Basic Principles of Islam

# Outline

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# Opening: *Bismillah* is the start of all things good!



*And from Him do we seek help.* *All praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds, and blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad, and on all his Family and Companions.*

**Bismillah**, *"In the Name of God,"* is the start of all things good. We too shall start with it. Know, O my soul! Just as this blessed phrase is a mark of Islam, so too it is constantly recited by all beings through their tongues of disposition.

Yes, this phrase is a treasury so blessed that your infinite impotence and poverty bind you to an infinite power and mercy; it makes your impotence and poverty a most acceptable intercessor at the Court of One Ail-Powerful and Compassionate. The person who acts saying, *"In the Name of God,"* resembles someone who enrolls in the army. He acts in the name of the government; he has fear of no one; he speaks, performs every matter, and withstands everything in the name of the law and the name of the government.

In the same way, all things act in the name of Almighty God, for minute things like seeds and grains bear huge trees on their heads; they raise loads like mountains. That means all trees say: *"In the Name of God,"* fill their hands from the treasury of mercy, and offer them to us. All gardens say: *"In the Name of God,"* and become cauldrons from the kitchens of Divine power in which are cooked numerous varieties of different foods. All blessed animals like cows, camels, sheep, and goats, say: *"In the Name of God,"* and produce springs of milk from the abundance of mercy, offering us a most delicate and pure food like the water of life in the name of the Provider. The roots and rootlets, soft as silk, of plants, trees, and grasses say: *"In the Name of God,"* and pierce and pass through hard rock and earth. Mentioning the name of God, the name of the Most Merciful, everything becomes subjected to them.

Since all things say: *"In the Name of God,"* and bearing God's bounties in God's name, give them to us, we too should say: *"In the Name of God."* We should give in the name of God, and take in the name of God. And we should not take from heedless people who neglect to give in God's name.

* TAKE AWAY POINT: *“Give in God's name, take in God's name, begin in God's name, and act in God's name. And that's the matter in a nutshell!”*
* DRILL: How many times does this blessed word appear in the Qur’an? Why?
* PRAYER: *Bismillâhillezî lâ yedurru mea ismihî şey'un fî-l (ea)rdi ve lâ fis-semâi ve hüves-semîul alîm.*

# Story: The Great Pleasure and Happiness in Islamic Belief



*“Those who believe in the Unseen*.” (2:3)

If you want to understand what great happiness and bounty, what great pleasure and ease are to be found in belief in Allah, listen to this story which is in the form of a comparison:

Since **the selfish man** was both conceited, self-centered, and pessimistic, he ended up in what seemed to him to be a most wicked country due to his pessimism. He looked around and everywhere saw the powerless and the unfortunate lamenting in the grasp of fearsome bullying tyrants, weeping at their destruction. He saw the same grievous, painful situation in all the places he traveled. The whole country took on the form of a house of mourning. Apart from becoming drunk, he could find no way of not noticing this grievous and somber situation. For everyone seemed to him to be an enemy and foreign. And all around he saw horrible corpses and despairing, weeping orphans. His conscience was in a state of torment.

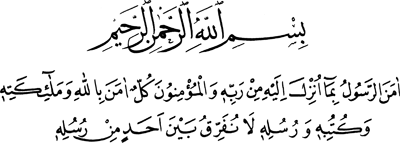
After some while he returned and came across the other man. He understood his condition, and said to him: *“You were out of your mind. The ugliness within you must have been reflected on the outer world so that you imagined laughter to be weeping, and the discharge from duties to be sack and pillage. Come to your senses and purify your heart so that this calamitous veil is raised from your eyes and you can see the truth. For the country of an utterly just, compassionate, beneficent, powerful, order-loving, and kind king could not be as you imagined, nor could a country which demonstrated this number of clear signs of progress and achievement.”* The unhappy man later came to his senses and repented. He said, *“Yes, I was crazy through drink. May Allah be pleased with you, you have saved me from a hellish state.”*

