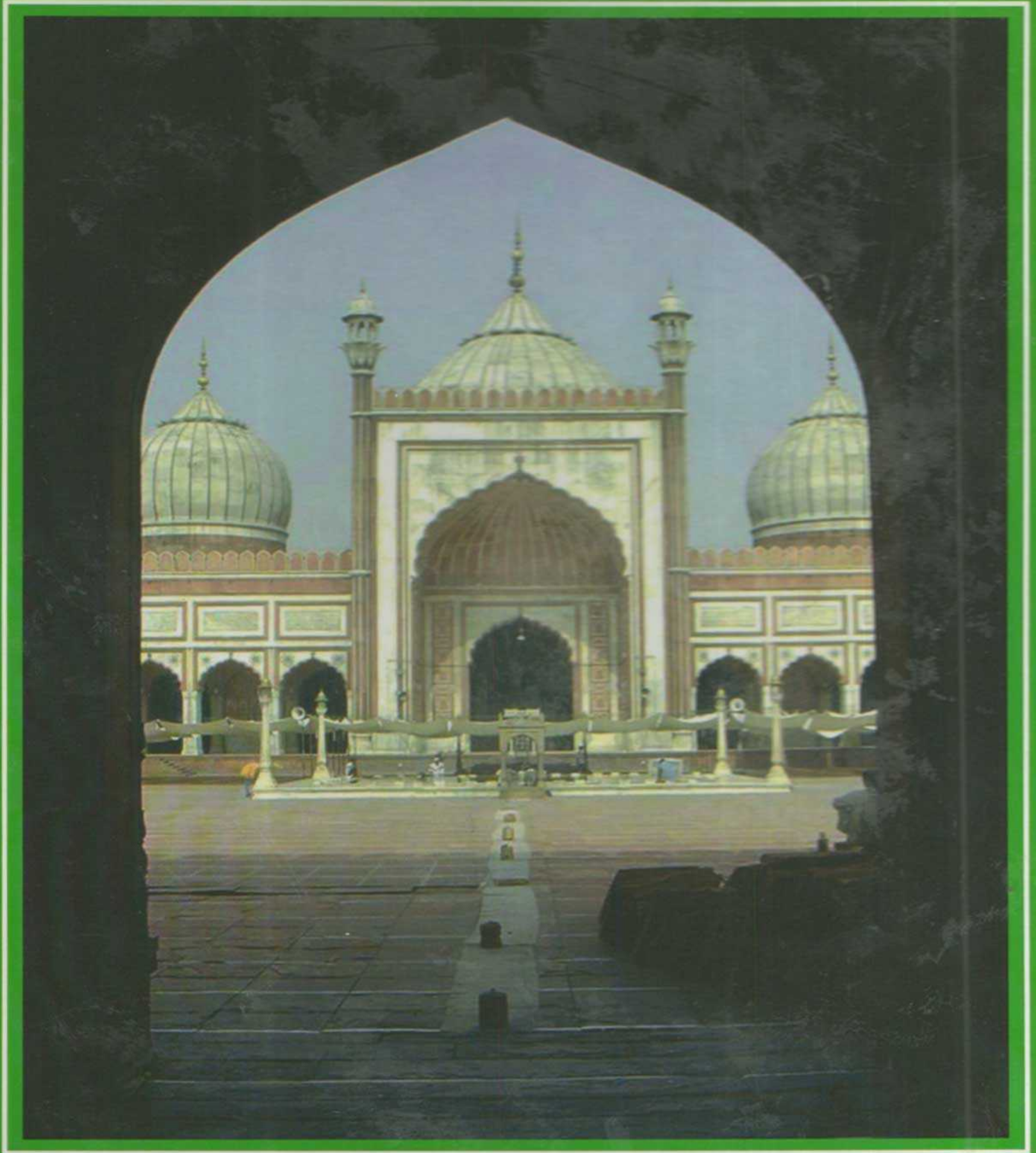


ISLAM



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ISLAM

Prophet Mohammad –A Brief Life Story
Holy Qoran — An Introduction
Islamic Philosophy – A Few Basic Issues

by

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Introduction

The study of Islam has always fascinated me. I have read Qoran many a times, and every time it has left a deeper mark on my thoughts. Its philosophy can leave an everlasting stamp on the mind of every reader. Its thoughts bring you nearer to God. It describes a very vivid picture of the world hereafter. It also very clearly elucidates the day of judgment and the modes of pronouncement of sentences.

Sikhism is very closely related to Islam. When Guru Nanak travelled to Mecca, Medina, Baghdad and other Muslim countries, he left a number of followers behind him. Many Muslims regard him as an ambassador of God and believe in his divinity. There are shrines to commemorate his visit in Baghdad, Kabul and other Muslim sacred places. Guru Arjan asked a renowned Muslim Faqir, Mian Mir, to lay down the foundation stone of the holiest of the holy Sikh shrine, Harimandir (Golden Temple).

There are compositions of Muslim saints Farid and Bhikhen, and Muslim bards Satta & Balwand and Bhai Mardana in Guru Granth Sahib. One of the closest ally of Guru Gobind Singh was a Muslim Pir Budhh Shah. Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, two Muslim Pathans helped Guru Gobind Singh to escape from the forest of Machchiwara, when the Mughal army was in hot pursuit to capture or kill the Guru.

Religions teach love and harmony. They explore the code of the divine rules. They nourish peaceful coexistence. My study of Islam is a step toward this direction. I hope my readers will appreciate my attempt.

I am very thankful to Poonam Kapoor for her help and guidance at every step of my life..

Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor

London

23rd January 2005

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

This is the second edition of the book. The demand of the book amongst the youngsters is great and that is, surely, a plus point. It has also been read by readers of different faiths and has been much appreciated..

I explain relevant and important points, without going in unnecessary detail, that is a point for the popularity of my books. In fact, I write, whatever Waheguru commands me to write.

I pray to Waheguru to give me strength and health that I should go on writing for the Sikh cause until my last breath.

I thank my secretary Poonam Kapoor for her help and encouragement to bring out the second edition of the book

23rd January 2011
London

Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor

Dedication

To my friend Abdul Haq (Glasgow), his wife Nasim and their daughters Shama and Amna. Abdul helped me in this foreign country when I was all alone and stood with me in all adversities.

OTHER BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

All books are in English; Gurbani text, where relevant, is both in Panjabi and English.

Year of Publication/Book List

- 2010** 1. Guru Granth Sahib, An Introductory Study 4th edition
2. Guru Granth Sahib: An Empirical Study (in publication)
- 2008/9** 1. The Crowning Glory of Guru Granth Sahib
2. The Last Rites - A Comparative Study of the last rites of different religions
3. The Making of the Sikh Rehatnamas
4. Anglo Sikh Wars
5. Sloaks of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Text of Ragamala
- 2007** 1. A Dynamic Look into Sukhmani Sahib
- 2006** 1. The Birds and Guru Granth Sahib
- 2005** 1. The Sikh Ideology
2. Janam Sakhi Parampara
3. Hinduism - An Introductory study
- 2004** 1. The Sikh Law Book - the Law personally handed by God to Guru Nanak
2. Guru Granth Sahib - An Insight into its Format and Design
3. Islam - An introduction
4. Sui Generis Martyrdom - Martyrdom of Mata Gujri and Sahibzadas
5. Sikhism - Guru Granth Sahib and The Sikh History
- 2003** 1. Guru Granth Sahib - An Advance Study Volume 2 (2007 edition)
2. Dasam Granth - An Introductory Study
3. Comparative Studies of World Religions. (Second edition)
4. Asa di Var - an Epic the listening of which fulfils all worldly desires.
- 2002** 1. Guru Granth Sahib - An Advance Study Volume 1 (2006 edition)
2. Sikh Religion and the Sikh People (Fifth revised edition 2007)
3. Sikhism - An Introduction (Second revised and enlarged edition)
4. Japji - A way of God realisation (Third edition)
- 2001** 1. Sikhism - 1000 questions answered.
2. Guru Granth Sahib, An introductory Study (enlarged edition).
3. Sikh Philosophy, Facts and Fundamentals of Sikh Religion (2nd edition)
4. Japjee - The Sikh morning prayer (Illustrated deluxe edition)
- 2000** 1. Bhagat Bani: Sikh Religion and the Sikh People (2nd edition) 'Adjudged best book of the year'
- 1999** 1. Sikhism - An Introduction
2. Saint Soldier (The Khalsa Brotherhood)
3. Comparative Studies of World Religions.
4. The Creation of Khalsa (Edited)
5. Japji, "A way of God realisation". (second edition) 'Adjudged one of the best available translations in English'
- 1998/97** 1. Guru Angad Dev, Life, History and Teachings
2. Nitnem (The daily Sikh Prayers) (Translation in both easy Panjabi and English)
3. Khushi de Hanju - (ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਹੰਝੂ) Panjabi poetry
- 1996** 1. The Sikh Marriage ceremony (Anand Marriage)
2. Baramah (The twelve months)
- 1995** 1. Kirtan Sohila and Ardas
2. Gurbani - God's word
3. Jap Sahib, Swayas and Ardas, Master compositions of Guru Gobind Singh Ji (Translation followed by relevant Sakhis (life stories))

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SEGMENT 1 – PROPHET MOHAMMAD

A Brief Life History –Life at Mecca

1.1

Before the birth of Mohammed and during his times, most of the known world was in the control of vast empires. Europe, North Africa and Asia Minor were under the control of Byzantine Roman Empire, and most of the Middle East zones were under the control of the Persian Empire whose power extended from Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine all the way to the borders of India and up to Central Asia.

1.2

Indian sub-continent was divided in numerous states and was under the control of warring Kings. Chinese Hans dynasty had crumbled resulting in chaos and confusion.

1.3

On the world horizon, the main rivalry was between Byzantines, who were Christians and Persians, who were Zoroastrians (worshippers of fire). The main battle grounds were Syria and Palestine.

1.4

The state treasuries were used for wars and war preparations. There were no budgets for education, health and civic amenities. The schooling was a prerogative of the children of nobles only. There was no law or order.

1.5

Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism were the dominant religions. Others believed in ancestor worship, and idol worship was very popular.

