

GLIMPSES OF ISLAM

(BASIC PRINCIPLES)

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Islamic Etiquette for Mosque Visitors

As Muslims, we value and appreciate your visit to the mosque, as it will inevitably help to build bridges of understanding and respect among people of various cultural backgrounds and religious denominations.

Each year many visitors pass through the welcoming doors of the Masjid Al-Salaam at 784 Parkhill Road in Peterborough, Ontario. These groups consist of curious churchgoers and students of all ages, as well as a variety of people from different walks of life. Regardless of which group they fall under, many will pose questions regarding Islamic etiquette, or ask what exactly is expected of them as visitors in the mosque.

Below are ten simple recommendations for our respected guests to keep in mind. If you have not yet been to the mosque and would like to stop by for a visit, you can do so by contacting Brother Muhammad at (705) 740-0711 (please give 3 to 4 weeks notice for large groups if possible).

On the day of your visit to the mosque, the following is recommended :

1. Bathe or wudu, and wear clean, modest, loose-fitting clothes which cover the legs and other parts of the body. A head covering is also strongly recommended.
2. Muslims greet each other with the phrase "Assalaam-o-aleikum" ("peace be upon you"), and the reply for this (given with a smile) is "Wa-aleikum-assalaam" ("peace be upon you too"). In Islam, to smile is a form of charity. Please be charitable when in the mosque.
3. If you decide to bring a lunch with you, please remember that Muslims do not eat foods made from pork, nor do we drink alcohol. Therefore we ask that you avoid consuming such foods in the mosque out of respect.
4. The mosque is a place of worship and contemplation. Complete silence and consideration are both necessary in order to avoid disruptions. From dawn until two hours after dusk, the mosque serves as a quiet sanctuary for the five obligatory prayers.
5. Please avoid any public displays of affection with the opposite sex (save it for later at home). In Islam, women and men do not shake hands or touch in any way when in public.
6. Remember to remove footwear prior to your entrance into the prayer hall. Your host or guide will remind you of this, and your cooperation is greatly appreciated in regard to this matter.
7. Please avoid loitering, defiling, arguing and shouting while in and around the mosque premises.
8. Above all, enjoy your visit to the mosque, and we'll make your day a memorable one filled with learning and spiritual enrichment.
9. A thorough visit to the mosque, including a lecture, prayer observation and questions period requires at least one hour.
10. The mosque is open every day for observance of the five daily prayers; Muslims and non-Muslims are equally welcome.

ISLAM: A UNIQUE RELIGION

1. Muslims believe in five pillars (irkan): (a) the unity of God, (b) five daily prayers, (c) fasting during the month of Ramadan, (d) paying the poor due (zakat): 2.5% of savings, (e) pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj).
2. Muslims worship a single God; a God of the whole universe, not the God of Israel (Jewish), and not a three-in-one-God (Christianity). To Muslims, Christ is a major prophet of Islam, not part of God.
3. God has sent prophets to all nations and tribes. Islam teaches that God sent 124,000 various prophets and messengers to humanity. The Holy Qur'an lists Adam, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Elias, Elijah, Jonah, Lot, Hud, Shuab, Saleh, Ezekiel, Zachariah, John, Jesus and Muhammad (pbuh). Muslims do not make distinctions between the prophets. Adam was the first and Muhammad the last.
4. Islam does not celebrate a sabbath. God does not get tired and therefore does not require rest.
5. In Islam there is no clergy, colour or creed. All humans are equal in the eyes of God. The whole universe is a masjid (place of worship) and a Muslim can pray anywhere, anytime.
6. All prophets preached the same message. Therefore there is a unity of thought. However some messages were lost and some were recorded a long time after the prophet had spoken. Other texts were changed and distorted with time. As a result, the Bible in its original languages including Aramaic, the Torah in Hebrew or Egyptian languages are simply not available anywhere.
7. The Qur'an was originally revealed in Arabic and is preserved to the last dot. Muslims believe all prophets related the same message and that Muhammad, the last prophet (pbuh) was recorded accurately in the Qur'an. Therefore the Qur'an has the pure message of all the prophets from Adam to Muhammad.
8. Islam is practiced in a similar way all over the world. Shia or Sunni everywhere pray in a similar manner and in Arabic. Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and of heaven.
9. Islam does not advocate the concept of a chosen people or chosen race. All humans are like the teeth of a comb, equal in the eyes of God and open to salvation by God alone by His will and His permission.
10. Nothing occurs without the will and knowledge of God. God is omnipotent (all powerful) and omnipresent.

11. Islam teaches that there will be a final day of judgment. All the living will die on doomsday and will then be raised and judged. The wicked will be punished in hell or forgiven by God alone, and the pious rewarded in paradise.
12. Muslims believe in angels, i.e. Gabriel, Israfil, Mikail, Jibril and Israfeel. Each one has a responsibility to fulfill. There are many more angels.
13. Each person is responsible for her or his deeds. There is no concept of original sin. Adam and Eve paid in full for their sin of disobedience to God. No child is born in sin in Islam. On the contrary, each child is an innocent and is a great gift of God. Eve alone is not responsible for instigating sin; both Adam and Eve sinned equally.
14. In Islam God does not beget. The Holy Qur'an describes God as follows: *He is One, the One and Only, God the Eternal, Absolute, He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him.* (112:1-4) Therefore, according to Islam Christ cannot be the son of God.
15. Islam is not a new religion; it is rather the cumulative experience of 124,000 various prophets and it was revealed to the man Muhammad (pbuh) and perfected. All prophets preached the same message: One God.
16. Most Islamic practices are fashioned in the manner of the prophet Abraham, the father of Ishmael and Isaac (pbuh). All prophets worshipped the Lord the same way.
17. Muslims are forbidden to oppress and be oppressed. Oppression violates Islamic teachings. Islam has shown itself to be more tolerant of other religions than either Christianity or Judaism. This tolerance results from the Muslim belief that Islam, Christianity and Judaism are related because all are "people of the book: (ah-lal-kitab).
18. Islam and nationalism are incompatible. Islam believes in a single Ummah (one nation).
19. All Islamic teachings stem from the Qur'an, the Hadith, Ulema, Ijma, Ijtimah and Qiayas.
20. Muslims all over the world face Mecca while praying (indicative of unity).

