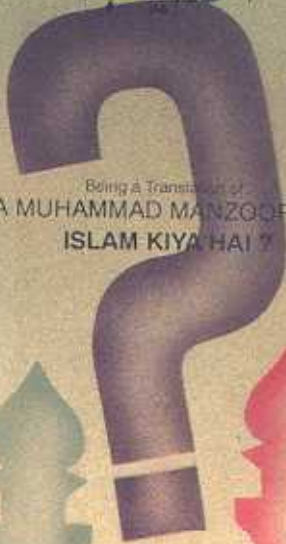


WHAT ISLAM IS ?

اسلام کیا ہے؟



Being a Translation of
MAULANA MUHAMMAD MANZGUR NAOMAN'S
ISLAM KIYA HAI ?

By
MOHAMMAD ASIF KIDWAI

DARUL ISHAAT

URDU BAZAR, KARACHI-1.

PAKISTAN. PHONE: 2631861

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PREFACE

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST
BENEVOLENT, THE MOST MERCIFUL

Should it be possible for the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon whom) to be sent down into the world once again by God what would his reaction be on seeing the conduct and behaviour and the general design of life of the community that passes today by the name of Muslim? And what advice and command would he give to such of his followers who still possess in their hearts some solicitude for the faith and whose souls have not yet frozen to and got completely bereft of devotion and allegiance to Islam?

Without the least hesitation I can say that he will extremely pained at the spectacle of utter moral and spiritual degeneration the bulk of Muslims present these days, as much as he was by the brutal treatment meted out to him by the people of Taif or by the savage assaults made by the callous Polytheists at Ohud. And his message to earnest concern for the Faith will be to dedecate themselves whole-heartedly to the task of improving and reforming the lamentable religious state of his Ummat and of breathing into it again the spirit of Faith and Islamic way of life.

So, if you find yourself in agreement with me and your heart concurs with what I have said above you must resolve, here and now, and in all sincerity, to make this endeavour a part of your life. For my part, I am absolutely confident that it is the choicest

way to earn the pleasure of God and the blessings of the Prophet and to make his soul happy.

By the grace of God, efforts for the moral and religious revival of Muslims are being made on a fairly large scale in India and Pakistan and in several other countries also in the form of a movement called Tabligh. Wherever you may be living you can take part in these efforts, according to your means and circumstances, along with other earnest sons of Islam of your place and also do what you can individually in respect of it.

This small book which is now in your hands is a part of this endeavour. It has been written specially to meet the needs of Muslim men and women who do not know much about Islam or who cannot avail themselves of more advanced books on it. They can read it themselves or have it read out to them by others and also communicate its contents to their brethren by reading the book publicly in mosques and at other Muslim congregations, and, thus, do their bit towards their own religious correction and reform as well as that of others.

Though the book consists only of about two hundred pages the sum and substance of the Faith has been covered fully in it. Within its twenty lessons all those teachings of the Quran and the Traditions have been compressed by knowing which and by acting on which a common man can not only become a good Muslim but a perfect man of faith and a 'friend' of the Lord also. Besides, it can be freely presented to

non-Muslims who may be interested in knowing about Islam and its precepts.

The humble Author could only produce the book which he has done. Now, to make it serve the purpose, in a worthwhile manner, for which it has been written depends solely on your choice and cooperation. Had his financial resources permitted, the Author would have got it printed in millions and sent a copy of it, free of cost, to every educated Muslim in India. The conditions now prevailing in India particularly cry out for it. But, from the beginning, it has been the Will of God that those who cherish such aspirations seldom have the means to realise them-and, without a doubt, there lies great wisdom of the Lord in it also.

Be it as may, it is beyond the power of the present writer to fulfil his desire. But, if Muslims in whose hands the book may reach decide, in their eagerness to propitiate God and give happiness to the soul of the Prophet and to earn for themselves a bountiful reward in the Hereafter, to make it available, or its contents, to as many of their brethren as possible, the real aim of its writing and publication can be fulfilled a good deal.

As it has been indicated already, in the new context of things in India the religious future of Muslims rests apparently on the sole condition that every follower of the Prophet here who is alive to the importance of the Faith and knows what it means makes it a personal duty to strive for the Islamic regeneration of the general body of Muslims and a

missions of his life to carry the message of Faith and the teachings of Islam to each and every member of his community.

Mohammad Manzoor Nomani

Lucknow.

