

FOREWORD

This work is prepared to explain what Islam is and what it means for human beings, including muslims and non-muslims. It seeks to show that Islam is the natural way for all creation. To uncover Islam is to return to one's natural disposition. To understand Islam is to understand true meaning and purpose of life. And the main source that shows us this true way properly is the Holy Qur'an.

Allah indicated the way to salvation and happiness both in this world and in the hereafter through his prophets. By following the commandments of Allah in this world, human beings attain the real happiness, as the main worldly goal of true religion is to make its followers morally good ones. Those who are morally good have a satisfactory inner life in their individual life on the one hand, and behave others morally and thus make them happy on the other. From this point two main characteristics of true religion come up: individual and social dimensions.

Islam, the essence of the religions proclaimed by Allah to prophets including Adam, restored the religion to its original purity by removing all distortions introduced by men in the pre-Muhammadan era. Furthermore, Islam has brought more perfect doctrines ensuring all mankind the felicities of this world and of the next. Islam has not come to force human beings to believe what their disposition denies. Contrary to that it emphasises that it provided man with reason to select the best and the most useful for him. Faith is the most important and vital matter for us. Then, how can it be possible to accept the most important part of our life without thinking and involuntarily?

All researchers acknowledged the fact that Islamic civilization ruled

the world during a certain area; those Muslims were the pioneers of civilization when the whole world lived the ages of darkness.

Islam had a civilization which influenced all branches of knowledge and ways of life. How was that practically put into effect? Islam advocated the call for civilization through learning. This is evident in the Holy Qur'an, in the Holy Prophet's sayings and Sunnah and this was, also, practically applied during the reign of the wise caliphs.

Almighty Allah orders the unlearned to ask those who have knowledge, be guided by their opinions and be their disciples: "Ask the followers of the reminder if you know not."

Islamic civilization was flourished by the great interest to all sciences and by the encouragement to learning and practising these sciences.

Muslims exerted their utmost efforts in the whole scope of civilization. Some of these efforts are well known in the fields of legislation, mathematics, astronomy, geography, chemistry, medicine, architecture, etc. The influence of Islamic Culture extended from the Atlantic to the River Sind in India and from the Mediterranean to the heartland of the African desert.

We can rightly put forward that civilization, with its good aspects, is the result of the Islamic teachings. Because Muslim scholars and scientists tried to do their best to use science for the good of humanity and to be useful for human beings. What is more, they combined knowledge with wisdom/hikmah to produce what is useful and to abstain from what is not for the mankind.

Therefore, we muslims have the honour of having this heritage and we, also, have responsibility of revitalizing a similar civilization the characteristics of which are love, peace and harmony among human beings.

Islam today has behind it some fourteen centuries of history. The main character of it throughout these centuries has been inherently a dynamic one, not static. Its dynamic structure created a splendid civilization in the past. Admittedly there has always been change. A lan-

guage, a mountain range, even the galaxies, we now know, have their life histories; everything we see has been in flux. Yet our age is distinctive on its scores. The pace of change is for us being not only quantitatively but qualitatively quickened. This change is really confusing, so human beings need a stable point to rely on. With its ethical and creedal principles the true religion, i.e. Islam gives humanity this stable point. Relying on these unchanged, everlasting ethical principles which do not change from one generation to other, the true believers have the responsibility of opening new horizons for humans.

CHAPTER I
BASIC ISLAMIC BELIEFS

The central concept in Islam, as reflected in the Shahadah, is Tawhîd, or Oneness of God. For Muslims, there is but One God who is Lord and Sovereign of Creation, and devotion, allegiance, and obedience must first of all be to Him. This view serves as the foundation from which the basic beliefs of Islam emanate, since God is recognized as the Source for all knowledge and understanding. More specifically, the beliefs of Muslims are delineated and described in the Qur'an and in the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad. The practice of Islam is based upon belief in One God (Allah), creations (humanly perceived and unperceived) of God, prophetic leadership, revealed guidance, and a Day of Judgement, the details of which are provided below.

The full meaning of Faith and Belief in Islam is not, by any means, something nominal or mere formality. Faith in Islam is a state of happiness acquired by virtue of positive action and constructive conceptions as well as dynamic and effective measures.

The Holy Qur'an and the traditions of Muhammad define these required measures and establish the standards which build up a meaningful Faith. Thus, the true believers are:

1) Those who believe in God, His angels, His Books as completed by the Qur'an, His messengers with Muhammad being the Last of them all, the Day of Final Judgement, the absolute knowledge and wisdom of God.

2) Those who trust God always and enjoy unshakable confidence in Him.

3) Those who spend in the way of God of what He has given them in the form of wealth, life, health, knowledge, experience, and so on.

4) Those who observe their daily prayers regularly as well as the weekly and annual congregations.

5) Those who pay their religious taxes (alms or Zakah) to the rightful beneficiaries (individual or institutions), the minimum of which is two and a half percent of the annual 'net' income, or of the total value of stocks if in business-after discounting all expenses.

6) Those who love God and His Messenger most, and love their fellow men sincerely for the sake of God alone.

7) Those who say the truth and engage in good talk, or else abstain.

It is clear that the very meaning of Faith makes Islam penetrate deeply and constructively into every aspect of life. According to Islam, true Faith has a decisive effect on the spiritual and material lot of man, and also on his personal and social behaviour.

FAITH (IMAN)

What is the declaration of Faith?

A Muslim declares his faith by reciting: "La-ilaha-illal-lah, Muhammadu'r-Rasulullah"

These Arabic words mean: "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." This declaration is called Kalimah at-Tawhîd. It summarizes whole of Islamic belief. The first part (La-ilaha-illal-lah) is about the ONENess of Allah (Tawhîd in Arabic), while the second part (Muhammad-ur-Rasulullah) concerns the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

We already know that we belong to Allah and He is our Master. So, in order to behave like the servants of our Creator we must practise Salah, Zakah, Savm and Hajj faithfully and we must shape our life around Shahadah. If we perform them regularly and correctly we come closer to Allah our Creator and Sustainer.

What are the basic beliefs of Iman (Faith)?

The Basic Beliefs of Iman are to believe in:

- 1) Allah
- 2) Angles of Allah
- 3) Books of Allah
- 4) Messengers of Allah
- 5) The day of Judgement
- 6) Life after death and supremacy of Divine Will (Al-Qadar).

These beliefs have been declared precisely in the faith in detail:

"I believe in Allah, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Last Day (the Day of Judgement) in the life after death and in the fact that everything good or bad operates under a law laid down by Allah the Almighty."

The person who confirms these principles by word of mouth and certifies them with his heart is considered as having entered the religion of Islam.

ALLAH

What does the term "Allah" mean?

The Arabic word Allah is a contraction of the words "al" and "ilah," and literally means "The God." Believers in Islam understand the word 'Allah' to be the proper name for the Creator as found in the Qur'an. The name Allah is analogous to Eloh, a Semitic term found in the divine scriptures revealed to Muhammad's predecessors Moses and Jesus (may peace be upon them all).

The use of the term Allah is not confined to believers in Islam alone -Arabic- speaking Christians and Jews also use Allah in reference to God, demonstrating thereby that followers of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism believe in a common monotheistic Creator.

How is God viewed in Islam?

The Qur'an, the divinely-revealed scripture of Islam, contains numerous verses describing the nature of God. The role of human beings as creations of God upon the earth and their relationship with God are also discussed extensively in the sacred text as is shown in the following verses:

"Say: He is God, the One, the Eternal, Absolute. He does not beget, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him." (Ihlas 112: 1-4)

"It is He who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when you knew nothing, and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affections that you may give thanks." (Nahl 16: 78)

"No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision. He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things." (An'am 6: 103)

Muslims believe that God has no partners or associates who share in His divinity or authority. Muslims also believe that God is transcendent and unlike His creations, and thus has no physical form. Nor is God believed to exist in (or be represented by) any material object. A number of divine attributes or "names," which serve to describe God, are found in the Qur'an. Some commonly known attributes include the Most Merciful, the Most Forgiving, the Most High, the Unique, and the Everlasting, among others.

In Islam, human beings, like other creations, are seen as completely unlike God, though they may aspire to exhibit various attributes manifested by God, such as justice or mercy. Furthermore, even while God is believed to be beyond traditional human perception, the Qur'an states:

"He is with you wherever you may be" (Hadid 57: 5).

For Muslims, God's Oneness heightens the awareness that ultimately all life is bound by Divine Law emanating from a singular source and that life has a meaning and purpose which revolves around the consciousness of God's presence.

Moreover, belief in a singular Creator compels conscientious Muslims to view all humanity as one extended family, and treat others with justice and equity. Respect for the environment and natural resources also follows from the Muslim view of God, of His unity.



Where is Allah?

We know by experience that we can not perceive every being. For example, in darkness we can not see far more than a hundred metres, but we do not say that there is nothing beyond this distance. Similarly we are intelligent beings, but we can not see our reasons. Likewise, as we can not see the God, we can not say there is no God. A believer is sure that Allah, knows and sees everything and nobody can escape

Allah's ever-watchful eye for a single moment. In fact, Allah is nearer to us than our own jugular-vein. So, a true Believer does not commit a sin either secretly or in the darkness of night, nor does he feels himself alone wherever he is. Because the believer has the firm conviction that Allah sees everything all the time and He (Allah) is everywhere. This can be seen in the following verses:

"Allah is He who created seven firmaments and of the Earth a similar number. Through the midst of them descends His command that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah comprehends all things in (His) knowledge." (Talaq 65 :12)

"It was We who created man and We know what dark sugges-

tions his soul, makes to him, for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular-vein." (Qaf 50: 16)

We understand from these verses that Allah has created everything on Earth and in the Heavens for the service and comfort of humans.

"Allah is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth the parable of His light is as if there were a Niche and within it a lamp: the lamp enclosed in glass: Glass as it were a brilliant star... Allah sets forth parables for men and Allah knows all things." (Nûr 24: 35)

God's being the Light means that He is everywhere and nothing can escape from His existence. The desire to see God like other objects is a primitive way.

Once, a Bedouin was asked what made an unsophisticated man like him believe in Allah.

Bedouin: "Do you see these marks in the sand?"

Man: "Yes."

Bedouin: "What do they tell you?"

Man: "A camel went by."

Bedouin: "Did you see the camel?"

Man: "No, but these footprints in the sand suggest that a camel made them."

Bedouin: "Do you see these mountains?"

Man: "Yes."

Bedouin: "They are indicative to me that Allah made them."

Imam Abu Hanifa was asked by an atheist: "What is the evidence pointing to the existence of Allah?" and he replied, "Forget it! At the moment, I am busy thinking about this ship. People tell me there is a big ship, it contains different goods on board. There is no one to steer it, no one maintaining it. Yet, this ship keeps going back and forth; it even traverses big waves on the oceans; it stops at the locations that it is supposed to stop at; it continues in the direction that it is supposed to head. This ship has no captain and no one planning its trips."

The atheist who posed the question interrupted and exclaimed, "What kind of strange and silly thought is this? How can any intelligent person think that some thing like this can occur?"

Abu Hanifa said, "I feel sorry about your state! You can not imagine one ship running without someone looking after its affairs; yet you think that for this whole world, which runs exactly and precisely, there is no one who looks after it, and no one owns it."

Who controls the Universe?

Allah is the Controller of the Universe. Because, the vast and majestic universe with its flawless system clearly indicates that there is One Creator and One Supreme Controller. As we look around in our environment, we see that every family has a head; every school has a principal; every city or town has a mayor. Moreover, we know beyond doubt that every product is the work of a certain producer, and that every beautiful art is the creation of some great artist. All this is obvious, yet it does not satisfy the hunger for knowledge and the curiosity of man about the great things in the world.

One often wonders at the beauties of nature with its scenic charms and marvels; the almost endless horizons in the sky and their far-reaching expansions; the ceaseless succession of day and night in the most orderly manner; the course of the sun, the moon, and the great stars; the world of animate and inanimate objects, the continuous process and evolution of man generation after generation. One often wonders because one would like to know the maker and maintainer of all these things with which we live and which we immensely enjoy.

Can we find an explanation of the great universe? Is there any convincing interpretation of the secret of existence? We realize that no city can prosperously exist without sound administration. We also realize that nothing comes into being on its own. In addition, we observe that the universe exists and functions in the most orderly manner, and that it has survived for hundreds of thousands of years.

When we think about the unique system of the world we find no conflict in it. The Sun, the Moon and the Galaxy obey the same Supreme Authority. Everything in the universe works in harmony and cooperation like various parts of the human body. The limbs of the human body seem to have different functions, but they all serve the same purpose. Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an:

"If there were in the Heavens and on Earth other Gods besides Allah there would be confusion in both." (Anbiya 21: 22)

Can we, then, say that all this is accidental and haphazard? Can we attribute the existence of man and the whole world to mere chance?

In the world, then, there must be a Great Force in action to keep everything in order. In the beautiful nature there must be a Great Artist who creates the most charming pieces of art and produces everything for a special purpose in life. This force is the strongest of all forces, and this Artist is the greatest of all artists. The true believers and deeply enlightened people recognize this Artist and call Him Allah or God. They call Him God because He is the Creator and the Chief Architect of the world, the Originator of life and the Provider of all things in existence. God signifies his creation and providence over universe in the following verses:

"And We have made, above you, seven tracts (paths of motion in the visible heavens) and we are never unmindful of (our) creation." (Mu'minûn 23: 17)

"It is Allah who sustains the Heavens and the Earth, lest they cease (to function) and if they should fail, there is none can sustain them thereafter: verily He is most forbearing and forgiving." (Fâtir 35: 41)

What does Tawhîd mean?

One word in Arabic for saying or affirming that "God is One" is the word Tawhîd. Tawhîd is the affirmation that there is only One Creator who deserves our praise and gratitude and whose guidance needs to be followed for our own good and benefit. Tawhîd has two main parts:

1) To believe in and affirm that there is only One Creator and Sustainer of the universe;

2) To affirm that only the One Creator deserves to be worshipped and obeyed.

The first duty of a conscious Muslim is to declare his faith that "there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is Allah's Messenger."

Tawhîd is clearly stated in the surah of Ihlas as follows:

"Say: He is God, the One, the Eternal, Absolute. He does not beget, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him." (Ihlas 112: 1-4)

Tawhîd, i.e. *monotheism* or unity of God has its counterpart in natural world as *monism*. That means that there is a unifying principle / telos or aim in nature. For example, to make it possible for a tree to grow; soil, water, sun, etc. come together and serve the one aim: to grow the tree. This unifying principle in nature is set by God, and this is reflection of tawhîd in nature.



"Do they not observe the birds above them spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except (Allah) most Gracious: Truly It is He that watches over all things." (Mulk 67: 19)

"There is not any Animal (that lives) on the Earth nor a Being that

flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communicates like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the End.” (An’am 6: 38)

Worshipping to the lifeless objects or to men is the primitive way of acting. So, a faithful can not adore but God.

God Exalted says in our Holy Book:

“Or have they taken for worship (other) Gods, besides Him? Say, bring your convincing proof...” (Anbiya 21: 22)

The objects which are worshipped by people are, essentially, parts of the universe and they are also created by a Supreme Creator. They can not create or sustain anything including themselves. So they can not deserve to be adored.

ANGELS

How do Muslims view Angels?

Angels are believed to be among God’s many creations, and belief in angels is symbolic of a Muslim’s belief in al-Ghayb, the world of the unseen (a world of which only God has knowledge). Angels are considered heavenly beings created by God to perform various duties. Angels by nature do not deviate from righteousness, as they do not possess an inherent free will as do human beings. They are special creatures of Allah, and they have been created from divine-light (Nûr) to perform specific functions.

Some angels are considered more prominent than others. Jibreel (Gabriel), for example, is known as the “Angel of Revelation,” since he communicated God’s revelations and scriptures to various human prophets, and also announced (much to her surprise and incredulity) to Mary, mother of Jesus, that she would bear the messiah awaited by the Children of Israel. Indeed, Jibreel is uniquely described in the Qur’an as a Spirit (Ruh) from God due to his role in bridging the divine and human spheres.

Muslims also believe that each human being is assigned two angels by God: one to keep track of good deeds, and the other to record bad

deeds or sins. Tradition holds that these “personal” angels will present the records of one’s deeds to each individual as he or she stands before God on the Day of Judgement.

As the angels are not material beings we can’t see them.

How do Angels differ from men?

They always obey Allah and can never disobey Him. They do not have free will but men, on the other hand, have been given free will and can choose either right or wrong. This is why men will have to face the test on the Day of Judgement. The angels never get tired, they do not need sleep and they are always ready to obey Allah.

What are the duties of the Angels?

We are informed by the Qur’an that angels do what Allah commands them. They are the innocent servants of Allah’s will. They can not act against the will of God. The angels provide strength to the worshippers, intercede and invoke to God on behalf of human beings. The specific duties of angels are as follow:

Jibreel: Brought the revelation from Allah to the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and to all other prophets.

Azrail: Also called “the Angel of Death” (Malak al-Mawt) is responsible for ending our life.

Israfil: Will blow the trumpet at the time of the End of the world and on the Day of Judgement.

Mikail (Michael): Puts the events of nature in order and maintains them.

Some angels are busy recording all that we do. They are called the Respected Recorders / Kiraman Katibin.

THE HOLY BOOKS or DIVINE SCRIPTURES

What is a “divinely revealed” scripture?

A divinely revealed scripture is a holy book or collection of writings believed to have divine, rather than human, origins. Muslims believe

God revealed scriptures to certain prophets to communicate His commandments and guidance to humanity. For Muslims, belief in the original scriptures revealed to Abraham (Scrolls), Moses and other Jewish prophets. (Torah, including the Ten Commandments), David (Psalms) and Jesus (Evangelium or original Gospel) is an essential component of faith. Indeed, one can not be considered a Muslim unless he believes in these previous scriptures in their original forms and their historical role in the spiritual development of humankind.

How were divine scriptures revealed?

The angel or heavenly Spirit Jibreel (Gabriel) is believed to have transmitted divine communication from God to human. As such, Jibreel figures prominently in the history of scriptural revelation, culminating with the holy book revealed to Muhammad. In 610 C.E., at the age of 40, while in spiritual retreat in the cave of Hira above Mecca, Muhammad was visited by Jibreel for the first time. During this encounter, Jibreel revealed the first of many divine verses that would eventually comprise the Qur'an. Muslims believe God revealed His holy scriptures to the prophets in their native language. For this reason, the Torah was revealed to Moses in Hebrew, while the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad in Arabic.

“We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and we will assuredly guard it (from corruption).”(Hijr 15: 9)

“Verily this Qur'an guides to that which is most right (or stable) and give the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward....” (Isra 17: 9)

What are the names of the four great-books?

The revealed books which are mentioned in the Qur'an are;

- a) **Torah** (Tawrah) of Moses (Musa)
- b) **Psalms** (Zabur) of David (Dawud)

- c) **Gospel** (Injil) of Jesus (Isa)
- d) **The Holy Qur'an** revealed to Muhammad

What is the QUR'AN?

The word Qur'an literally means “the reading” or “the recitation,” and refers to the divinely revealed scripture given to Muhammad. Since Muhammad is considered the last prophet of God, the Qur'an is believed to be the final revelation from God to humanity. The Qur'an is not only a holy scripture for Muslims throughout the world, but also the supreme classic of Arabic literature. In its 114 surahs or chapters, it comprises the whole revelation believed to have been revealed to the prophet Muhammad as a final expression of Allah to human beings.

The Qur'an is considered by Muslims to be the literal Speech of God given to Muhammad in the Arabic language. The chapters and verses of the Qur'an were revealed throughout Prophet Muhammad's mission, over a span of close to twenty-three years, from 610-632 C.E. Contrary to common misconception, Muhammad is not the author of the Qur'an. Rather, he is viewed as the chosen transmitter of the revelation and the ideal implementor of principles and commandments contained therein. The personal sayings or words of Muhammad are known as hadith, which are distinct from the divine origin of the content of the Qur'an.

As verses of the Qur'an were revealed to Muhammad and subsequently repeated by him to companions and other fellow Muslims, they were written down, recited and memorized. The Prophet also typically led the formal worship five times daily, during which he recited the revealed verses according to the procedure that he established. The verses were also recited out loud by designated Muslims in the early dawn hours and prior to the worship times and other important occasions. In short, the Qur'anic verses played an immediate and practical role in the spiritual lives of Muslims from the outset. Before he passed away, the Prophet arranged the 114 chapters into the sequence we find in the Qur'an. Scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, agree that the Qur'an has remained intact and unchanged to the present. The Qur'an as a scripture stands unique in this regard.

Each word of the Qur'an is a revealed word. It was sent down to Muhammad (pbuh) through the Angel Jibrail. In reciting the Holy Qur'an; piecemeal and completed over a period of twenty three years.

- When you hear God's name and His attributes, your heart should be filled with awe, gratitude, love and other appropriate feelings.
- When you read of the Day of Judgement, your heart should long for Paradise, and tremble at the very thought of Hell-fire.
- When you read of disobedient persons and nations who went astray and earned God's punishment, you should intensely dislike being as they were.
- When you read of the righteous whom God loves and rewards, you should be eager to be like them.
- When you read of the promises of good and honour in this world, of forgiveness and mercy, of His pleasure in the Hereafter, let your heart be filled with a desire to work for them and deserve them.
- When you read of those who are indifferent to the Qur'an, who turn away from it, who do not accept it, who do not live by it, you must fear lest you be one of them,
- And when you hear the summons to obey God and strive in His Way, you should be determined to respond and achieve the peace and happiness that come from responding.

How many chapters (surahs) are there in the Qur'an?

The Qur'an has 114 chapters / surahs. Chapters revealed when the prophet was living in Mecca are known Mekki and those revealed in Madinah are called Madani.

When were the first Verses of the Qur'an revealed?

The revelation of the Qur'an began in 610 (CE) at Hira. The first verses are;

- 1) Read and call in the name of your Lord who created.

- 2) Created man from a clot blood.
- 3) Read your Lord is the most Generous
- 4) Who taught by the pen
- 5) Taught man what he did not know. (Alaq 96: 1-5)

Which chapters of the Qur'an are the longest and shortest ones?

The longest chapter (surah) of the Qur'an is the Cow (Surah Al-Baqara) with 286 Verses.

The shortest chapter (surah) is the Abundance (Surah Al-Kawthar), which has three Verses.

What is the last verse of the Qur'an?

The last verse of the Qur'an which was revealed shortly before Prophet's (pbuh) death is:

"This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your way of life. (Maida 5: 3)

Who suggested the compilation of the Qur'an?

Each and every word of the Qur'an was recorded as soon as it was revealed by Allah to the Prophet through Angel Jibrail. The Prophet's secretary Zaid bin Thabit and others used to record them exactly as the Prophet told them.

He continued reading it back to the Prophet until 632 (CE). Shortly after the death of the Prophet in 632 (CE) Omar (May Allah be pleased with him) suggested to caliph Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Qur'an should be compiled in one volume. Up to then, the Qur'an was written down in pieces in order as they were revealed. A Committee was formed under Zaid bin Thabit to gather the scattered material of the Qur'an into one volume. And Abu Bakr ordered the compilation of the Qur'an.

Who were the most famous Huffaz?

Huffaz (plural form of hafiz) are those people who memorised the Qur'an and who can read it by their hearts. Some of the most famous Huffaz are;

- 1) Mu'az Ibn Jabal
- 2) Ubadah Ibn Samit
- 3) Abu Darda
- 4) Abu Eyyub
- 5) Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (may Allah be pleased with them).

What is the subject-matter of the Qur'an?

The Quran, the last revealed word of God, is the primary source of every Muslim's faith and practice. It deals with all the subjects which concern human beings: wisdom, doctrine, worship, transactions, law, etc., but its basic theme is the relationship between God and His creatures. Its teachings cover all areas of this life and the life after death. It contains principles, doctrines and directions for every sphere of human activity. It is a guide for all human beings, whether they are muslims or non-muslims. At the same time, it provides guidelines and detailed teachings for a just society and proper human conduct.

PROPHETS

What is the role of prophets in Islam?

Muslims believe that God has provided guidance to humanity over the ages through the institution of prophethood. In the Islamic context, prophets are not persons who prophesy (foretell the future); rather they are seen as righteous and truthful messengers selected by God to fulfill the most important mission-calling on people to worship God alone, and teaching them to live righteously, in accordance with God's commandments. Muslims believe prophets, and the scriptures given to some of them, are the only sure sources of God's guidance, and that God has chosen, throughout history, thousands of prophets from among all peoples of the earth, culminating with the last prophet, Muhammad.

"Say: We believe in Allah and that which is revealed to us, and in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, to Moses and Jesus and the other prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Allah we have surrendered ourselves." (Baqara 2: 136)

Thus, in Islam, the prophets are seen as spiritual brothers one to another. Some commonly known figures who are considered prophets in Islam include Noah, Jonah, Abraham, Ishmail, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, and Jesus. The chain of prophethood ended with Muhammad (570-632 C.E.), who lived 600 years after his predecessor Jesus.

Essentially, prophets give warnings as well as glad tidings to fellow human beings: warnings of punishment in this world and the next for unjust, immoral people who have turned away from God and His natural order, and glad tidings of reward in this world and the next for those who are conscious of God and follow His guidance as revealed to the prophets.

The Qur'an mentions twenty-five prophets by name, and tradition indicates that many thousands of prophets were chosen by God throughout human history between the time of Adam and that of Muhammad.

Why did Allah send prophets and messengers to every nation at different times?

