

Islam

A Total Beginner's

Guide

(PART TWO)



Molvi Abdul Aziz



ISLAM – A Total Beginner’s Guide

“PART – II”

A Reader for Those

WHO NEWLY ENTER INTO THE FOLD OF ISLAM AND FOR
TOTAL BEGINNERS!

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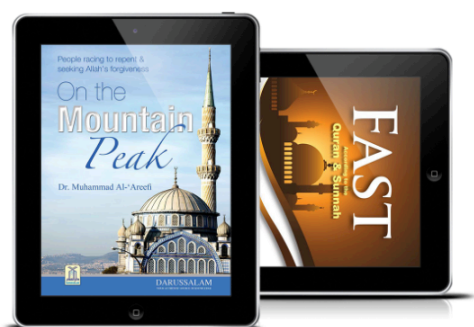
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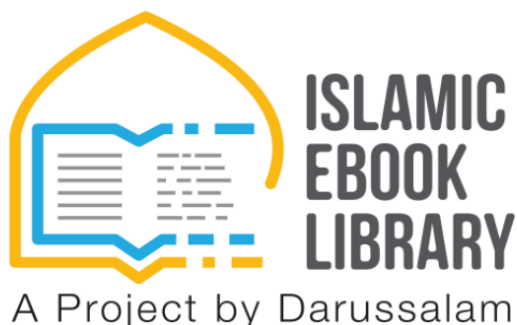


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PREFACE



You must have heard about Islam and its adherents, Muslims, in the news. This book offers an insightful introduction to Islam and takes the reader through well-known authentic sources and takes a closer look at the Islamic Faith, the Noble Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah and his sayings. It explores the Five Pillars of Islam in depth and narrates the biography of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) briefly but distinctly. The book presents a brief yet comprehensive survey of the basic teachings of Islam with particular stress on the significance of Islam's central belief in the Oneness of Allah or Tawhid. The book offers an in-depth discussion on the Glorious Qur'an as the Revealed Book.

Undoubtedly there is an overwhelming Demand for information about Islam, and this timely book attempts to offer a comprehensive, authentic understanding of this fastest growing religion: the Straight Path. The book provides succinct, accessible, authentic, sensitive and crystal clear information on the topics that range from the general to more specific issues – what is the status of women in Islam? Are women seen as second class citizens in Islam? Who is superior – man or woman? What is Jihad? What does Islam

say about abortion, mercy-killings or euthanasia, inter-religious marriages, suicide, man's treatment towards his wife, polygyny, divorce, dress, veil, the rights of parents, privacy in homes, clothing and ornaments, the wisdom of banning gold and silk for men, perfumes, unisex fashions, the alleged cruelty towards animals and foods – lawful and unlawful. Islam - A Beginner's Guide to Islam is a splendid introduction - carefully researched and comprehensive, yet highly readable. It corrects many popular and erroneous notions about Islam that prevail in non-Muslim communities.

For the newly-converted Muslim, there are many profound insights of great significance; for instance, the passages on women, their treatment and on Jihad, nearly always are completely misunderstood, rather misrepresented by the mass media. This study represents a traditional view of Islam as experienced by Muslims. We believe this work will prove an invaluable source for both new Muslims as well as the general public. Indeed this book will take you on a journey through various aspects of Islam, and Islam makes a man reborn!

Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported as having said: 'He who does not thank people does not thank Allah.' [at-Tirmidhi]

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SECTION 3: The Core Beliefs & The Articles of Faith

What is Iman or Faith

What is true Iman or Faith? What is a true believer [Mu'min]? What are the essential elements or articles of Faith or Iman? What is Allah to Muslims? These questions are of vital importance. In fact, this is what Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) explained to Angel Jibril when the latter asked him about Iman or Faith.

When Angel Jibril asked the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), "What is Faith [Iman]?" He replied, "It is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in the Divine Decree [al- Qadar], both the good of it, and the bad of it." [Muslim]

Thus, Iman consists of six core beliefs that every Muslim must accept as part of his Deen or Religion. During the course of this section, we take a closer look at each of these core beliefs.

The Word Iman

The religion of Islam may be divided into two parts – the articles of Faith or its doctrines and the practical, which

includes all that a Muslim is required to do, that is to say, the practical course to which he must conform his life. The former are also called Aqaid [plural of Aqeedah, literally what one is bound or tied to] or beliefs and the latter Ahkam [plural of Hukm, literally a command or order], or the commands and regulations of Islam. The former can also be called Ma'rifa or knowledge [Ilm], and the latter Ta'a, obedience or Amal. Thus knowledge is the root, and obedience and practice is the fruit. This terminology is adopted by the Noble Qur'an: Iman and Amal. Thus Iman [Faith] must issue in Deen or Religion: Religion means beliefs as well as behaviour.

