

Islam

A Total Beginner's

Guide

(PART THREE)



Molvi Abdul Aziz



ISLAM – A Total Beginner’s Guide

“PART – III”

A Reader for Those

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

By: Maulvi Adul Aziz

Translation: Sameh Strauch

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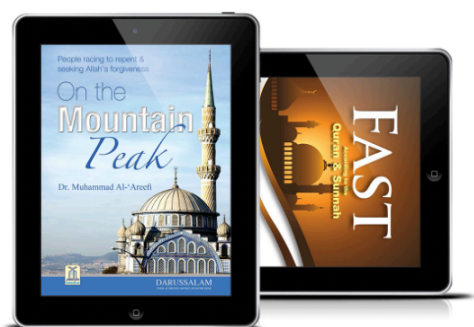
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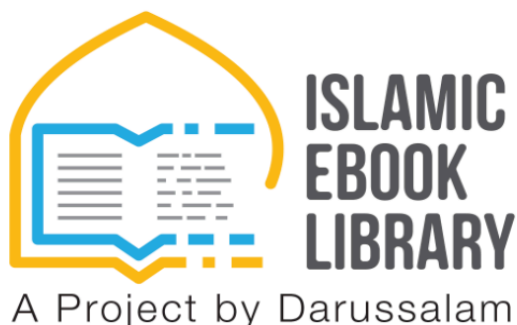


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PREFACE

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]

Abdul Malik Mujahid,
Darussalam
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Section Five: The Fundamental Sources of Islam

The Glorious Qur'an

The original source from which all commands and principles are drawn is the Sacred Book called al-Qur'an.

Generally, the sources are said to be four: the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah or Hadith being called absolutely sure arguments, while Ijma or unanimous agreement of the Muslim community and Qiyas or reasoning are called arguments obtained by exertion. But it is important to realize that Ijma and Qiyas both are admittedly based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Sunnah or Hadith, in itself, is an explanation of the Noble Qur'an. It is therefore perfectly right to say that the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) are the sole sources from which all the teachings and practices of Islam are drawn. The Sunnah in fact supplements the Qur'an as a source of Islamic Law.

The Noble Qur'an is the Book of Allah. It was revealed to the best of His servants, the most eminent of His Prophets and Messengers – Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), as He revealed the other Books to the previous Messengers. Messengership ended with the

Message of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

The Qur'an is the Book that comprises the most comprehensive Divine Law. Allah promises happiness in this life and in the Hereafter for those who believe and adhere to its commandments.

Definition of the Qur'an

Qara'a, the Arabic term, means to read and Qur'an is the verbal noun from this root meaning reading or recitation. The term Qara'a also signifies primarily to gather together. The Noble Qur'an has gathered together in itself the fruits or essence of all of Allah's Books. The Qur'an is the Arabic Speech of Allah which He revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), through Angel Jibril, in its precise meaning and exact wording. It is the literal uncreated word of Allah. It is inimitable, unique and protected by Allah from all sorts of corruption. It is referred to as the Qur'an, and it clearly states to whom, when, in what language, how and why it was revealed. It was revealed in the month of Ramadan, on the Night of Power or Decree and it was revealed in the Arabic language.

The Various Names of the Qur'an

Allah the Most High refers to the Qur'an by a number of names. These include the Qur'an [17: 88], the Book al-Kitab

[2:2], the Criterion al-Furqan [25:1], the Reminder ‘adh-Dhikr’ [15:9], and the Revelation sent down ‘at-Tanzil’ [26:192]. Other references to the Qur’an are by such terms as an-Nur [the Light], Huda [Guidance], ash-Shifa [Healing], Rahmah [Mercy], Burhan [Convincing Proof], Bayan [Clear Statement], al-Muhaymin [the Guardian], Mubarak [Blessed]. All these attributes explain different facets of the revealed word of the Qur’an. No other book has attempted to define itself in such a manner.

Brief History of the Revelation and its Collection

The Qur’an was revealed piecemeal over a span of twenty-three years, bit-by-bit according to the impending circumstances. The revelation of the Qur’an began in the month of Ramadan, after the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) had passed the fortieth year of his life. The first revelation arrived during his seclusion in the cave of Hira, on a mountain near Makkah, in the year 610 CE. The first revelation he received constitutes the first five verses of Suratul Alaq [the Clinging Clot].

