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The Beginning of Revelation

When the Messenger of God (Peace be upon him) first began receiving visions from God, it was when he was asleep, and when he saw them, they would come like the break of the dawn. He was then given a love for seclusion, and he would go on retreats in the Cave of Hira, where he would devote himself to worship for several days and nights at a time, after which he would return to his wife Khadijah and ready himself for still another retreat. He continued in this manner until the truth came to him in the Cave of Hira.

The angel of revelation (Gabriel) came to him and told him, "Read", to which he replied, "I don't know how to read" (Muhammad was illiterate).

Gabriel then seized him and pressed him to himself until all the strength went out of him.

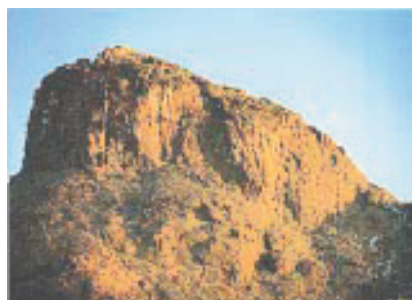
Then he released him, saying, "Read", and the Prophet replied again, "I don't know how to read". He seized him once more and pressed him to himself. Then he released him and said:

(1.Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).

2.He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).

3.Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous

4.Who has taught (the writing) by



The Mountain of Hira

the pen

5.He has taught man that which he knew not) Quran(96:1-5)

After this, the Apostle (peace be upon him) came home with a trembling heart. Coming in to where Khadijah was, he said: "Wrap me up! Wrap me up!" so they wrapped him in a blanket until he had come out of his fright. He then told Khadijah what had happened, saying: "I was afraid for myself".

She replied to him: "No, by God, there is no need to fear, for God would never put you to shame. You are the one who faithfully visits his kith and kin, bears up the weak, provides for those who have nothing, receives guests with hospitality, and helps others to cope with tribulation."

She then took him to Warakah Bin Nawfal her paternal cousin. Waraqah, who had embraced the Christian faith (who believed that Jesus Christ is a messenger of God) during the pre-Islamic era, was

literate in the Hebrew language and used to write down whatever he could of the Christian scriptures in Hebrew. By the time the Prophet (peace be upon him) received the revelation, Waraqah was advanced in years and had lost his sight. "Cousin" Khadijah said to him, "Listen to what your nephew has to say."

So he asked Muhammad (peace be upon him) "What have you seen?"

So the Prophet (peace be upon him) reported to him what he had seen. Waraqah responded, "This is Gabriel, the Archangel of Revelation, who descended upon Moses. Oh, how I wish I were still a youth so that I could live to see the day when your people expel you from their midst!"

"Is that what they are going to do?" asked the Prophet (peace be upon him).

"Yes" Waraqah told him, "No one has ever brought the likes of what you have brought without being treated as an enemy. So if I do live to see your day, I will lend you my full support."

And sooner Waraqah died.

The revelation after that ceased for almost six months then continued for 23 years, and stopped days before the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Adopted from: The Jurisprudence of Prophetic Biography
By: Dr. Muhamad Al Buti

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Every action which is done with the awareness that it fulfills the will of God is considered an act of worship in Islam. Nevertheless, the specific acts of worship, termed the pillars of Islam, provide the framework of spiritual life.

The 'Five Pillars' of Islam are the foundation of Muslim life:

- 1- Testimony of Faith.
- 2- Establishment of the daily prayers.
- 3- Zakat (Obligatory Charity).
- 4- Fasting the Month of Ramadan.
- 5- The pilgrimage to Makkah for those who are able.

This month, we discuss prayer and its spiritual value.

PRAYER

Prayer is the central practice that shapes the daily routine and consciousness of a Muslim. There are two words in Arabic that can be translated as "prayer" in English. The word "du'aa" means supplication; you ask God to fulfill a specific need of this life or the hereafter. This action is a fundamental part of the relationship between the worshipper and his Creator. Prophet Muhammad said, "*Du'aa is the brain of worship*".

