

# Understand Islam

What it is and what it is not



*NoClash*



# UNDERSTAND ISLAM

WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

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Written by *NoClash*



[islamicanswer.org](http://islamicanswer.org)

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(pseudonym for the author)

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1st printing

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

*In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful*



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# Preface

The articles in this book started life as posts to an online forum then on a blog. That is why the language used in the book often uses the vernacular of social media. The author was a frequent contributor to the forum discussions. Lastly, the blog articles were organized in this book format.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this book is to provide subjects of interest about the Islamic faith, practices, and laws, how it relates to other faiths, how Muslims relate to other people of faith, and answers to questions that have been raised by non-Muslims and Muslims alike. It is hoped that the book can help non-Muslims understand what Islam is and what it is not, and help Muslims clear up some questions that they may have and may not have found answers to them elsewhere.

Did you know or expect that Islam is a tolerant religion, supports democracy, free speech and free enterprise, encourages innovation and progress, abhors violence and has granted women their rights? If not, then this book is for you!

The readers of this book may vary significantly and that is why the author at times may write things that are already well-known to some readers in order to explain them to those readers who may be new to them.

All the explanations in the book are supported by evidence from the Quran, Islam's holy scripture, the Hadith, narrations attributed to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and wherever relevant, will reference scholarly books to ensure the readers that the explanations included in the book are not personal opinions but rather established understandings and evidentiary. Explanations without a reference are those of the author's understanding and analysis.

Some external links are given in several articles of the book but they are not clickable for security reasons. If you wish these links to be clickable so that you can visit their pages, you may configure your Adobe Acrobat Reader software to allow external links by going to the setting Edit, Preferences, Trust Manager. All the links in this book have been validated at the

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<sup>1</sup>The number at the bottom of each article is its number in the author's blog.

time of its publishing in late 2025, but the Web is dynamic; as time goes by, some links go bad. Therefore, have your malware protection activated just in case.

The book is organized into ten chapters followed by attachments. The chapters concentrate on the basics of the Islamic faith, its rituals, practices, and laws, interaction with other faiths and believers, and other subjects of interest. Many of the articles consist of a question someone asked and an answer to it. In addition to the list of references cited in the book, the attachments include an appendix of quizzes and answers to them, a brief word about the author, and several testimonials. The attachments also include three indexes, one for the vocabulary, one for the scholars who were cited, and one for the Quranic verses mentioned in the articles.

The author chooses to remain anonymous and requests that readers allow that wish. May the book be of help to many of its readers as it has been as a blog and in a forum.

*NoClash*

[Pseudonym of the author signifying that there is not and ought not be a clash between civilizations]

*2025 A.D., 1447 A.H., the 1500th anniversary of Prophet Muhammad's birth, PBUH*

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- About the author and testimonials therefor from forum and blog members, Appendix [C](#) on page [487](#).



**Part I**

**The Basics**

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**T**HE must-start is to state the basics: Who God is, how do we know Him, what the meaning of life is, why is it the way it is, what we are supposed to do, death, why it happens, and what happens after it. Islam answers all these questions clearly. After answering these big questions, how does Islam chart a course for believers in it to conduct their life in a way that pleases God.

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# Chapter 1

## The Big Questions

Thank you for checking out this book. It is hoped that you will benefit from it an understanding of Islam that is based on its authentic sources.

Islam is fully compatible with modern life and can easily co-exist with other religions and views of life. The author hopes to show that Islam is a tolerant religion, supports democracy, free speech, and free enterprise, encourages innovation and progress, abhors violence and has granted women their rights.

It is essential to begin by explaining the basics of the Islamic faith, starting with its answers to the big questions that have puzzled philosophers and thinkers over the millennia. The following articles offer answers to those questions from the authenticated teachings of Islam.

### 1.1 Truth Seeking

Is the truth out there? Can we find it? What is the way to find it? What are wrong ways to find it? After we find it, how do we live it?

#### 1.1.1 Can we ever find the truth?

*How do we know what the truth is if we were not there when Adam was created or when scripture was revealed?*

*I want to know the truth, but I think that no one will ever know the truth.*

Ask yourself this question: Would God leave people unguided all these centuries? If He is there and if He wants us to know Him, He will make

Himself known and do so in such a way that the simplest human can understand Him.

The truth is out there but to find it you must be truthful about trying to find it. By checking out Islam, you've done more than most people usually do. My reading of your message is that you are truthful about trying to find the truth.

God sent scriptures and prophets to every township throughout human history to let us know He is there and what He wants us to do and what He wants us to stay away from.

We have been endowed with a mind and a heart which give us the capacity to tell what's truthful and what's fake. That is why we have expressions like "the moment of truth" and "that rings true!" All a truth seeker needs to do is to check out the scriptures and the religions that are out there. They will undoubtedly figure out which one is true. The challenge is whether they'll admit it.

As you do this, remember that God is there to help you find Him. Call upon Him with sincerity and humility to help you. He most certainly will.  
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### 1.1.2 How can one find the truth? Is there one truth?

One can find the truth, by being truthful about trying to find it. If you appeal to God, with complete sincerity, to guide you to His truth, He promises He will. Do not call upon a person, dead or alive, to guide you. Do not call on an image or a statue to bring you closer to God. Call on God only. There is only one truth, and it is defined by God. He calls it the Straight Path. All other paths will lead you away from Him. 1819

### 1.1.3 How can you prove that Islam is the true religion?

The simplest answer is: by reading the Quran. It is God talking to you.

Folks who read the Quran but don't get it are the ones who carry a baggage of indoctrination, or indulgence. Just like rain cultivates only good soil, the Quran will manifest its truth only to those who purify their hearts and thoughts. 1373

### 1.1.4 Approaching Islam through mysticism

*I am very interested in Islam now. I have been a religious seeker for many, many years, and even became an Eastern Or-*

*thodox Christian 3 years ago. However, I keep stumbling over the Atonement theory, the Incarnation, and the Trinity. The principle of tawhid<sup>1</sup> appeals to me so much, as does having a direct connection to God without needing intermediaries (e.g., the priesthood). The Oneness of God seems an essential religious tenet to me now.*

*As an esoterist, being mystically inclined by nature, I wonder how most Muslims feel about Sufism. I know that there are more traditional Sufi orders, grounded in the Quran and Islam, and psuedo-Islamic Sufi orders, which I feel inclined to stay way from. I originally became an Orthodox Christian primarily because of theosis, the principle of achieving oneness with God or participating in the life and energies of God. There are hesychasts, particularly on Mount Athos, who live very ascetic lives and who invoke the name of Jesus Christ as a practice (called Prayer of the Heart). They're the Christians who've made me want to be one! However, as I've said, I've been intellectually stymied due to theological and doctrinal issues.*

*How do most people here feel about Sufism? Is it considered heretical? Is it something that interests most Muslims?*

Welcome. You have your heart in the right place.

Achieving union with God is a slippery road. That is why many Sufis deviated from the Straight Path and delved into transcendental imaginations. While that did produce some fabulous poetry, it is overall harmful to their souls. Why? Because Islam is a religion that balances this world and the Hereafter, materialism and spirituality, the individual and the society, the heart and the mind. It does not lean toward any of those.

Getting close to God and experiencing His love, on the other hand, is the ultimate aim of Islamic rituals. In a holy narration (Hadith Qudsi), authenticated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim, God says, “Whoever comes near Me a cubit, I come near him a fathom.” (Al-Bukhari [12] (7405), Muslim [43] (2675)) In another narration, He says, “My servant keeps approaching Me with extra good works until I love him. When I love him I become his eyes with which he sees, his ears with which he hears, his hands with which he reaches, and his legs with which he endeavors. And when he asks Me, I surely will answer him, and when he seeks refuge in Me, I surely will give him refuge.” (Al-Bukhari [12] (6502))

Does that sound like what you're looking for? It's all metaphorical of course. The danger is when one starts to believe that it has become physical or metaphysical.

*Is the practice of dhikr (remembrance of God) recommended for*

---

<sup>1</sup>The oneness of God.

*all Muslims, or just Sufis? Is the repeated invocation of the Name of God a basic feature of Islam?*

If by that you mean mantras, like what the whirling dervishes do, the answer is no. But if you mean the frequent remembrance of God then the answer is a definite yes. God says in the holy Quran,

“And mention God much, that you may prosper” (62:10)

And the Prophet (PBUH) advised, “Let your tongue remain moist with the remembrance of God”, reported to be authentic by [Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (814).

*Are there any Muslim mystics that are universally appreciated? For example, Shaikh Ahmad Al-Alawi or Al Ghazali? Are saints recognized in Islam?*

Yes. Jalal-Aldin Al-Rumi is one that jumps to mind. His poetry warms one’s heart, and you can see from some of it how he ventures into dangerous transcendental territory and that’s why many Muslims have strong reservations about him.

Saints are called Awliyaa in Islam. The word means allies [of God]. Muslim history is filled with them. Some were Sufi, but the majority were regular folks who had a job or business, raised families, taught and/or authored books on the many disciplines of Islamic knowledge, theology and law. And some were heads of the state!

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### 1.1.5 What is Sufism? Is it a deviation?

*Many Muslims I meet are highly influenced by the Zaytuna institute that was founded by Hamza Yusuf. Most converts in my area gravitate towards that group. In their mosque, Sunnis pray next to Shia! Women may or may not wear the hijab (head cover) - they are encouraged to “express their own interpretations”. In their classrooms, men and women sit together in the same room.*

*They practice “tasawwuf” (Sufism). What exactly is it? Did our Prophet (PBUH) practice it?*

The word “Sufiyya” (Sufism) is probably an Arabization of the Greek word Sophos, which means wisdom. Sufism is sort of like transcendental meditation, in that it aims at achieving purity of thought and feeling, and thus strengthening faith and achieving inner peace. Its history, however, proves that it’s a slippery slope! It tends to lead its followers astray by becoming convinced that they are literally one with God, or pieces of Him, etc. Such perceptions border on Kufr (deviation from correct faith), since God is above and beyond His creation and their imaginations.

For those who want to be close to God, sufism is not the answer. God gave us the answer in a Qudsi hadith<sup>2</sup>. He said,

*“My servant has not approached Me with anything better than what I have mandated on him. And as My servant keeps approaching Me with voluntary worship (Nawaafil), I love him. When I love him, I become his eyes with which he sees, his ears with which he hears, his hands with which he reaches and his legs with which he endeavors! And if he asks Me, I will certainly answer him and if he seeks refuge in Me, I will certainly shelter him.”* (Al-Bukhari [12] (6502))

Sounds like being one with God, doesn't it? Only it's metaphorical.

*People tell me Sufism is a deviant denomination that teaches “Wahdatul Wujood” (communion of all beings) and “Al fanaa” (dissolution in God). These are not teachings of Islam, are they?*

No, they are not. But that is what the “elite” (الخواص) of the Sufis believe, not the masses. It is that which should be renounced, not Sufism. I'm not defending Sufism, because, like I said before, it's a slippery slope to shirk (Associating others with God in worship). I'm only differentiating between its excesses and its good contributions. Whenever anyone asks me for advice about Sufism, I tell them it's a risky road to take and can ruin their faith, so they are better off not taking it.

The same thing applies to Shia teachings. Most Shia folks are unaware of what their elite believe. I had several Shia friends and their faith and practice are remarkably similar to Sunnis. Yet, when you read books written by their elite, such as “Al-Kafi fil Usul”, your jaw will drop!

*The religion is based on Quran and Sunnah. Where do we find any basis for Sufi heresies in the Quran or Sunnah?*

Heresies no, but mainstream plenty, e.g.,

“And those who struggle in Us - We shall certainly guide them to Our ways” (29:69),

*“My servant keeps approaching me with voluntary worship until I love him. When I love him, I become his eyes with which he sees, his ears with which he hears, his hands with which he reaches and his legs with which he endeavors”,* a Qudsi hadith, reported and authenticated by Al-Bukhari [12] (6502) and narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA).

That is the point that often is missing in that discussion, what Americans call “throwing the baby with the bath water!”, the blanket rejection

<sup>2</sup>A narration quoting God saying something that is not a Quranic text

of the good in rejecting the bad and the ugly. Only the bad and the ugly should be rejected. 1338

### 1.1.6 How can faith be a means to acquire knowledge?

An atheist wrote,

*This is the reason why I'm an atheist, and why many of my atheist friends are too: we reject faith as a means of obtaining knowledge.*

*When accepting a statement as true, there are two basic methods. The first is reason. It is when the known evidence points to the statement being true, and when the truth of the statement doesn't contradict other knowledge. The second is faith. It is when one accepts a statement as true without evidence for it, or in the face of evidence against it.*

*That is why you will be unable to convince a typical atheist to accept the existence of God - because you're not trying to convince him that God exists, you are trying to convince him to replace reason with faith to some extent.*

This is the rationale that dominated the West as a reaction to the dark age's conflict with science. Islamic history never suffered this dichotomy. From day one, Muslims have been urged by the Quran to investigate the world around them and verify the authenticity of what they are told to be true. In the Quran, God has harsh and rebuking words to say to those who blindly follow tradition.

In Islam, you first read the Quran and then reflect on it in order to determine whether it is the truth. Once convinced that it is, then you take its statements with confidence even if you cannot prove them in the lab. In other words, reflection comes first, then faith. Faith does not replace reason, it complements it in Islam. That's one of the most unique features of Islam. You won't see a conflict between scripture and history in the Quran as you may see elsewhere.

Faith is not a means to obtain knowledge in Islam. The knowledge of the physical world is obtained in the lab. The knowledge of the spiritual world can only be obtained from God's guidance. That is why He sent His prophets and scriptures: so that we do not stumble in the dark each with his opinion.

We know from everyday experience that logic does not apply to everything, e.g., emotions and relationships. That is because logic rules the physical and intellectual world while other factors rule the emotional world and still other factors rule the spiritual world. To deny the spiritual world

or the factors that rule it is to make an unfounded generalization that reason and logic rule all worlds. 97

### 1.1.7 Is learning Islam hard?

*When I converted to Islam, I found that I had to research a lot on my own. Unlike other religions, Islam doesn't seem to have a regular instruction program. It may be different in other areas where there are more Muslims. I am not complaining, just letting you know that my move from atheism to Christianity was easier than my reverting from Christianity to Islam.*

That's an interesting observation. Indeed, there is no clergy system in Islam and no indoctrination! In fact, if you encounter a group of Muslims who attempt to indoctrinate you, you should be suspicious of them.

The reason for this is that Islam is quite simple: All of it is in the Quran and the authentic Sunna and they are both preserved and available to everyone in their language and freely online! Besides, there is a support system of a billion people. Anyone who tells you it's more complex than that is either mistaken or pursuing an agenda. 643

## 1.2 The Supreme Being

Does God exist? Can that be proved? How can we find out? Who is He? What does He look like? These are some of the questions asked and answered.

### 1.2.1 Does God exist? How come?

This question, in Islam, is upside down. Everything and everyone is a creation of God, including existence. Things and people exist because of God, and they cannot exist without Him. God says in the Quran, verse 36:82, that when He wills something, He says to it: "Be" and it is. Not only does this illustrate the infinite power of God, but it also makes it clear that everything and everyone has always existed in a world known only to God. Existence as we know it, then, is a matter of transference from one world known only to God, to a world that we know. 1811

### 1.2.2 Who is God? What does He look like?

God is the supreme being through whom everything and everyone is defined. He is not a man. Men are His creation. He does not have children, parents,

siblings or any relatives. Family and relations are His creation. He is not an idol, an image, a planet, a star, an animal, a spirit, a concept, an energy, or anything else that you can imagine. All of those are His creations. He precedes and supercedes all. He is not male nor female. Gender is one of His creations. He is not old or young. Age and time are two of His creations. He does not have a body or a soul. Body and soul are two of His creations. He does not have a size nor can He be contained. Dimensions and containers are His creations. He cannot be in one place and not in another. God says in the Quran, verse 75:4, that He is with us wherever we are. He does not have a divine nature, nor a human nature. Nature is His creation. He is not a person, nor is He impersonal. Both concepts are His creation and He is beyond them. You get the point.

With a definition like that, it's impossible there can be more than one such God. That's why the oneness of God is the central theme of Islam and the first pillar of faith.

The Quran summarizes what God looks like in verse 42:11, "Like His simile is nothing" 1815

### 1.2.3 Is there proof of God?

*A lot of people don't believe in God and their excuse is that God doesn't show any proof of Himself.*

The existence of God cannot be proved by laws He created, such as math or physics. He is beyond them. That said, the whole universe is full of signs that point to God. People who do not believe in God do not allow themselves to see Him in His signs. The Quran is made of signs. We are signs. Everything in nature is a sign that gives a direction toward God. Only when one opens their heart and mind can they truly tune in and easily find God.

People who want God to manifest Himself to them have it backwards. God cannot be seen in this world because seeing something in this world means it is matter that reflects light. God is not matter. He is the creator of matter, light and reflection, so He is beyond them all. When God spoke to Moses (ؑؒؓؔ), He gave Moses a sign of Him with voice that Moses could hear in a language that Moses could understand. Voice and language were created by God, therefore He is beyond them.

People who do not believe in God, do so with the mind and the free will that God gave them. They want to see Him with the eyes that God gave them. The religion of God is called Islam, a word that means surrender, because any other attitude toward God lacks the proper humility.

That is why faith is what God emphasizes the most in the Quran. God repeatedly ties faith with reason in order to remove blind faith. He wants

us to develop educated faith, faith that is acquired after deliberation and reflection on His signs and concluding, “Our Lord, You have not created this in vain!” (3:191) 36

### 1.2.4 How can we prove that God exists?

We can't! If there were proof, there would be no need for faith. That said, the existence of God is something ingrained in all of us since before we were born, see verse 7:172. That is why when God expounds His favors on us and draws our attention to His signs all around us, He often asks us the rhetorical question, “Do you not remember?” (32:4).

*How do you explain the suffering that takes place in the world?*

It is a consequence of the free will that chooses evil. If there were no evil chosen, there would be no suffering. And if no one could choose evil, then there is no point to the free will!

For this and other fundamental questions, read the section on fate and the free will, §1.7. 1410

### 1.2.5 How can I know the true God?

*I'm investigating Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other religions. I want to find the truth. Will I?*

If you are sincere in your investigation, God will guide you to the truth.

If after your investigation, you are still undecided then here is a simple way to resolve the indecision: Wash up, wear clean clothes then pray to God to guide you. Do not call God any name, not Eloah, not Jesus, not Christ, not Krishna, not Buddha, and not Allah. Otherwise, you'd be making a conclusion before you start! If your heart is sincere and your desire for the truth is genuine, God will not turn you down. 1371

### 1.2.6 Who created God?

That question is kind of like asking, “What revolves around the moon?” It's ill-posed. A moon is a celestial being that revolves around a planet; nothing revolves around it by definition. If something revolves around it, then it's not a moon, it's a planet, or a star.

God, by definition, is the Creator of everything and everyone. A god who would be created is not God, but a creature. 686

### 1.2.7 God is not a man

*In my culture and religion, we perceive God as a man, for He created man in His image. What is the Islamic view of God?*

I remember reading an article by Maryam Jameela, a Jewish American lady who accepted Islam. She wrote in the article that her concept of God as she was growing up in the Jewish tradition was that He was a “very old man with a long white beard!”

God criticizes such imaginations in the Quran, “And they underestimated God. The whole earth is in His grip on the Day of Resurrection and the heavens are folded under His right arm.” (39:67)

Then God tells us what He looks like, “Like His simile is nothing!” (42:11)

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### 1.2.8 Does God have physical attributes?

*The Quran says that God has a “face”, “eye”, “two hands”, etc. It also says that He “established Himself on the Throne”. And I read hadeeths that say He has a “leg”, “fingers”, “foot”, etc. Does that mean God has physical attributes?*

Attributes in any language are either actual or figurative. If they are not actual then they are figurative. I’m sure you agree that God does not sit on something, because that would mean He ends where the seat begins, God forbid! Therefore, the only option left available is that it’s a figure of speech.

God says in the famous Qudsi hadith, “My worshiper keeps coming close to Me until I love him. When I love him, I become his eyes with which he sees, his ears with which he hears, his hand with which he reaches and his legs with which he ventures.” (Al-Bukhari [12] (6502))

Are those actual transformations or figures of speech? Obviously they are figures of speech.

Another hadith says that God descends to the nearest heaven and calls out, “Is there anyone who wants to repent? I will accept his repentance. Is there anyone who will seek My forgiveness? I will forgive him.” (Al-Bukhari [12] (7494))

Does God move from one place to another? Of course not. It’s a figure of speech to convey His closeness.

Why is it not literal? Because God tells us about Himself, very succinctly, “Like His simile is nothing.” (42:11)

*What you said doesn't prove it is a figure of speech. It simply shows that we don't know the "how" of God's attributes and actions. To then say it is metaphorical is simply imitation of the Jahmia's philosophy (a faction that denied God's attributes). Not understanding simply means we don't understand, it doesn't mean we need to deny the attribute or explain it away.*

How did you get deny? How can one deny what God said about himself? The Jahmia denied the attributes of God. I hope you're not accusing me of doing the same.

When God says that He scuttles toward the believer, do you take that literally or figuratively? When He says that He descends to the first heaven, is that actual or is it a figure of speech?

God knows that we cannot comprehend Him, so out of His grace, He uses figures of speech familiar to us in our language to tell us about Himself. That does not mean they are actual descriptions, which the Mumaththila (a faction that likened God's attributes to human attributes) and the Mujassima (a faction that believed God has physical attributes) believed, nor that they are void like the Jahmiia believed. All are extremes. The right course is always the middle between extremes.

You say that we don't understand but must believe. Isn't that the same logic used by other religions: You don't have to understand it; you can't understand it, but you have to believe it?

If our minds are so incapable, then why does God ask us hundreds of times in the Quran the rhetorical questions, "Have you not been using your mind?" (36:62), "Could you not reason?" (21:10) 867

### 1.2.9 Physical descriptions of God in the Quran

*Do Muslims believe that God has physical attributes, such as a face, hands, etc.? Such attributes are mentioned in the Quran, right? How is this different from the physical description of God in the Bible?*

It is important to differentiate between metaphors and regular discourse. The Arabs very often use a wide range of literary devices in their everyday words.

And so does the Quran; it uses metaphors a lot to describe God. It says that God has hands, eyes and a face. It says that God "settles" on the Throne. It says that God "gets angry." The Qudsi Hadith<sup>3</sup> says that God "comes near" a person and "scuttles" toward him. The authentic hadith

<sup>3</sup>A narration from the Prophet of something that God revealed to him that is not art of the Quran.

says that God “descends” to the first heaven. However, the Quran also makes it clear that those are all metaphors because it says “Like His simile is nothing!” (42:11) 671

### 1.2.10 Why does God refer to Himself in the Quran as “We”?

Queen Elizabeth II referred to herself as “we!” Most royalties throughout history have done likewise. This is not unique to Arabic that the plural is used for aggrandizing the first person single pronoun. 184

### 1.2.11 God’s constant kindness

*Allah is kind to us in ways that we cannot even imagine. His kindness is manifested to us from before we are born into our infancy and adulthood, in every aspect of our lives.*

*It is from Allah’s kindness that He creates the fetus in its mother’s womb, and that the womb does not reject it even though it is a foreign body. Allah makes the womb ready to welcome it. Allah thus enfolds the fetus in three protective coverings, that of the placenta, that of the womb, and that of the mother’s body where it develops in safety and receives nourishment from its mother.*

*It is from Allah’s kindness that the newborn knows to take its mother’s breast and knows to cry whenever it is hungry or needs something so that its needs can be tended to.*

*It is from Allah’s kindness that He blesses us with patience and fortitude in the face of pain and hardship. When we bear patiently what befalls us reconcile ourselves to His will, it is good for us. We see this in the story of Joseph (PBUH). First, he suffered at the hands of his brothers who abandoned him at the bottom of a well. Then he suffered years of imprisonment in Egypt as a result of sexual allegations he was innocent of. Finally, Allah blessed him to enjoy power and influence in Egypt. After everything that happened, Joseph declared:*

*“Lo! My Lord is Most Kind to whom He pleases.” (12:100)*

*Most people grumble about the tribulations that they face as individuals and as communities, because they do not see anything in them but their obviously negative aspects. With time, they come to see the situation’s many dimensions and outcomes, and they realize that it manifests Allah’s kindness in many profound ways.*

How true! May God reward you well for sharing these reflections. The countless good that God has done for us, most people take for granted and do not thank God for it. When hardship hits, some people panic, some despair, some curse the times, some collapse, some resort to violence or evil ways, some end their lives and some pray to other than God. Only a few pray to the One True God to alleviate their suffering. Of those, most forget God immediately after the hardship is lifted. Some even associate others with Him in the lifting of hardship. Only a few, the believers, continue afterward to thank God and hasten to please Him. May we all be among those believers.

*It is from Allah's kindness that He made the religion easy. Allah says,*

*"And in truth We have made the Quran easy to understand, so will anyone take heed?" (54:17)*

*Facilitation and flexibility are among the overarching principles of Islamic law. Whenever Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was faced with a choice between two options, he would always choose the easiest of the two, as long as no sin was involved. [Saheeh al-Bukhari (3560,6786) and Saheeh Muslim (2327)]*

The religion is indeed easy, not only the Quran, yet so many Muslims do not accept that! They insist on making it hard and when they have two opinions, they choose the harder one. The religion is straightforward but they make it complex, plain but they make it mysterious, peaceful but they make it violent, neighborly and outreaching but they make it alienating and hostile, attractive but they make it repulsive, flexible but they make it strict, inclusive but they make it exclusive.

May God help us all understand and appreciate the beautiful religion that He chose for the world. 1086

### 1.2.12 Doesn't God already know?

*There are verses in the Quran that say that God does things so that "he may know who has told the truth and who has been lying." Doesn't God already know that? Please explain to me. Thanks.*

This is another example of many of the use of figures of speech in the Quran, which echoes the way the Arabs talk. They use figures of speech all the time. Those who take every word literally will get confused, but those who understand how the Arabs use language will not be. That is why no early Muslim wondered about most figures of speech in the Quran; they all knew what they meant.

This is a challenge to translators of the Quran. If they translate it literally, the verse would come out confusing, but if they recognize how the Arabs use language, they can translate it the way the Arabs understand it.

The expression “so that He may know who have told the truth and who have been lying” is a figure of speech that means “so that He may note or make known to all who have told the truth and who have been lying.” 983

### 1.2.13 Is the word “Allah” exclusive to Muslims?

*A court in Malaysia ruled that non-Muslims cannot use the word “Allah”, per this article, [Reuter’s article](#). Is this proper?*

No. To begin with, one cannot censor the use of words that other people use unless the usage is defamatory, slanderous, libelous or profane.

Secondly, the word “Allah” is simply the Arabic word for God. God uses it in the Quran to refer to Himself because the Quran is revealed in the Arabic language, not because that is His name. God does not have a name. He does not need one. You and I have names because there are many people that are just like us, so a name is necessary to distinguish us from others. But there is only one God.

Arab Christians and Jews call God “Allah”.

It is true that many Islamophobes have been abusing the word “Allah”, but these folks do not realize that, by doing so, they are abusing the same God they believe in!

When God says in the holy Quran that He has beautiful “names” that we should use when we call upon Him (verse 7:180), He is referring to His attributes, such as Al-Rahman (The Beneficent), Al-Ghafur (The Much-Forgiving), Al-Tawwab (The Oft Accepting of repentance). One of those attributes is Allah, which means *The God*. 2382

### 1.2.14 How do we know that God loves us?

*How do we know that God loves us? Is His love unconditional? How do we know when He is pleased with us and when He is displeased?*

We know that God loves us from His revelation, but His love is not unconditional. He says in the holy Quran,

“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous. Who spend [in the cause of God] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon people - and God loves the doers of good.” (3:133-134)

But He also says, “Verily, God does not love those who are vain and boastful.” (4:36) And, “Eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He does not love the extravagant.” (7:31)

God is pleased when we manifest our faith in Him by saying and doing good and by remaining faithful under adversity.

A famous quote in Islamic literature, by Said ibn Jubair (RA), a fellow of the Prophet (PBUH) and a narrator of many of his hadiths, is particularly helpful in answering your question, “A reward of a good deed is a good deed after it, and a punishment of sin is a sin after it!”

The Prophet, peace be upon him, gave a succinct definition of sin; he said “Sin is what you mull around in your bosom and would hate for anyone to know about it.” (Muslim [43] (2553)) He also gave a simple criteria for knowing what is a sin and what is a good deed. He said, “If your good deed pleases you and your sin displeases you, then you are a believer.” (Al-Albani [3] (2/91))

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### 1.2.15 Why does God need constant reassurance from us?

*Does Allah, who is almighty, have to have your constant re-assertion of faith every second? It seems strange, being that Allah, who created the very universe, must have this constant reassurance.*

You got it backwards. It is we who need these reassurances every second because Satan is after us every second. It is God’s grace that He provided us with so many ways throughout the day to beat the devil.

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## 1.3 The Meaning of Life

How did we get here on earth? Why were we placed here? With reality being full of imperfection, what is the point of it?

### 1.3.1 What is the meaning of life? Why are we here?

The Quran,<sup>4</sup> verse 51:56 states that the purpose of our being is to worship God. God says in the Quran that He offered the “Trust”<sup>5</sup> to the heavens, the earth and the mountains to carry. They all declined to carry the Trust

<sup>4</sup>Pronounced: Qoor Ann, is the word of God which He revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (peace be upon him) in the 7th century A.D.

<sup>5</sup>The Trust [al Amana], as stated in verse 33:72, is widely interpreted as the use of the free will to establish God’s laws on earth.

as they felt it would be a huge burden. But man carried it! We agreed to be God's deputies in the earth, to promote virtue and curb vice, knowing full well the reward and punishment waiting for us on the Last Day.

We are here because we wanted to. We chose to be born!

If you think about it, this is really the only explanation that is consistent with the premise of God. If we are here against our will, that would violate the principle of God's fairness. 1809

### 1.3.2 What is the point of life on earth?

*A non-Muslim friend of mine asked me "Since Muslims don't believe in original sin, what is the point of humans?" What should I have answered her?*

Muslims believe in the original sin; they just don't believe it was inherited.

Her question reflects three fallacies,

1. That Adam and Eve were sent down to earth as punishment.
2. That sin is inherited.
3. That sin cannot be expiated by human effort, hence the need for a sinless savior.

The first fallacy ignores the obvious question: Did Adam and Eve regret what they did? Did they apologize to God? Did He accept their apology? If not, that would be unfair because He made them capable of sinning. If, on the other hand, they did apologize and He accepted, then the sin was forgiven and no punishment is necessary.

The second fallacy goes against fairness and logic.

The third fallacy contradicts God's fairness, since the sin was human, its expiation must also be human.

The Quran guided us to the simple, logical answers to those fallacies. For refuting the first one, God told us quite clearly that the purpose for Adam and Eve was to go to the earth! He says,

"And God said to the angels, 'I am setting up *in the earth* a deputy' " (2:30)

For refuting the second fallacy, God asserts the obvious,

"No bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another." (6:164)

For refuting the third fallacy, God says,

“And they say, ‘None will enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.’ That is [merely] their wishful thinking, Say, ‘Produce your proof, if you should be truthful.’ Nay! Whoever submits his face to God while being a benefactor shall have his reward with his Lord. And *no fear shall there be upon them, nor shall they grieve.*” (2:111-112)

*I've wondered about the original sin. Why create humans knowing full well that they're going to commit this original sin? Seems pretty cruel.*

It would be cruel if He did not make them able to avoid it, did not warn them of Satan being their sworn enemy, did not guide them to the way to apologize and repent or did not accept their apology and forgive them. But He did all that!

So, why did He put them through this trial in the first place? To give them a dress rehearsal of what will happen when they go on the job **they volunteered for**: life on earth! They needed to know first hand that violating God's commands carries dire consequences, that Satan wishes them failure, that they are vulnerable to sin, but that God is merciful and will forgive them if they turn to Him and ask His forgiveness. 744

### 1.3.3 Leo Tolstoy's last words

Tolstoy is reputed to have said to his wife on his death bed, “What if my whole life was wrong?”

How many people ask that question of themselves while they still have time to answer it and rectify their lives? 106

### 1.3.4 Why is there suffering, death, evil and injustice in the world?

This world was not meant to be heaven. It is actually the second stage in our existence. The first stage was before we were in the womb when we were in another world known only to God. The next stage following this life is the life in the grave. The last stage God calls “The Lasting Home” which starts with the Day of Judgment.

The Trust that God offered us and we accepted is founded on the free will that we all know we have. The reason there is evil and injustice in this world is that some of us choose them. We are capable of choosing goodness or evil. The choice of evil inevitably causes injustice and suffering.

Nothing happens, however, without God's permission. God allows suffering to happen for a variety of reasons that are consistent with His comprehensive knowledge and fairness. Some suffering is a test of faith, other

suffering is a punishment of sin. The suffering of others is a reminder to us of our own vulnerabilities and to be thankful to God for sparing us. The best way to express thanks to God is to alleviate suffering, correct injustice and fight evil.

The reason there is death is so we can transfer to the next life. We all will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment to stand trial before God for what we chose to do in this life. 1813

### 1.3.5 The dark night of the soul

*I now have insight into why I could not pray. InshaAllah (God willing), you will be able to give me Quran verses and hadeeth quotes to verify my insight.*

*I have been tested. I was blessed with a test that was life-changing. Trust me brother, I have broken down and called out to Allah swt. A common theme in these times of despondency is the alienation from the duyna (this world).*

*We are human beings. Part of the human condition is the social condition. In times of tests our world is narrowed. Shytan (Satan) promises us poverty. He can be very demonstrative. Accompanying poverty is social disgrace. He promises us a world of fear and want.*

*We are fragile. When the stressors of want explode into fear our bodies can break down. When fear reigns the soul, Shytan is pleased, the want is our physical existence. We need to protect it. We yield to base instinct for survival. We get sick.*

*In sickness our soul gets neglected. Our perception of the world and our state of want to survive are the overriding factors. Our physical pain is a mirror of the state of our spiritual state. The soul is in agony. Sabr (endurance) is a most difficult construct. Why am I going through this much pain. The what did I do to deserve this. When is this going to end. As the pain swells hope fades. The pain is both physical and emotional, thereby compounding the sense of hopelessness. This is the trick of Shytan.*

*The intellect alleviates the sense of hopelessness. This is simply turning the sense of loss into the hope. It is counting the blessings of Allah swt. It is taking the anguish of pain and transforming it into a moment of joy; of acknowledging the blessing of pain as being the expiation of sin. Furthermore, pain increases our dependence on Allah swt.*

*When the body can not cope the intellect has to make the decision. Enlightenment comes from the union of the body and*

*intellect in acknowledging the Divine Presence. At that moment want turns into abundance. And the best moment of union is prayer.*

*I hope this makes sense.*

May God keep being with you in your tribulations.

Very profound essay. I can hardly add to it.

Count yourself among those God may be pleased with. You keep bouncing back to God and thus escaping the traps of Satan. That bounce back is what entitled David, Solomon and Job, peace be upon them, to the label of Awwab (Oft-returner), with which God praises them in Chapter 38. The word means one who keeps coming back to God. A child instinctively runs to mom. A believer finds herself running to God.

*It was profound only in the sense that the depth of the experience is difficult to capture in words. Hence, I used the word insight. I had to contemplate. There is that fine line in illness. Susan Sontag wrote a wonderful book she entitled, "Illness as Metaphor". She did not develop the religious themes. Much of traditional psychoanalysis attempts to understand the relationship between illness and rebirth process. St. John of the Cross discusses the dark night of the soul. The Persian scholar, Sadr, had a metamorphosis.*

*I am blessed. But the letting go process is not easy. There seems to be a strong physical component to spiritual growth. It is a process of emptying oneself of a lifetime of false desires. And some are stuck like white on rice.*

Many Eastern philosophies and religions have long postulated that there is a mutually exclusive relationship between the body and the spirit. That, in order for the soul to reach enlightenment, the body needs to be deprived. That the food for the soul is the lack of food for the body.

Islam does not agree. Islam does say that there is a relationship between the body and the spirit, the union of which is the self. If the body fasts, it has a chance to heal itself, and it also gives the "heart" a chance to feed the spirit. This is analogous to the Eastern philosophies but is fundamentally distinct from them. It's not the hunger and thirst that is nourishing the spirit. Rather, it is the attention a believer can give to his spirit now that his attention is not busy with food and drink. Illness can work in a similar way. A patient may use the time he suddenly has to shift his focus to his spirituality, knowing that God is with him. It's not the illness that is doing this; it's the focus afforded by the illness.

Put another way, it is quite possible in Islam to nourish the body and the spirit at the same time without sacrificing either one. All the believer

has to do is remain mindful of God and of what's important and lasting. The Prophet (PBUH) once ate a rich delicious dinner he was invited to and still woke up for Tahajjud (vigil) in the middle of the night.

And by the reverse token, one can deprive both his body and his spirit at the same time, sacrificing both! That can happen when one stops eating and drinking and seeks enlightenment at all the wrong places.

*And the physical movements of prayer are healing. I have read how the positions correspond to the chakras. Could we say Islam allows us to have the best of both worlds. Our body is the theater of revelation which is nourishing to the soul. Simply put without the body the soul could not receive the benefit of prayer. And, naturally vice versa.*

Nicely put. However, any resemblance between the movements in a Muslim prayer and the chakras is a mere coincidence, unless it can be shown that the notion of chakras originated from God. 2395

### 1.3.6 What will happen to prior people?

*What happens to my ancestors? I'm from a city where everyone until recently was Catholic and very pious. But my great grandfather for example never heard of Islam in his whole life. What happens to him? What happens to people who died before Islam came out.*

God conveyed His message to all communities since Adam and Eve. He says in the holy Quran, "Indeed, We have sent you with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And there was no community but that there had passed within it a warner." (35:24)

Don't worry about where others are going; worry about where you are going. God says in the holy Quran, "Indeed, God does not do injustice, [even] as much as an speck's weight; while if there is a good deed, He multiplies it and gives from His providence a great reward" (4:40) and He also says, "Indeed, God does not wrong the people at all, but it is the people who are wronging themselves." (10:44) 504

## 1.4 Death

What is the point of life if it always ends with death? Is there life after death?

### 1.4.1 Nagging questions about death

*Why would God allow innocent people to die? Why would God allow infants to die? Why would God allow unborn babies to die through late-term abortions just because the mother didn't want a kid? Now I'll be the first to argue that, in certain circumstances, death isn't a bad thing for the person dying. But it's the effects of that death on loved ones that truly bring grief and suffering. I can't see God giving those kinds of effects to his believers.*

The loved ones' acceptance of the death of their relatives is proof of their submission to God, which is what the word Islam means. Their prayers for them adds to their reward with God.

When a Muslim loses a loved one to death, he or she utters the words "We belong to God and back to Him we all are returning" (2:156). That is the acknowledgment that our life is a temporary test of faith, but our place was always meant to be in heaven. The death of someone is not a punishment; it's their gateway to the Hereafter which the Quran calls "The Lasting Home."

The non-believer's reaction to death, on the other hand, is despair, panic, resentment, etc. He or she does not understand the meaning of life, what we're here for or where we're going. Or is not willing to accept it.

*This is also somewhat contradictory of free will. If I decide I want to die today, it doesn't matter, because God's in control of death. I could stab myself in the heart as many times as I want, I'm not gonna die until God allows me to. That doesn't sound right to me.*

The domain of the free will, and the consequences of choices made, is in the mandates of God only. It's not a Carte Blanche. You are free to believe in Him or to deny Him and you are free then to obey Him or rebel against Him. As for His decrees, He compels you to them because He has not asked you to choose in them. We could not have a free will if God did not will for us to have it. 1040

### 1.4.2 Can one wish for one's death?

*As miserable as this life gets, can I ask Allah to take my life away, to meet Him? Is this permissible?*

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Let none of you wish for death because of a harm that hit him, but rather say: 'O God, let me live as long as life is

*good for me and let me die when death is good for me.’ ” (Al-Bukhari [12] (5671))*

Did you notice the difference? You don't wish for death because of something, you delegate the decision to God who is the only one who knows when it is the right time. 667

### 1.4.3 Is there life after death?

Just like there is day after night and vegetation after aridness, there is life after death. The inevitability of the hereafter is coupled with the most emphasized teaching in Islam, the oneness of God. We have been assigned a task in this life by God. In the hereafter, God will review our performance. We will have to account for our conscious deeds. 1817

## 1.5 Life After Death

If there is life after death, what does it look like?

### 1.5.1 Life in the grave?

*What does the Quran say about what will happen to us in that time between our last breath and the Day of Judgement?*

That period is called Al-Barzakh (Isthmus). God says in the holy Quran, “And behind them (the dead) will be an isthmus until the Day they are sent off (resurrected)” (23:100).

The significance of the word “isthmus” is that the life in the grave is solitary. The deceased person in his grave will see and hear the living who come to visit his grave, but cannot communicate with them, and may be shown scenes from the Hereafter awaiting him but can neither avert or hurry them. God says in the holy Quran, about the House of Pharaoh, “The Hell they will be presented to it, day and night, and when the Hour is established (the Day of Resurrection) [it will be announced], ‘Admit the House of Pharaoh to the toughest torment’ ” (40:46).

That is why the Prophet (PBUH) used to pray for a fellow Muslim who has died, “O God, honor his stay-over and widen his entrance”, narrated by Awf ibn Malik and reported and rated authentic by Muslim [43] (963).

May God make our stay-over and that of our loved ones a pleasant one. 2229

### 1.5.2 Privileged Life in the grave

*Some Sufis believe that the Prophet (PBUH) and the Awliyaa (Saints) have a real life in their graves. Is there a basis in Islamic teachings to back that up?*

No. All dead have a different kind of life in the grave, called the life of Al-Barzakh (the labyrinth), but not the regular life we have here, and the Prophet (PBUH) and the saints are no exception.

*I have always understood being as a timeless process caught in time while we are here.*

*We can not dwell on the past nor the future; all we can manage is the present nano-second.*

You sound like Eckhart Tolle to whom I listened a few times and liked what I heard.

While all we have is indeed the present moment, our attitude toward our past greatly affects what we decide to do with the present. We can be bitter or content. We may repeat our mistakes or learn from them. His past frightened Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, his entire life! It caused him to abandon arrogance, obstinacy and hardness which he was known for prior to Islam and caused him the sins for which he could never forgive himself. That made him the remarkable Muslim that he was, renowned for justice and humility. Nobody would have ever guessed that he would turn out like that.

Dr. Wayne Dyer was fond of saying, “We’re not human beings living a spiritual experience, we’re spiritual beings living a human experience!”

I agree. We’ve had a life before the Trust was offered to the heavens, the earth and the mountains and they declined. We had a life in the backbone of Adam, before we were conceived by our mothers, when we gave testimony to God that He is our Lord. And we had a life in the womb, have a life on earth, will have the life of Barzakh in the grave and finally the real life in heaven, in-sha-Allah (God willing).

What some Sufis get wrong is that the life in the grave for the Prophet (PBUH) and the awliyaa (saints) is the same sort of life on earth. It is not. The Prophet (PBUH) said that the dead person hears the clicks of the shoes of the people who go to his funeral as they leave and s/he hears their prayers for them only they cannot reply. It’s a life but not the same kind of life. It’s a life of waiting without work or talk. On the Day of Judgment, all will feel that life on earth, including the portion of the grave, was but an hour of a day.

*I will read up on Tolle. But life teaches us to live in the present. I am afraid of the grave and do wish to have it expanded.*

*Dumb question: we give the Prophet our salams (salutations). Is he in the same reality as the other dead? I had assumed he went home.*

He is in the same reality as all who died. The angels convey to him the greetings from Muslims ([Al-Nasai \[17\]](#) (1282)). The dead do hear their visitors, per authentic hadiths, they just cannot reply ([Muslim \[43\]](#) (2873)).  
1163

### 1.5.3 Are the dead in a better place?

*I read that when the Prophet Muhammad (saws)<sup>6</sup> was on the night journey, that when he ascended to heaven that he saw people in heaven. I have a question, who are those people in heaven that he (saws) saw? When people die do they go straight toward their destination? I mean, when people die a lot of people say that “Oh, so and so is in a better place right now.” So, I want to know if people are in heaven and or hell right now and exactly who did the Prophet (saws) see. Thanks!*

The Night and Ascension journey (Al-Israa wal-Mieraj) transported the Prophet (PBUH) to other worlds. The whole trip took less actual time than a door opened closes back! So, laws of our world did not apply to the worlds he visited.

One of these laws is the law of time. It does not work there like it works here in this worldly life. When you ask, “Are dead people in heaven now?”, you’re trying to apply the earthly law of time to heaven. It can’t be. How does it work then? That’s a matter of Al-Ghayb (the Beyond).

To make this a bit easier to understand, reflect on dreams. Have you ever had an elaborate dream that you felt took hours and traveled you vast distances, but in reality you dosed off for a few minutes? The law of time does not apply to dreams either.

The Prophet (PBUH) saw Heaven and Hell and the people who will be in them.

When people die, they transfer to the next stage in their existence: Al-Barzakh (life in the grave). They do not go straight to their final destination. When the Hour is due, the Horn is blown and the Day of Judgment commences, all people will emerge out of their graves and ascend to heaven awaiting judgment. May our loved ones and we be among those whose judgment will be quick and easy and be admitted to Paradise. 1958

<sup>6</sup>Short for ‘Salla Allahu alyahi wa sallam’, Arabic for ‘Peace be upon him’

### 1.5.4 Is it true that the dead may be tortured in their graves?

God says in the holy Quran,

“Then how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, beating their faces and their backs?” (47:27)

And He tells us about the torment in the grave for Pharaoh and his cronies,

“The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening. And the Day the Hour rises [it will be said], ‘Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment.’ ” (40:46)

Al-Bukhari and Muslim hadith collections both reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas (RA) that the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by two graves and said to his fellows, “Verily, they are being tormented and not even for a blasphemy; one of them did not wash after urination and the other spread gossip.” (Al-Bukhari [12] (6055), Muslim [43] (292))

Both also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to make supplications in which he sought refuge in God from many things, among them was the torment in the grave, “O God, I seek refuge in You from the torment of the grave.” (Al-Bukhari [12] (6390), Muslim [43] (588))

The authentic hadiths are plenty that confirm the torment in the grave for those who die as unrepentant sinners. 567

### 1.5.5 Will all believers end up in Paradise?

*I had read one of your answers regarding Muslims going to Jannah (Paradise) or not. You had mentioned that it is Allah (SWT)<sup>7</sup> who decides. Very true. But I had also come across one hadith in Bukhari,*

*Narrated Abu-Said Al-Khudri: The Prophet said, “When the people of Paradise will enter Paradise and the people of Hell will go to Hell, Allah will order those who have had faith equal to the weight of a grain of mustard seed to be taken out from Hell. So they will be taken out but (by then) they will be blackened (charred). Then they will be put in the river of Hayaa (rain) or Hayat (life) (the Narrator is in doubt as to which is the right term), and they will revive like a grain that grows near the bank of a flood channel. Don’t you see that it comes out yellow and twisted”.*

*So what does this mean? Does it mean that people who have*

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<sup>7</sup>Short for ‘Subhanahu wa Taala’, Arabic for the aggrandizing clause ‘May He be sanctified and exalted’

*faith of ONE GOD and don't do idol worship/don't equate Allah (SWT) with anyone will go to Jannah?*

*I have heard that, if your bad deeds exceed your good deeds, then you are put in hell. Is it forever, that a person burns in hell? Or as the above stated Hadith, If the person believes in Allah (SWT) he will get Jannah after getting burned for his sins?*

*Finally, is it really necessary to follow one madhab (school of thought), like hanafi or shafi?*

*Sorry brother, I ask way too many questions. It's just the curiosity and zeal to learn more. I hope you understand. JazakAllah Khair<sup>8</sup>.*

Wa Iyyak (and you too), brother. Feel free to ask as many questions as you like. I only hope I'm able to answer them.

The hadith you quoted is authentic and it means that anyone who has the slightest faith will eventually reside in Paradise. Guess who is the only One who knows that?

Thus, it is futile to try and guess who will enter Paradise and who won't. This is God's domain. What we are commissioned to do is to obey God in what He told us in the Quran and obey the Prophet (ﷺ) in what he authentically told us in the Hadith. This requires knowledge of these two sources. Nobody has an excuse nowadays not to know what God and His Messenger have said because that is documented, preserved and widely and freely available in practically all human languages.

We cannot know, nor should we try to know, whether someone's faith is true or whether someone's actions please God. What we should try to do instead is to make our faith as sincere as we possibly can and our words and deeds as good and as dedicated to God as best as we can.

As for following a particular school of thought, ask yourself this question: Did the founder of that school receive revelation from God? Was he infallible? The answer is obviously no. Thus, strictly following a school of thought is not required upon Muslims, unless one is unable or unwilling to study the various opinions and pick the one that makes the most sense to him or her. All the founders of schools of thought were pious and knowledgeable. Yet, they differed greatly on many issues.

How come? Was it because they thought the other founder was less knowledgeable or less pious? Of course not. They simply saw alternative arguments that seemed to them more meritorious than the other founder's argument. If God or His Messenger wanted a matter to be settled without disputes, they would have explicitly given the ruling on it. A matter being subject to various interpretations is so by design. All legitimate interpretations of it are meant.

<sup>8</sup>Arabic for the good wish 'May God recompense you with good'

The only people who will not be in Paradise are the people whom God said about that they will “reside in the Fire for eternity”. Pay extra attention - when you read the Quran - to those verses. May God guard our faith, rectify our words and deeds and save us from straying from His Straight Path. 2223

### 1.5.6 Will we be reunited with our families in Paradise?

*I came across someone who told me that the people in Jannah (Paradise) won't see or even recognize their families or friends.*

*I'm not sure if it is true but the thought of it just scares me, to not be able to recognize my mother or see her.*

Not true. God says in the holy Quran,

“And those who have believed and their offspring followed them with faith, *We join them with their offspring* and We do not deprive them of their work a thing” (52:21)

The person is probably misinterpreting verses 70:8-14 which describe a scene on the Day of Judgment. In that scene, a frightened sinner will see their relatives and friends but won't be able to talk to them with the hope that they may mediate for him with God,

“70:8 [On] the Day the sky is like lava,  
 70:9 And the mountains are like tuft,  
 70:10 And no close friend asks a close friend,  
 70:11 [Even as] they are shown each other. The criminal [will] wish that he could ransom himself from the torment of that Day by his children,  
 70:12 And his consort (wife) and his brother,  
 70:13 And his clan who shelter him,  
 70:14 And whoever is in earth entirely then He would save him.” 1201

### 1.5.7 Do we get a new body in Paradise?

*If we go to Paradise, we will get a new body, right? Otherwise, we couldn't enjoy all the gifts.*

We get the same body resurrected to perfect health. That's easy for God to do because everything is easy for God to do. God says in the holy Quran “To them (the dwellers of Paradise) will be whatever they wish for and We have more!” (50:35)

If you wish for a new body you'll get it. Don't worry about that. Just worry about getting there first! 301

### 1.5.8 Earthly rewards in Paradise?

*How can there be any reward in Paradise that is taken from this physical world? Some of the rewards mentioned in the Quran for the people of Paradise are considered evil and iniquity in this world! How is that possible?*

If you are referring to rivers of milk and honey, drinks that don't get you drunk, and luxury houses, rooms, carpets, cushions, recliners and gold and such then the answer is very easy. God says in the holy Quran that the dwellers of Paradise will comment on what they are awarded saying "This is what we've been provided before. And they are given it looking familiar..." (2:25) It will all look familiar because that's what makes us elated, to get all we always wanted, yet it will all be purified and it will be from the Kingdom of God so it's in a different league than this world. 305

### 1.5.9 What happens to animals on the Day of Judgment?

*AssalaamuAlaikum<sup>9</sup> brother. Hope you are doing good in health and imaan by Allah's Grace.*

*Regarding what happens to animals on the day of judgment? If you could please state an authentic hadith and a verse from Quran.*

Wa Alaykum Assalam, brother, and same good wishes for you.

That question was answered very well by the reverend Sheikh Muhammad Salih Al-Munajjid. He wrote that all animals are assembled on the Day of Judgment, just like man will be. God says in the holy Quran, describing the Day of Judgment, "And when beasts are assembled." (81:5)

Another verse that makes this clear is, "And there is no living creature within the earth nor a bird that flies with its wings but are communities like you. We have not neglected in the Book a thing. Then *unto their Lord they will be gathered.*" (6:38)

But does that mean they will be questioned and tried? The answer is yes! Sheikh Al-Munajjid quotes an authentic hadith, reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2582) and narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA), "*You shall certainly pay off all dues to their rightful owners; even a stricken lamb will be given its compensation from the horned lamb that struck it!*"

God's justice is comprehensive, which brings up the question, "Will man be judged by his treatment of animals?" The answer to that question is also

<sup>9</sup>Arabic salutation, meaning: Peace be with you

yes! Two famous authentic hadiths give us the two flip sides of this question. The Prophet (ﷺ) told us that “A woman entered Hellfire because of a cat that she tormented: neither did she feed it, nor let it out of the house to graze.” Narrated by Ibn Umar and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (3318). On the flip side, the Prophet (ﷺ) told us that a woman entered Paradise because of a dog: She was very thirsty and found a water well. She took off a shoe and reached down in the well and filled the shoe with water then drank it. Then she saw a dog which also looked very thirsty, so she reached down into the well one more time, filled her shoe with water and gave it to the dog to drink. How beautiful is that? And get this...the woman was a prostitute! That hadith was narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (3321). 2218

### 1.5.10 Can I get pizza and burgers in Paradise?

Yes, you can get pizza and burgers in Paradise, because God says in the holy Quran,

“For them is *whatever they will* in it and We have more.” (50:35)

In fact, the Quran tells us that a lot of what’s in Paradise will look familiar. Consider,

“And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds that they will have gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow. Whenever they are provided with a provision of fruit therefrom, they will say, ‘*This is what we were provided with before.*’ And it is given to them *in likeness*. And they will have therein purified spouses, and they will abide therein eternally.” (2:25)

The difference is that those foods in Paradise won’t cause you a stomach upset or make you fat. 541

## 1.6 Creation or Evolution?

Does Islam address the issue of creationism versus evolution?

### 1.6.1 Puzzling question about creation

*I’m told that the Quran states that the purpose of creation is for man to worship God. But if Allah knows who will worship Him and who will not, then why did He create us in the first place if He already knows the outcome?*

What makes your friend think that creating something is meaningful only if its creator does not know its outcome? When I write a computer

program I know what it will do! Is that a reason not to write it? It has a function and it does it.

Similarly, man has a function for which God created him. That function is to exercise his free will, which man volunteered for, use it for establishing God's laws on earth. For those who do, He rewards generously. For those who betray that trust, He punishes painfully. This is why the skies, the earth, and the mountains, which were offered first to carry that trust, declined as they were apprehensive of the consequences if they failed. Man took it on, see verse 33:72.

God does not need anything. It's creatures who need Him all the time. God says in the holy Quran, "O people, you are the ones in need of God, and God is the One free of need, Praiseworthy." (35:15) 256

### 1.6.2 Have we evolved from apes?

Evolution is one of God's natural laws. Evidence of evolution was before our eyes long before Darwin made his studies of the species. We see a caterpillar evolve into a butterfly. We see a planted seed evolve into a palm tree. We see a fertilized egg evolve into a baby.

That said, it is not necessary for everything to evolve. God has applied another one of His laws, creation, to bring about some creatures. Man was one of those. The story of the creation of Adam is spelled out clearly in the Quran. 1821

### 1.6.3 What's Islam's position on evolution and creationism?

*I have met Muslims who believe in evolution. I want to say it's haram (forbidden) but I'm not sure so that's why I'm asking if believing that we came from monkeys is haram?*

It violates what God says in the Quran,

"[God] said, 'O Iblees (Devil), what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created **with My Two Hands**? Did you deem [yourself] big, or were you among the haughty?' " (38:75)

For all other creatures, other than man, there is nothing in Islam that says they did not come into being by evolution. Evolution is a physical law that God created, thus everything created directly by God (such as man) or indirectly by evolution is in fact created by God because God is the Creator and Maintainer of the law of evolution.

*One verse says, "And He is who has brought you into*

*being from a single being,” (6:98)*

*The thing I don't understand is: This single being could mean a single human or a fertilized egg - which evolves into a human?*

“Brought you into being” is an inaccurate translation. The word **أنشأكم** means “He initiated you.” Thus, this verse is referring to the creation of mankind from the single human, Adam.

Another example that explains the usage of the word **أنشأ** (to initiate) is,

“Indeed, We made them (the women of Paradise) anew.” (56:35)

*According to creationism, all species present on earth today have remained unchanged since they were created by God.*

*Darwin's theory of evolution contradicts this.*

And so do the Quran and science. We know, first from the Quran and then later confirmed by science, that the fertilized egg (Nutfa) changes into a clinging blood clot (Alaqa) which develops into a morsel (Mudhgha) which develops into bones which then develop flesh which then develops into what God has described as “another creation” (23:14). So, clearly what God creates He causes to go through changes. All the changes that creatures go through are according to God's laws. Therefore, evolution is not contrary to Islamic teachings.

The problem with both creationism and evolution theories is that they insist that they cannot be combined: it's either one or the other. Islam has no problem combining them. Man was created directly by God's Hands, while all other creatures may have evolved from others, thus indirectly created by God.

*But how about this, it mentions evolver, “He is ALLAH, the creator, the evolver. (Yousuf Ali's translation)*

Not an accurate translation either. Sorry. The word **البارئ** (Al-Bari) means the one who originates from nothing. That is why “innocence” is translated **البراءة** (Baraa) in Arabic and the jurisprudential term Al-Baraa-a Al-Asliyya means the original allowance of everything. The word **البراءة** also means absolving. What is common between all these semantics is “original state.”

In Arabic schools, the theory of evolution is called **نظرية النشوء والارتقاء** (the theory of initiation and refinement). I find that the word **الارتقاء** (refinement) is an excellent translation of the word evolution. The wrong part of the theory, IMHO, is the **النشوء** (initiation) part. The theory does not prove it, but there is a ton of evidence to support the refinement part.

*So, the origin of life that says the hot dilute soups of the world in its primitive conditions gave rise to simple polymers and that gave rise to prokaryotes, first form of life. So, can this word, Al-Baari, be used to explain that theory? That Allah made conditions of life origination possible, originated life from nothing?*

Al-Bari means God initiated the first creation. Al-Khaliq means that He creates from it subsequent creations, either directly, such as creating Adam from mud, or indirectly by evolution or other means not yet discovered.

*I read that experiments were carried out, primitive earth conditions were provided and primitive prokaryotic type of organism **was obtained**. So, this couldn't be possible that man does something Allah has not.*

If they couldn't obtain that primitive organism, could the experiment have continued? That is why initiation is necessary and only God can do it.

*But the Quran provides no reference to evolution. How come? I know the Quran is not for explaining science, but I just find it strange. I'm used to hearing that the Quran's says everything. I need more study.*

The Quran does not mention evolution directly, but it does draw attention to the process. For example,

"He said, 'Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form **and then guided** [it].' " (20:50)

Some of that guidance can be found in the "genetic instructions" found in every chromosome. Just like our bodies know how to heal wounds and how to adapt to extreme living conditions. 677

#### 1.6.4 Does Islam support evolution, or creation?

Both.

Most people misunderstand, or misrepresent evolution. The evolutionist who totally reject creation are wrong in their unfounded assumption that everything came into being through evolution. The creationist who totally reject evolution are wrong in their blanket assertion that everything came into being through creation, by which they mean bringing something out of nothing.

The fact of the matter, IMHO, is that evolution is simply another one of the natural laws that God created. Some beings have evolved and others were directly created. Whether directly or indirectly a being came into this world, they all were created by God because God is the *creator of the laws of evolution* and the one who set them in motion.

Evolution does not mean something sprung out of nothing as some opponents of evolution base their opposition. It means that changes occur to an existing being that transform it to another being. We see evidence of that with caterpillars evolving into butterflies in a matter of weeks! But just because we cannot see the guide, we cannot say that these changes occur without guidance. That's simply absurd because the changes that turn a fertilized egg into a baby are always the same, take place in the same order and take pretty much the same amount of time for millions of babies who are born everyday. Order doesn't happen without guidance. If the guidance is genetic instructions in each chromosome, who wrote them there?

Creation does not necessarily mean bringing something out of nothing, though it can also mean that. The verb, in both English and Arabic, may be used for bringing something out of something else. One of the creatures that came into being by direct creation is man. In the holy Quran, God asks Satan, "What prevented you to prostrate to what I created ***with My Two Hands?***" (38:75) That sounds a lot like direct creation, doesn't it? Thus, to say that man evolved from apes is simply not backed by science, which to date has failed to find that "missing link." Likewise, the many examples in nature that back up evolution cannot be rejected because God is the force behind their evolution. He chose to bring them into being by means of evolution rather than direct creation. He can do both and He can do whatever He wills.

Thus, creation and evolution can co-exist in harmony.

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## 1.7 Fate And Free Will

What does Islam say about the conflict between the free will and fated predestination?

### 1.7.1 A question on the free will

*I was wondering if all the wars, genocides and all other chaos that have happened in the past, were all of these planned by God or was it just man abusing his free will?*

All those are the consequences of the free will. If evil could not happen, then there was no point to the free will. Such a creation already existed.

It's called the angels.

For more details about the free will, check out the other articles in this section. 1068

### 1.7.2 On fate, destiny and pre-destination

*You said that pre-destination is not in Islam, Allah has not pre-destined stuff? But I thought marriage and death were pre-destined?*

God did not predestine anything on which He asked us to decide. He decreed the time and place of our death, but He never asked us to choose death or life. Since there is no choice asked of us, there can be no conflict between the free will and a predetermined outcome. See?

Marriage is not predestined. You pick the woman and she either agrees or doesn't, so how can that be a predestination? God simply knows who will be your wife.

Suppose you came to me and asked, "How do I get to Joe's house?" And I point to you Baker street. You, instead, took Hampton street. I tell you that Hampton street will get you to Sid's house, not Joe's, but you still take it anyway, did I force you to go to Sid's house?

*This example I don't understand, are you implying that Allah shows us the way but its our choice to pick which way to go? But then doesn't Allah already know that I would pick that way?*

The fact that God already knows which way you will take does not mean He chose it for you. You chose it. Freely. To use the example I mentioned, the friend knew what his friend will do: he will take Hampton Street, even though he knows it won't get him to Joe's house, so whose fault is it?

*What you are saying makes a lot of sense to me, my confusion is I took this course about pre-destination because its something I haven't been able to understand properly, and it said if something goes wrong, we should know that it was pre-destined.*

*So, just wondering does Allah (swt) know who is going to go to hell and heaven?*

If something goes wrong, the most likely reason is that you did it wrong, like one who didn't study well and failed the exam. It is possible that God will cause an effort to fail despite the person doing everything right to make it succeed. When that happens, it's not because of predestination,

but rather it's because God's knowledge is that it's not good for you and He saved you from it.

Of course God knows who's going to hell and who's going to heaven, but that's because He knows the future, not because He drove them there. They drove themselves. 703

### 1.7.3 On destiny and supplication

*AssalaamuAlaikum akhi<sup>10</sup>. Hope you and your family are doing well by the blessings and mercy of Allah (SWT). I have a question on destiny and duaa.<sup>11</sup> I understand it is a very confusing topic. But, well I believe, we humans can sure speculate and understand a pattern of the same. InshaAllah.*

*My question is,*

- 1. Does really Duaa change the destiny of believers? If yes, then what about the duaa (prayers) of disbelievers? Does Allah (SWT) accept their prayers also and change their destiny akhi?*
- 2. Are there any factors that make our dua's to be accepted soon by Allah (SWT)? I understand it is a matter which Allah (SWT) knows about and not us. But considering the limitations of our human mind, are there factors?*
- 3. This is a bit off the topic, I have heard that we should not judge people by their appearances, as their imaan (faith) lies in their heart and Allah (SWT) knows the best what sort of person he/she is? But isn't it that if imaan is there in our heart, it would be shown/seen out in our actions, behavior, our appearance? What is the Islamic and also your view point on it?*

*You can take one question at a time and answer it akhi. At your leisure. JazakAllah Khair. Peace.*

Wa Alaykum Assalaam, brother.

Destiny is not a confusing subject. It is quite simple. Only God knows where each of us will end up. Nobody else. He says in the holy Quran,

“Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the Beyond but God.” (27:65). Very straightforward.

Perhaps the confusion comes from the many opinions and theories people have formed about fate over the centuries. I'd suggest that you read the rest of the posts on fate in this section.

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<sup>10</sup>Arabic for brother

<sup>11</sup>Arabic for supplication

I think you are referring to the hadith, “*Nothing holds back a Divine Decree except supplication*”, narrated by Salman Al-Farisi and reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2139) and rated “sound” by [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (2139). The word “Al-Qadaa” that appears in it is wrongly translated as destiny or pre-destination. This is a very common error that most Muslims fall into. Al-Qadaa simply means Divine Decrees. What the hadith means is that God may suspend a Decree of His when the affected believer supplicates to Him. This does not change the believer’s destiny. God knew all along that His servant will call upon Him. He sends down His Decree then holds it. Why? In order to convey to us how much He loves our supplications! This teaches us that if we want to be saved from afflictions and hardship, our best chance is to call upon God to save us from them. Amen.

God may reply to your supplication immediately or may defer the reply. He does that because He is the only One who has the whole picture. He grants everything in precise measure and timing. That is what the word Al-Qadar means. Another word that is wrongly translated as fate.

As for appearance, it can, as we all know, be deceiving. Some people look pious but are wicked inside. God says in the holy Quran, “And among the people one whose utterance in this world you admire and he holds God a witness to what is in his heart while he is the fiercest of adversaries.” (2:204).

And the flip-side is also true. The Prophet (PBUH) said, “*There may be a man, dusty and unkempt, to whom people pay no attention, but if He swears upon God for something, God will fulfill it!*”, narrated by Anas ibn Malik (RA) and reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (3854) who rated it soundly authentic. 2249

#### 1.7.4 Isn’t everything destined by God to happen?

*Isn’t everything predestined to happen by God? So, what’s the point of prayer then? It’s not as if you can change God’s mind, or can you?*

God’s plan includes answering our prayers. He told us to ask Him for things. He told us that He loves being asked for things and loves to answer prayers. Wouldn’t you do what those you love would like you to do? The Prophet (PBUH) said “*Ask God for all your needs even to replace your shoe lining when it is torn!*” ([Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (866), [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (5/583))

Things are NOT predestined to happen. This is a very common error in understanding that many people have. All things are *foreknown* to God but He does not force anything on us on which He has given us a free will to decide. Everything that happens in life, with few exceptions, happens because people make it happen. The things that happen despite our efforts to prevent them or fail to happen despite our efforts to achieve them, those are the things that are predestined, such as death.

“Mind change” is a concept for creatures only. It does not apply to God. When the Prophet, peace be upon him, told us that “*Nothing changes God’s decree but supplication*” (Al-Tirmizi [23] (2139)), we learned that God has set a law for Himself that when He sends down a punishment that He will rescind it if people plead to Him. If you understand this, you’ve understood God’s will and the whole concept of “fate”.

Malcolm X is the best proof that we make our own fate. By all accounts and according to any established criteria, he should have been a lost cause. He seemed destined to spend the rest of his life in jail and have nothing to show for his life. Yet, he discovered Islam in jail, albeit a weird version of it. He transformed his life 180 degrees and became an upright leader who managed to divert thousands of black youth from living an empty life and ending up in jail themselves.

Then he did another huge transformation of his faith after he went for pilgrimage to Mecca. He adopted the orthodox Islam, the Sunna, and abandoned the so-called “Nation of Islam”.

Two huge transformations in a couple of decades in a very short life. How remarkable! Never give up on anyone. Only God knows what’s inside the hearts of people, “He knew what is in their hearts and therefore He sent down His tranquility upon them and rewarded them with eminent victory.” (48:18) 76

### 1.7.5 Does God control our actions too?

*God controls everything, right? Then He controls our actions too. So, if we sin, it means God is controlling that.*

Among what God controls is the guarantee that your will is free. You would not have had a free will if God didn’t will for you to have it. Your exercise of your free will is therefore your own decision. God knows what you will do and can stop you if He wants to but He chose not to.

*Does God already know if I’m going to heaven or hell? If God has already **pre-destined** for us whether we will go to heaven or hell they why does it matter what I do?*

Yes, He does know, but He *did not* predestine anyone. This is one of the most common errors Muslims make in understanding Al-Qadar, often wrongly translated to fate. Al-Qadar does NOT mean predestination; it means precise amount and timing. The other word wrongly translated is Al-Qadaa. It does not mean predestination either; it means decree.

God did not predestine anyone to anywhere; He simply foreknows what they will do with their free will and the consequences of their exercise of

their free will. There would be no point to the free will otherwise, and there would be no point to warnings and prophets and neither to promises of rewards.

Let me repeat an example I mentioned in another post, and ask you to reflect on it:

Suppose you came to me and asked, "How do I get to Joe's house?" And I pointed you to Baker street. You, instead, took Hampton street. I tell you that Hampton street will get you to Sid's house, not Joe's, but you still took it anyway, did I force you to go to Sid's house?

*It is hard for the human mind to grasp this concept and harder yet to explain.*

I beg to differ with the notion that it is hard to grasp and harder to explain. Once you grasp the concept of the free will, Al-Qadar becomes a straightforward notion. The problem that the debaters always have is that they keep bypassing the free will.

When God tells the angels to write all those matters down, it's not that they are predestined, they simply are foreknown. That's the key difference. Your knowledge of something does not mean you caused it. This also explains the rest of the hadiths that speak of this matter.

*If this is something you cannot comprehend, it is best not to speak of it.*

I beg to differ. The six pillars of faith include faith in the precision of God's provision (Al-Qadar), so it is incumbent upon every Muslim to understand it because faith in Islam is not divorced from reason. 657

### 1.7.6 Does God misguide some people?

*Can someone please explain to me what the Quran means by "Allah guides whom He wills and misguides whom He wills"?*

*If He "guides whom He wills and misguides whom He wills" then why does He punish people if He does not choose them?*

*It seems like some people are going to be punished for something they have no control over. I have a hard time thinking of Allah as being "the most merciful" because of this, unfortunately.*

No one can be guided if God doesn't will it and no one is misguided if God wills guidance for him. The will of God overtakes all factors.

Now, whom does God guide and whom does He misguide? It's not random. It's earned. God guides those who come to Him with a sincere

heart wanting guidance and He misguides the arrogant who refuse to accept the truth after they see it.

The Quran is filled with verses that state the above. For instance,

“Say, verily God misguides whomever He wills and guides to Him whomever turns [to Him]” (13:24)

“And God misguides the transgressors and God does what He wills” (14:27)

“He admits whomever He wills in His mercy, and the transgressors He prepared for them a painful torment.” (76:31)

The underlying principle is simple, “Verily God does not do a speck’s weight of injustice” (4:40). 431

### 1.7.7 Is apostasy preordained?

*What is apostasy? On a forum we are discussing Qadar and apostasy. Here is the question that is being discussed:*

*If a person apostated from Islaam, do you believe that Allaah ordained for that person to apostate from Islaam?*

Isn’t it interesting how people would blame God for all their bad decisions, but when good things happen to them they take credit?

God tells us in the Quran how disbelievers on the Day of Judgment will try to weasel out of the responsibility for their bad choice:

“And they said, ‘If the Beneficent had willed, we would not have worshiped them (the idols).’ They have no knowledge of that. They are but conjecturing.” (43:20)

Let’s examine their statement. Is what they said true? It sure is! If God wills for something to not happen, it cannot happen. So, does their statement logically lead to the conclusion they hope to make? Namely, does the will of God lead to some people’s wrong decisions? If so, then how can He punish them for such choice? That’s what they are hoping to conclude; that they should not be punished for a bad choice which they could not but make.

This method of arguing is a well known pseudo-reasoning method called red herring (or smoke screen). You change the premise without appearing to do so. Thus, the logical conclusion will be different than if you stay with the original premise.

The diverted premise is that we do not have a free will. The will of God surpasses any will we may or may not have. The original premise repeatedly stated by the Quran is that we should be accountable for the decisions we freely make.

So, I can see two steps to refuting the argument posed by your question. First, we need to establish that we do have a free will. This blows up the red herring and brings us back to the original premise. Then we need to establish that the will of God does not contradict our free will.

Does anyone seriously doubt that we have a free will? We instinctively know it. We feel it. When we make a decision, we know that we have alternatives and we know that we freely choose one of them.

The free will is the pre-requisite for life on earth. Check out the Story of Adam and Eve post, §2.4.1. If you have doubts that we do have a free will, check out the posts on fate and free will in this section.

The will of God has been that we have a free will. That is why God says,

“And you do not will but that God wills” (76:30)

We could not will anything if God did not will for us that we can.

Whether one apostates or stays faithful is *foreknown* to God, but it is not preordained. God could have stopped that person from apostating, but He had decreed that our choices will be free. That necessarily means that He would not interfere with them. It also means that the responsibility for our choices lie with us alone. Any attempt to escape that responsibility is therefore indefensible. 1941

### 1.7.8 Are we pawns in God’s master plan?

*My friend believes that our lives are controlled by fate and according to a master plan. She accepts that we have free will, but that it brings things that match the plan.*

Our lives are not controlled by fate. This is a very common misconception. All events past, present and future are *foreknown* to God but they are not preordained. Only a few things, such as birthplace and death are preordained by God. (verse 3:168) Most things happen because people make them happen. Just because God knows what you’re going to say or do does not mean He compelled you to do it. He can compel you to do anything (verse 13:31) as He did the angels, but He chose not to when He gave us all a free will. (verse 33:72)

“Qadaa and Qadar” is often mistranslated as fatalism. Qadaa means verdict. That is, God issues a command and the angels carry it out. When that happens, no one but God Himself can stop it. The Prophet, peace be upon him said, “*Nothing rescinds God’s verdicts (Al-Qadaa) but supplication (Al-Duaa)*” (Al-Tirmizi [23] (2139)). Verdicts imply consequences of actions. When a judge issues a verdict, he is responding to a crime or to a legal dispute. God’s verdicts come in response to our actions. God says

in the holy Quran, "Should I tell ye on whom devils descend? They descend on every liar and sinner." (37:221-222). He also said, "Verily, those who said 'Our Lord is Allah' then have been straight, angels descend on them" (41:30)

Qadar means precise measure and perfect timing. It implies wisdom not available to anyone but God. It does not imply force. God says in the holy Quran, "Verily, everything We sent down with precise measure (and at exactly the right time)" (54:49).

Fatalism, on the other hand, teaches that all events are preordained and nothing we do or can do can ever change them. This is actually one of the arguments that the unbelievers continue to make. God says in the holy Quran, "Those who associate others in the worship of God will say 'If God so willed, we would not have associated others in our worship of God, nor would our parents' " (6:148) God rebukes their argument and tells them that they reject the truth as did those who came before them and that they merely conjecture. He then says what seems like an agreement with them! He says, "Had He so willed He would have guided you all" (6:149) But it's not an agreement. The issue at hand is free will.

That is why God did not force us into guidance although He could have. We all know we have a free will and we can't pretend that we're forced to do evil or good. We always have a choice.

Thus, it is wrong, IMHO, to say that God has a master plan in which our actions fit perfectly. That would make us all like pawns on a chess board. God has master knowledge and we have no one to blame for our actions but ourselves (verse 78:40).

*Hmm, but still, there are some things that are beyond human control, right? Some things do work according to God's plan. I heard that there are different paths of the future, and that if a person chooses Path A, the Outcome A will happen, and if they choose Path B, then Outcome B will happen, etc. Is this true?*

Sure, many things are beyond human control but in all of them we are not asked to make a choice. Everything God requires us to do or stay away from is something within our control.

The theory of different paths to the future cannot be proved or disproved. But it has no bearing on the life of a Muslim since the right path is clearly defined by the Quran and the Sunna. God says in the holy Quran, "And verily this My path is straight, so follow it and do not follow the [different] paths; they will divert ye from His way." (6:153) God, of course, may choose outcome B for path A. For example, when He punished the people of the Aad tribe, He did so with a severe wind that rendered them like the dead trunks of palm trees, but when He punished Pharaoh and his followers, He drowned them.

*I'm sure you will not disagree that the situations to test us are fated for us by Allah? A rich person does not become rich purely by his own actions, it was Allah who willed him to be rich and then test him. Similarly, a poor person is not poor because he made bad choices, it's fated for him by Allah, and it's all a test. Maybe what I understand by the word 'fate' is different than what you understand?*

Tests of faith are fated but our success or failure in them are not. We pass the test not because God compelled us to but because we did the right thing. God knew we'd do the right thing but He didn't make us do it. We did it out of our free will. There would be no value in a test of faith whose result is forced by God.

Most of the rich become rich because of their actions. That does not mean that God did not give them the wealth. He did, but after they did what it took to be rich. Some people of course are born rich and some do all that the rich do but never become rich. These two situations are a sign from God that it is He who grants wealth. This understanding is what makes a good rich person thankful to God. The fact that God is the source of wealth does not mean that a person may do nothing and expect to become rich. Both elements are there. 375

### 1.7.9 Waiting for a blessing

*What about someone that is waiting for a particular blessing and it does not come? I know dua (supplication) and qadar (precision) meet and whichever is the stronger manifests. Yet, a blessing is a gift isn't it? A sweet chocolate kiss from Heaven.*

*Is it the ego that prevents blessings from flowing?*

*This may not seem like a serious subject but it is...give me a good Sura (Chapter of the Quran) or ayat (verse) that defines blessings.*

Ego, sin, impatience, doubt (including self-doubt), etc., halt blessings. In other words: lack of true submission.

Picture an airplane full of food and medicine for victims of a disaster but is unable to land because of lack of runway. Blessings are kind of like that. Remember the hadith in which Archangel Gabriel told the Prophet, peace be upon them, when Laylat-al-Qadr (The Night of Grandeur) is, and the Prophet (ﷺ) went out to tell Muslims but because two Muslims were arguing loudly he was made to forget it? (Narrated by Ubada ibn Al-Samit (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2023)). The scene was not welcoming to the blessing even though the Prophet (ﷺ) himself was there.

One of my favorite verses is this, “He knew what is in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with a nigh victory.” (48:18) It always starts with us submitting, hoping and waiting without hurrying and with full faith that good will happen. Only then does it happen.

Your statement that duaa and qadar meet and the stronger of them wins, needs discussion. I addressed a misunderstanding about this in another article in this section. Qadar comes with or without duaa, and it can be a reply to a duaa. It does not meet duaa nor fight with it. Qadar does not mean fate; it means precision in measure and timing.

*I read your response..you have a way of making things easy to understand. There is a youtube video that someone posted on a forum I follow. The young scholar discusses “the dua meeting the qadar”. The viewer gets the impression that supplication overrides destiny. I think you need to explain in your discussion that we can not mold the dua. We can not have dua be wishful thinking. I can not make dua and wish only for my knight in shinning armor. I can not have the mold. That is my shortsightedness and ego. Am I correct?*

*Contemplation is a part of reviewing the blessings. In hindsight, we see what Allah subhana wa taala has sent to us. And it makes sense. Trust me the past two years have been full of blessings yet I have felt as if I were in a dark wilderness, alone. When I take time to reassess I realize it could not have transpired any other way.*

*Yes, He is full of Mercy and He sends His Blessings. We are so scared of the blessings. There is accountability in accepting blessings. That is a part of submission. The runway in your example would be accountability in my words, correct?*

*You need to write on true submission. Honestly, we are so busy trying to be super-Muslims we forget the simple things. There is a fine line. We have to be busy with life while we wait for the guidance of Allah subhana wa taala. That is not easy.*

*I understand self-doubt to be an instrument of Shytan (Satan). I know dhikr (remembrance of God) and dua and salat (prayer) are cures as is the biggie sabr (patience).*

Actually, we can mold the duaa. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Let any of you ask his Lord all of his needs, even ask Him to replace the lining of his shoes that was torn!” (Ibn Hibban [33] (866)) The point of this hadith is that nothing is too small or too big for which to ask God. When you really think about it, you will find that most of what we wish for in our prayers is rather trivial and that what is really important God is already taking care of. He is Al-Qayyum (The All-Caretaker).

That said, your point is well taken. I understood it to be that a believer should not insist on an outcome. However God chooses to reply to his request should be reason for the believer to rejoice. That requires that the believer be in tune with what God sends his way. Otherwise, he will not recognize the reply when it comes. That is the lesson of Salat-Al-Istikhara (consultation prayer). You are torn between two decisions and honestly cannot decide, so you ask God to decide one for you. How do you know what God decided and when? You will see it and feel it if you are tuned in.

The belief many Muslims have that supplication preempts destiny is a false doctrine which sadly most Muslims do not even review. It is a harmless false doctrine, though, so I don't fret over it. Destiny never changes because God knows it already. He does not shape it for us. We shape it with our words and deeds out of our free will. He simply knows it already. It's kind of like watching a recorded football match with your son who hasn't yet seen it but you have and he made you promise not to spoil it for him. He can cheer his team till he's blue in the face, but you know his team lost. They lost because they didn't play well and didn't listen to their coach. You had nothing to do with it! I can excuse non-Arabic speakers who do not know what the word Al-Qadaa means, but what is the excuse of the Arabs? The word does not mean destiny and never did.

The "runway" in my previous example is the space in the heart that we leave open to receive God's gifts. It's what Rumi spoke of all the time. That space widens when we accept and narrows when we question. That is what true submission is about. After you read the Quran and recognize its truth, you let God in. Easier said than done though.

*Tuning in...that is never explained enough and people run from pillar to post trying to understand how they know they are tuned in. It seems that we have a paucity of vocabulary or descriptors to help us understand when we are tuned in. I know in prayer there is a physical change when you are tuned in. Yet, there are not universal words to define the "tuned in" stage. Similar to the Zen. The area of the spiritual real and the physical real is fuzzy. You mentioned self-doubt. It is overwhelming for the psyche to live in the tuned-in state for long periods of time. I am still trying to comprehend this one. Maybe that is what I was alluding to in terms of becoming reclusive; not that you do not wish to interact with the world but the need to be "tuned in" is greater and you do not want to risk the goodness.*

*Your runway made me think...our trials are the shovel that make the path wider. Our trials are what makes us dependent upon Allah subhana wa taala. Rumi's Love is so deep it is too simple. Once again it is the inability of our language to communicate to us what we have.*

*Salaat-ul-Istikhaara is the salaat for guidance when you have to make a decision. What about when you are in the wilderness looking for guidance?*

*As for understanding the Quran...there are times when Allah swt gives you a response as if you are slapped in the face and at other times one ayat takes months and months to comprehend.*

*Let me end with this: There comes a point in one's life when you see the blessings. You become sure that the end of any given is going to be good; you become so used to this that the ordinary stressors disappear. You know from past experiences what the anticipated result will be. It is almost too much to take in. I guess this is being "tuned in".*

*The reason why I am hung up on this is simple. I post on a forum I follow and often the responses become so obtuse that we forget in the wording, life is to be lived. We are ordinary people and Islam is a faith for the common man.*

*You really ought to give a kuthba (sermon) on this. Tell the imam (preacher) of your masjid (mosque) you need to speak to the youth. We are missing that in our masjids. The use of language to an audience that is real and meaningful.*

Zikr is the best way to achieve the tuned-in state, especially if it is done with mindfulness. But even when it is done by force of habit, provided the heart is sound, the believer will be eased into things. If you ever wondered why Zikr is so lauded in Islam, that's why IMHO.

Mindfulness is also the best way to understand the Quran. When you read the Quran mindfully, no word passes by without reflection. You ask yourself what does this word really mean? Why did God choose this word and not any of its synonyms in this particular verse and context? How is this verse related to the one before it and the one after it. That is the method taught by the late Sheikh Al-Shaarawi, may God bless his soul. Suddenly, the Quran relates to your life intimately. You feel clued in. You can see this method in his exegesis, [Al-Shaarawi \[20\]](#).

A person in the wilderness looking for guidance will find it if he is really looking for it, because God says in the holy Quran, "And upon God is the orientation of the road." (16:9) You just walk the road and earnestly look for the way and God will show it to you. It's a promise from Him. 2257





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# Chapter 2

## The Faith

Articles in this chapter explain the elements of the Islamic faith, based on its authenticated sources, in answers to posted questions about faith.

### 2.1 Elements of the Faith

#### 2.1.1 How is individual salvation achieved in Islam?

Salvation means different things to different people. Most Christians, for instance, think of salvation as an expiation of the original sin of Adam and Eve. They believe the original sin was not forgiven, that Adam and Eve descended to earth as punishment for it, that all of us their children are born in sin as a result and that a sinless savior is the only way to expiate this sin; that no amount of repentance, supplication and good deeds can substitute for a savior.

Islam narrates the story of Adam and Eve with some fundamental differences from the Biblical story. The Quran makes it clear that the original sin did occur. Adam and Eve felt remorse afterward. God looked upon them with grace and inspired Adam and Eve to repent and ask Him for forgiveness. They did and He forgave them. Original sin gone.

The Quran repeatedly asserts that “no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another” (35:18). Thus, no one is born in sin and no one is tasked with saving humanity.

Now, why did God send Adam and Eve down to earth even though He forgave them? It wasn’t a punishment. It was their assignment for which He created them in the first place. He says in the holy Quran, “And when your Lord said to the angels I am setting up *in the earth* a deputy.” (2:30)

So, why did God place Adam and Eve in the Garden first? IMHO,

because He wanted to teach them about Satan, temptation, sin and its wages, repentance, supplication, and His forgiveness, all lessons they will need to learn and heed when they go to their assignment: Life on earth.

So, is there an individual salvation in Islam? Sure. But our savior is not a person; it's our faith and good deeds. God promises to answer our supplications, accept our repentance from sin and reward us for our faith and good deeds. Salvation in Islam is not delivery from the original sin, it's the escape from God's punishment of Hellfire and the attainment of God's reward of Paradise in the Hereafter. 5

### 2.1.2 Confirmation of belief

*Do you mind sharing with me any personal revelation you've had that confirms your belief in Allah? Perhaps a miracle healing?*

The Quran is Islam's only publicized miracle. Every time I read it or listen to it being recited, my soul is filled with warmth and my mind and heart click with it. It puts my whole being in harmony with the world around me, the same harmony that you see in nature. It explains everything simply, logically and beautifully and encourages me to reason, wonder and reflect. 33

### 2.1.3 Top ten signs your good deed was accepted

10. It resulted in a benefit.
9. It prevented a harm.
8. You felt good afterward.
7. You regretted not doing it sooner.
6. You regretted not doing it bigger.
5. You thanked God for enabling you to do it.
4. You thanked God for giving you a chance to thank Him back for all the good He did to you.
3. You did not feel superior afterward.
2. You did not follow it with a sin.

And the number 1 sign your good deed was accepted is:

1. You did another good deed after it. 582

### 2.1.4 Isn't faith always a matter of blind trust?

Islamic faith is NOT a blind trust. It is an *educated* trust.

An educated trust is a trust that has developed after seeing enough evidence to assure a person that the trustee is trustworthy. We do that in life when we trust a doctor to operate on us, for example.

Likewise, and for God is the highest parable, Islamic faith is an educated trust in God. That trust has developed after reflecting on God's signs, including His verses in the holy Quran. God tells us in the Quran to do exactly that and to *never follow others blindly*. The Quran talks about those who followed their rabbis and priests blindly and says that "they took them as lords beneath God." (9:31) Muslims can and have done the same thing with their scholars. That's why God mentioned that verse, to warn us not to do the same. That observation is not mine only, it was written centuries ago by highly esteemed scholars, such as Al-Shawkani (Al-Shawkani [21] (567)).

1038

### 2.1.5 Does the Quran confirm science or vice versa?

*I am opposed to the whole idea of scientific nonimitability of the Quran; proving the truth of the Quran by means of showing its statements of scientific facts that were only established centuries after the Quran was revealed.*

*My reasons are three-fold:*

- *It gives non-Muslims a license to bear witness for the Quran,*
- *It exposes the total deficit of Muslims in the scientific fields, and*
- *The Quran is not meant to be a book of science, but a book of guidance.*

The Quran tells a lot of stories, doesn't it? Does that make it a story book? Of course not. All the stories God tells us in the Quran are told for their moral lessons. They ferment the faith and teach us how to live a life that pleases God. They also tell details that were previously unknown to the Arabs or to the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, they also serve as confirmation of the truth of his prophethood.

The Quran also makes quite a few prophecies, most of which came true during the life of the early Muslims. Does that make it a book of prophecies? No. All the prophecies that God tells us in the Quran are told to confirm the truth of the Quran and the prophethood of Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Likewise are the scientific facts stated in the Quran. Most of those statements were not even understood by early Muslims. It was only when those facts were discovered by scientists, Muslim and non-Muslim, that the wonder of those verses became appreciated.

Speaking of Muslim scientists, you may know that it was Muslims who established the scientific method. That is the foundation of all scientific

discoveries to date. There were hundreds of Muslim scientists inventing or discovering thousands of scientific facts that enriched the world. The fact that Muslims have not contributed to science for sometime now is a reflection on them not on the Quran. It was the Quran that inspired the early Muslims to seek knowledge and investigate the material world.

As for your objection to non-Muslims bearing witness for the Quran, I don't understand your objection. God says in the holy Quran, "And a witness from the Children of Israel testified to it" (46:10). If God finds such testimony worthy of including in His Last Testament, why would you find it objectionable?

But even without that, the non-Muslims who made scientific discoveries confirming the Quran did not do them to confirm the Quran, nor were most of them even aware that the Quran had mentioned their discoveries 14 centuries earlier. So, it's not a testimony.

The scientific statements made in the Quran confirm science and science confirms the Quran. That is only natural, since the author of the physical laws and the author of the Quran are the same: The One true God, Allah, may He be sanctified and exalted. 2090

### 2.1.6 The role of intention

*I read this somewhere that we will be judged by God because of our INTENT ("نية"). Do you believe that INTENT is more important than performance? (as reported by Ali and Jaafar As-Saadiq, may God have been pleased with them).*

*If you'd agree with me then should I keep going? I still haven't made a decision. If I choose not to, it won't be because of my situation (calamity). I swear to my dear Lord that it's not about misfortunes of my life. Maybe everyone hates me, even my family, all people except kids.*

*I just wanna see the truth, wanna see God, wanna see my Dear Lord because I believe that it would be enough for me, I'll endure those flames just for that sight of Him. Then I'll rest even in hell.*

*That will be the INTENT behind my action, so tell me as a man of God, not personal answer, as someone who knows the truth (Allah) and have a task to share that, is this forbidden too to make such a decision?*

*I've nothing to contribute, because of your perfect site, but pray. May our Dear Lord bless your soul.*

Thank you for your kind words and for your prayer for me. May God accept it and give you same.

It is important to first ask: How do you know that you will see God? There is no evidence that this will happen except for the people of Paradise. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, *“When the people of Paradise enter Paradise, God will say to them, ‘Do you want more I can add for you?’ They will say, ‘Did You not admit us to Paradise and save us from the Fire?’ Then the veil will be uncovered. They would never be given anything more beloved to them than looking at their Lord.”* Narrated by Suhaib ibn Sanan Al-Rumi (RA) and reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (181) who rated it authentic. In another narration of the same hadith, he subsequently recited, *“For those who did good is the best reward and more.”* (10:26)

Thus, your assumption that you may see God either way has no basis. If what you are talking about is committing suicide, God forbid, then you should know that it is the only terminal sin in Islam. All other can be remedied in time.

It is also unforgivable, regardless of the intention behind it. One day, in a battle, a man was quite the warrior. His fellows were praising his valor, but the Prophet (ﷺ) surprised them by saying, *“He is in the Hellfire!”* Shortly thereafter, the man was so badly wounded and in so much pain that he killed himself. Now the Sahaba understood the Prophet’s prophesy about him. The Prophet (ﷺ) also said that a man from the prior nations had a painful open wound, so he committed suicide. Then God said, *“My servant preempted Me with himself; I have forbidden him Paradise.”* (Narrated by Jandab ibn Abdillah and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (3463)). If, God forbid, you should commit suicide, you would lose both this world and the Hereafter. I pray that you come to your senses and expel Satan who is whispering such delusions into your ears.

The reality of this world can certainly be hard. God made that clear to Adam, *“So, We said, ‘O Adam, verily this (Satan) is an enemy to you and to your spouse, so do not let him evict you from the Garden lest you should suffer.’ ”* (20:117)

But does that mean we should abandon living and renounce the world? If that were true, how come the Prophet (ﷺ) and all his noble fellows were fully engaged in the world, in spite of all its trials, tribulations and unpleasantness? The Prophet (ﷺ) had uncles who cursed him and even plotted to kill him. And what did he do? He kept friendly relations with them to the end. As a matter of fact, he practiced forgiveness, largess and graciousness.

If renouncing the world was a teaching of Islam, don’t you think that God, or His messenger, would have told us so?

This world was meant to mix the good and the bad, the wholesome and the filthy, the right and the wrong, guidance and loss. How else would the free will that man took on be exercised or tested? Why do you think God

keeps telling us in the holy Quran to endure, keep the faith and do good? It is precisely because human nature would lead man to despair, lose faith and detach from the world otherwise. Maybe even drink to forget. Satan is counting on it!

Life is a finite opportunity to gain God's approval and earn His reward. This can only be done if we maintain the right faith, remain steadfast on the Straight Path, fulfill our obligations, accumulate good deeds, expiate sins and call upon God to accept what we do right and pardon what we do wrong.

Finally, the role of intention is to validate good deeds. A charity could be intended for show-off. It may still be beneficial but it ceases to be a good deed - the kind that gets recorded in one's book of deeds. A sin remains a sin regardless of the intention that preceded it. Intention is what differentiates the sincere from the hypocrites. That is why God judges by it, and only He fully knows it. 2464

### 2.1.7 They did good but still are losers?

*I'm extremely confused. And I'm wondering if someone could explain this please. Who are those people "whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds!" that the Quran talks about in Chapter 18?*

These are people who worship their desires, their opinions, their race, money, etc., and many of them think they got it right while others who worship God are fools for believing in someone no one has seen.

And you have people who believed in God, read His scripture, learned what His messenger said, yet they have interpreted it all in the most bizarre, perverted way that lead them to kill thousands of innocent people and even themselves thinking it is all pleasing to God and will admit them straight to paradise!

God has summarized all this in the most eloquent way in Chapter 103,

"Verily, man is in loss. Except those who had faith, worked righteous deeds, counseled each other with the truth and counseled each other with patience." (103:2-3)

Without counseling each other with the truth, man will most certainly be in loss. The truth is lost without a constant reminder of it. 571

### 2.1.8 Three plateaus of contentment

*Quick question: When we acquiesce to the call of Allah swt, there is a word in Arabic that sounds phonetically like ridah and roughly translated I believe means the tranquil acceptance of Allah swt's will.*

*Could you expand on this, please?*

“Tranquil acceptance” is an excellent translation of Ridha.

I usually translate it as contentment. Contentment can be motivated by several motivations. It can be motivated by surrender to reality. In such case, it is more like coping than contentment. It is then pragmatic. The motivation here is literally Islam (surrender), which some do willingly and others unwillingly. Consider,

“So, is it other than the religion of God they desire, while to Him have submitted [all] those within the heavens and earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will be returned?” (3:83)

Contentment can be motivated by peace of mind; that feeling that everything is in order and taken care of by the Supreme Caretaker (Al-Qayyum). In such case, it is tranquil acceptance. It is then rational. With that mental attitude, one is in harmony with other creatures, swimming downstream. The motivation here is Eeman (faith).

Contentment can also be motivated by pleasure; that feeling that God, being the source of everything, is the source of whatever happened and therefore it must be good for the person even if it doesn't look that way at first. In such case, it is love. Contentment here is two-sided. As God has said in the holy Quran, “..God is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. That is the grand win.” (5:119). With that mental attitude, one is in heaven on earth; one has that elusive inner peace. The motivation here is Ihsaan (benevolence).

God has mentioned several times in the holy Quran how Ridha is the ultimate reward. Take for example His praise of a pious, charitable, unselfish person, “But the most watchful [of God] will be averted from it (the Hellfire). Who gives [from] his wealth purifying himself. And no one has a favor with him to be rewarded. Except seeking the Countenance of his Lord, the Highest. And he shall contend.” (92:17-21). 2345

### 2.1.9 Tests of faith are healing

*I am on an adventure that I know has been sanctioned by Allah swt. My learning curve is off the charts.*

*I hold on to the precept after difficulties comes ease.*

*It would be good to address, yet again, how fortunate are the ones that Allah swt tests.*

*We often forget that our testing is a way to stay alive. We are kept young. We become resourceful. Often in our monotonous lives we become ungrateful of the favors of our Creator. We take things for granted. When the rug is pulled under our feet we become alive again.*

*We commence on a deeper esoteric journey. When it gets tough it seems the only door open is the door of the Mercy of Allah swt. The example of Yunus (Jonah) becomes alive. He was alone in the belly of the whale at the bottom of the sea. Not even a candle to give some light. Yet, the test was for him to call upon Allah swt.*

*We overlook the healing process after the ejection from the whale. Once the internal, the soul, is rescued then the body can recover.*

*Would love to hear your thoughts.*

*I am blessed too, as Allah has provided me with Believers that I can share my spiritual journey with.*

You bring up a very important point: that tests of life are nudges along the Straight Path. Picture a father teaching his son to ride a bike. We cannot be steady in life without God's constant guidance and occasional nudges, because Satan would then have a field day with us. And the only way to avail ourselves of that infinite source of guidance and redirection is correct, true faith in God, recognition of His correction to us, acceptance of His tests of us and doing good deeds.

It is then that we get it. Only then do we understand why we're here, what we're supposed to do and not do.

*This relates to the question I had regarding ridha. Trust me the term tranquil acceptance is not mine. I was listening to the Imam of Cambridge college. He is a revert. Brilliant mind. One who can think and be clear and precise. Here is a link: <http://cambridgekhubasetc.blogspot.com>.*

*It seems to be the case, and it is a difficult pill to swallow, that often the guidance of Allah comes at His Pace. When He guides us and wishes for us to purify our souls, for the fragile human ego it is a difficult period. Any metamorphosis requires a degree of what can be described as growing pains. Who wants to yield the warm bottle of milk and the comfort of mother's lap.*

*Yes, I understand that part of the tests are we give up our misconceptions and notions of what ought to be in a perfect*

*world for ourselves. However, it is not our world. We are participants in His Creation. What I have come to understand is the Truth of the Quran. It is absolute. There is not one lie in it.*

*This is an earth-shattering experience. It is scary. When we read Allah is sufficient unto me...we have to believe in that 100 percent. He has told us so. And we are tested to understand the meaning of that. One of the blessings of the test is the ridha. But, in the midst of the chaos of the test we have to stop and count our blessings. This is where we need the strength of community. Almost a reinforcement of enjoining good and forbidding evil.*

*As life is a new experience each day, is that not a definition of striving, we are in constant change.*

*Maybe, I am blessed.*

He is indeed successful who “gets” the Quran before they die, because back to its author they are going. 2347

### **2.1.10 Why do the good people have it hard and the evil ones have it good?**

*It is obvious to any observer that good people very often are suffering or dying young, while evil people are living the good life and living long? How can that be fair?*

The Prophet, peace be upon him said “The hardest tested people are the prophets, then the best of people after them then the best of people after those.” (Al-Tirmizi [23] (2398)) Why is that? If one judges by the standards of this world, one would think that God would make the life of the righteous the easiest, happiest, richest, most successful of all and the life of the wicked the harshest, most miserable of all. But then there would be no way to test faith or commitment to God, would there be?

A Muslim should also remember that bounty too is a test. A test of thankfulness and gratitude. There is a funny story of a couple in the early Islamic era. A woman looked at herself in the mirror then looked at her husband and said “Thank God!” Her husband asked her about it. She said “I am beautiful and you thank God for it and you are ugly and I endure it! Both the grateful and the patient are in paradise!” 1119

### 2.1.11 God guarantees sustenance, so why do people die of hunger?

*In Surah Hud (Chapter 11), verse 6, Allah says that He has created provisions for all the creatures. I wonder then why people die of hunger? Why is there starvation?*

*What is the true meaning of this verse?*

Starvation is man made. There is plenty of food for all creatures on earth. Did you know that some governments pay farmers *NOT to farm*? The reason is that if the harvest is plenty, food prices will go down and that would cut into the profits of agricultural and food companies! When people place profits over feeding humanity, imbalance occurs. God's design has balance.

Verse 11:6 does not guarantee that everyone will find food, it guarantees that God will provide sustenance for all creatures and He has. In the forest, animals do not wake up in the morning to find their daily regimen of food by their nest. They spend all day looking for it. If man takes it away from them for some industrial or military purpose, the animals will die. That is why we humans are Khalifas (stewards) in the earth. We promised God that we will take care of the earth and its resources that He provided, but look what we've done instead. 1536

### 2.1.12 How can she afford a second child?

*My daughter is twenty now and has a 6-month old son and she has just found out she is pregnant again. She is very upset; she thinks her life is over. I tried to explain to her that babies were a blessing and it would be rough but it would be ok. She is worried about their money situation and that they cannot really afford another child at this time.*

*I told her not to worry because Allah always provides for children. She said why there are children dying of starvation in the world. I did not know the best way to respond my daughter who is sort of like an atheist. Can anyone give me some wise words to say to her?*

Once upon a time a man divorced his wife and left her with a baby son. The wife wondered what will become of her and her son. She practically had nothing but the two of them. Fast forward a couple of decades. The baby became a prominent scholar whom everybody looked up to. His name was Imam Malik ibn Anas, may God bless his soul.

Every child who comes to this world does so by the will of God and for a specific purpose which he or she will fulfill and God takes care of him or

her all their life. Tell your daughter to leave the worry behind and replace it with faith and trust. As long as she is committed to caring for her children, God will open up doors for her. 427

### 2.1.13 Disproportionate expiation?

*I have a question regarding fasting. I heard that if one were to intentionally break 1 day of their fast without any good reason then they would have to fast 60 consecutive days. Now when I heard this I was a little surprised as I never heard of such a thing. But when I looked it up on the internet I found out that it is a real thing.*

*Now I read it was from a hadith but a lot of hadiths out there aren't authentic and have a lot of problems. This particular hadith in my initial opinion contradicts the Quran where Allah says that he doesn't want to 'burden us more than we can bear'. And where the prophet says in a hadith that 'this religion is easy and to not make it hard on yourself'. With that said, 60 days of fasting for only missing one fast is a little excessive for me and doesn't seem like a fair thing. And I don't think that that is something Allah wants for us.*

*So, can you please clear up this issue for me and explain this hadith and this whole "60 day fast for only missing 1 fast type thing"?*

Both Adam and Satan disobeyed a direct order from God. Yet, God forgave Adam and gave him a second chance, while He cursed Satan till the Day of Judgment. Why?

The difference between the two is that Adam recognized his error, regretted it and begged God to forgive him. Satan, on the other hand, refused to acknowledge that he did anything wrong and did not even attempt an apology to God. Adam knew his place; Satan deemed himself too big. Adam admitted his mistake; Satan argued with God. Adam bowed his head; Satan boasted his chest. Adam submitted; Satan arrogated.

When you say "missed one day of fasting", you're not being accurate. Missing implies inability or forgetfulness. When one can fast but won't, it's not called missing, it's called defiance. Missing is excusable; defiance is not.

That is why the expiation ("Kaffara") is different for each. The expiation for excusable breaking of the fast is one day of fasting later, or feeding a poor person a day's worth of meals. The expiation of inexcusable breaking of the fast is to fast two consecutive months or feed sixty poor people. It

is to teach the sinner humility before God. God does not benefit an iota from our worship. We do. It is in the best interest of the servant of God to be reminded of his place whenever he transgresses. If God leaves a sinner to himself, then know that the sinner is a lost cause, a hopeless case.

That is why the expiation, as harsh as it looks, is not disproportionate at all, nor unfair, nor contrasting God's grace. Rather, it is tough love. A needed training of the believer who was headed the wrong way.

As for the hadith that tells us what the expiation is for inexcusable breaking of the fast, it was narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6711) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1111). It is authentic. However, it is specific about mating during the fasting day. Scholars have concluded, however, that other inexcusable acts may be expiated the same way by analogy (Qiyas). In other words, mating is just one example.

The expiation, according to this hadith is (a) freeing a slave, or, if not possible, (b) fasting two consecutive months, or, if not possible, (c) feeding of sixty poor persons.

2470

### 2.1.14 Expectation of reward

I pray that all Muslim readers have completed the fast of Ramadan last month. The rewards for fasting Ramadan are incredibly generous:

*“Whoever fasts Ramadan, out of faith and expectation of reward, will be forgiven all his past sins.”*, said the Prophet (ﷺ), narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (38) who rated it authentic.

I translated the Arabic word “احتساب” (pronounced Ihtisaab) as “expectation of reward.” What the word linguistically means is the positive expectation of reward based on a valid reason.

The hadith I cited above is one such valid reason. Another is the authentic Qudsi (holy) hadith, *“All works of the son of Adam are for his own benefit, except fasting; it is for Me and I will recompense by it Myself.”* Also narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5927).

Ihtisaab, therefore, is quite different from “تمني” (pronounced “Tamanee”), wishful thinking, which is an expectation of reward based on no reason. What is worse than wishful thinking is self delusion (“وهم”) (pronounced 'Wahm'): the expectation of reward based on a provably invalid reason. God says about that, “Should I tell you about the most losing of their works? Those whose endeavor in this world is in vain while they think they have done good.” (18:103-104)

1924

### 2.1.15 A disproportionate reward?

*Hope you are doing good by the grace and blessings of Allah (SWT).*

*I was asked this question by one of my friends recently and he asked me whether life in paradise is finite or eternal? I gave him the answer saying eternal. But then he put forward a question saying, when this life we live for (say about 60-70yrs) is finite, then how come righteous people are rewarded with infinite time in the paradise? I had given it a thought and I did derive at an answer. But I would like to hear it from you too brother.*

*Secondly, I would like to know about Islamic rulings on Movies? And related to Music, Is melody, slow songs, love songs, songs that stir your emotions allowed?*

Usually, this question is asked about the flip side: is punishment of the hellfire disproportionate? The answer to both sides of this question is no, for the simple reason that “God does not do a speck’s weight of injustice.” (4:40).

