

FAQ On ISLAM

By Doctor Zakir Naik

Composed by Dayan Bunerai

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Introduction



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A medical doctor by professional training, Dr. Zakir Naik is



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have done in 4 years had taken me 40 years to accomplish, Alhamdulillah."

Sheikh Ahmed Deedat, the world famous orator on Islam and Comparative Religion, who had called Dr. Zakir, "Deedat plus" in 1994, presented a plaque in May 2000 awarded to Dr. Zakir Abdul-Karim Naik for his achievement in the field of Da'wah and the study of Comparative Religion with the engraving "Son what you



Dr. Zakir Naik appears regularly on many international T.V. Channels in more than 100 countries of the world. He is regularly invited for T.V. and Radio interviews. More than a hundred of his talks, dialogues, debates and symposia are available on video cassettes, video CDs and audio cassettes. He has authored books on Islam and Comparative Religion.

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 3. CONCEPT OF GOD IN MAJOR RELIGIONS
 4. ISLAM AND TERRORISM
 5. WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAM - Protected Or Subjugated?
 6. AL-QUR'ÂN - Should it be Read with Understanding?
 7. IS THE QUR'ÂN GOD'S WORD?

FAQ On ISLAM

By **Dr. Zakir Naik**

In conveying the message of Islam to a non-Muslim, it is usually not sufficient to highlight only the positive nature of Islam. Most non-Muslims are not convinced about the truth of Islam because there are a few questions about Islam at the back of their minds that remain unanswered. They may agree with your contentions about the positive nature of Islam. But, in the same breath, they will say -

"Ah! But you are the same Muslims who marry more than one woman. You are the same people who subjugate women by keeping them behind the veil. You are fundamentalists, etc."

I personally prefer asking the non-Muslim upfront, what he feels is wrong in Islam. I prefer asking directly, what they feel is wrong in Islam with their limited knowledge, whether right or wrong and from whichever source it may be. I encourage them to be very frank and open and convince them that I can take criticism about Islam.

In the past few years of my Da'wah experience, I have realized that there are barely twenty most common questions that a common non-Muslim has regarding Islam. Whenever you ask a non-Muslim, "what do you feel is wrong with Islam?", he poses five or six questions, and these questions invariably fall among the twenty most common questions.

Logical replies can convince the majority

The twenty most common questions about Islam can be answered with reason and logic. A majority of non-Muslims can be convinced with these answers. If a Muslim memorizes or simply remembers these answers, Inshallah he will be successful, if not in convincing non-Muslims about the complete truth of Islam, then at least in removing misconceptions about Islam and neutralizing the negative thinking about Islam and Muslims that the non-Muslims have. A very few non-Muslims may have counter arguments to these replies, for which further information may be required.

MOST COMMON QUESTIONS **ASKED BY NON-MUSLIMS**

MUSLIMS ARE FUNDAMENTALISTS AND TERRORISTS

Question:

Why are most of the Muslims fundamentalists and terrorists?

Answer:

This question is often hurled at Muslims, either directly or indirectly, during any discussion on religion or world affairs. Muslim stereotypes are perpetuated in every form of the media accompanied by gross misinformation about Islam and Muslims. In fact, such misinformation and false propaganda often leads to discrimination and acts of violence against Muslims. A case in point is the anti-Muslim campaign in the American media following the Oklahoma bomb blast, where the press was quick to declare a 'Middle Eastern conspiracy' behind the attack. The culprit was later identified as a soldier from the American Armed Forces.

Let us analyze this allegation of 'fundamentalism' and 'terrorism':

1. Definition of the word 'fundamentalist'

A fundamentalist is a person who follows and adheres to the fundamentals of the doctrine or theory he is following. For a person to be a good doctor, he should know, follow, and practise the fundamentals of medicine. In other words, he should be a fundamentalist in the field of medicine. For a person to be a good mathematician, he should know, follow and practise the fundamentals of mathematics. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of mathematics. For a person to be a good scientist, he should know, follow and practise the fundamentals of science. He should be a fundamentalist in the field of science.

2. Not all 'fundamentalists' are the same

One cannot paint all fundamentalists with the same brush. One cannot categorize all fundamentalists as either good or bad. Such a categorization of any fundamentalist will depend upon the field or activity in which he is a fundamentalist. A fundamentalist robber or

thief causes harm to society and is therefore undesirable. A fundamentalist doctor, on the other hand, benefits society and earns much respect.

3. I am proud to be a Muslim fundamentalist

I am a fundamentalist Muslim who, by the grace of Allah, knows, follows and strives to practise the fundamentals of Islam. A true Muslim does not shy away from being a fundamentalist. I am proud to be a fundamentalist Muslim because, I know that the fundamentals of Islam are beneficial to humanity and the whole world. There is not a single fundamental of Islam that causes harm or is against the interests of the human race as a whole. Many people harbour misconceptions about Islam and consider several teachings of Islam to be unfair or improper. This is due to insufficient and incorrect knowledge of Islam. If one critically analyzes the teachings of Islam with an open mind, one cannot escape the fact that Islam is full of benefits both at the individual and collective levels.

4. Dictionary meaning of the word ‘fundamentalist’

According to Webster’s dictionary ‘fundamentalism’ was a movement in American Protestantism that arose in the earlier part of the 20th century. It was a reaction to modernism, and stressed the infallibility of the Bible, not only in matters of faith and morals but also as a literal historical record. It stressed on belief in the Bible as the literal word of God. Thus fundamentalism was a word initially used for a group of Christians who believed that the Bible was the verbatim word of God without any errors and mistakes.

According to the Oxford dictionary ‘fundamentalism’ means ‘strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam’.

Today the moment a person uses the word fundamentalist he thinks of a Muslim who is a terrorist.

5. Every Muslim should be a terrorist

Every Muslim should be a terrorist. A terrorist is a person who causes terror. The moment a robber sees a policeman he is terrified. A policeman is a terrorist for the robber. Similarly every Muslim should be a terrorist for the antisocial elements of society, such as thieves, dacoits and rapists. Whenever such an anti-social element sees a Muslim, he should be terrified. It is true that the word ‘terrorist’ is generally used for a person who causes terror among the common people. But a true Muslim should only be a terrorist to selective people i.e. anti-social elements, and not to the common innocent people. In fact a Muslim should be a source of peace for innocent people.

6. Different labels given to the same individual for the same action, i.e. ‘terrorist’ and ‘patriot’

Before India achieved independence from British rule, some freedom fighters of India who did not subscribe to non-violence were labeled as terrorists by the British government. The same individuals have been lauded by Indians for the same activities and hailed as ‘patriots’. Thus two different labels have been given to the same people for the same set of actions. One is calling him a terrorist while the other is calling him a patriot. Those who believed that Britain had a right to rule over India called these people terrorists, while those who were of the view that Britain had no right to rule India called them patriots and freedom fighters.

It is therefore important that before a person is judged, he is given a fair hearing. Both sides of the argument should be heard, the situation should be analyzed, and the reason and the intention of the person should be taken into account, and then the person can be judged accordingly.

7. Islam means peace

Islam is derived from the word '*salaam*' which means peace. It is a religion of peace whose fundamentals teach its followers to maintain and promote peace throughout the world.

Thus every Muslim should be a fundamentalist i.e. he should follow the fundamentals of the Religion of Peace: Islam. He should be a terrorist only towards the antisocial elements in order to promote peace and justice in the society.

HEREAFTER - LIFE AFTER DEATH

Question

How can you prove the existence of hereafter, i.e. life after death?

Answer

1. Belief in the hereafter is not based on blind faith?

Many people wonder as to how a person with a scientific and logical temperament, can lend any credence to the belief of life after death. People assume that anyone believing in the hereafter is doing so on the basis of blind belief.

My belief in the hereafter is based on a logical argument.

2. Hereafter a logical belief

There are more than a thousand verses in the Glorious Qur'an, containing scientific facts (refer my book "Qur'an and Modern Science-Compatible or Incompatible?"). Many facts mentioned in the Qur'an have been discovered in the last few centuries. But science has not advanced to a level where it can confirm every statement of the Qur'an.

Suppose 80% of all that is mentioned in the Qur'an has been proved 100% correct. About the remaining 20%, science makes no categorical statement, since it has not advanced to a level, where it can either prove or disprove these statements. With the limited knowledge that we have, we cannot say for sure whether even a single percentage or a single verse of the Qur'an from this 20% portion is wrong. Thus when 80% of the Qur'an is 100% correct and the remaining 20% is not disproved, logic says that even the 20% portion is correct. The existence of the hereafter, which is mentioned in the Qur'an, falls in the 20% ambiguous portion which my logic says is correct.

3. Concept of peace and human values is useless without the concept of hereafter

Is robbing a good or an evil act? A normal balanced person would say it is evil. How would a person who does not believe in the hereafter convince a powerful and influential criminal that robbing is evil?

Suppose I am the most powerful and influential criminal in the world. At the same time I am an Intelligent and a logical person. I say that robbing is good because it helps me lead a luxurious life. Thus robbing is good for me.

If anybody can put forward a single logical argument as to why it is evil for me, I will stop immediately. People usually put forward the following arguments:

a. The person who is robbed will face difficulties

Some may say that the person who is robbed will face difficulties. I certainly agree that it is bad for the person who is robbed. But it is good for me. If I rob a thousand dollars, I can enjoy a good meal at a 5 star restaurant.

b. Someone may rob you

Some people argue that someday I may be robbed. No one can rob me because I am a very powerful criminal and I have hundreds of bodyguards. I can rob anybody but nobody can rob me. Robbing may be a risky profession for a common man but not for an influential person like me.

c. The police may arrest you

Some may say, if you rob, you can be arrested by the police. The police cannot arrest me because I have the police on my payroll. I have the ministers on my payroll. I agree that if a common man robs, he will be arrested and it will be bad for him, but I am an extraordinarily influential and powerful criminal.

Give me one logical reason why it is bad for me and I will stop robbing.

d. Its easy money

Some may say its easy money and not hard-earned money. I agree completely that it is easy money, and that is one of the main reasons why I rob. If a person has the option of earning money the easy as well as the hard way, any logical person would choose the easy way.

e. It is against humanity

Some may say it is against humanity and that a person should care for other human beings. I counter argue by asking as to who wrote this law called 'humanity' and why should I follow it?

This law may be good for the emotional and sentimental people but I am a logical person and I see no benefit in caring for other human beings.

f. It is a selfish act

Some may say that robbing is being selfish. It is true that robbing is a selfish act; but then why should I not be selfish? It helps me enjoy life.

1. No logical reason for robbing being an evil act

Hence all arguments that attempt to prove that robbing is an evil act are futile. These arguments may satisfy a common man but not a powerful and influential criminal like me. None of the arguments can be defended on the strength of reason and logic. It is no surprise that there are so many criminals in this world.

Similarly raping, cheating etc. can be justified as good for a person like me and there is no logical argument that can convince me that these things are bad.

2. A Muslim can convince a powerful and influential criminal

Now let us switch sides. Suppose you are the most powerful and influential criminal in the world, who has the police and the ministers on his payroll. You have army of thugs to protect you. I am a Muslim who will convince you that robbing, raping, cheating, etc. are evil acts.

Even if I put forth the same arguments to prove that robbing is evil the criminal will respond the same way as he did earlier.

I agree that the criminal is being logical and all his arguments are true only when he is the most powerful and influential criminal.

3. Every human being wants justice

Each and every human being desires justice. Even if he does not want justice for others he wants justice for himself. Some people are intoxicated by power and influence and inflict pain and suffering on others. The same people, however, would surely object if some injustice was done to them. The reason such people become insensitive to the suffering of others is that they worship power and influence. Power and influence, they feel, not only allows them to inflict injustice on others but also prevents others from doing likewise to them.

4. God is Most Powerful and Just

As a Muslim I would convince the criminal about the existence of Almighty God (refer to answer proving the existence of God). This God is more powerful than you and at the same time is also just. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Allah is never unjust
In the least degree"

[Al-Qur'an 4:40]

5. Why does God not punish me?

The criminal, being a logical and scientific person, agrees that God exists, after being presented with scientific facts from the Qur'an. He may argue as to why God, if He is Powerful and Just, does not punish him.

6. The people who do injustice should be punished

Every person who has suffered injustice, irrespective of financial or social status, almost certainly wants the perpetrator of injustice to be punished. Every normal person would like the robber or the rapist to be taught a lesson. Though a large number of criminals are punished, many even go scot-free. They lead a pleasant, luxurious life, and even enjoy a peaceful existence. If injustice is done to a powerful and influential person, by someone more powerful and more influential than he, even such a person would want that person perpetrators of injustice to be punished.

7. This life is a test for the hereafter

This life is a test for the hereafter. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"He who created Death
And life that He
May try which of you
Is best in deed;
And He is the Exalted
In Might, Oft-Forgiving"
[Al-Qur'an 67:2]

8. Final justice on day of judgement

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Every soul shall have
A taste of death:
And only on the Day
Of Judgement shall you
Be paid your full recompense.
Only he who is saved
Far from the Fire
And admitted to the Garden
Will have attained
The object (of life):
For the life of this world
Is but goods and chattels
Of deception."
[Al-Qur'an 3:185]

Final justice will be meted out on the Day of Judgement. After a person dies, he will be resurrected on the Day of Judgement along with the rest of mankind. It is possible that a person receives part of his punishment in this world. The final reward and punishment will only be in the hereafter. God Almighty may not punish a robber or a rapist in this world but he will surely be held accountable on the Day of Judgement and will be punished in the hereafter i.e. life after death.

9. What punishment can the human law give Hitler?

Hitler incinerated six million Jews during his reign of terror. Even if the police had arrested him, what punishment can the human law give Hitler for justice to prevail? The most they can do is to send Hitler to the gas chamber. But that will only be punishment for the killing of one Jew. What about the remaining five million, nine hundred and ninety nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine Jews?

10. Allah can burn Hitler more than six million times in hellfire

Allah say in the Glorious Qur'an:

"Those who reject
Our signs, We shall soon
Cast into the Fire;
As often as their skins
Are roasted through,
We shall change them
For fresh skins,
That they may taste
The penalty: for Allah
Is Exalted in Power, Wise"
[Al-Qur'an 4:56]

If Allah wishes he can incinerate Hitler six million times in the hereafter in the hellfire.

11. No concept of human values or good and bad without concept of hereafter

It is clear that without convincing a person about the hereafter, i.e. life after death, the concept of human values and the good or evil nature of acts is impossible to prove to any person who is doing injustice especially when he is influential and powerful.

WHY ARE MUSLIMS DIVIDED INTO SECTS / DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT?

Question:

When all the Muslim follow one and the same Qur'an then why are there so many sects and different schools of thoughts among Muslims?

Answer:

1. Muslims Should be United

It is a fact that Muslims today, are divided amongst themselves. The tragedy is that such divisions are not endorsed by Islam at all. Islam believes in fostering unity amongst its followers.

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"And hold fast,
All together, by the rope
Which Allah (stretches out for you),
and be not divided among yourselves;"
[Al-Qur'an 3:103]

Which is the rope of Allah that is being referred to in this verse? It is the Glorious Qur'an. The Glorious Qur'an is the rope of Allah which all Muslims should hold fast together. There is double emphasis in this verse. Besides saying 'hold fast all together' it also says, 'be not divided'.

Qur'an further says,

"Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger"
[Al-Qur'an 4:59]

All the Muslim should follow the Qur'an and authentic Ahadith and be not divided among themselves.

2. It is Prohibited to make sects and divisions in Islam

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"As for those who divide
Their religion and break up
Into sects, thou hast
No part in them in the least:
Their affair is with Allah:
He will in the end
Tell them the truth
Of all that they did."
[Al-Qur'an 6:159]

In this verse Allah (swt) says that one should disassociate oneself from those who divide their religion and break it up into sects.

But when one asks a Muslim, "who are you?", the common answer is either 'I am a *Sunni*, or 'I am a *Shia*'. Some call themselves *Hanafi*, or *Shafi* or *Maliki* or *Humbali*. Some say 'I am a *Deobandi*', while some others say 'I am a *Barelvi*'.

3. Our Prophet was a Muslim

One may ask such Muslims, "Who was our beloved prophet (pbuh)? Was he a *Hanafi* or a *Shafi*, or a *Humbali* or a *Maliki*?" No! He was a Muslim, like all the other prophets and messengers of Allah before him.

It is mentioned in chapter 3 verse 52 of Al-Qur'an that Jesus (pbuh) was a Muslim.

Further, in chapter 3 verse 67, Al-Qur'an says that Ibrahim (pbuh) was not a Jew or a Christian but was a Muslim.

4. Qur'an says call yourselves Muslim

- a. If anyone poses a Muslim the question who are you, he should say "I am a MUSLIM, not a *Hanafi* or a *Shafi*". Surah Fussilat chapter 41 verse 33 says
"Who is better in speech
Than one who calls (men)

To Allah, works righteousness,
 And says, 'I am of those
 Who bow in Islam (Muslim)?' "
 [Al-Qur'an 41:33]

The Qur'an says "Say I am of those who bow in Islam". In other words, say, "I am a Muslim".

- b. The Prophet (pbuh) dictated letters to non-Muslim kings and rulers inviting them to accept Islam. In these letters he mentioned the verse of the Qur'an from Surah Ali Imran chapter 3 verse 64:
 Say ye: "Bear witness
 That we (at least)
 Are Muslims (bowing
 To Allah's Will)."
 [Al-Qur'an 3:64]

5. Respect all the Great Scholars of Islam

We must respect all the great scholars of Islam, including the four Imaams, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi, Imam Hambal and Imam Malik (may Allah be pleased with them all). They were great scholars and may Allah reward them for their research and hardwork. One can have no objection if someone agrees with the views and research of Imam Abu Hanifa or Imam Shafi, etc. But when posed a question, 'who are you?', the reply should only be 'I am a Muslim'.

Some may argue by quoting the hadith of our beloved Prophet from Sunan Abu Dawood Hadith No. 4579. In this hadith the prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, "My community will be split up into seventy-three sects."

This hadith reports that the prophet predicted the emergence of seventy-three sects. He did not say that Muslims should be active in dividing themselves into sects. The Glorious Qur'an commands us not to create sects. Those who follow the teachings of the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith, and do not create sects are the people who are on the true path.

According to Tirmidhi Hadith No. 171, the prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said, "My *Ummah* will be fragmented into seventy-three sects, and all of them will be in Hell fire except one sect." The companions asked Allah's messenger which group that would be. Where upon he replied, "It is the one to which I and my companions belong."

The Glorious Qur'an mentions in several verses, "Obey Allah and obey His Messenger". A true Muslim should only follow the Glorious Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith. He can agree with the views of any scholar as long as they conform to the teachings of the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith. If such views go against the Word of Allah, or the Sunnah of His Prophet, then they carry no weight, regardless of how learned the scholar might be.

If only all Muslims read the Qur'an with understanding and adhere to Sahih Hadith, *Inshallah* most of these differences would be solved and we could be one united Muslim *Ummah*

ALL RELIGIONS TEACH MEN TO BE RIGHTEOUS, THEN WHY FOLLOW ONLY ISLAM?

Question

All religions basically teach followers to do good deeds. Why should a person only follow Islam? Can he not follow any of the religions?

Answer

1. Major difference between Islam and most other religions

All religions basically exhort mankind to be righteous and eschew evil. But Islam goes beyond that. It guides us towards practical ways of achieving righteousness and eliminating evil from our individual and collective lives. Islam takes into account human nature and the complexities of human society. Islam is guidance from the Creator Himself. Therefore, Islam is also called the *Deen-ul-Fitrah* (the natural religion of Man).

2. Example - Islam commands us to shun robbery and also prescribes method of eliminating robbery

a. Islam prescribes method of eliminating robbery

All major religions teach that theft is an evil act. Islam teaches the same. So what is the difference between Islam and the other religions? The difference lies in the fact that Islam, besides teaching that robbing is evil, shows a practical way of creating a social structure in which people will not rob.

b. Islam prescribes *Zakaat*

Islam prescribes a system of *Zakaat* (obligatory annual charity). Islamic law prescribes that every person who has a saving that exceeds the *nisaab* level i.e. more than 85 grams of gold, should give 2.5% of that saving every lunar year in charity. If every rich person in the world gave *Zakaat* sincerely, poverty will be eradicated from this world. Not a single human being would die of hunger.

c. Chopping off the hands as punishment for robbery

Islam prescribes chopping off the hands of the convicted robber. The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Maidah:

"As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime: and Allah is Exalted in power, full of wisdom."

[Al-Qur'an 5:38]

The non-Muslim may say, "Chopping off the hands in this 20th century. Islam is a barbaric and ruthless religion!"

d. Results achieved when Islamic *Shariah* Implemented

America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries in the world. Unfortunately it also has one of the highest rates of crime, theft, and robbery. Suppose the Islamic *shariah* is implemented in America i.e. every rich person gives *Zakaat* (2.5% of his savings in charity above 85 grams of gold every lunar year), and every convicted robber has his or her hands chopped off as a punishment. Will the rate of theft and robbery in America increase, remain same or decrease? Naturally it will decrease. Moreover the existence of such a stringent law would discourage many a potential robber.

I agree that the amount of theft that takes place in the world today is so tremendous that if you chop off the hands of all the thieves, there will be tens of thousands of

people whose hands will be chopped off. The point here is that the moment you implement this law the rate of theft will decline immediately. The potential robber would give it a serious thought before jeopardizing his limbs. The mere thought of the punishment itself will discourage majority of the robbers. There will barely be a few who would rob. Hence only a few person's hands would be chopped off but millions would live peacefully without fear of being robbed.

Islamic *Shariah* is therefore practical, and achieves results.

3. Example: Islam prohibits the molestation and rape of women. It enjoins *hijaab* and prescribes capital punishment for a convicted rapist.

a. Islam prescribes method of eliminating molestation and rape

All the major religions declare the molestation and rape of women as grave sins. Islam teaches the same. What then is the difference between Islam and the other religions? The difference lies in the fact that Islam does not merely preach respect for women, or abhor molestation and rape as serious crimes, but also gives clear guidance as to how society can eliminate such crimes.

b. *Hijaab* for men

Islam has a system of *hijaab*. The Glorious Qur'an first mentions *hijaab* for the men and then for the women. *Hijaab* for the men is mentioned in the following verse:

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do."

[Al-Qur'an 24:30]

The moment a man looks at a woman and if any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he should lower his gaze.

c. *Hijaab* for women

Hijaab for women is mentioned in the following verse:

"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons...."

[Al-Qur'an 24:31]

The extent of *hijaab* for a woman is that her complete body should be covered. The only part that can be seen, are the face and the hands up to the wrists. If they wish to cover, they can even cover these parts of the body. However some Islamic scholars insist that even the face should be covered.

d. *Hijaab* prevents molestation

The reason why Allah has prescribed *Hijaab* for the women is given in the Qur'an in the following verse of Surah Al-Ahzab:

"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient,

that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, most Merciful."

[Al-Qur'an 33:59]

The Qur'an says that *Hijaab* has been prescribed for the women so that they are recognized as modest women this would prevent them from being molested.

e. Example of twin sisters

Suppose two sisters who are twins and who are equally beautiful, walk down a street. One of them is wearing the Islamic *Hijaab* i.e. the complete body is covered except for the face and the hands up to the wrists, and the other twin is wearing a mini skirt or shorts. Around the corner there is a hooligan who is waiting for an opportunity to tease a girl. Who will he tease? The girl wearing the Islamic *Hijaab* or the girl wearing the mini skirt or shorts? Dresses that expose more than they conceal, are an indirect temptation to the opposite sex for teasing, molestation and rape. The Qur'an rightly says that the *hijaab* prevents women from being molested.

f. Capital punishment for rapist

The Islamic *shariah* prescribes capital punishment for a convicted rapist. The non-Muslim may be horrified at such a stringent punishment in this age. Many accuse Islam of being ruthless and barbaric. I have asked a common question to hundreds of non-Muslim men. Suppose God-forbid, some one rapes your wife, your mother or your sister and you are made the judge. The rapist is brought in front of you. What punishment would you give him? All of them said, "we would put him to death." Some went to the extent of saying, "we would torture him to death", If your wife or your mother is raped you want the rapist to be put to death. But if someone else's wife or mother is raped, capital punishment is a barbaric law. Why the double standards?

g. U.S.A. has one of the highest rate of Rape

The United States of America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries of the world. An F.B.I report in the year 1990 says that 1,02,555 cases of rape were reported. It further says that only 16% of the cases of rapes are reported. Thus, in order to know the actual number of rapes that took place in 1990, the reported figure should be multiplied by 6.25. We get a total of 6,40,968 rape cases that took place in the year 1990. If the total is divided by 365 the number of days in a year, we get an average of 1,756 rape incidents everyday.

Later another report said that an average of 1900 cases of rape are committed in U.S.A every day. According to National Crime Victimization Survey Bureau of Justice Statistics (U. S. Dept. of Justice) in 1996 alone 3,07,000 cases of rape were reported. Only 31% of the actual cases of rape were reported. Thus, $3,07,000 \times 3.226 = 9,90,322$ rapes took place in 1996. That is, an average of 2,713 cases of rape took place everyday in America in 1996. Every 32 seconds one rape is taking place in America. Maybe American rapists got bolder. The FBI report of 1990 continues and says that out of the rape cases that were reported only 10% of the rapist were arrested, that is only 1.6% of the actual rapes committed. Out of those arrested, 50% were let free before the trial. This would mean that only 0.8% of the rapists faced a trial. In other words if a person commits 125 rapes the chances that he will get a punishment for rape is only once. Many would consider this a good gamble. And the report says that of those people who faced trial 50% received sentences of less than a year's imprisonment though the American law says rape carries a seven year sentence of imprisonment. For a rapist, the judge is lenient to first time offenders. Imagine a person commits 125 rapes and the chances of being convicted is only

once, and 50% of the time the judge will grant leniency and give a sentence of less than a year!

h. **Results achieved when Islamic *Shariah* Implemented**

Suppose the Islamic *shariah* is implemented in America. Whenever a man looks at a woman and if any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he lowers his gaze. Every woman wears the Islamic *Hijab*, that is the complete body is covered except the face and the hands upto the wrists. After this if any man commits rape, he gets capital punishment. The question is, will the rate of rape in America increase, will it remain the same or will it decrease? Naturally it will decrease. Islamic *Shariah* gets results.

