

Islam

A concise overview presented in simple language

The Faith. The Beliefs,
The Book (Qur'an), and Observances.
The Prophets. Prophet Jesus and Virgin Mary.
The misconceptions in the West about Islam
Western scholars' views on Islam.
The Islamic concept of God,
Other topics.

"Say: we believe in God and that which is revealed unto us, and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and which the prophets received.

(The Qur'an Chapter 2, Verse 136)

"Say: O' people of the Book, (Jews and Christians) Come to common terms as between you and us: That we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than God."

(The Qur'an: Chapter 3, Verse 64)

Dr. Syed H. Akhtar

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In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

ISLAM MEANS...

The word Islam means “submission,” as in submission to the Will of Almighty God. God is referred to as *Allah** in the Qur’an (the Holy Scripture). Muslims worship the same one God that Abraham, Moses and Jesus worshiped. Muslims believe in all the prophets that Christians and Jews believe in. According to the Muslim belief, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&P)) was the last prophet in the long line of prophets which started with Adam and included Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, David, Solomon, Moses, John the Baptist and Jesus (*peace be upon them all*), to name a few. Muslims regard Prophet Muhammad as a human being with a divine mission; they do not worship Muhammad.

Thus, Islam is not a new religion. According to the Qur’an, it was the religion of all the prophets of God, peace be upon them. They all submitted to God and they were all Muslims. They brought the same central message: worship God alone, not join any other deity with God, and do good deeds.

A BRIEF LIFE HISTORY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (*Peace be upon him & his progeny*)**

Muhammad was born in Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula in the year 570 AD. At the age of 40, Muhammad received God’s first revelation through the Angel Gabriel, and he was instructed to begin preaching about one God.

At that time, the majority of people in the region were pagans. Idolatry, sin, and immoral behavior were common. Women were ill-treated, sold, and had no legal status; female infants were even buried alive. The Arabs believed in and worshipped over 300 different gods. Muhammad, for the first three years of his ministry, preached about one God secretly and thereafter, on divine instructions, preached openly. Upon teaching the new faith, he was initially mocked and later on abused, persecuted, and tortured. The advent of Islam was seen by the pagans as an economic blow, since they depended to a large extent on the income from having many tribal gods, and from pilgrims that came to Mecca from different parts of Arabia to pay homage to their gods. The first converts emigrated to Abyssinia and sought asylum there under the Christian ruler, Negus, in order to save their lives.

In 622 AD, at the age of 52 years, Muhammad left Mecca for Medina to save his life, as the pagans of Mecca had plotted to kill him. This event is referred to as *Hijra* or ‘migration,’ and this year constitutes the first year of the Muslim calendar. In Medina, Muhammad was welcomed with open arms by its people and amongst them; he found many friends and supporters.

*The Arabic name “Allah” is equivalent to “God” in English, “Jehovah” in Latin, and “Yahweh” in Hebrew. **This formula after the name of the Prophet is to show respect. An abbreviation often used is.

In the subsequent years, Muhammad successfully defended himself and his people from several attacks by the pagans of Mecca who wanted to kill him and root out the new religion. Muhammad fought with a small and ill-equipped band of his supporters against large and well-equipped forces.

The Meccan pagans had signed several peace treaties with Muhammad but repeatedly broke them, and plotted repeatedly to kill him. Eventually, Muhammad and his followers marched towards Mecca, his homeland, and took control of the city without a struggle. The inhabitants of Mecca feared revenge for the atrocities committed against Muhammad and his followers, but Muhammad declared general amnesty. He gave orders that no one should loot or plunder. Soldiers were forbidden to enter any house that was inhabited. No one was to be attacked unless he refused to lay down arms. Women and children were protected from harm under strict orders. The Meccans were so moved by Muhammad's generosity and compassion that they hastened in throngs to swear allegiance to him. Finally, Muhammad removed all the idols from the Kaba, the symbolic House of God, which was built by his ancestor, Prophet Abraham, many centuries earlier.

Eventually, deputations from all parts of Arabia came to Medina to meet the Prophet and to listen to the Holy Scripture, the Qur'an. The prophet also sent emissaries to neighboring countries in order to convey the message of Islam.

The Prophet, in fact, had become the virtual ruler of Arabia. His lifestyle, however, remained as simple as ever. In the tenth year after *Hijra*, after performing the pilgrimage, called the Hajj, Muhammad addressed his followers who had gathered in the thousands, and announced his impending departure from this world. At that time, he received the divine revelation that the religion of God had been completed and perfected. That was the final revelation from God conveyed by the Angel Gabriel to Muhammad. In that same year, he died after a brief illness, at the age of 62 years.

Thus, in a brief span of 23 years, Muhammad had abolished idolatry in Arabia and had established God's religion, Islam. He brought civilization, law, order, and decency to a land and a people known for idolatry, oppression, and lewdness.

STATUS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN ISLAM.

The scripture Qur'an enjoins total obedience to Prophet Muhammad. A believer is commanded to show him the utmost respect. Whenever his mere name is mentioned, the believer sends peace upon him and invokes God's blessing upon him. The Qur'an clearly states that the Prophet has greater right on the believers than they have on themselves.

The following quotes from the Qur'an will demonstrate the status of Prophet Muhammad in the eyes of the believers.

"And most surely you (Prophet) conform to sublime morality." Chapter 68, verse 4

"Surely God and His angels bless the Prophet; O' you who believe! Call for (divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation." Chapter 33, verse 56

"Surely (as for) those who speak evil things about God and His Apostle, God has cursed them in this world ..." Chapter 33: verse 57

"O' Prophet, surely We have sent you as a witness and as a bearer of good news and as a Warner, and as one inviting to God by His permission, and as a light-giving torch." Chapter 33: verses 45 & 46

"Certainly you have in the Apostle of God an excellent exemplar, in him who hopes in God and the latter (judgment) day, and remembers God much." Chapter 33: verse 21

"The Prophet has greater claim on the faithful than they have on themselves," Chapter 33: verse 6.

"And We have sent you not but as a mercy to the worlds." Chapter 21: verse 107

"Say: Obey God and the Apostle," Chapter 3: verse 32.

“O’ you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak to one another, lest your deeds become null while you do not perceive. Surely, those who lower their voices before God’s Apostle are the ones whose hearts have been tested for piety;” Chapter 49: verses 2, 3.

Prophet Muhammad measured up to the highest standard divinely laid for him. Historians, philosophers, students of world religions, and world leaders have nothing but flowing praise for his noble personality, as well as his spiritual and temporal accomplishments.

(For quotes from non-Muslim writers about Prophet Muhammad, please refer to the section on explanatory notes, page 40.)

Thus, it is clear that giving the utmost respect, bestowing the highest honor, and holding the Prophet dearer than one’s own life is integral part of the faith of a Muslim. Most non-Muslims, especially in the west are unaware of this important aspect of Islamic faith and do not understand the sensitivity of Muslims in this respect. Drawing the very picture of the Prophet is considered sacrilegious, and prohibited in Islam. It must be emphasized that Islam teaches peace, tolerance, forgiveness, compassion, sanctity of life, and treating others with respect. Violence, unlawful behavior, hurting others, and causing damage to the property of others is strictly prohibited. Those who indulge in such behavior are acting outside the teachings of Islam.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH&P)

Abraham is considered the common ancestor of the three major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. From his son Isaac’s lineage came many prophets, including Jacob, Joseph, Solomon, David, Moses and lastly Jesus (peace be upon them all). Muhammad was the direct descendant of Prophet Abraham through his son, Ishmael. The advent of Prophet Muhammad was the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham. The Bible says:

“I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name so famous that it will be used as a blessing.” Genesis 12:2.

