CHAPTER – IV

THEISM: THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM

Historical origin of Islam dates back to seventh century Arabia. Prophet Muhammad, an aristocratic Arabian born and raised as an orphan in the city of Mecca, experienced a revelation in his 14th year. He began to preach to his own people, most of whom initially persecuted him. After 13 years of suffering with patience and endurance, he migrated to the nearby city of Medina. Forever, twenty three years, beginning in 610 C.E, the Prophet orally transmitted the Quran. Muslims, believe that Quran was revealed from God through the angel Gabriel. In it, a cosmology, a theology and an elaborate eschatology are described. Its adherence reside in almost every country of the world.

The word Islam is derived from the Arabic word ‘SALEMA’, means ‘peace’, purity, submission and obedience. In the religious sense, it means the submission to the will of God and obedience to His law. That is, everything and every phenomenon in the world, is totally administered by God-made laws. That is they are obedient to God and submissive to His laws. Man possess the quality of intelligence and choice, thus he is invited to submit to the good will of God and obey his
law. Submission to the will of God together, with obedience to His beneficial law, is the best safeguard for man’s peace and harmony. Here one can say that the word submission does not imply absolute submission to God’s will, but means on the contrary striving after righteousness. It is the spirit of Islam.

Worshipping God or submission does not mean we spend our entire lives in constant seclusion or absolute meditation. To worship God is to live a life according to his commands, not to run away from it. To worship Allah is to know Him, to love him, to obey his commands, and to enforce his laws in every aspect of life. The given Quranic verse explains this point very well:

“How do you think God will know you when you are in His presence except by your love of your children, of your kin, of your neighbors, of your fellow creatures? Do you love your creator? Love your fellow being first. Do you wish to approach the Lord? Love his creatures, love for them what you love yourself, reject for them what you reject for yourself, do unto them what you wish to be done unto you”.

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Hence, the object of 'submission', is elevation of humanity towards the absolute ideal of perfection. Again in Rumi's view,

"Thou partakest of the nature of the beast as well as the angel:
Leave the nature of the beast;
That thou
Mayest surpass the angel".

Man must work out his salvation through the guidance of Allah. In order to obtain Salvation a person must combine both faith and action, belief and practice. Faith without doing good deeds is as insufficient as doing good deeds without faith.

It is clear that the perfection or salvation is attained through the worship of Allah. Here it is necessary to explain the Islamic Conception of God, world and Man and their relations and the faith and practices necessary for the attainment of Salvation in Islam.

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4.1 Concept of God in Islam

Islam does not subscribe to the idea that this universe is just an illusion. It is real, but it is just a creation which has a beginning and an end. God or Allah is the creator of the world. The Holy Quran says that it has a Supreme Creator and all the creations are proclaiming his purity and faith. The essence of Allah is distinct from His creations. All the creatures in this world are Allah's creations. Creator and creations are not the same. Creation is entirely distinct from the Creator:

It is like a painter and his painting. Painter is not the painting and painting is not the painter. From any respect, they are different Quran uses the words, 'doonillahi' (besides Allah) and 'hairullahi' (other than Allah) whenever creations are mentioned.

The Islamic notion of belief in one God implies that, He alone is the Creator, Master, Ruler and administrator of all that exists. The following Quranic verses clearly shows this point:

"Your God is one God; there is no God but He, the most Merciful. In the creation of the heaven and earth, and the alternation of day and night, and in the ship which saileth on the sea, laden with what is
profitable to mankind; and in the rain water which God sendeth from heaven, quickening again the dead earth, and the animals of all sorts which cover its surface, and in the change of winds, and the clouds balanced between heaven and earth, - are signs to people of understating”.

“He hath created the heavens and the earth to manifest His justice; far be that from Him which they associate with Him. He hath created man... and behold he is a professed disputer. He hath like wise created the cattle for you; and they are a credit unto you when they come trooping home at evening time, or are led forth to pasture in the morn... An he hath subjected the night and day to your service, and the sun and the moon and the stars are all bound His laws... It is He who hath subjected the sea unto you, and thou seest the ships ploughing the deep... and that ye might render thanks... shall He therefore who createth be as he who createth up the blessings of God, yet shall not be able to compute their number; God is surely gracious and merciful. He knoweth that which ye conceal and that which ye publish. But those (the idols) whom ye invoke, besides the Lord, create nothing, but are themselves created. They are dead and not living.”

4 ibid., XVIII : 3-21, pp. 269-270.
Again,

“God! There is no God but He the Living - the Eternal. No slumber seizeth Him. Whatsoever is in heaven or in earth is His. Who can intercede with Him but by his own permission? He knows what has been before, and what shall be after them; yet nought of His knowledge shall they grasp but he say, He alone is God: God the eternal. He begetteth not, and He is not be gotten; there is none like unto Him”. Praise be to God the Lord of the worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful, King on the day of reckoning; Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help”.

“Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth? There is no God, but He! He maketh alive and killeth... He is the living one. No God is there but He. Call then the lord of the worlds!... my prayers and my worship and my life and my death are unto God, Lord of the worlds. He hath no associate.

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5 ibid., I : 1-7, p.21.
Again, 'Is not He the more worthy who answereth the oppressed when they cry to Him, and taketh off their ills, and maketh you to succeed your sires on the earth'.

Then the Quran refers to the attributes of God as God’s ‘most beautiful names’. In Gerhard Bowering’s words, “they are traditionally enumerated as 99 in number to which is added as the highest name (al-ism al-aazam), the Supreme name of God, Allah. The locus classicus for listing the divine names in the literature of the Quranic commentary is 17:110, call upon God, or call upon the merciful; which so ever you call upon, to him belong the most beautiful names and also which includes a cluster of more than a dozen divine epithets”.

“Say: call upon Allah, or
Call upon Rahman;
By whatever name you call
Upon Him (it is well):
For to Him belong
The most beautiful names”.