4. Islam has Practical Solutions for the Problems of Mankind

Islam is the best way of life because its teachings are not doctrinaire rhetoric but practical solutions for the problems of mankind. Islam achieves results both at the individual and collective levels. Islam is the best way of life because it is a practical, universal religion not confined to any ethnic group or nationality

VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ISLAM AND THE ACTUAL PRACTICE OF MUSLIMS

Question:

If Islam is the best religion, why are many of the Muslims dishonest, unreliable, and involved in activities such as cheating, bribing, dealing in drugs, etc.?

Answer:

1. Media maligns Islam

- a. Islam is without doubt the best religion but the media is in the hands of the westerners who are afraid of Islam. The media is continuously broadcasting and printing information against Islam. They either provide misinformation about Islam, misquote Islam or project a point out of proportion, if any.
- b. When any bomb blasts take place anywhere, the first people to be accused without proof are invariably the Muslims. This appears as headlines in the news. Later, when they find that non-Muslims were responsible, it appears as an insignificant news' item.
- c. If a 50 year old Muslim marries a 15 year old girl after taking her permission, it appears on the front page but when a 50 year old non-Muslim rapes a 6 year old girl, it may appear in the news in the inside pages as 'Newsbriefs'. Everyday in America on an average 2,713 cases of rape take place but it doesn't appear in the news, since it has become a way of life for the Americans.

2. Black sheep in every community:

I am aware that there are some Muslims who are dishonest, unreliable, who cheat, etc. but the media projects this as though only Muslims are involved in such activities. There are black

sheep in every community. I know Muslims who are alcoholics and who can drink most of the non-Muslims under the table.

3. Muslims best as a whole:

In spite of all the black sheep in the Muslim community, Muslims taken on the whole, yet form the best community in the world. We are the biggest community of tee-totalers as a whole, i.e. those who don't imbibe alcohol. Collectively, we are a community which gives the maximum charity in the world. There is not a single person in the world who can even show a candle to the Muslims where modesty is concerned; where sobriety is concerned; where human values and ethics are concerned.

4. Don't judge a car by its driver:

If you want to judge how good is the latest model of the "Mercedes" car and a person who does not know how to drive sits at the steering wheel and bangs up the car, who will you blame? The car or the driver? But naturally, the driver. To analyze how good the car is, a person should not look at the driver but see the ability and features of the car. How fast is it, what is its average fuel consumption, what are the safety measures, etc. Even if I agree for the sake of argument that the Muslims are bad, we can't judge Islam by its followers? If you want to judge how good Islam is then judge it according to its authentic sources, i.e. the Glorious Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith.

5. Judge Islam by its best follower i.e. Prophet Mohammed (pbuh):

If you practically want to check how good a car is put an expert driver behind the steering wheel. Similarly the best and the most exemplary follower of Islam by whom you can check how good Islam is, is the last and final messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Besides Muslims, there are several honest and unbiased non-Muslim historians who have acclaimed that prophet Muhammad was the best human being. According to Michael H. Hart who wrote the book, 'The Hundred Most Influential Men in History', the topmost position, i.e. the number one position goes to the beloved prophet of Islam, Muhammad (pbuh). There are several such examples of non-Muslims paying great tributes to the prophet, like Thomas Carlyle, La-Martine, etc.

NON-MUSLIMS REFERRED AS 'KAFIRS'

Question:

Why do Muslims abuse non-Muslims by calling them 'Kafirs'?

Answer:

'Kafir' means one who rejects.

'Kafir' is derived from the word '*kufir*', which means to conceal or to reject. In Islamic terminology, '*Kafir*' means one who conceals or rejects the truth of Islam and a person who rejects Islam is in English called a 'non-Muslim'.

If non-Muslims are hurt - they should accept Islam.

If any non-Muslim considers the word '*Kafir*' i.e. 'non-Muslim' as an abuse, he may choose to accept Islam and then we will stop referring to him as or call him a *kafir* i.e. a non-Muslim.

POLYGAMY**Question:**

Why is a man allowed to have more than one wife in Islam? i.e. why is polygamy allowed in Islam?

Answer:**Definition of Polygamy**

1. Polygamy means a system of marriage whereby one person has more than one spouse. Polygamy can be of two types. One is polygyny where a man marries more than one woman, and the other is polyandry, where a woman marries more than one man. In Islam, limited polygyny is permitted; whereas polyandry is completely prohibited.

Now coming to the original question, why is a man allowed to have more than one wife?

2. The Qur'an is the only religious scripture in the world that says, "marry only one".

The Qur'an is the only religious book, on the face of this earth, that contains the phrase 'marry only one'. There is no other religious book that instructs men to have only one wife. In none of the other religious scriptures, whether it be the Vedas, the Ramayan, the Mahabharat, the Geeta, the Talmud or the Bible does one find a restriction on the number of wives. According to these scriptures one can marry as many as one wishes. It was only later, that the Hindu priests and the Christian Church restricted the number of wives to one.

Many Hindu religious personalities, according to their scriptures, had multiple wives. King Dashrath, the father of Rama, had more than one wife. Krishna had several wives.

In earlier times, Christian men were permitted as many wives as they wished, since the Bible puts no restriction on the number of wives. It was only a few centuries ago that the Church restricted the number of wives to one.

Polygyny is permitted in Judaism. According to Talmudic law, Abraham had three wives, and Solomon had hundreds of wives. The practice of polygyny continued till Rabbi Gershom ben Yehudah (950 C.E to 1030 C.E) issued an edict against it. The Jewish Sephardic communities living in Muslim countries continued the practice till as late as 1950, until an Act of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel extended the ban on marrying more than one wife.

3. Hindus are more polygynous than Muslims

The report of the 'Committee of The Status of Woman in Islam', published in 1975 mentions on page numbers 66 and 67 that the percentage of polygamous marriages between the years 1951 and 1961 was 5.06% among the Hindus and only 4.31% among the Muslims. According to Indian law only Muslim men are permitted to have more than one wife. It is illegal for any non-Muslim in India to have more than one wife. Despite it being illegal, Hindus have more multiple wives as compared to Muslims. Earlier, there was no restriction even on Hindu men with respect to the number of wives allowed. It was only in 1954, when the Hindu Marriage Act was passed that it became illegal for a Hindu to have more than one wife. At present it is the Indian Law that restricts a Hindu man from having more than one wife and not the Hindu scriptures.

Let us now analyse why Islam allows a man to have more than one wife.

4. Qur'an permits limited polygyny

As I mentioned earlier, Qur'an is the only religious book on the face of the earth that says 'marry only one'. The context of this phrase is the following verse from Surah Nisa of the Glorious Qur'an:

"Marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one."

[Al-Qur'an 4:3]

Before the Qur'an was revealed, there was no upper limit for polygyny and many men had scores of wives, some even hundreds. Islam put an upper limit of four wives. Islam gives a man permission to marry two, three or four women, only on the condition that he deals justly with them.

In the same chapter i.e. Surah Nisa verse 129 says:

"Ye are never able to be fair and just as between women...."

[Al-Qur'an 4:129]

Therefore polygyny is not a rule but an exception. Many people are under the misconception that it is compulsory for a Muslim man to have more than one wife.

Broadly, Islam has five categories of Do's and Don'ts:

- i. 'Fard' i.e. compulsory or obligatory

- ii. *'Mustahab'* i.e. recommended or encouraged
- iii. *'Mubah'* i.e. permissible or allowed
- iv. *'Makruh'* i.e. not recommended or discouraged
- v. *'Haraam'* i.e. prohibited or forbidden

Polygyny falls in the middle category of things that are permissible. It cannot be said that a Muslim who has two, three or four wives is a better Muslim as compared to a Muslim who has only one wife.

5. Average life span of females is more than that of males

By nature males and females are born in approximately the same ratio. A female child has more immunity than a male child. A female child can fight the germs and diseases better than the male child. For this reason, during the pediatric age itself there are more deaths among males as compared to the females.

During wars, there are more men killed as compared to women. More men die due to accidents and diseases than women. The average life span of females is more than that of males, and at any given time one finds more widows in the world than widowers.

6. India has more male population than female due to female foeticide and infanticide

India is one of the few countries, along with the other neighbouring countries, in which the female population is less than the male population. The reason lies in the high rate of female infanticide in India, and the fact that more than one million female foetuses are aborted every year in this country, after they are identified as females. If this evil practice is stopped, then India too will have more females as compared to males.

7. World female population is more than male population

In the USA, women outnumber men by 7.8 million. New York alone has one million more females as compared to the number of males, and of the male population of New York one-third are gays i.e. sodomites. The U.S.A as a whole has more than twenty-five million gays. This means that these people do not wish to marry women. Great Britain has four million more females as compared to males. Germany has five million more females as compared to males. Russia has nine million more females than males. God alone knows how many million more females there are in the whole world as compared to males.

8. Restricting each and every man to have only one wife is not practical

Even if every man got married to one woman, there would still be more than thirty million females in U.S.A who would not be able to get husbands (considering that America has twenty five million gays). There would be more than four million females in Great Britain, 5 million females in Germany and nine million females in Russia alone who would not be able to find a husband.

Suppose my sister happens to be one of the unmarried women living in USA, or suppose your sister happens to be one of the unmarried women in USA. The only two options remaining for her are that she either marries a man who already has a wife or becomes public property. There is no other option. All those who are modest will opt for the first.

In Western society, it is common for a man to have mistresses and/or multiple extra-marital affairs, in which case, the woman leads a disgraceful, unprotected life. The same society, however, cannot accept a man having more than one wife, in which women retain their honourable, dignified position in society and lead a protected life.

Thus the only two options before a woman who cannot find a husband is to marry a married man or to become public property. Islam prefers giving women the honourable position by permitting the first option and disallowing the second.

There are several other reasons, why Islam has permitted limited polygyny, but it is mainly to protect the modesty of women

POLYANDRY

Question:

If a man is allowed to have more than one wife, then why does Islam prohibit a woman from having more than one husband?

Answer:

A lot of people, including some Muslims, question the logic of allowing Muslim men to have more than one spouse while denying the same 'right' to women.

Let me first state emphatically, that the foundation of an Islamic society is justice and equity. Allah has created men and women as equal, but with different capabilities and different responsibilities. Men and women are different, physiologically and psychologically. Their roles and responsibilities are different. Men and women are equal in Islam, but not identical.

Surah Nisa' Chapter 4 verses 22 to 24 gives the list of women with who you can not marry and it is further mentions in Surah Nisa' Chapter 4 verse 24 "Also (prohibited are) women already married"

The following points enumerate the reasons why polyandry is prohibited in Islam:

1. If a man has more than one wife, the parents of the children born of such marriages can easily be identified. The father as well as the mother can easily be identified. In case of a woman marrying more than one husband, only the mother of the children born of such marriages will be identified and not the father. Islam gives tremendous importance to the identification of both parents, mother and father. Psychologists tell us that children who do not know their parents, especially their father undergo severe mental trauma and disturbances. Often they have an unhappy childhood. It is for this reason that the children of prostitutes do not have a healthy childhood. If a child born of such wedlock is admitted in school, and when the mother is asked the name of the father, she would have to give two or more names! I am aware that recent advances in science have made it possible for both the mother and father to be identified with the help of genetic testing. Thus this point which was applicable for the past may not be applicable for the present.

2. Man is more polygamous by nature as compared to a woman.

3. Biologically, it is easier for a man to perform his duties as a husband despite having several wives. A woman, in a similar position, having several husbands, will not find it possible to perform her duties as a wife. A woman undergoes several psychological and behavioral changes due to different phases of the menstrual cycle.

4. A woman who has more than one husband will have several sexual partners at the same time and has a high chance of acquiring venereal or sexually transmitted diseases which can also be transmitted back to her husband even if all of them have no extra-marital sex. This is not the case in a man having more than one wife, and none of them having extra-marital sex.

The above reasons are those that one can easily identify. There are probably many more reasons why Allah, in His Infinite Wisdom, has prohibited polyandry

WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY THE SWORD?

Question:

How can Islam be called the religion of peace when it was spread by the sword?

Answer:

It is a common complaint among some non-Muslims that Islam would not have millions of adherents all over the world, if it had not been spread by the use of force. The following points will make it clear, that far from being spread by the sword, it was the inherent force of truth, reason and logic that was responsible for the rapid spread of Islam.

1. Islam means peace.

Islam comes from the root word '*salaam*', which means peace. It also means submitting one's will to Allah (swt). Thus Islam is a religion of peace, which is acquired by submitting one's will to the will of the Supreme Creator, Allah (swt).

2. Sometimes force has to be used to maintain peace.

Each and every human being in this world is not in favour of maintaining peace and harmony. There are many, who would disrupt it for their own vested interests. Sometimes force has to be used to maintain peace. It is precisely for this reason that we have the police who use force against criminals and anti-social elements to maintain peace in the country. Islam promotes peace. At the same time, Islam exhorts its followers to fight where there is oppression. The fight against oppression may, at times, require the use of force. In Islam force can only be used to promote peace and justice.

3. Opinion of historian De Lacy O'Leary.

The best reply to the misconception that Islam was spread by the sword is given by the noted historian De Lacy O'Leary in the book "Islam at the cross road" (Page 8):

"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 myth that historians have ever repeated."

4. Muslims ruled Spain for 800 years.

Muslims ruled Spain for about 800 years. The Muslims in Spain never used the sword to force the people to convert. Later the Christian Crusaders came to Spain and wiped out the Muslims. There was not a single Muslim in Spain who could openly give the adhan, that is the call for prayers.

5. 14 million Arabs are Coptic Christians.

Muslims were the lords of Arabia for 1400 years. For a few years the British ruled, and for a few years the French ruled. Overall, the Muslims ruled Arabia for 1400 years. Yet today, there are 14 million Arabs who are Coptic Christians i.e. Christians since generations. If the Muslims had used the sword there would not have been a single Arab who would have remained a Christian.

6. More than 80% non-Muslims in India.

The Muslims ruled India for about a thousand years. If they wanted, they had the power of converting each and every non-Muslim of India to Islam. Today more than 80% of the population of India are non-Muslims. All these non-Muslim Indians are bearing witness today that Islam was not spread by the sword.

7. Indonesia and Malaysia.

Indonesia is a country that has the maximum number of Muslims in the world. The majority of people in Malaysia are Muslims. May one ask, "Which Muslim army went to Indonesia and Malaysia?"

8. East Coast of Africa.

Similarly, Islam has spread rapidly on the East Coast of Africa. One may again ask, if Islam was spread by the sword, "Which Muslim army went to the East Coast of Africa?"

9. Thomas Carlyle.

The famous historian, Thomas Carlyle, in his book "Heroes and Hero worship", refers to this misconception about the spread of Islam: "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."

10. No compulsion in religion.

With which sword was Islam spread? Even if Muslims had it they could not use it to spread Islam because the Qur'an says in the following verse:

"Let there be no compulsion in religion:
Truth stands out clear from error"
[Al-Qur'an 2:256]

11. Sword of the Intellect.

It is the sword of intellect. The sword that conquers the hearts and minds of people. The Qur'an says in Surah Nahl, chapter 16 verse 125:

"Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord
with wisdom and beautiful preaching;
and argue with them in ways that are
best and most gracious."
[Al-Qur'an 16:125]

12. Increase in the world religions from 1934 to 1984.

An article in Reader's Digest 'Almanac', year book 1986, gave the statistics of the increase of 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%, and Christianity had increased only by 47%. May one ask, which war took place in this century which converted millions of people to Islam?

13. Islam is the fastest growing religion in America and Europe.

Today the fastest growing religion in America is Islam. The fastest growing religion in Europe is Islam. Which sword is forcing people in the West to accept Islam in such large numbers?

14. Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson.

Dr. Joseph Adam Pearson rightly says, "People who worry that nuclear weaponry will one day fall in the hands of the Arabs, fail to realize that the Islamic bomb has been dropped already, it fell the day MUHAMMED (pbuh) was born".

HIJAAB FOR WOMEN**Question:**

Why does Islam degrade women by keeping them behind the veil?

Answer:

The status of women in Islam is often the target of attacks in the secular media. The '*hijaab*' or the Islamic dress is cited by many as an example of the 'subjugation' of women under Islamic law. Before we analyze the reasoning behind the religiously mandated '*hijaab*', let us first study the status of women in societies before the advent of Islam

1. In the past women were degraded and used as objects of lust

The following examples from history amply illustrate the fact that the status of women in earlier civilizations was very low to the extent that they were denied basic human dignity:

1. Babylonian Civilization:
The women were degraded and were denied all rights under the Babylonian law. If a man murdered a woman, instead of him being punished, his wife was put to death.
2. Greek Civilization:
Greek Civilization is considered the most glorious of all ancient civilizations. Under this very 'glorious' system, women were deprived of all rights and were looked down upon. In Greek mythology, an 'imaginary woman' called 'Pandora' is the root cause of misfortune of human beings. The Greeks considered women to be subhuman and inferior to men. Though chastity of women was precious, and women were held in high esteem, the Greeks were later overwhelmed by ego and sexual perversions. Prostitution became a regular practice amongst all classes of Greek society.
3. Roman Civilization:
When Roman Civilization was at the zenith of its 'glory', a man even had the right to take the life of his wife. Prostitution and nudity were common amongst the Romans.
4. Egyptian Civilization:
The Egyptian considered women evil and as a sign of a devil.
5. Pre-Islamic Arabia:
Before Islam spread in Arabia, the Arabs looked down upon women and very often when a female child was born, she was buried alive.

2. Islam uplifted women and gave them equality and expects them to maintain their status.

Islam uplifted the status of women and granted them their just rights 1400 years ago. Islam expects women to maintain their status.

***Hijaab* for men**

People usually only discuss '*hijaab*' in the context of women. However, in the Glorious Qur'an, Allah (swt) first mentions '*hijaab*' for men before '*hijaab*' for the women. The Qur'an mentions in Surah Noor:

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do."
[Al-Qur'an 24:30]

The moment a man looks at a woman and if any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he should lower his gaze.

***Hijaab* for women.**

The next verse of Surah Noor, says:

" And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons..."
[Al-Qur'an 24:31]

3. Six criteria for *Hijaab*.

According to Qur'an and Sunnah there are basically six criteria for observing *hijaab*:

1. Extent:

The first criterion is the extent of the body that should be covered. This is different for men and women. The extent of covering obligatory on the male is to cover the body at least from the navel to the knees. For women, the extent of covering obligatory is to cover the complete body except the face and the hands upto the wrist. If they wish to, they can cover even these parts of the body. Some scholars of Islam insist that the face and the hands are part of the obligatory extent of '*hijaab*'.

All the remaining five criteria are the same for men and women.

2. The clothes worn should be loose and should not reveal the figure.
3. The clothes worn should not be transparent such that one can see through them.
4. The clothes worn should not be so glamorous as to attract the opposite sex.
5. The clothes worn should not resemble that of the opposite sex.
6. The clothes worn should not resemble that of the unbelievers i.e. they should not wear clothes that are specifically identities or symbols of the unbelievers' religions.

4. *Hijaab* includes conduct and behaviour among other things

Complete '*hijaab*', besides the six criteria of clothing, also includes the moral conduct, behaviour, attitude and intention of the individual. A person only fulfilling the criteria of '*hijaab*' of the clothes is observing '*hijaab*' in a limited sense. '*Hijaab*' of the clothes should be accompanied by '*hijaab*' of the eyes, '*hijaab*' of the heart, '*hijaab*' of thought and '*hijaab*' of intention. It also includes the way a person walks, the way a person talks, the way he behaves, etc.

5. *Hijaab* prevents molestation

The reason why *Hijaab* is prescribed for women is mentioned in the Qur'an in the following verses of Surah Al-Ahzab:

31

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"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad); that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."
[Al-Qur'an 33:59]

The Qur'an says that *Hijaab* has been prescribed for the women so that they are recognized as modest women and this will also prevent them from being molested.

6. Example of twin sisters

Suppose two sisters who are twins, and who are equally beautiful, walk down the street. One of them is attired in the Islamic *hijaab* i.e. the complete body is covered, except for the face and the hands up to the wrists. The other sister is wearing western clothes, a mini skirt or shorts. Just around the corner there is a hooligan or ruffian who is waiting for a catch, to tease a girl. Whom will he tease? The girl wearing the Islamic *Hijaab* or the girl wearing the skirt or the mini? Naturally he will tease the girl wearing the skirt or the mini. Such dresses are an indirect invitation to the opposite sex for teasing and molestation. The Qur'an rightly says that *hijaab* prevents women from being molested.

7. Capital punishment for the rapists

Under the Islamic *shariah*, a man convicted of having raped a woman, is given capital punishment. Many are astonished at this 'harsh' sentence. Some even say that Islam is a ruthless, barbaric religion! I have asked a simple question to hundreds of non-Muslim men. Suppose, God forbid, someone rapes your wife, your mother or your sister. You are made the judge and the rapist is brought in front of you. What punishment would you give him? All of them said they would put him to death. Some went to the extent of saying they would torture him to death. To them I ask, if someone rapes your wife or your mother you want to put him to death. But if the same crime is committed on somebody else's wife or daughter you say capital punishment is barbaric. Why should there be double standards?

8. Western society falsely claims to have uplifted women

Western talk of women's liberalization is nothing but a disguised form of exploitation of her body, degradation of her soul, and deprivation of her honour. Western society claims to have 'uplifted' women. On the contrary it has actually degraded them to the status of concubines, mistresses and society butterflies who are mere tools in the hands of pleasure seekers and sex marketeers, hidden behind the colourful screen of 'art' and 'culture'.

9. USA has one of the highest rates of rape

United States of America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries of the world. It also has one of the highest rates of rape in any country in the world. According to a FBI report, in the year 1990, every day on an average 1756 cases of rape were committed in U.S.A alone. Later another report said that on an average everyday 1900 cases of rapes are committed in USA. The year was not mentioned. May be it was 1992 or 1993. May be the Americans got 'bolder' in the following years.

Consider a scenario where the Islamic *hijaab* is followed in America. Whenever a man looks at a woman and any brazen or unashamed thought comes to his mind, he lowers his gaze. Every woman wears the Islamic *hijaab*, that is the complete body is covered except the face

and the hands upto the wrist. After this if any man commits rape he is given capital punishment. I ask you, in such a scenario, will the rate of rape in America increase, will it remain the same, or will it decrease?

10. Implementation of Islamic *Shariah* will reduce the rate of rapes

Naturally as soon as Islamic *Shariah* is implemented positive results will be inevitable. If Islamic *Shariah* is implemented in any part of the world, whether it is America or Europe, society will breathe easier. *Hijab* does not degrade a woman but uplifts a woman and protects her modesty and chastity.

EATING NON-VEGETARIAN FOOD

Question:

Killing an animal is a ruthless act. Why then do Muslims consume non-vegetarian food?

Answer:

'Vegetarianism' is now a movement the world over. Many even associate it with animal rights. Indeed, a large number of people consider the consumption of meat and other non-vegetarian products to be a violation of animal rights.

Islam enjoins mercy and compassion for all living creatures. At the same time Islam maintains that Allah has created the earth and its wondrous flora and fauna for the benefit of mankind. It is upto mankind to use every resource in this world judiciously, as a *niyyamat* (Divine blessing) and *amanat* (trust) from Allah.

Let us look at various other aspects of this argument.

1. A Muslim can be a pure vegetarian

A Muslim can be a very good Muslim despite being a pure vegetarian. It is not compulsory for a Muslim to have non-vegetarian food.

2. Qur'an permits Muslims to have non-vegetarian food

The Qur'an, however permits a Muslim to have non-vegetarian food. The following Qur'anic verses are proof of this fact:

"O ye who believe! Fulfil (all) obligations. Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals with the exceptions named."

[Al-Qur'an 5:1]

"And cattle He has created for you (men): from them Ye derive warmth, and numerous benefits, And of their (meat) ye eat."

[Al-Qur'an 16:5]

"And in cattle (too) ye have an instructive example: From within their bodies We produce (milk) for you to drink; there are, in them, (besides), numerous (other) benefits for you; and of

their (meat) ye eat."

[Al-Qur'an 23:21]

3. Meat is nutritious and rich in complete protein

Non-vegetarian food is a good source of excellent protein. It contains biologically complete protein i.e. all the 8 essential amino acid that are not synthesized by the body and should be supplied in the diet. Meat also contains iron, vitamin B1 and niacin.

4. Humans have Omnivorous set of teeth

If you observe the teeth of herbivorous animals like the cow, goat and sheep, you will find something strikingly similar in all of them. All these animals have a set of flat teeth i.e. suited for herbivorous diet. If you observe the set of teeth of the carnivorous animals like the lion, tiger, or leopard, they all have a set of pointed teeth i.e. suited for a carnivorous diet. If you analyze the set of teeth of humans, you find that they have flat teeth as well as pointed teeth. Thus they have teeth suited for both herbivorous as well as carnivorous food i.e. they are omnivorous. One may ask, if Almighty God wanted humans to have only vegetables, why did He provide us also with pointed teeth? It is logical that He expected us to need and to have both vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian food.

5. Human beings can digest both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food

The digestive system of herbivorous animals can digest only vegetables. The digestive system of carnivorous animals can digest only meat. But the digestive system of humans can digest both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. If Almighty God wanted us to have only vegetables then why did He give us a digestive system that can digest both vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian food?

