

How Islam views other religions & How Muslims should interact with non-Muslims

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Concepts discussed

- Muslims believe in all God's prophets and divine revelation
- The Qur'an completes previous divine revelation and was safeguarded by God
- Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sent to all mankind, not just for the Muslims
- The basic relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is that of kindness and justice and cooperation

Concepts discussed

- The rights of non-Muslims are safeguarded
- We should not judge the fate of others
- The concept of Jihad
- Why extremists behave in a violent way ?
- How to deal with extremists !

Islam is a continuation of previous divine revelation

All divine scriptures like the Torah, Bible and Qur'an came from the same source: the One and only God. Therefore, the basic principle is the same: serve God by helping others who need your help

All God's prophets & messengers taught the same message

“Not a messenger did We send before you
without this inspiration sent by Us to him: that
there is no god but I, therefore worship and
serve Me “

Al-Anbia'a 21 : 25

God's divine inspiration is a continuous process of guidance

“The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah, and that which We sent by inspiration to you and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus: namely that you should remain steadfast in religion, and make no division therein “

Ash-Shura' 42 : 13

Muslims believe in all God's prophets

“ The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, as do men of faith: each one of them believes in God, His angels, His books, and His messengers: We make no distinction between one and another of His messengers; and they say: “ We hear and we obey, we seek Your forgiveness our Lord, to You is the end of all journeys “

Al-Baqara 2 : 285

Muslims believe in all God's prophets

Muslims believe in Abraham, Jacob (Israel) and Moses as messengers from God

Muslims also believe in Jesus Christ as God's prophet, but not as divine

Muslims believe that Muhammad (PBUH) was God's last messenger and that the Qur'an is God's last divine revelation.

The Qur'an completes previous divine revelation

God safeguarded the Qur'an from alteration:

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

Al-Hijr 15 : 9

The Qur'an corrects any mistakes humans may have introduced into previous divine revelation:

“ We have sent the scripture to you in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety “

Al-Maeda 5 : 48

Prophet Muhammad is a universal messenger to all mankind

“ Say : “ O mankind I am sent to you all as the messenger of God “

Al-Ara'f 7 : 158

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (previous messengers were sent to their own people, but I was sent to all mankind)

Bokhari & Muslim

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) came to complete what other prophets did

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (My example and that of other messengers, is that of a beautiful house that people look at and admire, but part of that house is missing. I am that part and I came to complete this house)

Bokhari, Muslim & Ahmad

Muslims respect and feel close to Christians and Jews

All three monotheistic religions claim Abraham as a founder, and worship one God

The Qur'an talks about Jews & Christians as the people of the Book or the family of the Book, to illustrate that they were given divine revelation by God

All three religions teach goodness and that we are accountable to God.

Relationship with people of other faiths

- Every person is entitled to his own beliefs
- We treat others as we wish them to treat us with kindness and justice, and according to their behavior and character
- Only few messengers were mentioned in the Qur'an; others were alluded to “ and messengers We related to you, and messengers we did not relate to you “ An-Nesa'a 4: 164 & 40 : 78. Some of these messengers could have been sent to India or China

Islam safeguards the rights of non-Muslims

Their lives, possessions and religious freedom is protected and safeguarded

When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) went to Madinah, he made a non-aggression pact with the Jewish tribes, where the rights and liberties of both Jews and Muslims were safeguarded

In Muslim Spain Muslims, Christians & Jews lives side by side in peace for 800 years. When the Spanish inquisition came both Muslims & Jews fled out of persecution

Talk to the people of the Book in a kind way

“Dispute not with the people of the Book except in the best way, unless it be those of them who do wrong, but say: “ We believe in the revelation which has come down to us, and in that which came down to you, our God and your God is One, and it is to Him that we submit in Islam “

Al-Ankabut 29 : 46

Kindness & justice

“ Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from treating them with kindness and justice, for Allah loves those who are just “

Al-Mumtahina 60 : 8

Be good to your neighbors

Our neighbors are those close to where we live, our colleagues and friends at work, those whom we know and cooperate with, those whom we pray with, and those who reach out to us

Both the Qur'an and the prophet's tradition teach us to be good and kind to our neighbors.

If neighbors are good to each other the whole community will improve

Neighbors do not have to share the same faith

Non-Muslims are not forced to become Muslims against their will

The freedom to accept or reject faith is crucial if we are to be responsible and accountable. Such freedom is stressed in the Qur'an:

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

Al-Baqara 2 : 256

“ If it was your Lord's will then everyone on earth would have believed, are you then forcing people to believe against their will ! “

Yunus 10 : 99

Jihad is misrepresented

- Jihad essentially mean restraining our vain desires and struggling against the temptations of Satan and placing our priorities correctly
- Fighting is only resorted to only to defend one's country against aggression, not for personal reasons

Fight only those who fight you and in the cause of God

“ Fight in the cause of God those who fight you but do not transgress limits, for God loves not transgressors “

* Fight only those who fight you

* Fight in God's cause

* No transgression

Fight only those who fight you

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Fight those who fight you; do not kill women, children, the elderly or those in retreat; do not burn crops or destroy buildings)

We are not to judge the fate of other people: God is the judge

“Your duty (O Muhammad) is to deliver the message, it is Our part to call them to account “

Ar-Ra'ad 13 : 40

Yet too many people condemn others who do not share their faith

Why extremists behave in a violent way ?

- Their knowledge & understanding of the Qur'an & Sunnah (tradition of prophet Muhammad) is superficial and wrong
- Poverty, lack of jobs, oppression and lack of freedom
- Narrow minded approach
- If you do not share their views, then you are against them

The Qur'an is full of love & mercy

Yet the extremists in any religion look for a narrow interpretation and force on others strict rules

God is kind, loving, forgiving and merciful

How can you invite others to God if your heart is full of hatred or jealousy ?

How to deal with extremists ?

- Contrast their wrong ideology to the truth so everyone can see for themselves
- Oppression and putting them in prison only reinforces their twisted thinking and hatred
- Improving economic conditions and allowing free expression does not allow them to recruit or brain wash those who are vulnerable

Explain what Islam is all about

“ Say: “ This is my way: I invite to Allah, I and those who follow me, with conviction and insight; glory be to Allah, I am not one who joins gods with Allah “

Yusuf 12 : 108

Share your convictions with others

“Invite to your Lord’s way with wisdom and good example, and argue with them only in ways that are best. Your Lord knows who has strayed from His path and who receives guidance “

An-Nahl 16 : 125

Muslims in America

- We are here to stay
- We are responsible to offer solutions and improve life for everyone in our community and our country
- We should reach out and work with others of good conscience to build and support important and useful projects

Muslims in America

- Are educated and professional
- They believe that Islam is compatible with Western democracy and that their loyalty is to America
- They follow the spirit and basic principles of Islam, but are not stuck on the literal words and understand the need to live as Muslims in a plural society

The struggle between “literalists” and open-minded Muslims

- Literalists want to stick to the literal words in the Qur'an & Sunnah, and dream of days past by, and are closed within their own circles
- Open-minded Muslims are true to the spirit, but understand the need to understand and apply the Qur'an & Sunnah according to the society they live in, and reach out to others in their faith and of different faiths