

KHADIJAH DAWAH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Presents

EXCLUSIVE

UNDERSTANDING ISLAM & MUSLIM

ISLAM AND MUSLIM

Islam is an Arabic word which means peace and submission. As a religion, Islam calls for a complete acceptance of the teachings and guidance of God (Allah). A Muslim is one who freely and willingly accepts the supreme power of God (Allah) and strives to organize his or her life in total accord with the teachings of God (Allah). He or she also works for building social institutions that reflect the guidance of God (Allah).

CONTINUITY OF THE MESSAGE

Islam is not a new religion. It is, in essence, the same message and guidance God (Allah) revealed to all His messengers and prophets beginning with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Last Messenger Muhammad (Peace and Blessing of Allah be upon them all).

WHAT IS KAABA?

Muslims believe the Kaaba is the first place of worship. Abraham and Ishmael were commanded by God (Allah) to build the Kaaba over 4,000 years ago. It is situated inside the compound of the Sacred Mosque in the city Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Because of its unique significance as the First House of Worship, Islam prescribes that Muslims face the direction of the Kaaba whenever they pray. Turning toward the Kaaba in worship symbolizes unity as one community worshiping the One God.

WHAT IS KORAN (QUR'AN)?

The Qur'an is the last revealed book of God (Allah). It is a record of the exact words revealed by God (Allah) through Angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty-three years. The Prophet did not know how to read or write.

When the angel brought the revelations, he memorized them then dictated them to his companions, and they were written down by scribes.

Not one word of its 114 chapters has been changed over the centuries so that the Qur'an is in every detail the unique and miraculous text which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad fourteen centuries ago between 610 and 632 Common Era. The Qur'an is the heart and soul of Islam. It provides guidelines for a just society, proper human conduct, and an equitable economic system.

WHAT ARE THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM?

THE DECLARATION OF FAITH: "I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except God (Allah), and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger." The Prophethood of Mohammad obliges Muslims to follow his exemplary life in every respect.

PRAYERS are prescribed five times a day as a duty toward God (Allah). Prayer strengthens and enlivens belief in God (Allah) and inspires people to higher morality. It purifies the heart and controls temptations, wrong-doing and evil. All Muslims across the globe pray in the same manner, as did the Prophet fourteen hundred years ago.

FASTING during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. It was in Ramadan when the first words of the Qur'an were revealed to Prophet Muhammad. Fasting means abstinence from food, beverages, and sex from dawn to sunset, and curbing evil intentions and desires. It teaches love, security, and devotion. Fasting develops self-control, patience, unselfishness, social conscience, and willpower to bear hardship. It also enables the Muslims to feel with the poor.

ZAKAT or Charity is a proportionately fixed contribution from the wealth and saving of the well to do and rich. It is spent on the poor and needy in particular, and the welfare of the society in general. The payment of Zakaat purifies one's income and wealth and helps establish economic balance and social justice in the society.

HAJJ OR PILGRIMAGE to the Kaaba in Makkah, is obligatory once in a lifetime, provided one has the means to undertake the journey and has good health.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD MERCY TO THE WORLDS

- Peace & Blessings -

Said be merciful to people so God is merciful to you

Banned killing prisoners

Prohibited killing any civilians

Established law and order

Campaigned to end slavery

Liberated all his slaves

Prohibited rape

Expressly forbade burning anyone alive

Ordered to protect churches

Abided by his treaties and agreements

Established peace among warring tribes

Declared Muslims, pagans, and Jews of his state as one people with full freedoms

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CHAPTER 1 : About Islam – A Brief Introduction

1. Believe in Oneness of Allah

One True God. Allah has no rivals, partners, equals, children or parents. He is not like His creation, as nothing shares His divine essence and perfect attributes. Some of His names and attributes include: The Creator, The Most Merciful, The Most High, The All-Powerful, The Most Just, The All-Wise, The Sustainer and The All-Knowing.

He is the Creator and Sustainer of all, the One who has granted us countless blessings, such as our faculties of hearing, seeing and thinking, as well as the ability to walk, talk and be productive. As such, we should acknowledge, thank and worship him alone by following his guidance.

It is rational to conclude that such a complex and balanced universe is not possible by any other than a powerful and intelligent being. It is therefore illogical to believe that the universe created itself, or was the result of random or coincidental events.

2. Belief in The Angels

Angels are made from light, have allocated tasks and never disobey their Creator. Details about a few have been revealed, such as Gabriel, who delivers God's message to the Prophets, and the Angel of Death, who takes the souls of people.

3. Belief in The Prophets

Muslims believe that thousands of Prophets were sent by Allah, at least one to every nation, to convey God's revelation. These Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Joseph, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them all). Their mission was to return people to the worship of the One True God, to serve as practical examples of how to obey God, and to guide people to the path of salvation. Prophets do not share in any part of God's divinity, and any type of prayer or worship towards the Prophets, or to God through them, is strictly forbidden and considered a violation of God's right to be worshiped alone.

4. Belief in The Revealed Books

Allah sent divine revelation to His Messengers as a guidance and mercy to mankind. These include the Torah and Gospel as originally revealed to Moses and Jesus respectively, and the Quran as revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

There are many clear signs and miracles that it is from God, examples of which include:

- Contains a simple, pure and universal message which appeals to Man's inherent beliefs about Almighty God.
- Contains a unique style of language that is universally known as the pinnacle of Arabic eloquence and linguistic beauty - yet the Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was known, historically, to be illiterate.
- Contains many scientific facts which have only been discovered recently despite being revealed over 1400 years ago.

5. Belief in The Day of Judgement

The Day of Judgment is the inevitable event when each one of us will stand before our Creator and be questioned about our good and bad deeds. Every one of our actions will be accounted for, regardless of size.

On this momentous Day, Allah, the All-Just, will settle all matters fairly and no person will be wronged. Everyone's rights will be returned. All will be treated justly, by either the reward of Paradise, or the punishment of the Hellfire.

6. Belief in Divine Destiny

Allah knows everything from the past, the present, and anything that will occur in the future. He has power over all things - nothing occurs without His knowledge and permission. Every person has been given the free will to choose between right and wrong, and will be held to account accordingly. Free will does not contradict the fact that events can only occur with God's knowledge and permission. Nor does it mean that God's power over everything prevents or restricts people's free will. God's knowledge of people's decisions does not mean that they are being forced to make such decisions, and God is not necessarily pleased with everything that He allows to occur.

The Foundation of Muslim's Life

- **The Declaration of Faith:** The declaration of faith is bearing witness there is no God worthy of worship but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger. It must be based on a sincere and belief in the heart, followed by action. With this declaration, a person rejects all false deities, asserts that Allah is the only One worthy of worship, and accepts His final Messenger, hence becoming a Muslim.
- **The 5 Daily Prayers:** Prayer establishes a personal and spiritual connection between the Muslim and their Creator, and is a constant and practical reminder of a person's duty to obey God. Each prayer can take a few minutes to perform, consisting of recitation of the Quran, supplications, praising Allah, and various movements. In preparation for prayer, Muslims wash certain parts of their body, such as the face and hands, to ensure spiritual and physical purity.
- **The Annual Charity:** The annual charity is an obligation on every Muslim who meets certain criteria (e.g. has wealth above a certain threshold). A mere 2.5% of one's annual wealth is donated to those who are eligible, such as the poor, the needy or those in debt. It purifies one's wealth and carries many benefits for both the giver and the receiver. One benefit is it reduces the gap between the rich and poor, ensuring everyone has their basic needs met.
- **The Annual Fasting:** Every year during the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food, drink and sexual relations. It serves as a spiritual purification, nurtures patience and self-restraint, and provides many health benefits.
- **The Pilgrimage:** Pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah, in Saudi Arabia, must be performed once in a person's life, if they are physically and financially able. It occurs annually in the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, unifying people of every color, race, status and age, as they join in worship of the One True God. This great journey consists of many components, including sacrifices, traveling and praying at various sites. Such an experience is life altering and humbles a person, making them more patient and thankful.

Conclusion: The above-mentioned aspects of faith and acts of worship make up the essence of Islam. When practiced, Islam fulfills the spiritual, physical, psychological and social needs of all people, and is a practical and rational way of life. Furthermore, it is the only way of life which is accepted by God Almighty, and the only path that leads to everlasting Paradise.

CHAPTER 2: JESUS – A PROPHET OF GOD

Jesus is a figure who is loved and revered by billions of people the world over, yet there is much confusion surrounding the status of this colossal personality. Muslims and Christians both hold Jesus in high regard but view him in very different ways.

1. JESUS AS GOD

Some Christians claim that “Jesus is God” or part of a trinity that he is the incarnation of God on earth, and that God took on a human form. However, according to the Bible, Jesus was born, ate, slept, prayed and had limited knowledge - all attributes not befitting God. God has attributes of perfection whereas Man is the opposite. How can anything be two complete opposites simultaneously.

Islam teaches that God is always perfect. To believe that God became a man is to claim that God is or was (at some point in time), imperfect. A Christian must ask him/herself, does the idea of a god who was once a weak helpless child, one who could not survive without food, drink or sleep, be the same Almighty God described in the Old Testament? Surely not. One may ask, “If God can do anything, why can’t he become a man?” By definition, God does not do ungodly acts. God does not do anything that would make Him, something other than God. If God became man and took on human attributes, he would, necessarily, no longer be God. Some ambiguous verses of the Bible can be applied erroneously to show that Jesus is in some way divine. But if we look at the clear direct verses of the Bible, we see again and again that Jesus is being referred to as an extraordinary human being and nothing more. The Bible contains many verses in which Jesus speaks and behaves as if God is a separate being to himself. For example: Jesus “fell on his face and prayed.” (Matthew 26:39) If Jesus was God, then would a God fall on his face and pray? And who would he be praying to?

The Bible calls Jesus a Prophet (Matthew 21 :1 0-1 1), so how could Jesus be God and be God’s Prophet at the same time? Jesus said, “I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than me.” (John 14:28) Jesus said, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.” (John 20:17) If Jesus was God, then why would he say, “to my God, and your God,” and who was he ascending to? If Jesus was God, he would have clearly told people to worship him, and there would be clear verses in the Bible stating this; yet he did the opposite and disapproved anyone worshiping him: “And in vain they worship me.” Matthew 15:9

2. SON OF GOD

Some Christians claim that Jesus is the Son of God. What does this actually mean? Surely God is far removed from having a physical and literal son. Humans have human children. Cats have kittens. What does it mean for God to have a child?

Rather than being taken literally, we find the term “Son of God” is symbolically used in the earliest biblical languages for a “righteous person”, and has been used for David, Solomon and Israel - not exclusively for Jesus: “Israel is my firstborn son,” (Exodus 4:22). In fact, anyone who is righteous is referred to as God’s ‘son’ : “All who are led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons and daughters.” (Romans 8:14)

3. FATHER AND LORD

In the same way, when the word ‘Father’ is used to refer to God it shouldn’t be taken literally. Instead, it’s a way of saying God is the creator, sustainer and the supreme master of all. There are many verses for us to understand this symbolic meaning of the word ‘Father’, for example: “One God and Father of all. Also, Jesus was sometimes called ‘Lord’ by the disciples. This term is used in the original languages of the Bible, for God as well as for people who are held in high esteem. For example, in the Greek New Testament, the term kyrios is used for both ‘Lord’ as well as to name the owner of the vineyard (Matthew 20:8), the master who beat the disobedient servant (Luke 20.42-47).

4. JESUS THE PROPHET

In Judaism, Jesus (peace be upon him) is denied as the Messiah. This is in stark contrast to Christianity where he is worshiped as a deity, or the son of God. Islam takes a middle ground & acknowledges Jesus as an honorable Prophet and Messenger of God, as well as the Messiah, but Muslims do not worship him - as worship is for God alone who created Jesus and everything that exists.

7. MESSAGES OF JESUS

Their message was simple: there is one God and He alone deserves your worship. It is not logical for God to send Prophets for thousands of years with the same essential message, only to suddenly change it, claim that He is now a part of a trinity, and to stipulate the belief in the divinity of Jesus to be saved.

The truth is, Jesus preached the same message as all the Prophets in the Old Testament. There is a passage in the Bible that really emphasizes this core message. A man came to Jesus and asked, “Which is the first commandment of all?” Jesus answered, “The first of all the is, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.’ So, the greatest commandment, most important belief according to Jesus, is that God is one. If Jesus was God he would have said, ‘I am God, worship me.

Instead, he merely repeated a verse from the Old Testament confirming that God is One. This aligns with the mission of Jesus as taught in Islam, where Jesus was sent to the Children of Israel to confirm the message of the past Prophets - to believe in the One True God.

As an honorable obedient Messenger of God, Jesus submitted willingly to God’s commands as such, he was a “Muslim” - which refers to anyone that submits to will & commandments of God.

5. MIRACULOUS BIRTH

According to the Quran, the Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary, the noble virgin, in the form of a man, informing her of a child who was to be born miraculously without a father. Some claim that his miraculous birth is evidence of Jesus’ divinity. However, Jesus was not the first to come into existence without a father as Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) before him had neither a father nor mother.

If Jesus is worshiped due to having no father, then surely Adam is deserving of worship since he was created without either parent.

6. MIRACLES OF JESUS

Jesus was miraculously conceived with no father and also performed great miracles by the will and permission of God. He spoke as a baby in the cradle to defend his mother against the people who accused her of fornication. The fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) performed miracles does not mean that he was anything more than a humble servant of God. In fact, many Messengers performed miracles, including Noah, Moses and Muhammad (may peace be upon them all) and these miracles only took place by the permission of God to demonstrate authenticity of the Messenger.

8. JESUS IN ISLAM

The Islamic belief about Jesus explains who the real Jesus was, whilst maintaining the pure belief about God and His complete Greatness, Uniqueness and Perfection. We invite you to look further and investigate Islam. It is not just another religion. It is the same message preached by Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad - may peace be upon all of them. Islam means ‘submission to God’ and is a natural and complete way of life that encourages one to give due attention to their relationship with God and His creation. Islam teaches that God is the All-Just and All-Merciful and does not need to sacrifice himself to forgive sins nor is anyone “born into sin”. God judges everyone based on their own deeds and everyone is accountable for their own actions.

CHAPTER 3: MARY IN ISLAM

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, holds a very special position in Islam, and God proclaims her to be the best woman amongst all humanity, whom He chose above all other women due to her piety and devotion. "And (mention) when the angels said, 'O Mary! Indeed God has chosen you, and purified you, and has chosen you above all other women of the worlds. O Mary! Be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow (in prayer).'" (Quran 3:42-43)

She was also made by God an example to follow, as He said: "And (God sets forth the example for those who Believe) of Mary, the daughter of Heli, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into it through Our Angel (i.e., Gabriel), and she believed in the words of her Lord and His Scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient." (Quran 66:12)

Indeed she was a woman who was fit to bring such a miracle as that of Jesus, who was born without a father. She was known for her piety and chastity, and if it were any different, then none would have believed her claim to have given birth while remaining in a state of virginity, a belief and fact to which Islam holds true. Her special nature was one which many miracles proved of from her early childhood. Let us recount what God revealed in regards to the beautiful story of Mary.

The Childhood of Mary

"Indeed God chose Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Heli above all others of the creation. Offspring, one of the other, and God is the All-Hearer, All-Knower. (Remember) when the wife (Hannah; also Anne, Ann, Anna) of Heli said: 'O my Lord! I have vowed to You what (the child that) is in my womb to be dedicated for Your services (to serve Your Place of worship), so accept this, from me. Verily, You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knowing.'" (Quran 3:35)

Mary was born to Heli and his wife Hannah, who was of Davidic descent, thus coming from a family of Prophets, from Abraham, to Noah, to Adam, may the Peace and Blessings of God be on them all. As mentioned in the verse, she was born to the chosen family of Heli, who was born into the chosen family of Abraham, who was also born into a chosen family. Hannah was a barren woman who longed for a child, and she made a vow to God that, if He granted her a child, she would consecrate him to His service in the Temple. God answered her invocation, and she conceived a child. When she gave birth, she was saddened, for her child was female, and it was usually males who were given in service to Bait-ul-Maqdis.

"So when she gave birth to her, she said, 'My Lord! I have delivered a female...and the male is not like the female.'" When she expressed her sorrow, God rebuked her saying: "...And God knows best what she delivered..." (Quran 3:36)...for God chose her daughter, Mary, to be the mother of one of the greatest miracles of creation: the virgin birth of Jesus, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Hannah named her child Mary (Maryam in Arabic) and invoked God to protect her and her child from Satan: "...And I have named her Mary (Maryam), and commend her and her offspring to your protection from Satan, the outcast." (Quran 3:36)

God indeed accepted this supplication of hers, and He gave Mary and her soon to come child, Jesus, a special trait - given to none before nor after; neither of them were afflicted by the touch of Satan upon birth. The Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said:

"None are born except that Satan touches them upon their birth, due to which it comes out screaming from its touch, except Mary and her son (Jesus)."
(Ahmed)

Here, we can immediately see a similarity between this narration and the Christian theory of the "Immaculate Conception" of Mary and Jesus, although there is a great difference between the two. Islam does not propagate the theory of 'original sin', and therefore does not condone this interpretation of how they were free from the touch of Satan, but rather that this was a grace given by God to Mary and her son Jesus. As other prophets, Jesus was protected from committing grave sins. As for Mary, even if we take the position that she was not a prophetess, she nevertheless received the protection and guidance of God which He grants the pious believers.

"So her Lord accepted her with gracious acceptance, and reared her in purity and beauty, and entrusted her to the care of Zachary." (Quran 3:37).

Upon the birth of Mary, her mother Hannah took her to Bait-ul-Maqdis and offered her to those in the mosque to grow under their tutelage. Knowing the nobility and piety of their family, they quarreled as to who would have the honor to rear her. They agreed to cast lots, and it was none other than the prophet Zachary who was chosen. It was under his care and tutelage which she was reared.

Miracles in her Presence and Visitation by Angels

As Mary grew older, even the prophet Zachary noticed the special features of Mary, due to the various miracles which occurred in her presence. Mary, as she was growing up, was given a secluded room within the mosque where she could devote herself to the worship of God. Whenever Zachary would enter the chamber to see to her needs, he would find abundant, and out of season, fruit in her presence.

"Whenever Zachary entered the chamber, he found her provided with sustenance. He said, 'O Mary! From where did you get this?' She replied, 'It is from God.' Surely God bestows sustenance upon whom He pleases without measure." (Quran 3:37).

She was visited by angels on more than one occasion. God tells us that the angels visited her and informed her of her praised status amongst humanity: "When the angels said, 'O Mary! God has chosen you and purified you (due to your worship and devotion), and chosen you (by making you the mother of the prophet Jesus) above the women of the worlds. O Mary! Pray to your Lord devoutly, and prostrate yourself, and bow down with those who bow down.'" (Quran 3:42-43).

Due to these visitations of the angels and her being chosen above other women, some have held that Mary was a prophetess. Even if she was not, which is a matter of debate, Islam still deems her having the highest status amongst all women of creation due to her piety and devotion, and due to her being chosen for the miraculous birth of Jesus.

CHAPTER 4: SCIENCE IN ISLAM

The Quran, the book of Islam, is the final book of revelation from God to humanity and the last in the line of revelations given to the Prophets.

Although the Quran (revealed over 1400 years ago), is not primarily a book of science, it does contain scientific facts that have only been discovered recently through the advancement of technology and scientific knowledge. Islam encourages reflection and scientific research because understanding the nature of creation enables people to further appreciate their Creator and the extent of His power and wisdom.

The Quran was revealed at a time when Science was primitive; there were no telescopes, microscopes or anything close to today's technology. People believed that the sun orbited the earth and the sky was held up by pillars at the corners of a flat earth. Against this backdrop the Quran was revealed, containing many scientific facts on topics ranging from astronomy to biology, geology to zoology.

Some of the man scientific facts found in the Quran include:

1. Origin in Life

Water is pointed out as the origin of all life. All living things are made of cells and we now know that cells are mostly made of water.

This was discovered only after the invention of the microscope. In the deserts of Arabia, it would be inconceivable to think that someone would have guessed that all life came from water.

2. Human Embryonic Development

God speaks about the stages of man's embryonic development. The Arabic word "alaqah" has three meanings: a leech, a suspended thing and blood clot. Embryology scientists have observed that the usage of these terms in describing the formation of the embryo is accurate and in conformity with current scientific understanding of the development process.

3. Iron Sent Down

Iron is not natural to earth, as it came to this planet from outer space. Scientists have found that billions of years ago, the earth was struck by meteorites which were carrying iron from distant stars which had exploded. God uses the words 'sent down'. The fact that iron was sent down to earth from outer space is something which could not be known by the primitive science of the seventh century.

