

Islamic concepts, beliefs and practices

BS Foad,M.D.

2008

Concepts to be discussed

1- Basic Muslim beliefs

2- Rituals of worship

3- Sources of knowledge in Islam

*** The Qur'an * Tradition of prophet Muhammad**

4-The Seerah (life story of prophet Muhammad)

5-The family in Islam

6-Jihad

7-Relationship between Muslims & non-Muslims

8- Different groups within Islam

9- Misconceptions about Islam

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**

Eiman (Belief, Faith or conviction)

When prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was asked to define Eiman, he said:

(Eiman is to believe in Allah, and His Angels, and His Books, and His messengers, and in the Last Day, and in Qadar (Fate) its good and bad)

Bokhari & Muslim

Islam (Willful submission to Allah)

The five pillars of Islam

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Islam is to bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is Allah's messenger; and to establish regular prayers; and to give Zakat (obligatory charity); and to fast Ramadan; and to perform Hajj (pilgrimage) if you have the way and means)

Bokhari & Muslim

Ihsan (Goodness and righteousness)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him,
realizing that if you do not see Him, He sees
you and what you do)

Bokhari & Muslim

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 watching 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)**

**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

Were you created out of nothing!

**“ Were they created of nothing, or were they
themselves the creators ? “**

At-Tur 52: 35

**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 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 suppliant 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 2 : 186

Call on God by His beautiful names or attributes of perfection

“ The most beautiful names belong to God: so call on Him by them, but shun such as use profanity in His names. For what they do, they will soon be requited “

Al-Araf 7 : 180

As human beings we cannot comprehend the nature of God

“No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision, He is above all comprehension, yet He is acquainted with all things “

Al-An'am 6 : 103

“There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the one that hears and sees all things “

Ash-Shura 42 : 11

God is forgiving, most-merciful

“ He ordained on Himself the rule of mercy “

Al-An'am 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 25 : 70

Allah is just, no soul is wronged

“Indeed Allah will not deal unjustly with anyone: it is man that wrongs his own soul “

Yunus 10 : 44

Allah knows what we are doing

“ On the Day that Allah will raise them all up again and show them the truth of their conduct. Allah has reckoned its value, though they may have forgotten it, for Allah is a witness to all things “

Al-Mujadalah 58 : 6

There is only one God

- Jesus (PBUH) said: “Worship Allah my Lord and your Lord” Az-Zukhruff 43 : 64
- Do not say God is one of three in a trinity
Al-Maeda 5 : 73
- To God Jesus is like Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him” Be “ and he was
Al-Imran 3 : 59

In Islam the Holy Spirit is the Angel Jebreel (Gabriel)

“Indeed this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. With it came down the spirit of faith and truth. To your heart and mind, that you may admonish in a clear Arabic tongue “

Ash-Shura'a 26 : 192-195

“To Jesus, the son of Mary, We gave clear signs and strengthened him with the holy spirit “

Al-Baqara 2 : 253

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: 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 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 11 : 114 & 115

Our good deeds are multiplied

“ He who does good shall have ten times as much to his credit; he that does evil shall only account according to his evil. No wrong shall be done to any of them “

Al-Ana'm 6 : 160

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

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**

We need God's mercy to enter paradise

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(None of you his deeds alone will allow him to enter paradise). His companions asked: Not even you O messenger of Allah? He said: (Not even I unless Allah encompasses me in His mercy)

Bokhari & Muslim

Belief in God's Divine revelations

- 1- The Torah revealed to prophet Musa (Moses)
- 2- The Injeel (Bible) 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 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 Torah is a Divine revelation from Allah

“ We revealed the Torah: therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the prophets who bowed to Allah’s will, by the Rabbis and the doctors of law: for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah’s Book, and they were witnesses thereto.. “

Al-Maeda 5 : 44

**The Qur'an was safeguarded by
Allah from alteration**

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

Al-Hijr 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 5 : 48

How do Muslims deal with the Bible?

