

MY FIRST STEPS IN ISLAM

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All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and may Allah exalt the mention of His Prophet, and render him and his household safe and secure from all derogatory things.

I sincerely congratulate you for the guidance Allah has granted and favored you with. I ask Allah that He keeps us and all Muslims firm upon this great religion until we meet Him, without changing anything from it and not being put through trials.

Indeed a true Muslim feels great joy when someone accepts Islam, for he wishes well for others and wants them to live as he does himself: a life of comfort and delight with spiritual joy and mental stability. This can only result from implementing the teachings of Islam. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Whoever does good whether male or female and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We will most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.» (16:97)

This is because Allah (ﷻ) clarified the condition of those who do not believe in Allah and what He revealed. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And whoever turns away from My Reminder, verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. He will say, ‘O my Lord! Why have you raised me up blind, while [before] I had sight.’ He [Allah] will say, ‘Like this Our *Aayaat* [proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.] came to you, but you disregarded them, and so this Day, you will be neglected.» (20:124-126)

A true Muslim wishes that they live happily forever in the Hereafter, whose delights are never-ending. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily those who believe and do righteous deeds shall have the Gardens of *Firdaws* (the highest level in Heaven) for their entertainment. * Therein they shall dwell [forever]. No desire will they have for removal there from.﴾ (18:107-108)

The end is inevitable: either eternal happiness or eternal remorse. Whoever dies upon disbelief - and refuge is sought in Allah - he will enter Hellfire for eternity. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily those who disbelieve from the people of the Book and the polytheists will abide in the Fire of Hell. They are the worst of creatures.﴾ (98:6)

Dear brother, indeed it is a great blessing and favor of Allah that He has guided you to Islam and has saved you from disbelief, for there are many who have not been granted the guidance to realize the correct religion, as there are many who have realized that Islam is the true Religion but have not been granted the guidance to follow it. So you should thank Allah, my brother, for this favor from Allah and this gift which He has given you. Ask Allah that He keeps you firm upon this religion until you meet Him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿They regard as a favor to you [O Muhammad (ﷺ)] that they have embraced Islam Say, ‘Count not your Islam as a favor to me. Nay but Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the Faith, if you indeed are true.﴾ (49:17)

We are all in need of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O Mankind! It is you who stand in need of Allah. But Allah is rich (Free of all needs), worthy of all praise.﴾ (35:15)

Allah (ﷻ) does not need us: He neither benefits from our obedience and worship, nor is He harmed by our disbelief and disobedience. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿If you disbelieve, then verily Allah is not in need of you, He likes not disbelief for His slaves. And if you are grateful [by being believers] He is pleased with that for you.﴾ (39:7)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said in Hadeeth *Qudsi*¹,

‘Allah said: ‘O My slaves! I have forbidden *dhulm* (oppression) for Myself, and I have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another. O My slaves, all of you are astray except those whom I have guided, so seek guidance from Me and I shall guide you. O My slaves, all of you are hungry except those whom I have fed, so seek food from Me and I shall feed you. O My slaves, all of you are naked except those whom I have clothed, so seek clothing from Me and I shall clothe you. O My slaves, you commit sins by day and by night, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me and I shall forgive you. O My slaves, you will not attain harming Me so as to harm me, and you will not attain benefiting Me so as to benefit Me. O My slaves, if the first of you and the last of you, and the humans of you and the *Jinn*² of you, were all as pious as the most pious heart of any individual amongst you,

¹ **Hadeeth *Qudsi*:** Hadeeth is a narration of the speech, actions, tacit approvals, and characteristics of the Prophet (ﷺ). Hadeeth *Qudsi* is a Hadeeth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) narrates from Allah in the first person (I).

² **Jinn:** A creation from the unseen having free will like the humans, made from a smokeless flame of fire.

then this would not increase My Kingdom an iota. O My slaves, if the first of you and the last of you, and the humans of you and the Jinn of you, were all as wicked as the most wicked heart of any individual amongst you, then this would not decrease My Kingdom an iota. O My slaves, if the first of you and the last of you, and the humans of you and the *Jinn* of you, were all to stand together in one place and ask of Me, and I were to give everyone what he requested, then that would not decrease what I possess, except what is decreased of the Ocean when a needle is dipped into it. O My slaves, it is but your deeds that I account for you and then recompense you for. So he who finds good, let him praise Allah, and he who finds other than that, let him blame no one but himself.’ ” (Muslim #2577)

In order to become a Muslim, there are no specific religious rituals or customs that you need to perform, neither in specific areas nor in front of people. This is due to the fact that in Islam man has direct relationship with his Lord without any intermediaries.

Also you don't need to exert great efforts [to enter its folds] you merely need to utter a few words, which are easy on the tongue, while understanding their great meanings.

One who has decided to become Muslim should utter *Shahaadataan*¹ in order to enter the folds of Islam, which is:

“Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abd-ullahi wa rasooluh.

Meaning: I testify that there is no true god except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.

¹ *Shahaadataan*: Literally, the Two Testimonies of Faith.

This statement is the key to enter Islam. Whoever utters it shuns all other religions besides Islam and all beliefs which differ with it. Through this statement, he receives the rights which all Muslims receive, and he must fulfill the rights which all Muslims fulfill. His wealth, honor and blood become inviolable, except for that which is prescribed by Islam. It is true that one is considered a Muslim by his apparent actions, but only Allah knows what is truly in the hearts...so what are the meanings of the *Shahaadataan*?

The *Shahaadataan*

(The Two Testimonies of Faith)

The Meaning of *Laa Ilaaha Ill-Allah*

This is the phrase of *Tawheed*¹. For this concept, Allah brought the creation into being, and for this concept He created *Jannah* and Hellfire. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And I have neither created the Jinn nor humans except to worship Me.﴾ (51:56)

This is the belief which all Prophets and Messengers called their peoples to, from Adam to the last of them, Muhammad, may Allah exalt their mention and render them safe from every derogatory thing. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And we have not sent before you any messenger except that We have revealed to him that there is no deity that is worshipped in truth except Me, so worship and obey Me.﴾ (10:25)

The Meanings of the *Shahaadah*:

The first testimony, **that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah**, includes the following meanings:

- Allah is the One Who deserves to be worshipped.² Allah says:

﴿No doubt! Verily, to Allah belongs whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth. And those who

¹ *Tawheed*: The concept of the Oneness of Allah.

² This concept is known as *Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah*, or the Oneness of Allah in His worship.

worship and invoke others besides Allah, in fact they follow not the (Allah's so-called) partners, they follow only a conjecture and they only invent lies.﴾ (10:66)

- Allah is the Creator of all that exists. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Such is Allah, your Lord! *Laa ilaaha illa Huwa* (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Creator of all things. So worship and obey Him (Alone), and He is the *Wakeel* (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian, etc.) over all things.﴾ (6:102)

- Allah is the Proprietor of all that exists, and the Disposer of all affairs.¹ Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Surely, His is the Creation and Commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the ‘*Aalameen* (mankind, *Jinns* and all that exists)!﴾ (7:54)

- To Him belongs the beautiful names and perfect attributes. Far removed is He from every imperfection.²

Allah says:

﴿And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do.﴾

(7:180)

The Conditions of the *Shahaadah*:

¹ Points two and three are known as *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah*, or the Oneness of Allah. This is the belief that there is no Creator, Provider, Sustainer, and Owner except for Allah.

² This concept is known as *Tawheed al-Asmaa' was-Sifaat*, that Allah has the Best Names and Attributes, and that there are none equal, comparable to, or like them.

It is not enough to merely utter the *Shahaadah* for it to be accepted by Allah. It is a key to the gates of *Jannah*, but in order for the key to work, it needs to have the right notches. The *Shahaadah* must meet the following conditions for it to be accepted by Allah:

1. Knowledge: Comprises knowing that all things worshipped besides Allah are false. There is no god worshipped in truth except Allah, even if it be a prophet, a messenger or an angel. Allah is the only One Who deserves all types of worship, such as prayer [*Salaah*], supplication (*du'aa*), hope, sacrificial slaughtering, making oaths, etc.

Whoever assigns any act of worship to other than Allah while that person intends to worship or aggrandize the one who he assigned it to has committed *kufr*¹, even if he uttered the *Shahaadataan*.

2. Certainty: The heart must be firmly certain of the meaning of the two *Shahaadah*. Certainty is the opposite of doubt, so there is no room for a person to doubt or waver in his belief. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not, and strive with their wealth and their lives for the Cause of Allah. Those are the truthful.﴾ (49:15)

3. Acceptance: One should accept the *Shahaadah* fully, and not reject it.² Allah (ﷻ) says:

¹ **Kufr:** Disbelief.

² It is not sufficient that a person knows what the *Shahaadah* means and believes it with certainty. Rather he must accept it by pronouncing it, and accepts to become a Muslim.

﴿Truly, when it was said to them, “*Laa ilaaha ill-Allah* (no deity is worshipped in truth except Allah),” they puff themselves up with pride (i.e. deny it).﴾ (37:35)

4. Submission, obedience and acting upon all what the *Shahaadah* necessitates.¹ A person must do what Allah ordered and abstain from what He prohibited. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And whosoever submits his face to Allah, while he is a *Muhsin*² (doer of good) then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold [*La ilaha ill-Allah*]. And to Allah return all matters for decision.﴾ (37:35)

5. Truthfulness: One must be truthful in professing the *shahaadah*.³ Allah says:

﴿They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts.﴾ (48:11)

6. Sincerity of worship: One must sincerely dedicate all acts of worship to Allah alone.⁴ Allah says:

¹ It is not sufficient that a person knows what the *Shahaadah* means and believes it with certainty, accepts it by pronouncing it and accepts to become a Muslim, rather, he must act according to it.

² *Muhsin*: Literally, a person who does something well. Here it means one who does righteous deeds sincerely for Allah, according to the method the Prophet (ﷺ) taught us. Allah mentions both submission to Allah along with doing righteous deeds, and if a person does these he has grasped the *Shahaadah*.

³ Even though a person may be doing all these things on the outside, he might be hiding disbelief in his heart, like the Hypocrites.

⁴ It may be that one fulfills all the previous conditions, but he directs worship to other than Allah at times, like supplicating to the dead, etc. He has not made his worship purely for Allah.

﴿And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, following the religion purely and sincerely for Him, turning away from other religions.﴾ (98:5)

7. **Love:** One must love the *shahaadah* and all that it necessitates. He must love Allah, His Messenger, and His righteous slaves. He must hate and show enmity towards all who show enmity to Allah and His Messenger. He must prefer what Allah and His Messenger love, even if it differs from his desires. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight... are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are *Al-Faasiqoon* (the rebellious and disobedient to Allah).﴾ (9:24)

The *Shahaadah* also necessitates that Allah is the only One Who has the right to legislate, whether it be in matters concerning worship or those concerning human relations, in both individual and public matters.

The act of making something prohibited or lawful is for Allah alone. His Messenger (ﷺ) merely explained and clarified Allah's commandments.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).﴾ (59:7)

The Merits of *Iman* (Belief) in Allah

1. When one fulfills the conditions of the *Shahadah*, he would free himself from worshipping man and devote all acts of worship to the Creator of man. This would lead one to being independent. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: ‘Tell me then, the things that you invoke besides Allah, if Allah intended some harm for me, could they remove His harm, or if He (Allah) intended some mercy for me, could they withhold His Mercy?’ Say: ‘Sufficient for me is Allah; in Him those who trust (i.e. believers) must put their trust.﴾ (39:38)

2. Peace of heart, mind and soul. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism) and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.﴾ (13:28)

3. Sense of security through the knowledge that there is someone to turn to in times of hardships. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And when harm touches you upon the sea, those that you call upon besides Him vanish from you except Him (Allah Alone). But when He brings you safely to land, you turn away (from Him). And man is ever ungrateful.﴾ (17:67)

4. The feeling of spiritual joy in worshipping Allah. This is due to the fact that the goal which he is trying to achieve (*Jannah*) cannot be reached except after death. So you see him persistently striving to achieve this goal by doing righteous deeds, rendering all acts of worship sincerely and purely to Allah alone. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: ‘Verily, my *Salaah* (prayer) my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the ‘*Aalameen* (mankind, Jinn and all that exists). He has no partner. * And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.﴾ (6:162-163)

5. The guidance and success which is granted by Allah to those that believe in Him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«...and whosoever has *Iman* in Allah, He guides his heart.» (64:11)

6. The love of doing righteous deeds and its propagation amongst the masses. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom shall see it.» (99:7)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

'Indeed the one who leads another to do a righteous deed is like the one who actually does it (i.e. he will receive the same reward).' (Tirmidhi #2670)

One who has belief in Allah must also have belief in all the things He has informed us of, and among them are the following:

Belief in the Angels

One must believe that the angels are from the creation of Allah; no one knows their exact number except Him. They are from the unseen world. Allah (ﷻ) created them to worship and obey Him. They carry out all of Allah's orders, from administration, observation, guarding and protecting the universe as well its creatures, all according to Allah's Will and Order. Allah says:

﴿The Messiah (Jesusﷺ) will never be so proud to reject being a slave to Allah, nor [will] the angels who are near (to Allah).﴾ (4:172)

The Angels act as emissaries between Allah and His Messengers. Allah says:

﴿Which the trustworthy *Rooh* [Jibreel (Gabriel)] has brought down; * Upon your heart (O Muhammad ﷺ) that you may be (one) of the warners, * In a plain Arabic language.﴾ (26:193-195)

Allah has charged the angels with specific duties, and they do what they are commanded. Allah says:

