

The Religion of Islam

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Abstract: Islam is a prophetic religion. Among all the religions of the world, except Hinduism there is a historical founder. Christianity can be traced back to Christ, Buddhism to Buddha and Islam to Prophet Mohammad. Prophet Mohammad, an Arab prophet born in 570 at Mecca established the religion of Islam. According to tradition, in 610 he was visited by the angel, Gabriel who informed him that he was the messenger of god. His revelations and teachings recorded in the Quran are the basis of Islam. Revelation explains and makes things clear. It gives the hope and mercy, and it warns men against the snares of evil. Deny not God, the Lord of the Worlds whose glory and power are shown in creation and His mercy in revelation. The cardinal belief of Islam is contained in the Kalima. There is no god but god alone and Mohammad is His prophet. He is eternal and without beginning or end. He is the creator of the world, everything existing on earth, and also the creator of Heaven and Hell. He is living, almighty, omniscient and never sleeps. He is a planned architect. The mercifulness of god is one of the grandest themes of the Quran Gods grade and mercy are all embracing. He is the source of all things. All Power, Wisdom, Beauty and Truth flow from them. All Knowledge is with god. His creation is not haphazard. He created man from dust and mud and molded into shape. Islam prohibits idol worship. Prayer, five times a day is essential. Hajj, one time in life is necessary. Every individual has to appear before god on the Day of Judgment wherein the wrong doers would have to go to hell and suffer the agonies therein and those who believe in god would be rewarded to heaven according to their deeds.

Keywords: Quran, A. Yushuf Ali, Prophet Mohammad, Gabriel, Mecca, Abraham, Moses, Christ, revelation God's grace and mercy, Heaven and Hell, Mystery of creation, Angels and Spirits creation from dust, Mans

1. Introduction

Before venturing to give details about the Religion of Islam, I would like to write a few lines on the Holy Book-Quran on which the philosophy of Islam is based.

QURAN

1. The Quran consists of the spoken words of Allah. The Arabic language in which the Quran has been revealed is noted for its inimitable excellent language. Of course, those who do not know Arabic or Urdu language has to depend on an authoritative version of the Quran. I have, for my authenticity has taken the help of "The Holy Quran" Mohmoud M. Ayoub "The Islamic Tradition" in Willard G. Oxtoby etc. "World religions: Western Traditions (Toronto Oxford University Press, 1996).

Being translated by A. YUSUF. ALI with its text and commentary. The Quran consists of 114 surahs (Chapters) and is similar in size of the New Testament. It has not been chronologically arranged. The different pronouncements by the Prophet were recorded at different intervals by the committee that Uthman appointment to compile an official recension of the "Quran"¹. Each Surah begins with the invocation bism-illahi ar rahman ar-rahim. (in the name of god, the all merciful, the compassionate). The Al-Fatihah (opening verse) reads as follows in translation.
"Praise be to god,

The Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;

Most gracious, Most Merciful;
Master of the Day of Judgment.

1. Mohmoud M. Ayoub "The Islamic Tradition" in Willard G. Oxtoby etc. "World religions: Western Traditions (Toronto Oxford University Press, 1996)
Thee do we worship and Thine we seek.
Show us the straight way,
The way to those whom thou has bestowed. Thy

Those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray (Sura 1-6-7)

It contains the true and final message

It is often used as a general invocation, like the Lords prayer of Christianity (given by Jesus himself) or like the verse given in the Brahadaranyaka

Upanisad (1.3.28) through much shorter in size.

"From the unreal lead me to the real,
From darkness lead me to light.
From death lead me to immortality."

The Quran is the most Sacred Book of the Muslims, which they strive to learn by hearts and refer it to all teachings of God, Angels, the Prophets, Resurrection and the day of reckoning, and the doctrine of heaven and hell. It also provides detail accounts of joys of paradise and the terrors of hell. It is the foundation of the whole Muslim culture. It contains the true and final message of pure monotheism to all the people and the final seal of the pure prophetic utterances. It is the foundation of whole Islamic culture and is said to have been revealed to the prophet part by part in a span of 23 years. It is the most important source of Divine Commandments. It is also believed to be externally existing in Heaven. The utterances of the Quran by the Prophet are supposed to be the genuine speech of God himself because the Prophet was an 'unlettered' man who was unable to coin any other words and mix up his own words with the words of god. That is why Quran is considered a miracle, the miracle being that god's words became human words.

