



# Everybody's Guide to Islam

- Prof. C.A.Babu

## Chapter 1

Worship the Creator, Not the Creations.

1. Who Created Us?
2. Why Should We Worship God?
3. What Does 'Islam' Mean?
4. Who Are Muslims?
5. Where Do Muslims Live?
6. What Is Unique about Islamic Monotheism?
7. Do Muslims Believe in the Hereafter?
8. Why Do Muslims Call God, 'Allâh'?
9. Is Islam Applicable to Modern Times?
10. What Is the *Shari'ah*?

What They Said about Islam

What the Media Said about Muslims

## Chapter 2

What are the Fundamental Articles of Faith in Islam?

1. Belief in One God
2. Belief in the Angels
3. Belief in the Holy Books of God
4. Belief in the Prophets of God
5. Belief in the Day of Judgment
6. Belief in Divine Decree

## Chapter 3

What are the Five Pillars of Islam?

1. Testimony of Faith – *Shahadah*

2. **Prayer – *Salat***
3. **Fasting – *Sawm***
4. **Charity – *Zakah***
5. **Pilgrimage – *Hajj***

#### WHAT SOME REVERTED MUSLIMS SAID ABOUT ISLAM

#### Chapter 4

#### The Qurân

1. **What Is the Qurân?**
2. **Is the Qurân the Word of God?**
3. **What is the Content of the Qurân?**
4. **What is Unique about the Qurân?**

#### WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THE QURÂN

#### WHAT SOME REVERTED MUSLIMS SAID ABOUT ISLAM

#### Chapter 5

#### Prophet Muhammad

1. **Who Was Muhammad?**
2. **Where Did Muhammad Live?**
3. **What Was the Character of Muhammad?**
4. **Is There Any Proof for Muhammad’s Prophethood?**

#### SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)

#### WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)

#### THE FAREWELL SERMON OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)

#### Chapter 6

#### Some Other Important Matters of Faith in Islam

1. **Belief in the Purpose of Creation**
2. **Belief in the Purpose of Life**
3. **Belief that the Qurân is the Word of God**
4. **Belief that Every Child is Born a Muslim**
5. **Belief that Man is Born Innocent**
6. **Belief in Rational Thinking**
7. **Belief in the Distinction between the Qurân and the Hadith**

#### WHAT SOME REVERTED MUSLIMS SAID ABOUT ISLAM

#### Chapter 7

#### Some Basic Concepts in Islam

1. **Concept of Prophethood**
2. **Concept of Religion**
3. **Concept of Life**
4. **Concept of the World**
5. **Concept of Equality**
6. **Concept of Freedom**

7. **Concept of Peace**
8. **Concept of Charity**
9. **Concept of Righteousness**
10. **Concept of Piety**
11. **Concept of Morality**
12. **Concept of Sin**
13. **Concept of Salvation**
14. **Concept of Family**
15. **Concept of Community**
16. **Concept of Brotherhood**
17. **Concept of War**

**SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

Chapter 8

Some Perceptions of Islam

1. **What Is the Dress Code in Islam?**
2. **What Does Islam Say about Marriage?**
3. **What Does Islam Say about Divorce?**
4. **What Does Islam Say about Husband-Wife Relationship?**
5. **What Does Islam Say about Bringing up of Children?**
6. **What Does Islam Say about the Duties of Children?**
7. **What Does Islam Say about the Rights of the Neighbor?**
8. **What Does Islam Say about Employer- Employee Relationship?**
9. **How Does Islam View Jesus and Mary?**

**SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

Chapter 9

Some Clarifications about Islam

1. **Are Muslim Women Oppressed?**
2. **Does Islam Encourage Polygamy?**
3. **What is *Jihad*?**
4. **Was Islam Spread by the Sword?**
5. **Does Islam Promote Violence and Terrorism?**
6. **Can Muslims Co-Exist with Non-Muslims in Peace?**

**SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

## **CHAPTER 1**

# Worship the Creator, Not the Creations.

### **1. Who Created us?**

We know that the universe has existed for millions of years and that it functions in the most orderly manner. No one can sincerely say that this is unplanned and haphazard. No one can attribute the existence of man and the universe to be the result of mere chance. We often admire and wonder at the splendid things and amazing phenomena of nature. These are too great to be the product of a random accident. We know that nothing can come to life on its own and that our wonderful world could not have come into existence by a freak accident. So, there must be a Great Power in action that created everything

and keeps everything in order. Believers recognize this Power as God. They call Him 'God' because He is the Creator of the world, the Originator of life and the Provider of all things in existence. He cannot be a man because no man can create anything by himself. He cannot be an idol, a statue, or an image of any kind, because none of these things possess life or power of any sort. He can neither be the sun, the moon nor any other celestial object, because all these things were created and are controlled by a great system. He is absolutely different from all His creations. He is the Creator and Sustainer of them all; He is the One True God and He is the Only One Who truly merits our worship.

*Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, before We clove them apart? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?*

[The Qurân Ch: 21 Al-Anbiyaa, V:30]

### 1. Why Should We Worship God?

The Creator and Sustainer of the universe and the Provider of man is one and the same, and that is Allâh or God. This is the greatest of all knowledge because only belief in Allâh and His omnipotence can provide mankind with the explanation for the great mysteries of the universe. By His mercy and love, He has shown us the right path and sent messengers, books and revelations for our guidance. The Last Messenger from Allâh is Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him), and the only genuine book of Allâh that exists today is the Qurân. From the teachings of the Qurân and the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him), we can know about Allâh and His love for mankind. The regular prayer of Muslims begins with the words: "In the name of God, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful." Allâh does not need anything from us in return for all His great favors and boundless mercy. What He commands us to do for His innumerable blessings is only to be righteous and grateful. The only unforgivable sin, according to Islam, is to believe in or to worship anyone or anything other than Allâh. This is the most ungrateful thing that a human being is capable of doing.

*And blessed is He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all between them: with Him is the Knowledge of the Hour (of Judgment): and to Him shall ye be brought back.*

[The Qurân Ch: 43 Al-Zukhruf, V: 85]

### 3. What Does 'Islam' Mean?

The word, 'Islam' is derived from the Arabic root, *SLM*, which means, 'submission' or 'peace'. Only through submission to Allâh can one achieve true peace. Some people refer to the religion as "Muhammadanism" and its followers as "Muhammadans". This misnomer was coined as a part of a deliberate attempt to create the wrong notion that the religion was founded by Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) and that Muslims worship him in the same manner as Christians worship Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him). Islam is a unique religion with a name which signifies a moral attitude and a way of life. Muslims derive their identity from the message of Islam, rather than from the person of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). Judaism takes its name from the tribe of Judah, Christianity from Jesus Christ (Peace be upon him), Buddhism from Goutama Buddha, and Hinduism from the Indus River. Muslims do not believe that Islam was founded by Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). Muslims worship only the One True God and they believe that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was only a mortal who was chosen by Allâh as a prophet to guide mankind. He stands as the best model in history for man in piety and perfection. His life is the greatest proof of what man can be and of what he can accomplish in the realm of excellence and virtue.

*If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to God), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).*

[The Qurân Ch: 3 Ali Imran, V: 85]

### 4. Who Are Muslims?

Islam has existed all along from the beginning and will continue to exist till Doomsday. The true name of the religion of all men who submit to the Will of Allâh is Islam and all those who follow this faith are Muslims. Thus all the prophets of God including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, David, Solomon, Moses and Jesus (Peace be upon them) were Muslims and the religion they believed in was Islam. Muslims believe that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was the last, not the only prophet of Allâh. They believe in all the prophets who came before Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). They believe that all those prophets of God and all their faithful followers were Muslims and that their religion was Islam. Therefore, just like the followers of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him), the true followers of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and all the other messengers of God (Peace be upon them all) were Muslims.

*The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah that which We have sent by inspiration to thee and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Namely, that ye should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein: to those who worship other things than Allâh.*

[The Qurân Ch: 42 Al-Shura, V: 13]

### 5. Where Do Muslims Live?

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today. At present, there are more than 1.3 billion Muslims, which means that one in every five persons living in the world today firmly believes that Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) is the Last Messenger of God. Not only individuals but entire nations take pride in declaring their allegiance to him. There are 54 such Muslim states today, ranging from those as large as Indonesia and Bangladesh, with populations of 200 and 125 million respectively, to those as tiny as the Maldives or Brunei with populations of 230,000 and 260,000 respectively. Even in non-Muslim countries, large Muslim populations constitute significant minorities. There are as many as 120 million Muslims in India whereas China has a Muslim population of above 20 million. Indeed, within the last half century, Islam has become the second largest religion in most European countries, as also in America and Canada. Followers of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) come from all races and tribes, and they speak many languages. Whether in

Asia or Europe, Africa or America, there are Muslims in every nook and cranny of the globe. They live in the most advanced, sprawling megalopolis as well as in the most primitive regions.

*It is He Who has named you Muslims both before and in this (the Qurân), that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you be witness over mankind.*

[The Qurân Ch: 22 Al-Hajj, V: 78]

## 6. What Is Unique about Islamic Monotheism?

People who profess other faiths also claim to be monotheists. Some claim that they do not really worship idols, but use them only because they are helpful in concentrating during prayers. Some others say that they pray to saints and holy men with the hope that they will act as intermediaries between the worshipper and God. Muslims believe in the One True God and worship and pray to the One True God. This is the unique quality of Islamic Monotheism. The pure essence of the beliefs and teachings that were revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad are the same as Allâh taught to Abraham, Moses, Jesus and all the other prophets who came before them. The command to worship none other than Allâh and to submit only to His Will was revealed to prophets throughout mankind's history. All messengers and prophets of Allâh propagated this divine message. This accounts for the fact that the command to submit to the Will of God and to worship Him without intermediaries can be found in the scriptures of other religions also even in their present contaminated form. The concept of God in Islam is completely based upon Divine Revelation. Not only is that concept characterized by purity and clarity, but it is also not marred by myths, superstitions or man-made philosophical ideas. According to the teachings of Islam, everything that a human being does with the pure intention of pleasing Allâh is an act of worship.

*“He is the One God: God the Eternal, the Uncaused Cause of All Being. He begets not, and neither is He begotten; and there is nothing that could be compared with Him.”*

[The Qurân Ch: 112 Al-Ikhlâs, V: 1-4]

## 7. Do Muslims Believe in the Hereafter?

Justice and equality before law can at best be described as hollow slogans, preached loudly by democracy, but are very rarely implemented. These terms attain full meaning only with belief in the Hereafter. In this world, we see that innumerable crimes go unchecked, unfair judgments are handed down and majority of criminals walk free. The human intellect too craves for a platform where true justice will be done. Allâh is just and manifests His justice. He established the system of accountability in the life of each person. All men will have to answer for their deeds on the Day of Judgment, wherein they will be given proper recompense. Those who do good will be rewarded and those who do wrong will be punished accordingly. Allâh has created Paradise and Hell for this purpose. Allâh is the only owner of life; all creatures have come to life by Allâh's Decree and will ultimately die by Allâh's Decree. Man has a soul and death is only the end of one's physical existence on earth. The present life is very short and transitory. It is only a trial and if we pass the test, we will be rewarded with eternal bliss in Paradise. Thus Islam instills the concept of accountability both in the private and public life of an individual by teaching the importance of life in the Hereafter.

*“Did you then think that We had created you in jest, and that you would not be brought back to Us (for account)?”*

[The Qurân Ch: 23 Al-Mu'minoon, V: 115]

## 8. Why Do Muslims Call God, 'Allâh'?

The word, 'Allâh', is the Arabic term for God and it most emphatically means the One True God, the Creator of the universe, the Lord of all lords, and the King of all kings. Arabic translations of the Bible and the Torah also refer to God using the term, 'Allâh'. Non-Muslim Arabs use the term 'Allâh' when they pray or speak of God. Muslims all over the world prefer to use the term, 'Allâh', because the word 'God' has so often been misused, abused and corrupted. The term 'Allâh' does not have a plural form like 'gods' nor does it have a feminine gender form like 'goddess'. It is never used in compound nouns like 'god-man', 'godfather', and 'godmother'. Moreover, the term, 'Allâh', signifies every one of the attributes which can be used to qualify none other than the Most Merciful Creator and Sustainer of the universe. It is a term that can be applied only to the Most Supreme, Who cannot be compared to anyone or anything and to the concept of God which has never been vilified by idolatry or myths of incarnations.

*He to Whom belongs the dominions of the heavens and earth, and Who has begotten no son and for Whom there is no partner in the dominion. He has created everything, and measured it exactly according to its due measurements.*

[The Qurân Ch: 25 Furqân, V: 2]

## 9. Is Islam Applicable to Modern Times?

Islam has as much meaning and is as applicable to people living in today's *world* as it was for people living 1400 years ago. Since the message of Islam is eternally true it is also very robust. It still has a strong spiritual impact on millions of people living today. The pure Monotheism of Islam, as well as its universal brotherhood, strong morals and positive outlook on life, is still very relevant and meaningful to modern man. The continued relevance and applicability to both the spiritual and worldly life of human beings from all around the world is just one of the many proofs of the divine origin of the message of Islam. Unlike the teachings of other religions, the teachings of Islam need not updated or watered down in order to appeal to a human being living in modern times. Since the teachings of Islam are both spiritually true and eternally practical, they can be lived and implemented in the daily life of a person in order to make their life more fulfilling. In short, unique among world religions, Islam has not had to sacrifice its integrity in order to be both applicable to all ages and to have enough spiritual impact to change people's lives.

