

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيَمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

--- Al-Quran (6.161-163)

Allah informs in Quran how people altered the true religion, sometimes by ascribing partners to Allah swt, and sometimes by failing to comply with Allah's commandments. They changed the true religion and split themselves into groups.

In the last few verses of Surah Al-An'aam, Allah swt presents the fundamental principles of the true religion. Allah has asked Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to convey the message to the people.

Allah says to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): "Say, Verily my Lord has guided me to a straight path." This implies that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has not created a religion himself as other people by following their own ideas. Instead, the way to Islam to which he (pbuh) has been directed is by his Lord. Allah is the 'Rabb' Who takes care of all His creation through every stage of life, under all conditions. It is His mercy to mankind that He guides them to the straight path. However, people need to seek Allah's guidance. Those who look for Allah's guidance, and strive to seek it through their actions (physical effort) and spiritual means (by making *du'aa* to Allah swt and by invoking Him), will have guidance from their Lord!

The straight path is deen al-islam. In other words, this religion stands on God-sent basics. It is established on strong and secure foundation. This has been the religion of all the prophets (may peace be upon them all). Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) was the torch-bearer of Islam. He always abstained from bowing down before anyone other than Allah and he stayed away from all kinds of Shirk which led people to associate partners with Allah's pristine Divinity.

Among the groups of the time, the Jews, the Christians and the disbelievers of Arabia, all believed Prophet Ibrahim to be the true messenger of Allah and always tried to prove that they were staunch followers of the religion of Ibrahim (alaihis-salaam) and were part of his community. Allah, in the last verses of Surah Al-An'aam removes people's misgiving by saying that prophet Ibrahim (alaihis-salaam) was pure, upright in his faith in Allah; He did not worship sun, moon, stars or idols; He did not like to associate partners with Allah - He only believed in One Allah! Whereas, people were all soaked in *Shirk* - This was in sharp contrast to prophet Ibrahim's faith in Allah. Hence, in order to claim that people were adhering to prophet Ibrahim's religion and that they belonged to his community, they needed to shun *Shirk* and *Kufr*. They needed to follow prophet Ibrahim's true religion, just the way Allah guided prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to follow it (to the straight path).

The beauty of emaan (outcome of the perfect faith and perfect sincerity) is that it grows once it has sound foundation of Oneness of Allah. For your faith to be complete, you must live your faith (Time for action, children! ☺). And to live your faith, you need to know the articles of faith.

Articles of Faith

1. **Salati** (My Salah)
Salah is the moving spirit of all good deeds and is the pillar of religion.
2. **Nusuki** (as in rites of Hajj) or My Acts of Worship (My offerings in 'Ibaadah)
3. **Mahyaya** (my life)

Whatever deeds are tied with my life are for Allah alone, such as Salah, Sawm, rights and duties involved in dealing with people, etc.

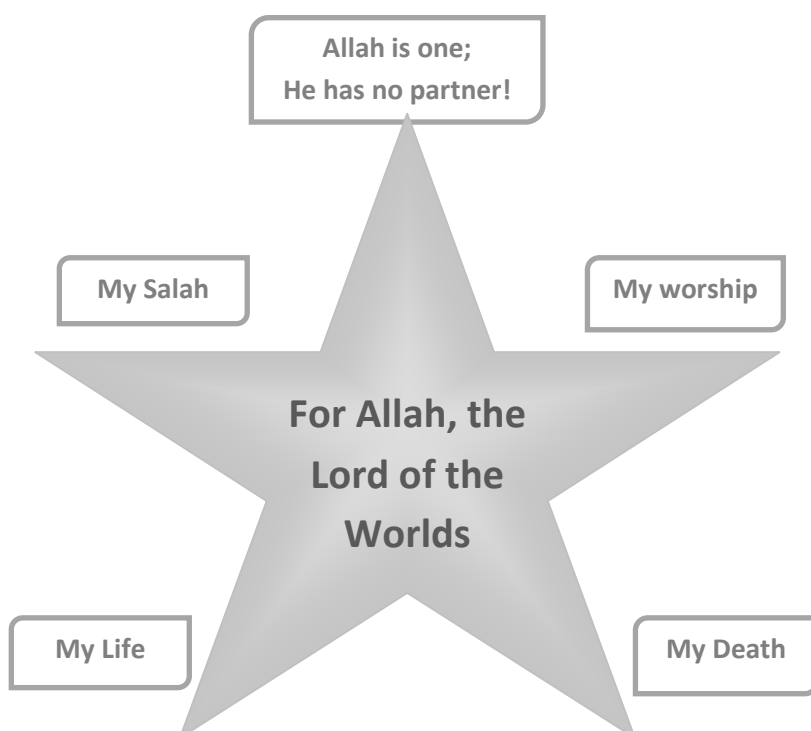
4. **Mamaati** (my death)

It becomes easy to act this way if we know: 'When my very life and death are in Allah's control, then, what I do in my physical and spiritual life (actions/'*amal* and invoking Allah/'*ibaadah*), has to be for Allah alone too.'

Allah is the Lord of all the worlds and He has no associate or partner in His Divinity.

After saying this, Allah instructs Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to say: "And this I have been commanded and I am the first one to submit." This means that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the first Muslim in this *Ummah*. The first Muslim in every *Ummah* is the prophet or messenger himself to whom the *Shari'ah* (religious code of guidance) is revealed through *Wahy* (revelation).

Sahaabi, Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari (may Allah be pleased with him) used to say: "*I honestly wish that every Muslim would keep reciting this verse time and again, almost making it the constant formula of his or her life.*" [Tafseer Ad-Durr Al-Manthur]



This means one must think, care and remember, in all states of life and in everything one does, that: 'my *Rabb*, and the *Rabb* of the whole wide world is One *Rabb*. I am His servant. He is *Al-Baseer*; I am in His sight – all the time. Let not my heart, my mind, my eyes, my ears, my tongue, and hands, and feet, nor my pen, or step, move in any direction against Allah's pleasure.' This is a simple meditation of the highest order, something which, if one trains himself to keep present in one's heart and mind, then, there is no doubt that he or she will become a human being in the real sense. Things like sin and disobedience and crimes will be scared to come anywhere close to a person that strong!¹

This is important part of *emaan* – All acts of worship must be free from any *Shirk* or worldly interest. This is what Allah commanded to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), His *Ummah* and, in fact, the whole mankind.

¹ Source: *MaarifulQuran* (Maulana Mufti Mohammad Shafi Uthmani Rahimahullah)