

Preface

Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem

In the name of Allaah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Nahmadul laahal 'aliy yal 'adhim, wa nus'al-lil 'alaa rasuulihil-karim.

(We praise Allaah, the Sublime, the Majestic, and pray for Allaah's Blessings on His noble Messenger.)

The eighteen essays in this booklet first appeared as a series of bi-monthly leaflets published over the years 1415 to 1417 A.H. (June 1994 to May 1997 C.E.).

The series was started with the objective of providing reading matter in Islam for children. In order to reach the target group the leaflets were distributed directly to all Muslim Government-assisted schools and also to the majority of maktabas in the country. Five thousand (5000) copies of each issue were published and distributed courtesy the Tackveeyatul Islamic Association of Trinidad and Tobago Inc.

It was initially intended that six publications would be made over a period of the Islamic year 1415 A.H. (June 1994 to May 1995 C.E.). However, in view of the very positive response from children, parents and teachers, this was extended first for a second year and then for a third. The essays in this booklet contain the eighteen published over the three-year period referred to above.

I must record the assistance given to me by the two persons (who wish to remain unnamed) who reviewed each of the eighteen essays in draft form and made valuable suggestions for their improvement. May *Allaah Ta'ala* grant them both goodly rewards in this world and in the Hereafter.

Finally, I thank *Allaah Subhaanuhu wa Ta'ala* for instilling in me the desire to produce these essays, and for giving me the knowledge, guidance, health and ability to write them. I pray that they contribute in some small measure towards a better understanding of Islam and a deepening of the Faith by those who read them, *Inshaa Allaah*.

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Glossary

<i>A.H.</i>	- After Hijrah (See Hijrah below)
<i>Ahadith</i>	- (sing. <i>Hadith</i>) Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)
<i>A.S.</i>	- ‘ <i>Alaihis Salaam</i> (Peace be upon him)
<i>C.E.</i>	- Christian Era
<i>Halaal</i>	- Lawful
<i>Haraam</i>	- Unlawful
<i>Hijrah</i>	- The migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) from Makkah to Madinah. The Muslim calendar commences from that time.
<i>Imaan</i>	- Belief, faith
<i>Imaam</i>	- The person who leads the congregational prayer.
<i>Khaliifaa’</i>	- (pl. <i>Khulafaa’</i>) Initially, the title given to the successors to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). Eventually, the word took on the meaning of the Head of State of a Muslim nation.
<i>Khudaa Haafiz</i>	- Goodbye. Literally, “Allaah is the Protector”
<i>R.A.</i>	- <i>Radhiallaahu ‘Anhu</i> (May Allaah be pleased with him). <i>R.A. - Radhiallaahu ‘Anha</i> (May Allaah be pleased with her). <i>R.A. - Radhiallaahu ‘Anhuma</i> (May Allaah be pleased with both of them, that is any two persons). <i>R.A. - Radhiallaahu ‘Anhum</i> (May Allaah be pleased with them, that is more than two persons).
<i>Nafl</i>	- Optional, voluntary.
<i>S.A.W.</i>	- <i>Sallallaahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam</i> . May Allaah shower Blessings and Peace on him, that is, the Holy Prophet.
<i>Sunnah</i>	- Sayings and practices of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

Introduction

THE BASIC TEACHINGS OF ISLAM

“Islam” is an Arabic word which literally means “submission”. In religious terminology however it means “submission to the Divine Will and Commands”. One who follows the religion of Islam is called a “Muslim”. The terms “Muhammadanism” and “Muhammadan” are misnomers.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

