

Islamic beliefs & Practices

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Concepts to be discussed

1-Muslim beliefs

2-Rituals of worship

3-Sources of knowledge in Islam

4-Relationship between Muslims & non-Muslims

5-Islam is viable in America

Basic Muslim beliefs

1-Belief in One God

2-Belief in being accountable to God

3-Belief in God's Divine books

4-Belief in God's angels

5-Belief in God's messengers

6-Belief in Fate as God's will, and how to deal with our fate

Faith has degrees, and increases or decreases

Islam is to say the words of Shahada (bearing witness) and doing rituals of worship

Eiman (Faith) is what you exhibit in your character and behavior, confirming the convictions in your heart

Ihsan (Goodness & righteousness) is to hasten in doing good and to watch your behavior because you realize your accountability

**By serving God, our faith increases
and we attain righteousness**

**“O people serve your Lord, Who created you
and those before you, that you may learn
Taqwa (righteousness)”**

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 23

We evolve and improve and become better
human beings

The concept of God in Islam

- 1- There is only One God, the God of all whether Muslims, Christians, Jews or Agnostics.
- 2- God created us, provides for us and guides us to His way
- 3- We are accountable to God
- 4- God is merciful, and forgives our sins
- 5- God is just, and He responds to our prayers
- 6- God knows what we do
- 7- We cannot see God, nor understand His innate nature. We know Him through His creation and as He described Himself in attributes of perfection

God responds to our prayers when we call on Him in distress

“Who listens to the soul when it calls on Him,
and who relieves the suffering, and makes
you mankind inheritors of the earth? Can
there be another god besides Allah? Little it
is that they heed!”

An-Naml (The Ants) 27: 62

God hears and answers our prayers

“When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close to them: I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls on Me. Let them also with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me, that they may walk in the right way“

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 186

God is forgiving, most-merciful

“He ordained on Himself the rule of mercy“

Al-An'am (The Cattle) 6: 12

“Without doubt I am He that forgives again and again, to those who repent, believe and do good, and are ready to receive guidance“

Ta Ha 20: 82

“Unless he repents, believes and works righteous deeds, for Allah then changes the evil of such persons into good, for Allah is often-forgiving, most-merciful“

Al-Furqan (The Criterion) 25: 70

Accountability

- *Muslims believe that after we die we will be resurrected to stand judgment, and account for our deeds in life
- There is reward for those who do good and obey Allah (God): paradise; and there is punishment for those who were wicked and disobeyed God: Hell
- God's forgiveness and mercy extends to everyone who has even a small amount of faith
- Intercession is granted by Allah to whom He pleases, and on behalf those who are acceptable to Him

Reward and punishment

“Tell my servants that I am indeed the one who forgives and shows mercy, but I am also severe in punishment“

Al-Hijr (Rocky Tracts) 15: 49 & 50

Our good deeds intercede on our behalf on the Day of judgment

“Establish regular prayers during the day and night; those things that are good remove those that are evil. Be that a word of remembrance to those who remember their Lord. And be steadfast in patience, for Allah allows not the reward of the righteous to perish“

Hud (Prophet Hud) 11: 114 & 115

The rewards of our good deeds varies

Our reward depends on:

- 1- Our sincerity and motivation
- 2- The difficulty we encounter in doing good
- 3- Helping others is rewarded more than individual acts of worship
- 4- We are rewarded more when others follow our example
- 5- Our reward is increased during Ramadan
(The month of fasting)

How can we atone for our sins?

- 1- Recognizing that we have sinned or made a mistake
- 2- Turning to God seeking His forgiveness
- 3- Making a pledge not to repeat our mistake
- 4- Doing good to cancel the wrong we committed

Belief in God's Divine revelations

1- The Torah revealed to prophet Musa (Moses)

2- The Injeel (Gospel) revealed to prophet Eisa (Jesus)*

3- The Qur'an revealed to prophet Muhammad

“It is He who sent down to you, in truth, the Book confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the Criterion (of judgment between right and wrong)

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3 : 3 & 4

* We do not have the Injeel. What we have today is writings by Christians who related to us what they believed Jesus (PBUH) said or meant to convey

The Qur'an was safeguarded by Allah from alteration

“We have sent down the message, and We will
guard it“

Al-Hijr (Rocky Tracts) 15 : 9

The Qur'an corrects mistakes humans introduced into Divine texts

“To you We sent the scripture in truth,
confirming the scripture that came before it,
and guarding it in safety: so judge between
them by what Allah has revealed, and follow
not their vain desires, diverging from the
truth that has come to you“

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5 : 48

How do Muslims deal with the Bible?