Throughout the history, human have gone astray and begun torturing one another. They distorted the truth that would guide them. Eventually, both themselves and others have suffered much from this distortion. So, it was necessary to send prophets at different times to bring forgetful human beings back to the Right-Path (Sirât al-Mustakîm).

Why do we need guidance (Prophethood) from Allah?

Since the beginning of the Creation, Allah has sent His guidance for mankind through His selected people. These chosen people are called

prophets or messengers. We human beings are weak and frail. We have no knowledge of the future and the knowledge we have is limited. Also we are not perfect. This is the reason why Allah has blessed us with guidance through prophets and messengers.

DAY OF JUDGEMENT / AKHIRAH

A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and then again the dead will be resurrected to stand before God. That day will be the beginning of the life that will never end, and that day every person will be rewarded by God according to his or her good or evil deed. The explanation that the Quran gives about the necessity of life after death is what moral consciousness of man demands. Actually, if there is no life after death, the very belief in God becomes irrelevant or even if one believes in God, that would be an unjust and indifferent God: having once created man not concerned with his fate. Surely, God is just; He will punish the tyrants whose crimes are beyond count: having killed hundreds of innocent persons, created great corruptions in the society, enslaved numerous persons to serve their whims etc... Man having a very short span of life in this world, and this physical world too being not eternal, punishments or rewards equal to the evil or noble deeds of persons are not possible here. The Quran very emphatically states that the Day of Judgement will come and God will decide about the fate of each soul according to his or her record of deeds:

“The Unbelievers say, ‘Never to us will come the Hour’: Say, ‘Nay! but most surely, by my Lord, it will come upon you;—by Him Who knows the unseen,—from Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or on earth: nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but is in the Record Perspicuous: That He may reward those who believe and work deeds of righteousness: for such is Forgiveness and a Sustenance Most Generous.’ But those who strive against Our Signs, to frustrate them,—for such will be a Chastisement,— of painful wrath.” (Saba’ 34: 3-5)

Why is belief in Akhirah (The Judgement Day) very important?

In the interest of justice and to fulfill God’s divine plan, a day will come when the present world will be destroyed and the entire human race will be resurrected and assembled before God for individual judgement. One will either be rewarded with permanent bliss in Jannah (Paradise) or be punished with suffering in Jahannam (Hell). However, the infinite mercy of God is demonstrated in the Qur’anic statement that those who have even a mustard seed’s weight of belief in God will eventually be admitted into Heaven.

It is unreasonable to expect that the virtuous and the vicious in this world should be treated in the same manner by the Wise, Just and Merciful Creator. Therefore, it is reasonable and natural to believe in a life after death and a judgement where all will be called to account for their deeds. Man’s responsibility and accountability is thus a major theme of the Qur’an.

The Qur’an asserts that a future life is both desirable and possible. If there is no future life in which the virtuous are rewarded and the vicious punished, there would be no justice and there would be no purpose in creating men with a sense of responsibility and in sending prophets to remind them of their responsibilities.

Belief in Akhirah has a tremendous influence on the life of a Muslim. He knows that Allah is watching all his actions and he will have to account for them on the Day of Judgement.

The belief in life after death not only guarantees success in the Hereafter but also makes this world full of peace and happiness by making individuals most responsible and dutiful in their activities. Think of the people of Arabia; gambling, wine, tribal feuds, plundering and murdering were their main traits when they had no belief in life after death. But as soon as they accepted the belief in the One God and life after death they became the most disciplined nation of the world. They gave up their vices, helped each other in hours of need, and settled all their disputes on the basis of justice and equality. Similarly the denial of life after death has its consequences not only in the Hereafter but also

in this world. When a nation as a whole denies it, all kinds of evils and corruptions become rampant in that society and ultimately it is destroyed.

A Muslim believes that our life on this Earth is temporary and is meant to be a preparation for Akhirah which is never ending.

A Muslim knows that he will be rewarded in the life after death for all his good actions. He will live in Heaven, a place of eternal happiness and peace. Wrong-doers will be punished on the Day of Judgement and will be sent to Hell.

The Qur'an says:

“Does man think that we shall not assemble his bones? Yes, surely, yes, we are able to restore the very shape of his fingers. (Qiyamah 75: 34)

What is the Muslim view of the Afterlife?

Muslims believe that death is not the end of life, but rather a transitory state. After death, life continues in a different form. Various verses in the Qur'an describe Heaven as a place of blissful gardens and rivers, where all of one's desires may be fulfilled, while Hell is described as a place of fire and torment. Some scholars believe that such descriptions are in part allegorical, and serve to provide in human terms a symbol for the experience of the afterlife. Even so, no matter what form they take, physical or ethereal, reward and punishment are considered patently real by Muslims.

“O my devotees! No fear shall be on you that Day, nor shall you grieve. Tell those who believe in Our signs and surrender themselves: ‘Enter the Garden rejoicing, both you and your spouses!’ To them will be passed round dishes and goblets of gold; there they will have all that the souls could desire; all that the eyes could delight in; and you shall abide therein forever. Such will be the Garden of which you are made heirs for your good deeds in life.” (Zuhruf 43: 68-72)

“Those who reject Allah, for them will be the Fire of Hell; no term shall be determined for them, that they may die, nor shall its penalty be lightened for them; thus do We reward every ungrateful one.” (Fâtir 35: 36)

When the death comes, human spirit only tastes it as it leaves the body it has enlived till that time. So, material side of human that is his body dies but the essential part, that is his spirit, only tastes the death, it never dies. The Holy Qur'an says:

“Every soul will *taste* the death.” (Ankabut 29: 57)

How is the Hereafter possible?

While some people may believe in a Supreme God, they can not conceive that their dead and decayed bodies will be resurrected and that they will be called to account for their actions on earth. Their typical questions is this:

“Who shall bring back the bones to life after they have decomposed and become dust?” (Ya-Sin 36: 78)

To this question which comes from a dubious mind the Holy Qur'an replies:

“O mankind! If you are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, (remember that) verily, We have created (every one of) you out of dust, then out of a drop of sperm, then out of a germ-cell, then out of an embryonic lump complete (in itself) and yet incomplete, so that We might make (your origin) clear unto you. And whatever We will (to be born) We cause to rest in the (mother's) wombs for a term set (by Us), and then We bring you forth as infants and (allow you to live) so that (some of) you might attain to maturity; for among you are such as are caused to die earlier, just as most of you are reduced in old age to a most abject state, ceasing to know anything of what he once knew so well. And (if, o mankind, you are still in doubt as to Resurrection, consider this:) you can see the earth dry and lifeless-and (suddenly) when We

send down waters on it, it stirs and swells and puts forth every kind of lovely plant! All this happens because God alone is the Ultimate Truth, and because He alone brings the dead to life, and because He has the power to will anything and because the Hour of Judgement is bound to come, beyond any doubt, and because God will indeed resurrect all who are in the graves.” (Hajj 22: 5-7. Also see: Ya-Sin 36: 77-83)

How is “salvation” viewed by Muslims?

For Muslims, following the straight path laid down by the prophets and exemplified by the last Prophet, Muhammad, whose message has been preserved since its revelation, is the means of safety and salvation. According to Muslim belief, a person who consciously rejects the prophets and their message is rejecting God, and thereby earns His wrath. Those who have not consciously rejected any prophet will be judged according to their belief in God and their good deeds. Ultimately, the Creator is the sole judge, and Muslims believe that no human being can judge another in spiritual terms. A hadith states “A person may appear to be working the deeds of the people of Paradise, while he is among the people of the Fire. And a person may appear to be working the deeds of the people of the Fire, while he is among the people of Paradise.”

For Muslims, belief in accountability to God and responsibility for one’s own deeds gives one a sense of purpose, and every moment and event in life has religious purport. Thus, awareness of God’s presence serves as a deterrent against crime, corruption, immorality and injustice as well as a means of acknowledging the role of God in one’s life.

CHAPTER II BASIC PILLARS of ISLAM

What is Islam?

The term Islam derives from the three-letter Arabic root s-l-m, which generates words with interrelated meanings, including “surrender”, “submission”, “commitment” and “peace.” Commonly, Islam refers to the monotheistic religion revealed to Muhammad b. (son of) Abdullah in 610 CE. The name Islam was instituted by the Qur’an, the sacred scripture revealed to Muhammad. For believers, Islam is not a new religion. Rather, it represents the last reiteration of the primordial message of God’s Oneness, a theme found in earlier monotheistic religious traditions. And in this meaning Islam is the religion of all the Prophets with which God sent them for the guidance of His servants.

Though Islam can be described as a religion, it is viewed by its adherents in much broader terms. Beyond belief in specific doctrines and performance of important ritual acts, Islam is practiced as a complete and natural way of life, designed to bring God into the center of one’s consciousness, and thus one’s life. Essentially, by definition Islam is a worldview focused on belief in the One God and commitment to His commandments.

Islam is the way of Universal Peace and Harmony. If we look around, we see that everything including the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, the high hills and the mighty oceans are obeying a law (the law of Allah) we find no disorder or chaos in them. Have we ever noticed any violation of the law of Allah by these objects of nature? Of course not. Then, why? Simply, because they are made to obey Allah. They have no choice but to obey. Allah has given us the knowledge and will to choose between right and wrong. He has also sent messengers and books for our guidance.

Therefore we can summarize Islam as;

- a) **Islam** is an Arabic word which means submission and obedience.
 - b) **Islam** is a complete way of life. It is the guidance provided by Allah, the Creator of the universe for all mankind.
 - c) **Islam** is the way of universal peace and harmony.
 - d) **Islam** is the message of all the prophets and messengers from Adam (peace be upon him) to Muhammad (pbuh). They asked people to obey Allah and none other. This message sent through prophets was completed at the time of Muhammad (pbuh) who was the last of the chain of prophethood.
- The prophet Muhammad (pbuh) transmitted Islam from Allah to Human-Being by Qur'an.
- e) **Islam** is the Primordial Religion that based on Divine Unity.
 - f) **Islam** is the Universal Religion of brotherhood and solidarity and the Religion of an ideal Social Order.
 - g) **Islam** is way to perfection for man from past to future. It shows us the best way to conduct our private, social, political, economic, moral and spiritual affairs of life.

Why does Allah not force us to obey Him?

He does not force us to obey Him, because Allah has given us, the knowledge and will to obey or disobey Him.

Why is this so?

It is because He wants to test us. After this test there will be a day of reward and punishment. This is the Day of Judgement. Those of who have passed the test will be rewarded with permanent happiness and peace in Paradise and those who have failed will suffer a terrible punishment in Hell. We can get this reward and escape punishment by obeying and worshipping Allah.

We already know that there is peace and harmony among other objects of nature. Because those things never disobey Allah. So if we follow the guidance given to us through prophets and messengers, we are sure to have peace in the world we live in.

What is the meaning of Ibadah?

The Qur'anic word for worship is *Ibadah*. Everything we do comes under Ibadah, if we do them for Allah's sake. Our purpose in life is to please Allah through Ibadah. Ibadah is the way to reach success and happiness in the life after death.

Worship means total obedience to Allah's commands. However, ibadah is not confined to these known deeds. Every good and useful thing has to be considered ibadah if it has any use for the muslim individuals and muslim community.

Every action performed in obedience to God's guidance or in order to please Him is considered an act of ibadah (worship) in Islam. Thus, helping someone with their homework, greeting a stranger, or even hugging one's spouse are at the same time acts of worship which earn spiritual reward.

However, it is the specific acts of worship commonly termed the "Five Pillars of Islam" that provide the framework for the Muslim's spiritual life. The observance of these duties is regulated by individual conscience, and consequently, in real life, a spectrum of practice exists among Muslims.

The regular performance of acts of worship, such as salah (formal worship) and sawm (fasting), is essential for acknowledging God's authority in one's life and for spiritual growth. While these acts involve specific practices and statements, Islam does not teach blind, ritualistic imitation. Muslims believe that God does not want from His servants absent-minded movement of the tongue and body, rather He wants attention of the heart and sincere actions. Consequently, the intention that one has before fulfilling a particular obligation, counts a great deal. Indeed, a hadith states that "Actions are judged according to their intentions."

Interestingly, the Arabic word ibadah means "worship" as well as "service." Thus, to worship God means not only to love and exalt Him but also to serve Him by living in accord with His guidance in every aspect of life, to enjoin goodness among people and forbid wrong-doing and oppression, to practice charity and justice, and to serve Him by serving humanity.

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward East or

West; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels and the Scripture and the Messengers; to spend of your wealth, out of love for him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, and for those who ask, and for freeing slaves; to observe prayer and give charity; to fulfill the contracts that you have made, to be firm and patient in pain and in adversity, and time of stress: such are those who are sincere. Such are the God-conscious." (Baqara 2: 177)

What is the meaning of Ordering Good (Ma'ruf) and Forbidding Evil (Munkar)?

All Human-Beings by their very nature like good things and dislike bad ones. So we can say that human nature likes the right and dislikes the wrong. Right is Ma'ruf and wrong is Munkar in the language of the Qur'an.

The human being was created with an inbuilt moral sense which allows him to recognize what is true and good from what is false and evil. "Good" may be defined as whatever pleases God and therefore beneficial to man. "Evil" may be defined as whatever incurs the anger of God and is therefore harmful to man. Although God created mankind in a naturally good state, He also created him with the capacity or power to do both good and evil. He gave him the freedom to choose between doing good and doing evil. Evil comes from the intentions and actions of man. Evil does not come from God and God is not responsible for evil.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

"And made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised. But he fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him something of his spirit. And he gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding) little thanks do you give." (Sajdah 32: 8-9)

"Now let man but think from what he is created. He is created from a drop emitted proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs. Surely He is able to bring him back (to life)." (At-Tariq 86: 8)

"Those whom Allah (in His plan) wills to guide, He opens their

breast to Islam. Those whom He wills to leave straying He makes their breast close...." (An'am 6: 125)

"Their intention is to extinguish Allah's light (by blowing) with their mouths but Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light even though the unbelievers may detest (it)." (Saff 61: 8)

WHAT ARE THE FIVE BASIC ARTICLES OF ISLAM?

Islam has five basic-duties which Muslims must perform. They are known as the five Pillars of Islam (Arkân al-Islam). These pillars are mentioned in the following Hadith (a saying of Prophet Muhammad):

"Islam is based on five things; declaring that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performance of Salah, payment of Zakah, Hajj (Pilgrimage), Savm in the month of Ramadan."

The Five Pillars as mentioned in the Hadith are ;

- a) Shahadah: (Declaration of faith)
- b) Salah : (Five compulsory daily prayers)
- c) Zakah : (Welfare-contribution)
- d) Hajj : (Pilgrimage to Mecca)
- e) Sawm : (Fasting during Ramadan)

What is the meaning of Testimony / Kalimah Shahadah?

The Shahadah represents the first pillar of Islam, upon which everything else is based. The shahadah is a two-fold declaration or statement; it is a denial of any thing's worthiness for worship save God, and an affirmation of Muhammad's prophethood (and thereby the prophethood of all previous prophets, since Muhammad is considered the last). The shahadah states "*I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah (God), and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.*"

Making the declaration in sincerity formally brings a person into the fold of Islam. Other than repeating the shahadah in the presence of at

least two Muslim witnesses, no particular ceremony (such as a baptism) is involved.

The shahadah, being the central theme of Islam, is repeated in the adhan (call to worship) and in the salah (formal worship) numerous times throughout each day. This practice serves to remind Muslims of their commitment to God and effort to live righteously.

THE SALAH (PRAYER)

Salah (prayer) is the second pillar of Islam. It refers to the five compulsory daily prayers. Salah (prayer) is offered five times a day individually or in congregation. We offer Salah (prayer) to remember Allah. It brings us closer to Him. The Qur'an says:

"Establish Salah to remember Me (Allah)." (Tâ-Hâ 20: 14)

Salah is the practical proof of our faith in Allah and Islam. It has been made compulsory at certain fixed time. Allah says in the Qur'an:

"Salah at fixed times has been enjoined on the Believers." (Nisâ 4: 103)

When we analyze the Islamic prayer and study its unique nature, it will reveal to us that it is not merely a physical motion or a void recital of the Holy Book. It is a matchless formula of intellectual mediation and spiritual devotion, of moral elevation and physical exercise, all combined. It should always be borne in mind that God does not need man's prayer, because He is free of all needs. He is only interested in our prosperity and well being in every sense. When He emphasizes the necessity of prayer and charges us with any duty, He means to help us; because whatever good we do is for our own benefit, and whatever offence we commit is against our own souls. Here, too, man is the centre of gravity, and his common interest is the main concern. Here is an explanation of the effectiveness of the Islamic prayer:

1) It strengthens the belief in the Existence and Goodness of God and transmits this belief into the innermost recesses of man's heart.

2) It enlivens this belief and makes it constructive in the practical course of life.

3) It helps man to realize his natural and instinctive aspirations to greatness and high morality, to excellence and virtuous growth.

4) It purifies the heart and develops the mind, cultivates the conscience and comforts the soul.

5) It fosters the good and decent elements in man, and suppresses the evil and indecent inclinations.

What are the five daily prayers and their times?

The five daily prayers are;

Fajr : from dawn until just before sunrise

Zuhr : after mid-day until afternoon

Asr : from late afternoon until daylight ends (dusk)

Maghrib : after sunset until daylight ends

Isha' : night until midnight or dawn

Our Prophet said that: "All the Earth has been given Me as a place for prayers (prostration) and as a purifier."

And he also said that: "Tell your children to pray when they are seven and warn them for omission (of Prayers) at ten."

How can we have purity?

We can have a full bath of the whole body with pure water or have partial ablution, cleaning only parts of the body (Fresh-Wudu). The full bath is called Ghusl and the latter is Wudu (Ablution) in Arabic. Cleanliness of the body and clothes is called Taharah / Purification. We may be clean outwardly and still not be pure. It is especially important to remove all trace of urine or excrement from the clothes worn for Salah / Prayer. We must be clean and pure for Prayer. The holy Qur'an says:

"Surely, Allah loves those who turn to Him and those who care for cleanliness." (Baqara 2: 222)

Muslims are not allowed to have a shower in the nude in the presence of others.

Why do we need to perform prayer (salah)?

We perform salah to remember Allah our Creator and to be close to Him and to gain His favour and benefaction. The Qur'an asks us to establish Salah to remember God and to purify ourselves inwardly so that we can refrain from all evil things.

What is Qiblah?

Stand upright on your prayer mat facing the direction of Al-Ka'bah. The direction we face to is called Qiblah in Arabic. Qiblah is in the south east from Turkey.

How do you make your Niyah for prayer?

Before we can begin to perform prayer (salah) we must first prepare ourselves. This preparation includes making sure we are clean and this is done by carrying out Wudu. Wudu (Ablution) is essential for performing Salah. So we can not perform our salah without first taking Wudu.

These are the steps to take :

After performing the ablution, the worshipper stands up facing Qibla. Prayers begin with the Niyah (intention), the worshipper's intention, expressing that he is proposing to pray, for example, the two Fard (obligatory) Rikats. Then he utters the words "Allahu Akbar" "God is the Greatest." With his thumbs he touches the lobes of his ears, his hands are opened on each side of his face. Then his right hand is placed upon the left over his breast while his eyes look at the ground.

What is Ruku?

Bowing down and saying; "Subhana Rabbiyal A'zim (Transliteration) (Glory to my Lord the Great) three times. This position is called Ruku.

What is Qiyam?

Stand up from the bowing position saying "Sami-Allahu-liman-hamidah (Allah hears those who praise Him). This standing is called Qiyam in Arabic.

What is the Takbirat al-Ihram?

Raising your hands up to your ears (women and girls up to their shoulders) and saying Allahu Akbar (Allah is the Greatest) is called (Takbirat al-Ihram).

What is Sajdah / prostration?

Prostrate on the floor on your prayer mat saying "Allahu Akbar" with your forehead, nose, palms of both hands and your knees touching the floor. Recite "Subhane-Rabbiyal-A'la (Glory to my Lord the Highest) three times. This position is called Sajdah.

What is Adhan (Call to Prayer)?

Adhan informs Muslims about the timing of prayer, and is recited at the beginning of the prayer. It is strongly recommended that wherever possible Muslims should offer their compulsory (Fard) prayers in the Mosque. It is a confirmed Sunna ordered by the holy Prophet.

Who is Muazzin (Caller to Prayer)?

The person who gives the Adhan is called the Muazzin (Caller). While calling for prayer he stands in the Minaret or in the courtyard of the Mosque facing the Qiblah and raises his hands to his ears and calls out;

- 1) Allahu Akbar (4 times) (God is the Greatest)
- 2) Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah (2) (I testify that there is no deity save God)
- 3) Ashhadu anna Muhammadan-Resulullah (2) (I testify that Muhammad is God's messenger)
- 4) Hayya ala-s-Salah (2) (Come to prayer)
- 5) Hayya ala-l-Falah (2) (Come to salvation and prosperity)
- 6) Allahu Akbar (2) (God is the Greatest)
- 7) Lailaha-illallah (1) (There is no deity save God)

Who is the first Muazzin (Caller)?

He is Bilal the Abyssinian Muslim who had a melodious voice. He for the first time called the believers to pray in congregation.

What are the units / rikats of prayer?

They are:

Fajr	Zuhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
(2) sunnah	4 sunnah	4 sunnah	3 fard	4 sunnah
(2) fard	4 fard	4 fard	2 sunnah	4 farz
	2 sunnah			2 sunnah
				3 witr
(4 Rikats)	(10 Rikats)	(8 Rikats)	(5 Rikats)	(13 Rikats)

What is the meaning of Fard-Salah (prayer)?

A Muslim must pray five times a day. These compulsory prayers are called Fard in Arabic. Each unit of prayer is called a Rikat.

What are the fard prayers?

Fard Prayers are :

Fajr	: 2 Rikats
Zuhr	: 4 “
Asr	: 4 “
Maghrib	: 3 “
Isha	: 4 “
Jumu’ah	: 2 “ (Replaces Zuhr on Friday)
19 Rikats totaly	

What is the Witr?

The witr prayer is Wadjib (necessary). It consists of three rikats and is performed after night prayer. Witr is performed just like the three Fard rikats of the magrib (sunset prayer), with the difference that in the third rikat, the worshiper recites some verses from the Qur’an after the Fatiha.

What are the Sunnah Prayers?

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) prayed extra Rikats in addition to Fard

Prayers. These Prayers are called Sunnah. They are as follows:

- Fajr (Morning)**2 rikats before Fard
- Zuhr (Noon)**4 before Fard and 2 after
- Asr (Afternoon)**4 (optional) before Fard
- Maghrib (Sunset)**2 rikats after Fard
- Isha (Night)**4 (optional) before Fard and
2 rikats after Fard

What is Tahajjud?

Between Isha and Fajr, a prayer called Tahajjud was regularly offered by the Prophet. It was obligatory for the Prophet. Devout Muslims try to follow this practice, but it is not obligatory for them. Thajjud might be regarded as reading Qur’an at this time of the night, because in the middle of quietness, it gives a deep and spritual sense of taste to the believer.

What is Nafilah (Optional)?

Muslims also pray additional prayers other than Fard and Sunnah. These are called Nafilah (Optional).

What are the times when we must not pray?

- 1) From the beginning of sunrise until after 15-20 minutes later.
- 2) When the Sun is at it’s height (Zenith) or (Meridian).
- 3) From the beginning of sunset until it is fully set.

What are the kinds of prayers?

They are;

- 1) The five compulsory (daily prayers)
- 2) Friday prayer
- 3) The Bairam / Eid (religious festival) prayers
- 4) Funeral prayer

What is Sajdat as-Sahw (Forgetfulness Sajda)?

We perform sajda sahw for two reasons:

- 1) If we forget to perform one of the Fards of the prayer in the pre-
scribe,
- 2) When we forget to perform one of the Wadjibs of the prayer in time
or when we ignores it totally.

As soon as the worshipper offers Salam, he performs two Sajdas in the usual prayer and then sits down to recite "Tahiyyat", "Salawat" and the prescribed prayers as usual. This prayers ends with Salam.

What is the meaning of Friday Prayer?

Muslims are a community. Friday-prayer or Salat al-Jum'a is a community prayer. Friday Prayer is offered in congregation. Each week on Fridays, Muslims living in an area get together to offer this prayer.

People assemble for this prayer immediately afternoon.

Imam (prayer leader) delivers a sermon (Khutbah). After sermon, the Imam leads two rikats fard prayer. After the fard prayer, four Rikats or more Rikats Sunnah Prayers are offered privately by each person.

What is the meaning of Funeral Prayer?

When a Muslim dies, his body is given a wash and then funeral prayer (Salat al-Janazah) is offered in congregation. This prayer unlike other prayers has neither any ruku (bowing) nor any Sajdah (prostration) and you do not have to recite tashahhud. Funeral Prayer is collective obligation (Fard al-Kifayah) on all the Muslims of the locality of the dead person. It is a kind that if some people perform it, others escape from responsibility. This is contrary to Individual-Obligation (Fard al-Ayn) which requires everybody to perform it respectively such as daily prayers.

THE WELFARE CONTRIBUTION (ZAKAH)

The literal and simple meaning of Zakah is purity. It purifies the property of the people and clears it from the shares which do not belong to it

any more. When Zakah is payable, a certain percentage of the wealth should be distributed immediately in the right manner, because the owner no longer has moral or legal possession of that percentage. If he fails to do so, he is obviously retaining something which does not belong to him. This is corruption and plain usurpation from every point of view, moral and spiritual, legal and commercial.