“For Ishmael too I grant you your request: I bless him and I will make him fruitful and greatly increased in numbers. He shall be the father of twelve princes, and I shall make him a great nation.” Genesis 17:20-21

“But the slave girl’s son I will also make into a nation, for he is your child too.” Genesis 21:13

“The prophet like unto Moses.” According to Muslim belief, Prophet Muhammad was the prophet prophesied in the Bible to come after Prophet Jesus. (For details, please refer to the section on explanatory notes)

BELIEFS AND OBSERVANCES.

A Muslim believes in one supreme deity (*Allah* or God), in all the divinely commissioned prophets of God, all the divinely revealed Books (the Torah, the Bible and the Qur’an), the Angels, the life after death, the Day of Judgment, and the concept of Heaven and Hell (reward and punishment for our deeds.)

The Fundamentals of the Beliefs are:

- Absolute oneness of God.* God has no partners, no associates, no helpers, no consorts, and no sons. When He intends a thing, He only says to it “Be” and it “Is”.
- Justice of God. God is just in His dealings with His creation.
- Belief in all the prophets of God, including the last prophet, Muhammad, peace be upon them all. Also, recognize the Imams (spiritual guides) from among the descendants of the prophet.
- Day of Judgment. Everyone shall experience death. There will be resurrection and accounting on the Day of Judgment. God will reward, punish, or forgive as He sees fit.

The Obligatory acts of Worship include:

Obligatory Prayers (called Salaat) A Muslim is required to offer five ritual prayers a day: morning (before sunrise), mid-day, mid-afternoon, evening (soon after the sunset), and night (after darkness sets in.)

Fasting (called Siyam) is observed during the entire month of Ramadan. This is the 9th month of the Muslim lunar calendar. The daily fast begins about an hour and a half before sunrise and ends after sunset. During the fast, a Muslim is not allowed to eat, drink, chew, or smoke. Sex is prohibited during the hours of fasting, although it is permitted at other times. The month of Fasting is to achieve the good pleasure of God and His nearness. During the fast, a Muslim must avoid arguments, loose talk, lying, backbiting, and pleasure seeking activities. Frequent remembrance of God, the giving of alms to the needy, and other charitable activities are encouraged.

Charity (called Zakat and Khums). This is a portion of the saving given annually to the poor, the widows, the orphans, and the indigent, and towards the maintenance of mosques, religious institutions, religious schools, and other deserving causes.

Pilgrimage (called Hajj) to the Kaba (symbolic House of God in Mecca) at least once in a lifetime. Prophet Abraham originally built this house with the help of his son, Ishmael.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS IN ISLAM:

Certain food items are prohibited to Muslims. These include pork and all pork products, meat from animals that died of natural causes, that were killed by wild animals, etc., and blood from animal sources. Similar to Jewish Law, only designated animals sacrificed in the prescribed manner are permitted to be used for food, and not all body parts are permitted. All forms of intoxicants are prohibited.

THE HOLY QUR'AN

It is also called "Koran" (not a preferred term) in English. The divine revelations were sent to Muhammad (pbuh&p through Angel Gabriel. is the word of God that Angel Gabriel brought to Muhammad (pbuh&p). His followers memorized them and wrote them. The divine messages came over a period of 23 years.

To date, the text of the Qur'an has remained intact in its original language, Arabic, unaltered by man or time. The Qur'an contains laws and commandments governing all aspects of the life of a Muslim. It also contains narrations of the life histories of the earlier Prophets, and parables to guide the reader. The Qur'an and the traditions or sayings of the Prophet constitute the guiding light for the Muslim in his/her day-to-day life.

The two most often recited Chapters or *Surahs* of the Holy Qur'an are: (1) The Opening Chapter, referred to as *Fatihah* and (2) The Unity Chapter, referred to as *Ikhlas*. They are listed below.

***Fatihah* (Opening Chapter)**

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;

The Beneficent, the Merciful.

Master of the Day of Judgment.

Thee alone we worship and Thee alone we ask for help.

Show us the straight way.

The way of those whom Thou has favored.

The way of those who did not earn Thy anger, and who did not go astray.

Ikhlas (Unity)

In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Say: He is God, the One and the only.

God, the Eternal, the Absolute (free of all needs)

He begetteth not, nor was He begotten; and there is none equal unto Him.

Some of the proofs that the Qur'an was divinely revealed:

Many Jewish and Christian scholars at the time of Prophet Muhammad recognized the Holy Scripture as the true word of God and acknowledged Prophet Muhammad as a true Prophet of God, and embraced Islam.

It is to be noted that:

- Muhammad was untutored and unlettered. He received no formal or informal instruction in reading or writing.
- The wisdom, the knowledge, and the literary eloquence contained in the Qur'an are unmatched and beyond the scope of human endeavor.
- The statements made in the Qur'an about sciences such as physics, biology, astronomy, etc. reveal knowledge that did not exist with humankind at the time of Muhammad. Those statements have been verified hundreds of years later through the discoveries of modern science.

Since the time of Muhammad to the present day, Islam continues to be accepted by more and more people in all parts of the world. Today Islam is the faith of one-fifth of the population of the world. Islam offers dignity, equality, and justice to humanity.

"God, according to the Qur'an, guarantees direct access to Himself. He says in the Qur'an: *"I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls unto Me."* (2:186)

The authenticity of the Qur'an is undisputed. The Qur'an holds a unique place among the scriptures because only one version has existed from the very beginning. Many faithful Muslims have continued the tradition of memorizing the entire scripture, thus guarding it against any change. Even a single letter of the original Arabic text has not been changed.

The Qur'an is free from any discrepancies or contradictions. This is particularly amazing, considering the fact that the messages were revealed in stages over a period of twenty-three years!

Western scholars' views on the Qur'an.

"A work, which calls forth so powerful and seemingly incompatible emotions even in the distant reader - distant as to time and still more so as mental development. A work, which not only conquers the repugnance, which the reader may feel as he begins its perusal, but also changes adverse feeling into astonishment and admiration. Such a work must be a wonderful production of the 'human mind' indeed and a problem of the highest interest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind." - Dr. Steingass in T.P. Hughes's Dictionary of Islam, p. 526

"The hypothesis advanced by those who see Muhammad as the author of the Qur'an is untenable. How a man, from being "illiterate" (untutored), could become the most important author, in terms of literary merit in the whole of Arabia? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at that time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncement on the subject?" - Maurice Bucaille in "The Bible, the Qur'an and Science," p.125

Some of the verses in the Qur'an, which came in response to criticism by the unbelievers and the skeptics, are as follows:

"And if ye are in doubt concerning that we reveal unto our servant (Muhammad) then produce a Chapter of the like thereof..." (2:23)

"And before this was the book of Moses, as a guide and a mercy. And this Book confirms (it) in Arabic, to admonish the unjust, and as glad tidings for the righteous." (46:12)

The Qur'an confirms that the earlier prophets, including Moses and Jesus, were true messengers of God. The previous scriptures, the Torah and the Bible, in their original forms were the true messages from God. The true purpose of the Qur'an is to restore and safeguard the message of God in its totality.

