WHY

ISLAM

AKHTARUDDIN AHMAD
why Islam?

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CONTENTS

1. What or Why Religion?
2. Creator God?
3. How / Why man on earth?
4. Does man need guidance?
5. What / Why Worship?
6. What is Islam?
7. Five pillars of Islam.
8. Other rights / Duties?
9. Is Islam complete / final religion?
10. Creed / Colour / Class or Brotherhood?
11. Force / Fundamentalism or peace?
12. Sex, family, society / human rights?
13. Science - Knowledge
14. Why Islam?
What or Why Religion?

Commonly the people of all ages and places understood or practiced religion in different ways and manners. Some identify the religion with their founders like Zoroast, Buddha, and Christ. Some identify with the place of their origin like Judae or Hind. These religions are generally covered by the dictionary meaning of following different ways or forms of service to the supernatural or their gods.

Islam is the only religion that does not go by the name of its founder like Muhammad, Ibrahim or Adam nor does it identify with the place or origin like Arabia or else. The religion, AlDeen, according to Islam is the whole code of human life based on its relationship with its Creator God and the creation of all things and beings. It is both objective and subjective mission of life which includes physical, moral and spiritual rights and duties in every walk of human life. It guides and motivates man to do the good and avoid the evil in your actions and sayings be it personal, family or social life. It agrees with man's nature and environment.

So man needs this code of life not to be confined in temple, church, synagogue or mosque but to be spread out in all your activities to establish a life of peace and tranquility.

Creator God?

We human beings inhabit the earth which is only one of the nine planets in our solar system. There are many other solar systems in the whole universe. How many systems, planets and moons there are in the universe man does not know yet. He does not even know for certain when the time began or when will it end.

Can there be an end without a beginning or can there be
an effect without a cause? Can the Universe with men, animals, birds, minerals, vegetables, planets, stars, galaxies and other objects be running according to a faultless discipline and order without a controller or Master? Can there be an army without a commander-in-chief or a school without a headmaster?

The ultimate source or power for all these things cannot be just a vacuum or accident. Even one accident needs a cause or source. This cause of all causes, the source of all sources, the power of all powers is nothing but the Sovereign. People call him by many names: God, spirit, nature, Jehovah, Bhagavan or Allah but He is one and ultimate Allah only.

The name Allah is very accurate as it has no sex, plural or finity. Allah in Arabic and Aramaic stands for that one sovereign. He is one who created and caused everything that you see or feel around you be it animate or inanimate, dead or alive, big or small. Nothing is eternal or permanent excepting Him. We cannot see Him as He is infinite who has created also time and space but not controlled by it. He created everything around us for our use, not misuse, as He is loving and benevolent.

Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, declares the praises and Glory of Allah: For He is the Exalted In Might, the Wise. To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. It is He who gives Life and Death; and He has power over all things.

He is the First and the Last, The evident and the hidden: And He has full knowledge of all things.

He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days then He established Himself on the one. He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it. what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you where so ever ye may be. And Allah sees well all that ye do. 57:1-4.

: Say: He is Allah, The One; Allah the eternal, Absolute He;
How / Why man on earth?

Neither you nor me came into being on its own self. So the vast universe around us and the multiple creatures therein are, none but the creation of a Prime Creator, with a set discipline and nature for each. The ultimate one is Allah, the One Supreme cause. **Man like any other things and beings in this universe is His creation.** Man came from Him directly and not by sheer chance or evolution in this planet earth. He created man from one soul, male and female.

*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you unto nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (Not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most Righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well equainted (with all things). 49:13*

This coming to life is not without a purpose. It is not a creation in vain. He endowed Adam, the first man, with intelligence and volition. He was given a choice between right and wrong with accountability. The right path was to submit to His will and guidance and wrong path was disobedience. Allah also created Satan and raised to the level of angels but was cursed for disobedience. He also created angels who are in his submission all the time. The purpose of human life is not served by disobedience as was done once by Adam but in submission and asking for forgiveness. Adam prayed forgiveness but Satan only asked for respite. **So the sovereign object of this life is nothing but to worship the one Creator, physically and spiritually.** The Quran says:

*I have only created Jinns and men, that they may worship Me. 51:56*
O ye people! Worship your Guardian Lord, Who created you and those who came before you that ye may become righteous. 2:21

Why man needs guidance?

