

What Does Muhammad represent to Muslims?

BS Foad, MD

Islamic center of greater Cincinnati

2016

Muhammad is a descendant of Ibrahim (Abraham). Muslims follow Abraham

Moses & Jesus are descendants of Isaac & Jacob (Israel).

Muhammad is a descendant of Isma'il (Ishma'il)

All three monotheistic religions are represented by descendants of Abraham, confirming the covenant between God & Abraham

“Then We revealed to you (O Muhammad): “Follow the ways of Abraham, the true in faith” An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 123

“Who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allah (God), does good and follows the way of Abraham the true in faith, for Allah did take Abraham for a friend”

(An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 125

Muhammad is God's messenger and an example to follow

Muhammad is God's messenger

As such his orders are to be obeyed

He delivered God's message: the Qur'an, explained its teachings and how it can be applied in our lives

Muhammad is an example to follow in his character & behavior

He was kind, caring, merciful, just and humble

His stand on issues and how he behaved is an example to follow

Muslims do not worship Muhammad, Muslims worship God

Muhammad was human: he was born and he died

The Qur'an states: ***“Muhammad is no more than a messenger, many messengers have passed away before him; if he died or was killed will you then turn back on your heels?”***

Al-Imran (Family of Imran) 3: 144

Sources of knowledge in Islam

Muhammad was given the Qur'an by inspiration from God

Muhammad also was inspired by God to explain the Qur'an and to teach morals and proper conduct.

Therefore the **two sources of knowledge in Islam are:**

1-The Qur'an (God's own words)

2-The Sunnah (tradition) of Prophet Muhammad

Evidence for the authenticity of the Qur'an is in the Qur'an itself

1-Qur'anic verses complete & complement each other with no contradiction, despite being sent down interrupted over 23 years

2-The Qur'an answers questions in a clear and logical way

3-No one could ever produce such a Qur'an

*Most people who attack the Qur'an have never studied the Qur'an

Muhammad could not read or write, how could he write such a Qur'an?

Muhammad was illiterate

“You were not able to recite a book before this, nor were you able to write it with your hand; in that case the talkers of vanity would have doubted”

Al-Ankabut (The Spider) 29: 48

The Qur'an came to confirm the Torah & the Bible

“God sent down the book to you in truth, confirming what came before it, and He sent down the Torah and Gospel before, as a guide to mankind”

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

The message of Muhammad is a continuation of those messengers before him: ***“The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah, that which He sent by inspiration to you, and that which He enjoined on Abraham, Moses & Jesus, namely that you should remain steadfast in religion and make no divisions therein”***

Ash-Shura' (Consultation) 42: 13

Islamic values are the same as Christian values

1-Belief in God and in being accountable to God: That there is a Day of Judgment, Heaven & Hell

2-Be good to your families and neighbors

3-Establish prayer and give in charity and help the poor and needy

4-Apply your faith in the way you live your life with noble character and morals, get close to God and never despair of his mercy

5-Faith in God's prophets & messengers and following their example

And faith in God's divine books as our constitution

6-Learn and improve and invite to God by our example

As God's messenger Muhammad's orders must be obeyed

“Whoever obeys the messenger obeys Allah”

An-Nesa'a (Women) 4: 80

“O you who believe obey Allah, and obey his messenger and those charged with authority among you”

An-Nesa'a (Women) 4: 59

“But no by your Lord they have no real faith until they make you judge in all disputes among them, and find no resistance in their souls regarding your decisions, and submit fully”

An-Nesa'a (Women) 4: 65

“Whatever the messenger gives you take it, and whatever he forbids you avoid” Al-Hashr (The Gathering) 59: 7

Follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his character & behavior

“You have indeed in the messenger of God a good example to follow for those who rest their hope on meeting God and the Last Day, and who remember God often”

Al-Ahzab (The Confederates) 33: 21

Muhammad (PBUH) was sent to implement morals & noble character

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Indeed I have been sent to implement morals and the most noble of character)

Narrated by Hakim & Baihaqi

Muhammad's noble character and excellent morals

He was **honest & truthful**, and never lied

He was **kind, caring, forgiving & merciful**

“There has come to you a messenger from among yourselves. It pains him that you should suffer, he cares about you, he is kind and forgiving with the believers” At-Tawba (Repentance) 9: 128

He was **just** even with his enemies

He was **humble & not arrogant**: (Do not glorify me)

He was a **devoted worshipper** & submitted to God & had trust in him

He was **eloquent** and commanding in his speech

He was **wise** and able to solve problems & have a vision

He **worked tirelessly** and was full of energy

How did Muhammad solve the problems in Madinah?