﴿They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded.﴾ (16:50)

The angels are not partners, associates, or rivals with Allah, nor are they His children; but one must still respect and love them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And they say: 'The Most Beneficent (Allah) has begotten a child [from the angels].' Far removed is He from every imperfection! They (the angels) are but honored slaves. They speak not until He has spoken, and [then] they act on His Command.﴾ (21:26-27)

They spend their time worshipping and obeying Allah, glorifying Him and praising Him. Allah says:

﴿They (i.e. the angels) glorify His praises night and day, (and) without slackening (to do so).﴾ (21:20)

The angels were created from light. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

'The angels were created from light, the *Jinn* were created from a smokeless flame of fire, and Adam was created from what was described to you (black dry clay).' (Muslim #2996)

Although they were created from light, they cannot be seen. Allah (ﷻ) has given them the ability to change their appearance in order to be seen and witnessed. Allah informs us that *Jibreel* (Gabriel) (جبرئيل) came to Maryam (Mary) in the form of a man:

﴿She placed a screen [to screen herself] from them; then We sent to her Our *Rooh* (*Jibreel* جبرئيل), and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects. * She said: 'Verily! I seek refuge with the Most Beneficent (Allah) from you, if you do fear Allah.' * [The angel] said: 'I am only a Messenger from your Lord [to announce] to you the gift of a righteous son.﴾ (19:17-19)

The Prophet (ﷺ) saw *Jibreel* (جبرئيل) in his actual form; he had six hundred wings, and the whole horizon was blocked. (Bukhari #3063)

Allah informed us of the names and tasks of some of the angels, such as; *Jibreel* (Gabriel) (جبرئيل) who was given the task of revelation. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Which the trustworthy *Rooh* [*Jibreel* (Gabriel)] has brought down; * upon your heart (O Muhammad ﷺ) that you may be (one) of the warners.﴾ (99:7)

Israafeel is given the task to blow the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection, while *Meekaa`eel* is in charge of the rain and vegetation. Every human has been appointed two angels, one who records his righteous deeds and the other who records his sins. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**(Remember!) That the two recorders (angels) record, one sitting on his right and one on his left.**» (50:17)

The Angel of Death (*Malak-ul-Mawt*) is the angel given the task of collecting peoples' souls at the time of death. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**Say: ‘The Angel of Death who is set over you will take your souls, and then you shall be brought back to your Lord.**» (32:11)

Maalik is the Keeper of Hell. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**And they will cry: ‘O Maalik! Let your Lord make an end of us.’ He will say: ‘Verily, you shall abide therein forever.**» (43:77)

Ridhwaan is the keeper of *Jannah*, and there are others also charged with guarding humans. There are other angels and each has been assigned a task. Some have been mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah¹, while others have not, but we must believe in them all.

Merits of Belief in the Angels

1. One would understand the greatness of Allah (ﷻ) His power and ability, and His All-Encompassing Knowledge, from the greatness of His creation which is a proof confirming the greatness of the Creator.
2. When a Muslim knows that there are Angels who record all that he says and does, and that everything he does is either for

¹ **Sunnah:** The way of the Prophet (ﷺ).

him or held against him, he would be keen to perform righteous deeds and abstain from sins, whether he is alone or in public.

3. One would safeguard himself from believing in superstitions and fables.

4. One would recognize the mercy Allah shows to His slaves; for Allah assigned to every individual angels who guard him and take care of his affairs.

Belief in the Books of Allah

One must believe that Allah (ﷻ) revealed Heavenly Books to His Messengers in order to convey them to mankind. These Books during their times contained nothing but the truth. All these Books call people to worship Allah alone, and that He is the Creator, Proprietor and Owner, and to Him belong the beautiful Attributes and Names.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice.»

(57:25)

Some of the Books are:

1) **The Scriptures of Ibraheem (ﷺ) (Abraham) and Musa (ﷺ) (Moses):** The Qur'an has given a brief insight about the religious fundamentals found in these scriptures. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Or, has he not been informed of what is in the scriptures of Musa? -And (of) Ibraheem who fulfilled (the commandments): That no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another;- And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for;- And that his striving shall soon be seen; Then shall be rewarded for it with the fullest reward; and that to your Lord is the goal.»

(53:36-42)

2) **The Torah:** The Torah is the Sacred Book which was revealed to Musa (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily, We did send down the Torah [to Musa], therein was guidance and light, by which the Prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah's Will, judged the

Jews. And the rabbis and the priests [too judged the Jews by the *Torah* after those Prophets] for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto. Therefore fear not men but fear Me (O Jews) and sell not My Verses for a miserable price. And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, such are the disbelievers.﴾ (5:44)

3) **The *Zaboor* (Psalms):** The *Zaboor* is the Book which was revealed to Dawood (ﷺ) (David). Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and to Dawood We gave the *Zaboor*.﴾ (4:163)

4) **The *Injeel* (Gospel) :** The *Injeel* is the Book which was revealed to 'Eesaa (ﷺ) (Jesus). Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And in their footsteps, We sent 'Eesaa, son of Maryam (Mary), confirming the *Torah* that had come before him. And We gave him the *Injeel*, in which was guidance and light and confirmation of the *Tauraat* (Torah) that had come before it, a guidance and an admonition for the Allah-fearing.﴾ (5:46)

A Muslim must believe in all the Heavenly Books and he must believe that they are from Allah (ﷻ). It is not lawful for him to abide by its laws, since these Books were revealed to certain nations at certain times.

The Qur'an has explained some of what was found in the *Torah* and the *Injeel*; such as the prophecy of Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿...and My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it (specially) for those who are pious and give Zakah (Obligatory Charity), and those who believe in Our *Ayaat*. Those who follow the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written down with them in the *Torah* and the *Injeel* (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from the their burden and the shackles which

were upon them; so (as for) those who believe in him and honor him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful.﴾ (7:156)

5) **The Noble Qur'an:** One must hold the following beliefs concerning it:

a. One must believe that the Qur'an is the Speech of Allah which *Jibreel* (Gabriel) (ﷺ) brought to Muhammad (ﷺ) in clear Arabic language. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Which the trustworthy *Rooḥ* [Jibreel (Gabriel)] has brought down; * Upon your heart (O Muhammad ﷺ) that you may be (one) of the warners, * In a plain Arabic language.﴾ (26:193-195)

b. One must believe that the Qur'an is the last of the Heavenly Books, which confirms the previous Books concerning the Message of *Tawḥeed* and the obligation to worship and obey Him. All previous Books were abrogated by the Qur'an. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿[It is] He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur'an) to you (Muhammad ﷺ) with truth, confirming what came before it. And he sent down the *Torah* and the *Injeel*. Aforetime, as a guidance to mankind, And He sent down the *Furqaan* (The Criterion) [of judgment between right and wrong (this Qur'an)].﴾ (3:3-4)

c. One must believe that the Qur'an contains all divine laws. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as a religion.﴾ (5:3)

d. One must believe that it was revealed to mankind at large; not to a specific nation, as were previously revealed Heavenly Books. Allah says:

﴿And We have not sent you [O Muhammad ﷺ] except to all of humanity, as a giver of glad tidings and a warner, but most people know not.﴾ (34:28)

e. One must believe that Allah has preserved the Qur'an from all distortions, adulterations, additions, or impairments. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Indeed it is We ourselves Who have sent down the Remembrance (the Qur'an) and surely, it is We Who shall guard it [from distortion].﴾ (15:9)

The Merits of Belief in Allah's Books

1. One would realize the mercy and love Allah has for His slaves; since He revealed to them Books which guide them to the path which leads to His pleasure. He safeguarded man from confusion and from the evil of *Shaytaan*¹.
2. One would realize the great wisdom of Allah; since He gave each nation a set of laws that suited them during their times.
3. To distinguish true believers from those who are not. It is incumbent upon one who believes in his own Book to believe in the other Heavenly Books.
4. To increase the good deeds of the believers; for the one who believes in his Book and the Books that came after his Book, would receive his reward twice. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Those to whom We gave the Scripture [i.e. the Torah and the *Injeel*, etc.] before it, - they believe in it (the Qur'an). And when it is recited to them, they say: 'We believe in it. Verily, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed even before it we have been from those who submit themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims (like

¹ *Shaytaan*: Satan: A Jinn named *Iblees* who disobeyed Allah's order to prostrate to Adam, therefore was cursed for eternity. He asked Allah for respite, which He in turn granted, to strive to lead humanity to the Hellfire with him.

‘Abdullah bin Salaam and Salmaan Al-Faarisi, etc.). These will be given their reward twice over, because they are patient, and repel evil with good, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them.﴾ (28:52-54)

Belief in Allah's Messengers

One must believe that Allah (ﷻ) chose the finest amongst mankind to be Messengers whom He sent to His creation with specific legislations; to worship and obey Allah, and to establish His religion and His *Tawheed*. He ordered His Messengers to convey the Message to people, so that they would not have any proof against Allah¹ after He sent them.

They are bearers of glad-tidings of the Pleasure of Allah and His *Jannah*, which is reserved for those who believe in them and their teachings. They are also sent as warners to their peoples, to warn them of the anger of Allah and His punishment which is reserved for those who disbelieve in them and their teachings.

﴿And We send not the Messengers but as givers of glad tidings and as warners. So whosoever believes and does righteous good deeds, upon such shall come no fear, nor shall they grieve. * But those who reject Our *Ayaat*, the torment will touch them for their disbelief.﴾ (6:48-49)

There are many Prophets and Messengers; no one knows their exact number except Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And, indeed We have sent Messengers before you (O Muhammad ﷺ); of some of them We have related to you their story, and of some We have not related to you their story.﴾ (40:78)

One must believe in all of them and that they were human; they were not supernatural beings. Allah (ﷻ) says:

¹ They will not be able to say, "Had Allah sent us messengers, we would have followed His verses and become of the believers."

﴿And We sent not before you (O Muhammad ﷺ) but men to whom We inspired, so ask the people of the Reminder (Scriptures) if you do not know. And We did not create them (the Messengers, with) bodies that ate not food, nor were they immortal.﴾ (21:8)

They do not have any attributes resembling Allah's. They can neither extend benefit, nor cause harm. They have no control over the universe, nor can they do with it as they please. They cannot do anything which only Allah is capable of. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say (O Muhammad ﷺ): ‘I possess no power of benefit or hurt to myself except as Allah wills. If I had the knowledge of the Unseen, I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me.﴾ (7:188)

If one believes in some, while he disbelieves in others, he has committed an act of *kufr* (disbelief).. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make distinction between Allah and His Messengers saying, ‘We believe in some but reject others,’ and wish to adopt a way in between. They are in truth disbelievers. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating torment.﴾ (4:150-151)

Allah calls some of the Messengers ‘*Ulul-‘Azm*’ (those of strong determination). They were the most determined of the Messengers in conveying the Message; they were patient and steadfast. They were Nooh (Noah), Ibraheem, Musa, ‘Eesaa, and Muhammad, may Allah exalt their mention, and render them safe from every derogatory thing.

The first Messenger was Nooh (ﷺ). Allah says:

﴿Verily, We have inspired you (O Muhammad ﷺ) as We inspired Nooh (Noah) and the Prophets after him.﴾

(4:163)

Muhammad (ﷺ) was the last and final Messenger; no Messenger will come after him until the Final Day. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last (end) of the Prophets.**﴾ (33:40)

The religion of Muhammad (ﷺ) abrogated the religions which preceded it. It is the complete and final religion of truth which is obligatory to be followed, and it will continue to be so until the Final Hour.

Who is Muhammad (ﷺ)?

His name is Muhammad bin¹ Abdullah bin Abdul-Muttalib bin Haashim. His *Kunyah*² is Abul-Qaasim. He was from the Arab tribe of Quraish whose ancestry traces back to ‘Adnaan. ‘Adnaan was from the children of Ismaa’eel (عليه السلام), the Prophet of Allah and son of Ibraheem (عليه السلام), the *Khaleel*³ of Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

'Indeed Allah chose the tribe of *Kinaanah* over other tribes from the children of *Ismaa'eel*; He chose the *Quraish* over other tribes of *Kinaanah*; He chose *Banu Haashim* over the other families of the *Quraish*; and He chose me from *Banu Haashim*.' (Muslim #2276)

He received his first revelation from Allah at the age of forty, and he remained in Makkah thereafter for thirteen years calling to the *Tawheed* of Allah. He then migrated to Madinah and

¹ **Bin pl. Banu:** ‘the Son of...’, “the children of...”

² **Kunyah:** A name similar to a Nickname.

³ **Khaleel:** the one whom Allah loves most.

called its people to Islam, and they accepted it. There, Allah revealed the remaining legislations. He conquered Makkah eight years after his migration, and he died when he was sixty-three, after Allah revealed to him the whole Qur'an. All the legislations of the religion were revealed, completed and perfected, and all the Arabs accepted Islam.

The Merits of Belief in the Messengers

1. One would realize the mercy and love Allah has for His slaves; since He sent to them Messengers who conveyed to them His religion. They in themselves were examples whom people emulated.
2. To distinguish the believers who are truthful in their Faith from others; for it is incumbent upon one who believes in his own Messenger to believe in other Messengers who are mentioned in his Book.
3. Those of the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) who believe in their Messengers and then believe in Muhammad, may Allah exalt his mention, would receive double reward.