It does not only purify the property of the contributor but also purifies his heart from selfishness and greed for wealth. In return, it purifies the heart of the recipient from envy and jealousy, from hatred and uneasiness; and it fosters in his heart; instead, goodwill and warm wishes for the contributor. As a result, the society at large will purify and free itself from class warfare and suspicion, from ill feelings and distrust, from corruption and disintegration, and from all such evils.

Zakah is an act of worship in which eligible Muslims pay a specified amount of money as a tax to be used to assist poor and needy persons in society. The annual payment of zakah "purifies" one's income and wealth by reminding Muslims that their possessions are in reality a trust and a test from God, to be used not only for personal benefit, but for the benefit of others as well.

What is the rate of Zakah on your cash savings?

The rate of Zakah on our cash savings is two and a half per-cent. This rate applies to cash bank savings and gold and silver, jewellery. The rate for cattle and agricultural product is different.

Who are the due recipients of Zakah?

Zakah is compulsory payment and is neither Charity nor a Tax. Charity is optional and taxes can be used by the State for any purpose. But Zakah has to be spent under fixed headings as follows:

- 1) The poor Muslims, to relieve their distress;
- 2) The needy Muslims, to supply them with means whereby they can earn their livelihood;

3) The new Muslim converts, to enable them so settle down and meet their unusual needs;

4) The Muslim prisoners of war, to liberate them by payment of ransom money;

5) The Muslims in debt, to free them from their liabilities incurred under pressing necessities;

6) The Muslims in service of the cause of God by means of research or study.

What lessons do we get from the payment of Zakah?

a) The Payment of Zakah is means of keeping our wealth clear from greed and selfishness.

b) Zakah is a Compulsory Payment.

c) Zakah is an act of "Ibadah" (Worship and Obedience). It includes all activities of life if we do them to please Allah. We pay Zakah to gain Allah's favour.

d) Zakah is one of the basic principles of economy in muslim society, based on Social-Welfare. Muslims are encouraged in the Qur'an to make voluntary contributions to help the poor and the needy.

THE FASTING

Fasting (Sawm) the fourth Pillar of Islam is another Ibadah. All adult Muslim must fast from dawn to sunset every day of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic Calendar. This means abstaining from eating, drinking, smoking and conjugal-relations during the hours of Fasting. Travelers and the Sick can defer fasting during Ramadan and make up for it later.

On the spiritual and moral level, Fasting means struggling to develop self-restraint, God-consciousness and piety. Muslim strive in Ramadan to curb all detrimental desires and negative or uncharitable thoughts, and to Nurture love, patience, unselfishness and social consciousness. Here is an explanation of the spritual meaning of the Islamic Fasting:

It teaches man the principle of sincere love; because when he

observes the Fasting he does it out of deep love for God. And the man who loves God truly is a man who really knows what love is.

It equips man with a creative sense of hope and an optimistic outlook on life; because when he fasts he hopes to please God and to see His Grace.

It imbues man with a genuine virtue of effective devotion, honest dedication and closeness to God; because when he fasts he does so for God and for His sake alone.

It cultivates in man a sound conscience, because the fasting person keeps his fast in secret as well as in public. In fasting, especially, there is no worldly authority to check man's behaviour or compel him to observe the Fasting. He keeps it to please God ad satisfy his own conscience by being faithful in secret and in public.

It teaches man patience and unselfishness; because when he fasts he feels the pains of deprivation but endures patiently. Truly this deprivation may be only temporary, yet there is no doubt that the experience makes him realize the severe effects of such pains on others, who might be deprived of essential commodities for days or weeks or probably months together.

What lessons do we get from the Fasting?

Fasting develops self-control and helps us to overcome selfishness, greed, laziness and other faults. It helps us to remain truly obedient to Allah's commands. That is why the Qur'an says:

"O, you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you that you are expected to be truly obedient." (Baqara 2: 183)

The Month of Ramadan is a month of forgiveness and mercy.

What is Tarawih?

An additional prayer known as Tarawih is offered during Ramadan after "Isha" (20 Rikats) or (8 Rikats). This is a Sunnah-Prayer in which efforts are made to recite as much of the Qur'an as possible. In Many

mosques, the Qur'an wholly is recited in Tarawih-Prayer. This Prayer is generally offered in congregation. Those who can not join a congregation can offer Tarawih at home. A pre-dawn meal known as Sahur is, also, taken in Ramadan.

What is the Eid al-Fitr?

At the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, A day of thanks giving and happiness. It is one of the great occasions for the Muslim Community. On this day Muslims offer special prayers in congregation and thank Allah for His Blessings and Mercy.

PILGRIMAGE / HAJJ

Hajj is the fifth Pillar of Islam. It is obligatory/fard for every adult, wise, strong and rich Muslim to go on the pilgrimage once in his life, walking around the Kaba and paying visits to the holy places. Poor, crippled, and paralysed persons are not obliged to go on pilgrimage.

Muslims are required to perform the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime if they are physically and financially able to do so. Hajj is a time of turning away from the world in order to turn towards God and sincerely seek His forgiveness for past sins and errors. The rites of the Hajj commemorate the trials and sacrifices of Prophet Abraham, his wife Hajar, and their son Prophet Ishma'il. The city of Mecca, in modern-day Saudi Arabia, is the site of the pilgrimage because the Ka'bah, which was built by Abraham and Ishma'il as the first "house of worship" dedicated to the One God, is located there. The Hajj takes place over several days in the early part of twelfth month in the Islamic calendar, called Dhul-Hijjah.

Al-Ka'bah, known as Bai-tullah (House of Allah) is a cube-like, one storey building which is the first House ever built for the sole purpose of the worship of Allah. Allah has blessed this Al-Ka'bah. Muslims who can afford to make the journey and are physically fit come here every year from all over the world.

What are the conditions for Pilgrimage:

- 1) Putting on Ihram
- 2) Paying visits and walking around the Kaba (Tawaf)
- 3) Visiting and staying at Arafah, Mina and Muzdalifah
- 4) A fast walk between As-Safa and Al-Marwah near Al-Kabah
- 5) Throwing pebbles at three fixed places in Mina
- 6) Sacrifice of an animal (sheep, goat, cow or camel)
- 7) Cutting or shortening hair

What is the meaning of Ihram?

At the time of Hajj, while approaching Mecca, a pilgrim must put on ihram before reaching a point called Miqat (Station). Ihram is two sheets of unseen white cloth for men. This is a very simple form of dress. It represents the severance of all worldly connections. A pilgrim must wear in place of his normal everyday clothes. For a woman, Ihram is her ordinary dress. When he puts on ihram, the pilgrim expresses his intention (Niyyah) by saying "I intend to put on ihram for Hajj."



The Mountain of Rahmah in Arafat (Jabal-ur-Rahmah)
(It's the mountain where Adam and Eve met)

What is the meaning of Black Stone (Hacar al-Aswad)?

The Arabic of the Black Stone is (Al-Hajar al-Aswad). It is on the Eastern Wall of the Ka'bah. The Black Stone was regarded as sacred by Muslims, a sacra-cy involves Muslims to respect it.

What is Talbiyah?

While in Ihram the Pilgrim recites Talbiyah as follows. "Here I am O Lord, here I am, here I am, You have no partner, here I am (3 times). Surely praise, blessings and the kingdom are for you. You have no Partner."

What is the significance of putting an Ihram during Pilgrimage?

This change is very significant. It reminds the Pilgrim of his position in relation to Allah. He is a humble servant of his Creator. It also reminds him that after death he will be wrapped in white sheets and his favourite or expensive clothes will be left behind.

What lessons do we get from Pilgrimage?

Pilgrimage: The occasion may rightly be called the Annual International Muslim Assembly. During Pilgrimage the Islamic brotherhood becomes particularly evident and can be experienced in a special way by everyone who takes part. Barriers of language, territory, colour and race disappear and the bond of faith is upper most. Everyone has the same status in the House of Allah (The status of His servant).

"Help you one another in righteousness and piety but help you not one another in Sin and Rancour. Fear Allah, for Allah is strict in punishment." (Maida 5: 2)

On the other hand, Hajj has in it all the lessons of Salah, Zakah and Fast and we offer Salah to remember Allah, pay Zakah to please Him and Fast only for His sake. During Salah, we present ourselves to Allah five times a day. But during Hajj we have to think of Allah all the time. At the time of Salah, we face towards Ka'bah but during Hajj we actually go there personally.

Zakah teaches us to pay part of our savings for welfare and other good causes for Allah's sake. But during Hajj we must sacrifice much more of our money for the pleasure of Allah.

Sawm teaches us to control ourselves during daylight hours from eating, drinking or smoking or having conjugal relations. But in the state of Ihram there are many more restrictions.

CHAPTER III THE STORIES of THE PROPHETS

The Merciful God has sent many prophets at different times of history. Every known nation has had one prophet or more. All prophets were of good character and high honour. They were prepared and chosen by God to deliver His Message to mankind.

God intervenes in the world in two ways. One of them is "creation", the other one is "revelation." This second is realized by way of sending prophets. The prophets came to lead people to the true way and to help them in accessing the happiness in this world and in the next. Stories of the prophets are presented and dramatized in the Holy Qur'an to lead people to true path and render them ethical devouts in their works. So, God says in the Holy Book:

"There is a lesson for the men of understanding in Their Stories" (Yûsuf 12: 11)

Here is the list of the prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur'an together with their counterparts in the Bible.

As Muslims, we must believe in all prophets and messengers (Baqara 2: 285).

THE PROPHET ADAM

Who lived on earth before human-beings?

Long ago, none lived on earth as humans. There were other creatures who fought among them. But they were not humans. Angels and Jinns were created before Adam. Allah then decided to create man to worship Him, to construct the world and to spread the peace over there.

Allah said to the Angels:

“I am going to send my Caliph (Deputy or Agent). The Angels said: “Will you send there someone who will make mischief and shed blood, while we praise you and glorify you. Allah said that “Surely I know what you do not know” (Baqara 2: 30).

The Angels, then, were silent. Allah also said to the Angels

“I am going to create a Mortal (Bashar) from clay. When I have fashioned him and given him life, you must prostrate before him.” (Sâd :38 71)

Who are Adam and Eve (Hawwa)?

Adam is the first Prophet on earth and father of humanity on earth, too. Allah created Adam from clay and gave him the nicest shape. He then commanded the Angels and the Jinn to prostrate before Adam as the sign of greatness of man over other beings.

The Angels obeyed the command but Iblis refused to prostrate Him and disobeyed Allah.

Eve is the wife of Adam and She is the mother of human-beings on earth. Adam (pbuh) was alone in Paradise so Allah created Eve as his wife. Allah created Eve from what He created Adam, not from the rib of Adam. Now, Adam was happy and living in Al-Jannah. Allah said to Adam:

“Live with your wife in Al-Jannah. Eat freely whatever you like there. But do not come close to that tree.” (Baqara 2: 35)

How about “Original Sin”?

Adam and Hawwa (the Arabic name for Eve) are believed to be the first human beings, endowed by God with faculties not found in other earthly creatures. Furthermore, the Qur’an indicates that the first souls of man and woman originated from a single soul cleft in two, demonstrating the spiritual coequality of men and women.

The blissful Garden in which Adam and Hawwa initially dwelt

proved to be a testing ground as well. God had warned the two not to eat of the fruit from a particular tree, yet at the insistence of Iblis (Satan), the two succumbed to temptation. Realizing that they had transgressed against God, the two repented and were ultimately forgiven. Thereafter, God placed the two on earth and multiplied the human race in order to test humanity and give humans the opportunity to demonstrate their highest potential in the face of continued temptation from Satan and his minions.

According to the Qur’anic account, both Adam and Eve sinned equally when they disobeyed God’s command to stay clear of the forbidden tree; Eve does not figure as a temptress leading to “man’s downfall.” Furthermore, since God assigns every individual his or her freedom and responsibilities, Muslims do not believe in “Original Sin,” the concept that the sin of Adam is inherited by all humankind. Rather, Muslims believe that each person is personally accountable to God, and will be judged by Him according to their good and bad deeds, independent of those of others.

“Those who believe and work righteous deeds, from them shall We blot out all evil, and We shall reward them according to the best of their deeds.” (Ankabut 29: 7)

Who is Iblis?

Iblis was from the Jinns. Allah asked:

“What prevented you from prostrating before that which I have created?”

Iblis replied:

“I am better than him. You have created me from fire, but him you created from clay.” (A’raf 7: 12) and (Hijr 15: 32-33)

Allah then said:

“Get out of here you are cast out. My curse is on you till the Day of Judgement.” (Hijr 15: 34-35)

“Iblis vowed to misguide Adam and his children.” (A’raf 7: 14-18)

But as you know, Allah has given man knowledge and guidance to distinguish between right and wrong to avoid being misguided.

Although Satan or Devil is the enemy to human-being, he can only do harm to those who are the companions of him. He can not do any harm to believers whatsoever. It is said in the holy Qur'an:

“Verily Satan is an enemy to you; so treat him as a enemy, he only invites his adherents, that they may become companions of the Blazing Fire.” (Fatir 35: 6)

“Did I not enjoin on you, O ye Children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed?” (Maryam 19: 68)

What did Allah teach Adam?

Allah then taught Adam some names and asked the Angels to tell those names. The Angels said:

“Glory to you, we do not know more than you have taught us. Surely you are All-Knowing and the most Wise.” (Baqara 2: 31)

“Allah then asked Adam to say those names and He did so.” (Baqara 2: 33)

Turning to the Angels, Allah said:

“Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?” (Baqara 2: 33)

God's teaching Adam the names means to promote human above angels and to appoint him as the vicegerent on earth to act and to construct a place suitable to live in peace and harmony.

Why did Allah forbid Adam and Eve from the tree in Paradise?

This was intended to test them and teach them self-control. Allah, also wanted to see whether they used the knowledge given to them to save themselves from the evil tricks of Iblis.

Iblis was trying hard to misguide Adam and Eve. At last, he suc-

ceeded and tempted Adam and Eve to go to that tree. As soon as they approached the forbidden tree, Adam and Eve became bared. Until then, they did not know what bareness was.

They had no cause to be ashamed of it. But now they felt ashamed. They tried to cover themselves with leaves and to hide. But there was nowhere they could hide from Allah, the All-Knowing. Adam and Eve asked Allah's Forgiveness and it was granted to them. So, some scholars interpreted that eating the forbidden fruit resembles to gain knowledge and awareness or self-consciousness.

The prayer of Adam and Eve to Allah after they were deceived by Devil was:

“Our Lord we have wronged ourselves, and if you forgive us not and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the lost.” (A'raf 7: 23)

Why did Allah command Adam and Eve to descend to earth?

Because they approached the forbidden tree. He then commanded Adam and Eve to go down to earth and live there. But Allah was very kind and taught them the way to seek forgiveness. (Baqara 2: 38-39)

He also told them that He would send guidance for them, so that they would not deviate from the right-path.

Allah revealed guidance to Adam and He was made the first Prophet on earth.

The fact that Adam had first been in Paradise then he was sent to the world shows that Adam is not only a natural creature like other creatures, but additionally he has some metaphysical characteristics that make him different from others, so human beings, though they live in nature, do tend to keep in touch with beyond nature.

THE PROPHET NOAH (NUH)

Many hundreds years passed after Adam and the Earth was filled with his children. As time passed, the children of Adam, forgot Allah and started to worship statues made of stones. They became bad and

they started to lie, steal and some became mean and greedy.

Allah the most Merciful, sent Noah (pbuh) to these people to bring them back to right path and to His worship. Noah invited the people to come back to Tawhîd. He asked them to give up Idol worshipping and all other vices which they had developed.

He warned them about the Day of Judgement. (A'raf 7: 64)

Noah did his best for many years to make people come worship of Allah. But the people did not listen. They laughed at him, mocked him, despised him and called him crazy and a liar. (Shuarah 26: 118)

Noah lived 950 years and within this long period, only a few people responded to his call. Even his sons and wife did not believe in him. (Ankabut 29: 14)

Noah (pbuh) became so fed up with the stubbornness of their opposition to the truth that he ultimately prayed to Allah.

“Leave not upon the land any one from the unbelievers.” (Nouh 71: 26)

So, He cried unto His Lord saying:

“I am vanquished, so give help” (Qamar 54: 10)

He also prayed to Allah to save him and his followers. And Allah, Almighty, accepted Noah's prayer and asked him to build an Ark. Noah started to construct the ark. It was not an easy task. But prophet Noah persevered. (Hûd 11: 37)

What did people say when they saw Noah building an ark?

They laughed at him and thought that Noah must have gone mad. They could not see the reason for building so huge an ark, hundreds of miles away from the sea. (Hûd 11: 38) Noah told the mockers that a flood would soon overcome them and they would have no place to take shelter. The people laughed even more. But Allah's plans soon came true and the disbelievers saw it happened.

Suddenly the skies became dark and thunder and rain followed, it rained and rained and the whole land became flooded. There was

water everywhere. Every living thing drowned except those that were in the ark which was floating on top of the water. (Qamar 54: 11-15)

After many days of hard work the ark was completed and Allah asked Noah to take a pair (one male, one female) of all the animals, into the ark. Noah and his followers boarded afterwards. (Hûd 11: 40-41)

How long did the Flood last?

The Flood lasted five months and it destroyed all the disbelievers, even Noah's own son, an unbeliever, was not saved. Noah had asked permission of Allah to take his son in the ark but he was refused. He was told that an unbelieving son was no part of his family. Noah felt sorry and Allah forgave him. Noah and his followers were safe in the Ark. (Hûd 11: 45-47)

At last the skies began to clear and the ark halted at Mount Judi. Noah and his followers disembarked. Thus Allah saved Noah and his followers. So, Noah is called the second of our father on earth.

THE PROPHET ABRAHAM (IBRAHIM)

Abraham known as the Khalilullah (Friend of Allah). (Nisâ 4: 125) He lived in the city of Urfa. During his time there were people worshipping to the stars. These people are called in the Holy Qur'an as Sabiins.

Abraham's father was Azar. He used to make idols and sell them. The people of the area used to worship these idols. They had a temple for these idols in which they worshipped. Abraham once asked his father: “O my father! Why do you worship idols which can neither speak nor hear”? Azar became angry and warned Abraham not to ask such questions.

Abraham was an intelligent boy. It was strange for him to see people bowing down before these stone-made idols which could neither move nor talk. They could not even drive away the flies which sat on their eyes and nose. Abraham wondered why people worshipped such powerless statues.

After thinking much about it, he thought he would give the people a practical lesson. Once when people were busy celebrating a festival, Abraham went to the temple where the idols were kept.

He asked the idols: "How do you do? Here is the food and drink. Why do not you help yourselves?" The stone-idols were silent of course.

Abraham then took an axe and began to break all the idols except the biggest which he spared with a purpose.

When he had finished, he left the axe hanging round the shoulder of the biggest idol. (Anbiya 21: 58)

When people came to the temple to worship the idols, they were astonished to see the pitiful condition of their gods. "Who has done this mischief?" they asked themselves. They thought of Abraham the only one who talked disrespectfully about the idols. Soon Abraham was found out.

They asked him, "Who broke the idols?" Abraham calmly replied: "Ask the biggest idol. The people knew that the idols could not talk. They said: "O, Abraham do not you know that the idols can not talk?." Abraham retorted: "Why do you worship them, then? They can not talk, move or understand anything. Why do you ask them for favour?"

The people had no answer. They were sure that it was Abraham who broke the idols. They could not let the matter go easily. They called people and decided to burn Abraham alive. They had to defend their gods. (Anbiya 21: 59,68)

Allah was in his favour and nothing could harm Abraham as he did the right thing. A big fire was set up and Abraham was thrown into it as the punishment of breaking the idols. But a Miracle happened!

The fire did no harm to him. Allah protected him, people were amazed to see it and they could not believe their eyes. But it was so, Abraham was happy and his persecutors felt sad and helpless. (Anbiya 21: 69-70)

Allah protected Abraham from fire. Because Allah was in his favour.

"Verily God will defend those who believe...." (Hajj 22: 38)

How did Abraham find Allah (cc) by using his reason?

Abraham's enquiring mind was in search of Allah. He thought and thought. He, initially, thought that the shining Moon might be his Lord. But when the Moon vanished, He said to himself:

"No, a vanishing thing can not be my Lord." He looked at the Sun and considered it as God. It also went down. Abraham said to himself, "No, this, also, can not be my Lord." He came to the conclusion that only the ever-lasting, ever-present and All-Knowing, Almighty can be his Lord. The Stars, the moon, the sun can not be Lord." (En'am 6: 76-79)

In this way Abraham given the light of truth by Allah was a messenger and servant of Allah. (Nahl 16: 120-122) ; (Maryam 19: 41)

What lessons can we learn from the story of the prophet Abraham?

It is narrated in the Qur'an that Abraham couldn't get a baby from his first wife Sarah, so married to Hajar and promised God that if he had a son he would sacrifice him. After Ishmael was born and grew up, Abraham, as a result of this promise, began dreaming that God wanted him to keep his promise and to sacrifice his unique son. He thought that was an order from God, but in fact it was only a dream. When he attempted to sacrifice Ishmael Allah saved him and his son. This was a big test. Abraham loved Allah more than anything else. He was ready to sacrifice his son Ishmael on Allah's command. Allah accepted Abraham's readiness and sent a lamb to be sacrificed instead of Ishmael. (Saffat 37: 101-107) We observe the festival of Eid al-Adha to commemorate this event. After Abraham passed the test, God gave him Isaac as a reward son from Sarah who was bare until then.

THE PROPHET MOSES (MUSA)

What is the meaning of Banî Israel (The Sons of Israel)?

The followers of the prophet Jacob (Ya'qub), father of prophet Joseph, are called Banî Israel (Israelites). Banî Israel had lived in Egypt since the days of the prophet Joseph.

Who was Pharaoh (Fir'awn)?

The name Pharaoh was a general attribute for the kings and rulers of Egypt. But specifically when the Qur'an refers to name Pharaoh, it means Ramses II to whom Moses was sent. This ruler of Egypt looked upon Banî Israel as foreigners and treated them harshly.

When was Moses born?

Moses, son of Imran, was born in Egypt 450 years after Joseph (Yusuf) during the critical time when the rulers of Egypt were scared that one day the Banî Israel would grow in number and be powerful. So, Pharaoh ordered to kill every male child born in the Family of Israel (Qasas 28: 4-6).

Because the men of Pharaoh were looking for every newly born child of Banî Israel to kill Moses mother wanted to hide him. She managed to conceal him for three months and when she could not manage any more she was inspired by Allah to put Moses into a specially made box and threw it into the river. (Ta-Ha 20: 3); (Anfal 8: 39)

Moses' sister Mary (Maryam) was asked to watch the floating box from a distance to avoid suspicion. (Qasas 28: 11)

When the box reached the other shore, one of the members of Pharaoh's family picked it up and Moses was then taken to Pharaoh's wife and she was very glad to have the baby and adopted him. Because he was a lovely baby boy. (Qasas 28: 8-9)

Moses' sister went to Pharaoh's palace and suggested a nanny to look after the baby, a woman who would be suitable to suckle him. This woman was none other than Moses' mother. (Qasas 28: 12)

So Moses came back to his mother's lap in this way, it has been proved that none could destroy a person whom Allah would protect.

Moses was growing up in Pharaoh's house and during this time he came across an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite. Moses gave the Egyptian a blow and killed him accidentally (Qasas 28: 15). Thus Moses left Pharaoh's house and went to Midian.



The Hill of Mountain
at Tur Sinai in Egypt

Moses stayed there (Midian) for ten years before moving on to Tuwa, a valley at the foot of the mountain Tur Sinai. Here Moses was given the Divine-guidance by Allah and was selected as a Messenger of Allah. (Qasas 28: 30)

Allah bestowed on Moses two Miracles.

- 1) A 'rod' which when thrown down would turn into a living serpent.
- 2) And the ability to make his hand shine, after it was drawn out from under his arm. (Ta-Ha 20: 17-22)

Who was Aaron (Harun)?

Aaron is Moses' brother. Moses begged Allah to make his brother Aaron his helper and Allah granted his prayer. Because Moses had a speech defect, Aaron would help him. (Ta-Ha 20: 24-36)

Why did Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh?

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and they argued with him, telling him that Almighty Allah had chosen Moses to save the Israelites (Ta-Ha 20: 47-54) He would rescue them from the oppression of the Egyptians. Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go.

When Pharaoh made fun of Moses, Moses showed his signs to impress upon that his message was true.

Moses threw his rod on the ground and it changed into a serpent. Moses picked it up and it turned again into a rod. Pharaoh and his followers were amazed to see this. Pharaoh and his magicians could hardly believe their eyes and his magicians bowed to the truth and they professed their faith in Allah.

Thus Pharaoh became angry and began to torture the Banî Israel even more.

When Pharaoh began to torture the Banî Israel. It was during this time that Allah commanded Moses to leave Egypt with his followers (Ta-Ha 20: 77).

Moses asked his followers to get ready and they set out at night to avoid Pharaoh's notice and reached the shore of the Nile. They were chased by Pharaoh and his soldiers.

When Pharaoh and his soldiers almost reached the Moses and his followers at this moment that (in front of them was the mighty Nile and behind were Pharaoh's soldiers). Allah ordered Moses to throw his rod in the water. And as he did so, The Nile was divided into two and a road was ready in the middle, allowing the Israelites to cross it. (Shuara 26: 52-65).