*As for the Righteous, they will be in bliss; and the Wicked they will be in the Hellfire, which they will enter on the Day of Judgment, and they will not be able to keep away therefrom.*

## 10. What Is the *Shari'ah*?

Allâh sent down messengers and prophets to all communities and tribes in different periods of history in order to show the true and straight path and to guide mankind to it. He also revealed laws that man should abide by and follow. Everything from marital and sexual relationships to ruling and trade were discussed. *Shari'ah*, or Islamic law, is the centerpiece and backbone of the religion of Islam. *Shari'ah* literally means 'the source' or sometimes linguistically it refers to a source of water or an oasis. The source of law in Islam is therefore called *Shari'ah*. It is comprehensive and complete and covers all aspects of man's life. It is based on the Qurân and the *Sunnah*, or example of the Prophet Muhammad. The *Hadith*, which are sayings of Muhammad and provide information about the *Sunnah*, were recorded in the two centuries after Muhammad's death in authenticated collections. The *Shari'ah* contains categories and subjects of Islamic law called the branches of *fiqh* (literally, "understanding"). They include laws related to worship, family relations, Inheritance, commerce, property, civil and criminal matters, administration, taxation, constitution, international relations, ethics of war, and other categories. The divine nature of the *Shari'ah* is manifest in the fact that crime rate is much lower in Muslim societies which enforce its laws.

*And O my people! Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due: commit not evil in the land with intent to do mischief.*

[The Qurân Ch: 11 Al-Hud, V: 85]

### WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT ISLAM

"The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue."

- A. J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial*, 1948

"The picture of the Muslim soldier advancing with a sword in one hand and the Qurân in the other is quite false. History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated."

- De Lacy O'Leary, *Islam at the Crossroads*, 1923

"It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran....Muslims have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Muhammad the Apostle of God' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion."

- Edward Gibbon and Simon Oakley - *History of the Saracen Empire* -1870

"If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam. I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age."

- George Bernard Shaw, *The Genuine Islam*, 1936

"Part of the Western problem is that for centuries Muhammad has been seen as the antithesis of the religious spirit and as the enemy of decent civilization. Instead, perhaps, we should try to see him as a man of the spirit, who managed to bring peace and civilization to his people."

- Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad- A Biography of the Prophet*

"Incidentally these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went, forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword."

- Lawrence E. Browne, *The Prospects of Islam*, 1944

"No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam. The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts this idea, and the Qurân is explicit in the support of the freedom of conscience."

- James Michener, *Islam: The Misunderstood Religion*, 1955

"Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically....the teachings of the Prophet, the Qurân has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting point, and the dogma of unity of God has always been proclaimed therein with a grandeur a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam....A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvelous power of winning its way into the consciences of men."

- Edward Montet, *La Propagande Chretienne et ses Adversaries Musulmans*, 1890

"Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of East and West is to be replaced by co-operation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition. In its hands lies very largely the solution of the problem with which Europe is faced in its relation with the East. If they unite, the

hope of a peaceful issue is immeasurably enhanced. But if Europe, by rejecting the co-operation of Islam, throws into the arms of its rivals, the issue can only be disastrous for both.”  
- H.A.R. Gibb, *Whither Islam*, 1932

“I am not a Muslim in the usual sense, though I hope I am a ‘Muslim’ as ‘one surrendered to God,’ but I believe that embedded in the Qurân and other expressions of the Islamic vision are vast stores of divine truth from which I and other occidentals have still much to learn, and ‘Islam is certainly a strong contender for the supplying of the basic framework of the one religion of the future.’”  
- W. Montgomery Watt, *Islam and Christianity Today*, 1983

“The league of nations founded by the prophet of Islam put the principle of international unity and human brotherhood in such universal foundations as to show candle to other nations... The fact is that no nation of the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done towards the realization of the idea of the League of Nations.”  
- Prof. C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, 1889

“It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for in the mosque, when the call for prayer is sounded and worshippers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and king kneel side by side and proclaim: ‘God Alone is Great’... I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes man instinctively a brother... Sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as I read in the Qurân I find those dynamic principles of life, not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conduct of life suited to the whole world.”  
- Sarojini Naidu, *Ideas of Islam*, 1918

“All its parts are harmoniously conceived to complement and support each other, nothing lacking, with the result of an absolute balance and solid composure.... The Qurân, more than any other single phenomenon known to us, has fundamentally affected the history of the world. No other sacred scripture has ever had a similarly immediate impact upon the lives of the people who first heard its message and, through them and the generations that followed them, on the entire course of civilization. It shook Arabia, and made a nation out of its perennially warring tribes; within a few decades, it spread its world-view far beyond the confines of Arabia and produced the first ideological society known to man; through its insistence on consciousness and knowledge, it engendered amongst its followers, a spirit of intellectual curiosity and independent inquiry, ultimately resulting in that splendid era of learning and scientific which distinguished the world of Islam at the height of its cultural vigor... and never has any other book supplied to so many, and over so long a span of time, a similarly comprehensive answer to the question, ‘How shall I behave in order to achieve the good life in this world and happiness in the life to come?’ The Qurân represents the ultimate manifestation of God’s grace to man, the ultimate wisdom, and the ultimate beauty of expression.”

- Mohammed Asad, *Islam At the Crossroads*, New York, 1934

## WHAT THE MEDIA SAID ABOUT MUSLIMS

Five to six million strong, Muslims in America already outnumber Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Mormons, and they are more numerous than Quakers, Unitarians, Seventh-day Adventists, Mennonites, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Christian Scientists, combined. Many demographers say Islam has overtaken Judaism as the country’s second-most commonly practiced religion; others say it is in the passing lane.”  
- Johan Blank, *USNEWS*

“Moslems are the world’s fastest-growing group...”  
- *USA TODAY*, *The Population Reference Bureau*, 1989

“Already more than a billion-people strong, Islam is the world’s fastest-growing religion.”  
- *ABCNEWS*

“The religion of Islam is growing faster than any other religion in the world.”  
- *Mike Wallace*, *60 MINUTES*

“Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States...”  
- *NEW TIMES*, 1989

“Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the country.”  
- *NEWSDAY*, 1989

“Islam is the fastest growing religion in North America.”  
- *TIMES MAGAZINE*

“Islam is the fastest-growing religion in America, a guide and pillar of stability for many of our people...”  
- *Hillary Clinton*, *LOS ANGELES TIMES*, 1996

“Islam continues to grow in America, and no one can doubt that!”  
- *CNN*

“In fact, religion experts say Islam is the second-largest religion in the United States... Islam has 5 million to 6 million members, followed by Judaism, with approximately 4.5 million.... And Islam is believed to be fastest-growing religion in the country, with half its expansion coming from new immigrants and the other half from conversions.”

- *Elsa C. Arnett*, *KNIGHT-RIDER News Service*

# What are the Fundamental Articles of Faith in Islam?

## 1. Belief in One God

Monotheism is the essence of Islam. To appreciate the purity and uniqueness of Islam, one must first clearly understand the Islamic concept of monotheism. The Arabic word, *Allâh*, is the abridged form of *Al-Ilah*, meaning, 'the God'. It implies that there is only one God, the Supreme and the Eternal, the Infinite and the Almighty, the Most Merciful and the Compassionate, the Creator and the Sustainer. He is the Omnipotent Who created the universe and everything in it. He is the One Who controls and sustains them. He is the One True God and He alone has the power of Creation. He is the Absolute. There is nothing like Him. He is the Creator and He is beyond the Universe, which is only one of His creations. Between Him and His creatures there are no intermediaries. He has existed always and will exist to all eternity. Everything shall perish except His Countenance. Islamic monotheism also includes recognizing the perfect names and attributes of God, which can be found in the Qurân. One should not compare His attributes or any other characteristic to that of anyone or anything else. All of the attributes of every other being are created while the attributes of Allâh are not created, but have always existed and are eternal.

*God is the Creator of all things and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs. To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth: and those who reject the Signs of God, it is they who will be in loss.*

[The Qurân Ch: 39 Al-Zumar, V: 62-63]

## 2. Belief in the Angels

The angels, whom Allâh created from light, are superb beings of purely spiritual nature. They cannot normally be seen with our naked eyes nor their presence felt. They do not require air, food, drink or sleep like other living things. They have no physical desires of any kind nor material needs. They do not experience fatigue. They spend their days and nights in the service of Allâh. They are not bestowed with freewill; they only obey the commands of Allâh. There are innumerable angels, and each one is assigned a specific duty. Allâh has revealed to us the names and the duties of some of the angels. Gabriel and Michael are among the angels mentioned in the Qurân. For instance, it is Gabriel's duty to take God's revelation to the prophets and messengers.

*Praise be to God Who created (out of nothing) the heavens and the earth Who made the angels, messengers with wings.*

[The Qurân Ch: 35 Fatir, V: 1]

## 3. Belief in the Holy Books of God

The scriptures are the revelations of Allâh. They were given to the prophets to guide people to the Right Path. In principle, Muslims believe in the previous books and revelations. But some of those books and revelations were lost or corrupted; others were forgotten, neglected, or deliberately suppressed. The only authentic and complete book of God in existence today is the Qurân. Its authenticity is indisputable, and no one has seriously ventured to question its genuineness. According to the Qurân, people have distorted the previous scriptures for their own worldly gains. These distortions have occurred in many different ways, such as additions or deletions of text or changes in the meaning or the language. These distortions were adopted over time and what remains is a mixture of the original divine text with human interpolations.

*O ye who believe! Believe in God and His Messenger, and the scripture which He hath sent to His Messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denieth God, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgment, hath gone far, far astray.*

[The Qurân Ch: 4 Al-Nisa', V: 136]

## 4. Belief in the Prophets of God

Warners or messengers from God have been sent to all lands. They were sent at different times of history and every known nation has had one messenger or more. These messengers were all mortals chosen by Allâh to deliver His divine message. No prophet of God ever claimed himself to be divine. It is forbidden for a Muslim to worship them or to use them as a conduit to Allâh. A Muslim should never invoke them, make any sort of supplications to them, or seek Allâh's mercy and forgiveness through or from them. Muslims are required to love and respect all the prophets and messengers of Allâh who called upon humanity to worship the Creator alone without ascribing any partner to Him. Their message, their religion, was basically the same because it came from one and the same source. All the prophets and messengers of Allâh propagated the teachings of Islam. Throughout history, all monotheistic people who submitted to the Will of Allâh and followed the prophets and messengers of their time are considered Muslims. The Holy Qurân mentions the names of twenty-five prophets and messengers of Allâh, and Muslims believe in them all. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him), the Last Messenger of Allâh, was sent for the entire humanity whereas all the other prophets were sent to a particular tribe or nation.

*For We assuredly sent amongst every people an apostle, (with the Command), "Serve God, and eschew Evil": of the people were some whom God guided, and some on whom error became inevitably (established). So travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the Truth).*

[The Qurân Ch: 16 Al-Nahl, V: 36]

## 5. Belief in the Day of Judgment

This world will come to an end one day and all of humanity will be resurrected for trial on the Day of Judgment and made to assemble together. Man is accountable to Allâh for the manner in which he conducted his life in this world. Everything we do here, every intention we have, every thought we entertain, and every word we say, are recorded by the angels of Allâh. On the Day of Judgment, each and every individual will be recompensed justly as per these records. They will stand before the Creator and be questioned about his or her deeds. When the Day of Judgment is going to be is known only to Allâh. On that momentous day, each one of us will see in detail the results of even the smallest good and the smallest evil we have done in this

life. At that time, lying and deception will no longer be possible. If some of our good deeds did not receive full credit and appreciation during the life in this world, they will receive full compensation and be widely acknowledged on the Day of Judgment. Likewise, if some people who committed sins, neglecting the commandments and warnings of Allâh, though they might have appeared to be superficially successful and prosperous in this life, they will be brought to book on the Day of Judgment. The ultimate reward for the righteous will be that they shall enter the eternal gardens of Paradise and the penalty for the sinners will be that they shall be thrown into the Hellfire. Paradise and Hell do actually exist; they are real places, not symbols or metaphors.

*I do swear by the Resurrection Day; and I do swear by the self-reproaching soul. Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones?  
Nay, We are able to put together in perfect order the very tips of his fingers.*

[The Qurân Ch: 75 Al-Qiyaamah, V: 1-4]

## 6. Belief in Divine Decree

The sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allâh. Allâh's Will is all-pervading and nothing good or evil falls outside its orbit. It is His Will that prevails everywhere. Not even a leaf stirs without His Will and not a sparrow falls to the ground unless He wills so. He is Wise and Loving, and whatever He does must have a good motive and meaningful purpose although our limited intellect may fail to understand it fully. The concept of predestination in Islam does not mean the helpless abandonment of human beings to an unwelcome fate. The basic principle of predestination and freewill is that man is neither completely the master of his fate nor is he bound to the blind law of predestination. The idea that Allâh has a foreknowledge of everything does not imply that human beings have been completely deprived of the freedom of action. The knowledge given to man to discriminate between good would be of no use if he had no choice to act on his own. Man would not be subjected to questioning on the Day of Judgment if he were not ultimately responsible for his actions. He would not be rewarded or punished for matters over which he had no control or freedom. He would not be held accountable for his transgressions if he were not endowed with freewill and if everything happens according to divine decree. Right and wrong have been clearly defined and man has been endowed with intelligence to distinguish between them. There are two paths before him and he has been provided with the freewill to choose either of them. The uphill path leads to salvation, whereas the downhill path leads to eternal torment and ruin.