1.6

The most important region of Arabia was called Hijaz wherein lied the cities of Mecca and Medina.

1.7

In olden times, most of the Arabs were Bedouins. A Bedouin is a member of a tribe who has no fixed dwelling place. Their only possession was a few camels, horses or goats. Their

main religion was Christianity, though Medina was inhabited by Jews. Most of the Arab population had started worshipping idols, and Kaaba had become the central place of idol worship.

1.8

One of the most respected and wealthy tribe of Mecca was the Quraish. They were the chair of the council of tribal leaders and controlled the water supply of the area. They claimed their ancestry from Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham).

1.9

There lived in Mecca a Quraish called Abdel Muttalib, he had ten sons. Once, Abdel Muttalib prayed to God that if the local well 'Zam Zam' was restored its water supply, he would sacrifice one of his sons at the Kaaba. Miraculously, the Zam Zam was restored with its water supply. Abdel Muttalib then decided to sacrifice his youngest son Abdullah to fulfil his promise to God.

1.10

On the insistence of the local people he went to a local priest Shiya, who advised him to sacrifice ten camels instead and save Abdullah. He was told to draw a lot between camels and Abdullah. Nine times the name of Abdullah came in the draws, and Abdel Muttalib went on adding ten camels making a total of 100 camels. The last time the draw came up for camels. Abdel Muttalib sacrificed 100 camels and saved the life of Abdullah.

1.11

When Abdullah was twenty he was married to Ameenah from Banu Zahra tribe. Their only son was Muhammad (later Prophet Muhammad). Abdullah had died a few months before the birth of Muhammad, and Ameenah died when Muhammed was only five years old. Abdel Muttalib took the custody of the young child, but he too died when Muhammad was ten years old. Then Abu Talib, an uncle of Muhammad and older brother of Abdullah took custody of Muhammad.

1.12

Muhammad had no schooling and could not read or write, but he was very genius and good at business dealings. He was a very good and honest salesman.

1.13

On one occasion when he went with his uncle to Syria on a business trip, a Christian monk called Bahira noticed a cloud following the caravan shielding them from the sun. He also noticed a Divine approved Prophet-birthmark on back of Muhammad, just between his shoulders. He told Abu Talib that Muhammad was the last Prophet of God as prophesied in the holy scriptures. He emphasized that clouds could shade only a Prophet and no one else.

1.14

Mohammad married Khadija, a rich widow of Mecca, who was married twice before and was a very successful and wealthy businesswoman. She was 15 years older to Muhammad.. They both loved each other until their last breath.

1.15

Khadija bore Muhammad four daughters and one son. The son died in his infancy..

1.16

At the age of forty, God spoke to Muhammad when he was meditating in the Cave of Hira. Angel Gabriel brought God's messages to him, which were later put together and were called 'Qoran'. Revelations came over a period of 23 years both at Mecca and later at Medina when the Prophet had moved there.

1.17

First convert to Islam, after revelations were received by Muhammad, was Khadija. While other Meccan rejected Muhammad's prophet-hood, Khadija believed in him and accepted his new mission. The second convert was Zayd ibn Harith, an adopted son of the Prophet. Next in line was Ali, Muhammad's nephew and then a friend Abu Bakr.

1.18

In the first three years of closed and secret preaching, Muhammad had gathered about thirty followers. Then Muhammad received the revelation that the time had come when he should make public proclamation of the new faith.

1.19

The open preaching of the new faith attracted the hostility of the idol worshippers. They stoned and pelted with rocks Muhammad and his new converts. Many of his followers were also tortured and beaten to death. Muhammad was given offerings of money, status and power if he could stop preaching the new faith, he rejected the offers.

1.20

For the fear of persecution many Muslims fled to Abyssinia, and when Meccan went after them, the Christian king Najjashi of Abyssinia refused to deport them rather he gave them protection and shelter.

1.21

In the following years many influential men of Mecca embraced Islam.

1.22

The Meccan then decided to boycott Muslims. A general notice was issued that Meccan should not sell, buy or have any dealings with Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib clans, to which

most of the Muslims belonged. They drove out Muslims to an adjoining small valley called Shibi Abi Talib where they lived a terrible life suffering from malnutrition and diseases.

1.23

Soon after these upheavals Abu Talib and Khadijah, who were a great support of Muhammad and his mission, died. Prophet declared that year as the year of sorrow.

1.24

Prophet was left alone and was in great remorse. Abu Bakr then offered his teen-aged daughter Aysha's hand to the Prophet. The marriage was solemnized when Aysha was in her late teens. Meantime on the advice of his followers Muhammad married a widow named Sauda.

1.25

With the growth in the number of Muslims the atrocities of Meccans also increased. Once they tried to strangle Muhammad when he was praying.

1.26

Muhammad then decided to move to the hill-top city of Taif near Mecca, but was refused entry and was rather badly stoned by the people of Taif.

1.27

Once when Muhammad was returning home, a Meccan threw dirt on his head and insulted him.

1.28

Two of Muhammad's daughters, Ruqaiyyah and Umm Kulthum were divorced by their husbands as they did not believe in Muhammad's new faith.

1.29

Muhammad then travelled from tribe to tribe outside Mecca and gave the message of Allah to them, some tribes accepted his faith other rejected it.

1.30

The breakthrough came when a group of twelve people came from Yathrib (Medina) to meet Muhammad. They met him at a secret location called Aqaba and embraced Islam. Next year a much larger group of seventy one men came from Yathrib and embraced Islam. They requested Muhammad to come with them and live in Yathrib. They promised to defend him with their lives. These two meetings are called first and second pledge of Aqaba.

1.31

Though both meetings were held in secret, but the Meccans came to know of it and decided to increase their persecution. Muhammad ordered his followers to leave Mecca and go to Yathrib. They made small groups and left Mecca at night time so that they are not noticed.

Before the Meccan could notice almost all Muslims had left Mecca and made their way to Yathrib. The only few left behind were Muhammad, Abu Bakr, Ali and a handful of close relations.

The Escape (Hijrat)

1.32

In desperation Meccan decided to kill Muhammad and all his associates. Allah then spoke to Muhammad to leave Mecca. At nightfall Muhammad left Mecca and headed south, in the opposite direction of Yathrib to mislead Meccan.

1.33

They took refuge in a small cave south of the city of Thawr. Meccan were in hot pursuit of Muhammad and his entourage. When they reached the cave they found an unbroken spider's web and a pigeon's nest at the entrance and thought that no one could be in there without breaking the web and causing the pigeons to flee. This miracle saved lives of all who were hiding in the cave.

1.34

After third day the small party marched towards Yathrib. A Meccan warrior named Suraqa came to know about their whereabouts. He followed them but met with unbelievable mishaps. He then felt that some divine power was preventing him to hurt Muhammad and others. Suraqa then returned to Mecca but did not tell any one of his experience.

1.35

After a few days of hard, strenuous and tiring journey, Muhammad and his party first reached Quba and then triumphantly entered Yathrib. He received a red carpet welcome from the people of Yathrib that included Muslims, Christians and Jews. They renamed the city as Medinat un Nabi, the city of the Prophet.

The First Mosque and the introduction of Azan

1.36

Muhammad built first mosque on a piece of land which he bought from two orphan brothers. He then asked a devoted follower called Bilal to go to the top minaret of the mosque and call everyone for prayers. The call by Bilal was named as an Adan (Azan), which later became a part of the Muslim prayer.

1.37

With the growth of Muslim converts in Medina, a fresh hostility arose between Muslims and local Jews, as many Jews were converting to Islam. The Meccan were also not sitting idle, they were regularly despatching small parties of idol worshipper to raid Muslims at the

outskirts of Medina, capture them and kill them. They had also mobilised a large army to attack Muhammad and put a stop on the spread of Islam.

The Battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq

1.38

First battle between the Meccan and Muslims was fought at Badr, where superior army of Meccan was badly defeated by Muslims. Muhammad himself led the Muslim forces.

1.39

Second battle was fought at Mount of Uhud. Meccan had come with a mighty army of three thousand men and the Prophet marched out of Medina with an army of only one thousand men.

1.40

The battle remained inconclusive. A Meccan woman named Hind, rushed to the battlefield and started to mutilate the dead Muslims. When she found Hamza's (an uncle of the Prophet) body, she cut it open and chewed on his liver.

1.41

In Medina, a dispute also arose between Jews and Muslims. The Banu Qunaiqa clan of Jews was expelled from Medina. Another Jewish clan the Banu Nadir refused to leave their rich farms. After a fierce battle of twenty days the Banu Nadir clan surrendered and begged for a safe passage to leave Medina.

1.42

The Meccan then organised an army of 10,000 soldiers and attacked Medina to kill Muhammad and wipe out his followers. Muslims dug a huge trench (Khandaq) around the exposed area of Medina. This battle was then known as Battle of Khandaq.

1.43

The Meccan cut off food supply lines to Medina and surrounded the whole area from the front. They also made a Jewish clan Banu Quraiza to attack Medina from the behind contravening their treaty with the Muslims. Miraculously, a strong sand storm changed the fortunes. The storm was so fierce that the Meccan had no choice but to retreat to save their lives and livestock. The wrath of Nature helped Muslims to win this un-fought war.

1.44

The Muslims under the command of Ali then attacked Banu Quraiza and made them to bend to their knees. All men were executed and women and children taken into custody.

The First Pilgrimage to Mecca

1.45

Next year, the Muslims declared that they would visit Mecca for the Hajj. The Quraish decided not to allow Muslims to enter the city. On the initiative of Usman, a close confidante of the Prophet a treaty was signed, and Muslims were allowed to come to Hajj the next year.

1.46

Two years after the treaty, an ally of Meccan, Bany Bakr attacked the camp of Banu Khuzaa and caused much killing and destruction and then took refuge in Mecca. The chief of Banu Khuzza went to Medina and asked the Prophet for justice. When the Prophet sent a complaint to Meccan and asked Banu Bakr to pay compensation, the Meccan refuted the Prophet and said that their treaty with him was over and declared annulled.