Pharaoh was following, but when the Israelites reached the other shore and Pharaoh was in the middle of the Nile, water from both sides suddenly poured in and the road was no longer there. Pharaoh and his soldiers were drowned in this way. This is how Allah punishes transgressors and helps his devout servants.

THE PROPHET JESUS (ISA)

What is Islam's view of Jesus?

Muslims believe that Jesus was a very important prophet of God, and that he was indeed the Messiah awaited by the Jews of ancient Palestine. Like Christians, Muslims believe Jesus' mission was to reestab-

lish justice among people and rectify deviations that had developed in the religion of the One God. Muslims share with Christians belief in Jesus' unique birth and various miracles performed by him.

“Lo! The angels said: ‘O Mary! Behold, God sends thee the glad tiding, through a word from Him, of a son who shall become known as the Christ Jesus, son of Mary, of great honour in this world and in the life to come, and of those who are drawn near to God.” (Al-i Imran 3: 45)

However, Muslims do not believe in Jesus' divinity, and do not consider Jesus the “Son of God”, since to do so would contradict the Qur'anic concept of God's Unity (Oneness). Furthermore, since the concept of “Original Sin” does not exist in Islam, Jesus (nor any other prophet or person) does not play a redemptive role in human salvation. In other words, there is no concept of “vicarious atonement” in Islam. Moreover, Muslims do not share the Christian belief in Jesus' crucifixion. According to the Qur'an, Jesus was assumed (taken up) to the realm of God to spare him such a fate.

In the Qur'an, God's creation of Jesus, who had no father, is likened to His creation of Adam, who had neither father nor mother. Both, fashioned out of earth's elemental components, are viewed as direct manifestations of God's Divine Command: “Be!”

Why did Allah the Merciful send a prophet to the Banî Israel again?

The Banî Israel were given many favours by Almighty Allah. But they were very ungrateful. They violated Allah's orders, ridiculed the prophets and killed some of them. They started to worship idols and made Allah's Message a mockery.

Thus Allah the Merciful again sent a prophet to bring them to the right way.

This Prophet was Jesus, son of Mary. (Baqara 2: 87). Allah bestowed Gospel (The New Testament) on him and Jesus confirmed what was in Torah (Tawrat=The Old Testament).

Why was the birth of Jesus (pbuh) a miracle?

Because he was born of the virgin Mary without a father, by Allah's command (Maryam 19: 17-21). Allah can do anything He wishes. Everything is possible for Him. When Allah wants to get something done He only says, Be and it becomes. We know that Adam was created by Allah without a father and a mother. So, It was easy for Him (Allah) to create Jesus without a father.

How old was Jesus when he received a revelation?

Baby-Jesus born of virgin Mary was able to talk even as a baby. He was commissioned as a prophet when he was 30, and He acted as a prophet for three years. (Maryam 19: 29-34)

What were the miraculous powers that Allah bestowed upon Jesus?

- 1) Jesus could make living birds out of clay
- 2) He could heal Leprosy within minutes
- 3) He could restore the eyes of the blind.
- 4) He could also make the dead come alive (etc.)

This making someone alive must be taken as a metaphor.

All these Miracles were given to him by Allah. The Qur'an mentions these miraculous powers. (Al-i Imran 3: 46-51)

Did Jesus died on the cross according to Qur'an?

According to the Qur'an, prophet Jesus was not crucified to death, rather he died later and his soul was taken up by Allah, the Almighty and the most wise. (Nisâ 4: 157-158)

What is the Trinity?

In the Qur'an Christians are criticized for saying that God is "the third of three." (Maida 5: 73) It may be that some Christians at the time

believed Jesus and Maryam were gods apart from God. However, the correct Christians belief in Trinity is not a belief in three gods. Christians believe in one God but they believe that God has three essential aspects or attributes. They use metaphoric or allegorical language to express these aspects of the nature of God.

Why do Christians call God "Father"?

By this image Christians mean that God is the loving creator and origin of all things. They do not mean that God is like a human father.

What do Christians mean when they call Jesus "Son of God"?

Christians do not believe that God has any physical attributes so obviously the term "Son of God" is not meant to be literal. It is allegorical or metaphorical. God does not have children in the way human beings have children. Because Christians believe that Jesus is God's Word, they call him "Son" to emphasize the closeness of the God's Word to God.

THE LIFE of MUHAMMAD (pbuh), THE PROPHET

The Holy Prophet Muhammad was born into the tribe of Quraysh in the city of Mecca in 570 C.E. His father, Abdullah, died before his birth. When Muhammad was six years old, his mother, Amina became ill and died. Thus, at a very young age Muhammad experienced the loss of his parents and became an orphan.

For the next few years Muhammad was entrusted to his grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib. When Muhammad was eight years old, his grandfather also passed away. His uncle Abu Talib, a well-respected member of the Quraysh tribe, took responsibility for him. Muhammad grew up to become an honest and trustworthy businessman. Indeed, Muhammad's upright and dependable reputation earned him the designation al-Amin (the Trustworthy One) among his fellow Meccans, and even invited a marriage proposal from Khadijah, a businesswoman in Mecca for whom Muhammad worked.

At the age of twenty-five, Muhammad married Khadijah, a widow who was his elder by fifteen or three years. Their marriage lasted twenty-five years, until Khadijah's death. Muhammad and Khadijah had seven children: two sons died in early childhood, and four daughters lived to bless their household.

While most of his fellow Meccans were polytheists, Muhammad refused to worship the traditional tribal deities and often retreated to meditate and worship the One God of his ancestor, Abraham. At the age of forty, while meditating in the cave of Hira on the mountain above Mecca, Muhammad received the first of many revelations, beginning with the Arabic word *Iqra*, meaning "Read", "Recite" and "Summon." Soon afterwards, he was commanded to convey the Divine message and thus became the last messenger of God, according to the Qur'an.

"Read, in the name of thy Lord, Who created man, out of a clot (embryo). Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught the use of the pen Taught man that which he knew not." (Alaq 96: 1-5)

Muhammad spent the remaining twenty-three years of his life receiving revelations from God and advocating the message of Islam among the peoples of the Arabian peninsula and working to implement the principles and teachings of Islam in human society. After suffering severe persecution from the polytheistic Meccans for 11 years, he and his fellow Muslims emigrated to Yathrib, a city 200 miles north of Mecca, where he established Islamic rule. The city was renamed Madinah (short for *Madinat an-Nabi*, City of the Prophet). In the following years, the message of Islam brought more and more tribes in the Arabian peninsula into the fold, creating a new community based on common religious principles, rather than tribal or other affiliations. Muhammad died in 632 C.E. at the age of 63. His tomb is located adjacent to the Masjid an-Nabawi (Prophet's Masjid) in Madinah, Saudi Arabia, in what used to be his quarters next to the original masjid of the city.

Muhammad is our great and beloved prophet. It is through Muhammad (pbuh) that Allah has completed the Islamic way of life.

No other person in the history of mankind has left so deep an impact

on the life of his followers as Muhammad (pbuh). He is the last Messenger of Allah, his life is the best example for us to follow. He has shown us, how to obey Allah, the Lord of the Universe. Allah says in the Qur'an:

"Say (O, Muhammad) if you love Allah, follow me, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Al-i Imran 3: 31)

What was Muhammad's role as the last prophet?

Islam teaches that Muhammad's role as the final prophet of God was to confirm the authentic teachings of previous prophets and to rectify mistakes or innovations that followers of previous monotheistic faith traditions had introduced into the original religion of humankind. Muhammad is also viewed as the last ring for the completion of God's guidance to humanity; the scope of his mission is seen as encompassing all people, rather than a specific region, group or community. Furthermore, his life serves as a perfect model of how to practice Islam fully.

"We have sent you forth to all humankind, so that you may give them good news and warn them." (Saba' 34: 28)

Muslims believe that the original revelations or scriptures given by God to prophets such as Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus had been lost or modified over time. Moreover, the ethno-religious concept of a "chosen people" found in Judaism and the doctrines of Trinity and Original Sin found in Christianity are believed to be later developments that grew away from the original practices and scriptures of previous prophets.

Essentially, Muslims view Islam not as a "new" religion, since it embodies the same message and guidance that God revealed to all His messengers, but rather a reestablishment of the "primordial" religion of humankind, centered around recognizing God's Oneness and adhering to His commands. The view of Islam as having achieved its final form through the scripture given to Muhammad and his own teachings is an important aspect of faith. Consequently, Muhammad is considered the final messenger of God, the "Seal" of the Prophets. Any claimants to prophethood after Muhammad, , are not accepted by Muslims.

Is the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) the last and the final Prophet of Allah?

Yes, he is the last and the final prophet of Allah. There will be no prophet after him. So God called him "The seal of the Prophets." This case is similar to an envelope. If you cover an envelope and seal it, nobody can uncover it. As such prophet Muhammad sealed the chain of the prophets and nobody can claim to be prophet.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of God, and the Seal of the Prophets...." (Ahzab 33: 40)

Qur'an says:

"We sent you (Muhammad) not but as a blessing for the Universe." (Anbiya 21: 107)

What is the difference between Muhammad and other human-beings?

The difference between Muhammad (pbuh) and us is that he received guidance directly from Allah through revelation but we did not.

Muhammad (pbuh) was not only a messenger but a man as well. He was not a super human-being but a mortal man and the last of the Messengers of Allah. (Kahf 18: 110)

When did the Prophet accompany his uncle on a business trip to Syria?

Muhammad was growing up in the affectionate care of his uncle, Abu Talib. At the age of twelve Muhammad accompanied him on a business-trip to Syria. When their caravan reached Busra, in Syria, a Christian priest called Bahira invited them to a dinner. This was unusual. Abu Talib and his caravan had passed this way before several times but they were never asked in before by priest.

Why did Bahira (a Christian priest) invite all the members of the caravan to a dinner and why did Bahira insist on having Muhammad join in the dinner?

All the members of the caravan went to the dinner, except

Muhammad who stayed behind, probably to look after the camels and the merchandise. Bahira insisted on having Muhammad join in the dinner. When Muhammad did, Bahira asked him a few questions and Muhammad answered them precisely.

When he heard the answers, Bahira (a person well versed in Christianity and the Bible) could recognize from his reading that the boy Muhammad was going to be a prophet in the future.

He advised Abu Talib to take special care of his nephew. When they finished their trading Abu Talib lost no time in returning to Mecca with Muhammad.

What is the significance of Alliance for Charity (Hilf al-Fudul)?

When Muhammad was fifteen a local war broke out during the Hajj season between the tribes of Quraish and Hawazin. According to Meccan tradition war was forbidden in the pilgrimage season. Despite this, the war lasted four years with intervals.

The reason for the war seemed silly to Muhammad and he felt quite disgusted at the nonsense bloodshed. He inspired many of them to take steps to stop the war and make peace.

Hilf al-Fudul organisation was formed to help the oppressed, the poor and the needy. Muhammad was present at the meeting. The participation of Muhammad in Hilf al-Fudul is a proof of his concern and interest in the welfare activities, even in his youth.

Why did Allah send his prophets mostly from shepherds?

Muhammad (pbuh) was very proud of having spent his boyhood as a shepherd. He used to say, "Allah sent no prophet who was not a shepherd. Moses was a shepherd, David was also a shepherd."

The reason for this might be that Allah wanted His messengers to have experience of life as a shepherd to help deal with human-beings, with rare patience, in preaching Allah's Message. It is very difficult to control a flock of sheep, goats, camels which do not have any understanding or sense of right and wrong. It needs a lot of patience and care

to handle animals. The experience was eventually very useful for the messengers in their task of propagating and transmitting the Message of Allah.

What are the physical features of the prophet Muhammad?

Muhammad was a handsome man of medium build neither very tall nor short. He had a large head, very black thick hair, a wide forehead, heavy eye brows and large dark eyes with long eye lashes.

He had a fine nose, well placed teeth, thick beard, a long handsome neck and a wide chest and shoulders. His skin was light coloured and he had thick palms and feet.

He walked steadily with firm steps. His appearance had the mark of deep thought and contemplation. His eyes gave the feeling of the authority of a commander.

When did Muhammad marry to Khadijah?

As Muhammad grew up, he helped in running the business of his uncle who was managing his family with some difficulty. During this time, Muhammad received an offer from a noble lady named Khadijah to look after her business affairs. Muhammad's fame as an honest and upright young man had now become well known in Mecca. That is why Khadijah made the proposal.

Muhammad accepted the proposal and set out for Syria with the goods of Khadijah. Accompanied by another of her employes called Maysarah, Muhammad's made second business trip to Syria. Muhammad made big profits for Khadijah on this trip because of his intelligence, skill and honesty. It was almost double what anyone else had earned for Khadijah in the past.

On their return, Maysarah hurried to Khadijah and told her about his experience of Muhammad and about the big profits he made for her. Khadijah, the daughter of Khuwailid, was a determined, intelligent and noble woman. She was deeply impressed by the ability, character and performance of Muhammad (pbuh).

Khadijah decided to send a proposal of marriage to Muhammad (pbuh). On the advice of his uncle Abu Talib. Muhammad consented to the proposal and the wedding ceremony went ahead. Now Muhammad was a family man and the marriage marked the beginning of a new phase in his life.

When and where did the prophet Muhammad receive the revelation first?

The Meccans worshipped idols made by themselves. Muhammad used to think about the stupidity of idol worshipping. The idols could not move, talk or do anything. How could they respond to the request of human-beings?



Cave Hira where the prophet received revelation first

All these appeared nonsense to Muhammad's thinking mind. The retreat in the Cave Hira was to find answers to these deep-rooted feelings on his own.

Muhammad had reached the age of forty. One night while he was in the Cave Hira in Ramadan the Angel appeared. After transmitting the

first verses the Angel Jibrail said: "O Muhammad! You are the Messenger of Allah and I am Jibrail and wherever he looked, Muhammad saw Jibrail flying in the distance. He stood still until the Angel disappeared.

The First verses of Qur'an the Prophet received were:

"Read (and summon) in the name of your Lord who created you.
Created man from a clot of blood.

Read: Your Lord is most Generous.

Who taught by the pen.

Taught man what he did not know." (Alaq 96: 1-5)

How did Khadijah comfort her husband when he had returned home in panic?

When the Angel hugged the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) again much harder for the third time and then released him the first verses of Qur'an. Muhammad (pbuh) recited these verses and felt as though the words were written on his heart.

Then the Angel disappeared and Muhammad (pbuh) rushed home in a panic and sat close to Khadijah. He told her all that happened. Khadijah, his noble, loving and caring wife had faith in the character of her husband and comforted him saying: "Rejoice, O son of my uncle and be of good heart. I have hope that you will be the Prophet of his people. You have never done any wrong to anyone. You are kind to others and you help the poor. So, Allah will not let you down."

Who was Waraqah bin Nawfal?

Waraqah bin Nawfal was a Christian and had knowledge of the scriptures of the Torah and the Gospel.

When Muhammad (pbuh) rushed home in a panic, he asked Khadijah to wrap him up with blankets. He was wrapped up and he fell asleep. And when Muhammad woke up, Khadijah took him to her cousin Waraqah bin Nawfal.

Waraqah heard all that happened from Muhammad and said: "This is

the same one who keeps the secrets (Angle Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out."

Who were the first Muslims?

First; Khadijah, Muhammad's wife accepted Islam, she encouraged and assured Muhammad (pbuh) about the success of his prophethood and declared her own acceptance of Islam. She thus became the first Muslim.

Second; Ali bin Abu Talib, Muhammad's cousin.

Third; Zaid bin Harithah, his household-servant outside the household.

Forth; Abu Bakr was the first among Muhammad's friends to become a Muslim.

How did Muhammad (pbuh) call the Meccans to the Message of Allah?

He climbed on the top of As-Safa and shouted at the people who saw him standing there, gathered below. Muhammad (pbuh) told them: "O men of Quraish! If I were to tell you that I see an army ready to attack on the otherside of the mountain, would you believe me? They answered, "Yes, why not? We trust you and never found you telling a lie." Muhammad said: "Know, then, that I am a warner and that I warn you of severe punishment. Allah has commanded me to warn you, my nearest kinsmen that I can assure you of good on this Earth and in Heaven, if you declare that "there is no god but Allah."

Abu Lahab his uncle, became red with anger and spoke bad of his nephew. He said "Damn you! Did you assemble us for this?"

Allah revealed:

"May the hands of Abu Lahab perish, doomed he is, his wealth and his properties shall not save him, he shall be thrown into a flaming fire of Hell." (Tabbat 111: 3)

What were the proposals of Utbah bin Rabiah to the prophet Muhammad?

Utbah bin Rabiah was the leader of the Quraish and put some proposals to the prophet Muhammad. He suggested "if what you want is money, we will gather for you our property, so that you can be the richest of us. If you want honour, we will make you our chief, so that no-one can decide anything apart from you, if you want sovereignty, we will make you king."

The prophet refused all these suggestions saying:

"O, my uncle and Quraish! By Allah if they put the Sun in my right hand and the Moon in my left, and ask me to give up my mission, I shall not do it until Allah has made it victorious or I perish there in." And Abu Talib was moved by the firmness of his nephew and said, "Go and say what you please, for by Allah I shall never withdraw my support from you."

Who were the first Muslims to suffer at the hands of the unbelievers of Mecca?

The first Muslims to suffer of the unbelievers of Mecca were Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas, Bilal bin Rabah and Ammar bin Yathir.

From the women Muslims: Sumaiyyah, Lubainah, Nahdiyyah and Umm Ubais.

For example; Bilal, an Abyssinian's slave, was tortured by his master as he embraced Islam. He was thrown onto the sand under the burning sun with a heavy stone laid on his chest for no other reason than his acceptance of Islam. Bilal gallantly faced his torture and used to proclaim: "Allah the ONE, Allah the ONE." Abu Bakr set him free from his infidel master.

Second example; Once Muhammad (pbuh) was almost strangled by an unbeliever while praying suddenly Abu Bakr arrived to rescue him.

Abu Lahab's wife, Umm Jamil, used to throw rubbish and thorny bushes from her house at Muhammad's (pbuh) door and way and all that Muhammad (pbuh) was able to do was to remove them.

Muhammad (pbuh) continued his preaching with even more enthu-

siasm and firmness and the hostility of the unbelievers also intensified.

The Meccans did all they could to stop him and his followers. But nothing worked. Islam continued to flourish among the Meccans despite the false propaganda.

During these sufferings Hamzah, the young uncle of the Prophet accepted Islam. His acceptance of the faith added strength to Islam. For Hamzah was a brave man. His acceptance of Islam compelled the Quraish to abandon some of their harassment.

Allah commanded the Prophet to tell the unbelievers in clear terms that there could be no such compromise on matters of basic principles. Muhammad (pbuh) was asked to declare them:

"You have your religion and I have mine." (Kafirun 109: 6)

Where did the Muslims emigrate to first?

Eighty three Muslims, excluding children, emigrated to Abyssinia in groups. It was the first emigration of the Muslims who had to leave their country for the sake of Allah. The first group was of ten people. Abyssinia (Ethiopia) was being ruled by Najjashi (Negus) at that time.

What is the meaning of Boycott?

The Quraish were seething at the gradual increase in the strength of the Muslims. They plotted another assault and decided on a total Boycott of the family of Hashim and Muttalib. The clans of Hashim and Muttalib demonstrated great firmness during the Boycott. The document of Boycott which was kept in the Ka'bah was eaten up by white ants, all except the name of Allah.

The Boycott continued for three years.

Why the Prophet had a very difficult day in Ta'if?

When prophet Muhammad (accompanied by Zaid bin Harithah) went to three important people of Ta'if, a City sixty miles to the west of Mecca, and invited them to Islam, All three refused and insulted him.

Then, the urchins threw stones at the Prophet's legs and feet. The prophet used to say that the Day in Ta'if was the most difficult day of his life.

What is Al-Isra?

After the severe shocks of the death of Abu Talib and Khadijah and the cruel treatment received at Ta'if, Muhammad longed for some comfort. It was not long before he got it. It happened in the form of a remarkable and eventful Nocturnal Journey to Jerusalem called Al-Isra. There is also a Surah in the Qur'an by this name, and the first verse of the Surah signifies it.



Al-Aqabah in Mecca

When and where was the first Covenant of Al-Aqabah performed?

When Muhammad (pbuh) opened public preaching, he met a group of people from Madinah (then called Yathrib) at the time of Hajj and he invited them to accept Islam. They responded to his call and became Muslims. There were six of them. They returned to Madinah as believers and invited the rest of their tribes to join the new faith.

Next year twelve people from Madinah came during Hajj and the Prophet entered into an agreement with them at a place called Al-Aqabah in 621 CE. This agreement is known as the Covenant of Al-Aqabah.

In this pledge they agreed;

- a) To obey none but Allah,
- b) Neither to steal nor commit adultery,
- c) Neither to kill their children nor commit any evil and not to disobey Allah.

They were told by Muhammad that if they lived under this covenant, Allah would be pleased with them and reward them with Paradise.

When and where did the second-covenant of Al-Aqabah take place?

A second covenant with the Muslims of Madinah was concluded in 622 CE in the same place, Al-Aqabah. In all, seventy-three people including two women took part in this pledge.

They are;

- a) This covenant was an extension of the first.
- b) It was agreed that the Muslims of Madinah would protect and help the Prophet against all enemies.
- c) As they would protect their own women and children.
- d) All dangers which would arise out of this covenant were explained by Al-Abbas (Prophet's uncle) to the Madinite Muslims in clear terms.

But still the Madinite Muslims said "we take him (the Prophet) despite all threats to property, wealth and life. Tell us O Prophet of Allah ! What will be our reward, if we remain true to this oath?"

The Prophet answered "Paradise." They stretched out their hands to him and he to them, and in this way the covenant was concluded.

The second covenant included clauses about war situations which made it a duty for the Madinite Muslims to defend the Prophet in the event of external attack from Mecca.

With this agreement Muslims had a place to take shelter, an ally in time of war and danger.

Why did the Prophet (pbuh) change his working strategy after the second Covenant of Al-Aqabah?

Because, for thirteen years, he had tried his best to preach the message of Allah to the people of Mecca. But the Meccan soil was not fertile for this.

Madinah provided him with fresh, receptive ground where he saw the seed of Islam and decided to use evaluate this opportunity.

Why did Muhammad (pbuh) command the Muslims of Mecca to start emigrating to Madinah?

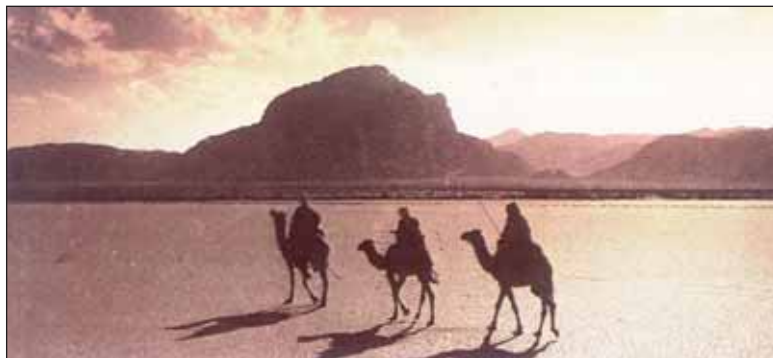
In order to strengthen the bond with the Muslims there the Meccan Muslims started moving to Madinah, individually and in small groups.

The Unbelievers tried ferociously to stop this and became even more malicious.

God praising the believers said in the Qur'an as to emigration:

"Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the Path of Allah, They have the hope of the Mercy of Allah and Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." (Baqara 2: 218)

"And say "Truth has (now) arrived and falsehood perished: for falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish." (Isra 17: 81)



The Hijrah: Initial steps of forming a new way of life and civilization

"Those who have left their homes and were driven out there from and suffered harm in My cause and fought and were slain. Verily, I will blot out from them their iniquities and admit them into Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath..." (Âl-i Imrân 3: 195)

"He who forsakes his home in the Cause of Allah. Finds in the Earth many a refuge... For Allah and His Messenger, His reward becomes due and sure with Allah and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful." (Nisâ 4: 100)

What is the Hijrah (Emigration)?

When the life became very difficult for Muslims in Madine, Muslims were obliged to leave their homes and lands for Makka for the sake of Allah and His Pleasure!

What are the meaning of Ansar (The Helpers) and Muhajirun (The Immigrants)?

a)The Muslims of Madinah are known as Ansar (Helpers).

b)And those of Mecca who emigrated from Mecca to Madinah are known as Muhajirun (Emigrants) in Islamic history.

Why was the Prophet (pbuh) waiting in Mecca with Abu-Bakr and Ali?

He was waiting for permission from Allah to emigrate himself. Abu Bakr, his closest friend stayed behind on the Prophet's advice. Ali, the cousin of the Prophet, also, stayed behind. Abu Bakr was to accompany the Prophet.

When did the Prophet (pbuh) emigrate to Madinah?

The Unbelievers potted to kill Muhammad (pbuh). The permission to migrate to Madinah also had come.

Muhammad secretly left Mecca at night in 622 CE with Abu Bakr. A specially formed group of unbelievers laid in wait at night around the

Prophet's house to kill him as he came out. Ali was left behind to sleep in the Prophet's bed and the Prophet quietly left. In the morning they found Ali in the Prophet's bed and were dumb-founded.

The Unbelievers fooled by the wit of the Prophet now organized a through search on the road to Madinah and offered a prize of 100 camels for the capture of Muhammad. Suraqah was almost successful but failed in the end. His horse fell down three times in his pursuit to kill Muhammad and in the end he gave up his sinister aim, taking the falls as bad Omens then he accepted Islam and became a Muslim.

