

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

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1 INTRODUCTION

ALL PRAISES BELONG TO ALLAH, AND SALUTATIONS UPON OUR PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PEACE BE UPON HIM).

The purpose of this booklet is primarily to provide information to those persons interested in learning more about the religion Islam and for those who are looking for a brief understanding of it. Or, for those who have accepted Islam and are still not quite sure of what it really entails.

A. For those interested in learning more about Islam:

May you be guided onto the straight path. Understand that, this too, is a blessing from Allah (God). A slave woman was once praying in the early hours of the morning. Whilst praying, her master overheard her from his courtyard. Upon his arrival, he heard her supplicating “FOR THE LOVE YOU HAVE FOR ME ALLAH (GOD)...” Immediately he reprimanded her and advised her to say “FOR MY LOVE FOR YOU ALLAH (GOD)” as opposed to “FOR YOUR LOVE FOR ME”. What her master meant was that she is a sinner, how can she claim Allah’s (God’s) love for her. At this she beautifully responded “Were it not for Allah’s (God’s) love for me, he would not have given me the ability to supplicate to him”. Understand well that nothing exists, nothing occurs, nothing transpires without the will of Allah (God). So, you, as

a reader, reading this book, whether it was truly to learn, whether for academic studies, whether to find fault in the religion of Islam, or for whatever other purpose it may be, this was destined by Allah (God) himself. For you to read this material, which many other people will never have access to, is due to the permission of Allah (God). This is the truth. You may now meditate over its understanding, and be guided accordingly. May Allah (God) bless you, and the writer. Aameen.

B. For those who have accepted Islam:

Welcome to a religion of peace, my brother/sister. May we remain on the straight path, the path of the people of guidance and not of those who have gone astray. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said that he/she who accepts Islam, is cleansed of every single sin he has committed prior to that, and his/her condition is like that of a new-born baby (free of any sin). No matter what your past may be, all of that is wiped out upon entrance into Islam. How merciful is your lord then?

The book will briefly highlight key aspects of Islam. Many colleagues and people are associated with daily have enquired of the understanding of what Islam really means, as the media has, through propaganda, distorted the true meaning of Islam and have indoctrinated the minds of the masses in this regard. For this reason, I hope, ALLAH (God) willing, this book will give you a basic understanding of what Islam is about.

2 WHAT IS ISLAM?

The word Islam literally means “**Peace**” and **Submission**”

2.1 Peace:

Islam is a religion which encourages the exercising of peace amongst Allah’s (God’s) creation, whether human or not. The greeting between two Muslims, which most people have heard at some point “Assalaamualaikum” translates to “May peace be upon you”. Islam does not encourage innocent warfare and killing of people. The media has manipulated people into believing that Islam is a religion of terrorism. “Suicide bombers” and “Terrorists” are the names which the media have associated Islam with. However, any person with consciousness will be able to point out:

One can never be sure of the truthfulness of the media. The media are almost always dishonest and trying to push forward an agenda. We can clearly see this with politics too! Just because the news tells us that the killer is a Muslim (believes in Islam), it does not mean that he truly is. It would be very foolish for us to believe in everything we read/hear in the media.

I More importantly, even in the event that any so-called terrorist is indeed a Muslim, this does not suggest that because he is involved in sin that the religion itself

propagates towards it. That would be like saying Hinduism believes in raping other people because of one Hindu man who committed the act of rape. Or that Hinduism promotes adultery because many Hindu men are committing adultery. This would be incredibly foolish.

2.2 Submission:

Secondly, Islam means: submitting oneself to Allah (God). To submit yourself to Allah (God), means that you worship Allah (God) alone and that you understand the basis of your existence is to be completely devoted to Allah (God) alone. To submit yourself to Allah (God) means that you will give up that which Allah (God) has prohibited, and you will act upon that which you have been commanded to do.

3 BELIEFS IN ISLAM

3.1 Believing in one Allah (God)

As Muslims, we believe:

- ❖ Allah (God) is ONE.
- ❖ Allah (God) is eternal.
- ❖ Allah (God) was not created, and Allah (God) does not have children.
- ❖ Allah (God) is unique. There is no one like Allah (God).
- ❖ Allah (God) is not human.
- ❖ Allah (God) is most powerful.
- ❖ No person can do without the control of Allah (God).

