

Our Religion

Introduction

Islam is a way of life for mankind; it is the sole means for the wellbeing and prosperity of mankind in this world, for the appropriate interaction with fellow human beings and with the environment, for the recognition and understanding of the creator, and for the preparation for the eternal hereafter.

Islam facilitates the grounds for sound politics, economy, justice, virtue, cultural and social order, all of which contribute and ensure mankind's wellbeing and prosperity. This is in addition to the added dimension of preparing for the hereafter which, in turn, is not without influence on the worldly material life here. Islam is a comprehensive system that safeguards mankind's success and advance in both worlds. Editors.

- ❖ Religion is a way of life.
- ❖ Falsehood comes in different forms and guises but the truth is always one.
- ❖ As long as the different prophets are dispatched by the one deity, then the path of all is one.
- ❖ Unlike the sick, the physically fit lead a natural and active life. In the same way, religion would lack purpose and vitality if its role is distanced from day to day life. Almighty Allah directed His prophets to [uphold the religion]¹ as a dynamic force in life.

¹ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 42:13.

- ❖ Our duty is to grasp the teachings of Islam, practice them, and teach them to others, irrespective of one being a man or a woman, a husband or a wife, offspring or parents, teachers or pupils, buyers or sellers, landlords or tenants, neighbours or relatives – we must practice the teachings of Islam under all circumstances and in all aspects of life.

- ❖ Performing the daily obligatory prayers in ignorance [of the prayers’ rulings] often constitutes a fault; because if the ignorant does not perform the obligatory prayers that would be a fault, and if he performs it in a wrong way, that would also be a fault. The fault is the same whether it is in terms of negligence and failure (*taqseer*) or mere ignorance (*quosoor*).¹

- ❖ If the individual who is ignorant of his religious duties, does not enjoin good and prohibit evil – while it is obligatory for him to do so – he would be committing a fault. Even if he were to do so, in all likelihood his “enjoining to good and prohibiting of evil” would be a fault, because he lacks the knowledge of how, when and in what circumstances he should do so. For example, he may prescribe that which is *makrooh* (i.e. discouraged) as forbidden, or that which is *mostahab* (i.e. recommended) as obligatory; thus advocating something contrary to what Allah has revealed.

- ❖ The *qasir* (ignorant), i.e. the one who is not aware of his obligations, is not obliged to anything. This is because one of the fundamental principles of Islam is justice, and Almighty Allah is just, and as part of His justice He does not punish the *qasir*. Thus one who is born in a land or at time or in circumstances which render him *qasir* would not be subject to punishment

¹ In other words, one is obliged to acquire knowledge, at least to the extent of knowing his duties and obligations, and the way to perform and fulfil them.

- ❖ It is imperative that alongside one's studies and education, one should learn [the rulings of Islam on] the *halal* and *haram* [the obligatory, permissible and prohibited], the Fundamentals of the Religion (*osool al- deen*),¹ and the Islamic Ethics and Etiquettes (*akhlaq & adab*).
- ❖ We must seize every opportunity and waste no time – not even one minute of our lives – to seek knowledge. For example, we should carry with us the handbook of Islamic Law (i.e. *al-risalah al-amaliyyah*) which we read meticulously during our youth. It is possible that we do not remember many of its content, or there are issues that we did not pay attention to. Therefore, let each one of us always carry the handbook, so that if one gets an opportunity – even if it were five minutes – one would be able to read even one page of it. If one adopts this practice, one would discover some issues that one might have thought one knew.
- ❖ From now on, let's begin learning and observing the Laws of Allah, and learn the *Shari'a* rulings. Even those that are not obligatory for us to learn, we should also learn in order to preserve and disseminate them. If we do this, our station in Allah's sight would be most esteemed, because in this way we have venerated Allah's Laws.
- ❖ Let each one of us take a copy of the *risalah al-amaliyyah*, and resolve to learn and memorize a number of the rulings, concerning various

¹The fundamental principles of the religion are five; the principle of *tauheed* or the indivisible oneness of Allah, the divine justice, the prophet hood of Prophet Muhammad, the *imamate* or leadership of the divinely-appointed twelve Imams, and the resurrection on the day of judgment.

