

Introducing Islaam and its merits

Article taken and slightly adapted from: alifta.net

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allaah the most Kind the most Merciful

All praise is due to Allaah. May peace and blessings be upon the Last Prophet. Allaah (سبحانه)¹ states, **[This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islaam as your religion.]** Allaah (سبحانه) also says: **[Truly, the religion with Allaah is Islaam.]** Allaah (سبحانه) also says: **[And whoever seeks a religion other than Islaam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers.]**

Islaam is to submit to Allaah by Tawheed (belief in the Oneness of Allaah/monotheism), yielding to Him by obedience and leaving acts of Shirk (associating others with Allaah in His Divinity or worship) and those who commit Shirk. Shirk was the belief of the Arabs before the advent of the Da`wah (calling to Islaam) of Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)². It is narrated by al-Bukhaaree that Aboo Raja' al-'Utaridee said, we used to worship a certain stone, but if we found a better stone, we would throw the first stone away and worship the other one. If we did not find any stone to worship, we would grasp a handful of dust, pour goat milk over it, then we would circumambulate it.

As for the condition of people before the Mission of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), the Noble Qur'aan referred to them in many Ayahs (Qur'aanic verses). For example, when Allaah (عزوجل) states, **[And they worship besides Allaah things that harm them not, nor profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allaah."]** Allaah (سبحانه) also states, **[And those who take Auliya' (protectors, helpers, lords, gods) besides Him (say): "We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allaah."]**

Allaah (سبحانه) also says: **[Verily, We made the Shayateen (devils) Auliya' (protectors and helpers) for those who believe not. And when they commit a Faahisha (evil deed, going round the Ka'bah in naked state, and every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse), they say: "We found our fathers doing it, and Allaah has commanded it on us." Say: "Nay, Allaah never commands Faahisha. Do you say of Allaah what you know not?" surely they**

¹ (سبحانه) (Subhanahu) Exalted be He

² (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

Introducing Islaam and its merits

took the Shayateen (devils) as Auliya' (protectors and helpers) instead of Allaah, and think that they are guided.] Allaah (سبحانه) also says: [And they assign to Allaah a share of the tilth and cattle which He has created, and they say: "This is for Allaah according to their claim, and this is for our (Allaah's so-called) partners." But the share of their (Allaah's so-called) "partners" reaches not Allaah, while the share of Allaah reaches their (Allaah's so-called) "partners"! Evil is the way they judge!]

There are many Ayahs that express this meaning. Moreover, the authentic Hadeeths narrated from the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and the writings of the compilers of Seerah (the Prophet's biography), historians and trusted scholars on peoples' conditions mentioned that they had different forms of Shirk before the Mission of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Some would worship idols and sculptures. Others used to worship the dead, the sun, the moon, or the stars, etc. Therefore, the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) called them to worship Allaah alone and abandon all false deities that they and their ancestors worshipped. Allaah (عزوجل) states, [Say (O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ))]: "O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allaah - to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Laa ilaaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). It is He Who gives life and causes death. So believe in Allaah and His Messenger (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)), the Prophet who can neither read nor write (i.e. Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)), who believes in Allaah and His Words [(this Qur'aan), the Tawraat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel) and also Allaah's Word: "Be!" - And he was, i.e. 'Isaa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary), (عليهم السلام)], and follow him so that you may be guided."] Allaah (سبحانه) also says: [(This is) a Book which We have revealed unto you (O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness (of disbelief and polytheism) into light (of belief in the Oneness of Allaah and Islaamic Monotheism) by their Lord's Leave to the Path of the All-Mighty, the Owner of all Praise.]

Allaah (سبحانه) also says: [O Prophet (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ))! Verily, We have sent you as witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner, And as one who invites to Allaah [Islaamic Monotheism, i.e. to worship none but Allaah (Alone)] by His Leave, and as a lamp spreading light (through your instructions from the Qur'aan and the Sunnah - the legal ways of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)).] Allaah (سبحانه) also says: [And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allaah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him)] Allaah (سبحانه) also says: [O mankind! Worship your Lord (Allaah), Who created you and those who were before you so that you may become al-Muttaqoon (the pious).] Allaah (سبحانه) also says: [And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him.] Indeed, there are many Ayahs conveying this very meaning.