- 1-Bond of **brotherhood** between residents & immigrants: to shift the economic burden from the state to individuals
- 2-The **mosque is the focal activity** in the life of Muslims: It is where they meet, know one another, pray together and work together
- 3-Pact of **cooperation between Muslims & Jews**: The life, possessions and freedom of all is safeguarded
- 4-**Education and inviting to God**: to spread useful knowledge so that the message does not end by the death of the messenger
- 5-**Protect and safeguard your city against aggression**

The mosque is the focal point of activity in the life of Muslims

The mosque is where Muslims **meet to pray, know each other and work together**, and It is where **problems are solved and questions answered**, and where anyone with need or problem will find help

Decisions are made in the mosque after **adequate consultations**

The Qur'an states: *"In houses that God has permitted to exist, in which the name of God is mentioned frequently by morning and evening. God is being glorified there by men whom neither traffic or gain distract them from remembering God, and establishing regular prayer and giving charity"* An-Nur (The Light) 24: 37

Pact of coexistence & cooperation between Muslims & Jews in Madinah

Rights are safeguarded and protected by the Muslim state:

- The life, possessions and freedom of both Muslims & Jews are sacred
- The right to practice their faith without fear or oppression
- The right to freely express themselves
- Each help the other in protecting and safeguarding their city against attacks

Education of Muslims about Islam

The Prophet (PBUH) taught a group of young Muslims to carry on his message, and to explain the guidelines of the Qur'an and his Sunnah (tradition), so that the message that he brought will not die with his death.

He said: **(The best among you is the person who learns the Qur'an, then teaches it to others)** Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim

The Prophet (PBUH) also said: **(Whoever embarks on a road seeking knowledge God will guide him to heaven, and the angels lower their wings content for the person seeking knowledge; indeed everyone in heaven and earth seeks forgiveness for the scholar. The scholars are the heirs of the prophets)** Narrated by Termedhi

The Qur'an urges Muslims to learn and keep on learning:

“And say: “My Lord increase me in knowledge”

Ta Ha 20: 114

Protecting Madinah against aggression

“And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not commit transgression, for God loves not transgressors”

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 190

Fighting is only allowed in the way of God, not for personal reasons

Fighting is only allowed to defend your country against aggression

No aggression is allowed in fighting: Women, children, the elderly or those not connected with the fighting are not killed

The Sunnah & Seerah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The Sunnah (Tradition or sayings of Prophet Muhammad)

- Sayings of the prophet
- His actions
- What he approved

These sayings are recorded in books of Hadeeth (sayings)

The Seerah (Life story of Prophet Muhammad)

The Seerah is closely connected with the Qur'an. Throughout 23 years in the life of Muhammad Qur'anic verses were revealed to answer questions and solve problems, and strengthen the heart of the prophet & his companions

The sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Were authenticated regarding the person (s) who related that saying:

- His honesty & integrity

- His ability to memorize

- Did he meet those he claimed to hear the saying from

- Is there anything in this saying (Hadeeth) that contradicts the Qur'an or another saying of the Prophet?

Hadeeth is then classified as authentic or weak or false

Only authentic Hadeeth are accepted

The sayings of Prophet Muhammad must be understood in historical context & in the context of the Qur'an

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(I have been commanded to fight An-Nas till they bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that I am Allah's messenger)

Narrated by Muslim

Extremists take this Hadeeth literally that the Prophet was ordered to fight all mankind till they submit to Islam.

This is wrong understanding because An-Nas here only refers to the tribe of Quraish who were fierce enemy to Muslims at that time.

The Qur'an orders Muslims to respect the right of non-Muslims to their faith, and not force anyone to become a Muslim against their will

Misconceptions about Muhammad ?

- He did not write the Qur'an:** The Qur'an is a divine revelation
- He was not a war monger:** He fought to defend his state against aggression
- He was married to one woman for 25 years** when he was in the prime of his life. After he became head of state, and after his wife died he married other women for political and social reasons
- He was kind, gentle, caring, truthful,** forgiving, just and merciful
- He was **sincere and devoted to God** and did not care about the material things in life

Muhammad was not a war monger

The battles he was involved in were **defensive in nature**

Fighting in the Qur'an is only allowed to defend our country against aggression, not to annex land or force others against their will

“Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, and commit no transgression for God loves not transgressors”

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 191

Misconceptions about Islam & the Muslims

1-Muslims do not hate non-Muslims: What does the Qur'an say about the relationship between Muslims & non-Muslims?

2-Do not kill an innocent soul

3-Muslims are forbidden from forcing non-Muslims against their will

4-Muhammad did not write the Qur'an

5-Shari'a applies only to Muslims

6-Islam is compatible with Western democracy

The relationship between Muslims & non-Muslims according to the Qur'an

1-Be kind & just.

