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PRACTICING ISLAM

It is obligatory for every muslim to learn and practice the principles of Islam and to abstain from things forbidden by Islamic laws.

The first and most important article which is compulsory for every muslim, after the two testimonies, is the daily prayer which is considered as a pillar of religion. In case a muslim leaves the daily prayer, there will be no difference between him and a disbeliever (non-muslim).

The learned men (scholars) among the Muslims practice Islam with their deep knowledge but whereas it is obligatory for the ignorant to learn Islamic laws and to follow a mujtahid in religious laws.

In future publications, Insha Allah, we will explain Islam in detail and elucidation.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

even sacrificing their lives to defend it.

The glorious Qur'an is actually the greatest miracle of Allah and challenges mankind and 'jinn' combined together, to produce even a single chapter like those contained in its Holy pages, thus proving that this book is a divine miracle.

In fact, we find in the glorious Qur'an all the legislations and ethics which are capable of achieving harmony and happiness for the whole mankind till the Day of Resurrection.

The Holy Qur'an contains exactly 114 chapters, comprising 6236 verses and 99469 words.

The Almighty revealed the Qur'an gradually to His Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.) during the twenty-three years of his prophethood. Imam Ali (a.s.) was the first one to copy the Holy Qur'an and also to memorise it, during the prophet's lifetime. After the death of the Messenger of Allah, many Muslims also wrote and learnt the whole Qur'an by heart.

The coming generations of Muslims continued this noble tradition and faithfully copied and memorized the Holy Qur'an and thus succeeded in spreading the genuine message throughout the world, without the addition or omission of a single alphabet in this great book.

Thus the glorious Qur'an which we Muslims have in our hands today, is the same original one revealed by Almighty Allah to His Prophet, 14 centuries ago.

THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN

The Qur'an is Allah's word revealed to His noble Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (s.a.w.). It begins with sura Al-Fatiha (The Opening Chapter) and ends with sura Al-Nas (The Chapter of Men).

So, the glorious Qur'an is the holy Word of the Almighty Allah and thus supersedes all previously revealed books or scriptures and will remain unchanged and unaltered till the Day of Resurrection.

«إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ»

(الحجر/٩)

“Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian”.

Sura Hjr (15/9)

The glorious Qur'an is the main source of Islamic law and according to its wise teachings the Muslims mould their lives and society. They respect and hold the Qur'an in high esteem

phet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and destroy Islam that night.

After emigration to Medina when more and more people started becoming Muslims, Almighty Allah granted Islam several victories against infidels, who were always plotting against the divine religion. The Messenger of Allah continued preaching Islam for twenty-three years, since the day of his appointment as a Prophet. He finally passed away at the age of sixty-three and was buried in Medina besides his noble mosque after completing the revelation of the Holy Qur'an to mankind. Thus the Muslims became the strongest among the people of the earth, and set about enlightening others.

of the whole world, occurred while Muhammad (s.a.w.) was meditating one day, in a cave called "Hera" on the outskirts of Mecca in order to be far from the pagan's worship and rites.

When the Almighty Allah ordered his Prophet to start preaching Islam to the people, his cousin, Imam Ali (a.s.) was the first to profess the new faith, and also the Prophet's wife Khadija, who became the first among women to accept Islam.

« وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ »

(الشعراء / ٢١٤)

"And warn your nearest relations".

Sura Shuara (26:214)

So, the Prophet began calling people to Islam. When the oppressed people began to flock towards Islam, the pagan Quraish tribes who were wicked and corrupt, felt that the emerging faith would put an end to their cruel exploitation. They started persecuting the Muslims. After the two emigrations by groups of Muslims to Abyssinia due to the tyranny of Quraish, the Almighty ordered Muhammad (s.a.w.) and his followers to emigrate towards Medina in 622A.D.. This opened a new chapter and a turning point in the history of Islam and this auspicious emigration was later on regarded as the date of the start of the 'Hegira' calendar. Imam Ali (a.s.) slept that night on the Messenger's bed and was ready to offer himself as a sacrifice for the Prophet to protect him against the conspiracy of the Quraish, who had decided to kill Pro-

THE START OF THE MISSION AND THE HISTORICAL EMIGRATION

When Muhammad (s.a.w.) reached the age of forty, the Almighty, chose him to be a prophet and a messenger for all mankind. Allah thereby gradually revealed the glorious Qur'an to him through the archangel Gabriel, beginning with the following verse:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
«إِقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ * خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ * اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ
الْأَكْرَمُ * الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ * عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ»

(العلق/١-٥)

***“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man
from a clot. Read and your Lord is Most Honourable. Taught
man what he knew not.”.***

Sura Alaq (96: 1-5)

This epoch-making event which was to change the history

(s.a.w.) reached the age of eight, he lost his grandfather too.