Unlike idol worshipers, Muslims believe that there is only ONE Allah (God), and not more.

Unlike Christians, Muslims believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) is NOT Allah (God), but rather a prophet of Allah (God), just like Abraham, Noah, Moses etc.

3.2 Believing in the Angels

Just as Christians, Jews and some other faiths, Muslims also believe in Angels. Muslims believe that Angels, unlike humankind, are infallible (perfect and sinless). They worship

Allah (God) at all times, and some Angels have also been appointed with specific duties and roles.

There are those Angels, who are in charge of controlling the weather, those who have been appointed to take life (death) and most famously, amongst other faiths such as Christianity and Judaism, is the angel Jibrael (who is known as Gabriel in English) as the Angel responsible for bringing revelation to the chosen prophets of Allah (God). However, one should note that despite these roles being assigned to them, they cannot fulfil their duties without the command and power of Allah (God).


3.3 Believing in the Revealed Books


In Islam, Muslims believe in the ORIGINAL texts revealed to the prophets:


- ❖ The TORAH given to Moosa (Moses).
- ❖ The PSALMS given to Dawood (David).
- ❖ The BIBLE given to Isa (Jesus).
- ❖ The QURAN given to Muhammad (peace be upon him).

As Muslims, we believe in each of the ORIGINAL books. However, we believe that during each prophet's time, that particular book needed to be followed. Now, this is the period of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and so the Quran, and no other text must be followed.

Note:

-  Jews believe in Moses (peace be upon him) and the book (Torah) revealed to him, and believe that David was NOT given any book, but was rather, a righteous man. They reject Jesus (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (peace be upon him) as being prophets, and claim that they were liars instead. They believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (peace be upon him) wrote the books they claim were revealed to them.

-  Christians believe in Jesus (peace be upon him) and the book (Bible) revealed to him. They also believe in Moses (peace be upon him) and the previous prophets but believe that the Bible is now the current book of guidance, which has replaced the previous texts revealed. They reject Muhammad (peace be upon him) and claim he wrote the Quran.

-  Muslims believe in the book revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the book (Quran) of guidance. They also believe in both Jesus (peace be upon him) and Moses (peace be upon him), as well as the previous prophets, but believe that each nation had a prophet to follow, and this nation, in this period, which will now last until the day of judgement, must follow the Quran alone for their salvation. Muslims believe that different nations had different laws to live

by, which were governed by the revealed holy book of that time, and now during this time, the Holy book to follow is the Quran. For example, if one was alive during the period of Jesus (peace be upon him), the book of guidance would be the Bible and those who followed the Bible were on the straight path. Those who did not, were misguided. Whereas this nation is the period of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and so one must follow the Quran to be successful.

3.4 Believing in the Prophets

Muslims, as well as Christians and Jews believe that Allah (God) chose prophets amongst different groups of people to be commissioned with the duty and responsibility of calling people towards the straight path. These prophets were given the duty of warning people against committing sin, and encouraging them to doing good deeds. Famous Prophets which most people are aware of are: Ebrahim (Abraham); Nooh (Noah); Ismail (Ishmael) etc. As mentioned above, Jews believe in Moses (peace be upon him) but reject Jesus (peace be upon him) and Muhammad (peace be upon him). Whereas Christians accept Moses (peace be upon him), and believe in Jesus (peace be upon him) but reject Muhammad (peace be upon him). Muslims, however, believe that both Moses (peace be upon him) and Jesus (peace be upon him) were prophets, but that Muhammad (peace be upon him)

was the last and final prophet. A key difference between Christianity and other religions is that Christians believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) was a God and not a man. Muslims believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) was not a God, but merely a prophet.

How can Allah (God) be a human? Would it not be disrespectful to the greatness of Allah (God) to reduce Allah (God) to the qualities of Man.? Does Allah (God) need to sleep, eat, or excrete as Jesus (peace be upon him) needed to? Would this not reduce the idea of what it means to be Allah (God)?