2-Talk to non-Muslims in a good way

3-Work with and cooperate in virtue and righteousness

4-Do not prejudge the fate of others

5-Do not force anyone to accept Islam against his will

6-Safeguard places of worship

7-Do not kill an innocent soul

8-Be good to your neighbor

Treat non-Muslims with kindness & justice

“God forbids you not regarding those who fight you not because of your faith, nor drive you out of your homes from treating them with kindness and justice, for God loves those who are just”

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

Talk to each other in a good way

“Tell my servants that they should say that which is best, for Satan incites enmity and hatred among them, for Satan to man is an avowed enemy”

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

“argue not with the people of the Book except in the best possible way; and say: “We believe in what was sent down to us, and what was sent down to you, our God and your God is one and to him we submit in Islam”

Al-Ankabut (The Spider) 29: 46

Work together in virtue and righteousness

“And work together and cooperate in virtue and righteousness, not in sin or transgression, and be conscious of God, for God is severe in retribution”

Al-Maida (The Table) 5: 2

Do not force others to Islam against their will

“Let there be no compulsion in religion, truth stands clear from error”

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 256

“Let him who will believe, and let him who will reject faith”

Al-Kahf (The Cave) 18: 29

“If it was the will of your Lord then everyone on earth would have believed! Are you then forcing people to believe against their will”

Yunus (Jonah) 10: 99

Muhammad did not force others to Islam against their will

He signed a **peace treaty with the Jews of Madinah** respecting their rights to their faith and ensuring their safety

He **allowed the Christian delegation from Najran to pray** in his mosque according to their faith

Do not prejudge the fate of others

“Your job O Muhammad is to deliver the message, it is up to Us to hold them to account”

Ar-Ra’d (The Thunder) 13: 40

Safeguard places of worship

“If it was not for God checking one group of people against another places of worship, like monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques would have been destroyed”

Al-Hajj (Pilgrimage) 22: 40

Human life is sacred; Do not kill an innocent soul

“Do not kill the soul that God has made sacred except through due process of law”

Al-Isra'a (Night Journey) 17: 33

“Because of this we ordained on the Children of Israel that he who kills a soul, unless it be for murder, or spreading mischief on earth, it is considered as if he killed all of mankind; and if anyone saves a soul, it is considered as if he saved all of humanity”

Al-Ma'ida (The Table) 5: 32

Be good to your neighbor

“Worship God and join no partners with him; and do good to your parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are of kin, and neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side and the wayfarer”

An-Nesa'a (The Women) 4: 36

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (Whoever believes in God and the Last Day let him be good to his neighbor) narrated by Bokhari

Islam is compatible with Western democracy and there is no clash of civilization

Muslims **obey the law** of the land

The principles of the American constitution, namely justice, accountability, freedom and the pursuit of happiness are Qur'anic principles revealed in the Qur'an more than 1400 years ago.

Justice in the Qur'an

“O you who believe stand up for God, as witnesses for justice; and let not the hatred of others towards you make you deviate from justice; be just, this is closer to piety, and be conscious of God, for God is well-aware of all that you do”

Al-Ma'ida (The Table) 5: 8

“O you who believe stand up for justice, as witnesses to God, even against yourselves, or parents or kin; if he was rich or poor God will take care of them both; Do not follow your lusts lest you swerve from justice; if you distort justice or refuse to do justice know that God is well aware of all that you do”

An-Nesa'a (Women) 4: 135

We have freedom of choice and we are accountable

Man was given a free choice: to believe or to reject faith, hence man is responsible and accountable for his choice.

We are not forced to believe against our will

Accountability in the Qur'an

“On the day when each soul will come pleading for itself, and each soul will be requited according to its deeds, and none will be wronged”

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 111

“And fear the Day when you will be brought back to God, then every soul will be requited for what it has earned, and none will be treated unjustly”

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 281

Why some people are afraid of Muslims?

1-**Not knowing** what Islam stands for, and what Muslims believe in

2-**Prejudice** against foreigners

3-**News media** portray Islam as a religion of violence, and Muslims as hateful and not respecting the rights of non-Muslims

4-The behavior of **radicals and extremists** confirms this violent image of Islam

5-Some **vent** their economic frustration, **fear and anger**

Islamophobia how should Christians respond?

There is a difference between Islam, a noble divine religion and the behavior of Muslim extremists. Islam safeguards the life, property and freedom of non-Muslims, whereas Muslim terrorists kill non-Muslims as well as Muslims who do not share their ideology

In the same way there is a difference between Christianity, a noble divine religion and the behavior of some Christians who are bigots

Do not blame the religion for the wrong behavior of few fanatics and criminals. Learn about true Islam & its teachings and support your Muslim neighbors and fellow human beings

Do not associate Islam with terrorism. These terrorists kill more Muslims than non-Muslims. They claim to be Muslims but behave against the teachings of the Qur'an

Islamophobia: How should Muslims react?

