



If thou wert in doubt as to what
We have revealed unto thee, then
ask those who have been
reading the Book from before
thee....
(Surah 10 verse 94)

A
CHRISTIAN'S
GUIDE TO
ISLAM

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A Christian's Guide to Islam

What follows is a summary of Islamic doctrine that is useful to better understand your Muslim friends. This is not an exhaustive treatment of Islamic doctrine, nor will every Muslim believe exactly this way. Islam is a religion with great diversity. What I have attempted to do is identify 16 basic areas of belief and present the things most commonly believed regarding them. This is the result of my own study and experience combined with teaching from Muslim sources. I have retained some of the original language and syntax of the sources to give a sense of how these thoughts would sound if spoken by a Muslim. **I would not advise you to take these points and develop a comprehensive refutation of them. Instead, seeing what is believed, steep yourself in the Christian truths which deal with the issues and learn how to present those truths in a sensible and positive manner, thus demonstrating the beauty of Christianity.** In other words, don't say 'This is what Muslims believe and here is why you are wrong.' Instead say, 'As a Christian I believe...' and then show them the beauty of Biblical truth.

Important Islamic Concepts: *Religion, Allah (God), Prophets, The Quran, Jesus, Humanity, Life and Death, Sins, the Day of Judgment, Paradise, Hell, Satan, Prayer, Jinn, Angels, and Becoming a Believer.*

There is only one true **Religion**--that of believing the correct belief in Allah and His messengers, worshipping Allah only, loving, respecting, and following the prophet of the time, and loving and respecting other prophets. Every prophet and messenger followed and called people to the same Religion. This Religion is called ISLAM. A believer in Islam is called a MUSLIM. The

the heart and declaring with the tongue: **“No one is God but *Allah* and *Muhammad* is the Messenger of *Allah*”**.

Believing in all this implies—*Allah*, the Creator, has perfect attributes, only *Allah* must be worshipped. And Prophet *Muhammad*, the last prophet, was truthful in all that he conveyed from *Allah*. All the prophets before him (the first of whom was *Adam*) conveyed the same message of belief to their people and are to be loved and respected, yet in no way do prophets (or any creation) have *Allah's* attributes.

A person can become Muslim, in the solitude of a forest or in a crowded subway; he does not need to go to a mosque or have Muslims witness his profession. *Allah* knows the hearts of His creation. However, when he becomes Muslim he may declare his belief to some fellow Muslims so he will be known as a Muslim among the people. Anyone who hears this must know if you are not already Muslim you must become Muslim immediately, for you do not know when you will die. To anyone who becomes Muslim when hearing this, seek knowledge as to the practice of *Islam* from a trustworthy Muslim teacher.

Islam the only way. As people go to college to be taught by those learned on different subjects, one should go to a learned Muslim to learn about the practice of *Islam*. There will always be more to learn and more ways to improve for a devoted Muslim, so arrogance is not a part of a good Muslim's life.

The Bridges Option can provide seminars covering this material but including time for discussion and examining the Christian response to these beliefs..

meaning of Islam is to submit to Allah. The meaning of the word Muslim is one who submits to Allah.

The name **Allah** is the name of the only true God. A person can declare that he believes and follows the true Religion--Islam--in any language, for belief is known to Allah regardless of the language. Although prophets and messengers spoke different languages, what they called people to was the same Religion.

Those who say they are Muslim, yet deny the true belief in their heart, with their tongue, or by some actions, are surely not Muslim. Allah knows fully who are the ones who truly believe in Islam. Both messengers Moses and Jesus called their people to the true Religion--Islam--which is clearly described in the QURAN--the last and preserved scripture for all of mankind on earth.

Allah is the lord and he is the only one to be worshiped. Allah is the Creator. Without comparing Allah to the creation one can use mental evidences to prove the existence of the Creator. When one sees a building, one knows there is a builder when one sees a painting they know there is a painter, when one sees the creation, one knows there is a Creator.

Allah existed eternally and place did not. Allah exists without a place because He always existed and He created all the places. and Allah exists now as He has been, i.e., without residing in a place, whether this place is skies, Earth, Paradise, Hell, or any other place in the six directions.

Allah does not change. Change is a sign of need and need is non-befitting to attribute to God. Allah is perfect. If something changes for the bad, it is no longer perfect, and if it changes for the good, it was not perfect to begin with. Therefore, Allah does not change.

Allah is not in Heaven. He is not in everyone. He is not everywhere. He does not occupy a space now, He never did, and He never will. Allah exists without a place. This is the creed of Muslims!

