



Frequently Asked Questions on Islam and the Muslims: Part 2

This is a series aimed at creating a thorough understanding of the essential teachings that underlie Islam, mainly for non-Muslims, in a brief, yet concise manner.

2. More on the meaning of Islaam...¹

Well... Islam is not named after an individual ﷺ as is Christianity after Jesus Christ or Buddhism ☸ after Gautama Buddha where human beings and their images are raised to God-like status and worshipped. Neither is Islam a tribal religion as is Hinduism ☸ or Judaism ✡ (named after the Hindu and Judaic tribes respectively) where salvation is a birthright and racism a virtue. And nor does Islam take its name after failing political ideologies like Socialism and Capitalism; both of which continue to oppress the weak, rape the Earth's resources and destroy her environment. 'Islam' actually means 'Submission to the will of Allaah (the One True God) and anyone who does so is a 'Muslim'. Islam also implies *peace* and *tranquility*, a natural consequence of submitting oneself to Allaah alone and avoiding the worship of and enslavement to whatever is besides Him.

This day have I perfected your religion for your, completed My favour upon you, and am pleased with Islam as your religion and way of life [Qur'an 5:3]

Hence, while all other religions are innovated and forged by men, Islam is the re-expression of the same religion espoused by all prophets sent throughout the ages to guide humanity. As Allaah states in the Qur'an, unchanged since its revelation to His Final Prophet and Messenger Muhammad, over 1400 years ago:

Allaah has ordained for you (humankind) the same religion which He ordained for Noah, and that which We have inspired to you (O Muhammad) and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus. [Qur'an 42:13]

The greatest oppression and the only unforgivable sin is to worship, directly or indirectly, any person, place or thing other than Allaah, the One True God. This is because every soul has an inborn inclination to worship Him alone. So to embrace Islam is simply to revert back to ones true nature and to ones natural belief in and worship of the Creator, Allaah. Islam is not simply to acknowledge the Creator - whose existence is an undeniable reality - but it is to direct all forms of worship, whether feelings in the heart, sayings of the tongue or actions of the limbs to Allaah alone. In this lies the freedom from the subjugation and enslavement to created things whether worthless idols, money, mere humans, prophets

¹ Adapted from an article originally produced by CTIT, UK.

raised to the level of gods, or abstract notions such as worldly status, fame and power. As one of the Muslim generals said in approaching a non-Muslim people: *"We have come to liberate whomsoever Allaah wills, from among His servants, from the worship of men by men, to the worship of the Lord of all men."*

As the highest created intelligence, humankind are responsible for their actions and will inevitably held to account for them. So salvation must be universally attainable, not being confined to any people, place or time. Eternal happiness cannot be obstructed by reincarnation, belief in man as a saviour or the mediation of priests between humans and God. Islam is simple, rational and practical. The greatest emphasis is one the very close and personal relationship between Allaah and His needy servants, humankind:

And when My servants ask you concerning Me (O Muhammad), then indeed I am close. I respond to the call of the supplicant when he calls Me. Let them then respond to Me (My call) and believe in Me, that they may receive guidance (and walk aright) [Qur'an 2:186]

Islam is not just a religion, but a truly complete way of life in which the relation of the individual to the society and the material to the spiritual is balanced into a perfect harmony. Islam offers certainty and security of faith unlike Christianity and other religions where 'going with the flow' is the order of the day - continuously changing to suit the culture they are in. Thus, only through the righteous guidance of Islam - the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Prophet Muhammad's exemplification of the teachings of the Qur'an) - can all of humankind attain peace and salvation... now and till the end of time.

For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for truthful men and women, for patient men and women, for humble men and women, for charitable men and women, for fasting men and women, for men and women who guard their chastity, and for men and women who engage much in Allaah's praise; For them has Allaah prepared forgiveness and a great reward. [Qur'an 33:35]