1. S. Radhakrishnaned- 'The Principle Upanishads (Atlantic Heights. NJ. Humanities press International 1992).

Propheticism in Islam

Concept of a prophet-The word 'Prophet' comes from the Greek word 'prophetess' in which pro means 'for' and 'prophet' means to speak;

Thus in the original Greek a prophet is someone who "spells for" someone else. This meaning is faithful to the original

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Hebrew. If we consider all the living religions of the world we find that Hinduism is the only religion which has no historical founder. Christianity can be traced back to Christ. Buddhism to Buddha and Islam to Prophet Muhammad.

Though in may sound true but if analyzed properly we can say that Hinduism is a flex if us religion and not an orthodox one so the Hindus do not base their theories on the findings of a particular book. The Bible or the Quran But if we go through the earliest "srutis", the Vedas, we find that the rsis were perhaps the founders of Hinduism. The concept and growth of Hinduism perhaps derive from the Rig-Veda and in that sense we can say that the rsis were the Prophets.

Prophet Muhammad

Prophet Muhammad, an Arab prophet born in 570 at Mecca established the religion of Islam. The son of a merchant of the tribe, he was orphaned at the age of six. He married a rich widow, Khadijah, with whom he had six children including Fatimah, a daughter. According to tradition, in 610 he was visited by the angel, Gabriel, who informed Muhammad that he was the messenger of God. His revelations and teachings recorded in the Quran, are the basis of Islam. He began to preach publicly in 619 urging the rich to give to the poor and calling for destruction of idols. He gained disciples but also acquired enemies, whose plan to murder Muhammad forced him to flee from Mecca to Medina in 622. This flight, known as the Hijrah marks the beginning of the Islamic era. Muhammad's followers defeated a Mecca force in 624. They suffered in 625 but repelled Mecca siege of Medina 627. They suffered reverses in 625 but repelled Mecca siege of Medina in 627. We won control of Mecca by 629 and all Arabs by 630. He made his last journey in mercy in 632 establishing the rights of HAJJ, a pilgrimage to Mecca. He died later that year and was buried at Medina. His life, teachings and miracles have been the subjects of Muslims devotion and reflection ever since. The Prophet Muhammad declared that there were more than one lakh prophets who have been sent to the various people at different times. In the Quran itself 18 prophets have been mentioned who were sent to the Jews. (Sura v-83-86) and later on three Prophets were added from the New Testament viz. Abraham, Moses and Christ. At least Jesus's name has been mentioned 25 times. in the Quran. But the prophet Muhammad has been called the last and final prophet of God to all mankind.

The prophet is a messenger of god to teach people about pure monotheism and law to guide the people. Prophets served the divine purpose of correcting the people and warning them against disobedience of His message and Social law. Usually, the prophet were god-intoxicated men who spoke things in their emotional outbursts and at times in poetic utterness, as in the case of prophets David and Prophet Muhammad the utterances were about god and warning against social injustices. They certainly were inspired men who were committed to God with a great def of self-involvement.

Revelation

Revelation explains and makes things clear. It gives the hope and mercy, and it warns men against the snares of evil. Deny not god the Lord of the Worlds whose glory and power are

shown in the creation and His Mercy in revelation. Revelation means everlasting Truths those who mock merely under themselves. Consider the Signs if the God's gracious kindness around you, and glorify Him Seek Truth in workshop more than mere ancestral ways, and abut not out Revelations Light. Revelation explains clearly how worldly pride and arrogance come to naught even at long odds, against Spiritual Truths. Proud Pharaoh and his Chiefs did resist authority but their sins rebounded on themselves: They were swallowed up by the sea; and their tilth, their gardens, their noble fanes and buildings and all the advantages of which they boasted passed to other hands. Not a tear was shed over heaven and earth. Thus ends the table of power misused (Sura XLI-1-32; SXLIII-1-15; Sx S-x-Iv-1-29)

Gods revelation so not an illusion; the illusion is in the minds of those doubt and have false ideas of God god is the source and goal of all things.

Gods most gracious has sent Revelation, one of his greatest favours to man; His creation is in pairs well balanced; all created things receive his favors, but they will all pass away and only god will endure through the ages.

Commentary to the Quran (c-241-sura1-11) p/1544 has very clearly stated-

" Gods care for his creatures are universal.

His revelation is for all-ignorant.

And lowly as well as learned and high placed.

Now and forever. None can arrogantly claim exclusive possessions of god's gifts.