- 1- What agrees with the Qur'an, we accept, like the Oneness of God**
- 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**

Belief in God's messengers

- **Muslims believe in all God's messengers:** Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, David, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad...
- **Five messengers of great resolve who had a major impact on human thought are of particular importance:**

Noah Abraham Moses Jesus
Muhammad

All of God's messengers have the same religion & preached similar message

“ The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah, 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 divisions therein.. “

Ash-Shura 42 : 13

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 4 : 151 & 152. The Muslims believe that Muhammad (PBUH) is God's last messenger to mankind and he completed the message 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**
- 2-They record what we do**
- 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**

The Angel Jebreel (Gabriel) brought God's revelation to the prophet

“ And thus have We, by Our command, sent inspiration to you: you knew not before what was revelation and what was faith. But We have made the Qur'an a light, wherewith WE guide such of Our servants as We will. Indeed, you do guide to the straight way “

Ash-Shura 42 : 52

Angels that record what we do

“ It was We who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him, for We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. Behold! Two angels appointed to learn his doings and note them, one sitting on the right and one sitting on the left. Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him, ready to note it “

Qa F 50 : 16-18

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 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 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 12 : 87

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

Al-hijr 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 rational and wisdom for praying**
- 6- Great reward for praying**

The five daily obligatory prayers

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

The way Muslims pray

- Muslims face the Ka'ba (Sacred shrine in Macca)
- Muslims stand reciting Al-Fatiha (opening chapter) and other verses of the Qur'an
- Then they bow celebrating God (Ruko'o)
- Then they prostrate celebrating God (Sojoud)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (Pray as you see me pray). He was taught to pray this way by the Angel Gabriel

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 1 : 1-7

Al-Fatiha teaches us important concepts

- 1- There is only One God whom we worship and serve**
- 2-We are accountable to God**
- 3- We turn to God, seeking His help and guidance**
- 4- We are grateful to God for His blessings**
- 5- We want to follow God's straight way, and not be misguided**

Al-Fatiha is recited at least 17 times every day

- Prayer is not valid unless we recite Al-Fatiha in every Rak'a
- Al-Fatiha is only 7 short verses, so it is not difficult to memorize and recite in Arabic, since only the Arabic Qur'an is accepted in prayer
- Those whose tongue is not Arabic and have difficulty in reciting the Qur'an are rewarded more as they struggle
- We are given a good deed for every letter that we recite of the Qur'an

The wisdom and rational 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

Prayer protects us from sin and shameful deeds

“ Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to you, and establish regular prayer: for prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds. The remembrance of Allah is the greatest thing without doubt, for Allah knows all that you do”

Al-Ankabut 29 : 45

We are promised a great reward for our prayers

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) compared the five daily prayers to a river that allows us to wash in and clean ourselves. Thus does Allah remits our sins through our prayers (Bokhari)

The prophet told us that for every letter we recite of the Qur'an, we get one good deed

Prayer opens our hearts and minds to the guidance of the Qur'an and brings us closer to God

Prayer at night, when others are asleep is noteworthy

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 rational & 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

The poor and needy have a right in our money

“ Do they not see that Allah gives more to some and restricts the provision to others as He pleases. Indeed in this are signs for people who believe. Therefore, give to your relative his right, as well as to the needy and the wayfarer. This is better for those who seek the pleasure of Allah, and such are the ones who will prosper “

Ar-Rum 30 : 37 & 38

Zakat is given to eight categories

- 1- The poor**
- 2- The needy**
- 3- Those employed to administer the funds**
- 4- Those whose hearts have been reconciled to Islam**
- 5- Those in bondage**
- 6- Those in debt**
- 7-The wayfarer stranded away from home**
- 8- In the cause of God**

Surat At-Tawba 9 : 60

The rational of Zakat

- 1- To help the poor & needy and correct social injustice
- 2- To re-circulate the wealth of the community, create jobs and stimulate the economy
- 3- To help support institutions that provide valuable service to the community
- 4- To liberate our souls of greed
- 5- To avoid jealousy and hatred between rich and poor
- 6- To please God and get His reward

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**

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**

Fasting Ramadan is obligatory

“ O you who believe fasting has been ordained on you, as it was ordained on those before you, that you may learn Taqwa (piety & righteousness) “

Al-Baqara 2 : 183

Exemptions from the fast:

- Those who are sick or traveling**
- Children, the old or infirm**
- Pregnant and nursing mothers**
- Those involved in hard labor**

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, 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 (Du'a)

The great reward of Ramadan

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Whoever fasts Ramadan with conviction and seeking his reward only from God, his previous sins will be forgiven)

