

### Fast 10: Faith or Belief

- The whole of the religion of Islam is briefly summed up in the two short sentences:
  - *Lā ilāha ill Allāh*, i.e., there is no god but Allah, or, nothing deserves to be made an object of adoration and worship except Allah,
  - *Muḥammad-ur Rasūl-ullāh*, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.
- It is simply by bearing witness to the truth of these two simple propositions that anyone enters the fold of Islam.
- The first part of the creed is the constant theme of the Quran, as for example in the verse “Know that there is no god but Allah” (47:19), and a faith in the Unity of God, that there is no god except Allah, is repeatedly mentioned as the basic principle, not only of Islam but of every religion revealed by God.
- The second part of the creed concerning the messengership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is also a constant theme of the Quran, and the very words *Muḥammad-ur Rasūl-ullāh* occur in 48:29.
- From Hadith, too, it appears that the essential condition of the acceptance of Islam was the acceptance of these two component parts of the creed. Whenever anyone, man or woman, accepted Islam in the time of the Holy Prophet, it is reported in Hadith that they did so by declaring: “I testify that there is no god but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah”. Later theologians calls this as “a brief expression of faith” (*īmān mujmal*).
- What they call the “detailed expression of faith” (*īmān mufaṣṣal*) is given in the Quran as follows:

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is the one who believes **in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets...**” — 2:177.
- In the Hadith there is a slight variation:

“That you believe in Allah and His angels and in the meeting with Him and His messengers and that you believe in the life after death.” (Bukhari)

The “meeting with Him” is the same as life after death. Belief in messengers here includes belief in books revealed to them.

- Thus the basis of belief rests on five principles, according to the Holy Quran and Hadith: God, His angels, His prophets, His books, and a life after death.
- There are no dogmas in Islam, meaning that there are no mere beliefs forced upon a person for his salvation. Belief, Islam says, is **not only** to believe in your heart that something is true, but also to act upon that belief. Every article of faith means a principle to be carried into practice for the higher development of man.
- **Belief in Allah:** Allah is the Being Who possesses all the perfect attributes, and when a person is required to believe in Allah, he is really required to make himself possessor of the highest moral qualities. He must set before himself the highest and purest ideal which the heart of a human being can conceive, and make his conduct conform to that ideal.
- **Belief in the angels** means that the believer should follow the good impulses which arise in his mind, for the angel is the agent who prompts a person to do good.
- **Belief in the books of God** signifies that we should follow the directions contained in them for the development of our inner faculties. The final book of God, which brings together in one place all the good teachings from previous books of God, is the Quran.
- **Belief in messengers** means that we are to model ourselves on their noble example. The messenger whose example was the most comprehensive, covering all conditions of human life, and whose example is known to mankind accurately and surely, was the Holy Prophet Muhammad. By following him, a person follows all the prophets.
- **Belief in the Hereafter or the Last Day** tells us that physical or material advancement, and things of this world, are not the end or goal of life; but that its real purpose is to develop spiritual life within us through good deeds. It is that spiritual life of a human being which survives after death and continues in the Hereafter.