It is He alone that can provide for your every need, and His gifts are best. "

In Sura xc vii 1-5 it has been clearly stated that in the mystic Power too for Honour, in which Revelation cosmos down to a benighted world. It may be the wonderful comes of an individual-and transforms the conflict of wrong doing into Peace and Harmony-through the agency of the angelic host, most, representing the spiritual powers of the Mercy of god.

GOD AND HIS CREATION

The cardinal belief of Islam is creation in the Kalima. There is no God, but God alone and Muhammad is His prophet. He is eternal, without beginning or end. He is form neither begotten nor does He beget. He has no body nor form but He is the creator of Heaven and Earth and all things in them. But He is transcendent to everything that exists. He is also nearer to man than his veins and is too high and never sleeps. HE has to keep awake all the time to see that the world is moving according to his plan

He is so to say a planned architect. Nothing possible can escape His grasp and vigilance. He is the judge of all men and their acts. 'Allah' is the standard Arabic word for god used by Arab Christians as well as Muslims.

He is the Creator and Judge of human mankind, omnipotent, compassionate and merciful. The Muslim profession of faith affirms that there is no deity but god and emphasize that he us inherently one, "nothing like unto Him. "Everything that happen occurs by His commandment. Submission to god is

the basis of Islam. The Quran and Habit contain some of the most beautiful names of god including the One and Only; the 'Living one' the Real one; the Real Truth; 'the Hearer, the 'Benefactor' and the 'constant Forgiver'

Merciful

The mercifulness of God is one of the grandest themes of the Quran.

Every surah, except the ninth opens with the words, 'bismillah al-rahman, al-rahim' i.e. in the name of god the merciful and the compassionate.

God is most merciful and forgiving and His love for man is more tender than the mother –bird. His forgiveness has been mentioned in Surah III

31, 27-11, and 33.73 as given below-

Say, " If ye do love god,

Follow me: God will love you

And forgive you your sins;

For God is oft giving, Most Merciful; (Surah iii-31)

" But if any have done wrong

And have thereafter substituted

God to take the place of evil,

Truly, I am Oft. Forgoing, most merciful ! (surah xxvII-II)

With the result that

God has to punish, and the hypocrites,

Men and women; and the unbelievers

Men and women, and god turns in

Mercy to the Believers; Men and women

For god is oft Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surah xxx-III-73)

God's grace and Mercy are all embracing (vi-147)

He has said " My Mercy extended to all things (viii-155)

His grace and Mercy are always First but His Justice and wrath will seize those who defy law. God grace and Mercy are always. First but His justice and wrath will seize. those who cdefy Low. Even when. The unspeakable crimes of the Cities of the plain made their destruction inevitable, God's message of Mercy to mankind was sent to Abraham and of safety to Lot. (SuraXV-51-84-C-121)

We must realise both sides of god's attributes. His mercy, grace and forgiveness are unbounded; if we reject all these, His justice and punishment will go beyond all that we can conceive. God's truth makes all things clear, and He will guard it. But His signs are not for those who mock.

Who fails to see the majesty, beauty, order and harmony blazoned in his creation and his goodness to all his creatures in heavens and on earth?

With Him are the sources of all things, and he doth freely gives his gifts in due measure.

He holds the keys of Life and Death and He will remain when all else passes away. God's truth may come in stages but it gives guidance, strength and glad tidings and shall be held fast when once received. Be not like those who get puffed up with pride in worldly good and scorn the Truth. Enjoy the good things of life, but render Thanks to God and obey His Law. Be truth in faith, and proclaim his word with

gentle, patient wisdom: for God is with those who live in self-restraint; a pure good and righteous life.

God's Mercy and Power endure for ever; Man should understand and not resist god's revelation Human wisdom and power as given to David, were only for establishing Righteousness, Human glory like Solomon's rested on slender foundation. Saba, but enjoyed her fair and prosperous state as long as she obeyed the Law of God, but perished for unrighteousness. Learn then, that the Mercy and Power, Wisdom and Justice, of God are beyond all comparison. Do right and prepare for the Final Day. (C-190 Sura XXXIV-1 to 30)

Unbounded

God's forgiveness and mercy are unbounded. Sura C205 (XXXIX-53- 75) makes it clear. Turn to God in repentance now, for the judgment it will be too late. Unity in worship and life is commended by god. Go not astray. When judgment comes, it will be a new world in perfect justice with the followers of Evil be sorted out from the Good, and the righteous will rejoice, singing praises to God with the angels on high.