How many days did they stay in the Cave Thawr?

The Prophet and his companion Abu Bakr had left just before dawn and proceeded to the Cave Thawr, to the south of Mecca. They stayed in the Cave for three days where Abu-Bakr's servant brought them food in the evenings. They left the Cave on the third day and started for Madinah.



The Cave-Thawr

Where is Quba?

It is a place near Madinah. The prophet spent a few days there before

proceeding to Madina. In Quba the Prophet waited for Ali who endangered his life for him. After fulfilling the mission assigned to him, Ali joined the Holy Prophet in Quba. Thus together they started towards Madina.

After a tiresome, exhausting and very difficult journey, the Prophet accompanied by Abu Bakr reached Quba. They stayed there for two weeks and the Prophet founded a Mosque in Quba.

The Quba Mosque which was founded by the Prophet is the first one to be built.

How did the Prophet enter Madinah?

The Prophet got on his camel and entered Madinah. The People of Madinah who had anxiously waited the arrival of Muhammad became very happy and excited when they found him among them.

They gave him a hero's welcome. Then the Prophet (pbuh) allowed his camel to kneel where it liked. It knelt first in a place which was owned by two orphans and got up to kneel finally in front of the house of Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari which became the first residence of the Prophet in Madinah.

Why the Hijrah of the Prophet is a new chapter in the history of Islam?

Hijrah has two sides ;

a) The sad and heart-breaking scene of leaving the beloved birth place. On the one hand a feeling of security and hope for the work of Islam more freely than before.

b) On the other, the Islamic Calendar started from the day of the Hijrah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) from Mecca to Madinah. Hijrah was the beginning of the new role for the Prophet as a Statesman and a Ruler. Thus his fifty three years of life in Mecca of which he spent thirteen eventful years as the Prophet of Allah ended.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S LIFE AT A GLANCE

Life in MECCA

YEARS	EVENTS
Birth	Monday, 22 nd April, 571 CE 12 Rabi' al-Awwal Father Abdallah died just before the Prophet's birth
At Six years of age	Death of mother Aminah
Eight	Grandfather Abd al-Muttalib died
Twelve	First business trip to Syria
Fifteen	Battle of Al-Fujar
Sixteen	Member of Hilf al-Fudul
Twenty four	Second business trip to Syria
Twenty five	Marriage with Khadijah
Thirty five	Settlement of Al-Hajar al-Aswad (BlackStone) dispute
Fourty	Prophethood in 610 CE
1 st Year of Prophethood	Fajr and Asr prayers 2 Rikats each
1 st -3 rd year	Secret preaching of Islam (Centre: Arqam Makhzumi's house)
At the end of 3 rd year	Open Call to Islam from Mount Safa
3 rd -5 th year	Hostility of Meccan infidels
5 th year	Migration of Muslims to Abyssinia (Ethiopia)
6 th year	Hamzah and Omar accepted Islam
7 th -9 th year	Boycott and Confinement by Meccan Infidels
10 th year	Year of Sorrow-Uncle Abu Talib and wife Khadijah died
10 th year	Visit to Ta'if
10 th year	Mi'raj, 27 Rajab
10 th year	Five times daily prayers made obligatory
11 th year	First Covenant of Al-Aqabah, 621
12 th year	Second Covenant of Al-Aqabah, 622
13 th year	Hijrah to Madinah, 27 Safar (622)



Al-Ka'bah in Mecca

Note: The Prophet's biographers differ about the exact year of his birth. Some have taken it to be 570 CE while others 569 CE. We have preferred late Allama Shibli Nu'mani's view from his famous *Sîrat an-Nabi* : 571 CE.

End of Meccan Period

What is the meaning of Madinat an-Nabi?

Madinah was known at that time as Yathrib, it came to be known as Madinat an-Nabi, the Prophet's city-after Muhammad's (pbuh) arrival. Later it became known simply as Madinah-Al-Munawwarah (The Illuminated / Enlightened City)

Where is Masjid an-Nabi?

It is in Madinah al-Munawwarah. The Prophet then decided to construct a Mosque in Madinah. Soon, work began at a place which was purchased from its Orphan owners.

This was the place where the Prophet's Camel (Quswa) had first knelt before it finally knelt in front of the house of Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari. The Prophet's residence was built next to the Mosque. Muhammad himself took part in the construction as an ordinary labourer.



The Masjid an-Nabi

Muhammad (pbuh) never hesitated to do any ordinary work, he used to mend his own clothes, repair his own shoes, do the shopping etc. In this respect he left for us a shining example.

How the prophet created Islamic brotherhood in Madinah?

The prophet's first task was to form a solid bond of Faith and brotherhood between the Ansar and the Muhajirun.

He called a meeting of both communities and asked the Ansars to become brothers of the Muhajirun. He also suggested that they should share their property and other belongings with their migrant brothers.

After having settled in Madina and building a mosque which was indeed the military and constitutional base of Muslims, the Prophet of Islam took the excellent initiative. He laid the foundation of Islamic brotherhood, so that great unity and sincerity could be created in Muslim society and so the emigrant Muslims would know that though they had lost a number of their friends and relatives and had been forced to leave their homeland, in return, they had gained brothers who were much more loyal and sympathetic from every point of view.

The Ansar did what they were asked by the Prophet. This was a rare event unmatched in human history, such was the powerful influence of Islam.

How many communities were there in Madinah?

The City had these communities:

- a) The Ansar (the Helpers) of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj,
- b) The Jews from the tribes of Qainuqa, Nadir and Quraizah,
- c) The migrants from Mecca,
- d) Christian people most of whom were slaves, not learned ones.
- e) Other religious groups: Maniheists and Mazdaists.

When did Madinah become the capital of the Islamic Community?

When Muhammad became the leader of the city with the cementing of the bond of brotherhood, he had virtually inaugurated the Islamic Society. Madinah then became the capital of Islamic Community, the first Islamic City State.

The Islamic State of Madinah knew no distinction between the ruler and his subjects. Every citizen belonged to Allah and enjoyed equal rights. Islam doesn't recognise any preference of one over another except on the basis of piety (Taqwa). In the Islamic State of Madinah, there was no discrimination on the basis of colour, class or descent. Allah's Messenger made a treaty with the Jews but the Jews did not live up their pledge and later betrayed it.

When was Qiblah changed?

In the second year of Hijrah (the Month of Sha'ban) Qiblah (the Direction of Prayer) was changed by revelation from Bait al-Maqdis in Jerusalem to Al-Ka'bah in Mecca.

THE BATTLES OF OUR PROPHET

Islam and Jihad

The Arabic word jihad means "struggle" or "exertion" and refers to any spiritual, moral or physical struggle. Upon returning from a battle, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "We are returning from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad-jihad against the self." For Muslims, jihad means struggle in the cause of God, which can take many

forms. In the personal sphere, efforts such as obtaining an education, trying to quit smoking, or controlling one's temper are forms of jihad.

Jihad as a military action is justified in two cases: struggle to defend oneself, or others, from aggression and struggle for freedom of religion and justice. The Qur'an says "Tumult and oppression are worse than killing" (Baqara 2: 217), and therefore must be thwarted. Human beings as responsible agents of God on earth are compelled to exert themselves to protect the oppressed and strive to create righteous societies.

Systematic, forced conversion to Islam is a historical myth. Muslims defeated hostile forces (Byzantines and Persians for example) and gained control of new lands where Islamic rule was established, yet non-Muslim inhabitants were not forced to become Muslims. Islam clearly condemns such actions: "There is no compulsion in religion" (Baqara, 2: 256). For various reasons, and in the course of time, many non-Muslims did find the message of Islam appealing, however, and converted to Islam, resulting ultimately in the transformation of society at all levels.

Because jihad is a highly nuanced concept, and because the term stems from an Arabic root meaning "struggle," the term "holy war" is an inappropriate rendering or definition.

This term in Islamic understanding is mostly associated with the right of protection and defense. Muslims fight in order to defend themselves and their lands against enemies not to gain land. In addition, Muslims have the responsibility of defending other miserable nations and of maintaining peace in the world.

Islam, the religion of peace, had to wage war to protect and establish itself. This has led to the vilification of Islam as a religion based on force and propagated by the sword. Islam was presented by a prophet who was socially, economically and politically a man without any worldly might. He and his followers were persecuted by all possible means for more than a decade before he began to use force against force to defend himself and the handful of his followers against ancient tribal savagery. They were deprived of all worldly goods, deprived of the means of securing their daily bread, exiled and made to flee from their homeland. Even for a long time when they thought they were strong

enough to hit back, they were restrained by the Prophet who was waiting for a time when they could succeed in their mission with the least possible bloodshed. They were striving to establish not only their own creed but general religious liberty, where everyone could follow his own convictions and beliefs, provided that he did not directly disrupt the minimum bonds of a peaceful social order. But how could a creed, whose fundamental principle was that 'there ought to be no compulsion in religion' as the Qur'an has put explicitly, compel people by force to accept it? The simple question is: Where did these users of the sword come from? If the sword converted people to Islam, who converted to people who used the sword? Terrible force was used against the Prophet when he had no force except the force of truth and the force of his faith. After the number of Muslims increased the same persecution continued. Then there came a time when they were left with only two alternatives: either to fight for their religious liberty or to perish. Who can blame Islam if it fought for its very existence?

Allah Almighty says in Qur'an:

"Against them (your enemies) make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war to strike terror into (the hearts) of the enemies of Allah and yours." (Anfal 8: 60)

"Allah has granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home) unto all (in Faith...)" (Nisâ 4: 95)

The Motives of the Wars of the Prophet

Prophet Muhammad and the Rightly-guided Khalifahs (caliphs) prohibited the killing of civilians and non-combatants in the course of warfare. The Qur'an says:

"Fight for the sake of God those who fight against you, but do not attack them first. God does not love the aggressors" (Baqara 2: 190).

Moreover, the Qur'an indicates that taking one life unjustly is like taking the life of all humanity, providing a strong moral deterrent

to indiscriminate bloodshed. Besides prohibiting the killing of non-combatants, the Qur'an and the Prophet also prohibited the torturing of prisoners and the senseless destruction of crops, animals and property.

Struggle against injustice and oppression is a key, distinctive concept in Islam. Through the ages, the concept of righteous struggle has inspired Muslim peoples and movements to stand up against wrong and oppression.

“O you who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is the closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do.”
(Maide 5: 8)

Unlike the self-centered rulers and kings all over the world who embark on wars for expansionist purposes, for the exploitation of human powers and the plunder of other people's wealth and natural resources, the Prophet of Islam refused to resort to the sword and fighting unless it was necessary and unavoidable. Instead, he advanced carrying the torch of the Holy Book and the divine laws and would get involved in war only to remove the thorns in the way of salvation, to hinder oppression and tyranny and to raise the flag of justice and truth.

The battles of the prophet were meant to remove those brutal selfish pagans from the scene who for their own satanic passions inflicted all kinds of oppressions against God's pure creatures. The pagans also prevented the circulation of Islamic beliefs which aimed at bringing peace and justice to all humans.

Can such a war be considered to be illegitimate and unjust? It goes without saying that such wars are necessary and no prophet could avoid combat those who intend to bring ruin on human societies.

Jesus Christ had a short period of prophecy (three years) and lived under conditions which did not permit war, so he did not attempt any war. Otherwise, he too would have destroyed the trouble makers of

human society. So it is unjust to propagate Islam as the religion of war. On the contrary, early Muslims must be commemorated gratefully because they sacrificed themselves in order to bring peace and justice to human beings that have lasted throughout centuries.

When was the battle of Badr take place?

The battle of Badr is the first battle of our prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It was made on the 17th of Ramadan of the second Hijrah.

Muhammad (pbuh) was a wise and practical man. He took steps to counter the dangers from both inside and outside of the city of Madinah.

News of the Meccan army reached the Prophet and he had decided to face them outside Madinah with the help of Allah.

What is Al-Badr?

Al-Badr is a place eighty miles from Madinah. Under the Prophet's command the army camped at Al-Badr. The Muslim army had only few horses, a small quantity of armour. This small army of three hundred and thirteen people but were full of faith. But the Meccan Army consisted of a thousand people. An encounter between the two armies took place on the 17th of Ramadan. They repelled the Meccan army and they left seventy dead and a further seventy were taken prisoner by the Muslims.

The battle of Badr proved beyond doubt that real strength lies in faith in Allah and not in army and ammunition. This battle determined the course of future history of the Muslims.

When was the battle of Uhud?

The Meccans could not forget the shattering blow inflicted on them by the Muslims at Badr. They were planning to revenge on. The following year was their year of preparation. The Prophet sent messengers and delegations to various parts of Arabia at that time. When the Prophet received news that an army of three thousand stronger includ-

ing two hundred horsemen was marching towards Madinah, he called elders and consulted them on the matter.

What were the opinions of elders as regards Uhud?

The wise elders of Madinah, among them Ansar and Muhajirun, favoured defence of Madinah from inside. But the young men alive with faith and vigour wanted a combat outside Madinah. They saw it as an opportunity to prove their faith. After Jumu'ah (Friday Prayer) the Prophet started out for Mount Uhud with an army of seven hundred Muslims. The Quarish of Mecca had already camped there.

The Prophet reached Uhud and after Dawn Prayer put the Muslim army into position. He took particular care to place fifty archers under the command of Abdallah bin Jubair to protect a strategic mountain pass and ordered them not to leave their position under any circumstances.

The two armies faced each other in the morning. The Muslim army got the upper land. But most of the archers stationed in the mountain pass joined in the collection of booty.

When was Hamza martyred?

Abdallah bin Jubair and six other archers who had not left their position put up a desperate fight until finally all of them were martyred.

Khalid bin Walid, one of the Meccan commanders, overcame the Muslim army by surprise and soon the Muslim's celebration ended in grief.

They found themselves surrounded and in the fighting that followed Hamza the prophet's uncle and a great warrior was martyred by Wahshi. Many other Muslim's became Shahid and the Prophet himself suffered injury.

What happened before the Battle of Ahzab (Trenches)?

Badr had been a fatal blow to the dreams of the Meccans. At UHUD their mission remained unfulfilled. But it gave them new impetus to launch another attack. Because their impression of the invincibility of the Muslims had been shaken. News of these sinister moves reached the Prophet and he consulted his companions about preparations to counter the latest enemy offensive.

Salman, a Persian Muslim, suggested 'digging-trenches' round the city to hold the enemy horses outside when the Meccan army headed for Madina at the battle of Ahzab (Trenches). The decision was made to face the enemy from within the city and Salman al-Farsi advised 'digging-trenches round the city to hold the enemy hordes outside. This novel idea was put into effect.

Deep, wide trenches were dug round the whole of Madinah and it took twenty days to complete the digging. Muhammad (pbuh) himself



took part in the digging. After the trenches had been completed the Prophet placed the Muslims in position to defend the city from inside.

An allied force ten thousand stronger marched against Madinah in the fifth year of the Hijrah. The number was very large.

The enemy could not understand this new war technique. They were greatly astonished. They had no other alternative but to wait and see.

But for how long? A long and boring wait for about four weeks made them (Meccans) very weary, tired and restless, the stocks of food and other supplies of the enemy were dwindling and they felt worried and anxious.

A treacherous plot during this siege was hatched by the enemy to instigate a surprise attack on the Muslims at the night by the Jews of the Banu Quraizah who were still in Madinah at the time. The Prophet heard of the plot and took measures to foil it with sending a message to the Jews in Madinah.

How did Allah the Almighty help the Muslims at the battle of Ahzab (Trenches)?

Allah, Almighty is always with the lovers of truth. His help is crucial for the success. It was time the Muslims besieged in Madinah, badly needed such help indeed. They did get that help.

The weather changed suddenly, strong winds, thunder and heavy rain storms made the enemy flee in disarray, soldiers were trampled under foot by horses and camels in the rush. The hordes eventually fled in a wild frenzy.

What a scene it must have been and what a timely intervention by Allah. And the enemies were greatly dispirited. While the Muslims were equally relieved and elated. The Muslims expressed their gratitude to Allah, the Merciful for His timely help.

When did Hudaibiyah treaty take place?

In the sixth year of the Hijrah the Prophet announced his people to pay a visit to Al-Ka'bah in Mecca for Short Pilgrimage (Umrah). He set out

with 1400 of his followers who were under strict orders not to carry any weapons, except their travelling sword.

The Quraish of Mecca knew fully well that the only purpose of the Prophet's visit was pilgrimage but how could they let the Muslims enter Mecca when they had not been able to enter Madinah?

They decided that the Muslims had to be stopped. Plans were put in hand. The top generals Khalid and Ikrimah were alerted to be ready with their armies to stop the Prophet and his followers from entering Mecca.

The Muslims continued their journey to Mecca until they had reached a place called Hudaibiyah, a place near Mecca where the Hudaibiyah treaty was signed between the Quraish and Prophet.

The Quraish were in no mood to allow the Muslims in for the Pilgrimage that year. They (Quraish) made it an issue of prestige and pride. It was humiliating for the Muslims but what could they do? Allah's Messenger was their leader and all his steps had to be followed.

Eventually after intense negotiations an agreement between the Quraish and the Prophet was signed. This agreement is the Hudaibiyah agreement.

The conditions were as follow;

- 1) The Muslims would not visit Mecca that year but would come a year later and remain there only for three days.
- 2) There would be one-sided extradition the Meccans taking refuge with the Prophet would be handed over to the Quraish on demand but Muslims taking refuge in Mecca would not be handed over to the Prophet.
- 3) There would be peace for ten years and during this period, Muslims could go to Mecca and Ta'if and the Quraish could go to Syria through the Muslim areas.
- 4) Each party would remain neutral in the event of a war between the other and a third party.
- 5) Any tribe wishing to sign an agreement with either the Muslims or the Quraish would be able to do so.

The terms of the agreement were apparently very unfavourable for

the Muslims but it turned out to be a favourable one for them in the end.

The Muslims were disheartened but they were soon given the news of victory by Allah. It was revealed;

“Surely we have granted you a clear victory.” (Fath 48: 1)

In fact, during the years that followed the Hudaibiyah treaty, the number of new Muslims increased dramatically. Khalid bin Walid who later became the most famous general in Islamic Victory and Amr ibn al-As the conqueror of Egypt became Muslims during this time.

The Treaty proved beyond doubt that the Prophet and the Muslims stood for peace. It also later paved the way for the escape of the detained Muslims in Mecca as the extradition clause was later dropped on the initiative of the Meccans.

The Hudaibiyah agreement also opened the way to the conquest of Mecca in 630 (the eighth year of Hijrah).



The place where Hudaibiyah treaty was signed

Why did the Prophet send letters to the rulers of different countries?

During the following years of the Hudaibiyah treaty, the Prophet sent emissaries to the Roman Emperor, the Persian Emperor, the Ruler of Egypt, the King of Abyssinia, the Chiefs of Syria and other leaders, invit-

ing them to accept Islam. Sending letters to other states, the Prophet signified that Madinah City State regarded itself a state among others, but the prophet signed these letters as ‘prophet of God’, not as the ruler of Madinah.

When was the Battle of Khaiber?

In the seventh year of Hijrah an expedition was made against the Jews of Banu Nadir who were expelled to Khaibar. Khaibar became the center of anti-Islamic activities and Prophet decided to take action against trouble makers there. After a long siege and protracted battles in a number of different places the fortress of the Jews was conquered and a center of anti-Islamic activities was destroyed.

What did the Treaty of Hudaibiyah bring to the tribes?

The strength of the Muslims was on the increase and new followers were joining. The Hudaibiyah treaty gave freedom to the Tribes to make agreements with either the Quraish or the Muslims.

For example; the tribe of Banu Khuza’ah sided with the Muslims. While Banu Bakr went on the side of the Quraish. Two years after the agreement Banu Bakr attacked Banu Khuza’ah while they were asleep. Banu Khuza’ah took refuge in Al-Ka’bah.

The news of this violation of the treaty reached the prophet and he sent an ultimatum to the Quraish asking them to accept any of the following options.

- 1) To pay compensation for the victims of the Banu Khuza’ah;
- 2) To withdraw their support for Banu Bakr.
- 3) To declare that the Hudaibiyah agreement no longer holds valid.

The Quraish did not agree to the first two options and declared the Hudaibiyah treaty to be null and void.

The Prophet then had no alternative but to take action against the Quraish.

When the Quraish did not agree the options of the Prophet’s ultimatum the Prophet set forth for Mecca with an army of ten thousand

and took care to see that the news of his advance remained a secret. It was the tenth of the month of Ramadan in the eighth year of Hijrah. The Quraish had no power to resist the mighty Muslim advance. All the famous warriors were now on the Muslim side. How could the Quraish fight? They were totally demoralised by the might of the Muslim army. Abu Sufian, arch-enemy of the Prophet, saw that there was no route to escape. He asked Al-Abbas, the prophet's uncle, to take him to the Prophet. Muhammad (pbuh) granted an unconditional pardon for Abu Sufian.

When was Mecca conquered?

The Muslim army entered Mecca without incident. It was the tenth of the month of Ramadan in the eighth year of Hijrah. Inside Meccans locked themselves with in their homes and only a few who were unable to accept the new situation put up vain resistance.

What did the Prophet declare for Meccans after the conquest?

The Prophet declared a general amnesty for the entire community of Mecca. He forgave them for their past crimes. It was a unique scene! The Quraish could not believe it. But even if they were unable to understand, it was the beauty and splendour of Islam which Muhammad (pbuh), Allah's Messenger, was trying to make them comprehend. Now they saw it with their own eyes. It was Muhammad whom they compelled to migrate called a sorcerer crazy and an apostate. Now it was the same Muhammad who granted pardon to them. Now Mecca was safe, peaceful and free of vengeance and enmity, everyone enjoyed peace.

The Conquest of Mecca without any bloodshed is a memorable event in Islamic History. The amnesty granted by the Prophet was unique and unmatched. The greatness of Islam and its Prophet is proved splendidly in the conquest of Mecca. Where can one find an example of such forgiveness and mercy? It is only in Islam which is the only way to real-peace and happiness. The Prophet stayed at Mecca until the 9th Shawwal of eight Hijrah.

The Prophet completed his mission. He sustained every sort of trial

and tribulation for the sake of his Lord and Creator. For twenty three long years he worked hard to make the rule of Allah supreme on Earth. He carried out this onerous duty on the soil of Arabia. A country which was most reluctant to accept the rule of the One Allah.

When and where did the Prophet deliver his Farewell Address?

The system to guide mankind for all eternity was now completed. The Prophet could feel that his days were coming to an end. After the performance of the last Hajj, he delivered his Farewell-speech at Arafah, in the presence about 120.000 of his followers.

This speech was one of the most memorable event in the whole History of Islam. The Prophet delivered his speech sitting on his camel and devoted followers listened intently to every word of it.

THE FAREWELL SPEECH OF THE PROPHET

The way to guide mankind for all eternity was now completed. The Prophet could feel that his days were coming to an end.

The Prophet delivered his speech sitting on his camel and devoted followers listened intently to every word of it.

Praising and thanking Allah, the Prophet said:

“O people! Listen to my words carefully, for I know not whether I would meet you again on such an occasion.

O people! Just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Remember that you will indeed appear before Allah and be questioned for your actions.

Return the things kept with you as a trust (Amanah) to their rightful owners. All dues of interest shall stand cancelled and you will have only your capital back; Allah has forbidden interest, and I cancel the dues of interest payable to my uncle “Abd al-Muttalib.”

O people! Your wives have a certain right over you and you have certain rights over them. Treat them well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers.

Beware of Satan, he is desperate to divert you from the worship of Allah, so beware of him in matters of your religion.

O people! Listen carefully! All the believers are brothers. You are not allowed to take the things belonging to another Muslim unless he gives it to you willingly.

O people! None is higher than the other unless lies is higher in obedience to Allah. No Arab is superior to a non-Arab except in piety.

O people! Reflect on my words. I leave behind me two things, the Qur'an and my example, and if you follow these, you will not fail.

Listen to me carefully Worship Allah and perform Salah, observe Sawm in the month of Ramadan and pay Zakah.

O people! Be mindful of those who work people under you. Feed and clothe them as you feed and clothe yourselves.

O people! No prophet or messenger will come after me and no new Faith will emerge.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others, and those to others again.

Have I conveyed the message of Allah to you, o people? "asked the Prophet facing towards the heavens. The audience answered in one voice "Yes, you have; Allah is the witness."

As the Prophet finished, the following revelation came to him:

"... Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as the true way of your life." (Maide 5: 3).

What is the meaning of sad news?

Back in Madinah, the Prophet was taken ill. His health deteriorated and illness became serious. He was unable to lead Salah. So, he asked Abu Bakr, his closest friend, to lead Salah for him.

During the last days of illness, He had terrible headaches. The disease eventually took the life of the Prophet the most illustrious personality in the history of mankind.

It was heart-breaking news for the Muslims. At first, they could not believe it. Omar, one of the well-known companions of the Prophet became so furious about the news that he threatened to kill anyone who said Muhammad (pbuh) was dead. It was the depth of his love and attachment to the Prophet that made him behave this way.

What did Abu Bakr say to the crowd waiting outside the Mosque after his death?

The Prophet was a man, he was mortal. He died however painful and upsetting the news was for the Muslims. They had to believe it.