Man is not only mortal but also erring. His knowledge and power of judgment is also limited by time, space and experience. He does not control his own birth or death. He cannot see even what is behind the wall or his future. He is born with intelligence of free will so he is accountable for his own ways of life. The lucky ones benefit from knowledge and guidance but others grope in darkness and misery.

Guidance may come from man or supernatural. Guidance from man of limited power or resources is bound to be limited and imperfect per se. Only the guidance from the sovereign eternal power is reliable and truthful. The sovereign Lord guides man through His prophets and books for the benefit of the mankind. Man has to learn about these prophets and their massage to know about the Truth and the ways of practicing that Truth. This is eternal divine guidance as against the guidance of mortal and erring man.

Prophets are mortal men but inspired by divine revelations sent to them by the immortal and unerring Divine Himself in different ages, places and people for the love of His creation. Books and prophets surely came for the people of Asia, Africa, Europe, America or others but they are mostly lost or corrupted in history of millions of years.

This guidance that came through the first man prophet Adam, continued through Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them) and many more unknown prophets. But the message of guidance was complete and given final shape for the entire mankind in Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last prophet, in the last final and unchanged, and
unchangeable book, the Holy Quran.

: We have, without doubt, Sent down the massage; And We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption). 15:9.

What / Why worship?

Generally worship means to follow the rituals of prayer, fasting, sacrifice etc. But true worship lies in practicing the good and avoiding the evil according to the divine guidance. This is not confined in ritual prayers in house, temple, church, synagogue or mosque.

Religions tend to guide you to the path of good. But due to the loss of the original divine guidance sent down to each people by Allah through His messengers stays replaced by human guidance on own manipulations, modifications and mutilations of their divine books. Atheists even claim to be the gods of their own destiny and free thinkers do not bother about a higher mission of mortal existence. Epicureans believe in animal habits of eat, drink and be merry.

But man, the mortal and rational being in confusion and frustration, cannot escape his higher destiny of reaching the Truth. The Truth comes not from mortal man limited in time, space and intelligence but from the eternal sovereign through His books sent through His human messengers for the human good.

Only the guidance of the Quran which remains unchanged and unchangeable complete in pristine purity as revealed to the last prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asks you to establish worship like other revealed books. And worship in this Book of Islam is taught for your own good and to be established in your prayer, education, work, leisure and every step of your life be you young or old, man or woman.

: It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; But it is righteousness to believe in Allah and Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book. and the
Messengers: To spend of your substance, out of love for Him. For your kin, For orphans. For the needy. For the wayfarer, For those who ask, And for the ransom of slaves; To be steadfast in prayer and give Zakat. To fulfil the contracts Which ye may have made; And to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing. 2:177.

What Is Islam?
Islam is commonly known as the religion practiced by the Muslims. In fact Islam is the natural code of life as revealed by Allah to His messengers from the days of Adam down to the last of them Muhammad (peace be upon them). He was born in Makkah in 571G and died in Madinah in 634G. **Islam is the first and the last religion of Allah on earth.**

Islam is an Arabic word which means submission, obedience and peace. It is complete submission to the will of Allah, the One and Only Sovereign. Peace comes through the obedience to the code and conduct devised for human good in His revealed Book, the Quran. Islam is the religion of peace and tranquillity in this temporary world for a permanent world hereafter. Muhammad (peace be upon him), His servant and prophet, was sent down to the earth only for 63 years with His messages completed in the Holy Quran and practiced in his life time known as Traditions (Sunnah). Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a prophet, a guide, a leader, a general, an administrator and a man of the family.

**Not by birth alone but by following His code of life one becomes a Muslim.** Islam teaches man the one brotherhood of mankind irrespective of colour, cast, territory or wealth. When you see the Muslims in prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and doing good deeds you know that Islam is a blessing for the lost, misguided and have nots by one's own choice, for his own salvation.
Five Pillars of Islam

There are five obligatory pillars of Islam to become or remain a Muslim.