THE TWELVE COMMANDMENTS

My good Christian friends have often asked me if Muslims believe in 10 commandments. During the blessed prophet Muhammad's mystical and bodily ascension to heaven (al-miraj) he was given a comprehensive moral code from Allah. (See Qur'an 17 : 23-38)

1. THE LORD HAS DECREED THAT YOU WORSHIP NONE BUT ALLAH
2. BE KIND TO PARENTS ADDRESS THEM IN TERMS OF HONOUR, & LOWER TO THEM THE WING OF HUMILITY
3. GIVE YOUR RELATIVES, THE NEEDY & TRAVELLERS THEIR DUE RIGHTS
4. SQUANDER NOT YOUR WEALTH IN THE MANNER OF A SPENDTHRIFT, & KEEP NOT YOUR HAND CHAINED TO YOUR NECK (LIKE A MISER)
5. KILL NOT YOUR CHILDREN FOR FEAR OF POVERTY
6. DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, FOR IT IS A SHAMEFUL DEED
7. DO NOT TAKE LIFE WHICH ALLAH HAS MADE SACRED, EXCEPT THROUGH DUE PROCESS OF LAW
8. DO NOT TOUCH THE ORPHAN'S PROPERTY, EXCEPT TO IMPROVE IT
9. FULFIL YOUR PROMISES; ON JUDGEMENT DAY YOU WILL BE CALLED TO ACCOUNT
10. GIVE FULL MEASURE WHEN YOU MEASURE
11. FOLLOW NOT THAT OF WHICH YOU HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE
12. WALK NOT ON THE EARTH WITH ARROGANCE IT IS HATEFUL IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH

M.S. Shaikh

ISLAM (FACT SHEET)

SYNOPSIS OF ISLAM:

- FOUNDED:** Islam was revealed over a long period of time – from the start of mankind. Adam being the first prophet, and Muhammad being the last and final (570-632 C.E.).
- FOUNDERS:** Islam in totality was revealed by God through 124,000 prophets sent to mankind. Islam accepts all prophets mentioned in the Tanakh, the Bible and the Qur'an. The major prophets of Islam are: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ and Muhammad.
- PLACE:** All of the earth. However, major prophets were born in the Middle East. God sent prophets to all nations and tribes.
- NUMBER OF ADHERENTS:** Judging from "Anyone who submits to God is a Muslim", the number is many billions. However, the people who believe in God and Muhammad as the last messenger, the number is 1.6 billion.
- PLACES:** The followers of Islam are found in every nook and corner of the world. Fifty six nations have Muslims in the majority, mainly in the Middle East, Africa and Asia.
- MUSLIMS IN NORTH AMERICA:** There are over 8 million Muslims in the U.S.A. In Canada, Muslims number over 800,000. Most of them live in Toronto, Montréal, Edmonton, Hamilton and Vancouver.
- SCRIPTURES :** Islamic knowledge stems from the Qur'an and the hadith. In case of a challenge, Muslims may consult and use Ulema; Ijma and Qiayas.

BASIC THEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS & PRACTICES/FIVE 'PILLARS' OF ISLAM :

- a) Shahada b) Five daily prayers c) Alms giving d) Fasting
e) Pilgrimage to Mecca. Sometimes, Jihad is considered as the 6th pillar of Islam.

JIHAD : Jihad is : Don't oppress others and don't let others oppress you. Jihad literally means 'the struggle'. Two types: Jihad-A-Akbar and Jihad-A-Asghar.

Qur'an 2 : 136 also asks Muslims to believe firmly in a) one universal God - "Allah" b) the Messengers c) the Sacred Books d) the Angels
e) the Day of Judgment f) 'Qadar' and Taqwa

ISLAMIC SALUTATION:

Assalamu-Alaikum/Wa-Alaikum-Assalam, regardless of hour or season

SABBATH: No sabbath day in Islam

SECTS: Sunni and Shia

MAJOR FESTIVALS:

Eid-ul-Fitr; Eid-ul-Adha; Eid-Mild-un-Nabi; Ashura and Ramadan

HOLY PLACES:

Jerusalem, Medina and Mecca

ISLAMIC CALENDAR:

November 2nd 2003 C.E. is Ramadan 7 1424 Hijrah year. The Islamic calendar is based on lunar systems. There are 12 months of 29 or 30 days each.

ISLAMIC LANGUAGES:

Paramount is Arabic, Urdu; Indonesian; Turkish and Persian.

FURTHER READING:

- 1) THE HOLY QUR'AN by A. YUSUF ALI
 - 2) What everyone should know about Islam and Muslims by Suzanne Haneef.
- Available from IEIE - phone (705) 740-0711

IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY:

Allah-Azan-Allahu Akbar-Shahada-Fard-Hadith-Hajj-Halal-Haram-Hijab-Iftar-Imam-Iman-Jihad-Ka'aba-Muharram-Muslim-Qibla-Qur'an-Rak'at-Salat-(Salat-ul-Jum'ah)-Shar'iah-Shia-Sunnah-Sunni-Surah-Taqwa-Wuzu-Zakat-Hafiz-Muazin-Alim

