

hensible to fast three days consecutively on the thirteenth, the fourteenth and the fifteenth days of a lunar month. Even though fasting in the month of Shawwal is *Sunnah*, it is reprehensible to fast six days consecutively without taking a break after the feast of Ramadan.¹³⁷ Finally, the forbidden category of fasting includes; not fasting on the day of the Ramadan festival (*Eid al-Fitr*, the day of the sacrificial holiday (*Eid al-Adha*), the days of *tashriq* (total four days). It is also forbidden for women who are menstruating to fast until their menstruation ceases and for women who are experiencing post natal bleeding following child birth. Furthermore, it is forbidden to fast for any person who is suffering from a terminal illness or a condition whereby fasting may lead to the further deterioration of their health or even result in their death.

There are two essential principles of fasting, which are, to make an intention and to stay away from things that break the fast. In order for the intention to be considered valid, it should be made at night or just before the time of dawn. The intention can be made for the whole month of Ramadan, or it can be made for one day at a time. Concerning the former method, one intention is sufficient for all the fasts that are going to be performed consecutively, however, it is important to note that the fasts should not be interrupted due to making a journey, becoming ill or menstruation etcetera. Concerning the latter method of making an intention, the intention needs to be renewed every night for the next day's fast. It is considered *mandūb* to make a separate intention for every day. It is perfectly satisfactory to make this intention in any language, in the mind or out aloud.¹³⁸

It is recommended for a Muslim to partake in the '*suhur*', a pre-dawn meal. It is the *Sunnah* of the Prophet to eat a pre-dawn meal; *suhur* is intended to reduce the hardship of *sawm* during the day. However, if due to over-sleeping or any other cause, upon waking a person finds that it is already dawn, or if they are not certain whether dawn has broken, they should refrain from eating or drinking. It is safest to awake early enough to eat and finish the meal about 20 minutes before dawn, since eating after dawn would nullify the day's fast. As soon as the sun has set, the Muslim should break his fast with *iftar* (breakfast). It is suggested that if the *iftar* is light, for example, a few dates or other fruit and water; one may have it before offering the Sunset prayer. However, if one is having a heavy *iftar*, perhaps it is better to offer the prayer first to avoid missing its proper time. It is *Sunnah* to break the fast with dates, water or something sweet, to say an invocation at the time of

137. In both of the above mentioned cases the reasons that cause reprehensibility of fasting is the worry about leading people to think such consecutive fasting is obligatory in Islam.

138. *I intend to fast in the month of Ramadan, as a Fard act of worship to You. I pray to You to accept the fast from me.*

iftar and to invite a fasting Muslim to *iftar*. Ramadan is also seen as the best time to help relatives and give charity to the poor.

It is important to note that if necessary, the following types of people are allowed to defer their fasting: (a) *The ill*: if the *sawm* is likely to make the illness worse. (b) *The mentally ill*: for as long as the mental illness lasts. (c) *The traveler*: when the journey is made to such a distance that it is possible to shorten the *salah*, (d) *The pregnant woman*: if the *sawm* is likely to harm the health of the mother or her unborn child and (e) *The nursing mother*: if the *sawm* is likely to harm the health of the mother and/or prevent her from having enough milk for her baby. This is because Allah, Almighty does not burden his servants with responsibilities they are not able to carry out. Allah states in the Qur'an, "*O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil). For a certain number of days; but whoever among you is sick or on a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; and those who are not able to do it may effect a redemption by feeding a poor man; so whoever does good spontaneously it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you knew.*"¹³⁹

It is also important to note that if the fasting is missed without a valid excuse and the missed fast(s) cannot be made up, then the *fidya* is paid. This is the financial compensation paid for every obligatory fast that has not been carried out, "...and upon those who are able [to fast, out during Ramadan and could not be made up but with hardship] -they must give a ransom [as before the following year's Ramadan by those who are unable to fast payment of *fidya* as a compensation substitute] of feeding a poor person [each day]." *Fidya* is normally given as currency, the monetary value of the weight of one *mud*¹⁴⁰, approximately 687 grams, to a charity organization that provides food items,¹⁴¹ or to the poor as compensation for each day that a person was not able to fast in the month of Ramadan. The new Muslim can visit their local Muslim charity to find out the current rate of *fidya* or give food items locally. It is important to note that those who are unable to fast because of their old age or chronic illness, they are not obliged to pay the *fidya*, but it is *mus-tahab* (recommended) if they do so.

For the new Muslim it is imperative that they clearly understand the things and the situations that break the fast and require both making it up (*Qada*) and expiation (*Kafara*). For example, engaging in sexual relations while fasting, intentionally emitting semen while fasting, revoking the intention of fasting during the day or night, intentionally taking something solid or liquid through the mouth

139. Q. 2:183-184

140. Q. 2: 184.

141. A measurement used in the time of the Prophet (peace be up on him)

that will break the fast, intentionally vomiting and intentionally eating or drinking something that is edible during the daytime in the month of Ramadan breaks the fast, and, requires both *qada* and *kafara*. Depending on the person's choice, the *kafara* for such broken fasts can be one of the following three things: 1. Feeding sixty poor people; for each poor person a mud amount of food is given. 2. Fasting for two months consecutively in accordance with the lunar calendar. 3. The freeing of a slave (this was carried out in the past when slavery was widespread; it is difficult to undertake in the present day and age). Other situations require only *qada*, for instance, when the fasting is broken due to: a. illness, however, when a person has recovered, after Ramadan, he or she should fast the number of days equal to the number missed during Ramadan; b. if a person is travelling then after Ramadan that person should fast a number of days equal to the number of days missed during travel in the month of Ramadan; c. if a person has to be intravenously fed or have injections for nutritional purposes¹⁴² then the person has to make up their missed fast(s). However, a person does not have to do the *qada* if he or she eats, drinks, smokes, or engages in sexual activity while in a state of forgetfulness during the state of fasting. In this case, he or she should stop eating, drinking etcetera the moment they remember and continue to fulfill the fast of that day. This brings us to the situations and incidents that do not break the fast, for example; involuntarily vomiting, a fly or any insect entering one's mouth, dust from the road entering one's throat, flour entering the throat of the miller, baker etcetera, liquid medicine applied to a wound around the stomach or chest area, cleaning one's teeth, a thirsty person rinsing his/her mouth with water, and being in the state of *janāba*. All of these do not break the fast.

As a new Muslim if you are partaking in the fasting of the month of Ramadan for the first time, you may come across the act of, '*itikaf*', which lexically means, 'to stay somewhere, to wait, to be patient and not to leave a certain location'. In Islamic legal terminology it means that a Muslim who has reached the age of discernment, retires inside a *masjid* while fasting and distances himself from sexual desires and everything related to it. *Itikaf* is one of the *nafla* (extra) acts of worship. The minimum amount of time for *itikaf* is one day and one night. The most virtuous *itikaf* is the one that is carried out in the last ten days of Ramadan because *Laylat al-Qadr* (The night of Power)¹⁴³ is amongst these days. During the *itikaf* the Muslim spends his or her¹⁴⁴ time in *salah*, asking Allah's forgiveness, remembering

142. Other medical injections, such as vaccinations, do not nullify the fast

143. This night is considered the holiest night of the year, and is traditionally celebrated on the 27th night of Ramadan but it is possible for it to be during any night of the last ten days of Ramadan. It is known as the "Night of Power," and commemorates the night that the Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Prayers are answered and blessings are abundant.

144. Females normally do this act of worship at home.

Allah (*dhikr*), reciting the Qur'an and invoking Allah's blessings on the Prophet. In many Muslim cultures today, this is considered a very virtuous and popular act of worship, and, most mosques are filled up with Muslims carrying out *itikaf* during the last ten days of Ramadan.

HAJJ

Hajj is an Arabic word, which translates as pilgrimage. The fifth pillar of Islam is the pilgrimage to the Kaba in Mecca on specific dates during the month of *Dhu al-Hijjah*¹⁴⁵. Hajj was made *fard* in the ninth year of *Hijrah*. The obligation of hajj is established by the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet and *ijma* (the consensus of the Muslim scholars). Allah says in the Qur'an, "*Pilgrimage to the Sacred House is a duty to Allah for humankind, for him who is able to make the journey.*"¹⁴⁶ Every Muslim (male and female) is required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime. A person who is unable to do so due to illness, safety, ability or lack of finances, is excused. A person who has debts is not permitted to make pilgrimage until he or she has settled all debts.¹⁴⁷ There is no harm in children accompanying their parents for *Hajj*. However, it does not exempt them from having to complete *Hajj* when they become mature adults. It is not permissible for the believers to send someone to perform the hajj on behalf of them if they do not have a valid excuse. However, if they are not in a state to go to hajj, then they may send someone else as their representative. Normally a woman should be accompanied by a *mahram* (her husband or a close male relative), but according to the Shafi'i school of law, a woman who is not accompanied by her husband or a close male relative may set out on the journey of pilgrimage with a trustworthy group of women in order to perform the hajj that is obligatory upon her.

The pilgrimage season starts during the month of *Shawwal*, whereas, the actual pilgrimage is performed from the 8th to the 13th of *Dhu al-Hijjah*. If a pilgrim visits the Kaba at any other time of the year, they cannot perform *hajj*, but they can perform *umrah* (the Lesser Pilgrimage). The new Muslim should be aware that an *umrah* performed during the season of *hajj* is in fact, a part of the *hajj*. There are three methods of performing the pilgrimage and all require the completion of certain procedures, which, are known as the rites of *hajj*. The pilgrim should make his or her intention according to the pilgrimage he or she chooses to perform. The different types of pilgrimage are: 1. *Ifrad* (*hajj* only); the pilgrim performs only the *hajj*. 2. *Qiran* (combined *hajj*); the pilgrim performs the *hajj* and the *umrah* together, in one *ihram* and without changing their *ihram*. 3. *Tamattu* (*hajj* with ease); this

145. The 12th lunar month of the Muslim calendar.

146. Q. 3:97

147. Q. 3: 97

is performed as follows, during the season of *hajj*, the pilgrim first wears the *ihram*¹⁴⁸ for *umrah* and after it is completed, during the same season-before returning home- he/she wears the *ihram* once again and performs the obligatory *hajj*.



On their way to Mecca, when the pilgrims are arriving from various directions, they enter the state of *ihram* at a number of certain assembly points called *miqāt* in Arabic. The state of *ihram* means to cleanse the whole body; for the men it means to put on two pieces of unsewn white cloth, leaving the head bare and to wear footwear that does not cover the heels and for women it means to cover everything but the face, feet and hands. The new Muslim should be aware that there are a number of acts that must be avoided once the state of *ihram* is entered into such as: a. hunting or killing a living thing; b. sexual pleasure of any kind; c. shaving or cutting the hair; d. trimming the nails; and e. wearing perfume, cologne, or cosmetics. All the acts and prohibitions of the state of *ihram* are there to help the pilgrim attain a higher state of mind. First, the pilgrim circumambulates the Kaba seven times. This is known as *tawaff*. This is followed by supplication and drinking from the water of *Zamzam*. The next ritual of *Hajj* is the *sa'y*, which is the walk between the hills of Safa and Marwa.¹⁴⁹ Pilgrims may first perform the *tawaff* and the *sa'y* immediately as they arrive or just before the eighth of *Dhu al-Hijjah*. On the day of the eighth of *Dhu al-Hijjah*, all pilgrims leave Mecca to spend the night at Mina, continuing their *talbiyah* (glorification of Allah) and quiet meditation. On the morning of the ninth of *Dhu al-Hijjah*, the pilgrims move from Mina to the plain of Arafat. Spending the day at Arafat is the most important rite of *hajj*. It is said that there is no *hajj* without the standing at Arafat. According to the Maliki school of law, the *Zuhr* and the *Asr* prayers are combined and shortened to two cycles each. The pilgrims remain standing until sunset, glorifying Allah, praying for the Prophet, for themselves, relatives, friends and other Muslims. If tired, they may sit down to rest occasionally. Females are allowed to remain seated during the entire stay at Arafat, if they wish. The pilgrims must leave Arafat soon after sunset without performing the Maghrib prayer.

148. It refers to the acceptance of the person, who intends to perform *hajj* and *umrah*, certain actions and behavior as prohibited to himself/herself which are permissible at other times for a certain period of time, in other words until the requirements of *hajj* and *umrah* are completed. It also includes the two pieces of cloth men wear at this point.

149. To walk from Safa to Marwa four times, and to come back from Marwa to Safa three times between the hills of Safa and Marwa, this makes up seven shawts (circuits). This is one of the obligatory tasks of *hajj* and *umrah*.

Instead, the *salah* of Maghrib is combined with the *Isha* prayer at Muzdalifah.¹⁵⁰ The pilgrims spend the night in this open field in prayer, rest and collecting pebbles to stone the *Jamarāt*, the three symbolic Shaitans, in Mina. After the *Fajr* prayer, which the pilgrims perform in congregation, they perform *wuquf* (Praying in the standing position) until daybreak. Then, they return to Mina, where they throw seven small stones at the largest of the *Jamarāt*. This is symbolic for the pilgrims to show that they resolve never to follow the path of evil and wrongdoing. After throwing the stones, the pilgrims offer a sacrifice of a sheep, goat, cow, or a camel at Mina. Since the day of the tenth of *Dhu al-Hijjah* is the day of *Eid al-‘Adha*, the Muslims all over the world also offer animal sacrifice. Following the sacrifice, pilgrims shave their heads or have a haircut. Their *ihram* is ended by the pilgrims changing into regular clothes. This is followed by the pilgrims leaving for Mecca to perform the obligatory *tawaff*, which is best performed on the day of sacrifice, but may be completed later on, if necessary. It is obligatory to pass the nights of the tenth and the eleventh of *Dhu al-Hijjah* at Mina. Every pilgrim is required to stone each of the three *Jamarāt* seven times. It is also *Sunnah* to pay a last visit to the Kaba for a farewell *tawaff* just before the departing from Mecca.

The new Muslim should know that the spiritual atmosphere during *hajj* is unlike any other a Muslim may experience. First of all, the pilgrim finally has the opportunity to see the birthplace of Islam and our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Being in the presence of the Kaba gives the feeling of being very close to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and sharing this experience with millions of other Muslims gives an overwhelming sense of the universal strength of Islam. The pilgrim must remember to maintain good behavior and relations with other pilgrims. In the Qur’an it says, *“And whoever undertakes the pilgrimage in those (months,) shall on pilgrimage, abstain from lewd speech, from all wicked conduct, and from quarreling; and whatever good you do, Allah*

*is aware of it.”*¹⁵¹ Therefore, for a successful *hajj*, a pilgrim must have piety, self-control and set a high standard of behavior for themselves. Moreover, upon returning from *hajj*, he or she should also strive to maintain this elevated code of behavior throughout their daily life.

Many Muslims desire to visit Medina, pray at the *Masjid al-Nabi*, offer greetings to the Prophet, which means to stand and greet him at his grave, and visit the many blessed



150. Muzdalifah is located halfway between Arafat and Mina.

151. Q. 2: 197

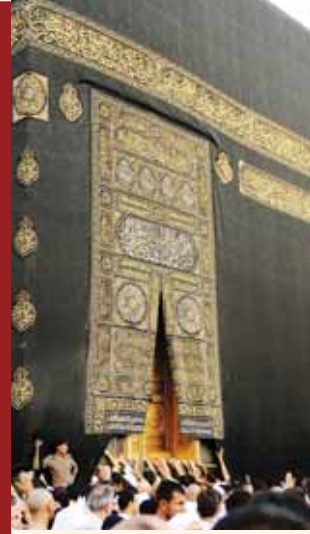
places that relate to the life of the Prophet and his companions. It is true that the visit to Medina is not a part of the *hajj* rites, yet most pilgrims seem to feel that their mission is incomplete without a visit to Medina. Like Mecca, Medina is also considered *haram* (sacred), as it is the second holiest city of Islam. For the pilgrims the journey from Mecca to Medina is filled with emotions, as the *hujjaj* (pilgrims) make their way to Medina saying their greetings of *salam* and uttering the praises of the Prophet. It is customary upon arrival at the prophet's mosque, to offer two *cycle* of *Sunnah salah*. Upon seeing the mosque of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and visiting other historical sites in Medina, the pilgrim is reminded of the sacrifices made by the early Muslims; this enhances the experience of the *hajj* and helps to strengthen their faith and conviction.