These are:
1. Faith (Iman)
2. Prayer (Salah)
3. Poor Dues (Zakah)
4. Fasting (Soum)
5. Pilgrimage (Hajj)

There has to be a conscious awareness of these fundamentals of Islam followed up by their practice. Allah makes it easy for you to practice these once you firmly believe and understand them.

1. Faith

Faith begins with Shahadah i.e. to bear witness that:
There is none to worship other than Allah who has no partners and Muhammad (pbuh) is His servant and prophet.

"Ashhadu Allah La Elaaha Illallahu, Wa Ashhadu anna Muhammadan Abduhu wa Rasuuluhu"

(a) It means to accept not by pronouncements alone but to firmly believe in heart in one Allah who is supreme, eternal, infinite, mighty, merciful, creator and provider. So He is the only one not dual, triple or multiple, who deserves to be obeyed and worshipped. This is Tawheed.

He loves His creation so wants man to love Him most.

(b) It also means that Muhammad (pbuh) is the seal and last of the prophets of many of those that came before him. The Quran mentions only 25 of these prophets as examples but there are many unnamed ones. In all of them you must believes as Allah's prophets who came
only to guide man to the Truth. *

Besides these two basic ingredients of faith there are four more which we also must believe. They are:

(c) The Books (Kutub) revealed to the Prophets, the last being the Quran.

(d) Angels (Malaikah)- Ever obedient beings.

(e) Day of Judgement (Akhirah). The world hereafter.

(f) The divine Decree (Qadar)- Power of action from Allah.

Long before the revelation of the Quran To Muhammad (peace be upon him) the other books came to different peoples at different times but have been lost or corrupted by human beings. So the last book came to the last prophet as complete, incorruptible, preserved and final one. Allah revealed to man through His prophets to guide man to the right path of Truth. In the Quran a special reference is made to the scriptures of Abraham, Books of Moses (Taorah), David (Zabur), Jesus (Injeel) and Mohammad (peace be upon them) (Quran).

The Quran is the only book compiled during the lifetime of the prophet, preserved in writing and memorised by thousands all over the world and promised by Allah to keep it pure in full and final form and contents. It was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him) over 23 years from the age of 40 years till his death in 114 chapters (surahs) and over 6000 verses (ayahs). It is the primary source of Islamic law-- Shariah.

It is revealed and preserved in Arabic language but addressed to the mankind of all ages and not to the Arab Muslims alone. It is not the book written or dictated by the illiterate prophet but is the actual revealed words of Allah verbatim. It is the answer and guidance on all subjects, be it marital, spiritual, physical, moral, scientific, historical, political, economic, social and other aspects of the whole life. When you read or listen to it you can get the feeling of divine wisdom in its
language, symphony and meaning.

Once you have the faith well grounded in all these elements you have accepted Islam. And by pronouncing the faith (shahadah) you submit to Islam and become a new born Muslim opening the gates of mercy and forgiveness for you.

2. Prayer (Salah)

The second pillar of Islam is to establish prayer. **Prayer is offered five times a day preferably in congregation** before sunrise, noon, afternoon, evening and night. With clean body and clean clothes and on a clean place you submit to your Lord with devotion in remembrance, thanks and asking forgiveness. Quranic verses are recited with some physical movements to purify your body and mind to get in direct touch with your Creator, Evolver and Sustainer throughout the day.

Prayers make you righteous and keeps you away from all evil things in and around you. Besides five times of obligatory prayers spread out the day and night, there are annual Eid prayers, weekly Friday prayers and daily supplementary prayers for all men and women of mature age. In all these prayers there are obligatory and optional parts of prayer the details of which you can easily learn and practice with some effort. **This is your all time readiness of willing submission to Allah's orders for your own good without any intercession.** You don't need a priest or monk to perform your prayers as you are in direct communion with Allah. Any practicing Muslim can lead a congregational prayer.