- 1- What agrees with the Qur'an, we accept like the Oneness of God and good morals & ethics
- 2- What is contrary to Qur'anic teachings we reject, like depicting God's prophets in bad manner, or stating that Jesus is Divine, because the Qur'an states clearly that Jesus (PBUH) was human and not Divine
- 3- What is not mentioned in the Qur'an we stop: neither denying it, nor confirming it

Muslims believe in all of God's messengers

- The Jews believe only in the messengers sent to them. Therefore, they reject both Jesus and Muhammad (PBUH) as God's messengers
- The Christians believe in the messengers sent to the Children of Israel, and believe that Jesus (PBUH) came as a human being, but that he is also Divine
- The Muslims believe in all of God's messengers and do not say: "We believe in some, and reject others" An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4 : 151 & 152.
- Muslims believe that Muhammad (PBUH) is God's last messenger to mankind and he completed the message sent before him

What is the function of God's prophets & messengers?

- They **deliver** God's message to their people and **explain** it
- They **apply** the message in their character and behavior
- They **serve as examples** for others to follow
- They **live with their people and show how we as human beings react to difficulty, tests and trials.** God's messengers faced rejection and were patient. They **never lost faith**, but were steadfast and were wise, caring and kind

Belief in God's angels

The Angels of God perform several functions:

- 1-They deliver God's message to His messengers & prophets: Gabriel the Angel of revelation.
- 2-They record what we do or say
- 3-They praise & glorify God
- 4-They pray for and seek God's forgiveness on behalf God's righteous servants
- 5-They help those who believe
- 6-They guard Hell & Heaven

Belief in Fate, its good and its bad all come from God

- 1-God knows what will happen in the future,
we do not know that
- 2-Nothing occurs without God's permission
- 3-God knows our suffering and struggle
- 4-Through patient perseverance we can
change our fate to another fate that God
wills for us; we cannot sit idle and give up
- 5-We are rewarded for our effort and for our
faith and not loosing hope

Tests and trials are to be expected

“And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience; and We shall try your reported mettle“

Muhammad (Prophet Muhammad) 47 : 31

“Do people think that they will be left alone on saying: “We believe“ and that they will not be tested? We did test those before them, and Allah will certainly know those who are true from those who are false“

Al-Ankabut (The Spider) 29 : 2 & 3

We are tested according to the strength of our faith

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(The ones tested the most are the prophets and the most righteous. Every person is tested according to the degree of his faith. If his faith is strong, his test will be more severe; and if his faith is weak, his test will be lighter)

Ibn Hibban, Termedhi & Ahmad

Despair not of the mercy of God

“(Israel said): O my sons go and inquire about Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah’s soothing mercy. Truly no one despairs of Allah’s mercy except those who have no faith“

Yusuf (Joseph) 12 : 87

“(Abraham said): And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, but such as go astray?“

Al-hijr (Rocky Tracts) 15 : 56

All the affairs of the believer are good for him

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(I wonder for the affairs of the believer, all his affairs are good for him: if he is experiencing difficulty, he patiently persevere, and this is good for him. And if he is experiencing good times, he is grateful to Allah, and this is good for him. This only occurs to those who have faith)

Bokhari & Muslim

Rituals of worship

1- Prayer

2- Charity

3- Fasting (Ramadan)

4- Pilgrimage (Hajj)

Prayer in Islam

- 1- Muslims pray five obligatory prayers each day
- 2- There are optional prayers as well
- 3- Prayer in congregation like the Friday prayer
- 4- Prayer in Islam is structured, and only the Arabic Qur'an is recited
- 5- There is a rationale and wisdom for praying
- 6- Great reward for praying

The five daily obligatory prayers

- 1- Fajr (Dawn) before sunrise: 2 Rak'a
- 2- Zuhr (Noon): 4 Rak'a
- 3- Asr (Afternoon): 4 Rak'a
- 4- Maghrib (Sunset): 3 Rak'a
- 5- Isha'a (Night): 4 Rak'a

Al-Fatiha is recited in each Rak'a

“In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most-Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds. Most Gracious, Most-Merciful. Master of the Day of Judgment. We worship You and we seek Your help. Show us the straight way. The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not those You are angry with nor those who have gone astray“