*Let him who will believe, and let him who will, reject (it): for the wrong-doers We have prepared a Fire.*

[The Qurân Ch: 18 Al-Kahf, V: 29]

## CHAPTER 3

# What are the Five Pillars of Islam?

The Five Pillars are the basis of Muslim life and are the foundation upon which the Faith itself stands. These are the five obligations that every Muslim must satisfy in order to lead a responsible and fruitful life. Unlike the Ten Commandments which merely tells what to avoid, the Five Pillars of Islam clearly says what one must do in order to be faithful and true in one's practice of Islam. The Five Pillars are prioritized as follows:

*If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to God)  
never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost.*

[The Qurân Ch: 3 Ali Imran, V: 85]

### 1. Testimony of Faith – *Shahadah*

The first and foremost of the five pillars of Islam is the testimony of faith: "I bear witness that there is no God other than Allâh, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His messenger." This declaration of faith is called the *Shahadah*. It should be pronounced with genuine belief that comes from one's heart. It declares the faith in the Oneness of Allâh by rejecting any other form of deity. It recognizes that divinity can be attributed only to Allâh and that no entity or being shares any of His powers or rights. This also is a vow not to violate the Oneness of Allâh in the matters of worship and devotion - that there is no praying to, nor through an intermediary, whether it be a prophet, priest, saint or idol. This testimony of faith also witnesses that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) is a prophet chosen by Allâh to convey the message of Islam to all humanity. This implies that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) is the last in the long chain of messengers and prophets sent by Allâh to guide people to the path of salvation.

*For to God belong the Forces of the heavens and the earth; and God is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. We have truly sent thee as  
a witness, as a bringer of Glad Tidings, and as a Warner.*

[The Qurân Ch: 48 Al-Fat'h, V: 7-8]

### 2. Prayer – *Salat*

*Salat* is obligatory upon every Muslim who is sane, mature and in the case of women who are free from menstruation and confinement related to child birth. In prayer, *Salat*, every muscle and bone of the body joins the soul and the mind in the worship of Allâh. The prayers are performed at dawn, mid-day, late-afternoon, sunset, and nightfall; reminding one of his duty to Allâh throughout the day. *Salat* should be offered in its due time, unless there is a reasonable excuse. Other obligatory prayers include the Friday congregational prayer, *Eid* prayers and the funeral prayer. Regular prayer helps prevent one from

committing sins and gives one the opportunity to seek Allâh's pardon for any misgivings that occur in the course of one's daily activities.

*Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of God is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And God knows the (deeds) that ye do.*

[The Qurân Ch: 29 Al-Ankaboot, V: 45]

### 3. Fasting – *Sawm*

Fasting is abstaining completely from eating, drinking, and intimate sexual contacts from the break of dawn till sunset. It is a matchless Islamic institution which teaches man the principle of sincere love to God, creative sense of hope, devotion, patience, compassion, discipline, etc. Obligatory fasting is done once a year for the period of the month of *Ramadan*. Fasting during this time is obligatory on every Muslim adult if he is mentally and physically fit and not on a journey. Women are allowed to skip fasting during the period of menstruation, and during pregnancy and suckling. The lost days of fasting have to be made up before the commencement of the next *Ramadan*.

*Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qurân, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment. So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties to complete the prescribed period.*

[The Qurân Ch: 2 Al-Baqarah, V: 185]

### 4. Charity – *Zakah*

*Zakah* is considered to be the first form of tax collection known in human history. Giving obligatory charity, *Zakah*, is an act of worship and spiritual investment. *Zakah* does not only purify the wealth of the contributor but also purifies his heart from selfishness and greed. It purges the heart of the recipient of envy and hatred and instills in him warm wishes towards the giver. It also frees the society from distrust and corruption. *Zakah* is paid on the net balance after paying personal expenses, family expenses, due credits, taxes, etc. Taxes paid to government do not substitute for this religious duty. The contributor should not seek pride or fame but if disclosing his name and his contribution is likely to encourage others, it is acceptable to do so. *Zakah* is obligatory. Muslims can also go above and beyond what they pay as *Zakah*, in which case the offering is strictly voluntary.

*Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of God; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by God, and God is full of knowledge and wisdom.*

[The Qurân Ch: 9 Al-Tawbah, V: 60]

### 5. Pilgrimage – *Hajj*

*Hajj* is considered to be the greatest symbol of the unity of mankind or the brotherhood of man. It is obligatory for a Muslim to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in a lifetime. Muslims from all walks of life, from every corner of the globe, assemble in Mecca for *Hajj* in response to the call of Allâh. It is to commemorate the divine rituals observed by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael, who were the first pilgrims to the house of Allâh on earth: the Ka'bah. It is also to remember the great assembly of the Day of Judgment when people will stand equal before Allâh. *Hajj* provides an ideal occasion for the Muslim to reflect on his or her life, to refocus on God, and to return to their homes and their families spiritually rejuvenated. It is the largest gathering for peace and worship known to humankind. It also provides a unique opportunity for people of different nations and cultures to meet one another.

*“And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways; that they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of God, through the Days appointed, over the cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice): then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed ones in want.”*

[The Qurân Ch: 9 Al-Hajj, V: 27-28]

## WHAT SOME REVERTED MUSLIMS SAID ABOUT ISLAM

The Europeans had left no stone unturned in distorting the facts and disfiguring Islam. They have painted Islam as the religion of the brutes and savages having no sense of wisdom, sagacity, virtue and righteousness. Now I was firm and confident that Islamic teachings are flawless and free of all contradictions, defects, drawbacks, and shortcomings. My studies, observations and discussions have led me to believe that Islam is free from the weaknesses of other religions and the defects which we see in the Muslims are not the defects of Islam.”

*Muhammad Asad (formerly Leopold Wais, Poland)*

“When I recollect my past days, I become restless and shed tears of repentance when I am alone. I have no words to thank Allâh, the Exalted who pulled me out of this marsh. Before this I was moving with the banner of Satan in my hands. Had I been dead in that state how could I face Allâh the Almighty?”

*Yusuf Islam (formerly, Cat Stevens, England)*

“Before America allows herself to be destroyed by the “cancer of racism” she should become better acquainted with the religious philosophy of Islam, a religion that has already molded people of all colors into one vast family, a nation of brotherhood of Islam that leaps over all “obstacle” and stretches itself into almost all the Eastern countries of this Earth.”

*Malik Al-Shabazz (formerly Malcolm X)*

“Islam is the standard-bearer of a respectable and balanced life. It neither considers man helpless nor gives all out freedom and license to him. It attaches fundamental importance to the qualities of efforts and struggle, caution, reason and understanding. In

other words, it believes in establishing such a society which is based on peace, justice and fairplay and putting them into practice with intelligence and reasoning.”

*Sir Abdullah Archibald Hamilton (formerly, Sir Charles Hamilton, England)*

“I pay countless thanks to Allâh that He saved me from sinking deep into the darkness of race and color. I pray that Allâh, the Almighty, confer upon me the will to spread Islam and I keep calling mankind to the straight path. In fact, each citizen of America needs to be shown the true face of Islam, because till now the true face of Islam has not been shown to the West.”

*Sulaiman Shahid Mufassir, America*

## CHAPTER 4

# The Qurân

### 1. What Is the Qurân?

Fourteen centuries ago, Allâh sent down the Qurân to mankind as a book of guidance. It was through Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) that the mighty verses of the Qurân were revealed. He called upon people to be guided to the Truth by adhering to the Scripture. From the day of its revelation to the Day of Judgment, this divine book remains the sole guide, faith, solace, and a methodology of life for humanity. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was the final Messenger of Allâh to humanity, and therefore the Qurân is the last Scripture which Allâh has sent to us. It contains the essence of all the previous scriptures that were sent down to mankind through the many messengers of Allâh. The other scriptures such as the Torah, Psalms, and Gospels were all superseded because they no longer existed in their original form. Almighty Allâh has guaranteed that He will forever protect the Qurân from human tampering. We can find exact copies of the Qurân all over the world and the Qurân of today is the same as the Qurân that was revealed to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). It has been preserved exactly as it was in its original complete form 1400 years ago and remains as an undeniable testimony to the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). Every Muslim believes that the Qurân is the word of God, and every sound in it is the true echo of God's voice. The Qurân is the first and most authentic source of Islam.

*This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt,  
to those who fear God*

[THE QURÂN CH: 2 AL-BAQARAH, V:2]

### 2. Is the Qurân the Word of God?

The verses of the Holy Qurân were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) over a period of twenty-three years. It is inconceivable that any human author would remain consistent in his composition for such a long period of time. The matchless style of the verses of the Qurân and the superior wisdom contained in them are definite evidence that they are the revelations of Almighty Allâh. The Qurân challenged all its opponents to bring the like of a single chapter of its, but no one has ever been able to do that. When miracles were demanded from the Prophet (Peace and Blessings be upon him), he said that the Qurân was the miracle. Today, men of wisdom, people with literary and spiritual insight, who are honest enough to themselves, recognise and accept the Qurân as the miracle of miracles. The Qurân has many miraculous attributes proving that it is a revelation from Allâh. Many scientific facts relating to the nature of the universe that are expressed in an extremely concise and profound manner in its verses were uncovered and confirmed only in the 20th century with the help of modern science. None of the facts mentioned in the Qurân has been proved to be wrong and several prophesies made in it have already come true. This is only because of the fact that the Holy Qurân is the word of Almighty Allâh, the Originator of everything and the One Who encompasses everything with His knowledge. It certainly is the Divine Scripture that is to be accepted by all, up to the very last man.

*The Qurân is not such as can be produced by anyone other than God; on the contrary it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book wherein there is no doubt from the Lord of the worlds.*

[THE QURÂN CHAPTER: 10 YUNUS, VERSE:37]

### 3. What Is the Content of the Qurân?

Allâh created humanity and, through the Qurân, communicated to all people the most viable solutions and all sorts of information needed to lead a purposeful life. The term ‘Qurân’ has the meanings of ‘the recitation,’ ‘that which is to be recited,’ or ‘that which is recited.’ As far as the believers are concerned, the Qurân is but the criterion to distinguish truth from falsehood. They understand that all that has been commanded therein constitute the good and all that has been prohibited therein constitute evil. In fact, the Qurân introduces itself as *Furqaan* which means ‘the criterion to distinguish between truth and falsehood.’ It is to mankind that the Qurân speaks. It is to his salvation that the Qurân beckons. It convinces him of the existence of the Lord Creator by turning his attention to the varied and amazing phenomena of nature. It speaks to him of the impermanence of the life of this world and of the utter meaninglessness of wasting an entire lifetime in pursuit of the comforts herein. It makes clear to him the path which must be followed in order that he be of that blessed group which becomes worthy of the entry into Paradise as of the safety from the confines of Hell. It invites his attention to the history of those who purchased the punishment of Hell in exchange for the comforts of this world. It tells him of those who were granted the entry into Paradise for having led a life of purity. The Qurân contains all the guidance necessary for mankind and there is practically no aspect of life that it does not deal

with. The Qurân tells us the purpose of humanity's existence on earth and how to live so that each person's life is well-matched with that purpose. It explains our obligations to Allâh and how we will be rewarded according to our actions. The Qurân, which Allâh sent to His devotees as a mercy, calls us to righteousness, purity, and eternal happiness. Forms of worship, ideal morality, good conduct that must be shown in the face of unexpected happenings or at difficult times, ways to lead a physically and spiritually healthy life, moment of death, events that a soul will go through on the Day of Judgment, and Heaven and Hell awaiting all people afterwards are all described in the Scripture. Therefore, when faced with problems, it is essential for believers to refer to these verses and their implied outlook. No matter what kind of intellectual caliber or background a person has, his or her knowledge is still limited, for only Allâh encompasses the knowledge of all things.

*Those who reject the Message when it comes to them (are not hidden from Us). And indeed it is a Book of exalted power. No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it: It is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 41 FUSSILAT, V:41-42]

#### **4. What is Unique about the Qurân?**

The Qurân is the last Scripture that was revealed to mankind by the Grace of Almighty Allâh. It was revealed in Arabic. Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit etc., which were the languages of earlier scriptures, are either dead or scarcely used. Arabic language has miraculously survived in the same form for more than 1400 years. It is still a living language spoken by more than 200 million people around the world. The Qurân was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) in a span of twenty-three years. It is the only religious book that is completely free from any external and internal inconsistency. The Qurân is the only scripture that is fully compatible with modern established scientific facts. There is no other scripture in the world that can make such a claim. Most of the scientific facts mentioned in the Qurân, which was revealed 1400 years ago, were uncovered by scientists only during the last 100 years. Several prophecies that are mentioned in the Qurân have come to pass exactly as described in it. At least a million people around the world have memorized the Qurân. This fact alone is enough to guarantee that the Qurân will be preserved for all times to come.

*And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 2 AL-BAQARAH, V: 23]

#### **WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THE QURÂN**

The Qurân is a literal revelation of God, dictated to Muhammad by Gabriel, perfect in every letter. It is an ever-present miracle witnessing to itself and to Muhammad, the Prophet of God. Its miraculous quality resides partly in its style so perfect and lofty that neither men nor jinn could produce a single chapter to compare with its briefest chapter, and partly in its content of teachings, prophecies about the future, and amazingly accurate information such as the illiterate Muhammad could never have gathered of his own accord.”

*Harry Gaylord Dorman*

“The book is written in rich and effective language, full of brilliant images... Classical is undoubtedly the right description: the language of the Qurân, with its particular vocabulary, assonances, syntax and style, is believed to have come straight from God and to have been chosen by him for his Revelation because it stands out amongst all the languages of the world as the one most able to speak clearly to the spirit and profoundly to the heart.”

*Andre Miguel*

“It was in totally objective spirit, and without any preconceived ideas that I first examined the Qurânîc Revelation. I was looking for the degree of compatibility between Qurânîc text and the data of modern science. I knew from translations that the Qurân often made allusion to all sorts of natural phenomena, but I only had a summary knowledge. It was only when I examined the text very closely in Arabic that I kept a list of them, at the end of which I had to acknowledge the evidence in front of me: the Qurân did not contain a single statement that was assailable from a modern scientific point of view.”

