

ISLAM IN BRIEF

This book runs through the basics of Islam. I have inserted numerous quotes from the two most important sources in Islam, the Noble Quran and the Sunnah (the sayings and teachings of Muhammad, PBUH). The quotes are placed in the right context of the subject matter.

This is a relatively short book, straightforward and not difficult to read.

Islam is not a new religion. In fact, Islam is the religion of all of the 124,000 Prophets and Messengers Peace Be upon Them (PBUT). Islam began when ALLAH (GOD) created the first thing in the universe.

The Prophet Adam (PBUH) was the first human being to bring forth Islam to the rest of humanity. Thereafter, as the human population began to grow and people began to spread and disperse into pockets ALLAH sent down Messengers and Prophets (PBUT) to

reconfirm and teach people how to worship their LORD (ALLAH) and how to live according to His laws.

ISLAM: The wilful and peaceful total submission to ALLAH. All creatures and objects always wilfully submit to ALLAH, except the Jinn and Humans. Islam is not only a religion, but a comprehensive way of life. Knowledge and intellect are a big part of Islam.

Islam is free of all superstitions and any irrationality. It is quite easy to understand the basic tenets of Islam. They are straightforward.

AS COMMANDED BY ALLAH IN HIS BOOK, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPULSION IN RELIGION. IT IS A GRAVE SIN FOR ANY MUSLIM, MALE OR FEMALE TO FORCE OR COERCE ANOTHER PERSON INTO BECOMING A MUSLIM:

- **"There is no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out (very clearly) from error. Whoever rejects evil and believes in ALLAH has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And ALLAH hears and knows all things." (Noble Quran, Ch. 2:256)**

ALLAH: The personal name of our LORD. In Arabic this name means the One and only true Deity. There is no plural form for ALLAH, nor is there a feminine version of His name. Although He certainly is not a man, we Muslims refer to ALLAH in the masculine, he is after all the Most Powerful being in the entire universe.

Many Arab Jews and Christians use the name ALLAH to describe GOD. ALLAH is not love, he is the Most Loving. The latter signifies that He (ALLAH) loves his slaves more than anyone else can ever, but at the same time we must never forget that ALLAH has other attributes. ALLAH can punish too. He created a Paradise and a Hell.

- **"And your GOD (ALLAH) is One GOD (ALLAH), there is none who has the right to be worshipped but He, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." (Noble Quran, Ch. 2:163)**
- **"So glorify with praises the Name of Your LORD (ALLAH), The Most Great." (Noble Quran, Ch. 56:96)**
- **"He is ALLAH, the Creator the Inventor of all things the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the best names. All that**

is in the Heavens and the Earth glorify Him. And He is the Almighty, the All Wise." (Noble Quran, Ch. 59:24)

- "There is nothing comparable unto Him (ALLAH)." (Noble Quran, Ch. 42:1)
- "No vision can grasp Him (ALLAH), but His (ALLAH) grasp is over all vision." (Noble Quran, Ch. 6:103)
- "Say He is ALLAH, One, ALLAH the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent." (Noble Quran, Ch. 112: 1-4)
Note: This particular chapter (112) of the Noble Quran clearly indicates, without any reservations or confusion, that ALLAH is one and cannot be compared to. This is absolute monotheism.
- Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-Aas said, "I heard Muhammad (PBUH) say, 'ALLAH wrote the decrees of His creation fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth, and He (ALLAH) said, 'His Throne is above the water.'"

Narrated by Bayhaqi, and ibn Al-Jaroud from Umran Ibn Haseen that the people of Yemen came to Mohammed (PBUH) and said, "O Prophet of ALLAH we came to you to learn about our Religion and to ask you about the Beginning of this thing, how was it?" Muhammad (PBUH) responded, "It was ALLAH and nothing else and His Throne was on the water, and He (ALLAH created the pen then he) wrote in the Book (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuth (the Preserved Tablet)) all things and then He (ALLAH) created the Heavens and the Earth." (Bukhari)

ALLAH IS THE MOST MERCIFUL, COMPASSIONATE, FORGIVING AND LOVING:

- Muhammad (PBUH) said, "ALLAH the Almighty said, "O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the Earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it." (Related by at-Tirmidhi and Ahmad ibn Hanbal). Its chain of authorities is sound.