At this juncture, the new Muslim should note that no one is permitted to pray to the Prophet or prostrate to his grave. Occasionally, some people, out of love for the Prophet, unfortunately commit such unacceptable acts, without fully realizing the sinfulness of their actions. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) continuously warned us against all such acts; Muslims have been repeatedly informed that to express true love for the the Prophet, is to follow his *Sunnah*. Once the pilgrim is ready to depart from Mecca and Medina, he or she should commit themselves to follow the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* for the rest of their life and to the best of their ability, make sure to avoid what is forbidden in Islam.¹⁵²

On that point, let us note that all sincere Muslims ought to do their upmost best to try to follow the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). For this purpose, new Muslims should acquaint themselves with the Qur'an and learn about the Prophet Muhammad, who is an example for all Muslims. The Qur'anic verses that were revealed at different time and places for various reasons, cultivated the Prophet, as well as, educating the new Muslims in Arabia. For instance, by following the chronological order of the verses that were revealed, it is possible to see how the people around the Prophet were transformed from a *Jahiliyya* society to a new and pure society of Islam. Therefore, let us first briefly revisit the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in the following chapter, in order to give the reader an overview of his life, and, then go onto having a closer look at the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

152. For more information please read, Hasan Serhat Yeter and Soner Duman, *Fiqh 1: According to Maliki School of Law*, Istanbul: Erkam Publication, 2015.



LIFE OF THE PROPHET

LIFE OF THE PROPHET

BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was born in the city of Mecca, which is located in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula, in the year 570. His father was Abdullah, who was the son of Abdul-Muttalib from the Banu Hashim branch of the Quraysh tribe, and his mother was Amina, the daughter of Wahb ibn Abdumanaf, who was a member of the Banu Zuhra branch of the Quraysh tribe. The Prophet was their only child. Prophet Muhammad's father Abdullah bin Abdul-Muttalib died before the Prophet was born and when Muhammad reached the age of six his mother Amina also died. Muhammad was entrusted to the care of his grandfather Abdul-Muttalib, who was more than eighty years-of-age at the time, Abdul-Muttalib passed away not long after he handed over the custody and protection of his grandson, then eight years-of-age, to the latter's paternal uncle, Abu Talib. Abu Talib was a trader and when the Prophet was nine years of age, he accompanied Abu Talib to Syria. Their caravan stopped in Bosra, located in Syria and, it is transmitted that a monk called Bahira, living in a monastery, invited the caravan to join him for a meal. It was during this event that Bahira told Abu Talib that he recognized Muhammad as the long awaited Prophet foretold in the Bible. He cautioned Abu Talib against some of the dangers that his nephew could face and advised Abu Talib to protect his nephew well. Upon this warning, Abu Talib ended his journey and returned to Mecca. It is also well-known that when the Prophet Muhammad was about ten years old, he worked as a shepherd for a period of time, in order to help his uncle Abu Talib who had a large family.

MARRIAGE AND HOUSEHOLD

Growing up the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was a noble and highly respected young man. He made his living through trade and continued this trade when his uncle became older. There is consensus amongst the sources that the Prophet Muhammad lived an honest life and stayed away from the wrongdoing prevalent during that Age of Ignorance. At the age of twenty five, due to his decency, bravery, compassion, fairness, and his honesty and reliability in commercial life, he came to be known as, Muhammad al-Amin or Al-Amin (the Trustworthy). Khadija was the daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad, a prominent member of the Quraysh. Khadija, who was married twice before marrying the Prophet,

was a noble, beautiful and rich woman. After the death of her second husband, she received several marriage proposals from the leading figures of the tribe of Quraysh; however, she refused them all. Khadija made her living through trade with people whom she considered reliable. Upon advice she had received, Khadija proposed marriage to the Prophet Muhammad and he accepted. It is recorded that the Prophet Muhammad was twenty-five years old and Khadija was forty years old at the time of their marriage. The couple had seven children; Qasim, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, Fatima, Abdullah (Tayyib), and Tahir. Abdullah and Tahir died before the prophethood of Muhammad. Khadija ceaselessly supported the Prophet Muhammad, both materially and spiritually, throughout their twenty-five-year long marriage. As the first person to believe in the Prophet, Khadija remained by his side during the most difficult of times. She was the Prophet's first wife and the mother of all of his children, with the exception of Ibrahim. The Prophet never forgot her goodness and devotion. As is known, the Prophet Muhammad did not marry any other woman while Khadija was alive, and married all his other wives after she passed away.

REVELATION AND THE MECCAN PERIOD

The Prophet Muhammad was chosen as a Messenger by God when he was forty years of age. It is reported that Muhammad did not agree with his society's beliefs in idols and or their social actions. A few years prior to his Prophethood, in the month of Ramadan, he had begun to retreat to the secluded cave of Mount Hira. Aisha, who most probably heard this from the Prophet, reported the following, "The commencement of the Divine revelation to God's Messenger was in the form of good dreams, which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go into seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (God alone), continuously for many days before his desire to see his family brought him back. He used to take with him prepared food for the journey and for his stay, and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to take his food likewise again, till suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet replied, *'I do not know how to read.'* The Prophet added, *'The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released*



*me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)?' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.'*¹⁵³ It was in that cave in 610 CE that Prophet Muhammad received from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, the first verses of the Qur'an. Then and there, history changed. The main message that Muhammad was to convey to his people was that there was only One God and that Muhammad was the last Prophet of God. The Qur'an continued to be revealed in fragments to the Prophet Muhammad over the following twenty three years. During these twenty three years of the Prophet receiving revelation, the Qur'an was the most important agenda for the Muslims; it was part and parcel of their daily lives. The last words of the Book were revealed to the Prophet shortly before his death in 632 CE.

The Prophet Muhammad was commanded to invite those close to him to the religion of Islam. This invitation continued in secret for approximately three years. The public invitation to Islam started in Mecca after the fourth year of Prophethood. The Prophet began this difficult task by first addressing the tribe of Quraysh. However, very few of the inhabitants of Mecca paid any heed to his words and slowly the leading elite started to persecute anybody who accepted Muhammad's message. The Quraysh began to humiliate and insult Prophet Muhammad due to his criticism of their beliefs and attitudes; they increased in their enmity towards him when they saw that he was gaining support. After a certain time they did not refrain from resorting to violence. The Prophet was subjected to harassment and abuse. However, armed with patience, resilience, determination and the protection of his uncle Abu Talib and the clan of Hashim, the Prophet was able to carry on preaching



the new faith to people. However, the people that accepted Islam, many of whom were slaves and the poor, had to suffer all kinds of persecution, including brutal torture and murder. Finally, in 614 CE, the Prophet instructed a group of Muslims to escape the persecution by going to Abyssinia and seeking the protection of its just Christian king. The Quraysh then sent a delegation to the king, carrying precious gifts, to secure the extradition of the Muslim refugees. However, the king rejected

153. Q. 96:1-5.

the bribe and let the Muslims stay in Abyssinia. One year later, the Quraysh imposed economic and social sanctions on the Prophet, his followers and his clan. As a result, the Muslims began to live in a sanctioned off place near a mountain in Mecca. These sanctions lasted approximately three years before they came to an end. Soon after the decision to cease the sanctions due to support of the Hasimite clan, the Prophet lost his beloved wife Khadija and his uncle. The loss of his uncle's protection resulted in the further persecution of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers at the hands of the disbelievers; their relentless attempts to uproot Islam and destroy its adherents increased tenfold.

From the first years of his Prophethood, the Prophet Muhammad had demonstrated great efforts to convey the message of Islam to those who came to Mecca for pilgrimage, as well as, those who visited the city's fairs for trade. The most fruitful of these contacts were those he made with the people of Yathrib. In 622 CE, during the season of pilgrimage at Mecca, Muhammad met with a number of leaders from the city of Yathrib, where he had previously sent some Muslims to settle. These leaders made a pledge to protect the Prophet against the Quraysh and invited him to live in Yathrib. The Prophet then began to instruct Muslims to immigrate, individually, or in small groups, to Yathrib. The Quraysh tried to prevent Muslims from fleeing Mecca but most Muslims succeeded to migrate, and finally, Muhammad himself decided to immigrate. The various clans of the tribe of Quraysh agreed to act as one and assassinate the Prophet before he left Mecca. The thought behind acting collectively was so that no one party could be blamed for the killing of the Prophet and hence, become embroiled in a war of vengeance with the clan of Hashim. However, the assassination plan was sabotaged by divine intervention. The night the murder was planned to take place, Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, informed His Prophet of the danger and ordered him to secretly leave Mecca and head to the city of Yathrib (which had become known as Medina by then). This famous event, known as the '*Hijrah*' (immigration), had far-reaching consequences with regards to establishing the Muslim community, strengthening the position of Islam and spreading its message. The new Muslim should also be aware of the fact that this event marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar known as the '*Hijri*' calendar.

THE MEDINAN PERIOD AND THE CONQUEST OF MECCA

In Medina the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), structured a treaty for all the inhabitants to live in peace; it meant equity for all, governed by the Prophet and mutual consultation. However, soon afterwards this new emerging community was faced with external challenges, such as, the Quraysh increasing

their assault by first confiscating the valuables of the Muslims that they had left in Mecca and selling them through caravans heading towards Syria. In relation to these circumstances, the Muslims were given divine allowance to fight against their oppressors and in due time the battles of Badr and Uhud were fought between the two sides. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and the Muslims engaged in these battles with great discipline, by avoiding injury to the innocent and by using only the minimum force required. By the year 627 CE, the Quraysh allied themselves with one of the Jewish tribes of Medina and some of the other Arabian tribes and attacked the city of Medina. During this battle of the Trench, the Muslims lost many men while defending their city and religion. This resulted in many widowed Muslim women and numerous orphaned children. In such challenging and difficult circumstances of war, the Prophet Muhammad married several women during this period of his life. All of the women he took as wives were either widowed or divorced, except Aisha.¹⁵⁴ A year after the Battle of Allies (Trench) in 628 CE, the Prophet and fifteen hundred of his companions left for Mecca to perform the annual pilgrimage. Unfortunately, they were barred from approaching Mecca by the Quraysh at a place called, 'Hudaybiya', where following some negotiations a treaty was signed, allowing for the Muslims to come for the performance of the pilgrimage the following year and to allow for ten years of peace. This treaty facilitated the growth and spread of Islam amongst the people of the whole region without interference. Many delegations from all regions of Arabia came to the Prophet to investigate the teachings of Islam. A large number of people accepted Islam within a couple of years. The Prophet sent many of his companions to the new Muslim communities in order to instruct them about the practices of Islam. Approximately two years after the signing of the treaty of Hudaybiya, the polytheists broke the treaty by attacking a tribe under the protection of the Muslims. This resulted in the Prophet's decision to conquer Mecca.

After confirming all the reports of the attack and the following subsequent events relating to his ally, the Prophet marched to Mecca with an army consisting of three thousand Muslims of Medina. Muslims from other Arab communities also joined the Prophet on the way to Mecca bringing the total of the armed forces up to ten thousand Muslims. Before entering the city, the Prophet sent word to the residents of Mecca informing them that anyone who remained in their own home, or in Abu Sufyan's home, or in the Kaba, would be safe from the attack of the Muslim army. The army entered Mecca without fighting and the Prophet went directly to the Kaba. The Kaba was then cleansed by the removal of all three hundred and six-

154. The Prophet married Umm Salama (ranha) in 626 CE. Her husband had died of wounds inflicted in the Battle of Uhud (625 CE). The Prophet's marriage contract with Umm Habibah (ranha) was solemnized, by proxy, by Negus, King of Abyssinia, in 628 CE. Two of his wives, Juwayriah and Safiyah, were prisoners of war.

ty idols; it was restored to its pristine status of only being used for the worship of the One True God. The people of the city expected general slaughter in view of their persecution and torture of the Muslims for the past twenty years. However, much to their surprise, standing by the Kaba, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), forgave them all by saying, *“I will treat you as Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) treated his brothers. There is no reproach against you. Go to your homes, and you are all free.”* The tolerance shown during this expedition proved beyond doubt, that Islam is indeed a religion of peace; the strategy utilized was a stroke of masterpiece, since, it ensured the conquest of the people’s hearts more than the conquest of a city. Within a year (630 CE), almost all of Arabia accepted Islam.



SPREAD OF ISLAM AND THE FAREWELL

At the time the Prophet passed on in 632 CE, Islam had become well established as the main religion of the Arabian Peninsula and it had made inroads into neighboring regions; Muslims had become a major force to be reckoned with in the area. The great change in Arabia alarmed both the Byzantines and the Persians. Their governors, particularly those of the Byzantines, reacted with threats to attack Medina. Instead of waiting for an attack, the Prophet sent a small army to defend the northernmost border of Arabia. During the remaining lifetime of the Prophet, all the major battles were fought at the northern front. The Prophet did not have a standing army; whenever he received a threat, he assembled the Muslims, discussed the situation with them and gathered volunteers to fight any act of aggression. During the Prophet’s own life time, Islam began to grow as the faith of the people living on both sides of the borderlands, between Arabia and the Byzantine and the Persian Empires. The Prophet’s followers faithfully carried the message of Islam to all these lands and within the time period of ninety years, the light of Islam had already reached Spain, North Africa, the Caucasus, northwest China and India.

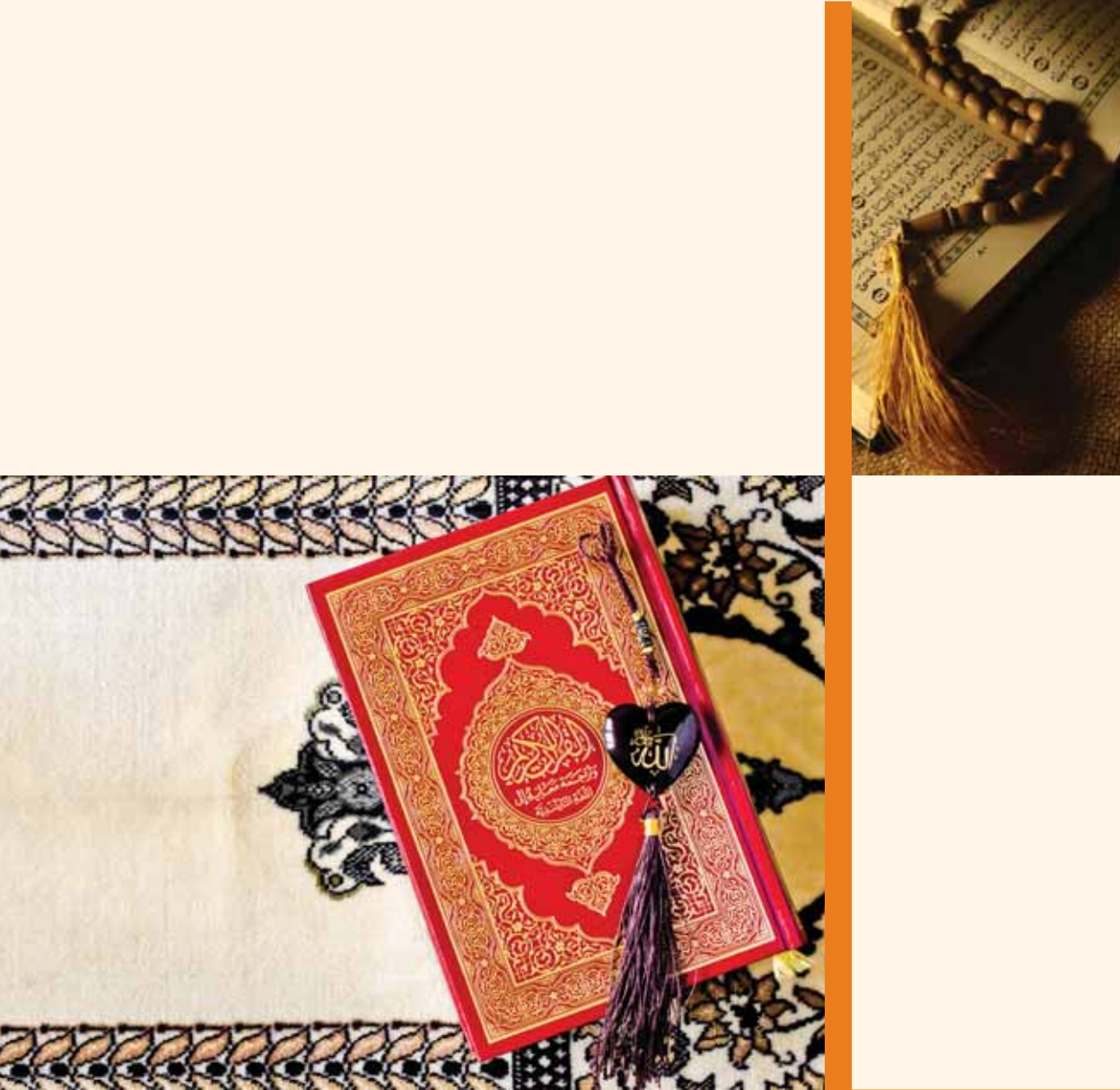
According to the sources, it is reported that, it was during this period in 632 CE, that the Prophet performed his first and last pilgrimage. One hundred and twenty-thousand men and women performed pilgrimage that year with him. The Prophet received the last revelation during this pilgrimage and gave his farewell sermon. Two months later, the Prophet Muhammad (s) fell ill in Medina and after



several days died, on Monday the twelfth of *Rabi al-Awwal*, in the eleventh year after Hijrah (June 8, 632 CE). He is buried at the same place where he died. Prophet Muhammad lived an extremely simple, austere and modest life. He was an immensely devoted man who spent one- to two-thirds of every night in prayer and meditation. The Prophet's possessions consisted only of mats, blankets, jugs and other simple things, even though at the time he was the virtual ruler of Arabia. He left nothing to be inherited except a white mule,

a little ammunition and a piece of land that he had bestowed as gift during his life time. Some of his last words were, "*We the community of Prophets is not inherited. Whatever we leave is for charity.*" Truly, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was a man, a messenger of Allah and the last of His prophets.¹⁵⁵

155. For further detailed reading about the life of Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) please read, Martin Lings, *Life of the Prophet Muhammad; based upon the earliest sources*, Cambridge: Islamic Text Society, 1997.



