

ISLAM

IN BRIEF

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Introduction

This is a message for every free thinking and broad-minded human being. It is for every seeker of the truth who might have, once wondered, what the religion of Islam is all about, who Allah is, what is the ultimate goal of man's existence, or what happens after death, for these questions and many others are prompted at certain occasions, but brushed aside by various factors.

Islam is indeed a misunderstood and misrepresented religion in the West. «This misconception is hardly surprising», remarks the French Dr. Maurice Bucaille, in his book, **The Bible, The Qur'an and Science**.¹ «when we consider the way so many generations in the West were instructed in the religious problems facing humanity and the ignorance in which they were kept about anything related to Islam». Hence Islamic ideals remain obscure from the vast majority of non-Muslims.

This booklet does not claim to answer all the questions you would like to be answered. However, this booklet will open before you a new dimension of thinking, and will enable you to realize the importance of your role as a human being in this universe, to help you understand the relationship between you and your Creator,

1. The Book was originally written in French, entitled 'La Bible, le Coran et la Science'. Its English version is published by American Trust publication, 1979.

God Almighty Allah. It presents Islam to you in a nutshell, and provides straightforward answers to many questions about Islam and its credibility.

In this booklet, you will also be able to know Allah, the last of His Scriptures, the last of His Prophets and Messengers, what Islam is, the role of man in this life and other related issues.

Lest one may think that there is an English version of the Qur'an, I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that Arabic is the only language of the Qur'an. Although the Qur'anic quotations and Prophetic traditions cited in this booklet are preceded with «Allah says», only the meaning of such quotations are quoted.

M. Murad

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Who Is Allah?

Allah is the proper name applied to the only true God Who exists necessarily by Himself, comprising all the excellent Divine names and attributes of perfection. Allah is One and Unique; He has no partner or equal. He is the sole Creator and sustainer of the universe. Every creature bears witness to His Oneness. Divinity, Lordship and the uniqueness of His attributes and names. Allah's essence does not resemble other essences; «There is none like unto Him». He is the One, the Sole, the Indivisible. He is the God without Whom no affairs are accomplished, and to Whom Lordship ultimately pertains. He neither begets nor is begotten. He does not inhere in anything, nor does anything inhere in Him. All creatures stand in need of Him, but He stands in need of none.

Allah is the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, Whose knowledge comprehends in the most perfect manner all things, hidden or manifested. But He is far greater than to be encompassed by the knowledge of His creatures. Allah the Supreme is the Creator of everything, for He has a free hand in the disposal of all affairs. He is the most Merciful, Whose unbounded mercy encompasses everything. He is far removed from injustice and tyranny. Allah's justice ensures order in the universe, which has no defect. There is no one to share His domain, nor does He take aid or support from His crea-

tures. He is the God of the worlds. Yet, He is nearer to man than man's jugular vein. Whenever a believer in need or distress calls on Him, He responds. He is above the Seven Heavens mounting His throne is the manner which suits His grandure.

Allah has revealed His final Scripture, al-Qur'an to the last of His Messengers, Muhammad, peace be on him, to convey the Message of Islam to mankind. He is the Exalted Allah; Glory be to Him.

What is the Qur'an?

The word «Qur'an» is understood in its general connotation to mean the speech of Allah which is neither created. The Qur'an is the real word of Allah, which was delivered by the angel Gabriel to Muhammad, peace be on him. Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, memorized the verses he received and recited them to his companions, who happened to be with him. He then ordered them to immediately write the verses down. He himself used to keep a copy of the revealed portions in his house. The Qur'an is the last of Allah's Scriptures which Allah revealed in instalments over a period of twenty-three years. It is divided into 114 *surahs* (chapters) of unequal length. It is one of the fundamental sources of the Islamic teachings. Some of its *surahs* and verses were revealed at Makkah, and the rest thereof were revealed at Madinah. The Makkan *surahs* and verses are concerned mainly with the issues of *tawhid*, or the belief in the Oneness of Allah, the signs of the existence of Allah, Resurrection, and life after death. The creed of the Oneness of Allah was the focal point of the messages with which all the Prophets and Messengers were sent to mankind, beginning with Adam and ending with Muhammad, peace be on them all. The *surahs* revealed at Madinah at a latter period of the life of the Messenger of Allah, peace be on him, are concerned with legislations, rites of worship, and transactions related to all aspects of life.

