

# *GLAD TIDINGS*

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## Introduction

Many books have been written about the Islamic Faith; some go into considerable detail, while others touch on a few specific aspects. The 'Glad Tidings' differs from previously compiled books; instead of shedding light on the duties of a Muslim, the many intrinsic qualities of the Islamic faith have been compiled to help those who are keen on seeking the truth about Islam.

Consider this booklet 'a key' that will lead you on an exciting journey to explore the Islamic Faith. I firmly believe that if you read the points mentioned in this booklet you will reconsider what you know about Islam.

Before going into the qualities of the Islamic Faith, it is extremely important for a researcher of the truth to have the following points in mind:

1. **Have a sincere intention;** do not view Islamic teachings with the intention of uncovering errors. Whoever seeks the truth, shall find it, and they will be comfortable with it. God, the Exalted, says: **"Thus, (it is a fact that) whomsoever Allah wills to guide, He opens his breast for Islam; and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, He causes his breast to become strait and constricted, as if he were climbing towards the heaven. Thus Allah lays the abomination (of flight from and hatred of Islam) on those who do not believe."** (6:125)

2. **Invoke God sincerely to guide you to the truth.** God, the Exalted, says: **"Mankind was once a single community, [but then people developed differences], so God sent prophets to them as bearers of good tidings and warning, and sent down with them the Book containing the truth, so that He might judge between their disputes. It was only those to whom it [the scripture] was given who disagreed about it after clear signs had come to them, because of rivalry between them. God by His will guided the believers to the truth about which the others had disputed. God guides whom He will to a Straight Path."** (2:213)

3. **Put aside prejudiced views and all preconceived notions.** One shouldn't allow others to make their decisions; the same holds true for choosing a faith. God, the Exalted, says: **"But when they are told, "Follow what God has sent down," they answer, "We will follow the ways of our fathers," even though their fathers did not use their reason, and were devoid of all guidance."** (2:170)

The researcher must be aware that Islam is not an "Arab Faith"; rather, it is a global religion that all humanity can adopt. There are no prejudiced views or racism in Islam. Whoever believes in its tenets becomes a Muslim. Whoever doesn't apply its teachings is not a Muslim, even if he comes from a noble lineage.

The social makeup of the early Islamic society sheds light on this matter for many of the Prophet's Companions came from diverse backgrounds. In spite of this, they were not mistreated or disrespected in the least; on the contrary, they were given full and complete equality with nobles from that society. Among the notable Companions were:

1. **Bilal**, who was the “Caller” for the five daily prayers, who was an Abyssinian<sup>1</sup>,
2. **Suhaib** who was a freed slave, who came from a Roman background,
3. **Salman** who was from a Persian background.

Islam is not a religion that is confined to Makkah and Madinah or to the Arabian Peninsula. On the contrary, any country that upholds Islamic law is labeled an “Islamic Country”, even if it be in the midst of Africa or in Asia.

It is important to note that many Muslims today may do things or profess certain beliefs that are in fact foreign to Islam! These practices have played a devastating role in marring the true image of Islam, and have kept many away from it.<sup>2</sup>

There is a simple rule with which one can discern whether an action is in compliance to Islamic law or not. If an action that is in question:

- a. conflicts with the natural disposition of man,
- b. conflicts with sound reason and intellect,
- c. is simply revolting to people who are intellectually sound,

...these are tell-tale signs that the action in question is foreign to Islamic teachings! Further verification can be made by asking those who have proper Islamic knowledge.

Islam teaches us that there is only One God. It professes the best of ethics and manners and it is a complete way of life.

In reality, Muslims fluctuate in their dedication to their Faith; there are those who are more dedicated and those who are less dedicated. God clarifies this matter in the Quran saying: **“We have bestowed the Book on those of Our servants whom We have chosen. Some wrong their own souls, some keep half-way [between right and wrong]; some, by God's leave, excel others in good deeds. This is a great bounty of God:”** (35:32)

You should always acquire the facts about Islam from proper sources. One cannot rely on biased sources of information such as the media and hold them as a true, viable source of Islamic knowledge. Whoever wants to learn about Islam should be truthful and have the courage to approach it from its true sources. The Prophet, may God praise him, said in a Tradition: **“I've left two things behind, if you are to adhere to them, you will not be lost after me; the Book of Allah and my *Sunnah* (Prophetic Traditions).”**

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<sup>1</sup> You can read more about this from the book **‘Bilal the Abyssinian – One Light, Many Colors.’** By: Dr. Abdul-Rahman Al-Sheha.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, you can read the book **‘The Message of Islam’** by: Dr. Abdul-Rahman Al-Sheha.

