

The New Muslim's Book of
The Fundamentals
of Islam

Their Significance

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Dedicated to

***the Souls of my Parents and
Forefathers***

“My Lord! Bestow on them thy Mercy as
they cherished me in childhood.”[24:17]

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Foreword

Allah's will (Be done)! There is no power
But with Allah, the Almighty, praise be to Allah, the
Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds, and PBU the
Prophet Mohammed and his progeny. Quran states,
*“When comes the help of Allah, And you see that the
people enter Allah's religion (Islam) in crowds, So
glorify the praise of your Lord, And ask for His
forgiveness, verily, He is the One Who accepts the
repentance and forgives.”*[110:1-3]

Dear reader, the aim of writing this small book
is a unique one. It has been observed that the
bookshelves which contain books for new Muslims,
possess many publications which deal with the
fundamentals and basics of Islam. No doubt these books
are well-written and present the facts related to the
basics of Islam elaborately and extensively.

However, very few publications have dealt
with the *significance* of the fundamentals of Islam. This
small book attempts to present not only the
fundamentals of Islam, but also the *significance* of each
pillar of Islam. It tries to highlight the basics of Islam
and clothe them with their practical utility not only to
the individual Muslim, but also to the society as a
whole. It avoids presenting the fundamentals of Islam as
just rituals like those of other faiths, but lays emphasis
on depicting their practical implications and relatedness

to the basic needs of human society. However, the writer admits that the book has not ventured into the minute details of the basics and fundamentals of Islam, rather, it concentrates on their significance. The writer feels that the new embracer of Islam is in a real need for such unique information that satisfies him and forms a foundation for developing his Islamic intellect by further readings.

The writer expresses his high sense of gratitude to all those who contributed to the publication of this Islamic material. May Allah, the Almighty, accept and add it to the deposit of their virtuous deeds and manifold His blessings for them.

Finally, we pray to Allah, the Almighty, to increase our Islamic knowledge and help us to devote it to the service of Islam.

Dr. Abdelrahman Mohammed Yeddi Elnoor, 2003

Welcome to the Religion of Islam

My dear brother/sister: Welcome to the religion of Islam. Welcome to the religion that provides the person who believes in it and practices it as a method of life with an inner sense of security and spiritual satisfaction. In fact, if we become true to ourselves, get rid of all prejudices and look at ourselves and observe our surroundings, we will find that the personal defects nursed by people and the problems which exist around us, can be cured and solved only by the glorious teachings of Islam. Therefore, you are really blessed because, by embracing Islam, you have realized the true Faith, come to, and enjoyed as well, the sublime vision and reached the shore of salvation. We congratulate you and hope that you achieve a steady progress in acquiring the details of the teachings of Islam by further readings. In this short note on Islam, we would like to introduce you to the fundamentals of Islam. It explains for you the basics of the faith and the basic duties of Islam and their significance which are the foundation on which your further knowledge and practices of Islam may rest.

Basics of Faith

Dear brother/sister: Let's have a look at the basics of faith in Islam. They are as follows:

1. Belief in Oneness of God (Monotheism) and that Prophet Mohammed is His Final Prophet:

Surat Al Ikhlas (112:1-4) of Quran tells us about the essence of Monotheism. It states: "Say 'Allah is one, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten, None is equal to Him.'" These Quranic verses display the concept of monotheism ('Tawheed' or oneness of God) and present it free from all human distortion and interpolation. They emphasize that God is not many. He is only one. The concept of 'Tawheed' or monotheism had existed since the beginning of human life on earth. The first man- Adam- was the first prophet of God. He was a monotheist and conveyed the same message of monotheism to his offspring. Polytheism, throughout human history, tried to overthrow monotheism. Therefore, God sent prophets to renew the concept and spirit of monotheism in the hearts and deeds of people. In fact, monotheism had been the basic mission and message on which messengers of Allah had always stressed. However, Satan always targeted monotheism and corrupted the proper intuition of

people. Consequently, in the pre-Islam period, polytheism reigned. It turned Man into a slave of idols and a worshipper of his own craved stones. Islam dawned and Quran was sent to save humanity from polytheism and restore monotheism. In fact, monotheism is the basic concept which the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) conveyed to people. In other words, Islam replaced polytheism with monotheism and consequently monotheism spread all over the world. It called upon Man to abolish all forms of polytheism and believe in one God.

Believing in one God is the first and the most important pillar of Faith. We believe that He is one. He is the Almighty. Allah alone is the real deity and none other than Allah has any right to be worshipped. We must believe that Allah alone has the absolute authority over everything in the universe. Man should never think that worship can be devoted to anyone else because Allah, alone, can determine Man's destiny in this world and in the Hereafter. It means that Allah is the Creator of the universe and the Master of Human lot. Quran says, "There is not a moving (living) creature but He has grasp (full control over) of its forelock(destiny)."[11:56] At another point it says, "He knows you well when He created you from the earth (Adam) and when you were fetuses in your mother's womb."[53:32] Thus, since He creates Man and knows Man's points of weakness, then, Allah alone can guide Man and show him the right way.

Man should fear only Allah and worship Him because he is answerable to Him. If Man realizes the majesty of Allah, he will not fear any other creature on earth nor will he think that any power, other than that of Allah, can determine his fate.

Believing in Allah presupposes believing in His existence and presence. There are many factors which, if properly employed, will always make Man realize the existence of Allah. They are embodied in human intuition, human intellect, human sense and legislation or *'Shar'a which derives from the holy Quran and the prophet's way of life and sayings; that is Sunna.*

As far as human intuition is concerned, when every man is born, he is a monotheist by intuition. His intuition and nature accept believing in the existence of one God. It means that he is a Muslim by nature and Islam is the intuitive and natural religion of every human being. However, if he was a child of non-Muslim parents, it is his parents who would disfigure the genuine Islamic intuition existing within him and divert him, as he grows, into another religion whatsoever it may be. They deprive him of enjoying the concept of monotheism. In this regard, God stresses that Man should remain a monotheist throughout his life and worship Allah. He, the Almighty, advises, "So set you (O Mohammed PBUH) your face towards the religion of pure Islamic monotheism Hanifa (worship none but

Allah Alone), Allah's Fitrah (Allah's monotheist intuition) with which He created mankind, no change let there be in Khalqillah (the religion of Islamic monotheism) that is the straight religion, but most of Men know not." [30:30]

As far as the human intellect is concerned, every rational and wise human intellect can't miss the fact that the universe, with its contents such as man, animal, plantation, skies, seasons, etc, and the systematic functioning of the norms of the universe, has not come into existence by chance. Chance can't create such organized and systematic norms. Each of them has been created and organized by capable Creator. To address our intellect, Quran says, "Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, and in the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind, and the water (rain) which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alive therewith after its death, and the moving (living) creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the veering of winds and clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are Aayat (proofs, evidences, signs, etc,) for people of understanding." [2:164] If there had been more than one God, the systematic and organized functioning of the universe would have been disrupted. Quran argues, "Had there been therein (in the heavens and the earth) gods besides Allah, then verily both (heavens and earth)

would have been ruined.”[21:22] At another part Quran gives the same argument by stating, “Say (O Mohammed to those polytheists, pagans, etc) ‘If there have been other gods along with Him (Allah) as they claim, then they would certainly have sought out a way to the Lord of the Throne (seeking His pleasure to be near to Him”).[17:42] The holy Quran continues to address human intellect and emphasize that Allah is the Creator of Man and the Universe. It exposes the baseless claims of the unbelievers by saying, “Were they created by nothing, or were they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they have no firm belief.”[52:35-36] Therefore, every rational and logical human intellect will not miss the fact that the universe, with its systematic norms, is a concrete evidence of the existence and oneness of God. Just a glance at creation of human being would make it clear that he has been created in the best form. Allah, the Almighty says, “We have indeed created man in the best of moulds.” [95:4] In another verse of the Quran, Allah, the Almighty says, “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 (foetus) 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 Allah, the best to create!”[23:12-14] Thus, the

Darwinian claim that the human being was originally a monkey is completely wrong and has no any base. All these Quranic reference do not only prove the existence of Allah and His ability, but also prove his oneness and thus strengthen the concept of monotheism.

As far as the Legislation or '*Shar'a*' is concerned, all revealed religions, including Islam, tell us that all prophets (PBU them) came to emphasize the existence of Allah and stress His absolute oneness. They asked their people to worship Allah and follow His teachings. The prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) crowned the efforts of all previous prophets (PBU them) and conveyed, for all people, the message of Islam (monotheism) that raises Man to the highest level of humanity. The practice of Islamic way of life clearly reveals, to the sincere worshipper, the existence and oneness of Allah.