According to traditions one who says prayers in mosques in congregation he gets 25 times rewards, for saying in prophet's mosque in Madinah the rewards are one thousand times and in the grand mosque in Makkah 100 thousand times. The third Holy Mosque of Islam is in Jerusalem -- Baitul Maqdis.
3. Poor Dues (Zakah)

The third obligatory pillar of action is zakah touching economic well being and spiritual elevation of man. Any Muslim who has some net savings belongs not only to him and his family but also to the needy, poor and six other social welfare beneficiaries as prescribed in the Quran. This is paid at 2 1/2% of net savings over a limit for cash, jewellery, stock, etc. throughout the year with account ending in the month of Ramadhan.

Zakah purifies your wealth and helps establish economic equilibrium and social security. Muslim states are obliged to collect and distribute Zakah but elsewhere it is the obligation of the Muslims to collect and distribute to its beneficiaries throughout the year.

Besides this obligatory payment Allah encourages you to payout to the needy and poor out of His bounties bestowed on you. Such charities earn the reward of 700 times or more according to the Quran.

4. Fasting (Saum)

From dawn to sunset during the whole 9th month of Ramadhan in lunar year is obligatory on all male and female Muslims of mature age. You refrain from eating, drinking and sex, avoid all bad talks and deeds and devote yourself to prayers, recitation of the Quran and good deeds in this month. This is the month of special blessings and forgiveness from Allah. In this month the holy Quran was descended on earth for gradual revelation through prophet Muahmmad (peace be upon him). The other books and scriptures were revealed to Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus (peace be upon them) also in this Holy month according to the Traditions.

In the Quran certain exceptions are made for fasting by the sick, traveller and women in her period, pregnancy or breast feeding. Fasting is good for your health, a
training for your spiritual elevation, fostering a bond of brotherhood for all men and Muslims and a total physical and mental submission to the will of Allah for His pleasure and protection.

At the end of the fasting month, Muslims celebrate Eid with prayers and festivities all over the world.

5. Pilgrimage (Hajj)

The last but not the least is the pilgrimage, Hajj to the Holy city of Makkah where lies the house of Allah, the Kaabah, from the days of Adam. **It is obligatory for only those Muslims who can afford it financially and physically once in his or her lifetime to perform Hajj travelling far and wide.**

It is a cosmopolitan assembly of men and women of all races and regions in Makkah, Muna and Arafat on a few days of the month of Zilhejjah, the last month of lunar year. It is the union of the world devotees testifying that Allah is One Sovereign without any partner. Millions assemble in white clothes saying prayers and performing certain rites and offering sacrifices in His name for physical and spiritual salvation between the 8th and 13th days of the month.

During this period and any other time in the year, Muslims can travel to the city of Madinah to perform prayers, and to pay respect to prophet Muahmmad (pbuh) at the Grand Mosque where his grave lies. Yet, this is not a requirement of Hajj itself, but it is extra ritual.

**On this solemn occasion of prayer and sacrifice, the Muslims from all over the world meet each other and also transact trade and exchange goodwill.**

Other rights / Duties

Once you become a Muslim with conscious belief and
performing other 4 obligatory acts of worship more beneficial rights and obligations become encumbent on you to make you a righteous person. Some of them are obligatory and some are optional earning benefits for you and the society around you. Some more obligatory ones are:

1. To acquire knowledge be you a man or woman - Ilm.
2. Struggle to establish rule of Allah within and outside with your life and property- Jihad.
3. Invite people to the good and desist the evil- Dawa.
4. To try establish justice and peace in society and be just and peaceful by yourself- Adil / Aman.
5. To avoid prohibited things, and actions and use permitted things which are good for you as prescribed in the Quran- Halal and Haram.

The optional ones are multiple as part of your good life and living. Instance of such dos and dont's are presented in the Quran and Traditions of the prophet (peace be upon him).

As you do your duties as man or woman your rights to life, liberty, property and dignity are assured to you in this world with a greater reward for all your good deeds in the life hereafter.

**Is Islam final and complete religion?**

You have seen that religion is a complete code of life and not confined to certain rites or rituals performed in places of worship alone leaving the major part of your life to evil, selfish or sensual pleasure. Islam unlike other religions thus define a code of life in its entirety with revealed guidance. Prophets came to each community since the beginning of man with the same message of worship to one God without partners.