As for the other man, **he is a believer**. He recognizes and affirms Almighty Allah. In his view this world is an abode where the Names of the All-Merciful One are constantly recited, a place of instruction for man and the animals, and a field of examination for man and jinn. All animal and human deaths are a demobilization. Those who have completed their duties of life depart from this transient world for another, happy and trouble-free, world so that place may be made for new officials to come and work. The birth of animals and humans marks their enlistment into the army, their being taken under arms, and the start of their duties. Each living being is a joyful regular soldier, an honest, contented official. And all voices are either glorification of Allah and the recitation of His Names at the outset of their duties, and the thanks and rejoicing at their ceasing work, or the songs arising from their joy at working. In the view of the believer, all beings are the friendly servants, amicable officials, and agreeable books of his Most Generous Lord and All-Compassionate Owner. Very many more subtle, exalted, pleasurable, and sweet truths like these become manifest and appear from his belief.

That means that salvation and security are only to be found in Islam and belief. In which case, we should continually say, *“Praise be to Allah for the religion of Islam and perfect belief.”*

* TAKE AWAY POINT: Islam is the essence and the light of everything.
* DRILL: What are the five pillars of Islam and six articles of belief?
* PRAYER: *Elhamdulillah âla diynil İslam ve kemalil iman.*

# Reading Circle: Indivisible Six Articles of Belief

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*The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Sustainer. As do the men of faith. Each one [of them] believes in Allah, His angels, His Books, and His Messengers. “We make no distinction [they say] between one and another of His Messengers...” [2:285]*

Belief is a single truth, which, composed of its six articles, cannot be divided up. It is a universal that cannot be separated into parts. It is a whole that cannot be broken up. For each of the articles of belief proves the other pillars with the proofs that prove itself. They are all extremely powerful proofs of each other. In which case, an invalid idea that cannot shake all the articles together with all their proofs, cannot in reality negate any one of the articles, or even a single of their truths, and cannot deny them. Under the veil of non-acceptance one might only, by shutting his eyes, commit ‘obstinate unbelief;’ he would by degrees fall into absolute disbelief and lose his humanity, and go to Hell, both physically and mentally.

**Belief in Allah** proves with its own proofs both the other articles and **belief in the hereafter**. Yes, is it at all possible and can reason accept that a pre-eternal everlasting sovereignty of dominicality, a post-eternal Divine rule, which administers the boundless universe as though it was a palace, a city, or a country; and makes it revolve in balanced and ordered fashion; and changes it with wisdom; and equips and directs all together particles, planets, flies, and stars as though each was a regular army, and continuously drills them within the spheres of command and will in a lofty maneuver; and employing them in duties makes them act, and causes them to roam and travel, and to parade worshipfully; —is it at all possible that that eternal, everlasting, enduring rule would not have an eternal seat, a permanent and everlasting place of manifestation; that is, the hereafter? Allah forbid!

That means the sovereignty of Almighty Allah’s dominicality and most of His Names and the proofs of His necessary existence, require the hereafter and testify to it. So see and understand what powerful support this pole of belief has, and believe in it as though seeing it!

Also, is it at all possible or reasonable that the All-Knowing Speaker Who answers clearly by act and deed through His infinite bounties and gifts, which indicate intention, choice, and will, at exactly the right time, all the supplications of living beings for their natural needs, and their desires and recourse through the tongue of disposition, that He should speak by deed and by state with the most insignificant living creature and remedy its woes and heed its troubles with His bounties, and know its needs and meet them, then not meet with the spiritual leaders of men, who are the choicest result of the universe, His vicegerent on earth, and the commanders of most of the creatures on the earth? Although He speaks with them and with all living beings, should He not speak with men verbally and send them scriptures, books, and decrees? Allah forbid, innumerable times!

That is to say, with its certainty and innumerable proofs, **belief in Allah** proves **belief in the prophets and sacred scriptures**.