INTRODUCTION

Brothers,-You all will, perhaps, be aware that Islam is not the name of a caste or community so that anyone who is born in it automatically becomes a Muslim without having to do anything, on his own part, about it just as a child born in a Sheikh or a Syed family becomes a Sheikh or a Syed, as a matter of course, and there is nothing it can do in this regard.

Islam, on the other hand, is the name of that faith and that way of life which was brought into the world from God by His true and devoted Apostle, Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him), and is preserved to this day in its pristine purity in the Quran and the holy Traditions. Thus, he alone can be called a Muslim who accepts that faith and practices that way of life. Those who are ignorant of the teachings of Islam, or do not act upon them, are not genuine Muslims by any means. We, therefore, conclude, that two things are necessary for anyone to be a true Muslim :

Firstly, to acquire a proper knowledge of the teachings of Islam, or, at least, of its basic and fundamental doctrines;

And, secondly, to believe in these teachings as true and to resolve sincerely to live according to them.

This, in sum, is what Islam is. To acquire a knowledge of the tenets of Islam, i.e., of its essential

teachings is the first requisite of being a Muslim. A Tradition of the Prophet reads :

"To acquire knowledge of the faith is the duty of all Muslims."

It is necessary to bear permanently in the mind that to carry out what is described in religion as a duty is an act of worship in Islam. To exert oneself for the sake of obtaining an adequate knowledge of the faith, hence, is also an act of worship on which there is a bountiful reward from God. The holy Prophet has proclaimed great merit in it. Take these Traditions, for instance :

"He who goes forth in search of religious knowledge engages himself in the cause of God until he returns."

"For him who goes out in search of religious knowledge God shall make easy the way to Heaven."

"Thirst for religious knowledge and the pursuit of it atones for one's previous sins."

In short, the cultivation of religious knowledge, i.e., the knowledge of the essential teachings of Islam is binding on all Muslims, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, male and female, old and young. From the Traditions of the Prophet quoted above we also learn that a rich reward awaits us in the Hereafter for the time spent and the pains taken for the sake of it. Let us all, now, make up our minds that we will strive earnestly to equip ourselves with adequate

knowledge of the faith and a proper understanding of the basic doctrines of Islam.

For Muslims who, on account of their age or pre-occupation, cannot join a Muslim theological institution and take a regular course of Islamic religious instruction, the best thing will be that, if they are educated, they should develop the habit of reading reliable books on Islam regularly, and, if they are not or only nominally so, they should have such books read out to them by others who can read and understand. If the custom of reading religious books, individually or in groups, can become common in Muslim homes, mosques and at their other gatherings, the spread of religious knowledge to all classes and sections of the community will be greatly facilitated indeed.

This small book has been written solely to fulfil this purpose. All the necessary information regarding Islam and the teachings of the sacred Prophet which a Muslim ought to possess has been furnished in it in a simple language. Let us all learn these truths and precepts ourselves and impart them to others as well and make it a mission of our lives to popularise them in the world. A Tradition of the Prophet says :

"If a person engages himself in the pursuit of Islamic religious knowledge with the object of reviving the faith through it (i.e., by instructing it to others and bringing them round to act on it) and he dies in the process, his place will be so very close to the Prophets in the Hereafter that there will be only a difference of one degree between them and him."

May Allah grant us the great good fortune of learning the precepts of Islam ourselves and teaching them to others, and of acting on them and endeavouring sincerely to persuade others to do the same.

Lesson 1

The Holy Kalima

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

THERE IS NO GOD (NO ONE IS WORTHY OF
WORSHIP AND OBEDIENCE) SAVE ONE
GOD, AND MOHAMMAD IS HIS APOSTLE

Brothers,—this confession is the gateway to Islam, the arch-stone of the faith. By affirming it and reciting it with sincerity and conviction even a life-long heathen or a polytheist can become a Muslim, a man of faith, and earn his title to salvation. The condition, however, is that he should have accepted conscientiously and with full understanding the declaration of the Oneness of God and the Apostleship of Prophet Mohammad contained in it. Thus, any one who repeats the confession mechanically, without understanding it and without knowing what the concepts of Divine Unity and Apostleship and Prophecy mean, will not gain recognition in the sight of God as a Muslim. It is, therefore, necessary to study its meaning and implications carefully.