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7 ibid., XXVII: 62, p. 390.
Similar message regarding the beautiful names of *Allah* is repeated in the *Quran* in Surah Al-Araf (7:180), in Surah Taha (20:8) and in surah Al-Hashr (59:24). Here it is clear that each attribute of God is unique and possessed by him alone. That is, not only does God possess unique attributes but also each attribute of God is sufficient to identify Him. The attribute of Almighty God should be unique. If one say God is the constructor of buildings, it is possible and true, but it is not unique. Thousands of people can construct a building. But each attribute of *Allah* is unique and points to none but *Allah*.

A also one can say that one attribute of God should not contradict with other attributes. That is, if someone says that God as the Creator of the universe has one head, two hands, two feet etc, the attribute is correct but the associated quality in the form of human being is wrong and false. Since there is only one God, all the attributes should point to one and the same God. That is, to say that, the Creator of the universe is one God and the cherisher is another God is absurd because God possesses all these attributes combined together.

4.1.1 *Allah* - The Creator

*Allah* is the one who created the universe. Creation is also a quality of *Allah*. We can only build things. It is just a kind of transformation that
is brought to materials available. But *Allah* can create from nothingness. Combining Hydrogen and Oxygen, water can be produced in the laboratory, but the scientist will not claim, he has created water. Because water is the creation of God, the Almighty. This is applicable to all substances. And that is what *Quran* reveals through the following verse:

"O men! Here is a parable

set forth! Listen to it!

Those on whom besides *Allah*, you
call, cannot create

(Even) a fly even if they all met together for the purpose".\(^\text{10}\)

He is also the destroyer of this universe. He can destroy this universe whenever he likes.

Then he has complete and direct knowledge of the reality of man and of the world. Since God alone is the creator and the master, he has exclusive authority over the universe and man.

\(^\text{10}\) ibid., XXII : 73, p. 146.
4.1.2 God – The Almighty

All the animate and inanimate things in this universe are observable evidences of Allah’s might and power. The one who can create out of nothingness should definitely be a superior power. There is nothing which is beyond His capacity. God alone has authority over the forces of the universe, and he alone can fulfill or frustrate man’s hopes.

This Quranic verse clearly says,

“This is so because Allah is the reality,
It is He who gives life to the dead,
And it is he who has power over all things
blessed be He, in whose land is dominion
And He over all things has power”.11

4.1.3 God – The Supreme

The real owner of all powers is Allah alone. He makes man powerful or powerless. The Quran commands,

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“Say, oh Allah’ Lord of power
(and rule).
You give power whom you please
And you strip off power from
Whom you please
You endure with honour whom you please
And you bring law whom you please
In your hands is all good. Verily over all things you have power.”¹²

Again,

“There is not a grain in the darkness (or depth) of the Earth Nor anything fresh or dry (green or wither).

But is (inscribed) in a record clear (to those who can read)
He knows the unseen and that which is open
He is the Great, the most High
It is the same (to Him) whether any of you Conceal his speech or declare it openly;
Whether he lie hid by night or walk forth freely by day.
And whether you hide your word or publish it

¹² ibid., III : 26, p.69.
He certainly has (full) knowledge of the
secrets of (all) hearts".\(^{13}\)

Again

Should he not know He that created? And he is the one that
understands the finest mysteries (and) is well acquainted (with them)".\(^{14}\)

4.1.4 *Allah* – The Omnipotent and Omniscient

*Allah* knows all. There is no state of ignorance. To Him, there is
nothing like ‘reveals’ or ‘secret’. Nothing is public or private to Him. He
is all knowing. Past, present and future are for this world which incurably
is bound by these 3 time epochs. *Allah* is beyond time. He knows past
present and future. He knows all the secrets and intricacies of every
animate and inanimate things in this world which He has created. *Quran*
explains this fact as,

"With Him are the Keys, of the unseen.
The treasures that more none but

\(^{13}\) *ibid.*, XIII : 9-12, pp.249-250.

\(^{14}\) *ibid.*, LXVII : 13-14, p.599.
He knows whatever there is on the Earth and in the sea
Not a leaf does fall but with His knowledge”.15

4.1.5 God – The Living

Allah has given life to us all. Life has started from Him. There is a limit for the life of all creations since they have started life at a particular point in time. One day they will perish. Sleep, death, drowsiness etc .... will affect creations. But life in its complete and absolute form exists only in Allah. No beginning, no end, no sleep, no drowsiness. The Quran declares:

“Allah! There is no God but
He – the Living
The self subsisting, eternal
No slumber can seize Him, nor sleep”.16

Hearing, sight and such senses of human beings and other life forms have limitations. The life- giver who has provides these senses

15 ibid., VI : 59, p.142.
16 ibid., II : 255, p.59.
does not have these limitations. He sees and hears all things continuously.

Holy *Quran* says

"*Allah* hears and sees all (all things)".\(^\text{17}\)

4.1.6 *Allah* – The Most Gracious and Merciful

The *Quran* declares that *Allah* who creates and protects His creation is the most graceful and merciful. His name Al-Rahman has several times been repeated in the holy *Quran*. In fact, it is repeated 169 times. It means, 'the most merciful to his creations'. Every chapter except one in the *Quran* starts with 'Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim' every good deed is started with Bismillah, which means, in the name of *Allah*, the most gracious, most merciful. It is the most repeated sentence in a Muslim's life. *Allah* himself considers mercy towards creation as binding on Him. He declares this fact in the Holy *Quran* as,

"Your Lord has inscribed for Himself (the rule of)

mercy, verily if any one of you did evil

In ignorance and thereafter repented

And amended (His conduct)

He is oft-for giving, most Merciful"\(^\text{18}\)

\(^\text{17}\) ibid., LVIII : 1, p.570.