Commandments. This term is not specifically used in the Qur'an. However, after reading the Qur'an one learns the injunctions contained therein. A partial list is given below:

1. To believe in one God.
2. To honor and respect parents.
3. To honor the human rights of all people, regardless of their religion.
4. Be charitable, but do not be prodigal.
5. Do not kill except for justifiable cause.
6. Do not commit adultery or fornication.
7. Safeguard the possessions of orphans.
8. Deal with others with justice.
9. Be pure in heart and mind.
10. Be humble and unpretentious.
11. Do not backbite.
12. Do not be a scandalmonger.
13. Do good deeds for the love of God.
14. God loves those who forgive.
15. God is with those who patiently persevere.
16. Help your neighbor.

WHAT THE QUR'AN SAYS ABOUT OTHER PROPHETS**

"Say: we believe in God and that which is revealed unto us, and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered." (2:136)

"Surely We have revealed to you, as We had revealed to Noah, and the Prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job, and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David the Psalms." (4:163)

Prophet Adam

He was the first Prophet and the first human being created by God. Then God created his mate Eve. Adam erred and ate the forbidden fruit or grain. Then he regretted. God taught him how to ask for forgiveness. He repented and was forgiven. Eve was also forgiven. According to the Qur'an, Eve was not blamed for Adam's slip. They both were sent down to earth as an honorable couple endowed with the Grace of Merciful God to start the human race on planet earth

Prophet Noah

Prophet Noah preached his people for nine hundred and fifty years according to the Qur'an. They however refused to believe in him. He prayed to God to bring punishment on them. God accepted his prayer, sent deluge, and ordained that all unbelieving folks will drown. Noah had built an ark by God's command. He and a handful of believers and one pair each of all types of animals alighted on the ark and were saved. All unbelieving people were drowned. Noah's son who was an unbeliever was also drowned. He had not heeded Noah's pleadings to come aboard the ark. According to the Qur'an, the Ark landed safely on mount Ararat, which is a mountain range situated between the countries Modern Iraq and Turkey.

Prophet Abraham

Prophet Abraham is a patriarchal figure revered by Muslims, Christians and Jews as "father of the three monotheistic religions." Prophet Abraham is referred to as "Muslim" in the Qur'an, meaning that he submitted to the Will of God. He broke the idols in the temple and admonished his people, including his father, for worshipping idols. His father threatened him with stoning to death.

He is referred to as "*friend of God*" and "*upright in faith.*" According to the Qur'an, for his belief in one God, Abraham was thrown into a huge fire by the order of the king, who also was idol worshipper. Abraham was unwavering in his conviction and God prevented the fire from causing him any harm. In obedience to God's command, Abraham "sacrificed" Ishmael, his son borne by lady Hager. This was a great trial for Abraham, but he was successful. God was pleased with him, and He saved Ishmael from harm. Ishmael in his infancy was sent, along with his mother, to the land of Paran, the modern day city of Mecca. When he grew up to be strong, Abraham with his help construct the House of God, named Kaba. He was so commanded by God. Whenever Prophet Muhammad introduced a new Law or Ritual to the Muslims, they would ask him where it came from. He would answer that it was from the tradition of his ancestor, Prophet Abraham.

Prophet Lot.

He was a nephew of Prophet Abraham. He was sent to the people of the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The men of those cities practiced sodomy. They also ambushed travelers and made them target of their lust. Lot warned them that sodomy was sin and God will punish them, but they did not pay heed. They even threatened to banish lot form the land for inviting them to piety. Finally, God sent two angels to lot, and asked him and his daughters to leave the city during the night. In the morning, God rained brimstone on the cities and "turned them upside down." Prophet Lot's wife also perished, because she condoned the sin. Lot and his two daughters were saved. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were situated adjacent the dead sea on the highway to modern Syria. That land now is desolate covered with high sulfur containing soil. Nothing grows there. God said in Qur'an said that He made those destroyed cities as His "Sign," meaning that they are remain as monument to the wrath of God on the sinful people. In the local tradition that part of Dead sea is called "Sea of Lot." Prophet Lot was God fearing and pious, as a prophet of God should be. Qur'an does not contain any allegations of sin and incest against Prophet Lot. This is in contrast to the Bible, which alleges that Prophet Lot (God forbid) got drunk and committed incest with his daughters.

Prophet David.

He was a prophet and a king to the children of Israel. He was also a judge and was endowed with knowledge and authority. He was given miraculous powers. When he sang hymns (The Psalms of David), the birds, trees and mountains echoed his songs. Despite being a king, he knitted baskets and sold them to earn his living. He spent much time in worship of God. The Biblical story of David defeating God's enemy Goliath is also in the Qur'an, but many details have been omitted. Only spiritual lessons are emphasized. The following verse of the Qur'an is an example:

"And were it not God's repelling some men with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder; but God is Gracious to the creatures." (2:251)

Prophet Solomon

Solomon was Prophet David's son. He prayed to God to grant him a magnificent kingdom that no one ever had before. God granted his prayer. Solomon commanded the winds to do his bidding with God's leave. Jinn kind (powerful creatures made from fire) toiled for him, obeying his command. He could understand the language of animals. Despite the great power and wealth, Solomon was humble and ever thankful to God. God appreciated and accepted his gratitude and was pleased with him. He was pious, virtuous and godly according to the Qur'an. This is in contrast to the Bible, which contains stories of lust and debauchery (God forbid) attributed to Solomon.

Prophet Isaac

He was born to Prophet Abraham from his wife Lady Sarah. According to the Bible, Isaac was born when Abraham was one hundred years old, which is fifteen years after Ishmael was born. Therefore, Isaac was second born and not first born. From Isaac's progeny came other prophets including Prophet Moses.

Prophet Moses

Prophet Moses is held in great esteem in the Qur'an and his name is the most frequently mentioned of all the prophets, about 136 times. His miraculous bringing up in the palace of Pharaoh and later his confrontation with him is described in detail. God spoke to him from behind the burning bush. His many miracles include turning his staff into a real serpent, turning his hand shining white, episodes of punishment (signs from God) to people of Pharaoh, the escape from Pharaoh by parting of the red sea are mentioned. He received Torah and the Ten Commandments at the foot of Mount Sinai. Many more events related to his ministry are recorded in the Qur'an.

Prophet Aaron.

He was brother of Prophet Moses and a prophet himself. He helped Moses in his mission and looked after the children of Israel when Moses spent forty nights at mount Sinai in communion with God. He accompanied Moses to invite him to the worship of God Almighty.

Prophet Ishmael

He was the first-born son of Prophet Ishmael from lady Hager. He was born when Abraham was eighty-six years old according to the Bible. When he was still an infant, God commanded Abraham to take him and his mother to settle in the land of Paran (modern day Saudi Arabia). When Ishmael came of age, Abraham saw in his vision that he was sacrificing Ishmael. Abraham asked Ishmael what he thought. Ishmael replied,

according to the Qur'an, that Abraham to do what God had commanded, and that he will comply and be patient. This was a trial and God was pleased with both. God later commanded Prophet Abraham to build a House for Him with the help of Ishmael in Mecca. It is called Kaba. When the house was completed, God commanded Abraham to proclaim that people to come to perform pilgrimage. At that time, the land was desolate and Abraham wondered who would hear him. God told him to proclaim and He would make people listen. Today several million Muslims from all parts of the world visit the house of God, Kaba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia every year to perform Hajj pilgrimage.

Prophet Muhammad is direct descendant from the progeny of Prophet Ishmael.

John the Baptist

He was a contemporary of prophet Jesus. In the Qur'an, he is referred to as *Yahya*. His was born to Zachariah, miraculously, in his ripe old age through his wife who was barren and very old. Zachariah had prayed to God to grant him a child, and God answered his prayer by sending an angel to inform him of a son. John th Baptist was a contemporary of Prophet Jesus and had announced his coming.

