

Pamphlets

Pamphlets aimed mainly
for non-Muslims –
“Learn the basics”

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Worship

The 5 Pillars of
The foundation of
a Muslim's life

1. The Declaration of Faith

The declaration of faith is bearing witness there is no God worthy of worship but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger. It must be uttered verbally and based on a sincere and firm belief in the heart, followed by action. With this declaration, a person rejects all false deities, asserts that Allah is the only One worthy of worship, and accepts His messenger, hence becoming a Muslim.

2. The 5 Daily Prayers

The 5 daily prayers form the second pillar of Islam. Prayer establishes a personal and spiritual connection between the Muslim and their Creator, and is a constant and practical reminder of a person's duty to surrender to God. They are prescribed once each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. Each prayer takes a few minutes to perform, consisting of recitation of the Qur'an, supplications, praising Allah, and various body postures. In preparation for prayer, Muslims wash certain parts of their body, such as the face and hands, to ensure spiritual and physical purity.

3. The Annual Charity

The annual charity is an obligation on every Muslim who meets certain criteria (e.g. has wealth above a certain threshold). A mere 2.5% of one's annual wealth is donated to those who are eligible, such as the poor, the needy or travellers. It purifies one's wealth and carries many benefits for both the giver and the receiver. One benefit is that it reduces the gap between the rich and the poor, ensuring that everyone has their basic needs met.

4. The Annual Fasting

Every year during the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food, drink and sexual relations. It serves as a spiritual purification, nurtures patience and self-restraint, and provides many health benefits. Fasting is obligatory upon every physically and mentally capable mature Muslim. Children, the sick, the mentally unfit, the elderly, menstruating women and travellers are exempt. Pregnant or breastfeeding women are also exempt, if fasting would bring harm to themselves or the child.

Ramadan
is the 9th month
of the Islamic
Calendar

5. The Pilgrimage

All pilgrims
wear simple and similar
clothing, which strip away
distinctions of class and
culture, so that all stand
equal before God.

Pilgrimage to the holy cities in Saudi Arabia must be performed once in a person's life, if they are physically and financially able. It occurs annually in the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, unifying people of every colour, race, status and age, as they join in worship of the One True God.

This great journey consists of many components, including sacrifices, travelling and praying at various sites. Such an experience is life altering and humbles a person, making them more patient and thankful, as they realise all of life's bounties they have taken for granted.

Worship

The Concept of
Any action that Allah
is pleased with

Islam's concept of worship is not restricted to the above mentioned rituals. Worship is an all-inclusive term for those actions that are pleasing to Allah. Everyday activities can become acts of worship by purifying one's intention and ensuring one's actions are in line with God's guidelines. Examples include smiling, being good to one's neighbours, supporting one's family, honesty, and even removing rubbish from the road. It should be noted that Allah is not in need of anyone's worship, rather, we are in need of Him and our worship is for our benefit.

Conclusion

The above mentioned aspects of faith and acts of worship make up the essence of Islam. When practised, Islam fulfils the spiritual, physical, psychological and social needs of all people, and is a practical and rational way of life. Furthermore, it is the only way of life which is accepted by God Almighty, and the only path that leads to Paradise.

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about Islam

a brief introduction

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about Islam

Muslims constitute approximately one fifth of the world's population, making Islam one of the largest religions. Belief in and worship of the One True God (Allah) is the purpose of life and cornerstone of Islam.

The Arabic word "Islam" literally means "submission" to the one true God (Allah) alone. Success is only attained in this life and the hereafter through Islam – the only religion accepted by God. Unlike some other religions, it is not named after a person or tribe. One who voluntarily surrenders their will to God is called a Muslim, who can be from any racial or ethnic background.

In a short pamphlet as this, space does not permit to cover all the intricacies of Islam: Islam as a complete way of life; the brotherhood and sisterhood that spans all races and nations; the importance of family and society; the universality of the message and its applicability to all nations and time. As such, this pamphlet focuses on the six main aspects of belief and five main acts of worship in Islam.

The 6 Aspects (Articles) of Belief

Allah is the personal name of the One True God.

1. Belief in Allah

"Allah" is the unique Arabic name of The One True God, Who is the only One worthy of worship, with no rivals, equals or partners. Allah is not like His creation, as nothing shares His divine essence and attributes, including: The Creator, The Provider, The Most Merciful, The All-Powerful, The Most Just, The All-Wise and The All-Knowing.

Allah is without partner in His authority and actions. The world was created by Allah's command alone, Who solely runs and controls it. Such a complex and balanced creation is not possible by any other than a superior being. It is therefore illogical to believe that the universe created itself, or was the result of random or coincidental events.

2. Belief in The Angels

Allah created angels from light, who never disobey His command. Details about some of the angels have been revealed, such as Gabriel, who delivers God's message to the Prophets, and the Angel of Death, who takes the souls of people.

3. Belief in The Revealed Books

Allah revealed divine books to His Messengers as a guidance and mercy to mankind. These include the Torah and Gospel as originally revealed to Moses and Jesus respectively, and the Qur'an as revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon them all). Apart from the Qur'an, these revelations do not exist in their original form, as they have been distorted, changed or lost.

Another miracle of the Qur'an is that it is free from any contradictions or errors.

The Qur'an is the literal word of God and the final revelation to all of mankind. Together with the authentic sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), it is the primary source of Islamic knowledge.

4. Belief in The Prophets

Muslims believe that thousands of Prophets were sent by Allah, at least one to every nation, to convey God's revelation. These Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, Joseph, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them all). Their mission was to return people to the worship of the One True God, to serve as practical examples of how to obey God, and to guide people to the path of salvation. As humans, it is forbidden to worship them or to use them as an intercessor to God. Any type of prayer or worship towards the Prophets, or to God through them, is strictly forbidden and considered a violation of God's right to be worshipped alone.

Prophets do not share in any part of God's divinity.

- Prophet Jesus

Muslims believe that Jesus is an honourable prophet of God, born miraculously through his virgin mother Mary. He performed many miracles with the permission of God, such as healing the sick, curing the blind and speaking as a newborn defending his mother from accusations. Although Muslims respect and love Jesus, they do not worship him. He is not considered the son of God, nor part of a trinity, nor does he share in any of God's perfect attributes.

God says: "It is not befitting for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When he decrees an affair, He only says, 'Be' and it is." Qur'an 19:35

- Prophet Muhammad

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the final Prophet sent to all of mankind. He came with the Qur'an to demonstrate how its teachings should be applied, and is a perfect example of an honest, just, merciful, compassionate, truthful and brave human being. As with Jesus, Muslim do not worship Muhammad.

Prophet Muhammad said:

"Do not exceed bounds in praising me as the Christians praised Jesus, the Son of Mary. I am only God's servant; so call me the Servant of God and His Messenger."

5. Belief in The Day of Judgement

The Day of Judgment is an event when each person will stand before The Creator and be questioned about their good and bad deeds. Deeds will be shown in vivid detail, regardless of their size, and everyone will be judged accordingly.

On this momentous Day, Allah, the All-Just, will settle all matters fairly and no person will be wronged. Everyone's rights will be returned. All will be treated justly, by either the reward of Paradise, or the punishment of the Hellfire.

Without a Day of Judgement, life would be grossly unfair, as not everyone receives justice in this world.

6. Belief in Divine Destiny

Allah knows everything from the past, the present, and everything that will happen in the future.

Every person has been given the free will to choose between right and wrong, and will be held to account accordingly. However, this excludes people unable to exercise their free will, such as the severely intellectually disabled.

Free will does not contradict the fact that events can only occur with God's knowledge and permission. Nor does it mean that

God's power over everything prevents or restricts people's free will. God's knowledge of people's decisions does not mean that they are being forced to make such decisions, and God is not necessarily pleased with everything that He allows to occur.

Allah has power over all things - nothing occurs without His knowledge and permission.

gentleness... continued

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised her, ***“Be gentle and calm, O Aisha, as Allah likes gentleness in all affairs.”***

He also said, ***“Show gentleness! For if gentleness is found in something, it beautifies it, and when it is taken out from anything, it makes it deficient.”***

humbleness

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to prevent people from standing up for him out of respect. He used to sit wherever there was a place available in an assembly and never sought a prominent or elevated place. He never wore anything to distinguish himself from his companions or appear in higher rank than them. He used to mix with the poor and the needy; he used to sit with the elderly and support the widows. People who did not know him could not tell him apart from the rest of the crowd.

Addressing his companions, he said, ***“Allah has revealed to me, that you must be humble. No one should boast over one another, and no one should oppress another.”***

Such was his humbleness that he was fearful of being worshipped, a privilege only befitting God:

“Do not exceed bounds in praising me as the Christians do in praising Jesus, Son of Mary. I am only the Lord’s servant; then call me the Servant of Allah and His Messenger.”

the ideal husband

The Prophet’s beloved wife, Aisha, said of her noble husband, ***“He always helped with the housework and would at times mend his clothes, repair his shoes and sweep the floor. He would milk, protect and feed his animals and do household chores.”***

Not only was he a devoted husband, he also encouraged his companions to follow his example, ***“The most perfect of the believers in faith are the best of them in morals. And the best among them are those who are best to their wives.”***

“Indeed you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character.”
Qur’an 68:4

“And the servants of The Most Gracious (God) are those who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say: ‘Peace.’”
Qur’an 25:63

“And live with them (your spouses) in kindness.”
Qur’an 4:19

the ideal example

What has preceded is only a glimpse of how Muhammad (peace be upon him) lived his life. The examples of kindness and mercy mentioned may come as a surprise to some people given the portrayal of Islam in the media and its constant misrepresentation.

It is important when trying to understand Islam that one goes directly to its sources: The Qur’an, and the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and that anyone does not judge Islam based on the errant actions of a few Muslims.

comments from non-muslims

Mahatma K Gandhi, a major political and spiritual leader of the Indian independence movement, remarked: ***“It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle.”***

George Bernard Shaw, the British playwright, declared: ***“The world is in dire need of a man with the mind of Muhammad; religious people in the Middle Ages, due to their ignorance and prejudice, had pictured him in a very dark way as they used to consider him the enemy of Christianity. But after looking into the story of this man I found it to be an amazing and a miraculous one, and I came to the conclusion that he was never an enemy of Christianity, and must be called instead the saviour of humanity. In my opinion, if he was to be given control over the world today, he would solve our problems and secure the peace and happiness which the world is longing for.”***

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Prophet Muhammad

(peace be upon him)

You should know this man!

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who is (peace be upon him) Muhammad?

Muslims believe that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the final Prophet in a long chain of Prophets sent to call the people to the obedience and worship of God alone ('Allah' in Arabic). Some of these Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon them all).

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example to follow for whoever hopes in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much."
Qur'an 33:21

Just as Moses (peace be upon him) was sent with the Torah (the original uncorrupted revelation sent to Moses) and Jesus (peace be upon him) with the Gospel (the original, uncorrupted revelation - not the present-day versions), Muslims believe that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent with the Qur'an to demonstrate how its teachings should be applied.

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) wife, Aisha, was once asked to describe the Prophet (peace be upon him), and she replied that he was *'the Qur'an walking'*, meaning he meticulously implemented the noble teachings of the Qur'an into his daily life. We will demonstrate how he translated these noble teachings into noble actions.

mission of mercy

As well as calling people to pray, fast and give charity, the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught that one's faith in God should also affect one's treatment of others. He said, *"The best of you are they who have the best character."*

Many sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasise the relationship between belief and action, for example, *"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should not hurt his neighbour, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should serve his guest generously, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should speak what is good or keep quiet."*

"And We (God) have not sent you (Muhammad) except as a mercy for mankind."
Qur'an 21:107

The final Messenger (peace be upon him) taught humans to show mercy and to respect each other, *"He who does not show mercy to others, will not be shown mercy."*

In another narration, some people requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) to invoke God to punish the disbelievers but he replied, *"I have not been sent as one to curse but as a mercy."*

forgiveness

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the most forgiving of all people and the kindest. If someone abused him, he would forgive him, and the harsher a person was, the more patient he would become. He was extremely lenient and forgiving, especially when he had the upper hand and the power to retaliate.

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was all for forgiveness and no amount of crime or aggression against him was too great to be forgiven by him. He was the best example of forgiveness and kindness, as mentioned in the following verse of the Qur'an, *"Keep to forgiveness (O Muhammad), and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant."* Qur'an 7:199

"Let them forgive and overlook: do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."
Qur'an 24:22

equality

In the following sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), he taught that all humans are equal in the sight of God,

"Indeed the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you."
Qur'an 49:13

"All humanity is from Adam and Adam is from clay. There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for a black over a white; except through piety."

"God does not judge you according to your appearance and your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and looks into your deeds."

It is related that once a companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) called another companion in an offensive way, *"Son of a black woman!"* The Prophet (peace be upon him) became

angry and replied, *"Do you condemn him because of the blackness of his mother? You still have within you traces of ignorance from the pre-Islamic period."*

tolerance

"Good deeds and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is best, then he with whom you had enmity shall become as a loyal friend."
Qur'an 41:34

"You should not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you should deal with them with forgiveness and kindness." This is how the final Messenger of God (peace be upon him) reacted to personal attacks and abuse.

Islamic sources include a number of instances where the Prophet (peace be upon him) had the opportunity to take revenge upon those who wronged him, but refrained from doing so.

He taught man to exercise patience in the face of adversity: *"The strong is not the one who overcomes people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger."*

Practising patience and tolerance does not mean that a Muslim should be a passivist and not defend himself in case of attack. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that, *"Do not wish to meet the enemy, but when you meet (face) the enemy, be patient (i.e. stand firm when facing the enemy)."*

gentleness

A companion who served Muhammad (peace be upon him) for ten years said that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was always gentle in his dealings with him. *"When I did something, he never questioned my manner of doing it; and when I did not do something, he never questioned my failure to do it. He was the friendliest of all men."*

On one occasion, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) reacted angrily after being insulted by a person.

"By the grace of Allah, you are gentle towards the people; if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you."
Qur'an 3:159

society's view of hijab

BY NAHEED MUSTAFA

MY BODY IS MY OWN BUSINESS

I get the whole range of strange looks, stares, and covert glances. You see, I wear the hijab, a scarf that covers my head, neck, and throat. I do this because I am a Muslim woman who believes her body is her own private affair.

Young Muslim women are reclaiming the hijab, reinterpreting it in light of its original purpose to give back to women ultimate control of their own bodies.