Also, is it at all possible or reasonable that in response to the One Who makes Himself known and loved through all His creatures and seeks thanks by deed and state, Muhammad *(peace and blessings be upon him)* should have known and made known, loved and made loved that Glorious Artist through the Qur’anic reality, which brings the universe to tumult, and with his declarations of *“Glory be to Allah!”* *“All praise be to Allah!”* and *“Allah is Most Great!”* should have caused the globe to ring out so that it could be heard by the heavens, and have brought the land and seas to ecstasy; and that in one thousand three hundred years he should have taken behind him numerically a fifth of mankind and qualitatively a half of it, and responded with extensive, universal worship to all the manifestations of the Creator’s dominicality; that in the face of all the Divine purposes he should have called out with the Qur’an’s suras to the universe and the centuries, and taught them and proclaimed them; that he should have demonstrated the honor, value, and duties of man; and that he should have been confirmed through his thousand miracles — and that he should not have been the most choice creature, the most excellent of envoys, and the greatest prophet? Is this at all possible? Allah forbid! A hundred thousand times, Allah forbid!

That is to say, with all its proofs, the truth of *“I testify that there is no Allah but Allah”* proves the truth of *“I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”*

Also, is it at all reasonable that He should not proclaim through a decree the Divine purposes in the universe? That He should not send a book like the Qur’an which will solve its riddles and provide the true answers to the three awesome universally-asked questions: *“Where do they come from?”*, *“Where are they going?”*, and *“Why do they follow on caravan after caravan, stop by for a while, then pass on?”* Allah forbid!

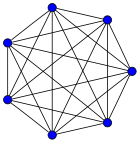
That is to say, with all its proofs, **belief in Allah** proves that **the Qur’an is the Word of Allah**.

Also, is it all possible that the Glorious Monarch Who continuously fills and empties the earth with living beings and inhabits this world of ours with conscious creatures in order to make Himself known and worshipped and glorified, should leave the heavens and earth empty and vacant, and not create inhabitants suitable to them and settle them in those lofty palaces, that in His most extensive lands he should leave the sovereignty of His dominicality without servants, functionaries, envoys, and majesty; without lieutenants, supervisors, spectators, worshippers, and subjects? Allah forbid! To the numbers of the angels, Allah forbid!

Also, is it at all possible that the All-Wise Ruler, the All-Knowing and Compassionate One, should write the universe in the form of a book; inscribe the entire life-stories of trees in all their seeds, and write in the seeds of grasses and plants all their vital duties, and record precisely the lives of conscious beings in their memories, as tiny as mustard seeds, and preserve with innumerable photographs all the actions and events in all His dominions and all the eras of His sovereignty, and create mighty Heaven and Hell and the supreme scales of justice for the manifestation and realization of justice, wisdom and mercy, the basis of His dominicality, then not have written down the acts of men connected with the universe, nor have their deeds recorded so they may meet with reward or punishment, nor write their good and bad deeds on the tablets of Divine Determining? Allah forbid! To the number of letters inscribed on them.

That is to say, with its proofs, the truth of **belief in Allah** proves the truth of both **belief in the angels, and belief in Divine Determining**. The articles of belief prove each other as clearly as the sun shows the daylight, and daylight shows the sun.

* TAKE AWAY POINTS:
  + Principles of Islam are all connected with each other and cannot be separated from one another. What happens if you try to separate an atom’s protons, neutrons, and electrons from each other?



*Principles of Islam:* 6 dots for articles of belief and 1 dot for (5) pillars of Islam =

*Belief in God \* Prophets \* Books \* Angels \* Hereafter \* Destiny \* 5 Pillars of Islam*

*Note:* This is a multiplication. One zero in it will make the whole equation zero!

* DRILL:
  + Some of the relations among the articles of belief have been exemplified above. Can you think of some more relations among them?
  + What is the difference between *Iman* and *Islam*? Can they be separated?
* PRAYER: *All praise be to God for belief in God, and for His unity, and necessary existence, and attributes, and Names, to the number of the manifestations of His Names from pre-eternity to post-eternity.*

# Appendix A: Introduction to Islam

**Al Fatihah (The Opening)**

1. In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
2. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,
3. The Beneficent, the Merciful.
4. Master of the Day of Judgment,
5. Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help.
6. Show us the straight path,
7. The path of those whom Thou hast favored; Not the (path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.