6. Hindu scriptures give permission to have non-vegetarian food

- a. There are many Hindus who are strictly vegetarian. They think it is against their religion to consume non-vegetarian food. But the true fact is that the Hindu scriptures permit a person to have meat. The scriptures mention Hindu sages and saints consuming non-vegetarian food.
- b. It is mentioned in Manu Smruti, the law book of Hindus, in chapter 5 verse 30

"The eater who eats the flesh of those to be eaten does nothing bad, even if he does it day after day, for God himself created some to be eaten and some to be eater."
- c. Again next verse of Manu Smruti, that is, chapter 5 verse 31 says

"Eating meat is right for the sacrifice, this is traditionally known as a rule of the gods."
- d. Further in Manu Smruti chapter 5 verse 39 and 40 says

"God himself created sacrificial animals for sacrifice,, therefore killing in a sacrifice is not killing."
- e. Mahabharata Anushashan Parva chapter 88 narrates the discussion between Dharmaraj Yudhishtira and Pitamah Bhishma about what food one should offer to

Pitris (ancestors) during the *Shraddha* (ceremony of dead) to keep them satisfied. Paragraph reads as follows:

"Yudhishtira said, "O thou of great puissance, tell me what that object is which, if dedicated to the *Pitris* (dead ancestors), become inexhaustible! What *Havi*, again, (if offered) lasts for all time? What, indeed, is that which (if presented) becomes eternal?"

"Bhishma said, "Listen to me, O Yudhishtira, what those *Havis* are which persons conversant with the rituals of the *Shraddha* (the ceremony of dead) regard as suitable in view of *Shraddha* and what the fruits are that attach to each. With sesame seeds and rice and barley and *Masha* and water and roots and fruits, if given at *Shraddhas*, the *pitris*, O king, remain gratified for the period of a month. With fishes offered at *Shraddhas*, the *pitris* remain gratified for a period of two months. With the mutton they remain gratified for three months and with the hare for four months, with the flesh of the goat for five months, with the bacon (meat of pig) for six months, and with the flesh of birds for seven. With venison obtained from those deer that are called *Prishata*, they remain gratified for eight months, and with that obtained from the *Ruru* for nine months, and with the meat of *Gavaya* for ten months, With the meat of the buffalo their gratification lasts for eleven months. With beef presented at the *Shraddha*, their gratification, it is said, lasts for a full year. *Payasa* mixed with *ghee* is as much acceptable to the *pitris* as beef. With the meat of *Vadhrinasa* (a large bull) the gratification of *pitris* lasts for twelve years. The flesh of rhinoceros, offered to the *pitris* on anniversaries of the lunar days on which they died, becomes inexhaustible. The potherb called *Kalaska*, the petals of *kanchana* flower, and meat of (red) goat also, thus offered, prove inexhaustible.

So but natural if you want to keep your ancestors satisfied forever, you should serve them the meat of red goat.

7. Hinduism was influenced by other religions

Though Hindu Scriptures permit its followers to have non-vegetarian food, many Hindus adopted the vegetarian system because they were influenced by other religions like Jainism.

8. Even plants have life

Certain religions have adopted pure vegetarianism as a dietary law because they are totally against the killing of living creatures. If a person can survive without killing any living creature, I would be the first person to adopt such a way of life. In the past people thought plants were lifeless. Today it is a universal fact that even plants have life. Thus their logic of not killing living creatures is not fulfilled even by being a pure vegetarian.

9. Even plants can feel pain

They further argue that plants cannot feel pain, therefore killing a plant is a lesser crime as compared to killing an animal. Today science tells us that even plants can feel pain. But the cry of the plant cannot be heard by the human being. This is due to the inability of the human ear to hear sounds that are not in the audible range i.e. 20 Hertz to 20,000 Hertz. Anything below and above this range cannot be heard by a human being. A dog can hear up to 40,000 Hertz. Thus there are silent dog whistles that have a frequency of more than 20,000 Hertz and less than 40,000 Hertz. These whistles are only heard by dogs and not by human beings. The dog recognizes the masters whistle and comes to the master. There was research done

by a farmer in U.S.A. who invented an instrument which converted the cry of the plant so that it could be heard by human beings. He was able to realize immediately when the plant itself cried for water. Latest researches show that the plants can even feel happy and sad. It can also cry.

10. Killing a living creature with two senses less is not a lesser crime

Once a vegetarian argued his case by saying that plants only have two or three senses while the animals have five senses.

Therefore killing a plant is a lesser crime than killing an animal. Suppose your brother is born deaf and dumb and has two senses less as compared to other human beings. He becomes mature and someone murders him. Would you ask the judge to give the murderer a lesser punishment because your brother has two senses less? In fact you would say that he has killed a *masoom*, an innocent person, and the judge should give the murderer a greater punishment.

In fact the Qur'an says:

"O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good"
[Al-Qur'an 2:168]

11. Over population of cattle

If every human being was a vegetarian, it would lead to overpopulation of cattle in the world, since their reproduction and multiplication is very swift. Allah (swt) in His Divine Wisdom knows how to maintain the balance of His creation appropriately. No wonder He has permitted us to have the meat of the cattle.

12. Cost of meat is reasonable since all aren't non-vegetarians

I do not mind if some people are pure vegetarians. However they should not condemn non-vegetarians as ruthless. In fact if all Indians become non-vegetarians then the present non-vegetarians would be losers since the prices of meat would rise.

EQUALITY OF WITNESSES

Question:

Why are two witnesses who are women, equivalent to only one witness who is a man ?

Answer:

It is not true that two female witnesses are always considered as equal to only one male witness. It is true only in certain cases. There are about five verses in the Qur'an that mention witnesses, without specifying male or female. There is only one verse in the Qur'an, that says two female witnesses are equal to one male witness. This verse is Surah Baqarah, chapter 2

verse 282. This is the longest verse in the Qur'an and deals with financial transactions. It says:

"Oh! ye who believe!
When ye deal with each other,
in transactions involving future obligation
in a fixed period of time
reduce them to writing and get two witnesses
out of your own men and if there are not two men,
then a man and two women, such as ye choose,
for witnesses so that if one of them errs
the other can remind her."
[Al-Qur'an 2:282]

This verse of the Qur'an deals only with financial transactions. In such cases, it is advised to make an agreement in writing between the parties and take two witnesses, preferably both of which should be men only. In case you cannot find two men, then one man and two women would suffice.

For instance, suppose a person wants to undergo an operation for a particular ailment. To confirm the treatment, he would prefer taking references from two qualified surgeons. In case he is unable to find two surgeons, his second option would be one surgeon and two general practitioners who are plain MBBS doctors.

Similarly in financial transactions, two men are preferred. Islam expects men to be the breadwinners of their families. Since financial responsibility is shouldered by men, they are expected to be well versed in financial transactions as compared to women. As a second option, the witness can be one man and two women, so that if one of the women errs the other can remind her. The Arabic word used in the Qur'an is '*Tazil*' which means 'confused' or 'to err'. Many have wrongly translated this word as 'to forget'. Thus financial transactions constitute the only case in which two female witnesses are equal to one male witness.

However, some scholars are of the opinion that the feminine attitude can also have an effect on the witness in a murder case. In such circumstances a woman is more terrified as compared to a man. Due to her emotional condition she can get confused. Therefore, according to some jurists, even in cases of murder, two female witnesses are equivalent to one male witness. In all other cases, one female witness is equivalent to one male witness. There are about five verses in the Qur'an which speak about witnesses without specifying man or woman.

While making a will of inheritance, two just persons are required as witnesses. In Surah Maidah chapter 5 verse 106, the Glorious Qur'an says:

"Oh you who believe!
When death approaches any of you,
(take) witnesses among yourself when making bequests."
[Al-Qur'an 5:106]

two just persons of your own (brotherhood)
or other from outside if you are journeying
through the earth and the chance of death befalls you."
[Al-Qur'an 65:2]

Two persons endowed with justice in case of talaq.

"Four witnesses are required
in case of charge against chaste women,
[Al-Qur'an 24:4]

There are some scholars who are of the opinion that the rule of two female witnesses equal to one male witness should be applied to all the cases. This cannot be agreed upon because one particular verse of the Qur'an from Surah Noor chapter 24, verse 6 clearly equates one female witness and one male witness:

"And those who launch a charge
against their spouses, and have (in support)
no evidence but their own -
their solitary evidence can be received."
[Al-Qur'an 24:6]

Hazrat Ayesha (RA) hadith narrated of one witness

Many jurists agree that even one witness of a woman is sufficient for the sighting of the crescent of the moon. Imagine one woman witness is sufficient for one of the pillars of Islam, i.e. fasting and the whole Muslim community of men and women agree and accept her witness! Some jurists say that one witness is required at the beginning of *Ramadaan* and two witnesses at the end of *Ramadaan*. It makes no difference whether the witnesses are men or women.

Some incidents require only female witness and that of a male cannot be accepted. For instance, in dealing with the problems of women, while giving the burial bath i.e. '*ghusl*' to a woman, the witness has to be a woman.

The seeming inequality of male and female witnesses in financial transactions is not due to any inequality of the sexes in Islam. It is only due to the different natures and roles of men and women in society as envisaged by Islam.

INHERITANCE

Question:

Under Islamic law, why is a woman's share of the inherited wealth only half that of a man?

Answer:

The Glorious Qur'an contains specific and detailed guidance regarding the division of the inherited wealth, among the rightful beneficiaries.

The Qur'anic verses that contain guidance regarding inheritance are:

- * Surah Baqarah, chapter 2 verse 180
- * Surah Baqarah, chapter 2 verse 240
- * Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 7-9
- * Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 19
- * Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 33 and
- * Surah Maidah, chapter 5 verse 106-108

There are three verses in the Qur'an that broadly describe the share of close relatives i.e. Surah Nisah chapter 4 verses 11, 12 and 176. The translation of these verses are as follows:

"Allah (swt) (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females, if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; If only one, her share is a half.

For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; If no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers (or sisters) the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all cases is) after the payment of legacies and debts. Ye know not whether your parents or your children are nearest to you in benefit. These are settled portions ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

In what your wives leave, your share is half. If they leave no child; but if they leave a child, ye get a fourth; after payment of legacies and debts. In what ye leave, their share is a fourth, if ye leave no child; but if ye leave a child, they get an eighth; after payment of legacies and debts. If the man or woman whose inheritance is in question, has left neither ascendants nor descendants, but has left a brother or a sister, each one of the two gets a sixth; but if more than two, they share in a third; after payment of legacies and debts; so that no loss is caused (to anyone). Thus it is ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing Most Forbearing"

[Al-Qur'an 4:11-12]

"They ask thee for a legal decision. Say: Allah directs (them) about those who leave no descendants or ascendants as heirs. If it is a man that dies, leaving a sister but no child, she shall have half the inheritance. If (such a deceased was) a woman who left no child, Her brother takes her inheritance. If there are two sisters, they shall have two thirds of the inheritance (between them). If there are brothers and sisters, (they share), the male having twice the share of the female. Thus doth Allah (swt) makes clear to you (His knowledge of all things).

[Al-Qur'an 4:176]

In most of the cases, a woman inherits half of what her male counterpart inherits. However, this is not always the case. In case the deceased has left no ascendant or descendent but has left the uterine brother and sister, each of the two inherit one sixth. If the deceased has left children, both the parents that is mother and father get an equal share and inherit one sixth each. In certain cases, a woman can also inherit a share that is double that of the male. If the deceased is a woman who has left no children, brothers or sisters and is survived only by her husband, mother and father, the husband inherits half the property while the mother inherits one third and the father the remaining one sixth. In this particular case, the mother inherits a share that is double that of the father. It is true that as a general rule, in most cases, the female inherits a share that is half that of the male. For instance in the following cases:

1. daughter inherits half of what the son inherits,
2. wife inherits 1/8th and husband 1/4th if the deceased has no children.
3. Wife inherits 1/4th and husband 1/2 if the deceased has children
4. If the deceased has no ascendant or descendent, the sister inherits a share that is half that of the brother.

In Islam a woman has no financial obligation and the economical responsibility lies on the shoulders of the man. Before a woman is married it is the duty of the father or brother to look after the lodging, boarding, clothing and other financial requirements of the woman. After she is married it is the duty of the husband or the son. Islam holds the man financially responsible for fulfilling the needs of his family. In order to do be able to fulfill the responsibility the men get double the share of the inheritance. For example, if a man dies leaving about Rs. One Hundred and Fifty Thousand, for the children (i.e one son and one daughter) the son inherits

One Hundred Thousand rupees and the daughter only Fifty Thousand rupees. Out of the one hundred thousand which the son inherits, as his duty towards his family, he may have to spend on them almost the entire amount or say about eighty thousand and thus he has a small percentage of inheritance, say about twenty thousand, left for himself. On the other hand, the daughter, who inherits fifty thousand is not bound to spend a single penny on anybody. She can keep the entire amount for herself. Would you prefer inheriting one hundred thousand rupees and spending eighty thousand from it, or inheriting fifty thousand rupees and having the entire amount to yourself?

MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED BY NON-MUSLIMS WHO HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE OF ISLAM

Islam

1. QUR'AN IS THE HANDIWORK OF MUHAMMAD AND NOT THE WORD OF GOD ?

Question:

Is it not true that Qur'an is the handiwork of Muhammad and not the work of God ?

Answer:

Under Construction

2. PRESENT QUR'AN IS NOT THE ORIGINAL BUT THAT OF USMAN (r.a.)

Question:

There were many versions of the Qur'an all of which were burnt by Usman (r.a.) except for one. Therefore is it not true that the present Qur'an is the one compiled by Usman (r.a.) and not the original revelation of God?

Answer:

One of the most common myths about the Qur'an, is that Usman (r.a.), the third Caliph of Islam authenticated and compiled one Qur'an, from a large set of mutually contradicting copies. The Qur'an, revered as the Word of Allah (swt) by Muslims the world over, is the same Qur'an as the one revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It was authenticated and written under his personal supervision. We will examine the roots of the myth which says that Usman (r.a.) had the Qur'an authenticated.

1. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) himself supervised and authenticated the written texts of the Qur'an

Whenever the Prophet received a revelation, he would first memorize it himself and later declare the revelation and instruct his Companions (R.A. – Radhi Allahu Taala Anhu) – May Allah be pleased with him who would also memorize it. The Prophet would immediately ask the scribes to write down the revelation he had received, and he would reconfirm and recheck it himself. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was an *Ummi* who could not read and write. Therefore, after receiving each revelation, he would repeat it to his Companions. They would write down the revelation, and he would recheck by asking them to read what they had written. If there was any mistake, the Prophet would immediately point it out and have it corrected and rechecked. Similarly he would even recheck and authenticate the portions of the Qur'an memorized by the Companions. In this way, the complete Qur'an was written down under the personal supervision of the prophet (pbuh).

2. Order and sequence of Qur'an divinely inspired

The complete Qur'an was revealed over a period of 22½ years portion by portion, as and when it was required. The Qur'an was not compiled by the Prophet in the chronological order of revelation. The order and sequence of the Qur'an too was Divinely inspired and was instructed to the Prophet by Allah (swt) through archangel Jibraeel. Whenever a revelation was conveyed to his companions, the Prophet would also mention in which *surah* (chapter) and after which ayat (verse) this new revelation should fit.

Every *Ramadhaan* all the portions of the Qur'an that had been revealed, including the order of the verses, were revised and reconfirmed by the Prophet with archangel Jibraeel. During the last *Ramadhaan*, before the demise of the Prophet, the Qur'an was rechecked and reconfirmed twice.

It is therefore clearly evident that the Qur'an was compiled and authenticated by the Prophet himself during his lifetime, both in the written form as well as in the memory of several of his Companions.

3. Qur'an copied on one common material

The complete Qur'an, along with the correct sequence of the verses, was present during the time of the Prophet (pbuh). The verses however, were written on separate pieces, scrapes of leather, thin flat stones, leaflets, palm branches, shoulder blades, etc. After the demise of the prophet, Abu Bakr (r.a.), the first caliph of Islam ordered that the Qur'an be copied from the various different materials on to a common material and place, which was in the shape of sheets. These were tied with strings so that nothing of the compilation was lost.

4. Usman (r.a.) made copies of the Qur'an from the original manuscript

Many Companions of the Prophet used to write down the revelation of the Qur'an on their own whenever they heard it from the lips of the Prophet. However what they wrote was not personally verified by the Prophet and thus could contain mistakes. All the verses revealed to the Prophet may not have been heard personally by all the Companions. There were high possibilities of different portions of the Qur'an being missed by different Companions. This gave rise to disputes among Muslims regarding the different contents of the Qur'an during the period of the third Caliph Usman (r.a.).

Usman (r.a.) borrowed the original manuscript of the Qur'an, which was authorized by the beloved Prophet (pbuh), from Hafsha (may Allah be pleased with her), the Prophet's wife. Usman (r.a.) ordered four companions who were among the scribes who wrote the Qur'an when the Prophet dictated it, led by Zaid bin Thabit (r.a.) to rewrite the script in several perfect copies. These were sent by Usman (r.a.) to the main centres of Muslims.

There were other personal collections of the portions of the Qur'an that people had with them. These might have been incomplete and with mistakes. Usman (r.a.) only appealed to the

people to destroy all these copies which did not match the original manuscript of the Qur'an in order to preserve the original text of the Qur'an. Two such copies of the copied text of the original Qur'an authenticated by the Prophet are present to this day, one at the museum in Tashkent in erstwhile Soviet Union and the other at the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, Turkey.

5. Diacritical marks were added for non-Arabs

The original manuscript of the Qur'an does not have the signs indicating the vowels in Arabic script. These vowels are known as *tashkil*, *zabar*, *zair*, *paish* in Urdu and as *fatah*, *damma* and *qasra* in Arabic. The Arabs did not require the vowel signs and diacritical marks for correct pronunciation of the Qur'an since it was their mother tongue. For Muslims of non-Arab origin, however, it was difficult to recite the Qur'an correctly without the vowels. These marks were introduced into the Quranic script during the time of the fifth 'Umayyad' Caliph, Malik-ar-Marwan (66-86 Hijri/685-705 C.E.) and during the governorship of Al-Hajaj in Iraq.

Some people argue that the present copy of the Qur'an that we have along with the vowels and the diacritical marks is not the same original Qur'an that was present at the Prophet's time. But they fail to realize that the word 'Qur'an' means a recitation. Therefore, the preservation of the recitation of the Qur'an is important, irrespective of whether the script is different or whether it contains vowels. If the pronunciation and the Arabic is the same, naturally, the meaning remains the same too.

6. Allah Himself has promised to guard the Qur'an

Allah has promised in the Qur'an :

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly Guard it (from corruption)."
[Al-Qur'an 15:9]

3. DOES ISLAM PROMOTE VIOLENCE?

Question:

Doesn't Islam promote violence, bloodshed and brutality since the Qur'an says that Muslims should kill the *kuffar* where ever they find them?

Answer:

A few selected verses from the Qur'an are often misquoted to perpetuate the myth that Islam promotes violence, and exhorts its followers to kill those outside the pale of Islam.

1. Verse from Surah Taubah

The following verse from Surah Taubah is very often quoted by critics of Islam, to show that Islam promotes violence, bloodshed and brutality:

"Kill the *mushriqeen* (pagans, polytheists, *kuffar*) where ever you find them."
[Al-Qur'an 9:5]

2. Context of verse is during battlefield

Critics of Islam actually quote this verse out of context. In order to understand the context, we need to read from verse 1 of this surah. It says that there was a peace treaty between the Muslims and the *Mushriqs* (pagans) of Makkah. This treaty was violated by the *Mushriqs* of

Makkah. A period of four months was given to the *Mushriqs* of Makkah to make amends. Otherwise war would be declared against them. Verse 5 of Surah Taubah says:

"But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is oft-forgiving, Most merciful."
[Al-Qur'an 9:5]

This verse is quoted during a battle.

3. Example of war between America and Vietnam

We know that America was once at war with Vietnam. Suppose the President of America or the General of the American Army told the American soldiers during the war: "Wherever you find the Vietnamese, kill them". Today if I say that the American President said, "Wherever you find Vietnamese, kill them" without giving the context, I will make him sound like a butcher. But if I quote him in context, that he said it during a war, it will sound very logical, as he was trying to boost the morale of the American soldiers during the war.

4. Verse 9:5 quoted to boost morale of Muslims during battle

Similarly in Surah Taubah chapter 9 verse 5 the Qur'an says, "Kill the *Mushriqs* where ever you find them", during a battle to boost the morale of the Muslim soldiers. What the Qur'an is telling Muslim soldiers is, don't be afraid during battle; wherever you find the enemies kill them.

5. Shourie jumps from verse 5 to verse 7

Arun Shourie is one of the staunchest critics of Islam in India. He quotes the same verse, Surah Taubah chapter 9 verse 5 in his book 'The World of *Fatwahs*', on page 572. After quoting verse 5 he jumps to verse 7 of Surah Taubah. Any sensible person will realise that he has skipped verse 6.

6. Surah Taubah chapter 9 verse 6 gives the answer

Surah Taubah chapter 9 verse 6 gives the answer to the allegation that Islam promotes violence, brutality and bloodshed. It says:

"If one amongst the pagans ask thee for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of Allah; and then escort him to where he can be secure that is because they are men without knowledge."
[Al-Qur'an 9:6]

The Qur'an not only says that a *Mushriq* seeking asylum during the battle should be granted refuge, but also that he should be escorted to a secure place. In the present international scenario, even a kind, peace-loving army General, during a battle, may let the enemy soldiers go free, if they want peace. But which army General will ever tell his soldiers, that if the enemy soldiers want peace during a battle, don't just let them go free, but also escort them to a place of security?

This is exactly what Allah (swt) says in the Glorious Qur'an to promote peace in the world.

4. QUR'AN USES 'WE' FOR ALLAH

Question:

Does Islam believe in several gods because the Qur'an uses the word 'We' when God speaks in the Qur'an?

Answer:

Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion. It believes in and adheres to uncompromising monotheism. It believes that God is one, and unique in His attributes. In the Qur'an, God often refers to Himself using the word 'We'. But this does not mean that Islam believes in the existence of more than one God.

Two types of plural

In several languages, there are two types of plurals, one is a plural of numbers to refer to something that occurs in a quantity of more than one. The other plural is a plural of respect.

- a. In the English language, the Queen of England refers to herself as 'We' instead of 'I'. This is known as the 'royal plural'.
- b. Rajiv Gandhi, the ex-Prime Minister of India used to say in Hindi "*Hum dekhna chahte hain*". "We want to see." '*Hum*' means 'We' which is again a royal plural in Hindi.
- c. Similarly in Arabic, when Allah refers to Himself in the Qur'an, He often uses Arabic word '*Nahnu*' meaning 'We'. It does not indicate plural of number but plural of respect.

Tawheed or monotheism is one of the pillars of Islam. The existence and uniqueness of one and only one God is mentioned several times in the Qur'an. For instance in Surah Ikhlas, it says :

"Say He is Allah the One and Only."
[Al-Qur'an 112: 1]

6. THE THEORY OF ABROGATION

Question:

Muslims believe in the theory of abrogation, i.e. they believe that certain earlier verses of the Qur'an were abrogated by verses revealed later. Does this imply that God made a mistake and later on corrected it?

Answer:

1. Two different interpretations

The Glorious Qur'an says in the following verse:

"None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but We substitute something better or similar: knowest thou not that Allah hath power over all things?"
[Al-Qur'an 2:106]

A reference to this is also made in chapter 16 verse 101 of Surah Nahl. The Arabic word mentioned is *ayat* which means 'signs' or 'verses' and which can also mean 'revelations'. This verse of the Qur'an can be interpreted in two different ways:

a. The revelations that are abrogated are those revelations that were revealed before the Qur'an, for example the *Torah*, the *Zaboor* and the *Injeel*.

Here Allah (swt) says that He does not cause the previous revelations to be forgotten but He substitutes them with something better or similar, indicating that the *Torah*, the *Zaboor* and the *Injeel* were substituted by the Qur'an.

b. If we consider that the Arabic word *ayat* in the above verse refers to the verses of the Qur'an, and not previous revelations, then it indicates that none of the verses of the Qur'an are abrogated by Allah but substituted with something better or similar. This means that certain verses of the Qur'an, that were revealed earlier were substituted by verses that were revealed later. I agree with both the interpretations.

Many Muslims and non-Muslims misunderstand the second interpretation to mean that some of the earlier verses of the Qur'an were abrogated and no longer hold true for us today, as they have been replaced by the later verses of the Qur'an or the abrogating verses. This group of people even wrongly believe that these verses contradict each other.

Let us analyze a few such examples.

2. Produce a recital like the Qur'an / 10 Surahs / 1 Surah:

Some pagan Arabs alleged that the Qur'an was forged by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Allah (swt) challenges these Arabs in the following verse of Surah Al-Isra:

"Say: If the whole of Mankind and Jinns were together to produce the like of this Qur'an they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support."
[Al-Qur'an 17:88]

Later the challenge was made easy in the following verse of Surah Al-Hud:

"Or they may say, "He forged it." Say, "Bring ye then ten Surahs forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever ye can, other than Allah, if ye speak the truth!".
[Al-Qur'an 11:13]

It was made easier in the following verse of Surah Yunus:

"Or do they say, "He forged it"? Say: "Bring then a Surah like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can, besides Allah, if it be ye speak the truth!".
[Al-Qur'an 10:38]

Finally in Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah (swt) further simplified the challenge:

And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a *Surah* like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah if your (doubts) are true.

But if ye cannot – and of a surety ye cannot – then fear the Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones – which is prepared for those who reject faith".
[Al-Qur'an 2:23-24]

Thus Allah (swt) made the challenges progressively easier. The progressively revealed verses of the Qur'an first challenged the pagans to produce a book like the Qur'an, then

challenged them to produce ten *Surahs* (chapters) like those in the Qur'an, then one *Surah* and finally it challenges them to produce one *Surah* somewhat similar (*mim mislihi*) to the Qur'anic *Surahs*. This does not mean that the later verses that were revealed i.e. of *Surah Baqarah* chapter 2 verses 23 and 24 contradict the earlier three verses. Contradiction implies mentioning two things that cannot be possible simultaneously, or cannot take place simultaneously.

The earlier verses of the Qur'an i.e. the abrogated verses are still the word of God and the information contained in it is true to this day. For instance the challenge to produce a recital like the Qur'an stands to this day. Similarly the challenge to produce ten *Surahs* and one *Surah* exactly like the Qur'an also holds true and the last challenge of producing one *surah* somewhat similar to the Qur'an also holds true. It does not contradict the earlier challenges, but this is the easiest of all the challenges posed by the Qur'an. If the last challenge cannot be fulfilled, the question of anyone fulfilling the other three more difficult challenges does not arise.