4. Expansion of the Universe

At a time when science of Astronomy was still primitive, the following verse in the Quran was revealed. One of the intended meanings of the above verse is that God is expanding the universe (i.e. heavens). Other meanings are that God provides for, and has power over, the universe - which are also true. The fact that the universe is expanding (e.g. planets are moving further away from each other) was discovered in the last century. Physicist Stephen Hawking in his book 'A Brief History of Time' writes, "The discovery that the universe is expanding was one of the great intellectual revolutions of the twentieth century." The Quran alludes to the expansion of the universe even before the invention of the telescope

5. Sky's Protection

The sky plays a crucial role in protecting the earth and its inhabitants from the lethal rays of the sun, as well as the freezing cold of space.

The Quran points to the sky's protection as a sign of God, protective properties which were discovered by scientific research conducted in the twentieth century.

6. Mountains

God draws our attention to an important characteristic of mountains:

The Quran accurately describes the deep roots of mountains by using the word "stakes". Mount Everest, for example, has an approximate height of 9 km above ground, while its root is deeper than 125 km!

The fact that mountains have deep 'stake'-like roots was not known until after the development of the theory of plate tectonics in the beginning of the twentieth century. God also says in the Quran (16:15), that the mountains have a role in stabilizing the earth "so that it would not shake," which has just begun to be understood by scientists.

7. Internal Waves in the Ocean

It was commonly thought that waves only occur on the surface of ocean. However, oceanographers have discovered that there are internal waves that take place below the surface which are invisible to the human eye and can only be detected by specialized equipment.

This description is amazing because 1400 years ago there was no specialist equipment to discover the internal waves deep inside the oceans.

8. Lying & Movement

There was a cruel oppressive tribal leader who lived during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). God revealed a verse to warn him:

God does not call this person a liar, but calls his forehead (the front part of the brain) 'lying' and 'sinful', and warns him to stop. Numerous studies have found that the front part of our brain (frontal lobe) is responsible for both lying and voluntary movement, and hence sin.

9. Two seas that do not Mix

Physical force called surface tension prevents the waters of neighboring seas from mixing, due to the difference in the density of these waters. It is as if a thin wall were between them. This has only very recently been discovered by oceanographers.

The Quran is a book of guidance that demonstrates that God did not create humans to simply wander aimlessly. Rather, it teaches us that we have a meaningful and higher purpose in life - to acknowledge God's complete perfection, greatness and uniqueness, and obey Him. It is up to each person to use their God-given intellect and reasoning abilities to contemplate and recognize God's signs - the Quran being the most important sign. Read and discover the beauty and truth of the Quran, so that you may attain success.

CHAPTER 5: WOMENS RIGHT IN ISLAM

1. Equal Right to Knowledge

Both men and women are equally encouraged to seek knowledge. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Education is compulsory for every Muslim." Also, great female Muslim Scholars existed at and around the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Some were from his family and others were his companions or their daughters. Prominent among them was Aisha, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) through whom a quarter of the Islamic law has been transmitted.

Females were the great scholars of jurisprudence and had famous male scholars as their students.

2. Equal Right to Choose a Spouse

Islam has honored women by giving them the right to choose a spouse and keep their original family name once married. Additionally, many have the impression that parents force their daughters into marriage. Cultural practice, and has no basis in Islam. In fact, it is prohibited.

At the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), a woman came to him and said, "My father has married me to my cousin to raise his social standing and I was forced into it." The Prophet sent for the girl's father and then in his presence gave the girl the option of remaining married or nullifying marriage. She responded, "O Messenger of Allah, I have accepted what my father did, but wanted to show other women (that they could not be forced into a marriage).

3. Equal yet different

While men and women have equal rights as a general principle, the specific rights and responsibilities ranted to them are not identical. Men and women have complementary rights and responsibilities. Aside from external and internal anatomical differences, scientists know there are many other subtle differences in the way the brains of men and women process language, information and emotion, just to mention a few.

A socio-biology expert, Edward O. Wilson of Harvard University, said that females tend to be higher than males in verbal skills, empathy and social skills, among other things, while men tend to be higher in independence, dominance, spatial and mathematical skills, rank-related aggression, and other characteristics.

It would be foolish to treat both genders the same and to ignore their differences. Islam teaches that men and women have complementary, yet different, roles because it is best suited to their nature. God says

4. The Family Unit

God created men and women to be different, with unique roles, skills and responsibilities. These differences are not viewed as evidences of superiority or inferiority, but of specialization. In Islam, the family is of central importance. The man is responsible for the financial well being of the family while the woman contributes to the family's physical, educational and emotional well being. This encourages cooperation rather than competition. By fulfilling their mutual responsibilities, strong families are created and hence strong societies. Also, emotionally, neither men nor women live a happy life without one another. Allah describes this beautifully by saying: Clothing provides comfort, warmth and security as well as making one look good - this is how the relationship between the husband and wife is defined in Islam.

6. Loft positions of mothers & daughters

A mother has the greatest influence on a child especially in the earlier years through her affection, care and love. Undoubtedly, the success of a society is due to mothers. Therefore, it is only right for Islam to honor and raise their status. Allah says in the Qur'an: The Prophet (peace be upon him) was once asked, "O Messenger of Allah, who among people is most deserving of my good treatment?" He said, "Your mother." The man asked twice more, "Then who?" and was given the same response. Only until the fourth time did the Prophet respond, "Then your father." Reward is not only given to the good and kind treatment towards mothers. In fact, Islam has designated a special reward for raising daughters that is not granted for raising sons. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever Allah has given two daughters and is kind towards them, they will be a reason for him entering Paradise."

5. Love & Mercy in Spousal Relations

The Prophet peace be upon him also encouraged men to treat their spouses in the best way, "The best of you are those who are best (in treatment) to their wives." Aisha (the Prophet's wife) was once asked how the Prophet's conduct was in his home.

She said, "He was like one of you at home yet he was most lenient and most generous He was ready to give a helping hand to his wives in the ordinary work of the house, [he] sewed his own clothes and mended his own shoes." In general, he helped in whatever work his wives did".

Conclusion

Before Islam, women were considered shameful, female children were buried alive, prostitution was rampant, divorce was only in the hands of the husband, inheritance was only for the strong, and oppression was widespread. Islam came and abolished these practices. Even now, in "developed countries", women are not granted respect, dignity and honor, let alone equal pay for equal work. Islam, however, regards women as precious and valuable, not to be disrespected or disgraced. The mistreatment of women in some Middle-Eastern countries or Muslim families is due to cultural factors that some Muslims wrongly follow, not because of Islam. Why would many women around the world willingly enter Islam if it is an oppressive religion? We end with the words of our Lord and your Lord, the Creator and Sustainer of all men and women.

WHAT IS QURAN? WHAT DOES QURAN SAY ABOUT IT?

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the very word of God Almighty: a complete record of the exact words revealed by God through the Archangel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him). The Qur'an was memorized by Prophet Muhammad and his followers, dictated to his companions, and written down by scribes, who cross-checked it during the Prophet lifetime. Not one word of it's 114 surahs (chapters) has been changed over the centuries. The Qur'an is in every detail the same unique and miraculous text that was revealed to Muhammad over fourteen centuries ago. The Qur'an is the principle source of every Muslim's faith and practice. It deals with all subjects that concern us as human beings, including wisdom, doctrine, worship and law; but its basic theme is the relationship between God and his creatures. At the same time, the Qur'an provides guidelines for a just society, proper human conduct and equitable economic principles.

The Word of God: The Qur'an is the literal word of God, The Almighty (Allah in Arabic), revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the Angel Gabriel. Guidance for Mankind, The Qur'an is "a guidance for mankind and the distinction (between right and wrong)." It provides direction to help mankind judge between right and wrong, without which, man would surely be in loss.

The Final Revelation: The Qur'an is the last scripture revealed by Almighty Allah (God), confirming what little truth remains in parts of previous scriptures and refuting and correcting fabrications and additions which have crept into current day versions of such scriptures.

How was the Qur'an Revealed: The Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him) and exists only in the language in which it was revealed - Arabic. However, the translation of the meaning of the Qur'an is available in many languages. The Qur'an was not sent down as a complete book in one revelation; rather, the revelation spanned over a period of 23 years. For this reason, it is essential to know in what circumstances the verses were revealed, in order to have a proper understanding of the Qur'an; otherwise, its teachings could be misunderstood.

CHAPTER 6: ISLAM & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is Islam and who are Muslims?

Islam is a natural and complete way of life that encourages one to give due attention to their relationship with God and His creation. It teaches that souls find true happiness and peace through performing good actions that are approved by God and which benefit both the society and the individual.

The message of Islam is simple: to believe in and to worship The One True God alone, and to accept Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His final Messenger. The word "Islam" means submission to God, and its followers are known as Muslims, who can be from any racial or ethnic background

2. What is the purpose of Life?

God did not create humans to simply wander aimlessly.

We have a higher purpose to acknowledge and worship God alone, so that we live upon the guidance of our Creator.

This guidance enables us to live a successful and blessed life in all aspects, as well as entry into Paradise and freedom from Hell.

The test of one's faith is in the using one's intellect and reasoning abilities to strongly contemplate and recognize God's signs and to live according to his guidance.

3. Who is Allah?

Allah is the personal name of The One True God. Allah has no partners, equals, parents or children. All of Allah's attributes are perfect, such as The Creator

The Most Merciful, The All-Powerful, The Most Just, The All-Wise and The All-Knowing. No human or object shares in Allah's lordship and His divine attributes, as such, He alone deserves to be worshiped exclusively.

He was an ideal father, husband, teacher, leader and judge, and a perfect example of an honest, just, compassionate and brave human being. Although greatly respected, he, like the other Prophets, is not worshiped by Muslims.

4. What are the sources of Islam?

Islam is a natural and complete way of life that encourages one to give due attention to their relationship with God and His creation. It teaches that souls find true happiness and peace through performing good actions that are approved by God and which benefit both the society and the individual.

The message of Islam is simple: to believe in and to worship The One True God alone, and to accept Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His final Messenger. The word "Islam" means submission to God, and its followers are known as Muslims, who can be from any racial or ethnic background

5. What is the Quran?

The Quran is the final revelation to mankind, and is a guide and criterion between right and wrong. It is the literal word of Allah, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the Angel Gabriel, and supersedes all previous revelations, such as the Gospel and the Torah. It explains and clarifies many issues like the purpose of our existence; the correct concept of God; the actions liked and disliked by God; the stories of the Prophets and their lessons; accounts of Heaven, Hell, and the Day of Judgement.

One of the great miracles of the Quran is that it has been preserved and unchanged since it was revealed over 1400 years ago.

6. What are main practices in islam?

1st: The Testimony of Faith - to declare that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah, and Muhammad is His final Messenger.

2nd: Prayers - to be performed five times daily: once each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon after sunset and at night.

3rd: Prescribed Charity - this is an annual compulsory charity paid to those less fortunate and is calculated at 2.5% of one's total wealth. It is paid by those who have excess wealth beyond basic needs.

4th: Fasting the Month of Ramadan - throughout this month, Muslims must refrain from all food, drink and sexual relations with their spouses, from dawn to sunset.

7. Why do bad things happen?

God tests people in different ways through various trials. This includes health, family, natural disasters, wealth or other means. Patience during adversities (by not giving up hope or despairing), and gratefulness for blessings (by using such blessings in a way pleasing to God), is a means of getting closer to God, attaining eternal Paradise. Ofcourse pain and suffering in the is temporary; while Paradise is everlasting.

8. How does Islam view women?

In Islam, men and women are viewed as equals before God, in terms of both receiving equal reward and accountability for their actions. Allah, the Creator of both genders, assigned different roles and responsibilities for each, taking into account their differences.

Women are given the utmost respect and honor, with no form of oppression condoned towards them.

9. Are all religions the same?

While most religions generally have the same teachings regarding good manners and kindness to others and so on Islam additionally focuses on the Greatness of God with no compromises with his Oneness and Perfection. Unlike other religions, Islam primarily teaches that God is completely different and unique compared to His creation and that all praise and worship is due directly and exclusively to Him.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?

The first evidence that points to the existence of a Creator relates to understanding the origin of the universe. Imagine walking in a desert and finding a watch. We know a watch consists of glass, plastic and metal. Glass comes from sand, plastic from oil, and metal extracted from the ground - all these components are found in the desert. Would you believe that the watch formed itself? That the Sun shone, the wind blew, lightning struck, the oil bubbled to the surface and mixed with the sand and metal, and over millions of years the watch came together by random or natural coincidences?

Human experience and simple logic tells us that something that has a beginning does not simply come from nothing, nor can something create itself. Therefore, the most rational explanation is that a higher "being" created the universe. This "being" must be powerful and intelligent as it brought the whole universe into existence and created the

'laws of science' which govern it. We can also reason that this "being" is timeless and not bound by space, because time, space and matter began at the creation of the universe. All of these attributes make up the basic concept of God, the creator of the universe. This is in perfect agreement with modern science which concludes that the universe is finite and has a beginning.

CHAPTER 7: THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Every sound structure must have a solid foundation in order to remain strong. Islam's foundation is the five pillars it was built upon, forming the basis of Islamic teaching as taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), wherein he said: Islam is built upon five pillars:

1. **The Declaration of Faith (Shahadah);**
2. **Establishing regular prayers (Salah);**
3. **Paying Charity (Zakah);**
4. **Fasting the (lunar) month of Ramadan (Sawm);**
5. **Pilgrimage (Hajj)**

These five pillars are a cornerstone of a Muslim's life.

1. The Declaration of Faith (Shahadah): The declaration of faith is bearing witness (testifying) that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah (God), and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Servant and Messenger. It must be based on a sincere and firm belief in the heart, as well as being uttered verbally.

The first part of the declaration implies that: No person, object or being has the right to be worshiped except Allah alone. The Arabic name "Allah" refers to the One True God of all mankind and everything that exists.

Allah alone is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, and He has power over all things.

Allah alone has perfect attributes and is free from all deficiencies.

Allah has no partner, equal, father, mother or son.

The second part of the declaration is that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Allah's Servant and final Messenger. He is the final Prophet in a long chain of Prophets sent to call the people to the obedience and worship of Allah alone. Some of these Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon them all).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent with the Qur'an (the final revelation), in order to teach the people Allah's message, and serve as an example for all to follow.

Some benefits of the Declaration of Faith:

Complete surrender to the will of Allah and becoming His true servant and subject.

Produces a high degree of self-respect and confidence, while also remaining humble and modest.

Produces strong determination, patience and perseverance, making a person brave and courageous, as well as dutiful and upright.

Makes a person obey and observe Allah's commands

2. Establishing regular prayers (Salah): The five daily prayers form the most important ritual of worship in a Muslim's life; one each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Prayer is a pillar of the religion (Islam). Whoever establishes it, establishes religion; and whoever destroys it (e. g. neglects it), destroys religion.

"Prayer establishes a personal and spiritual connection between the Muslim and his Creator, based on faith, love, hope and reverence. When prayer is performed correctly with complete concentration, humility and sincerity, it will have an enduring effect on the person, filling his heart with contentment, peace and closeness with Allah.

Prayer is the center of a Muslim's life and the best way to achieve submission to Allah. It can be offered almost anywhere clean: such as in fields, offices, factories or universities; and takes only a few minutes to perform. It consists of recitation from the Holy Qur'an, supplicating to and praising Allah, with various body postures such as standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting. Through prayer, the Muslim remembers the greatness of his Creator and supplicates to Him for his needs and wishes.

Repeatedly humbling oneself before Allah prevents a person from falling into sin, and is a type of purification for one's soul, as mentioned in the Qur'an: "Verily the prayer prevents one from the shameful and evil deeds." Qur'an 29:45. Prayer is also an opportunity for repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) asked his companions, "If one of you had a river by his door in which he bathed five times a day, would any filth remain on him?" They replied, "No." Then the Prophet added, "Likewise, Allah wipes away sins with the five daily prayers."

3. Paying Charity (Zakah): All things belong to Allah, including wealth, which is considered as a trust. The prescribed charity (zakah) is an obligation on every Muslim who meets certain criteria (e.g. attained maturity, is sane, has wealth above a certain threshold). A mere 2.5% of wealth must be paid annually to those who are eligible, as prescribed in the Qur'an (e.g. the poor and needy).

The Prophet (peace be on him) said: "Allah has made zakah obligatory simply to purify your remaining wealth."

The meaning of the word "zakah", is both 'purification' and 'growth'. This is similar to the pruning of plants, whereby regularly trimming provides balance and encourages growth. By fulfilling this obligation, Muslims purify their remaining wealth, as well as ensure both financial and spiritual growth.

Some benefits of zakah:

Purifies one from selfishness, arrogance and a greedy heart. Trains one to be sympathetic and compassionate towards the poor and needy.

Reminds one of the blessings from Allah and encourages one to be grateful. Bridges the gap between different socio-economic classes and groups, and is a form of social security. Reduces poverty and ensures equality by making it obligatory upon the rich to share some of their wealth with the less fortunate "...so that this (wealth) may not circulate solely among the rich from among you." Qur'an 59:7

A person may also give as much as they please as additional voluntary charity.

4. Fasting the (lunar) month of Ramadan (Sawm):

As with any act of worship, fasting requires obedience and submission to Allah's commands through the highest degree of commitment and sincerity. Every year during the month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the lunar calendar), Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from three key human needs - food, drink and sexual relations. One should also abstain from all sinful actions. Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory on every physically and mentally capable adult Muslim. Children, the sick, the mentally unfit, the elderly, menstruating women, and travelers are exempt.

Some benefits of fasting:

Promotes spiritual self-purification and growth.
Scientifically proven health benefits.
Sympathy for those less fortunate, prompting more charity.
A means of learning self-restraint and patience.
Purifies the soul and helps it acquire the habit of obeying Allah by restraining desires, and promotes steadfastness.
Creates an increased feeling of unity and collective identity among those fasting.
Creates an increased awareness about the state of affairs across the globe and the hardships endured.
Forgiveness of sins.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "He who fasts Ramadan, with faith and hoping for reward (from Allah), then his past sins are forgiven."

5. Pilgrimage (Hajj): Pilgrimage to the Holy city of Makkah (in Saudi Arabia) and other sacred sites must be performed at least once in a person's life, if they are physically and financially capable. Performing the pilgrimage is a temporary suspension of all worldly activities, and is a time for one to reflect, worship, seek the forgiveness of Allah and attain His closeness.

The Pilgrimage is an annual event in the 12th month of the lunar calendar (Dhul-Hijjah in Arabic), which unifies people of every color, race, status and age, as they join in worship of the One True God. All pilgrims wear simple and similar clothing, which strips away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before Allah. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever performs Hajj and does not utter Obscenities or commit sin, will come back just like the day when his mother bore him (i. e. pure of sins)."

Hajj involves following in the footsteps of Prophet Abraham, as taught to us by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them). This great act of worship consists of many components including sacrificing an animal, supplicating, visiting and praying at various sites, circling the Ka'bah, walking between two mountains, as well as many other rituals, all of which are performed over a period of 6 continuous days.

Such an experience is life-altering and humbles a person, making them more patient and thankful to Allah. Brotherhood is increased, as is the sense that all Muslims, regardless of their differences, are one nation.

Conclusion: The five pillars of Islam have been prescribed by Allah, and a Muslim is required to believe and act according to them. They are practical as well as easy, and the blessings and wisdom behind them are manifold. When put into perspective, they contribute to the well being of both the individual and the society, enhancing the character and manners of the individual, and making both society and individuals accountable and closer to Allah.

These noble pillars of Islam are purely for the benefit of His creation, as Allah (Glory be to Him!) is free of all needs. These five pillars provide the solid structure and 'training program' for the betterment and success of all humanity.



CHAPTER 8: WHY ISLAM? – BEAUTY AND BENEFITS OF ISLAM

1. Close Relationship with the Creator

At the core of Islam is the focus of an individual's personal relationship with God, their Creator. It encourages believer to have sustained awareness of God which is a key to lasting happiness. Islam teaches that God is the source of peace. By focusing on this important relationship and following God's guidance, believers will be able to acquire inner peace and tranquility.

Seeking lasting happiness through other means, such as following one's desires the accumulation of material possessions, will never void we have. This need can only be filled with the awareness of God. Primary reason for this close relationship is that Muslims have a direct connection with their Creator. There is no intermediary, such as praying to, or through, others, in worshiping God.

2. Positive Outlook on Life

Islam gives a person a clear perspective on the events that happen in their life, both good and bad, as they are, in fact, tests from God. It encourages a person to understand events in the context of the overall purpose of life, which is to acknowledge God and obey Him. He created humans with intellect and free will to test them as to who will willfully choose to follow His guidance.

Life is an ultimate testing ground and although we cannot control everything that happens to us, we can control how we react. Islam encourage a person to focus on what is in their control, to be grateful to God for blessings, and to be patient during hardships. Patience or gratitude - this is the formula for a happy life.

