
The Arabic word 'Allah' is a proper noun of the Creator
The Arabic word 'Islam' means in English 'Submission' to Allah

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful

What is Islam?

Ahmad Darwish Alshaykh

**IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
THE MERCIFUL, THE MOST MERCIFUL**

FROM MUHAMMAD ﷺ THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH
TO HERACLIUS: THE GREATEST OF ROMANS.

Peace be upon those who follow Divine Guidance. I therefore invite you to embrace Islam, surrender to Allah to be in peace. Allah will doubly reward you, but if you turn away the sin of the Arians will rest upon you.

“People of the Book, (Jews and Christians), let us come to a common word between us and you that we will worship none except Allah, that we will associate none with Him, and that none of us take others for lords besides Allah.’ If they turn away, say: ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims (those have surrendered to Him)’.” Koran 3:64

The Prophets ﷺ of Allah mentioned in the Holy Koran

Muhammad, Jesus, John, Zachariah, Elisha, Ellias, Jonah, Ezekiel, Job, Solomon, David, Aaron, Moses, Shuaib, Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, Ishmael, Lot, Abraham, Salih, Hood, Idris, Noah and Adam

To the reader:

First of all we would like to thank you for taking the time gain a better understanding of Islam which is the religion of absolute submission to the Creator of mankind and prophets alike, Allah.

We sincerely hope that you will benefit from this authentic introduction to Islam, and that it may deepen your knowledge and increase your interest.

People such as yourself with inquiring minds invariably have families and friends of similar inclination, and we invite you to give them a copy of this booklet.

The Mosque of the Internet team

Welcome!

Everything seems to be turned upside down these days. Crazy things are happening all over the world, we are fed with partial information, misinformation and so on, that many of us find ourselves in a state of complex ignorance, that is we are ignorant that we are ignorant and do not know the whole truth through no fault of our own, and we form our opinions accordingly.

This brief booklet presents Islam in its true form and we stress that it is not that of the fanatical Saudi Wahabi cult, responsible, since its inception for terrorism and the murder of many innocent people as well as Muslims. Their actions are totally against the principals of Islam and Islam rejects and condemns their actions. Islam is the religion of peace, brotherhood, and tolerant co-existence among all mankind, not just amongst its followers.

The foremost principal of Islam is the belief in the Oneness of God, the Creator of all, who has no partners, who is the sender of the Prophets to whom he gave His guidance, who is the sender of the last prophet, Prophet Muhammad who was sent for all mankind and not to one nation as were the missions of previous prophets. Praise and peace be upon all the prophets of Allah.

Many people have the inherent desire for guidance. However, in this complicated, fast moving technological society, the pace of life is so consuming that one is soon distracted from his/her search. New religions are born almost every day only to fade into oblivion soon after.

Many of us try to do good, but how many times has it turned out to be the opposite? We have all heard the phrase, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. So what are we to do? Without the correct guidance we are going to keep falling into the same error time and time again.

Islam addresses each and every aspect of our life from conception to death. It is a complete religion, both spiritually and materialistically that shows us the right path to take, and Allah, the Arabic pronoun for God, confirms this in the opening verses of chapter two in His Holy Book, the Koran "That is the (Holy) Book, where there is no doubt. It is a guidance for the cautious."

Muslims are no in doubt that the Arabic Koran recited today is the same as it was when it was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad because Allah in His Mercy promises in the Koran to protect this, His Final Word from alteration. The Koran contains guidance for every age up until the end of time and contains miraculous signs that await discovery in the appropriate centuries. One such sign that awaited discovery was the developmental stages of the fetus in the womb. This process only became known to physicians recently, many centuries after the revelation of the Koran, and it is impossible that it would have been known at the time of the sending down of the Holy Koran.

The Koran found in today's book stores can be compared to the first copies ever to be written down, such as the one in Bukhara, USSR, there is no

difference between them. This in itself is a miracle as rabbis and priest alike admit their books have been, for one reason or another, subjected to alteration and/or parts deleted over the passage of time. Allah refers to the alterations in the Koran saying: "Some Jews tampered with the words (altering) their places saying: 'We heard and we disobey,' and 'hear, without hearing,' and 'observe us' twisting with their tongues traducing religion" Koran 4:46

The Gospel given to Prophet Jesus by Allah is no longer found in the New Testament, what remains, for the most part, are the teachings of Paul who was not a prophet.

Islam is not a new religion. It is the completion of teachings of Prophets Abraham, Moses and Jesus, all of whom preached that God is One and has no partners. It is tolerant and respectful of all other heavenly religions and their followers who share the belief in the One and only God. The Holy Koran teaches: "There is no compulsion in religion. Righteousness is now distinct from error. He who disbelieves in the idol and believes in Allah has grasped the firmest tie that will never break, Allah is Hearing, Knowing." Koran 2:256

THE MEANING OF ISLAM

It is false to call Islam Muhammadanism, as has been done so frequently in the West. We have already pointed out that Muslims believe that Islam is the eternal message which Allah sent to all prophets, peace be upon them, from the dawn of mankind, and not a new belief which began with the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (praise and peace be upon him)

Muslims call their religion Islam, and the Arabic word "Islam" implies the attainment of peace through submission to Allah. The word "Muslim" is an adjective derived from the noun Islam, and implies one who has peace within himself from his submission to Allah.

Muslims believe in the One, Eternal God, who created the heavens and the earth and all that exists. In Arabic, God is called Allah.

There is absolutely no difference between Allah and the God of Abraham, Moses ﷺ and Jesus ﷺ. Muslims do not believe that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was the only prophet; rather they believe that he was the last of the prophets ﷺ of the Old and New Testaments. The Holy Koran is the revealed and sacred scripture of Islam, and it teaches: "Say (O Muslims), 'We believe in Allah and that which is sent down to us, and in what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes; to Moses and Jesus and the prophets of their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them, and to Him we are submissive (Muslims.)'" Koran 2:136.