One may look at a good deed and think that it is rather minor, but God sees it as major, and because He does, He rewards it more generously than the person who did it ever hoped for. The flip side of this is also true: one may say or do something that he doesn’t think is too bad, but God sees it as a grave sin, and because He does, He punishes it far more severely than the person who committed it ever feared.

To give you an example. God says in the holy Quran, “Did you not see how God strikes a parable of a good word is like a good tree: its foundation is fixed and its branch is in the sky. *It delivers its food every season* with the permission of its Lord” (14:24-25). Did you get the reason for the seemingly disproportionate reward? It is a deed that constantly breeds good deeds. Its benevolent effect does not only positively touch the lives of many contemporary people, but goes on and on for all generations to come. That is why God rewards it so much. And bear in mind that the good deed referred to in this verse appears minor. It is just a good word.

As for your question about music, songs and stirring of emotions, it depends on the environment where the music is played, the lyrics of the songs and the emotion that is stirred and what that leads to. Music is neither good nor bad on its own, as Sheikh Al-Shaarawi once said in a televised program, may God bless his soul. If it is accompanied by lewd or violent acts or lyrics then it’s forbidden. Otherwise, how can it be bad, when we know that it soothes the soul, puts one in a good mood, a romantic mood or a patriotic mood? Documented evidence is plenty that music speeds up healing of wounds and calms the nerves of patients about

to undergo surgery! See the other posts about Music, such as §5.2.14.

Likewise are love songs and love movies. It depends on whether they contain indecent lyrics or scenes. The emotions stirred by music, poetry, motion pictures, or art works in general can be benign and can be malicious. Art is neither good nor bad in the absolute. Art stems from love of beauty and awe at God's creation and an unconscious desire to connect with God, as the late President of Bosnia, Alija Izetbegović, wrote in his book "Islam and the West." 2231

### 2.1.16 Are we at fault for all bad things?

*I would like to know why do we tell "Everything good is from Allah SWT and everything bad is from us."*

*If you have already answered this question in your older posts, please provide me the link.*

You are referring to verse 4:79, but you should also take verse 4:78, which establishes the context, in order to understand it:

4:78 "Wherever you may be, death will catch up with you, even if you should be within towers of lofty construction. And if good comes to them, they say, 'This is [coming] from God'; and if a bad [thing] hits them, they say, 'This is [coming] from you.' Say, 'All [things come] from God.' So what is [the matter] with those people that they can hardly understand a statement?"

4:79 "What comes to you of good is [caused] by God, but what comes to you of bad is [caused] by yourself. And We have sent you, [O Muhammad,] to the people as a messenger, and sufficient is God as Witness."

Most translations I read of these two verses fail to distinguish between the two different prepositions that God used here, namely "من" and "من عند", which would lead the English reader to view these two verses as contradictory to each other! Verse 4:78 says that God is the *source* of all things, pleasant or not, while verse 4:79 says that only good things are *caused* by God while bad ones are caused by us. The distinction specified in the Arabic is lost in the translation and leads to a wrong conclusion. Rather, "من عند", used in verse 4:78, means "comes from the reservoir of" while "من", used in verse 4:79, means "is caused by." Thus, to be faithful to the Arabic, and in doing so dispel confusion, I suggest the above translation.

It is particularly interesting to me that in verse 4:78, God chastises people for not understanding plain talk. That means that this distinction I explained above was clear enough, yet people did not get it. Indeed, the source of all things is God. Who else is or can be a source? But the cause of something is creature action. If we don't do the wrong things, nothing wrong will happen! The Sunna (way) of God is that everything is in

order, working as planned, in harmony, in precise measure and timing, well designed for maximum benefit. That is why God says that the cause of good is He. God does not do anything to ruin His plan or design. But we often do.

Why are there wars, famine, scarcity, disease, poverty, ignorance, etc., in the world? It is all caused by human action. We are all capable of choosing right, but some of us willingly and knowingly choose the wrong. The result is suffering. That is the cosmic law of cause and effect that God created and set forth. 2320

### 2.1.17 Does this verse imply reincarnation?

*Please help me understand this verse. What does it mean when it says in different forms?*

*Chapter 56, verses 61-62:*

**Yusuf Ali's translation:**

*From changing your forms and creating you (again) in (forms) that ye know not. And ye certainly know already the first form of creation: Why then ye not celebrate HIS praises?*

**Picthall's translation:**

*That **We may transfigure you** and make you what ye know not. And verily you know the first creation. Why, then, do ye not reflect?*

*Something very disturbing comes to my mind everyday I go through this verse, something that is in Hindu religion.*

You left out the preceding verse that introduces the subject:

"We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone." (56:60).

In other words, God is stating His power to create as He wills. So, a proper translation of these three verses, I suggest, is:

"We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone; In that We [may] replace you with [creatures] like you, and initiate you in what you do not know. And you have already known the first creation; if only you remember." (56:60-62)

The verses do not say that this *will* happen, it only says that God *can do it*.

*Would that mean He **may** give our souls different bodies and make them alive after we die?!.....Is this what the verse means? That it is in ALLAH's power (no doubt). That He destroys us and then resurrects us in forms we know not?*

Since He did not tell us, it's Ghayb (matter of the Beyond) and therefore we cannot know until He tells us on the Day of Resurrection.

The fact that we will be resurrected after turning into bones and dust in the graves is proof that He will initiate us in a new form from the one we ended up with, right?

If the source of your confusion is the doctrine of reincarnation, don't be confused. The Quran tells us clearly that our souls will stay where the body dies until the Day of Resurrection. Consider the story of Prophet Jonah (Yunus), peace be upon him. God says that if it weren't for Jonah's goodness, "*he would have stayed in the whale's belly until the Day all are resurrected*" (37:143-144).

*Most of it is clear, except one last thing.....our souls, everyone have one, a distinct one. Is it right from the beginning? The rooh (spirit) which helps us move around and all. It is ours, right? So, when he dies the rooh stays (his but free) till resurrection?*

*Actually a sufi minded teacher of mine argued that the number of souls was constant and that when one dies his soul is put into another person/human who is born; like more bodies are created but souls/rooh have been created from Abad (absolute beginning) and that except the prophet's souls, others are not specifically for one person. That's what she said.*

What was her evidence?

No, there is no evidence that I know of to back up such opinion. What we know for sure is that God has plainly told us, in verse 17:85, that we cannot know much about the Ruh (spirit), thus it is Ghayb (Beyond) and it's therefore futile to try to guess what it is.

*I don't exactly remember. She said something about a verse which says something like: "We give life and take it then give life and take it....." and something like this. She said the verse mentions this alternation of life and death six times.*

She may be referring to,

"How can you disbelieve in God when *you were dead* and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned." (2:28)

If so, the verse says that we were naught at first and God gave us life, first in the womb then on earth, then He will cause us to die then He will resurrect us. Nothing about reincarnation.

The part about the first "death" is confirmed in,

“[An angel] said: Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, ‘It is easy for Me, for I created you before, while you were nothing.’ ” (19:9)

On the Day of Judgment, all who wish to escape Hell will say,

“Our Lord, You caused us to be dead *twice* and gave us life *twice*, and we have confessed our sins. So is there to an exit any way?” (40:11)

So, the straightforward interpretation is that we started out dead, became alive, will die, then will be resurrected.

*It's all very clear now! You explained it nicely. Life twice, death twice. I never thought of that. New knowledge!*

*May God reward you well for your help and answer.*

Thank you and amen. Glad I was able to help.

769

### 2.1.18 What is the point of supplication?

*If God knows that He will heal me at the time I was sick and supplicated him to heal me, then what is the point of the supplication? It was going to happen anyway, wasn't it?*

How do you know that He will heal you?

God also knew that you will supplicate to Him.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Nothing turns a divine decree except supplication.” (Al-Tirmizi [23] (2139)). God may or may not will for you good health with or without your supplication. The supplication is something that God loves to receive from His worshipers because He loves to answer prayers. The Prophet (ﷺ) also said that supplication is the “brain of worship.” (Al-Tirmizi [23] (3371)) Supplications benefit the supplicant and please God.

You may also view posts in the “Fate, and Free Will” section, §1.7, as they detail more the concepts of divine decrees and destiny. 463

### 2.1.19 Are we allowed to ask God for patience?

*Is it permissible to ask ALLAH to grant us patience?*

*I'm asking this, because recently I heard someone say that if you do so, then ALLAH will provide you with a hardship in life in order to fulfill your supplication.*

*I'm confused now.*

“And you do not resent us except because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. Our Lord, pour upon us patience and recall us [in death] as Muslims.” (7:126)

“And when they went forth to [face] Goliath and his soldiers, they said, ‘Our Lord, pour upon us patience and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people.’ ” (2:250)

Does that answer your question?

963

### 2.1.20 Supplication during the night

*Assalaamu alaikum WR WB brother.*

*Is there any specific Duaa recorded in the Sunnah which should be recited specifically during night prayers (Qiyaamul Layl)? If so, please do share them In-sha Allah.*

Wa Alaykum Assalam wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuh (Upon you may be peace, the mercy of God, and His blessings). The first time God ordered the Prophet (ﷺ) to stay up at night praying was in Chapter 73 (Al-Muzzammil), very shortly after revelation started. In this Chapter, God only tells the Prophet to recite the Quran. By that time, only some 20 verses of the Quran were revealed.

Later, in Chapter 17 (Al-Israa), God tells the Prophet two things about night prayer: (a) that it is voluntary (Nafila) and (b) to say in it this supplication, “Rabbi adkhillni mudkhala sidqin wa akhrijni mukhraja sidqin waj-al li min ladunka sulnaan naseera” (17:80) which means, “Lord, make me enter an entrance of truthfulness and make me exit an exit of truthfulness, and set for me, from Your Own, a supporting authority.” Followed by, “Jaa-al haqqu wa zahaqa-l baatilu. Inna-l baatila kaana zahooqa” (17:81), which means “Truth has come and falsehood has passed away. Indeed, falsehood is always passing away.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) did that and much more. He was committed to night prayer even after he was told it was voluntary. And he added other supplications, such as this one reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (1120), [Muslim \[43\]](#) 769, [Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (2597), and [Ibn Khuzayma \[35\]](#) (2/323) in their authentic compilations,

*“O God, to You is praise; You are the Caretaker of the heavens and the earth and whomever is in them. To You is praise; You are the King of the heavens and the earth and whomever is in them. To You is praise, You are the Truth. Your promise is truth. The meeting with You is truth. What You say is truth. The Garden (Al-Janna) is truth. Hellfire is truth. To You I have submitted. In You I have believed. Upon You I have relied. Back to You I have returned. By You I have argued. For Your sake I have judged. So, forgive me what I have put forward and what I have put*

behind, what I have kept private and what I have made public. You are the Advancer (Al-Muqaddim) and the Regresser (Al-Muakhhir). There is no god but You and there is no capacity nor strength except by You.”  
2269

### 2.1.21 Dua is really powerful

*Eid Mubarak (Blessed feast) to you and yours.*

*This Ramadan was significant to me. It would take a pot of coffee to explain everything. Alas, you are spared the details. I was tested. I was thoroughly tested. I came to the conclusion that was my blessing. I am at a point where I know everything will be ok. Dua is answered and it can happen in the blink of an eye.*

*You need to preach that message. In the twinkling of an eye Allah subhana wa taala (may He be sanctified and exalted) can change the course of your life to His Purpose when you beseech him. What appears to be many insurmountable impasses disappears with dua.*

*I had to make supplication as never before. I had to make decisions and they came so easily. He, in His Infinite Mercy made the path wide open for me. Simple example, I was on the road a lot. I supplicated make this journey easy and quick. Brother, on one of the most deadly highways in the US I had no traffic. The temperature was perfect and it was cloudy. My son could not believe the progress we made on the road.*

*The words of one of the prophets of Allah subhana wa taala is etched in my heart and carried me through: “O Allah, I am in distress and You are the most merciful of those who have mercy.” Them some powerful words.*

*May Allah reward you for your Love of Him.*

*InshaAllah, I will hear from you. Please keep me in your dua.*

Eid Mubarak to you, sister, and to your loved ones. Many happy returns in-sha-Allah (God willing). It is heart warming to hear that Ramadan has been a spiritually fulfilling experience for you. That is what it is for, “So that you may watch out [for him]” (2:183).

Rumi once wrote,

*“Be watchful; the grace of God appears suddenly. It comes without warning to an open heart.”*

The catch is how to open the heart. That is where acts of worship come in. When done with sincerity and longing, they bring us closer to the

Source of all. Once the heart is open, there is no telling what power befalls a believer.

God says in a holy hadith, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6502) in his authentic collection, “As My worshiper keeps seeking closeness to Me with voluntary acts of worship, I become his ears with which he hears, his eyes with which he sees, his hands with which he reaches and his legs with which he walks. And if he asks Me, I most certainly will give him, and if he seeks refuge in Me, I most certainly will give him refuge.”

Imagine having that power! How can one fear or worry then? This is perhaps what Rumi meant when he said, “For those who cleaned their hearts, things hidden and things future are plain to them.”

But I remind myself before you: Closeness to God is only maintained with righteousness; sin turns it to a distance, causing uncertainty, apprehension, confusion and insecurity. The struggle against our dark sides is as constant as our breath.

BTW, the prophet who said the supplication you quoted was Ayyub (Job), peace be upon him. And wouldn't you know it? God immediately gave him a prescription to heal him from his illness: a jog in and a drink from the Jordan river. 2191

### 2.1.22 A supplication of the wise

*“O God, keep me busy with what You created me for, and do not keep me busy with what You created for me.”*

The one who figures that out is the wise one. Most people, however, do not. Someone said that Satan must be saying, “I'm amazed at mankind; they love God but disobey Him and they hate me but obey me!” 1135

### 2.1.23 Supplicating with confidence

*Salaams,*

*This is what you said to me earlier: “What you keep thinking about tends to happen. That's because the brain and the psyche are geared to achieve what you obsess about!”*

*I obsessed about getting married and having children. I was worried about being alone and tried my darndest for that not to happen, but it did. What was at the forefront, however, was a constant determinatin: I will not reach 40 without getting married. I will not enter my middle years without having children.*

*Based on your thesis, it should have happened.*

Forgive me but it seems that you obsessed more about your fears that it won't happen. Your brain and psyche saw two strong thoughts, one positive and another negative, and the negative was stronger, so it won.

What would you say about a person who goes to an authority figure seeking a favor and says to him, "I don't think that you will help me, but if you can please do!"?

I do not mean to be hard on you. Please believe that. I'm only trying to point out to you why your approach needs refinement. What is at stake here is bigger than marriage and family. What is at stake here is your faith.

The right approach of a believing man or woman is to earnestly supplicate to God for what they wish for, work hard to exhaust all the possible material means to achieve that goal and then completely accept the outcome. As I mentioned to you before, God has already answered your prayers. The answer is either not obvious to you in your disheartened state, or it is coming.

Have you ever prayed in congregation and the Imam (preacher) said "ادعوا الله وأنتم موقنون بالإجابة" (supplicate to God, certain in the response)? The believer is certain of God's reply to their supplication. The believer supplicates with confidence.

*One of the things I really pray for is that my elderly parents remain healthy and able-bodied at least until I get married and have children (of course even beyond that, too!). I say that in every salaah, and at each time I speak to God. But last week my mother found out she had a health scare and now needs to see a surgeon to evaluate cancer. She does not want to take the further testing because it is very invasive.*

*I feel like I am drowning. The more I ask, the more disappointed I get. It's like the joy in life is lying at the surface of the ocean but I am struggling to get to the top. And I tried to keep the struggle at bay through my 30's because I assumed that eventually I would get there. But now the struggle is overwhelming because it is compounded by so many other factors...the health of my mother, health and longevity, my fatigue in always taking care of my own needs, my loss of someone I loved but who ultimately did not want to be with me, the loss of my childbearing years, and abandonment by my siblings and friends during a time when I am heartbroken. So I'm not getting to the top.*

May God heal your mother as only He can. Please encourage her to seek all available treatments. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Take medicine, for God sent down ailment and sent with it its cure." Narrated by Ibn

Masoud and reported and authenticated by [Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (6062) and [Al-Albani \[3\]](#) (6/875).

The joy is not at the bottom of the ocean, it's all around you. What you feel inside is what is blinding you to it. Millions of people have worked hard for goals that never materialized. Life handed them a lemon, but they made of it lemonade. Don't keep tasting the lemon.

*And I disagree that I obsessed over that - to the contrary, I obsessed over the opposite.*

It was a subtle, subconscious obsession. Your supplication took you one step up the ladder, but your fears dragged you down two steps.

*I know you think that the joy may lie in where I am, but everyone has a different perspective on joy. For me, joy is in being surrounded by family that loves and cares about you, and being nourished by them. Joy is being able to experience this world with people who are important to you.*

Joy is getting to Paradise. Joys of this life are fleeting. Please reflect on these verses from the holy Quran,

"And [this] the nearest life is but distraction and play. And verily, the Lasting Home (the Hereafter) is the life, if they only knew." (29:64)

"So that you will not grieve over what missed you nor be overjoyed over what He has given you." (57:23) 1909

### 2.1.24 The universe is Muslim?

*Did I read that right in the Quran? That everything in the universe is Muslim?*

Yes, you read it right. That's because everything in the universe, that does not have a free will, is in harmony with God. So, it can only submit to Him, and submit to God is what Islam means.

Not only that, but every being in the universe prostrates to God and sings His praises. God says in the holy Quran,

"Do you not see that to God prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the moving creatures and many of the people?" (22:18)

and

"The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them sanctify Him. And there is not a thing except that it sanctifies [God] with praising Him, but you

do not understand their [way of] snactifying. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving.” (17:44) 604

### 2.1.25 Please explain Rizq and Naseeb

*What are the concepts of Rizq and Naseeb? Are they fixed, or do they depend on the person?*

Both. It is something you can never change, but because you don't know what it is, it depends on you.

Rizq means sustenance or providence and Nasib means share or portion.

If you don't work hard, you most likely are not going to get much, but God may give you something anyway. You don't know and never will. If you do work hard, you most likely are going to get what you work hard for, but God may cause it to disappear from your hands. You don't know and you never will.

So what are we supposed to do? Our best. We work hard for our goals, assured that God provides for all His creatures but also content with whatever God gives us.

God says in the holy Quran, “Indeed, your Lord extends provision to whom He wills and restricts [it]. Indeed He is ever, concerning His servants, Acquainted and Seeing.” (17:30). We learn from this verse that God's provision is the right amount for each individual.

And He says, “And if God had extended provision to His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Acquainted and Seeing.” (42:27) We learn from this verse that man has the tendency to do evil if he has huge wealth.

And regarding Nasib, God says, “And do not wish for that by which God has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned. And ask God of His bounty. Indeed God is ever, of all things, Knowing.” (4:32) We learn from this verse that we get what we work for and that we should not eye what others get. 525

### 2.1.26 Can we call upon other than God in supplications?

*I have noticed that Sufis (transcendentals) call upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in their supplications. Some of them believe that he is still alive in his grave and hears all supplications and greetings sent his way. I seriously doubt this*

*view, though it's making me a bit confused in my theology, because God emphasizes in the Quran so many times that we must not call upon any one but Him.*

You arrived at the right conclusion, Bless your heart. And how did you do it? You consulted the source of guidance: the Quran. It's not hard to arrive at the truth and clear up any confusion. Simply test an argument/evidence against the Quran. If it fails, it has no value regardless of who said it. Always put God first. 1696

### 2.1.27 Do Muslims have a covenant with God?

*The Jews believe that they have a covenant with God. Do Muslims believe they have a covenant with God? What does Islam say about God's covenant?*

God's covenant with people has been the same since He created Adam. It is that we believe in Him alone, do not associate anything or anyone with Him in worship, uphold His laws, follow His Messengers, and honor His scriptures. That is Al-Amana (the Trust) which God speaks about in this key verse,

"We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains. They declined to carry it and were apprehensive of it. But man carried it; he is ever unjust and ignorant." (33:72)

We volunteered for the job, but we haven't done it too well.

The first obligation of the covenant is made clear in this verse:

"When your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'But yes (You are our Lord), we have testified.' [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'Indeed, we were of this unaware.' " (7:172)

The belief in the One God is in our DNA.

Whenever God sent a Messenger to a people, He had them testify that they would uphold the Covenant. That is why many scriptures are called Testaments. There are many verses in the Quran which speak about that, for instance:

"And [recall] when God took the covenant of the prophets, [saying,] 'Surely whatever I give you of the Book and wisdom *and then comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, that you [will] indeed believe in him and support him.*' [God] said, 'Have you acknowledged and taken upon that My commitment?' They said, 'We have acknowledged.' He said, 'Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.' " (3:81)

Thus, the Covenant was taken by all prophets and part of it was that all future prophets must be followed.

“And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], ‘Do not worship except God; and to parents do good and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give alms.’ Then you turned away, except a few of you, with refusal.” (2:83)

The covenant included God’s moral teachings as well as theological fundamentals. The Children of Israel were one of the earliest people who did not uphold the Covenant,

“And [mention, O Muhammad], when God took a covenant from those who were given the Book, [saying], ‘You must *make it clear to the people and not conceal it.*’ But they banished it behind their backs and exchanged it for a small price. Then how wretched is what they purchased!” (3:187)

The covenant included spreading the word of God to all, but people have hidden it, or worse, altered it.

What do people get when they stick to their end of the Covenant? God explains clearly in this verse,

“And God had already taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We delegated from among them twelve leaders. And God said, ‘***I am with you.*** If you establish prayer and give alms and *believe in My messengers and support them* and loan God a goodly loan, I will surely remove from you your misdeeds and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow. But whoever of you disbelieves after that has certainly strayed from the level road.’ ” (5:12)

We get the company of God! We get expiation of our sins. We get the ultimate reward in the Hereafter. May God enable us to uphold His Covenant and not deviate from the level road.

In case you’re wondering whether Christians were exempted from the Covenant, I invite you to read Mathew 5:17-20, in which Jesus (PBUH) is reported to have said that any talk about him abolishing the law is nonsense, that the law stands as long as the heavens and the earth stand, and that those who do not uphold the law will not enter the Kingdom of God. The law of God has been, and always will be the same, and it applies to all people without exceptions. Upholding it is the covenant we made with God.

1804

## 2.2 Faith by Blind following

### 2.2.1 What is the difference between blind following and a leap of faith?

A leap of faith is when one exhausts the material avenues and leaves the rest to God. In Islam, that's called Tawakkul (putting trust in God). If material avenues are not exhausted and a person makes a "leap of faith", it is called in Islam Tawaakul (negligence or laxness).

A great story that explains the difference is when Umar, may God have been pleased with him, passed by a man resting under a tree, with his she-camel standing loose near him. Umar asked him why he is not tying the camel to the tree? Is he not worried that she may run away? The man answered that he has tawakkul on God; that God will keep the camel. Umar replied, "Tie it *then* have tawakkul!"

Blind following is another matter. It is the following, without question, of others, even after evidence shows it is incorrect or without merit. That in Islam is called Taqlid. 1461

### 2.2.2 Is there any good Taqleed?

*You have come down hard on Taqleed (blind following) in several posts. I see your point, but is there any good Taqleed? Can we blindly or strictly follow someone we really trust not to mislead us?*

Yes. That one is God. He is the only One we should follow. But even He, may He be sanctified and exalted, does not want us to follow Him blindly. He wants us to examine what He has sent us and ponder His signs. Then, when we are convinced in our hearts and minds that what we examined is the Truth, then we follow it strictly with confidence. It is an *educated* following.

God summarizes this criterion as follows,

"Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord, and do not follow beside Him [any] allies. Little that ye remember!" (7:3)

Why is that? Because all humans tend to err, misconstrue, misinterpret, etc., and their understanding evolves and changes over the years. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "I am but a human; I get it right sometimes and wrong other times. You come to me to judge between you, and one of you may be more articulate than the other. If I cut you a piece that belongs to your brother, I've cut you a piece of the Fire!" Narrated by Umm Salama (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2680) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1713).

So, if the Prophet himself, peace be upon him, may err or misjudge, what about others who do not have his knowledge or the benefit of revelation?

I repeat, in case some readers think that I'm denigrating the scholars: Most scholars are wonderful people whom we owe a debt of gratitude for sharing their valuable knowledge and analysis with us. But that is no cause for blindly following them.

I find this verse fascinating,

"Those are the ones whom God has guided (the prophets), so emulate their guidance." (6:90).

Notice how God instructs the Prophet (PBUH) to follow *their guidance*? He did not tell him to follow *them*. 1789

## 2.3 Keeping the Faith

### 2.3.1 Can faith go up and down?

*Brother, I pray this finds you in high eman (faith) and good health.*

*Here is one of my serious questions. I did not know where to start the research.*

*I pray. I believe in prayer. I try not to miss my salat (prayer).*

*I got sick. I could not pray. I do not mean physically. There arose the problem. I could not make myself pray. I put it off. I blamed the physical lethargy. I could not understand nor rationalize the blockage. The inability to pray ran down to my soul. I could not find an answer.*

*To try and sum it up in words: Why do we have periods of such low eman that prayer becomes difficult? It is not the total abandonment of prayer but a temporary inability to pray. Does this even make sense? I understand that the body hurts but the soul hurts more when prayer is ignored. It was as if I felt I was abandoned.*

*Point the passages in the Quran for me to ponder on this one. I know others who have the same blockage. It is not that you do not want to pray..but something prevents you from praying.*

You're asking why this is happening to you. The answer is simple: Satan got to you. Don't panic; it happens to everyone. Satan never tires of trying to get to people so that they may follow him instead of following God. In the holy Quran, God quotes Satan challenging Him and saying,

“I will come to them before them, behind them, at their right sides and at their left sides, and You will not find most of them thankful.” (7:17)

What do you do about it? You show Satan who’s boss! You fight him on it. You drag yourself to pray if necessary and cry to God in your prayer to help you win that fight. It is not an easy fight, it’s a jihad (struggle). And if you just start it, God promises He will be on your side, “And those who struggle in Us, We shall surely guide them to Our ways.” (29:69)

Prayer is the second most emphasized pillar of the religion in the Quran, after the oneness of God. Why? Because once you understand who God is, you certainly want to find out how to communicate with Him.

Prayer is an audience with God that He invites you to five times everyday. It is a privilege given to every believer, similar to the privilege God gave to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on his Mieraj (ascension journey to heaven). Unlike audiences with human dignitaries, you don’t make an appointment first, you don’t need intermediaries, you can stay as little or as long as you want, and you can ask for anything and be sure that an answer will be given right away and in the way that fits you best.

Prayer, therefore, is much more than a duty upon every believer toward His Maker, it is a fabulous opportunity; like a freebie you get five times a day and all you have to do is open the door to get it. No strings attached.

Prayer is a chance to thank God five times a day for the many more than five favors He has given you that day.

Belief does not go up and down, but faith does. Belief is binary. You either believe or you don’t. Faith, on the other hand, is the practice, cordially, mentally, verbally and manually, that proves the belief and affirms it. Since all of these can go up and down, that’s why faith can go up and down. God defined believers as follows, “Verily, believers are only those who, when God is mentioned and His verses are recited to them, it increases their faith, and upon their Lord they rely.” (8:2)

To make your faith go up, you increase the rate at which you affirm your belief. Cordially, you contemplate God’s love and grace often. Mentally, you reflect on God’s creation and bounties often. Verbally, you do Zikr often, and manually, you perform the rituals, charity and good deeds often. The more you commit yourself to that, the easier it gets, because Satan will find you a tough nut to crack and will look for an easier prey, just like a car thief doesn’t bother with cars that have a powerful alarm.

The Prophet (PBUH) often said this supplication, “*O turner of hearts, steady my heart on Your religion! O diverter of hearts, direct my heart to obeying You!*” (Al-Tirmizi [23] (2140))

And he always said this supplication after ending each prayer,

“*Allahumma ainni ala zhidrika wa shukrika wa husni ibaadatika*” (“*O God, help me to remember You, thank You, and comply well with your*

ordinance.”) ([Al-Nasai \[17\]](#) (1302)).

2366

### 2.3.2 Struggling to surrender

*Thanks for answering my previous question.*

*You say, “How about thinking instead, ‘What wonderful things God has in store for me, if He has not written for me marriage? Have I been missing the forest for the trees?’ ”*

*I have tried, over the years, to see a life beyond love and companionship, to be open to an alternative existence.*

*My friend and blog member recently mentioned a saying, “Life is a flower. You can’t force it to bloom.” That hit me so hard. Because throughout my 30s, I was waiting for my life to bloom, even though I desperately tried to convince myself it was already blooming. Year after year, I tried to create a life for myself, one where friendship, activities, travel, faith, books, sports, prayer and parents replaced love, babies, companionship and intimacy.*

*It didn’t work.*

Sometimes the goals we work so hard for never materialize. As I mentioned previously, the cause could be that we went about them wrong, or that we did not take opportunities when they came. Those we can fix and try again. But the cause could also be that we were not meant to have them. That one we have to accept as Muslims, because we trust that God only deprives us of what is not good for us.

*It’s been almost a year since I lost the man I loved and with whom my destiny was not meant to unfold. It was on the eve of Ramadan last year, and throughout Ramadan 2010 and the following September I convinced myself I did the right thing in breaking ties, and that God would bring me something better even if “better” means peace with not being married.*

Acceptance is an attitude. It doesn’t come naturally to some people. Dr. Jeffrey Lang wrote a book on the subject. He called it “Struggling To Surrender!” ([Lang \[41\]](#)) Indeed, it’s not easy. But it is the substance of our religion. By fostering it in yourself, things will look quite different to you. The hardship will turn into tranquility.

*I told you that I am somewhat disheartened by prayer. But I think more than anything, the cold hard reality that my life did not bloom is hitting me in the face.*

Your life did bloom, but you just don't want to see it that way. I hope that you will.

*My best friend abandoned me. She has not called me once in the last 10 months to ask how I am. Although I remain active in sports, I really don't have a lot of friends. I may do one social activity a month. I find that my life consists of work, prayer, eating meals, and visiting my elderly parents. I do engage in some hobbies, like art etc, but again, I come home and I am alone. Although I work in an office, I don't work in a team. I am a nice, friendly person.*

*It is painful. It is painful, as I sit here and type this, alone in my home, with absolutely no one to call or talk to or love or be loved by.*

Why did your best friend abandon you? That may be indicative of something that you unconsciously do that keeps you lonely. Examine your own personality and conduct as if a therapist is asking you questions. Some people, as you probably know, demolish their goals unconsciously out of fear of failure or even fear of success.

*Now, the life I was trying to avoid all these years has come true! What I tried throughout my 30s to avoid happening - happened! I am truly alone in the world.*

What you keep thinking about tends to happen. That's because the brain and the psyche are geared to achieve what you obsess about. Dr. Wayne Dyer has a very nice program called "The Power of Intention" where he elaborates much more on this point.

Change your thoughts and your life will change. I know it's easier said than done, but if you want to escape the life you dislike, you must.

*When I was with the man I loved, my life felt like it was in bloom, because all of a sudden I felt loved, I had a companion, I could plan for the future, etc. Now, in addition to the grief, the emotional vacancy is that much more potent. The things that kept me busy before...those things are not present anymore. I can't find a replacement. How can one find a replacement for love?*

You're assuming that no other love will come your way. That's despair from the mercy of God. Don't think that way. Jacob's life (פְּבוּחַ) was empty when he lost his son Joseph (פְּבוּחַ). He wept so hard he became blind. Yet, he never despaired of the mercy of God (see verse 12:87). His

faith was rewarded when he was reunited with Joseph in Egypt. Think like him, a role model of faith, acceptance, and patience, peace be upon him.

*So how can I possibly, possibly embrace what you are saying  
and agree that there is so much better in store for me now,  
that I have been unable to see the forest but for the trees?*

You do that out of faith. That is what makes it possible. It is a state of the heart. It is a trust in God's love.

*Where am I? Where did all my prayers and desires and  
conformity to "the rules" get me?*

It got you plenty of entries in the credit column of your Kitab (register of deeds), which will delight you on the Final Day, when most people will be in panic. That is, unless you wipe them out with loss of faith, God forbid. Ibn Masoud (RA) put it like this: "Certitude is the full faith and endurance is half the faith", reported by [Al-Bayhaqi \[11\]](#) (7/3180) and rated authentic by the Hadith Encyclopedia ([Al-Dorar Al-Saniyya \[19\]](#)). 1861

### 2.3.3 Help me keep my faith

*I am a Muslim who has lost my faith. Not because I converted  
to another religion. And not because I decided to adopt a  
secular life-style to fit in. I've lost my faith, after much  
thinking and questioning, and finding in the end that I could  
not see the logic of religion at all.*

*I am sad to have lost my faith, and have turned to this site to  
get help, because I am trying to be optimistic that there is  
something I have missed, and that if I realize what I have  
missed, I will find my faith once again.*

*I have to admit that life can be more difficult without faith.*

*Some of my issues are:*

*1. If God is so merciful, how could He possibly burn someone  
in Hell eternally simply because he did not believe in God.*

That's not true. God only punishes people who received His message yet chose to reject it. He says in the holy Quran,

"And We would not be tormenting until We send off a Messenger" (17:15)

*What if someone wasn't convinced of the truth of God,*

Why aren't you? Did you read the Quran? It's not rocket science. The knowledge of God is the innate nature of all creatures.

*2. ... They say God created it. But who created God? Again, a classical, yet I think fair question. People of religion will argue that God wasn't created. But that doesn't simplify things; it means we now have to explain where God got the building materials for the universe, and how he came about.*

This is an ill-posed question, because it makes the assumption that for an entity to exist, it needs building materials and a maker. This is true for creatures but not for God. God, by definition, is the One who can create without building material and exists without a maker.

To ask, "Who created God" is like asking "What revolves around the moon?" A moon, by definition, is a celestial being that revolves around a planet. Nothing revolves around it. If something revolved around it, it would be a planet (or a star) but not a moon.

*3. Why doesn't God just prove his existence? People of faith will say because then the element of faith would be non-existent. True enough. But that's also admitting that there's no way to prove his existence and so to punish someone who did not believe in something that could not be proved would be grotesquely unfair, especially when the punishment is eternal damnation.*

Not true, because God instilled in all His creatures the certain knowledge that He is God. See verse 7:172. Those who reject God go against the conviction of their own souls.

You may also find §1.2 helpful.

*4. Why did the Prophet marry a nine year old.*

He did not. This a common misconception. See §4.1.21 for more details.

That said, why would that be cause for you to abandon Islam? Let's say, for the sake of argument, that the Prophet (ﷺ) did something wrong, why would that convince you that Islam is not true? He was human. He made mistakes and some of them were mentioned, and corrected in the Quran.

But marrying Aisha bint Abi-Bakr, may God have been pleased with both, was quite proper, since she was nineteen at the time.

*5. Relating to point one, how could God eternally burn Abu-Talib simply because he didn't believe, in spite of the fact*

*that he was a good man, who had helped and protected Muhammad, and helped the cause of Islam?*

As he was dying, Abu-Talib, the Prophet's uncle, had his nephew Muhammad, peace be upon him, on his right side, and his brother Abu-Jahl on his left side. The Prophet (ﷺ) kept begging him to say the Shahada (testimony of faith) and he could see in his eyes that he wanted to do it, but Abu-Jahl kept shaming him by saying, "Are you going to abandon the religion of Abdul-Muttalib (their father)?" Abu-Talib **chose** Taqlid (blind following) instead of doing the right thing. If he will be punished, and only God knows that, then that's why. Our choices in life carry consequences. The foremost choice, acceptance of God, must therefore carry the biggest consequence.

*6. Why would God let his most pious followers suffer so much? I don't really buy the argument that it's a trial, or we don't know. How can God justify letting a young child be raped, for example? Or justify a young child being eaten alive by a wild animal, as has happened? Can children who are unaware of the concept of God be trialed? Clearly not.*

Evil is a necessary result of the free will. The articles in §1.7 may help you understand this better.

As for horrible accidents to innocent people, they are a test of faith of those who survive them. The child is not trialed. His parents are. The child, in fact, is in heaven having skipped all trials of this world.

*However, this is only true if you believe, not if you simply practice religion. I am unable to believe. I want to but I can't. And I want help, because I hope that there is something I'm missing that will make me believe.*

What you're missing is the Quran. It is God talking to you. Say to yourself that you are going to study the Quran like your life depends on it! Give yourself time to reflect on what you study. Ask questions about what you don't understand. We are all here to help you.

And above all, ask God to help you. If you are sincere in seeking the truth about Him, then He will certainly guide you if you ask Him.

*Thank you for your help of a complete stranger. I will go through the references you provided. I have gone from no faith to faith before, and I hope I can make the same journey once again successfully, albeit it will be a bigger challenge this time around.*

You have the right attitude; it will help you a lot, in-sha-Allah. I pray to God to guide you back to Him. He is Al-Haleem (the Forbearing), the Gracious (Al-Rahman), the Guide (Al-Hadi) and the One who delights when His servant repents to Him and will accept his repentance over and over again (Al-Tawwab). 1090

### 2.3.4 Focus on the rain

*I am concerned about a brother. He is on the brilliant end of the scale. He is one of the most compassionate human beings I know. He is a good person. He supports many many people. Should someone need a hand he drops everything and does it for them. He is respected for his skills and accomplished.*

*He was turned off Islam. The Muslims are what he has difficulty with. As Yusuf Islam (Formerly Cat Stevens) has stated he was glad he became Muslim before he met many!*

*I make dua (supplication) that Allah subhana wa taala soften this brother's heart to Islam. He is knowledgeable about the history and politics of Islam. Any suggestions?*

The Prophet (PBUH) gave a parable one day. He said that rain falls on the earth carrying blessings but different terrain react differently to those blessings. Fertile soil blooms with flowers and vegetation, rocks are washed but that's about it, sand brings out palm trees and cactus but not much more, etc. Human reception of God's blessings is kind of like that. This brother should not be disillusioned because all he sees is rocks. He should instead focus on the rain!

It is understandable to be frustrated by an environment that does not nourish spirituality and righteousness. But this brother should keep in mind that he did not become Muslim in order to follow Muslims; he became Muslim in order to follow God and His Messenger. Whether his fellowship consists of him alone, like Abraham's was at first, or has billions of faithful people, should not be the primary concern of a believer, as nice as it is to have.

I have a feeling that things will be all right. Tests of life are tests of character. They expose a person's true colors. From what you said, it sounds like the seed of goodness is in this brother. I know someone who once had a bout with doubt and left the faith for several years but came back. That was a much harder test than what this brother is going through. A believer comes out of such tests stronger and so will this brother, in-sha-Allah (God Willing). 2253

### 2.3.5 How do we struggle “in God”?

*I enjoyed reading your posts about Sufism. I'm not Sufi, but I'm curious: You quoted verse 29:69, which says, “And those who struggle in Us...” How does one struggle in God?*

Thanks. Interestingly, God answers that question immediately after the phrase you quoted. He says, “and God surely is with benefactors.” (29:69)

Benefaction (Ihsaan) is to do beautiful things. The Arabic word has the noun root Husn which means beauty. So, benefaction is more than doing good, it is doing good in a beautiful manner. God calls every good deed Hasana (a beautiful thing).

The Prophet (ﷺ) defined the difference between Islam (submission), Eeman (faith) and Ihsan (benefaction). He said that Islam is to do the five pillars of it: Shahada (testimony of faith), prayer, fasting, Zakah (alms giving) and pilgrimage to Mecca if you can. He defined Eeman as belief in the six pillars of it: Belief in God, His angels, His scriptures, His Messengers, the Final Day (the Hereafter), and the Qadar (precision and wisdom of God’s timing and provision). Finally, he defined Ihsan as follows, “*That you worship God as if you see Him. While you do not see Him, He sees you!*” That is the realization that causes a Muslim to be a benefactor: God is watching and appraising what we do and the angels are writing it down in our eternal record of deeds. 1627

### 2.3.6 A dilemma of faith?

*Have you ever read Narcissus and Gouldmond by Hesse?*

*I think we are focusing too much on the interpretation of the scholar. I do not see a balance in the wise man. A forum I follow is stuck on scholars and fatwas. I see a lack of independent thought. That scares me. In simple words: we choose to be Believers. We have to be true to ourselves as to why we choose to be Believers. I understand that scholars help us to arrive at an understanding.*

*In essence faith is the most intellectual pursuit we have and at the same time faith is the most anti-intellectual endeavor we face. You need to write on this one.*

An interesting characterization of faith as a dilemma. The way most people view faith, it is a dilemma. The way Islam defines it, it is far from it.

Most people, when they think of faith, they think of blind trust. They trust a book, a preacher, a parent, a peer. Most of them do not pause to

ask themselves the simple question, “Do *I know* that this is true?” Many of them are too scared to ask that question, or too timid.

They take one side of the dilemma as you described it: the anti-intellectual side. Atheists, on the other hand, take the other side. They will tell you that there is no rational reason to believe in God and that’s why they don’t.

Islam, as usual, solves the dilemma and comes in the middle of these two extremes. In Islam, faith is not blind; it’s *educated*. By that I mean that you first are asked to read the Quran and think deeply about what you read. Does it ring true to *both your heart and your mind*? The Quran keeps asking its reader, “Little that you remember!” (27:62), “If only you would remember!” (56:62), “Should you not then remember?” (32:4), “So that perhaps they would remember” (39:27)

Remember what? Remember the truth about God which you were born with. Remember the covenant with God that you agreed to before you were born. When you do, your faith is then a confirmation of what you already know to be the truth. Nothing blind about that.

It’s not the people who make you faithful, it’s your innate knowledge.  
1918

### 2.3.7 How do I renew my faith?

*Please give me practical ways that I can use to renew my faith when I’m down or in doubt.*

Watch a baby laugh and learn. Watch a bird feed. Watch a thirsty person after he drinks water. Watch the sunset. 894

### 2.3.8 Balance In Life

*Assalaam alaikum,*

*I have been active in reading the Quran. It is becoming a little easier.*

*Have many things on my mind. I believe there comes a point in life where all our decisions are made to please Allah subhana wa taala. I have developed a great love for the Prophet Nuh. I can not image living to 950 years. I do not have the patience for humanity that he did. Yes, all prophets and messengers are of the same cloth of sabr (Patience).*

*I am seeking a balance in life. Need your input on spiritual balance. What does a believer do when you feel so alone in the duyna.*

Wa Alaykum Assalam. Being active in reading the Quran is being active in getting closer to God, for the Quran is the word of God. It is the memento God has graciously given us to remember Him by and to remind us that He is always there (Al-Samad), meaning the Constant, always alert (Al-Hayy), meaning The Living, always listening and watching (Al-Samee), meaning The Listening, sees all (Al-Baseer), meaning The All-Seeing, always welcoming (Al-Tawwab), meaning The Oft-Accepting of repentance, Loves to forgive us (Al-Ghafur), meaning The Oft-Forgiving, and to make our wishes come true!

When one realizes that fully, how can one then feel alone? It is only when we let our dark side win over the good side, even briefly, that the feeling of loneliness creeps in, because the light of God does not cohabit with the darkness of ego in the same heart.

One of the repeatedly taught principles of Islam is balance. Extremes on either side are rejected by God and His Messenger (ﷺ). And within every aspect of life, balance is also required. One day three people asked about the worship style of the Prophet (ﷺ). They were not impressed with the answer! They thought that he did not do much worship because he could afford to; because he has been forgiven all his sins already. So, one of the three said, "I will stay up every night praying." The second said, "I will fast everyday" The third said, "I will vow chastity and never marry." The Prophet (ﷺ) heard about that and got upset. He said, *"By God, I am the most observing of God among you and the most watchful of Him. But I fast some days and eat some days. I pray part of the night and sleep the rest of it. And I marry women. He who desires a way (Sunna) other than mine does not belong to me."* Narrated by Anas ibn Malik (RA) and reported and rated authentic by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5063).

When our decisions in life are aligned with God's teachings, we sail through life. We feel as if we're under a protective wing. We weather storms. Tumult and confusion that often lead people astray or desperate do not dent us. And we can recognize blessing when it comes. God says in the holy Quran, "Whoever does righteously, male or female, and is a believer, then We shall give them a good life." (16:97) Otherwise, it's an uphill battle that makes the world seem to us like a lawless jungle. God says in the holy Quran, "And whoever turns aside from My remembrance, then verily for him is an arduous living." (20:124)

Did you notice in the story of Prophet Nuh (Noah), peace be upon him, that God told him one day that there will not be any more people who will believe in him? (11:36) That is when he instructed him to build the ark. Noah didn't stop preaching until God told him to. And even then, he kept hoping against hope that he may be able to save his son who hasn't accepted God. As the flood waters were rising and the ark was about to sail out, he called upon his son, "O dear son, ride with us! Don't be among the disbelievers." (11:42) He knew the son will not believe, because God

said so. Yet, he still tried. It wasn't second guessing God; it was a desperate human effort of a loving father. It didn't work of course and could not have.

We do not have the privilege that Noah had. We do not know when to stop calling for God with our words and deeds. Therefore, we must keep trying. 2244

### 2.3.9 The complex soul

*Assalamu Alaikum WR WB Akhi.*

*Just need a clarification on this issue.*

*I had to attend a lecture today in my school and the shaikh was saying that we have 3 types of Nafs, (Self),*

*01 Nafsul Ammara*

*02 Nafsul Lawwama*

*03 Nafsul Mudh dhima*

*The third one is the worst one ever, and each level of Nafs has 07 different "Sub- Nafs", all together 27 sub stuffs, and that why people throw 21 stones at the Hajj per head...*

*Is this analogy true?*

*Plus, Is there any doubtful issues regarding the Hajar Al Aaswad (the Black Stone)... I mean, people say that there is no valid proof for it to be sent down from the heaven, Plz do throw light on this issue as well, in-sha Allah.*

*Fee Amanillah*

Wa Alaykum Assalaam WR WB (and upon you may be peace, the Mercy of God, and His Blessings).

There are no sub-nafses. There is only one Nafs (self). But it has two sides, as mentioned in the Quran:

- (1) Al-Nafs Al-Lawwama (the chastising self) and,
- (2) Al-Nafs Al-Ammarati bis-Sooe (the sin-inducing self).

The third mention of Nafs, Al-Nafs Al-Mutmainna (the tranquil self) is the one where the chastising side of it has won over the sin-inducing side.

Whenever one lets the sin-inducing side of one's self win over, one is doing wrong to oneself (Zhalimun li-Nafsih), because the soul wants to submit to God and do good and man fails it.

As for the black stone, there are narrations that say that it was sent down from Paradise and was originally white as snow. These hadiths range between Sound (Hasan) and weak in authenticity. Neither Al-Bukhari nor

Muslim have reported any of them. In matters of Aqida (theology), don't crowd your head with less than authentic texts.

*What about the Sufis..The three levels of the soul..could the lecturer have been alluding to those constructs?*

Possibly. I'm not acquainted with this Sufi teaching, but if they are referring to Islam, Eeman (faith) and Ihsan (Benevolence), then these are three promotions of the same self, hence the attribute "levels."

What these promotions are based on is a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) in which it is narrated that a man wearing all white, whom nobody recognized, and who did not look like he's been traveling, dropped in on the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was sitting down with several people. The man greeted the Prophet (ﷺ) and sat very close to him. He asked the Prophet, "What is Islam?" The Prophet answered him by telling him of the five pillars of Islam. The man replied, "Right!" People were puzzled by this man asking the Prophet (ﷺ) and then confirming his answer! Then the man asked the Prophet, "What is Eeman (faith)?" The Prophet answered him with the six pillars of faith. The man again replied, "Right!" Finally the man asked him, "What is Ihsan (benevolence)?" The Prophet answered, "Ihsan is to worship God as if you see Him. Though you don't see Him, He sees you!"

The man smiled and said again, "Right!" Then he bid farewell to the group and left. The Prophet then said, "Do you know who that was? It was Jibreel (Gabriel); he came to teach you your religion." Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (50), also narrated by Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) and reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (8) who rated it authentic.

*Souls...well the Sufis have this one down...They spend more time on the inner journey...the rest break the world into the duyna and deen..the Sufi goes internal...they examine the soul from all aspects and dwell on polishing the heart to reach the soul and keep it clear. My question has always been..we become so hard on ourselves as the struggle against ourselves is really our test. You used the word promotion of souls. Yet, if there is promotion of soul there is the counterpart..the demotion of souls. And the hard part...to put this to test in the duyna..*

*Let me know what you think about my thoughts and InshaAllah, have a blessed day.*

You said the keyword that the Quran uses a lot: the heart. It is not that ticking muscle; it's a metaphor for all that is not physical in us. It can be "sound", as Abraham's was,

“And among his (Noah’s) affiliates surely is Abraham. As he came to his Lord with a sound heart” (37:83-84)

A sound heart is our only savior,

“On a Day when neither wealth nor children will benefit [anyone], except him who came to his Lord with a sound heart.” (26:88-89)

The flip side is that a heart may rust from sins,

“No! Rather the rust has built up on their hearts because of what they have earned. No! They verily are from their Lord that Day are kept away.” (83:14-15)

The Prophet (ﷺ) explained verse 83:14 like this, “*When a worshiper sins, a dark stain is imprinted on his heart. When he quits and repents, it is polished away. If he comes back to it, it builds up. That is the Raan (build-up) that God mentions (in verse 83:14)*”, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (3334) who rated it soundly authentic. [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (3334) rated it authentic.

Thus, demotion of the self is done by sinning, and its promotion by good deeds and keeping rapport with God. Our hearts are capable of both...to the extreme:

“We have certainly created man in the best stature. Then We turned him back to the lowest of the low!” (95:4-5)

We can be saints and we can be devils. And the choice is entirely ours.  
1982

### 2.3.10 How can inner peace be achieved?

*Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote,*

*“The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is because man is disunited with himself.”*

*So, how can man achieve unity with himself?*

The agony and unrest that so many people feel, even when they are well off financially and socially, etc. is the result of a discontent that goes on inside them every second. Their bodies and their spirits are Muslim but their conscious minds refuse the one true God and thus are at odds with the rest of their being.

So many theories, philosophies and opinions have been developed over the course of human history in an attempt to achieve that elusive inner peace, but what all those philosophers, thinkers and self-appointed experts have been missing is that they cannot on their own find inner peace. Only God can lead them to it and that’s why He kept sending His message to people.

### 2.3.11 Help me conquer my bad thoughts

*I've been getting these stupid and uncontrolled thoughts about God.*

*It hurts me a lot by getting these images and thoughts. I can't take it anymore. Suggestions, please.*

Those thoughts are from Satan hoping to make you miserable enough to abandon God and follow him instead! Show him who's boss by reciting Al-Muawwizatan often (Chapters 113 and 114) and making the supplication,

“Rabbi aoozhu Bika min hamazaat ish-shayaateen, wa aoozhu Bika Rabbi an yahdhuroon” (“Lord, I seek refuge in You from the incitements of the devils, And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, that they would be present with me.”) (23:97-98) 1142

### 2.3.12 Questioning my culture and intentions

*What helped me accept Jesus as a Prophet like all the other Prophets and NOT as the begotten son of God is what I read that we are trained by our parents to believe in certain aspects of different religions. So, with that in mind I really asked myself. I searched my heart and found that I had no proof whatsoever that what I was taught all my life was in fact the TRUTH. When I did that, my mind (and heart) was opened and I began to understand everything I am reading in The Holy Quran.*

You are one in a million, a diamond in the ruff. Most people blindly follow their parents, peers, and authority without ever scrutinizing what they've been told. Stay that way, it will lead you to enlightenment.

*I recently started to read the life of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) and have accepted that he truly is a messenger of Allah. Ok, so now I feel almost ready to take the Shahada (testimony of faith in Islam), but. I read posts on an Islamic forum that made me doubt my true intentions once again. I had to ask myself, “If it were not for this man who I am in love with would I care about Islam?” and “If something happened that I didn't end up with this man who I am in love with will I still believe in Islam?” In other words “am I doing all of this just for him or for myself?”*

That further confirms your integrity. You are a sincere person or you wouldn't have asked yourself that question. You want to purify your

acceptance of Islam. In my humble opinion, God will let you come to Him when He sees that your heart is pure. He may have sent you this man to help you take that giant step.

*These are tough questions and I can't pray about it, because my prayers are not accepted by Allah, and I am so afraid that it won't be Allah answering them if I was to pray but rather Shaitan (Satan) answering them. WHAT CAN I DO? How can I get the answer I need to this very serious question? And I'm afraid (terribly afraid) of what my answer will be.*

Don't be afraid. Satan does not answer prayers. He has no power. The only thing he can do is throw doubt at you which is why you're afraid and uncertain right now. All the power is in the Hands of God. Seek His help and His only. Pray to Him with the certainty that He, and no one else, will answer them to your full satisfaction. 354

### 2.3.13 How do we raise our thoughts above desire?

*Our eyes behold an object and we become attached to the object. Thus we are told to lower our gaze. Like a child in a candy store when I see it..I want it. I want to consume it. Often in our lives we see beauty and we become consumed by desiring the object. We can get no rest until it becomes ours.*

*The question becomes how do we Islamically discipline ourselves to detach from the beholding and gain an understanding that we can love the object but not desire it. What ayats and hadeedths would help us to refrain from acting on our desires.*

Faith in God means trusting His judgment. When He says, "Do this," believers do it, even if they don't really want to, because they trust that God would not have ordered them to do if it weren't beneficial to them. Likewise when God says, "Don't do that," believers refrain from it for the harm they know must be in it.

Thus, it is faith, first and foremost, that leads a person to overcome his or her desire for or against something. People even do that out of perception, so doing it out of faith is all the more reason.

The mechanism that hones self-discipline is commitment to, and steady practice of, religious teachings. Taqwa (watchfulness of God) is its name. The word means keeping a shield between you and God's displeasure. Sort of like when you say, "Don't let your guard down!"

Ali ibn Abi-Talib, may God have been pleased with him, defined and summarized Taqwa succinctly and eloquently in this rhyme,

الخوف من الجليل والعمل بالتنزيل والرضا بالقليل والاستعداد ليوم الرحيل

Translation:

Fear of the Majestic One,  
Commitment to the Revelation,  
Contentment with little,  
And preparation for the day of departure!

Knowing that, one can train himself or herself with recitation of the Quran, prayer, fasting, charity, good deeds, supplication, being mindful of God, being on alert from Satan, being conscious of, and in control of, one's negative emotions, contentment with what life throws one's way, all the while being mindful of where we are going and how to get the best life in the Hereafter.

There are many verses in the Quran that teach us self-discipline. For instance,

“And do not wish for what God has favored some over others...” (4:32)

“God extends provision for whom He wills and measures [it]. And they rejoiced in [this] the nearest life, while the nearest life is not, compared to the Hereafter, but [brief] enjoyment.” (13:26)

“But as for him who feared the stature of his Lord, and prohibited [his] soul from desire, then the Garden is the abode [for him].” (79:40-41)

The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, “*Be content with what God has allotted to you and you will be the richest of people.*”, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA), reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#), and rated Hasan (sound) by Al-Albani. 1698

### 2.3.14 Why seek refuge in God from Satan?

*Before we recite from the Quran, should we ‘seek refuge in Allah from satan the accursed’? And if we should why? Is it some sort of protection? Thanks.*

It is God's advice to us,

“And when you read the Quran, seek refuge in God from Satan the outcast. Verily, there is for him no authority over those who have believed and upon their Lord they rely. His authority is only over those who ally with him and those who through him associate [others with God in worship].” (16:98-100)

Thus, it is indeed a protection. But it is also a filter of faith. If the recitation is not intermingled with whispers of Satan, one can be reassured that one's recitation was sincere and one's faith is not tainted with “Shirk” (associating others with God in worship). 1930

### 2.3.15 When you escape a dire straight, don't revisit it!

*I am in, as the cliché aptly states, dire straights. It is dark outside. This naturally intensifies the feeling of isolation. And the example of Hajar is an excellent source of strength. Her situation captures all our fears. Thus, we have to really rely on the inner source. When we use the expression digging deep it sums her dilemma.*

*Yet, it is during trials like this that we have to dig deep. It does not make one a welcome guest at a party. The need for reflection and contemplation overrides the need for social activity. Sometimes social activity takes too much energy that is better spent to dig deeper.*

*I am looking for balance. My path at the moment is very steep. I am looking for the moss between a rock and a hard place; to rest for a minute.*

*Please understand that there is no negativity in what I am writing. I am not a negative person. This is a learning curve.*

*Yes, the inner journey is difficult. It seems that Satan is very busy with one on that path. And our hearts betray us constantly. The journey is riddled with struggles. It often seems that the other path is so much easier.*

One of the reasons why the Prophet (PBUH) experienced dire straights was to teach the rest of us what to do when we are in a similar situation. We follow the Prophet's example. What did he do?

He had just lost his only remaining physical protector, his uncle Abu-Talib and the one person in this world whom he loved the most, his wife Khadija, may God have been pleased with her. The polytheists of Mecca had cornered the believers in a ghetto for three years: No trading, no contact. Muslims had to eat leaves to survive. Those economic sanctions were probably what killed Khadija and Abu-Talib.

During that tough period, God has not revealed any new verses of the Quran to the Prophet (PBUH) so even the spiritual joy and reassurance was withheld, to the point that the polytheists of Mecca mocked the Prophet (PBUH) saying, "Muhammad's Lord has abandoned him!"

Anyone would have given up at that point, consoling himself that he had done all he could but it didn't work out. Not Muhammad ibn Abdillah! He figured that Mecca may be a lost cause, so let him try Al-Taaif town. He traveled to it, on foot, and when he got there he called them to God. No one gave him the time of day. They even let loose their kids and slaves to make fun of him, throw stones at him and force him out of the town. Some of the stones hit him and he started bleeding from his feet.

Can things get worse for someone? As he was leaving that wretched town, he paused and made the most beautiful supplication to God that was ever made! (If you don't know it, ask me and I'll include it in my reply).

God's response was immediate and flooding. Quran revelation resumed, with the reassuring Chapter 93, God sent Archangel Gabriel down to let the Prophet (PBUH) retaliate against the people of Al-Taaif. As you may know, he chose not to. God sent the Jinn (the sprites) to listen to the Quran for the first time, recited by the Prophet (as mentioned in Chapter 72) and when the Prophet (PBUH) arrived in Mecca, he experienced the grandest and most reassuring miracle of all: Israa and Mieraj, the Night and Ascention Journey.

No matter how dire your straights, how steep your path, or how dark it seems outside, you know, by the example of the Prophet (PBUH), what to do.

I'm glad you reassured me that you're not a negative person. That said, may I advise you not to disengage socially? The Prophet and his fellows were sociable and active in their communities, each in his own way. Sometimes, your social effort will be appreciated and other times it won't be. Don't let that sway you. The reward of God, not of people, is what you're after.

*Wisdom does not come easy. In retrospect it is simple...but that journey is a mini-hajj.*

*I am in an awkward place to socialize. Thus, I am looking forward to moving back home. I love the peace there. I have a little community that needs some life. I have made much dua. InshaAllah, I will be able to move there soon.*

*The other day, I took the Quran and asked Allah subhana wa taala to give me a little hope. I randomly opened the Quran. And the ayats were Musa (Moses) (PBUH) going to the Madyan people. InshaAllah, my move home is imminent.*

*I do not wish to complain. I am not unhappy. I am growing ten-fold in faith daily. The reliance on Allah subhana wa taala totally is a reality.*

*You know Sura 93 is one of my favorites. It is reassuring. I love the words of not being displeased. It is a strong sura.*

*I am familiar with the dua of the Prophet (swas) at Al-Taaif. Those are words of courage. In the vernacular the words of an old song come to mind: Hit me with your best shot.*

*I'm a fan of Muhammad Ali. I bring that up because even in the ring there is a respite. I need a break.*

*It is also a difficulty process for the ordinary human being to understand that Allah subhana wa taala loves you enough to*

*test you. In the world of sports there is always a period of training for an event. In the world of spirituality the event provides the need for us to seek guidance. The seeking of the guidance is the discipline needed to overcome the obstacles of the individual tests.*

*I wish to be of those that Allah is well pleased; I have a long way to go but the intention is there.*

*If I may ask I am assuming you have undergone some trials that have given you the knowledge to provide such words of compassion. I ask this not to pry. Rather, to gain understanding that the seeker of knowledge undergoes ego transformations in the process. The no pain no gain cliché.*

When a believer passes a test of faith, it means two things; (a) that God is pleased with him and (b) that his character needed a boost. Thus, passing a trial means it had served its purpose and a believer should not dwell on it. Revisiting it means revisiting the pain, emotional and spiritual, which God has already delivered him from.

*Excellent response. I am serious. What I see in the therapeutic milieu here (our culture) is the very fact that recovery is dependent upon revisiting the pain. In a sense you have to go back and destroy the wall brick by brick, that has impeded your growth. Whereas, in Islam we overcome the wall by guidance.*

*Islam also demands that we do not purge our emotions. So difficult. Simple example would be anger. Many modalities of treatment for psychological illnesses suggest the patients take the time to examine the emotions and relive them. You always hear the: you have the right to be angry slogan. A person's spiritual health is dictated by an emotional balance. In Islam it seems that we have to get beyond the emotional balance to a spiritual balance that holds the reigns to direct the emotions.*

*It seems to make sense that wise persons are naturally quiet. A believer's vision changes after a trial. It seems that we humans really do not have a place for anger.*

Fascinating angle. The therapy method you describe may very well work, but I venture to guess that it will leave a spiritual void in the person. One can treat an emotional scar or a spiritual wound in a number of ways, including pharmaceutical, but that may not heal it. The person may find himself or herself resentful, cynical, grieving, regretful, less self-confident, less joyful. Sure the wound is no longer on the surface; it went deeper - into dangerous territory.

Only the connection with God can heal. The Prophet (PBUH) always said this in his ruqyas (Supplication for healing), "O God, heal. You are the

*Healer. There is no healing but Yours; a healing that leaves behind no ailment.*" Narrated by Aisha (RA) and reported by Muslim [43]2191. That is healing!

About anger, God says in the holy Quran, in praise, "And those who suppress frustration and the pardoners of people. And God loves the benevolent." (3:134). It is their benevolence that earned them God's love and it is God's love that gives them the tranquility they seek. 2283

### 2.3.16 I have it good. I feel guilty!

*I've been dealing with a serious problem lately. Guilt.*

*I reflect on my home, my clothes, my family, the food I eat, the money I earn from my job....And then I think of those who have had major injustice in their life. Palestinians, the various nationalities of Muslims who are slaughtered in wars, etc.*

*In the past couple of weeks it's been worse than usual, I'll just start to cry out of nowhere and just weep for them, make dua (supplication), and want to do more (like impact their lives directly) Its hard for me to enjoy my life anymore because I know they're suffering.*

*Does anyone else experience this? What can I do?*

When Solomon, peace be upon him, saw the throne of the Queen of Sheba settling in front of him, he said, "This is a bounty from God to test me whether I thank or be ungrateful" (27:40). One way to thank God for His bounty is to share some of it with the less fortunate. Don't feel guilty, feel good instead. God has given you what you have for a reason: to test your gratitude.

The believer who feels the pain of his fellow believers and can do something to help them, such as donate money to feed, clothe, foster, shelter, or defend them, should do as much of it as possible. If s/he is unable, s/he ought to pray for them. 1144

### 2.3.17 Don't be so sure

Ever felt content with your worship of God and thought that you have done well for yourself and deserve to go to heaven? Let me tell you three stories.

A man observed Al-Hasan ibn Ali, may God have been pleased with both, supplicating hard and weeping. He approached him and said, "You cry out of fear of God when you have all the means to salvation?" He replied, "Like what?" The man said, "How about your lineage to the Prophet

(PBUH) (*Al-Hasan was the Prophet's grandson*). *What about his mediation for Muslims? What about God's vast mercy?"*

Good points, right? Well, Al-Hasan answered him, *'As for my lineage, God says, "Then when the Horn is blown (on the Day of Judgment), there is no kinship between them." (23:101) As for the Prophet's mediation, God says, "Who is that who will mediate with Him except by His permission?" (2:255) As for God's vast mercy, God says about it, "I will grant it to those who watch out [for Me]."* (7:156) *So, where is security, brother?"*

Good counter-points, don't you think? If a saint whom the Prophet (PBUH) said was going to be a prominent youth among the people of Paradise isn't sure, how can ordinary folks be sure?

Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, once said, *"If an angel on the Day of Resurrection, announced that all people will go to Paradise but one, I'd worry I'm the one!"* This, coming from the second Caliph, a man renowned for his piety, whom the Prophet (PBUH) gave him the good news that he was one of ten who will go to Paradise, if he is not sure, how can the rest of us be?

One time the Prophet (PBUH) surprised his fellows sitting with him listening to his teachings when he said to them, *"The work of any of you will not enter him into Paradise!"* They asked, *"Even you, O Messenger of God?"* He replied, *"Even me, unless God covers me with mercy from Him and favor."* Narrated by Aisha (RA) and Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2816) and [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5673) in their authentic collections.

The Prophet (PBUH) was teaching that while faith and good deeds are necessary for admission to Paradise, they are not sufficient. It is God's mercy and favor that gets us there. Faith and good deeds only make it likely.

This is not to dash the hopes of Muslims, but rather to balance their attitude. Imam Al-Ghazali, may God bless his soul, brilliantly defined faith in Islam as *"The balance between fear and hope."* ([A. Al-Ghazali \[13\]](#))

2180

### 2.3.18 Is there a limit on what we can ask God?

*Is there any limitation in what we can ask from Allah in prayer? Also are there any limitations in heaven? Like is there something you can't ask for in heaven either?*

No. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, *"Let any of you ask his Lord all his needs, even ask him to replace the lining in his shoes that was torn!"*, narrated by Anas ibn Malik (RA), and reported and authenticated by [Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (866).

As for the hereafter, No as well. God says about the dwellers of the Garden,

“They will have whatever they wish therein, and with Us is more.” (50:35)  
638

### 2.3.19 God has not answered my prayers

*I prayed and prayed for something, and it never happened! I feel betrayed. I've done my duties. Why doesn't God give me what I've asked? Why does He ignore me, or does He look down on me?*

The Japanese have a saying, “If you don’t get what you want, think of what you don’t get that you don’t want!”

Take a drive to your nearest hospital and visit the many patients who haven’t had a visitor in months. Not only will you be getting a big reward for visiting the sick and making them feel they are not alone, but you will also realize like you probably never did before how much blessing you live in.

God answers all supplications. He says, “I answer the call of the supplicant when he calls Me.” (2:186) His answer, however, isn’t always obvious and isn’t always what the supplicant asked for. That’s because God knows better than the supplicant what is best for them. God may grant you your wish, keep a harm from hitting you, or give you a reward that you can use in the hereafter. It could be the straw that tips the scale in your favor.

Never think that God looks down on you or ignores you; that’s what Satan wants you to believe. If Satan can’t get you to sin, he will do everything in his power to make you feel miserable. Don’t let him! Show him who’s boss. 468

### 2.3.20 Her prayers have not been answered

*When I was younger, God did help me when I called out to Him. Overall, He has blessed me with good things in this life. Recently that has changed.*

Having the good things in life is what most people think is God’s blessings. But Islam teaches us that the good things in life are a *contingent* blessing! That is, if one thanks God for them by being good and faithful, then they are a blessing indeed. But, if one becomes occupied with them or does not thank God for them and starts to think that he deserves them, then they are a curse and not a blessing. Why?

Because “the Hereafter is the life, if they only knew” (29:64). Thus, anything that does not improve our chances for Paradise is not a good thing even if it looks like a very good thing.

Likewise is hardship! Even hardship is contingent. If one endures it with faith in God that He will alleviate it, then it was *a blessing in disguise*. If one cannot bear them out and starts to feel discontentment or resentment, then it was a punishment. A test of faith they failed in.

*I recently went through a very, very terrible heartbreak. My soul has not healed, and because I am grieving so badly my soul is still not healing. I am dealing with many losses.*

Heartbreaks can be as wrenching as the loss of a loved one. When my father died, may God bless his and my mother’s souls, I honestly didn’t know how any day could pass. I felt constant torment and time wasn’t moving. Grief is legitimate and weeping for loss is allowed. But endurance and acceptance are the lessons to be learned from loss and hardship. The longer it takes for those lessons to be learned, the longer it takes the soul to heal.

*People tell me to keep praying and things will turn around for me. I believe that, but at the same time I’ve never known it to happen to others. It’s like I am looking for water in a desert.*

Perhaps you are. Your grief is legitimate but it has put you in a box. You have *predefined* what God’s answer should be. If, on the other hand, you are confident that He has *already* answered your prayers, then you have freed yourself from that box. God’s answer is not always obvious.

*Why doesn’t God answer my friend’s prayers? After all of her suffering and loneliness, why couldn’t God give her a nice husband and children, instead of a bad car accident and more loneliness?*

Now you’re redefining what God’s answer should be for other people too. God does not forget anyone. He gives everyone what is best for them. We will see it all in detail and finally understand it on the Day of Settlement.

*I ask myself...am I being unrealistic in praying for my own Zamzam (water well that sprung under Ishmael’s feet), so to speak? I have prayed for over 10 years for my Zamzam...a loving husband...healthy babies...joy in my life...*

Not if you will recognize your Zamzam when it comes to you. This, of course, is easier said than done. That’s why faith, as Islam defines it, is

not easy. It's a balance between trust in God, acceptance of what He gives us, and working hard to achieve our goals. *All are required.*

*and for a few brief months at age 39 I CAME CLOSE but it all fell apart. Has God given me my answer?*

Not necessarily. One pitfall people fall into a lot is that they interpret things as God's will and stop trying. Everything is by God's will, and part of His will is that things follow the earthly laws He created and set in motion.

*What I am having a harder time with is, if God did not want to answer my prayers, then why did He not give me peace in my heart, instead of a broken heart? And now that I have a broken heart and a terrible sense of grief over lost love and the lost opportunity to have a family of my own, why isn't God repairing my broken heart so that I am content with what I don't have?*

It works the other way around! First, you accept and be content, then God grants you peace of mind. "He knew what is in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them, and granted them a near opening" (48:18)

God answered your prayers, but you can't see the answer just yet. You will in time.

*What do you mean, by grief has put me in a box? So should I accept that God has given me His answer? If so, doesn't that mean that to obtain peace in my heart I have to stop praying for what (and for whom) my heart desires?*

I mean that you are unable to think beyond the loss. That's understandable for the time being. But if you start thinking beyond the loss, you'll gradually accept it, open up other opportunities for yourself and get the wisdom of what happened. It takes time but it also takes initiative.

*What is perplexing me is that I should accept that certain joys will bypass me, and instead I should wait patiently for death. But dying alone and unloved is a hard, bitter pill to swallow, especially when you are 40 and have (potentially) another 30 years to go!*

No. That's not it at all. You should see the bigger picture. How do you know that the marriage you didn't get would not have been a curse that would ruin the rest of your life? Only God truly sees the whole picture.

My post was not an advice for you to wait! It was an advice for you to accept and be content, then move on. When you do that, the world opens up and you start to see what you couldn't see before. Other opportunities start coming your way and, which is the best part, you actually see them when they come.

*What do you mean, God answered my prayers? I just don't know how to interpret that! When you say that I will see the answer in time....again this goes back to my heartrenching question...do you mean, I will see the answer upon my death?*

I mean that the answer has arrived though you cannot identify it just yet. You can't in your current state of sorrow and confusion. However, if you start thinking that positive way, it will start to become clearer to you. That is an important ingredient of faith.

*Am I presumptuous in thinking that God will hold me as dear as the wife of Abraham, and grant me what I desire?*

Are you as faithful as Hajar, peace be upon her? When her husband left her and her baby in the middle of an arid, uninhabited desert of a foreign land, what did she say? She asked him, “*Did God order this?*” When he said yes, she replied, “*Then He will not leave us!*” Do you have the same level of faith? That God did not and will not leave you?

Did you work hard to achieve your goal? Hajar walked and ran seven times between the two hills of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa looking for water or people or an oasis. Have you exhausted all lawful means available to you to achieve your goal?

If the answer is yes to both questions, then God holds you as dear as Hajar and your Zamzam will spring out when you don't expect it!

*Do I ACCEPT that the Zamzam I want is unattainable and instead focus on alternatives?*

Not **unattainable** but *may not be attained*. Big difference. The former is despair from God's mercy and the latter is pragmatic. 1319

### 2.3.21 Is supplication futile?

*Please, what is the relationship between dua (supplicating to God) and the Hadith which says that after 120 days of a fetus development in its mother's womb that four things will be written for the baby, and nothing will be added and subtracted*

*from the four things? In other words, can dua change the four things? If it can, then there is a misconception of what the Hadith says about nothing will be added or subtracted.*

The hadith you refer to is reported by Muslim and ibn Hibban and rated authentic. It was narrated by Aamir ibn Waathila. What the hadith says is that an angel is commissioned by God, after a fetus is 42 nights old, to fashion its form, hearing, eyesight, skin, flesh and bones. Then the angel asks God, “O Lord, male or female?” God tells him. Then the angels asks God, “And its lifespan?” God tells him. Then the angel asks God, “And its provision?” God tells him. Then the angel leaves with the paper in his hand, having added nothing else to it nor left out any of it. (Muslim [43] (2645))

Thus, what the hadith tells us is that four things are “written” for each human before he or she is born: His or her physical appearance, his or her gender, his or her lifespan and his or her provision and sustenance.

Writing these things means they are already known to God. People have changed their birth gender, for example. But it is the new gender that was written. God has already known about the change.

It is also important to realize that this “paper” is withheld from us. Only God and the angel who wrote it down know its content. People keep trying to change their financial situation and believers are encouraged to ask God to bestow on them wealth. God instructs us in the holy Quran, “And ask God from His bounty, for God is of everything Knowledgeable” (4:32).

Whatever financial situation we end up with is foreknown to God. It is what was written down before we were born. We simply don’t know it. By not knowing, we have to work for it. By not knowing, we may keep asking God to change it. If we were to know it, we wouldn’t even try to change it, would we?

People keep trying to extend their lives. In doing so, they pursue methods which will keep them healthy, fight deceases and avoid risky behavior. By not knowing how long each of us will live, we can do all that. If we were to know, we would give up trying any of it.

The lesson learned from the hadith is the wisdom of the Beyond (Al-Ghayb); why it is kept hidden from us. It is precisely because we don’t know it that we supplicate to God to grant us what we hope for. It is precisely because we don’t know the Beyond that we keep trying to improve our lives. Supplicating to God and working hard for our goals are two things that God loves for us to do. Neither would be practical if we already knew the outcome.

God says in the holy Quran, “And say [to people], ‘Work! For God will observe your work, as well as his Messenger and the believers. Then you will

be returned to the Knower of the Beyond and the Presence then He will inform you of what you have been doing.' " (9:105)

And He also says, "And your Lord has said, 'Supplicate to Me; I will answer you.' " (40:60) His answer is a fulfillment of what He has already written, but He wanted us to ask for it. This way, we keep remembering that He is the Source and He keeps showing us His Grace and that He listens.

To clear up any misconception, please go through posts in this book about fate, §1.7.

2315

### 2.3.22 He went back to atheism

*Day 1: I haven't looked into the basic pillars of Islam, but I assume I will find out by reading the Quran? I have begun, and I am currently reading the second Sura (Chapter). I am finding it hard to understand but no doubt I will understand in time.*

*Day 2: I have changed. I have accepted Islam as my religion and Allah as my God. I have much to learn, but I will be a good Muslim, in time. Thank you to those who gave me advice and kindness. Alhamdulillah (Praise to God) for changing me in such a profound way.*

*Day 3: Thank you all who welcomed me with kind words. I now feel that I have opened my mind and I have found purpose. I know it seems a fast reversion to Islam, but truth be told, I have always, deep down felt an attraction to it in some way.*

*Day 4: I went to a mosque today and had an awesome experience there. Everybody was kind and helpful. I do, however, have many questions and need a mentor.*

*Day 30: I attended the mosque and such, but, after a while, I realized that I never truly believed in this religion. I am an atheist, and I always was, because when I took shahadah (testimony of faith) I didn't do it with belief and sincerity. And now, while I respect and admire this religion, I can not be a Muslim. I do not believe. However, I wanted to thank everyone here and at the mosque for being so incredibly kind and welcoming. May your lives be filled with faith.*

Obviously, you are free to make that decision. However, forgive me for saying, the way you proceeded with your journey was like a homework assignment, rather than a lifelong matter of the utmost import.

You did not ask about the things you do not understand. You hastily decided to convert, without sufficient knowledge and with many questions remaining unanswered. While such a sudden conversion does and has

occurred, you did not tell us why you accepted Islam, or how did you understand Chapter 2 which you just the day before could not.

Attraction is not a solid foundation on which to found the most important part of your life. Being so young, I'm not too surprised though, because the youth tend to act on impulse.

My humble comment is that you were looking for a religious experience, a spiritual wow. While that does and has happened to many people, one of them is a well known American Professor of Mathematics and author, Dr. Jeffrey Lang, who was atheist, it is rare. You could have contacted him, read his books, or asked us the questions that bothered you or discussed with us the issues that make you lean toward atheism. There is no guarantee that any of that would have helped persuade you, but you should have tried.

I hope that you consider Islam again in the near future and give your quest a no-holds-barred approach, i.e., ask all the questions and get all doubts out of the way, so that you do not keep fluctuating like this. 1301

### 2.3.23 Christian, Muslim then Christian again

*On a forum that I follow, there was a post about a woman who was raised Christian, then she accepted Islam, but lately decided to go back to Christianity. I was dismayed by that, but more dismayed by the attitude of Muslims on the forum of condemning her and some suggested that she should be killed because they claim, apostasy is punishable by death! Is there a basis for that?*

She can become Muslim again! God says in the holy Quran, "Those who believe, then disbelieve, **then believe**, then disbelieve then increase in disbelief, God would not forgive them nor show them a way." (4:137)

From that we learn two things:

That one can still go back to belief after they went back to disbelief, and

That there is no punishment for apostasy, or else God would have mentioned it here.

The fact that God says that an apostate may go back to believing is solid proof that they may not be killed! Because, obviously, if they are killed, they cannot have the chance to believe again!

The apostasy ruling of the capital punishment is based on a hadith reported by Al-Bukhari and narrated by Ibn Abbas. It is in direct conflict, however, with the teaching of the Quran,

"And say: the Truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills, let him believe, and

whoever wills, **let him disbelieve**" (18:29).

The Quran overrules any other authority, especially if the matter is ending someone's life.

1413

### 2.3.24 Can you be a Muslim and not follow Islam?

Yes. You can be a Muslim in name only. Your ID card may say your religion is Islam, but you don't do any of what you must do as a Muslim and do many of what you must not do.

You can also be a Muslim and not know it! There was a video a while ago of a young Palestinian Christian man in which he says, "I was a Muslim all my life. I just didn't know it!" He accepted Islam when he realized it. In another video by a woman, she said, "I was Muslim *and Christian* for seven years!"

996

### 2.3.25 Escaping bondage

*Assalaamu alaikum WR WB, Brother.*

*Does Islam provide us with any authenticated Duas to get out of the custody of people?*

*In other words, is there any Duaa to recite if we want to be free from any other human being's governance and overpowering authorities?*

*Fee Amanillah*

Wa Alaykum Assalaamu wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakaatuh, Sister.

Imam Jafar As-Sadiq, may God have been pleased with him, said something very powerful. He said, "I'm amazed at one who is depressed and does not say (to God), 'There is no deity but You, may You be sanctified. I have been among the wrongdoers.' (21:87) For I heard God say afterward, 'So, We answered him and rescued him from depression, and thus We rescue believers.' (21:88)"

That was in reference to the story of Prophet Yunus (Jonah) as he lay inside the whale. Can you think of a more desperate bondage?

Did the words of Jonah surprise you? Why did he say that he was among the wrongdoers? A prophet like him who actually delivered God's message to the people of Nineveh (in Iraq)? So, what did he do wrong?

The beginning of verse 21:87 tells it: "And Zhan-Noon (companion of the whale, i.e., Jonah) when he went angrily..." (21:87)

Jonah left Nineveh in anger when its people did not accept his message. He rode on a ship and was thrown into the sea just in time when the

whale came sailing through to swallow him whole. It's his anger that God wanted to teach Jonah to control, because a caller to God is not supposed to lose his temper or give up on his people so quickly. Jonah, being the conscientious prophet that he was, realized his error, mended his way, passed the test and was freed. The irony is that the people of Nineveh did become believers shortly after Jonah left, and it is said that they went after him to apologize but couldn't find him.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked about Jonah's prayer if it was special for him only. He replied that it is for any Muslim who is in bondage or hardship. Narrated by Saad ibn Abi-Waqqas (RA) and reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (3505) and [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (3505), both rating it authentic.

The moral of the story is that bondage, like any hardship, can be a teaching from God for a sin that one may not think of as a sin. Successful are those who are alert to such lessons. Sin is the the worst bondage and expiation of it is the true freedom.

Thus, after a believer has exhausted all material means available to free himself or herself from bondage, they should turn to God with Jonah's supplication and picture themselves in the belly of a whale as he was. 2112

### 2.3.26 Fitna of confusion

*Given the political situations in Islamic countries..there is so much confusion. I do not have the means to understand the intricate workings of why people are killing each other...my question is simple..what is the fundamental action for a simple Muslim like me to do. I do not know who is right and why they are right; same goes for wrong. How do I reconcile myself to this in the correct Islamic manner?*

There is a hadith, though rated week in authenticity, that rings very true especially these days. It is narrated by Abu-Umama Al-Bahili and reported by Al-Iraqi in his book "Takhrij-ul-Ihya". In this hadith, the Prophet, peace be upon him, tells the Sahaba (his fellows),

*"How would you do when you view virtue as vice and vice as virtue?"* The Sahaba asked, *"Is this happening, O Messenger of God?"* He replied, *"By Him in whose Hand is my soul: Yes, and worse."* They said, *"What can be worse?"* He said, *"God will say, 'By Me I swear I will set up for them a Fitna (test of faith) that leaves the forbearing among them confused.' "*

When Muslims turn a blind eye to sin, tolerate tyranny and focus on the trivia, they turn the natural moral order upside down. As a result, God turns their honor to disgrace, their peace to conflict, their prosperity to austerity, their mutual love to hostility and their works to naught. It

should not then come as a surprise what Muslims are going through these days.

What you write about is the Fitna that leaves the forbearing confused. To recover, hold fast to the discerning criterion, the Quran. Examine what somebody is doing or saying by what the Quran says about it. What does the Quran say about killing? It says,

“And whoever deliberately kills a believer, then his recompense is Hell, forever staying therein, and God will be angry with him, curse him, and prepare for him a grand torment.” (4:93)

You’d think that after such a frightening list of threats, that no Muslim would even contemplate killing a believer. But many Muslims ignored this verse totally and continue to do so today.

Can you then be confused about the killing that is taking place? Can there be any doubt in your mind who is wrong?

You ask what can an ordinary person do in such a situation. You read the Quran, so that you won’t be confused. You supplicate to God that He help you discern right from wrong and keep you walking the Straight Path. You ask God to put an early end to injustice, punish the perpetrators and shelter the oppressed. You donate to charitable organizations that do good work relieving the suffering of victims. You call your political representatives and urge them to weigh in so that the unjust do not think they may get away with it. You network with others so they may do likewise.

Finally, you remind yourself that sooner or later the truth prevails as God says in the holy Quran, “Say: The truth has arrived and falsehood perished. *Falsehood tends to perish.*” (17:81) 2078

### 2.3.27 Why are they leaving Islam?

An excellent article by Mathew Longacre,

<https://www.virtualmosque.com/society/dawah/why-are-they-leaving-islam/>

I’d add that the spread of lies, half-truths, bad translations and scare tactics, and confusing traditions or culture with religious tenets by Islamophobes, as well as the spread of misinterpretations, misconceptions and flawed fatwas (religious rulings) by fundamentalist Muslims, as well as portraying terrorism, mass murder and suicide as Jihad (!), all leave the vulnerable and the gullible Muslims in confusion and doubt. It is the responsibility of parents, friends, preachers, scholars and the media to rush to help those who have unanswered questions about Islam and answer them! We are all responsible for each other and will be questioned by God on the Day of Judgment if we have failed that responsibility. The

Prophet (PBUH) made that quite clear when he said, “*All of you are caretakers and all of you will be questioned about those you were to take care of!*”, narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari [12](5200) in his authenticated collection. 2199

### 2.3.28 Is this hypocrisy?

*Of late, I have developed this strange tendency that makes me doubt internally things I hear from the Quran, Dawah (call to Islam), etc. Have I become a hypocrite?*

The Prophet, peace be upon him, defined a hypocrite as one who had three traits,

1. When he speaks, he lies.
2. When he promises, he does not deliver,
3. When he is entrusted, he betrays.

Do you have those?

The fact you're asking and are worried is a sign that you're not. Linguistically, a hypocrite is one who declares what he does not believe. That's is not the same as one who doubts what he believes. The remedy for doubt is knowledge. Study and learn. Share with us what you doubt and in-sha-Allah your doubt will be a thing of the past. 747

## 2.4 Sin

### 2.4.1 Why should we bear Adam and Eve's sin?

A lot of people completely miss the story of Adam and Eve. The popular understanding is that we are here in this tough life as a result of the original sin. The Quran clearly says differently. We are here because it is the job we volunteered for!

God says in the holy Quran, “We offered *the trust* to the heavens, the earth and the mountains and they refused to carry it and were apprehensive of it, and **man carried it.**” (33:72)

After that, God told the angels, “I am setting **in the earth** a deputy.” (2:30) So, we were tasked to be on earth whether Adam and Eve sinned or obeyed. And being tasked to earth is the “trust” we agreed to undertake. The only reason Adam and Eve were put in the Garden first is to give

them a “dress rehearsal” for life of earth! By the end of their experiment with Satan and the forbidden tree, they learned four things: that the Garden of God is a wonderful place, that Satan wishes them failure and will lie and deceive them, that disobedience to God carries unpleasant consequences, and that God accepts apologies! All crucial lessons to learn when they move to their job location.

The original sin was forgiven. We do not inherit our parents sins, or anybody else’s sin for that matter. We are responsible only for our own sins. 492

### 2.4.2 On repentance and forgiveness

*Assalamu Alaikum WR WB.*

*I have a doubt regarding Istighfar (seeking forgiveness) and Tawba (repentance).*

*I know both of them are different from each other. But I don’t have a proper understanding on them...*

*But, when it comes to “Repentance”, most of us make it in our own ways, without knowing about the differences which are there behind these two terms..*

*So, If you can explain to us what really they are from the beginning, it would be a beneficial piece of information for many of us Insha Allah.*

*Fee Amanillah (in the safety of God)*

Wa Alaykum Assalaamu WR WB.

Simply put, Tawba (repentance) must follow Istighfar (asking God for forgiveness), or else the Istighfar was insincere! God says in the holy Quran,

“And ask forgiveness of your Lord and **then** repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is Merciful and Affectionate.” (11:90)

A believer asks God for forgiveness out of regret. He or she recognizes or suspects they sinned and it is a scary thought. Who is best to relieve that fear but Al-Ghafur (the Most Forgiving), Al-Raheem (the Most Merciful)?

That recognition is a sign of faith that is still alive. But it is not sufficient to have faith. Action must confirm it. Repentance confirms the guilt feeling that prompted Istighfar. Without repentance, the sin does not go away, rather tends to be repeated. And it may not be forgiven.

The two terms, as you well know, are emphasized frequently in the Quran and the Hadith. This verse is a perfect example,

“And those who, when they committed a debauchery or wronged themselves, remembered God and sought forgiveness for their sins - and who forgives sins except God? - and [who] *did not persist* in what they have done while they know.” (3:135)

The key words “did not persist” are what repentance is. It is the harder of the two! In fact, God tells us in the Quran that He helps out repentants when He sees that they are ready for it:

“...and their souls confined them and they were certain that there is no refuge from God except in Him. Then He eased it up on them so that they may repent” (9:118)

Truthful repentance (Tawba Nasuha) is done in three stages, as Sheikh Sharaawi, may God bless his soul, clearly explains in this video,

God knows very well how hard repentance is. That is why the Prophet (ﷺ) has said “*All the children of Adam are oft-sinners, and the best of the oft-sinners are the oft-repentants.*” Narrated by Anas ibn Malik (RA), reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2499), and rated Hasan (Sound) by [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (2499).

Thus, believers can rest assured that just as they sin often, they should ask for forgiveness often and repent often. If they break their repentance and sin again, it’s not the end of the world. God is Al-Haleem (the Forbearing), Al-Tawwab (the One who keeps accepting repentance) and Al-Ghaffar (the Oft-Forgiving). May He include us in His wide Grace.  
2021

### 2.4.3 Are any sins unforgivable?

God forgives all sins. He says,

“Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the mercy of God. Verily, God *forgives all sins*. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’ ” (39:53)

There is an expiation for every sin. Some sins are expiated with a legal penalty. Others are expiated with worship. Others are expiated with money. And the rest is expiated with repentance. After a sin is expiated, then God forgives it.

The only sin that cannot be expiated is suicide, because the sinner in this case did not give himself a chance to expiate it!

*Even the cardinal sin, shirk (associating with God others in worship)?*

Yes. What motivation then would there ever be for a mushrik (one who associates others with God in worship) to accept Islam? The Prophet,

peace be upon him, said, “*Islam pits what was before it*”, i.e., wipes it out. Narrated by Amr ibn Alas (RA) and rated authentic by [Al-Albani \[4\]](#) (17812.)

If shirk cannot be forgiven then the Islam of all the Sahaba (fellows of the Prophet (RA)), such as Umar would not be accepted, since they were mushrik before the Prophet called them to Islam. 794

#### 2.4.4 Are there unforgivable sins in Islam?

In Islam, there is only one cardinal sin, called “Shirk.” It translates to “associating others with God in worship.” That sin is unforgivable if a person dies and has not repented from it.

There is one terminal sin, suicide. It is unforgivable too. It is the only sin one cannot repent from for obvious reasons.

The rest of the sins, major or minor, can all be expiated or forgiven if repented from in this life and may be forgiven by God in the hereafter even if the sinner died before repentance. That’s because the sinner may have accumulated more good deeds that outweigh his sins, for instance.

Accepting Islam wipes away all sins and starts a person anew like a newborn ([Al-Albani \[4\]](#) (17812)). 537

#### 2.4.5 Is “shirk” forgivable or not?

*The Quran states that God will not forgive “shirk”, associating others with God in worship. So, a pagan is doomed?*

What the Quran states about shirk being unforgivable applies to dying that way. As long as one is living, he or she always has a chance to start over again with repentance. “*Islam buries what was before it*”, said the Prophet, peace be upon him ([Al-Albani \[4\]](#) (17812)). 293

#### 2.4.6 Is hope lost for a repeat sinner?

*I’m a mix of atheist, pagan and christian! I believe that sin is only crimes in which a victim suffers harm to life, limb or property. I have done many of what Islam considers sin. Is there any hope for people like me?*

There is always hope.

First, it must be said that we humans cannot define sin. Only God has that authority. We cannot postulate about what God wants and we

certainly cannot custom make religion. We can only know what God wants by reading His message to us and following the Messenger He sent to us.

The good news is that God has provided countless means of expiating sin and has repeatedly affirmed that He forgives and accepts repentance. God says in the holy Quran, “O My servants who have excessively sinned, do not despair of the mercy of God. Verily, God forgives all sins. He is the Oft-forgiving, the Merciful one.” (39:53). And the Prophet, peace be upon him said, “*The door of repentance is open until the sun rises from the west!*” (Al-Tirmizi [23] (3536))

A person can at any time join that warm fold of God by accepting Islam. The Prophet, peace be upon him said, “*Islam buries deep what was before it.*” (Al-Albani [4] (17812)) When one accepts Islam, one starts anew. I fondly remember a Scottish lady who was telling her story of conversion. She said, “I’m a 65 year old baby!”

*Problem is, there is no real evidence that any religious text on the planet is an actual message from God.*

If that were true, how would God expect us to know Him? Does He have things for us to do? How would we know them? Are there things He wants to warn us against? How would we know that? Is He going to punish us in the afterlife if we didn’t follow His commandments? How do we avoid that?

If God doesn’t want us to know any of this, why did He send so many prophets and scriptures to the world?

The evidence you’re seeking is there. You just haven’t checked it out. I hope that you do someday, because life is too short to spend it in the dark and cold.

1127

### 2.4.7 What if a Muslim unknowingly blasphemes?

*A Muslim who believes in the Oneness of God goes to the graves to seek the help of dead saints, he will be still a Muslim right?*

Words and actions are not separated in Islam; they go hand in hand. Almighty God has emphasized this very often in the Quran as He always followed the words “those who believed” with “and did the righteous deeds.” A person who says something and does the opposite is a hypocrite.

But what if the person is doing shirk out of tradition or taqlid (blind following) and he’s not aware of it? It can be argued that he’s still guilty because he still has a sound mind with which he can realize what he’s

doing wrong, but he chooses not to use it. But God is the only Judge of that. What is excused by God is honest errors, forgetfulness and sin by coercion; not blind following. God condemns blind following repeatedly in the Quran. He says,

“And when it is said to them follow what God has sent down, they say, ‘Rather, we follow what we found our fathers doing.’ ” (2:170), on which [Al-Shawkani \[21\]](#) (109) wrote, “and in that is evidence of the ugliness of blind following and the prevention of it.”

And in another verse, He quotes the blind followers saying,

“We found our fathers all doing the same thing, and we on their tracks are following.” (43:23)

Taqlid is a human nature. People trust their closest people. But God wants us all to trust Him above all. We are not to follow our fathers if they say something contrary to what God says.

Visiting the graves of the saints (Al-Awliyaa) seeking their intercession or blessing is almost like praying *to* them, which is shirk (association of others with God in worship), a blasphemy. Visiting the graves to pray *for* departed Muslims, on the other hand, is a Sunna and a good reminder of the Hereafter. 897



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## Chapter 3

# The Quran and the Sunna

Questions about the Quran, the Holy Scripture of Islam, and the Sunna, the teachings and practice of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

### 3.1 The Quran

#### 3.1.1 The Grace of gradual revelation

The style of the revelation of the Quran was gradual, over a period of 23 years. A command would initially be revealed in much general terms. This was done to ease Muslims into the new Divine regulations. When the initial command is absorbed by Muslims, God followed it with more details about it, such as how to implement it properly. Many scholars thought that subsequent commands were abrogation of the initial command! But that is incorrect, since abrogation means cancellation, and the initial command always remained in force.

A good example of that is the prohibition of drinking alcoholic beverages. The first command God sent down on this issue was,

“And from the fruits of the palm trees and grapevines you take for yourselves intoxicant and good provision. Verily, in that is a sign for a folk who reason.” (16:67) Here is a very subtle indication that intoxicants are not a good thing. God leaves the word without an adjective to describe it, but He follows the word “provision” with the adjective “good.” Those who got the hint, Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) was one, understood that God is not pleased with alcoholic beverages.

A subsequent command was then revealed,

“They ask you about intoxicants and easy gain (gambling). Say: In them is major sin and benefits for people. But their sin is bigger than their benefit.”

(2:219) So, those who did not notice before are now left with no doubt that alcohol is bad. Notice that this verse does not abrogate 16:67, because not describing something as being good is tantamount to describing it as more bad than good!

Then, a third command was revealed,

“O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying,” (4:43)

Now the matter is getting serious; intoxication prevents a Muslim from even approaching a prayer! Still, many people thought that it was OK to drink outside prayer times! They still didn't get the hint. You see why God is walking them those baby steps? It is very hard for a society used to drinking alcohol to quit that habit. They need training. That is what God was doing, out of His Grace, by the gradual revelation of these commands. Notice also that this verse does not abrogate either of the aforementioned verses, because not praying while drunk does not mean drinking is allowed.

Finally, the prohibition was revealed in no uncertain terms,

“O you who have believed! Verily, intoxicants, easy gain (gambling), [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than God], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that perhaps you may prosper. Verily, Satan only wants to drop between you enmity and acrimony through intoxicants and easy gain (gambling) and to shun you from the remembrance of God and from prayer. So, are you ceasing?” (5:90-91)

It is of particular interest to notice that Chapter 5 was one of the very last chapters of the Quran to be revealed. That means that the prohibition of alcohol took the entire period of revelation between Chapter 16 and Chapter 5, almost a decade!

That is just one example of why the Quran may not start off a command with the clear statement outright. [Al-Bahiyy \[10\]](#) and [Ataya \[25\]](#) each wrote an entire book on that. 2512

### 3.1.2 Is there evidence that any text is from God?

*I'm an atheist. Part of the reason why is that I find that there is no real evidence that any religious text on the planet is an actual message from God.*

If that were true, how would God expect us to know Him? Does He have things for us to do? How would we know them? Are there things He wants to warn us against? How would we know that? Is He going to punish us in the afterlife if we didn't follow His commandments? How do we avoid that?

If God doesn't want us to know any of this, why did He send so many prophets and scriptures to the world? Did all these great, honorable men lie about God?

The evidence you're seeking is out there; plenty of it. His signs are all over the skies, the land, the sea, the cosmos, in our own bodies, in our conscience, in other creatures, etc. Signs are meant for people to take notice and be guided, but some pass by them without pausing to think of their significance. Check out for yourself the truth of that by reading the Quran and reflecting on what it says and the signs it draws attention to, and you will know. I hope that you do someday, because life is too short to spend it in the dark and cold. 890

### 3.1.3 Was the universe created in six days?

*In the Quran, Allah States that He created Earth and the Universe in 6 Days.*

*Now, when He says "days", does He mean our days?*

God says in the holy Quran, "And verily a day by your Lord is like a thousand years of your counting" (22:47)

The use of "day" in verse 50:38 is to convey the notion of *stages* to us. That is, it took two stages (days) for the earth to develop and four stages for the cosmos. 149

### 3.1.4 Was the body of Pharaoh saved?

Next time you are in Cairo, Egypt, go visit the Antiquities museum downtown and see for yourself the sign God is speaking of in verse 10:82,

"Today, We save you in your body so that you will be, for those who will come after you, a sign" (10:82)

It's in the mummies wing for all to see and reflect.

The irony is that Pharaoh said about himself "I'm your highest lord" (79:24) and called Moses (PBUH), "Who is this one who is lowly and can hardly articulate?" (43:52). Now, see where both ended! Pharaoh was defeated and drowned and no one decisively knows what his name was. The Jews say it's Ramses, but Egyptologists say it was Menphetah. As for Moses, he was victorious, lived a long life, had millions of followers and is highly revered by billions of people for thousands of years. 787

### 3.1.5 Why is the Quran in Arabic only?

*I'm not Muslim, but I have been considering conversion. And in my studies I've been wondering why the Quran was revealed in Arabic only? I understand why it was revealed in Arabic, but why not multiple languages? And why only one prophet?*

God did not send one prophet; He sent many, each speaking the language of his folk. God's message has always been the same, but people kept changing it. The Quran restores God's message to its pure origin. God has vowed to preserve the Quran Himself and He has delivered on His promise.

Translating the Quran may be a challenge, but a lot of talented people have done a remarkable effort translating it. If that were not the case, how can one explain that the vast majority of Muslims are not Arab and do know Arabic?

Scholars of the Arabic language, including those of them who are not Arab or are not Muslim, have unanimously agreed throughout history that Arabic is a uniquely qualified language for the Quran and that the Quran is its undisputed masterpiece. 1060

### 3.1.6 Learning the Quran by learning Arabic

*Salam,*

*I just want to ask if perhaps you could help me to understand the Quran better. The thing is I know how to read and write Arabic. We have that as a subject from first to sixth grade although my school was a Catholic school. So I can read the Qur'an but I can not understand Arabic save for some words. I end up relying on the English translation. But I still want to read, write and understand. Can you suggest any website or anything where I can learn to understand Arabic? I know it would take a long time but it will be a great help to me. Thank you.*

You are fortunate that you can read and write Arabic. Most Muslims don't!

While learning Arabic is not necessary for being a good Muslim, or for understanding the Quran, since there are many good translations of it, knowledge of Arabic adds a dimension to understanding the Quran that no other tool can approach.

The Quran is the undisputed masterpiece of Arabic language and literature. Even non-Muslims who have mastered the Arabic language

agree. The sheer beauty of the Arabic words, expressions and style that God uses in His Quran has mesmerized the polytheists of Mecca, who were themselves masters of Arabic literary avenues. The Quran challenged them to come up with a book like it. They did not even try. Then the Quran challenged them to come up with ten chapters like any of its chapters, some of which are as short as three verses (11:13). They did not even try. Then the Quran challenged them to come up with one chapter like any of its chapters (2:23). They did not even try. Finally, the Quran declared its superiority, "Say: Verily, if mankind and the sprites combine in order to bring about the like of this Quran, they will not, even if they backed each other!" (17:88)

The website, <http://www.themostreadbook.org>, attempts to translate the Quran into English in a way that preserves the Arabic style and literal meaning of each word as much as the English language permits. Take a look at it and you will get a sense of why that is important and why knowing the Arabic words can make a significant difference in learning the Quran.

I take it that you really want to master the Arabic language as it is used in the Quran. I know of a school in the USA whose mission is to do just that. It is called Al-Bayyinah Institute, <http://bayyinah.com>, and it was founded by a gentleman whose native language is not Arabic, but he was determined to master it and he did. His name is Nouman Ali Khan. He has a YouTube channel and periodically offers a course on the Arabic language, to help people read and understand the Quran, [Learn To Read Quran](#), may God bless his effort. 2138

### 3.1.7 Is Arabic God's chosen language?

*Why is Arabic "God's chosen language" when Arabic wasn't spoken by many of the prophets of Israel, and a language Jesus himself did not speak? Why is it that suddenly the Arabs seem like God's chosen people (something the Jews have always laid claim to), why is Arabic the - pardon the expression, "club language" - and so forth? To me, I don't think Arabic is any such thing.*

Arabic is honored to be the language of the last Testament, but it's not God's chosen language. God chose Hebrew for the Jews, Aramaic for the Christians and Arabic for Muslims. There is no chosen language and there are no chosen people. The Jews would love to have everyone believe that they are a chosen race. Who wouldn't? The Arabs are not chosen; they have been honored that the last and final prophet and messenger of God was one of them. 401

### 3.1.8 What do those single letters mean?

*Many chapters of the Quran start out with what looks like acronyms. Are they acronyms? What do they mean?*

That has been the subject of much discussion and many theories were offered. The conclusion of all is that only God knows their significance. While that is true, there is one particular theory that I really like. That theory is that God is giving us His word in our language! A detailed guidance for all humanity for all time He managed to put for us in one of our languages. The letters symbolize the Arabic language. In other words: from letters of the Arabic alphabet came the enduring miracle of the Quran.

Another cute theory that was offered is that the sum of the letters makes up this sentence,

نص حكيم قاطع له سر

which means "A wise, decisive, esoteric text!"

590

### 3.1.9 What is the best translation of the Quran?

*I know that the Quran cannot be truly translated, but short of that, what is the best English translation of the Quran?*

No one translation is sufficient. I always recommend to people to check out multiple translations, because each has something valuable to offer. Some sites that offer multiple translations are:

- <http://www.quran.com>
- <http://www.islamawakened.com>
- <http://www.themostreadbook.org>

841

### 3.1.10 How many verses are there in the Quran?

*Just curious - How many verses there are in the Quran, how many words and how many letters?*

It so happens that I wrote a computer program to count the words, among other tasks. The total number of verses in the Quran is 6,236 verses. The total number of words is 77,797 words.

I have not yet counted the letters. Let me get back to you on this. 1688

### 3.1.11 Does the Quran discourage asking questions?

*It appears that the Quran, in verse 5:101, discourages Muslims from asking questions. Isn't that contradictory to its emphasis on reason?*

There are two distinct and separate points to be discussed here. Asking God why, may put a believer in the same league as Satan. Satan asked God why he is required to prostrate himself to Adam. He found that to be unacceptable. Satan even came up with what he thought was a good reason not to obey God's command. He said, "I am better than him! You created me out of fire and created him out of mud" (7:12) Satan was asking why he would have to honor a creature whom he believed was inferior to him.

That's the first point: that deciding not to follow a commandment of God by asking why it was given and not getting a satisfactory answer, that decision is a sin. In fact, it is such a cardinal sin that it earned Satan an eternal curse.

That is a completely different issue from asking why in order to understand the wisdom of a commandment or verdict, *but following it nonetheless*. The word Islam means surrender to the will of God. First, you read and reflect on the Quran and once you are convinced of its truth, you follow God's commandments without arguing because you believe their authenticity and authority.

The angels asked God, when He told them He was going to create Adam and set him up as His deputy on earth. They asked God, "Are You placing in it (the earth) whom will corrupt it and shed blood, while we celebrate Your praise and sanctify You?" (2:30) God did not reprimand them for asking. Instead, He answered them.

Our good ancestors, may God have been pleased with them, asked why all the time. Not to argue with God or find an excuse to neglect a commandment, but to understand the wisdom of the laws as much as possible. That understanding comes in handy later on when new juristic issues come to the fore and need a verdict. This is what is called in the discipline of foundations of deduction (Usul-al-Fiqh) Qiyas (deduction by analogy).

It is quite legitimate to ask why God, for example, mandates fasting in Ramadan. After hearing all the rationales offered by the scholars and not liking what he heard, a Muslim is still required to fast. A Muslim who decides not to fast because he is not convinced of the wisdom of fasting is a sinner.

On the flip side, a Muslim who blindly follows his culture thinking that what other people do is part of Islam also risks being a sinner if what he does actually turns out to be against Islamic teachings. For example,

many Muslims visit the tombs of pious ancestors (Al-Awliyaa) and pray to them asking for a cure to their illness or a reconciliation of their marriage, etc. Such an action is a serious sin bordering on the ultimate sin of shirk (Associating others with God in worship). Just because his peers do it all the time does not make it right. Asking why in this case is highly recommended.

The verse you quoted discouraged Muslims to ask questions *before* verses of the Quran were revealed. In other words, revelation will come in due time and will answer their questions; they shouldn't hurry the answers.