DID YOU KNOW THAT

- The Qur'an, the word of God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over 1400 years ago, accurately describes the evolution of the embryo inside the uterus (verified by modern science)
- Muslim scholars studied, translated and thereby preserved the works of the early Greek philosophers covering all fields of study
- Hospitals as we know them today were first established by Muslims in the 7th century
- A person had to finish Islamic studies, philosophy, astronomy, art and chemistry BEFORE being accepted as a medical student
- The period 900–1200 A.D. was termed the glorious & flourishing phase of Islamic medicine
- Muslim medical scholars were the first ones to use anaesthesia
- Al-Razi, known as Rhazes in the west, was the first to use alcohol as an antiseptic, described cataract surgery & proposed that tumours should be completely excised or burned out
- A Muslim physician named al-Zahrawi (930-1013 A.D.) used wax & alcohol to stop bleeding from the skull during cranial surgery
- Ibn Sina (980-1037 A.D.), known as Avicenna in the west, was the first to describe meningitis correctly, discover the contagious nature of tuberculosis, propose that some diseases could be caused by minute 'animals' (i.e. germs), etc. His works known as 'The Cannon of Medicine' served as the chief guide to medical sciences in the west from the 12th to the 17th centuries
- The 13th century Muslim physician Ibn al-Nafis discovered pulmonary & coronary circulation
- The principle of inertia was discovered by Ibn al-Haitham, the 10th century Muslim physicist (known as al-Hazen in the west). He also contributed to optics by analyzing the role of the eye as a lens
- Ibn Majid served as a pilot to Vasco da Gama when he wanted to discover the sea route to India
- Muslims invented the art of calligraphy
- The art of bookbinding using leather was introduced to the west by Muslims
- Pile carpets, including Oriental rugs, were first made by Muslims
- Domes, horseshoe arches, twisted columns and arabesque designs were developed by Muslim architects and artisans

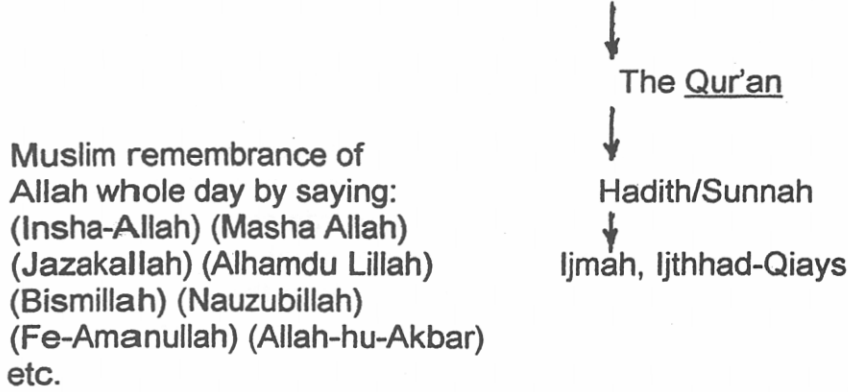
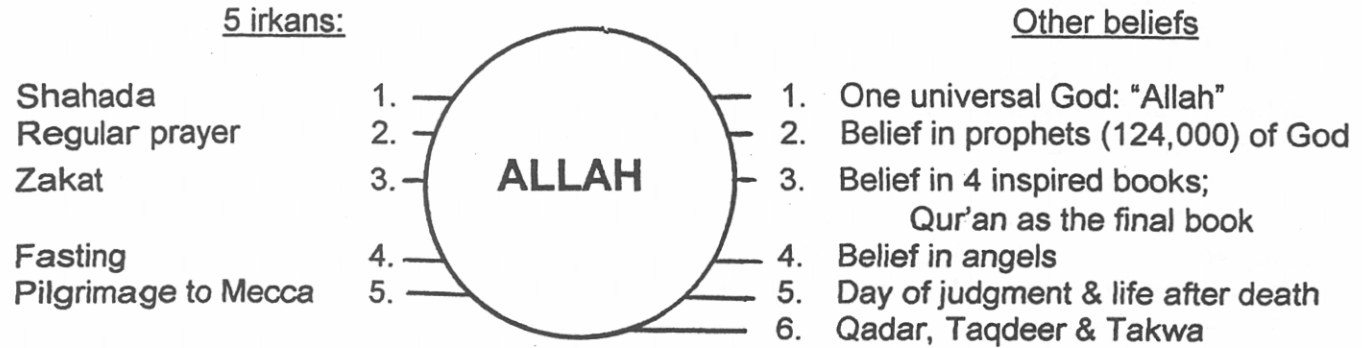
- Numbers as they are written today were developed by Muslim mathematicians
- Muslim mathematicians developed trigonometry & worked up accurate tables for the functions
- The terms logarithm & algebra come from the names of two Muslim mathematicians who studied and developed these areas
- Al-Idrisi, the 12th century geographer, made the first map of the world that was similar to those made by modern cartologists
- Al-Biruni (973-1048 A.D.) developed the mathematical side of geography
- Al-Khwarizmi perfected the planespheric astrolabe, from which the navigator's astrolabe was made in the 15th century
- Al-Razi, the famous Muslim alchemist, first classified substances into mineral, vegetable and animal categories; he also described the processes of distillation and filtration (the word chemistry comes from the Arabic alchemy)
- Al-Jazari constructed highly developed mechanical devices in the field of hydraulic machines and automobiles
- The name Gibraltar comes from 'jabal Tariq' meaning 'Tariq's mountain', after Tariq ibn Ziyad who conquered Spain in the 8th century
- There was a school for perfume makers (Madrasat al-'Attarin) built in Fez, Morocco in the 14th century by Sultan Abu Sa'id
- The first few Muslims arrived in Canada in 1882
- Muslims were among the Canadian soldiers who fought in WW II
- Islam is the principle religion of the Maldives Islands
- Muslims have lived in Poland for six centuries. Two of Poland's mosques were built in the late 17th century
- The kitchens of Istanbul's Topkapi palace once prepared 10,000 meals a day; these kitchens served as a food bank and meals were also prepared for the military guard
- It was the prophet Abraham who coined the term 'Muslim(s)' for the believers even before the revelation of the Qur'an (Qur'an 22:78, 2:128)
- The Qur'an is the most read book in the world according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica

Source unknown

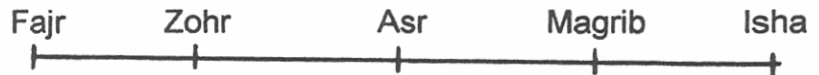
THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

1st Muharram 1426 A.H.
10th February 2005 C.E.