The Liberation of Mecca

1.47

The annulment of the treaty, the first refusal of entry for Hajj to Muslims, high headedness of the Meccan, and continuous torture of small Muslim pockets outside Medina made the Prophet to think different. So far Meccan had attacked the Prophet. This time the Prophet wanted to give them a surprise. He mobilised a large army of Muslims and in the year 630, during the month of Ramadan, he himself at the head of a ten thousand strong army marched towards Mecca. They camped outside Mecca and sent in a message, either to surrender or fight.

1.48

The chief of the Meccan Abu Sufyan called a meeting of the tribe leaders. They were all scared. Most of their brave soldiers had already embraced Islam. This time, even their combined forces were no match to the Muslim forces. They decided to surrender and ask for a safe passage.

1.49

The next morning, Muhammad entered Mecca and cleared Kaaba from all idols and images. The Prophet asked Bilal to climb to the top of the Kaaba and give the Adan for the noon prayer.

1.50

The news of the fall of Mecca enraged other pagan tribes who lived outside Mecca. They mobilised their forces for a final show down with the Prophet. The main lead was taken by Thaqif tribe of Taif. Other tribes which joined hands with Thaqif were Hawazin, Nasr and Jusham. Together they marched towards Mecca.

The Battle of Hunain

1.51

The battle was fought at a canyon called Hunain. The Prophet raised an army of twelve thousand people and came forward to repulse the attack. The initial assault by the Allies killed many Muslims, a rumour that the Prophet had been killed panicked the Muslims and they fled. Abbas, an uncle of the Prophet shouted at the top of his voice 'Muhammad is alive, come back and fight for the new faith'. The Muslims realised their folly and came back.

1.52

The reorganised assault of Muslims was so severe that the Allies fled back to their fortress in Taif leaving their wives and children behind.

The Battleground of Tabuk

1.53

In the same year, a 100,000 strong army of Byzantine Roman soldiers had also gathered in Syria to attack Medina, but the news that the army of the Prophet, which had come forward and was camping near Tabuk to meet them, was better equipped and stronger made Romans to retreat. The Muslims returned back to Mecca victorious without a fight and laden with a heavy loot.

1.54

The victories of the Muslims in various battles had spread the mission of the Prophet all over Arabian peninsula and most of the inhabitants had converted to Islam. Muhammad had also secured the borders of Mecca and Medina. He had declared that non-Muslims would never be allowed in those two cities. His mission was almost complete.

1.55

He was now 63 years old and knew that his end had come. He instructed his followers to spread Islam all over the globe.

He breathed his last on 8th June 632. His wife Aysha and daughter Fatima were near him when he died.

The Caliphas

1.56

After the death of the Prophet, the Muslims were divided into many factions. The first dispute which arose was regarding the new Imamate. People in Medina wanted to have one of their men, and when Abu Bakr told them that the Imamate must belong to one of the Quaraish and that was the wish of the Prophet, they agreed to elect him as the **first Calipha**. **Abu**

Bakr ordered Zaid, an adopted son of the Prophet to collect the revelations which were written on stones, tree leaves and pieces of leather etc. and collate them in one book.

1.57

The second Calipha was Umar, nothing untoward happened during his times.

1.58

When the **third Calipha Uthman** (*during his times Qoran was standardised*) succeeded dissension was so great that he was assassinated. He belonged to the family of the Umayyads who had been opposed to the Prophet before he came to power.

1.59

After Uthman was slain, Muawiya, the governor of Syria declared himself to be the next Calipha, but when Ali*, a son-in-law of the Prophet and husband of Fatima, assumed the caliphate war broke out between them and Muawiya became an avenger of his blood.

** Shia sect of the Muslims are his followers and recognise only his relatives as the Caliphas. He himself was assassinated and his son Hussain was killed at Karbala by the rival forces of Muawiya.*

***The events of Karbala reflect the collision of **Imam Husain** versus **Yazid**, a son of **Muawiya**. Husain was a revolutionary person, a righteous man, the religious authority, the Imam of Muslim Ummah. As the representative of his grandfather Prophet Muhammad Imam Husain's main concern was to safeguard and protect Islam and guide fellow Muslims. On the other hand, the staying power of the rulers (Muawiya and his son Yazid) depended solely on the might of the sword. They used brute force to rule over the Muslim empire even by all possible illicit means.*

Imam Husain never recognized Muawiya nor his followers. Before him Imam Ali had fought battles against Muawiya because Muawiya continuously violated the Islamic principles. Imam Hasan had to swallow the bitter pill of making a peace agreement with Muawiya, in order to safeguard the security of the Ummah which was at stake. When Yazid son of Muawiya declared himself as a ruler over the Ummah, he demanded Imam Husain's allegiance of loyalty. Imam Husain on his part flatly rejected Yazid's rule and behavior, for there was no way Yazid could represent Islam, it would be blasphemy.

*Imam Husain was quick to realize that giving allegiance of loyalty to Yazid would serve no purpose but to jeopardize the survival of Islam. To safeguard and protect Islam, therefore, the Imam had no choice but to confront and collide with Yazid's ruler-ship irrespective of consequences. Since Yazid had ordered his commanders to seize the Imam's allegiance of loyalty at any cost, even by brutal force, the commanders had to assemble a relatively large army, surrounding Imam Husain's camp in a desert called **Karbala**. Then they cut off the basic necessities to the camp, including access to water. The camp consisted of Imam Husain, his family, friends, and companions, all of whom stood fast and firmly with him. The death of Hussain and his kith and kin at the hands of Yazid's forces in Karbala is remembered by Shia Muslims all over the world.*

SEGMENT 2 – THE QORAN

The Subject matter

The Qoran is a record of the exact words revealed by God through angel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad. It is the prime source of every Muslim's faith and practice. It deals with all subjects which concern people as human beings: wisdom, doctrine, worship, and law, but its basic theme is the relationship between God and His creation. At the same time it provides guidelines for a just society, proper human conduct and an equitable economic system.

The Revelation

The Prophet himself was not conversant with reading and writing. As such he would memorise the word so spoken by Gabriel. It was memorised in order of sequence and was recited in the prayer services and missionary discourses. When Muhammad found such people who could write, he selected half a dozen for recording the revelations. When the revelations came to him, he would send for one of them and dictate the text to him and also proclaim it so that it could be memorised forthwith. There were very few facilities for recording the text at that time. Most reliable method of preserving the text was however to memorise it.

Qoran's first revelation was brought to Muhammad by Gabriel in the month of Ramadan on the 25th night (some say it was 27th night), which is known as Lailat-al-Qadr – the night of majesty, while he was meditating in a cave on the mount Hira. The language of Qoran is Arabic and it is the most read book in the world.

The First Copy and standardization of the Scripture

Qoran was revealed in piecemeal during the period of 23 years. The Prophet, under the divine guidance, arranged its chapters and the verse. Abu-Bakr, the first Calipha, made its first written copy by arranging the manuscripts written in times of the Prophet in the order of oral recitation of Prophet's time. Uthman, the third Calipha, ordered to make revised copies from the written manuscripts of Abu-Bakr's times and placed them in Islamic learning centres, so that those who wrote the Holy Qoran could follow the standard copy.

The Archives

Some of these copies still survive. One such copy is preserved in a Turkish Museum which has been used by leading authorities to compare the current Qoranic text. Muslims can thus claim that the Qoran around the world is uniform, even in its minutest detail. It is exactly the same as was originally revealed to the Prophet and which was assembled in one volume by the first Calipha Abu Bakr.

The seal of Authority

The authority of the Qoran is beyond the slightest shadow of doubt. It had to be so because God Himself had promised to safeguard the integrity of His word. Allah says:

“Surely we have revealed the Reminder and we are surely its guardian.” (15:9)

The Language

Undoubtedly, Qoran has been preserved in its entirety. *Arabic*, the language of Qoran is a living language and will remain in use at all times, so that no difficulty might be encountered in determining and comprehending the meaning of the Qoran. Arabic is today spoken and written over a much greater part of the world by many hundred times the number of people compared to, the people when Qoran was revealed.

The First and the Last words of Qoran

Gabriel's first words to Muhammad were:

“Recite in the name of your Lord who created....” (96: 1-5)

His last words were:

“This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” (5 : 4)

The Number references: e.g., (5:4)

The numbers at the end of hymns can be interpreted as follows:

The first number represents the number of the chapter and second number refers to the hymn number in that chapter, e.g., 5:4 means 4th hymn in chapter 5.

SEGMENT 3 – SURAS AND AYATS (CHAPTERS AND VERSES)

Division of Qoran

Total verses: 6247

Total Chapters (Books): 114

Total parts: 30 of equal length

Holy Qoran is divided into 114 chapters, each of which is called a Sura. The chapters of the Holy Qoran are of varying length. The largest comprise of 286 verses and smallest containing only 3 verses. Each chapter is called a book. The whole Qoran is said to contain many books. Larger chapters are divided into 'rukus' or sections, generally dealing with one subject, the different sections being inter-related. Again, each section contains 'Ayats' or verses. Ayat means an apparent sign or mark. It comes to mean a miracle, but it also signifies a communication or message from God. Total verses in the Qoran are 6247. For the purpose of recitation, the Holy Qoran is divided into 30 parts of equal length, so that the reciter could complete its recitation in one month. Every part is subdivided into 4 parts.

Meccan and Medina Revelations

Revelation at Mecca:

The Holy book can further be divided in Meccan and Medina revelations. Of the 23 years, over which the revelation of the Holy Qoran is spread, 13 years were at Mecca, and 93 chapters were revealed there.

Revelation at Medina:

The period of revelation at Medina were 10 years, and 21 chapters were revealed there. The 110th chapter, though belonging to Medina period was, in fact, revealed at Mecca during the well known farewell pilgrimage.

