

Lesson 14: The Branches of Religion (I)

Furu' al-Deen

Furu' al-Deen means the branches of religion. These branches are very many: but usually six to ten are taught to the children. They are explained below.

I. Salat (Prayer)

The daily five prayers and other eleven prayers which are detailed elsewhere are all obligatory and should be performed on their occasions in fulfillment of prescribed conditions.

The prayers are obligatory on adults (*baligh*). For purpose of fulfilling religious obligations a boy is deemed to be adult on completion of his fifteenth year, and a girl on completion of her ninth year.

The Qur'an has repeatedly enjoined upon every Muslim the offering of prayers (*Iqam as-Salat*):

"Verily! I am Allah; there is no god but I, therefore submit to Me and maintain the prayer for My remembrance". (20:14)

"Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and maintain the prayer! Indeed the prayer prevents indecencies and wrongs... and Allah knows what you do". (29:45)

"O my son! Maintain the prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and be patient in whatever befalls thee: for this is firmness in the conduct of affairs". (31:17)

II. Sawm (Fasting)

Fasting is obligatory for every Muslim adult, male or female, for the entire lunar month of Ramadhan every year. The fast lasts from the true dawn till the commencement of night. During the fast one has to abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and some other actions.

In this regard the Qur'an says:

“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you, as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may exercise self-restraint”. (2: 183)

“So every one of you who witnesses this month should fast in it”. (2: 185)

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