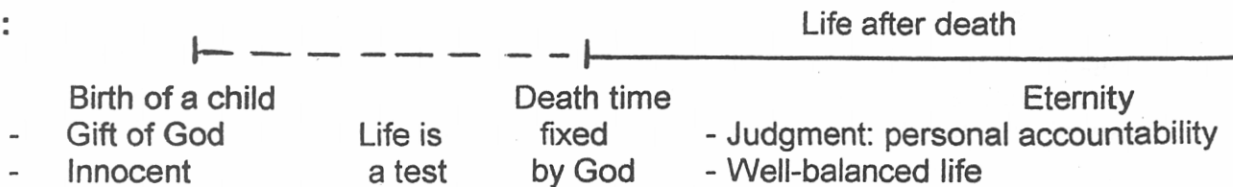
Greeting: Assalaamu-Alaikum / Wa Alaikum Assalaam



(Typical) Muslim day



View on life:



Salvation: → 1. Grace of God → 2. Good deeds

Goal of life: To please Allah according to the injunctions of the Qur'an and the Hadith. Muhammad (pbuh) is a role model for each and every Muslim.

Major languages: Arabic-Urdu-Turkish-Persian-Indonesian-English-French

ORIGINAL SIN: AN ISLAMIC VIEW

'Original sin' or 'acquired sin'? Are we all born bearing the mark of original sin, or did mankind acquire the inclination to sin through Adam and Eve's act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden? In other words, did God decree that every human being would be held accountable for the sin of the first humans ('hereditary criminality'), or did we merely inherit the propensity to sin, since Adam and Eve's disobedience caused sin to enter the world?

A person can only be said to have sinned if he intentionally performs an unlawful prohibited act of his own free will, being in full control of his mental capacity, or if he avoids some lawful obligation. This can also be interpreted as 'disobedience to God's laws'. The theme of intention is echoed in a maxim in law : 'An act does not make a man guilty unless there be intention'.

The story of Adam and Eve and their fall from paradise is well known. They were directed by God to reside in the Garden of Eden and enjoy its fruits as they wished, assured of bountiful supplies and comfort. However, they were warned not to approach a particular tree so as not to run into harm and injustice. But Satan (who had refused to bow down to Adam when the angels were commanded by God to do so) deceived them saying, 'Your Lord only forbade you this tree lest you become angels or such beings as live forever (Qur'an 7 :20). Of course being human, Adam and Eve had to taste the forbidden fruit. When they realized they had disobeyed God, they immediately asked Him for forgiveness. God accepted their plea, and '... turned to him (Adam) with forgiveness and gave him guidance' (Qur'an 20 :122). 'Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration, and his Lord turned towards him; for He is oft-returning, most merciful' (Qur'an 2 :37). However, Adam and Eve were ordered to leave the garden and descend to earth, where their progeny would live and die, and where Satan would also exist. From this we understand that once Adam and Eve realized their sin and repented (and it should be noted that according to the Qur'an both were equally responsible for their transgression, not Eve alone), God in His mercy forgave them, but removed them from paradise to earth, where their progeny would then have the *propensity* to sin, but would not bear the responsibility for the sin of Adam and Eve.

This symbolic event is very revealing. It tells us that the human being is imperfect, and always wanting, even if he were to live in paradise. However, committing a sin as Adam and Eve did does not prevent spiritual reform or stop moral growth. On the contrary, each human being has been endowed with the sense to recognise his sins and shortcomings. Each human being is capable of knowing where to turn for guidance. Even more important is the fact that God is always responsive to those who turn to Him. He is so gracious and compassionate that His forgiveness is encompassing and His mercy is all-inclusive. His forgiving of both Adam and Eve illustrates that forgiveness is not based on gender, and that sin or guilt is not passed on to succeeding generations.

(cont'd....)

Since there is no concept of original sin (or hereditary criminality) in Islam, Muslims believe that every child is born in a natural state of purity, a state of 'submission to God' (which is the meaning of the word Muslim). As he grows up, the state of the human being is the result of external influence and intruding factors. This means that the socialization process, and particularly the home environment, is crucial in the formation of human personality and the development of moral character. However, this in no way removes the freedom of choice given to each individual, nor does it remove the responsibility for one's actions – one cannot use the excuse of a 'dysfunctional family' for example. But it is a relief from the heavy burden of hereditary criminality. All human beings are innocent at birth, and become sinful only when they consciously commit a sin.

Islamic teachings say that human nature is essentially good; there are many elements to human nature and each one has the potential to bring benefits. There is no original sin. When a person contradicts God's commandments he commits a sin, and each person is responsible for his own actions; one's sins cannot be transferred to another, nor can the reward to be gained in the afterlife be transferred. God is never unjust. His scriptures and messengers have strengthened the conscience of the human being to give exact, unambiguous and indubitable guidance. God says in the Qur'an (17 :15), 'Who received guidance receiveth it for his own benefit; who goeth astray doth so to his own loss. No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; nor would We punish until we had sent a messenger to give warning'. This sentiment is also apparent in the Old Testament. In Jeremiah 31 God says '....everyone will die because of his own sin I will forgive their sins and I will no longer remember their wrongs.' In Deuteronomy 24 and 2 Chronicles 25 we read that, 'Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children for their fathers; only for his own guilt shall a man be put to death.' This same theme is expounded in detail by Ezekiel. He says, 'It is the one who sins who will die. A son is not to suffer because of his father's sins, nor a father because of the sins of his son'. This is in accordance with all the tenets of justice and equity, and anything against it is unnatural and detestable. Therefore it is inconceivable that God, who is the source of all justice and equity, would violate it by allowing us to be responsible for another person's sin.