This being said, it is quite natural that every individual seeks to achieve what is in their best interest; so choosing a faith that appeals to common sense is something a person should strive towards as well. What we will present in this booklet are the traits of the Islamic Faith.

In the end, this is a choice that you make; a choice that will have an impact on your life and in the next world, as we believe that there is a life after death, in which one would live in eternal bliss or damnation. God, the Exalted, says: **“Thus We revealed to you, this Arabic Quran so that you may warn the mother of cities [Makkah] and those around it, and warn them of the Day of Gathering which is sure to come: when some group will be in the Garden, and some will be in the Fire.”** (42:7)

I pray to God that anyone who reads this will be guided to the truth about Islam. *Ameen!*

## What Is Islam?

Islam is taken from the root word ‘*sa-la-ma*’ which in Arabic refers to submission; so **Islam** means submission to God alone, and not associating any partners with Him. The Islamic Faith is the link between individual and God.<sup>3</sup>

A Muslim is always mindful of God during day and night; the five daily prayers are meant to preserve the relation between God and man. The entire life of a Muslim is tied with God. God, the Exalted, says: **“Say, 'My prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for God, the Lord of the worlds.’”** (6:162)

## The Traits of the Islamic Faith

To a Muslim, Islam is the last of the heavenly religions that has a divine link. One of the teachings of Islam is adherence to a strict form of monotheism. A Muslim does not associate partners to God. God, the Exalted, says: **“If anyone seeks a religion other than Islam [submission to God], it will not be accepted from him; he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.”** (3:185)

Being more than a simple faith or religion, Islam is called a “*Deen*”, which means a way of life. It has solutions to humankind’s problems and is suitable in all times and places. Due to the holistic approach of Islam to life, it possesses a number of traits that make it unlike any other religion. We will mention a few in this discourse.

**1. It agrees with the natural disposition of man.** Islam appeals to man’s common sense; for man is programmed with belief in the Oneness of God. When one ponders their surroundings, they will see clear evidence that endorses this innate belief. God, the Exalted, says: **“So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the *fitrah* of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.”** (30:30)

One’s society or upbringing would cause one to lose touch with this natural disposition and it may also lead him to worshipping others besides Allah, the One and True God. The Prophet ﷺ said: **“Every newborn is born in a state of *Fitrah* (i.e. unaltered natural disposition) but his parents make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.”**

**2. Islam is the religion of monotheism and sincerity.** Islam directs one to worship God alone and it establishes a direct relationship between God and His slaves. This relation stipulates that one turn to God at all times and that they seek repentance from Him. Islam has abolished previous adulterated spiritual systems wherein help of intermediaries was sought in order to reach God. This is clear from God’s words in the Quran, where He chastised the polytheists for taking intermediary gods. He says: **“Unquestionably, for Allah is the pure religion. And those who take protectors besides Him [say], 'We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position.'”** Indeed, Allah will judge between them concerning that over which they differ. **Indeed, Allah does not guide he who is a liar and [confirmed] disbeliever.”** (39:3)

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<sup>3</sup> For more information read ‘**Islam-The Religion of Peace**’ by: Dr. Abdul-Rahman Al-Sheha.

Islam adheres to a strict form of monotheism. The ‘Testimony of Faith’<sup>4</sup> is the key through which one enters Islam. On account of it, Allah created all creation and Heaven and Hell. All prophets and messengers preached this creedal belief from Prophet Noah to Prophet Muhammad, may God praise them all. God, the Exalted, says: **“And We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, "There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.”** (21:25)

### **The Testimony of Faith includes:**

- a. Believing that God must be worshipped directly, with no intermediaries. He has no partners, wives or children. God, the Exalted, says: **“That is Allah, your Lord; there is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him. And He is Disposer of all things.”** (6:102)
- b. Believing that God is the only creator for all that exists. He is the One Who provides, gives life and takes it away, if He wills. God, the Exalted, says: **“He is the Ever-Living; there is no deity except Him, so call upon Him, [being] sincere to Him in religion. [All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds.”** (40:65)
- c. That God’s names and attributes belong to Him and they indicate His absolute perfection. God, the Exalted, says: **“[He is] Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you from yourselves, mates, and among the cattle, mates; He multiplies you thereby. There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”** (42:11)

**3. Servitude.** Allah has only created the creation so that they worship Him. He says: **“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”** (51:56)

The need to worship and turn to God is an innate need within humankind; as one’s body needs food and beverage to stay alive; one’s soul is in need of spiritual nourishment as well! This is evident in all human beings, without exception.