As far as the human sense is concerned, there is no doubt that Man feels the existence of God and seeks His aid. When one faces difficulties, he usually seeks the help from God and because God is very merciful and kind, people find that their call for Him to interfere and save them is always answered. Quran, through an impressive verse, reminds Man of the mercy of Allah by saying, "Is not He (Allah) Who responds to the distressed one, when he (the distressed) calls Him, and Who removes the evil, and makes you inheritors of the earth, generations after generations, Is there any ilah

(god) with Allah? Little is that you remember.”[27:62] There are many cases which reveal the answering of the supplication and saving of sincere believers. There are many references in Quran which tell us that Allah responded to His prophets (PBU them) and answered their call and appealing. Quran opines, “And (remember) Noah, when he supplicated (to Us) aforetime, And We are the Best to hear prayer. We listened to his invocation and saved (delivered) him and his family from great distress.”[21:76] Another verse from the Quran relates: “And (remember) Ayoub (Job), when he cried to his Lord: ‘Verily, distress has seized me, and you are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy.’” “So We answered his call, and We removed the distress that was on him, and We restored his family to him (that he had lost), and the like thereof along with them, as a mercy from Ourselves and a Reminder for those who worship Us.” [21:83-84] We have the story of Dhan-Nun which is narrated in Quran as follows: “And the story of Dhan-Nun (Jonah) when he cried through the darkness (saying), La ilah illa Anta (None has the right to be worshipped but You [O Allah]) Glorified (and Exalted) are You (above all that (evil) they associate with you) Truly, I have been of the wrong doers.” “So We answered his call, and delivered him from the distress and thus We do deliver the believers (who believe in the oneness of Allah, abstain from evil and work righteousness.”[21:87-88] Even at present,

one feels and sees the results of the just intervention of God and His answer to the call of Man.

Therefore, the above factors indicate that it is only Allah who deserves to be worshipped. Quran says, "Such is Allah, your Lord! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Creator of all things, So worship Him (alone), and He is the Disposer of affairs over all things." [6:102] At present, there are few people who still live in the margin of history and disbelieve in the existence of God. By the grace of God, now, the majority of the people in the world believe in the existence of God, but unfortunately, a large number of them are still polytheists. Although they believe in the existence of God, yet they call Him by wrong names or make material incarnations to Him or call human beings to be his sons or make equals and associate gods with Him, etc. Some people mistook creatures and things to be deities and indulged in worshipping them. Such people went astray and have not yet realized the grave error they are committing by opting for such abnormal behaviours. Quran addresses such people by saying, "Those whom you worship beside Him (Allah) but only names which you and your forefathers have forged (coined), for which Allah has sent down no authority. The command (or judgment) is for none but Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him." [12:40] Quran challenges the polytheists by saying, "Say (O Mohammed to those polytheists, idol

worshippers, pagans, etc) ‘Call upon those whom you claim (to be associate gods) besides Allah, they possess not even the weight of an atom either in the heavens or on the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor there is for Him (Allah) any supporter from among them.’”[34:22] Another verse from Quran challenges the polytheists and exposes the falsity of their claims. It says, “O Mankind! A similitude has been coined, so listen to it (carefully): Verily, those on whom you call besides Allah, cannot create (even) a fly, even if they come together for the purpose, and if the fly snatches away a thing from them, they will have no power to release it from the fly, so weak are (both) the seeker and the sought-No just estimate have they made of God: for God is He Who is strong and able to carry out His will.” [22:73-74]

Thus, Islam re-stresses what had been emphasised by previous revealed religions, namely, believing in oneness of God. However, being a complete and inclusive way of life, Islam adds to them believing in the prophethood of Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny). Thus, believing in Mohammed’s prophethood is part and parcel of the first faith in Islam; namely, believing in the oneness of God. In fact, believing in prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) complements the first faith. Allah (the Exalted) sent the prophet Mohammed, (PBUH and his progeny), to conclude the missions of other prophets because, as it

was mentioned earlier, Islam is not a new religion. It is the world's oldest religion. As human life progressed and his life-experience increased by the teachings of earlier forms of Islam, Allah perfected it and conveyed it in a final form through the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny). It means that the holy Quran consolidated the content of the previous scriptures, covered all human issues and dealt with all aspects of human life in a constitutional, legislative, reformative and practical perspective.

In other words, in order to perfect human life, He (Allah) revealed to the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) the inclusive Islamic way of life and Quran asserts that it complements and supplements the previous holy revealed Books and covers as well all human affairs. Believing in Allah means obeying Him and following His guidance. Believing in the prophethood of Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) means accepting the final guidance of Allah which was revealed through him and managing the affairs of life according to its teachings. In other words, Islam is capable of guiding us in each and every walk of our life and giving us a God-centered approach to life. Therefore, it came to be the most perfect way of life and the most practical approach to each and every current problem which is troubling human society.

However, the sources of Islam are Quran and the ways of life of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and

his progeny) and the prophet's progeny interpretation of Quran and the ways of life of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny). The prophet's Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) did not only convey the Quran to mankind, but also lived according to its teachings and taught it, as well, to people. Thus, the prophet's way of life, his teachings and his sayings are the source of Islamic way life. If we want to know about the way of life and sayings of the prophet, we have to get them from a reliable source. The reliable source in this regard are the Itra (the progeny of the prophet PBU them all). In other words, prophet's way of life is taught through Itra. They are the reliable source of Islam after Quran and its prophet (PBUH and his progeny). In other words, they are the reliable source from which we can derive Islamic way of life. Their life embodies the life of the prophet (PBUH and his progeny). The prophet (PBUH and his progeny) asks us to take the teachings of Islam from his Itra. He says, "I have left with you what if you stick to it, you will never go astray. They are Quran and my Itra (progeny). They are the strong rope of Allah and they never get separated from each other till they come to my basin in paradise."

Thus, Quran is the elaborate and extensive way of life that covers each and every aspect of our life. Prophet's way of life is the practical way of life that derives from Quran, guides Man and shows him that he can live according to the teachings of Allah and avoid

the things prohibited by Him. They are the most excellent and practical embodiment of the holy Quran. Therefore, praising the prophet's personality and way of life Quran states, "And verily, you (O Mohammed) are on an exalted standard of character." [68:4] It means that the sayings and way of life of the prophet are the practical vision of the method of human life conveyed through the holy Quran. This is a clear evidence of the fact that Quran and the way the prophet lived it, provide the Islamic code of conduct that establishes the culture of Islam. Therefore, without this belief, namely, belief in prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny), belief in God will remain incomplete. If we really love God, we must believe in and follow the prophet Mohammed PBUH. Quran says, "Say (O Mohammed to mankind): 'If you (really) love Allah, then follow me (i.e., accept Islamic monotheism, follow the Quran), Allah will love you and forgive your sins and Allah is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'" [3:31]

2. Faith in Justice:

Justice is one of the basics of faith. In fact, justice is the most important value on which God has emphasized in all holy books. Without justice human life will turn into a chaos or nurse continuously the seeds of chaos which will explode at any time and harm humanity. The mother of all evils which exist in life is the absence of justice. As God has created Man to

rehabilitate the earth according to His teachings and as His teachings are in the form of systematic norms that organize human life, then the absence of justice would cripple those Godly norms and annihilate them. Therefore, God emphasized on them in each and every holy book. Allah says, "We sent aforetime our apostles with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong), that men may stand forth in justice." [57:25] In another verse Quran addresses people by saying, "O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, 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 Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do." [5:8] In another verse Quran emphasizes that justice should be the barometer to which we have to stick towards everyone whether a relative, a rich person or a poor person. It says, "O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor." [4:135] Thus, justice is the axis around which Islam rotates. It is one of the factor that develops piety, reduces aggression and fosters harmony in the society.

3. Faith in Prophetood:

Believing in prophets is the third basic of Faith. Throughout the history, Allah sent many prophets. We,

human beings, do not know the exact number of prophets who were sent. The holy Quran mentioned the names of only 25 prophets. But there are many more of them. Only Allah knows them. Allah says to the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny), “And, indeed We had sent messengers before you (O Mohammed); of some of them We have related to you their story and of some We have not related to you their story.”[40:78] However, all prophets were Muslims because the religion which Allah accepted for human beings since the creation of Adam PBUH has been, and still is, the religion of Islam.

Prophets were sent by Allah as the messengers of good tidings for those who believe and as warners of those who disbelieve. They were sent to rescue the people from the practice of worshiping stones, evil spirits, human beings, etc. They opposed such stray practices and called people to worship Allah only. They exerted all efforts to direct people towards proper religious, moral, social, economic and political conducts. Unfortunately, in spite of the fact that prophets came to save people, they always faced mocking and all kinds of opposition, torturing and plotting. Disbelievers used to call prophets ‘magician’, ‘mad’, and sometimes they even killed prophets. Consequently, the disbelievers were punished by Allah. The anger and fury of Allah came to them in different

forms of punishment such as heavy rains, floods, hurricanes, etc.