\(^\text{18}\) ibid., VI : 54, p.142.
Allah hates, sin and the Quran says that sinners cannot attain proximity to Allah. But whatever be the quantum of sin one has committed, if he repents sincerely and accept the path of righteousness. Allah, the most merciful will forgive all his previous sins. That is what Quran teaches:

"Say: my servants who have transgressed
Against their souls!
Despire not of the Mercy of Allah;
For Allah forgives
All sins for He is oft for giving,
Most merciful
Turn your to your Lord
(in repentance)
and bow
To His (will) before the penalty comes on you;
After that you shall not be helped".\(^\text{19}\)

Allah likes those who repent. Those who repent with heart felt guilty, consciousness and confess sincerely and try not to move again to

\(^{19}\)ibid., XXXIX : 53-55, P. 478
the paths of sin, will be forgiven by the Most merciful *Allah*. He doesn’t like anyone in between, for recommendation or mediation.

There are a number of verses in the *Quran* which reveals qualities related to His grace and mercy. *Al Rahman, Al-Rahman, salam Gafoor*, etc are few among them, which designate His boundless love and mercy.

4.1.7 God – The Just

Man is the only living being which can independently do things on his own. He can think about and weigh in his mind the pros and cons of various situations and take decisions accordingly. *Allah* commands him to choose the righteous path and live accordingly. Doing good things for the making of an elite society is actually part of *Allah*’s mercy. So *Allah* has given the ruling that those who sin here shall get a painful life in the hereafter and those who do good deeds, will get a virtuous life in the hereafter. There are many *Quranic* verses which make it clear that it is a part of *Allah*’s justice to reward human beings for all their deeds in this materialistic world and that He would not be unjust to anybody.
The *Quran* says,

"And *Allah* means no injustice to any of His creatures".\(^{20}\)

Again,

"*Allah* is never unjust in the least degree".\(^{21}\)

Also,

"*Allah* not one will your lord treat with injustice".\(^{22}\)

4.1.8 *Allah* - The One and the Only to be Worshipped

It is *Allah*, who creates and protects human beings as well as the whole world. He is the Most Graceful and Merciful. He knows all, even the hidden things. He is just only He knows the 'in' and 'out' of things will know the transactions going on in the minds of people. *Quran* says

\(^{20}\) *ibid.* IV : 40, p.98.
\(^{21}\) *ibid.* IV : 40, p.98.
\(^{22}\) *ibid.* XVIII : 49, p.300.
"Allah knows well all that is in man's hearts."

From all these, it is clear that, Allah, becomes the one and only to be worshipped. Prayer means asking those who have inhuman powers for things beyond human power and capability. Therefore prayer is a kind of celestial spiritual plea for help. Then the question is whom should man offer prayer to? Whom should he worship? It is to Him who holds the key to the entire secrets, things private and public in this universe, who knows the innermost transactions of every human being. Prayers should be offered to only the creator and the protector. It is the teaching of Islam. Belief in God attains perfection only when it is held with the conviction that prayers and other offerings are to be made only to Allah. Tawheed, (belief in Oneness of God) which Islam upholds will be complete only when God, who is complete and perfect in everything, is worshipped. Again, man attains spiritual wisdom only when he offers prayers to an absolute power, that is, Allah.

Allah says,

"I have only created jinns and men that, they may worship me

No substance do I require of them,"

ibid., XXXI : 23, p.421.
Nor do I require that they should feed me

For *Allah* is He who gives (all) sustenance

Lord of power-stead fast (for ever)".24

Also,

It is the worship to the creator and protector that prevents man from sins.

The *Quran* commands man,

"Oh you people!

Adore you Guardian Lord, who created you

And those who come before you,

That you may become righteous".25

A man can enter through the door of faith and enroll himself as a member of the society of believers only when he strongly believes that *Allah* is the only one deserving all forms of worship and prayers and that He is unparalled in essence and qualities.

24 ibid., I : 56.58, p.543.
Man does not bow in front of idols and tombs. He leads a life absolutely free offering prayers to the one and only God, *Allah*, and accepts His commands. Thus he becomes a *Muslim*.

4.2 Concept of world in Islam

Islam does not subscribe to the idea that this universe is just an illusion. It is real. In the Islamic view, if this universe is just an illusion, it does not need a creator behind it. The *Quran* says that it has a Supreme, Creator, *Allah*. This given *Quranic* verse clearly states this point:

“Whatever is in the heavens and on earth
Let it declare the praises and glory of *Allah*,
For He is the exalted in might, the wise”\(^{26}\)

The world is the creation of God. Everything in it—the rivers, the mountains, the trees, the animals, the birds and every other thing—has been created by God. The *Quran* repeatedly reminds man that he is surrounded everywhere by things created by God. Everything in the world speaks of God’s glory and power. However, Islam does not seem to accept the

\(^{26}\) ibid., LVII: 1. p.565
genesis story of creation although like many other Biblical stories, the
Genesis story of creation is narrated in the Quran. According to it, no one
can say how God has created all that we find in the world. We simply
know that the heaven and earth are all his creation and it is by him and
him alone that all are sustained and maintained.

However, the world is real and not illusory. It is finite and
temporal. It is not co-eternal with God. It has been created in time. But
again time did not pre-exist. Both space and time have been created by
God himself. The world exists at God’s sweet will. The world absolutely
depends upon God and nothing can happen in it without God’s will and
knowledge. The world will not stay even for a moment without God’s
support. His presence can be felt everywhere in the world.

