

Frequently Asked Questions

Question1: So long as the three principal religions have emanated from

God, why should differences appear as to the essence of God

among their adherents? Why should a Christian or a Jew be

required to abandon his religion and adopt Islam?

Answer1: There is no doubt that the three religions acknowledge one source, God. They all agree as to the uniqueness, the absolute omniscience and omnipresence of God, to the exclusion of any parallel power to be worshipped. All agree as to attributing to God all perfection and excluding all defects and blemishes. Whatever differences may appear is sporadic extraneous, accretious developing over the ages from distortions interpolated by members of both Judaism and Christianity. Herein came differences as to the essence of God. The difference, therefore, is between Islam, which God entrusted His Prophet with, and other religions which have been distorted and adulterated. The difference is not between authentic religions, rather, it is between a true religion and others that have been invalidated and turned away. The latter category has been manipulated by vicious hands which misdirected them.

When we call upon a Jew or Christian to discard his/her religion and adopt Islam, we are in reality asking him/her to revert to the true religion which has been preached by all prophets. Should an impartial thinker consider Islam in relation to other religions, he/she is bound to acknowledge the radical difference between both categories. He/she

is likely to find in the former the truth and monotheism, while the latter would reveal innovations and polytheism. Moreover, Islam advocates justice and tolerance, while the other implies racism and discrimination.

Question 02: What is the penultimate reason behind the creation of man? Does God need man's worship?

Answer 02: Man has been created in order to worship God:

“And I (God) created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me (Alone)” (Noble Qur'an: 51: 56).

The Primary incumbency on man is to know God through His oneness, and thence to worship Him truly. Secondly, man is required to act his role as God's vicegerent on earth, so as to enjoy bliss both here and hereafter. Indeed, his/her need to acknowledge the supremacy of God exceeds his/her need and drink:

“O mankind! It is you who stand in need of God. But God is rich, worthy of all praise” (Noble Qur'an: 35: 15).

God is above the need for man's worship. He does not benefit from man's devotion, nor would He be adversely affected by man's blasphemy. From beginning to end the story of man's existence on earth, no matter how many are its incidents, is an ordeal, a test, whether for him/her as an individual or for all humanity. Man's performance in this test determines either his praise and reward or reproof and punishment.

Question 03: You Muslims claim that you worship One God, while in actual fact you resemble the Christians who say “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” for you say “In the name of God, the Merciful; the Compassionate.” How would you account for this resemblance?

Answer 03: In the Christian creed, God is the Creator. The Son is Jesus the Deliverer. And the Holy Spirit is His life or one of His creations chosen by Him as a messenger and/or prophet imparting God's inspiration or cosmic order to whoever He wishes. Whatever the mission carried out by the Holy Spirit, the Christians believe in the above powers as three entities, three aspects, three qualities. They say: "Oneness in Trinity and Trinity in Oneness." They are all phenomena of one God, etc. Therefore, the One God, they claim, consists of three separate categories, which they call the Trinity. As a matter of fact, God, as they take Him, is not one but three. In the Qur'an God says: "Surely, disbelievers are those who said: 'God is the third of the three (in a Trinity)'." (Holy Qur'an: 5: 73). The verse means that God the Creator is the third in relation to the Son and the Holy Spirit. As for the Muslim dictum "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate," it means three names of God which exceed ninety nine, all denoting one Entity. A name is not separate from the named. The Being named and described is not to be conceived except by His names and qualities, unlike the case of the Christian Entities, for they are three dimensional, but separate, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION 04: How can you claim that your God is Merciful and Compassionate, while He created evil in the world, expressed in illnesses, volcanoes, toxics, earthquakes, hatred, etc.?

ANSWER 04: The answer to this question is threefold:

1. God Almighty is a universal God, the God of all creation. This is obvious in the following verse: "And your God is One (God), there is none who has the right to be worshipped but He, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful..." (Holy Qur'an: 2: 163).

2. Undoubtedly, God's mercy is comprehensive. It encompasses all creatures under its canopy. The evidence is clear: "...And My Mercy embraces all things..." (Holy Qur'an: 7: 156). Such a spacious clemency expresses itself in bestowing upon His creation so much bliss: material sustenance, the gifts of sight and hearing. Indeed, such blessings are countless.