Prophet Jesus

Prophet Jesus was the last prophet of God before the coming of the advent of the last Prophet of God, Prophet Muhammad. He came from the lineage of Prophet Abraham, through Prophet Isaac. He was born to virgin Mary through a miracle. Angel Gabriel came to her in human form and informed her that she will have a son and God had named him Jesus. She asked how she could have a son when no man had ever touched her. The angel replied, "So it be, it is easy for God. When He intends a thing, He says to it "*Be*" and it "*Is*." Jesus spoke to his people as baby in the lap of his mother, defending her virginity. He also announced that he was a prophet and servant of God, bestowed with a book (Evangel) and wa sent by God to guide the children of Israel. The Qur'an mentions his many miracles. He brought dead alive, healed the lepers and the sick by permission of God. Most of the children of Israel rejected him, except a few. His mission was to bring back the children of Israel to the true teachings of Torah. Their priests had hidden Torah, changed its words and used the religion for personal financial gains. He followed the Jewish tradition. He denied bringing a new religion.

The Second Coming of Prophet Jesus.

The Qur'an clearly states that Jesus did not die on the cross, but it was made to appear so to his people. The Qur'an states that Jesus was raised up to God. In Islamic tradition, Jesus will re-appear (his second coming) before the day of Judgment. He, along with the representative of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them) will fight injustice and establish peace and justice on earth.

The fundamental difference between the Muslim belief and the Christian belief is the position of Jesus. While both Muslims and Christians believe in Jesus, the majority of Christians also regard Jesus as "the son of God," and "God in the flesh", which the Muslims reject. Muslims regard Jesus as a chosen Prophet of God. God strongly rebukes the notion of Trinity, which was proposed by St. Paul more than one hundred years after Jesus left.

More on Prophet Jesus in the chapter "Jesus and virgin Mary in the Qur'an." (Page)

More on Prophets

There are several other prophets mentioned briefly in the Qur'an. A partial, listing of them along with their Arabic names are presented later in this book in the section on Explanatory Notes. (Page)

WHAT THE QUR'AN SAYS ABOUT OTHER RELIGIONS

God says in the Qur'an: "Lo! Those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians and Sabeans, whoever believes in God, the last day, and does right, surely, their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come unto them. Neither shall they grieve." (2:62)

About Christians, monks and priests

Surely, those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabeans and the Christians, whoever believes in God (Almighty and the Last Day, and does good; they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve." (5: 69)

"Say: we believe in God and that which is revealed unto us, and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and which, the prophets received." (2: 136)

"Say: O' people of the Book, (Jews and Christians) Come to common terms as between you and us: That we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than God." (3:64)

"And We sent Jesus, son of Mary, afterwards, and We gave him Injeel (Gospel), and We put in the hearts of those who followed him, kindness and mercy ..." (57: 27)

"And you (O' Prophet) will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe (to be) those who say: 'we are Christians'; this is because there are priests and monks among them, and because they do not behave proudly." (5: 82)

"And when they (Monks and the priests) hear what has been revealed to the Apostle (Muhammad), you will see their eyes overflowing with tears on account of the truth that they recognize; they say 'Our Lord, we believe, so write us down with the witnesses (of truth).'" (5:83)

"And when God said: O' Jesus, I am going to terminate the period of your stay (on earth) and cause you to ascend unto Me and purify you of those who disbelieve, and (will) make those who follow you (to be) above those who disbelieve, to the Day of resurrection, ..." (3: 55)

THE QUR'AN AND SCIENCE

In the following paragraphs, some of the verses from the Qur'an, dealing with various scientific facts, are presented. For the sake of convenience, these are grouped under various headings. For a more detailed study, the reader is referred to the book "The Bible, The Qur'an and Science," by Dr. Maurice Bucaille.

About the creation of the heavens and the earth

"Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then we clove them asunder and We got every living thing out of the water? Will they not then believe?" (21:30)

The above verse might be a reference to the origin of the universe with an explosion. The modern Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe also postulates an explosion.

The word "smoke" here refers to the gaseous material with particles suspended in it. This corresponds to the concept of the "Primary Nebula" put forward by modern science, which consisted of hydrogen and helium.

"Your Lord is God who created the Heavens and the Earth in six days (periods)...In a day whereof the measure is as a thousand years of your reckoning." (32:5)

. *“Moreover (God) turned to the heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth: Come willing or unwilling; they said: We come in willing obedience.” (41:11)*

The time taken for the creation of the Heavens and the Earth is not to be taken in a literal sense. As explained in the Qur’an, what we call a day by our earthly yardstick is not the same as a day by the heavenly yardstick. This is consistent with modern scientific knowledge, which estimates the age of the Earth and sun in millions of years.

*For more on Prophet Jesus and Virgin Mary, please refer to the section “Jesus and virgin Mary in the Qur’an” on page 19.

**Who is a Prophet of God? Arabic names for Biblical Prophets. Please refer to explanatory notes on page 22.

“Did you see how God created seven Heavens one above another and made the moon a light therein and made the sun a lamp”. (71:15-16)

It is well known to modern science that in the universe there is a plurality of galaxies, with many galaxies and many suns larger than ours.

Astronomy in the Qur’an

“God is the one who created the night, the day, the sun, and the moon. Each one is traveling in an orbit with its own motion.” (21:33)

Modern scientific knowledge has shown that our galaxy revolves on its own axis. The sun is located eccentrically and thus revolves in an orbit around the center of the galaxy. This was not known to man 1400 years ago. The concept of motion of the heavenly bodies with an orbit of their own belongs to modern science. Earlier scientists regarded the sun as a stationary object.

“Has thou not seen how God merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night?” (21:29)

“He coils the day upon the night and coils the night upon the day.” (39:5)

Astronauts have described the appearance of the Earth from space. The sun lights up half of the earth facing it and the other half is dark. As the earth rotates on its axis, the darker areas are lighted, and the light areas merge into darkness. This is well understood now. However, 1400 years ago this knowledge did not exist. In those days the earth was mistakenly thought to be flat and at the center of the universe. Modern scientific data are in full agreement with the Qur’anic description.

“God subjected the sun and the moon, each one runs its course to an appointed term.” (33:2)

Modern science has estimated the age of the sun and has estimated when it will run out of hydrogen and will cool off. Modern astronomy has discovered that the solar system is moving towards a point in the constellation of Hercules, named the Solar Apex.

About the expansion of the universe

“The heaven, we have built it with power. Verily, we are expanding it.” (51:47)

The gradual expansion of the universe is one of the most important discoveries of modern times.

About the conquest of space

“O Assembly of Jinn (spirits) and men, if you can penetrate regions of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate them! You will not penetrate them save with a power.” (55:33)

This refers to man’s entry into space and the exploration of the depths of the earth.

About the water cycle

“We sent down water from the sky in measure, and lodged it in the ground. And We certainly are able to withdraw it. Therewith for you, we gave rise to gardens of palm trees and vineyards.” (23:18-19)

“Has thou not seen that God sent water down from the sky and let it through sources into the ground? Then He caused sown fields of different colors to grow.” (39:21)

The water cycle as we know it today was described 500 years ago. Before that, many people believed that water from the ocean was thrust into soil that formed springs and underground reservoirs. It was also thought that moisture in soil condensed to form water. The Qur’an gave the correct view in an authoritative way 1400 years ago.