THE SOURCES OF ISLAM

THE SOURCES OF ISLAM

THE QUR'AN: THE WORD OF ALLAH

The root meaning of the Arabic word 'Qur'an' means both 'recitation' and 'reading' in English. In its inception, the revelation of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), was heard by the Muslims through oral recitation; it formed an essential part of both the liturgical and the spiritual acts of personal and communal worship in Islam. This is largely due to the fact that the Arabian society of that time was mainly an oral society. Later on, the revelation i.e. the Qur'an was written down and read from a text as well as being recited from memory. In the history of the Arabic language, the Qur'an was the first oral discourse to be described by its own text as a book. For the new Muslim it is pertinent to know that the Qur'an as the Word of God, -its vocabulary, its grammar, its law, its theology, and its ethics-is to be studied with the utmost reverence and diligence. The Arabic word for revelation is '*wahy*'. For the new Muslim it is also essential to know that the Qur'an as *wahy* has never been considered to be the consequence of the Prophet's mind, but rather it is seen as a transmission, without any alteration of form or meaning, from God to the Prophet. Furthermore, it is through the recitation and the listening of the Qur'an, whether it is during the ritual prayer or a host of other contexts that, Muslims today chiefly continue to deal with the Holy Scripture. It is also true that majority of the contemporary Muslims do not understand the Arabic language and, therefore, use translations to understand the Noble Scripture. However, it is still important for New Muslims to acquaint themselves with the Qur'an by listening to the various Arabic recitations available through digital media over the Internet. One of the main reasons for listening to the Qur'an in Arabic is

that, the revelation is truly spiritual in its original form and many Muslim people across the ages have attested to the instantaneous power and the value of the properly recited Qur'an. Moreover, it is recommended by scholars of Islam for all Muslims, to learn at least the basic Arabic language and the Qur'anic recitation rules, so that they are able to recite the Qur'an in its original language.



The Qur'an has 114 suras (chapters) and over 6,000 *ayāt* (verses). The chapters of the Qur'an vary greatly in length, for example; the shortest suras (103, 108, and 110) consist of three verses each, the longest sura (2) consists of 286 verses, and yet many more are medium sized. The length of verses also varies considerably. In many printed copies of the Qur'an, each chapter is identified as having been revealed either in the city of Mecca or in the city of Medina and is, accordingly, known as Meccan or Medinan. These designations relate to the first thirteen years of the Prophet's life in Mecca and the last ten years of his prophethood in Medina, as mentioned in the above chapter. In most cases, the Meccan revelations deal with matters of faith and ethics, such as, the fundamentals of Islamic dogma and the principles of ethics; in contrast most of the Medinan revelations deal with the political, social and economic aspects of Muslim life in the light that during this period the Muslims had developed their own independent city in Medina. However, generally such distinction of theme is not always accurate, since, at times Medinan suras frequently take up the themes of faith and ethics, using them as a base for presenting legislative verses, whereas, the Meccan suras contain references to regarding the future events in Medina.

Generally, it can be said that the Qur'an contains numerous injunctions as well. For example, there are broad guidelines for family life, through rules set down for marriage and divorce (Qur'an 2:221, 229–237, 240–241; 4:3, 19–25, 35, 128–129; 5:5; 24:3, 32), for inheritance (Qur'an 2:180, 4:7–9, 11–12, 176), and for making transactions (Qur'an 2:282). In addition, in the Qur'an Muslims are also informed with regards to what is accepted as lawful food and unlawful food (Qur'an 2:168, 172–173; 5:3–5; 6:118–119, 121, 145–146; 16:114–116), decrees concerning punishments for certain offenses (Qur'an 5:38; 17:32; 24:2–9), and general guidelines for running a Muslim society (Qur'an 4:59; 42:38). Furthermore, there are also verses in the Qur'an, whereby, Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, insists that Muslims should treat parents kindly (Qur'an 17:23; 29:8; 31:14; 46:15), He promotes virtues like forbearance and repaying good for evil (Qur'an 23:96; 28:54; 41:34; 42:37, 40; 7:199), and forbids backbiting and slander (Qur'an 24:4, 6–9). The ultimate goal of all such injunctions is to create a God conscious society and individuals.

At this point it is also important for the new Muslim to know how the Qur'an was compiled. Accordingly, the compilation of the Qur'an occurred in three stages. The first stage occurred during the Prophet Muhammad's (peace and blessings be upon him) lifetime and it included both text and structure, as we find it today. It is reported that when a revelation came to him from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, it was devotedly memorized by the Muslims and some of these revelations were written down by designated scribes under the Prophet's instructions. Since paper was not available, rudimentary parchment, thin flat stones, or animal



shoulder bones were used. It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) recited, through memory, the whole Qur'an to the angel Gabriel before passing on, moreover, during the same time a number of his companions also recited the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. This indicates that, both the text and the structure of the Qur'an, was well known through memorization. Today, the arrangement of the Qur'an follows the same arrangement that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon

him), himself approved under the guidance of the Angel Gabriel. The second stage of the compilation of the Qur'an took place a year after the death of the Prophet in 633 CE, during the reign of the first caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was advised that there was a need to have a written compilation of the Qur'an because many of those who had memorized the Qur'an had been martyred on the battlefield. Abu Bakr accepted the suggestion to prepare a compilation of the Qur'an that differed from the memorized version only in one respect; that of being written down on loose papers. This compilation became known as *sahifa*. The third stage of compiling the Qur'an took place during the rule of the third caliph of Islam, Uthman bin Affan (644–656 CE). This compilation transpired due to variations in the oral and the written copies of the Qur'an beginning to occur in the periphery of the Caliphate; thus, by using the *sahifa*, Caliph Uthman produced the definitive copy of the Qur'an (*suhuf*) that is read by all Muslims today. Copies of this written scripture were sent to all the major cities of the Islamic world so that they might serve as master copies for people to use as standard reference texts. Hence, both the text and structure of the Qur'an is sacrosanct.

The reciting of the Qur'an takes place throughout Muslim society the world over; it transpires in the everyday lives of Muslims globally. Various forms of recitation take place at different times and on different occasions, such as, during the performance of prayers, on the occasions of birth, death, holy days, festivals, marriage and illness etcetera. One of the most significant of these forms is the everyday usage of phrases, such as, “if God wills” (*Insha'Allah*), “what God wills” (*Ma-sha'Allah*), or the even more widespread recitation of *bismillah al-Rahman Al-Rahem* (In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate) before eating, or initiating virtually any act. In addition there are many other examples of the Qur'an being recited in Muslim society, such as, during prayers at the places of burial, while visiting the graves of the departed, the automatic recitation of the

standard blessings after any mention of Muhammad or other prophets (peace and blessings be upon them all), the widespread use of prayer beads for the recitation of the divine names and other invocations found in the Holy Book. As a text, the Qur'an initially addresses the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), but at the same time, it also speaks to each of its reciter and listener. The impression is that the person reading or listening to the Word of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is being asked to both recognize and remember the truth. The reciting of the Qur'an and the understanding of it, should overtime, lead the new Muslim to form a relationship of the lifelong process of familiarization and recollection, between the experiences of one's own life and that of the corresponding lessons and insights conveyed to one by the verses of the Qur'an. Perhaps, this is the reason that some sages of Islam have said, "Recite and read the Qur'an as it is the mirror of your soul and seek to understand each verse as though it were being revealed directly to you."

At this juncture it is vital to highlight to the new Muslim and caution him or her from presuming that any independent and highly individualized scriptural interpretation, based exclusively on foreign language translations, (which in the contemporary world is taken for granted), is acceptable within the scholarship of Islam. In fact, the scholarly understanding of the Qur'an has for centuries been the preserve of the *ulama*; being a part of this intellectual scholarship, demands mastery in a number of related preparatory and interpretive religious sciences, requiring years of preparation. These essential contextual disciplines include; Qur'anic grammar and syntax, Arabic lexicography and philology, Qur'anic rhetoric (*balagha*), Hadith, history (*sirah*, *tarikh*, and *qisas al-anbiya*), literatures concerning the historical contexts of the Qur'anic revelations (*asbab al-nuzul* and *tafsir*), dialectical theology (*ilm al-kalam*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Thus, the studying of the Qur'an and its interpretation has always been mediated by the traditional religious disciplines, which have their origins in the essential teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. This leads us to the fact that the symbiotic relationship between the Qur'an and the thousands of Prophetic teachings (*Sunnah*) recorded in the collections of Hadith continues to have an importance in the everyday lives of Muslims.

SUNNAH: THE PROPHET'S TRADITIONS

All of the prophets were people who submitted to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted; they were chosen in order to guide human beings and to teach them how to fully submit to God. Although the prophets were chosen from different places, at different times throughout human history and they conveyed their message to people in various languages, their mission was the one and the same. Expounding upon this universality of the prophets and his role within it, the Proph-



et Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “*The similitude of mine and that of the Apostles before me is that of a person who built a house quite imposing and beautiful, but for one brick in one of its corners. People would go round it, appreciating the building, but saying: Why has the brick not been fixed here? He said: I am that brick and I am the last of the Apostles.*”¹⁵⁶ Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, prescribed that the example of perfect faith, is the belief in Him and then in His Messenger. For if a person

believes only in [God] and not in His Messenger, they cannot be described as one who has perfect faith’; they must have faith in His Messenger together with Him... God has imposed the duty upon men and women to obey His divine communications, as well as, follow the Sunnah of His Messenger.

The term ‘*Sunnah*’ is an Arabic word, which, in pre-Islamic times, linguistically meant, ‘path’ or ‘custom’ relating to the norms and the practices of an individual or a people. During Prophet Muhammad’s (peace and blessings be upon him) own life time, the *Sunnah* began to be understood exclusively as the way of the Prophet, embodied in what he said, did, and what he approved of through explicit or tacit confirmation. Narrations regarding his physical appearance and his attributes were also included in *hadith* collections. In scholarship, ‘*hadith*’ is described as the verbal expression of the Prophet’s *Sunnah*. Hence, for example, the manner in which to perform various acts of worship mentioned in the Qur’an, such as, ritual prayer, fasting, charity and pilgrimage etcetera are learnt by Muslims from the *hadith* and practice of the Prophet. Muslims scholars have always appealed to the *Sunnah* as the second source of Islam after the Noble Qur’an. The Prophet’s way (*Sunnah*) can be found across the total spectrum of Shari’ah, from the obligatory (*wājib*) to the forbidden (*hārām*). This *Sunnah* is preserved in both the Qur’an and the *Hadith*. The term *Sunnah* is further utilized for two auxiliary purposes; it is utilized by legal theorists in jurisprudence to denote acts of worship that are not obligatory in Islam, but are recommended (*mandūb*)¹⁵⁷ and it is also utilized to refer to the textual source of *Hadith*, in contrast with the Book (the Qur’an).¹⁵⁸ Hence, the *Sunnah* is

156. Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 43, Hadith 24.

157. i.e. meaning an act that is rewarded for in the afterlife, however not doing such an act (*mandūb/Sunnah*) is not punished. In this context in Islamic Law it is contrasted with the obligatory act which is rewarded for in the next life and not acting on it leads to punishment in the next life.

158. i.e. it is synonymous with *Hadith*, and distinguish evidence from that of the Qur’an. However, it is important to note that rulings of what is obligatory (*Fard/Wājib*) and recommended (*Sunnah*/

the way of the Prophet and in general has been understood by Muslims to mean the imitation of the precedents set by the Prophet. “It is reported that Yazid ibn Yabnus said, ‘We went to Aisha and said, ‘Umm al-Muminin, what was the character of the Messenger of Allah like?’ She replied, ‘His character was the Qur’an’.”¹⁵⁹

It is evident that the *Sunnah*, as a whole, is binding in Islam. In the Qur’an it is stated, “*It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger to have any option about their decision: if any one disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed clearly on a wrong Path.*”¹⁶⁰ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) even warned his followers from establishing rulings in religion by willfully ignoring universal principles brought by the *Sunnah*, and, instead claim that the Qur’an is enough for them. He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “*Let me not find one of you reclining on his couch when he hears something regarding me which I have commanded or forbidden and saying: We do not know. We follow (only) what we found in Allah’s Book.*”¹⁶¹ Therefore, the *Sunnah* is an indispensable part of religion and in this respect; one cannot refer to the Qur’an without the *Sunnah*, just as one cannot consider the *Sunnah* without the Qur’an.

Nevertheless, it is important for the new Muslim to recognize that the *Sunnah* is not the equivalent of the Qur’an in terms of its significance; in other words, the Qur’an is binding in all its totality, regarding its various commandments and injunctions. In contrast, the *Sunnah* due to its very nature is not binding in its entirety. For example, the *hadith* concerning matters, such as, law, ritual prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and almsgiving etcetera are binding, due to the fact that statements by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), regarding such matters are related to his task of prophethood (*risala*). Whereas, his statements regarding fields that require specialist expertise, such as, agriculture, trade, treatment of diseases, art, etcetera are not mandatory unless they contain a divine message. In addition, the Prophet’s personal actions carried out as a human being, such as, his habits regarding eating, drinking, dressing, sleeping etcetera are not binding, however, Muslims should recognize that such actions of the



mandūb) are found both in the Qur’an as well as in the Hadith.

159. Sahih al-Bukhari, 14: 308.

160. Q. 33: 36.

161. Abu Dawud, *Sunnah*, 5; Al-Tirmidhi, *Ilm*, 10



Prophet constitute a high ethical and moral code of conduct and should be incorporated in their own lives.¹⁶²

Finally, the new Muslim should keep these following three Prophetic traditions in mind concerning the *Sunnah*: “He who does not follow my tradition in religion is not from me.”¹⁶³ “Whoever revives my *Sunnah* has loved me, and whosoever loved me, he shall be with me in Paradise”¹⁶⁴, and, “There are three qualities for which anyone who is char-

acterized by them will relish the sweetness of faith: He to whom Allah and His Messenger are dearer than all else; He who loves another human being for Allah’s sake alone; and He who has as great an abhorrence of returning to unbelief after Allah has rescued him from it as he has of being cast into Hell.”¹⁶⁵

162. For further detail reading about the *Sunnah* and *hadith* please read E. M. Yaşaroğlu, İ. Erkul and N. Morgül, *Hadith*, İstanbul: Erkam Publications, 2016.