From the time of Prophet Adam to the time of Prophet Noah, may God praise them both, people were worshipping God alone. Polytheism first occurred among the people of Noah. Since then, people have worshipped a multitude of idols, ranging from trees, animals to even occurrences in nature.

The Prophet was sent to guide people to the pure belief in the Oneness of God. This belief stabilizes people in their perpetual and spiritual lives. God, the Exalted, says: **“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and Allah has sent him astray due to knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him after Allah? Then will you not be reminded?”** (45:23)

Strict monotheism is a quality exclusive to Islam. Other religions that preach monotheism are not actually monotheistic. Among the Jews were those who worshipped Ezra, elevating him

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<sup>4</sup> This is to profess ‘I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is the last messenger of God.’

to the status of God, and in Christianity, the Christians worship Jesus, may God praise him, who is elevated to the status of a God.

God, the Exalted, says: **“Indeed, those you [polytheists] call upon besides Allah are servants like you. So call upon them and let them respond to you, if you should be truthful.”** (7:194)

**4. Islam is a rational religion that preaches respect.** The teachings of the Quran will appeal to one’s intellect and encourage one to use it. There are many verses in the Quran that say: **“Do you not understand?”, “Do you not ponder?”, “Do you not reflect?”, “Do you not know?”, “Do you not perceive?”** All of these verses encourage one to explore and use their intellect and common sense.

God, the Exalted, says: **“Indeed, within the heavens and earth are signs for the believers. And in the creation of yourselves and what He disperses of moving creatures are signs for people who are certain [in faith]. And [in] the alternation of night and day and [in] what Allah sends down from the sky of provision and gives life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and [in His] directing of the winds are signs for a people who reason.”** (45:3-5)

The areas in which intellect plays an important role are in issues that we can perceive in terms of material/physical matters.

As for the world of the unseen which cannot be perceived through our senses, we simply submit to what God has informed us about them in His Divine Scripture. God, the Exalted, says: **“[He is] Knower of the unseen, and He does not disclose His [knowledge of the] unseen to anyone.”** (72:26)

The teachings of Islam can be rationally proven as correct, and its benefit can be clearly perceived. The general theme of every command and prohibition within Islamic law is that it brings to us that which would benefit us and distances from us that which is harmful.

**5. The teachings of Islam are divine.** Its beliefs, code of ethics, acts of worship, and rights for each individual, have been divinely assigned.<sup>5</sup> They are not susceptible to change. God, the Exalted, says: **“[It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.”** (56:80)

It is not a man-made religion which is susceptible to change or error and it is not influenced by exterior elements. It has been revealed through a continuous, uninterrupted chain from God. The Quran has been recorded and memorized by people through all ages. God, the Exalted, says: **“Then is it the judgment of [the time of] ignorance they desire? But who is better than Allah in judgment for a people who are certain [in faith].”** (5:50)

Islam is the only religion that has been preserved in its pristine form.

## **The sources of Islamic law are as follows:**

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<sup>5</sup> For more information read ‘**Human Rights in Islam**’ by: Dr. Abdul-Rahman Al-Sheha.



a. **Quran:** This is the revealed word of God. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, may God praise him through Angel Gabriel. It remains in its pristine form. Muslims have made monumental efforts to memorize and pass the Word of God down from generation to generation. This is due in part to the encouragement of the Prophet, may God praise him, who said: **“The best of you are those who memorize the Quran and teach it to others.”** (Bukhari)

Memorizing and reading the Quran is a form of worship. The Prophet has informed us that anyone who recites a verse of the Quran would receive a reward for every individual letter of the Quran that is recited.<sup>6</sup>

b. **Sunnah** (Prophetic Traditions)<sup>7</sup>. This is the second source of Islamic law. It has been preserved and remains in its pristine form. Scholars have sifted through the numerous chains of narration identifying the strong from the weak. A narration that is graded “authentic” or “good” is accepted; whereas, one that is graded “weak” is rejected.