About the mountains

“We have placed in the ground (mountains) standing firm, so that it does not shake with them.” (21:31)

“Have We not made the earth an expanse and the mountains stakes?” (78:6-7)

According to modern theories, mountains played a key role in the formation and stability of landmass. They also contribute to the stability of the earth’s crust, which is relatively very thin. Beneath the crust are molten rocks at very high temperatures. Qur’anic description and modern scientific discoveries are in agreement.

About the effects of high altitude

“Those who God wills to guide, He opens their breasts to Islam. Those who He wills lose their way, He makes their breasts narrow and constricted, as if they were climbing the sky.” (6:125)

This refers to breathlessness or “air hunger” due to the decreased quantity of oxygen available at high altitude. This is an accurate yet surprising statement, because high mountain climbing, air travel, etc. were not available at that time.

About the origin of life on earth

“God created every animal from water.” (24:45)

“And We got every living thing out of water. Will they then not believe?” (21:30)

Modern scientific data indicate that life is of aquatic origin and water is the major component of the living cell. Humankind did not know this in Muhammad’s time.

About the Vegetable kingdom.

About the balance in the vegetable kingdom:

“The earth...We caused all kinds of things to grow therein in due balance.” (15:19)

Reproduction in the vegetable kingdom.

“God is the One who sent water down from the sky and thereby, We brought forth pairs of plants each separate from the other.” (20:53)

“Glory be to Him who created components of couples of every kind: of what the ground caused to grow, of themselves (human beings) and of what you do not know”. (26:36)

The last two verses above clearly indicate the two sexes, not only in the vegetable kingdom but also in other creatures not known to man at the time of Muhammad, but discovered later on. The use of word ‘things’ refers to pairs in higher living form, lower living forms like smaller animals, birds, insects, members of plant kingdom, also inanimate creation including, electricity which has positive and negative charge, atomic particle which consists of electrons and protons. It appears that all things we know are in pairs of opposites.

About the Animal kingdom

“God fashioned the two of a pair, the male and a female, from a small quantity of liquid, when it is poured out.” (53:45-46)

In the above verses, the reproduction of the animal kingdom is stated in a general but precise way. The word used in Arabic signifies sperm.

Animal Communities

“There is no animal on earth, no bird, which flies on wings that (does not belong to) communities like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book (of decrees.) Then to their Lord they shall be gathered.” (6:38)

The existence of true communities amongst animals, insects, etc., has been established only in the last few decades.

About formation of milk

“Verily in your cattle, there is a lesson for you! We give you a pure milk to drink, excellent for its drinkers; (it comes) from what, inside their bodies, is between digested food and blood.” (16:66)

The above verse describes in general but accurate terms the formation of milk from the product of digested food, which mixes with blood and is carried to the mammary glands that secrete it. Man did not know this at the time of prophet Muhammad. In fact, the discovery of the circulation of blood was made some ten centuries after the Qur’anic revelation.

About human reproduction

Qur’an has made many references to various facts about human reproduction in precise and accurate terms. Professor Keith Moore, who has written a well-known book on embryology (study of human reproduction), has verified the accuracy of the Qur’anic statements. Scientific knowledge about human reproduction was incomplete until recent times. Use of the microscope was indispensable for the study of development of a fetus in the mother’s womb. The sperm and the ovum (egg) are so small; they are invisible to the naked eye. The microscope was invented in the 17th century AD

“He makes you in the womb of your mother in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness.” (39:8)

The three veils of darkness or layers have been identified by biologists as (1) Abdominal wall, (2) Uterine wall, and (3) Amniochorionic membrane (a sac filled with fluid in which the fetus floats).

“Man We did create from a quintessence of clay, and then We placed as a drop of sperm, in a place of rest, firmly fixed. Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot, We made a leech-like lump. Then we made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it

another creature. So blessed be God, the best to create.”
(40:13-14)

“Then out of a morsel (chewed up) of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed.” (22:5)

According to Professor Keith Moore, the above is a surprisingly accurate description of human development in the uterus. The word “chewed up flesh” and “leech-like clot,” precisely describe the appearance and characteristics of the developing embryo and the product of conception.

“And He made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised.” (32:8)

“Verily We created man from a drop of mingled sperm in order to try him, So, We give him (the gifts of) hearing and sight.” (76:2)

The word ‘despised’ refers to the fact that semen comes out through the same route, as does the urine. “Mingled fluid” refers to the various secretions that semen is made up of. In addition, semen mixes with fluids in the female genital tract.

“That He did create in pairs, male and female, from a seed when lodged in its place.” (53:45)

The above verse refers to the fact that sex is determined at the time of fertilization. This discovery was made only sixty years ago, when sex chromosomes were discovered. Thus, it is clear that the information in the Qur’an about human reproduction is of divine origin, and was beyond the knowledge of a human being at the time it was revealed.

(The translation of Qur’anic verses given above is by Doctor Maurice Bucaille.)

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT IN ISLAM

Since its inception 1400 years ago, several major schools have evolved among the Muslim. Sunni Muslims constitute a majority while Shi’ite Muslims are the dominant minority group. There several other smaller splinter groups.

The majority of Sunni Muslims follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad as interpreted by various Imams and scholars. The Shi’ite Muslims strictly follow the teachings of Prophet Muhammad as interpreted by Imam Ali, the son-in –Law, cousin, and the fourth Khalif of Islam. Additionally, they follow the teachings of the pious Imams from the family of Prophet Muhammad.

The differences among Muslims occurred after the death of Prophet Muhammad, concerning his succession, and were in part of a political nature. Tribal loyalties also played a part. Many Muslims at that time did not want the successorship to the Prophet to stay in his family. They preferred an older person in preference to the young man, Ali. The Sunni Muslims believe that the succession to Prophet Muhammad was up to the people to decide. Whereas, the Shi’ite Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad had designated his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, as his successor. Over the years, rulers and unscrupulous religious leaders have exploited these differences in order to achieve their selfish and material objectives.

It must be emphasized that the fundamentals of the faith are common to all Muslims. All Muslims believe in one God. All Muslims follow the same Qur’an. All Muslims believe in Prophet Muhammad and strive to emulate him. All Muslims agree upon the basic tenets and Pillars of Islam.

Wahabism.

This is an offshoot of Sunni Islam. Its founder was 18th century Abdul Wahab. Wahabism is the dominant religion of Saudi Arabia. Abdul Wahab preached a puritanical, ultraconservative and extreme form of religion. A noteworthy aspect of their belief is calling other Muslims, as “apostates and heretics” They prohibit visiting gravesites of saints. Their intolerance has led them to violence against other Muslims. During early 20th century, Wahabi expeditions used to invade Shia religious shrines in Iraq and plunder, loot and kill. Oil wealth has helped the spread of Wahabi movements in many parts of world. They aggressively promote their philosophy by building mosques and religious centers. They extensively publish books and literature promoting

their ideology. They appoint and fund Imams of the mosques and Islamic organizations, especially in the west. Bin Laden, the founder of Al-Qaeda movement belongs to Wahabi faith.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ISLAM

Islam has been largely misunderstood in the west. The reasons can be traced back to the era of the Crusades. Ignorance, fear, suspicion, etc. prevented the followers of other major faiths from an objective and impartial study of the religion. The result was that numerous misconceptions, false stories, and biased accounts about Islam came to be accepted as “true” even by Christian scholars and historians. Some of the misconceptions are listed below:

Misconception #1 - *Allah* is “God of the Muslims”

Many Christians believe that *Allah* is different from the God of Jesus. The fact is that “*Allah*” in Arabic simply means The God, as does “Yahweh” in Hebrew, “Dieu” in French, and “Gott” in German. He is the same one God, the Omnipotent and the Omnipresent Deity, the Creator, Sustainer, and Cherisher of the universe.

