

PREFACE

THERE ARE many books that carry the name of Mawlana Sheikh Nazim (ؒ). Most of them are either transcriptions of his lectures or edited versions of them. Many of these he read and approved. This book, however, is the only book that he actually wrote himself.

Mawlana wrote it in the '50's, years after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The alphabet had been changed from Arabic to Latin letters a generation earlier, leaving the traditional Ottoman sources inaccessible to the average Turkish reader. It was written to remind the Turks and the Cypriots both of their religious duties and their Ottoman heritage. In consequence some of the Ottoman references may be unfamiliar to the English reader.

The book contains basic information that every Muslim should know. It was intended for everyone so he wrote it in a language that is clear and easy to understand. In 2012 Mawlana gave it to us to republish and, following his advice, we were handing it out to the Turkish speaking people who came wanting to learn more about their religion. Since then I have seen the need to also have something for the people coming from the West, especially in this time when there is so much misinformation, and when so many sources professing Islam are unreliable. It came to my mind to have this book translated into English to serve this purpose.

I want to thank Karima Sperling, Radhia Shukrullah, and Salim and Hagar Spohr for working hard on this project and making it happen. May Allah bless them.

May Allah fulfill Mawlana's intention that this book serve Islam and bring benefit to those searching for the straight way.

Al-Fatihah

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Lefke Cyprus
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Publisher's note: The English translation of Arabic words and prayers have been placed between brackets within the main body of the text. Lengthy passages, however, will be found as footnotes.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

B O O K O N E

F A I T H

Faith means to believe; one who believes will derive strength from what he believes in. Those who believe in nothing will lack a spiritual foundation. That is why we always see people of faith overcoming those lacking faith. When the heroes of the Ottoman Empire drove back their enemies at Çanakkale and Sakarya, when Alparslan at the Battle of Malazgirt with fifteen thousand horsemen routed the tremendous Byzantine army of two hundred thousand men, their victories were not due to superiority in numbers, but rather the result of their outstanding faith. Therefore, faith in Allah Almighty is the greatest source of strength for us, and an inexhaustible powerhouse.

The Six Articles of the Declaration of Faith

- 1 – Belief in Allah ﷻ, for He has the Power to do anything;
- 2 – Belief in the Angels, for Allah ﷻ has created them;
- 3 – Belief in the Holy Scriptures, because Allah ﷻ has revealed them;
- 4 – Belief in in the Prophets and Messengers, because Allah ﷻ has sent them;

- 5 – Belief in the Hereafter and the Last Day, for Allah ﷻ will certainly make that day come;
- 6 – Belief in Destiny, both good and bad being from Allah ﷻ. To know that in Allah’s dominion His Will alone can manifest; whatever is not His Will cannot occur. Allah is the Absolute Sovereign over this world and the next.

I – BELIEF IN ALLAH

Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He, has brought us and all things from non-being into existence, He has no partner and no one is like Him; He alone is the Absolute Possessor of Greatness, Power, and all Perfection.

He has Power over all things. If He says: “Be!” He brings things into Being from Nothingness. If He says: “Be not!” He can obliterate all creatures from existence in an instant.

He does as He wills, He is in no need of counsel or advice from anyone. No one can say to Him: “Why have You done this?”

All sovereignty belongs to Allah ﷻ. He owns this world and the world to come. We are His servants. This belief is sufficient.

This belief satisfies those who have faith in Allah Almighty. Allah will take under His Divine Protection whoever harbours this faith in his heart. He will not be troubled or fearful either in this world or in the next. Moreover, even the prophets cannot know or describe how great a reward Allah holds in store for a person who calls upon his Lord Allah, be it only once in his life.

*Every Being is Engaged
in the Remembrance of Allah (dbikru llāb)*

In order to uphold its existence in this world, even the smallest particle of creation is in need of Allah's grace in every instant. Without this grace all creatures would vanish into nothingness. Since every particle of creation has its own perception and understanding, all things are engaged in the *dbikr* of Allah ﷻ who sustains their existence.

Angels in Heaven, men on Earth, the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the animals on dry land, mountains, stones, water, and plants – every creature engages in the remembrance of Allah (*dbikr*).

Allah says: "Know Me!"

Allah ﷻ says, "I was a hidden treasure and wanted to be known; therefore I called this creation into existence."

This being the case, the purpose of our life is to know and recognise Allah.

To Know Allah is the Purpose of Creation

As the purpose of our being in this world is to know Allah ﷻ, every single creature gives us testimony of Allah's Existence and Perfection.

To ascertain whether a servant has achieved his life's goal or not, when he has left this world and has been laid in his grave, the first station of the afterlife, the questioning angels first of all will ask him this question: "Who is your Lord?" Those who can answer "My Lord is Allah," are then saved.

What are the words of the Testimony of Faith (shabāda)?

