

ISLAM & OTHER RELIGIONS

Introduction

Islam' comes from the root word 'Salam', which means peace. Islam also means... Submitting your will, to Almighty God. Anyone who submits his or her will, to Almighty God, is called Muslim. Many people have a misconception that Islam is a new Religion, which was founded by Prophet Muhammed (Peace be upon him). In fact, Islam is there, for time immemorial -since man first put foot on earth. Prophet Muhammed (Peace be upon him), is not the founder of the Religion of Islam. In fact, Qur'an says

Surah Raad, Ch.13, Verse 7

“And to every nation and to every people have we sent a guide”.

That means, there were messengers and guides, send to all the nations of the world. But by name, only 25 Prophets of Almighty God are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an by name. For example Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, David, Solomon, Jesus, Muhammed (Peace be upon him).

Basically there is only one religion in the world “ISLAM”, Only Islam is acceptable Deen in the sight of Allah (swt) as it is mentioned in Quran

Surah Al-Miadah Chapter #5 Verse#3

“This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”

Another Place Allah Says

Surah Al Imran Cahpter#03 Verse #19

“The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will)”

If it is like that than how comes we witnessed other major religions like Christianity, Judaism etc. as we have discussed before that there is only one religion and that is Islam, the teachings of prophet Moses (pbuh), the teachings of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were same. These terminologies later on carried by different people as the result of human ideology. Most of the people they misunderstood the message of their prophet and that lead them to have new religion, but one think we have to make it on the floor that all the messengers before Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) carried the similar message like we have today in the form of Holy Qur'an. The basic fundamental message of all the prophet from Hazarat Adam (AS) to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the preaching of Tauheed (To believe in One True God) sometimes it refers as Monotheism.

Why Islam has supremacy over all other world religions

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. Despite being molested by western media still Its growing its roots very deeply and specially in UK and USA. It is just because that Islam is the only true religion which not only emphasize on the morality, humanity and social problems of mankind, but it also shows a path how to achieve success by eliminating all evil deeds from the society.

(i) Tauheed

One of the most imperative fundamental article of faith in Islam in Tauheed means believing in one true God. This is the back bone of Iman (faith) of Muslim, no Muslim would be Muslim if he/she does not believe in this article of faith. Allah says in Quran

Surah Ikhlas Chapter#112 Verses# 1 to 4

“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”

Now if we consider all other religions on the subject of Oneness of God, we would come to conclusion that they got same message to believe in oneness of God, they have manipulated their own scriptures and forgotten their focal message to believe in one true God. For example a common hindu believe almost 320 Millions Devis and Devtas (gods) while their scripture is adhering them to believe only in one true God.

It is mentioned in their The Brahma Sutra of Hinduism is:

"Ekam Brahm, dvitiya naste neh na naste kinchan"

"There is only one God, not the second; not at all, not at all, not in the least bit."

Another Place it is mentioned

Ma cid anyad vi sansata sakhayo ma rishanyata"

"O friends, do not worship anybody but Him, the Divine One. Praise Him alone."

[Rigveda 8:1:1]

Now if we consider Christianity and which also known as sister religions as compare to Islam. All Christian Churches unequivocally believe in the concept of Trinity (God in Three forms "The God, The Son & The Holy Ghost"). They believe in three Gods and consider them to be one. We all are astonished on knowing the truth about Trinity, the word trinity is not mentioned in any Christian Bible. On deep consideration of Bible we came to know that they also got the parallel message of Monotheism as we have in our holy Qur'an, if you read Bible it is mentioned there

"Shama Israelu Adonai Ila Hayno Adonai Ikhad."

This is a Hebrew quotation, which means:

"Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord."

[The Bible, Mark 12:29]

"I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour."

[The Bible, Isaiah 43:11]

"I am Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me."

[The Bible, Isaiah 45:5]

From this whole discussion we came to know that believing in one true God is foremost important than any other religious obligation. Oneness of God is main article of all the religions but most of them had regulated this crucial belief. Islam is the religion on the face of the earth which adhere Its follower to firmly believe in ONE TRUE GOD.