Everything that exists, except Allah, the Creator, is created by Him. Allah has full power over every bit of His creation. Allah is not created He existed always, having His attributes, He will never perish, nor will His attributes diminish. Among His attributes is that He has knowledge of all His creation, He sees the seeable and He hears the hearable. But His knowing, seeing and hearing are in no way similar to ours. Allah speaks and His Speech is not made up of language or sound, nor does it resemble the speech of man in any way.

Allah does not need any of His creation for His existence and He does not resemble any of His creation in any way. This means that Allah is not a man or a woman He is not a Father or a Mother. He does not have:

- o a wife, a mother, a father, a son, or a daughter
- o He has no equal or partner.
- o Allah does not divide into parts
- o no creation, including man, has a part of Allah in him, nor can any creation become like Allah.

Allah existed eternally before He created any place, such as Paradise (Heaven), the skies, earth, or any planets. He is the only God. Hence, we know He is now as He was before He created all these places He does not need any place to exist in.

Allah has always known about every bit of His creation. There is no thing in His creation which escapes or defeats Him. No thing goes against the will of Allah. Both good and evil occur by His Will. However, Allah orders humans to do only the good, hu-

low Allah's orders and asks Allah for protection from Satan, he should not doubt Allah's great protection and mercy.

Upon the order of Allah, Prophet Muhammad commanded the Muslims to **pray** five times a day. This order applies since the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad until the Day of Judgment. The prayers have a specific format with one praying, praising and thanking Allah, asking for His help and guidance, and asking Him to bless the prophets and the pious Muslims. A Muslim knows that at any moment of his life he can ask *Allah* for help and guidance, he is encouraged to do so, but this does not replace the five prescribed prayers, which have a specific format to be followed.

Jinn are a distinct creation of Allah, who are invisible to humans. Allah created them from the pure flame of fire. They are male and female and have offspring. They exist here on earth and out of it. Like humans, some jinn worship Allah, but some do not. The ones who do not are known as the devils, whose head is Satan.

Angels are another distinct creation of Allah. They are not male or female and have no children. Allah created them from light. They never sin, obeying Allah in every matter. Humans have angels near them that record all they do. Some angels have appeared to men in the form of men but they never take a woman's shape. Some angels protect people from jinn by Allah's will. The angel who brought revelations to the prophets is Gabriel.

A person **becomes a Muslim** by leaving all that contradicts the meaning of the following Testification of Faith. Believing in

Hell is the everlasting dwelling place for those humans and jinn who rejected the revelations of the prophets. Hell is also a particular place and is not experienced here on earth. Its torture will not cease. The suffering will also be in body and soul. Some humans who were followers of the true Religion will suffer in Hell for some time, because they had sinned and did not repent of their sins during their lifetime. Being believers of the true Religion, they will get out of Hell after a time which Allah wills. After that, they will enter Paradise and dwell there forever and receive no further punishment. Some believers of the true Religion who die as sinners will be forgiven by Allah on the Day of Judgment and will not go to Hell before entering Paradise.

Satan, the first jinn, was present with the angels when Allah ordered him and the angels to bow down in respect before Adam. Satan did not bow down in respect. He objected to Allah and said he was better than Adam, because he was made from fire whereas Adam was made from clay. Because of this objection, Allah banished Satan. Satan vowed that he would try to persuade humans into false belief and worship and shameful conduct. Allah promised that Satan and those who follow him will be the inhabitants of Hell on the Day of Judgment.

Satan is man's accursed enemy and his vow to ruin many of mankind is not to be taken lightly. He attempts to confuse and ruin man. By his prompting, he makes bad deeds seem good. A person is not sinful when Satan whispers to him, he is sinful if he believes and/or acts on the prompting.

Humans must believe that Satan exists. They must take the warning about him very seriously, but we must remember that Allah has full power over Satan. Satan can do nothing against the will of Allah. When a believer of the true Religion strives to fol-

mans make the choice to obey or disobey Allah. Our ability to do good or evil is given to us by Allah, the Exalted.

Prophets are the greatest men that ever lived. Prophets received Revelation from Allah and conveyed it to the people. The prophets received the Revelations and conveyed them exactly in the language Allah ordered. A prophet is a messenger who sometimes comes abrogating some of the laws brought by the previous messenger or receives a new set of laws. Prophets were intelligent, trustworthy, truthful, did not commit major sins and never left their Religion. Muhammad, who lived some 1400 years ago, was the last and greatest prophet. Many prophets have lived in the past. The true scriptures were Revelations received by prophets.