The confession consists of two parts. The first part لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ contains the affirmation of the Oneness of God. It means that no one except the Almighty

is worthy of worship and obedience. Worship and obedience should be offered to Him alone because He and no one else is our Lord and Creator, Nourisher and Sustainer and the Dispenser of Life and Death. Sickness and health, poverty and riches, in short, all manner of good and evil, gain or loss, lies solely in His control. Apart from Him, whatever living things exist on the earth, or in the heavens, be they men or angels, are all His creatures and slaves. He is partnered by no one, no one has a share in His Divinity nor can any one amend or alter His Will, or interfere with His affairs. Hence, He and He alone is worthy of devotion and worship. He alone is the Supreme Being, the Almighty, to whom all our prayers and supplications should be addressed. He alone is the real Owner of the heavens and the earth, the Monarch of all monarchs, the Lord Sovereign. It is, therefore, necessary that all His commands and injunctions are strictly obeyed and faithfully carried out. As against His commands the commands of no one should be heeded to no matter whether they are of our parents or rulers or of the head of the community or a dear friend, or the biddings of our own heart. In a nutshell, when once we have realized and confessed the truth that God alone, and no one besides Him, is worthy of worship and obedience our conduct should also be in conformity with it, so much so that any one who sees us should know by our behaviour that we are the devoted servants of the Lord who carry out His commands dutifully and live and die for His sake alone.

Brothers,-this **لااله الا الله** is the keystone of Islam and the first and foremost item in the teachings of all the Prophets. It commands the highest, the most important place in the religious scheme of things. A famous Tradition of the Prophet reads :

"There are more than seventy departments of the faith and among them the most superior and exalted is belief in the *Kalima* of **لااله الا الله**.

For this reason, among the prayer-formulas¹ also it is the best. States the Prophet :

"Of all the prayer-formulas the best and most excellent is that of **لااله الا الله**."

In another Tradition it is related that once God gave this reply to a question put to Him by Prophet Moses :

"O Moses, if the seven heavens and the seven earths and all that is contained in them are placed on one side of the balance and **لااله الا الله** on the other, the side on which **لااله الا الله** is placed will turn out to be heavier."

Brothers,-this unique virtue and excellence of **لااله الا الله** is due solely to the fact that it contains the solemn affirmation of Divine Unity, the assertion, the pledge and the declaration that we shall worship Him alone and offer our homage and obeisance to no one

1. The word *Zikr* which occurs in the original literally means a special phrase meant for recitation by the devout by way of God-remembrance. -Translator

apart from Him, and shall make Him the sole pivot of our existence. It, indeed, is the life-breath of Islam.

That is why, the holy Prophet has advised Muslims to refresh and to reinvigorate their faith by repeating the *Kalima* frequently.

It is narrated that the Prophet once said, "O men ! keep on refreshing your faith". Upon this the Companions enquired, "O Prophet of God ! How are we to do so?" The Prophet replied, "By reciting the *Kalima* frequently."

The *Kalima* of لا اله الا الله holds the power to restore and revitalise the faith for the simple reason that it embodies the affirmation of Divine Unity and the covenant to worship Him alone, to do allegiance to no besides Him and to hold Him dearer and nearer to the heart than anything or anybody else in the world. As we have said earlier, it is the essence, the sustaining principle of Islam. So, the more we will utter it attentively, concentrating duly on what it stands for, the more will our faith gain in vitality and our covenant in strength, and our whole life will, Insha Allah, get cast in the mould of لا اله الا الله.

The Second Part

The second part of the *Kalima* consists of محمد رسول الله. In it the affirmation is made of the Divine Apostleship of Prophet Mohammad. That Prophet Mohammad is the Apostle of God means that he was raised up by the Almighty for the guidance of the world and whatever he taught, preached or revealed like the Divinity of the origin of the Quran,

the existence of the angels, the certainty of the Last Day, the Resurrection, the Judgement, the award of heaven and hell according to one's deeds on the earth was hundred per cent true and authentic. Indeed, the Apostleship of the holy Prophet denotes nothing more and nothing less than this that all the things he taught to the world, all the truths he revealed to mankind, were based on Divine inspiration, that they were based on special and authoritative knowledge vouchsafed to him by God, and so they were absolutely correct and beyond dispute. There is not the least excuse, the slightest reason, for doubting or questioning his word. The guidance he gave to men, the laws he laid down, were Divine guidance and Divine laws which had been inspired to him by the Almighty. You would have realised that the acceptance of any one as a Divine Apostle automatically implies that each and every precept and command of his should be wholeheartedly believed in and obeyed for God raised up His Apostles in the world solely to convey through them to mankind the commands and precepts He wants it to follow. Says the Quran :

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

We sent not an Apostle, but to be obeyed in accordance with the Will of God. (IX:64)

To believe in anyone as an Apostle and to accept him as such, thus, means simply to hold every word of his as true, to regard his teachings and guidance to be the teachings and guidance of God, and to decide,

once for all, to lead one's life according to the precepts he taught. So, if a person recites the *Kalima* but does not, as a logical consequence of it, resolve firmly to hold all the teachings of the Prophet to be wholly true and all that may run counter to them to be wholly false, and to abide by his Shariat (holy law) and his commands faithfully, he, of course is not a man of faith and a Muslim. He, probably, has not even understood what it means to be a Muslim.