4.3 Concept of Man in Islam

Clearly, man, with everything else in the world, is the creation of
God. It is said in the Quran that man has been created from “clots of
blood”. In the very first revelation that Mohammad is reported to have
had through Gabriel, it is mentioned that man was created by God from
clots of blood.
“Recite: In the name of thy Lord who created,

Created man from clots of blood...” \(^{27}\)

Man, according to Islam, is a real unit of existence. Although he has been created by God and is absolutely dependant upon him, still he exists as a separate reality. His only job is to serve God in humble submission. He has only duties. His duty is only to pray and serve God. Even during prayer he is not to ask for anything from God except God’s grace and guidance. It is in this sense that Bouquet remarks about Islamic prayer that it is simply reverential and not petitionary. And as an explanation to this, he adds-“This is easy of explanation, since the practice of submission to an inscrutable and arbitrary Divine will leave no room for petitionary prayer. “Every man’s course of action and final destiny are absolutely predetermined by God. The prophet has said, ‘there is not one amongst you whose place is not written by God whether in Fire or Paradise.’ This shows that there is nothing like human free will in Islam. Man proves simply an obedient servant of God whose conscience is suppressed. There is no scope for moral ought in Islam. It is also expressly said in the Quran, “Allah leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases, and no one knows the hosts of the Lord save Himself”. \(^{28}\)

\(^{27}\) ibid., XCV: 1-2, p.659.

God created the universe and entrusted the world to the care of man. So his duty is to develop and not destroy it. Everything was created by God for the benefit of man. He created the sun, the moon and the stars made subservient by His command, surely God has made everything subservient to man’s dominion.

Again, the Quran presents a very believable study of the nature in man. Of all the tens of thousands of animals, he came into possession of the independent faculties and has tremendous knowledge which are to be found in none of the others. That is, man becomes the possessor of an incomparable freedom of existence worthy of his status of vicgerency heavens on earth; of an intelligence that enables him to perceive and utilize effectively all that comes within the range of his eyes, hands and ears; of an ability of conveying to his own species, through languages, the ideas of the mind, that too, with an originality, a clarity and a comprehensiveness all of its own; of a lasting script that helps convert the saying and speeches into permanently inscribed lines; of clothes that provide personality of the wearer, of means of transportation and of other innumerable specialties. Specialties all of which serve only to further distinguish and maintain aloof, their position from amongst the tens of thousands of other existing life forms.
The Quran says,

"Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beast of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth; (here) indeed are signs for a people that are wise".29

Pride, thus, is viewed as the cardinal sin of man, for not recognizing in himself his essential quality of ascribing to himself, partnership with Allah, that is shirk, (associating a creature with the creator) and of violating the unity of God. True faith (Iman), thus consists of belief in the Divine unity and is one's submission to the Divine will.

Again, the goal of Muslims, declared in the Quran is to live and die in accordance with God's will as revealed in the Quran and practiced by the prophet. Muslims attempt to adjust their view of the world with the lens of the Quran. The will of God is expressed in the Quran through both expectations and examples. The expectations are usually descriptions of how a believer should live his or her life, and various

stories in the Quran provide positive and negative examples. The epitome of a positive exemplar is Moses, whose story is dealt with, in great detail in the Quran. The Quran says, “struggle is at the roof of life on earth, a spiritual survival of the fittest. The fittest are those closest to God; they are those who are steady fast in prayer and spend out of what we have provided for them”\(^{30}\). The negative prototype is embodied in Pharaoh, who elevates himself above God’s law and make his own law the only source of guidance. Moses is given the promised hand for his perseverance and steadfastness, and pharaoh is destroyed by his own hubris and rebellion against the divine will. The story of Moses is an example of submission and pharaoh’s is of rebellion and infidelity (Kufr). Between these two lies the struggle of humanity.

Life is meant to be an arena whereby one struggles with good and evil. The Quran teaches that good and evil exist in the heart or every individual as well as the in the society. The individual struggle is to act righteously in accordance with the Quran and the prophetic example and to stunt one’s own evil and its impulses. The collective struggle is to work with others to make the world a more righteous place. In Arabic, this inward and outward struggle is called Jihad. It also means a person’s struggle with the lower tendencies of the soul, the gravitational pull of

\(^{30}\) Ibid., II : 2-3, p. 24
self destructive forces that lead to alienation from God and a state of spiritual disequilibrium. Because humans inevitably fall short morally and succumb to these destructive tendencies from time to time, a means of reestablishing spiritual balance is given, called *tauba* or atonement. This is done by experiencing a genuine sense of remorse for one’s transgressions and a removal of the unhealthy effects of that state by turning to God and seeking divine grace through leading a good life.

Again, man, within the limited sphere of his existence, is absolute master of his conduct. He is responsible for his actions and for the use or misuse of the powers with which he has been endowed. He may fall or rise, according to his own inclination. There is supreme assistance for him who seek divine help and guidance.

Every human being has two inclinations, one prompting him to good and impelling him thereto, and the other prompting him to evil and thereto impelling, but the Godly assistance is high, and he who asks the help of God in contending with the evil promptings of his own heart obtain. No man’s conduct is the out come of fatality, nor is he born along by an irresistible decree to heaven or hell, on the contrary, the ultimate result is the creation of his own actions, for each individual is primarily answerable for his future destiny.
Again, God has printed out to you the path of salvation and temptations of this world. Obedience to the commandments of God and avoidance of sin, that is the ability to live a holy life which brings one near to God. God has placed us on earth to try each according to his endowments.

A Muslim believes that man must work out his salvation through the guidance of Allah. No one can act on behalf of another between him and Allah. In order to obtain, Salvation, a person must combine faith and action, belief and practice. Faith without doing good deeds is as insufficient as doing good deeds without faith.

4.3.1 Application of faith

The application of faith is necessary for salvation. God has laid down certain major exercises of faith - some are daily, some weekly, some monthly, some annually and some are requires as a minimum of once in a lifetime. These exercises of faith are to serve man’s spiritual purpose, satisfy his human needs and to mark his whole life with a Divine touch. They are Shahadath, prayer, fasting, Zakath, Hajj and so on.