NOTE:

PROPHETS ARE CHOSEN AND SENT BY ALLAH (GOD) FOR THE GUIDANCE OF HUMANITY. THEY WERE NORMAL HUMANS LIVING AMONGST MEN. ALLAH (GOD) SELECTED THEM TO BE HIS PROPHETS AFTER IMBUING IN THEM THE ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF PROPHETHOOD. HE APPOINTED THEM BY SENDING REVELATION THROUGH THE ANGEL JIBRAEEL (GABRIEL).

WHO IS MUHAMMAD?

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in the sixth century. Prior to prophethood he was known amongst his people as the truthful and righteous one. At the age of 40, he received revelation of the first verses of the Quran by the angel Jibrael (Gabriel) and was given the responsibility of being a prophet amongst mankind. At the beginning of his duties, he was mocked. At the end of his lifetime, the whole of the Arabian Peninsula had accepted Islam. This was achieved in a space of 23 years.

NOTE: PRIOR TO BEING APPOINTED AS A PROPHET, MUHAMMAD (PBUH) HAD NEVER WORSHIPED AN IDOL OR ANYONE OTHER THAN ALLAH (GOD).

3.5 Believing in Resurrection, Day of Judgement & the Hereafter

Every Muslim believes that this world is temporary, and that every soul shall taste death. Thereafter, we will all be raised back to life and will be gathered in front of Allah (God) on what is referred to as “The day of Judgement”. Our good deeds and bad deeds will be measured against each other. Those whose good deeds outweigh their bad deeds will go to paradise, while those whose bad deeds outweighed their good deeds will go to hell. Furthermore, those people who committed evil acts but believed in Islam will go to hell to be punished for the wrong which they have committed if they had died without having repented. However, they will eventually be permitted to paradise for their belief in the teachings of Islam.

4 WHY WERE WE CREATED AND THE HISTORY OF OUR EXISTENCE?

Muslims believe that Allah (God), after creating the earth informed the angels that Allah (God) would create mankind to live on earth as a test for them. Those who abided by Allah's (God's) commands would go to heaven where they would live forever or to hell for those who failed to abide by Allah's (God's) commands.

The angels voiced their concerns over the creation of man saying that man will not abide by Allah's (God's) commands and that they should not be created. However, Allah (God) told the angels that it is human beings free will to do both good and evil which makes them superior to the angels as the good and bad that they commit are voluntary acts.

Allah (God) created the prophet Adam, as the first human to be created, and used the properties of sand in creating Adam, whereas the angels are made from light, and the jinn (devil) are made from fire. Allah (God) then, in order to ensure the superiority of Man is well established, ordered the Angels to prostrate to Adam once Adams body had been molded and completed. This event took place in heaven.

The angels abided and prostrated to Adam, however, Iblees i.e., the Devil (who is a jinn and not an angel) refused to prostrate out of pride, and said that he is made from fire whereas humans are made from clay.

Hence, he claimed it would not be befitting to prostrate to something created from a lesser substance. As a result thereof, Allah (God) expelled Iblees from heaven. Before being expelled, the Devil told Allah (God) that he would prove the inferiority of man by leading man astray for the rest of time.

Adam felt lonely in paradise, and so Allah (God) created Hawa (Eve) to be his companion in paradise. Eventually, Allah (God) sent both Adam and Eve to Earth where humans would then reside for the rest of time. Adam was given laws and regulations to live by, and for his offspring to follow as well.

The reason for our existence quite simply, is to worship Allah (God). This world is a test and is very temporary. For the limited time that we are here, we have to worship Allah (God) and treat his creation (mankind and animals) with kindness and respect. Furthermore, our beliefs must be in line with those beliefs mentioned above, and we must act upon the 5 pillars of Islam, which will be mentioned below.

5 FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

5.1 Faith (Imaan)

To have faith is to attest that there is no Allah (God) but Allah. He is one, he is the all-powerful and that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was his last and final messenger, and that our success lies only in the way of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

5.2 Praying (Salah)

Praying is a necessary condition as a Muslim. Muslims pray 5 times a day. The first one at the time prior to dawn, the second one during the noon period, the third during the mid-afternoon period, the fourth after sunset, and the fifth at night.