Authenticity of the Qur'an

There has been no nation which cared about, holified and preserved its Divine Scripture as the Muslim *Ummah* (nation) cared about, holified and preserved the Qur'an. Unlike the Divine Scriptures which preceded it, the Qur'an is not kept in the hands of a particular group or clan of Muslims so that one may suspect it to be tampered with or altered; rather, it was within the reach of all Muslims. The Muslims are commanded to recite it in their prayer and refer to it in all their disputes for a final judgment. The Qur'an was compiled at a time when those who committed it to memory were still alive. Allah has promised to preserve the Qur'an, and it will be preserved till the Day of Judgment. The Muslims today read and recite the Qur'anic texts that were read and recited during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, and his companions: No letter has been added to the Qur'an or deleted from it. After examining the Qur'an, Dr. Maurice Bucaille ascertains: «Thanks to its undisputed authenticity, the text of the Qur'an holds a unique place among the books of revelation»¹.

1. Dr. Maurice Bucaille is a surgeon who has taken great interest in the scientific aspects of the Qur'an. He learnt Arabic and managed to study the Qur'an in its original text. He was amazed with its precise scientific data. As a result of this study, Dr. Bucaille converted to Islam.

Miraculosity of the Qur'an

Allah, the Exalted has challenged the Arabs and non-Arabs to produce a *qur'an* similar to the Divine one. The challenge was then reduced to ten *surahs*, and yet they failed to do so. Finally, Allah challenged them to produce a single *surah* comparable to any of His. Although they were masters of eloquence and rhetoric during that period, the Arabs were still incapable of taking up the challenge. They realized that it could never be from anyone other than Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The difference between miracles of the previous Messengers, which proved their veracity, and those of the Messenger of Allah, peace be on him, is that their previous miracles were effective during the lifetime of everyone of them, whereas the miracle of the Qur'an remains effective, everlasting and unchallenged until the Day of Judgment.

Comprehensive Legislation

Besides the finesse of its rhetoric, the Qur'an constitutes the most comprehensive concept of Islam on the practical level, the *shari'ah*, or the laws and legislation. The Qur'an is comprehensive because it includes law, moral principles and the creed which every Muslim subscribes. The Islamic *shari'ah* is suitable not only for the Muslims, but for all mankind at all times. The Islamic law governs all human acts, public or private-duties towards Allah and duties towards man.

Man-made laws are subject to alteration and are based on theories; whenever a new body of legislators assumes authority in a non-Muslim country or a new theory appears and appeals to its government, the laws are changed accordingly. The Divine laws, on the other hand, are unalterable and perpetual because the One Who made them is Everliving and Everlasting God. He is the Creator Who created mankind and ordained for them what suits them till the end of time. For this reason, the Qur'an, being the last revealed to the last of Prophets and Messengers, abrogates all previous Scriptures.

Many prophesies in the Qur'an are fulfilled to the letter. Allah promised those who believe and did good deeds that He will surely make them successors on earth. The early Muslims ruled a vast land encompassing many countries in the world. The Qur'an foretold the victory

of the Romans over the Persians². Allah says: «The Romans have been defeated, in the land nearby, and they after their defeat, will be victorious».

A person who reads the Qur'an objectively shall realize that the prophesies in it are far removed from conjuncture or speculations. This is due to the fact that Who revealed them is the One who predecreed all events until the Day of Judgment.

2. The reference to this prophesy is found in surah #30 entitled 'Arrum' or the Romans. This refers to the battle which took place between the Persian and the Roman in 614 A.D. when the Roman were defeated. Eight years after that, the Roman defeated the Persians, and the prophesy to the Qur'an was fulfilled to the letter.

Science and the Qur'an

Along with the fact the Muhammad, peace be on him, was illiterate; he could neither read nor write, he grew up in Makkah where there were no schools, and he was far away from the scientific circles which existed in Syria, Alexandria, Athens and Rome. Moreover, the scientific facts mentioned in the Qur'an were not known in the seventh century. Having studied and examined the Arabic text of the Qur'an, Dr. Bucaille marvels:

«I could not find a single error in the Qur'an. I had to stop and ask myself: if a man was the author of the Qur'an, how could he have written facts in the Seventh century A.D. that today are shown to be in keeping with modern scientific knowledge? I had too acknowledge the evidence in front of me: the Qur'an did not contain a single statement that was assailable from a modern scientific point of view. I repeated the same test for the Old Testament and the Gospels, always preserving the same objective outlook. In the former, I did not even have to go beyond the first book, Genesis, to find statements totally out of keeping with the cast-iron facts of modern science».

Dr. Bucaille studied many of the scientific facts that are mentioned in the Qur'an, such as the creation of the universe, and other topics including astronomy, animal and plant kingdoms, human reproduction and other

related issues. For the sake of brevity, two of the above issues will be discussed in order to draw the reader's attention to one of the objectives of this booklet.

