

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Essentials of Islam

*Ahmad ibn Zayn al-
Habashi*

Islamic Village

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Introduction

All praise is to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. May Allah send prayers and salutations upon His servant, sent as a mercy to the worlds, Muhammad, the seal of the Prophets and likewise upon his family, companions and those who follow him in excellence until the Day of Recompense.

This text, *al-Risâlatul Jâmi'ah*, translated as *The Essentials of Islam*, has been used for three centuries as a basic introduction to the rules and principles of Islam. It has served as an elementary book all over the world, especially in East Africa, the Yemen and the Far East. It presents in a few pages the basic facts of belief, worship and morals which are obligatory knowledge for every Muslim man and woman.

The Author

Ahmad ibn Zayn ibn 'Alawi ibn Ahmad al-Habashi was born in the town of Ghurfa in the Hadramaut region of South Arabia at the beginning of the year 1069H (1659ce).

As a young student, he was accustomed to travelling great distances on foot to the towns of Shibâm, Taris, Sayûn and Tarîm in search of knowledge. He studied all the Islamic subjects, including jurisprudence, theology, the Prophetic biography, grammar, rhetoric and literature under al-Sayyid Abdullah bin Ahmad Balfaqih.

For forty years, he kept the company of Imam Abdullah bin 'Alawi al-Haddâd, the celebrated '*Pillar of Guidance*', who taught him more than seventy books relating to a wide variety of Islamic disciplines including *tassawuf*, spirituality. He was described by his teacher as 'the learned ascetic who was sent to me'.

Ahmad bin Zayn composed a number of books including speeches, advice, letters and commentaries on his teacher's poetry. He established many mosques in various parts of Hadramaut.

He died on Friday 19th Sha'bân 1145H, 27th October 1732ce.

The Translation and Acknowledgements

The original translation of this text was made with the permission of the late Ahmad Mashûr bin Tâha al-Haddâd and edited by Shaykh Abdul Hakim Murad. Amendments and corrections were made on the advice of a number of teachers notably Mustafa Azzam in Jordan and Abdul Wahid Shakir in Sweden. The translator is indebted to them all, especially his own teachers Shaykhs Muhamamd Abu Bakr and Muhammad Mlamali, to his family and friends in Glasgow who helped with the editing of this edition.

All good is from Allah granted through the blessed author and all faults and defects are the responsibility of the translator. And by Allah is *tawfiq*, enabling success.