- Abu Huraira reported that Muhammad (PBUH) said, "When ALLAH decreed the creation, He wrote in His Book (The Preserved Tablet) which is with Him on His Throne: My Mercy prevails over My Wrath." (Sahih Bukhari)
- Say, (O Muhammad), "If you should love ALLAH, then follow me. ALLAH will love you and forgive you your sins. And ALLAH is Forgiving and Merciful. (Noble Quran, Ch. 3:32)
- "He (ALLAH) it is Who Creates for the first time, and He it is Who will create again, and He is the Ever Forgiving, the Most Loving." (Noble Quran, Ch. 85:13-14)

ALLAH IS CLOSER TO US THAN WE ARE TO OURSELVES:

- "Indeed, We (ALLAH) have created man, and We know what his own self whispers to him. And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein (through our knowledge)." (Noble Quran, Ch. 50:16).

IMPORTANT NOTE: The plural of 'we' in this context and in the Arabic language designates a 'Royal Plural' or 'Plural of Respect'. ALLAH uses the singular and plural; the latter to emphasize absolute royalty and respect unto himself.

ALLAH did not leave us in the dark to find and discover the correct path to salvation. Trial and error alone will get us nowhere. ALLAH has described the criterion for the right way to live, worship and to die. ALLAH in His Mercy has sent us guidance through His Scriptures, and Messengers and Prophets (PBUT).

ALLAH IS THE ONLY CREATOR:

- "Do you not see that ALLAH sends down rain from the sky and makes it flow as springs (and rivers) in the Earth; then He produces thereby crops of varying colors; then they dry and you see them turned yellow; then He makes them (scattered) debris. Indeed in that is a reminder for those of understanding." (Noble Quran, Ch.39:21).

ALLAH'S PUNISHMENT IS SEVERE:

- "And fear none but Me (ALLAH)". (Noble Quran, Ch. 2:40)

- "And ALLAH warns you against Himself (His punishment)."
(Noble Quran, Ch.3:30)
- "Such is the Seizure of your LORD (ALLAH) when He seizes the (population of) towns while they are doing wrong. Verily, His Seizure is painful, (and) severe. Indeed in that (there) is a sure lesson for those who fear the torment of the Hereafter. That is a Day whereon mankind will be gathered together, and that is a Day when all (the dwellers of the Heavens and the Earth) will be present. And We delay it only for a term (already) fixed. On the Day when it comes, no person shall speak except by His (ALLAH's) permission. Some among them will be wretched and (others) blessed. As for those who are wretched, they will be in the Fire, sighing in a high and low tone". (Noble Quran, Ch. 11:102-106)
- "Indeed, the vengeance of your LORD (ALLAH) is severe."
(Noble Quran, Ch. 85:12)

The Noble Quran mentions the 99 names of ALLAH, such as the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, the Most High, the Greatest, the Watchful One, the Most Wise, and so forth. To ALLAH belong the most beautiful names.

- Narrated by Abu Hurraira, Muhammad (PBUH) said, "ALLAH has ninety nine Names, and whoever believes in their meanings and acts accordingly will enter Paradise; and ALLAH is Witr (One) and loves the Witr." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

ALLAH LISTENS TO OUR PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS:

- And your LORD (ALLAH) says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell contemptible." (Noble Quran, Ch. 40:60).

TAWHEED: The Oneness of ALLAH.

SALAM OR SALAAM: Derived from the word Islam. Salam means peace.

SALAM 'ALAYKUM: May Peace be upon you. This is the basic greeting by one Muslim to another.

WA 'ALAYKUM ASSALAM WA RAHMATU-ALLAHU WA BARAKAATU:
And May the Peace, Grace and Blessings of ALLAH be upon you.
This is the response to the Peace Salutation.

WA 'ALAYKUM: And unto you. This is the response a Muslim gives
when given a Salam greeting by a person of the People of the
Book (Jews, Christians).