Suppose I speak about a person that he is so dumb, that he would not be able to pass the 10th standard in school. Later I say that he would not be able to pass the 5th standard, and further say that he would not be able to pass even the 1st standard. Finally I say that he is so dull that he would not even be able to pass K.G. i.e. kindergarten. One has to pass kindergarten before one can be admitted to school. What I am stating is that the person is so dull as to be unable to pass even kindergarten. My four statements do not contradict each other, but my last statement i.e. the person would not be able to pass the kindergarten is sufficient to indicate the intelligence of that person. If a person cannot even pass kindergarten, the question of him passing the first standard or 5th or 10th, does not arise.

3. Gradual prohibition of intoxicants

Another example of such verses is that related to gradual prohibition of intoxicants. The first revelation of the Qur'an to deal with intoxicants was the following verse from *Surah Baqarah*:

"They ask thee concerning wine and gambling say: 'In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit'."
[Al-Qur'an 2:219]

The next verse to be revealed regarding intoxicants is the following verse from *Surah Nisa*:

"O ye who believe! approach not prayers with a mind befogged, until ye can understand all that ye say" [Al-Qur'an 4:43]

The last verse to be revealed regarding intoxicants was the following verse from *Surah Al-Maidah*:

"O ye who believe! intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork; eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper."
[Al-Qur'an 5:90]

The Qur'an was revealed over a period of 22½ years. Many reforms that were brought about in the society were gradual. This was to facilitate the adoption of new laws by the people. An abrupt change in society always leads to rebellion and anarchy.

The prohibition of intoxicants was revealed in three stages. The first revelation only mentioned that in the intoxicants there is great sin and some profit but the sin is greater than the profit. The next revelation prohibited praying in an intoxicated state, indicating that one should not consume intoxicants during the day, since a Muslim has to pray five times a day. This verse does state that when one is not praying at night one is allowed to consume

intoxicants. It means one may have or one may not have. The Qur'an does not comment on it. If this verse had mentioned that one is allowed to have intoxicants while not praying then there would have been a contradiction. Allah (swt) chose words appropriately. Finally the total prohibition of intoxicants at all times was revealed in Surah Maidah chapter 5 verse 90.

This clearly indicates that the three verses do not contradict each other. Had they been contradicting, it would not have been possible to follow all the three verses simultaneously. Since a Muslim is expected to follow each and every verse of the Qur'an, only by following the last verse i.e. of Surah Maidah (5:90), he simultaneously agrees and follows the previous two verses.

Suppose I say that I do not live in Los Angeles. Later I say that I do not live in California. Finally I say, I do not live in the United States of America. This does not imply that these three statements contradict each other. Each statement gives more information than the previous statement. The third statement includes the information contained in the first two statements. Thus, only by saying that I do not live in the United States of America, it is obvious, that I also do not live in California nor New York. Similarly since consuming alcohol is totally prohibited, it is obvious that praying in an intoxicated state is also prohibited and the information that in intoxicants is "great sin and some profit for men; but the sin is greater than profit" also holds true.

4. Qur'an does not contain any contradictions

The theory of abrogation does not imply that there is a contradiction in the Qur'an, since it is possible to follow all the verses of the Qur'an at the same time.

If there is a contradiction in the Qur'an, then it cannot be the word of Allah (swt).

"Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy (contradictions)."

[Al-Qur'an 4:82]

7. MEANING OF ALIF LAAM MEEM

Question:

Why do certain Surahs in the Qur'an begin with Alif Laam Meem, Haa Meem, Yaa Seen. What is the significance of such terms or phrases?

Answer:

1. Abbreviated Letters

Alif Laam Meem, Ya Seen, Ha Meem, etc. are known as *Al-Muqattaat* i.e. the abbreviated letters. There are 29 letters in the Arabic Alphabet (if *hamza* and *alif* are considered as two letters) and there are 29 *surahs* i.e. chapters in the Glorious Qur'an that have the abbreviated letters prefixed to them. These abbreviated letters some times occur alone, sometimes in a combination of two letters and sometimes in a combination of three, four or five letters.

a. **Three surahs are pre-fixed with only one letter:**

- (i) Surah Sad chapter 38 with *Sad*
- (ii) Surah Qaf chapter 50 with *Qaf*
- (iii) Surah Nun or Qalam chapter 68 with *Nun*

b. The combination of two letters occurs in 10 surahs:

Three of them occur only once each:

- (i) Surah Ta Ha chapter 20 has *Ta Ha*
- (ii) Surah Al Naml starting with chapter 27 has *Ta Seen*
- (iii) Surah Ya Seen chapter 36 has *Ya Seen*

Ha Meem occurs in seven consecutive *Surahs* from Surah 40 to Surah 46:

- (i) Surah Ghafir or Al-Mu'min chapter 40
- (ii) Surah Fussilat or Ha Meem chapter 41
- (iii) Surah Al Shura chapter 42
- (iv) Surah Al Zukhruf chapter 43
- (v) Surah Al Dukhan chapter 44
- (vi) Surah Al Jathiyah chapter 45
- (vii) Surah Al Ahqaf chapter 46

c. There are three combinations of three letters each occurring in 14 surahs.

Alif Laam Meem occurs in six *surahs*

- (i) Surah Al Baqarah chapter 2
- (ii) Surah Ali 'Imran chapter 3
- (iii) Surah Al 'Ankabut chapter 29
- (iv) Surah Al Rum chapter 30
- (v) Surah Luqman chapter 31
- (vi) Surah Al Sajdah chapter 32

Alif Laam Ra occurs in six consecutive *surahs*: Surah 10 to Surah 15:

- (i) Surah Yunus chapter 10
- (ii) Surah Hud chapter 11
- (iii) Surah Yusuf chapter 12
- (iv) Surah Al Rad chapter 13
- (v) Surah Ibrahim chapter 14
- (vi) Surah Al Hijr chapter 15

Ta Seen Meem occurs in two *Surahs*:

- (i) Surah Al-Shura chapter 26
- (ii) Surah Al-Qasas chapter 28

d. Combination of four letters occurs twice:

- (i) Surah Aaraf chapter 7: *Alif Laam Meem Sad*
- (ii) Surah Anfal chapter 8: *Alif Laam Meem Ra*

e. Combination of five letters occurs twice:

- (i) Surah Maryam chapter 19 begins with *Kaf Ha Ya Ayn Sad*
- (ii) Surah Al-Shura chapter 42 begins with *Ha Meem Ayn Seen Qaf*

Surah Al-Shura chapter 42 has a double combination of abbreviated letters one set of two letters followed by one set of three letters.

2. Meanings of these abbreviated letters

The meaning and purpose of these letters is uncertain. There have been a variety of explanations offered by Muslim scholars through the ages. A few among them are:

- i. These letters might be abbreviations for certain sentences and words for instance, *Alif Laam Meem* means *Ana-Alahu -a'Laam* or *Nun* meaning *Noor* (light), etc.
- ii. These letters are not abbreviations but symbols and names of Allah or something else.
- iii. These letters were used for rhyming.
- iv. These letters have some numerical significance as the semitic letters also have numerical values.
- v. These letters were used to attract the attention of the Prophet (and later his audience).

Several volumes have been written on the significance of these abbreviations.

3. Best explanation of abbreviated letters:

Of all the explanations given by various scholars, the one which is authentic and also supported by *Tafsir* of Ibne-Kathir, Zamakshari and Ibne-Taiymiyah is the following:

The human body is composed of various fundamental elements that are found in nature. Clay and dust are composed of the same fundamental elements. Yet it would be absurd to say that a human being is exactly the same as the dust.

We can all have access to the elements that are found in the human body, and add a few gallons of water, which is the constitution of the human body. We know the elements in the human body and yet we are at a loss when asked the secret of life.

Similarly the Qur'an addresses those people who reject its Divine authority. It tells them that this Qur'an, is in your own language, and over which the Arabs took pride. It is composed of the same letters that the Arabs used to express themselves most eloquently.

The Arabs were very proud of their language and Arabic was at its peak when the Qur'an was revealed. With the letters *Alif Laam Meem*, *Yaa Seen*, *Ha-Meem*, etc., (in English we would say A, B, C, D) the Qur'an challenges mankind to produce a *Surah* at least somewhat similar to the Qur'an in beauty and elegance, if they doubt its authenticity.

Initially, the Qur'an challenges all the men and jinn to produce a recital like the Qur'an and adds that they would not be able to do it even if they backed each other. This challenge is mentioned in Surah Isra chapter 17 verse 88 and in Surah Tur chapter 52 verse 34.

Later the Qur'an repeats the challenge in Surah Hud chapter 11 verse 13 by saying produce ten *surahs* like it and later in Surah Yunus chapter 10 verse 38 produce one *surah* like it and finally the easiest challenge is given in Surah Al-Baqarah chapter 2 verses 23 and 24.

"And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a *Surah* like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah if your doubts are true.

But if ye cannot – and of a surety ye cannot – then fear the fire whose fuel is men and stones – which is prepared for those who reject faith."

[Al-Qur'an 2:23-24]

To compare the skill of two artisans, they must be given samples of the same raw material and their performance evaluated in performing the same task. If they are tailors they must be provided with the same fabrics. The raw materials of the Arabic language are these letters *Alif Laam Meem, Ya Seen* (in English it is A, B, C, D, etc.) The miraculous nature of the language of the Qur'an does not lie only in the fact that it is the Word of Allah, but also in the fact that although made up of the same letters in which the pagan Arabs took pride, it has not been rivalled.

The Arabs are noted for their rhetoric ability, eloquence and meaningful expression. Just as the constituents of the human body are known to us and can be obtained by us, the letters comprising the Qur'an, such as *Alif Laam Meem* are known to us, and used frequently to formulate words. Life cannot be created by us, even if we possess knowledge of the constituents of the human body. Similarly we cannot capture the same eloquence and beauty of expression that we find in the Qur'an, despite knowing the letters that constitute the Qur'an. The Qur'an thus proves its Divine origin.

4. Miraculous quality of Qur'an mentioned immediately after these broken letters

Therefore immediately after these broken letters are mentioned in the Qur'an, the following verses speak about the miracle of the Qur'an, and its authority e.g. in Surah Baqarah Chapter 2 verse 1-2:

*"Alif Laam Meem.
This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah."
[Al-Qur'an 2:1-2]*

8. DOES THE QUR'AN SAY THAT THE EARTH IS FLAT?

Question

Qur'an says that Allah has made the earth for you as a carpet. This gives an indication that the earth is flat. Does this not contradict established modern science?

Answer

1. Earth made as a carpet

The question refers to a verse from the Qur'an in Surah Nuh:

*"And Allah has made the earth for you as a carpet (spread out)."
[Al-Qur'an 71:19]*

But the sentence in the above verse is not complete. It continues in the next verse, explaining the previous verse. It says:

*"That ye may go about therein, in spacious roads."
[Al-Qur'an 71:20]*

A similar message is repeated in Surah TaHa:

*"He Who has made for you the earth like a carpet spread out; has enabled you to go about therein by roads (and channels)...."
[Al-Qur'an 20:53]*

The surface of the earth i.e. earth's crust is less than 30 miles in thickness and is very thin as compared to the radius of the earth which is about 3750 miles. The deeper layers of the earth are very hot, fluid and hostile to any form of life. The earth's crust is a solidified shell on which we can live. The Qur'an rightly refers to it like a carpet spread out, so that we can travel along its roads and paths.

2. Carpet can also be spread on other than an absolute flat surface

Not a single verse of the Qur'an says that the earth is flat. The Qur'an only compares the earth's crust with a carpet. Some people seem to think that carpet can only be put on an absolute flat surface. It is possible to spread a carpet on a large sphere such as the earth. It can easily be demonstrated by taking a huge model of the earth's globe covering it with a carpet.

Carpet is generally put on a surface, which is not very comfortable to walk on. The Qur'an describes the earth crust as a carpet, without which human beings would not be able to survive because of the hot, fluid and hostile environment beneath it. The Qur'an is thus not only logical, it is mentioning a scientific fact that was discovered by geologists centuries later.

3. Earth has been spread out

Similarly, the Qur'an says in several verses that the earth has been spread out.

"And We have spread out the (spacious) earth: how excellently We do spread out!"
[Al-Qur'an 51:48]

Similarly the Qur'an also mentions in several other verses that the earth is an expanse:

"Have We not made the earth as a wide expanse"
"And the mountains as pegs?"
[Al-Qur'an 78:6-7]

None of these verses of the Qur'an contain even the slightest implication that the earth is flat. It only indicates that the earth is spacious and the reason for this spaciousness of the earth is mentioned. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"O My servants who believe! truly, spacious is My Earth: therefore serve ye Me –(And Me alone)!"
[Al-Qur'an 29:56]

Therefore none can give the excuse, that he could not do good and was forced to do evil because of the surroundings and circumstances.

4. Earth is geospherical in shape

The Qur'an mentions the actual shape of the earth in the following verse:

"And we have made the earth egg shaped".
[Al-Qur'an 79:30]

The Arabic word *Dahaha* means egg shaped. It also means an expanse. *Dahaha* is derived from *Duhiya* which specifically refers to the egg of an ostrich which is geospherical in shape, exactly like the shape of the earth.

Thus the Qur'an and modern established science are in perfect harmony.

9. DOES ONLY ALLAH KNOW THE SEX OF THE CHILD IN THE MOTHER'S WOMB?

Question:

The Qur'an says that only Allah knows the sex of the child in the womb of the mother but now science has advanced and we can easily determine the sex of the child in the womb by ultrasonography. Isn't this verse of the Qur'an conflicting with medical science?

Answer:

Allah is Omnipotent and Omniscient. Allah has granted knowledge of certain things to humankind. But Allah has knowledge of the seen as well as the unseen.

1. Allah has knowledge of all things

Many people believe that the Qur'an claims that Allah alone knows the sex of the child in the mother's womb. The Glorious Qur'an says:

"Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). It is He who sends down Rain, and He who knows what is in the wombs...."

[Al-Qur'an 31:34]

A similar message is given in the following verse:

"Allah doth know what every female (womb) doth bear,
By how much the wombs fall short (of their time or number) or do exceed. Every single thing is before His sight, in (due) proportion."

[Al-Qur'an 13:8]

2. Sex can be determined by Ultrasonography

Today science has advanced and we can easily determine the sex of the child in the womb of a pregnant mother, using ultrasonography.

3. The word 'sex' is not mentioned in the verse of the Qur'an

It is true that many translations and commentaries of this verse of the Glorious Qur'an say that only Allah knows the sex of the child in the mother's womb. If you read the Arabic text of this verse, there is no Arabic word corresponding to the English word 'sex'. In fact the Qur'an says the knowledge of what is in the womb is with Allah alone. Many commentators have misunderstood it to mean only Allah knows the sex of the child in the womb, which is a mistake.

4. No one besides Allah can determine the nature of the child

This verse does not refer to the sex of the child in the womb but it refers to, how the child in the mother's womb will be. How will his nature be? Will he be a blessing or a curse to his parents? Will he be a boon or a bane to the society? Will he be good or evil? Will he go to heaven or hell? The complete knowledge of all things is with Allah alone. No scientist in the world, no matter how advanced his equipment, will ever be able to accurately determine the knowledge of these things about the child in the mother's womb.

10. HOOR:

Question:

According to the Qur'an when a man enters paradise, he will get *hoor*, i.e. beautiful maidens. What will a woman have when she enters paradise?

Answer:

1. Hoor mentioned in the Qur'an

The word *hoor* occurs in the Qur'an in no less than four different places:

(1) In Surah Dukhan chapter 44, verse 54

"Moreover, We shall join them to companions
With beautiful, big and lustrous eyes."
[Al-Qur'an 44:54]

(2) In Surah Al-Tur chapter 52 verse 20

"...And We shall join them to companions, with beautiful,
big and lustrous eyes."
[Al-Qur'an 52:20]

(3) In Surah Rahman chapter 55 verse 72

"Companions restrained (as to their glances), in goodly pavilions."
[Al-Qur'an 55:72]

(4) In Surah Al-Waqiah chapter 56 verse 22

"And (there will be) companions with beautiful, big and lustrous eyes."
[Al-Qur'an 56:22]

2. Hoor Translated as Beautiful Maidens

Many translators of the Qur'an have translated the word *hoor* as 'beautiful maidens' especially in the Urdu translations. If *hoor* means 'beautiful maidens' or girls, then they are meant only for the men. Hence, what will the women get if they enter Paradise?

3. Meaning of Hoor

The word *hoor* is actually the plural of *ahwar* (applicable to man) and of *haura* (applicable to woman) and signifies a person having eyes characterized by *hauar* a special quality bestowed upon a good soul, male or female in paradise and it denotes the intense whiteness of the white part of the spiritual eye.

The Qur'an describes in several other verses that in paradise you will have *azwaj* which mean a pair or spouse or companion which means you will have spouses or companions pure and holy (*mutaharratun* means pure, holy).

"But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness, that their portion is gardens, beneath which rivers flow. Every time they are fed with fruits therefrom, they say: "Why, this is what we were fed with before", for they are given things in similitude; and they have therein companions pure (and holy); and they abide therein (forever)".
[Al-Qur'an 2:25]

"But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, We shall soon admit to Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath – their eternal home; therein shall they have companions pure and holy: we shall admit them to shades, cool and ever deepening". [Al-Qur'an 4:57]

Therefore the word *hoor* has no specific gender. Mohammad Asad has translated the word *hoor* as spouse and Abdullah Yusuf Ali as companion. Therefore according to some scholars a man in paradise will have a *hoor* that is a beautiful maiden with beautiful big and lustrous eyes and a woman in paradise will get a man with beautiful big and lustrous eyes.

4. Women will get something exceptional in Paradise

Many scholars say that in context, the word *hoor* used in the Qur'an refers only to ladies since gents are addressed. A reply that would be accepted by all types of people would rather be the answer given in the Hadith when a similar question was posed that if a man gets a *hoor*, a beautiful Maiden in Paradise, then what will the women get? The reply was that the women will get that which the heart has not desired for, the ear hasn't heard off and the eye hasn't seen, indicating that even the women will get something exceptional in Paradise.

11. IS THE HEART RESPONSIBLE FOR UNDERSTANDING?

Question:

The Qur'an says that Allah has put a seal on the hearts of the *Kuffar* and they will not believe. Science tells us today that the brain is responsible for understanding and believing and not the heart. Isn't the Qur'an contradicting Science?

Answer:

1. Allah has set a seal on the heart of the *Kuffar*

The Glorious Qur'an says:

"As to those who reject Faith it is the same to them
Whether thou warn them or do not warn them;
They will not believe.

"Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing and on their eyes is a veil
Great is the penalty they incur."

[Al-Qur'an 2:6-7]

2. The word *qalb* in Arabic means heart as well as intelligence

The Arabic word *qalb* used in these verses means the heart. It also means intelligence. Thus the above verses also mean that Allah has put a seal on the intelligence of the *kuffaars* (unbelievers) and they will not understand and believe.

3. In the Arabic language heart is also used as a centre of understanding

In the Arabic language the word 'heart' is also used to connote one's centre of understanding.

4. Several words used in English language whose literal meaning is different

Even in English language there are several words which are used to explain something, though the literal meaning of these words are different. Consider the following examples

a. Lunatic - Struck by the moon:

The word 'lunatic' literally means struck by the moon. Today people use the word lunatic for a person who is insane or mentally unstable. People very well know that a mad or a mentally unstable person is not struck by the moon. Yet even a medical doctor uses this word. This is normal in the evolution of a language.

b. Disaster – An evil star

The word 'disaster' literally means an evil star. Today the word disaster is used for a great or sudden misfortune or calamity. We know very well that a misfortune has nothing to do with an evil star.

c. Trivial – Three roads meet

The word 'trivial' literally means where three roads meet. Today the word 'trivial' is used for something of small nature or little importance. We know very well that if something is of small value it has nothing to do with where three roads meet.

d. Sunrise and Sunset

'Sunrise' literally means rising of the sun. Today when the word 'sunrise' is used most of the people know that the earth is rotating and is moving in relation to the sun. Most of us know that the sun does not rise during sunrise. However even an astronomer uses the word 'sunrise'. Similarly we know that during sunset, the sun does not actually set.

5. In the English language heart is the centre of love and emotion

In the English language heart means an organ in the body which pumps blood. The same word heart is also used for the centre of thought, love and emotion. Today we know that brain is the centre of thought, love and emotion. Yet while expressing emotions a person is likely to say "I love you from the bottom of my heart". Imagine a scientist telling his wife, "I love you from the bottom of my heart" and the wife replies, "Don't you even know the basics of science, that the brain is responsible for the emotions and not the heart? In fact you should say I love you from the bottom of my brain."

6. Arabs know that the word heart in Arabic is also used for centre of thought and understanding

No Arab will ever ask the question as to why Allah has sealed the hearts of the *kafir* because he knows that in this context it refers to the centre of thought, understanding and emotions.

12. GOD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR DESTINY**Question:**

If God is responsible for our destiny then why we should be held responsible for the evil acts and sins we commit?

Answer:

Under Construction

13. ALLAH HAS SEALED THE HEART OF KUFFAR**Question:**

If Allah has sealed the hearts of the Kuffar i.e. non-Muslims, then why are they to be blamed for not accepting Islam?

Answer:

1. Allah has sealed the hearts of those who are continuously bent on rejecting the truth

Allah (swt) mentions in Surah Al Baqarah chapter 2 verses 6 and 7

"As to those who reject Faith, it is the same to them Whether thou warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe.

Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur)."

[Al-Qur'an 2:6-7]

These verses do not refer to common *Kuffar* who reject faith. The Arabic words used are *al-lazina kafaroo*, those who are bent on rejecting the truth. It will not make any difference to such people whether you warn them or not, they will not believe. Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing and on their eyes is a veil. It is not because Allah has set a seal on their hearts that these *kuffar* do not understand and believe, but it is the vice-versa. It is because these *kuffar* are bent on rejecting the truth and whether you warn them or not they will not believe, that Allah has set a seal on their hearts. Therefore Allah is not to blame, but these *kuffaar* who are bent on rejecting the faith are responsible.

2. Example of teacher predicting a student will fail

Suppose an experienced teacher, before the final examinations, predicts that a particular student will fail in the exams, since the student is very mischievous, not attentive in class and does not do his homework. If after the student appears for the examination, he fails, who is to be blamed for the student failing: the teacher or the student? Just because the teacher predicted, it does not mean that the teacher is to be blamed but the student himself is responsible for his failure.

Similarly Allah (swt) knows in advance that there are some people who are bent on rejecting the faith and Allah has put a seal on their hearts. Thus these non-Muslims themselves are responsible for rejecting the faith and not Allah (swt).

14. HEAVENS AND EARTH CREATED IN SIX DAYS AND NOT EIGHT DAYS**Question:**

The Qur'an mentions in several places that the heavens and the earth were created in 6 days but in Surah Fussilat it says that the heavens and the earth were created in 8 days. Isn't this a contradiction? The same verse also says that the earth was created in 6 days and then later on the heavens were created in 2 days. This is against the Big-Bang theory that the heavens and the earth were created simultaneously.

Answer:**1. Heavens and the Earth created in Six days**

I do agree that the Qur'an says that the heavens and the earth were created in 6 days i.e. 6 epochs and it is mentioned in

Surah Al A'raf chapter 7 verse 54
 Surah Yunus chapter 10 verse 3
 Surah Hud chapter 11 verse 7
 Surah Al Furqan chapter 25 verse 59
 Surah Al Sajdah chapter 32 verse 4
 Surah Qaf chapter 50 verse 38
 Surah Al Hadid chapter 57 verse 4

The verses of the Qur'an which according to you say that the heavens and the earth were created in 8 days are Surah Fussilat chapter 41 verses 9 to 12

"Say: Is it that ye deny Him Who created the earth in two days? And do ye join equals With him? He is the Lord of (all) the Worlds;

He set on the (earth) mountains standing firm, High above it, and bestowed blessings on the earth, and measured therein all things to give them nourishment in due proportion, In four days, in accordance with (the needs of) Those who seek (sustenance)."

Moreover, He Comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke. He said to it and to the earth. "Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly. They said: "We do come (Together), in willing obedience."

So He completed them as seven firmaments in two days and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command and We adorned the lower heaven with lights, and (provided it) with guard. Such is the decree of (Him) the exalted in might, full of knowledge."
 [Al-Qur'an 41:9-12]

On the face of it, it seems that these verses of the Qur'an give the initial impression that the heavens and the earth were created in 8 days.

Allah says in the beginning of this verse that those who exploit this information contained in this passage to raise doubts about its authenticity are equally interested in promulgating blasphemy and denying His unity. Allah is telling us that in course of time, there will emerge unbelievers who will make use of this apparent contradiction.

2. Summa means moreover

If you analyse these verses carefully, it speaks about 2 different creations: the earth and the heaven. The earth excluding the mountains was created in 2 days and the mountains were

set on the earth standing firm and blessed and measured its sustenance in 4 days. Therefore the earth along with the mountains was created in 6 days according to verse 9 and 10. Verse 11 and 12 says, moreover the heavens were created in 2 days. The Arabic word used in the beginning of verse 11 of Surah Fussilat is *summa* which means; 'then' or 'moreover'. There are certain Qur'anic translations, which have, used 'then' for the word *summa* which, indicates 'afterwards'. If 'then' is wrongly used for *summa* then the total of the creation of heaven and earth will be 8 days which will conflict with other verses of the Qur'an which says heavens and earth were created in 6 days and will also conflict with the Big Bang Theory as well as the verse of the Qur'an Surah Al Ambiya chapter 21 verse 30 which says that heavens and the earth were created simultaneously.

Therefore the correct translation of the word *summa* in this verse would be 'moreover'. Abdullah Yusuf Ali has rightly translated the word *summa* or moreover which clearly gives an indication that while the earth along with the mountains, etc. was created in 6 days simultaneously the heavens were created in 2 days. Therefore the total does not come to 8 days but 6 days.

If a builder says that he will construct a 10 storey building and surrounding compound wall in 6 months and after completion of his project he gives a more detailed account saying that the basement of the building was built in 2 months and the 10 storeys took 4 months and simultaneously, while the basement and the building was being constructed, he also constructed the surrounding of the building along with the compound wall which took 2 months. Therefore both his first and second descriptions are not contradicting but the second statement gives a more detailed account for the construction.

