

## Basics of Islaam

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

**Shaykh ibn Baaz** (*May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him*):

Praise be to Allaah. The good end will be for the righteous. May Peace and Blessings be upon His Slave and Messenger, His Trustee of the Revelation, our Prophet, leader Muhammad ibn `Abdullah ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, upon his household, Companions, and whoever adopts his way and follows his guidance till the Day of Judgment.

Dear brothers and children, Allaah explains the attributes of Muslims and the manners of believers in various positions of His Glorious Book. Allaah encourages people to follow them. He praises those who adopt them in some positions promising them abundant good, the best outcome, Paradise, and lofty repute.

For example, Allaah states at the end of Soorah (chapter from the Qur'aan) of al `Imraan,

**[Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allaah (always, and in prayers) standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides.]**

Our Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) used to recite these noble Ayahs to the end of the Soorah (the third chapter of al-Qur'aan) upon awakening and would wipe his face with hands to rouse himself from sleep. He (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) would recite the following Ayahs while looking up to the heavens: Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding. In addition to the Ayahs that follow it. ["**Men of understanding**"] refers to the people endowed with sound and enlightened minds. Allaah describes them with the attributes of remembering Him in all conditions; while standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about things created by Allaah (*The Exalted*), such as the heavens, the earth, and the alternation of night and day. Allaah's Signs in creation are so many; the heavens with its expanse and vastness, and the earth with its amplitude, breadth, steadiness, and what they contain of numerous and great signs.

Similarly, the alternation of the night and day is among Allaah's Great Signs. Thus, Allaah made special mention of them and told that they include many signs for people of

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understanding. The Ayahs relate some acts of those people such as remembrance of Allaah while they are standing, sitting, and lying on their sides by heart, tongue, and deed. They remember Allaah in their hearts through love, glorification, fear, and hope of Allaah. They also remember Him with their tongue through Tasbeeh (Glorification of Allaah saying, "Subhaanallaah [Glory be to Allaah]"), Tahmeed (Praising Allaah saying, "Al-Hamdu Lillah [Praise be to Allaah]"), Tahleel (saying, "La illah illaallaah [There is none worthy of worship but Allaah]"), Takbeer (saying "Allaahu Akbar [Allaah is the Greatest]"), reciting the Qur'aan, supplications, Istighfar (seeking forgiveness from Allaah), and the like.

In addition, they remember Allaah in their deeds through offering Salaah (prayer), day and night, charity, enjoining good, and forbidding evil, and other good deeds.

Then, Allaah mentions that they reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth with its marvels, wonders, and great miracles, saying:

**[Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose]**

Undoubtedly, these things were created in wisdom and for lofty purposes. Then, they invoke:

**[...glory to You! (Exalted are You above all that they associate with You as partners). Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire.]**

They confessed the Divine Wisdom underlying the creation, not in vain or without purpose. They then ask Allaah to save them from the torment of Hell. They hold Him far above what does not befit Him (*Mighty and Majestic is He*).

Allaah (*Mighty and Majestic is He*) says in other Ayahs at the beginning of Soorah al-Anfaal:

**[The believers are only those who, when Allaah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses (this Qur'aan) are recited unto them, they (i.e. the Verses) increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone); Who perform as-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat) and spend out of that We have provided them. It is they who are the believers in truth. For them are grades of dignity with their Lord, and Forgiveness and a generous provision (Paradise).]**

The aforementioned Ayahs relate some attributes of those who have perfect and pure faith. In other Ayahs of Soorah at-Tawbah Allaah (*Mighty and Majestic is He*) states,

**[The believers, men and women, are Auliyyaa' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) al-Ma'roof (i.e. Islaamic Monotheism and all that Islaam orders one to do), and forbid (people) from al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islaam has forbidden); they perform as-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat), and give the Zakaat, and obey Allaah and His Messenger. Allaah will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allaah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.]**

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This Ayah mentions the attributes of sincere believers among the Muslim soldiers as well as all Muslims.