JIHAD: A believer's internal struggle to live out the Muslim
faith as well as possible, the struggle to build a good Muslim
society. The term Jihad has been distorted by individuals either
unaware or often-times are aware of its meaning but have their
own agenda. Jihad is an Arabic word derived from the root Je Ha
Da, in a literal sense it means to struggle and/or strive in the
way of and sake of ALLAH.

JIHAD IS NOT:

- Holy War
- Committing suicide to harm others
- The killing innocent people including non-combatants women
and children, people in monasteries, monks, the old, etc.
- Killing resulting from one's own anger
- Killing people because they are not of your religion

JIHAD CAN ORIGINATE FROM:

- The heart (weakest form)
- The tongue
- The pen
- The hand
- The use of a weapon (self-defence, fighting evil and
injustice
- **"Fight in the cause of ALLAH those who fight you, but do not
transgress limits; for ALLAH loves not transgressors."
(Noble Quran, Ch. 2:190).**
- **"And if anyone of the (people who associate partners with
ALLAH) seeks your protection then grant him (or her)
protection, so that he (or she) may hear the Word of Allah,
and then escort him (or her) to where he (or she) can be
secure, that is because they are men (and women) who know
not." (Noble Quran, Ch. 9:6)**

NOTE: This verse refers to the treatment of an enemy soldier in battle, who surrenders or who no longer wants to fight. Furthermore, ALLAH has commanded Muslim Armies to feed, give drink, and clothe enemy prisoners the same as the Muslim soldiers.

- "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; - and verily, ALLAH is Most Powerful for their aid." (Noble Qur'an, Ch. 22:39).

"But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in ALLAH: for He is One that hears and knows (all things)." (Noble Qur'an, Ch. 8:61)

Muslim writers agree that the main meaning of Jihad is the internal spiritual struggle, and this is accepted by many Muslims. The internal Jihad is the one that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is said to have called the Greater Jihad. There are a number of reasons, but the Noble Qur'an is clear that self-defence is the fundamental cause. The Jihad on the Military field is the Minor Jihad.

HUDUD: Islamic laws stating the limits ordained by ALLAH that includes the punishments and penalties for serious crimes and sins. The Noble Quran and the teachings and sayings of Muhammad (PBUH) are used to determine legal actions.

SHARIAH LAWS: A complete code of Islamic Laws pertaining to the rights and duties of Muslims. It entails the conduct of a man or a woman; primarily concerned with the methods of worship, laws regarding social relations and principles, and determining what is lawful and unlawful (often-times sinful versus non-sinful).

SHARIAH literally means the clear path to be followed.

COMPONENTS OF SHARIAH INCLUDE: The Noble Quran, The Sunnah (the way and teachings of Muhammad (PBUH), Ijma (Consensus or agreement of the Muslim Community on a particular matter, and Qiyas (Analogical reasoning as applied to the deduction of juridical principles from the Noble Quran and the Sunnah of Muhammad (PBUH).

FATWA: A legal pronouncement issued by a religious law specialist on a specific issue.

MADH-HAB: Islamic school of thought. There are four of them, including the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali.

HIJAB: A headscarf worn by some Muslim women which does not cover the face.

NIQAB: A piece of cloth worn by some Muslim women that is worn, in addition to a hijab, which covers the face. Depending on the person, the eyes may be exposed, or may be behind screened-cloth.

CHADOR: A long dress, traditional garment that is similar in appearance to a Muslim dress. However, this dress is cultural and may also be worn by Hindu women or others. Depending on the person, part of or much of the woman's hair may be exposed, or less so.

NIKAH: Islamic Marriage.

A Muslim woman who wears a Hijab is advertising to the whole world that she is a Muslim, it is her identity. The vast majority of Muslim women who wear Hijab choose to do so. They are practicing their faith, and want to appear modest. They do not like people to tell them what they can't wear; they choose not to expose their bodies. Unfortunately, there are many stories of racism and acts of hatred against these women. Would it be better if they exposed much of their bodies, to sin against their LORD (ALLAH), and to be gawked at by men, and sometimes by other women and to be judged primarily by their outer appearance?

Hijab is an Arabic word. But the truth is, many pious women, including but not limited to the Virgin Mary wore conservative, non-revealing clothing. Although she (the Virgin Mary) was very beautiful she chose wholeheartedly to obey her LORD (ALLAH); no tight pants, no cleavage, no exposing of her hair to the public. Nuns wear conservative clothing.