Al-Fatiha (Opening Chapter) 1 : 1-7

The wisdom and rationale of prayer

- 1-Prayer teaches obedience, submission and devotion to God
- 2-We recite the Qur'an (God's words) in our prayers and listen to its guidance
- 3-Prayer protects us from sin and shameful deeds
- 4-Prayer teaches discipline & organization, commitment and placing our priorities correctly
- 5-Prayer in congregation allows Muslims to know each other, work together and help each other
- 6-We are promised a great reward for safeguarding our prayers

Learning from the Qur'an that we recite during prayers

“Here is a Book which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may consider its signs, and that people of understanding may receive admonition“

Sa D 38 : 29

Zakat (obligatory charity)

Important concepts

- To help the poor and needy is an obligation on those who can afford to give in charity
- It is actually God's money, we only use it during our life, and we are accountable how we earn it and how we spend it
- There is a great reward for giving charity
- Charity is more than just giving money
- If we do not give in charity we are penalized
- The rationale & wisdom of charity

We are accountable for our money

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Every human being will be asked on the Day of Judgment to account for four things: his life, what did he do with it; and his youth, did he use it properly or abuse it; and his money how did he earn, and how did he spend it; and his knowledge, did he share it with others)

Termedhi

Re-circulate your money and do not hoard it

- Money in Islam is not to be hoarded. Those who hoard money will be punished by God
- When money is circulated, jobs are created and the economy improves, and the poor and needy get help
- In contrast a society where money is hoarded is notable for high un-employment, economic stagnation and disparity between rich and poor

Whatever you give in charity is replaced by God

“Say: “My Lord enlarges or restricts sustenance to such of His servants as He pleases: and nothing do you spend in His cause but He replaces it: for He is the best of those who give sustenance“

Sa Ba 34 : 39

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Charity never decreases your wealth) Muslim

The ethics or manner of giving charity

- 1-Charity should be given in secret
- 2-Do not harm the feelings of those receiving your charity
- 3-Give the best of what you have
- 4-Each should give according to his means
- 5-Do not delay your charity
- 6-Charity is not just giving money: our effort to help others, our guidance and kind words are also charity

Charity is more than just giving money

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Every Muslim should give charity). His companions asked: Suppose he is poor and does not have money to give? He said: (He works, earns, become self-sufficient, then gives charity). They asked: Suppose he cannot work? He said: (He helps those who need his help). They asked: Suppose he does not do that? He said: (He guides to what is right and warns against what is wrong). They asked: Suppose he does not do that? He said: (Then he says good words). They asked: Suppose he does not do that? He said: (Then he does not harm others, it will be considered a charity for him)

Ahmad, Bokhari & Muslim

Fasting the month of Ramadan

- Muslims are obligated to fast Ramadan (the 9th month in the lunar year)
- Fasting involves abstinence from food, drink and sex from dawn till sunset
- Fasting also involves fasting from lying, cheating or doing wrong, and hastening in doing good and helping those who need our help
- We learn patience, self-restraint, piety and obedience to God and we get closer to Him
- Ramadan is a month of blessing and great reward

Learning self-control, discipline and controlling our vain desires

As we abstain from food and drink, we understand our obligation in obeying God and we learn to place our priorities correctly

We also learn how to deal with hunger and thirst, and to be patient and persevere, and we understand what it feels like to be hungry and in need

We learn to avoid bad language, and saying or doing anything that is wrong because we are fasting and it is wrong and inappropriate for us to wrong someone else or to commit sin

Conduct yourself properly in Ramadan

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Whoever does not stop lying or cheating,
there is no need for him to leave his food
and drink)

Bokhari

(When someone curses you, or picks a fight
with you, say: “I am fasting“)

Bokhari

Ramadan is a month of worship

- Fasting every day for a whole month from dawn to sunset
- Praying five times every day and offering additional optional prayers and attending congregational prayers at night in the mosque
- Giving charity is highly desirable in this blessed month
- Reciting the Qur'an
- Prayer to God (Dua'a)

Hajj (pilgrimage)

Hajj is a journey to the holy sites in Macca

It is done in the month of Zul-Hijja (12th month of the lunar year)

The pilgrim wears simple white clothes and goes with the intention of worshipping God

The pilgrim performs four main rites:

- Circling the Ka Ba
- Walking between the hills of Safa & Marwa
- Seeking God's forgiveness in Arafat
- Offering sacrifice and stoning the devil in Mena

The Ka' Ba is a house of worship

“Remember Abraham and Ishma’il raised the foundations of the house with this prayer: “Our Lord accept this service from us: for You are all-hearing, all-knowing. Our Lord make us Muslims bowing to Your will, and of our progeny a people Muslim bowing to Your will, and show us our places for the celebration of due rites, for You are the often-forgiving, most-merciful“