3. Heavens and the Earth created simultaneously

The Qur'an describe the creation of the universe in several places, sometimes it says the heavens and the earth (7:54, 10:3, 11:7, 25:59, 32:4, 50:38, 57:4) while in other places it says earth and the heaven (49:9-12, 2:29, 20:4) thus further supplementing the verse of Surah Al Ambiya chapter 21 verse 30 which speaks about the Big-Bang and that the heavens and the earth were created simultaneously.

Similarly in Surah Al-Baqara chapter 2 verse 29

"It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth; Then He turned to the heaven and made them into seven firmaments. And of all things He hath perfect knowledge."
[Al-Qur'an 2:29]

"It is who has created for you all things on the earth *summa* simultaneously made the heaven into seven firmaments".

Here also if you wrongly translate *summa* as 'then' only then would this verse contradict the Big-bang theory and other verses of the Qur'an. Therefore the correct translation of the word *summa* is 'moreover' or 'simultaneously'.

15. IS MAN CREATED FROM SPERM OR DUST?

Question:

At one place the Qur'an mentions that man is created from sperm and in another place it mentions that man is created from dust. Are these two verses not contradicting? How can you scientifically prove that man is created from dust?

Answer:

1. Man created from sperm and dust

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The Qur'an refers to the lowly beginnings of a human being from a drop of sperm, in several verses including the following verse from Surah Al-Qiyamah:

"Was he not a drop of sperm emitted (in lowly form)"?
[Al-Qur'an 75:37]

The Qur'an also mentions in several places that human beings were created from dust. The following verse makes a reference to the origin of human beings:

"(Consider) that We created you out of dust".
[Al-Qur'an 22:5]

We now know that all the elements present in the human body (i.e. the constituent elements of the human body), are all present in the earth in small or great quantities. This is the scientific explanation for the Qur'anic verse that says that man was created from dust.

In certain verses, the Qur'an says that man was created from sperm, while in certain other verses it says that man was created from dust. However this is not a contradiction. Contradiction means statements, which are opposite or conflicting and both cannot be true simultaneously.

2. Man created from water

In certain places the Qur'an also says that man was created from water. For instance in Surah Al-Furqan it says:

"It is He Who has created man from water".
[Al-Qur'an 25:54]

Science has proved all the three statements to be correct. Man has been created from sperm, dust as well as water.

3. It is not a Contradiction but a Contradistinction

Suppose I say that in order to make a cup of tea one needs water. One also needs tea-leaves or tea powder. The two statements are not contradictory since both water and tea leaves are required in order to make a cup of tea. Furthermore if I want sweet tea I can even add sugar.

Thus there is no contradiction in the Qur'an when it says that man is created from sperm, dust and water. It is not a contradiction but a contradistinction. Contradistinction means speaking about two different concepts on the same subject without conflict. For instance if I say that the man is always truthful and a habitual liar, it is a contradiction, but if I say that a man is always honest, kind and loving, then it is a contradistinction.

16. ALLAH IS THE LORD OF TWO EASTS AND TWO WESTS

Question:

It is mentioned in one verse of the Qur'an that Allah is the Lord of two Easts and two Wests. How can you explain this verse of the Qur'an scientifically?

Answer:

1. Qur'an mentions Allah is the Lord of two Easts and two Wests

The verse of the Qur'an which refers to Allah being the Lord of two easts and two wests is the following verse from Surah Ar-Rahman:

"(He is) Lord of the two Easts and Lord of the two Wests:"
[Al-Qur'an 55:17]

In the original Arabic script, the words east and west have been used in the dual form. It implies that Allah is the Lord of two easts and two wests.

2. Allah is the Lord of both the extremes of East and West

The science of geography tells us that the sun rises from the east, but the point of sunrise keeps shifting throughout the year. Only on two days of the year known as 'equinox', does the sun rise exactly from due east. On the remaining days, it rises either from a little north or a little south of due east. During summer solstice the sun rises from one extreme of the east and during winter solstice it rises from the other extreme. Similarly, the sun sets in one extreme of the west in summer solstice. It sets in the other extreme of the west in winter solstice. This phenomenon can be easily seen in Bombay or any other city, by people living in certain areas, or in tall skyscraper buildings, from where the rising or setting of sun can be seen. They are able to notice that during the summer solstice the sun rises from one extreme of east and during winter solstice it rises from the other extreme of east. In short, through out the year, the sun keeps rising from different points of the east and sets on different points of the west. Thus when the Qur'an refers to Allah as the Lord of two easts and two wests, it means that Allah is the Lord of both the extremes of east and both the extremes of west.

3. Allah is the Lord of all the points of the East and West

Arabic language has two types of plurals. One is the dual plural i.e. the plural that implies the existence of two. The other is the plural for more than two, i.e. three and above. In Surah Rahman verse 17 the Arabic words used are *mashriqaini* and *magribaini* which are in dual plural and therefore imply two easts and two wests.

Consider the following verse of the Qur'an:
"Now I do call to witness the Lord of all points in the East and the West."
[Al-Qur'an 70:40]

The Arabic words for east and west used in this verse are *mashaariqi* and *magharibi'* which are plurals that imply the existence of more than two.

We can thus conclude that the Qur'an refers to Allah being the Lord of all the points in the east and all the points of the west, as well as the Lord of both the extreme points of east and both the extreme points of west.

17. ONE DAY IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH IS 1,000 OR 50,000 YEARS

Question:

A particular verse of the Qur'an says that one day in the sight of Allah is equal to 1000 years. In another verse of the Qur'an it says that one day is equal to 50,000 years. Isn't the Qur'an contradicting itself?

Answer:

1. Time of Allah is incomparable to earthly time

The Qur'an says in two verses, (22:47 and 32:5), that the measure of one day in the sight of Allah is equal to 1,000 years of our reckoning. In another verse (70:4) it says that the measure of one day in the sight of Allah is equal to 50,000 years of our reckoning.

These verses generally mean that the time of Allah (swt) is incomparable to the earthly time. The examples given are of one thousand years and fifty thousand years of the earthly time. In other words thousands of years or a very, very long time of the earth a day in the sight of Allah is equal to:

2. Yaum also means Period

The Arabic word used in all these three verses is *yaum*, which, besides meaning a day also means a long period, or an epoch. If you translate the word *yaum* correctly as 'period' there will be no confusion.

a) The verse from Surah Hajj reads as:

"Yet they ask thee to hasten on the Punishment! but Allah will not fail in His promise. Verily a Day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning".

[Al-Qur'an 22:47]

When the unbelievers asked to hasten the punishment the Qur'an says Allah will not fail in His promise. Verily a period in the sight of Allah is like a thousand years of your reckoning.

b) The verse from Surah Al-Sajdah says:

"He rules (all) affairs from the heavens to the earth: in the end will (all affairs) go up? To Him, on a Day, the space whereof will be (as) a thousand years of your reckoning".

[Al-Qur'an 32:5]

This verse indicates that a period required for all the affairs to go up to Allah (swt), is a thousand years of our reckoning.

c) A verse from Surah Al-Maarij says:

"The angels and the spirit ascend unto Him in a Day the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years".

[Al-Qur'an 70:4]

This verse means that the period required for angels and the spirits to ascend unto Allah (swt) is fifty thousand years.

d) The period for two different acts need not be the same. For example the period required for me to travel to destination 'A' say Vashi is one hour and the period required for me to travel to destination 'B' i.e. Kashmir is 50 hours. This does not indicate that I am making two contradictory statements.

Thus the verses of the Qur'an not only do not contradict each other, they are also in perfect harmony with established modern scientific facts.

18. IBLIS - ANGEL OR JINN?**Question:**

The Qur'an in several places says that *Iblis* was an angel, but in Surah Kahf it says that *Iblis* was a *Jinn*. Isn't this a contradiction in the Qur'an?

Answer:**1. Incidence of *Iblis* and Angels mentioned in the Qur'an**

The story of Adam and *Iblis* is mentioned in the Qur'an in various places in which Allah (swt) says, "We said to the angels bow down to Adam: and they bowed down: not so *Iblis*".

This is mentioned in:

Surah Al Baqarah chapter 2 verse 43
 Surah Al 'Araf chapter 7 verse 17
 Surah Al Hijr chapter 15 verses 28-31
 Surah Al Isra chapter 17 verse 61
 Surah Ta Ha chapter 20 verse 116
 Surah Sad chapter 38 verses 71-74

But in Surah Al Kahf chapter 18 verse 50 the Qur'an says:

"Behold! We said to the angels, "Bow down to Adam." they bowed down except *Iblis* He was one of the *Jinns*."
 [Al-Qur'an 18:50]

2. Arabic Rule Of Tagleeb

The English translation of the first part of the verse 'We said to the angels bow down to Adam: they bowed down except *Iblis*', gives us the impression that *Iblis* was an angel. The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic. In Arabic grammar there is a rule known as Tagleeb, according to which, if the majority is addressed, even the minority is included. If for example, I address a class containing 100 students of whom 99 are boys and one is a girl, and if I say in Arabic that the boys should stand up, it includes the girl as well. I need not mention her separately.

Similarly in the Qur'an, when Allah addressed the angels, even *Iblis* was present, but it is not required that he be mentioned separately. Therefore according to that sentence *Iblis* may be an angel or may not be an angel, but we come to know from Surah Al Kahf chapter 18 verse 50 that *Iblis* was a *Jinn*. No where does the Qur'an say *Iblis* was an angel. Therefore there is no contradiction in the Qur'an.

3. Jinns have free will and can disobey Allah

Secondly, *Jinns* have a free will and may or may not obey Allah, but angels have no free will and always obey Allah. Therefore the question of an angel disobeying Allah does not arise. This further supplements that *Iblis* was a *Jinn* and not an angel.

19. AUTHOR OF THE QUR'AN DOES NOT KNOW MATHEMATICS**Question:**

According to Arun Shourie there is a mathematical error in the Qur'an. In chapter 4 verses 11 and 12 when you add up the different parts of inheritance given to the heirs, it is more than one. Therefore the author of the Qur'an does not know mathematics.

Answer:

The Qur'an mentions about inheritance in many places, in

Surah Al Baqarah chapter 2 verse 180
 Surah Al Baqarah chapter 2 verse 240
 Surah Al Nisa chapter 4 verses 7 to 9
 Surah Al Nisa chapter 4 verses 19 and 33
 Surah Al Ma'idah chapter 5 verses 105 and 108

Regarding the share of inheritance it is clearly given in Surah Nisa chapter 4 verse 11, 12 and 176.

Let us examine the verses quoted by Arun Shourie, i.e. Surah Nisa chapter 4 verses 11 and 12:

"Allah (swt) (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is a half.

For parents, a sixth share of the inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; if no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers (or sisters) the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all cases is) after the payment of legacies and debts. Ye know not whether your parents or your children are nearest to you in benefit. These are settled portions ordained by Allah; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

"In what your wives leave, your share is a half, if they leave no child; but if they leave child, ye get a fourth; after payment of legacies and debts. In what ye leave, their share is a fourth, if ye leave no child; but if ye leave a child, they get an eighth; after payment of legacies and debts." [Al-Qur'an 4:11-12]

Islam explains the law of inheritance in great detail. The broad and basic outline is given in the Qur'an and the minute details are given in the *Ahadith* i.e. the tradition and sayings of the Prophet (pbuh).

A person can spend his full life only on the research of the Islamic law of inheritance with its various permutations and combinations. Arun Shourie expects to know the law only by superficially reading two verses of the Qur'an without knowing the criteria.

It is similar to a person who wants to solve a mathematical equation but does not know the basic rule of mathematics, i.e. BODMAS which says that in a mathematical equation, irrespective of which mathematical sign appears first, you will first solve BODMAS: 1st Brackets Off, 2nd Division, 3rd Multiplication, 4th Addition and 5th Subtraction. If Arun Shourie does not know mathematics and first does multiplication then subtraction, then brackets off, then division and finally addition, the answer that he will obtain is bound to be wrong.

Similarly, when the Qur'an mentions the law of inheritance in Surah Nisa chapter 4 verses 11 and 12, even though the children's share is mentioned first and then that of the parents and spouses, according to the law of inheritance in Islam after paying off the debts and liabilities first, the share is given to the spouses and the parents depending on whether the deceased has left children or not, and whatever portion of wealth is remaining is divided between the sons and the daughters according to their respective shares.

So where does the question arise of the total coming to more than one? So it is not Allah who does not know mathematics but it is Arun Shourie himself who is ignorant about mathematics.

20. IS ALLAH FORGIVING OR REVENGEFUL?

Question:

The Qur'an says several times that Allah is most Merciful and Forgiving but also says many times that He gives severe punishment. Is He Forgiving or Revengeful?

Answer:

1. Allah is most Merciful

The Qur'an says several times that Allah is the most Merciful. In fact all the 114 Surahs i.e. chapters of the Glorious Qur'an except for Surah Taubah chapter 9, begin with the beautiful formula, *Bismillah-hir-Rahman-nir-Rahim*, which means, "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful".

2. Allah is Forgiving

The Glorious Qur'an mentions in several verses including Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 25 and Surah Maidah, chapter 5 verse 74:

"And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

3. Allah gives severe punishment to the deserving

Allah besides being Merciful and Forgiving is also strict in giving punishment to the deserving. The Qur'an mentions in several verses that Allah will give severe punishment to the unbelievers and rejecters of faith. He will give punishment to all those who disobey Him. Several verses of the Qur'an describe the various types of severe punishment that Allah will give in hell to all those who disobey.

"Those who reject our Signs, we shall soon cast into the Fire; as often as their skins

Are roasted through, we shall change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the penalty: for Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise".

[Al-Qur'an 4:56]

4. Allah is Just

The question is, whether Allah is forgiving or revengeful? An important point to be noted is that Allah besides being Merciful and Forgiving, He also has to give severe punishment to the deserving wicked or evil people, because He is also Just. The Qur'an mentions in Surah Nisa: "Allah is never unjust in the least degree".

[Al-Qur'an 4:40]

It is further mentioned in Surah Al-Ambiya:

"We shall set up scales of justice for the day of Judgement, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. And if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, we will bring it (to account): and enough are we to take account".
[Al-Qur'an 21:47]

5. Example: Teacher forgives a student who copies in the examination

If during an examination, a student copies and the teacher who supervises in the examination catches the student red-handed, the teacher says that he is very merciful and kind and forgives him and allows him to continue copying. Those students who have worked hard for the examination will not call the teacher merciful and kind but will call him unjust. This merciful act of the teacher will encourage the other students to also copy. If all the teachers are merciful and kind and allow the students to copy then no student will ever study for examinations and all will pass with flying colours by copying. The theoretical results of the examinations will be excellent in which all the students will pass with first class and distinction but practically these students will be a failure in life. The whole purpose of the examination would be defeated.

6. This Life is a Test for the Hereafter

The life in this world is a test for the Hereafter. The Qur'an says in Surah Al Mulk: "He who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed; and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving".
[Al-Qur'an 67:2]

7. If Allah forgives all and punishes none, who will obey him?

If Allah (swt) forgives each and every human being and punishes no one, then why should the human beings obey the command of Allah (swt)? I do agree that no one will go to hell, but this world would become hell to live in. If all human beings are going to go to heaven then what is the purpose and use of the human beings to come to this world, this life cannot be called a test for the hereafter.

8. Allah only forgives if a person repents

Allah (swt) only forgives if a person repents. The Qur'an says in Surah Al-Zumar, chapter 39 verse 53-55:

"Say: 'O my servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

"Turn ye to your Lord (in repentance) and bow to His (will), before the penalty comes on you - after that ye shall not be helped."

"And follow the best of (the courses) revealed to you from your Lord, before the penalty comes on you - of a sudden, while ye perceive not!"
[Al-Qur'an 39:53-55]

There are four criteria for repentance: First, agree that the act is wrong. Secondly, stop it immediately. Thirdly, never do it again in future. And lastly, compensate for the loss if caused to anyone.

**3. COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED BY HINDUS ABOUT
ISLAM**

**COMMON QUESTIONS
ASKED BY HINDUS
ABOUT ISLAM**

by

Dr. Zakir Naik

1. IDOL USED FOR CONCENTRATION

Question:

The Hindu Pundits and Scholars agree that the Vedas and other Hindu religious scriptures prohibit idol worship, but initially because the mind may not be matured, an idol is required for concentration while worshipping. After the mind reaches higher consciousness, the idol is not required for concentration.

Answer :

1. Muslims have reached the higher level of consciousness

Muslims have reached the higher level of consciousness. If an idol is required for concentration only in the initial stages and not later on when the mind reaches higher consciousness then I would like to say the Muslims have already reached the state of higher consciousness because when we worship Allah (swt) we do not require any idol or statue.

2. Child asks why does it thunder?

When I was discussing with a Swami in IRF. He said that when our child asks us, "Why does the sky thunder?", we reply that "aeee ma chakki pees rahi hai", the grandmother is grinding flour in the heaven; because he is too young to understand. Similarly in the initial stages people require an idol for concentration.

In Islam we don't believe in telling a lie, even if it's a white lie. I will never give such a wrong answer to my child because later on when he goes to school and learns that the thundering sound after lightning is due to the expansion of rapidly heated air, he will either think that the teacher is lying or later on when he understands the fact he will conclude that the father is a liar. If you feel that the child may not understand certain difficult things you should simplify the answer rather than give a wrong fictitious reply. If you, yourself do not know the answer, you should have the guts to be truthful and say 'I don't know'. But many children nowadays will not be satisfied with this answer. If this answer was given to my son, he would say "Abba (father), why don't you know?" This will compel you to do your homework and thus educate yourself as well as your child.

3. Those in standard one require idol for concentration – (2 + 2 = 4 will remain same in standard one and ten)

Some pundits while trying to convince me regarding idol worship said that in standard one the student is initially taught to worship God by concentrating with the help of an idol but later on when he graduates he no longer requires the idol to concentrate while worshipping the God.

A very important fact to be noted is that only if the fundamentals of any particular subject is strong, then only will he be able to excel in future for e.g. A teacher of mathematics in standard one teaches the students that $2 + 2 = 4$ irrespective whether the student passes school or does graduation or does a Ph. D. in mathematics, the basics of $2 + 2 = 4$ will yet remain the same, it will not change to 5 or 6. In higher standards the student, besides addition may learn about Algebra, Trigonometry, Logarithm, etc. but the fundamental of addition will yet remain the

same. If the teacher in standard one itself teaches the fundamentals wrong, how can you expect the student to excel in future?

It is the fundamental principal of the Vedas regarding the concept of God that He has got no image, so how can the Scholars even after knowing this fact keep silent at the wrong practice being done by people.

Will you tell your son who is in standard one that 2 plus 2 is not equal to 4 but 5 or 6 and only confirm the truth after he passes school? Never. In fact if he makes a mistake you will correct him and say it is 4 and not wait till he graduates; and if you don't correct him initially you will ruin his future

2. **WATER IS CALLED BY DIFFERENT NAMES IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES – GOD IS CALLED BY DIFFERENT NAMES AS ALLAH, RAM OR JESUS**

Question:

Water is called by different names in different languages: in English as water, in Hindi as paani, in Tamil as tanni. Similarly if God is called either Allah, Ram or Jesus, is it not one and the same?

Answer:

1. To Allah belongs the Most Beautiful Names

The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Isra chapter 17 verse 110

"Say: 'Call upon Allah, or call upon Rahman: by whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names.'"

[Al-Qur'an 17:110]

You can call Allah by any name, but it should be a beautiful name, should not conjure up a mental picture, and should have qualities that only Allah possesses.

2. Water can be called by different names in different languages but something else besides water cannot be called water in another language.

You can call water by various names in different languages, like water in English, paani in Hindi, tanni in Tamil, mai in Arabic, apah in Sanskrit, jal in *Shudh* Hindi, jal or paani in Gujrati, pandi in Marathi, neer in Kannad, neeru in Telugu, vellam in Malayalam, etc. If a person tells me that his friend has advised that everyday early in the morning he should have one glass of paani, but he is unable to drink it because when he drinks it, he feels like vomiting. On enquiry he says that the paani stinks and it is yellowish in colour. Later I realise that what he is referring to as paani is not water but urine. Thus you can call water by different names having the same meaning but you cannot call other things as water or paani.

People may think that the example is not realistic and I agree with them because even an ignorant person knows the difference between water and urine. He will have to be a fool to call urine 'water'. Similarly when any person who knows the correct concept of God, sees people worshipping false gods, he naturally wonders how a person cannot differentiate between a true God and false gods.

3. Purity of Gold is not verified by calling it by different names in different languages but rubbing it against a Touchstone.

In the same way, gold can be called sona in Hindi, gold in English, dhahaba in Arabic. In spite of knowing all these different names for gold, if a person wants to sell you his gold jewellery and says this is 24 carat pure sona, you will not blindly

believe, without verifying it with a goldsmith. The goldsmith confirms whether it is gold or not with the help of a touchstone. The yellow glittering jewellery may not be gold, because all that glitters is not gold.

4. Surah Ikhlas is the Touchstone of Theology.

Similarly, any person or candidate who is called God cannot be accepted as the true God without verifying him with the touchstone. The touchstone of theology, that is study of God, is Surah Ikhlas chapter 112 of the Holy Qur'an which says:

"Say, 'He is Allah, The One and Only; Allah, The Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not Nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him.'"

[Al-Qur'an 112:1-4]

5. Any candidate who passes the Acid test can be called God.

Any candidate who claims to be God and fits in this four line definition, passes the Acid test, is entitled to be called God and worshipped as God.

Suppose a lunatic says that Muhammad (pbuh) is God, (God forbid). Let's put him to the test of Surah Ikhlas.

i. "Kul hu allah hu ahad" – Say He is Allah, The One and Only;

Is Muhammad (pbuh) one and only? No! he was not the only messenger. There were many other messengers.

ii. "Allah hus Samad" – Allah, The Eternal, Absolute;

We know that Muhammad (pbuh) had to undergo many hardships. Though he was the mightiest messenger of God, he died at the age of 63 and was buried in Madeenah.

iii. "Lam ya lid wa lam yulad" – He begetteth not Nor is He begotten;

We know that he was born in Makkah and his parents were Abdullah and Aaminah. He even had several children e.g. Fatimah, Ibrahim (may Allah be pleased with them), etc.

iv. "Wa lam ya kullahu kufuwan ahad" – And there is none like unto Him.

Though all the Muslims love and revere the Prophet (pbuh) and are supposed to follow each and every of his commandments, yet you will not find a single Muslim in the whole world, who in his senses will ever say that Muhammad (pbuh) is God. The Islamic Creed is, "La illaha illallah Muhammadur Rasoolullah", which means that there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad (pbuh) is the messenger of Allah. This is repeated five times a day during the call for prayer, so that the Muslims are reminded daily that although they respect and obey him, he is only a Messenger and servant of God, and not God Himself.

6. Verify the Gods you worship.

Now that we have explained to you how to use the touchstone of theology it is the duty of everyone to verify with this touchstone, whether the gods that they worship are true or false.

3. HINDUISM IS NOT THE OLDEST AND BEST RELIGION

Question

Hinduism is the oldest of all the religions and thus the, most pure, authentic and best of all the religions of the world.

Answer:**1. Islam is the oldest religion**

Hinduism is not the oldest of all the religions. It is Islam which is the first and the oldest of all religions. People have a misconception that Islam is 1400 years old and that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the founder of this religion. Islam existed since time immemorial, ever since man first set foot on this earth. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was not the founder of Islam. He was the last and final Messenger of Almighty God.

2. The oldest religion need not be the purest and the most authentic religion

A religion cannot be claimed to be most pure and authentic, only on the criterion that it is the oldest. It is similar to a person saying that the water he has kept in an open glass, in his house, outside the refrigerator, for three months is purer than the water which has just been collected in a clean glass, immediately after it has been purified.

3. The latest religion need not be the purest and the most authentic religion

On the other hand a religion cannot be claimed to be the purest or authentic, only on the criterion that the religion is new or the latest. A bottle of distilled water which is sealed, packed and kept in the refrigerator for three months is much purer than a bottle of water freshly collected from the sea.

4. For religion to be pure and authentic, it should not have interpolations, changes and revisions in its scriptures revealed from God

For any religion to be pure and authentic, its scriptures should not contain any interpolation, addition, deletion or revision. Moreover the religion's source of inspiration and direction should be Almighty God. The Qur'an is the only religious scripture on the face of the earth which has been maintained in its original form. All the other religious scriptures, of all the other religions have interpolations, additions, deletions or revisions. The Qur'an has been in the memory of a multitude of people, intact in its original form ever since its revelation, and now there are hundreds of thousands of people who have preserved it in their memory. Moreover, if you compare the copies made by Caliph Uthman from the original Qur'an which is yet present in the museum in Tashkent and in Koptaki museum in Turkey, they are the same as the ones we possess today.

Allah (swt) promises in the Qur'an, in Surah Al Hijr, chapter 15 verse 9

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."

5. The oldest religion need not be best religion

A religion cannot be claimed to be the best religion only on the criterion that it is the oldest. It is similar to a person saying, that my 19th century car is better than a Toyota car manufactured in 1998, because it is older. He would be considered to be a fool to say that his 19th century car which required a rod to be turned in circles to start it, is better than a key-start 1998 Toyota car, just because it is older.

6. The latest religion need not be the best religion

On the other hand a religion cannot be called as the best religion only on the criterion that the religion is new or that it came later. It is similar to a person who says that my 800 cc Suzuki car manufactured in 1999 is better than a 5000 cc Mercedes 500 SEL manufactured in 1997. To judge which car is better, a person

should compare the specifications of the car e.g. the power of the car, safety measures, the capacity of the cylinders, the pickup, the speed, the comfort, etc. 5000 cc Mercedes, 500 SEL car manufactured in 1997, is far superior and better than a 800 cc Suzuki (Maruti Suzuki 800) manufactured in 1999.

7. A religion is best, if it has the solutions to the problems of mankind

For a religion to be considered the best, it should have the solution to all the problems of mankind. It should be the religion of truth, and should be applicable to all ages. Islam is the only religion which has the solution to all the problems of mankind. e.g. the problem of alcoholism, surplus women, rape and molestation, robbery, racism, casteism, etc.