*Maurice Bucaille*

“Whatever the psychological explanation may be, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the term ‘revelation’ was confined to those utterances which were not consciously produced and controlled by the Prophet and seemed to him to have been put into his mouth from without.”

*H.A.R. Gibb*

“The Qurân abounds in excellent moral suggestions and precepts; its composition is so fragmentary that we cannot turn to a single page without finding maxims of which all men must approve. This fragmentary construction yields texts and mottoes and rules complete in themselves, suitable for common men in any of the incidents of life.”

*John William Draper*

#### **WHAT SOME REVERTED MUSLIMS SAID ABOUT ISLAM**

After embracing Islam I felt that something tremendously magnificent had entered in my very existence. I have no words to express my joys and sense of satisfaction. One has many difficulties to face in America with a series of crimes and counter-crimes. But after embracing Islam, I started wearing veil and escaped such troubles. I came under the shadow of peace and safety. I also felt that people in general would hold me in high esteem due to my observing *pardah*. None would tease me anywhere either on the road or in the bus, etc.”

*Laila Lessalut Watman, America*

“Muhammad (S) was the final Messenger. His deeds are matchless, but, however, these can’t be taken as metaphysical. These have come to the fore with the flow of history and reason testifies.”

*Dr. Umar Rolf Baron Van Ehrenfeis, Austria*

“The spirit behind true Faith in Islam is the attainment of the Pleasure of Allâh and His unconditional obedience. It is the “cornerstone” of prayer. This religion teaches universal brotherhood, equality, harmony, large-heartedness and humility. It lays stress on purity of heart and cleanliness of action, tongue, and body. If a man wants to get himself identified with the way of life, which is most lofty in regard to action and morality, it is Islam and Islam alone.”

*Muhammad Alexander Russel Webb (formerly. Alexander Russel Webb, America)*

“While the evils of atheism and materialism, supported by all the forces of modern technology, are working day and night to destroy us - spiritually, culturally and politically - rather than hold fast to faith in Allâh, unite and combat our real enemies, we foolishly choose to tread the path of an alien civilization, hoping thereby in vain to attain social prestige and the comforts and pleasures of this transitory world in utter forgetfulness of the eternal Life Hereafter and thus totally neglect our duties as Muslims to Allâh and our fellow-beings. This is not the way to “progress” but can only result in our failure, degeneration and doom, both individually and collectively!”

*Maryam Jameelah (formerly Margaret Marcus)*

“I have become very happy after getting such a true and universal religion as Islam. My heart is full of real happiness, and it is my heart-felt yearning to convey to each and every person I come across the lofty manners, character and teachings of the Messenger of Allâh.”

*Rajkumari Javed Banu Begam, India*

## CHAPTER 5

# Prophet Muhammad

### 1. Who Was Muhammad?

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) is the Last Messenger of Allâh. It was through him that Islam was perfected. The biography of no other person in the history of the world has been preserved in such detail as the life of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) is the greatest and the most influential man who ever lived. The life of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) is a perfect example of being truthful, upright, humble, trustworthy, compassionate, brave, and generous. In all his actions and dealings, he was ever mindful and fearful of Allâh and striving solely for the reward in the Hereafter. Down the centuries, billions and billions of men and women across the planet have lived all their lives, loving the Prophet and trying to follow in his footsteps, as no one else has been loved and followed. No other man on earth is emulated by his followers in all his doings as is done in the case of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). Those who believe in Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) sleep in the manner he slept; purify themselves (through ablution) in the manner he purified himself; and adhere to his practices in the way they eat, drink, and worship Allâh. In all aspects of their lives, the followers of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) adhere to his teachings and the path that he traveled upon during his life. Indeed, never in history has a man influenced mankind, even beyond his death, as deeply as he has. He brings light and peace to countless hearts and lives. They love him more dearly than their own selves. They find their greatest source of inspiration and guidance in him. He is the ultimate norm and the perfect example for them.

*Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of God, and the Seal of the Prophets: and God has full knowledge of all things.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 33 AL-AHZAAB, V: 40]

### 2. Where Did Muhammad Live?

Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was born in Mecca around the year 570 A.D. His father had died before Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was born and his mother died while he was still very young. Orphaned before he had reached the age of six, he was raised under the protection of his uncle Abu Talib. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) began working as a merchant and became known for his trustworthiness. When he was about twenty-five, he married Khadijah, a wealthy widow. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) and Khadijah had four daughters and two sons, both of whom died in infancy. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) often sought solitude in a cave on Mount Hira on the outskirts of Mecca. It was there one night that the first revelation came to him when he was forty years old. This revelation was soon followed by others about the One True God. Eventually, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was directed to begin proclaiming God’s message. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) slowly began to attract some followers. When Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) began to impugn the traditional polytheism of his native town, the rich and powerful Quraysh tribe began to persecute him and his followers. Muhammad’s position in Mecca soon became hopeless when his wife Khadijah and Uncle Abu Talib died in quick succession. In 622, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) and his small band of followers fled the city to settle in the oasis of Yathrib. This trip became known as the *Hijra*, which marks the beginning of the Islamic Calendar. In the new place, which was later renamed Medina, the people accepted Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) as the Prophet of Allâh. In the next 20 years of his life, he conveyed the message of Allâh to

his people, and set an example of how each human being should lead his life. He succeeded in establishing Islam as a way of life in its true meaning. He not only gave guidance on purely religious matters, but also provided Muslims with rules and laws covering social, economic, and political fields. When he finally returned to Mecca, it was at the head of an imposing army that forced the residents to yield. Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) died in 632, and it was left to his followers to carry on the mission he had begun.

*“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures) in the Law and the Gospel; for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him, it is they who will prosper.”*

[THE QURÂN CH: 7 AL-A'RAF, V: 157]

### **3. What Was the Character of Muhammad?**

No other person in the history of mankind has ever been able to combine in himself all virtues and good qualities as perfectly as Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). He was neither very tall nor excessively short, but was a man of medium size. He had neither very curly nor flowing hair but a mixture of both. He was reddish-white; he had wide black eyes and long eyelashes. He had protruding joints and shoulder-blades. He had a finer chest than anyone else, was truer in utterance than anyone else, and had the gentlest nature and the noblest lineage. Those who saw him stood suddenly in awe of him and those who shared his acquaintance loved him. Those who described him said they had never seen anyone like him before or since. His expression was pensive and contemplative, serene and sublime. The stranger was fascinated from the distance, but no sooner he became intimate with him, than this fascination was changed into attachment and respect. His expression was very sweet and distinct. His speech was well set and free from the use of superfluous words, as if it were rosary of beads. He was singularly bright and fresh. He was always surrounded by his Companions. Whenever he uttered something, the listeners would hear him with rapt attention and whenever he issued a commandment, they vied with each other in carrying it out. The achievements of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) are unparalleled in history. Yet, he was the most humble of men, and the most serene, without any sign of arrogance. He was the most eloquent of men, without ever speaking for too long. He was perfectly dignified but also very gracious. The Prophet (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was the mildest of men, but he possessed great moral and physical courage. He never despised any pauper for his poverty or illness; neither did he hold any king in awe simply because he was a king. He would call rich and poor to God, without distinction. He would wear a rough Yemeni cloak, or a woolen tunic; whatever was lawful and was to hand, that he would wear. He would ride whatever was available: sometimes a horse, sometimes a camel, sometimes a mule, sometimes a donkey. And at times he would walk barefoot, without a turban or a cap. He would attend weddings, visit the sick, and attend funerals even if they were in the furthest part of the city. He would often walk among his enemies without a guard. He loved perfumes, and disliked foul smells. He maintained affectionate and loyal ties with his relatives, without ever preferring them to anyone who was superior to them. He never snubbed anyone. He accepted the excuse of anyone who made an excuse. He would joke, but would never say anything that was not true. He would laugh, but not uproariously. He kept a sheep, from which he would draw milk for his family. He used to mend his own sandals, and patch his own clothes, and serve his family, and help them to cut meat. He was the shyest of men, so that his gaze would never remain long in the face of anyone else. He was the most restrained of people; never touching the hand of a woman with whom he did not have family ties. He was the most generous of men, so that never did a gold or silver coin spend the night in his house. If something remained at the end of the day, because he had not found someone to give it to, and night descended, he would go out, and not return home until he had given it to someone in need. He would accept anyone's invitation, and accept a gift, even if it were no more than a gulp of milk, or a small piece of meat, and he would offer something in return. He never hesitated to reply to even a pauper in rags. He was tolerant, polite, courteous, and mild. He paid no attention to people's outward form, but assessed and responded to their spirits. He forgave constantly. There was no aspect of human perfection that he did not know and manifest.

*We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 34 AL-SABA', V: 28]

### **4. Is There Any Proof for Muhammad's Prophethood?**

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) had all the essential attributes pertaining to prophets. He was perfectly balanced in his admirable virtues and exceptional moral qualities. And in all this, he attributed his success only to Allâh. Before claiming prophethood, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was quite well-off and had a respected position among his community. However, he had to confront all kinds of hardships and persecutions after attaining prophethood and spent for his cause whatever he had. His enemies slandered him, mocked him, beat him, expelled him from his homeland, and waged war on him. He patiently bore all such cruel treatments and hostilities without complaint and asked God Almighty to forgive even his enemies. He practiced with utmost sincerity and honesty what he communicated to others and was always the first and foremost in obedience to the religion he preached, in worship to the Creator and in avoidance of the religious prohibitions. Although he could neither read nor write, he touched upon many social, ethical, cultural, and political issues and suggested solutions to all of them. In spite of having grown up in poverty in a land of ignorance, he pronounced and practiced the greatest code of moral conduct that mankind has ever known. Regardless of the fact that he was an orphan and a shepherd, he spoke on every issue from theology and metaphysics to medicine, history, physics, and biology. Whatever he spoke and taught and whatever he prophesied and warned have not been contradicted ever since. All these prove that the teachings of the Prophet

were entirely based on what God Himself taught him. God Almighty informed him of the stories of the early and later prophets and showed him the way to salvation and triumph in the Hereafter. Even his enemies agree that Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was known to have never uttered a lie in his life. This in itself was sufficient guarantee for his people to accept the truth of the message that he preached. The first person to believe him was his wife Khadijah, followed by his nearest relatives. The Companions of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) were so devoted to him that they were ready to sacrifice their lives, wealth and families for him. A lying, deceitful person could never have had such a large number dedicated followers. Although brought up among a primitive people and in a climate of ignorance, devoid of any positive notions of social life, immersed in the darkness of the uncivilized era, Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) was able to transform his followers to become the torchbearers of the most glorious civilization. In a very short period, they became in the footsteps of their exalted leader, the masters, guides, and just rulers of the most civilized, socially and politically advanced peoples and states, and ruled the world from east to west in the most admired fashion. Above all these facts, the unquestionable divine nature of the Scripture, the Holy Qurân that was revealed to him by Allâh stands as the greatest testimony to the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him).

*Believe in God and His Messenger, and the scripture which He hath sent to His Messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denieth God, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgment, hath gone far, far astray.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 4 AL-NISA', V: 136]

### **SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

- Doing justice between two people is a charity; assisting a man upon his beast, and lifting his baggage is a charity; pure, comforting words are charity; answering a questioner with mildness is a charity; and removing that which is an inconvenience to wayfarers, such as thorns and stones, is a charity.
- Kindness is a mark of faith: and whoever has no kindness, has no faith.
- That man, who pardons someone who would have injured him, when he has him in his power, is nearest to God.
- Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all the people to Jesus, the son of Mary. The prophets are my paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is Islam.
- Beware! Verily there is a piece of flesh in the body of man, which when good, the whole body is good; and when bad, the whole body is bad, and that is the heart.
- The grave is the first stage of the journey into eternity.
- He is not of us who is not affectionate to his little ones, and doth not respect the feelings of the aged; and he is not of us who doth not order that which is good and prohibit that which is evil.
- Charity is a duty unto every Muslim. He, who hath not the means thereto, let him do a good act or abstain from an evil one. That is his charity.
- The best of alms is that which the right hand gives, and the left hand knows not of.
- A man giving in alms one piece of silver in his lifetime is better for him than giving one hundred when about to die.
- Every good act is charity; and verily it is a good act to meet your brother with an open countenance, and to pour water from your bucket into his vessel.

### **WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

Head of the State as well as the Church, 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 police force, without a fixed revenue. If ever a man ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the powers without their supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life."

Reverend Bosworth Smith, *Muhammad and Muhammadanism*, 1874

"Four years after the death of Justinian, A.D. 569, was born in Mecca, in Arabia, the man who, of all men, has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race... To be the religious head of many empires, to guide the daily life of one-third of the human race, may perhaps justify the title of a Messenger of God."

Dr. William Draper, *History of Intellectual Development of Europe*

"The lies (Western slander) which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man (Muhammad) are disgraceful to ourselves only."

Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*

“The good sense of Muhammad despised the pomp of royalty. The Apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family; he kindled the fire; swept the floor; milked the ewes; and mended with his own hands his shoes and garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed without effort of vanity the abstemious diet of an Arab.”

Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1823

“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 secular and religious level. ...It is probable that the relative influence of Muhammad on Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. ...It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history.”

Michael Hart, *The 100, A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons In History*, 1978

“If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astonishing results are the three criteria of a human genius, who could dare compare any great man in 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, dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls... Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Conqueror of Ideas, Restorer of Rational beliefs.... 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?”

Alphonse de LaMartaine, *Historie de la Turquie*, 1854

“I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle.”

Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India*, 1924

“I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”

Sir George Bernard Shaw, *The Genuine Islam*, 1936

“It was the genius of Muhammad, the spirit that he breathed into the Arabs through the soul of Islam that exalted them. That raised them out of the lethargy and low level of tribal stagnation up to the high watermark of national unity and empire. It was in the sublimity of Muhammad’s deism, the simplicity, the sobriety and purity it inculcated the fidelity of its founder to his own tenets, that acted on their moral and intellectual fiber with all the magnetism of true inspiration.”

