

Answers to "Born-Again" Preachers'

Bismillah Rahman Raheem

<http://www.todayislam.com/index.html>

Islam: "Way of life in submission to God in Peace"

Allah said in the Holy Quran: "It is not fitting for a believer that when Allah and His Messenger decide a matter to have any other opinion. They say nothing more than, 'We hear and we obey.'" [Holy Quran 33:36]

All answers are provided by direction of Yusuf Estes, national chaplain and spokesman for ISLAM TODAY PROJECT, unless otherwise stipulated.

The following is a reproduction of an actual dialog through email with a "born-again" Christian and the National Muslim chaplain, Yusuf Estes, who was a former Christian businessman and minister before entering into Islam in July of 1991.

The simple beauty of understanding where people are coming from in their thinking and having proper knowledge of Islam and the methodology of explaining Islam (menhaj ad dawah), is demonstrated here to show how close some of the statements against Islam are to actually in fact verifying the proof that Islam is the only correct religion with Allah. These questions are from a man that Allah has been testing with belief in Christianity & Islam. The answers are provided from Today Islam's Sheik Yusuf Estes. As we will see, many times the very objections and complaints that others have about Islam, can actually be used to support the correct teachings of Islam. The problem comes from the fact that all too often we do not know enough about what the people are meaning and not enough about our own religion. Notice the art of agreeing at the correct points and then bringing about a clear understanding in the other points without alienating the other person.

Thank you for writing to us with your ideas, comments and questions.

In a message dated 3/14/2002 9:22:40 PM Eastern Standard Time, a Christian writes:

Humans do wrong things, evil things regardless of what religion they belong to.

Answer:

Yes. There is no doubt whatsoever, that what you are saying is the belief of the Muslims. This is correct and we agree on that. Islam does teach that all people do commit sins. However, some realize the severity of it and then they do repent to the One True God of the Universe, the Lord Almighty, who has no partners. And He then extends to them His Grace and forgives them from His Mercy.

So it is not wise to first of all judge and secondly to judge a religion based on people.

Answer:

Yes, again. Muslims are not the final judge. It is only Allah who is the Judge. And Islam is based on the teachings of the Quran and the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. What some people chose to do, and then call it "Islam" does not affect the truth of what Islam really is. So the answer here to you is; "No. It is not correct to judge a system of belief by some people who claim to be in that religion."

After all, Hitler, Al Capone (1930s gangster) and Timothy McVeigh (the man who confessed to bombing the Federal building in Oklahoma City) all claimed to be Christians the same as you. But I feel certain that you would not want anyone judging you and your beliefs based on those characters, right?

I think you must be from a Catholic system and that's why Islam convinced you more but Jesus is the truth, the way and the life.

Answer:

No. Sorry, but actually, you are wrong on this point. My family for generations have all been in nondenominational Christianity,

simply called "Christian Church" until the 1950s when there was a split and one branch became known as the "Disciples of Christ."

You might be interested to know that all of the Protestant churches today have their origins in the Catholic Church. However, the Catholic Church actually was in business prior to the birth of Jesus, peace be upon him. It was the old Roman Church originating out of the concepts of Alexander the Great. It was totally pagan in its origins. And the first time it came in contact with the early Church Fathers, at the Nicaea Council, (325 AD) it swallowed up their books, and teachers and totally revamped the whole religion. That was the time when the day for celebrating Jesus birthday was CHANGED to December the 25. Also, the addition of the rites of the Feast of Ishtar (now called Easter) were established. The day of worship was CHANGED from Saturday (Sabbath) to Sunday to accommodate the Emperor's worship of his religion. He was a cult worshipper in "Sol Invictus" (Invincible Sun). He was a sun worshipper and believed that he was the son of the sun, literally.

Another interesting note is that fact that the books that were offer at the Nicaea Council by the original Christians totaled in number exceeding 200. Yet they only selected a few. The Catholics held onto a total of 73 books from the Old and New Testament. Later (early 1500s) the Protestant Reformation reduced the number to only 66. Keeping 39 books of the Old Jewish Testament and 27 books for what they called the New Testament. The Coptic claim they have the more accurate version being the one based on Saint Mark's Testament.