Abu Bakr, pale and saddened with grief went in and kissed the prophet's forehead. He came out weeping to the waiting crowd outside the mosque. He heard what Omar had said. He addressed the crowd with tears in his eyes but a firm voice: "Surely he who worshipped Muhammad (pbuh) should know that Muhammad (pbuh) is dead. But he who worshipped Allah should know that Allah is alive and never dies. Abu Bakr then recited the verse of the Qur'an:

"Muhammad is but a messenger and messengers have passed away before him. Will it be that when he dies or is slain you will turn back on your heels? He who turns back does no harm to Allah and Allah will reward the thankful." (Âl-i Imrân 3: 144)

These words of Abu Bakr brought the Muslims back to face hard reality and instilled in them confidence and hope, for Allah was there to help them and the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet were there to guide them.

When was the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) breathed his last?

Muhammad (pbuh), Allah's last Messenger on Earth and supreme example for mankind, breathed his last on 12 Rabi'ul Awwal 11 AH (8th) June, 632 (CE), at the age of sixty three. And he was buried on the night of 13th Rabi'ul-Awwal of the 11th Hijrah.

**Life in MADINAH
YEARS**

EVENTS

1 st Year of Hijrah	Arrival at Quba, 8 Rabi' al-Awwal Arrival at Madinah, 622 CE Construction of Masjid an-Nabi Establishment of First Islamic State
2 nd year of Hijrah	Treaty with the Jews Jihad ordained, 12 Safar Adhan and Zakah introduced Revelation about the change of Qiblah Fasting was prescribed Eid al-Fitr, 1 st Shawwal Battle of Badr, 17 Ramadan Marriage of Ali and Fatimah, after Badr Siege of Banu Qainuqa
3 rd year of Hijrah	Restriction on drinking wine revealed Battle of Uhud, 5 Shawwal First order about Riba (Interest) revealed Revelation of Laws about orphans, after Uhud Laws of Inheritance revealed Revelation of the Laws about marriage and the rights of women
4 th year of Hijrah	Verses on veil revealed Revelation about the prohibition of drinking wine
5 th year of Hijrah	Battle of Dumatul Jandal and Battle of Banu Al-Mustaliq Laws about Adultery and Slander revealed Battle of Ahzab, Punishment of Banu Quraizah
6 th year of Hijrah	Hudaibiyah agreement
7 th year of Hijrah	Khalid and Amr Ibnul As accepted Islam Letters to rulers of different countries including Iran and Roman emperor, Battle of Khaibar Performance of postponed Umrah
8 th year of Hijrah	Laws about marriage and divorce revealed Battle of Mu'tah, Conquest of Mecca, 20 Ramadan Battle of Hunain, month of Shawwal, Siege of Ta'if Final order prohibiting Riba (Interest) revealed
9 th year of Hijrah	Battle of Tabuk Order of Jiziah (Protection Tax on minorities) revealed Hajj prescribed
10 th year of Hijrah Death	Farewell Adress, 9 Du'l-Hijjah 12 Rabi' al-Awwal, 11 Hijrah (632 CE)

CHAPTER IV
THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CHALIPHS
(Khulafa ar-Râshidîn)

ABU BAKR (ra)

After the death of the Prophet the problem of governing muslim community became a big problem. Now that the Prophet died, who would lead the Islamic Community? That was the question in the minds of all muslims. It was a crucial matter. A community could not continue without a leader. There was much discussion on the question of leadership.

After discussion and argument Abu Bakr was elected unanimously as the Leader of the Muslim Community. He was the first to succeed the Prophet and was the first caliph (or Successor to the Prophet) of the Muslims. Who else could lead the Muslim Community at this crucial moment except Abu Bakr?

He was the closest friend of the Prophet and acted as the Prophet's deputy, leading the prayers when the Prophet was ill.

Who was Abu Bakr?

Abu Bakr's real name was Abdallah. His father Uthman was known as Abu Quhafah and his mother Salma, was known as Ummul-Khair. Abu Bakr was two and a half years younger than Muhammad.

His title is As-Siddiq. Siddiq is he who testifies the truth. Abu Bakr was the first among the Prophet's Friends to accept Islam at the beginning. He accompanied the Prophet during the Hijrah to Madinah. Abu Bakr was a merchant. He set free many slaves including Bilal and

Umayyeh bin Quhafah. He participated in all the battles the Prophet maintained against unbelievers.

How did Abu Bakr address the Muslims after the Prophet's death?

Being elected as the Caliph, Abu Bakr addressed the Muslims with those words:

"O People, I have been chosen by you as your leader although I am not better than any one of you. If I do any good, give me your support. If I do any wrong, set me right."

"Listen, truth is honesty and untruth is dishonesty."

"The weak among you are the powerful in my eyes, as long as I do not get them their due. The powerful among you are weak in my eyes, as long as I do not take away from them what is due to others."

"Listen carefully! If People give up striving for the cause of Allah, He will send down disgrace upon them. If a People become evil-doers, Allah will send down calamities upon them."

"Obey me as long as I obey Allah and His Messenger. If I disobey Allah and His Messenger, You are free to disobey me."

Abu Bakr was asking people to obey him only if he obeyed Allah and His Messenger. Such was the first caliph of the Muslims. Indeed the world would be a better place to live in if we had leaders like Abu Bakr.

Abu Bakr enjoyed his Faith more than anything else. At Badr, his son Abdur-Rahman was fighting on the side of the unbelievers. After accepting Islam, Abdur-Rahman once said to his father:

"O, Father! At Badr-War, you were twice under my sword, but my love for you held my hand back. "To this, Abu Bakr replied: "Son, if I had you only once under my sword, you would have been no more."

At the time of the battle of Tabuk, Abu Bakr donated all his belongings to the War Fund, and when the Prophet asked: "What have you left for your family? Abu Bakr replied: "Allah and His Messenger."

He died on 21 Jumadi-ul-Akhir, 13 AH (22 August 634 CE). His rules lasted two years and three months. One of many contributions of Abu

Bakr was the collection and compilation of the Qur'an. Abu Bakr lived a simple, pious and upright life. He was a true Servant of Allah and a follower of the Prophet.

What were the Abu Bakr's advices to the Muslim Army?

- 1) Always fear Allah, He knows what hearts have.
- 2) Be kind to those who are under you and treat them well.
- 3) Give brief directions, for directions that are too long are likely to be forgotten.
- 4) Improve your own conduct before asking other to improve theirs.
- 5) Always tell the truth, so that you get the right advice.
- 6) Give up bad company.

What did the Abu Bakr declare about Zakah?

The news of the Prophet's death made some new Muslims think that the Islamic State would crumble and so they refused to pay the Zakah. These new Muslims couldn't accustom their new Faith and its requirements until then. Abu Bakr declared: "By Allah ! Even if a single kid is due from a man, he must give it. If he refuses I will declare war against him.

Who were the renegades and impostors at the time of Abu Bakr?

1) Tolaihah 2) Musailimah 3) Malik bin Nuwairah 4) Aswad Ansi and a woman named Sajah, claimed they were Prophets and created deal of confusion.

What did Abu Bakr do against these renegades and impostors?

Abu Bakr quickly took strong action against these impostors. Khalid bin Walid was sent to deal with Tolaihah, who fled to Syria and later became a Muslim. Malik bin Nuwairah was killed. Ikrimah and Shurahbil were sent to take action against Musailimah but they were defeated

and Abu Bakr dispatched Khalid bin Walid to tackle the notorious Musailimah. Wahshi, who was the killer of Hamzah at Uhud War and became muslim after the Conquest of Mecca, killed Musailimah and compensated for his earlier mistake that he made when he had killed Hamzah, the Prophet's Uncle.

OMAR (ra)

Omar bin Al-Khattab was a very powerful man. He was a very brave and straight forward person. He was a strong disciplinarian. He was uncompromising in basic principles. He was a great and talented ruler. He became Muslim in the sixth year of the prophethood of Muhammad. His embrace Islam gave a strong impetus to the Muslims. Before him, Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle became a Muslim. He was also a powerful man. The acceptance of these two great and brave men was a turning point in the history of the early Islamic movement.

Omar (ra) is the second caliph of the Muslims. He is famous in Islamic History as Al-Faruq, one who distinguishes between right and wrong or one who puts the standard. Abu Bakr, before his death, consulted the Senior Companions of the Prophet and selected Omar (ra) as the second Caliph of the Muslims. Omar al-Faruq ruled the Islamic State for ten years, six months and four days. During his caliphate, the frontiers of the Islamic State expanded enormously.

How did caliph Omar go to Jerusalem?

Muslims laid siege to Damascus during caliph (khalifah) Abu Bakr. It continued after Abu Bakr's death and lasted 70 days during the rule of Omar. After the long siege, Khalid took the Romans by surprise and entered the City. The Governor surrendered and a peace treaty was signed.

Meanwhile Amr ibn al-As was laying siege to Jerusalem, later Khalid, Abu Ubadah and others joined him there. The Christians had little hope and decided to give in. They put forward a proposal to the Muslims that they would hand over the City, if caliph Omar himself came to

Jerusalem. The proposal were relayed to Madinah and the Caliph agreed to go to Jerusalem.

He started out for the city with one attendant riding a camel. They would ride the camel in turn. Sometimes the Caliph would walk and the attendant would ride and another time the Caliph would ride and the attendant would walk by the camel. This is Islamic justice. The Ruler and the ruled have equal rights. The Rulers of the Islamic State must acknowledge the rights of the citizens over their own rights.

The Caliph of the Muslims entered Jerusalem dressed in ordinary clothes and flanked by the Muslim Generals. The Christians could hardly believe the Muslim rider had arrived. Such was the simplicity of Omar. He used to live like a very humble ordinary man. But he was tough. And the most able ruler of his time. He had no pride, no pomp and no grandeur.

This is what present day Muslim rulers have forgotten and is what we must restore and get back. An agreement was signed, which guaranteed the safety and security of the Christians in Jerusalem.

During the caliphate of Omar, vast areas of the Roman and Persian Empires and the whole of Egypt were brought under Islamic Rule. Omar (ra) was a gifted orator. He was very concerned for the welfare of the citizens under his rule. He left a memorable legacy for Muslims after him.

The second caliph Omar died after being stabbed by Firoz, a non-muslim person nicknamed Abu Lu'lu. Firoz complained to Omar about his master Mughirah bin Shu'bah, who imposed a tax on him. Omar (ra) heard the details of the complaint and told Firoz that the tax was reasonable. This made Firoz angry and the next day during dawn prayer, Firoz struck the caliph with a dagger six times wounding him fatally. Omar al-Faruq died three days later in 23 AH (644 CE).

Before his death, Omar had appointed a six-man committee to elect his successor among themselves. They were:

- 1) Uthman bin Affan

- 2) Abdurrahman bin Avf
- 3) Ali bin Abu Talib
- 4) Zubair bin Awwam
- 5) Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas
- 6) Talha bin Ubaidullah.

What were Omar's advices to the Muslim army?

They are :

- 1) Do not be misled by someone's reputation.
- 2) Do not judge a person only by his performance the Salah and Sawm rather look into his truthfulness and wisdom.
- 3) Fear the Person whom you hate.
- 4) Do not defer your work for tomorrow.
- 5) One who has no idea of evil can easily fall into its trap.
- 6) Be grateful to him who points out your defects.

UTHMAN (ra)

Uthman is the third caliph of Islam. He was born six years after the Prophet and he belonged to the Umayyah-Tribe of the Quraish. He was a cloth merchant and was very rich. He had accepted Islam on Abu Bakr's invitation and migrated to Abyssinia with his wife. He acted as the Prophet's envoy during Hudaibiyah agreement. He was known as Zhin-Nûreyn. His wife was Ruqaiyyah (Prophet's daughter).

How was the personality of Uthman (ra)?

Uthman (ra) was a simple and a very kind hearted man. His state policy can be understood from his letter to the officers of the Islamic army and from the speech he made to the tax collectors. His simplicity and kindness did not allow him to take strong action against the trouble makers and rioters. Above all, because of his simple mindlessness, his administration was not as disciplined as it had been during Omar. Uthman was a generous man. He used to spend a lot of money for

Islam and for setting the slaves free. He was a great pious man. He feared and loved Allah much more than everything else.

Which countries came under muslim rule during the caliphate of Uthman?

During the caliphate of Uthman the rebellion in Adharbaijan and Armenia was completed. Muawiyah, Governor of Syria, with the help of Abi Sarah, the governor of Egypt made a naval attack on Cyprus and brought it under Islamic Rule. Vast areas of North Africa including Tripoli, Tunisia and Morocco were brought under Islamic Rule during the caliph Uthman.

How was Uthman elected as the third caliph of Islam?

The six member of committee, appointed by Omar al-Faruq, after long debates and consultation elected Uthman as the third Caliph of Islam.

Uthman's caliphate lasted twelve years. He was murdered by rioters on Friday (17 Dhu'l-Hijjah) in 35 AH (656 CE).

ALI (ra)

Ali (ra) is the fourth, caliph of the Muslims and the son of Abu Talib the Prophet's uncle. Ali was married to the Prophet's daughter, Fatimah and they had two sons (Hasan and Hosain), whom the Prophet loved very dearly as his grandsons.

He very much loved the prophet. The following words of Ali, the cousin of the Prophet were spoken in the presence of the elders of Quraish during the dinner hosted by the Prophet to invite them to Islam: "I am the youngest of you, I may be a boy, my feet may not be strong enough, but O Messenger of Allah, I shall be your helper. Whoever opposes you, I shall fight him as a mortal enemy."

When was Ali elected as the fourth caliph of Islam?

Ali was the person who risked his life for the Prophet and slept in the Prophet's bed when the unbelievers laid a siege around the

Prophet's house to kill him at the night of the Prophet's migration. Then the same Ali was elected the fourth caliph of Islam after Uthman (ra). He took part in the battles of Badr, Ahzab and Khaibar. At Khaibar, it was Ali who subdued the Jews by his furious assault.

Ali held many important positions during the life of the Prophet and three caliphs before him. He was elected caliph at a very delicate time when the Muslim Ummah (community) was torn by internal strife and the sad incident of the murder of Uthman. Ali had to spend much of his time pacifying the warring fractions of the Muslims. He tried to do his best to reconcile the opposing groups.

During this turmoil, Ali, the fourth caliph of Islam, was fatally wounded during Salat al-Fajr by Ibn Muljim. Ali died on Friday 20 Ramadan (AH 40) (659 CE).

Ali's rule lasted for four years nine months and whole of that period, unfortunately, was the time of unrest and chaos.

How was the personality of Ali (ra)?

Ali lived a very simple and austere life. He was a very generous and courageous person and had a sharp sense of justice. He had a love of learning and he was a great and learned person himself. He had been given the Title of "Gate of Learning" by the Prophet. He was also called Asadullah (Lion of Allah).

What are the some important sayings of Ali (ra)?

- 1) "One who knows himself, knows his Creator."
- 2) "If you love Allah, tear out your heart's love of the world."
- 3) "The fear of Allah makes one secure."
- 4) "Three defects make life miserable" :
 - a) Vindictiveness
 - b) Jealousy
 - c) A bad Character.
- 5) "The best man is he who is most helpful to his fellowmen."
- 6) "Virtue is the key to success."
- 7) "There is no treasure like knowledge."
- 8) "Who never corrects himself will never correct another."

THREE GREAT MUSLIM WOMEN

KHADIJAH (ra)

Khadijah is the great Muslim lady, (Khadijah al-Kubra). Prophet says about her "When none believed me Khadijah did. She made me a partner in her wealth." Khadijah, the daughter of Khuwailid was born 15 years before the year of the Elephant in 555 CE. Her mother was Fatimah bint Zaidah. She was a noble, fine natured wealthy lady of Mecca. She married the Prophet when she was 40 or 28 according to some narrations and he was 25. They had seven children;

Three boys; Qasim, Tahir and Tayyib

Four girls; Zainab, Ruqaiyyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah.

She lived with the Prophet for 25 years and was the Prophet's only wife during that time. Khadijah's wealth was used for the cause of Islam. During the prophethood the Quraish did all they could to stop the Prophet preaching Islam. But, that did not work. The prophet continued his mission, relying on Allah. Khadijah was his source of encouragement and comfort. She also had to bear enormous strain and suffering during the Boycott for three years.

The great Muslim Lady Khadijah, the first Muslim, died on 10 Ramadan in the tenth year of the prophethood, in 620 CE. Her death was a great loss to Muhammad (pbuh). He loved Khadijah so dearly that after her death He used to remember her very often. The Angel Jibrail used to bring Salam for her from Allah.

Fatimah az-Zahra became so sad at her mother's death that she stuck to her Father and continued crying, "Where is my mummy? Where is my mummy? The Prophet consoled her and told her of the good news of Khadijah's acceptance by Allah in Paradise. Young Muslim girls should know how devoted Khadijah was to her husband and how much she did for him for the cause of Allah. The Muslims of the present day would feel proud to have such a wife.

FATIMAH (ra)

Fatimah, the youngest of the four daughters of the Prophet, was born five years before the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh) and migrated to Madinah after the Prophet together with her sisters and step mother Sawdah. After the death of her mother Khadijah, she served her father with total devotion and love. The Prophet loved her very much and kept her with him in deep affection. She was loved by all the wives of the Prophet. She looked like her mother Khadijah and this reminded people of her Great Mother. Fatimah az-Zahra is known as leader of the women.

Ali was married with Fatimah, after the battle of Badr, in a simple marriage ceremony. The guests were served dates and drinks made from honey. She was about 18 years old. Her marriage life was happy and peaceful. Ali her husband, respected her and the Prophet always used to advise Fatimah to serve her husband in every respect. She kept her house neat and tidy and gave it a simple pure and peaceful look where happiness and good fortune prevailed.

They had five children :

Three sons; Hasan, Husain and Muhassin (Muhassin died a baby).

Two daughters; Zainab and Ummu Kulthum.

According to Hadiths Fatimah was regarded as a great and respected lady by the women of her day. Because of her personality, kindness, politeness and dignity, Fatimah resembled her father very closely in habits, traits and in conversation. When she came to any meetings of the Prophet, he used to get up for her and make room for her to sit by his side. Fatimah took part in the battle of Uhud War and nursed the wounded Muslim soldiers. She bandaged the wound sustained by the Prophet during the battle. She also took part in the battle of the Conquest of Mecca. The Prophet was always seen off by Fatimah when He was going out from Madinah and was met by her when He returned home.

Fatimah took part in the battle of Uhud and also in the battle of the Conquest of Mecca.

The Prophet said: "Among the women in the whole world, four are great :1) Khadijah 2) Fatimah 3) Mary (Maryam) 4) Asiyah (wife of Pharaoh (Fir'awn)).

Fatimah died after a few months of the death of the Prophet, on 3 Ramadan in 11 AH at the age of 30. Before her death, she willed that her body be carried for burial prayers in such a way that no one could recognize whether it was the body of a male or female. Since she died so soon after the death of the Prophet, she could narrate no more than eighteen or nineteen Hadiths. Fatimah was an ideal Muslim daughter, wife and mother. Her life should be an example for Muslim girls of all ages.

A'ISHAH (ra)

Who was A'ishah?

A'ishah (ra) was born in 613 or 614 CE in Mecca, in the fourth year of the Prophet's mission. Her father was Abu Bakr, the closest friend of the Prophet and the first caliph of Islam. Her mother was Umm Ruman. A'ishah was a great Muslim Lady. She was very talented and had a wonderful memory and a quick eye. She had a great love of learning and became noted for her intelligence, learning and sharp sense of judgement. She grew up in an Islamic environment. Her father was a great Muslim and the Prophet himself was a frequent visitor to their house. She became a Muslim as soon as she became an adult. During her childhood, A'ishah memorized quite a number of Surahs of the Qur'an. Her father was a man of learning and she inherited his love of knowledge. A'ishah and her elder sister, Asma helped in packing for the famous Hijrah of the Prophet.

This great Muslim Lady was married to the Prophet (pbuh) after the death of his first wife, Khadijah, and was engaged to the Prophet when she was nine. But she only went to live with him when she was 15. She loved and enjoyed serving her husband. She used to do the household works, including grinding flour and baking bread. She always kept water ready for the Prophet's ablutions before prayer.

The Prophet did not love her only for her physical beauty but for her intelligence, sound judgement and personality. She would inform Muslims about internal life of the Prophet and enlighten them. If A'ishah loved anyone more than her husband Muhammad (pbuh) it was Almighty Allah. This was the teaching of the Prophet.

A'ishah (ra) had the good fortune to be trained under the care of the greatest teacher of mankind prophet Muhammad. This training made her one of the most notable Muslim Ladies in Islamic History. She taught Islam to many people. She was an authority on many matters of Islamic Law. Especially on these concerning women. She narrated 2,210 Hadiths. Her life shows to what high status a Muslim woman can rise. Before Islam, woman had no status in society. Islam gave them a very important position and made them indispensable part of the community.

The Prophet used to live a very simple life. There were occasions when the family had nothing to eat and times when guests were served with whatever they had while they went hungry themselves. They believed that the comfort of the life after death was far more important to them than the comforts of this World. This also is the teaching of Islam.

A'ishah was totally devoted to the Prophet, her husband and he loved her very dearly. She used to accompany the Prophet in Prayers. They used to remain standing for long periods in prayer weeping and asking Allah's forgiveness. The Prophet fell ill in 11 AH and A'ishah Nursed him with a love and care of a devoted wife. He died in her lap.

A'ishah died at the age of 67 on 17 Ramadan (58 AH). A'ishah's life is an example for young Muslim girls who should try to follow her devotion and love for her husband and her special interest in knowledge and learning.

CHAPTER V GENERAL TOPICS

A- SOCIAL LIFE in ISLAM

Human interaction is naturally necessary because people are endowed with different abilities and capacities. God has made people to need one another and depend on one another, to live in community and society.

A word commonly used for community in Islam is Jamaa'ah. The Muslim community or jamaa'ah is guided by firm principles of what is right and what is wrong based on the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet. These are the sources for the moral and legal code of Islam. The Holy Qur'an describes what is the nature and purpose of the best communities. It sets out the conditions that are necessary for strong and stable communities. It establishes principles or supreme values which help to guide the community through changing times and conditions. It provides a range of institutions which anchor the community. It defines the roles of various people in the community including leaders, scholars, businesspeople, and others. And the main purpose of Islam in organising this structure is to protect the interests of all people.

Everyone in a Muslim community, regardless of the colour of his skin, the language he speaks, or the place of his birth has a duty to work for the realisation of the purposes of the community. This is not only because of narrow self-interest and need, but stems from the moral duty to strive to be 'the best community commanding the good, forbidding evil and believing in God', as described by the Qur'an.

The Muslim community has been described by the noble Prophet as having mutual support and compassion and acting like 'a single body, when one part of which is afflicted, the other parts feel pain and fever'. The Qur'an also describes the community of believers as forming 'a solid well-knit structure'.

Thus, if you as an individual in an Islamic society feel indifferent to your community or society, if you do not feel concern and pain when it is hurt, you should regard yourself as a selfish sinner; your morals are in trouble, your conscience is in disorder and your faith is undermined. You may not even be justified in claiming to be part of this community for the noble Prophet has said: "Whoever does not concern himself with the affairs of Muslims is not one of them."

The following principles should be followed in order to create a justice community which consists of happy and comfortable people:

- submission to God alone
- freedom governed by responsibility and discipline
- justice and kindness
- equality strengthened by brotherhood
- mutual consultation or shura

The most natural unit of society is the family. Many principles are geared to preserving the institution of the family and the web of relationships within the family. For example, as we shall see, the need to preserve the family, within which the identity and proper upbringing of children is safeguarded, is one of the reasons why adultery and fornication are strictly prohibited and punished severely.

In Islam the family welded together by three factors:

- 1) Kinship or blood ties which are the strongest natural ties;
- 2) Marital commitments and;
- 3) Faith.

Why is the marriage basis of muslim family?

Because a good and sound society can only grow if a man and a woman are bound in a solid relationship through the sacred contract of marriage. Marriage was the practice of most of the prophets including Muhammad. Marriage is highly encouraged in Islam, as families are seen as the cornerstone of Muslim society. Men and women are enjoined by the Qur'an and the guidance of Prophet Muhammad to live with mutual love, respect, and affection.

What did Allah's Prophet say about the marriage?

Marriage is a social contract between a bride-groom and a bride. Piety should come before all other considerations in marriage. The Prophet said: "Do not marry but only for the sake of beauty. Maybe the beauty becomes the cause of moral decline. Do not marry even for the sake of wealth; Maybe the wealth becomes the reason of disobedience. Marry rather on the ground of religious devotion."

How do Muslims view dating and mixing of the sexes?

Dating as it is commonly understood in western society is not permitted in Islam. For Muslims, physical interaction, an almost inevitable component of dating, is only permissible within the bonds of marriage.

Naturally, the proper and productive functioning of society requires the talents and contributions of all its citizens, male and female. Therefore, Islam provides guidelines for etiquette and behavior in order to enable full participation of men and women while at the same time fostering righteous societies. Some guidelines pertain to appropriate forms of interaction across gender, while others pertain to kinds of clothing men and women should wear in the interest of modesty. By observing such guidelines, women and men are able to interact productively in society, minimizing potential for sexual harassment, uninvited attention, disrespect, or acts of violence fostered by provocative conduct.

What status is given to women in Islam?

Women have a very important place in Islamic Society. Unlike a number of other religions, her importance as a mother and a wife has been clearly stated by the prophet Muhammad. The prophet said : "Paradise lies at the feet of your mothers."

Once a person asked the Prophet:

- "Who deserves the best care from me?" The Prophet replied:

- "Your mother (He repeated this three times). Then your father and then your nearest relatives."