163. Sahih al-Bukhari, Nikah, 1; Muslim, Nikah, 5.

164. Sahih al-Tirmidhi, Ilm, 16

165. Sahih al-Bukhari, Iman 9, 14; Muslim, Iman 67



FAMILY LIFE

FAMILY LIFE

MARRIAGE AND HOUSEHOLD

The importance and virtue of family life is highly recognized in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Marriage is a legally binding contract between a man and a woman, which establishes the lawful relationship between them as spouses, with a mutual commitment to live together according to the teachings of Islam. Allah says in the Qur'an, *"Oh, humankind, be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate, and from the two of them spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty to God in whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs. Verily, God is Watcher over you."*¹⁶⁶ It is important for the new Muslim man to know that if he is already married to a woman that belongs to the People of the Book, such as, Judaism or Christianity, then their marriage is still valid. However, if the woman belongs to a religion not designated as People of the Book, then their marriage can only be validated by her also becoming a Muslim. Whereas, for the female new Muslim who is already married to a non-Muslim man, her marriage can only be validated if her husband also accepts Islam as his faith, otherwise, the female Muslim is not allowed to stay married to a non-Muslim man, no matter if he is of the people of the Book. The reason for this is that Islam assigns the responsibility of both the moral wellbeing and the finances of the family unit, to the male and he is held accountable for the support and the maintenance of the female, their offspring and even other female relatives. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says in the Qur'an, *"Men are responsible for women because Allah has given the one more than the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). Virtuous women are therefore obedient, guarding in their (husbands') absence that which Allah has guarded."*¹⁶⁷

Moreover, a man must have a lawful source of income in order to support his family and, it is for this reason that Islam's inheritance law insists on men inheriting a larger share than women. However, it is important to remember the following Qur'anic verse in this context, *"Your wives are a garment for you and you are a garment for them"*¹⁶⁸ This indicates that the wife is her husband's companion, who is, together with him, responsible for the affairs of the household, the physical and

166. Q. 4:1

167. Q. 4:34

168. Q. 2:187

emotional well-being of its members, and the instruction of the children. The tone of marriage in Islam is, thus, one of mutual respect, kindness, love, companionship and harmonious interaction. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says in the Qur'an, *"And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect."*¹⁶⁹



At this juncture it is important to reiterate the fact that in Islam, a woman, whether married or single, is recognized as a person in her own right, not merely as an optional extra to her husband. She has the full right to work even after her marriage; she has full ownership of her property and the right to dispose of her property and earnings as she wishes. Furthermore, if she so desires, she has the right to retain her own maiden name, instead of taking that of her husband. If she wishes to, she is permitted to spend her own finances on her family; however, she is not obligated in any way to do so. On the other hand, family expenses and lifestyle should be regulated according to the husband's level of income. It is not right for a wife and the children to ask more from a man than he earns or can manage with ease, since; the husband is only responsible to provide for the food, the clothing and the housing of his family according to the extent of his income. It is for this reason that most schools of law have recommended that men and women should try to get married according to their social compatibility. Thus, it is better for a woman or a man to marry someone who has a similar financial status, similar social manners and customs, and similar level of intellect. In this manner, a family may be able to avoid the pitfalls that arise from disputes rooted in differences regarding social status, such as, the standard of living or the social cultures that divide the families of the husband and the wife. Of course, it is possible that mutual love can overcome all differences and prevent any resulting disputes and arguments, but this is not always the case. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), said the following about finding the appropriate spouse, *"A woman is married for four things: her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. Try to marry the one who is religious; may your hand be scented with goodness!"*¹⁷⁰ As can be deduced from this tradition, such teachings are also applicable to a woman who wants to marry a man.

169. Q. 30:121

170. Sahih al-Bukhari, Nikah, VI, 123.

The religion of Islam recognizes that men and women have different natures, strengths and weaknesses. Based upon this fact it assigns different, but complementary roles to men and women within society. For example, a woman is the mother and is therefore responsible for both the children and the household. However, it is recognized as good conduct for a husband and a wife to consult each other regarding family matters and assist one another in their complementary roles. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said, *“The best of you is the one who is best in his treatment of women.”*¹⁷¹ It should also be noted that male authority in the family does not give any man the right to use brute force, nor should it be considered that the woman’s role is equivalent to servitude. If both men and women pursue their traditional roles in the family in accordance with the principles of Islam, there will neither be an oppressor or an oppressed in the family. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), expressed the significance of women’s rights during his farewell sermon, *“O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regards to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah’s trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right, then to them belongs the right to be provided with kind-heartedness, their sustenance and attires. Do treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your companions and committed supporters. Moreover, it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never be unchaste.”*

A contemporary issue that is often debated a great deal these days is the allowance for men to marry up to four wives in Islam. However, it is important to note that the allowance for such a limited polygamy is neither a recommendation, an encouragement, nor is it a blanket permission. Rather the act of contracting marriage

with more than one woman is dependent upon the man being able to observe meticulous fairness amongst all his wives. Allah says in the Qur’an, *“... Marry of the women who seem good to you two or three or four. And if you fear that you cannot do justice...”*¹⁷² and, *“You will not be able to deal equally between wives however much you desire (to do so). But (if you have more than one wife) do not turn altogether away (from one), leaving her as in suspense”*¹⁷³ This means that the



171. Sahih al-Tirmidhi, Rada, 11. Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 15; Ibn Maja, Nikah, 50

172. Q. 4:3

173. Q. 4:129

husband is obligated to provide each of the wives with equal facilities and maintenance, spend an equal amount of time with each one and not make them feel as if he prefers one to the other. Due to the difficulty of such a task and the variety of cultures in the Muslim world, the majority of the Muslim men today are only married to one wife at a time. It is important to note that, Islam as a faith recognized the needs of women and created a system, whereby they did not need to live



alone and to carry all the economic and other burdens of life on their shoulders; they did not need to spend their lives without the love and the care of a husband or the blessings of bearing children. Moreover, certain unusual situations, such as, barrenness or chronic illness in a woman may make marrying more than one wife desirable. The permission for plural marriages has been given partly in order to provide a home and maintenance for every woman in the society, and partly in order to make provision for other exceptional situations.

This leads us to the issue of Muslim offspring resulting from marriage. It is important for parents to understand that any child that they have is a divine trust and not their property. This means that upon the birth of the child, the parents are obligated to raise him or her in the best manner possible and to teach them about Islam. It is *Sunnah* for the father to recite the *adhan* softly in the ear of the new-born child. Moreover, the birth of a child in Islam is commonly followed by the slaughter of an animal, which is shared out amongst family, friends and the poor. This act is also a *Sunnah*, whereby the family demonstrate their thankfulness to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. It is also important to note that a male child must be circumcised; this is part of the *Sunnah of Ibrahim*. It is the right of the child, male or female, to have a good name, because the meaning of the name influences the personality of the child. The name can be from any culture or language, but it is common practice for many Muslims to find their child's name from the Qur'an, or name them after the Prophet's family or his companions, or someone from Muslim history.

It is a well known fact in Islam that the mother is the first educator of a child, followed by his or her father. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), was asked who was most entitled to be treated with the highest respect, he said three times, "Your mother" and only after that did he say, "Your father."¹⁷⁴ It is the

174. Sahih al-Bukhari, *Adab*, 2; Muslim, *Birr*, 1, 2

responsibility of the parents to provide a loving environment for the children, an environment consisting not only of discipline, but also affection. It is reported that one day the Prophet was playing with his grandsons and kissing them. A Bedouin came up to him and remarked, “You (people) kiss the children! We do not kiss them”, the Prophet replied, *“I cannot put mercy in your heart after Allah has taken it away from it.”*¹⁷⁵ Islam teaches the same affinity, kindness and love between all close relations, especially, for parents when they become elderly. For new Muslims it is important to know that blood relatives, in particular, still have rights over them. Thus, a new Muslim should still show respect and love for their father, mother, siblings, and grandparents and so on, even if they are not Muslims. It is important to note that it is acceptable to partake in social events with non-Muslim family members, as long as, it does not contradict the teachings and principles of Islam. In cases of doubt, the new Muslim should always remember the following verse; *“Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for your Lord knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.”*¹⁷⁶

DIVORCE

Although divorce is permissible in Islam, the Prophet (peace and blessings be on him), said that of all the things which Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has permitted, divorce is the most disliked by Him. This in itself points to the grave undesirability of divorce except as a last resort, when all means of reconciliation between husband and wife have failed. Such means include the attempts of relatives and friends to mediate between the two spouses in order to help them resolve their differences. Furthermore, effective safeguards are also built into the divorce procedure, so that at any stage short of the final pronouncement, reconciliation between the two parties can still take place. It is also important to note that for a man to divorce a woman merely for his own convenience and pleasure, is considered repressive and a great sin.

According to Islamic Law there are three methods in which a marriage is dissolved. The first is ‘*talaq*’ by the husband, commonly translated as divorce. This consists of a single pronouncement of divorce made by the husband. After this pronouncement, the wife enters into a waiting period of approximately three months, during which time they may simply reunite as husband and wife. Such a pronouncement may be made a further two times again by the husband; reconciliation after

175. Sahih al-Bukhari, Adab, 22

176. Q. 16:125

the second pronouncement is possible, however, after the third pronouncement of *talaq*, reunification during the waiting period is no longer permissible and the couple must separate completely. The second form of divorce in Islam is known as '*khula*'. This is where the wife requests the husband to release her from the marriage in exchange for something that she offers, for example, she may offer to return the dower in exchange for ending the marriage. The third form of divorce is where the husband is not meeting the rights of the wife and therefore, she turns to the court to end the marriage.



Marriages in Islam are contracts and hence, there are legal provisions for terminating contracts when necessary. Every agreement can be superseded by another agreement. Obviously, divorce is not a desired goal or a light matter in Islam and in a flawless world, all married couples would live in bliss. However, there are times in which this option of divorce is the best for all parties concerned. If there was no way out of a failed marriage, the couple's life would be torture; this is why Islam allows divorce because in certain cases divorce is not only desirable, but also essential.¹⁷⁷

177. For further detail reading about family life in Islam please read Osman Nuri Topbaş, *A Peaceful Home: Paradise on Earth*, İstanbul: Erkam Publications, 2015.



THE MUSLIM CALENDAR

THE MUSLIM CALENDAR

Muslims have two major festivals in Islam. One marks the end of the month of fasting (*Eid al-Fitr*) and the other marks the Prophet Abraham's sacrifice (*Eid al-Adha*) at the end of the pilgrimage season. These festivals consist of certain acts of worship, which distinguish them from any other days in the calendar. These two special days are linked to two special periods; the first one to the month of Ramadan and the other one to the days of pilgrimage. The Muslims, who spend the month of Ramadan fasting, observing prayers and giving charity, celebrate their individual accomplishments with joy and happiness on the occasion of *Eid al-Fitr*. Whereas, *Eid al Adha* is celebrated at the end of the pilgrimage season, when the Muslims commemorate the memory of Abraham's sacrifice, and rejoice after the completion of the communal yearly pilgrimage. It was Allah's Messenger's tradition to take a bath and perform the major ablution on festival days, as he did so on Fridays.¹⁷⁸ Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), said, "*Ramadan is the day the people start fasting, the festival is the day that the people break their fast, and the festival of sacrifice is the day the people sacrifice.*"¹⁷⁹

In addition to these two festivals, Muslims also celebrate numerous other events, such as, the Friday Congregational Prayer, the Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*) during the month of Ramadan, the first day of the month of Muharram, which is the first day of the Islamic year and marks the date of the Prophet's migration (*Hijrah*) from Mecca to Medina; it constitutes the most important date for Islam because it signaled the actual beginning of the Muslim *ummah* as an independent unit. Other days of observance include, *Al-Isra wa al-Miraj*, which is celebrated

on the twenty seventh Day of Rajab, and marks the Prophet's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and the Heavenly sphere. *Mawlid al-Nabi* falls on the twelfth of Rabi al-Awwal, and it is the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. The day of Ashura on the tenth of Muharram is celebrated in memory of the exodus of the Prophet Moses from Egypt. All of these occasions are observed throughout the various Muslim cultures the world over, by enjoying a variety of sweet dishes and cele-



178. Ibn Hanbal, 4, 79.

179. Al-Tirmidhi, Sawm, 11.

brations. However, it is important to recognize that only the two major festivals of Islam i.e. the two Eids and *Jumu'ah* (Friday) have structured ritual prayers.

FRIDAY

The gathering of Muslims in one place and turning towards the same direction is in itself a festival, and so every Friday ritual prayer, which gathers all Muslims at the same place, has been effective in defining the term festival in Islam.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, for those who pray the *Jumu'ah* prayer, the Friday congregation is the weekly religious festival of the Muslim community. For this reason, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), disliked fasting on Friday, unless it was combined with Thursday or Saturday, or it occurred during the month of Ramadan.¹⁸¹ The first Friday ritual prayer in Islamic history was performed at the Bani Salim Mosque, when the Prophet Muhammad stopped on the way, while emigrating from Mecca to Medina.¹⁸² The *Jumu'ah* prayer is obligatory upon all adult Muslim men, who are religiously and legally responsible, and are present at their area of residence. However, if a person is on a journey, then the Friday prayer is not obligatory on him, nor is it obligatory for those who are either ill or elderly, and are unable to reach the mosque. Thus, when the *adhan* is called, it is required for all those adult men, who are legally responsible in Islam, to perform the Friday prayer. Allah says in the Qur'an, "*O you who believe, when [the adhan] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu'ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade [any work]. That is better for you, if you only knew.*"¹⁸³ Once Allah's Messenger addressed the congregation after the sermon of a Friday Prayer with the following words; "*O Society of Muslims! God has made this day a festival day (Eid) so perform major ablution (ghusl), and it will not harm whoever has perfume to wear some of it, and use a tooth-stick.*"¹⁸⁴ It was the Prophet's tradition to take a bath and perform major ablution on Fridays.¹⁸⁵ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), said, "*If anyone takes a bath*



180. Ibn Maja, Iqama, 83; al-Tirmidhi, Tafsir al-Qur'an, 5.

181. Sahih al-Bukhari, sawm 63; Sahih Muslim, siyam 145, 146

182. Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqat*, 3, 118.

183. Q. 62: 9

184. *Al-Muwatta'*, Tahara, 32.

185. Ibn Hanbal, 4, 79.

on Friday, puts on his best clothes, applies a touch of perfume if he has any, then goes to congregational prayer (in the mosque), and takes care not to step over people, then prays what Allah has prescribes for him, then keeps silent from the time the Imam comes out until he finishes his prayer, it will atone for his sins during the previous week.”¹⁸⁶ It is important for New Muslims to be aware of the rule of silence while the Imam is giving his sermon. It is not permissible to speak to others, even if is to tell them to be quiet. It is reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said; “If you say to your companion when the imam is giving his sermon on a Friday, ‘Be quiet and listen,’ you have engaged in idle talk.”¹⁸⁷ It is also important to remember that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), said; “The five (daily) ritual prayers and from one Friday prayer to the (next) Friday ritual prayer, and from Ramadan to Ramadan are expiations for the (sins) committed in between (their intervals) provided one shuns the major sins.”¹⁸⁸

THE RAMADAN FESTIVAL

When the Prophet came to Medina in 623 C.E, he encountered the people celebrating two days of the year with ceremonies and entertainment. Anas, (may Allah be pleased with him) who was a boy at that time, reported; “When the Messenger of Allah came to Medina, the people had two days on which they engaged in games, so he asked them; “*what is the significance of these two days?*” The people replied that these were the days that they had celebrated since the pre-Islamic period. The Messenger of Allah then said; “*Allah has substituted for them something better, the day of sacrifice and the day of the breaking of the fast.*”¹⁸⁹ *Eid al-Fitr* is the festival which marks the end of Ramadan; it takes place on the first day of the lunar month of Shawwal, and its celebration extends to a period of three days. On the morning of *Eid al-Fitr*, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), would not leave for the ritual Eid prayer until he had sweetened his mouth with a couple of dates.¹⁹⁰ For Muslims, this *Sunnah* of the Prophet became influential in the development of the custom of making sweets and desserts and offering them to guests on Eid. Since the festival days are celebrated by eating together and offering food to others, the Prophet prohibited fasting on these days.¹⁹¹ The occasion of *Eid-al-Fitr* is a time of great joy and thankfulness for Muslims because they have completed their obligation of fasting. The festival is characterized by a morning *salah* just after

186. Abu Dawud, Tahara, 127.

187. Al-Bukhari, 892; Muslim, 851

188. Sahih Muslim, al-Tahara, 16.

189. Abu Dawud, Salat, 239; Al-Nasai, 'Idayn, 1.

190. Ibn Maja, Siyam, 49.

191. Sahih al-Bukhari, Savm, 67; Sahih Muslim, Siyam, 142.

sunrise, good food, visiting and exchanging greetings, and, entertainment and joy. It is important to know that it is obligatory to pay a charity called, '*zakat al-Fitr*' before the time of the festival *salah*. *Zakat al-Fitr* is commonly a specified amount of grain or other foodstuff, or alternatively, a sum of money equivalent to the cost of one meal; which is given on behalf of every member of one's family, to the needy Muslims, either directly, or through some Islamic organization. The festival ritual prayer is performed in congregation. The two cycle prayer following the Imam is *Sunnah mu'akkadah* for those people who are required to perform the Friday prayer. It is known that the Prophet recited additional takbirs during the festival ritual prayers,¹⁹² recited chapter al-'Ala' in the first cycle and chapter al-Ghashiya in the second cycle,¹⁹³ and then finally delivered the festival sermon.¹⁹⁴ Normally, every able-bodied male attends these prayers, but the Prophet also urged that all the women should be present even if they are not able to pray due to their monthly indisposition. The first exchange of greetings and wishes for happy holidays, takes place just after the sermon ends.