These are definitely the attributes and manners of true believers, which should be adopted by Muslim soldiers in order to become good examples for all people. No doubt, acquiring these manners is one of the causes of gaining victory over enemies. The Muslims are prepared to struggle (fight in the cause of Allaah) and defend Muslim lands. Consequently, they are more apt to acquire these attributes and adhere to them. Thus, they fulfil their role as Muslims in the best manner.

Islaam is the way of Allaah preached by all Messengers (*Peace be upon them*). Allaah (*The Exalted*) says,

**[Truly, the religion with Allaah is Islaam.]**

Allaah (*The Exalted*) also says:

**[And whoever seeks a religion other than Islaam, it will never be accepted of him]**

Allaah (*The Exalted*) also says:

**[This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islaam as your religion.]**

Allaah called His way Islaam as it involves submission to Allaah's Commandments and Prohibitions, adherence to worship of Allaah, and observing His Restrictions.

Islaam is literally derived from the word 'aslam' i.e. to submit and yield. It is said, "aslam fulan li fulan i.e. so-and-so submitted to so-and-so." Likewise, it is said, "aslam al-`abd lillah i.e. the Slave submitted completely to Allaah". Therefore, Islaam means the complete submission and obedience to Allaah's Ordinances, avoiding His Prohibitions, and observing His Restrictions.

It is also called 'Eemaan (Faith), for a Muslim does good deeds out of belief in Allaah and His Messenger (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*), not to show off or establish a reputation among people or out of hypocrisy. Rather, the true Muslim submits to Allaah, follows His Ordinances and observes His Restrictions out of firm faith and deep knowledge. A Muslim knows that Allaah is One and has no partners and He is the Lord of the heavens. He knows that Allaah is the All-Knowing Supreme Creator. Therefore, he devotes himself to Him and glorifies His Sacred Ordinances out of firm faith in Allaah Who is the Lord, the God, the Creator, the All-Provider, and the One Who is rightfully worthy of worship. The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) stated in an authentic Hadeeth,

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**“Faith has over seventy branches, the best of which is the declaration that there is no one worthy of worship but Allaah, and the humblest of which is removing harmful things from the path. And modesty is a branch of faith.”**

Our religion is called Islaam, as it is submission to Allaah, truthful devotion to Him, humility to Him and glorification of Him. It is also called ‘Eemaan i.e. Faith, for it is belief in Divine matters e.g. Allaah's Attributes, His Oneness, and that he is the true God Who Alone is worthy of worship along with believing in what He has ordained, forbidden, and allowed for His Slaves. All these meanings are included in the words Islaam and faith. Islaam is called so owing to what it involves of submission to Allaah, abiding by His Commandments, and observing His Restrictions. It is called faith, for its truthfulness which results in continual righteous deeds and proper speech.

When Jibreel (Gabriel) asked the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) about Islaam and faith, he replied,

**“Islaam is that you testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allaah and that Muhammad is Allaah's Messenger, establish prayer, pay Zakaah (the obligatory charity), observe the fast of Ramadhaan, and perform Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House (Ka`bah) if you are able.”**

Then, he (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) defined faith,

**“To believe in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in the Divine Predestination whether good or bad.”**

He (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) mentioned the principles of faith upon which Islaam is based and the foundational pillars of Islaam on which it is established.

The pillars of Islaam are five: The two testimonies of faith, Salaah, Zakaah, Sawm, and Hajj.

The inherent pillars of Islaam are the six foundations of ‘Eemaan on which Islaam is built; to believe in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and Divine Decree whether good or bad. Neither Islaam nor ‘Eemaan can stand apart from each other; both are essential.

It is necessary to have firm ‘Eemaan that gives rise to submission to Allaah and fulfilment of His Rights. Likewise, Islaam is necessary to certify this ‘Eemaan by means of practical obedience. Thus, the characteristics of a believer differ from those of hypocrites and their evil deeds, for they say with their tongue what is not in their hearts and do things which appear to be good while concealing their ill intentions. Allaah (*The Exalted*) describes them in His Noble Book in Soorah an-Nisaa',

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**[Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allaah, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for as-Salaat (the prayer), they stand with laziness and to be seen of men, and they do not remember Allaah but little. (They are) swaying between this and that, belonging neither to these nor to those].**

They do not remain on one way. Sometimes, they are with Muslims and other times they are with the disbelievers. We ask Allaah to protect us from that.