Arthur Glyn Leonard, *Islam, Her Moral and Spiritual Values*

“Mohammad’s career is a wonderful instance of the force and life that resides in him who possesses an intense faith in God and in the unseen world. He will always be regarded as one of those who have had that influence over the faith, morals and whole earthly life of their fellow men, which none but a really great man ever did, or can exercise; and whose efforts to propagate a great verity will prosper.”

Rodwell, *Preface to The Translation of the Holy Qurân*

“In little more than a year he was actually the spiritual, nominal and temporal ruler of Medina, with his hands on the lever that was to shake the world.”

John Austin, *Muhammad, the Prophet of Allâh*, 1927

“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 a leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems that it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.... Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must not forget the conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty.”

W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, 1953

“It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher.”

Annie Besant, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad*, 1932

“Serious or trivial, his daily behavior has instituted a canon which millions observe this day with conscious memory. No one regarded by any section of the human race as Perfect Man has ever been imitated so minutely. The conduct of the founder of Christianity has not governed the ordinary life of his followers. Moreover, no founder of a religion has left on so solitary an eminence as the Muslim apostle.”

D. G. Hogarth, *Arabia*

“Within a brief span of mortal life, Muhammad called forth of unpromising material, a nation, never welded before; in a country that was hitherto but a geographical expression he established a religion which in vast areas suppressed Christianity and Judaism, and laid the basis of an empire that was soon to embrace within its far flung boundaries the fairest provinces the then civilized world.”

Philip K. Hitti, *History of Arabs*

“Muhammad was a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His house, his dress, his food - they were characterized by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave that he could do for himself.” Dr. Gustav Weil, *History of the Islamic Peoples*

“People like Pasteur and Salk are leaders in the first sense. People like Gandhi and Confucius, on one hand, and Alexander, Caesar and Hitler on the other, are leaders in the second and perhaps the third sense. Jesus and Buddha belong in the third category alone. Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Muhammad, who combined all the three functions.”

Jules Masserman, *Who Were History's Great Leaders?*, 1974

“In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints... His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vainglory, as they would have done had they been effected for selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manners and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting a regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonials of respect were shown to him. If he aimed at a universal dominion, it was the dominion of faith; as to the temporal rule which grew up in his hands, as he used it without ostentation, so he took no step to perpetuate it in his family.”

Washington Irving, *Mahomet and His Successors*

“No other mortal has ever, from the beginning of the world, exercised such an immeasurable influence upon the religious, moral, and political relations of mankind, as has the Arab Muhammad.”

Johann Doellinger

“A silent great soul, one of that who cannot but be earnest. He was to kindle the world, the world's Maker had ordered so.”

A. S. Tritton, *Islam*, 1951

“Muhammad is the most successful of all Prophets and religious personalities... A mass of detail in the early sources show that he was an honest and upright man who had gained the respect and loyalty of others who were like-wise honest and upright men.”

*Encyclopedia Britannica*

“He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence; those who came to hear him loved him; they who described him would say, ‘I have never seen his like either before or after’. He was of great taciturnity, but whenever he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said.”

Stanley Lane Poole

“If we judge greatness by influence, he was one of the giants of history. He undertook to raise the spiritual and moral level of a people harassed into barbarism by heat and foodless wastes, and he succeeded more completely than any other reformer seldom has any man so fully realized his dream.... When he began, Arabia was a desert flotsam of idolatrous tribes; when he died it was a nation.”

Will Durant

### **THE FAREWELL SERMON OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) delivered this sermon on the 9 *Dhul-Hijjah* 10th year after *Hijra* in the valley of Mount Arafat, during his final *Hajj*, known as the Farewell *Hajj*. After praising, and thanking Allâh, he said:

“O people, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether, after this year, I will ever be among you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present today.”

“O people, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. 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. Allâh has forbidden you to take interest; therefore, all interest obligations shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer inequity...”

“O people, 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 matters.”

“O people, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. If they abide by your right, then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers...”

“O people, listen to me in earnest. Worship Allâh, say your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and give the share of Zakah in your wealth. Perform Hajj if you can afford to. All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no

superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor does a black have any superiority over a white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim and that Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim that belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.”

“Remember, one day you will appear before Allâh and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.”

“O people, no prophet or messenger will come after me, and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O people, and understand my words that I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qurân 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 Allâh, that I have conveyed Your message to Your people.”

## CHAPTER 6

# Some Other Important Matters of Faith in Islam

### 1. Belief in the Purpose of Creation

Allâh’s creation is meaningful and life has a sublime purpose. The world is Allâh’s gift to mankind and there is proof of His existence in every natural object. The finest grain of sand, with its patterned arrangements of atoms, displays the minute detail of His reckoning. From the smallest of viruses to the largest of plants and animals, every living creature presents signs of the splendor Allâh’s creation. The universe serves as a reminder that the extent of His creation is still unknown to man. The Qurân describes the special status of man in creation and that the purpose of man’s life is to worship Allâh. This does not mean that man has to renounce the world and spend his entire life in constant prayer and meditation. To worship Allâh is to know Him, to love Him, to obey His commandments, to enforce His law in every aspect of life, to serve His cause by doing the right and shunning the evil, and to be just to Him, to ourselves, and to our fellow human beings.

*Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay); Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (fetus) lump; then we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then we developed out of it another creature. So blessed be God, the best to create! After that, at length ye will die. Again, on the Day of Judgment, will ye be raised up.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 23 AL-MU’MINOON, V: 12-16]

### 2. Belief in the Purpose of Life

The purpose man’s life is to know and worship the One True God Who created and sustains him. Man’s life in this world is very short and it should be lived in such a manner that he will be able to enjoy the eternal bliss of Paradise in the life Hereafter. There is more good than evil in human nature and the probability of successful reform is greater than the probability of hopeless failure. If it were impossible to reform man, Allâh, with His absolute wisdom, would not have assigned messengers with revelations for guiding him to the path of salvation. In order to attain salvation, man must combine Faith and action, belief and practice. Faith without action is as insufficient as action without Faith. No one can attain salvation until his Faith in Allâh becomes dynamic in his life and his beliefs are translated into actions. Allâh does not accept lip service, and no true believer can be indifferent to the practical requirements of Faith. Everything that a believer does, says, or thinks should be beneficial to his life in the Hereafter. Consequently, the life of a believer, who combines good deeds with Faith, becomes ultimately successful and at the same time beneficial to fellow human beings.

*What is the life of this world but amusement and play? But verily the Home in the Hereafter, that is life indeed, if they but knew.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 29 AL-ANKABOOT, V: 64]

### 3. Belief that the Qurân Is the Word of God

The Qurân is the word of Allâh revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) through Angel Gabriel. The Qurân was revealed in a span of twenty-three years, on various occasions to answer certain questions, solve certain problems, settle certain disputes, and to provide guidance to man to attain eternal bliss. The Qurân is the first and the most authentic source of Islam, the second being the Traditions of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings be upon him). The Qurân was revealed in Arabic; it is still and will always remain in its original and complete form. It is the only scripture on earth in which we can find claims that it the Word of God. It is a miracle of miracles and no sane person can deny its authenticity. It also remains as the greatest testimony to the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him).

#### **4. Belief that Man Is Born Innocent**

Islam does not presuppose any type of inherent wickedness of human nature. At birth, the human baby is totally innocent and is not responsible for the sin of its parents or any of its ancestors. When the person reaches the age of maturity, he becomes accountable for his deeds and intentions. Man is free from sin until he commits sin. God does not hold any person responsible until He has shown him the Right Way. There are many people in the world who have not heard of Islam and have no way of knowing about it. Muslims, who can present Islam to such people, will be held responsible if they fail to convey the Truth to them.

*Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself: no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. Your goal in the end is towards God: He will tell you the truth of the things wherein ye disputed.*

[THE QURÂN CH:6 AL-ANÂM, V: 164]

#### **5. Belief that Every Child Is Born a Muslim**

Allâh created man in the best of molds and gifted him with rational faculties and spiritual aspirations. He occupies the position of Allâh's viceroy on earth. He is endowed with honor and dignity, spiritual potentialities, and intellectual inclinations. A human child is not born out of any sin, original, inherited, or derived. It is born in a state of *fitrah*, a state of purity. Its birth takes place in accordance with the Will of Allâh. Just as the child submits to the physical laws, which Allâh has put in nature, its soul also submits naturally to the fact that Allâh is its Lord and Creator. But, the child is influenced by the way of life of its parents and is not strong enough in the early stages of life to resist the will of its parents. The religion which the child follows at this stage is one of custom and upbringing. This is the reason why many people born to non-Muslim parents readily accept Islam when it is properly presented to them.

*Mankind was but one nation, but differed (later). Had it not been for a word that went forth before from thy Lord, their differences would have been settled between them.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 10 YUNUS, V: 19]

#### **6. Belief in Rational Thinking**

Faith is not complete when it is followed or accepted blindly. A person who calls himself a Muslim because of his family traditions, or because he has accepted Islam under coercion or blind imitation is not a complete Muslim in the sight of Allâh. Faith is to be founded on unshakable convictions based on profound inquiry. A Muslim must build his Faith on firm belief devoid of any doubt or uncertainty. Then only, Faith can inspire action. Unless Faith is harmonized with practice, it cannot lead to salvation.

*Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made? And at the Sky, how it is raised high? And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm? And at the Earth, how it is spread out?*

[THE QURÂN CH: 88 AL-GHAASHIYAH, V: 17-20]

#### **7. Belief in the Distinction between the Qurân and the Hadith**

There is a clear distinction between the Qurân and the *Hadith*, the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). The Qurân is the word of Allâh whereas the Traditions of the Prophet are the practical interpretations of the Qurân. The Prophet's role was to convey the Qurân as he received it, to interpret it, and to practice it fully. Such interpretations and practices of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) are known as the *Hadith*, or his Traditions. They are considered the second source of Islam and must be in complete harmony with the Qurân, which is the first source - the standard and the criterion.

*Obey God, and obey the Apostle: but if ye turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and ye for that placed on you. If ye obey him, ye shall be on right guidance.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 24 AL-NUR, V: 54]

#### **SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

- The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr.
- He who travels in the search of knowledge, to him God shows the way of Paradise.
- Be in the world like a traveler, or like a passer on, and reckon yourself as of the dead.
- Appreciate five things before five others: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your wealth before your poverty, your spare time before your hard work and your life before death.
- God does not judge you according to your appearance and your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and looks into your deeds.
- You must give the laborer his full wages even before his perspiration is dry on his body.
- You should not look down upon those who work for you, for they are your brothers whose care has been entrusted to you by Allâh and who are the true supporters of your prosperity.

- Whoever has food for a day and a night, it is prohibited for him to beg.
- The love of the world is the root of all evil.
- Wealth properly employed is a blessing; and a man may lawfully endeavor to increase it by honest means.
- It is difficult for a man laden with riches to climb the steep path which leads to bliss.
- The taker of usury and the giver of it, and the writer of its papers and the witness to it, are equal in crime.
- There are two characteristics which cannot be found together in a believer; greediness and a vicious temper.

### WHAT SOME REVERTED MUSLIMS SAID ABOUT ISLAM

“I have become a Muslim by force of my study and I have a great regard for it. The Muslims have got Islam as a legacy, hence they fail to recognize its value. In fact, during all the troubles and problems I faced in my life, Islam proved the only cradle of peace and comfort. Whatever thanks I repay to Allâh, The Almighty and Exalted, is much less in comparison to what I have got by way of this Blessing.”

*Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, England*

“The Holy Qurân which was revealed nearly fourteen hundred years ago contains even such ayahs which have been discovered with respect to its scientific value much later through scientific research. And this discovery was sufficient for me to believe that the second part of the *Kalimah* is also believable.”

*Ali Sulaiman Banoist, France*

“I was startled to know that a sense of praise emerged from my sub-conscious for those who were still firm in following their religion. This feeling created in me a soft corner for Islam and a desire arose for knowing about that religion.”

*Dr. Ta'lim Ali, (formerly Thomas Irving, Canada)*

“My study is vast, but the impression produced by the style of expression of the Holy Qurân has no parallel and can't be described in words. I thought as if Allâh, the Almighty, was Himself addressing me with all His Blessings and Benedictions, and the Qurân was going to be revealed on me. I felt pity at the Muslims treating Qurân as they do. They go on reading this Book of Allâh like novels. They neither ponder over its meaning nor stop at any point to understand its glory.”

*Dr. Ataullah Budgan, Poland*

“Islam has forged in one relation of brotherhood all the people taken out from the boundaries of culture, color and region. So far as marriage and marital life is concerned, they have very deep roots in Islam, and social and biological realities have set the seal of truth upon them. In comparison to the superficial and so-called monogamy of the West, family principles, traditions and regulations of Islam are more practicable.”

*Ismail Wieslaw Jazierski, Poland*

“All the comforts, glitters and luxuries are nothing in comparison to the blessings of Islam, the religion of Allâh. This alone contains real spiritual happiness, blessings of the world and salvation in the Hereafter.”

*Fatima Hereen, Germany*

## CHAPTER 7

# Some Basic Concepts in Islam

### 1. Concept of Prophethood

Allâh sent many prophets and sages to all nations at different times of history. One prophet or more has been sent to every known land. All the prophets of Allâh were men of exemplary character. They were prepared and chosen by Allâh to deliver His Message to humanity. Their honesty, integrity, sincerity, and intelligence were beyond suspicion. The strong link that exists between God and man is clearly evident in prophethood. Prophethood is an eloquent expression of Allâh's love of mankind. By conveying His messages to man, He gives humanity the chance to attain eternal happiness in the Hereafter. Prophethood is an emphasis of Allâh's justice to man. Allâh holds man responsible for his deeds only after showing him true guidance and after warning him. The guidance and warnings conveyed by all prophets were the same because they came from the same source. Their mission was to serve Allâh, to acquaint man with Allâh and His Divine Message, to establish truth and goodness, to help man to realize the true purpose of his existence, and help him to conduct his life in such a way as to attain salvation. It is on this basis that the Muslims make no discrimination among the prophets and accept their teachings as reliable and true.