3. Pure and Clear Concept of God

Unlike other religions, Islam is not named after its founder or the community of its birth. Islam is an attributive title that signifies obedience to God, the Creator of the Universe. One of its main beauties is that it acknowledges the complete perfection, greatness and uniqueness of God with absolutely no compromises. This is reflected in Islam's pure teachings of the attributes of God:

GOD IS ONE & UNIQUE

God has no partners, no equals and no rivals. God has no father, mother, sons, daughters or wives. God alone is worthy of all worship.

GOD IS ALL POWERFUL

God has full authority and power over all things. Obedience to God does not increase His Power, nor does disobedience decrease His power.

GOD IS PERFECT

God does not have any human limitations, such as resting on the seventh day after He created the universe. God always maintains perfection and does not do anything to compromise this perfection such as "becoming a man" as claimed by other religions. God does not do ungodly acts, so if God became man and took on human attributes, he would, necessarily, no longer be God.

4. Emphasis on both evidence and faith

Islam is a religion in which faith is based on clear proof. It encourages people to use their God given intelligence to think and ponder over their life and the universe. Although this life is a test, God has provided sufficient signs and guidance to people who are open-minded and sincere to be able to acknowledge the truth. Unlike other religions, there are many clear proofs, signs and miracles that the book of Islam, The Quran, is from God.

THE QURAN: Is free from any errors or contradictions, despite it being revealed over a period of 23 years. Is preserved, word-for-word, since it was revealed in its original Arabic language, unlike other scriptures which have been distorted, changed or lost. Contains a simple, pure and universal message that has a profound effect on all those who are sincerely searching for the truth.

5. Forgiveness of Sins

Islam encourages a balance between hope in God's mercy and fear of His punishment - both of which are required to lead a positive and humble life. We are born sinless but have the free will to commit sins. God created us and knows we are imperfect and commit sins, but the key is how we react to committing those mistakes.

Islam teaches that God is the Most Merciful and will forgive and pardon those who sincerely want to repent. The beautiful steps for repentance include being sincere, remorseful, refraining from committing the sin as well as having the intention not to repeat it. Islam encourages a process of self-development & self-purification. This process happens directly between the individual and God there is no need for sins to be shared or confessed to a righteous person/priest. Furthermore, God does not need to sacrifice himself to forgive sins, nor is anyone "born into sin".

6. Accountability and Ultimate Justice

Islam teaches that God is the Most Just and that each person will be held responsible for their own actions on the Day of Judgement. Each person is accountable, as they have freedom of choice and intelligence to discern between right and wrong.

It is an absolute demand of justice that there be a Day of Judgement, every person is rewarded or punished, otherwise life would be unjust as not everyone receives true justice in this world.

Islam teaches that ultimately we will be judged for how well we fulfilled our responsibilities and exercised our free will. We will be judged by God, the All Knowing and All Wise, who knows and sees everything we do. This encourages a more harmonious society & gives people contentment knowing that justice will ultimately prevail.

7. Practical and Balanced way of Life

Islam provides the right balance between faith and action, as both are required for a stable life. It provides guidance for all situations and circumstances. It is a practical religion with practical acts of worship that are designed to fulfil the spiritual, physical, psychological and social needs of people.

Islam is from God, every command found in the religion is ultimately good and beneficial to the individual and society when practiced correctly. Quranic examples include being honest, forgiving, truthful, kind to one's wife, patient, moderate, modest, sincere, and respecting parents, family and the elderly. There are also many principles in the teachings of Islam that prevent or reduce many of the individual and social ills facing the world today.

8. Universal and Timeless Message

Islam has a message that applies to all people at all times, from the creation of Adam up until the Day of Judgement. It is applicable today as it always has been.

Conclusion

Islam's timeless and beautiful message is the same message of all Prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them all). They all called their people to "Submit to the One True God" which, in Arabic, means to become a "Muslim". This submission to God enables one to fulfill the purpose of life by acknowledging the greatness of God and sincerely worshiping him alone. In doing so, one will acquire the countless benefits of Islam mentioned above.

CHAPTER 9: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?

One of the first questions that comes to mind when considering our purpose of life is, “where did we come from?”. Are we here based on random natural coincidences or is there a higher intelligent being, a creator? There are many logical and rational reasons for believing in a creator. Three reasons are briefly mentioned below.

1. THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIVERSE:

The first evidence that points to the existence of a Creator relates to understanding the origin of the universe. Imagine walking in a desert and finding a watch. We know a watch consists of glass, plastic and metal.

Glass comes from sand, plastic from oil, and metal extracted from the ground - all these components are found in the desert. Would you believe that the watch formed itself? That the Sun shone, the wind blew, lightning struck, the oil bubbled to the surface and mixed with the sand and metal, and over millions of years the watch came together by random or natural coincidences?

Human experience and simple logic tells us that something that has a beginning does not simply come from nothing, nor can something create itself. Therefore, the most rational explanation is that a higher “being” created the universe. This “being” must be powerful and intelligent as it brought the whole universe into existence and created the ‘laws of science’ which govern it. We can also reason that this “being” is timeless and not bound by space, because time, space and matter began at the creation of the universe. All of these attributes make up the basic concept of God, the creator of the universe. This is in perfect agreement with modern science which concludes that the universe is finite and has a beginning.

2. PERFECTION OF UNIVERSE:

The second evidence that points to the existence of an intelligent creator, God, is the order and perfect balance of our complex universe.

Many features in the universe clearly indicate it to be specially designed to support life, such as the earth’s distance from the sun, the thickness of the earth’s crust, the speed at which the earth revolves, the percentage of oxygen in the atmosphere, and even the earth’s tilt. If these measurements were slightly different to what they currently are, life could not exist.

In the same way that a watch has an intelligent maker to keep accurate time, so too must the earth have an intelligent maker to keep accurate time around the sun. Could this occur by itself?

When we see the order, precise laws and systems within ourselves and throughout the universe, is it not rational they have an organizer? This ‘organizer’ is again best explained by the existence of God the one who brought about this order.

3. REVELATION FROM GOD:

The third evidence that points to the existence of a Creator, God, is the actual revelation that has been sent to humankind as a sign of His existence. There are clear signs that the book of Islam, the Quran, is the word of God.

Below is a brief summary of reasons that support this claim.

The Quran:

- Is over 1400 years old and contains many scientific facts that were unknown to people of that time and which have only been discovered recently by science. Examples include: water being the origin of all living things (Quran 21:30); the expanding universe (Quran 51:47); and the individual orbits of the sun and moon (Quran 21:33).
- Contains many historical facts that were unknown to the people of that time as well as numerous predictions which have proven to be correct.
- Is free from any errors or contradictions despite gradual revelation over 23 years and covering a wide variety of topics.
- Has been preserved, word-for-word, since its revelation in its original Arabic language, unlike other scriptures which no longer exist in their original form.
- Has a simple, pure and universal message which appeals to Man’s intellect and inherent beliefs about Almighty God.
- Has a deep and moving effect on people.
- Was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who was known to be illiterate, yet contains a unique style of language that is universally known as the pinnacle of Arabic eloquence and linguistic beauty.

The most rational explanation for the many unique and miraculous aspects of the Quran is that it is from God.

4. GOD SENDS GUIDANCE:

Upon acknowledging that we have been created by the All-Wise Creator, God, we would expect to be informed of our purpose. How can we know what God expects from us? Do we live in trial and error, or make our own purpose? Do we “go with the flow” by following others? No. God sent Prophets and revelation to inform us of our purpose.

God sent thousands of Prophets, at least one to every nation, with the same message: to worship God alone and to follow His guidance. They included Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last in the chain of Prophets, was the perfect example of an honest, just, compassionate and brave human being. He was sent with the final revelation from God, the Quran, to demonstrate how its teachings should be applied.

The Quran is a book of guidance and explains many concepts such as the purpose of our existence; who God is; the actions liked and disliked by God; the stories of the Prophets and their lessons; accounts of Heaven, Hell, and the Day of Judgement. It aims to clarify misunderstandings about the nature of God, such as clarifying the nature and role of Jesus compared to the nature of God.

5. THE NATURE OF JESUS:

“Jesus is God” or part of a trinity - that is, he is the incarnation of God on earth and that God took on a human form.

However, according to the Bible, Jesus was born, ate, slept, prayed and had limited knowledge - all attributes not befitting God. God has attributes of perfection whereas Man is the opposite. So how can anything be two complete opposites both at the same time? This is not rational. However, some may ask, “If God can do anything, why can’t he become a man?” By definition, God does not do ungodly acts, so if God became man and took on human attributes, he would, necessarily, no longer be God.

Furthermore, the Bible contains many verses in which Jesus speaks and behaves as if God is a separate being to himself. For example, Jesus “fell on his face and prayed” (Matthew 26:39). If Jesus was God, then would a God fall on his face and pray? And, who would he be praying to? Some Christians claim that “Jesus is the Son of God.”

We should ask ourselves, what does this actually mean? Surely God is far removed from having a physical and literal son. Rather, we find that the term “Son of God” is symbolically used in the earliest biblical languages for a “righteous person”. It is used throughout the Old Testament for many righteous people such as David, Solomon and Israel - not exclusively for Jesus, “...Israel is my firstborn son,” (Exodus 4:22) is one such example.

The Islamic belief about Jesus explains who the real Jesus was, whilst maintaining the pure belief about God and His complete Greatness, Uniqueness and Perfection. Jesus was as an honorable Prophet sent by God to call to the worship of God alone.

6. SO WHY I AM HERE?

Everyone would acknowledge that our body parts, such as our eyes, ears, brains and hearts, have a purpose. Wouldn’t it then make sense that the individual, as a whole, also has a purpose?

God, the All Wise, did not create us to simply wander aimlessly or to only fulfill our basic instincts and desires. Rather, we have a higher purpose – to acknowledge and worship God alone, so that we live upon the guidance of our Creator. This guidance enables us to live a successful and blessed life in all aspects. This includes personal acts of virtue like prayer, as well as beneficial acts to society, like being good to one’s neighbors, supporting one’s family, honesty, and caring for animals.

God forbids us from worshiping anything else (e.g. statues, the sun, moon, saints, priests or even Prophets). He does not need any partners or intermediaries. Everyone can always worship God directly.

God describes this life as a test, and people are tested in different ways. We cannot control what happens to us, but we can control how we react. Patience during adversities, and gratitude for blessings, are a means of getting closer to God and attaining eternal Paradise. We are also warned of a terrible punishment in Hell if we choose to disbelieve and ignore His commands.

7. SO WHAT DO I DO NOW?

The test of one’s faith is in using one’s intellect to contemplate and recognize God’s signs and live according to His guidance. This is done by submitting to God’s commands, which in Arabic means to become a “Muslim”.

God, the One and only Creator - ‘Allah’ in Arabic - has made Islam accessible to everyone, regardless of their history, background or present situation. Therefore, anyone can become a Muslim by simply believing in, and uttering the following testimony of faith: “I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger.” Isn’t it time for you to fulfill your purpose of life, submit to the truth and acknowledge your Creator?

CHAPTER 10: PROPHETHOOD IN ISLAM – ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Prophets receive revelation: The main difference between an ordinary human being and a Prophet is that a Prophet receives revelation from Allah.

Prophets have noble character: Prophets were the best examples amongst their people in character and righteousness. They lived in obedience to God, with excellent morals and were always truthful in speech and conduct. For this reason, Muslims reject totally the false attribution of major sins to the Prophets, as appears in some scriptures of other religions.

Prophets perform miracles: Many Prophets performed miracles, usually in a field which their people excelled. For example, the people of Moses (peace be upon him) excelled in magic; therefore, Moses (peace be upon him) was able to perform miraculous acts which even magicians could not perform. The people of Jesus (peace be upon him) excelled in matters of medicine; therefore, Jesus (peace be upon him) was able to perform acts of healing beyond the skill of his own people. The people of Muhammad (peace be upon him) excelled in poetry; therefore, Muhammad (peace be upon him) delivered the Quran, containing such eloquent words which no poet could ever compete with. In addition, many Prophets conveyed truthful prophecies of future events. Such miracles were performed only with the permission and assistance of Allah, proving that they were human, and not divine.

Prophets are not divine: While Prophets are chosen by Allah Almighty, they are in no way divine and should not be worshiped. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was commanded to say, “I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is One God.” Quran 18:110. It is clear even from the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, that the Prophets were not divine, and would worship and prostrate to the One True God.

Prophets have necessary qualities: Allah gave all Prophets certain characteristics in order for them to successfully fulfill their mission, such as persistence, courage, leadership, patience and wisdom.

Some examples include: The persistence of Noah (peace be upon him) in calling his people to Allah, even though very few accepted. The courage of Abraham (peace be upon him) to single-handedly confront his entire community regarding their false beliefs, while he was still very young. The leadership of Moses (peace be upon him) in directing the escape of his people from the most oppressive tyrant of his time Pharaoh. The patience of Jesus (peace be upon him) in enduring the hardships and persecution imposed upon him by his people. The wisdom of Muhammad (peace be upon him) in uniting the many rival tribes of Arabia, who had a long history of conflict, into one peaceful community.

CHAPTER 11: PROPHET MUHAMMAD – WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW HIM?

1. MISSION OF MERCY

As well as calling people to pray, fast and give charity, the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught that one's faith in God should also affect one's treatment of others. He said, "The best of you are they who have the best character." Many sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasize the relationship between belief and action, for example, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should not hurt his neighbor, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should speak what is good or keep quiet."

The final Messenger (peace be upon him) taught humans to show mercy and to respect each other, "He who does not show mercy to others, will not be shown mercy."

2. FORGIVENESS

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the most forgiving of all people and the kindest. If someone abused him, he would forgive him, and the harsher a person was, the more patient he would become.

He was extremely lenient and forgiving, especially when he had the upper hand and the power to retaliate.

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was all for forgiveness and no amount of crime or aggression against him was too great to be forgiven by him. He was the best example of forgiveness and kindness, as mentioned in the following verse of Qur'an, "Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant."

3. EQUALITY

In the following sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he taught that all humans are equal in the sight of God, "All humanity is from Adam and Adam is from clay. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a black over a white; except through piety."

"God does not judge you according to your appearance and your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and looks into your deeds."

It is related that once a companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) called another companion in an offensive way, "Son of a black woman!" The Prophet (peace be upon him) became angry and replied, "Do you condemn him because of the blackness of his mother? You still have within you traces of ignorance from the pre-Islamic period."

4. TOLERANCE

"You should not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you should deal with them with forgiveness and kindness." This is how the final Messenger of God (peace be upon him) reacted to personal attacks and abuse. Islamic sources include a number of instances where the Prophet (peace be upon him) had the opportunity to take revenge upon those who wronged him, but refrained from doing so. He taught man to exercise patience in the face of adversity:

"The strong is not the one who overcomes people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger." Practicing patience and tolerance does not mean that a Muslim should be a passivist and not defend himself in case of attack. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that, "Do not wish to meet the enemy, but when you meet (face) the enemy, be patient (i.e. stand firm when facing the enemy)."

5. GENTLENESS

A companion who served Muhammad (peace be upon him) for ten years said that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was always gentle in his dealings with him. "When I did something, he never questioned my manner of doing it; and when I did not do something, he never questioned my failure to do it."

On one occasion, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) reacted angrily after being insulted by a person.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised her, "Be gentle and calm, Aisha, as Allah likes gentleness in all affairs."

He also said, "Show gentleness! For if gentleness is found in something, it beautifies it, and when it is taken out from anything, it makes it deficient."

6. HUMBLENESS

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to prevent people from standing up for him out of respect. He used to sit wherever there was a place available in an assembly and never sought a prominent or elevated place. He never wore anything to distinguish himself from his companions or appear in higher rank than them. He used to mix with the poor and the needy; he used to sit with the elderly and support the widows. People who did not know him could not tell him apart from the rest of the crowd.

Addressing his companions, he said, "Allah has revealed to me, that you must be humble. No one should boast over one another, and no one should oppress another."

Such was his humbleness that he was fearful of being worshiped, a privilege only befitting God:

7. COMMENT FROM NON MUSLIMS

The Prophet's beloved wife, Aisha, said of her noble husband, "He always helped with the housework and would at times mend his clothes, repair his shoes and sweep the floor. He would milk, protect and feed his animals and do household chores." Not only was he a devoted husband, he also encouraged his companions to follow his example, "The most perfect of the believers in faith are the best of them in morals. And the best among them are those who are best to their wives."

8. THE IDEAL HUSBAND

The Prophet's beloved wife, Aisha, said of her noble husband, "He always helped with the housework and would at times mend his clothes, repair his shoes and sweep the floor. He would milk, protect and feed his animals and do household chores." Not only was he a devoted husband, he also encouraged his companions to follow his example, "The most perfect of the believers in faith are the best of them in morals. And the best among them are those who are best to their wives."

9. THE IDEAL EXAMPLE

The examples of kindness and mercy mentioned may come as a surprise to some people given the portrayal of Islam in the media and its constant misrepresentation. It is important when trying to understand Islam that one goes directly to its sources: The Qur'an, and the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and that anyone does not judge Islam based on the errant actions of a few Muslims.

Muslims believe that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the final Prophet in a long chain of Prophets sent to call the people to the obedience and worship of God alone ('Allah' in Arabic). Some of these Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon them all). Just as Moses (peace be upon him) was sent with the Torah (the original non-corrupted revelation sent to Moses) and Jesus (peace be upon him) with the Gospel (the original, non-corrupted revelation not the present-day versions), Muslims believe that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent with the Qur'an to demonstrate how its teachings should be applied.

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) wife, Aisha, was once asked to describe the Prophet (peace be upon him), and she replied that he was 'the Qur'an walking', meaning he meticulously implemented the noble teachings of the Qur'an into his daily life. We will demonstrate how he translated these noble teachings into noble actions.

CHAPTER 12: WHO WAS MUHAMMAD?

Muhammad (peace upon him) was born in Makkah in the year 570, during the period of history Europeans call the middle ages. Muhammad was the son of Aamenah and Abdullah, from the tribe of Quraysh. He was a direct descendant of Ishmeal, the eldest son of prophet Abraham. Muhammad's father died just before he was born, and his mother passed away when he was six. He was raised by his grandfather, the chief of Makkah; and upon his grandfather's death, Muhammad came under the care of his uncle, Abu Talib. Muhammad was a shepherd in his youth. As he grew up, he became known for his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity; earning the title at Amin, the trustworthy one. Muhammad was frequently called upon to arbitrate disputes and counsel his fellow Makkahs. At age 25, Muhammad married Khadijah, an honorable and successful businesswoman. They are blessed with two sons and four daughters. It was an ideal marriage and they lived a happy family life. Muhammad was of a contemplative nature and had long detested the decadence and cruelty of his society. It became his habit to meditate from time to time in the cave of Hira' near the summit of jabal an-Noor, the "Mountain of Light" on the outskirts of Makkah.

WHAT IS ISLAM & WHO ARE MUSLIMS?

Islam: simply means to achieve peace — peace with God, peace within oneself, and peace with the creations of God —through wholly giving oneself to God and accepting His guidance. Islam is not a new faith. Muslims believe that it is the same truth that God revealed through all His prophets to every people. For a fifth of the world's population, Islam is not just a personal religion, but a complete way of life. Muslims come from all races, nationalities and cultures across the globe. They have varied languages, foods, dress, and customs; even the way they practice Islam may differ. Yet they all consider themselves to be Muslim.

Islam is a qualitative term - the quality of accepting God's supreme authority above one's own. As such, being a Muslim does not mean having to give up one's culture or traditions; rather it means adopting the simple and logical principles of Islam to better one's life and attain peace. Less than 15% of Muslims live in the Arab world; a fifth are found in Sub-Saharan Africa; and the world's largest Muslim community is in Indonesia. Substantial parts of Asia, and almost all the Central Asian republics, are Muslim. Significant Muslim minorities are found in China, India, Russia, Europe, North America and South America.

WHY IS ISLAM OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD?

In today's turbulent world, Islam is often on the front page - mostly for the wrong reasons. Islam means peace; yet some have taken this peaceful way of life and hijacked it into a violent way, and distorted their ideology for personal and political gains. Seeing a faith through explosive world events, and judging in by the actions of a misguided few, is the primary reason why Islam is often misunderstood. Islam is sometimes, intentionally misrepresented. Some politicians, religious leaders and media have found an ideal scapegoat in Islam. By associating Islam with the inhumane acts of a handful, they have been successful in driving larger numbers of people to vote for them; to donate towards their ministries; and to read their newspapers, watch their television programs and listen to their radio shows. However, with an increasing number of Muslim speaking out against this falsehood; the true and peaceful nature of Islam is becoming more evident. Muslims are standing up against terrorism, against the persecution and killing of innocent people, and against those who perpetrate such injustice in the name of any faith. The very word "Islam" means peace.

IS JIHAD "HOLY WAR?"