Islam is the religion of truth, and its laws and solutions are applicable to all the ages. The Qur'an is the only religious book on the face of the earth, which has maintained its purity and authenticity proving itself to be the word of God in all the ages. i.e. previously, when it was the age of miracles, literature and poetry and in present times when it is the age of science and technology. Moreover, Islam is not a man-made religion, but a religion revealed and inspired by Almighty God. It is the only religion acceptable in His Sight.

4. IS ALLAH MENTIONED IN OTHER SCRIPTURES

Question:

"Allah" is the most appropriate name for God in the Qur'an. Is this name "Allah" mentioned in other religious scriptures besides the Qur'an?

Answer:

Almost all the major religious scriptures of the world contain the word "Allah" as one of the names of God.

a. Elohim El, Elah, Alah

In the Bible, God is very often referred to as 'Elohim' in the Hebrew language. The 'im' in the ending is a plural of honour and God is referred to as 'El' or 'Elah' in the English Bible with commentary, edited by reverend C. I. Scofield. 'Elah' is alternatively spelled as 'Alah'. The difference in spelling is only of a single 'L'. Muslims spell Allah as 'Allah' while the Reverend has spelled it as Alah and they pronounce it as 'Elah'. Muslims pronounce it as Allah. Hebrew and Arabic are sister languages therefore we say it should be pronounced as 'Allah' and not as 'Elah'.

When I was in school, I was taught 'D, O' is do, 'T, O' is to. What is 'G, O' It is 'go' and not 'gu'. 'N, U, T' is nut, 'C, U, T' cut; 'B, U, T' is but, what is 'P, U, T'? Not 'pat' but it is 'put'. If you ask "Why?" The answer is "It is their language". If I have to pass I have to say 'P, U, T' is 'put' and not 'pat'. Similarly the right pronunciation for A, L, L, A, H, is Allah.

b. Jesus (pbuh) cried out Allah Allah when he was put on the cross

It is mentioned in the New Testament in the Gospel of Mathew, chapter 27 verse 46 as well as Gospel of Mark, chapter 15 verse 34 when Jesus (pbuh) was put on the cross.

Jesus cried with a loud voice saying "E'-Li, E'-Li la'-ma sa-bach'-tha-ni?" that is to say, 'My God, My God why hast Thou Forsaken Me?' Does this sound like Jehovah! Jehovah! why has thou forsaken me? Does it sound like *Abba Abba*? The answer is 'No'. Hebrew and Arabic are sister languages and if you translate "E'-Li, E'-Li la'-ma

sa-bach'-tha-ni" into Arabic it is 'Allah Allah *lama tarak tanī*' does it sound similar?

This statement of Jesus (pbuh), "E'-Li, E'-Li la'-ma sa-bach'-tha-ni" is preserved in its original Hebrew in each and every of its translation which is available in more than 2000 different languages of the world and in each and every of them, "Allah" is present.

2. "Allah" in Sikhism

One of the names by which Gurunanak Sahib referred to God is "Allah".

3a. "Allah" in Rigveda Book 2 Hymn I verse II

Even in the Rigveda which is the most sacred scripture of the Hindus, one of the attributes given to God Almighty in Book no 2 Hymn no I verse II, is '*lla*' which if pronounced properly is the same as Allah.

3b. Allo Upanishad:

Amongst the various Upanishads one of the Upanishad is named as '*Allo*' Upanishad in which God is referred to as "Allah" several times.

5. BURYING BETTER THAN CREMATING DEAD BODIES

Question:

Why do Muslims bury dead bodies instead of cremating them, i.e. burning them?

Answer:

1. Components of human body present in the soil

Elements that are present in the human body are present in lesser or greater quantity in the soil. Hence it is more scientific to bury a dead body, as it easily gets decomposed and mixed in the soil.

2. No Pollution

Cremating (burning) the dead body leads to pollution of the atmosphere which is detrimental to health and harmful for the environment. There is no such pollution caused by burying a dead body.

3. Surrounding land becomes fertile

To cremate a dead body several trees have to be chopped, which reduces the greenery and harms the environment and the ecology. When dead bodies are buried, besides the trees being saved, the surrounding land becomes fertile and it improves the environment.

4. Economical

It is expensive to cremate a dead body when tons of wood have to be burned. Annually there is a loss of crores of rupees, only because dead bodies are cremated in India. Burying dead bodies is very cheap. It hardly costs any money.

5. Same land can be utilised for burying another body

The wood used for cremating a dead body cannot be reutilised for cremating another dead body since it gets converted to ashes. The land used for burying a dead body can be reutilised for burying another body after a few years since the human body gets decomposed and mixed in the soil.

6. BINDI AND MANGALSUTRA

Why do the Muslim married women not put *bindi* or *tika* on the forehead and wear *Mangalsutra*, like Hindu married women?

1. *Bindi* or *tika*

Bindi is derived from the sanskrit word *bindu*, which means a 'dot'. It is usually a red dot made with vermilion powder and is worn by the Hindu women between their eyebrows on their forehead.

Bindi is considered a symbol of 'Parvati' and signifies female energy which is believed by Hindus to protect women and their husbands. It is traditionally a symbol of marriage and is worn by the Hindu married women. It is also called as *tika*.

2. *Bindi* has become a fashion

Nowadays, wearing *bindi* has become a fashion and is even worn by unmarried girls and women. The shape of the *bindi* is no longer restricted to a dot and is available in various shapes, including oval, star, heart shaped, etc. It is even available in different bright colours like blue, green, yellow, orange, etc. The material of the *bindi* is no longer restricted to vermilion powder, but is made of coloured felt and other material. It is also available in a variety of designs in combination with coloured glass, glitter, etc.

3. *Mangalsutra*

Mangalsutra means a thread of good-will. It is a necklace worn specially by Hindu married women as a symbol of their marriage. It consists of two strings of black beads with a pendant usually of gold. The black beads are believed to act as a protection against evil. It is believed to protect the women's marriage and the life of her husband. In southern India, *mangalsutra* is called *tali*, which is a small gold ornament string on a cotton cord or a gold chain.

Hindu Married women are never supposed to remove their *mangalsutra*. It is only cut off when a Hindu lady becomes a widow.

4. Allah is the Protector

Allah (swt), our Creator, is the best to protect human beings. We do not require any red dot or black thread to protect us from evil. It is mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an in Surah Anam Chapter 6 verse 14

"Say: Shall I take for my protector any other than Allah, the Maker of the heavens and the earth?"

[Al-Qur'an 6:14]

It is mentioned in several places in the Glorious Qur'an including Surah Ali Imran Chapter 3 Verse 150 and Surah Alhadj Chapter 22 Verse 78

"Allah is your Protector, and He is the best of helpers."

Wearing a *bindi* or *mangalsutra* signifies a lack of faith in Almighty God, our Creator, who is the best to protect.

5. Against the Islamic Dress Code

Wearing a *bindi* or *mangalsutra* is a sign of Hindu women. The Islamic dress code does not permit a Muslim to wear any sign, symbol or mark which is specially significant of a non-Muslim.

6. In Islam, Both Married and Unmarried women should not be Teased

Once, a Hindu friend of mine, while mentioning the benefits of *mangalsutra* said that it easily identifies a married women, and thus prevents them from being teased and molested. According to Islam, each and every woman, whether married or unmarried, Muslim or Non-Muslim, should neither be teased nor molested.

7. **TAKING NAME OF EMPEROR AKBAR IN ADHAAN**

Question:

Why do Muslims take the name of Emperor Akbar while calling people to pray?

Answer:

1. Non Muslim misunderstand that Emperor Akbar's name is taken in Adhaan

Once, when I attended a conference in Kerala, a non-Muslim minister spoke just before my speech. He was highlighting the achievements of the Indian Muslims and their role in the progress of India. He said that amongst the Indian kings, the greatest was Emperor Akbar. No wonder the Muslims take his name five times a day, while calling people to pray. During my speech however, I clarified this misconception.

2. The 'Akbar' word of the Adhaan has nothing to do with Emperor Akbar

The word 'Akbar' mentioned in the *Adhaan* which is given to call people to pray has nothing to do with Emperor Akbar of India. The words in the *Adhaan* were used centuries before the birth of Emperor Akbar.

3. 'Akbar' means 'Great'

The Arabic word 'Akbar' means 'great'. When we say 'Allahu Akbar' in the Adhaan we proclaim that 'Allah is Great' or 'Allah is the Greatest' and we call people to worship the one and only Allah who is the Greatest.

8. **WHY DON'T MUSLIMS IN INDIA FOLLOW THE ISLAMIC CRIMINAL LAW?**

Question

When Muslims in India insist on having a separate Muslim Personal Law for themselves, why don't they also insist on implementing the Islamic Criminal Law for the Muslims; for example implementing the rule that the robber's hands should be chopped off if a Muslim robs?

Answer:

1. Muslim Personal Law

Personal Law is a law concerning an individual person and the persons closely related to him, e.g. laws relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc. It includes laws which are mutually agreed upon by a group of people. This law does not include any crime or an act that will harm the society directly.

2. India is Secular And Democratic

In any country, the Personal Law may differ for different groups of people and for different communities. Since India is a secular and democratic country it allows different groups of people to follow their own personal law if they wish.

3. Islamic Personal Law is the Best

Muslims believe that compared to all the different types of personal laws available in

the world, the best and the most result oriented is the Islamic Personal Law. Muslims of India prefer following the Muslim personal law also because of their own belief in Islam.

4. Criminal Law

Criminal law is that law which is associated with a crime or an act which directly affects the society e.g. robbing, raping, murdering, etc.

5. The Criminal Law should be the same for all people

In any country, the criminal law unlike the Personal Law cannot be different for different groups of people. It has to be same for all people of different groups and different religions e.g. In Islam if a person robs, his hands are chopped off. This punishment is not prescribed in Hinduism. If a Hindu robs a Muslim, what would be the robber's punishment? The Muslim would want the hands of the robber to be chopped, while the Hindu Law would not agree.

6. The Muslims in India alone cannot separately follow the Islamic Criminal Law without involving the Non-Muslims

Even if a Muslim agrees, that as far as he commits a crime he should be given the punishment according to Islamic Criminal Law, it would not be practical. In case an allegation is made against a Muslim for robbery and if the witnesses are Non-Muslims, and if each one follows his own Criminal Law, the punishment in Islam for bearing false witness is 80 lashes, whereas in the Indian Criminal Law, a person giving false witness can easily escape. Thus, for a non-Muslim to falsely accuse a Muslim of any crime is very easy, if both follow their own criminal law. However, if both follow the Indian Law where the punishment is lenient for false witnesses and robbers, it will encourage both the robber to rob as well as encourage the witnesses to give false witness for their own benefit.

7. The Muslims in India would prefer the Islamic Criminal Law to be implemented on all Indians

We Muslims would prefer that in India the Islamic Criminal Law be implemented on all the Indians, since, chopping the hands of a thief will surely reduce the rate of robbery in India. Similarly, 80 lashes for giving false testimony will prevent a person from giving false witness.

8. Islamic Criminal Law is Most Practical

Islam besides pointing out a crime, it also gives you a solution showing how to prevent the crime e.g. chopping the hands of a robber, death penalty for the rapist. The punishment is so severe that it is a deterrent for the criminal to commit the crime. He will think a hundred times before committing a crime.

Thus if crime has to be reduced or stopped in India the best solution is to implement 'The Common Islamic Criminal Law'.

9. ARE RAM AND KRISHNA PROPHETS OF GOD?

Question:

If according to Islam, messengers or prophets were sent to each and every nation of the world, then which prophet was sent to India? Can we consider Ram and Krishna to be messengers of God?

Answer:

1. Prophets sent to every nation

a. The Glorious Qur'an mentions in Surah Fatir, chapter 35 verse 24

"... And there never was a people, without a warner having lived among them (in the past)."
[Al-Qur'an 35:24]

b. A similar message is repeated in Surah Rad, chapter 13 verse 7

"... and to every people a guide."
[Al-Qur'an 13:7]

2. Stories only of some prophets narrated in the Qur'an

a. Allah (swt) says in Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 164

"Of some messengers We have already told thee the story; of others we have not."
[Al-Qur'an 4:164]

b. A similar message is repeated in Surah Ghafir chapter 40 verse 78

"We did aforetime send messengers before thee: of them there are some whose story We have related to thee, and some whose story We have not related to thee."
[Al-Qur'an 40:78]

3. 25 Prophets of God are mentioned by name in the Qur'an

By name, only 25 Prophets of God are mentioned in the Qur'an e.g. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammed (pbuh)

4. More than 1,24,000 prophets of God

According to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), there were more than 1,24,000 prophets sent to this world.

5. All previous prophets sent only for their people

All the prophets that came before Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were only sent for their own people and were to be followed only for a particular period of time.

Surah Ali Imran, chapter 3 verse 49

"And (appoint him) a messenger to the Children of Israel, . . ."
[Al-Qur'an 3:49]

6. Muhammad (pbuh), the last messenger of God

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the last and final messenger of Almighty God. It is mentioned in

Surah Ahzab, chapter 33 verse 40

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things."
[Al-Qur'an 33:40]

7. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), sent for whole Humankind

Since Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the last and final messenger, he was not sent

only for the Muslims or the Arabs, but he was sent for the whole of humankind.

a. It is mentioned in

Surah Anbiya, chapter 21 verse 107

"We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures."

[Al'Qur'an 21:107]

b. A similar message is repeated in

Surah Saba, chapter 34 verse 28

"We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not."

[Al Qur'an 34:28]

c. It is mentioned in

Sahih Bukhari, volume 1, Book of Salaah, chapter 56 hadith no. 429

Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah: Allah's Messenger said,

"Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to all mankind."

8. Which prophet was sent to India?

Regarding the question of which prophet of God was sent to India, and can we consider Ram or Krishna to be prophets of God, there is no text in the Qur'an or Sahih Hadith mentioning the name of the prophet that was sent to India. Since the names of Ram and Krishna are nowhere to be found in the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith, one cannot say for sure whether they were prophets of God or not. Some Muslims, especially certain Muslim politicians who try to appease the Hindus, say Ram *Alai-his-salaam*, i.e. Ram, may peace be on him. This is totally wrong, since there is no authentic proof from the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith that he was a prophet of God. However, a person may say that perhaps they may have been the prophets of God.

9. Even if Ram and Krishna were prophets, today we have to follow the last Prophet of God i.e. Muhammad (pbuh)

Even if Ram and Krishna were prophets of God, they were only meant for people of that time and were to be followed only for that particular period of time. Today, all the human beings throughout the world, including India should only follow the last and final prophet and Messenger of God – prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

10. ARE THE VEDAS A REVELATION OF GOD?

Question:

If Allah has sent His books and revelations in every period, then which revelation was sent to India? Can we consider the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures to be the word of God?

Answer:

1. Revelation sent in every period

The Glorious Qur'an mentions in Surah Rad, chapter 13 verse 38

"For each period is a book (revealed)."

[Al-Qur'an 13:38]

2. Four revelations of God mentioned by name in Qur'an

By name, only four revelations of God are mentioned in the Qur'an i.e. *Torah*, *Zaboor*, *Injeel* and the Qur'an

Torah is the revelation which was given to Moses (pbuh)

Zaboor is the revelation which was given to David (pbuh)

Injeel is the revelation which was given to Jesus (pbuh)

and Qur'an is the last and final revelation which was given to the last and final Messenger Muhammad (pbuh).

3. All the previous revelations sent only for their people

All the revelations that came before Qur'an were only sent for their own people and were to be followed only for a particular time period.

4. The Qur'an sent for whole humankind

Since the Qur'an is the last and final revelation, it was not sent only for the Muslims or the Arabs but it was sent for the whole of humankind. It is mentioned in:

a. Surah Ibrahim, chapter 14 verse 1

"*Alif Lam Ra*. A book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light . . ."

[Al-Qur'an 14:1]

b. A similar message is repeated in Surah Ibrahim chapter 14 verse 52

"Here is a Message for mankind: let them take warning therefrom, and let them know that He is (no other than) One God: let men of understanding take heed."

[Al-Qur'an 14:52]

c. Qur'an mentions in Surah Baqarah chapter 2 verse 185

"Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgement (between right and wrong)."

[Al-Qur'an 2:185]

d. A similar message is repeated in Surah Zumar chapter 39 verse 41

"Verily We have revealed the Book to thee in Truth, for (instructing) mankind."

[Al-Qur'an 39:41]

5. Which revelation sent to India?

The question that arises is "which revelation of God was sent to India and whether we can consider the Vedas and the other Hindu Scriptures to be the revelations of God?" There is no text in the Qur'an or Sahih Hadith mentioning the name of the revelation that was sent to India. Since the names of the Vedas or other Hindu scriptures are nowhere to be found in Qur'an and Sahih Hadith, one cannot say for sure that they were the revelations of God. They may be the revelation of God or may not be the revelation of God.

6. Even if the Veda was the word of God today you have to follow the Qur'an

Even if the Vedas and the other scriptures were the revelations from God, they were only meant for people of that time and were to be followed only for that particular

period of time. Today all human beings through out the world including India should only follow the last and final Revelation of God, i.e. the Qur'an. Moreover since all the previous revelations were not meant to be followed for eternity, Almighty God did not preserve them in their original form. There is not a single religious scripture of any of the major religions which claims to be the word of God and has maintained its pure original text and is free from alteration, adulteration and interpolation. Since the Glorious Qur'an is to be followed for eternity, Allah (swt) has taken upon Himself to maintain its original purity and guard it from corruption. Allah says in Glorious Qur'an.

Surah Hijr chapter 15 verse 9

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."

[Al-Qur'an 15:9]

**4. COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED BY CHRISTIAN
MISSIONARIES AGAINST ISLAM**

TEN MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ASKED BY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES AGAINST ISLAM

by

Dr. Zakir Naik

1. QUR'AN PLAGIARIZED FROM THE BIBLE :

Question

Is it not true that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has copied the Qur'an from the Bible?

Answer

Many critics allege that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) himself was not the author of the Qur'an but he learnt it and/or plagiarised (copied or adapted) it from other human sources or from previous scriptures or revelations.

1. MUHUMMAD LEARNT THE QUR'AN FROM A ROMAN BLACKSMITH WHO WAS A CHRISTIAN

Some Pagans accused the Prophet of learning the Qur'an from a Roman Blacksmith, who was a Christian staying at the outskirts of Makkah. The Prophet very often used to go and watch him do his work. A revelation of the Qur'an was sufficient to dismiss this charge - the Qur'an says in Surah An-Nahl chapter 16 verse 103:

"We know indeed that they say, 'It is a man that teaches him,' The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear."

[Al-Qur'an 16:103]

How could a person whose mother tongue was foreign and could hardly speak little but of poor broken Arabic be the source of the Qur'an which is pure, eloquent, fine Arabic? To believe that the blacksmith taught the Prophet the Qur'an is some what similar to believing that a Chinese immigrant to England, who did not know proper English, taught Shakespeare.

2. MUHUMMAD (PBUH) LEARNT FROM WARQA - THE RELATIVE OF KHADIJAH (RA)

Muhummad's (pbuh) contacts with the Jewish and Christian Scholars were very limited. The most prominent Christian known to him was an old blind man called Waraqa ibn-Naufal who was a relative of the Prophet's first wife Khadijah (r.a.). Although of Arab descent, he was a convert to Christianity and was very well versed with the New Testament. The Prophet only met him twice, first when Waraqa was worshipping at the Kaaba (before the Prophetic

Mission) and he kissed the Prophet's forehead affectionately; the second occasion was when the Prophet went to meet Waraqa after receiving the first revelation. Waraqa died three years later and the revelation continued for about 23 years. It is ridiculous to assume that Waraqa was the source of the contents of the Qur'an.

3. PROPHET'S RELIGIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

It is true that the Prophet did have religious discussions with the Jews and Christians but they took place in Madinah more than 13 years after the revelation of the Qur'an had started. The allegation that these Jews and Christians were the source is perverse, since in these discussions Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was performing the roles of a teacher and of a preacher while inviting them to embrace Islam and pointing out that they had deviated from their true teachings of Monotheism. Several of these Jews and Christians later embraced Islam.

4. THE PROPHET LEARNT THE QUR'AN FROM THOSE JEWS AND CHRISTIANS THAT HE MET OUTSIDE ARABIA

All historical records available show that Muhammad (pbuh) had made only three trips outside Makkah before his Prophethood:

- i. At the age of 9 he accompanied his mother to Madinah.
- ii. Between the age of 9 and 12, he accompanied his uncle Abu-Talib on a business trip to Syria.
- iii. At the age of 25 he led Khadija's Caravan to Syria.

It is highly imaginary to assume that the Qur'an resulted from the occasional chats and meetings with the Christians or Jews from any of the above three trips.

5. LOGICAL GROUNDS TO PROVE THAT THE PROPHET DID NOT LEARN THE QUR'AN FROM JEWS OR CHRISTIANS

- i. The day-to-day life of the Prophet was an open book for all to see. In fact a revelation came asking people to give the Prophet (pbuh) privacy in his own home. If the Prophet had been meeting people who told him what to say as a revelation from God, this would not have been hidden for very long.
- ii. The extremely prominent Quraish nobles who followed the Prophet and accepted Islam were wise and intelligent men who would have easily noticed anything suspicious about the way in which the Prophet brought the revelations to them - more so since the Prophetic mission lasted 23 years.
- iii. The enemies of the Prophet kept a close watch on him in order to find proof for their claim that he was a liar - they could not point out even a single instance when the Prophet may have had a secret rendezvous with particular Jews and Christians.
- iv. It is inconceivable that any human author of the Qur'an would have accepted a situation in which he received no credit whatsoever for originating the Qur'an.

Thus, historically and logically it cannot be established that there was a human source for the Qur'an.

6. MUHAMMAD (PBUH) WAS AN ILLITERATE

The theory that Muhammad (pbuh) authored the Qur'an or copied from other sources can be disproved by the single historical fact that he was illiterate.

Allah testifies Himself in the Qur'an
In Surah Al-Ankabut chapter no.29 verse 48

"And thou was not (able) to recite a Book before this (Book came), nor art thou (able) to transcribe it with thy right hand: in that case, indeed, would the talkers of vanities have doubted."

[Al-Qur'an 29:48]

Allah (swt) knew that many would doubt the authenticity of the Qur'an and would ascribe it to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Therefore Allah in His Divine Wisdom chose the last and final Messenger to be an 'Ummi', i.e. unlettered, so that the talkers of vanity would not then have the slightest justification to doubt the Prophet. The accusation of his enemies that he had copied the Qur'an from other sources and rehashed it all in a beautiful language might have carried some weight, but even this flimsy pretence has been deprived to the unbeliever and the cynic.

Allah reconfirms in the Qur'an in Surah Al A'raf chapter 7 verse 157:

"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures) in the Law and the Gospel"

The prophecy of coming of the unlettered Prophet (pbuh) is also mentioned in the Bible in the book of Isaiah chapter 29 verse 12.

"And the book is delivered to him that is not learned."

[Isaiah 29:12]

The Qur'an testifies in no less than four different places that the Prophet (pbuh) was illiterate. It is also mentioned in Surah A'raf chapter 7 verse 158 and in Surah Al-Jumu'a chapter 62 verse 2.

7. ARABIC VERSION OF THE BIBLE WAS NOT PRESENT

The Arabic version of the Bible was not present at the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The earliest Arabic version of the Old Testament is that of R. Saadiah Gaon of 900 C.E. - more than 250 years after the death of our beloved Prophet. The oldest Arabic version of the new Testament was published by Erpenius in 1616 C.E. - about a thousand years after the demise of our Prophet.

8. SIMILARITIES IN THE QUR'AN AND THE BIBLE DUE TO COMMON SOURCE

Similarities between the Qur'an and the Bible does not necessarily mean that the former has been copied from the latter. In fact it gives evidence that both of them are based on a common third source; all divine revelations came from the same source - the one universal God. No matter what human changes were introduced into some of these Judeo-Christian and other older religious scriptures that had distorted their originality, there are some areas that have remained free from distortion and thus are common to many religions.

It is true that there are some similar parallels between the Qur'an and the Bible but this is not sufficient to accuse Muhammad (pbuh) of compiling or copying from the Bible. The same logic would then also be applicable to teachings of Christianity and Judaism and thus one could wrongly claim that Jesus (pbuh) was not a genuine Prophet (God forbid) and that he simply copied from the Old Testament.

The similarities between the two signify a common source that is one true God and the continuation of the basic message of monotheism and not that the later prophets have plagiarised from the previous prophets.

If someone copies during an examination he will surely not write in the answer sheet that he has copied from his neighbour or Mr. XYZ. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) gave due respect and

credit to all the previous prophets (pbuh). The Qur'an also mentions the various revelations given by Almighty God to different prophets.

9. MUSLIMS BELIEVE IN THE TAURAH, ZABOOR, INJEEL AND QUR'AN

Four revelations of Allah (swt) are mentioned by name in the Qur'an: the Taurah, the Zaboor, the Injeel and the Qur'an.

Taurah, the revelation i.e. the Wahi given to Moosa (a. s.) i.e. Moses (pbuh).

Zaboor, the revelation i.e. the Wahi given to Dawood (a.s.) i.e. David (pbuh).

Injeel, the revelation i.e. the Wahi given to Isa (A.S.) ie. Jesus (pbuh).

'Al-Qur'an', the last and final Wahi i.e. revelation given to the last and final Messenger Muhammad (pbuh).

It is an article of faith for every Muslim to believe in all the Prophets of God and all revelations of God. However, the present day Bible has the first five books of the Old Testament attributed to Moses and the Psalms attributed to David. Moreover the New Testament or the four Gospels of the New Testament are not the Taurah, the Zaboor or the Injeel, which the Qur'an refers to. These books of the present day Bible may partly contain the word of God but these books are certainly not the exact, accurate and complete revelations given to the prophets.