5.3 Charity (Zakat)

Whilst voluntary charity is encouraged in Islam, the word “Zakat” deals with compulsory charity which Muslims must pay every year: 2.5% of one’s wealth must be given as zakat. There are Muslims which are exempted from this if their possessions, cash etc. is below the required threshold. Zakat

is paid to those poor Muslims who have little to no livelihoods.

The idea of Zakat is to spend for the love of Allah (God), and to try and improve the adverse conditions of man. Studies show that if every human paid zakat, the world would not have any poverty.

5.4 Fasting (Saum)

Almost everyone knows what it means to fast. However, in Islam, during one month of the year, known as 'Ramadhan', it is compulsory for Muslims to fast. From sunrise until sunset NOTHING can be consumed by the one who is fasting. It is NOT permissible to drink water as well.

5.5 Pilgrimage (Haji)

The Muslim holy lands are situated in the cities of Makkah and Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

The Kaabah is located in Makkah- (the image of the Kaabah is on the front cover of this booklet).

Muslims congregate around the Kaabah and perform tawaaf (the ritual of walking and praying around the Kaabah seven times, with the aim of drawing Allah's (God's) love.

Madinah is around 500 km's away from Makkah, and is significant due to the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) masjid (place of worship) being located there. The masjid also hosts the grave of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself.

Once a year, there is a period of 5 days in the month known as Zhul Hijjah (in the Islamic calendar) in which Muslims, (who can afford it, must go at least once in their lifetime) go to perform the rituals of Hajj in the holy lands.

6 MAJOR SINS

- i. Associating partners with Allah (God).
- ii. Neglecting ones 5 daily prayers.
- iii. Murder.
- iv. Failure to pay Zakat without a valid excuse.
- v. Failure to fast in Ramadan without a valid excuse.
- vi. Indulging in black magic.
- vii. Failure to perform pilgrimage if one has the means.
- viii. Pre-marital sex.
- ix. Adultery.
- x. Charging and receiving interest.
- xi. Breaking family ties.
- xii. Consuming alcohol/intoxicants.
- xiii. Eating pork and carrion.
- xiv. Being disrespectful to parents.
- xv. Being an unjust leader.
- xvi. Treating others cruelly.
- xvii. Dishonesty.
- xviii. Listening to music.
- xix. Backbiting of others.
- xx. Stealing/theft, etc.

7 YOUR BELIEF OF ISLAM

While you may not have expressly said it, or may not have even considered it, if you do not believe in Islam, it means that you are basically saying the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a liar - that he was not a prophet and that the Quran was in fact written by him, and not revealed by Allah (God).

One cannot claim that the Quran is the word of Allah (God), but not be a Muslim. As the Quran states that no other way but the way of Islam is the true path.

8 DISPROVING YOUR BELIEF

For the sake of keeping this booklet concise, a thorough rebuttal of each religion/Atheistic beliefs cannot be conducted. Living in Johannesburg, South Africa, the majority encounters I have with non-Muslims are Christians.

For this reason, a short but concise rebuttal of Christianity will be conducted.

NOTE:

ISLAM DOES NOT PROMOTE DISRESPECT AND HATRED. ANY INTER-RELIGIOUS REBUTTAL IS MEANT FOR GUIDANCE AS OPPOSED TO DISRESPECT.

i. REFUTING CHRISTIANITY:

Christianity can be somewhat simplified into 3 categories:

8.1 *Those Who Believe that Jesus (Peace Be Upon Him) is God*

- ❖ Refuting this form of Christianity only requires for a person to contemplate the true qualities of Allah (God). Allah (God) is God. Allah (God) is not human. The powers and qualities of Allah (God) cannot be restricted to human qualities. If Jesus (peace be upon

him) was God, did Allah (God) sleep then? eat/ use the toilet? Can this be Allah (God) then?

- ❖ Christians believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) was crucified. Was Allah (God) killed then in that moment? Is Allah (God) dead then?
- ❖ If Mary gave birth to Jesus (peace be upon him), then did a woman from earth give birth to God?
- ❖ When Jesus ordered his disciples to pray, and then subsequently prayed himself by prostrating, who was he then prostrating to?

