

Basic Beliefs of Islam

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The religion Islam can be divided into two parts

1. Theoretical, which may be called the articles of faith.
2. The practical, which includes all that a Muslim is required to do.

Both are related each other. One is insufficient without the other. In the holy Qur'an two words have been used, one is Iman (ایمان) and other is Amal (عمل). The word Iman is generally translated as faith or belief and Amal signifies Action. Both words are often used together to indicate a believer that those who believe and do good.

Every mature person in this world possesses a thinking that is based on any ideology. We use word 'Aqeeda' belief for this ideology. When we talk about Islamic beliefs, we find some beliefs which are called fundamental beliefs of Islam as it is stated in surah Baqarah verse 285: "The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers." And is detailed in Iman al-Mufasssal "I believe in Allah His Angles, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and in Taqdir, that all good and bad is from Allah the Most High and I believe in the resurrection after death".

Here are the Basic or fundamental beliefs of Islam.

1. Tauheed (Oneness of God)
2. Belief in the Angels
3. Belief in God's revealed books
4. Belief in the Prophets and Messengers of God
5. Belief in the day of judgment
6. Belief in Taqdeer (predestination)
7. Belief in Resurrection after death

Some scholars count first five ones as basic beliefs and say that the last two beliefs are included in first five ones. Some say there are first 6 basic beliefs of Islam and 7th is concerned with day of judgement. And the scholars who say the basic beliefs of Islam are 7, they count every belief separately as are detailed in Iman al-Mufasssal.

Before explaining Tawheed I would like to describe the views about God around the world. There are three major beliefs about God.

1. Atheism
2. Polytheism
3. Monotheism

According to Atheism, There is no any god, creator and protector of this universe. This universe does not have any Master and Sustainer. Therefore Atheists do not believe in existence of any supreme power (God).

There is maker of everything in this universe. Nothing takes place without cause. Everything comes through cause and effect. All objects in the nature like Sun, Moon, stars, mountains etc have been created by some being and that is God. It's not necessary to believe on certain things through practical observation and experiments as Atheists do, for example a child believes on the statement of his father and mother that they are his parents. A child firmly believes and he never argues on that issue.

When we look at the lives of pious 4 Imams, we come to know that, they not only dispelled all the doubts about monotheism (Tawheed) but also destroyed Atheism view point about God through their logical arguments. For example:

1. Imam Abu Hanifah was posed with this question in a debate with an atheist. The time and date was set for the debate. The whole village gathered but the Imam did not turn up on time. When he eventually arrived, the atheist began to taunt him that he was scared and that is why he turned up late. The Imam answered calmly: "I was on my way but encountered a river. There was no bridge or boat to cross the river.

To my amazement, I see a tree coming out of the ground and begin to shape itself in the form of a boat that enters the water; I was able to board it and cross the river.” The atheist began to laugh and disgrace the Imam. The Imam said the real joke is on you. If this is not possible then how can this whole world come into existence and be maintained in this order without a creator.

2. Imam Malik was asked the same question. He replied, “I see a cow, a silk worm, and a honey bee, all eat the same leaf but they all produce different products. This proves to me that there is a creator who has the power to do this”.

3. Imam Shafi replied to this question, “Different languages that people speak and use to communicate prove to me that this world has a creator”.

4. Imam Ahmed on being asked this question replied that once he took three eggs of a chicken and three of a duck and placed them with the mother hen. When they hatched, they were taken to a pond. The ducks without hesitation jumped into the water but the chicks remained on the bank. Who taught the duckling to jump in the water and who taught the chicks to refrain from this? There surely has to be a creator.

Polytheism is the belief that there are many gods. Breaking the word down, “poly” comes from the Greek word for “many,” and “theism” from the Greek word for “God.” Polytheism has perhaps been the dominant theistic view in human history. The best-known example of polytheism in ancient times is Greek/Roman mythology (Zeus, Apollo, Aphrodite, Poseidon, etc.). The clearest modern example of polytheism is Hinduism, which has over 300 million gods. Although Hinduism is, in essence, pantheistic, it does hold to beliefs in many gods. It is interesting to note that even in polytheistic religions, one god usually reigns supreme over the other gods, e.g., Zeus in Greek/Roman mythology and Brahman in Hinduism. Holy Quran criticizes this doctrine and says in surah Anbia chapter # 21 verse # 22

لو كان فيهما آلهة الا الله لقدتا

*if there were therein other gods besides Allah, verily the both (the heavens and the earth) had been
disordered ”*

Third one is Monotheism, means Tauheed, which is totally opposite of the both previous beliefs. Tauheed means to believe that Allah is the one and only supreme and unique God, worthy of worship. Allah Says in holy Qur'an

Surah Al Anbiya Chapter #21 Verse # 25

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ

“And we did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We inspired him (saying): ‘There is none who has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship Me (Alone and none else).’”

Tawheed is the essence of Islam, it is the core of Islam, it is what Islam stands for, and it is the reason why Allah created us. All prophets and messengers were sent with the message of Tauheed, the Quran itself is a book of Tawheed. The Qur'an declares that “Nothing is like Him” (42:11). Allah is eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent. Allah has always existed and will always exist. Allah knows everything that can be known. Allah can do anything that can be done. Allah has no shape or form. Allah can't be seen. Allah can't be heard. Allah is neither male nor female. Allah rewards and punishes fairly. But Allah is also merciful. Allah has no children, no parents, and no partners. He is not created by a being. There are no equal, superior, or lesser Gods. As Allah (S.W.T) declares in the holy Quran:

“قل هو الله احد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد

Say, “He is God, the One. God, to Whom the creatures turn for their needs. He begets not, nor was He begotten, and there is none like Him.”

Tawheed(Oneness of God)

Introduction

Tawheed means to believe that Allah is the one and only God worthy of worship. It is sometimes referred to as monotheism; however, in the purest sense in that no other entity can in any way have the attributes or be equivalent or even in competition with Allah. All acts of worship that a person does should be to Allah or for Allah Alone. For example, the prayer should only be to Allah etc. Allah Says in Qur'an Surah Al Anbiya Chapter #21 Verse #25

"And we did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We inspired him (saying): 'There is none who has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship Me (Alone and none else).'"

Tawheed is the essence of Islam, it is the core of Islam, it is what Islam stands for, and it is the reason why Allah created us. All prophets and messengers were sent with the message of Tawheed, the Quran itself is a book of Tawheed, and those who have a firm and correct belief in Tawheed will indeed be the saved ones.

The Qur'an declares that "Nothing is like Him" (42:11). Allah is omniscient and all-powerful. All of Allah's attributes belong to Him exclusively. He is the first and there is no last but His oneness. He is the First without anything before Him. He is the Last without anything after Him. The end is with Him alone, and He is the End. He is All-Existing: with him there is no end. Allah is now as He was before. He is Eternal.

Types of Tawheed

The types of Tawheed are three:

1. Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah (توحيد في الربوبية)
2. Tawheed al-Ilaahiyyah (توحيد في الألوهية)
3. Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat (توحيد في الأسماء والصفات)

Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah is singling out Allah the Exalted with (the actions of) creation, providing sustenance, giving life, causing death, and all of the types of regulation and administration of the dominion of the heavens and earth, and (also) singling Him out, the Exalted, with (the right to) judgement and legislation and sending of the Messengers and revealing of Books. Allah the Exalted said, "Verily, to Him belongs the creation and the command, blessed be Allah, the Lord of the worlds" (al-A'raaf 7:54).

Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah is singling out Allah with worship so that none besides Him is worshipped, so that none besides Him is called upon, so that no one is sought for rescue, or aid except Him. So that no one is sacrificed to or slaughtered for, or made an oath for, except Him. Allah the Exalted said, "Say: My prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. He has no partner. This is what I have been commanded with and I am the first of those who submit (to him with Islam and Tawheed)" (al-An'aam 6:162), and He said, "Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only)" (al-Kawthar 108:2).

Tawheed al-Asmaa was-Sifaat is describing Allah the Most High and naming Him with whatever He described and named Himself with, and with whatever His Messenger (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) described and named Him within the authentic narrations - and to affirm that for Allah without resemblance (to the creation) or likening (to the creation), and without (false) interpretation (of any of that) or negation (of any of that). There is nothing like Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer. And may Allah send prayers and salutations upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and his companions.

Significance of Tawheed

Tawheed is the essence of Islam and the mainspring of its strength. All other laws, beliefs and commands of Islam stand firm on this foundation. Take it away, and there is nothing left of Islam. Tawheed is the call of all the prophets to their people, it is mentioned in Qur'an Surah An Nahl Chapter#16 Verse #36

"And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Taghut (all false deities i.e. do not worship Taghut besides Allah)."

Tawheed is the only reason for the world's creation as Allah Says in Qur'an Surah Al-Dhariaat Chapter #51 Verse #56

"And I (Allah) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone).

By declaring sincere belief in Tawheed, a disbeliever will become a Muslim. Conversely, a Muslim will become a disbeliever (kafir) if he rejects any aspect of it. By Tawheed we achieve salvation from Eternal punishment in the Hereafter, right guidance in this world, and forgiveness for sins. Tawheed is only belief in Islamic ideology which does not have forgiveness of its rejection, means Allah will never forgive that person who associate partner with Allah. Allah states in the Qur'an: Surah Nisa Chapter #04 verse #48

Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills;

There is a Sahih Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Volumn 009, Book 093, Hadith Number 470. SahihBukhariNarated By Mu'adh bin Jabal : The Prophet said,

"O Mu'adh! Do you know what Allah's Right upon His slaves is?" I said, "Allah and His Apostle know best." The Prophet said, "To worship Him (Allah) Alone and to join none in worship with Him (Allah).

Whoever fulfills Tawheed will be admitted to the Garden (Al-Jannah) in the Hereafter. The Prophet Muhammad has stated: Verily Allah has promised that whosoever does not commit shirk shall enter Al-Jannah (the Garden in the Heaven) [Al-Bukhari)].