The late Mother Teresa covered all of her hair, most of her neck, and virtually all of her forehead. She also wore long, loose-fitting, conservative clothing.

In Islamic law a woman is an independent, unique individual in her own right. She has the same responsibilities towards herself, towards ALLAH and towards other human beings, and will be punished or rewarded in the Hereafter without discrimination based on her gender.

- **"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts from sin and not show of their adornment except only that which is apparent, and draw their head-covers over their necks and bosoms and not**

reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women (i.e., their sisters in Islam), or their female slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants free of physical desires, or small children who have no sense of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto ALLAH altogether, O you Believers, in order that you may attain success." (Noble Quran, Ch. 24:31)

- "O Prophet (Muhammad, PBUH) tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their outer garments about themselves (when they go out). That is better so that they may be recognised and not molested. And ALLAH is Forgiving, Merciful." (Noble Quran, Ch. 33:59)
- Narrated by Abu Dawood, 'Aaishah (one of Muhammad's, PBUH wives) said: "Asmaa' the daughter of Abu Bakr came to see Muhammad (PBUH), while she was wearing a thin dress; Muhammad (PBUH) turned away from her and said, 'O Asmaa, as soon as a woman reaches the age of menstruation, no part of her body should be seen but this, he pointed to his face and hands.'"

ISLAM DOES NOT BLAME EVE ALONE FOR THE ORIGINAL SIN. THE NOBLE QURAN MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT BOTH ADAM AND EVE WERE TEMPTED, THAT THEY BOTH SINNED AND WERE BOTH FORGIVEN AFTER THEIR REPENTANCE:

- "Then Satan whispered suggestions to them both (Adam and Eve) in order to uncover that which was hidden from them of their private parts (before); he said: "Your LORD (ALLAH) did not forbid you this tree save you should become Angels or become of the immortals." And he (Satan) swore by ALLAH to them both (saying), "Verily, I am one of the sincere well-wishers for you both." So he misled them with deception. Then when they tasted of the tree, that which was hidden from them of their shame (private parts) became manifest to them and they began to stick together the leaves of Paradise over themselves (in order to cover their shame). And their LORD (ALLAH) called out to them (saying), "Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you: Verily, Satan is an open enemy unto you?" They said: "Our LORD (ALLAH)!

We have wronged ourselves. If You forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers." (ALLAH) said, "Get down, one of you an enemy to the other (i.e. Adam, Eve, and Satan, etc.). On Earth will be a dwelling-place for you and an enjoyment, - for a time. He said, Therein you shall live, and therein you shall die, and from it you shall be brought out (resurrected)." (Noble Quran, Ch. 7:20-25)

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAM:

- "ALLAH commands you regarding your children for the male a share equivalent to that of two females." (Noble Quran, Ch. 4:11)

NOTE: Why is this so? A female receives half the share of a male. First, by Islamic law, the man is obligated to take care of his wife and all of their children, this includes the financial burden. Any money that a wife makes is hers. If she gives her husband any of her money, it is considered Sadaqa (a donation of charity). Second, males are obligated to take care of their parents when they get old, the same is not obligatory for females. But if a daughter wants to take care of her parents there is no harm in that, it is a blessed act.

The reason for the discrepancy in inheritance has to do with RESPONSIBILITY not superiority.

- "O mankind! Be dutiful to your LORD (ALLAH), Who created you from a single person (Adam, PBUH), and from him (Adam, PBUH) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women and fear ALLAH through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, ALLAH is Ever and All-Watcher over you." (Noble Quran, Ch. 4:1)
- "O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will, and you should not treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of the bridal money you have given them. And live with them honourably. If you dislike them, it may be that you dislike a thing and ALLAH brings a great deal of good through it." (Noble Quran, Ch. 4:19)
- "And whoever does righteous good deeds, male or female, and is a true believer in the Oneness of ALLAH, such will enter Paradise; and not the least injustice, even to the size of

a speck on the back of a date stone, will be done to them."
(Noble Quran, Ch. 4:124)