SEGMENT 4 – CENTRAL ISSUES

Ten Salient Features

1. The Qoran is the Holy Book of Islam.
2. It is a record of the exact words revealed from God, through Gabriel, to Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. First revelation came on the 25th or 27th of Ramadan. (The month of fasting) in 610 A.D.
3. The Qoran was revealed in piecemeal over a period of 23 years, in Mecca (610-622 A.D.) and Medina (622-632 A.D.)
4. The Prophet did not know reading or writing, so he would memorize the revelation and dictate it to the scribes, who would record it on hide and skin. Some of his companions memorized it by heart.
5. The Prophet, under the Divine guidance, arranged the verses and chapters of the Qoran.
6. The first Caliph Abu Bakr prepared first written copy of the Qoran by arranging the recorded and orally memorized revelations of the times of the Prophet.
7. Uthman, the third Caliph, ordered to remake copies of the Holy Qoran, prepared in the time of Abu Bakr, and placed them in various Islamic learning centres. .
8. No word or verse has been changed or altered ever since and the Qoran is 100% in its original form.
9. The Qoran is divided in 114 Chapters (Suras/Books) of varying lengths. The longest chapter comprises of 286 verses while the smallest contains 3 verses only. The total number of verses is 6247.
10. The Qoran was originally revealed in Arabic language. It has since been translated in more than 50 languages.

SEGMENT 5– A FEW SELECTED HYMNS

Hymns

Hereunder are given hymns of a few important short chapters of Qoran:

Chapter 1 Surah Al-Fatihah “The Opening”

The chapter (Sura) consists of seven verses which are constantly repeated by every Muslim in his prayers, private or congregational.

The Opening

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,
2. The Beneficent, the Merciful.
3. The controller of the Day of Judgment,
4. You (alone) we worship; You (alone) we ask for help.
5. Show us the straight path,
6. The path of those whom You have favoured;
7. Not (the path) of those who earn Your anger not of those who go astray.

Chapter 77 Surah Al-Qadr “The Power”

Al-Qadr takes its name from a word in verse I. It refers to the night (one of the last nights of Ramadan) on which the Prophet received his call.

The Power

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. We revealed it on the Night of Power.
2. Ah, what will convey to you what the Night of Power is!
3. The Night of power is better than a thousand months.
4. The angels and the Spirit descend therein, by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees.
5. (That night is) Peace until the rising of the dawn.

Chapter 99 Surah Al-Zilzal “The Shaking”

In the name of Allah, shaking the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. When the earth is shaken to her convulsions.
2. And Earth throws up her burdens.
3. And human cry: What is the matter to her?
4. That day she will relate her chronicles.
5. For that day Lord had inspired her.
6. That day humankind will proceed in companies sorted out on the basis of their deeds.
7. And those who did good even of an atom’s weight will see it then, and those who did ill even of an atom’s weight will see it then.

Chapter 103 Surah Al-Asr “The Time”

This chapter draws attention to the testimony of the time showing that those alone prosper who accept the truth.

The Time

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. By time through the ages.
2. Humans are in a state of loss.
3. Save those who believe and do good works, and join one another to truth and join one another to endurance.

Chapter 110 Surah Al-Nasr “The Help”

The Help

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. When Allah’s help and triumph come.
2. And you see mankind entering the religion of Allah in large groups.
3. Then recite hymns in the praises of the Lord, and seek forgiveness of Him. He is ever ready to show mercy.

Chapter 112 Surah Al-Ikhlās “The Unity”

Al-Tauhid, “The Unity” takes its name from its subject. It has been called the essence of the Qoran.

The Unity

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. He is Allah, the One and Only.
2. Allah, the Eternal, the Absolute.
3. He does not take births and Himself is self illuminated.
4. And there is none comparable to Him.

Chapter 114 Surah Al-Nas “The Men”

In this Surah, protection of God is sought speedily from the evil. In human’s own heart and in the heart of other human.

The Men

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1. I seek refuge in the Lord of humankind.
2. The King of humankind.
3. The Judge of humankind.
4. From the evil of the sneaking whisperer.
5. Who whispers in the hearts of humankind.
6. Among Jinns and among human.

SEGMENT 6 – COMMUNICATION WITH ALLAH

Muslims are very devotional people. They regularly say their prayers either personally at home or joining others at a mosque. The text of prayers include requests made to Allah for His blessings and thanks to Him for His bounties.

Text of Prayers in Qoran

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, The Merciful

Selections from Chapter 2

1. Our Lord, pour out patience on us and make our steps firm and help us against the disbelieving people. (2:250)
2. Our Lord, punish us not if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden as you did lay on those before us. Our Lord, impose not on us (afflictions) which we have not the strength to bear. And pardon us, and grant us protection, and have mercy on us. You are our Patron, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people. (2:286)
3. Our Lord, grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the chastisement of the fire. (2:1201)
4. Our Lord, accept from us surely You are hearing us, You are knower of our inner thoughts. (2:1270)

Selections from Chapter 3

5. Our Lord, make not our hearts to deviate after You have guided us and grant us mercy; surely You are the most liberal Giver.
Our Lord, surely You are the gatherer of men on a day about which there is no doubt, surely Allah will not fail in (His) promise. (3:7,8)
6. Our Lord, we believe, so forgive our sins and save us from the chastisement of the fire. (3:15)

7. Our Lord, we believe in that which You have revealed and we follow the Messenger, so write us down with those who bear witness. (3: 52)
8. Our Lord, grant us what You have promised us by Your Messenger and disgrace us not on the day of resurrection. Surely You never break your promise. (3: 193)

Selections from Chapter 7

9. Our Lord, place us not with the unjust people. (7:47)
10. Our Lord, pour out on us patience and cause us to die in submission. (7:126)

SEGMENT 7 – THE MUSLIM BELIEFS

There are five articles of belief.

1. Belief in God.
2. Belief in Angels.
3. Belief in Prophets.
4. Belief in revealed Books.
5. Belief in the Day of Judgment.

Evidence from Qoran

Some verses containing above Beliefs are given below:

1. Praise be to Allah the Sustainer of the world, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the controller of the **Day of Judgment**. (1 : 1-3)
2. **This is the Book** (The Qoran), there is no doubt in it. It is a guide to those who are righteous. Who believe in the **Unseen (world)** and keep up prayer and spend out of what we have given to them.
And who believe in the Revelation sent to you, and that which was **revealed before**, and of the **hereafter**. (2 1-4).
3. It is not righteousness that you turn your face towards the East and the West, but righteous is the one who:
 - a. believes in **Allah**, and
 - b. the **Last Day**, and
 - c. the **Angles**, and
 - d. the **Book**, and
 - e. **Prophets**, and
 - f. give away wealth out of love to the kith and kin and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and

- g. to set slaves free, and
- h. keep up prayers, and
- i. give charity, and
- j. fulfill promises when they make one, and
- k. be patient and tolerant in distress and affliction and in the time of conflict; and these are they who are righteous. (2:177)

1. Belief in God

The Islamic belief in God can be summarized as follows:

1. The most basic belief of Islam is that there exists a single personal God.
2. God is the supreme being who exists independently.
3. He is the sole creator of the universe, the maker of heaven and earth.
4. He revealed Qoran to Muhammad.
5. He is in complete control of the universe.
6. No event occurs without His knowledge. Whatever happens, happens only by His will. He is unique. He nourishes and sustains the Creation. He is the Lord.
7. He listens to prayers of human beings. He provides for all their needs. He overlooks their shortcomings and forgives their excesses. He is very close to them whenever they need Him, in distress or prosperity.
8. He deals with His creation directly, without any intermediary, with mercy, love and compassion.
9. He is one. Nothing can be compared to him or put in the same category with Him. He has no associates. Associating partners with God is a grave sin, it is a blasphemy.
10. In Muslim view, Christians also commit this sin by believing in Jesus as the son of God, for God did not have a son.
11. The Muslim theologian Al Ghazali says: "He in His essence is one without any partner, single without any similar, eternal without any opposite, separate without any like. He is one prior with nothing before Him, from eternity without any beginning, abiding in existence with none after Him, to eternity without an end, subsisting without ending, abiding without termination. Measure does not bind Him and boundaries do not contain Him."
12. God while one, is called by ninety nine names in the Qoran. These are considered as His attributes, such as Al-Ali (Most High), Ar-Raqib (The watchful) etc. Allah is the name of God that encompasses all attributes.

13. Islam rejects polytheism with the utmost intensity. Monotheism is expressed in the witness or Shahada, uttered daily by devout Muslims.
 “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet.”
14. Qoran reveals in Sura 2:16. “Your God is one God. There is no God but He, the most gracious, most merciful.”

2. Belief in Angels

The Muslim belief in Angels is as follows:

1. The Qoran was revealed to Muhammad not directly by God, but by Angel Gabriel speaking on behalf of God.
2. It is a doctrine of Islam that there also exist spiritual beings. Angels are spiritual beings who carry out the assigned duties in accordance with God’s commands. Although angels are spoken of as beings, they do not have the power to choose between right or wrong. In this respect they are inferior to human beings.
3. According to Muslim beliefs, angels were specifically created from light (nur) where as Adam, the first man, was from clay and Jinn (spirits) from fire.
4. Unlike human beings angels can never disobey Allah, and unlike human beings, they will never have to be judged on the final day.
5. Angels take many forms - sometimes human; Gabriel once appeared as a human to a gathering of companions of the Prophet to teach them about Islam. Israil is known as the angel of death and will end our lives. Some of the angels violated God’s commands as Iblis or Satan, Harut and Marut.
6. The various tasks assigned to the angels include:
 - a. Bringing of divine revelations to the Prophets.
 - b. Bringing punishment upon their enemies.
 - c. Giving glad tidings to the believers.
 - d. Glorifying God with His praises.
 - e. Keeping record of People’s deeds.
 - f. The Islamic concept of angels is consistence with that of Judaism and Christianity. The names of some of the angles that the Muslims believe-in are also mentioned in the Bible. Jibrail (Gabreil in Bible.), Mikail (Michael in Bible.), Israfeel (Raphael in Bible). Izrail (Israel in Bible.)

3. Belief in revealed books

The Qoran mentions five divine books believed to be revealed by Allah. They are:

1. Suhaf (Scrolls) of Abraham.
2. Taurat (Torah) of Musa (Moses).
3. Zafur (Psalms) of Dawood (David).
4. Injeel (Gospel) of Isa (Jesus).
5. Qoran (Koran) of Prophet Muhammad.