It is also interesting to note that Catholic was not the only church out there at that time. The Copts (Egypt), and the Greek Orthodox and the Eastern Orthodox were already in place. Christianity had already reached the British Isles before the Nicaea Council so they already had the foundation for the Anglican Church. Christianity had made some influence into the superstitions of the Germanic parts of Europe and the affects of their nature worship began to affect the beliefs of the Christians in those areas. This is evidenced by the results arising out of the Catholic movement in that area in later dates.

As for me personally, I did visit a number of churches in the Protestant denominations. However, I have never attended a

single mass or any Catholic form of worship. I have been to a Catholic wedding but I felt that it was too much for me in many ways.

Philosophies, ideas, magic, evil , etc., can not bring dead back to life, only GOD can.

Answer:

Yes. That is also the belief of a Muslim. Humans also do not bring the dead back to life except by the permission of Allah, as in the case of Jesus, peace be upon him, when Allah let him bring Lazarus back from the dead.

God brought me back to life, believe it or not.

Answer:

We as Muslims believe that when a person dies they do not recycle or come back to this life. However, we also know that Allah sent Jesus to perform miracles to show people that he was a prophet of Allah. One of the miracles was to bring back a man to life. But the man still ended up dying later anyway. Allah has told us in the Quran that "every soul shall taste death." This includes even Jesus, as I am sure that you are well aware.

We are not dead yet, but when we are, it will only be Allah who will bring us back and about that we may be sure.

Catholics have a system from which a lot of things are not even mentioned in the bible so if that's what you compared Islam with then I can understand.

Answer:

(note: the word "Bible" should be capitalized out of respect).
Yes. You are correct again. And that is why the Protestants (from the word "protest") broke off from the Catholic church in 1520 under Martin Luther. Many different forms of Christianity grew out of this break up and each of them claimed they were correct.

Question here is: "How do you know which one is correct?"

But if you are saying you knew the JESUS mentioned in the bible and then also you accepted Islam . . .?

Answer:

The more that I searched for the "Jesus" of the Bible in sincerity and honesty, the more that Allah led me to know the true "Jesus" and what his message really was. He was telling the people not to change the Word of God and not to worship anyone alongside of God. He was calling himself by the title of the prophets mentioned in the Old Testament; "Son of Man." This is clear when you compare the statements in Ezekiel.

Jesus was doing his miracles by the permission of Allah, the Almighty. He did nothing on his own, but rather by the One who sent him in the first place. This is the understanding in Islam and the teachings in what remains of the Holy Bible.

hmmmm...are you sure about the information you have about Jesus?

Answer:

Good question. I have information from a number of sources. The most authentic of all is the Holy Quran as it still exists today. We Muslims must agree with the fact that Jesus is the "miracle birth" as that is in the Quran. His mother was a virgin. She was the best of women ever created. He did many miracles by Allah's permission. He did not know what was in Allah, but Allah Knows what is in him, peace be upon him. Jesus is still alive and he is coming back in the Last Days. He will kill the Anti-Christ. The true believers will follow him. There will be victory over the evil one.

In Islam we have even learned what he looks like, where he will appear, what he will do first and the order of the things that will happen in the Last Days.

What do you know about the person you are calling "Jesus?" Let us begin with his name. Was it "Jesus." - No.

The word "Jesus" is the Latinized name given to him after the Council of Nicaea. His name comes from the Old Semitic name "Eeshua" or "Eesa." This is based on the pronunciation of the letter known as "seen" or in Hebrew "sheen." The Jewish pronounce the word for "peace" as "Shalom;" whereas, the Arabic pronunciation would be "Salam." So we see how the name of "Eesa" can also be "Eeshua." But why should we say "Jesus" when he never called himself by that name?

Next, we know that he was not born on December 25. (documented in the Nicaea Council records). According to the Bible he was born during the census taking for the tax polls at the time of Herod the Great. This was done in the Fall of the year, not the winter. According to the Quran, he was born at the time dates would be ripe and ready to fall from the trees. That again, is in the fall, not in the winter.