The Qur'an teaches us that individuals should not be judged according to gender, beauty, wealth or privilege.

"Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." Qur'an 49:13

Nonetheless, people have a difficult time relating to me. After all, I'm young, Canadian born and raised and university educated, so why would I do this to myself, they ask?

Strangers speak to me in loud, slow English and often appear to be playing charades. They politely inquire how I like living in Canada and whether or not the cold bothers me. If I'm in the right mood, it can be very amusing.

But, why would I, a woman with all the advantages of a North American upbringing, suddenly, at 21, want to cover myself so that with the hijab and the other clothes I choose to wear, only my face and hands show?

Because it gives me freedom!

Women are taught from early childhood that their worth is proportional to their attractiveness. We feel compelled to pursue abstract notions of beauty, half realising that such a pursuit is futile.

v1.03

When women reject this form of oppression, they face ridicule and contempt. Whether it's women who refuse to wear makeup, shave their legs, or expose their bodies, society-both men and women-have trouble dealing with them.

In the Western world, the hijab has come to symbolise either forced silence, or radical, unconscionable militancy. Actually, it's neither. It is simply a woman's assertion that judgment of her physical person is to play no role whatsoever in social interaction.

Wearing the hijab has given me freedom from constant attention to my physical self.

Because my appearance is not subjected to public scrutiny, my beauty, or perhaps lack of it, has been removed from the realm of what can legitimately be discussed.

No one knows whether my hair looks as if I just stepped out of a salon, whether or not I can pinch an inch, or even if I have unsightly stretch marks. And because no one knows, no one cares.

Feeling that one has to meet the impossible male standards of beauty is tiring and often humiliating. I should know, I spent my entire teenage years trying to do it. I was a borderline bulimic and spent a lot of money I didn't have on potions and lotions in hopes of becoming the next Miss World.

The definition of beauty is ever-changing; waifish is good, waifish is bad, athletic is good - sorry, athletic is bad. Women are not going to achieve equality by putting their bodies on display, as some people would like to have you believe. That would only make us party to our own objectification. True equality will be had only when women don't need to display themselves to get attention and won't need to defend their decision to keep their bodies to themselves.

my hijab

reflections by muslim women

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my journey to freedom

BY SUMAYYAH JOAN

It will be three years since I stood before two Muslim sisters and declared openly my belief in God (Allah) and His Messenger, peace be upon him... Stepping out of the darkness of disbelief into the light of Islam, it's funny that I found such freedom in the very thing that was keeping me from Islam in the first place - the hijab.

Even though I get the wide gamut of strange stares, points and comments, this covering makes me feel honoured, safe and cherished.

The word hijab comes from the Arabic word "hajaba" meaning to hide from view or to conceal. Women who don't reveal their beauty in this society and give in to this oppressive system, are looked upon as invisible, without sexuality and backward. Because I'm often mistaken for a nun, or terrorist, I feel the reactions to the hijab for many women, is the truest test of being a Muslim.

But in reality, the hijab is easy!

In instructing us to wear the hijab, Allah has given Muslim women what they can bear of injunctions and obligations. For Allah says:

"And we do not lay on any soul a burden except to the extent of its ability, and with Us (God) is a Book which speaks the truth..." Qur'an 23:62

Unfortunately, Satan and his cohorts are calling the Muslim woman to enslave her to the creation, and to forget about her servitude to her Creator. Chastity, modesty and piety are deceptively marked as shackles on personal freedom.

Allah warns the believers that they should not let Satan deceive them, as he deceived their parents, Adam and Eve. Under the guises of fashion, culture, and modernism, Satan has succeeded and is succeeding to lead the Muslim woman –and all women– into immodesty.

Since the heyday of the feminist movement, there has been an increasing amount of scrutiny placed on the dress and status of Muslim women.

According to these "liberated" women, the hijab not only covers the head, but also covers the mind, will and intellect. They say that our dress code is outdated and oppressive, and it stops us from being productive human beings. They speak out of ignorance when they say that our hijab does not belong in these modern times, when due to the constant decrease in moral values in the world today, circumstances make the hijab even more necessary.

From the dawn of civilisation, flowing dresses and headscarves have always been associated with "Godliness" or "God consciousness". Even the Christian pictorial representation of the earlier prophets and their womenfolk bear familiar likeness to the dress ordained for Muslim men and women (e.g. Mary). This tradition of modesty is reflected in the Qur'an (7:26), wherein Allah says:

"O Children of Adam! We (God) have bestowed clothing upon you to cover yourselves and as an adornment (for beauty); and the clothing of righteousness – that is best."

Allah enjoined hijab on the Muslim woman to protect her from harm.

He knows His creation, and knows that when women make a dazzling display of themselves, with immodest clothes, perfumed bodies and made-up faces, it serves to increase the sexual deviance of the overall society. Many of those who are misguided however, would have us think that the hijab is a portable prison that restricts our minds, lives and hearts. It is none of these things, and in order not to fall victim to their plots, we must begin to understand what the hijab truly is - a source of liberation, dignity and protection.

What the Hijab is...

- ✔ An act of Obedience to The Creator
- ✔ An act of Honour & Dignity
- ✔ An act of Belief & Faith
- ✔ An act of Modesty
- ✔ An act of Purity
- ✔ An act of Bashfulness
- ✔ An act of Righteousness
- ✔ A Shield

What the Hijab is NOT...

- ✘ It is *NOT* something new. Muslim women follow the example of righteous women in the past such as Mary, the mother of Jesus.
- ✘ It is *NOT* a symbol of oppression.
- ✘ It is *NOT* required in non-public places where there are only females and close male relatives.
- ✘ It is *NOT* a means to restrict a woman's freedom to express her views and opinion, or to have an education and a career.
- ✘ It is *NOT* an act of defiance, confrontation or protest to non-Muslims.
- ✘ It is *NOT* a portable prison.

"Indeed, the men who submit and the women who submit, the believing men and the believing women, the obedient men and the obedient women, the truthful men and the truthful women, the patient men and the patient women, the humble men and the humble women, the charitable men and the charitable women, the fasting men and the fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who remember - Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward." Qur'an 33:35

“Muslims worship a new God called Allah”

MISCONCEPTION #3

Some non-Muslims incorrectly believe that Muslims worship a different God than Jews and Christians. This might be due to the fact that Muslims sometimes refer to God as “Allah”. In actuality, Muslims worship the God of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. The word “Allah” is simply the Arabic word for Almighty God - an Arabic word of rich meaning, denoting the One and Only God. Allah is also the same word that Arabic speaking Christians and Jews use to refer to God. If you pick up an Arabic translation of the Christian Bible, you will see the word “Allah” where “God” is used in English.

However, although Muslims, Jews and Christians believe in the same God (the Creator), their concepts regarding Him differ significantly. For example, Muslims reject the idea of God having any partners or being part of a ‘trinity’, and ascribe perfection only to The Almighty.

“Islam permits terrorism”

MISCONCEPTION #4

This is perhaps the biggest misconception about Islam, especially given the constant stereotyping by the media. The media portrays as a terrorist any Muslim who fights regardless of whether they fight justly or unjustly, or whether they are oppressing others or being oppressed. So the question that comes to mind is: Does Islam encourage terrorism? **Certainly not!** Islam totally forbids and condemns the misguided acts of vigilantes that target innocent civilians.

Of course, Islam does not remain silent in the face of oppression, injustice and humiliation. Any religion or civilisation that does, would never survive --- but it certainly does not condone attacks against defenseless men, women and children.

“Fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. Allah does not love transgressors.”

Qur’an 2:190

Allah says:

Even during times of war, Islam lays down strict rules. For example, a Muslim is not allowed to harm or kill those in a peace treaty with Muslims, non-combatants, women, minors, servants, the blind, monks, the elderly, those physically incapable of fighting, and the mentally ill. In fact, Muslims are not even allowed to damage crops and vegetation during times of war! These noble ethics were, and still remain, unheard of in any army.

The Qur’an clearly demonstrates the seriousness of killing an innocent person, and emphasises the value of human life. At the same time it also instructs Muslims to treat people of other faiths with kindness.

“If anyone murders an (innocent) person, it will be as if he has murdered the whole of humanity. And if anyone saves a person it will be as if he has saved the whole of humanity.”
Qur’an 5:32

“Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion, nor drove you out of your homes. Indeed, Allah loves those who deal with equity.”
Qur’an 60:8

How, after reading these clear verses of the Qur’an, can Islam be blamed for what is done by terrorists?

conclusion

So many attempts have been made to portray Islam as a religion that is both strange and foreign to people’s normal instincts and values. In deciding upon what to make of Islam, remember this:

- Who stands to gain from perpetuating such misconceptions and untruths?
- Have you researched about Islam yourself, as opposed to what you have heard from others and the media?
- Would millions of people all over the world embrace Islam if it was a harsh and inhumane way of life?

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misconceptions about Islam

What do you
REALLY know?

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introduction

Have you ever wondered why a nun can be covered from head to toe and she's respected for devoting herself to God, but when a Muslim woman covers, she's viewed as "oppressed"? Or why a Jew can grow a beard and he's just practising his faith, and when a Muslim does that, he's an "extremist"?

People in the west seem to have many misconceptions about Muslims and Islam. Many believe that the western world is advanced, enlightened and liberated, while Islam is just the opposite: primitive, ignorant and oppressed. One reason for this belief is that the media has time and again portrayed the Muslims in a way contrary to Islamic teachings. The key to understanding Islam and Muslims is to resist stereotypes and examine each situation according to *Islamic teachings*, and **NOT some Muslims' actions**. For this reason, we have felt it our duty to address the most common misconceptions.

? "Hijab is oppressive"

MISCONCEPTION #1

So what exactly is hijab? To observe the hijab, Muslim women are required to cover their body with modest clothes that don't reveal their figure in front of male strangers. However, hijab is not just about outer appearances; it is also about noble speech, dignified and righteous conduct, and modesty. It goes without saying that these manners are also required of men.

There is nothing in hijab that restricts a Muslim woman's freedom to express her views and opinion, to own property, to have an education and a career, or to choose a husband. The hijab is an act of honour and dignity, an empowerment, and a guarantee that a woman will be judged according to her inner spiritual beauty rather than her outer superficial appearance. The hijab liberates and raises a woman's status, and demands that she be judged according to her intellect rather than her sexuality.

The reason Muslim women observe hijab is simply because Allah (God) made it a compulsory act of worship for them, and Allah knows what is best for His creation.

The hijab gives women the freedom to be active members of society, while maintaining their modesty. The hijab is meant for the public, as women do not have to observe hijab when they are at home with their family!

The hijab does not symbolise suppression, oppression or silence. Rather, it is a shield guarding against degrading remarks, unwanted advances and unfair discrimination. Of all converts to Islam, 75% are women! Would you enter a religion that oppresses you? So the next time you see a Muslim woman, know that **she covers her physical appearance, not her mind or intellect!**

"O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men).

That is better in order that they may be known (to be chaste women) and not abused..."

Qur'an 33:59

? "Islam oppresses women"

MISCONCEPTION #2

One of the most disturbing misconceptions is the negative portrayal of women in Islam – namely that Islam degrades and oppresses women. According to the teachings of Islam, the only thing that distinguishes people in the sight of God is their level of piety.

"Verily the most honourable of you in the sight of God is the most God conscious."
Qur'an 49:13

This verse proves that real honour and status is not attained because a person is rich or poor, black or white, male or female but attained through piety and devoutness. Therefore, it comes as no surprise to learn that for every male convert to Islam, four females convert. Some reasons for this overwhelming female conversion rate are due to the following rights enshrined in Islam:

- total control of their wealth;

- choose their spouse;
- keep their own surname when married;
- own property, operate a business, study, and receive equal pay for equal work;
- inherit property, and to have their marriage dissolved in the case of neglect or mistreatment;
- participate in all forms of worship that men participate in.

Islam guaranteed these rights, among many others, to women over 1400 years ago – rights that women in the West are still lacking.

"Whoever works righteousness whether male or female, while he (or she) is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward (in the Hereafter) according to the best of what they used to do."

Qur'an 16:97

Without doubt, there are Muslim women who are oppressed and not given their rights. However, this is not the fault of Islam. The problem is that in many places in the world, culture and traditions have come to overshadow the teachings of Islam, either through ignorance or harmful cultural practices.

While Islam enshrines the rights of women, it also acknowledges the fact that men and women are **not identical**.

Allah says: '...and the male is not like the female...'

Qur'an: 3:36

Islam has therefore ordained different roles for men and women to reflect this undisputable fact. Women have been granted the honour and tremendous responsibility of caring for the family and the household. While Men have been given the responsibility of providing financial support, security and maintenance for the family and the household.

In conclusion, the noble position of women in Islam can be summarised by the following saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

"The world and all things in the world are precious, but the most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman."

Allah is not like His creation

Similar to how Islam forbids attributing Allah's divine attributes to His creation, Islam also rejects the notion of attributing human qualities and limitations to Allah.

An example of this is how some religions claim that "God rested on the 7th day" after He created everything. Allah does not need rest and to believe so is to attribute imperfection to Allah:

Islam makes a clear distinction between the imperfection of creation and the perfection of Allah. He is far above any imperfections that His creation has described Him with.

Some religions however, believe that Allah fashioned himself into a human body and was both fully God and fully man at the same time. We should consider that God has attributes of perfection such as being All-Knowing, All-

Powerful and Immortal. Man however, has imperfect attributes. Man has limited knowledge, limited power and is mortal.

Muslims are saved from having to ponder over this illogical concept (that God became man or any aspect of His creation) due to the pure and comprehensive Islamic concept of God.

Allah is worshipped directly

There is nothing to prevent a person from calling directly upon Allah and asking for His help and forgiveness.

Allah hears all who praise and call upon Him. There is no "middle man" in Islam; everyone has uninterrupted and direct access to God.

Muslims are required to maintain a direct relationship with God. Worshipping Allah indirectly (e.g. through an idol, statue or other intermediaries) is viewed as compromising Allah's Oneness and contaminating the purity of worship that Allah surely deserves.

"Surely pure religion (Worship and obedience) is for Allah only. And those who take protectors besides Him (say): 'We worship them only that they may bring us closer to Allah' ... Truly Allah guides not him who is a liar and a disbeliever."
Qur'an 39:3

"We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days, and no weariness touched Us."