Muslims believe that these books were sent down through His Prophets in the same way as He sent down the Qoran to Muhammad.

However, Muslims believe, the original writings of all the earlier revealed books except the Qoran were manipulated, since, the writings no longer existed in their original form. The books, came down to the humanity, were composed many years after the death of Prophets and the subsequent compilers could have changed Allah's words either accidentally or deliberately. So the Qoran was needed to set the matter straight.

Although non-Muslims view Islam as the youngest of the major religions, Islam does not think itself like that. It sees itself as identical with the first revelations God gave to mankind. The Qoran mentions 25 Prophets to whom God gave message in earlier times. All of those were Muslims. To each one God entrusted a scripture containing essentially the same message as the Qoran. But in each case the scriptures were corrupted and falsified by evil men. As a result these texts as they exist now are completely un-reliable. To correct the distortions God sent Muhammad revealing to him true Qoran. It alone is now the pure scripture possessing the original form given to it by God, so it supersedes all the earlier ones.

4. Belief in Prophets

Faith in Divine revelation is one of the essentials of Islam and since revelation must be communicated through a man, faith in the messengers is a natural sequence.

Belief in all prophets of God and in the finality of the Prophet-hood is the fourth article of Islamic faith. After Adam, who was the first Prophet, God continued to guide mankind through a number of Prophets, who appeared in all nations. All of them brought the same religion—Islam. According to a saying of Muhammad, the total number of Prophets is

1,24,000 (313 of which were messengers) but only 25 of these are mentioned by name in the Qoran. The chain begins with Adam and ends with Muhammad. Most of them also figure in the Jewish and Christian Bibles. The following names of the Prophets are mentioned in the Qoran.

Adams, Idris (Enoch); Nuh (Noah); Hud; Salih; Ibrahim (Abraham); Ismail (Ishmael); Ishaq (Isaac); Lut (Lot); Yaqub (Jacob); Yusuf (Joseph); Shuib; Ayyub (Job); Musa (Moses); Harun (Aaron); Dhulkifi (Ezekiel); Dawood (David); Sulaiman (Solomon); Ilias (Elijah); Al-gesu (Elisha); Yunus (Jonah); Zakeriyya (Zechariah); Yahya (John); Isa (Jesus); and Muhammad.

The Prophet is not only the bearer of the Divine message but he also shows how the message is to be interpreted in practical life, and therefore, he is the model to be followed. It is the Prophet's example that inspires a living faith in the hearts of his followers. That is why the Qoran lays particular stress on the fact that the Prophet must be a human being. "And we sent not before you any but men to whom we sent revelations." (21:7)

5. Belief in the Day of Judgment

Belief in the Day of Judgment is paramount in Islam and vital for all Muslims. According to Qoran, the entire universe will come to an end on that Day; the dead will be resurrected and judged; people with good deeds will be rewarded and sent to heaven while those with bad deeds will be punished in hell. The concept of hell in Qoran is more of a reformatory, where people will spend a limited time before eventually entering heaven, which will last for ever.

The Qoran gives many signs of this day, but its exact time is known only to God.

Many people will wonder how Allah can raise the dead; Islam says, it is much easier for Allah to bring a corpse to life than to have created a person in the first place. (Qoran 75: 3-4)

SEGMENT 8 – ADDITIONAL BELIEFS

Other important Muslim beliefs

In addition to the five fundamental beliefs, there are many other important Islamic beliefs, some of which are mentioned here:

1. A Muslim believes in '*taqdir*' or the Divine decree. In Islamic philosophy *taqdir* controls the eventual outcome of all actions in this universe.
2. A Muslim believes that every person is born innocent and free from sin. Sin is a conscious breach of God's commandments.
3. A Muslim believes that God always sends His guidance and warning through His prophets before inflicting His punishment on people. All Muslims believe that faith is not meaningful if it is followed blindly, without reasoning or understanding.
4. A Muslim believes that every person is responsible for his own deeds and that no one carries the burden of another. On the day of judgment no intercession will be accepted on behalf of another and each soul will be rewarded or punished according to what it had earned.
5. A Muslim believes that all Prophets were sent by God and that no distinction should be made among them in this respect.

SEGMENT 9 – PILLARS OF ISLAM

Islam means obedience to God. The purpose of the creation of man, according to Islam, is that he should worship Allah. Islam has five basic duties which a Muslim has to perform. They are known as the Five Pillars of Islam.

1. First Pillar : Shahadah (Witness)

Shahadah is the declaration of Islamic faith i.e. to bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. It is a confession of the Oneness of God. It is a statement that makes a person a Muslim. Anyone who utters it is counted as a Muslim. Shahadah also forms part of the daily prayers. The Shahadah reads: “There is no God except Allah, Muhammad is His Messenger.”

Evidence from Qoran:

- i) Your God is one God; there is no God except Him, the Beneficent, the Merciful. (2: 163)
- ii) Say it is only inspired in me that your God is one God, will you then surrender (unto him)? (21:108)
- iii) And He is Allah; there is no God except Him. He is all praise in the former and the latter, and His is the command, and unto Him you will be brought back. (28:70)
- iv) He is Allah the one; Allah the eternally be sought of all. He begets not nor is begotten. And there is none comparable to Him. (112 : 1-4)

2. Second Pillar: Salah (Prayers)

Salah is the name of the obligatory prayers. All Muslims, both men and women, are required to perform formal prayers five times a day which establish a direct link between the worshipper and God.

Prayers are said at dawn (Fajar), noon (Zohar), afternoon (Asr), sunset (Maghrib) and night fall (Isha). Although it is preferable to worship together in a mosque, a Muslim may pray almost at any clean place, such as fields, offices, factories, schools and universities. The prayers are to be recited facing Mecca. Around the world this point facing of Mecca for prayers unites all Muslims into a single world family.

The direction towards Mecca is called Qiblah. Muslims often use a prayer mat for saying prayers. At a mosque shortly before the time of prayer, the caller (Mu'adhdhin) calls for prayers by announcing Adhan from the minaret of the mosque. The text of Adhan is:

Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest.
Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest.
I testify that there is no God except Allah.
I testify that there is no God except Allah.
I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.
I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.
Come to prayer. Come to prayer.
Come to success. Come to success.
Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest.
There is no God except Allah.

Friday Prayers and the Mosque:

Before every prayer, Muslims perform ritual ablution with water or with sand if sick or if water is short or not available. The sacred day of the week for Muslims is Friday. It is not a day for rest, unlike the Sabbath in Judaism and Sunday in Christianity. All men (optional for women) are required to take part in the Friday noon prayers at a mosque. The Friday service includes a sermon by a priest (the Imam). The word mosque (masjid) means a place of prostration.

Mosque can be used for many purposes relating to religion i.e. a school or a meeting place.

When the prayers are observed by a congregation, all stand and bow shoulder to shoulder, with no distinction of social standing. In a mosque, women and men pray in separate groups, with women behind the screen to avoid mutual attraction, which may distract minds from prayers and attention towards God.

Unlike other religions, there are no photos, images or scriptures in a mosque. It is an empty hall with Qiblah pointing towards Mecca.

Evidence from Qoran:

- i) Tell my bondmen who believe to establish worship.... (14:31)
- ii) And enjoin upon the people worship, and be constant therein.... (20:132)
- iii) Establish worship at the going down of the sun until the dark of night... (17:78)
- iv) Establish worship at the two ends of the day and in some watches of the night.... (11:114)
- v) Be guardian of your prayers, and of the midmost prayers, and stand up with devotion to Allah.

3. Third Pillar : Zakat

Zakat means legal alms-giving. The underlying idea is that Allah can be worshipped indirectly through the love of people. Muslims are expected to support others by giving food, clothing and shelter. Zakat-purity or sweetness is the obligation to give financial assistance to others. Zakat is not a discretionary offering, it is an obligatory payment by every Muslim. Each Muslim calculates his own Zakat individually. Zakat has to be paid at different rates in cash, cattle, crops, precious metal and other objects. Zakat is calculated at 2½ % of the disposable income of a household. Zakat is given to:

1. The poor Muslims, to relieve their distress.
2. The needy Muslims, to help them to earn their livelihood.
3. The new Muslim converts, to enable them to settle down and meet their needs.
4. The Muslim prisoners of war, to liberate them by payment of ransom money.
5. The Muslim in debt, to free them.
6. The Muslim employees appointed by a Muslim governor for collection of Zakat.
7. Muslims stranded or helpless in a foreign country.
8. Muslim preachers.
9. In addition it is given to help students, schools, teachers, hospitals, doctors, community workers and mosques.

Evidence from Qoran:

- i) Establish worship and pay the poor due (Zakat) and obey the Messenger that happily you may find mercy. (14:56)
- ii) Establish worship, pay the poor due and bow your head with those who bow in worship. (2:43)

4. Fourth Pillar of Islam: Sawm (Fasting)

The basic rules of fasting are as follows:

Sawm is an Arabic word. It means a fast. Frequent fasts are recommended to Muslims, but the one obligatory is the fast during the month of Ramadan.

Every year in the ninth lunar month Ramadan all Muslims fast from first light until sundown, abstaining from food, drink, smoking and sexual relations.

Those who are sick, elderly or on a journey, and women who are pregnant, menstruating or nursing are permitted to break the fast and make up equal number of days later in the year. (2.184)

Those who are physically unable to do this, they must feed a needy person for every day missed.

Children begin to fast from puberty. Although the fast is most beneficial to health, it is regarded as a method of self purification.

Muslims use a lunar calendar of 354 days, the month of Ramadan gradually moves through all seasons. The lunar year consists of 12 months, four weeks, and is, therefore, shorter than solar year. As a result the month of Ramadan cycles backwards throughout the regular year and occurs in every season. Consequently, the length of the fast from sunrise to sunset varies greatly from the middle of the summer to the middle of winter.

At the end of the month, there is a joyous celebration, Eid ul Fitr, one of the two chief feast days of Islam.