Also, he was born before the beginning of the calendar date 1 AD (According to the Bible, he was born in the reign of Herod the Great which would probably have been around 6 BC)

Outside of the Bible, the only other chronicler of events of that time was Josephus. He lived in the area and even traveled about the same time and to the same places as did Saul (later became

Paul). Josephus does not mention Jesus or the son of God or anything like this occurring. William Whitset (200 + years ago) did translate the works of Josephus and added, yes ADDED an entire chapter to his works, fabricating a meeting between Josephus and Jesus and even having Josephus believing in the son of God story. However, Josephus was a Jew and he worked for the Romans as an advisor and journalist.

I am sure you read the bible and found contradictions in it, because you were looking for them?

Answer:

I have read the Bible many times since I was old enough to read. I have many different versions in different languages of the Holy Bible. I also have the books of commentary and explanation of the Bible, including the Strong's Concordance of the Bible.

My father, an ordained minister, was the first one to point out mistakes in the King James Version of the Bible. The Revised Standard Version very clearly points out a number of "Grave mistakes and errors" in the King James Version of the Bible. In his book, "History of the Translations of the Bible into the English Language," the Biblical scholar F. F. Bruce, clearly states that the first revision of the King James Version came in the very next year after its first translation due to very serious errors in it. The book, "Who Wrote the Bible" very clearly states a number of human mistakes and errors. Other books in my library today include apocrypha and "lost" books of the Bible and all of them clearly show that there is room for admission of errors, mistakes, contradictions and interpolations in the Bible.

There is not a single serious Bible scholar that would tell you that he has an original of the Bible. Nor is there one who really believes that the Bible was revealed in English. This is nonsense and does not even merit a discussion. The version that is offered in book stores today in Greek, is actually a backward translation from the English to the Greek and not the other way around as many people mistakenly believe. The same is true for most languages including Arabic. I own a number of different versions and

translations of the Bible into many languages. The Arabic and the Spanish will translate right into the English version easily, mistakes and all. Why? Because that is where they came from to start with. There was no English language, no Spanish language, no Portuguese language, no French language at the time of Jesus (or Muhammad, peace be upon him, for that matter). So where did these translations come from? Straight from the English. If you go back to older manuscripts you will find many problems with what is being represented in these "modern" versions of the Bible.

Perhaps you have read my book on this subject. If not, feel free to visit our website and print it out. It is free. And you can make copies if you like.

<http://www.TodayIslam.com/bible.htm>

But we did not try to prove the Bible was wrong. We only tried to find out where the Bible was right. That is why I studied what remains of it in the ancient languages.

Did you read Quran with that intension?

Answer:

As a matter of fact, I did try to disprove the Quran as being from Allah. After all, I used to be a real enemy to Islam and Muslims due to the heavy influence of other evangelists like Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, Jimmy Swaggart, Benny Hind, Oral and Richard Roberts. Personal friends of mine were also haters of Islam and had told me the Quran was the book of the devil. So, I prayed before even touching it.

I did try my best to find mistakes and errors so that I could show the Muslim that I was trying to convert to Christianity the "error of his ways."

I read the Quran from cover to cover in English. I was sure that I would find mistakes and errors just as we know there are many in the Bible.

I could not find one.

Then I began to learn the Arabic language and I have read the Quran in Arabic.

This is without doubt, not something a human can make up. This is at last the true "Speech of Almighty God."

Over nine million (9,000,000) people living on earth today have memorized the ENTIRE QURAN. Think about that for just a minute.

Can anyone say that about the Bible?

No.

We know that the original Bible came from Allah and that it was memorized in the early days of Moses and others. But over the centuries different people came along and changed it for whatever reasons. Once the Word of Allah is changed, it is no longer the Word of Allah and as such it not longer has that special quality and protection of Allah.

I challenge anyone to bring a single person who even find an original Bible and then memorize an equal amount of the text to the Quran and then be able to recite it in the beautiful manner recited by those who recite Quran everyday.

Has anyone ever memorized the whole Bible in any language?

Has anyone memorized the New Testament?

Can 8 and 9 year old children stand up and recite the Bible in Hebrew or Aramaic or Greek for hours at a time without looking at the words?