4.3.1.1 Shahadath

The first pillar, which makes one a Muslim, is called the Shahadath, meaning ‘testimony’, or witnessing. This Shahadath, is,
Ashhadu An la ilaha illa Allah Wa anna Muhammadan Rasulullah. This means, 'I witness that there is nothing worthy of worship except God and that Muhammad is God’s messenger'. The first part of the testimony is a belief that God is Unique with no partners. Thus nothing in creation can be associated with God, as creation has no real substantiation without the sustaining power of God. The Second part of the declaration, Muhammad as the messenger of God, acknowledges the means through which this understanding of God has come. All prophets are special human beings capable of refracting divine light, acting like prisms that allow others to see it. The intensity of direct divine light is something only a prophet can bear. Muslims believe that the revelation given to Muhammad is like refracted green light, which lies in the middle of the light spectrum. The position of the prophet has been so clearly defined in Islam that we can know what he was and what he was not. The prophet is no more than a servant of God. He was to make people servants of God and not servants of himself. At least seventeen times a day Muslims recite in their prayers, "I bear witness that Muhammad is a servant of God and is His prophet". 

4.3.1.2 Prayer

Prayer to the creator on a daily basis is the best way to cultivate in man a sound personality and to actualize his aspiration. An earnest prayer

31 ibid., XLVII : 16-19, p.524.
goes beyond the limits of request for material and earthly gains. This type of prayer is the meaning of true worship. Prayer is the soul of worship. Worship which is devoid of prayer becomes a mere ritual. The spirit of prayer should reside in the mind of the person who prays. The term 'prayer' attains its true meaning only when the appeal comes from the heart of the person. That is, man's consciousness of a supreme, all pervading power; his helplessness in the external conflict of nature; his sense of benefaction—all lead him to pour out the over-flowing sentiments of his heart in words of gratitude and love or repentance and solicitation, to the one who is every wakeful and merciful. Prayers are only utterances of the sentiments which fill the human heart.

So everyone should try to approach God through systematic methods of worship which God Himself has ordained or instructed us. The value of prayer as the means of moral elevation and the purification of the heart, has been clearly set forth in the Quran. The Quran says, "rehearse that which bath been revealed unto thee of the Book, and be constant at prayer, for prayer preserveth from crimes and from that which is blameable; and the remembering of God is surely a most sacred duty."32

32 ibid., XXIX : 45, p.408.
Again, it says of the nature of prayer thus: "O God! I supplicate Thee for firmness in faith and direction towards rectitude, and to assist me in being grateful to Thee, and in adoring. Thee in every good way: and I supplicate Thee for an innocent heart, which shall not incline to wickedness; and I supplicate Thee for a true tongue, and for that virtue which thou knowest; and I pray thee to defend me from that vice which Thou knowest, and for forgiveness of those faults which though knowest. O my defender! assist me in remembering Thee and being grateful to Thee, and in worshipping Thee with the excess of my strength. O Lord! I have injured my own soul, and no one can pardon the faults of thy servants but thou; forgive me out of thy loving kindness, and have mercy on me; for verify. Thou art the forgiver of offences and the bestower of blessings on Thy servants."

Hence, Islam recognizes no caste of priesthood, and allows no monopoly of spiritual knowledge or special holiness to intervene between man and his God. Each soul rises to its Creator without the intervention of priest. No sacrifice, no ceremonial is needed to bring the anxious heart nearer to its comforter. Each human being is his own priest and no one man is higher than the other.

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33 ibid., XXIX : 48-52, p.409
The practice of the prophet has attached certain ceremonies to the due observance of prayers. At the same time, it points out in unmistakable terms, that it is to the devotional state of the mind, the searcher of the spirit looks: The *Quran* declares,

“It is not the flesh or the blood of that which ye sacrifice which is acceptable to God. It is your piety which is acceptable to the Lord. It is not righteousness hers, continues the *Quran*, “that ye turn your faces in prayer to wards the east or the west; but righteousness is of him who believeth in God... who give the money for God’s sake unto his kindred, and unto orphans, and the needy, and the stranger, and those who ask, and for the redemption of captives; who is constant at prayers and giveth alms; and of those who perform their covenant, when they have covenanted; and who behave themselves patiently in hardship and adversity, and in times of violence: these are they who are true”.

It was declared that prayer without the presence of the heart was of no avail and that God’s words which were addresses to all mankind and not to one people, should be studied with the heart and lips in absolute accord. So devotion without understanding was useless and brought no blessing.

34 ibid., II : 177, p.p.45-46.
Again, Muhammad, required cleanliness as a necessary preliminary to the worship and adoration of God. At the same time, he especially inculcated that more external or rather physical purity does not imply true devotion. He distinctly laid down that, the Almighty can only be approached in purity and humility of spirit.

Then inorder to keep alive in the Moslem world, the memory of the birth place of Islam, Muhammad directed that during prayers the Muslim should turn his face towards Mecca, as the glorious centre which saw the first glimmerings of the light of regenerated truth. Every where throughout the world the Muslim should pray looking towards the Kaaba.

Then praying to the creator on a daily basis, is the best way to cultivate in a man a sound personality and to actualize his aspiration. Prayer is for our benefit which are immeasurable and the blessings are beyond imagination.

While people may supplicate anytime they wish to do, there is a specific prayer for every adult Muslim, female or male is obliged to perform five times a day. The times are determined by the perceived movement of the sun as a way of reminding people of the temporal nature of the world. Requirements of prayer are performing of ablution, purity of
the whole body, clothes and ground used for prayer, dressing properly and having the intention and facing the *qiblah*; the direction of the *kaabah* at Mecca. Times of prayer are early morning (after dawn and before sunrise), Noon, (after the sun begins to decline from its Zenith until it is about mid way on its course to set), mid afternoon (after the expiration of the noon salah time until sunset), Sunset (immediately after sunset until the red glow in the western horizon disappears, evening (after the expiration of the sunset salah until dawn. Prayer should be offered in its due time, unless there is a reasonable excuse. Delayed obligatory prayer must be made up. In addition to the prescribed prayer, a *Muslim* should express gratitude to God and appreciation of his favours and ask for his mercy all the time.