The Creation of the Heavens and the Earth

“Man’s knowledge of the origin of the universe is considerably limited. The scientists have proposed hypotheses and theories of evolution that are centred around one theme: the radiation era, the premordial fireball and the premordial matter and antimatter. The theories state that the universe consisted mainly of strongly interacting particles. Premordial matter and antimatter, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica, eventually annihilated each other; and the remaining particles formed the present universe”³. The Qur’an presents the development of the universe in relatively simple terms. Allah says, directing His Messenger Muhammad, peace be on him, to ask the unbelievers:

“Say: Is it that ye deny Him Who created the earth in two Days? And do ye join equals with Him?

He is The Lord of (all) The Worlds. He set on the (earth) Mountains Standing firm, high above it, and bestowed blessings on the earth, and measured therein its sustenance in four Days, alike for (all) who ask.

Then He turned to the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth: “come ye together, willingly or unwillingly”.

They said: “we do come (together), in willing obedience”.

3. Macropedia, Vol. 18, p. 1008.

So He completed them as seven firmaments in two Days, and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command. and We adorned the lower heaven with lights, and (provided it) with guard.

Such is the Decree of (Him) The Exalted in Might, Full of Knowledge”⁴.

“Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder?

We made from water every living thing.

Will they not then believe?”⁵.

“The concept of rending of one unit into two or more, the celestial «smoke» as referred to in the above verses are fact to which corresponds the factual scientific data. «Smoke», the English physicist and astronomer Sir James Jeans wrote: We have found that, as Newton first conjectured, a chaotic mass of gas of approximately uniform density and of very great extent would be dynamically unstable: nuclei, would tend to Form in it, around which the whole of matter would ultimately condense”. On the basis of this theory Newton proposed that all celestial objects originated by a process of fragmentation.

Needless to say the space program helped discover the homogeneity of the substances of which the moon, the earth and other planets are formed. «Such state-

4. Qur'an 41 : 9, 10, 11, 12.

5. Qur'an 21 : 30.

ments in the Qur'an concerning the creation which appeared nearly fourteen centuries ago», Dr. Bucaille concluded, «obviously do not lend themselves to a human explanation»⁶.

6. *Macropedia*, Vol. 18, p. 1008.

Human Reproduction

The complexities of human reproduction were decoded and understood only after the invention of the microscope which was hundreds of years after the death of Muhammad, peace be on him. However, the Qur'an refers to the stages of development that human embryo undergoes. Allah says:

“Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay);

Then we placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, Firmly fixed;

Then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then we developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, The Best to create!”⁷.

As it has been scientifically proven, the stages of human reproduction are: «1- Fertilization of an ovule which takes place in the Fallopian tubes. The fertilizing agent is the male sperm. 2- The implantation of the fertilized egg which takes place at a precise spot in the female reproductive system: it descends into the uterus and lodges in the body of the uterus.

Once the embryo begins to be observable to the naked eye, it looks like a small mass of flesh. It grows there in progressive stages which are very well known today;

7. Qur'an 23 : 12, 13, 14.

they lead to the bone structure, the muscles, the nervous system, the circulation, and the viscera, etc»⁸.

In conclusion, Dr. Bucaille ascertains: «More than a thousand years before our time, at a period when whimsical doctrines still prevailed, men had a knowledge of the Qur'an. The statements it contains express in simple terms truths of premordial importance which man has taken centuries to discover».

8. The Bible, the Qur'an and Science, p. 199.

Who is Muhammad?

Muhammad, peace be on him, is the last of Allah's Messengers and Prophets. His name is Muhammad son of Abdullah. He was born in Makkah 570 A.D. Due to the fine reputation he enjoyed among his people, they nicknamed him 'the Trustworthy'. At the age of 40, he was endowed with the prophethood when Allah the Exalted, revealed to him, through the angel Gabriel the first Qur'anic verses, Muhammad, peace be on him, was asked to preach the belief in the Oneness of Allah and warn people against polytheism.

The Makkan polytheists opposed Muhammad, peace be on him, and his few followers harshly, but that did not shake his faith nor waiver his steadfastness, nor did it stop more people from responding to his preaching. Finally, when the majority of the people of Madinah embraced Islam, the Makkan Muslims took flight to Madinah, Later on, the Messenger of Allah himself migrated to Madinah to establish the Islamic State. Few years later the polytheists of Makkah and their allies succumbed to the growing power of the Muslims, and Makkah was conquered. Some thirty years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him, Islam had already spread throughout the world sweeping the two greatest empires in existence; the Persian and the Roman.

What is Islam?