The Qur'an orders the Prophet to tell the disbelievers:

"Say (O Muhammad to the disbelievers): My Lord pays attention to you only because of your invocation to Him. But now you have indeed denied (Him). So the torment will be yours for ever (inseparable, permanent punishment)." Qur'an(25:77)

The other word for prayer, "Salaah" originally meant the same thing as du'aa. However, it came to have a more specific meaning in Islam. It is a series of postures in which Qur'an is recited and God is praised and supplicated. The primary purpose of Salaah is to instill God-consciousness in the individual. God says in the Qur'an:

"And perform Prayer for My Remembrance." Qur'an(20:14)

Remembrance of God nurtures the heart. It is the true means of happiness. God says: **"Verily, in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest."** Qur'an(13:28)

When the heart falls into neglect of God, Satan establishes control over it. Sins become attractive and faith weakens. Remembrance of God is the antidote. That is why the Quran says:

"Recite (O Muhammad) what has been revealed to you of the Book (the Qur'an), and perform the Prayer. Verily, the prayer prevents from Al-Fahsha (i.e. great sins of every kind) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed) and the remembering of (you by) God (in front of the angels) is greater indeed. And God knows what you do." Qur'an(29:45)

Muslims pray five times a day. The prayers are scheduled at times that people fulfill some physical need. Prayer at such times prevents people from becoming overly focused on their immediate worldly needs. It is a reminder that God is the Provider, the Sustainer and Fulfiller of all our needs. The first prayer comes about an hour before sunrise. It is a time when the body wants to keep sleeping. To overcome

inertia in order to stand and remember the Creator requires a struggle against one's self. To pray at this early time on a daily basis is very effective training for the self to submit to the will of God. The second prayer comes around the time one would stop work to eat lunch. In addition to feeding one's body, one should also feed one's soul. The third prayer comes around the time people are taking tea or heading home from

work. The fourth prayer is at a time when most people are eating dinner. The fifth prayer is at a time when one is winding down, getting ready to sleep.

A prayer is preceded by a Call to Prayer or (Athan, in Arabic). Although it is preferable to pray together in a mosque, a Muslim may pray almost anywhere, such as in fields, offices, factories and universities. Before offering the prayer one must be in good shape and pure condition. It is necessary to wash the parts of the body which are generally exposed to dirt or dust or smog. This performance is called ABLUTION (Wudu', in Arabic). Muslims all over the world should face Mecca in Arabia when praying. There is no hierarchical authority in Islam and there are no priests. However, congregation prayers are led by a learned person who knows the Qur'an and is generally chosen by the congregation. It doesn't have to be him always, every time two Muslims or more pray together, they would choose one of them to lead the prayer.

Next Month: Fasting



In today's ever chaotic political climate, the religion of Islam and its teachings have been obscured and reduced to analyses by so-called "Muslim experts" to explain vastly complex political situations. Whole governments and their policies, many of which are autocratic and oppressive, are attributed to the religion of Islam, which claims a following of over one billion individuals, belonging to a unique mosaic of cultures and traditions. The religion of Islam, because of this, has become a political current and not the religion and belief system, which it is. It is then important to step away from the barrage of 30 second sound bites and commentaries of political pundits to truly understand that it is not Islam that is fueling international unrest, but violent ideologues dedicated to militancy and supremacy that are sowing discord and misunderstanding amongst humanity's great civilizations.

Muslims, for centuries, have shaped their lives around interpretations of the **Qur'an**, the primary source of Muslim law, and the *Sunnah*, or example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is therefore important to investigate the true nature of Islam by its primary texts. Below are a collection of verses from the Qur'an that hopefully will allow Americans to enjoin a greater understanding of Islam and the faith of individuals from the United States to China.