Inspirational Quotes

- ❖ The Acts of Worship that we perform for the sake of the Almighty should not take the form of soulless cold rituals. Rather it is imperative that we engage with them, and through them, we should be aware that we stand before Almighty Allah, and we should relate with Him.
- ❖ Those who perform the acts of worship as a habit and a ritual exercise – without paying attention and presence to Allah – will not reap any benefit from them; neither in this world nor in the hereafter. Rather, this conduct of theirs would have negative consequences for them, as mentioned in some hadith narratives.
- ❖ From now on, we should gradually endeavor to give some spiritual substance to our acts of worship, by beginning to pay attention to their meanings.
- ❖ Just as knowledge, understanding, and cognition (i.e. *ma‘rifah*) about Allah is a fundamental criterion of faith (*iman*), this would not be enough if it is not accompanied by *ma‘rifah* about the Prophet. Similarly, cognition about the Prophet alone would not be enough without recognition of the Imam. In other words, *ma‘rifah* about Allah and the Prophet would not be beneficial without *ma‘rifah* about the

Imam; rather, the former two would not really be considered *ma'rifah* Without the latter.¹

- ❖ Those who died during the pre-Islamic era of ignorance would be considered to have died as disbelievers, polytheists or atheists, so too are those who die without knowing the Imam of their time. In other words, they too would be considered to have died as disbelievers, polytheists or atheists.
- ❖ A believer always takes the side of Allah whenever there is a conflict between [the desire of] the self and [the command of] Allah.
- ❖ A believer may amass great wealth and become a millionaire, but as soon as he realises that this wealth will lead him to Hell and to Allah's wrath, he would relinquish and turn away from it with ease, and the same goes for women, children, and other worldly pleasures.

¹ This is in reference to a body of hadith which states that were it not for the *ma'soom* Imams, people would not have been able to acquire true knowledge understanding and cognition about the Almighty, and that the Imams are the perfect guides to the Almighty. See for example, al-Kafi, vol.1 p145, al-Kafi, vol.4 p575, Bihar, vol.23 p102, Sadouq's *al-tawheed*, p152, Bihar, vol.26 p260, (it is by us that Allah is recognized). See *al-ziyarah al-jami'ah*. See also Imam Husayn's *ziyarah*#1 in *mafateeh al-jinan*, p439, and Supplication at the Time of Occultation, p588 of *mafateeh al-jinan*, which states:

O Allah, make me have knowledge understanding and cognition (*ma'rifah*) about Yourself, because if You do not make me recognize You, I will not recognize Your Messenger.

O Allah, make me recognize Your Messenger, because if You do not make me recognize Your Messenger, I will not recognize Your Proof and Authority (i.e. the divinely appointed *ma'soom* Imam).

O Allah, make me recognize Your Proof and Authority, because if You do not make me recognize Your Proof and Authority (*hujjah*), I will stray off my religion.

- ❖ Devotion to Allah is the single most important issue.
- ❖ The point that should force you to focus in your prayers, to prevent you from eating *haram*, looking at *haram*, listening to *haram*, uttering *haram*, wronging people or hurting them, which the Holy Qur'an has emphasized upon, is [that ye rise up for Allah's sake].¹This is a pivotal point which is imperative for us to pay attention to more than any other *mostahab* deed or conduct, because it encompasses all virtues.
- ❖ In numerous instances in the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah has stated that He has sent prophets to various nations to convey His messages and rulings to them, but people killed the prophets, or ridiculed them, or tortured them. This means Almighty Allah offered His prophets, as well as the *ma'soom* Imams,² peace be upon them all, as sacrifices in the cause of His rulings and His messages to the nations.
- ❖ The rulings of Allah are manifested in His *halal* and *haram*, in His Signs and Laws, in the Holy Qur'an and the credible hadith, in the *Sharia* rulings that are presented in the *al-risalah al-amaliyyah* (Islamic Law handbook), which scholars have worked tirelessly to deduce from the Holy Qur'an and the teachings of the *ma'soomeen*, peace be upon them all.
- ❖ The greatest merit that we can acquire in the sight of Almighty Allah is directly proportional to the effort we make to defend the Laws of Allah,

¹ The Holy Qur'an, (34):46.