In many Ayahs, Allaah (سبحانه) indicates that these Mushriks (those who associate others with Allaah in His Divinity or worship), despite their shirk and Kufr (disbelief), admitted that

Introducing Islaam and its merits

Allaah was their Creator and Sustainer but they worshipped others besides Allaah as intermediaries between them and Allaah. This was previously mentioned as Allaah (سبحانه) states, **[And they worship besides Allaah things that harm them not, nor profit them, and they say: "These are our intercessors with Allaah."]** and other Ayahs that convey the same meaning such as the Ayah in which Allaah states, **[Say (O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)):** "Who provides for you from the sky and the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes the affairs?" They will say: "Allaah." Say: "Will you not then be afraid of Allaah's punishment (for setting up rivals in worship with Allaah)?"] Allaah (سبحانه) also says: **[And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say: "Allaah." How then are they turned away (from the worship of Allaah, Who created them)?]** There are also many other clearly stated Ayahs corroborating this meaning.

Thus, the mission of our Master Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) brought about Islaam, the last of all faiths, not only for Arabs but for all people. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) was sent at a time when all people were in dire need of someone to bring them out of darkness into light.

This great Islaamic faith is based on five basic principles, which are its pillars. They are mentioned in the Two Saheeh (authentic) Books of Hadeeth (i.e. al-Bukhaaree and Muslim) in the narration of Ibn `Umar (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **["Islaam was based on five pillars: testimony that there is none worthy of worship but Allaah alone without any partners, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah; performing Salaah (prayers), giving Zakaah; fasting Ramadhaan; and performing Hajj (pilgrimage)."]**

The two Testimonies are the first and most important pillar of Islaam.

Such great words are not merely an act of worship to be pronounced by tongue, though by pronouncing them one becomes a Muslim. It is an commitment to act according to what they imply, including the worship of Allaah Alone sincerely; the belief that He is the Only One worthy of worship and that worshipping anything or anyone other than Him is Baatil (baseless and void).

They imply the necessity of loving Allaah (سبحانه) as well as for His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Such devotion implies worshipping Allaah Alone, glorifying Him, and following the Sunnah (supererogatory act of worship following the example of the Prophet). Allaah (سبحانه) states, **[Say (O Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to mankind): "If you (really) love Allaah then follow me (i.e. accept Islaamic Monotheism, follow the Qur'aan and the Sunnah), Allaah will love you and forgive you your sins.]** They (i.e. the two testimonies) imply obedience to the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) concerning all of his commands. Allaah (سبحانه) says: **[And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it).]** It is reported by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **["Three (qualities) whoever have them will taste the**

Introducing Islaam and its merits

sweetness of faith: When Allaah and His Messenger are more dearer to him than everything else...”]

Thus, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, [“None of you will believe until I am dearer to him than his father, his children, and all people.”]

The second pillar: performance of Salaah (Prayer).

It is the second and most important pillar after the two testimonies, as it is the basic foundation of Islaam. Indeed, the first act of worship for which Muslim servants will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection is Salaah. If Salaah is fulfilled, they will achieve success and prosperity, and if it is lacking, they will face loss and frustration. Salaah is an act of worship that must be performed at its due time. Allaah (سبحانه) states, [Verily, as-Salaat (the prayer) is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours.] Allaah (عزوجل) has commanded us to faithfully observe them at their prescribed times, hence He states, [Guard strictly (five obligatory) as-Salawaat (the prayers) especially the middle Salaat (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And stand before Allaah with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salaat (prayers)].]

Allaah (عزوجل) has warned those who neglect them and delay them beyond their proper time: [Then, there has succeeded them a posterity who have given up as-Salaat (the prayers) [i.e. made their Salaat (prayers) to be lost, either by not offering them or by not offering them perfectly or by not offering them in their proper fixed times] and have followed lusts. So they will be thrown in Hell.] Allaah (سبحانه) also says: [So woe unto those performers of Salaat (prayers) (hypocrites),] [Those who delay their Salaat (prayer from their stated fixed times).]