Allaah mentioned them in the beginning of Soorah al-Baqarah:

**[And of mankind, there are some (hypocrites) who say: "We believe in Allaah and the Last Day" while in fact they believe not. They (think to) deceive Allaah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive (it) not! In their hearts is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allaah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies.]**

The Ayahs indicate that they speak well and do wrong. Thus, their acts do not reflect their hearts. Consequently, they are liars. Some recite the Ayah as follows:

**[...because they used to disbelieve.]**

They apparently admit the outward rites of Islaam but inwardly they belie the Prophet and revelation. Thus, Allaah mentions that they are lower than the disbelievers in Hellfire. Allaah states,

**[Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth (grade) of the Fire; no helper will you find for them.]**

The Muslims of true faith are indeed believers. They combine submission and humility to Allaah; obey Him, and fight in His Cause sincerely in true faith. Thus, they possess truthful tongues, good deeds, and sincere hearts that entertain fear, hope, sincerity, love of Allaah, and a longing for His Paradise, while fearing His (*Mighty and Majestic is He*) Punishment.

Allaah referred to the truthful believer in His Statement,

**[The believers, men and women, are Auliya' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another]**

And:

**[The believers are only those who, when Allaah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses (this Qur'aan) are recited unto them, they (i.e. the Verses) increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone);]**

And the Ayah that follows it.

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Therefore, we should realise these great attributes and adopt them, especially, devotion to Allaah. The testimony of faith enjoins seeking Allaah Alone in worship, offering acts of worship exclusively for His Sake with hearts filled with love and devotion, and longing to remember Him. Allaah (*The Exalted*) states,

**[And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allaah, and worship none but Him Alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him)]**

Allaah (*The Exalted*) also says:

**[So worship Allaah (Alone) by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allaah's sake only. Surely the religion (i.e. the worship and the obedience) is for Allaah only.]**

Allaah (*Mighty and Majestic is He*) also says:

**[So, call you (O Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*)) and the believers) upon (or invoke) Allaah making (your) worship pure for Him (Alone) (by worshipping none but Him and by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allaah's sake only and not to show off and not to set up rivals with Him in worship), however much the disbelievers (in the Oneness of Allaah) may hate (it).]**

Allaah (*The Exalted*) also says:

**[That is because Allaah — He is the Truth (the only True God of all that exists, Who has no partners or rivals with Him), and what they (the polytheists) invoke besides Him, it is Baatil (falsehood).]**

Indeed, sincerity to Allaah is the basis of the word of Tawheed, i.e. there is none worthy of worship except Allaah. It rejects the worship of any other along with Allaah and approves the worship of Allaah Alone. Faith is not valid or acceptable except by sincerity to Allaah. Similarly, a Muslim or believer cannot have sound faith except through devoting their worship to Allaah and having firm belief in Allaah's Messenger (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*); testifying that he is Allaah's Messenger to jinn and mankind. This testimony results in the following of His Sharee'ah, being steadfast upon His way, and observing the restrictions that the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) determined.

Both these declarations that there is none worthy of worship but Allaah and that Muhammad is Allaah's Messenger are the basis of faith. A Muslim is required to be truthful in them and must fulfil their duties i.e. verbal and practical commandments and prohibitions. The neglect of any of these reveals deficiency in faith and Tawheed. It is thus evident that these two testimonies enjoin duties to be fulfilled and lay down prohibitions to be avoided. According to the authentic Hadeeth, the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) stated,

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**“I have been commanded to fight against people until they testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allaah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, perform the Prayer, and pay Zakaah. If they do so, their blood and property are guaranteed protection by me except when justified by law...”**

Aboo Bakr (*May Allaah the Most High be pleased with him*) raised this Hadeeth as a proof for fighting those who refused to pay Zakaah. He said, "Zakaah is a due right by the testimony of faith." Accordingly, the Companions (*May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them*) obeyed him and fought against those people.