It is obvious that once we have recited the *Kalima* and accepted the Prophet as the true Apostle of God, it becomes obligatory for us to believe in his guidance, to adhere to his commands and to observe faithfully the *Shariat* he brought.

A Covenant

From the meaning and interpretation of the holy *Kalima* given above, you will have realised that it is a covenant. It embodies the pledge and the vow that we believe in Allah as the One and Only Lord Sovereign, Master and Creator, and regard everything that exists in this world and the Hereafter to be exclusively in His control, and that, since we do so, we will worship Him alone and carry out His commands the way a servant and a slave carries out the commands of his master, and love Him and adore Him above all else, and, further, that we accept Prophet Mohammad as the true Apostle of God, and will abide by his guidance as a loyal follower, and fashion our lives according to the holy law laid down by him. In fact, faith denotes nothing except this pledge and covenant

and this is precisely what the affirmation of Divine Unity and Apostleship means.

A Muslim should therefore, hold himself bound by this covenant and try his level best to shape his conduct in its light so that he may earn recognition in the eyes of God as a genuine man of faith and attain his salvation and place in the paradise.

Those who are blessed enough to bear faith honestly in both the parts of the holy *Kalima* and to give proof of it by word as well as by deed are the recipients of countless glad tidings like the one reproduced below :

It is related by Hazrat Anas that the Prophet once said to Hazrat Ma'ad, "God has declared as forbidden the fire of the Hell for him who affirms the Kalima of لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله with a true heart."

Brothers,-affirm لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله with a true heart and with a full knowledge and awareness of its implications and importance and resolve now and forever to lead your lives according to it in order that your attestation may not turn out to be false. On this very attestation depends your faith and your salvation.

Lesson 2

NAMAZ

The first and most important duty in Islam after one has brought faith in God and in Prophet Mohammad and borne witness to Divine Oneness and the Apostleship of the holy Prophet is *Namaz*. It is a most special act of Divine worship which a Muslim is called upon to perform five times a day. There are numerous verses of the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet enjoining the *Namaz* on us. It has been described as the pillar and the foundation of the faith.

Namaz, if it is offered with a sincere heart and proper devotion and mental concentration, is particularly vested with the property of cleansing the heart and reforming one's life and ridding it of sins and impurities. It generates love for piety and truth and promotes fear of God in man. Thus it is that Islam has laid greater emphasis on it than on all other religious obligations. When anyone came to the Prophet to embrace Islam, the first promise the sacred Prophet took from him, after instructing him in Divine Oneness, was that he will offer the *Namaz* regularly. In fine, after the *Kalima*, *Namaz* is the bedrock of Islam.

Traditions

We know from the Traditions that the holy Prophet used to equate neglect of the *Namaz* with

infidelity. He denounced it as the way of the unbelievers. He would say that those who did not offer the *Namaz* had no share in the faith.

A Tradition of the Prophet reads, "What separates a believer from infidelity is simply the *Namaz*".

This Tradition clearly warns that if a Muslim will give up the *Namaz* he will get associated with infidelity; his conduct will become the conduct of an infidel. In another Tradition the Prophet has said, "He has no share in Islam who does not offer the *Namaz*."

And here is another Tradition from which we can imagine what a great act of virtue and felicity is it to offer the *Namaz* regularly and how utterly fatal and ruinous is it to neglect it. Once while urging upon the Muslims to be most particular about the *Namaz* the sacred Prophet is reported to have observed :

"Whoever will offer the *Namaz* properly and regularly it will be for him on the Last Day a source of light, a proof of his faith and a means to salvation. (On the other hand) whoever will not offer it carefully and regularly it will be for him neither a source of light, nor a proof of faith, nor a means to salvation, and the end of such a person will be with Karun ¹, Fir'aun ², Haman ³ and Ubai-bin-Khalaf ⁴."

Brothers,-let us now imagine what our end is going to be if we failed to cultivate the habit of offering the *Namaz* correctly and regularly.