204

### 3.1.12 Unclear verses

*I need to know more about distinguishing the Mutashabihat (indeterminate) verses from the Muhkamat (definitive) verses.*

*If a believer reads an unclear verse, he has two choices. One choice is to seek a scholar. The second choice is to understand that he is being tested by Allah. Thereby if the believer fears Allah he resorts to prayer for further guidance. Where is the role of contemplation to gain understanding in accepting knowledge.*

According to verse 3:7, the believer has only one choice! To say, "We believe in it. It is all from our Lord."

No Muslim should or even could find the ultimate interpretation of Mutashabihat verses. That is what God says in verse 3:7, "None know its Taawil (ultimate interpretation) but God."

God also warns those of us who will try! He says that those who try, do so out of one of two motivations: To cause sedition, or to find its ultimate meaning. The former is a sin and the latter is impossible.

You may find

<http://www.themostreadbook.org/phpbb/viewtopic.php?f=130&t=2547>this discussion helpful.

*What are we able to meditate on? What are the guidelines for contemplation?*

Verse 3:7 does not prevent meditation, it cautions against two things: (1) throwing in interpretations for the purpose of causing fitna, and (2) deciding that one interpretation is right while the others are not.

The word "Mutashabih" is itself mutashabih! The word can mean either "look alike" or "carries multiple meanings." Thus, verse 3:7 teaches us

that God has put in the Quran verses that look like other verses but have multiple meanings. To decide that one of those meanings is the only correct one is to seek Taawil and that is impossible.

There are many ways that multiple meanings can be conveyed by the same word or phrase. All languages have them but Arabic uses them a lot. Among them are:

- Syntactic ambiguity,
- Semantic ambiguity,
- Polysyms.

An example of syntactic ambiguity used in the Quran is this verse, ﴿سَبِّحْ

اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى﴾ [الأعلى: ١]

The word “الأعلى” (the Highest) can syntactically be one of three things at least,

1. An adjective for “اسم” (Name),
2. An adjective for “ربك” (your Lord),
3. An apposition for “اسم” (Name).

If it's the first, then the meaning of the verse is “Sanctify the highest name of your Lord.”

If it's the second, then the meaning is “Sanctify the name of your highest lord.”

And if it's the third, then the meaning is “Sanctify the name of your Lord: The Highest.”

Now, which one of these is valid? All of them! They are all intended. The syntactic ambiguity is there for a reason: All valid interpretations are meant and we should accept them all without preference.

*It is so humbling to understand the complexity of the construction of the Quran. I would love to know what the deconstructive school of thought would have to say. No matter what perspective..it leads to the same answer: Allah is our God.*

*My question is now a practical one. We are encouraged to ponder the meanings of the Quran. How do we ponder without breaching the boundaries Allah has given us?*

By remaining centered, balanced and humble.

By centered, I mean not leaning to either extreme. One extreme is accepting without asking and the other is asking about every minutia. Both are bad, because not asking equals not learning and not using the mind. And asking too much leaves no room for contemplation which often is the way to understanding. Understanding comes after both the heart and the mind had a chance to digest the information.

By balanced, I mean keeping the relative weight of each resource: the Quran, the Sunna and the opinions of the scholars.

And by humble, I mean to realize when one does not understand something. Many writers of Islamic literature felt like they had to come up with an opinion on a matter, even though what they wrote clearly shows they don't quite understand it. When this situation arises, it's an opportunity to seek more knowledge.

*Thus we do not need to go into unknown territory, i.e., transcendental meditations and astral projections. We are grounded. This makes psychological and spiritual sense. The Quran is the grounding source. It is concrete..we are able to hold it in our hands. We are automatically centered.*

Couldn't have said it better myself, even if I tried.

736

### 3.1.13 Does God deliberately misguide some people?

*In this verse, it sounds like God deliberately misguides some people. Please explain,*

*“Those whom Allah (in his plan) wills to guide - He opens their breast to Islam; those whom He wills to leave straying - He makes their breast close and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies; thus does Allah (heap) the penalty **on those who refuse to believe.**” (6:138)*

I highlighted above the answer to your question!

The will of God is not arbitrary; it's meritoriously targeted. God makes that point over and over and over in the Quran. For example,

“So that God may torment the hypocrite men and hypocrite women and the men and women who associate others with Him in worship; and that God may accept repentance from the believing men and believing women. And ever is God Forgiving and Merciful.” (33:73)

And

“How shall God guide a people who disbelieved after their belief and had witnessed that the Messenger is true and clear signs had come to them? And God does not guide the wrongdoing people.” (3:86)

And God emphasizes His fairness over and over. For instance,

“Indeed, God does not do injustice, [even] as much as a speck’s weight; while if there is a good deed, He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward.” (4:40)

And

“Do the disbelievers await [anything] except that the angels should come to them or there comes the command of your Lord? Thus did those do before them. And God did not wrong them, but they had been wronging themselves.” (16:33)

*My question was, the meaning of WILLS in this context.*

*For example, can some people not be Muslim because of Allah’s WILL?*

God’s will is *not random*. He does not will people at random to be guided and other people at random to go astray. That would be unjust and He does not do a speck’s weight of injustice.

His will has been that those who accept Him He will guide and those who reject Him He will leave astray. He does that because it has been His will to let man *have a free will*. As a result of that, and because He does not do injustice to anybody, His will has been in response to man’s will.

Hope that makes it clearer.

844

### 3.1.14 Why did God change the prayer direction?

*Why did God change the direction of prayer (Qibla)? Did He just change His mind?*

God never ordered the Qibla to be Jerusalem. In Mecca, before God revealed the verses ordering the Qibla to be the Sacrosanct Mosque which houses the Kaaba, the Prophet faced it as the Qibla because it was right there in front of him. God had not yet ordered a Qibla direction. The same thing happened when the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated to Medina. There was still no instructions from God on Qibla direction, so the Prophet decided to face the Qibla that the Muslims of Medina had been facing, Jerusalem.

But the Prophet (ﷺ) did not like it. He wished to face in his prayers his beloved town, Mecca. God granted him his wish by revealing verses 2:142-2:144,

{2:142} The foolish of people will say, "What has turned them away from their qibla (prayer direction), which they were on?" Say, "To God belongs the east and the west. He guides whom He wills to a straight path."

{2:143} And thus we have made you a centrist community to be witnesses over the people and the Messenger be over you a witness. And We did not make the direction which you were on except that We may note him who follows the Messenger from him who would flip on his heels. And verily, it is huge except for those whom God has guided. And never would God squander your faith. Verily, God, to the people, surely is Kind and Merciful.

{2:144} We do see the turnover of your face [ , O Muhammad,] into the heaven, therefore We surely are turning you to a qibla (prayer direction) that pleases you. So turn your face toward the sector of the Sacrosanct Mosque. And wherever you all may have been, turn your faces toward its sector. And verily, those who have been granted the Book well know that it is the truth from their Lord. And God is not in the slightest unaware of what they do.

Notice that God says in verse 2:143, "you used to face". The initial direction toward Jerusalem was not by an order from God. There is no verse or authentic Hadith that says that. It was a decision the Prophet (PBUH) made. There had been no instruction from God on which direction to face. In Mecca, Muslims faced the Kaaba shrine by default. Before the Prophet (PBUH) migrated to Medina, the Ansar (Medinite Muslims) decided to face Jerusalem as the Jews there did. Jerusalem is a holy city to Islam as well as to Judaism. When the Prophet (PBUH) migrated to Medina and saw the Ansar facing Jerusalem, he figured that was a good idea too.

Then, verse 2:144 was revealed. That was an order from God to all Muslims to face Mecca in prayer, so the Ansar switched direction.

Plain and simple. No need to be confused. God acknowledged that the change-over was a major event, "It is a big matter except for those whom God has guided." (2:143) It was a tough test of faith and obedience, which the Ansar passed with high marks.

I also find it fascinating that the main detractors were the Jews of Medina. It's understandable that they would be upset that Jerusalem was no longer the direction of prayer, but God tells us that they knew from the Torah that the change-over would happen! "And verily those who have been given the Book know that this is the truth from their Lord. God is not unaware of what they do." (2:144) 80

### 3.1.15 Are there abrogated verses in the Quran?

*I read, with shock, that the majority of Sunni Muslim scholars of the past have opined that there are verses in the Quran that have been abrogated. Is this true? How can that be?*

The subject of abrogation has been very controversial and scores of scholars have written authoritative books proving it never happened. The key to understanding it is to understand what the word Naskh means in Arabic and how the early Muslims understood and used it. [This forum](#) discusses the subject in depth, for those who may be interested. It's a rather advanced subject. Also, [this book](#) studies the subject comprehensively.

*I'd rather follow the scholars of the past than opinions on some forum.*

How about reserving judgment until after you read the forum or the book? If you do, you would've seen that it presents what the scholars wrote and you would've understood that the debate is largely semantic and you would've also seen that many scholars did not support abrogation. You can't learn if you refuse to read.

If you did read it and do not agree, you are certainly entitled to your conclusion.

1240

### 3.1.16 Was there once a “stoning verse”?

*Is there such thing as a Verse of Rajm or stoning? I read a hadith that says in Sahih Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 82, Number 816:*

*Narrated by Ibn Abbas:*

*Umar said, “I am afraid that after a long time has passed, people may say, ‘We do not find the Verses of the Rajam (stoning to death) in the Holy Book,’ and consequently they may go astray by leaving an obligation that Allah has revealed. Lo! I confirm that the penalty of Rajam be inflicted on him who commits illegal sexual intercourse, if he is already married and the crime is proved by witnesses or pregnancy or confession.” Sufyan added, “I have memorized this narration in this way.” Umar added, “Surely Allah’s Apostle carried out the penalty of Rajam, and so did we after him.”*

*Is this hadith authentic?*

*And also, is it possible for a hadith to be authentic but still contradict the Glorious Quran? Thanks, and in no way did I mean to cause offence.*

This hadith is problematic because it alleges that several verses were revealed but never recorded as part of the Quran. This is called Naskh in Islamic literature and is often, incorrectly IMHO, translated abrogation.

This is a complex, and controversial, subject in Islamic literature, but if you're interested to know more about it you can check out [this discussion forum](#), or read

this recently published book on the subject.

Because this hadith is reported in Al-Bukhari (and Muslim's) Hadith compilation books, regarded by all Sunni Muslims to be authentic sources, many scholars are adamant that there was once a stoning verse. The majority of them have opined that it was abrogated by verse 24:2, the only explicit verse that sets a penalty for adultery in an unambiguous, most emphatic language. There is no other penalty for adultery in Islam other than what verse 24:2 states.

The subject of abrogation is perhaps the strangest subject you will ever read in the classic books of the Salaf. If you are interested in learning what has been said about the stoning verse and whether it was abrogated by 24:2 or abrogated it (!). For more details, you may want to read [this discussion topic](#).

To answer your last question, yes, a hadith can be rated authentic but still appear contradictory to the Quran. It's not because the Prophet (ﷺ) would contradict the Quran, but it's because the hadith is either misunderstood or mistransmitted. Read some of the posts in this book about authentication and abrogation for more details. 2096

### 3.1.17 Are there contradictions in the Quran?

Someone wrote the following on Yahoo Answers. Is it true?

*The Koran was written (mostly) by Mohammad. There is no excuse for one man to contradict himself in his own writings.*

Muhammad, peace be upon him, could not read or write.

*In Sura 3:42, 45 SEVERAL angels appear to Mary in the annunciation of the birth of Jesus. In Sura 19:17-21 only ONE angel appears to the virgin Mary.*

Verses 3:42 and 3:45 speak of the angels who gave Mary the good news of a son. Verses 19:17-21 speak of the Spirit of Holiness (Gabriel) who blew into Mary a holy spirit and caused her to conceive. Two different tasks. Only Gabriel had the authority from God and the capability to blow into Mary from the Spirit of God causing her to conceive a child without male input.

*Sura 2:29 says the earth was created first and then heaven.*

*Sura 49:27-30 says the heaven was created first and then the earth was created*

No. Verse 2:29 says that God created for us all that is *in the earth*, then turned to the heaven and layered it into seven heavens. Both the heaven and the earth were already created by then.

Chapter 49 does not have verses 27-30. It ends at verse 18.

*Sura 22:47 and 32:5 Allah's day is equal to 1,000 human years. Sura 70:4, Allah's day is equal to 50,000 human years.*

No. Verse 22:47 says that a Day with God is *like* a 1,000 years of our counting. A figure of speech to relate the vastness of a *heavenly day*. Verse 70:4 refers *specifically* to the Day of Judgment when all angels ascend to heaven for the last time.

664

### 3.1.18 Is this a contradiction in the Quran?

*The Quran states that the family of Pharaoh has been cursed and are going to Hell. But it also says that Pharaoh's wife, Asia, was a role model for believing women. Is that a contradiction, or an exception?*

The Quran does not condemn the family of Pharaoh, it condemns "Aal" of Pharaoh. The difference is that the word Aal, which is often translated as "family of" or "house of", actually means "close associates". Asia was not one of those. She was a believer and a follower of Moses, not of Pharaoh. Thus, while she was from the family of Pharaoh, she was not from his "Aal".

In each prayer, we Muslims acknowledge that God has blessed the "Aal of Abraham". We do that a minimum of five times everyday! But we know that Abraham's father is declared in the Quran as "an enemy to God!" (9:114) Therefore, he cannot be from "Aal of Abraham"! Sarah, Hajar (Hagar), Ismail (Ishmael), and Isshaq (Isaac) are.

This is further confirmed by the story of Noah (PBUH) and his son. Noah thought that his son would be saved from the Flood, but God explained to him that Noah's son "is not from his family!" See verses 11:40-49.

I read this poem on another forum and thought it articulated this concept quite well,

The "Aal" of the Prophet are the followers of his religion,  
Be they foreign or Arab.

If his Aal were only his kinsmen,

We would be praying for his tyrant uncle Abu-Lahab!

1253

### 3.1.19 Were parts of the Quran lost or forgotten?

*I got an email from a group called the Sakshi Reserach Team quoting some hadeeths which imply that parts of the Quran were lost, forgotten or abrogated. One hadeeth says that verses were written on a piece of paper but a goat ate it!*

*Is this strange or what? How do I answer them?*

See what happens when people give narrations precedence over the Quran?

The subject of abrogation is one of the worst manifestations of that. See this [discussion forum](#) for example.

For a comprehensive study of the subject, you may find this book informative: <http://aabedan.org>

BTW, verse 2:106 does not say “We do not abrogate”, it says “If we ever abrogate”.

If you read half as many classical books as I did, you will be absolutely shocked by some of what was said in them.

Muslims must never believe that any part of the Quran was lost, forgotten or abrogated, because God clearly says in it,

“Verily, upon Us is collecting it and [teaching you how to] recite it. When We recite it [to you], follow its recitation. Then upon Us is its elaboration.”  
(75:17-19)

Muslims must also never give narrations, no matter how authentic they are, precedence over the Quran, if those narrations contradict it. This is what Imam Malik and all the Sahaba did in regard to the authentic hadith reported by Amra bint Abdul-Rahman (RA) who said that Aisha (RA) told her that there was once a verse specifying ten sucklings as a minimum before a child is considered a suckling sibling. Then, she said it was abrogated by another verse that reduced the minimum to five. She said that Aisha told her that both verses were in recitation when the Prophet (PBUH) died!

All the Sahaba rejected that. None of them ever heard those two “verses”. Imam Malik said that the hadith, even though it’s authentic, *must be rejected* (Mardood). No one has ever said that Amra lied, or that she was anything less than trustworthy. In fact, she was so knowledgeable that Calif Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz (RA) used to consult her.

So, how can that be? Who knows why? Maybe she was confused. Maybe she misunderstood what she heard from Aisha. Maybe maybe. The bottom line is that when a narration, even an authentic one, contradicts the Quran, it must not be accepted. The Sahaba did so and so did Imam Malik, rahimahullah.

Does that mean they denied the Sunna? Of course not. They simply put the Quran at a higher pedestal. The Quran was transmitted to us by thousands narrating to thousands who all memorized every letter, diacritic and intonation of it. It was written down entirely during the life of the Prophet (PBUH) It was copied and sent to the capitals of all Muslim countries.

The Hadith, on the other hand, was not written down and was not authenticated for nearly 200 years after the death of the Prophet (PBUH). 99 percent of it is narrated by a few people (Aahad), only a small fraction, approximately 300, are narrated by many from many, called Mutawatir (ubiquitous).

Does that mean we should discard the Hadith? Of course not. The Hadith is extremely important as it tells us details we could never know on our own without it. But we must understand that the Quran takes first stage, and nothing can nor should overrule it. This is what God tells us in the Quran,

“Is it then other than God that I should seek as judge, when He sent down to you the Book, detailed?” (6:114) 1028

### 3.1.20 Was the Quran burned after Muhammad’s death?

*There is a sister I know, who claims that the burning of the Quran was a political move. She insists the motive was to govern the growing faith. She feels we do not have evidence that refutes her position. In other words the original copies of the Quran were burnt and the versions we have are somewhat edited. I am at a loss. I usually change the subject. She also says the Prophet asked everyone to be educated so there were multiple copies subject to change. I have not read anything to support her argument. However, I am not a scholar. Is there any meticulous evidence that would refute her thinking?*

Yes we have an argument against her! The Quran itself. It says that God vows to preserve it Himself just as He revealed it Himself. See verse 15:9.

What is her evidence that the Quran was burned? Without authentic evidence, anyone can say anything about anything and anyone! Don’t pay attention to people who theorize. Insist on evidence and reasoning, or else you will easily be lost like millions are.

The only thing that comes to mind, is that maybe she is confused about what Uthman ibn Affan, may God have been pleased with him, what he did to the copies that people claimed were Quran. He compared each such copy against the Mus-haf (bound volume of the Quran) that the Prophet

(PBUH) left with his wife Hafsa before he died. The Prophet also left another identical copy with his daughter Fatima, may God have been pleased with both. Uthman promptly burned all inauthentic copies claimed to be Quran but did not exactly match Hafsa's Mus-haf. He had an authentic original to compare with.

*She is a revert who calls herself a Qurani. One who upholds the Quran. She was with the Salafis for a minute. As Allah has promised us the Guardianship over corruption, I will use this ayat (verse) in the future. I do not like to argue (surprise, surprise).*

Quranis take the other extreme. I dislike extremes. Islam is in the middle, but people just love to take one extreme or the other!

Quranis discard the Hadith altogether. That's illogical, not to mention wrong. Because we could not know how to pray if it weren't for the Hadith. It is also wrong because God orders us to obey the Prophet (PBUH), see verse 4:80. How can we do that if we don't know what he said?

Just because many hadiths are inauthentic or problematic is no reason to dismiss all hadiths! Rather, it's reason to authenticate the Hadith, not just in its Sanad (attribution), but also in its Matn (content). 1732

### 3.1.21 Are there different versions of the Quran?

*I have just heard a recitation of a short Chapter of the Quran that sounded different from the way I used to hear it. I don't speak Arabic, so I cannot properly tell the difference. Am I imagining things, or are there different versions of the Quran?*

Neither! What you heard is probably a different *recitation method*. The Quranic script accommodates several different recitation methods; different ways to pronounce the same word or sequence of words. That includes dialects but is not limited to them. This is possible because Arabic does not have letters to represent short vowels. Therefore, short vowels are indicated by diacritics written above, below or next to letters. Even when diacritics are written, there may be more than one way to pronounce the word still! For example, in Chapter 1, verse 4, the third word is written “مَلِكٌ” with a “short alif” diacritic placed after the first letter, “م” (M). That indication allows two different pronunciations: “ملك” (King) and “مالك” (Owner). Both are valid pronunciations for this verse. The latter is the most recited one.

The different ways have all been preserved by ear. Each one has its own name, named after the famous reciter who taught them, such as Hafs and Warsh. They have been taught in religious schools to all professional

reciters of the Quran. If you are interested in hearing them, check out the recordings made by the late reciter Mahmoud Khalil Al-Hosary, may God bless his soul. He recorded the entire Quran in each of the agreed recitation methods.

To be clear, the different ways to recite the Quran are all auditory. That is, the only difference between them is how words are pronounced, not that other words are used. Also, where pauses and punctuations are placed.

Such variation can only be fully indicated orally. Until the last Century, recordings were not possible. That is why the knowledge of the recitation methods was transmitted orally, from teacher to student. Today, you can learn them at your leisure by listening to recordings, such as those by Sheikh Al-Hosary. 1083

### 3.1.22 Have there been attempts to alter the Quran?

*Have there been attempts to alter the Quran? How were they foiled? How was the Quran preserved intact?*

You probably know about the so called “true furqan” that’s been going around, which is nothing more than the New Testament disguised as a Quran.

The first person to preserve the Quran was the Prophet, peace be upon him, himself. As he was receiving revelations, he dictated them to scribes who kept a copy and gave him a copy which he kept in his house. He entrusted his wife Hafsa and his daughter Fatima, may God have been pleased with them, with two identical copies just before he died. The order of the Chapters and the placement of each verse was done by dictation from the Prophet (PBUH).

Then First Calif Abu-Bakr (RA) collected all written copies and simply organized them into bound volumes (Masahif).

Then the third Calif, Uthman (RA) did the same thing and ordered burning of all copies that did not match what Fatima and Hafsa had. Not only did he have a written original to compare with, but he and hundreds of Sahaba memorized the Quran letter-for-letter, so the preservation task was easy. Uthman then made six new identical copies and sent them to Mecca, Medina, Damascus, Kufa and Basra (both in Iraq), and kept the sixth copy at home.

Those were the copies used to make the hundreds of thousands of copies of the Quran that were made later as Muslim land expanded. May God grant Uthman ibn Affan the highest place in Paradise for accomplishing the single most important service to Islam. 674

### 3.1.23 Does the Quran say that the earth is flat?

*There are a number of verses in the Quran that appear to say that the earth is flat. How do you interpret those verses?*

1. *“And the earth- We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm, and produced therein every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs)” (50:7)*
2. *“And We have spread out the (spacious) earth: How excellently We do spread out!” (51:48)*
3. *“And Allah has made the earth for you as a carpet (spread out)” (71:19)*
4. *“And at the Earth, how it is spread out?” (88:20)*
5. *“Who has made the earth your couch, and the heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith Fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know (the truth).” (2:22)*
6. *“And the earth, after that, He rolled it out.” (79:30)*

50:7- A better translation is “stretched out”. Being stretched out is not the same thing as being flat. The earth is stretched out, isn’t it? Wherever you look, you see it stretched out. That is actually all the hint you need to realize that the earth is round! Because, if the earth is flat, then the only way for it to look stretched out from every spot on it is if it is endless, or that it is round.

If you prefer the translation “spread out”, consider that you can spread whip cream all around an apple, right?

51:48- The word “فرشناها” means furnished it, not spread it out. And the word “مهادا” means paved. That’s also the word used in verse 2:22.

71:19 and 88:20- These two verses emphasize the blessing of stretching out the earth so that we can walk on it, and that’s how it is, isn’t it?

79:30- This is a key verse that most exegetes did not get. Sheikh Al-Shaarawi, may God bless his soul, noticed it and explained how it combines the stretching AND the roundness of the earth at the same time! That’s because the word “دحها” means the action of rolling and unrolling of dough such as when you make a pie crust ([Al-Shaarawi \[20\]](#)). It is a metaphor that indicates that the earth is stretched like the dough when it is unrolled and round like the dough when it is rolled.

The misunderstanding many people fall into is when they do not realize how large the globe of the earth is. If you try to walk on a beach ball, you will make one step before the ball rolls and realize that you’re walking on a sphere. But when you walk on the earth, you can walk for miles and

you still have covered only a tiny distance, so you never feel that you are walking on a sphere. 1292

### 3.1.24 Are these scientific inaccuracies in the Quran?

*I've been debating an atheist on a discussion forum and been telling him about the many scientific miracles of the Quran. So, he came back with what he claimed were scientific inaccuracies in the Quran. Can you help me refute them?*

*By the sun and its brightness (1) And [by] the moon when it follows it (2) And [by] the day when it displays it (3) And [by] the night when it covers it (4) And [by] the sky and He who constructed it (91:1-5). The Quran says sunlight is invisible until it hits the atmosphere.*

Where did he get that? The verses he quotes say that the day makes the sun prominent. Is there any doubt about that? It's a reminder of His grace that the day makes all the benefits of the sun available, such as light, warmth, sustenance for plants, etc.

*"Are you the harder to create or the heaven? He built it. (27) He raised (increased) its thickness, then put it into a right good state. (28) And He made dark its night and brought out its light." (27:29). This says that the universe is dark.*

No, it doesn't. It says He made the night dark and the day bright. A reminder of His grace that makes it possible for us to sleep and rest at night and rise up and be alert so we can work in the day.

*"Even if We opened out to them a gate from heaven, and they were to continue (all day) ascending therein, (14) They would only say: 'Our eyes have been covered. Nay, we have been bewitched by sorcery.' " (15:14-15). The Quran says the universe is engulfed in darkness.*

Where did he get that? The verses he quotes continue the theme started four verses earlier (15:10-13) about the disbelievers ridiculing all messengers sent to them. The verses quoted say that such disbelievers would still reject God even if He lets them ascend to heaven to see its wonders. Pretty much what your atheist friend is doing now! God says that they would come up with other explanations for those wonders, such as "Our eyesights have been dimmed, or maybe we've been bewitched."

Anything but admit that those signs are God's wonderful creation. 936

### 3.1.25 Did Muhammad confuse the two Marys?

*In Islam, Mary, Jesus's mother, is the sister of Moses? Looks like Mohammed mixed them up.*

LOL! This is what happens when a person doesn't know Arabic, reads one verse then jumps to a conclusion. Muhammad, peace be upon him, did not write the Quran; he couldn't read or write. The Quran was revealed to him by God.

The expression "Ukhta Haaron" in verse 19:28 does not mean biological sister of Aaron. It's an honorary title meaning a lady who comes from the lineage of Aaron. Arabic, like the other Semitic languages, uses "father of" (Abu), "mother of" (Umm), "son of" (Ibn), "daughter of" (Bint), "brother of" (Akhu), "sister of" (Ukht), "associates of" (Aal) and "children of" (Banoo) often to indicate a noteworthy attribute, or a praise of character or lineage.

Examples often used:

"Son of a lion" (Ibna Qaswara) to indicate bravery,  
 "Son of the road" (Ibn al Sabil) to indicate a destitute or a traveler,  
 "Father of grace" (Abul-Fadhil) to indicate generosity and largess,  
 "Brother of hardship" (Akha-sh-Shada-id) to indicate toughness,  
 "Mother of prosperity" (Umm-al-Hana) to indicate generosity or blessings,  
 "Mother of the Book" (3:7), to indicate the source register of all scriptures,  
 "Mother of towns" (6:92), to indicate the high status of the town of Mecca,  
 "This is the faith of *your father Abraham*. He named you Muslims earlier."  
 (22:78),  
 "As He has fulfilled it before for your *two fathers*, Abraham and Isaac." (12:6),  
 "O children of Adam, let not Satan sway you like he got your *two parents* out of the Garden" (7:27),  
 "And to Aad [We sent] *their brother Huud*" (7:65),  
 "Verily, Wasters are the brothers of devils" (17:27),  
 "Every community that enters [the hellfire] curses *its sister*" (7:38)

There are countless other examples. Hope this helps.

58

### 3.1.26 How long is a heavenly day? 1000 or 50,000 years?

*I've seen two conflicting verses in the Quran. One says that a day with God is a thousand years, while the other says it's fifty thousand years. Which is it?*

The two verses in question do not conflict. The first verse says, "And verily, a day with your Lord is *like* a thousand years of your counting."

(22:43) The second verse says, “The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a day which is measured as fifty thousand years.” (70:1)

The first verse clearly approximates the concept of a day with God to our human understanding. Time is a creation of God. We measure a day as the time it takes to complete a rotation of the earth around its axis. A day on Mercury is shorter and a day on Jupiter is longer. One can then appreciate that a “day” with God is *different* from a day on earth.

The second verse refers specifically to the day of judgment, while the first verse does not specifically do so.

With the two verses together, one can begin to understand that “days”, “years” and time in general have different meanings in the hereafter. 496

### 3.1.27 Did Muslims cancel a treaty unilaterally?

*Chapter 9 starts off with what sounds like a unilateral cancellation of all treaties with polytheists. Is that what it says?*

*On a side note, why is Chapter 9 the only one that does not start with the Basmala introduction (the words: In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful)?*

Unilateral cancellation of obligations is renegeing on a promise! Sanctified is God above that.

The “Baraa-a” (disavowal) mentioned in Chapter 9 is a declaration of an end to the practice of having treaties with the polytheists of Arabia. That is, after the terms of the current treaties expire, there shall be no more treaties. Either the polytheists accept Islam or live peacefully with Muslims. If they choose to fight, Muslims will have to fight them back. No more treaties.

As for the Basmala question, lots of explanations were suggested in the literature, but no one really knows. Neither God nor His Messenger have told us. Therefore, all explanations offered are guesses.

*I read an argument, which sounds plausible to me. It says that this Sura (Chapter of the Quran) is very harsh on the hypocrites and that's why an introduction filled with grace would be unfitting.*

There is really no answer, because the only way we can know is if God or His Messenger tells us and they did not.

If that explanation was correct, then how come Surat Muhammad (Chapter 47) starts with the Basmala? That Sura is also tough on the

disbelievers from the first verse. In fact, many Salaf (scholars of old) have called this Sura, Surat Al-Qital (The Chapter of fighting).

The flip side of this argument should also be examined. There is one Sura which has two Basmalas! It's Surat An-Naml, Chapter 27. The second Basmala is in verse 30. How come? Does this Chapter contain more of God's mercy than all other chapters? No. If any Chapter deserved to have two Basmalas by that logic, it would have been Surat Maryam, Chapter 19. It has the name Al-Rahman 11 times, more than any other Sura.

That explanation sounds nice, but is flawed as an argument. 1308

### 3.1.28 Where does the Quran condone terrorism?

*Can someone please give me the full Quran quotes for those verses in the Quran that encourage terrorism and let me know the meaning of them all without quoting them out of context? Thanks.*

That's easy. The answer is "Verse not Found!"

Suicide is forbidden by God. He said "Do not kill yourselves. God is merciful to you." (4:29)

Killing is forbidden by God. He said "and whoever kills a soul not in retaliation for the killing of another soul nor because of corruption in the land, it is as if he killed all mankind. And he who saves a soul, it is as if he saved all mankind." (5:32). The decision of whether there's corruption in the land that warrants a capital punishment can only be delivered by a duly elected scholarly imam (head of state) or a duly appointed scholarly judge and after consultation. Not every Tom, Dick and Harry can give a religious edict.

Quite the contrary, the Quran specifies the capital punishment for the crime of terrorism! Islamic scholars have all agreed that terrorism, called in the Sharia (Islamic law) "terrifying the secure", is one of the acts the Quran describes in verse 5:33 as "fighting God and His Messenger." 225

### 3.1.29 Does the Quran confirm or abrogate the Torah?

*If the Quran confirms the written Torah, then it means that the corruptions/deletions/fabrications/omissions/lies must have happened after the lifetime of Mohammed. And finally, it was not the Jews who wrote the Torah. Therefore it must be the author/s, who happen to be prophets, that "fabricated the lies". Right?*

Wrong. The editing of the Torah was not done by the prophets. It was done by scribes and some rabbis with a material gain in mind. God says in the holy Quran, "So, woe unto those who write the Book with their hands then say this is from God so that they gain by it a little price..." (2:79)

The Torah we have today is an edited version. The Quran does not confirm the edited Torah. It confirms the original Torah revealed to Moses. The Quran came to correct the alterations the Jewish scribes made to the Torah and the Christians to the Gospel. 289

### 3.1.30 Is the Quran anti-Semitic?

*Sir, I am a Jew and in reading the Quran, I find that it is very harsh in its criticism of the Jewish people. For example in Chapter 5, verses 60-64, I see that Jewish people are called as those whom Allah has cursed, is angry with them and has turned them into apes and swine. This is very offensive and it sounds outright anti-Semitic. How do you explain this?*

Antisemitism is the racial or ethnic hatred or discrimination against Semitic people. Let us then examine whether this applies to the Quran.

The Semitic people are many races, chief among them are the Hebrews and the Arabs. The Quran praises the Hebrews who followed Moses, peace be upon him, and fought alongside him, "That is because they endured and of Our signs they were certain" (32:24). God honored these Hebrews:

"And we have chosen them knowingly above all people." (44:32)

Therefore, we can conclude that the Quran is NOT anti the Hebrew people.

Now let's see if the Quran is anti-Arab. In many verses, God praises the Arabs who followed Muhammad, peace be upon him, and fought alongside him. He honored these Arabs who accepted Islam. He said, "You are the best community brought out for mankind!" (3:110).

Therefore, we can conclude that the Quran is not anti-Arab.

With these two conclusions we then arrive at the conclusion that the Quran is NOT anti-Semitic.

The verses you quoted speak of the Hebrews who rebelled against God, disobeyed Moses, edited the scriptures and killed prophets. Do such people deserve other than a curse from God?

God also has in the Quran some harsh words for some Arabs. Do we conclude then that it is anti-Arab? The Quran is pro the faithful and anti the wicked, regardless of their race.

If the Jews have redefined antisemitism to exclude all people who are not

descendants of Isaac and they expanded the word to include any criticism to any of them, that doesn't make it so. God does not cajole the Hebrews, the Arabs or any other race. Whoever does wrong God will criticize, ridicule, reprimand, condemn, punish and may destroy. 131

### 3.1.31 I see the Quran confirming Christian teachings

I'm a Christian minister and I believe in the Bible and the teachings of the Church. I read a translation of the Quran and I can see that the Quran confirms Christian teachings. For instance,

4:159 Yet there is not one of the followers of earlier revelation who does not, at the moment of his death, grasp the truth about Jesus; and on the Day of Resurrection he [himself] shall bear witness to the truth against them.

4:157 And their boast, "Behold, we have slain the Christ Jesus, son of Mary, [who claimed to be] an apostle of God!" However, they did not slay him, and neither did they crucify him, but it only seemed to them [as if it had been] so; and, verily, those who hold conflicting views thereon are indeed confused, having no [real] knowledge thereof, and following mere conjecture. For, of a certainty, they did not slay him.

3:55 Lo! God said: "O Jesus! Verily, I shall cause thee to die, and shall exalt thee unto Me, and cleanse thee of [the presence of] those who are bent on denying the truth; and I shall place those who follow thee [far] above those who are bent on denying the truth, unto the Day of Resurrection. In the end, unto Me you all must return, and I shall judge between you with regard to all on which you were wont to differ.

This is a strange translation. Here is what the Arabic verses say (context added for clarification),

3:55 "As God said, 'O Jesus, I am recalling thee whole, ascending thee to Me, cleansing thee from those who rejected and making those who followed thee above those who rejected until the day of resurrection.' Then to Me is the return of all of you when I shall judge between ye in what ye differed on."

4:157 "And their saying 'We killed Christ Jesus son of Mary, the messenger of God.' They did not kill him and they did not crucify him but it was made to look that way to them. Verily those who differ about him are in doubt about it. They do not have knowledge of it except following conjecture. They most certainly did not kill him."

4:158 "Nay, God raised him up to Him, and God has always been unbeatable, very wise."

4:159 “And none of the people of the Book will but believe in him before his death and on the day of resurrection he will be a witness upon them.”

These verses speak of God saving Christ from crucifixion, raising him up to heaven alive. Then God will send him back to earth, at which time all the people of the Book will believe correctly about him as Muslims do. It is absolutely necessary to have the original. Any message can quickly be lost in the translation. 443

### 3.1.32 Why would the Quran deny the crucifixion?

Non-Muslims accuse the Prophet, peace be upon him, of writing the Quran. The evidence is overwhelming that he did not and could not, because he couldn't read or write. See for instance: [The Amazing Quran](#)

I'd like to draw attention to one particular Muslim belief: That Jesus was not crucified.

The Quran confirms most of the Christian beliefs about Jesus, such as he was born of the virgin Mary, that he performed many miracles even brought someone back from the dead and even that he will be back! Some of these beliefs are disputed by some Christians and all of them are denied by most Jews. So why did Muhammad (ﷺ) confirm those beliefs? What would he get out of it? Did he hope to attract Christians to his new religion? If that were the case, then why does the Quran deny, in the most strenuous manner and most emphatic language, three doctrines the Christians believe in: The trinity, the divinity of Jesus, and the crucifixion? How could he appeal to the Christians that way?

And let's look at those three doctrines. The trinity and divinity of Jesus can be easily dismissed because they are an obvious violation of the First Commandment. So, one could see why Muhammad (ﷺ), if he wrote the Quran, would deny these two, but why would he deny the crucifixion? What's in it for him?

I heard a Jewish rabbi explain that on a TV documentary. He said that Muhammad (ﷺ) felt that God could not leave Jesus to be killed and therefore he had to deny the crucifixion. This is incredible coming from a rabbi who knows that his people killed many prophets and that the account of those killings is still in the Old Testament and is confirmed by the Quran. Therefore we know that God let many prophets get killed.

No, there is no worldly explanation for Muhammad (ﷺ) to deny the crucifixion, which all non-Muslims either agree has happened or have no opinion on the matter. Only Islam stands alone, defiantly, against that event having happened. Why?

The only answer is that it wasn't Muhammad, peace be upon him, who thought of that idea, but he simply, as he stated in the emphatic,

repeated verbatim what God has revealed to him.

The Quran denies the crucifixion because the only one who knows for certain that it didn't happen is the author of the Quran: God, may He be glorified. 521

### 3.1.33 Who was the sacrificial son?

*Muslims believe that the son who was to be slaughtered by Abraham, by command from God, was Ishmael, but the Jews and the Christians believe it was Isaac. Who is right? What is the reason for the discrepancy?*

The reason is simple: The Jews edited the Torah. They were jealous that the honor of the sacrifice was given to the child of Hagar, whom they viewed as an illiterate slave, and not to themselves, and they viewed themselves to be educated and privileged. So, they simply changed words to make it clear that the name Ishmael gets less attention, even though in their tradition the first-born son has tremendous advantages.

In their editing of the Torah, they overlooked one place! There is a verse there where God tells Abraham, peace be upon him, that He wants him to slaughter his *only* son. It is established by most scholars of the Bible that Ishmael was 13 years older than his brother Isaac, peace be upon them, and therefore, Isaac was never Abraham's only son!

Realizing this, the Jews had to come up with an explanation, so they explained that obvious verse away by claiming that Ishmael was not a legitimate son because, they claimed, Hagar was a slave and not a wife. Hagar was Abraham's legitimate wife. In fact, she was Sarah's maid and when Sarah saw how sad her husband was that he did not have children, it was she who suggested to him to marry Hagar, so he can have children. I firmly believe that it was because of this selfless love for her husband that God rewarded her with her own son, Isaac, at an age no woman can normally conceive. Praise the Lord, and may peace be upon the house of Abraham. 730

### 3.1.34 Misinterpreting Quranic verses

*I thought you'd like this article, which talks about misinterpretation of some Quranic verses, that lead to the conclusion that they condone violence. They do not at all. People should know that and not accuse the Quran of what it does not say.*

Thanks for sending me this good article. Indeed, many verses of the Quran were misunderstood and misinterpreted even by some Muslim

scholars, so it's no wonder that orientalists of the past and Islamophobes of the present have claimed that Islam is violent or aggressive; many Muslim scholars made it look that way!

One glaring case in point is what the classic scholars wrote about the so-called "sword verse", discussed in much detail in [this forum](#). 1330

### 3.1.35 The science of asbaab-un-nuzool

*I'm told that learning the science of asbaab-un-nuzool (circumstances of revelation) is key to understanding and interpreting the Quran. What do you say?*

Unfortunately, asbab al-nuzool is not a science, because nearly all narrations that mention the circumstances of revelation are uncertain in their attribution ("ظني الورد") as they have been narrated by a few to a few ("آحاد"). You will notice, after reading the classic books, that the scholars and narrators have often differed about the circumstances of revelation of the same verse. Furthermore, jurists ("الفقهاء") and foundationists ("الأصوليون") have agreed that interpretation of a verse and analyzing it for the purpose of deriving teachings and rulings from it, is not bound by its circumstances of revelation, but rather by its general meaning, unless specified elsewhere ("خاص أريد به العموم").

That does not mean that learning the circumstances of revelation is useless; it only means that it is not a precise discipline to rely on for exegesis (Tafsir) or analysis (Ijtihad). The best approach to interpreting a verse of the Quran is by examining the verse's context and comparing it to other verses in the Quran. [Al-Khatib \[15\]](#) wrote an entire book on that discipline. 1332

### 3.1.36 Verse 4:93 is quite scary

Indeed. The verse says,

"Whoever deliberately kills a believer, his recompense is Hell, forever staying in it. God is wroth against him and has cursed him and prepared for him a grand torment." (4:93)

Verse 4:93 contains the harshest language of threat from God in the Quran! Yet, countless Muslims have done what this verse warns against without any remorse. Starting with Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi crucifying Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair (RA), all the way to the terrorists who think that their mass murder-suicide campaign is an offering to God that pleases Him!

When people listen to other people, instead of listening to the Quran, they can be misled in a thousand different ways, some of which are fatal. 1351

### 3.1.37 Quoting the Quran out of context

Quoting any text out of context is obviously dishonest, so why do so many people do it? The reason is that it works! When someone has an agenda and they know that if they expose it, it will not be popular, they must find alternative ways. One such way is to use for evidence, backing their argument, text taken out of context and quoted by respectable sources. This impresses the gullible, thus helping the people making those arguments pursue their agendas.

This practice of quoting text out of context is a pseudo-reasoning technique, a misinformation. Many politicians use it to knock down the electability of their opponents or the favorability of their opponents programs.

Thus, it is no wonder that Islamophobes often quote translations of verses of the Holy Quran stripped from their context, so that their listeners or readers would get the wrong impression about what the verse is about and would not be interested in Islam. Few people actually bother to check out the Quran to verify what they heard or read. Those who do invariably conclude the opposite.

Elsewhere in this book are many example of questions and/or arguments made by Islamophobes to repulse people away from Islam, and the exposition of the fraud in those questions and the flaws in their arguments. See posts in this book about Islamophobia and misconceptions for examples.

Today, I thought I'd turn this negativity into a fun quiz! The following are quizzes to test your knowledge of the Quran. See if you can solve them by yourself by simply examining their context. The answers are in Appendix B.

Each of the following is a translation of a part of a verse that sounds like a blasphemy! Where in the Quran do you find these verses? What is their context that was left out and that explains what they really mean?

1. "Blessed is the one in the fire"!
2. Satan "misguides and guides"!
3. "Woe unto those who pray"!
4. "My Lord does not pay attention to you"!

2127

### 3.1.38 Does the Quran say that everyone will go to Hell first?

*Chapter 19 of the Quran says that every Muslim will go to Hell first then to Heaven, I doubt this is true. Anyway, can anyone confirm if this is false or true.*

Verses 19:71-72 say "And among you is none but will be exposed to it (hellfire). That is upon your Lord a decided certainty. Then We rescue those who have observed [God] and leave the wrong doers in it kneeling."

The word God uses in these verses is "wariduha". It does not mean entering. It means to pass by or have exposure to. The scholars have concluded that this refers to "the upper path" (Al-Sirat), which you can think of as a bridge high above and over hell. We will all walk on it. All people therefore will see Hell and experience some of its heat from a safe distance. May God save us from it.

This is the explanation too of verses 102:5-7, "Nay, if you know the knowledge of certainty, you would see the blaze. Then you will see it with the eye of certainty."

Why would God put us through such a frightening ordeal? To realize how fortunate we are as we are saved from it (Amen), how close we could have been to damnation and the true value of the prize: Paradise. You don't really enjoy luxury until after you've tasted adversity. 153

### 3.1.39 Explain the first five verses of Chapter 9

*It would be great help for me if you explain how to present these verses (9:1-5) to non-Muslims. I was talking with some non-muslim friends and based on tafsir (exegesis) of Quran I could not explain it well.*

Muslims had non-aggression treaties with the polytheists of Mecca. Verses 9:1-15 were revealed to declare that after the expiration of the terms of the current treaties with the polytheists that those treaties will never again be renewed. The polytheist will have to live peacefully with Muslims. If they choose to fight, as they have done repeatedly before, then Muslims will fight them back and there will not be any more treaties.

Verse 9:4 makes it clear that the terms of the current treaties that have not yet expired have to be honored,

"Except those you have covenanted of the polytheists and they have not shorted you of anything nor supported anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until the end of their term. Indeed, God loves the watchful [of Him]." (9:4)

Verse 9:5, called in the classic literature “the sword verse”, and often quoted by Islamophobes, is the most misunderstood verse in the Quran, even by Muslims. It simply says that after the expiration of the terms of the current treaties, aggression of the polytheists will not be tolerated. This is made clear by the next verse, 9:6, which makes it clear that aggression is only directed at the aggressors,

“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of God. *Then deliver him to his place of safety.* That is because they are a people who do not know” (9:6)

The next verses explain the theme further and tell why God does not want Muslims to have more treaties with the polytheists by reminding Muslims of the past hostility and atrocities the polytheists committed against Muslims. Verse 9:7, however, makes it clear that peaceful co-existence can happen between Muslims and polytheists,

“How can there be for the polytheists a covenant with God and with His Messenger, except for those you covenanted at the Sacrosanct Mosque? *So as long as they have been straight with you, be straight with them.* Indeed, God loves the watchful [of Him].” (9:7)

Finally, verse 9:12, emphasizes again that betrayal and aggression from the polytheists must be met with a fight back. Verse 9:13 urges Muslims not to fear the polytheists and reminds them of the long history of injustice done by the polytheists to Muslims. 1607

### 3.1.40 Is paying Jizya a sign of disgrace?

*The Jizya verse, 9:29, says that the people of the Book have to be fought until they pay the Jizya in humility. Is paying Jizya a sign of disgrace?*

That is not what the verse says. It says that citizens of a Muslim country, who are Jewish or Christian, must pay a defense tax called Jizya, and if they refuse, the authorities may fight them until they do. That is not a sign of disgrace, it’s a citizenship duty. That is the same law all countries use to collect mandatory taxes from their citizens. In the USA, for example, Federal Marshals are authorized by law to fight, with guns if necessary, any citizen who refuses to pay taxes.

That is simply being fair to the other citizens. Muslim citizens are not only required to join the army at time of war, but they also pay Zakah (mandatory alms). Non-Muslim citizens are exempt from military service and from Zakah. Jizya is what they have to pay in equivalence to Zakah.

The word God uses in verse 9:29 (صاغرون) does not mean disgraced, it means humbled, as in surrendering to the authorities. The law of the land has to be followed by all citizens equally. 1713

### 3.1.41 Does the Quran demean women?

*An Islamophobic blog wrote the following under the heading, "Top ten Quran quotes all women should know." I know that you and others have answered such allegations many times, but please comment anyway.*

*A husband has sex with his wife, as a plow goes into a field.*

*2:223 "Your women are your fields, so go into your fields whichever way you like . . ." (MAS Abdel Haleem, *The Quran*, Oxford UP, 2004)*

That web site caused my anti-virus program to launch into high gear! It is possible that it's not only trying to spread lies about the Quran, but may also be trying to spread malware.

You need to understand the background of many Islamophobes when it comes to the issue of women. They come across as defending women's rights, when in fact they are defending their rights to women. The way Western society has evolved affords men to have sex with women they are not committed to by way of legal marriage. This is a dream come true for many men. They have been pursuing this dream for centuries. They finally succeeded when they convinced women that sex without marriage is not a sin if it is by mutual consent between grownups. Western women, unfortunately, fell for it. The result is what you see everyday of children born out of wedlock, single mothers, cheating husbands, one-night stands, women treated as sex or display objects, etc. It is a truly sad state of affairs for women who may actually be duped into thinking that they are "liberated."

It had to happen, because of human nature. That is why we all need God's guidance to set us straight. The Quran is that guidance. Men who do not want women to listen to the Quran and mend their ways, will undoubtedly attack and demean the Quran. Did you know that more than half of new converts to Islam are women? That is what the men are afraid of! Muslim women will not date them.

Why do so many women accept Islam? Didn't they read the Quran and see that top ten list? Why did the Quran not repulse these women, and on the contrary, attracted them? It's because the Quran spoke the truth to them. God wants to honor women but most men's natural impulses eventually will lead to disgracing them. As God clearly said in the holy Quran,

"God wants to accept your repentance, but those who follow lusts want you to swing a great swinging." (4:27)

Isn't it profound that God uses the same word that came to identify the "sexual revolution": swinging?

With that background well understood, you can now see through the men who claim to “defend women”.

Now, let me address their method. First, they quote a translation, which they pick from many available, because it can be easily assaulted. Everyone knows that meanings often suffer through translation. They will not offer other translations that elucidate the meaning better, because they don’t want you to know the original meaning.

The other aspect of translation is that it is highly influenced by the translator’s culture and knowledge of Arabic, and it is also susceptible to the reader’s culture and knowledge of English. That is why I always advise folks who ask me, to consult several translations before making a conclusion about a verse. This web site, <http://www.themostreadbook.org>, is one of many that show multiple translations to help the reader understand the Arabic verse better.

The other point to highlight about their attack method is that they take verses out of context. That’s a well-known pseudo-reasoning technique, because it changes the premise. This is known in logic as a red herring. Other techniques that apply to that blog are scare tactics, appeal to spite and indignation, and quoting common practice as valid reasoning.

That was a necessary foreword. Now, let me reply to the point quoted. Verse 2:223 does NOT say that women are fields to plow. The verse uses tith as a metaphor for pregnancy. That metaphor has been used by all cultures throughout the ages. To this day, medical clinics that help women get pregnant are called *fertility* clinics. So, this blogger should start his attack by protesting in front of a fertility clinic demanding they change their name.

*Husbands are a degree above their wives.*

*2:228 Wives have the same rights as the husbands have on them in accordance with the generally known principles. Of course, men are a degree above them in status . . . (Sayyid Abul Aala Maududi, The Meaning of the Quran, vol. 1, p. 165)*

Notice how he changed the translation source? Now you understand how he operates.

The degree referred to is a degree of responsibility. The Arabic does NOT say “status”. This is consistent with the beginning of the sentence, “And due to them (women) is similar to what is expected of them.” (2:228)

What should happen when an issue in the family must be decided? Islam teaches that the issue must be discussed between husband and wife, e.g., see verse 2:233. If there is no agreement reached after such discussion, then how would a decision be made? Islam says the man decides. Does this blogger suggest that the woman should decide instead? I doubt it.

Why does Islam make this rule? It is not because men are better than women in decision making, nor because men are better than women in analysis or intelligence. It's because men have that responsibility from God, while women have other responsibilities. It's a simple division of labor in order to get the needed work done.

*A male gets a double share of the inheritance over that of a female.*

*4:11 The share of the male shall be twice that of a female . . .  
 . (Maududi, vol. 1, p. 311)*

That's because the male is financially responsible for the female in Islamic societies. In Islam, a woman never has to work, but she can if she wants to. If she chooses not to work, her financial support is guaranteed. If her husband, father, sons, uncles, etc. cannot support her, the government must!

What about the woman's own money? She has no obligation to support any men in her family from it. Even if she's rich! Her dowry, her inheritance, her savings and investments are her property. No one can demand her spend from it if she does not want to. On the other hand, the husband has to support his wife, and the women in his family who need support, from his money.

Do you see now why he inherits double? It is not unfair to women, it's a responsibility upon men. The blogger did not care to make that clear.

*A woman's testimony counts half of a man's testimony.*

*2:282 And let two men from among you bear witness to all such documents [contracts of loans without interest]. But if two men be not available, there should be one man and two women to bear witness so that if one of the women forgets (anything), the other may remind her. (Maududi, vol. 1, p. 205).*

Doesn't the verse explain why? The ruling is contingent upon forgetfulness, which was the norm for most women in financial matters throughout the ages. Up until the 1950s, you heard women in the US say that they "have no head for business."

That started to change. When a contingency is no longer, so isn't the ruling. Women with a "head for business" can therefore be witnesses, by themselves, of a debt writing. By the same token, men who have no head for business, and there are many, should not be witnesses to a loan by themselves.

Early Muslims understood this well. When they needed a testimony for an event that women are more familiar with than men, they accepted

single testimonies from women. But the blogger would not want you to learn that.

*A wife may remarry her ex-husband if and only if she marries another man and then this second man divorces her.*

*2:230 And if the husband divorces his wife (for the third time), she shall not remain his lawful wife after this (absolute) divorce, unless she marries another husband and the second husband divorces her. [In that case] there is no harm if they [the first couple] remarry . . . (Maududi, vol. 1, p. 165)*

That applies to the husband too, doesn't it? He cannot remarry his ex-wife except after that protocol takes place, and it may never happen. That teaches him not to be hasty with divorce. Islam wants couples to stay together, but this blogger wants women to be available to all men at all times.

*Slave girls are sexual property for their male owners.*

*4:24 And forbidden to you are wedded wives of other people except those who have fallen in your hands [as prisoners of war] . . . (Maududi, vol. 1, p. 319).*

That was necessary in those times as likewise treatment. Prisoners of war were taken slaves by the enemy. Most men would not accept that humiliation of their women.

Islam was the first religion to take serious steps toward ending slavery. The Quran is clear that prisoners of war must either be ransomed or pardoned (74:4). Freeing a slave is considered one of the top righteous deeds and an expiation of sins (90:11-13).

Islam calls for what should be, but legislates for what is. Legislating for what should be is wishful thinking.

*A husband may simply get rid of one of his undesirable wives.*

*4:129 It is not within your power to be perfectly equitable in your treatment with all your wives, even if you wish to be so; therefore, [in order to satisfy the dictates of Divine Law] do not lean towards one wife so as to leave the other in a state of suspense. (Maududi, vol. 1, p. 381)*

The blogger's statement is a clear straw man argument. He reads into it what it does not say. In fact, it says the *opposite!* It orders men not to neglect any of their wives and favor one. Where does it say "get rid of"?

You can see that the blogger is running out of plausible, but misconstrued attacks, so now he's inventing new ones.

The rest of the "top ten" have been answered many times before, so I won't make this post longer by refuting them when others have done so over and over again. 1837

### 3.1.42 Is cosmology in the Quran geocentric?

*It seems the Quran's cosmology is pre-Copernicus. For instance,*

*"The sun is not allowed to overtake the moon, nor does the night outpace the day. Each in its orbit runs." (36:40)*

The translation "overtake" is not very accurate. A better word, IMHO, is "catch up with". As such the sun indeed has never caught up with the moon: they never touched or collided and that's because "each in its orbit swims" (36:40)

*One way to look at it is Allah is in fact referring to the sun's revolution around the galaxy. But this cannot hold for two primary reasons. Firstly, this explanation would be completely out of context. The verse is clearly devoted to the day/night and its explanation.*

I don't see that at all. The verse itemizes several of God's precise designs and signs that all can clearly see for themselves.

*Secondly, if it is in fact referring the revolution of Sun around the galaxy, did the companions of the Prophet extrapolate a sun revolving around the galaxy? More importantly, what did the companions understand by this verse?*

That's not important. The Sahaba (fellows of the Prophet) did not know anything about science and in fact verses like this one are what compelled them to study astronomy, math, etc. precisely to understand. With verses like this, God is wetting the appetite of Muslims to seek knowledge, which they sure did.

*What's bothering me is the seemingly pre-Copernicus tone of the verse. The verse does not mention the rotation of the earth.*

Not directly but implicitly. The rotation of the earth is what causes day and night! Another knowledge appetite wetter.

*I will not comment on verse 27:88 (mountains) since it is self-explanatory. The mountains which we see as firm will be clouds by Allah's Will on that particular day. Simple and straightforward. No rotating earth is implied.*

I'm not so sure. The verse does not specify a day when that will happen, so it can apply all the time. Evidence supporting that is how God ends the verse by saying "that is the handiwork of God, who perfected everything" (27:88). That clause would have no relevance if the phenomenon in question happens only on one exceptional day. Now how can the mountains be passing if the earth is stagnant as people felt and believed? Another knowledge appetite wetter.

*Furthermore, verse 21:33. You assert that ALL here means indeed all celestial bodies when the only celestial bodies even mentioned in the Koran are sun and the moon.*

Not true. Stars (al-Nujum) and planets (al-Kawakib) are mentioned several times in the Quran and one of them in particular was singled out, Al-Shiera (Sirius), in verse 53:49.

*Interestingly the word "falak" (orbit) is always used with sun/moon and not even once for earth.*

Again, not directly because people at the time had no way of verifying it but could clearly see the sun and the moon moving about. The two verses that mention the word "falak" (orbit) both include the day and the night in the orbit that they swim. That's food for thought for the curious.

*Secondly, many commentators have translated the word "kull" as "both", since only the sun and the moon are mentioned in the verse.*

Then they would be wrong comments, because the verses clearly mention four phenomena: the sun, the moon, the day and the night. "Kull" can only mean "all". "Both" is "Kilahuma" in Arabic.

*If the sun does not catch up with the moon then how do we explain the solar eclipse? For the solar eclipse to occur, both of them should catch up in the orbit.*

That's alignment, not catching up.

*It is noteworthy that the early commentaries maintain silence on the true meaning of this verse which suggests that it was too difficult for them to interpret.*

*Maybe you would want to comment on which translation is more suited.*

A straightforward translation would be,

“And you see the mountains and think they are rigid while they pass [like] the passing of clouds. [That is] the handiwork of God who perfected everything. He is knowledgeable of what you do.” (27:88)

I can see why some may think this only happens on the Day of Judgment, but that is an unnecessary conclusion. Verse 27:86 talks about signs of God and IMHO so does verse 27:88.

*Yes true, but the question is whether this interpretation could fit in the verse (36:40)?*

Why couldn't it?

*Catch up never means colliding.*

An object cannot touch or collide with another object except after it has caught up with it! Since the verse says the sun is not supposed to catch up with the moon, we know that they are not meant to touch or collide.

*Not directly but implicitly. “The rotation of the earth is what causes day and night! Another knowledge-appetite wetter.” In fact Koran says otherwise.*

Where? Name the verse.

*Is it incorrect to use “kull” for ‘two’ in Arabic? and what could orbit mean for day/night?*

It's permissible in “Bayan” (elegant prose) or in poetry and then it implies plurality in an allegorical way. For instance, verse 49:9 says,

“If two groups of believers fight (in plural) then make peace between them (dual).” (49:9)

Here the reason for the plural is that each member of group is fighting and therefore it's more than two but the reason for the dual is that the peace making is between the two units or their representatives.

But since the sentence in verse 36:40 names four entities, there is no justification of interpreting “Kull” as referring to only two of them.

*I'm not sure whether you mean the word 'orbit' applies only to the sun and the moon or the nigh/day as well, since you say “kull” does not mean ‘both’ here.*

The orbit of the day and night is by indirection. The verse is imaging the night and day as running after each other in succession, and this image has been used in the Quran a lot, hence an orbit. The verse is stimulating the minds of early Muslims to find out how the day and night are made!

*Catching up does not mean colliding. Two cars in a drag race can catch up without colliding. Alignment and catching up is the same thing here isn't it?*

If so, then catch up is not the right translation either. The Arabic word does mean getting a hold of something that's been elusive. It is also used to mean "understand" because when you understand something, you finally grab hold of a concept that was alien to you previously. This is why God often uses this verb to convey the majesty of something, e.g., "The Trumpeter. What is the Trumpeter? And what can *make you understand* what the Trumpeter is?" (101:1-3)

*Doesn't verse 39:5 mention heavens, earth, sun and the moon and each running. Doesn't that motion then apply to all of them: sun, moon, earth and the heavens?*

*And sun and the moon run on a separate orbit [path]. So isn't the analogy of drag race a faulty one as two cars will never catch up if they race on a different circuit [path].*

Not only that, but verse 39:5 uses a most interesting verb in describing the succession of the day and the night, the verb "يَكْوِرُ" (pronounced yukawwir) which means that their succession is the result of a rotation of a ball! How is that for a clue from God that the earth is round and that it rotates?

*I found an article that points out an important verse in Surat ash-Shams, 1-4; where the Quran states the [sun] and the day when it displays it [and not the other way round], i.e., sun displays the day.*

That's right, but the translation "displays it" is not quite accurate. The verb God uses is "جَلَّاهَا" which means "unveils it" or "shows it without obstruction." Thus verses 1-4 mean the day unveils the sun and that's a sign of God worthy of being sworn by.

I did answer the question about what the "orbit" of the day and night means. It is what literature calls a poetic license. The consistent succession of day and night, by way of "takweer" implies a ball rotation. A stationary orbit, if you will.

*Yes you did. I just wanted to clarify the translation of verses;*

*Do you not see how your Lord lengthens the shadows? Had it been His Will He could have made them constant. But We make the sun their guide; little by little We shorten them”*  
(25:46)

*Is that the accurate translation as he mentioned the shadow part as well.*

Yes, “Guide” is a good translation, but “Daleel” can also mean “indicator” or “evidence.” God is saying that the sun is your clue to why shadows form and its changing position relative to the earth is what causes the shadow to change. Another hint for the curious. 698

### 3.1.43 Does the Quran forbid Muslims from having non-Muslim friends?

*Some verses of the Quran, such as 58:22, seem to suggest that Muslims are not supposed to make friends with non-Muslims. Is this a true conclusion?*

No, it’s not. The Quran must be taken in its entirety, not one verse at a time. Thus, verses that command not taking the disbelievers as allies (which is what the word Awliyaa means, it does not mean friends) must be understood to be in the context of hostility only. Why? Because God also says,

“Perhaps God will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, **affection**. And God is Able, and God is Forgiving and Merciful.

God *does not forbid you* from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being cordial toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, God loves those who act justly.

God only forbids you from those *who fight you* because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.” (60:7-9)

Thus, it is abundantly clear that Muslims do not and should not have any problem with peaceful non-Muslims, only with those non-Muslims who fight us or want to pick a fight with us. 979

### 3.1.44 “Learn the Quran” day!

The pastor of St. Luke’s Presbyterian Church in the town of Rolling Hills Estates in California, USA, is holding a “**Learn** the Quran Day” tomorrow! And he is inviting all who want to attend. A rabbi called him

and said he would like to attend. The pastor also said that he received a couple of angry phone calls from people who criticized this program. He does not anticipate trouble, but he notified the police and they will be ready in case any problems happen.

A big salute to the pastor for his initiative and courage. There are still some sane people in the world. 971

### 3.1.45 Please explain the Jizya verse

The Jizya verse is verse 9:29. Jizya means defense tax and it applies to Jews and Christians under Muslim rule. They are not required to join the military but it's the Muslim ruler's duty to defend them at time of war, hence the name defense tax.

Because Islamic law does not institute regular taxes, a Muslim state's main revenue is the Zakah (alms). Since non-Muslim citizens do not pay the Zakah, it would be unfair that they do not pitch in but still be defended. Jizya balances that. That's what the Arabic word means: compensation.

The command to fight in verse 9:29 means that People of the Book under Muslim rule are required to pay the Jizya, or be fought until they pay it. In all modern societies, the authorities are legally empowered to collect taxes by force if citizens refuse to pay them. Jizya collection is no different.

The Jizya collector of caliph Umar ibn Abdil-Aziz, may God have been pleased with him, went to him one day complaining that Jizya revenue is shrinking! He said that Christian and Jewish citizens are accepting Islam in large numbers and that's why less and less Jizya is collected. Umar said to him, "Almighty God sent Muhammad (ﷺ) a guide, not a tax collector."

*How do we reach the conclusion that this verse speaks about non-Muslim citizens under Muslim rule?*

We know that because it was the understanding of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and the Sahaba (his fellows), may God have been pleased with them. They took the Quran *in its entirety together* and that's how one can understand the Quran correctly. Extracting one verse and making conclusions from it will not work.

When the early Muslims went to Egypt to call its people to Islam, the Egyptians liked them very much and asked them if they could stay and help them get rid of their Greek occupiers. They agreed and, with God's help, succeeded in driving the mighty Greeks out of the country. Muslims were suddenly in power in Egypt! Something which historians and

orientalists have called a miracle. What did they do with the population which was mostly Coptic Christian? They left them with total freedom to choose Islam and simply collected the Jizya from those who chose not to and the Zakah from those who chose to convert. That was the primary revenue for the new Muslim state of Egypt. Muslims did not even try to impose the Arabic language on the Egyptians. Many Muslims learned the Coptic language so that they can be effective governors to the population that did not know a single Arabic word.

That went on for *seventy years!* During which time, Egyptians learned Islam from role models of it and learned Arabic. They converted in droves and they chose Arabic as their new language.

To this day, one of every ten Egyptians is Christian. If the Jizya verse meant forced conversions of non-Muslims, then the early Muslims must have misunderstood its meaning. They understood it fine. 1275

## 3.2 Lessons from the Quran

### 3.2.1 Lessons to learn from the Queen of Sheba

*I just read the detailed story of the Queen of Sheba in the Quran, verses 27:16-44. What an awesome story!*

Indeed it is. In addition, many lessons can be learned from it. That's why God tells us such stories: so that we learn good lessons.

One such lesson is that it tells that she was the ruler of her people. Now, if there was anything fundamentally wrong with having a woman be the leader over men, God would have pointed that out here. *But He did not.* Thus, we know that women can be leaders over men in Islam.

Another lesson to learn from this marvelous true story is that the Queen of Sheba said, "I submit *with* Solomon" not *to* him. When you become Muslim, you join Muslims, not follow them. But you will find many Muslims who wish that you follow them. Don't do that. Follow God and His Messenger only. 1275

### 3.2.2 Lessons from Chapter 18

Today's sermon was particularly terrific. It was about Surat Al-Kahf (Chapter 18). The imam (preacher) highlighted that the Chapter told four stories: Sleepers in the Cave, The man with two gardens, Moses and Al-Khadr, peace be upon them, and Zul-Qarnayn.

What is particular here is that each story was about some test,

1. Sleepers in the Cave: A test of faith. Do the young men abandon their faith so they can stay in town, or do they hold on to their faith and have to leave the only place they can call home? They put their trust in God and decided to keep the faith and hoped that God will protect them. He did in a most unexpected way! He had them sleep 309 years and wake up when people of their town became believers!
2. The man with two gardens: A test of wealth. If you've been given good, does that mean you are good? That you deserve it? Or should you recognize the source of all good and thank Him? What may happen if you don't?
3. Moses and Al-Khadr: A test of knowledge and patience. No matter how smart one is, there is someone smarter. Things that happen happen for a reason and we may not realize that wisdom right away or ever. We need not question what seems unfair; God is in control.
4. Zul-Qarnayn: A test of authority. What does a strong leader do when he acquires enormous power and influence? Is this a chance for him to conquer lands and people and get rich, or is it an opportunity to thank God by doing a lot of good to a lot of people?

669

## 3.3 The Sunna and the Hadeeth

### 3.3.1 What is Sunna and what is not

*An article I read suggests that a congregational supplication after a prayer is discouraged, because neither the Prophet (PBUH) nor the Sahaba (his fellows) have done it.*

They may not have done it, but the Prophet (PBUH) never said we couldn't do it. There is a difference between "not practiced" and "forbidden."

The problem with issues like that one is that the people who rule in such a way, do so out of concern that something which is not Sunna becomes a regular part of Islam in the minds of the masses. That would establish a Bid-a (novelty) in religion, which the Prophet (PBUH) warned us not to do. The solution to this problem, IMHO, is not to forbid what is not forbidden, but to ensure that it doesn't become a novelty, by deliberately not doing it on a consistent basis.

Scholars have differed on what constitutes a Sunna (Practice of the Prophet). That's because following the Sunna is a requirement of Islam. Therefore, knowing what is Sunna and what is not becomes of religious essence.

The Sunna is not simply everything that the Prophet (PBUH) said or did or approved or did not disapprove, but rather what he consistently said and did and encouraged us to follow him on. The scholars have attempted to differentiate between the two by classifying the latter as Sunna Muakkada (Emphasized practice). That's fine. Then, what we are required to follow is the emphasized Sunna.

*As usual you gave me the words to clarify the issue. Not practiced and forbidden. A world apart. It opens a new universe.*

Thank you. You may already know this hadith, but it illustrates the point very clearly. One day, Khalid ibn Al-Walid (RA) invited the Prophet (RA) and others to dinner. His aunt, Maymoona, had prepared for them a grilled porcupine<sup>1</sup>! Everyone stretched their hands to grab a bite of it, except the Prophet. Khalid's face paled like he saw a ghost. He said to the Prophet (PBUH), "Is it forbidden, O Messenger of God?" He answered, "No, but I find myself not agreeing with it!" Reported by Muslim [43] (1945).

So, just because the Prophet didn't do something is no reason for us not to do it. Only if he told us "don't do it!", then we will have to stay away from it. It seems obvious, but in these days of massive confusion and disinformation, the obvious needs to be stated!

*That is why the world always needs teachers. They are known to excel in one thing: to repeat and repeat and repeat.*

*We have so much confusion. Our faith is ripe not with bida but cultural and nationalistic nonsense. Yet, the hadeeth of the simple woman who kept repeating her question to the embarrassment of the Prophet (swas) helps us. She wanted an answer, although it was intimate, she would not give up until she gained knowledge.*

*We need to simplify Islam. We have so much on the agenda. Let's forget trying to save the universe and remember how to make salat.*

*On a personal note: Eid Mubarak. May Allah reward you immensely for your kindness to me. I have been given a trial which in turn seems to be a blessing. It has made me reach deep into my being. Kinda sorta letting go of a lot of pretenses in life, too. I heard a sheik relate a hadeeth about the Prophet (swas) telling some Sahaba (ra) sometimes our deen is like a hot coal in our hands. (I have always been the princess who felt the pea at the bottom of ten mattresses). Your kindness is akin to the cool of the fire for Prophet Ibrahim.*

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<sup>1</sup>Other versions of the narration say it was a lizard.

A blessed and happy Eid to you and your loved ones.

Thank you for your kind words.

How do you simplify something which both God and His Messenger have repeatedly said was already simple? By removing the fluff and pork that accumulated on it over the centuries. My blog is my humble way of doing that.

*Brother,*

*All I can respond is to write “Blog on baby blog on!” It takes wisdom to understand simplicity. When endeavoring to resolve a complex problem the walls are everywhere. Once we have the solution it is so simple.*

*Likewise, our faith has been mingled with politics and men of various ambitions. The simple laity is lazy. We want the ends and care little about the means. For those of us who are foolish, we seek the means. It makes for a lonely road. (Cf. Zen/Sufism).*

*Your blog serves the purpose of giving the readers solutions without having to do all the homework. Blog on baby blog on.*

*(Trust me, I do take advantage of your wisdom...I am all over the universe in my thoughts and it helps to have some notion of being grounded).*

There is no problem in taking a voyage in a hot-air balloon, as long as you can always land safely on earth! 2359

### 3.3.2 Is Hadeeth like scripture to Muslims?

*I heard in a kuthbah (sermon) that hadeeth to Muslims is equal to scripture. That one puzzled me. Is my definition of scripture skewed to mean holy words?*

I think maybe the preacher was referring to the similarity between the Hadith and the Gospels or books of the Bible. What they have in common is that they are mostly narrations of followers of what the Prophet they follow has said, taught and did. The style of the Quran is markedly different; it is a *first-person* speech by God to Muhammad (PBUH) or to people. Quite often in the Quran, you read verses that command the Prophet (PBUH) to say something, e.g., “Say: He is God, Unique.” (112:1). If Muhammad (PBUH) were the author of the Quran, he would not have mentioned the command “Say:”. When Muslims recite this verse, they do not say, “He is God, Unique,” they say, “Say: He is God, Unique.”

The polytheists of Mecca once made fun of the Prophet (PBUH) because of this! They said that he is “an ear”, meaning he only repeats what he’s been inspired to say. God answered their mockery saying,

“And among them are those who abuse the Prophet and say, ‘He is an ear.’ Say, ‘An ear of goodness for you; he believes in God and has faith in the believers and [is] a mercy to those who believe among you.’ And those who abuse the Messenger of God - for them is a painful torment.” (9:61)

I find this phenomenon, that the Prophet (PBUH) repeated what God revealed to him verbatim, to be fascinating, especially when one reads the Old Testament and encounters the prophecy about him that identifies him so fittingly and among the signs identifying him is that “*God will put His words in his mouth*”! Read it in Deut 18:15-23 if you’re curious. 1715

### 3.3.3 Are all hadeeths in Bukhaari and Muslim books authentic?

The two books were written in the third Hijri Century (Islamic calendar). Up to the fifth Century, no scholar has ever said that all hadiths in the two books were authentic; they only said that the two books contain *more authentic narrations* than any other book after the Quran.

It wasn’t until the fifth Century that scholars began to write that all hadiths in the two books are authentic. Some scholars, however, have shown that some hadiths were not authentic and some narrators should not have been considered. Among those scholars were Ibn Hazm in the past and Al-Albani in modern times. 1377

### 3.3.4 What was the Hadeeth authentication methodology?

Hadith authentication is based on verifying and validating the chain of narrators. Each Hadith scholar has set his criteria for what constitutes an authentic chain of narrators. The best criteria are those set by Al-Bukhari, may God bless his soul. He required a continuous chain, in which every narrator is named, known and proven to have heard from the one before him and the chain ends with the Prophet (PBUH), and where every narrator has three qualities,

1. Trustworthy (Thiqatun),
2. Accurate (Dhabtun),
3. Upright (Adlun)

Trustworthy means that the narrator always told the truth, and is not given to exaggeration. Accurate means he is known for reporting what he heard as it was said, without alteration, interpretation or interjection of his own words. Upright means that he is square in his dealings and does not practice favoritism or act on whim.

Other scholars relaxed some of these requirements to various degrees. IMHO, if a hadith is not rated authentic by any of the six scholars (Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu-Dawoud, Al-Tirmizi, Al-Nasai, and Ibn Majah) then it is most likely not authentic. Two more compilation books can safely be added to this list, Ibn Hibban's and Ibn Khuzayma's. 654

### 3.3.5 Why wasn't the Hadeeth recorded sooner?

*I learned that the Hadith was written down for the first time almost 200 years after the death of the Prophet (PBUH). That was a surprise. Why wasn't it written down sooner? How can we be sure we have any authentic hadith?*

The reason the Hadith was not written down during the life of the Prophet (PBUH), like the Quran was, is because the Prophet forbade it. He did not want people to confuse anything with the Quran. There are several narrations, where the Sahabi (fellow of the Prophet) says something like, "I didn't know if it was Quran or something the Prophet (PBUH) said."

But the Prophet (PBUH) encouraged people to memorize, as best they could, what they heard him say outside of Revelation. He said, "May God brighten the face of him who hears what I say and relates to others, for there may be one who understands what he's been told better than whom told him!" Narrated by Abdullah ibn Masoud (RA) and reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2658) who rated it "soundly authentic."

That is what the first three generations did, may God have been pleased with them. By the time of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may God bless his soul, the number of fabricated and weak narrations had become huge, so he wrote his book "Musnad" to attempt to contain the false narrations and to help him derive the rulings for his school of thought. He did not specialize in authentication, however. As a result, subsequent Hadith scholars found numerous weak hadiths in his book. That's when Al-Bukhari determined to authenticate all hadiths in a disciplined, strict way, and the result of his multi-year research effort was his landmark book "Sahih-al-Bukhari", may God bless his soul.

While subsequent hadith scholars have written their own compilation books of hadith, nothing comes close to Al-Bukhari's, with the exception of "Sahih Muslim". And while some of Al-Bukhari's hadiths have been found to be not authentic by some scholars, they were few and far

between. You can rest assured that Al-Bukhari's (and Muslim's) compilations of hadith are reliable for the most part.

1548

### 3.3.6 Questions about two hadeeths

*In Bukhari's Hadeeth compilation, there is this hadeeth:*

*Allah's Apostle said, "I have been ordered to fight the people till they say: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah.' And if they say so, pray like our prayers, face our Qibla and slaughter as we slaughter, then their blood and property will be sacred to us and we will not interfere with them except legally and their reckoning will be with Allah."*

*How should the beginning of this hadith be interpreted? As fighting in a war?*

*And the second hadith is this:*

*"The best Jihad is the word of Justice in front of the oppressive Sultan." (Abu-Dawud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah)*

*In what volume/section of Dawud can I find this hadith? I've searched everywhere but can't find it. Tell me the exact number of it please.*

Unlike the Quran, the Hadith is mostly reported without context. That is, the narrator would say, "We were sitting with the Prophet, peace be upon him, when he said ..." Sometimes, but rarely, some context is given. This often leads to misinterpretation, as taking any quote out of context usually does.

The first hadith you mention is talking about when to end a war with non-Muslims. Muslims must end fighting when the person they are fighting accepts Islam.

Islamophobes and extremists alike quote this hadith as evidence that Islam mandates forced conversions. It does not, as I just explained. How do we know that? Because Islam is not one hadith. It is the entirety of the Quran and the authentic Hadith taken together, not in isolated pieces. The Quran makes it abundantly clear that choice of religion is free and must never be coerced. For instance,

"Had God so willed, all in the earth would have believed together. Would you [O Muhammad] then coerce them to be believers?" (10:99)

No hadith, not even an authentic one, can possibly contradict the Quran.

As for the second hadith you mention, it's been narrated by Abu-Said Al-Khudri (RA) and reported by [Abu-Dawoud \[1\]](#) (4344) and rated authentic by Al-Albani. Also reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2174) who

rated it “strange but sound“. It was also narrated by Tariq ibn Shihab Al-Ahmusi and reported by Al-Nawawi who rated it authentic, and by Ibn Kathir who rated it “Thabit” (established). 1708

### 3.3.7 God’s children?

*I came across this hadeeth, “All creatures are God’s children, and those dearest to God are the ones who treat His children kindly.”*

*I thought Islam teaches that God has no children.*

This hadith was reported by [Al-Bayhaqi \[11\]](#) (6/2528), but its authenticity has been rated “weak,” thus, it is not taken as a part of the religion.

That said, the hadith is actually mistranslated. What the hadith says is, “All creation are the *dependents* of God. The most loved of His creation to Him are those who benefit His dependents most.” That is something that Islam does teach. 251

### 3.3.8 Why do some people follow Quran but reject Hadith?

*The following was asked on a discussion forum I follow. I need your help in answering it.*

*A few weeks ago, I joined a woman’s group and we post questions to get to know each other and answer questions, give advice, and so on. It was a mixed group with Muslims and non-Muslims with the majority being Muslim. Anyway, there were several debates in which some women would argue over why they reject hadith and only follow Quran. I’m wondering how can they be Muslim when they reject certain aspects of Islam?*

*Almighty Allah SWT (May He be sanctified and exalted) says: “This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion” (5:3)*

Rejecting the Hadith altogether is irrational. Because it is the Hadith that tells us how many prayers we have to pray everyday, how to pray and what to say in a prayer, what proportion of our money are we to take out for the Zakah (mandatory alms), among hundreds of other teachings without which the religion would not be complete.

More importantly, rejecting the Hadith is tantamount to disobeying God, who says, "Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed God" (4:80). How do we obey the Prophet (PBUH) if we don't know what he said?

Which brings me to the reason which is probably why these folks reject the Hadith. Namely, they do not trust that the Prophet (PBUH) said what the Hadiths say he said. I doubt that any Muslim would actually know that the Prophet ordered something and they consciously decide not to do it!

So, the issue actually is the authenticity of the Hadith. There is reason to be suspicious of the authenticity of some Hadiths, but that's no reason to reject it; it is reason to scrutinize them.

This is exactly why our righteous predecessors spent lifetimes collecting narrations, verifying the integrity and competence of each narrator and ensuring the continuity of the "chain of narrators". May God have been pleased with their phenomenal efforts. They found out that 90 percent of all narrations going around were either weak or outright fabrications! They discovered that many narrators were not credible or were incompetent.

The good news is that they ended up with the creme of the crop: Men and women of impeccable reputation, remarkable memory, mastery of language, piety and knowledge. Those are the narrators of the Hadiths rated authentic by the leading Hadith scholars, such as Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

The disciplines of Hadith study are many and are sophisticated; you actually are taught them in specialized universities in the Muslim world. There is the Usul discipline (Foundations), the Takhrij discipline (scrutinization and rating of narrations), Taarikh discipline (biography of narrators), Al-Jarh wal-Taadil discipline (assessment of narrators), as well as the need to learn the vocabulary, customs, geography and society at the time of the Prophet (PBUH) until the Hadith books were authored three Centuries later.

What the Hadith scholars have done is a showcase of scientific discipline. Yet, they were human still and as human they could err despite their best efforts. Therefore, it is conceivable that a hadith could be rated authentic but has fundamental problems with it. This is a sensitive issue, because strict Muslims, such as the Salafis (blind followers of ancestors) reject the notion that the Salaf (ancestors) could have made mistakes. Other Muslims are puzzled by the apparent discrepancy, even contradiction, of what some hadiths say and what the Quran says. Whenever such situation happens, Muslims typically have one of four reactions: (a) Pretend that there is no discrepancy, (b) Attempt to reconcile the two texts, (c) Favor the Quran over the Hadith, or, believe it or not, (d) Favor the Hadith over the Quran!

I humbly suggest that everybody should do (b)! And if they can't, then at least (c). The other approaches to the problem are irrational, because ignoring a problem does not solve it and a true hadith cannot possibly conflict with the Quran.

The women in your friend's group have taken the cop-out position, which, IMHO, is just as bad as pretending there's no problem.

Verse 5:3, which you cited, and the subsequent two verses were the last verses revealed of the Quran. The Prophet (PBUH) knew that his mission is complete and that perhaps his time was up. He said on his "farewell sermon" which immediately followed the revelation of 5:3-5, "*Listen to me and understand what I'm saying, perhaps I will not see you again after this year of ours!*" [Al-Tabarani \[22\]](#) (24/307;777) He died three months later. Thus, the "completion verse" meant that not only was the Quran complete, but the Hadith too. Their conveyor, peace be upon him, would shortly die.

So, to answer your main question: Those people don't know how to handle hadiths that seem to contradict the Quran, so they don't bother with the Hadith at all. It's a radical reaction, kind of like being diagnosed differently by different doctors then deciding that you won't treat yourself at all! The right thing to do is to scrutinize the hadith. By doing so, and provided the hadith is authentic, one gains knowledge of what the hadith actually means and can see that no conflict exists between it and the Quran. That is a task that is understandably beyond the capacity of most Muslims. It is an obligation, IMHO, upon Muslim scholars to do this and ease people's minds. Several of them have begun to do that. 2039

### 3.3.9 Is this a true story?

*I read a story, reported in the Abdur-Razzaq classification book of Hadeeth, that Umar ibn Al-Khattaab, may God have been pleased with him, flogged his son Abdur-Rahmaan for getting drunk and that the son died while being whipped. Is this story true?*

The Musnad of Abdur-Razzaq is uniformly dismissed by scholars of the Hadith as mostly weak narrations. In particular, if Al-Zuhri mentioned in the narration chain is Ibn-Shihab Muhammad ibn Muslim Al-Zuhri, then it is a well known issue in the authentication literature (Al-Jarh wal-Taadil) that multitudes of narrations have been falsely attributed to him and he never said any of them. That is why many narrations that involve him have been dismissed, not because of anything wrong about him - he was a pious trustworthy man of the second generation - but because much has been attributed to him that he never said.

Think about it, if this were an authentic story, wouldn't it have been much

better known? If something cannot be found in the top six authentic books of Hadith, the odds are extremely high that it's not authentic. Scholars of Hadith dismissed almost all other books for a reason. 911

## 3.4 Sects and Juristic Schools

### 3.4.1 How many sects of Islam there are?

*I read a hadeeth (quote from the prophet, peace be upon him), that there will be 72 sects of Islam. Another version says 73. Please clarify. How many sects of Islam there are?*

All those numbers are examples for illustration purposes only. They do not mean the exact count. The Arabs used numbers to indicate multiplicity rather than count. The hadith simply tells us that followers of all three religions will divide themselves up into many sects, the Christians more than the Jews and the Muslims more than the Christians, but that in each religion, only one is saved: the one that adhered faithfully to the message delivered to them by their prophet. 784

### 3.4.2 Do we need the religious scholars?

*I'm going to do my best not to make this sound like a rant, but these are things I feel very strongly about. Often times I feel I'm a lone ranger.*

*The forum I regularly read is awesome for discussion and sharing knowledge and ideas. But over time, I have decreased my questioning about certain things because I have realized that I really don't care what the scholars say. This is not to discredit their knowledge and length of studying. I know their knowledge is vital to the history and preservation of Islam, but I am not going to let their opinions be the deciding factor in my life decisions.*

*God gave you a heart and a mind. Those are the two best tools you can have. If you team them up with the Qur'an, then it's pure bliss. We will all forever be studying and trying to understand the Qur'an, so we need to just get used to that and take our time doing so as not to be overwhelmed.*

*What I don't understand is how people on forums will state fatwas from this scholar and that scholar saying it's more authority than our own individual hearts and minds which we use to communicate with God. These are the same people who say "everyone is born muslim." If we were all born muslim*

*that means God instilled certain instincts, characteristics and remembrance (dhikr) in us. I believe that in trials and tribulations, we know what is right and what is wrong. If we do not know... that is what Istikhara (Consultation prayer) is for. I haven't read ANYTHING in the Qur'an that states we should ask so and so Imam or scholars for advice. I have only read about communicating with God.*

There are two problems with your post, forgive me. The first is that opinions of the scholars are the result of lifetimes of study, worship, piety and debates with other scholars. If you discard all that, it would be like trying to invent the wheel without realizing that it's already invented.

The other is that Satan is active and eager to mislead us. Without being armed with knowledge, any of us can easily arrive at conclusions about religious matters, or even about theology, that are erroneous and that can be very dangerous.

Scholars are humans and thus can make mistakes, but they are also righteous and knowledgeable thus their analysis cannot be dismissed. The right approach, IMHO, is to learn from them but not blindly follow them. With proper analysis, one can distinguish a flawed fatwa (religious edict) from a sound one; it's not that hard, because all the tools to do it are available to us: the Quran, the authentic Hadith and logical rules of deduction (Usul-al-Fiqh).

When we meet God on the Day of Judgment, we cannot use for an excuse that this scholar said to do this or not do that, because God ordered us repeatedly in the Quran to use our minds. We cannot use for excuse either that we did not know because all the sources of information are available to us, for free, including the vast body of knowledge imparted to us by our righteous predecessors, may God have been pleased with them. 718

### 3.4.3 What are Suni, Shia, Wahabi and Sufism?

Sunnis are the people who accepted Abu-Bakr (RA) as the legitimate first caliph after the Prophet's death and the Shia are those who did not and wanted Ali (RA) instead. There are other differences but that's how it started.

Sufism is a deeply spiritual practice that is sort of like transcendental meditation. It's not a sect.

Wahabism is not a sect either. It is a reform movement started by Muhammad bin Abdul-Wahab in Saudi Arabia that aimed at ridding Muslims of superstitions and the practice of intercession and returning them to the way of the early Muslims (Salaf). Followers of the movement may have added to it or may define it differently but that's how it started.

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# Chapter 4

## The Prophets

Islam believes in all the Prophets and Messengers whom God sent to guide mankind to God's only approved religion.

### 4.1 Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

#### 4.1.1 Muhammad was foretold in the Bible

*I came across this book online, which shows plenty of evidence that prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was foretold in the Bible.*

*You can download the book at*

*<http://www.scribd.com/doc/40093482/Who-is-the-Promised-Prophet-of-the-Bible>*

Thank you for sharing. I also recommend two booklets: One, published by the Islamic Center of St. Louis, called "*The Bible's Preview of Muhammad*" (Mufassir [42]). The other, written by Dr. Jamal Badawi and published by the Islamic Society of North America, called "*Muhammad's Prophethood - An Analytical View*" (Badawi [26]).

Update: The above quoted online book was later deleted from the website, but another, more detailed book is currently available online, [Assaqqar \[24\]](#). 1340

#### 4.1.2 Why is Muhammad so special?

God says in verse 2:253 that He has favored some prophets over others. He sure did. He made Muhammad, peace be upon him, the leader of all the messengers and prophets during the night journey (Israa) to

Jerusalem. God tells us that Muhammad, peace be upon him, will be the witness for or against all nations on the Day of Judgment (4:41). God tells us that He blesses the Prophet and that His angels pray for him and so should we (33:56). Such high status is earned and is well placed as God says “God knows better where He places His message.” (6:124)

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the last and final prophet and Messenger of God, upon whom the last testament and scripture, the Quran, was sent down and preserved by God, a guidance to humanity for how best to connect with and please God till the Day of Judgment.

[Al-Nadawi \[16\]](#) is an interesting read on that subject.

Did you know that the name Muhammad means “much praised”? 88

### 4.1.3 The Prophet’s kindness and humor

I saw this posted on a public discussion board. It is excerpts from the book “Enjoy Your Life” by Dr. Muhammad Al-Arifi. It sheds light on the kindness, merriness and sense of humor of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

*You can sometimes notice the different ways in which people deal with children. When a person enters a public gathering with his son, he’d shake everyone’s hands one by one, while his son follows suit. Among the people are those who would completely ignore the child, others would barely shake his hand, and others would warmly shake his hand and saying, “Welcome, young man! How are you today?” It is the love of that person that will be engraved in the heart of the child, as well as in the hearts of his parents.*

*The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would display the best form of treatment with children. Anas bin Malik - may Allah be pleased with him - had a younger brother; and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) would play with him and nickname him Abu Umayr. The child had a small bird pet. Whenever the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) would meet him, he would joke with him saying, “O Abu Umayr, what happened to al-Nughair?”, meaning, the bird.*

*He would be kind and playful with children. Whenever he would meet Zaynab bint Umm Salamah, he would playfully say to her, “O Zuwaynib! O Zuwaynib! (little Zaynab)”. Whenever he passed by children playing, he would greet them. Whenever he visited the Ansaar (people of Medina), he would greet their children and shake their hands.*

*One day as the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was performing ablution, there came to him Muhammad bin al-Rabi who was only five*

*years old. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) took some water and jokingly splashed it out on the boy's face. (al-Bukhari)*

*Once he jokingly said to Anas, "O you, the possessor of two ears!"*

*We read in various hadeeths that often the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) would smile with this whole face till his molar teeth would show.*

Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) was merry with all people, had a sense of humor and was particularly kind to children.

I also recall reading that when Osama ibn Zayd and Abdullah ibn Abbas were small boys that the Prophet used to put Osama on his right thigh and Ibn Abbas on his left thigh, and then pedal his two legs such that the two boys go up and down in a cycle like a teeter-totter!

The Prophet (ﷺ) was kind even to the children of the polytheists! One day he was being playful with them and a couple of Sahaba (his fellows) were passing by and were astonished. They said to him, "O Messenger of God! These are the children of polytheists!" He replied, "And who are you?"

1297

#### 4.1.4 What has been said about Muhammad?

*I'm sure Muslim thinkers, historians and intellectuals had nothing but good to say about Muhammad, but what did non-Muslims say about him?*

While some writers have been antagonistic toward Muhammad, peace be upon him, especially recently, the majority of thinkers, writers, historians, academics, poets, and other intellectuals over the centuries had plenty of compliments for the Messenger of God. Some of what has been posted of those writings follow.

Alphonse Lamartine, French poet, wrote,

*Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Warrior, Conqueror of ideas, the Restorer of rational beliefs, the Preacher of a religion without images, the Founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one heavenly Empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards, I repeat, ALL by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, "Is there any man greater than he?"*

*If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad?*

*Mohammad established a system based upon true and immortal ideology. Is there any like he?*

*This man (Muhammad) moved not only armies, legislation, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and soul...his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire; his endless prayers; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was two-fold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not.*

An entry in Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 12, states,

*A mass of detail in the early sources shows that he (Muhammad) was an honest and upright man who had gained the respect and loyalty of others who were like-wise honest and upright men.*

*During the almost 1,000 years that science was dormant in Europe, the Arabs, who by the 9th century had extended their sphere of influence as far as Spain, became the custodians of science and dominated biology, as they did other disciplines.*

And in the 4th and 11th editions, it has this entry,

*“Muhammad was the most successful of all religious personalities.”*

Jules Masserman, Professor of History, wrote,

*People like Pasteur and Salk are leaders in the first sense. People like Alexander and Caesar on one hand, and Gandhi and Confucius on the other, are leaders in the second and perhaps the third sense. Jesus and Buddha belong in the third category alone. Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Mohammed, who combined all three functions. To a lesser degree, Moses did the same.*

George Bernard Shaw wrote,

*I believe that if a man like Mohammad's caliber were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much*

*needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.*

*I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man, and in my opinion, he must be called the Savior of Humanity.*

*Medieval ecclesiastics, either through ignorance or bigotry, painted Muhammadanism in the darkest colors. They were, in fact, trained to hate both the man Muhammad and his religion. To them, Muhammad was anti-Christ. I have studied him, the wonderful man, and in my opinion, far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the savior of humanity.*

Reginald Bosworth Smith, in his book “Mohammed and Mohammedanism”, 1874, wrote,

*He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports.*

*Absolutely unique in history, Muhammad is a threefold founder of a nation, of an empire and of a religion...The unlettered one bestowed upon the world the Book which is a miracle, the eternal miracle and the true miracle.*

Prof. K. S. Ramakrishna Rao wrote,

*Muhammad was the perfect model of human life. The personality of Muhammad, it is most difficult to get into the whole truth of it. Only a glimpse of it I can catch. What a dramatic succession of picturesque scenes! There is Muhammad, the Prophet; there is Muhammad, the Warrior; Muhammad, the Businessman; Muhammad, the Statesman; Muhammad, the Orator; Muhammad, the Reformer; Muhammad, the Refuge of Orphans; Muhammad, the Protector of Slaves; Muhammad, the Emancipator of Women; Muhammad, the Judge; Muhammad, the Saint. All in all these*

*magnificent roles, in all these departments of human activities, he is like a hero.*

*An honest man, as the saying goes, is the noblest work of God, Mohammad was more than honest. He was human to the marrow of his bones. Human sympathy, human love was the music of his soul. To serve man, to elevate man, to purify man, to educate man, in a word to humanize man - this was the object of his mission, the be-all and end-all of his life. In thought, in word, in action he had the good of humanity as his sole inspiration, his sole guiding principle.*

*In the person of the prophet of Islam we see the rarest phenomenon on earth walking in flesh and blood, i.e., the union of the theorist, the organizer and the leader in one man.*

*The principles of universal brotherhood and doctrine of the equality of mankind which he proclaimed represents one very great contribution of Mohammad to the social uplift of humanity. All great religions have preached the same doctrine but the prophet of Islam had put this theory into actual practice and its value will be fully recognized, perhaps centuries hence, when international consciousness being awakened, racial prejudices may disappear and greater brotherhood of humanity come into existence.*

*The number of verses in Qur'an inviting close observation of nature are several times more than those that relate to prayer, fasting, pilgrimage etc. all put together. The Muslim under its influence began to observe nature closely and this gives birth to the scientific spirit of the observation and experiment which was unknown to the Greeks.*

*The Quran says that God has created man to worship him but the word worship has a connotation of its own. God's worship is not confined to prayer alone, but every act that is done with the purpose of winning approval of God and is for the benefit of the humanity comes under its purview.*

*How often the words came in Qur'an: Those who believe and do good works, they alone shall enter paradise. Again and again, not less than fifty times these words are repeated as if too much stress can not be laid on them. Contemplation is encouraged but mere contemplation is not the goal. Those who believe and do nothing can not exist in Islam.*

*My problem to write this monograph is easier because we are not generally fed now on that (distorted) kind of history and much time need not be spent on pointing out our misrepresentations of Islam. The theory of Islam and sword, for instance, is not heard now in any quarter worth the name.*

*The principle of Islam, there is no compulsion in religion, is well known.*

*It is difficult to imagine that this type of knowledge was existing at that time, around 1400 years back. May be some of the things they have simple idea about, but do describe those things in great detail is very difficult. So, this is definitely not a simple human knowledge.*

Mahatma Gandhi said,

*I become more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme for life. 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 his own mission. These and not the sword, carried everything before them and surmounted every trouble.*

*The sayings of Muhammad are a treasure of wisdom not only for Muslims but for all mankind.*

Bertrand Russell wrote,

*The supremacy of the East was not only military. Science, philosophy, poetry, and the arts, all flourished in the Muhammadan world at a time when Europe was sunk in barbarism. Europeans, with unpardonable insularity, call this period 'the Dark Ages' but it was only in Europe that it was dark. Indeed, only in Christian Europe, for Spain, which was Muhammadan, had a brilliant culture.*

Prof. Bernard Lewis wrote,

*It was in the Islamic Middle East that Indian numbers were for the first time incorporated in the inherited body of mathematical learning. From the Middle East they were transmitted to the West, where they are still known as Arabic numerals, honoring not those who invented them but those who first brought them to Europe. To this rich inheritance scholars and scientists in the Islamic world added an immensely important contribution through their own observations, experiments, and ideas. In most of the arts and sciences of civilization, medieval Europe was a pupil and in a sense a dependent of the Islamic world, relying on Arabic versions even for many otherwise unknown Greek works.*

In his book “An apology for Mohammed and the Koran” (1869) John Davenport wrote,

*It must be owned that all the knowledge whether of Physics, Astronomy, Philosophy or Mathematics, which flourished in Europe from the 10th century was originally derived from the Arabian schools, and the Spanish Saracen may be looked upon as the father of European philosophy.*

French social anthropologist Robert Briffault wrote,

*It is highly probable that but for the Arabs, modern European civilization would have never assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution. For although there is not a single aspect of human growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the paramount distinctive force of the modern world and the supreme course of its victory, natural sciences, and the scientific spirit. What we call sciences arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry; of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of Mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs. The Renaissance of Europe did not take place in the 15th century. Rather, it began when Europe learned from the culture of the Arabs. The cradle of European awakening is not Italy. It is the Muslim Spain.*

H. N. Spalding, British professor of eastern religions and ethics, wrote,

*Mohammad was the greatest Executive Officer for implementation of the Divine Will. Like other prophets, he knew that time will come when all mankind will become one community.*

*In Islam, the believer is a worshiper and a soldier ever ready to go to the battlefield but only for that battle which is waged to eradicate the evil.*

American attorney and scholar Samuel Parsons Scott wrote,

*If the object of religion be the inculcation of morals, the diminution of evil, the promotion of human happiness, the expansion of the human intellect, if the performance of good*

*works will avail in the great day when mankind shall be summoned to its final reckoning it is neither irreverent nor unreasonable to admit that Muhammad was indeed an Apostle of God.*

Huston Cummings Smith, scholar of religious studies, wrote,

*Muhammad adhered meticulously to the charter he forged for Medina, which - grounded as it was in the Quranic injunction, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256) - is arguably the first mandate for religious tolerance in human history.*

English preacher Dr. Agnes Mawde Royde[n] wrote,

*Mohammad introduced the concept of such Glorious and Omnipotent God in Whose eyes all worldly systems are pieces of straw. Islamic equality of mankind is no fiction as it is in Christianity. No human mind has ever thought of such total freedom as established by Mohammad.*

David Samuel Margoliouth, professor of Arabic at Oxford University wrote,

*The Book revealed to Muhammad is one and unique of its kind. It has left indelible impression on the hearts of humanity. Nothing can overcome its majesty. The Qura'n has given new dimensions to human thinking - Surprising reforms, stunning success!*

*The power that created in Muslims a ravenous appetite for knowledge sprung from the Qur'an.*

Ramsey Clark, Former U.S. Attorney General, wrote,

*Islam is the only religion that gives dignity to the poor.*

Rev E. Stephenson wrote,

*The message of Mohammad, Islam, is nothing but a blessing for mankind - The usher from darkness to light and from Satan to God.*

Phillip K. Hitti, American historian, philosopher, professor, and scholar at Princeton and Harvard universities wrote,

*Islam does not set impossible goals. There are no mythological intricacies in this message. No hidden meanings or secrets and absolutely no priesthood.*

*Kingdom of God on Earth! God's messenger serving as the greatest proponent of human brotherhood, His viceroy on earth in the form of Muhammad.*

*Between the middle of the eighth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, as we have noted before, the Arabic-speaking peoples were the main bearers of the torch of culture and civilization throughout the world. Moreover they were the medium through which ancient science and philosophy were recovered, supplemented and transmitted in such a way as to make possible the renaissance of Western Europe. In all this, Arabic Spain had a large share.*

Sir Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen, Scottish historian and orientalist wrote,

*The Message of Mohammad is not a set of metaphysical phenomena. It is a complete civilization.*

Fossey John Cobb Hearnshaw, English professor of history wrote,

*The Christian World came to wage crusades against Muslims but eventually knelt before them to gain knowledge. They were spellbound to see that Muslims were owners of a culture that was far superior to their own. The Dark Ages of Europe were illuminated by nothing but the beacon of Muslim civilization.*

Arnold Joseph Toynbee, English historian and author wrote,

*The solution to all international conflicts lies only in embracing Islam en masse because Islam is the only religion that can transcend nationalism. I see, with great dismay, that nationalism is gaining grounds even among the bearers of the Qur'an. I will hope for the day when all humanity will break this idol and unite all as the children of God.*

Lewis Mumford, American historian and sociologist wrote,

*Fellow inhabitants of the planet! Search for the ideal Prophet, who in the 7th century, has shown you the way to total success.*

Dr. William Ernest Hocking, American idealist philosopher at Harvard University, wrote,

*All religions, save the word of Muhammad, are broken boats. They cannot take humanity to the shore of serenity.*

Diwan Chand Sharma, member of parliament, India wrote,

*Mohammad was the soul of kindness, and his influence was felt and never forgotten by those around him.*

Napoleon Bonaparte said,

*I hope the time is not far off when I shall be able to unite all the wise and educated men of all the countries and establish a uniform regime based on the principles of the Quran, which alone are true and which alone can lead men to happiness.*

H.G. Wells wrote,

*The Islamic teachings have left great traditions for equitable and gentle dealings and behavior, and inspire people with nobility and tolerance. These are human teachings of the highest order and at the same time practicable. These teachings brought into existence a society in which hard-heartedness and collective oppression and injustice were the least as compared with all other societies preceding it. Islam is replete with gentleness, courtesy, and fraternity.*

Edward Gibbon, British historian, wrote,

*No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity and Endeavour so many and so varied races of mankind. The great Muslim communities of Africa, India and Indonesia, perhaps also the small community in Japan, show that Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of the East and west is to be replaced by cooperation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition.*

*The Creed of Mohammad is free from ambiguity and the Qur'an is a glorious testimony to the unity of God.*

*The greatest crime, the greatest 'sin' of Mohammad in the eyes of the Christian West is that he did not allow himself to be slaughtered, to be 'crucified' by his enemies. He only defended himself, his family and his followers; and finally vanquished his enemies. Mohammad's success is the Christians' gall of disappointment: He did not believe in any vicarious sacrifices for the sins of others.*

John William Draper, English scientist, philosopher, physician, chemist, and historian wrote,

*The towering personality of Muhammad has left bright and indelible imprints on all mankind.*

*The man who of all men exercised the greatest influence upon the human race: Muhammad.*

James Gavin, in “Speeches of a U.S. Army General”, wrote,

*Among leaders who have made the greatest impact through ages, I would consider Muhammad before Jesus Christ.*

Thomas Carlyle, British author, wrote,

*A man of truth and fidelity, true in what he did, in what he speaks and thought - this is the only sort of speech worth speaking.*

*The lies that we (Christians) have heaped round this man (Muhammad) are disgraceful to ourselves only.*

*The word of Mohammad is a voice direct from nature’s own heart - all else is wind in comparison.*

*The sword indeed, but where will you get your sword? Every new opinion, at its starting is precisely in a minority of one. In one man’s head alone. There it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world believes it, there is one man against all men. That he takes a sword and try to propagate with that, will do little for him. You must get your sword! On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can.*

And in his book “Heroes and Hero worship”, he wrote,

*How one man single-handedly, could weld warring tribes and wandering Bedouins into a most powerful and civilized nation in less than two decades?*

De Lacy O’Leary, British orientalist wrote,

*History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword is the most fantastically absurd myth that historians have ever repeated.*

Stanley Lane-Poole, British orientalist and author of the first Arabic-English lexicon wrote,

*He was the Messenger of the One True God: And never to his life’s end did he forget for a moment who he was! He was one*

*of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life-spring.*

*Mohammad was an enthusiast in the noblest sense.*

Pringle Kennedy, British author of “Arabian Society at the Time of Muhammad”, wrote,

*The height of human achievement and glory, Mohammad.*

Lawrence E. Browne, in “The Prospects of Islam”, London, 1944, wrote,

*Under his influence people became united in one bond which they knew not, the bond of true monotheism.*

*Incidentally, these well-established facts dispose of the idea so widely fostered in Christian writings that the Muslims, wherever they went, forced people to accept Islam at the point of the sword.*

Sir William Muir, Scottish orientalist, wrote,

*Mohammad brought an end to idol worship. He preached Monotheism and infinite Mercy of God, human brotherhood, care of the orphan, emancipation of slaves, forbidding of wine. No religion achieved as much success as Islam did.*

Raymond-René Lerouge, Catholic priest and bishop, wrote,

*The Arabian Prophet Mohammad is the founder of a revolution unparalleled in history. He founded a political state that will ultimately embrace the entire planet. The law of that Government will rest on justice and kindness. His teachings revolve around human equality, mutual cooperation and universal brotherhood.*

Tor Julius Efraim Andræ, Swedish clergyman and professor and scholar of comparative religion, wrote,

*Islam is a forceful spiritual energy. Its true meaning will manifest itself when it will be implemented on a large scale.*

Sir Richard Arman Gregory, British professor of astronomy at Queens College in London, wrote,

*The Book revealed to Muhammad defines an unalterable guide to individual and collective lives of people.*

Johann Goethe wrote,

*The message of Mohammad is flowing toward its noble destination like a pure, fresh and transparent rivulet.*

*The teachings of Islam can fail under no circumstances. With all our systems of culture and civilization, we can not go beyond Islam and, as a matter of fact, no human mind can go beyond the Qur'an.*

Pandit Gyanandra Dev Sharma Shastri wrote,

*The critics are blind. They cannot see that the only 'sword' Muhammad wielded was the sword of mercy, compassion, friendship and forgiveness - the sword that conquers enemies and purifies their hearts. His sword was sharper than the sword of steel. But the biased critics of Islam are prejudicial and partisan, who are narrow minded and whose eyes are covered by a veil of ignorance. They see fire instead of light, ugliness instead of beauty and evil instead of good. They distort and present every good quality as a great vice. It reflects their own depravity.*

A Hindu Editor of Sat Updaish wrote,

*Some people say that Islam was preached by the sword, but we cannot agree with this view. What is forced on people is soon rejected. Had Islam been imposed on people through oppression, there would have been no Islam today. Why? Because the Prophet of Islam had spiritual power, he loved humanity and he was guided by the ideal of ultimate good.*

Sikh Journalist, Nawan Hindustan wrote,

*In the beginning, the Prophet's enemies made life difficult for him and his followers. So the Prophet asked his followers to leave their homes and migrate to Medina. He preferred migration to fighting his own people, but when oppression went beyond the pale of tolerance he took up his sword in self-defense. Those who believe religion can be spread by force are fools who neither know the ways of religion nor the ways of the world. They are proud of this belief because they are a long, long way away from the Truth.*

Annie Beasant, in her book "The Life and Teachings of Muhammad", wrote,

*It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to how I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher.*

*But do you mean to tell me that the man who in the full flush of youthful vigor, a young man of four and twenty (24), married a woman much his senior, and remained faithful to her for six and twenty years (26), at fifty years of age when the passions are dying married for lust and sexual passion? Not thus are men's lives to be judged. And you look at the women whom he married, you will find that by every one of them an alliance was made for his people, or something was gained for his followers, or the woman was in sore need of protection.*

Edward Geoffrey Simons Parrinder, Methodist minister and professor of comparative religion at King's College in London, wrote,

*No great religious leader has been so maligned as Prophet Mohammed. Attacked in the past as a heretic, an impostor, or a sensualist, it is still possible to find him referred to as 'the false prophet'. A modern German writer accuses Prophet Mohammed of sensuality, surrounding himself with young women. This man was not married until he was twenty-five years of age, then he and his wife lived in happiness and fidelity for twenty-four years, until her death when he was forty-nine. Only between the age of fifty and his death at sixty-two did Prophet Mohammed take other wives, only one of whom was a virgin, and most of them were taken for dynastic and political reasons. Certainly the Prophet's record was better than the head of the Church of England, Henry VIII.*

Montgomery Watt, in "Mohammed in Mecca", 1953, wrote,

*His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.*

*Of all the world's greatest men none has been so much maligned as Muhammad. It is easy to see how this has come*

*about. For centuries, Islam was the great enemy of Christendom, for Christendom was in direct contact with no other organized states comparable in power to the Muslims.*

James A. Michener, prolific American author, Pulitzer prize winner, and philanthropist, wrote,

*No other religion in history spread so rapidly as Islam. The West has widely believed that this surge of religion was made possible by the sword. But no modern scholar accepts this idea, and the Qur'an is explicit in the support of the freedom of conscience. In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumors of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, "An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human being." At Muhammad's own death, an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: "If there are any among you who worshiped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshiped, He lives forever."*

Jewish author and politician Uri Avnery, who founded the Gush Shalom peace movement, wrote,

*Every honest Jew who knows the history of his people cannot but feel a deep sense of gratitude to Islam, which has protected the Jews for fifty generations, while the Christian world persecuted the Jews and tried many times 'by the sword' to get them to abandon their faith.*

Edward Gibbon, in "History of the Saracen Empire", London, 1870, wrote,

*The greatest success of Mohammad's life was effected by sheer moral force without the stroke of a sword.*

*"I believe in one God, and Mahomet an apostle of God" is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honor of the Prophet has never transgressed the measure of human virtues; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.*

Arthur Stanley Tritton, British professor of Arabic at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, wrote,

*The picture of the Muslim soldier advancing with a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other is quite false.*

French author Édward Montet in “Mahomet - Le Coran” (1925) wrote,

*Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically....the teachings of the Prophet, the Qur'an has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting point, and the dogma of unity of God has always been proclaimed therein with a grandeur a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam....A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvelous power of winning its way into the consciences of men.*

Arthur Glyn Leonard in “Islam Her Moral and Spirtual Value” (2011), wrote,

*It was the genius of Muhammad, the spirit that he breathed into the Arabs through the soul of Islam that exalted them. That raised them out of the lethargy and low level of tribal stagnation up to the high watermark of national unity and empire. It was in the sublimity of Muhammad's deism, the simplicity, the sobriety and purity it inculcated the fidelity of its founder to his own tenets that acted on their moral and intellectual fiber with all the magnetism of true inspiration.*

American author and diplomat Washington Irving wrote in his biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH),

*He was sober and abstemious in his diet and a rigorous observer of fasts. He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind; neither was his simplicity in dress affected but a result of real disregard for distinction from so trivial a source. In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and poor, the powerful and weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints.*

Jared Diamond, a world renowned UCLA sociologist and physiologist who won the Pulitzer Prize for his book “Guns, Germs, and Steel”, wrote,

*Medieval Islam was technologically advanced and open to innovation. It achieved far higher literacy rates than in contemporary Europe; it assimilated the legacy of classical Greek civilization to such a degree that many classical books are now known to us only through Arabic copies. It invented windmills, trigonometry, lateen sails and made major advances in metallurgy, mechanical and chemical engineering and irrigation methods. In the middle-ages the flow of technology was overwhelmingly from Islam to Europe rather from Europe to Islam. Only after the 1500's did the net direction of flow begin to reverse.*

Professor T. Vidhya N. Persaud, Ph.D., Head of the Department of Anatomy, University of Manitoba, wrote,

*It seems to me that Muhammad was a very ordinary man. He could not read or write. In fact, he was illiterate. We are talking about 1400 years ago. You have someone who was illiterate making profound pronouncement and statements and are amazingly accurate about scientific nature. I personally cannot see how this could be mere chance. There are too many accuracies and, like Dr. Moore, I have no difficulty in my mind in concerning that this is a divine inspiration or revelation which led him to these statements.*

Professor Alfred Kröner, German Professor of Geology at Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, wrote,

*Thinking about many of these questions and thinking where Muhammad came from, he was after all a Bedouin. I think it is almost impossible that he could have known about things like the common origin of the universe, because scientists have only found out within the last few years with very complicated and advanced technological methods that this is the case.*

Michael M. Hart, in his book "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History", New York, 1978, wrote,

*My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels...Of humble origins, Muhammad founded and promulgated one of the world's great religions, and became an immensely effective political leader. Today, thirteen centuries after his death, his influence is still powerful and pervasive.*

Professor Keith Moore, one of the world's prominent scientists of anatomy and embryology, University of Toronto, wrote,

*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 Allah, because almost all of this knowledge was not discovered until many centuries later. This proves to me that Muhammad must have been a messenger of God or Allah.*

Professor Joe Leigh Simpson, Obstetrics and Gynecology at the North Western University in Chicago, wrote,

*It follows, I think, that not only is there no conflict between genetics and religion, but in fact religion can guide science by adding revelation to some traditional scientific approaches. That there exist statements in the Qur'an shown by science to be valid, which supports knowledge in the Qur'an having been derived from Allah.*

Professor Armstrong, a Scientist who works at NASA, wrote,

*I am impressed that how remarkably some of the ancient writings seem to correspond to modern and recent Astronomy. There may well have to be something beyond what we understand as ordinary human experience to account for the writings that we have seen.*

R. L. Mellema, Holland, Anthropologist, Writer and Scholar, wrote,

*The doctrine of brotherhood of Islam extends to all human beings, no matter what color, race or creed. Islam is the only religion which has been able to realize this doctrine in practice. Muslims wherever on the world they are well recognize each other as brothers.*

Indian poetess Sarojini Naidu, in her book "Ideas of Islam", Vide Speeches and Writings, Madras, 1918, wrote,

*It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for, in the mosque, when the call for prayer sounded and the worshipers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim: "God alone is great". I have been struck over and over again by this indivisible unity of Islam that makes man instinctively a brother.*

*The doctrine of brotherhood of Islam extends to all human beings, no matter what color, race or creed. Islam is the only religion which has been able to realize this doctrine in practice. Muslims wherever on the world they are well recognize each other as brothers.*

*Sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as I read in the Qur'an I find those dynamic principles of life, not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conduct of life suited to the whole world.*

Professor Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, Dutch scholar and professor of oriental cultures and languages, wrote,

*The league of nations founded by the prophet of Islam put the principle of international unity and human brotherhood on such universal foundations as to show candles to other nations... The fact is that no nation of the world can show a parallel to what Islam has done towards the realization of the idea of the League of Nations.*

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#### **4.1.5 Please tell the story of Al-Israa and Al-Mirraaj (The Night and Ascension Journey)**

Stated by the Quran (verses 17:1 and 53:13-18), Islam's holy scripture, and by the authentic Hadith (quotes of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), the Night Journey, Al-Israa, and the Ascension journey, Al-Mieraj, are the two parts of a journey that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) took in one night around the year 621. While some Muslims consider it a spiritual journey made in a vision, the majority believes it was a physical journey, evidenced by the fact that the Prophet named all the caravans that were travelling between Mecca and Jersulam that night and he described Jerusalem accurately though he had never been there before.