**The Six Articles of Faith**

1. Belief in God *(*[*Allah*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah)*)*, the one and only one worthy of all worship *(*[*tawhid*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawhid)*)*.
2. Belief in the Angels *(*[*mala'ika*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_angels)*)*.
3. Belief in the Books *(*[*kutub*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Holy_Books)*)* sent by God (including the Qurʾān).
4. Belief in all the Prophets *(*[*nabi*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet#The_Islamic_concept_of_prophet)*)* and Messengers *(*[*rusul*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rusul)*)* sent by God
5. Belief in the Day of Judgment *(*[*qiyama*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qiyama)*)* and in the Resurrection (life after death).
6. Belief in Destiny (Fate) *(*[*qadar*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qadar)*)*.

**The Five Pillars of Islam**

1. *Faith (tawhid):* There is no god but One God, Allah. Muhammad is the messenger and servant of God.
2. *Ritual Worship (salat):* five times a day ‑‑ at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and night.
3. *Alms (zakat):* the obligation to share wealth for charitable purposes, especially widows, orphans, the poor and needy.
4. *Fasting (sawm):* Required only during the month of Ramadan if a person is able. Nothing enters the mouth from dawn until shortly after sunset.
5. *Pilgrimage (Hajj):* obligatory journey once in a lifetime to the Ka'bah (House of God built by Abraham and Ishmael) in Mecca for those physically and financially able.

# Appendix B: The Qur’an

**From the perspective of Universe:**

* the pre-eternal translator of the mighty Book of the universe
* the post-eternal interpreter of the various tongues reciting the verses of creation,
* the commentator of the book of the worlds of the seen and the unseen,
* the revealer of the treasures of the Divine Names hidden in the heavens and on the earth,
* the key to the truths concealed beneath the lines of events,
* the clear interpreter of the Divine Essence, Attributes, Names, and functions.
* A book of prayer, and a book of wisdom, and a book of worship, and a book of command, and a book of thought.

**From the perspective of God Almighty:**

* The Qur’an is a revealed Scripture which comprises in summary of the Books of all the prophets, whose times were all different, and the works of all the purified scholars, whose paths are all different.

**The Qur'an has four fundamental aims:**

**Divine Unity** *(Tawhid)*

**Prophethood** *(Nübüvvet)*

**Afterlife** *(Haşir)*

**Integrity**

*(İbadet ve Adalet)*

**Qur’an**

# Appendix C: The Seal of the Prophets (peace and blessings be upon him)

**Three universal sources which make known to us our Sustainer:**

1. The Qur’an of Mighty Stature
2. The Seal of the Prophets (Upon whom be blessings and peace)
3. The supreme sign of the book of the universe
4. Our conscience

Now we must become acquainted with the Seal of the Prophets (PBUH) and must listen to him.

Indeed, look at the collective personality of this proof:

* The face of the earth has become his mosque.
* Mecca, his mihrab.
* Medina, his pulpit.

Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is leader to all the believers, preacher to all mankind, the chief of all the prophets, lord of all the saints, the leader of a circle for the remembrance of God comprising all the prophets and saints.

He is a luminous tree whose living roots are all the prophets, and fresh fruits are all the saints; whose claims all the prophets relying on their miracles and all the saints relying on their wonder-working confirm and corroborate.

For he declares and claims: *There is no god but God!* And all on left and right, that is, those luminous reciters of God's Names lined up in the past and the future, repeat the same words, and through their consensus in effect declare: *"You speak the truth and what you say is right!"*

*Peace and blessings be upon him thousands and thousands of times, to the number of the breaths of his community; at whose beckoning came the tree, on whose prayer rain swiftly fell, and whom the cloud shaded from the heat; who satisfied a hundred men with his food; from between whose fingers three times flowed water like the Spring of Kauthar; and to whom God made speak the lizard, the gazelle, the wolf, the torso, the arm, the camel, the mountain, the rock, and the clod; the one who made the Ascension and whose eye did not waver; our master and intercessor, Muhammad!*

*Peace and blessings be upon him thousands and thousands of times, to the number of the letters of the Qur'an formed in the words represented with the permission of the Most Merciful in the mirrors of the airwaves at the reciting of all the words of the Qur'an by all reciters from when it was first revealed to the end of time. And grant us forgiveness and have mercy on us, O God, for each of those blessings. Amen.*

# Appendix D: Reflection on the universe

The **purpose for the sending of man to this world** and the wisdom implicit in it, consists of knowing the Creator of all beings or believing in Him and worshipping Him.