No. Definitely not. Jihad should never be confused with Holy War - an idea that does not have a place in Islam. The concept of Holy War does not exist anywhere in the Qur'an, nor is it found in classical Islamic teaching. It is a foreign concept introduced by the Crusaders who waged "Holy War" against the Muslim "infidels" in the Holy Land. Contrary to popular opinion, Jihad is not a means of forcing Islam on others. It should never be viewed as an expansionist, proselytizing movement. However, historically, and even in today's times, some Muslims have taken it as such. This distortion of the virtuous concept of Jihad is in total contradiction to the authentic Islamic teachings.

Jihad is the noble effort of improving oneself, one's family and community, one's nation and the world at large. Jihad is the struggle that a mother undergoes during pregnancy, child-birth, and the raising of her child; it is years of hard work that a student puts towards a good education; it is the sacrifice that makes when risking his own life to save another; and it is the courage that soldier has on the battlefield in the defense of his life, his country, his freedom and his beliefs.

Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

"Beware on the Day of Judgement, I shall, myself, be the accuser against him who wrongs a non-Muslim citizen (of a Muslim State) or lays on him a responsibility greater than he can bear, or deprives him of anything that belongs to him."

HOW DOES ISLAM GUARANTEE HUMAN RIGHTS?

According to the Qur'an, God has created all of humankind equal, and has given each the right to pursue their own destiny. The life, honor and property of all people in a Muslim society are considered sacred, whether the person is Muslim or not. Racism, sexism and prejudice of any sort are unacceptable in Islam. The Qur'an speaks of human equality in the following terms: "O humankind! We created you from a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Truly, the most honored of you in God's sight is the greatest of you in piety. God is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

The right to life is the most basic of human rights; the Qur'an equates the unjust killing of a single person to killing all of humankind: "And whoever kills a soul, should be as though he has killed all of humankind."

Dealing equitably and protecting the rights of every individual is the cornerstone of a Muslim society. God further states in the Qur'an: "O you who believe! Stand up firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not hatred of a people invite you to act inequitably; act justly, that is nearer to piety, and be conscious of (your duty to) God, surely God is aware of all that you do."

Jihad is a beautiful, yet greatly misunderstood, Islamic concept. The Arabic word, Jihad is derived from the root word "Jahada" which means "to strive" - to struggle, to strain, to exert, to endeavor, to persevere, and to defend are all different terms used to describe Jihad.

God states in the Muslim holy book, the Qur'an: "O you who believe! Shall I show you a trade that will save you from a great punishment? You should believe in God and His messenger, and you shall strive (to the best of your ability) in the way of God, with your possessions and yourself. That is better for you, if only you knew."

CHAPTER 13: IMPORTANT ASPECTS IN ISLAM

WHAT IS ISLAM

Islam is an Abrahamic ethical monotheistic religion (Quran 6:151; 22:78), and it mandates surrendering to and worshipping the one and only God of Abraham. Worship is a blend of loving, trusting, adoring, cherishing, venerating, fearing, and being grateful to the one God, mankind's Creator, and Mercy-giver. God does not force anyone to surrender to Him; rather, He woos people through love, mercy and circumstances to make a willful decision to submit and surrender to Him.

God wants us to love Him, because it is when we love Him, we surrender to Him. Loving God is the catalyst for surrendering to God. The servant of God is not only the one who loves God with his heart, mind and soul, but also loves Him more than anything else. This love provides the long term impetus of genuine worship, as well as for Godly, ethical living. (Bukhari, Saheeh al-Bukhari, 7553)

WHO IS GOD

God is the singular Supreme Being who is perfect in power, wisdom, knowledge and goodness. Prior to the existence of time and space and before anything else ever was, God always has been. He needs neither time nor space within which to exist. He is eternal, uncaused, un-originated and not restricted by any physical limitations. He neither acquires His existence from any source nor depends on anything to sustain His existence. Rather, He is the ever-living, sustaining God who neither dies nor ever sleeps. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and knows not only the past, the present and the future, but also knows everything about everything and everyone.

The first encounter with God on the pages of the Bible happens at Gen. 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God here, according to the Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon is Elohim. In the Arabic language that Jesus spoke, Alaha is the name of God. It is easy to recognize the three pronunciations as similar dialectal variants of the same Deity. Unfortunately some people attempt to demonize the name of Allah, thinking it refers to a false god. That is very wrong. Just as Jehovah, Yahweh and Elohim are some of the biblical names of the LORD of the universe, so too Allah is the Quranic and Arabic name of the LORD of the universe.

The Bible says about God: "You alone are the LORD; (Thou art Jehovah ASV) you made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve and give life to everything and all the angels of heaven worship you." (Nehemiah 9:6 NLT). Muslims worship this same God who has also said, "Your Lord indeed is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He ascended over the throne." (Quran 7:54)

WHO IS THE SAVIOR

The savior is the creator who totally refuses to share with others the worship, adoration and homage that are due to Him alone, for others contributed neither to the creation, provision nor to the salvation of human beings. The Bible tells us: "I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no savior (Isaiah 43:10-11 ASV). Throughout the history of humanity, God worked out His redemptive plan through the Hebrew prophets and "commissioned in every nation a messenger proclaiming: Worship Allah and shun false gods." (Quran 16:36). In the final stage of God's redemptive plan, He commissioned Muhammad, "as a mercy to the worlds" (Quran 21:107). Through the advent of Muhammed, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham to bless all the nations through his descendants.

WHAT IS SALVATION

Salvation means to be saved from damnation caused by rejecting God. Salvation is a matter of relationship to the single universal Deity, identified variously as Elohim, Alaha and Allah -- that is to the God of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Everyone who is saved is saved through the mercy of this Deity Allah, who said, "Indeed, My mercy exceeds My wrath." This means He needs neither a cross to propitiate Himself nor a mediator to mend estranged relationships. Thus, salvation is the product of God's mercy applied to the faith and good deeds of a person who has a believing relationship with God.

WHAT IS THE QURAN

The Quran is not human in origin; rather it is an oral communication from God to mankind addressing three main topics: identity of God, godly living, and the temporal and eternal consequences for embracing or rejecting God. God, the author of the Quran spoke the Quran, and the angel Gabriel conveyed God's words to Muhammad in installments over a period of 23 years. Muhammad memorized the 114 Quranic chapters, and taught them to his disciples who memorized them, committed them to writing and then passed them on to generation after generation. The Quran is a book of guidance, mercy and healing. Allah announces: "Oh mankind, there has come unto you an exhortation from your Lord, and healing to that which is in the chests, and guidance and mercy to the believers. Say: In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy therein let them rejoice" (Quran 10:58-57).

Quranic healing is the antidote to the illness of evil desires and negative attitudes such as jealousy, envy, hatred, resentment and vindictiveness. Furthermore, the Quran prophesied many events that have been fulfilled, and it spoke extensively about Jesus' birth, mission, message, ascension and return. And, for the modern person, the Quran contains many verses of a scientific nature speaking about cosmetology, embryology and astronomy, just to name a few. These facts, which were not known to the human race when the Quran was revealed, have been discovered scientifically in our century independently of scripture. And as a book of faith, the Quran mandates belief in all of God's heroes of faith. "[Oh Muslims] Say: We believe in Allah and that which was revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes; and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are submitters unto Him" (Quran 2:136)

CHAPTER 14: RAMADAN: THE MONTH OF FASTING

Fasting is a common form of worship among the various religions across the world. Its spiritual benefits are widely recognized even though its frequency, practice and duration may differ from faith to faith. Islam places great importance on the act of fasting, calling it one of the pillars of worship, along with prayer, charity and pilgrimage. God says in the Quran, the holy book of Islam, “You who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may be mindful of God” (2:183). Islam teaches that God (Allah in Arabic) sent many prophets since the beginning of the human race, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon all of them).

Hence, Islam shares core values such as belief in God as well as a commitment to justice and virtue with Christianity and Judaism; similarly, fasting in one form or another is common to all three Abrahamic faiths and, indeed, to the vast majority of religions across the world. In Islam, fasting is one of the major acts of worship and a means of attaining God-consciousness. Along with the physical aspects of fasting, its spiritual dimensions purify the soul, instill self-reflection and inspire virtuous living.

AN ANNUAL RETREAT

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, which begins with the sighting of the new moon. During this month, Muslims worldwide are obligated to abstain completely from food, drink and sexual relations from dawn to dusk, culminating in a release of restrictions at sunset. The fast, as per the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), is broken with dates followed by a meal which varies from culture to culture. Fasting is observed as an act of obedience to God, one for which He has reserved special blessings. The fasting person is rewarded manifold for all good deeds. In addition, according to a saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whoever fasts and prays during Ramadan with pure intentions will have their past sins forgiven.

At the same time, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught his followers to remain conscious of the deeper significance behind their fast, saying, “Whoever does not abandon falsehood in word and action, then God has no need that they should leave their food and drink.” Therefore, fasting is multidimensional – along with the physical aspects of fasting, one must nurture the social and spiritual elements as well in order to fully benefit from fasting.

In essence, fasting in the month of Ramadan is a yearly opportunity for Muslims to physically and spiritually revive themselves. Fasting redirects the heart away from worldly affairs and towards the remembrance of God. During Ramadan, Muslims focus on strengthening their relationship with their Creator. The self-restraint practiced in Ramadan makes the heart and mind accustomed to the remembrance of God and to the obedience of His commandments. Fasting during Ramadan is, therefore, a spiritual regimen and a reorientation for the body and mind. It is a time for spiritual reflection, prayer and good deeds. The spiritual cleansing during the month of Ramadan results in renewed determination to worship God throughout the year.

BENEFITS OF FASTING

Fasting is intended to instill self-discipline, empathy and compassion in the individual. Muslims are motivated to increase their generosity during this month. They are encouraged to share the blessings that God has provided them by giving generously in charity because wealth is regarded as a trust from God. Indeed, fasting makes people more aware of the many bounties of God. Experiencing hunger and thirst allows us to feel the desperation of hunger and leads us to empathize with those who don’t know when they will eat their next meal. “Fasting allows us to experience once a year what many throughout the world experience almost daily. Hunger, for them, is not a choice; it is simply a fact of life,” says Hamza Yusuf, a renowned Muslim leader based in California. Fasting also reminds us of the importance of appreciating what we have and minimizing waste. From His generosity, God continuously graces us with His favors, and fasting reinforces the concept that wasting the Creator’s bounties is a sign of ingratitude to Him.

When the month of Ramadan arrives, it brings a heightened sense of community with it. Muslim families often wake up together before sunrise for an early breakfast. They also invite one another to break their fast together, which creates friendship and stronger ties among neighbors, families and friends. Many people also bring meals to mosques to share with the community, especially the poor, the needy, the travelers and those who do not have families. Together, they also make it a point to go to the mosque for the nightly Ramadan prayers.

THE MONTH OF QURAN

God began revealing the Quran to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during Ramadan in the year 610 C.E. The Quran, the final revelation from God, is often read and memorized in its original Arabic language, preserving the divine order and structure of this book. In Ramadan, Muslims are encouraged to focus as much time as possible on reading, listening and understanding the Quran as a means of coming closer to God. One of the ways Muslims become nearer to the Quran during Ramadan is through extended congregational prayers offered in the late evening after the breaking of the fast. Over the course of the month, the entire Quran is commonly recited in these night prayers. This is an opportunity for Muslims to become spiritually connected to God and reflect on His words of guidance.

Muslims believe that the last ten nights of Ramadan are the holiest of all, and strive to increase their worship during that time even more. The most sacred night of all, the Night of Power, falls on one of the odd-numbered nights in the last third of Ramadan. God mentions in the Quran that the Night of Power is better than one thousand months (97:3). In other words, the worship of this one night is worth more than the worship of a thousand months. As a result, Muslims seek this special night by staying awake in worship during the odd-numbered nights from the last ten days of Ramadan.

Even as the day’s routine of work and home continue, Muslims make extra time for spiritual nourishment and self-introspection. Commitments ranging from the recitation and study of Quran to increased charity to nightly attendance of additional prayers are commonly made to reap the rewards of the fasting month. And, as the month draws to a close, a sense of sadness overcomes the worshippers, wistful at the departure of the blessed month which seemed to have flown by.

EID-UL-FITR CELEBRATION

The end of Ramadan is marked by the sighting of the new moon, which is followed by a day of celebration known as Eid-ul-Fitr. Families wake up early in the morning, put on their best clothes and go to the mosque for a brief Eid sermon and congregational prayer. They thank God for giving them the opportunity to experience the holy month of Ramadan. The day is filled with celebration, socializing, festive meals and modest gift-giving, especially to children. Before attending the Eid prayer, the head of the household or guardian gives a special charity on behalf of each dependent family member called Zakat-ul-Fitr. This is the giving of a meal to a needy person to make sure that none are excluded from this happy occasion and to encourage people to continue the spirit of generosity after Ramadan as well.

The Eid celebration is not merely about feasting and socializing. There is a deep significance for those who truly observed the holy month with their fasting, abstaining from all bad habits and striving hard to earn the pleasure of God. Muslims feel a sense of happiness and a renewed energy to face the rest of the year with faith and determination – until next Ramadan!

CHAPTER 15: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRAYER

Direct communication with Allah

“The closest a person is to His Lord is when he is in prostration.” Prayer connects you with Allah. The Arabic word for prayer (As-Salah) is actually derived from the Arabic word meaning “connection”. Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said, “When any one of you stands to pray, he is communicating with his Lord, so let him pay attention to how he speaks to Him.” Don’t sever this relationship with your Creator.

A Pillar of Islam

Prayer is the second most important pillar of Islam, and is the most regular compulsory action in a Muslim’s life. Prayer is an act that must be fulfilled daily, regardless of the circumstance. In fact, Allah did not even exempt the Muslims from praying during battle!

Success lies in the Prayer

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “The first of his deeds for which a man will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection will be the prayers. If it is found to be perfect, he will be safe and successful. But if it is defective, he will be unfortunate and a loser.

ITS BENIFITS

Shield against evil

Without seeking Allah’s help, it is impossible to refrain from evil. How can sins be committed if you’re willingly standing before Allah 5 times a day?

Enriches your soul

Prayer satisfies your spiritual need to be in contact with your Creator. This gives your soul peace and contentment, especially with your busy lifestyle.

Makes you humble

Pride and arrogance is rid by realizing Allah’s greatness and your dependence on Him. In the prayer, the Muslim puts the highest part of his body and source of intellect, his head, on to the ground and says, “How perfect is m Lord, The Most High.” Of course, this can only be achieved when you understand what is recited and concentrate with humanity.

Washes away sins

Such is the cause during war. What then during peace? Everyone commits sins, however, Allah has provided, through prayer, a way to wipe out those sins. The Messenger gave a beautiful example when he said to his companions, “Consider if one of you had a river by his door in which he bathed five times a day. Would any fifth remain on him?” They said, “No. ” Then the Prophet replied, “Likewise, Allah wipes away sins with the five daily prayers.

Solves your problems

If you strengthen your relationship with Allah, Allah will strengthen your relationship with the rest of the creation. Through prayer, He, who is All-Powerful, will rectify all your problems.

Unites the Muslims

Congregational prayer cultivates brotherhood, equality and humility between Muslims. The worshipers stand in rows and as one body, shoulder to shoulder, without any distinction of race, color, wealth, family or status. This act of unity helps demolish all barriers which stand between people.

ABANDONING PRAYER

You are disobeying your Creator

The whole purpose of your existence is to worship Allah, yet daily, you are disobeying your Creator.

You are being ungrateful

Refusing your Creator’s invitation to establish this close relationship with Him is the ultimate ingratitude. Allah created you and gave you everything. The Prophet’s feet would swell because he would stand in prayer for lengthy periods. When asked about this, he replied, “Should I not be a grateful servant of my Lord?”

You are being lazy

What excuse will you give your Creator, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, on Judgement Day? The One Who blessed you with 24 hours in a day, yet only commanded that you pray five times a day - a command that takes approximately 30 minutes to fulfill! The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “The son of Adam will not be dismissed from before his Lord on the Day of Resurrection until he has been questioned with things: his life and how he spent it, his youth and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned it and how he disposed of it, and how he acted upon what he acquired of knowledge.”

You are flirting With disbelief

Many Scholars of Islam hold the opinion that if you do not pray, you are a disbeliever, quoting the following hadith: “The covenant which distinguishes between us and the (i.e., between believers and disbelievers) is the prayer, and whoever neglects it has disbelieved.” Additionally, the Prophet’s companions (may Allah be pleased with them) did not consider the abandonment of any act as disbelief, except for prayer.

COMMON EXCUSES

- **No Time (work, study, busy...etc):** Pure and simple deception. You haven’t given prayers priority. Allah will bless your time and make you more effective, efficient and successful.
- **My heart is clean:** Allah judges who has clean hearts, and He wants you to pray! Actions will reflect what is in your heart. No one has a cleaner heart than Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who used to pray regularly.
- **My alarm:** It’s hard for your alarm to go off, if you don’t SET it!!! Purify your intention and sleep according to the Sunnah.
- **My family/spouse/parents/friends prevent me:** The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “There is no obedience to anyone in disobedience to Allah.” You will be judged alone.
- **I’m sinning too much: In time, your prayers will prevent you from committing these sins** - just pray! You are sinning because you are not praying. Contemplate over this hadith, “If they knew the merits of the ‘Isha and Fajr prayers, they would come to them (in the mosque) even if they had to crawl.”

CHAPTER 16: THE LAST SERMON – OF THE HOLY PROPHET MUHAMMAD

This sermon was delivered on the ninth day of dhul hijjah, 10 a.h (hijrah calendar) 631 (christian era) in the uranah valley of mount arafat, arabia, in the presence of approximately 140,000 sahabah (companion of the holy prophet muhammad (peace be upon him). After praising and thanking allah, the holy prophet (pbuh) said: "O people, lend me an attentive ear, for i know not whether after this year, i shall ever be amongst you again. therefore-listen to what i am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

DO NOT OPPRESS EACH OTHER:

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city is Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. ALLAH has forbidden you to usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn `Abd'al Muttalib (Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived. Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

FAIR TREATMENT TO WOMEN:

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste. O People, listen to me in earnest, worship ALLAH, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

EQUALITY OF RACES IN THE BROTHERHOOD OF MUSLIMS:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety (taqwa) and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves. Remember, one day you awill appear before ALLAH and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

THE FINAL MESSAGE OF GUIDANCE:

O people, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born.

Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QURAN and my example, the SUNNAH and if you follow these you will never go astray. All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people. They (the companions) said: "we bear witness that you conveyed (the message), discharged (your duty) and advised (us).

PERSPECTIVES - VIEWS OF SOME PROMINENT WESTERN WRITERS ABOUT THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW: " I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because off its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion to the changing phase of existence which can make it self appeal to every age." "I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it could be acceptable tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today, Medieval ecclesiastic, either through their ignorance or bigotry, painted Muhammadanism in the darkest colors. The were, in fact, trained to hate both the man Muhammad and his religion. To them Muhammad was anti Christ. I have studied him, the wonderful man in my opinion for from being an anti-Christ he must be called the savior of humanity, I believe that if a man like him were assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving the problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness. Europe is beginning to be enamored of the creed of Muhammad, In the next century it may go still further in recognizing the utility of that creed in solving its problems, and it is in the sense that you must understand my prediction". (A collection of writings ()1. some ()1. the eminent scholars page 77 published 1935).

LAMARTINE: If greatness of purpose, smallness of means. and astounding results are the true criteria of human genius, who would dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad ? The most famous men created: arms, laws, and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the inhabited world, and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs, and the souls. His forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire, his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a sigma. The dogma was two-fold, the unity of god and the immateriality of god; the former was telling what god is, the latter telling what god is not; the one overthrowing false Gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with words, "Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?" (Translated from Histoire De La Tureyrie. Paris, 1854, vol. II, pp. 276-277).

BOSWORTH SMITH: He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Pope's pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue. If ever a man ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the powers without its instruments and with out its supports. (Mohammad and Wham madanism, London 1874, p92).

W. MONTGOMERY WATT: His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of histappreciated in the West as Muhammad. (Mohammad At Mecca, Oxford, 1953, p 52.)

MICHAEL H. HART: My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level. (The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History, New York: Hart Publishing Company Inc. 1978, p 33)

THOMAS CARLYLE: The lies, which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man are disgraceful to ourselves only, the word of such a man (Muhammad) is a voice direct from nature's own heart; mean must listen to that, as to nothing else; all else is wind in comparison. (On Heroes, Hero worship and the Heroic in History, The Hero as Prophet'.

CHAPTER 17: PURPOSE OF REVELATION

To Believe in One True God

"And your god is One God. There is no god but He, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." Qur'an 2:163. The most important topic mentioned throughout the Qur'an is the belief in the One, True God. God informs us that He has no partner, no son, no equal, and that none has the right to be worshipped except Him alone. Nothing is comparable to God and none of His creation resembles Him. The Qur'an also rejects the notion of attributing human qualities and limitations to God.