It is the reason for solving peoples' sadness because true happiness will be achieved if persons realize Tawheed within their heart. They will also never feel psychologically enslaved even if physically captive. It is the only reason for Allah's pleasure and rewards. In another aayah (verse) in the Qur'an Allah says: Surah AzZumar Chapter#39 verse#7

If you disbelieve, then verily, Allah is not in need of you; He likes not disbelief for His slaves.

Disbelief is nothing but a manifestation of shirk which is the opposite of Tawheed. The acceptance of all of one's religious deeds is based upon Tawheed. Allah states: Surah Al-Imran Chapter #03 Verse #85

"Whoever accepts a religion other than Islam it shall be rejected by Allah and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers"

Islam is nothing if not an embodiment of the belief in Tawheed. Tawheed prevents man from eternally remaining in the Hellfire. The Prophet Muhammad stated in an authentic report:

"Whoever dies and has so much as a mustard seed of faith in his heart shall enter Al-Jannah".

Effects of Tawheed on Personal Life (Individuals)

When an individual pronounces the testimony: "Ash-hadu al-laailaaha illAllah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammad-ar- Rasullullaah" (I testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His Messenger), believing in it and acting upon it, he experiences a noticeable change in his life. By understanding who his Lord is as well as the purpose of his creation, he will be able to achieve success in this life and the next. This success emanates from the following points:

1- A believer in this testimony can never be narrow in outlook. He believes in Allah, Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Master of the universe and its Sustainer. After this belief, he does not regard anything in the world as a stranger to himself. He looks on everything in the universe as belonging to the same Lord he himself belongs.

2- This belief produces in man the highest degree of self-respect and self esteem. The believer knows that Allah Alone is the Possessor of all power, and that none besides Him can benefit or harm a person, or provide for his needs, or give and take away life or wield authority or influence. This conviction makes him indifferent to, independent on, and fearless of all powers other than those of Allah. He never bows his head

in homage to any of Allah's creatures, nor does he stretch out his hand before anyone else. He is not overawed by anybody's greatness. This attitude of mind cannot be produced by any other belief.

3- Along with self-respect, this belief also generates in man a sense of modesty and humbleness. It makes him unostentatious and unpretending. A believer never becomes proud, haughty or arrogant. The boisterous pride of power, wealth and worth can have no room in his heart, because he knows that whatever he possesses has been given to him by Allah, and that Allah can take away just as He can give. In contrast to this, an unbeliever, when he achieves some worldly merit, becomes proud and conceited because he believes that his merit is due to his own worth. In the same way, pride and self-conceit are a necessary outcomes and concomitants of 'Shirk' (association of others with Allah in worship), because a polytheist believes that he has a particular relation with deities, which does not exist between them and other people.

4- This belief makes man virtuous and upright. He has the conviction that there is no other means of success and salvation for him except purity of soul and righteousness of behavior. He has perfect faith in Allah Who is Above all needs, is related to none and is absolutely Just. This belief creates in him the consciousness that unless he lives rightly and acts justly, he cannot succeed. No influence or underhand activity can save him from ruin.

5- The believer never becomes despondent. He has a firm faith in Allah Who is The Master of all the treasures of the earth and the heavens, Whose grace and bounty have no limit and Whose power is infinite. This faith imparts to his heart extraordinary consolation, fills it with satisfaction and keeps it filled with hope. Although he may be met with rejection from all sides in this world, faith in and dependence on Allah never leave him, and on that strength he goes on struggling. Such profound confidence can result from no other belief than belief in Allah Alone.

6- This testimony of faith inspires bravery in man. There are two things which make a man cowardly: (a) fear of death and love of safety, and (b) the idea that there is someone else besides Allah who can take away life, and that man by adopting certain devices can ward off death. Belief in "Laa ilaaha illAllah" blocks and drives away both these ideas. The first idea goes out of his mind because he knows that his life and his property and everything else really belong to Allah, and he becomes ready to sacrifice his all for the pleasure of Allah. He gets rid of the second idea because he knows that no weapon, no man or animal has the power of taking away his life; Allah alone has the power to do so. A time has been ordained for him, and all the forces of the world combined cannot take away anyone's life before that time. It is for this reason that no one is braver than the one who has faith in Allah. Nothing can daunt him: not even the strongest tempest of adversity and the mightiest of armies.

7- The belief in 'Laa ilaaha illAllah' creates an attitude of peace and contentment, purges the mind of jealousy, envy and greed, and keeps away the temptations of resorting to base and unfair means for achieving success. The believer understands that wealth is in Allah's hands, and He apportions it out as He Wills; that honor, power, reputation and authority - everything - is also subjected to His Will, and He bestows them as He Wills; and that man's duty is only to endeavor and to struggle fairly.

Effects of Tawheed on Collective Life (Social)

Belief in one God has deep impact on the social life of man. This is certain that the basis of social and collective life is based on justice and equality, and perfect justice and equality is not possible without the concept of one God and unity of mankind.

Tawheed in Islam is that it implies the equity and unity of all people in their relation with Allah. Thus, people of different social strata were not created by separate deities with varying levels of power, since this would violate Tawheed by putting barriers between them. Instead, social dimension of Tawheed states that the same Allah created everyone, and so all people have the same fundamental essence. In fact, the noblest person in Allah's Sight is the one who is most Allah-conscious. It is mentioned in Quran Surah Al Hujrat Chapter #49 Verse #13

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things))."

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Your Lord is One. You are from Aadam and Aadam was created from dust. An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab, nor a white person over a black person, except for his/her piety and righteousness."

We know that all religions in the world preach peace, but even we witnessed violence, destruction of civilization and values human society. It is just because of that nations in the world are not united on one base, they have their own different religion, different God, that is the most focal point which serve as the basic block of violence and destruction. Tawheed is only solution for the whole humanity to bring and maintain peace in the world.

Associating Partner (شرك)

One of the most important obligations is to know the meaning of shirk, its seriousness and its different types, so that our Tawheed (belief in the Oneness of Allah) and our Islam may be complete, and our faith may be sound. Allah is the Source of strength and true guidance comes from Him. The word shirk in Arabic means taking a partner, i.e., regarding someone as the partner of another. It is said [in Arabic]:

اشرك بينهم (he joined them together) when he regarded them as two of equal status; or اشرك في امره غيرهم (he introduced another into his affair) when he made two people involved in it. In terms of sharee'ah or Islamic terminology, shirk means ascribing a partner or rival to Allah in Lordship (rubaobiyyah), worship or in His names and attributes. A rival is a peer or counterpart. Hence Allah forbids setting up rivals with Him and he condemns those who take them (rivals) as gods instead of or besides Allah in many verses of the Qur'aan. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Then do not set up rivals unto Allah (in worship) while you know (that He Alone has the right to be worshipped)" [al-Baqarah 2:222]

"And they set up rivals to Allah, to mislead (men) from His path! Say: 'Enjoy (your brief life)! But certainly, your destination is the (Hell) Fire!'" [Ibraaheem 14:30]

In the hadeeth it is narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever dies claiming that Allah has a rival, will enter Hell." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4497; Muslim, 92.

Types of shirk

The texts of the Qur'aan and Sunnah indicate that shirk and the ascribing of rivals to Allah sometimes puts a person beyond the pale of Islam and sometimes does not. Hence the scholars divided shirk into two types which they call shirk akbar (major shirk) and shirk asghar (minor shirk). There follows a brief description of each type.

Major shirk

This means ascribing to someone other than Allah something that belongs only to Allah, such as Lordship (rubaobiyyah), divinity (uloohiyyah) and the divine names and attributes (al-asma' wa'l-sifaat). This kind of shirk may sometime sbe outward, such as the shirk of those who worship idols and graves, or the dead or absent or it may sometimes be hidden, such as those who put their trust in other gods besides Allah, or the shirk and kufr of the hypocrites. For even though their (hypocrites') shirk puts them beyond the pale of Islam and means that they will abide forever in Hell, it is a hidden shirk, because they make an outward display of Islam and conceal their kufr and shirk, so they are inwardly mushriks but not outwardly.

Forms of Shirk

1. Shirk may sometimes take the form of beliefs: Such as the belief that there is someone else who creates, gives life and death, reigns or controls the affairs of the universe along with Allah or the belief that there is someone else who must be obeyed absolutely besides Allah, so they follow him in regarding as permissible or forbidden whatever he wants, even if that goes against the religion of the Messengers. Or they may associate others with Allah in love and veneration, by loving a created being as they love Allah. This is the kind of shirk that Allah does not forgive, and it is the shirk of which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah" [al-Baqarah 2:165] Or the belief that there are those who know the Unseen as well as Allah. This is very common among some of the deviant sects. Some of them believe that their imams have knowledge of the unseen, and some of them believe similar things about their awliya' ("saints") and so on. It is also shirk to believe that there is someone who bestows mercy in a manner that is befitting only for Allah, so he shows mercy as Allah does and forgives sins and overlooks the bad deeds of his worshippers.

2. Shirk may sometimes take the form of words: Such as those who make du'aa' or pray to someone other than Allah, or seek his help or seek refuge with him with regard to matters over which no one has control except Allah, whether the person called upon is a Prophet, a wali ("saint"), an angel or a jinn, or some other created being. This is a kind of major shirk which puts one beyond the pale of Islam. Or such as those who make fun of religion or who liken Allah to His creation, or say that there is another creator, provider or controller besides Allah. All of these are major shirk and a grave sin that is not forgiven. Shirk may sometimes take the form of actions: Such as one who sacrifices, prays or prostrates to something other than Allah, or who promulgates laws to replace the rulings of Allah and makes that the law to which people are obliged to refer for judgment; or one who supports the kaafirs and helps them against the believers, and other acts that go against the basic meaning of faith and put the one who does them beyond the pale of Islam.