Bokhari & Muslim

The great reward for fasting Ramadan

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said :

(Allah says: “ Fasting is done for Me, and I give its reward. He leaves his food and desire for My sake. The fasting person has two joys: once when he breaks his fast; and the second when he meets his Lord)

Bokhari & Muslim

Rituals of worship are meant to help us improve our faith and behavior

- God has no need for our prayers or fasting; and He can certainly provide for the poor and needy
- God ordered us to pray, fast and give charity because these acts of worship are good for us: they increase our faith, improve our behavior and make us better human beings
- When we pray we get closer to God, and as we listen to the Qur'an: God's words, we are guided. As we fast we learn self-control and achieve righteousness
- There should not be a separation between rituals of worship and what we do in our daily life

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**

Visiting the Ka Ba

The Ka Ba is the house of worship built in Macca by prophets Abraham & Ishma'il

When Muslims circle the Ka Ba they perform a form of worship

Hajj is ordained only once in a life time, but many people go more than once to “ wipe out their sins ”. This causes over-crowding : 2-3 million attend Hajj every year

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 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 Hajar (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 Du'a (prayer) on that day is the Du'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)

Sacrificing an animal in Mena

This is done in memory of prophet Isma'il, who was offered by his father prophet Abraham in sacrifice to God, but was ransomed by a ram. The Qur'an states:

“ It is not their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah; it is your piety that reaches Him. He has thus made them subject to you, that you may glorify Allah for His guidance to you, and give glad tidings to all that do right “ Al-Hijj 22: 37

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 understand 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 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

The Qur'an

- Is composed of 114 Suras (chapters), some are short (few verses), others quite long (286 long verses)
- Each Sura is a separate entity, and Suras complement each other. A topic may be discussed in many Suras from different aspects
- The Qur'an revealed in Macca deals with principles of faith and urges patience. The Qur'an revealed in Madina discusses, in addition, laws that govern the Muslim community and its relationship with others
- The Qur'an has parables and stories, the goal is to learn lessons and morals, not the details of the story

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

Muhammad could not read or write

“ You were unable to recite a Book before this (revelation came), nor were you able to write it with your right hand. In that case indeed, the talkers of vanity would have doubted. No, here are signs self-evident in the hearts of those endowed with knowledge, and none but the unjust reject Our signs “

Al-Ankabut 29 : 48 & 49

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 gradual revelation of the Qur'an

“ Those who reject faith say: “ Why is not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once? “ Thus (it was revealed) that We may strengthen your heart thereby, and We have rehearsed it to you in slow, well-arranged stages, gradually. No question do they bring to you but We reveal to you the truth and the best explanation thereof”

Al-Furqan 25 : 32 & 33

Mankind was challenged to bring a Qur'an like it

“ Do they say: “ He forged it? “ Say: “ Bring then a chapter like unto it, and call (to your aid) anyone you can besides Allah, if you are telling the truth! “

Al-Baqara 2 : 23

“ Say: “ If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support “

Al-Isra'a 17 : 88

There is no contradiction in the Qur'an

“ Do they not consider the Qur'an? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy “

An-Nesa'a 4 : 82

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

The Qur'an is a guidance, Mercy and a cure for the ills in our hearts

“ O mankind there has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the diseases in your hearts, and for those who believe guidance and mercy “

Yunus 10 : 57

“ We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe; to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss “

Al-Isra'a 17 : 82

The Qur'an was revealed in Arabic because Muhammad was an Arab

“Indeed this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. With it came down the Spirit of faith and truth. To your heart, that you may admonish in a clear Arabic tongue “

Ash-Shura'a 26 : 192-195

“We sent not a messenger except (to teach) in the language of his own people.. “

Ibrahim 14 : 4

The Torah was entrusted to the Rabbis and scholars

“ We revealed the Torah: Therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the Prophets who bowed to Allah’s will, by the Rabbis and the Doctors of law: for them was entrusted the protection of Allah’s Book, and they were witnesses thereto.. “

Al-Maeda 5 : 44

The Qur'an was safeguarded from alteration

“ We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)”