SOME BASIC BELIEFS OF ISLAM

The most fundamental concept of Islam and the fountainhead of all its other principles and practices is the Oneness of Allah. Islam is monotheism in its purest form, and the logic of pure monotheism is the thread that runs through the entire fabric of the Islamic way of life.

Islam teaches a fundamental difference between Allah, the Creator and that which He has created. The sky, the moon, the stars, the harmony and perfection of the natural world, the grace and beauty of the human body and the excellence of the human mind, the alternation of day and night, the change of the seasons, and the mystery of life and death all point to something beyond, greater than themselves.

To the believer these are all signs of Allah. Islam teaches that Allah is not to be likened to anything that He has created. He is All-Powerful, All-Knowing; He is beyond any imperfection, and is the fulfillment of all Perfection. He is not a substance, nor is He like any of His creatures. Allah is not a far away and distant God, nor is He unapproachable ideal. He is All-Kind, All Merciful, and the Turner of hearts.

Islam teaches that Allah is eternal. He was not Himself born, nor has He fathered a son or a daughter. Islam rejects the concept of the incarnation of Allah, which is found in Hinduism, Christianity, and other religions, and believes that the concept of incarnation limits the concept of Allah and destroys the believer's conviction of the activeness and perfection of Allah.

The Koran describes Allah being perfect and active: "Allah, there is no god except He. The Living, the Everlasting. Neither dozing nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is he that shall intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what will be before their hands and what was behind them, and they do not comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He willed. His Seat embraces the heavens and earth, and the preserving of them does not weary Him. He is the High, the Great." Koran 2:255.

Islam rejects the notion that Jesus, peace be upon him, was the son of God. Rather it honors and respects him as one of the great messengers and prophets of Allah to the children of Israel. Islam rejects the Pauline concept of trinity and considers it a contradiction of pure monotheism. It also rejects the argument of some Christians that God made Himself incarnate in Jesus, peace be upon him, so that God could be known by men, and also rejects the argument that Jesus, peace be upon him, died on the cross for mankind's sins.

To begin with, Islam believes that man can come to know Allah and feel close to Him by means of proper prayer, fasting, charity, pilgrimage, and righteous deeds. The very practice of Islam is meant to purify the believer's soul and to bring him/her closer to Allah. With regard to Jesus dying for our sins, Islam teaches that no human being can bear the burden of another's responsibility.

Allah is very aware of our human weaknesses and imperfection. He does not condemn us because we are imperfect; rather He guides us to self-perfection and He forgives us and showers His Mercy upon us when we fail and then sincerely ask His forgiveness.

Muslims believe in the Divine origin of the Bible although Muslims doubt the historical authenticity of some parts of the Old and New Testaments and do not believe them to be exact representations of what Allah originally revealed.

The Koran upheld this view of the text of the Old and New Testaments hundreds of years ago, and in recent years, this view has been upheld by textual studies of biblical scholars. Muslims believe in the Angels of Allah, and His Prophets, peace be upon them. They believe in the resurrection of the dead at the end of the world; they believe in the coming of the Day of Judgement and eternal life in Paradise or Hell.

Although Muslims believe that Allah is All-Powerful and maintains complete control over His creation, they also believe that Allah has created man with free will and the ability to choose and act, and that Allah is just in making man morally responsible for what does during his/her lifetime. It is false to say that Islam teaches its followers to resign meekly and passively to their fate or destiny. Rather, Islam challenges the believer to fight against wrong and oppression and to strive for the establishment of righteousness and justice.

FAITH IN ACTION

Faith without action is a dead letter. Islam teaches us that faith by itself is not enough until it is transformed into action.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said; "Faith does not depend on raising hopes, but it is something which is firmly established in the heart and testified to by action. Indeed, there are people who have been deceived by their hopes, so that they finally leave this world without merit. They used to say, 'We have good expectations from Allah.' Yet they only deceived themselves. For had they truly placed good expectations in Allah, they would have excelled in good deeds."

Each Muslim is taught that he/she is personally responsible for his/her own actions. Islam teaches that every individual must carry the responsibility of his/her own actions and that no one can carry that burden for them.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

Islam teaches that the woman is not inherently inferior to man; rather man and woman are of similar nature. They both are equal in intellectual and spiritual capacity. Furthermore, they are both equally responsible for their deeds before Allah.

It is also true that Islam regards the woman as having a primary role to play in the constitution and running of the family. Such is the importance of the role of motherhood that Prophet Muhammad informed us that Paradise lies under the

feet of the mother, in other words one must respect, honor and be good to one's mother. If you visit a Muslim home it will become very noticeable how the entire family pivots around her and it is extremely rare in Muslim countries to hear of a mother or father being farmed off into a nursing home when they are elderly.

Islam places great emphasis on the role of the Muslim woman as a wife and particularly as a mother, and Muslims are often of the opinion that the best position for the woman is in the home with her children and family. However, the Muslim woman is not prohibited from leaving her home to pursue education, a career, or other worthwhile and constructive goals that profit not only her but society as well. The Koran establishes the spiritual equality and mutual responsibility of man and woman in verses such as the following: "But whosoever does good works of righteousness, whether they be a believing male or female, shall enter Paradise, and not be wronged a pit mark of a date stone." Koran 4:124.

"And indeed their Lord answered them, 'I do not waste the labor of any that labors among you, male or female, you are from each other.'" Koran 3:195.


The relationship of the Muslim husband to his wife is not that of master to slave. Rather the entire responsibility of economic support is placed on the shoulders of the husband alone. He cannot demand of his wife that she also become economically productive to support the family, although she is able to do this if she desires.

The Koran explains this responsibility of men to women in the following verse: "Men are the maintainers of women for that Allah has preferred in bounty one of them over the other, and for that they have spent their wealth. Righteous women are obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah has guarded." Koran 4:34.