The Qur'an presents all the different prophets of Allah as belonging to one single brotherhood; all had a similar prophetic mission and the same basic message. Because of this, the fundamental teachings of the major faiths cannot be contradictory, even if there has been a considerable passage of time between the different prophetic missions, because the source of these missions was one: Almighty God, Allah. This is why the Qur'an says that the differences which exist between various religions are not the responsibility of the prophets, but of the followers of these prophets who forgot part of what they had been taught, and furthermore, misinterpreted and changed the scriptures. The Qur'an cannot therefore be seen as a scripture which competes with the teachings of Moses, Jesus and the other prophets. On the contrary, it confirms, completes and perfects the messages that they brought to their people.

Another name for the Qur'an is the 'The Furqan' which means the criteria to judge the right from the wrong, and it is on the basis of the Qur'an that we can decipher which part of the previous scriptures can be considered to be the word of God.

10. SCIENTIFIC COMPARISON BETWEEN QUR'AN AND BIBLE

If you glance through the Bible and the Qur'an you may find several points which appear to be exactly the same in both of them, but when you analyse them closely, you realise that there is a difference of 'chalk and cheese' between them. Only based on historical details it is difficult for someone who is neither conversant with Christianity or Islam to come to a firm decision as to which of the scriptures is true; however if you verify the relevant passages of both the scriptures against scientific knowledge, you will yourself realize the truth.

a. Creation of the Universe in Six Days

As per the Bible, in the first book of Genesis in Chapter One, the universe was created in six days and each day is defined as a twenty-four hours period. Even though the Qur'an mentions that the universe was created in six 'Ayyaams', 'Ayyaam' is the plural of years; this word has two meanings: firstly, it means a standard twenty-four hours period i.e. a day, and secondly, it also means stage, period or epoch which is a very long period of time.

When the Qur'an mentions that the universe was created in six 'Ayyaams', it refers to the creation of the heavens and the earth in six long periods or epochs; scientists have no objection to this statement. The creation of the universe has taken billions of

years, which proves false or contradicts the concept of the Bible which states that the creation of the Universe took six days of twenty-four hour durations each.

b. Sun Created After the Day

The Bible says in chapter 1, verses 3-5, of Genesis that the phenomenon of day and night was created on the first day of creation of the Universe by God. The light circulating in the universe is the result of a complex reaction in the stars; these stars were created according to the Bible (Genesis chapter 1 verse 14 to 19) on the fourth day. It is illogical to mention the result that is the light (the phenomenon of day and night) was created on the first day of Creation when the cause or source of the light was created three days later. Moreover the existence of evening and morning as elements of a single day is only conceivable after the creation of the earth and its rotation around the sun. In contrast with the contents of the Bible on this issue, the Qur'an does not give any unscientific sequence of Creation. Hence it is absolutely absurd to say that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) copied the passages pertaining to the creation of the universe from the Bible but missed out this illogical and fantastic sequence of the Bible.

c. Creation of the Sun, The Earth and the Moon

According to the Bible, Book of Genesis, chapter 1, verses 9 to 13, the earth was created on the third day, and as per verses 14 to 19, the sun and the moon were created on the fourth day. The earth and the moon emanated, as we know, from their original star, the Sun. Hence to place the creation of the sun and the moon after the creation of the earth is contrary to the established idea about the formation of the solar system.

d. Vegetation Created on the third day and Sun on the fourth day

According to the Bible, Book of Genesis, chapter 1, verses 11-13, vegetation was created on the third day along with seed-bearing grasses, plants and trees; and further on as per verses 14-19, the sun was created on the fourth day. How is it scientifically possible for the vegetation to have appeared without the presence of the sun, as has been stated in the Bible?

If Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was indeed the author of the Qur'an and had copied its contents from the Bible, how did he manage to avoid the factual errors that the Bible contains? The Qur'an does not contain any statements which are incompatible with scientific facts.

e. The Sun and the Moon both Emit light

According to the Bible both the sun and the moon emit their own light. In the Book of Genesis, chapter 1, verse 16 says, "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night".

Science tells us today that the moon does not have its own light. This confirms the Qur'anic concept that the light of the moon is a reflected light. To think that 1400 years ago, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) corrected these scientific errors in the Bible and then copied such corrected passages in the Qur'an is to think of something impossible.

11. ADAM (PBUH), THE FIRST MAN ON EARTH, LIVED 5,800 YEARS AGO

As per the genealogy of Jesus Christ given in the Bible, from Jesus through Abraham (pbuh) to the first man on earth i.e. Adam (pbuh), Adam appeared on the earth approximately 5800 years ago:

- i. 1948 years between Adam (pbuh) and Abraham (pbuh)
- ii. Approximately 1800 years between Abraham (pbuh) and Jesus (pbuh)
- iii. 2000 years from Jesus (pbuh) till today

These figures are further confused by the fact that the Jewish calendar is currently on or about 5800 years old.

There is sufficient evidence from archaeological and anthropological sources to suggest that the first human being on earth was present tens of thousands of years ago and not merely

5,800 years ago as is suggested by the Bible.

The Qur'an too speaks about Adam (pbuh) as the first man on earth but it does not suggest any date or period of his life on earth, unlike the Bible - what the Bible says in this regard is totally incompatible with science.

12. NOAH (PBUH) AND THE FLOOD

The Biblical description of the flood in Genesis chapter 6, 7 and 8 indicates that the deluge was universal and it destroyed every living thing on earth, except those present with Noah (pbuh) in the ark. The description suggests that the event took place 1656 years after the creation of Adam (pbuh) or 292 years before the birth of Abraham, at a time when Noah (pbuh) was 600 years old. Thus the flood may have occurred in the 21st or 22nd Century B.C.

This story of the flood, as given in the Bible, contradicts scientific evidence from archaeological sources which indicate that the eleventh dynasty in Egypt and the third dynasty in Babylonia were in existence without any break in civilisation and in a manner totally unaffected by any major calamity which may have occurred in the 21st century B.C. This contradicts the Biblical story that the whole world had been immersed in the flood water. In contrast to this, the Qur'anic presentation of the story of Noah and the flood does not conflict with scientific evidence or archaeological data; firstly, the Qur'an does not indicate any specific date or year of the occurrence of that event, and secondly, according to the Qur'an the flood was not a universal phenomenon which destroyed complete life on earth. In fact the Qur'an specifically mentions that the flood was a localised event only involving the people of Noah.

It is illogical to assume that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had borrowed the story of the flood from the Bible and corrected the mistakes before mentioning it in the Qur'an.

13. MOSES (PBUH) AND PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS

The story of Moses (pbuh) and the Pharaoh of the Exodus are very much identical in the Qur'an and the Bible. Both scriptures agree that the Pharaoh drowned when he tried to pursue Moses (pbuh) and led the Israelites across a stretch of water that they crossed. The Qur'an gives an additional piece of information in Surah Yunus chapter 10 verse 92:

"This day shall We save thee in thy body, that thou mayest be a sign to those who come after thee! But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our Signs!"
[Al-Qur'an 10:92]

Dr. Maurice Bucaille, after a thorough research proved that although Rameses II was known to have persecuted the Israelites as per the Bible, he actually died while Moses (pbuh) was taking refuge in Median. Rameses II's son Merneptah who succeeded him as Pharaoh drowned during the exodus. In 1898, the mummified body of Merneptah was found in the valley of Kings in Egypt. In 1975, Dr. Maurice Bucaille with other doctors received permission to examine the Mummy of Merneptah, the findings of which proved that Merneptah probably died from drowning or a violent shock which immediately preceded the moment of drowning. Thus the Qur'anic verse that we shall save his body as a sign, has been fulfilled by the Pharaohs' body being kept at the Royal Mummies room in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

This verse of the Qur'an compelled Dr. Maurice Bucaille, who was a Christian then, to study the Qur'an. He later wrote a book 'The Bible, the Qur'an and Science', and confessed that the author of the Qur'an can be no one else besides God Himself. Thus he embraced Islam.

14. QUR'AN IS A BOOK FROM ALLAH

These evidences are sufficient to conclude that the Qur'an was not copied from the Bible, but that the Qur'an is the Furqaan - 'the Criteria' to judge right from wrong and it should be used to decipher which portion of the Bible may be considered as the Word of God.

The Qur'an itself testifies in Surah Sajda chapter 32 verse 1 to 3

Alif Laam Meem.

(This is) the revelation of the Book in which there is no doubt – from the Lord of the Worlds.

Or do they say, 'He has forged it'? Nay, it is the Truth from thy Lord, that thou mayest admonish a people to whom no warner has come before thee: in order that they may receive guidance."

[Al-Qur'an 32:1-3]

7. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MARY AND MIRIAM

Question

It is mentioned in your Qur'an that Mary was the sister of Aaron (pbuh). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who wrote the Qur'an did not know the difference between Miriam the sister of Aaron (pbuh) and Mary the Mother of Jesus (pbuh), the time span between both of them was about a thousand years.

Answer

1. IN THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES SISTER ALSO MEANS DESCENDANT

The Qur'an mentions in Surah Maryam, Chapter 19 verses 27-28

"At length she brought the (babe) to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: 'O Mary! Truly an amazing thing hast thou brought!

O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of evil, nor thy mother a woman unchaste!"
[Al-Qur'an 19:27-28]

Christian missionaries say that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) did not know the difference between Mary the mother of Jesus (pbuh) and Miriam the sister of Aaron (pbuh). The time span between both was more than a thousand years.

In the Arabic construction of the sentence, sister is also considered as a descendant. Thus, when the people said to Mary, Ukhta Haroon i.e. 'sister of Aaron' it actually means descendant of Aaron (pbuh).

2. SON ALSO MEANS DESCENDANT

It is mentioned in the Gospel of Mathew, Chapter 1 verse 1

"Jesus Christ, the son of David,....".
[Mathew 1:1]

Gospel of Luke Chapter 3, verse 23

"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph,"
[Luke 3:23]

DID JESUS (PBUH) HAVE TWO FATHERS?

What do you call a person who has two fathers? The explanation of the phrase that Jesus (pbuh) was the son of David (pbuh), is that Jesus (pbuh) was a descendant of David (pbuh). 'Son', here means a descendant.

8. JESUS (PBUH) DID NOT DIE

Question

Is it not true that your Qur'an mentions in Surah Maryam, Chapter 19 verse 33 that Jesus (pbuh) died and was resurrected?

Answer

JESUS (PBUH) SAID, "THE DAY THAT I DIE", NOT "THE DAY THAT I DIED"

It is mentioned in Surah Maryam, Chapter 19 verse 33

"So Peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die and the Day that I shall be raised up to life (again)".

[Al-Qur'an 19:33]

The Qur'an mentions that Jesus (pbuh) said "Peace is on me the Day I was born, the day that I die". It is not stated "the day that I died". It is in the future tense and not in the past tense.

1. **JESUS (PBUH) WAS RAISED UP ALIVE**

The Qur'an further says in Surah Nisa, Chapter 4 verse 157-158:

"That they said (in boast), 'We killed Jesus Christ the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah' – But they killed him not, Nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not –

Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is exalted in Power, Wise."

[Al-Qur'an 4:157-158]

9. JESUS IS "A WORD" OF ALLAH AND A "SPIRIT" FROM ALLAH

Question

Does not your Qur'an mention that Jesus is Kalimatullah – "The Word of Allah (swt)", as well as Ruhullah – "The Spirit of Allah", indicating his Divinity?

Answer

1. **JESUS (PBUH) "IS A WORD FROM ALLAH" NOT "THE WORD OF ALLAH"**

The Qur'an mentions in Surah Ali 'Imran Chapter 3 verse 45

"Behold! The angels said: O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus. The son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those Nearest to Allah.

[Al-Qur'an 3:45]

Jesus (pbuh) is referred in the Qur'an as a word from Allah and not as 'the word of Allah'.

"A word" of Allah means a message of Allah. If a person is referred to as "a word" from Allah, it means that he is a Messenger or a Prophet of Allah.

2. THE TITLE OF A PROPHET (PBUH) DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT EXCLUSIVELY BELONGS TO THAT PROPHET (PBUH)

Different titles are given to different prophets (pbuh). Whenever a title is given to a prophet (pbuh), it does not necessarily mean that the other prophets do not have the same characteristic or quality. For e.g. Prophet Abraham (pbuh) is referred to in the Qur'an as Khaleelullah, a friend of Allah. This does not indicate that all the other Prophets (pbuh) were not the friends of Allah. Prophet Moses (pbuh) is referred to in the Qur'an as Kaleemullah, indicating that God spoke to him. This does not mean that God did not speak to others. Similarly when Jesus (pbuh) is referred to in the Qur'an as Kalimatullah, "a word from Allah", it does not mean that the other Prophets were not "the word," of Allah.

3. JOHN THE BAPTIST (PBUH) IS ALSO CALLED "A WORD" OF ALLAH

Yahya (pbuh) i.e. John the Baptist (pbuh) is also referred to in the Qur'an as Kalimatullah i.e. a word of Allah in Surah Ali 'Imran, Chapter 3, verses 38-39

"There did Zakariya Pray to his Lord, saying: "O my Lord! Grant unto me from Thee a progeny that is pure: for Thou art He that heareth prayer!"

While he was standing in prayer in the chamber, the angels called unto him: "Allah doth give thee glad tidings of Yahya, witnessing the truth of a Word from Allah, and (be besides) noble, chaste, and a Prophet – of the (goodly) company of the righteous."
[Al-Qur'an 3:39]

4. JESUS (PBUH) REFERRED AS RUHULLAH – A SPIRIT OF ALLAH

Jesus (pbuh) also never referred to as Ruhullah "a spirit of Allah" but as a spirit from Allah in Surah Nisa Chapter 4 verse 171

"O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Jesus Christ the son of Mary was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah, And His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not 'Trinity': desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is One God: glory be to Him: (Far Exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs."
[Al-Qur'an 4:171]

5. SPIRIT OF ALLAH IS BREATHED IN EVERY HUMAN BEING

A spirit from Allah does not indicate that Jesus (pbuh) is God. The Qur'an mentions in several places that Allah breathed into the human beings "His Spirit" in Surah Al-Hijr, chapter 15 verse 29 in Surah Sajdah, chapter 32 verse 9

Surah Al Hijr Chapter 15 verse 29

"When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him."
[Al-Qur'an 15:29]

Surah Sajdah Chapter 32 verse 9

"But He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit. And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding): little thanks 90

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do ye give!"
[Al-Qur'an 32:9]

10. IS NOT THE QUR'AN WRITTEN BY SATAN?

Question

The Qur'an is not the Word of God but on the contrary the handiwork of Satan.

Answer

In reply to a similar allegation put forward by the pagans of Makkah, that the prophet (pbuh) received the revelations from Satan, the following verses were revealed:

Surah Waqiah, chapter 56 verses 77-80

"That this is indeed
A Qur'an most honourable,

In a Book well-guarded,

Which none shall touch
But those who are clean:

A Revelation from the Lord
Of the Worlds."

Kitabim Maknoon means a book well guarded or a protected book, referring to Lauh-e-Mahfooz in the heaven, which none shall touch except the Mutahhareen. i.e. those who do not have any uncleanness or impurity or evil like sin. This refers to the angels. The satan is absolutely prohibited.

Thus since it is impossible for satan to come anywhere close to it or touch it, the question of him writing the verses of the Glorious Qur'an does not arise.

It is further mentioned in Surah Shura, chapter 26 verse 210-212

"No evil ones have brought
Down this (Revelation):

It would neither suit them
Nor would they be able (To produce it).

Indeed they have been removed
Far from even (a chance of)
Hearing it."

Many people have a wrong concept of satan. They think that satan can probably do everything, except a couple of things that God can do. According to them, satan is slightly below God in power. Since the people do not want to accept that the Qur'an is a miraculous revelation, they say that it is satan's handiwork.

1. If satan would have written the Qur'an, he would not have mentioned in the same Qur'an in Surah Nahl, chapter 16 verse no. 98

"When thou does read
The Qur'an, seek Allah's protection from Satan the Rejected One."

Is this how you feel satan would write a book? Does he tell you; "Before you read my book ask God to save you from me?"

2. There are several verses in the Qur'an which will give enough evidence that satan is not the author of the Qur'an.

In Surah Al Aaraf chapter 7 verse 200

"If a suggestion from Satan assail your (mind),
seek refuge with Allah; for He hears and knows
(all things).

Why would satan tell his followers, that whenever he gives any suggestions to them,
they should seek refuge in Allah (swt) to whom he is an avowed enemy.

3. In Surah Baqarah, chapter 2 verse 168

"O ye people!
Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good;
and do not follow the footsteps of the Evil one,
For he is to you an avowed enemy."

4. In Surah Yasin, chapter 36 verse 60

"Did I not enjoin on you,
O ye children of Adam,
that ye should not worship Satan;
for that he was to you an enemy avowed?"

Satan is intelligent, no wonder that he can put this idea into the minds of people that he himself wrote the Qur'an. Compared to Almighty God, Satan is insignificant, and Allah (swt) is far more intelligent. He knows satan's evil intentions and hence no wonder that He has given the reader of the Qur'an several proofs to show that Qur'an is God's word, and not satan's word.

The Bible mentions in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 3, verses 24-26

"And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that
kingdom cannot stand."

"And if a house be divided against itself,
that house cannot stand."

"And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an
end."

QUERIES ON ISLAM

PRAYING BEHIND BEARDLESS IMAM

Q1. My son is working in Japan. He attends the Tarawih prayer at a mosque, where two imams lead the Tarawih prayer on alternate days. One is an Egyptian and another one is from some Arab country. This Imam is not professional imam. He is a wealthy person in the city where my son resides. The Imam has not sported the beard. Some Pakistanis do not pray behind him when he leads the Tarawih prayer, objecting that it is not right for a person to pray behind an imam, who does not sport a beard. But my son prays behind that imam and he is very much puzzled over this matter whether to pray or not to pray behind the imam who does not sport a beard. My son has sent this query over the phone seeking clarification.

G. A. Basheer, Bangalore

A1. Shaving beard is Fisq and the one who does that is Fasiq. It is preferable to have an Imam having a beard. However, if such an Imam is not available, then it is allowed to offer Salah behind a beardless Imam. It is agreed upon by the Ahle-Sunnah-Wal- Jam'ah that offering Salah behind every righteous or Fasiq Muslim is allowed and his Salah is valid so that there is unity amongst the Muslims, in order to avoid any conflict. Therefore your son is correct in offering Salah behind the imam. Infact, those who do not offer Salah behind him should also start doing so, in order to avoid any conflict. However, as soon as an Imam with beard is available, you may start offering Salah behind him, and Allah knows the best

Q2. In Japan, only eight rakat Tarawih is followed. Can my son pray individually the remaining 12 rakat at the mosque or home or is it also right to perform 8 rakat only.

G.A. Basheer, Bangalore

A2. Regarding the Salah, offered after the Isha Salah (i.e. Tarawih), in Ramadan, the right opinion is that one can offer as many number of rakat as one wishes because there is no fixed limit on it.

Narrated Nafi

Ibn 'Umar said, "While the prophet was on the pulpit, a man asked him how to offer the night prayers. He replied, ' Pray two Rakat at a time and then two and then two and so on, and if you are afraid of the dawn (the approach of the time of the Fajr prayer) pray one Rakat and that will be the witr for all the Rakat which you have offered." Ibn 'Umar Said, "The last Rakat of the night prayer should be odd, for the prophet ordered it to be so. (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 1, Hadith No. 461).

Narrated Amr ibn Anbasah as-Sulami

I asked: "Apostle of Allah, in which part of the night the supplication is more likely to be accepted? He Replied: In the last part: Pray as much as you like, for the prayer is attended by the angels and it is recorded till you offer the dawn prayer. (Abu Dawood, Vol. 1, Hadith No. 1272).

We also find that some of the Taba'een used to pray 20 and some used to pray 36 Rakats in Tarawih. (Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol.2, Pages 165 & 166).

However, it is preferable to offer it the way prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) did. He used to offer 11 or 13 Rakats, as mentioned in the following Hadith.

Narrated Abu Salma bin Abdur Rahman

I asked Aisha, "How is the prayer of Allah's Apostle during the month of Ramadan." She said, "Allah's Apostle never exceeded eleven Rakats in Ramadan or in other months; he used to offer four Rakats do not ask me about their beauty and length, then four Rakats, do not ask me about their beauty and length, and then three Rakat." Aisha further said, " I said, ' O Allah's Apostle! Do you sleep before offering the Witr prayer?' He replied, 'O 'Aisha! My eyes sleep, but my heart remains awake!' (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 2, Hadith No. 1147). From all the above mentioned Hadith, it is clear that there is no fixed limit for the Tarawih Prayer; therefore, one should refrain from getting into any controversy in this regard. However, in mosques, where eight congregational Rakats are offered, it is advisable not to offer further 12 Rakats in congregation, thus avoiding any unwanted disputes amongst the Muslims. For those who wish to offer more Rakats can very well do so at their homes. Similarly, in mosques, where 20 congregational Rakats are offered, it is advisable not to offer 8 Rakats in different congregation so that there is no conflict among the Muslims.

Q3. Is it allowed for an ulcer patient to leave the Fast ?

Abdulrehman Bello Krzysiek, celnik@ecnx.net

A3. It is not obligatory upon a person suffering from Ulcer to fast during the month of Ramadan if fasting is likely to cause increase in his disease, however he has to complete his fasts after recovering. Allah says in the Qur'an in Surah Baqarah, 2:185: "But if any one is ill or on a journey the prescribed period should be made up by days later. Allah intends every facility for you, He does not want to put you to difficulties." And Allah knows the best.

Isaal-e-Sawab through Recitation of the Quran

Q4. I would like to know that if we read Quran and ask Allah to send sawab to all Muslims and my relatives including my parents who are no more, will the sawab only go to my parents or to all the rest too ?

Abdulla Aminuddin, aminuddin@sancharnet.in

A4. It is Bid'ah (innovation) to recite the Qur'an for Isaal-e-Sawab of those who have passed away, regardless whether the deceased is your parent or relative. There is no evidence supporting this practice in the authentic sources of Islam, in the Seerah of the Prophet (Pbuh) or the life of his Companions. Didn't deaths occur during the time of the companions ? Why then, we do not find any such evidence from their lives ? All those things that benefit the living and the dead have already been shown by the Prophet (Pbuh), as Deen has been completed. Therefore, it is inappropriate to innovate anything in the religion.

Narrated Aisha (R.A.): Allah's Messenger (Pbuh) said, "If somebody innovates something which is not present in our religion, then that thing will be rejected." (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Hadith No. 2697 & Sahih Muslim, Vol. 3, Hadith No. 4266).

However it is allowed to pray for the deceased and give charity for him, as there is no difference of opinion in this regard.

Does a wife have the right to refuse sex with her husband ?

Q5. If at a particular time, a lady has no desire for sex with her husband, but he insists for it, what is her right of refusal in this context ?

Abdul Wahab

A5. If a husband expresses his desire for sexual intercourse with his wife, and asks her to fulfill his need, then she should fulfill her husband's desire, and she has no right to refuse him or deprive him of his need (unless of course if she is undergoing her monthly menstruation period or is down with illness).

Islam encourages and insists on chastity and fidelity. Islam prohibits and condemn illicit sexual relations, extra-marital affairs, pre-marriage sex, fornication, adultery, prostitution, pornography and promiscuity. It is for this reason that a wife is bound to fulfill her husband's sexual desires so as to prevent him from straying.

Narrated Abu Huraira

Allah's Apostle (Pbuh) said, " If a husband calls his wife to his bed (i.e. to have sexual relations) and she refuses and causes him to sleep in anger, the angels will curse her till morning." (Sahih Al-Bukhari Vol. 4 Hadith No. 460 & Sahih Muslim Vol. 2 Hadith No. 3368)

Narrated Abu Huraira

The Messenger of Allah (swt) said: By him in whose hand is my life, when a man calls his wife to his bed, and she does not respond, the One Who is in the heaven is displeased with her until he (her husband) is pleased with her. (Sahih Muslim Vol. 2 Hadith No. 3367)

Narrated Taiq ibn Ali

Allah's Messenger (Pbuh) said, " When a man calls his wife to satisfy his desire she must go to him even if she is occupied at the oven." (Al Tirmidhi Hadith No. 1160 & Ibn Ma'jah Hadith No. 4165)

From all the above mentioned Ahadith, it is Wajib upon the wife to fulfill the desire of her husband whenever he wishes. If the relationship between the husband and the wife is truly based on Islamic principles, in which both of them treat each other with love, affection, kindness, fulfilling all Islamic desires and settling all matters with mutual agreement and understanding, the question of the wife refusing the sexual desire of the husband does not arise. Nor does the question arise of the husband being insistent or getting perturbed at her not wanting to have sex.

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an in Surah Rum, Chapter 30, verse no. 21:

" And among His signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell in tranquility with them and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); verily in that are Signs for those who reflect."

If on certain rare occasions, the husband shows a desire for sexual intercourse with his wife, and for some genuine reason the wife shows a hesitation (not refusal), then it is possible, the husband can be understanding and voluntarily and happily give indication for postponement!

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an, in Surah Baqara, chapter 2, verse no. 187:

"They (your wives) are your garments. And you are their garments."

Here, because of the strong bond between the husband and the wife, if the husband is not displeased or angry, the angels will not curse his wife and neither will she displease the Almighty. And Allah knows the best

Visiting graveyards on 15th Sha'ban

Q6. In the light of the teaching of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, is it a correct Islamic practice to visit graveyards on the night of Shab-e-baraat? please narrate the Hadith related to this night.

M. A. Khan, Bhopal

A6. Giving significance to the night of 15th Sha'ban, visiting graveyards, doing extra Ibaadah (worship) and offering extra Nawaafil Salaah with the intention of specifically doing so on the occasion of 15th Sha'ban, having illuminations, considering it to be the Eid of the dead and keeping awake for the whole night of 15th Sha'ban and encouraging others to do the same -- all these are Bid'ah (innovation) . The prophet and the Sahaabah never did so nor commanded the muslims to do so.

We don't find any evidence of such things in the entire authentic Seerah of the Prophet and his companions. According to Allamah Ibn Rajab Abu Bakr Turtoshi, Ibn Wazzah Qurtubi, Suyuti, Shokani etc. all the Ahadith pertaining to the subject are weak and unacceptable.