After reaching Jerusalem, the Prophet met with and led in prayer, at the site of Al-Aqsa Mosque, all the other Prophets and Messengers of God, from Adam to Jesus, peace be upon them. Hadiths report that he described some of the prophets. He said that he looked a lot like Abraham, that Adam had a dark skin and that Jesus had very oily hair.

Starting off on a rock in the site of the Dome of the Rock, the Prophet was ascended to heaven. He was accompanied by archangel Gabriel. As he visited each heaven, he would see sites and people and would ask Gabriel about them and Gabriel would tell him what the sights mean.

Then, just below the last heaven, Gabriel said to Muhammad, “*You can ascend farther up but if I try, I’d burn.*” No creature has ever been there before. The Prophet ascended up and saw God. God greeted the Prophet, blessed him and gave him the mandate of the formal, ritual prayers of Islam.

Scholars have offered several purposes for that miraculous journey. Some said it was consolation for the Prophet, who in that year (called in Islamic literature the year of sadness) had lost his beloved wife, Khadija and his uncle Abu-Talib, who was his protection from the violent opposition of his tribe, Quraysh, and his mistreatment at Al-Taif, a close-by city he went to calling them to Islam. Others said the purpose of the trip was to highlight the paramount importance of the prayer and to give all Muslims a chance to have a similar experience to that of the Prophet. A famous sentence in Islamic literature states that prayer is the “ascension of the believer.”

The event is commemorated each year on the eve of the 27th of the seventh lunar month, Rajab. It is regarded as one of the most important events in the Islamic calendar. Though not required, many Muslims bring their children to the mosques, where the children are told the story, pray with the adults, and then afterward food and treats are served.

In a sermon I attended recently, the imam (preacher) mentioned three more lessons we can learn from that wonderful event,

- No matter how hard times are, there is good news reserved for us from God. Good times ahead.
- The connection between Mecca and Jerusalem is solid and was never severed as the Jews claim when they said that Hajar and her son were “outcast” to the desert. Even today, Islamophobes and adversaries of Islam keep trying to isolate and alienate Islam and reject that it is part of the family of monotheist religions and Muhammad (PBUH) is part of the family of Prophets.
- The quick move from Mecca to Jerusalem was a good omen to Muslims that Islam would reach Jerusalem and will spread fast and wide.

*Do we know anything about the burak, the vehicle of the journey, which I’ve read somewhere described as a winged horse? Is that true, or is it a wrong translation?*

I found only one reference to Al-Buraq in Al-Albani’s book which he rated Hasan (sound). It describes it as a white, tall beast of burden. That’s all. All other references are either weak or fabricated.

I can’t find any authentic mention of it anywhere in the six acknowledged books of Hadith. If someone can, please reply.

The word Buraq comes from the Arabic verb برق (bariqa) which means to appear suddenly and brightly and quickly disappear, like the English verb to flash. That is why lightning is called Al-Barq in Arabic. 881

#### 4.1.6 The Prophet's love for the prayers

Happy birthday, beloved Messenger of God!

On the occasion of the birth of the last and final Prophet and Messenger of God, Muhammad, peace be upon him, I send him my unbound love and endless gratitude for bringing humanity from darkness to light and for leaving with us *“what we will never lose our way as long as we hold on to them: the Book of God and the Sunna.”* Narrated and reported by Malik ibn Anas (RA) and [Al-Dorar Al-Saniyya \[19\]](#) rated it “memorized, recognized, well-known so much that an attribution chain is unnecessary!”

The Prophet's love for God and desire to please Him was phenomenal, and is a tough act to follow. In an article about the Prophet's life, peace be upon him, published by The Mosque Foundation, a community magazine, two hadiths are mentioned that illustrate it. In one hadith, Huzayfa ibn Al-Yaman, may God have been pleased with him, narrated that he decided one day to join with the Prophet (PBUH) in his Tahajjud (night prayer). It turned out to take much longer than Huzayfa expected! He narrated, *“The Prophet (PBUH) started reciting Al-Baqara (Chapter 2, which is the longest in the Quran). Huzayfa said to himself, ‘Maybe he will bow down after the 100th verse’. But he continued reciting! Then Huzayfa thought, ‘He will finish it then bow down’. But he continued to recite Chapter 3 and then Chapter 4 (both quite long themselves). Huzayfa also said, ‘Whenever a verse called for sanctifying God, the Prophet (PBUH) would say loud ‘Subhan-Allah’ (May God be sanctified), and whenever a verse called for asking God for something, the Prophet would ask Him, and whenever a verse instructed seeking refuge in God, the Prophet would say loud, ‘I seek refuge in God’. And as if that was not long enough, his bowings and his prostrations took almost as long.* Narrated by Muslim who rated it authentic.

In another hadith, Abdullah ibn Masoud, may God have been pleased with him, did something similar and he narrated, ‘He stood up so long I almost did something sinful!’ He was asked, ‘What was it?’ He replied, ‘I almost decided to sit down and leave him standing!’ Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim who both rated it authentic.

Bear in mind that both gentlemen were younger in age than the Prophet (PBUH). The Blessed Prophet fully heard God when He told him,

“O you who is wrapped up in covers! Stand up [in prayer] the night, but a little. Half of it or a bit shorter, or a bit more and recite the Quran articulately.” (73:1-4)

He was hoping for what God promised him when He said, “And [a portion] of the night, spend it in prayer, an extra for you, perhaps your Lord will send you out [on the Day of Resurrection to] a praised station.” (17:79)

May God grant him that high station and join us with him there.

To some people, a prayer is a necessary chore that they can't wait for to end, but to the Prophet (PBUH), it was a delight that he couldn't wait to do. He often called on Bilal ibn Rabah, may God have been pleased with him, who was the Muazzin (caller to prayers), “*O Bilal, relieve us with it (the prayer).*” Narrated by Salim ibn Abil-Hamd and by Bilal and reported by Al-Albani who rated it authentic and by Abu-Dawoud. 2070

#### 4.1.7 Importance of lineage to the Prophet (PBUH)

*I watch YouTube a lot for talks and sermons by Sheiks (Muslim elders). I am learning that there is a group of scholars who trace their lineage back to the Prophet (swas). It seems to me that the link is the hand shake from sheik to his predecessor in knowledge up to the Prophet (swas). Am I correct that the link is almost an “apostolic succession” and not a blood link?*

Be cautious with YouTube. It is free and anybody can put on clergy clothing and express his opinion and make it sound like it is the absolute truth. The merit of any talk is the evidence it cites and the logic it follows, not the man, his appearance, his credentials or his lineage.

I think when they say they trace their lineage back to the Prophet (PBUH), they are talking about being direct descendents of him, through one of his daughters. In Arabic, they are called Al-Ashraf (the honored ones). In the Indopak I understand they are called Syeds (masters).

Being a descendant from the Prophet (PBUH) is indeed an honor, but it doesn't make one particularly knowledgeable, pious or credible. Some Ashraf are sinners or non-practicing and some are saint-like. Those who are saint-like are not that way because of their lineage, but because of their faith, piety, commitment, good deeds and constant learning. They also tend to not boast about it.

I'm not sure you meant this, but if your observation of a handshake is a secret handshake, then they have a secret order not unlike the secret orders that have been created in other religions. Islam does not have a secret order. There are no special people in Islam entrusted with exclusive insights into the religion. There is no pope or guru whose uttering is infallible. There are scholars with various degrees of knowledge and insight. There may be ordinary folks whom you would not pay any attention to, who have more insight and faith than a Mufti, Imam or another dignitary. God grants knowledge and wisdom to people on the

basis of their faith and good deeds, not on the basis of their rank in society or their lineage or connections. 2389

#### 4.1.8 What does the Prophet's title, Al-Maasoom, mean?

Many Muslims think that the title Al-Maasum, given to the Prophet, peace be upon him, means that he cannot make a mistake. But in fact, he is given that attribute because of verse 5:67; he was guaranteed by God that his life will not be at risk as he preaches Islam.

After this verse was revealed, the Prophet (PBUH) dismissed the bodyguard he used to have standing guard for him at night! I read a while ago an article written by a non-Muslim woman who said that this event is the best proof yet that Muhammad was indeed a true prophet of God. She wrote that no one would risk his life after an assurance from an invisible force. 1093

#### 4.1.9 Muhammad, peace be upon him, was illiterate

*In an article by you that I read, you used the word "illiterate" when you referred to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. It is best not to use this word, instead the proper word to be used is "unlettered".*

*This is because illiterate means following,*

- *not able to read or write.*
- *ignorant: uneducated in the fundamentals of a given art or branch of learning; lacking knowledge of a specific field; "she is ignorant of quantum mechanics"; "he is musically illiterate".*
- *lacking culture, especially in language and literature.*
- *a person unable to read.*

*obtained from [wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)*

*And unlettered means un-alphabetic: having little acquaintance with writing; "special tutorials to assist the unlettered sector of society", obtained from [wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)*

*Thanks.*

Thank you for your message. I fully understand it and the sentiment behind it but you may be surprised to learn that all the definitions you list above of the word "illiterate" actually applied to the Prophet, peace

be upon him. He was lacking culture as well especially in language and literature and also in history and religion. His peers were great with words and poetry but he wasn't. He became a master of literature only after he became a prophet!

All this was not meant to belittle the Prophet but to make the unparalleled contrast, and therefore the miracle, between the undisputed masterpiece of Arabic language and literature, the Quran, and the total lack of literary capability of the man who delivered it to the world! 701

#### 4.1.10 Did Muhammad write the Quran?

The Prophet, peace be upon him, did not read or write. He had no schooling whatsoever. He was so unable to read nor write that he couldn't even recognize his own name written down; people had to point it out to him every time! So, does that answer your question?

The Quran emphasizes this fact in a number of verses, e.g.,

“And you [O Muhammad,] did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise, they who try to disprove the truth [of this revelation] might indeed have had cause to doubt [it].” (29:48)  
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#### 4.1.11 Why did Muhammad write the Quran?

Kinda hard to do when *he couldn't write or read a single word*, isn't it?

And if he wrote it, then how come the Quran admonishes him in several places for mistakes he made, peace be upon him? Why does the Quran threaten him of dire consequences if he does not convey the Message fully? Why did the Quran make public some private matters in his household which he did not talk about in public?

People who say that Muhammad, peace be upon him, wrote the Quran, do so only in an attempt to explain it away. They can't. The only rational, historical and documentary explanation of the phenomenon that is the Quran is that it is what it claims it is: The preserved word of God. 969

#### 4.1.12 Prove that Muhammad didn't lie

If Muhammad, peace be upon him, lied then you have to explain why he was called the trustworthy one (Al-Amin) by his enemies. What possible purpose did he have to make such a stupendous monumental lie and keep the lie going for 23 years and suffer an economic embargo that starved his uncle and his wife to death? He was offered to be the king of Arabia, wealth and women if he would just stop preaching but he turned it all

down! And how can anyone explain the Quran, the undisputed masterpiece of Arabic literature delivered to us by a man who never went to school and never learned how to read or write and never uttered any eloquent phrase until then?

Would a man of undisputed integrity among his people start a lying career with the biggest lie in the universe? And how can you explain why the Quran repeatedly threatens those who lie about God with severe torment? How can Muhammad (PBUH) afford to take such risk?

Denying Muhammad (PBUH) or the Quran is nothing but refusal to accept the obvious truth, in favor of what one has grown up with and feels familiar and comfortable to them. That is not the criteria for the truth.  
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#### 4.1.13 Was Muhammad cruel or gentle?

*I read accounts of the life of Muhammad that described him as a cruel, vengeful man and other accounts that praised his kindness and generosity! Which is it?*

A pagan Meccan woman used to dump her trash everyday at the door of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and he or his wife Khadija, may God have been pleased with her, used to scoop it out. He didn't curse her nor call for her head.

One morning the Prophet got out of the house and noticed that there was no trash in front of his door! He asked around and learned that the woman fell ill. What do you suppose he did? He went with Khadija to the woman's house to visit her!

Does that answer your question?

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#### 4.1.14 Why did Muhammad endorse slavery?

*Mohammed is referred to in the Quran as having a sublime nature, and this is usually construed to mean that Mohammed is an infallible or perfect man.*

*Mohammed owned slaves ("... a black slave of Allah's Apostle was at the top of its stairs"), which is now rightly condemned as immoral and illegal in most countries.*

*This leads to my first question: how is it possible for Muslims to reform Islam to reject practices carried out by Mohammed during his life, and approved (tacitly or explicitly) in the Quran itself?*

*As far as I can tell it is wrong for a Muslim to condemn slavery, as it was a facet of Mohammed's life, and tacitly permitted in the Quran ("And free those slaves you possess who wish to buy their freedom after a written undertaking ..."). Condemning slavery constitutes a direct denial of the infallibility of Mohammed and the Quran itself.*

The subject of your post assumes facts not in evidence. I hope you didn't mean it as a flame bait. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, did **not** endorse slavery. He simply regulated and reformed it in preparation for ending it. Ending slavery by a decree would have been impractical because it was an established social and economic institution in all countries and cultures at the time. The gradual approach followed by the Prophet was the right way to do it. The Quran is the only scripture which explicitly orders its followers to free the slaves, an unheard of proposition in the seventh Century.

Abraham Lincoln's decree to free the American slaves, as commendable as it is, was unwise in its abruptness. It caused the bloodiest war in American history. It created resentment in the hearts of white Americans that has not yet been erased. And it got him killed! Lincoln would have done much better had he followed the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The premise you start with is also wrong. The Prophet is indeed highly esteemed by God and by Muslims but he was not infallible. Verse 68:4 does not say he had a sublime nature. It says he is "upon a grand conduct." That is he had a grand character and manners. Yet, God has reprimanded him a couple of times for things he said or did or failed to say or do. God repeatedly instructs the Prophet in the Quran to emphasize to people that he is "but a human inspired with the fact that your God is one God." (18:110)

Thus your conclusion is also wrong. Islam does not need reform. Muslims do. And it is not wrong for a Muslim to condemn slavery. How did you arrive at that conclusion? In order to make such statement you must provide a direct text from the Quran or the authentic Sunna which says "Do not condemn slavery!" Failure to do so kills your argument. 166

#### 4.1.15 Muhammad's letter to Christian monks

*In 628 C.E. Prophet Muhammad sent a letter of immense support to the monks of St. Catherine's Monastery in Mt. Sinai. It contained several aspects of human rights including the protection of Christians, freedom of worship, freedom to own and maintain their property, exemption from military engagement, and the right to protection in war.*

*An English translation of that document is below:*

*“This is a message from Muhammad ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily I, the servants [of God], the helpers (Medinite Muslims), and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them.*

*Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims’ houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God’s covenant and disobey His Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray.*

*Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation (Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).”*

I don’t know if this letter is authentic, but that sounds very much like the Prophet I know and love. May God’s blessing and peace be upon him and may Muslims truly follow his lead. 172

#### **4.1.16 Did Muhammad learn from his Christian uncle-in-law?**

*Waraqah, who was the uncle of Muhammad’s wife Khadija, was Christian and he was with Muhammad all along for at least 15 years before he announced he was a prophet. So, Muhammad learned all about Christianity and used it to form Islam.*

If that was the case then why did Waraqa tell Khadija, his niece, may God have been pleased with her, and her husband, Muhammad, peace be upon him, that Muhammad was a true prophet and was THE prophet foretold in the Torah and the Gospel?

And if Muhammad (PBUH) learned from the Jews and the Christians then why did he change their teachings? The Quran corrects the Jewish teaching about Jesus being a heretic and corrects the Christian teaching about Jesus being divine. And why didn’t his teacher come forward?

Muhammad (PBUH) was known, even to his enemies, to be *“the trustworthy one”*. Then why would he lie about where from he got the teachings of

Islam? And would he start lying by lying against God? Muhammad (PBUH) and his followers spent 13 years in non-stop torment and harassment by the Meccan pagans, why would he hold on to a falsehood in such a situation?

What if we applied the same logic to Jesus, peace be upon him? We all know that Jesus lived among the Jews (in fact most Christians believe he was a Jew), spoke Hebrew fluently (in addition to his native Aramaic) and was a recognized scholar of the Torah. Thus, applying your logic, Jesus must have learned all from the Jews and used it to form Christianity! God forbid.

The bottom line is this: The message of God is spelled out in the Quran. I invite you to read the Quran, if you haven't done so already, then decide for yourself if it came from other than God. 124

#### 4.1.17 Why didn't Muhammad free all slaves at once?

*Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Sahaba (his companions) freed over 300,000 slaves in the Prophet's time (PBUH). Remaining slaves were treated like family and it was one of the best deeds if you freed a slave (and not only free them, but also made sure they could live by themselves).*

*That was revolutionary and unheard of at the time. But why didn't the Prophet (PBUH) free all the slaves at once?*

The reason he did not, IMHO, is the same as the reason the prohibition of intoxication and usury was gradual: Breaking a bad, but strong habit cannot be done by a decree! How many people succeeded in quitting smoking cold-turkey?

After American President Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves with a decree (the Emancipation Proclamation), 3.5 million African Americans became jobless and homeless! And because their previous masters were forced to free them, they would not hire them. That's the fault of Lincoln's approach to the problem, however noble his intention was. Recall that after the emancipation proclamation, the bloodiest war in US history was launched and Lincoln was assassinated!

Compare that approach to this teaching of the Quran,

"Should he not then conquer the obstacle? And what may make you understand what the obstacle is? Untying of a neck! (freeing a slave)" (90:11-13)

To this day, black Americans suffer from discrimination, rooted in racism, that keeps many of them uneducated, unemployed and living in ghettos.

Had Lincoln followed the example of the Prophet (PBUH) instead, slaves

would have been freed gradually, willingly and without bloodshed. The consequences of a hasty, from-the-top prohibition would have caused havoc and more pain whose main sufferers would have been the slaves themselves.

*If Muslims had followed the Prophet (PBUH) in these teachings, slavery would've been abolished long before it was.*

Another great point. Thanks for bringing it up. Muslims did NOT follow the example of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Sahaba (RA) in freeing slaves, but they did treat them like family. 1314

#### 4.1.18 Did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) order the killing of apostates?

*Hello, I have a question that's been bothering me for a week now. I was reading the hadiths and I came across a very disturbing hadith and it says: "Whoever changed his religion, then kill him" Sahih al-Bukhari, 9-84-57. Why does it say this? I thought the Quran talks about no compulsion in religion. Why is this hadith contradicting the message in the Quran? Personally I feel that if someone leaves Islam, it's their personal choice. Because God gave them a free will and so they have the free choice to leave if they want. And if they're killed because they left Islam then its not fair because they might come back in the future. Please just help me out with this problem of mine. Thanks!*

That hadith contradicts the Quran. None of the versions of this hadith actually state that the narrator heard the Prophet (PBUH) say those words. The text of the hadith is like this,

"Ali was brought a gang of agnostics. He burned them. Ibn Abbas, when he heard this, said: If it was me, I would have killed them instead, because the Prophet said, 'Whoever substitutes his religion, kill him.' When Ali heard that, he said, 'Woe unto Ibn Abbas!' "

Do you sense the problems with this hadith? Does that sound like anything Ali or Ibn Abbas would say? Is it conceivable that the Prophet (PBUH) gives a ruling of *capital punishment* that Ali, his cousin, had never heard? Is it conceivable that Ali would burn to death people even though he never knew he could kill them?

Is it conceivable that God will make a capital punishment ruling that we know about only through a narration? Did He not say in the holy Quran, "And We have not neglected in the Book not a thing" (6:38)

No, brother, the Prophet (PBUH) did not, and could not have said those words, for he does not do anything in violation of God's orders. And he relayed to us God's word in this matter,

"And say: The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills, let him believe, and whoever wills, **let him disbelieve.**" (18:29)

"And if God had so willed, all those in the earth would have believed together. Is it you [, O Muhammad] then who would compel people to be Muslims?" (10:99)

Check out the other posts in this book about apostasy. The evidence is overwhelming that there is no punishment whatsoever in Islam for apostasy.

1891

#### 4.1.19 Did Muhammad put adulterers to death?

There are hadiths that state that, but many scholars have pointed out problems with those hadiths that cast doubt on their authenticity.

Other scholars said that the Prophet (PBUH) stoned married adulterers of his own judgment, not by command from God, because that was the penalty in the Old Testament. The Prophet (PBUH) often did as the People of the Book do in matters in which He hasn't yet received a revelation from God. These scholars added that the Quran came to abrogate that ruling and correct it with Chapter 24.

IMHO, I do not believe that the Prophet (PBUH) would put someone to death, the ultimate and terminal penalty, based on his own opinion or judgment. I agree with the scholars who rejected or doubted the stoning hadiths. I also agree that the Quran abrogates the Sunna but not the other way around. That should be obvious to everyone because of the relative authority of both, yet you will find scholars who said that the Sunna can abrogate the Quran! These scholars seem to forget that the Prophet (PBUH) made mistakes and the Quran corrected him with verses that we all read till this day.

For more details, you may want to read

<http://www.themostreadbook.org/phpbb/viewtopic.php?f=130&t=2736>this discussion.

799

#### 4.1.20 Did Muhammad marry for money?

*I read an article on the web alleging that Muhammad married his first wife, Khadijah, for her money. Any truth to that?*

The web site you quoted makes it clear from the first line that it is antagonistic to Islam, not a site that wants to understand or learn it. The

first paragraph is a dead giveaway that it is written by a Hindu. Some Hindus resent Muslims for the rapid growth of Islam in India to the point that the king of India was Muslim at one point in history. The allegations of the site have been rebuffed hundreds of times on hundreds of web sites. For instance, the allegation that Muhammad, peace be upon him, married Khadija, may God have been pleased with her, for her wealth is instantly shattered by the fact that *it was she* who proposed to him and that he mourned her after she died until he died. If the Prophet, (PBUH), wanted to live a life of luxury and not work he would have accepted the pagans offer to make him king of Arabia and give him plenty of money and women if he would just stop preaching! But he turned it all down.

Islamophobes have been unable to attack the Quran effectively so they always turn to the life of the Prophet, peace be upon him, to the Hadith and to the juristic opinions hoping to find things to assault. You will be wasting your precious time following these people when their agenda is so obvious. If there are specific points that bother you, feel free to ask.

At the end of the article they list the names of people who contributed to it: Three completely unknown people without any links to verify their knowledge or background. Anybody can say anything about anyone, especially in this age of the web.

435

#### 4.1.21 Did Muhammad marry a six year old girl?

*There is a hadeeth that says that Lady Aisha was six years old when the Prophet (PBUH) married her and that he consummated the marriage when she was nine. I find that hard to believe, but it is widely accepted. Adversaries of Islam have a field day with that one. Do you have any thoughts on this?*

This is a common misconception. It is known and documented that Aisha, may God have been pleased with her, was ten years younger than her sister Asmaa and that Asmaa was 27 years old when she was helping her father and the Prophet (PBUH) in their migration to Medina. That makes Aisha 17 years old at Hijra. We also know that the Prophet (PBUH) married her at the year 2 A.H. which makes her 19 years old at her wedding and 22 when it was consummated.

There are several biographical books, classic and modern, that state that Asmaa bint Abi-Bakr, may God have been pleased with them was born at the year 27 B.H. and died at 73 A.H., at the age of 100, a few nights after her son Abdullah ibn Az-Zubair (RA). Most of these books also state that she was ten years older than her sister Aisha (RA) or slightly older.

Some of these books are:

Usd Al-Ghaba (أسد الغابة في معرفة الصحابة) ابن الأثير الجزري, [Ibn Al-Athir](#)

[29] (Part 7;Page 7;Item 6705). Also available on line at [Al-Shamela Modern Library](#)

Aalam Al-Nisaa (عمر رضا كحالة، أعلام النساء، دار صادر، بيروت) [Kahhala](#)

[38] (Part 1; Page 47)

Al-Isaba (الإصابة في تمييز الصحابة) [Ibn Hajar](#) [31] (Part 8; Pages 1-14)

Other useful books on that subject are,

Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra, by Ibn Saad (ابن سعد، الطبقات الكبرى، دار صادر، بيروت)

Hilyat Al-Awliyaa, by Abu-Naeem (أبو نعيم الأصفهاني، حلية الأولياء، المطبعة السلفية، بيروت)

Hope this helps.

The error about her age comes from a narration attributed to her by her maid, who was illiterate and could not count. It is therefore quite possible that she dropped the “teen” from the numbers, i.e., she said “six” when she meant to say “sixteen”. That’s a reasonable explanation. I sometimes say “last year” when I mean to say “last week”. 928

## 4.2 Prophet Jesus (PBUH)

### 4.2.1 Do Muslims believe in Christ? Do they love him?

Who believes in all the following?

- That Jesus was a true prophet and messenger of God,
- That he is the Christ promised to the children of Israel,
- That he was born miraculously to the Virgin Mary,
- That he performed many miracles including bringing someone back from the dead,
- That he was given a scripture, the Gospel, and taught it, and
- That he will come back to earth.

If you answered: the Christians, you’re only half right! The other half is Muslims. Muslims believe in Christ Jesus and love him and always follow his name with the phrase, “peace be upon him.” 453

### 4.2.2 Will Jesus be risen, again?

*Will God raise Prophet Jesus again after he comes back and dies? I guess what I am wondering if when Prophet Jesus comes back is the time we are raised back to life? Or will this raising again of humanity be after Jesus passes away? Thanks for your help.*

When he comes back, he will live a normal life then die a normal death, be buried and Muslims will pray for him the funeral prayer (Janaza). On the Day of Resurrection, he and the rest of creation will be risen from the graves all at once and assemble before God for judgment. 630

### 4.2.3 Why will Jesus come back?

*Why will Jesus come back? Why he and not any other prophet?*

IMHO, To settle all disputes about him once and for all. Jesus, peace be upon him, is the one Prophet of the three Abrahamic religions who was turned into a god by his followers. Therefore, God is sending him back to make it abundantly clear that Jesus wasn't and isn't a god. The message of Jesus is the one message that has been altered the most. God, out of His grace, wants the Christians and the Jews who have not yet accepted the Quran to have the last decisive evidence of the truth of Islam before time on earth ends. Indeed, God says in the Holy Quran about the second coming of Jesus "Without exception all of the people of the Book will believe in him (Jesus) before he dies and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness upon them." (4:159) 82

### 4.2.4 When Jesus comes back

*Assalam u Alaikum, I was just wondering what will happen to people other than the people of the book on the day of judgment? Because I read that when Isa ibn Mariam (as) (Jesus) comes back, all the People of the Book will believe in him and become Muslims. But what about people who are not from the People of the book like Hindus or Buddhists or Sikhs etc.? What about them? Will they convert and believe in Isa (as) or not? Will they follow Ad-Dajjal (Antichrist)? Thanks and may Allah (swt) bless you!*

And you. The short answer to your question is this verse,

“Verily, those who have believed (the Muslims), those who came back apologizing (the Jews), the Sabeans, the Christians, the Magi and those who have associated [others with God in worship] - God will decisively judge between them on the Day of Resurrection. Verily, God is upon everything a Witness.” (22:17)

It is a matter of Al-Ghayb (the Beyond). This verse makes it clear that such judgment is up to God only. We cannot nor should we attempt to make a judgment about the destiny of any people of any belief.

As for your point about Jesus, peace be upon him; God tells us in the Quran, “And there is from the People of the Book [none] but who will surely believe in him (Jesus) before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be upon them a witness.” (4:159)

The preceding three verses state very emphatically and unambiguously that Mary (PBUH) was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus (PBUH), that no one killed Jesus and that, in fact, he never died at all - God raised him up to Him. When Jesus comes back, the People of the Book - the Jews and the Christians - will have to believe the truth about him as taught in the Quran, because Jesus will be there teaching the same teachings until he dies. Whether they continue to believe after his death is unknown. They may differ about him yet again as they did the first time!

The Antichrist, by definition, will come before Christ Jesus does. This is confirmed in the Hadith. Jesus will easily defeat him.

We don't know whether people other than Christians and Jews will choose to follow Jesus when he comes back and accept Islam. Nor do we know what will be the judgment of non-Muslims on Judgment Day. But we know this for sure: “God does not do a speck's weight of injustice” (4:40) So, rest assured that God will dispense His judgment fairly and gracefully as only He can.

After Salman Al-Farisi, may God have been pleased with him, accepted Islam (he had been a Christian), he asked the Prophet (PBUH), with great concern, what will be the destiny of his parents and other relatives who were righteous people but had no chance to know about Islam until they died. God revealed this verse to answer that question,

“Verily, those who have believed (the Muslims), those who came back apologizing (the Jews), the Christians, and the Sabeans - those who believed in God and the Final Day and did a righteous [deed], for them will be their reward with their Lord and there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.” (2:62)

God is fair; He would not punish a people until after He sends them a messenger (see verse 17:15). Thus, those who die without having any knowledge of Islam will be judged on their reply to their prophets and messengers. And if they had none, on their faith in God and Judgment

Day and their actions in life, something which only God truly knows. 2209

### 4.2.5 Doubts about the second coming of Jesus

*A friend of mine, who is also Muslim, is telling me that Jesus will never be resurrected because it is not written in the Quran that he will.*

First is to establish that Jesus, peace be upon him, *did not die*. We know that from:

“And [for] their saying, ‘Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of God.’ And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but it was made to look [that way] to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of conjecture. And they *most certainly did not kill him*, Rather, God **raised him** to Himself. And ever is God Exalted in Might and Wise.” (4:157-158)

The end of life on earth is done by one of two ways: death or killing. Neither word was used about Jesus (PBUH) in the Quran at the time of the alleged crucifixion. The word the Quran uses is “raised”, “lifted” (رَفَعَهُ).

Second is to establish that Jesus *will die*. We know he will from the very next verse,

“And there is none from the People of the Book but will surely believe in him **before his death**. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be upon them a witness.” (4:159)

*His second question is that there is nothing in the Quran about the Dajjal (the Antichrist), only in the Hadeeth and the Hadeeth is not the word of God and therefore we should not believe it.*

How did the word of God get to us? It came to us by way of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Thus, anything we know for certain that the Prophet (PBUH) said that it came from God, we believe in. The question then becomes a question of authentication. A hadith that can be proved to be authentic is something we must believe,<sup>1</sup> because God orders us in the Quran to obey the Prophet (PBUH) and **warned us of severe punishment if we do not**. We wouldn't be able to if we didn't know what he said. 715

<sup>1</sup>Unless it contradicts the Quran, see for instance §3.1.16

### 4.2.6 Beliefs Muslims and Christians share about Jesus

Egyptian Coptic Christian writer Louis Grace wrote recently, *“I learned to love Jesus Christ because of the Quran!”*

Did that statement surprise you? Though I was delighted to read it, it did not surprise me. Mr. Grace grew up in a Muslim country that has a 1400 year history of cordial relations between Muslims and Christians. Even though many attempts throughout the centuries tried to sow seeds of division between the two, none has succeeded.

The Quran mentions Jesus, son of Mary, peace be upon both, numerous times and always with high praise and affection. It calls him Christ 9 times. In case you didn't know, here are what Muslims and Christians have in common in regard to Jesus (PBUH):

- Jesus was born miraculously to the virgin Mary.
- Jesus was “the word of God”.
- Jesus was a true prophet and a messenger of God.
- Jesus is the Christ (Messiah) promised to the Children of Israel.
- Jesus received from God a holy scripture, the Gospel.
- Jesus performed many miracles, including raising people from the dead.
- Jesus will come back.

Did any of that surprise you? It's all in the Quran for all to read and learn.

2237

### 4.2.7 Were Mary and Jesus sinless?

*Hello, can you explain what this hadeeth means please? A lot of anti-Islam websites say that this hadeeth means that Jesus and his mom were sinless. “Abu Huraira reported Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: The Satan touches every son of Adam on the day when his mother gives birth to him WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MARY AND HER SON.”*

*Aren't all the prophets in Islam sinless? If they are can you explain it please? Didn't some of them commit sins? I hope I didn't cause any offense. Thanks!*

That hadith is rated authentic, but what does it have to do with sinlessness? Being touched by Satan does not cause a person to sin! Being spared from Satan's touch does not exempt a person from sin. The hadith simply gives a religious explanation to why newborn babies' first utterance is a cry.

The Quran tells us that not only do all human beings have the potential to sin, but also that they all have sinned. Consider,

*"And if God were to censure people for their wrongdoing, He would not have left upon the earth any creature, but He defers them for a specified term. And when their term has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it]."* (16:61)

The hadith you quoted simply asserts another special honor that God gave to Mary and her son, peace be upon them. It does not follow that they never sinned as a result.

All prophets and messengers of God were 100-percent human. They were honored by God, not because they never sinned, but because they were the most righteous in conduct, purest in faith and most able to carry God's message to people. 1903

#### 4.2.8 Does Islam prophesy an Anti-Christ?

*What do you know and what do you believe about this person whom some people claimed that Prophet Muhammad prophesied as Mahdi and this event called Dajjal Fitnah. I'm not sure but I think these are unfounded claims as far as the Quran is concerned. I don't know but some people relate these things to what is happening in Syria.*

There are several authentic hadiths, reported in Al-Bukhari and Muslim's compilations and narrated by Al-Khudri ([Muslim \[43\]](#) (2938)), Ibn Umar ([Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6999)), and others, which mention Al-Masih Al-Dajjal (the luring messiah). In these hadiths, the Prophet (PBUH) forewarns Muslims of the coming of the Anti-Christ, a man who will possess great powers, even power to resurrect people from the dead, and succeed in luring most people away from true faith to follow him instead. He will claim to be God. The Prophet (PBUH) said that the Dajjal Fitna (test of faith) is the greatest and that every prophet had forewarned his people against it.

While the Quran does not mention Al-Dajjal, there is no reason to doubt the story. It would be a different matter if the Quran has contradicted the story. One authentic hadith I know of is reported by Al-Bukhari and narrated by Aisha, may God have been pleased with her, in which she relates that the Prophet (PBUH) used to say in his supplication during

prayer, “O God, I seek refuge in You from the trying times of the Luring Messiah.” (Al-Bukhari [12] (6376))

Several authentic hadiths also mention the coming of the Anti-Christ as one of several grand signs of the approach of the Hour (the Day of Judgment), see for instance Muslim [43] (2901). Most of the signs mentioned in those hadeeths are also mentioned in the Quran, such as the second coming of Jesus Christ, the release of Gog and Magog, and the animal which will preach to people. Thus, there is no cause to deny the story about the Anti-Christ while the other, equally exotic stories are confirmed by the Quran.

There is no evidence that the war in Syria has anything to do with the Anti-Christ.

As for Al-Mahdi (the guided one), the hadiths about him are far less authentic. Neither Al-Bukhari nor Muslim have reported any hadith about him, to the best of my knowledge. Whether he will exist has no bearing on your or my faith, since we already have all we need to be true believers: the holy Quran and the authentic Sunna. 2336

### 4.2.9 Why don't Muslims defend Jesus?

*Jesus was also a prophet, and yet when he is slurred, there's hardly a blink. Why the double standard?*

Muslims were outraged and said so when the movie “The last temptation of Christ” came out. They also objected when artwork was shown making Lady Mary, peace be upon her, look like a loose woman. Just because you didn't hear it in the news doesn't mean it didn't happen.

In all discussions of religion, you will find the majority of Muslims respectful of the Bible, Jesus and Moses, but what we've been hearing from Christian preachers and even the pope<sup>2</sup> about Islam, the Quran and Muhammad, peace be upon him, has been defamatory and vulgar. A far cry from the teaching, “Love your enemy and bless those who curse you”, even though Muslims are not your enemy. 398

## 4.3 Prophet Moses (PBUH)

Prophet Musa (Moses), peace be upon him, is the prophet mentioned the most in the Quran (129 times) and his life story is the most detailed. Perhaps this is the reason the author did not receive any questions about

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<sup>2</sup>At the time this post was initially written, the pope was Benedict XVI who made unfair statements about Islam and he resigned his post soon after. Pope Francis replaced him and he has been a fair pope.

him! Muslims know his story well from when he was a newborn to the Exodus.

Some of the stories in the Quran involving Moses (PBUH) are:

- How he was rescued from being killed by Pharaoh and instead raised in his mansion under the care of Asia, Pharaoh's wife.
- How he fled Egypt for fear of his life and arrived at the Midian township where he met with Prophet Shuaib (Jethro) (PBUH), married his daughter, and worked for him for several years.
- How he traveled to Sinai where God spoke to him, gave him the Ten Commandments and his prophethood assignment.
- How he met Al-Khadr, a man of knowledge that God bestowed on him from His providence, and the valuable lessons Moses learned from him.
- How he returned to Egypt to convey to Pharaoh that God is one and that Judgment Day is real, and to ask Pharaoh to let the Hebrews leave in peace.
- How Pharaoh rejected it all and planned to prove Moses wrong by way of a sorcery competition between Moses and Pharaoh's magicians, and how that challenge ended in Moses's favor.
- How Moses and the Hebrews fled Egypt and Pharaoh and his soldiers followed them to kill them but ended up drowned in the waterway that Moses's staff split into two huge, standing waves leaving between them a safe passage for the believers.

## 4.4 Prophet Abraham (PBUH)

### 4.4.1 Happy Eid-ul-Adhha

Eid Mubarak to all fellow Muslims around the world. Today is the feast of sacrifice, commemorating the ultimate willingness to surrender to God by Prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael) and Lady Hajar (Hagar), peace be upon them. They all teach us the lesson that surrender to God, which is what the word Islam means, is the gateway to peace, prosperity and longevity.

This photograph shows the location of the sacrifice event, in Mecca, next to the Kaaba, named Hijr Ismail,



Hijr Ismail

1991

#### 4.4.2 Why did Abraham tell three lies?

*Why did Abraham tell the following three lies?*

1. *His wife Sarah is his sister,*
2. *He told his father he was sick, but he wasn't, and*
3. *He said it was the big idol that broke the other idols to pieces, when it was he who did that?*

The first item on your list is not in the Islamic narrative of Abraham, peace be upon him.

The second item, you may be referring to verse 37:89 where he is quoted saying to his people, "I'm sick". He had been arguing with them about their worship of idols. He heard enough of their nonsense and wanted to end the futile dialog. It's like when one says "I'm sick and tired of this nonsense". It was allegorical.

Item 3 is mentioned in the Quran with the explanation. It wasn't a lie but a satire. Young Abraham, peace be upon him, created a drama to illustrate a point: idols are not gods. His people were impressed by the message for a moment then returned to their wicked ways shortly afterward.

158

#### 4.4.3 Was Sarah jealous of Hagar?

Sarah, the first wife of Abraham, peace be upon both, has been accused of being jealous of Hajar (Hagar), his second wife, and that is why she had

Abraham send her away and her son, Ismail (Ishmael), peace be upon both.

If Sarah was such a terrible person then why would God tell us in verse 11:73 in the story of the angels visiting her house and giving her the good news that she will be pregnant with Isshaq (Isaac) and then give her and her husband the wonderful greeting, “The mercy of God and His blessings are upon you, people of the house. He is Praiseworthy and Glorious.”?

Far from it. Sarah was a virtuous, believing woman and the wife of the patriarch of the prophets. When she saw how much her husband wanted a son and she knew she couldn’t give him one, she did a most generous and unselfish thing that only a few wives will ever consider: She gave him her maid to marry! She picked a virtuous, believing woman because that’s what her husband deserved. May God have been pleased with Sarah. I strongly believe that it’s precisely because Sarah was so unselfish, compassionate and loving to her husband that God rewarded her with her own son.

In every prayer, during Tashahhud<sup>3</sup>, all Muslims say this, “*O God, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You have blessed Abraham and the family of Abraham.*” How many confirmations have Muslims made so far that Sarah was blessed? Trillions!

I find it infinitely amusing that the explicit evidence that Ishmael (PBUH) was the sacrificial son comes from the Torah and not from the Quran! The Quran seems to be deliberate in not telling us the name of the sacrificial son while the Torah states that God instructed Abraham to slaughter *his only son*. Isaac was never Abraham’s only son since he was younger than Ishmael by all accounts. Thirteen years difference in their ages seems to be the consensus. In fact, the entire story of the sacrifice may have taken place before Isaac was even born.

Don’t believe any talk of mad jealousy between Sarah and Hajar. It’s an attempt from religious agitators to sow the seeds of hatred between Muslims and Jews. Muslims and the authentic Jews are not only cousins in blood line, they are also cousins in faith. 113

## 4.5 Other Prophets, Peace be upon them

The Prophets mentioned by name in the Quran are 25. They are: Adam, Idris (Enoch), Nuh (Noah), Huud (Eber), Saleh (Methoselah), Lut (Lot), Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ishmael), Isshaq (Isaac), Yaaqub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Shuaib (Jethro), Ayyub (Job), Zul-Kifl (Ezekiel), Musa

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<sup>3</sup>Saluting God, bearing witness to His oneness and to the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), and praying for him, his family, and his followers and acknowledging the blessings God bestowed on Abraham (PBUH) and his family.

(Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dawoud (David), Sulaiman (Solomon), Elyas (Elias), Al-Yasaa (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Zakaria (Zachariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), Eesa (Jesus), and Muhammad, peace be upon all of them.

18 of these names are mentioned in Chapter 6 of the Quran. Five Chapters are named after prophets: Yunus (Jonah) (Chapter 10), Huud (Eber) (Chapter 11), Yusuf (Joseph) (Chapter 12), Ibrahim (Abraham) (Chapter 14), and Muhammad (Chapter 47).

But those are not all the prophets whom God sent. He says in the holy Quran, "And We have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those [whose stories] We have related to you, and among them are those [whose stories] We have not related to you..." (40:78). There is a hadith ([Ibn Hanbal \[32\]](#) (22288)) that says that the number of prophets God sent over the centuries is 124,000, but it is rated weak. Another hadith was rated authentic only by Al-Albani and narrated by Abu-Zarr Al-Ghafari (RA) that he asked the Prophet (PBUH) about the number of Messengers of God, and he replied that they were three hundred and some.

#### 4.5.1 Why were there no female prophets?

I don't know for sure, but my guess is that women have been isolated from life outside the home throughout history. In order for a prophet to call his people to the way of God, he must be able to mingle with them freely and argue with them. He also had to fight to defend himself and his followers. That would have been impossible for a woman to do.

Furthermore, men dominated all aspects of society. Therefore, God's message was to be delivered to men, who are then required to convey it to their women and children. Society simply has always been structured that way, so men would only listen to other men and look up only to other men. Even then, most prophets were belied and fought and many were killed. No woman in the past would have a chance in such mire. 826





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## Chapter 5

# Rituals and Practices

The following articles deal with the pillars of Islam, and its practices.

### 5.1 Rituals

#### 5.1.1 What is the point of the rituals?

Suppose your boss at work told you to do some task and you couldn't see the point of it, would you not do it? Of course you would do it anyway because you don't want to be fired. Lucky for you and me, God doesn't fire us! He gives us an entire lifetime to do the simple things He asks us to do, such as stopping eating a few hours a day a few days a year, or bowing down to Him in thanks a few minutes a day. Simple things that, unlike your boss, do not benefit Him, only benefits us humans. 180

#### 5.1.2 Why do we have to pray 5 times a day?

*God doesn't need our prayers, right? So, why did He order us to pray to Him 5 times everyday? What is the significance of prayer?*

Have you ever reflected on the words you say near the end of every prayer? They are (translated into English):

*“Greetings to God, and prayers and all good things. Peace is upon you, O Prophet, and the mercy of God and His blessings. Peace be upon us, and upon all righteous worshipers of God. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His worshiper and Messenger.”*

It is called Al-Tashahhud (Professing the Testament), as you know. It sounds like a conversation, doesn't it? I read a long time ago that it is the conversation that took place between the Prophet (PBUH) and God, when God invited him up above the Seventh Heaven and before His Throne during the Night and Ascension journey (Al-Israa wal-Mieraj).

Whoa! When we pray, we are in an ascension toward God. Does that answer your question about significance? No wonder many of the Salaf (Muslim predecessors), such as An-Naysapuri and As-Suyuti, have described prayer as *“the ascension of the believer”*.

Prayer is so important that it is the only mandate in Islam that was made directly by God to the Prophet (PBUH) on the ascension journey above the seventh heaven! Everything else was conveyed by Archangel Gabriel (PBUH) as Quran or in inspirations as Hadith.

One hadith, narrated by Buraida and reported by [Ibn Majah \[36\]](#) (1079) and [Al-Nasai \[17\]](#) (463) calls the prayer thusly, *“the covenant between us and them is the prayer; whoever leaves it out has disbelieved.”* Another version added *“If they keep it, God will fulfill His Covenant with them by admitting them to Paradise. If they don't keep it, they have no covenant!”*

Prayer, therefore, is the most important tool we have to keep our covenant with God.

Why do we have to pray? Do you need to eat and drink everyday to stay alive? That's the food for the body. The food for the spirit is the company of God. Prayer gives us that. God does not need our prayers. We do. Our souls would die without it.

One of the fascinating verses in the Quran to me is this,

*“So, endure what they say and sanctify with praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting; and during periods of the night sanctify [God] and at the ends of the day, that you may be contented.”* (20:130)

Did you notice that? *“so that **you may be contented**”*. We are the beneficiaries of prayer. That verse also answers the question, *“why five times?”* Because our soul needs its food that often, much like our bodies need to eat and drink three or more times everyday. The spreading of prayer times over the waking hours also serves to make each one lighter to do and leaves no period without the remembrance of God, which we all need to stay focused on what's really important.

Do you take a bath frequently to keep clean? The Prophet (PBUH) gave that parable about the prayer. He said to his fellows, *“See you if there was a river by the door of one of you, in which he bathes five times a day; does that leave out of his dirt anything?”* They answered, *“That would not leave out of his dirt anything.”* He replied, *“That is the parable of prayer. God erases with it sins.”* Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and

reported and authenticatd by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (528), [Muslim \[43\]](#) (667), and [Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (1726).

With every prayer, you have audience with the King of kings, where you can ask him for anything and stay with Him as long as you want. How many kings come close to that Grace? 1829

### 5.1.3 Why do we have to pray in Arabic?

*I wonder. If Islam is universal and for all races and all kinds why do I have to pray in language I don't know at all (Arabic)? Can't I pray in English?*

To start with, part of the prayer is reciting from the Quran. Only the Arabic text is the Quran. Anything else is a translation.

It isn't that hard to learn the rest of the words used in a prayer. If it were hard, then how come a billion people whose native language is not Arabic have been able to learn them? 1133

### 5.1.4 Forgetfulness during prayer

*I want to learn about prostrations of forgetfulness. How is that done?*

Prostration for distractedness (Sujood-al-Sahw) is an established practice (Sunna) of the Prophet (ﷺ) Whenever he was reminded by people that he forgot to do something in the prayer that is mandatory, he would make up what he missed, e.g., a rakaa (bowing), then make two prostrations after the prayer. Several authentic Hadiths teach that the making up can be done during the prayer or after ending it. If you choose to make the prostrations during the prayer, then you have to do them after the Tashahhud (the greeting start) and before the Tasleem (the greeting finish).

They are two prostrations, with a sit up between them. Each prostration is made as the normal prostration, but instead of saying “Subhana Rabbiya Al-Aala” (Sanctified is my Lord, the Highest) three times, you instead say once, “Subhana man la yas-hoo wa la yanam” (Sanctified is He who does not get distracted, nor sleeps). As usual, each movement is preceded by the words “Allahu Akbar” (God is greater).

So, let's take a few examples:

1. You prayed Isha three rakaat instead of four. In this case, you rise up, say “Allahu Akbar”, pray a rakaa until you say the Tashahhud.

Then, and before Tasleem, you make the two prostrations and then make the Tasleem.

2. You prayed Isha five rakaat instead of four. In this case, you rise up, say “Allahu Akbar”, then immediately sit down, make the two prostrations of Sahw then say the Tasleem.
3. You forgot to make the first Tashahhud, or you made three prostrations instead of two, etc. This case is like the second case above. You only make the two prostrations of Sahw.

If you have done either of the above two cases, but remembered that during your prayer, i.e., have not yet made the Tasleem, then you may continue with the Tasleem and do like above, or you may do it before the Tasleem. Both methods have been narrated in authentic Hadiths. 1841

### 5.1.5 I’m unable to pray in time

*I would like to do all 5 prayers on time, but I don’t think I can with school interfering.*

When I was a student in the university, I used to pray in the library, or in any empty room of any building on campus. It wasn’t easy, but I managed to do it. Do not assume that it’s impossible until you’ve tried. If you tried and failed, then you have an excuse, in which case you can make the missed prayers up when you go back home after school. 1189

### 5.1.6 Is delaying the prayer a sin?

*In the Quran, it says,*

*“So woe unto those performers of Salaah (prayers) (hypocrites). Those who delay their Salaah (prayer from their stated fixed times)”*

*Does this mean if I delay my prayer 30 minutes later but I still have two hours of prayer left it’s a bad thing? Or is it that I delay it until the two hours finish?*

*Please answer asap!*

A better translation IMHO of the word “Saahoon” (in 107:5) would be “unmindful”. Praying during the allotted time means that you are mindful of the prayers.

Verb to delay is transitive while verb *سهى*, used in verse 107:5, is intransitive. That is why when your flight doesn’t go on time, it is said to

be delayed. The Arabic verb ساهون, on the other hand, means left out unintentionally, i.e., was unmindful. It is similar to the verb نسي (to forget), except that it is more often used in the Quran as a transitive verb. That is, it is often used as a figure of speech to mean rejection or abandonment, e.g., “they forgot God, so He forgot them” (9:67). 1183

### 5.1.7 Can I make up for my missed prayers?

*My teacher mentioned that one cannot ever make up for missed prayers unless if they were missed because of sleep or forgetfulness.*

*I actually missed a lot of prayers when I was young and not practicing, but I've been trying to make these up with each regular prayer. Tell me, is this wrong? Can no prayer at all be done as qadha (compensation)?*

You're doing the right thing, may God enable you to do it all. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “*If one of you misses a prayer because of sleep or forgetfulness, let him make it up as soon as he remembers, **for there is no compensation (Kaffara) for it other than that.***”

The highlighted sentence in the hadith is often overlooked in the religious opinions. It simply means that missed prayers cannot be compensated with money, fasting, repentance, feeding the poor, etc. It can only be compensated in kind. That is, with equal numbers of prayers.

The fact that the hadith gives examples of reasons for missing prayers does not necessarily mean these are all the reasons. To conclude that one cannot make up missed prayers because a scholar said you can't, is a very serious conclusion. You are going to face God alone on the Day of Judgment and that scholar will not be with you to plead for you.

My humble advice is to start making up your missed prayers as much as you can until they are all done. I know a gentleman who missed 17 years of prayers! When he started taking Islam seriously, he decided to pray one missed prayer after each regular prayer and he kept asking God to keep him alive long enough to make up for all his missed prayers. God responded to him favorably and he's made up all 17 years worth of missed prayers! Ma-sha-Allah. It became second nature to him.

*But the teacher said that even such qadha is not accepted.*

How does he know that? Where is it in the Quran or the authentic Hadith that says that a qadaa prayer is not accepted?

Almighty God says “God wants for you ease, He does not want for you difficulty” (2:185). Stay away from people who want to make things

difficult, thinking that it would lead to piety. There is no relationship between difficulty and piety.

God says that He will not deny the People of the Book the good they do! (2:115), so do you think that He would deny Muslims the good they do?

*Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Ikhtiyaaraat (34): "It is not prescribed for the one who misses a prayer deliberately to make it up, and the prayer, if he makes it up, is not valid; rather he should do a lot of voluntary (naafil) prayers."*

With all due respect to him, and he is due a lot of respect, what is his evidence? You can't declare that something God will not accept if neither God nor His Messenger have told you so.

*I am still confused as to how it is allowed for a person to pray the fard (mandate), that he missed years ago 'out of neglectfulness', now? I am a layman.. so have patience with me.*

Simple. Are you allowed to pay a Zakah (alms) that you neglected years ago? Are you allowed to fast days of Ramadan that you neglected years ago? Are you allowed to perform Hajj (pilgrimage) which you could have made years ago but did not?

Why is it hard then to understand that you can pray neglected Fard prayers from years ago?

*The reason you said, still didn't clarify whether the Prophet (PBUH) has permitted that type of prayer.*

He did not forbid it, therefore it's allowed! But he actually did more than allow it. He implied that you must do it when he told the man who asked him about performing Hajj on behalf of his dead mother, by making the analogy (Qiyas) of a debt, that debt owed to God has more priority than other debts. That analogy applies to neglected prayers, Zakah and fasting as well, since all are debts owed to God.

*What about a person who didn't pray for five years or so and then takes the deen (religion) sincere. If he has to pray all the missed out prayers how will he pray? Like should he pray the missed out maghrib (Sunset prayer) at the time of maghrib or at what time? In any case whats the evidence?*

I mentioned earlier the gentleman I know who neglected praying for 17 years! Then his conscience woke up and he started to take Islam seriously.

He vowed to make up all 17 years of missed prayers! What resolve! He followed a simple, disciplined method: with every regular prayer he prays another one like it. Thus, he made up a day everyday! He kept supplicating to God to keep him alive until he has finished his debt to Him. God answered his supplication and he finished compensating all 17 years. Ma-sha-Allah. I felt like dancing in joy when I heard it.

This is just one method that's been tried and tested and proved successful. You can come up with other ideas that might work equally well.

*Wouldn't it be much easier for him if he prays voluntary prayers hoping that it will compensate for the fard in the Hereafter? (especially because we have a proof)*

Easier for sure, but it's a gamble! How do you know it would be enough? Sure God is merciful, but since He did not tell us that He would forgive neglected prayers and neither did the Prophet (ﷺ), one stands on shaky grounds if one thinks they might get away with praying nawafil (voluntary but recommended prayers) and hope for the best!

We do not have proof that voluntary prayer is all we need in this case. We have opinions of scholars. Opinion is not proof.

*I am afraid your suggestion would amount to bidah (novelty). Not accusing you of anything, but rather it is the hadith of Rasool-Allah (Messenger of God), pbuh, that every innovation will be rejected. A scary area.*

This is another widely misunderstood narration. Bid-a, meaning novelty, is any change to the religion. When you mandate something that is not mandated by God or His Messenger, or forbid something that they did not forbid, then you have changed the religion. Bid-a is not any innovation, because building domes on top of mosques is an innovation, furnishing mosque floors with carpets is an innovation, using a rosary (Sibha) for tasbeeh (sanctification of God) is an innovation, etc. BTW, the narration you quoted is not a hadith; it is a quote made by Abdullah ibn Masoud (RA).

*But isn't it true that if a person deliberately abandoned a prayer until the stated time for it had expired, making up for it would not benefit him. This is because an act of worship which is scheduled for a certain time must be performed at that stated time.*

It is true that mandated prayers are timed, but that does not prove that making up for them when not done in time is disallowed. If one follows

that logic, one may not make up for missed days of Ramadan, because it too is timed, or Zakah for that matter, but we know that we can make up for them, right? So, that logic is flawed.

*OK. There is a hadeeth, reported by Muhammad bin Uthman Adh-Dhahabi, which says:*

*“The first of people works that they should be called to account for on the Day of Judgment is the Prayer. Our Lord, Holy and Exalted will say to His angels, while knowing better than they, ‘Look at the Prayer of My servant. Did he perform it in full, or fall short of it?’ If it is in order, then he will have prospered and succeeded; if it is wanting, then he will have failed and lost. While if anything is missing from it, He will say, ‘Look to see if My servant has any supererogatory worship.’ And if he has, Allah will say, ‘Complete My servant’s obligatory Prayers for him from his supererogatory ones’. And he will be dealt with likewise in his other works.”*

Thanks for finding this hadith. This hadith was narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Tabarani \[22\]](#) (7/317). Hadith attribution analysts paused at one narrator in the chain, Al-Hajjaj ibn Nusair, whom they uniformly dismissed as weak. Therefore, the hadith is not authentic, but authenticity aside, it is clear from it that it does not prohibit making up for missed prayers, nor does it say that such Qadaa (compensation) will not be accepted. Thus, all we can conclude from it, assuming it’s authentic, is that voluntary prayer will save us if our regular prayer was lacking. That does not preclude Qadaa.

As for the notion that our intention is what matters (which is true) and that God is merciful (which is also true), that does not mean that neglect of mandates should not be compensated. Otherwise, we may skip fasting in Ramadan or paying the Zakah and hope that God will forgive us because we convinced ourselves that our intentions were good. When God or His Messenger tell us that something has a *Kaffara* (expiation), that means the *Kaffara* **must** be made if the mandate was neglected or missed.

### 5.1.8 I’ve been praying in the wrong direction

*I’ve recently found out that, for years, I’ve been praying in the wrong direction! What’s the ruling on that? Would I have to repeat all my salats (prayers)?*

You did not do it on purpose, did you? Then it will be accepted, in-sha-Allah (God willing). The scholars have agreed that sins are not

counted if done by mistake, forgetfulness or coercion. By the same token, one would conclude that good deeds will not be discounted if they haven't been done correctly because of a mistake, forgetfulness or coercion. We know, for instance, that if you're fasting in Ramadan and you eat something without thinking, then remember that you were fasting, that you do not have to compensate for that day and can resume the fast.

*I follow the Shaafii school of thought, and I looked up his ruling on this matter. I found out that he had two different rulings: one says that the prayer direction must be as accurately determined as can be, and another that says that the important thing is to face the Kaaba in Mecca and not turn your back to it.*

If you have a means to accurately determine the Qibla (prayer direction), then you should. But if you don't, then your best estimate is sufficient. The scholars have ruled that a traveler who cannot determine the Qibla may estimate the direction to the best of his ability. Remember that the verses that mandate facing the Sacrosanct Mosque all say to face "the half where the mosque is", i.e., the hemisphere, e.g., verses 2:144 and 2:149-150. 1640

### 5.1.9 Can we pray with hypocrites?

*Let us suppose a person states they do not go to the masjid (mosque) because they do not want to pray with hypocrites. They would rather pray alone. I told the person that we do not go to pray with the hypocrites but go to pray to Allah. And I continued stating that our prayer may soften the heart of others.*

*What does one say to a person whose heart is hardened against fellow Muslims? These are serious questions. This person does not take well much hadeeth. This person does not trust scholars.*

*I honestly believe some of us are given the gift of joy in this life under all conditions. I feel this is one of my blessings. On the bleakest of moments I find something joyful in it. Even if it is the benefit of the experience in its darkest depths.*

What a beautiful way you finished your question! A blessed person sees blessings in the bleakest moments, while a deprived person sees deprivation in the most opulent moments.

From the other things you wrote to me about this person, I'm getting the impression that they have grown cynical or depressed. I'm not surprised,

given their illness, may God heal the sick as only He can and save us all from similar afflictions.

You are right in approaching this delicately. God teaches us in the holy Quran that the call to Him must always be done gently, even with an enemy. You recall how He instructed Moses and Aaron to call upon Pharaoh: “Then say to him a soft uttering perhaps he will remember or fear.” (20:44) Remember or fear, see? That is what you and I hope for your friend.

So, when you get a chance, remind your friend that they have an excuse to pray sitting down and explain how this is done if they don’t know how. Don’t press it. Let them sleep on it and keep praying for them. Also assure them that they can always make up for all missed prayers, and should, unlike what many fatwas have ruled.

Life is too short to waste on cynicism, apathy or despair. A true believer never despairs, “Verily, they do not despair of the grace of God but the disbelieving folk.” (12:87) Life can end at any time, and suddenly, and be replaced by the sobering reality of the Hereafter and Judgment. Cynicism would not be of any help then. Cynicism is an escape from unpleasant reality, but it achieves nothing but ill mood. Optimism and positive activity on the other hand, warm the heart and set the mind to find solutions to problems and fixes for what is wrong.

As for your other question, none know who is hypocrite and who is not. A fellow Muslim is not a hypocrite just because one doesn’t like what they say or do! God told the Prophet (ﷺ) that there are hypocrites around him, that He will tell him the names of some of them but will withhold the names of others! (see verse 9:101). And the Prophet (ﷺ) did likewise when Huzayfa ibn Al-Yaman (RA) asked him to tell him who were hypocrite. The Prophet (ﷺ) made him promise not to tell anyone.

Why is that? Because being a hypocrite may not be the end of the story. A hypocrite may become a good, committed believer later. Affairs of the heart constantly change and God is the “*turner of the hearts.*” 2385

### 5.1.10 How was prayer done before it was mandated?

*How many times did the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) pray before he got the order to pray 5 times a day? How many times did the prophets before Muhammad (SAW) pray?*

We don’t know. What we do know is that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed a good portion of the night every night, as God commanded him in the beginning of his mission,

“O you bundled up! Stand up [in prayer] during the night minus a little” (73:1-2)

Many of his fellows did the same, as God tells us in the same Chapter, verse 73:20. So, it is reasonable to assume that the format of the prayer was known to them before the mandate. But there is no evidence that I'm aware of that the format of the prayer was different before the mandate, or that the number of prayers Muslims offered was fixed, or that they prayed at specific times. The command to pray and give alms was unspecific until both were mandated later.

As for previous prophets, we do not know how many times a day they prayed. Interestingly enough, you can read in the New Testament that Jesus (PBUH) used to stand up in prayer almost the whole night. I have also been referred to a YouTube video showing how the proper Jewish prayer is to be performed. Guess what, it is almost identical to the Muslim prayer. I'm not the least bit surprised. 1913

### 5.1.11 The benefits of fasting in Ramadan

*I know, and have experienced the physical benefits of fasting in Ramadan. Talk to me about the non-physical benefits.*

When God told us we have to fast, He did not mention any physical benefit, though there are many. Check out books on fasting by Dr. Ahmad Sakr for much of that.

God, however, gave us the purpose of fasting: Taqwa (piety). That is the inevitable result of a thoughtful fasting. A non-thoughtful fasting is the kind the Prophet, peace be upon him, referred to when he said, “*There may be one who fasts but does not get out of his fasting except hunger and thirst!*” (Al-Nasai [17] (3249)). A thoughtful fasting, on the other hand, is abstaining from sin, big and small, in addition to abstaining from food and drink. That discipline is what fasting is all about and it is what leads to piety.

A thoughtful fasting is one where the person does it out of faith, not custom, and then counts it with God (Ihtisaab). That means you leave the reward to God. Indeed, He said in a Qudsi hadith, “*All of man’s work is for himself except fasting; it’s for Me and I reward it.*” (Al-Bukhari [12] (5927)).

A longer version of this hadith continues, “*For the fasting person are two joys: one when he breaks the fast and the other is when he meets his Lord!*” (Al-Bukhari [12] (1904)) May we all be among those fortunate ones.

Piety is a moral value, but it leads to the spiritual benefit of fasting: closeness to God. This is revealed in verse 2:186. In a recent Friday prayer sermon, the Imam (preacher) drew our attention to the fact that in verse 2:186, God did not say: when My servants ask you about Me, tell

them I'm near, He said instead, "When My servants ask you about Me, *I am near.*" God is so near and we have direct access to Him that there is no need for any one to intercede with Him.

In his book *Kitabul-Ilm*, the late Sheikh Ibn Uthaymeen, may God bless his soul, wrote, "*Piety is a means for strengthening understanding, and strong understanding assists in increasing knowledge.*" Another non-physical benefit of fasting! If we do reach the plateau of Taqwa as Ramadan promises, we stand a good chance of acquiring knowledge as a bonus. Two for the price of one.

*I know the look of piety. It is a look of beauty. What are the degrees of piety?*

I don't know if there are degrees of piety, but I particularly like one definition of it, by Ali ibn Abi-Talib, may God have been pleased with him,

"الخوف من الجليل والعمل بالتنزيل والرضا بالقليل والاستعداد ليوم الرحيل"

Translation: Fear of the Majestic One, complying with the Revelation, contentment with little, and preparing for the day of departure. 838

### 5.1.12 Wasting opportunities

Today's Khutba (sermon) was about opportunities that God periodically gives us to get abundant blessings, forgiveness and balance-tipping actions, but alas many of us miss them and some may not even be aware of them.

The Khatib (preacher) mentioned a hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and rated between Hasan (sound) and Sahih (authentic) by various scholars. The hadith tells of one time the Prophet (ﷺ) was stepping up the three steps that led to his pulpit.

As he made each step, he said aloud "Amen!" When he finished the sermon, a man asked him about that. He replied, "*Jibril (Archangel Gabriel) came to me and said, 'Cast away is he who reached his parents and they did not cause him to go to heaven'. I said amen. Then he said to me, 'Cast away is he in whose presence your name is mentioned and he did not pray for you!' I said amen. Then he said to me, 'Cast away is he who reaches Ramadan and is not forgiven'. I said amen.*"

Happy, blessed and spiritually fulfilling Ramadan to all fellow Muslims. May you and I be able to fast its days, stand up in prayers its nights, be generous with our charities, good deeds and kind talk, be patient, enduring and forgiving, read the Quran a lot and understand what it says, and remember God often and remember His countless blessings and the

many opportunities He keeps giving us to be better human beings worthy of His eternal abode of bliss, Janna.

This is a once-a-year opportunity. Let us not waste it on trivia. 2146

### 5.1.13 Ensuring a sincere fast

*Ramadan starts on Monday. Ramadan Mubarak. How do we see to it that our fasting is sincere?*

Ramadan Mubarak (Blessed Ramadan) to you and your loved ones. May God enable us to fast, pray, give charity and recite the Quran in a way that pleases Him.

This is a particularly interesting question, because fasting is a private matter between man and God. You can claim to fast, while sneaking out at times to eat then wash your mouth and come back and no one would be the wiser! It is possible, therefore, to fake fasting.

So, asking about sincerity of fasting is a very valid and relevant question. Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, *“There may be a fasting person who gets nothing out of his fast but hunger and thirst!”* Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA), repored by [Ibn Majah \[36\]](#) (1690) and [Al-Nasai \[17\]](#) (3249), and rated authentic by [Al-Albani \[8\]](#) (1380). Others rated it “soundly authentic.”

That’s a person who did not get the purpose of fasting. The Prophet (ﷺ) tells us how to make our fasting sincere. He said,

*“Whoever does not leave the utterance and acting of falsehood, then God has no need of him leaving his food and drink!”* Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (1903). Another version added *“and acting with insolence”* ([Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6057)).

Our fast is insincere if we say or do falsehood.

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said,

*“If one of you is fasting, let him not do profane or offensive things. And if someone offends him, let him say, ‘I’m fasting. I’m fasting.’”* Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (1894) [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1151).

Our fast is insincere if we succumb to our natural instincts, such as to defend ourselves against insults.

The effect of a sincere fast is immeasurable. Your spirit feels it. Your soul is fed while your body is deprived of food! When Ramadan ends, not only do you lose weight, regulate your digestive system and feel clean, but you also feel lighter, happier and closer to God. Such are the ones who got the wisdom and benefit of fasting, may God make us among them. And if that’s not your goal from fasting, this may be: The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Whoever fasts Ramadan out of faith and expectation of reward, his past sins are forgiven!” Narrated by Abu-Hurayra and Ibn Abbas, may God have been pleased with them, and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (38) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (760).

I came across this blog post,

<http://ramadanmissions.wordpress.com/daily-goals/>

that itemizes things one can do to ensure a sincere fast. Each one of them helps. 1867

### 5.1.14 Should I have fasted today?

*Today is the 9th of Muharram (the first month of the Islamic calendar). I understand that the Prophet (PBUH) either fasted on it, or intended to fast on it, in addition to fasting on the tenth, known as the day of Aashooraa. Can you settle that question?*

*Also, a friend told me that instead of the 9th, I should fast on the 11th. Is this true? She could not provide me with evidence.*

What I know is that the Prophet (PBUH) fasted only on the 10th. On the last year of his life, he said, “If I live another year, I’ll fast on the 9th.” ([Muslim \[43\]](#) (1916))

In Abu-Dawoud’s version of the hadith, the Prophet added, “lest I miss the day of Aashuraa”, implying, I suppose, that a mistake in citing the crescent (and thus determining when the month begins) should not cause him to miss fasting that great day. This was one of the opinions that Al-Nawawi mentioned that the scholars offered to explain why the Prophet intended to fast on the 9th.

But he did not live another year, so we have no way of knowing if fasting on the 9th is a good idea, because God may have discouraged the Prophet from doing it. Some scholars say that his intention is sufficient to make it a Sunna. You may agree or disagree. I respectfully disagree. Sunna is established by deeds of the Prophet (PBUH), not intentions.

It was Ibn Abbas (may God have been pleased with him) who suggested fasting the 9th and the 10th. There is a narration, by Hunayda ibn Khalid, rated authentic by Al-Albani only, that the Prophet (PBUH) fasted on the 9th and the tenth.

The scholars have actually disagreed on which day is Aashuraa. Some thought it was the tenth (which is what the Arabic word means), and others thought it was the ninth (presumably because of the hadiths that say that).

I heard about fasting on the 11th, but I'm yet to find evidence to support it. 1169

### 5.1.15 Are we supposed to fast in mid-Shaaban?

*What is the correct ruling on fasting in the middle of the month of Shaabaan (the 8th month of the lunar calendar)?*

There is no authentic Sunna about it, so if you fast, it will be a voluntary fast with no special importance attached to it. The Prophet (PBUH) often fasted much of Shaaban, but never all of it. He must, by chance, have fasted the middle day, but it wasn't for any particular significance of the day. In fact, a hadith, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by Ibn Hanbal and others says that the Prophet (PBUH) forbade fasting the second half of Shaaban.

There are opinions in the literature that the Quran was sent down from the Preserved Tablet and given to angel Gabriel (PBUH) on the 15th of Shaaban. But none of those narrations is attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) nor authentic. 1846

### 5.1.16 Must we verbalize our intentions?

*I am very confused about intention to pray. There seems to be a difference of opinion. Do we make intention. Or do we have an implicit understanding that Allah knows our intention as we make wudu? I swear ignorance is bliss.*

What is the evidence you're given that intentions need to be renewed before every religious ritual? Intention is in the heart. Your wudhoo (ablution), like you said, is an expression of your intention to pray. Your extending your prayer rug and standing on it facing Mecca, is an expression of your intention to pray. Even without all that, God obviously knows what you've intended when you set out to pray.

Perhaps the reason some people think that making the intention in one's head, or verbalizing it, is necessary is the famous hadeeth, "Every action is judged by its intention." (Al-Bukhari [12] (1)) That hadith is authentic, but what it means is that if you are standing in prayer to show off to people how religious you are, your prayer will not be accepted, but if you're praying out of compliance with God's command and for the sake of pleasing Him, then your prayer will, in-sha-Allah (God willing), be accepted and rewarded. 1886

### 5.1.17 What is best done in the honored ten eves?

*The month of Zhil-Hijja (the twelfth lunar month) is upon us and the first ten eves of it are highly honored by the Quran. What are the best things to do during those ten eves?*

The thing to do is to do a lot of good deeds and Zikr (remembrance and mention of God) in the first ten days (starting this year on Nov. 6th) and offer Udhiya (sheep sacrifice) on the tenth day. You can pay an organization which will do the sacrifice for you. The sacrifice commemorates the story of prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael), peace be upon them. The meat is to be divided into three portions, one for oneself, another for friends and neighbors, and a third for the poor and needy.

If you're not going to Hajj, you should pray Eid prayer in the Mosque on the tenth day and join your fellow Muslims after each prayer saying, "Allahu Akbaru Allahu Akbaru Allahu Akbar. La Ilaha illa Allah. Allahu Akbaru Allahu Akbaru wa Lillahi lhamd," three times. (God is greater. There is no deity but God. God is greater, and to God is the praise)

That is what the people at the Hajj will be saying as they throw pebbles at the three stone columns (Al-Jamrat), symbolizing casting away of Satan.

1125

### 5.1.18 Some questions about Zakah

*Someone told my husband that he has to pay Zakah (mandatory alms) everyday on his earnings. He asked a Sheikh (Muslim scholar) and he told him that the Zakah is paid after one year has passed since the last time it was paid. Who is right?*

The Sheikh is right. The only thing whose Zakah must be given out immediately is crop harvest, because God says in the holy Quran,

"And give its due the day of its harvest" (6:141)

*Am I able to give some Zakah to my parents? They are on fixed income but most of it is going towards bills and they sometimes don't have enough. This stresses my dad. I help them as much as I can but we are on a budget too. Can I give them from Zakah money?*

Zakah is supposed to be collected and pooled so that its administrators can subsequently divide it up among the eight categories mentioned in verse 9:60. Zakah is due on the excess of your wealth after you take care

of all your expenses, one of which is supporting your parents. So, why couldn't you give them throughout the year? I don't understand.

*I meant that because we ourselves don't have enough money.*

Say you paid Zakah of 600 dollars the last time. That means you have money! You could have given your parents 50 dollars a month each month last year. See?

Simply estimate what the Zakah will be. Past Zakah amounts can also help in the estimate. If the Zakah was 600, 500 and 1000 dollars the last three years, for example, then it averages 700 dollars. Use that as guiding estimate if you like.

*How do we pay the Zakah on the business we own? How do we factor in the expenses, the debts, etc.?*

If you were to sell the business tomorrow, how much would you get? Net after payment of all debts and obligations? That is the basis from which you calculate the Zakah.

You keep accounting books for your business in order to estimate taxes. Use the same books to figure out the networth of the business. That is your basis for Zakah. Deduct it from the networth before calculating the Zakah. The Zakah is based on the networth, which is defined as assets minus liabilities. Debts go into the liability column. Expenses are spent already, so they are not assets. Also, the scholars have agreed that basic necessities, such as the house you live in, the car you drive, the food that you eat, etc., are not included in the Nisab (basis).

To simplify the matter: add up the balances of your bank accounts, equities in your brokerage accounts (deduct 10 percent from IRA accounts, the early withdrawal penalty), the networth of the business and the market value of your gold and silver jewelry. That's your basis for Zakah, assuming you don't have agriculture land and oil fields and such.

Jewelry is part of your networth, whether you wear it or not. Take it to a jeweler and see how much he would pay for it. That is its market value and the basis for Zakah.

1304

### 5.1.19 He died before paying Zakah

*My father passed away and left us inheritance. He did not pay Zakah on his money for several years. Can we his children pay the Zakah for him? How much would that be? I assume if we do, we have to deduct it from the estate before it is distributed to heirs?*

*Another problem is that part of the inheritance is in certificates of deposit that pay interest. That is haraam (forbidden), isn't it? What do we do with the interest portion of the inheritance?*

Zakah is an obligation that must not be skipped. You certainly can pay it for him. A woman from the Juhaina tribe came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said to him, “My mother vowed to perform the pilgrimage but she died before she could do it. Can I perform it for her?” The Prophet (ﷺ) answered, “If she owed money, would you pay it for her?” He said, “Certainly.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Debt owed to God has more priority!” Narrated by Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (1852). Similar hadiths have been reported by Muslim about making up for the missed fasting of a deceased mother. The analogy clearly applies to Zakah equally.

If your father, may God have mercy on him, kept financial records, you may be able to figure out what his networth was each of the years he did not pay the Zakah and deduct two and a half percent of it. The financial records for the CDs are available from the issuing financial firm. You can deduct the interest and donate it, but keep the face value of the CDs.

If you cannot estimate his networth in those years, you can use the latest networth for your calculations.

Finally, and I'm sure you're doing this already, pray to God to forgive your father for neglecting the Zakah and ask Him to accept your compensation for it. May God bless your family.

1661

### 5.1.20 Why do Muslims circle the Kaba seven times?

*Why do Muslims circle the Kaba (in Mecca), and why seven times?*

It's symbolic. The life of Muslims revolves around God. God is the center of our lives. The Kaaba is metaphorically called the house of God.

The seven times is because the Prophet, peace be upon him, circled seven times and he said, “Take your rituals from me.” ([Al-Nasai \[17\]](#) (3062)) 460

### 5.1.21 The need for moon sighting

*As you know, there used to be quite a debate every year on how to determine the start of a new lunar month, especially Ramadan. Most scholars did not favor astronomical computations and insisted on manual sighting of the new moon. Phone calls were all over the globe to get the word out that the new moon was sighted or could not be sighted.*

*About a decade ago, the conviction changed. Most scholars are now comfortable with astronomical computations. No more debates!*

*However, I'd like to know what you think of the hadith, where the Prophet (PBUH) says, "Fast when you see it (the new moon of Ramadan) and break the fast when you see it (the new moon of Shawwal, the month after Ramadan). If it is obscured from you, then complete the count of Shaaban (the month before Ramadan) thirty days."*

That hadith was narrated by Abu-Hurayra and Ibn Abbas may God have been pleased with them, and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (1909), [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1081), and others. It is authentic.

Let's follow the proper deduction method, shall we? God orders us to fast Ramadan (2:185), but He does not specifically tell us how to tell that it started. He tells us that crescents are time keepers for us (in verse 2:189). The conclusion is that we learn from the new moon whether a lunar month has started.

Now, how do we know that a new moon is born? Astronomical computations are very accurate in this. Thus, following these computations enables us to be certain of when a lunar month has started.

But these advanced computations were not available to folks in the Seventh Century. So, how do *they* know that a new moon is there? That is where the hadith comes in. It's what the Prophet (PBUH) advised for that situation. It is not the only method for us, but it was for them and for others today who find themselves in a similar situation.

Now, what about the new moon being obscured? That can never happen with astronomic computations, but it can and did with naked-eye sighting. Again, the Prophet's advise, peace be upon him, was to assume it wasn't born. Without a stronger evidence that it was born, that was a valid, practical advice.

By the same token is the determination of when to start the fast everyday. God tells us to start the fast "when the white thread is distinguished from the black thread." (2:187) Most exegetes regard that criterion as a metaphor for dawn. A fellow of the Prophet (PBUH), named Udayy ibn Hatim Al-Tai, took it literally. He told the Prophet (PBUH) that he kept two headbands under his pillow, one white and one black. Then whenever he woke up during the night, he'd look at the two bands and if he couldn't tell them apart, he went ahead and ate something! The Prophet (PBUH) jokingly replied, "You have a wide neck! It's the darkness of the night and the brightness of the day." Narrated by Udayy and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (4510).

So, what is important is to tell that dawn started. All scholars have no

problem following computations to make that determination, so why would sighting the moon, to determine when Ramadan starts, be any different?

1872

### 5.1.22 What is the punishment for apostasy?

*Does Islam indeed rule the capital punishment for apostates?  
This is the prevailing opinion I've heard. It sounds to me the  
opposite of God's teachings in the Quran!*

*What is the punishment for apostasy?*

None! The only places in the Quran that mention apostasy are in verses 5:54 and 2:217. In verse 5:54, God makes it clear that He will replace the apostates with people He loves. No mention of any punishment. And in verse 2:217, God says that the work of the apostates is wasted and will be punished in the Hereafter. No mention of a punishment in this life.

You are right. God also has repeatedly emphasized that religion is a free choice and that our will is free. He says in verse 18:29,

“And say: the truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills let him believe and whoever wills **let him disbelieve**” (18:29)

God has also made it clear that the mission of the Prophet, peace be upon him, is limited to conveyance of the message and guidance. He specifically says in verses 88:21-26 that the Prophet is not a controller of people:

“So, remind, [O Muhammad]; you are *only a reminder*.

You are **not** over them a controller.

However, he who turns away and disbelieves -

Then **God will punish him** with the greatest punishment.

Indeed, to Us is their return.

Then indeed, **upon Us is their account.**” (88:21-26)

Therefore neither the Prophet (PBUH) nor anyone else has the authority to force religion on anyone. And the punishment for apostasy will be in the Hereafter.

It all makes sense since forcing a person into Islam produces hypocrites and enemies within! How can that be wise? Sanctified is God from being unwise.

Hope this helps.

*Jazaak Allah khayr (May God reward you well) for your input.  
I have been reading up about apostasy and most articles that I  
came across mentioned those verses you quoted. I understand  
that even scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah said apostates should  
not be killed unless they commit treason etc. Another scholar*

*was careful about this subject and even had two separate books about apostates - one for apostates who are against Islam and other for those who leave peacefully.*

*However, last question for you if you don't mind. Would it then imply the hadeeth that my friend quoted, contradicts the Quran? I know it doesn't but how can I explain to a non-Muslim that the aayah (verse) from Quran instructs differently from the hadeeth?*

The hadith certainly contradicts the Quran. That is a problem that Muslims often pretend is not there. Some explain it away by saying the Hadith abrogates the Quran. Can you believe that some scholars said that? Others explain it that the Quran abrogates the Hadith. That is a reasonable explanation. We know from the Quran that the Prophet (PBUH) made a few mistakes and God corrected him in the Quran. A third explanation is that the hadith is not authentic. Scholars have found several hadiths that were declared authentic but really aren't. And a fourth explanation is what you alluded to by quoting Ibn Taymiya: that the capital punishment was applied only to apostates who turned against the state and fought to bring it down, i.e., treason. That is, the hadith was referring to treason, not to apostasy. 925

### 5.1.23 Evolution of Islamic laws

*I sent you the link to an article that suggests that Islamic law has evolved over the centuries. What do you think of it?*

Thank you, my friend, for the article link.

I particularly like the author's post on Islamic law. I like to second the idea he stressed: that Islamic law evolved and was flexible and took in diversity of opinions, people and circumstances. I humbly think that this is also the case with executive government, economics, etc. Any student of Islamic history who read the writings of the Salaf (Muslim antecedents), can easily notice that evolution of thought, discipline and rulings.

What the Quran and the Sunna did was not ordain a rigid set of rules, but rather a framework within which a judge, ruler or businessman may work safely. Like a parent teaches their children how the world works so they make it and not get into trouble.

*I watched a YouTube video with that brother interviewing Hamza Yusef. They were discussing the fact due to internet access to translations of hadith, i.e., Bukhari, and of the Quran, many youths make judgments. They forget that many hadiths are contextual and it takes wisdom to understand.*

*They joked that in the old days the elders/scholars would literally give them 20 lashes for the rash judgments.*

*Unfortunately, nationalism has erased the words of the tribal elder. And it is easiest to control the greatest number of people with the most rigid standards. George Orwell comes to mind in 1984. As nationalism spreads we have a loss of deep understanding of our faith. We have lost the sense of compassion that was a trait characteristic of the prophets.*

*We forget that we need forgiveness from Allah swt. We also need to be in the mode of forgiving. Our laws today are not the Laws of Love.*

*We forget our history. How can we forget what happened to us in Spain?*

*We need a basic class in why understanding sharia helps us to be the best of moral character. We are distanced from each other not by nationalism but our ignorance of the laws that unite us.*

Islam is wide, but some want it narrow. It is easy, but some want it cumbersome. It is open, but some want it strict. It welcomes diversity and history has proved it, but some want it exclusive. It is adaptable, but some want it rigid. The problems Muslims have are not the result of Islam, as some Islamophobes want you to believe, but are the result of misunderstanding Islam. Hopefully, this book may put a dent into that misunderstanding. 2352

## 5.2 Practices

### 5.2.1 Let the beauty you seek be what you do

*I'd like to share with you this poem by Rumi, of whom I'm a huge fan, may God bless his soul,*

*Absorbed in this world,  
you have made it your burden.*

*Rise above this world;  
There is another vision.*

*All your life you have paid attention to your experiences,  
but never to your Self.*

*Are you searching for your Soul?*

*Then come out of your prison.*

*Leave the stream,  
and join the river that flows into the Ocean;*

*It will not lead you astray.*

*Let the beauty you seek be what you do.*

How beautiful! Rumi was indeed a genius poet. Thank you so much for sharing. 1404

### 5.2.2 How do you forgive a person?

*I often hear people say you must forgive people, I have even told people that myself. But how do you forgive someone? I mean just because you utter the words do not mean you have forgiven someone, and often times I forget things but it does not mean I have forgiven them. So How do you forgive someone?*

It is a skill and like every skill it needs practice to perfect and regular maintenance to preserve.

One day the Prophet, peace be upon him, said to the companions: “A man of Paradise will now come in!” Seconds later a man walked in and sat down to listen to the Prophet. The next day, the same thing happened and the third day too. Abdullah ibn Amr (RA) could not contain his curiosity and determined to know why this man whom nobody knew was described by the Prophet as a man of Paradise.

Ibn Amr invited himself to the home of the man and stayed there the traditional three nights with the purpose of observing worship practice of his host. Three nights passed and Ibn Amr did not notice anything out the ordinary!

When he was leaving, Ibn Amr told his host about what the Prophet said and asked him about it. The man said he did not know why the Prophet called him so but he knew that he never goes to bed holding a grudge against anyone! (Ibn Kathir [34] (8/95)) 327

### 5.2.3 Cooperation for good works

*I watched with delight the successful rescue operation of 33 Chilean miners who were trapped underground for more than two months. Thank God for their safety. Every now and then there are some good news!*

This is a wonderful example of how people can get together, work together, use their know-how for good and save lives. Why is that so rare?

God says in the holy Quran, “...And cooperate for goodness and piety and do not cooperate for sin and aggression...” (5:2) 1077

### 5.2.4 Should I mind my own business?

*I got to know an Arab woman who was recently divorced and with children. She told me recently that she is starting a relationship with a man, but that he does not intend to marry her. This, of course, is forbidden in Islam. I tried to talk sense into her but she is not listening. Should I keep trying or mind my own business?*

Your friend is feeling an emotional void, which is understandable being recently divorced and having to care alone for her children. You should stay in touch with her IMHO. She needs emotional support more than common sense at the moment.

Keep trying to counsel her. Argue with her that a man who is willing to sin is not a good man. He is likely to leave her and then she will be hurt again.

1047

### 5.2.5 Mixing culture with religion

*In this [Daily Mail article](#), written by British Eve Ahmad, who was raised a Muslim but rejected the faith, she writes something that caught my eye,*

*“When you dig deeper, it is not the faith they turned against, but the culture. Rules like marrying within the same sect or caste and education being less important for girls, as they should get married anyway. Where does it say that in the Koran? It does not.”*

That summarizes the problem!

One of the first human tendencies that God condemns in the Quran is Taqlid (blind imitation), which is a superset of culture. Taqlid suspends the mind, which is the best gift from God to man after life itself. The mind is the second of the two equally important ways to recognize the truth about God; the other being the heart.

It is clear from what she wrote that diagnosed the problem: the culture, so why did she reject the *faith*? It's the culture she should reject. The faith is absolved from what the culture mixed with it.

1107

### 5.2.6 Is the Niqab required for Muslim women?

*This week, France applied its new law banning the wearing of the Niqab (face veil) in public. A Muslim French woman was fined a 150 Euros for wearing a niqab. What is your view on*

*the niqab and on the debate about it. Belgium is doing the same thing, but the US sees the issue as a personal liberty issue.*

It is not only a personal liberty issue, it is also a religious issue. Many Muslim women who wear the niqab, do so out of conviction that it is required of them and that they would be living in sin if they did not wear it. Banning them from wearing it, therefore, is religious persecution.

Can society force a dress code on its citizens? Yes, but what are the limits? French society sees nothing objectionable when women wear very little clothing, but sees a great deal of problem when the women cover up on religious grounds. That is hypocrisy. If you listened to the French Parliament debate on the issue, prior to approving the ban, you would be surprised that an advanced, enlightened society like France would put forward such ridiculous arguments for a silly law and broadcast the session! One of the silliest arguments was that people have the right to know whom they are talking to and the niqab prevents that. Solution: identification card! When it is very cold in France, people wear head cover to protect them from freezing. Those head covers expose only the eyes, just like a niqab does. How come those head covers are not banned?

That said, the niqab is not required in Islam. It is not mentioned in the Quran or in the authentic Hadeeth. The hadith that some scholars build the niqab case on, reported by Abu-Dawoud and narrated by Aisha, may God have been pleased with her, about her sister Asmaa, is vague about what the Prophet (ﷺ) was pointing to when he said, “No woman who reached puberty should show of her body but this and this.” He pointed to his hands and head. The pro-niqab scholars interpreted that to mean he pointed to the eyes. The pro-hijab (veil that only covers the hair) interpreted it to mean he pointed to the face. Those are the majority of scholars. Others interpreted it to mean he pointed to the entire head, hence not even hijab is required. The debate is not settled and probably won't be any time soon, because the text is not definitive on it, therefore the conclusion cannot be certain. In the discipline of Usul-al-Fiqh (Foundations of Deduction), this is called “uncertain in significance” (ظني الدلالة). Adding to the uncertainty is the fact that this hadith is rated Mursal (open-ended). That is, it is not certain that Aisha (RA) said it because the narrator who said he heard from her, never met her! Other Hadith scholars rated it weak.

The funny thing about the debate is that all sorts of folks got into it on both sides. I've read arguments by feminists some of whom are for it and others are against it! To me, the matter is simpler than all this:

It is every woman's own business whether to wear the niqab or the

so-called hijab.<sup>1</sup> It is not the business of anyone else. I am against the niqab, because it is an unnecessary burden, but I am *also* against a ban on the niqab. 1630

### 5.2.7 Is Niqaab/Burka good or bad?

Niqab (a cover of entire face except the eyes) is neither good nor bad. It is unnecessary because it is based on one interpretation of the hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) to Asmaa bint Abi-Bakr, may God have been pleased with both.

Niqab should not be banned because every woman is free to wear it if she wants to or if she believes it is required of her. It should not be imposed either. 691

### 5.2.8 Can I travel alone?

*Asalamu alaikum, brother! So good to finally get in contact with you alhamdulillah. I left the forum that you used to post on after you. I couldn't find anything worth reading so I am here on your blog now.*

*I have a question. My parents have a great issue with me traveling on my own. I am now 21 years old and have not been anywhere on my own for more than a day. Now that I am graduating in-shaa Allah and would like to continue my studies perhaps abroad, I'm finding it very hard convincing them to let me go on a leisure trip let alone to another country! In my opinion and although they say it is because I'm without a mahram, I think this is more culture than Islamically. So I need to prove that I do not need a mahram so they would have no excuse inshaa Allah!*

*JazakAllah khairan!*

Welcome to the blog, sister. It's good to hear from you again. I enjoyed reading your posts on that forum.

The issue of women traveling alone is more than culture or tradition. Many of the hadiths that forbid it are authentic, narrated by Ibn Umar, Abu-Said Al-Khudri, and Ibn Abbas, may God have been pleased with them, and reported by Al-Bukhari. These hadiths all say that a woman may not travel by herself, only with a mahram (chaperon) if the trip will take two or more days of walking.

<sup>1</sup>The headscarf is called in Arabic khimar, not hijab. The term hijab, therefore, is a linguistic novelty.

Why is that? To answer this question, one needs to picture Arabia in the Seventh Century. Traveling between any two points was hazardous even for men, but at least men carried their swords and could defend themselves from thieves and thugs along the uncharted roads. How could any woman by herself?

That is the contingency of the hadiths. If there are no risks to a woman's life, dignity, or property while traveling by herself, then the hadiths do not apply.

Can such assurance be made today? While there will always be some risk, because there are always thugs and rapists out there, one has to admit that the risk has become much less than it was in Seventh Century Arabia. Airports and airplanes are packed with security. There are police officers in every town. Roads are well lit.

And nowadays, there are many ways a woman can defend herself. I always recommend to whomever asks me that a woman carries in her handbag defensive weapons, such as mace or "shriek alarms" and learn martial arts techniques.

If you are going to travel abroad, learn all you can about the crime rate where you will be living and seriously take precautions, passive and active. Passive precautions are things like not going out at night, always closing doors and windows after dark, etc.

Your parents will be constantly worried about you while you're abroad, so stay in touch with them. Modern technologies and communications make this easy. Get them cell phones with webcams if they do not have them already and call them daily so that they can see and hear you and know that you're doing well and are safe. 1954

### 5.2.9 Why is eating pork forbidden in Islam?

*A Christian is asking me why eating pork is forbidden in Islam when pigs are a creation of God.*

If that were a valid argument, then nothing should be forbidden to eat, since everything is the creation of God!

What that Christian should ask first is why Christians allow eating pork, when the law of Moses forbids it and Jesus (PBUH) said that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. 1109

### 5.2.10 Why are Muslims forbidden to eat pork?

The word "Islam" is Arabic for the willing, loving surrender or submission to God. That means we do things because God wants us to do them and

we stay away from things because God forbade us from doing them. We define right and wrong as God and His messenger defined them.

Thus, the answer to your questions is: because God said so. This may be hard for some to accept, but that's exactly what submission to God means. Anyone can claim he has what God allowed for us and prohibited, so it is necessary to read the Quran in order to determine once and for all whether it is from God or it is man made. Once you're totally convinced that it is from God, then you do what it says and stay away from it warns you against. 127

### 5.2.11 Am I allowed to trim my beard?

*I need advice. I have been looking for another job for months. I finally found one with great pay and benefits.*

*I thought it was perfect, until they told me I would need to trim (not completely shave) my beard. What should I do?*

Trim it, brother. The beard is a Sunna, not a mandate because there is no injunction against shaving it. That is how you can tell if a command is a mandate or a recommendation.

If you carefully read the arguments that suggest that growing a beard is mandatory on Muslim men, you will notice that they are all affirmative. None of them address the flip side. That is, does the Quran or the authentic hadith say anything negative about shaving the beard? No, they do not, to the best of my knowledge. Therefore, the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) is a strong recommendation but not a mandate. That is how scholars of the rules of deduction have distinguished the two. Hope this helps. 1193

### 5.2.12 Is music forbidden?

*Is it really haraam (forbidden) to listen to music? I am from a culture that is rich in music and I am living in a culture that expresses itself through music.*

It's a popular fatwa (religious opinion) that is deeply flawed. Its basis is two pieces of evidence:

1. The interpretation of Ibn Abbas, may God have been pleased with him, of verse 31:6. What's wrong with it is that it is his interpretation only and not something the Prophet, peace be upon him, said. It also makes no sense since music is not discourse, which is what verse 31:6 mentions.

2. A hadith without a narration chain (Muallaq) that Al-Bukhari mentions as a comment, not as one of the authentic hadiths in his book.

The hadith bundles music bands and female dancers at parties with drunks. Clearly the reference in that hadith is to night-club type parties, not to music per se.

Nobody who has said that music is forbidden has ever bothered to say why, or to refute the documented evidence that music can be beneficial and healing. You may be interested to know that several prominent Islamic scholars have ruled that music is not forbidden except when accompanied by sinful lyrics or acts, see §5.2.14.

939

### 5.2.13 The fuss about music

*Talk to me about music. I love music. I love dance, to watch it and more to simply dance. I am so confused about it. My family has Desi background can not help but celebrate by dancing. I recall many years ago meeting tribal clans in the Western regions of Pakistan who would dance by the setting sun with their swords illuminated by fires. I was stirred in my youth by the vocals of the singers of protest and peace. I think you get the picture and bam: the haram police take over.*

*I know that the female voice can stir up wow emotions. I think of the singer Sade.*

*I know the Prophet allowed Aisha to watch the Nubian dancers. I know the Prophet said there will come a time when musicians will play the flute to hearing of the Quran.*

*Why the confusion over something all men love? And of course wherein lies the balance?*

Many Muslims have a big fuss about music, and some believe it is all forbidden. There is no basis for that conclusion. The ruling that forbids it is deeply flawed, both in evidence and in reasoning.

Music, by itself, is neither evil nor good. Play it well and it is soothing, cheering, consoling or exciting. Play it badly and it is antagonizing, distracting, or noise. See §5.2.14.

I don't know the hadith you referred to (about the flute), but the hadith anti-music scholars rely on is the one narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and others and reported by Al-Tirmizi in which the Prophet (RA) says, "When female singers and musical instruments become common and people drink alcoholic beverages [and he mentioned many other signs], then watch for a red wind, earthquake, destruction, deformation, ...etc.", reported by Al-Suyuti in his book Al-Jami Al-Saghir (7687) as authentic but all other versions of this narration has been rated weak or less!

The scholars see the bundling of female singers and musical instruments with the list of other terrible signs of the latter day decline, they see that

as evidence that it is as bad as the rest of them.

To begin with, the hadith was rated “strange” by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2211) who reported it and Al-Albani took it further by rating it weak. Thus, it is not authentic. But even if it was, it does not prove that music is forbidden. It only proves that the spread of “female singers and musical instruments” is what’s wrong. The reason it is wrong is because that is what makes a night club! The Prophet (PBUH) was referring to the night club scene, not to melodies like the Rachmaninoff second Piano concerto played by the Vienna Philharmonic!

And that is also what Ibn Abbas, may God have been pleased with him, must have been thinking about when he interpreted verse 31:6 as referring to music. He never knew music except as it was played in Arabia: in night clubs, where females sang and danced lewdly and men drank alcohol. Of course, that’s forbidden. But it’s not the fault of music.

Dancing is different, because it can be seductive and it can involve body contact. That is only allowed between a husband and his wife. 1744

#### 5.2.14 Is there consensus that music is forbidden?

*I am told by many Muslims that music is forbidden in Islam and that this is a consensus of all Muslim scholars. Is it true? Can you name scholars who ruled that music is NOT forbidden?*

Sure. Four very prominent names come to mind: Shaarawi, Qaradhawi, Tantawi and Hilali. They all agreed on the following three facts: that everything is allowed until proven otherwise based on an explicit authentic evidence (called in the discipline of Foundations of Deduction, Usul-al-Fiqh, the Original Allowance, Al-Baraa-a Al-Asliyya), that music is neither good nor bad on its own but rather it depends on other factors such as accompanying lyrics, dance, environment, and that all the evidence quoted to forbid music is either inauthentic or interpretive.

M. M. Al-Shaarawi, may God bless his soul, was the foremost Islamic scholar of the Twentieth Century. He said that music is only forbidden if it distracts one from required worship and duties, or if it is accompanied by bad lyrics. Otherwise it is allowed ([Al-Shaarawi \[20\]](#) (Volume 19, pages 11584-11588)).