The important point that should be made is that the religion of Islam has great respect for the woman. It does not teach that she is without a soul or that she is the root of all evil, neither does it define a woman as being inferior and must be kept in seclusion and subjugation.

We are often asked why Muslim women wear black and are completely veiled. This practice is nationalistic and not from Islam. The attire of a Muslim woman is that of modesty, where her figure is not apparent to outsiders, not of veiling, however a scarf is a necessity. In this day and age in particular where rape is a common occurrence in the west she finds modest clothing to be a protection from unwarranted advances by the opposite sex. Also, modest clothing has recently been advocated by cancer physicians as a form of protection against the sun's harmful rays that cause melanoma, skin cancer.

Both Judaism and Christianity preach that the fall of Adam from the Garden of Eden was the fault of Eve and as such women are to blame. This is not the teaching of Islam, the Koran directs all the responsibility to Adam himself, while adding that Allah turned to Adam in mercy and forgave him his sin.

Therefore, Adam's sin stops with Adam  himself, and Allah does not hold mankind responsible for the sin of Adam and rejects the concept of original sin.

We cannot deny that the condition of women has at times been regrettable in the Muslim world, but the same can also be said of the rest of the world at large. We do not wish to justify these circumstances, but only to make the point that they did not originate from the teachings of Islam itself. Rather they are the results of short sightedness, ignorance and human failure. Those believing women who were unjustly treated will be recompensed for their patience in the Hereafter because Allah is Just and does not love injustice.

BROTHERHOOD AND EQUALITY OF MANKIND

Islam teaches that the human family is one, that there is no superiority of white over black or black over white. Islam rejects radically all notions of racial prejudice and teaches that the only basis of distinction between human beings is their belief and individual moral qualities.

The concept of Islamic brotherhood has two primary dimensions; the relationship of Muslims to Muslims and the relationship of Muslims to non-Muslims. As for the first category, Islam teaches that the brotherhood between all Muslims is to be absolute and total. The Arab has no privileges over the non-Arab, and, since there is no clergy or priesthood in Islam, all Muslims are basically equal, from top to bottom, from rich to poor, from educated to uneducated.

As for the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, the teaching of Islam is that this is to be a relationship of mutual respect and particularly of tolerance. It is preferable that Muslims and non-Muslims live in peace, protect each other, and cooperate with one another. As the Koran says: "There is no compulsion in religion" Koran 2:256 and "To you your religion, and to me my religion." Koran 109:6

REASON

Muslims consider their religion to be very rational and consistent with the dictates of the believing and reasoning mind.

Furthermore, the Koran teaches that rational faculty is one of the greatest gifts of Allah to man, and encourages us to use and develop this faculty. Islam does not ask its followers to believe and then follow everything blindly and unquestioningly. The Koran says, for instance: "If you are in doubt of what We (1) have sent down to Our worshipper (Prophet Muhammad), produce a chapter comparable to it. Call upon your helpers, other than Allah, to assist you, if you are true." Koran 2:23

(1) When pronouns are capitalized they refer to the Creator, Allah. Examples: You, He, Him, His and, Own while pronouns such as Our, Ours, Us and We denote His Greatness not plurality.

Islam encourages reasoning, thought and personal opinion. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The differences of opinion among the learned of my followers are Allah's mercy." Islam has great respect for learning science and for man's exploration of the secrets of nature and of creation. In fact Allah challenges man on many occasions in the Koran to deepen his faith, knowledge, and wisdom from study and contemplation of the natural world, its harmony, symmetry, and beauty. For example: "(It is He) who created the seven heavens, one above the other. You cannot see any inconsistency in the creation of the Merciful. Then return your gaze once more and yet again, your gaze comes back to you dazzled, and tired." Koran 67:3-4.

The individual capacities and unique abilities of people are the gift of Allah, to be developed, perfected, and used for the benefit of humanity. Islam does not try to crush the individuality of its believers, but rather to guide each believer to perfection and purify his own uniqueness.

This multiplicity of expressive and developed personalities enriches society and places it on a higher level, like the beauty of an intricate but unified arabesque.

ISLAMIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS WAR

In the eyes of some commentators on Islam in the West, Islam has been portrayed as a militant religion, a religion of blood, fire, and sword. We have already tried to draw attention to the fundamental concern of Islam for tolerance and religious freedom, and have also commented upon the emphasis Islam places on peace and cooperation among mankind. However, Islam is a practical religion, a religion which never ignores for a single moment the complexities and demands of the harsh realities and facts of life. Islam is fundamentally concerned with establishing societies in which the rights of freedom of belief, human rights, and protection of life, dignity, and property are secure from both internal and external threats.

Therefore, even as Islam teaches its followers to be merciful and inclined toward forgiveness and peace even in times of war, it never teaches them to turn the other cheek. The philosophy of "turning the other cheek" may be appropriate for private individuals and small day-to-day affairs, however, it spells social suicide if it is implemented by society as an absolute value.

Islam therefore stipulates principles that Muslims are to follow before, during, and after war. Peace is to be established on the basis of justice. Muslims are not to be aggressive or to violate treaties they have concluded with others, but war is to be waged in defense of the Muslim community and what it stands for. It is forbidden for Muslims to be the initiators of war or terrorist activities.

During war, killing of civilians and those who do not participate directly in the war is strictly forbidden. Prisoners are to be treated humanely. Destruction of lands, fruit trees, animals, and towns and villages are also forbidden where avoidable. Muslims are to incline to peace if the enemy is truthfully inclined to peace, and make treaties and agreements to preserve that peace and then observe those treaties as long as the enemy observes them. The concept of

"jihad" is one of the highest concepts in Islam. The term has at times been translated as "Holy War". However, this translation is incomplete for jihad also means by language "struggling." It is a concept that places great emphasis on the struggle of oneself with the temptations of satan; to do good and sacrifice.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, that the greatest jihad is the striving of the Muslim to purify himself.