Evidence from Qoran:

- i) Oh you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may learn self restraint. (2.183)
- ii) The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qoran, a guidance for mankind, a clear proof of guidance and the criterion of right and wrong. And whosoever of you is present at home, let him/her fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, let him fast the same number of days at other times. Allah desires ease for you; he desires no hardship. You should complete the period of fasting and glorify Allah for His guidance and mercy. (2:185)

5. Fifth Pillar of Islam : Hajj (Pilgrimage)

Terminology:

Ihram = white robe; Umrah = lesser pilgrimage; Hajj = main pilgrimage

Tawaf = 7 parikarmas of the Kaaba; Rami = Hitting the Jamarat (pillars representing Devil with stones);

Safa and Marwa = two hills, on which Hajira (wife of Ibrahim) ran up and down trying to spot any help; Sa'ey = the act of running between the hills.

Zam Zam = Fountain of water, miraculously found by Ishmael, son of Ibrahim (Abraham) and Hajira); Talbiyah = A prayer

The story of Kaaba

1.

Four thousand years ago, the valley of Mecca, then called Becca, was a dry and uninhabited place. This was until Prophet Ibrahim came there with his wife Hijira and son Ishmael.

2.

Ibrahim was commanded by God to leave Palestine, his home town, and go to Mecca to settle there. God had promised him to make him the father of three great nations.

3.

After reaching Mecca, Ibrahim left some supplies and provisions with his wife and son and went back to his first wife Sarha in Palestine..

4.

The supplies soon ran out and within a few days Hajira and Ishmael were beginning to suffer effects of dehydration and severe sunburn.

5.

In her desperation Hajira ran up and down two hills called Safa and Marwa trying to find some help, food or water, but there were none. Finally, she prayed to Allah for deliverance and collapsed by Ishmael.

6.

At the command of Allah, Ishmael struck his foot on the ground, a spring of fresh water gushed from the earth. Hajira and Ishmael were saved. This place was later called 'Well of Zam Zam'.

7.

Later both, mother and son were able to trade water with wandering *Nomads* for food and supplies.

8.

In time Ibrahim came from Palestine to find the well-being of his wife and son. Allah spoke to him and asked him to build a shrine dedicated to Him. This shrine is called Kaaba.

9.

Allah then commanded Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. When Ibrahim was about to cut his throat, Allah spoke again and gave him a ram to sacrifice instead. The stone on which Ishmael was to be sacrificed has also become an object of veneration. It is popularly called 'Black Stone'

9.

After the death of Ibrahim, Ishmael was blessed with prophet-hood. He then spread the message of Allah to people who settled in the valley.

10.

After many centuries, Mecca became a thriving city, due to its reliable water source. But gradually people began to develop false ideas about spirits and gods and Kaaba became a store of idols and statues.

11.

Allah, then, sent Prophet Mohammad to clean up the house of Allah and spread the message of the unity of Allah.

12.

Qoran is the holy book of Muslims which was revealed to Mohammad. In this book verse 3.97 has made it obligatory for every able Muslim to undertake a visit to Kaaba once in their life time. It is one of the pillars of Islam.

13.

The pilgrimage is called 'Hajj' and it occurs in the month of Dhul Hijjah, the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar.

The Preparations for the Hajj:

13.

Though the main Hajj rituals last five days, but most of the people spend at least seven days to complete all rituals. Some spend two weeks and repeat the rituals.

14.

All male pilgrimage wear simple white clothes called IHRAM and simple sandals, women can wear whatever simple dress they can wear made of cotton.

15.

Hajj has two different types of rituals which may be performed while in Mecca. The first one is called Umrah, a lesser pilgrimage, and is not counted as once-in-lifetime Hajj, and the second the main pilgrimage called Hajj.

Step by Step Procedure of Performance:

DAY 1

16.

A complete Hajj lasts 5 days. It includes Intention of performing Umrah and Hajj, recitation of Talbiyah and other Dua's (seeking forgiveness for sins and repentance) Saey, Rami and Twaf.

17.

The pilgrims assemble outside Mecca at a point called Miqat, bathe, put on the Ihram and make the intention for 'Hajj'.

They then

- a. Recite Talbiya Dua (a special prayer).
- b. Arrive at the 'Masjid al Haram'.
- c. Walk around Kaaba seven times repeating duas. This is called TWAF.
- d. Proceed to the special walkway between the hills of Safa and Marwa.
- e. Walk forth and back between the hills seven times. This activity is called 'Saey'.

The above completes 'Umrah'.

18.

Those who visit Mecca in months other than the month of Dhul Hijjah, their pilgrimage is also called 'Umrah' rather than Hajj.

19.

After the completion of 'Umrah' . Make your intention of Hajj and put on Ihram again, if you had taken off after completing 'Umrah' .

20.

Travel to a place called Mina and remain over night over there. In Mina offer Zuhar, Asr, Maghrib and Isha prayers. Next day offer Fajr's namaz and then proceed to Arafat.

DAY 2

21.

Travel to the valley of Arafat and remain their in the open terrain. ***Recite the praises of Allah and remember the scenario of the Judgment Day.***

22.

At the end of the day, travel to Muzadalifa and remain there at night. Gather either 49 or 70 stones to use the next day at Mina. Travel back to Mina.

DAY 3

23.

While in Mina throw seven stones at the pillar called Jamarat Aqabah which represent Shaitan, the Devil. This activity is known as Rami.

24.

Then a sacrifice is made called Qurbani of goats or sheep. There are three days designated for the sacrifice. Sacrifice is either done by the pilgrim himself or a reliable person so designated. These days people buy vouchers and give money to a central fund for such sacrifices.

25.

Men's heads are shaved and women cut a lock of their hair.

26.

Another Tawaf called Tawaf-e-Ziarat is now performed. This is performed after Rami, Qurbani and shaving and clipping of hair.

27.

After this perform Saey. After this return to Mina.

DAY 4

28.

Throw seven pebbles on each of three Jamarat after the decline of the sun. At your residence recite Qoran, glorify Allah, repent on your sins and seek forgiveness.

DAY 5

29.

Throw seven pebbles on each of three Jamarat after the decline of the sun. and do Rami at night if there is no risk to life. Return to Mecca.

30.

The last day is called Eid when everyone joins in the celebrations. Some make another TAWAF before returning home.

Evidence from Qoran:

The pilgrimage is in the well known months, and whosoever is minded to perform the pilgrimage therein let him remember that there is (to be) no lawlessness nor abuse nor angry conversation on the pilgrimage. And whatsoever good you do, Allah knows. So make provision for yourself (hereafter), for the best provision is to ward off evil. Therefore keep your duty towards God. (2: 197)

SEGMENT 10 – IMAN AND AMAL

Islam can be broadly divided into two parts –

1. Theoretical, and
2. Practical.

Where theoretical aspects represent articles of faith or belief and practical aspects represent the course on which every Muslim should conform his life. Yet another interpretation is that the theoretical division represents knowledge and the practical aspect represents obedience.

In Quran the two broad divisions are referred to as '*iman*' (faith or belief) and '*amal*' (deed or action) and the two words are often used together to describe a believer (Muslim), those who believe and do good deeds.

The believer is called "al-mumin", meaning one who has come into peace of security, because he has accepted the principles which bring about peace of mind or security from fear. And God is called "al-Mumin" meaning the Granter of Security. (59:23)

Iman in Hadith

Hadith is the second most important book of Islamic studies. It contains an account of traditions developed in the Islamic corporate life since the times of the Prophet.

In it (Hadith) the word Iman is frequently used in a wider sense. The Prophet is reported to have said : Iman (faith) has over seventy branches the highest of which is "the belief", that nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah (La ilaha ill Allah), and the lowest of which is avoiding the way which might cause injury to anyone."

Prophet said 'One has no faith unless he has the same love for his brother, what he has for himself.'

Iman also refers to doing good deeds. Islamic beliefs are based on reason and not superstition. They are presented in the Holy Qoran in a systematic way and are supported by logical arguments.

SEGMENT 11 – THE SUBJECT MATTER

The Subject Matter of Qoran

The Qoran is a record of the revelations of God sent down to Prophet Muhammad.

It not only affirms the truth of previous revelations and its fulfilment, but also gets as a watcher over it; pointing out, where necessary, the perversion of its text or meaning by those who professed to follow it.

“And to you I have revealed the Scripture with the truth, confirming whatever scriptures were before it, and a watcher over it.” (2:48)

The Qoran depicts the true religion of God started with the beginning of man’s relation with God through His manifestation.

The subject matter of Qoran covers all aspects of life. Important aspects of it can be grouped under the following headings:

1. Allah and His Attributes.
2. Universe.
3. Man (Adam).
4. Angels.
5. Jinns.
6. Devil.

Allah and His Attributes

Allah

Evidence is Qoran:

“Say, He is Allah the one. Allah the eternally be sought of all. He begot not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable to Him.” (112: 1-4)

“So believe in Allah and His messengers and not in trinity. Desist it is better for you; Allah is the only one God.” (4: 173).

“O people of the Book, commit no excesses in your religion nor utter any word concerning Allah save the truth. Believe that the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and his word which he conveyed to Mary and the spirit proceeding from him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not ‘Trinity’ - Allah is only one God. Far exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs all things in heavens and in earth. He is the disposer of affairs. (4:171)

“And cry not to any other God along with Allah. There is no God save him. Everything will perish save His countenance. He is the command and to Him you will be brought back.” (28:88)

His Attributes:

Total number of Allah’s attributes given in Qoran are 99, a few of them are produced below:

- The One** : Say He is Allah, the One (112:1)
- The Almighty** : Allah is the Strongest, Omnipotent, Almighty. (22:74)
- The Beneficent** : The Beneficent has made known Qoran. (55: 1-2)
- The Merciful** : Allah is ever Merciful to you. (4:24)
- The Wise** : Allah is Mighty, the Wise. (3:62)
- The Watchful** : Allah knows the unseen of the heavens and earth. And is watchful of what we do. (49:18)

The Universe:

Allah has created for you all that is on the earth. Moreover, His designs also comprehended heavens, for He gave order and perfection and built seven heavens. (2:29)

Praise be to Allah, who has created the heavens and earth, and has appointed darkness and light. (6:1)

And He created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon: All celestial bodies swim along in their own orbit. (21:33)

Man – the origin of humans

Allah first created the physical universe and populated it with Angels and Jinns. Angels were made out of elements of light and were made for the purpose of carrying out Allah’s

will. Jinns were made out of elements of fire and had very little free will. They were not very intelligent and generally existed in their thick dark form.