In the commentary No.4323 it has been pronounced clearly that god's gifts are given to all men-to some in a greater degree than to others. But it is all done according to His wise plan, for his will is just and looks to the good of all creatures. No one should therefore be puffed up in prosperity or cast down in adversity Prosperity does not necessarily mean meriton man's part nor adversity the reverse. Thinking men, bear in mind the large plan-which is visible in all God's signs.

Mystery of Creation

God is the source of all things: all Power, Wisdom, Beauty and Truth flow from Him. It is Evil that deceives and plots in the dark. All knowledge is with god. God is free to all needs: it is we that need Him Let. us seek his love and live. His message will save us from wrong, while dark is the fate of those who reject him. Praise and glory to him, the cherisher of all. Sura No. XXXV—I to26 deals very clearly with the mystery of creation and its maintenance with various forces typified by the wings of Angels.

Praise be to God who created (out of nothing) the heavens and the earth.

Who made the Angels Messengers with wings,--Two or three, or four (pairs). He adds to Creation as he pleases: for God has power over all things (sura No. XXXV-1-26) Commentary No.1386 (P/484) makes it very clear that "His design comprehended the heavens" to emphasize the fact that the heavens were a part of his design. The Throne of authority represents symbolically many ideas e. g. (1) That God is high above all His creation; (2) that he regards and governs it, as a King does whose authority is unquestionably recognized (3) that he is not, therefore like the Gods of Greece and paganism, who were imagined to be in a world apart, careless of mankind or jealous of mankind, but on the contrary, He (4) dispose of their affairs continuously and with justice; that the authority of his prophets, ministers, and

messengers is derived from Him, and such intercession as they can make is by his will and permission.

Man's creation from Dust

God has categorically stated that he created man from dust. He created man from sounding clay, from mud molded into shape but his rank was raised above that of other creatures because god breathed into them his spirit. Jealousy and arrangancy caused the fall of Iblis, the power of Evil. Of course he created the Jinns race before man from the fire of a scorching wind. When God wanted to create man he told the angels "I am about to create man from sounding clay, from moulding clay from mud into shape. When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him My Spirit, Fall ye down in obeisance into him". So, the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together but Iblis refused. When asked the reason Iblis said, "I am not one to prostrate myself to men, whom thou did'st create from surrounding clay, from mud molded into shape." Then God said, "Thou get out from here; for thou art rejected accursed. And the curse shall be on then till the Day of Judgment." (Sura XV Section 3-2-35)

Made of man's creation

God further clarifies how He created man. It is He who has created you from dust. Then from a sperm-drop, then from a leech like clot: Then does he get you out (into the light) as a child; then lets you grow and reach your age of full strength; then let you become old. Though of you there are some who die before; and let's you reach a Term appointed in order that ye "may learn wisdom". It is the who gives Life and Death and when he decides upon an affair, He says to it, "Be and it is". This has been more clearly expressed in Sura XII-5.

Man's seven stages of life

The various stages of man's physical life are categorically stated in the Quran (1) Simple matter-dust (2) The sperm drop in the father (3) the fertilized ovum in the mother's womb (4) out in the light as a human child (5) youth and full maturity (6) decay (7) death.

In some cases the later stages are cut off "but in any case a Term appointed is reached so that the higher purpose of God's Will and Plan may be fulfilled in each given case, that man "may learn wisdom".

Creation—Not haphazard but purposive

God's creation is not haphazard. Everything goes by law, proportion and measure. Everything has appointed time, place and occasion, as also its definite limitation. Nothing happens but according to this plan, and every dead, word and thought of man has its fullest consequences except in so far as the Grace and Mercy of God intervene and that is according to law and plan. Night and Day are opposites, and yet by the alchemy of God, they can both subserve the purpose of human good because the Night can give rest while the day can promote activity. The Sun and Moon are similarly complementary.

So, in moral and spiritual affairs seeming opposites may be God's alchemy be made to subserve the purposes of god. They are but instruments: God is the cause.

Adore God and not the things which he has created. Use the things which

He has created, but do not adore them.