Jihad consists of all the striving the Muslim does in his external life, charity, righteous living and acts, the constant effort to achieve the Right Path in his dealings with his fellow men. This is true striving in the Way of Allah.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Islam sets down five principle duties that are obligatory upon all Muslims, and form the structure, or pillars, of his/her life.

They are:

1. Belief in the Oneness of Allah, and the bearing of witness to this belief with the words: "I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Prophet and Messenger."
2. The five daily prayers at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and nightfall. These five daily prayers help one to develop Allah consciousness in his/her everyday life. The importance of these cannot be over emphasized. They are a constant reminder to the worshipper of the Presence and Power of Allah and help the worshipper to keep his/herself from deviating from the Right Path.
3. The bestowal of charity on one's fellow man. Islam places great emphasis on generosity and charity as a means of purifying one's soul and drawing closer to Allah. The Muslim is enjoined to give voluntarily whenever he/she can; however, he/she is required each lunar year to pay an obligatory charity tax of 2 ½% of his/her annual savings. This obligatory charity is then given to orphans, the needy and the poor. The Zakat, which means obligatory charity, enables the Muslim community to take care of all its members and insures that no one will be deprived of his/her basic human right to exist.
4. Fasting during the ninth month of the lunar year called "Ramadan." This fast is enjoined upon Muslims of good health and sound body who have attained the age of physical maturity and are not prevented from performing the fast by various circumstances like travel, sickness, mental illness, or specifically in the case of women, menstruation, or childbirth. The fast of Ramadan begins at dawn and lasts until sunset. During this period the Muslim abstains from eating, and drinking, sexual activity and smoking. Fasting teaches self-discipline and control, while purifying the soul and body and strengthening one's consciousness of Allah.
5. The pilgrimage to Mecca. The pilgrimage is required of all Muslims at least once during their lifetime, if they have the financial means. The annual pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the greatest events of the Muslim world, uniting Muslims from every race and from every corner of the world. This is a great

experience in the life of a Muslim that enables him/her to draw closer to Allah. The greatest blessings of going on pilgrimage is that all one's previous sins are wiped away and the pilgrim returns as pure as the day he/she was born. We would like to remind the reader that the Holy Mosque in Mecca was built by Prophet Abraham ﷺ and his son, Prophet Ishmail ﷺ.

WHO IS A MUSLIM?

Since there is no priesthood in Islam, no clergy and no official religious institution, all one has to do to become a Muslim is to be personally convinced of the truth of the teachings of Islam and bear witness that "There is no god except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Prophet."

One of the great beauties of Islam is its simplicity, naturalness, and lack of formalities. Islam is the religion of Adam and of mankind in its earliest and most advanced stages of development. Allah says in the Holy Koran: "Therefore set your face to the religion purely, the upright creation upon which He originated people. There is no changing of the creation of Allah. This is the valuable religion, although most people do not know." Koran 30:30.

A THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION

Allah asks you, "Did you think that We had created you only for play, and that you would never be returned to Us? Koran 23:115. Have you ever stopped and asked yourself what is this life all about, what is the purpose of being here, the purpose of your creation? The correct answer to this question is that you seek the truth, worship Allah alone, do good deeds for which there is the greatest reward, the reward of living eternally in Paradise.

THE BENEFIT OF EMBRACING ISLAM

Among the many benefits of embracing Islam are that once you bear witness that: "There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet," all your past sins are forgiven and are transformed into merits with an enormous reward awaiting you in Paradise! In addition, you receive the reward of believing the religion of the Prophet Jesus, if you are a Christian, or Prophet Moses, if you are a Jew, and the religion of Prophet Muhammad, which means that you receive two huge rewards, and you know that Allah loves you because He guided you to Him.

Your First 24 Hours In Islam

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1. Tenets of the Islamic Faith

- a. To know God is the first obligation of all who are mature and competent. (*mukallaf* – someone who has reached puberty and is of sound mind.) Allah is existent and not nonexistent, eternal without beginning or end, not originating in or subject to time or space, everlastingly abiding, dissimilar to anything within time or space, existing without need and not subject to any conditions, having nothing and no one that resembles Him. He is One, without co-sharing His existence, attributes or actions. So Almighty is He that, He possesses Divine Power, Will, Knowledge and Life. He wills all, knows all, lives, hears, sees, and speaks all.
- b. Through His generosity, Allah sent the Prophets, protecting their prophet hood, from any physical or spiritual harm, guarding them from the temptation of committing any sins, whether large or small. He also forbade any disability or disadvantage to come onto them. They lived among and like the rest. They were the best of all created being, and the highest of them was whom Allah chose to be the final seal of prophet hood, our Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace.) He is Allah's messenger of the sacred law that supersedes all previously valid religious laws. Prophet Muhammad's (Allah bless him and give him peace) Companions (*Sahaba*- those followers that new him in his time) were the finest generation, the best of them being Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali. (May the pleasure of Allah be upon them all.)
- c. We believe in everything that Allah has informed us of upon the tongue of Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace) including the existence of hell and paradise. We believe in the angels and their questioning of the dead about their faith while in the grave,

and of the Day of Judgment for the dead and their resurrection. We also believe in the scales of justice in which every soul's good and bad deeds are weighed. We acknowledge the existence of the high and narrow bridge over hell in which believers will safely cross over into paradise. We also believe that the Prophets and the devout worshippers can plead to Allah on behalf of their followers.

- d. To be called a Muslim one must believe in the basic principles of Islamic faith. These are the prayer rituals, rules, obligations, and beliefs, as said by Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace) and practiced by Muslims. Persons who have not been exposed to Islam cannot be called non-Muslim because they have not had the opportunity to accept or reject the principles of Islam. Once a person has been informed of the principles of Islam they can then be identified as being a Muslim or a non-Muslim according to their acceptance or non-acceptance of the faith. Any person, who, upon knowing Allah's laws, chooses to disobey any of them, is considered to be non-Muslim.