Dr. Saad-al-Deen Al-Hilaali, a Professor of comparative jurisprudence, expounded on what Shaarawi said that music is *never forbidden on its own*; only for what accompanies it or what it leads to. If bad lyrics, lewd dancing or drinking alcohol accompany it, then it is forbidden. If you understand Arabic, this video of an interview with Dr. Al-Hilali explains the matter in much detail,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QSYUmikiQA>.

Dr. Ali Tantaawi was a renowned Professor, judge, and author in Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. In an episode of his television program “Nur wa Hidayah” (Light and Guidance), he answered a question about music and singing by first quoting the Original Allowance rule and that there is no firm evidence to rule against music and singing. He also added that Al-Shawkani, a respected Islamic scholar of the 19th Century, allowed specific music and singing because they do not violate tenets of the religion. Finally, he made the statement that forbidding things without a firm evidence is itself forbidden!

Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi was the President of the Global Council of Muslim Scholars. He analyzed the issue at depth, including all the opinions for it and against it (Al-Qaradawi [18]). 1402

### 5.2.15 Why are art and music banned in Islam?

*Absolutely no music, no song, no dance, no enjoyment, is the Islamic way of life. And art is utterly banned. What kind of culture is that?*

Islamic art is renowned for its beauty. It is manifested in buildings, architecture, calligraphy, arabesque, etc. The art that is not allowed is that which depicts living creatures, profanity or blasphemy. Music is not forbidden, see §5.2.14. Dancing is allowed in the privacy of homes. Only vulgar or blasphemous lyrics and dancing are not allowed. Islam wants to protect people from sin without depriving them of good fun. 393

### 5.2.16 Drawing images of living beings

*Forgive my bad English (I'm from Spain).*

*I heard that Prophet Muhammad said that making a picture of a human or animal being is haram (prohibited) and in the Day of Judgement God will ask us to turn our pictures to life. Is it true? Can we not paint living beings?*

*God bless you.*

Your English is just fine! Thanks for writing. And may God bless you too for doing the research and for wanting to verify what you hear. Too many people simply take for granted what they have been told, without ever attempting to ask themselves if it is true.

The hadith you refer to is authentic. It was narrated by Ibn Abbas (RA) and reported by Al-Bukhari [12] (2225) and many others.

Those two hadiths, and there are other, use the Arabic word “صورة”, pronounced “soora” which in modern Arabic is often used to mean a picture, but it actually means likeness and that is how it was used by the Arabs of the Seventh Century. The word for picture is actually “رسم”, pronounced “Raqm”, which in today’s Arabic has come to mean marking or engraving.

This distinction can be discerned from another authentic hadith, reported by Muslim and narrated by Abu-Talha, where the Prophet (PBUH) made an exception from the prohibition a *raqm* on a cloth. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the prohibition applies only to three-dimensional images, i.e., statues, figurines, embossed images, etc.

The ending of the two hadiths of prohibition give away the reason for the prohibition. It is what Americans call “playing God.” That is, the attempt by humans to do things that only God may do. Creation of living beings is the domain of God only.

This prohibition is not unique to Islam. The exact same thing is said in the Second Commandment, prohibiting making engraved images and bowing to statues.

This is the key to understanding the prohibition of sculpting images of living beings. It is to protect us from *Shirk* (associating others with Him in worship).

One may think that shirk is far-fetched in the modern educated world. One, therefore, may think that this prohibition may have been called for in ancient times, when shirk was rampant, but not relevant in the sophisticated societies of the present time. But that is not actually the case! There are millions of people in this sophisticated world who pray to statues. Many even bow down to images on the wall. Many believe that a token or a figurine will bring them good fortune, heal them or stave evil away from them. All of that is shirk.

Why is shirk so dangerous? Because it creeps on the psyche, with enthusiastic help from Satan, until they are detached from God. That is the greatest loss.

Tawhid (the oneness of God) is the central teaching of Islam. It is also the subject of the First Commandment. God is teaching us to worship Him only and abandon any hint of worship of anyone or anything else - not because He needs it, but because we do. Human nature is such that we look for idols, literal or figurative. We keep aggrandizing the people we admire. Americans have coined a good term for that: hero worship. Shirk can be subtle.

The issue at hand is not art, creativity or expression, all of which are allowed in Islam. Rather, it is the kind of art, creativity or expression that is dangerous to our souls.

2485

### 5.2.17 Does Islam prohibit owning dogs for pets?

*Hello,*

*First, let me thank you for your site. I have already learned quite a lot.*

*I am not a Muslim but am considering becoming one. One sticking point for me is, strangely enough...dogs! I have always owned pet dogs and have one now. My understanding is that Muslims consider dogs to be "unclean" and would never have one as a pet.*

*I find this really difficult, as I find dogs to be noble, wonderful animals. My understanding is that the main objection is that dogs can make one "unclean" and interfere with wudu...?*

*Here is a little more about this from my own blog:*

*"It is surprising to me that Muslims are apparently forbidden from having dogs as pets. My understanding is that having dogs as guard dogs or hunting dogs is allowed, but not as pets kept in the home. I need to read further to see if this is purely cultural, if it is a tradition that only some Muslims follow, or if it is truly a commandment."*

*I found an article on the web that refutes the notion that dog ownership is prohibited in Islam. It cites verses 18:18-22, which narrate the story of Ahl-ul-Kahf (the sleepers in the cave).*

*I would appreciate your perspective! Thank you!*

Welcome to the blog. I am happy you decided to join and I look forward to your participation. Thank you for the kind words about my blog.

I like the name and title font of your blog. BTW, the talk by Joshua Evans is one of the best lectures you can hear about the transition from Christianity to Islam. Another one I can endorse is by Gary Miller.

The article you referred me to cites the evidence of the sleepers in the cave having a dog guarding the entrance of the cave. Scholars have agreed that guard dogs are perfectly allowed, but they differed on keeping dogs as pets. The reason they dislike it is a hadith, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by Muslim, Abu-Dawoud and others, in which the Prophet (PBUH) said, "When a dog bobs into the pot of any of you, let him wash it seven times." Muslim rates this hadith authentic.

Scholars have interpreted the reason for the command to be that the saliva of a dog is inherently filthy. Thus, keeping a dog around means that its owner is always unclean and must therefore perform wudhoo (ablution) before every prayer or recitation of the Quran.

That does not lead to prohibition of owning a pet dog! It simply tells us what to do if we choose to own a dog. The dog owner must be constantly aware that he or she, the owner, is always unclean because of the dog and therefore must maintain the cleanliness of himself or herself and that of the dog. If the owner is up to that responsibility, then there is nothing to prohibit him or her from owning a pet dog.

That said, I don't know if dog saliva is inherently filthy. It is quite possible that keeping a dog clean was an unsurmountable job for the Arabs living in Seventh Century desert Arabia, where water is so scarce, it is barely enough for them. In other words, this is the "Illa" (contingency) of the hadith. If the saliva is not inherently filthy, then the hadith does not even apply if the dog owner bathes the dog often and brushes its teeth everyday.

BTW, the article you mentioned makes unwarranted accusations against Abu-Hurayra, may God have been pleased with him. While he was human, and as all humans may err, he was a righteous, pious, trustworthy Sahabi (fellow of the Prophet (ﷺ)). He is entitled to much respect. 1749

### 5.2.18 Is it allowed in Islam to keep a dog as a pet?

*I proposed marriage to a Muslim lady and she agreed to marry me. The only problem is that she keeps a pet poodle. I'm trying to convince her that keeping a dog as a pet is forbidden in Islam.*

*Some Muslims tell me that the sleepers of the cave, Chapter 18, kept a dog, so it must be OK to keep a dog.*

*What is the right thing here?*

You may have noticed, however, in the story of the sleepers in the cave, that God said that their dog was "stretching his arms in the entrance of the cave" (18:18). That is the job of a dog: guarding. It should be kept outside the house. The Prophet (ﷺ) also allowed the use of dogs in hunting, confirming what God says in the Quran in verse 5:4.

The hadith about washing a pot seven times after a dog bobs into it is authentic, narrated by Abu-Hurayra ((RA) and reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (279, 280).

There is no explicit prohibition against keeping a dog as a pet. All we know is that hadith. Scholars have concluded that dog saliva must be filthy. That is not sufficient reason to conclude that dogs cannot be kept as pets, if the owner regularly bathes the dog, brushes its teeth and ensures that the dog does not have access to the utensils and pots, etc, of its owner. If someone is willing to take all that trouble to have the

company of a dog, then there is no justification for forbidding her from having a pet dog. 1396

### 5.2.19 Novelties about visiting graves

*In my country some people, mostly Barlewi Muslims, do things like commemorating the 40th day after death of a loved one, gathering together, reading the Quran and passing over the blessing to the dead, reciting the Fatiha (Chapter 1) at the grave site.*

*As far as I know, these things are not allowed in Islam, but someone emailed me an article citing many hadeeths which they say support these practices. I am attaching the article herewith. I know most of those hadeeths, but I don't see how they can make from them the conclusions they made.*

*Can we pass good deeds to the dead? The authentic hadeeth about the three things the deceased continue to benefit from does not mention reciting the Quran.*

*Am I right in considering these acts as biddah (novelty)? If yes, how can convince the Barelwi people?*

The article mixes two issues together: (1) the fact that the dead can benefit from good deeds of the living, and (2) that the practice of the 40th day memorial is sanctioned by Islam. The former is true, but the latter is false. You are right that the evidence they quoted you does not prove the 40th day memorial practice. It is a novelty that traces its roots to ancient Egypt.

Supplicating for the dead is a good deed and this is a consensus of the scholars. The Quran makes that clear,

“Our Lord, forgive us and those of our brethren who *were ahead of us in faith*” (59:10) and the Prophet (ﷺ) frequently supplicated, “O God, forgive our living and our dead...” ([Al-Bayhaqi \[11\]](#) (4/41)).

Muslims are taught to say the phrase “Rahimahullah” (May God have mercy on him) when referring to the dead. Muslims pray a special funeral prayer for a deceased person before he or she is buried.

As for reciting the Quran at a grave, scholars have differed on that. Abu-Hanifa and Malik did not like it, because there is no Sunna to support it, but Al-Shafii, Muhammad ibn Al-Hasan, Judge Iyadh and Al-Qarafi all favor it for the blessing it causes. Ibn Hanbal saw no harm in it. 1450

### 5.2.20 Curse them or pray for them?

*I have seen many people cursing leaders, actors/actresses, etc.  
Is it not better to pray for their guidance?*

As Muslims were being persecuted, tortured and boycotted, the Prophet (PBUH), stood up in Watr prayer (Special night prayer) and asked God to curse some polytheists by name. Shortly after, God revealed,

“Not for you is the decision whether He should [cut them down] or forgive them or punish them, for indeed, they are wrongdoers.” (3:128)

The Prophet (PBUH) stopped immediately.

We all know the stories of conversion of Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Khalid ibn Al-Waleed, may God have been pleased with them. Nobody but God knows what someone will become, thus cursing them is a judgment that must be reserved to God. 1224

### 5.2.21 Early Muslim women fully participated in society

*I thought you will like this article which details many of the contributions of women in early Muslim society. They were farmers, traders, surgeons, politicians, scholars, jurists and even soldiers!*

*The Prophet (PBUH) always listened to women with consideration and compassion as he valued their views and opinions not only about affairs that specifically concerned them, but also about matters of wider significance.*

*It was because the Prophet gave such encouragement to women that there were well-known instances in early Muslim history of some of them freely speaking out for their rights.*

*Following the injunctions in the Quran, the Prophet gave women the right to education and freedom in matters related to marriage, divorce, and property rights.*

*He taught his followers that it is the commandment of God to treat women with gentleness and affection because, he said, “Women are your mothers, daughters, aunts.”*

*The Prophet described women as “the twin halves of men,” (Al-Albani [3] (2863)) which emphasized the idea that their role in society is complementary to that of men. He declared that “the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.” (Muslim [43] (1467))*

“Those scholars who study the role of women in Islam will notice that throughout the different periods of history, women were actively engaged in every field of endeavor, be it politics, government, or learning. Women were not confined, as some have assumed, to mothering and household occupations.”

*[Salah al-Din al-Munajjid]*

*Busra bint Uzwan (RA) was the sister of Utbah bin Uzwan al-Mazini, the famous companion, the governor of Basra (in Iraq). According to the author, Busra hired Abu Huraira (RA) and he was her employee during the time of the Prophet. Later she married him, after Marwan succeeded him [as administrator] over Madinah. [Al Isaba fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani]*

*Nafisa bint al-Hasan (d. 208/824) taught hadith to Imam ash-Shafii.*

*Ibn Hajar mentioned 12 women who were musnida (transmitters of collection of traditions). He studied with 53 women.*

*Ibn Asakir Al-Dimashqi (499-571) took hadith from 1,300 male shaykhs and 80 or more female shaykhas (female scholars).*

*The labor force in the Caliphate were employed from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, while both men and women were involved in diverse occupations and economic activities. Women were employed in a wide range of commercial activities and diverse occupations in the primary sector (as farmers, for example), secondary sector (as construction workers, dyers, spinners, etc.) and tertiary sector (as investors, doctors, nurses, presidents of guilds, brokers, peddlers, lenders, scholars, etc.). Muslim women also held a monopoly over certain branches of the textile industry, the largest and most specialized and market-oriented industry at the time, in occupations such as spinning, dyeing, and embroidery.*

*Some specific examples (by no means a comprehensive list) of working women living at the time of the prophet follow.*

### **Women Farmers**

*Sahl ibn Saad, a companion of the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned a woman who had her own farm. She used to cultivate beets and barley to feed the fellows of the Prophet with it after Friday prayer.*

*Asmaa, daughter of Abu Bakr, may God have been pleased with her, mentioned that when she was married to Al-Zubair, they did not have wealth. The Prophet gave them some land about two miles away from their home. She used to farm it and transport the produce herself.*

*She once reported, “One day I was coming back with date stones on my head. Then I met the Prophet with some people from Madinah. He asked me to ride with him on his camel’s back.”*

*It was apparent that farming was independently done by women. Moreover, they transported farm produce. If they had modern trucks, trains, ships and planes, Asmaa and other women would have used them rather than carrying the goods on their heads.*

### **Women Traders**

*Quite a few women fellows of the Prophet were engaged in trading. Khadija (RA), the first wife of the Prophet, is the most famous example. Other women such as Khaula, Lakhmia, Thaqla, and Bint Makhramah traded perfumes.*

*A fellow of the Prophet, named Quila, said to him, “I am a woman who buys and sells things.” Then she asked several questions about buying and selling.*

*Clearly, business was a legitimate activity of the women fellows of the Prophet.*

*The wife of Abdullah ibn Masoud met her expenses by manufacturing and selling handicrafts.*

*Saudah (RA), wife of the Prophet, was an expert in tanning skins. She sold her tanned goods to trading caravans and local men throughout Medina.*

### **Women Surgeons**

*Rufaidah Aslamiyyah was an expert in medicine and surgery. She used to tend to the sick and wounded in the battlefields. According to biographer Ibn Saad, her tent was equipped with equipment for surgery and first aid. When Saad ibn Mu'az was injured in the Battle of the Trench, the Prophet transferred him to her tent for medical care.*

*Other women experts in medicine and surgery were Umm Mutaa, Umm Kabashah, Hammah bint Jahsh, Mu'aza, Laila, Umm al-Qays, Umm Zaid, Umm Atiyyah, and Umm Sulaim. Rubayyi bint Mu'awwiz ibn Afra was a great fellow of the Prophet. She tended to the wounded and sick and supplied water to the thirsty soldiers in many battles. With other women, she transported the wounded and the dead in the war.*

### **Women in Politics and Scholars**

*For example, the Prophet consulted with his wife Umm Salamah (RA) when he negotiated the treaty of Hudaibiah. Many companions were angry at the weak terms of the treaty. It was Umm Salamah whose counsel helped ease the situation.*

*Fatima bint Qais was a very able and intelligent scholar. When Umar died, the nomination committee consulted Qais on the selection of the next Caliph.*

*Prophet Muhammad (RA) appointed Shifa bint Abdullah ibn Shams as the administrator and controller (accountant) of the Market of Madinah which was one of the largest markets in those days. Umar (RA) reappointed her when he became Caliph. Hazrat Umar also appointed Hazrat Umm Hakim Baiza, who was the paternal aunt of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) a learned woman, at the post of Khilafat.*

*According to Allama ibn Abd al-Barr, Shifa bint Abdullah was a very intelligent and scholarly woman. Umar often took the initiative of asking her opinion to other people.*

*Women not only gave their opinion on various problems but also criticized state matters and participated in the evaluation and reckoning of the actions of a ruler.*

*It is commonly believed that freedom of speech originated recently in the West. This is no more than myth. Islam introduced equal rights and freedom of expression for women fourteen hundred years ago. The incident about mahr (dowry) in the Caliphate of Umar is well known. When he decided to fix the dowry money, an old woman protested that he had no right to decide about it, and he ceded to her protest.*

### **Women Jurists**

*There are many female jurists in early Islamic history. In jurisprudence, Aisha (RA) had few equals and Umm Salam also gave many legal rulings.*

*Others are Safiyyah, Hafsa, Umm Habiba, Juwayriyyah, Maymuna, Fatima, Zahra, Umm Sharik, Umm Atya, Asmaa bint Abu-Bakr, Haila bint Qanif, Khaula bint Tuwait, Umm al-Darda, Atika bint Zaid, Sahalah bint Suhail, Fatima bint Qais, Zaynabah bint Abu Salamah, Umm Ayman, and Umm Yusuf.*

*A noted medieval Muslim scholar, Imam Badr al-Din Kashani, explained the rationale for appointing a woman Qadi (judge): "Where there is ability to give testimony, there is also the ability of qadaa (ruling)." According to al-Tabari, a woman can be an absolute judge in every matter.*

*It is reported that Dawoud ibn Husein, a fellow of the Prophet, used to take Quranic lessons from Umm Saad Jamilah bint Asaad Ansariyyah, daughter of Asaad ibn Rabie who fought in the Battle of Badr and achieved martyrdom in the Battle of Uhud. According to ibn Athir, Umm Saad had memorized the Quran and used to give regular lessons.*

*Al-Khansa bint Amr was a woman of great stature and a poetess of great fame. According to biographer ibn Al-Athir, all poets of fame unanimously agree that no poetess ever equaled Al-Khansaa, and the Prophet appreciated her poems.*

*Sueda, Safiyyah, Atikah, Muridiyyah, Qunila Abduriyyah, Umm Ayman, Umm Ziad, and Kabsah bint Rafi were also well known poetesses at the time of the Prophet.*

*Amra bint Amra bint Abdul-Rahman was one of most prominent women of second generation. She was one of those who gave legal opinions in Madina after the Companions. Her opinion overrode the views of other authorities. She is the first authority for three legal issues dealing with the prohibition against digging up graves, the ban on selling unripe fruit, and the effect of crop damage on the sale of agricultural produce. In one case, she reversed the decision of her nephew to cut off the hand of a man who stole some iron rings. Her authority was accepted on matters such as business transactions and punishments (hudud). Imam Malik takes her as a legal precedent for details on the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).*

### **Women Warriors**

*Many examples of women actively participating in war could be found at the time of the Prophet. One companion, Umm Umarah, demonstrated courage and fearlessness in the battle of Uhud.*

*Umm Hakim, wife of Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl participated in the war against the Romans.*

*When Muslims suffered defeat in the Battle of Uhud, there was some confusion in the Muslim camp. Then Safiyah bint Abd al-Muttalib left Madinah armed with a spear and aroused a sense of shame among those who were returning from the battle. She angrily asked them, "Did you leave the Prophet behind?"*

*Asmaa bint Yazid fought and killed nine enemy soldiers in the battle of Uhud. Umm Salaim, mother of Anas, went to battle with a dagger.*

### **Summary:**

*There were not many different kinds of jobs during the days of the Prophet.*

*Farming, trading, construction, tool making, tanning, bread making, teaching, transporting goods, nursing, health care and defense of the nation were the major economic activities in those days.*

*Female fellows of the Prophet participated in all these activities WITH his approval.*

*Published by Crescent Life.*

Thank you so much for the detailed post.

God tells us in the holy Quran that the responsibility for a Muslim society is divided equally between men and women,

“And the believing men and believing women - each are allies to one another. They command what is recognized as good, forbid the objectionable, establish the prayer, give the alms and obey God and His Messenger. Those - God will be merciful with them. Verily, God is Mighty and Wise.” (9:71)

We are all here for each other.

Notice how God finishes the verse with two attributes of His that are pertinent to this verse? Mighty over those who want to organize society differently and Wise in His arrangement of society the way He arranged it.

1334

### 5.2.22 Can a Muslim woman be heard in public?

*A group of women want to make a series of talks about Islam. Can I lend my voice to them, knowing that the talks will be broadcast on the Internet?*

*Is the voice of a Muslim woman Awrah (something that must be kept private)?*

Muslims, women and men, used to come to Lady Aisha, may God have been pleased with her, to ask her questions after the Prophet died, peace be upon him. A woman interrupted Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) during the Khutba (sermon) when he suggested a cap on dowries and reminded him of verse 4:20 which puts no limit on dowries.

These examples prove that the voice of a woman is not something to hide (awra). However, verse 33:32 tells us that a certain *tone of voice* can be seductive and therefore a pious woman should not use that tone of voice if men will be listening.

1000

### 5.2.23 Contributions of Women to Islam

*A fellow Muslim posted the following information to an online forum:*

*After reading Islamic history, I find that women made a lot of contributions to Islam. How come they do not get any credit?*

*For centuries, Muslim women were teachers to men, where they preached openly in houses and mosques. Among the examples:*

1. *Sheikha Nafisa who was one of the teachers of Imam Shafi (he sat in her circle during the height of his fame).*
2. *Sitt al-Wuzara was known for her acclaimed mastery of Islamic laws, and delivered lectures on religion in Damascus and Egypt.*
3. *Karima al-Marwaziyya (d.1070 AD) who counted among her students the male scholars al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d.1036 AD) and al-Humaydi (d.1095 AD).*
4. *Zaynab of Harran (d.1289 AD), whose lectures attracted a large crowd of students, teaching them the Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the largest known collection of hadiths.*
5. *Amra bint Abd al-Rahman. Among her students, was Abu-Bakr ibn Hazm, the celebrated judge of Medina, who was ordered by the caliph Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz to write down all the prophetic traditions known on her authority.*
6. *Umm al-Khayr Amat al-Khaliq (1408-1505), who is regarded as the last great hadith scholar of the Hijaz held classes on the hadiths.*
7. *The famous historian of Damascus, Ibn Asakir (1106-1175) had 80 women teachers.*
8. *The great Muslim male scholar Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti studied the Risala of Imam Shafi with Hajar bint Muhammad.*
9. *Ajif al-Din Junayd, a traditionist of the ninth century AH, read the Sunan of al-Darimi with Fatima bin Ahmad ibn Qasim.*
10. *Zaynab bint al-Shaari (d.524/615-1129/1218). She studied hadith under several important traditionists, and in turn lectured to many students, some of who gained great repute, including Ibn Khallikan, author of the well-known biographical dictionary Wafayat al-Ayan.*
11. *Juwayriya bint Ahmad. Some of my own teachers said the scholar Ibn Hajar (1372-1448), and many of her contemporaries, attended her discourses.*
12. *Aisha bint Abd al-Hadi who for a considerable time was one of the teachers of Ibn-Hajar, was considered to be the finest traditionalist of her time, and many students undertook long journeys in order to sit in her circle and study the truths of religion.*

Much thanks to the brother for this comprehensive, valuable information. May God bless him.

I might add that the Prophet (ﷺ) also consulted his wife Umm Salama (RA) on the day of the Hudaibiya treaty when Muslims almost had a

mutiny and would not follow his orders. Her advise was calm, wise and saved the day!

Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) often consulted his daughter Hafsa (RA). She, together with Fatima (RA), were the two people the Prophet entrusted with the complete written Quran!

People who do not give credit where credit is due are insecure or selfish and those are not two traits of a good Muslim. 575

### 5.2.24 Can women be appointed judges and heads of state?

*I read fatwas (religious rulings) that say that Islam does not allow women to be judges or rulers. Is this true?*

No, it is not. In fact, the Quran has implied that leadership by women is fine. We learn that from the story of Balqees, the Queen of Sheba. It is in Chapter 27. In this Chapter, we hear the hoepoe bird agonizing that Sheba worships the sun and we read how angry Solomon (PBUH) was that Sheba worships the sun, but not one word criticizing that the people of Sheba have a queen. Neither does God comment on that, nor did the Prophet, peace be upon him. If there was anything fundamentally wrong with a woman appointed leader over men, God or His Messenger would have said something.

Quite the contrary, in fact. The story of Balqees as narrated in the Quran shows a wise woman. She consults with her court and military. She does the diplomatic thing and sends Solomon a gift. And, when she recognizes the truth, she accepts it. To me, that is an exemplary leader. The story, therefore, is praise for women leaders, far from the condemnation opined by many scholars.

This, of course, is rational and natural. Some women have leadership qualities and others do not. Some men have leadership qualities and others don't. There is no biological cause for leadership!

*But, is not there a hadeeth that says that "No people ever prosper who appoint over their affairs a woman."*

This hadith was narrated by a convicted felon! His name was Abu-Bakrah. He was convicted of bearing false testimony in an adultery case. Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, flogged him eighty times, as the Quran mandates as penalty for such crimes, and never allowed his testimony, as Chapter 24 of the Quran mandates. A man whose testimony is permanently rejected cannot be believed in any narration he gives.

*So, all of the 132 hadiths Abu-Bakrah reported are void?*

The answer must be yes! It is enough that Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, flogged him eighty times and ***permanently disallowed his testimony***. A person whose *testimony* is false is not a man to be believed in narrations.

Is that hard to understand? Is such a person trustworthy to you? Can you trust him to teach you your religion?

Perhaps, the difficulty you are having is that accepting this obvious logic means that you have to accept that there are some hadiths in Sahih Al-Bukhari that should not have been included in it. That should not upset you, since scholars in the past, such as Ibn Hazm, as well as scholars of modern times, such as Al-Albani have said the same thing.

When people say that Al-Bukhari's book is the most authentic after the Quran, it does not mean that everything in it is authentic; it only means it has more authentic content than any other man-authored book.

Why did Al-Bukhari include hadiths that are not authentic? He believed they were authentic! He was human and he did his best, may God reward him handsomely for his tireless effort to preserve the Sunna of the Prophet (ﷺ). But humans make mistakes despite their best efforts. That does not in any way belittle their contributions.

Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir both pointed out that the woman Abu-Bakrah was referring to was the Persian queen Bouran Dokht and that she was crowned during the caliphate of Umar. That presents a problem, does it not? Abu-Bakrah either confused people and times or made up the hadith. He narrated this hadith 28 years after the event which he recalled it about, the battle of Al-Jamal. 862

### 5.2.25 Are women in Islam equal to men?

*I am a Muslim woman who converted to Islam three years ago. I believe that women are not equal to men in a number of concerns, and that is why I disagree with you about allowing women to be heads of state, or judges. Here is my evidence:*

- *Islam says we need 2 women to be witness instead of 1 and for man, only 1 man is sufficient enough to be witness then how can a woman be a judge?*
- *Islam gives the right to divorce to men only.*

As for your first point about witnesses, that is contingent on the women being forgetful in financial matters, which was the norm in the Seventh Century. The verse clearly says,

“If there are no two men then a man and two women you approve of as witnesses, **lest one of them should err** so the other would remind her” (2:282)

As established in Usul-al-Fiqh (Foundations of Deduction), a contingent ruling goes with its contingency. So, if the contingency is not there, so is not the ruling. What that means, is that if there is a woman whose memory and integrity are undoubted, she can replace a man as witness by herself. It also means that if the memory or integrity of a man cannot be trusted, he cannot be a witness.

As for your second point, God and His Messenger, peace be upon him, gave women the authority to divorce. It is called in the Sharia Khul'a (severance).

*From the Quran and Hadith it is clear that men are leaders and women are followers, in all affairs.*

The Quran does not say that men are leaders and women are followers. This is a common fallacy. The Quran says that men and women are here for each other,

“And the believing men and believing women are *allies of one another*. They promote virtue, curb vice, establish prayer, give alms, and obey God and His Messenger. Those - God will have mercy upon them. Indeed, God is Exalted in Might and very Wise.” (9:71)

A girl, or a boy, is required to obey both their father and mother. A wife is required to obey her husband. Those are arrangements within a family. They have nothing to do with the world outside the home. Outside the home, we are all required to obey God, His Messenger, and our duly appointed righteous heads of state.

Leadership does not mean one orders and the follower obeys. Leadership is a quality that can only be earned. Our best example of a leader is the Prophet, peace be upon him. He ordered only what he was told by God to order. In all other matters, he consulted with his fellows and wives.

He consulted his wife Umm Salama (RA) at the treaty of Hudaibiya. Muslims rebelled and would not obey him. He went into his tent where Umm Salama was staying and helping out and said to her, “*Muslims have perished, Umm Salama! I ordered them and they did not comply.*” She asked him what happened and then gave him a wise, cool-headed advice, “*Pack your stuff and start heading back to Medina. When Muslims see you do that, they will follow you.*” She was right. He did and they did as she expected. Her advice prevented a crisis.

That is an example of the Prophet (PBUH) obeying his wife. BTW, “obey” is not a derogatory word, as some people have come to believe. It simply means to agree with what you are asked to do and do it.

In one battle, the Prophet (PBUH) ordered the troops to camp at some site. A soldier asked him, *“Is this a site God ordered you to camp at, or are we talking opinion, war and tactics?”* The Prophet (PBUH) answered, *“Rather, it is opinion, war and tactics.”* The man said, *“This is no camp site.”* Then he pointed to another site and the Prophet followed him and the rest of the soldiers as well. That is an example of the Prophet (PBUH) obeying one of his soldiers.

In both of these examples, the Prophet (PBUH) taught us that a leader leads by example, not by orders, and engages whom he leads. That example was followed by the righteous caliphs. Both Abu-Bakr and Umar, may God have been pleased with them, said the following in their acceptance speeches,

*“I have been appointed over you but I am not the best of you. If you find me doing right, support me. If you find me doing wrong, correct me.”*

After Umar said it, a man shouted, *“If we find you doing wrong, we will correct it with our swords!”* Umar replied, *“Thank God that there are Muslims who would correct Umar if he deviated.”*

Now, I would like to address the meritorious argument that some verses in the Quran seem to suggest that men are leaders and women are followers. Two verses have been mentioned,

1. “Men are the *caretakers* of women, **for** what God has given more of to some over other and for what they spend from their wealth” (4:34)

First, This verse is talking about the relationship between a man and his wife, evidenced by the phrase “in beds” later in the verse. Therefore, it is not a valid argument for the relationship between men and women in general and outside the home.

Second, the verse gives an affectionate, benevolent description to the responsibility of a man toward his wife: caretaker. The word God uses, “Qawwam” means one who is taking care of something and alert to anything that might infringe on it. It is used for a business owner or a landlord as well.

Last, God gives the contingency, or reason, why this responsibility is assigned to men. They are endowed with strength and finances. That means they are in a position to take care of and defend women.

2. “Divorced women remain in waiting for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what God has created in their wombs if they believe in God and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation. And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And God is Exalted in Might and Wise.” (2:228)

Clearly, the verse is again talking about the responsibility a man has toward his wife. Thus, it cannot be used to generalize the relationship between men and women outside the home. In addition, the degree God refers to in this verse may be interpreted in two ways: authority or responsibility. If you go for the authority interpretation, then the meaning is “Divorced wives must agree to go back to their husbands if they want them back during the grace period.” If you go for the responsibility interpretation, then the meaning is “Men who divorced their wives and then took them back should be extra careful not to do that again. They are expected to act responsibly, not in haste or emotionally.” Unfortunately, many Muslims interpret the degree as a degree of favor. There is no linguistic basis for that, since the words God has used in the Quran to indicate favor have been “Fadhl” and “Niema”, not “Daraja” (degree).

So, what is the relationship between men and women in general as the Quran specifies? It is the verse from Chapter 9 that I quoted above. Here it is again,

“And the believing men and believing women are *allies of one another*. They promote virtue, curb vice, establish prayer, give alms, and obey God and His Messenger. Those - God will have mercy upon them. Indeed, God is Exalted in Might and very Wise.” (9:71)

Can your ally be your leader? Sure, God says in the holy Quran,

“God is the ally of those who have believed.” (2:257)

And

“Your ally is none but God, His Messenger, and those who have believed - those who establish prayer and give alms, and they bow [in worship].” (5:55)

*OK. How do you then explain 92:3-4,*

“And how He created the male and the female. Your strife is different.”

God is giving examples of the variety in His creation to state the fact that our actions are all over the place. Some of us, men and women, take the straight path and others stray and others deny. To prove that this is what is meant, simply continue reading and you will find,

“**As for** he who gives and fears God,  
And believes in the best [reward],  
We will ease him toward ease.

**But as for** he who withholds and considers himself free of need  
And denies the best [reward],

We will ease him toward difficulty.  
And what will his wealth avail him when he falls?" (92:5-11)

*How would you explain the authentic hadith, "You are all shepherds and are all responsible for your flocks and the woman is a shepherdess and responsible in the home of her husband."?*

Does that not prove that a woman can be a good manager? Is that not what a shepherdess is? Where does this hadith state that this responsibility prevents her from all other responsibilities? She still has to connect with her parents, siblings and relatives. She still can do charity work. She still can help out during times of war. So why is it that she cannot serve as judge or ruler if she is qualified and has the time?

*A woman will have to follow orders from her husband, a man need not!*

That is not accurate. A wife must disobey her husband when he orders her to do something wrong. And a husband should listen to his wife when she corrects something wrong he is doing. The duty of promoting virtue and curbing vice is upon all Muslims, men and women as clearly stated in verse 9:71, quoted above.

*For muslims the imaam (who leads the prayers) is a leader. On community basis or national its the imaam who leads. But muslim women are not allowed to be imaams. I say imaam, because it is him who leads us while we are doing the most important thing in our life, when the worshipers of ALLAH bow to HIM. It is the man who leads so how can a women lead in other cases?*

What is the aspect of analogy ("وجه القياس") here? Why is leading the prayer analogous to leading the country or the court room? Each of these has its qualifications. There is evidence that the leader of the prayer must be a man, but there is no evidence that the leader of the country or court room must be a man. 813

### 5.2.26 Can Muslim women wear make-up in public?

A Muslim woman can wear make-up in public. The only prohibition I am aware of is against strong perfumes, the kind that can be smelled from a distance.

The aim of Islam in regulating the appearance of women in public is preventing seduction. Make-up is embellishment while perfume can be seductive. 263

### 5.2.27 Are women allowed in Islam to visit cemeteries?

*Is it true that women are not allowed to enter cemetery at any time?*

The prohibition against women visiting the graves is tied to their practice of wailing and tearing up their clothes at the site of the grave of their loved ones. Some used to wish themselves dead instead. Some even cursed the angel of death. All of that is forbidden in Islam. It was the practice of most women prior to Islam and it continued for many after it.

In Usul-al-Fiqh (the Islamic discipline of Foundations of Deduction), this is called “العلة” (reason) for the ruling. As such, once the reason is gone, so is the ruling. That means that if a woman wants to visit a grave and observes the visitation etiquette by refraining from wailing and other improper practices, then there is nothing to prevent her from going. 640

### 5.2.28 Is gender selection allowed in Islam?

*What do you all think about gender selection if you have girls and want a boy? Someone I know got it done. Do you think Islamically it is correct to do it if you want a boy?*

God says in the holy Quran,

“**To God** belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He wills. He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males. Or He makes them [both] males and females, and He renders whom He wills barren. Indeed, He is very Knowledgeable and Powerful.” (42:49-50)

It appears from these two verses that gender selection should remain the domain of God only. God knows best. 646

### 5.2.29 Can Muslims celebrate Halloween?

*Halloween is recognized as a pagan holiday by almost everybody, but it is also recognized as a fun day for kids. So, can Muslims celebrate Halloween for the sake of their kids?*

I read in InFocus News magazine about a clever way some American Muslims managed to celebrate Halloween for their kids, without actually celebrating it! What they did is that they held a party in the parking lot of the mosque, on a day other than October 31st, where the kids played and everybody had fun and ate good food. There were no trick-or-treat

candy or costumes or any aspects of the macabre. They called the event Halaloween! 1209

### 5.2.30 I converted and now my mom hates me

*I am a recent convert to Islam and my mom has a very hard time with that. Whenever I visit her, she never stops talking about how she hates Islam and wondering why I converted. She says some awful things about Islam that are published on web sites.*

*I love my mom and love to visit her, but we are almost at war with each other now. I try to explain to her that she is wrong about Islam, but she just keeps repeating the lies of those web sites. What can I do?*

Keep trying, but also tell her gently but firmly that you will leave if she attacks Islam but stay when she changes the subject. God says in the holy Quran,

“And He has sent down upon you in the Book that when you hear the verses of God blasphemed and mocked, that you do not sit with them until they delve into another discourse, otherwise you are like them.” (4:140).

At all times, remain polite and gracious toward her, as this is your Islamic duty toward your parents, even if they are disbelievers. 1424

### 5.2.31 Is health (and life) insurance allowed in Islam?

I asked several prominent scholars and they all told me that insurance is allowed in Islam. The rationale is that insurance is a social co-sponsorship contract (Takaful); everyone pitches in so that the ones who eventually need coverage can be helped.

I had reservations about the allowance for life insurance, but I have been told by several Islamic scholars that the same concept of Takaful applies to life insurance too, because the proceeds go to cover funeral and probate expenses, etc. 1428

### 5.2.32 Can I try to recoup my gambling losses?

*I know that gambling is forbidden in Islam, and I lost a lot of money gambling. My question is: Can I play a few more hands so I can get back the money I lost?*

The illusion that one may get back his losses in gambling by gambling some more, is precisely why gambling is an addiction and is forbidden in

Islam. The odds are against you, because the odds are designed to be “with the house.”

And even if you got back your losses, it will be ill-gotten money, a sin. Consider yourself lucky that you did not lose all your money as many gamblers have done.

1431

### 5.2.33 Is Islam compatible with democracy?

*I will be giving a talk on Islam and will be addressing the issue of democracy. Some Muslims tell me that democracy and Islam do not mix and others tell me they are compatible. What do you think?*

Representative democracy is how Umar ibn Al-Khattab suggested his successor and popular democracy is how Uthman ibn Affan was elected, may God have been pleased with them. It is also the way district assemblies were structured throughout Muslim history. They are called Ahl-al-Hall wal-Aqd.

*The anti-democracy Muslims tell me that democracy is dictatorship of the majority. For example, in France and Belgium they ruled that women cannot cover their head and in Switzerland the majority decided that minarets cannot be constructed. Both these decisions are perfectly democratic! What can you say about that?*

Simple. Their constitution allows it. Ours does not. If their constitution does not allow it, it can be challenged in court. Many a bill voted on by the people in the USA were turned down by the Supreme Court because it was determined to be unconstitutional.

To say that democracy is un-Islamic without proof is un-Islamic! Judgments in Islam cannot be made without evidence. Where in the Quran does God mandate on us to submit to dictatorship or forbid us from freely electing our leaders?

Ironically, the anti-democracy Muslims firmly believe in Ijmaa (consensus). That is what representative democracy is all about: electing people who know their stuff to make decisions on behalf of the people and in accordance with the law of the land. The law of a Muslim land is the Quran and the authentic Hadith and the rulings derived from them. Parliaments in a Muslim democracy cannot pass laws allowing Muslims to drink alcohol or to gamble because that would be unconstitutional.

*But if democracy means going against the Law of Allah (as is happening)...its totally un-Islamic.*

But that is not what democracy means! No democracy can go against the law of the land, or else it is anarchy.

It is misunderstanding of what democracy means and how it is implemented that causes some folks to think that Islam and democracy are not compatible. Proper understanding is advised before one starts to talk about them in public.

*But is democracy not self-rule by the people? This is why Fornication and Riba (usury) are allowed in the West and more over Homosexuality being legalized. The policies and legislation are based on majority that is why you can see why Niqab and Minarets being banned.*

*If it was compatible with Islam all those would not happen.*

No. That is not why these things happen. They happen because the constitution in the West does not forbid them. Case in point is whether people can vote to elect a man for president of the US even if the man was not born in the US. Such vote would be overturned by the Supreme Court because it is unconstitutional!

Banning minarets and the niqab can be challenged in court, if Muslims care to defend their religious freedom in Europe. And they can win too because the case is not hard to make, given the EU constitutional guarantee of freedom to practice religion.

*OK, but who makes the constitution? It is the people!*

In the West, yes. For us, the Constitution was already written by God and His Messenger. Furthermore, Western constitutions can be amended, but ours cannot be because the Quran and the Sunna are final.

*Well, you have to admit that modern versions of democracy are incompatible with Islam.*

Forgive me, but I think that you still do not get the notion of the constitution and how “modern” democracy operates within it. The constitution of France may be different from the constitution of the US in some points. As a result, the French people may vote for something and it passes, but if Americans vote for the same thing, it will not pass!

The constitution of Muslims is the Quran and the Sunna. Thus, implementing democracy for Muslim countries guarantees that Sharia will be honored. The Supreme Court will see to it even if people vote against it. The Supreme Court is a democratic institution and is a fundamental part of how democracy is implemented.

“Modern” version of democracy is fully compatible with Islam. As I said earlier, representative democracy (republic) is how Abu-Bakr and Umar were elected, may God have been pleased with them, and popular democracy is how Uthman was elected, may God have been pleased with him.

*I am told that democracy is a system which is at odds with the very essence of the exclusive right of Allah to legislate and as such it steps outside the mere disobedience of Allah into the realm of Shirk (blasphemy), in that it seeks to elevate mankind to the level of the Legislator.*

The imams (foremost clerics), judges, and jurists have all legislated thousands of laws throughout Muslim history. Are they all challenging the exclusive right of God to legislate? Of course not, because their rulings are based on the principles taught by God. That is what the constitution is about!

*Those who support democracy in whatever form should provide supporting evidence from Quraan and hadith instead of going around in circles.*

The burden of proof is on the claimant. That is one who says democracy is incompatible with Islam. The claimants have to prove that it is. They have to show verses where God orders us to submit to dictatorship or prohibits us from freely electing our leaders. They have not and cannot, because there is none.

It is clear to me now that many Muslims completely misunderstand what democracy is and how it is implemented. While some of them will no doubt continue to misunderstand it, some may have gotten it.

It is often the case, is it not, that when Muslims and Westerners talk to each other, they often talk above the heads of each other! If only each side would cool down and actually starts listening until they understand what the other is talking about, there would be much less resentment of the West and much less Islamophobia.

*But democracy has not been practiced by Muslims. Why would we consider it now?*

First of all, that is not true. Caliphs Umar and Uthman were freely elected as I noted before.

But even if it were true, the argument that tradition is our guide is false. One of the first things God attacks in harsh language in the Quran is tradition! And He uses the rhetorical question “Could you not reason?”

often in chastisement. Thus, the Quran makes it clear to us that logic is our guide, not tradition.

Then a question is asked to prove that democracy is not forbidden! In Usul-al-Fiqh (the discipline of foundations of deduction), this question is never asked, because the question to ask is if something is forbidden. It is called the principle of Original Allowance (Al-Baraa-a Al-Asliyya): Everything is allowed until proved otherwise, everyone is innocent until proved guilty and every place is clean until proved unclean.

*Many tell me that democracy is a Western idea and that we should not follow Western ideas.*

The West has stuff that are immoral, but it also has a few very good ideas that are in no way contrary to Islam. Ideas that evolved over centuries and have been tried and tested and proved beneficial and practical.

Many Muslims think that if they start following Western ideas, they will soon follow all their religion! If they believe that, then they are implying that Muslims do not have any discernment; they cannot tell what is good and what is not. So, they think that the safest thing to do is to follow tradition, even if tradition is wrong. That is precisely what God berates people in the Quran for doing. He quotes them saying, "Nay, we will follow what we found our parents doing." (2:170)

Many Muslims also believe that following any Western idea is tantamount to approving their religion, or their way of life! It is neither; it is following a good idea. If you have a cell phone, TV or computer, you are following good ideas that came from the West. The Prophet, peace be upon him, often did like the people of the Book in matters where no revelation was sent to him. Does that mean he approved of their religion or their way of life? Obviously not.

*Democracy has not been tried in Muslim countries before. In fact, it has been tried in Yemen and look what happened!*

So, if a system has not been tried, it should not be used? Is that logical, or is it more sensible to ask: does this new system have enough merit to give it a try? Especially since alternative systems have failed?

If the Yemeni model failed, was that the fault of democracy, or the fault of corruption? Democracy is not only free elections. It is independent legislative and judiciary powers too, a system of checks and balances, watch-dog organizations, independent free media, etc., where nobody is above the law and corruption is quickly exposed and penalized.

*We know from the Quran that obeying people is like worshiping them. That is what democracy leads to.*

And in Islam, many Muslims worship their scholars as if gods, when they take their opinions without understanding their reasoning or questioning them. That is not my view only, it was the view of one of the most prominent scholars of old: Imam Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, may God bless his soul.

And he was not alone in this. Imam Al-Shafii, may God bless his soul, was once asked a question by a man. He answered it for him in some detail, giving him his reasoning. The man started to pull out a tablet and pen. Al-Shafii yelled at him, "What are you doing?" He said, "I am writing down your fatwa before I forget it!" Al-Shafii said, "Do not! I might change my opinion by the Isha prayer!"

The sad phenomenon that many Muslims have had for decades now is that they have decided that they will not, or cannot, use their minds to learn their religion. So, they delegated that job to the scholars altogether. Wrong! The job of the scholars is to study matters and share their conclusions, and the reasoning they used, with fellow Muslims. Their conclusions can, and should be taken if they are sound and logical, but should be turned back if they are not.

Most scholars do their job well, may God bless them and add to their knowledge. It is Muslims who turn their opinions into religion.

*I am not quite convinced of what you said. I prefer the opinions of several scholars who ruled that democracy is incompatible with Islam, so I will have to say that in my presentation.*

Talking about Islam in public is a very serious affair. Done right, it can guide people to the One and Only true God. Done wrong, it may misguide them! God teaches us in the holy Quran not to do that! He teaches us this supplication, "Our Lord, do not make us a temptation for those who disbelieved, and forgive us, our Lord..." (60:5)

What is worse than not conveying the Message of God to people? Conveying the wrong message to people!

Unfortunately, that is precisely what Muslims have done for quite some time now: Holding fundamentalist views, projecting a holier-than-thou attitude, ridiculing the religions of other people, fighting amongst each other, living a backward and closed life, consenting to dictatorship, even committing war crimes... All are direct and blatant violations of the unambiguous commands from God in the Quran.

The disbelievers have been tempted. The Islamophobic campaign is a predictable result of such conduct from Muslims. "And if God willed, He would let them loose upon you..." (4:90)

Obviously, Muslims are not the only ones who did all those ills and

non-Muslims have done more of them and on a larger scale, but that does not excuse Muslims. God described the true Muslims as “the best community ever produced for mankind: promote virtue, curb vice, and believe in God.” (3:110)

The only rescue for Muslims from all the rut they are in is to once again make the Quran and the Sunna supreme. As long as we prefer Taqlid (blind following) to the Quran and the Sunna, as long as we prefer people to God, we will continue to be in torment.

Please do not say in your speech about Islam things that are not true, cannot be proved, or are merely interpretations/opinions rather than established tenets. You would be misrepresenting Islam. Remember that in the Hereafter you will be held responsible for “*the harvest of your tongue*”, as the Prophet (ﷺ) eloquently put it. 1362

### 5.2.34 Is this horrible sight a sanctioned Islamic practice?

*I saw on TV Muslims in Iran beating their own backs with chains until they bleed and some deliberately wounding the tops of their heads in a mass ceremony. The TV reporter said it was an Islamic memorial for the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad’s grandson. Is this a recognized memorial? Seems extreme to me.*

We are only allowed to weep for our dead. All other expressions of grief are forbidden. The murder of Al-Husein, may God have been pleased with him, was a tragedy on many levels, but it does not mean that Muslims should go berserk with grief expressions that belong to the ignorance era (Jahiliyya). 1219

### 5.2.35 Joke or blasphemy?

*My friend from the mosque had jokingly asked a hafiz (Quran memorizer) to intercede on his behalf if he were to require intercession, now he feels that he has committed bidaah (novelty in religion) or shirk (blasphemy of associating others with God in worship) because only the prophets, the martyrs and scholars can intercede and your good deeds can intercede too. Now he was only joking when he asked and the hafiz joked back and said yea sure if you give me 10 dollars every week you live. Now he is really scared and constantly calling me to see if I have found out if he has committed a sin.*

Clearly he meant it as a joke, and the hafez took it to be a joke, so

hopefully it will not count as a sin. But it is a bad joke. We are commanded to keep our tongues. A lot of what we say, without thinking, may be written in our book of deeds in the negative column.

Tell your friend to ask God for forgiveness and to remember that God forgives all sins of those who ask Him for forgiveness. Also tell him that the shirk that is not forgiven is the shirk that a person keeps until death and does not repent from.

BTW, the Prophet (ﷺ) and the martyrs do not intercede but *mediate*, or put in a good word, with God on the Day of Judgment. There is no intercession in Islam at all. Intercession is a wrong translation of Shafaa.

Also, who says that scholars can intercede? They cannot. 1324

### 5.2.36 Do Muslims have to take an afternoon nap?

*Verse 24:58 of the Quran defines three periods during which children and servants must knock before entering the bedrooms of adults. One of these periods is “when you have shed off your clothes at noon”. Does this mean that Muslims are required to take a siesta?*

No. When the Quran describes what the Arabs used to do and does not praise it or criticize it, then it is using something they are familiar with to make a point. In Seventh Century Arabia, most houses did not have solid doors to rooms if at all. Children and servants used to go about the house freely all day long and if an adult was taking a nap and has not covered himself or herself, because it was hot, then parts of their bodies may have become exposed to the youngsters. God wants to protect the honor of people and the innocence of children. That is why He specified nap time as one of the three times children and servants must seek permission to enter a room in which an adult may be taking a nap.

The command in the verse is to seek permission. There is no command, nor prohibition, to take a nap! A Muslim is not in violation of this verse if he or she never takes an afternoon nap.

By the same token, when the Quran directs women to cover their bosoms, in verse 24:31, it says that they should use “their head covers” to do that. Does that imply that women are required to cover their heads? No. The Quran is again using a custom to make a point. The custom was that all women, and all men for that matter, covered their heads to protect them from the blazing sun and desert sand. And the point being that it is improper for women to show their bosoms in public, but because, at that time, dresses were customarily designed to show the bosom area, the Quran is suggesting a simple way for women to be modest without having to tailor new dresses. The command in this verse is to cover the bosom,

not the head. A Muslim woman who wears a dress that does not show the bosom is already in compliance with this verse, whether or not she is covering her head. 2104

### 5.2.37 How must a Muslim return non-Muslim greetings?

*I was told that a Muslim should not initiate a greeting to a non-Muslim and not even return a greeting from a non-Muslim? That does not sound to me like a teaching of a friendly religion, which I believe Islam is. Kindly explain.*

Almighty God says in the holy Quran,

“When you are greeted with a greeting, then greet with one that is better or return it. Verily, God takes count of everything.” (4:86)

This verse is proof that Muslims must return all greetings from anyone. The use of the passive tense for the verb “are greeted” and the use of the indefinite noun “a greeting” both emphasize any greeter and any greeting! Thus, non-Muslims are included and un-Islamic greetings are included too.

What the verse instructs us to do is to try to find a better greeting to return, or at least an equal one in courtesy. That is how we are supposed to behave toward others and it is consistent with what God told us in verse 49:13 of how we are supposed to get to know people. If we do not return greetings and act with hostility toward others, we alienate ourselves, give people a suspicion about Islam and sow the seeds of mutual hatred which can only hurt both sides. How can a Muslim possibly do his or her duty of daawa (calling others to Islam) while maintaining an anti-social or an aloof attitude toward non-Muslims? 952

### 5.2.38 Can authorities force citizens to practice the religion?

Verse 2:256 makes it clear that there shall be no compulsion in religion. Notice that God says “in religion”, not just “upon” it. One has to conclude that no matter in religion can be forced.

What the Muslim authority is obligated to do though, is protect citizens from immorality in the same way any society protects its citizens from crime. If a woman, for example, goes out in improper attire, it is the duty of the Muslim authorities to prevent her, not because they can force her to be decent but to protect others from fitna (temptation to sin). That is the key difference that many advocates of personal freedom overlook. We cannot drive our own cars on the highway faster than the speed limit because if we do we may cause fatal harm to others, not just ourselves.

So, why did Abu-Bakr, may God have been pleased with him, fight the people who refused to pay the Zakah? For the same reason non-Muslims who refuse to pay the Jizya must be fought: Because the Zakah (on Muslims) and the Jizya (on non-Muslims) are the only sources of revenue for a Muslim state. The government cannot operate without revenue. Those who refuse to pay these taxes violate the law of the land. This is not a novel idea. In all countries, take the USA for example, the Federal government may send U.S. marshals to bust the home of a citizen who refuses to pay taxes. 902

### 5.2.39 Celebrating Israa and Miraj

*Got a simple question for you. I was reading that many Muslims are going to celebrate the Isra and Miraj of the Prophet, swas, today. I was unaware of the celebration until yesterday. What is your take. I know I have missed the boat on several things in life, but what is going on? It appears there are masjids in the US that will have special prayers. I kinda feel as I am Rip Van Winkle. When did this start?*

Happy Israa and Mieraj to you. There is no official celebration of the occasion; it is a new practice of many mosques. The more strict Muslims frown on such practice and call it a Bid-a (novelty), and they would be technically correct, but it is harmless. A get-together of fellow Muslims to commemorate a seminal event in Islam, the highest honor God has given to any creature, and the launch of the prayer, cannot be a bad thing. Besides, my mosque has a program for the kids. They learn and they play. 2280

### 5.2.40 How to protect oneself from the “evil eye”?

*Can one who assumes they have some degree of superiority intimidate others with what is commonly referred to as an evil eye? Many will give this woman money to appease the fear of her evil eye.*

As you know, sister, the evil of envy and the evil of voodoo are mentioned in Chapter 113, so some people can harm others without touching them or even talking to them, but it is not due to any superiority they have; it is due to their evil. God has allowed evil to take effect, but He also prescribed a protection from it: reciting Al-Muawwizatan (Chapters 113 and 114). Armed with this knowledge, therefore, no Muslim should be intimidated by anyone reputed to have an evil eye. 761

### 5.2.41 Can I name my daughter Hannah?

*I'm a Muslim woman and I just had a baby girl. Can I name her Hannah, or is that a Christian name?*

Congratulations. May she grow up in faith and good health.

The word Hannah is Hebrew for “favored grace”. That is a good meaning, and therefore can be given to a Muslim girl. It was the name of the mother of Mary too. A variation of the name is Anne. That is why you hear of a lot of women in the West called Marianne.

The corresponding Arabic word is Hanan, meaning compassion or tenderness. Prophet Yahya (John the Baptist) ibn Zakaria, peace be upon him, is called in Hebrew Yochannan, which is also related to Hannah and God uses a strikingly similar word “Hananan” to describe him in verse 19:13 of the Quran. 711

### 5.2.42 Can I tell a white lie?

*If, out of shyness, you say, “No, I am not hungry,” or “No, you do not owe me any money” is it okay?*

God mentions in the holy Quran that the Prophet, peace be upon him, felt shy sometimes, but the Prophet never lied; he simply said nothing. When he had to say something he said the truth and he put it gently. A great example of that is that one time Khalid ibn Al-Walid, may God have been pleased with him, invited him and others to dinner. Khalid served a grilled lizard. Everybody started to eat it except the Prophet! Khalid panicked as he thought that maybe lizard meat was forbidden and he asked the Prophet. The Prophet answered him, “No, but I find myself disliking it.” (Al-Bukhari [12] (5391)) 689

### 5.2.43 Of judgment and correction

*A question on judgment. What are our limitations? When we see behavior that is wrong, we are to correct it. How can we correct others when we have to constantly guard ourselves? What dictates are there that achieve a balance between forbidding evil and enjoining good?*

Great question, and it highlights the balance that Islam always teaches. You can point out to others, in a warm, sincere manner, what you noticed of their words or behavior that you understand Islam does not approve. This will cause one of several reactions. The egotistical person will take it

as an insult. The average person may or may not dislike it, but the righteous person will benefit and may even thank you. For those who do not receive it well, you leave them alone and hope that your reminder will ring true with them some day.

To balance that, do like Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, advised, and he started with himself. He advised, *“audit yourselves before you are audited and weigh your deeds before they are weighed for you.”* He was so much apprehensive about his own deeds that he often asked Huzayfa ibn Al-Yaman, may God have been pleased with him, whom the Prophet (ﷺ) gave the names of several hypocrites, Umar kept asking him, *“Am I one of them?”* Huzayfa kept avoiding answering him because he did not know if the Prophet would allow it, until he finally gave in to the pressure and told Umar he was not! 763





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## Chapter 6

# Laws and Jurisprudence

Articles in this chapter answer questions about Islamic laws and the jurisprudence used to legislate them.

### 6.1 Laws

#### 6.1.1 Does Islamic law apply to non-Muslims too?

*The recent news from Iran about a woman sentenced to death by stoning got me thinking. Is this indeed the Islamic law for adultery? And does Islamic law apply to non-Muslim citizens as well?*

Stoning is the opinion of many scholars, but is not the Islamic punishment. Many scholars have ruled differently. The Islamic punishment has been set explicitly and emphatically by God in the holy Quran as 100 lashings (see verse 24:2). Nobody can overrule God. [This discussion](#) may help you understand the background of the disagreement better.

As for non-Muslim citizens of a Muslim country, called *Zhimmis*, the Quran makes it clear that they can have their own arbitration,

“...If they (people of the Book) come to you [for arbitration], judge between them or turn aside from them. If you turn aside from them, they will not harm you a bit. And if you judge, then judge between them with equity; God loves the equitable.

And how do they make you judge, when they have the Torah in which is the judgment of God?...” (5:42-43)

What is the equity God speaks about in 5:42? He explains it as,

“...Then judge between them by what God has sent down and do not follow

their whims..." (5:48)

If both the plaintiff and the defendant are Zhimmis and choose their own arbitration, they can. But if they appeal to the law of the land, then of course that must be Islamic law. If either the plaintiff or the defendant is Muslim, then obviously only Islamic law applies, because God says in the holy Quran,

"And God shall not make for the disbelievers upon the believers a way."  
(4:141)

1062

### 6.1.2 How does Islamic law protect non-Muslim citizens?

*Historically speaking, Christians never lived in more peace when it came to Islam ruling in Palestine where Shariah (Islamic law) was implemented. Even the Jews used to "run to the Arab lands" for the freedom and equality they saw there.*

That was also said by Abba Eban, one of the founders of Israel and a prominent British Jew. He said it in an interview for the PBS documentary "Civilization and the Jews."

*One Rabbi wrote a letter to his family telling them that even in court the Jews had equal justice against Muslims.*

Ali ibn Abi-Talib, may God have been pleased with him, sued a Jew. He said he borrowed a shield from him and never returned it. The judge asked Ali if he had witnesses to the loan. Ali did not. The judge dismissed the case!

Ali was the caliph at the time, mind you!

*Sharia law is the best, but it needs to be correctly implemented. Leaders who attempt to apply Shariah law never implement it right and it causes problems.*

You said it. The problem is that Sharia enthusiasts rush to implement it but forget to lay the foundation for it first, like the Prophet did, peace be upon him. You can't apply penal code before you've provided opportunities for education, jobs, investment and prosperity. That is why Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, suspended the theft penalty during the year of famine.

You also have to apply the law to all, including the ruler and the elite. Only an independent judiciary can govern that. I bet a lot of Sharia

enthusiasts will change their minds after that! When was the last time you heard of a “royal prince” who was flogged for drinking alcohol?

Lastly, you cannot impose Sharia on non-Muslim citizens. They have to *request it first* (see verse 5:42). If they don’t, they are delegated to their own arbitration mechanisms. 1342

### 6.1.3 Is Islamic inheritance law unfair?

The British newspaper The Telegraph published today an article with the heading, “[Islamic law is adopted by British legal chiefs](#)”. The author, John Bingham, alleges in the article that British lawyers will now for the first time be able to write wills for their clients that “deny women an equal share of inheritances and exclude unbelievers altogether.”

Is that true? Have testators never been able to exclude from their wills heirs they resented, or wished to penalize, and given some heirs more than others and even given people who were totally unrelated to them a large portion of their estate? I doubt that, since the English law, as far as I know, regards the testator as the sole owner of his or her estate and therefore the only one who has a say in how the estate is to be distributed. It is called “testamentary freedom”. Probate courts only interfere when a litigator contests the will as being contrary to common standards of fairness. [One article](#) I found, written by a lawyers group, spells out how a testator can legally disinherit some heirs. I’m sure you can find many other.

However, is Bingham’s Islamophobic allegation true about Islamic law? Does Islamic law of inheritance deny women an equal share of inheritance and exclude unbelievers altogether?

Not quite as stated. The reason women inherit half of what men inherit is because Islamic law requires men to financially support women! If this requirement is not found in a Muslim community, then the division becomes invalid. I hope that the legal guidance the article refers to has taken into consideration that important proviso. Bingham really should have asked about it before he published his article.

And what about non-Muslims, can they possibly inherit from a Muslim? While some schools of thought do not allow it, there really is nothing in the Quranic verses that makes that ruling. A Muslim testator certainly can specify a bequest in his will, not to exceed one third of the estate, to be given to any one person or group who is not a regular heir.

The questions and answers page of [this software](#) may answer more of the readers questions about Islamic law of inheritance.

God says in the holy Quran “Verily, God does not wrong even the weight of a speck.” (4:40) Don’t let Islamophobic writers give you the wrong

impression about God.

Bingham also reports in the article that the legal guidance documents will exclude out-of-wedlock children and adopted children from inheriting. Is this true? Apart from the fact that any British testator can probably do that already under British law, Islamic law does not deprive out-of-wedlock children. The Quran does not say they are excluded! As for adopted children, they are not regular heirs for the reasons explained in previous posts, but they can inherit by way of a bequest.

Next Islamophobic allegation in the article is the exclusion of people married in a church or in City Hall! Where is that written exactly in the Quran? If the reader can point to the verse, I'd appreciate it.

Is that guidance document “the first step on the road to a parallel legal system” for British Muslims, as the article quotes some campaigners? My humble answer to this question is that it can be, but never has to be. It all depends on how Islamic law is defined. If the definition is made by a school of thought, or some influential person, then the fears expressed in the article are legitimate. But that does not qualify as Islamic law. Islamic law is the Quran and the authentic Hadith, properly interpreted according to universally recognized logic, called in Islamic disciplines *Usul-al-Fiqh* (Foundations of Deduction). Anything else is somebody's opinion.

This whole issue of fear of “Sharia”, which resulted in several American states banning Sharia altogether, mixes two things which are not always related: Islam and Muslims! What Islam teaches is not necessarily followed by Muslims, and what Muslims do is not necessarily taught by Islam. To ban unfair laws is a good thing regardless of who wrote those laws. But to ban something based on misunderstanding it, or on mixing it with something else, is unwarranted.

If I were to advise the Law Society of Britain, I would only say that what they are told is Sharia may not be. It could simply be a tradition, or somebody's refutable interpretation, and therefore should not overrule British law. They and the detractors and even many Muslims may be surprised to learn that much of British law has always been Sharia-compliant. In fact, the beginnings of the English Common Law were much influenced by Islamic law. 2457

#### 6.1.4 What in Islam is the punishment for apostasy, adultery and homosexuality?

Apostasy is mentioned twice in the Quran, in verses 5:54 and 2:217. In neither verse does God specify any punishment. In fact, in verse 2:217 God threatens the apostate of a punishment from Him *in the Hereafter*.

This makes sense since the freedom to believe is guaranteed in Islam,

“There shall be no compulsion in religion” (2:256),

“And say: The Truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills to believe, let him believe, and whoever wills to disbelieve, let him disbelieve!” (18:29)

As for adultery, the punishment for it is clearly, emphatically and finally specified in the Quran, verse 24:2, as one hundred lashings in public.

Finally, concerning homosexuality, for women, the punishment is house arrest (see verse 4:15) and for men, the punishment is hurtful discipline (see verse 4:16). 1146

### 6.1.5 Can a Muslim wife divorce her husband?

Certainly. There are two words in Islamic law that translate divorce. “Talaq” is when a husband divorces his wife, and “Khul-a” is when a wife divorces her husband.

Khul-a is allowed in Islam even if the husband did nothing wrong! The principle of Khul-a, an Arabic word that means severance, is established in verse 2:229. In Sharia (Islamic law), a woman can divorce herself from her husband by giving him back the dowry. If he does not agree, she can sue him for Khul-a and the judge is obligated to grant it if the wife gives the dowry back.

This is well established by the authentic hadith, “*The wife of Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shammās came to the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, and said, ‘O Messenger of God, I do not fault my husband in character or religion but I hate ingratitude in Islam.’ The Prophet asked her, ‘Would you return his garden?’ She said, ‘Yes’. The Prophet said to her husband, ‘Accept the garden and divorce her.’*” (Al-Albani [7] (3463)) 116

### 6.1.6 Does Islam allow forced marriages?

Of course not. Not only is mutual consent a prerequisite of a valid marriage contract, God tells us in the Quran in clear, unambiguous language that there is no compulsion in religion (2:256). “In” is the keyword here. That is, no matter in this religion is to be forced on people. 119

### 6.1.7 Can a Muslim woman operate a business?

*I read a post on a forum that suggested that it is not proper for a Muslim woman to own or operate a business if that means she will have to mix with men in her employ or who are clients. The post cited some hadeeths, but I found them lacking as evidence.*

Lady Khadija, may God have been pleased with her, was a successful businesswoman who operated caravans and trade and hired and managed men, one of whom was the Prophet himself, peace be upon him.

There is nothing wrong in a woman being a business woman, as long as she adheres to Islamic teachings about appearance and mannerism.

*I see your point, but didn't Khadija stop working after she married the Prophet (PBUH)? And did she actually travel with the men on those trading caravans?*

She did not stop working; she was actually the main financial (and moral) support for the Prophet (PBUH) during the early years of his preaching. As for traveling, we know from several events that men and women traveled in caravans but separately. The women rode on howdahs (sedan chairs affixed to camel humps).

1205

### 6.1.8 I'm in a custody battle. What should I do?

*My ex-husband has abandoned our son. He is in the country illegally and now wants to see him. My current husband, who loves my son, refuses to let my ex see the child. I know that my ex loves our son and would not hurt him and I'd like my son to know his biological father.*

*We are now in a custody battle, which I'm sure I will win, but should I forbid my ex from ever seeing his son? What I want to do is arrange for visitations where I work, in a public library, supervised by me.*

Severing the relationship between your son and his biological father is the one thing you should never do. Your son is, and always will be, his biological father's son. In fact, he must have his last name, per verse 33:5.

If you'll have custody and visitation will be supervised by you and in a public place, this sounds like an excellent arrangement.

*I told my husband about what I wanted to do. As soon as I did, he was immediately upset. I think I remained calm and did the best I could in talking to him.*

*At least I feel better after telling him.*

*I get so confused sometimes about when to be obedient to my husband and when I should argue back with him. I feel like a slave sometimes and I'm not sure if this is how a Muslim marriage should be.*

No, it's not. Obedience is not derogatory as it has come to mean to many people. Obedience to husband means trusting his good judgment and delegating leadership to him. That does not preclude good counsel. We are all human and therefore can err, misconstrue or let our emotions cloud our judgment. That is where the Book of God and the authentic Sunna can help the most. They have the decisive argument. A Muslim, by definition, is one who has committed to obeying these sources above all other.

You probably heard this story before. One day, while Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, was giving the Friday sermon and he declared that dowries have been excessive and should therefore be capped. A woman rose up at the back of the mosque and said to him that he couldn't cap dowries because God says in the holy Quran, "and if you gave one of them (women) a kantar (a hundredweight) [in dowry], do not take from it at all." (4:20).

How did Umar, the caliph, reply to her? He said, "*The woman is right and Umar is wrong!*" As author Abbas Al-Aqqad put it in his famous book "The genius of Umar", "Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) always stopped at the Book of God."

Continue to communicate with wisdom, calmness and good evidence with your husband. In-sha-Allah (God willing), he will realize that the decision you've arrived at is the right thing to do and will support it. 1228

### 6.1.9 Can Muslims adopt children?

Muslims can foster children, but cannot adopt them as adoption is understood in the West, i.e., giving the children their name. This is not unkind; it has to do with the laws of marriage and inheritance. These laws are affected by whether a person is a blood relative.

Fostering an orphan is one of the noblest things a Muslim can do. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "*I and the foster of an orphan in the Garden are like these*", and he put two fingers together! ([Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5304, 6005)) 724

### 6.1.10 How does Islam regard adoptions?

*Assalaam alaikum,*

*Can a Muslim adopt (be a foster parent to) a non-Muslim child? And how does one rear such a child?*

*If an infant is adopted and the child has no name what is the ruling? Child born in hospital; father unknown; mother gives it up for adoption... what do we do Islamically?*

*Am I correct in understanding that the issue of adoption stems from inheritance laws?*

*Need response by yesterday!*

Islam strongly encourages fostering orphans. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “I, and the foster of an orphan, are in Paradise like these (and he held up his second and third fingers tightly together).” Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by Muslim [43] (2983) who rated it authentic.

What Islam forbids is giving the child the last name of the foster parent, which is what normally happens in adoptions. The reason is inheritance and marriage laws. These laws are structured around blood relations. A son inherits but a foster son does not, though he may be given a bequest. A man cannot marry the divorced or widowed wife of his son, but can marry the divorced or widowed wife of his foster child.

The Prophet (ﷺ) adopted his servant Zayd, before Zayd’s father became known. People started calling the boy Zayd ibn Muhammad! Zayd was overjoyed by that name. Then, after verse 33:5 was revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent out for folks who are gifted in telling paternity from looks, voice and mannerism. They asserted that Zayd’s father was Haritha ibn Shuraaheel. The Prophet (ﷺ) was very delighted that the father was now known. Zayd, however, was not that happy! He would never again be called Zayd ibn Muhammad.

Then, a most surprising consolation prize came from God to Zayd. God mentions his name in verse 33:37, the only fellow of the Prophet (ﷺ) to get this honor!

What to call a foster child? Any decent name, as long as the last name is not the same as the foster father’s name.

How to raise the foster child? Just like one would raise his own child.

There is no difference between Islamic perspective on fostering a child and the common perspective on adoptions except in that one issue: legally regarding the child a son (or daughter) of the foster parents. That is not allowed in Islam, for the reasons of inheritance and marriage laws as I mentioned above.

*What happens if you decide to become a foster parent to a child that is practicing a faith other than Islam. You gain custody after they have professed a faith. What is a Muslim parent to do.*

*I await a response.*

What is the main responsibility of a Muslim toward his or her fellow human being? It’s to call him or her to God. For a stranger, this may be

done by preaching or by being a good example. For a close person under one's care, it is by raising him or her to be a good Muslim. If the foster child rejects that, they cannot be forced to become Muslim. 1951

### 6.1.11 When, if ever, is abortion allowed in Islam?

*With all this talk about health care I wanted to ask a question about abortion. Since Islamically "Ruh" (spirit) is blown into the embryo after four months of being in the womb, do you think it is ok for couples to have abortion before the 4th month? What about the case of rape or incest?*

As horrible as rape and incest are, the child is innocent and therefore cannot be penalized with the capital punishment! The only justified abortion after 120 days of pregnancy (not a trimester) is when the fetus threatens the life of its mother. This turns the issue from murder into self defense and preservation of the mother's life.

BTW, the hadith that states that the spirit is blown into the fetus after 120 days is authentic and was narrated by Abdullah ibn Masoud (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (3208) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2643). 648

### 6.1.12 Is declaring bankruptcy allowed in Islam?

Declaring bankruptcy is allowed in Islam. And the court has the authority to declare a person bankrupt in order to liquidate his assets to pay his creditors.

Abdul-Rahman ibn Kaab ibn Malik narrated that Muaz ibn Jabal (RA) was a very generous young man and he spent money left and right, until he owed more than he had. He went to the Prophet (PBUH) to talk to his creditors. The Prophet (PBUH) sold off Muaz's assets and paid the creditors.

Imams Malik and Al-Shafii both ruled that a bankrupted person's property is put under guardianship and he is not allowed access to his money until creditors settle. Al-Shafii and Ibn Hanbal ruled that creditors divide up the bankrupted man's property by the ratio of their original debts.

Abu-Hanifa, however, ruled that the debtor is jailed until he pays off his debts and that he must not lose control of his money.

There are other fine points in the law, such as paying the Zakah first, encouraging creditors to forgive the debt of a man experiencing hardship, excluding the man's home and enough stipend to live on, etc.

You can read these details in books such as Fiqh-al-Sunna by Sayyid Sabeq (Sabeq [44]) and Nayl-al-Awtar by Al-Shawkani.

Hope this helps.

1095

### 6.1.13 What is the penalty for accidental killing?

*I assure you this did not happen. I'm asking so that I'd know what to do if something like it ever happens to me.*

*Suppose I was walking down the street carrying groceries and a man grabs the bag from my hand and runs up the street. I run after him but he is faster than me so I grab a rock and throw it hoping to stop him. The rock hits his leg and trips him. He falls and hits his head on the cement and dies instantly.*

*My question is am I accountable for his death? Would it be considered self defense or murder? Obviously it was not intentional on my part to kill him. I was only trying to make him stop or at the very least drop my groceries but things went bad. What does Islam say about this situation?*

This is called in Sharia “ضرب أفضى إلى موت” (a beating that resulted in death), which was translated in English common law as “man slaughter.” If a judge determines in court that the death was truly accidental, there are punitive damages. But if the defendant cannot afford the punitive damages, then there is religious penance. God explains all that in the holy Quran,

“And never is it for a believer to kill a believer except by mistake. And whoever kills a believer by mistake - then the freeing of a believing slave and a **compensation payment** presented to the deceased's family [is required] unless they give [up their right as] charity. But if the deceased was from a people at war with you and he was a believer -then [only] the freeing of a believing slave; and if he was from a people with whom you have a treaty - then a compensation payment presented to his family and the freeing of a believing slave. And whoever does not have [neither] - then [instead], **a fast for two months consecutively**, [seeking] acceptance of repentance from God. And God is ever Knowing and Wise.” (4:92)

*The Quran tells us the story of Moses and how he hit that man and accidentally killed him.*

Great observation. This is told in verse 28:15. You will notice that nowhere in the Quran does God tell us that Moses was punished for it or was supposed to be punished for it. Moses must have done the penance mentioned in verse 4:92, peace be upon him. 1762

### 6.1.14 Is Sharia law cruel?

*I am a peace-loving person by nature. I simply hate, hate, HATE violence. I can't stand it. I can't watch gory things. I know Islam is peaceful. But people have told me that I'm so brainwashed that I can't understand that Shariah Law is really not the right thing. Please note that I'm not saying Shariah Law isn't the right thing, I'm just confused at what my feelings are.*

*I'll get down to the questions. Please understand however, that these questions are of curious nature, and not to offend people or try to refute Islam. I'm simply keeping an open mind when asking so I can answer others and so I can be contented; I'm asking it the way others have asked so blatantly, so it's more relatable. Forgive me Allah, if I have transgressed.*

Bless your heart, sister. There is no sin in asking. When God Almighty told the angels that He was about to create Adam, they asked why! They said, "Will you put in it (the earth) whom will corrupt in it and shed blood?" (2:30)

God did not chastise them. He simply told them that He knows what they do not.

Dr. Jeffrey Lang put it well in the title of one of his excellent books, "Even Angels Ask." (Lang [40])

*1) Why does Shariah Law have to be torture before death?/Painful death?/Death in a very painful way?*

The only penalty that involves pain before death is crucifixion for Hiraba (terrorism), as stated in verse 5:33. Terrorists do not deserve any mercy. The pain they cause their innocent victims deserves to be returned likewise. You do not have to watch the crucifixion of terrorists, but only to know that they have been justly punished.

*2) Why does Islam practice an 'eye-for-an-eye' in these matters? Isn't that a vengeful way out? Forgiveness in Islam was also heavily emphasized. I would think that a hurt family member would have wanted the killer killed.*

Family members of a murder victim are offered three choices: (a) kill the convicted murderer, (b) take a ransom, or (c) pardon the murderer. That is Sharia law. The choice is not the judge's or the jury's, it's the murder victim's family's. This makes provision for families who are unable to forgive. It also makes provision for families who will benefit more from

punitive damages. It also does not leave out the pardon option you are looking for.

*3) I've heard the church burnings of before were done to save the burning person from the even more dangerous "fires of Hell." And then they say Islam wants the accused to be saved from an even greater danger (Hell), which is why the rapist for example, has to be set to death.*

Nonsense. Rape is terrorism and adultery combined. The punishment for terrorism is one of four, as clearly stated in the Hiraba verse, (5:33): (a) Killing, (b) crucifixion, (c) severing a hand and a foot on opposite sides, or (d) permanent deportation. The choice is left to the judge and is based on the severity of the crime. If the punishment for a rapist was death, that does not mean he is saved from Hell. That is God's decision to make.

*4) Why are apostates killed? Freedom of religion is emphasized in Islam, so why is there an apostasy rule? There are answers in my head, but I still can't comprehend it.*

They are not. This is one of the misconceptions about Sharia. There is no punishment for apostasy. See the articles in this book about apostasy for details. You are right; freedom of religion is guaranteed in Islam and mandated by God in the Quran.

*5) Islam cannot change its rules. I accept Shariah Law, I guess, but it's easier said than done. If I saw it with my own eyes, being carried out, I'm very scared of what will happen to my faith. Any way of understanding the wisdom behind Shariah Law?*

Don't see it. Most people are like you. The few penalties in Sharia that are tough are tough for the reasons I mentioned above. The punishment must suit the crime and there must be a visual deterrent to potential criminals who do witness a penalty carried out.

*6) What does "stoning" mean?*

It means throwing stones at someone until he or she dies. It is a Jewish custom that crept into Muslim society and it has no basis in Islam. It is another misconception about Sharia. Read this post for details, §3.1.16. Also check out the Misconceptions and Islamophobia posts in this book where many of your concerns are discussed and clarified. There is a lot of misunderstanding, even among Muslims, of what Sharia includes and doesn't include.

7) *Why doesn't Islam offer rehabilitation for homosexuals? I'm not making my own rules, btw. Why is it stoning instead? What is the validity of this:*

*“Maududi vol. 2, p. 52, note 68):*

*. . . Ibn Abbas ruled that they be thrown headlong from the highest summit.”*

The punishment in Islam for male homosexuality is discipline, not death, as clearly stated in verse 4:16. Any fatwa saying otherwise is in contradiction to the Quran, and therefore must not be considered. In fact, rehabilitation for homosexuals is precisely what the Quran encourages. In verse 4:15, God says that female homosexuals are to live under house arrest “until God makes for them a way out” (4:15). The house arrest gives rehab a chance. It also saves the women’s dignity and privacy and saves their families’ honor. Many exegetes have interpreted the “way out” as proper marriage. As for male homosexuals, verse 4:16 clearly states that if the two men repent and *reform*, then Muslims must not bother them anymore. That’s rehab, isn’t it? And it’s a far cry from killing them, wouldn’t you say?

*Please understand that it is not my intention to mislead or offend, nauzubillah (seeking refuge in God from such). I myself have no proper knowledge on this matter. I believe in Islam; it has far too clear a message to ignore. I am trying to learn, since a lot of websites do not explain this matter satisfactorily to me. They don't give proper reasons, therefore this doubt lingers on. May Allah Forgive me if I've said anything wrong.*

Don’t stay in doubt and don’t settle for bad or half answers. I hope that you read my humble answer and that it is clear enough for you. Islam and its Sharia are innocent from the lousy interpretations Muslims and others have made of it. 1758

### 6.1.15 Buddhist killer pardoned by Muslim victim’s family

You may have heard this news or read about it: Relatives of a Muslim Sri Lankan worker murdered by his Buddhist colleague in the country of Abu Dhabi told court they have decided to pardon the killer, prompting the judge to bring forward hearings for sentence.

An official from the Sri Lankan embassy in Abu Dhabi handed the pardon document from the victim’s relatives to court on Tuesday, the semi-official Arabic language daily Alittihad newspaper said.

“They just pardoned the Buddhist killer without demanding any diya (punitive damages) taking into consideration that the killer’s family is poor”, it said.

Gulf News, in its November 1924 issue, reported another such clemency, made by a Saudi family who one of their members was murdered. The family members were touched by a photo of the killer’s daughters and decides to pardon him, preferring God’s reward to punitive damages or retaliation. You can read it online [here](#). In the same issue, correspondent Ramadan Al-Shirbini reported another clemency decision by a Saudi man of the murderer of his son! How hard is that? It takes a saint to be able to be so gracious. I was reminded of verse 24:22, “Forgive and pardon. Do you not love that God forgives you?”

Few people know this, but in Sharia (Islamic law), when a killer is convicted in a court of law, it is not up to the judge to issue a sentence! The judge is obliged to give the victim’s family one of three choices of sentence to make: (1) Pardon the killer, (2) Take punitive damages, or (3) Execute. The judge is also obliged to explain to the victim’s family why they may consider a non-terminal sentence.

Ah, if only people would know the true Sharia instead of the propaganda Sharia.

2084

## 6.2 Rules Of Evidence

### 6.2.1 The high regard for the Hadeeth

*I recently read two books quoting the renowned Imaam Ash-Shaafi, may God bless his soul, saying that the Hadeeth is more important than his rulings.*

He was not the only one, may God bless his soul. All four Imams said something similar. For instance, Imam Abu-Hanifa said, “*If you find an authentic hadith that contradicts my ruling, the hadith is my ruling!*”

This also highlights a very important historical fact that many Muslims are unaware of: that the four Imams lived and died before Hadith authentication was taken up as serious task, by Al-Bukhari first. The imams ability to rule on thousands of juristic issues without the benefit of verifiably authentic hadiths is testimony to their brilliance, depth of knowledge and absorption of the Quran.

1158

### 6.2.2 How does one verify a hadeeth?

*Whenever you come to know about a Hadeeth, How do you find it to be Sahih (authentic) or Da'eef (weak)?*

*I know that Naasir-ud-Deen Al-Albaani has declared some as sahih. Where can I find his works?*

*Plus, I wanna know about the methodology of distinguishing the Sahih Hadeeth away from the Da'eef. How is that done?*

*Or, if the scholars have done any work on it, then how do we find them?*

What you're asking about is Usul-al-Hadith (Foundations of Hadith authentication). It's a four year course in Islamic colleges! There are four components to it: language, culture, people and text.

1. Language: Knowledge of Arabic, as spoken in 7th Century Arabia is a must. The vocabulary of Hadith is very different from the Quran and from modern Arabic. It is similar to the language of Arab poetry.
2. Culture: Without familiarity with the environment, socioeconomic, and geopolitical elements of Arabia in the 7th Century, many hadiths are easily misunderstood.
3. People: That is the study called Al-Jarh wal-Taadeel (faulting and approving), which studies narrators and evaluates their trustworthiness, memory and competence. Also, whom they are known to have narrated from and whom they are known to have narrated to. That is how you can tell that a hadith is weak or fabricated. It is also how you can tell if a narrator tends to impose (Tadlees).

The best book on that subject is [Ibn Hajar \[30\]](#) "Levels of Imposers".

4. Text: This is the study of the Matn (content) of the hadith. Does it sound like something the Prophet (PBUH) would say? Does it conflict with other hadiths rated authentic? Does it conflict with the Quran? Does it contain interjections (Idraj) from the narrator? That is how scholars have been able to rate a hadith Gharib (strange) or Munkar (unrecognized). This area, unfortunately, is not as well studied as the the previous one.

As for Al-Albani, the References attachment lists several of his books.

It is a very important subject to study. But, for a person who does not wish to study it, it is quite sufficient to verify a given hadith in one of the six acclaimed books: Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Al-Tirmizi, Al-Nasai, Ibn Majah and Abu-Dawoud.

Update:

A very helpful website, <http://dorar.net/hadith>, has been online for a while now and it helps determine the rating of a given hadith. Check it out.

### 6.2.3 What are the criteria for authenticating a Hadeeth?

*I've read articles which quote hadeeths (narrations attributed to Muhammad, peace be upon him) which sound contradictory to the teachings of the Quran. Then somebody would reply by showing the hadeeth is not authentic.*

*How can one tell if a hadeeth is not authentic?*

Authentic Hadiths have conditions that have been very well defined by our righteous predecessors, may God reward them well. They established the discipline of " " (Foundations of Hadith authentication). I have been blessed to have read many books by them on that subject. It is a rather complex subject, but to simplify it a bit:

A hadith is authentic if the following statement is true about it,

Translation: "Whose attribution is continuous by trustworthy, accurate, upright narrators, ending with the Prophet (ﷺ), and without oddities or faults."

Each scholar of hadith authentication has set his criteria for what constitutes an authentic chain of narrators. The best criteria are those set by Al-Bukhari, may God bless his soul. He required a continuous chain, in which every narrator is named, known and proven to have heard from the one before him and the chain ends with the Prophet (ﷺ), and where every narrator has three qualities,

1. Trustworthy (Thiqatun),
2. Accurate (Dhabtun),
3. Upright (Adlun)

Trustworthy means that the narrator always told the truth, and is not given to exaggeration. Accurate means he is known for reporting what he heard as it was said, without alteration, interpretation or interjection of his own words. Upright means that he is square in his dealings and does not practice favoritism or act on whim.

Other scholars relaxed some of these requirements to various degrees. Different scholars had different criteria of these definitions, and that's why you see hadiths reported by some but not by others. IMHO, if a hadith is not rated authentic by any of the six scholars (Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu-Dawoud, Al-Tirmizi, Al-Nasai and Ibn Majah) then it is most likely not authentic. You can also safely add Ibn Hibban and Ibn Khuzayma to the list.

As for oddity and fault, they refer to the text of the hadith. Again, various definitions were offered by different scholars, but the bottom line of most of them is that “odd” means it contradicts another hadith judged authentic or contradicts the Quran, and “fault” means there is something else in it that causes the evaluator to hesitate before judging it authentic, even though its narration chain seems authentic. 1043

#### 6.2.4 What does “Tadlees” mean?

*I'm having trouble understanding the concept of Tadlees taught to us in class. Does it mean lying or fraud?*

Tadlees means imposition, or giving a false impression. It can be deliberate but it may also be unintended. It is most often used in Hadith authentication. Some examples of Tadlees have been called other names in order to distinguish them specifically. For instance, interjection of one's own words in the body of a narration is Tadlees, but scholars have called it Idraj (interjection) instead, in order not to confuse Tadlees within content with Tadlees within the attribution chain.

Other examples of Tadlees in Hadith attribution is when a narrator is referred to by an ambiguous nickname, such as Abu-Abdillah or only his first name, such as Saeed. That could be out of brevity, relying on the fact that all who hear the narrator know exactly whom he means, but it can also be out of deception because one Abu-Abdillah may have heard from the narrator before him in the chain while another Abu-Abdillah did not.

Scholars opinion on Tadlees vary a lot. Some have called it “the brother of lying”, others have tolerated it. Scrutineers of Hadith have usually been able to tell whether any given Tadlees is deceptive. 1088

#### 6.2.5 Should schools of thought be unified? Can they?

*I saw a video by a Muslim scholar who calls for unifying the four schools of thought [of Islamic jurisprudence]. Is that a good idea? Can it be done?*

*Personally, I think that we should follow whatever reaches us which has sound evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, it can reach us from any madhab (school of thought) or any knowledgeable reliable scholar of Ahlus Sunnah (People of the Sunna).*

I certainly agree.

The founders of all four schools of thought (five if you count Al-Zahiriya), as well as their students, were all pious and knowledgeable people. That does

not mean we must follow them though! It means that their interpretations and deductions are a very valuable database of Islamic knowledge that can save us having to re-invent the wheel. If one of their opinions in a given issue comes across as solid argument, we ought to take it. If two differing opinions come across equally convincing, we may choose either one. If none of their arguments in a given issue is strong, we may apply Ijtihad (analysis) principles to come up with a better interpretation or deduction.

We have a treasure of knowledge; it would be dumb to dump it, but it is also not a good idea IMHO to follow it without question. 1073

### 6.2.6 Is consensus of past scholars binding on subsequent generations?

Consensus (Ijmaa) can be and has been wrong. People have agreed to things and then changed their views later. That's only rational because they are human. Imam Al-Shafii, may God bless his soul, was one of several who went against consensus in a number of issues, and...get this...his opinion became the consensus opinion later. He was once asked why he opined against the opinions and rulings of the Sahaba themselves. His reply was, "*They were men and we are men!*" He is also very well known for having changed his opinions later in life.

Several scholars past and recent have attempted to document all juristic issues in which there is consensus and out of a thousand issues they examined they couldn't find one! Perhaps that is why Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may God bless his soul, and others have concluded that [consensus is impossible](#).

Sticking with opinions offered in the past is freezing of the mind and the intellect. Past opinions are a treasure of knowledge, but they are not holy, nor cast in stone. They are a guide and a tool for us to build on, not to follow blindly. That was the folly of the Church. Muslims must not repeat that mistake. 1152

### 6.2.7 Knowledge or understanding?

*In my online debates, I am beginning to see that people are seeking knowledge and once they find it they are content. I seek understanding.*

*I feel as if I hit a brick wall. It has hurt my iman (faith). Thus, I am not responding to them anymore.*

I'd add that many are seeking less; they're seeking direction. A quote from a fatwa web site (Islamic rulings) is sufficient for them. It's not for me, but I can appreciate why it is for them. Working the mind is harder than following. That's why most people follow. Even most leaders follow other leaders.

That would be OK if what is followed is right. Unfortunately, in many cases, it is not. In Islam, no one has the authority to declare anything forbidden or mandated after the death of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Yet, countless scholars have done just that, often with flimsy evidence.

The word used for jurisprudence in Islam is Fiqh, which takes understanding (Fahm) to a higher level: the level of recognition of contingency (Illā) and wisdom (Hikma) of each ruling. That level enables a jurist to derive other rulings without additional text. That is the primary benefit of the discipline of Usul-al-Fiqh (Foundations of Deduction).

*When I read jurisprudence I hit a wall. It becomes very arcane. Sometimes the language, in translation, becomes obtuse. I understand the need to provide governance.*

*Am I correct in understanding this arena is for scholars and not the ordinary seeker?*

*It seems that the sufi path is easier for the non-scholar. It is the path of the simple believer.*

Understood. But the basics need to be familiar to all IMHO. Otherwise, flawed and agenda-driven fatwas can wreak havoc among Muslims as they have. Without the ability to tell the flaws in what you're told by someone who appears to know what he's talking about, you end up forbidding upon yourself what is permitted and mandating what is not and misunderstanding Islam altogether in some cases.

I have reservations about Sufism. Like transcendental meditation, it starts out beneficial and spiritual but tends to develop dangerous beliefs later. It is risky business.

There is no better way to be close to God than the way He told us in a Qudsi (holy) hadith, "As My servant continues to offer Nawafil (voluntary worship) to get closer to Me, I get to love him. When I love him, I become his eyes with which he sees, his ears with which he hears, his hands with which he reaches and his legs with which he endeavors; and when he asks Me, I surely will give him and when he seeks refuge in Me, I surely will give him refuge." (Al-Bukhari [12] (6502))

*And that is the crux of the problem. I am in need of a teacher. We do need direction.*

*I agree about the risky business of Sufism. Many participants do not understand the demands of the path that you tread upon. They do not see the flip side. It does entail giving up much.*

*I am seeking the gentle balance of wisdom and intellect.*

I hope that this book contributes to that goal which I pray that you reach.  
1161

### 6.2.8 Intolerance for differing opinions

*I have been a regular contributor to an Islamic discussion board, but decided to leave them. The forum has been invaded by people who have no tolerance for opposing views. Someone can't even ask what time it is without there being posted a dozen hadiths talking about how to build your own watch, followed by half a dozen saying time is bidah (novelty). Yet the original question remains largely unanswered.*

LOL! I know what you mean and you summarized the situation well.

*One thing that has kept me away though is how differences of opinion are NOT ALLOWED on that forum. If we do not agree with you, you're wrong. Period. No ifs, ands, or buts. We do not care if you have hadith backing your point. It does not match ours. So - you are wrong. No, there is no discussion. You are wrong. Period!*

Compare that to this story about Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, may God bless his soul. Isshaq ibn Bahlul wrote a book about differences of opinion and brought it to Ibn Hanbal. He said to him, "I'm going to call it the *Book of Disagreement*." The Imam replied, "No. Call it the *Book of Wideness!*" The wise Imam knew that differences in opinion and interpretation are a blessing, because they multiply the possibilities. But, no, many Muslims want one narrow view to prevail. Theirs!

My humble advice is: Don't stay away. Be patient and continue to contribute. Fundamentalism flourishes only when it is not opposed. It is easy to defeat because the evidence against it is overwhelming, but it requires resolute debaters. 1181

### 6.2.9 Etiquette of disagreement

*Does Islam teach the etiquette of disagreement? How are Muslims supposed to behave when they disagree? It seems to me that they fight more often than they agree.*

Muslims are human, and as such are vulnerable to emotion and ego. As soon as two people disagree on something, they start fighting and calling each other names. Muslims should know better, because God says clearly in the Quran,

"And do not call each other names. What a wretched attribute to have: deviance after faith!" (49:11)

Why is it so hard for people to realize that difference in opinion is normal? Our righteous predecessors (al-Salaf al-Saleh) differed in opinion about every juristic issue they analyzed, bar none, but most of them never called each other names. Instead, they'd say "He is mistaken, may God forgive him." They called this manner " " (etiquette of disagreement), coining the phrase.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said that for the analyst (Mujtahed) is a reward even if his conclusion is wrong. If it's right, he gets two rewards! Narrated by Amr ibn Alas and Abu-Hurayra, may God have been pleased with them, and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (7352) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1716). The Prophet (ﷺ) is encouraging us to use our minds, but we want to suppress it and suppress the minds of other Muslims too. The irony is that those who do that do it for the claimed purpose of uniting the Umma (community), yet it has always led to divisions that fought each other and often turned bloody. This, despite reading God's words,

"And do not be among the mushrikeen (those who associate others with God in worship) - those who separated their religion and became sects, each faction with what they have are rejoicing!" (30:31-32) 790

### 6.2.10 Are doctrinal errors forgiveable?

*Can one hold erroneous views as a Muslim but still be saved as long as the error is due to honest ignorance and not willful sin?*

Not only doctrinal errors due to ignorance, but errors due to making the wrong conclusion from your analysis (Ijtihad). The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "If the judge rules wrong, after analysis, he gets a reward (for his diligence). If he rules right, he gets two rewards." Reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (7352), [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1716) and [Ibn Majah \[36\]](#) (2314) and narrated by Amr ibn Alas and Abu-Hurayra, may God have been pleased with both.

That is why Ijtihad is important and should have never been put on hold. Erroneous views cannot last long when Ijtihad is encouraged and practiced.

*Please explain Ijtihad in detail.*

Ijtihad means analysis. It's an Arabic word that means exerting an effort. That is, doing what is necessary regarding an issue for the purpose of arriving at a conclusion that hopefully pleases God.

What is necessary? It's all of the following:

- Collecting all of the relevant verses and authentic hadiths that address the issue directly or indirectly. Many fatwas, unfortunately, pick evidence.

- Learning what the scholars said about the issue and what conclusions they reached. Most fatwas, unfortunately, stop here. Stopping here is not Ijtihad but Taqlid.
- Determining if those conclusions are appropriate. If they are based on relevant, authentic evidence, followed proper reasoning based on Usul-al-Fiqh (Foundations of Deduction), and have not neglected other relevant evidence, then those conclusions may be adopted.
- Otherwise, further analysis is necessary. All evidence is examined and rules of deduction are applied to it to reach a conclusion.

The conclusion reached may or may not be enforceable. It depends on the certainty of evidence and robustness of reasoning. If the evidence is certain in its occurrence ( *Qat'i* ), ( such as a verse in the Quran or a ubiquitous hadith (Mutawatir), and the meaning of it is certain ( *Ma'ni* ), ( then the conclusion is certain and therefore enforceable. An example is the prohibition of eating pork.

If the evidence is certain in its occurrence but its meaning is not certain ( *Qat'i Ma'ni* ) ( then the conclusion, after robust reasoning, will remain a probability. An example of that is what part of a woman's head is to be covered.

If the evidence is uncertain in its occurrence ( *Qat'i Ma'ni* ), ( such as hadiths narrated by a few (Aahad), then the conclusion will remain a probability, even if the meaning is certain. An example of that is stoning.

If you read the classic literature, you'd find so much of the conclusions made do not follow the above recipe. Many fatwas have set the bar much lower than the above. Many conclusions are based on weak or even fabricated hadiths. Many conclusions are based on a wrong understanding which led to wrong assumptions, e.g., abrogation. Many fatwas declare their conclusions mandating or forbidding even when the evidence is uncertain or the reasoning is flawed. In fact, much of what was written was no more than opinion.

It is good that all the venerable scholars have warned their followers against following them blindly! Abu-Hanifa said, *"If you learn of a hadith that says differently from what I said, the hadith is my ruling!"* Malik said, *"Everyone's talk may be taken or left, except the dweller of this grave"*, pointing to the tomb of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Al-Shafii yelled at a man who was about to write down his fatwa, *"Don't. I may change my opinion by tonight!"* Ibn Hanbal said, *"Never say there is consensus about a matter; say instead, 'I do not know of dissenting opinions.' "* Some scholars said on their death beds that they wished their books be burned! May God bless their souls.

Indeed, classic literature is filled with conflicting reports in many rulings from the same scholar. It is also chock full of dissenting opinions. Ibn Hazm wrote a book hoping to show all issues in which there was consensus, but ended up

showing that not one of nearly a thousand issues he listed, not one escaped a dissenting opinion.

Attitude toward such phenomenon has typically been one of two extremes. One extreme was to blindly follow one school of thought (Mazhab) and stick with it. Another extreme chose to discard all scholarship of the past. Both approaches are wrong. We have a huge database of conclusions, methodologies, reasonings and evidence. We should take advantage of it and use it instead of reinventing the wheel, but we also should not take a shortcut and choose the lazy approach of mindless following. 885

### 6.2.11 When to end a debate?

*I was at a friend's house and we started a discussion on marriage. He said it's not right to look at the girl before marriage because it creates fitnah (seduction) in your mind. I said, "No. There is an authentic hadith which tells us it's recommended to look at her before marriage."*

*He fully agrees that there could be a hadith he doesn't have knowledge of. We debated a little but then I don't want to keep argument, so I said, "What you are saying might be better, but I don't know enough to agree or disagree with you so I won't argue with you."*

**SO MY QUESTION:**

*How far should we go in argument? And if the person is not in agreement, is it Ok to say something like I did to end the argument?*

You were right to end the debate, because without evidence on either side of the two of you, a debate is a battle of opinions and that gives rise to the ego. You are to be commended on your Islamic attitude toward your brother and giving him the benefit of the doubt.

As for the question you were asking about, the Prophet, peace be upon him, advised a man (Al-Mugheera ibn Shueba) seeking marriage to look at the woman he intends to marry and he gave the reason: *"It is likely then that a bond will form between you."* Narrated by Al-Mugheera himself, and reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (1087), [Ibn Majah \[36\]](#) (1866), [Ibn Hanbal \[32\]](#) (18137), and [Al-Nasai \[17\]](#) (3235). Rated authentic by [Al-Albani \[3\]](#) (1/198). 1199

### 6.2.12 Fundamentalism and tolerance

*I read a good article issued by the Institute of Islamic Understanding in Malaysia. It attempts, however, to legitimize*

*fundamentalism when it says:*

*“Fundamentalism is the most abused of words. It is equated with extremism. Yet if the teachings of Islam are studied, it would be clear that the best Muslims are the fundamentalists.”*

*That’s not what fundamentalism is. Do you agree?*

You are right. That’s not what fundamentalism is. The mutual misunderstanding comes from the fact that the West means something completely different by fundamentalism from what Muslims mean. The West means the belief that the fundamentalist’s opinion or view is the only correct one and all else is false, while Muslims mean by it the return to or insistence on the basics of the religion: the Quran and the Sunna.

The Arabs translate fundamentalism as “ ” (Al-Usuliya) and that is where the error is made! The word has nothing to do with Usuliyya, which means foundationism.

Fundamentalism is indeed evil, because it assumes that one interpretation, made by mortals who by nature are prone to error, is the only acceptable interpretation and all other are heresies. This can only cause animosity between people with different views. The article discusses verse 3:7, but neglects to mention its epilogue,

“...As for those in whose hearts is a bias, they follow what carries multiple meanings of it, seeking discord and seeking its ultimate meaning. And no one knows its ultimate meaning except God. And those established in knowledge say, ‘We believe in it. All [of it] is from our Lord.’ And no one remembers [that] except those of understanding minds.” (3:7)

Yet, despite the clear declaration from God, countless scholars tried to interpret verses that carry multiple meanings, which God says is something that only He can do! See [this discussion](#) for more details about this verse.

The lesson I think should have been learned from verse 3:7 is that a verse that carries multiple meanings was revealed that way because all of those meanings are intended! To confine such a verse to one meaning is to narrow down what God has widened. 1249

### 6.2.13 The dogmatic mind

*Dr. Tariq Ramadan wrote an excellent article about the dogmatic mind. Check it out.*

Thanks for the reference. Great article, indeed. Dr. Ramadan is describing fundamentalism and its effect on the mind. Fundamentalism can be found in all aspects of life: politics, economics and religion. “It’s my way or the highway” as the saying goes. We have seen each being abused by its

adherents, not to mention imposed on others. If only we listen to God when He says,

“Say, ‘O God, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, You will judge between your servants concerning that over which they used to differ.’ ” (39:46)

Balance is the bedrock of Islam. There is, for instance, a fine line between respect for and loyalty to scholars and taqlid (imitation). Taqlid dumps the mind, incapacitates intellect and makes infallible out of humans when we all know that even the Prophet, peace be upon him, made mistakes which are documented in the Quran! That’s one extreme. The other extreme is to look down on our great heritage and attempt to reinvent the wheel. No good ever comes out of extremes. 1150

### 6.2.14 What are Fiqh and Usool-ul-Fiqh disciplines?

*I read a bit some of “Fiqh” books and frankly found them boring. I got lost between the various rulings on the same issue by different scholars.*

*Actually, I don’t quite understand what Fiqh is and how it is disciplined, if at all. And what is the discipline of Usool-ul-Fiqh?*

The word Fiqh literally means “Getting the point!” Not all people who read a text or listen to a talk get the point of it. Worse yet, some may even get weird concepts from it.

In order for one to get the point, one needs to know how! That’s what the discipline of Usul-al-Fiqh (Foundations of Deduction) comes in. It is logic applied to Islamic sources. What you are finding boring is comparative jurisprudence (Al-Fiqh Al-Muqaran).

*Yes. There are schools of thought and then comes the exegesis. But the process, and I am a process person, loses its perspective. Minute replaces the objective.*

*What about women. Why do women not discuss Fiqh?*

I think that women were generally not encouraged, or their contributions have not been publicized. But that wasn’t the case early on. Aisha, may God have been pleased with her, was a consultant to many Sahaba (Fellows of the Prophet, (PBUH)) on all issues, not just women’s issues. Al-Hasan Al-Basri and Imam Malik, among many others, had female teachers. For more examples, see this post, §5.2.23.

*Is Fiqh derived from the Hadiths? Given that the Quran is Absolute.*

Fiqh applies to both the Quran and the Hadith, because both are texts from which rulings may be derived. Usul-al-Fiqh work the same way for both. Hadith involves an additional discipline: authentication.

While the Quran is absolute, it is revealed in a human language, and therefore may be interpreted in more than one way. If interested, check out [this discussion](#) about verse 3:7.

*I read the Bukhari and Muslim compilations of authentic hadeeths and I was impressed with the arduous work involved in authentication of the Hadeeth*

Indeed, may God bless the scholars of Hadith who verified the integrity of every narrator in every narration! A huge body of investigative research. 1442

### 6.2.15 Is there consensus on blind following?

*As a muqallid (strict follower) myself I wanted to know whether there is actually ijmaa (consensus) of the ulema (scholars) that you have to follow an imaam (religious teacher) and what is their main proofs for it.*

There is no such consensus. In fact, Imam ibn Hajar, may God bless his soul, wrote that strict following of a scholar borders on idol worship!

That said, if there were consensus, it does not prove the point! A Muslim is not required to obey the scholars, he or she is required to obey God and His Messenger only. The role of the scholars is to interpret, to the best of their abilities, what God and His Messenger have taught and share their conclusions with fellow Muslims. Being human, they may err. The fact that they differ on most issues is proof that (a) one or more of them got it wrong, or (b) there is room for multiple interpretations.

My humble advice to you and to any muqallid, is that if you're not able or willing to study the various viewpoints of the imams, then go ahead and strictly follow one of them. They are all good, pious, knowledgeable people. If, on the other hand, you can put in the effort to study, then you are free to pick rulings from any of them. When you have studied the Quran, the Hadith and Usul-al-Fiqh (Foundations of Deduction), you can make logical deductions yourself.

Taqlid (strict following) is the easier route to take. That is why most people do it. Its danger, however, is that it suppresses the mind, God's best gift to man after life itself. A Muqallid will do things that he or she normally would not do, such as things that are illogical, or sometimes even contrary to the teachings of the Quran, simply because it was the reported opinion of their chosen scholar.

1601

### 6.2.16 Is Aql subservient to Naql?

*What is the status of Aql (mind) in Islam? Is it true that Ahl-us-Sunna wal-Jamaa (People of the Sunna and consensus) believe that Aql is subservient to Naql (narrations)?*

We know the validity and authenticity of any narration by way of the mind! Therefore, Aql (the mind) is superior to Naql (narrations), not the other way around.

The reason we know that the Quran is God's word is because we've read it and came to the unshakable conclusion that it is the truth. The Quran made its case for being holy scripture by invoking our minds, and warming our hearts, and inviting us repeatedly to think, contemplate and reason. Thus, the Quran makes it clear that the mind is one of the two ways we can find the truth. The other being the heart. Both are required.