Misconception #2 - “Muslims worship Muhammad”

It is a common misunderstanding that “Muhammad was divine and that Muslims worship Muhammad,” similar to some Christians who worship Jesus. The truth is that Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) is no more than a chosen messenger of God. He died like any other mortal. Muslims do not believe that Jesus was divine (God or part of God). Muslims regard Jesus as a blessed and chosen Prophet of God.

Misconception #3 - “Women are given an inferior status in Islam”

Nothing can be farther from the truth. The status of women in Islam is the most misunderstood aspect of the religion. According to the Qur’an as well as the sayings of the prophet Muhammad, women are given an honorable status in Islam.

Islam gives women separate legal rights as individuals. Fourteen hundred years ago at the very inception of the Islamic faith, by divine decree, women were given the right to divorce, the right to own property in their own name which is separate from husband’s property. The women were granted the right of inheritance, the right to make last will and testament, and other rights. These rights were not available to women in the western societies until the 19th century.

The Qur’an says:

“Men shall have the benefit of what they achieve and acquire, and women shall have the benefit of that which they similarly achieve and acquire.” (4:32)

A saying of Prophet Muhammad is recorded as follows: “If a daughter is born to a person and he brings her up, giving her good education and training in various arts of life, I shall myself stand between him and hellfire.”

According to another saying of Prophet Muhammad:

“Paradise lies under the feet of the mother.”

God says in the Qur’an about women: *“They (women) have rights similar to those against them...”* (i.e., men)

Misconception #4 - “Polygamy is conducive to loose moral behavior”

Islam permits a man to have more than one wife under certain circumstances, but it does not encourage this practice. In fact, polygamy is discouraged.

The Qur’an says this about polygamy:

“And if you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two, three, and four, but if you may not do justice to them, then marry only one.” (4:3)

Islam permits polygamy as an alternative to situations, which may force a husband to immoral acts. A husband may be forced to seek a second wife in the following situations:

- A. Inability of the wife to bear children and the couple choose not to seek divorce.
- B. Prolonged debilitating illness of the wife, where she is unable to provide the sexual needs of her husband, or is unable to carry on her responsibilities in relation to the family.
- C. Prolonged physical separation due to war, travel, etc.

All the prophets of the old and their followers, such as Abraham, David, Solomon, and others practiced polygamy. In the early days of Islam, because of successive wars of defense, there was a great shortage of men and an over-supply of women. Polygamy was the only honorable way to provide the women, particularly the widows and orphans, with food, shelter, and protection. Thus, many moral and social ills were avoided.

Misconception #5 - “Islam was spread with the sword”

In the past, Muslim kings, or more appropriately, kings who were Muslims, conquered many lands; but a distinction has to be made between lands conquered by these kings and imposition of Islam on its people. Islam does not believe in force, coercion, or lure of material benefits to spread the faith. Muslims believe that God alone can put faith into the heart of a person.

“No soul can believe, except by the will of God...” (10:100)

“Let there be no compulsion in religion.” (2:256)

There are several examples of the tolerance of Muslims towards other religions. Muslims ruled over Spain for many hundreds of years. The Christians and the Jews there were free to practice their *in case of murderer or mischief on earth, (it is as if he) has killed the whole mankind.” (5:32)*

Misconception #7. “Islam rewards suicide with paradise.”

A few, very small, misguided Muslim groups hold this misconception. Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of Muslims reject this distorted and extreme view. Taking one’s own life is no different than taking someone else’s life. It is a major sin, which invokes extreme displeasure and wrath of God. An individual who commits suicide or deliberately takes the life of another innocent human, invokes wrath of God and becomes liable to enduring punishment in the hereafter.

Misconception #8. “Islam condones terrorism.”

Islam prohibits terrorism, unlawful acquisition of property of others, and causing harm to innocent human beings. Islam rejects all forms of violence. Five times every day, at the end of their daily prescribed Prayers, Muslims say this “Peace be upon you (all), and Mercy of God and blessings.”

Prophet Muhammad (p) came as “Mercy to the worlds.” He treated every one with kindness, forgave his worst

enemies, even though he had full authority and right to punish them. Fallen enemy soldiers were treated humanely. He strictly prohibited torture, or mutilation of the bodies of enemies who died on the battlefield. The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001 was condemned by Muslims around the world. In fact, those who perished included many Muslims.

Terrorists have no religion. They kill indiscriminately (even their own). They use the name of religion to justify the atrocities, and thus they bring a bad name to the religion.

The Qur'an says:

“Any one who has saved one life, (it is as if he) has saved the whole mankind, and any one who has killed a human being, except in case of murderer or mischief on earth, (it is as if he) has killed the whole mankind.” (5:32)

Misconception #9. “Hijab (the head scarf and the outer covering) is degrading to women.”

In fact, it is a sign of dignity and respect for women. It signifies that the worth and value of a woman is not in her looks and her physical form. It protects Muslim women from being molested by men. It safeguards the woman from being reduced to mere “sex objects.” Islam prohibits women from all acts of lewdness including public display of their beauty in any form or manner.

Islam similarly requires men to practice modesty in their behavior, to cover their private parts, and not to look at women with lust.

Conclusion. Islam upholds the moral and ethical teachings similar to the Abrahamic faiths of Christianity and Judaism. In fact, the teachings of the Qur'an as practiced by Prophet Muhammad (p) require a higher code of moral and ethical conduct. If a Muslim falls short in his conduct, he is to be blamed, and not the religion itself.

JESUS AND VIRGIN MARY IN THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an is a source of knowledge about Prophet Jesus and his mother Virgin Mary, peace be upon them, which is not generally known to those who follow the Christian faith. The Qur'an not only leads us to a better understanding of who he was, but most importantly, it tells us who he was not. It increases our respect and love for him. The Qur'an was revealed 600 years after Jesus' birth. It provides a unique perspective that no other source does. Following are the Qur'anic statements regarding Jesus and his mother Virgin Mary.

Jesus son of Mary was a Prophet of God like other prophet.

“Say: We believe in God and what is revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was entrusted to Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have surrendered.” (3:84)

All the Prophets were well aware that they were sent by God Almighty, for the same purpose and with the same message:

“And when We exacted a covenant from the Prophets, and from you (Muhammad), and from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant; that He may ask the loyalty of their loyalty. And He has prepared a painful doom for the unfaithful.” (33:7-8)

“...messengers We have mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you...” (4:164)

“He has ordained for you that religion which He commanded to Noah, and that which We inspired in you (Muhammad), and that which We commanded to Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion and do not be divided in it!” (42:13)

Thus, the picture of Jesus in the Qur’an is that of a messenger who, like all the other messengers, came to the people of his time in fulfillment of God’s comprehensive and universal plan:

“And We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, confirming what was before him, and We bestowed on him the Gospel wherein is guidance and light, confirming that which was before it in the Torah - a guidance and a warning to those who are careful.” (5:46)

“When God says; O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favor unto thee and unto thy mother. How I strengthened thee with Holy spirit, so thou speakest unto mankind in the cradle, as in maturity, and how I taught thee the scripture and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel.” (5:110)

Jesus had knowledge of the past and the future:

“Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Children of Israel! See, I am the messenger of God to you, confirming what was before me in the Torah, and bringing good news of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Ahmad (the Praised One)...” (61:6)

with those who bow (in worship). This is of the news of things hidden. We reveal it to you (Muhammad).