Thus the parentless boy was taken under the care of his loving uncle, Abu Talib (May Allah be gracious to him) who undertook the responsibility for bringing up his orphaned nephew. When he reached the age of 40, Muhammad (s.a.w.) was commanded by Allah to announce his mission of prophethood. After the declaration of the noble mission, his uncle Abu Talib undertook upon himself the task of protecting and defending his nephew, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) from unbelievers.

THE LIFE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (s.a.w.)

Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdul Muttalib (s.a.w.) is the last and the greatest Prophet of Islam and the saviour of mankind. He was born in Mecca Al-Mukarama in the year when Allah destroyed the army of the elephants*, corresponding to the year 570A.D.. The Prophet started preaching his mission about 610A.D., when he reached 40 years of age. In 622 at the age of 53 he migrated to Medina, as a result of the persecution of Muslims by the Meccan infidels.

The name of his mother was Amina bint Wahab and his wife was Khadija bint Khoweilid. His father, Abdullah, died a few months before his birth, while he was still in his mother's womb. Later on when he reached the age of six, his mother also died leaving him an orphan. His grandfather Abdul Muttalib looked after him, but when Muhammad

* Abraha, the ruler of Yemen led an attack on Mecca to destroy the Holy Ka'ba, but the Almighty Allah as mentioned in the Qur'an "the chapter of Elephant" destroyed him and his elephants and thus protected the Holy Ka'ba.

«... قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ * قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ»

(يس/٧٨-٧٩)

“... Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation”.

Sura Yaseen (36- 78 & 79)

When a man dies, his body decays, but his soul remains and will be returned back to the body, which will be revived by Allah on the Resurrection Day. Mankind will then be judged by Allah for their deeds in the world. The true believers, who had performed good deeds, will be rewarded by entering paradise and those who did bad deeds, disbelieved the message of Allah and scorned the prophets, imams and the pious scholars, will be punished and cast into the fires of hell.

The Almighty says:

«يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصُدُّرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ * فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ حَيْرًا يَرَهُ * وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ»

(الزلزلة/٦-٨)

“On that day men shall come forth in sundry bodies that they may be shown their works. So, he who has done an atom’s weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom’s weight of evil shall see it”.

Sura Zilzal (99. 6-8)

tative books of Hadith.

“For whomsoever I am a master, Ali is his master.*”

Thus it is clear Prophet Muhammad’s (s.a.w.) first successor was Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) and the last one is the awaited Saviour Imam (Muhammad) Al-Mahdi (a.s.) who is in occultation and will re-appear when Allah decides to fill the earth with justice.

The Imams were guiding stars for the Muslims and in their absence, they entrusted the task of leading the faithful to the “Marja”*i.e. pious scholars. And as, the Almighty, has preserved Islam by safeguarding the Qur’an from any distortions, so He has protected Islam by the infallibility of the prophet’s progeny who struggled and were martyred for the sake of Islam.

c. Third Element: The Belief in the Resurrection

A muslim believes that the Almighty will raise all mankind back to life on the Resurrection Day. He is capable of doing that, because it was He Who had created them in the first place.

* Sahih Tirmidhi Vol. 2, p. 380 ‘Manaqib Ahl-ul-Bait’. Also Al-Hakeem in Mustadrak al-Sahihayn (Vol. 3, p. 109), Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his Musnad (Vol. 3, p. 17) and Tabrani in Al-Muajjam al-Kabeer (Vol. 1, p. 129).

* A Marja or Mujtahid is a person who is an expert in Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh).

“... Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives...”.

Sura Shura (42:23)

When asked who his near relatives were the Prophet replied:

“Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain”.

«إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَ
يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ».

(السائدة/٥٥)

“Only Allah is your Vali and His apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they pray.”.

Sura Maidah (5:55)

All narrators and commentators are unanimous that the above verse refers to Imam Ali(a.s.), the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law and rightful successor after him.

Although on many an occasion the Prophet had made it clear to the Muslims as to who his rightful successor was, but the formal announcement came a couple of months before his sad demise.

Upon Almighty Allah’s command the Prophet assembled a huge multitude of Muslims and announced to them these eternal words, still preserved so immaculately in all authora-

them you will never go astray, for these (two) will never part, until they meet at Kawther (a spring in paradise):”.