² The *ma'soom* Imams are Prophet Muhammad's divinely-appointed twelve infallible successors. Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Lady Fatima al-Zahra', and the divinely appointed twelve successors are referred to as the fourteen *ma'soom* (or *ma'soomeen* (plural)).

and to apply and practice them in our day to day lives. It is also proportional to the effort we make to observe and preserve them, in a bid to pass them on to the next generations.

- ❖ Almighty Allah has no regard for those who have no respect for His Laws. To Him, His Laws are the most treasured.
- ❖ To Almighty Allah, glorified be He, His Laws are of utmost eminence and beyond comparison.
- ❖ The Laws of Allah are the most important in the sight of Almighty Allah.
- ❖ Firstly, let's begin by revering Allah's Laws, and secondly, let's implement those laws in our daily lives, and endeavor to reduce our failure to adhere to them.
- ❖ It is true that the beneficence of Almighty Allah is immense and His grace is universal, and embraces both the believers and the disbelievers in His sustenance and kindness in this world. This, however, does not mean that He is showing respect for the disbelievers. Rather, this is like a banquet one invites the public to. It is likely that it would be attended by people one does not wish to see, but one would not prevent them because the invitation is public, and being there does not constitute respect for them.
- ❖ From now on, let's make a pledge with our Lord – and He witnesses what we say, hear, think, and resolve – to defend Allah's Laws; by promoting virtue and prohibiting vice, at home, with friends, neighbors, and strangers, to the extent we can. To realize this, we are

not required to brandish swords and battle, rather let our weapon be the wise word that we utter. If it was heeded, good, otherwise we would have fulfilled our responsibility and discharged our obligation.

- ❖ The person who orders to have the hand of a thief cut off at the wrist would have committed a greater crime in the sight of Allah than the thief himself. This is because the thief has, on individual basis, defied a single Sharia law, but the one who executes a self-prescribed law and attributes it to Allah would have committed a very grave sin, compared to which the act of stealing itself is insignificant.¹
- ❖ In the effort to implement the teachings of Islam we should not be selective. Rather, our effort should cover all aspects of Islam and its teachings. It is not permissible to implement the Islamic penal code, for example, and ignore the teachings of Islam in the fields of culture, economics, politics, society, and suchlike.
- ❖ Some scholars are of the opinion that it is not permissible to apply the penal codes in Islam as long as the political and economic elements of its teachings are not adhered to.²

¹The Islamic penal code concerning theft, as well as great many other offences, may only be executed when there is a true Islamic government in place; the Laws of Allah implemented, all freedoms, opportunities, and facilities are available to the masses. See for example *The Islamic System of Government*, by the late grand ayatollah Muhammad Shirazi, in which he has cited more than forty preconditions all of which should be met simultaneously before such a code may be executed. If it were to come to that, therefore, only the fingertips of one hand would be cut and not the entire palm of the hand. The palms of the hands are two of the seven places of prostration required for praying, and the Almighty's instructions on this are clear: [And the places of worship are for Allah: So invoke not any one along with Allah]. 72:18.

²One of those scholars is the eminent jurist and distinguished writer the late Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Shirazi, who authored more than 1,100 books

- ❖ It is unfortunate that some think that a government is defined as Islamic only if it implements the Sharia penal code; whereas that [i.e. penal code] constitutes a negligible portion of Islamic Law. If Islamic Law is partially or selectively implemented, a distorted image will be presented of Islam.
- ❖ Almighty Allah considers changing or distorting His Laws to be the gravest crime, and all other sins and crimes are considered minor in comparison.
- ❖ One of the cardinal sins is for an individual to claim “this is *halal* and this is *haram*” – while ignorant about the teachings or falsely attributing them to Allah.
- ❖ If we claim something or some action to be *haram* or *halal* contrary to Allah’s laws, that would go against Allah’s revelation, and [one of the consequences of the gravity of] such conduct would be to deprive us of Allah’s blessings such as rain and earth’s treasures. The same goes for the *makrooh*, *mostahab*, and *wajib* aspects.
- ❖ When an individual asks you whether a particular thing is *halal* or *haram*, do not respond to him according to your own opinion. Ask a *mojtahid* for the answer before you reply to him. This is because Almighty Allah has not left His Laws in my hand or yours; rather He has put them in the hands of His prophet and has declared: [he does not speak of desire] i.e. he does not say something according to his own

on the teachings of Islam ranging from basic to specialized works for the Islamic seminary (*hawzah*) including the famous *fiqh* series which is in 160 volumes.