**Note: The term We in the translation is not a plural pronoun, but a formal title given to God. Islam stresses the oneness of God and the use of We is meant only to represent the vastness and greatness of God.*

Sanctity of Life

"if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land - it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if

Hadith¹ of this Month

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: *"God will not give mercy to anyone, except those who give mercy to other creatures."*

(1) Hadith is anything Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said.

anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. And indeed, there came to them Our Messengers with clear proofs, evidence, and signs, even then after that many of them continued to exceed the limits in the land!" Qur'an (5:32)

Justice for everyone

"There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Tâghût¹ and believes in God, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And God is All-Hearer, All-Knower." Qur'an (2:256)

"Worship God and join none with Him (in worship); and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, Al-Masâkîn (the poor), the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those whom your right hands possess. Verily, God does not like such as are proud and boastful," Qur'an (4:36)

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for God as just witnesses; and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety; and fear God. Verily, God is Well-Acquainted with what you do." Qur'an (5:8)

"And insult not those whom they (disbelievers) worship besides God, lest they insult God wrongfully without knowledge. Thus We have made fair-seeming to each people its own doings; then to their Lord is their return and He shall then inform them of all that they used to do" Qur'an (6:108)

And if anyone of the idolators seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the Word of God (the Qur'ân), and then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men who know not." Qur'an (9:6)

Michael H. Hart says:

"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level."

Michael H. Hart, THE 100: A RANKING OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN HISTORY, New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1978, p. 33.

(1) Any thing worshiped other than the real God, with his acceptance.



I'M AN AMERICAN AND I'M A MUSLIM

My name is Dr. J. AISHA SIMON. I attended the Medical College of Virginia, completed my residency at Georgetown University and I'll be attending Harvard University to earn a masters degree in public health. I'm a family physician, a wife and a mother. I'm also involved in international relief work, traveling to places like Bosnia and Africa, and coordinating medical volunteers to serve in Guatemala. I was previously a regional coordinator for an anti-tobacco education campaign for elementary school children and I've served as an advocate for domestic violence survivors. I'm an American Muslim woman and I believe in the importance of charity and service to my community.

The values I learned from my family and my religion while growing up in America have led me to a life of service. Islam calls upon us to strive with one another in hastening to good deeds, and to care for the less fortunate as we care for ourselves. The Prophet Muhammad taught us that when we serve our brother or sister, we are serving God.

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Digging for the Red Roots

by: Mahir Abdal-Razzaaq El

My name is Mahir Abdal-Razzaaq El and I am a Cherokee Blackfoot American Indian who is Muslim. I am known as Eagle Sun Walker. I serve as a Pipe Carrier Warrior for the Northeastern Band of Cherokee Indians in New York City.

There are other Muslims in our group. For the most part, not many people are aware of the Native American contact with Islam that began over one thousand years ago by some of the early Muslim travelers who visited us. Some of these Muslim travelers ended up living among our people.

For most Muslims and non-Muslims of today, this type of information is unknown and has never been mentioned in any of the history books. There are many documents, treaties, legislation and resolutions that were passed between 1600s and 1800s that show that Muslims were in fact here and were very active in the communities in which they lived. Treaties such as Peace and Friendship that was signed on the Delaware River in the year 1787 bear the signatures of Abdel-Khak and Muhammad Ibn Abdullah. This treaty details our continued right to exist as a community in the areas of commerce, maritime shipping, current form of government at that time which was in accordance with Islam.

According to a federal court case from the Continental Congress, we help put the breath of life in to the newly framed constitution. All of the documents are presently in the National Archives as well as the Library of Congress.

If you have access to records in the state of South Carolina, read the Moors Sundry Act of 1790. In a future article, Inshallah¹, I will go in to more details about the various tribes, their languages; in which some are influenced by Arabic, Persian, Hebrew words. Almost all of the tribes' vocabulary includes the word Allah². The traditional dress code for Indian women includes the Kimar³ and long dresses. For men, standard fare is turbans and long tops that come down to the knees. If you were to look at any of the old books on Cherokee clothing up until the time of 1832, you will see the men wearing turbans and the women wearing long head coverings. The last Cherokee chief who had a Muslim name was Ramadhan Ibn Wati of the Cherokees in 1866.

Cities across the United States and Canada bear names that are of Indian and Islamic derivation. Have you ever wondered what the name Tallahassee means? It means that He Allah will deliver you sometime in the future.

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- (1) God's Willing.
 - (2) God in Arabic.
 - (3) Veil.