Therefore when we claim to sincerely follow the Qur’an’s teachings we have to tread the radiant path of the Ahl-ul-Bait. When we do we are in fact obeying our Prophet’s injunctions and emphasising the continuity of the Islamic Leadership.

Besides the above quoted Hadith there are clear references in the Holy Book itself about the issue of the Prophet’s succession. To go into detail is outside the scope of our present booklet, we will suffice by quoting a few verses of the Holy Qur’an for the enlightenment of our dear readers. The following verse not only introduces the Ahl-ul-Bait to the Muslims but confirms their pristine purity and infallibility from any error whatsoever:

«... إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ
تَطْهِيراً»

(الاحزاب/ ۳۳)

“... Allah desires to keep away uncleanness from you O Ahl-ul-Bait and keep you thoroughly pure.”.

Sura Ahzab (33:33)

The next verse shows that it is incumbent upon Muslims to love and follow the Prophet’s progeny:

«... قُلْ لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ...».

(الشعراء/ ۲۳)

“Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian*”.

Sura Hijr (15:9)

The Holy Qur’an is the eternal miracle of Islam and even today 14 centuries later it is in the same immaculate state as it was when revealed gradually to the Prophet. It is the basis of the Islamic Shariah (Laws) and constitution for the life of a muslim individual or society. Therefore it is obligatory for all Muslims to follow its teachings and apply its divine laws in every aspect of their lives.

Guaranteeing the Continuation of the Great Islamic Leadership

The social and ideological leadership of the Muslim Ummah, so wonderfully performed by the Prophet during his lifetime was after him passed onto his infallible progeny by the Almighty’s command, to ensure continuity of the Islamic mission. On many an occasion Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) had made clear as to who his divinely chosen successors were. The following famous tradition found in all authoritative books of Hadith is a glowing testimony to his successors, his Ahl-ul-Bait:

“I am leaving behind the ‘Thaqalain’ (two precious things); the book of Allah (Qur’an) and my progeny. If you hold fast to

* Allah has taken on Himself to guard the Holy Qur’an from corruption.

«رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ
الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا»

(النساء/١٦٥)

“(We sent) apostles as the givers of good news and as warners, so that people should not have a plea against Allah after the (coming of) apostles; and Allah is Mighty, Wise”.

Sura Nisa (4:165)

Muhammad ibn Abdullah (s.a.w.) is the last and the greatest of the Prophets to preach the message of Islam.

There will be no prophet after Muhammad (s.a.w.) and no religion other than Islam till the Resurrection Day.

Therefore, it is inevitable that Islam remains till the Day of Resurrection, so that there will be proof of Allah's message for the coming generations. He, the Almighty, has Himself undertaken the responsibility of safeguarding Islam by means of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's infallible Household:

The Eternal Miracles of Islam

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) had many miracles, but the most important one is: The glorious Qur'an which unlike other previously revealed scriptures is safeguarded from any additions or alterations till the Resurrection Day.

«إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ»

(الحجر/٩)

“Say: He, Allah is One. Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten And none is like him”.

Sura Ikhlas (112: 1-4)

Allah, the Almighty was there before anything was created. He will be there, when everything would be destroyed, and He is greater than anything.

He is All-Powerfull and controls everything. He is Just and does not oppress anyone. He has sent the messengers and the prophets to guide people to the right path, and made them mercy for the universe.

Allah is the legislator of the laws, and it is obligatory* for all mankind to observe His commands. He must be obeyed in whatever he has made lawful, and whatever he has prohibited to mankind, and this could be realized by sincerely following the blessed path of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.).

b. Second Element: The Belief in the Prophethood and the Imamate.

A muslim believes that Almighty Allah has sent Prophets and Imams to make people submit to His Will. And every nation which obeyed its prophet, during his prophethood, is considered as an obedient muslim (submissive) nation.

* Obligatory means a compulsory act which must be performed by a believer without fail. One will be rewarded for performing it and punished for neglecting it.

WHAT DOES AN ISLAMIC CREED MEAN

a. First Element: The Belief in Almighty Allah.

A muslim believes that, Almighty Allah is the Creator of the universe, and all that exists within it. He created all these things with His Power and Will and perfected everything wisely. And the Almighty, is One, Unique and Eternal. He has no partner or equal.

«وَاللَّهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ»

(البقرة/١٦٣)

“And your God is one God! there is no god but He; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful”.