Minor shirk

- Showing off (الرياء): worshipping Allah based upon the Sunnah but to impress people, and this is the most common type.

"When they get up for the prayer (Salaah), they get up lazily. That is because they only show off in front of the people, and rarely do they think of Allah." (An-Nisaa', 4:142)

"The thing that I fear most for you is the minor Shirk; Riyaa" (Ahmad in his Musnad)

The prophet said: ان يسير الرياء شرك "A little showing off (riyaa) is shirk. Allah(swt) will ask the one who does riyaa on the Day of Judgment to take his rewards from those he showed off for.

- Swearing by other than Allah (حلف بغير الله)

The prophet Muhammad (SAWW) said:

من حلف بغير الله فقد اشرك

"Whosoever swears by other than Allah, verily, he associates (partners with Allah)"

The Belief in Angels

Angels are beings created from light. A'isha (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saws) said:

"Angels were created from light, Jinn were created from smokeless fire, and Adam was created from that which has been described to you (in the Qur'an and Sunnah)..." (Muslim)

The belief in Angels (الملائكة) is the second article of faith in Islam. Allah says:

"The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. All believe in Allah, His Angels and His Messengers." (Qur'an 2:285)

It is obligatory, and in fact an essential part of faith to respect all of the Angels. Therefore, it is unthinkable for Muslims to have any animosity towards any of the Angels, let alone cursing them. Any such action is considered an act of Kaffir (disbelief). Some Jews once came to the Prophet (saws) and told him that they had five questions for him. If He could answer the questions satisfactorily, they would be his followers. The Prophet (saws) answered the first four to their satisfaction, and then they asked him the final question; "There is not any Prophet, except that he has an angel assigned to him as a companion, who brings him news from Allah. So tell us who your companion is?" The Prophet (saws) replied, "Jibreel, (as)." They said, "That is the one who brings down war, fighting and punishment - our enemy. If only you had said Mika'el, who brings down mercy, rain and vegetation, it would have been that we follow you!" Then Allah revealed the reply:

"Say: Who is an enemy to Jibreel? For, it is he who brought it (this Qur'an) down to your hearts, by Allah's permission, confirming that which was before it, and as a guidance and a mercy to the believers. Whoever is an enemy to Allah, and to His Angels, and to His Messengers, and (in particular to) Jibreel and Mika'el, then let him know that Allah is an enemy to the disbeliever." (Qur'an :AlBaqarah 2:97-98) Related by Ahmad, Al-Timidhi and Al-Nasa'i

The Nature of Angels

Angels are beings created from light as we mentioned a Hadith above. They do not have desires of their own, neither do they eat or drink. They are honoured servants of Allah, and never disobey Him. They are perpetually in service, in prostration, in a standing posture, or through various other forms of worship. Allah says:

"Those who are before him are not scornful of worshipping Him, nor do they tire or get bored. They glorify Him night and Day: they do not halt." (Qur'an 21:19-20)

And also:

"They are honoured servants, who do not precede Him in speech, and they act according to His command. He knows what is ahead of them, and they do not intercede, except for those whom He approves." (Qur'an 21:26-27)

Angels are also described as having wings:

"Praise be to Allah, the Originator of the Heavens and the Earth, the creator of angels having wings - two, three and four." (Qur'an 35:1) However, we should not try to guess the nature or form of these wings. Certainly, there is no basis in Islam, for the corrupt notion, prevalent in the west, that angels are like beautiful little girls with a pair of wings on their backs. We should also be careful that our children are not exposed to those books which contain such misleading pictures, so that they don't grow up with an incorrect concept of angels. The angels do not have a gender. They do not procreate, Allah has denounced those who regard them as female. Indeed to do so is the way of the disbelievers.

"Those who do not believe in the Hereafter, surely name the angels with female names." (Qur'an 53:27)

The pagan Arabs, for example, called the angels; daughters of Allah, despite the fact that they themselves were disdainful of female offspring, and were so ashamed of them that they were inclined to bury their daughters alive. Allah (swt) thus condemns these ignorant beliefs and practices:

"Or has He (Allah) taken, out of that which He created, daughters, and honoured you with sons? And, when one of them receives tidings of that which He sets up as a likeness to Allah Most Gracious (i.e. of a girl) his

face becomes dark and gloomy and full of grief....And they consider the angels, who are worshippers of Allah, to be females. Did they witness their creation ? Their testimony shall be recorded, and they will be asked."(Qur'an 43:16,17,19)

Can Angels be Seen?

Prophets can see angels in their natural form. Al-Bukhari recorded that A'ishah (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saws) saw the Angel Jibreel (as) twice in his natural form. However, ordinary people (i.e. non-Prophets) cannot see them unless they (angels) take on a visible form. Angels can indeed take a material form, such as that of handsome man. An example of this is found in the Qur'an where Allah sent angels to give Prophet Ibrahim (as) glad tidings of a son, and then to assist the Prophet Lut (as). Lut's (as) people, being homosexuals, lusted after these angels, but Allah destroyed the depraved sinners. Allah says:

"And verily, there came our Messengers to Ibrahim with glad tidings. They said 'salaam' (i.e. greetings of peace). He answered, 'salaam...'"(Qur'an: Hud 11:69-83)

Also, in the Qur'an, there is the incident in which the angel Jibreel (as) came to Maryam the mother of Isa (as) to inform her that she would miraculously give birth to Isa (as). Allah says:

"Then we sent to her our Spirit (angel Jibreel) and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects..."(Qur'an 19:17-21)

Lastly there is the famous "Hadith Jibreel" related by Muslim, in which angel Jibreel came to the Prophet (saws) in the form of a man, and asked him about Islam, Iman and Ihsan. This was done in public view, and its purpose was to teach the people about their religion.

The Duties of Angels

Angels have various duties, with each having a well defined role. The Qur'an says:

"And there is not any among us, except that has a known position. And we are indeed the ones who glorify Allah."(Qur'an 37:164-166)

Angels thus teach us the benefits of specialization. So, in the Islamic society, some members must specialize in the Qur'an and its sciences, others in medicine, still others in agriculture and so on and so forth, so that the Muslim community becomes efficient and well balanced. Similarly, in the home, the responsibilities are divided. While the man is responsible primarily for supporting the family financially, the woman has an important role in the upbringing of the children, although she is by no means confined to only this task. Only Allah knows all the details and roles of all the angels:

"...And none know the hosts of your Lord except He..."(Qur'an 74:31)

Nevertheless, He has told us about some of these angels through the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

The Names and Roles of Some Angels

Only a few angels are mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, Others are mentioned either by specific names or by role or their general nature of serving and worshipping Allah. Among those mentioned are

Jibreel (حضرت جبرائيل)

This is the most distinguished of the angels, and is entrusted with carrying revelation to the Prophets. This includes bringing the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammed (saws), which is referred to in the following:

"And it is surely the revelation of the Lord of the worlds. The trusted Spirit has brought it down to your heart, in order that you might be one of the warners, in clear Arabic speech."(Qur'an: 26:192-195)

Angel Jibreel (as) is also called 'the Holy Spirit', as mentioned in the Qur'an:

"And we gave Isa, son of Maryam, clear proofs, and supported him with Ruh-al-Qudus (holy spiritie. Jibreel)." (Qur'an 2:253)

Mika'el (حضرت ميكائيل)

The one entrusted with the sustenance of creatures, and is also one of the most prominent angels.

The Recorders (کرامن کاتبین)

These are two angels who accompany every human being and record his deeds. One of them stays on the right side and he records only good deeds. The other stays on the left side and records only bad deeds. The one on the right (the generous one - He records good deeds and is so named because each good deed is rewarded ten times over or even more.

"And indeed, there are over you scribes, generous and recording. They know what you do." (Qur'an: 82:10-12)

These angels record our deeds, words, and thoughts. Allah says regarding mankind:

"He utters not any word except that there is with him an observer, ready." (Qur'an: 50:18)

The Gaurdians (محافظین)

They are angels who protect us from whatever evil Allah wills to save us from.

"For each (person) there are angels in succession in front of him and behind him, who guard him by Allah's command." (Qur'an 13:11)

The Angel of Death (ملك الموت)

He is entrusted with taking the souls of all creatures in the universe.

"Say: The Angel of Death, who is set over you, will take your souls, then you shall be brought to your lord." (Qur'an: 32:11)

There are angels with him who torture the wrongdoers at the time of death:

"If only you could see, when the angels take the souls of those who disbelieve, the angels are beating their faces and their backs." (Qur'an 18:50)

Munkar and Nakeer (منکر نکیر)

They are the two angels in charge of questioning people in their graves about their faith.

Ridwan and Malik (رضوان اور مالک)

They watch over Heaven and Hell. The custodian of Heaven is called Ridwan, while that of Hell is named Malik. Hell has nineteen angels who watch over it.

"Over it (Hell) are nineteen (angels)" (Qur'an 74:30)

There are angels who welcome the believers into heaven, greeting them with peace:

"And angels shall enter unto them from every gate saying: "salaam alaykum" (peace be upon you for that you persevered in patience! Excellent indeed is the final home." (Qur'an 13:23-24)

Eight angels will carry the Arsh, which is Allah's greatest creation, on the Day of Judgment:

"And the angels will be on its sides, and eight angels will that Day, bear the throne of your Lord above them." (Qur'an 69:17)

Holy Books in Islam

Throughout the ages, Allah revealed scriptures to some of His selected prophets. Muslims must believe in Allah's books, and it is one of the key articles of faith that keep a Muslim within the fold of Islam.

The final book of Allah is the Quran, revealed to His final messenger, Muhammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). The Quran has been unchanged since it was revealed 1,400 years ago and remains in its original language.

Some fundamental Islamic beliefs regarding the books of Allah include:

- **Injeel**

this is the book revealed to Jesus and known commonly as the Gospel. However, Muslims do not consider the Gospel, as it exists today, the word of God as they it has been changed many times and does not exist in its original language.