Salaah is the point of differentiation between Islaam and Kufr and Shirk. It is narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh that Jaabir (رضي الله عنه)³ said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying, [“Between a man and disbelief and paganism is the abandonment of Salaah (Prayer).”] As, in the Hadeeth narrated by Buraydah (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, [“That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salaah. He who abandons it becomes a disbeliever.”]⁴

It is obligatory to observe congregational Salaah (Prayer) at the mosque, for its great merit. It is narrated that Ibn `Umar (رضي الله عنهما) said that the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, [“Salaah made in congregation is twenty-seven degrees more excellent than the Salaah of a single person.”]⁵ It is reported by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim that the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) considered ordering the houses of those who abandoned

³ (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah the Most High be pleased with him

⁴ It is reported by Imam Ahmad and Ahl-ul-Sunan (authors of Hadeeth compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) through an authentic chain of narrators.

⁵ Agreed upon by Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

Introducing Islaam and its merits

congregational Salaah to be burned down. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **["Whoever hears the call (adhaan) and does not come to it (the prayer), then there is no prayer for him except with an excuse".]**⁶ All these texts indicate the great merit of performing it in congregation.

It is a prerequisite of perfect and accepted Salaah by Allaah (عزوجل) to be performed with humility and tranquillity. Allaah, the Exalted, states, **[Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their Salaat (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.]** The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) ordered those who were not tranquil while observing Salaah to repeat it.

Salaah is one of the expressions of equality, brotherhood, union, and united destination towards the Ka'bah as one Qiblah. Salaah is the source of comfort and utmost delight for a Mu'min (believer). The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, **["Salaah (prayer) has been made my utmost pleasure."]** The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) used to turn to Salaah whenever he felt any sort of distress. Allaah (سبحانه) states, **[Seek help in patience and as-Salaat (the prayer).]** Moreover, he used to say to Bilaal, **["O Bilaal, comfort us with it (i.e. Salaah)."]** This is because when a Muslim stands in Salaah, he actually stands in front of his Creator, Allaah, (عزوجل). He feels calmness in his heart, tranquillity in his soul, submissiveness in all his body, and utmost pleasure with His Lord and God (عزوجل).

The third pillar: Giving Zakaah (obligatory charity)

It is a noble social Faridah (obligatory act) that makes a believer realise the supreme principles of Islaam including empathy, mercy, love, and cooperation among Muslims. It is not a gift or a favour to give money (as charity), but it is an obligatory duty for in fact one's wealth is merely a trust conferred by Allaah on some servants. Allaah (سبحانه) states, **[And give them something (yourselves) out of the wealth of Allaah which He has bestowed upon you.]** Allaah (سبحانه) also says: **[Believe in Allaah and His Messenger (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)), and spend of that whereof He has made you trustees. And such of you as believe and spend (in Allaah's Way), theirs will be a great reward.]** Zakaah has been coupled with Salaah in many Ayahs and it is because of its great significance that Aboo Bakr al-Siddeeq (رضي الله عنه) fought the Arab tribes who withheld Zakaah due on their wealth. He said, "By Allaah! I will fight those who separate between Salaah as an act of worship and Zakaah (i.e. they offer Salaah and refuse to pay Zakaah). Thereafter, all the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)⁷ agreed with him doing so. Allaah, (عزوجل) admonished those who fail to give of their wealth in charity, hence He stated, **[And those who hoard up gold and silver [Al-Kanz: the money, the Zakaat of which has not been paid] and spend them not in the Way of Allaah, announce unto them a painful torment.]** Zakaah is obligatory upon every Muslim

⁶ It is reported by Ibn Maajah, Al-Daraqutnee, Ibn Hibbaan and Al-Hakim with an authentic chain of narrators.