The Hadith that is generally quoted to support the practices done on the night of 15th Sha'ban is Zaif (weak) according to Muhaddiseen (the scholars of Ahadith) and is not to be put into practice.

Narrated Aisha (R.A.),

I missed Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) during the night and found him in al-Baqi'. He said: Were you afraid that Allah and His Messenger would deal unjustly with you? I said: Allah's Messenger , I thought that you had gone to some of your other wives. He (the prophet) said: Verily Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, comes down to the heaven of the world in the middle night of Sha'ban and forgives sins even more abundant than the hair of the goats of Kalb. (Tirmidhi, Hadith No. 739; Sunan Ibn-I-Majah, Hadith No. 1389; Ahmad Vol. 6, 238)

According to Imam Bukhari and Tirmidhi, the above mentioned Hadith has a broken chain of narrators in two places, and therefore it is weak. Allamah Ibnul Arabi (543H), in his commentary of Sunan -At-Tirmidhi, titled 'Arizatul-Ahwazi', Vol 3, Pg No. 216 adds: '....further, in it Hajjaj Ibn Artaat is not reliable.'

However, it is established that the Prophet (pbuh) did visit the Baqi graveyard once, as Allah had commanded him and he prayed for Ahle-Baqi (the people of Baqi), but the exact night of this event is not known, as there is no clear proof in this regard. The prophet had done this by the commandment of Allah (swt), therefore the Prophet was an exception to this act.

Aisha (R.A.) says that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "Gabriel came to me and said; Your Rabb commands you to go to the graveyard of Baqi and seek forgiveness for them". (Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 2256)

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It is permissible for men to visit graveyard whenever they wish and pray for the dead, however it is not permissible to fix a specific day or night for the purpose and consider it to be of a special virtue unless we find any proof for doing so from the Qur'an or the authentic Ahadith.

Allamah Ibnul Arabi writes: "There is no reliable Hadith regarding the 15th of Sha'ban. Although certain commentators insist that the verse from Surah Dukhan, chapter 44, verse 4: 'In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom', refer to 15th of Sha'ban, but this is not true, as Allah did not reveal the Qur'an in Sha'ban. The Qur'an was revealed in Ramadan, as mentioned in Surah Baqarah, chapter 2, verse 185, and this can only be statement of a person who transgresses the book of Allah (swt) and is careless of his word". (Arizatul Ahwazi, Vol. 3, Page No. 217)

According to Hadith of Sahih Muslim, Vol. 2, Hadith No. 1885: ".. Most evil affairs are their innovations, and every innovation is an error..."

So Muslims should beware of and steer clear of all innovation and bid'ah.

Social Service in Islam

Q8. What is the concept of social service in Islam? Do we have to work for the Muslim community only or for the whole of humankind as was done by Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) ? Please clarify.

Sabith Khan (sabithisthebest@rediffmail.com)

A8. In Islam, social service is of immense significance. Whatever services a person renders for the welfare of humankind, and through these deeds, hopes for the blessings of Allah will be regarded as righteous deeds. These deeds if done solely for seeking the pleasure of Allah (and not for recognition or show) will be considered Karze Hasana and will surely be rewarded by Allah.

Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an :

" Whoever comes (at Judgement) with a good deed will have better than it, and they, from the terror of that day, will be safe." (Surah An-Naml, 27:89)

"He that does good shall have ten times as much to his credit " (Surah Al An'am, 6:160)

"Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good see it!" (Surah Al-Zilzal, 99:7)

Allah repeatedly instructs as in the Glorious Qur'an to behave kindly, to give charity, to serve the poor, the orphans, and the needy. While the Qur'an condemns hoarders and misers, it also prohibits ill-treating and threatening the poor and the needy.

In all these verses of the Qur'an, Allah has not instructed the Muslims to work only for the welfare of the Muslims. There is no such restraints. All these instructions are general in their scope and hence include both, the Muslims as well as the non-Muslims. The Prophet (pbuh) too has made it clear that striving of a Muslim for the welfare of any of the human beings or living creatures is an act of charity.

Narrated Anas bin Malik (RA) :

Allah's Messenger said : "There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him." (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Hadith No. 513)

In Islam, removing a harmful thing from way is also Sadaqa (charity). (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 4, Hadith No. 232)

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA):

Allah's Apostle said, "While a man was on the way, he found a thorny branch of a tree on the way and removed it. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him." (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Hadith No. 652)

Islam ordains us to treat all the living creatures well and with kindness.

Social service that is done by a Muslim for any human being, irrespective whether the beneficiary is a Muslim or a non-Muslim, and which gets this beneficiary closer to his Creator Allah and makes him/her understand Islam better, then the reward for the performer of such service will be further multiplied. First, for the social service and second, for getting the other person closer to his Creator. These acts of social service include Islaah if the recipient is a Muslim and Daw'ah if the recipient is a non-Muslim.

Narrated Urwa bin Az-Zubair (RA):

Hakim bin Hizam said, "O Allah's Apostle! I used to do good deeds in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, e.g., keeping good relations with my kith and kin, manumitting slaves (releasing and freeing slaves after paying for them) and giving alms. Shall I receive a reward for all that?" Allah's Apostle replied, "You embraced Islam with all the good deeds which you did in the past." (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Hadith No. 423 & Sahih Muslim, Vol. 1, Hadith No. 223)

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA):

Allah's Apostle said, "While a man was walking he felt thirsty and went down a well and drank water from it. On coming out of it, he saw a dog panting and eating mud because of excessive thirst. The man said, 'This (dog) is suffering from the same problem as that of mine. So he (went down the well), filled his shoe with water, caught hold of it with his teeth and climbed up and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for his (good) deed and forgave him.'" The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving (the) animals?" He replied, "Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate." (Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Hadith No. 551)

Thus, social service in Islam carries great significance and it is to be done to all in general, regardless of the religion. And Allah knows best.

The system of Zakaat in Islam, however is a religious duty and obligation upon the Muslims and the beneficiaries of Zakaat are only Muslims.

The Qur'an provides details about needy Muslims that are entitled to Zakaat :

"Zakaat expenditures are only for the poor and for the needy and for those employed to collect (Zakaah) and for bringing hearts together (for Islam) and for freeing captives (or slaves) and for those in debt and for the cause of Allah and for the (stranded) traveller - an obligation (imposed) by Allah. And Allah is knowing and wise." (Surah Tauba, 9:60).

Are Menstruating Women Permitted to Recite or Touch the Qur'an ?

Q9. Are menstruating women permitted to recite Surah Fatiha, Ikhlaas, Falak, Nas and Ayatul Kursi at night before going to sleep ? Can menstruating women touch and read

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the Qur'an ? Does this word in the Qur'an 'Mutahharen' (none can touch except those who are clean) relate to the Qur'an or to the Tablet Preserved (Lauh-a-Mehfuz) ? Is one allowed to touch Qur'an without wudhu ? Please explain with reference to Hadith.

Nishat Bare <nishat_bare@rediffmail.com>

A9. The Glorious Qur'an says : "That this is indeed a Qur'an most honorable in a book well guarded which none shall touch but those who are clean : A Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds." (Surah Al-Waqi'a, 56:77-80)

The Kitabim Maknoon mentioned in the above mentioned verse does not refer to the holy Qur'an in the book form, which we have, and the word Mutahharen does not merely refer to cleanliness of the body.

Kitabim Maknoon means a book well guarded or a protected book. This word refers to Lauh-e-Mahfooz in heaven, which is also mentioned in the following verse "Nay this is a Glorious Qur'an (Inscribed) in a Tablet Preserved!" (Surah Al-Buruj, 85:21 & 22)

Mutahharen does not refer to mere body cleanliness but also refers to those who do not have any uncleanness or impurity like sin and evil, thus referring to the angels. According to the commentary of Tabari, Mutahharen means the angels.

According to Ibne Hazam, who has discussed the subject in detail, there are no pre-requisites or conditions for touching the Qur'an. Although all the scholars, of all different schools of thought, agree upon it without any difference of opinion that it is preferable to be in wudhu before touching the Qur'an, however, according to Ibne Hazam there is not a single verse of the Qur'an or the authentic hadith saying that being in wudhu is compulsory.

Ibne Abbas, Sho'bi, Zahhaq, Zaid bin Ali, Muayyid Billaah, Dawood, Ibne Hazam and Hammad bin Sulaiman are of the opinion that Qur'an can be touched without performing wudhu.

(Fiqh-us-Sunnah, As Saiyid Saabiq, 1.52)

Regarding the hadith of Muwatta Malik which is often quoted by certain scholars to back up their claims that one should be in wudhu before touching the Qur'an, this hadith narration besides being Mursal, has the Arabic word Taahirun in it, which according to Ibne Katheer, Zamakhshari & others, does not necessarily mean being with wudhu but simply means 'pure', that is, one should not be in ceremonial impurity or menstruation.

Scholars of different schools of thought differ on the issue of whether one should compulsorily be in a state of wudhu while touching the Qur'an. According to Hanafi school of thought, one cannot touch the Qur'an without wudhu, but if one uses a piece of cloth or sheet then he can touch it. Some Hanafi Scholars insist that the cover of the Qur'an itself serves as a covering sheet or cloth, while the others believe that one can touch the Qur'an but not the Arabic text within the Qur'an. Amongst the Shafia scholars, some say that one cannot touch the Qur'an without wudhu, despite using covering sheet. Malikis too believe in some what the same. However, they allow touching the Qur'an without wudhu for students and teachers of the Qur'an.

It is permissible for a menstruating womam to recite the Qur'an without touching it. Similarly, she can very well recite the portions of the Qur'an, which she does regularly, or even the Ahadith of the prophet (pbuh) . However she shouldn't touch the Qur'an with her hands.

Ibne Majah narrates a hadith from Abdullah Ibne Umar (R.A.) that a man in a state of ceremonial impurity, and a menstruating lady should not recite anything from the Qur'an, but this hadith is weak.

Allama Ibne Hajr and Allama Ibnul Mulaqqin have rated the hadith as weak in their books At-Talkheesal Habeer, Vol. 1, pg. no. 138, hadith no. 183 & Khulasatul Badrul Muneer, vol. 1, pg. no. 60, hadith no. 170, respectively.

However, if a menstruating woman, or a woman with postpartum impurity, wishes to read the Qur'an, then she may use some sheet or cloth while touching the Qur'an so that her hands do not have direct contact with the Qur'an.

According to Maliki school of thought, while doing hifz of the Qur'an, a man in spite of being in ceremonial impurity or a woman in her menstruation, can touch the Qur'an so that they do not forget the portions of the Qur'an memorised by them. And Allah knows best.

Is Allah Masculine In Gender

Q10. Why do we quote Allah (swt) as - Him/His ?

Jameela Arif, jameela99@rediffmail.com>

A10. a) The Arabic word 'Allah' has no gender. The Arabic grammar has only two genders, male and female and male gender is of two types:

1. Masculine Haqeeqi i.e. Real, which is used to denote the masculine gender in humans, animals.
2. Masculine Majazi i.e. Unreal, wherein it is used as Masculine but in reality it is not so e.g. (Angels) Malak, Layl (Night), Bab (door). The word Allah (swt), too falls in the second category i.e. Masculine Majazi.

The English language has got three genders; male, female and neutral. So if we translate the Arabic word 'huwa' into English, it can be translated as 'he' or 'it'. And the Arabic word 'hiya' can be translated as 'she' or 'it'.

Allah (swt) is unique and cannot be referred as 'it' in English, since Allah (swt) has no gender, neither male nor female or neutral.

Some people may argue that the Arabic word 'huwa' and 'hiya' both can be used for 'it' or neutral gender, then why Allah has used 'huwa' and not 'hiya' ?

In Arabic grammar there are certain rules and criteria for feminine gender. First, if it is female by nature, like the word mother (ummum), it becomes feminine in gender. Allah is not a female. Second, if it ends with the third Arabic letter 'ta' like 'mirwahtun' (fan), it becomes feminine. The Arabic word 'Allah' doesn't end with 'ta' so it cannot be feminine. Third, if the word ends with 'Alif Mamduda' (big Alif), it becomes feminine. But the Arabic word 'Allah' doesn't end with 'Alif Mamduda' so, it cannot be feminine. And lastly, if the object occurs in pairs, like pairs of the body, e.g. 'Ainun' (eyes), 'yadun' (hands), they are considered feminine. But Allah (swt) says in the Glorious Qur'an in Surah Ikhlas, chapter 112, verse 1"

"Say: He is Allah the ONE and Only;"

So Allah (swt) is one and not a pair. Therefore, by default since it cannot be used as 'Hiya' i.e. she or it, Allah (swt) uses huwa i.e. He. And Allah (swt) knows the best.

b) Many people have a misconception that Islam is a new religion and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the founder of Islam. However, Islam has been in existence since time immemorial. Islam was present when the first human Adam (pbuh) first set foot on the earth.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is not the founder of Islam but the last and final messenger of Allah.

It is mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an :

"And there never was a people without a warner having lived among them (in the past)."
(Surah Fatir, 35:24)

Narrated Umama that Abu Dhar said :

I asked , "O Messenger of Allah, altogether how many messengers were sent?" The Prophet (pbuh) said: One Hundred and Twenty Four Thousand." (Mishkat-UI-Masabih, authenticated by Shaikh Nasiruddin Albani, Vol. 3, Pg. No. 1599, Hadith No. 5737)

The Religion of all the Prophets was 'total submission to God's will' and one word for that in the Arabic language is 'Islam'.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an that Abraham (pbuh) was a Muslim.

"Abraham was not a Jew nor yet a Christian but he was true in faith and bowed his will to Allah's (which is Islam) and he joined not gods with Allah." (Surah Al Imran, 3:67)

It is mentioned in Surah Al Imran Chapter 3 Verse 52 that Jesus (pbuh) was a Muslim.

" When Jesus (pbuh) found unbelief on their part he said: " Who will be my helpers to (the work of) Allah?" said the Disciples: "We are Allah's helpers we believe in Allah and do thou bear witness that we are Muslims" (Surah Al Imran, 3:52)

Allah (swt) says in the Glorious Qur'an in Surah Al Imran, Chapter 3 Verse 19:

"The Religion before Allah is Islam (Submission to His will)"

And further Allah (swt) mentions in Surah Al Imran Chapter 3, Verse 85:

"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah) never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good)"

Thus, Islam is the first religion and hence the oldest of all the religions. It is the only true religion. All the other religions came later.

The Glorious Qur'an is the last and final revelation of Allah (swt) which was revealed to the last and final messenger prophet Muhammad (pbuh). After him no messenger will come to guide humankind. As Allah (swt) says in the Glorious Qur'an in Surah Al Ahzab, chapter 33 verse 40:

"Muhammad (pbuh) is not the father of any of your men but (he is) the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets: And Allah (swt) has full knowledge of all things."

Islam & Universal Brotherhood

by

Dr. Zakir Naik

There are various types of brotherhoods - brotherhood based on blood relations, brotherhood based on regional affiliations, or brotherhood on the basis of race, caste, creeds, ideology, etc. But all these types of brotherhood are limited in their scope, coverage and benefits.

Islam, on the other hand, prescribes Universal Brotherhood. It rejects the thought that human beings have been created in castes or in different levels. In the Glorious Qur'an, in Surah Hujurat, Chapter No. 49, Verse No. 13, Allah (SWT) describes the Islamic concept of Universal Brotherhood:

'O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most Righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

This Verse of the Glorious Qur'an indicates that the whole human race originated from a single pair of male and female. All humans have common great-grandparents and ancestors.

Further, Allah (swt) says that he has made nations and tribes, so that humans can recognize each other, and not so that they may despise each other and fight amongst themselves.

This verse also clarifies that the criteria for judgment in the sight of Allah (swt) does not depend on caste, colour, creed, gender or wealth, but on Taqwa - God consciousness, piety and righteousness. Anyone who is righteous, pious and God-conscious, is honoured in the sight of Allah (swt).

Further it is stated in the Glorious Qur'an in Surah Ar-Rum verse. 22, that:

'And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages, and your colours: Verily in that are signs for those who know.'

These variations in colour and language are not for the purpose of creating animosity or differences between groups of humans. Every language on earth has its own beauty and significance.

A foreign language may sound strange and funny to you, but it sounds sweet to those for whom it is the mother tongue.

Allah says in the Glorious Qur'an, in Surah Israa, Ch. 17, Verse 70:

'We have honoured the sons of Adam'

Allah does not say that He has honoured only the Arabs or the Americans or a particular race. He states that He has honoured all the children of Adam, irrespective of race, caste, colour, creed or gender.

While there are many religions that believe that humankind originated from a single pair - Adam and Eve (peace be upon them), there some faiths that say, that it is because of the sin of the woman (Eve - may Allah be pleased with her) that the humans are born in sin. They blame only on the woman, which is Eve, for the downfall of human beings.

The Qur'an speaks about the story of Adam and Eve (peace be upon them) in several chapters, but in all the places, the blame is placed equally on both -Adam and Eve (peace be upon them).

According to Surah Araf, Ch. 7 : Verses 19 to 27 Both of them disobeyed Allah (swt), both of them repented, and both were forgiven.

Both are equally blamed for the mistake. There is not a single verse in the Glorious Qur'an, which puts the blame only on Eve (may Allah be pleased with her).

In Surah Taha, Ch. No. 20, V. No. 121, it is stated that Adam (pbuh) disobeyed Allah (swt).

Certain faith, on the other hand state that because Eve disobeyed God, it is she who is responsible for the sin of humankind'. Hence God cursed the woman, and said that she will bear labour pains. This means that pregnancy is a curse.

Islam of course does not agree with this unjust view.

In Surah Nisa, Ch. No. 4, V. No. 1, Allah states: 'And (reverence) the wombs (that bore you).'

In Islam, pregnancy does not degrade a woman - it uplifts a woman. In Surah Luqman, Ch. 31, V. No. 14, it is stated that:

'And we have enjoined on man (to be good) to his parents. In travail upon travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning.'

The Qur'an says in Surah, Ahqaf, Ch. 46, V. No. 15...'We have enjoined on man to be kind to his parents. In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth.'

Islam states that men and women are created equal.

According to a Hadith mentioned in Sahih Bukhari, Vol.No. 8, in the Book of Adab, Chapter 2, Hasith No. 2:

'A person came to Prophet Mohammed (saw), and asked him, 'Who is the person who deserves the maximum love and companionship in this world ?'

The Prophet replied, 'Your mother.'

The man asked, 'Who next?'

The Prophet said, 'Your mother.'

The man asked, 'After that who?'

The Prophet repeated for the third time, 'Your mother.'

The man asked, 'After that who?'

Then the Prophet said, 'Your father.'

So, 75% or 3/4 of the love and companionship of the children are due to the mother and only 25% or 1/4 of the love and companionship goes to the father. In other words, the mother gets the gold medal, she gets the silver medal, as well as the bronze medal. The father has to be satisfied with a mere consolation prize.

These are amongst the teachings of Islam.

In Islam, men and women are equal - but equality does not mean identity. There are many misconceptions about the status of women in Islam. These can be removed if one studies the authentic sources of knowledge of Islam and its teachings - the Glorious Qur'an and the Sahih Hadith.

While men and women are overall equal, equality does not mean identity. Let's take an example. In a class, two students - student 'A' and 'B' get the highest marks in a subject - 80 out of 100.

The question paper consisted of 10 questions, each of 10 marks.

In the first answer student 'A' gets 9 out of 10, student 'B' gets 7 out of 10. So in question 1 student 'A' has a degree of advantage than student 'B'.

In question 2, student 'B' gets 9 out of 10, and student 'A' gets 7 out of 10. So in question 2, student 'B' has a degree of advantage, than student 'A'.

In the remaining 8 questions, both get 8 out of 10, and if you total the marks of both the students, both get 80 out of 100.

So if you analyze, both student 'A' and 'B' have got over all equal marks.

But in answers to some questions, student 'A' has a degree of advantage and in answers to some other questions, student 'B' has a degree of advantage - but in terms of overall marks, both are equal.

Similarly in Islam, men and women are equal.

Brotherhood in Islam does not only mean that the same sexes are equal. 'Universal Brotherhood' in Islam means, that besides race, caste, and creed, even the sexes are overall equal. Men and women are equal in Islam, but in some aspects, men have a degree of advantage while in some other aspects, women have a degree of advantage - but overall both are equal.

For example, if a robber enters my house, I will not say, 'I believe in women's rights, and I believe in women's liberation and therefore my sister, my wife, my mother, should go and fight the robber.'

Allah says in Surah Nisa, Ch. 4, V 34, 'God has given the one (man) more strength than the other'. Men have more strength than the women.'

So where strength is concerned, men have a degree of advantage. Since they have been given more strength, it is their duty to protect women. Here the men have a degree of advantage.

Where love and companionship from children is concerned, the mother gets three times more love and companionship than the father. Here women have a degree of advantage.

For more details, you can refer to the video-cassettes of my talk on 'Women's Rights in Islam - Modernizing or Outdated? Part I has the lecture and Part II has the Question-Answer session.

CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM **AND ITS IMPACT ON UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD**

The concept of Almighty God in Islam, of Allah (swt) , is of a Universal and Unique God of all, and not that Almighty God, Allah (swt) is the deity of a particular race or a particular group of people.

The Qur'an says in Surah Fatihah, Ch. No. 1, V. No. 2:

"All praise is (due) to Allah, Lord of the worlds".

Almighty God is referred to as "Rabbil Aalamin" the Lord of the worlds.'

The Last Surah (Chapter) of the Glorious Qur'an, that is, Surah Nas, Ch. 114, V. No. 1 states:

'Say : I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind'.

Almighty God, Allah (swt), is the Lord of the whole of humankind and not exclusively of only a particular group of people or a particular race.

There are various verses of the Glorious Qur'an which begin by saying, ' O humankind'.

ISLAM PRECRIBES A MORAL CODE

TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD :

The Glorious Qur'an also says in Surah Baqarah, Ch. No. 2. V. No. 168 :

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth (that is) lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."

Islam has prescribed a moral code in order to ensure that Universal Brotherhood prevails in the world.

The Qur'an says in Surah Maidah, Ch. No. 5, V. No. 32,

‘If anyone slew a person unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if anyone saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.’

The Qur’an says that if any person kills any human being whether it is a Muslim or Non Muslim (irrespective of the race, caste, colour or creed) – if any person kills any human being, unless it is for murder, or for spreading mischief in the land, it is as though he has killed the whole of humanity.

And if anyone saves another human being, whether it be a Muslim or Non Muslim (irrespective of any caste, colour or creed), it is as though he has saved the whole of humankind.

Thus, Islam has prescribed a moral code in order to ensure that Universal Brotherhood prevails in the world.

The Glorious Qur’an says that no one should ever steal it is a crime, it is a sin.

Islam has a system of Zakaat that is, any rich person who has a saving of more than the Nisaab level (which is 85 grams of gold) he or she should give 2.5 percent of that saving, every lunar year in charity.

If every human being in the whole world gives Zakaat, poverty will be eradicated from this world and there will not be a single human being who will die of hunger.

The Glorious Qur’an says that we should love and help our neighbours. The Qur’an says in Surah Ma’un, Ch. No. 107, Verses 1 to 7:

“Have you seen the one who denies the Recompense ? For that is the one who drives away the orphan. And does not encourage the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who pray (but) who are heedless of their prayer. Those who make show (of their deeds). And withhold (simple neighbourly) assistance.”

According to Islam, ‘ He is not a Muslim, who sleeps with his full stomach, while his neighbours are hungry.’ (neighbour could be Muslim or Non-Muslim)

This means that any person, who has had a good meal and sleeps with his stomach full while his neighbours are hungry, is not following the commandments of Allah, and His Rasool.

The Glorious Qur’an commands us not to be spendthrifts. The Qur’an says in Surah Israa, Ch. No. 17, V. No. 26 and 27:

‘Squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the evil ones (of the Satan).’

If you are a spendthrift, you are bound to disturb the Universal Brotherhood, because if a person squanders, it creates animosity, it creates enmity, it creates envy between the brothers.

A person should not steal, a person should give charity, a person should provide neighbourly assistance, a person should not squander wealth – all these are moral conducts mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an.

The Qur'an further prohibits believers from receiving or offering bribes.

The Qur'an says in Surah Baqarah, Ch. No. 2, V. No. 188:

“ And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities nor use it as bait for the judges with intent that you may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) people's property.”

PROHIBITION OF INTOXICANTS, GAMBLING, ADULTERY & SLANDER TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD :

The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Maidah, Ch. No. 5, V. No. 90

“O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork. Eschew such (abomination), that you may prosper.”

The Glorious Qur'an commands humans to abstain from intoxicants, alcohol, drugs, gambling, from dedication of stones and divination of arrows.

All know that intoxicants are one of the main causes for various evils in society. It obstructs Universal Brotherhood from prevailing.

Statistics tell us that in America on an average more than one thousand nine hundred cases of rape take place daily and in most of the cases, either the victim or the rapist is intoxicated. Further, 8 % of the population in America is affected by incest. This means that every 12th or 13th person you come across in America has committed incest (that is, having sexual relationship with close relatives – father and daughter, son and mother, brother and sister) and almost all the cases of incest take place under the state of intoxication.

Therefore the Glorious Qur'an says that Intoxicants and gambling are satan's handiwork. We are instructed to abstain from these so that we may prosper.

Islam forbids adultery. The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Israa, Ch. No. 17, V. No. 32:

"Nor come nigh to adultery : for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil opening the road (to other evils)."

The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Hujurat, Ch. No. 49, V. No. 11 and 12 :

“O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others : it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at

others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: And those who do not desist are (Indeed) doing wrong..... avoid suspicion as much (as possible) : for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother ? Nay ye would abhor it..”

The Qur’an says that if one indulges in backbiting or slander, it is as though he / she devours the meat of his/her dead brother. Eating dead meat itself is prohibited – eating meat of your dead brother is worse. Even the cannibals who eat humans do not eat the flesh of their dead brother.

All these laws of moral conduct given in the Glorious Qur’an and the Sahih Hadith promote Universal Brotherhood. Besides talking about it, the uniqueness about Islam is that it practically demonstrates Universal Brotherhood and shows practical ways to practice it and attain it.