Qur'an 50:38

All Prophets called to the Oneness of God

"And certainly We raised in every nation a messenger (saying): 'Serve Allah and avoid false gods.'" Qur'an 16:36

Muslims believe in all the Prophets that Allah sent to every nation. They all came with the same message – the Oneness of God. Below we see some examples:

Noah (peace be upon him) said [Qur'an 7:59],

"O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other gods besides Him."

Abraham (peace be upon him) said [Qur'an 21:66],

"Do you worship besides Allah, things that can neither be of any good to you nor do you harm?"

Moses (peace be upon him) said [Qur'an 7:140],

"What! Shall I seek for you a god other than Allah while He has made you excel (all) created things?"

Jesus (peace be upon him) said [Qur'an 43:64],

"For Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord: so worship Him: this is the Straight Way."

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was commanded to say [Qur'an 18:110],

"I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your God is One God. So whoever expects to meet his Lord then let him do good deeds and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord."

The foundation of the Islamic faith is belief in the Oneness and Uniqueness of Almighty God, and as we have seen, Islam discards any concept which leads to the denial of Allah's Oneness. There is One God, and none has the right to be worshipped but He.

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THE ONENESS OF God in Islam

“ Say: He, Allah, is One. Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten. And none is like Him. ”

Qur'an 112:1-4

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THE ONENESS OF God in Islam

The teaching of God's complete Oneness is the essence of Islam. All other laws, beliefs and commands of Islam are built on this foundation. Take it away, and there is nothing left of the religion.

God's name is unique

"Allah" is the proper and personal name applied to The One True God. Nothing else can be called Allah. The term has no plural or gender unlike the English word "God" which can be made both plural and feminine (i.e. gods/goddess).

The unique usage of "Allah" as a personal name of God is a reflection of Islam's emphasis on the purity of the belief in One God.

There is no god except Allah

"And your god is One God. There is no god but He." Qur'an 2:163

The Oneness of God in Islam is a comprehensive teaching and can be further understood through the following attributes of Allah:

- Allah has no partners, no equals and no rivals
- Allah has no father, mother, sons, daughters or wives
- Allah is worshipped directly without anyone or anything acting as an intermediary
- Allah is not in need of anyone's worship
- Allah is not answerable to anyone
- Allah is not dependant on any person or thing, but all persons and things are dependant on Him
- Allah created everything without any assistance
- There is nothing above or comparable to Allah

- There is nothing that exists except that it is completely subservient to Him
- No one can withhold what Allah provides and no one can provide what Allah withholds
- Allah alone can benefit or harm

Allah has no equals

"Are many lords differing among themselves better, or Allah, the One, the Supreme?" Qur'an 12:39

Muslims believe that the existence of the one True, Unique, Supreme, Almighty God, is the only logical concept of God. There cannot be, for example, two Absolutely Powerful Creators, and a moment's thought shows that this is not feasible.

If there were more than one God it would surely lead to confusion, disorder, chaos and destruction in the universe. The universe however, is in complete harmony. The Qur'an summarises this in the following verse:

"Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any (other) god. (If there had been), then each god would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is Allah above what they attribute to Him."

Qur'an 23:91

Allah alone is worthy of worship

"And worship Allah and associate none with Him." Qur'an 4:36

From the Islamic standpoint, believing in the Oneness of God means to realise that all prayer and acts of worship should be exclusively to God.

None have the right to be invoked, supplicated, sworn upon or prayed to but God alone. Nothing else is worthy of worship: not statues, crosses, tombs, the sun, the moon, stars, temples, animals, Prophets, Messengers, saints, priests or religious scholars. All of these things are created and limited, hence imperfect - they are not worthy of worship in Islam, whereas Allah is perfect.

The Qur'an reminds us of the falsity of all alleged gods as follows:

"Do you worship what you have carved yourself? But Allah has created you and what you make."

Qur'an 37:95-96

"Surely those you call upon besides Allah, are only slaves like yourselves."

Qur'an 7:194

The creation does not share in Allah's Perfect attributes

"And there is nothing like Him." Qur'an 112:4

Islam teaches that no part of Allah is present in anyone or anything (although His knowledge encompasses everything). The idea of any created object or being possessing any of Allah's perfect attributes is completely rejected in Islam. To give a created thing attributes or powers only befitting the Creator is to elevate the creation to a level of partnership with the Creator.

For example, the belief that good-luck charms, amulets and superstitions, such as rabbit's feet, horse shoes and the number 13, have the ability to bring benefit or harm is effectively making partners with Allah. This is because He alone is All-Powerful, and therefore He alone is able to harm or benefit:

"And do not call besides Allah on that which can neither benefit you nor harm you, for if you do then surely you will be amongst the wrong-doers."

Qur'an 10:106

Other examples include fortune telling and astrology. Whoever claims to know the future is attributing to himself/herself one of the

attributes of Allah, i.e. the only Knower of the unseen and hidden things.

"He alone has the keys of the Unseen, none knows them but He."

Qur'an 6:59

Clothing provides comfort, warmth and security as well as making one look good – this is how the relationship between the husband and wife is defined in Islam.

Love & Mercy in Spousal Relations

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also encouraged men to treat their spouses in the best way, **“The best of you are those who are best (in treatment) to their wives.”**

“And among His signs is that He created for you wives amongst yourselves that you may dwell in tranquillity with them; and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts). Surely in this are Signs for people who reflect.”

Qur’an 30:21

Aisha (the Prophet’s wife) was once asked how the Prophet’s conduct was in his home. She said, *“He was like one of you at home, yet he was most lenient and most generous ... He was ready to give a helping hand to his wives in the ordinary*

work of the house, [he] sewed his own clothes and mended his own shoes.” In general, he helped in whatever work his wives did.

Lofty Positions of Mothers & Daughters

A mother has the greatest influence on a child especially in the earlier years through her affection, care and love. Undoubtedly, the success of a society is due to mothers. Therefore, it is only right for Islam to honour and raise their status.

Allaah says in the Qur’an:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was once asked, *“O Messenger of Allah, who among people is most deserving of my good treatment?”* He said, **“Your mother.”** The man asked twice more, *“Then who?”* and was given the same response. Only until the fourth time did the Prophet respond, **“Then your father.”**

“And we have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his Parents, His mother bears him with hardship and she brings him forth with hardship.”

Qur’an 46:15

Reward is not only given to the good and kind treatment towards mothers. In fact, Islam has designated a special reward for raising daughters that is not granted for raising sons.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, **“Whoever Allah has given two daughters and is kind towards them, they will be a reason for him entering Paradise.”**

Conclusion

Before Islam, women were considered shameful, female children were buried alive, prostitution was rampant, divorce was only in the hands of the husband, inheritance was only for the strong, and oppression was widespread. Islam came and abolished these practices. Even now, in “developed countries”, women are not granted respect, dignity and honour, let alone equal pay for equal work. Islam, however, regards women as precious and valuable, not to be disrespected or disgraced. The mistreatment of women in some Middle-Eastern countries or Muslim families is due to cultural factors that some Muslims wrongly follow, not because of Islam. Why would many women around the world willingly enter Islam if it is an oppressive religion?

We end with the words of our Lord and your Lord, the Creator and Sustainer of all men and women:

“Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obedient men and the obedient women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women... Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward.”

Qur’an 33:35

women’s rights in Islam

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Women in Islam are thought to be subjugated, degraded, oppressed - but are they really? Are millions of Muslims simply that oppressive or are these misconceptions fabricated by a biased media?

“And for women are rights over men, similar to those of men over women.”

Qur’an 2:228

Over fourteen hundred years ago, Islam gave women rights that women in the West have only recently began to enjoy. In the 1930’s, Annie Besant observed, “It is only in the last twenty years that Christian England has recognised the right of woman to property, while Islam has allowed this right from all times. It is a slander to say that Islam preaches that women have no souls”. (The Life and Teachings of Mohammed, 1932).

Men and women all descended from a single person - the Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). Islam does not accept for either of them anything but justice and kind treatment.

Equal Reward & Equal Accountability

Men and women worship Allah in the same way, meaning they worship the same God (Allah), perform the same acts of worship, follow the same scripture, and hold the same beliefs. Allah (the Arabic word for the One true God of all creation), judges all human beings fairly and equitably. Allah emphasises the just treatment and reward due to both men and women in many verses of the Qur’an:

“Allaah has promised to the believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss.”

Qur’an 9:72

“Never will I allow the loss of the work of any worker amongst you, male or female; you are of one another.”

Qur’an 3:195

These verses show that reward is dependent upon one’s actions and not one’s gender. Gender does not play any part in how a person is rewarded and judged.

If we compare Islam to other religions, we see that it offers justice between the sexes. For example, Islam dismisses the idea that Eve is more to blame than Adam for eating from the forbidden tree. According to Islam, Adam and Eve both sinned, they both repented and God forgave them both.

Equal Right to Knowledge

Both men and women are equally encouraged to seek knowledge. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, **“Education is compulsory for every Muslim.”**

Also, great female Muslim Scholars existed at and around the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Some were from his family and others were his companions or their daughters. Prominent amongst them was Aisha, the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) through whom a quarter of the Islamic law has been transmitted.

Other females were great scholars of jurisprudence and had famous male scholars as their students.

Equal Right to Choose a Spouse

Islam has honoured women by giving them the right to choose a spouse and keep their original family name once married. Additionally, many have the impression that parents force their daughters into marriage. This is a cultural practice, and has no basis in Islam. In fact, it is prohibited.

At the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), a woman came to him and said, *“My father has married me to my cousin to raise his social standing and I was forced into it.”* The Prophet sent for the girl’s father and then in his presence **gave the girl the option of remaining married or nullifying the marriage.** She responded, *“O Messenger of Allah, I have accepted what my father did, but I wanted to show other women (that they could not be forced into a marriage).”*

Equal yet Different

While men and women have equal rights as a general principle, the specific rights and responsibilities granted to them are not identical. Men and women have complementary rights and responsibilities.

Aside from external and internal anatomical differences, scientists know there are many other subtle differences in the way the brains of men and women process language, information and emotion, just to mention a few.

A socio-biology expert, Edward O. Wilson of Harvard University, said that females tend to be higher than males in verbal skills, empathy and social skills, among other things, while men tend to be higher in independence, dominance, spatial and mathematical skills, rank-related aggression, and other characteristics.

It would be foolish to treat both genders the same and to ignore their differences. Islam teaches that men and women have complementary, yet different, roles because it is best suited to their nature. God says:

“And the male is not like the female.”

Qur’an 3:36

“Does not the One who created, know? And He is the Most Kind, the All Aware.”

Qur’an 67:14

The Family Unit

God created men and women to be different, with unique roles, skills and responsibilities. These differences are not viewed as evidences of superiority or inferiority, but of specialisation. In Islam, the family is of central importance. The man is responsible for the financial well being of the family while the woman contributes to the family’s physical, educational and emotional well being. This encourages cooperation rather than competition. By fulfilling their mutual responsibilities, strong families are created and hence strong societies.

Also, emotionally, neither men nor women live a happy life without one another. Allah describes this beautifully by saying:

“They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them.”

Qur’an 2:187

Purpose of Revelation

To Believe in One True God

“And your god is One God. There is no god but He, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.” Qur’an 2:163

The most important topic mentioned throughout the Qur’an is the belief in the One, True God. God informs us that He has no partner, no son, no equal, and that none has the right to be worshipped except Him alone. Nothing is comparable to God and none of His creation resembles Him. The Qur’an also rejects the notion of attributing human qualities and limitations to God.

To Reject All False Gods

“And worship Allah and associate none with Him.”

Qur’an 4:36

Since Allah alone is the only One worthy of worship, false deities and false gods must be rejected. The Qur’an also rejects the notion of attributing divine qualities to anyone or anything other than Allah.

To Narrate the Stories from the Past

The Qur’an contains many narratives with beneficial lessons, including the true stories of previous Prophets such as, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jesus and Moses. Of these stories, Allah says, *“Indeed in their stories, there is a lesson for men of understanding.” Qur’an 12:111*

To Remind us of the Day of Judgement

This Noble Book reminds us that everyone will taste death and will be held accountable for all their actions and sayings: *“We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least...” Qur’an 21:47*

To Fulfil the Intended Way of Life

Importantly, the Qur’an teaches that the purpose of life is to worship God alone, and live one’s life according to the way of life prescribed by Him. In Islam, worship is a comprehensive term that includes all actions and sayings (whether private or public) that Allah loves and is pleased with. Therefore, by doing what Allah commands, a Muslim is worshipping God and fulfilling his purpose in life. The following are examples of worship from the Qur’an:

To pray: *“O you who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship your Lord, that you may succeed.”*

Qur’an 22:77

To give charity: *“...And spend, it is better for your souls; and whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that are the successful.” Qur’an 64:16*

To be honest: *“Cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know (what it is).” Qur’an 2:42*

To be modest: *“Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty [...] And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty.” Qur’an 24:30-31*

To be thankful: *“And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers-- you did not know anything-- and He gave you hearing and sight and hearts that you may give thanks.” Qur’an 16:78*

To be just: *“O you who believe! Stand firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor...” Qur’an 4:135*

To be patient: *“And be patient, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.”*

Qur’an 11:115

To do good: *“Allah has promised to those who believe and do good deeds (that) they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward.” Qur’an 5:9*

Conclusion

In summary, the Qur’an teaches mankind how to worship the One True God, hence fulfilling their true purpose in life, and attaining success in both this world and the next.

“Verily, We have sent down to you (O Muhammad) the Book for mankind in truth. So whosoever accepts the guidance, it is only for his own self; and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray only for his own loss.” Qur’an 39:41

Don’t you owe it to yourself to at least read this Noble Book?

The Qur’an

The Final Revelation to Mankind



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What is the Qur'an?

The Word of God

The Qur'an is the literal word of God, The Almighty (Allah in Arabic), revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the Angel Gabriel.

"The revelation of The Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise." Qur'an 39:1

Guidance for Mankind

The Qur'an is *"a guidance for mankind... and the distinction (between right and wrong)."* Qur'an 2:185

It provides direction to help mankind judge between right and wrong, without which, man would surely be in loss.

The Final Revelation

The Qur'an is the last scripture revealed by Almighty Allah (God), confirming what little truth remains in parts of previous scriptures and refuting and correcting fabrications and additions which have crept into current day versions of such scriptures.

"O you who have been given the Scripture! Believe in what We have revealed confirming what is (already) with you..." Qur'an 4:47

How was the Qur'an Revealed?

The Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him) and exists only in the language in which it was revealed - Arabic. However, the translation of the meaning of the Qur'an is available in many languages.