Since there is no concept of original sin, Muslims believe that every baby is born free of sin, and human beings are endowed with the capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Every individual, male or female, is an independent person who is responsible for his or her actions alone. If a person deliberately chooses to commit a sin, that person alone is answerable for it. Since there is no original sin, there is no need for 'salvation'. One's success in the afterlife depends on one's faith in God and on one's actions in this world. Faith is important, but faith alone without deeds would be fruitless.

HOW DO MUSLIMS VIEW JESUS?

How do Muslims view Jesus? The simple answer is that to Muslims Jesus (peace be upon him) is a revered prophet of God. God sent 124,000 prophets to all tribes and nations including all those mentioned in the old and new testaments; this line of prophets ended with Muhammad (pbuh). All these prophets preached the same message; however their teachings were sometimes distorted by those hearing the message, sometimes inadvertently, sometimes to promote other interests.

When Muslims mention Jesus (Eesa in Arabic) we always add 'peace be upon him', as we do with all the prophets. Jesus is mentioned 25 times in the Holy Qur'an; in chapter 2 we read, 'We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit', In chapter 4 '... Christ Jesus the son of Mary was no more than an apostle of God.' Jesus is also addressed with respect as Ibn Maryam, the 'son of Mary', and as the 'maseeh' (or messiah in Hebrew) which means 'anointed one' and which is translated as 'Christ' (the Greek word for anointed is 'christos', hence Christ in English). Prophets, priests, kings and others were also 'anointed (christos-ed). Jesus was anointed as God's messenger by his cousin John the Baptist.

In the Qur'an Jesus is also referred to as the 'Word of God' (he was created by the mere word 'Be', and it was), 'Spirit of God' and 'Sign of God', and other honourable titles in 15 different chapters. This messenger of God is given great importance by Muslims, and there is not a single disparaging remark about him in the Qur'an. Other prophets were also given honourable titles : Abraham is described as the 'friend of God', while Muhammad is known as the 'seal of the prophets'.

Muslims believe in the virgin birth – the birth of Jesus is described in two places in the Qur'an : 'The angels said, O Mary! God hath chosen thee and purified thee, and chosen thee above the women of all nationsGod giveth thee glad tidings of a word from him; his name will be Jesus, the son of Mary; held in honour in this world and the hereafter; and of the company of those nearest to God.' When the time came for Mary to deliver her baby 'she retired herself to a remote place'. When she returned with her baby, she was disgraced – how could Mary explain what had happened to her? All she could do was point to her baby. 'They said, How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle? He (Jesus) said, I am indeed a servant of God; He hath given me revelations and made me a prophetHe hath enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life again.' This is the first miracle attributed to Jesus, that he spoke as a baby to defend his mother. However, this does not mean Jesus was divine; merely that he performed miracles 'by God's leave', just as other prophets did. If being born without a male parent signifies divinity, would Adam not be more divine, being created with neither a mother nor father?

(cont'd)

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What do Muslims believe about the death of Jesus? In the Qur'an God states that Christ's enemies boasted that they had killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, '... but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them'. So although his enemies put Jesus on the cross, he did not die, although it appeared so to his enemies, but 'God raised him up unto Himself'.

Jesus mentioned 'the day that I will be raised up to life again'. This refers to the day of judgement, when all humankind will be raised up again and we will be questioned about our deeds during our lifetime. According to the Qur'an, on that day 'God will ask Jesus, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, didst thou say unto men, take me and my mother for two gods beside God? He will say : Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right to say Never said I to them aught except what Thou didst command me to say, to wit : worship God, my Lord and your Lord'.

This brings up an interesting fact – if the Qur'an is not, as Muslims believe, the inspired word of God, but merely a fabrication by Muhammad (who could neither read nor write by the way), why would he give so much importance and respect to Jesus and Mary, even going so far as to name a whole chapter after Mary (an honour not even given to her in the Bible), and describing Mary as being 'above the women of all nations'? Jesus and Mary were Jews, sworn enemies of the Arabs. If Muhammad wrote the Qur'an, would he not honour his own mother, or wife, or daughter, rather than an enemy, especially as he was addressing his own people, the Arabs?

So according to the Qur'an Jesus was a great prophet, 'in the company of those nearest to God', a servant of God and messenger of God who preached the same message as all the other prophets of the old and new testaments. The Qur'an warns us, 'O people of the Book, commit no excesses in your religion; nor say of God aught but the truth. Christ Jesus son of Mary was no more than a messenger of God, and His word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him; so believe in God and His messengers.'

Elizabeth F. Rahman

AH-OOZU BIL-LAA-HI MINASH

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ

I SEEK REFUGE WITH ALLAH

SHAI-TAA NIR-RA-JEEM

الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

FROM THE ACCURSED SATAN

BIS-MIL-LAA HIR-RAH-MAA
NIR-RA-HEEM

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE
BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

AL-HAM-DU LIL-LAA-HI
RAB-BIL AALA-MEEN

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

ALL PRAISE IS DUE TO ALLAH,
LORD OF ALL THE WORLDS

AR-RAH-MAA NIR-RA-HEEM

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

MAA-LI-KI YAU-MID-DEEN

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

MASTER OF THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

EEYAA-KA NAA-BU-DU
WA EEEYAA-KA NAS-TA-EEN

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

THEE ALONE WE WORSHIP
AND THEE ALONE WE ASK FOR HELP

IH-DINAS SIRAA-TAL
MUS-TA-KEEM

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

GUIDE US ON THE STRAIGHT
PATH

SIRAA-TAL LAZEE-NA
AN-AM-TA ALAI-HIM

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

THE PATH OF THOSE WHOM
THOU HAST BLESSED

GHAIR-RIL MAGH-DOO-BI
ALAI-HIM

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

NOT OF THOSE UPON WHOM
WRATH IS BROUGHT DOWN

WA-LAD DAUL-LEEN (AMEEN)