The word Iman, generally translated as Faith or belief is derived from Amana [ordinarily rendered, he believed], which means he came into peace or security, while Amal signifies deed or action. These two terms are most often used together in the Gracious Qur'an to indicate a believer *“and those who believe and do good”* is the oft-occurring description of true believers. This relation of Faith with actions must be borne in mind if we try to understand the true meaning of Islam. It should also be recognized that the seat of Faith or belief is the heart. That is, the heart has Faith in or believes in the fact that there is nothing which is worthy of worship but Allah and that the Messenger is true, and that all that the Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) brought is true. What the tongue does is to

confess it, and what the limbs do is to act in accordance with it.



Iman or Faith is a statement and action. In other words, it has three essential elements: belief in the heart, profession by the tongue, and performance of the deeds by the limbs. Faith, however, differs from one believer to another, and true Faith is one that is expressed in actions. The term Iman occurs forty-five times in the Noble Qur'an.

Iman resides in the heart. The heart is its focus, its foundation. If the heart is filled with Iman, with love of Allah and His Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), hope in Allah's Mercy and fearing His punishment, it will certainly drive one to perform acts of obedience to Allah.

Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) has said,

“Faith has sixty-odd or seventy- odd branches, the highest and the best of which is to declare that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah and the lowest of which is to remove something harmful from the road. Modesty is a branch of Faith.” [al-Bukhari and Muslim]

If Iman has different branches and each part is called Iman, it follows that Salah is Iman, Zakat is Iman, and Hajj is Iman. Likewise, virtues such as modesty, trust in Allah, heedfulness of Allah, and total submission to His will, even removing harmful things from the road are parts of Iman. Some of these parts are very basic: like the two testimonies of faith, if one loses them, he loses his Iman completely. Other parts are marginal, such as removing an obstacle from the road. If, for any reason, one loses them, they do not lose Iman completely. Instead, they descend from the lofty level of Iman to the lower level.

There are a number of things that testify to one's true faith. These include the following:

- Knowledge: This means knowledge that Allah is the only One who deserves to be worshipped and that to worship anything other than Him is sheer falsehood.
- Loving the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) more than one loves one's parents and children. [al-Bukhari 1:14]

- Establishing voluntary Prayers on the Night of the Decree [Laylat al-Qadr]. [al-Bukhari 1:35]
- Fasting in the month of Ramadan faithfully and in anticipation of Allah's reward. [al-Bukhari 1:37]
- Establishing the obligatory Prayers. [al-Bukhari 1:40]
- Following the funeral procession of a Muslim. [al-Bukhari 1:47]
- Observing Haya [modesty]. [al-Bukhari 1:24]



THE LEXICOLOGY of Iman and Islam

The term Imān signifies originally conviction of the heart, while the word Islam signifies submission, and hence relates primarily to action. This difference in the original meaning finds expression both in the Gracious Qur'an and the Hadith, though in ordinary use they both convey the same significance and Mu'min [believer] and Muslim [submitter] are generally used interchangeably.

Belief In Allah

Belief in Allah is the cornerstone of Iman. All other forms of belief revolve around belief in Allah. It is, therefore, very important that a Muslim's belief in Allah must be correct.

Allah – The name Allah is used with the highest frequency in the Qur'an. It is the personal name of the Creator of the Universe and what it contains. No one is able to perceive and comprehend 'Allah.' The human mind has always remained bewildered about Him. The Noble Qur'an states, "Nothing is like unto Him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing." [ash-Shu'ra 42:11] In order to know Allah, the best and the safest way is to heed the Prophet's (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) counsel. He advised us, "Reflect on the creation of Allah and do not ponder about His self." It is obvious that Allah cannot be seen or perceived by anyone in this world, *"Visions cannot grasp Him, while He grasps the visions. He is the All-Subtle, the All-Aware."* [6:103]

The Beatific Vision, however, will not be denied to the dwellers in Paradise. This is proven by several Traditions of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him). One of them says, "You shall see your Lord in the Hereafter just as you can see the full moon now, or the sun on a cloudless sky." [Traditions of this import are found in Sahih Muslim – The Book of Knowledge]