⁷ (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu 'anhum) May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them

Introducing Islaam and its merits

who possesses any quantity of Nisaab (the minimum amount on which Zakaah is due) after a whole year passes, except for grain and fruits on which Zakaah is due whenever they reach maturity and are harvested regardless of the passing of a year. Zakaah must be paid to its recipients exactly according to the categories mentioned in the Noble Qur'aan in Soorah at-Tawbah. Allaah (سبحانه) says: **[As-Sadaqaat (here it means Zakaat) are only for the Fuqaraa' (poor), and the Masaakeen (needy) and those employed to collect (the funds), and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islaam), and to free the captives, and for those in debt, and for Allaah's Cause, and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allaah.]**

The fourth pillar: Observing Sawm (Fast) during Ramadhaan

Allaah (سبحانه) says: **[O you who believe! Observing as-Sawm (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become al-Muttaqoon (the pious).]** Sawm conditions a Muslim by denying him permitted pleasures and desires for a period of time, and it has health benefits as well as spiritual ones. When observing Sawm, Muslims experience the hunger felt by Muslim brothers who may find neither food nor drink for days, as is the case with some of our Muslim brothers in Africa now.

Ramadhaan is the best of all months in which Allaah revealed the Noble Qur'aan. Allaah (سبحانه) states, **[The month of Ramadhaan in which was revealed the Qur'aan, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong).]** It includes a night which is better than a thousand months. Allaah (سبحانه) says: **[Verily, We have sent it (this Qur'aan) down in the night of al-Qadr (Decree). And what will make you know what the night of al-Qadr (Decree) is? The night of al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allaah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e. 83 years and 4 months).]** Whoever observes Sawm (during this month) out of firm belief and hope for Allaah's reward, all his past sins will be forgiven. It is authentically reported that Aboo Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) stated, **["Whoever fasts the month of Ramadhaan out of sincere Faith hoping for a reward from Allaah, then all his past sins will be forgiven. Whoever observes the night Prayer during Ramadhaan because of faith and seeking reward from Allaah, his past sins will be forgiven; and whoever stands for prayers in the night of Qadr out of sincere Faith and hoping for a reward from Allaah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven ."]**⁸

It is obligatory upon a person who observes Sawm to preserve his Sawm by abstaining from Ghibah (backbiting), Namimah (tale-bearing), lying, and idle diversions. He should beware of all other prohibitions. He should recite more of the Noble Qur'aan, increase the remembrance of Allaah, and exert greater effort in performing acts of worship especially in the last ten days of Ramadhaan.

⁸ Agreed upon by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

Introducing Islaam and its merits

The fifth pillar is Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the Sacred House (Ka'bah).

Allaah (سبحانه) says: **[And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allaah, for those who are able to undertake the journey.]** Allaah has enjoined Hajj to be performed once in a lifetime, as well as `Umrah (lesser pilgrimage). They both are obligatory for every free sane adult Muslim who can afford it. Hajj and `Umrah are valid when performed by a minor but is not an exemption from performing the obligatory Hajj after reaching adulthood and has the ability. A woman who has no Mahram (spouse or permanently unmarriageable relative) to travel with her during Hajj and `Umrah, is exempted according to the Hadeeths narrated from the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) which prohibits a woman to travel without a Mahram. Indeed, Hajj is an Islaamic gathering where Muslims meet one another. They come from every deep and distant mountain path and from every country all over the world with their different nationalities, colours, and languages. They are all dressed in the same cloths, standing on the same land, and performing the same acts of worship. There is no difference between the young and the old, the rich and the poor, and the black and the white; they are all equal. Allaah (سبحانه) states, **[O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allaah is that (believer) who has at-Taqwaa [i.e. he is one of the Muttaqoon (the pious.)]**

Hajj Mabroor (the one accepted by Allaah) has no other reward but Paradise, as mentioned in the two Saheeh that Aboo Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) narrated a Hadeeth Marfoo⁹ saying, **["The performance of `Umrah is an expiation for the sins committed (between it and the previous one). And the reward of Hajj Mabroor (the one accepted by Allaah) is nothing except Paradise."]** In the Saheeh, it is narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, **["Whoever performs Hajj for Allaah's pleasure and does not have sexual relations with his wife, and does not commit evil or sin then he will return (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born anew."]**