THE FESTIVAL OF SACRIFICE

This is the greater of the two major festivals, the period of its celebration extends over four days. This festival marks the annual completion of the *hajj*. It falls on the tenth of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah, approximately two-and-a-half months after *Eid al-Fitr*, rotating clockwise around the year and occurring ten days earlier annually, as do all Islamic calendar dates. The Eid prayers are identical to the Eid al-Fitr prayer except that Muslims do not pay *zakat al-Fitr*. However, Muslims recite the *takbīr* after each obligatory unit of prayers, beginning from the day before the festival, at the dawn ritual prayer, all the way until the late afternoon ritual prayer on the fourth day of the festival. The festival of sacrifice is also known as, 'the days of *tashrīq*', because in Arabic the word *tashrīq* is used to refer to the sunrise, which is the time for the ritual festival prayer. Moreover, *tashrīq* also refers to the act of slaughtering an animal for sacrifice and drying its meat under the sun. A further meaning of *tashrīq* is 'light'. Just as the sun illuminates its surroundings, the

192. Al-Darimi, *Salat*, 220; Ibn Maja, *Iqama*, 156.

193. Sahih Muslim, *Jum'a*, 62; Abu Dawud, *Salat*, 234, 236.

194. Sahih al-Bukhari, *'Idayn*, 8; Muslim, *'Idayn*, 8.



joy of festival opens the hearts of people to each other, which is the reason for calling the sacrificial holiday as the days of *tashrīq*.¹⁹⁵ It is well known that during the sacrificial festival, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would not eat anything until he came back from the ritual festival prayer.¹⁹⁶ During this day, those who perform *hajj* complete their observance in Mina, with the slaughter of an animal (although this is not a requirement for all pilgrims) and with the termination of their state of *ihram*. Elsewhere, other

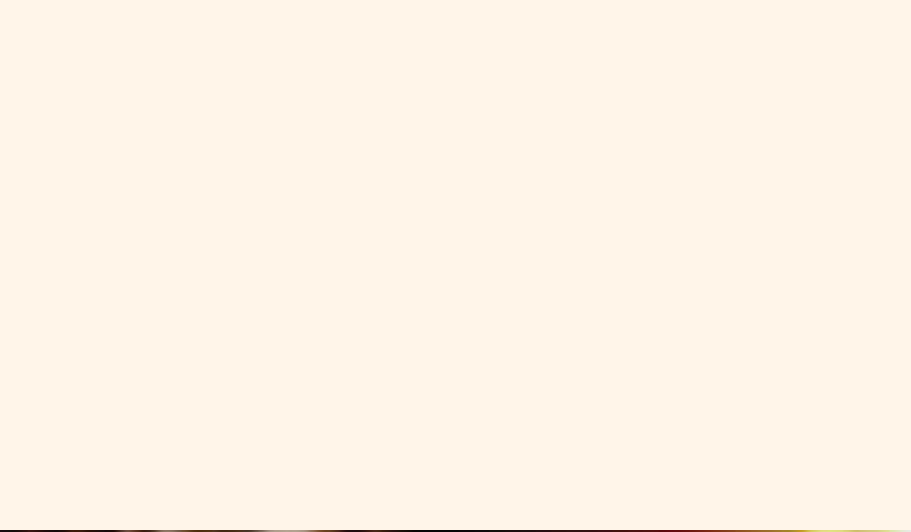
Muslims sacrifice animals (this is *Sunnah* rather than obligatory) in commemoration of Prophet Abraham's sacrifice of a sheep in the place of his son Ishmael, as commanded by Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. It is important to know that Allah says concerning sacrifice; "*It is neither their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah: it is your piety that reaches Him*"¹⁹⁷ On the day of *Eid al Adha*, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), first performed the festival prayer and then slaughtered an animal to offer his sacrifice. He is reported to have said, "*Whoever does so, he acted according to our Sunnah (traditions).*"¹⁹⁸ The meat of the sacrifice is divided into three equal portions—one for the use of the family, one to be given to neighbors and friends, and one to be given away to the poor, to be used as food; the portions which are distributed are given away as meat (not cooked or prepared). This sharing out of the meat constitutes the special charity of this festival, in the place of a monetary one. Apart from these differences, the other aspects of the observance of this festival are identical to those of *Eid al-Fitr*.

195. Ibn al-Athir, *Nihaya*, II, 464.

196. Ibn Maja, *Siyam*, 49; al-Darimi, *Salat*, 217.

197. Q. 22:37

198. Sahih al-Bukhari, 'Idayn, 3.



RELIGIOUS LIFE

RELIGIOUS LIFE

REPENTANCE (*TAWBA*) IN ISLAM

Repentance (*tawba*) generally means to face the Truth. It signifies the moment when the servant of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, realizes his or her wrongdoing and turns his or her heart towards Allah and sincerely repents. The repentance of the heart that is accompanied by regret and humility is as known as ‘*tawba*’, whereas, the utterance coming from the heart and tongue, to express regret and beg forgiveness from Allah is called, ‘*istighfâr*’. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says in the Qur’an; “...Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.”¹⁹⁹ It is important for the new Muslim to know and apply this wisdom. It is human to err and commit a sin due to weaknesses, but it follows that it is a divine blessing to be able to immediately regret, repent and beg for forgiveness by turning towards Allah. He, may He be glorified and exalted, says; “And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins, -and who can forgive sins except Allah?- and who do not persist in what they have done while they know.”²⁰⁰ Hence, one of the main conditions of repentance is not to persist in the wrongdoing, once *tawba* has taken place. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “Verily, when the servant commits a sin a black spot appears upon his heart. If he abandons the sin, seeks forgiveness, and repents, then his heart will be polished. If he returns to the sin, the blackness will be increased until it overcomes his heart. It is the covering that Allah has

mentioned: ‘No, but on their hearts is a covering because of what they have earned.’”²⁰¹

In other words, sincerity is a condition in repentance and so is the determination not to commit the sin again for which one is currently repenting to one’s Lord.

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, erases sins by the power of his name *al-‘Afuw*, forgives sins and accepts repentance by the power of his name *al-Ghafur* and *at-Taw-*



199. Q. 2: 222

200. Q. 3: 135

201. Sunan al-Tirmidhī 3334

wab, and covers faults by the power of his name *al-Sattar*. Despite the fact that whatever transpires in the lives of human beings, due to their own individual and collective actions, Allah still forgives²⁰² because He, may He be glorified and exalted, is all-Merciful and all-Forgiving.²⁰³ That is why Allah asks His sinful servants never to give up hope or to despair.²⁰⁴ He gave human beings the following glad tidings; “*My mercy prevails over My wrath.*”²⁰⁵



The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was a forgiving person and stressed upon the Muslims to exercise forgiveness towards one and all. He said that if a believer makes an error and asks for forgiveness then a pardon should be granted to him.²⁰⁶ This is because understanding one's own mistake and showing remorse is a virtue. It is reported that one of the companions came to the Prophet and asked: “*O Messenger of Allah! How many times should the servant be pardoned?*” The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was silent. Then he again asked: “*O Messenger of Allah! How many times should the servant be pardoned?*” The Prophet finally replied; “*Seventy times each day.*”²⁰⁷ Therefore, a new Muslim should know that the atonement for sins plays a significant role in the healthy development of one's religious life. This is why the Prophet (peace be up on him) said; “*Follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out.*”²⁰⁸ The things that keep a person away from Allah and are called ‘sin’ or ‘evil’ are usually the results of ignorance and the succumbing to temporary pleasures. The way to in which to alter such a behavior, is to abandon wrong paths, accept mistakes, repent and beg for the forgiveness of Allah, the Almighty, and seek shelter with Him from all evil. In other words, repentance refers to the efforts made in the pursuit of abandoning wrong choices, turning to Allah, and shaping life in accordance with His commands and prohibitions. Repentance is an important spiritual sustenance, which nourishes and enhances a Muslim's religious life. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, does not refuse those who come to Him, seek refuge in Him and repent and ask forgiveness sincerely.

202. Q. 42:30.

203. Q. 2:192.

204. Q. 39:53.

205. Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Tawhid, 22

206. Ibn Maja, al-Adab, 23

207. Sunan al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 31; Abu Dawud, al-Adab, 123-124.

208. Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Birr, 55

FOOD CODE

Rizq is a bounty from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and therefore all food and drink should be received with the attitude of gratitude. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), was very clear about the status of food and drink in life, when he said that the Muslims are those who do not eat unless they are hungry and when they eat, they do not fill themselves. Moreover, he taught that one third of the stomach is for food, one-third for liquids, and one-third for air. This means that food should be eaten moderately and with a healthy disposition. The new Muslim should know that all good acts, including eating and drinking, should commence with *bismillah ar-rahman ar-raheem* (in the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate). The *Sunnah* includes a number of other invocations, such as; *“Oh Allah, bless us in that which You have provided for us, and shield us from the fire”*. At the end of any meal, small or large, it is *Sunnah* to say; *“Praise be to God, who fed us and gave us drink, and made us Muslims.”* All of this is based upon the knowledge that it is Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, who provides for all His creatures, therefore, wasting food is a sin; as Muslims it is our duty to try to give any leftover food to the needy people or to animals, instead of wasting it by disposing of it in the garbage etcetera.

The Islamic concept of *halal* (permitted) and *haram* (forbidden) foods provides Muslims with some main dietary guidelines. In the Qur'an Allah states; *“[Allah] has only forbidden you carrion and blood and the flesh of swine and anything over which a name other than that of Allah has been invoked. But if one is forced [to eat forbidden foods] by necessity and without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful”*²⁰⁹ The principle is that whatever is not specifically or by analogy prohibited, is permissible; hence all foods and drinks are allowed except the following which are prohibited in the Qur'an. Allah says; *“Forbidden to you (as food) are carrion and blood and swine flesh, and that which has been dedicated to any other than God and the strangled, and the dead through beating, and the dead through falling from a height, and that which has been killed by (the goring of) horns, and that which has been devoured by wild beasts except that which you make lawful (by killing it while it is still alive), and that which has*



209. Q. 16:115

been immolated to idols..."²¹⁰; *"Therefore eat of that on which Allah's name has been mentioned if you are believers in His verses "*²¹¹; and, *"Do not eat anything over which the name of Allah has not been mentioned. To do so is abomination. The devils inspire their friends to dispute with you. If you obey them, you would then be idolaters."*²¹² All seafood is permissible according to the majority of the schools of law.²¹³ Whereas, anything that intoxicates or interferes with the clear functioning of the mind, in any quantity or form, i.e. alcohol and drugs, are clearly forbidden in Islam. By analogy, birds of prey, animals with claws and fangs, rodents and insects with the exception of locusts are also forbidden to consume in Islam. Nevertheless, for all of these forbidden foods there is an important maxim, which is that Muslims may eat any of these afore mentioned forbidden foods if they are facing starvation and their life is in danger. Furthermore, with the exception of the *haram* food items, most food is permissible, unless a forbidden substance has been processed with it, or if a particular food has been fermented to produce alcoholic content. In addition, Allah encourages Muslims in the Qur'an by saying; *"Eat of the things that Allah has provided for you, lawful and good: but fear Allah in whom you believe"*²¹⁴ In this verse of the Qur'an 'good' refers to healthy and beneficial, signifying the notion that Muslims should not only consume what is merely *halal* for them, but that their food should also be healthy and beneficial for their physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing.

DRESS CODE

The new Muslim should be aware that attire in Islam is very much related to the notions of cleanliness, hygiene and respect for the bodies that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, provided for human beings. It is recommended to all Muslims to emulate the Prophet with regards to their personal cleanliness. This includes frequent bathing, keeping the nails and hair trimmed, caring for one's hair, and making one's appearance clean and pleasant. Weekly baths before Friday prayers, bathing after sexual relations and menstrual periods, and washing the private parts with water after using the toilet are recognized Islamic requirements for personal hygiene. Therefore, on that basis, Muslims are required to pay attention to their attire making sure that their clothing is good and clean. As noted in an earlier chapter, the cleanliness and the ritual purification of the body is a prerequisite for the performance of the *salah*. In relation to the notion of respect for the human

210. Q. 5:4, and 2:173, 6:145, 16:115

211. Q. 6:118

212. Q. 6:121

213. Hanafi law does not allow such seafood as crabs, prawn and lobster.

214. Q. 2:172



body in Islam, Islam does have a dress code but it is important to know that there are no explicit rules in Islam with regards to wearing any specific cultural or national attire. Instead, the rules of attire in Islam are linked to the concepts of modesty and integrity. Allah states; *“He has made shelters for you in the mountains and He has made garments for you to protect you from the heat and garments to protect you from each other’s violence. In that way He perfects His blessing on you so that hopefully you may devote yourselves*

*to Him”*²¹⁵ and, *“Children of Adam, We have given you garments to cover your nakedness and as adornment for you; the garment of God-consciousness is the best of all garments– this is one of God’s signs, so that people may take heed.”*²¹⁶ Hence, human beings are informed that they wear their attire to cover their body, to adorn themselves, and to protect themselves against the elements, however, the most important aspect of attire is piety. In other words, the most important aspect of the dress code in Islam is *ḥayāʾ*, which carries the meaning of modesty, integrity, inhibition, diffidence and sensibility. The Prophet insisted that Muslims observe the principle of *ḥayāʾ* in their deeds and their words, he said; *“Every religion has a unique essence. Islam’s essence is ḥayāʾ.”*²¹⁷

Based upon this there is a standard of modesty in Islam for both men and women in relation to attire. For men, the minimum amount to be covered is between the navel and the knee.²¹⁸ Moreover, referring to gold and silk, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, *“These are forbidden for men among my followers but permissible for women.”*²¹⁹ This means that men are not allowed to wear any garment or item with either silk or gold, such as, a silky shirt or a gold watch. For women, who are in the presence of men not related to them, the dress code asks them to cover their whole body with the exception of their face and hands. In the Qur’an Allah says; *“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their head covering all over their bodies. That will be better; that they should be known (as free respectable women) so as not to be annoyed”*²²⁰ and, *“Say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze*

215. Q. 16:81

216. Q. 7:26.

217. Sunan Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 17.

218. According to one view in Maliki school of law, it can slightly be above the knee.

219. Sunan Ibn Maja: 3595; Sunan Abu Dawud: 4057

220. Q. 33:59

and protect their private parts (from sins); and they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what appear thereof...’’²²¹ This whole dress code for women is known as the ‘*hijab*’, meaning barrier, but popularly the term refers to the head scarf. Furthermore, both men and women are not allowed to wear clothes that are skin-tight or see-through. However, there is still more to the concept of dress code in the Muslim society. Allah says; “*And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their head covering over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to [those relatives who fall within bounds of close relationship explained in the Qur’an]...*’’²²² It is obvious from the above verse that men are required to take the lead in respecting women and not engaging in or approving any activity which objectifies or demeans women. The same code of behavior applies to women as well. Therefore, it is important to be aware that even though the dress code in Islam is essential, without the notion of *ḥayā*, it loses its meaning and purpose.

WHAT IS FORBIDDEN IN ISLAM?

At this point it is important to note that in Islamic law there is a maxim which states that everything is permissible except what the Law Giver, Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has clearly forbidden either in the Quran, or it is forbidden according to the Prophet’s *Sunnah*. Moreover, another maxim states that whatever leads to the prohibited is itself forbidden. Finally, there is a maxim, which states that forbidden items may be treated as lawful for an exact temporary period, and should be subject to extremely strict rules, in the case of very urgent and compelling necessities, such as, starvation.

The Shari’ah originates in the divine revelation and is an integral part of the lives of Muslims. Its rules are both legal and religious at the same time. According to the Shari’ah, there are five values given to all aspects of life, which are as follows; obligatory (*wajib*), recommended (*mandub*), permissible (*mubah*), reprehensible (*makruh*), and forbidden (*haram*). A lot of the daily life either falls within the recommended, i.e. the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) or *mubah*, i.e. that which is neutral to legal and religious edicts. The more popular concepts of permissible and prohibited (*halal* and *haram*), are also both religious and legal categories that involve duties toward God and fellow human beings. It is important for the new Muslim to recognize that by avoiding what is forbidden, he or she is setting a tone for a healthy and sound way of life.