The Qur'an was not sent down as a complete book in one revelation; rather, the revelation spanned over a period of 23 years.

For this reason, it is essential to know in what circumstances the verses were revealed, in order to have a proper understanding of the Qur'an; otherwise, its teachings could be misunderstood.

How do I know that it is from God?

Preservation

The Qur'an is the only religious sacred text that has been in circulation for a lengthy period, and yet remains as pure as the day it was revealed. Nothing has been added, removed or modified from it, since its revelation over 1400 years ago.

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will certainly guard it (from corruption)."
Qur'an 15:09

Not only has the Qur'an been preserved in written form, but also in the hearts of men, children and women. Today, millions of people have memorised the Qur'an from cover to cover.

Scientific Miracles

The Qur'an does not contradict modern science but rather, supports it. One of the most remarkable aspects about the Qur'an is that it contains many verses which accurately describe natural phenomenon in various fields such as embryology, meteorology, astronomy, geology and oceanography. Scientists have found its descriptions incredibly accurate for a book dating back to the 7th century.

"We shall show them Our Signs in the Universe and within their own selves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth."

Qur'an 41:53

In fact, many of the scientific miracles mentioned in the Qur'an have been discovered only recently, through the modern advancement of technological equipment. Consider the following:

- The Qur'an gives a detailed description of the development of the human embryo. These details were unknown to the scientific community until recent times.
- The Qur'an states that the astronomical objects (stars, planets, moons etc...) were all formed from clouds of dust. Previously unknown, this fact has now become an undisputed principle of modern cosmology.
- Modern science has discovered the existence of barriers that allow two seas to meet yet maintain their own temperature, density and salinity.

These signs of God were clearly stated in the Qur'an more than 1400 years ago.

Uniqueness

Ever since its revelation, no person has been able to produce a single chapter like that of the Qur'an in its beauty, eloquence, splendour, wisdom, prophecies, and other perfect attributes.

"And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful."
Qur'an 2:23

The people that rejected Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) failed this challenge, even though they were extremely eloquent in the language of the Qur'an. This challenge remains unanswered to this very day.

No Contradictions

When people write, they are bound to make mistakes such as spelling and grammar, contradictory statements, incorrect facts, omission of information, and other various errors.

"Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely, have found in it (the Qur'an) many contradictions."

Qur'an 4:82

The Qur'an has no contradictions whatsoever – be it in scientific explanations of the water cycle, embryology, geology and cosmology; historical facts and events; or prophecies.

Couldn't Muhammad have authored it?

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was known in history to be illiterate; he could not read nor write. He was not educated in any field that could account

for neither the scientific and historical accuracy, nor the literary beauty of this magnificent Book. The precision of historical recounts of previous peoples and civilisations mentioned in the Qur'an is also too great to be authored by any man.

"And this Qur'an is not such as could ever be produced by other than Allah."
Qur'an 10: 37

Allah's Mercy sent to earth, **"...His creatures are merciful to each other, so that even the mare lifts up its hoof away from its baby animal, lest it should trample on it."** The Merciful Creator ensures that every creation is looked after - from the fish in the depths of the ocean, to the insects in the earth, and the birds in the skies - all are sustained by Him.

how to increase **ALLAH's MERCY** upon us

"Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good."

Qur'an 7:56

Due to God's Mercy, He has promised to forgive and pardon whosoever follows the appropriate means as mentioned in the following verse: **"And surely, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and**

then remains constant in doing them." Qur'an 20:82. Part and parcel of having the correct belief is believing and obeying the final Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him).

In short, the people who receive more of Allah's Mercy are those who have acknowledged His blessings and favours; used them in a way which pleases God; spent their God-given wealth in charity and to look after the needy; employed their hands to care for orphans; utilised their gift of speech to speak good; and performed other honourable acts ordained by God.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **"Allah will show mercy to those who show mercy to people. Show mercy to those who are on earth - the One Who is in Heaven will show mercy to you."**

Below, are some ways to attain God's Mercy.

- **"Obey Allah and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy."** Qur'an 3:132

- By following the teachings of mercy and justice found in the Qur'an: **"And this is a blessed Book We have revealed; therefore follow it and protect yourself (against evil), that mercy may be shown to you."** Qur'an 6:155

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- **"Keep up prayer and pay the compulsory charity (to the needy) and obey the Messenger, so that mercy may be shown to you."** Qur'an 24:56

- Sincerely asking for Mercy from God. **"Our Lord! Make not our hearts to deviate after you have guided us aright, and grant us mercy from Yourself; surely You are The Bestower."** Qur'an 3:8

MERCY & accountability

Alongside Allah's attribute of Mercy is His attribute of Justice. **"Verily, for the Righteous, are Gardens of Delight, in the Presence of their Lord. Shall We then treat the People of Faith like those who do not believe? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?"** Qur'an 68:34-36

Allah is the Most-Merciful, however, He is also Swift in Reckoning. One cannot try to deceive Allah and take advantage of His Mercy by constantly committing the same sins without sincere repentance or resolving never to go back to the sin again. **"And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says: 'Now I repent;' nor of those who die while they are disbelievers."** Qur'an 4:18

Muslims are encouraged to have hope of reward for good deeds, while being concerned about sins they may perform. When they commit sins, they repent sincerely, and are hopeful of being forgiven. And finally, they feel content with the words of their Creator, and keep it close to their heart: **"Surely Allah is Most Gentle, Ever Compassionate to people."** Qur'an 22:65

THE MERCY OF Allah (God)



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“Limitless is your Lord in His mercy...”

Qur'an 6:147

God Almighty is full of love and kindness to His creation. All blessings and goodness in this world and the next are clear proofs of His Mercy. Indeed, Islam teaches that God is more merciful toward us than our own mothers. How can it be otherwise, when some of God's names and attributes include:

- The Acceptor of Repentance;
- The Compassionate;
- The Loving;
- The Forbearing One;
- The Most Gracious;
- The Most Merciful;
- The Source of Goodness;
- The Most Generous;
- The Bestower

These names all indicate that God is characterised by mercy, goodness and generosity. They testify to the vastness and perfection of His Mercy, which He blesses all of His creation. This same creation is addressed by God, when He says, “O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as the earth.”

examples of **ALLAH's MERCY** & blessings

“Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you deny?”

Qur'an 55:13

Throughout life, people continually receive Allah's blessings, be it good health, sight, hearing, nourishment, clean air, children, wealth and countless others. Some use their God-given gifts of intelligence and reasoning to acknowledge these blessings, grasp the purpose of their existence, and thereby submit themselves

to Allah. Others, however, do not appreciate the Mercy of Allah toward their own selves, even though He feeds and sustains them despite their disobedience toward Him. They are given mobility, enjoyment, freedom of thought and action, despite

their outright denial of Him. Their very existence would not be, were it not for the Mercy of Allah.

Ultimately, everyone has the free will to acknowledge their blessings, use them in a manner ordained by Allah (the Lord of mankind) and worship Him alone. Below, we have outlined a glimpse of such blessings, because **“... if you were to try and count the favours of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”** Qur'an 16:18

Guidance Through Divine Scriptures & Prophets

“It is He Who has sent down the Book (the Qur'an) to you (Muhammad) with truth, confirming what came before it. And He sent down the Taurah and the Injeel (the original revelations revealed to Prophets Moses and Jesus respectively).”

Qur'an 3:3

From the beginning of creation, man was not left to face the struggles of life alone. Due to God's Mercy, man received revelation through Prophets, who conveyed and taught it to their people to guide and protect them. The most perfect and merciful of revelations was the Qur'an and the last of the prophets was Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The Qur'an – the final revelation – superseded and abrogated previous revelations, and is the ultimate mercy and guidance for mankind. Just as God sent Messengers in the past, He also sent mankind a living, perfect and practical example of how the Qur'an's teachings of mercy and justice should be practically applied in our daily lives. This example was Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) - a mercy to mankind.

Following are just some of the Prophet's sayings which are indicative of his mercy, kindness, tolerance and beautiful teachings:

“And We (God) have not sent you (Muhammad) except as a mercy for mankind.”

Qur'an 21:107

- **“Kindness is not found in anything except that it adds to its beauty, and is not withdrawn from anything except that it makes it deficient.”**

- **“The most perfect of believers in belief is the best of them in character.”**

- **“He is not a perfect Muslim who eats his fill while his neighbour goes hungry.”**

- **“Allah will not show mercy to him who does not show mercy to others.”**

How desperately do we, as a society, and in these times, need such beautiful advice?

Mercy Towards The Creation

The creation of human beings and all their faculties is a great mercy in itself. The fact that we can get out of bed, work, eat, play and sleep should make us grateful. **“And out of His Mercy He made for you the night and the day that you may rest therein and [by day] seek from His Bounty and [that] perhaps you will be grateful.”** Qur'an 28:73

A spouse is one of the greatest of mercies, a means to tranquillity and affection. **“And of His signs is that He created for you, from yourselves, mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”** Qur'an 30:21

Another mercy is the fact that He created us sinless and will not hold us to account until the age of maturity and decision making. This is in stark contrast to the “Original Sin” concept in Christianity.

Forgiveness of sins is another example of Allah's Mercy, as Allah knows we are imperfect and commit mistakes. The fact that believers commit sins does not mean that we should lose hope of Allah's Mercy or that we have exhausted Allah's Forgiveness. **“O My servants who have transgressed against their souls! Do not despair of the Mercy of God: for God forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”** Qur'an 39:53

Even animals are not exempt from Allah's Mercy. They have faculties of hearing and sight, are provided with sustenance and offspring, and are granted many other blessings. Allah's Mercy envelops them to the point that because of one single portion of

the creation of living things from water

"Allah created every (living) creature from water. Some of them go on their bellies, some of them on two legs, and some on four. Allah creates whatever He wills. Allah has power over all things."
Qur'an 24:45

Water is the main component of organic matter. Between 50%-90% of the weight of living things consists of water. Furthermore, 80% of the cytoplasm (basic cell material) is water. The analysis of cytoplasm took place hundreds of years after the revelation of the Qur'an.

mountains as stabilisers

Mountains play an important role in stabilising the crust of the earth by hindering its shaking. God has said in the Qur'an:

"And He has set firm mountains in the earth so that it would not shake with you..." Qur'an 16:15

Likewise, the modern theory of plate tectonics agrees that mountains work as stabilisers for the earth. The knowledge about the role of mountains as stabilisers has just begun to be understood by scientists in the framework of plate tectonics.

what do modern scientists say?

Dr Keith L. Moore, Professor Emeritus of Anatomy and Cell Biology, was Associate Dean of Basic Sciences at the Faculty of Medicine as well as the Chairman of the Department of Anatomy. He is the author of the book entitled *The Developing Human*, which has been translated into eight languages and was chosen by a special committee in the United States as the best book authored by one person.

During one conference, Professor Moore stated:

"It has been a great pleasure for me to help clarify statements in the Qur'an about human development. It is clear to me that these statements must have come to Muhammad from God, because almost all of this knowledge was not discovered until

v1.02
many centuries later. This proves to me that Muhammad must have been a messenger of God."

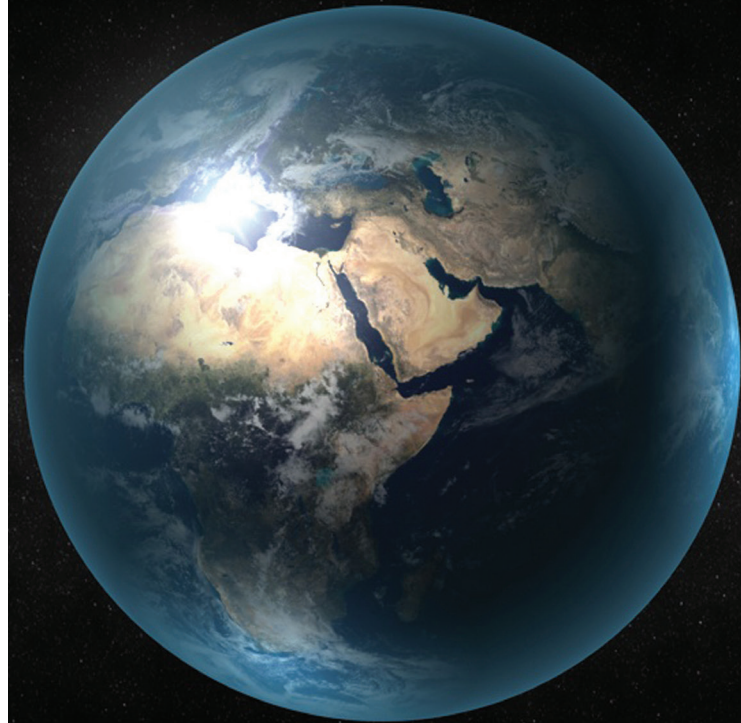
Dr. T. V. N. Persaud, Professor of Anatomy, Professor of Pediatrics and Child Health, and Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at the University of Manitoba, Canada, was the Chairman of the Department of Anatomy for 16 years. He is the author or editor of 22 textbooks and has published over 181 scientific papers. He received the most distinguished award presented in the field of anatomy in Canada, the J.C.B. Grant Award, from the Canadian Association of Anatomists.

When he was asked about the scientific miracles in the Qur'an which he has researched, he stated the following:
"You have someone illiterate making profound pronouncements and statements that are amazingly accurate about scientific nature. And I personally can't see how this could be a mere chance. There are too many accuracies and, like Dr. Moore, I have no difficulty in my mind that this is a divine inspiration or revelation which led him to these statements."

in conclusion

This pamphlet has provided a mere glimpse of the many scientific facts mentioned in the Qur'an. Due to space limitations, topics such as what the Qur'an says about the water cycle, the oceans, astronomy, history, the human anatomy, flora and fauna, could not be included. These scientific facts were revealed over 1400 years ago, when technological equipment and knowledge were inadequate to make such discoveries. This proves that not only these facts but the remaining contents of the Qur'an were divinely revealed from the One True God who created the Universe and all that it contains. Be of those who read and discovers the beauty and truth of the Qur'an, so that you may discover the beauty and truth of this world and the world of the afterlife to come!

science in Islam



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introduction

The Qur'an is the final revelation from God to humanity. Although the Qur'an, (revealed over fourteen centuries ago), is not primarily a book of science, it does contain scientific facts that have been scientifically discovered only recently through the advancement of technological equipment. Moreover, it does not promote an anti-scientific stance, but rather, encourages scientific research. Indeed, studying and understanding the nature of creation enables people to further appreciate their Creator and the extent of His Sovereignty.

human embryonic development

In the Qur'an, God speaks about the stages of man's embryonic development: *"We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him as a drop in a place of settlement, firmly fixed. Then We made the drop into an alaqah (leech, suspended thing, and blood clot), then We made the alaqah into a mudghah (chewed substance)..."* Qur'an 23:12-14

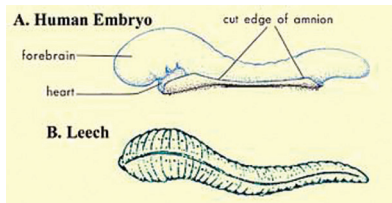


Figure 1: Drawings illustrating the similarities in appearance between a leech and a human embryo at the alaqah stage.