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2 : 127 & 128

Walking between the hills of Safa and Marwa

- The pilgrim walks between these two hills 7 times
- The pilgrim pays homage to and retraces the footsteps of Hajer (the wife of prophet Ibrahim and the mother of prophet Isma'il) as she searched for water in Macca which was a desolate un-inhabited place at that time. The well of Zamzam erupted at that time

Standing in Arafat

Arafat is a valley near Macca, where pilgrims go to on the 9th day of Zul-Hijja, where they pray and seek God's forgiveness and remember the Day of accountability & judgment

The best Dua'a (prayer) on that day is the Dua'a of all the prophets: (There is no god except Allah, He is alone with no partners; all praise is due to Him; He gives life and He takes it away; and He has power over all things)

The Rationale of Hajj

- Hajj is a journey of purification, when a person leaves his worldly preoccupation and journeys to Allah, remembers his obligations and understands his accountability (standing in Arafat)
- Hajj is a new beginning and a pledge to obey God and live our lives as He has commanded
- Hajj is an annular gathering of Muslims
- Visiting the holy places reminds us of God's prophets, their mission and their life struggle
- The reward of Hajj is forgiveness of sin

Sources of knowledge in Islam

1-The Qur'an

2-The Sunnah (tradition) of prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

From these two sources of knowledge scholars reach conclusions that can guide Muslims in the form of :

-**Ijma'**: (collective agreed upon opinion of the scholars)

-**Ijtihad & Qias** (critical thinking and deduction)

The Qur'an

- Is the literal word of God, and not the writings or sayings of Muhammad
- The Qur'an was safeguarded from alteration
- The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic because Muhammad was an Arab
- Qur'anic revelation came gradually over 23 years to strengthen the heart of Muslims, solve problems and answer questions
- The Qur'an guides, is a mercy from God and a cure for the ills in our hearts
- We have obligations towards the Qur'an

Evidence that the Qur'an is the word of God

- **Muhammad was illiterate:** he could not read or write
- The evidence for the authenticity of the Qur'an is **in the Qur'an itself:**
 - **No contradiction** in its verses, rather the verses complete and complement one another
 - It addresses our hearts and minds in a **logical** way and it has a commanding effect
 - **None of its verses were proven wrong**
 - **No one could produce such a Qur'an**

The Qur'an was revealed gradually over 23 years

- 1- To answer questions and solve problems
- 2- To strengthen the heart of the prophet and to provide guidance
- 3- It would have been impossible for the prophet and his companions to memorize, understand and apply the Qur'an if it came all at once

The Qur'an gives guidelines, but does not restrict us with specific details

The Qur'an does not specify the form of government, because the needs of each society is different

What it does provide are the guidelines of justice, equality and proper representation which are applicable in every society

Our obligations towards the Qur'an

- 1- To **read** it properly with concentration and devotion
- 2- To **understand** its principles and guidelines
- 3- To **apply** its orders and directives in our lives and to establish and develop the noble character espoused in the Qur'an
- 4- To **teach** the Qur'an and spread its useful message
- 5- To **defend** the Qur'an against false accusations

How was the Qur'an preserved?

- 1- It was **written** on the material available at the time by scribes who heard the verses from prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
- 2- The verses of the Qur'an revealed gradually over 23 year were **memorized** in the hearts of the prophet's companions
- 3- When the prophet died, the whole Qur'an was **safeguarded in written and oral forms**
- 4- **Abou Bakr** collected the Qur'an from its sources **in one book**; then **Othman** wrote it in **one version** to make sure there are no differences in recitation

The Sunnah (tradition) of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

- The **sayings** of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also known as Hadeeth
- His **actions**
- What he **allowed and approved or did not object to**

What does an authentic Hadeeth mean ?

- The series of men relating the Hadeeth have been found to be **honest, truthful and of high integrity**
- Their **memorization** cannot be questioned
- There is **nothing that casts doubt** on the content of the Hadeeth
- The Hadeeth is **not contradicted by the Qur'an or another saying of the prophet** that is authentic

The Prophet's sayings were scientifically authenticated

- The **character and memorization of each narrator was authenticated** before accepting the Hadeeth, to make sure that he did not lie or forget or change the words
- **Where he heard the Hadeeth and from whom was also authenticated**
- The Hadeeth was **cross referenced** to other Hadeeth to make sure there is no discrepancy
- **Those narrators who were weak or unreliable were exposed and not accepted**
- **The words of the Hadeeth were scrutinized** to make sure they were indeed the prophet's own words