However, Quran asserts that all prophets are but human beings. Like Angels, they also have no share in Allah's divinity or power and none of them is a son of God. In fact, all prophets admitted that they are servants (worshippers) of Allah. For example, in Quran, the prophet Noah said to his nation, "I am a Messenger from the Lord of the Aalameen (mankind, Jinns and all that exists)."[7:61] The prophet Salih PBUH addressed his people by stating: "I am a trustworthy messenger to you." [26:143] The same meaning was expressed by the prophets Lout and Shu'eib (Peace be upon both of them). (See Quranic Verses No.: 26: '162, 178') Preaching his people the prophet Moses PBUH also said, "Restore to me the servants of Allah (i.e., the sons of Israel). Verily, I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust." [44:18] The Quran reminds us what the prophet Jesus (Eesa), the son of Mary PBU both of them, has stated to his people. Quran says, "And 'remember' when Eesa 'Jesus the son of Mary' said, "O sons of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you." [61:6] As far as the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny), who was sent to all mankind, is concerned, Quran says, "Say (O Mohammed) 'O *mankind!* Verily, I am sent to *you all* as the Messenger of Allah." [7:158]

The above verses indicate that the first thing which all prophets had stressed on was that they are

messengers sent by God and that they were sent to convey the same message to their people, namely, the message of monotheism and worshipping Allah. No prophet had aimed to be an object of worship nor had any of them claimed or had the right to say so. Quran confirms this fact by saying, “It is not (possible) for any human being to whom Allah has given the Book and Alhikma (the knowledge and understanding of the laws of religion, etc) and prophethood to say to the people ‘Be my worshippers rather than Allah’s’. On the contrary, (he would say) ‘Be you Rabbaniyun (learned men of religion who practise what they know and also preach others) because you are teaching the Book and you are studying it.”[3:79] Jesus (Eesa) PBUH was a devoted worshipper of Allah. Quran asserts this fact by saying, “The Messiah (Jesus) will never reject to be a servant to Allah.”[4:172] Explaining the peculiarity of the creation of Eesa (Jesus, the son of Maryam) PBUH, Allah resembles it to the creation of Adam PBUH. Quran says, “Verily, the likeness of Eesa (Jesus) before Allah is the likeness of Adam, He (Allah) created him from Dust, then He (Allah) said to him (Be) and he was.” [3:59] Replying those who claim that Jesus is the son of God, Allah emphasized “He [Eesa (Jesus)] was not more than a servant We granted Our favour to him and We made him an example to the children of Israel (i.e., his creation without a father).”[43:59] Jesus himself stresses, “Verily, I am a servant of Allah, He has

given me the scripture and made me a prophet.” [19:30] Clarifying the norms on which prophethood was based since the dawn of history, Allah, the Almighty says, “And We did not send any messenger before you (O Mohammed) but we inspired in him (saying), ‘La ilaha illa Ana’ (none has the right to be worshipped but I, i.e., Allah) so worship Me (Alone and none else).” [21:25] Therefore, it is clear that Eesa (Jesus) PBUH was a Haneefi (a monotheist) and he cherished worshipping Allah throughout his life. Not only that but also monotheism will remain part and parcel of his conviction even on the Judgment Day. This fact is already indicated in Quran when it says, “And (remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection) ‘O Eesa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary)! Did you say unto men worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?’ He (Jesus) will say, ‘Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right (to say), Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it You know what is in my inner self though I don’t know what is in Yours, Truly You, only, are the All Knower of all that is hidden and unseen- Never did I say to them except what You (Allah) did command me to say ‘Worship Allah my Lord and your Lord’ And I was witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a Witness to all things.’”[5:119-120] This

Quranic verse contains a clear admonition and warning to those who claim that Jesus is the son of God.

It is clear that the prophet Jesus PBUH was not more than a prophet with his own miracles. He is neither the son of God nor was he crucified. Allah has given every prophet some miracles that support the fact that he is sent by Allah to teach people the Islamic way of life. However, it is important to remember that the miracle of each prophet was active and valid only by the approval and permission of Allah. It does not clothe the prophet with any divinity. In other words, whatever a miracle given to a prophet, it doesn't make him an object of worship nor does it give him any divine characteristic. For example, Allah devoted many forces of nature and creatures to help the prophet Solaiman (Solomon) PBUH. He gave the wood-stick of Moses PBUH many miraculous abilities. He provided the prophet Jesus with miraculous abilities such as curing people, etc. However, the miraculous powers which prophets were enjoying, ended up with their death, but the miracle which was given to the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) is everlasting. The prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) received the holy Quran. Its miraculous characteristic manifests itself in the fact that it is a challenge to human intellect. If the brightest and most experienced human intellects come together and form an ally, they would never produce anything like it. Quran asks the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his

progeny) to declare, vehemently, “If mankind and the Jinn were together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like, even if they helped one another.”[17:88] Therefore, the aim behind the miracles of the prophets is to convince people that Allah is their Lord and they have to worship Him only.

However, Islam enjoins us to believe in all prophets without any differentiation between them and that Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) is the final prophet. In a verse which depicts the elevated nature of the Islamic ideals, Quran opines, “Say (O Mohammed) ‘we believe in Allah and in what has been sent down to Ibraheem (Abraham) Ismaeel (Ishmael), Ishaque (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob), and what was given to Musa (Moses), Eesa (Jesus) and the prophets from their Lord, we make no distinction between one another among them and to Him (Allah) we have submitted (in Islam).’”[3:84]

4. Faith in Revealed Scriptures:

The fourth basic of Faith is to believe in the revealed Books of God. The holy Books have been revealed to prophets so that they could convey the message of Islam to their fellow human beings. Allah has told us the names of some and not all the prophets He sent, similarly, He mentioned the names of some and not all the revealed Books. For, example, prophet Dawood PBUH received ‘Zaboor’, prophet Musa PBUH received ‘Torat’, prophet Eesa PBUH received

'Injeel'. Allah sent down Quran to the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) as the final divine message to all human beings. However, the Quran reveals that the other old scriptures had been changed, mutilated and interpolated. People of those scriptures mixed up their own ideas, opinions and whims with the words of God so as to serve their own narrow interests and vicious impulses. Different versions and editions of their Books are full of contradictions which were inserted by human beings. Therefore, contradictions ingrained in their Books affected their personality and fueled it with hypocrisy and duplicity. Even today we observe the moral corruption among many priests of those interpolated scriptures. They claim to be men of religion, but they indulge in all kinds of evils such as fornication, sexual abuse of children, etc. If they had adhered to an intact holy scripture, they would not have reached such an extent of moral degeneration.

Only the holy Quran remained intact and has not been changed or interpolated or invaded by contradiction. Therefore, still the Islamic society is based on a respectable moral structure which is admired by people of other religions as well. If we examine the moral and ethical structure of the human society, we will, definitely, find that the Islamic society is at the top of the higher moral and ethical castle of the entire world. This is basically because Quran is pure and intact and people are still sticking to its teachings. God

Himself undertook to protect and preserve Quran from any change or interpolation. Allah assures, "Verily We: It is We Who have sent down the Dhikr (the Quran) and surely, We will guard it (from corruption)."[15:9] Today, large numbers of Muslims, all over the world, recite Quran by heart. Reciting Quran and subjecting it to memory has been the practice of Muslims throughout the history and it will remain so till the Day of Judgment. Therefore, Quran remained and will remain the source of pure Godly-guidance which is capable of dealing with the current problems existing in human society. For example, the current corrupt culture pretends to be a defender of woman's rights, but in fact it has turned her into a cheap flesh to be consumed and chewed by human wolves. It exploits and destroys the dignity and honour of the mother of the future generations. If the human society aims at saving women and elevating them, it must implement the teachings of Quran in the daily life of its people. If the church wants to mend the behavior of its priests, it has to allow them to marry otherwise sexual abuse of children will continue and if it gives permission to priests to marry, at then, it has come to an Islamic value and a wise Christian should ask: Who has prevented them from marrying and consequently made them reach to that abnormal extreme? Definitely, it is not the God Who imposed such an abnormal rule upon them! A human being, if prevented from marriage under any pretext,

can't be morally reliable. If we aspire to eliminate AIDS from the human society, we must believe in, and abide by, the teachings of Quran which enjoin us to be morally straightforward, avoid violating the norms of human morality and intuition, fuel the growing generations with spirituality and morality of Islam. Moreover, if a non-Muslim is observing any kind of terrorist act among Muslims, it is not because Islam teaches them to do so. If we read the holy Quran, we will find that Quran asked Muslims to deter the aggression on them and it forbade Muslims to be the aggressors. Whatever un-Islamic act we see among Muslims derives its teachings not from Quran at all, but from the traditions of secular rulers who ruled Muslims after the death of the prophet (PBUH and his progeny). The history is full of references which contemporary ignorant people wrongly take them as religious orders though they have no relation with the teachings of Quran. Therefore, whoever wants to know about Islam, he should read the Quran and if he has to resort to the books of tradition, he should judge the material he deals with according to the teachings of Quran. If it agrees with Quran, then it is acceptable otherwise he must discard it. There are many contemporary scholars who launched a vigorous activity of purifying the traditions from fabricated sayings which were falsely attributed to the prophet (PBUH and his progeny) though the prophet (PBUH and his progeny) had never said them. Many of such fabricated sayings

were injected into the books of traditions mainly to support unjust rulers who ruled over Muslims, searched for and fabricated whatever justifies their gruesome acts. Therefore, such corrupt rulers always found men who claim to be conversant with religion and who relegated Quran to the background and hid the authentic sayings of the prophet (PBUH and his progeny) that call for justice and piety and presented to the rulers fabricated sayings to satisfy their whims and filthy interests. Those fabricated sayings intruded the books of traditions and became later on a source of terrorism. However, Quran always remained authentic and untouched by any kind of interpolation. Whoever reads Quran will find it an ideal book that teaches ideal values which appeal to every human being. Therefore, new Muslims should concentrate on studying Quran. As far as Hadith (the books of traditions) are concerned, there are many books which Muslims claim to be authentic books of Hadith, but in fact they are mixture of authentic and fabricated Hadith. The prophet (PBUH and his progeny) had never uttered the fabricated sayings. They have been coined by people of ruling systems and inserted among authentic Hadith. It seems that the books of Hadith have undergone through the same mutilation and interpolation which affected the Bible, Torah, and other previous holy books. Therefore, the new Muslim should subject whatever so called Hadith to Quran. If it agrees with Quran, then he can accept it even if the prophet