- "And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief! He hides himself from the people because of the evil (he perceives) of that whereof he has been informed. Shall he keep her (his baby daughter) with dishonour or bury her in the earth? Certainly, evil is their decision." (Noble Quran, Ch. 16:58-59)
NOTE: This quote from the Noble Quran is referring to the Pagan (Pre-Islamic) Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula, many baby girls were buried, often alive.
- And when the female (infant) buried alive shall be questioned (by ALLAH, on the Day of Judgement), for what sin was she killed? (Noble Quran, Ch. 81:8-9)
- Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Assuredly, women are the twin halves of men." (Reported by Abu-Dawud)
- Muhammad (PBUH) declared that, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim (male and female)." (Declared Authentic By Shaikh Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen Al-Albaani)
- Muhammad (PBUH) said, "A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission." The people asked, "O ALLAH's Messenger! How can we know her permission?" He responded, "Her silence (indicates her permission)." (Bukhari)
- Muhammad (PBUH) said, "None but a noble man treats women in an honourable manner. And none but an ignoble treats women disgracefully." (At-Tirmidhi)
- A woman was given by her father in marriage when she was a matron and she disliked that marriage. So she went to Muhammad (PBUH); "He declared that marriage invalid." (Sunan Abu Dawud)

We have free will; we can choose to obey or disobey ALLAH, or to submit or not to submit to ALLAH. Submitting to ALLAH enables a person to live in peace and tranquility.

Islam is not named after a tribe, a person, nation, or a race; Judaism is named after a tribe, Judah; Christianity is named after Christ, Buddhism is named after Buddha.

No human being or creation of ALLAH chose the word Islam to signify this religion or its followers. The word Islam was sent down to us by ALLAH.

MUSLIM: A person (male) who voluntarily submits his will to ALLAH. Believes in and follows the Noble Quran and the Sunnah (the way) of the Prophet. A Muslim must fill his or her life on the love and fear of ALLAH, and to dedicate him or herself to the obeying of ALLAH in order to receive ALLAH's loving mercy and to enter Paradise along with the other believers.

"Say: 'My prayer and my rites, my living and my dying, are for ALLAH alone, the LORD of all the Worlds.'" (Noble Quran, Ch. 6: 162)

MUSLIMA: A person (female) who voluntarily submits her will to ALLAH. Believes in and follows the Noble Quran and the Way of the Prophet.

THE NOBLE QURAN: Is the Final Divine Revelation, the word of ALLAH (GOD). The Noble Quran is in Arabic, and was sent down in Arabic. Translations are in fact transliterations or narratives. However, the word 'translation' is often used for simplicity sake.

ALLAH's words cannot be translated in a literal sense. This rule also applies to the scriptures sent down to Abraham, David, Moses, and Jesus (PBUH). The Noble Quran is un-created; it is the eternal word of ALLAH.

The Noble Quran was revealed in stages so that readers and followers could understand, internalize, and apply its prohibitions, commands, and reforms.

SUNNAH: The life, way, and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

HADITH: The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), as narrated by the Sahaba.

SAHABA: The companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

ISNAD: The link of narrators used to judge the authenticity of Hadiths.

AL-MA'ROOF: A noun that includes everything that is looked upon as good by Islam like obeying Allah, getting closer to Him, and being good with people.

AL-MUNKAR: A noun that includes everything that is looked upon as bad by Islam like disobeying Allah and turning one's back to Him and being bad with people.

MAKROOH: An act that is deemed hated or strongly disliked.

HARAM: Sinful, or if describing an act, a sinful act.

FOUR MAIN CATEGORIES OF NON-MUSLIMS IN A CALIPHATE STATE:

DHIMMI: Non-Muslim citizens of an Islamic state.

MU'AHID: A citizen of a foreign state with which the Khilafah has a treaty.

MUST'AMIN: A citizen of a foreign state with which the Khilafah has no treaty.

AMBASSADORS, DIPLOMATS, CONSULS AND ENVOYS: From foreign states have diplomatic immunity and the rules of Islam do not apply on them.

WHAT KIND OF GOVERNING SYSTEM AND WHO RULES IN AN ISLAMIC STATE:

KHILAFAH: The Caliph System.

KHALIFAH: The nominated ruler under the Caliph System.