Islaam has other fundamentals that even if are not bases, they exist in the lives of Muslims and are applied to all matters. Among these principles is enjoining good and forbidding evil. Allaah (سبحانه) describes this Ummah (community sharing one belief) as the best Ummah ever raised up for mankind, because they enjoin good and forbid evil. Allaah (سبحانه) says: **[You [true believers in Islaamic Monotheism, and real followers of Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)] and his Sunnah] are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin al-Ma'roof (i.e. Islaamic Monotheism and all that Islaam has ordained) and forbid al-Munkar (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islaam has forbidden), and you believe in Allaah.]** Some Salaf (righteous predecessors) said, "Whoever wishes to be one of the best among these peoples, let him fulfil its condition which is: enjoining good and forbidding evil.

⁹ A Hadeeth narrated from the Prophet with a connected or disconnected chain of narration

Introducing Islaam and its merits

There is another important aspect of Islaam that should be taken into consideration by Muslims, which is Jihaad in the Cause of Allaah. It brings about the honour of Muslims, exalts the Word of Allaah, and protects Muslim lands against the transgressions of the disbelievers. It has been mentioned in the two Saheeh that Ibn `Umar (رضي الله عنهما)¹⁰ narrated that the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, ["I have been ordered to fight against people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah and that Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is Allaah's Messenger, and offer the prayers perfectly, and give Zakaah (obligatory charity), so if they perform all that, then they save their lives and property from me except for Islaamic laws, and then their reckoning (accounts) will be done by Allaah."] In Musnad (Hadeeth compilation of) Imaam Ahmad and Jami` al-Tirmidhee with an authentic chain of narration from Mu`adh (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, ["The peak of the matter is Islaam; the pillar is Salaah; and its topmost part is Jihaad (Fighting/Struggling in the Cause of Allaah)."] Moreover, Aboo Bakr al-Siddeeq (رضي الله عنه), in the sermon that he delivered and after which Muslims granted him their Bay`ah (pledge of allegiance), said, "No people will abandon Jihaad but Allaah will afflict them with humiliation."

Jihaad enforces al-Haqq (the Truth), suppresses falsehood, establishes Allaah's Law, and protects Muslims and their lands from their enemies' schemes.

Islaam is the faith of Fitrah (natural disposition) upon which Allaah created mankind. It is the mission of the past Prophets and Messengers. Every Prophet called his people to embrace Islaam. Allaah (سبحانه) in His Great Book mentions the Father of all Prophets and the Friend of Allaah, Ibrahim (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): [And who turns away from the religion of Ibraaheem (Abraham) (i.e. Islaamic Monotheism) except him who befools himself? Truly, We chose him in this world and verily, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, "Submit (i.e. be a Muslim)!" He said, "I have submitted myself (as a Muslim) to the Lord of the `Alameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)." And this (submission to Allaah, Islaam) was enjoined by Ibraaheem (Abraham) upon his sons and by Ya`qoob (Jacob) (saying), "O my sons! Allaah has chosen for you the (true) religion, then die not except in the Faith of Islaam (as Muslims - Islaamic Monotheism)."]

Allaah sent His Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) with this great faith when People of the Book including the Jews and the Christians were in a state of ignorance and divergence after they distorted and changed the Tawrah (Torah) and Injeel (Gospel) yielding to their desires. Therefore, the Jews and the Christians sided with the disbelievers of Qur`aysh to defeat Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his mission, especially the Jews although they knew about him through their Book and that they were demanded to follow him and believe in his mission. Allaah (سبحانه) states, [Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognise him (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) or the Ka`bah at Makkah) as they recognise

¹⁰ (رضي الله عنهما) (rad iyallaahu `anhumaa) May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them both

Introducing Islaam and its merits

their sons.] Furthermore, it is reported in Saheeh of Muslim from Aboo Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allaah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, **["By Him in Whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, any Jew or Christian amongst this community who hears about me but does not affirm his belief in that with which I have been sent and dies in this state (of disbelief), he shall be but one of the inhabitants of Hellfire."]**