8.2 Those Who Believe in the Trinity

- ❖ Mainstream Christians believe in a complicated understanding of the trinity (God; Jesus; The Holy Spirit).
- ❖ A question arises, if Allah (God) willed for an earthquake to occur, does Allah (God) require the permission of Jesus (peace be upon him) and the Holy Spirit? Is there a conference meeting prior to every decision being made?
- ❖ IF YES, CONSENT IS NEEDED, this would mean they believe that Allah (God), who is meant to be independent (as an attribute of God), is actually dependent on Jesus (peace be upon him) and the Holy Spirit. This would be saying Allah (God) is independently dependent. Therefore, a logical fallacy (does not make sense). Would it make Allah (God) a

God if he required the consent of others? The idea of Allah (God) is a deity in control of everything, and not one which requires the permission of others.

- ❖ If Allah (God) requires the permission of Jesus (peace be upon him), then when Jesus (peace be upon him) was so called crucified, did he veto the decision prior to his crucifixion?
- ❖ IF NO, CONSENT IS NOT NEEDED: They are conceding Allah (God) is ONE. And that all others be it Jesus (peace be upon him) etc. are not Gods.
- ❖ If Jesus (peace be upon him) was the SON of God, did Allah (God) give physical birth to him? If Jesus (peace be upon him) was merely created, is this not like Adam then?
- ❖ If the grandeur of Jesus (peace be upon him) comes from him being born without a mother, then why don't Christian's worship Adam for having both no mother and father?
- ❖ The Old Testament does not make any mention of a trinity. This concept was agreed upon only at the Council of Nicaea. Eventually the New Testament included the idea of the trinity. Therefore, the crux of the belief was actually not in the first testament, and had to be inserted in the new one. Would Allah (God) actually want someone to believe in something not clearly specified?

8.3 *Those Who Believe Jesus (Peace Be Upon Him) was not God but rather a Prophet (The Last Prophet).*

This would kind of mean that they are not really a 'Christian' but in any event, the rebuttal of this would then be in the proof of the Quran. Any person who follows this belief would need to disprove the authenticity of the Quran or be able to find an excuse/reason for any miracle of the Quran.

9 PROOF OF QURAN

The proof of the Quran can primarily lie in two things. One, where the onus is on the other party to disprove the Quran. And two, where the onus is on the Muslim to prove the Quran. Regardless, the proofs of Quran will be highlighted. A famous method of testing the Quran involves 4 crucial factors.

9.1 Reproduction Challenge

The Quran itself challenges mankind. The Quran challenges one and all to produce ONE surah, or even a part thereof and rival it to the Quran. Since non-Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was just a liar who invented the Quran, they are hereby challenged to produce at least one surah or even a part thereof like that in Quran. The Quran is challenging all to prove their claim.

If you believe that the Quran is the word of Allah (God), then you are actually a Muslim. However, note that the Quran states that only Islam can be followed. So, you cannot claim that yes, it is the word of Allah (God) but I am not Muslim. That would be like saying you can count on your fingers that $1+1 = 2$ but you follow the belief that $2-1 = 3$.

9.2 Preservation

To date, the Quran is the only revealed text, which has remained unchanged. This is an undisputed historical fact. The Quran has been preserved through written texts as well as in the hearts of man. Young children, as young as 4 years and 5 years have memorized the Quran from the start until the end. Which means there is no opportunity to change it.

However, the Torah, which was sent to Moses (peace be upon him) had gone completely missing and this is evidenced by the fact that at the time of Jesus (peace be upon him), there were FOUR different versions of the Torah.

The Bible has undisputedly changed many times, and the language in which Jesus (peace be upon him) revealed the bible was Aramaic. Furthermore, how can anyone claim that the bible is the word of Allah (God,) if they do not even have the original texts revealed by Allah (God) to compare it to? It's like buying a fake shoe and claiming it is the real one, but not even knowing how the real one looks to start with.