- **Muhammad (PBUH) said, "He who harms a person under covenant, or charged him more than he can, I will argue against him on the Day of Judgement."** (Narrated by Yahya b. Adam in the book of Al-Kharaaj)
- **Muhammad (PBUH) said, "He who hurts a Dhimmi hurts me, and he who hurts me annoys ALLAH."** (al-Tabarani)

DHIMMI: The general term describing a non-Muslim living in Islamic lands. This doesn't apply today, because there are no Muslim Governments on this planet, not even one.

JIZYA (TAX PAYMENT FROM NON-MUSLIMS):

- **"Fight those of the People of the Book who do not (truly) believe in ALLAH and the Last Day, who do not forbid what ALLAH and His Messenger (Muhammad, PBUH) have forbidden, who do not obey the rule of justice, until they pay the tax and agree to submit." (Noble Quran, Ch. 9:29)**

The People of the Book (Jews, Christians) were required to pay a Jizya (payment in return). In return for what; full protection by the Muslim state, and the benefits of living therein, total exemption from military service. Furthermore, they did not pay the mandatory Muslim tax (Zakat).

The Jizya was only required of able-bodied males who have attained puberty, monks were exempted. In addition, women, children and the poor were exempt from paying the Jizya. The amount of the Jizya payment was low.

A MUSLIM IS OBLIGATED AND COMMANDED (BY ALLAH) TO ENJOIN GOOD AND FORBID EVIL, DOING THE OPPOSITE IS SINFUL:

- **"And let there be (Risen) from you a nation inviting to (all that is) good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful." (Noble Quran Ch. 3:104)**
- **"You are the best nation produced (to set an example) for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and (you firmly) believe in ALLAH. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient." (Noble Quran, Ch. 3:110)**
- **"And when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We (ALLAH) saved those who had forbidden evil and seized those who wronged, with a wretched punishment, because they were defiantly disobeying." (Noble Quran, Ch. 7:165)**
- **"Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; But turn away from the ignorant." (Noble Quran, Ch. 7:199)**

- **On the Authority of Abu-Saïd Al-Khudri, who reported that Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Whoever (amongst you) sees something detestable (evil, sinful, wicked, unjust, wrong, etc.) let him (or her) change it with his (or her) hand, if he (or she) cannot do so, then with his (or her) tongue, and even if he (or she) cannot do so, then do so with his (or her) heart, and this is the weakest kind of faith."**

Although estimates vary, the Muslim population currently stands at 1.5 billion people. Islam is the fastest growing religion, through birth rates and conversions.

Muslims come in all colours; the Far East, China, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Russia and the Caucasus, Australia and New Zealand, Americas and so forth. Muslims are in a real sense everywhere on this planet.

A Muslim is a true Monotheist. There is no room for other deities, associates or partners with ALLAH, or intermediaries.

Is there a single statement or pronouncement that signifies a person is a Muslim? Yes, there certainly is. It is the Shahadah, the First Pillar of Islam.

THE SHAHADAH (TESTIMONY, ACKNOWLEDGMENT) IS THE FIRST PILLAR OF ISLAM:

SHAHADAH: A formal declaration and pronouncement by a person which is done in Arabic, but for the sake of ease and clarity I will translate it into English.

If a person is giving the Shahadah for the first time in order to become a Muslim or Muslima does not understand Arabic, the person dictating the Shahadah will translate in English, or if needed the language of the convert.

Muslims believe that everyone is born a Muslim. ALLAH has planted Belief deep into everyone's soul.

- **I TESTIFY THAT THERE IS NO DEITY WORTHY OF WORSHIP, EXCEPT ALLAH, AND I TESTIFY THAT MUHAMMAD IS HIS SLAVE AND FINAL MESSENGER.**

The Shahadah is the most important statement that any Muslim can make. This statement signifies that he or she acknowledges that Islam is his or her religion.

During the first portion of the Shahadah when the person is negating false Deities and stating his or her belief in the One and only true GOD (ALLAH), the index finger on the right hand is raised. It is lowered before signifying the belief in Muhammad's (PBUH) being a Slave and Messenger of ALLAH.