The primordial duty of man and the obligation incumbent upon him are to **know God** *(marifet)* and believe in Him, to **assent to His Being and Unity** *(tawhid)* in submission and perfect certainty.

For man, who by nature desires permanent life and immortal existence, whose unlimited hopes are matched by boundless afflictions, any object or accomplishment other than faith in God, knowledge of God and the means for attaining these, which are the fundamental and key of eternal life – any such object or accomplishment must be regarded as lowly for man, or even worthless in many cases.

*“A non-particularized denial, not directed to a particular locus, cannot be proven”*

For example, if I affirm the existence of a thing in the world, and you deny it, I can easily establish its existence with a single indication. But for you to justify your negation, that is to establish the non-existence of the thing – it is necessary to exhaustively through the whole world, and even to examine every aspect of past ages. Only then can you say *“It does not exist, and never existed.”*

Since those who negate and deny do not regard the matter as it is but judge rather in the light of their own souls, and their own intelligence, and vision, they can in no way strengthen and support each other. For the veils and causes that prevent them from seeing and knowing are various. Any one can say *“I do not see it; therefore, in my opinion and belief, it does not exist.”* But none can say, *“It does not exist in actuality.”*

In short, the result is one and single in the case of affirmation, and every instance of affirmation supports all other instances.

Negation by contrast is not one, but multiple. Multiplicity arises through each person’s saying concerning himself, *“in my opinion and view”* or *“in my belief”* and leads to multiplicity of result. Hence each separate instance cannot support all other instances.

Therefore, with respect to the truth with which we began, there is no significance in the multiplicity and apparent predominance of the unbelievers and deniers who oppose belief. The grave with open door constantly threatens the denier with annihilation and poisons his life with the bitterest of sourness. Appreciate then how great a blessing is faith, and the very essence of life.

With respect to a problem subject to discussion in an art or a trade, those who stand outside that art or trade cannot speak authoritatively, however great, learned and accomplished they maybe; nor can their judgments be accepted as decisive. They cannot form part of the learned consensus of the art. For example, the judgment of a great engineer in the diagnosis and cure of a disease does not have the same value as that of the lowliest physician.

**A poetic reflection on the skies:**

*Listen to the stars, listen to their harmonious address! See what wisdom has emblazed on the decree of its light. Altogether they start to speak with the tongue of truth,*

*They address the majesty of the All-Powerful, All-Glorious One’s sovereignty: We are each of us light-scattering proofs of the existence of our Maker,*

*We are witnesses to both His Unity and His Power,*

*We are subtle miracles gilding the face of the skies for the angels to gaze upon. We are the innumerable attentive eyes of the heavens which watch the earth, which study Paradise.*

*We are the innumerable exquisite fruits that the hand of wisdom of the All- Glorious and Beauteous One has fastened*

*To the celestial portion of the tree of creation, to all the branches of the Milky Way.*

*For the inhabitants of the heavens,*

*We are each of us a travelling mosque, a spinning house, a lofty home; Each is an illumining lamp, a mighty ship, an airplane.*

*We are each of us a miracle of power, a wonder of creative art*

*Created by the Powerful One of Perfection, the All-Wise One of Glory; A rarity of His wisdom, a marvel of His creation, a world of light.*

*We demonstrated to mankind innumerable proofs,*

*We made them hear with these innumerable tongues of ours;*

*But their accursed unseeing, unbelieving eyes did not see our faces, They did not hear our words.*

*And we are signs that speak the truth: Our stamp is one, our seal is one,*

*We are mastered by our Sustainer,*

*We glorify Him through our subjugation, We recite His Names,*

*We are each of us in ecstasy,*

*A member of the mighty circle of the Milky Way.*

*The Eternal One, He is the Eternal One!*

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*Congratulations! You’ve completed this unit.*