- **Taurat**

this is the Torah, revealed to Moses. Like the New Testament, Muslims do not believe that the Torah survived time in terms of content and original language of revelation.

- **Zaboor**

this is the book revealed to prophet Dawood (David), known commonly as the Psalms. Allah says in the Quran (Surah Israa, verse 55):

"And it is your Lord that knoweth best all beings that are in the heaven and on earth: We did bestow on some Prophets more (and other) gifts than on others: and We gave to David (the gift of) the Psalms."

- **Superiority of Quran**

the Quran encompasses previous books and adds to it, with the Prophet saying that the Mufassalsurahs (short chapters) gives the Quran its raised status. The Prophet said:

"I have been given the long seven Surahs instead of the Torah, I have been given the Mi'un Surahs instead of the Psalms, I have been given the Mathani Surahs instead of the Gospel and I have been privileged with the Mufassal portion".

Risalat / Prophet Hood

Belief in the Prophets (Peace be upon them) of Allah (SWT) is one of the required pillars of faith. Muslims are obliged to believe in all the Prophets (Peace be upon them) because they all preached the same message and their respect is mandatory upon every Muslim. Allah (SWT) says in Surah Al- Baqrah Chapter#02 verse#136:

Say ye: "We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: And we bow to Allah (in Islam)."

Belief in certain prophets who God chose to relay His message to humans is a required article of Islamic faith. God conveys His message and relates His will through human prophets. They form a link between the earthly beings and the heavens, in the sense that God has picked them to deliver His message to human beings. There are no other channels to receive divine communications. It is the system of communication between the Creator and the created. God does not send angels to every single individual, nor does He open the skies so people can climb up to receive the message. His way of communication is through human prophets who receive the message through angels.

To have faith in the prophets is to firmly believe that God chose morally upright men to bear His message and pass it to humanity. Blessed were those who followed them, and wretched were those who refused to obey. They faithfully delivered the message, without hiding, altering, or corrupting it. Rejecting a prophet is rejecting the One who sent him, and disobeying a prophet is disobeying the One who commanded to obey him. God sent to every nation a prophet, mostly from amongst them, to call them to worship God alone and to shun false gods. As Allah Says in Quran Surah An-Nahl Chapter#16 Verse #36

And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): "Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Taghut (all false deities i.e. do not worship Taghut besides Allah)."

Muslims believe in those prophets mentioned by name in Islamic sources, such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, David, Solomon, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, to name a few. A general belief is held in those not mentioned by name, as God says: Surah Al Ghafir Chapter#40 verse #78

"And, indeed We have sent prophets before you (O Muhammad), of some of them We have related to you their story, and of some We have not related to you their story..."

We as Muslims firmly believe the final prophet was the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, and there will be no prophet or messenger after him. Surah Al-Ahzab Chapter# 33 Verse#40

"Mohammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the Messenger of Allah, and the seal of the Prophets, and Allah is aware of all things."

To appreciate this fact, one must understand that the teachings of the last prophet are preserved in original language in their primary sources. There is no need for another prophet. In the case of earlier prophets, their scriptures were lost or their message was corrupted to the point that truth was hardly distinguishable from falsehood. The message of the Prophet Muhammad is clear and preserved and will remain so till the end of time.

Purpose of Prophet Hood

Allah (SWT) chose Prophets (Peace be upon them) from among the humans; therefore, they are not divine. Their sole purpose was to convey the true message, not to convert people into religion. He (SWT) sent them to each nation, and commanded them to call them to worship Allah (SWT) alone and to explain the ways which would bring happiness in this world and in the Hereafter, and to bring glad tidings of Paradise to those who believed and the warning of Hell to those who disbelieved. Allah Says in Quran Surah Al Anbiya Chapter #21 Verse #25:

"And we did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We inspired him (saying): 'There is none who has the right to be worshipped but I (Allah), so worship Me (Alone and none else).'"

We as Muslims believe that all prophets gave guidance and instruction to their people about how to properly worship Allah and live their lives. Since God is One, His message has been one and the same throughout time. In essence, all prophets taught the message of Islam - to find peace in your life through submission to the One Almighty Creator; to believe in God and to follow His guidance.

We can identify the following main reasons for sending prophets:

- (1) Guiding humanity from the worship of created beings to the worship of their Creator, from being in a state of servitude to the creation to the freedom of worshipping their Lord.
- (2) Clarifying to humanity the purpose of creation: worshipping God and obeying His commands, as well as clarifying that this life is a test for each individual, a test of which its results will decide the type of life one will lead after death.
- (3) Showing humanity the right path that will lead them to Paradise and to salvation from Hellfire.
- (4) Establishing proof against humanity by sending prophets, so people will not have an excuse when they will be questioned on the Day of Judgment. They will not be able to claim ignorance to the purpose of their creation and life after death.
- (5) Uncovering the unseen „world“ which exists beyond the normal senses and the physical universe, such as the knowledge of God, existence of angels, and the reality of the Day of Judgment.
- (6) Providing human beings practical examples to lead moral, righteous, purpose-driven lives free of doubts and confusion. Innately, human beings admire fellow human beings, so the best examples of righteousness for humans to imitate are those of Gods prophets.
- (7) Purifying the soul from materialism, sin, and heedlessness.
- (8) Conveying to humanity the teachings of God, which is for their own benefit in this life and in the Hereafter.

Message of Prophets

The single most important message of all prophets to their people was to worship God alone and none else and to follow His teachings. All of them, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Jesus, Muhammad and others (Peace be upon them), in addition to those we do not know - invited people to worship one True God and shun false gods.

Old Testament (Books of Mosses)

"I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour." [Isaiah 43:11]

"I am Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me." [Isaiah 45:5]

New Testament (Bible)

"Hear, O Israel The Lord our God is one Lord."

(MARK 12:29).

Finally, the call of Muhammad some 600 years later reverberated across the hills of Mecca: Surah Al-Baqrah Chapter #02 Verse #163:

"And your God is One God: there is no god but He..."

The Holy Quran states this fact clearly: Surah Al Ambiya Chapter #21 verse #25

"And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We revealed to him (saying): none has the right to be worshipped but I, so worship Me (alone)."

Characteristics of Prophethood

1. He is the best person in his community as regards morality and intellectual ability This is necessary, for a prophet's life serves as a model for his followers. His personality should not drive people away from his message, but rather inspire them to accept it and to transform their own lives. After receiving the message, he is infallible on all matters dealing with the revelation.

Although he might commit some small mistakes, but not in any matter that concerns the revelation, he cannot commit a sin.

2. He is supported by miracles, which derive from the power and permission of Allah and not of the prophet himself, to prove that he is not an impostor. Such miracles are direct challenges to the powers that be, for they do not follow the rules laid down by the experts in the affected field or activity By way of illustration, let us review some of the miracles recorded in the Old Testament, the New testament, and the Qur'an.

Moses' Egyptian contemporaries excelled in magic. Thus his major miracle was to defeat the best magicians that the society could offer. Jesus' contemporaries were skilled physicians, and so he raised the dead and cured those suffering from incurable diseases. Muhammad (pbuh)'s contemporaries were known for their eloquence and magnificent poetry. Therefore Muhammad (pbuh)'s major miracle was the Qur'an, which no poet could imitate or surpass, despite their repeated and vigorous efforts to do so.

All previous miracles were limited to a specific people living at a specific time. This is not the case with the Qur'an, however, for this miracle is universal and everlasting. Although previous generations actually witnessed it, all future generations will continue to witness its miraculous nature in term of its style, content, and spiritual impact and message. This ability of the Qur'an to rise above the limits imposed by time and space on all other miracles proves its divine origin.

3. Every prophet states clearly that what he receives comes from Allah and that it is for the well-being of humanity. He confirms what was revealed previously and what may be revealed by a future prophet, for his task is to convey the message entrusted to him by Allah. Thus the revealed message is always the same in essence and purpose-it cannot deviate from prior or future revelations.

Prophets are necessary for conveying God's instructions and guidance to mankind. Without this knowledge, we would be unable to answer the fundamental questions of our existence: Why were we created? What happens after death? Is there an afterlife? Are we accountable for our actions? Is there any future reward or punishment for what we do? What about Allah, His angels, heaven, and hell? Each of these questions, and all others, are answered in the revelation brought by the prophet. But in order for his community to believe and accept them, the prophet must be brought by individuals who have attained a position of trust and respect among their people. This is why he must be morally and intellectual superior to his contemporaries.

Based on this understanding, Muslims reject some of the stories found in the Old Testament concerning the prophets. For example: the prophet Lot engaging in fornication-with his own daughters when drunk, or the prophet David sending one of his military leaders to his death so that he could marry his wife. it is

inconceivable to Muslims that a prophet of Allah could do such things. Prophets are also miraculously supported by God and instructed by Him to affirm the continuity of His message.

In brief, the divine revelation consists of the following information:

- a) A clear concept of God, His attributes and creation, and what should and should not be ascribed to Him.
- b) A clear idea about the unseen world, angels and jinn (spirits), paradise and hell.
- c) Why has God created us? What does He want from us? Will we be rewarded (or punished) for obeying (or disobeying) Him?
- d) A clear explanation of how to order our societies according to His will. This involves the implementation of a law that, when applied correctly and honestly, will bring about a happy and ideal society.

As we have seen in the above discussion, there is no substitute for prophets. Despite the tremendous and impressive advancements of modern science, even it cannot provide authentic information about the supernatural world or provide guidance. Its very nature, which is too materialistic and limited, precludes it from serving this purpose. Mystic experience is also unsuitable, for it is too subjective and, frequently, too misleading.