Desire or opinion, but rather [it is a revelation that is revealed] to him by the Almighty.¹

- ❖ If one is asked a question about a certain matter of which one is not an expert, then it is imperative for one to refer the enquirer to a fully qualified *mojtahid*, or seek the answer from a *mojtahid* and convey it to the enquirer. One does not have the authority or the right – not even the *mojtahid's* representative – to respond to the enquirer according to one's own opinion; rather one must convey the opinion of a *mojtahid*, who is the ultimate authority. It is worth noting the considerable time and effort *mojtahids* spend to arrive at appropriate rulings according to the laws of Almighty Allah. It is also worth noting that sometimes they do not arrive at conclusive rulings and thus take the side of precaution (*ihtiyat*) and refrain from issuing a verdict (*fatwa*).
- ❖ It is only the ignorant who issues verdicts arbitrarily. But the learned and the specialist is the one who appreciates the sanctity of these rulings, does not underrate Allah's laws and does not treat them arbitrarily, because he recognizes their greatness, and that he would be held to account before Almighty Allah.
- ❖ If the Laws of Allah were in the hands of every one to issue verdicts on according to one's desires and opinions, the Islam that we have today before us would have vanished, and after fourteen hundred years we would have been left with something completely different.
- ❖ There is no deficiency in Allah's religion; thus when Almighty Allah promises happiness to its true followers, the true Muslim would no doubt attain happiness; contrary to other schools of thoughts that

¹ The Qur'anic verses cited are 3&4 of surah#53 (The Star)

promise happiness but do not honor their promise and sooner or later their inability would be exposed.

- ❖ The devout believer in Allah would be grasping the most trustworthy handhold that will never break.¹ Conversely, those who adhere to *taghut* (all false deities) and follow or adopt principles which deviate from true Islam would be clinging to a wavering handhold and would sooner or later come to realize their mistake.
- ❖ Islam uproots all forms of difficulties and diseases, while other entities barely try to curtail them, with little success.
- ❖ Islam eradicates poverty and anxiety for mankind, while other civilizations attempt to reduce them but they do not succeed.
- ❖ Islam is not mere theories, but rather principles that are implementable in practice. Islam's teachings were indeed implemented during the Islamic Era and produced splendid results.
- ❖ All trials and tribulations suffered by mankind are consequences of his own actions and conducts, since Allah does not wish any evil or suffering for anyone.²

¹ In reference to the Qur'anic verse 2:256.

² With the natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, hurricanes and volcano eruptions, mankind also has the intellectual ability and therefore the wherewithal to address the dangers or harms of the elements. In the same way that man is expected to manage against the elements, and various climate conditions such as hot or cold weather, or diseases and viruses, he is able to manage other forces of nature such as quakes, by designing and constructing

Quake-proof buildings. The same goes for other natural phenomena.

Inspirational Quotes

- ❖ Whenever you suffer an affliction look for the cause, because Allah is just and does not hurt anyone, rather He is the epitome of goodness and kindness.
- ❖ Those who do not refrain from committing sin or evil, will, sooner or later, harvest the ill effect of such evils.
- ❖ A person who does not care about committing sin or evil should not be fooled by his arrogance. The Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al- Mo' mineen*),¹ Imam Ali,² peace be upon him, said, “If you see your Lord continually blessing you with His favors while you are disobeying Him, be warned.” Do you know why? This means that Almighty Allah has postponed his punishment to the Hereafter. And there lies the catastrophe!! Because this world would end one day, and one would be relieved from it, but there is no relief from punishment in the Hereafter.
- ❖ [One should be sincere in every aspect of his endeavors.] But the allure of display of that sincerity should not be the motive for us in our effort and exertion; rather our effort should be purely for Allah alone.
- ❖ Doing noble deeds and harboring noble intentions in pursuit of reward will be futile if they are not solely and purely for Allah.