Faith in God

Faith (Iman) is the foundation of the Islamic society and tauheed (the belief in the existence and unity of God) is the essence of this faith and the very core of Islam. The safeguarding of this iman and of this pure tauheed is the primary objective of all the Islamic teachings and legislations. In order to keep the Muslim society purified of all traces of 'shirks' and remnants of error, a continuous war must be waged against all belief system which originate in mains ignorance of the Divine guidance and in the errors of idol worship. One of the fundamental belief which Islam Inculcates in the soul of Muslims is that this vast universe does not run itself without any control and guidance, nor does it follow the misguided, blind, conflicting, and contradictory desires of men or of any other creatures residing in it. The Quran says: "If reality had been accord with their desires, the heavens and the earth, and whosoever is therein, would have been in corruption." It further says that God's Law's are fixed and his ways of dealing with those who follow iniquity the same are the some in all ages. Our human will may falter or turn away from, its course but God's will ever follow its course and cannot be turned away by any cause whatever. (c-3938-xxxv-43)

" Believe in God, For He is Perfect
In knowledge and flower, Forgives Sin
And accept Repentance and justly
Enforces His law. Those who reject Him
Are but in deceit: His glory is sung
By the highest and purest give all
Devotion to Him alone " (e 206xi-1to 20)
Faith is ever justified for god forgives: but evil
Deeds must have evil fruits for God know and is just.
In all history evil comes to evil, the protest of faith,
In the midst of evil may ignored, but Faith is
Protected by God while evil perishes.
Say to those who reject Faith;
"Soon will ye be vanquished?
And gathered together to Hell-
An evil bed indeed (to lie on) " (sura III-12)

Faith means belief in Allah who is One, omniscient and Omnipotent Muslims believe that true existence is of God and God alone is of the sole creator of everything that exists. Man has been created as a creature with free will so that by his surrender of free will to that divine he may become worthy of God's fellowship.

Belief in the existence of Angels and Spirits

Islam believes in the existence of Angles and Spirits both of good and evil dispositions. Angels of good disposition always stands at God's call in heaven to carry out His orders. There is no distinction of sex amongst the angles as they are all spiritual. They maintain a record of man's conduct for the last judgment. On the day of Judgment. The Angel bring people from their graves to god judgment for final Besides good angles islam also believes in one fallen

angeliblis' and his companions. Iblis is in the ruler of Hell Besides angels Islam also believes in good and bad Jinns.

Problem of Evil and Suffering

Quran takes suffering in simple and direct terms as it occurs and not as a theoretical problem. God is in full control of the world and therefore suffering must be a part of his plan or purpose. It would be simply irreligious and impious to question the merit of God's plan. God's purpose behind allowing existence of evils in the following two ways which on the whole present, like Judaisam, an instrumental view of suffering (1) Suffering is a punishment for sin (2) Suffering is a trial or test for faithfulness in God. It asserts that by inflicting pain and suffering on the people god actually wants to test their endurance and the depth of their faith on Him. There are people who seem to believe in God only halfheartedly on a kind of experimental basis. If as a consequence of their faith and prayer, they are rewarded by God, they continue to have faith in Him otherwise they turn unbelievers, Such people are not regarded by God as real believers, and it is to distinguish such fence sitters from real believers that god has allowed evils to exist. As the Quran says in this connection"

There are some who serve God on an edge:
If good befalls them, than are therewith,
well-content; but if a trial comes to them,
They turn on their faces,
They lose both this world and the Hereafter: that is loss for
all to see!
(sura 22.11)

Thus evil, according to Quran, seems to be a necessary part of god's purpose. Further many evils are caused by man's disobedience to God by lying and cheating his fellowmen. Then God in His compassion has allowed him (devil) to tempt men for doing evils. These are evils to test men so that they may turn to god for getting their suffering redressed And such those who disobey are punished in this world and then again in the next, on the day of judgment. The Quran ever where teaches men to obey Allah, otherwise they will have to face the torments of Hell.

Lo ! those who disbelieve and hinders other from the way of Allah or reject Faith

And keep off (men) from the way of God
Have verils strayed far, away from the path.
Those who reject faith and do wrong, God
Will not forgive them to anyway.
Except the way of Hell, to dwell there in for ever
And this to God is easy. (swras iv 167-169)

Many evils are due to the machinations of the Devil (I blis) is a disobedient and rebellious angel but God in his mercy and compassion has allowed him to live till the day of judgment. But this I blis causes men to deflect from God as in the case of Adam and lurks in ambush for men on Gods right path and has beguiled Adam. No matter whichever be the evil which befalls many, the faithful are asked and expected to remain firm in their faith. Thus we find that misfortune and sufferings being men to God.