*For We assuredly sent amongst every people an apostle, (with the Command), "Serve God, and eschew Evil." Of the people were some whom God guided, and some on whom error became inevitably (established). So travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the Truth).*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 16 AL-NAHL, V: 36]

### 2. Concept of Religion

Religion has always been misused and abused. Many have used it as a means of exploitation and repression. Some people have used it as an excuse for their prejudice and intolerance. Some others have used it as a source of power and

domination over the masses. There are many religions in the world, and each one claims to be the one and only true religion. But these claims contradict each other. Genuine religion must come from the One True God for the right guidance to humanity. Human nature and major human needs are basically the same at all times. So there can be only one true religion coming from the God Who created all men. This religion is Islam. Islam was not taught only by Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). On the contrary, Islam was the religion preached by all the prophets of Allâh including Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him). So Islam has been, and will continue to be, the true universal religion of God, because God is One. Islam maintains that religion is not only a spiritual and intellectual necessity but also a social and universal need. It is meant not to bewilder man but to guide him. It is not to debase him but to elevate his moral nature. True religion purifies the soul from evil, clears the mind from doubts, and strengthens the character. It provides him with peace and security and makes his life meaningful. That is what a true religion can do for humanity.

*Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to God, does good, and follows the way of Abraham, the true in Faith?*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 4 AL-NISA', V: 125]

### 3. Concept of Life

Allâh does not give life to an individual without any purpose. He bestows upon him unique characteristics and immense capabilities. He also places upon him certain responsibilities and obligations. Man is expected to fulfill the purpose of life and realize the goal of existence. Life on earth is likened to a journey starting from a certain point and ending at a certain destination. It is a transitory stage, an introduction to the eternal life in the Hereafter. Life and death belong entirely to Allâh's realm. Life is an amazing sign of Allâh's wisdom and power, a vibrant evidence of His skill and supremacy. He is the Giver and Creator of life. Life is unique and precious and no sensible or normal person would like to lose it by choice. Life is given to man by Allâh, and only He has the right to take it back; no one else has the right to destroy a life. This is why Islam forbids suicide and all kinds of self-mortification. But, when capital punishment is carried out on a criminal, his life is taken away by the right of Allâh in accordance with His Law. Islam also recommends patience and good faith at the death of a dear one.

*If any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 5 AL-MA'IDAH, V: 32]

### 4. Concept of the World

The present human situation is alarming. Increasingly economic and social injustices, world health crises, and the threat of ecological self-destruction appear to be forcing humanity toward the brink of a new age of potentially irreversible darkness. But the problems and crises of modern times are not entirely unique or peculiar. It is true that they are difficult, complex, and agonizing. Perhaps this is even more so now than ever before. But the difference, however, between this age and the past is basically a difference of degree rather than of kind. The present human crisis seems to emanate from a serious imbalance between our material explorations and our moral groping. A harmony between the two aspects, a "middle range" or a "golden means," is the need of the hour. The principle of "moderation" is an important characteristic of Islam. Muslims wish to live in the modern world without simply imitating blindly the ways followed by the West. They wish to live at peace with the West but at the same time not to be dominated by them. Islam aims to devote its resources and energies in order to build a better life for mankind on the basis of the teachings of Islam and not to squander its resources in any conflict. Muslims seek to create better understanding with the West because the destinies of people of different parts of the world cannot be totally separated. By understanding each other better, nations can contribute to a better life for the whole of humanity.

*Thus, have We made of you a Brotherhood justly balanced, that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Apostle a witness over yourselves.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 2 AL-BAQARAH, V: 143]

### 5. Concept of Equality

Mankind was created by the One True Eternal God, the Supreme Lord of all. The entire human race has the common parentage of Adam and Eve. So, all men are equal in the sight of God; but they are not necessarily identical. Men have differences of abilities, potentials, ambitions, wealth, and so on. Yet none of these establishes a status of superiority of one man or race over another. Lineage, color, region, or language does not give individuals any special status in Islamic society and no discrimination of any type is allowed in Islam. These teachings of Islam are intended to remove all the impositions of barriers and classes among people in order to enable them to enjoy and practice their legitimate rights. Islam considers all people as equal in matters of worship; all individuals are seen as equal in the Islamic Code of Law; all members of the nation have the right to benefit from the national resources; and Islam declares all people equal in terms of human values. Along with the rights that man enjoys, he also has certain obligations and responsibilities that he is expected to fulfill. Every individual is judged by Allâh on the basis of his own merits and according to his own deeds. The only distinction which Allâh recognizes is the distinction in piety, and the only criterion which He applies is the criterion of goodness and spiritual excellence.

*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 49 AL-HUJURAT, V: 13]

### 6. Concept of Freedom

Freedom is often denied to many individuals, groups, and nations. The fact is that in no human society can man be free in the absolute sense of the word. There must be some limitations of one sort or another, if the society is to function at all. Anarchy would prevail in lands where people have the freedom to live as they like. Freedom without restraints leads to corruption and immorality since they are not tied to higher moral values or self-control. The freedom that Islam grants is based on commitment and responsibility without which there can be no true freedom. Islam does not believe in giving man unbridled freedom to do whatever he likes. The right of freedom that man has been endowed with is sacred as long as he does not violate the Commandments of Allâh. Islam insists that man has freewill because that is the way that Allâh created him. It allows him to express this freedom and to practice it within the limits of commitment, responsibility, and self-control. Moreover, man has an obligation to choose the path of righteousness and to safeguard his freedom and that of others. One of the main objectives of Islam is to free humanity from superstitions, the soul from sin, and the conscience from fear. Every man has the right to freedom of belief, conscience, and worship. Islam expects man to think, ponder, affirm faith, and do good deeds. Every human being is personally responsible for his deeds and he is accountable for the consequences of all his actions. Man should therefore, practice his personal freedom without encroaching upon the rights of others and deviating from a correct moral conduct. In an atmosphere which respects the rights and freedoms of others, mankind can grow and prosper.

*The truth is from your Lord: Let him who will believe,  
and let him who will, reject (it).*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 18 AL-KAHF, V: 29]

## 7. Concept of Peace

Allâh created the heavens and the earth in such a way that they might perform their functions peacefully. For billions of years, the entire universe has been functioning in total harmony with His divine plan. Hence, peace is no external commodity to be artificially imposed upon man. Peace is inherent in nature itself. The system of nature set up by Allâh already rests on the basis of peace. If this system is not disrupted, it will continue to stay in the course set for it by Allâh. In order to preserve the peace established by nature from disruption, two important injunctions have been laid down by Islam - one at the individual level, which stresses the exercise of patience, and the other at the social level, which forbids taking the offensive. 'Peace' and 'Islam' are two words that are derived from the same root and may be considered synonymous. One of the names of Allâh is 'Peace'. The concluding words of the daily prayers of Muslims are words of peace. The daily salutations among the Muslims are expressions of peace. Heaven in Islam is the abode of peace. These are just a few of the facts that show how fundamental and dominant is the theme of peace in Islam. An individual who follows Islam attains peace with God, with himself, and with his fellow men. There cannot be any 'Islamic terrorist' or 'Islamic terrorism' because 'Islamic' can only mean 'peaceful'. The aim of Islam is to build a peaceful society because higher human objectives can be achieved only in an atmosphere of peace. The spiritual as well as moral progress of the individual is possible only in peaceful circumstances. Since an atmosphere of peace is essential for the building of a good society, Islam enjoins Muslims to establish peace even at the cost of unilateral sacrifice and patience.

*But indeed if any show patience and forgive, that would truly be an exercise of courageous will and resolution in the conduct of affairs.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 42 AL-SHURA, V: 43]

## 8. Concept of Charity

Like the concept of worship in Islam, the definition of charity also embraces all aspects of life. Islam in no way restricts charitable deeds to the economic realm. Other than giving obligatory charity - *Zakah*, an individual may also give as much as he pleases as *Sadaqah*. Although this word means 'voluntary charity' it has a wider implication. It includes every imaginable act of kindness that one can possibly do to human beings or any other creatures. A kind word, a good deed, or even a noble intention can be a great act of charity meriting infinite rewards in the Hereafter. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) taught that meeting someone with a cheerful face is an act of charity, helping a person to load his animal is a charity, and pouring some water in your neighbor's bucket is a charity. Working to earn a living for oneself and one's family, providing education to children, and placing a morsel of food into the spouse's mouth are all acts of charity. Refraining from doing evil and enjoining others to do good are acts of charity.

*Those who spend their substance in the cause of God, and follow not up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury, -for them their reward is with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 2 AL-BAQARAH, V: 262-263]

## 9. Concept of Righteousness

Righteousness must be founded on strong faith and constant practice. There is no place for shallow concepts or meaningless rites and rituals in Islam. A righteous person should obey all the salutary regulations, and should make the love of Allâh and the love of his fellowmen and all other creatures his sincere motive. Righteousness is not merely a matter of void utterances. A righteous person's faith should be true and sincere and should be complemented by good deeds. Every such act of kindness shown to men as well as to other creatures is considered as charity and merits reward in the Hereafter. A righteous person will also be steadfast and unwavering in all circumstances. He will be a good member of the community and a good citizen of the nation. Righteousness, in the Islamic perspective, tends to provide the individual with peace in all circumstances, the society with security on all levels, the nation with solidarity, and the international community with hope and harmony. Life on this planet will be absolutely harmonious and pleasant if the Islamic concept of righteousness is adopted and practiced by all men.

*It is not righteousness to turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God fearing.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 2 AL-BAQARAH, V: 177]

## 10. Concept of Piety

The Qurân speaks of the pious as those who are steadfast in prayer, believe in the Unseen, spend freely in the way of Allâh, believe in the verses of the Qurân, and always remember of the Hereafter. The pious are also those who control their anger and pardon all men, for Allâh loves those who are patient and do good deeds. It is indeed piety if one earnestly asks for forgiveness from Allâh for his sins, for having done something to be ashamed of, or for having wronged his own soul. Piety requires a proper use of the mind by grasping truth of Allâh and life. Piety demands a proper use of wealth by spending in the way of Allâh under all circumstances. Piety calls for a proper use of one's spiritual as well as the physical abilities by observing the Prayer. Piety insists on a high degree of self-control over one's anger and emotions, a moral capacity for forgiveness and patience, and conscious urge to make the sinner return to Allâh in regret and repentance. Piety seeks of man to be of true and fine convictions, of determination and character, and of strong will and courage.

*Worship none but God; treat with kindness your parents and kindred, and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people; be steadfast in prayer; and practice regular charity.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 2 AL-BAQARAH, V: 83]

## 11. Concept of Morality

One of the most important aspects in the life of a Muslim is to have a high standard of morals. Morality in Islam is based on the firm conviction that Almighty God is the Creator and Originator of everything and that man is endowed with the responsibility and honor to act as His agent on earth. Allâh has entrusted everything in the heavens and the earth to man and he is expected to do justice to that trust. Allâh does not expect the impossible from man or hold him accountable for anything beyond his power. Islam expects man to endeavor to achieve progress and fulfillment of the self in this world as well to strive for success in the Hereafter. He is expected to observe everything that is obligatory. Islam does not expect Muslims to shun all the good things of life. In principle, everything is permissible except that which are forbidden or harmful to the self, for others, or to the world at large. The Muslim's moral obligation is to be a glowing example of honesty and excellence. Man's ultimate responsibility is to Allâh and his highest goal is His pleasure. The range of morality in Islam is so comprehensive that it combines faith in God, religious rites, spiritual observances, social conduct, intellectual pursuits, manners of speech, and all other aspects of human life.

*For Muslim men and women, for the believing, for the devout, for the true, for the patient and constant, for the generous, for those who fast and guard their chastity, and for those who engage much in God's praise, - for them has God prepared forgiveness and great reward.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 33 AL-AHZAB, V: 35]

## 12. Concept of Sin

Man, according to Islam, is born in natural state of purity or *fitrah*. The idea of Original Sin has no room in the teachings of Islam. The human child is totally innocent and is not responsible for the sin of its parents or any of its ancestors. Whatever happens after its birth is the result of external influences and social environment. Man is imperfect. But he is not left helpless or deserted by Allâh to fall victim to his shortcomings. Allâh has provided him with the necessary guidance to ward off sin and imbibe piety and righteousness. According to the moral scale of Islam, a sin is any act, thought, or intention that is deliberate, defies the law of Allâh, violates the right of Allâh or the right of man, or is harmful to the soul or body. In Islam, there are major and minor sins as there are sins against Allâh and sins against both Allâh and man. All sins against Allâh, except one, are forgivable if the sinner sincerely seeks forgiveness. The Qurân states that Allâh does not forgive the sin of *shirk* (polytheism, pantheism, trinity, etc.), which is attributing partners to Allâh in belief and worship. He forgives sins other than this and pardons whom He wills.

*Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself; no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. Your goal in the end is towards God: He will tell you the truth of the things wherein ye disputed.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 6 AL-AN'AM, V: 164]

## 13. Concept of Salvation

The concept of salvation in Islam is a positive achievement as against the negative and barren concept of escapism favored by other religions. This world offers immense scope for development and fulfillment of one's being and man is endowed with a number of potentialities. By developing these, he reaches his full stature and qualifies for still higher stages awaiting him. His main task in this life is to develop his self by understanding the various aspects of nature and employing them for the development of mankind. Salvation by faith and good deeds are both tied together integrally in Islam. This is the comprehensive Islamic solution to all social disorders. Good deeds are central, not peripheral to the Islamic life and salvation. Islam gives no blank check of salvation to sinners. Individuals have to earn it, work for it, and deserve it, through a commitment to good deeds. Salvation by faith alone, which is preached by some faiths, only massages the ego of the sinner. It promises him the eternal bliss of paradise, without ever acquiring an iota of goodness or doing anything good, thus leaving the victims of his sins to the mercy of the society. Islam condemns such behavior and such approaches to salvation. Faith helps a person to formulate his thoughts in a God-conscious manner. No matter

how well intentioned one may be, faith or thinking about God is not beneficial to others unless good deeds are produced. Hence, in the Islamic perspective, a combination of faith and good deeds is essential in order to attain salvation.

*If any do deeds of righteousness, be they male or female - and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 4 AL-NISA', V: 124]

#### **14. Concept of Family**

The family is a human social group whose members are bound together by blood ties or marital relationship. The family bond needs mutual expectations of rights and obligations that are observed by the members. Islam sees the family on solid grounds that are capable of providing reasonable continuity, true security, and mature intimacy. Islam recognizes that there is no more natural relationship than that of blood. The normal course of behavior for the Muslim individual is to be family-oriented and to seek a family of his own. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) has said that the best Muslim is one who is best to his family, and the greatest, most blessed joy in life is a good, righteous wife. To take good care of children is one of the most commendable deeds in Islam. It is charity of a higher order to attend to their spiritual welfare, educational needs, and general well-being. Similarly, it is a divine injunction that no child may become the cause of harm to the parents. It is also the absolute religious duty of children to provide for aged parents and help them to make their lives as comfortable as possible. A Muslim should extend his utmost help and kindness to other family members and relations, to show them true feelings of love and care. Earning a livelihood for one's family is considered as an act that deserves reward in the Hereafter. It is also a sacred duty to be good to the kin even though they may not respond in a similar way.

*“Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous.”*

[THE QURÂN CH: 25 AL-FURQAN, V: 74]

#### **15. Concept of Community**

The purest form of monotheism of Islam, as well as the Islamic teaching that all Muslims are equal before God, provides the basis for a collective sense of loyalty to Allâh that transcends class, race, and nationality. Islamic community does not take its name after the name of a leader, a founder, or an event. It transcends national borders and political boundaries. All Muslims belong to one community, the *umma*, irrespective of their ethnic or national background. The foundation of the community in Islam is the submission to the Will of Allâh. An Islamic community is present only when it is nourished and fostered by Islam. A truly Islamic community is the alert guardian of virtue and the bitter enemy of vice. What is required of the community at large is likewise required of every individual member. This is because every individual is accountable to Allâh and the whole community is a single organic entity. This does not imply that Islam prefers the individual to the group. What it means is that the individual has different sets of roles to play. He must play them in such a way as to guard his moral integrity, preserve his identity, observe the rights of Allâh, and fulfill his social obligations.

*Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity. Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 2 ALI IMRAN, V: 104]

#### **16. Concept of Brotherhood**

In the Islamic perspective, human brotherhood is based on the unshakable belief in the Oneness of Allâh. God is One, Eternal, and Universal. He is the Creator of all men, the Provider for all men, the Judge of all men, and the Lord over all men. The original common parentage of all men is that of Adam and Eve. Allâh does not confine His favors to any particular nation, race, or period. All human beings irrespective of their color, language, race, or faith enjoy the innumerable blessings of Allâh. Before Him, all human beings are equal and are brothers and sisters of one another. So the basis of human brotherhood, according to Islam, is based on the Oneness of God. Islam sees Allâh as the Only One True God, Who is worshipped and envisages entire humankind as the worshippers of Allâh.

*And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood, and I am your Lord and Cherisher: therefore fear Me (and no other).*

[THE QURÂN CH: 23 AL-MU'MINOON, V: 52-53]

#### **17. Concept of War**

As long as there exist injustice, oppression, whimsical ambitions, and illogical claims in the world, wars will continue to be waged. Islam has recognized war as a lawful and justifiable course for self-defense and restoration of justice, freedom and peace. Islam permits war but keeps it within the limits of mercy at which the twenty-first century civilization has not yet been able to arrive, not even to come near to. War is not an objective of Islam nor is it the normal course for Muslims. It is only the last resort and should be used under the most extraordinary circumstances when all other measures fail. Islam has set down certain rules, the most merciful and considerate to people, and required people to observe them. Muslims are commanded by Allâh not to begin hostilities, embark on any act of aggression, or violate any rights of others. During the course of a war, Muslims are forbidden to destroy any homes, crops, supplies, etc., or kill civilians, children, women, elders, and disabled people.

*O ye who believe! stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear God. For God is well-acquainted with all that ye do.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 5 AL-MA'IDAH, V: 32]

- The first thing created by God was the intellect.
- One learned man is harder on the devil than a thousand ignorant worshippers.
- Riches are not from an abundance of worldly goods, but from a contented mind.
- A man of wealth has many enemies, while a man of knowledge has many friends. Hence knowledge is better
- Do not cut down trees that provide shade to travelers and animals.
- When the bier of anyone passes by you, whether Christian, Jew, or Muslim, rise to your feet.
- Actions will be judged according to intentions.
- That which is lawful is clear, and that which is unlawful likewise, but there are certain doubtful things between the two from which it is well to abstain.
- No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.
- That person is nearest to God, who pardons the one who would have injured him.
- The creation is as God's family; the most beloved unto God is the person who does good to God's family.
- Assist any person oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.
- Modesty and chastity are parts of the Faith.
- Monopoly is unlawful in Islam.
- Cursed are the ones who take or give bribes.

## CHAPTER 8

# Some Perceptions of Islam

### 1. What Is the Dress Code in Islam?

Islam promotes modesty and seeks to minimize vice and immorality in society. One of the ways it does so is by requiring modest dress. Both men and women are expected to dress in a simple, modest, decent, and dignified manner. One's appearance should never be the source of an eyesore for others. The dress must cover the body adequately. A man must always be covered in loose and unrevealing clothing from his navel to his knee. This is the absolute minimum covering required. For women, it is the entire body except hands and face. These parts must never be exposed to any other person (except in case of genuine need e.g. medical treatment). In addition, the cloth must neither be see-through nor tight-fitting. For women, the essential requirement is that their dress should identify them as respectable ladies who would be honored and not harassed. *Hijab* rules aim at protecting them from the gaze of other men. A man should not dress like a woman and a woman should not dress like a man. The dress of Muslims should also establish their Islamic identity. At the least it should not identify them as followers of another religion. The design of dress must avoid three deadly sins: show off, arrogance, and self indulgence. Islam has not prescribed a particular dress style, giving us ample room to accommodate our needs, circumstances and tastes. Any garment that accommodates these principles will be an Islamic dress. This is the Islamic formula to dress for eternal success.

*Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad):*

*that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 33 AL-AHZAB, V: 59]

### 2. What Does Islam Say about Marriage?

Marriage and the family are central in the Islamic system of life. Islam recognizes the religious virtue, the social necessity, and the moral advantages of marriage. There are many sayings by Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) which go as far as to state that when a Muslim marries, he has thereby perfected half his faith. As marriage is a religious duty, moral safeguard, and social commitment, it must be fulfilled. But like all other duties in Islam, it is enjoined only upon those who are capable of meeting the responsibilities involved. Islam views marriage as a strong bond and a challenging commitment. It is a commitment to life itself, to society, and to the dignified and meaningful survival of the human race. It is a commitment that married partners make to one another as well as to Allâh. It is the kind of commitment in which they find mutual fulfillment and self-realization, love and peace, compassion and serenity, as well as comfort and hope. Even at the most trying times of married life, and in the midst of

legal disputes and litigation, the Qurân reminds of God's law of the partners; it commands them to be kind to one another, truly charitable toward one another, and above all to be dutiful to God. Islam regards marriage to be the normal, natural course for women just as it is for men.

*And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 30 AL-RUM, V: 21]

### **3. What Does Islam Say about Divorce?**

Islam considers marriage a very serious commitment and has prescribed certain measures to make the marital bond as permanent as possible. When the parties enter into a marital contract, the intention must be clear to make the bond permanent. The parties must strive to meet the conditions of proper age, general compatibility, good will, consent, honorable intentions, and judicious discretion. However, to insist on the permanent character of marriage does not mean that the marital contract is absolutely indissoluble. The marriage contract should be taken as a serious, permanent bond. But if it does not work well for any valid reason, it may be terminated in kindness and honor, with equity and peace. The success of a marriage depends on mutual love and trust between the husband and wife. If there exists no love or trust between them, it will be meaningless to continue with the relationship. Divorce is possible for both man and woman though the manner varies depending on whether it is the man or the woman who seeks it. The procedures for getting a divorce are very clearly and elaborately described in the Qurân. Though divorce is permissible in Islam, it is also the most hated thing to Allâh.

*O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye treat them with harshness, that ye may take away part of the dower ye have given them, -except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary live with them on a footing of kindness and equity.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 4 AL-NISA', V: 19]

### **4. What Does Islam Say about Husband-Wife Relationship?**

Marriage is the foundation of society and family life. The main objects of marriage are that both husband and wife enjoy the pleasures of life with purity, and that the continuity of the human race is maintained with dignity. These objects can be realized best when the relations between husband and wife are good and there is love, sympathy, and good understanding between them. Peace of mind and a happy life are greatly dependent on the mutual relationship that develops between husband and wife. In an atmosphere of love and respect, marriage proves to be a source of joy and satisfaction. The ideal that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union through the physical. Good marriages require patience, kindness, humility, sacrifice, empathy, love, understanding, and forgiveness. Islam imposes certain duties on both husband and wife in return for certain rights which it assigns to each of them. When both husband and wife fulfill their duties, they will enjoy their rights. According to Islam, a woman is not required to work in order to earn her living. Her husband is responsible to ensure a decent standard of living for her, according to his means. He must discharge this duty cheerfully, without reproach or injury. She has the right to seek divorce on grounds that she is not being supported by her husband. When a woman earns something from her work, her earnings belong totally to her. A husband is commanded by the law of God to treat his wife with equity, to respect her feelings, and to show her kindness and consideration. No man is allowed to keep his wife with the intention of inflicting harm on her or hindering her freedom. The main obligation of the wife as a partner in marital relationship is to contribute to the success of the marriage as much as possible. She must be attentive to the comforts and well-being of her mate. The wife must be faithful, trustworthy, and honest. The husband's possessions are her trust. If she has access to any portion thereof, or if she is entrusted with any fund, she must discharge her duty wisely and prudently. She should leave nothing to be desired with regards to devotion and earnestness and should believe that, for her, the happiness in both worlds lies in fulfilling all her duties. The husband, on his part, ought to consider his wife as a blessing of Allâh and he should always give her his love, hold her in high esteem, and look after her needs and comforts to the best of his ability. If she makes a mistake, he should overlook it and try to correct her with tact and patience.

*They (your wives) are your garments and ye are their garments.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 2 AL-BAQARAH, V: 187]

### **5. What Does Islam Say about Bringing up of Children?**

Islam considers bringing up of children in the proper manner as very important. This is because whatever habits they learn in their childhood do not leave them for the rest of their lives. It is the responsibility of parents to bring them up as responsible members of the society and loyal citizens of the nation. Responsibility for and compassion toward the child is a matter of religious importance. Children are born in a state of *fitra* (purity) and then their parents teach them to be believers or unbelievers. Parents should take care of the material as well as the spiritual needs of their children so that they are successful in this world and in the Hereafter. Hence, it is the duty of parents to train children in such a way so that they grow up to be believing, practicing Muslims. One of the most important aspects of raising children to be Muslims is to introduce the idea that Allâh is also happy with their good actions. Thus they begin to associate good behavior with actions done for gaining the pleasure of Allâh. Children should be made to feel that they are important members of the family and that they have a part to play in its growth and well-being. Humility should be inculcated in them at a very young age. Children should be encouraged to be around with relatives and friends from whom they can pick up good manners and values. Children should be made to do chores in line with their age after convincing them that they are doing something important and rewarding. They should be appreciated for every good thing that they do. They should not be abused, scorned, or humiliated in front of others. They should not be discriminated on any grounds. Love, kindness, affection, and mercy should dominate in all interactions of parents with children.

*O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong: and bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs. And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for God loveth not any arrogant boaster. And be moderate in thy pace, and lower thy voice; for the harshest of sounds without doubt is the braying of the ass.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 31 LUQMAN, V: 17-19]

## 6. What Does Islam Say about the Duties of Children?

Islam recognises family as a basic social unit. In a family, cordial and intimate parent-child relationship is very important. After Allâh, parents are the ones who give us innumerable favors. They provide protection, food, and clothing to the newly born. The mother sacrifices her comforts and sleep to provide comfort to her children. The father works hard to provide for their physical, educational, psychological and spiritual needs. So, parents merit consideration, love, compassion, and mercy. As between parents, the mother has more rights than the father. Islam views all parents are well-wishers of children. So it is the duty of children to obey their orders and act accordingly. They should never utter a harsh word towards either of their parents. It is the instinctive obligation of parents to protect their children from physical and moral harm. To this end they may resort to advice, rebuke, and even punishing them. It is the duty of children to help their parents in any household chore in which they can help. It is also the duty of grown-up children to repay their parents by way of caring for them and looking to their physical and financial needs in their old age.

*Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 17 AL-ISRA', V: 23 & 24]

## 7. What Does Islam Say about the Rights of the Neighbor?

Neighbors of all kinds enjoy a great number of privileges conferred on them by Islam. Nobody can be a true believer unless his neighbors feel secure and safe from his side. Nobody can be a true believer, if his neighbors remain hungry while he has his belly full. He who is best to his neighbors will enjoy the neighborhood of Allâh on the Day of Resurrection. Sharing of presents, gifts, joys, and sorrows among neighbors should be done. The Prophet is reported to have said that he thought that neighbors would be granted the right to a share of one's inheritance when he listened to Angel Gabriel speaking to him about the rights of the neighbor in a very emphatic manner. Neighborhood is not limited just to houses. For a trader, the traders around him are his neighbors; for a worker, his coworkers are his neighbors; for a student, his class mates are his neighbors; for a traveler, the people sitting around him in a bus, train, or a plane are his neighbors; for a village, the villages around it are its neighbors; for a city or province, the cities and provinces around it are its neighbors; and for a country, the countries around it are its neighbors. Therefore, if every one of us, whether as an ordinary citizen, a trader, or even as a ruler of a country made sure that the rights of his neighbor are protected, all the problems of this world would disappear overnight.

*Seest thou one who denies the Judgment (to come)? Then such is the (man) who repulses the orphan (with harshness), and encourages not the feeding of the indigent. So woe to the worshippers*

*Who are neglectful of their prayers, those who (want but) to be seen (of men), But refuse (to supply) (even) neighborly needs.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 107 AL-MA'UN, V: 1-7]

## 8. What Does Islam Say about Employer-Employee Relationship?

Islam has given high regard for work. All human beings have the right to enter upon any lawful profession or occupation and to conduct any lawful trade or business. No work is menial or degrading. Those who work and earn their living by their own labor must be respected, provided that the work is lawful and is in an honest and sincere manner. Justice and fair dealings are the basic values of Islam. Employers and employees should be honest and must deal with each other justly. They must fear Allâh in the exercise of their rights and duties. An employer must establish good relationships with his employees and labor workforce. Exploitation of any kind is alien to Islam. It is injustice to deprive others of their rights. The workers should be treated with dignity and honor. Such a relationship must be based on equality and goodwill. Islam upholds the honor and the dignity of the workers. An employer should declare the wages to the worker before the worker embarks on the required work. All agreements, whether oral or written, must be clear, transparent, just, and lawful. Employees should know their duties and responsibilities. They should also be told about their rights in terms of vacations, leaves, compensations, etc. Employers should not assign their workers tasks that they are not capable of doing. Islam requires workers also to maintain good relations with their employers. Workers have to fulfill their duties towards their employers to the best of their abilities and talents. Workers have the right to exercise the freedom of association because it helps their work and socialization. It can also help workers to seek justice for their rights and bargaining power to receive proper remuneration.

*And O my people! Give just measure and weight, nor withhold from the people the things that are their due: commit not evil in the land with intent to do mischief.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 11 HUD, V: 85]

## 9. How Does Islam View Jesus and Mary?

An extensive chapter of the Qurân, *Maryam*, is named after Mary and another chapter, *Ali Imran*, is named after Mary's ancestors. Mary is referred to as having been purified by Allâh and chosen as the most exalted of all women. These two chapters of the Qurân provide vivid accounts of the virgin birth of Jesus, the miracles that he performed, and his preaching. The Jews accused Mary of being an adulteress for having had a child before marriage. Not knowing what to do, she stared helplessly at the newborn child. Then, to her amazement, the newborn child started to speak

proclaiming that he was the prophet of God. Thus the first miracle performed by Jesus (Peace be upon him), according to the Qurân, is that he protected the honor of his mother by speaking from his cradle. There is reference in the Qurân to the fact that Jesus performed other miracles of healing and bringing the dead back to life. A significant point about the Muslim beliefs about Jesus (Peace be upon him) is the total rejection of the story of crucifixion. The Qurân does not explain what actually happened except that Allâh employed a strategy that deceived the Jews and raised the Prophet to the sky. A popular explanation of this great event is that Jesus (Peace be upon him) was taken away to heaven by four angels just before the arrest, and that Judas was made to look like Jesus so that he was arrested and crucified instead of Jesus (Peace be upon him). This leads on to the belief that Jesus (Peace be upon him) will return to earth to complete his life, to establish Islam as the world religion, to destroy Christianity, and to signal the nearness of the end of the world. He will then die and be buried, some say in Medina, next to Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him).

*The angels said: "O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God. "He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company) of the righteous."*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 3 ALI IMRAN, V: 45-46]

### **SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

- Keep yourselves far from envy; it eats up and takes away good actions, like as fire eats up and burns wood.
- He who covets another's property, his sorrow shall be prolonged.
- Paradise lies at the feet of thy mother.
- He is the most perfect Muslim whose disposition is best; and the best of you are they who behave best to their wives.
- A virtuous wife is a man's best treasure.
- The thing which is lawful, but disliked by God, is divorce.
- No father can give his child a better gift than good manners, good character and good education.
- He who wishes to enter Paradise must please his father and mother.
- That person is not a perfect Muslim who eats his fill, and leaves his neighbors hungry.
- The best of friends is he who is best in behavior and character.
- It is better to associate with a good friend than to remain in solitude, while being alone is better than dealing with a vicious companion.
- Adopt a cordial attitude towards your relatives and neighbors and with whomever you keep company and associate.
- Social gatherings should be marked by good faith, divulging the secret of a friend is breach of faith.
- You should not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you should deal with them with forgiveness and kindness.
- You will not enter Paradise until you have faith, and you will not complete your faith until you love one another.

## **CHAPTER 9**

# **Some Clarifications about Islam**

### **I. Are Muslim Women Oppressed?**

For the critics of Islam, the *Hijab* has long been a symbol of the oppression of women in the Islamic world. But Muslims regard it as a symbol of cultural and religious self-assertion and reject the idea that Muslim women are downtrodden. Women are equal to men in the sight of God but they have in some respects different roles in life because of their different natures. They differ psychologically, physiologically, and biologically from men. This makes them more suitable than men for certain responsibilities and less suitable than men for others. Islam recognises these differences. In a truly Islamic society, women have the right to obtain education, the right to have their own independent property, the right to work to earn money if they need it or want it, the right to keep all her own money, equality of reward for equal deeds, the right to participate fully in public life and have their voices heard by those in power, the right to negotiate marriage terms of her choice, the right to provisions from the husband for all her needs and more, the right to obtain divorce from her husband even on the grounds that she simply cannot stand him, and many more. Critics use the plight of Muslim women in some countries to suggest that Islam is inherently evil and unjust to women. This is because of the cultural habits of those regions or the ignorance of people about their religion. It is unjust to attribute to Islam the evil deeds of some Muslims in such matters.

*O mankind! Reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single Person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- Fear God, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for God ever watches over you.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 4 NISA', V: 1]

## 2. Does Islam Encourage Polygamy?

Islam did not start the system of polygamy. It was prevalent in all societies right from very ancient times. In seventh-century Arabia, when a man could have as many wives as he chose, to prescribe only four was a limitation. Islam did not do this to encourage polygamy. Islam has allowed a man to marry more than one wife. This has been done for the purpose of solving many social and domestic problems, which a family is confronted with from time to time. Many are the times when the general welfare of both man and woman depends upon the husband marrying another wife. It is allowed only because adultery is more detestable than polygamy. It is also a system of support for women who are not financially or economically independent. A man can have more than one wife, if and only if, he can sustain her, and is equally fair to all his wives in all matters. It should be remembered that polygamy is not a compulsory thing nor is it advocated. It is just a permission with certain limitation and conditions.

*If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly, then marry only one.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 4 NISA', V: 3]

## 3. What Is Jihad?

*Jihad* simply means “effort” or “struggle,” which implies “striving to do good.” *Jihad* is to restrain one’s soul from impure and evil desires. It is the “spiritual struggle” of each man, against vice, passion and ignorance. When a person strives to give good education to his children, his action is a *Jihad*. It is a *Jihad* if one finishes his assignments in a proper manner. It is a *Jihad* if one controls his anger even when provoked. The word, *Jihad*, when associated with the word “terrorism” becomes an absurd term. *Jihad* in the form of armed combat is permissible only when one is displaced from his home or birthplace or when his freedom of religion is denied. Islam, the religion of tolerance and forgiveness, holds human life as precious. It considers the killing of an innocent human being a grave sin and the most horrible crime against humanity. Muslims who have learned the teachings of Islam in the right perspective will never indulge in any act of aggression against innocent people. Acts of terrorism are equivalent to injustice done to human beings. Terrorist activities carried out in the name of Islam against innocent human beings are actually assaults against Islam. It is unfair to hold Islam responsible for the crimes carried out by a miniscule minority of extremists, or to characterize the religion as a faith lending support to violence and terrorism.

*Allâh forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loveth those who are just.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 60 AL-MUMTAHINAH, V: 8]

## 4. Was Islam Spread by the Sword?

Among the most widely believed myths about Islam is the myth of forcible conversion to Islam. Many people have the false notion that Islam is so widespread in the world today simply because of a “holy campaign of terror” carried out by the early Muslims to convert non-Muslims to Islam. While it is true that in many places where Muslim armies went to liberate people or the land, they did carry the sword as that was the weapon used at that time. In many places where there are Muslims now - in Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Eastern Europe, and many parts of Africa - there are no records of any Muslim armies going there. Islam in all these regions replaced so many other well-established religions like Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The “Sword of Islam” did not convert all the non-Muslim minorities in Muslim countries. Ten percent of all Arabs are Christians. In India, where Muslims ruled for 700 years, they are still a minority. In the U.S.A., Islam is the fastest growing religion and has over six million followers. Islam is an amazing blend of simplicity and rationality: a very simple religion yet very rational at the same time. The unambiguous and uncompromising belief in the Unity, the Greatness, and the Wisdom of the Creator of the universe, is unparalleled among other religions. The moral and intellectual superiority of Islam over all other religions has manifested itself so clearly throughout its history. This accounts for the fact that Islam continues to be the fastest growing religion in the world despite all of the ills of Muslims everywhere.

*Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for God loveth not transgressors.*

[THE QURÂN, CH: 2 AL-BAQARAH, V: 190]

## 5. Does Islam Promote Violence and Terrorism?

Allâh sent prophets to all lands in order to preach the message of Islam. The meaning of the word, ‘Islam’ signifies the peace that one can attain by submitting his life to his Creator. Thus Islam is meant to provide peace to the individual as well as peace and tranquility in the world all over because it is the religion of peace, hope, harmony, goodwill, and brotherhood. It is unfortunate that the perpetrators of various terrorist acts have spread the misconception that Islam promotes violence and terrorism. Sometimes, violence is a human response of oppressed people as it happens in Palestine. Although this is wrong, they think that this is the last thing that they can do in their desperate situation. These people who resort to violence are called terrorists while the armed Israeli settlers, who have deprived the Palestinians of their homeland, are not called so. As far as Islam is concerned, it categorically rejects and condemns every form of terrorism. It does not provide any cover or justification for any act of violence, be it committed by an individual, a government, or a group. Terrorism and resistance are two different things. Resistance by the people of an occupied country like Palestine or Iraq is a sacred and fundamental right and duty in all cultures, old and new, and enjoys sanction even in international law laid down by western countries. But acts of violence committed by individuals

causing casualties to innocent civilians cannot be considered as acts of war or resistance, irrespective of whether they are done out of frustration or revenge. It has always been a part of the propaganda orchestrated against Islam that whenever such acts are done by Muslims, they are accounted in the name of Islam.

*Nor can goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: Then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!*

[THE QURÂN CH: 41 FUSSILAT, V: 34]

## **6. Can Muslims Co-Exist with Non-Muslims in Peace?**

Humankind was created from one male and female. But generations that followed divided themselves into many tribes, races, and nations. Men are also of many colors and they speak quite a lot of languages. Islam is basically and essentially pluralistic in nature. This can be understood from the fact that Muslims are permitted to eat food of the Jews and Christians. A Muslim bridegroom can marry a Christian or Jew bride without conversion to Islam. The Islamic state guarded not only the lives, but also the honor of non-Muslims. It guaranteed the protection of their religious beliefs and rituals and the maintenance of their personal laws, institutions, and endowments. Islam is a religion of mercy, tolerance, and moderation. It teaches its followers to be moderate in dealing with others and in interaction with members of other faiths. The practices of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) and his Companions indicate that non-Muslims were treated in the most respectful and amicable of ways. Islam teaches moderation and rejects all sorts of extremism. It allows Muslims to have a good relationship with non-Muslims to a certain limit.

*Serve God, and join not any partners with Him; and do good- to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For God loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious.*

[THE QURÂN CH: 4 NISA', V: 36]

### **SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIM)**

- 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 is not merciful to him who is not so to humankind. He who is not kind to God's creation and to his own children, God will not be kind to him.
- Your smiling in your brother's face is charity; and your exhorting man to virtuous deeds is charity; and your prohibiting the forbidden is charity; and your showing men the road, in the land in which they lose it, is charity; and your assisting the blind is charity.
- The most excellent *Jihad* is that for the conquest of self.
- Do not argue with your brother, nor depress him with sarcastic humor, and do not make a promise so as to fail in fulfilling your covenant.
- The strong is not the one who overcomes people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger.
- The proof of a Muslim's sincerity is that he pays no attention to that which is not his business.
- He is not of me who, when he speaks, speaks falsely; who, when he promises, breaks his promises; and who, when trust is reposed in him, fails in his trust.
- Do you know what the rights of a neighbor are? Help him if he asks your help; give him relief if he seeks your relief; lend him if he needs a loan; show him concern if he is distressed; nurse him when he is ill; attend his funeral if he dies; congratulate him if he meets any good; sympathize with him if any calamity befalls him; do not block his air by raising your building high without his permission; harass him not; give him a share when you buy fruits, and if you do not give him, bring your buys right to your house quietly and let not your children take them out to excite the anger of his children.