6. **Islam is a Global Religion.** Islam is a global message; it is suitable for all people, regardless of their background, ethnicity, skin color or language. In short, it is for all people in all times. Whoever believes that Allah is their God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God and that Islam is their faith, they are regarded as Muslims. There are no initiation ceremonies, special procedures or examinations that must be passed in order for one to become a Muslim!

Islam is unlike previous religions, which were revealed to a specific nation. For example, Prophet Moses preached to his people alone, so did Prophet Jesus, may God praise them both. Their messages were not meant to be global. God, the Exalted, says: **“And We gave Moses the Scripture and made it a guidance for the Children of Israel that you not take other than Me as Disposer of affairs,”** (17:2)

When the children of Israel lost their way after Prophet Moses, God sent to them Prophet Jesus to guide them back to the Straight Path. God, the Exalted, says: **“And We have placed over their hearts coverings, lest they understand it, and in their ears deafness. And when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn back in aversion.”** (5:46)

After a period in which no prophet was sent after Jesus, God sent Muhammad, may God praise him. He was sent to both Men and *Jinn*<sup>8</sup> and his message was the final message to humankind. God, the Exalted, says: **“Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion upon His Servant that he may be to the worlds a warner.”** (25:1)

Even though Islam is a global message, it doesn't force anyone to accept it. Each person has the right to choose their own path in life. God, the Exalted, says: **“And say, "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve." Indeed, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire whose walls will**

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<sup>6</sup> Recorded in the collection of at-Tirmidhi.

<sup>7</sup> This includes Prophet Muhammad's actions, utterances and tacit approvals.

<sup>8</sup> The Jinn are spiritual creatures mentioned in the Quran who inhabit the unseen world. Together, the Jinn, humans and Angels make up the three sapient creations of God.

surround them. And if they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like murky oil, which scalds [their] faces. Wretched is the drink, and evil is the resting place.” (18:29)

**7. Islam preaches moderation.** One of the key characteristics of the Islamic faith is that it is a moderate faith, and one that is easy for people to understand. The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **“The most beloved *Deen* to Allah is the moderate faith which is straightforward.”** (Bukhari)

The Prophet would not overburden people. Allah, the Exalted, says: **“And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. Allah named you "Muslims" before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So establish prayer and give *zakah* (obligatory charity) and hold fast to Allah. He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper.”** (22:78)

Islam is straightforward and simple in its teachings and various rulings. It is built upon ease and does not overburden anyone, an example is in the case of a person who is forced to eat or drink something unlawful, due to a dire need. God does not chastise that individual. He, the Exalted, says: **“But if anyone is forced by necessity, being neither disobedient nor exceeding the limit, then surely your Lord is most forgiving and merciful.”** (6:145)

The ease found within Islamic teachings indicates the divine nature of Islam. God, the Exalted, says: **“God does not charge a soul with more than it can bear. It shall be requited for whatever good and whatever evil it has done.”** (2:286)

The Prophet as well affirmed this through his statement: **“What I have forbidden upon you refrain from it, and what I have commanded you to do, do of it as much as you can.”**

A’ishah, the wife of the Prophet, may God be pleased with her, said: **“The Messenger of Allah, may Allah praise him, was not given a choice between two matters, except that he took the easier of the two, except if it was a sinful matter.”**

**8. Islam is a complete system of perfection.** Islam is perfect. God, the Exalted, says: **“Today I have completed your religion for you and completed My blessing upon you. I have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”** (5:3)

Islam has abrogated all previous religions. It is not appropriate for one to worship anyone besides God. The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **“My example and that of the prophets before me is like that of a man who built a structure, he beautified it and decorated it except for the place of one brick in one of its corners. The people would walk around this structure and marvel at it and say: only if a brick would be put in this place! I am that brick and I am the last of the prophets.”** (Muslim)

Allah, the Exalted, says: **“It is We who have sent down the Reminder and We will, most surely, safeguard it.”** (15:9)