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْنَا الْكُرْآنَ



Then the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) continued to receive revelations intermittently over a period of twenty-three years, as pointed out above. This period comprises the Prophet's (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) stay in Makkah for thirteen years and then in Madinah. It was revealed in portions, on various occasions, in different places, in different lengths and in order different from what it is now. Each verse was committed to memory and written down as soon as it was revealed. The sequence of the verses [Ayat] and Surahs was learnt directly from the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him).

Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) would dictate to anyone who knew how to write at the time the revelation was received. This accounts for the large number of revelation-writers or scribes who numbered more than fifty. While dictating he also instructed them where the latest revelation was to go, for, they came especially in Madinah, bit-by-bit, and he had to tell them to which previously revealed Surah or Chapter it belonged, and where exactly it was to be placed; for example, put it after the Verse ending with such and such words, and before the Verse starting with such and such words, of Surah so and so.

The significant element of judgement was how the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) himself recited. During his sermons, talks and Prayers, he recited at length, sometimes entire chapters. During his private Prayers he

recited long chapters, in length often running to more than tenth part of the Qur'an, taking several hours, until those behind him thought of breaking away from the little private congregation. He recited from any part of the Qur'an. He also taught the Qur'an to his Companions, while most learnt from his recitation in ritual Prayers. During the recitation, on all these occasions a particular order was maintained and confirmed through repetitions.

His Companions, generally, did not need any written material because they were good in memory. The people whose every second person was a poet, who knew hundreds of couplets of poetry by heart, would have no difficulty in memorizing the Qur'an, especially when they were offered nothing else to memorize besides the Qur'an.

The Conclusive Proof of the Prophet's [Peace and Blessings of Allah] Authenticity



Allah's Messenger (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) received revelations in Makkah, at home, in caves, in

the mosque, during journeys, when alone, in Madinah, in company, on a mount; in short, in every odd situation of day and night, in summer, in winter, over twenty-three long years. Most of the revelation came addressing a need, or answering a certain question. But the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) did not place the Verses in order of their revelations. He recited them in a different order altogether, where Makkan revelations were interspersed with Madinan revelations, and some Madinan revelations were entirely Madinan, but for a Verse or two which were of the Makkan period. But the miraculous part is that whenever he recited, he recited in the same order, with the result that those tens of thousands of his Companions who had memorized the Qur'an, never had to tell him that he was missing on the order. On the contrary, they could always check their order against his. The fact of the matter is that the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was promised by his Lord that to preserve the Qur'an was His responsibility. Indeed, not merely preservation was covered by the promise, but also its correct recital. Yet more: preservation of its meanings was also promised, which denotes Arabic will be the only language that will remain unchanged until the final hours of life on earth.

The Qur'an has about 6,666 verses, divided into 114 parts called Surahs. Makkan Surahs are poetic, rich in meaning and nuances, overflowing with subtleties, deep in meaning, vigorous in their drive, filled with surprises, sonorous,

rhythmical, musically charged, yet following the rules of rhetoric, all in Verses packed with power. Consequently, they are easy to memorize.

During the time of the first Caliph or Khalifah, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, all the written, scattered pieces were brought together. This was called Suhuf [leaves]. During the time of the third Caliph, Uthman ibn Affan, the script was standardized and the Mushaf 'Uthmani became the only authentic version, which is still in existence.

A prominent Companion of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) returned to Madinah after the fall of Armenia and Azerbaijan. He informed Uthman ibn Affan, the third Caliph, that he himself had heard people of different regions reciting the Qur'an differently, following their own accents and dialects. For illustration, and this problem still persists in some regions; people of certain areas pronounce Qaf as Kaf; hence, they say Kalam instead of Qalam. Uthman understood the problem; he summoned some of those who used to write down the verses of the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and instructed them to make copies of the Qur'an following the

Qurayshite dialect and accent, because the Qur'an was sent down in the language of the Quraysh. This was done, and utmost extra precautionary measures were observed during the process. Several copies were made – one was kept in