With that established, we can now feel comfortable accepting matters of the Beyond that are hinted at in the Quran. Because we trust the Source of information, we can trust everything He says, even if our minds cannot grasp it. That is the point where Ahl-us-Sunna wal-Jamaa mean when they say that Aql is subservient to Naql: they mean *authenticated* Naql.

This is a key differentiator of Islam. Belief in Islam is not blind and is not without questioning. Faith in Islam is *educated*. It is only after you have become convinced in your heart and in your mind that the Quran is the whole truth about God, then you believe in Islam. And the Quran emphasizes that each of us *can tell* if it is the truth or not!

As for narrations, such as the Hadith, they have been evaluated by scholars on two fronts: Sanad (attribution chain) and Matn (content). A narration that passes authenticity tests of both fronts may be declared authentic and only then does it become part of the religion. 1656

### 6.2.17 Can logic and reason be used in religion?

*I've noticed that in many of your articles, you use logic and critical thinking, but can they be used in religion? I'll give you an example. Prophet Muhammad Went from Mecca to Jerusalem in one night, can you explain to me how this is logically possible? We know also Angel Gabriel took Prophet Muhammad's heart out and cleansed it and put it back when he was little. Can you logically prove this? And Allah turned some Jews from among the Children of Israel into apes and swines, Can you explain this to me as well?*

That's easy! Let me start with the night journey. An object will move at a speed proportional to the force that pushed it, the stronger the force, the

faster the move. That is why airplanes get us to our destination faster than automobiles and faster than walking. God has infinite power, therefore, He can push any object any distance in no time at all.

Creatures differ in their abilities. A horse can live and build muscles from a diet of grass and hay, but man can't. Birds can fly but man can't. Likewise, angels have powers that man doesn't have.

And because God has infinite creation powers, He can turn any creation into any other creation. It's the same logic with which a worm, the caterpillar, which can only crawl, has many legs and looks creepy, turns in three weeks into *another species*, an insect, a butterfly, which can fly thousands of miles, has only two legs and looks beautiful. The same logic that turns a seed into a palm tree, or a fertilized egg into a baby. Glory be to God. 815

### 6.2.18 Muslims led the scientific revolution

*I didn't know that Muslims have invented all those things. I read a news article on the web about a new science museum. It says,*

*“From coffee to cheques and the three-course meal, the Muslim world has given us many innovations that we take for granted in daily life. As a new exhibition opens, Paul Vallely nominates 20 of the most influential - and identifies the men of genius behind them” [Islamic Inventors Changed The World](#)*

Thanks for sharing. This article was published by UK Independent News in March 2006.

Muslim contributions to civilization go beyond inventions. Muslims established the scientific method, without which no other science could have developed. Muslims translated the writings of the ancient Greeks. If they didn't, scientists and philosophers would have had to start from scratch. And by going into Europe, Muslims transmitted this knowledge to the Europeans, without which they would have remained in the dark ages a lot longer. 508

### 6.2.19 When to follow a fatwa

*Brother,*

*To what degree does a Believer have to follow a fatwa (religious ruling). Is a fatwa an absolute? I do not think so but I do not have the knowledge to make a judgement.*

A fatwa is a conclusion made by a scholar concerning a religious issue. Often the question answered by a fatwa is whether something is allowed, obligated

or forbidden. To arrive at such conclusion, certain discipline must be followed, called Usul-al-Fiqh (Foundations of deduction). For those who may be interested in learning this fascinating discipline, I can recommend three books, written in Arabic, Ibrahim [37], Abu-Zahra [2], and Khallaf [39].

There is a protocol, established by the Prophet (PBUH), for the sources a scholar must consider as he analyzes an issue. This was done when he sent Muaz ibn Jabal, may God have been pleased with him, to Yemen, to teach people Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) asked Muaz, “*How are you going to judge between the people?*” Muaz answered, “*By the Book of God.*” The Prophet liked that, then he asked him, “*And when you don’t find the answer there?*” Muaz answered, “*I consult the Hadith.*” The Prophet liked that, then he asked him, “*And if you don’t find the answer there?*” Muaz answered, “*Then I work hard with an opinion of mine.*” The Prophet (PBUH) smiled in approval.

Thus, the protocol is clear. The Quran comes first, and *only if one cannot find the answer in it*, then one consults the Hadith. Let’s say that again: If the answer is in the Quran, you do not pay attention to any other source.

While that may sound obvious to any Muslim, you will be surprised by the number of fatwas from prominent scholars which break that first rule! Their fatwa may cite a hadith, even one whose authenticity is suspect, and fully *ignore evidence from the Quran*.

So, to answer your question: If the fatwa does not reference the Quran and focuses on hadiths, or on opinions of other scholars, then that is a red flag for you. Rarely is there an issue which the Quran has not dealt with explicitly or implicitly.

Obviously, if the fatwa uses irrelevant evidence, inauthentic text, mere opinions, poor logic, subjective interpretations, etc., then it is uncertain in its conclusion at best.

Most fatwas, especially those from well respected scholars, are meritorious and well thought of and industriously analyzed. When you hear or read such fatwas, you ought to follow them.

One final word. There are many schools of thought out there, called Mazahib. You are at liberty to follow any of them, or pick and choose from either. There is seldom an issue where imams (the foremost scholars) have all agreed on.

1774

### 6.2.20 Should a Muslim follow one school of thought only?

*There are four Mazhaahib (schools of thought) in Sunni Islam and more in Sheei Islam. Muslims typically follow one school of thought or the other. Is that OK?*

If one is not inclined to study things on his own, then it is OK to follow one of the four Sunni mazahib, because they are all good and their founders were pious, knowledgeable people.

The differences between the mazahib are plenty, but mostly in secondary issues. When you realize that Islam is quite simple: it's the Quran and the authentic hadith, your mind is at ease. Mazahib cannot mandate something that God or the Prophet (PBUH) did not mandate, nor forbid something they did not forbid. Therefore, all they do is *interpret evidence* in order to arrive at a ruling. You can take it if you follow them, or you can take the ruling of another mazhhab if you prefer.

The problem is when a scholar tells you that something is haram (forbidden) or fardh (mandatory) based on shaky evidence or poor logic. If you can read and can apply logic, you can easily tell if his fatwa (ruling) is flawed. It's not rocket science. People of Taqlid (blind following), however, block their minds and follow the fatwa to the letter. That is sad and bad, for God has condemned Taqlid.

*Who were the founders of the four schools of thought? Was there a time gap between them? When did Al-Bukhari live? And who is Al-Albani and where does he fit in?*

The four Imams and Al-Bukhari all lived in the second and third Centuries A.H., First was Abu-Hanifa, then Malik, then Al-Shafii then Ibn Hanbal. Al-Bukhari followed them. Right away you can see that all four schools of thought (Mazahib) did not have the benefit of authenticated Hadith when they made their analysis! They were wonderful people, pious, knowledgeable and intelligent, and they tried their best and offered a large number of scholarly and enlightened rulings, but, because they were human nonetheless, they also made mistakes and they were the first to tell others that they are not immune to error. Al-Shafii changed many of his opinions after he settled in Egypt.

They differed with each other because most matters they studied required interpretation, and that is a subjective matter. Even their fellows and students differed with their teachers. The differences prove that there is really no consensus, but it does not mean that we should discard their work! It is extremely valuable.

Al-Albani is recent. He died a couple of decades ago, I believe. He did a good job verifying and authenticating the Hadith, but he was a bit liberal in assessing narrators. That's why he approved many hadiths as authentic when they are less than that. In contrast, he found a number of hadiths in Al-Bukhari and Muslim compilations that are not authentic and pointed them out.

*What can I say to someone who follows a particular school of*

*thought religiously and wouldn't open his mind to any differing opinions?*

To a person who blindly follows a school of thought, I'd only direct their attention to the countless verses in the Quran where God asks the rhetorical questions, "Could you not reason?" and "Don't you use your mind?" and the many verses where God condemns people who say, "We found our fathers that way and we are on their tracks following!" That is Taqlid and it is not a good thing, though its adherents believe it is. It is the easier thing to do and that's why most people do it. 921

### 6.2.21 Is the default in Islam prohibition?

*I've been told that the basic rule in Islam is that all actions related to the affairs of this world are allowed, unless specifically prohibited, and the basic rule regarding matters of Islam is prohibition, unless there is a proof it's allowed.*

*That is why we must know what the scholars have ruled to be mandated or forbidden. Is that not so?*

Who made that rule? God repeatedly asks the rhetorical questions, "Who forbade the ornaments from God which He brought out for His worshipers?" (7:32)

and

"Say, 'Have you seen what God has sent down to you of provision of which you have made [some] lawful and [some] unlawful?' Say, '**Has God permitted you** [to do so], or do you invent [something] about God?' " (10:59)

Clearly, no one, scholar or not, has the authority to declare something mandated or forbidden. He can only say it is what he concludes from the evidence available to him and offer his reasoning. You are under no obligation to follow him unless his reasoning and evidence are compelling.

Islamic scholars of Foundations have concluded from the Quran and the Hadith that " " (the foundation of all things is allowance). This rule is called the Original Allowance rule ( " ( God clearly says,

"[Say], 'Then is it other than God I should seek as judge while it is He who has revealed to you the Book *explained in detail?*' " (6:114)

Therefore, only God can tell us what is OK and what is not and He has told us all we need to know, in detail. He repeatedly says that the Quran contains all that we need to know. For instance,

"And We sent down upon you the Book, *explaining everything* and guidance, mercy and good news for Muslims." (16:89)

And

“We left *nothing out* of the Book” (6:38)

Thus, the job of the Prophet, peace be upon him, was to convey the Message and point out to people the details that God provided. God delegated that authority to him by saying,

“What the Messenger gives you, take it, and what he forbids you, cease.”  
(59:7)

Thus, we must know what the Messenger gave us and what he forbade us. That can only be done by verifying what he said. Only authentic hadiths can be relied on to know what he said.

*If it is as you say, then people could do anything in Islam without proof, such as the innovations.*

It is not a novelty until it becomes part of the religion, and it cannot be part of the religion unless it can be substantiated with an evidence from the Quran that is certain in meaning or from a hadith that is certain in sourcing and meaning. 870

### 6.2.22 Should I dismiss all fatwas?

*I don't pay too much attention to “fatwas” (religious edicts) to be honest. If someone wants a fatwa supporting their opinion, they will probably find it. No matter WHAT the opinion is.*

*Because as you said, more scholars use their opinions instead of cold, hard facts.*

I wouldn't neglect fatwas altogether. Many fatwas are very good and they save you time and research. If you dismiss all scholars or all fatwas you end up on your own having to analyze hundreds of juristic issues yourself. That's reinventing the wheel.

The criteria, IMHO, of handling fatwas is critical thinking. Does it follow the rules of logical deduction? Does it cite relevant evidence? Is the evidence authentic? If the answer is yes to all three questions, then one should accept such fatwa. There is good in it and there is knowledge too. 864

### 6.2.23 Specificities meant for generalities

*In a previous post, §5.1.7, you mentioned the hadeeth which instructs us to make up for missed prayers by praying them later. Most scholars who read this hadeeth agreed that it is*

*specific for unintentional missing of prayers, such as due to sleep or forgetfulness, and that it does not include intentional missing. That is why they have ruled that prayers intentionally missed cannot be compensated, but that the repenting Muslim should offer a lot of nawafil (extra) prayers and hope that God will forgive him. isn't it true that the hadeeth is specific?*

Scholars of Usul-al-Fiqh (Foundations of Deduction) have noticed many examples in the Quran and the Hadith of statements using a specificity but whose coverage is clearly general. They coined this style “ ” (a specificity meant for generality). This Arabic style is an alternative way of quoting examples to illustrate a point which is general.

Let me give you an example. In verse 6:151, God says, “...and do not kill your children because of poverty; We provide for you and them.” Here God cites a specificity, namely, poverty, as the reason some people killed their children. Does that mean that killing one’s children for other reasons is OK? Obviously not. The reason given was only an example to illustrate the point that there is no cause for one to kill one’s children, as God is in control and provides.

One simple way to figure out if a specificity is meant for a generality is absence of the generality. And that is why the prayer expiation hadith was meant for generality, because we do not have any statement in the Quran or the Hadith that tells us what to do with a person who purposely missed his prayers. It is that lack of direct evidence that forced scholars to conjure up an expiation. Some scholars even said that there is no expiation and that a man purposely neglecting his prayers is an apostate and must be killed! An opinion that is totally without merit. 2186

### 6.2.24 The perils of the wrong mindset

*Brother,*

*I understand that riba (usury) is wrong. I understand that riba is like gambling. I understand that there are many views on insurance.*

*But, I need to have a fundamental understanding of why speculation is wrong. I know we have to work for our money.*

*I need to have the sin explained to me. Trust me I have done my share of reading on the matter. Yet, I do not have the basic definition of the sin of riba and gambling and it seems that they share the same root.*

Indeed they do, and the Quran calls it Al-Maysir. The word means tools for easy gain.

It is not the ease that is wrong though. It is the belief in it. The central point, IMHO, is what you alluded to when you said that we have to work for our money. The biggest problem with all games of chance, and speculation is one of them, is that they set the wrong mindset. They entice people to believe that there is a shortcut out there. That is contrary to the laws of God which state that means, not gimmicks, lead to results. Gimmicks may work sometimes, or else no one would have ever tried them. But they are short lived and cause more harm than good.

Even Wall Street knows that, or at least they used to. When you open a trading account, you have to sign forms that can fill a book. Forms to explain to you the risks involved, some may even exceed the value of the entire portfolio! When you open an investment account, on the other hand, there are far fewer forms to sign. That is because, even though investments too carry risk, they are natural risks, whereas speculative risks are random. The difference between the two is that investments involve an asset: property, product or service, while speculation is a bet on how such investment will do. In financial circles this is called a derivative. We all know from the global financial crisis of 2008, the extent of harm speculative derivatives can do.

That is the peril of the mindset that is convinced that there is a shortcut to riches that requires no work, no sweat, and no asset. There is no such thing, but speculators won't accept that disappointing conclusion, just like a gambler keeps telling himself that the next time he will recoup all his losses.

Investments can be win-win affairs, while speculation is always a zero-sum game.

Usury fits that profile too. It stems from the wrong mindset that treats money as a commodity and thus finds what it thinks is a great business model: buy money cheap and sell it for more. That's right; economists actually call interest the price of money! Money is price, it doesn't, and shouldn't have a price.

While you did not ask it, other readers may be wondering: how else can an economy run? How can banking be done without interest? How does an Islamic system finance start-up companies or real estate purchases, etc.?

The answer is quite simple: partnerships. A financier may decide to finance a project in return for a percentage of its equity and profits. But that also means sharing the risk. That is a natural mechanism in the law of God that makes a financier scrutinize the project like his networth depends on it. The result is that frivolous projects won't find financing, but quality ones will. Mortgage lenders would never lend money to home buyers whom they are almost sure cannot repay the loan, which is what caused the foreclosure crisis of 2008. On the flip side, rich people will still put their money in worthwhile and promising projects, which by their nature benefit a lot more people than the stakeholders.

That, in a nutshell, is Islamic finance. It brings wealth to investors and far

reaching benefits to society, advancement of the economy and, most important of all, the right perception of money and finance. It is not a game for clever quants to play, it's life enhancement for millions of people.

*I apologize for not having a MBA. Your response was detailed, as usual. However, I need to go to a simpler and deeper understanding.*

*My question thus becomes this: How does interest oppress those who are the meek and poor. How is usury a tool of the oppressor.*

*In other words how is this haraam (forbidden). On a grand scale I see the consequences of poor decision making, giving loans to those who do not have the means of paying back thus leading to bankruptcy. But break it down for me.*

*For example the issue of adultery is simple to understand as it does destroy the fabric of the family.*

*I am not trying to be stubborn or argumentative. I need to be able to place my finger on the essence of the sin of interest.*

Many people question why adultery is a sin. If the reason is, as you stated, that it breaks up families, then divorce should also be a sin, because it too breaks up families. But it isn't. It is only strongly discouraged.

Many scholars, past and modern, have attempted to find material reasons why adultery is a sin. Some postulated that it results in paternity uncertainty. If that's the reason, then modern science can solve this problem with a DNA test. Would that make adultery OK? Of course not.

Some suggest that the reason is unwanted pregnancies. If that's the reason, then foster homes can solve this problem. Does that make adultery OK. Of course not.

Some guess that the reason is sexually transmitted diseases. If that's the reason, then immunizations and other protections can take care of this risk. Would that make adultery OK? Of course not.

The interesting thing is that God already told us why adultery is a sin. He says in the holy Quran, "And do not approach fornication; it is a debauchery and a wretched path." (17:32). It sets a wrong mindset. It makes people view sex, women and marriage differently from God's moral law. That is what makes it a sin. Sin is violation of God's law. God designed His laws for maximum benefit to mankind. When man breaks God's law, it is an objection to God. Adultery sets the sinner on an evil path because he is deviated from the Straight Path and is distanced from God and becomes an easy prey to Satan.

You will observe the same about other sins prohibited in the Quran. Intoxication and unearned gain are prohibited in verse 5:90. God explains why

in the next verse, “Satan only wants to sow between you enmity and hatred with intoxicants and unearned gain, shun you from the remembrance of God and from prayer. Are you ceasing?” (5:91)

God doesn't say that intoxication can ruin your liver, or that it may endanger other people when you drive drunk. God doesn't say that gambling can wipe out one's life savings. God doesn't mention that both are addictions that are very hard to be free from. God's reasons are moral. Other material reasons may apply, but they are not why something is a forbidden sin. Intoxication sets a wrong mindset. It makes a person “drink to forget” his problems, instead of heading them on and solving them, gaining strength of character and wisdom in the process. Unearned gain sets the wrong mindset. It makes a person view others as “marks”, to borrow from con artists vocabulary. The right mindset that Islam encourages is that others are fellow human beings, dignified, worthy of respect and care, and having full capacity to be good and contribute to positive human progress.

The sin of interest is that it sets the perception and belief that you can have your money work for you instead of you working for your money. The Prophet (PBUH) said, “None of you would eat better food than food he earned by the work of his hands. God's prophet David, upon him be peace, did.”, narrated by Al-Miqdam ibn Maadikarib and reported and rated authentic by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2072).

I find it fascinating that God quotes people who have argued that usury is like trading. He does not refute their argument! Instead, He states unequivocally that He made trading lawful and usury unlawful (see verse 2:275). God doesn't want us to be distracted by arguments why something He forbade is bad for us.

*I beg you to help me with this. Where do trust funds find themselves. And what is the difference in Islam between a trust fund and inheritance?*

Trusts are called Waqf in Islam. The word means holding an asset from being sold or donated and dedicating its income and facilities to designated people or purpose.

Waqf has two types: (1) Waqf Khayri (charitable trust/endowment) and (2) Waqf Ahli (familial trust). The first type is very highly praised in Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) has famously said, “All the work of a child of Adam ceases with his death, except three: an ongoing charity, a knowledge that benefits and a righteous child who prays for him.” Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and rated authentic by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1631). This has motivated multitudes of Muslims throughout the ages to found thousands of charitable projects and endowments. The result was that nearly all needs of society were taken care of without the government having to do any of it! A stranded traveler knew that he can find a hostel where he could

stay the night, warm and safe, at no cost. Orphans and widows didn't have to be scared or hungry. Desert travelers knew there would be plenty of water wells they could drink from.

Waqf Ahli, on the other hand, has been controversial for a good part of a century now. It is banned by many Muslim countries, such as Turkey, Syria and Egypt. The reason is that they saw much abuse of it. They saw it as a way to concentrate wealth in a family, instead of letting it into the economy. Many people used it as a way to circumvent inheritance law. With familial trusts, they could favor some relatives over others, whereas inheritance law fixes heir eligibility and distribution amounts of an estate.

IMHO, abuse of a system is no reason to ban it, but rather is reason to regulate it. Waqf Ahli has been allowed, even suggested, by the Prophet (PBUH) when one has needy relatives, as has been reported about Abu-Talha dedicating his best garden to his poor relatives after he heard this verse, "You shall not attain godliness until you spend from what you love" (3:92). It is a good way to take care of one's poor relatives while one is still alive, as well as after he, the trustee, dies. That is the difference between trusts and inheritance. The other difference is what I mentioned above about allotment of shares and designation of beneficiaries.

No one ever owns the asset under Waqf and the trustee's heirs are supposed to carry on the upkeep of the trust. Perhaps that's why many Waqf assets were neglected to the point of deterioration. That was another reason governments moved to ban them. It would've been better IMHO if governments took over the maintenance.

2295



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Part II

Reaching Out

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**H**ow are Muslims supposed to relate to and interact with non-Muslims? Can Muslims socialize and be friends with non-Muslims, exchange culture, tradition, and knowledge with them? Should they invite them to Islam? How is that properly done? How do Muslims handle hostile attitudes they may encounter from some non-Muslims?



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# Chapter 7

## Interfaith

The articles in this chapter address what Islam teaches Muslims about interacting with non-Muslims, getting to know them, forming cordial relationships with them, and exchanging with them culture, tradition, and knowledge.

### 7.1 Interfaith Dialogs

#### 7.1.1 To non-Muslims with love

*I'm sending you a link to a book by Sheikh Kaleem Siddiqui, who has been successful in calling Hindus to Islam. Hope you enjoy reading it.*

May God bless Sheikh Siddiqui.

Indeed, Muslims have a duty of daawa (calling people to Islam), first started by the Prophet (ﷺ) and followed by the Sahaba, may God have been pleased with them. But daawa cannot be done if we ourselves do not understand Islam or do not practice it! We cannot tell people “do as I say, not as I do.”

And daawa cannot be done when we hold resentment or despise of others in our hearts. Those we try to convey the Message to, while holding those negative emotions, will see through us quickly! Many Muslims today have a holier-than-thou attitude towards non-Muslims. That will be returned by them toward us in the form of arrogant dismissal. Muslim fundamentalism is what gave rise to Christian fundamentalism. Hatred of non-Muslims is what gave rise to Islamophobia.

Many Muslims today think that hating non-Muslims is necessary to protect

their faith! You cannot preach out of hatred. Hatred darkens the heart and a darkened heart cannot shed light.

Many Muslims today follow the traditions of their forefathers, without actually studying those traditions themselves to sift them from tenets of the religion. You cannot call others to follow tradition! You can only call them to follow the truth. Tradition is made by people, while the truth is made by God. 1369

### 7.1.2 Define Islam for the layman

Islam is the religion that teaches that there is only one God. No one else and nothing else was, is, will be or can be God. God has a message for all humanity, things He wants us to do and things He wants us to stay away from. He will reward us after death for obeying Him and punish us for disobeying Him. This message is in the holy Book called The Quran and in the teachings of Muhammad, peace be upon him, the last and final prophet and messenger of God. 533

### 7.1.3 What is so appealing about Islam?

*What is appealing about Islam? Why do so many people convert to it?*

Islam is so appealing because it clicks with both the heart and the mind alike. You never have to suppress reason to attain faith. You never have to struggle to reconcile faith with science or scripture with history. It's not a religion for some chosen people but for all. It balances material life with spiritual life and the individual with the society. It is uncompromisingly clear in its teachings. 86

### 7.1.4 Is Islam really easy?

*Is Islam really easy? From what I've seen and read, it doesn't look that way to me.*

Islam is easy because God wanted it that way when He said, "God wants for you ease; He does not want for you hardship." (2:185). What seems hard to outsiders, such as fasting or praying five times everyday, is for our own benefit and protection. Without God's protection, life is truly hard.

Unfortunately, many Muslims make Islam hard! Three men once asked about the Prophet's worship. When they heard an account of it, they looked like they thought it was too little. One of them said, "That's the messenger of God, he's been forgiven. He can afford to do little! Me, I'm going to stand up all night in prayer." The second man said, "Me, I'm going to fast everyday."

The third man said, “And me, I’m going to remain celibate for the rest of my life.” When the Prophet, peace be upon him, heard their story, he got visibly upset and said, “*By God, I am the most observing of God and the most fearing of Him among you all, and I pray and go to bed, I fast and eat, and I marry women. Whoever longs away from my Sunna does not belong to me!*” (Al-Bukhari [12] (5063))

To this day, you will find Muslims making things forbidden which are only discouraged or even allowed and making things mandatory which are only encouraged or even allowed. Despite the fact that the Prophet (PBUH) said, “*This religion is easy. No one will play a tug of war with it but will defeat him! Make things easy, not hard. Give good news, tend to agree with people and do not repel people!*” (Ibn Hibban [33] (351)) 546

### 7.1.5 Is it too late for me to be a Muslim?

*My sins are a mountain. I have no hope that God will forgive me. I’ve been considering converting to Islam, but my sins stop me.*

I mentioned the following in a previous post and it applies to this question:

The good news is that God has provided countless means of expiating sin and has repeatedly affirmed that He forgives and accepts repentance. God says in the holy Quran, “O My servants who have excessively sinned, do not despair of the mercy of God. Verily, God forgives all sins. He is the oft forgiving, the merciful one.” (39:53). And the Prophet, peace be upon him said, “*The door of repentance is open until the sun rises from the west!*” (Al-Albani [5] (2479))

A person can at any time join that warm fold of God by accepting Islam. The Prophet, peace be upon him said, “*Islam buries deep what was before it.*” (Al-Bukhari [12] (6921)) When one accepts Islam, one starts anew. I fondly remember a Scottish lady who was telling her story of conversion. She said, “I’m a 65 year old baby!” 888

### 7.1.6 I want to convert but...

*Whenever I try to speak about converting to Islam in front of my mom, she explains to me that everything is written in the Bhagvatgita (Hindu holy book), and explains to me about the great heros in Mahabharata (Hindu Epic). Then I feel I shouldn’t convert?!*

Why don’t you verify that claim yourself? Study the Bhagvad Gita and study the Quran then conclude for yourself which is the teaching that appeals most

to **you**, your heart and mind. Religion is not a tradition, a culture, or a heritage. You are a free human being who can and should make all her decisions herself. There is no cosmic law that says you have to follow your parents, community or culture. Follow your heart and mind. 350

### 7.1.7 I'd convert now if it weren't for the Hadeeth

*I've been looking into Islam for a nearly a year now and after a lot of questioning and soul searching I firmly believe the Quran is the word of God. Coming from an agnostic belief system my need to see in black and white has made me question a lot of Islamic beliefs but there is one I still don't get. I'm referring to Hadith.*

*If the Prophet (peace be upon him) were here today then I would have no hesitation in following his judgements and teachings and I would take my shahadda right now but my issue is reliability. Having researched Christianity I find my major problems with it stem from poor reliability of sources and the poor translations and I can't help but draw the same parallels with Hadith. I know there are some Hadiths better than others but I have a real hesitation inside me to trust, for example, a Hadith writer's perspective on Wudu that **contradicts that of the Quran.***

*If anyone can shed some light on this I would be extremely grateful as I believe my foundations in Islam are solid enough for me to enter into it properly.*

I highlighted above a key criterion that invalidates a hadith: it cannot possibly contradict the Quran. The job of Hadith is to expound on and detail what the Quran teaches. Scholars of Hadith have dissected each narration into two components: Sanad (attribution) and Matn (content). By scrutinizing both, one can determine if a hadith is reliable and therefore should be followed. You are talking above about Matn. Scholars have criticized the Matn of many hadiths and rated the narrations Gharib (strange) or Munkar (unrecognized) if the Matn is found to be suspicious or outright contradictory to the Quran.

Hadith scholars have done a marvellous, scholarly job in authenticating the Hadith. You have nothing to fear from the authentic Hadith. Tell me examples of hadiths that bother you and I'll be happy to search for their credentials.

There is also the issue of misinterpreted hadiths. Sometimes the content sounds contradictory to the Quranic teachings, but they really are not, if one would spend some time figuring out what they mean. 1507

### 7.1.8 I accepted Islam, sort of

*I accepted Islam but I'm having a hard time. There is an unexplainable struggle within me. It's like a war, you see. I tell myself on one hand that my faith is sufficient. I tell myself on the other hand that I need more, that more is expected of me, and that I must behave differently, speak, live and act differently.*

Perhaps you are a Muslim by faith but not yet by deed. You do need more. The pillars of Islam are five. Saying the Shahada (testimony of faith) is only the first one. Prayers, fasting, Zakah (alms giving) and pilgrimage are the other four and they are all mandated by God. Pilgrimage is only mandatory if you can afford it physically, logistically and financially. It is also required only once.

If you've been doing all that but are still struggling then the struggle you suffer from is caused by Satan trying to change your decision to submit to God. Satan will be happy if you do not practice Islam and he would be elated if you never uttered the Shahada. He is your only true enemy and always will be. Show him who's boss!

The key to Islam is to understand what the word means. It means the willing, loving surrender to the one and only true God, Allah. Put your trust in God and seek His help in conquering the whispers of Satan. Start with the rituals of ablution (Wudoo), prayer (Salah), and supplication (Duaa) and you will in-sha-Allah (God willing) start to experience a transformation of your being as your soul, body and mind are finally in harmony. Godspeed. 136

### 7.1.9 A sweet, but disbelieving mother

*My mum is very innocent and she just adheres to the rituals and religion that she has been witnessing since her childhood. Undoubtedly she commits Shirk (associating others with God in worship) but out of her innocence. By Allah I have never found her uttering a single word against any individual except out of advise.*

*The message of true Deen (way of life) is being passed to her but its on to Allah to guide her. She never stopped me following Islam. Rather when I acquainted her of my reversion she advised me to stand firm in Islam.*

*Is not Shirk by my Mum out of innocence forgivable?.*

Only God knows for sure. Remember also that "God does not do a speck's weight of injustice" (4:40). And He also said in a Qudsi Hadith, "My Grace

*outpaces My anger*”, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (7422, 7453, 7553, 7554) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2751).

That said, your duty of daawa (calling for God) to her, with wisdom and good preaching (16:125) remains. Your love and kindness to her, your good example, your gentle but earnest advice may just be the instrument for her guidance. Amen. 1326

### 7.1.10 Are inter-faith debates worthwhile?

*I've been discussing Islam with my Christian friend and he Christianity with me. Lately, he seemed to agree that he has been wrong in many of his assumptions about his religion, but he would not say that I'm right about mine.*

Not totally unexpected. I myself believe that most debates are a waste of time. That's because they arouse the ego. Once the ego gets into the room, guidance flies out the window. I suggest that you wish your friend well and assure him that you will always be there for him if he needs you to answer questions about Islam. Leaving him to reflect on your conversations may just be the thing to do. Who knows, maybe God will open his eyes once the spirit of challenge which the ego brings forth cools down.

*BTW, are there any credible books written by Christians that prove that Christianity has been changed from the original teachings of Jesus, peace be upon him. This is the subject that interested my friend the most and the one where he agreed he was wrong about. Thanks.*

One book I know of and can be helpful is [Ehrman \[28\]](#) “From Jesus to Constantine - How Christianity was changed from the religion of Jesus to a religion about Jesus”<sup>1</sup>, written by Dr. Bart Ehrman, M.Div., Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary. He is a highly respected Bible scholar and has been the head of the religious studies department at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. The book was initially published by The Teaching Company.

Another scholarly work by him that you may consider is [Ehrman \[27\]](#), “Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why”. 1156

### 7.1.11 Do Muslims accept the Bible or reject it?

Neither!

<sup>1</sup>The book's title was since changed to: From Jesus to Constantine - A History of Early Christianity.

Because the Bible is a mix of what God said and what man added or changed, Muslims don't believe in any part of the Bible, but they are also required *not to disbelieve* in it! There is no way to know which parts are man-written and which are God revealed.

The original scripture is no longer there in the way God revealed it to Moses, David and Jesus, peace be upon them. Muslims only believe in the original Torah (which in edited format is the first five books of the Bible), the original Psalms of David, also edited and made part of the Old Testament, and the original Gospel, which was never written or was lost but replaced with narrations by four different disciples in the first four books of the New Testament.

610

### 7.1.12 Do Muslims believe in the Messiah or don't they?

*The following is from an article entitled "Bethlehem 2007 A.D." in the Dec 2007 issue of the National Geographic Magazine:*

*"For Jews, still awaiting their Messiah, Froman says it's possible that he will arrive right here, in the eroded back-country of Bethlehem, the presence of God palpable in the desert's sandpaper wind. For Christians anticipating their Messiah's return, why shouldn't he come back to the spot he was born? **Muslims do not believe in a messiah - there is only Allah, only God** - but Palestinian Muslims also revere this land as sacred, since Jesus is one of their prophets."*

*I have seen the use of the word "Messiah" in translations of the Quran (e.g., of verse 3:45) so I feel that the above statement is not true.... unless the Jews and Christians have a different interpretation of "Messiah" from the Muslims.*

The issue is what people mean when they say "messiah." The Jews mean the man who will make them kings again. The Christians mean a divine "son of God" who will take away humanity's sins. Muslims mean what the word means, "the anointed one." The word "messiah" simply means one whose hair is so oily it looks like it's dripping. That's how Jesus, peace be upon him, looked and how Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, saw him during the night journey (Israa). God told the Jews in the Torah that the upcoming prophet who will restore their true faith is anointed, so they had a way to recognize him when he comes to them. When the old and new testaments were translated to Greek, the Greek word for anointed one was Khristos. That's where the word Christ comes from.

There is nothing mythical or fantastic about the words messiah or Christ. It's a distinctive mark, a feature, like when you describe someone and say that he

has, say, a thick mustache.

When the angel Gabriel came to Mary to give her baby Jesus, he told her (see verse 3:45) two very significant facts: That the baby's title is Al-Masih (The Messiah), so that she knows that her son is the prophet promised to the Jews, and secondly that he will be called *the son of Mary* and *the word of God*, so that she will have no doubt that his conception was miraculous but that he was not divine. 145

### 7.1.13 Do Muslims believe in the Holy Spirit?

The Quran refers to "the spirit of holiness" four times,

{2:87} "And We did give Moses the scripture and followed up after him with messengers. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs and supported him with the *spirit of holiness*. Is it [not] so, that every time a messenger came to you (children of Israel) with what you do not desire, you grew arrogant and some [messengers] you belied and some you kill?"

{2:253} "Those messengers - some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom God spoke, and He raised some of them in degree. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the *spirit of holiness*. If God had willed, those [generations] succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if God had willed, they would not have fought each other, but God does what He intends."

{5:110} "[The Day] when God will say, 'O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the *spirit of holiness* and you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and [remember] when I taught you the Book and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, This is not but obvious magic.' "

{16:102} "Say, 'The *spirit of holiness* brought it down from your Lord in truth to affirm those who have believed and as guidance and good tidings to the Muslims.' "

It is that last verse that proves that the spirit of holiness is the archangel Gabriel, peace be upon him. He is most likely the angel who brought the news to Mary that she will bear Jesus and he is probably the angel who enabled, by God's permission, all the miracles Jesus performed. 626

### 7.1.14 What is Muslims attitude toward Christmas?

*I saw a pamphlet here in the UK which claims that Christmas is a lie and an evil and that it is the duty of Muslims to attack it. The pamphlet is incoherent and it actually blames Christmas for crimes such as domestic violence and societal ills such as homelessness!*

The pamphlet is an incoherent rant like you said and should be taken as the attitude of its self-righteous authors only. They represent only themselves.

Islam treats other faiths with respect, even as it strongly disagrees with their theologies. The Prophet (PBUH) said that “*For every community is their feast.*” (Al-Bukhari [12] (3931)) And God tells us in the holy Quran to “*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good preaching, and argue with them in the most beautiful manner. Verily, your Lord knows best whom has strayed from His way and it is He who knows best whom are the guided.*” (16:125)

Islam gives particular consideration to “the People of the Book”, i.e., the Jews and Christians. God says in the holy Quran, “*And do not argue with the People of the Book except in the most beautiful way*” (29:46) 1238

### 7.1.15 Questions from a Christian

*My brother in law is Christian. I am Muslim. We were talking religion and a number of questions were asked. Can you shed light on them? Thanks.*

*1. Where did Jesus get his blood from? Meaning his DNA? A woman who bares a child needs a certain chromosome to produce a child, and that other chromosome is found In a male.*

How did Adam and Eve get their chromosomes? God is able to create without limitation. He is the maker of the laws of genetics and can overrule them at will.

*2. Does the Quran teach to hate the Hebrew people or shall I say Israel?*

Neither. The Quran tells us that of the people of Moses are a large community that guide with the truth and with it they judge (verse 7:159). It also tells us that God’s choice of the Hebrews to receive His Message was deliberate (verse 44:32). That privilege was not because of their race or lineage, as they have come to believe, but was because of their potential for executing His commands. To the extent they complied with His Message, He

blessed them (verse 32:24). When they rebelled, violated their Covenant, edited the Torah and started killing the prophets and rejected Jesus (PBUH), He cursed them (verse 4:155).

Muslims do not hate the Jews and never did. Muslims and Jews lived together peacefully for 1300 years.

*3. Adam and the Angels were once called the Son or Sons of Yahweh.*

Not in Islam. Everybody is a creature and worshiper of God. God has no sons, literally nor figuratively.

*4. Yahweh is Spirit*

No. God is above and beyond spirit. He is the creator of spirit. The Quran tells us that "like His simile is nothing" (42:11)

*5. The serpent in the garden was Satan (meaning he had to inhabit a body to do his bidding)*

Not in Islam. There is no mention of a serpent in the story of Adam and Eve in the Quran, see §2.4.1.

*6. Yahweh sent his Word in the form of Flesh which was and is Yeshua.*

Jesus is the word of God, because he was created with one word: "Be". He is not a flesh representation of God; he is a creature of God like everyone else.

*7. Messiah was to be born in bethlehem: OT Micah 5:2 NT Matthew 2:1-6 and Luke 2:1-20*

*Messiah was to be born of a virgin: OT Isaiah 7:14..... Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38*

Jesus was born of virgin Mary, peace be upon them, and he is indeed the Messiah promised to the Jews. Messiah simply means an anointed one. He was so nicknamed because he had very oily hair that looked like it was always dripping. It is a sign for the Jews to recognize him when he came.

*8. Messiah was to be a prophet like Moses: OT Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19*

These verses do not talk about the Messiah; they talk about the final Prophet, whom Jesus foretold. You may remember a scene from the movie "The Passion of Christ" where Jesus tells the disciples about the comforter (Paraclete) who will come after him whose name in Aramaic is HMD? Only one man fits the description: Muhammad, peace be upon him. For more details, refer to [Mufassir \[42\]](#), "The Bible's Preview of Muhammad". 1174

### 7.1.16 Questions from a Christian

*I read the Quran over three years ago and I've asked these questions about Islam before and did not get an answer. Maybe you can answer them?*

- *Why is Mohammed called a Prophet when he has apparently not prophesied anything?*

The Quran has plenty of prophecies. Did you actually read it, or did you just skim through it?

- *Why is the Quran such a small book after 23 years of revelation?*

Teachings that guide humanity to truth and justice are simple. They do not take up many pages. What takes up pages is the correction of false doctrines that people keep developing, which lead them astray from the straight path.

- *WHY do Muslims think they need to pray to Mecca when God is everywhere and actually the earliest discovered mosques were directed towards Palestine?*

Muslims don't think that; God told them that they must. Mecca is the direction of prayer commanded to all the Prophets. God says in the holy Quran that He set up the Kaaba (the Meccan shrine) to be the first house of worship for mankind (see verse 3:96). Jews and Christians who prayed toward Jerusalem did that in violation of God's orders. God never ordered any people to direct their prayers toward Jerusalem. One of the primary objectives of the Quran is to restore the laws of God which people keep changing.

Before the Prophet (PBUH) migrated to Medina, he and his followers there prayed toward the Kaaba. When people of Medina accepted Islam, they didn't know which direction they should take in prayer (The Prophet still lived in Mecca, 270 miles south of them), so they did like the Jews in Medina did: pray toward Jerusalem. When the Prophet (PBUH) arrived at Medina, he still didn't have instructions from God which direction of prayer Muslims should take, so he did as the Medinite Muslims have been doing and faced

Jerusalem. But he did not like that and wished that he could turn toward Mecca again. God answered his wish and revealed the clear instruction to face Mecca (see verse 2:144).

If a Muslim cannot tell which direction is Mecca, he is allowed to pray in the direction he thinks it is, precisely because God is everywhere. The uniformity of the direction is intended symbolism to unite Muslims toward the One True God.

- *Why do Muslims and many other religious people think the enemy is other people?*

Most Muslims don't think so. The enemy is people who fight us. Everybody else is a brother or sister in humanity, which the Quran instructs us to get to know.

- *What NEW Wisdom (no scientific knowledge is not the same as wisdom so) is in the Quran that was not already in the holy bible?*

The New Testament reversed many teachings of the Torah and added blasphemous dogma. The Quran came, in part, to restore the original teachings of the Torah and the Gospel which the Jews and the Christians changed.

- *WHY is the Koran supposed to be only beautiful in Arabic?*

Because any translation is a human effort, while the Quran is divine providence.

- *WHY IS Mohammed not in the line from Noah down through Solomon to Jesus not from the Same line as any other prophet?*

He is from the same line. He is a descendant of Ishmael and Abraham, peace be upon them, who trace back to Shem, Noah and Adam.

But what if he wasn't? What difference does that make? A prophet is not respected because of his lineage, but rather because of his message.

- *WHY, when the Bible is apparently a complete Book about this eternity and this universe and the whole history of life did we even need an extra book?*

Because the Bible contains a mix of what God revealed and what people changed, added and deleted. The Quran confirms what was from God and corrects what was from people.

### 7.1.17 Questions about the Gospel

*I am a Christian who is earnestly seeking to learn more about Islam.*

*I have a couple questions about what the Quran says about the Gospel. They are:*

*1. Why does the Quran refer to the Gospel or Injil as if it is one book, when at the time of Muhammad there existed the four canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) in the Christian Bible and many more apocryphal texts and so-called Gospels besides?*

*If there was one Gospel, what happened to it? Is there any historical record of such a thing (besides the Diatessaron?)*

Welcome. Please feel free to ask all the questions you have in mind.

The Gospel was revealed to Jesus, peace be upon him, on Mount Olives. There is no evidence that he wrote it down. After the departure of Jesus, several disciples wrote down their recollection of what Jesus said and did. That's not the same thing as the Gospel. That's why you hear the gospels called, "The Gospel *according to* John," etc.

The Church decided which books to include and which to exclude from the New Testament. They excluded books such as the gospels of Barnabas, James, Peter, the children, and many more. The Church instead included letters written by Paul, whom the disciples distrusted and who never met Jesus or ever hear him speak.

*2. I am stumbling over there ever existing one Injil and that it was Christ's mission to give the people of the world a book of God's teachings.*

Why are you stumbling over that? Jesus said that what he said was not of his own but of *the one who sent him* (John 7:16). So, he was the messenger of God. A messenger has a message to deliver, doesn't he?

BTW, the mission of Jesus was never for the world. He said it was for "*the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" only (Mathew 15:24). The Quran confirms it in verse 3:49 among other verses.

*3. What does Islam say of the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures and Christ's fulfillment of them? Do y'all believe that they are fabrications?*

Jesus, peace be upon him, did fulfill the prophecies of the Torah. He was the Messiah promised the Jews and the Quran confirms it in verse 3:45, among other verses.

*4. But to get to what you were saying, the Christians, the early ones at least did not believe that Christ came to bring them any book from God, but that he came to show them the way of salvation through his teachings and example. The early Christians relied heavily on the Jewish scriptures, especially in terms of prayer.*

That's not what the Quran says. The disciples clearly believed in and followed the Gospel which Jesus taught. The purpose of the Gospel was to restore the original Torah which the Jewish rabbis and scribes edited to suit their needs. If the Torah had not been altered, there would not have been a need for the Gospel or for Jesus! The disciples and their followers struggled for 300 years to make sure those teachings remain pure. They were fed to lions and thrown into pits of fire but they did not relent. May God reward them handsomely for their sacrifice. Their sacrifice, sadly, was not enough as the Council of Nicaea decided in 325 A.D. to adopt the Pauline version of Christianity. The original teachings of Jesus were lost until God sent Muhammad, peace be upon him, to restore them.

*5. It seems to me that every time that Allah of Islam sends a messenger He gives him some book. Am I mistaken? If so, why? Is this the way He chooses to reveal himself?*

Allah of Islam is the same God whom Jesus called, in his native Aramaic, Alaha. He is the same God whom Moses, peace be upon him, called in his native Hebrew, Eloah.

The way God chose to reveal Himself was indeed through His Books which He revealed to all His Messengers throughout human history. One Book would have been sufficient if people kept it intact and followed it. The reason God sent down the Gospel is because the Jews tampered with the Torah. The reason God sent down the Quran is because the Christians tampered with the Gospel. God has vowed in the Quran that He will preserve the Quran Himself. He sure did! For the past 1400 years since the Quran was revealed, not one letter, consonant, vowel, diacritic, punctuation or even intonation has changed. How is that for preservation?

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### 7.1.18 Is there baptism in Islam? Why not?

*One of the things that I cannot understand is why Islam doesn't practice baptism by submerging the whole body in water. I know this is a righteous practice because Jesus did it and well, John the baptist did it.*

*Can someone please explain why Islam doesn't? What is the difference between Wudu (ablution) and Baptism? I don't understand.*

Ablution (Wudhoo) washes the face, hair, and ears, arms and hands, feet, and mouth and nose. It is also done every day while baptism is done once. Baptism is done to small Christian children, but ablution is required of grown-up Muslims only because they are the ones required to pray.

Muslims are also encouraged to take a thorough bath, called Ghusl, every Friday before the congregational prayer, and it is required after a number of situations for hygiene purposes. 562

### 7.1.19 Isn't the Torah sufficient?

*The Quran says that the Torah has in it guidance and light and detailing of all matters. So, why do we need anything else?*

The original Torah revealed to Moses (PBUH) is not available anywhere; the Jews changed it. What we have is the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, the Tenach, etc. None of it is the Torah.

If the Torah was not altered, there would not have been a reason to reveal the Gospel or the Quran. The Gospel was revealed in order to correct the changes the Jews made to the Torah, and the Quran was revealed in order to correct the changes the Jews and Christians made to the Torah and the Gospel.

*I respectfully disagree with your statement, "If the Torah was not altered, there would not have been a reason to reveal the Gospel or the Quran." It looks like an explanation of a decision of Allah, for which we have no knowledge. In general I agree, that the religion in its origin has always been the same. However, there have been some changes in the medicine according to the state of the patient.*

*From the sermon of the mount, which looks like a excerpt from the original gospel, it looks like the Jewish scholars of that time (and seemingly also today) had lost the real understanding of faith and they were more into the textual interpretation of the laws. This is why, it contains less laws and more topics regarding spirituality and theology. Apparently, that was the missing part, at that time.*

But we have knowledge; God told us. The Quran quotes Jesus, peace be upon him, saying to the Jews,

"And [I have come] **confirming what was before me of the Torah** and to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you. And I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear God and obey me." (3:50)

Why were these things made unlawful to the Jews? God tells us it was because of their rebellion against Him,

**“For wrongdoing** on the part of the Jews, We made unlawful for them [some] good things which had been lawful to them, and for their averting from the way of God many [people].” (4:160)

I also respectfully disagree that the Gospel had few laws. We don't know that because we don't have the Gospel; it's been altered. If we accept what Jesus is reported in the New Testament to have said as authentic, then we find the explanation of why there are few laws in the Gospel: *“Do not think that I am come to abolish the law. I'm not come to abolish the law, but to complete it.”* (Mathew 5:17) Other translations say, “to correct it.”

The Quran was revealed for the same purpose, to confirm what remained unchanged in the Torah and the Gospel and correct what was changed. God addresses the people of the Book,

“O you who were given the Book, believe in what We have sent down [to Muhammad], **confirming that which is with you**, before We obliterate faces and turn them toward their backs or curse them as We cursed the sabbath-breakers. And ever is the decree of God accomplished.” (4:47)

That is what happened. God sent a complete guidance to humanity, the Torah. But the Jews altered it, added to it and deleted from it, so God sent the correction: the Gospel. People altered that too, so He sent the final correction and restoration of His original Message and vowed to keep it from alteration. 987

### 7.1.20 Why are there many religions?

Moses, peace be upon him, was given a true book from God, the Torah, but his followers edited it to fit their desires. If they didn't there would not have been a need for the Gospel or for Jesus (PBUH).

Jesus, peace be upon him, was given a true book from God, the Gospel, but his followers edited it to suit their desires. If they hadn't there would be no need for the Quran or Muhammad, peace be upon him.

God vowed in the Quran that He will preserve it Himself and He did: Every consonant, vowel, diacritic, punctuation and even intonation has been the same from the time of the revelation till today in every country in the world the whole time! That is why the Quran is the final scripture and Muhammad, peace be upon him, was the last and final prophet and messenger of God. 12

### 7.1.21 I like my religion, thank you!

*I like my religion, thank you. I do not need to study Islam.*

Consider God's words criticizing the idolaters of Mecca, “And if they are told to follow what God has revealed they say no, we follow what we found our

parents following. Even if their parents did not know the truth and were not guided?" (2:170)

If you accept blindly what you've been told all your life and will not use your mind to scrutinize it, you have no one but yourself to blame on the Day of Judgment when you discover that you were wrong. Muslims too are forbidden to follow blindly what they have been taught. A famous scholar of Islamic jurisprudence, Ibn Hajar, once wrote that when Muslims blindly follow certain scholars without questioning their evidence, they are no better than the Christians and Jews who "took their rabbis and monks as lords besides God." (9:31)

After life itself, the dearest gift God gave you is your mind. To not use it is like saying to God, "Thanks, but no thanks."

Why wouldn't you study the Quran? Can you guarantee that it is not the truth? What would be your excuse on the Day of Accounting when God asks you this question? What if, say, Hinduism turns out to be the true religion, did you even try to find out?

84

### 7.1.22 Is there room for Islam in America?

*I've heard Americans say that there is no room for Islam in America, and I also heard Muslims say that there is no room for America in Islam! What do you think?*

There is room for Islam in every country as the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Verily, this matter (Islam) will reach wherever night and day reach." (Al-Hakem [14] (8546))

A huge chunk of American values and principles are Islamic. The rule of law, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, representative democracy, free enterprise and the no-class social system are all values and principles taught by the Quran, the Prophet, peace be upon him, and practiced by his disciples (Sahaba) and the subsequent generations.

517

### 7.1.23 Inaccurate astronomy?

*My friend, who is Muslim, is starting to doubt the Quran. He says that some of the verses of the Quran that deal with astronomy are inaccurate, as proven by modern science. He quotes two instances:*

1. Verse 36:40 implies that the sun and the moon orbit the earth.

No. The verse says none of the sort. It says,

“The sun is not allowed to overtake the moon, nor does the night outpace the day. Each in its orbit swims.” (36:40)

Which is true and always has been: the succession of night and day. In addition, the sun and the moon have their own orbits, which has been proved centuries after this verse was revealed.

*2. Verses 91:1-2 imply that the moon and the sun are on the same orbit.*

They don't. What the verses say is,

“By the sun and its bright. And by the moon as it follows it.” (91:1-2)

You can come into the room after taking a ride on Baker Street and I can follow you into the room after taking a ride on Hampton Street. We met in the same room but we were not taking the same ride or the same route to get there.

What the verses simply say is that the moon comes into view consistently after the sun sets. It's a notice from God to us to reflect on that particular blessing: that nighttime in which we can rest comes consistently and never fails. Imagine if you lived where daylight was permanent! You'll soon be a nervous wreck. That meaning is further explained in the very next two verses: “And the day as it makes it clear and the night as it covers it” (91:3-4). 1179

### 7.1.24 An example of a true Christian pastor

*I saw [this video](#) on YouTube, and thought I'd share it with you. Not all Christian pastors are hatemongers like Terry Jones.*

*This was on Sunday, August 29, worship service, First Community Church, Columbus, OH, with Rev. Deborah C. Lindsay preaching.*

*%url<http://www.fcchurch.com/worship/broad>*

Thanks for sharing this wonderful sermon. Too bad we don't hear this kind of talk on TV.

God has spoken the truth when He said, “And We put in the hearts of those who followed him (Jesus), kindness and mercy” (57:27). 1052

### 7.1.25 Were we all created to serve the Jews?

*Out of Israel last week, a rabbi said that all people were created to serve the Jews. Is that ridiculous or what?*

*Do Muslims believe similarly that they are superior?*

No. The Quran makes it clear that “the noblest of you with God is the most pious of you” (49:13). Neither race, lineage, social status, wealth, or any other worldly measure makes a Muslim superior. A Muslim gains prestige with God with his or her commitment to Islam through faith, worship and good deeds.

The news you refer to was published by Haaretz Israeli newspaper and condemned by ADL. The newspaper itself is professional but when I clicked on the link, I got a blocked page, and I couldn't find the article elsewhere.

This “rabbi” is not the first, nor the last one who believes this rubbish. The origin of this dogma is the weird interpretation the early Jews made of the word “chosen.” They thought it meant they were privileged by God as a race. God replies in the Quran to their twisted argument as follows,

“Then why does He torment you for your sins? Nay! You are humans among those He created.” (5:18)

Most religious Jews will tell you that they believe that they have been cursed by God for the past 2000 years at least and that the curse will only be lifted when the Messiah comes. Does that sound like a privileged people?

God does not choose people unconditionally. He chooses people for a specific task. If they do it as told, He blesses them. If they do not do it, or do the opposite of it, He curses them. That applies to the Jews and all other communities, including Muslims.

1098

### 7.1.26 Ark of the Covenant

*What is the Islamic perspective on the Ark of the Covenant? When I was Christian, I was taught that it contained the original tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, but that they were smashed by Moses in anger. My Jewish friend confirms this belief.*

*And where is it? I heard that Solomon is the only one who knows where.*

I saw a BBC documentary that asserts it's at Axum, Ethiopia, home of King Negus. In that documentary, it was mentioned that the Jews call it Tabot, which is almost the same word the Quran uses to name it: At-Tabut,

“Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after [the time of] Moses when they said to a prophet of theirs, ‘Send to us a king, and we will fight in the way of God’? He said, ‘Would you perhaps refrain from fighting if fighting was prescribed for you?’ They said, ‘And why should we not fight in the cause of God when we have been driven out from our homes and from our children?’ But when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, except for a few of them. And God is Knowing of the

wrongdoers.”

“And their prophet said to them, ‘Indeed, God has sent to you Saul as a king.’ They said, ‘How can he have kingship over us while we are more worthy of kingship than him and he has not been given any measure of wealth?’ He said, ‘Indeed, God has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. And God gives His sovereignty to whom He wills. And God is all-Encompassing [in favor] and Knowing.’ ”

“And their prophet said to them, ‘Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the Tabut will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.’ ” (2:246-248)

I doubt though that the prophet referred to in these verses was Solomon, peace be upon him, because Solomon was mentioned by name several times in the Quran, so why would he be unnamed here?

The verses quoted above from Chapter 2 clearly state that the Ark contains some items left by the families of Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them. It is therefore quite possible that it has the original tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed. The Quran also tells us that Moses “threw” the tablets in anger at the relapse of faith of his followers (verse 7:150), but it doesn’t say that the tablets were smashed as a result. So, they could be in one piece still.

BTW, the words Tabut and Tabot mean coffin or casket, so I’m not sure why it was translated in English as Ark.

Another interesting bit of information in the documentary was that Ethiopian Jews believe that the Queen of Sheba was from Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and that she married Solomon and that’s how the Ark ended up in Ethiopia and not in Jerusalem.

But the same documentary concluded that the Queen of Sheba was from Yemen. 1211

### 7.1.27 Are Hindus “people of the Book”?

*I always thought that Hindus were polytheistic - but some sites say they are “polytheistic monotheists”, ie. they pray to one God, but through many idols.*

That is exactly what the Mushrikun (polytheists) of Mecca were doing. God quotes them in the Quran saying,

“Hear ye, to God belongs the pure religion. And those who take besides Him allies [say], ‘We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to God in proximity.’ Verily, God judges between them concerning that over which they differ. Verily, God does not guide him who is a liar and an [unrepentant] disbeliever.” (39:3)

We do not know if Hindus were given a Book from God, so we really cannot tell. There are statements in the Bhagvad Gita that are monotheistic and suggest that the religion may have had correct origin. Statements like, "I am the source of all material and spiritual things. Everything emanates from Me."

*Only Allah knows. I have read in the Quran that it refers to people of the book as Christians and Jews.*

That is the prevailing opinion, but we really do not know for sure. Consider these verses,

"And We sent messengers before you - some We related their stories to you and some We did not..." (40:78)

"Then how will it be when We bring from each community a witness and We bring you upon those a witness?" (4:41)

"And We sent off in each community a messenger [telling them] to worship God and avoid falsehood..." (16:36) 1050

### 7.1.28 How do I interact with Muslims?

*I live next to a really nice Muslim couple, we often watch their house when they're away and such. She has done many nice things for us, brought me over some middle eastern cuisine, brought over a birthday present for my daughter, and just recently brought over some Christmas presents for my daughter (which shocked me). We want to do something really nice for them but don't want to offend them since we are ignorant to their religion. We wanted to either buy them a gift certificate towards a meal at a restaurant or just buy them a present, but we are unsure about what is considered "ok" when presents are concerned.*

The best thing you can do for them is to learn about their religion. Why remain ignorant? That is how you know what presents are OK.

Next best thing is to know about their holidays and birthdays and reciprocate. Just last week was Islam's biggest holiday, Eid-ul-Adha. You could have said to them "Eid Mubarak" (Blessed feast) and cooked a lamb shank for them. They would have been so happy.

Next time you hear someone say something awful about Islam, why not tell the offender that you have Muslim neighbors who are wonderful people and that he doesn't know what he's talking about. 141

### 7.1.29 Will Jews and Christians go to Heaven?

*Verse 5:69 says,*

*“Those who believe, those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), the Sabians and the Christians, those of them who believed in God and the Last Day and worked righteous deeds, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”*

*Does this mean Jews and Christians go to Heaven too?*

What is there on the Day of Judgment beside Heaven but Hell? If they don't go to Heaven, then they go to Hell. That can't be because then they will fear and grieve!

But the verse is specific and clearly says, “*those of them who...*”, so there are conditions and God spells them out.

Belief in God is more than just believing He exists; it means obeying Him in what He ordered and prohibited. One of the things He ordered is that we must follow His prophets and messengers whom He sends to us and abide by the scriptures He sends down with them. Therefore, any Jew or Christian to whom the message of the Quran has reached, but chooses not to follow it, is not covered by verse 5:49 and only God knows what his destiny will be. 1416

### 7.1.30 A Christian acting like a Muslim

*I have a Christian friend who prays five times a day the way we Muslims pray and uses words like In-sha-Allah (God willing) and Mashallah (admiring God's creation). She is asking me if she is allowed to do that. She has not declared her conversion, so I don't know how to answer her.*

This lady is taking her time. Let her. Islam must enter the heart and the mind before it is real in a person's life. Islam has entered this lady's heart. Mind is next in-sha-Allah. As for her question whether she's allowed to this worship, the answer is of course!

Search YouTube for videos of people just like her, one is called “I was a Christian AND Muslim for seven years” and another is called “I was Muslim all my life and did not know it!”

*Found the first video [here](#) and [also here](#) but it is private in both locations.*

You may be able to contact the author and ask her to give you access to watch the video. The other video, if I remember correctly, was by a young Palestinian man who was Christian who believed in God, Jesus and the Gospel but not in original sin, crucifixion or the trinity. 1420

### 7.1.31 What to tell a pantheist?

*My older brother who's 18 years old just left Islam. Now he's a pantheist. Would you please help me to give a beautiful explanation, so he'll think of Islam again? What should I say to him? What would YOU say to him if you were my parent? I don't understand his philosophy very well, except that he believes in impersonal god and everything occurs in the universe has always been a mere mechanical process (not God's will). He's trying to convert me, my sisters, and my mother, a few days ago older sister's starting to believe his conversion was making sense.*

Sorry to hear that. I know you must be feeling terrible.

God is not a person, but He is not impersonal either! These terms apply to creatures only. He is above and beyond everything that we can imagine or conceive of. Everything in the universe did develop in a mechanical way, but it was God who created the mechanical and physical laws, right? God says in the holy Quran,

“[Pharaoh asking Moses and Aaron] saying, ‘Who then is your Lord, O Moses?’ He said, ‘My Lord is He who gave everything its form and then **guided [it]**’ ” (20:49-50)

The main question that no atheist has been able to answer is: who created the laws that operate everything? They say they don't know how any law evolved and may never know. God tells us in the Quran that it is He and no one else who created all, including the laws by which all operate.

Why do these laws operate so orderly and so consistently? Has your brother ever been wounded? Did he ever reflect on how the wound heals? What tells scar tissue to form, just above new skin cells that are too ripe still to be exposed to air?! How does scar tissue know that new skin cells are ready and thus it drops off having served its purpose?

Isn't this a sign of God, the Healer?

Atheists may think that they are intellectuals, but they really are irrational. Their motivation, IMHO, is one or more of three things: (a) Resentment of God for His Power over them, (b) resentment of God for allowing imperfections in this world, or (c) evasion of religious obligations. All three reasons are ill-conceived. God's power over us is a good thing, because we tend to abuse our powers while God never does, so He is the Balance in the universe. Imperfections in this world are the result of the exercise of the free will. Without the free will, no atheist would have been able to reject God! Finally, religious obligations are for our own benefit. They are our connection to God and the food for our souls.

Remain a good brother to your brother, and pray for him, but educate

yourself and him. I suspect that the main reason he veered from Islam is that he knew little or knew wrong about Islam. Yes, many Muslims are ignorant about their religion, I'm sad to say. 1678

### 7.1.32 How can I defend Islam and the Prophet (PBUH)?

*I've been coresponding with a Christian missionary about Islam. He had been reasonable until his last email in which he accused Islam, Islamic history and the Prophet (PBUH) with the most horrid charges! He did not comment on, or indicate that he even visited the links I recommended to him. Then he finishes his vile email with the words "Perhaps a look at Zakaria Boutros 'Truth Talk' would be useful as he clearly articulates the Muslim position from Muslim sources, and the Christian position from Christian sources. Wishing you every good thing and blessing of Christ."*

*How do I reply to him and defend Islam and the Prophet (PBUH) when he would not even visit the links I recommended to him?*

Tell him that he cannot learn about Islam from Islamophobes like Zakaria Boutros any more than you can learn about Christianity from agnostics.

The sources of Islam are not the books written by Muslims! The sources of Islam are the Quran and the authentic Hadith. If the charge he made about Muslims persecuting Christians are true, it was the fault of those Muslims, not the fault of Islam, which prohibits persecution in religion and guarantees freedom of belief to all. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and Islam are absolved from the horrible things some Muslims did or do. Did Christians ever commit atrocities? They sure did. The Crusades come to mind and so do the Conquistadors and the IRA terrorist war against Protestant Britain. They were all done in the name of Christianity! Are those the fault of Christianity and the teachings of Christ, or are they the fault of Christians from whom Christ and Christianity are absolved?

The charge against the Prophet (PBUH) that you mentioned in your more detailed email, is a famous fallacy. See this post, §4.1.21, for explanation.

Also read the posts in this book about apostasy if you like to reply to him about it. I doubt, however, that he will listen. He has taken the posture of self-righteousness. It is futile to converse with such people. Their arrogance deafens their ears.

You may also find the posts in this book about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) very relevant to your question. 1680

### 7.1.33 My aunt keeps telling me about Jehovah

*Hello, I have a Jehovah's Witness aunt whom I think is trying to convert me. No one in my family knows that I'm a Muslim, being that I'm only a 15 yrs old convert. My aunt who's a Jehovah's Witness gave me a Jehovah's Witness book for young people which I still read, because it has good moral messages which comply with Islamic morals and I find nothing wrong with them. But I just feel a li'le uncomfortable when she's telling me about Jehovah God and how he's blessing me etc. What should I do? How should I respond to this? Should I tell her I'm Muslim and talk to her about the Quran? Thanks.*

Your aunt loves you and if she's trying to convert you, she's doing it out of her belief and out of her love for you. You should be kind to her as you have been and accept her gift. You are probably too young to tell her about Islam though, but it's your call. If she's a supportive kind of person, you may tell her. But bear in mind that many people nowadays have a negative view of Islam because of the media, so if she's the kind of person who believes what she hears on TV, you'd be better off not telling her.

Jehovah did bless you! The name Jehovah is the English pronunciation of the Hebrew word Yahweh, which means "O You who is He!" The reason for this name is that many Jews took the third Commandment very seriously and thought it meant to never say God's name. You will see many of them refer to Him in their writings as G-d.

What the commandment actually teaches is that a believer should not swear by God's name unless he means what he says and will honor what he promises. This is the same teaching in the Quran,

"And do not make God a subject to your oaths..." (2:224)

And God explains this verse further in the following verse,

"God does not chastise you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He chastises you for what your hearts have earned. And God is Forgiving and Forbearing." (2:225)

And the Prophet (PBUH) explained oaths etiquette by saying, "Whoever is going to swear, let him swear by God or be silent." Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2679) who rated it authentic.

So, Jehovah is Allah and He blessed you by guiding you to Islam. 2001

### 7.1.34 Can I participate in non-Muslim celebrations?

*My mother was born and raised Catholic but converted to Islam when she married my father. Although she embraced*

*Islam as her religion it didn't affect her very close relationship with her family. So, whenever there are occasions like Christmas, All Saints Day, and birthdays we would usually go as a family. Even after my mother's passing we still continue the tradition. Are we committing any sin?*

Being kind and courteous to your family and relatives is something that Islam emphasizes a lot, even if the family is non-Muslim. What Islam warns against is participation in Zoor (lies and falsehood). God says in the holy Quran,

“And those (worshippers of the Beneficent) who do not witness falsehood, and when they pass by frivolity, they pass dignified” (25:72)

The reason for this warning is that participation in such activities, sooner or later, affects one's beliefs and may taint his faith. Islam has made it clear that Muslims must express Walaa (allegiance) to the truth and Baraa (detachment) from falsehood, see Chapter 109 of the Quran for instance.

It is because of Baraa that Asmaa bint Abi-Bakr, may God have been pleased with both, thought she should not receive her mother, Qutaila bint Abdil-Uzza, who was a polytheist, who traveled from Mecca to Medina to see her and brought her a gift. Asmaa asked the Prophet (PBUH) what to do and he told her quite clearly to be good to her mother ([Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2620) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1003)). Just then, God revealed verses 60:8-9,

“God does not forbid you from those who did not fight you because of religion and did not expel you from your homes - from being **cordial** toward them and acting with equity toward them. Indeed, God loves the equitable. God only forbids you from those who fought you because of religion and expelled you from your homes and aided in your expulsion - [forbids] that you ally with them. And whoever allies with them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.” (60:8-9)

These verses correct the misunderstanding that some Muslims have about Walaa and Baraa. These teachings do not imply hatred of non-Muslims; they teach that Baraa is the separation from hostile enemies of Islam and that Walaa is the allegiance with those who testify to the truth about God.

So, to answer your question, you are not committing a sin if the celebrations you attend are free from falsehood. If a celebration starts to take a religious inclination in which false theology is uttered or blasphemous acts are practiced, then you should immediately excuse yourself and leave, after wishing your relatives well.

2006

### 7.1.35 Help me write a Dawah letter

*I emailed you a draft of a Dawah letter (invitation to Islam). Would you critique it? I'd like it to be effective and accurate.*

Thanks for sending it to me. I'm happy to help. Here is how I edited your letter:

Have you ever thought...

If the truth about God has been revealed? That it is really out there and that we can find it?

The truth about God has come and is available to everybody, so check it out. I encourage you to pause and reflect on your religious beliefs and to examine what you've been taught. The truth just maybe elsewhere, so don't deprive yourself from finding it out.

The originals of all religious scriptures are not available, except for one: The Quran, the holy Book of Islam. The Quran is the only scripture in which God vows that He Himself will protect it from any and all alterations. Every letter, diacritic, punctuation, and even intonation is today the same way as it was over 1400 years ago when Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, received it from God.

Did you know that Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, even in the West? People from around the world who check it out quickly realize that it is the truth. Why don't you do the same and check it out? All you have to do is read the holy Quran and you will know.

Did you know that the Quran states several scientific facts that only recently have been discovered or proved? Is that a cause for wonder?

You may have noticed that Islam receives the lion's share of vilification in the media, yet it keeps growing. Ever wondered why it is vilified and how come the vilification results in the opposite of its intention?

Did you know that Islam believes in all the prior scriptures, the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms and others, and believes in all the prophets and messengers of God, from Adam and Noah, to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses and Jesus, and culminating and ending with Muhammad, peace be upon all of them.

While some religions will tell you that they are meant for certain people or races, Islam unequivocally declares that it is for all people at all times, therefore, it is for you too. Look into it today. Do not put it off for another day. You owe it to yourself.

905

### 7.1.36 Comparative religion

*Why is it that in most religions there are educated theologians that even after studying and comparing the religions they usually stick to how they were raised?*

Why do people prefer to stick to what they've been told? It's human nature. People prefer what they know to what they don't know, what's familiar to

what's different. Change for most people is not easy, *even if it is change for the better*. God condemns this natural tendency when it comes to receiving the truth from Him because He expects us to use our minds and hearts and recognize the truth when we see it. God wants us to examine what we have been told and, if it is false, change it. 22

### 7.1.37 Calling a non-Muslim a Kaafir

*Is it permissible to call a non-Muslim a Kaffir? The word is often translated as infidel, but what does it actually mean?*

The word Kafir means one who covers something. It is used in the Quran to indicate an ungrateful person. Why is a non-Muslim-by-choice called a kafir? Because He learned the truth about God, which is Islam, and deliberately chose something else, thus, he "covered" the truth which he was born with. That cannot be the decision of a grateful person.

Not all non-Muslims are Kuffar (plural of kafir), because not all of them have learned the truth about God; Islam has not reached them. Only God knows who is and who is not a kafir, therefore we ordinary folk cannot make that charge against anyone. 721

### 7.1.38 How will God judge non-Muslims?

*How will God judge non-Muslims? Is Islam the only religion acceptable to God?*

To begin with, no one knows for certain how God will judge him or her. We can get an educated guess, however, from God's assurances in the Quran and the Prophet's assurances, peace be upon him, in the Hadiths.

These resources make it clear that:

1. Those whom the message of Islam has not reached will not be faulted for not being Muslim. God says in the holy Quran, "Verily those who have believed (Muslims), those who turned to God in humility and apologized (Jews), the deist (Sabeans) and the Christians, those of them who believed in God and the Final Day and did good deeds, there is no fear upon them nor do they grieve." (5:69)
2. Those whom the message of Islam has reached, nothing but Islam will be accepted from them. God says in the holy Quran, "Whoever seeks other than Islam for a religion, it will not be accepted from him and in the hereafter he will be among the losers." (3:85)

### 7.1.39 Can you be a Christian Muslim?

A Catholic man converting to Islam wrote,

*I was raised Catholic and I'm converting to Islam. I feel it is vital to say that I am embracing Islam. In doing this, I am making my Christian heritage stronger and so I believe I can call myself a Christian Muslim.*

*In doing this I will be closer to Allah, I will respect my family and follow my own path in life.*

The values of faith, hope and charity, dedicated service to God, love and gratitude for Jesus and Mary, and peace and harmony, the values you probably cherish the most about Catholicism are all very emphasized and stressed in Islam. If these values are what you think of when you think of Christianity then you'll find yourself at home with Islam.

Where the two religions differ is in key Christian dogma: That sin is inherited; that a savior is needed to forgive sin; that God has a son and is a trinity; that Jesus is divine; and that Jesus was crucified. Islam teaches that sin is not inherited; every newborn is born sinless with the pure original nature. Repentance, good deeds and seeking God's forgiveness are the way to wipe out sin. God is one, unique, indivisible and uncontainable and there's none like unto Him. He has no son nor was He begotten. Jesus was human in every way, a very honorable and distinctly noble man. He was miraculously conceived by his chaste, virgin mother Mary. He was a prophet and a messenger of God. He was given the holy scripture of the Gospel and he was the Christ promised to the Jews. Jesus was not crucified and he didn't even die. God saved his life and dignity and lifted him up to heaven. Jesus will come back to rule the world and establish peace on earth for a while before he dies a natural death and the world comes to an end.

Just like Jesus said to the Jews that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Mathew 5:17), so did Islam come to confirm God's message to humanity and correct deviations from it. It has always been the same message "Worship God, you have none worthy of worship but He" (Quran 7:59) which is the First Commandment and the first words God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai "I am Eloah, your God. Worship none but Me." To associate in the worship of God anything or anyone, be it a man, an image, a statue, a crucifix, a bite of bread, a sip of wine, you name it, is the one and only cardinal sin in Islam. 271

### 7.1.40 Can I visit a mosque?

*I want to visit the mosque, can I? I'm very sure people would look at me if I do. What should I think of to know before?*

If you're going to enter the prayer area, you'll need to take a shower before you leave the house. And you will take off your shoes, as a gesture of respect, before you can enter the prayer area.

You'll need to dress modestly, no shorts or gold chains for example. The mosque may have other concerns so it's best to call ahead and ask for their etiquette. 277

### 7.1.41 My experience with God is different from yours

*If I believe in your God but I believe that my Bible is true, should I tell you that you have rejected the message that God said in relation to my own experience?*

*I have a sincere, honest-to-God question. I feel I am a good person who believes we all have a purpose on this earth. I ask you though, if God is talking to me in my heart, and it diverges from what you are taught, am I wrong?*

The other questions you asked before prove that you are a good person agonizing over what is true and what is false.

It's quite risky to say that God is talking to you in your heart. Too many clergy and even heads of state have said that God talks to them. And the terrorist are convinced their mass murder campaigns are pleasing to God! Without guidance from God you and all of us would be in total darkness and played for suckers by Satan. The guidance and the truth is out there available for free to whomever wants it. It is the last testament and covenant from God. It is the holy Quran.

Why do you believe in the Bible? Because that's what you've been told? Because that's what you grew up with? I am inviting you to find the truth on your own, not influenced by anything anyone tells you, including us here! I read the Bible cover to cover, in English and in Arabic, and I read the Quran and I was convinced without a shadow of a doubt that the Quran is the truth. I'm encouraging you to do the same. How can you possibly know that Islam is false until you've read the Quran with an open heart and an open mind and your soul told you it wasn't true?

*You say that the Quran is protected by Allah himself: If that was so, why were not the preceding books? I am told the Quran is a "fixed version" of the Jewish Torah. Why was the Torah not in Allah's care? Do you see where my line of thinking comes from?*

If God had wished to protect the Torah, He would have, but He chose not to. We do not tell God what He should or should not have done. If the Torah

had been protected from alteration, there would not have been a need for the Gospel or for Jesus, peace be upon him. Same thing with the Gospel. Maybe God wanted to test the obedience of the Jews; if they cannot be trusted to keep the holiest of books intact then they do not deserve God's grace and the Testament will go to some other people. "If you turn your backs, He will replace you with other people and they will not be like you!" (47:38) 388

### 7.1.42 Questions from an atheist

*My brother died of cancer even though he prayed to God to heal him. Most of us would attempt to help others who are ill. But God didn't. How is this God good then?*

Here we have several sub-questions:

1. If God does not answer your prayer the way you wanted, does that mean He is not good?

Answer: God is always good. He answers prayers. He even answered Satan's prayer! Satan requested that God let him live till the Day of Judgment and God let him! The materialist define what's good in terms of material things and in this life only but God's definition spans all existence and all time.

God answered your brother's prayer in a way that is not obvious. That way may be revealed in this life or in the life to come. To define for God how your prayer is to be answered is tantamount to telling God what to do. A Japanese wisdom says it very well, "*If you don't get what you want, think of what you don't get that you don't want.*"

2. Was your brother praying to the right God?

Answer: If he was then see point 1 above. If he wasn't then how does he expect his prayer to be answered? Imagine you want a raise at work but instead of going to your boss to ask him you go the grocer instead!

*Evil is everywhere, isn't it? And God did make everything. Correct? Is there sickness? Immorality? Hatred? Ugliness? All these terrible things exist in the world, don't they? So, who created them?*

Here we have a few sub-questions as well:

3. Why are there ugly things in the world?

Answer: Because man was given a free will. A free will by definition means the ability to do bad as well as do good. Ugly things are the result of what ugly people freely decided to do.

4. Why does God let ugliness happen?

Answer: For the same reason, ironically, He lets good things happen: Because He tests people all the time. Just like you do not truly learn until you make mistakes, your faith is only words until it is tested. Ugly things test your patience and hope in God. Good things test your generosity and gratitude to God.

5. How can a good God create ugly things?

Answer: Because nothing can exist if God doesn't create them, and since the free will of man can decide to cause ugly things, they cannot materialize unless God allows them to exist. Besides, what appears ugly may have a value that is not immediately obvious.

*Science says you have 5 senses you use to identify and observe the world around you. Tell me then, have you ever seen God? Tell me if you have ever heard your God? Have you ever felt your God, tasted your God, smelt your God? Have you ever had any sensory perception of God for that matter? Yet you still believe in Him?*

Answer: The argument of the five senses is flawed, because we know things we didn't know before, not because we developed new senses, but because we developed new tools, such as telescopes and microscopes. Even with these tools, we cannot see Planet Saturn, for instance, at certain times of the day. Does any of that mean that Saturn does not exist?

God is not part of the world around us, the world around us is created by Him. He is above and beyond all perceptions. Because we cannot know Him the way we can know the physical world, He sent us scriptures and prophets whom He entrusted and they conveyed to us His message which He wants us to heed.

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### 7.1.43 Two traps atheists fall into

*I honestly believe that Islam is the greatest religion I have ever seen, the proof is undeniable and the miracles of the Quran are there for all to see, but my main two questions are:*

1. *How can you be so sure there really is a God, and,*
2. *If Allah didn't want me to do some of the things I do, why make me the way I am? Why make humanity have so many flaws? Why not simply make us perfect servants?*

There is no *proof* that God exists but there are billions of clues to it. God calls them Aayaat (signs). Chief among them is this feeling we all have deep inside, the feeling that we have a Creator who is our Guardian to whom we can always turn in times of difficulty.

If the existence of God could be proved then there would not have been a need for faith! And if it could be disproved then someone would have done that by now. Offering an alternative to creation is not a proof that creation did not happen.

There have consistently been two traps many atheists have fallen into. One trap is resentment of God's control and the other trap is resentment of the ills of this world. Both traps are short-sighted and here is why. God's control, aside from being a fact that no one can logically challenge, is the best thing that can happen to the universe! If anyone else had control, the universe would crumble. It's by God's grace that you and I can breathe.

As for the ills of this world; they are the direct or indirect result of wrong choices made by people with their free will. What's the alternative? No free will? In that case humans would be unnecessary since God already has angels. We have a job to do: establish God's laws on the earth. God says in the holy Quran that He offered the heavens, the earth and the mountains to keep "the Trust" (Al-Amana) but they all declined and man volunteered! We are here because we chose to! Now, you may accept this or reject it, but your rejection of it doesn't change it and doesn't help your life either. You may not realize it, but your body and your spirit are Muslim. The agony a doubter feels is the result of the conflict his conscious mind is having with his soul. Inner peace can only be achieved when God throws it in our hearts as a reward for doing our assignment. He benefits nothing from us doing the job; we are the beneficiaries. 412

#### 7.1.44 Are the Jews cursed?

*There are many verses in the Quran that say the Jews have been cursed by God. Actually, the Bible says likewise. Are the Jews doomed?*

God also said:

"And among the people of Moses is a community which guides to the truth and with it they judge." (7:159)

"And we have chosen them (the children of Israel) knowingly above all people." (44:32)

"And of the people of the Book is one whom if you entrust with a heap of money he will return it to you." (3:75)

Bottom line is that they are not all alike and only God knows whom He curses and whom He pardons. I pray to God that we are among those He pardons. 285

### 7.1.45 Am I a Muslim Jew?

*In your reply to a post that asked, "How can there be an atheist Jew?", you wrote,*

*The 'Jews' consider themselves a race when in fact they are not entirely because many of them are converts to Judaism from non-Hebrew races. You certainly can be a Jew even if you have not descended from any of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Quran has made it clear though. When God talks about the Jews as a race, He calls them the children of Israel. When He talks about them as a community of faith, He calls them the people of Moses or the people of the Book.*

*But when God told us who hates Muslims the most, He named 'The Jews' (Al-Yahud), not the children of Israel and not the people of Moses and not the people of the Book! The Jews, together with the polytheist are the ones who hate Muslims the most.*

*Why is that? Because of the children of Israel are people who harbor no hatred toward their cousins and longest time neighbors, the Arabs, and often the only protectors, the Muslims. And the people of Moses, the true ones, have an affinity for their fellow believers in the One God. It is only the people who think Jew is a race that hate Muslims most. The fight in and about Palestine is not religious and never was. It is and always has been racial.*

*All that presents a dilemma to any Jew convert to Islam. Does he or she stop being a Jew? Can they be a Jew and a Muslim? Some Jews seem to think so. There is a web site and a group of fine Muslims who call themselves "Jews for Allah."*

*Why is it that the Jews insist they are a race? Because it makes their race, not their faith, the object of God's affection. They want to believe that their race is the chosen race and that they are given the promised land, not because of their faith, which many of them have abandoned, but because of their race. It's easier that way.*

*Because this confusion cannot be easily dissolved, I always try to differentiate between Zionist and Jew. The Israelis don't want to make that distinction because they can then easily accuse anyone who opposes them of antisemitism. It's funny that they accuse Arabs, who are also Semites, of antisemitism while accusing fellow Jews who are critical of them self-hating Jews!*

*So out of curiosity, what ethnicity does a former Jew like myself give when asked? Hebrew? Semite?*

Ethnicity has no weight in Islam. We should remind each other of this and also convey that principle to non-Muslims. People who ask you what your ethnicity is or where you are from either have a preconceived idea about various ethnicities or they want to classify you. Why would you want strangers to classify you?

How about answering, "I'm a Muslim Jew!" I'd love to see the look on their faces. 369

### 7.1.46 You did not convince me

*I've been arguing with my teacher who is non-Muslim. He is very stubborn and I can't seem to win the argument. Any advice?*

Some people just love to argue. Others value being right more than the truth. Others fear the truth because what they have, though it's darkness, is familiar and comfortable.

Our obligation from God and His Messenger is to deliver the message. That includes answering questions and clearing up misconceptions. Our obligation does not include winning the argument or proving we're right or proving they're wrong or converting them. That's in the hands of God alone as we all know. Thus, after we've done our duty, we just leave people to reflect and hope that they one day may be guided. 423





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## Chapter 8

# Islamophobia

The articles in this chapter address the hostility toward Islam, its causes, and the proper way Islam teaches Muslims to handle hostility toward them and their religion.

### 8.1 Causes of Islamophobia

Phobias are primarily caused by not knowing, and they are survival mechanisms. For example, one might fear the dark because one does not know what may be lurking in it. Or one might fear a large animal, like an elephant, if one did not know that it presents no danger unless it was attacked.

In a similar manner, fear of Islam comes from wrong information about it. This section presents the types of misinformation about Islam and where they originate.

Misinformation about Islam is the result of one or more of the following factors: misunderstanding, hatemongering, misrepresentation, or resistance to change. The Quran and the Sunna teach Muslims the proper way to react to the different types of hostility towards Islam.

Let us see questions that were raised about all these causes and offer answers to them.

#### **Misunderstanding**

Misunderstanding is to hear or read something but understand it incorrectly. This is often caused by unfamiliarity but may also be caused by prejudice.

Some negative attitudes toward Islam are caused by misunderstanding it. The solution to this problem is to ask knowledgeable Muslims and engage with them in interfaith dialogs.

### 8.1.1 Is Islam violent?

*Is Islam violent? Does the Quran encourage violence? I have seen some of the Quran extracts which talks about Muslims not being allowed to befriend Christians and that the West are all infidels, etc. For example,*

*“O ye who believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for friends. They are friends one to another. He among you who taketh them for friends is (one) of them. Lo! Allah guideth not wrongdoing folk.” (5:51)*

Two common fallacies. God tells Muslims in the Quran not to be *allies in war* with the People of the Book (Christians and Jews). Nothing to do with friendship. The word God uses in the Quran is “Awliyaa’”, plural of “Waliy”, which means close ally and the context you quote is a context of war as you can see from the very next verse, 5:52. Thus, the quoted translation is misleading.

When there is no war, the instructions from God are, “God does not forbid you to be cordial and just with those who do not fight you in religion or expel you from your homes. God loves the just” (60:8) The next verse emphasizes the different circumstances of wartime, “What God forbids you is to be allies with those who fight you in religion, expel you from your homes, or ally themselves with those who do. Those of you who ally themselves with them are the wrongdoers” (60:9)

Even when there is war, God's instructions are to honor all treaties until the other side breaks them, “Except those polytheists with whom you have treaties and they did not break them nor ally with your enemies: Complete the term of the treaties. God loves those who fear Him.” (9:4)

*There are a number of Quranic passages that appear to evoke hatred. For instance,*

*“...slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush...” (9:5)*

You left out the beginning of the verse! It says, “When the term [of the treaty] expires...” Then, the state of war is back and when in war one kills the enemy. In the same Chapter, God instructs Muslims to “fight against the disbelievers collectively as they fight against you collectively.” (9:36)

The reason for war and the conditions to end it are defined by God in Chapter 2. He says, “Fight in the way of God those who fight you *and do not commit aggression*; God does not like the aggressive.” (2:190) And, “Fight them until there is no persecution and the religion is for God [alone]. If they cease, then *there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors.*” (2:193)

*Another example,*

*“...O Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites! Be harsh with them...” (9:73)*

Bad translation. The word used is “Ughluzh” which means be firm or tough as opposed to being lenient “Urfuq.”

*A third example is,*

*“The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet on alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land. Such will be their degradation in the world, and in the Hereafter theirs will be an awful doom;” (5:33)*

The word “ ” does not mean reward; it means recompense. This is the legal punishment for a crime. When a judge passes a capital punishment verdict on an accused, he or she does not hate that person. He or she is applying the law. You may be surprised to know that this very verse is the Islamic law condemning terrorism and specifying the capital punishment for it. Muslim scholars have agreed that armed robbery falls under the category of “going around with corruption in the land” and that terrorism, defined as “ ” (frightening the secure), falls under the category of “waging war against God and His messenger.”

*And what about where it says in the Hadith “Jihad in the way of Allah” as a way for paradise.*

What about it? Perhaps you think that Jihad means war. That's another fallacy promoted by the media. Jihad means exerting an effort that meets with resistance. In the case of war, and it is always a war of self-defense, the jihad is the effort to repel the attackers, and the resistance is the enemy who started the hostilities. Jihad can also be done with words, “And struggle with them a big struggle using it (the Quran)” (25:52). It can be done by the disbelievers! See for instance “And if they struggle with you so that you would associate others in worship with Me, others of whom you have no knowledge, then do not obey them.” (29:8, 31:15). It can be done with money (see verse 8:72). It can be done in oneself, like when someone is struggling to find the truth about God (verse 29:69).

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### 8.1.2 Oklahoma votes to ban Sharia law

*Oklahoma voters voted to ban Islamic law in their state. The bill was initiated by Newt Gingrich. Any comments?*

Mr. Gingrich and the Oklahoma voters probably do not realize that Sharia law is the basis for the British and French common laws. The word “jury” comes from Arabic Shura (mutual consultation). Terms like premeditated murder and negligent homicide are translations of juristic phrases coined by Muslim jurists.

The irony is that Gingrich used to be a history teacher. I bet he doesn't know that the inspiration behind the Magna Carta was the human rights practices of Muslims as witnessed by the invading Crusaders.

That said, Sharia law applies to Muslims only. It is only applied on non-Muslim citizens of a Muslim country IF they chose it (they often did) AND IF the Muslim ruler agrees to arbitrate! This is because God says in the holy Quran,

“...So if they (non-Muslim citizens) come to you [for arbitration], then judge between them, or turn aside from them. If you turn aside from them, they will not harm you a bit. And if you judge, do so between them with equity. God loves the equitable.” (5:42)

So, Newt Gingrich and his sort have nothing to fear from Sharia law because it won't apply to him unless he migrates to an Islamic country and wants Sharia law to arbitrate for him. In fact, he may want it but not get it!

Update: As of this writing, this law has been put on hold by a judge pending investigation of its constitutionality. Then a Federal court struck down the ban, according to [Barbara Bradley Hagerty of NPR](#). 1121

### 8.1.3 Are they trying to confuse us about our religion?

*French Foreign Minister Michele Alliot Marie said it was “important not to confuse moderate Muslims with radical or fundamentalist parties.”*

*What do they mean by this? Are they trying to confuse us about our own religion?*

What she's saying is that generalization is wrong. Radicals and fundamentalists do not represent Muslims, nor are the majority. From her point of view, she can work with “moderate” Muslims, but she cannot work with fundamentalists. In that she's right, because the fundamentalists, by definition, do not want to discuss; they want a fight.

That said, I'm sorry to say that I doubt her sincerity. She was a champion of banning the niqab (face veil that only shows the eyes) in France and was instrumental in getting the ban approved by the French parliament. I heard her speech to the French Parliament. She confuses freedom of religion with social integration. I hate to say this but I don't think she does that out of

ignorance, rather out of prejudice. A European court shamefully approved the ban despite the ban's obvious violation of human rights, women's rights, and religious rights. As of this writing the ban is still in effect. 1281

#### 8.1.4 Do Muslims worship a moon god?

*You make Islam sound all good, but if you live in America, it isn't. My parents constantly tell me that Islam is a pagan religion and that Allah is really a moon god.*

*I am so confused. Is Islam the True Religion? I don't know. I read somewhere on beliefnet.com that a young girl said that she tried to read the Quran, from a prospective convert view, and thought that it wasn't from God.*

*To me, Islam seems sort of like a cult, no offense to anyone.*

None taken, but why do you think so? Because Muslims are a minority? Or because Muslims are portrayed as such in the media?

The experience of reading the Quran will be different for different people. God tells us clearly that some people will hear the Quran and get nothing out of it or stray even more because they have chosen to close their hearts and minds to it, while some will hear the Quran and their eyes will overflow with tears as they recognize the truth in it. Another girl's experience with the Quran should not influence your own.

Allah<sup>1</sup> is the creator of the moon and everything else. Ask your parents why they think that Allah is a moon god. A pagan religion is one where God is objectified such as being the sun, the moon, an animal, etc. Since God in Islam is not objectified and He tells us that "And there's none like unto Him" (112:5) and that He created all then Islam is not pagan. Ask your parents why they think that Islam is pagan. Their answers will reveal the reasons for the conclusions they made about Islam, and can open the door for all of you to learn the truth about Islam. 230

#### **Hatemongering**

Hatemongering is deliberate malicious efforts to alienate the listener or reader from the target of hate. Hate has no solution and therefore must be decisively countered and frustrated. The haters may be a hopeless case, but their victims can be rescued with education.

Some negative attitudes toward Islam are caused not by misunderstanding but by hate. The solution to this problem is by education and countering lies with documented facts.

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<sup>1</sup>The Arabic word for God.

### 8.1.5 Why is Islam so often attacked in the media?

Islam has a massive, magnetic appeal. It appeals to the heart and mind equally. It is the fastest growing religion in the world, despite all the attacks, smear campaigns and misinformation, despite the lousy way some Muslims present themselves and despite the lack of proselytizing effort! Some reports claimed that in the few months following 9/11, the number of Americans and Europeans who accepted Islam was four times the number who did in the entire previous year! The notoriety Islam received at that time piqued people's curiosity about it and they started to check it out. When people get to know Islam, good Muslims, or read the Quran, the odds are high that they will accept Islam. They recognize the truth when they see it.

Certain people and organizations who do not want this mass exodus to occur, will do everything in their power to stop it. This has happened many times in the past and the irony is that every time it happened it had the exact opposite effect: Muslims banded together to defend their religion and thus became stronger; those who didn't practice it started to; those who wanted to keep a low profile and live and let live started to proselytize. 70

### 8.1.6 Islamophobic Media

*Islam intrigues me but I've seen a bad portrayal of your religion in the media and to be honest that's made me fearful of Muslims in general. I'm scared of what reaction might be provoked if I say anything anti-Allah or that degrades your religion.*

Many media have their agenda and they pursue it relentlessly without shame. You do well to at least seek other sources of information as you have done coming here. Certain powerful people in the media want to alienate their viewers and listeners from the Muslim world because they regard Islam as a threat to the order they are comfortable with. Islam has a magnetic appeal. There is a reason why Islam is the fastest growing religion in the West even though Muslims themselves are sometimes Islam's worst advertising!

There is nothing to fear from Muslims. When you see them on TV demonstrating against a cartoonist who offended Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, it's not that they do not approve of freedom of speech; it's that they do not approve of freedom to insult. And they are passionate about their love for the Prophet and for the religion. Freedom to insult is not a human right nor a value to uphold, but rather is a sign of bad breeding. 49

### 8.1.7 How the “Ground Zero” campaign was started and promoted

A reader of my blog sent me links to two articles about Islamophobia. The first one was about the so-called “Ground Zero” campaign, and the second one was about how that campaign was only a small part of a much larger, lavishly financed hatemongering effort against Islam and Muslims.

The first article also named the people who started the campaign and how they promoted it to the main media!

It’s amazing that so many Americans can so easily be manipulated. But I guess there are always gullible people who will believe the first thing they hear.

And the second article shows how the Islamophobic campaign’s aim was to keep fear alive.

I like this interjection from the author of the second article, Pam Martens,

*With 43 million Americans now living below the poverty level, it’s fascinating to know that these folks earmarked 17 million dollars not to hunger relief but to DVD packaging. Let them eat plastic, perhaps.*

It is also good to read about ordinary Americans who resist hate campaigns such as that and make their voices heard. Salute to Margaret Lewis of Durham, North Carolina, Hal Chase of Hudson, and John Robinson, Editor of The News and Record. 1105

### 8.1.8 A call for the Quran to be changed!

*Stephen Lennon on English Defence League’s mission,  
“<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/9385015.stm>”*

2

The Quran predicted things like that,

“And when Our verses are recited to them, making things clear, **those who do not hope to meet Us** said, ‘Bring a Quran other than this or replace it!’ Say, [O Muhammad,] ‘It is not for me to replace it of my own volition. I only follow **what has been revealed to me from my Lord**. I fear, if I disobeyed my Lord, the torment of a grand Day!’” (10:15)

Update:

The above URL has since removed the video of the BBC broadcast. A related video is currently available at <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1395262538687750>this Facebook page

<sup>2</sup>That webpage had since been removed.

### 8.1.9 Prove that Islam was not spread by the sword

The noted historian De Lacy O'Leary wrote,

*“History makes it clear, however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.”*

The facts speak for themselves:

\* Indonesia is the country that has the largest number of Muslims in the world, and the majority of people in Malaysia are Muslims. But, no Muslim army ever went to Indonesia or Malaysia. Same thing about China, Africa, the Indian subcontinent, etc.

Despite the disappearance of Islamic government from many regions once ruled by it, their original inhabitants have remained Muslims.

\* Muslims ruled Spain (Andalusia) for about 800 years and India for about a 1000 years. During this long period, they could have forced the citizens to become Muslims, but they didn't. Spanish Christians and Jews enjoyed freedom to practice their respective religions, as well as India's Hindus. Ironically, it was Spanish Christians who, when they gained power, gave Muslims and Jews three choices: become Catholic, leave the country, or die!

\* An article in Reader's Digest "Almanac, yearbook 1986", gives the statistics of the increase of the percentage of the major religions of the world in half a century from 1934 to 1984. This article also appeared in The Plain Truth magazine. At the top was Islam, which increased by 235 percent, while Christianity had increased by 47 percent. During this fifty-year period, there was no "Islamic conquest" anywhere in the world - the Ottoman Empire had just been terminated by the West - yet Islam spread at an extraordinary rate.

\* Today the fastest growing religion in America and Europe is Islam. The Muslims in these lands are a minority. What sword do they have? 365

#### **Misrepresentation**

Some Muslims misunderstand Islam! This sounds like an oxymoron but it is a sad fact of life that can be observed in all religions. If a person is a blind follower, for instance, they cannot open their mind to different interpretations or opinions. Same thing if their nature is fundamentalist. Extremists and some of the strictest believers tend to be very intolerant and even hostile to viewpoints that are different from theirs, and if they are the domineering types they tend to try to impose their viewpoints on those who don't agree

with them. The result of such attitude is an offputting, even repulsive picture of Islam shown to non-Muslims.

Some negative attitudes toward Islam are caused by Muslims presenting Islam incorrectly. The solution to this problem is to present Islam correctly and the only way to do so is to cite documented evidence that is certain in its sourcing and clear in its semantics.

### 8.1.10 Are attacks against Islam justified?

*I can recommend this book by Dr. Moustafa Zayed, "The lies about Muhammad: An answer to the book 'the truth about Muhammad' "*

*It's available [on Amazon](#)*

Thanks for sharing.

I noticed this lone negative review of the book,

"It is a rebuttal to Robert Spencer's book. Since Robert Spencer used Islamic doctrine and sources in his book it is hard to buy into this book's logic which now claims those sources are wrong yet Islam is still right on a doctrine level. Read it with great caution and skepticism."

That is the core of the problem IMHO; the fact that all the negative information about Islam can indeed be substantiated by writings of Muslim scholars of old! They misinterpreted the Quran and the Hadith and published their erroneous views in books that remained unknown for a thousand years...until the Internet exposed those books for the whole world. But Islam is not what Muslims wrote; it's what the Quran and the authentic Hadith say.

Dr. Zayed did the right thing by pointing out how wrong Spencer's references are and he correctly and timely defended Islam by writing this book. May God reward him handsomely. But he has an uphill struggle against the "dark ages" of Muslim thought. It is a struggle we all have to go through for ourselves first, so that we may filter out opinion from doctrine, before we can convey it to others. 1066

### 8.1.11 Is Islamophobia justified?

*If Islamophobia is defined as 'an (irrational) fear, prejudice, hatred against Muslims and Islamic culture', it makes me wonder.*

*Is there any such a thing as a rational, legitimate fear of Islam? And is there anything in correct Islamic teachings that can be a threat to non-muslims?*

There is no rational or legitimate fear of Islam, but there is rational, legitimate fear of *some Muslims*. How some Muslims have interpreted the Quran and the Sunna is scary, even to fellow Muslims.

Most of the people who criticize Islam do so out of ignorance. However, some of them quote what some Muslims wrote and said publicly as their argument for attacking Islam. That's no argument for attacking Islam, but it is legitimate argument for attacking those Muslims. Islam is what the Quran and the authentic Hadith have taught, not what Muslims opined. That is the issue the article probably skipped over.

I personally find those particular attacks a blessing in disguise! Why? Because they open our eyes to the dangers implied by those radical writers. We need to know that some Muslims wrote weird interpretations of the Quran and the authentic Hadith and made some terrible conclusions as a result. For the large part, that went unnoticed and ignored for centuries by the mainstream because it was not very well known. But once the Internet became widespread, all those ugly writings became available world-wide. They cannot be ignored anymore. It is the duty of mainstream scholars, IMHO, to expose those writings, refute them and clear up the image of Islam. From many recent books and articles I read, I see that already starting to happen, Thank God. 850

### 8.1.12 Is Sharia law cruel? Does it still apply today?

*I just heard the news that a 14 year old girl in Bangladesh was whipped until she died because she was accused of having a relationship with a married man. Of course that's a bad sin, but shouldn't the punishment be between her and Allah SWT?<sup>3</sup> It's not only in this case but many others who punished people under the name of Islam. These kinds of things really put my faith into a depression. Should Sharia really be practiced in today's world? Yes I do know the teachings are from the Quran but isn't it true some teachings in the Holy Book were only meant for the Arabs back then?*

*I don't like to question. But when I hear such scary things, happening under the name of Allah SWT, the Holy Prophet, and Islam I have no choice but to question. I honestly don't know what to believe. I'm sure if Allah SWT were to reveal the Quran in today's world, it would be very different. I believe that Allah revealed the Quran to fit with the Arab culture of the time. Do you guys believe that these people that are following the Shariah are really following the Shariah or they're just abusing it? Or that the Shariah shouldn't be practiced in*

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<sup>3</sup>Acronym of Arabic words of glorifying God. They mean: May He be sanctified and exalted

*today's world because some of the teachings were only meant for Arabs at the time?*

Sharia law is meant for all Muslims at all times. It is designed by God to achieve a good society. The Quran was revealed for all times.

That said, Sharia has plenty of preconditions and pre-requisites. It cannot be applied until after a lot of foundations have been in place and all conditions are met. The Prophet (ﷺ) spent 13 years in Mecca teaching faith and theology. Not even prayer, fasting and Zakah (Alms giving) were clearly defined yet. After migrating to Medina and establishing a state, Sharia was gradually implemented. In fact, the penalties for adultery and theft were not specified until 7 years later.

A Muslim society needs to establish the entirety of Islam before Sharia may be applied. For instance, you cannot enforce the theft penalty when citizens are poor and cannot find work and Zakah is not collected or properly distributed. That is why Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, suspended the theft penalty during the year of famine (“ .(”

By the same token, the penalty of adultery cannot be enforced when people are unable to marry and when pornography is allowed and easily available.

An Islamic country has the duty to teach Islam to its citizens, to protect them from sin and to provide them with an environment where sin is a luxury, not a necessity. If they choose sin after all that, then the punishment in Sharia is applied to them for discipline and as a deterrent. When you understand this, you understand why Sharia is not cruel though it may seem that way.

When Sharia punishes a crime, it is protecting all others from it. If adultery is left unpunished, for instance, all will be in fear that their spouses may cheat on them. Some spouses will cheat no matter what, but if the adultery penalty is enforced, the probability of cheating is significantly reduced.

Sharia law applies to all Muslims. No one is above the law. So, a state which claims to be Islamic, but will not penalize its elite is NOT Islamic. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, *“What destroyed those who came before you was that when their nobles stole, they let them go, but when their weak stole, they penalized them! By Him in whose Hand is my soul, if Fatima bint Muhammad (his daughter) stole, I would cut her hand!”*, narrated by Aisha, Urwa ibn Al-Zubair and Jabir, may God have been pleased with them, and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (1688, 3733, 4304, 6787), [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1688, 1689), as well as Al-Tirmizi, Al-Nasai, and Abu-Dawoud. BTW, this is an excellent example of a ubiquitous hadith ( .( Being ubiquitous and authentic means that is certain in sourcing and thus is a solid reference from which to derive Islamic rulings with confidence.

I have a few questions for you:

- Were there four eye witnesses to the adultery act? I doubt it very

much. Accusation is not enough. In fact, accusation without supporting witnesses *is punishable* by eighty whippings! And the accuser is permanently discredited, his testimony is never accepted and he is labeled a Fasiq (deviant). That is what the Quran requires in verse 24:4. That's in the Sharia law too, so why wasn't that applied?

- Was the married man whipped too? If not, then this is an act of misogyny, not Sharia.
- The girl was a minor. Minors do not suffer the same penalty as grownups. Why wasn't her sentence reduced? In fact, was the matter ruled on by a duly authorized court of law or did people take the law into their own hands? If it's the latter then it's a ruling of the jungle, not of the Sharia.

Update: According to this [CNN News article](#), the girl's dying words to her mother were that she was innocent! If that's true, then those who whipped her must be tried for man slaughter (" .(" That's in the Sharia too. 1466

### 8.1.13 Satanic verses?

*I researched this and have not found a straight answer. What is the story of the Satanic verses and does it have any basis?*

What Salman Rushdi's novel builds on is a fabricated hadith that alleges that, as verses 53:19-20 were being revealed, which name three idols of the polytheist Arabs, Satan added words after them and that the Prophet recited those words as if they were two additional verses and that the people around him heard it. God forbid. The words are " , " meaning "Those are the tall cranes, and their intercession is hoped for". That made the verses sound like they condone idolatry.

Many scholars fell for the story because they took narrations without authentication. Unfortunately, that happened a lot in the classic literature. These scholars wrote in their books attempts at explaining that strange event. One explanation that they came up with was that those "verses" were later [abrogated!](#)

The reality is that the event never happened; it's a figment of imagination of the man who concocted that fake narration. Those alleged "verses" were never uttered by the Prophet (PBUH) and were never part of the Quran. The Quran has [always been preserved](#) from any corruption and nothing in it was abrogated. It is dangerous to the religion to give precedence to narrations over the Quran, for the simple reason that the authenticity of any narration cannot compete with the ubiquitous authenticity of the Quran and that narrations were written down 200 years after the death of the Prophet (PBUH)

while the Quran was written down by 43 Sahaba (fellows of the Prophet), known in the literature as Revelation Scribes ( during the Prophet's lifetime (PBUH) and memorized by thousands of them.

The modern, highly respected Islamic scholar [Al-Albani \[9\]](#) wrote an entire book proving the utter fallacy of that story. 1328

### **Resistance To Change**

Some negative attitudes toward Islam are caused not by misunderstanding but by reluctance to change. This is what held most converts to Islam. It is understandable. The solution to this problem is to let folks take their time to make such a major decision that affects their life in this world and the hereafter, and to be available to them to answer all their questions factually and caringly.

#### **8.1.14 Why do so many people dislike Islam?**

In addition to the many other reasons mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, I'd like to stress another: For the same reason alcoholics keep denying that they have a problem; for the same reason voters dismiss third-party candidates; for the same reason battered wives stay in their abusive marriages! What's common between those reasons? Resistance to change, even if it is change for the better, and especially if the change will force a person to face his or her vulnerabilities head on. But that change is the best thing they can do to improve their lives, if they only allow it. 549

## **8.2 Proper Muslim response**

The Quran and the Sunna teach Muslims how to properly answer questions of those who are considering Islam but are hesitant to make the big decision, as well as how to respond to Islamophobia.

### **8.2.1 How should we react to Islamophobia?**

God says in the holy Quran,

“You will surely be tested in your possessions and in yourselves. And you will surely hear from those who were given the Scripture before you and from those who associate [in worship] others with God much abuse. But if you endure and watch out [for God] - indeed, that is of the matters resolute.” (3:186)

I never thought that I'd live to see verse 3:186 apply to us everyday several times, but that's exactly what we're experiencing nowadays from the

Islamophobes, Zionists, fundamentalist Christians, radical Republicans, and Tea Party members.