**9. Islam preaches transparency and clarity.** There is no ambiguity in it. This is the description of the Quran, which is the first source of Islamic Faith. It is a “Clear Book”, and a source of guidance for humankind. God, the Exalted, says: **“People of the Book! Our Messenger has come to make clear to you much of what you have hidden of the Scriptures and to forgive you much. A light has now come to you from God and a clear Book,”** (5:15)

Every human being has the right to inquire and ask about issues they are unable to perceive. It must be borne in mind that not every Muslim has a clear understanding of their faith. So if one seeks answers to troubling questions, they should ask those who have true knowledge. The same can be said for any other aspect of life. If one is sick, they would seek the opinion of a qualified doctor. If one has any other problem, they would make a point of seeing a professional in the concerned field. One wouldn't ask a doctor about matters of engineering or mechanics! God, the Exalted, says: **“So ask the people of the message if you do not know.”** (21:7)

It must be mentioned that there are matters that are beyond human comprehension, which we refer to as “The Unseen World”. Even if we were to delve into its reality, there would be no real benefit in doing so; in this, we simply believe what God has informed us. We believe that He is all-capable and can do as He pleases.

The issue of the unseen world is indeed the **acid test** with which a true believer is distinguished from others. God says: **“Alif Lam Mim. This is the Book; there is no doubt in it. It is a guide for those who are mindful of God, who believe in the unseen, and are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided them with; those who believe in the revelation sent down to you and in what was sent before you, and firmly believe in the life to come -- they are the people who are rightly following their Lord and it is they who shall be successful.”** (2:1-5)

**10. Islam preaches positivity.** The *Shari'ah* (Islamic Law) is a system that is built around positivity. Islam orders its followers to spread the positive message of hope, peace and love for others. It is not sufficient for a Muslim to be a good individual who is pious; He must also strive to share the message of Islam with those who are around him. God, the Exalted, says: **“Let there be a group among you who call others to good, and enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong: those who do this shall be successful.”** (3:104)

Islam views showing love to others and wanting their goodness an important point of faith. The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **“Whoever calls others to the path of guidance, he shall have that reward and the reward of those who follow in that path, while no one's reward will be lessened.”** (Muslim)

**11. Islam is a religion of stability and development.** Islam accepts advancements of the present day and is accommodating. Rulings are issued for these new issues that were never present in the past. This is achieved through the guidelines and principles set forth in Islam

that are never changing; through them, opinions regarding matters that never occurred in the past are established.

## Examples:

1. **Smoking and drug addiction:** Prophet Muhammad, may God praise him, said: **“Do not harm yourself or others.”** Based on this guideline scholars in Islam stated that smoking and drug abuse is deemed unlawful due to the overwhelming medical evidence that it is harmful to one’s health.

2. **Abortion:** God, the Exalted, says: **“He who slays a soul unless it be (in punishment) for murder or for spreading mischief on earth shall be as if he had slain all mankind; and he who saves a life shall be as if he had given life to all mankind.”** (5:32) From this verse the scholars have deduced rulings that pertain to abortion.

12. **Islam integrates the spiritual life with the physical one.** Islam answers the spiritual and physical needs of humankind. God, the Exalted, says: **“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.”** (28:77)

There is no monasticism in Islam. One cannot segregate themselves from society nor can they prohibit upon themselves what God has made lawful. God, the Exalted, says: **“Say, “Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of provision?” Say, “They are for those who believe during the worldly life [but] exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection.” Thus do We detail the verses for a people who know.”** (7:32)

Islam ordains that a person live their life in a conservative fashion. In the following narration this is stated clearly:

**“Three men came to the houses of the wives of the Prophet, may God praise him, and asked how his worship was. When they were informed, they considered their own worship to be insignificant and said: ‘Where are we in comparison to the Prophet? God has forgiven his past and future sins!’ One of them said: ‘As for me, I shall offer prayer all night long.’ Another said: ‘I shall observe fasting perpetually, never to break it.’ Another said: ‘I shall abstain from women and will never marry.’ The Prophet, may God praise him, then came to them and said: “Are you the people who said such things? I swear By Allah that I fear Allah more than you do, and I am the most obedient and dutiful among you to Him, but still, I observe fasting (sometimes) and break it (at others); I perform (optional) prayer (at night sometimes) and sleep at night (at others); I also marry. So whoever turns away from my *Sunnah* (i.e., my way) is not from me.”**