(PBUH and his progeny) had not said it and in such a case it can be considered as a wisdom and true wisdoms always agree with Quran. If so called Hadith does not agree with Quran, he must reject it because the prophet (PBUH and his progeny) will never contradict the teachings of Quran. Whatever he said fully agrees with Quran because his sayings also, like Quran, are Godly sayings which are revealed through his tongue.

5. Faith in Imamate (Guidance):

It is one of the important basics of faith. It is not possible for a prophet to die without leaving a recommendation that appoints a religious guide so that the people can follow and take the religious knowledge from him. All prophets God had successors. They are appointed by God. Ibraheem (PBUH) was succeeded by two of his sons, Is'haq and Ismael (PBU them). Moses (PBUH) was succeeded in his absence by his brother Haroon (PBUH). Jesus (PBUH) was succeeded by sincere disciples. Therefore, the successor of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH and his progeny) was Ali bin abee Talib (PBUH). The prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) said to Ali (PBUH), "Your position from me like the position of Haroon to Moosa, but there is prophet after me." This is a clear indication that Ali (PBUH) was the successor of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny). In his last Haj (pilgrimage) the prophet held the hand of Ali and said to the pilgrims,

“Whomever I was his guardian (saint), this Ali, he is his guardian.” He also said, “I have left with you what if you stick to it, you will never go astray. They are the Quran and my Itra (progeny). They are the strong rope of Allah and they never get separated from each other till they come to my basin in paradise.”

However, like the followers of the previous prophets who deviated from the teachings of their prophets, Muslims also deviated from the recommendation prescribed by the prophet (PBUH and his progeny) and refused to accept Ali ibn abee Talib (PBU both of them) to be the successor of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny). Those who fabricated Saqeefa and snatched away the role of Ali ibn abee Talib have burnt the authentic sayings of the prophet Mohammed (PBUH and his progeny) as they contained a clear statement about the appointment of Ali ibn abee Talib as the successor. They thought that they would be able to hide the truth. They paved the way for weak Muslims and hypocrites to control the joins of the Muslims' society and coin fabricated sayings which were falsely attributed to the prophet (PBUH and his progeny). They inserted them into the books of tradition and therefore the consequences of that deviation are affecting Muslims till to date as they succeeded in making the progeny of the prophet (PBU them) far away from the administrative affairs of Muslims. Nevertheless, authentic Islam was preserved and disseminated by the Itra. There-

fore, a true Muslim should accept the fact that Ali ibn abee Talib (PBU both of them) was the designated successor of the prophet (PBUH and his progeny), renounce those who deprived Ali ibn abee Talib (PBU both of them) of his rights and harmed the progeny of the prophet and then embrace and study Islam as it was disseminated by the Itra (PBU them). It is important to remember that the only way to reestablish Islam with its complete set of values is through the Quran and the school of Imam Al Sadiq (PBUH) which is based on Quran and the authentic sayings of the prophet as narrated by Itra.

6. Faith in the Existence of Angels:

Believing in the existence of Angels is the sixth basic of Faith. Angels are lighteous creatures (created from light). Their number is large and only Allah knows it. The names and the duties of some of them are mentioned in Quran and Hadith. The following is just names of some of them and is not a coverage. For example, Gabriel is the trustee of revelation. He was in contact with all prophets. Mekaeel is the undertaker of the distribution of boons. Izraeel is the taker of souls. However, whatever their duties may be, they, untiringly, worship Allah and are in a continuous mode of prayers and praise to Him. Some are in a standing posture, some are in the bowing position, some are in prostrating position, some others are sitting on their toes and knees.

It is important to mention, here, that the prayer in Islam includes all these postures and positions.

It is important to keep in mind that Angels have no share in God's divinity nor have they any authority to do anything of their own. They cannot put before God any vision established by themselves. They are, rather, under the direct command of Allah. They enforce the orders of Allah accurately and minutely. In other words, they carry out the orders of Allah obediently and without any deviation. They are endowed with a measure of supernatural power and employed by God so as to carry out duties related to human, animal and other planetary functioning. They look after the continuous existence of human and animal species on earth.

We must remember that we are indebted to Angels. When Allah decided to create Man and make him His vicegerent on earth, Angels expressed their concern that Man may resort to corruption and blood shedding on earth. However, Allah did not exonerate mankind from what the Angels had expected, but He assured them that He knows what they do not know. Quran relates, "And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth." They (angels) said, "Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praises and thanks (exalted be You above all that they associate with You as partners) and sanctify You."

He (Allah) said, "I know that which you do not know." [2:30] Then, Allah created Adam from clay and breathed His spirit into him. He, the Almighty, taught Adam names of all things, and in order to display the merits of His new creature, Allah conducted a competitive test between Adam and the Angels. The Angels could not answer the questions directed to them because they were acquainted only with what He (Allah) had taught them whereas the knowledge which Adam acquired from Allah, was more than theirs. Consequently, Adam emerged triumphant. Allah bade the Angels to bow down before Adam. All the Angels, except Iblis (Satan), obediently and promptly, prostrated before Adam. Iblis (Satan) was originally a Jinn (a creature who was created from fire). He was elevated by Allah to the rank of Angels because, in his worldly life, he worshipped Allah sincerely. However, when it came to the issue of prostration before Adam, Satan (Iblis) emerged jealous, envious, proud, arrogant, haughty and disobedient because he considered that he had been created from a material (fire) that was, as he thought, better than the clay from which Adam was created. Therefore, he, wrongly and snobbishly, thought that it is degrading for him to bow down before a creature created from clay. He tried to undermine mankind by saying, "Shall I prostrate to one whom You (Allah) created from clay?" [17:61] When he refused to obey Allah's order to prostrate before Adam, Allah cursed and

expelled him from Heaven. Therefore, loaded by malevolence and jealousy, Satan, obstinately, determined to tempt, mislead and corrupt Man on earth. Quran exposes for us the evil-intentions of Satan towards mankind. Satan said, "Verily, I will mislead them, and surely, I will arouse in them false desires, and certainly, I will order them to slit the ears of cattle, and indeed I will order them to change the nature created by Allah." [4:119] Satan went on to vomit his malicious intentions by saying, "surely, I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your (Allah's) straight Path. Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, And You will not find most of them thankful (i.e., they will not be dutiful to You)."[7:16] Here we realize that we are targeted by the ill-designs and conspiracies of Iblis (Satan). Therefore, we have to commemorate, always, the respect paid for mankind by Angels and pay our dues to them in the form of believing in their existence. By strengthening our belief in Allah and possessing a strong faith in the existence of Angels, we will not only foil the cunning designs, conspiracies and temptations of Satan, but also realize what the angels had realized by their obedience to Allah. We must remember that angels are still possessing high vision about the faithful believers. Quran says, "Those (angels) who bear the throne (of Allah) and those around it, glorify the praise of their Lord, and believe in Him, and ask forgiveness

for those who believe (in the oneness of Allah)(saying),
'Our Lord! You comprehend all things in mercy and
knowledge, so forgive those who repent and follow Your
way, and save them from the torment of the blazing fire-
And grant, our Lord! That they enter the Garden of
Eternity, which You have promised to them, and to the
righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their
posterity! Verily, You are the All Mighty, the All Wise-
And save them from (the punishment, because of what
they did) the sins, and whomsoever You save from (the
punishment, because of what they did) the sins, (excuse
them) that Day, verily You have taken into Mercy and
that is supreme success.'[40:7-9]

7. Faith in the Last Day:

Faith in the Day of Judgment is the seventh basic of Faith. It is based on the fact that the present life has a finite frame of time. It is only a period of testing and examination which Man undergoes. After every human being experiences death, the whole human race will be awakened once again. It means that death is not an end nor is it the terminal point. There is life after death and Allah will resurrect the dead on the Day of resurrection. On that Day, every person is accountable to Allah for his actions and he will face the consequences of his deeds. All his deeds, whether he had committed them in private or public, will be presented before him in the open and just court of Allah. On that Day, he will

be dealt with as per the record of his worldly deeds. He will be rewarded or punished in accordance with the virtues or vices of his worldly deeds. On that Day, Man will stand alone to face the consequences of his deeds. No other person will come to his help whether the person was a mother, a father, a son or a wife. His wealth also will not benefit him. Quran says, "The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart; To the righteous." [26:88-90] Quran describes the attitude of people towards each other on that Day. It says, "The Day shall a person flee from his brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children. Every person, that Day will have enough to make him careless of others." [80:34-37] It also says, "Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world: But the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight of thy Lord, as rewards, and best as (the foundation for) hopes." [18:46] Therefore, each one will escape from the other and think only of his own lot. It will be a Day on which "neither wealth nor sons will avail-But only he (will prosper) that brings to God a sound heart." [26:88-89] Only the quality of the person's deeds will post him either in a happy situation or vice versa. Therefore, we are obliged to stick to righteous behaviour throughout our present life in order to increase our good records and ensure for ourselves a happy everlasting Hereafter.