4.3.1.3 Fasting

The institution of fasting has existed more or less among all nations. But it may be said that through out the ancient world the idea attached to it was, without exception more of penitence than of abstinence.

Fasting is in the entire lunar month of Ramdan and it begins with the sighting of the new crescent for that month. Fasting entails abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations from dawn to sunset and is
obligatory on adults healthy enough to do so. Again, useless and unnecessary mortification of the flesh is discountenanced.

Fasting is prescribed to the able bodied and the strong, as a means of chastening the spirit by imposing a restraint on the body. For the weak, the sickly, the traveler, the student (who is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge), the soldier, doing God’s battle against the assailants of the faith, and women in their ailments, it is disallowed.

Mark the wisdom of the rule as given in the Quran,

“O ye that have believed, a fast is ordained to you... that ye may practice piety, a fast of a computed number of days. But he among you who will be ailing, nor on a journey (shall fast) an equal number of other days: and they that are able to keep it (and do not), shall make atonement by maintaining a poor man... But if ye fast, it will be better for you if ye comprehend, God willeth that which is easy for you”.

4.3.1.4 Zakath.

Another pillar of Islam’ is paying Zakath, an obligatory alms given once every lunar year from the standing capital of every responsible adult. It is not an income tax, as income tax is prohibited in Islamic law, but rather a capital tax on wealth that has been stagnant for at least a year. It is

35 ibid., II : 183-84, p.4
one-fortieth of a person's liquid assets, on the value of all goods, chattels, implements, on profit of trade, mercantile, business etc. But alms are due only when the property amounts to a certain value and has been in the possession of a person for one whole year; nor are any due from cattle employed in agriculture or in the carrying of burdens. Besides at the end of the month of Ramazan and on the day of the Eid-Ul-Fitr, each head of the family has to give away in alms, for himself and for every number of his household, and for each guest who breaks his fast and sleeps in his house during the month, a measure of wheat, barley, dates, raisins, rice or any other grain, or the value of the same.

The rightful recipients of the alms, as pointed out by Muhammad and his disciples are the poor and the indigent, those who help in the collection and distribution of the obligatory alms, slaves, debtors, who cannot pay their debts, travelers and strangers.

Hence here it is clear that no religion of the world, prior to Islam had consecrated charity, the support of the widow; the orphan and the helpless poor, by enrolling its principles among the positive enactments of the system.
4.3.1.5 Hajj

Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca is the next pillar of Islam. Muslims believe Mecca to be the site of the first house of worship built by Prophet Adam and his wife, Eve and then restored millennia later by the Muhammad Abraham and his son, the Prophet Ismail.

The wisdom which incorporated in to Islam, the time honoured custom of annual pilgrimage to Mecca and to the Shrine of the Kaaba, has breathed in to Muhammad’s religion, a faith of brotherhood, inspite of sectarian division. Annual pilgrimage to Mecca prescribed for every Muslim once in a life time, provided one can afford it and provided a person has enough provisions to leave for his family in his absence. Then the conditions necessary to make the injunction obligatory are the ripeness of intelligence and discernment, perfect freedom and liberty, possession, of the means of transport and subsistence during the journey, possession of means sufficient to support the pilgrim’s family during his absence and finally the possibility and practicability of the voyage.

The Hajj is intended to establish a firm bond between man and his creator. Any person who has performed the Hajj becomes repentant and desires to keep away from sinful deeds. A person performing Hajj
identifies himself as one among the millions who have arrived from the
different concerns of the world.

4.3.2 Faith

*Muslims* have certain beliefs for the attainment of salvation. They
are believes in God, believe in the messengers and prophets of God,
believes in the scriptures of God, and believes in the last day of judgment.

4.3.2.1 Belief in *Allah* - The One and Only God

A *Muslim* believes in One God, Supreme and Eternal, Infinite and
Mighty, Mercy and Compassionate, Creator and Provider. God has no
father nor mother, no sons nor was He fathered, none is equal to Him. He
is God of all mankind, not of a special trace or race.

God is high and supreme, but He is very nearer to the pious
thoughtful believers. He answers their prayers and helps them. He loves
the people who love Him and forgive their sins. He gives them peace,
happiness, knowledge, and success. God is the loving and the Provider,
the Generous and the Benevolent, the Rich and the Independent, the
patient and the Appreciative, the Unique and the Protector, the Judge and
the peace. These attributes are mentioned in the *Quran*. 
God creates in man the mind to understand, the soul and conscience to be good and righteous, the feelings and sentiments to be kind and humane. If we try to count His favours upon us, we cannot, because they are countless. In return for all the great favours and mercy, God does not need anything from us; because He is needless and independent. God asks us to know him, to love him and to enforce His law for our own benefit and our own good.

Then the Oneness of God or *Tawheed* is the act of believing and affirming that God is one and unique. The *Quran* asserts the existence of a single and absolute truth that transcends the world, a unique and indivisible being who is independent of the entire creation. To pointing out this, the *Quran* declares.

4.3.2.2 Belief in the Messengers and Prophets of God

A *Muslim* believes in all the messengers and prophets of God without any discrimination. All messengers were mortals, human beings, endowed with divine revelations and appointed by God to teach mankind. The holy *Quran* mentions the names of 25 messengers and prophets. These include *Noah, Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Moses, Jesus* and *Muhammad*. From them Muhammad is the most important. Because
Muhammad was the last prophet of God. God revived through him the same genuine faith, which had been conveyed by all the prophets. God transmitted the message of Islam in its purest form to mankind through Muhammad. The word of God which reached us through Muhammad is pure divine language, and preserved in its original form. Its language is a living language, spoken, written and understood by millions of people, and whose grammar, idiom, vocabulary and pronunciation and script have remained unchanged from the time of revelation till today. His mission was to revive the man and the world as a whole.