Sura Baqara (2:163)

«قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ * اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ * لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ * وَأَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ»

(سورة الانخلاص)

ISLAM AND BELIEF

A muslim is he, who believes and utters the two testimonies already explained.

Therefore, Islam is a confession by tongue and a belief by heart.

But a believer is a true and practical muslim who applies Islamic methods in organizing his personal and social life, as well as the public life, with faith, thought, behaviour and ethics.

So, belief is the most important action according to the principles of Islam.

inviting all mankind to the true religion (Islam), from the day of his blessed mission till the Resurrection'.

We believe that the glorious Qur'an was revealed by the Almighty, through His prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.) and He also taught him the blessed traditions. So the Qur'an and the prophet's traditions are considered as sources of Islam.

The Prophet (s.a.w.) began his enlightened mission to mankind by sincerely preaching the Qur'an as it was gradually revealed and inviting people towards truth. It is obligatory for all people to obey and follow him.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TWO TESTIMONIES

The meaning of *“I bear witness that there is no god but Allah”* is a profound belief that a man does not submit to anything except Allah, the Almighty, Who created everything, and is so powerful that He can create from nothing.

And He, the Almighty is Omnipotent or All-Powerful.

Therefore, man shouldn't worship and submit to anything except the Almighty, and among mankind only those people deserve obedience and respect who do good according to Allah's commands and abstain from what He has forbidden.

“Don't submit to a creature (human being) who disobeys the Creator”. (The Prophet).

The meaning of *“I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”* is 'I believe that “Muhammad son of Abdullah” (s.a.w.)* has been sent by Allah as a messenger

* (s.a.w.): is the abbreviation of the Arabic phrase “Sal-Lallahu' alaihi wa'aalihii Wa sallam” (May Allah shower blessings on him and his holy progeny).

HOW DOES A MAN BECOME A MUSLIM

By reciting in the Arabic language the following two testimonies, a man enters Islam from disbelief:

(Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah) أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

1. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah.

*(Wa'ashhadu anna Muhammadan
rasulullah)* وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

2. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

WHAT DOES ISLAM MEAN

Islam is a complete method revealed by Allah as a mercy to all mankind and it organizes the affairs of the individual, the family, the society and the state in this present life till the Resurrection Day. Accordingly, they will be judged by Allah on Doomsday.

So, Islam is the best and a universal system which can be applied by every human being, in every time and place, in order to lead a happy and peaceful life, with a blissful ending.

Islam is the last profound heavenly message through which the Almighty Allah has defined all the complete needs of mankind explicitly, like the social, economic, educational, religious and political aspects.

Islam harmoniously organizes human relations as well as linking mankind with its Creator.

In short, it is an obligation for mankind to follow Islam.

We have to be sure that the majority of the Muslims (in addition to, the newly converted Muslims) are in need of a simple presentation of Islam, i.e. simple in its expression and style, and clear in its proofs, dealing with the general fundamental aspects of Islam.

We present this booklet for our dear brothers who are working for the cause of Allah and carrying the Great Islamic flag of propagation in the East and the West.

We supplicate to the Almighty, to support their endeavours and give them strength and give this booklet the priority in the series of Islamic literature publications (Insha Allah).

We hope to publish regularly, as a means of helping the Muslims achieve their great targets.

Surely, Allah the Almighty undertakes the welfare of the believers.

Al-Balagh Foundation

INTRODUCTION

إِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلسَانِكَ لِنُشِيرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَنُنذِرَ بِهِ قَوْمًا لُدًّا»

(مريم/٩٧)

“So We have only made it easy in your tongue that you may give good news thereby to those who guard (against evil) and warn thereby a vehemently contentious people”.

Sura Muiam (19.97)

Al-Balagh Foundation receives various letters from different parts of the world, indicating the spread of Islam and the response of the people towards Islam especially in Africa, Europe, North and South America and Eastern and Southern Asia.

These letters reveal the urgent necessity for defining Islam in an easy and simple form for those individuals whom Allah has guided to the right way and saves them from the darkness of atheism, polytheism, paganism, communism and infidelity so that they may have a brief knowledge of this great religion and its doctrines, laws and ethics.

*In the name of Allah
the Beneficent, the Merciful*

«إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ * وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ
أُفْوَاجًا * فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا»

(سورة النصر)

“When there comes the help of Allah and the victory. And you see men entering the religion of Allah in companies. Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and ask His forgiveness: Surely He is oft-returning (to mercy)”.

Sura Nasr

The Message of Islam

1

1/2/4

Basic Principles

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