There are seven cardinal articles of Faith in Islam, namely,

1. Belief in the Oneness of Allaah.
2. Belief in all of Allaah’s angels.
3. Belief in all of Allaah’s revealed books, which are four in number: Taurat (Old Testament), Zaboor (Psalms), Injeel (New Testament) and the Holy Qur’aan.
4. Belief in all of Allaah’s prophets, some of whom are: Adam, Nuuh (Noah), Ibraahiim (Abraham), Ismaa-iil (Ishmael), Yusuf (Joseph), Musa (Moses), Iisaa (Jesus) and Muhammad (peace be on them all).
5. & 6. Belief in the Day of Resurrection and the Day of Judgement: that is, the day on which Allaah will resurrect the dead and each person will be judged according to his or her good or bad actions. Those who have led a righteous life and pleased Allaah will be sent to Heaven, while those who have disobeyed His Commands and displeased Him by committing sins and performing bad actions will be sent to Hell.
7. Belief that the power of doing all actions (good or bad) proceeds from Allaah but each one is responsible for his her actions. (To illustrate, Allaah has given us the ability to speak. However, it is up to each individual to decide whether we will speak the truth or tell lies).

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

There are five fundamental principles of Islam, namely:

1. The declaration of Faith - *Laa ilaaha illallaah Muhammadur Rasoolullaah* (There is no deity worthy of worship but Allaah and Muhammad - S.A.W.) is His final messenger.
2. The observance of the five obligatory prayers at the prescribed times each day.
3. The payment of Zakaat (poor-rate). This is payable, among other things, at the rate of 2½% by all Muslims who have in their possession a certain minimum wealth for over a year. The beneficiaries are the needy, the indigent, the zakaat collectors, those in debt (in certain circumstances), travellers (rich and poor), those who may be in temporary need, and in the way of Allaah.
4. The observance of the fast during the month of Ramadaan. The Islamic fast begins at the break of dawn and ends immediately after sunset. It is compulsory on all Muslims except infants, the insane and invalids. It may be postponed in certain circumstances. (See Chapter Five).
5. The performance of Haj (Pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia) at least once in one's lifetime if one is financially and physically capable of doing so and can also leave sufficient means for up-keep of one's family.

THE HOLY QUR'AAN

The Holy Qur'aan is the book of Guidance for Muslims. It is the last revealed book of Allaah and was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) over a period of twenty three years. It was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) through the Angel Jibra-iil in the Arabic language.

The Holy Qur'aan still exists in its original form and, should all copies be destroyed, it will be still available as it has been memorised by scores of thousand of Muslims. One who knows the Holy Qur'aan by heart is called a *Hafiz* (plural: *Huffaz*).

The Holy Qur'aan contains a complete code for the guidance of mankind in all spheres of life: social, economic, spiritual, physical and political.

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is the final Messenger of Allaah. He was born in Makkah, Arabia, in the year 570 C.E. and received the first revelation of the Holy Qur'aan when he was forty years old. He migrated from Makkah to Madinah in the thirteenth year of his prophethood. This migration is called the Hijrah and the Muslim era dates therefrom.

At the time of the Holy Prophet's death in 632 C.E., Islam had been accepted by the whole of the Arabian peninsula and was fast spreading to other countries. The Muslim population today stands at about 1.2 billion. (See Chapters Two, Four, Eight and Nine).

CELEBRATIONS

There are two festivals in Islam, namely Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha. In addition, a number of religious occasions are commemorated. (See Chapters Five, Six and Eighteen).

DIET

The Muslim diet excludes the use of certain foods and drinks, for example the flesh of dead animals, animals slaughtered without invoking the name of Allaah, swine, animals strangled to death, carnivorous animals, animals devoured by wild beast, the blood of animals, alcoholic and intoxicating drinks.

DRESS

There is no special dress as such for Muslims. However, Islam lays down certain minimum requirements. In the case of man, the minimum requirement is covering from the navel to just below the knees. One should however follow the norms of the society, have some consideration for others, and follow the *Sunnah* (practice) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). One should therefore also cover the upper part of one's body and also one's head.

In the case of women, the whole body except the face, hands and feet must be covered.

THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR

Muslims follow a lunar calendar, so that the Islamic month may be either 29 or 30 days. There are twelve months in the Islamic year. Thus the Islamic Calendar is approximately 11 days (12 in a leap year) shorter than the solar year. (See Chapter One).

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