221. Q. 24:31

222. Q. 24:30-31

It is not within the scope of this section to discuss all of the prohibited aspects that Islam categorizes, however, the author will attempt to list a few. Allah states in the Qur'an;

*"Say: 'Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents; kill not your children because of poverty - We provide sustenance for you and for them; come not near to shameful sins (or illegal sexual intercourse), whether committed openly or secretly, and kill not anyone whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause. This He has commanded you that you may understand. And come not near to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he (or she) attains the age of full strength; and give full measure and full weight with justice. We burden not any person, but that which he can bear. And whenever you give your word, say the truth even if a near relative is concerned, and fulfill the Covenant of Allah, This He commands you, so that you may remember.' Verily, this (way) is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not (other) paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious."*²²³

There are numerous matters that are clearly forbidden in the Qur'an and the Sunnah and are recognized as sins. Firstly, Muslims are forbidden explicitly to worship anyone or anything other than Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. This is followed by numerous prohibitions and I will cite a few here. In Islam killing without just cause, i.e. murder is forbidden and so is suicide. Abortion is forbidden with the only exception being when the mother's life is in lethally threatened. Moreover, taking or giving interest (usury), fraud, stealing, gambling, slandering, drinking alcohol, eating any pork product, and taking any drugs that cause intoxication, are all prohibited. Self-mutilation as part of religious rites or in response to grief is strictly forbidden, as well as, scarring or tattooing the body regardless of any cultural

custom. Sexual relationships outside marriage are totally prohibited; therefore, adultery and homosexuality, which are not only personal sins, but are very serious crimes against the foundations of society, are firmly prohibited. These are some of the aspects of life that have been explicitly and permanently forbidden in Islam. It is important for the new Muslim to appreciate that these laws are present in Islam due to Allah's Wisdom, to make the person a good servant of Allah; they are not intended as any form of hardship. Allah says in the Qur'an;



223. Q. 6:151-153

*“Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you”,*²²⁴ and, *“Allah does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you, and to complete His Favor on you that you may be thankful”*²²⁵

OPPRESSION AND TERRORISM HAS NO PLACE IN ISLAM

The unfortunate link made between Islam and terrorism in the contemporary world, is based upon a superficial interpretation of Islam by certain sections of both, the Muslim and non-Muslim society. Primarily, it is the misinterpretation of the term, *‘jihad’*, which is in fact composed of at least fourteen aspects, none of them referring to the concept of holy war. The term *jihad* refers to struggle, which includes the struggle against the self, the struggle in the field of education to better oneself, the struggle to build a civilized society and the struggle regarding combative combat. On the subject of the struggle against the self, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *“The Mujahid is the one who struggles against his self to obey Allah.”*²²⁶ In addition to the *Jihad* against the self, there is also a *Jihad* regarding society at large, which includes a struggle to disseminate Allah’s message, starting from the people close to oneself and, then to the entire society, in order to build a moral and good Muslim civilization. Finally, the combative combat *Jihad* is recognized as a communal obligation, whereby, the Muslims wage a defensive war in order to protect their religion and society. However, as stated earlier, *Jihad* was never limited to armed struggle only, but refers to attempting to live in accordance with the will of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted; it means disseminating His message through education, eliminating all the obstacles between Allah and human beings, enjoining good and forbidding evil.

Jihad is not an offensive fight to destroy others. On the contrary, it is a defensive struggle, aiming to protect and defend the rights of the Muslims. Importantly, it is about upholding what is just and establishing the rule of law. Establishing justice and fairness can even sometimes be realized by the means of the pen and through words, without the need for any other form of ruthless force. However, there are times when a believer cannot continue his or her struggle through their property, their hands or their words; but that does not mean that they can wage *Jihad* by taking up arms and blindly attacking the enemy. Indiscriminate individual acts of violence are by no means considered *Jihad*. Certain violent activities seen in the recent years, such as, suicide bombings and terrorist attacks, cannot be associated with *Jihad* nor do such atrocious acts qualify as *Jihad*. Such killings perpetrated by people in the name of religion are by no means justifiable; they do not befit the

224. Q. 2: 185

225. Q. 5:6

226. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Fada’il al-Jihad, 2.



cherished moral values and virtues of Islam. Such acts are horrible atrocities, and crimes against humanity. Whenever the Prophet set out to fight, he considered all options to establish peace, before he picked up arms for battle, he said; *“Do not wish for an encounter with the enemy, (but) when you (have to) encounter them exercise patience.”*²²⁷ With these words, he was clearly expressing that fighting was not something to be desired. The Prophet’s advice about keeping the peace reminds us of the following Qur’anic verses; *“If*

they incline towards peace, you [Prophet] must also incline towards it, and put your trust in Allah”,²²⁸ and, *“But as for those who seek refuge with people with whom you have a treaty, or who come over to you because their hearts shrink from fighting against you or against their own people, Allah could have given them power over you, and they would have fought you. So if they withdraw and do not fight you, and offer you peace, then Allah gives you no way against them.”*²²⁹ Keeping these commandments in mind, we should understand the parameters set down by Islam regarding the concept of *Jihad*.

In contemporary society, the declaration of a combative war is foremost, the duty of the legitimate authority of a Muslim nation state only. It is also important to note that this specific duty can never be delegated to a group(s), living in a nation state, who acts against the government by terrorizing and controlling innocent citizens. No individual Muslim or group, residing in a nation state, has the right, duty or the role to declare *Jihad*, nor are the *ulama* placed in such a position to issue a call for combative *Jihad*. It is reported that the Prophet sent the following message to his military leaders, who were setting forth in the way of *Jihad* to stop hostile advances and defend Muslim territories; *“Advance in the name of Allah, with Allah, on the pattern of the Messenger of Allah. That means do not kill the elderly, infants or children and women. Do not exceed the proper bounds. Gather your spoils and make peace ‘and do good. Lo! God loves those who do good.”*²³⁰ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), observed the laws of war even in the most upsetting conditions and times. He never approved of inhuman, savage and begrudging behaviors during war. It is clear that any form of terrorism, and terrorist acts, including any kind of suicide attacks that kill indiscriminately, are utterly unacceptable forms of combat in Islam.

227. Sahih Muslim, Jihad wa siyar, 19

228. Q. 8:61.

229. Q. 4:90.

230. Q. 2:195



SOME VIRTUES

SOME VIRTUES

TAQWA

All virtues in Islam commence from *taqwa*, which is to have consciousness of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, love Him and His Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and have fear of Allah. In the Qur'an, those who believe and perform good deeds are described as '*muttaqi*' (pious). The most precious people in the eyes of God are the *muttaqi*.²³¹ Allah is with those who are pious and with the people who do good deeds.²³² Allah says; "*Goodness (taqwa) does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who believe in God and the Last Day, in the angels, the Scripture, and the Prophets; who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travelers and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage; those who keep up the prayer and pay the prescribed alms; who keep pledges whenever they make them; who are steadfast in misfortune, adversity, and times of danger. These are the ones who are true, and it is they who are aware of God.*"²³³ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) emphasized that a believer needs to uphold *taqwa* in every condition, he said; "*Have taqwa of Allah wherever you are, and follow an evil deed with a good one to wipe it out, and treat the people with good manners.*"²³⁴ It is important for the new Muslim to understand that the respect and the obedience of God, based on fear only is not recognized in Islam, since the love of Allah is always prioritized over the fear of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. The understanding of the term, 'fear of Allah', which is often incorrectly translated as the only meaning of *taqwa*, should be recognized to mean, to shy away from sinning and violating God's commands, as well as, being genuinely perturbed about being shamed on the Day of Judgment. The rationale behind this principle is to guide Muslims to able to obey God out of their intense love for Him and the immense desire to earn His Pleasure. In other words, to have the wish to obey Him because they want to, and not only because they have to, out of fear of His Wrath and punishment. It is important to know that while delivering his message, the Prophet always approached people with love and affection, rather than, with a strict and daunting attitude.²³⁵

231. Q. 49:13

232. Q. 16:128.

233. Q. 2:177.

234. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Birr, 55.

235. Q. 3:159.

To achieve *taqwa* is the definite way to overcome all kinds of hardships in this world and the world to come.²³⁶ Regarding religious issues, a Muslim should look towards the ones who are better than him or her, and strive to do even better; and regarding worldly blessings, a Muslim should look to those who have less than him or her and be thankful to Allah. According to the Prophet, these are the characteristics of a “thankful and patient believer.” A pious person takes the following command to heart; *“Help one another to do*



what is right and good; do not help one another towards sin and hostility.”²³⁷ Being aware of one’s own weaknesses and sins, and asking for forgiveness from both people and Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, are qualities of a pious human being. It is reported in one hadith that one of the Companions of the Prophet, Hanzala, developed an apprehension concerning himself; he observed that while he was in company of the Prophet, he was positively influenced by the Prophet’s (peace and blessings be upon him), in such a way that he felt immediately the blessings of heaven and the fear of the torments of hell. However, when he returned home, and partook in his daily activities, he was unable to call to mind these important issues and feelings. Hanzala felt that his behavior was hypocritical and consulted the Prophet. The Prophet consoled him and said; *“If you were to abide in the state that you are in when you are with me, then the Angels would shake hands with you in your gatherings, and upon your bedding, and in your paths. However, O Hanzala! There is a time for this and a time for that.”*²³⁸

Here it is apt to inform the new Muslim that a misconception regarding religious life is to envision *taqwa* as, either an unattainable state, or to idealize it too much. It is not appropriate to consider that *taqwa* will make life more difficult for oneself, or to idealize the attainment of *taqwa* in such a way as to not consider the material and the spiritual capacity of oneself as a human being. The Prophet always asked his companions to do things in moderation and to not exceed their capacity. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *“Abstinence in the world is not, by prohibiting (oneself) the lawful nor by neglecting wealth. Instead abstinence in the world is that you do not hold more firmly to what is in your hand than to what is in the hand of God, and that you be more hopeful of the rewards*

236. Sunan Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 24.

237. Q. 5:2.

238. Sahih Muslim, al-Tawba, 12.



that come with an affliction that you may suffer if it remains with you."²³⁹ The Prophet did not live his life in seclusion, but at the same time, he did not lose himself in worldly affairs as well. In his Last Sermon, the Prophet proclaimed that the Arabs did not have any superiority over non-Arabs, non-Arabs over Arabs, white people over black people, and black people over white people, except in the matter of *taqwa*.²⁴⁰

One day, the Prophet met a group of his companions. They told him; *"We see you are very content today."* Upon this, the Prophet said; *"Yes, alhamdulillah."* When the companions began to speak about wealth, the Prophet said; *"There is nothing wrong for a pious person being rich, but for him, health is better than wealth, and spiritual contention is better than worldly blessings."*²⁴¹ When the Prophet was once asked the main reason for why people were admitted to Paradise, he replied; *"Taqwa and good character."*²⁴² Allah says in the Qur'an; *"You who believe, be mindful of Allah, as is His due, and make sure you devote yourselves to Him, to your dying moment. Hold fast to God's rope all together; do not split into factions. Remember Allah's favor to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace; you were about to fall into a pit of Fire and He saved you from it— in this way Allah makes His revelations clear to you so that you may be rightly guided."*²⁴³

HUMILITY

The word, 'dutiful humility' (*khushū*), means, 'quietly standing still with sobriety and submission'; it refers to being humble before Allah and, being respectful and loyal to Him with one's mind, body and spirit. In the Qur'an, the term is mentioned as one of the essential characteristics of a believer. It is used with the connotation of humility,²⁴⁴ respect,²⁴⁵ submission,²⁴⁶ dependence,²⁴⁷ and lowering

239. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Zuhd, 29.

240. Ibn Hanbal, 5, 411.

241. Ibn Hanbal, V, 372.

242. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Birr, 62; Sunan Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd, 29.

243. Q. 3:102-104.

244. Q. 33:35.

245. Q. 21:90.

246. Q. 3:199.

247. Q. 68:43.

the gaze.²⁴⁸ These are physical manifestations of one's deep belief and respect to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. Allah says; *"Is it not time for believers to humble their hearts to the remembrance of Allah and the Truth that has been revealed, and not to be like those who received the Scripture before them, whose time was extended but whose hearts hardened and many of whom were lawbreakers?"*²⁴⁹ Concerning this the Prophet said; *"God looks at people's hearts and deeds, not at their physical appearance and properties."*²⁵⁰ According to Ibn Abbas, when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), went out for a ritual rain prayer during the time of draught, he dressed humbly and modestly. He continued his supplication and chanted the *takbīr* with the greatest of humility.²⁵¹ A human being needs to be aware of the fact that he or she needs to display the greatest of humbleness before their Creator. The feeling of humility is the essence of a genuine prayer.²⁵²

The locus of *khushū'* is the heart. Once this state is born in the heart, it manifests itself through the entire being of the person; it shapes all of the character and behavior of the believer, such as, speaking, eating, walking, and clothing. However, even at the time of the Prophet it was known that sometimes people may pretend that they are humble in their deeds in order to gain recognition in the eyes of others. Abu al-Darda, the Companion of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with him) said; *"I take refuge from such sedition towards God."* When he was asked what false humility and modesty entailed, he replied; *"It is a state of being where the heart does not feel anything, but the body pretends that it is humble."*

The virtue of *khushū'* should not be limited to religious rituals only, but rather it must be present in every sphere of one's life. In order to sustain this mode of behavior, the Muslim needs to have the awareness that he or she is present before Allah at all times; he or she needs to make sure to implement *'ihsān'* (i.e. the awareness that God sees you all the time even if you do not see Him).²⁵³ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessing be upon him), supplicated to Allah by saying; *"O Allah, to You I have bowed, and in You I*



248. Q. 54:7.

249. Q. 57:16.

250. Sahih Muslim, al-Birr, 34.

251. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Jum'ā, 43

252. Q. 7:55.

253. Sahih Muslim, al-Iman, 1.

believe, and to You have I submitted. My hearing, my sight, my brain, my bones and my strength are humbled in front of You."²⁵⁴

PATIENCE

Patience is one the most essential virtues of a Muslim. Primarily, patience is one of the most crucial requirements for having genuine belief. It was one of the most important traits the early Muslims exhibited during the first thirteen years of Islam in Mecca. Due to their steadfast patience, many of the early Muslims were able to maintain their beliefs. Perhaps that is why, when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), was asked; *"what is faith?"* he replied; *"Patience and tolerance."* Abdullah b. Mas'ud said; *"Patience is half of the faith"* and Ali (may Allah be pleased him), likened patience to the head of a body and pointed to the fact, that just as a body cannot survive without a head, so faith will not advance without patience. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *"Worship is a light, charity is a proof (of one's faith) and patience is brightness."*²⁵⁵

Patience does not only refer to endurance against afflictions, but also to observing Allah's commandments, concerning His obligations and prohibitions. Performing worship that will help faith develop towards perfection depends on patience. For example, fasting is associated with patience, so much so that, the Prophet called the month of Ramadan; *"the month of patience."*²⁵⁶ Piety and gentleness, which are characteristics of a mature character stem from being patient and patience is truly what is able to control the self. Once, the Bedouin Aqra b. Habis, who had recently accepted Islam, decided to relieve himself, in one of the corners of the mosque where the flooring was sand based. The companions immediately intervened and scolded Aqra b. Habis. The Prophet, who always advised patience to his companions, asked them to leave Aqra alone. Then he himself called upon Aqra and explained to him his error by saying; *"This house was built to remember God's name, and to pray. It is wrong to relieve yourself here."*²⁵⁷ Aqra was so touched by the Prophet's polite and patient attitude that he said; *"May my mother and father be sacrificed for you. The Prophet neither cursed me nor scolded me."* The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him), asked Muslims to avoid anger as it defies patience. He advised the importance of anger management. Once someone asked the Prophet to give him some advice; the Prophet told him; *"Do not get angry!"* The man repeated his question three times, and the Prophet gave him

254. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Davat, 32.

255. Sahih Muslim, al-Tahara, 1.

256. Abu Dawud, al-Siyam, 54; Ibn Maja, al-Siyam, 43.

257. Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Wudu, 58.

the same answer all three times.²⁵⁸ It is very important to stay calm and patient, even if there are means to chastise the person one is angry with;²⁵⁹ the Qur'an gives glad tidings of paradise to those who are able to curb their anger.²⁶⁰ Managing anger in a difficult situation and circumstances in the Qur'anic vocabulary would mean; *"preventing evil in the best possible manner."*²⁶¹ Due to this the Prophet said; *"The strong man is not he who beats someone in wrestling, but he who controls himself when he is angry."*²⁶²



Patience is the way of the prophets who had strong wills and determination.²⁶³ Through patience, Ismael (peace be upon him) surrendered his will to his father who agreed to sacrifice him according to the command of Allah²⁶⁴; it was through 'beautiful patience' that Yaqub (peace be upon him), dealt with the loss of his son, Joseph,²⁶⁵ and it was through patience that Ayyub (peace be upon him), was cured from his long-lasting ailments.²⁶⁶ The patience of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was such that it brought endurance to the trials and tribulations in Mecca; and it was the root cause of building a devoted society in Medina. In the words of the Prophet; *"patience is the light that brightens the path of the Muslims"*.²⁶⁷ In this regard, one needs to take the principle of patience as a guide in serving Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, in observing His commandments and in taming the cravings of the ego. A Muslim should endure all calamities, face all tribulations, and overcome all challenges with patience. It is also important to note that Muslims are not only tested with difficulties but also with wealth and blessings. In the case of the latter, patience, requires maintaining the belief in Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and serving Him without being allured by the seemingly never ending material pleasures and blessings of the world. The following statement of 'Abd Allah b. 'Awf captures this notion perfectly; *"We were tested*

258. Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 76.