8. Faith in Qadha and Qadar:

Believing in, and accepting, the Qadha (divine pre-ordainments) and Qadar (fate, destiny and lot) is the eighth basic of Faith. In this regard, we must keep in mind that nothing takes place without God's knowledge and leave. Quran emphasizes, "No calamity befalls, but with the leave (i.e., decision or Qadar [divine pre-ordainments]) of Allah, and whosoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart (to the true faith with certainty i.e., what has befallen him was already written for him by Allah from Qadar (divine pre-ordainments) and Allah is the All-knower of everything." [64:11] In Islam, it is essential to believe in the fact that fate, lot and destiny are under the control of God. Allah asserts: "No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (Al-Lauh Al-Mahfooz) before We bring it into existence, Verily, that is easy for Allah." [57:22] However, Man must accept, wholeheartedly, whatever Qadar happens to him whether it was desirable or vice versa as it is out of his control. Quran praises those who spiritualize the difficult situations and circumstances and bear them patiently. Quran opines: "Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: 'To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.'" [2:156] They are, definitely, the gainers because they are "those on whom (descend) blessings from God, and mercy, and they are the ones that receive guidance." [2:157]

Moreover, the limited knowledge of Man gives ample room for Qadar (fate, destiny and lot) to make him realize that he is still a weak creature. Whatever knowledge Man has achieved and will achieve of the world remains limited to, and bound by, Man's own weakness. It is a fact that many aspects of our life are still, and will remain, undiscovered by Man. He will never be able to deal with, or wade into them. Still Man can't and will never be able to know anything about the essence of soul. Quran says, "And they ask you (O Mohammed) concerning the Ruh (the spirit); say: 'The Ruh (spirit): It is one of the things; the knowledge of which is only with my Lord and of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little.'" [17:85] In addition to that, Man will never be able to predict what destiny, fate and lot, the future is hiding for him. Quran reminds Man of his limited knowledge by saying, "Verily, Allah! With Him (alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs, No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die, Verily, Allah is All-knower All-Aware (of things)." [31:34] All these things are out of Man's ability to predict, but they contribute to foster Man's faith in God. In other words, though these unknown aspects of human life expose the limitation of human intellect, they also contribute to spiritualize him.

However, human deeds and actions, whether good or bad, do not come under the context of Qadha and Qadar. In other words, Man should not think that if he commits a sin or mistake, it means that it was pre-ordained or God has ordered him to do so. God does not order man to commit a sin or mistake and then punishes him. If we believe so, then we will make God unjust. Whatever sin or mistake we commit, it is by own choice and not pre-ordained by God. Moreover, God has created everything in the best mold. Quran says, "God has made everything which He has created most good." [32:7] Whatever God has created is in the best shape. Ugliness is denied to them. Sins and disobedience are ugly. God does not order Man to commit ugly things. Quran says, "When they do aught that is shameful, they say: 'We found our fathers doing so'; and '(Allah) commanded us thus': Say: 'Nay, Allah never commands what is shameful: do ye say of Allah what ye know not?'" [7:28] Thus, God ordered Man to do good things and made rewards for that and prohibited Man from doing bad things and made punishment for that. He; God, ordered Man to do good things and gave choice to him and at the same time prohibited Man from doing bad things by warning him of the consequences, but still He left man free to act and bear the responsibility of his action. Thus, if God pre-ordained Man to do sins or mistake, He would have not punished him. Man is responsible for his actions as they are his

deeds for which he would be either rewarded or punished. In other words, human actions are based on human's own choice and desires that aim at either a worldly result or a Hereafter result. The Quran says, "If any do wish for the transitory things (of this life), We readily grant them - such things as We will, to such person as We will: in the end have We provided Hell for them: they will burn therein, disgraced and rejected. Those who do wish for the (things of) the Hereafter, and strive therefore with all due striving, and have Faith,- they are the ones whose striving is acceptable (to Allah. Of the bounties of thy Lord We bestow freely on all- These as well as those: The bounties of thy Lord are not closed (to anyone)." [17:18-20] It means that Man is left free to decide his worldly and Hereafter lot, fate and destiny. Therefore, he must exert all efforts, within the framework of Islam, to do good things and to improve his life and that of the society in which he lives. Whatever good we achieve is by the help and support of Allah and whatever bad afflicts us is from ourselves and as a result of our own deeds which sprang out of our choice. Thus, the whole concept of Qadha and Qadar is based on the fact that we are left free in what we know, but we are guided in what we do not know. In other words, if a cyclone sweeps away a society, then it is a fate. It is out of the control of human beings, but Man can invest it, positively, by accepting what has happened, upgrade his ability to be patient and thus

elevate the level of his piety and promote his ability to face natural calamities. However, if a Man fails in exams, then it is due to human impeachment somewhere; either his or that of the system. Therefore, Man should strive to improve his lot by avoiding bad deeds and impeachment so as to improve his fate and lot.

Duties of Islam

Dear brother/sister in Islam. After we have dealt with the basics of Faith which are part of Islam since the time of Adam PBUH, let's have a look at the basic duties of Islam and examine their significance. These duties are enjoined as means to ends. The ends are set of values mentioned in Quran. They are such as justice, piety, patience, benevolence, faithfulness, sincerity, thinking, soft-heartedness, charitableness, unity and cooperation for accomplishing good deeds, avoiding harming other, avoiding committing aggression, etc. Clinging, properly, to any of those values will pave the way to elevate human quality. Thus, the following duties or means are enjoined upon man to upgrade the aforementioned set of values mentioned in Quran. The more correct and sincere a man performs the duty, the more clear the set of values in his behavior becomes. If a person doesn't achieve any measure of improvement in his human quality though he performs the duties, then he has to revise the extent of the correctness of performing the means or duties. Otherwise, the duties would turn up to be just rituals which have no meaning and performing them would be no more than a show-off or hypocrisy. The degree of sincerity with which these duties are performed would give its tangible positive effect on human behavior. Thus, sincerity in performing them is the source of their

final quality that would make man resistant to evils seduction and enticement. A sincere performer of duties would not be approached by Satan. Quran says, "Satan (Iblis) said, 'O my Lord! because Thou hast put me in the wrong, I will make (wrong) fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the wrong, Except Thy servants among them, sincere and purified (by Thy Grace).' (Allah) said, 'This (way of My sincere servants) is indeed a way that leads straight to Me.'" [15:39-41] In another Quranic verse (Iblis) said, "Then, by Thy power, I will put them all in the wrong, Except Thy Servants amongst them, sincere and purified (by Thy Grace)." [38:82-83] Thus, sincerity is the platform on which these duties stand firmly. These duties or means are as follows:

1. Performing Prayer:

Prayer is written in Arabic as 'Salat', but it is pronounced as 'Salah'. It is the most important form of practical worshipping in Islam and the main duty of religion as a whole. According to the hierarchy of the worshipping duties in Islam, prayer occupies the first position. Therefore, prayer is obligatory for every Muslim. It is not only obligatory for those who have reached the age of 10 years, but even those who have reached the age of seven must be ordered to perform it.

The five obligatory prayers are performed at five or three appointed times in daytime and at night

(Followers of Imam Sadiq school pray the five prayers in three time e.g.: Zuhur before Asr prayer as they have a shared time. Magrib before Isha prayer as they have a shared time. But according to the followers of Imam Sadiq school praying them separately is preferable) Thus, both practices are right. They are performed by men in congregation in Masjid (Mosque). However, as far as women are concerned it is preferable that women perform them at home, but they also can perform it in Masjid in their own section. When the appointed time approaches, Azan is performed to call people for attending prayer.

Prior to prayer, it is important to perform ablution (Wadhu). Its steps are as follows:

- =Making intention to perform Wadhu by saying, 'Bismillahi, Nawaitul Wadhu', "In the name of Allah, I intended to perform ablution".
- =Washing hands up to the wrists.
- =Rinsing the mouth thrice.
- =Cleaning nostrils by inhaling some water into it and expelling it thrice.
- =Washing the face thrice.
- =Washing the right hand and then the left hand thrice, each from elbow down to the wrist.
- =Wet or moisture patting and wiping up of the front surface of the head.