To Reject All False Gods

"And worship Allah and associate none with Him." Since Allah alone is the only One worthy of worship, false deities and false gods must be rejected. The Qur'an also rejects the notion of attributing divine qualities to anyone or anything other than Allah.

To Narrate the Stories from the Past

The Qur'an contains many narratives with beneficial lessons, including the true stories of previous Prophets such as, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jesus and Moses. Of these stories, Allah says, "Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding." Qur'an 12:111

To Remind us of the Day of Judgement

The Qur'an reminds us that everyone will taste death and will be held accountable for all their actions and sayings: "We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least..." Qur'an 21:47

To Fulfill the Intended Way of Life

Importantly, the Qur'an teaches that the purpose of life is to worship God alone, and live one's life according to the way of life prescribed by Him. In Islam, worship is a comprehensive term that includes all actions and sayings (whether private or public) that Allah loves and is pleased with. Therefore, by doing what Allah commands, a Muslim is worshipping God and fulfilling his purpose in life.

The following are examples of worship from the Qur'an:

1. **To pray:** "O you who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord, that you may succeed." Qur'an 22:77
2. **To give charity:** "...And spend, it is better for your souls; and whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that are the successful." Qur'an 64:16
3. **To be honest:** "Cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know (what it is)." Qur'an 2:42
4. **To be modest:** "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty I...1 And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty." Qur'an 24:30-31
5. **To be thankful:** "And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers- you did not know anything- and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that you may give thanks." Qur'an 16:78
6. **To be just:** "O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor" Qur'an 4:135
7. **To be patient:** "And be patient, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good." Qur'an 11:115
8. **To do good:** "Allah has promised to those who believe and do good deeds (that) they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward." Quran 5:9

Conclusion

In summary, the Qur'an teaches mankind how to worship the One True God, hence fulfilling their true purpose in life, and attaining success in both this world and the next. "Verily, We have sent down to you (Muhammad) the Book for mankind in truth. So whosoever accepts the guidance, it is only for his own self; and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray only for his own loss.

CHAPTER 18: ISLAM DENOUNCES TERRORISM

INTRODUCTION

As Muslims, we strongly condemn the terrorist attacks on two major cities of the United States of America on September 11, 2001, which caused the death and injury of thousands of innocent people, and we offer our condolences to the American nation. These attacks propelled the important issue of the true source of terrorism to the top of the world agenda. Thus, it has been announced to the entire world that Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance that summons individuals to compassion and justice. Many world leaders, leading media organisations, television and radio stations said that true Islam forbids violence, and encourages peace between people and between nations. The Western circles that have come to a full grasp of the religion of Islam and are well-informed about Islam as commanded by God in the Qur'an noted clearly that the words "Islam" and "terror" cannot stand side by side, and that no divine religion permits violence.

As is known, for centuries, various acts of terrorism have been carried out in different parts of the world by different groups for a variety of purposes. Sometimes a communist organisation, sometimes a fascist group, and sometimes radical and separatist factions assume responsibility for these acts. While countries like America often became the target of attacks by racist and marginal terrorist groups, the European countries have been centre stage for violent acts carried out by terrorist groups. 17 November in Greece, RAF (Red Army Faction) and Neo-Nazis in Germany, ETA in Spain, Red Brigades in Italy and many other organisations seek to make their voices heard through terror and violence by killing innocent and defenceless people.

The nature of terrorism changes with changing world conditions and increases its impact and power with the new means made possible by developing technology. In particular, mass communication tools such as the Internet extend the scope and influence of the terrorist activities considerably. Besides the Western organisations, there are also other terror organisations of Middle East origin. Terrorist attacks are carried out by these groups in all corners of the world. Sadly, the fact that the perpetrators of various terrorist acts carry Christian, Muslim or Jewish identities cause some people to put forward claims which do not concur with divine religions. The truth is that even if terrorists have Muslim identities, the terror they perpetrate cannot be labelled "Islamic terror", just as it could not be called "Jewish terror" if the perpetrators were Jews or "Christian terror" if they were Christians.

That is because, as will be examined in the following pages, murdering innocent people in the name of a divine religion is unacceptable. We need to keep in mind that, among those who were killed in New York and Washington, there were people who loved the Prophet Jesus (Christians), the Prophet Moses (Jews) and the Prophet Muhammad (Muslims). Unless forgiven by God, murdering innocent people is a great sin that leads to torment in Hell. No one who is religious and fears God would do such a thing.

The aggressors can commit such violence only with the intention of attacking religion itself. It may well be that those who carried out this violence did so to present religion as evil in the eyes of people, to divorce people from religion and to generate hatred towards those who are religiously inclined. Consequently, every attack on American citizens or other innocent people having a religious facade is actually an attack made against religion. Religion commands love, mercy and peace. Terror, on the other hand, is the opposite of religion; it is cruel, merciless and demands bloodshed and misery. This being the case, the origins of a terrorist act should be sought in disbelief rather than in religion. People with a fascist, communist, racist or materialist outlook on life should be suspected as potential perpetrators. The name or the identity of the triggerman is not important. If he can kill innocent people without blinking an eye, then he is a nonbeliever, not a believer. He is a murderer with no fear of God, whose main ambition is to shed blood and to cause harm. For this reason, "Islamic terror" is an erroneous concept which contradicts the message of Islam. The religion of Islam can by no means countenance terrorism. On the contrary, terror (i.e. murder of innocent people) in Islam is a great sin, and Muslims are responsible for preventing these acts and bringing peace and justice to the world.

If Islam is a religion of peace, why the misunderstanding? How can a religion of peace gain a reputation for being a religion of war and terror? The answer lies in the way that Islamic scriptures are misinterpreted to suit perverted agendas. Words and phrases that are often repeated in the media have been misconstrued by individuals to give incorrect meanings. The deliberate blur between 'jihad' and acts of terror has been a phenomenon that has resulted from those unqualified in the science of Sacred Law. Since the end of the Sunni Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, the Muslim world has been fragmented. The loss of unification created many difficulties from which Muslims are still trying to recover. For one thing, it has seen the loss of the promulgation of traditional Islam, which has now given way to individuals claiming the right to reinterpret Islamic texts to grant them legitimacy in their own ideas. This has seen a tendency 'toward ambiguity and the careless use of many important terms.

Traditional Islam in contrast is related to the notion of orthodoxy, clarity and authority; to continuity and consistency in the transmission of the truth. It places its reliance upon classical scholarship as exemplified in the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Within this tradition of Islam, a true Islamic landscape emerges, encompassing the richness of scholarly tradition and its illuminating contribution to the advancement of civilisation. The result has been examples of extreme religious practice devoid of any real knowledge and characterised by bigotry, intolerance, harshness and excessiveness – all of which are in opposition to Islam as exemplified by the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, who always advocated the middle way.

CHAPTER 19: ISLAMIC MORALITY: THE SOURCE OF PEACE AND SECURITY

Some of those who say that something is done in the name of religion may, in fact, misunderstand that religion and as a result, practice it wrongly. For that reason, it would be wrong to form ideas about that religion by taking these people as an example. The best way of understanding a religion is to study its divine source. Islam's divine source is the Qur'an, which is based on concepts of morality, love, compassion, humility, sacrifice, tolerance and peace. A Muslim who lives by those precepts in its true sense will be most polite, careful of thought, modest, just, trustworthy and easy to get on with. He will spread love, respect, harmony and the joy of living all around him.

Islam is the Religion of Peace

Terror, in its broadest sense, is violence committed against non-military targets for political purposes. To put it another way, targets of terror are entirely innocent civilians whose only crime, in the eyes of terrorists, is to represent "the other side". For this reason, terror means subjecting innocent people to violence, which is an act bereft of any moral justification. This, as in the case of murders committed by Hitler or Stalin, is a crime committed against mankind. The Qur'an is a Book revealed to people as a guide to the true path and in this Book, God commands man to adopt good morals. This morality is based upon concepts such as love, compassion, tolerance and mercy. The word "Islam" is derived from the word meaning "peace" in Arabic. Islam is a religion revealed to mankind with the intention of presenting a peaceful life through which the infinite compassion and mercy of God manifest on earth. God calls all people to Islamic morals through which compassion, mercy, peace and tolerance can be experienced all over the world.

God addresses believers as follows: O you who believe Enter absolutely into peace (Islam). Do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. He is an outright enemy to you. As the verse makes clear, security can only be ensured by "entering into Islam", that is, living by the values of the Qur'an. The values of the Qur'an hold a Muslim responsible for treating all people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, kindly and justly, protecting the needy and the innocent and "preventing the society in which Islamic moral values are truly honoured is a society characterised by peace, forgiveness, love, compassion and mutual support and joy. dissemination of mischief". Mischief comprises all forms of anarchy and terror that remove security, comfort and peace.

As God says in a verse, "God does not love corruption". (Qur'an, 2:205) Murdering a person for no reason is one of the most obvious examples of mischief. God repeats in the Qur'an a command He formerly revealed to Jews in the Old Testament thus: if someone kills another person – unless it is in retaliation for someone else or for causing corruption in the earth – it is as if he had murdered all mankind. And if anyone gives life to another person, it is as if he had given life to all mankind (Qur'an, 5:32) As the verse suggests, a person who kills even a single man, "unless it is in retaliation for someone else or for causing corruption in the earth", commits a crime as if he had murdered all mankind. This being the case, it is obvious what great sins are the murders, massacres and attacks, popularly known as "suicide attacks", committed by terrorists.

God informs us how this cruel face of terrorism will be punished in the hereafter in the following verse: There are only grounds against those who wrong people and act as tyrants in the earth without any right to do so. Such people will have a painful punishment. (Qur'an, 42:42) All these reveal that organising acts of terror against innocent people is utterly against Islam and it is unlikely that any Muslim could ever commit such crimes. On the contrary, Muslims are responsible for stopping these people, removing "mischief on earth" and bringing peace and security to all people all over the world. Islam cannot be reconciled with terror. Just the contrary, it should be the solution to and the path to the prevention of terror.

God Commands Us to Do Good Deeds

A Muslim is someone who abides by the commands of God, tries scrupulously to live by Qur'anic morality, peace and harmony, which make the world a more beautiful place and lead it to progress. His aim is to lead people to beauty, goodness and well being.

Someone who adopts the Islamic faith wishes to earn God's pleasure and compassion and to enter heaven. He has to make strenuous efforts to do this, and to adopt a morality acceptable to God while he is in this world. The clearest manifestations of this morality are compassion, pity, justice, honesty, forgiveness, humility, sacrifice and patience. The believer will behave well towards people, try to perform good deeds and spread goodness.

In His verses, God commands: We did not create the heavens and earth and everything between them, except with truth. The Hour is certainly coming, so forgive [men's failings] with fair forbearance. (Qur'an, 15:85). Be good to your parents and relatives and to orphans and the very poor, and to neighbours who are related to you and neighbours who are not related to you, and to companions and travellers and your slaves. God does not love anyone vain or boastful. (Qur'an, 4:36).

A Muslim does not remain indifferent to what goes on around him, and never adopts the mentality that nothing matters as long as it does not harm him. That is because he has surrendered himself to God. He is His representative, and an ambassador of good. He cannot, therefore, remain indifferent in the face of cruelty and terrorism. In fact, the Muslim is the greatest enemy of terrorism, which kills people who have done no wrong. Islam is against all forms of terrorism, and tries to prevent it right from the beginning, in other words on the level of ideas. It demands peace between people and for justice to prevail, and commands people to avoid discord, conflict and wickedness.

Islam Defends Freedom of Thought

Islam is a religion which provides and guarantees freedom of ideas, thought and life. It has issued commands to prevent and forbid tension, disputes, slander and even negative thinking among people. In the same way that it is determinedly opposed to terrorism and all acts of violence, it has also forbidden even the slightest ideological pressure to be put on them: There is no compulsion in religion. True guidance has become clearly distinct from error. (Qur'an, 2:256) So remind them! You are only a reminder. You are not in control of them. (Qur'an, 88:21-22).

Forcing people to believe in a religion or to adopt its forms of belief is completely contrary to the essence and spirit of Islam. According to Islam, true faith is only possible with free will and freedom of conscience. Of course If your Lord had willed, all the people on the earth would have believed. Do you think you can force people to be believers? (Qur'an, 10:99) Muslims can advise and encourage each other about the features of Qur'anic morality. All believers are charged with explaining Qur'anic morality to people in the nicest manner possible. They will explain the beauties of religion in the light of the verse, "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair admonition..." (Qur'an, 16:125), however, they must also bear in mind the verse, "You are not responsible for their guidance, but God guides whoever He wills." (Qur'an, 2:272)

They will never resort to compulsion, nor any kind of physical or psychological pressure. Neither will they use any worldly privilege to turn someone towards religion. When they receive a negative response to what they say, Muslims will reply along the lines of: "To you your religion, and to me, mine" (Qur'an, 109:6) The world we live in contains societies with all kinds of beliefs: Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, atheist, deist and even pagan. Muslims living in such a world must be tolerant of all beliefs they come up against, no matter what they may be, and behave forgivingly, justly and humanely. This responsibility placed on believers is to invite people to the beauty of the religion of God by means of peace and tolerance. The decision whether or not to implement these truths, whether or not to believe, lies with the other party. Forcing that person to believe, or trying to impose anything on him, is a violation of Qur'anic No matter what another person's religion or belief may be, be they Jew, Christian, Buddhist or Hindu, Muslims are called on in the Qur'an to be tolerant, forgiving, and to act justly and humanely towards them. morality.

In fact, God issues a reminder to believers in the Qur'an: If your Lord had willed, all the people on the earth would have believed. Do you think you can force people to be believers? (Qur'an, 10:99) We know best what they say and you [O Muhammad] are not a compeller over them. But warn by the Qur'an whoever fears My warning. (Qur'an, 50:45) A model of society in which people are forced to worship is completely contradictory to Islam. Belief and worship are only of any value when they are directed to God by the free will of the individual. If a system imposes belief and worship on people, then they will become religious out of fear of that system. From the religious point of view, what really counts is that religion should be lived for God's good pleasure in an environment where peoples' consciences are totally free.

The history of Islam is full of the tolerant practices of Muslim rulers who have respected all religions and built religious freedom with their own hands. For example, Thomas Arnold, a British missionary employed in the service of the Indian government, describes that Islam favours freedom in these words: But of any organised attempt to force the acceptance of Islam on the nonMuslim population, or of any systematic persecution intended to stamp out the Christian religion, we hear nothing. Had the caliphs chosen to adopt either course of action, they might have swept away Christianity as easily as Ferdinand and Isabella drove Islam out of Spain, or Louis XIV made Protestantism penal in France, or the Jews were kept out of England for 350 years. The Eastern Churches in Asia were entirely cut off from communion with the rest of Christendom, throughout which no one would have been found to lift a finger on their behalf, as heretical communions. So that the very survival of these Churches to the present day is a strong proof of the generally tolerant attitude of the Muhammadan governments towards them.

God Forbids the Murder of Innocent

People Killing a person is one of the greatest sins related in the Qur'an: if someone kills another person – unless it is in retaliation for someone else or for causing corruption in the earth – it is as if he had murdered all mankind. And if anyone gives life to another person, it is as if he had given life to all mankind. Our Messengers came to them with Clear Signs, but even after that many of them committed outrages in the earth. (Qur'an, 5:32) those who do not call on any other deity together with God and do not kill anyone God has made inviolate, except with the right to do so, and do not fornicate; anyone who does that will receive an evil punishment. (Qur'an, 25:68)

As the verse suggests, a person who kills innocent people for no reason is threatened with a great torment. God informs us that killing even a single person is as evil as murdering all mankind on earth. A person who observes God's limits can do no harm to a single human, let alone massacre thousands of innocent people. Those who assume that they can avoid justice and thus punishment in this world will never succeed, for they will have to give an account of their deeds in the presence of God. That is why believers, who know that they will give an account of their deeds after death, are very meticulous to observe God's limits.

God has Commanded Forgiveness and Tolerance

The concept of forgiveness and tolerance, described in the words, "Make allowances for people" (Qur'an, 7:199) is one of the most fundamental tenets of Islam. When we look at the history of Islam, the way that Muslims have translated this important feature of Qur'anic morality into the life of society can be seen quite clearly.

As we shall be considering in later parts of the book, Muslims have always brought with them an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance wherever they have gone. They have enabled people whose religions, languages and cultures are completely different from one another to live together in peace and harmony under one roof, and provided peace and harmony for its own members. One of the most important reasons for the centuries-long existence of the Ottoman Empire, which spread over an enormous region, was the atmosphere of tolerance and understanding that Islam brought with it. Muslims, who have been known for their tolerant and loving natures for centuries, have always been the most compassionate and just of people. Within this multi-national structure, all ethnic groups have been free to live according to their own religions, and their own rules.

True tolerance can only bring peace and well-being to the world when implemented along the lines set out in the Qur'an. Attention is drawn to this fact in a verse which reads: "A good action and a bad action are not the same. Repel the bad with something better and, if there is enmity between you and someone else, he will be like a bosom friend." (Qur'an, 41:34). All of this shows that the morality that Islam recommends to mankind brings to the world the virtues of peace, harmony and justice. The barbarism known as terrorism, that is so preoccupying the world at present, is the work of ignorant and fanatical people, completely estranged from Qur'anic morality, and who have absolutely nothing to do with religion. The solution to these people and groups who try to carry out their savagery under the mask of religion is the teaching of true Qur'anic morality. In other words, Islam and Qur'anic morality are solutions to the scourge of terrorism, not supporters of it.

Hatred Felt Towards a Community Does Not Prevent Believers From Exercising Justice

Hatred and anger are the major sources of evil, and are likely to prevent people from making just decisions, thinking soundly and conducting themselves rationally. People can readily inflict all kinds of injustice on people for whom they feel enmity. They may accuse these people of acts they have never committed, or bear false witness against them although their innocence is known to them. On account of such enmity, people may be subjected to unbearable oppression. Some people avoid bearing witness in favour of people they disagree with, although they know they are innocent, and they keep evidence which would reveal their innocence hidden. Furthermore, they take pleasure in the misery these people face, their encounters with injustice or great suffering. Their greatest worry, on the other hand, is that justice should be done and these peoples' innocence proved. For these reasons, it is very hard for people in corrupt societies to trust one another. People worry that they can fall victim to someone else at any time. Having lost mutual trust, they also lose their human feelings such as tolerance, compassion, brotherhood and co-operation, and start hating one another.

The Responsibility of Believers !!!

Those who have no concern for events unless they directly affect them are bereft of the insight that espouses unselfishness, brotherhood, friendship, honesty and the service that religion bestows upon people. Throughout their lives, such people try to satisfy their own egos by merely wasting their means, totally unaware of the threats humanity faces. In the Qur'an however, God praises the morals of those who strive to bring good to their surroundings; those who are concerned about the events that take place around them and who call people to the right way. In a verse from the Qur'an, a metaphor is given for those who offer no good to others and those who always act on the path of goodness.

God makes another metaphor: two men, one of them deaf and dumb, unable to do anything, a burden on his master, no matter where he directs him he brings no good, is he the same as someone who commands justice and is on a straight path? (Qur'an, 16:76)

As the verse points out, it is obvious that those who are "on a straight path", are those who are devoted to their religion; fear and heed God, hold spiritual values in high regard, and are filled with eagerness to serve people. In general, such people are there to serve humanity and bring with them great benefits to mankind. For this reason, it is very important for people to learn about the true religion and live by the morals explained by the Qur'an – the final Revelation from God. In the Qur'an, God defines those people who live by such high morals

Those who, if We establish them firmly on the earth, will keep up prayer and pay the welfare due, and command what is right and forbid what is wrong. The end result of all affairs is with God. (Qur'an, 22:41)

The Mercy-giving will grant affection to those who believe and perform honourable deeds.

CHAPTER 20: SIX KALIMAHS – BELIEFS OF ISLAM

1. Kalimah Tayyibah (Word of Purity)

There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.

2. Kalimah Shahadah (Word of Evidence)

I bear witness that (there is) no god except Allah; One is He, no partner hath He, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger.

3. Kalimah Tamjeed (Word of Majesty)

Exalted is Allah, and praise be to Allah, and there is no deity except Allah, and Allah is the Greatest. And there is no might nor power except in Allah, the Most High, the Most Great.

4. Kalimah Tawheed (Word of Oneness)

"(There is) no god except Allah – One is He, no partners hath He. His is the Dominion, and His is the Praise. He gives life and causes death, and He is Living, who will not die, never. He of Majesty and Munificence. Within His Hand is (all) good. And He is, upon everything, Able (to exert His Will)."

5. Kalimah Istighfar (Word of Penitence)

"I seek forgiveness from Allah, my Lord, from every sin I committed knowingly or unknowingly, secretly or openly, and I turn towards Him from the sin that I know and from the sin that I do not know. Certainly You, You (are) the knower of the hidden things and the Concealer (of) the mistakes and the Forgiver (of) the sins. And (there is) no power and no strength except from Allah, the Most High, the Most Great".