The term Muhammad means, 'The Blessed One'. 'The Blessed One', -seems to have come true with the arrival of Muhammad. He is the prophet of all men, to the last man to live on this earth. The life of no other world leader has been recorded in so detailed a manner as has been done in the case of Muhammad. His contributions to humanity were not limited to speeches and sermons. His greatest success is that he practiced what he preached and he was able to set the best examples for mankind through his own life.

In Lamartine’s words, “philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual
empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he”? He attained his prophethood at the age of forty. He loudly declared these cardinal messages of supreme truth:

"Worship Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. I am the last of the prophets that He was sent unto you. Heed my words: Death, which puts an end to life in this world, is the beginning of another life. It is there that punishment or reward is distributed according to the performance of this world. Those man who have led virtuous lives in this world will attain eternal bliss in heaven and those who have depraved their lives are bound to suffer the (agonies of ) hell. The prime goal of life in this world should be the attainment of salvation in the life hereafter. The means to attain this goal is to observe the body of traditional laws based on the words and acts of the messengers of God". This is the gist of Muhammad’s preaching’s to mankind.

Muhammad made the people believe in the Oneness of God and the people who where eager to sacrifice everything in order to attain the

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eternal bliss of paradise. They showed the readiness to totally submit to the will of God, Almighty.

4.3.2.3 Belief in the revelations and the Quran

A Muslim believes in all scriptures and revelations of God, as they were complete and in their original versions. Allah, the Creator has not left man without guidance for the conduct of his life. Revelations were given to guide the people to the right path of Allah and sent down to selected people, the prophet and messengers, to convey it to their fellow men.

The message of all the prophets and messengers is the same. They all asked the people of their time to obey and worship Allah and none other. Abraham, Moses, and Muhammad who revealed their own book of Allah, were sent at different times to bring back straying human being from deviation to right course.

The Quran is the sacred book of the Muslims. It is the last book of guidance from Allah, sent down to Muhammad, through the angel 'Gabriel'. Every word of it is the word of Allah. It was revealed over a period of 23 years in the Arabic language. It contains 114 surahs (chapters) and over 6000 verses.
Of the various religious scriptures that exist today, it is the only book that can be considered as the true revelation of God. The ethical and moral codes spelt out in the Holy book are relevant for all times. The *Quran* provides invaluable and faultless directions to lead a life of virtue and piety. There is no other book like the *Quran* which can show the right path to discreet souls. The given *Quranic* verse states this point clear: "This is the Book: in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear ‘Allah’."38

The *Quran* deals with man and his ultimate goal in life. Its teachings cover all areas of this life and the life after death. It contains principles, doctrines and directions for every sphere of human life. So here one can say that the success of human beings on this earth and in the life hereafter depends on obedience to the *Quranic* teaching.

4.3.2.4 Believes in the Angels of *Allah*

Angles are purely spiritual and splendid beings created by *Allah*. They require no food or drink or sleep. They have no physical desires nor material needs. Angels spend their time in the service of *Allah*. Each charged with a certain duty. Angels cannot be seen by the naked eyes. But a *Muslim* believes in the angles of *Allah*.

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4.3.2.5 Believes in the Last Day of Judgment

A Muslim believes in the last day of the judgment. This world as we know it will come to an end and the dead will rise to stand for their final and fair trial on that day. All men and women from Adam to the last person will be resurrected from the state of death for judgment. Everything we say, make, intend and think are accounted for and kept in accurate records. They are brought up on the day of judgment. Here it is clear that, one who believes in life after death is not expected to behave against the will of Allah. He will always bear in mind that Allah is watching all his actions and the angels are recording them. People with good records will be generously rewarded and warmly welcomed to Allah's Heaven. People with bad records will be fairly punished and cast in to Hell. The real nature of Heaven and Hell are known to Allah only but they are described by Allah in man's familiar terms in the Quran.

If there is a life after death, there also has to be a Supreme Power to control the affairs of that world. The final judgment, on the acts of a person during his life on earth will be done by that Great Sovereign Power. So to know that great power, and attain his reward, belief in the last Day of Judgment is very essential.
The existence of a life after death and the need for man to strive to attain paradise are repeatedly and emphatically stated in several chapters of the Holy Quran. The given Quranic verses, expresses this idea very well:

"Every soul will taste death, and ye will be paid on the Day of Resurrection only that which ye have fairly earned. Who so ever is removed from the fire and made to enter paradise, he indeed is triumphant. The life of this world is but the comfort of 'illusion'".  

Again,

"But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is gardens, beneath which rivers flow, every time they are fed with fruits there from, they say: 'why, this is what we were fed with before', for they are given things in similitude; and they have therein spouses purified; and they abide therein (forever)".

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40 ibid., XXI : 35, p.331.
4.3.3 Moral Codes

Here it is also important to notice that Islam recognizes certain moral codes for leading a good life. That is, to lead a moral life is necessary for attaining Salvation. They can be divided as Spiritual life, Intellectual life, Personal life, Political life and International life and so on.

4.3.3.1 Spiritual life

Spiritual life as a moral code includes prayer, fasting, charity giving, pilgrimage love for Allah and his messenger, love for truth and humanity for the sake of Allah, hope and trust in Allah at all times and doing good for the sake of Allah.

4.3.3.2 Intellectual life

It includes true knowledge based on clear proof and indisputable guidance acquired by experience or experiment or by both. The Qur'an points to the rich sources of knowledge in the whole universe. Islam demands faith in Allah on the basis of knowledge and research and leaves
wide open all fields of thought before the intellect to penetrate as far as it can reach.

Personal life includes laws with reference to family life. Family is a human social group whose members are bound together by the bond of blood ties and or marital relationship. Marriage is a religious duty on all who are capable of meeting its responsibilities. Each member of the family has rights and obligations. In Islam marriage is highly recommended and celibacy is frowned upon. The prophet Muhammad encouraged marriage.