Moses and Jesus both received scriptures, but what are now called the Torah and the Bible have been tampered with by man and are not the true Revelations received by the great messengers Moses and Jesus. The only scripture which is unchanged and will never be changed is the Quran. This is the scripture Allah gave Muhammad, His last prophet, in clear and eloquent Arabic. Allah has promised to protect the Quran from any changes by man, and it has remained unchanged since it was received some 1400 years ago.

Unlike the prophets before him who were sent to a particular people, Muhammad was sent to all people who lived at his time and all people who live after him until the Day of Judgment when the earth will be destroyed.

The **Quran** is the Last and Final Word of God and a message to all mankind. It is a collection of 114 surahs or chapters that were revealed to Prophet Muhammad by revelation through the Archangel Gabriel over a period of 23 years starting in 610. The

Quran was revealed piecemeal, according to the needs of the time. Angel Jibrail brought it to the Prophet who would memorize it. It lays down the law and commandments, codes for social and moral behaviour, and contains a comprehensive religious philosophy.

The Surahs are of varying lengths, these chapters, with the exception of the first are generally arranged according to length.

The text of the Quran has remained unchanged over the past 1400 years. The millions of copies of the Quran circulating in the world today are all identical down to a single letter. God says in the Quran that He Himself will guard this book: "Surely it is We Who have revealed the Exposition, and surely it is We Who are its guardians" (Surah 15:10)

The Quran was revealed to Muhammad in Arabic only. So, any Quranic translation, either in English or any other language, is neither a Quran, nor a version of the Quran, but rather it is only a translation of the meaning of the Quran. The Quran exists only in the Arabic in which it was revealed.

Because of this, we must be careful of how to treat the Quran. The Quran (Arabic) must be revered. It must not be placed on the floor and feet should never touch it. One should wash before handling it. It is the word of Allah and must be respected.

Jesus, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, is dearly loved by Muslims, for he is one of the greatest of messengers and he is one of the most loved creations to Allah. Jesus has no father he was created within Mary, Muslims believe that his mother Mary is the best of all women.

By Allah's will, Prophet Jesus performed many miracles and was obedient to Allah in every way. Jesus spoke only the truth and his followers were Muslim. Never did Jesus say:

of those (the foremost) will be from the later (generations). They will be reclining, face to face, on thrones woven with gold and precious stones. They will be served by immortal boys, with cups and jugs, and a glass from the flowing wine, from which they will have neither any headache, nor any intoxication. They will have fruit from which they may choose, and the flesh of fowls that they desire. There will be Houris with wide, lovely eyes (as wives for the pious), like preserved pearls, a reward for deeds that they used to do. They will hear no vain or sinful speech (like backbiting, etc.) but only the saying of: Salam, Salam, (greetings of peace). And those on the Right Hand, who will be those on the Right Hand? They will be among thorn-less lote-trees among Talh (banana trees) with fruits piled one above another, in long-extended shade, by constantly flowing water, and fruit in plenty, whose season is not limited, and their supply will not be cut off. They will be on couches or thrones raised high. Verily, We have created for them (maidens) of equal age, loving (their husbands only). For those on the Right Hand." [Surah 56:10-38]

Those in Paradise will experience it in body and soul, but the body will be a new body with no defects. There will be wonderful riches, foods, joy, and peace. People will be married and have interaction with one another. Those in Paradise will be in ranks according to their piety. Those who are rewarded with Paradise will never be sent out of it. When one enters Paradise everyone cheers for him

Some examples of sins less than blasphemy are killing a person unjustly, adultery, drinking alcohol, and stealing.

When a Muslim makes sincere repentance, it is as if he did not sin, in that he will not be punished for what he repented of, for Allah is ever-merciful to the Muslims. When a person becomes a Muslim for the first time, Allah forgives all his past sins.

Allah will bring **the Day of Judgment**. This earth, planets and stars were all created by Allah at a point in time. They did not always exist and they will perish by Allah's will. On a day which only Allah knows (not even the angels or prophets know it), Allah will make everything on earth and in the skies die (including angels, Satan, and all devils) and then He will resurrect them all and judge humans and jinns on what they did during their lives. Because humans and jinn made the choice to be believers or non-believers, pious or sinners, they will be rewarded or punished, by Allah's will, for what they believed, said, and did.