6. Kalima Radde Kufr ("Word of Rejection of Disbelief")

"O Allah! I seek protection in You from that I should not join any partner with You and I have knowledge of it. I seek Your forgiveness from that which I do not know. I repent from it (ignorance) and I reject disbelief and joining partners with You and of falsehood and slandering and innovation in religion and tell-tales and evil deeds and the blame and the disobedience, all of them. I submit to Your will and I believe and I declare: There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger."

CHAPTER 21: SIXTY GUIDELINES FROM AL QURAN

1. Respect and honour all human beings irrespective of their religion, colour, race, sex, language, status, property, birth, profession/job and so on [17/70]
2. Talk straight, to the point, without any ambiguity or deception [33/70]
3. Choose best words to speak and say them in the best possible way [17/53, 2/83]
4. Do not shout. Speak politely keeping your voice low. [31/19]
5. Always speak the truth. Shun words that are deceitful and ostentatious [22/30]
6. Do not confound truth with falsehood [2/42]
7. Say with your mouth what is in your heart [3/167]
8. Speak in a civilised manner in a language that is recognised by the society and is commonly used [4/5]
9. When you voice an opinion, be just, even if it is against a relative [6/152]
10. Do not be a bragging boaster [31/18]
11. Do not talk, listen or do anything vain [23/3, 28/55]
12. Do not participate in any paltry. If you pass near a futile play, then pass by with dignity [25/72]
13. Do not verge upon any immodesty or lewdness whether surreptitious or overt [6/151].
14. If, unintentionally, any misconduct occurs by you, then correct yourself expeditiously [3/134].
15. Do not be contemptuous or arrogant with people [31/18]
16. Do not walk haughtily or with conceit [17/37, 31/18]
17. Be moderate in thy pace [31/19]
18. Walk with humility and sedateness [25/63]
19. Keep your gazes lowered devoid of any lecherous leers and salacious stares [24/30-31, 40/19].
20. If you do not have complete knowledge about anything, better keep your mouth shut. You might think that speaking about something without full knowledge is a trivial matter. But it might have grave consequences [24/15-16]
21. When you hear something malicious about someone, keep a favourable view about him/her until you attain full knowledge about the matter. Consider others innocent until they are proven guilty with solid and truthful evidence [24/12-13]
22. Ascertain the truth of any news, lest you smite someone in ignorance and afterwards repent of what you did [49/6]
23. Do not follow blindly any information of which you have no direct knowledge. (Using your faculties of perception and conception) you must verify it for yourself. In the Court of your Lord, you will be held accountable for your hearing, sight, and the faculty of reasoning [17/36].
24. Never think that you have reached the final stage of knowledge and nobody knows more than yourself. Remember! Above everyone endowed with knowledge is another endowed with more knowledge [12/76]. Even the Prophet [p.b.u.h] was asked to keep praying, "O My sustainer! Advance me in knowledge." [20:114]
25. The believers are but a single Brotherhood. Live like members of one family, brothers and sisters unto one another [49/10].
26. Do not make mockery of others or ridicule others [49/11]
27. Do not defame others [49/11]
28. Do not insult others by nicknames [49/11]
29. Avoid suspicion and guesswork. Suspicion and guesswork might deplete your communal energy [49/12]
30. Spy not upon one another [49/12]
31. Do not backbite one another [49/12]

32. When you meet each other, offer good wishes and blessings for safety. One who conveys to you a message of safety and security and also when a courteous greeting is offered to you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous or (at least) of equal courtesy [4/86]
33. When you enter your own home or the home of somebody else, compliment the inmates [24/61]
34. Do not enter houses other than your own until you have sought permission; and then greet the inmates and wish them a life of blessing, purity and pleasure [24/27]
35. Treat kindly -Your parents-Relatives-The orphans-And those who have been left alone in the society [4/36]
36. Take care of -The needy,-The disabled-Those whose hard earned income is insufficient to meet their needs-And those whose businesses have stalled -And those who have lost their jobs. [4/36]
37. Treat kindly -Your related neighbours, and unrelated neighbours-Companions by your side in public gatherings, or public transportation. [4/36]
38. Be generous to the needy wayfarer, the homeless son of the street,and the one who reaches you in a destitute condition [4/36]
39. Be nice to people who work under your care. [4/36]
40. Do not follow up what you have given to others to afflict them with reminders of your generosity [2/262].
41. Do not expect a return for your good behaviour, not even thanks [76/9]
42. Cooperate with one another in good deeds and do not cooperate with others in evil and bad matters [5/2]
43. Do no try to impress people on account of self-proclaimed virtues [53/32]
44. You should enjoin right conduct on others but mend your own ways first. Actions speak louder than words. You must first practice good deeds yourself, then preach [2/44]
45. Correct yourself and your families first [before trying to correct others] [66/6]
46. Pardon gracefully if anyone among you who commits a bad deed out of ignorance, and then repents and amends [6/54, 3/134]
47. Divert and sublimate your anger and potentially virulent emotions to creative energy, and become a source of tranquillity and comfort to people [3/134]
48. Call people to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful exhortation. Reason with them most decently [16/125]
49. Leave to themselves those who do not give any importance to the Divine code and have adopted and consider it as mere play and amusement [6/70]
50. Sit not in the company of those who ridicule Divine Law unless they engage in some other conversation [4/140]
51. Do not be jealous of those who are blessed [4/54]
52. In your collective life, make rooms for others [58/11]
53. When invited to dine, Go at the appointed time. Do not arrive too early to wait for the preparation of meal or linger after eating to engage in bootless babble. Such things may cause inconvenience to the host [33/53]
54. Eat and drink [what is lawful] in moderation [7/31].
55. Do not squander your wealth senselessly [17/26]
56. Fulfil your promises and commitments [17/34]
57. Keep yourself clean, pure [9/108, 4/43, 5/6].
58. Dress-up in agreeable attire and adorn yourself with exquisite character from inside out [7/26]
59. Seek your provision only by fair endeavour [29/17, 2/188]
60. Do not devour the wealth and property of others unjustly, nor bribe the officials or the judges to deprive others of their possessions [2/188]

CHAPTER 22: The True Religion of God

Which Is The True Religion Of God?

Each person is born in a circumstance which is not of his own choosing. The religion of his family or the ideology of the state is thrust upon him from the very beginning of his existence in this world. By the time he reaches his teens, he is usually fully brain-washed into believing that the beliefs of his particular society are the correct beliefs that everyone should have. However, when some people mature and are exposed to other belief-systems, they begin to question the validity of their own beliefs. The seekers of truth often reach a point of confusion upon realizing that each and every religion, sect, ideology and philosophy claims to be the one and only correct way for man. Indeed, they all encourage people to do good.

So, which one is right? They cannot all be right since each claims all others are wrong. Then how does the seeker of truth choose the right way? God gave us all minds and intellects to enable us to make this crucial decision. It is the most important decision in the life of a human being. Upon it depends his future. Consequently, each and every one of us must examine dispassionately the evidence presented and choose what appears to be right until further evidence arises.

Like every other religion or philosophy, Islam also claims to be the one and only true way to God. In this respect it is no different from other systems. This booklet intends to provide some evidence for the validity of that claim. However, it must always be kept in mind that one can only determine the true path by putting aside emotions and prejudices, which often blind us to reality. Then, and only then, will we be able to use our God-given intelligence and make a rational and correct decision.

There are several arguments, which may be advanced to support Islam's claim to be the true religion of God. The following are only three of the most obvious. The first argument is based on the divine origin of the names of the religion and the comprehensiveness of its meaning. The second deals with the unique and uncomplicated teachings concerning the relationship between God, man, and creation.

The third argument derives from the fact that Islam is universally attainable by all men at all times. These are the three basic components of what logic and reason dictate necessary for a religion to be considered the true religion of God. The following pages will develop these concepts in some detail.

The Religion's Name

The first thing that one should know and clearly understand about Islam is what the word 'Islam' itself means. The Arabic word "Islam" means the submission or surrender of one's will to the only true God, known in Arabic as "Allah". One who submits his will to God is termed in Arabic a "Muslim". The religion of Islam is not named after a person or a people, nor was it decided by a later generation of man, as in the case of Christianity which was named after Jesus Christ, Buddhism after Gautama Buddha, Confucianism after Confucius, Marxism after Karl Marx, Judaism after the tribe of Judah and Hinduism after the Hindus. Islam (submission to the will of God) is the religion which was given to Adam, the first man and the first prophet of God, and it was the religion of all the prophets sent by Allah to mankind. Further its name was chosen by God Himself and clearly mentioned in the final scripture which He revealed to man. In that final revelation, called in Arabic the Qur'an Allah states the following:

"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." [Qur'an 5:3]
"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to God), never will it be accepted of Him." [Qur'an 3:85]

Hence, Islam does not claim to be a new religion brought by Prophet Mohammed into Arabia in the seventh century, but rather to be a re-expression in its final form of the true religion of Almighty God, Allah, as it was originally revealed to Adam and subsequent prophets.

At this point we might comment briefly on two other religions that claim to be the true path. Nowhere in the Bible will you find God revealing to Prophet Moses' people or their descendants that their religion is called Judaism, or to the followers of Christ that their religion is called Christianity. In other words, the names "Judaism" and "Christianity" had no divine origin or approval. It was not until long after his departure that the name Christianity was given to Jesus' religion.

What, then, was Jesus' religion in actual fact, as distinct from its name? (Both the name Jesus and the name Christ are derived from Hebrew words, through Greek and Latin. Jesus is the English and Latin form of the Greek Iesous, which in Hebrew is Yeshua or Yehoshua' (Joshua). The Greek word Christos is a translation of the Hebrew [for] 'messiah', which is a title meaning 'the anointed'.) His religion was reflected in his teachings, which he urged his followers to accept as guiding principles in their relationship with God.

In Islam, Jesus is a prophet sent by Allah and his Arabic name is Eesa. Like the prophets before him, he called upon the people to surrender their will to the will of God (which is what Islam stands for). For example, in the New Testament it is stated that Jesus taught his followers to pray to God as follows:

"Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name, may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

This concept was emphasised by Jesus in a number of his statements recorded in the Gospels. He taught, for example, that only those who submitted would inherit paradise. Jesus also pointed out that he himself submitted to the will of God.

"None of those who call me 'Lord' will enter the kingdom of God, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."

"I cannot do anything of myself I judge as I hear and my judgment is honest because I am not seeking my own will but the will of Him who sent me."

There are many reports in the Gospels which show that Jesus made it clear to his followers that he was not the one true God.

For example, when speaking about the final Hour, he said: *"No-one knows about the day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, not the son, but only the Father."*

Thus, Jesus like the prophets before him and the one who came after him, taught the religion of Islam: submission to the will of the one true God.

God And Creation

Since the total submission of one's will to God represents the essence of worship, the basic message of God's divine religion, Islam, is the worship of God alone. It also requires the avoidance of worship directed to any person, place or thing other than God. Since everything other than God, the creator of all the things, is God's creation, it may be said that Islam, in essence, calls man away from worship of creation and invites him to worship only his Creator. He is the only one deserving of man's worship, because it is only by His will that prayers are answered.

Accordingly, if a man prays to a tree and his prayers are answered, it is not the tree which answers his prayers but God, who allows the circumstances prayed for to take place. One might say, "That is obvious". However, to tree-worshippers, it might not be so. Similarly, prayers to Jesus, Buddha, or Krishna or Saint Christopher, or Saint Jude or even to Muhammad, are not answered by them, but are answered by God. Jesus did not tell his followers to worship him but to worship God, as the Quran states:

"And behold! Allah will say: 'O Jesus, the son of Mary! Did you say to men, worship me and my mother as gods besides Allah?, He will say: "Glory to you, I could never say what I had no right (to say)." [Qur'an 5:118].

Nor did Jesus worship himself when he worshipped, but rather he worshipped God. And Jesus was reported in the Gospels to have said, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

This basic principle is contained in the opening chapter of the Qur'an, known as Soorah alFaatihah, verse 4: "you alone do we worship and from you alone do we seek help."

Elsewhere, in the final book of revelation, the Quran, God also said: "And you Lord says: 'Call on Me and I will answer your (prayer)." [Qur'an 40:60]

It is worth emphasizing that the basic message of Islam (namely, the worship of God alone) also proclaims that God and His creation are distinctly different entities. God is neither equal to His creation nor a part of it, nor is His creation equal to Him or a part of Him.

This might seem obvious, but man's worship of creation, instead of the Creator is to a large degree based on ignorance, or neglect, of this concept. It is the belief that the essence of God is everywhere in His creation or that His divine being is or was present in some parts of His creation, which has provided justification for the worship of God's creation and naming it the worship of God. However, the message of Islam, as brought by the prophets of God, is to worship only God and to avoid the worship of His creation either directly or indirectly. In the Qur'an God clearly states: *"For we assuredly sent amongst every people a prophet, with the command Worship Me and avoid false Gods."*

When idol worshippers are questioned as to why they bow down to idols created by men, the invariable reply is that they are not actually worshipping the stone image, but God who is present within it. They claim that the stone idol is only a focal point for God's essence and is not in itself God! One who has accepted the concept of God being present in any way within His creation will be obliged to accept this argument for idolatry. Whereas, one who understands the basic message of Islam and its implications would never agree to idolatry no matter how it is rationalized. Those who have claimed divinity for themselves down through the ages have often based their claims on the mistaken belief that God is present in man.

Taking one step further, they claim that God is more present in them than in the rest of us, and that other humans should. therefore submit to them and worship them as God in person or as God concentrated within their persons. Similarly, those who have asserted the godhood of others after their deaths have found fertile ground among those who accept the false belief of God's presence in man. It should be abundantly clear by now that one who has grasped the basic message of Islam and its implications could never agree to worship another human being under any circumstance. God's religion, in essence, is a clear call to the worship of the Creator and the rejection of creation-worship in any form.

This is the meaning of the motto of Islam: "Laa Ilaaha Ill Allah" (there is no God but Allah) The sincere declaration of this phrase and the acceptance of prophethood automatically bring one within the fold of Islam, and sincere belief in it guarantees one Paradise. Thus, the final Prophet of Islam is reported to have said, "Any one who says: There is no God but Allah, and dies holding that (belief) will enter paradise." Belief in this declaration of faith requires that one submit his/her will to God in the way taught by the prophets of God. It also requires the believer to give up the worship of false gods.

The Message Of False Religions

There are so many sects, cults, religions, philosophies, and movements in the world, all of which claim to be the right way or the only true path of God How can one determine which one is correct or whether, in fact, all are correct? One method by which the answer can be found is to clear away the superficial differences in the teachings of the various claimants to the ultimate truth, and identifies the central object of worship upon which they call,

directly or indirectly. False religions all have in common one basic concept with regard to God they either claim that all men are gods, or that specific men were God, or that nature is God, or that God is a figment of man's imagination.

Thus, it may be stated that the basic message of false religion is that God may be worshipped in the form of His creation. False religions invite man to the worship of creation by calling the creation or some aspect of it God. For example, prophet Jesus invited his followers to worship God, but those who claim to be Jesus' followers today call people to worship Jesus, claiming that he was God.

Buddha was a reformer who introduced a number of humanistic principles in the religion of India. He did not claim to be God, nor did he suggest to his followers that he be an object of worship. Yet today most Buddhists who are to be found outside of India have taken him to be God and they prostrate themselves to idols made in their perception of his likeness.

By using the principle of identifying the object of worship, we can easily detect false religions and the contrived nature of their origin. As God said in the Qur'an: "That which you worship besides Him are only names and you and your forefathers have invented for which Allah has sent down no authority: the command belongs only to Allah He has command that you worship Him; that is the right religion, but most men do not understand." [Qur'an 12:40]

It may be argued that all religions teach good things, so why should it matter which one we follow? The reply is that all false religions teach the greatest evil the worship of creation. Creation-worship is the greatest sin that man can commit because it contradicts the very purpose of his creation. Man was created to worship God alone as Allah has explicitly stated in the Qur'an: "I have only created jinns and men, that they may worship Me" [Qur'an 51:56]

Consequently, the worship of creation, which is the essence of idolatry is the only unforgivable sin. One who dies in this state of idolatry, has sealed his fate in the next life. This is not an opinion, but a revealed fact stated by God in his final revelation to man: "Verily Allah will not forgive the joining of partners with Him, but He may forgive (sins) less than that for whomsoever He wishes." [Qur'an 4:48 and 116]

Universality Of God's Religion

Since the consequences of following a false religion are so grave, the true religion of God must have been universally understandable and universally attainable in the past and it must continue eternally to be understandable and attainable throughout the entire world. In other words, the true religion of God cannot be confined to any one people, place, or period of time. Nor is it logical that such a religion should impose conditions that have nothing to do with the relationship of man with God, such as baptism, or belief in man as a savior, or an intermediary.

Within the central principle of Islam and its definition (the surrender of one's will to God) lie the roots of Islam's universality. Whenever man comes to the realization that God is one and distinct from His creation, and submits himself to God, he becomes a Muslim in body and spirit and is eligible for paradise.

Consequently, anyone at any time in the most remote regions of the world can become Muslim, a follower of God's religion, Islam, by merely rejecting the worship of creation and turning to God alone. It should be noted, however, that in order to actually submit to God's will, one must continually choose between right and wrong. Indeed, man is endowed by God with the power not only to distinguish right from wrong but also to choose between them. These God-given powers carry with them an important responsibility, namely, that man is answerable to God for the choices he makes. It follows, then, that man should try his utmost to do good and avoid evil. These concepts are expressed in the final revelation as follows:

"Verily, those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish faith, and the Christians, and the Sabians (angel-and-star-worshippers) -- any of these who believe in Allah and the Last Day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord. They will not be overcome by fear or grief." [Qur'an 2:62]

If, for whatever reason, they fail to accept the final message after it has been clearly explained to them, they will be in grave danger. The last Prophet said: "Whoever among the Christians and Jews hears of me but does not affirm his belief in what I brought and dies in this state will be among the inhabitants of hell."

Recognition Of God

The question which arises here is : How can all people be expected to believe in the one true God, given their varying backgrounds, societies and cultures? For people to be held responsible for worshipping the one true God, they all need to have access to knowledge of Him. The final revelation teaches that all humans being have the recognition of the one true God imprinted on their souls as a part of their very nature with which they are created.

In the seventh chapter of the Qur'an (Al-A'raaf, verses 172-173), God explained that when He created Adam He caused all of Adam's descendants to come into existence and He took a pledge from them saying: "'Am I not your Lord?' To which they all replied, 'Yes, we testify to it'" Allah then explained why He had all of mankind bear witness that He is their creator and the only true God worthy of worship. He said: "That was in case you (mankind) should say on the day of Resurrection, 'Verily we were unaware of all this'" [Qur'an 7:172]

That is to say, we cannot claim on that day that we had no idea that Allah, was our God and that no one told us that we were only supposed to worship Allah alone. Allah went on to further explain that: "It was also in case you should say, 'Certainly it was our ancestors who made partners (with Allah) and we are only their descendants; will you then destroy us for what those liars did?'" [Qur'an 7:173]

Thus, every child is born with a natural belief in God and an in-born inclination to worship Him alone. This in-born belief and inclination is called in Arabic the “Fitrah”. The Prophet Muhammad reported that Allah said, “I created my servants in the right religion, but devils made them go astray.” The Prophet also said, “Each child is born in a state of Fitrah. Then his parents make him a Jew, Christian or a Zoroastrian.” If the child were left alone, he would worship God in his own way, but all children are affected by the environment.

So, just as the child submits to the physical laws, which Allah has imposed on nature, in the same way his soul also submits naturally to the fact that Allah is his Lord and Creator. But, if his parents try to make him follow a different path, the child is not strong enough in the early stages of his life to resist or oppose the will of his parents. In such cases, the religion, which the child follows, is one of custom and upbringing, and God does not hold him to account or punish him for his religion up to a certain stage of his life.

The Signs Of God

Throughout people’s lives, from childhood until the time they die, signs of the one and only true God are shown to them in all regions of the earth and in their own souls, until it becomes clear that there is only one true God (Allah). God says in the Qur’an: “We will show them our signs In the furthest regions (of the earth) and in their souls, until it becomes clear to them that this is the truth.” [Qur’an 41:53]

The following is an example of God revealing by a sign to one man the error of his idol-worship. In the south-eastern region of the Amazon jungle in Brazil, South America, a primitive tribe erected a new hut to house their man-idol Skwatch, representing the supreme God of all creation. The following day a young man entered the hut to pay homage to the God, and while he was in prostration to what he had been taught was his Creator and Sustainer, a mangy old flea-ridden dog slunk into the hut. The young man looked up in time to see the dog lift his hind leg and pass urine on the idol.