3. Whatever adversities may befall man in this world, like pain, illness, poison, earthquakes, volcanoes, etc., are not exclusively evils. They are mixed blessings. For some who are harassed by such evils they are a punishment for their disobedience or heresy, while for some others they are a reminder, a nudge, to awaken them from their slumber. They also indicate the absolute power of God, His ability to deal with His creation, the sphere of His dominion, in the ways He deems just and wise. All that God decrees emanates from His compassion, wisdom and justice.

QUESTION 05: Does God allow prostration to any power or creature other than Himself? If the answer is negative how can we account for the prostration of Joseph's brothers and parents before him?

ANSWER 05: Initially, it is to be maintained that there are two kinds of prostration:

1. Expressive of worship and favour-seeking, which is permissible only to God. If it is practised to appease some other power, this is polytheism.

2. Indicative of man's desire to glorify an absolute power, in which case the action of prostration is not polytheistic. Kneeling down and/or prostration before human beings as a way of showing respect or greeting was quite acceptable in earlier creeds. But it has been abrogated in Islam. Joseph's brothers did not worship him. They bent down before him in an expression of esteem and reverence. Such a posture was permissible in their creed, but abolished and abrogated in Islam. Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa was reported to have said that on coming from Sham (currently greater Syria) Mu'az ibn Jabal knelt down before the prophet (pbuh) whereupon the prophet enquired what the man meant. In explanation, Mu'az said that in Sham he had seen people bending down before their bishops and patriarchs, so he thought it would be fit to do so in front of

the Prophet. In response the Prophet denied this by saying: "Muslims may not bow down to anybody except God...".^[1]

It was obvious that Mu'az's posture before the prophet implies reverence, a sentiment he noted in the case of the faithful, but in no way does it denote worship, which is exclusive to God. When the prophet knew that Mu'az's posture did not denote worship, he still exhorted him not to perform such an action. Consequently, abrogation was applied to kneeling down and prostration in glorification of human grandeur.

It is true that Joseph's father and brother prostrated before him, and equally true that God Almighty enjoined the angels to prostrate before Adam, but in neither case did the posture imply worship, rather it meant a gesture of honour and recognition of merit.

[1] Cited in *Abu Dawud*, Hadith No. 214; *Al-Turmudhi*, No. 1159; *Ibn Majah*, No. 1853.

QUESTION 06: What is the indisputable evidence that the teachings of Muhammad have all come from God?

ANSWER 06: There are numerous irrefutable evidences indicating that such teachings originated from God almighty. Here are some:

1. All that has been enjoined, and denied, can be found highly propitious and useful to all mankind, everywhere and at any time. They are commensurate with the sound mind and the chaste insight. Examples are commandments on solidifying family ties, preserving superior moral qualities, avoiding usury and all misdemeanors. All that the prophet (pbuh) has been told in inspiration has been proved valid. Such material falls in two categories:

A. Pertaining to the past. These are corroborated by former books as well as authenticated evidence confirmed by science and modern discoveries, e.g. findings in geology as the era of the deluge, in archeology as the relics from the epochs of Thamud and the Pharaos.

B. Pertaining to the future. Certain incidents were predicted by the prophet, e.g. the fire which blasted Medina in 654 *hijra*, the good offices performed by Hasan

ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib in reconciliation between two major factions of Muslims, the gathering of the Jews in Palestine today, the emergence of nudist women who earn their living in immodest ways, and the spread of usury, corruption, murder, etc.

C. Evidences derived from the Prophet's own life and morals, a study of both of which can only confirm that such actions can never emerge except from one who is both true and honest. Whoever considers God's support of His prophet (pbuh), the victory over his enemies, and the spread of his religion, must come to the conclusion that this prophet was sustained by God and that all he preached had come from the Almighty.

D. Some contemporary scientific discoveries support the prophet's tenets, e.g. stages of the life of the embryo, the way in which milk comes into being in the mammals, the existence of the aquarian barrier between two adjacent seas, the fact that the Dead Sea is the nethermost place on earth, etc.

E. The miracles performed by him: these were simultaneously witnessed by both his followers and antagonists, e.g. the fissure of the moon surface, the springing of water from his fingers, the healing of the sick, etc. His greatest miracle remains the glorious Qur'an that has proved the authenticity of its contents over the ages.

QUESTION 07: How can Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) be the imam (leader) of all the prophets when he is the last messenger?