= Wet or moisture patting and wiping up of the upper side of the right foot and then the upper side of the left foot, both up to the ankle.

These are the main steps of Wadhu. Without them Wadhu and prayers will be incomplete. Wadhu must be performed in order, and quick succession without halting and before the parts, which were washed earlier, dry up. It is important to remember that the right limbs must precede the left limbs whether it is an arm or a foot.

Then, the worshipper starts praying. The obligatory prayers are as follows:

1. Fajr Prayer:

Its timing commences before dawn, e.g., (when the thread of light appears at the eastern horizon) and ends just before sun rising.

Before performing this obligatory prayer there are two prostrations (Rakaat) which are Sunna Mukkada (Sub-obligatory). These two prostrations are called Raqeebatul Fajri. In the first prostration of Raqeebatul Fajri, the worshipper, stands, keeps in mind the intention to pray the target prayer, and says, 'Allahu Akber' and keeps hand hanged down at the sides of the body and they should not be put on each other on the chest of stomach as this has not been done by the prophet (PBUH and his progeny). It is a Persian tradition of

respecting rulers and idols and it was introduced by Omar bin Al Khattab and it is wrong. He reads Sooraht'ul Fatiha (The first Soorah of the holy Quran) and Soorahtul Kafiroon (Its number in the holy Quran is 109). In the second prostration, he reads again Sooraht'ul Fatiha and Soorahtul Ikhlas. (Its number in the holy Quran is 112). Finally, he sits and reads "Tashaud". It is read as follows: "Altahiyatu lillahi wassalawatu wattyibat assalamu alaykaya ayuha nabiyyu wa Ramatullahi wa barakatuhu. Assalamu alayna wa ala ibadillahi ssaliheen. Ashhadu an la ilah illa Allah wa ashhadu anna Mohammadan abduhu wa rasuluh." Its interpretation is: *'Salutations to Allah, along with prayers and good deeds. Peace be upon you; prophet Mohammed, and Allah's blessings. Peace be upon us and those good faithful Muslims. I witness that there is no deity except Allah, and that Mohammed is his prophet'*. It is important to remember that this quotation is read after every pair prostrations and at the end of every prayer. However, for every reading of final Tashaud, we add to it the Ibraheemic Duaa. The Ibraheemic Duaa is as follows: "Allahumma salli ala Mohammed wa ala aali Mohammed, kama sallayta ala sayyidina Ibraheem wa ala aali sayyidina Ibraheem. Wa barik ala sayyidina Mohammed wa ala aali sayyidina Mohammed, kama barakta ala sayyidina Ibraheem wa ala aali sayyiddina Ibraheem, fil aalameen, innaka Hameedun Majeed." Its interpretation is: *'Oh Allah,*

pray upon Mohammed and the progeny of Mohammed, as You had prayed upon Ibraheem and the progeny of Ibraheem. And bless Mohammed and the progeny of Mohammed, as You had blessed Ibraheem and the progeny of Ibraheem, in the two worlds, You are the Praised and the Glorious'. Then, the worshipper ends prayer by saying, 'Essalamu Alaikum' "Peace be upon you" once to the right side and once to the left side, respectively. It is called 'Tasleem'. If the prayee was in group prayer, he will perform 'Tasleem' once to the right side and once to the left side, respectively. However, if he is performing prayer alone or he is the Imam (leading prayer), he will perform 'Tasleem' towards Ka'ba.

The worshipper proceeds to pray Fajr in congregation with the Imam. When we pray with Imam, we just listen to him if the prayer is performed loudly and do as he does if the prayer is performed silently. If we were praying alone, then we do as the Imam would have done. Fajr consists of two loud prostrations. In the first prostration the worshipper reads Sooraht'ul Fatiha and any other Soorah or part of a Soorah. In the second prostration the worshipper reads Sooraht'ul Fatiha and any other Soorah or part of a Soorah. Then, he sits for performing Tashahud, Ibraheemic Duaa and Tsaleem.

2. Zuhur Prayer:

Its timing commences after the sun reaches the meridian and it ends when the shadow of an erect object on the ground becomes twice its length. It consists of four Rakaat (prostrations) performed in congregation with Imam. They are performed silently. In the first pair of Rakaat, the worshipper reads Sooraht'ul Fatiha and selects a Soorah or part of a Soorah for each. He sits for the first Tashahud and then he stands to perform the second pair of Rakaat. He reads only Sooraht'ul Fatiha for each and then sits to perform the final Tashahud, Ibraheemic duaa and Tasleem.

3. Asr Prayer:

Its timing commences after the end of Zuhur time and extends till just before sun setting. Like Zuhur, it consists of four Rakaat (prostrations) performed in congregation with Imam. They are read silently. In the first pair of Rakaat, the worshipper reads Sooraht'ul Fatiha and selects a Soorah or any part of a Soorah for each from any part of Quran, not necessary the same ones which he read in Zuhur. Like what he has done in Zuhur prayers, he sits to perform the first Tashahud and then stands to perform the second pair of Rakaat. He reads only Sooraht'ul Fatiha for each and then sits for the Tashahud, Ibraheemic Duaa and Tasleem.

4. Magrib Prayer:

Its time commences after the sun setting and extends till the disappearance of the twilight. It consists of three Rakaat performed in congregation with Imam. The first two are performed loudly. In the first Rakaat, the worshipper reads loudly Soorahtul Fatiha and selects any other Soorah or part of a Soorah. In the second Rakaat, he reads Soorahtul Fatiha and selects any other Soorah or part of a Soorah. He sits to perform the first Tashahud and then he stands to perform the third Rakaat. The third Rakaat is performed silently. The worshipper reads only Soorahtul Fatiha and then sits to perform the final Tashahud which is usually accompanied by the Ibraheemic Duaa and Tasleem.

5. Isha Prayer:

Its time commences from the disappearance of twilight and stretches till the commencing of the time of Fajr prayer. It consists of four Rakaat performed in congregation with Imam. The first two Rakaat are performed loudly. In these first two Rakaats the worshipper reads Soorahtul Fatiha and any other Soorah or part of it. After the first two Rakaat, the worshipper sits to read the first Tashahud and then stands again for performing silently the last pairs of Rakaat in which he reads Soorahtul Fatiha only. Then, he sits to perform the final Tashahud in addition to the Ibraheemic Duaa and Tasleem.

However, like Fajr prayer, Isha prayer also has Sunna Mukkada prayers (Sub-obligatory). They are (2 and 1) Rakaat. The first Sunna is called Shif'e and the second Sunna is called Witr. Sunnatul Shif'e has two Rakkat. In its first Rakaat, the worshipper reads Soorahtul Fatiha and Soorahtul Alaa (Its number in Quran is 87). The second Rakaat consists of Soorahtul Fatiha and Soorahtul Kafiroon (Its number in Quran is 109). Then he sits to perform Tashahud, Ibraheemic Duaa and Tasleem.

Sunnatul Witr is only one Rakkat. The worshipper reads Soorahtul Fatiha and three other Soorahh. They are Soorahtul Ikhlas, Soortul Falaq and Soorahtul Nas. Their numbers in Quran are (112, 113 and 114 respectively). Then, he sits to perform Tashahud, Ibraheemic Duaa and Tasleem.

The above discussion is a summary of the obligatory prayers. There are other Sunna, optional and other types of prayers. It would be advisable for the new Muslim to consult a detailed book and accompany a model worshipper in order to practise them correctly.

In Islam, prayer has great implications. It impresses even the non-Muslims. People of other religions admire the unmatched and excellent spiritual characteristic of Islam which is manifested in the regular and successive prayers performed at various parts of the world every day during daytime and night. In fact, it gives the earth its true spiritual nature which it really

needs very much in today's hectic and merciless materialistic world. Prayers have a great influence on the person who performs them sincerely and regularly. They establish the aforementioned set of values within the human being and turn into a source of trust in the society. They make Man obedient to Allah and seeker of His blessings. By performing prayer, the worshipper seeks moral regeneration in this world and salvation in Hereafter. It stands for Man's helplessness and his continuous need of help from Allah. It enables him to stick and adhere to His straight path and avoid going astray.

Prayer has various postures such as bowing low, prostrating, kneeling, etc. All these postures have appealing symbolical implications. They are indications of our sense of devotion, surrender and submission to, and communion with, Allah. By kneeling and prostrating, the worshipper remembers the dictates of Allah. The dictates and commands which show him the right path. It means that during Salat, the arrogance and Pharaonic tendencies of Man disappear. Man's submissiveness and surrendering to the teachings of Islam become the dominant mood. It eliminates the rebelling impulses and stray instincts from him. It means that prayers inculcate the value of modesty, humility, good-will and sympathy in the worshipper.

The words 'Allahu Akbar' "Allah is great" by which the worshipper commences prayer and repeats it

many times during prayer, stand for attributing all kinds of greatness, grandeur and majesty to Allah. It expresses the readiness of Man to surrender to these Godly attributes, lead a modest and humble life and contribute to the smooth functioning of the society.