2. The Fundamentals of Islam

Before accepting Islam, one must have been informed of the Prophet's message and voluntarily accepted its validity. One must also be of sound mind and reached puberty.

- a. The foundations of Islamic practice are made up of five things:
 - i. Saying and accepting the two-part declaration of faith, "I declare that there is no god except Allah, and I declare that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." One must understand and believe all parts of the declaration and must utter them in their original order without separating them. This declaration can be said in any language (although it is preferred that it be said in Arabic) and must be stated before one can be considered a Muslim.
 - ii. The prescribed pattern of prayer (*salat*)
 - iii. Obligatory charity that equals 2.5 percent of annual savings (*zakat*)
 - iv. Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once if financially affordable
 - v. Observing the fasting of the month of Ramadan
- b. The meaning of true faith (*iman*) is that one believes in Allah, His angels, His Revealed books, His messengers, the Last Day, and in destiny whether good and bad.
- c. In the Islamic lifestyle there are three moral guidelines:
 - i. To do what Allah has commanded
 - ii. To avoid what He has forbidden
 - iii. To accept what He has destined
- d. There are four basic sources that support Islamic laws:¹
 - i. The Koran
 - ii. The sayings and actions of the Prophet

¹Any conclusion from the use of any other sources (*bid'a*) is unacceptable, and these four sources are equally binding for all believers.

- iii. The scholarly interpretation of original law in order to apply new laws that fit the needs of a changing society (*qiyas-extrapolation*)
- iv. The unanimous consensus of Islamic scholars

3. The Sacred Law

There are five classifications of Sacred Law. These are:

- a. Recommended (*mandub*) actions – whose performance is rewarded, and whose non-performance is not punished²
- b. Essential (*wajib*) actions – whose performance is rewarded, and whose non-performance is punished
 - i. Personally essential- an action that every individual is obligated to perform (i.e. ablution.)
 - ii. Communally essential – an action that can be performed by one person for the group (i.e. prayers at a funeral)
- c. Permissible (*mubah*) actions – whose performance is not rewarded and whose non-performance is not punished
- d. Offensive (*makruh*) actions – whose performance is not punished and whose non-performance is rewarded
- e. Unlawful (*haram*) actions – whose performance is punished and whose non-performance is rewarded

4. Accepting the Islamic Faith

In order to enter into the faith of submission to the Creator, one must declare this statement in the presence of two Muslim male witnesses after cleansing oneself with a shower or bath.

Say:

- a. (It is recommended that it is spoken in Arabic but the English translation has been provided.)

<i>Ash hadu</i>	=	<i>“I bear witness</i>
<i>anla</i>	=	<i>that there is no</i>
<i>ilaaha</i>	=	<i>god</i>
<i>ella</i>	=	<i>except</i>
Allahu	=	Allah
<i>wa</i>	=	<i>and</i>
<i>ash hadu</i>	=	<i>I bear witness</i>
<i>anna</i>	=	<i>that</i>
<i>Muhammadan</i>	=	<i>Muhammad</i>
<i>abduhu</i>	=	<i>is His worshipper</i>
<i>wa</i>	=	<i>and</i>
<i>rasooluh.</i> ”	=	<i>messenger.</i> ”

² Those actions that are recommended for believers were required of Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace.) I.e. The night vigil prayer (tahajjud) was required of Muhammad but is not essential for his followers.

- b. "I believe in the above statement and in:
 - i. Allah.
 - ii. All his angels.
 - iii. All his books.
 - iv. The Day of Recompense (Judgment.)
 - v. The predetermined plan of Allah."
- c. "I also acknowledge my obligatory duties. These are:
 - i. The five daily prayers.
 - ii. Fasting during the month of Ramadan.
 - iii. Charity of at least 2.5 percent of annual savings.
 - iv. At least one Pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca."

Right after you have completed your Declaration of Faith (above), it is obligatory to say your first prayer. After you have accepted Islam (by accepting the Declaration of Faith) it is obligatory to complete all prayers after that.

Congratulations! You are now officially a Muslim!

5. Consumption

- a. Eat only *halal* or kosher meats. You can find such meats in specialty stores. If it is not *halal* or kosher, do not eat it.
Halal is a way of slaughtering the animal and a way of preparing it for eating. *Halal* pertains only to red meats and poultry (non-carnivorous birds). It does not apply to any ocean life, which is permitted as is (i.e. fish, shrimp, crab, etc.) Be careful in eating deep-fried seafood or French fries, as they may have been fried in oil that has been used to fry other non-halal meats. By preparing the meat in a *halal* way, the animal's suffering is greatly minimized. At the time of slaughter, the animal never sees the knife (which must be very sharp to minimize pain), and there are no other animals in viewing distance. The person who slaughters the animal must be Muslim or have been directed to kill the animal by a Muslim, and he must bless the animal by pronouncing the name of Allah (*Bismilla Allahu Akbar*) over it prior to slaughter. Once the animal has been slaughtered, it is hung upside down from its hind feet in order for all the blood to drain out. Muslims believe that eating meat with blood in it is unhealthy. As with any

Muslim guidelines about life, each one has its practical reasons, but first and foremost, that rule has been directed to us by Allah through Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace) and therefore it should be blindly upheld.

Kosher meats are essentially prepared the same as *halal* but the Jews put more regulations on their meat. (i.e. A kosher store must be owned by a Rabbi.) Therefore Muslims can eat *halal* and kosher foods, but Jews only eat kosher.