**13. Islam is divinely preserved by God.** God has promised to preserve both the Quran and the *Sunnah* (Prophetic Traditions). He, the Exalted, said: **“Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We shall preserve it.”** (15:9)

The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **“There will always be a successful group from my Ummah that adheres to the truth, they would not be harmed by those who try to harm them, and they shall remain in that manner till the Final Hour is established.”** (Muslim)

**14. Islam is a Holistic way of life.** Islam is a holistic way of life. Its rulings aim to establish a society that is lofty in its ethics and strive to ensure that one may live with dignity and honor within society. God, the Exalted, says: **“And [mention] the Day when We will resurrect among every nation a witness over them from themselves. And We will bring you, [O Muhammad], as a witness over your nation. And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy and good tidings for the Muslims.”** (16:89)

Islam has preserved relations between individual and God, relations between Muslims and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam upholds that ethics are an important, integral part of faith. The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“*Iman* (faith) is of seventy-so branches, the highest is to profess the belief in the Oneness of God and the lowest is to remove harmful objects from the pathway and being modest is a branch of faith.”** (Muslim)

a. Humankind has been honored; they are elevated above all other creation. God, the Exalted, says: **“And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.”** (17:70)

b. One is encouraged to have good relations with those around him. God, the Exalted, says: **“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.”** (49:13)

c. It promotes social welfare. It is a must upon Muslims to take care and look after their fellow Muslims. The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **“Muslims in their love and affection towards each other are like a body, if one part of it feels pain the rest of it feels that pain.”** (Bukhari)

d. It promotes freedom. This doesn't mean that one has the freedom to do every illicit act.

## **What is meant here are the following things:**

**1. Freedom to think.** God, the Exalted, says: **“O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice.”** (33:70)

2. **Freedom to earn *Halal* (lawful) earnings.** God, the Exalted, says: **“For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned.”** (4:32)

3. **Freedom to seek an education.** The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **“Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim.”** (Ibn Majah)

4. **Freedom to use what is on the earth from resources.** God, the Exalted, says: **“It is He who made the earth tame for you - so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection.”** (67:15)

e. It ensures that one would achieve complete stability in their life. This is achieved through the following ways:

1. **Spiritually:** The soul needs nourishment as does the body. Worshipping God satisfies the spiritual urge within humankind. God, the Exalted, says: **“Piety is the best of all provisions: so refrain from disobeying Me, O men of understanding!”** (2:197)

2. **Protection of one’s self.** God, the Exalted, says: **“But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment.”** (4:193)

3. **Protection of one’s wealth.** God, the Exalted, says: **“And do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].”** (2:188)

4. **Protection of one’s honor.** God, the Exalted, mentions a preventive measure that would ensure one’s honor<sup>9</sup>: **“And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is an evil way.”** (17:32)

5. **Protection of one’s intellect.** God, the Exalted, says: **“O you who have believed, indeed intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”** (5:90)

f. It ensures that the rights are given to those whom they are due to. This falls into two categories.

1. **Specific rights.** God, the Exalted, says: **“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are self-deluding and boastful.”** (4:36)

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<sup>9</sup> This should not be mistaken for honor killing, which is rejected in Islam! What this refers to is simply that sexual relations are to be observed only within a marriage.



2. **General Rights.** The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **"Do not envy one another, do not inflate prices for one another, do not hate one another, do not turn away from one another, do not undercut one another in trade, but [rather] be slaves of Allah and brothers [amongst yourselves]. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim: he does not oppress him, nor does he fail him, nor does he lie to him, nor does he hold him in contempt. *Taqwa* (piety) is right here [and he pointed to his chest three times]. It is evil enough for a man to hold his fellow Muslim in contempt. A Muslim is inviolable for another Muslim: his blood, his property, and his honor."** (Muslim)

g. **Islam is a message of mercy.** Its mercy includes all creation. The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **"The merciful will be shown mercy by Allah. Be merciful to those on earth, and you shall be shown mercy by the One above the heavens."**