Allah then willed the creation of a third type of being who would have emotions and would be responsible for his actions

He, however, asked every other thing in the universe if they wanted to become sentient (emotional), they all refused, except one type of creation, which was made up of human spirit, that accepted it.

Allah then planned to create humans. Angels were not happy with this decision, they thought that the human power of free-will might create chaos and disorder, but Allah accepted the challenge and fashioned humans in His own image. He gave them faculties of sight, hearing, speech and reasoning, First human was Adam and the second was Eve.

Allah asked all Angels to bow to Adam. All agreed except Iblis. He, with his supporters were expelled by Allah. Iblis then vowed to corrupt humans and make them reject the authority of Allah. Allah accepted this challenge.

Evidence from Qoran:

Verify we created man from a product of wet earth, then placed him as a drop (of seed) in a safe lodging, then fashioned the lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh and then produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the best of Creators (23:12-14)

He (God) has created man and taught him utterance. (55:3-4)

And He taught Adam (man) all names, then showed him to Angels. (2:31)

See you not how Allah had made serviceable to you whatsoever is in the skies and whatsoever is in the earth. (31:20)

He is the one who has placed you as viceroys of the earth and has exalted some of you in rank above others. He may try you by (the test of) that which He has given you. (7:165)

Angels

Islam teaches that there are other intelligent beings with us in this universe, who are created to carry out Allah's commands. They were called Angles.

They are made from the element of light. They can travel , therefore, at the speed of light (70.4). They can assume physical forms, seem little too perfect and dazzle eyes of those who see them. (19.17)

They can see humans but humans cannot see them. They have no independent desires and never disobey Allah (19.64-65).

Allah sends down angels with the spirit of His command, to warn mankind that there is no God save me, so keep your duty to him. (16:2).

Multitude of Angels fill the cosmos and perform a variety of functions both in this world and in the next. There are two angels who stand at each of the seven gates of Paradise to shower greeting of peace to all entrants. (13. 23-24).

Angels who question the soul of the dead, upon whom punishment or peace will visit **until** the Day of Judgment are called Nakir and Munkir.

The Angel who takes the soul away from the bodies is called Izrail. A good person's soul is removed gently whereas a bad person's soul is ripped away (6.61).

Nineteen Angels are standing over hell fire (74.30-31) to throw wrongdoers in the pit of fire and to block their escape (19.86). The chief of these Angels is called Malik.

The Angel who brings God's messages to prophets is called Gabriel (16.102)

The name of the Angel who will blow the horn at the end of the world is called Israfil. The sound will be heard all over the globe.

The Muslim belief in Angels is consistent with Judaism and Christianity.

Jinn

Allah created Jinn from fire (15.27). They are given a limited form of free will. Like humans they live, die and procreate. They live on another plane which is not open to humans. They can see us and are aware of us, but we cannot see them (7.27).

Those Jinn who obey Allah and accept Him as Lord, they are generally peaceful and do not harm humans. Those who choose to disobey Allah or reject Him, they become evil spirits and are called Devils. The first Jinn who disobeyed Allah was Iblis. He refused to bow to

Adam, when Allah commanded him to do so (15.33). He said that humans, who are made of mud are inferior to him as he is made from fire.

When Allah ordered Iblis to be thrown out from there, he challenged Allah and claimed that he could prove that humans were inferior to him, and asked for time to prove that. Allah accepted his challenge and said that he would have time until the Day of Judgment to do his tempting. So Iblis will not die until then (7.14-15).

Iblis then blamed Allah for His own mistake and said, “For you have thrown me out from the right path, I will lie in ambush for humans walking on the right path. I will attack them from every side and corrupt them...” (7. 16-17)

Allah then declared, “Get out of here, you are cursed and rejected. If any of them follow you, I will fill hell with you all.”

Iblis corrupted Adam and Eve and they were thrown out of the Garden of Eden, but to Iblis disappointment they apologized to Allah and asked for His forgiveness. Allah forgave them, wiping the sin clean.

Devil/Shaitan

A Jinn who rejects Allah is Devil. He tries to corrupt human race and prophets bring them back to purity and goodness. Thus has begun the struggle for the human soul. (7.27)

The Devil is an enemy of humans, so treat him as enemy and shun him off before he overtakes you.. (35:6)

SEGMENT 12 – LIFE AFTER DEATH

A. Life and death

1. The Qoran deals with all aspects of human life on earth.
2. It also deals with the life hereafter and determines the relation between the two.
3. It tells that the spirit of man does not die with his death. It leaves his body and proceeds further.
4. It describes heaven and hell, and the Day of Judgment.
5. It states that on the Day of Judgment, good and evil deeds of man will be judged. Righteous will go to Heaven and the Evildoer will be conducted to Hell.

The Muslim Tradition

1. Death is not the end of a life. The dead will live again, in a new form, in a new reality. (56:60-62)
2. Islam believes in four stages of life:
 - a. Conception in the womb, where flesh is united with the spirit (ruh) (23.13-14)
 - b. Life on earth (*Dunya*) (22.5)
 - c. Life after death, where spirit leaves the body (39.17).
 - d. End of the world, the doomsday (20.102-104, 79.13-14).
3. Life after death has the following stages:
 - a. At death the soul is taken from the body by the angel of death (79.12)
 - b. If a person had performed noble deeds, soul is taken out gently and peacefully (47. 27-28).
 - c. If a person had performed bad deeds, then soul is ripped violently from the body (47. 27-28).

- d. The soul hover near the dead body and can see and hear the scene around, but it cannot communicate with the living.
- e. The soul can see relations weeping, the corpse being buried and the loved ones leaving the grave.
- f. Though death separates soul from the body but it remains near it, lying next to it.
- g. Then two angels named *Munkir and Nakir* arrive and raise the soul to an upright position. (39.17)
- h. They ask the soul a few questions about belief in Allah and if the teachings of the Prophet were practised.
- i. If the answer was in affirmative, then the environment around the soul is softly lighted and resting place in the spiritual dimension made comfortable and roomy . The soul then rests there and sleep and dream until the Day of Judgment.
- j. But if the answer was non-affirmative, then angles become horrifying, they strike the soul and squeeze the resting place to a small suffocating cell. The soul is tormented and tortured until the Day of Judgment.

B. Judgment.

- k. On the Doomsday, the whole world will come to an end and everyone will perish. All dead then will wait for the moment of Judgment.
- l. On the Day of Judgment, all people will be sorted into groups based on many factors, the most important is their belief.
- m. All those who followed the teachings of a Prophet will be standing behind that Prophet. All those who followed idols or fake-gurus, they will be standing behind them
- n. Muslims will be standing behind Prophet Muhammad.
- o. Then all people will be shown the record of their deeds, which they had done in their lives.
- p. Noble people will hold their record in the right hands and the bad people will hold it in their left hands.
- q. Whatever people had done in their lives will roll back in front of their eyes (like a movie)
- r. The deeds will then be weighed. Prophets may plead for their followers and can get some or all of their sins pardoned.

- s. In the end Allah will pronounce the Judgment.
- t. Firstly, the sinners will be dragged and mercilessly thrown in the pit of hell.
- u. All others will wait.
- v. After the worst evildoers are thrown in the pit of hell, a bridge will be stretched over the burning pit.
- w. This bridge called the *Sirat*, leads to different paradises.
- x. Everyone is to cross this bridge and feel the roar of the hell fire below.
- y. The bridge is studded with sharp and jagged edges.
- z. Prophets and righteous people cross the bridge very comfortably and enter the gates of paradises, where they receive their rewards.
- aa. All others left behind then start crossing the bridge.
- bb. According to their deeds they face hardships at the bridge and enter various gates of paradises, or tumble and fall in the pit of fire.
- cc. The worst people will stay in hells for ever, whereas others, after finishing their punishments, will be admitted in marked paradises..
- dd. There is a place between hells and paradises which is called Heights, where people wait before they are admitted in a paradise.
- ee. Those who enter paradise they stay there for ever.

Further evidence from Qoran:

1. “That man will have nothing but what he strives for; And that the results of his striving shall soon be known; then he will be rewarded for it with the fullest reward; And that with your Lord is the final Judgment.” (53: 39-42).
2. “And whosoever does good deeds, whether male or female, and they are believers. They shall enter the garden and they will not be dealt with unjustly.” (4:124)
3. “Whosoever does good, whether male or female, and they are believers, we will certainly make them live a happy life, and we will certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did.” (16:97)

SEGMENT 13 – HEAVEN AND HELL

Muslims have a very staunch belief in the chambers of heaven and hell above in the skies where souls are directed to go according to their deeds in human lives.

There are seven paradises, one hovering over the other and seven gates to enter the paradise. Three important gates are called, gate of Salat, gate of Jihad and gate of Rayan. The higher is the paradise greater are the amenities, comforts and luxuries.

The seven heavens are:

- i. The heaven of pure silver, where Adam resides.
- ii. The heaven of pure gold, where John the Baptist and Jesus reside.
- iii. The heaven of pearls belonging to Joseph.
- iv. The heaven of White gold of Enoch.
- v. The heaven of silver of Aaron.
- vi. The heaven of ruby and garnet of Moses.
- vii. The heaven of Abraham.

Like paradises there are also seven ***hells*** with different variety and severity of punishments. They are:

- i. Johunnam – the purgatorial hell.
- ii. Laza, - the hell of blazing fire.
- iii. Al-Hutamah – the hell of intense fire.
- iv. Saeer – the hell of flaming fire.
- v. Saqar – the hell of the scorching fire.
- vi. Al-Jahim – the hell of huge hot fire.
- vii. Hawaiiyah – the hell of bottomless pit.

Different types of souls categorized by their actions are sent to different hells.

(39.73-74; 13.23)

SEGMENT 14 – MUSLIM LAW

Qoran is believed to be the eternal guideline for the mankind up to the end of the world. During the course of fourteen centuries passed after its first revelation, it has been proving a light for those who have been seeking help and guidance from the broad principles contained in it. Much has been achieved in the fields of metaphysics, social sciences and other scientific fields, but the word of Qoran is still the final word in every field of knowledge.