Belief in the Last Day

One must believe that the life of this world will come to an end. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**Whatsoever is on it (the earth) will perish.**﴾ (55:26)

When Allah wills this world to come to an end, Allah will order Angel *Israafeel* to blow the Trumpet. At that point, everything on Earth will perish. Then He will order him to blow it again, and upon that, all people will rise from their graves in their bodies, all over the world, from the time of Adam (ﷺ). Allah says:

﴿**And the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will collapse and die, except him whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time and behold, they will be standing, looking on (waiting).**﴾ (39:68)

Belief in the Last Day constitutes, belief in everything Allah and His Messenger, may Allah exalt his mention, has informed us about:

1) **To believe in the life of the *Barzakh*:** This life is the time after one's death until the Last Day. In it, the believer will live a life of pleasure, while the disbelievers will be punished. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**The Fire; they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon, and on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels): ‘Make *Fir‘awn*’s (Pharaoh) people enter the severest torment!**﴾ (40:46)

2) **To believe in the Resurrection:** Allah will resurrect mankind, naked, barefooted, and uncircumcised. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected (for the Account). Say: Yes! By my *Lord*, you will certainly be resurrected, then you will be informed of (and recompensed for) what you did, and that is easy for Allah.» (64:7)

3) **To believe in the Gathering:** Allah will gather all creation together and call them to account. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And (remember) the Day We shall cause the mountains to pass away (like clouds of dust), and you will see the earth as a leveled plain, and we shall gather them all together so as to leave not one of them behind.» (18:47)

4) **To believe that people will be brought before Allah in ranks:** Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And they shall be brought before your *Lord*, standing in ranks: Now certainly you have come to Us as We created you at first. Nay, you thought that We had not appointed to you a time of the fulfillment of the promise.» (18:48)

5) **To believe that one's limbs will bear witness.** Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Till, when they reach it (Hellfire), their hearing (ears) and their eyes, and their skins will testify against them as to what they used to do. * And they will say to their skins, 'Why do you testify against us?' They will say: 'Allah has caused us to speak, He causes all things to speak: and He created you the first time, and to Him you are made to return.' * And you have not been hiding yourselves (in the world), lest your ears, and your eyes, and your skins testify against you; but you thought that Allah knew not much of what you were doing.» (41:20-22)

6) **To believe in the Questioning.** Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿But stop them; verily they are to be questioned. *
‘What is the matter with you? Why do you not help one
another [as you used to do in the world]?’ * Nay, but
that Day they shall surrender.﴾ (33:40)

7) **To believe in the *Siraat* (Bridge)** and that everyone must pass over it. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿There is not one of you but will pass over it (Hell); this
is with your *Lord* a Decree which must be
accomplished.﴾ (19:71)

8) **To believe in the weighing of deeds.** Allah will call people to account and reward those who did well with what they deserve, due to their righteous deeds, their Belief, and adherence to their Messengers, and He will punish those who did evil. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of
Resurrection, then none will be dealt with unjustly in
anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed,
We will bring it. And Sufficient are We to take
account.﴾ (21:47)

9) **To believe in the handing out of Scrolls and Books.** Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Then, as for him who will be given his Record in his
right hand, He surely will receive an easy reckoning. *
And he will return to his family in joy! * But whosoever
is given his Record behind his back. * He will invoke
(his) destruction. * And he shall enter a blazing Fire
and made to taste its burning.﴾ (84:7-12)

10) **To believe that people will be rewarded** with *Jannah* or Hellfire in an everlasting and eternal life. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily those who disbelieve from among the people of
the Book (Jews and Christians) and the *mushrikoon*
(pagans) will abide in the Fire of Hell. They are the

worst of creatures * Verily, those who believe and do righteous deeds, they are the best of creatures. Their reward with their *Lord* is ‘*Adn* (Eden) *Jannah* (Gardens of Eternity), underneath which rivers flow. They will abide therein forever, Allah will be pleased with them, and they with Him. That is for him who fears his *Lord*.» (98:6-8)

11) To believe in the *Hawd*¹, Intercession, and all other things which the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) informed us.

The Merits of Belief in the Last Day:

- 1) It would make one prepare himself for that Day, by performing good deeds, and competing therein, and abstaining from sinful acts and fearing His punishment.
- 2) It would comfort the believers; since they know what they missed in this world, Allah would reward them with better in the Hereafter.
- 3) To distinguish the believers who are truthful in their faith from those who are not.

¹ The Pool which Allah granted the Prophet ﷺ; whoever drinks from it once, will never feel thirsty thereafter.

Belief in Qadaa' and Qadar¹

One must believe that Allah knew everything before it came into being, and what will happen to it afterwards. He then brought them into existence, all in accordance to His Knowledge and Measure. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿**Verily, We have created all things with *Qadar*.**﴾
(54:49)

Everything which occurred in the past that is occurring in the present and what will occur in the future is known to Allah before it came into existence. Allah then brought it into being, all in accordance to His Will and Measure. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“A person is not a Muslim until he believes in *Qadar*, its good and its evil consequences – until he knows that whatever happened to him would have never missed him, and what missed him would never have occurred.” (Tirmidhi #2144)

The belief in *Qadar* means to believe in four things:

- 1) To believe that Allah is well acquainted with everything taking place and His knowledge encompasses everything.
- 2) To believe that Allah has pre-assigned the portions of everything in the ‘Preserved Tablet’ (*Al-Lawh-ul-Mahfoodh*).

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

¹ *Qadaa' and Qadar*: These two Arabic words are usually translated as ‘fate’, ‘destiny’, or ‘pre-ordainment’. Many of these English words lead people to incorrectly believe this concept, so the best way is to leave them as Arabic terms and understand them in their true light.

“The first thing which Allah created was the Pen, and He said to it, ‘Write.’ It responded, ‘What should I write?’ He said, ‘Write everything that will occur until the Day of Resurrection.’ (Abu Dawood 4700 & Timidhi #3319)

3) Nothing takes place in the heavens or on the earth without the will of Allah and His wish; whatever Allah wills, takes place, and whatever He does not, will not take place.

4) Allah, the Exalted, is the Creator of all things. There is no other creator besides Him, nor is there a *Lord* other than He...

This belief does not contradict the fact that one must strive to attain things. To clarify this, if a person wants a child he must do certain things to achieve this goal; such as getting married. After he does all that is in his power, he may be granted what he wishes or not. The reason for this, is that a person would realize that what he does to achieve his goal is not in fact the true cause behind it; rather it is the Will of Allah. These ‘means’ to fulfill our goals are also considered from the Qadar of Allah. The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked:

‘O Messenger of Allah, do the verses and supplications we recite and the medicine we take to cure ourselves waive the Qadar of Allah (ﷻ)?’ [He replied,] ‘They are from the Qadar of Allah.’ (Mustadrak al-Haakim, but with a weak chain).

The Merits of Belief in Qadaa’ and Qadar

1) One strengthens his dependence upon Allah [in achieving results] after fulfilling their means.

2) One becomes pleased with whatever results, which in turn produces peace of heart and spiritual comfort. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿No evil befalls on the earth nor in your own souls, but it is in a book before We bring it into existence; surely

that is easy to Allah: So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you; and Allah does not love any arrogant boaster.﴾ (57:22-23)

3) It eases the effects of calamities. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than a weak believer, and in each one there is good. Be keen to do what benefits you and seek Allah's help, and do not be neglectful in doing so. And if any mishap befalls you, do not say, ‘If only I had only done such and such,’ but rather say, ‘This is the *Qadar* of Allah, and whatever He Wills He does (*Qadarullaah wa maa shaa fa‘al*),’ for indeed, ‘if,’ opens the door for *Shaytaan*’s works.” (Muslim #2664)

4) It increases one’s reward and effaces his sins. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“No Muslims is fatigued, is stricken with illness, feels stress, worry, sadness, or harm, not even a thorn which pricks him, except that Allah forgives sins through it.”

(Bukhari #5318)

Belief in *Qadar* is not, as some mistakenly think, a call to put one's trust in Allah without striving or fulfilling the means, for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) replied to a person who asked him:

**‘Should I leave my camel untied and trust in Allah?’
He said, ‘Tie it and trust in Allah.’** (Tirmidhi #2517)

The Testimony that 'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah' and what it Necessitates

1) To believe that he is a Messenger, and that he is the best, and last of the Messengers; no Messenger will come after him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets.﴾ (33:40)

2) To believe that he is infallible in the teachings he conveyed from Allah (ﷻ). Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired.﴾ (53:3-4)

As for the affairs of this world, he was a human, and he would perform *ijtihad*¹ in his judgments. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed I am only a human. It may be that a claimant comes to me with a dispute, and due to one of them being more coercive in speech than the other, I may rule in his favor. Whoever was ruled in his favor while he is wrong, [what he is receiving without right] is only a portion of the Hellfire, so let him take it or leave it.”

(Muslim #1713)

3) To believe that he is a Messenger to all creation; to Jinn and men until the Last Hour. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And We have not sent you (O Muhammad ﷺ) except to all of humanity, as a giver of glad tidings and a warner, but most people know not.﴾ (34:28)

¹ **Ijtihad:** In religious context, it is striving to decipher a ruling based upon legislative reasoning and textual evidence.

4) To obey the Prophet (ﷺ) in what he ordered, to believe in everything he said, and to abstain from what he forbade and warned against. Allah says:

﴿And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).﴾ (59:7)

5) To follow and adhere to the Prophet's (ﷺ) Sunnah, without innovating matters in it. Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿Say (O Muhammad ﷺ to mankind): If you (really) love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you of your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ (3:31)

What One Should Do After Pronouncing the *Shahadataan*

After pronouncing the Shahadataan, it is from the Sunnah that a person does the following:

1) It is recommended that a person takes a complete bath (*ghusl*) with pure water and then perform a two-unit prayer. It is narrated that Thumamah al-Hanafi was taken captive and the Prophet (ﷺ) would keep coming to him and say:

“What do you say, O Thumamah?” He would say, “If you decide to kill me, you would be killing [in right] because I have killed; if you let me free, you would be letting free one who shows gratitude; and if you desire wealth, we will give you what you please.” The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) liked to ransom captives, and so they said, “What would we gain if we killed him?” So finally one day, the Prophet (ﷺ) decided to set [Thumamah] free, and he accepted Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) untied him and sent him to the walled garden of Abu Talhah, commanding him to take a complete bath (*ghusl*). He performed a complete bath and prayed a two unit prayer, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“Your brother’s Islam is sincere.”**
(Saheeh ibn Khuzaimah #253)

How to perform a Complete Bath (*Ghusl*)

◆ **The Intention (*Niyyah*).** One must intend (in his heart) that he is performing *ghusl* to purify himself from a state of major impurity¹ – whether *janâbah*, menstruation or postpartum bleeding – without uttering such intention verbally.

¹ There are two types, major and minor, both will be explained later.

- ♦ Say ‘**Bismillah**’ (‘I begin with the name of Allah’).
- ♦ **Wash the hands** and then the private parts.
- ♦ **Next, perform *wudhu***¹ as he would for the prayer. He may delay washing his feet until the end of his *ghusl*.
- ♦ **He should pour [at least] three handfuls of water on his head**, running his fingers through his hair and beard so that water reaches the roots of his hair and scalp.
- ♦ **Then pour water over the rest of the body**, beginning with the right side. He should make sure that he washes his armpits, ears, navel, and the creases of the skin if he is fat, for these creases prevent water from reaching the areas of skin concealed within. He should then wash his feet if he has not already done so while making *wudhu* [before performing the *ghusl*]. ‘Aa`ishah reported:

“When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would perform *ghusl* due to sexual intercourse, he would first wash his hands, then pour water with his right hand into his left, washing his private parts. After that he would perform *wudhu* as he would for the Prayer, and then take water and rub it into the roots of his hair with his fingers. [Lastly] he would wash his feet.” (Muslim #316)

***Ghusl* becomes obligatory after one of the following things:**

- 1) Ejaculation of semen due to desire, nocturnal emission, or the like.
- 2) Sexual intercourse, even if it does not result in ejaculation.

¹ **Wudhu** is washing specific parts of the body to remove oneself from a state of minor impurity. It will be explained in detail.

- 3) Following menstruation,
- 4) Following postpartum bleeding.

Wudhu

One should perform *wudhu* before the prayer, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"Prayer is not accepted without purification...."
(Muslim #224)

Allah (ﷻ) says:

«O you who believe! When you intend to offer the *Salaah*, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, pass wet hands over your heads, and [wash] your feet up to the ankles.» (59:7)

One should perform *wudhu* in the following manner:

Humraan the freed slave of ‘*Uthmaan bin Affaan* (رضي الله عنه) said:

“I saw ‘Uthmaan (رضي الله عنه) perform wudhu. He poured water on his hands thrice, then he rinsed his mouth and nose, washed his face thrice, washed his right hand up to his elbow thrice, washed his right hand up to his elbow thrice, wiped over his head once, washed his right foot thrice, and then his left foot thrice. He then said, ‘I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) perform wudhu like this, and he said: ‘Whoever performs wudhu like my wudhu, and then prays two *Rakaat* not thinking about anything else, Allah will forgive him all his previous sins.’ (Bukhari #1832)

- 1) One should intend that he is performing *wudhu* to purify himself from a minor state of impurity. The proof that intention (*niyyah*) is obligatory as seen from the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“All deeds are considered by their intentions, and each person will be rewarded according to what he intends...” (Bukhâri #1 & Muslim #45)

2) One should say, “*Bismillaah*,” before making *wudhu*. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“There is no Prayer for one who does not perform *wudhu*, and there is no *wudhu* for one who does not mention the name of Allâh.”

(Abu Dawood #101 & ibn Maajah # 399)

3) One should wash his hands thrice at the beginning of the *wudhu*.