The Arabic word alaqah has three meanings: (1) leech – when comparing a leech to an embryo in the alaqah stage, we find similarities. Also, the embryo at this stage obtains nourishment from the blood of the mother, similar to a leech (see Figure 1). (2) suspended thing – this is what we can see in figure 2. (3) blood clot – the external appearance of the embryo and its sacs during the alaqah stage are similar to that of a blood clot. This is due to large amounts of blood present in the embryo during this stage (see Figure 3).

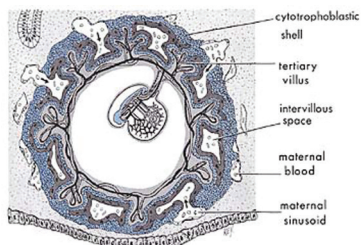


Figure 2: We can see in this diagram the suspension of an embryo during the alaqah stage in the womb (uterus) of the mother. (The Developing Human, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 66.)

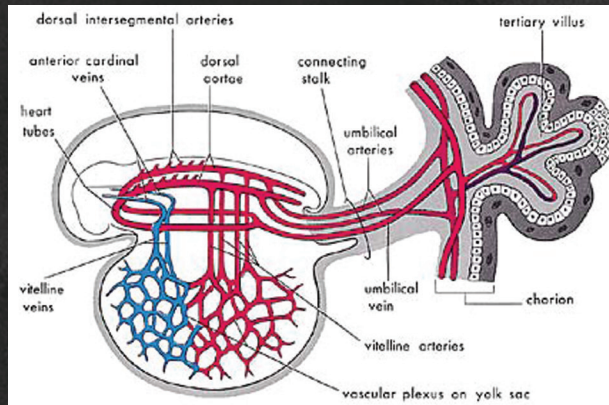


Figure 3: Diagram of the primitive cardiovascular system in an embryo during the alaqah stage. (The Developing Human, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 65.)

The next stage mentioned is the mudghah stage which means "chewed substance." If one were to chew a piece of gum and compare it to the embryo at this stage, we would conclude that the embryo resembles a chewed substance. This is due to somites (cells that form the vertebrae) at the back of the embryo that, according to Dr. Moore and Persaud, "somewhat resemble teeth marks in a chewed substance." See Figure 4.

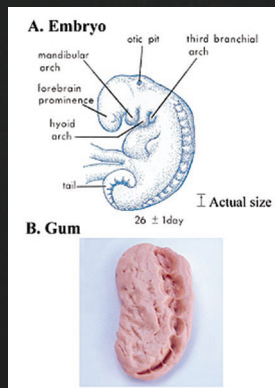


Figure 4:

A) Drawing of an embryo at the mudghah stage. We can see here the somites at the back of the embryo that look like teeth marks. (The Developing Human, Moore and Persaud, 5th ed., p. 79.)

B) Photograph of a piece of gum that has been chewed.

40 days in the womb

Professor Simpson is the Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Professor of Molecular and Human Genetics at the Baylor College of Medicine, Houston. Upon studying the following two sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

"In every one of you, all components of your creation are collected together in your mother's womb by 40 days..."

and;

"If 42 nights have passed over the embryo, God sends an angel to it, who shapes it and creates its hearing, vision, skin, flesh, and bones..."

he noted that the first 40 days constitute a clearly distinguishable stage of embryo-genesis.

According to modern science, the end of the sixth week (42 nights) is the time where the foetal development of the limbs is at its height. This is the peak of the rapid development that occurs between the fourth and eighth week.

He was particularly impressed by the absolute precision and accuracy of Prophet Muhammad's sayings (peace be upon him).

the two seas that do not intermix

Regarding the seas, God says: *"He has let loose the two seas, converging together, with a barrier between them (which) they do not break through."* Qur'an 55:19-20. The scientific fact that seas of different properties do not intermix has only very recently been discovered by oceanographers. A physical force called surface tension prevents the waters of neighbouring seas from mixing, due to the difference in the density of these waters. It is as if a thin wall were between them. (See Figure 5).

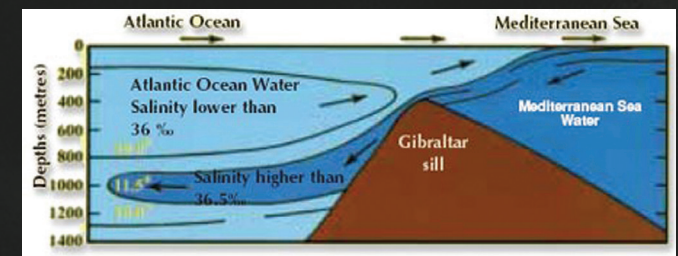


Figure 5

the miracles of Jesus

Jesus performed great miracles by the will and permission of God. One of his greatest miracles was that he was conceived with no father. He also spoke as a baby in the cradle to defend his mother against the children of Israel who accused her of fornication.

“He (Jesus) will speak to the people in the cradle and in manhood, and he will be one of the righteous.”
Qur’an 3:46

Jesus also gave life to the dead, cured the leper and the blind- all by the will of God:

“Indeed, I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird with God’s permission; and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead to life with God’s permission and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses; most surely there is a sign in this for you, if you are believers.” Qur’an 3:49

The fact that Jesus (peace be upon him) performed miracles does not mean that he was anything more than a humble slave of God (Allah) and His Messenger. In fact many Messengers performed miracles, including Noah, Moses and Muhammad (may peace be upon them all) and these miracles only took place by the permission of Allah, so as to prove the authenticity of the Messenger.

crucifixion or cruci-fiction?

The Islamic perspective is that Jesus was not crucified, but rather raised up to the heavens. This point is further clarified in the following verses of the Qur’an:

“[The Jews] killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Jesus was put over another man (and they killed that man), and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely they killed him not: but Allah raised him (Jesus) up (with his body and soul) unto Himself. And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise.” Qur’an 4:157-158

the return of Jesus

Muslims believe that Jesus will reappear before the Hour, i.e. Day of Judgement, and descend back to earth. God says:

“And he (Jesus, i.e. his descent to earth) shall be a known sign for the coming of the Hour (Day of Judgement).”
Qur’an 43:61

He will descend as a Muslim (one who submits to God’s laws) and call others to Islam, rejecting those who took him as other than a slave and Messenger of the One True God. Jesus was born, will return and die, as a Muslim.

conclusion

Muslims view Jesus in the same way they view all Prophets of God. They respect and love him dearly, however, they do not worship him, as worship is for God alone who created him and everything that exists. Jesus is not god, nor is he the son of god, nor is he three entities in one.

God tells the Muslims to come to common terms and understanding between them and the People of the Scriptures (Jews and Christians). He says:

“Say: ‘O People of the Scripture! Come to a word that is equitable between us and you: that we will not worship anything except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.’ But if they turn away, then say, ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to God].’”

Qur’an 3:64

the truth about Jesus

“ [Jesus] said, ‘And indeed, Allah (God) is my Lord & your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path.’ ”
Al-Qur’an 19:36

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the *truth* about **Jesus**

Islam is a religion of pure monotheism, or, in other words, the worship of The One and only true God – known as “Allah” in Arabic. Islam is also a religion of many great Prophets and Messengers, one of whom is Jesus (peace be upon him), a man whose name is known in almost every household. A man highly respected and revered by two major faiths: Islam and Christianity. What does this man, Jesus, have to do with Islam?

Jesus as a prophet & messenger

In Judaism, Jesus (peace be upon him) is denied as the Messiah. This is in stark contrast to Christianity, where he is worshipped as a deity, or the son of God. Islam takes the middle ground and actually acknowledges Jesus as an honourable Prophet and Messenger of God, as well as the Messiah. He is neither God nor is he part of a Trinity.

Muslims view Jesus in the same way they view all Prophets of God – highly respected and loved. To disbelieve in him or any other Prophet or Messenger within Islam, such as Moses, Abraham or Muhammad (peace be upon them), takes one out of the fold of Islam. Prophets are not worshiped, because doing so is an act for God alone, since it is He who created them and all that exists.

“[Jesus] said, ‘Indeed, I am the slave of Allah. He has given me the Scripture & made me a prophet.’”
Qur’an 19:30

Jesus as god

The concept of Jesus being God or the begotten son of God is inconsistent with the old testament, the Qur’an and numerous passages within the New Testament.

As numerous Qur’anic verses clearly indicate, Jesus was not God, nor was he the begotten son of God, as it does not befit His Majesty to have children. Claiming that God has a son would mean to attribute human qualities and limitations to the All-Mighty, and God is far removed from such imperfection.

“Surely, they have disbelieved who say: ‘Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary.’ But the Messiah [i.e. Jesus] said: ‘O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.’” Qur’an 5:72

“It is not befitting for Allah to take a son; exalted is He! When he decrees an affair, He only says to it, ‘Be’ and it is.”

Qur’an 19:35

A Christian must ask him/herself, does the idea of a god who was once a weak helpless child, one who could not survive without food, drink or sleep, be the same Omnipotent, All Mighty God described in the Old Testament? Surely not!

“And do not say, ‘Three [God is part of a trinity]’; desist – it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs what is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of Affairs.” Qur’an 4:171

As for those who continue in their blasphemy, God says;

“And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment.”

Qur’an 5:73

Mary, the mother of Jesus

Mary, the noble virgin, holds a great status within Islam and an entire chapter within the Qur’an is named after her. Allah says:

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also recalls her high status with his statement: **“The best of the world’s women was Mary (at her lifetime).”**

“And remember when the Angels said: ‘Oh Mary, Indeed Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you from amongst all the women.’”

Qur’an 3:42

the *birth* of **Jesus**

The Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary in the form of a man, with glad tidings of a child who was to be born miraculously without a father.

“Then We sent to her Our spirit (angel Gabriel), and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects. She said:

‘Surely I seek refuge from you with the Most Beneficent (God), if you do fear God.’ He said: ‘I am only a messenger of your Lord: to announce to you the gift of a righteous son.’ She said: ‘How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?’ He said, ‘Thus [it will be]. Your Lord says, ‘It is easy for Me, and We will make him a sign to the people and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter [already] decreed.’”

Qur’an 19:17-21

Some claim that his miraculous birth is evidence of Jesus’ divinity. However, Jesus was not the first to come into existence without a father, as Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) before him had neither a father nor mother. God says:

“The likeness of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: ‘Be, and he was. This is the truth from your Lord, so be not of the disputers.”

Qur’an 3:59-60

Surely, if Jesus is worshipped due to having no father, Adam is more deserving of worship since he was created without either parent.

what was his *message*?

Jesus was sent to the Children of Israel to confirm the message of the past Prophets – to believe in the One True God (Allah). He was also taught by Allah the Books of old (i.e. the previous revelations), as God says:

“And He (Allah) will teach him the Book and the wisdom and the Torah and the Injeel (Gospel).” Qur’an 3:48

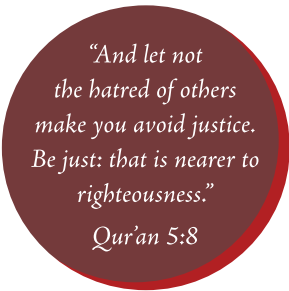
“And when Jesus came with (Our) clear Proofs, he said: ‘I have come to you with the wisdom, and in order to make clear to you some of the points in which you differ, therefore fear Allah and obey me. Verily, Allah! He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him alone. This is the only Straight Path.’”

Qur’an 43:63-64

As an honourable obedient Messenger of God, Jesus submitted willingly to God’s commands. As such, he was a “Muslim” – one who submits to the will and commandments of God.

As we read in verse 2:190, Allah commands Muslims not to go to extremes by saying, **“Do not transgress the limits.”**

A situation of war is no excuse to go beyond boundaries. Islam teaches the avoidance of blind retaliation.



terrorism in perspective

The problem with putting terrorism into perspective is that there is no agreed-upon definition of what constitutes “terrorism”. Also, terrorism takes many forms, as the following examples illustrate.

Robert Fisk, from *The Independent*, writes: “Israel and Israel’s militia allies (on 16 September 1982) started their three-day orgy of rape, knifing and murder in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila that cost 1,800 lives. It followed an Israeli invasion of Lebanon designed to drive the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) out of the country and given the green light [by the United States] which cost the lives of 17,500 Lebanese and Palestinians, almost all of them civilians.”

According to *Professor Noam Chomsky*, “It’s uncontroversial that the United States is a leading terrorist state. In fact, it’s the only state that was condemned for international terrorism by the highest bodies: the International Court of Justice in 1986.”

Similarly, “The horrific massacre of 8,000 Muslims - some unarmed - at Srebrenica in 1995 never led to a stream of pieces about the violence and repressive tendencies of Christianity.”

William Dalrymple, *The Independent UK*.

“The carnage wrought by Western, ostensibly Christian, leaders over the last six decades - including a world war and a cold war, a Holocaust, two atomic bombs, repression of wars of independence, the fuelling of proxy wars, nuclear brinkmanship, and the support of dictators and state and non-state terrorists – makes it spurious to view Islam as a more inherently violent religion or civilisation.”

Rama Mani (*Geneva Centre for Security Policy*)

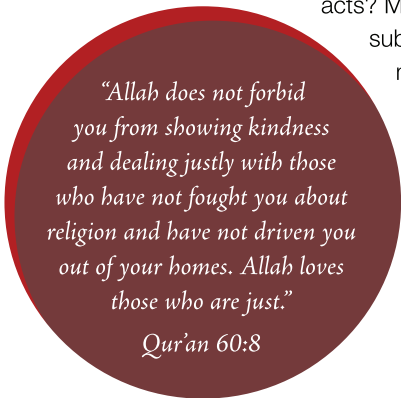
There are many other examples of both Jewish and Christian terrorism, however, we must never generalise and call all Christians and Jews terrorists. Similarly, we should not put all Muslims on trial but only those that committed the crime should be judged.