The verses of Quran we recite stand for the regular return to the constitution of our life; the holy Quran. They remind us our Islamic duties, commitments and obligations which we have to adhere to in order to establish a real humanistic society.

Concluding prayer by saying, 'Assalamu Alaikum' "Peace be upon you" is an indication of the idea that the worshipper is determined to lead a peaceful life with other people and get rid of all ill-feelings and ill-intentions towards others.

It means that prayer is a temporary departure to an elevated world. This temporary departure from our worldly activities during prayers, moulds the character of the worshipper, disciplines him, engages him in virtuous deeds and enlarges his virtuous account which will benefit him on the Day of Judgment. In other words, the frequent praying keeps Man within the framework of Islam and enables him to practise its moral teachings without any deviation. This is the definite fruit of prayer and Quran assures to sustain and strengthen our moral and ethical character by prayer. Quran opines, "perform As- Salat (Iqamat As Salat) Verily, As- Salat (the prayer) prevents from Al- fahshaa

(i.e., great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse, etc) and Al-Munkar (i.e., disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil and wicked deed, etc).”[29:45]

Performing ablution before prayer is hygienically useful. It keeps Man physically clean and morally fresh. In other words, it renews and refreshes the sense of faith in Man and preserves his humanity, both, in physical and moral sense. It makes Man feel that he is pure and up to the human level in the true sense of the term. One can imagine the extent of cleanness which characterizes the person who performs Wadhu and prays regularly. Performing ablution shows that Islam gives great importance to purity, cleanness and health of the human beings and urges Muslims to be particular about them. It means that Wadhu stands for higher human life which a man must lead by being spiritually upright and physically clean.

Whether the worshipper prays loudly or in a low voice, he is very much particular about performing it sincerely and correctly. It means that sincere prayers develop in Man the tendency to be true to himself and get rid of hypocrisy and show-off. Such a spontaneous discipline gets developed in him because he is well aware that Allah knows his outer appearance and inner essence, external conducts and internal tendencies, loud utterance and secret intentions. Man knows that, on the Day of Judgment, he has to appear before Allah and,

then, he will find a complete and minute account of his entire worldly life. The sense of spontaneous discipline and sincerity which springs out from the sincere and careful observance and practice of prayer will, definitely, have a positive effect on the moral, ethical and spiritual character of the worshipper. It will perfect his personality and offer him eternal salvation. It enhances Man with excellent spiritual uplift. The worshipper will remain always straightforward and can be depended upon in all walks of life. He becomes a reliable and effective contributor to human and social welfare. If the worshipper strives to reach the essence of prayer, it becomes an integral part of his life and it positively influences his behaviour and character. In other words, if prayers are performed perfectly, they refresh our spirit, fill us up with a peaceful mood and relieve us from distress. They prepare the person to lead a worthy life in the society. He will always be keen on sticking to purity and avoiding every Satanic temptation. Rarely, there is anyone who goes wrong if he performs prayers sincerely and correctly. If a person goes wrong in any aspects of life, after such spiritual doses and moral training which are provided by prayers, it can be attributed to some defects either in his character or in his performance in prayer.

Prayer has further useful social dimensions. Prayer in congregation creates intimate social relations among worshippers. It fosters a sense of brotherhood,

fraternity and unity among them. It inculcates in them mutual understanding and the sense of equality whether they are poor or rich, the ruled or the rulers.

2. Zakat-offering:

Zakat is the second duty of Islam. Islam made the payment of the needy's dues and the poor's economic rights a religious duty and an obligation on the part of the rich Muslims in order to heap up the gap between the rich and the poor. There is a well-known economic principle which assumes that every rich has become rich at the cost of the economic status of another person who turns gradually into poverty. In other words, Man amasses wealth at the cost of another person who loses it. Therefore, in order to reduce the economic gaps between the members of the society, Quran repeatedly stresses that believers should perform prayers and give Zakat to the poor. The term Zakat means giving certain portion of one's own wealth for the poor every year. In other words, Zakat is an amount of cash or kind which is taken annually from the wealth or property of the rich and given to the needy people who are less-endowed and afflicted by economic adversity. It means that every person whose financial status is above certain specified minimum should pay, on annual basis, a very small percentage of his wealth to the needy people. Its minimum fixed rate is only 2.5% of the person's possession for a period of one year. This percentage is

against every 85 grams of gold or 595 grams of silver or a cash that is equal to the above mentioned amount of gold. As far as commercial goods are concerned, their Zakat is determined annually. The Zakat of crops which are irrigated by rain is 10% whereas that of the crops which are irrigated by human effort is 5% at the time of reaping. If a person possesses a cattle of 40 goats then their Zakat is a one year old goat. If a person possesses a cattle of 30 cows, then their Zakat is a two years old cow and if they were forty cows then their Zakat is a three years old cow. If the possessed cattle are in the form of more than five camels but their number is less than nine, then their Zakat is a goat. For further details about Zakat in general and Zakat of camels in particular, the new Muslim may consult a suitable reference that handles the subject in details. Thus, it is clear that it is not a very large amount of money. In fact, it is rather a nominal amount that does not affect one's wealth. At the same time, it contributes effectively to uplifting the needys' economic condition. Thus, Zakat aims at promoting the living standard of the whole society in general and that of the needy people in particular.

The philosophy of Zakat in Islam is based on the idea that if the financially able person helps the poor people and paves the way for them to lead a dignified and respectable life in the society, the subject society will be raised above want. Therefore, it can be asserted that Zakat has many advantages to give for, both, the

receiver and the society as a whole. It makes the rich person offer his financial service to others without expecting any material return from them because he believes that the reward and blessing from Allah will be ample and abundant. Quran asserts, "And give Zakat and whatever of good (deeds that Allah loves) you send forth for yourselves before you, you shall find it with Allah, Certainly Allah is All-seer of what you do." [2:110] In another Quranic verse, it assures the alms-givers that the Godly offer is ample and multiplied. It says, "The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah, is as the likeness of a grain (of corn); it grows seven ears, and each ear has a hundred grains, Allah gives manifold increase to whom He pleases." [2:261] In other words, when the financially able person gives the poor people Zakat, he does not seek from those people any gratitude, recompense or material return nor does he try to belittle them. He only hopes to receive blessings of Allah in this world or in the Hereafter.

It means that the person who gives Zakat to poor people knows that in Islam, the logic or the philosophy behind Zakat is that whatever we possess is a trust given to us by Allah and it belongs to Allah. By deducting Zakat from one's wealth and giving it over, wholeheartedly, to poor and needy people, the rich man acknowledges that the actual giver is Allah. He deeply believes in the Quranic verse which states, "And

whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allah.”[16:53] Therefore, when a rich person gives Zakat to a poor person, it is given in the name of Allah. Thus, Zakat benefits not only the poor, but also the rich, in the sense that it is an annual reminder to Man that he will be given, amply, by Allah as he gives to the poor.

Moreover, Zakat purifies the wealth of the rich and fosters in them the spirit of worship. It promotes in the rich the readiness to sacrifice a specified portion of their wealth for the sake of uplifting the life-standard of the poor sections of the society and acts as a solace and comfort to the poor. Such an act of generosity eliminates the poor's inner sense of being financially deprived and protects him from being economically exploited. Thus, Zakat cures people from diseases such as envy, selfishness, hatred, malevolence, jealousy, greed, acquisitiveness and promotes mutual love, harmony, generosity and prosperity in the society. It rotates wealth among people, reduces the rate of poverty and abolishes economic inequality. The many advantages of Zakat remind us of the Quranic verse that summarises the significance of taking Zakat from the rich and giving it to the poor by saying, “in order that it may not become a fortune circulated by only the rich among you.”[59:7]

In fact, if we examine the advantages of Zakat, we will realise that whatever is received by the poor person is not only his sole right, but it is also the most

important economic principle which every society must strive to adopt and implement for maintain its own stability and security. If people perform Zakat regularly and sincerely, the extent of poverty would have reached the extent of what we see today nor would have capitalism got hold of the neck of the poor people as we see today. One of the factors of the economic injustice which is dominating the human society today is that people are not performing Zakat regularly.

3. Performing Fasting:

Fasting is the third duty of Islam. It is a form of Islamic worship which is observed, annually, by Muslims for one month; the month of Ramadan. It is obligatory for every Muslim who reaches the age of puberty and whose health will not be negatively affected by fasting. Quran states, "The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong) So whoever of you sights (the crescent on the first night of Ramadan) must observe Saum (fasts) that month, and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number (of days which he did not observe Saum 'fasts') must be made up from other days." [2:185]

During the month of fasting, Muslims abstain from food, water and Jimaa (the sexual intercourse between the husband and the wife), daily,

right from the first light of dawn until the night (time after post sun setting. When the darkness of the light reaches the middle of the sky and expels the twilight to the west horizon) It means that the daily duration of fasting is from dawn till dusk.