4) One should rinse his mouth and clean his nose by sniffing water into it thrice. He should blow the water out of his nose using the left hand.

5) One should wash his face thrice. The face consists of the area starting from the forelock at the top of the forehead of a normal haired man to the bottom of the [chin or] beard, vertically, and from right earlobe to the left, horizontally.

6) One should wash his hands from the tips of fingers to the elbow (while washing it as well) beginning first with the right hand, then the left. If he is wearing a ring or a watch, he must remove it in order to allow the water to reach the skin underneath it.

7) One must wipe over his head once. This is done by wetting the hands and passing them over the head, beginning from the front, proceeding to the back, and then passing them back over the head to the front. Abdullah b. Zaid (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

“Allâh’s Messenger (ﷺ) passed his hands over his head starting from the front, proceeding to the back. He

started from his forehead and passed them over to the top of his neck, and then passed them back to the place where he started from.” (Bukhari #183 & Muslim#235)

8) One should wipe his ears by inserting wet index fingers in the cavity of the ears, and wipe their backs with the thumbs. Ibn Abbas described the *wudhu* of the Prophet (ﷺ) saying:

“He then wiped over his head and put his index fingers into his ears. He wiped the outside of his ears with his thumbs, and the insides of his ear with his index fingers.” (Abu Dawud #123)

9) One should wash his feet three times from the tips of the toes up to and including the ankles. Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) saw a person who did not wash his heels, and he said to him:

“Woe to the heels from the Hellfire!”
(Bukhari#60 & Muslim #142)

10) One should wash the parts of *wudhu* in the correct sequence. He should not contradict the sequence mentioned in the verse, for Allah mentioned the obligatory acts of *wudhu* in a specific sequence.

11) One should not delay washing one part of the body so that the previously washed part becomes dry.

It is mentioned in a *Hadeeth* that the Prophet (ﷺ) saw a man praying, but a portion of his foot -the size of a *dirham*- was not

wet. Upon this, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered him to repeat his *wudhu* and Prayer.”¹ (Abu Dâwud #175)

One must remove anything from the parts that must be washed in the *wudhu* which might prevent water from reaching the skin underneath it, such as paint, and similar things.

One remains in a state of *wudhu* unless something invalidates it, such as urination, defecation, passing of gas, pre-seminal fluid, prostatic fluid, false menstruation (vaginal bleeding other than menses) eating camel meat, touching the private parts with one’s hand directly, and deep sleep.

Tayammum (Dry Ablution)

If there is no water available to perform *wudhu* or *ghusl*, or there is a factor present which prevents the use of water, such as illness, or the inability to use water, it is lawful to perform *Tayammum*.

Tayammum takes the place of water in purifying oneself from states of impurity, and it is performed as follows:

- 1) One should strike the ground once with his hands while his fingers are spread apart,
- 2) One should then wipe over his face once with his palms,
- 3) One should wipe both hands until his wrists.

The Prayer

It is obligatory upon you to establish the prayer (*Salaah*) for it is the backbone of the religion; without it, one’s Islam would

¹ Note that he did not merely order him to wash his foot, but rather he ordered him to repeat the entire *wudhu* as well as his prayer.

not be complete. The Prophet (ﷺ) said [striking an example between the religion and a camel]:

“As for the head of the religion, it is Islam (the *Shahadataan*); as for its backbone, it is the *Salaah*, and as for the highest part of its hump, it is *Jihad*¹.”

(Tirmidhi #2616)

The *Salah* is a term which denotes a group of words and actions which start with *takbeer* (saying ‘**Allahu Akbar**’, meaning: ‘Allah is the greatest’) and end with *tasleem* (saying ‘*As-Salaamu ‘alaykum wa Rahmatullaah*’).

The Reward of *Salaah*

When one establishes the *Salaah*, he benefits in the following ways:

1) Spiritual joy: The *Salaah* establishes a relationship between the slave and Allah. He enters a private conversation with Him, supplicating Him in sincere humbleness.

2) Peace of heart and tranquility. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Women and perfume have been made beloved to me, and the *Salaah* has been made the delight of my eyes.”

(Nasa’ie #3940)

3) The *Salaah* prevents one from all sinful and immoral deeds. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And We have not sent you (O Muhammad ﷺ) except to all of humanity, as a giver of glad tidings and a warner, but most people know not.﴾ (29:45)

¹ **Jihad**: Fighting against the disbelievers to raise Allah’s word and establish Islam.

4) The *Salah* strengthens the bonds of love and unity among the Muslims. It breaks down all social differences that may exist between them; they all stand together side by side in rows, the old and young, the rich and poor, the noble and ignoble. All people are the same, humbling themselves before Allah, facing the same direction (the *Qiblah*¹) performing the same actions, reciting the same recitation, all at the same time.

Prayer Times

There are five prayers during the day and night which are obligatory upon every Muslim. All men should establish *Salaah* in congregation (*jamaa'ah*) in the *Masjid*, unless they have a valid excuse; while women should pray in their homes.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“The time of Dhuhr is when the sun declines from its zenith until a person’s shadow becomes equal to his height, as long as the time of ‘Asr is not due. The (recommended) time of Asr is until the sun starts to turn yellow [at which point it becomes *makrooh*²]. The time of Maghrib remains until the red color of the horizon disappears, and the time of ‘Ishaa’ remains until the middle of the night, and the time of Fajr prayer is when the pre-dawn light appears until the sun starts to rise. If the sun starts to rise, then abstain

¹ **Qiblah:** the direction of the Ka’bah.

²**Makrooh:** Something disliked in the *Religion*. If a person does it, he will not be punished, but if he leaves it, he will be rewarded. It is preferred do pray ‘Asr before the sun starts to turn yellow, but it is permissible until the sun fully sets.

from prayer, for indeed it rises between the two horns of *Shaytaan*.” (Muslim #612)

Prayer Chart

	Name & Type of Recitation	# of Rak'ahs	Its Time	# of Sunnah Prayers ¹
1	Dhuhr (Noon) Silent	4	It starts from the time the sun starts to descend towards the west after its zenith, and ends when the length of an object's shadow is equal to the actual object's height.	4 rak'ahs before and 2 rak'ahs after.
2	'Asr (Afternoon) Silent	4	It starts when the time of Dhuhr ends, and ends when the sun sets.	None
3	Maghrib (Dusk) Audible	3	It starts when the Sun has totally set, and ends when red color of dusk disappears.	2 rak'ahs after
4	'Ishaa' (Night) Audible	4	It starts when the time of Maghrib ends, and ends at the first appearance of light before dawn.	2 rak'ahs after
5	Fajr (Dawn) Audible	2	It starts at the first appearance of light at dawn, and ends when the sun starts to rise.	2 rak'ahs before

¹ These are the Sunnah prayers which are emphasized; there are others related to each prayer which the author did not mention for the sake of brevity.

The Pre-Requisites of Salaah

Know that the *Salaah* has certain prerequisites; if one leaves them, his prayer is invalid. They are as follows:

- 1) Praying them in their proper times.
- 2) One must purify himself from minor and major impurities. Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿O you who believe! When you intend to offer the Salah, wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, pass wet hands over your heads, and [wash] your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of janaabah (state of major impurity), purify yourself (bathe your whole body).﴾ (5:6)

- 3) One's body must be clean from any impurities. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Be careful to keep yourself clean from urine, for indeed majority of the punishment of the graves is due to people not doing so.” (Haakim #654 and verified)

One must keep his clothes pure from any impurities. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And purify your garments.﴾ (74:4)

One must make sure that the place he is praying in is free from impurities. A Bedouin once urinated in the Masjid, and the people stood up to confront him and the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Leave him and pour a bucket of water where he urinated, for you have been sent to make things easy, not to make things hard.” (Bukhari #217)

4) Covering one's 'awrah¹. For a man, it is the area between the navel and the knees, but in Salah, it includes both his shoulders. As for a woman, it is her whole body, but in Salah, she does not need to cover her face and hands. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing clean clothes), while praying.﴾ (7:31)

5) One must face the *Qiblah*. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So turn your face to the direction of al-Masjid al-Haram (in Makkah). And wherever you are, turn your faces (in prayer) to that direction.﴾ (2:144)

A woman in her menstrual period, or postpartum bleeding should not pray until her bleeding stops. Thereupon, she should perform a complete bath (*ghusl*) and resume praying, and perform ablution (*wudhu*) for each prayer if she invalidates it. She should not make up any prayers she missed while bleeding.

How to Perform Salah

1) One should make *wudhu* by using pure water, as Allah (ﷻ) orders:

﴿O you who believe! When you stand to offer Salah (the Prayer) wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, pass wet hands over your heads, and [wash] your feet up to ankles.﴾ (5:6)

2) One must face the *Qiblah*, which is the direction of the *Ka'bah*, with his whole body and intend (with his heart) the specific prayer he is performing, without uttering it verbally.

¹ 'Awrah: The parts of the body which are forbidden for another to look at.

3) One must pronounce *Takbeerat-ul-Ihraam* by saying ‘**Allahu Akbar**’. He should do so while looking at the place he will prostrate in, raising his hands to the level of his shoulders or his earlobes, extending his fingers [with his palms] facing the *Qiblah*.

4) One should put his hands on his chest, placing his right hand over his left, and recite the opening supplication (*Du‘aa-ul-Istiftaah*):

“Subhaanak-Allahumma wa bi hamdika, wa tabaarak-Asmuka, wa ta‘aala jaddukka wa laa ilaaha ghayruka.”

Meaning: Far removed are You from every imperfection, O Allah, and all praise belongs to You. Blessed is Your Name. Great and Exalted is Your Kingdom. None has the right to be worshipped except You.”

One should then say:

“A’oodhu billaahi min ash-Shaytaan ir-Rajeem. Bismillaah ir-Rahmaan ir-Raheem.”

Meaning: I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the Rejected One. I begin with the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, and the Bestower of Mercy.

Then one should recite *Surah al-Faatihah*, saying ‘*Ameen*’ after finishing it; saying it aloud in the prayers in which he reads aloud and silently in the silent prayers. After this, one should recite whatever he can from the Qur'an.

5) After completing recitation, one should bow (*rukoo’*) by bending the back forward. First he should say:

“Allahu Akbar.”

Meaning: Allah is the Greatest.

He should raise his hands to his shoulders or earlobes while doing so. Then he should make *rukoo'* (bowing posture) extending his back, making his head level with it. At this point he should place his hands with his fingers spread on his knees, keeping the elbows away from his sides. In the *rukoo'*, one should say three times:

“Subhaana Rub-biyal-Adheem.”

Meaning: Far removed is my *Lord*, the Most Magnificent, from every imperfection.

6) One should raise his head [and upper body] from the *rukoo*, and raise his hands to his shoulders or earlobes, saying:

“Sami‘allahu liman Hamidah.”

Meaning: Allah answers the supplication of those who praise and extol Him.

One should say this whether he is praying alone or leading others in Prayer. After fully returning to a standing position, one should say:

“Rabanaa wa lak-al-Hamd.”

Meaning: Our *Lord*, and to You belongs all praise.

But if one is praying behind an *Imam*¹, he should say while standing:

“Rabanaa wa lak-al-Hamd.”

Meaning: Our *Lord*, and to You belongs all praise.

¹ **Imam:** One who leads others in Prayer.

It is recommended that one should place his hands on his chest as he did in the first standing before the *rukoo*'.

7) Next, one must prostrate (*Sujood*) and say:

“Allahu Akbar.”

Meaning: Allah is the Greatest.

He should not raise his hands [to his shoulders or ears]. He should descend, placing his knees on the ground before his hands -if it is not hard for him- and prostrate on his forehead and nose, his hands, his knees, and the bottom of the toes. The fingers and toes should face the *Qiblah*, and his fingers should be drawn together (not spread apart). He should keep his elbows away from his sides and his knees away from his stomach and his thighs away from his legs. He should lift his elbows and forearms off the ground and say (three times):

“Subhaana Rub-biyal-A’laa.”

Meaning: Far removed is my *Lord*, the Most High, from every imperfection.

One should supplicate as much as possible¹ in the *sujood*, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“As for the *rukoo*', aggrandize the *Lord* (ﷻ) and as for the *sujood*, make as much supplication as you can, for [it is the place where] it is most likely to be accepted.”

(Muslim #479)

8) One should raise his head from the *sujood* and say, “Allahu Akbar.” One should not raise his hands to his shoulders or earlobes while saying so. He should lay his left foot flat on the

¹ He may supplicate Allah in his own words, or native language.

ground [pointing to the right] and sit upon it, and prop his right foot upright [with the bottom of his toes on the ground facing the *Qiblah*]. One should place his hands on his thighs and knees, and then say thrice:

“Rabbighfir li.”

Meaning: My *Lord*, forgive me.

In addition to this, he may say:

“Allahumm-aghfir li, warhamni, wahdini, warzuqni, wa ‘aafini, wajburni.”

Meaning: O Allah, forgive me, have mercy upon me, grant me sustenance, keep me in a state of safety and wellbeing, and strengthen my weakness.

9) One has to perform a second *sujood* saying, “Allahu Akbar,” without raising his hands. He should do as he did in the first *sujood*.

10) Then one raises his head [from *sujood*] saying, “Allahu Akbar,” without raising his hands [to his shoulders or earlobes] and stand up and perform the second *Rak’ah*, supporting himself with his knees, if possible. If this is difficult, then he may stand up while supporting himself with his hands.

After standing, he should recite *Surah al-Faatihah* and whatever he can recite from the Qur’an, just as he did in the first *rak’ah*.