*Asbbadu an lā ilāha illā llāh
wa asbbadu anna Muḥammadan ‘abdubu wa rasūlub.*

These blessed words are Allah’s greatest favour to us, His servants. For by uttering these blessed words, a person enters the religion of Islam. And whoever becomes Muslim has saved himself from eternal torment and ruin. Whoever is able to utter these words with his last breath is forgiven all sins and will enter paradise. Even if an unbeliever uttered these blessed words with his last breath, he would be cleansed of his unbelief and attain Paradise. Even if an unbeliever testified only with his tongue and not with his heart, Hellfire would not burn his body from without, but from within. A believer who recites the declaration of faith (*shabāda*) will be cleansed of all the sins he has committed up until that moment.

If a person recites the words of the *shabāda* every day when lying down to sleep and upon rising in the morning, were he to die that very day, on account of these words he would die as a believer destined for Paradise. The words of the *shabāda* are the words that Allah ﷻ loves best of all.

The Meaning of the Words of the shabāda

I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is His servant and the true messenger sent to us.

To teach our children these blessed words, which are the foundation of our religion, before anything else and thus prepare them for a sound future, is one of the most important rights of our children over us, their parents.

2 — ALLAH'S ANGELS

They are created of light. They are so beautiful that men cannot bear to gaze at them. That is why Allah ﷻ has hidden them from us. Angels neither eat nor drink, they are neither male nor female, and they do not sleep. From the moment they are created, they are in Allah's service. They dwell in the Seven Heavens, the Divine Throne, and the Divine Court. They never disobey Allah, Exalted be He. They are free from sin. Among the angels are some who have been charged with the maintenance of creation. The prophets among the angels are Jibrā'īl, Mikā'īl, Isrāfil and 'Azrā'īl ﷺ. The following tasks have been entrusted to them:

JIBRĀ'ĪL — to deliver Allah's revelations to the prophets;
 MĪKĀ'ĪL — to bring rain and to care for all that grows;
 ISRĀFĪL — to blow the Trumpet at the End of Time;
 'AZRĀ'ĪL — to take the souls and bring death.

There are also two angels for every person, who record his deeds. One of them stands to the right, the other to the left of a person. These two angels are charged with writing down everything he says and does.

In the Declaration of Faith, belief in the angels comes right after belief in Allah ﷻ so that man might believe that he is always accompanied by two angels, and that the awareness of all his actions being thus scrutinized might induce him to act with sincerity and righteousness.

3 — ALLAH'S HOLY SCRIPTURES

Allah ﷻ has sent one hundred and four Holy Scriptures to mankind, in order to show us the right way. One hundred of these consist of a single page, while four of them are large books. Today, the only original scripture in existence is the Holy Qur'ān. The Psalms, revealed to Dāwūd, *'alayhi s-salām*, the Torah, revealed to Mūsā, *'alayhi s-salām*, and the Bible, revealed to 'Īsā, *'alayhi s-salām*, have been modified and are no longer accessible in their original form. For example, even though only one holy book, the *Injīl* (gospel), was sent down to 'Īsā, *'alayhi s-salām*, Christianity today has four gospels. Therefore it is not permissible to rely on any of these.

The Holy Qur'ān is the Word of Allah

The Holy Qur'ān is the enlightened scripture, which was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad, *'alayhi s-salām*, over a period of twenty-three years through the mediation of the Angel Jibrā'il, *'alayhi s-salām*, and it is the assurance of happiness for all humankind. It is the venerable Word of Allah Himself. No one has ever changed one letter of these words, nor will anyone ever be able to do so. The Holy Qur'ān will remain as it was revealed by Allah ﷻ until the Day of Judgment. It is the book that will release the entire world from darkness and guide humanity towards the light. The whole world has no choice but to accept its eternal validity.

4 – THE PROPHETS

The first man and first prophet is Adam, on whom be peace. The greatest, best, and last of all prophets is our Holy Prophet and intercessor Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, peace and blessings be upon him. Allah ﷻ has sent one hundred twenty-four thousand prophets to mankind. The names of twenty-eight prophets have been explicitly stated in the Holy Qurʾān, whereas the other prophets' names have been hidden in the depths of the Holy Book. The twenty-eight prophets the Holy Qurʾān mentions by name are:

1) Ādam, 2) Idrīs, 3) Nūḥ, 4) Hūd, 5) Ṣāliḥ, 6) Ibrāhīm, 7) Ismāʿīl, 8) Lūṭ, 9) Ishāq, 10) Yaʿqūb, 11) Yūsuf, 12) Ayyūb, 13) Dhu l-Kifl, 14) Shuʿayb, 15) Mūsā, 16) Hārūn, 17) Dāwūd, 18) Luqmān, 19) Sulaymān, 20) Ilyās, 21) Alyasaʿ, 22) Yūnus, 23) Dhu l-Qarnayn, 24) ʿUzayr, 25) Zakariyyā, 26) Yaḥyā, 27) ʿĪsā, 28) Muḥammad. – Peace be upon them all.

We accept and confirm all these prophets without making any distinction between them.

The Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, is the greatest and the last of all prophets. He was not sent to only one people or for one period of time. His prophethood encompasses all humanity and all periods of time. The Qurʾān he received from Allah ﷻ addresses all of mankind. He was sent to do away with the disagreements between men and to teach all mankind good character by joining all men as brothers in the service of the one God, Allah.