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ آمِينَ

NOR OF THOSE WHO HAVE GONE
ASTRAY (BE IT SO)

Qur'an 1 : 1-7

KUL-HU WAL-LAA-HU AHAD

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ

SAY! HE IS ALLAH, THE ONE

AL-LAA-HUS SAMAD

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ

ALLAH, THE ETERNAL, ABSOLUTE

LAM YA-LID WA LAM YOU-LAD

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ

HE BEGETS NOT, NOR IS HE
BEGOTTEN

WA LAM YA-KUL-LA-HOO
KU-FU-WAN AHAD

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

AND THERE IS NONE LIKE
UNTO HIM

Qur'an 112 : 1-4

BIS-MIL-LAA HIR-RAH-MAA
NIR-RA-HEEM

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE
BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

AL-LAA-HU LAA-ILAA-HA IL-LAA-HU

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

ALLAH! THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE

AL HAI-YUL KAI-YOOM

الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

THE LIVING THE SELF SUBSISTING
ETERNAL

LAA TAA-KHU-ZU-HOO SINA-TUN
WA LAA NAUM

لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

SLUMBER DOES NOT OVERTAKE
HIM NOR DOES HE SLEEP

LA-HOO MAA-FISS SA-MAA-WAA-TI
WA MAA FIL ARD

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

HIS ARE ALL THINGS IN THE
HEAVENS AND ON EARTH

MAN ZAL-LA-ZEE YASH-FA-UH
IN-DA-HOO IL-LAA BI-IZ-NIH

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

O WHO CAN INTERCEDE WITH HIM
EXCEPT BY HIS PERMISSION

YAA-LA-MU MAA BAI-NA
AI-DEE-HIM WA MAA KHAL-FA-HUM

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ

HE KNOWS WHAT IS BEFORE THEM
AND WHAT IS BEHIND THEM

WA-LAA YU-HEE-TOO-NA BI-SHAI-IM
MIN IL-MI-HEE

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ

AND THEY CANNOT COMPREHEND
ANYTHING OUT OF HIS KNOWLEDGE

IL-LAA BI-MAA SHAA-AH

إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

EXCEPT WHAT HE PLEASURES

WA-SI-AH KUR-SEE-YU-HUSS
SA-MAA-WAA-TI WAL ARD

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

HIS THRONE EXTENDS OVER THE
HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

WA-LAA YA-ODU-HOO HIF-ZU
HU-MAA

وَلَا يُكْوِدُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا

AND PRESERVING THEM DOES NOT
OVERBURDEN HIM

WA HU-WAL ALEE-YUL AZEEM

وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

AND HE IS THE MOST HIGH-
THE GREAT

I seek refuge in Allah from Satan.
 In the name of Allah
 Most Compassionate
 Most Merciful

Praise be to Allah,
 The Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds.
 Most Gracious, most Merciful
 Master of the day of judgement;
 You alone we worship,
 And Your aid we seek.
 Show us the straight path
 The path of those who have earned Your favour,
 Not the path of those who earn Your anger
 Or of those who go astray.

Qur'an 1 : 1-7

In the name of Allah
 The Compassionate
 The Merciful
 Say : He is Allah
 The One and Only
 Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;
 He begetteth not,
 Nor is He begotten;
 And there is none
 Like unto Him.

Qur'an 112 : 1-4

Allah! There is no god but He
 The living, the self-subsisting, eternal.
 No slumber can seize Him nor sleep.
 His are all things in the heavens and on earth.
 Who is there can intercede in His presence,
 Except as He permits?
 He knows what appears to His creatures as
 Before or after or behind them.
 Nor shall they comprehend anything of His knowledge
 Except as He pleases.
 His throne extends over the heavens and the earth,
 And He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them.
 For he is the most High, the Supreme in glory.

Qur'an 2 : 255

YOU MUST KNOW THIS MAN : MUHAMMAD (pbuh)

You may be an atheist or an agnostic; or you may belong to any one of the religious denominations that exist in the world today. You may be a communist or a believer in democracy and freedom. No matter what you are, and no matter what your religious and political beliefs, personal and social habits happen to be – YOU MUST STILL KNOW THIS MAN!

He was by far the most remarkable man that ever set foot on this earth. He preached a religion, founded a state, built a nation, laid down a moral code, initiated numerous social and political reforms, established a dynamic and powerful society to practise and represent his teachings, and completely revolutionized the worlds of human thought and action for all times to come.

His name was Muhammad, peace and blessings of Almighty God be upon him – and he accomplished all these wonders in the unbelievable short span of twenty-three years.

Muhammad was born in Arabia on 20th August, in the year 570 of the Christian era, and when he died after 63 years, the whole of the Arabian Peninsula had changed from paganism and idol-worship to the worship of One God; from tribal quarrels and wars to national solidarity and cohesion; from drunkenness and debauchery to sobriety and piety; from lawlessness and anarchy to disciplined living; from utter moral bankruptcy to the highest standards of moral excellence. Human history has never known such a complete transformation of a people or a place before or since!

The Encyclopaedia Britannica calls him *'the most successful of all religious personalities of the world'*. Bernard Shaw said about him that if Muhammad were alive today he would succeed in solving all those problems which threaten to destroy human civilization in our times. Thomas Carlyle was simply amazed as to how one man, single-handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less than two decades. Napoleon and Gandhi never tired of dreaming of a society along the lines established by this man in Arabia thirteen centuries ago.