The role of prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

- 1- He was **God's prophet to all mankind**. As a prophet, he delivered God's message and explained it
- 2- He applied the **Qur'an** in his character and behavior, and became an example to follow
- 3- He taught and groomed the next generation of leaders and scholars who carried on his mission
- 4- He explained in his **Sunnah** how we can live as **Muslims**: we cannot practice our Islam by just following the Qur'an

Follow the spirit of the Hadeeth, not the literal words

The prophet was addressing people who lived in a society different from ours today, and their needs and challenges were different

The message or spirit of the Hadeeth can be applied at all times. When a man was walking arrogantly, drawing his robe on the floor, the prophet said: (What is below the ankles is in hell fire). This does not mean that we must wear short pants. It means that we should be humble and not arrogant

The difference between hard-line Muslims and liberal Muslims

Some Muslims follow a strict or literal interpretation of the Sunnah, and follow the opinions of old scholars who lived many centuries ago

Other Muslims favor critical thinking and allow room for interpretation, and do not necessarily follow the literal words of the Hadeeth. This allows Islam to be compatible with a Western democracy and a plural society

Misconceptions about women in Islam

Muslim women can work and do not have to stay at home

In some Muslim countries tradition dictates that women stay at home. In other Muslim countries women work as doctors, lawyers, teachers, judges etc. There is nothing in Islam that prevents a woman from working as long as the environment is safe, lawful and decent

A woman's primary responsibility is to her family and home. If she can fulfill that duty, or the children are grown up then she can work.

The relationship between the spouses is a sign of God

“And among His signs is that He created for you mates, from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your hearts: indeed in this are signs for those who reflect“

Ar-Rum (The Romans) 30 : 21

The best among you is the best to his wife and family

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(The best among you is the best to his wife and family; and among you, I am the best to my family)

Termedhi, Ibn Majja & Tabarani

(The best among you and the closest to me on the Day of Judgment are those of best character)

What the Qur'an has to say about taking care of our parents

“Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you are kind and good to your parents. Should they reach old age, one of them or both of them, in your life, then do not repulse them, nor say a word of contempt to them, but address them in terms of honor. And out of kindness lower to them the wing of humility, and say: “My Lord bestow on them Your mercy as they cherished me in childhood”

Al-Isra'a (The Night Journey) 17 : 23 & 24

The notion that Muslims must fight all mankind till they become Muslims is wrong

- Islam is against forcing others to become Muslims against their will
- The relationship with non-Muslims is based on kindness, justice and cooperation, not enmity or hatred
- Muslims are supposed to safeguard the freedom and rights of both Muslims and non-Muslims alike

Important concepts about fighting in Islam

- 1- Fighting is only allowed to defend one's home or to defend one's country against aggression.
- 2- Fighting is not allowed for personal reasons
- 3- No transgression is permitted: fight only those who fight you, not civilians. Do not kill women, children or the elderly. Do not burn crops or destroy buildings
- 4- Accept offers of peace

Fighting is not allowed for personal reasons, only in the cause of Allah

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked: A man fights with courage; and a man fights for fame and glory; and a man fights for gain: who is fighting in the cause of Allah? He said: (only those who fight to make the words of Allah great are the ones fighting in the cause of Allah)

Bokhari

Some Muslims call for “**Holy Jihad**“. Only those charged with authority can rally Muslims in Jihad to defend themselves against aggression

Types of Jihad

- 1- Struggling with our souls to control our vain desires
- 2- Resisting the temptations of Satan, and living our life as God commanded us to do
- 3- Correcting misconceptions about Islam, and presenting Islam as it is truly a peaceful, tolerant religion that respects other faiths
- 4- Fighting to defend one's home and country against aggression

Jihad to correct misconceptions about Islam

“You shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your personal selves; and you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you, from those who received the Book before you and from those who worship many gods. But if you patiently persevere, and guard against evil, then that will be a determining factor in all affairs“

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3 : 186

The relationship between Muslims & non-Muslims

Important concepts

- What does the Qur'an say about non-Muslims and how they should be treated
- How did prophet Muhammad (PBUH) interact with Christians & Jews ?
- How did Muslims in the past treat non-Muslims?
- Muslims living in the West as a minority among a Christian majority
- Misconceptions about Islam in the news media

Freedom of worship is safeguarded in Islam

No one is to be forced to accept Islam against his will:

“Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error“

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2 : 256

“Say: “The truth is from your Lord”. Let him who will believe do so, and let him who will reject faith“