Those of mankind and jinn who believe correctly in Allah, i.e. they believe in the Messenger sent to them and profess their belief by becoming followers of the true Religion and die with that status, will dwell forever in **Paradise**, which Allah has created for them. The life in Paradise is better than what any human living on earth can imagine. Paradise is not allegorical. It is very real and actual.

"And those foremost (In Tawheed and obedience to Allah and His Messenger in this life) will be foremost (in Paradise). They will be those nearest to Allah in the Gardens of Delight. A multitude of those (the foremost) will be from the first generation (who embraced Islam) and a few

- o he was Allah,
- o he was the son of Allah, or
- o that his followers should pray to him or to anyone other than Allah.

Jesus is a man, but had no father, Adam was a man but had neither a father nor a mother. The Quran tells us that the Jews did not crucify Jesus. He was not crucified at all. By Allah's will Jesus was raised from the earth. Jesus is alive, and Allah will send Jesus back to the earth before the Day of Judgment. Jesus will attest that Islam is the true faith and that Prophet Muhammad, is the last messenger. He will follow the laws that Allah gave to Muhammad, and He will slay the one-eyed impostor. This is the truth, although some do not believe.

Men and women (**Humanity**) are one of the creations of Allah. They are distinct from plants, animals, jinn, and angels. They were created after angels and jinn. The first man was created from clay. Allah puts a soul into man but in no way is man's soul Allah, or a part of Allah. The first man was Adam and all human beings come from his family. Adam had no mother or father he was created and given life by Allah. Allah created a wife for Adam who bore his children.

Allah created the human beings to order them to believe, profess the truth about Allah and His messengers, worship Allah only, and follow His orders during life on earth. Some of mankind has and does worship Allah correctly, obey His orders, and will be rewarded beyond imagination. Some of mankind has not and will not worship Allah correctly they will be punished by Allah with severity in Hellfire.

This **life** of a human or jinn always ends with **death** and there is no exception. No human is doomed to Hell because he was born as a certain sex or race. Humans do not choose their race, sex, parents, or birthplace and will not be held accountable for those aspects of their life on the Day of Judgment.

Allah the Merciful, has promised any human or jinn who dies as a follower of the true Religion will receive Paradise forever. Those people who truly never heard about the correct belief in Allah during their entire lifetime and died in that state will not go to Hellfire. Sane and pubescent people who have heard of the correct belief in Allah and His messenger and die as unbelievers will dwell in Hell forever.

The correct belief in Allah has never changed and every prophet and messenger has said the same concerning belief in Allah. No one is God but Allah and mankind is to believe in Him and worship Him only.

The prophet for the people on earth at present is Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and the laws for the present population are the laws that Prophet Muhammad was given by Allah for mankind. There will be no new laws given, for there will be no new messenger. No matter how appealing it is to some people, they will not reincarnate after they die. A person is given one life in this world, so a person is wise to live this life correctly. This and other false beliefs about mankind and Allah are whispered into humans minds by Satan and the devils, and some men are fooled into believing them.

When a person goes against Allah's orders, this person has **sinned**. The worst sin is blasphemy; this is caused by any belief, saying, or action that contradicts Islam. When a person becomes

Muslim he leaves all blasphemy. A Muslim must learn about all the types of blasphemy to avoid committing any of them as he proceeds through life. This is where the sunnahs are crucial for instruction. If a Muslim commits blasphemy, he becomes non-Muslim and must become Muslim again. If he dies without becoming a Muslim, he will be in Hell forever in the Hereafter. If a Muslim commits a sin which is less than blasphemy and dies without repenting to Allah of the sin, then this sin is counted against him on the Day of Judgment. Similarly, if a Muslim follows Allah's orders, in obedience to Him, this is counted in his favor. All of this is known by Allah and no thing escapes Him. When a Muslim commits sins, he must repent of them immediately. To repent of blasphemy, one must utter the Testification of Faith, clearing himself of the committed blasphemy. The Testification of Faith (Shahadatan) can be stated as follows - I testify that no one is God but Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

For a sin less than blasphemy, one must stop doing the sin, regret having done it, and have the intention not to commit the same sin again. If the sin is stealing from a person, for example, then the stolen goods must also be returned.

Allah is ever-merciful to the Muslim. No matter how many times he sins in his life, if he stops it, regrets having done it, and intends not to do it again, he will be forgiven by Allah.

For those who are non-Muslim, no matter what good things they do, those deeds are not to their credit in the Hereafter they must first become Muslim.

A few examples of blasphemy are believing that Allah has a son, worshipping an idol, and saying that Allah does not know everything.