The Arabic term 'Islam', meaning «submission», points to the fundamental religious creed which dictates that a Muslim submit to the will of Allah, conforming inwardly and outwardly to His laws.

The religion of Islam lays great emphasis on uncompromising monotheism and strict adherence to certain creeds and acts of worship. It enjoins submitting to the will of Allah and following the exemplary way of the life of Muhammad, the last of the Prophets and Messengers, may peace be on them all.

Allah, the Exalted created the universe and what is in it that He be recognized as the One and only God. He created man and jinn only to celebrate His praise and worship Him. His words signify: "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may Serve Me".

The ways and acts of worship are not left to man's option or choice. Allah is the One Who ordains and decrees all acts of worship and the means in which they must be observed. Since Islam deals in every aspect of life, spiritual and physical, its jurisprudence is based on creeds, acts of worship and ordinances regarding social, economical and political transactions.

Because Islam is a perfect way of life, it enjoins maintaining a refined code of manners. The Messenger of

9. Qur'an 51 : 56.

Allah said: "Verily, I have been sent to accomplish the fine manners". Allah has praised the fine manners of His Messenger saying: "And surely thou hast sublime morals"¹⁰. A'ishah, the wife of the Messenger of Allah, peace be on him, was asked about his manners. She said: "His manners were al-Qur'an". A'ishah meant that the Prophet, peace be on him, clung to the Qur'an, its rules of discipline, its commands, its prohibitions, and the excellent, beautiful and gracious things comprised in it. For this reason Allah commands the believers to follow the exemplary life of His Messenger, peace be on him, saying: "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar"¹¹.

Islam enjoins good manners for every occasion: seeking permission, greeting, sitting, eating, learning, teaching, sporting, travelling, dressing, visiting, sleeping, marriage, treating people, particularly relatives and neighbours with kindness, etc. Codes of all such great manners are found in both the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions of the Messenger of Allah, peace be on him.

The family enjoys a high status in Islam. It is the core of society; a healthy family means a healthy society, hence Allah, the Exalted commands to treat them with gentleness and submissiveness saying:

"Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents.

10. Qur'an 68 : 4.

11. Qur'an 33 : 21.

Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them but address them, in terms of honour.

And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say:

“My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood”¹².

Next to family comes the kindred. The Messenger of Allah, peace be on him, said that Allah has promised to be kind to him who behaves kindly to his kindred, and to sever him who severs his kindred by unkind behaviour.

12. Qur'an 17 : 23, 24.

The Pillars of Islam

The Messenger of Allah, peace be on him, said: Islam is built on five pillars:

1. ***ash-Shahaadah*** (the profession of faith) which must be recited by anyone embracing Islam. (*La ilaha illallah, Muhammad Rasoolullah*) meaning: «There is no true god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah». This means that there is no god worthy of being worshipped but Allah, and that He must be worshipped only according to the teaching of His Messenger Muhammad, peace be on him.

2. ***Salat*** (prayer), which must be performed five times a day. The first is *Fajr* prayer, [two *rak'aat* (units)]; which may be performed between dawn and sunrise. The second, *Dhuhr*, just afternoon, [four *rak'aat*]. The third *Asr*, in the later afternoon, [four *rak'aat*]. The fourth, *Maghrib*, [three *rak'aat*] immediately after sunset. The fifth, *Isha'*, [four *rak'aat*], after the sun's redness disappears from the horizon. Prayer, however, must be preceded by ablution which is washing hands, face, wiping over the head, washing the forearms and the feet.

Prayer is one of the greatest pillars of Islam. It is the first act of worship about which man shall be asked on the Day of Reckoning. If it is accepted by Allah, then

the rest of man's good deeds are accepted too¹³.

3. **Zakat** (the poor-due) is one of the greatest financial institutions of Islam, literally meaning 'purification', indicating that such a payment makes the rest of the Muslim's wealth pure. *Zakat* is levied annually on certain types of food grain, cattle and cash possessed for one lunar calendar year to be given out to the poor, the needy and other specified classes of people.

4. **Sawm** (fasting) to be observed during the month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar). It begins at daybreak (dawn), and ends at sunset. Eating, drinking¹⁴ and sexual activities with one's wife are forbidden.

Besides health benefits which one gains through fasting, it is an act of worship which helps one who observes it attain piety, humbleness and share the feelings of the bereft and hungry in the community. Fasting also allows one to be more benevolent and charitable.

5. **Hajj** (pilgrimage) to Makkah, prescribed for those Muslims who can afford the trip financially¹⁵ and health

13. Man shall be held accountable for every minute and thing he does, and shall stand all by himself on the Day of Judgment or Reckoning to be questioned by the Almighty Allah. Every one shall be held accountable for his own deeds. The life in the Hereafter is either everlasting happiness or everlasting torment.