11) If one is performing a prayer which consists of two *Rak’aat*, such as Fajr, Jumu‘ah, or ‘Eid, after the second prostration he should sit with his right foot propped up, sitting on his left foot laid flat [pointing to the right]. He should clench his right hand and place it on the lower part of his right thigh, and he should

point with his finger during his supplication and mentioning Allah (**the *tashahhud***) symbolizing His *Tawheed*. He should place his left hand on the bottom part of his left thigh and recite the *tashahhud*:

“At-Tahiyyaatu lillaahi, was-Salawaatu, wat-Tayyibaatu, as-Salaamu ‘alayka ‘ayyuhan-Nabiyyu, wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh. As-Salaamu ‘alaynaa wa ‘alaa ‘ibaad-illaah-is-Saaliheen. Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allaah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhu wa rasooluh.”

Meaning: All Words of Praise and glorification are for Allah alone, and all Prayers and acts of worship, and pure words and attributes. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. May Allah send peace and security upon us, and upon all of Allah’s righteous slaves. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger.

He should then seek refuge from four things:

“Allaahumma innee a‘oodhu bika min ‘adhaabi jahannam, wa min ‘adhaab-il-qabr, wa min fitnat il-mahyaa wal-mamaat, wa min fitnat il-maseeh id-Dajjaal.”

Meaning: O Allah! I seek refuge with You from the punishment of Hellfire, from the Torment of the Grave, from the Trials of Living and Dying, and from the Trials of the Pseudo-Christ (*Dajjaal*).¹

¹ The ‘**Trials of Living...**’ are that which a person encounters in life with regard to being enticed by the worldly life and the desires to which it gives rise. The ‘**Trials of dying...**’ are the trials of the grave,

One should ask Allah whatever he wishes,¹ and desires from the good things of this life and next.

12) Lastly, one should make the ‘*Tasleem*’ to the right, by turning his head to the right saying:

“As-Salaamu ‘alaykum wa Rahmatullaah.”

Meaning: May the Safety and Mercy of Allah be upon you.

Then he should make *tasleem* to his left, by turning his head to the left, saying “*As-Salaamu ‘alaykum wa Rahmatullaah.*”

13) If one is performing a three rak‘ah Prayer, such as Maghrib, or a four rak‘ah prayer, such as Dhuhr, ‘Asr or ‘Ishaa, after saying “**Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘Abduhu wa Rasooluhu,**” in the Tashahhud mentioned previously, he should stand up and pray the third rak‘ah for a three rak‘aat Prayer, or the third and fourth rak‘ahs for a four rak‘aat Prayer. He should stand, while supporting himself with his knees if he is able, and raise his hands to the level of his shoulders [or earlobes] saying, “Allahu Akbar.” He should place his hands on his chest, grasping the right hand over the left, and recite Surah al-Fatihah. He should do the same as he did in the previous rak‘aat. He should then sit for the last Tashahhud, and after its recitation, he should conclude his Prayer by making the *Tasleem*.

and the questioning by the two Angels. The ‘**Trials of the False Messiah (Dajjaal)...**’ are the supernatural occurrences that will happen at his hands: things that will lead many people to go astray, to follow him and accept his claim to divinity.

¹ He may supplicate Allah in his own words, or native language.

Voluntary Prayers

There are certain prayers known as *as-Sunan-ur-Rawaatib*¹, by which one would get extra reward and raise his level in *Jannah*. Through them, one makes up for any of his faults in the obligatory prayers, which have been mentioned in the table. The *Witr* Prayer is also a Sunnah Prayer, and it consists of at least one rak‘ah. It should be the last prayer one performs at night.

Forbidden Times of Prayer

Voluntary prayers other than those mentioned may be performed at any time other than those specifically forbidden by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). They are as follows:

- 1) After the Fajr Prayer until the sun rises a spear’s length.²
- 2) The time when the sun reaches its zenith until it descends.
- 3) After the ‘Asr prayer until the sun sets.

¹ See chart on p.54.

² About 15-20 minutes after the sun has risen.

Zakaah

Upon becoming Muslim, one must pay Zakaah to those who deserve it.

Zakaah is a right from the rights of Allah (ﷻ) which a Muslim must pay to his brothers from the poor and those in need to cover their requirements and save them from the humility of asking others. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him), and establish the Salah and give the Zakah: and that is the upright religion.﴾ (98:5)

There is a great wisdom and many reasons why Zakah has been prescribed. From them, may be the following:

- 1) It purifies the souls of rich Muslims and cleanses them from greed, selfishness, base covetousness, and the love of this interim world and drowning in its desires.
- 2) It purifies the soul of the poor from hate and jealousy which they might feel for the rich. They see them giving from their wealth, and continuously caring for them, by giving them money and treating them well.
- 3) It causes a Muslim to grow fond of good manners, such as giving charity, and preferring others over himself.
- 4) It uproots poverty in the Muslim society and alleviates the dangers which result from it, such as theft, murder, and transgression against people's honor.
- 5) It brings the spirit of mutual dependence and Islamic brotherhood to life, by fulfilling the needs of Islam and the Muslims.

6) It plays a role in spreading Islam throughout the world. Through it, non-Muslims are shown the religion of Islam and its beauty, and it is hoped that they would accept it.

The Conditions of Zakaah

1) Possession of the *nisaab*, which is the amount of wealth upon which Islam has legislated Zakaah. This amount is equal to 85 grams of gold.

2) The elapse of one year. If one possesses the *nisaab* for a period of a complete year, Zakaah becomes due upon him.

Those Eligible for Zakaah

Allah has specified those who are eligible to receive Zakah. Allah says:

﴿As-Sadaqaat (i.e. Zakaat) are only for the *Fuqaraa'* and *Masaakeen* (the poor) and those employed to collect [the funds]; and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined [towards Islam]; and to free the captives; and for those in debt; and for Allah's Cause (i.e. for *Mujaahidoon* - those fighting in Jihad), and for the wayfarer (a traveler who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah. And Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise...﴾ (9:60)

Important Notes

1) There is no Zakah due on those items which one possesses for personal use, such as houses, furniture, cars, and beasts of burden (horses, donkeys, etc.).

2) There is no Zakah due on those assets one holds for rental purposes, like cars, shops, houses. Zakah must be paid on the rental payment if it is combined with his other wealth, reaches the *nisaab* and remains in his possession for a period of one year.

The Fast (Siyaam) of Ramadhan

Upon becoming Muslim, one must fast the month of Ramadhan, every year. One must abstain from anything that breaks the fast, such as food, drink, and sexual intercourse, from Fajr until Maghrib as an act of obedience to Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become from the pious.» (2:18)

The objective of fasting is not that one merely abstains from the material and physical things which break one's fast, but rather, one must also refrain from those intangible things which diminish [the reward] of one's fast, such as lying, backbiting, tale-bearing, cheating, deception, false talk, and other offensive behavior. He should keep in mind that it is obligatory upon him to abstain from these offensive things outside of Ramadhan, but more so in this month, due to the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“Whoever does not refrain from false speech and deeds, Allah has no need for him to leave his food and drink.”

(Bukhari #1804)

There are many reasons and great wisdoms why *Siyaam* has been prescribed. From them are the following:

1) It is spiritual exercise for the believer, for his soul is making Jihad¹ against his wants and desires.

¹ **Jihad:** Here the word is used in its literal sense, which means 'to strive against'.

2) Keeping the Muslim's soul above all offensive speech and deeds. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“When one of you is fasting, he should not speak evil, nor should he yell or shout, and if someone were to curse or fight him, let him say, ‘Indeed I am a fasting person.’” (Bukhari #1805 & Muslim #1151)

3) Through fasting, one realizes how his needy brothers feel, and this encourages him to fulfill their rights, ask about their welfare, and look into their needs.

Note:

It is not allowed for a woman in her menstrual period or postpartum bleeding to fast until her bleeding stops. Once it does, she must have a complete bath (*ghusl*) and make up the fasts she missed. If one is ill or traveling, it is permissible for him not to fast, but he must make up those days at a later time.¹

¹ One must make up the fasts before the arrival of the following Ramadhan.

Hajj

Upon becoming Muslim, one must perform Hajj once in his lifetime. Hajj is the pilgrimage one makes to the Sacred House of Allah (the Ka'bah) in order to perform certain rites at specific places at specific times. This pillar of Islam is obligatory upon every Muslim, male or female, who is sane and has reached the age of puberty, once in a lifetime if they have the physical and financial ability. If a person has an incurable disease which prevents him from performing Hajj, but has enough money, he must assign someone to perform Hajj for him. But if a person does not have enough money to fulfill his daily requirements or to support those whom he supports, Hajj is not an obligation upon him. Allah says:

﴿And Hajj to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses; and whoever disbelieves, then Allah stands not in need of any of the 'Aalameen (Mankind and Jinns).﴾ (3:97)

There are many reasons and great wisdoms why Hajj has been prescribed. From them are the following:

1) To increase one's good deeds due to his act of obedience, for the reward of Hajj which has been accepted by Allah is nothing but *Jannah*. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“An ‘Umrah¹ followed by another is an expiation for the lesser sins one performed between them, and there is no reward for a Hajj which has been accepted by

¹ **‘Umrah:** Lesser pilgrimage. It consists of *Tawaaf* and *Sa'i* whilst in the state of *Ihraam*. These terms will be explained later.

Allah except *Jannah*.” (Bukhari #1683 and Muslim #1349)

2) To realize the unity of the Muslims, for Hajj is the largest Islamic gathering. Muslims from all over come together at one place, at one time, calling the same *Lord*, wearing the same clothes, performing the same rituals. There is no difference between the rich and poor, the noble and ignoble, the white and black, Arab and non-Arab. They are all equal; there is no difference between them except in piety (*taqwaa*). This is nothing but an emphasis of the brotherhood of all Muslims and the unity of their hopes and feelings.

3) It is a spiritual exercise which trains one to exert his efforts, physically and financially, in the way of Allah and seeking His Pleasure.

4) It is a purification of one’s sins and wrongdoings. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever performs Hajj to this House (the Ka’bah) and does not and does not have sexual relations, he will return [sin-free] like the day he was born.”
(Bukhari #1723 & Muslim #1350)

How to Perform Hajj

There are three types of Hajj; each one has its specific rites. The best type is *Tamattu’*, wherein one performs Hajj and ‘Umrah separately, in the Sacred Months of Hajj. It is done as follows:

1) One should enter the state of Ihraam¹ from the Miqat² before the 8th of Dhu'l-Hijjah. He should enter state of Ihram, saying:

“Labbayk-Allahumma ‘Umratan mutamitti’an bihaa ilal-Hajj.”

Meaning: Here I am at your service, O Allah, performing ‘Umrah and then a Hajj [separately].

2) After entering Makkah, he should perform Tawaaf³ around the Ka’bah⁴ and perform the Sa‘i for ‘Umrah, and then shave or shorten the hair. Women should clip her hair equal to a third of a finger’s length.

3) On the eighth day of Dhul-Hijjah, which is called the day of Tarwiyah, one should enter the state of Ihraam at the time of Duhaa⁵, from the place he is in. He should then go to Minaa’, and there he should perform Dhuhr, ‘Asr, Maghrib, and ‘Ishaa’

¹ **Ihraam:** A state in which certain things become forbidden for a pilgrim.

² **Meeqaat:** Particular places which one cannot cross without entering a state of Ihraam if he wishes to perform ‘Umrah or Hajj.

³ **Tawaaf:** Circumambulating the Ka’bah counter clockwise.

⁴ The Ka’bah is the first place which was made for the worship of Allah on the face of the earth. It was built by Ibraheem and Ismaa’eel, may the Safety and Mercy of Allah be upon them both, upon the command of Allah (ﷻ). Allah said:

“And Hajj to the House (Ka’bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses; and whoever disbelieves, then Allah stands not in need of any of the ‘Aalameen (mankind and jinns).” (3:97)

⁵ **Duhaa:** Forenoon. The time after the sun has risen a spear’s length until before it reaches its zenith.

prayers. He should shorten Dhuhr, ‘Asr and ‘Ishaa’ prayers [as a traveler does] but he should not combine them.¹

4) After the sun has risen on the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah, which is the Day of ‘Arafah, one should leave Minaa’ and head towards ‘Arafah. He should pray Dhuhr and ‘Asr at the time of Dhuhr, both two *rak’ahs*. After completing them, he should spend his time remembering Allah and supplicating him with sincere humility. One should ask Allah whatever he wishes raising his hands while facing the *Qiblah*.

5) When the sun sets on the Day of ‘Arafah, one should set out for Muzdalifah. Once he has reached, he should pray the Maghrib and ‘Ishaa’ prayers, combining both prayers together, making the ‘Ishaa’ prayer two rak’aat only. He should spend the night in Muzdalifah. He should pray Fajr prayer in its earliest acceptable time, and then he should spend his time supplicating until the sky appears bright.

6) But before the sun has risen, he should leave for Minaa’. Once he arrives, he should throw seven pebbles at Jamrat-ul-‘Aqabah², saying “Allahu Akbar” with each throw. The pebbles should be the size of a chickpea.

7) After this, he should slaughter his sacrificial animal, and then shave or shorten the hair. Shaving is better for men, but as for women, she should clip her hair about a third of a finger’s length. (She should not shave her head).

¹ Allah has legislated that the traveler shortens the Dhuhr, ‘Asr and ‘Ishaa’ prayers from four rak’ahs to two rak’ahs. A traveler may also combine the Dhuhr with the ‘Asr prayer, by praying them together, one after the other, and the Maghrib with the ‘Ishaa’ prayer.