- b. Resign from eating all pork products (including lard and pork by-products), as the swine consumes dirt and is a vital carrier of certain diseases (i.e. flu.)³
 - c. Resign from consuming any alcohol or mind-altering products. Allah forbids all products that alter the mind because decision-making skills are lost when under the influence of such chemicals. Also, alcohol and other drugs are unhealthy for the human body.³
6. **Performing Ablution (*wudu*) for Prayer.**³
- a. Upon using the toilet, it is essential that one's private area be fully cleansed with water, and the hands must be washed with soap before performing ablution (*wudu*.) This also applies to any time one uses the bathroom regardless if ablution needs to be performed. If one engages in any kind of intercourse, a full shower is needed in which every part of the body is rinsed, including the hair.⁴
 - i. Say: "*Bismillah Arahmani Araheem.*" (In the name of Allah the Merciful, the Most Merciful.)
 - ii. Wash hands: Rinse them up to the wrists making sure that no part of the hands are left dry. (3x)
 - iii. Wash mouth: Cup the right hand and fill it with water. Use the water to rinse the mouth. (3x)
 - iv. Wash nose: Sniff water up into the nostrils using the right hand and then eject it with the help of the left hand. (3x)
 - v. One should wash his/her hands/arms including the elbow, starting from right and then left (3x)
 - vi. Wash face: Splash water over the face covering the entire area from ear to ear, and from forehead to chin, making sure that no part of the face is left dry. (1x)
 - vii. Wash head: With wet fingers, wipe the head starting from the forehead and ending at the nape of the neck, then reverse the motion ending up at the forehead again. (1x)
 - viii. Wash ears: Gently insert wet fingertips into the ears and pass them through the ear canals. Complete the movement by passing the thumbs behind the ears from the bottom up. (3x)

³As with any Islamic law, there are practical reasons for it but because the law was given to us by Allah through his messenger Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace) it should be blindly upheld regardless of reasoning.

⁴The hair must be rinsed thoroughly. Partial wetting is not acceptable.

- ix. Wash feet: Starting with the right foot, rinse feet entirely including the ankles making sure that no part is left dry, especially between the toes. (3x)
- b. There are four conditions that can nullify a person's last ablution. The ablution must be performed again if:
 - i. Anything exits from any of the private areas, including flatulent.
 - ii. The person has slept.
 - iii. Bodily contact with another person of the opposite sex in a sexual manner has occurred. (But if sexual intercourse has occurred a full shower is needed.)
 - iv. One's own hand has touch their private area (i.e. using the restroom.)Ablution is not nullified by vomiting, nose bleeds, having an open wound⁵, or laughing during prayer. It is also not nullified by any natural, non-sexual discharge from either the male or female genital orifice.
- c. If one is uncertain that ablution is needed, according to Islamic law, one should err on the side of caution and perform the ablution to be certain.
- d. If one is traveling and does not have access to water, it is permissible to perform a dry ablution. Performed much the same way and in the same order, ablution can be accomplished by substituting water with tapping the earth with the hands. (One may omit ablution for head, ears, and feet if performing a dry ablution.) This also applies to those who would like to pray outside and do not have immediate access to water. But if one has made dry ablution and, before making prayer, finds water, it is obligatory to perform ablution again using water.
- e. For persons having bandaged wounds or a cast, it is acceptable to gently rub the area with wet fingertips to fulfill the ablution to that part of the body.
- f. If it is difficult to perform ablution on the feet (i.e. a working woman who is wearing panty hose and does not want to take the panty hose off in order to wash her feet), it is permissible to wipe the tops of the shoes with wet fingers only if the shoes have not been taken off since the last ablution.
- g. A person suffering from urinary incontinence must take care that the private area is cleansed immediately before prayer. It is also recommended that one wear an absorbent cloth to catch the urine.

7. **The Five Daily Prayers⁶**

- a. It is essential that you immediately begin to pray even though you may not be fully knowledgeable in the process of prayer yet. Just do what you can in prayer but it is imperative that you learn it quickly.
- b. Ablution must be made before any prayer can be performed.

⁵ If an open wound produces blood or puss, the liquid must be removed before prayer, unless it is unhealthy to do so.

⁶There is much more to learn about salat, but this text will provide the basics. For a more in depth look into salat refer to The Civil Islamic Law (fiqh.com.)

- c. One should say all statements of prayer in Arabic, but performing it in your native language until you learn the Arabic does not make it void. Allah hears all who speak to him.
- d. One must not speak sounds other than those for prayer.
- e. It is recommended that you use a prayer mat on top of which to prayer, but again, it is not necessary. A clean towel is sufficient.
- f. Below is a definition of one unit. (For each prayer there is an obligation to do a certain number of units.)⁷
 - i. Face southeast, as this is the direction of the *Kabah*, a building used as the Islamic compass created by Allah rebuilt by Abraham, located in the city of Mecca on the Arabian peninsula. If during any part of a prayer, the worshipper's chest turns to face any other direction, the prayer is cancelled and must be performed over again.
 - ii. While standing, swing hands up above the shoulders. This symbolizes leaving the whole universe behind you and preparing yourself to hear only Allah (directing the ears toward *Kabah*.) During this movement one should say:
 "Allah is the Greatest."
"Allahu Ekbar."
 - iii. Upon allowing the hands to come down, place the right hand over the left wrist, and place your hands over your abdomen. Recite the first chapter of the Holy Koran, and recite three or more consecutive verses of choice from the Holy Koran.

Begin with:

"I seek refuge with Allah, from satan, the stoned."⁸

"Aothu bilahee min ash highton arajeem."

"In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Most Merciful."

"Bismillah arahman araheem."

Chapter 1:

"Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, the Merciful, the Most Merciful, Owner of the Day of Recompense. You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we rely on for help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom You have favored, not those upon whom is the anger, nor those who have gone astray."

"Alhamdu lil lahi rabil alameen arahmani araheem maliki yaw mideen. Iyaka nabudu wa iyaka nestaeen. Ehdena aserata almostakeem. Seratal lathenna anamta alayhim ghayril magh dubi alayhim wa la dauleen (Ameen)"

Example of Supplementary reading of Koran:

⁷If anyone is unable to physically perform any part of a prayer, it is acceptable to perform it in the best way possible.

⁸This statement must always be said before reciting any part of the Koran. It also should be said before using the restroom.