Notice in the Shahadah that before acknowledging the oneness of ALLAH there is a denial of other deities. This is because associating partners with ALLAH is tantamount with disbelief. He (ALLAH) neither has a father, son, wife, or other relative or equal. Nor can any person, place, or thing even be compared to him.

The negation of other deities is followed by acknowledging the Oneness of ALLAH. Thereafter, the second half or part of the Shahadah signifies that Muhammad (PBUH) is first ALLAH's slave (servant) (like all other believers), then he (Muhammad, PBUH) is ALLAH's final Messenger (124,000 Messengers and Prophets, PBUT).

Parents of a newborn are supposed to whisper the Shahadah into their child's ear.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not, as many western texts incorrectly identify, the founder of Islam. On the contrary, Muhammad (PBUH) is the Seal of the Prophets; there were 124,000 Messengers and Prophets (PBUT) sent to every nation that existed.

A MUSLIM MUST BELIEVE THAT ALLAH NEVER TIRES; TO SAY THAT ALLAH EVER RESTS OR TIRES IS BOTH A BLASPHEMY AND A PERSONAL INSULT TO HIM. NEITHER DOES HE HAVE ANY RELATIVES OR EQUALS. IF ALLAH WANTS TO DECREE ANYTHING, EVEN THE CREATION OF AN ENTIRE NEW UNIVERSE ALL THAT IS NEEDED IS FOR HIM (ALLAH) TO SAY IS 'BE' AND IT IS:

- **"They say, "ALLAH has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, to Him belongs whatever is in the Heavens and the Earth. All are devoutly obedient to Him, Originator of the Heavens and the Earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is." (Noble Quran, 2:116-7)**
- **"Behold! In the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, and the alternation of the night and day, and the sailing of ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind, and the water which ALLAH sends down from the skies, thereby reviving the Earth after its death, and dispersing therein all kinds of beasts, and (in) the ordinance of the winds, and the clouds subjugated between Heaven and Earth: are signs for people who have sense." (Noble Qur'an 2:164)**
- **"ALLAH is He Who (has) raised the Heavens without pillars that you can see, then mounted the Throne, and compelled the Sun and the Moon to be of service (to his Law)! Each runs (its course) unto an appointed term. He regulates all**

affairs, explaining the revelations, that you may be certain of the meeting with your LORD (ALLAH)." (Noble Qur'an 13:2-4)

- Or, Who guides you through the depths of darkness in the land and the sea, and Who sends the winds as heralds of His Mercy? Could there be another GOD besides ALLAH? High is ALLAH above what they ascribe to Him! Or, Who originates creation, then repeats it, and Who gives you sustenance from Heaven and Earth? Could there be another GOD besides ALLAH? Say, "Bring your proof, if you are truthful!" Say, None in the Heavens or on Earth, except ALLAH, knows what is hidden. Nor are they able to perceive when they shall be resurrected (for Judgment)." (Noble Qur'an 27:60-65)
- "Then He completed and finished from their creation (as seven Seavens in two Days and He made in each Heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest (lowest) Heaven with lamps (stars) to be an adornment as well as to guard (from the devils by using them as missiles against the devils). Such is the Decree of Him, the All-Mighty, the All-Knower." (Noble Quran, Ch. 41:9-12)
- "We (ALLAH) shall show them Our Signs on the horizons and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth. Is it not sufficient that the LORD (ALLAH) is Witness over all things?" (Noble Qur'an, Ch. 41:53)
- "And indeed We (ALLAH) created the Heavens and the Earth and all between them in six Days and nothing of fatigue touched Us." (Noble Quran, Ch. 50:38)

EVERY MUSLIM SHOULD KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE 5 PILLARS OF ISLAM. OUR LIVES REVOLVE AROUND THEM. THEY ARE THE ESSENCE AND THE FOUNDATION OF A MUSLIM'S ENTIRE LIFE:

- Faith or belief in the Oneness of God and the finality of the Prophet-hood of Muhammad (PBUH).
- Establishment of the Salat (daily Prayers).
- Concern for and (Zakat) almsgiving to the needy.
- Self-purification through fasting during the Holy month of Ramadan.
- The pilgrimage (only the first time is compulsory) to Mecca for those who are able.

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