

Search of Truth, Series - 18

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ISLAM

WHAT is Islam and who are Muslims?

Islam is a natural and complete way of life that encourages one to give due attention to their relationship with God and His creation. It teaches that souls find true happiness and peace through performing good actions that are approved by God and which benefit both the society and the individual.

The message of Islam is simple: to believe in and to worship The One True God alone, and to accept Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as His final Messenger. 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, we have a higher purpose - to acknowledge and worship God alone, so that we live upon the guidance of our Creator. This guidance enables us to live a successful and blessed life in all aspects, as well as promises entry into Paradise and freedom from Hell. The test of one's faith is in using one's intellect and reasoning abilities to

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

contemplate and recognise God's signs and to live according to His guidance.

Who is ALLAH?

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

Who is Muhammad?

Muhammad (peace be upon him) is final Prophet in the long line of Prophets, sent to call all mankind to the worship of God alone. He was an ideal father, husband, teacher, leader and judge, and a perfect example of an honest, just, compassionate and brave human being. Although greatly respected, he, like other Prophets, is not worshipped by Muslims. He was a human being. He had no trace of divinity, whatsoever.

WHAT is the Quran?

The Quran is the final revelation to mankind, and is 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 our 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. One of the great miracles of the Quran is that it has been preserved and unchanged since it was revealed over 1400 years ago. It also contains many scientific and historical facts that were unknown to the people of that time and have only been discovered recently, which is one of the proofs that it is from God.

WHAT are the main practices in Islam?

1st Pillar: The Testimony of Faith - to declare that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and Muhammad is His final Messenger.

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

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

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 beyond their basic needs.

4th Pillar: Fasting the Month of Ramadan - throughout this month Muslims must refrain from all food, drink and sexual relations with their spouse, 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, they are required to make the pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia, at least once in their lifetime. It involves prayer, supplication, charity and travelling, and is a very humbling and spiritual experience that unites the Muslim nation.

WHAT do Muslims believe about Jesus & other Prophets?

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 without a father and performed many miracles all by the permission and will of God.

WHY do bad things happen?

God tests people in different ways through various trials. This includes health, family, natural disasters, wealth or other

■ ■ 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

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.

WHAT happens after death?

Death is the passage from this brief life into the next eternal life. Each person will be resurrected to be held to account on the Day of

■ ■ If there was no afterlife in which the good were rewarded and the bad punished, that would contradict the perfect justice of God and life would not be fair. ■ ■

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

WHAT is the worst sin in Islam?

Worshipping others besides God or associating partners or equals with God is the worst sin in Islam. This includes ascribing some of God's attributes to other objects or beings; claiming that God has a son, mother or any other partner; or disbelieving in God.

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. Allah, the Creator of both

g e n d e r s , h a s
a s s i g n e d d i f f e r e n t
r o l e s a n d
r e s p o n s i b i l i t i e s
f o r e a c h , t a k i n g
i n t o a c c o u n t t h e i r

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

d i f f e r e n c e s . W o m e n a r e g i v e n t h e u t m o s t r e s p e c t a n d h o n o u r , w i t h n o f o r m o f o p p r e s s i o n c o n d o n e d t o w a r d s t h e m .

DOES the concept of the original sin exist in Islam?

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 truth in a manner which is pleasing to God. Linguistically, it means “striving your utmost” and can refer to doing your best to perform good deeds, giving charity. The most commonly known form is the military Jihad which is permitted only in order to preserve the well being of society, to prevent oppression from spreading, and to promote justice.

DOES Islam condone terrorism?

In war, the targeting of innocent non-combatant is a despicable act which Islam clearly prohibits. In fact, Muslims are not even allowed to destroy plants and animals unnecessarily, let alone innocent humans. This is just but one example of many ethical guidelines of war stipulated in Islam. However, it is important to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate resistance to colonial occupation, as the two are very different.

ARE all religions the same?

While most religions generally have the same teachings regarding good manners and kindness to others and so on, Islam additionally focuses on the Greatness of God with no compromises with his Oneness and Perfection. Unlike many religions, Islam primarily teaches that God is completely different and unique compared to His creation and that all praise and worship is due directly and exclusively to him. Islam is also comprehensive, simple yet profound, has revelation that is preserved, does not reject any of God’s Prophets but states that they all came to mankind with the one and same message.

WHAT is Halal food?

Halal, or lawful, foods are those permitted by God for consumption. 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.

WHO can become a Muslim?

Becoming a Muslim means acknowledging the greatness of The Creator and developing and maintaining a close relationship with Him by obeying Him. This will lead to happiness and contentment in this life and the next.

■■ **By becoming a Muslim, one will live a life of purpose and fulfilment, while being guaranteed eternal Paradise in the Hereafter.** ■■

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

'I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger.'



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