No.

No one has memorized the Bible, not even the Pope; not even Pat Robertson; not Jimmy Swaggart; not Benny Hind; not Oral Roberts; not even the Pope.

Muslims all over the world that I have met, all recite exactly the same thing regardless of their native languages, culture, background or traditions.

All of them recite it in Arabic, letter for letter and word for word.

Please feel free to visit our website and read my articles about the Quran and the miracles that it contains in regard to modern discoveries in science, medicine and even space travel.

<http://www.TodayIslam.com/quran.htm>

Let me explain what happened to us in brief:

My father was an ordained minister, I preached Christianity to anyone who would listen in those days. My wife was a strong believer and we did go to church regularly in those days.

We met a Muslim from Egypt and we tried to convert him to Christianity to "save" him. He came to live in our big home out in the country near Dallas, Texas. We also met a Catholic priest who was recovering from a heart attack. He too came to live with us in our home.

My father, my wife, myself, the Catholic priest and the Muslim from Egypt used to all sit around the table at night and discuss the Bible, religion, beliefs, Jesus, peace be upon him. We felt sure that we must be in the right religion and that we just had different understandings of things.

But it was the Muslim who made the amazing statement that I shall never forget. He said, **"If what you have is better than what I have, then I am willing to join you."**

I thought, "Wow! This will be easy. Get the baptismal ready! We're going to give this boy a bath tonight!"

But then he said something else that I shall remember for a long time, "But you will need to have proof."

I said, "Proof?" "We don't need proof. We only have faith."

He said, "Muslims have faith, and proof."

That is when we began to learn the miracles in the Quran and how that it came 1,400 years ago, yet it told of things that would happen in the future and they did happen. Additionally, it talks about science and medicine, biology, formation of the universe, the earth being round and in an orbit, and even about going into outer space. All of this came over 1,400 years ago to a man who could neither read nor write. It was all recited in classical Arabic in beautiful prose that none have been able to imitate until this very day.

And even I could learn this language and understand and recite it. What an amazing thing.

But it was the Catholic priest who embraced Islam first. Then my wife made it known to me that she too, was ready to live the life of a Muslim woman and wanted to wear the covering and be treated as the women of Islam are treated, with respect and honor.

I accepted Islam the very next morning.

My father came along a little later on at his own speed.

All of us were changed and we have seen many more good, righteous and honest Christians, even priests, bishops and ministers coming to Islam since that time.

You can get the whole story by going to:

<http://www.todayislam.com/yusuf/index.html>

Anyways, God's will be done, in Jesus name I pray, Amen Amen Amen!

Answer:

Yes!

May God's Will be done.

That is so beautiful coming from you at the end of your letter trying to talk to me about Christianity. Because you see, you just said that you want to be a "Muslim."

That's right.

"Islam" means, "God's Will be done on earth, especially in us as human beings." The actual meaning of the word "Islam" comes from the root word, "salama." And there are five clear meanings into the English language from the word "Islam." They are:

- 1. Surrender to God's Will**
- 2. Submission to God's Will**
- 3. Obedience to God's Will**
- 4. Sincerity to God's Will**
- 5. Being in Peace with God's Will**

And in Arabic instead of using the suffix of "er" at the end of a verb to show the one who is performing the action, you place the letter "meem" in front of the verb and then pronounce it "mu."

Therefore, one who "Islam's" would be a "mu" "Islam" -- Muslim.

So, may Allah accept your admission of Islam being the correct way of life and may He make all of us in "His Will," ameen.

By the way, we pray in the Name of the Almighty, Himself. We say; "Bismillah." This means in the Name of Almighty Allah." We don't pray in the name of Moses or Muhammad, or Abraham or Jesus. None of these mighty and wonderful prophets of Almighty God Above ever prayed in their own names or someone else's name when praying to the One Above. Jesus did not pray in his own name. So, we pray to the same God Above that they prayed to, in the same way that they prayed to Him. We even follow the

physical style they they followed, that was standing, bowing, putting our face on the ground to Him in our prayers.