¹ On specific divine instructions, the title *amir al-mo' mineen* or the Commander of the Faithful was exclusively granted to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

² Imam Ali is the first of the twelve divinely-appointed Imams or leaders to succeed the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family.

- ❖ One should always ask Allah's help in making the sole motive behind one's deeds to be Allah's favor and approval.
- ❖ Almighty Allah has not created Paradise in order to make favors and give it to whomever and remind people about His generosity. Rather, He created it for the sincere and devout faithful.
- ❖ Besides being a book of knowledge and culture, laws and rights, etiquette and manners, politics and economics, the Holy Qur'an is Heaven's eternal miracle; a book which has deep moral impact and profound spiritual influence.
- ❖ The Inimitable Qur'an, this eternal and timeless book of Heaven, brings happiness and prosperity to mankind, infuses goodness and blessing universally to all, and spreads peace and tranquility throughout the world.
- ❖ [In an Islamic country,] no one has the right to legislate something as being permissible or prohibited [in contradiction to Sharia law]; rather one only has the right to implement these divine laws.¹

¹ For example, in an Islamic country's parliament, members of parliament do not have the right to pass a law allowing the government to levy Sales Tax (also known as Value Added Tax (VAT)) or Excise duty, or Inheritance tax, because these taxes are prohibited in Islam and they may not be made permissible. Another example, is that all the disused land in the country "belongs to Allah and whoever develops it" as declared by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, and it's therefore free- for-all. Thus no one in parliament or elsewhere has the right to declare the land of the country as "Crown Estate" or "Public Estate" or "government owned", something which is done in various Muslim countries today. Another example is that of alcohol. The production, promotion, sale and

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Islam has blended knowledge with faith, and culture with manners and ethics.

- ❖ The essence of the teachings and principles of Islam as a religion is that of human morality and the reality of the sublime social etiquettes; they are inseparable – one essence for one meaning. Thus anything that moral principles advocate, Islam has commanded, and anything that sublime etiquettes have urged, Islam has called for. In other words, all the laws of Islam and its teachings – ranging from acts of worship to those on dealings and transactions, and others – are built on sublime moral fundamentals, and equable ethical bases. Thus Islam has ordered the obligatory, forbade the prohibited, warned against the unethical, and called for the virtues and etiquettes.
- ❖ It is obvious that Islam’s teachings and laws are in concert with human nature. Equally, they are compatible with the human soul and spiritual values, and mankind’s earthly and material aspirations at the highest standards of refined manners.
- ❖ If one practices Islam in the way it used to be in the early days of the religion within one’s family, then one’s neighbors, relatives and family friends will gradually start to believe in the values of Islam’s divine laws and teachings. Thus, if they were non-believers they would embrace Islam; if they harbored no love for Ahl al-Bayt,¹ peace be

Consumption of alcohol is forbidden under Islamic law, and therefore no one in the Islamic country’s parliament or government has the right to make legal or permissible any of the above mentioned categories concerning alcohol.

¹ Ahl al-Bayt literally means people of the house (of the Prophet). This is in reference to Lady Fatima al-Zahra’, her father Prophet Muhammad, her husband, Imam Ali, and her sons, Hasan and Husayn, as well as Husayn’s nine *ma’soom* descendants. They are also referred to as the fourteen *ma’soom* or infallible. In this respect, Allah Almighty has revealed about them, [Indeed

upon them, they would start to love them; and if they were non-practicing, they would be observing the teachings of Islam. This is because the teachings of Islam, its laws and rules are grand and magnificent.

- ❖ Islam does not concern the hereafter only ... rather Islam means living happily in this world too. Islam means peace and security, sound economy, sound politics, vice-free society, and it means everything that is good and proper.
- ❖ There are certain attributes that are exclusive to Almighty Allah. No creature may be characterized by them, because they belong to the Holy Essence of Allah and no-one else.¹
- ❖ It is not admissible to attribute even one of Almighty Allah's *exclusive* characteristics to the *ma'soom* Imams, peace be upon them.