In Farewell Speech at Arafah in the tenth year of Hijrah, the Prophet said: "O, People! Your wives have certain rights over you and you have certain rights over them. Treat them well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers."

The Prophet also said: "The best among you is the one who is the best towards his wife. These sayings clearly prove the important position given to women in Islam. During the Roman Civilization, in France, in India, in the pre-Islamic State of Arabia, for example, a woman was regarded as a slave and baby girls were sometimes buried alive after birth. If we keep this picture in mind and look into the position of the women in Islam we must conclude that Islam liberated women from the dark age of obscurity (fourteen hundred years ago).

What are the rights of women in Islam?

In the seventh century, a revolution in women's rights occurred due to the message of the Qur'an and its directives for forging a just and righteous society. In pre-Islamic Arabia as in other places in the world, women were considered little more than chattel, with no independent rights of their own. The Qur'an specifies the natural and inherent rights of women as well as men, and enjoins people to act in line with God's teachings of justice and equity. Some of the rights of women elaborated in the Qur'an and Sunnah include the right to own and inherit property, the right to obtain an education, the right to contract marriage and

seek divorce, the right to retain one's family name upon marriage, the right to vote and express opinions on societal affairs, and the right to be supported financially by male relatives (husband, father, brother, etc.).

Such rights were unheard of in the seventh century, yet were implemented to varying degrees in Muslim civilization throughout the last fourteen hundred years. It is also important to recognize that only in the last two centuries have such rights been available to women in Western societies. Clearly, common stereotypes regarding women's rights must be carefully considered, and the current practice of Muslims in various countries and regions must be examined within the context of history and with in light of the sources of Islam in order to ascertain the degree to which Muslim women are able to exercise their rights today. Prevailing cultural factors must also be taken into account. If we put in order;

1) Allah has created every living being in pairs (male and female) (Zâriyat 51: 49)

2) Allah has honored the children of Adam; both male and female. (Isrâ 17: 70)

3) Allah will reward both men and women in the life after death. (Âl-i 'Imrân 3: 95)

4) In Islam, woman has a distinct and separate identity.

5) Islam has given women a right to own property. She is the owner of her earnings. No one (father, husband or brother) has a right over them. She can dispose of her earnings and property as she wishes, within the bounds of Halaal (lawful) and Haraam (unlawful).

6) Islam has given women a right to inheritance. She has a part in the property of her dead father, husband (etc.) (Nisâ 4: 72; Âl-i 'Imrân 3: 178).

7) Woman has a right to choose her husband. No-one can impose a decision on her against her will.

8) Woman has a right to seek separation from her husband if their marriage becomes impossible to sustain.

9) If any man falsely questions a woman's chastity, that man is declared unfit for giving evidence (Nûr 24: 4). This shows how a woman's honour is safeguarded from false accusations.

10) The Qur'an asks the Muslims to treat women kindly (Nisâ 4: 19). It makes Muslim husbands responsible for their wife's maintenance.

11) A Woman has a right to develop her talents and to work within the limits of Islam.

12) Islam allows a non-Muslim married woman, when married to a Muslim man, to retain her religion and her husband can not interfere in this freedom, (etc.).

What are the duties of a woman in Islam?

A Muslim woman is expected to observe the following duties:

- 1) Belief in Allah and the practice of Islam come first.
- 2) A Muslim woman must perform her prayer, observe fasting / Pay Zakah on her own wealth, if it is applicable, go on Hajj, if she can afford it.
- 3) Friday-prayer (Jum'ah) is optional on women.
- 4) It is her duty to bring up children according to the needs of Islam.
- 5) She should dress modestly while going out. (Ahzab 33: 59)
- 6) She is expected to protect her husband's property and belongings in his absence. Islam views husband and wife as complementary to each other. Each has his or her individual rights and duties. Together they form a peaceful and happy family.

Under what circumstances is polygamy allowed in Islam?

Islam is a practical religion, it can answer all human problems. Islam restricted polygamy (marriage to more than one woman). Normal Muslim marriage form is monogamy (marriage of one man married to one wife). (Nisâ 4: 3-129).

In special circumstances Islam allows polygamy. These situations are :

1) When a wife is barren and can not bear children but the husband wants children.

2) If the first wife is chronically ill and she is unable to carry out her marital and household duties. The husband may marry another woman and so help restore family peace.

3) Polygamy may be the solution to the problems of a society which has more women than men this happens especially after war.

The Verse in the Qur'an allowing more than one wife was revealed after the battle of Uhud in which many Muslim men were martyred. Islam strictly forbids any sexual relationships outside marriage and there is no such thing as a mistress in Islamic Society.

How does Islam view homosexuality?

The Qur'an forbids homosexuality:

"Of all the creatures in the world, will you approach males and abandon those whom God created for you as mates?" (Shu'ara 26: 165).

By analogy, the above verse applies equally to females. While Muslims may condemn acts of homosexuality, Islam requires that the basic rights of life and safety of all human beings must be protected. Thus, Muslims may not treat proclaimed homosexuals unjustly.

What does Islam say about the equality of men and women?

According to Islam, men and women are spiritually equal beings created from a common origin. All of the religious obligations in Islam are incumbent upon both women and men, such as daily worship, fasting, performing the Hajj, etc. God's mercy and forgiveness apply equally to men and women. The following Qur'anic verse illustrates this point:

“For Muslim men and Muslim women,
For believing men and believing women,
For devout men and devout women,
For true men and true women,
For men and women who are patient and constant,
For men and women who humble themselves,
For men and women who give in charity,
For men and women who fast,
For men and women who guard their chastity,
And for men and women who engage much in God’s praise,
For them has God prepared forgiveness and great reward.”
(Ahzab 33: 35)

As a consequence of physiological, psychological and other distinguishing factors embodied in men and women by the Creator, the rights, responsibilities, and roles of men and women are believed to naturally differ. Muslims believe that God has assigned the responsibility of providing financially for the family to men, and the important responsibility of fostering a God-conscious and righteous family to women. Such roles do not preclude women from having careers and earning income or men from helping to raise a family. Rather they provide a general framework for Muslim society, designed to reinforce the concept of a family unit.

The guidelines for men and women’s roles are also meant to ensure dignified and proper relations between people of the opposite sex. Minimal mixing of the sexes in Muslim societies should not be construed to imply inequality or confinement. Rather, such measures are designed to protect individuals from unsolicited attention, inappropriate sexual attraction, adultery and fornication, and possibly even forms of violence such as rape.

What does Islam say about suicide and euthanasia?

According to Islam, all life is sacred. Deliberate and calculated suicide is considered a total lack of faith in God. To kill oneself is just as forbid-

den as to commit murder, and is a sign of ungratitude towards God. Muslims believe that God tests people in this life, yet does not burden a soul beyond what it can bear. To persevere in times of distress and to call upon God for comfort and strength is an important element in the Muslim lifestyle and worldview. Ultimately, Muslims are to call upon God’s infinite Mercy and seek an appropriate solution to life’s dilemmas.

“And most certainly shall We try by means of danger, and hunger, and loss of worldly goods, of lives and of (labour’s) fruits. But give glad tidings unto those who are patient in adversity.”
(Baqara, 2: 155)

Euthanasia, the practice of terminating someone’s life to end their perceived suffering, is not permissible in Islam (cases where the physical body is being kept alive through artificial means are another matter). Muslims believe that all things are ultimately according to God’s decree, and pain and suffering must be dealt with through prayer and repentance. Moreover, only God determines the time and manner of one’s death. Muslims also believe that the suffering of righteous believers in this life is an examination and it will be compensated by immeasurable happiness and reward in the Afterlife.

B-ECONOMIC LIFE in ISLAM

Economic life in Islam is also based upon solid instructions. Earning one's living through decent labour is not only a duty but a great virtue as well. Dependence of any able effortless person on somebody else for a livelihood is a religious sin, a social stigma and disgraceful humility.

A Muslim is enjoined by God to be self-supporting and to stay away from being a liability on anybody. Islam respects all kinds of work for earning one's livelihood so long as there is no indecency or wrong involved.

Whatever the individual makes or earns through lawful means is his private possession, which neither the State nor anybody else can justifiably claim. In return for this right of private possession he has only to fulfill certain obligations to the society and pay certain taxes to the State. When this is done, he has full rights to protection by the State, and his freedom of enterprise is secure and guaranteed.

“Wealth and Sons are allurements of the life of this World...” (Kahf 18: 46)

“Know you (all) that the life of this World is but play and amusement pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children...” (Hadid 57: 20)

What are the fundamental principles of the Islamic Economic System?

Islamic Economy is based on the following fundamental principles:

1) Islam has prescribed laws to regulate earnings and expenditure by Halal means.

2) Islam has given person a right to property and individual liberty with the freedom of speech, work and earnings. Freedom is not harmful for the greater good of Society. Because every individual will be answerable to Allah for his or her actions. (Nisā 4: 7; Ya-Sin 36: 71; Nahl 16: 111)

3) Compulsory Payment of Zakah is one of the main principles of an

Islamic Economy. Islamic State is responsible for providing basic needs of food, clothing, housing, medicine and education to every citizen.

4) An Islamic Economy is free from interest. Islam prohibits all transactions involving interest. It does not allow any rate of interest.

5) Money can not earn money. Because this prevents investment and as a result unemployment increases.

6) Islam has given person a right inheritance (Mirath). Islamic Law of inheritance (Mirath) is a wonderful system which stops accumulating of wealth in certain hands.

What is the balanced attitude in wealth?

Islam recognizes the importance of material well being. To be deprived of the basic needs of life and to be in a state of dire poverty is to be in a terrible state - so terrible that when the Prophet was asked whether the evils of deprivation equalled the evils of associating other with God, he said yes!

“Poverty”, warned the Prophet, “can lead to kufr (rejection of God and ingratitude).”

Beyond merely striving to eliminate poverty, believers are urged to enjoy, and not to deny themselves the good things of this life. These are enjoyed as part of the bounty of God but should not lead to a materialistic outlook and the compelling desire to acquire more and more.

Gains from economic activity should be based on two factors: on labour and economic risk. Income from betting or gambling, for example, is therefore unlawful because it is not acquired through work and labour. Such income is called “unearned income.” Income from lending money at a guaranteed rate of interest is unlawful partly because it is not earned through labour or economic risk. Income from such activities as usury, gambling, monopolistic trade practices, hoarding and speculation is therefore regarded as unlawful or haram.

The Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet urge Muslims to engage

in trade and commerce, and to undertake journeys for what the Qur'an refers to as "seeking the bounty of God." Those who travel or the purpose of trade are mentioned in the Qur'an side by side with those who fight in His cause:

"Others travel through the land, seeking the bounty of God, and still others fight in the cause of God" (Muzzammil 73: 20)

All trade in Islam is allowed unless it involves injustice, cheating, making exorbitant profits, or the promotion of something which is haraam. It is also haraam to do business in alcoholic drinks, intoxicants, harmful drugs.

What is the meaning of the interest (Riba)?

Interest is neither a trade nor a profit. It is a means of exploitation and accumulating wealth. The holy Qur'an says: "They say, trade is like interest. But Allah has allowed trade and prohibited Interest. (Baqara 2: 275; Rum 30: 39)

Interest is the basis of Modern Capitalism. It is completely opposite to Zakah. Zakah channels wealth from the rich to the poor while interest takes away wealth from the poor and hands it over to the rich. The situation is really very complex, but we must aim at getting rid of interest.

"And make not your own hands Contribute to (your) destruction but do good, for Allah loves those who do good." (Baqara 2: 195)

C- RELIGION and SCIENCE

We as humans have two sources before us: with its rules the universe and with their principles the Holy Books. As the universe has its rules, it enables us to discover these standard rules and develop science. So, we define the science as the set of relations that exist among realities. This definition speaks about some existing relations among realities. These constant relations among realities are called 'Natural Laws' or 'Sunnat-Allah' as occurred in the Qur'an. So, It is God who set up these standard relations among realities and make it possible for us to produce science and what we call scientific.

Moreover, the same God sent books to guide humans that astrayed from true path and started to torture one another. That is to say that God is the unique source of both spheres and so it is unlikely that they contradict each other.

In order to show the compatibility of both, i.e. religion and science, at least in the context of the Holy Qur'an, it is convenient to give some examples:

a. The Qur'an on Mountains

It is known that mountains have underlying roots. These roots are deeply embedded in the ground, thus, mountains have a shape like a peg (see figures 1, 2, and 3).



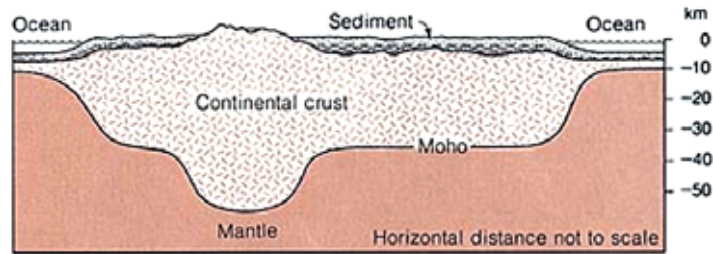


Figure 1: Mountains have deep roots under the surface of the ground. (*Earth*, Press and Siever, p. 413.)

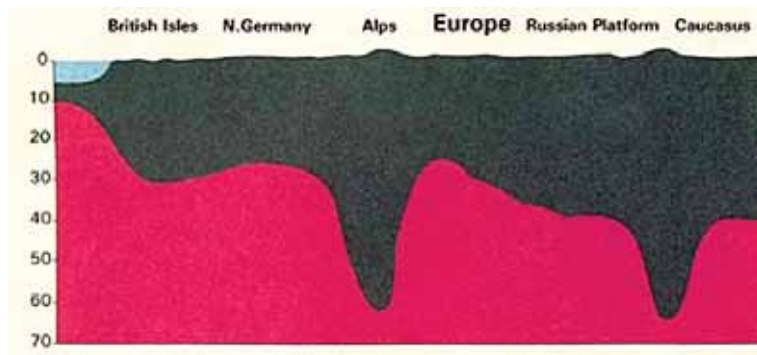


Figure 2: Schematic section. The mountains, like pegs, have deep roots embedded in the ground. (*Anatomy of the Earth*, Cailleux, p. 220.)

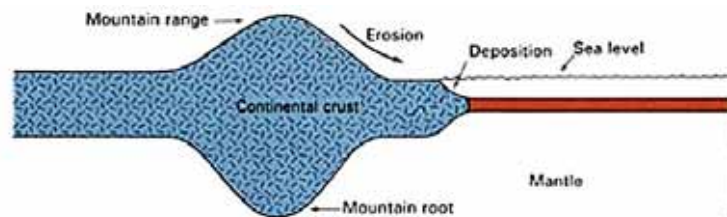


Figure 3: Another illustration shows how the mountains are peg-like in shape, due to their deep roots. (*Earth Science*, Tarbuck and Lutgens, p. 158.)

This is how the Quran has described mountains. God has said in the Quran:

“Have We not made the earth as a bed, and the mountains as pegs?” (Naba’ 78: 6-7)

Mountains also play an important role in stabilizing the crust of the earth. They hinder the shaking of the earth.

Likewise, the modern theory of plate tectonics holds that mountains work as stabilizers for the earth. This knowledge about the role of mountains as stabilizers for the earth has just begun to be understood in the framework of plate tectonics since the late 1960’s.

Could anyone during the time of the Prophet Muhammad have known of the true shape of mountains? Could anyone imagine that the solid massive mountain which he sees before him actually extends deep into the earth and has a root, as scientists assert? A large number of books of geology, when discussing mountains, only describe that part which is above the surface of the earth. This is because these books were not written by specialists in geology. However, modern geology has confirmed the truth of the Quranic verses.

b. The Qur’an on Deep Seas and Internal Waves

God has said in the Qur’an:

“Or (the unbelievers’ state) is like the darkness in a deep sea. It is covered by waves, above which are waves, above which are clouds. Darkneses, one above another. If a man stretches out his hand, he can not see it....” (Nur 24: 40)

This verse mentions the darkness found in deep seas and oceans, where if a man stretches out his hand, he can not see it. The darkness in deep seas and oceans is found around a depth of 200 meters and below. At this depth, there is almost no light (see figure 1). Below a depth of 1000 meters there is no light at all. Human beings are not able to dive more than forty meters without the aid of submarines or special equipment. Human beings can not survive unaided in the deep dark part of the oceans, such as at a depth of 200 meters.

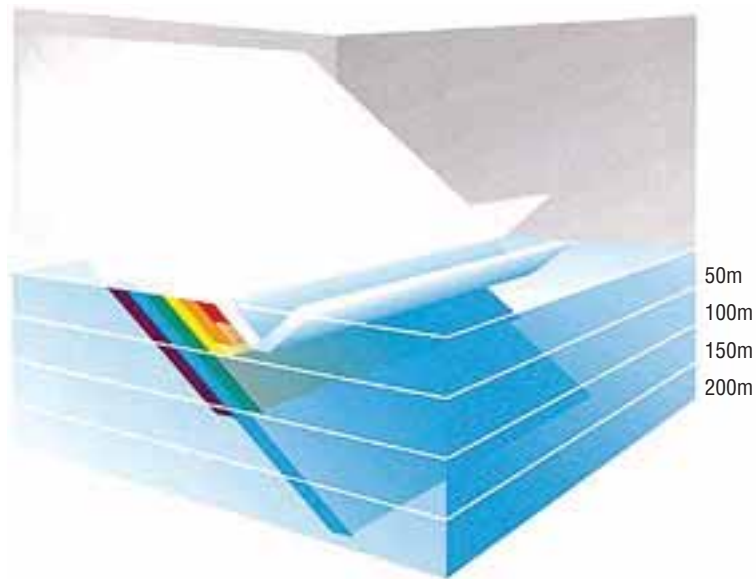


Figure 1: Between 3 and 30 percent of the sunlight is reflected at the sea surface. Then almost all of the seven colors of the light spectrum are absorbed one after another in the first 200 meters, except the blue light. (*Oceans, Elder and Pernetta, p. 27.*)

Scientists have recently discovered this darkness by means of special equipment and submarines that have enabled them to dive into the depths of the oceans.

We can also understand from the following sentences in the previous verse, "...in a deep sea. It is covered by waves, above which are waves, above which are clouds...", that the deep waters of seas and oceans are covered by waves, and above these waves are other waves. It is clear that the second set of waves are the surface waves that we see, because the verse mentions that above the second waves there are clouds. But what about the first waves? Scientists have recently discovered that there are internal waves which "occur on density interfaces between layers of different densities." (see figure 2).

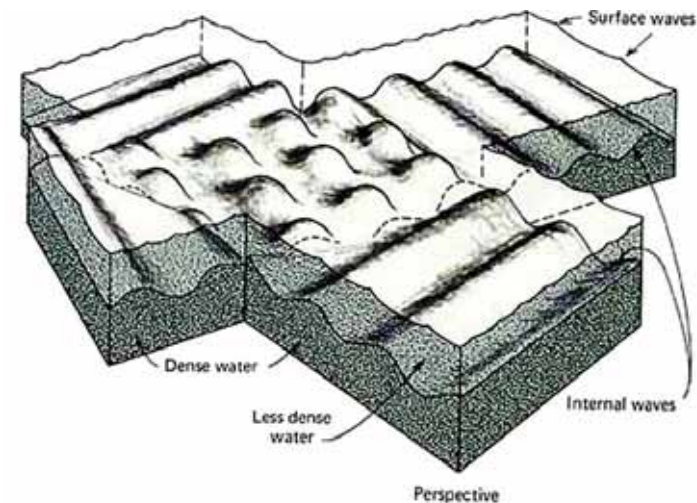


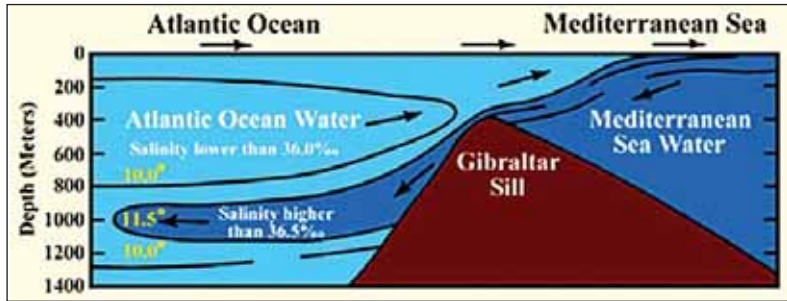
Figure 2: Internal waves at interface between two layers of water of different densities. One is dense (the lower one), the other one is less dense (the upper one). (*Oceanography, Gross, p. 204.*)

The internal waves cover the deep waters of seas and oceans because the deep waters have a higher density than the waters above them. Internal waves act like surface waves. They can also break, just like surface waves. Internal waves can not be seen by the human eye, but they can be detected by studying temperature or salinity changes at a given location.

Allah (Almighty) says in the holy Qur'an with regard to two seas separated from each other by a barrier:

"It is He who has let free the two bodies of flowing water one palpable and sweet and the other salt and bitter. Yet has He made a barrier between them a partition that is forbidden to be passed" (Furqan 25: 53)

"Nor are the two bodies of flowing water alike: the one palatable, sweet and pleasant to drink and the other salty and bitter..." (Fatir 35: 12)



The mediterranean sea water as it enters the Atlantic over the Gibraltar sill with its own warm, saline, and less dense characteristics, because of the barrier that distinguished them. Temperatures are in degrees Celsius(c°) (Marine Geology, Kuenen, p. 43)

“He has let free the two bodies of flowing water meeting together, between them is a barrier which they do not transgress. Then which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?.” (Rahman 55: 19)

c. The Qur’an on Human Embryonic Development

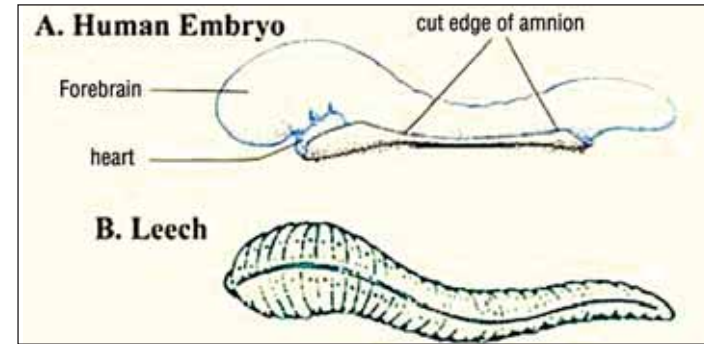
In the Holy Quran, God speaks about the stages of man’s embryonic development:

“We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him as a drop in a place of settlement, firmly fixed. Then We made the drop into an *alaqah* (leech, suspended thing, and blood clot), then We made the *alaqah* into a *mudghah* (chewed substance)... “ (Mū’minun 23: 12-14)

Literally, the Arabic word *alaqah* has three meanings: (1) leech, (2) suspended thing, and (3) blood clot.

In comparing a leech to an embryo in the *alaqah* stage, we find similarity between the two as we can see in figure 1. Also, the embryo at this stage obtains nourishment from the blood of the mother, similar to the leech, which feeds on the blood of others.

Figure 1: Drawings illustrating the similarities in appearance between a



leech and a human embryo at the *alaqah* stage. (Leech drawing from *Human Development as Described in the Quran and Sunnah*, Moore and others, p. 37, modified from *Integrated Principles of Zoology*, Hickman and others. Embryo drawing from *The Developing Human*, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 73.)

The second meaning of the word *alaqah* is “suspended thing.” This is what we can see in figures 2 and 3, the suspension of the embryo, during the *alaqah* stage, in the womb of the mother.

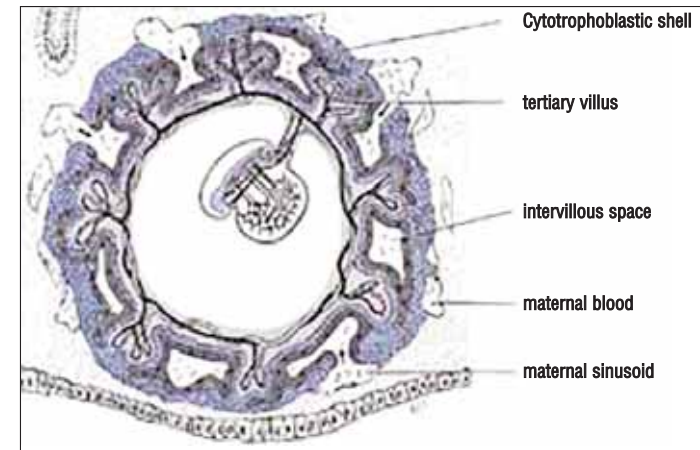


Figure 2: We can see in this diagram the suspension of an embryo during the *alaqah* stage in the womb (uterus) of the mother. (*The Developing Human*, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 66.)