Therefore, when our Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) settled in al-Madeenah, he sent invitations to the kings of the earth of the time calling them to Islaam to bring them out of darkness into the light. It is explained by Rib`y ibn `Amir (رضي الله عنه) in a few words, when Rustom, the Persian Commander, asked him, "Who are you?" He answered, "We are people whom Allaah sent to bring whomever He wills out of the worship of slaves into the worship of Allaah Alone, out of the narrowness of this world into the vastness of this world and the Hereafter, and out of the injustice of other beliefs into the justice of Islaam."

This final faith has been revealed to set matters aright and guide people to the right direction, including Tawheed (belief in the Oneness of Allaah/monotheism), belief in His Prophets and Messengers, and inviting to what they called of Tawheed and submission to Allaah.

The religion was revealed while the Jews and the Christians were in great opposition. The Jews were known for their abuse of their prophets; they killed some of them and defamed others unjustly, so what about the infallible and the best of Allaah's creatures! The Christians went to extremes in worshipping Jesus claiming that Allaah (سبحانه) is one of three. Afterwards, Islaam was revealed to establish al-Haqq and nullify falsehood being just and moderate with neither exaggeration nor negligence. Allaah (سبحانه) says, **[Thus We have made you [true Muslims - real believers of Islaamic Monotheism, true followers of Prophet Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Sunnah (legal ways)], a just (and the best) nation, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) be a witness over you.]** Allaah (عزوجل) prohibited and warned the People of the Book against exceeding the limits and warned this Community against following their path, stating, **[O people of the Scripture (Christians)! Do not exceed the limits in your religion, nor say of Allaah aught but the truth.]** It is narrated by al-Bukhaaree in his Saheeh that `Umar Ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **["Never deify me the way the Christians deified `Isaa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), verily I am a servant, so call me the servant of Allaah and His Messenger."]** It is authentically reported from Ibn `Abbas (رضي الله عنهما) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated, **["Do not exceed the limits in your faith for those who preceded you were destroyed due to their excessiveness in faith."]**

The merits of Islaam are countless; how could they not be while Islaam is the way of Allaah Who knows all, has absolute wisdom, and irrefutable evidence. He is the All-Wise and the All-Knowing in every matter He ordains and legislates for His servants.

Introducing Islaam and its merits

Our Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) omitted nothing in calling to the good and guiding Muslims to it and left no evil except that he warned against it. It is narrated in Saheeh Muslim that `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As (رضي الله عنهما) said that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **["It is the duty of every Prophet whom Allaah has sent to guide his followers to what he knew was good for them and warn them against what he knew was bad for them."]**

Similarly, it is reported in Musnad (Hadeeth compilation) of Imaam Ahmad with an authentic chain of narrators that Aboo Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, **["I was sent to perfect good character."]** The same Hadeeth was narrated by al-Haafidh al-Khara'itee, with a good chain of narration as follows: **[I was sent to perfect good morals.]**

Finally, we notice nowadays that so many people accept Islaam including Kaafirs, Mushriks, and People of the Book; the Jews and the Christians. This is indeed an indication of the failure of other faiths and philosophies to bring tranquillity, peace, and happiness to people. It is the duty of Muslims, especially the preachers, to expand their activities among these people in order to call them to the way of Allaah. However, before doing so we must not forget to adhere to Islaam through knowledge and practice. Indeed, mankind is urgently in need of people who will bring them out of darkness into light. **[And who is better in speech than he who [says: "My Lord is Allaah (believes in His Oneness)," and then stands firm (acts upon His Order), and] invites (men) to Allaah (Islaamic Monotheism), and does righteous deeds, and says: "I am one of the Muslims."]**

May Allaah make us preachers of good, grant us the deep knowledge of our faith and success in calling to it insightfully. Verily, He is the Lord of everything and the Omnipotent. May Allaah's Peace and Blessings be upon Muhammad, his family, and Companions!