Allah wills to repel all impurity from you, O People of the House, and purify you a thorough purification.] 33:33 Imam Ali, and his sons Imams Hasan and Husayn, along with Imam Husayn's nine *ma'soom* descendants are the twelve Imams who have been appointed by Prophet Muhammad, on divine instructions, to succeed him and lead humanity after him. The first of the *ma'soom* Imams is Imam Ali, and the twelfth is Imam Mahdi who is hidden from view and will reappear to fill the earth with justice after it is filled with tyranny and injustice. Prophet Muhammad used to say of the Ahl al-Bayt, "The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is that of Noah's Ark; whoever boards it is saved, and whoever abandons it drowns." Towards the end of his blessed life, the Prophet said, "I leave behind with ye two momentous entities – Allah's Book and my kin the Ahl al-Bayt – as long as ye adhere to them both ye would never go astray after me."

¹ Allah is the most generous. Some people might be generous to an extent, but no comparison, thus generosity is not an exclusive attribute of Allah. However, Allah is the *creator* and no creature shares Allah in this exclusive attribute whatsoever.

- ❖ Excessive glorification or undue exaggeration is not the way to learn about the *ma'soom* Imam, peace be upon him.
- ❖ Educate the youth about the quality of *'esmah* (infallibility), the issue of knowledge of the unseen (*ghayb*), and all other indisputable and irrefutable aspects related to the qualities of the *ma'soom* (infallible) Imams, peace be upon them.
- ❖ Those who adopt the approach of excessively glorifying the *ma'soom* Imams beyond their real standing bestowed upon them by Almighty Allah may run the risk of being cursed by the *ma'soom* Imam or by Imam al-Hujjah, may Allah hasten his reappearance.
- ❖ The soundness of one's understanding and practice of religion is measured by the depth of one's understanding of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and the degree to which one adheres to and practices those teachings.
- ❖ Attaining soundness in [one's] religion is a matter of individual determination and achievement through endeavor and choice.
- ❖ Religion is a way of life, and it may be categorized in two aspects. The aspects of religion which concerns belief are called "the roots of religion" (*osool al-deen*); i.e. the core, underlying doctrinal principles of Islam such as monotheism and resurrection. The aspects of religion which concerns its practice are called "the branches of religion" (*foroo' al-deen*); i.e. the obligatory (*wajib*) duties such as the daily prayers and fasting, and the prohibited (*haram*) such as backbiting and slander, the recommended (*mostahab*), the discouraged (*makrooh*), as well as the moral conducts and the etiquettes.

- ❖ Our predecessors did an admirable job as guardians by preserving the religion for future generations and handing it over to us before passing away. We, in turn, have a duty to guard and preserve the religion that has been handed over to us in its best manner for future generations.
- ❖ Fundamentally, absolute submission and obedience should be solely to Almighty Allah.
- ❖ If the world was to realize the triad of “a sound economy, fair politics, and virtuous morality”, appreciate its significance, and discern its boundaries that Islam has clearly defined, millions would rush to embrace the religion. This would be similar to what happened in the holy city of Medina when Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, presented Islam in its proper form without any shortfalls, and disbelievers and atheists willingly and eagerly embraced Islam.
- ❖ Islam has the kind of laws the like of which, altogether, there is none in history, nor is there anything like it today. In most countries of the world there is no such law as “no inheritance tax”, no such law as “the government guarantees all the debts of the deceased”, and there is no law that “the government guarantees *all the needs* of families that have no breadwinner or income”.¹
- ❖ The Holy Qur’an is a covenant between two parties; namely Almighty Allah and mankind.

¹ There is also the unique notion in Islam that states, as given by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his holy family, “The land belongs to Allah and whoever develops it”, so we do not have things like Crown Estate, government estate, or suchlike.

- ❖ Almighty Allah has honored mankind by elevating him to a lofty position; in that He made him a party to a covenant with Him. The instrument for this covenant – the Holy Qur'an – attends to mankind's entire needs in this world, be it societal, political, economic, familial, educational, psychological, and all others.
- ❖ Islam is a complete intellectual and practical system.