And that worship includes not only your prayers but all activities as a good person, as a loving member of the
family and the dutiful citizen of the society at large. It is establishing a brotherhood of mankind for peace and progress in material and spiritual aspect of the whole personality of man on earth. Everything that is good is propagated and practised and everything that is bad is prohibited and punished as set in God's guidance. The logical guidance of the prophets and books came to finality in Muahmmad (peace be upon him) and the Quran 1400 years ago. **This is Islam the final and complete religion for the entire mankind to follow.**

The Quran not only was guidance for humanity 1400 years ago when half of the world came under its influence. But even thereafter and till today and till the last day of this world it will remain so in any field of its domain and guidance. Modern science and theology are only discovering the latent, its profundity and the truth everyday.

> *This day have I Perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion* 5:3

It is this religion which emanated from desert sands of Arabia and now inhabits in all countries of the world because it is final and comprehensive for entire mankind. The number of Muslims exceed 1000 millions today.

**Force, Fundamentalism or Peace.**

The Quran says:

*There is no compulsion in religion.* 2:256

Force may be used as a means of defence or for establishing the rule of divine laws only.

**Fundamentalism, when means extremism, terrorism or force of oppression, has no place in Islam as it is the religion of peace and submission to the laws of Allah.**

Islam practices and preaches middle course with
toleration and not excess, bigotry or hatred.

So it is a bad name given to Muslims out of ignorance, prejudice or bad motive. Black people once were named or treated as dogs, and brown or yellow as backward whereas the world owes so much to them and their prophets. Only Islam merges in its fold colour, class, language and territorial discrimination. **Greatness of Islam lies not in number, race or force but in the excellence of its creed and brotherhood of mankind.**

Strict following of the path of truth as required by Allah and His messengers is neither fanaticism, terrorism or fundamentalism. To fight falsehood (batil) of exploitation, atheism and oppression as against the truth (haqq) is a duty of every man and Muslim. **Islam establishes peace with truth and justice as against hatred, injustice and discrimination.**

**Colour, Class or Brotherhood**

Islam is not a sect or dogma of some mystic person, world power or big resources. It is not a creed of Muhammad (peace be upon him) nor an empire of the Muslims. It does not fight for a class against another, a race against another or economic market against another or black against white.

Islam is the moral kingdom of Allah for one brotherhood of mankind to establish peace and tranquillity in this world and hereafter. **It is the religion of worship of one Creator practiced in good deeds and piety.** There is no superiority of one man, colour or class over another except through righteousness. Allah is one, origin and destination of man is one, human family is one and our mission is to worship Allah alone with love and piety.

**Sex, Family, Society and Human rights**

Modern man is sometimes enchanted by the license
enjoyed by free sex relationship and unmarried mothers, free mixing and free divorce and superficial equality of man and woman. But we have to call the spade as spade and day as day. Sexes are not only physically different but functionally too. Islam only accepts this natural difference as a gift of happiness and not an artificial display of equality or freedom.

Each father or mother, brother or sister has a defined role to play in their personal, family and social relationship; not duplicating or conflicting but as complimentary to maintain peace and harmony in this world. **Islam gave women the fundamental rights to life, liberty, property and dignity to play their honourable role.**

Man cannot carry a baby or breast feed nor a woman can give birth by herself. Pure bond of marriage and procreation need not be polluted for temporary pleasure. More than one wife in case of equal treatment, working by woman in her specialised fields, and separation of man and woman for natural and moral purposes are some of such differences as called for by Allah for human benefit only. By challenging this nature of creation we have created lot of diseases and disorders in the society and Islam not only disallows them but asks mankind to remain within the bounds laid by Allah in His divine guidance. Marriage, not adultery, separate men and women, no licence of free mixing and sex abuse and maintaining privacy, modesty and chastity, not lewdness or perversion are some such morals of Allah for the good of mankind.

**Next to the individual, family is considered to be the most important organ of human society in Islam.** That is why the family ties of love, understanding and care are emphasised most to keep the society well knit and happy.

Islam not only believes but guarantees human rights of person, property and conscience from the early days of human civilisation. The most eminent factor of
such rights is that it has a part of duty also. Man receives these rights in his personal, family and socio-political relationship and also owes the duty to them and to Allah.