Idol Worship in Islam

Islam has prohibited idol worship. Muslims are not allowed to keep idols /statues in their homes By statues is meant complete solid figures which has not been disfigured or otherwise defaced. Their presence in a house is considered Allah's mercy and His pleasures. Statues in his house is similar to unbelievers, whose practice it is to keep and venerate idols in this, they their homes. The angles are repelled by this, they do not enter such a house and abandon it. It is also forbidden to the Muslims to engage in manufacturing statues, even if he makes them for non-Muslims. The Prophet (peace be on him) said-

" Among the people receiving the harshest punishment on the Day of Resurrection will be the makers of figures or in another version the immitators of Allah's creation; He also said on the day of Resurrection the maker of figure will be asked to breathe a Spirit into it and he will never be able to do so.1

The wisdom of prohibiting statues

The reasons for Prohibiting statues are

(1) to safe guard the belief in the neness of God And to be far removed from the practices of idolators , who fashion statues and idols with their own hands and them sanctify them, standing before them in adoration.

(2) Another reason for this Prohibition concerns the statues, the sculptor himself. Sculptors tend to feel pride in their work as if they had created something out of nothing or had given life to clay or stone. A sculptor over whelmed with pride and exhilaration completed a figure after great deal of labor. It was so perfect and so beautiful that he stood before it, lost in admiration of its fine lines and features and said it thrice "Speak/Speak and then fell down and then fell down. What happened to Him later was not indicated in the Quran. That is why the Noble Messenger (peace be on him) said "Those who make will be chastised on the Day of Resurrection will be told

Put life into what you have created" And in the hadith Quadsī, Allah Ta'la says 'Who does greater wrong that he desires to create the life of what I cerate ? Let them create an anatom! let them create barley!

1. Report by Al Bhukhari – Bulehari and others – halal in Islam page 1 01

(3) Those who engage in this art stop at nothing, producing statues of mud or erotic figures of the deities and saints of other religions, aequise inregaras. A Muslim is not Permitted to aequise inregrads to such praetises.

(4) Finally, statues have been and still are, symbols of aristocratic and luxurious living. People in high places fill their palaces, halls and chambers with statues fabricated of many materials, It is not surprising that a religion which declares war on luxury in all its manifestations should prohibit the Muslims from having statues at home.

Five Pillars of Islam

The most important factor in giving Islam its distinctive character is the rigorous discipline of daily life that it prescribes for its followers. Consequently much of Islamic discipline consists of teaching its people definite ways of sincere and devotion of a prayer to God. It consists in the following five duties known as the "Five pillars of Islam" (i) Repetition of faith in the absolute oneness of Allah- As a strict monotheistic religion, Islam perceives it to be the basic duty of every Muslim that before every prayer he should repeat the following words-" La illah ilah Hahu. Muhammed resula ' ilah " (There is no god but Allah and Muhammed is his Prophet) This repetition is intended not merely as a recital of words quite unmindfully but as a reaffirmation of the whole hearted conviction that Allah is the only supreme God and that this important message has been brought to the people of the world by the revered Muhammad.

(2) Daily prayer-I repeat here, the Introduction to surah (Fatiha) "The opening chapter " of Seven Verses which is rightly called the essence of the Book-

" It teaches us the perfect Prayer.

For if can Pray alright, it means
That we have some knowledge of God
And His attributes, of His relation
To us and His creation, which includes
ourselves; that we glimpse the source
From which we come and that final goal
Which is our spiritual destiny

Under gods true judgment: Then we offer ourselves to God and seek his light (e42) Prayer is the heart of Religion and Faith For how shall we pray ? What words shall convey the yearnings of our miserable ignorant hearts. To the knower of All Is it worthy of Him or of our spiritual nature to ask for vanities, or even for such physical needs As our daily bread. The Inspired one taught us a Prayer that sums up our Faith, our home, and. our aspiration in things that matter. We praise Him for His cherishing care; We call to mind the Realities, seen and unseen; We offer Him worship and ask for His guidance; And we know the straight from the crooked path. By the light of His grace that illumines the righteous ! (c-43) 1

The observance of set prayers five times a day-at day break, at noon, at, mid-afternoon, at sunset and at early night-is another impotent pillar of Islam.

Every Muslim-is expected to take as his basic duty praying to god unfliningly five times a day at the appointed hours These prayers follow a set of devotional pastures. According to A. c. Bouquet the innate psychological skill with which these devotional postures are planned is " remarkable, and the interest parallel is to be found in the system of yoga postures in India2 "In prayer 2-A. C. Bonguet-'Comparative Religion' p/281 a Muslim has to face toward Mecca (whether private or in a mosque) here.