ANSWER 07: Preference is God's own prerogative. It is exclusive to such and not to others, in accordance with His omniscience and wisdom. Preference has no relation with precedence or antecedence in time. Moses and Jesus are among the latter batch of prophets, still they are the best among all those who preceded them except Noah and Abraham (peace be upon them). Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad's religion, in terms of creeds and the morals, conforms to those preached by the previous prophets. As for the rules of these religions, the Prophet (pbuh), by commandments from Almighty God, nullified some, modified others; altered some, and augmented others. Accordingly, his call has become more comprehensive, more perfect, hence has dominion over precedences. The one in charge of such a call deserves being an imam to those who preceded him. Those were made to pledge to be faithful to him and support him, Almighty God says:

“And (remember) when God took the covenant of the prophets, saying: ‘Take whatever I gave you from the book and hikmah (understanding of the laws of God), and afterwards there will come to you a messenger

(Muhammad) confirming what is with you; you must, then, believe in him and help him.' God said: 'Do you agree (to it) and will you take up my covenant (which I conclude with you)?' They said: 'We agree.' He said: 'Then bear witness; and I am with you among the witnesses (for this).'"
(Holy Qur'an: 3: 81).

Such favours prove that he is the best.

Question 08: What evidence proves that Jesus was not a God, but only a messenger from God?

Answer 08: Jesus Christ (pbuh), following both the Gospels and the Qur'an, was born of the virgin Mary, who was just like any other human being. It is common knowledge that whoever is born cannot be deified. Jesus Christ was a human being who used to eat and drink just like anybody else. He was susceptible to hunger, grief and/or merriment. He experienced all the paraphernalia pertaining to human life. His miraculous creation from no father is no stranger than that of Adam, a being who was both fatherless and motherless. This is an evidence of God's omnipotence. Jesus Christ was no more than a servant to, and messenger of God, who revealed the scripture in order to promulgate it and carry out His call. On the day of judgement Jesus Christ is not to be judged because of those who deified him in exclusion of God or thought of him as parallel. In the Qur'an we have a mentioning of this, where in the hereafter God will ask Jesus if he had asked his followers to deify him, whereby Jesus will answer God by saying: *"If you punish them, they are your slaves, and if you forgive them, verily, you, only you, are the all-Mighty, the all-Wise"* (Holy Qur'an: 5: 118). Here is one more reply to the one who seeks an evidence as to the deification of Jesus Christ, while he has none of the qualities of God. Whatever miracles he performed emanated from God, just as He supported other prophets.

Question09: In what way was Jesus Christ a Muslim, as well as all the other prophets?

Answer 09: There is no doubt that all prophets (peace be

upon them), beginning with Adam and ending in Muhammad, preached one religion—the worship of God alone and disregarding all other powers. This is something advocated by Islam. God says: “Truly, the true religion with God is Islam” (Noble Qur’an: 3: 19). About Abraham (pbuh), God says: “Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but was a true Muslim (Hanif: monotheist—a worshipper one God alone) and he was not a mushrik—a polytheist” (Noble Qur’an: 3: 67). On the question of the disciples of Jesus, God says: “And when I (God) inspired al-hawariun (the disciples of Jesus) to believe in Me and My Messenger, they said: ‘We believe. And bear witness that we are Muslims’.” (Noble Qur’an: 5: 111). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) confirmed this in his saying: “Prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one.” (Cited in Bukhari, Hadith No. 1437.)

Question 10: If people have managed to distort the message of Christ, is not this sufficient evidence that he failed in his mission? If he was great, how could God allow his call to peter out into failure?

Answer 10: Christ (pbuh) cannot be said to have failed in his mission. God supported him with astounding miracle and convincing arguments. Whatever distortion has befallen the scripture preached by Christ, it must have happened after his ascension to heaven. Failure and disintegration are the works of the followers who fell a prey to whims and caprice. In this connection God says:

And (remember) when God will say (on the day of resurrection): ‘O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say unto men: ‘worship me and my mother as two gods besides God?’ He will say: ‘Glory is to You! It is not for me to say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, You would surely, have know it. You know what is in my inner-self though I do not know what is in Yours; truly You, only You, are the All-Knower

of all that is hidden (and seen). Never did I say to them aught except what You (God) did command me to say: worship God my Lord and your Lord. And I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when you took me up, You were the Watcher over them; and You are a Witness to all things'." (Holy Qur'an: 5: 116-117)

Question 11: Seeing that God's message to humanity is one and the same, why was it partitioned among more than one prophet and not revealed in one package?