(ii) Scriptures

In any religion scriptures are considered as the main and authentic sources of all its beliefs. It is also one of the imperative beliefs in Islam to believe in all religious scriptures sent down by Allah (swt) to His messengers. As Allah says in Quran

in Surah Fatir, Ch. 35, Verse 24

‘There is not a nation or a tribe...there has never been a nation or a people, to whom a warner has not been sent

Allah (swt) has sent 124,000 Messengers in every era with the Message. In Quran there are only 25 Prophets mentioned with names and only 4 revelations (Zaboor, Torah, Injeel & Qur’an). According to scriptures again Islam has supremacy over all other world religions. Revelations carried by prophets before Muhammad (pbuh) were only for the particular people and for the particular time whereas the revelation as Qur’an is for whole mankind. It is mentioned in Quran

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.”

Islam is not for only Arabs but it is for whole humanity. It preaches the equality that no one is superior than any other. All human beings are equal in the sight of Allah (swt).

There is one more aspect regarding the religious scriptures, we know that today on the face of earth only pure, unchanged, Original Scripture is Qur’an on the other hand all other religious scriptures have been manipulated by their people to gain personal goals.

Islam has practical solutions for the problem of mankind

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). For example 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.

(a) Elimination of Poverty

All the religions renounce poverty and firmly believe in elimination of it, then what will be the difference between Islam and other religions? Islam besides condemning poverty also elaborates the way to eliminate it. Islam prescribes a mechanism known as “ZAKAT” (obligatory annual charity).

Allah says in Qur’an

Surah Baqrah Chapter#02 Verse#43

“And be steadfast in prayer; practise regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship).”

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.

Poverty as the symbol shows the nation's conduct towards the poor people. Zimbabwe and Congo are the poorest countries of the world. UN has tried his level best only just to reduce poverty in mean terms only. Now if we apply the Islamic Law and zakat will be compulsory for everyone who has saving ore than nisab level it is for granted poverty will be eradicated from these countries.

(b) Diminution of Crime

Crime is one of the most treacherous factors of the society. No religion accepts or proclaimed crime as fine beneficial for society. But Islam prescribes a law through which you can control over the crime rate. Islam prescribes chopping off the hands of the convicted robber. The Glorious Qur'an says in

Surah Maidah: Chpater #5 Verse #38

"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."

The non-Muslim may say, "Chopping off the hands in this 20th century. Islam is a barbaric and ruthless religion!" 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 people's hands would be chopped off but millions would live peacefully withdraw fear of being robbed. Islamic Shariah is therefore practical, and achieves results.

(c) 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.

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:

Surah An-nur Chapter # 24 Verse # 30

"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."

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

Hijaab for women is mentioned in the following verse:

Surah An-nur Chapter # 24 Verse # 31

"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...."

The extent of hijab 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.

Hijab prevents molestation

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

Surah Al-Ahzab Chapter # 33 Verse # 59

"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."

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

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.

The United States of America is supposed to be one of the most advanced countries of the world. According to United States Department of Justice document Criminal Victimization in the United States, there were overall 191,670 victims of rape or sexual assault reported in 2005. 1 of 6 U.S. women has experienced an attempted or completed rape. (According to Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault). Suppose the Islamic shariah is implemented in USA. 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 up to 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.

Conclusion

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.

CSS PAST PAPERS QUESTIONS

Q: Describe the dignity and superiority of Islam with proof as compared to other religions. **(2000)**

Q: "Islam enjoys an exalted place in the religions of the world". Elaborate **(2001)**

Q: Islam enjoys an exalted place in the religions of the world regarding human dignity moral values and Allah's vicegerency. Discuss with arguments. **(2004)**

Q: Differentiate between Deen & Religion. State the important points of Co-existence among Islam and world religions in the present scenario. **(2010)**