Now one might ask: How many prophets has Allah sent to humanity? Although we cannot answer this question definitively, some Muslim scholars place the number at two hundred forty thousand. We are only sure of what is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an: God has sent one or more messengers to each nation, for He would not be just if he were to hold a nation to account for its actions without first informing its people of what is allowed and what is not. The Qur'an mentions twenty-five prophets by name (i.e., Noah, Abraham, Moses,

Jesus, and Muhammad (pbuh), who are considered the greatest of all the prophets) and indicates that there were others not known to Muhammad (pbuh).

Muslims are required to believe in and to respect all of the messengers of Allah without exception. Since all the prophets come from the same God and for the same purpose-to lead humanity to Allah-belief in them all is essential and logical. If some are accepted and others are rejected, it is due to the individual's misunderstanding of the prophet's role or of racial (or other) bias.

The Muslims are unique in considering belief in all of the prophets of God to be an article of faith. The Jews reject Jesus Christ and Muhammad (pbuh); the Christians reject Muhammad (pbuh) and, in reality, reject Moses because they do not abide by his laws. The Muslims accept them all as messengers of God who brought guidance to mankind. However, this acceptance is characterized with a degree of caution, for the Qur'an and the Prophet states the revelation conveyed by those prophets has been distorted and corrupted by those who received it. We read in the Qur'an:

Say (O Muslims), we believe in Allah and that which is revealed to us and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob, and their children, and that which Moses and Jesus received and that the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them and unto Him we have surrendered. (2:136)

The Qur'an tells the Muslims that this is the true and impartial belief. If other nations share this belief, it means that they are on the right track. If they do not share this belief, it means that they are following their own whims and biases. The Qur'an says:

And if they believe in what you believe, then are they rightly guided. But if they turn away, then they are in disunity, and Allah will suffice you against them. He is the Hearer; the Knower: This is Gods religion and Who is better than God in religion? (2:137-38)

There are two important points that need to be clarified about the roles of Jesus and Muhammad (pbuh), as they are usually misunderstood and distorted. In the case of Jesus, the Qur'an rejects completely the Christian assertion of his divinity and his status of the "son" of God. It also states that the unusual circumstances of his birth-without a father-does not make him a "son" of God, for if this logic were followed to its logical conclusion, Adam, who had no father and no mother, would be greater than Jesus, for: Truly the likeness of Jesus, in God's sight, is as Adam's likeness; He created him of dust, then said unto him, "Be," and he was (3:59).

Like other prophets, Jesus performed miracles: he raised the dead and cured the blind and the lepers. He also made it perfectly clear that these miracles were done by God, not by him. But his message was distorted, because; it was not recorded in his presence and under his direction, but only about one hundred years after his death. According to the Qur'an, Jesus was sent to the children of Israel to confirm the Torah of Moses and to bring glad tidings of a final messenger who would come after him:

And when Jesus son of Mary said, Children of Israel, I am indeed the Messenger to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving good tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be the praised one. (61:6)

However, the majority of the Jews rejected his ministry and plotted against his life. The Qur'anic account of his death differs from the one found in the New Testament: he was not killed or crucified, but rather was raised to heaven by God. It is also implied that Jesus will return one day and that all of the Christians and Jews will believe in him before he dies. This is also supported by authentic sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Muhammad (pbuh), the last prophet of God, was born in Makkah in the sixth century CE. Until the age of forty, he was known as a man of excellent character and cultured manners. These characteristics earned for him the nickname of al-Amin (The Trustworthy). There were no prior indications that Allah had chosen him to be His last messenger. Once he was entrusted with this task, however, he began calling his idol-worshipping people to Islam. The revelation was recorded during his lifetime in writing and in the memory of his followers. The care taken to preserve each revelation as it was transmitted by the Prophet ensured that it would reach future generations in an uncorrupted form. As Allah has stated that the Qur'an would be preserved accurately, it is the source of divine guidance for all time, and the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is His final prophet.

Finality of the prophethood (ختم نبوت)

Khatm e Nubuwwat means that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the Last of the Prophets. The process and routine of appointing Prophets and Messengers by Almighty Allah has been terminated, finished, ended, stopped, and sealed. None will be appointed as prophet after Muhammad (PBUH). His Prophethood will continue until the judgment day and the day after, only that person can claim to be a Muslim who believes in Khatm e Nubuwwat and confesses.

Close to one hundred verses of the holy Quran, directly or indirectly, support the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood. Verse 40 of the Surah Al-Ahzab (33), for instance, highlights this teaching in clear terms.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things. (The Holy Quran, Al-Ahzab 33:40)"

Numerous verses of the Quran indicate that the teachings of Islam have been completed, perfected, and preserved and have been meant universally for all the Worlds. Such statements eliminate every reason for which a new prophet may need to be commissioned to humanity.

"And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind; but most of mankind do not know. (The Holy Quran, Saba 34:28)

Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to Whom belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: it is He That giveth both life and death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet, who believeth in Allah and His words: follow him that (so) ye may be guided." (The Holy Quran, Al-Araf 7:158)

If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (All spiritual good). (The Holy Quran, Al-e-Imran 3:85)

The following portion of the last revealed verse of the Holy Quran is also a testimony that no Apostle with new instructions or interpretations of the holy Quran will ever need to be sent to the humanity:

"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.(The Holy Quran, Al-Maidah 5:3)"

The following teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) deal with the issue of Finality of Prophethood. As apparent from the references, these Ahadith are authentic and have been recorded by many scholars and reported by numerous companions of the Prophet(SAW).

"My position in relation to the prophets who came before me can be explained by the following example: A man erected a building and adorned this edifice with great beauty, but he left an empty niche, in the corner where just one brick was missing. People looked around the building and marveled at its beauty, but wondered why a brick was missing from that niche? I am like unto that one missing brick and I am the last in the line of the Prophets.(Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Tirmizi, Babu Khatimin-Nabiyyin, Musnad Abu Dawud Tayalisi)"

"God has bestowed upon me six favors which the former Prophets did not enjoy:

- I have been endowed with the gift of pithy and perfect speech.
- I was granted victory owing to my awe.
- The spoils of war were made lawful unto me.
- The whole earth has been made the place of worship for me and it has become the means of purification for me also. In other words, in my religion, offering of prayers is not confined to certain specified places of worship. Prayers can be offered at any place over the earth. And in case water is not available, it is lawful for my people to perform ablutions with earth (Tayammum) and to cleanse themselves with the soil, if water for bathing is scarce.
- I have been sent by Allah to carry His Divine message to the whole world.
- And the line of prophets has come to its final end in me.(Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah)"

"I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad, I am the effacer and infidelity shall be erased through me; I am the assembler. People shall be assembled on Doomsday after my time. And I am the last in the sense that no prophet shall succeed me.(Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Muatta)"

"You (Hazrat Ali) are related to me as Aaron was related to Moses (pbuh). But no Apostle will come after me.(Bukhari, Muslim, Musnad recorded a similar hadith ending in 'Behold there is no prophethood after me.'). If ever there arose a person from among my people who would hold communion with God, it would be none else but 'Umar bin Khattab.(Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi)"

"We are the last (ummah) but will precede all on the Day of Resurrection except that the Book was given to them before us.(Bukhari, Muslim)"

"The tribe of Israel was guided by prophets. When a prophet passed away, another prophet succeeded him. But no prophet will come after me; only caliphs will succeed me.(Bukhari)"

"I am the last in line of the prophets of God and my Masjid is the last Masjid.(Muslim)"

"The chain of Messengers and Prophets has come to an end. There shall be no Messenger nor Prophet after me.(Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Anas bin Malik)"

"There will arise thirty impostors in my Ummah and each one of them will pronounce to the world that he is a prophet, but I am the last in the line of the Prophets of God and no Prophet will come after me.(Abu Dawood, Tirmizi)"

"Allah will send no Apostle after me, but only Mubashshirat (Good vision or pious vision). (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Tufail, Nasa'i, Abu Dawud)"

"No Prophet will come after me and there will, therefore, be no other community of followers of any new Prophet.(Baihaqi, Tabarani)"

"God Almighty hath sent unto the world no apostle who did not warn his people about the appearance of Dajjal (Anti-Christ, but Dajjal did not appear in their time). I am the last in the line of Prophets and you are the last community of believers. Without doubt, then, Dajjal shall appear from amongst you.(IbnMajah)"

"I am Muhammad, the unlettered prophet of Allah. I am Muhammad, the unlettered prophet of Allah. I am Muhammad, the unlettered prophet of Allah. There will be no prophet after me.(Musnad Ahmad)"

Here it is the list of all those who claimed to be a prophet after Prophet Mohammed(pbuh):

*.Musailamaal-Kazzab: Among the first false claimants to Prophecy was Musailama al-Kazzab, who appeared during the time of Prophet Mohammed(upon whom be blessings and peace) and his Companions and caused numerous troubles among Muslims and had many followers. He eventually surrendered along with his supporters in Al-Yamam battle, led by the Abu Bakr, and was killed.

*.Sajahal-Kahenah: Along with Musailama infalsely claiming Prophethood, was his wife, Sajah al-Kahenah, although she later reversed her position after her husband, Musailama, had been killed.

*.Saf son of Sayyad: Another false claimant to Prophethood that appeared during the time of the Prophet and his companions, was Saf son of Sayyad. He claimed he was a Prophet when he was on the threshold of adolescence, and was initially believed to be the false messiah, as his characteristics were the same as those of the false messiah. He later repented and embraced Islam.

*.Tulayha son of Khwailid: Tulayha was another of the false Prophets who appeared during the time of the Prophet and his companions, but later repented and returned to the fold of Islam.

*.Aswadal-Ansi: Also during the time of the Prophet and his companions was another false Prophet, named Aswad al-Ansi. He was based in Yemen and was killed by the companions of the Prophet.

*.Mahmud son of al-Faraj:In Samara, a false Prophet by the name of Mahmud son of al-Faraj appeared in 849-850 CE with a claim that a Quran was revealed to him through the angel Gabriel. He is reported to have some followers in Samara and Baghdad. He was executed on the orders of caliph, al-Mutawakkil.