Acceptance of divine guidance is meant for the benefit of man. So by willful surrender to this guidance one becomes a Muslim, an ideal man, to escew rice and crime to establish peace and harmony, to avoid conflict, oppression, corruption, exploitation and discrimination for himself and the society.

**Brotherhood of mankind ensures right to life and liberty both in personal and collective fields** as specified in the Quran and the Traditions. Defence of this right and duty to life, property, freedom, justice and equality led the desert Arabs of dark ages to become respected Muslims for ages to come. Islam thus spread to East, West, North and South with respect and recognition of Human Rights and even now it is gaining ground for this.

**Science / Knowledge**

The arabic world "Ulum" covers both knowledge and science. And only in Islam these two are considered as very important and complimentary instead of conflicting. This is why from the early days of Islam the very rich contribution of Muslim scientists and scholars like Al-Gabir, Al-Razi, Al-Beruni, Omer Khayam, Ibne Sina, Iben Rushd etc. remains unparalleled in the field of Biology, Mathematics and Humanities. There are numerous quranic verses on all these branches of science including travel in space and environment.

The Quran itself is recognised as the best source of scientific information even by the non-Muslims like Maurice Buchaille, George Sarton, Bernard Shaw and others and the names of Muslim scientists in each of the subjects are almost synonymous.
Actually the very first revelation of Allah to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was about knowledge and its teaching by the Pen:

Proclaim! (or Read), in the name of thy Lord and cherisher. Who created: Created man, out of leech-like clot: Proclaim! And thy Lord is most Bountiful, · He who taught (the use of) the Pen. 96:1-4.

Thus Islam is not only the natural religion of the whole human existence but a scientific one too. So emphasis is laid on acquiring knowledge of all kinds but to be used for human benefit and not for destruction, perversion or disorder. One tradition of Prophet (pbup) says: Acquiring knowledge is obligatory on all Muslim man and woman.

Why Islam?

To conclude our discussion you can find for youself both physically and mentally that Islam is the religion of mankind from the beginning of life and history to the end. It is not just a dogma or ritual but is the guiding code of life for every field of your activity. And life is not an end in itself rather a means to a superior goal.

The goal is to reach the truth and salvation through serious worship. The worship is not just prayer but to acknowledge the truth of sovereign unity and lead the whole life according to His guidance. The Sovereign Allah does not need your worship but you need it for your own good in this temporary world and mortal life for a blissful eternal life of the hereafter. By pronouncing the words with deep faith: There is none to worship except Allah; you open for yourself the doors of happiness and salvation. That is why the non-Muslims of all ages and places accepted Islam voluntarily for their own salvation. The recent ones you know are only a few of those millions. Some are: Muhammed Asaad of Austria, Siddiq and Silma Buckley of Australia, Marmaduke Pickthall and Yousuf Islam of Britain, Bilal Phillips of Canada and

In this world of chaos, conflict and frustration the way to order and happiness is to establish religion of Islam in your personal, family and collective life. Once you are a Muslim you become an equal member of human brotherhood, breaking the barriers of colour, class territory or language. By practicing the code of life prescribed in the Holy Quran and Traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) you become a true Muslim with supreme protection and forgiveness of your Lord, Allah, and you establish thereby peace within and out by your righteous deeds. There can't be a better choice for a man or woman, young or old, black or white, brown or yellow than to enter the fold of Islam and be certain of salvation.

Say: “O people of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship None but Allah; That we associate No partners with Him; That we erect not, From among ourselves, Lords and patrons Other than Allah.” If then they turn back, Say ye: “Bear witness That we (at least) Are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)” 3:64

Your God is one Allah: Submit then your wills to Him (in Islam) and give thou the Good news to those who humble themselves. 22:34

Published By Islamic Writers Guild, London.
Printed By Brothers Printing Press.
Phone: 2 6550922, Jeddah - Saudi Arabia.
### The Messengers of Allah

(Peace be upon them all)

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<th>English</th>
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Author, P.O.Box 2876, Jeddah 21461, KSA.
Phone / Fax - 2 - 6603995.
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