You were not present with them when they cast their lots, to decide which of them should be the guardian of Mary, nor were you present with them when they disputed it. And when the angels said: O Mary! God gives you good news of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, exalted in the world and the hereafter, and one of those brought near (to God). He will speak to humankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is of the righteous. She said, ‘My Lord! How can I have a child when no man has touched me?’ He said: ‘It is so. God creates what He will. If He decrees a thing, He says to it only, “Be” and it “is” ’.

And He will teach him the Book and the wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. And He will make him a messenger to the Children of Israel, saying: I come to you with a sign from your Lord. See! I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by God’s will. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by God’s will. And I announce to you what you eat and what you store up in your houses. Here truly is a sign for you, if you are believers. And I confirm what was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful some of what was forbidden to you. I come to you with a sign from your Lord, so keep your duty to God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is the straight path.

But when Jesus became conscious of their disbelief, he cried: Who will be my helpers in the cause of God? The disciples said: We will be God’s helpers. We believe in God, and bear you witness that we have submitted. Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed and we follow him whom You have sent. Enroll us among those who bear witness.” (3:42-53)

An account of the birth of Jesus in the Chapter of the Qur’an titled “Maryam” (Mary):

“And make mention of Mary in the Book, when she withdrew from her people to a chamber looking East, and secluded herself from Jesus’ disciples are mentioned in the Qur’an as follows: “O you who believe! Be

God's helpers, even as Jesus, son of Mary, said to the disciples, who are my helpers for God? They said, "we are God's helpers." And a party of the Children of Israel believed, while a party disbelieved...." (61:14)

Qur'anic description of "The Last Supper."

"And when I inspired the disciples: Believe in Me and My messenger, they said: We believe. Bear witness that we have submitted. When the disciples said, O Jesus, son of Mary! Is your Lord able to send down for us a table spread with food from heaven? He said: Observe your duty to God, if you are true believers. (They) said: We wish to eat from it, that we may satisfy our hearts and know that you have spoken the truth to us, and that we may be witnesses to this. Jesus, son of Mary, said: O God, our Lord, send down for us a table spread with food from heaven, that it may be a feast for us, for the first of us and the last of us, and a sign from You. Give us sustenance, for You are the Best of Sustainers. God said: See! I send it down. And whoever disbelieves in you afterwards, him I shall surely punish with a punishment with which I have not punished any of (My) creation." (5:111-115)

Jesus, a servant of God:

"And when the son of Mary is quoted as an example, behold! The folk laugh aloud, and say: Are our gods better, or is he? They raise not the objection but for argument's sake. No! But they are a contentious people. He is nothing but a servant on whom we bestowed favor, and we made him a pattern for the Children of Israel." (43:57-59)

"...and we caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow, and gave him the Gospel, and placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him. But they invented monasticism - which We did not ordain for them - seeking only God's pleasure, but they did not for those who disbelieve, I shall chastise them with a heavy chastisement in the world and the hereafter; and they will have no helpers. And as for those who believe and do good works, He will pay them their wages in full. God loves not the wrongdoers. This We recite to you is a revelation and a wise reminder. The likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, and then He said to him: Be! And he was." (3:55-59)

"And they say: The Beneficent has taken unto Himself a son. Certainly, you utter a disastrous thing, whereby almost the heavens are torn, and the earth is split open and the mountains fall in ruins, that you ascribe to the Beneficent a son! When it is not fitting for the Beneficent that He should take a son. There is no one in the heavens and the earth but that he comes to the Beneficent as a servant." (19:88-93)

"And they say: God has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him! No! However, whatever is in the heavens and earth is His. All are subservient to Him, the Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a thing, He says to it only: 'Be' and it 'Is'." (2:116-117)

The Qur'an further rejects that Jesus was "divine" or "God incarnate":

"They indeed have disbelieved who say: God is the Messiah, son of Mary. Say: Who then can do anything against God, if He willed to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone on the earth? To God is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them. He creates what He will. And God is able to do all things." (5:17)

The scenario on the Day of Judgment regarding Jesus' teachings is foretold:

"And when God says: O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you say to humankind: Take my mother and me for two gods besides God? He there is no god save the One God. If they desist not from saying it, a painful doom will fall on those of them who disbelieve. Will they not rather turn to God and seek forgiveness of Him? For God is Forgiving, Merciful. The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger; messengers had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. But they both used to eat food. See how We make the revelation clear for the people, and see how they are turned away!" (5:73-75)

The Qur'an rejects the doctrine of the crucifixion of Jesus, but affirms his ascension to God:

"And because of their saying: We killed the Messiah Jesus, son of Mary, God's messenger - they did not kill him or crucify him, but so it was made to appear to them; and look! Those who disagree concerning it are in doubt about it; they have no knowledge of it except pursuit of a conjecture; they did not kill him surely; but God took him up to Himself. God was ever Mighty, Wise". (4:157-158)

The above is a partial listing of verses in the Qur'an about Prophet Jesus, son of Virgin Mary. For a complete review, please refer to an approved translation of the Qur'an.

CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM:

The concept of God is unique in Islam. It not shared by any other religion. He is one, indivisible, and unlike any other being in existence. He is uncreated, whereas everything else is His creation. He has no beginning and no end. He was not begotten; he has no father, no mother, no son, and no consort. He is sublime and non-physical. He has no helpers and no associates. He is omnipotent and omnipresent. He is free of the limitations of time and space, because He created time and space, whereas all creation is subject to the limitations of time and space. His knowledge is total and comprehensive, i.e. he has knowledge of past, present, future, manifest, and hidden. He is aware of human intention, thoughts, and motives. He is fully aware of the innermost thoughts in the heart of His subjects. He is kind, compassionate, forgiving, relenting, generous and benevolent. God says in the Qur'an that when He intends a thing, He says to it '**Be**' and it '**Is**'.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The word "Allah." *Allah* is from "*Al + ilaha*," which means "The God," or "The Deity." This is the proper name of God Almighty, the one and the only, the creator of the universe, and everything in it. In the Arabic Qur'an, God gave this name to Himself. This name has no gender, no plural, and it is unique to Him only. Arabic speaking Christians and Jews use the name Allah when referring to God Almighty.

Who is a Prophet of God? What are the Qualifications of a Prophet of God?

A Prophet of God according to Islamic belief is a human being who is divinely commissioned to deliver God's message to the people. The message is inspired directly by God, or through the agency of an angel. A Prophet is chosen, educated, and guided by God Himself. He possesses highest morals, ethics, and integrity. He is unsurpassed in knowledge, piety, love of God, and in his obedience to God. A Prophet of God is totally selfless and humble. He is free of sins, blemishes, and ordinary human weaknesses. These credentials are of paramount importance for a Prophet of God to be a trustworthy teacher, mentor and guide to his followers. He faithfully conveys God's message in word, spirit, and action. The Qur'an does not ascribe the blemishes, weaknesses and sins to the Prophets of God that are found in some of the Biblical narratives.