The mercy of Islam encompasses even animals. The following narration indicates this clearly: **"While a man was walking on his way he became extremely thirsty. He found a well and he went down into it to drink water. Upon leaving it, he saw a dog which was panting out of thirst. His tongue was lolling out and he was licking moist earth from extreme thirst. The man thought to himself: 'This dog is extremely thirsty as I was.' So he descended into the well, filled up his leather sock with water, and holding it in his teeth, climbed up and quenched the thirst of the dog. Allah rewarded his action and forgave his sins".** The Companions asked: "Shall we be rewarded for showing kindness to the animals also?" He, may God praise him, said, **"A reward is given in connection with every living creature."**

h. **Islam promotes mutual consultation.** God, the Exalted, says: **"So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]."** (3:159)

i. **Islam is a religion of equality.** There is no difference between any two individuals; the only matter that would distinguish one from another in the sight of God is piety. God, the Exalted, says: **"O humankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."** (49:13)

j. **Islam promotes complete justice.** God, the Exalted, says: **"Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded."** (16:90)

k. **Islam is a religion of peace.** The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“Shall I not inform you of the true believer? He is the one whom people can trust him with their monies/worldly possessions and their lives. The Muslim is the one who others would not be harmed by his tongue, physical injustice. As for the *Mujahid* (one in Jihad) he is the one who perseveres to obey Allah and the *Muhajir* (the one who migrates) is one who abandons sins.”** (Ibn Hibban).

l. **Islam encourages mankind to do good deeds.** The Prophet, may Allah praise him, said: **“If one was to go out and sell wood, it is better for him than to beg from people.”** (Bukhari)

m. **Islam is a religion of purity and purification.** Of its beautiful mannerisms that endorse this ideal are the following:

1. **Washing one’s hands before eating and after it.** The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“The blessing in one’s food is achieved through *wudhu* (water ablution) before and after it.”** (Tirmidhi)

2. **Rinsing out one’s mouth after eating and making sure it is clean.** The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“Had it not been for the fact that I would overburden my nation, I would have ordered them to use the *siwak* (tooth-stick) before each prayer.”** (Muslim)

3. **Purifying areas of the body that may be neglected** (in terms of purification). The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“Ten are the practices of *fitrah*: clipping the moustache, letting the beard grow, using the tooth-stick (*siwak*), cleaning the nasal passages by sniffing water up the nose, cutting the nails, washing the hands, plucking the hair under the armpits, shaving the pubic hairs and cleaning one's private parts with water.”** The narrator said: 'I have forgotten the tenth, but it may have been **“rinsing the mouth.”**

4. **Purifying the body after answering the call of nature.** The Prophet, may God praise him, instructed the Muslims how to purify themselves after relieving themselves.

5. **Having a good appearance and pleasant odor.** God, the Exalted, says: **“O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.”** (7:31)

In Islam, purification is a cornerstone aspect of all the acts of worship. In general, purification falls into one of two categories.

a. **Physical Purification:** This includes the purification of one’s body, clothing and place of worship. It is a prerequisite for prayer. The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“No prayer is accepted without purification.”** (Muslim)

God, the Exalted, says: **“And if you are in a state of impurity, then purify yourselves.”** (5:6)



b. **Spiritual Purification:** This is purity in terms of beliefs; i.e. that one not adhere to an inappropriate system of belief. God, the Exalted, says: **“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him.”** (4:36)

It also indicates purity from boasting. God, the Exalted, says: **“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer. Those who make show [of their deeds]. And withhold [simple] assistance.”** (107:3-7)

It also indicates purity from arrogance and pride. God, the Exalted, says: **“And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”** (31:18)

It also indicates purity from envy. The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“Do not become envious, for indeed envy would eat one’s good deeds as fire consumes wood.”** (Abu Dawood)

It also indicates purity from putting others down. The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“Arrogance is to reject the truth and to belittle others.”** (Muslim)

**15. Islam upholds a pristine system of mannerisms and ethics.** The Prophet, may God praise him, said: **“Indeed Allah has commissioned me as a Prophet to establish the good ethical manners and code of conduct.”** (Bukhari)

A Muslim is to uphold every good mannerism and avoid every evil one. The Messenger of Allah, may God praise him, said: **“Avoid all prohibitions and you shall be among the most obedient to Allah. Be satisfied with what Allah has blessed you with, and you shall be the richest of people. Be good to your neighbor and you shall be a believer. Love for people what you love for yourself, and you shall be a Muslim. Do not make a habit of laughing excessively, for excessive laughter would cause one to become oblivious of what is important.”** (Tirmidhi)