² These are three pillars in Minaa, the small, middle and large. The largest is the *Jamrat-ul-‘Aqabah*.

8) With this one would partially terminate the Ihraam, and remain in a state of lesser Ihraam. He may wear normal clothes and do everything which is allowed for a normal person except for having marital relations with his wife.

9) One should then proceed to Makkah and perform the Tawaaf and Sa‘i, both for Hajj. Upon completion, he should return to Minaa‘ and spend the nights of the eleventh and twelfth of Dhul-Hijjah there. During the days, he should throw seven pebbles at all three Jamaraat, saying “Allahu Akbar” with each pebble. He should do so after the sun starts to decline from its zenith. He should begin with the smallest Jamrah, and then proceed to the middle and then the largest.

10) Once a person has thrown pebbles at the Jamaraat on the twelfth day, he may leave Minaa‘ or he may spend another night in Minaa‘, throwing pebbles at the three Jamaraat on the thirteenth day after the sun starts to decline from its zenith as explained earlier, this is more praiseworthy.

11) Once one intends to return home, he should proceed to Makkah and perform *Tawaaf al-Wadaa’* (farewell Tawaf). This Tawaaf is not an obligation for a woman experiencing menses or postpartum bleeding. Once a person has done this, his Hajj is complete.

The Worship of Allah

Know my brother that worship is obligatory upon every Muslim who is mentally sane and has reached the age of puberty. Performing these pillars of Islam is a means to enter *Jannah*, after the Mercy of Allah (ﷻ). The Prophet (ﷺ) once said to a Bedouin who came and asked:

‘O Messenger of Allah, tell me what Allah has obligated upon me in terms of the prayer.’ He replied, ‘The five [daily] prayers, except if you wish to perform some voluntary ones.’ He asked, ‘Tell me what Allah has obligated upon me in terms of the fasting.’ He replied, ‘The month of Ramadaan, except if you wish to perform some voluntary ones.’ He said, ‘Tell me what Allah has obligated upon me in terms of Zakaah.’ [The narrator] said ‘So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) informed him of the legislations of Islam.’ The Bedouin said, ‘By Him Who has honored you, I will not do any voluntary acts, and I will not leave anything of what Allah has ordered me.’ The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), said: ‘He has succeeded (or, ‘He will enter *Jannah*’) if he is saying the truth.’ ” (Bukhari #46 & Muslim#11)

The Individual and Social Effects of the Worship of Allah

1) The believers will achieve happiness and success in the life of this world as well as the Hereafter. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Indeed whosoever purifies himself shall achieve success, [as well as he who] remembers (glorifies) the Name of his Lord, and prays.﴾ (87:14-15)

2) Physical and spiritual strength which results from one's private conversation with Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him (keep their duty unto Him), and those who are *muhsinoon* (good-doers).**» (16:128)

3) The Help of Allah and establishing His believing slaves' authority on the earth. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**Verily, Allah will help those who help His (Cause). Truly, Allah is All-Strong, All-Mighty. Those (Muslim rulers) who, if We give them power in the land, (they) order the establishment of the Salaah, to pay the Zakaah, and they enjoin all good, and forbid all evil [i.e. they make the Qur'an as the law of their country in all the spheres of life]. And with Allah rests the end of (all) matters (of creatures).**» (22:40-41)

4) Building ties of brotherhood, cooperation, bonding, and security between the individuals in an Islamic society. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**The believers, men and women, are *Awliyaa'* (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another, they enjoin all good, and forbid from all evil; they establish the *Salaah* and give the *Zakaah*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.**» (9:71)

5) The guidance of Allah and the success which is only granted by Him. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«**O you who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you *Furqaan* (a criterion to judge between right and wrong), and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you.**» (8:29)

6) An abundance of provision from Allah and ease in times of hardships. Allah says:

﴿And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine.﴾ (65:2-3)

7) A multiplication of reward and expiation of sins. Allah says:

﴿And whosoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, He will remit from him his sins, and will admit him to Gardens under which rivers flow (*Jannah*) to dwell therein forever, that will be the great success.﴾ (64:9)

The Commandments of Islam

Dear Brother, seek a path in your relationship with society and others that is guided by the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“Avoid the prohibited and you will be the best worshipper, be pleased with the sustenance Allah has provided for you and you will be the richest of people, be good to your neighbor and you will be a true believer, desire for others what you desire for yourself and you will be a true Muslim, and do not laugh much, for indeed laughing much causes the heart to die.”

(Tirmidhi #2305 & ibn Maajah #8081)

And he (ﷺ) said:

“A true Muslim is he from whom Muslims are safe from his tongue and his hand, and a true *muhaajir*¹ is one who abandons what Allah has forbidden.”
(Bukhari #10)

Islam aims to form a well knit society, in which individuals show mutual mercy and love and exemplify the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ by ordering them to do certain things and to abstain from other things.

“The Believers in their love, mercy and feelings for each other are like one body: if one part feels pain, all the other parts feel pain by fever and sleeplessness.”

(Bukhari #5665 & Muslim #2586)

Islam has guided man to every good and warned them of every evil. Islam commands the following things:

¹ The other type of *hijra* or migration: is to migrate from the land of disbelief for the sake of Allah.

1) It commands one to believe in the *Tawheed* of Allah (i.e. oneness of Allah) and forbids associating partners with Him (i.e. Shirk). Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and He forgives what is besides this to whom He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allah, he indeed strays off into a remote error.﴾ (4:116)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Avoid the seven destructive sins.” They asked, **“O Messenger of Allah, what are they?”** He replied, **“Associating partners (shirk) with Allah, sorcery, killing someone who Allah has forbidden without right, taking interest, consuming the wealth of orphans, fleeing upon confronting the enemy in battle, and accusing chaste believing women who are far removed from committing any licentious acts.”**
(Bukhari #2615 & Muslim #89)

2) It commands treating others well and forbids false consumption of wealth, such as interest, theft, deception, usurpation of property, and the like. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Do not devour your property among yourselves falsely, except that it be trading by your mutual consent; and do not kill your people; surely Allah is Merciful to you.﴾ (4:29)

3) It commands justice and equity and forbids all types of oppression and transgression against others. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, Allah enjoins justice and *al-Ihsaan* [i.e. to be patient in performing your duties to Allah, totally for Allah's sake and in accordance with the *Sunnah* (legal

ways) of the Prophet in a perfect manner], and giving (help) to kith and kin; and forbids all licentious acts, evil, and oppression, He admonishes you, that you may take heed.﴾ (16:90)

4) It commands that people cooperate in righteousness, and it forbids that they cooperate in evil. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Help you one another in righteousness and piety; and do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment.﴾ (5:2)

5) It commands with the preservation of souls, and forbids killing and participating in it, except with due right. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Because of that We ordained for the Children of Israel that if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. And indeed, there came to them Our Messengers with clear proofs, evidences, and signs, even then after that many of them continued to exceed the limits (e.g. by doing oppression unjustly and exceeding beyond the limits set by Allah by committing the major sins) in the land!﴾ (5:32)

Allah (ﷻ) also says:

﴿And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell to abide therein, and the Wrath and the Curse of Allah are upon him, and a great punishment is prepared for him.﴾ (4:93)

6) It commands well-treatment of one's parents and forbids their disobedience. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And your *Lord* has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor. * And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: ‘My *Lord!* Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.﴾ (17:23-24)

7) It commands joining ties of relation and forbids severing them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties of kinship? Such are they whom Allah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight.﴾ (47:22-23)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“One who severs ties of relations will not enter *Jannah*.” (Bukhari #5638 & Muslim #2556)

8) It commands and encourages marriage. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“O youth! Whoever of you is able to get married let him do so, for it lowers one’s gaze and keeps one chaste. Whoever is not able then let him fast, for indeed it acts like a shield for him.” (Bukhari #1806 & Muslim #1400)

It forbids fornication and homosexuality and all things which lead to it. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say (O Muhammad): ‘(But) the things that my *Lord* has indeed forbidden are *al-fawaahish* (great evil sins, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) whether committed openly or secretly, sins (of all kinds) unrighteous oppression, joining partners in worship

with Allah for which He has given no authority, and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge.﴾ (7:33)

9) It orders the protection of the wealth of orphans and their well-treatment, and it forbids consuming their wealth without right. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, those who unjustly devour the property of orphans, they devour only a fire into their bellies, and they will be burnt in the blazing Fire.﴾ (4:10)

It forbids grieving and ill-treating them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression.﴾ (93:9)

10) It orders that one be truthful in his testimony and forbids that one lie in them (*shahaadat-uz-zoor*). The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Shall I not tell you the three greatest sins?” They said. “Indeed O Messenger of Allah.” He said, “Associating partners with Allah (shirk) and ill-treatment of parents.” He was leaning [when he mentioned that], and then sat up straight (as if he was alarmed) and said, “And bearing false witness.” [The narrator] said, “He continued to repeat this until we said [to ourselves], “If only he would stop.” (Bukhari #2511 & Muslim #87)

11) It commands that one fulfill his oaths and forbids that one lie in it: (*al-yameen al ghamoos*), which means that one intentionally lies in his oath in order to deprive another his right. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, those who purchase a small gain at the cost of Allah’s Covenant and their oaths, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter (Jannah). Neither will Allah

speak to them, nor look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful torment.﴾ (3:77)

12) It commands humans to take care of themselves and forbids suicide, whether directly or indirectly, such as dealing with intoxicants, drugs, cigarettes, and other things which modern medicine has proven to be causes of harmful diseases. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you. * And whoever commits that through aggression and injustice, We shall cast him into the Fire, and that is easy for Allah.﴾ (4:29-30)

13) It commands truthfulness, trustworthiness, and the fulfilling of oaths; and it forbids lying, deception and treachery. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your *amaanaat* (things entrusted to you and all the duties which Allah has ordained for you).﴾ (8:27)

14) It commands love and unity, and it forbids disassociation and all things which lead to hate and enmity, such as bearing grudges, hatred, and envy. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not hate each other, do not envy each other, and do not turn your backs on each other (i.e. boycott) but rather be true slaves of Allah as brothers. It is impermissible for a Muslim to boycott his brother more than three days.” (Bukhari #5718 & Muslim #2558)

15) It commands generosity and forbids greed and miserliness.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿ And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift),so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty ﴾ (17:29)

16) It commands one to be frugal in all matters and forbids wastefulness and the squandering of money uselessly. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And give to the near of kin his due and (to) the needy and the wayfarer, and do not squander wastefully. Surely the squanderers are the brothers of the *Shaitans* and the *Shaitan* is ever ungrateful to his *Lord*.﴾ (17:26-27)

17) It commands moderateness and forbids fanaticism and extremism in religion. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Allah intends for you ease and He does not want to make things difficult for you.﴾ (2:185)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Be aware and stay away from extremism in religion, for indeed the only thing which destroyed those before you was extremism in Religion.”

(Nasa'ie #3039 & ibn Maajah #3057)

18) It commands humility and forbids pride and arrogance. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice (braying) of the ass.﴾ (13:19)

About pride, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“He who has even a mustard seed’s worth of pride in his heart will not enter *Jannah*.” A person asked, “O Messenger of Allah, people like to wear nice clothes and sandals.” He said, “Indeed Allah is Beautiful and He loves beauty. Arrogance is to reject the truth and belittle others.” (Muslim #91)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said about self-conceit:

“Whoever drags his clothes on the ground out of self-conceit, Allah will not look at him on the Day of Resurrection.” (Bukhari #3465 & Muslim #2085)

19) It commands people to console others and not feel happy about others’ grief. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do not feel happy about your brother’s grief, it might be that Allah will show mercy to him and put you through a trial.” (Tirmidhi #2508)

20) It forbids Muslims from interfering in affairs which do not concern them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed from the good traits of a true Muslim is that he leaves that which does not concern him.” (Tirmidhi #2317 & ibn Maajah #3976)

21) It commands respecting people and forbids debasing them and holding them in contempt. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Let not a group scoff at another group, it may be that the latter are better than the former; nor let (some) women scoff at other women, it

may be that the latter are better than the former. And do not defame one another, nor insult one another by nicknames.﴾ (49:11)

22) It commands one to jealously protect and guard one's *maharim*¹, and it forbids cuckoldry (i.e. the person is not protective of his relatives and turns a blind eye to their promiscuity).

. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Three will not enter *Jannah*: one who maltreats his parents, a cuckold (*Day'youth*) and women who act like men.” (Nasa'ie #2562)

23) It prohibits resembling members of the opposite sex. Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) cursed those men who imitate women and those women who imitate men.”

(Bukhari #5546)

24) It commands that people exert efforts in doing good to others, and it forbids that they remind them of their favors upon them. Allah's (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Do not render in vain your *Sadaqah* (charity) by reminders of your generosity or by injury.﴾ (2:264)

25) It commands thinking good about others, and it forbids suspicion and backbiting. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of

¹ **Maharim:** Those relatives who are forbidden for a person to marry due to their closeness in blood relations, like mothers, sisters, aunts, or suckling or marriage ties etc.

his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.﴾ (49:12)

26) It commands that one guards his tongue from all evil talk, and that he use it for good and beneficial things which would benefit himself and his society; such as remembering Allah, and reconciliation between people. Likewise, it forbids the individual to use it in evil. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“May your mother lose you O Mu‘adh! Are people thrown into the Hellfire on their faces or nostrils except for what their tongues reaped?”