Names of Prophets, and other terms in the Arabic Qur'an with corresponding names in English Bible:

ARABIC	ENGLISH	ARABIC	ENGLISH	ARABIC	ENGLISH
<i>Ayyub</i>	Job	<i>Luq'maan</i>	Lok	<i>Nuh</i>	Noah
<i>Al-Yash'a</i>	Elisha	<i>Maryam</i>	Mary	<i>Qarun</i>	Korah
<i>Dawood</i>	David	<i>Isma'il</i>	Ishmael	<i>Saba</i>	Sheba
<i>Fir'aun</i>	Pharaoh	<i>Ei'sa</i>	Jesus	<i>Suleiman</i>	Solomon
<i>Haroon</i>	Aaron	<i>Jibreel</i>	Gabriel	<i>Taurat</i>	Torah
<i>Ibrahim</i>	Abraham	<i>Jaloot</i>	Goliath	<i>Uzair</i>	Ezra
<i>Imran</i>	Amran	<i>Lut</i>	Lot	<i>Taloot</i>	Saul
<i>Ilyas</i>	Elias	<i>Majuj</i>	Magog	<i>Yahya</i>	John the Baptist
<i>Injeel</i>	Evangel, Gospel	<i>Mika'il</i>	Michael	<i>Yunus</i>	Jonah
<i>Ishaq</i>	Isaac	<i>Musa</i>	Moses	<i>Yusuf</i>	Joseph
		<i>Zakariy'ya</i>	Zachariah		

What Non-Muslims say about Prophet Muhammad

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad?"

"This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls ..."

"His forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea, and in no manner striving for an empire ...; his endless prayers, his mystic conversation with god, his death and his triumph after death,"

"Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas (e.g. unity of God and immateriality of God, etc.), of a cult without images, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie, Paris 1854, Vol. II, pp. 276-77.*

"It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved after the revolutions of twelve centuries,"

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ocklay, "History of the Saracen Empire" London 1870, P. 54.

"He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar, without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its support."

Bosworth Smith, "Mohammad and Mohammadanism," London 1874, P. 92

“It is impossible for anyone who studied the life and character of the great prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived to feel anything but reverence for that mighty prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme.”

Annie Besant, “The life and teachings of Muhammad,” Madras 1932, P. 4

“His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of men who believed in him and looked up to him as their leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement – all argue his fundamental integrity.”

W. Montgomery, “Muhammad in Mecca,” Oxford, 1953, P. 52

“My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world’s most influential persons may surprise some readers, and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level.”

Michael H. Hart, “The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History,” New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc. 1978, P. 33.

Genealogy of Prophet Muhammad

Prophet Muhammad’s lineage is traced to Prophet Abraham Peace be upon him. Muhammad belonged to the tribe of Quresh. Quresh came from the tribe of Kedar. Kedar descended from Prophet Ishmael, who was the older son of Prophet Abraham peace be upon them all.

According to the Bible, Ishmael was blessed by God, and God made a promise to Abraham that He would make Ishmael a nation. *“I will make him a great nation.” Genesis 17:20, 21. & 21:18*

According to the Muslim belief, the advent of Prophet Muhammad was in fulfillment of God’s promise to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon them).

“The Prophet like unto Moses.”

Who was the prophet “like unto Moses” that the Bible refers to in the verse below?

“I will raise a prophet like unto thee for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him.” Deuteronomy 18:18

The name of the prophet is not mentioned here but Prophet Muhammad in many ways was “like” Moses. Here are a few common things that Moses and Muhammad shared (peace be upon them): Both were given a code of Law, both overcame their enemies, both migrated to another land, both established themselves as prophets and statesmen, both commanded authority and respect from their people. On a more personal level, both were born a natural birth, having a father and a mother. Both married and raised children and both died a natural death.

In all the above-mentioned respects, Jesus was “unlike” Moses. Jesus did not bring a new code of Law. He was rejected by his people and was overcome by his enemies. He did not establish a State and did not wield political authority as Moses did.

On a personal level, he was born by a miracle, not having a father, and his mother was a virgin. He did not marry and did not have children. He did not die a natural death. According to the Bible he was crucified, and ascended unto his Lord.

“The awaited Prophet.” Who was the awaited prophet mentioned in the Bible, Deuteronomy 18:18?

The Jews sent priests to John the Baptist to ask who he was. They asked, “was he that Prophet?” He answered: *“I am not.”*

John the Baptist said: *“He that cometh after me is mightier”* Matthew 11:11
 Jesus said, *“I shall ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate
 (comforter, protector) to be with you forever ... John 14:16*

Jesus was a contemporary of John the Baptist. Thus, chronologically he is not likely the one referred to in the verses above. Besides, the Christians generally do not regard Jesus to be a Prophet of God.

Historically, Prophet Muhammad is the only prophet of God who came after Jesus, and who fits into the profile of: *“like unto Moses”* and who spoke God’s Words exactly as were revealed to him by Angel Gabriel. Prophet Muhammad’s name was also *“Ahmed”* meaning *“the praised one.”*

The Qur’an asserts that Prophet Muhammad is mentioned (not by his name, but by describing his profile) in the older scriptures.

Truly indeed, there is no god but God

THE BEAUTIFUL NAMES (ATTRIBUTES) OF GOD

The Qur’an mentions names (attributes) of God, which shed some light upon some of His qualities. These are listed below:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| O’ Allah (God’s proper name) | O’ Forgiving | O’ Powerful |
| O’ Gracious | O’Appreciator | O’ Expediter |
| O’ Merciful | O’ Exalted | O’ Delayer |
| O’ Sovereign Lord | O’ Very Great | O’ First |
| O’ Holy | O’ Preserver | O’ Last |
| O’ Peace | O’ Maintainer | O’ Manifest |
| O’ Guardian of Faith | O’ Reckoner | O’ Hidden |
| O’ Protector | O’ Sublime (Glorious) | O’ Governor |
| O’ Strong | O’ Generous | O’ Above reproach |
| O’ Compelling | O’ Watchful | O’ Source of all Good |
| O’ Majestic | O’ Responsive | O’ Relenting |
| O’ Creator | O’ All Embracing | O’ Avenger |
| O’ Evolver | O’ Wise | O’ Pardoner |
| O’ Sculptor | O’ Loving | O’ Indulgent |
| O’ Forgiving | O’ Glorious | Owner of Sovereign Kingdom |
| O’Dominant | O’ Resurrector | Lord of Majesty & Bounty |
| O’ Bestower | O’ Witness | O’ Equitable |
| O’Provider | O’ Truth | O’ Gatherer |
| O’ Opener | O’ Guardian | O’ Self-sufficient |
| O’ All knowing | O’ Mighty | O’ Enricher |
| O’ Absolute Possessor | O’ Firm | O’ Withholder |
| O’ Grantor in Abundance | O’ Protecting Friend | O’ Favorably inclined |
| Literally “Stretches out hand” | O’ Praiseworthy | O’ Who causes Distress |
| O’ Abaser | O’ Allocator | O’ Light (Divine) |
| O’ Exalter | O’ Originator | O’ Guide |
| O’ Honorer | O’ Restorer | O’ Creator |
| O’ Dishonorer | O’ Giver of life | O’ Everlasting |
| O’ All Hearing | O’ Giver of death | O’ Inheritor |
| O’ Seeing | O’ Alive | O’ Unerring |
| O’ Judge | O’ Self-subsisting | O’ Patient |
| O’ Justice | O’ Finder | |
| O’ Subtle | O’ Honorable | |
| O’ All Knowing | O’ One & Unique | |
| O’ Clement | O’ Free of need | |
| O’ Most High | O’ Most Able | |

It is not possible to accurately translate the Arabic names (Attributes) of God into another language. Above is an approximation in English language, which is generally agreed upon by the experts.

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Islamic Web Site: <http://www.al-islam.org>

Web site of the author: <http://www.islamquery.com>

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(The End)

“God is the Light of heavens and earth”
(The Qur'an)

“My Lord, increase me in knowledge.”
(A Qur'anic prayer)

As-salaamu-alaikum “Peace be upon you.”
(An Islamic greeting)