God's advice is simple: endure and be patient, so we must. As long as we keep the faith and commitment to God, call people to God with wisdom and good preaching and argue with them in the most beautiful manner, and practice what we preach, then all their propaganda and lavish spending on hatred and plots will not harm us one bit. 1251

### 8.2.2 How do we respond to Islamophobia?

*I just watched a horrible video on YouTube that says the worst things about the holy Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. How do I respond to that video and how can we encounter this venomous campaign against him and against Islam?*

The reasons for Islamophobia are three IMHO:

1. Insecurity caused by the rapid spread of Islam.
2. Adverse propaganda by special interest groups.
3. Repulsive behavior of some Muslims.

Thus, we counter Islamophobia by doing the following:

1. Educate people that Islam does not threaten them or their way of life, because it is only binding on those who willingly accept it.
2. Produce rebuttal propaganda that exposes the ill intentions of the special interest groups.
3. Condemn the repulsive behavior of some Muslims and counter it with exemplary behavior. Almighty God says in the holy Quran,
 

“And thus We have set you up as a middle community, so that you would be witnesses upon people and the Messenger would be a witness upon you.” (2:143)

That means that we will be asked if we delivered God's message to people, at least by our good example, and properly represented Islam and the Prophet (ﷺ). Those of us who misrepresent Islam with repulsive behavior will be carrying two burdens.

### 8.2.3 Help me answer these anti-religion questions

*I've been in discussion with an atheist who rejects religion. Can you help me answer some of his questions and accusations? For instance:*

*“Religion is used to control the masses of people”*

Other religions maybe but not Islam, because God has told His Prophet, peace be upon him, in the Quran,

“So remind. You are but a reminder. You are not over them a controller. However, he who turns away and disbelieves; God will torment him the biggest torment. Verily, to Us is their return. Then, verily, upon Us is their accounting.” (88:21-26)

Thus, Islam is meant to remind each of us of God, so that we can lead a balanced life. If anyone abused their authority and imposed Islam on people, it's their fault, not Islam's.

*“Religion makes people humble, worship God”*

Yes. Is that bad? I guess the atheist would rather have a world of arrogant people who worship their desires. He would be their first victim.

*“Religion does not allow people to ask any questions except for priest (Shiekhs/scholars), and the average person's opinion is not taken in consideration.”*

As our brother Professor Jeffrey Lang put it in his book, “Even Angels Ask,” (Lang [40]) Muslims are supposed to ask, study and analyze. It's called Ijtihad (Analysis), and it carries a reward even if the answer obtained is wrong! The fact that Ijtihad has been suspended is the fault of Muslims, not of Islam.

Islamic history has many events, starting with the life of the Prophet (PBUH), proving that the average person's opinion was honored. Ignorance of those events is no excuse. Some of those events are the soldier who criticized the Prophet's directive to camp at one location and suggested another and the Prophet (PBUH) agreed and followed him. Another example is the woman who corrected Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, when he commanded a cap on dowries and showed him evidence from the Quran that there is no limit to a bride's dowry. The fact that Muslims have discouraged individual opinions and preferred Taqlid (blind following) and a clergy system is their error, not Islam's. 967

### 8.2.4 What to do about the massive Islamophobia?

*I wasn't aware of the constant barrage of anti-Muslim Propaganda. Perhaps those opposed to Islam have a massive campaign to demean it. Satan seems to be burying the true Islam under slander, lies, and propaganda.*

*Do a search on practically any Islamic subject and see how many of the top search results seem to be legitimate Islamic information sites and then when you click on the links, it is filled with nothing but hate, filth, and misinformation.*

*I am disgusted at what I see on sites that read like an Islamic information or forum, only to find it contains nothing but slurs, libel, and falsehood. With all this misinformation is it any wonder that those whom Allah directs to Islam, that Satan shouts at them lies about all that we cherish.*

Almighty God has told us this will happen! He says,

“You will surely be tested in your possessions and in yourselves. And you will surely hear from *those who were given the Scripture before you* and from those who associate [in worship] others with God ***much abuse***. But if you are patient and fear God - indeed, that is of the resolute matters.” (3:186)

Our job is to understand the message of God, convey it with wisdom and good preaching, practice what we preach, push back evil with good, answer the lies with facts and leave the rest to God.

To elaborate,

- Understand the message of God: because if we don't, we can't convey it,
- Convey it with wisdom and good preaching: because if we do otherwise, we are derelict in our duty and will turn people off instead of attracting them. In this, many Muslims, unfortunately, fail miserably today,
- Practice what we preach: because if we don't, we risk being hypocrites and we can never have credibility with those we're calling to Islam,
- Push back evil with good: because if we do otherwise, we fan the flames of mutual hatred and that leads to disaster instead of guidance,
- Answer the lies with facts: because if we're emotional, we come across as such and the message is lost in the mud slinging.

*Only after we've done all that* can we relax and leave the outcome to God, who promised that the good word will periodically give fruit. (verse 14:25)

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### 8.2.5 What do we do in the face of Islamophobic nonsense?

*I was viewing an interview with Daniel Pipes. I must say it was hilarious. Here is the very stern Mr. Pipes. He is describing the horror of Sharia becoming the governing law of the Muslim countries. He is using a very authoritative posture and gesticulations to emphatically appeal to the audience that Islam is medieval. The verbiage of oppression is flowing out of his mouth. He is very angry and concerned that Muslims believe themselves to be superior to everyone else and will impose their religion on all.*

*So much nonsense I don't know where to begin.*

The tragedy is not that people like him exist and are given a voice, it's that there are many who listen and believe his nonsense. That's why daawa (explaining Islam) is so important. We have no choice but to defend Islam against his accusations, rebut his arguments and expose his hateful agenda, with factual evidence and sound logic and with the coolness of a firm believer.

1379

### 8.2.6 I didn't pay attention to Islamophobia until I converted!

*I'm a new Muslim and I didn't pay attention to Islamophobia until I converted!*

A big welcome to you to Islam. Hope to hear from you often. May God keep you and our faith strong and sure footed.

All phobias are treatable! Their medicine is knowledge. When an Islamophobe interacts with a Muslim who is a postcard for righteousness and benevolence, he cannot continue being an Islamophobe. He may even become an advocate for Islam.

This is why God tells us in the holy Quran,

"Repel by that which is more beautiful, and all of a sudden he, between you and whom is enmity, is as if he is a warm ally!" (41:34)

Muslims have been blessed by being guided to the truth about God. Like all blessings, they come with responsibility. The responsibility of a Muslim is to convey the Message correctly, even by his or her good example only. 981

### 8.2.7 How can a new Muslim counter Islamophobia?

*It is getting really hard for me, with my family, and facing the forever present misconceptions about Islam. I think that if many people in society would just learn the principles of Islam, they would find that this religion makes so much sense, and may not be very different to what they already believe, but when I ask them about Islam, all that comes of it is negativity. They do not even want to know about it, learn about it. Rather, they prefer to rely on the media for their education about Islam, saying that they are happy with the way they are.*

*I pray for these things, in every prayer! So that I can one day talk openly with my family about Islam without immediately being attacked with ill-informed 'facts' from them, e.g., 'women get beat by their husbands' and 'the men are terrorists' and 'you will never get a husband if you don't look pretty, or if you cover yourself fully', etc.*

The Prophet, peace be upon him said “There will be a time when holding on to your religion will be like gripping a burning stone.” (Al-Albani [3] (957))

Be patient as “patience is half the faith.” (Al-Tabarani [22] (8544))

Powerful forces are actively and constantly preventing people from learning the truth about Islam because they know its irresistible appeal! But rest assured in God's words “Verily many rabbis and monks take people's money under false premise and shun away from the way of God. They will spend the money, regret it and will be defeated.” (9:34)

The only cure for negativity is positivity. Your good example will balance out their negative impression. You were exposed to the same negative media yourself, weren't you? So, how come you overcame it all and checked Islam out for yourself to find out the truth? Many others will do the same!

Christian women get beat by their husbands too. Thousands everyday. I don't hear attacks on Christianity though. Wife beating is the practice of lowly men regardless of their religion or culture.

The Sixties and Seventies were full of terrorist activity by people from every country: Ireland, Italy, America and even Japan to name a few. I didn't hear any attacks on Christianity, Catholicism or the Shinto religions though. Terrorism is the practice of evil men and women regardless of their religion or culture.

Does the woman who dresses down have a better chance of getting a husband? Let's compare statistics of single women between Western and Muslim countries. And even if this worked, how can any woman keep her self-respect or have any respect for her husband after knowing that she could

only get him that way?

The effort to counter Islamophobia may seem insurmountable but it's our calling and every little bit we do to clear the good name of Islam gains us a huge reward from God.

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## Part III

# Interesting Questions

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**I**N this part are some interesting questions asked by Muslims and non-Muslims alike that are related to Islam, with the author's answers to them.

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## Chapter 9

# Social And Economic Life

This chapter collects articles of interest about social life of Muslims and answers questions about it. Also discussed are matters of business and finance.

### 9.1 Manners and Social Life

#### 9.1.1 On gentleness and responsibility

*We are such passionate beings we forget the message of Allah is one that encourages the best of manners. But it is more than a superficial gesture. We have to recall the gentleness that the Prophet always carried. We forget the strength of being kind and gentle. The refinement it carries. The respect it brings upon the personhood of the gentle being.*

One day a man said something abusive to the Prophet (PBUH). Aisha (RA) was standing there and heard it and she returned it in kind! The Prophet (PBUH) promptly said to her, “*Easy now, Aisha, God loves gentleness in everything.*” Narrated by Aisha and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6927).

Indeed, the Prophet (PBUH) was gentle and friendly even to his enemies. God says in the holy Quran, “So by mercy from God, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech], thick-hearted (harsh), they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them, ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon God. Indeed, God loves those who rely [upon Him].” (3:159)

A major role for gentleness is in the call to Islam. God emphasizes that

calling people to Islam must be done with “wisdom and good preaching” and that arguing with them must be “in the most beautiful manner” (16:125). Yet, you find some Muslims today that drive away potential converts by the way they behave, by the way they talk and even by the way they look! Why would anyone in their right mind consider giving Islam a first look after seeing what these Muslims do?

That is the opposite of Daawa (proselytizing)! The Prophet’s advice to his missionaries has been, “*Make things easy and don’t make them difficult. Give good news and don’t repulse.*” Narrated by Anas ibn Malik (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6125), and also narrated by Abu-Musa Al-Ashaari and reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1732). See how beautiful the Prophet’s advice has been and how many Muslims do the exact opposite?

*Most major figures in history are either remembered for being gentle or ruthless. But, we forget that a major component of piety is gentleness.*

Did you notice that the gentle are far more remembered? How many people remember Abraham (PBUH) and are named Abraham? How many people remember Nimrod, if that’s even his name?

*And my major thought; the one that makes me write to you is our lack of understanding of the covenant we have made with Allah. The one we forget so easily. We proclaimed to Allah subhana wa taala, and let me know if I am wrong, that we would take care of His Earth and all its inhabitants. Is not the English word vicegerent? I wish I knew the Arabic word.*

The Arabic word is Khalifa, which means deputy. A deputy’s job is to take care of things on behalf of the sheriff. God made it clear that man’s job on earth was to be His deputies (verse 2:30). When God appointed David (PBUH) King of Judea, He said to him, “O David, We have made you a deputy in the land, so judge between people with the truth and do not follow desire.” (38:26)

As I mentioned in a previous post, all suffering, misery and imbalance in the world is a direct, predictable result of injustice, which comes from not abiding by the truth and following desire instead.

God praises people who cultivate and improve the earth and chastises those who ruin it and spread mischief.

*We do not recall that we are the ones who are responsible for the contents of the Quran. We have forgotten that we are responsible and accountable.*

Excellent point. In fact, God vowed to preserve the text of the Quran, but left to us the preservation of its teachings. But even the text of the Quran would not have been preserved if it weren't for the righteous people who did the work! There were attempts early on to have differing versions of the Quran, however slight, but they all failed, thanks to upstanding leaders such as Uthman ibn Affan, may God have been pleased with him.

You are indeed correct that we have a covenant with God. I talked about that in this earlier post. God expects us to fulfill all covenants we make. Consider:

“O you who have believed, fulfill contracts.” (5:1)

“And fulfill [the terms of] a vow. A vow will be accounted.” (17:34)

“And remember the favor of God upon you and His covenant with which He bound you when you said, ‘We hear and we obey’; and watch out for God. Indeed, God knows well what is within.” (5:7)

“They fulfill their pledges and fear a Day whose hardship flares up.” (76:7)  
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### 9.1.2 Gestures of respect

*Assalamu Alaikum WR WB.*

*What is the correct ruling of Islam, with regards to observing silence?*

*In universities and many public places, when the administration / government asks us to observe the silence for few minutes as a tribute to the expired people, or any other past incidence such as natural disasters etc, as a Muslim, am I permitted to do undergo with this command? To stand up and keep quiet for few minutes?*

*And, what is the correct ruling on standing up when the chief guest arrives for a meeting, or when we see elders, teachers, etc.*

*Some say that the companions of Prophet (PBUH) did never stand up, when they saw the Prophet, so we are not supposed to stand up for the chief guests to show the respect ...*

*But on the other hand, I know of a Hadeeth, where Prophet (PBUH) stood up to show his respect to a Jewish funeral parade. Am I correct? (I am not sure about the authenticity of this Hadeeth)*

*I am quite confused with these two issues. Please do help me as usual In-sha-Allah*

*May Allah Azzawajal (may He be honored and prominent) bless you always. Fee Amanillah.*

Amen to your good wishes for me. Thank you and may you have the same.

The related prohibition in the Quran is of participation in Zoor (falsehood). The verse is 25:72, identifying “the worshipers of the Beneficent”: “And [they are] those who do not witness falsehood, and when they pass by frivolity, they pass dignified.”

Observing a moment of silence out of respect for a deceased person does not come under the criterion of Zoor. No words are uttered by definition, so there is no risk of being involved in blasphemy. It would be different if a clergyman was leading the audience and started to say words that are blasphemous.

As for standing up when some VIP enters the room, there is a hadith about it, narrated by Muawia ibn Abi-Sufyan, and rated authentic by Al-Albani, in which Muawia tells of when he came into a room where Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair (RA) and Abdullah ibn Aamir were sitting. Ibn Al-Zubair stayed seated but Ibn Aamir stood up. Muawia told Ibn Aamir to sit down because the Prophet (PBUH) said, “*Whoever is pleased when people stand up for him, let him pick his seat in Hell!*” (Al-Albani [3] (1/694))

You will notice that the prohibition in this hadith is against *being pleased* when people stand up to greet you. It does not prohibit people from doing it.

The hadith you mentioned is specific about funerals. It was reported by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, and Abu-Dawoud and narrated by Jabir ibn Abdillah and others. In it, the Prophet (PBUH) says, “*When you see a funeral procession, stand up for it.*” (Al-Bukhari [12] (1311))

Gestures of respect have been expressed by all communities throughout the ages. There is no harm in them unless they degrade the person or resemble acts reserved for worship. For instance, kneeling before the Queen to be knighted, or prostrating to people to apologize to them. 2048

### 9.1.3 Table manners in Islam

A non-Muslim gentleman was invited to dinner by a group of local Muslims. He accepted as he was curious to see what table etiquette Muslims observed. They all sat on the floor. Everyone said some short prayer. He learned later that it is a simple “in the Name of God.” Then everyone ate with their right hand, no utensils, from the same plate, from the side of the plate that was in front of them. It was a delicious, spicy meal and he was full.

He wondered if that pretty much is the way Muslims are supposed to eat. He felt awkward to ask questions of his hosts.

To answer him, what he saw is a mixture of culture and Sunna (practice of the Prophet (PBUH)). Sitting on the floor is cultural. Eating with the right hand is Sunna, unless one simply can't. There is one authentic hadith about that in Muslim [43]'s (2021) compilation of Hadith, narrated by Salama ibn Al-Akwaa, where a man ate with his left hand and the Prophet (PBUH) ordered

him to eat with his right hand. The man said he couldn't. The Prophet (PBUH) replied that he is only saying that out of ego. Thus, we conclude that if one can eat with his right hand, one should.

Not using utensils is also cultural. Eating from what's next to you is Sunna. And the Basmala before eating is emphasized Sunna. The Quran makes it clear that the Name of God must be mentioned on food before a Muslim can eat it (see verse 6:121).

Eating from the same plate is cultural. Some Muslims may misunderstand a hadith, narrated by Wahshi ibn Harb and reported by Al-Albani who rated it Sound, in which a man said to the Prophet (PBUH) that he eats but does not get full. The Prophet (PBUH) advised him to gather with others when eating, mention God's name before eating and then eat together ([Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (5224)). There is a blessing in eating together which will cause everyone to feel full. The misunderstanding that some Muslims may have here is that they may think that the plate must be one. The hadith is talking about eating together, but not necessarily from the same plate.

Another thing the invited non-Muslim wondered about was how come he was invited, because he thought, wrongly, that Muslims are not supposed to have non-Muslims eat their food.

There is a narration, narrated by Abu-Said Al-Khudri and reported by Al-Tirmizi and Abu-Dawoud and rated Sound, which suggests that. It is not clear if it is an advise from Abu-Said or something that the Prophet (PBUH) said. But the Quran makes it clear that people of the Book can eat Muslim food,

"And the food of the People of the Book is lawful to you and your food is lawful to them" (5:5), provided of course that it was not dedicated to other than God or has prohibited food such as pork or prohibited drink such as alcohol, as emphasized in numerous other verses. 1649

#### 9.1.4 Mingling of the sexes

*Let's have a discussion on the mingling of sexes. There is so much confusion within the American Muslim world. Some communities have free mixing; some are segregated. I do not see evidence of the prohibition of mixing with the opposite sex. This prohibition really dehumanizes females. We are turned into sexual objects. The Prophet never limited the role of women.*

Like you said, there is no evidence from the Quran or the authentic Hadith that the two sexes cannot be together, provided they are in a public place (otherwise it would be the forbidden Khulwa (seclusion)) and provided both sexes are dressed modestly and act properly. The extreme segregation applied

to the wives of the Prophet (PBUH) only. We know that because the Quran made that clear,

“O wives of the Prophet, *you are not like anyone among women*. If you watch out [for God], then do not submit in speech, lest he in whose heart is disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech. And abide in your homes and do not expose yourselves as [was] the exposition of the [era] of ignorance. And establish prayer and give alms and obey God and His Messenger. God only wants to displace from you the impurity [of sin], *O people of the [Prophet's] household*, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.” (33:32-33)

Extending that to all Muslim women is a matter of tradition, not Sunna. Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, was once invited to dinner with the Prophet (PBUH). The two of them sat at the table with Aisha, may God have been pleased with her. No segregation here. As they were reaching to the serving plate, Umar's and Aisha's hands touched. Umar was very upset but the Prophet (PBUH) was not! He saw that it was accidental.

I respectfully disagree that segregation is tantamount to dehumanizing either sex; it is acknowledging the potential harm and taking precautions against it. Would you live in a drug infested neighborhood if you don't have to? Admitting that men are lustful does not dehumanize them; it is simply acknowledging a fact of life. Admitting that women are extremely attractive to men and that their effect on them can preempt their better judgement, is an admission to a widely known fact. We may resent that fact, but that doesn't change it. Pretending otherwise is wishful thinking and ignoring the elephant in the room. You can see that in today's world a lot. Both men and women keep telling themselves that what they are wearing or the way they are conducting themselves should not lead to adultery; that grownups can control themselves. Well, what actually happens?

The example set by the Prophet (PBUH) and followed by the Sahaba after him, in the congregational prayer in the mosque, best illustrates Islam's view on segregation. Women and men pray together in the mosque, a public place, both dressed properly and behave decently, and all the women pray behind all the men. Doing otherwise would open the door to distractions and ugly attempts from men to touch the women or watch their bodies. Segregation in this manner protects both sexes. Outside the mosque, the same awareness should be present, i.e., women and men can work together and socialize but only if they act like ladies and gentlemen and dress properly. This is not a novel concept. Corporations have had dress codes and codes of conduct all employees must agree to.

1669

### 9.1.5 Is friendship between a man and a woman allowed in Islam?

This question is actually the second of three very related questions:

1. Can a man talk to a woman whom he can legally marry (non-Mahram)?
2. Can non-Mahram men and women be friends?
3. Can a non-Mahram man and a non-Mahram woman be alone together?

The reason these three questions are related, and the reason this is an issue at all, is because of the intensity of the physical attraction between men and woman, which, if not controlled, almost certainly will lead to sex. Sex between men and women who are not married to each other is a major sin in Islam. The Quran calls it a debauchery and a bad way of life and lists it as one of the very few offenses for which it has set a legal punishment.

To answer the third question above, the Prophet (PBUH) made it unambiguously clear that the answer is no. He said, as narrated by Ibn Abbas (RA) “*Let not a man be alone with a woman, except if with them is a Mahram (a man whom she cannot marry)*”, authenticated and reported by both [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (3006, 5233) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1341).

Why is that? After all, if people are respectful of each other and are God-conscious, they can be trusted not to engage in sin, right?

Wrong! The best people sin, because they’re human and because Satan has taken upon himself to seduce them into sin with whatever means available to him. You will hear people say, in justification of falling into the sin of fornication, “We did not plan this. It just happened!” They did not plan it, but it did *not* just happen! It was what was sure to happen.

To illustrate this point further, think of this parable. You are going to walk down Baker Street to get to a grocery store. I know that there is a great deal of construction work being done on Baker Street and that there are no warning signs. I know that even if you were careful where you step, you are almost certainly going to fall into one of the many potholes there. If you decide to ignore my advice and take Baker Street anyway, and then fall in one of its pits, whom would you blame?

Therefore, if you can say with complete confidence that being face-to-face friends with a woman will never result in the two of you having sex outside matrimony, then the answer to the second question is yes!

But can you? The odds are against you.

If the friendship is *not* face to face, then the odds improve considerably. That is because a man is visually stimulated.

Bear in mind too that human emotions, such as love and loneliness, and desires, such as lust, often develop in an irrational way.

Similarly, we can answer the first question: if talking one-on-one to a woman will never lead to the two of them having sex, then the answer to that question is yes. Many scholars have ruled against it though, because they fear the worst, do not trust human nature, or simply to be on the safe side.

So, in summary, you can be friends with a woman whom you legally can marry if you can fulfill all of the following conditions:

- Neither of you will ever engage in a suggestive dialog,
- Neither of you will ever make an advance at the other, and
- The two of you will never be alone together anywhere.

That being said, knowing human nature, especially if you are a young man, and knowing the constant whispering of Satan, the above conditions practically rule it out.

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### 9.1.6 Greetings between Muslims and non-Muslims

*Can you talk about greetings between Muslims and non-Muslims? Can Muslims initiate greetings to non-Muslims? Are they obligated to return their greetings? What do they say? What if the non-Muslim greeting was "Assalaamu Alaykum" (Peace be upon you), the traditional Islamic greetings?*

Let's start with returning a greeting from non-Muslims. The Quran makes it clear that we must return the greeting with a *more beautiful one*, or at least one like it,

"And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with a more beautiful one than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]. Indeed, God is ever, over all things, is Accounting." (4:86)

Notice how God ends this verse with His Attribute that emphasizes that He keeps count? Every time you fail to return a greeting, it is written down against you!

What do you say? Something more beautiful! Suppose a non-Muslim says to you, "Merry Christmas!" You can say back, "May you have a happy season!" If they say, "Assalaamu Alaykum", you can say, "And may peace and blessing be with you!"

A beautiful person can think of many beautiful things to say.

Now, can a Muslim initiate greeting to a non-Muslim? You will read opinions out there that a Muslim shouldn't. But that opinion does not square with the

Quran, which tells us that Moses and Aaron were *commanded by God* to initiate greeting to Pharaoh! Read it, if you will, in verse 20:47,

“So go (Moses and Aaron) to him (Pharaoh) and say, ‘Indeed, we are messengers of your Lord, so send with us the Children of Israel and do not torment them. We have come to you with a sign from your Lord. And peace is upon him who follows guidance.’ ” (20:47)

If we can greet a sworn enemy, all the more reason we should greet friendly folks.

Finally, you may encounter a hadith, reported by Al-Bukhari and narrated by Aisha, may God have been pleased with her, in which she tells an event when a group of Jews came calling on the Prophet (PBUH). When they met him, they said, “*Assamu Alaykum*”. A phonetic distortion which means “Death be upon you!” It sounds a lot like “*Assalamu Alaykum*” (Peace be upon you), except that it is missing an L. Aisha recognized the curse and said to them, “And may God’s curse be upon you!” What did the Prophet (PBUH) say? He said, “*Wa Alaykum*” (Likewise)! He followed God’s orders of returning the “greeting” with one like it. It was really a curse disguised as a greeting, but even then, the Prophet gives us the lofty role model of being magnanimous even when insulted. He said to Aisha, “*God loves gentleness in everything.*” (Al-Bukhari [12] (6927)) 1693

### 9.1.7 I disagreed with her, so she called me a name

Tell her to read verse 49:11 and worry that she may have turned her faith into deviance because of her name calling.

Many people, not just Muslims, cannot stand it when someone holds a different opinion than theirs, and call him or her a choice of labels. That adds a big weight to their bad deeds scale on the Day of Settlement. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “*Sufficient sin for one is to demean his Muslim brother.*” Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by Muslim [43] (2564) who rated it authentic.

I’ve been reading a book, called “And they will continue to disagree”, quoting verse (11:118), by author and preacher Salman bin Fahd Al-Awda. It is a fascinating look into the hundreds of disagreements between the Sahaba. Yet, we don’t read one narration of any of them calling the other names. Will the Muslim community ever grow up like our predecessors were? 1236

### 9.1.8 New to Islam and lonely

*As a new Muslim, I am happy with my decision but I’m unhappy with the loneliness I now feel. My friends left me. My family is not speaking to me and fellow Muslims prefer to talk*

*to each other in their native language and hardly ever talk to me.*

I fully concur with you that many Muslims-since-birth alienate new Muslims with their behavior or attitude. That is the opposite of what the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, when he said, “*A Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim; he does not wrong him, he does not fail (or abandon) him and he does not demean him.*” Narrated by Ibn Umar (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6951) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2580).

That said, often times the reason for this alienation is social awkwardness or language intimidation! Many Muslims-since-birth speak English with difficulty and are poor at translating from their native language to English and back. While they may want to do the courteous thing and translate, they just don't know how and it becomes a burden, so they don't do it. Also, many Muslims-since-birth feel nothing in common with new Muslims: the culture, language, history, interests, etc., are all different. In this case, it is a social matter, not religious.

The way to break this ice, IMHO, is to break it purposely. I know it's hard to ask someone to do the courteous thing, but maybe you should. If you wait for them to start, you may wait forever. If you feel indignation, you have the right but you will alienate yourself faster. Better to make the initiative and join in as best you could. Sooner or later, your foreign-language-speaking friends will feel embarrassed enough that they're leaving you out of the conversation and will make the extra effort to translate for you. If they don't, look for more courteous friends.

Remind them of what the Prophet (PBUH) said about this. He said, “*If there are three of you, let not two have a private conversation excluding the third, for it saddens him.*” Narrated by Ibn Masoud (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2184).

As for your family and friends, it is a sad situation that I pray will change in time. Keep good relations with them, especially your parents, and hopefully they will soon realize that you are the same person they know and love and connect with you again.

1213

### 9.1.9 I am depressed and feel like a loser. Is there a way out for me?

God says in the holy Quran,

“Say, should We inform you whose work is the most lost? Those whose strife in this world is misdirected while they think they are doing good!”  
(18:103-104)

You are not one of those, are you?

The way out of depression, if it's not clinical, is to surround yourself with positive people and events and read positive books and think positive thoughts. To seek refuge in God from Satan's whispers to you and to stay away from negative people, events, readings and thoughts. Do charity and you will feel good. Ask God to lift you up and He will.

Jaafar Al-Sadiq, may God have been pleased with him, once said, *'I find it amazing that one would feel depressed and not recite "There is none worthy of worship but You, God, may You be sanctified. I have been one of the wrongdoers" (21:87), for I heard God say immediately afterward, "So, We responded to him and rescued him from depression and thus we rescue the believers." (21:88)'* 379

### 9.1.10 Anything for depression?

*I suffer from depression and have had some bad dreams lately.  
Is there a prayer I can say?*

May God alleviate your suffering. Whenever that happens, recall what Jaafar Al-Sadiq, may God have been pleased with him, once said. He said, *'I am amazed at one who is depressed but does not recite,*

*"There is no deity except You; sanctified are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers." (21:87)*

*That's because I heard God say afterward,*

*"So We responded to him and saved him from the depression. And thus We rescue the believers." (21:88)'* 831

### 9.1.11 I'm alone but I'm not lonely

*I'm alone a lot, and it's easy to slip into feeling lonely, but I don't. That's because when I'm alone, it means that I'm only with God! It's a chance to focus on Him instead of the constant daily distractions of people and self.*

What a beautiful thing to say! You are delving into wisdom, may God grant it to you and I wish the same for me.

In addition, you have two angels, one on your right side and another on your left side, writing your words and deeds and praying for you! These are the two angels you say Assalaamu Alaykum (peace be with you) to at the end of each prayer. 1385

### 9.1.12 My father wants me to cheat

*My dad wants me to get a good education. But he's doing this by all the wrong means. He's making me skip a year without doing all the college work and pushing me to university with a passable grade. I'm so conflicted since I highly disagree with the method used. I insisted I go to classes and rightfully earn the marks needed, but he flat out said "No." I've tried to talk with him, but he keeps pushing away my thoughts and says it's for my future. I'm so depressed because this method is unfair for other students and is against my principles. To me, it feels like cheating. You can't suggest to attempt talking to my dad or using Quranic sources because I know he knows it's wrong, and he has a temper. My dad loves me, but this isn't the way.*

*I'm applying for every college I can get, hoping they'd accept me and that I needn't follow my dad's way, that I'd go through the whole year. But then he says I shouldn't because he already has a seat for me. I cry and cry and ask Allah for help. I know this is not halal. I've asked help from people, but they can't help. I'm so scared my education won't be halal. I'm so scared of punishment. And it's not even my fault.*

Your dad found a shortcut afforded by the educational system and he is taking advantage of it so that you'd graduate sooner. That's NOT cheating. It is not unfair to the other students, because they too can do the same thing, if they want to. If it would ease your soul, tell all your friends about this shortcut, so that they too can peruse it should they decide to.

Taking a shortcut on the highway is not cheating other drivers. It is available to all drivers. They can know about it if they call the highway ministry.

Your dad indeed loves you and wants the best for you.

1700

### 9.1.13 Should I develop a more aggressive attitude?

*I feel that I'm always on the weak side when I ask for what's mine. People demand their money from me aggressively, such as house rent, car rent, etc. but I can only \*humbly request\* my rights such as salary.*

*Should I develop a more aggressive attitude?*

That's because you have a gentle soul, brother. That's not weakness, it's virtue! Don't lose that, it puts your heart in the right place and makes it easier for you to be close to God. The Quran has a beautiful word to describe your sort of people: Al-Mukhbiteen (the humble), see for instance verse 11:23.

That does not mean that you give up your rights; it only means that your attitude in demanding your rights is a gracious attitude. That is closer to piety.

961

### 9.1.14 About bullying

*What does the Quran and Sunnah say about bullying? This is a big issue in schools lately with kids killing themselves for many reasons. What does Islam say about this, because I care alot alot about trying to prevent bullying. Thanks!*

Bullying is strictly prohibited by the Quran and the Sunna. God says in the holy Quran,

“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other [offensive] names. How wretched an attribute is deviance after faith. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers. O you who have believed, avoid much of [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother dead? You would detest it. And watch for God; verily, God is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.” (49:11-12)

In those verses, God calls a believer who engages in bullying and the other obnoxious acts mentioned in the verse, God calls such a believer a deviant! And He calls him or her to repent at once, or count themselves among the wrongdoers!

If any believer entertains the thought that bullying is cool, or will give them importance they badly crave, or that it demonstrates his or her virility, those verses ought to scare the daylights out of them.

The Prophet (PBUH) said in an authentic hadith, “A Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim; he does not wrong him, he does not fail him and he does not demean him... It is enough evil for anyone that he demeans his Muslim brother...The whole of a Muslim is forbidden to another Muslim: his blood, his property and his honor.” Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by Muslim [43] (2564).

Did you notice the words, “It is enough evil for anyone?” Make no mistake about it; bullying is evil and as such must be fought by authorities, from teachers and principles to law enforcement. It is also something that must be repelled by the bullied, in self-defense. Words can hurt as badly as weapons, or worse, since their effect can last a lifetime. It is truly a sad state of affairs that in the West, especially in the US, bullying is tolerated, considered masculine or assumed to be normal as in “boys will be boys.” Educators who believe that, put up with it or turn a blind eye to it are derelict in their

primary obligation: Raising well-adjusted, productive citizens.

Bullies will also see the consequences of their bullying in the Hereafter, when it will be too late to mend their ways. God says in the holy Quran,

“Indeed, those who committed crimes used to laugh at those who believed. And when they passed by them, they would exchange derisive glances. And when they returned to their people, they would return jesting. And when they saw them, they would say, ‘Indeed, those are truly lost’. But they had not been sent as guardians over them. So, Today those who believed are laughing at the disbelievers, On adorned couches, observing. Have the disbelievers been rewarded for what they used to do?” (83:29-36)

Notice how God first calls them criminals (in this life) then disbelievers (in the Hereafter)? And He mocks them by saying that they will be “rewarded” for their bullying in the Hereafter, just like they mocked others in this life? 1978

### 9.1.15 Difference between backbiting and testimony

*A class mate called and the conversation turned to the topic of some girls who had bad-mouthed her in my presence. She was hurt and wanted to know what they had said. I tried to avoid the subject but lost lol!*

*Anyways, there was stuff I said I know the others would not want this girl to know about (what they said behind her back). I realised what I did and I want to know what I should do?*

That’s not Gheeba (backbiting), that’s Shahada (testimony)! It is your duty to tell her what was said about her in your presence,

“And do not conceal the testimony. And whoever conceals it, then guilty is his heart” (2:283).

*Should I call those girls and apologise? I’m not much friends with them and I got only one girl’s number.*

*Do I stand a chance of forgiveness without letting them know of what I did?*

Those girls are the ones who committed Gheeba. You do not owe them anything. If you want to do them a favor, call them and tell them to apologize to the girl they backbit.

*I don’t understand, brother. I mean they were not present when I was talking to the classmate. And what they did (gheeba) or said about her was not nice. So isn’t mentioning*

*one's bad stuff in their absence a sin.....gheeba? I mean it does create more hate between her and the others. That's not good.*

Apparently, you're equating two different concepts : Shahada and Gheeba. So, let me try to define the difference:

- When you **initiate** or participate in a talk about someone in their absence, and it is something they would not like to hear, and it is **true**: That's Gheeba. It's a sin.
- When you initiate or participate in a talk about someone in their absence, and it is something they would not like to hear, and it is **false**: That's Buhtan. It's a bigger sin.
- When you initiate or participate in a talk about someone in their absence, and it is something they **would like** to hear, and it is true: That's Hamd (acknowledgement of good). It's a encouraged.
- When you initiate or participate in a talk about someone in their absence, and it is something they would like to hear, and it is **false**: That's Nifaq (hypocrisy). It's a sin.
- When you are **asked** or required to say what you saw or heard someone say or do, *whether or not* it is something they would not like to hear, and it is **true**: That's Shahada. It's mandatory and concealing it is a sin.
- When you are asked or required to say what you saw or heard someone say or do, *whether or not* it is something they would not like to hear, and it is **false**: That's Zoor. It's a sin.

Hope that helps.

766

## 9.2 Marriage and Divorce

### 9.2.1 The noble relationship between husband and wife

*Assalaamu alaikum WR WB Akhi.*

*I want to know the concept of Islam with regards to the relationship of Husband and wife in Islam.*

*We all know that Hawwa was created from Adam (PBUH). I heard some one saying that every girl on the face of the earth is created from her husband. Is this true according to Islam?*

*The ones who publish this concept do take the verse as their Daleel (evidence) which says that every thing is created with their pairs.*

*Is the bond of husband and wife so noble, which is already being predestined with a special treatment as they say?*

*Plz throw light In-sha-Allah. Fee Amanillah.*

Wa Alaykum Assalaamu wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakatuh, Sister.

The relationship between husband and wife is indeed a noble one, but it is not predestined because it involves initiative from one and approval from another, both are freely made decisions.

God does say that He created all creatures in pairs, "And of everything We created pairs, that they may remember." (51:49). A pair has two of a kind, each complementing the other and is not complete without it. That is the metaphor for marriage.

If every girl on earth was created from her husband, then how were the girls who remain unmarried created? The notion that for every one there is a soul mate out there somewhere is sweet and romantic, but cannot be proved. Many people married more than once and had a happy marriage every time. How come those people have many soul mates?

Folks who interpret verse 51:49 and similar verses to mean an exclusive pairing of mates, are entitled to their interpretation, but you should recognize that it is nothing more than an interpretation. If God wanted to teach this notion, He would have explicitly stated it. 2108

### 9.2.2 Isn't arranged marriage a silly idea?

*Arranged marriage is common in Muslim countries. Isn't that a silly, backward idea? Shouldn't marriage be based on love?*

Islam does not require marriage to be arranged. This is a custom. In fact, that custom was worldwide until the last century. Islam allows love. In fact, Islam allows a woman to propose to a man, not just the traditional way that a man proposes to a woman.

That said, whether the marriage is arranged is not actually the important part. Commitment to God is. A marriage could be arranged and approved by bride and groom and turn to a daily torment and so can a marriage that followed a love relationship. Half of all marriages in the USA end in divorce, a bitter contested one in many cases. None of these marriages are arranged and all but a few are based on mutual love!

I know countless couples whose marriage was arranged and they got to know each other after marriage, yet because of their commitment to God in

everything they say and do, they grew in love for each other and became best friends to each other and raised healthy, successful children. 310

### 9.2.3 About marrying Christian or Jewish women

*Are there restrictions on a Muslim man if he wants to marry a Christian or Jewish woman?*

Yes. What the Quran has clearly allowed is marriage to **chaste** women (Al-Muhsanat) of the People of the Book. Alas, chastity is very rare in today's world. Chastity is to have sex only within marriage, i.e., no premarital nor extramarital sex. A Jewish or Christian woman who fits that criteria is eligible for a chaste Muslim man to marry.

God has very specifically forbidden marriage to fornicating women,

"...And the fornicating woman - none may marry her but a fornicating man or a polytheist, and that is forbidden to the believers." (24:3)

God has declared Chapter 24 **mandated** and its verses "manifestly clear", in its opening verse. This Chapter must therefore be taken very seriously just as God made it so serious.

The question of whom a Muslim may and may not marry is answered in multiple verses, each addressing a particular angle. Verse 24:3 addresses the angle of fornication; that fornicators cannot marry chaste people. Verses 2:221 and 60:10 address the angle of polytheism; that Muslims cannot marry polytheists or stay married to them, and verse 5:5 addresses the angle of the people of the Book; that Muslim men can marry their chaste women. The decision table below gathers the rulings on this matter from these verses and sorts them out in order to make a conclusion that is based on all the verses.

### 9.2.4 Why can't Muslim women marry non-Muslim men?

*Hi, Can Muslim women marry non-Muslim men? And if not why not? Allah gives men permission to marry chaste Jewish and Christian women. So obviously this might mean that Muslim women can marry chaste Jewish or Christian men. Honestly I feel they should be able to because if a man married a Muslim woman, and if he really loved her, he should respect her religion. Please I want to know. Thanks!*

Why does Islam prohibit Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men? This is based on the influence Islam assumes that the man has in the family. If he is not Muslim, the odds are high that the children won't be either, and

Women			M		B		P	
			Ch	F	Ch	F	Ch	F
Men	M	Ch	✓	X	✓	X	X	X
		F	X	✓	X	✓	X	X*
	B	Ch	X**	X	✓	X	✓	X
		F	X	X**	X	✓	✓	✓
	P	Ch	X*	X*	✓	✓	✓	✓
		F	X	X*	✓	✓	✓	✓

M: Muslim, B: People of the Book, P: Polytheist

Ch: Chaste, F: Fornicator

\* A Muslim cannot marry a polytheist regardless of their chastity

\*\* A Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man regardless of their chastity

Table 9.1: Allowed marriage decision table

900

there's a good chance the wife may leave Islam too, if her husband pressures her to.

The flip-side can also be true! A Muslim man who is highly influenced by his non-Muslim wife, may leave Islam for her sake. That is why many of the Salaf have opined that Muslim men, though allowed to, should not marry non-Muslim women.

Your view is romantic, and would be fine if reality wasn't so different. While God teaches us what should be, He *legislates* for what is. 1943

### 9.2.5 Does Islam allow marriage to children?

*Why the need to exploit children via..child brides? Does it not say in the Quran what puberty is? What are the motives behind child brides and its popularity? Who are the scholars who would preach such strange ideology? This is serious.*

It sure is serious and must end, for it violates human rights, offends Islam, which is absolved of it, attributes abhorrence to the Prophet (PBUH), who is totally innocent of such foul charge, and contradicts the Quran!

The Muqallid scholars (strict followers of predecessors) are the ones who allow child brides. They are trapped by a Hadith that is rated authentic, attributed to Aisha (RA) in which she is reported to have said that she was engaged at age six and married at age nine.

Despite the fact that that hadith was rated authentic, it has numerous problems. For one, it is solely narrated by her maid. The Arabs were mostly illiterate. They could not read, write or count. That goes double for their

women and goes triple for the servants. If we believe the Matn (content) of the hadith, it is most likely an error in counting: mixing six with sixteen and nine with nineteen, as I postulated in a previous post.

Hadiths narrated by only one or two narrators, called Aahad in Hadith discipline, are not to be relied on for mandates or prohibitions. This hadith should never have been relied on for allowing what is obviously wrong.

But the problems with this hadith do not end there. It is contradictory to the Quran. The Quran has consistently referred to wives as “al-nisaa”, the same word for women. Not girls. Children are referred to as “al-atfal” and nowhere in the Quran or the authentic hadith is there any mention of allowance to marry a child!

You’re right that puberty is what transitions a girl into a woman. Verse 24:59 makes it clear that this is what ends childhood.

Taqlid (strict following of predecessors) is the culprit in this atrocity. People who follow blindly, even if what they’re following is abhorrent, illogical or factually false, will do wrong and think they’re doing good! What misguidance!

*I read your previous post.*

*Child brides make no sense. No sense. But, in my manner I wish to bring this to light for Muslim women. We have many good and educated women with time on their hands.*

*In-sha-Allah I may be able to write an article and bring this light. Is this hadeeth in Bukari..or Muslim?*

*Why are we so preoccupied with the age of Aisha. It seems to be one of the major stumbling blocks in our faith. I do not mean to be childish but we are stuck on it.*

The Hadith is reported in both books. That’s why it’s so problematic. It defies the established consensus that all hadiths in these two books are authentic. But the reality is that *most* hadiths in these two books are authentic, but not all. For two centuries after the two authors, no one has said that all hadeeths reported in the two books were authentic. All they said was that the two books contain more authentic text than all other books, save the Quran.

It wasn’t until the Fifth Century A.H. (After Hijra, the Islamic calendar), that scholars started to declare that all hadiths in Al-Bukhari and Muslim were authentic. That broad statement did not go unchallenged, however. Ibn Hazm Al-Zahiri, a highly regarded Sunni Imam, has written and showed how some of the hadiths in these two books were not authentic and should not have been included in them. More recently, Sheikh Al-Albani, a very well known and very respected Hadith scholar made the same conclusion.

Once you free yourself from unwarranted assumptions, such as that one,

you're not stuck anymore. The Quran clears up any confusion, if you're willing to make it judge any issue. 1728

### 9.2.6 Why can't I get married?

*My friend told me I should email you. She believes I need you. Below is a summary of my current state of mind. What do I do next? Where can I find answers?*

Welcome. Thanks for posting your question. I'll sure try to be of some help.

*I've been trying to get married, and it hasn't happened. In fact, my mother told me there is no one she knows who can help me get married, including imams (she asked), friends, relatives, etc. I actually told my mother to ask more learned people in the community and she said no, there is no point.*

You've been trying to do the right thing. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Marriage is my way (Sunna). Whoever desires other than my way does not belong to me!" Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA), reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (1084) and [Ibn Majah \[36\]](#) (1967) and authenticated by [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (1084).

Do not despair, nor should your mother. Recall the story of Jacob, after he lost his dearest son, Joseph, peace be upon them. His other children kept telling him to give up his hope of ever seeing Joseph alive again, even as they knew he was alive! And what was the old man's reply?

"He said, 'I only bemoan my anguish and grief to God, and *I know from God what you do not know.*'" (12:86)

That is the essence of faith in God. The certain knowledge that He has your best interest at heart, so to speak. You don't know what God knows. You could have been saved from some horrible husbands. You may have been spared some ingrate children. Your very faith may have been protected from coming apart.

*I find myself questioning Allah SWT. I have prayed a great deal for marriage but it never happened. My parents did not help, either. I live in a non-muslim country; in fact, I was born here. I wonder, if there is no leeway for a muslim girl to marry a non-muslim man.*

While your dismay is natural, it is not healthy for your faith. The name of our religion means the willing surrender to God's will. Our ambition is to please God, not to have God please us. The irony is that when we do please God, we become so pleased ourselves, nothing else seems important!

Why does Islam prohibit Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men? This is based on the influence Islam assumes that the man has in the family. If he is not Muslim, the odds are high that the children won't be either, and there's a good chance the wife may leave Islam too, if her husband pressures her to.

The flip-side can also be true! A Muslim man who is highly influenced by his non-Muslim wife, may leave Islam for her sake. That is why many of the Salaf have opined that Muslim men, though allowed to, should not marry non-Muslim women.

*Why did my parents immigrate to this country and have children, only to tell me that getting married is not possible? I don't think that is fair.*

I'm sure your parents had good intentions for the whole family when they migrated. If some of their hopes have not yet happened, they may still.

*I read a lot of dua, but lately when I am speaking to God during my dua, I feel like in my heart it will not come true. After all, I've been reading the dua for over 15 years. In my dua, I ask Allah to please make 2011 more joyous than 2010 (I was briefly happy in 2010 because of someone I met, and had some hope then but it fell sharply). It is now July 2011, and I am still so sad. When I make this dua, I feel like I am "testing" God, because I know that He has not answered that prayer for me. When I ask my elders about getting married, they say to do dua because there is no other way. Am I being sinful for questioning my dua? It's been so many years that I have been praying, and I also do Istikhara and Salaat ul Hajaat. To me, it appears that God has given me His answer for now. Is it sinful to think that way?*

Thoughts do not become sins until they are translated into words or action, so don't worry.

How about thinking instead, "What wonderful things God has in store for me, if He has not written for me marriage?", "Have I been missing the forest for the trees?", "Did I meet the right man, but didn't even notice him?" Try to escape the box you're in. Think outside it and inspiration will dawn on you.

*I have also been experiencing "resentment" towards Islam lately. I had to question myself - if I want to get married, but the muslim community does not help me nor do my parents, will God nevertheless send me to Hell because I had no other options?*

As much as marriage is an emphasized Sunna, it's not a sin to fail to get married. There will be bachelors in Paradise.

*Will God punish the muslim community for failing to create marriage opportunities for muslim women like myself?*

That may be true only if they stand in the way of a good marriage opportunity. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "If a man comes to you [asking for your daughter's hand in marriage], and you approve of his religion and character, then accept his marriage proposal." (Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA), reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (1084), and authenticated by [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (1084)) He then recited, "If you do not, tumult will be in the land and much mischief." (8:73)

That hadith makes clear what the primary criteria are for a good Muslim marriage: commitment to Islam and good conduct. Other factors, which most families hold higher in importance, are less important and should not stop the marriage from taking place. Things like wealth, social status, family name, career, looks, etc.

The same principle was emphasized by the Prophet (PBUH) for the suiter's side. He said, "Women are married for four reasons: their beauty, their wealth, their lineage and their religion. Win the one with the religion, or else you will be miserable!" Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5090) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1466).

*I just feel so guilty for harboring these thoughts. To be honest, I feel a bit like I want to "take a break" from all this dua and begging God, as it has left me emotionally and spiritually exhausted. Is that sinful?*

No, but it's not healthy. Your attitude toward dua (supplication) can use some refinement. A Muslim calls upon God for something, because God is the source of all things. But a Muslim also accepts what God grants him or her. A Muslim lets God answer his or her dua the way He sees best. Your dua may have already been answered, but you're too distracted to see it.

*Will God have mercy on me because I am undergoing a test in life,*

Certainly. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "No harm that hits a believer, even a pin on the road that stings him, but God will expiate by it of his sins!" Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5641) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2574) who both rated it authentic.

*I have prayed for a family of my own but those prayers have not come true and I now have to face a life alone? I must be*

*honest that I am angry about that...angry because I did everything right, I was obedient to my parents, relied on them for everything, and they did not take this aspect of my life seriously. Will God punish me for being angry?*

Not unless the anger translates into words or actions that displease Him.

When we work hard for a goal and it never happens, it could be because we didn't go about it correctly, even if we thought we did. It could be because it was not meant for us, for a wisdom that only God knows. It could be that the goal was achieved in another format and we are yet to recognize it.

I'll end with these poems by Rumi,

"How could we know what an open field of sunlight is? Don't insist on going where you think you want to go."

"Give up to grace. The ocean takes care of each wave till it gets to shore."

"You miss the garden, because you want a small fig from a random tree."

1854

### 9.2.7 Divorce: Who's Guilty?

*In all the divorce cases (may Allah save us from them), we always hear from the wife's side that the husband was not a good person, was abusive, he did this and that. When you talk to the husband, he says that the wife was this and that.*

*I recently saw a marriage destroyed because the husband lost his job. If you ask the wife, she says that the husband was lazy and didn't want to earn a living... etc.*

*If you ask the husband, he says that on top of being unable to find a job, the wife was making his life hell by taunting him daily.*

*So my question is, how do you find out what the real problem is?*

I like the fact that you see that the real problem could very well be something else completely!

That is why God's advice is so valuable when a divorce is imminent. He says in the holy Quran,

"And if you fear dissension between the two [spouses], send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, God will harmonize between them. Indeed, God is ever Knowing and Well Acquainted [with all things]." (4:35)

The word God uses for arbitrator is " " which means "firmly rooted", "balanced", "judicious". Thus, the two arbiters are not given to emotions, are

not easily swayed or agitated, and can reach a sound judgement even if it was against their client.

This is how to know the real problem. When one is speaking out of emotion, one could be narrating all of one's grievances instead of focusing on the question asked. Marriage counselors know this well. That's why they earn what they are paid.

One very interesting aspect of this verse is its deliberate syntactic ambiguity! The phrase "if the two of them desire reconciliation" is ambiguous about who the two are: the two arbitrators or the two spouses! As always with syntactic ambiguity in the Quran, it is thusly stated in order to include both interpretations. That is, if the two spouses truly want to reconcile and save the marriage, God will help them save it. If the two arbitrators also want to do their job faithfully, God will make their effort successful. 1973

## 9.3 Business and Finance

### 9.3.1 What exactly is Islamic banking/financial system?

In a nutshell:

- Gold and silver are the only money,
- Interest rate is always zero,
- No gambling is ever allowed, whatever name is given to it,
- No financial transaction involving forbidden issues, such as alcoholic beverages, pork, pornography, etc.

*Thanks, but I don't understand one thing: what about income?  
How will banks make money?*

Through appreciation of investments and businesses that they buy or partner in. Much like what Warren Buffet often does. In Islam, money is not a commodity and therefore should not be bought, sold or rented. The Western expression, "The price of money" is an oxymoron in Islam. Money does not earn money, it buys investments that earn money.

*Just to check whether I understood: A comes to a bank and wants a loan to buy a machine. The bank buys the machine and gives A the machine. But the bank takes some extra money, so it has earned a bit. Is this correct?*

Yes. The bank in this case is acting as a buying agent for its client and earns a fee for its effort. The bank may also choose to *lease* the machine to the businessman for a lease amount and duration they both agree to. The bank may also give the machine to the businessman for an agreed on *percentage partnership* in the business. 439

### 9.3.2 Islamic economic theory and finance

*Can you tell me briefly what is Islam's view of economic theory and finance?*

Money, in Islam, is a means and not a commodity. So, there is no price for money. And because gold and silver (or checks fully backed by them) are the only valid money, there is no price for time. Exchanging gold and silver must be "same metal, same weight, same time, hand-to-hand."

Islamic finance has two primary vehicles: partnerships (Musharaka), or interest-free loans (Qard Hasan). Under the banner of partnership are many financing techniques, such as leases (Ijara), equity participation (Shiraka), venture capital (Mudaraba), profit sharing (Murabaha). Stocks belong in the category of equity participation.

With partnerships, a financier puts up the money and the investor or business person puts up the work (aka sweat equity). They share equally in the profits and in the losses. This way a financier will never part with his or her money financing a bad business idea or unpromising project. Non-Islamic lenders do that with ease because they can repossess the investment, or sell the loan in the secondary market, or be bailed out by the government! 1383

### 9.3.3 Is bank interest allowed in Islam?

*What about the interest on Provident Fund? That is the ultimate saving of a salaried class. Monthly contributions are made to this out of salary on which the government credits interest at 8-10 percent. Limited withdrawal is conditionally allowed.*

*And what about taking loan from banks for the purpose of purchasing a house (when there is no other way left)?*

This issue has been in debate for quite sometime and is not really settled. The reason it is complicated is because it is not quite similar to the definition of Riba (usury) as agreed about in Islamic literature. Forbidden Riba is defined like this. A lender asks the borrower for the principal at the time of repayment. The borrower says he can't pay and asks for a reprieve. The lender gives him a reprieve but *adds an arbitrary amount* to the loan.

Such arrangement does not exist today, not even among loan sharks! Even they tell the borrower before they lend him the money how much the interest will be.

So, does that mean that interest on bank deposits is OK? The scholars that do not see a similarity between interest and the formal definition of Riba, do not see a reason to forbid bank interest. Those who equate bank interest with Riba forbid it.

What complicates matters more is the fact that the monetary systems of today differ sharply from the old days. Back then gold and silver were the only money. Their value does not decrease with time. In today's economy (since 1971), money is fiat currency not backed by gold. With the massive debts of just about every country, paper money is almost worthless, and decreases in value with time. A lender who gets back his principal only is losing money!

The reason Riba is prohibited in Islam is to prevent rich lenders from taking advantage of the needy. We've seen in human history many examples of entire countries enslaved because of their debts.

If you now understand the complexity of the issue and the fact that scholars are not in agreement on it, you can decide for yourself whether to apply for an interest-bearing loan. IMHO, a financial transaction whose conditions are transparently spelled out in a legal document signed by both parties without duress, and where no injustice is suffered by either party, cannot reasonably be wrong. I suggest, however, that you consult your Imam and make your decision afterward and after much contemplation, because Riba is a severe sin.

I didn't understand why buying a house is a necessity. You can always rent.  
1496

#### 9.3.4 Why is interest on money forbidden in Islam?

Islam prohibits it because in Islam, time is NOT money. Money is not a commodity to be bought and sold, which is what usurers do. Money is a means by which to acquire property or investments. In Islam, legitimate profit is one gained from merchandising actual products and services, or appreciation of investments. Money does not appreciate.

To understand this better, consider that the only money in Islamic finance is gold and silver. If you compare the value of the dollar, for instance, with the price of gold, you will notice a remarkable reverse relationship! What cost a gold Dinar a thousand years ago, still costs pretty much a gold Dinar today.

633

### 9.3.5 My credit card company has charged me interest

*I got my credit card statement and in it they charged me interest on balance unpaid in time. I called and verified that the error was actually mine, out of negligence. I asked them to remove the interest on religious grounds and told them that I will pay the entire remaining balance. They agreed, but said that they will credit the amount on the next statement.*

*My question is: did I sin because interest was charged to my account, even though it is going to be reversed?*

You did not, because you did not deliberately cause it. We are only accountable for actions we do consciously and with sound mind.

It was gracious of your credit company to honor your request, because they have the right to what they did based on the credit card agreement you consented to when you opened an account with them. 1408

### 9.3.6 Can I pay off debts with lottery money?

*I won some money in a lottery. I know I know it's haraam (forbidden), but my family and I have accumulated debts and this money comes in handy. Can I use it to pay off our debts? Please say yes!*

You may be glad to know that a number of scholars have said yes. Among them are Reverend Sheikh Muhammad Al-Munajjid. His rationale is that getting rid of ill-gotten money is necessary and the only proper way he sees to do that is charity and he extrapolates that to debt payoff, based on rulings of Ibn Al-Qayyim and Ibn Taymiya, may God bless their souls.

I agree with the reverend Sheikh on the charity part, but respectfully disagree on the debt payoff part. I don't see the analogy between charity and debt payoff. If you have dirt in your house, you sweep it off; you don't move it over to your neighbor's house! Giving away the money is like returning stolen property, but using it to pay debts off is, IMHO, like stashing stolen money with someone else!

Bear in mind that when we stand before God for judgment in the Hereafter, He will ask each of us two questions about our money: (a) How did we earn it, and (b) how did we spend it.

God knows best.

1589

### 9.3.7 Business and the work ethic in Islam

I came across the following last week and thought to talk about it a bit today:

#### **From unemployment to self employment:**

A beggar from Medina came to the Prophet (PBUH) and asked him for money. The Prophet asked him, “*Have you nothing in your house?*” The man replied, “Only a cloth, part of which we wear and part we use for carpet. And a wooden bowl from which we drink water.” The Prophet (PBUH) told him to bring them to him. He did.

The Prophet (PBUH) held the items in his hand and started an auction, “*Who will buy these?*” One man bid a Dirham (a silver coin). Another bid two Dirhams and bought the two items.

The Prophet (PBUH) gave the two Dirhams to the beggar and told him, “*With one Dirham, go buy food and clothes for your family. With the other Dirham, buy an axe, go out with it and chop wood and sell it in the market. I don’t want to see you again for fifteen days!*”

Fifteen days later, the man came back to the Prophet (PBUH) and reported to him that he made ten Dirhams selling the firewood that he chopped!

This story is reported by Abu-Dawoud from a narration by Anas ibn Malik (RA). He did not immediately rate it, but indicated later that its authenticity was sound. The tenor of the story is confirmed by a hadith, reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (1470, 1471, 1480) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1042) and narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) that the Prophet (PBUH) said, “*Carrying a bundle of firewood on your back and selling it is better for any of you than begging for money that he may or may not get.*” Also reported by [Ibn Majah \[36\]](#) (1498) and authenticated by [Al-Albani \[8\]](#) (1498) from a narration by Al-Zubair ibn Al-Awwam (RA). Also reported by [Al-Nasai \[17\]](#) (2583) and authenticated by [Al-Albani \[7\]](#) (2583) from a narration by Abu-Hurayra (RA).

Islam encourages business, trade and self-employment. Did you expect that Islam and capitalism have something in common? This is one aspect of pre-Islamic era that Islam has approved and encouraged. 2307

### 9.3.8 Abuse of Islamic finance

[This article](#) that appeared in the Economist magazine tells about the troubled state of the Sukook market in the Gulf states, an investment similar to bonds but without interest. Instead, it pays investors from income generated by the bonded assets, e.g., real estate.

What went wrong? This paragraph tells,

*Many seem to have thought that the bonds were asset-backed, giving them a claim on the assets in the event of a default.*

*Most sukuk, however, are asset-based, handing investors ownership of the cashflows but not of the assets themselves. “Many sukuk holders have a perception that they hold a security that is collateralised,” says Anouar Hassoune of Moody’s, a rating agency. In 90 percent of cases, that is incorrect.*

That makes the investment **not** Sharia compliant. Partnership is partnership in the acquired assets, not in their income. Be sure when you invest in Sukook that your investment is *asset-backed*, not asset-based. Your investment buys you a piece of the property.

A similar observation was made by a Bloomberg News article:

*It is predicted that the demand for Islamic finance will reach 2.8 Billion dollars in a few years. With this kind of money, there is huge room for fraud and abuse, so be careful you all. Islamic finance is quite simple: You the investor are a full partner in the investment, not just a beneficiary. Do not accept “asset-based” investments where you are handed dividend. Insist on “asset-backed” investments where the investment manager shares with you in profit and loss.*

*Could you put that in very plain, simple English? You know, for those of us who know zip about finance and economics? If necessary, use diagrams and cartoon figures.*

LOL! I'll try. A bond investment is when you the investor finances a project. Western style bonds give you a fixed return on your investment, called the bond yield.

To avoid the fixed yield, which Islamic law prohibits as Riba, the Sukook bonds were introduced. Instead of a fixed interest, they pay the investors from income generated by the project. For example, the Sukook may have bought an apartment building and the investors will be paid a dividend from the rents collected.

Is this better?

P.S. The word “Sukuk” is an Arabic word. It's the plural of “Sakk” ( ( which means “a check.” In fact, it is the origin of the word Check. The concept of checks was first introduced by Muslim merchants.

*But what about our business, salaries, etc.? All of its dealings are done using “paper/plastic money” (i.e. notes, credit cards) or electronic money, and this “money” has no real value. It's no more based on gold or silver but on just demand.*

*So, isn't it the same then?*

None of that is investment, brother. All the examples you quoted are expenditures. We are talking here about investments and how to make them Sharia-compliant.

The way to do that is partnership. The investor puts up the money (financing) and the manager of the project contributes the work (known in finance as sweat equity). The two of you agree on what each of these contributions are worth. Say 50-50. That means whatever income he generates from the project, he splits it with you 50-50, whatever loss is incurred is also split 50-50. When both of you decide to sell the project, you split the proceeds 50-50. That's a perfect example of a Sharia-compliant investment.

If banks were partners, instead of lenders, in real estate financing, the real estate crisis would not have happened, because no bank in their right mind would partner with a family who cannot afford to buy a house. And when recession hits, it is shared by all, not just by the home "owner".

You are right about currency. It's all worthless paper. We are playing a game of pretend when we buy and sell from each other, because what we use for money actually has no value. The currency *rates* published in the newspaper is a myth and reflects only the *relative* strength of economies, not the intrinsic value of the currency. Only when a currency is fully backed by gold is currency valuable. 679

### 9.3.9 AIG Bailout promotes Sharia law, lawsuit claims

*The U.S. government's bailout of American International Group is helping promote Sharia law, a lawsuit filed in federal court in Michigan alleges.*

*The suit, brought with the support of the Thomas Moore Law Center, a non-profit law firm that promotes conservative Christian values, claims that making U.S. taxpayers comply with Sharia, the Islamic legal framework based on the Koran, is unconstitutional.*

*This month, AIG announced that it would offer Sharia-compliant homeowner insurance policies, known as takaful, to U.S. customers through one of its subsidiaries. To be Sharia compliant, companies cannot earn interest.*

*The lawsuit, levied by Iraq war veteran Kevin Murray on behalf of U.S. taxpayers against Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and the Federal Reserve, claims that by subsidizing AIG, the federal government is conveying "...a message of endorsement and promotion of Sharia-based Islam ... and a message of disfavor of and hostility toward Christianity and Judaism."*

*In September, the U.S. Treasury and Federal Reserve took a nearly 80-percent stake in AIG when it injected 150 billion dollars to help prop up the troubled company.*

The forbidding of riba (usury) is an integral part of the law of Moses, thus Mosaic financial laws must be complied to by all who claim to be followers of Moses, peace be upon him. And since Jesus, peace be upon him, said “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.*” (Mathew 5:17-18), it is mandatory upon all Christians to obey the law of Moses.

Do the litigants know that takaful means mutual sponsorship? Could it be that the motivation behind this frivolous lawsuit, in addition to Islamophobia, is that usury-based companies would collapse if takaful became a common fiscal tradition? Isn't it ironic that the current interest rate in America is zero? If it had been that all the time the economic crisis may not have happened.

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## 9.4 Government

### 9.4.1 Is Islam contrary to democracy?

Abu-Bakr and Umar, may God have been pleased with them, were nominated by the Sahaba (fellows of the Prophet, peace be upon him) and unanimously voted for by them. None of the public objected or challenged the vote because they all trusted the Sahaba with their lives. The Shia didn't exist yet.

When Umar, may God have been pleased with him, was on his death bed, he nominated six people and asked the Sahaba to select one of them. One of these great people was Abdul-Rahman ibn Awf, may God have been pleased with him. He withdrew himself from the selection and volunteered to go door-to-door to collect votes for one of the five remaining. That's democracy, ain't it? The vote tallied for Uthman, may God have been pleased with him.

Muslims did not stick to the democratic method for selecting the leader though but the example pioneered by Umar, may God have been pleased with him, remains a precedent for all Muslims to follow.

There is nothing in Islam that causes it to be incompatible with the West's governmental systems. What Islam is incompatible with is sin and blasphemy. Those who claim that Islam and the West are on a collision course are the ones who want to sin and blaspheme without anyone to stop them.

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# Chapter 10

## Other Interesting Questions

Finally, this chapter collects other articles of interest and miscellaneous questions about Islam.

### 10.1 Vocabulary

#### 10.1.1 What does the word Islam mean?

According to the Arabic dictionary, The word Islam means:

1. To follow or comply,
2. To accept, obey, agree to or submit,
3. To yield, surrender or allow control,
4. To deliver intact, and
5. To delegate out of trust.

15

#### 10.1.2 What does Zikr mean?

God has vowed to preserve the Quran Himself. He says, most emphatically, in verse 15:9,

“Verily, it is We who sent down the Zikr and verily, We surely shall be of it Preserving.” (15:9)

The word Zikr (with a fricative Z as in this or that) means mention, remembrance or reminder. The syntax and context are what determines which semantic is meant. The scholars have been unanimous that the Zikr mentioned in verse 15:9 is the Quran. What they did not agree on is whether it is *only* the Quran. The reason they thought other items may be included in the Zikr in verse 15:9 is the apparent implication of other verses. For instance,

“And We sent down to you the Reminder that you may make clear to the people what was sent down to them and that they might reflect.” (16:44).

In this verse, if the Zikr is only the Quran, then what is “what was sent down to them”? Isn’t that the Quran also? That is why many scholars have opined that the Zikr here refers to the Hadith.

But if the Zikr includes the Hadith, then it too must have been preserved by God. While the strict Muslims take that position, historical evidence begs otherwise. While the Quran was written down before the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), and committed to memory by thousands of people, the Hadith was not written down for two hundred years after the Prophet’s death. It was only then that the Hadith was meticulously authenticated and less than one in ten narrations have been found to be authentic. This means that the Hadiths evaluated as authentic can be relied on in matters of the religion, but it also means that the Hadith was not preserved, or else it would not have required such massive effort to authenticate.

Therefore, I respectfully disagree that the Zikr refers to the Hadith, or includes it. So, how can we explain verse 16:44?

The key to understand 16:44 is to notice the word “people” in it. People include non-Muslims! Thus, what this verse is saying is that one of the functions of the Quran is to clarify to non-Muslims the scriptures which were sent to them, e.g., the Torah and the Gospel.

This conclusion is backed up by a later verse in the same Chapter,

“By God, We did certainly send [messengers] to communities before you [, O Muhammad], then Satan embellished for them their works, so he is their ally Today and for them is a painful torment.

And We have not sent down upon you the Book [, O Muhammad], but so that you may clarify to them what they differed about and as guidance and mercy for a folk who believe.” (16:63-64)

Verse 16:63 makes it clear that the pronoun “them” in 16:64 refers to followers of prior scriptures.

A reader may jump in here and quote, “And We certainly did write in the Zabur (Psalms), after the Remembrance (Torah), that the land - shall inherit it My righteous worshipers.” (23:105) and argue that the Torah has been described as the Zikr. It was. But then, it was humanly altered thus it ceased

to be Zikr. Only the original, pure revelation from God qualify as Zikr. The only scripture that God has vowed to preserve Himself is the Quran. 2508

### 10.1.3 Define Jihad, Jihadi and Jihadist please

*I hear those words often in the news, and always associated with terrorism. I've seen enough media distortion of your religion to distrust what they say. Can you once and for all define Jihad, Jihadi and Jihadist and how they relate to terrorism?*

Jihad is an Arabic word that means “exerting an effort that meets with resistance.” Thus, any endeavor you embark on that is not a smooth sailing is a Jihad. Have you tried to lose weight, quit smoking, or petition City Hall? Then you did Jihad!

The struggle of Jihad can therefore be against external forces, or against oneself. Resistance can be your own negative thoughts, whispers of Satan, mind talk, false memes that you hold on to, a tendency to procrastinate, fear of failure, fear of success, and countless excuses that stop us from achieving the goals we set for ourselves.

It can also become a war, if the resistance uses force. Muslims are required to defend themselves against militant enemies, but never start a war. God says in the holy Quran,

“And fight in the way of God *those who fight you*, but *do not transgress*. God does not like transgressors.” (2:190)

Armed Jihad may be declared by a duly elected Muslim leader and only in response to an act of war by an enemy. Not anyone is authorized to do so, and certainly not the terrorists!

Terrorism has absolutely nothing to do with Jihad. The word for terrorism in Islamic law is “*ifk*” (frightening the secure). It is punished in Sharia with the capital punishment! Tell that to Islamophobes.

Jihadi is an adjective for the struggle act, e.g., pushing a bill through Congress is a Jihadi act, LOL. A person is never called a Jihadi; the adjective for the person is Mujahid, plural Mujahideen.

Finally, a Jihadist is a person who believes in Jihad. That is, if you believe that establishing truth and justice requires struggle, then you're a Jihadist. 1605

### 10.1.4 What do these words mean, often used by Muslims?

*What do the words, “Kaafir”, “Inshallah” and “Mashallah” mean? I hear Muslims say them quite often.*

Kafir (plural Kuffar) is an Arabic word that means one who covers something. In Islam, it refers to a person who is ungrateful to God. He or she covers the in-born nature which acknowledges God and is grateful to Him. The opposite word is Shakir (plural Shakirun) meaning thankful.

As for the words Ma-sha-Allah and In-sha-Allah, they both relate to the will of God. Ma-sha-Allah means “What God has willed.” Muslims say it when they admire something as they recognize the will of God in bringing to being the admirable thing. In-sha-Allah means “if God wills.” Muslims say it before anything that will happen in the future because it won’t happen if God doesn’t will it to.

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### 10.1.5 Arabized words

*Why does the Quran use Isa for the name Jesus (as)? Why doesn’t it use Yeshua? Because in google translate, when you translate the english name Jesus to Arabic, it says Yeshua...but when you write Jesus son of Mary and translate that to Arabic, THEN it says Isa ibn Maryam. Why does the pronoucation of the name Jesus(as) change? Thanks!*

His name was not Yeshua either. Jesus, peace be upon him, spoke Aramaic. His name, therefore, is what the name is in Aramaic: ܝܫܘܥ, pronounced<sup>1</sup> /ʕiːʃoʕ/ ‘Eesho’. Yeshua is the Aramaic version of the Hebrew name Yehoshua (English Joshua). It’s a different name.

So, why is he referred to in the Quran as Eesa? Because that is how the Christian Arabs referred to him. Ancient people did not keep foreign people’s names as they are pronounced in the foreign language. Instead, they transliterated the names, and sometimes even *translated* them to their language.

Egyptian Coptic Christians refer to Jesus as Yasoo’. The Japanese refer to him as Yesu.

When a people cannot pronounce some letters, they choose another letter that sounds a bit like it that they can pronounce. The first two letters of the Aramaic name of Jesus may have been hard for some people to pronounce, so they chose the letters YE to replace them. The Arabs kept them because for them they are easy to pronounce. The last two letters of his name may also have been hard for some to pronounce, so they replaced them with UA.

<sup>1</sup>Pronunciation expressed in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

The translation of names is particularly interesting. Take for instance the disciple Peter. The name Peter is an English rendition of the Greek Petros, which means "a rock." Why is that? Because Peter's actual name was Sakhr, which in Semitic languages means a rock.

BTW, Google Translate is very good, but it has errors, and Google actually lets you suggest improvements to the translation it produces. 1893

## 10.2 Poetry

### 10.2.1 Did the Prophet (PBUH) say any poetry?

Very little, and he wasn't good at it! Which makes the miracle of the Quran that much more remarkable. The undisputed masterpiece of Arabic language and literature was delivered to us by a man who was never known for any particular literary talent, and who could not even read or write!

I recall two lines of poetry that he is reported to have said. The first was during the battle of Uhud, when the polytheists started to gain a foothold and the morale of Muslims declined sharply. The Prophet (PBUH) said this poem line,

Translation: "I'm the Prophet, no fib...I'm the son of Abdul-Muttalib!"

The second poem was a supplication for his followers,

Translation: "O God, the living is the living of the Hereafter...Forgive the supporters (Medinites) and the migrants (Meccans)."

The polytheists of Mecca tried everything to explain away the Quran, which awed them like nothing they have ever heard. They used to sneak up at night near the mosque in order to hear it recited without anyone knowing they were listening! One of the ridiculous accusations they made against the Prophet (PBUH) was that he was a great poet, and that explains the Quran. God ridicules this theory in verse 69:41,

"And it is not the utterance of a poet. How little do ye believe!" (69:41)

The Quran is not a poetry book, though it often sounds like poetry. Any student of poetry can quickly dismiss the claim that the Quran is poetry. The polytheists of yesteryear and the antagonists of today all fail to explain away the Quran, or explain how an average man, in terms of literary prowess, was able to produce that masterpiece.

The answer quite simply is what the Quran says about itself. It is a revelation from God and by Him. Muhammad, peace be upon him, simply received it and related it to us exactly as it was revealed to him. 1740

## 10.2.2 A poem by Imaam Ash-Shaafii

*I know you love poetry, especially by Imaam Ash-Shaafii, rahimahullah, so here is one:*

...  
...  
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...  
...  
...  
...

May God reward you well. Lovely poem. Here is its translation:

Commit to consciousness of God, if you've been heedless,  
He will bring you sustenance from wherever you wouldn't know.  
How can you fear poverty knowing that God is Provider,  
He provided for birds and the whale in the sea.  
To whomever thought that sustenance is obtained by strength,  
A sparrow wouldn't be eating with eagles!  
You depart the world [when you sleep] and you don't know,  
when night covers you, will you you live till dawn?  
How many healthy ones died without a sickness,  
and how many sick ones lived for some time.  
And how many a youth laugh night and day,  
while their coffin in the Beyond is being sewn and he doesn't know. 1455

## 10.3 Interesting Questions

### 10.3.1 What is your favorite quote from the Quran and the Hadeeth?

There are so many, but if I have to name only one, I'd say:

Favorite verse: "Isn't time already for those who believe that their hearts hearkened to the remembrance of God and what has come down of the truth?" (57:16)

Favorite hadith: "*Observe God wherever you are, follow a bad deed with a good one; it will erase it, and treat people with good manners.*", narrated by Abu-Zarr Al-Ghafari (RA), reported by [Al-Nasai \[17\]](#) (1987) and authenticated by [Al-Albani \[7\]](#) (1987). 110

### 10.3.2 What do you like best about Islam?

*If you had to name one thing only that you like the most about Islam, what would that be?*

That it assigns to us the task of seeking knowledge and trusts our minds to grasp it! Islam condemns people for blindly following their forefathers. The Quran keeps asking us the rhetorical questions: Could you not reason? Have you not been using your minds? Did you not have hearts with which to understand?

Unfortunately, many Muslims did not get that primary teaching, those who think that following the forefathers is the way to go and reasoning is the gateway to misguidance! The opposite of what God teaches.

The Quran does not tell us that we have to believe, it tells us *why we should*.<sup>1381</sup>

### 10.3.3 Name your favorite thing about Islam

*If you had to name only one positive thing about Islam, what would it be?*

That the door of repentance is open until the sun rises from the west!

God is the Forbearing (Al-Haleem). He "descends" to the first heaven every night and asks, "Is there a repentant out there? I'll accept his repentance. Is there any seeker of forgiveness out there? I'll forgive him!", a Qudsi hadith, narrated by Abu-Hurayra and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari](#) [12] (7494). 727

### 10.3.4 Did you find peace in Islam?

*I am searching for peace. So, my first question is how did you find peace in Islam? When did you realize it?*

One of the most fascinating things in the Arabic language is how certain concepts that at first blush appear different are linked together because they use the same word root. Case in point is Islam. The word means surrender or delivery. It comes from the same root word for Salam which means peace or soundness!

Thus one can conclude that through genuine surrender to God in the way He instructed us one achieves peace.

A perfect clue to how one would experience peace is what God said in a holy Hadith. He said "My servant keeps approaching Me with voluntary good deeds until I love him. When I love him, I become his eyes with which he sees, his ears with which he hears, his hands with which he works and his legs with which he walks. If he asks me I shall most assuredly give him

and if he seeks refuge in Me I shall most assuredly protect him”, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6502).

Every time you do a voluntary good deed you come closer to God which is the only way to find peace. A good deed could be as simple as a smile.

*For such a long, long time I have been so unhappy, and I have been trying to find peace and happiness in my life. Like I said I am looking for peace in my life and I am hoping to find it in Islam.*

There are many reasons why one may be unhappy. You must have heard of people who despite being healthy, wealthy and beautiful are unhappy, while other people who are sick or poor are happy. Your self-image and what you keep telling yourself is often the reason why you stay unhappy. If you start believing differently about yourself, your role in life, and the people around you, you will start to feel differently. Happiness is achieved when what you think, say and do are in agreement and are moving toward God. 234

### 10.3.5 Tell me a positive experience from Islam

*I'm really conflicted right now, part of me knows that Islam is what I wanted Christianity to be (which I left 11 years ago). The prayer, serving only God, living your life in a good way and helping those less fortunate.*

*What did turn me off about Christianity are the negative things. I understand if you do good things, you'll be rewarded, if you do the wrong things, you'll be punished. I lived my life as a Christian out of fear, and that gets very tiring, very quickly. I don't want to live in fear of Allah. (And I mean fear as in "afraid" not fear as in "respect" which many people use the word for. Respect is something that I want to give of course).*

*Can anyone share with me the positive things that you have experienced since being Muslim?*

*Thank you in advance.*

Imam Abu-Hamed Al-Ghazali, may God bless his soul, a Muslim scholar and author who lived in the Eleventh Century, defined faith eloquently as “*the balance between hope and fear.*” ([A. Al-Ghazali \[13\]](#) ([Shamela Library](#))) Only fear can dissuade you from listening to Satan or your desires and disobeying God, and hope is the most reliable way to persuade people to do good.

That said, let me answer your question in my case. I have prayed Istikhara (the “consultation prayer”) several times in my life, a prayer a Muslim prays when

s/he is stuck and cannot decide a matter. Every time the answer came immediately! I felt like God was right there which, of course, He always is.

The feeling I get when the month of Ramadan has ended is indescribable. I feel light, pure, happy, strong, confident, humble, grateful, at peace, healthy, sharp-minded, and surprisingly not hungry nor thirsty at all.

635

### 10.3.6 What are the seven heavens?

*I have a question, if you don't mind that is. It's about the 7 heavens. I'm trying to understand what exactly they are. In Surah Al-Naba (Chapter 78) Allah says "wa banayna fawkakum seba3an shidada" (And We constructed above you seven tough ones). Because of the context, I assume this refers to the seven layers of the atmosphere we know about in science.*

*But, in another spot in the Quran God says that He built seven heavens over each other, and that He decorated the lowest heaven with stars. Could this mean there are seven Universes? I say this because there has to be a specific physical constant in a Universe for stars to form, and that if stars can form in one place in a Universe they must be able to form in others. In this regard, the seven layers cannot be in the same Universe. God also says the Seven Heavens are layered over eachother; this is consistent with the Bubbles model of the Universe.*

*I was wondering what you thought about this little theory and what is the seven heavens in the view of consensus scholars? Thank you.*

The seven layers are not necessarily the seven heavens. And the seven heavens are Ghayb (matter of the Beyond). We only know from the hadiths about the Al-Mieraj (the Ascension journey) that the Prophet (PBUH) saw different sites in each heaven. We don't know if they are different universes or layers. It's all possible. And they could be something else completely. Being Ghayb means we do not and cannot know. Consensus scholars were also human and therefore any view they may have had on this matter was entirely a guess.

As for the stars defining a universe, this only applies to our universe. If there are other universes, they do not necessarily have to be like the one we know. God's creative powers can make anything anywhere. Fish breathe under water and die in the air, while we breathe in the air and die under water.

943

### 10.3.7 Was the Garden of Adam and Eve the same as the Garden of Paradise?

*I read a scholar's opinion that the Garden where Adam and*

*Eve briefly lived and committed their sin was not the same as the Garden of Paradise. I'm sending you the full text of the opinion. What do you think?*

The scholar is right when he says that there has been a wide disagreement on this matter. That is natural, since God did not tell us and neither did His Messenger. Therefore, any opinion about it is a guess.

That said, the evidence used in the text you sent me is quite weak and easily refutable. I personally see the evidence is stronger that it was the same Garden, as God ordered the angels to prostrate to Adam (See verses 2:34, 7:11, 17:61, 18:50, and 20:116) and the angels live in heaven. And after the sin of Adam and Eve, God tells them to “*descend* from it, both of you” (20:123) and that the earth will be their residence and provision for a while (verses 2:36 and 7:24). 1230

### 10.3.8 What is Islam to you?

*Can you sum up in three sentences what Islam means to you?  
I would like to find out what your idea of Islam is.*

Islam is the original nature of all creatures which acknowledges the oneness of God and the oneness of creation. Islam is the ideal way of life that achieves balance and harmony between the material and the spiritual, faith and science, heart and mind, this life and the lasting life. Islam is the religion that correctly defines God and purifies our relationship to Him. 357

### 10.3.9 What was Muslim Spain like?

*I am fascinated by the era when Spain was under Muslim rule (the Moors). However, I read differing narratives of that era. What is your take on it?*

I think that this video produced by British TV in 2007 says it best,  
[Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain \(Documentary\)](#)

It is about an hour and half long, but worth every minute. 1080

### 10.3.10 Should schools of thought be unified? Can they?

*I saw a video by a Muslim scholar who calls for unifying the four schools of thought [of Islamic jurisprudence]. Is that a good idea? Can it be done?*

*Personally, I think that we should follow whatever reaches us which has sound evidence from the Quran and Sunnah, it can reach us from any madhab (school of thought) or any knowledgeable reliable scholar of Ahlus Sunnah (People of the Sunna).*

Exactly. Just in case somebody out there starts thinking that I am dismissing the schools of thought, I'm not. The founders of all four schools of thought (five if you count the Zahiriya), as well their students, were all pious and knowledgeable people. That does not mean we must follow them though! It means that their interpretations and deductions are a very valuable database of Islamic knowledge that can save us having to re-invent the wheel. If one of their opinions in a given issue comes across as solid argument, we ought to take it. If two differing opinions come across equally convincing, we may choose either one. If none of their arguments in a given issue is strong, we may apply Ijtihad principles to come up with a better interpretation/deduction.

We have a treasure of knowledge; it would be dumb to dump it, but it is also not a good idea IMHO to follow it without question. 1070

### 10.3.11 Do babies see angels?

*Can babies see angels? Is that why they have that irresistible, angelic smile?*

No way to know. But I'll tell a story that my dad, may God bless his soul, told me which he witnessed himself. A good friend of his, let's call him M, died suddenly and he was rather young. M was a model of decency, piety, spirituality and knowledge. After coming back from his funeral, they all went to his widow's house where the big family and friends were gathered to comfort her. His niece, a four year old girl, suddenly pointed out in front of her and called, "Uncle M!"

Everyone looked where she pointed and there was no one there. Someone asked her, "What are you pointing at, sweetheart?" She answered, "Uncle M, right there! He is with God and he is calling the Azhan for the Maghrib (Sunset) prayer!"

Everyone was stunned and didn't know what to say.

Six days later, the girl died suddenly and for no apparent reason. 1113

### 10.3.12 Angels having female names

*Chapter 53 of the Quran (The Star) has a strange verse. It says,*

*"Verily, those who believe not in the hereafter, name the angels with female name." (53:27)*

*My questions:*

1. *Is it forbidden to give female names to angels?*
2. *What is the connection with believing in hereafter?*
3. *Is it a gender thing?*

In order to understand a verse, you always need to study its context, the preceding and succeeding verses. Earlier in this chapter, (53:19-25), God ridicules the pagans' idols, al-lat, al-uzza and manat. They were given female names. Coming from a people who used to bury their newborn daughters alive, it's a truly strange belief. God tells us here that the pagans merely followed conjecture, whims and wishful thinking and that is what deniers of the hereafter do.

Then later, in verses 53:27-30, God tells us about how they do the same thing with angels. They name them as females, without knowledge but only conjecture and then tells us to "turn away from those who turn their backs on Our remembrance and do not want but this life!" (53:30). That's the connection with the hereafter.

This has nothing to do with gender. It has to do with the belief system. Those people despised women yet they named angels and the idols they bow down to female names! They custom design God and religion as they see fit. 404

### 10.3.13 Do birds have feelings?

*I watched a video featuring a bird and its mate that has just died. It sure looked to me like the bird that survived was grieving over its dead mate! Am I imagining things, or do birds have feelings?*

You're not imagining things. God tells us in the Quran,

"There is no creature in the earth, nor a bird that flies with its wings, but *are a community like you!*" (6:38)

The sky and the earth have feelings! Consider,

"Then the sky and the earth *did not weep for them* (the house of Pharaoh)" (44:29)

Modern research has shown that plants have feelings too. That does not surprise me. 1197

### 10.3.14 Does everything have a life?

*I believe that everything is alive. If I were to stomp on the floor hard with the intention, on the Day of Judgment it will say that I did it. Am I off base?*

No. Obviously the life of other creatures differs from our lives, like the life of plants is different from the life of fish, for instance. God tells us in the holy Quran that the sky and the earth "did not weep" for the people of Pharaoh when they drowned! (verse 44:29)

And God tells us that rocks sometimes fall down "out of fear of God" (2:74)

*In Chapter 18, the story of Moses (PBUH) and the sage is told. In that story, the Quran says that there was a wall that "wanted" to collapse! From this, some scholars said the wall has a will. Is this true?*

*And we also know the hadeeth where a palm tree trunk cried when the Prophet (PBUH) got a new pulpit. So, the tree too has feelings!*

The wall wanting to collapse is a metaphor. The Arabs used metaphors liberally and frequently, and so does the Quran and the Hadith. The metaphor means that the wall was so unstable, it looked like it wants to fall.

Interpreting metaphors literally has been a cause for misunderstanding and even some strange beliefs.

The tree, being a plant, is alive of course. Modern research has shown that plants have feelings. I'm not surprised. 1279

### 10.3.15 Are there miracles and healings in Islam?

*My whole family is Christian and they believe in doing miracles in the name of Jesus (PBUH). What do we Muslims believe about people being healed and miracles in present day?*

Muslim scholars are in agreement that miracles have ceased with the death of the Prophet, peace be upon him. That said, healing is not a miracle. A miracle is supernatural, such as resurrecting the dead and splitting the sea. Healing can be done by the Quran, since God says, "And We send down of the Quran what is a healing and a mercy to the believers, and it does not add to the wrongdoers but loss." (17:82) 1203

### 10.3.16 Why are non-Muslims barred from Mecca?

*How do we answer the statement "we will allow a mosque near ground zero, when a church or synagogue is allowed in Mecca."*

*People try to use the fact that non-muslims aren't allowed in makkah as evidence that we as muslims are intolerant of other faiths.*

If that were true, then there wouldn't be Christians and Jews in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen, ...etc. There wouldn't be Hindus in India when it was ruled by Muslims and there wouldn't be Buddhists in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Afghanistan.

And the answer to the argument ``we will allow a mosque near ground zero, when a church or synagogue is allowed in Mecca" is that the analogy fails and with it fails the argument. New York is not holy to Christians, but Mecca is holy to Muslims. You must compare apples to apples.

That said, Imam Abu-Hanifa, rahimahullah (may God bless his soul), opined that people of the Book may enter Al-Masjid Al-Haram (The sacrosanct mosque). His argument was that verse 9:28 forbids only the polytheists, but that the people of the Book are not polytheist. The majority, however, disagreed. I agree with the reverend Imam because the Quran always differentiates between people of the Book (Christians and Jews) and the polytheists, consider,

“Those who disbelieved among the People of the Book and the polytheists were not parting [from disbelief] until there comes to them clear evidence; a Messenger from God reciting purified scrolls, in which are upright books.” (98:1)

Naming both groups would be redundant if they were the same. And specifying ``those who disbelieved" makes it clear that some of the people of the Book are believers. 1131

### 10.3.17 Excessive titles for scholars

*I have often wondered why a lot of Muslims use excessive titles for their shaykhs (scholars), but often not for the Imams (foremost scholars) of the Salaf (ancestors). Take for instance,*

*Hazrat Khalifa Majaz-E-Bayt Shaykh-ul-Arab wal-Ajam  
Arifbillah Hazrat-E-Aqdas Muhaqqiq ul-Waqt Abu Ibnih Fulan  
ibn Fulan al-Fulani (damat barakatuhu wa qaddasa Allahu  
sirrah) said...*

*But when they quote one of the Salaf, they just say: Imam  
Malik (rahmatullahi alayhi) said...*

*No disrespect meant to the shaykhs in question. I just don't get  
why one needs four lines every time a contemporary shaykh is  
mentioned, but not when mentioning the Salaf.*

The early generation did not use any titles at all, just the name or nickname of the person, for instance: Umar or Abu Abdillah. In fact, many early Muslims addressed the Prophet (ﷺ) by his name only: Muhammad. He was the only one who was given a title, a short one, by God. His title has been: The Messenger of God. So, Muslims started using that.

To be fair to the scholars, they had great respect for each other, and the culture at the time gave a lot of weight to mutual courtesy. But, you're right; it was a bit too much. 1459

### 10.3.18 All those honorary titles

*Assalamu Alaikum WR WB.*

*I need the clarifications on passing different types of Islamic titles on different individuals / groups.*

*We say Alaihissalam to All the prophets, and angels.. and Mahdi too.....*

*We say Radiyallahu Anhu, to Sahaba...*

*Some say Raheemahullah to living scholars, and the expired as well...*

*I wanna know, the root of these titles, why we say this?*

*More over, I met some one and she said, Prophet (PBUH) commanded us to say Salawat upon his family, and we must say Alaihissalaam to Ali(Ral). And when I said its from shia analogies, she replied back saying that Imam Bukhari has approved this !!!!*

*Please do throw light on this issue In sha Allah..*

*Fee Amanillah*

That is a good convention created by al-Salaf al-Salih (the righteous predecessors) after the death of the Prophet (PBUH). It is a good example of a benevolent novelty (Bid-a Hasana).

In the Quran, God tells us that He ``prays" for the Prophet (PBUH) and so do the angels and asks us to do likewise and send our greetings to him (verse 33:56). Therefore, it is highly recommended that we say ``Salla Allahu Alayhi wa Sallam" (May God bless and greet him), which is commonly abbreviated PBUH (peace be upon him), whenever Muhammad's name is mentioned.

As for other prophets and the angels, we are encouraged to say ``Alaihi Al-Salam" (upon him be peace) because the Prophet (PBUH) did so. For some distinguished people, such as Mary, we may do so as well by saying ``Alayha Al-Salam" (peace be upon her).

BTW, God ``praying" for someone means He graces them.

In the Quran, God tells us that He ``is pleased with" the Sahaba (fellows of the Prophet (PBUH)), who pledged allegiance to the Prophet (verse 48:18). That is the origin of the phrase ``Radhiya Allahu Anhu" (May God have been pleased with him), commonly abbreviated RA, in reference to the Sahaba.

For all subsequent Muslims, the convention has been to say ``Rahimahu Allah" (May God have mercy on him), in reference to a deceased Muslim.

You were correct when you told your friend that special treatment of Ali (RA) tends to occur with our Shii colleagues. I'm not aware of anything that Al-Bukhari has said that is different. It is not standard to refer to Imam Ali with the phrase ``Alayhi Assalam" but I know a highly respected Sunni scholar who did. There is no harm in doing so because it is in its essence a prayer for the person.

All those honorary phrases are literally prayers for those wonderful people. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "*Whoever prays for his brother in absentia, the angels reply, 'Amen, and the same to you!'* ", narrated by Abu Al-Dardaa (RA) and reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2732) who rated it authentic.

It is not appropriate to say Rahimahullah about living people, even though literally it is valid. The reason is the convention that it refers to deceased people.  
2027

### 10.3.19 Why didn't Satan repent?

*I'm just wondering why would shaytan, knowing full well he will burn in hell, want that fate? Shouldn't he just give up his whisperings and surrender to Allah SWT and beg for His forgiveness or something?*

Because he knows that God's curse on him is permanent; he has no chance to be forgiven. In fact, when he had the chance to repent, he blew it by asking God to spare him till the Day of Judgment. God answered his request and spared him,

"[God] said, 'Then get out of it, for indeed, you are expelled.

And verily, upon you is the curse **until the Day of Settlement.**'

He (Satan) said, 'My Lord, then reprieve me until the Day they are sent out (Resurrection).'

[God] said, 'Then you are of the reprieved, Until the Day of the time well-known.'

[Iblees] said, 'My Lord, because You lured me, I will surely embellish [disobedience] to them in the earth, and I will lure them all, Except your worshipers among them [who are] saved.' " (15:34-40)

He was blinded by arrogance at first, which caused him to disobey God then to not repent. Then he was blinded by resentment, which caused him to want to *take as many humans with him to Hell as he could*. It is a profound lesson to all of us never to be arrogant and never keep a resentment. 1100

### 10.3.20 Why is Satan doomed?

*There is a hadeeth that says that whoever has half a mustard seed of weight of faith will not enter the eternal hellfire.*

*Why is Satan still a kaafir (disbeliever) if he believes in Allaah's existence? Why is he still going to the eternal fire?*

Belief in God means more than belief in His existence. It means obeying God's commands and staying away from His prohibitions. Satan disobeyed God's order, was arrogant about it, and refused to repent. That is why God cursed him for eternity. An authentic hadith, narrated by Ibn Masoud (RA) and reported by Muslim [43] (91) states that "no one will enter Paradise who has in his heart the weight of a speck of arrogance." That was Satan's pitfall.

Compare that to Adam and Eve, who also disobeyed God's order, but they regretted it, begged God in all humility to forgive them, so God accepted from them and pardoned them. Theirs was a sin, but Satan's was a blasphemy which he would not apologize for.

BTW, Kafir means ungrateful. It is used for disbeliever as a figure of speech. The opposite of it in Arabic is Shakir (thankful).

1195

### 10.3.21 What do the words Fatwa and Fitna mean?

*Excuse my ignorance, but I confuse the two words Fatwa and Fitna, which I've been hearing a lot. What do they mean?*

Fatwa is an opinion about a religious matter, that is obtained by following rules of Usul-al-Fiqh, the Islamic juristic discipline of Foundations of Deduction, and given by qualified licensed scholars.

Fitna, on the other hand, is an Arabic word that originates from heating iron to remove its impurities. Concepts such as seduction, sedition, persecution, tumult, and tests of faith are all given the name Fitna because they all test the strength and quality of faith.

1115

### 10.3.22 What does Jazakallah mean?

*I hear Muslims thanking each other saying "Jazakallah". What does that word mean?*

It means "May God recompense you." It is incomplete, though, because recompense can be with good or with bad! Therefore, the proper phrase to use when thanking a fellow Muslim is to say, "Jazaka Allahu Khayran" (May God recompense you with good).

If you want to be very accurate and follow Arabic grammar, then:

To thank:

One man: Jazaka Allahu Khayran,

One woman: Jazaki Allahu Khayran

Two people: Jazakuma Allahu Khayran,

More than two men: Jazakumu Allahu Khayran, and

More than two women: Jazakunna Allahu Khayran.

The ``n" in Khayran may be dropped if you pause after it. In fact, it's more proper Arabic to drop it in that case. But if you continue talking, the ``n" must be pronounced, e.g., Jazaka Allahu Khayran Katheera (may God recompense you with plenty of good). That ``n" is called Tanween in Arabic grammar. 1137

### 10.3.23 Can there be peace in the holy Land?

*I saw a thread about "Nazi Israel" which, since my family escaped Nazi Germany, caught my attention. I would like your readers to watch the documentary "Islam: Empire of Faith". I am not stating ANY opinion except that I think the war has been going on for so long now that no one really remembers who "fired the first shot"...so much hate and anger is in place that I see no way for true peace to happen. This saddens me deeply...*

The Hebrews lived in Palestine, on and off, for 3000 years. The natives of Palestine, called Philistines, lived there for almost a millennium longer (since 1875 BC). When God saved the Jews from Pharaoh, He sent them to Palestine where the Philistines have been living. Many of them accepted Judaism, thus became Jews. Then when Jesus (PBUH) came, many Philistines and some Jews converted to Christianity. Finally, when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) came, most Philistines converted to Islam and began to speak Arabic, thus became Arab. Their native language before that was Aramaic. The peaceful co-existence of the Arabs and the Hebrews continued until 1948, when the Jews took the land by force, including massacres, and declared the state of Israel. That was the first shot.

There is no doubt that the Jews had to escape Nazi Germany, but the fact that almost as many Jews are in the USA as in Israel is proof that they did not have to go to Palestine. Despite that, the Palestinians had no problem hosting them. They always did. The problem is that the Jews took over. By force. The problem is Zionism, not Judaism and not the Jews. Zionism was enabled by Britain, which was occupying Palestine at the time. You can't hand over property you stole to another.

The peaceful solution IMHO is two states where original land is returned to its owners. Palestinians actually still have their deeds of trusts to their lands, homes, and farms that were taken from them by force. 1123

### 10.3.24 Spiritual healing

*There is a man out here who claims he can heal people with somethings called Rohani Ilaj, Tawiz and Ruqya. Is there a basis for any of this in Islam? What do these words mean?*

Rohani Ilaj (spiritual therapy) is hocus pocus. Tawiz (protection), aka Hijab (shield), borders on blasphemy.

What is commonly referred to as Rohani Ilaj is fraud and manipulation of folks who are in desperate need for a cure. Cure must first be sought in physical medicine. The Prophet, peace be upon him, “*Seek medicine, for God sent down ailment and with it He sent down its cure.*” Narrated by Ibn Masoud (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (6062). Also narrated by Jabir ibn Abdillah (RA) and reported and rated “good” by [Al-Albani \[3\]](#) (6/875).

But Ruqya (supplication for healing) is a Sunna. There is no mystery to it and it does not require a specialist, like many people believe. It is simply a supplication or recitation you read for the afflicted person. A good example is when Anas ibn Malik (RA) offered Thabit Al-Banani to perform for him the Ruqya he learned from the Prophet (PBUH). He welcomed that. Anas said (translated), “*O God, Lord of people, ridder of hardship, heal. Only You are the Healer, a healing that leaves behind no ailment.*” This supplication was narrated by Aisha (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5750, 5675, 5743), [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2191), and [Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (2970).

Another example is narrated by Abu-Said Al-Khudri (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5007). Abu-Said performed Ruqya on a man bit by a scorpion. All he did was recite Al-Fatiha (Chapter 1) seven times. The man was healed and he paid him 30 sheep as wage. The Prophet (PBUH) approved it.

Opinions differ on asking others to perform Ruqya on oneself. One hadith suggests that it is makruh (discouraged). It praises believers and identifies them as “*No Ruqya except from an evil eye or a fever ... those (believers) who do not ask for Ruqya, do not believe in evil omens, do not treat themselves with a hot iron, and in their Lord they trust.*”, narrated by Ibn Abbas (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5705) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (220). But other hadiths clearly allow it and the consensus is that it is allowed. My humble conclusion is that asking for Ruqya is allowed when necessary, but discouraged when unnecessary. 1242

### 10.3.25 Are the Arabs a superior race?

*I read an article which quotes a famous scholar of the past saying that the Arab race is superior because it was given favors from God not given any other race. Is this true? Do the Arabs feel superior?*

No, to both. It is important to differentiate between favor and superiority. The word usually translated "favor" is which, as a verb, means "to give more" and, as a noun, it means extra or excess. That is a different concept from superiority.

Is there any doubt that the Arabs have been given more by God? The Quran was revealed in their language! The last and final Prophet and Messenger of God was from them! The holiest town on earth is in their land!

Were they worth such honor? You bet! It was they who conveyed the Message of guidance and light from God to the rest of the world. May God have been pleased with them. Even though they could have seized the opportunity to impose their language on the countries they went to, they never did! Egyptians, for instance, adopted Arabic as their language of their own volition after the Arabs have been there for seventy years! And we know that the majority of Muslim countries do not speak Arabic and that Arabic is not their official language. The Arabs who preached Islam, never imposed it on people. As a result, we have large minorities of non-Muslims in nearly every Muslim country, free to practice their religion. If the Arabs believed for one second that they were superior or privileged, they might have imposed Islam or Arabic on the countries they went to.

The Quran makes it clear that rank with God is based only on piety (verse 49:13), and the Prophet (ﷺ) famously said, "There is no favor for an Arab over a non-Arab except by piety", narrated by Jabir ibn Abdillah (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Albani \[3\]](#) (2700) 1244

### 10.3.26 Are there female devils?

There are female devils, because God tells us that devils have offspring (verse 18:50), and because God tells us that He created everything in pairs (verse 51:49). 1226

### 10.3.27 Can we touch Satan, or the angels?

*Satan whispers to people right? So that means he must come close to our bodies. But what happens if we just randomly extend our hand let's say forward and Satan is standing or whatever in front of you (Scary thought I know); is it possible that we might touch Satan?*

*Same goes for Angels, lets say an Angel is beside you and randomly extend your arm to the side are you actually touching the Angel?*

No, we can't. The reason is that we must have the ability and we don't. Satan does have the ability to touch our bodies, evidenced by verse 2:275. Just like the fact that he can see us, but we cannot see him.

*Satan is part of us, no? I think there is a hadeeth that says so.*

No, he's not. The hadith you refer to tells a metaphor to drive home the point that Satan is ever so close to us, always around trying to tempt us away from God. Metaphors have been used by the Arabs in abundance even in their everyday talk, and any student of Arabic literature and poetry can see that. The Quran used the same literary device often. Taking metaphors literally has unfortunately caused many Muslims to hold weird beliefs, even about God Himself. 1217

### 10.3.28 Does Islam have a flag?

*In my country of India, I see people using green flags on which a crescent and a star are drawn. Is that the flag of Islam? Is there a significance to the color green in Islam?*

*I asked a scholar and he said that Islam has no flag and green has no significance in Islam.*

I beg to differ. Muslim troops always had one fighter carrying Al-Liwaa, which is a long stick with a flag tied to its top. Its objective was to identify where Muslim troops are, so that other troops can join them. Another job of Hamil-al-Liwaa (flag carrier) was to rally the troops.

Therefore, there was a flag for Muslims.

As for the color green, it had significance to the Arabs. Because it is the color of plantations and grass, it always was a metaphor for prosperity and blessings. For instance, the Prophet (PBUH) said, *“The world is green and pretty, and God has appointed you custodians of it to see how you will do.”* Narrated by Abu-Said Al-Khudri (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2742) and [Ibn Hibban \[33\]](#) (5591).

The Prophet (PBUH) always disliked ugly names, and had the habit of changing them. One day he passed by a town called Afira (dusty or arid), he renamed it Khadhira (green), narrated by Aisha (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Albani \[3\]](#) (208).

And we know that green is the color of clothes people wear in Paradise (see verses 18:31 and 76:21), so clearly the color has significance in Islam. 1294

### 10.3.29 Too much attention to ancient artifacts

*During the Egyptian revolution of January 25th, 2011, thugs invaded the Ancient Egyptian museum in Cairo and stole a number of artifacts. The mummy chamber was not invaded.*

*Are we giving too much attention to monuments and ancient artifacts? Don't they belong to pagan times? As a matter of*

*fact, I heard some Muslims call for the destruction of all ancient statues, like Taliban did with Buddha statues in Afghanistan.*

God draws our attention to ancient artifacts as a sign of how He punishes people who disbelieve in Him and fight His Messengers. He addresses Pharaoh as the man was drowning and says to him,

“So, today We rescue you with your body [only], so that you will be for those after you a sign.” (10:92)

God frequently asks people this question in the Quran, “Did they not travel the land **and see** what was the end of those before them? They were stronger than them...” (30:9)

Losing, neglecting or destroying ancient artifacts may result in losing, neglecting and destroying signs of God that He intended for us to keep and learn from.

Consider the long Islamic history in Egypt during which no Muslim ruler of Egypt has ever even contemplated destroying the Pyramids, the Sphinx or any ancient statue. Not Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA) who sent a mission to Egypt to call its people to Islam, nor Amr ibn Al-Aas (RA) who led that mission, nor the hundreds of righteous Muslim leaders who ruled Egypt for over a millennium!

How come? Did they not see the Sphinx as an idol that should be smashed? Ironically, the only one who tried to blow up the Sphinx was a non-Muslim: Napoleon Bonaparte. He succeeded in severing the Sphinx's beard only.

And this not unique to Egypt. Muslim rulers of Afghanistan never thought of destroying the Buddhist statues, but the Taliban did. That's what happens when unqualified people take charge.

*OK, but we need to find a balance and not wish to possess those treasures.*

I'm sure the British Museum will love you for suggesting that! Ancient monuments are the property of the countries they are in. It was no coincidence that God left those particular monuments where they are.

“And they (the remnants of Sodom and Gomorrah) are not far from the wrongdoers.” (11:83)

“And you pass by them (the site of Sodom and Gomorrah) by morning. And by night; do you not use your minds?” (37:137-138)

*It is one of my great lifetime wishes to travel to Egypt and see all its ancient sites and museums they are so fascinating especially the mummies. I hope they remain safe. May God protect Egypt and its people.*

May you get your wish, and amen to your supplication. When you visit the museum of antiquities, go see the mummy of Pharaoh. You are going to feel the verses of the Quran that spoke about him. You will no doubt reflect on what happens to disbelievers, tyrants and conceited people! Here lies before you a man who claimed to be a god, and fought God's Messenger, Moses, peace be upon him. He ended up in a box shown to all, his name is not even known for sure and his followers are no more, while Moses ended up honored by the followers of all three Abrahamic religions.

*I don't agree with those who call for the destruction of ancient statues. Instead, we should be learning from them, and appreciating them as beautiful art, regardless of their original purpose. As a good friend of mine said, you can appreciate something without worshiping it.*

Nice way to put it. I lived in Egypt many years and not once did I ever see or hear of anybody prostrating to the Sphinx!