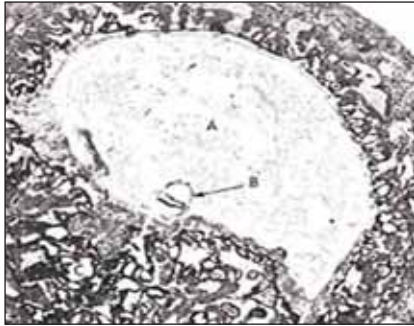
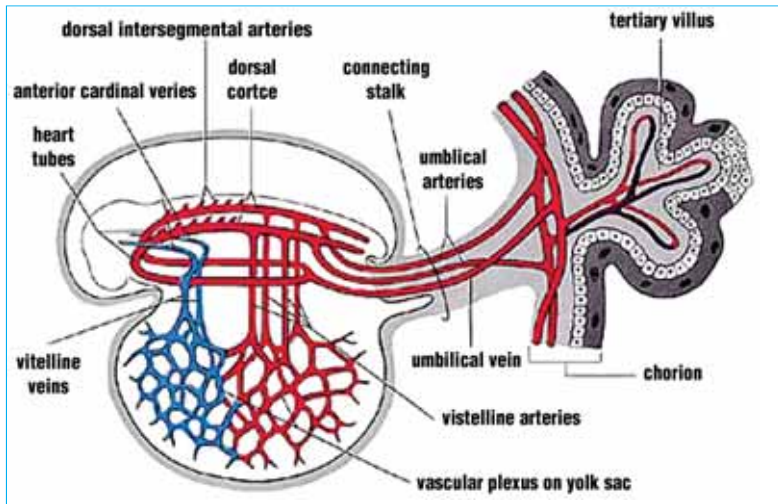


Figure 3: In this photomicrograph, we can see the suspension of an embryo (marked B) during the *alaqah* stage (about 15 days old) in the womb of the mother. The actual size of the embryo is about 0.6 mm. (*The Developing Human*, Moore, 3rd ed., p. 66, from *Histology*, Leeson and Leeson.)

The third meaning of the word *alaqah* is “blood clot.” We find that the external appearance of the embryo and its sacs during the *alaqah* stage is similar to that of a blood clot. This is due to the presence of relatively large amounts of blood present in the embryo during this stage (see figure 4). Also during this stage, the blood in the embryo does not circulate until the end of the third week. Thus, the embryo at this stage is like a clot of blood.

Figure 4: Diagram of the primitive cardiovascular system in an embryo during the *alaqah* stage. The external appearance of the embryo and its sacs is similar to that of a blood clot, due to the presence of relatively large amounts of blood present in the embryo. (*The Developing Human*, Moore, 5th ed., p. 65.)



So the three meanings of the word *alaqah* correspond accurately to the descriptions of the embryo at the *alaqah* stage.

The next stage mentioned in the verse is the *mudghah* stage. The Arabic word *mudghah* means “chewed substance.” If one were to take a piece of gum and chew it in his or her mouth and then compare it with an embryo at the *mudghah* stage, we would conclude that the embryo at the *mudghah* stage acquires the appearance of a chewed substance. This is because of the somites at the back of the embryo that “somewhat resemble teethmarks in a chewed substance.” (see figures 5 and 6).

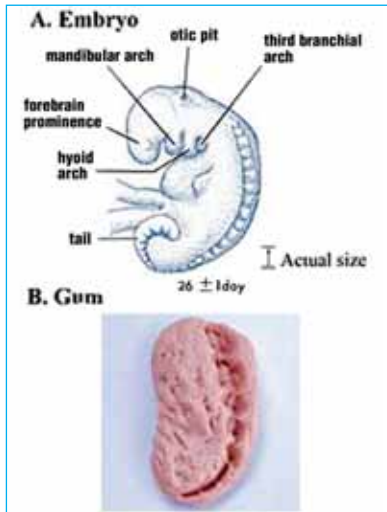


Figure 5: Photograph of an embryo at the *mudghah* stage (28 days old). The embryo at this stage acquires the appearance of a chewed substance, because the somites at the back of the embryo somewhat resemble teeth marks in a chewed substance. The actual size of the embryo is 4 mm. (*The Developing Human*, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 82)

Figure 6: When comparing the appearance of an embryo at the *mudghah* stage with a piece of gum that has been chewed, we find similarity between the two.

- A) Drawing of an embryo at the *mudghah* stage. We can see here the somites at the back of the embryo that look like teeth marks. (*The Developing Human*, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 79.)
- B) Photograph of a piece of gum that has been chewed.

How could Muhammad the prophet have possibly known all this 1400 years ago, when scientists have only recently discovered this



using advanced equipment and powerful microscopes which did not exist at that time? Hamm and Leeuwenhoek were the first scientists to observe human sperm cells (spermatozoa) using an improved microscope in 1677 (more than 1000 years after Muhammad). They mistakenly thought that the sperm cell contained a miniature preformed human being that grew when it was deposited in the female genital tract.

CONCLUSION

We believe that religion is the spirit of the physical world we live in. This spirit is what awakes the community up from its catalepsy and motivates it towards good. This 'good' is the main and perennial source of the life which is recommended by the Holy Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an speaks about two sides of the cosmos or *Alem*: *Alem al-Amr* and *Alem al-Halq*. *Alem al-Amr* is the source of eternal and perennial values, which is also called in the Qur'an as *Umm al-Kitab*. Every change in the world takes its source and model from this source, nothing has been left out of this source. On the other hand, in *Alem al-Halq* which we live in and experience the results of these values, we have been provided with many faculties and abilities by God to be an another important source of value to lead a wise and beneficial life, which is good for us, good for our fellow beings, good for environment, etc.

This 'good' feeds on many principles:

– **Submission to God.** The feeling that we submit us only to God makes us free. As He is our Lord and he is the main Sustainer of us, we are not obliged to submit ourselves to anybody else who is not eligible for this kind of submission, as he himself indeed needs such a submission. So a believer can just retain his honour against every act aiming to distort it by submitting himself to God.

– **A wide field of liberty which takes its source from the senses of responsibility and discipline.** Through this principles a believer can be aware of the fact that he was not created in vain and there are some responsibilities entrusted to him to realize in order do deserve to be named as the real believer.

– **Justice and kindness.** Justice is the central concept of the Qur'an.

It plays very important part in relations between God and His creatures (we call this an ontological justice) on the one hand, and among human beings (behavioral justice).

– **Equality on the basis of brotherhood.** Equality protects us from every evil that leads people to claim superiority one another, so turns the world into a blood lake. History has been witnessing what kind of genocides have been committed because of this superiority claim which in fact has no any ethical, metaphysical basis.

– **Taqwa.** This consciousness of God give the believer a sense of knowing and doing what is best for himself and for others. Taqwa is not only a mental situation, but also it gets the believer to do some good deeds. So it is the sister concept of Akhlaq or ethics. In a verse God uses Taqwa as the opposite of Zulm / wrongdoing (Hacc 22: 37). That means it has also a place in our social life as an act.

These and other values or principles that we should follow in our personal and social life are supported by religion itself to create a wise and just society in which everybody entitles to what one deserves.



"You see the Mountains and think them firmly fixed, but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away..." (Naml 27: 18-20)

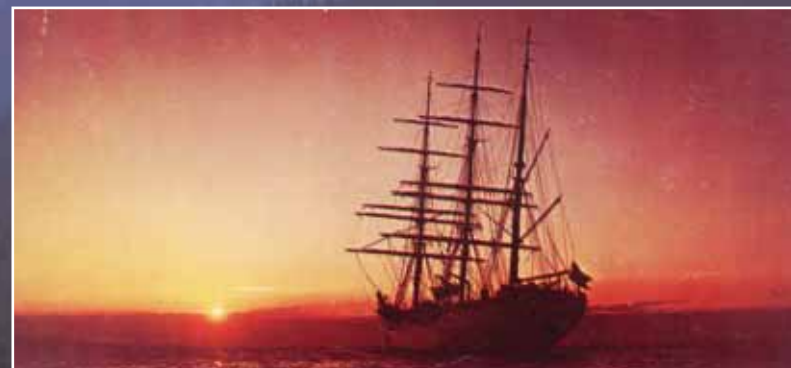
"They ask you concerning the Mountains. Say: "My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust."

"He will leave them as plains smooth and level"

"Nothing crooked or curved will you see in their place." (Ta-Ha 20: 105-107)

"Do not you see that to Allah how down in worship all things that are in the Heavens and on Earth and the Sun, the Moon the Stars, the Hills, the Trees, the Animals and a great number among Mankind..?" (Hajj 22: 18)

"Do not you see that Allah has made subject to you (men) all that is on Earth. And the Ships that sail through the sea by His command? He withholds the sky (rain) from falling on the Earth except by his leave for Allah is most kind and most Merciful to Man." (Hajj 22: 65)



APPENDIX I

What are some important dates in the Islamic Year?

There are a number of important dates in the Islamic calendar. Some of them are described below:

The first day of the month of Muharram announces the *new hijri year*, and the tenth of this month is known as *Ashurah*. Muslims believe the tenth of Muharram to be the day when Moses led his people out of Egyptian bondage. It is also the date on which the Prophet's grandson Husayn and his family were killed by the forces of Yazid, the second Umayyad ruler. All Muslims mourn this tragic event.

Laylat al-Qadr, or the "Night of Power," is one of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan. It is significant as the night on which in 610 C.E. Prophet Muhammad received the first revelations of the Qur'an. Muslims commemorate this night, believed to fall on the 27th of Ramadan, by offering additional prayers and supplications late into the night. It is said the blessings for praying on this night are greater than those received for praying for a thousand months.

The 27th of the month of Rajab is the date for *Laylat al-Miraj*. On this date Muslims recall Prophet Muhammad's miraculous journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and thence to Heaven atop the heavenly steed known as Buraq. According to tradition, during this Night Journey and Ascension, which took place in 619 C.E., Muhammad received instructions for instituting the salah, or formal worship. Islam's connection with previous monotheistic religious traditions was also reiterated, as the Prophet met all of his predecessors during his experience.

What holidays do Muslims celebrate?

There are two major holidays in Islam:

Eid al-Fitr takes place on the 1st of Shawwal, the tenth month of the Islamic lunar year, at the conclusion of Ramadan, the month of fasting. The holiday celebration begins early in the morning with a special con-

gregational worship. The Eid prayers are often held in a specially designated gathering place, such as a park or convention center, meant to accommodate large numbers of Muslims from several local masjids.

After the prayer, the imam (worship leader) delivers a short khutbah (sermon or address). Then everyone rises to their feet to greet and hug one another. The rest of the festival's observances are held among family and friends, and include visits, shared meals, new clothes, gifts for young children, and lots of sweets. In Muslim countries, festivities are often in evidence for three or more days. In order to share the spirit of the occasion with all members of society, Muslims pay a special nominal charity tax which is used to purchase food, clothing and gifts for needy persons.

Eid al-Adha takes place on the tenth of Dhul-Hijjah (the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar), after the majority of Hajj rituals are completed by pilgrims. Around the world, Muslims share in the spirit of the Hajj by observing the Eid festivities in their own localities. The day's observances are similar to those of Eid al-Fitr, with the addition of a special sacrifice—Muslims commemorate Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishma'il when he was instructed in his dream to do so as a test of his commitment. Since God miraculously provided a lamb to Abraham which took the place of his son, Muslims recall the event by sacrificing animals such as lambs, goats, sheep, cows or camels. The sacrifice may be performed any time after the Eid morning prayers until the evening of the twelfth of Dhul-Hijjah. The meat of the sacrificed animals is distributed to the poor or needy, and portions are kept for one's own family and friends during this time of extra charity and hospitality.

Do Muslims celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad?

The birth of Prophet Muhammad is commemorated on the twelfth of the month of Rabi al-Awwal. Rather than celebrating the event with festivities or fanfare, most Muslims take the opportunity to study more about the Prophet and his deeds, since Muslims consider him to be the best example of how one should lead his or her life. While the Prophet's birth date is an important event recognized by Muslims, it is not an official religious holiday like *Eid al-Fitr* or *Eid al-Adha*.

APPENDIX II
SELECTED VERSES FROM THE QUR'AN AND HADITH
ON SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

Selected verses from the Qur'an

"Surely this Qur'an guides to that which is the straightest and gives good news to believers who practice good and they will get a great reward" (Isra 17: 9).

Tawhîd

"Allah, there is none worthy of worship except Him, the Living, the Ever Lasting. Slumber does not overtake Him nor does sleep. He knows what lies before them and what is behind them. His authority extends over Heaven and Earth." (Baqara 2: 255)

Risalah

"We have sent a Messenger to every Nation. Serve Allah (Alone) and turn a side from false Gods." (Nahl 16: 36)

Akhirah

"Do you think then that we have created you for nothing and that you would not be returned to Us." (Mu'minun 23: 115)

Qualities of Mu'min

"They are who are humble in their prayers, who avoid vain talk and who practice the System of Zakah and who faithfully observe their trusts and undertaking..." (Mu'minûn 23: 1-11)

Duty towards Parents

"Be kind to your Parents and the relatives and the Orphans and those in need and speak nicely to people." (Baqara 2: 83)

"Your Lord has ordered that you worship none but Him and show kindness to your Parents, whether either of them or both of them attain old age in your life, never say to them "Ough" nor be harsh to them, but speak to them kindly. And serve them

with tenderness and humility and say: My Lord have mercy on them, just as they cared for me as a little child." (Isra 17: 23,24)

Relatives

"Allah commands Justice, kindness and giving (their due) to near relatives." (Nahl 16: 90)

Orphan

"Give Orphans their property and do not replace something bad for something good." (Nisâ 4: 2)

Brotherhood

"Believers are but brothers, so set things right between your brothers and observe your duty to Allah so that you may obtain mercy." (Hucurât 49: 10).

Greetings

"When you enter houses salute one another with a greeting from Allah, blessed and sweet." (Nûr 24: 61)

Talking

"Be modest in your behaviour and lower your voice. Truly the harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass." (Luqman 31: 19)

"If you find no one there in still do not enter until permission has been given" (Nûr 24: 27,28).

Keeping promise

"O, you who believe, fulfill your undertakings..." (Maide 5: 1)

Honesty

"Whenever you speak, speak justly even if a near relative is concerned." (An'am 6: 152)

Truthfulness

"O, you who believe! Fear Allah and stand by those who are truthful." (Tavba 9: 199)

Tolerance

"Tolerate patiently what (Unbelievers) say and part from them in polite manner." (Muzzammil 73: 10)

Justice

“Allah commands justice and fairness...” (Nahl 16:90); (Maida 5:8)

Reliance on Allah

“...He who relies on Allah, Allah is enough for him” (Talaq 65: 3)

Hypocrisy

“And there are People Who say: “We believe in Allah and the Last Day but actually do not believe” (Baqara 2: 8)

Abortion and Birth Control

“Do not kill your children in fear of poverty, We shall provide for them and you. Killing them is a big Sin.” (Isra 17: 31)

“Eat of the things which Allah had provided for you lawful and good but fear Allah in Whom you believe.” (Maida 5: 88)

“Eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah and do no evil nor mischief on earth...” (Baqara 2: 60)

“O people! Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of the Evil One for he is to you and avowed Enemy.” (Baqara 2:168)

“O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer, eat and drink but waste not by excess for Allah loveth not He wasters.” (A'raf 7: 31)

Usury and Interest

“..Allah has permitted trading and forbidden Interest and Usury.” (Baqara 2: 275)

Wine and Gambling

“..O you who believe! Liquor and Gambling, Idols and Divining arrows are only a filthy work of Satan; give them up so that you may prosper” (Maida 5: 90)

Adultery

“And keep away from Adultery. Surely, it is a hateful filthy work and a very bad thing.” (Isra 17: 32)

SELECTIONS FROM HADITHS

Learning

“The best of you is he who has learnt the Qur'an and then taught it.” (Bukhari)

“The seeking of knowledge is a must for every Muslim man and woman.” (Bukhari)

Kindness

“Allah is not kind to him who is not kind to people.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Thankfulness

“He who does not thank people does not thank Allah.” (Tirmidhi)

Love of the Prophet

“None of you has faith unless I am dearer to him than his father and his son and all mankind.” (Bukhari)

Parents

“A father's pleasure is Allah's pleasure a father's displeasure is Allah's displeasure.” (Tirmidhi)

“Paradise lies at the feet of your mother.” (Nasa'i)

Wife

“The most perfect of the believers is the best of you in character and the best of you are those among you who are best to their wives.” (Tirmidhi)

Children

“No father can give his child anything better than good manners.” (Tirmidhi)

Guests

“He who believes in Allah and the last day should honour his guest.” (Bukhari)

Neighbours

“By Allah, he has no faith (the Prophet repeated is three times) whose neighbours are not safe from his wickedness.” (Bukhari)

“He is not a believer who eats his fill while his neighbours remains hungry by his side.” (Baihaqi)

The Needy

“One who tries to help the widow and the poor is like a warrior in the way of Allah.” (Bukhari)

Modesty

“Modesty is part of Faith.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Salah and Tahârah

“The key to Paradise is Salah and the key to Salah is Taharah (Purification).” (Bukhari)

Repentance (Tawbah)

“By Allah I (Muhammad) ask Allah’s forgiveness and turn to him in repentance more than seventy times a day.” (Bukhari)

Talking

“He who truly believes in Allah and the last day should speak good or keep silent.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Eating and Drinking

“Say Allah’s name (Bismillah) and eat with your right hand and eat from near you.” (Bukhari)

“When one drinks, he should not breathe into the Vessel (Glass)” (Bukhari)

Charity

“Every good action is a charity and it is good action to meet a friend with a smiling face.” (Bukhari)

“Removal from a road that which is harmful is charity.” (Bukhari)

“There is a man who gives charity and he conceals it so much that his left hand does not know what his right hand spends.” (Bukhari)

Brotherhood

“None of you can be a believer unless he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” (Bukhari)

“Believers are like the parts of a building to one another, each part supporting the others.” (Bukhari)

“Each of you is a mirror of his brother, if you see something wrong in your brother, you must tell him to get rid of it.” (Tirmidhi)

“A Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe.” (Bukhari)

Greeting

“When one of you meets his brother he should say Salam to him” (Abu Dawud)

“The young should say Salam to the old, the passer-by to the one sitting and the small-group to the large one” (Bukhari)

Visiting the Sick

“...Visit the sick, feed the hungry and set free the captives.” (Bukhari)

Hypocrisy

“The signs of the hypocrite are three: when he speaks, he lies: when he promises, he breaks it when any trust is kept with him, he misuses it” (Bukhari)

GLOSSARY

Ahl al-Kitaab: Literally, the People of the Book, the People of the Scripture. It refers to the followers of Divine revelation prior to the Qur'an. It refers in particular to the Banî Israel (The Children of Israel) to whom God sent Prophets with Scriptures to guide them –Moses with the Tawrah and Jesus with the Injil. By extension, it could also refer to any people to whom a prophet was sent with a scripture.

Al-Amiin: The Trustworthy. Description by which Muhammad was known in Mecca before his call to Prophethood.

Al-Ākhirah: The Hereafter; life after death; the 'end' of life. Refers to another existence after the life of this life. A person's hereafter is shaped by the way he conducts his life in this world. The Hereafter begins with the Day of Resurrection. This will be followed by the Day of Judgement or the Day of Recompense in which everyone will be treated with the mercy and absolute justice of the Creator.

Amr bi'l Ma'ruf: Commanding what is good - an individual and collective duty of the Muslim community.

As-salamu aleykum: Peace be on you. The Islamic greeting which enhances the feelings of love and brotherhood among people. In the Qur'an it is mentioned as the greeting used by the keepers of Paradise to welcome those who have done well in this life.

Asta firullah: I seek God's forgiveness. One of the phrases used by a Muslim to repent for wrongs committed knowingly or unknowingly and which brings a person back to his naturally good and pure state.

Banî Israel: Literally, the Children of Israel or the Jews. Israel was another name for the prophet Ya'kub (Jakob), the son of Prophet Ishaq (Isaac) and grandson of Prophet Abraham. Another word used in the Qur'an is Yahuud.

Da'wah: Invitation. Call. Refers to the duty on Muslims to invite or call others to return to the straight and natural path of Islam or submission to God. This, according to the Qur'an, has to be done with wisdom and beautiful advice.

Dhikr: Remembrance, in particular, of God. Every action or utterance made for the sake of God can be considered dhikr.

Du'a: Supplication, calling upon God, prayer. A means of showing gratitude to and dependence on the Creator for guidance and the good things of life.

al-Faatihah: The opening. The name of the first chapter of the Qur'an which is regarded as the Essence of the Holy Book.

Fard: Compulsory duty. **Fard 'ayn:** A duty which is imposed on every adult and sane individual which can not be discharged by anyone else, e.g. fasting in the month of Ramadaan. **Fard kifaayah:** A duty which is imposed on the Muslim community as a whole which is considered discharged if carried out by some in the community.

Fasaad: Corruption, chaos.

Ghurur: Deception, fallacy, illusion. Refers in particular to the fallacy of treating life in this world as the only existence and being unmindful of the Hereafter.

Ghusl: Washing, Bathing. A complete bath performed in the manner taught by the noble Prophet which is necessary under certain conditions and recommended in others.

Hadith: Saying of the noble Prophet.

Hajj: Literally, effort. Pilgrimage to the House of God in Mecca which is compulsory once in a lifetime for Muslims who have the means to perform it. It is the fifth 'pillar' of Islam.

Halaal: Lawful, Permissible. Only that which is good and beneficial for man and creation is regarded as halaal in Islam. The basic assumption in Islam is that everything is halaal unless it has been declared haram or forbidden.

Haraam: Unlawful, Prohibited. Only that which is bad or harmful for man and creation is regarded as haraam in Islam.

Hijrah: Migration. The act of leaving a place to seek freedom of worship in another place. Also the act of leaving a bad practice to adopt a righteous way of life. Specifically, the Hijrah refers to the Prophet's journey from Mecca to Madinah in the twelfth year of his mission corresponding to June 622 CE. The Islamic calendar begins from this event.

Ibadah: Worship. True worship is only for God. All actions of a person which are in accordance with the will of God is regarded as worship.

Iman: Faith based on knowledge; firm belief and trust in God which is the natural and reasonable attitude for man to adopt.

Islam. 1. Submission to God. 2. The religion (diin) of God. All creation at one level exist in a state of Islam to their inbuilt laws.

Israaf: Extravagance. Waste (of talents and resources); regarded as sinful and leading towards a refusal to acknowledge the bounties of God.

Jamaa'ah: 1. Group, 2. Congregation, 3. Organised community of believers. The minimum number for a jamaa'ah is three.

Jihaad: Literally, striving. Any earnest striving in the way of God, involving either personal effort, material resources or arms, for righteousness and against evil, wrong-doing and oppression. Where it involves armed struggle, it must be for the defence of the Muslim community or a just war to protect even non-Muslims from evil, oppression and tyranny.

Ka'bah: A cube-shaped structure in Mecca which is described in the Qur'an as the first house of worship built for mankind.

Khalifah: 1) Steward, Vicegerent. 2) Successor. Man is referred to in the Qur'an as the khalifah of God on earth. As a khalifah, he has been given an amanah or trust to discharge. In consequence, he has been given free will and responsibility and has an important status above other creation.

Kufr: Ingratitude to God and disbelief in Him and His religion. It has the primary meaning of concealing, that is concealing one's natural inclination to acknowledge God and be grateful for His innumerable bounties.

Makruuh: Disliked but still permissible, an example of which is divorce.

Masjid: A place of prostration, a mosque. According to a saying of the Prophet, the whole earth is a masjid which makes it easy and natural to perform Prayer at any time.

Minbar: Raised platform in a mosque from which the Khutbah is delivered.

Miizaan: Balance. Measure. Scale of justice and equity. Denotes the measure or the inbuilt laws or balance with which God created everything.

Mubah: That which is allowed in Islamic law. Failure to do what is mubaah doesn't bring any blame. Doing what is mubaah doesn't merit any special reward.

Muhaajir: A person who undertakes hijrah.

Mukallaf: Obligated, responsible. One who has reached the age of responsibility. It begins with the onset of maturity (buluugh). From this age on, a person whether male or female is under obligation to carry out all the duties of Islam.

Mustahabb: That which is recommended but not compulsory in Islamic Law. Failure to perform it is not regarded as sinful.

Rabb: Lord and Sustainer. One who owns something and looks after it well.

Rikat: A unit of Salaat (prayer). Begins from the standing position with the utterance of Allahu Akbar and includes the recitation of Al-Fatiha and another portion of the Qur'an, bowing (rukku') and prostrations (sajdah) in the manner shown by the noble Prophet.

Ramadan: The ninth month of the Islamic calendar. The month of fasting, in which the Qur'an was revealed.

Sabr: Constancy, Patience, Perseverance. One important quality of a believer in dealing with the “tests” of life.

Sadaka: 1) Charity, 2) Dowry or mahr. ***Sadakah jaariya**-continious charity, charitable endowment. ***Sadakat al-Fitr** (also called **Zakat al-Fitr**): compulsory amount paid by the head of a household at the end of the fast of Ramadaan for the benefit of the poor.

Shahaadah: 1) Testimony, witness, 2) Declaration of faith, 3) Martyrdom.

Shari'ah: The moral and legal code of Islam. The two main sources of the Shariah are the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad.

Shirk: Associating others in worship with God. Regarded in the Qur'an as a “great injustice” and the only sin which will not be forgiven.

Suffah: Raised platform or bench. Part of the prophet's mosque in Madinah used as a soft of reception point for newcomers to the city and destitute persons.

Sunnah: Literally, path or example. Refers in articular to the Example of the Prophet Muhammad and includes what he agreed to.

Taqwa: Consciousness of God; being careful not to transgres the limits of God in order to stay as close as possible to one's originally good state.

Tawbah: Literally, returning. Repenting and seeking forgiveness for one's sins in order to return as close as possible to one's originally good state.

Tawhîd: Belief in or affirmation of the Oneness of God. Tawhîd is the correct human attitude to Reality.

Ummah: Community, nation. Specifically, the community of believers or the universal Muslim community. Other species or groups in creation are referred to in the Qur'an as “umam”, nations.

Zakah: The compulsory “purifying” tax on wealth which is one of the five pillars of Islam.

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