Chapter: 112 Oneness - Al-'Ikhlas

In the Name of Allah the Merciful, the Most Merciful

“1 Say: 'He is Allah, the One, 2 the called upon. 3 Who has not given birth, and has not been born, 4 and there is none equal to Him.”

Chapter 112:

“Say, Allah is One. Allah is the One to be called upon. He has not given birth, and He was not borne. There is none equal to Him.”

“Kul huwa Allahu ahad. Allahu asamad. Lam yalid wa lam yulad. Wa lam yakun lahu kufu wan ahad.”

- iv. When the reading is complete, swing arms up to shoulders, then allow the entire torso to fall down into a bent-over position, ending with the hands resting on the knees. Fill the movement with the words, “*Allahu Ekbar.*”
- v. In this bent over position, repeat three times or more (keeping to odd numbers):
 - “Exalted my Lord, the Great.”
 - “Subahana Rabia el alla.”
- vi. In coming up to standing position, say:
 - “Allah hears whosoever praises him.”
 - “Samia Allahu leman hamidah.”
- vii. While saying “*Allahu Ekbar,*” prostrate onto your knees with face touching the ground so that seven points are touching the floor.
 1. Face (forehead and nose)
 2. Two hands (closed fingers)
 3. Two knees
 4. Two feet
- viii. In this position repeat three times or more (keeping to odd numbers):
 - “Exalted is my Lord, the High.”
 - “Subhana rabia el alla.”
- ix. Come up into a sitting position in which your legs are resting underneath you, while saying “*Allahu Ekbar.*” In this position, your hands should be resting on your knees.
- x. While saying “*Allahu Ekbar,*” prostrate again. Once the seven points are resting on the ground say, “*Subhanna rabia el alla,*” three times or more (keeping to odd numbers.)
- xi. This completes one unit.
- xii. After the second unit of any prayer, all or part of the Greeting Prayer must be recited.

“All greetings, prayers and goodness are for Allah. O Prophet, may the Mercy, the Blessings, and the Peace of Allah be upon you. Peace be upon us, and upon the good worshipper of Allah. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Worshipper and Messenger. (1st half ended.) O Allah, grant praise upon Muhammad and the kin of

Muhammad as You granted praise upon Abraham and the kin of Abraham. Truly, You are the Most Praised and Noble. Bless Muhammad and the kin of Muhammad as You blessed Abraham and the kin of Abraham in the world. Truly, You are the Most Praised and Noble.”

“At tayhi yatu lil layhe wa salawatu watyebat. Asalamu alayka ayuha anabey wa rahmatu lahi wa barakatu. Asalamu alayna wa alla ibady ilayhe asaliheen. Ash hadu anla ilaaha ella Allahu wa ash hadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasooluh. (1st half ended.) Allah homma, solly alla Muhammadin wa alla eli Muhammadin kama saulighta alla Ebrah heem wa alla eli Ebrah heem. Ineka hameedon majeed. Allah homma, barik alla Muhammadin wa alla eli Muhammadin kama barokta alla Ebrah heem wa alla eli Ebrah heem fil alameen. Ineka hameedon majeed.”

- xiii. Upon completing all required units for a particular prayer, stay seated and turn head to the right and then to the left, saying both times:

“Peace be upon you.”

“Ah salamu alaycum.”

This is referred to as the Peace Statement and it ends all prayers.

- xiv. If one has missed a prayer for a valid reason (i.e. being asleep or forgetting it), or if one has missed a prayer for a non-valid reason (i.e. choosing not to pray at the appropriate time) the prayer should be made up as soon as possible.

<i>Morning</i>	<i>Afternoon</i>	<i>Late Afternoon</i>	<i>Sunset</i>	
<i>Twilight</i>				
2 units	4 units	4 units	3 units	4 units

*Beginning to *No more be light, but daylight before sunrise (darkness)	*Begins just after sun has reached its zenith	*Begins when object's shadow equals its height	*After sun has fully set
*Koran recited *1 st -2 nd units aloud Koran read aloud *3 rd -4 th units Koran read silently	*Koran recited silently	*Koran recited silently	*1 st -2 nd units Koran read aloud *3 rd unit Koran read silently
*Supplemental *Supplemental reading of Koran reading of Koran for both units for 1 st -2 nd units *After 2 nd unit *After 2 nd unit recite full Greeting recite ½ Greeting Prayer Prayer *After 4 th unit recite full Greeting Prayer	*Supplemental reading of Koran reading of Koran for 1 st -2 nd units *After 2 nd unit recite ½ Greeting Prayer *After 4 th unit recite full Greeting Prayer	*Supplemental reading of Koran for 1 st -2 nd units *After 2 nd unit recite ½ Greeting Prayer *After 4 th unit recite full Greeting Prayer	*Supplemental reading of Koran for 1 st -2 nd units *After 2 nd unit recite ½ Greeting Prayer *After 3 rd unit recite full Greeting Prayer
*End w/ Peace *End w/ Peace statement statement	*End w/ Peace statement	*End w/ Peace statement	*End w/ Peace statement

8. Purification

- a. Purification according to Islamic law means the action of removing any impurity or filth by rinsing the entire body or by performing ablution with pure water. There are two types of impurity each

requiring its own purification process. Minor impurity requires ablution. Major impurity requires a full shower. Later in this document, actions or circumstances that cause such impurities will be discussed. Water is no longer pure if its taste, smell or color is different from pure water. Salt water is considered pure water.