1360

### 10.3.30 Where lies the balance between the esoteric and exoteric life?

*If the esoteric is special knowledge granted to a select few, and the exoteric is general knowledge available to all, then the balance between them is the realization that they both come from God and cannot contradict His Revelation.*

Seekers of spiritual wisdom throughout the ages have thought at some point or another in their quest that they finally got it; the meaning of it all. But the Quran tells us that "the Truth is *from your Lord*" (18:29). The truth is not granted to a select few, it is granted to those who commit to God's teachings as He revealed them in His scriptures.

He tells us, "And those who *struggle in Us* - We certainly will guide them to Our paths. Verily, God is with benefactors." (29:69). That verse is quoted a lot by Sufis, but often misinterpreted as allowing esoteric knowledge. It merely explains that deeper understanding of the same exoteric knowledge is available to anyone who tries to obtain it.

Another verse often quoted and misinterpreted in this context is, "He grants wisdom to whomever He wills, and he who is granted wisdom has been given much good." (2:269) Who are those? They are the ones who adhere to the Quran and live by its teachings, not the ones who are on a hunger strike thinking it will lead them to enlightenment.

Why was Sage Al-Khadr privy to knowledge that Moses (ؑ) didn't have, peace be upon them? Al-Khadr was not a prophet, yet God granted him special

knowledge, because he was eligible for it, that's why. Recall that he kept reminding Moses that he will not bear his decisions, will lose patience and keep asking questions too early? That's why that knowledge had to be given to somebody else. Moses could not learn it on his own.

The belief that there is some prized esoteric knowledge out there is what leads many Sufis to deviation, and to beliefs such as communion with God (Wahdat-ul-Wujood) and Dissolution in God (Al-Fanaa), both contrary to the Quran.

The balance you're asking about is the Quran, which God describes this way, "It surely is a decisive statement. It is not a jest." (86:13-14) 1478

### 10.3.31 A halal armed robbery?

*This is funny if it wasn't so pathetic. An armed robber testifies that his crime was halal (allowed in Islam) because he needed the money! He needed the money because he was a member of a terrorist group, so he couldn't get a job! I read that on the muslimsdebate.com website.<sup>2</sup>*

This also shows you the twisted mentality of terrorists. First, they assert that what they are trying to do is good, and of course it's evil, then they justify everything on that basis.

The punishment specified in the Quran for terrorism ( ), which includes armed robbery, is frightening: Execution, crucifixion, severing a hand and a leg on opposite sides or permanent exile. (verse 5:33) Islamic jurists have said that the choice of which punishment applies is left to the judge and is based on the extent of the harm done. 1516

### 10.3.32 Did Mary appear to people?

*What does Islam say about the Marian Apparitions? They are claims that the Virgin Mary (peace be upon her) appeared herself in front of certain people to deliver them a message, like The Lady of Guadeloupe, The Lady of Fatima, etc? Did the Virgin Mary really appear before the people? Or was it Satan disguised as someone righteous in order to lead people astray? Thanks!*

No one knows for sure.

What Islam says about Mary, peace be upon her, is pretty much what's in the Quran. God describes her and her son as a "sign for the worlds" (21:91). Signs of God are there to draw our attention to *Him*, not to the sign. 2013

<sup>2</sup>The article was since removed from the website.

### 10.3.33 Are Muslims poor because of their religion?

*I live in the United States and am a revert.*

*Everyone for the most part who is not Muslim I talk to thinks Islam is in countries that are poor and backward.*

Poverty is the result of injustice or laziness. It has nothing to do with one's religion. Muslims were once the richest and most advanced people on earth and now look at them. The West was once poor and dirty and now they are rich and powerful.

When you pursue a progress agenda seriously, you will get there regardless of whether you worship the One True God, or an idol or none at all. If you don't do what it takes to advance, you won't, even if you are the most beloved of God. That is Sunnatullah (God's way) which He instituted in this life.

Muslims not only abandoned science and technology, which they revolutionized and pioneered, they also abandoned much of Islam, keeping only appearances. The result is that they sunk relative to other countries in material accomplishment and citizen welfare, and God withdrew His blessings from them so they now fight and kill each other and themselves.

The solution is simple but hard: understand Islam correctly, follow it closely and pursue a progress agenda. 847

### 10.3.34 Does analytical thinking reduce religious belief?

*VANCOUVER: A University of British Columbia study suggests analytical thinking can be harmful to religious faith. The psychology report, in the prestigious journal Science, reveals that religious belief drops after subjects perform analytical tasks or are exposed to Auguste Rodin's sculpture, The Thinker.*

*However, UBC social psychologists Will Gervais and Ara Norenzayan insist they are not debunking religion or promoting atheism. Instead, they are trying to figure out the psychological origins of spirituality.*

Interesting study, but notice how it does not name the religions espoused by the participants? That means they willfully bundled all religions together versus atheism. That is an assumption on their part whose validity they first had to prove. What if all participants in their survey actually followed the same one religion, which is very likely?

Those snags aside, it is particularly profound that the Quran keeps prodding its readers to think, reflect, examine, reason and adopt sound logic *in conjunction*

*with* having faith and consulting ones heart, conscience, guts and feelings. That is the consistent message of Islam: Balance. Things in life are not ``either or'', but rather ``both and.'' The challenge before each of us in life is how to correctly balance the seemingly opposite demands of aspects of our lives all of which we need.

A Muslim finds enormous help on this tough task through the guidance of the Holy Quran and the teachings of the Sunna. In Islam, there is no conflict between science and faith, between scripture and history, between the individual and society, between the spiritual and the material. They can all coexist and must. So can and must the heart and the mind just like the left brain and the right brain coexist and cooperate!

Blind faith is as bad as atheism. The former cancels the mind. The latter cancels the heart. 2118

### 10.3.35 On hijab, niqab, beards and faith healing

*The dean of Islamic studies at Al-Azhar university, Egypt, made announcements that are bound to get criticism. Dr. Aamina Nusayr said that Niqab (face veil that only shows the eyes) is a Jewish tradition and not part of Islam, while Hijab (head scarf) is. She criticized Salafis who let their beard grow to look like a "radish bundle" as she put it, and finally she said that healing with the Quran is hocus pocus; that the Quran heals the soul, not the body.*

*What do you think?*

There is no evidence from the Quran that the Niqab is required for Muslim women. The only evidence comes from hadiths that state that the wives of the Prophet (PBUH) wore it. Some scholars view that as a mandate on all Muslim women, but the majority see it as a special status for the Prophet's wives only. Other women may elect to wear it, but they are not required to. That view best matches the evidence. Whether the Niqab is a Jewish tradition is something that Jewish readers and historians are better qualified to confirm or refute.

Dr. Nusayr said that 13 exegetes have interpreted the so-called<sup>3</sup> Hijab verse (24:31) to mean the head and neck, not the face. I agree that it does not address the face, but I respectfully disagree that it orders covering of the hair. The verse clearly orders covering the upper chest, *using whatever the woman is wearing on her head*. The assumption that the woman is wearing a head cover is what prompted most scholars to say that a head cover is required. But the verse never said it was.

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<sup>3</sup>The word Hijab is never mentioned in the Quran or the authentic Hadith to mean a head scarf. Whenever it was mentioned, it always means seclusion (verse 19:17) or privacy screen (verse 33:53). The verse modern Muslims call the hijab verse calls the head scarf Khimar, which is the correct Arabic word for it.

So, why does the Quran make this assumption? It's because everyone at that time covered their heads - women and men. In fact, that was the custom of all people, not just the Arabs, throughout the centuries. Only in the Twentieth Century did people start to go out with exposed hair.

The ``Hijab verse" requires women to cover their decollete area, that's all. The reason is that many dresses at that time were tailored with an open decollete area, and Islam makes it clear that this area is a charm that can incite lust and therefore should be covered. A dress that does not have such design already complies with the ``Hijaab verse", whether the woman is covering her head or not.

Interestingly enough, the verse mentions one more thing that women of the time used to wear: ankle bracelets! Should we then conclude that ankle bracelets too are required? I'm not aware of any scholar who suggested that. Ankle bracelets are neither required nor forbidden. They are simply allowed, just like head covers are. What is forbidden about ankle bracelets is banging the feet so that they chime, thus drawing attention to the woman's legs though they are hidden. You can see the fallacy of the conclusion that because God mentions a head cover it must be required.

It also follows that ankle bracelets that chime all the time are forbidden even if the woman wearing them never bangs her feet. It also follows that a woman wearing ankle bracelets that never chime may bang her feet as much as she likes! Get it? The scholars who have been fixated on the words ``their head covers" totally miss the points of the ``Hijab verse", namely: (a) Women should cover areas of their bodies that tend to arouse men's lust, and (b) Women should not draw attention to those areas even if they are covered. That would defeat the purpose of covering them!

As for the unruly long beard, the evidence for it comes from a hadith where the Prophet (PBUH) says, "Trim the mustaches and let the beards grow. Do the opposite of the Magi." Narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (260) who rated it authentic.

It is important to realize that imperatives in religious texts are two types: mandates or recommendations. Scholars of Foundations have devised a [simple rule](#) to be able to tell which is which. If the order is accompanied by explicit words that it is a mandate, then obviously it is. If the flip-side of the order is prohibited, then the order is a mandate. Otherwise, the order is a recommendation. The consequence of this distinction, as the scholars defined it, is that with a mandate you are rewarded when you do it and punished when you don't. With a recommendation, on the other hand, you are rewarded when you do it, but *not punished* when you don't. There is no evidence that shaving a beard is prohibited. Therefore, the order in the hadith is a recommendation.

The other point to consider is that the hadith clearly states a contingency, namely, that Muslims should look distinctly different from the Magi. A command revolves around its contingency, as the scholars have concluded, so the hadith only applies if today's Magi all have the same distinct look and a Muslim imitates

that look. I rather doubt that today's Magi all wear their facial hair the same way.

Finally, healing with the Quran is not hocus pocus. God says in it, "And We send down of the Quran what is a healing and a mercy for the believers" (17:82). This verse does not say whether the healing is spiritual, physical or both. Since it doesn't, we have to assume both unless other evidence suggests otherwise. Verses 10:57 and 41:44 also make the same statement. There is evidence from the Hadith for and against faith healing. Evidence for it comes from Aisha ([Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5741)) and evidence against it comes from Ibn Abbas ([Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5705)), may God have been pleased with them. Aisha's narration quotes the Prophet (PBUH) making a supplication for a sick person, but he did not recite any verses ([Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5746)). Other hadiths, however, stated the recitation of Al-Fatiha (Chapter 1) seven times ([Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2279, 5007, 5736, 5749)). Therefore, we can conclude that faith healing (Ruqya) with the Quran is allowed and faith healing with a supplication also is. Furthermore, to say that this is the only way to heal is a stretch, since neither God nor His Messenger have suggested that. God is the Healer whether the medicine is the Quran, a supplication or pharmaceutical.

God knows best.

2170

### 10.3.36 Why not a Muslim Pope?

*Why don't the Muslims create a Muslim "Pope" to represent the ummah and clear up misconceptions about Islam and our beloved Prophet (saws)? If the Christians have someone to represent them, why can't we? Don't you think we need a Caliph or "Pope" like figure to represents us? Thanks.*

No, I don't. Islam is not confined to the opinion of any one person or group. The only person who ever had that kind of authority was the Prophet, peace be upon him, as he was assigned that responsibility by God. But even he had to consult with the Sahaba (his fellows) on many issues in which he did not receive revelation. After he died, no one person or a select group had an exclusive right to interpret Islam. That is why the Salaf (Muslim predecessors) differed with each other, however respectfully, on nearly every detail of the religion that is not one of the fundamentals. That is why you see multiple schools of thought (Mazhab). If there would be a Muslim "Pope", which school of thought would he follow? And what happens to Muslims who favor a different school of thought, something which they have every right to?

The Quran sets all the guidelines that Muslims need. In today's parlance, it is a Constitution. It states principles, rules and credos. And it repeatedly invites its readers to reason and to consult each other in order to arrive at the correct conclusions. As a result, Muslims developed a very sophisticated deduction discipline (Usul-al-Fiqh). Neither the Quran nor the Sunna (practice of the Prophet (PBUH)) have sanctioned a priesthood or a clergy system. They have

praise for scholars but nothing more.

As for a Caliph, it depends! A benevolent, freely elected leader of Muslims would be a good thing, but any other can do more harm than good, as history teaches us.

2116

### 10.3.37 Is Islam too strict and hard to commit to?

*It seems to me that Islam is too strict and has a lot of rules, do's and don'ts. Is this a wrong perception?*

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “*This religion is easy! And no one would play tug of war with it but it will defeat him. So, make things easy and don't make them hard. Find points of agreement or closeness [with people]*”, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (39).

Islam does have many requirements, but they are all within our capacity. God says, “God does not charge a soul except what is within its capacity” (2:286). He also makes worship easier on the worshipers who do them wanting, and He rewards worship generously, which makes the worshiper eager to offer worship.

221

### 10.3.38 Is euthanasia allowed in Islam?

*When my mother was in the hospital she was declared brain dead and was only being supported by the oxygen machine. When the doctor told us there was nothing they can do my father decided to remove the life support and let her go. The rest of us however refused to do so. A day after she died naturally. Is removing the life support considered euthanasia and if its allowed in Islam?*

May God have mercy on your mother.

Since removing life support escalates removal of life and keeping it slows that down, it is euthanasia. Euthanasia is given the euphemism “mercy” killing. That means it's a killing. So, the question is “is killing a brain dead person allowed in Islam?”

To answer that question, one needs to understand when Islam allows killing. God says in the holy Quran, “And do not kill the soul which God has made sacrosanct except in truth.” (6:151). What does “in truth” mean? The Quran answers that. There are only three situations that the Quran has allowed killing: (i) self defense, which includes war, (ii) as punishment for first degree murder and (iii) as punishment for terrorism. Clearly euthanasia does not qualify.

The euphemism "mercy killing" makes it clear that the act is not done out of compassion for the sick, who may be in a coma, but in order to spare the loved ones the pain of watching dearly departing die slowly. It's understandable why they are in pain, but that is no excuse for killing. Otherwise, suicide would be acceptable but of course it is totally forbidden.

There is a difference between deadening and killing. Deadening is when the soul departs the body naturally and that can only be done by the angel of death authorized by God. Killing is when the soul is forced out of the body. It preempts deadening and therefore it's an infringement on God's authority. 2247

### 10.3.39 Losing weight

If you have ever tried to lose weight, you know three things: (a) That the way to do it is simple and well known, albeit easier said than done, (b) that it requires discipline and self control and (c) that when it succeeds, you feel unencumbered and happy. You know you've done the right thing for yourself. The same can be said about stopping any addiction, such as smoking or gambling. Even spring cleaning is the same way.

And so is soul cleaning. The Prophet (PBUH) commented one day on verse 83:14 of the holy Quran. The verse said, "Nay! Rather, what they have been earning [of sin] has formed a stain on their hearts." (83:14). He said, "*A person's heart gets blotted every time he sins. If he repents, it is polished out. If he does it again, the blot gets bigger. Until his heart is blocked. That is the stain.*", narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA), reported by [Ibn Majah \[36\]](#) (3441), and rated authentic by [Al-Albani \[8\]](#) (3441).

Cleaning of the heart is probably the hardest component of soul cleaning. It all starts with cleaning of the faith, such that no hint of "shirk" (associating others with God in worship) taints it. Then comes mind cleaning: cleaning of thoughts, such that you assume good until you see otherwise and when you do you forgive. Change negative thoughts to positive ones promptly and seek refuge in God from the whispers of Satan. Think twice before saying or doing things. Never act impulsively or on negative emotions. Stay away from negative people. Keep up prayer, supplication and charity. Read the Quran and reflect on it. Say good words and do good wherever you go and to whomever you meet. Clean your attitude, such that you deal with all with equal respect and courtesy.

When you boycott sin, it works for your soul like boycotting cigarettes works on your lungs and boycotting gambling works for your pocket book. The more you practice, and ask God to help and strengthen you, the easier it will get and the more likely it will be to succeed. 2273

### 10.3.40 Fire against fire

On the Facebook page of IslamicExperiences is an interesting story. A man asked a Shaykh (Muslim scholar), "O Shaykh, the hell is made from fire, and Satan is made from fire! So, how will the punishment harm him when they are created from the same thing?"

The Shaykh told him to come closer, then he slapped him across the face! The man was in shock and asked, "That hurts! Why did you slap me!" To which the Shaykh replied, "What is my hand made from?" The man replied, "Flesh." He then asked the man, "And what is your face made from?" He answered, "Flesh!" The shaykh finally asked him, "Now did you not feel pain?"

Clever, right?

I'd add that the power of God overrules the laws that govern His creatures. He said to the fire in the pit where Abraham (PBUH) was thrown, "O fire! Be cool and safe on Abraham!" (21:69) And Abraham walked out of the pit unscathed. 2035

### 10.3.41 Am I a bad Muslim?

*I am very much thankful to Allah for everything . But i hate myself for not obeying Him. I hate myself as I am a great and deep sinner. I am fed up of being this way . . . . I have done so many sins in my life; I don't know how will I erase them . . . . Even if I sit and cry the whole day, my heart won't feel a bit better . . I am very scared of Allah. I don't know how much punishment Allah will give me. I don't know what to do . . . I know no matter what, I will go astray . . I don't know what I am . I am very sick of myself . . . I don't know what more to write and show my evilness . . . I hate myself.*

Imam Abu-Hamid Al-Ghazali, may God bless his soul, defined faith beautifully as "the balance between fear and hope." (A. Al-Ghazali [13] (Shamela Library)) Your fear of God is proper because His punishment is severe, but you're neglecting the fact that He is also most Merciful, Gracious and Generous. Not to leave out Forbearing.

Do not say that no matter what you will go astray. That's Satan's whispers to you in order to persuade you to abandon this uphill struggle and obey him instead. God forbid. What you should say instead is that you may sin because you're a fallible human, but you know how to repent and expiate it if it ever happens. God is there all the time, close by, quick to forgive those who seek His forgiveness, lets pass many of our infractions and misgivings, and gives us all the time we need to reconnect with Him.

707

### 10.3.42 Is the shrine at Mecca an idol?

*Isn't the Muslim prayer toward the shrine in Mecca (Al-Kaaba) a form of idolatry?*

Idol worship means the belief that the idol has power. That's not what most Christians believe when they pray toward a cross or a crucifix. By the same token, Muslims do not believe that the black stone or the Kaaba have any power. Muslims pray toward the Kaaba because God says so. 64

### 10.3.43 Are Muslims obligated to fight non-Muslims till they accept Islam?

*I've read articles on the web alledging that the Quran requires Muslims to fight non-Muslims until they accept Islam or be killed! The article quotes verse 8:39. I find that hard to believe, but then I'm no expert on the Quran.*

Your instinct is correct. The Quran says no such thing.

The verse the article quotes in evidence comes between two verses. The article's author, by negetcing to show the verse's context, exposes his ill intentions with this article. Here are the three verses, which together make the meaning very clear,

{8:38} "Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, they will be forgiven what has previously occurred. But if they return [to hostility] - then the precedent of the former [rebellious] peoples has passed."

{8:39} "And fight them **until there is no persecution** and [until] the religion, all of it, is for God. And if they cease - then indeed, God sees well what they do."

{8:40} "But if they turn away - then *know that God is your protector*. How excellent a protector, and how excellent a helper!"

Thus, the subject of this verse is fighting religious persecution so that people who choose Islam will not be persecuted. But even if religious persecution continues, Muslims must endure knowing that God is with them and will protect their faith.

That same clear principle is stated in Chapter 2 as well,

{2:193} "Fight them **until there is no persecution** and the religion is for God. If they cease, then **there is to be no aggression except against the oppressors.**"

The Quran has repeatedly made it clear that faith is voluntary. Some verses that teach that unambiguously are,

{18:29} "And say, 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; **and whoever wills - let him disbelieve.**' "

{10:99} “And had your Lord willed [it], those in the earth would have believed - all of them entirely. *Is it you then who compels people to be believers?*” 614

#### 10.3.44 Moral atheists?

*As-Salaam-Alaikum,*

*I would like to know, what is the Islamic response to those people (atheist, agnostics, etc.) who say that you can be moral without religion?*

*They say this because since they don't believe in God or any religion for that matter that that you can be a good moral person without God or religion. In a way I kind of understand where they are coming from but then I kind of feel like something is wrong with their statements.*

*What is the Islamic response to people who say things like this? Thanks!*

Morality cannot be forced on people but it can be *enforced* by law. That is, a society can arrange itself such that certain values it considers paramount are upheld and others it considers harmful are stopped by force of law. But that is a different question altogether from people committing themselves willingly to certain moral values. We see all parents raising their children to certain moral values they believe in, but the children may not observe them when they grow up. And we also see the flip side: parents neglecting moral teaching of their children, yet the children acquire moral attitudes when they grow up!

Islam teaches us that non-Muslims can be moral and furthermore can do good. The Quran says, “And verily, among the people of the Book are those whom if you entrust with a Qintar (a heap of money), he would deliver it to you” (3:75). God also tells us in the Quran that “whatever good they (non-Muslims) do, they will not be denied it” (3:115).

That is why, when non-Muslims do good to us, we are required to reciprocate with good. Asmaa bint Abi-Bakr (RA) had migrated to Medina, but her mother, Qutaila bint Abdil-Uzza, remained in Mecca and remained polytheist. Then one day, Qutaila traveled to Medina to see her daughter and brought her a gift. Asmaa was wary that she must sever her relationships with polytheists, so she consulted the Prophet (PBUH) on whether she may receive her mother. The Prophet told her, “Yes, *keep kin with your mother*”, narrated by Asmaa and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2620) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1003).

So, if religion is not a pre-requisite to morality, then why is religion necessary? Religion's purpose is not only to establish a moral code, but also to establish a bond between man and God, a bond that man feels very strongly. A bond that atheists cannot explain away. That affinity is ingrained in all of us since before we were born. God says in the holy Quran, “And [mention] when your Lord

took from the children of Adam - from their backbones - their offspring and had them testify of themselves, [saying to them], 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'But yes. We have testified.' [This] - lest you should say on the day of Resurrection, 'We were of this unaware.' " (3:172)

Besides, moral values vary with people. What is immoral to some may not be to others. And what is moral to some may not be to others. God has given us in the Quran the true moral code to live by. And He had His Prophet (PBUH) teach it to us in the authentic Sunna. 2450

### 10.3.45 What about re-incarnation?

*Is there no re-incarnation whatsoever in Islam? If so, if someone dies and is not Muslim do they go to hell? Do they get no other chances? What if someone doesn't believe in a physical hell, or for that matter any hell at all?*

*I understand a lot of the Quran, but some must be left up to the imagination, because no one knows for sure if there is a heaven or a hell.*

*If someone never had access to a Quran or never met Muslims or heard of Islam, would they still go to hell for not being Muslim?*

There is no reincarnation in Islam. When someone dies, that's the end of their life on earth and the beginning of their life in the grave (Barzakh). On the Day of Judgment, all will end their lives in the grave and start their lasting life (Al-Aakhira) either in the doom of the hellfire or the bliss of the Garden (Janna).

The Quran quotes many people who wished they could go back to earth to fix what they did! For example, "We wish we could go back so we can be believers!" (26:102), "We wish we could be returned so that we wouldn't deny the signs of our Lord and be believers!" (6:27), and "Do we have any to vouch for us, or can we be returned so we would do things differently?" (7:53)

If someone dies before becoming Muslim, he or she will go where God sends him or her. No one knows where but God. Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him, who became the second caliph and whom the Prophet, peace be upon him, told that he would go to Paradise, once said, "If on the Day of Judgment an angel calls out that all will go to Paradise but one, I'd worry I'm the one!"

Don't worry about where others are going, worry first about where you're going!

Belief that hell exists is part of the Islamic faith. God says in the holy Quran, "Nay, if you have certain knowledge, you would see the hellfire. And you shall eyeball it with certainty." (102:5-7) 315

### 10.3.46 Is the Western way of life superior to Islam?

*If Islam is so good, how come Muslims run away from their countries and come to the West? It's because the Western way of life is superior to Islam, that's why.*

If people who migrate to the West are running away from Islam then how come they stay Muslim in the West? And how come many of the Westerners who go to Muslim countries or stay in the West end up converting to Islam themselves if Islam is so inferior to the Western way of life? 449

### 10.3.47 Is Aramaic dead?

*I'm told that Aramaic, the language of Jesus Christ, is a dead language. How sad!*

Aramaic is not dead, thanks in large part to Muslims! This is a YouTube video showing a short TV documentary about a Syrian mountain town called Malula, whose population speaks Aramaic,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iy38UQ9EQ6o>

I also know people from Iraq whose native language is Aramaic. 512

### 10.3.48 Do nightmares foretell of pending punishment?

*I have nightmares. Is God angry with me and showing me in my dreams His pending punishment?*

We know from the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), peace be upon him, in Chapter 12 that some dreams foretell the future in a mysterious or symbolic way. God does not tell ordinary people if they are going to Paradise or Hell except at the moment of death when the dying person sees his or her seat there. The only time people were authoritatively told that they were going to Paradise was when the Prophet (ﷺ) told ten Sahaba (his fellows) that good news. May you, we and our loved ones join them there. 834

## 10.4 Muslims

### 10.4.1 Being a beacon of light

*Brother, why do people, believers and non-believers, not understand the power of faith?*

*And question number two: The prostration of the heart. I have read that once the heart prostrates it remains in that position. That the body returns to the upright position but the heart has no fear of death. Can you give me some links to ponder this one?*

*Lastly, I have caught so many blessings my hands are teaming full. Now...what do I do with the blessings. How do I serve my Lord and Creator such that the blessings are spread as the hadith about the corn...how does one make one blessing turn into the thousands? I am a simple woman. I am not Yusef (Joseph, peace be upon him).*

I would respectfully disagree that the heart remains prostrate. Did you know that the word for heart in Arabic, Al-Qalb, literally means that which keeps turning over? Recall the supplication of the Prophet (PBUH), “O Turner of hearts, steady my heart upon Your religion. O Diverter of hearts, direct my heart toward obeying you.” Narrated in different versions by Umm Salama and Anas ibn Malik, may God have been pleased with them, and reported and rated between authentic and sound by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2140) and [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (2140).

I wish the heart could be set once and for all, the task of faith would've been easy.

People underestimate the power of faith because it does not work the way they expect! People want things now and faith produces results on God's own timing. People want specific things, but faith brings them what God has determined to be best for them. “...And God knows and you do not know.” (3:66)

The way to turn one blessing into thousands is to “lend God a goodly loan” (57:18). That expression God uses in the Quran several times and it a surprising statement, isn't it? How do we creatures lend anything to our Creator? And what do we lend Him? He is the owner of everything we've got, including our lives. How do you lend someone something he owns and you don't?

The best way to understand this metaphor is to contemplate an Egyptian proverb that says, “Do the good and throw it in the river!” What the Egyptians mean by that is that we are to do good and not expect anything in return because we know that God will reward us for it sometime somehow. That is the goodly loan. You do not collect interest on it nor recall it nor does it become due any time, but it pays off big time. You just don't know when or how. 2398

## 10.4.2 How come new Muslims are called reverts?

*People who embrace Islam, why are they called reverts, and not converts? For if you check the meaning of the word Revert it means “to return to a former habit, practice, belief, **condition**, etc.” like saying “They reverted to the ways of their forefathers.” (source: dictionary.com)*

The word I highlighted in the definition you quoted is why. They, like everyone else, were born Muslim. That is the original condition of every creature, the knowledge of and the submission to the one true God. Their parents make them Christian, Jew, Magus, etc. So, when they accept Islam, they return to their original state. 651

### 10.4.3 Why did Muslims lose their glory?

*I'm curious about how the Islamic areas lost their power. I know it was powerful and had its golden age for awhile..but what destroyed middle-east and made it so weak as it is today?*

In a few words: abandonment of principle.

It wasn't military. For example, the Mongol invasion had a mightier military. It invaded and gobbled up the Middle East in a few years. But it was a crisis that brought out the best in Muslims. Saif Al-Deen Qutuz of Egypt confronted the Mongols and defeated them. And, get this, the Mongols eventually accepted Islam.

The decline of Muslims began, IMHO, with the Ottoman Empire. During that time, religious knowledge declined because Ijtihad (analysis) was suspended. The Ottomans had a mighty army, but instead of using it to protect Muslims and Islam, as God teaches, they used it to invade neighboring countries in Europe and collect taxes from their citizens. That is how resentment of Islam was born in Europe and it is why Europeans fear Islam today and believe it's violent and a threat to them.

What sealed the decline and signaled its end is the Armenian genocide at the hands of the Young Turks brief rule. It is no coincidence that the Ottoman Empire collapsed only eight years after that massacre. God's retribution is not biased. 1406

### 10.4.4 What is holding Muslims back?

*In conversations with disbelievers and nonbelievers, they are adamant about being able to create anything they want in this world, i.e., whatever their hearts desire. It is the go for it attitude: Nothing is holding you back. What the Amway philosophy was in the 1970's. Nothing is holding you back but yourself.*

*My thoughts are: In conversations with Muslims, we have the hadeeths of tying your camel and working hard, but we do not have the go for it attitude. I understand we are going for the big bucks. We are not sprinters but marathon runners. What else holds us back from this attitude.*

In short: our perception of our self worth.

This has nothing to do with religion, especially Islam. Case in point is the early Muslims. Nothing held them back. Before Islam, the Arabs were nobodies, constantly fighting each other for some meager spoils. After Islam, they established one of the longest, most global, most enlightened civilizations in human history!

What holds the Muslims of today back is the same as what holds all underachievers. They do not believe they can, or deserve to advance. This negative self perception is often the result of culture. A child who sees negligence tolerated and hard work punished is not likely to do any worthy work.

What is the solution? The reversal of that mindset. I'm always happy to hear people from all spiritual persuasions teach positive thinking and self value, such as Muslim Amr Khaled, Christian Joel Osteen, and New Age Wayne Dyer.

Some of the readers may say to themselves, "But isn't the culture in Muslim countries based on Islam?" The answer is no. It is only influenced by Islam, but the culture actually rewards sloppiness, puts down achievers and aborts much of the hard work. A sad state of affairs indeed, but is fixable if people work together seriously to fix it. 1514

#### 10.4.5 Is migration to a Muslim country mandatory?

*A friend told me that his teacher was teaching how Hijra (migration) to a more Islamically sound country is mandatory for Muslims if they live in a non-Muslim country.*

*But no sources were given for this statement. I have searched online but all I can really find is the Hijra Muhammad (PBUH) made.*

It is mandatory only on those who are persecuted in their religion and had the means to migrate. Almighty God says in the holy Quran,

"Verily, those whom the angels recall [in death] having wronged themselves - [the angels] will say, 'In what [condition] were you?' They will say, 'We were oppressed in the land.' The angels will say, 'Was not the earth of God spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?' For those, their refuge is Hell - and evil it is as a destination.

Except for the weakened among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan [to migrate] nor are they guided to a way [out]" (4:97-98). 1207

#### 10.4.6 Why are many Muslims harsh even with each other?

Those Muslims are not listening to the Prophet, peace be upon him, who said,

“By God, he does not believe whose neighbor is not safe from his ugly deeds.”, narrated by Abu-Huraya (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (46),

“The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe.”, narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6484),

“None of you believe until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself”, narrated by Anas ibn Malik (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (13) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (45), and

“Does anything push people’s faces down in the hellfire but the harvest of their tongues?”, narrated by Muaz ibn Jabal (RA) and reported and rated “soundly authentic” by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2616).

Modern culture, TV shows and movies all encourage people to be rude, vulgar and arrogant. A Muslim does not follow culture, he shapes it. Looking cool, doing the in thing or being popular are not goals of a Muslim, rather looking decent, doing the right thing and being virtuous are the goals.

101

### 10.4.7 Why are many Muslims cruel?

*Since my interest in Islam began, I have come to learn that what is said about Islam here and there is mostly not true. There are lots of insulting points that are totally baseless.*

*However, my biggest concern is, how can a merciful religion like Islam give birth to a rather inhuman people? I am sure this will be a shock to many but I assure you that I strongly believe that a muslim doesn’t define Islam by all means so I am not saying Islam is a “cruel” faith.*

*1. Maids from Africa and Asia end up in Arab countries which are predominantly Muslim. But the way they are treated is so ungodly, I don’t know how these people go to the mosque to pray.*

*2. Throughout history, we have seen lots of protests but suicide bombing was almost never an issue. That is because one is afraid of killing his/her life. Suicide bombing seems to be something left to Muslims.*

*3. Muslim women tend to lead a rather controlled life. I have read Islamic books that address this issue and I’ve come to learn that Islam is very generous towards women. I was surprised to learn that, unlike the bible which states a woman was created from a man’s body, a woman was created fully on her own. That shows how valued a woman is in the eyes of Islam. Yet, in my community, I don’t see that at all. I don’t think there is any Islamic justification towards the things that*

*happen either. Again, the question is how they have the guts to force them to lead a life like that when Allah grants them a better life?*

*I have more doubts but it just occurs to me why the heart is so hard like that when Islam teaches the other way round? Isn't Allah's teaching far more stronger and effective than some culture? Or am I missing the point?*

You're not missing the point at all. But Islam did not give birth to those cruel people. They have always been cruel and they have not allowed Islam to heal them. The good news is that the vast majority of Muslims are kind, peaceful and a joy to be with, but you don't hear about them on the 6 O'clock news.

The Arab poet and foremost scholar, Imam Muhammad ibn Idris Al-Shafii once said,

Translation: The eye of contentment overlooks all faults, while the eye of resentment exposes all shortcomings.

A cruel person will make anything cruel. Islam is not responsible for how some people interpret it. It is as clear as the daylight, but some people have dark hearts, bitter souls or closed minds and that's why they turn Islam into the repulsive image that you see on TV or hear about on the news.

The Quran most emphatically forbids killing, as in,

*"But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and God has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great torment" (4:93).*

Yet, thousands of Muslims went ahead and killed fellow Muslims without hesitation or remorse. Is Islam at fault, or are they?

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, *"Whoever throws himself from a hill top and dies is in hell and will be thrown from a hill top in hell. Whoever drinks poison to die and dies is in hell and will keep drinking his poison in hell. Whoever kills himself with a sharp instrument is in hell and will keep stabbing himself with it in hell."* Rated authentic and narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (5778) and [Muslim \[43\]](#) (109), as well as Al-Nasai, Al-Tirmizi, Al-Darimi, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Abu-Dawoud.

Yet, you see thousands of Muslims kill themselves with no hesitation, and with them kill hundreds of innocent people. Is that the fault of Islam or their fault?

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, *"A woman entered Hell because of a cat! She locked it up, wouldn't feed it, give it drink nor let it go eat from the land"*, narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (3318).

Yet, you hear of many Muslims who torture not cats, but people, without a second thought. Is that the fault of Islam or their fault?

God has repeatedly described such people with one phrase, "In their hearts is a disease". That disease is not high blood pressure, it's hatred, bigotry, fundamentalism, cruelty, tribalism, etc. And God has prescribed the Quran, prayer and supplication as cures for those diseases, but do people listen? 740

### 10.4.8 Do Muslims disrespect divorcées?

*I'm interested in Islam and have been reading up about it for the past few days now, although not as much as I'd like to. My job and my son take a great deal of time. However, I had this question that I was searching an answer for, and couldn't find. Let's say I were to become Muslim, would it still be okay to live as a single parent with my job etc.? In my culture - Hinduism - single parents are absolutely abhorred, even if they are divorcees like me. One of my biggest attractions to Islam has been when my friend told me how Islam respects women, even if what I read in the Indian press is otherwise.*

If some of them do, it's their problem. The Quran (the Word of God) and the Hadith (the words of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), say nothing about treating divorcees any differently from married women.

Some people think that because Islam highly regards marriage and highly discourages divorce, that divorced women are to be looked down on. No basis for that whatsoever. If that reasoning had any validity, then divorcing men should also be looked down on! In fact, most men recognize that divorces are more often the fault of the man. That is why, IMHO, God makes it a potential point of no return when a man divorces his wife for the third time. God wants to keep couples together, but He will not tolerate a man who plays a game with the sacred covenant that is marriage.

Islam teaches Muslims that they figuratively are brothers and sisters to each other,

"Verily, believers are siblings, so make right between your two siblings, and watch out for God that you may receive mercy" (49:10). And it teaches that women and men are allies to one another, "Believing men and believing women are allies of each other; they promote virtue, curb vice, establish prayer, give alms, and obey God and His Messenger. Those - God will have mercy on them. Verily, God is Mighty and Wise." (9:71).

Thus, every Muslim man is expected to treat every Muslim woman as if she is his wife, mother, daughter or sister. And most Muslim men meet that expectation. You can see it in many Muslim countries. 2061

### 10.4.9 What does Islam say about Muslims fighting each other?

*Most of the fights Muslims have gotten into seem to be with each other! Why is that? Does Islam antagonize Muslims against each other?*

Quite the contrary. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said,

“Reviling a Muslim is a disobedience to God Almighty, and fighting with him is infidelity”, narrated by Abdullah ibn Masoud (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (7076),

“A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim; he does not wrong him, does not fail him and does not demean him”, narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6951),

“The whole of a Muslim is forbidden to another Muslim: his blood, his property and his honor”, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2564), and

“If two Muslims meet with their swords, the killer and the killed are in hell!” The fellows of the Prophet said with great shock, “O Messenger of God. This is the killer (that is, we can see why the killer would be in hell), but what about the killed?” The Prophet, peace be upon him, replied, “He was determined to kill his fellow!”, narrated by Nafee ibn Al-Harith and reported and authenticated by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (2888) and [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6875). 176

### 10.4.10 Is Muslim life cheap?

*Nick Kristoff wrote in a recent article in the New Republic magazine that Muslim life is cheap, especially for Muslims. Would you comment on that?*

Extremist Muslims give him reason to say that. They not only do not value their fellow Muslims lives, they don't value their own either.

Throughout Muslim history, classic books written by some scholars kept saying whom may be killed, as if they have that authority!

This is especially ironic, since the Quran has declared the value of human life so eloquently, “Whoever kills a soul, unless retaliating for a killed soul or for villainy in the land, it is as if he killed all mankind. And whoever keeps it alive, it is as he saved all mankind.” (5:32)

The Quran also tells us so clearly that whoever deliberately kills a believer incurs God's wrath, curse and will be in the Hellfire for eternity, severely tormented! (4:93) In his last sermon, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “The whole of a Muslim is forbidden to another Muslim: his blood, his property and his

*honor*”, narrated by Abu-Hurayra (RA) and reported and authenticated by Muslim [43] (2564).

How so many Muslims gloss over all those references is beyond me to fathom.  
1064

### 10.4.11 Majority of terrorism victims are Muslim

*I just read an article that says:*

*A study from December 2009 by the Center for Combating Terrorism at West Point says that “the vast majority of Al Qaeda’s victims are Muslims” and that “15 percent of the fatalities resulting from Al-Qaeda attacks between 2004 and 2008 were Westerners.”*

*How do Muslim terrorists justify killing fellow Muslims?*

The same way they justify killing innocent people from all faiths: they label them hypocrite, apostate, infidel, etc. Terrorists who call themselves Muslim and claim to be guarding the faith are nothing more than a mad evil campaign that the world must confront and eradicate with force.

Terrorists cannot find backing in the Quran for their perverted agenda. The Quran condemns the killing of believers in the strongest possible language, see verse 4:93. The Quran also makes it unambiguously clear that killing one innocent life is like killing all of humanity, and saving one life is like saving all of humanity (verse 5:32)

The fact that they call those who oppose their lunatic views infidel backfires against them! The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever calls his brother Kafir (disbeliever), one of them returns with it!” Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar, may God have been pleased with both, and reported by Al-Bukhari [12] (6104) and Muslim [43] (60). The terrorists who accuse others of disbelief may be shooting themselves in the heart.

1666

### 10.4.12 How about a Muslim commune?

*I was reading something about a new Mennonite (similar to Amish) commune in my state. A commune is basically a small community where people share similar interests.*

*That got me thinking about a Muslim commune! In this case, everyone there would be Muslim and it would be away from a mixed religion city.*

*There are MANY of these in the United States: Amish communes, Mormons, Hippies (self-sustaining communes) and even one for Buddhists in Oregon.*

*IF there was a Muslim commune, we could impose “laws” which all people in the community had to abide by. We could have a Shariah law system as close as US federal law allowed.*

*Alcohol would be illegal, the Masjid (mosque) could play the Azan (Call to prayer) 5 times a day, and given how many Muslims lived there, we could have a private school grades k-12. These things are common in these small communities, usually all one would have to leave for are groceries and other things like that!*

*How cool would this idea be?*

Sorry for discussing the cynical side of it, but unfortunately the cynical side in this case is quite probable.

You may end up with a fundamentalist commune, in which everyone is required to believe in a narrow version of Islam or else are excommunicated or worse. Despite the Quran's explicit prohibition of it, many Muslims have no qualms about calling each other names and they have a large bag of labels to cast on their fellow Muslims who disagree with them. The chance for a successful Muslim commune are slim unless Muslims learn to respect each other's views and live and let live.

Those Muslims who can coexist with diverse views do not need to live in a commune! They do just fine in a pluralistic society. 1222

### 10.4.13 Should Muslims leave non-Muslim countries?

*Is it better for Muslims now living in non-Muslim countries to stay, enduring the hardships of un-Islamic life and Islamophobia, or is it better for them to go back to Muslim countries?*

If the early Muslims thought that, they would have stayed in Arabia. Thank God they did not. Closed minds close the door of daawa (Inviting to Islam) and deprive millions from guidance. God tells us, “You have been the best community **brought out for people**; you promote virtue, curb vice, and believe in God.” (3:110). It's our charter from God to be among others, so that, at least, they would see, hear and experience what being a Muslim means. We have not been privileged to be Muslims for no reason! We are given this enormous privilege because we are required to convey the message to others, if only by our good example. 985

### 10.4.14 Do all Muslim households look alike?

*In my readings, I have come across many references to Muslim*

*households. We do have some guidelines. The direction we sleep. We all have an area dedicated to prayer in our homes. We have rules for halal (what is allowed). I was reading articles on gardening and I found a request for information on Islamic gardens. We are all gardeners in Islam. There are rules of etiquette we follow that transcend culture. We as a people have areas that are dedicated as private and those for our guests. I call this the "Feng Shui of Islam!" I bring it up because I want to help reverts understand that there is a simple method to practicing Islam. We do not seek perfection in our households. Unlike many other peoples we can have a picture hanging a little lopsided and not be concerned as it reminds us of our limitations and imperfections. I always think of Alhambra with the crooked door.*

I love the expression ``Feng Shui of Islam."

A Christian gentleman once asked me, ``Why do all Muslims have the same culture?" It is not exactly culture, but rather Sunna, guidelines of the Prophet (PBUH). In fact, culture is what each country has that is NOT taught by the Quran or the Sunna.

I'm not sure about the lopsided picture hanging on the wall though. I wouldn't tolerate it myself, LOL. 1560

### 10.4.15 Life became hard after I became Muslim

*I love Allah Taala (may He be exalted) above all others and would not abandon Islam for any reason. However in saying this I cannot help but sometimes think that He (Taala) may have abandoned me. I mean like before I reverted everything was fine, afterwards? At times I ask myself whether life is worth the effort. I suppose this is normal when peoples lives become seemingly too much to bear.*

God has not abandoned you and never will, for you are a believer. God says in the holy Quran that He is the ally of those who have believed (verse 2:257).

Your test of faith is hard, because your faith is strong! The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "*The hardest tested people are the prophets, then the best of people after them, then the best of people after them.*" Narrated by Saad ibn Abi-Waqqas (RA) and reported and rated soundly authentic by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2398). The hadith continues to say, "*The servant keeps being tested until he walks the earth with no sins on him.*"

God the Graceful taught us how to receive calamities. You of course know that, but it is always good to repeat as a reminder. He says,

“And We shall surely test you with a bit of fear, hunger and shortage of wealth, lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, who when disaster strikes them, say, ‘Indeed we belong to God, and indeed to Him we are returning.’ Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the guided.” (2:155-157)

May God end your hardship soon to your delight.

1277

### 10.4.16 Why don't fellow Muslims greet me?

*For some reason I identify more with the American revert (as they do me). What happens to us, and specifically the non-white female, is we are ignored by most Muslims. And there are subtle clues in dress and mannerisms that identify us as American Muslims. There is that imperceptible cultural wall. And no-one gets past it.*

*What advise would you give to the American revert in terms of conducting themselves when meeting Muslims. How do we get past that cultural clutter to a sincere Assalaam walaikum.*

As I mentioned in another, related post, this problem is most likely cultural, not personal.

That said, many Muslims think that a greeting between men and women is improper as it opens the door for flirtation. The opinion of several scholars, such as Imams Malik, Ibn Hanbal and Al-Nawawi is that initiating a greeting, which all agree is a Sunna, is permissible if Fitna (temptation) is not likely. That is why they ruled that a man may greet a group of women (which the Prophet (ﷺ) did, as reported by Abu-Dawoud and narrated by Asmaa bint Yazeed), or may greet an older woman, but not a young woman.

There is nothing explicit about this, however, in the Quran or the Sunna. It is merely an opinion based on analysis. It has merit. Certainly, many men would use the greeting as a “line” to say to women, knowing that returning a greeting is mandatory in Islam. Ibn Hanbal went further and ruled that a woman is exempt from returning a greeting from a man.

Getting past the cultural clutter takes time, communication and initiative. It is a good investment for any Muslim, because culture tends to overshadow everything, including religion and logic.

1556

### 10.4.17 Who are the Ahmadiyya Muslims?

*Can you explain to me who the Ahmadi Muslims are, what they believe that is different from mainstream Sunni Muslims? Thanks.*

The Ahmadiyya are a Muslim sect whose followers believe that a man, named Ghulam Mirza Ahmad, was a prophet. Islam makes it clear that there will be no prophets or messengers of God after Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. The Quran states, "Muhammad has not been the father of any of your men, but the Messenger of God and **the seal** of the prophets." (33:40)

You might wonder how then do the Ahmadiyya justify their belief that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet? They interpret the word "seal" differently. They believe it means "the best" or "the leader", etc. But all other Muslims understand it as it means in Arabic, i.e., the permanent closure.

The verb is used in the Quran to mean permanent closure and finality in several verses, e.g.,

"God has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and on their eyes is a covering, and for them is a *grand torment*" (2:7) and

"Have you seen him who has taken as his god his [own] desire, and God has sent him astray despite [his] knowledge and has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart and put over his vision a veil? So who will guide him *after God*? Then will you not be reminded?" (45:23)

It should be noted that the Ahmadiyya do believe in God and His Messenger, the Quran and the Sunna, and perform all pillars and mandates, and abstain from all prohibitions, etc. 1316

### 10.4.18 Protesting against a Muslim ruler

*I've read articles that say assert that protesting against a Muslim ruler, even if he is unjust, is not allowed. I even heard recently that Saudi scholars issued a fatwa prohibiting demonstrations! What say you?*

Explain then why Al-Husein ibn Ali, may God have been pleased with both, fought Yazid ibn Muawia, who was the ruler, and why Abdullah ibn Al-Zubair, may God have been pleased with both, fought Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi, who used to lead the prayers?

They did because Yazid and Al-Hajjaj were tyrants. Fighting them is required Jihad.

The Quran and the Sunna both urge Muslims to resist tyranny and vindicate themselves:

"There shall be no aggression except against the wrongdoers" (2:193),

"And those who, when tyranny hits them, they vindicate themselves" (42:39),

"And those who vindicate themselves after they have been wronged"(26:227),

*"If (the Muslim) is ordered to commit a violation, there shall be no*

obedience.” Narrated by Ibn Umar (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2955), and

“If they did it (enter a fire as ordered by their imam!), they would never have left it! Obedience is ONLY in Maaruf (virtue, that which is recognized as good).” Narrated by Ali ibn Abi-Talib (RA) and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (7257). 1387

### 10.4.19 Are demonstrations against a bad Muslim ruler allowed?

*I've read many articles arguing that demonstrations against a Muslim ruler, even one who is a tyrant, are not allowed in Islam! Is that true? Doesn't make sense to me.*

“And those who, when transgression hits them, they vindicate themselves” (42:39).

Does this answer your question?

Interestingly enough, this verse comes immediately after the democracy verse, “...And their affair is by consultation between them” (42:38). 1375

### 10.4.20 Facing up to a Pharaoh

*I just discovered first hand that reading the Quran is a journey. Some of the passages are so powerful that I actually slept all day one day.*

*I know I am going through a tough time but this time reading the Quran has been a drastically different experience.*

*Musa (PBUH) (Moses) had a staff. He had his brother Haaron (Aaron) (PBUH)... What staff can I hold onto?*

What did Hajar (Hagar) (PBUH) hold on to? Her husband, Ibrahim (Abraham) (PBUH) told her he's been commanded by God to leave her and their only son, Ismail (Ishmael) (PBUH), who was still a baby, in a desert in the middle of nowhere. Her reply was, “God ordered you? Then He will not abandon us.”

I know you may be thinking that Hagar, peace be upon her, was in a completely different league than the rest of us. True, but she reached that plateau only because of her faith. She was an ordinary woman, a maid, with no material means. Because of what she did next, God sprang the Zamzam Well and that arid, vacant desert became the flourishing city of Mecca. Since her time, millions of people have echoed her footsteps every year (during the pilgrimage).

I sure hope that you do not have to face a pharaoh anytime soon. Also remember that Aaron (PBUH) was not always very helpful to his brother.

One of the ways the Quran was described was that “*Its wonders never cease*”, a quote attributed to Ibn Masoud in one narration and to Ali in another, may God have been pleased with them. Indeed, if you read the Quran and you get the feeling that you're reading it for the first time, then rejoice, for God is bringing you closer to Him by giving you new insight into His word.

*Funny thing I just saw a video on Hagar. I have always admired her faith.*

*What I have also experienced are the immediacies of receiving blessings. I see that Allah subhana wa taala does not hold back. When we ask He gives.*

*I am always about the inner journey. And the section of the Path that I am walking upon demands that I spend time on the quest. In a sense I am learning that we are always exactly where He wants us to be, at any given moment. Maybe that realization is the fountain of youth. It takes the stressors and anxieties away.*

*I do not think I will meet a pharaoh anytime soon, Besides, it is not the meeting that is momentous. It is the gathering of the faith leading to the meeting. On a deeper level don't we meet mini-pharaoh's every day? They may not be as powerful but the sheer arrogance of their personalities and their inability to prostrate to the Lord of the Universe and persistence in sinning ways.*

*(May Allah subhana wa taala reward you immensely. Your words are always a source of strength and comfort)*

Amen, and may He reward you likewise.

The journey is indeed inner more than it is outer. The outer journey is perhaps easier because it is aided by other people. We are encouraged by parents, teachers and preachers to pray, fast, be charitable, exercise good manners and say and do good. We see immediately the effect of the good we do to others and it makes us happy and fulfilled. The reward is felt right away.

But the inner journey we make alone. And it is an arduous journey. God says in the holy Quran, “O man, you are toiling toward your Lord quite a toiling then meeting Him!” (84:6) The journey is hard because Satan and our desire keep interfering with it. 2279

#### 10.4.21 Support your brother even when he's doing wrong

*Narrated Anas ibn Malik, may God have been pleased with him, and reported by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (2443), that the Prophet (PBUH) said,*

*“Support your brother whether he is doing wrong, or wrong is done to him!”*

*A man said, “O Messenger of God, I’d support him if wrong is done to him, but how can I support him when he’s doing wrong?”*

*The Prophet (PBUH) replied, “by stopping him!”*

*Other versions of the hadith use the words “preventing him”, “standing between him and wrongdoing”, and “repelling him.”*

*Our duty as Muslims toward each other, and our charter from God and His Messenger, is to do all we possibly can to stop tyranny and vindicate the oppressed. Almighty God praises the believers by saying,*

*“And they vindicate themselves after they have been wronged. And the wrongdoers shall know what return they will return to.” (26:227)*

*Those who let the wrongdoers get away with their wrongdoing are complicit in their wrongdoing. They are in violation of God’s order to “command what is right and forbid what is wrong.” That stand of theirs is a dangerous state of faith to be in.*

A dangerous state of faith, indeed. Reflect, if you will, on the epilogue of verse 11:113:

*“And do not recline to those who did wrong, lest Fire should touch you and you will have no allies beside God, then you will not be helped.” (11:113)*

Like always in the Quran, a verse's ending deliberately matches its beginning. In this verse, God tells us not to take the side of the oppressors. We are not to be allies with wrongdoers. Keeping silent about what they do is a passive alliance. It is also failure to rush to be allies with the oppressed! We are supposed to be of help to those whom wrong is done to.

Now look at the ending: Oppression is met with touch of fire! Taking the side of the oppressors results in having no allies in the Hereafter! Failure to aid the oppressed results in having no help in the Hereafter!

Powerful, and scary stuff, for anyone who thinks that there is rationale for standing by while tyranny, oppression and corruption are taking place in front of him, but does nothing to stop it. Worse yet, some call others not to do anything either.

We can avoid being in a dangerous state of faith by holding firmly to the Quran. It is our savior. Never take the word of anyone that contradicts the Quran. 1398

### 10.4.22 Which group is at fault?

*There has been tension recently in Egypt, between Salafis (strict followers of ancestors) and Sufis (transcendentals) Muslim groups regarding shrines of Awliyaa (saints). Some Salafis have demolished some of those shrines and that got the Sufis, who are naturally quite meek, animated and furious.*

*Peace makers have tried to mediate between the two groups, and I just read that the negotiations have failed. I read that on the Almasry Alyoum newspaper.*

*What is the Islamic view on this issue? Whom do you think are at fault here?*

According to the article, the sticking point was the insistence of the Sufi negotiator that the reconciliation document rule that destruction of shrines was forbidden in Islam. The Mufti (scholar authorized to give fatwas) of Egypt has given a fatwa (religious conclusion) that such act is contrary to Islam. So, the Sufis had a legitimate cause to ask for such a statement. I imagine they wanted a guarantee of sorts that this won't happen again.

But Salafis are hung up on the established Sunna (teaching of the Prophet (PBUH)) that visiting the graves must not turn into excessive practices that are often seen at those shrines. Practices like people praying to the shrine, rubbing hands against the shrines for blessing, etc. Those are blasphemous acts. So, Salafis are right in their precaution, but certainly not right in demolishing shrines.

It seems to me that an agreement could have been reached, if both concerns were addressed! Sufis vow to monitor shrines in order to educate visitors about deviant practices, and Salafis vow to not cause harm to shrines or their visitors and prosecute those who do.

I know someone who describes herself as a Sufi Salafi! She would've been ideal as a go-between. The Mufti was right also when he said that this is but a Fitna (sedition) between the two groups that should be averted. 1565

### 10.4.23 Cut-and-paste Muslims

*I think we need to discuss Taqleed (blind following). I see so much culture infused with blind following.*

*The confidence it takes to use your mind is a tome in itself. We have a generation of cut-and-pasters who do not take the time to reflect.*

*How do I put it? Those who follow blindly do not take well to questions posed from a philosophical perspective. And specifically from a western orientation and or Sufism. I am*

*seeking the essence of matters. Blind following has no room for seeking the essence. It is the easy way out.*

If blind followers pause for a minute to reflect, they may ask themselves this simple question: Is the man, or group you're following blindly, are they infallible?

The answer is obviously not, and I'm sure most of them will answer correctly. With that established, how can they justify following those who may be wrong, may have misconstrued things, may have misinterpreted the texts, may have misunderstood the intent and/or spirit of the revelation?

They can't, of course, but in their minds, there is no better alternative! They do not trust their own minds. They see those whom they follow as superior to them in knowledge, intellect and spirituality. While that may be true, it is no reason to annul one's mind and choose to be led by others without questioning. If that were part of our religion, then how come God asks us many times in the Quran the rhetorical questions,

"Don't you use your minds?" (2:44),

'That is because they were a folk who did not reason." (5:58),

"Should you not then reason?" (7:169),

"The most evil of creatures, in the sight of God, are the dumb, mute who do not reason!" (8:22),

"Did they not walk in the land and have hearts with which to understand, or ears with which to hear? Verily, it is not the eyes that go blind, but the hearts which are in the bosoms." (22:46),

"Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? They are but like animals, nay, they are more misguided!" (25:44)

"Have you not been using your minds?" (36:62),

What a strong and harsh chastisement to those who elect to suspend their minds! If any reader is a blind follower, I urge you to reflect on Rumi's advice, "*Do not let others lead you; they may be blind, or worse: vulchures!*"

God gave each of us a sound mind as a valuable gift, urges us to use it and *trusts it* to make the right decisions! Don't turn away God's gift. 1754

#### 10.4.24 Can people express themselves in Islam?

*How can people express themselves fully or explore their creativity in Islam when there seems to be only very specific things that are allowed? For example, in music, I heard that rap music is haram (forbidden)? I also heard that it is not allowed to write love letters to the opposite sex. Not to*

*mention prohibitions regarding taking pictures, painting/drawing objects and regulations regarding what sort of clothes to wear. Islam seems to enclose its followers to certain emotions they should/ could only feel. I don't know.*

If Muslims could not express their creativity, there wouldn't have been the Blue Mosque, Taj Mahal, Arabesque, abstract art, calligraphy, etc.

Not all Muslims agree that all music is forbidden. Music that invites lewdness or violence is. Furthermore, it's the lyrics that need to be watched. In Islam, expression and speech are allowed but within limits of decency. Lewdness, lies, profanity, insults and blasphemy are not allowed in order to protect society from those ills. That is the basis on which several prominent Islamic scholars have ruled that music is not forbidden unless it is accompanied by sinful lyrics or acts, see §5.2.14.

Love letters are allowed between couples who have been formally engaged or are married, not before that because they can quickly get out of hand. Again, the principle is to protect people from sin without constricting them.

Painting is allowed but not of lewd images or of living creatures. The prohibition against painting or sculpting living creatures is to protect people from developing pagan tendencies. Even in this modern day of ours, people bow down before statues as if these statues can actually benefit them in the least. In Islam, you only bow before God.

Clothes can easily be a source of seduction. Fashion designers actually depend on it! Seduction leads to sin and that's why Islam controls dress. It's not to limit freedom, it's to protect people from sin.

The word Islam means surrender to God. When you accept Islam, you willingly and lovingly agree to comply by God's rules not by man's. Why? Because you can trust that God knows what's best for you and man doesn't. Man is only guessing and he has been wrong more often than he has been right and when he was wrong horrendous things happened.

*I do not know why I'm still not satisfied. If I were Muslim I'd be a disobedient little sinner. Perhaps that's why I'm not?*

It's not easy. Just like relationships need work and patience, your relationship with God, the one who loves you the most, needs work and patience.

*However I think we as humans should be able to express or explore themselves **fully**, or **explore** the extent of our creative prowess.*

If people explore the effects of drugs fully, they can be addicted. If they explore sex fully, they may catch a fatal disease. If they speed up on the highway to

experience the thrill, they may kill themselves and others! Full exploration is not necessarily a good thing. The right limits have been set by the only one who has the full picture: God.

*How would we be able to fully know ourselves?*

There is no reason you can't. But you don't have to kill yourself or others to find out! When you raise your child, you prevent him or her from full exploration if it's going to hurt them, don't you? That's how God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, guides us to what is good and forbids us what is bad. Only He knows which is which.

*With regards to music, and clothing, I think in general if people have a good idea of themselves, or have good internal control, external sources, which could cause them to sin shouldn't be a problem?*

That's a big if! Do people have a good idea of themselves, or internal control? If that were true then how come they ruin their lives and the lives of millions? It's precisely because they don't have sufficient controls that the world is in such a mess. Only by following God's guidance can the world come back to balance. God says in the holy Quran,

“And do not corrupt in the earth after it has been put in order!” (7:56) and

“And if they are told: Do not corrupt in the earth, they reply: But we are doing good!” (2:11).

599

#### 10.4.25 Is playing video games allowed in Islam?

There is nothing wrong with playing any game unless the game involves, or leads to something prohibited. For instance, playing poker is fine unless it's played for money. Playing video games is fine unless they distract you so much you miss the prayer.

The issue is not the game nor is it the playing; it's what is played, what is involved in it, and what it leads to.

853

#### 10.4.26 Are curses accepted?

*My Muslim friend curses people all the time when she's upset with them. Will her curses be answered?*

Even when there is a good reason to curse somebody, one shouldn't. We learn that from something that happened to the Prophet, peace be upon him. The

pagans of Mecca had tortured so many Muslims that the Prophet (PBUH) stood up in Qunoot (devotional prayer) and asked God to curse certain people by name. God then revealed the verses,

“Not for you, [O Muhammad, but for God], is the decision whether He should [cut them down] or forgive them or punish them, for indeed, they are wrongdoers.

And to God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills. And God is Forgiving and Merciful.” (3:128-129)

The Prophet stopped after that.

As for your subject question, God tells us that He only accepts from the pious (verse 5:27). It is not exactly the practice of a pious person to go around cursing everybody with or without cause. Remind her that her negative habit negatively affects her faith.

*Because we are such good friends, I find it hard to say something to her and I don't want to break up the friendship. What can I do then?*

First try to tell her that you do not like to hear curse words, that cursing is not the conduct of a lady. Tell her that cursing is a negative act that negatively affects a person's character and relationships.

If that does not help, tell her that you expect her to stop cursing when you are with her, if she values your friendship.

If she doesn't, then tell her that you cannot continue seeing her. Your reason is what God says in Chapter 28,

“And when they hear ill speech, they turn away from it and say, ‘For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. Peace will be upon you; we do not seek the ignorant.’ ” (28:55)

*I'll try to help her. But I don't know where to begin? Every time she's angry even on the slightest things she curses people. I don't know how can one get rid of such habits.*

Perhaps you can start by showing her the rules in the Quran and the Sunna about foul mouthing. Almighty God tells us in the holy Quran,

“God does not like that bad words are said publicly, except one who has been wronged. And God is ever All-hearing and All-knowing.” (4:148)

Thus, we learn that bad words are disliked by God, but He tolerates it when a person has been wronged.

And God encourages us to endure insults and even forgive the offenders. He praises people who can do that in several verses,

“And whoever is patient *and forgives* - indeed, that is of the resolute matters.” (42:43)

“Who spend [in the cause of God] during ease and hardship and who *restrain anger and who pardon the people* - and God loves the benevolent.” (3:134)

So, the question is to correctly identify whether the situation is injustice (Zulm) or frivolity (Laghw). If it is the former, cursing is tolerated as it lets out steam, but if it's less than that, a Muslim should not be tempted to lose his or her temper, because it gives entry to Satan to whisper more sins into them.

What we say is written down in our record, and we are accountable to it on the Day of Judgment. That was a surprise to Muaz ibn Jabal, may God have been pleased with him, when the Prophet, peace be upon him, said that to him. The Prophet (PBUH) replied to his astonishment saying, “*Does anything toss people on their faces in the Fire except the harvest of their tongues?*” Narrated by Muaz himself and rated authentic by [Al-Albani \[3\]](#) (3284, 7/845) and others. 751

### 10.4.27 Can Muslims say about themselves that they're good?

No! God says in the holy Quran,

“And do not promote yourselves, He knows better who has been pious” (53:32) and

“Did you see those who promote themselves? Rather, God promotes whomever He wills and they are not wronged even a filament.” (4:49)

Because of this, the Sahaba (fellows of the Prophet, (PBUH)), may God have been pleased with them, whenever they wanted to apply for a job or propose to a woman, they would mention their strong qualifications and immediately follow that with the words, “*Wa la uzakki nafsi*” (and I do not promote myself).

*When I apply for a job, may I use the same phrase? “Wa la uzakki nafsi”?*

It is not required, but it is a good habit to acquire for the same reason the Sahaba took it up: training oneself against conceit. You don't have to say it out loud, especially to people who won't know what it means. 756

### 10.4.28 Are Muslims guaranteed heaven?

Islam is perhaps the only religion in the world which does not suffer from wishful thinking. Most Jews believe that they are God's chosen people and that there's no life after death but that reward and punishment are in this life. That may very well be wishful thinking. Most Christians believe that their sins are

forgiven and that they are guaranteed a place in heaven. That may very well be wishful thinking. I don't know much about Buddhism, but I understand that most Buddhists believe in reincarnation and that if they do good in this life and die they come back to it and enjoy their reward and if they do ill they come back to this life to suffer. That may very well be wishful thinking.

Islam, on the other hand, offers no guarantee to Muslims of going to Paradise! The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "*The work of any of you will not admit him to Paradise.*" His fellows (Sahaba) were surprised and asked him "Even you, Messenger of God?" He replied "*Even I, unless God covers me with His mercy*", narrated by Aisha (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Al-Bukhari \[12\]](#) (6464). It is God's mercy that gets us there and He promised those of us who keep the faith and do good deeds that He will have mercy on us.

The fellows of the Prophet clearly understood this concept. Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may God have been pleased with him said, "*If on the Day of Judgment an angel calls out that all will go to Paradise but one, I'd worry I'm the one!*" This is a saint whom the Prophet personally gave him the good news that he was one of ten people who will go to Paradise.

Despite this, thousands of people every year convert from religions that offer them guarantees and few or no requirements to Islam, which offers no such guarantees and has a lot of requirements.

73

### 10.4.29 How can I become an Islamic scholar?

*Salam, there is something that I've wanted to know but couldn't really find any defined information on.*

*1- What is an Islamic Scholar? 2- How does one become an Islamic Scholar? 3- How many years does it take to become one? (how long) 4- What are the necessary college classes/courses and degrees necessary to be qualified as one? (i.e., PhD?) 5- Are there different types of Islamic Scholars (specializations)? If there are, what are they?*

*Becoming an Islamic Scholar is something that I am really interested in in the near future. I hope this is not a lot, and I hope to hear from you soon. Thanks!*

An Islamic scholar is one who can study an Islamic text, determine its credibility and then deduce intent from it. Like any other field of scholarship, this requires acquiring knowledge as well as skills of logical analysis and critical thinking honed by discipline and methodology.

Such scientific approach is crucial for weeding out whimsical opinions! If you have listened to some fatwas (religious edicts) issued by unknown, self-appointed Muslim scholars on satellite TV and YouTube, you know what I'm talking about.

Prior to modern times, Islamic scholars were not many and they all had to learn

and be licensed (Ijaza) by a recognized scholar. This approach carried over to modern times in the form of colleges and universities where Islamic disciplines are formally taught by teachers of high repute and earned licenses. If you want to be a *formal* Islamic scholar, this is the proper way to go about it. Such study takes about four years in reputable learning institutions such as Al-Azhar university and Darul-Ulum college of Cairo university in Egypt, for instance.

That said, one can attend these places of learning and graduate from them without actually becoming a scholar! Why? Because a student who simply memorized what he or she has been taught and echoes the rulings he or she has learned is a copy, not a scholar. Such a person cannot handle new, controversial or challenging issues. You will notice right away that they do not have what it takes and that they will end up giving their personal opinion, which is often based on their likes and dislikes.

God has honored scholars a number of times in the holy Quran. For instance,

“Verily, those who truly fear God out of all His worshipers are the scholars” (35:28) and

“But if they had referred the matter back to the Messenger or to those of authority among them, then the ones who can deduce from it would have known about it. And if not for the favor of God upon you and His mercy, you would have followed Satan, except for a few.” (4:83)

Thus, true Islamic scholarship can save Muslims from falling prey to Satan. It can also sort out what is religion and what is tradition. So many people mix the two.

Finally, you asked about disciplines and specialties. Disciplines are many. There are disciplines centered on the Quran, such as its language and syntax, its interpretations, how to deduce rulings from it. There are disciplines centered on the Hadith, such as authenticating it, knowing the biographies and credibility of its narrators, how to deduce rulings from it, how it and the Sunna explain the Quran, etc. There is also the discipline of Usul-al-Fiqh, which I personally think is near the top of disciplines, because it teaches the foundations of deduction. It disciplines the mind to be rational, logical and methodical. That way, the many pitfalls that some fall into can be systematically avoided.

There is also the discipline of law (Sharia), history, comparative religions and more. You can specialize in any of it. You can study with the aim of becoming a preacher, for instance, or a judge. Your academic advisor can help guide you in this endeavor. Best wishes.

2362

### 10.4.30 Serious jobs

Abu-Zharr Al-Ghafari (RA) (may God have been pleased with him), noticed many of his fellows getting leadership jobs assigned to them by the Prophet (PBUH). So, he went to him and asked him if he would give him a similar job. The Prophet (PBUH) smiled kindly at him, patted him on the shoulder and said, “Oh,

*Abu-Zharr, you are weak. This is a trust, and on the Day of Resurrection it will be a disgrace and a regret for all except those who get it with merit and fulfill its obligations!*" Narrated by Abu-Zharr himself and reported by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1825), his compilation book of authentic hadiths.

Folks who trip over themselves to get a leadership position do not realize that they are walking into a fire pit unless they know what they are doing and can do it.

Another serious job people clamour to get is the job of a scholar. Such prestige and reverence from people! And authority too! He says it's OK, and it may not be, and people do it, possibly getting themselves into trouble. He says it's forbidden, and it may not be, and people abstain from it, possibly deprived. On that, Abdullah ibn Al-Mubarak, a highly regarded second generation scholar brilliantly said, *"A scholar enters between the worshiper and his Lord, so he had better find the exit!"*

The job of a judge has two strikes against it! The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, *"Judges are three; two are in hell and one is in paradise. The two who are in hell are a judge who knows the truth and rules differently and a judge who rules without knowing the truth. The judge in paradise is the one who knows the truth and rules accordingly."* Narrated by Buraida ibn Al-Husaib Al-Aslami, reported by [Abu-Dawoud \[1\]](#) (3573), and rated authentic by [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (3573). 2152

### 10.4.31 Can a Muslim live in a non-Muslim country?

*I once, not long ago, read in a hadith book that if a Muslim person lives in a place where Mushriks (polytheists) live then that Muslim person is just the same as the mushrik person. Have you heard of this, please explain it to me!*

The hadith says that *"he may soon become like them"*. It was in the context of war. What happened was some Muslims were prostrating in prayer and the polytheists took advantage of it and killed them all. When the Prophet, peace be upon him, learned this, he forbade that Muslims stay among hostile polytheists. 586

## 10.5 Novelties and Fables

### 10.5.1 Is there such a thing as Bida Hasana?

*There is a hadeeth that says that every bida (novelty) is a misguidance and every misguidance ends up in Hell, right?*

*Yet, I hear the expression "Bida Hasana" (good novelty). Is there such a thing?*

As famous as this quote is, it is actually not a hadith! It is a saying of Abdullah ibn Masoud, may God have been pleased with him, a fellow of the Prophet (PBUH). Some scholars, such as Al-Albani have rated it authentic, but the consensus is that those words were not of the Prophet, but of Ibn Masoud.

A bid-a is a novelty *in religion*, not any novelty. Things like TV, telephone and cars are novelties but none of them is a bid-a.

What is a novelty in religion? It's anything that is added to the religion, removed from it or changes it. Saying that the number of prayers is now six instead of five, for instance, would be a bid-a.

To create a religious novelty, one would have to either mandate something that is not mandated, or forbid something that is not forbidden. Only God can mandate or forbid when it comes to religion. By delegation from God, so could the Prophet, peace be upon him.

This is a serious matter. God warns people often in the Quran not to say, "this is allowed and this is not allowed!" Consider,

"And do not say untruth about what your tongues assert, 'This is lawful and this is unlawful,' to invent falsehood about God. Indeed, those who invent falsehood about God will not prosper." (16:116), and

"Say, 'Have you seen what God has sent down to you of provision of which you have made [some] lawful and [some] unlawful?' Say, 'Has God **permitted you** [to do so], or do you invent [something] about God?' " (10:59).

Despite that, you'll find many people who feel they can declare things mandated or forbidden based on shaky evidence. By doing so, they risk being muftadaa (novelty starters). May God save us from falling in that trap.

So, can there be a good novelty in religion? No! But novelties such as domes on mosques, carpets in mosques, taking the shoes off before entering a mosque, praying Taraweeh at Ramadan eves in congregation in the mosque, etc., all are good things, *as long as people do not believe they are required* by God or by His Messenger. With that in mind, they may be called a "Bid-a Hasana" (A good novelty).

Speaking of Taraweeh prayers, the Prophet (PBUH) prayed them in congregation in the mosque on the first and second eves of Ramadan. On the third eve, he only prayed 'Ishaa' (night prayer) then he went inside his house and did not come out until the Fajr (dawn) prayer! Clearly, he did *not* want people to get the impression that Taraweeh prayers in the mosque were a Sunna.

*The verses you quoted seem to me to disable all fatwas! How can any scholar then rule on a religious matter?*

As long as they say, ``And God knows best" at the end of their fatwa (ruling), then they are fine. That makes their fatwa an intellectual exercise in logical deduction based on Usul-al-Fiqh (the discipline of Foundations of Deduction) and not a directive to people. Most scholars do that.

Abdullah ibn Al-Mubarak, may God bless his soul, a Tabii (second generation) scholar, had a wonderful, but frightening saying. He said, "*A scholar enters between God and the servant, so let him seek an exit!*" 1880

### 10.5.2 Does Islam acknowledge the evil eye, black magic and demon possession?

The evil eye and black magic are both mentioned in Chapter 113, therefore they exist. As for Jinn (demon) possession, it's a common myth that was passed to all religions from pagan times. There is no evidence to it in the Quran or the authentic Hadith, therefore we should not believe in it. 932

### 10.5.3 Do jinn have power over human beings?

*Do jinn (sprites) have power over human beings? I read that they can possess human bodies and cause epilepsy. I also know that many people in many countries, including Muslim countries, do exorcism.*

This a common fallacy that many people, including many Muslims, believe. Sprites do not have any power over human beings. Epilepsy is caused by multiple medical reasons, never by sprite possession.

Muslims who believe in possession, often quote the verse,

"Those who consume usury will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person whom Satan repeatedly strikes by touching" (2:275).

The verse says nothing of possession, but people have interpreted ``touching" as possession and ``strikes" as entering the body. Clearly, such interpretations are linguistically incorrect.

They also quote a hadith of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in which he says, "*Verily, Satan runs through the son of Adam as blood runs.*" This is obviously a metaphor, since God says in the holy Quran that He is closer to us than our jugular vein. Another metaphor. People have taken metaphors literally and by doing so veered into strange beliefs. Metaphors are literary devices that bring concepts closer to human understanding but they are never literal. 500

### 10.5.4 Can demons possess the human body?

Belief in Jinn (sprites or demons) is a must because God and His messenger told us they exist, can see us, can visit us in our homes, can whisper to us, can touch us, can travel vast distances in almost no time, can use powers to cause us harm and can be used by man to cause others harm and to perform amazing feats. All of that is evidenced by the Quran and the authentic Hadith.

*But we have no way of knowing that they can possess our bodies, because there is no evidence to that in the Quran or the authentic Hadith. Muslims should not believe in things pertaining to religion unless robust evidence can be shown from the Quran or the authentic Hadith.*

The experiences people have and attribute to Jinn possession could have hundreds of explanations. Limiting them to Jinn possession is therefore unwarranted.

683

### 10.5.5 Can Jinn possess people?

*I've heard conflicting opinions about Jinn (sprites) possessing human bodies. Can they? How do we exorcise them? I read somewhere that the Prophet (PBUH) captured a Jinn and wanted to show him to people.*

By definition, Jinn cannot be seen by humans. The word Jinn means ``*the obscured*." Therefore, any narration that says that Jinn were seen cannot possibly be authentic. It also violates what Almighty God says in the holy Quran,

“Verily, he (Satan) sees you and so do his kind whereas **you do not see them**.” (7:27)

Furthermore, Jinn possess no power over man. Almighty God tells us in the holy Quran what Satan will say on the Day of Resurrection,

“And Satan said when the matter is settled, ‘God has promised you the promise of truth and I promised you and failed you. **I had no power over you**, except that I called you and you responded to me! So, do not blame me; blame yourselves.’ ” (14:22)

Muslims should not believe in superstitions and fables, not after the clear guidance of the Quran came to them. Muslims should also reject narrations and stories that clearly contradict the Quran. Putting the Quran first is the Straight Path. Other paths lead to going astray.

908

### 10.5.6 My father-in-law has been hexed

*My father-in-law lives in Indonesia where they believe and practice this black magic stuff. He is a good God-fearing*

*Muslim, but he takes part in all this magic stuff. He has been told that his wife and son have hexed him. Is this something that should be ignored? I don't buy into this magic stuff. Sounds kinda silly to me, but in Indonesia they really buy into this goofy stuff.*

Remind him that God calls black magic evil in Surat Al-Falaq (113:4). And that God warns that whoever participates in magic "has no share in the Hereafter!" (2:102). This is not silly nor goofy; it is very serious stuff and should not be taken lightly.

Advise him to recite Al-Muawwizatan often (Chapters 113 and 114) to protect himself from all evil.

*Many Muslims also believe that they can be possessed by Jinn (sprites). Does Islam teach that?*

There is no such thing as being possessed by Jinn or by Satan. It's a fable and a pagan belief, which Muslims should not accept. God says in the holy Quran, "And Satan said, when the affair is settled, 'God promised you the promise of truth and I promised you then failed you. I **had NO power over you** except that I called you and you responded to me! So, do not blame me; blame yourselves.'" (14:22)

*How can you say that when many reliable scholars have talked about their experience of being possessed? And how they remitted themselves by reciting verses from the Quran.*

You should not believe in anything that violates the teachings of the Quran. I gave you the evidence from the Quran that Satan cannot and never did possess any human body. Black magic is a different topic and it is asserted in the Quran. Do not mix the two subjects.

I only point out these matters so that you can align your thoughts with what God said. Abdullah ibn Masoud, may God have been pleased with him, once said, "Whoever says he loves God, let him evaluate himself against the Quran, for it is the word of God."

*What do you say about the black magic done to our beloved Prophet (PBUH) for which Sura Naas and Sura Falaq (Chapters 113 and 114) were revealed?*

The story of betwitching the Prophet (PBUH) is reported by [Al-Bukhari](#) [12] (3175, 3268, 5766) without any mention of revelation of Chapters 113 and 114. The narration is not something that the Prophet said; it was an interpretation of Aisha (RA). She saw him in pain and delirious and made the conclusion that he

was bewitched, but he simply could have been delirious from a fever. Two men, unnamed in the narration, came to look after him and they made an unfounded conclusion: that he was bewitched by his Jewish servant Lubaid ibn Al-Aasam! In his exegesis of Chapter 113, [Ibn Kathir \[34\]](#) (Volume 8, page 538) discussed this in detail and came to the conclusion that it is a strange story and that the narrator chain had credibility problems and that Chapters 113 and 114 were NOT revealed after that event.

But let's say that the story is valid, how does that relate to Jinn possession? Black magic can do harm (113:4), if God lets it (2:102), but how did you jump to the conclusion that it leads to Jinn possession?

*Jinn possession is real. There are two good books on this.*

The Book of God says differently; that's what we should follow. See article §10.5.3 that discusses the Quranic evidence you cited and shows why it does not mean Jinn possession. 1346

### 10.5.7 My sister is scared of Jinn

*My younger sister told me that she saw shadows moving outside her window one night. She was convinced they were Jinn (sprites). She is now scared almost all the time that Jinn are going to hurt her. How do I reassure her? Some people offered us their services for expelling Jinn. They are charging 400 dollars.*

Jinn is an Arabic word that means "the obscured." Therefore, by definition, they cannot be seen! Your sister did not, and could not, see Jinn even if she wanted to. Start with that.

Then tell her that while Jinn exist and can see us, they cannot do harm to humans except those who seek their contact. God tells us in the holy Quran in Chapter 72, named "Jinn",

"And that there have been humans seeking refuge with sprites and [ended up] with more suffering." (72:6)

Finally, tell her that reciting Chapters 113-114 is the prescription the Prophet (PBUH) gave us for seeking God's protection from evil. You do not need external help, especially from people who will charge you for it. The Prophet's method (PBUH) is free. 1438

### 10.5.8 A Satan inside him

*For the past 3 or 4 years I have suffered a great deal due to the influences of black magic and shayateen jinn (Satan sprite). I*

*have learnt that some people from a non-muslim background have placed a shaytan inside of me using black magic. The shaytan is under their control and they have been using it harm me constantly, mentally and physically, as well as using it to communicate to me. I have concluded that these people have been hired by someone to do this to me, to harm me in my Iman and Deen and mentally, physically and in my family life. Even my wife was affected by this, through possessions and the like.*

How do you know, brother, that this is what happened to you? Did you or anyone else see those people grab a Satan and move him inside your body?

That is NOT what happened to you. You are a victim of false belief. Demon possession is a fable perpetuated by beneficiaries, such as self-proclaimed exorcists, and by lack of knowledge. Do not believe a fable. You are a Muslim. God and His Messenger gave you the guidance you need and the way to distinguish truth from falsehood. Demon possession is falsehood that taints your faith. God says in the holy Quran, quoting what Satan will say on the Day of Judgment,

“And Satan said when the matter is done, ‘Verily, God promised you the promise of truth and I failed you. And **I had no power over you**, except that I called you and you responded to me’..” (14:22)

There is a difference between black magic, which does exist, and demon possession, which does not. Unfortunately, so many Muslims combine the two. I hope you don't anymore.

*This is something difficult to explain to my elders as they would not understand, since you probably would be aware of the different types of people out there you would know how to deal with these people, the black magic and the shaytan.*

*I beg two things of you for the sake of Allah, show me how to deal with this and please could you recommend to me from here or another country someone renowned in curing black magic and the shayteen problem that I am suffering from, who will be a cause of shifa for me and help me rid of my problem. as well help me to deal with the people who did this, as they will if I am cured, are likely to do this again and my wife and children are in danger, if they have not already been effected.*

You do not need any healers. God gave you the prescription for healing from black magic: Chapters 113 and 114. Recite them often with certainty that God, and only God, can heal you. Reject false beliefs and reject false proclaimers.

Your faith depends on it.

1966

### 10.5.9 Can one sell one's soul to Satan?

*Do you know Lady Gaga? I heard that she worships, or sold her soul to satan and that's why she's successful. Is there really something that you sell your soul and become successful? Doesn't success comes ONLY from Allah (SWT)? Please don't talk about Lady Gaga at all and that all forms of music is haraam. I want to talk about people being successful by worshipping Shaytan. This not about Lady Gaga but applies to others to.*

Not all forms of music is haram (forbidden). See the other articles in this book on Music for explanation, for instance §5.2.12. The index of terms at the end of this book can help you find these articles quickly.

``Selling one's soul to Satan" is a metaphor. It means following Satan's whispers in violation of God's teachings. The Quran calls this ``being an ally of Satan", e.g.,

“[Abraham speaking to his father], ‘O my father, do not worship Satan. Indeed Satan has ever been, to the Beneficent, disobedient. O my father, verily, I fear that there will touch you torment from the Beneficent so you would be to Satan an ally.’ ” (19:44-45)

Abraham's father did not, to the best of our knowledge, sell his soul to Satan, or engage in what is commonly known as Satanic rituals. However, he worshiped idols. This is what prompted Abraham (ؑBUH) to plead with his father to stop that blasphemy and follow him instead in worshipping the only true God. Abraham equated worshipping idols to worshipping Satan.

Now, your question was about whether dedication to Satan can result in success. If you define success as material wealth, fame, etc., then the answer is it may! We learn that from the holy Quran,

“So when they forgot that of which they had been reminded, We opened to them the doors of every thing until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly, and they were [then] in despair.” (6:44)

The Quran teaches us to never be impressed with abundance of worldly goods, regardless of its source,

“And do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [some] categories of them, [its being but] the splendor of worldly life by which We test them. And the provision of your Lord is better and more enduring.” (20:131)

And that goes double if the source of the wealth is unlawful,

“Say, ‘Not equal are the filthy and the pure, although the abundance of the filthy might impress you.’ So fear God, O you of understanding, that you may be successful.” (5:100)

God teaches us to seek what is good in both this life and the Hereafter, not just what is good in this life. He says,

"...And of the people are [some] who say, 'Our Lord, give us in [this] the nearest [life]'; they will not have in the lasting [life] not a share. And of them are [some] who say, 'Our Lord, give us in [this] the nearest [life] good and in the lasting [life] good, and shield us from the torment of Hell. Those will have a share of what they have earned, and God is swift in account.'"

(2:200-202)

1897

### 10.5.10 Should Muslims boycott Facebook?

*I read an article that gives a number of reasons why Muslims should not participate in Facebook or should boycott it. I'm thinking they're right. What do you think?*

*The reasons given are:*

1. *Wastes a significant amount of time.*
2. *Wasting one's youth.*

That's not the fault of Facebook; it's the fault of its user who cannot or will not organize his or her time.

3. *Facebook are the enemies of Islam.*

Facebook is a public domain like the roads. Enemies of Islam can use it and friends of Islam can use it. If friends of Islam leave it, they give the enemies of Islam a free hand! That would be the opposite of daawa (prosletizing).

Facebook was indeed too slow to ban the pages that were antagonistic to Islam. But that's partly due to the fact that Muslim members were not well organized to call for the ban. We can't blame our failures on others.

4. *It is a place of great fitnah (temptation to sin).*

Which is under the user's control. You choose which pages you like and you can dislike those pages later. You can also delete ads that you find offensive.

That said, if you're a person who cannot resist fitna, then indeed you should not approach Facebook. But you really should train yourself to resist fitna because you are going to encounter it in your life many times. If you do not build resistance against it, you would easily fall in it, God forbid.

If we leave Facebook and Twitter to non-Muslims, we leave the field open to Islamophobes to spread their hatred and leave a field that can be used for Daawa! Is that wise?

In the US, liberals and progressives left talk radio to the radical conservatives. The result was that talk radio is now dominated by hatemongers and fundamentalist Christians. The liberals realized their mistake and started to use talk radio, but it's too late now. 1283

### 10.5.11 I'm surrounded by religious novelty

*How do you deal with a community who is full of bidah (religious novelty) and "modernization of Islam"? They are so hard-headed and go against anybody who speaks up against their practices. I have no other options, either be with them or be alone. Isolating oneself, I know, is dangerous but it's either that or be around bidah, backbiting, etc. How do you deal with this?*

God has praised the believers by describing them as a community which "commands what is right and forbids what is wrong." Daawa (Calling people to Islam) is sometimes needed for Muslims too. You may be just the person they need. Educate yourself well, then argue with them with wisdom and good preaching, giving evidence supporting your argument. Some of them will listen, in-sha-Allah. If none of them does, then at least you've done your duty toward them.

Part of your education is to know what is bid-a and what is not. Don't just take someone's ruling on it; investigate for yourself. The holy Quran and the noble Hadith are there available to you, so check it out yourself.

That said, if you are a person who is easily influenced by others, it may not be a good idea for you to stick around them often. 1367

### 10.5.12 Are some Muslims using demon possession as an excuse?

*What is this preoccupation with jinns (sprites) that many Muslims have? When in Islam did jinn become synonymous with evil? I think that being possessed by a jinn is an easy excuse not to be accountable for your behavior: "The jinn made me do it." That is scary territory. Or let me ask you this...of what purpose does it serve the Salafi to propagate jinn preoccupation. What is this keeping from us seeking. What knowledge is available to us that would have the Salafi (strict followers of ancestors) not wish many believers to know.*

You make an important point that not all jinn are evil! Thank you. God quotes them in the holy Quran, saying, "And among us (Jinn) are Muslims and among

us are the iniquitous. And whoever has become Muslim - then those have pursued forthrightness." (72:14)

I don't think that Salafis are defending the myth of demon possession to excuse some sins or to keep some knowledge hidden. Their core belief puts them in the box of Taqlid (blind following): they have to follow what the elders before them said, even if it can be proved wrong. I wish them well, because I know that the intention of most of them is pure. 1445

### 10.5.13 Baraath is a novelty, right?

*In my country, people celebrate what is called Baraath, which is a devotion that is held on the eve of 15th of Shaaban (the eighth month in the Islamic calendar). Many folks have told me that it is a novelty and there should not be any special celebration that night.*

*But, is there any special events that happened on the 15th of Shaaban?*

There are narrations that suggest that the Quran was descended from the Preserved Tablet (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfuzh) on the 15th of Shaaban in preparation for Archangel Gabriel (PBUH) to reveal it to the Prophet, peace be upon them. There are also narrations that suggest that the Qibla (prayer direction) toward Mecca was commanded on the 15th of Shaaban.

Neither narration is authentic enough, to the best of my knowledge. And even if they were, since the Prophet (PBUH) did not celebrate or commemorate that night or day in any special way, we have no cause to. 917



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**Part IV**

**Attachments**

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**N**<sub>EXT</sub> are three convenient indexes, a list the references previously cited throughout the articles of the book, and three appendices.



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# Appendix A

## Vocabulary

The following is a list of common Islamic terms, for readers who may not be familiar with them.

**Allah:** Arabic word for God.

**Aakhira** (or **Akhira**): The Hereafter.

**Aameen:** Amen.

**Alhamdulillah:** Praise is to God, said in gratitude.

**Al-Fatiha:** “The Opener”, Chapter 1 of the Quran. Recited several times in every prayer.

**Al-Masjid Al-Haram:** The Sacrosanct Mosque of Mecca.

**Aoozhu Billah:** I seek refuge in God. Said in seeking protection, or in distancing oneself from blasphemy or improper speech.

**Astaghfirullah:** I seek forgiveness from God. Said after one says something which may be blasphemous or religiously improper.

**Azza wa Jall:** May He always be honored and prominent, said about God.

**Basmala:** The phrase “Bismillah-ir-Rahmaan-ir-Raheem” meaning “In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.” Muslims say it before they embark on any work, and it is the introduction to 113 out of 114 Chapters of the Quran.

**Bismillah:** In the Name of God.

**Daawa** (or **Dawah**): Calling people to God; prosletizing.

**Deen:** The way one conducts one’s life; religion.

**Dua** (or **Duaa**): Supplication.

**Dunya:** This world. Literally means the closest [life].

**Eid** (pronounced eed): Feast; a day of celebration.

**Eid Mubarak** (or **Eid Saeed**): Congratulations for Eid day. Literally means “Blessed Feast” (or Happy Feast).

**Faasiq** (or **Fasiq**): Deviant; sinner.

**Fatwa**: Religious edict; ruling.

**Fiqh**: Jurisprudence, literally means understanding or comprehension.

**Firdaws** (or **Firdaus**): Paradise.

**Fitna**: Temptation; sedition; test of faith.

**Hadeeth** (or **Hadith**): The words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. The *Quran*, on the other hand, is the word of God.

**Halaal** (or **Halal**): Allowed.

**Haraam** (or **Haram**): Forbidden.

**Hajj**: Pilgrimage to Mecca.

**Hijra**: Migration from Mecca to Medina.

**Hijri**: Islamic lunar calendar, started with the migration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Abu-Bakr (RA) from Mecca to Medina.

**Ilm**: Knowledge; discipline of knowledge; science.

**Ijtihad** (or **Ijtihad**): Working the mind to analyze an issue, usually a religious issue. The analyst is called **Mujtahid**.

**Imaam** (or **Imam**): Foremost scholar; leader; preacher. Plural is **A-imma**.

**Iman** (or **Eemaan**): Faith.

**In-sha-Allah** (or **Inshallah**): God willing.

**ISA**: Short for In-sha-Allah, God willing.

**Jahannam**: Arabic for Gehenna (Hellfire).

**Jaahiliyya** (or **Jahilia**): Ignorance era (before Islam).

**JAK**: Short for *Jazaka Allahu Khayra[n]* (May God recompense you with good).

**Janna**: Heaven. Literally means Garden.

**Jazaka Allahu Khayra[n]**: May God recompense you with good, said in thanks.

**Jihaad** (or **Jihad**): An effort that meets with resistance; struggle; strife.

**Kaaba**: The shrine in Mecca.

**Khateeb** (or **Khatib**): Preacher - one giving a sermon.

**Khutba** (or **Khutbah**): Sermon.

**Ma-sha-Allah** (or **Mashallah**): What God has willed, said in admiring.

**Masjid**: Mosque.

**Mazhab** (or **Mazhab**): A school of thought.

**Mujaahideen** (or **Mujahideen**): People who struggle to establish a goal, usually a righteous goal, such as truth, justice, freedom. The struggle is called *Jihad* (see above). The singular is **Mujaahid**.

**Mus-haf** (or **Mushaf**): Pronounced moos-huff - the bound volume of the Quran.

**PBUH**: Peace be upon him, said about all prophets and messengers of God, and in reference to angels and some distinguished people, such as Mary.

**Qibla**: Direction of prayer, toward the Sacrosanct Mosque in Mecca.

**Quran** (or **Qur'an**): The Koran, the holy scripture of Islam and the word of God.

**RA**: Radhiya Allaahu anhu (May God have been pleased with him), said about fellows of the Prophet (PBUH).

**Rahimahullah**: May God have mercy on him, said about a deceased person.

**Sadaqa**: Charity.

**Sahaba**: Fellows of the Prophet (PBUH) may God have been pleased with them. Singular is **Sahabi** for a man or **Sahabia** for a woman.

**Salla Allaahu Alayhi wa Sallam**: May God bless and greet him. Similar to (PBUH).

**Salaah** (or **Salah**): Prayer.

**Shahaada** (or **Shahadah**): Testimony of faith, "*Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasool-Ullah*" (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah).

**Sharia**: The way; Islamic law derived from the Quran and the authentic Hadith.

**Shia**: An Islamic sect where followers believe that Ali ibn Abi-Talib (RA) and his offspring were the only eligible people to head the caliphate. The singular is **Shii**, pronounced She-ee.

**Subhan-Allah**: May God be sanctified, said in awe of the signs of God.

**Sunna**: The way of the Prophet (PBUH), learned from authentic hadiths. A **Sunni** is a person who follows it.

**SWT**: Subhanahu wa Ta-ala (May He be sanctified and exalted), said about God.

**Tabieen:** Second generation of Muslims, after Sahaba. The singular is *Tabii*.

**Tafseer:** Exegesis of the Quran.

**Taqwa:** Fear of God; consciousness of God.

**Ulamaa** (or **Ulema**): Religious scholars. The singular is **Aalim**.

**Umma** (or **Ummah**): Large community; Nation.

**Wudhoo** (or **Wudu**): Ritual ablution, mostly before a prayer.

**Zakah** (or **Zakat**): Mandatory alms.

1518

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## Appendix B

# Quizzes And Acknowledgements

How about some quizzes to test your knowledge of the Quran? Let's see how many of these quizzes you answered correctly.

### Quizzes 1-4:

Where in the Quran do you find these statements?

1. "Blessed is who is in the fire"
2. "He (Satan) misguides and guides"
3. "Woe unto the praying"
4. "My Lord does not bother with you"

Intriguing, isn't it? How can that be explained? Hint: Read their context!

Now compare your answers to quizzes 1-4 with these:

1. The fire here is the burning bush through which God spoke to Moses (PBUH). This phrase appears in verse 27:8.
2. This is in verse 22:4, where God mocks Satan by saying that he "guides" to the torment of the hellfire blaze.
3. This sentence is verse 107:5. The following two verses explain that the woe is unto those who are distracted from offering the regular prayers, who show off and when called on to help they don't.
4. This the first sentence of verse 25:77. The rest of the sentence says, "...had it not been for your supplication." Thus, we learn that we do not get God's attention without work. Faith is not enough. 2160

### Quizzes 5-10:

Who was quoted in the Quran saying the following?

5. "My dear son, ride with us!"
6. "My dear father, hire him!"
7. "Lord, show me how You resurrect the dead."
8. "Lord, let me see so I can look at You."
9. "Is your throne like this?"
10. "I only said to them what You commanded me with." 2475

Answers to quizzes 5-10:

5. Noah (PBUH) said it to his son who did not accept his message and thought that climbing a mountain will save him from the Great Flood. It is from verse 11:42.
6. Shuayb's (Jethro's) daughter said it to her father, suggesting to him that he hire Moses as his assistant. It's from verse 28:26.
7. Abraham (PBUH) said it to God out of curiosity and fascination only. It is from verse 2:260.
8. Moses (PBUH) said it to God. God told him that he couldn't possibly see him and then showed him why. It is from verse 7:143.
9. A host from Solomon's court said it to the Queen of Sheba who was visiting him in Jerusalem. It is from verse 27:42.
10. Jesus (PBUH) says it to God on the Day of Judgment. It is from verse 5:117. 2477

**Quizzes 11-18:**

11. Which days of the week were mentioned by name in the Quran?
  12. Which months of the year were mentioned by name in the Quran?
  13. Which women were mentioned by name in the Quran?
  14. Which men, who were not prophets, were mentioned by name in the Quran?
  15. Which angels were mentioned by name in the Quran?
  16. Which countries were mentioned by name in the Quran?
  17. Which cities or towns were mentioned by name in the Quran?
  18. Which tribes or ethnic groups were mentioned by name in the Quran?
- 2479

Answers to quizzes 11-18:

11. Friday and Saturday. Friday is mentioned in verse 62:9 and it has the honor of also being the name of Chapter 62. Saturday is mentioned five times! In verses 2:65, 4:47, 4:154, 7:163 and 16:124.
12. Ramadan, the fasting month, the 9th month of the Hijri (lunar) year. It has the special honor that the revelation of the Quran was started in it.
13. Mary. She is mentioned ten times in the Quran: in verses 3:36, 3:37, 3:42-45, 4:156, 19:16, 19:27, and 66:12 and 21 other times in the identification of Jesus (PBUH). She has the special honor of being the only

woman mentioned in the Quran by name and that Chapter 19 is named after her.

14. Luqmaan, Goliath, King Saul, Haman and Zayd. Luqman is mentioned in verses 31:12-13 and Chapter 31 is named after him. Goliath is mentioned in verse 2:251. King Saul, called in Arabic Taaloot, is mentioned in verses 2:247 and 2:249. Haman, Pharaoh's minister is mentioned in verses 28:6, 28:8, 28:38, 29:39, 40:24 and 40:36. Zayd ibn Haaritha is mentioned by his first name in verse 33:37.

15. Gabriel, Michael, Haaroot and Maaroot. Gabriel, who transmitted the Quran to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was mentioned in verses 2:98 and 66:4. He is mentioned by title many other times. Michael is mentioned in verse 2:98. Haaroot and Maaroot, who taught people some secrets of magic at the time of Solomon, were mentioned in verse 2:102.

16. Egypt, Babylon and Rome. Egypt was mentioned four times: in verses 10:87, 12:21, 12:99 and 43:51. Babylon was mentioned in verse 2:102. Rome is mentioned in verse 30:2 and its countrymen, the Romans, is the name of Chapter 30.

17. Mecca, Medina and Midyan. Mecca is mentioned by that name in verse 48:25 and by the valley it is in, the Baca Valley, in verse 3:96. Medina is mentioned by that name in four verses: 9:101, 9:120, 33:60 and 63:8 and by its old name Yathrib in verse 33:13. Midyan is mentioned in nine verses: 7:85, 9:70, 11:84, 20:40, 22:44, 28:22-23, 28:45 and 29:36.

18. The Children of Israel, Quraysh, Aad and Thamood. The Children of Israel were mentioned in the Quran 40 times! Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe is named in verse 106:1 and is the name of Chapter 106. Aad is mentioned 19 times and Thamood 25 times. 2521

### Quizzes 19-23:

Who is quoted in the Quran saying the following, and under what circumstances?

19. "And do not puff up your cheek to people!"

20. "I gave you sincere advice, but you do not like sincere advisers!"

21. "Won't you eat? Why don't you speak?"

22. "These two surely are magicians."

23. "Lord, prison is more to my liking than what they invite me to!" 2522

Answers to quizzes 19-23:

19. Noah (PBUH) to his son who remained a disbeliever and tried to escape the Great Flood by taking shelter in a high mountain. Verse 11:42.

20. Prophet Shu'ayb (Jethro)'s daughter. She recommended Moses (PBUH) to her father as a hired hand for he is "strong and trustworthy." Verse 28:26.

21. Righteous man Luqman preaching to his son. Verse 31:18.

22. Prophet Saalih (Mesoselah), (PBUH), to his destroyed people who refused to believe in his message. Verse 7:79.

23. Young Abraham (PBUH) to the idols in his city's temple. Subsequently, he

axed them all, but the biggest one, to make the point to his people that these statues they worship cannot even defend themselves. Verses 37:91-92.

24. Pharaoh's sorcerers, impressed by the magic performed by Moses. They included his brother Aaron too, although Aaron is not mentioned performing any magic. Verse 20:63.

25. Joseph (PBUH) after the wife of the nobleman kept pursuing him for an illicit affair. Verse 12:33. 2524

### **A poem with quizzes:**

This is a humble attempt by me at poetry! Well, it's more like rhyming prose. It was written some time ago, inspired by certain verses and hadiths. Can you figure out whom or what the poem is talking about and what verses and hadiths are expressed in the following paragraphs? Each quatrain or group of poetry lines represents a riddle solved with hadith or verse.

#### **Who Am I?**

Most people believe that money and power  
Are the best things in life.  
I believe the best life has to offer  
is, without doubt, a good wife.  
When good happens,  
I'm filled with gratitude.  
When bad happens,  
I stay in a calm mood.  
I always have  
a good attitude.  
Hearing God's words,  
Makes my heart tremble.  
Watching His signs,  
Makes me humble.  
Walking in His light,  
I no longer fumble.  
Some see sin a fly  
They can swat dead.  
I see it a mountain  
Ready to fall on my head.  
I'm a palm tree reaching high,  
High up in the sky.  
Yet, I have a deep root.  
And every season I give fruit.  
So, do you know who am I?

1671

Answers to the poem quizzes:

The first quartain is inspired by a Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH) in which he said, "*The world is goods to cherish, and the best of goods to cherish of*

*the world is the virtuous woman.*”, narrated by Abdullah Ibn Amr (RA) and reported and authenticated by [Muslim \[43\]](#) (1467).

The next five lines are inspired by verse 57:23, “So that you do not mourn what missed you nor exuberate over what He gave you...”.

The next six lines are inspired by verse 22:35, “Those who, when God is mentioned, their hearts tremble...”.

The next quartain is inspired by a narraion attributed to Abdullah ibn Masoud (RA) in which he said, “*The believer sees his sins like a mountain about to collapse on him, and the deviant sees his sins like a fly he swats away*”, narrated by Al-Harith ibn Suwaid, reported by [Al-Tirmizi \[23\]](#) (2497), and authenticated by [Al-Albani \[6\]](#) (2497).

The last five lines are inspired by verses 14:24-25, “Did you not see how God struck a parable for a good word as a good tree, its root is firm and its branch is in the sky. It supplies its fruits periodically by permission of its Lord...”.

These are six clues and they all point to the answer to the riddle: the believer.





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## Appendix C

# About The Author

The author is an American Muslim who wishes to explain to everyone that there is no clash between the Islamic and Western civilizations, that there is nothing to fear from Islam and that Islam actually has a lot of good ideas to offer to the West.

Testimonials: It is with great humility that I list the following excerpts from unsolicited testimonials from readers. I'm grateful for their exaggerated kindness. It is effect like this which makes me continue to author this blog. Understanding is liberating.

"I just wanted to celebrate his knowledge of the Quran and Sunna and his love for Islamic poetry. He is one I truly respect." M.M.

"I really enjoyed reading his posts and sharing his friendship, Subhanallah! May Allah protect and have mercy on my older brother." J.

"I don't have enough time to reply ... but read all posts to learn from knowledgeable people like him" Kh.

"You know the man is brilliant; and humble; and pious." M.M.

"If anyone on here had a nitty-gritty question, especially regarding financial matters, zakat, charity, interest, banks, etc. - nobody else ever replied to topics like that. But you could be sure this brother would reply with the proper answer." T.

"He is one of the greatest assets on the forum. I learn from the wisdom in his posts more than anyone else on the boards. His humble point of view coming from very accurate research." M.

"We all gained so much knowledge from him, and he helped so many brothers and sisters with his posts." A.

"He had sound knowledge of scriptures from other religions. And whenever a non-Muslim would ask questions that seemed so hard to answer, he'd just

answer in a sentence. ” Ch.

“He was a wealth of knowledge and information. It was refreshing to read his posts and his perspectives on matters. Coupled with daleel (evidence), I would read every word of his posts. May Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala bless him and keep his future bright.” Sh.

“I’ve bookmarked a bunch of threads here specifically because of his wonderfully eloquent answers to tough questions as well as all the links that he’s posted with his responses.

Even if you try other forums/sites, you would be hard-pressed to find answers with the kind of clarity and quality that he was able to usually give.” X.

“He was very knowledgeable on Fiqh (jurisprudence) as well as Arabic. His posts were one of the few that I enjoyed reading because he always used his knowledge as opposed to his opinion on matters.” Sh. H.

“He is a well-respected brother and his posts are brilliant. I pray that Allah blesses the dear brother and grant him all good, Ameen.” Sh.

“We know he is a man of impeccable faith. We know that Allah has blessed him with extraordinary intelligence and wisdom. And, a little bit of wit. ...Why not put all those thoughts, that reach a wide variety of Muslims in a multicultural world, and give us a book? I would read it and comment on it.” M.M.

“I wish he was here to answer this question!” A.I.

2

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- The books listed below are those cited in this book, as well as other resources that helped the author research and verify answers to questions posted. No endorsement (or lack thereof) about an author or a title is to be inferred by either the inclusion or exclusion of a reference. Red numbers following a listing are page numbers in this book where the listing is referenced.
- All the listed books below were accessed, sometimes via the actual printed copy and sometimes via online copies. The bibliographical specifications are based on the best information available at the time.
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## **Index of Persons**

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*Unsolicited testimonials:*

*“He is one of the greatest assets on the forum. I learn from the wisdom in his posts more than anyone else on the boards. His humble point of view coming from very accurate research.” M.*

*“If anyone on here had a nitty-gritty question, especially regarding financial matters, zakat, charity, interest, banks, etc. – nobody else ever replied to topics like that. But you could be sure this brother would reply with the proper answer.” T.*

*“He had sound knowledge of scriptures from other religions. And whenever a non-Muslim would ask questions that seemed so hard to answer, he'd just answer in a sentence.” Ch.*

*May God make this work a “knowledge that benefits”*