You know what comes to my mind on this issue? This may be one of your problems. You need to eliminate the middle man and pray direct so that you can be assured that the One Above is accepting it. It could be that when you pray in the name of something else or someone else, that the Almighty God Above may not accept the prayer and as a result allow the person to be misguided. After all if a person insists on making up something in worship that the Lord has not ordained nor approved of, it might well be rejected.

Practicing what you like is good for you but to say that somebody else's religion is false will always bring you questions like these.

Answer:

You are right once again. And in Islam we are taught that there is no compulsion in religion. Everyone is free to accept or reject Islam. But if a person submits to Allah in Islam, it is expected that they will do it wholeheartedly and not just play around. We pray five times a day, fast the month of Ramadhan, pay charity to the poor (Muslims or non-Muslims alike), and we make the pilgrimage to Makkah to commemorate the religious rites of Abraham.

Actually in your last statement above it was you who said that you wanted "God's Will to be done." So, now you wouldn't want to change your mind and ask for some other will to be done instead of Allah's would you? Of course not.

God Almighty has His Will and you and I want that to be done on earth in the place of the things that oppose His Will, right? So, then it is not any person's will that we are seeking here. We in fact, are negating the will of the individual in favor of the Will of the Almighty on His Terms, right? Keep in mind that it is not I who am originating this in our dialogue here. I am not who determines what God's Will is, He Alone does that. So this necessarily cancels all of the opposing will of those created humans here on earth. And you just got through bearing witness to the truth of it in your last statement.

There is only One God. He is the only One to tell us what He will accept in worship. That is why we say: "God's Will" not my will, be done on earth as it is in Heaven. You just said it yourself. So there can only be one correct religion -- the one that God has ordered and it is in fact "Islam" as you just witnessed to yourself.

You claim that what you believe it right and the rest is false and that's what made me email you, sorry if I offended you.

Answer:

You have not offended me at all. I'm happy to hear you are ready to surrender to the Will of God. This is so beautiful. I only regret that I have been traveling for so long and am only just now having the time to read your letter. May Allah always keep you in His Will, ameen.

God forgive me for my immaturity. A creation of GOD!!

Answer:

Again, we agree with you 100%. We are all only creations of the One Creator. He created the heavens and the earth and the angels and Adam. From Adam He created Eve and from them two He created all the humans of the earth. So, if you accept that, then you and I were already brothers in humanity. But since your confession of faith in the Surrender, Submission, Obedience, Sincerity and Peace with the Almighty, and you believe that only Allah Almighty has the right to determine what is religion in the first place; and you accept that only His Will should be done on earth, we may be closer to each other in faith than many others who claim to be Christian or Jew.

You see, after all, the one who truly believes in the original Books of Allah and His prophets, peace be upon them all, will likely see the same truth in Islam. When they wake up to the beauty and

truth of Islam they will recognize it to be the same religion that Jesus preached and they will be most excited to enter into it just as I did, and my father did, and my wife did and our friend the Catholic priest did, eleven years ago.

My final advise to you as a brother human is to go off in private somewhere that nobody even knows what you are doing and then pray as you have never prayed before, directly to the One Almighty God of the universe. Ask Him for His Guidance for you in this life.

Thank you so much for your good questions and may Allah guide us to all Truth and forgive me for my shortcomings and for anything that I may have said wrong, as well. Ameen.

All answers are provided by direction of Yusuf Estes, national chaplain and spokesman for ISLAM TODAY PROJECT, unless otherwise stipulated. Pray for him and all those who are assisting him to do so only for the sake of Allah.

Email Us At: sheikyusuf@aol.com

Your questions are important. If you feel that we have not provided sufficient answers to your questions, then please visit the following sites for additional help on many subjects on Islam:

<http://www.islamonline.net/>

We do refer to both of these and "ISLAMONLINE" does occasionally use our services to assist in English answers.

We strive to please Allah and ask him to forgive our mistakes and not to let us be a source of misguidance for ourselves or others, ameen. Any good in this is from Allah and the mistakes are from ourselves.

www.islamic-invitation.com

Please visit ISLAM TODAY

<http://www.todayislam.com/index.html>