259. Abu Dawud, al-Adab, 3; Ibn Maja, al-Zuhd 18.

260. Q. 3: 133-134.

261. Q. 41: 34.

262. Sahih Muslim, al-Birr, 107.

263. Q. 46:35.

264. Q. 37:102.

265. Q. 12:18.

266. Q. 21:83-84; 38:41-44.

267. Sahih Muslim, al-Taharat, 1.

along with the Messenger of Allah by adversity, so we were patient, then we were tested after him with prosperity, but we were not patient."²⁶⁸

Being patient does not mean to be submissive in difficult situations. Real patience is to perform good deeds and to speak the truth, despite facing hard and trying circumstances. The advice of Luqman to his son as described in the Qur'an is truly an advice for us all; *"Keep up the prayer, my son; command what is right; forbid what is wrong; bear anything that happens to you steadfastly: these are things to aspire towards."*²⁶⁹

GOODNESS

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *"The best of you is the one, whose goodness is hoped for, and people are safe from his evil. And the worst of you is he whose goodness is not hoped for, and people are not safe from his evil."*²⁷⁰ The term 'goodness' is one of the richly textured words most frequently used the Qur'an and in the Prophetic traditions. It is mentioned a hundred and seventy-six times in the Qur'an with its different meanings. It is possible to categorize those meanings under such terms as, good, beautiful, precious and valuable. It also carries the meaning of revelation,²⁷¹ wisdom,²⁷² and beneficial.²⁷³

'Goodness' is one of the most prominent concepts mentioned in many hadiths. The Prophet often opened his statements with the following words; *"The best people among you....," "the best of the worships..."*, and, *"The best Muslim is..."*, while giving lessons to the Muslims on issues related to worship and morality. In one hadith on integrity and solidarity the Prophet said; *"The best thing to do in Islam is to feed others, and greet everyone."*²⁷⁴ At another time he (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *"The best of your worship is salah"*²⁷⁵ and yet in another hadith he said; *"Ḥayā' brings ḥayā'."*²⁷⁶ The Prophet equated the virtue of 'ḥayā' with goodness by saying; *"ḥayā' is pure goodness."*²⁷⁷ Through their intentions and deeds people acquire goodness, the Prophet described this as; *"Surely, goodness is filled treasures. Those treasures have keys; glad tidings to those, in whose*

268. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sifat al-Qiyama, 30.

269. Q. 31:17.

270. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Fitan, 76.

271. Q. 2:105; 16:30.

272. Q. 2:269.

273. Q. 6:17; 10:107; 17:11.

274. Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Iman, 6; al-Isti'zan, 9.

275. Sunan Ibn Maja, al-Tahara, 4.

276. Sahih Muslim, al-Iman, 60; Ibn Hanbal, IV, 427.

277. Sahih Muslim, al-Iman, 61.

hands Allah places the keys to good, and, woe unto those, in whose hands Allah places the keys to do evil.”²⁷⁸ Moreover, the Prophet said that goodness is related to how a Muslim positively responds to any incident or event, he said; *“How content is the believer! All of his deeds are good and blessed. This is the privilege of a believer. If a believer feels thankful upon the reception of a blessing, this is good for him. If he is thankful upon receiving infliction and hardship, this is good for him too.”*²⁷⁹ Aisha (may Allah be pleased



with her), relates that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), taught her the following prayer; *“O God, I ask You for all that is good, in this world and in the Hereafter, what I know and what I do not know. O God, I seek refuge with You from all evil, in this world and in the Hereafter, what I know and what I do not know. O God, I ask You for the good that Your slave and Prophet have asked You for, and I seek refuge with You from the evil from which Your slave and Prophet sought refuge. O God, I ask You for Paradise and for that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed, and I seek refuge in You from Hell and from that which brings one closer to it, in word and deed. And I ask You to make every decree that You decree concerning me good.”*²⁸⁰ The new Muslim should know that Muslims are asked to use their *ikhtiyār* (free will) towards acquiring goodness; it is interesting to note that, ‘*ikhtiyār*’ stems from the word, ‘*khayr*’ (goodness) and means to choose the good between a numbers of options.

GENEROSITY

The Companions used to say that the Prophet was more generous than the wind.²⁸¹ If he was asked to give something of what he had, the Prophet never hesitated to offer it,²⁸² and was known to never say ‘no’.²⁸³ He did not hesitate to share his food, clothes and knowledge. Generosity means to be able to share. It is the ability to share love, compassion, knowledge, and wealth. Allah states; *“They give food to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, though they love it themselves, saying,*

278. Sunan Ibn Maja, Sunnah, 19.

279. Sahih Muslim, al-Zuhd, 64.

280. Ibn Maja, al-Du‘ā, 4.

281. Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Bad’ al-Wahy, 1.

282. Ibn Hanbal, I, 326.

283. Sahih Muslim, al-Fadāil, 56.

*'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone: We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you. We fear the Day of our Lord—a woefully grim Day.' So Allah will save them from the woes of that Day, give them radiance and gladness.'*²⁸⁴ If a person spends their wealth in order to gain fame, honor, position and prestige, this does not count as generosity. Such expenditure can only cause harm to the one who spends it rather than bring him or her blessings. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), describes the state of affairs of those who spend without considering Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, as; *"...Then will be brought a man whom Allah had made abundantly rich and had granted every kind of wealth. He will be brought forward and God will make him recount His blessings and he will recount them and (admit having enjoyed them in his lifetime). Allah will (then) ask: What have you done (to requite these blessings)? He will say: I spent money on every cause, which You wished that it should be spent. Allah will say: You are lying. You did (so) that it might be said about (You): 'He is a generous fellow' and so it was said. Then God will pass orders and he will be dragged with his face downward and thrown into Hell."*²⁸⁵ A generous person should give charity for the sake of Allah alone and should not expect any repayment. Moreover, a Muslim should not shame the person to whom he or she provides aid, since, whenever the Prophet helped the needy he was very careful not to hurt their feelings or belittle them.²⁸⁶ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *"The similitude of a miserly man and the giver of charity is that of two persons with coats of mail over them; when the giver of charity intends to give charity, it expands over him (so much so) that the footprints are also obliterated. And when the miserly man intends to give charity, it contracts over him, and his hands are tied up to his collar bone, and every ring is fixed up to another."*²⁸⁷

Allah Almighty encourages generosity and praises it as a virtue, however, at the same time He discourages extravagance and wastefulness; He asks his human beings to adopt the middle path in all their actions and avoid being people of extremes. In the Qur'an he says; *"They are those who are neither wasteful nor niggardly when they spend, but keep to a just balance."*²⁸⁸ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) went as far as outlining a criteria for being generous by saying; *"Eat, drink, clothe yourselves, and give charity without being extravagant, and without showing off."*²⁸⁹ However, in the case of a dire need of society, it is permitted to donate more, for instance, the Prophet praised this attitude as a virtue, when

284. Q. 76:8-11.

285. Sahih Muslim, al-Imara, 152.

286. Sahih al-Bukhari, Fard al-Hums, 7.

287. Sahih Muslim, al-Zakat, 77.

288. Q. 25:67.

289. Al-Nasai, al-Zakat, 66.

Abu Bakr donated all of his wealth, and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) went onto donate half of his wealth.²⁹⁰ Generosity has no limit; it can be petite or vast, even showing sensitivity towards another person is a form of generosity.²⁹¹ In the same line of thought, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), warned the Muslims against the extreme forms of stinginess that is greediness, by supplicating; *“O God! I seek refuge with You from miserliness; and I seek refuge with You from cowardice; and seek refuge with You from being sent back to geriatric old age; and I seek refuge with You from the affliction of this world; and I seek refuge with You from the punishment of the grave.”*²⁹²



A miserly individual is a narcissistic person; always thinking of himself or herself first and searching for happiness in materialism and wealth. The Prophet said; *“Miserliness and faith cannot reside in one’s heart at the same time.”*²⁹³ A Muslim should never forget that all wealth belongs to Allah alone and He can give it to whomsoever He likes, and He can take it away from whomsoever He dislikes.²⁹⁴ The Prophet said; *“Generosity is close to God, close to Paradise, close to the people and far from the Fire. Stinginess is far from God, far from Paradise, far from the people and close to the Fire. The ignorant generous person is more beloved to God than the worshiping stingy person.”*²⁹⁵

TRUTHFULNESS

It is a religious, moral and worldly imperative for a human being to speak the truth, and to avoid lying. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *“Leave what makes you feel in doubt for what does not make you feel in doubt. The truth brings tranquility while falsehood sows doubt.”*²⁹⁶ In order to have this tranquility, one needs to be careful, and not be rash in saying everything that comes to mind. Otherwise, there may be the danger of combining the truth with lies. The Prophet warned us concerning this issue with the following statement; *“It is enough*

290. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Manaqib, 16.

291. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Zuhd, 17.

292. Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Da’awat, 37.

293. Al-Nasai, al-Jihad, 8.

294. Q. 3:26.

295. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, al-Birr, 40.

296. Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sifat al-Qiyama, 60.



falsehood for a man to relate everything he hears.”²⁹⁷ The Prophet also said; *“The signs of a hypocrite are three: Whenever he speaks, he tells a lie; and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays (proves to be dishonest).”*²⁹⁸ The Prophet also said that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, does not need the hunger or the thirst of a fasting person who does not stop lying²⁹⁹ and that the blessings from fasting for such people, are only hunger and thirst.³⁰⁰ Being honest and truthful is an

important principle of business life as well, and the Prophet said; *“If merchants are honest and open, their transaction will be blessed, but if they tell lies and conceal anything, the blessing of their transaction will be lost.”*³⁰¹

Although Islam prioritizes truthfulness in words and actions at all times, the Prophet stipulated the right to tell a lie only in three conditions: to make spouses in marriage glad, to eliminate sour feelings between two people and to win a war.³⁰² The Prophet lived a truthful life and asked the Muslims to be truthful in their words and actions. Truthfulness is the alignment of one’s intentions, words and deeds. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *“Telling the truth is a virtue and virtue leads to Paradise and the servant who endeavors to tell the truth is recorded as truthful, and lying is an obscenity and obscenity leads to the Hell-Fire, and the servant who endeavors to tell a lie is recorded as a liar.”*³⁰³

297. Sunan Abu Dawud, al-Adab, 80.

298. Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Adab, 69.

299. Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Sawm, 8.

300. Al-Darimi, al-Riqaq, 12.

301. Al-Nasai, al-Buyu’, 4;

302. Sunan al-Tirmidhi, al-Birr, 26.

303. Sahih Muslim, al-Birr, 105.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM

1. What are the differences between the Qur'anic verses and hadiths?

The Qur'anic verses are literally the words of Allah. The hadiths consists of the sayings, actions, and tacit approvals (*Sunnah*) of our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). It is important to note that the hadiths are an indispensable part of religion and cannot be separated from the Qur'an. In this respect, one cannot think about the Qur'an without the *Sunnah* just as one cannot think about the *Sunnah* without the Qur'an.

2. Do I have to practice circumcision?

Circumcision is a process by which the foreskin of a male private part is partially or fully removed. All Muslim male babies are circumcised. There is no such equivalent for females and any circumcision of females is prohibited in Islam. Any adult male who accepts Islam is not required to undergo circumcision but it is a *Sunnah* and strongly recommended.

3. Is Jesus the son of God?

Islam categorically rejects the notion that Jesus is the son of God. Jesus (peace be up on him) is recognized as one of the messengers of Allah.

4. Why do we need to take ablution before praying and why do we pray five times?

Cleanliness is an essential principle in Islam. Therefore, Muslims are asked to be clean and wear good clothes before they present themselves before Allah, to worship. The five times prayers during the day and night, keep clear for the Muslim, the perspective of who he or she is in relation to Allah. For indeed, the new Muslim should be aware that however faithful and conscientious an individual is, such reminders are essential in a day so as not to lose sight of one's relationship with Allah, his or her responsibilities and the ultimate aim of life. Moreover, the daily prayers accustom the person to gratitude, move the human being closer to his or her Lord, help the believer gain spiritual reward and create an avenue for redemption of minor sins. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) once

asked his Companions, “If there was a river by the door of anyone of your houses and he took a bath in it five times a day, would there remain any dirt?” When they answered, “No”, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) stated; “That is the example of the five daily prayers with which Allah blots out evil deeds.”³⁰⁴

5. What should I do to be a good Muslim?

Believe in the six articles of faith, practice the five pillars of Islam, avoid the prohibited in Islam, follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), and be virtuous in everyday life. Please read the book for further details.

6. Not all my family and friends are Muslims. How should I behave with them?

Islam teaches affinity, kindness and love between close relations and friends. Your first responsibility to them is to demonstrate to them in the best manner possible, the truth of Islam. However, it is their choice if they accept or reject it. There is no force in religion. Take part in their social gatherings as long as it does not contradict with the teachings of Islam. This means that if alcohol or anything prohibited is being consumed or spoken of, then you should politely take your leave. The best way to promote Islam and be a good Muslim is to be steadfast and virtuous.

7. Before I became a Muslim, I was married and I have children. Should I leave my spouse? If she or he does not want to be a Muslim, what should I do? What should I do about my children?

If you are already married to a spouse who has also become a Muslim, then your marriage is valid. There is no need to remarry according to Islam. If you are a male Muslim and your wife belongs to the People of the Book, such as Judaism or Christianity, then your marriage is still valid. However, if your wife belongs to a religion not designated as People of the Book, then your marriage can only be validated by her also becoming a Muslim. Whereas, if you are a female Muslim who is already married to a non-Muslim, no matter if he is or not of the people of the Book, your marriage can be only validated if he also accepts Islam as his faith, otherwise, you are not allowed to stay married to him. Concerning children of any such marriage, if they are not adults, then it is the duty and responsibility of the father to bring them up as Muslims. On the other hand, if they are adults then there is no responsibility except for inviting them to Islam in the best of manners.

304. Sahih al-Bukhari, Mawaqit, 6; Nasai, Salat, 7.

8. What is the purpose of Zakah?

Zakah is given primarily to purify the wealth of a person and to morally distance the person from miserliness and greed; turning an individual into a giving and generous person. Please read the *zakah* section of this book for further details.

9. Can I worship in my local language? Do I have to learn Arabic? Does God not understand my language?

All supplications can be performed in your local language at any time of the day, Allah is omniscient, you do not have to learn the Arabic language. However, for the five time prayers it is obligatory for Muslims to learn surah *Fatiha* and the Arabic words and phrases uttered during the ritual prayers. It does not take much time for an individual to learn and memorize such a short surah of seven verses. According to Abu Hanifa, until the individual is able to memorize these words, which should be in a highly limited time, the new Muslim is permitted to, for a limited short time only, to recite the surah in his or her own language. It is important to note that this is not an alternative, and the new Muslim is obliged to memorize the Arabic terminology as soon as possible. The reason for the *salah* being in the Arabic language is twofold; firstly, that is how the method of performing the *salah* was transmitted to Muslims through the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), and secondly, it enables the Muslim to join the congregational ritual prayers at any place in the world, hence, further reinforcing the concept of unity in Islam.

10. If I drink some wine, is it a problem?

Yes, because Allah has prohibited the consumption of alcohol in any amount. In the same manner, all intoxicants are forbidden. If one has drunk such an intoxicant then it is advisable to ask for forgiveness from Allah, He is oft forgiving and furthermore, make a sincere intention not to take any kind of intoxicant ever again.

11. I am now a Muslim. What do I have to do to repent for my previous sins?

When someone embraces Islam, Allah forgives all his or her previous sins and wrong deeds. The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said; *“If a person accepts Islam, such that his Islam is good, Allah will decree reward for every good deed that he did before, and every bad deed that he did before will be erased. Then after that will come the reckoning; each good deed will be rewarded*

ten times up to seven hundred times. And each bad deed will be recorded as it is, unless Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, forgives it.”³⁰⁵

12. What are the most severe sins in Islam?

The major sins in Islam are those that are prohibited by Allah in the Qur’an and by the Prophet in his sayings. However, it is important to remember that even a minor sin, if repeated continually, equates to a major sin. It is reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said to his companions; *“Avoid the seven destructive sins.”* They said; *“O Allah’s Messenger! And what are they?”* He replied; *“Committing shirk, sorcery, to take a life unjustly, interest (usury), to consume the wealth or property of an orphan, to flee on the day of the battle, and to slander the chaste, unaware, believing women.”* In addition to these, there are other major sins, such as, adultery, fornication, homosexuality; stealing, committing fraud, gambling and taking intoxicants. However, Muslims must always remember that Allah is the Most Merciful, and they should repent to Him

13. What should I do to leave my old bad habits?

Always keep in mind that Allah is Most Forgiving and Most Merciful. Focus on becoming virtuous, steadfast in worship and make supplications. Most of all, trust in Allah. Remember that any change takes time, and be moderate in your religion.