Indeed no other human being ever accomplished so much, in such diverse fields of human thought and behaviour, in so limited a space of time, as did Muhammad. He was a religious teacher, a social reformer, a moral guide, a political thinker, a military genius, an administrative colossus, a faithful friend, a wonderful companion, a devoted husband, a loving father – all in one. No other man in history ever excelled or equalled him in any of these difficult departments of life.

The world has had its share of great personalities. But these were one-sided figures who distinguished themselves in but one or two fields such as religious thought or military leadership. None of the other great leaders of the world ever combined in himself so many different qualities to such an amazing level of perfection as did Muhammad.

The lives and teachings of other great personalities of the world are enshrouded in the mist of time. There is so much speculation about the time and the place of their birth, the mode and style of their life, the nature and detail of their teachings and the degree and measure of their success or failure that it is impossible for humanity today to reconstruct accurately and precisely the lives and teachings of those men.

Not so this man Muhammad. Not only was he born in the fullest blaze of recorded history, but every detail of his private and public life, of his actions and utterances, has been accurately documented and faithfully preserved to our day. The authenticity of the information so preserved is vouched for not only by faithful followers, but also by unbiased critics and open-minded scholars.

At the level of ideas, there is no system of thought and belief – secular or religious, social or political – which could surpass or equal ISLAM – the system which Muhammad propounded. In a fast changing world, while other systems have undergone profound transformations, Islam has remained above all change and mutations, and retained its original form for the past 1400 years. What is more, the positive changes that are taking place in the world of human thought and behaviour truly and consistently reflect the healthy influence of Islam in these areas.

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Further, it is not given to the best of thinkers to put their ideas completely into practice, and to see the seeds of their labours grow and bear fruit in their own lifetime. Except of course Muhammad, who not only preached the most wonderful ideas but also successfully translated each one of them into practice in his own lifetime. At the time of his death his teachings were not mere precepts and ideas straining for fulfillment, but had become the very core of the life of tens of thousands of perfectly trained individuals, each one of whom was a marvellous personification of everything that Muhammad taught and stood for. At what other time or place and in relation to what other political, social, religious system, philosophy or ideology, did the world ever witness such a perfectly amazing phenomenon?

Indeed no other system or ideology, secular or religious, social or political, ancient or modern, could ever claim the distinction of having been put into practice in its fullness and entirety even once in this world, either before or after the death of its founder. Except of course ISLAM, the ideology preached by Muhammad which was established as a complete way of life by the teacher himself, before he departed from this world. History bears testimony to this fact and the greatest sceptics have no option but to concede this point.

In spite of these amazing achievements and in spite of the countless absolutely convincing and authentic miracles performed by him and the phenomenal success which crowned his efforts, he did not for a moment claim to be God or God's incarnation or son, but only a human being who was chosen and ordained by God to be a teacher of truth to mankind and a complete model and pattern for their actions.

He was nothing more or less than a human being. But he was a man with a noble and exalted mission – and his unique mission was to unite humanity in the worship of the ONE and ONLY GOD and to teach them the way to honest and upright living in accordance with the laws and commands of God. He always described himself as a MESSENGER and SERVANT of GOD, as indeed every single action and movement of his proclaimed him to be.

A world which has not hesitated to raise to divinity individuals whose very lives and missions have been lost in legend and who historically speaking did not accomplish half as much – or even one tenth – as was accomplished by Muhammad, should stop to take serious note of this remarkable man's claim to be God' messenger to mankind.

Today after the lapse of some 1400 years, the life and teachings of the prophet Muhammad have survived without the slightest loss, alteration or interpolation. Today they offer the same undying hope for treating mankind's many ills which they did when the prophet Muhammad was alive. This is our honest claim and this is the inescapable conclusion forced upon us by a critical and unbiased study of history.

The least YOU should do as a thinking, sensitive, concerned human being is to stop for one brief moment and ask yourself : could it be that these statements, extraordinary and revolutionary as they sound, are really true? Supposing they really are true, and you did not know this man Muhammad or hear about his teachings? Or did not know him well and intimately enough to be able to benefit from his guidance and example? Isn't it time you responded to this tremendous challenge and made some effort to know him? It will not cost you anything but it may well prove to be the beginning of a completely new era in your life. Come, let us make a new discovery of the life of this wonderful man Muhammad, the like of whom never walked on this earth, and whose example and teachings can change your life and our world for the better. May God shower His choicest blessings upon him!

NON-DISCRIMINATORY, UNBIASED OPINIONS & GLOWING TRIBUTES TO PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.)

"And We have not sent thee (Muhammad) except as a mercy to all nations."

"Certainly there is for you in (Muhammad) the Messenger of Allah an excellent example"

The Qur'an 21: 107; 33:21

"Of all men Muhammad (S.A.W.) has exercised the greatest influence upon the human race."

History of the Intellectual Development of Europe: J.W. Draper M.D., LL.D.

"With regards all standards whereby human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, 'Is there any man greater than he (Muhammad S.A.W.)?' "

History of Turks: Lamartine

"My choice of Muhammad (S.A.W.) to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others. But he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels."

The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential persons in History": Michael H. Hart

"Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Muhammad (S.A.W.)"

Time: 15th July 1974

"No name in the world's history shines with a more specious luster than that of the Prophet of Mecca (Muhammad S.A.W.). Judged by the standard of human renown, the glory of what man can compare with his?"

Islam and its Founder: J.W.H. Stodard

"Muhammad (S.A.W.) was probably the greatest champion of women's rights the world has ever seen."

Pierre Crabites, an American judge

"Of all the religious personalities in the world Muhammad (S.A.W.) was the most successful."

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th Edition

"History has only one solitary instance on record when a spiritual teacher (Muhammad S.A.W.) transformed a whole nation of drunkards and winebibbers into complete teetotallers with the instantaneousness of a miracle."