14. Drinking, refers to water, fruit juices and other non-alcoholic and soft drinks; liquor and smoking are prohibited in Islam.

15. This means that one must have enough provisions for his journey and for his family during his absence.

wise, once in a lifetime. The *Hajj* rites take place during the Islamic or lunar months of Shawwal, Dthul-Qi'dah and the first ten days of Dthu-Hijjah only. It is a precondition for the pilgrim to enter the state of *Ihram*¹⁶ at a certain point before entering the boundries of Makkah.

16. *Ihram* is the intention to perform Hajj or Umrah by wrapping a piece of cloth covering his body from the chest down. Another piece of cloth covers the upper body; excluding the head. *Ihram* makes it unlawful for the pilgrim to wear sewed garments, shoes, to have sexual activities with his wife, to hunt and the like. Under normal circumstances, once a Muslim enters the state of *Ihram*, he may not break it until he has completed all Hajj or Umrah rituals. But if one is held back from completing Hajj or Umrah, for health reason, fear of enemy or great danger, he may then quit his *Ihram* and sacrifice a sheep, goat, cow or camel as an expiation.

The Articles of Faith

There are also articles of faith which include beside believing in the Oneness of Allah:

1. Believing in the **angels**. Allah has created them and tasked them to undertake numerous duties beside praising Him. They are His obedient slaves. "They stand in awe and reverence of His [glory]"¹⁷.

2. Believing in Allah's **Scriptures**, that they were free from any imperfection or errors at the time of their revelation. All Scriptures that preceded the Qur'an have been tampered with or distorted by their people, while the Qur'an is protected by Allah from change or tampering. Allah sent down Scriptures to Abraham, Isma'il, Is'haq, Ya'oob (Jacob) and his twelve sons, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.

3. Believing in Allah's **Messengers**. Among whom the most prominent and steadfast are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, peace be on them. They are human and slaves of Allah. Every Prophet or Messenger before Muhammad, peace be on him, was sent to his own people, but Muhammad, peace be on him, was sent to all mankind. Allah says: "Blessed is He Who Sent down the Criterion To His Servant, that it May be an admonition to all Creatures;-"¹⁸.

17. Qur'an 21 : 28.

18. Qur'an 25 : 1.

None of Allah's Messengers or Prophets claimed to be a god or part-god. Allah says: "No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have Lorded it over others! Glory to Allah! (He is free) from the (sort of) things they attribute to Him!"¹⁹.

4. Believing in the **Last Day**, the Day of Resurrection. Allah has predecreed a term for each creature, and a term for the life of this world. The world's termination will be marked by the sounding of the Trumpet, then the trumpet will sound again and mankind shall be resurrected to stand before the Lord of the worlds to be questioned about their deeds in this world. Those who believed in Allah and were obedient will go to Jannah or (Paradise), and those who disbelieved will end up in Hell-Fire.

5. Believing in **predestination**. Allah has created everything in accordance with His decree, predestination, desire and will, and in due proportion. His determination of the nature of things was established fifty-thousand years before He created the Heavens and the earth²⁰. Nothing occurs or takes shape within the heavens or the earth but with His knowledge and by His order.

19. Qur'an 23 : 91.

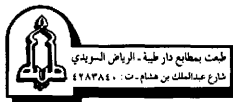
20. Abdullah Bin Amr reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace be on him, said: "Allah had predecreed the creation fifty thousand years before he brought the heavens and the earth into existence". (Imam Muslim, Ahmad and at-Tirmidhi).

Now that you read this booklet, the decision is yours. Everyone is heading for the same end, but may choose any other route. Allah is so merciful; Allah is far removed from injustice; He says: “Nor would we punish until. We had sent A messenger (to give warning)”²¹. Out of our concern for you, we have prepared this message.

21. Qur'an 17 : 16.

Suggested books for reading:

- The Holy Qur'an, (English translation of the meaning) by T. Al-Hilali.
- Sahih al-Bukharri, a collection of the authentic Prophetic traditions.
- Sahih Muslim, a collection of the authentic Prophetic traditions:
 - * The book of Prayer by A. Saqib.
 - * General Prescripts of Islam.
 - * Fasting.
 - * Exegesis of the opening chapter of the Qur'an.
 - * The Fundamentals of Islam.
 - * The life and the Aqeadah of Ash-Sheikh, Muham-mad Ibn Abdul Wahab.



رسالة موجزة عن الإسلام



الكتاب التعاوني للدعوة والإرشاد وتوعية الجاليات بالسييم

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التعاونية
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