The Ayah of Soorah Bara'ah (Soorah number 9) explains these rights where Allaah states,

**[The believers, men and women, are Auliyyaa' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another; they enjoin (on the people) al-Ma'roof (i.e. Islaamic Monotheism and all that Islaam orders one to do), and forbid (people) from al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islaam has forbidden); they perform as-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat), and give the Zakaat, and obey Allaah and His Messenger. Allaah will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allaah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.]**

The believers, men or women, are those who believe in Allaah's Divinity and Oneness, and devote their acts to Him in firm belief in His Messenger (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*). Thus, they are sincere supporters of one another. They love and advise each other to hold fast to truth and patience. They also cooperate in righteousness and piety.

These are the characteristics of believers and their good manners that leave no room for hatred, malice, envy, cheating, betrayal, perjury, lying, injustice, disappointment of their brothers in Islaam, or breach of trust. They are truthful brothers in Islaam. Muslims who fulfil these requirements are indeed truthful in their belief and their hearts will be filled with faith and firm love of Allaah. If you find in yourself any inclination to deceive your brother, thus you have weak faith and lack of sincerity to Allaah. If perfect faith exists, no deficiency will occur. Indeed, the vices of envy, deception, perjury, and injustice are evident tokens of one's deficient faith, lack of sincerity, and weak Islaam.

Similarly, all sins are tokens of weak belief. Some sins may lead to the complete loss of faith, such as abandoning Salaah which is regarded as major disbelief and apostasy. This holds true even if a person abandons it without denying its obligation, according to the preponderant opinion of the two main views of scholars on this issue. As for those who deny the obligation of Salaah, they are regarded as disbelievers according to the unanimous agreement of scholars. The same is applied to one who denies the obligation of Zakaah, fasting of Ramadhaan, Hajj to the Sacred House, Jihaad (fighting/striving in the Cause of Allaah), or other matters that are taken for granted.

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Similarly, if one denies any known forbidden matters such as adultery, wine, undutifulness to parents, usury, and other like things that are taken for granted as being unlawful, this takes one out of the fold Islaam. May Allaah protect us against this.

It is evident that sins may cause the loss of faith completely. They may take one out of the fold of Islaam as illustrated in the aforementioned examples.

However, some sins weaken the faith such as consuming alcoholic beverages, usury, undutifulness to both or one of one's parents, backbiting, tale-bearing, envy, and injustice. If a person commits one of these acts without deeming them lawful, it will cause deficiency in his faith. According to Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah (those adhering to the Sunnah and the Muslim community) faith increases by acts of obedience and decreases by sins.

The weakness of faith is in accordance with the severity of the sins a person commits.

For example, some may commit the sin of Isbaal (lowering garment), shaving the beard, and other prohibited matters. Many Muslims do not pay attention to their clothes or beards. They may shave off their beards or trim them and drag their garments, which are all sinful acts that weaken faith and decrease conviction. The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) stated in the authentic Hadeeth,

**“Trim closely the moustache, let the beard grow, and act against the polytheists.”<sup>1</sup>**

The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) also stated,

**[Trim closely the moustache, and grow beard, and act against the Magi.]<sup>2</sup>**

The Hadeeths that forbid imitating the disbelievers and command to act contrary to them are many.

One should take into consideration that the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) clarified and called Muslims to every good act and warned them against every evil. He (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) stated,

**[What is below the ankles of a lower garment is condemned to the Fire (Hell).]<sup>3</sup>**

The lower garment, trousers, cloaks, and the like should not be worn beneath the anklebones. If one does so, he is liable to the punishment referred to with regard to men. As for women, they must wear their clothes loose and cover their feet as well. Also, men are not permissible to imitate women by trailing their garments or anything else.

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<sup>1</sup> Agreed upon by Imaams Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

<sup>2</sup> Related by Muslim in his Saheeh

<sup>3</sup> Narrated by Al-Bukhaaree in his Saheeh