Islam denounces terrorism

The act of inciting terror in the hearts of defenceless civilians, the wholesale destruction of buildings and properties, the bombing and maiming of innocent men, women and children are all forbidden and detestable acts according to Islam and the Muslims. This is regardless of any type of terrorism, including western state-sponsored terrorism which has killed, injured and displaced infinitely more people than all other types of terrorism.

If an individual Muslim were to commit an act of terrorism, this person would be guilty of violating the laws of the very religion they claim to follow - Islam. Would it be fair to condemn all Muslims as a result, when the religion itself is against such acts? Muslims follow a religion of submission to God, peace, mercy, and forgiveness.

The vast majority have nothing to do with the violent events some – notably the media - have associated with Muslims. Islam is not a religion of extremism.



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Islam is not a religion of extremism

Allah says:
“...Whosoever kills an innocent human being, it shall be as if he has killed all mankind, and whosoever saves the life of one, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind...”
Qur'an 5:32

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Islam...

an extreme religion?

“Islamic terrorists!” “Muslim fundamentalists!” “Extremists!” “Radical Islamists!” These are just some labels that have been wrongly applied to Muslims and certain Muslim groups in recent years.

The media’s portrayal of Islam often misleads those whose knowledge of the religion is limited, into making negative assumptions about this very peaceful and tolerant way of life.

Peter Manning, a journalist of over 30 years, states in his book, **“Us and Them”**:

“My experience tells me there’s a vast gulf between the realities of the daily lives of Arab and Muslim Australians and how they are represented in our [Australian] media.

In more than 60 percent of cases [from the coverage of 2 major newspapers], the words ‘violent’, ‘death’, ‘attack’, ‘kill’, ‘suicide’ or ‘gunmen’ were in close proximity to the words ‘Arab’, ‘Palestinian’, ‘Muslim’ or ‘Islam’.

Is it then, any wonder that most people associate Islam with terrorism?

The problem of ignorance is highlighted by a survey which revealed that more than one in three Australians admit to knowing nothing about Islam and its followers.

“Those with the least knowledge and personal contact with Muslims were the most likely to feel threatened by Islam,” said Dr Dunn, who was commissioned by the Australia-Indonesia Institute to carry out the study.

The prevalence of media bias and ignorance regarding Islam can be countered by understanding Islam *through its proper teachings*. That means referring to the Qur’an (which Muslims believe to be the word of God) and the authentic sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Through the proper understanding of these teachings, one will discover Islam to be completely against any form of extremism.

how the Qur’an can be misunderstood

When reading through the Qur’an or the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him), one must understand the context in which the wording applies.

The following verse of the Qur’an is a favourite amongst those seeking to mislead people about Islam:

“And kill them wherever you find them, and expel them from where they expelled you, as persecuting people to sway them from God’s Religion is worse than killing. But do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque, unless they fight you there. But if they do fight you, then slay them; This is the recompense of the disbelievers.”
Qur’an 2:191

On occasions, this verse has been dangerously trimmed down to the following:

“And kill them wherever you find them...” Qur’an 2:191

The obvious question is, “Kill who?”. To answer this question, one should read the verses before and after verse 2:191.

“And fight in the way of Allah those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits.” Qur’an 2:190

The above verse mentions fighting as a means of self defence (i.e. with those who fight you). The verse after 2:191 is:

“But if they cease, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.”
Qur’an 2:192

These verses were revealed at a time when the Muslims had been expelled from their homes on account of their faith. They endured more than ten years of persecution and eventually had to flee to a safe land.

The above verses were referring to the Arab pagans of Mecca during the Prophet’s time, who oppressed the Muslims and planned to attack them where the Muslims sought refuge.

Hence, the above verse can only be applied in such circumstances.

This example demonstrates that verses in the Qur’an should be understood in their proper context since verses were revealed in stages in relation to particular situations, over a period of 23 years. It is also important to note that the Qur’an was revealed in Arabic. Therefore, translations into different languages may be misleading and/or inaccurate.

permissible fighting/warfare

There can be no doubt that Muslims (like anybody else) have a legitimate right to fight against aggression or when oppressed.

Islam teaches that warfare is permitted in order to preserve the wellbeing of the community or to prevent oppression from spreading - this may be in the context of defensive or offensive warfare depending on the particular situation. Islam, just like any ‘way of life’ that wants to ensure its survival, has the right to defend itself when war is declared against it. In the Qur’an we read:

“To those against whom war is made, permission is given to fight, because they are wronged.”
Qur’an 22:39

However, when the enemy ceases its hostility, Muslims are commanded to cease fighting.

“And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in God; surely He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.”
Qur’an 8:61

Abu Bakr (may God be pleased with him), Prophet Mohammad’s closest friend and first successor, spoke of the Islamic approach to war by highlighting the following:

In the battlefield, one should not:

- commit treachery
- mutilate the dead
- deviate from the right path
- kill a woman, child or aged man
- harm or burn trees, especially the fruitful
- slay the enemy’s flock, except for food
- harm those who devote their life to worship

4. Fasting

SAWM

"Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may attain piety."
Qur'an 2:183

As with any act of worship, fasting requires obedience and submission to Allah's commands through the highest degree of commitment and sincerity. Every year during the month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the lunar calendar), Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from three key human needs - food, drink and sexual relations. One should also abstain from all sinful actions.

Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory on every physically and mentally capable adult Muslim. Children, the sick, the mentally unfit, the elderly, menstruating women, and travellers are exempt.

Some benefits of fasting:

- Promotes spiritual self-purification and growth.
- Scientifically proven health benefits.
- Sympathy for those less fortunate, prompting more charity.
- A means of learning self-restraint and patience.
- Purifies the soul and helps it acquire the habit of obeying Allah by restraining desires, and promotes steadfastness.
- Creates an increased feeling of unity and collective identity amongst those fasting.
- Creates an increased awareness about the state of affairs across the globe and the hardships endured.
- Forgiveness of sins. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ***"He who fasts Ramadan, with faith and hoping for reward (from Allah), then his past sins are forgiven."***

5. Pilgrimage

HAJJ

"And Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) to the House (Ka'bah) is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, for those who can afford the expenses (for one's transportation, provision and residence)."
Qur'an 3:97

Pilgrimage to the Holy city of Makkah (in Saudi Arabia) and other sacred sites must be performed at least once in a person's life, if they are physically and financially capable.

Performing the pilgrimage is a temporary suspension of all worldly activities, and is a time for one to reflect, worship, seek the forgiveness of Allah and attain His closeness.

The Pilgrimage is an annual event in the 12th month of the lunar calendar (Dhul-Hijjah in Arabic), which unifies people of every colour, race, status and age, as they join in worship of the One True God. All pilgrims wear simple and similar clothing, which strips away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before Allah.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, ***"Whoever performs Hajj and does not utter obscenities or commit sin, will come back just like the day when his mother bore him (i.e. pure of sins)."***

Hajj involves following in the footsteps of Prophet Abraham, as taught to us by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them). This great act of worship consists of many components including sacrificing an animal, supplicating, visiting and praying at various sites, circling the Ka'bah, walking between two mountains, as well as many other rituals, all of which are performed over a period of 6 continuous days.

Such an experience is life-altering and humbles a person, making them more patient and thankful to Allah. Brotherhood is increased, as is the sense that all Muslims, regardless of their differences, are one nation.

conclusion

The five pillars of Islam have been prescribed by Allah, and a Muslim is required to believe and act according to them. They are practical as well as easy, and the blessings and wisdom behind them are manifold. When put into perspective, they contribute to the well being of both the individual and the society, enhancing the character and manners of the individual, and making both society and individuals accountable and closer to Allah.

These noble pillars of Islam are purely for the benefit of His creation, as Allah (Glory be to Him!) is free of all needs. These five pillars provide the solid structure and 'training programme' for the betterment and success of all humanity.

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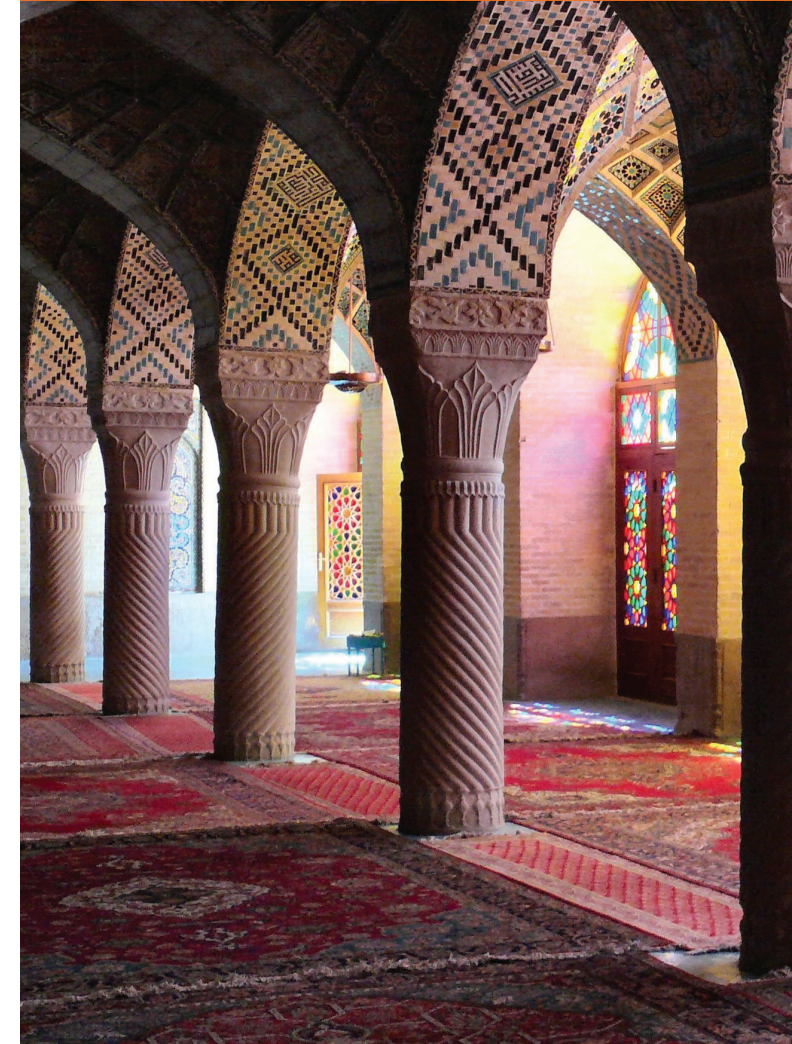
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the 5 pillars of Islam

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF A MUSLIM'S LIFE



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 the
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introduction

Every sound structure must have a solid foundation in order to remain strong. Islam's foundation is the five pillars it was built upon, forming the basis of Islamic teaching as taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), wherein he said:

Islam is built upon five pillars:

1. *The Declaration of Faith (Shahadah);*
2. *Establishing regular prayers (Salah);*
3. *Paying Charity (Zakah);*
4. *Fasting the (lunar) month of Ramadan (Sawm);*
5. *Pilgrimage (Hajj)*

These five pillars are a cornerstone of a Muslim's life.

1. SHAHADAH

The declaration of faith is bearing witness (testifying) that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah (God), and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is His Servant and Messenger. It must be based on a sincere and firm belief in the heart, as well as being uttered verbally.

The first part of the declaration implies that:

- No person, object or being has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone. The Arabic name "Allah" refers to the One True God of all mankind and everything that exists.
- Allah alone is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, and He has power over all things.
- Allah alone has perfect attributes and is free from all deficiencies.
- Allah has no partner, equal, father, mother or son.

The second part of the declaration is that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is Allah's Servant and final Messenger. He is the final Prophet in a long chain of Prophets sent to call the people to the obedience and worship of Allah alone. Some of these Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon them all).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent with the Qur'an (the final revelation), in order to teach the people Allah's message, and serve as an example for all to follow.

Some benefits of the Declaration of Faith:

- Complete surrender to the will of Allah and becoming His true servant and subject.
- Produces a high degree of self-respect and confidence, while also remaining humble and modest.
- Produces strong determination, patience and perseverance, making a person brave and courageous, as well as dutiful and upright.
- Makes a person obey and observe Allah's commands.

2. SALAH

The five daily prayers form the most important ritual of worship in a Muslim's life; one each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: ***"Prayer is a pillar of the religion (Islam). Whoever establishes it, establishes religion; and whoever destroys it (e.g. neglects it), destroys religion."***

Prayer establishes a personal and spiritual connection between the Muslim and his Creator, based on faith, love, hope and reverence. When prayer is performed correctly with complete concentration, humility and sincerity, it will have an enduring effect on the person, filling his heart with contentment, peace and closeness with Allah.

Prayer is the centre of a Muslim's life and the best way to achieve submission to Allah. It can be offered almost anywhere clean: such as in fields, offices, factories or universities; and takes only a few minutes to perform. It consists of recitation from the Holy Qur'an, supplicating to and praising Allah, with various body postures such as standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting. Through prayer, the Muslim remembers the greatness of his Creator and supplicates to Him for his needs and wishes.

Repeatedly humbling oneself before Allah prevents a person from falling into sin, and is a type of purification for one's soul, as mentioned in the Qur'an: ***"Verily, the prayer prevents one from the shameful and evil deeds."*** Qur'an 29:45. Prayer is also an opportunity for repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah.

*"Indeed, I am Allah! There is none worthy of worship but I, so worship Me and offer the prayer for My remembrance."
Qur'an 20:14*

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) asked his companions, ***"If one of you had a river by his door in which he bathed five times a day, would any filth remain on him?"*** They replied, ***"No."*** Then the Prophet added, ***"Likewise, Allah wipes away sins with the five daily prayers."***

3. ZAKAH

All things belong to Allah, including wealth, which is considered as a trust. The prescribed charity (zakah) is an obligation on every Muslim who meets certain criteria (e.g. attained maturity, is sane, has wealth above a certain threshold). A mere 2.5% of wealth must be paid annually to those who are eligible, as prescribed in the Qur'an (e.g. the poor and needy).

The Prophet (peace be on him) said: ***"Allah has made zakah obligatory simply to purify your remaining wealth."***

The meaning of the word "zakah", is both 'purification' and 'growth'. This is similar to the pruning of plants, whereby regularly trimming provides balance and encourages growth. By fulfilling this obligation, Muslims purify their remaining wealth, as well as ensure both financial and spiritual growth.