The Prophet, may God praise him, clarified this point in many narrations. In one he asked his companions, **“Do you know who a bankrupt individual is?”** The Companions said, **“One who is bankrupt has no money!”** The Prophet then answered: **“The bankrupt is one who has many good deeds in his record, but because he has harmed this person, swore at that one, hit this one, he shall give each of those whom he has wronged from his good deeds and once his good deeds are consumed, he would take of their bad deeds, and he shall then be tossed into Hell.”** (Muslim)

Islam is a faith that upholds and strictly preaches a high level of conduct and ethics. God, the Exalted, says: **“O you who believe, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by**

[offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers. O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.” (49:11-12)

16. **Islam is a religion of integrity and honesty.** God, the Exalted, says: “**Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing.**” (4:58)

17. **Islam is a religion of truthfulness.** God, the Exalted, says: “**O you who believe, fear Allah and be with those who are truthful.**” (9:119)

18. **Islam orders Muslims to fulfill their duties and obligations.** God, the Exalted, says: “**O you who believe, fulfill [all] contracts. Lawful for you are the animals of grazing livestock except for that which is recited to you [in this Qur'an] - hunting not being permitted while you are in the state of *ihram*<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, Allah ordains what He intends.**” (5:1)

19. **Islam is a religion of ease and kindness.** The Prophet, may God praise him, said: “**Indeed ease and kindness is not used in a matter, except that it would elevate it, and it is not put aside in something except that it would ruin it.**” (Muslim)

20. **Islam is the religion of love, harmony and affection.** The Prophet, may God praise him, said: “**None of you shall believe until you love for your fellow Muslims (of the good) what you love for yourself.**” (Bukhari)

These virtuous qualities of the Islamic faith are implemented within society through a number of means:

A. **Through ordering with the good and forbidding evil.** God, the Exalted, says: “**You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.**” (3:110)

B. **Through sincere advice.** God, the Exalted, says: “**By time. Indeed, mankind is in loss. Except for those who have believed and done righteous deeds and advised each other to truth and advised each other to patience.**” (103)

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<sup>10</sup> This is a state wherein both man and woman prepare to perform the pilgrimage to Makkah.

## Conclusion

We believe that the religion of Islam, which is a way of life, is the greatest gift God can bestow upon humankind. What we aim to do is simply to present Islam in its true form; far from the sensationalization of the media and from the ignorance of those who are ignorant.

In my opinion, the characteristics of the Islamic Faith mentioned herein would provoke you to begin that spiritual journey into Islam.

Islam does not endorse terrorism; it is indeed a religion of moderation. Even though, some who are behind certain terrorist attacks may coincidentally be Muslim, the Islamic faith is clearly against any form of aggression. It's only on account of one's ignorance of the Islamic faith that would lead them to any form of extremism.

It must be borne in mind that the actions of a Muslim are not be held against Islam; the question that should be asked is, 'how carefully are those who do such acts, following Islamic teachings?'

### Dear Reader:

According to Islamic teachings, one who becomes a Muslim would receive a great reward. God, the Exalted, says: **"Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it - they are believers in it. And when it is recited to them, they say, "We have believed in it; indeed, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed we were, [even] before it, Muslims [submitting to Allah]." Those will be given their reward twice for what they patiently endured and [because] they avert evil through good, and from what We have provided them they spend."** (28:52-54)

Another reward promised is in the words of the Prophet, may God praise him: **"Islam would efface all sins performed before it."** (Muslim)

The third reward is in the words of God, the Exalted, where He informs us that He will replace one's sins with good works if they accept Islam. He says: **"Those who repent, believe and do righteous work; for them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful."** (25:68-70)

In the end, we simply say that we hope that you will be guided to the truth!

### Other Books Written by the Author:

1. The Message of Islam
2. Islam – The Religion of Peace
3. Human Rights in Islam

4. **Women in Islam**
5. **Purity**
6. **Muhammad the Messenger of Allah**
7. **Prophet Jesus in the Quran**
8. **Bilal, the Abyssinian – One Light, Many Colors**
9. **The Key to Understanding Islam**
10. **Islamic Perspective on Sex**
11. **Every Innovation is a Means of Misguidance**
12. **The Beginning and the End**
13. **First Steps in Islam**
14. ***Hisn al-Mu'min* (Fortification of the Believer)**
15. **The Way to Happiness.**