(Tirmidhi #2616 & ibn Maajah #373)

27) It commands with well-treatment of the neighbor and forbids harming them. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“By Allah he is not a true believer! By Allah he is not a true believer!” It was said, “And who is he, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Him whose neighbor is not safe from his evil.”

(Bukhari #5670)

28) It commands that one seek righteous companions and forbids that one seek evil companions. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The example of a righteous and evil companion is like one who carries perfume and another who is a blacksmith. As for the one who carries perfume, he will either give you some perfume, you might buy some, or [at least] you will find a pleasing scent with him. As for the blacksmith, either he (the blacksmith) will burn his clothes, or you will find a hideous odor from him.”

(Bukhari #1995 & Muslim #2628)

29) It orders people to settle their disputes and prohibits anything which leads to enmity and hatred. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«There is no good in most of their secret talks save (in) him who orders *Sadaqah* (charity in Allah's Cause), or *Ma'roof* (Islamic Monotheism and all the good and righteous deeds which Allah has ordained), or conciliation between mankind, and he who does this, seeking the good Pleasure of Allah, We shall give him a great reward.» (4:114)

30) It orders that people be sincere to each other [by giving good advice] and forbids that advice be withheld when it is sought. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The religion is sincere counseling.” We asked, “To whom?” He replied, “To Allah, to His Book, to His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their general folk.” (Muslim #55)

31) It orders people to help relieve worries of Muslims, to give them respite [in paying back debts] and to conceal their faults. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever relieves some worry of a believer, Allah will relieve a worry of his on the Day of Requitah. Whoever makes things easy for one in times of hardship [by giving respite to one who is not able to pay back a debt] Allah will make things easy upon him in this life and the next. And whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah helps his slave as long as he helps his brother.” (Muslim #2699)

32) It orders that one have patience and fortitude in times of hardships, and forbids that one become worried and discontent. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to *As-Sabirin* (the patient ones, etc.). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return. They are those on whom are the *Salawat* (i.e. blessings, etc.) (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their *Lord*, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided-ones.﴾ (2:155-157)

33) It orders one to forgive, pardon, and turn away from one who does evil to him, and forbids that one seek revenge and retribution. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your *Lord*, and for *Jannah* as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for *Al-Muttaqoon* (the pious). Those who spend [in Allah's Cause - deeds of charity, alms, etc.] in prosperity and in adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men; verily, Allah loves *Al-Muhsinoon* (the good doers).﴾ (3:133-134)

34) It commands mercy and it forbids cold-heartedness. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Allah shows mercy to those who show mercy. Show mercy to those on earth, and Allah will be merciful to you.” (Abu Dawood #4941 & Tirmidhi #1924)

35) It commands people to be kind and lenient to each other, and it forbids harshness. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Nothing is done with kindness except that it is beautified, and nothing is devoid of kindness except that it is flawed.” (Muslim #2594)

36) It commands that one return evil with good, and forbids that one reciprocate evil with evil. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e. Allah ordered the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly): then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend.﴾
(41:34)

37) It commands the spreading of knowledge and forbids concealing it. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever was asked about knowledge but conceals it, he will be brought on the Day of Resurrection muzzled with the leashes of Hellfire.”

(Abu Dawood #3658 & Tirmidhi #2649)

38) It commands that Muslims enjoin virtue and righteousness and prevent evil and vice, each according to his ability. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever of you sees an evil act, let him change it with his hand, if he is not able, then with his tongue, and if he is not able, then with his heart, and that is the lowest branch of Iman.” (Muslim #49)

Some Prohibitions Concerning Food, Drink and Clothing

1) Wine and all other drugs which come under this heading, whether ingested, inhaled or injected. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks) gambling, *Al Ansaab*, and *Al Azlaam* (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of *Shaytaan's* (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. *Shaytaan* (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from *As-Salaat* (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?﴾ (5:90-91)

2) Eating the meat of carrion, pigs, and all other things mentioned in Allah's (ﷻ) words:

﴿Forbidden to you (for food) are: *Al-Maytatah* (the dead animals - cattle-beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and the meat of that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols, etc., or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering, and that which has been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the smiting of horns - and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal - unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on *An Nusub* (stone altars). (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision, (all) that is *Fisqun* (disobedience of Allah and sin).﴾ (5:3)

3) Eating things over which the Name of Allah was not pronounced intentionally, or that over which other than the Name of Allah was pronounced upon slaughtering. Allah (ﷻ) says: **«Eat not (O believers) of that (meat) on which Allah's Name has not been pronounced (at the time of the slaughtering of the animal), for sure it is *Fisq* (a sin and disobedience of Allah).»** (6:121)

4) Eating animals which have canine teeth, such as lions, leopards, wolves and the like, as well as birds which have talons, like eagles, falcons, hawks etc. Ibn 'Abbaas said:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade us from [eating] any carnivorous animal which has canine teeth, and every bird which has talons [with which it catches its prey].”
(Muslim #1934)

5) What was slaughtered by other than the Jews and the Christians. It is considered carrion and it is impermissible to eat.

6) Any food or drink which is apparently harmful to one's body, such as cigarettes and the like; they are impermissible. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«And do not kill yourselves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you.» (4:29)

7) Wearing silk, gold, and silver for men; they are permissible for women. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: **“The wearing of silk and gold has been permitted for the women of my nation but not for its men.”** (Ahmad #19662)

It is allowed for men to wear silver rings, belts, and have decoration on weaponry.

Various Supplications, Words of Remembrance, and Islamic Etiquettes

1) Mention the name of Allah [by saying Bismillaah] before you start eating or drinking, and thank Allah [by saying Alhamdulillah] upon finishing. You should eat from what is in front of you and you must eat with your right hand, for the left hand is mainly used to clean what is abhorred (like cleaning oneself after relieving himself).

‘Umar bin Abi Salamah (رضي الله عنه) said: “When I was a young boy, I was in the care of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and my hand was wandering all over the plate [while eating]. So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to me,

“Young boy, mention the name of Allah [before you start to eat], eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you.” (Bukhari #5061 & Muslim #2022)

2) Never be critical of food, no matter how it is. Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) said:

“The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) never criticized food at all. If he liked it he ate it, and if he did not, he left it.”
(Bukhari #3370 & Muslim #2064)

3) Do not enter the houses except after seeking permission [by knocking or the like]. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have sought permission and greeted those in them.﴾ (24:27)

Do not persist in seeking permission [more than thrice]. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“One should seek permission thrice. If he grants you permission, [then enter] and if not, go back.”
(Muslim #2153)

5) Greet both those you know and those you do not know [by saying ‘As-Salaamu ‘alaykum] for love and friendship would result from this. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“You will never enter *Jannah* until you believe, and you will never believe fully until you love each other. Shall I not inform you of something that if you do it, you will love each other? Greet one another with ‘Salaam’.”

(Muslim #54)

6) If someone greets you with Salaam, return him the same greeting or one that is better.¹ Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it or (at least) return it equally. Certainly, Allah is Ever a Careful Account Taker of all things.﴾ (4:86)

7) When you feel like yawning, you should try to suppress yourself as much as possible. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Yawning is from the *Shaytaan*. When one of you feels like yawning, let him suppress it as much as he can. And if one of you yawns making sound, “Aahh!” *Shaytaan* laughs.” (Bukhari #3115)

¹ If someone says “As-Salaamu alaykum,” respond with, “wa ‘alaykum As-Salaam,” at the very least. It is better to add, “wa Rahmatullaah,” and even further, “wa Barakaatuh.”

If he is unable to suppress it, he should cover his mouth with his right palm. If he uses his left hand, he should either use its back, or make a fist and use the circle composed of his index finger and thumb.

8) When you sneeze, say, **“Alhamdulillah.”** If another Muslim sneezes and says, **“Alhamdulillah,”** you should reply by saying, **“Yarhamuk-Allah (may Allah have mercy on you).”** If someone replies to you by saying, **“Yarhamuk-Allah,”** reply to him by saying, **“Yahdeekumullaah wa yuslihu baalakum (may Allah guide you and better your affairs).”** The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“When one of you sneezes, let him say, ‘Alhamdulillah,’ his brother or companion should say to him, ‘Yarhamuk-Allahu,’ and the one who sneezed should say, ‘Yahdeekumullaah wa yuslihu baalakum.’” (Bukhari #5870)

If a disbeliever says, **“Alhamdulillah,”** you should reply saying, **“Yahdeekumullaah (may Allah guide you),”** only. (Abu Dawood #5038 & Tirmidhi #2739)

Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) related, that whenever the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sneezed, he would put his hand or his clothes in front of his mouth and lower his voice [in doing so]. (Abu Dawood #5870)

9) Do not burp in public. Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said:

“A man burped while in the company of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and he said to him: ‘Save us from your burping, for the most satiated in this life will be hungry for the longest time on the Day of Resurrection.’”

(Tirmidhi #2478)

10) If you joke, do not say anything to harm or ill-treat others. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Let not anyone take his brother’s things (to anger him) seriously or jokingly.” (Abu Dawood 5003 & Tirmidhi #2160)

Do not let your joking be untrue, leading you to lie to make others laugh. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Woe to the one who lies in his speech to make people laugh, woe to him! woe to him!”
(Abu Dawood #4990 & Tirmidhi #2315))

11) When you wish to sleep, mention the Name of Allah and lie down on your right side. Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan said:

“When the Prophet (ﷺ) would retreat to his bed, he would say:

‘Bismika amootu wa ahyaa.’

Meaning: With your Name I die and I live.

Upon awaking, he would say:

‘Alhamdu-lillaah-illadhi ahyaaanaa ba’da maa amaatanaa wa ilayh-in-nushoor.’” (Bukhari #5953)

Meaning: All praise is due to Allah, Who gives us live after He has caused us to die and to Him will be the resurrection.

12) When you go to your wives [to have marital relations], say:

“Bismillaah. Allahumma jannibnash-Shaytaan, wa jannib-ish-Shaytaana maa razaqtanaa.”

Meaning: “I begin with the Name of Allah. O Allah, keep the *Shaytaan* away from us, and keep the *Shaytaan* away from what you grant us [from offspring].”

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“If someone says when he approached his wife (before sexual intercourse), ‘I begin with the Name of Allah. O Allah, keep the *Shaytaan* away from us, and keep the *Shaytaan* away from what you grant us [from offspring],’ if Allah grants them a child he (the *Shaytaan*) would not harm him.”
(Bukhari #141 & Muslim #1434)

Also, keep whatever takes place between you and your partner private. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Indeed from the worst of people on the Day of Resurrection is one who has marital relations with his wife and then spreads her private matters.”

(Muslim #1437)

13) Upon leaving your home, say the following supplication.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever says, meaning upon leaving his home:

‘Bismillaahi, tawakkaltu ‘ala Allahi, laa hawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaah.’

Meaning: I begin with the Name of Allah, I put my trust in Allah, there is no ability or might except with Allah.’

...it will be said to him, ‘Your affair has been taken care of, you have been protected [from all evil], and the *Shaytaan* moves away from him.’ (Tirmidhi #3426 & Abu Dawood #5095)

14) When you visit the sick, invoke the supplication which has been narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ). When he would visit the ill, he would sit close to his head and say the following seven times:

“Asalullaah al-‘Adheem, Rabb al-‘Arsh il-‘Adheem an yashfiyak.”

Meaning: I beseech Allah, the Magnificent, the *Lord* of the Magnificent Throne, that He cures you.

He said:

“If Allah has written for him to live longer, he will be cured from this sickness.” (Saheeh ibn Hibbaan #2975)

15) When you enter the toilet, enter with your left foot and say:

“Bismillah Allahumma inni a’uthu bika min al-kubthi wal-khabaa’ith.”

Meaning: I begin with the Name of Allah, O Allah, I seek refuge in you from the male and female Devils. (Bukhari #142 & Muslim #375)

When you leave the toilet, exit with your right foot and say:

“Ghufraanak.”

Meaning: I seek your forgiveness.

(Abu Dawood #30 & ibn Maajah #300)

Brotherly Advice

1) Know that upon entering the folds of Islam, Allah has effaced all your previous sins and evil deeds. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Do you not know that Islam effaces all that is done before it?” (Muslim #121)

Rather, the evil deeds you committed before you entered Islam are changed into good deeds by the Bounty of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And those who invoke not any other *ilaaah* (god) along with Allah, nor kill such life as Allah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this shall receive the punishment. * The torment will be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace. * Except those who repent and believe (in Islamic Monotheism), and do righteous deeds, for those, Allah will change their sins into good deeds, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ (25:68-70)

Listen to this good news from Allah (ﷻ). Those who embrace this religion from the People of the Book will be given double reward, due to their belief in their Messenger and their belief in Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah says:

﴿Those to whom We gave the Scripture [i.e. the Tawraah and the Injeel, etc.] before it, - they believe in it (the Qur`an). And when it is recited to them, they say: ‘We believe in it. Verily, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed even before it we have been from those who submit themselves to Allah in Islam as Muslims

(like ‘Abdullah bin Salaam and Salmaan Al-Faarisi, etc.). These will be given their reward twice over, because they are patient, and repel evil with good, and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided them.﴾

(28:52-54)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever accepts Islam from the people of the two Books (the Jews and Christians) they will have a double reward. They will receive the rights we enjoy, and they must give the rights we give. And whoever accepts Islam from the pagans [other than them] will have their reward, and they will receive the rights we enjoy, and they must give the rights we give.” (Ahmad #22288)

Your records are white and clean, so be careful not to taint it by doing any sins.