Some benefits of zakah:

- Purifies one from selfishness, arrogance and a greedy heart.
 - Trains one to be sympathetic and compassionate towards the poor and needy.
 - Reminds one of the blessings from Allah and encourages one to be grateful.
 - Bridges the gap between different socio-economic classes and groups, and is a form of social security.
 - Reduces poverty and ensures equality by making it obligatory upon the rich to share some of their wealth with the less fortunate
- "...so that this (wealth) may not circulate solely among the rich from among you."*** Qur'an 59:7

A person may also give as much as they please as additional voluntary charity.

*"Those who establish the prayer (salah) and give the charity (zakah) ... these are the ones who will prosper."
Qur'an 31:4-5*

#6 “Muslims Do Not Share Good & Noble Values With non-Muslims” ?

It is often claimed by many non-Muslims that Muslims do not share the same refined values as themselves, and that, perhaps, they dislike anyone with different values. These same people use such lies to allege that Islamic values are somehow incompatible with decent Western values. Such claims could not be further from the truth.

Muslims cherish universal values such as:

- being honest and upright
- keeping one's word
- allowing freedom of religion
- respecting parents, relatives, and the elderly
- being charitable
- caring for one's neighbour
- looking after the poor and needy, and
- contributing to society.

In fact, it is compulsory for Muslims to display these values at all times, not only if they feel like it. Muslims are required to contribute positively towards society and to always conduct themselves with the highest of morals and best of actions.

Reflect on some of these noble values in Islam.

From the words of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

“The best among you are those who have the best manners and character.”

“Removing something harmful from the road is charity.”

“None of you can be a believer unless he loves for his brother (in faith) what he loves for himself.”

“Allah is not kind to him who is not kind to people.”

“He will not enter Paradise if his neighbour is not safe from his harm.”

From the words of Allah, the Creator of all things:

“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour. And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: ‘My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they nurtured me when I was small.’” Qur'an 17:23–24

#7 “The Qur'an is Just Another History or Poetry Book” ?

Some people mistakenly believe that the Qur'an, Islam's Holy Book of Scripture and God's final revelation, is just another history book or a book of poetry. The Qur'an is actually the divine literal word of God Almighty, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), through the angel Gabriel. It is a criterion for the truth, containing rules and guidelines for humanity to live by. The Qur'an also cites lessons from preceding generations and the history of the Prophets in order that we may learn from their experiences, and learn the correct narrations of the past. It further teaches us about ourselves and our Creator, as well as the purpose of our existence.

This revelation is a miracle from God, and contains within it many miracles, so that we can have no doubt about its authenticity.

The best way to discover what the Qur'an is actually about is to read it for yourself.

Conclusion

Sending your sick child to a florist is illogical and harmful. Likewise, learning about Islam from unqualified sources without verification is also damaging and leads to misunderstandings. Therefore, before you accept everything you hear as fact, verify it through an Islamic scholar or other reputable sources. After all, the decision to accept false and misleading information about Islam, the belief shared by a quarter of mankind, lies solely in your hands. Does not the guidance for all humanity, the message of Islam, deserve to be carefully pondered over and reflected on?

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misconceptions about #2 Islam

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Would you send your car to a butcher for repair, or a sick child to a florist? Of course not. A butcher is not qualified to repair a car, nor a florist qualified to treat the sick. Likewise, people without Islamic knowledge are not qualified to inform others about Islam. So why is it that people are willing to accept information about Islam from those that do not have the required knowledge?

Islam, one of the world's largest religions, is, without doubt, gravely misunderstood. For various reasons, numerous false rumours have been spread about Islam, which have led many people to hold misconceptions about its true teachings.

1 “All Muslims are Arabs” ?

In contradiction to this misconception, only about 15% to 20% of Muslims in the world are Arabs, meaning that up to 85% of Muslims are not Arabs! There are more Indian Muslims than Arab Muslims, and more Indonesian Muslims than Indian Muslims. This mistaken assumption is possibly based on the fact that most of the first generation of Muslims were Arabs, that the Qur'an is in Arabic, and that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was an Arab. The final message may have initiated in a particular region and a particular language, but it was revealed for all mankind.

“It [the Qur'an] is not except a reminder to the worlds.”

Qur'an 12:104

Islam is a message for all mankind, and no race is superior to another:

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, “An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor has a non-Arab any superiority over an Arab; also a black has no superiority over white, nor has a white any superiority over black, except by piety and good action.”

While it is true that not all Muslims are Arabs, not all Arabs are Muslim either. Some Arabs are Christian, Jewish or even atheist.

2 “Islam Permits Forced Marriages” ?

Arranged marriages are cultural practices which are predominant in certain countries throughout the world. Although not restricted to Muslims, forced marriages have become incorrectly associated with Islam. In fact, some Muslims mistakenly believe that this practice has an Islamic origin. The reality is quite the opposite.

In Islam, both males and females have the right to choose or

reject their potential spouse, and a marriage is considered null and void if a woman's approval is not granted prior to the marriage. This was illustrated in an incident in which a woman told the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), that she had been forced into marriage. He advised that it was entirely up to her to either continue with, or end the marriage.

Since an Islamic marriage is a voluntary agreement between both the male and the female, forced marriages are not only invalid, but completely forbidden.

3 “Muslims Worship the Moon God” ?

A common misconception about Islam is that Muslims worship a ‘Moon God’. Muslims actually worship the Creator, whose personal name in Arabic is ‘Allah’. This name is also used by Arab Christians and Jews to refer to God. Worshipping the moon, or anything other than Allah, is strictly prohibited in Islam:

“And from among Allah's signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Do not prostrate to the sun or to the moon, but prostrate to Allah Who created them, if you really worship Him.” Qur'an 41:37

4 “Fundamentalist Muslims are a Threat to Society” ?

The word “fundamentalist” actually does not mean anything bad, nor is it specific to Islam. In fact, the term was first used to describe Christian groups.

One of the more illogical and sinister rumours recently spread about Islam and Muslims is that “fundamentalist” Muslims are a danger to society. To understand this issue correctly, we must firstly understand the true meaning of the word “fundamentalist”. A fundamentalist is one who strictly adheres to the original teachings of the doctrine or theory they are following. For example, in order for a person to be a good economist, they must know, follow and practise the fundamentals of economics; i.e. they must be a “fundamentalist” in the field of economics. Likewise, for a person to be a good Muslim, they must know, follow and practise the fundamentals of Islam; i.e. they must be a “fundamentalist” Muslim.

Based on the above definition, society has nothing to fear from fundamentalist Muslims, as they bring benefit, not harm to society. A fundamentalist Muslim who follows the correct teachings of Islam cannot be a drug addict, an alcoholic, a thief, a rapist, a murderer or a liar, as these are all grave sins. Rather, the fundamentalist Muslim is required to be pious, just and sincere in all of their actions and dealings with others.

From an Islamic perspective, a fundamentalist Muslim simply adheres to the original teachings of Islam, making them balanced in all of their actions, while an extremist exceeds the bounds set by Islam, harming themselves and others. The media at times depicts both of these as one. Even the word “extremist” has been thrown around without definition by governments and the media, so we should not always take this to be true on face value either.

Being a fundamentalist Muslim prevents an individual from harming others, which in return shields society from harmful acts. However, for those who do not obey God nor have high morals, there is nothing preventing them from committing any such crimes. Therefore, it is these people, and not the fundamentalist Muslim, that threaten society.

Many people fear fundamentalist Muslims because they confuse them with extremists.

5 “Muslims Worship Muhammad” ?

Yet another misconception is that Muslims worship the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is entirely untrue, and is easily refuted by the actual saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him): “Do not over-praise me as the Christians over-praised Jesus, the son of Mary. I am His slave, so refer to me as ‘God's slave and Messenger.’ ”

Worshipping God alone is the basis of Islamic teachings, as mentioned in the Qur'an in numerous places:

“And worship Allah and do not join anyone with Him in worship.”

Qur'an 4:36

Islam teaches Muslims to respect all of God's Prophets and Messengers - but respecting and loving them does not mean worshipping them.

'It is a security risk'

Burqas are no more of a security risk than a motorcycle helmet, big fashion sunglasses, or a big beanie, and can be removed when identification is required for security reasons. Of course, the request for removal should be done by another woman and not in the presence of men (where possible).

'It is against community values'

Wearing the burqa does not go against acceptable community values. Community values necessitate that people should not be judged by what they wear, nor discriminated against or mistreated, based on their choice of clothing or appearance.

Why People Fear the Burqa

No doubt, seeing women wearing the burqa is strange for many people. It is not a common sight, as only a minority of Muslim women wear it, and as such it is new and unfamiliar to many. This fact does not make the burqa something which ought to be feared or hated. The fierce media campaign of fear which has been launched against the burqa has caused many people to pass judgment on this Islamic practice without having any knowledge of its significance. It is important to consider who benefits from such prejudiced propaganda. Some political parties, for example, capitalise on people's misunderstandings and fears in order to make political gains.

Does it make sense to pass judgement on someone without first verifying the facts?

The Right to Freedom of Religion & Expression

Modern societies were founded on the basis of freedom and liberty. This entitles their members to freely practise their own religion and dress as they wish. Banning the burqa goes against these very core values, and is a form of hypocrisy and double standards. In fact, there are international laws which explicitly ensure people's right to expression and to practise their religion:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Article 18:1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to... manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

Furthermore, banning a religious item based merely on emotional rhetoric may open the door to further discrimination and human rights abuses. It is worth noting that Nazi Germany first began with minor discrimination against Jews and other minorities, then, when that was accepted, proceeded with more severe repression.

Should the Burqa be Banned?

Banning the burqa not only breaches international law but is highly discriminatory, leading to a number of harmful social impacts. It will only serve to vilify Muslim communities and create distrust between Muslims and the communities in which they live. While claiming to protect Muslim women, a ban would make life intolerable for those who wear the burqa, forcing them to choose between defying their beliefs simply to leave the house, or not leaving the house at all. Additionally, such a ban will also amount to double standards, as other religious symbols and clothing are not only tolerated, but respected, such as the clothing of nuns, Buddhist monks, orthodox priests and rabbis.

Conclusion

The burqa is clearly not oppressive or anti-social. It does not pose security risks or create barriers between the wearer and society. Rather, it is the personal choice of women wanting to gain closeness to God, and should be respected as such. Having a debate over whether to ban a well established religious practice is in itself discrimination, and goes against the very values which ought to be protected. Being tolerant does not only mean accepting people who look and act exactly like you; but accepting the choices of other people, especially, if you do not understand or agree with them.

In a time where women have more and more freedom to make choices, is it not strange that the most basic freedom, the freedom to choose what to wear, is being taken away from Muslim women in many modern societies? If forcing someone to wear the burqa is oppressive, is not forcing someone to remove it equally oppressive?

The Burqa & Niqab

Uncovering the facts



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The burqa and niqab have become a topic of much controversy and heated debate. A number of countries have banned the wearing of these religious garments, while others have considered banning or limiting their use.

Many arguments have been made against the wearing of the burqa and niqab, claiming they are anti-social, backward, oppressive, and not part of Islam. This pamphlet discusses the burqa and niqab from an Islamic viewpoint and addresses the many concerns and allegations made against the wearing of these garments.

Types of Islamic Dress

“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters, as well as all believing women, that they should draw over themselves some of their outer garments [when in public]: this will be more conducive to their being recognised as decent women and not molested.”

(Quran 33:59)

There are three main types of Islamic dress relating to women when in public.

1. Hijab: This is the most common type of Islamic dress, which covers the woman's body, leaving only her face and hands visible.

Hijab



2. Niqab: This type is like the hijab, except it also covers part of the face, leaving only the eyes visible.

Niqab



3. Burqa: This type is the least common, and involves covering the whole body as well as covering the face with mesh, so that the eyes are not visible.

Burqa



The hijab can generally be found amongst Muslim women all over the world, while the niqab and burqa are more common in specific regions.

It is not obligatory for a Muslim woman to dress in one of the above fashions in front of other women. It is only obligatory in the presence of men who are not closely related to her, as prescribed in Islam

An Established Practice

There is no doubt that both the burqa and niqab have an Islamic basis, and that both have been commonly practised and recognised by Muslims throughout history. Islamic texts make it very clear that the hijab is compulsory for Muslim women to observe. Consequently, Islamic scholars have agreed that both the burqa and niqab are part of Islam, but have differed as to whether they are also compulsory or optional acts of virtue. This explains why some Muslim women wear the hijab, while others decide to wear the niqab or burqa.

Common Allegations

*Note: This pamphlet will refer to both the niqab and burqa simply as the burqa for the remaining sections.

‘It is oppressive’

Muslim women who choose to wear the burqa do so out of their own free will, believing it is an act of worship and a form of liberation from the objectification of women in modern society.

In fact, preventing Muslim women from practising their religion is what is truly oppressive.

‘It is backwards’

The burqa is not part of a short-lived fashion trend. It is a religious garment and act of worship which is not subject to time and therefore, does not become outdated. In fact, the

burqa is gaining much popularity in modern societies, especially amongst Western convert women.

“My body is my business, and I shouldn't have to defend what I wear to anyone. The burqa is part of my religion, and the fact that I choose to wear it does not make me any less human.”

Ms. Yasmin, 21, Aus.

“Niqab is a very liberating and empowering experience. It allows me to realise my goals by having a career and going to school without worrying about the prying eyes of men. It forces people not to judge me based on my appearance, but on my thoughts and character.”

Ms. Flavia, 22, USA.

‘It is intimidating’

While the burqa may appear intimidating to some people, it is not worn with the intention of being threatening or frightening. People are often intimidated by what they have no knowledge of, and the burqa

is a piece of clothing which should not warrant fearful reaction. Underneath the burqa is a person simply trying to practise their religion. It is interesting to note that other forms of dress and appearance are no longer considered intimidating, as they have become accepted by the wider community. Tattoos, extremely short dresses, revealing clothes, body piercing and outlandish hairstyles are all examples of this phenomena.

‘It is a form of male domination’

Wearing the burqa does not in any way suggest that women are inferior to men. Claiming that the burqa is a symbol of male domination goes against the fact that many women voluntarily wear the burqa, even though some have no male relatives, or wear it against their male relatives' wishes.

‘It is anti-social’

There is nothing in the burqa that prevents a woman from interacting with other members of society, or from participating in the community. In fact, neither the hijab nor the burqa are required when among women only.

‘It stops women from contributing to society’

Wearing a burqa does not stop a woman from contributing to society or from pursuing higher education. There are many women who wear the burqa and are very highly educated, or lead very successful careers.