Each complete set of prayer is called a hakah and consists of eight separate acts of devotion. These five postures correspond to the Yogic asans though their purposes are quite different The first prayer consists of two kneeling.

The second and third prayer have four kneeling and the early evening prayer has three kneeling.

1-These are the exact words as given in the Quran of c42 and 43 (in translation)-The holy Quran' By A. Yusuf Ali (Text, Translation and commentary-11)

2-A. C. Bouquet-'Comparative Religion' page 281.

And the last one consist of four kneeling. Then after various devotional postures, the prayer is complete by uttering once again the creed 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is In addition to private Prayers, a special virtue is attached to collective prayers which are said each and Friday and enlarge gathering at the time of Eid al-fitr and eid al-adha. This a fact of life that participating in group mind in a congregation, the mental and spiritual powers of each participant are heightened. So that creative powers of the worshippers get additional impetus in pursuit of a virtuous life.

(3) Observance of Ramadan Fast-

Most of the living religions prescribe the keeping of fast for controlling bodily desires and mental fickleness. Fasting is to be observed by a Muslim during the whole month of Ramadan i. e. the ninth month for every lunar year. This consists in refraining from any kind of food or drink between sunrise and sunset. Eating is allowed in night But taking wine and practicing such other impurities are forbidden for all times during the months. However children, he sick and the travelers are made exception. It is believed that this fasting remits all kinds of sins committed during the whole year. Do you know what does fasting teaches us as embodied in the Quran ?

(1) Fasting teaches us self-discipline; one who can endure the demands will have less difficulty controlling the demands of appetites at other times

(2) It underscores the creature's dependence on God.

(3) It calls back to one's frailty and dependence.

(4) Human beings are as frail as rose petals; nevertheless they assume airs and pretensions.

(5) It sensitizes compassion. only those who have been hungry know what hunger means. 1 People who have fasted for 29 days within the year will be apt by someone who is hungry. A Muslim who keeps fast for the whole month not only gains his physical fitness, but also gains much spirituality. in the pursuit of his daily life.

In Sure (section 23) ii-183-189 the details of fasting as enumerated above has been beautifully described which I have not reproduced.

1. Huston Smith – "The world Religion. page 247" (4f) Alms-giving / Zakat Giving alms to the poor and the needy is another essential duty of all the Muslims. It was recommended by Muhammad from the very beginning as a mark of piety and liberality towards the poor, but later on took the form of a regular religious tax called Zakat for the support of the poor and other state purposes. According to Zakat a Muslim has to pay 2.5 to 5 % of his income for the poor and needy. Most of the Arabs were shepherds so they could pay their Zakat in terms of sheep and cattle. Sometimes 1/10 the and sometimes 1/20 the of one's land

income is required to be gifted of greater religious merit. As regards the merit of the gifts, it has been related to the Quran that a man served God for seventy years and then committed a sin which cancelled the merit of his entire service. Afterwards, he gave a loaf to the poor man and gave him back the merit of his entire service.

(5) Hajj or Pilgrimage in Mecca.

Hajj means pilgrimage to Mecca. Whilst performing Hajj, a Muslim temporarily suspends all his worldly activities. He has to overcome all bad habits and has not to decorate himself. He has to put on very simple dress prescribed and is supposed to have all his bodily desires under control and has not to think of marriage. The pilgrims prescribed dress is: two seamless white garments, a waist-wrapper from navel to knee and a shawl covering the left –shoulder, and tied under the right. Sandals may be used, but not the shoes. Rituals amongst others, consist in walking or running seven times round the Kabba kissing the Black stone each time; casting stones at three pillars at Mina; . sacrifice of a sheep, goat or camel, must be given to the poor. Ten days are occupied with various such performances and prayers and when all are done, the pilgrim puts off the sacred robe (Ihram) and wears his normal dress. The reward for taking the pilgrimage is a secured place in paradise.