Answer 11: The message entrusted to all prophets is one and the same. It finds expression in a call for the worship of the one God and the avoidance of false deities, God says: "And verily, we have sent among every ummah (community/nation) a messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship God (alone), and avoid taghut (all false deities)'." (Holy Qur'an: 16: 36). God almighty also said: "And We did not send any messenger before you (Muhammad) but We revealed to him (saying): 'None has the right to be worshipped but I (God), so worship Me (alone and none else)'." (Holy Qur'an: 21: 25). As for the multiplicity of the prophets, it has been caused by various motives:

1. So that people in any age may not have the pretext as to have been ignorant of God's commandments. God says: "Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against God after the (coming of) messengers." (Holy Qur'an: 4: 165).

2. Specifying individual laws for each nation which shall conform to its nature and circumstances. God says: "...To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way..." (Holy Qur'an: 5: 48).

3. The differences among languages and their multiplicity, required entrusting more than one prophet/messenger, each speaks the language of a certain nation. This is obvious in the Almighty's words: "And We sent not a messenger except with the language of his people in order that he make (the message) clear for them" (Holy Qur'an: 14: 4).

Question 12: Why were the first batch of prophets sent to certain geographical areas and not others? How can we judge those areas which received no prophets? Why were they left without the word of God?

Answer 12: Judging by the accounts given by the Prophet's hadiths (sayings) God sent to various folks 124,000 prophets, while God's messengers numbered 314. (Cited in Ahmad (vol.,5 Hadith No. 178), Al-Hakim (vol.,2 Hadith No. 288) and others.) Such a large number of prophets and messengers prove that not one nation or area went without one (or some). In this regard God Almighty says: "...And there never was a nation but a warner had passed among them" (Qur'an;35:24). And again, He also says: "And verily, we have sent among every ummah (community/nation) a messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship God (alone), and avoid taghut (all false deities)'." (Qur'an;16:36).

Question 13: Why should Muhammad (pbuh) be considered the last prophet while Jesus Christ will reappear?

Answer 13: Muhammad (pbuh) is actually the last of all prophets, according to what he said. The descent of Jesus Christ (pbuh) from heaven is not a new mission. It is a return whose aim is to reinforce Islam and its shari'a (Islamic laws and rules) our Prophet called for, and the last celestial teachings. This is clear in his words: "The coming of Jesus is imminent. He will come as a just ruler, destroy the cross, and nullify the poll tax. There would be so much money that no one would accept charity." (Bukhari vol. 4, Hadith 134) In another long hadith, he says: "...He (Jesus Christ) will call people to Islam and God would abolish all religions leaving Islam alone." (Bukhari vol. 4, Hadith 134)

It is quite obvious from the above evidences that whatever Jesus Christ preaches is nothing but Islam and the law of Muhammad (peace be upon them both). He will even pray behind a Muslim. The Prophet says: "How will you be when the son of Mary (Jesus Christ) descends among you, while you are praying behind

an imam (a prayer leader) from among you?" (Bukhari vol. 4, Hadith 143)

Muslim scholars referred to the return of Jesus Christ (pbuh) at the end of time. They mentioned that his return would be especially significant to:

1. Emphasize the facts of Islam as preached by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).
2. Reply to the claims of the Jews and the Christians as to his death, crucifixion.
3. His return indicates the approach of the end of his life and his burial.
4. The Prophet's report about Jesus Christ must be the truth, because it is something that had been revealed to him from God.

Question14: How can you claim that Jesus did not die while his death is actually mentioned in Surrat Al-Imraan (Chapter 3 of the Holy Qur'an)?

Answer14: No verse in the Qur'an relates the death of Jesus Christ (pbuh). The term used in the chapter '*wafaat*' does not refer to death as much as it refers to departure from earthly existence. His appointed time on earth had elapsed. Accordingly, God says: "**And (remember) when God said: 'O Jesus! I will take you and raise you to Myself and clear you of those who disbelieve...'**" (Holy Qur'an: 3: 55). This can be paraphrased thus: I have taken your body and soul. The term *wafaat* can also be used to indicate sleep. God says: "**It is He who takes your soul by night (when you are asleep), and has knowledge of all that you have done by day...**" (Holy Qur'an: 6: 60).