Al-Kahf (The Cave) 18 : 29

“If it had been your Lord’s will, they would all have believed, all who are on earth! Will you then compel mankind to believe against their will!“

Yunus (Jonah) 10 : 99

Qur'anic guidelines regarding the relationship with non-Muslims

1-Kindness

2-Justice

3-Talking to others in a good way

4-Reaching out and improving the relationship & working together to make things better for everyone

5-Not prejudging the fate of others

6-Respecting the right of every one to his faith, and not forcing anyone to become a Muslim against his will

Relationship between Muslims & non-Muslims

“God forbids you not, regarding those who do not fight you because of your faith nor drive you out of your homes, to treat them with kindness and justice, for God love those who are just”

Al-Mumtahina (Woman to be examined) 60: 8

“Tell My servants to say those things that are best”

Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 53

“And work together in virtue & righteousness”

Al-Maeda (The Table) 5: 2

“Your job is to deliver the message, Our job is to hold them accountable”

Ar'Ra'd (The Thunder) 13: 31

The prophet's saying can be misunderstood

(I have been commanded to fight An-Nas (the people) until they bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that I am Allah's messenger. When they do that they protect their persons and possessions from me according to what is right)

Muslim

The prophet (PBUH) was referring in An-Nas to the tribe of Quraish in Macca who fought the Muslims and drove them out of their homes. It does not mean that Muslims fight everyone, or force others to become Muslims against their will.

The prophet's behavior towards the Jews in Madina

He made a pact of cooperation and non-aggression between the Muslims and Jews, in which the rights and liberties of each group was protected and safeguarded

He respected the Jewish holiday of Ashura and ordered the Muslims to fast that day

He visited the Jews in their temples

Only later on when the Jews broke their covenant with the Muslims and plotted against the Muslim state did things turn to the worse, and the three Jewish tribes were banished from Madina

The Prophet's reaction to the Christian delegation

He allowed them to pray in his mosque
according to their tradition

He signed a treaty with the Christians
protecting and safeguarding their churches
and way of life and how they govern
themselves

He did not force anyone to accept Islam
against his will

Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule were treated well

Their convictions and traditions were respected and their persons and possessions were safe

No one was forced to become a Muslim against his will

Cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims is evident in the great civilization that flourished in many Muslim countries including Baghdad and Andalusia

Islam is a moderate religion, yet the views of extremists are portrayed

What most Americans see in the news media is a picture of backward Muslims, living in days past, with views that are extreme and hostile to the West

Moderate progressive Islam is not shown

The implication is that there is a clash of civilization and that Islam is not compatible with Western civilization, such a concept is wrong and dangerous

Corrections of misconceptions about Islam in the news media

- The majority of Muslims are non-Arabs
- Many Muslims are well educated professionals
- Millions of Muslims live in America and Europe and contribute to this civilization
- American Muslims are diverse and come from many different countries and speak different languages
- Muslims do not hate non-Muslims and they are neighbors to and friends and colleagues with non-Muslims

Why extremists hold such radical views ?

- 1- **Lack of proper knowledge** about Islam or knowledge that is superficial, wrong and harmful
- 2- **Oppression and lack of freedom and deep mistrust of the West as siding with and supporting rulers that are ruthless and corrupt**
- 3- **Poverty and inability to provide for one's family, despair and lack of human dignity**
- 4- **Occupation of Muslim lands allows radicals to recruit vulnerable souls**

How can we deal with the problem of terrorism ?

- Hunting down terrorists and killing them or putting them in jail does not solve the problem; it only suppresses it as it grows underground and festers
- We must address the basic underlying reasons for extreme ideology by proper education and exposing the wrong teachings of the terrorists against the teachings of true Islam; and by addressing the problems of poverty and lack of freedom and oppression in Muslim countries

American Muslims living among a Christian majority

- Muslims in America have the **freedom to worship** according to their faith
- American Muslims are **active in their community** and work with and cooperate with their friends and colleagues who are not Muslims
- There is **no conflict between being a loyal American citizen and being a true Muslim** faithful to one's religion and beliefs
- **It is important to safeguard our freedom and civil liberties**
- **We should proactively fight bias, prejudice and stereotyping**

Dialogue and cooperation with non-Muslims

Since we live in this community, earn our living here, and we have children and grand children here, it is only natural to give back to the community, and to work with and cooperate with others, in order to benefit the whole community

Muslims can provide a new prospective, and offer solutions to problems facing our nation and threatening our future