2) Now that you know the truth, set aside a part of your time to learn your religion. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“If Allah desires good for a person, He gives him understanding of the religion.”

(Bukhari #71 & Muslim #1037)

Seek the knowledge of ‘*Aqeedah* (Creed) and then study everything else you need in your daily life about your religion, such as *Tahaarah*, *Salah*, and the rest. You should also study the rulings of trade and the rulings pertaining to your source of livelihood, so that you do not unintentionally fall into things which are impermissible. Also, try your best to memorize the Book of Allah.

You should understand your religion from its proper and trusted sources, the Book of Allah and the authentic Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ).

Your example should be Muhammad (ﷺ) learn his biography so that you can emulate him. Try your best to be in the company of the scholars and students of knowledge who practice what they preach.

Be advised that not everyone who claims to be a Muslim is a true Muslim. Therefore, you should be careful who you seek knowledge from. Whatever you read or hear should be scrutinized in light of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) (The Sunnah should be understood in light of the understanding of the Pious Predecessors). The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“I advise you with the *taqwaa* of Allah, hearing and obeying even to an Ethiopian slave with amputated limbs (if he be your leader). For indeed whoever lives long amongst you will see many differences. So adhere to my Sunnah, and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Hold tight and cling on to it with your molar teeth. And beware of innovated matters [in religion], for indeed every innovated matter is an *Bid'ah*, and every *Bid'ah* is misguidance.” (Abu Dawood #4607, Tirmidhi #2676 & ibn Majaah #42)

Whatever is in accordance with his Sunnah take it, and whatever opposes it, leave it. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The Jews split into seventy-one sects, one is in Jannah and seventy are in the Hellfire. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, seventy-one are in the Hellfire and one is in Jannah. By Allah, my *Ummah* (nation)

will be split into seventy-three sects, one will be in Jannah and seventy-two will be in Hellfire.” It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, who are they?” He answered, “The *Jamaa’ah*¹.” (Abu Dawood #4596 & ibn Maajah #3993)

3) *Al-Wala* and *Al-Bara*. You must love and stand with the believers, and hate the disbelievers and take them as enemies. But to hate them does not mean to oppress and transgress against them or usurp their rights. You should not hate them merely for their selves, but rather due to their disbelief and misguidance. This should encourage you to do your utmost to help save them from the Hellfire. Do not prefer disbelievers over Muslims, and do not help them against Muslims. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The believers, men and women, are *Awliyaa’* (helpers, supporters, friends, allies, protectors) of one another.﴾

(9:71)

4) Know that whoever accepts Islam would face opposition, disagreement and harm, especially from those closest to them. You should keep this in mind and know that if you are oppressed in any way, this would elevate your rank, purify your sins, and would serve as a test through which Allah is trying you to see the extent of your truthfulness and steadfastness on your religion. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Do people think that they will say: ‘We believe,’ and will not be tested. We indeed tested those who were before them. * And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will

¹ **Jamaa’ah:** The group (i.e. those who stick to the way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions).

certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allah knows all that before putting them to test.) ﴿29:2-3﴾

Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked:

“Which people are the most tested?” He replied, “The Prophets, then the righteous, then those after them, and then those after them. Every person is tried according to the strength of his religion, if his religion is strong, he is tested more, and if his religion is weak, his trial is lessened. A person continues to be tested and tried until he walks on the earth totally free of sin (for they would be effaced due to the trials).” (Tirmidhi #2398 & ibn Majaah #4023)

Know that they will try to raise doubts in your mind about Islam and constantly mention these doubts to you. Ask the People of Knowledge, so that you may find a proper reply to these doubts, from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

5) Calling to the religion of Allah (*Da'wah*) and his authentic Sunnah. You must be knowledgeable to what you call people to. In this manner, the doubts that the enemies of Islam bring about can be easily answered. Give *Da'wah* as Allah says:

﴿Invite (mankind, O Muhammad ﷺ) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in the best way. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.﴾ (16:125)

Save others from the Hellfire, just as Allah saved you from it, and start with those closest to you. Be mindful of the words of the Prophet (ﷺ):

“Allah did not send me to make things hard...rather as a teacher and to make things easy.” (Muslim #1478)

Know that there is much good and great Bounty from Allah in helping a person to become Muslim, The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to ‘Ali (رضي الله عنه):

“If Allah guides a person through you, it is better for you than all that is on the earth.” (Bukhari #2783 & Muslim #2406)

You will receive the same reward as all those who have been guided through you, without their reward being decreased in the least. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Whoever calls to guidance, he will receive an additional reward equal to those who follow him, without their rewards being reduced in the least. Whoever calls to misguidance, he will receive the sin of those who follow him, without their punishment being reduced in the least.” (Muslim #2674)

Know that conveying this religion to non-Muslims and calling them to it is a duty upon every Muslim, so do not fall short in doing this duty. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

“Convey to others (the religion), even if it be one verse.” (Tirmidhi #2669)

You should make people love the religion of Allah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Give glad tidings, and do not cause people to flee from the religion; make things easy for people and don’t make things hard.” (Bukhari #69 & Muslim#1732)

Know that in calling others to Islam, you are not responsible for the results, for your calling is restricted to merely clarifying and showing people the way to the truth. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And verily, you (O Muhammad ﷺ) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the Straight Path (i.e. Allah’s religion of Islamic Monotheism). The Path of Allah, to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. Verily, all the matters at the end go to Allah (for decision).﴾ (42:52-53)

As for the guidance by which one actually practices Islam, this is from Allah alone. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily! You (O Muhammad ﷺ) guide not whom you like, but Allah guides whom He wills. And He knows best those who are the guided.﴾ (28:56)

6) Try to choose righteous companions who encourage and help you to do good, warn and prevent you from doing evil, and will be a support for you in your life. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“The example of a righteous and evil companion is like one who carries perfume and another who is a blacksmith. As for the one who carries perfume, either he will give you some perfume, or you might buy it, or [at least] you will find a pleasing scent with him. As for the blacksmith, either he (the blacksmith) will burn his clothes, or he will find a hideous odor from him.”

(Bukhari #1995 & Muslim #2628)

7) Be careful not to go to extremes in the religion. There is neither monasticism nor fanaticism in the religion. Allah says:

﴿Allah intends for you ease and He does not want to make things difficult for you.﴾ (2:185)

Anas bin Maalik (رضي الله عنه) said:

Three people came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) asking about the worship of the Prophet (ﷺ). When they were informed, they thought it was too little and said, “Who are we in comparison to the Prophet (ﷺ) for indeed Allah has forgiven him his past and future sins.” One of them said, “As for me, I will pray the whole night long.” Another said, “I will fast every day without breaking it,” and yet another said, “I will stay away from women and never marry.” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came [and when he heard of this, he] said, “Are you the people who said such and such? As for me, By Allah, indeed I am the most god-fearing and most cautious amongst you, but I fast and I eat, I pray and I sleep, and I marry women. Whoever desires other than my *Sunnah* (Way), then he is not from me.” (Bukhari #4776)

On the other hand, there should be no compromising or improper lenience in the religion of Allah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Leave me to what I have ordered you. Indeed those before you were destroyed due to their [persistent] questioning, and opposing their Prophets. If I forbid you from something, abstain from it, and if I command you with something, do of it as much as possible.”

(Bukhari #6858 & Muslim#1337)

8) You will see many Muslims who do not fulfill their obligations and do not refrain from the prohibitions of the religion. They do not fulfill their obligations towards the Da'wah. People differ in this; such that some fulfill their obligations in a more complete way than others. In any case, the reason one does not fulfill these obligations is due to the fact that Shaitan is trying his utmost to misguide the Children of Adam. Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿[Iblees (Satan)] said: 'By Your Might, then I will surely mislead them all.﴾ (32:82)

Shaitan has promised to exert all his efforts to mislead the Children of Adam. Allah, the Exalted, says:

﴿And surely, We created you (your father Adam) and then gave you shape (the noble shape of a human being), then We told the angels, 'Prostrate to Adam', and they prostrated, except Iblees (Satan), he refused to be of those who prostrate. (Allah) said: 'What prevented you (O Iblees) that you did not prostrate, when I commanded you?' Iblees said: 'I am better than him (Adam), You created me from fire, and him You created from clay.' (Allah) said: '(O Iblees) get down from this (Jannah), it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out, for you are of those humiliated and disgraced.' (Iblees) said: 'Allow me respite till the Day they are raised up (i.e. the Day of Resurrection).' (Allah) said: 'You are of those allowed respite.' (Iblees) said: 'Because You have sent me astray, surely I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your 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 as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You).' (Allah) said (to Iblees) 'Get out from this (Jannah) disgraced and expelled.

Whoever of them (mankind) will follow you, then surely I will fill Hell with you all.﴾ (32:82)

Do not be discouraged from fulfilling your duty in the field of Da'wah to the religion of Allah; let this be an incentive to yourself to strive in spreading the religion of Allah.

9) Practice Islamic conduct in your daily life; such as helping someone who is in need whether you know him or not, and smiling in the face of your brother. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Smiling in the face of your brother is a charity, enjoining good and prohibiting evil is a charity, showing someone the way when he is lost is a charity, helping the weak-sighted is a charity, removing a rock, a thorn, or bones from the path is a charity, and pouring water from your bucket into the bucket of your brother is a charity. (Tirmidhi #1956)

Your clothes and all your things should be clean. A Muslim must always be clean, for his religion is the religion of cleanliness. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿O Children of Adam! Take your adornment (by wearing your clean clothes), while praying.﴾ (7:31)

You should try to do as many good deeds as possible, such as giving charity, performing supererogatory prayers and other acts of worship.

When one performs these deeds [mentioned above] they are giving indirect *Da'wah* to the Muslims who are heedless of their religion. They are also giving *Da'wah* to the non-Muslims; since they would become curious and ask about Islam when they see its beautiful aspects.

Treat your relatives well, and do not sever your relationship with them even if they oppose your acceptance of Islam. You

should have better relations with your relatives, in order to bring them closer to Islam. They would also know that after you became a Muslim, your manners improved and you became a better person. Asmaa' (رضي الله عنها) said:

“My mother, who was a pagan during the life of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), came to visit me, so I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): ‘My mother has come to visit me...should I keep ties with my mother?’ He (ﷺ) said: ‘Yes, keep your ties of relation with your mother.’ ”

(Bukhari #2477 & Muslim #1003)

10) Know that the struggle between good and evil will last till the Last Day. The weakness of the Muslims and the strength of the disbelievers, the minority of Muslims and the majority of the disbelievers, the backwardness of the Muslims and the advancement of the disbelievers, the humility of the Muslims and the might of the disbelievers are not evidences indicating the falseness of Islam. It is a definite result of their distance from implementing the legislation of their *Lord* and their abandoning righteous deeds and calling to the path of Allah.

‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه), the second *Khaleefah* (Caliph) said:

“We are a people who Allah honored and gave might through Islam. If we seek honor in something else, Allah would humiliate us. The truth should be followed, for indeed Allah created *Jannah* and Hell, and He has promised that each one will be filled.”

11) Know my brother that we are in the last of times (the Last Day is near) and that each year that passes, we come closer to the end of the world and the establishing of the Final Hour. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

‘I myself and the Hour have been raised like these two,’ and he joined his index and middle fingers.”

(Bukhari #4652 & Muslim #867)

The Prophet (ﷺ) foretold the state of Islam [and Muslims] in this time. He (ﷺ) said:

“Islam started as a strange thing and it shall once again return to this state. So may glad tidings be to the strangers.” (Muslim #145)

Having many followers is not a proof of the correctness of a methodology. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Glad tidings to the strangers! Glad tidings to the strangers! Glad tidings to the strangers!” Someone asked, **“Who are the strangers O Messenger of Allah?”** He said, **“Righteous people amongst many evil ones. Those who disobey them are more than those who obey.”** (Ahmad #7072)

He also clarified the state in which the Muslim who holds on to his religion will be, and the various hardships he will face [in practicing his religion] whether physical or psychological. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Enjoin the good and forbid the evil, but when you see that greed is obeyed, desires followed, the life of this world playing its affect on people, and that people are pleased with their own opinions, stick to yourselves and leave commanding the general public with good, for indeed there will be days after you, having patience in them is like grasping a hot coal. One who does

righteous deeds in them will receive the reward of fifty people doing the same deed.” (Saheeh ibn Hibbaan)

The Prophet (ﷺ) informed us that when the Day of Resurrection draws near, the religion would diminish. No person who says “*Laa ilaaha ill-Allah*” will remain on the face of Earth. Only the most evil of creation will remain, and upon them will the Final Hour be established.

Nawwaas ibn Sam‘aan narrated the Hadeeth of the Prophet (ﷺ) in which he describes the story of the *Dajjaal* (Pseudo-Christ) the descending of ‘Eesaa ibn Maryam, and the coming of *Ya'jooj wa Ma'jooj* (Gog and Magog) saying:

“... then Allah will send a good and pure wind which will take them underneath their armpits. It will take the soul of every *Mu'min* and Muslim, and only the most evil of people will remain. They will engage in sex in public in front of people like donkeys, and upon them the Hour will strike.” (Muslim #2937)

12) Know that all affairs are judged by the way they end, so be keen to always ask Allah that He keeps you steadfast upon Islam, and that He causes you to die with a good end. Make sure your speech and deeds are purely for Allah’s sake, that they are done according to what He legislated, and that you spend your time in Allah’s (ﷺ) obedience. Take account of yourself, before you are taken to account, and let Allah see you doing what He commanded not what He forbade.

May Allah keep us steadfast on His religion, and cause us to die as Muslims.