- b. Use the right hand only for clean things, such as eating, feeding babies, and greeting people. Use the left hand for cleaning and personal hygiene.
- c. If one comes into contact with any of the following substances, the substance must be removed before one can be considered in a purified state.⁹
 - i. Blood
 - ii. Puss
 - iii. Vomit
 - iv. Liquor (except wine that has naturally turned to vinegar)
 - v. All substances that exits from any private areas, including semen and vaginal discharge.¹⁰
 - vi. Animal life that dies in a non-Islamic way, excluding aquatic life (which is considered pure.)
 - vii. Hair from animals that are unslaughterable (i.e. lion or pig)
 - viii. Locusts
 - ix. Deceased human beings
 - x. Saliva from dogs (Must be washed seven times. Washing machine is sufficient.)
 - xi. Swine
- d. In order to purify the mouth, it is recommended that one use a toothbrush, floss, tongue scrapper and mouthwash.
- e. After a state of major impurity, a complete water shower is needed. Major impurity comes from:
 - i. Intercourse (meaning when the head of the penis passes through the vaginal ring.)
 - ii. Female or male orgasm.
 - iii. Death. (A person who dies must be given a shower before burial.)
 - iv. A woman's menstrual period.
 - v. Giving birth.
 - vi. Prenatal bleeding.
- f. There are three obligations while performing a purifying bath. These are that one must:
 - i. Begin by saying,
"In the name of Allah, Most Merciful and Compassionate."
"*Bismillahi arahmani araheem.*"
 - ii. Intend to purify one's self through cleansing.
 - iii. Rinse all of the skin, including the hair to the roots, and under the nails.

⁹One must be in a state of purity before making any prayers (salat.)

¹⁰Although semen and vaginal discharge are considered impure, the specific source of reproduction (sperm and egg) is pure.

- g. The following actions are unlawful to perform in a state a minor impurity. In order to perform any of these actions, ablution must be made.
 - i. Prayer
 - ii. Touching of the Koran
 - iii. The required prostration upon hearing certain verses of the Koran
 - iv. Volunteer prostration to thank Allah
 - v. The required circling of Kabah upon journey to Mecca
- h. The following actions are unlawful to perform in a state of major impurity. If in such state, a full shower must be made in order to perform any of the following actions.
 - i. Recitation of the Koran
 - ii. Intercourse immediately after a menstrual cycle
 - iii. The beginning of a fast immediately after a menstrual cycle
 - iv. To enter a mosque after a menstrual cycles has ended

9. Specific Information for Men

- a. During prayer, men should take care to cover their bodies from the shoulders to the knees. Clothing should be loose and not reveal the shape one's figure.
- b. Attending Friday prayer (juma) in a local mosque is obligatory for all able, Muslim males. In preparation, he must take a purifying bath/shower and clean his mouth. He should also wear perfume and wear white loose clothing. He should arrive at the mosque before the sun reaches its highest, for juma replaces his afternoon prayer.

10. Specific Information for Women

- a. In Islamic faith it is understood that men are attracted to women by way of sight, whereas women are attracted to men by way of thought. Therefore in order to avoid any sexual thoughts on the part of the male during a time of prayer, it is necessary for a woman to cover her entire body save the face and hands. Contrary to Western opinion, the choice to cover the body is done out of respect for the woman, and some Muslim women cover up partly as a favor to their Muslim brothers.¹¹ For the same reason, when men and women are praying together, the woman prays behind the man so that he cannot be sexually distracted by her presence, thus allowing him to focus on his prayer. All this being said, if you are female, it is obligatory to cover one's self up during prayer (even if you are alone.)³
- b. In Islamic thought, a woman should have the opportunity to rest during her menstrual period. Therefore, during her cycle, a woman must not participate in any of the five obligatory prayers.³ If however a woman begins to bleed and the bleeding ceases within 24 hours, it is not considered a menstrual cycle and therefore, she must make up all

¹¹There are, of course, other reasons why a woman would choose to cover herself up. For a more in-depth look into this topic please refer to The Holy Koran.

¹² Asking Allah for blessing upon Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace) is considered Remembrance of Allah.

missed prayers. If the bleeding begins and stops repeatedly, usually referred to as spotting, this is considered menstruation and therefore no prayers should be performed.

- c. If a woman is in her menstrual cycle during a time of fast, she should not partake in the fast, but needs to perform the fast once her menstrual cycle has ended.
- d. If a woman for any reason chronically emits an unusually large amount of vaginal discharge, she should cleanse the area immediately before making any prayers.

11. The Remembrance of Allah (*Thikre*)

- a. Remembrance - Although it is essential to state the Declaration of Faith during one's initiation into Islam, stating it frequently is highly recommended. It means that one accepts the Oneness of Allah and the Prophet hood of Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace.) One can also continuously repeat the first statement as a means of contemplation.

“I declare that there is no god except Allah.”
“*Ash hadu enla ullahah ella Allah.*”
- b. Worship - Aside from believing in your heart, the next best form of worship is the prescribed pattern of prayer (*salat.*)
- c. Glorification - The best way to give glory to Allah is to say:

“Exalted are You. We are unable to glorify You as You glorify Yourself.”
“*Subahanaka. Lan ohsee thana an ahlayeka anta kama athnighta alla nafsik.*”
- d. Praise – The best way to give praise to Allah is to say:

“Praise be to Allah, a kind of praise that equals His favors and the favors yet to come.”
“*Alhamdu lelahe hamdan yuafio neamahu wa yukafe u mazeeda.*”
- e. Blessing on the Prophet (May Allah bless him and give him peace)¹² – The best way to ask Allah to bless Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace) is to say:

“O Allah, grant praise upon Muhammad and the kin of Muhammad as You granted praise upon Abraham and the kin of Abraham. Bless Muhammad and the kin of Muhammad as You blessed Abraham and the kin of Abraham in this world. Truly, You are the Most Praised and Noble.”
“*Allah homma, solly alla Muhammadin wa alla eli Muhammadin kama saulighta alla Ebrah heem wa alla eli Ebrah heem. Wabarik alla Muhammadin wa alla eli Muhammadin kama barokta alla Ebrah heem wa alla eli Ebrah heem fil ala meen. Ineka hameedon majeed.*”
- f. Blessing on the Prophet when saying his name¹² – Although obligatory during the Declaration of Faith, it is strongly recommended that one give Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace) this blessing at every mention of his name.

“Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless him and give him peace.)”
“Prophet Muhammad (*Saula Allahu aleahe wa sal lam.*)”