NOTE: LUKE, JOHN, MARK AND MATHEW, WHOM THE GOSPELS ARE ATTRIBUTED TO, WERE NOT THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS! THEY WERE RESEARCHERS WHO HAPPENED TO SHARE THE SAME NAME AS THEM!

9.3 Contradictions

To date, no person has ever claimed that the Quran has contradictions in it. Despite living in a generation of instant research due to the internet, NO person has ever found contradictions in the Quran. In many novels, the author starts of by apologizing for any mistakes he may have made in the book. The Quran however, begins by saying that the Quran has NO mistakes at all.

9.4 Miracles

9.4.1 Medical

The Quran clearly stipulates the stages of human embryology; stipulating each stage of human conception, and then further explaining the embryo. Only in the late 1800's were medical experts, through technology, able to determine that which the Quran explained almost 1250 years prior to that.

9.4.2 Predictions

During a period in which the Persian Empire was the superpower, the Quran predicted that the Romans would defeat the Persians. This is a miracle, which if it did not occur, would immediately disprove the Quran. We can, by

now, assume what happened next: The Romans defeated the Persians.

9.4.3 Science

The Quran refers to the home of a spider as “the flimsiest of homes”. After female and male spiders copulate, if the male does not quickly escape, the female eats the male. Generally, a home is built for protection, whereas with spiders, it is built to destroy those who enter. This is a miracle of the Quran.

The Quran further states that the female spider is responsible for making the home. Science now confirms that it is indeed the female spider which is the stronger of the two. The Quran is filled with miracles, too many to mention in a short booklet. But above are just some of the many miracles for any reader to ponder.

Consider it. Can anyone possibly claim that 1442 years ago, a man who historically is accepted to have been unable to write, be able to write such a glorious book? You as a reader have been given consciousness, instead of using it to disprove, meditate and reflect.

THE PROPHET (PEACE BE UPON HIM) WAS MOCKED FOR HAVING LOST BOTH HIS SONS DURING THEIR INFANCY. THE NON-BELIEVERS WOULD SAY THAT HE IS LIKE AN ANIMAL WITHOUT A TAIL I.E. HIS LEGACY WOULD BE WIPE OUT WITHOUT A SON BEARING HIS NAME. THE VERSES OF QURAN WERE REVEALED SAYING THAT THOSE WHO MOCK THE PROPHET (PEACE BE UPON HIM) WOULD BE FORGOTTEN AND THE PROPHET'S (PBUH) NAME WOULD BE REMEMBERED FOREVER. TODAY, IT IS A WORLD FACT, THE MOST COMMON NAME IS "MUHAMMAD". A MAN WHO WAS MOCKED, JEERED AND LAUGHED AT, EVENTUALLY WOULD GO ON TO BECOME THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN TO HAVE EVER LIVED. CAN THIS MAN HAVE BEEN A LIAR? CAN THE BOOK HE REVEALED BE CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY HIM?

10 CONCLUSION

The topic of religions viewed in light of others is one, which is very difficult to reduce into limited words. For this reason, I have tried my best to include just a brief summary of that which I felt was important to share.

I hope I have done so respectfully, without any air of arrogance in doing so. The idea of life is not in the accumulation of wealth, but in finding the true path. May we all be guided onto that path. Aameen.

For those who have been inspired by this book, and wish to accept Islam, I urge you to go to your local Mosque (Muslim place of worship) and speak to the Imam (leader) of that Mosque. The process of accepting Islam is a short process, but one should not initiate the process on his own without the guidance of an experienced Imam through the process.

I am confident that almost every reader knows at least one mosque in their area of residence, or at least one Muslim who can guide you to the local mosque in your area.

Should you fail in both aspects, my email address is placed on the cover for further assistance.

For those who read this book for purely academic reasons, I encourage you to read this book with a different perspective. Read it with the intent of seeking, as opposed to learning.

For those who read this book for purely mocking purposes, and to ridicule the religion by finding beliefs which seem illogical to the human mind, then for you I say, May ALLAH (God) guide you.

And lastly, for those Muslims, be it new Muslims or “old” Muslims, May Allah (God) keep us on the straight path, and let us be a means of guidance to all. Aameen