Although Hajj can be undertaken at any time but it is especially recommended during the twelfth months of the Islamic calendar to perform Hajj known as Dhu – al-Hijjah. It is not necessary for every Muslims to perform Hajj. But a Muslim who has fulfilled all his earthly obligations and without incurring any injury to his health or the members of his family he should perform Hajj. Before starting for the pilgrimage an intending pilgrim should ask God the forgiveness of his sins, should say his prayers and uttering Bismillah should get ready for the pilgrimage. By the performance of Hajj at Mecca, the universal brotherhood of Muslims is most probably demonstrated. This also exemplifies Islamic equality of the rich and the poor, of the black and white, irrespective of any race. Hence, there can be no caste in Islam. The Day of Judgment / Final Destiny and Life after death / Hell and Heaven

The Quran indicates that the Arabs, prior to the coming of Muhammad, did not believe in an after-life. The Quran, however introduced doctrine of resurrection and contains clear descriptions of the Day of judgment, the rising of the dead from their graves and God's assigning to the souls their shares either in heaven or hell according to their deeds in the earthly lives. Islam believes that man's life does not come to an end with his physical death. Though his physical body is consumed by the earth in the grave yet one aspect of his being the spiritual aspect, remains uncorrupted till the last day when the world comes to its final end. In the intermediary period, the soul rests in a place called Al-Berzakh. When exactly this final day of world's doom will come is known to nobody except God, but whenever it actually comes it will be announced by the blow of a trumpet. This day is called the Day of Judgment. On this day all the dead rise from their graves. Their souls reunite with their bodies and are brought before the Allah by His Angels. Those whose good deeds balance over the bad ones are rewarded by God by having a place in the heaven and those

whose evil deeds over balance the good ones are eventually damned to hell. The view that hell is final dwelling place of the damned after the last judgment is held by Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Jewish concept of Gehenna as an infernal region of punishment for the wicked was the basis for the Christian version of hell as the fiery domain of Satan and his evil angels and a place of punishment for those who die repenting of their sins. In Hinduism hell is only a stage in their career the soul as it passes through the phases of reincarnation. The schools of Buddhism having various conceptions of hell usually entailing some kind of punishment or purgatory. In Jainism hell is a purgatory in which sinners are tormented by demons until the evil of their lives has been exhausted.

Islam starts with the creation of man and this creation of man culminates on the day of judgment. Those who are judged as the faithful and obedient, will be rewarded by Allah with a life in Heaven with an unending happiness. Sura x vii-9 says "To the Believers who work deeds of righteousness they shall have a magnificent reward. The unfortunate evil doers and disbelievers will be hurled into hell –fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth " If you do good ye do good for your own souls and do evils it is for them (in like manner) Again in Surah 17.8 it is said that for the believers there are seven Heavens which God has created for them and for the disbelievers God has appointed hell. Q-Sura xvii-8 "we have made Hell for those who reject All Faith-The seven lands of heaven are given below-

1-Jannat-al-Adan (This is the eternal place) 2. Jannat al-Firdaws (Firdaws refers to a Garden with all kinds of plants) 3. Jannat-an-Naim 4. Jannat-ul-Mawa 5. Darul khuld.6. Darul Maqaam 7. Dar-us Salam. The first heaven is the lowest and the seventh is the highest. Allah created seven Heavens which is not to be confused with Paradise in Islam. Paradise and Heaven are not used interchangeably as they commonly are. They are different. The seven heavens are above each other. The –lowest Heaven is the universe. Allah says that he adorned the lowest heaven with stars. The rest of the heavens are different from our universe., The seventh highest heaven contains Bait-al-ma'moor, the frequented house. Everyday 70, 000 angels visit this place and they never come back. All 93 billion light years of the observable universe and what is beyond this is the lowest heaven I.

1. **Belief**-Likewise there are seven gates of hells created by the gods as places of punishment and torment for sinners who do not repent for their sins. And each is deeper than the last. The condemned can burn in seven Hells, which are believed to be hot instead of frozen. Some of the seven halls have black pits. The Lord of the Seven Hells practices dark arts and commands demons: (Q.15.43.44.)

Dr. S. M. Iqbal has mentioned three important things about the final destiny of man. First man was created at a certain point of time and before that he had no existence of his own. Hence man's soul is not eternal. Contrary to what has been taught in the Gita. Secondly, man remains in state of suspended animation till time of resurrection, The Quran also states ' that We may transfigure you and make you what ye know not. ' (surah 56-59) Hence the state of man after

death has not been disclosed to man. Lastly, each man is accountable for his deeds on the day of reckoning.

2. Conclusion

Thus Islam is very clear in its objective that the non-believers in Allah His faith has to undergo the pangs of suffering in hell-fire and the believers would be ascended to heaven.

1. Mohammad Toure – Practicing and knowledge Muslim.