*.Bab: Another false claimant to prophethood, and the predecessor of Bahaullah, was Mizra Ali Muhammad, who initially declared himself the "Bab" (Gate) to the Mahdi, and eventually progressed into other claims. He was embraced by the Shaykhis sect of Shi'a , who were then renamed "Babis". Subsequently, he declared himself to be the Shi'ite's hidden Mahdi. After declaring himself the Mahdi, he moved on to call himself Nuqtiyiula and declared that the Quran and Muslim Shari'a were now abrogated. Shi'a and Sunni scholars condemned him and Bab faced a series of imprisonment, trials, and indignities before being shot dead by a firing squad in 1850.

*.Bahaullah: The self-proclaimed successor to the Bab, and another liar/false claimant to prophecy was Mizra Hussein Ali Nuri. In 1863 Hussein Ali, a prominent member of the Babi group, declared himself to be the person whom God will make manifest, whom the Bab had foretold. He also took the name Bahaullah (Glory of God) and formed a new religion, the Bahai faith. Bahaullah was banished from Persia and was eventually imprisoned in Akka-Palestine. There he wrote his main work, his Kitab-ul-Aqdas (Most Holy Book), and developed the doctrine of the Bahai faith into a comprehensive teaching.

*.Elijah Muhammad: Elijah Muhammad, succeeding Wallace Dodd Ford, was another in the line of false prophets. He founded the convoluted belief system based on ideas extracted from everything from Christianity to Masonry to Islam in Detroit, Michigan in the 1930s. He referred to it as the "Nation of Islam".

*.Kareem Agha Khan: In the early 1970s, another false-claimant to prophecy appeared within the Ismaili sect, who proclaims himself to be a manifestation of God on Earth and a spokesman for Allah.

*.Rashid Khalifa: Then we have another false prophet, Rashid Khalifa, who came from Egypt, and claimed there to be an intricate numerical pattern to the Qur'an revolving around the number 19 in 1974. Because of this, he claimed to be a Messenger of God, alongside Prophets Ibraheem (Abraham) and Muhammad, and founded the group called "United Submitters International", rejecting the hadeeths of the Prophet, and denounced ayats 9:128-129 of the Qur'an. For many years he was the Imam at the Tuscon Mosque in Arizona, where he was later stabbed to death in 1990.

*.Al Mizra Abbas: Another liar, Al-Mizra Abbas, in 1233 AH/1818 CE, appeared in Tehran, Iran and died in Palestine.

*.Shabbatai Zevi: Shabbatai Zevi was one of the False Prophets who appeared during a desperate period of Ashkenazi Jewish history in the 16th and 17th centuries, promising to lead his compatriots out of tzuresdikegolus (painful exile) to dwell with the Lord in EretzYisroel (the land of Israel). It neither turned out as prophesised, nor did the high hopes of the Jewish colonies in Brazil.

*.Saleh son of Tarif Burghwati: Saleh claimed prophethood and Mahdihood in 125 AH. After ruling over his people for 47 years, in 174 AH he abdicated the throne in favour of his son.

*.Abu Mansoor 'Eessa: AbuMansoor 'Eessa claimed prophethood and Mahdihood in 341 AH and ruled over his people for 28 years.

*.Al-Harith son of Sa'id: Al-Harith son of Said claimed prophethood during the reign of the Umayyad caliph, Abd al-Malik son of Marwan. A number of royal soldiers were suspected of supporting him. He was executed in 698-699 CE.

*.Mizra Ghulam Ahmad: MizraGhulam Ahmad of Qadian is a British-engineered false Prophet who appeared in India to quell resistance against the British colonialists. He claimed to be the Messiah as the similitude of Prophet 'Eessa, the Mahdi, a Prophet, a Messenger, and the second advent of Prophet Mohammed simultaneously. He invited his fiercest opponent, Molvi Sanaullah Amratsari, to a prayer duel. He advertised his supplication to Allah pleading Him to annihilate the liar amongst the two in the lifetime of the truthful one, by Cholera or by Plague. He considered them to be the sign of Divine Anger and Punishment. Mirza subsequently died of cholera a year later.

*.Mohammed son of Sa'id: Mohammed son of Sa'id is considered as one of the four infamous forgers of hadith. He distorted the hadith: "I am the seal of prophets and there is no prophet after me" by adding:

"unless Allah wills {otherwise}". He is reported to have drawn his own conclusions from this addition and claimed prophethood for himself. He was executed on the orders of Abbasid caliph, Abu Jafar al-Mansoor.

*.Mahmood Mohammed Taha: Mahmood Mohammed Taha was also a false claimant to prophecy who was based in Sudan, and he tried with maximum endeavor to mislead normal people from their Islamic way of life until he was beheaded in 1985.

*.Jasmin: A more recent individual who has appeared, and could potentially be a false claimant to prophethood is Jasmin. He appeared in 1998 in Bosnia, claiming the War of Bosnia and Herzegovina was the Battle of Armageddon, and claims that he is the Messiah, tasked by God to introduce the human community into the "golden age", and claims that his destiny has been described under the symbol and notion of alamb.

*.Dr. Dwight York: Another fairly recent false claimant to prophecy was Dr. York. In the late 1960s York, started calling himself "AmunnubiRooakhptah," and founded various quasi-Muslim black-nationalist movements (among these was the Ansaarullah Community) based on something called the "Science of Nuwaubu". In the 1990s, he changed his community from worshipping Allah to worshipping pagan idols. Soon thereafter, he claimed to receive divine revelation, forming his own cult of Nuwaubians, following, what they call, "The Holy Tablets", with beliefs, based on pantheism, with an anthropomorphic view of Allah. In 2002, he was arrested and charged with child molestation. In 2004, he was convicted, and sentenced to 135 years in prison.

*.Riyaz Ahmad Gohar Shahi: Another claimant to Mahdihood and prophecy, is Gohar Shahi. He was born in 1941 in the Indian sub-continent. He had a traditional Sufi upbringing, and at age 34 he went on a 3 year spiritual retreat (which he says to have been under the guidance of a "divine spirit") into the mountains of Sehwan Sharif. Afterwards, he returned (claiming it to have been commanded by God), and started to preach his message of "Remembrance and Love of God", disregarding religion and its practices, also claiming that his image is implanted on the moon, gaining a significant number of followers. The Ulema have since issued various fatwas against him. So as you can see, the situation is clear. There were many false prophets who came after Mohammed (pbuh). There is nothing to show that the Bahai Faith stands out from any other false religion. In fact, Musaylima the Liar, the first false prophet after Prophet Muhammad, actually had a lot of following and he also had some poetry that he called revelation, and people recited it. People even fought battles to keep Musaylima alive, until they lost of course. Even with all these criteria, Musaylima wasn't a prophet! It would have to take much and more to be a prophet from God. Isn't this similar to Bahaullah religion? There were books thought to be revelation by its followers, there was a following (somewhat), there was an uprising but failed. As all this wasn't the criteria of a true prophet, isn't it? The first criteria of a true prophet is appointment by God. And there will be no other appointments as such after Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). The second is his character, and for anyone to be a prophet after Mohammed (pbuh), he must beat the Prophet's character. Thirdly, he must have a book from Allah. The miracle isn't that a book exists, but rather in the book there is evidence that it is from Allah. Simple queen's english won't cut it. It has to have substance, not like Kitab-i-Eqan or Aqdas. Fourthly, there must be reports of miracles from that person equaling Muhammad's (pbuh) miracles or more. Simply writing a book and saying it is revelation is NOT a miracle. Fourthly, monotheism must be the priority of a religion or revelation brought by a prophet. So when Shogi Effendi, the so called Guardian of the Bahai Faith advised Bahai's to pray to Bahaullah, it is instantaneously against monotheism and teaches idol worship. Fifthly, the teachings and revelations cannot have contradictions. For example, saying that God is Truthful and Keeper of promises, but then say that God broke his promise to Noah about the hour of the flood (Kitab-i-Eqan). Isn't it contradictory? or that Men and Women are equal but yet women cannot serve on the highest council in the Bahai Faith called the Universal House of Justice? Sixthly, the revelation has to be completed. An incomplete revelation is a clear sign of false prophecy, for example, Bahaullah says that it is obligatory for Bahais to pay zakat and that measure of calculating the Zakat would be revealed soon, then Bahaullah dies without the measure being revealed, leaving the Bahai Faith hanging incompleting.

Day of resurrection/judgment and life hereafter

When a person dies he passes through two major stages. The condition of a Muslim differs from that of the Kafir in these stages. The first stage is the life of the Barzakh (the interval between one's death and resurrection). This stage starts with the death of the person and ends with the Blowing of the Trumpet on the Day of Resurrection. The second stage is The Day of Judgment; it starts with the Blowing of the Trumpet and ends with the admission of the people of paradise to paradise and the throwing of the people of hell fire in Hellfire. The world which is situated between the mortal and immortal worlds is called "Aalam-e-Barzakh" (a period or state between death and resurrection). All human beings and genies have to stay in it after death according to their status. "Aalam-e-Barzakh" is far larger than this world. It has the same attachment with this world as the world has with a mother's belly (womb). Some enjoy comfort and some face discomfort there.

What does happen to the dead in "Barzakh"?