Outraged, the youth chased the dog out of the temple; but when his rage died down he realized that the idol could not be the Lord of the Universe. God must be elsewhere, he concluded. As strange as it may seem, the dog urinated on the idol was a sign from God for that young man. This sign contained the divine message that what he was worshipping was false. It liberated from slavishly following his traditionally learned worship of a false god. As a result, this man was given a choice: either to seek the true god or to continue in the error of his ways. Allah mentions Prophet Abraham’s quest for God as an example of how those who follow His signs will be rightly guided:

“So also did we show Abraham the power and the Laws of the heavens and the earth that he might (with understanding) have certitude. When the night covered him over, he saw a star. He said: ‘This is my Lord.’ But when it set, he said: ‘I love not those that set’ When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said: ‘This is my Lord.’ But when the moon set, he said: ‘Unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.’ When he saw the rising sun in splendor, he said: ‘This is my Lord this is the greatest (of all).’ But when the sun set, he said; ‘O my people I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah” [Qur’an 6:75-79]

As was mentioned earlier, prophets have been sent to every nation and tribe to support man’s natural belief in God and man’s in-born inclination to worship Him, as well as to reinforce the divine truth in the daily signs revealed by God. Although much of these prophets’ teachings became distorted, portions revealing their God-inspired messages have remained untainted and have served to guide mankind in the choice between right and wrong.

The influence of God-inspired messages down through the ages can be seen in the “Ten Commandments” of Judaism’s Torah which were later adopted into Christianity’s teachings, as well as in the existence of laws against murder, stealing and adultery in most societies throughout the ancient and modern world. As a result of God’s signs to mankind through the ages combined with His revelation through His prophets, all mankind has been given a chance to recognize the one only true God. Consequently, every soul will be held accountable for its belief in God and its acceptance of the true religion of God, namely Islam, which means total submission to the will of Allah.

Conclusion

The preceding presentation has demonstrated that the name of the religion of Islam expresses Islam’s most central principle, submission to God, and that the name “Islam” was chosen not by man, but by God, according to the holy scriptures of Islam. It has also been shown that Islam alone teaches the uniqueness of God and His attributes and enjoins the worship of God alone without intermediaries.

Finally, due to the divinely instilled inclination of man to worship God and the signs revealed by God throughout the ages to each individual, Islam may be achieved by all men at all times. In short, the significance of the name Islam (submission to God), Islam’s fundamental acknowledgment of the uniqueness of God and Islam’s accessibility to all mankind at all times convincingly support Islam’s claim that from the beginning of time in whatever language it was expressed, Islam alone has been, and will be the true religion of God.

In conclusion we ask Allah, the exalted, to keep us on the right path to which He has guided us, and to bestow on us His blessings and mercy, for He is indeed the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be on prophet Muhammad and on all the prophets of God and their righteous followers.

CHAPTER 23: THE NAMES OF ALLAH - ALLAH THE GREATEST NAME

1. Ar-Rahman <i>The All-Compassionate</i>	21. Al-Basit <i>The Reliever</i>	41. Al-Jalil <i>The Mighty</i>	61. Al-Mumit <i>The Taker of Life</i>	81. Al-Muntaqim <i>The Avenger</i>
2. Ar-Rahim <i>The All-Merciful</i>	22. Al-Khafid <i>The Abaser</i>	42. Al-Karim <i>The Generous</i>	62. Al-Hayy <i>The Ever Living One</i>	82. Al-'Afuww <i>The Forgiver</i>
3. Al-Malik <i>The Absolute Ruler</i>	23. Ar-Rafi <i>The Exalter</i>	43. Ar-Raqib <i>The Watchful One</i>	63. Al-Qayyum <i>The Self-Existing One</i>	83. Ar-Ra'uf <i>The Clement</i>
4. Al-Quddus <i>The Pure One</i>	24. Al-Mu'izz <i>The Bestower of Honors</i>	44. Al-Mujib <i>The Responder to Prayer</i>	64. Al-Wajid <i>The Finder</i>	84. Malik-al-Mulk <i>The Owner of All</i>
5. As-Salam <i>The Source of Peace</i>	25. Al-Mudhill <i>The Humiliator</i>	45. Al-Wasi <i>The All-Comprehending</i>	65. Al-Majid <i>The Glorious</i>	85. Dhu-al-Jalal wa-al-Ikram <i>The Lord of Majesty and Bounty</i>
6. Al-Mu'min <i>The Inspirer of Faith</i>	26. As-Sami <i>The Hearer of All</i>	46. Al-Hakim <i>The Perfectly Wise</i>	66. Al-Wahid <i>The Unique, The Single</i>	86. Al-Muqsit <i>The Equitable One</i>
7. Al-Muhaymin <i>The Guardian</i>	27. Al-Basir <i>The Seer of All</i>	47. Al-Wadud <i>The Loving One</i>	67. Al-Ahad <i>The One, The Indivisible</i>	87. Al-Jami' <i>The Gatherer</i>
8. Al-Aziz <i>The Victorious</i>	28. Al-Hakam <i>The Judge</i>	48. Al-Majid <i>The Majestic One</i>	68. As-Samad <i>The Satisfier of All Needs</i>	88. Al-Ghani <i>The Rich One</i>
9. Al-Jabbar <i>The Compeller</i>	29. Al-'Adl <i>The Just</i>	49. Al-Ba'ith <i>The Resurrector</i>	69. Al-Qadir <i>The All Powerful</i>	89. Al-Mughni <i>The Enricher</i>
10. Al-Mutakabbir <i>The Greatest</i>	30. Al-Latif <i>The Subtle One</i>	50. Ash-Shahid <i>The Witness</i>	70. Al-Muqtadir <i>The Creator of All Power</i>	90. Al-Mani' <i>The Preventer of Harm</i>
11. Al-Khaliq <i>The Creator</i>	31. Al-Khabir <i>The All-Aware</i>	51. Al-Haqq <i>The Truth</i>	71. Al-Muqaddim <i>The Expediter</i>	91. Ad-Darr <i>The Creator of The Harmful</i>
12. Al-Bari' <i>The Maker of Order</i>	32. Al-Halim <i>The Forbearing</i>	52. Al-Wakil <i>The Trustee</i>	72. Al-Mu'akhhir <i>The Delayer</i>	92. An-Nafi' <i>The Creator of Good</i>
13. Al-Musawwir <i>The Shaper of Beauty</i>	33. Al-Azim <i>The Magnificent</i>	53. Al-Qawiyy <i>The Possessor of All Strength</i>	73. Al-Awwal <i>The First</i>	93. An-Nur <i>The Light</i>
14. Al-Ghaffar <i>The Forgiving</i>	34. Al-Ghafur <i>The Forgiver and Hider of Faults</i>	54. Al-Matin <i>The Forceful One</i>	74. Al-Akhir <i>The Last</i>	94. Al-Hadi <i>The Guide</i>
15. Al-Qahhar <i>The Subduer</i>	35. Ash-Shakur <i>The Rewarder of Thankfulness</i>	55. Al-Waliyy <i>The Governor</i>	75. Az-Zahir <i>The Manifest One</i>	95. Al-Badi <i>The Originator</i>
16. Al-Wahhab <i>The Giver of All</i>	36. Al-Ali <i>The Highest</i>	56. Al-Hamid <i>The Praised One</i>	76. Al-Batin <i>The Hidden One</i>	96. Al-Baqi <i>The Everlasting One</i>
17. Ar-Razzaq <i>The Sustainer</i>	37. Al-Kabir <i>The Greatest</i>	57. Al-Muhsi <i>The Appraiser</i>	77. Al-Wali <i>The Protecting Friend</i>	97. Al-Warith <i>The Inheritor of All</i>
18. Al-Fattah <i>The Opener</i>	38. Al-Hafiz <i>The Preserver</i>	58. Al-Mubdi' <i>The Originator</i>	78. Al-Muta'ali <i>The Supreme One</i>	98. Ar-Rashid <i>The Righteous Teacher</i>
19. Al-'Alim <i>The Knower of All</i>	39. Al-Muqit <i>The Nourisher</i>	59. Al-Mu'id <i>The Restorer</i>	79. Al-Barr <i>The Doer of Good</i>	99. As-Sabur <i>The Patient One</i>
20. Al-Qabid <i>The Constrictor</i>	40. Al-Hasib <i>The Accounter</i>	60. Al-Mu'id <i>The Giver of Life</i>	80. At-Tawwab <i>The Guide to Repentance</i>	

1. Allah Sublime is the Single Lord of Pristine Purity Wherein pride is wind and passion is eternity Prayers become passages into tranquillity Grant Your love 'n' peace as honor 'n' dignity	8. As-Samad-al-Maboud Unique and without any needs; worthy of Prayer Sublime is the Single Lord, Absolute and Prayed Beautifully laid is the heavenly path and arcade For prayerful souls to enjoy the soothing shade Rivers and streams, fruits and company sedate.	15. Al Khaliq-al-Bari Primal Creator and Grantor of Life Sublime is the Single Lord, Creator and Grantor Creating chromosomes like a mystic enchanter Stirring life in depths of oceans or in silent Castor To implant Light in the Universe as an instigator.
2. Al Azziz al Jabbar Almighty Lord Who Guides All Humanity Sublime is the Lord, Single Almighty Guide Who turns virtue to might as desires subside Dignity becomes truth and beauty to confide Grant us gratitude and courage side by side.	9. Al Ghafoor-al-Wadud Most Forgiving and Most Sincere Friend Sublime is the Single Lord, Most Forgiving Friend Doors of forgiveness are open for you to ascend Doors of love are open for all humans to transcend Rivers and streams, fruits and company to wend.	16. Al A'li- al-Azeem Most Revered and Highly Esteemed Sublime is the Single Lord, Revered and Esteemed Holiest thoughts, Almighty is aware to be redeemed Events that stars and humans have ever dreamed Have come home as I have prayed and screamed. (Reference to Aa. 55.6 and to Aa. 1.3)
3. Ar-Rauf ur-Raheem Lord of Extreme, Eternal Kindness and Mercy Sublime is the Single Lord, Kind and Gracious Dispersed His blessings, His whims fastidious Evident His majesty and deeds tenacious Show us the Straight Path so infinitely spacious. (Sura Al Fatiha 1, Aa. 1.6)	10. Al Wakeel-al-Kafeel Most Efficient and Responsible Sublime is the Single Lord, Firm and Responsible Ways of Allah, Kind, Invisible, Firm and Compatible With ways of humans efficient, logical and addible Sometimes becoming inconceivable and incorrigible.	17. Al Wahid al-Ah'ad The One Unique Single and Singular Sublime is the Single Lord, Unique and Singular Every place or every moment similar or bipolar The Unity of Allah is always singular and annular Limits of thought is status of soul somewhat circular Like a moment of innocence it is perhaps cellular. (Reference is to Sura 53, Surath-an-Naj'm, Aa.53.14)
4. Al-Ghafoor-al-Haleem Most Forgiving and Most Graciously Helpful Sublime is the Single Lord, Forgiving and Gracious For every human to become humble and judicious Lest worries and evils turn fictitious and fallacious Then Signs in Scripture are lasting and tenacious. (Reference Aa. 1.6)	11. Ar Raqib-al-Hafeez One Watchful and Protector Sublime is the Single Lord, Watchful Protector Sustainer of universes and for believers a Shelter Supreme is the fate of one who is a Quranic reciter Singing the Names of Allah, the Only Divine Rector.	18. Al Momin-ul-Mohemeen Ordaining Peace and Protective of the righteous Sublime is the Single Lord, Peaceful and Righteous Protective, peaceful and precocious For here and Hereafter, righteous and ingenious Faith for heart and soul, Refuge from inauspicious.
5. Al-Kareem-al-Hakeem Merciful and Miraculously Healing Sublime is the Single Lord, Merciful and Miraculous Light and Love, Straight Path, nothing dubious Focus of Faith and Scripture forever tenacious Pristine, Divine and Unified forever capacious. (Reference to Aa. 1.6 and to Aa. 55.2)	12. Ad Daim-al-Khaim One Ancient and Eternal Sublime is the Single Lord, Ancient and Perpetual Since eons to past Judgment, He is beyond visual From behind Bangs to past Universes, all continual For His creation, He's Lord of mercies, all-effectual. (Reference to Aa. 55.6, and Aa.1.3)	19. Al Haseeb-ul-Saheed Sufficient (for His creations) and Omnipresent Sublime is the Single Lord, Sufficient, All Present To witness deeds, lives sadly spent, sorrows pent Hopes that once were life turn to voices that repent Should tears, wash away the Holy Scripture sent.
6. Al-Khavi-al-Wafi Almighty and Loving Sublime is the Single Lord, Almighty and Loving Omnipotent, Omnipresent, infinitely forgiving In His Presence, human stature starts dwindling Eternally Alive is His Singular Face forever smiling.	13. Al Muhi-al-Mumemuth One Who Ordains life and death Sublime is the Single Lord, Giver of life and death Eternity for faith 'n' trust, hope 'n' love that wreath Death for greed 'n' pride, hideous 'n' false that wrath Love for Allah and His Prophet is the purest Sabbath.	20. Al Haleem-al-Kareem Perfectly Accomplished and Generous Sublime is the Single Lord, Capable and Generous Accomplished to create the Universe capacious The single One worthy of all praise and efficacious His mercy and generosity make Him tenacious Through every word He is Straight and never devious Plead You grant this prayer and servitude precious Long life for dignity in the world would be gracious. (Reference to Aa. 1.6)
7. Al-Lateef-al-Khabeer All Seeing-All Informed Sublime is the Single Lord, All Seeing-All Informed One Who ordains how chromosomes are reformed One Who dictates how universes are transformed Unseen constellations and stars yet to be formed. (Sura Ar Rahman 55, Aa. 6)	14. Al Hi'gh- al-Khayuum One Who is Alive and forever Established Sublime is the Single Lord, Alive and Established Living, Eternal, firmly seated on Throne lavished Through all universes replenished and untarnished Sorrow is for those well fed yet remain famished.	

21. Al-Awal-al-Khadeem The One Primal and Ancient	26. Ar Rahman ur Raheem	32. Al-Aleem-al-Hakeem
Sublime is the Single Lord, Primal and Ancient From the beginning of time to eternity, it is apparent Allah's Signs all point straight to human betterment With Light, Guidance, Scripture and Enlightenment His mercy still calls you as your life is clement "Now is the time for evil to freeze and fragment; Servants in clay, embrace thy Benevolent. " (Reference to Aa. 1.6)	Most Merciful and Ever Merciful Sublime is the Single Lord, Most and Ever Merciful Dutiful servants seeking bliss from Allah, All-Powerful Prayerful seeking protection from Allah, All-Graceful His mercy this life exists, prayer that faith is plentiful His order the worlds exist, joy the eternity is peaceful: Bless Thy mercies that Rahman means merciful. For the wise and those who are prayerful.	The One Informed and Miraculously Knowledgeable Sublime is the Single Lord, the One All Knowing Single, pristine, miraculous, knowledgeably bestowing Eternal kindness and mercy, virtue and purity flowing For those with ears to hear the Prophet's teaching; When every breeze that brings down his looks loving Guiding learned and believing to paradise glowing: Pray, end the trial of life in this world by bestowing A divine death at Your door while still be praying. (Reference is to Aa. 1.6 of Surath-a-Fatiha)
22. Al-Awal-al-A'Khira	28. Rab al A'la	33. As-Sattaar-al-Ghafaar
The One Primal and Final through Eternity Sublime is the Single Lord, Primal and Final Single line from origin of time to edges terminal One soul, one trust, one journey, one human cynical Allah's Singlehood, Majesty and a human irrational Seeking the destination pure, bright and cardinal With a firm deep voice that becomes ordinal "Abandon ugly gods and their tools criminal."	Lord and Creator, One Who is the Highest Sublime is the Single Lord, Creator Who is Highest Delete this world and create skies of virtue spacious Payers of servants seek Your generosity tenacious Sorrows of the world may not become so vexatious And drive the fate of believers to become precarious: Trust of Faith, Your recitations become harmonious To destroy every sin and wear the angels beauteous.	The One Hidden and Most Forgiving Sublime is the Single Lord, the Most Forgiving Lest man should lose the Path and die struggling. It has been that believers trap the devil struggling: It is for a short while that Satan keeps laughing With nowhere to hide, that Allah is Himself hiding: Seek refuge that Allah is All-Potent and Forgiving Pray, we never stop searching You Everlasting.
23. Az-Za'hira-al-Bat'in	29. Burhan us Sultan	34. Ar-Rahman-ud-'Dian
The One Evident and (yet) Hidden Sublime is the Single Lord, Evident yet Hidden Evident is His grandeur even in worlds forbidden Evident is His grandiose in Order never overridden Hidden is His mercy in the protection unbidden. (Reference is to Aa. 1.2)	The King who shows the (Right) Path Sublime is the Single Lord, One to lead to the Path Teachings of Scripture, arrays of mercy in any math The origin behind zero or anger beyond infinite wrath Grant reason in numbers so humans can find a path Should the clay vanish for good in a cosmic mud bath Human race, civilizations and their nuclear aftermath Befriend the Mystic Guide always on the Right Path. (Reference to Aa. 55.2, Sura e Rahman)	The Merciful and Most Kind One Sublime is the Single Lord, Merciful and Most Kind The most graciously kind against every odd to find One Who grants all the mercies without any bind Favors in thoughts, deeds for entire humankind: Brighten this life with a beautiful state of mind Close of life that still has a story to spellbind. Light of Truth in trials of world left behind Without apathy or regrets of the mortal kind.
24. Al Kabeer al Muth'aal	30. As Sami al Baseer	35. Al-Kabeer-al-Akbar
The One Supreme and Accomplished Sublime is the Single Lord, Supremely Accomplished Qur'an has descended; practice is to be polished The path to pristine purity is clearly established; For every soul in life, the sinful nets are flashed For every thought, the devil has plots furbished: Hark! Man may become reason for a soul slashed Life may itself become reason for an end banished	The One Who hears and sees (everything) Sublime is the Single Lord, One Who hears and sees All-hearing, All-seeing, Allah is All-knowing to please He takes each one to his abode in a gentle breeze Rich or poor, high or low, for each to appease Ever since Unity has started His heavenly keys For a wayfarer to enter a world of virtue as reprise Faith, deeds, Scripture and Kabah, if you please.	The Great and then the Greatest Sublime is the Single Lord, Great and the Greatest Beyond words, higher than love, He is the strongest Beyond thought and reality, He is forever the wisest Higher than galaxies, His honor are waves deepest Beyond limits of understanding, lies castles truest Ahead of comprehension, shines the Prophet brightest For all the atrocities cruel, Allah is Great, the Greatest (Reference is to Aa. 6, Sura 55 and to Aa. 14 of Sura 53).
25. Al Khazi al Hajaath The Grantor of Longings	31. Al-Wahid-al-Qh'haar	36. Al-Aleem-al-Al'aam
Sublime is the Single Lord, Grantor of Longings Grant Your mercy for those long lost longings Bless the heart and its saddest carvings Hopes that sink in the darkest screenings: Storms blow away the dimmest lightings Pray grant safety for believer's belongings The prophet's teachings and hidden meanings The ultimate knowledge and its truest surroundings. (Reference is to 53.14 of Surath-an-Naj'm)	The One Single One and Irresistible Sublime is the Single Lord, the One Irresistible Saddest are those who found His Oneness deniable Stars 'n trees, suns 'n moons hear Allah's voice audible Heaven 'n hell, sky 'n earth respond in words amicable; Themes of the world, and all diversions are corruptible As one listens to beauty of Faith and Love as agreeable Now that Qur'an is revealed, make the Hereafter stable. (Reference to Aa. 55. 5, Aa., 55.6)	Sublime is the Single Lord, Knowing and All-Knowing Order in Your universe keeps graciously flowing Your Truth and Unity keep beautifully repeating Songs, shows, sorrows, storms keep stowing Only to vanish as the lovely soul keeps chanting From Medina to hearts has the message singing Beyond then stars and worlds are castles calling "Dress your soul to circle His Kursi, All-Alluring".