14. Can my daughter perform as an imam while we pray?

Women are only allowed to lead other women in prayer. If you are a male then your daughter cannot lead you in prayer.

15. Do my wife and daughter have to wear headscarves?

Only females that have reached puberty are obliged to wear a headscarf. Islam does have a dress code but it is important to know that there are no explicit rules in Islam about wearing any specific cultural or national attire. Please read the section on dress code for further details.

16. What is Jihad?

Please refer to the section entitled ‘Oppression and Terrorism has no Place in Islam’.

305. Sunan al-Nasa’i, Book 47, Hadith 14.

17. What is Shari'ah?

Shari'ah is a far broader concept than, 'law', as it is generally perceived in the English language, since it includes not only penal, state, inheritance, trade and family law, but also doctrines of beliefs, manners, ethics, rituals and worship; each of these aspects have an impact in this world as well in the next world. Thus, Shari'ah is seen as paramount for both this world and the hereafter. In trying to explain the legal aspect of Shari'ah we use the term fiqh, which literally means understanding, but refers to the jurisprudential aspect of the Shari'ah, such as, the rights and obligatory acts pertaining to purity, worship and ritual, family, inheritance, trade and penal laws.

**18. What is the hereafter and what should I do in order to get to Paradise?
What is the Day of Judgement?**

Please refer to the section entitled 'The Hereafter'.

19. If I have to work, can I pray at home on Friday?

No, the only exceptions for not praying the Friday prayer at the mosque for males are, that if they are travelling, ill or unable to reach the mosque due to environmental restraints.

FINAL WORDS FOR THE NEW MUSLIM

This book has attempted to present to the new Muslim, the basics of Islam in order for him or her to understand the foundations of their newfound faith and to live his or her life according to the teachings of Islam. Nevertheless, it is vital that the reader understands that what has been presented in the book is, but, a brief glimpse into a vast subject. In fact, the knowledge relating to Islam and its sciences is immense, as it is based upon the Muslim scholarly and intellectual history of fourteen hundred years. Muslim scholars collectively, represent this knowledge, since it is not possible for one scholar or a group of them to singlehandedly deal with such a vast amount of knowledge in one lifetime. Therefore, the maxims found in the Qur'an; *"And ask the people of knowledge when you do not know"*³⁰⁶ and, *"O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger; and all those in authority amongst you..."*³⁰⁷ refers to recognizing one's limits and asking for assistance concerning knowledge, or any other issue, whenever the need arises. The main focus of this book is therefore, to assist the new Muslim in recognizing the path of submission to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, which is perfectly summarized in the following Qur'anic verse; *"Say: 'Verily, my prayer and my worship, my life and my death, are for God, the Lord of the worlds. He has no associate. This I am commanded and I am the first of those who submit.'"*³⁰⁸

The new Muslim has entered into a wonderful new phase of his or her life. This is a journey of self-discovery, followed by the discovery of the sacred. Imam Ghazali once said that happiness in this world is based upon four sequential components; the knowledge of the self, the knowledge of God, the knowledge of this world as it really is and finally, the knowledge of the next world as it truly is. Thus, in any event and situation the Muslim must learn to trust Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, be virtuous, perform the prayers, recite the Quran and live a pious life. With the will of Allah, he or she will be able to receive the blessings of this life and the Hereafter. However, on this journey, there will be many hurdles and challenges. In Islam, this worldly life is recognized as a test and the new Muslim should know that the true character of person is only ever truly revealed when under pressure. Therefore, the new Muslim should always exercise virtuous behavior, such as tolerance, patience, steadfastness, *ḥayā'*, and *taqwa*. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the Muslim society is not a faultless society and by no means is

306. Q. 16:43

307. Q. 4:59

308. Q. 6:162-163

it perfect. Many times a new Muslim may have high expectations from born Muslims; he or she needs to remember that Muslims come in all shapes and hues and they are by no means flawless with impeccable characters. Furthermore, due to a variety of Muslim cultures and societies the world over, there is also a valid diversity. At certain times, new Muslims find it hard to navigate such differences, but it is important to recognize that Islam is not a narrow literalistic faith. As mentioned earlier, Allah says in the Qur'an; *"Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition, and argue with them in the best manner possible."*³⁰⁹ Thus, New Muslims if pressed should discuss topics related to the sacred or the mundane with a gentle and compassionate approach and speak with both sympathy and empathy, whether their audience is Muslim or not. Moreover, it is important to recognize the fact that any one person does not have all the answers. Another important issue is the relationship with non-Muslim relatives; it is best, if possible, to build a healthy relationship with relatives that are non-Muslims, however, any such relationship should be based on the ethics and the morality of Islam. In fact, showing kindness to people, Muslims and non-Muslims, based upon moral standards is the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). Finally, every Muslim, whether they are born Muslims or have embraced Islam, should make it a habit to continually turn towards Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and ask Him for guidance to be led to the Straight Path. This is because a Muslim should be humble enough to understand that guidance only comes from Allah and that it is possible that our own pride can lead us astray. It is in fact a blessing from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, that a Muslim is able to recite numerous times in his or her daily prayers to Allah; *"Guide us to the Straight Path."*³¹⁰

309. Q. 16:125

310. Q. 1:6

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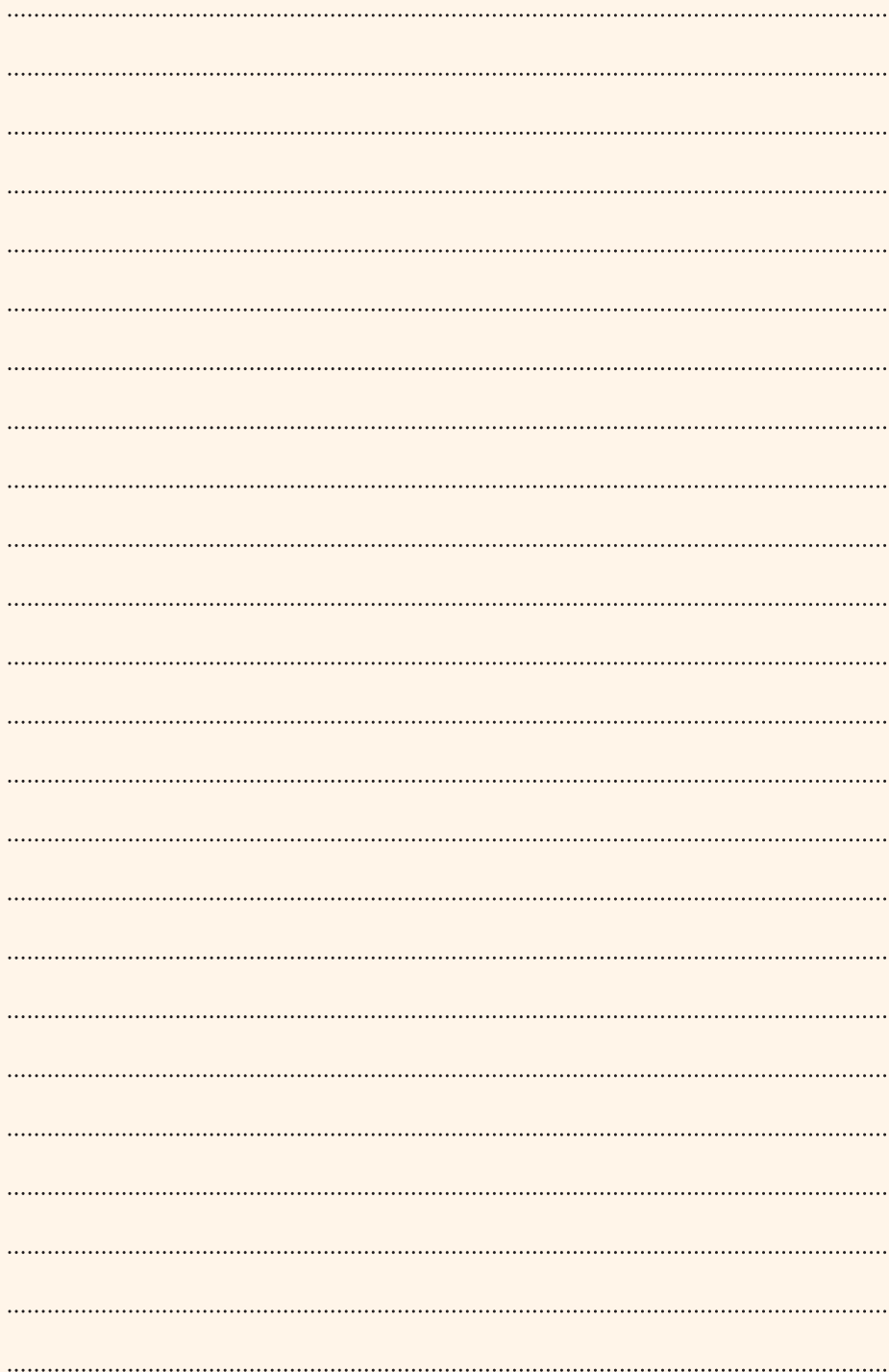
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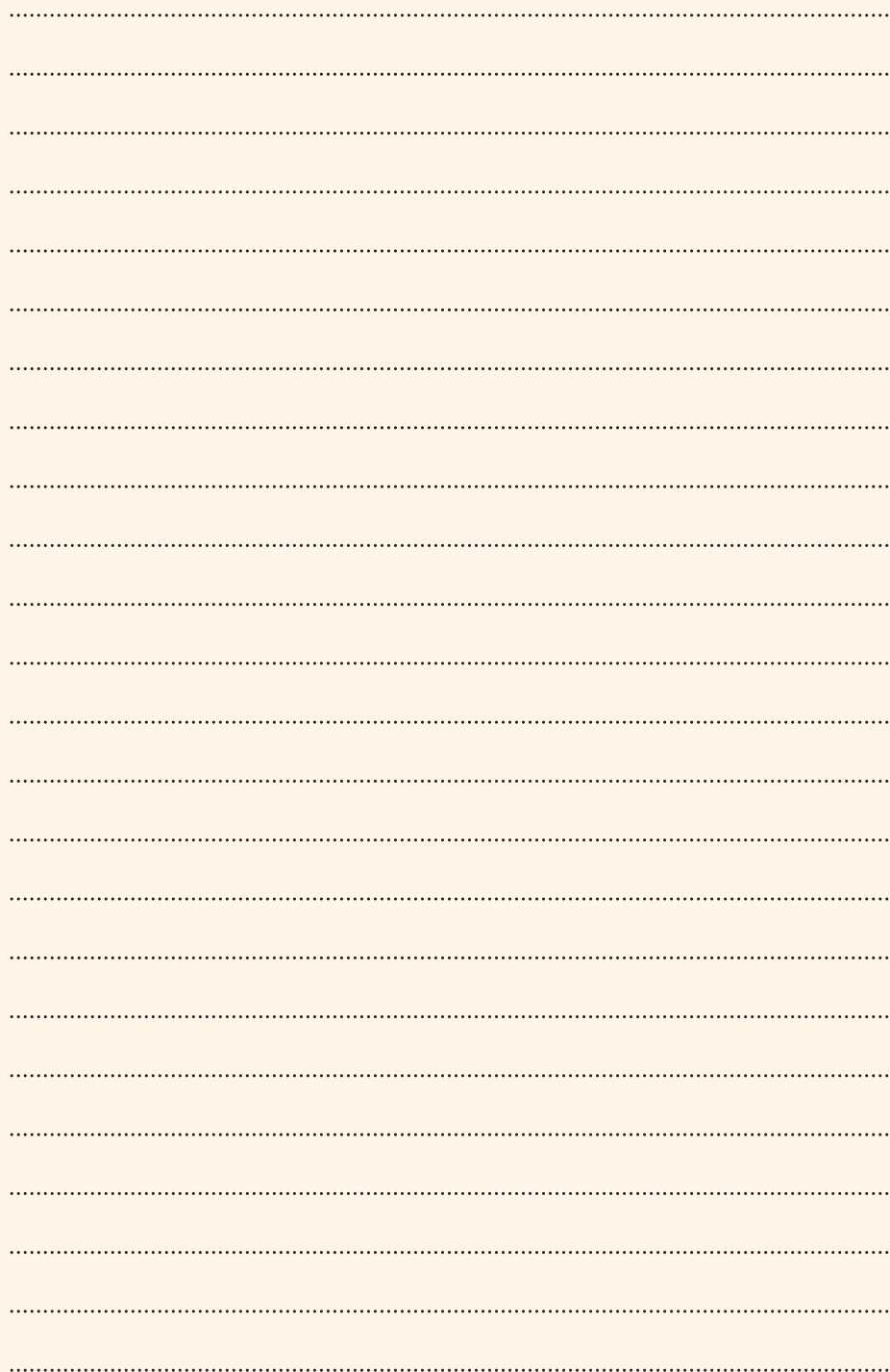
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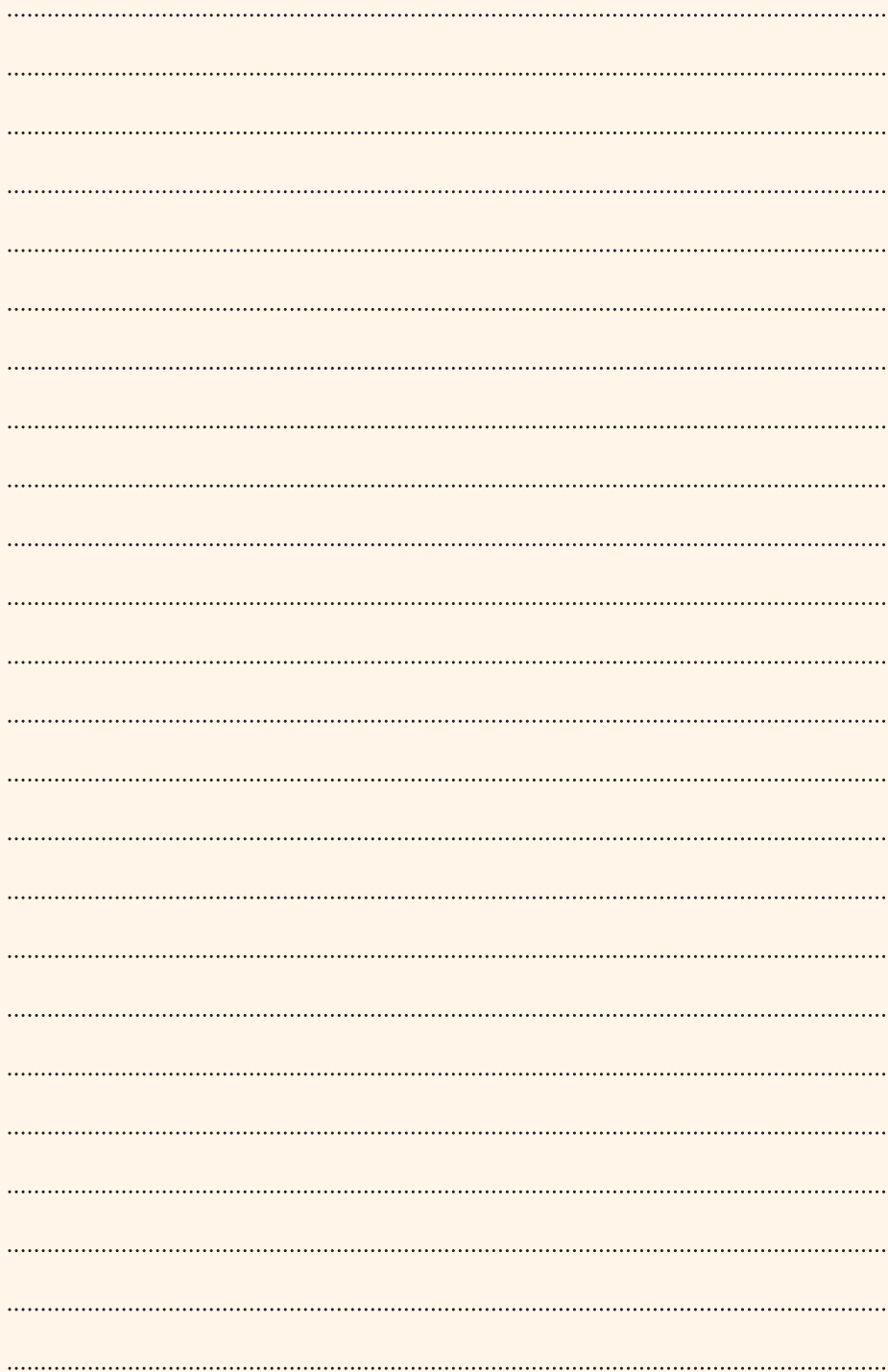
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