1. "Zughta-e-Qabr" i.e. after burial grave presses the dead. If the dead is Muslim grave presses it as if a mother hugs her child lovingly and in case the dead is infidel then the grave becomes so tight that his ribs are intertwined.
2. The dead hears the sound of the steps of people who leave graveyard after having buried him. Then two angels named "Munkar" and "Nakeer" disguised in horrible figure come to the grave tearing through the earth and question the dead harshly viz: Who is your "Rab" (Sovereign Lord)? What is your religion? And what did you use to say about him i.e. the Holy Prophet Hadrat Muhammad Mustafa (may Allah's choicest blessings & peace be upon him).
3. If the dead is believer he will answer the questions as: My "Rab" is Allah. My religion is Islam. And he is the Messenger of Allah (Hadrat Muhammad Mustafa [Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam] may Allah's choicest blessings & peace be upon him).
4. If the dead is hypocrite or infidel he will say: Alas! I know nothing. I used to say what I heard people say.
5. Grave of the believer will be enlarged and a door opened to Paradise whereby he will receive the fragrance of Paradise.
6. Some disobedient believers will face torment in proportion to their sins. But later when Allah will please they will be absolved either by His mercy or by the supplications/intercession of the spiritual guides of the dead or Allah's saints. Some Muslim scholars maintain that torment is removed from the graves of believers as the Friday night falls.
7. For an infidel or hypocrite, a bed of fire will be laid in his grave and he will be dressed with the garment of hell-fire. A door will be opened to Hell and the angels of torment will be posted there to torment him. Besides, snakes, scorpions etc. will also keep tormenting him.
8. The virtues and good deeds of believer will adopt beautiful and pretty shapes to please him and as against this the evils and bad deeds of infidel and hypocrite will change into dogs, wolves and other dreadful animals to torment him.

Both the soul and body receive reward and torment. A Hadeeth to this effect says: a cripple was lying in an orchard and witnessing fruits but could not pluck those due to his disability. Perchance, a blind went by there. He called the blind and advised him to carry him (cripple) on his shoulders to pick fruits from trees which they will eat. The blind concurred and lifted the cripple on his shoulders. He plucked fruits which they both ate. Who is to be held responsible for the crime? Definitely the both. So it is clear from the given example that blind is the body and cripple is the soul.

Though the body may decompose or turn into dust yet the vital constituents of it will remain intact till the Doomsday. These basic constituents will be subjected to reward or torment and the body will be reassembled or reconstructed on the very constituents on the Day of Judgment which is called "Ujb uz Zanb" (the atom). The Nature has created and preserved such marvelous constituents in the back-bone of human

beings which can neither be seen by any microscope nor fire or the earth can burn and annihilate them. These very constituents of the dead person will face torment or enjoy reward in grave. "Azaab-e-Qabr" (torment in grave) and "Tan'eem-e-Qabr" (Divine blessing in grave) are the truth which nobody but only a "misguided" will deny.

The dead that is not buried will be questioned where it is thrown or left unburied at the place it died and will also receive reward or torment there even if one is eaten up by a lion that will be questioned in the lion's stomach and will also receive torment or reward therein.

The earth never decomposes the bodies of prophets and messengers and martyred (shaheed) and sometimes even the bodies of others rather than prophets and martyred like Ulama, Tulaba and true believers.

Muslims believe that the present life is only a trial preparation for the next realm of existence. This life is a test for each individual for the life after death. A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and the dead will be resurrected for judgment by God. This day will be the beginning of a life that will never end. This day is the Day of Judgment. On that day, all people will be rewarded by God according to their beliefs and deeds. Those who die while believing that

"There is no true god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of God"

and are Muslim will be rewarded on that day and will be admitted to Paradise forever, as God has said: [And those who believe and do good deeds, they are dwellers of Paradise, they dwell therein forever.] (Qur'an, 2:82)

But those who die while not believing that "There is no true god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of God" or are not Muslim will lose Paradise forever and will be sent to Hellfire, as God has said:

[And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter.] (Qur'an, 3:85)

And as He has said:

[Those who have disbelieved and died in disbelief, the earth full of gold would not be accepted from any of them if it were offered as a ransom. They will have a painful punishment, and they will have no helpers.] (Qur'an, 3:91)

One may ask, 'I think Islam is a good religion, but if I were to convert to Islam, my family, friends, and other people would persecute me and make fun of me. So if I do not convert to Islam, will I enter Paradise and be saved from Hellfire?' The answer is what God has said in the preceding verse, "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter." After having sent the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to call people to Islam, God does not accept adherence to any religion other than Islam. God is our Creator and Sustainer. He created for us whatever is in the earth. All the blessings and good things we have are from Him. So after all this, when someone rejects belief in God, His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), or His religion of Islam, it is just that he or she be punished in the Hereafter. Actually, the main purpose of our creation is to worship God alone and to obey Him, as God has said in the Holy Qur'an (51:56). This life we live today is a very short life. The unbelievers on the Day of Judgment will think that the life they lived on earth was only a day or part of a day, as God has said: [He (God) will say, "How many years did you stay on the earth?" They will say: "We stayed a day or part of a day"] (Qur'an, 23:112-113) And He has said: [Did you then think that We had created you in jest (without any purpose), and that you would not be returned to Us (in the Hereafter)? So, God is exalted, the True King. None has the right to be worshipped but Him...] (Qur'an, 23:115-116) The life in the Hereafter is a very real life. It is not only spiritual, but physical as well. We will live there with our souls and bodies. In comparing this world with the Hereafter, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "The value of this world compared to that of the Hereafter is like what your finger brings from the sea when you put it in and then take it out." The meaning is that, the value of this world compared to that of the Hereafter is like a few drops of water compared to the sea.

There would be three places to lead life hereafter,

1. Paradise (جنت)

2. Hell (جهنم)

3. A'raf (اعراف)

The people whose good deeds overweigh from their bad deeds will be guided to the paradise, and the people whose bad deeds overweigh from their good deeds will be thrown into the hell. And the people whose good and bad deeds are equal they will wait for their final decision at the place between paradise and hell which is called A'raf (وبينهما حجاب) "And between them (Paradise and Hell) will be a screen". Their evil deeds prevented them from qualifying to enter Paradise, and their good deeds qualified them to avoid the Fire. Therefore, they are stopped there on the wall until Allah judges them.

(لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ) "and at that time they will not yet have entered Paradise but they will hope to enter it"

(وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْكَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ) "And when their eyes will be turned towards the dwellers of the Fire, they will say: "Our Lord! Place us not with the people who are wrongdoers."

(أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ) Enter Paradise, no fear shall be on you, nor shall you grieve.

The first two places are permanent and the A'raf is temporary and supposed to be a waiting place until their final decision.

The paradise (جنت)

Greetings of "Peace!"

Those who enter Heaven will be greeted by angels with words of peace. In Heaven, one will have only positive emotions and experiences; there will be no hatred, anger, or upset of any kind. "And We shall trip their hearts of whatever rancour there may be (for others)" (Quran 7:43). "Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring. Angels shall enter from every gate (with the salutation): 'Peace be with you, that you persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final home!' (Quran 13:23-24). "They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin. But only the saying of: 'Peace! Peace!'" (Quran 56:25-26).

Gardens

The most significant description of heaven is as a beautiful garden, filled with greenery and flowing water. In fact the Arabic word, jannah, means "garden." "But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is gardens, beneath which rivers flow" (2:25). "Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous" (3:133) "Allah hath promised to Believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of Allah. That is the supreme felicity" (9:72).

Family & Companions

Both men and women will be admitted to Heaven, and many families will reunite. "Never will I suffer to be lost the work of any of you, be the male or female. You are members, one of another..." (3:195). "Gardens of perpetual bliss: They shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring. Angels shall enter to them from every gate (with the salutation): 'Peace be with you because you persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final home!' (13:23-24) "And whoever obeys God and the

Messenger – those will be with the ones upon whom God has bestowed favor – of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions!" (Quran 4:69).

Thrones of Dignity

In Heaven, every comfort will be afforded. The Quran describes: "They will recline (with ease) on Thrones (of dignity) arranged in ranks..." (52:20). "They and their associates will be in groves of (cool) shade, reclining on Thrones (of dignity). Every fruit (enjoyment) will be there for them; they shall have whatever they call for" (36:56-57). "In a lofty Paradise, where they shall neither hear harmful speech nor falsehood. Therein will be a running spring. Therein will be thrones raised high, and cups set at hand. And cushions set in rows, and rich carpets (all) spread out" (88:10-16).

Food & Drink

The Quran's description of Heaven includes plentiful food and drink, without any feelings of satiation or intoxication. "... Every time they are fed with fruits there from, they say: 'Why, this is what we were fed before,' for they are given things in similitude..." (2:25). "Therein you shall have (all) that your inner-selves desire, and therein you shall have all for which you ask. An entertainment from Allah, the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (41:31-32). "Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent forth (good deeds) in days past!" (69:24). "... rivers of water incorruptible; rivers of milk of which the taste never changes..." (Quran 47:15).

Eternal Home

In Islam, Heaven is understood to be a place of everlasting life. "But those who have faith and work righteousness, they are companions of the garden. Therein shall they abide forever" (2:82). "For such the reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath - an eternal dwelling. How excellent a recompense for those who work (and strive)!" (3:136).

Hell (جهنم)

All Muslims hope to spend their eternal lives in Heaven (jannah), but many will fall short. Disbelievers and evil-doers face another destination: Hell-Fire (jahannam). The Quran contains many warnings and descriptions of the severity of this eternal punishment.

Cursed By Allah

The worst punishment for disbelievers and wrongdoers will be the realization that they have failed. They did not heed Allah's guidance and warnings, and thus have earned His wrath. The Arabic word, jahannam, means "a dark storm" or "a stern expression." Both exemplify the seriousness of this punishment. The Quran says: "Those who reject Faith, and die rejecting, - on them is Allah's curse, and the curse of angels, and of all mankind. They will abide therein: Their penalty will not be lightened, nor will they receive respite" (2:161-162). "They are (men) whom Allah hath cursed: And those whom Allah Hath cursed, thou wilt find, have no one to help" (4:52).

Blazing Fire

The blazing fire of Hell is fueled with men and stones.

"fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for those who reject Faith"(2:24).

"Enough is Hell for a burning fire. Those who reject Our Signs, We shall soon cast into the Fire. As often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the penalty. For Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise" (4:55-56). "But he, whose balance (of good deeds) is found to be light, will

have his home in a (bottomless) Pit. And what will explain to you what this is? A Fire blazing fiercely!" (101:8-11).