Every woman who wears a burqa is a unique individual, and it is unfair and inaccurate to make a sweeping judgement about all such women based on one item of clothing they have in common.

From the very advent of Islam, Aisha, the wife of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), was and still is renowned as one of the greatest Islamic scholars to have ever lived. The fact that she wore the burqa did not, in any way, hinder her from becoming such a prominent scholar or from teaching the men and women of her society.

We will be amazed by the accuracy of such a record of all our actions, as we will be reminded of matters long forgotten. Allah says,

“Allah has kept account of it, while they have forgotten it.”
Qur'an 58:6

Thinking deeply on this should make us ashamed of committing any sin while knowing that it will be recorded against us and exposed on the Day of Judgement in front of Allah.

For those who doubt Allah's abilities to resurrect and judge them, Allah quotes the disbelievers as saying:

“Who will give life to these bones when they have rotted away and became dust?’ Say (O Muhammad), ‘He will give life to them Who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation!’” Qur'an 36:78-79

Paradise and Hell

Those who believe in Allah as the only God worthy of being worshipped, and perform good deeds, will be rewarded with Paradise.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) narrated that Allah said:

“I have prepared for My righteous slaves such excellent things as no eye has ever seen, nor an ear has ever heard, nor a human heart can ever think of.”

This is in sharp contrast to the people who deny the Oneness of Allah, who will be told:

“This is the Hell which you were promised! Burn therein this day, for that which you used to disbelieve.” Qur'an 36:63-64

“Verily, the dwellers of the Paradise, that Day, will be busy in joyful things. They and their wives will be in pleasant shade, reclining on thrones. They will have therein fruits (of all kinds) and all that they ask for.”
Qur'an 36:55-57

For the disbelievers is the worst of punishments:

“Indeed, Hell has been lying in wait for the transgressors, a place of return, in which they will remain for ages (unending). They will not taste therein any coolness or drink except scalding water and dirty wound discharges - an appropriate recompense (according to their evil acts)! Indeed, they were not expecting an account, and denied our verses with emphatic denial. But all things We have recorded in a Book. ‘So taste the penalty, and never will We (God) increase you except in torment.’” Qur'an 78:21-30

Conclusion

“O man! What has deceived you concerning your Lord, the Most Generous? Who created you, fashioned you perfectly, and gave you due proportion. In whatever form He willed, He put you together. No! But you deny the Recompense (reward for good deeds and punishment for evil deeds on the Day of Judgement).”

Qur'an 82:6-9

Death is inevitable. Our purpose in life is to worship Allah alone, perform acts of righteousness and to avoid all that is forbidden. Our fate is being decided on the basis of our present actions, so we can either make use of our opportunities on Earth to ensure an eternal place for ourselves in Paradise, or we can waste them and condemn ourselves to eternal punishment in Hell.

“Indeed, the righteous will be in pleasure, and indeed, the wicked will be in Hellfire.”
Qur'an 82:13-14

Death & the Hereafter in Islam

“ Every soul shall taste death. ”
Qur'an 29:57

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Death is Near

"Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!"

Qur'an 4:78

Death is the reality from which none can escape. It draws nearer every day; every hour; every minute.

According to the CIA's The World Factbook 2007, almost two people die each second. That's a staggering 57.9 million people each year! Every single being will reach this inescapable fate, regardless of their age, health, background, social status or piety.

Where are the past kings, the billionaires and the powerful? Where are the once beautiful, the famous, and the intellectual elite?

The Reality of Death

Death is not a disaster, but simply a passing from this world onto the next. It should make us reflect and ponder about the purpose of life, and what will become of us after death.

Allah (God) has informed us in the Qur'an that He has created us with the purpose of worshipping Him alone and that He made this life a test to see who will fulfil that purpose:

"And I did not create the Jimm and mankind except to worship Me." *Qur'an 51:56*

God has also informed us the purpose behind the creation of death and life:

"Allah is He who created death and life to test you as to which of you is best in deed." *Qur'an 67:2*

One does not prepare for death by pre-paying funeral services or selecting a coffin in advance. It is about fulfilling one's purpose in life – to worship Allah alone, to live according to His commandments, and perform good deeds. The concept of worship in Islam is all encompassing and is not merely restricted to praying. In fact, any action that is pleasing to Allah is considered an act of worship, and a person will be rewarded for it.

The Moment of Death

"Let every person consider what they have sent ahead for tomorrow."

Qur'an 59:18

Every day we see examples of death. We perceive a peaceful death as one with neither pain nor violence. However, this is not necessarily the case. When a person dies, the soul leaves the body, and so the physical appearance of the body may not reflect the situation of the soul. The peacefulness or unease of the soul will be a direct result of how well a person fulfilled their purpose in this life, and has little to do with the cause of death.

Consider an example of two people who have a one-way ticket to a destination they have never been to before. The first person takes the time to learn about the language, culture and practices relating to the destination. He acquires the right currency and vaccinations, and when it comes time to travel, he arrives without any surprises. He is safe and content, because he has taken the time to prepare.

In contrast, the second person is careless in his preparations and simply lives for the moment until the time comes to depart. He arrives at the unknown destination scared and confused. His unpreparedness causes him to end up with a dreadful fate, as all of the things he has brought with him were of no use.

Describing such a heedless person, Allah says in the Qur'an:

"When death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord, send me back! So that I can do good in the things I neglected.' By no means! It is a mere word that he speaks." *Qur'an 23:99-100*

Also consider the response of those people consigned to Hell, when they are questioned regarding what put them there:

"They will say, 'We were not of those who prayed, nor did we feed the poor. And we used to enter into vain discourse with those who engaged in it, and we used to deny the Day of Recompense (the Day of Judgement) until there came to us the death that is certain.'" Qur'an 74:43-47

We all have an appointed time with death, and we will all travel to this unfamiliar destination. Ask yourself - have you prepared for it?

The Purpose of Life

Life is a test which ends in death, but it does not mark the end of one's existence. Once death arrives, the opportunity to do good ceases. It will be too late to repent and our fate will be determined solely by our beliefs and deeds that we do in our current life. Man's life is divided into two parts: a brief stay in this world, and an eternal life in the next. Any sane mind will conclude that eternal bliss is far more beneficial than short lived pleasures on Earth.

"Did you think that We (God) created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back to Us (God)?"

Qur'an 23:115

Allah created mankind and made us responsible for our actions by granting us freedom of choice, and intelligence to discern right and wrong. If there were no afterlife in which the good were rewarded and the bad punished, that would contradict the perfect justice of Allah.

Hence it is an absolute demand of justice that there be a Day of Judgement on which every soul is brought to account.

"Shall We then treat the People of Faith like the People of Sin? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?"

Qur'an 68:35-36

The Day of Judgement

Everyone's deeds in this life are meticulously recorded and preserved, as Allah says:

"And the Book (of Deeds) will be placed open, and you will see the sinful in great terror because of what is recorded therein. They will say, 'Ab! Woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great, but takes account thereof!' They will find all that they did placed before them. And your Lord does injustice to no one." *Qur'an 18:49*

"Death, from which you are running away from, will certainly catch up with you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible (i.e. Allah) and He will inform you about what you did."

Qur'an 62:8

WHAT is the worst sin in Islam?

Worshipping others beside God or associating partners or equals with God (called “shirk” in Arabic) is the worst sin in Islam. It is the only sin not forgiven by God if the person dies without repenting.

This includes:

- Directing worship to other than God (e.g. prostrating or supplicating to other than God).
- Delegating some of God’s attributes to other objects or beings (e.g. idols/lucky charms).
- Claiming that God has a son, mother or any other partner.

HOW does Islam view women?

In Islam, men and women are viewed as equals before God, in terms of both receiving equal reward and accountability for their actions. Women are given the utmost respect and honour, with no form of oppression condoned towards them. Over fourteen hundred years ago, Islam gave women rights that women in the West have only recently began to enjoy, such as the right to equal pay, choice of spouse, pursuit of education, and the right to divorce and inheritance.

Allah, the Creator of both genders, has assigned different roles & responsibilities for each, taking into account their differences.

DOES Islam believe in the concept of the original sin?

The concept of “original sin” does not exist in Islam. God is just so no person is held accountable for any sin they themselves were not responsible for.

WHAT is Jihad?

The essence of Jihad is to struggle and sacrifice for one’s religion in a manner which is pleasing to God. Linguistically, it means to “struggle” and can refer to one’s striving to do good deeds, give charity, or to join an Islamic military action. The most common form is the military Jihad which is permitted in order to preserve the well being of society, to prevent oppression from spreading, and to promote justice. This can be either defensive or offensive, depending on the circumstance.

DOES Islam condone terrorism?

In war, the targeting of innocent non-combatants is a despicable act which Islam clearly prohibits.

In fact, Muslims are not allowed to destroy plants and animals unnecessarily, let alone innocent humans. However, it is important to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate resistance to occupation, as the two are very different. Muslims are required to be just in all their dealings with people, even their enemies.

“...and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness.”

Qur’an 5:8

WHAT is Halal food?

Halal, or lawful, foods are those permitted by God for Muslims to consume. Generally, most foods and beverages are considered halal, with the main exceptions being pig and alcohol. Meats and poultry must be slaughtered humanely and correctly, which includes mentioning God’s name before slaughter, and minimising the suffering of animals. Everything that is halal (lawful) is beneficial to mankind, whilst everything that is not halal is harmful, since God, Who knows best, has set the guidelines.

WHO can become a Muslim?

Allah has opened the doors of Islam to all of mankind, regardless of their history or current situation. Therefore, anyone can become a Muslim at any time by simply believing in, and uttering the following testimony of faith:

‘Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ilallah, wa ash-hadu ana Muhammadan rasoolullah’,

which means:

‘I bear witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger’.

By becoming a Muslim, one is guaranteed success in this life and eternal Paradise in the Hereafter.

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WHAT is Islam and who are Muslims?

Islam is an all-encompassing religion which defines guidelines for Muslims to follow in all facets of life, such as social, financial, legal, spiritual and political.

It was revealed by God (Allah), through His final Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), with the basis that there is only One True God worthy of worship, and Muhammad is God's final Messenger. In essence, it is the same religion which was taught by all the Prophets of God. The word "Islam" means submission to God, and its followers are known as Muslims, who can be from any racial or ethnic background.

WHAT is the purpose of life?

God did not create humans to simply wander aimlessly. Rather, the purpose of life is to acknowledge God, worship Him and live according to His laws. The test of one's faith is in using one's intellect and reasoning abilities to contemplate and recognise God's signs, and to live according to His laws.

God gave humans free will as a test to see who will willingly follow His path.

WHO is Allah?

Allah is the personal name of The One True God. Allah has no partners, equals, parents or children. To Allah belong all of the perfect attributes, such as The Creator, The Sustainer, The Provider, The Most Merciful, The All-Powerful, The Most Just, The All-Wise and The All-Knowing. No human or object shares in Allah's Lordship and His divine attributes, necessitating that He alone deserves to be worshipped exclusively.

WHO is Muhammad?

Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the final Prophet in a long chain of Prophets sent to call all Mankind to the worship of God alone. He was an excellent father, husband, teacher, leader and judge, and a perfect example of an honest, just, compassionate and brave human being. Although greatly respected, Prophet Muhammad does not have any divine attributes, and Muslims do not worship him.

WHAT are the sources of Islamic Knowledge?

The Qur'an is the primary source of Islamic knowledge, and lays out the principles of Islamic teachings. The Sunnah is the secondary source, and is a collection of thousands of sayings and actions by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as conveyed by his companions.

As they are rigorously authenticated, it provides an accurate way of life for Muslims to follow. All Islamic teachings are based on evidence derived from these two authentic sources.

WHAT is the Qur'an?

The Qur'an is the final revelation to mankind, and is a guide and criterion between right and wrong. It is the literal word of Allah, as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the Angel Gabriel, and supersedes all previous revelations, such as the Gospel and the Torah. It explains and clarifies many issues like the purpose of existence; the correct concept of God; the actions liked and disliked by God; the stories of the Prophets and their lessons; accounts of Heaven, Hell and the Day of Judgement; and the beliefs accepted by God. One of the great miracles of the Qur'an is that it has been preserved and unchanged since it was revealed over 1400 years ago.

WHAT are the main practices in Islam?

1st Pillar: The Testimony of Faith to declare that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah, and Muhammad is His final Messenger.

2nd Pillar: Prayers – to be performed five times daily; once each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall.

3rd Pillar: Prescribed Charity – this is an annual compulsory charity paid to those less fortunate and is calculated at 2.5% of one's total wealth. It is paid by those who have excess wealth.

4th Pillar: Fasting the Month of Ramadan – throughout this month, Muslims must refrain from all food, drink and sexual relations with their spouses, from dawn to sunset. They also endeavour to refrain from all bad deeds.

5th Pillar: The Pilgrimage – if a Muslim has the means to do so,

The main practices in Islam are referred to as the five pillars.

they are required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. It involves sacrifice, prayer, supplication, charity and travelling, and is a very humbling experience that unites the Muslim nation.

WHAT do Muslims think about Jesus & other Prophets?

Muslims believe that thousands of Prophets were sent by Allah, at least one to every nation with the same message: to worship Allah alone and not associate any partner with Him. Some of these Prophets include Adam, Noah, Joseph, Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them all). Jesus (peace be upon him) was one of the greatest Prophets sent by Almighty God. He was born miraculously, performed many miracles and he will return before the Day of Judgement – all by the permission and will of God.

WHY do bad things happen?

God tests people in different ways through various experiences. This includes health, family, natural disasters, wealth or other means. Patience during adversities (by not giving up hope or despairing), and gratefulness for blessings (by using such blessings in a way pleasing to God), is a means of getting closer to God and attaining eternal Paradise. Of course, pain and suffering in this life is temporary; while Paradise is everlasting.

"He who created death and life to test you as to which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, Forgiving"
Qur'an 67:2

WHAT happens after death?

Death is the passage from this brief life into the next eternal life. Each person will go through a phase in the grave and then be resurrected to be held to account on the Day of Judgement.

WHY is there a day of judgment?

This Day ensures that justice prevails, as anyone who was wronged in this life or had their rights trampled, will be compensated and dealt with justly by Allah, the All-Knowing and Most Just. If a person lives a good, honourable life by worshipping and obeying Allah, they will be entered into Paradise, through Allah's Mercy. If they choose to disbelieve, Hellfire awaits them.