A few important rules of life in relation to birth, marriage, divorce and death as contained in Qoran are as follows::

Birth of child

The day of the birth

In Muslim families birth of a baby is seen as a gift from Allah. A simple ceremony is held by the parents to show their feelings about the event. The ceremony involves chanting of Adhan (call to prayer) into the baby's ear. Although the baby would not understand Adhan at that time, the parents feel that the name of Allah should be the first thing that the child should hear. Such ceremonies may be held in the maternity unit of the hospital or in the house where the baby is born.

The seventh day – naming ceremony and Aqeeqa

On the seventh day after the birth of the baby, a second ceremony is often performed. On this day usually the name of the baby is announced.

Aqeeqa is also performed on the same day. The baby's head is shaved. In certain families the hair are weighed and the same weight of either gold or silver is given to the needy persons of the community. This is supposed to be the first charity from the new born to others. Charity, however, is not restricted to above only, it may be more or even less than that. Certain families do not give at all. As a sacrifice, animals are also slaughtered. Some

of the meat is eaten by the family and friends, while the rest is distributed amongst the needy people.

Marriage

The Arabic word for marriage is Nikah, which originally means 'Uniting'. Marriage in Islam is a sacred contract which every Muslim must enter into, unless there are special reasons, why he should not.

Preliminaries of marriage

The very fact that marriage is looked upon as a contract in Islam shows that both parties must satisfy themselves that they like each other. The Qoran says: "Marry such women as seem good to you." A man should look at the woman when he intends to marry. Likewise, invite a man who intends to marry a woman to have a look at his face and hands.

Proposal of marriage

The man makes the proposal of marriage either to the woman in question or to her parents or guardians. A woman may also make a proposal of a marriage to a man.

Age of marriage

No particular age has been specified, but it is indicated that the age of the marriage is the age of puberty. The law of the land now prevails and is abided to.

Essentials in the contract

Marriage is called a covenant in the Qoran. The marriage contract is entered into by mutual consent expressed by the husband and wife, in the presence of witnesses. This mutual consent is called affirmation or declaration. A sermon is given before the declaration of marriage. A dowry (Mehr) must be settled. Dowry is a gift that is given by the husband to the wife at the time of contracting the marriage. Marriages can be solemnized in a mosque, house or a public place.

Publicity of the marriage

The mutual consent of the parties to live as husband and wife does not constitute a marriage unless that consent is expressed publicly and in the presence of witnesses. In this respect a tradition may be quoted: "Make public this marriage and perform it in the mosque and beat the drums for it." Beating of drums or singing by the girls amounts to public declaration.

Marriage sermon

When the friends and families of both parties have assembled for marriage, a sermon is delivered by the Imam announcing the marriage. The sermon explains to the audience rights and duties of husband and wife. At the conclusion of the sermon, an announcement is made of the names of the bride and the bride-groom, and the amount of Mehr is also announced at that time. The bride and the groom are then asked if they accept this new relationship and on the reply being given in affirmative the marriage is concluded. The consent of the woman is generally obtained through her father or guardian or a close relation. After the expression of consent by both parties, all attending marriage raise their hands and pray for the blessings of Allah on the newly wedded couple. Generally some sweets are distributed on the conclusion of ceremony. A dinner is also arranged by the bride's family.

Walimah or marriage feast

After the Nikah (marriage) is over, the bride is escorted to the husband's house, and that is followed by the marriage feast called Walimah. This feast is another step in the publicity of the marriage.

Prohibitions to marry

The Qoran forbids certain marriage relations. "Forbidden to you are your mothers and your daughters, and your sisters, and your paternal aunts, and your maternal aunts, and brother's daughters and sister's daughters, and your mothers that have suckled you and your foster-sisters, and mothers of your wives, and your step daughters who are in your guardianship, born of your wives..... (4:23)

Marriage relations between Muslims and Non-Muslims

There is a clear prohibition to marry idolaters or idolatresses. However, marrying with a woman who professes a revealed religion (Ahl al Kitab) is permitted.

Conclusion

There is no provision for sexual relations between a male and a female without legal marriage. Such relations amount to fornication and are highly objectionable and deplorable.

As a punishment against fornication the Qoran says: "The adulterer and the adulteress, scourge you each one of them (with) a hundred stripes. And let no pity for the twain who

holds you from obedience to Allah, if you believe in Allah and the last day. And let a party of believers witness their punishment.”

Divorce

Arabic word for divorce is ‘talaq’ which carries the literal significance “freeing or the undoing of a knot.” In the terminology of the jurists, the ‘talaq’ is called ‘khul’ (meaning, putting or taking off a thing) when it is claimed by the wife. Both from the Qoran and the tradition it appears that, though divorce was permitted, yet the right could be exercised only under exceptional circumstances.

The Prophet is reported to have said: “With Allah, the most detestable of all things permitted is a divorce.” Remedies are also suggested to avoid divorce as long as possible. “And if you fear a breach between the two (i.e. husband and wife), appoint an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire agreement, Allah will effect harmony between them.” (4:35).

It was due to such teachings of the Qoran, divorce takes place only rarely among the Muslims.

Marriage itself is nothing but an agreement to live together as husband and wife and when either of the parties find itself unable to agree to such a life, divorce may follow.

Equal Rights in a divorce

The two sexes are placed on a level of perfect equality. “A breach between the two” would imply that either the husband or the wife wants to break off the marriage agreement, and hence either may claim a divorce when parties can no longer pull on in agreement.

Causes for the break

The breach of the marriage agreement may arise from many causes or from the conduct of either party. For instance:

- a. if either of them misconducts himself or herself,
- b. or either of them is consistently cruel to the other,
- c. if there temperaments differ to the extent that they cannot live together in marital agreement.

- d. Marriage becomes meaningless if there is no spark of love left between the husband and wife; divorce is, therefore, only remedy left to dissolve the agreement.

Wife's right of divorce

According to a tradition, the Prophet married a woman called Umaima or Ibnat al Jaun, and when he went into her, she said that she sought refuge in God from him, that is to say, wanted a divorce, and he granted her divorce and sent her with some presents. (68:3)

Another case is that Thabit ibn Qais, whose wife is reported to have come to the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah, I do not find fault in Thabit ibn Quais regarding his moral or faith, but I cannot pull on with him." The Prophet said: will you return to him his orchard (which he had settled upon her as a dowry)? On receiving a reply in affirmative, the Prophet sent for Thabit and ordered him to take back his orchard and divorce his wife. (68:11)

These two examples show that the wife had the right to claim divorce on those very grounds on which the husband could divorce the wife.

According to Jurisprudence wife's right to divorce by returning her dowry is called 'khul.' In case of the husband divorcing the wife, the wife shall have the dowry; but if the wife wants the divorce, the husband is entitled to dowry. The arbiters shall decide whether the husband or the wife is responsible for the breach and which of them is entitled to the dowry.

The wife is also entitled to a divorce if a husband is missing or disappeared and cannot be communicated with. The period of waiting by the wife is at least one year.

Husband's right of pronouncement of divorce

As in the case of a wife asking for divorce, the husband is also bound by the decision of the arbiters. Calipha Ali is reported to have told a husband, who thought he had the sole right to divorce that he would have to abide by the judgment of the arbiters.

The Iddah or the waiting period

Every divorce must be followed by a period of waiting called 'iddah'. "O Prophet, when you divorce women, divorce them for their iddah (waiting time) (65:1).

The iddah is about three months; “And the divorced women should keep themselves in waiting for three courses (menstrual).” (2:228)

In case of pregnant woman, the waiting period is until delivery.

Procedure of divorce

Divorce may be given orally (saying “I divorce you” three times at a go), or in writing, but it must take place in the presence of witnesses. Some schools of thought say that the divorce is ineffective if given under compulsion or influence, or in a state of intoxication, or in anger or jest, or by mistake.

Hanafi law recognizes that divorce is effective whether the words be uttered in sport or jest or in a state of drunkenness and whether a person utters them willingly or under compulsion. Imam Shafi takes the opposite view. Hanafi views are against the teachings of Qoran, which lays down special procedure to be gone through before it is resorted to.

The Rituals of Death

As a Muslim approaches death, the relatives and friends sitting by his/her side recite Kalima, . “There is no God but Allah.” It is a reminder to the dying person about his most basic belief. Muslims believe that the soul of the dead person is questioned by two angels about his life.

As soon as the person dies, limbs are straightened, eye lids closed and the body is cleaned. The body is then given a bath and wrapped in two unseen cloths, from head to foot. Some perfume is also sprayed on the body. The corpse is transported to a mosque or direct to the grave yard for funeral service (*In western countries, the body rests in a mortuary, from where it is taken to the burial ground on the day fixed by the directors of funerals and the management of graveyards*). The funeral prayer is said by a congregation led by the Imam. The corpse is laid in front of the Imam for the prayer.

The Imam commences the prayer by loudly saying *Allaho Akber*. “Allah is the Greatest”. Then the Imam and the followers recite *Sura Fatiha* in silence. The Imam again says *Allaho Akber*, and he and the followers say Durood. The Imam then, for the third time, says *Allaho Akber* loudly and the following is recited silently: “O Allah, forgive the living ones and the deceased ones, and those of us who are present and are absent, and our young ones, and our old ones, and our males and our females. O Allah, those of us whom You grant life keep them firm on Islam, and those of us You cause to die, cause them to

die in the faith. Deprive us not, O Allah, of the benefits relating him (the deceased) and subject us not to trial after him.”

After this, the Imam says *Allaho Akber* and the prayer is concluded by saying *Assalamo Alaikum wa Rehmatullah* by turning his face to the right and then to the left.

The corpse is then buried in the cemetery. It is the duty of all those Muslims who can afford the time to go with the funeral procession to the cemetery and remain there until the corpse is buried.

A few sections of Qoran are also recited for a few days of mourning.

Muslims believe that after the death, the soul leaves the body and passes to the next stage of existence. Never to return to this world in any form.

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