Boiling Water

Normally water brings relief and puts out a fire. The water in Hell, though, is different. "Those who deny (their Lord), for them will be cut out a garment of Fire. Over their heads will be poured out boiling water. With it will be scalded what is within their bodies, as well as (their) skins. In addition there will be maces of iron (to punish) them. Every time they wish to get away there from, from anguish, they will be forced back, and (it will be said), 'Taste the Penalty of Burning!'" (22:19-22). "In front of such a one is Hell, and he is given, for drink, boiling fetid water" (14:16). "In its midst and in the midst of boiling hot water will they wander round!" (55:44).

Tree of Zaqqum

Whereas the rewards of Heaven include plentiful, fresh fruits and milk, the inhabitants of Hell will eat from the Tree of Zaqqum. The Quran describes it: "Is that the better entertainment or the Tree of Zaqqum? For We have truly made it (as) a trial for the wrong-doers. It is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hell-Fire. The shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils. Truly they will eat thereof and fill their bellies therewith. Then on top of that they will be given a mixture made of boiling water. Then shall their return be to the (Blazing) Fire" (37:62-68). "Verily, the tree of deadly fruit will be the food of the sinful. Like molten lead will it boil in the belly, like the boiling of burning despair" (44:43-46).

No Second Chances

When they are dragged into Hell-Fire, many people will instantly regret the choices they made in their lives, and will beg for another chance. The Quran warns such people: "And those who followed would say: 'If only We had one more chance...' Thus will Allah show them (the fruits of) their deeds as (nothing but) regrets. Nor will there be a way for them out of the Fire" (2:167). "As to those who reject Faith: if they had everything on earth, and twice repeated, to give as ransom for the penalty of the Day of Judgment, it would never be accepted of them. Theirs would be a grievous penalty. Their wish will be to get out of the Fire, but never will they get out. Their penalty will be one that endures" (5:36-37).

Effects of life hereafter on worldly life

The belief in life after death not only guarantees success in the Hereafter but also makes this world full of peace and happiness by making individuals most responsible and dutiful in their activities. Think of the people of Arabia. Gambling, wine, tribal feuds, plundering and murdering were their main traits when they had no belief in life after death. But as soon as they accepted the belief in One God and life after death they became the most disciplined nation of the world. They gave up their vices, helped each other in hours of need, and settled all their disputes on the basis of justice and equality. Similarly the denial of life after death has its consequences not only in the Hereafter but also in this world. When a nation as a whole denies it, all kinds of evils and corruptions become rampant in that society and ultimately it is destroyed. The Quran mentions the terrible end of 'Aad, (قوم عاد) Thamud (قوم ثمود) and the Pharaoh (فرعون) in some detail:

"(The tribes of) Thamud and 'Aad is believed in the judgment to come. As for Thamud, they were destroyed by the lightning, and as for 'Aad, they were destroyed by a fierce roaring wind, which He imposed on them for seven long nights and eight long days so that you might see the people laid prostrate in it as if they were the stumps of fallen down palm trees. "Now do you see remnant of them? Pharaoh likewise and those before him and the subverted cities. They committed errors and those before him, and they rebelled against the Messenger of their Lord, and He seized them with a surpassing grip. Lo, when the waters rose, We bore you in the running ship that We might make it a reminder for you and for heeding ears to hold. So when the Trumpet is blown with a single blast and the earth and the mountains are lifted up and crushed with a single

blow, then on that day, the Terror shall come to pass, and the heaven shall be split for upon that day it will be very frail. Then as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall say, 'Here take and read my book! Certainly I thought I should encounter my reckoning.' So he shall be in a pleasing life in a lofty garden, its clusters nigh to gather." "Eat and drink with wholesome appetite for that you did long ago, in the days gone by." "But as for him who is given his book in his left hand, he shall say: 'Would that I had not been given my book and not known my reckoning! Would that it had been the end! My wealth has not availed me, my authority is gone from me.'" (69:4-29)

Thus, there are very convincing reasons to believe in life after death. First, all the prophets of God have called their people to believe in it. Secondly, whenever a human society is built on the basis of this belief, it has been the most ideal and peaceful society, free of social and moral evils. Thirdly, history bears witness that whenever this belief is rejected collectively by a group of people in spite of the repeated warning of the Prophet, the group as a whole has been punished by God even in this world. Fourthly, moral, aesthetic and rational faculties of man endorse the possibility of life after death. Fifthly, God's attributes of Justice and Mercy have no meaning if there is no life after death.

Predestination (تقدير)

Qadr (قدر) is the Arabic word for Destiny. Qada' (قضا) is the Arabic word for Decree. They may or may not be used interchangeably depending on the context. Essentially, Destiny is what Allah has decreed. Allah has knowledge of everything in his creation. Nothing occurs except by his will. Human beings are given free will, and it must be made clear that destiny does not have a cause-and-effect influence of the choices humans make. The choices that humans make are all within Allah's knowledge. The destiny of everything is recording in Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuud (لوح محفوظ) (The Preserved Tablet). In an authentic hadith narrated by At-Tirmizee (الترمذی) and Abu Dawuud, (ابو داؤد) Prophet Muhammad said "Verily, the first thing Allah created was the pen. He said to it: 'Write.' It replied: 'My Lord, what should I write?' So He said: 'Write all that will occur.' So in that hour, everything that will occur until the Day of Recompense was recorded." Another hadith indicates that this was 50,000 years prior to creation.

Concept

The phrase reflects a Muslim doctrine that Allah has measured out the span of every person's life, their lot of good or ill fortune, and the fruits of their efforts. When referring to the future, Muslims frequently qualify any predictions of what will come to pass with the phrase Insha'Allah, Arabic for "if God willed [it]." The phrase recognizes that human knowledge of the future is limited, and that all that may or may not come to pass is under the control of God. Qadr is one of the aspects of aqidah. Muslims believe that the divine destiny is when God wrote down in the Preserved Tablet ("Al-Lawhu Al-Mahfuud") all that has happened and will happen, which will come to pass as written. According to this belief, a person's action is not caused by what is written in the Preserved Tablet but, rather, the action is written in the Preserved Tablet because God already knows all occurrences without the restrictions of time. Another perspective asserts that God is omniscient and therefore has foreknowledge of all possible futures. With divine power, God then also deems which futures will be allowed, and man's choice is between those possibilities approved by God.

History

There are two groups who represent the extremes regarding Qadr and are considered outside the fold of Islam. Al-Jabiriyah (الجبریه) are of the opinion that humans have no control over their actions and everything is dictated by Allah. The other group is Al-Qadiriyyah (القدریه) and they are of the opinion of humans having complete control over their destiny, to the extent that Allah does not even know what we will choose to do. The Sunni view is in the middle between both views, where they believe that Allah has knowledge of

everything that will be, but that humans have freedom of choice. Among the historical proponents of the Sunni view of were: Ibn Umar was a strong proponent on this concept.

Among those who criticized the Sunni view of the doctrine was Ma'bad al-Juhani, the first man who discussed Qadr in Basra.

Belief in al-Qadar is based on four things

1 - العلم Knowledge: i.e., that Allah knows what His creation will do, by virtue of His eternal knowledge, including their choices that will take place.

2 - كتابة Writing: i.e., that Allah has written everything that exists including the destiny of all creatures in al-Lawh al-Mahfuud prior to creation.

3 - مشيئة Will: i.e., that what Allah wills happens and what He does not will does not happen. There is no movement in the heavens or on earth but it happens by His will. This does not mean that he forces things to happen the way they happen in the area of human beings volunteer actions. It means that He knew what they will chose, wrote it and let it happen, and was, is and can always change it when He wants.

4 - الخلق Creation and formation: i.e., that Allah is the Creator of all things, including the actions of His servants. They do their actions in a real sense, and Allah is the Creator of them and of their actions.

Stages of Fate (تقدير)

There are five stages where Qadr is determined and prescribed/send to creation:

1. The Decree of Allah that is written in Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuud 50,000 thousand years before the creation of the universe. This destiny written in the preserved tablet is never changed and encompasses everything that will be.

2. Allah made a divine decree after the creation of Adam. Allah took out all of the progeny of Adam (i.e. all of the humans from the beginning of time until the end of time), and asked them "Am I not your Lord?" and all of the humans responded "We testify that You are our Lord!" Then Allah decreed to them who shall go to paradise and who shall go to hell.

3. The Life-time decree. This occurs when a person is in the womb of the mother, specifically 120 days after conception. Allah sends an angel to put a soul into the person, and the angel writes down the decree that Allah has made; his life-span, his sex, his sustenance (how much he will earn throughout his lifetime) and whether he will be a dweller of paradise or a dweller of hell.

4. The yearly decree. This is during the Night of Qadr (Night of Decree) where Allah sends down his decrees from heaven to earth; in it he destines the actions (deeds, sustenance, births, deaths, etc) of creation for the next year. The word Qadr should not be confused with Qadr; Qadr is destiny, Qadr is that which has been destined, i.e. decree, thus the translation - Night of Decree.

5. The Daily Decree. Allah decrees the daily actions of his creation. An example of how these categorizations help clear the idea of destiny is as follows:

It is possible that Allah sends a daily/yearly decree dictating that a person will die. However, due to that person's good deeds (for instance, fulfilling the ties of kinship [being good to your relatives and maintaining the relationship] Allah sends another decree extending that person's life. The reversal of the two decrees is all within Allah's knowledge and is recorded in the Preserved Tablet. The person himself knows nothing of his own destiny or of Allah's decrees, but what he does know is that if he performs certain good deeds, then he will cause his life (as in the example above) to extend longer than if he does not do that deed.

In the light of the above the following may be derived:

- Our supplications do change destiny and are of much avail.
- Good deeds are a source of increase in ones sustenance, and avert calamities.
- Sins result in a decrease in ones sustenance, and invite calamities.