In Islam, children are highly esteemed and seen as one of God’s greatest blessings to humanity. The prophet stated that humans were born innocent and later corrupted by their societies. Thus parents are held responsible for maintaining the state of innocence and raising them with a sense of love and awe of the divine. Motherhood is highly regarded in the Quran and the prophetic tradition. Quran adds, “paradise lies at the feet’ of mothers.” In most Muslim societies, adult women are still predominantly mothers and housewives during their productive years.
It asserts that man is ordained by *Allah* to extend his utmost help and kindness to other family members, relations, servants and neighbors. No superiority is recognized on account of class, colour, origin of wealth etc. Humanity represents one family springing from the one and the same father and mother. The unity of humanity is not only in its origin but also in its ultimate aims. Again for a good social life, Islam rejected slavery. The *Quran* recommended the freeing of slaves as an act of expiation for many a sin. Under no circumstances, was a *Muslim* to have the right to enslave a man. *Quran* has not prescribed the making of slaves out of prisoners – of – war. Islam was against concubinage, the union of people standing to each other in the relation of master and slave, without the sanction of matrimony. This is a phenomenon that was prevalent during that interim period when slavery was being taken out by its very root. The Islam had only commanded that the slave owner was to help in every way possible to marry off – his made servant to an eligible suitor, never that she should be made a concubine. *Quran* says,

"And you are permitted to marry virtuous women who are believers, and virtuous. women of those who have been given the
scriptures before you, when you have provided them their portions, living chastely with them without fornication, and not taking concubines. 41

The Islamic teachings dealt a blow at the institution of slavery. Mohammed ordered that slaves should be allowed to purchase their liberty by the wages of their service; and that in case the unfortunate beings had no present means of gain, and wanted to earn in some other employment enough for that purpose, they should be allowed to leave their masters on an agreement to that effect. He also provided that sums should be advanced to the slaves from the public treasury to purchase their liberty.

Lastly, Islam recognizes no distinction of race or colour, black or white citizens or soldiers, rulers or subjects, they are perfectly equal, not in theory only, but in practice. In the field or in the guest chamber, in the tent or in the palace, in the mosque or in the market, they mix without reserve and without contempt.

4.3.3.4 Economic life

Earning one's living through decent labour is not only a duty but a great virtue as well. The individual is responsible for the prosperity of the state and the state is responsible for the security of the individual. The Islamic economic system is not based on arithmetical calculations alone but also on moral principles. In Muhammad's view, "man comes to this world empty-handed and departs empty-handed. The real owner of things is Allah alone. Man is simply a trustee". 42

4.3.3.5 Political Life.

The sovereignty in the Islamic state belongs to Allah. The people exercise it by trust from Him to enforce His laws. The ruler is only an acting executive, chosen by the people to serve them according to Allah's law. The state is to administer justice and provide security for all citizens. Rulers and administrators must be chosen from the best qualified citizens. If an administrator betrays the trust of Allah and the people, it has to be replaced.

42 Guillaume, The Life and Teachings of Muhammad, op.cit., p.103.
Hence, the importance which Islam attaches to the duties of sovereigns towards their subjects, and the manner in which it promotes the freedom and equality of the people and protects them against the oppression of their ruler are evident. Here one may note that the countries where the Moslems established themselves remained exempt from the disastrous consequences of the feudal system and the feudal code.

4.3.3.6 International life

Since, man has a common origin, the status and aim of other people, their interests and right to life, honour and property should be respected. Transgression is forbidden. War is only justified if the state security is endangered. During war, destruction of crops, animals and homes, killing non fighting woman, children and aged people are forbidden.

Islam rejects priesthood. Islamic philosophy aims at inducing men to put in to practice the idols of monotheism in its purest and perfect form. Not only tombs and idols but also priests who claim to be the middlemen between men and God are targeted by this basic principle of Islam which instructs men that the creator alone is to be worshipped. Islam teaches man that there is no need for middlemen between man and
his creator. Islam does not allow priesthood of any nature. Thus Islam tries to save mankind from the clutches of the priests who have been exploiting men in the name of religion.

So the ethical code of Islam is thus summarized in the ‘fourth Sura,’ “come, I will, rehearse what your lord hath enjoined on you- that ye assign not to Him a partner; that ye be good to your parents: and that ye slay not your children because of poverty; for them and for you will we provide: and that ye come not near to pollutions, out ward or inward; and that ye slay not a soul whom God hath for bidden, unless by right…. and draw not nigh to the wealth of the Orphan, save so as to better it … and when ye pronounce judgment then be just; though it be the affair of a kinsman. And God’s compacts fulfill ye; that is, what He hath ordained to you. Verity, this is my right way; follow it, then”.

The object of Islam like that of other systems was the elevation of humanity towards the absolute ideal of perfection. Instead of inviting people to strife and hostility, it teaches peace and goodwill among mankind in as eloquent terms as a basis of ethical system.

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The followers of Islam firmly believe that it is the final and perfect religion of mankind. The *Quran* is to be believed to be a completely divine scripture. It is also believed that of all the religious scriptures of the world, the *Quran* is the only one which has been preserved in all its purity. There are no interpretations of the *Quran* which was conveyed to the prophet of Islam through a divine agency like Gabriel. The final and perfect religion as it is, there is no question of its growth and further development.

Monotheism is the soul of Islam. A man can conduct his life totally according to God’s will if he worship none other than God. Only then a man can submit himself completely to God and thereby become a *Muslim*. Islam is the religion that all prophets preached.

Islam represents a whole civilization, a complete culture and a comprehensive world order. It provides moral guidance in all walks of life. That is why, Islamic values are not for the ascetics, who renounces the world, but for him who actively participates in different spheres of life and works within them.

So here we all understand that, the only path before a man who seeks salvation in the life hereafter is to accept the teachings of the great
messengers of God and lead life in a way in which he submit himself wholly to God Almighty. The meaning of Islam may be conducted (Allah – Akbar), God is great.

So may the Most Gracious God help us all in finding and accepting the truth. (Ameen)