Fasting has multi-dimensional merits. It is a sweet and festive spiritual month. It fosters spiritualism in the person. Its spiritual dose is so high that Man tastes the pleasure of being near Allah. Like many other teachings and practices of Islam, Fasting makes Man feel the suffering of the poor people. The crying of the stomach created by the writhe of hunger and the mouth drought created by thirst remind the devotee the conditions under which the needy, the less endowed and the poor people are living. Fasting promotes the sense of equality among the members of the society. It makes Man realise that food and water are Allah's gifts and thus he realizes their value and exerts all efforts to protect and preserve the nature's valuable assets around him.

Islam asks Man to get rid of the clutches of passion and evils. Man performs fasting sincerely and avoids whatever is not allowed to be approached during fasting period such as food, water, Jimaa, tobacco whether smoked or chewed, gossiping, backbiting, scandal, etc. By curbing one's daily desires, fasting changes the daily routine radically. By avoiding Jimaa from dawn to sun setting, Man promotes in himself the

ability to resist and tame sexual desire and animal urge existing within him. Thus, fasting elevates Man above animal level by decreasing permissiveness, promoting discipline and helping Man to resist lust and teaching him how to refrain from biological needs. It promotes individual discipline and social security by making Man capable of avoiding all temptations which may harm him and his society. It makes Man feel that he can conquer and control, both, his desired and undesired habits. Thus, the month of fasting transforms Man morally, spiritually and physically. It purifies the soul and motivates Man to stick to sublime and higher values. It enables Man to do what is right and avoid what is wrong. It inculcates and fosters, in Man, the virtues of patience, fortitude, forbearance, endurance. Hence, he lives according to the teachings of Islam. If the societies in which obesity or rape is reigning opt for fasting, they would have decreased these rates of these evils. However, it is gratifying to see that even non-Muslim societies realized now the value of fasting. Many non-Muslim families are now joining the Muslim families in fasting the month of Ramadan.

4. Performing Haj:

Haj is the fourth duty of Islam. It is obligatory once in life for those who are physically and financially capable. Quran states, "And Haj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'ba) is a duty that mankind

owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses.”[3:97] Haj is a worshipping duty of Islam which is characterised by its, highly, elevating spiritual power. It links Man with Allah and the prophets of Allah and re-projects the holy way of life led by prophets (PBU them). Moreover, it is an Islamic conference in which Muslims from all over the world gather in a single place. Thus, it has the scope of unifying the political, ideological, racial and social affairs of Muslims. It provides them the opportunity to get acquainted with each other, unite with each other, support each other, discuss problems, find solutions and renounce those who conspire against Islam.

The main rites of Haj are circumambulating around Kaabah seven rounds, a fast-paced walking between the two hillocks ; Safa and Marwa, halting at Arafat, casting stone at Jamr and sacrificing an animal. The pilgrim visits also Madina and other historical sites which remind him of the life of the prophets Ibraheem and Ismael in general and Mohammed in particular (peace be upon all of them). Performing all these and other rites of Haj represent Man's readiness to worship Allah sincerely and live according to His teaching conveyed through the message of Islam. Sacrificing an animal reminds him of the sacrifice made by the prophet Ibraheem PBUH and his deep interest in obeying Allah and surrendering to him.

Haj brings millions of Muslims who come from different parts of the world to the path of Allah. They leave their nears and dears and worldly interests and affirm their love for Allah. They concentrate their thoughts on obeying Allah and long for expiating their sins and opening a new chapter with Him. Various rites of Haj leave unforgettable good impressions upon the mind of the pilgrim and he cherishes them throughout his life. It leaves a permanent positive effect on the course of his life and helps him to practise Islamic concepts, precepts and way of life in his daily life when he goes back home.

However diverse their races and nations, they are all one and united in Haj. It gives all the pilgrims a uniform dress which is in the form of two pieces of un-sewn cotton clothes. One is for covering the loins and the lower parts and the other is for the upper part of the body. This special uniform 'Ihram' removes the artificial and fabricated barriers between Muslims. The artificial barriers such as geographical, national, racial, social, economic, political, etc. all are abolished. Consequently, they seem to be identical. Thus, Haj displays the unmatched and unparalleled Islamic brotherhood, fraternity and equality. It stands for universal Muslim unity and the principle of equality in Islam which do not differentiate between people on the basis of race, colour or gender. In fact, it is an excellent demonstration of human equality. Whether rich or poor,

old or young, black or white, those who come from the East, the West, the South or the North, all are equal. It gives them also a valuable opportunity to meet and discuss the concerns of all Muslims irrespective of their geographical and racial backgrounds.

If Haj is sincerely and correctly performed, it has a reforming effect that covers all aspects of human life whether material, spiritual, individual or social. It makes Man realise his true position in the society. In Islam, only piety is the real barometer that determines human quality. When a person goes to Haj, he has to get rid of all narrow individualistic and selfish vision of life. In other words, there is no place for pride and snobbery in Haj. In Haj, large crowds of people in a small area may make some people prone to develop anger and impatience, but the moral restraints developed by the glorious teachings of Islam make the pilgrims treat each other with kindness, mildness, respect and consideration. It means that Haj tests the strength of our patience and examines our sincerity to Allah. It inculcates in pilgrims the value of piety, humbleness, patience and character distinctiveness. It creates social cohesion, self-discipline and self-control. It paves the way for Man to learn self-restrain, endure hardships and experience a practical exercise in tolerating and forgiving the inconveniences created by changing situations and embarrassing conditions. In other words, Haj develops in Man the sense of living together and

forgiving each other. It leads him to a state of inner individual and social harmony. Moreover, the scene of the crowds of people who gather there reminds Man of the awesome of the Day of Judgment, therefore, it helps him to adopt and practise a spiritual life. Thus, Haj is a worshipping obligation that makes Man realise that the life of a Muslim should revolve around Godly teachings only. If performed sincerely and correctly Haj makes the performer renounce the non-Islamic way of life, adhere to the set of Islamic values and elevate himself to the highest level of human quality.

Finally, if the new convert desires to perform Haj, it is advisable to accompany a mission of Pilgrims in order to perform it correctly and enjoy its spiritual fruits.

The above duties of Islam are the main duties. There are other important duties also such as Khums (Wealth Tax), Jihad (repelling the aggressor), Al Amr-bil-Ma'roof (ordering others to do what is good), Al Nahi-anil-Monkar (Forbidding others from doing what is bad), Mowadat Ahl-ul-Bait, (loving, adoring, respecting, obeying and following the prophet's progeny 'PBU them'), Tabarro' (Renouncing the enemies of the prophet's progeny. In this regard, unless, a person renounces the enemies of prophet's progeny (PBU them), he will not be able to give them the due loving and adoring which they deserve and prescribed in the Quran nor will he be able to obey and follow them

because loving prophet's progeny (PBU them) and at the same time loving those who committed injustice towards them can't come together in single heart. Prophet's progeny (PBU them) represents the axis of good whereas their enemies represent the axis of evil. If a person claims that he loves both the axis, then he will neutralize truth and his faith becomes defective. In pointing out the enemies of the prophet's progeny (PBU them), we have to go through the history very carefully as it is full of the hypocrites who wear the gown of Islam and became idols for many who claim to be Muslims. Therefore, in this regard, the matter becomes purely an intellectual matter that derives from the historical and thus here the role of the exceptional human intellect desired by God to be played in search for truth manifests itself so as to be the evidence behind the creation of Man as opposed to Angels questioning to God that would He create a creation who would shed blood, but God replied them that He knows what they do not know and Man should come up to God's expectation in operating his intellect, searching for truth and following it.

Epilogue

Dear brother/sister in Islam: When you read the above short notes about the basics of the faith and the basic duties of Islam and examine their significance carefully, you will, definitely, realise that the current world is in real need for Islam. In today's world human beings are killing each other. Moral, ethical, social, economic and political corruption is all pervading. Women are being deprived of their dignity and self-respect. They are being turned into a cheap and rotten flesh for entertaining the idle and corrupt elements in the society. If societies are aspiring for spiritual salvation and moral regeneration, it is only the glorious and divine teachings of Islam that can satisfy their aspiration. Therefore, we must respond positively to the call of Islam because it calls people for what makes them lead a real human life. Quran states: "O you who believe! Answer Allah (by obeying Him) and (His) messenger when he (PBUH) calls you to that which give you life." [8:24] In fact, it calls us for the best method of life on earth. Quran asserts: "Verily, this Quran guides to that which is most Just and Right." [17:9]

Dear brother/sister: Stick to the teachings of Islam, be particular about prayers and invite your dears and nears to embrace Islam. Urge and request them not to lose a golden opportunity to uplift themselves to a real level of true humanity in this world and enjoy an

everlasting pleasure in the Hereafter. Tell them to opt for Islam and not to hatch false and interpolated faiths and let them know that Allah said, “Verily, the religion with Allah is Islam.”[3:19] Let them be informed that Allah asserted: “And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.” [3:85]

Please send your feedback and correspondences to the author through the E-mail: dryeddi12@gmail.com