The Qur'an states:

“You will be tested and tried in your possessions and in yourselves, and you will hear a lot that will grieve you from those who were given divine revelation before you, and from the pagans. But if you patiently persevere, and guard against evil, that requires resolve & determination”

Al-Imran (The Family of Imran) 3: 187

- Patient perseverance
- Not doing wrong
- Resolve & determination

Lone wolf attacks can happen from deranged people who are brain washed

As Muslims if we spot persons who have extremist ideas or behavior we do **report them** to the authorities

The way **to combat a twisted ideology is by exposing its fallacy** and wrong teachings and contrasting it to the proper teachings of religion, whether this wrong ideology is Muslim, Christian or Jewish

“For the scum disappears like froth cast out, while that which is for the good of mankind remains on the earth”

Ar-Ra'd (Thunder) 13: 17

Characteristics of extremists and radicals

They only accept their beliefs and are not willing to listen to different points of view, since they believe they are right and everyone else is wrong

Their knowledge is wrong and superficial, and rely on the teachings of their Sheikhs (religious leaders) and not based on proper understanding of the Qur'an

To them others who do not share their ideology are unbelievers and have no rights

Their blind and wrong faith leads them to commit crimes against both Muslims & non-Muslims

The root causes of extreme and radical ideology

- 1-Wrong and superficial knowledge, and lack of proper understanding of the Qur'an and Sunnah (prophet's tradition)
- 2-Oppression and lack of freedom
- 3-Poverty, lack of jobs and despair of a better future
- 4-Occupation of Muslim land by foreign powers feed the perception of new colonization and that the West is fighting Islam

Christians should learn about other religions since America today is made up of diverse faiths

We see **many faith communities in America today**: Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Atheists, Agnostics etc. We need to understand these different beliefs

We also hear **different languages and see people of different ethnic background and different cultures**, and we need to embrace this diversity and learn from our differences, and not feel threatened.

Our own faith is strengthened when we learn about the faith and beliefs of other people. **We all share the same hopes and fears and have our humanity to unite us**

Diversity is willed by God

“And among his signs is the creation of the heavens and earth, and the differences in your tongues and colors. Indeed in this are signs for those who know”

Ar-Rum (The Romans) 30: 22

“If it was the will of your Lord he would have made mankind one nation, but they will continue to differ, except those on whom your Lord bestows his mercy, and for this did he create them”

Hud (Prophet Hud) 11: 118 & 119

- We should learn from our differences
- We should listen to different points of view
- Our differences is willed by God, we should not fear it

Shari'a law applies only to Muslims

Shari'a does not apply to non-Muslims

Shari'a is everything that we do in our daily life, not just punishment

Prayer, fasting, charity, being good to our parents, family & neighbors, doing our job to the best of our ability, reaching out and helping those in need is Shari'a

Islam did not spread by the sword

It did spread **through the efforts of Muslim merchants** who lived among the native people and helped them. They invited to God through their example by their kind caring character and through their righteous behavior.

Muslims are encouraged in the Qur'an to **invite to God with wisdom and good example**, and with clear conviction

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good example”

An-Nahl (The Bees) 16: 125

“Say: “This is my way, I do invite to God with clear conviction, I and those who follow me” Youseff (Joseph) 12: 108

Islamic Jihad: What is Jihad?

Jihad means **striving against our vain desires and against the temptations of Satan and obeying God** and living our lives as he commands.

Jihad also means **correcting misconceptions about religion** and inviting others to God through good example

If your country is attacked then Jihad is to rise up and defend your country against aggression

Therefore, fighting is a small aspect of Jihad

There is nothing in the Qur'an called Holy war, such a term is a Christian concept. There is nothing holy about war, only destruction and misery

No one can call for Jihad except a leader accepted by all or a group of scholars when the need arises for such Jihad. Therefore **the call of ISIS for Jihad has no merit** or validity. **Muslim scholars all over the world have condemned the actions of ISIS**

Be good to your wives and families

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (The best among you is he who is best to his wife and family) Narrated by Ahmad

Men and women have human dignity, are responsible and accountable

No gender is better or superior to another except through piety

“Indeed the most honored amongst you in the sight of God is the person who is most righteous (of service to others)”

Al-Hujerat (The Apartments) m49: 12

In some Muslim countries women are not treated well because of tribal traditions

Difficulties in understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah

Do we understand the Qur'an **literally or as concepts?**

We need to understand certain Qur'anic verses in **historical context**

The **Sunnah** of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) must be understood **in the context of the Qur'an and its teachings, and in historical context**

Our understanding of **how to apply Qur'anic verses** may change depending on the society that we live in and our new and current challenges and problems

Differences in **Sunni & Shi'e thinking and Fiqh** (Jurisprudence)