The Light: 16th July 1957

"If Islam means submission to one God, do we not all live in Islam?"

Goethe

"If there is any religion which can have sway in Britain,, nay in the whole of Europe, it will be Islam or something similar to Islam. So there is nothing to be worried about Islam."

George Bernard Shaw

The Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Last Sermon

This sermon was delivered on the ninth day of Dhul Jijjah 10 A.H. in the 'Uranah valley of Mount Arafat

'O people, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.

O people, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. ALLAH has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O people, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. If they abide by your right, then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never to commit adultery.

O people, listen to me in earnest; worship ALLAH, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to. You know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal. Nobody has superiority over other except by piety and good action.

Remember, one day you will appear before ALLAH and answer for your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O people, NO PROPHET OR APOSTLE WILL COME AFTER ME AND NO NEW FAITH WILL BE BORN. Reason well therefore O people, and understand my words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QUR'AN and my example the SUNNAH and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people.'

Chronological table of the main events in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

- 570 C.E./53 B.H. Born posthumously at Mecca (father – Abdulla; mother – Aminah)
- 576 Death of his mother Aminah
- 578 Death of grandfather Abdul Muttalib
- 595 Marriage to Khadija
- 610 Prophetic mission and call to Islam
- 615 Muslims migrate to Ethiopia to avoid Quraysh tribe's persecution
- 619 Death of uncle Abu Talib (b. 539), then of wife Khadija
- 621 Events of Al Isra and Miraj (spiritual and physical journey from Mecca to Jerusalem then to Heaven and back)
- 621-622 First and second covenant of Akabah
- 622 *The Hijrah or migration of Muslims and Muhammad to Medina (12th Rabi-ul-Awal/July 622)
*Start of Islamic era
- 624/2 A.H. Battle of Badar (Friday 7th Ramadan 2 A.H.) near Medina
- 625/3 A.H. Battle of Uhud near Medina
- 626/4 A.H. The tribe of Al-Nadhir expelled from Medina for treachery
- 627/5 A.H. Tribe Qurayza broke covenant with Muhammad in the middle of war of Al-Khandiq, joined Meccans – their treacherous act punished. War at Medina.
- 628/6A.H. In March, Treaty of Hdaybiyya signed: truce between Muslim and Quraysh prevailed. The Prophet allowed to preach Islam without hindrance.
- 629/7A.H. The people of Khybar raised a large army against Muslims. Khybar defeated.
- 629/7 A.H. Invitation to accept Islam extended to Kings of Persia, Yemen, Ethiopia and Rome. Letters and messages sent.
- 630/8.A.H. * Treaty of Hdaybiyya broken by the Quraysh
 - Mecca taken by the Muslims
 - Entire Meccan population given amnesty
 - Kaa'ba became the religious centre of Islam (8 A.H.) once again.
- 631/9A.H. * The 9th year of Hijrah was called "The Year of Deputation"
 - Arab tribes from all directions sent delegates to learn Islam
 - Qur'anic revelations completed – the Farewell
- 632/10A.H. Muhammad's farewell pilgrimage to Mecca
(see the Last Sermons of the last Prophet for Islamic teaching)
- 632/10 A.H. Death of Prophet Muhammad – Sunday 8th June, 3 months after the farewell

SOCIAL REFORMS

Islam restrained the unlimited rights exercised by men over their wives, and gave women both spiritual and material equality with men.

Pierre Crabites, an American judge, after a long experience of Muslim law as administered in Cairo, Egypt, said: 'Muhammad was probably the greatest champion of women's rights the world has ever seen. Islam conferred upon the Muslim wife property rights and juridical status exactly the same as that of her husband. She is free to dispose of and manage her financial assets as she pleases, without let or hindrance from her husband'.

(*Judge Pierre Crabites : What Muhammad did for women; Magazine Asia USA, 1927*)

Islam also laid the foundation for the abolishing of slavery. Great social changes were brought about by breaking down the differences between free men and freed man; placing every Muslim under the protection of the entire community, and instituting a compulsory poor due (*zakat*) by which every Muslim had to pay 2 1/2% of his total assets (after expenses) for the year, to be collected in a central treasury and distributed among the poor.

'Not until the Recluse of Hira sounded the note of freedom, not until he proclaimed the practical equality of mankind, not until he abolished every privilege of caste and emancipated labour, did the chains which had held in bondage the nations of the earth fall to pieces', writes *Syed Amir Ali* in his celebrated work *The Spirit of Islam*.

The essence of the political character of Islam is to be found in the charter granted to the Jews by the prophet (pbuh) after his arrival in Medina, and the noteworthy message sent to the Christians of Najran and the neighbouring districts after Islam had fully been established in the Arabian peninsula. In a politically significant message, the prophet wrote :

'To the Christians of Najran and neighbouring territories, the security of God and the pledge of His prophet are extended for their lives, their religion and their property There shall be no interference as with the practice of their faith, or their observance, nor any change in their rights and privileges; no tithes shall be levied from them, nor shall they be required to furnish provision for them' (*quoted in Kitab al Khira of Imam Yusuf, edited by Muir*).

Essentially, Islam gave to its people a code which, however archaic in its simplicity, was capable of the greatest development in accordance with the progress of material civilization. It conferred on the state a flexible constitution, based on just appreciation of human rights and duties. It made men and women equal in the eyes of the law, and established checks and balances on sovereign power by making the executive authority subordinate to the law – a law based upon religious sanction and moral obligations.

The first four governments of the Muslims after the passing of the prophet were popular governments, administered by an elected chief with limited powers in administrative and executive affairs. No head of state could act in contravention of the recognized law. The law was the same for rich and poor. The judicial tribunals were not dependent on the government; their decisions were supreme.

Contributed by Elizabeth F. Rahman