37. As-Shafi-al-Kafi	45. Al-Azziz-al-Ghani	54. Hameed-el-Majeed
One Who Heals and Cures, and is Sufficient Sublime is the Single Lord, Who Heals and is Enough Praise and thanks, from believers, He heals every sough Ask you for any cure He is the Healer without any bluff Ask for forgiveness, for He forgives without any gruff Pray grant your servants thoughts gentle but tough. To drive every evil and every Satan off his flagrant cuff Thanks to Allah, One Who can raise even a dead slough.	Almighty and Free from all Needs	The Praiseworthy and the Noble Sublime is the Single Lord, Praiseworthy and Noble Never achieved is the goal of life but hope remains audible Never overcome is the trial of life but the Word is adorable In every breath recites the Praise and Glory commendable. Accept the prayer of a Mu'min who remains accountable For all reason and emotion, notion and action conceivable Grant the vision of Prophet that makes Judgement admirable.
38. Al-Azeem-al-Baqi	46. Al-Ghafoor-as-Shukoor	55. Hakeem-el-Khadeem
The Greatest and Everlasting Sublime is the Single Lord, Greatest and Eternal As the stars fall down and lightening goes nocturnal As earth and oceans tremble, men turn cruel aboriginal As dusk and dawn turn dark, none has virtue exceptional As sun and moon merge, no woman has love maternal As hills turn to pebbles, none to quench the terminal Pray grant the tears of Love for You, Almighty Eternal. (Reference to Sura-e-Rahaman, Aa. 55.6 and to Aa. 55.5	Forgiving and Appreciative	The Wise and the Ancient One Sublime is the Single Lord, Wise and Ancient One Healer and Merciful, Originator and Primal to everyone Informed and Great, Irresistible, Singular and all Alone For the believers, He is love, dignity, truth, next to none For the Mumins, His is the servitude, His is twilight zone Prayer and breath are serenity and sweetness redone Grant their souls a place next to Your beloved one.
39. As-Samad-al-Ahad	47. Al-Azeem-al-Aleem	56. Khader-es-Sataar
Totally Unique (Free of all needs) Single Sublime is the Single Lord, Unique and Single None His master, none His keeper, never any wrangle Omnipresent His mercy and His wisdom never mangle Beginning without ending, He is the Origin and toggle: Galaxies and stars, suns and moons that do not wrangle Humans and devils, wisdom and temptations that jargle Knowledge and faith, lovingly bestowed as they mingle. (Reference to Aa. 55.6, 55.5, 55.8 of Surath-e-Rahman	The Great and All-Knowing	The Able and the (Obscure) Hidden One Sublime is the Single Lord, the Able and (Obscure) One Omnipotent, Almighty, Supreme One and next to none To command the Universe to Be and it is been and done Lord of worlds and skies, and Lord of many a mighty sun Irresistible Creator of Mystic, everything become and won Pray, grant The servants captive with and nowhere to run Unseen paradises of life that never fade away nor burn.
40. Rab-ul-Arz-us-Samawath	48. Zul-Malik-ul-Malkhu'th	57. As-Sami-al-Aleem
Lord of the Earth and the many Skies Sublime is the Single Lord, Lord of the Earth and Skies His Oneness, His mercy, His love and His vast galaxies His greatness, His mastery, His kindness and His mercies The light of Prophet-hood, the message and the allies From continents to hearts, they built shrines for the wise From customs to thoughts they built bridges and ties Pray! Grant the believers' gift of heavenly surprise.	Ruler (and Keeper) of Skies and Earths	One Who Listens and the All Knowing Sublime is the Single Lord, Listening and All-Knowing Lord of sky, with Your Greatness and of Mercy growing Through forgiveness, and kindness forever healing For a human race lost under a sun scorching, His Oneness, Mercies and mysteries never waning Pray bless your servants devoted to the Prophet bowing To Your Will with gratitude for Quran forever overwhelming.
41. Khaliq-ul-Mukhulqat	49. Zul-Izhat-ul-Azhmuth	58. Al-Ghani-al-Azeem
The Creator of all that is Created.	With Dignity and Grandeur	The Self Sufficient and the Great One Sublime is the Single Lord, Self Sufficient and Great Self Sufficient, Ancient, Mighty, Healing and Beneficent Most Merciful, Forgiving, Blissful, Hidden yet is Great He is the Script for the universe, and those who slate Humans who preach mysteries and order that dictate By Your wish beautify their own fate, no one can abate For them are their virtues and deeds, no one can negate.
42. Min-Khal'q-ul-Lail'n Nihar	50. Zul-Haibuth-ul-Khudrath	
Creator of Night and Day	Efficient (Wise) and Miraculous	
43. Creator and Provider	51. Kibria-al-Jabbruth	
The Creator Who Provides for all Needs	One with Greatness with Capability to Compel Sublime is the Single Lord, the Great and the Compeller To bestow His Last Prophet, Messenger and a divine caller The enlightened, noblest, with Quran as the golden pillar From here begins justice, learning and a divine tumbler For this whole world, to drink purity become a foreteller For Justice on Last Day, His command for every peddler; Seek a Noble Path now to Him, the Merciful over-ruler.	
44. Al-Fateh-al Aleem	52. Sataar-el-Azeem	
One to resolve (hardships) and All-Knowing	The One (Obscure) Hidden and Great Sublime is the Single Lord, Obscure yet the Greatest Every place, every instant holds His Mystery brightest Hidden lie the wisdom, and a Noble Path straightest To guide His creation through every curve steepest A gift for humankind, with understanding smartest; For the disbeliever, who has sunk into sin deepest For rejecter of Faith, the slave of Satan in dark deepest (Sura al-Fatiha 1, Aa.6)	
	53. Aalim-el-Ghaib	
	Sublime is the Single Lord, All-Knowing of the Hidden Praise be to Allah, free of all needs and faults open or hidden When formed and where deformed human fate but never overridden That You are the Master, Caretaker of the Universe and Eden Though the worlds carry imprints of sorrow and burden; Pray men do not lose love in emotions deeply hidden Make their destiny.	

59. Aalam-es-Salaam	64. Sabur-es-Sataar	70. Khalis-el-Mukhlis
The Infer-er and the Source of Peace Sublime is the Single Lord, Logical and Peaceful Stars and trees pray to Him, every moment in full For those who conceive, the Scripture is beautiful; Some lost in lust and greed soon become deceitful Some sell religion only to make their lives deathful, Pray make human conscience, lively and dureful Not to make life and eternity ugly and dernful. (Sura e Rahman, 55, Aa.6)	The Patient and the (Obscure) Hidden One Sublime is the Single Lord, the One Patient and Hidden Pray teach humans their significance not to be over ridden With a passing view of the universe and a garden of Eden To wear a crown of deception and its false burden And forget the Lord only to be downtrodden; Devil falsifies the human only to harden Body, mind and soul all too sudden.	The Perfect and Pristine Purity Sublime is the Single Lord in Perfect and Pristine Purity With His Merciful Face Bright in farthest eternity With His Omnipotent Power in extreme certainty His Perfect Order spread in outer edges of infinity To lead human race through every cosmic obscurity To guide the human thoughts through every virtuality Peace be upon those who seek His Shelter and Serenity.
60. Malik-en-Naseer	65. Khaliq-en-Nur	71. Sadiq-el-Waa'd
The Lord Sovereign and the Ruler and Helper Sublime is the Single Lord, Sovereign and Helpful Rich or poor, for everyone, He is great and meaningful For the righteous and dutiful, there is no limit for the Merciful Call upon Him, He is One Who sees and listens, fully watchful The Names of beauty are His, for He is greatest and cheerful Life of neglect and sin becomes shameful and frightful Life in darkness, shatters its own image beautiful.	The Creator of Light (Enlightenment) Sublime is the Single Lord, the Creator of Light Merciful, Patient, Appreciative, Giver of life, face and light, Witness His Light and every mound is the mountain* of light. Light upon light to drive darkness far from a soul in light Angel upon angel, Prophet and his word are powers of light Pray, expel the arrogance nor ignorance that block the light For it is You, Who is the Creator of infinite shades of light. (* Jabel-e-Nur is the Mountain close to Makkah where the Prophet received his many revelations from Allah.)	The One True to His Promise Sublime is the Single Lord the One True to His Promise Eternal to His Promise as Himself that none can place amiss A shrine of refuge, He offers too good to deny or dismiss So many doubts, yet He is Devotion in every thoughtful bliss So many lies, yet He is Truth in every prayerful reminisce So many angels, yet He rules them with a loving remiss Devotion is the truth, Truth is love and Love is bliss. (Lines 6-7 are from Sura 112 in the Glorious Qu'ran.)
61. Ghani-er-Rahman	66. Ghani-el-Moj'iz	72. Haq-el-Mubeen
The Self Sufficient and the Beneficent Sublime is the Single Lord, Self Sufficient and the Benefcent Mercy upon mercy, purity upon piety, He is magnificent Perfect and flawless, gift of expression by His consent In blessing upon blessing, sky upon sky, mercy is meant. Every sense, every moment, with dignity, He is Omnipresent Those lost in arrogance and pride will have lives ill-spent Jinn or human can you reject His Qur'anic Signs ever-present. (Surath an Nur, Sura 24, Aa. 35 and Sura 55, Aa. 4)	The Self Sufficient and the Subduer Sublime is the Single Lord, Sufficient and One to Subdue Almighty, Omnipotent, Forgiving, Forceful to settle any due One free of all needs; grant the fate of Mumins that once flew From here into eternity, free from every evil those devils threw To steal away this life away from You, the Light in every hue; Those misled will forever see their fate that You will endue Shame and hypocrisy in life, deathless in fiery Hellish glue.	The One All True, Evident (and Obvious) Sublime is the Single Lord, True and Evident Grant virtue of patience and light of truth heavenly sent Awaken faith and love in soul and mind to climb and ascent Purify passion and brighten the path to reach and present Peace and joy for a Journey seeking Your divine consent For an anguished soul seeking Your Throne of content With a face of love bearing its mortal assent.
62. Khareeb-el-Hasnaath One	67. Fazil-ash-Shukoor Sophisticated and the Appreciative	73. zil-Quwath-el-Matin
Whose Blessings are near Sublime is the Single Lord Whose Blessings are near Galaxies bow, jinns and human pray to Lord very dear Throughout the world are spread His gifts far and near Pray listen to a pinning heart O Lord, the One to hear Grant Thy peace and blessings to believers who adhere To mysteries in Your Word written in every biosphere And focus all the thoughts to wash away every fear. (Sura Ar Rahman. 55, Aa. 6)	Sublime is the Single Lord, Sophisticated and Appreciative Forgiving, Patient, Prevalent, Light upon lights and Positive Restrain hate and horror that disbelief takes away as negative For Peoples of the Book, bless away the sins* as You forgive Bless the Mu'mins, patience of prophets* You made affective For their pining hearts, brighten the souls with Light native Gifted with love in life and spirituality in eternity attractive. (*Yunuspbuh was forgiven and blessed, see Sura 10. Ayubpbuh was noted for his enduring patience, see Aa. 44, of Sura 38)	The All Powerful and Firm Sublime is the Single Lord, All Powerful and Firm Show the heavens, and the love of Unity in a mind infirm Through the dark passages in life grant the light to confirm That Prophet walked the lonely streets of Medina and affirm The Tawaafs of Kabah with Love for Allah, Powerful and Firm That for Judgement, Your purity and majesty will reconfirm That million earths and skies hide their orbits and squirm. (Reference to Aa. 1.4; Tawaaf is walking around Kabah done mostly during Hajj and Umrah.)
63. Wali-el-Hasnaath	68. Ghani-el-Khadeem	74. Khavi-el-Azziz
	The Self Sufficient and the Ancient One Sublime is the Single Lord, Self Sufficient and the Ancient Sufficient and Great, Healing and Merciful, Wise and Ancient Informed and Great, Great and Knowing, Primal and Ancient Since before any bang to end of time, Your Unity is ambient From galaxies to farthest stars is a Straight Path adjacent The Quran: Sorry and anguished are be those in sin ardent Passion for Truest and Love of Prophet is the best ornament. (Aa 55.6, Aa.1.6, Tasnim is a drink in Paradise Aa 83.27)	The Omnipotent and Mighty Sublime is the Single Lord, Omnipotent and Mighty Almighty and Compelling; Almighty Subduer of impurity Every star and angel, every earth and sky bow in humility Every devil and jinn; kafir and hypocrite may show absurdity But never touch and tarnish a Mumins soul in deep sublimity Yet again the human does turn to disbelief and disintegrity Burnt in passion and pettiness, acquires devil's familiarity

75. Alaum-el-Ghai'ub	80. Rahman-es-Sataar	93. Al Malik ul Maq'hsood
The One Who Knows the Hidden Sublime is the Single Lord, One Who Knows the Hidden Source and path to peace and put aside traits forbidden Knowledgeable of every Bang to every garden of Eden In ordeals, grant us the patience of pious unbidden In prayers, grant us the faith never to be overridden For the Mumins, bury swarms of sin in a deep den And grant the virtues of prophets in life east of Eden. (Reference to Nabi Ayub, see Aa.41-44, Sura 38)	Rahman-es-Sataar Beneficent and Hidden Sublime is the Single Lord, Beneficent and Hidden Praise be Allah, Almighty yet kind, gentle and golden Everywhere, He prevails as a mystic breeze in a garden Every moment until eternity His Word is never overridden All creation lies prayerful and serene in a joyous Garden Seeking the Straight Path to righteous deeds that deaden Unholy ties with those who burden, dampen and sadden. (The Sura 1, Aa. 2-7 Sura Fatiha in the Glorious Quran)	The Sovereign Destination of everyone Sublime is the Single Lord, the Destination of everyone A million Namroods or a million gems, You are the One Lord of Creations, You are the Single Omnipresent One Anyone who denies You becomes a single drifting one Can anyone be sane when life is chaos on a distant run Yet Your mercy, life can be human, all said and done You are the Origin and the Destination for everyone.
76. High-al-L'zi-lamauth	91. Rub ul Malakat-ur Ruh	94. Al-Hanan al Manaan
The One Alive forever, never to die Sublime is the Single Lord, Forever Alive and never to die Lord of prestige, dignity; universes where angels in purity fly Eternally alive without sorrow or death; they shall never come by For humankind, He sent the Qu'ran, the light-post for soul to tie The gift of love and worship from here to deep in the sky For both the worlds free from every sinful stain or dye And this world to be a heaven free from evil cry.	Lord of the Arch Angel of angels Sublime is the Single Lord of the Arch Angel of angels Your refuge and closeness seeks this Mu'min who marvels The Straight Path from here to Eternity that propels Love for Allah and passion for Prophet who tells "Search for the Light in the night that swells; Search for an Immortal Face that spells Love, Peace and Joy in cosmic bells". Truth, Beauty and Virtue in silver bells." (Reference to Aa. 1.6)	Merciful and Bestower of Favors Sublime is the Single Lord, Merciful and Bestower of Favors Merciful, Forgiving, Gracious and Obscure with open doors In honor He sent the Prophet, revealed Quran for all sectors; The Truest Identity of Absolute Unity even for lost defectors Perfect Unity, Unique entity, without kindred or ancestors One unto Himself, Sublime in Mercy, Supreme of all rectors His Name is Mercy, His love for you is the best of all suitors His Name is Mercy, enough to send life in cosmic tremors. (Sura e Ikhlas Sura 112, Aa. 1-4, Sura e Rahman 55.1-4)
77. Sataar-el-Ayu'b	92. Zul ala ul Naima	95. Al-Badi
The One Who hides the shortcomings Sublime is the Single Lord Who hides the faults and flaws One Who forgives, Almighty and Great, He sets His Own laws Ever present His guidance, His Signs and His Divine Laws His Unity is intact east and west, as the sun withdraws His Light makes every glimpse free from all flaws His Qur'an initiates virtue and human laws To make sin and hate two evil outlaws. (Aa. 55.2, Sura e Rahman)	Lord of All the Blessings Sublime is the Single Lord of All the Blessings From inception to eternity life is a marvel and still evolving Saints and sages have sought its blessings and misgivings; Reason and wishes give way to prayers and teachings The Name of Allah precedes every grand undertaking Your blessings and my devotion to make up a writing Like Your mercy and light both a heavenly sighting.	The Originator
78. Mastaan-el-Ghafoor		96. Al-Baqi
The Grantor of Help and Forgiveness Sublime is the Single Lord Who helps and forgives Creator of Light, Love, Mercy and many gifts He gives To counter the illusions that evil contrives Against blessings He bestows that every Mu'min receives. Seek help from the One Who often forgives Leaving behind none who grieves and the human who lives To praise and glorify You by the one who strives.		The Everlasting One
79. Rab-el-Aalamin		97. Al-Warith
Lord of many (all) Universes Sublime is the Single Lord, the One for all universes Single One to provide, to guide and to overrule all curses Unto You bow down stars and galaxies of all universes For Your mercy men or angels plead with Qur'anic verses Believers revere Prophet's teachings and his discourses; Pray Guide us to the Straight Path to You One Who nurses The wisdom behind Scripture, the beauty behind all verses The pinning souls striving against evil and its untold curses. (Reference to Aa. 1.4; Aa. 55.6, and Aa. 1.6)		The Inheritor of All
		98. The Inheritor of All
		The Righteous Teacher
		99. As-Sabur
		The Patient One

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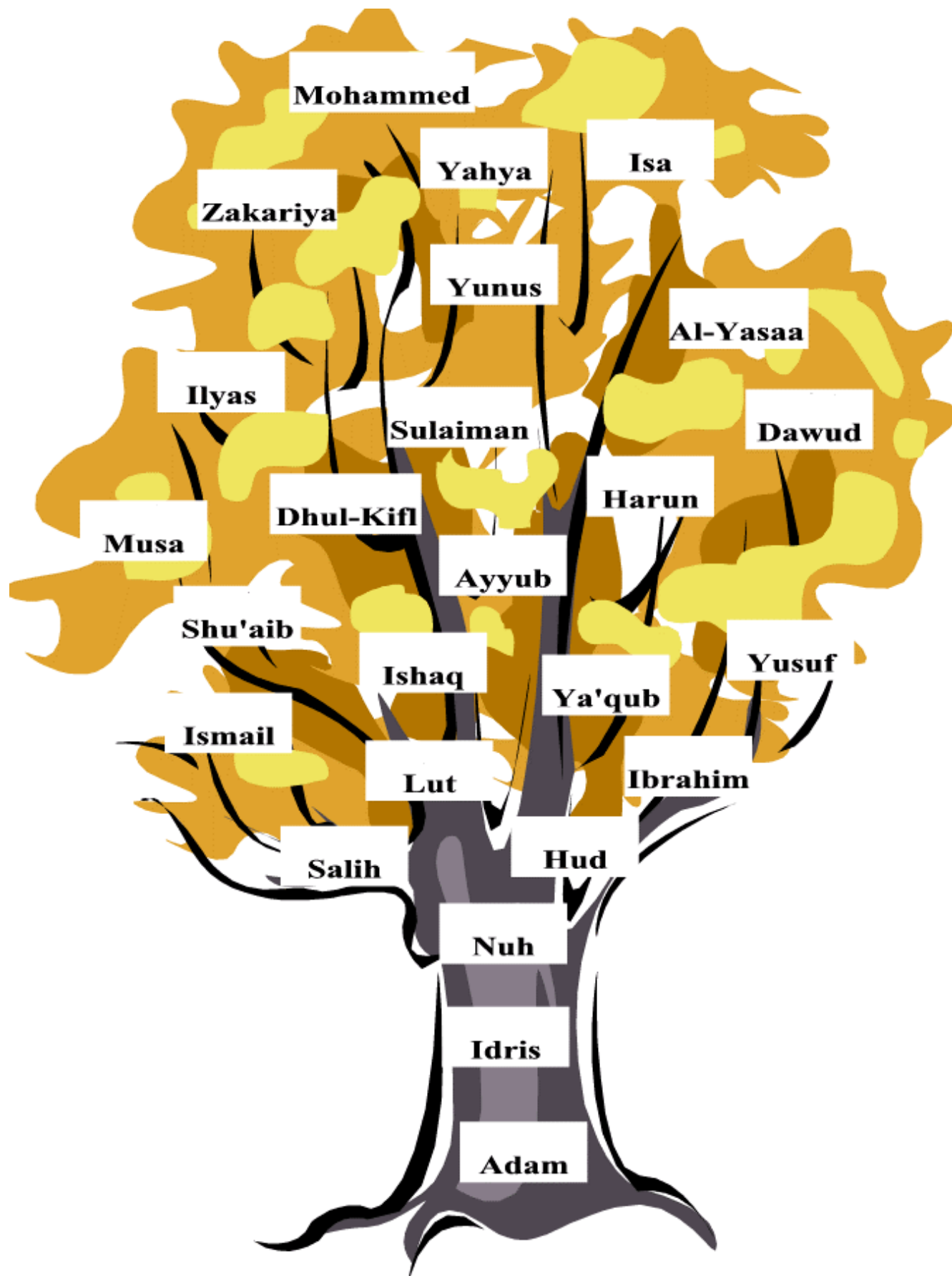
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An Illustration of The Tree of The Beloved Prophets



Significance

The people who took the pledge, also known as the People of the Tree are held in high regard by Muslims in general and Sunnis in particular. After the pledge, verses were revealed in the Qur'an commemorating and appreciating the pledge and those who made it:

Certainly Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity on them and rewarded them with a near victory.

Due to this verse, the pledge is also known as the Pledge of Pleasure as it was said to be a cause for God's pleasure.



Knowing Islam is one thing,
Understanding is the other

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Our Vision & Mission:

**Our goal is not to convert anyone to Islam, for guidance only comes
from God Almighty.**

**These articles are only to dispel as much misunderstanding as
possible. So please read with an open mind.**