Contrary to what the Christians claim, the Qur'an confirms that Jesus Christ (pbuh) was not killed. God raised him up to Himself:

“...For Surely, they killed him (Jesus) not. But God raised him up (with his body and soul) unto Himself...” (Holy Qur’an: 4: 157-158). The truth of the matter is that Jesus was ascended alive and will come back alive.

Question 15: How can you prove that Jesus Christ was not crucified?

Answer 15: This question can be answered from different angles:

1. There are many ambiguities surrounding the issue of Christ’s crucifixion in the canonical Gospels. How was the Crucifixion carried out? For how long did Jesus hung on the cross? What are the precise dates? Who carried the cross? What was his prayer while he was on the cross? How do you explain his cry of despair? Who were the witnesses? What happened after the crucifixion? There is no consensus on these questions. So much of the crucifixion story is based on mere conjecture.

2. The issue of crucifixion is based on the belief in the original sin and redemption by blood. This issue contradicts common sense, and it is irreconcilable with God’s justice and mercy. How can the innocents be held accountable for the actions of the guilty?

3. Finally, the Qur’an has unambiguously refuted the Bible’s crucifixion story. God says: “...They killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Jesus was put over another man, and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely, they killed him (Jesus) not. But God raised him up (with his body and soul) unto Himself. And God is ever all-powerful, all wise” (Holy Qur’an: 4: 157-158).

Question 16: You always say that the Old and New Testaments contain fabrications. Why then do you sometimes use them as references when it is convenient for you?

Answer 16: *I would like to clarify that Muslims believe that books*

were revealed by God to His prophets; and among these are the Torah, the Gospels, David's Psalms, and the Qur'an and accounts of Prophet Abraham's life. Their belief in these revelations is a fundamental aspect of Islamic teachings. Therefore, the Muslims believe that, generally speaking, the Torah and the Gospels are divinely revealed. But people who follow these revelations have introduced fabrications in them. God has revealed this fact to us in the Qur'an. Therefore not all of the Bible is fabricated. And not all that Jews and Christians claim to be true of the Bible is wholly from God. As a result Islamic scholars have articulated a sound position regarding these books which can be summarized as follows:

1. Whatever is in accordance with the Qur'an, we believe in and quote for the benefit of those who follow these scriptures.

2. Whatever contradicts the Qur'an, we reject, knowing that it is a fabrication. We do not quote it, and do not believe in it.

3. We maintain silence over what neither agrees nor contradicts Qur'anic teachings. This is due to our fear of refuting what may be well true or accepting what might be false.

*The latter attitude is imposed by the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh), who said: **"Do not give credence to what the people of the Book (Jews and Christians); and do not refute it outright."** Therefore, when we quote the Bible, we are in fact quoting what finds support in the Qur'an, and not arbitrarily.*

Question 17: Why do you believe that the divine revelations were not preserved in the same way that you claim the Qur'an was?

Answer 17: God made the preservation of earlier scriptures the responsibilities of the followers of these books. God says: **"...For to**

them was entrusted the protection of God's books, and they were witnesses thereto" (Holy Qur'an: 5: 44). But they were negligent of this; distorted the books with their interpolations and the reversal of some facts. This is not a total loss, because God intended another scripture whose teachings and principles will serve the good of man and under all conditions.

God did not give the responsibility of protecting the Qur'an to man. He pledged to protect it Himself, knowing that this was the last revelation to mankind. This is the absolute necessity that it be preserved intact. God says: "Verily, it is We Who have sent down the *dhikr* (the Qur'an) and surely, we will guard it (from corruption)" (Holy Qur'an: 15: 9). Due to this divine pledge, the Qur'an has been preserved. It is impossible for anyone to do to the Qur'an what was done to previous scriptures.

Question 18: To what extent, do you think, are the present Gospels authentic?

Answer 18: The present Gospels, as attested by Christian scholars, were written by historians. They are therefore not totally authentic. Parts of these books are authentic, others are fabricated. The falsehood in them supersedes the truth, especially in those parts which deify Jesus Christ (pbuh) and make him the son of God. The Muslim accepts what is in accord with the Islamic teachings and rejects what contradicts them. He is silent over aspects that are not clearly in agreement or disagreement with Islamic teachings.

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