Al-Hijr 15 : 9

The Qur'an corrects any mistakes humans introduced into Divine revelation

“ 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 5 : 48

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

The rewards and benefits of the Qur'an

- 1- We are guided to Allah's straight path
- 2- The Qur'an explains our goal in life
- 3- We get a good deed for every letter of the Qur'an that we recite
- 4- The Qur'an intercedes on our behalf on the Day of Judgment
- 5-The Qur'an fills our hearts with peace and contentment
- 6- Those who memorize (and apply) the Qur'an are with the Angels

Qur'anic stories

The Qur'an relates to us many stories like that of God's prophets: their life story, the struggle they faced and how they delivered and lived God's message

The Qur'an does not give specific details but what is stressed is the moral of the story and the lessons we derive that can be applied in our lives. It is not important to know the names of Abraham family or the names of those whom he came in contact with; what is important is his character, logic and devotion and how he invited others to God

Abraham asks God to show him how He gives life to the dead

“ Abraham said: “ O my Lord show me how You give life to the dead “God said: “ Do you then not believe ? “Abraham said: “ Yes I believe, but I want my heart to be satisfied” God said: “ Take four birds, cut them to pieces, then put a portion of them on every hill, and call on them: they will come to you flying with speed. Then know that Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise “

Al-Baqara 2 : 260

What do we learn from this Qur'anic story?

- There is nothing wrong in asking questions, even in matters of faith if our goal is to learn and increase our faith and understanding
- We see God's power and miracles, but we may not know the how of His power. God showed Abraham that indeed He is capable of giving life to the dead birds, but He did not show him how. We learn that our knowledge in some areas is indeed limited, and we learn to be humble

Qur'anic stories teach morals

In the story of Joseph and Jacob (chapter 12):

- We should be just and not favor some of our children over others to avoid jealousy
- When we are in a position of authority it is better to forgive than to seek revenge
- We should be grateful to God for His blessings and turn to Him in humility and not become arrogant
- We learn organization and proper planning as Joseph devised a plan to save Egypt from famine

Surat Marium (Chapter Mary)

Chapter 19 of the Qur'an relates the story of the Virgin Mary and how she conceived Eisa (Jesus)

“ We sent to her Our Angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. She said: “ I seek protection in Allah from you, come not near me if you do fear Allah”. He said: “ I am only a messenger from your Lord to announce to you the gift of a pure son”. She said: “ How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me and I am not unchaste? “ He said: “ So it will be your Lord says: that is easy for Me, and We wish to appoint him as a sign unto men and a mercy from Us. It is a matter decreed”. So she conceived him.. “

Marium 19 : 17-22

Qur'anic parable

“ Allah sends water from the skies, and channels flow to its measure, but the torrent bears away the foam that mounts up to the surface. From the ore that they heat in the fire, to make ornaments or utensils therewith, there is scum likewise. Thus does Allah by parables show truth and falsehood, for the scum disappears like froth cast out, while that which is for the good of mankind remains on earth. Thus does Allah sets forth parables “

Ar-Ra'd 13 : 17

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

Books of Hadeeth

1- Bokhari

2- Muslim

3- Ahmad

4- Termedhi

5- Abou Dawood

6- Ibn Majja

7- Nesa'ee

8- Malik

9- Hakim

10- Ibn Hibban

11- Tabarani

* The two most authentic books are Bokhari & Muslim

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

As God's prophet Muslims are obligated to obey prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

“ The answer of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His messenger, in order that he may judge between them, is no other than this: they say: “ We hear and we obey” It is such as these that will succeed “

An-Nur 24 : 51

To obey the prophet is a criterion of belief

“ But no, by your Lord, they can have no real faith, until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction “

An-Nesa'a 4 : 65

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

Follow the spirit of the Hadeeth

When the prophet called on his Lord to let him live as a meskeen (needy person) he did not mean that he should be dependant on the generosity of others or be at their mercy. Rather, he showed compassion and solidarity with the needy, deprived and disadvantaged. In other sayings he praised hard work that makes us independent and gives us self-dignity

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

The Seerah (life story) of prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

He was born in the year AD 571 in Macca to a noble family in the tribe of Quraish

He received God's divine revelation at age 40, and continued to receive Divine revelation till the time of his death at age 63

He was known as truthful, honest and trustworthy. His people respected his judgment and wisdom

The Quraish resisted Muhammad's call for social justice

- The leaders of Quraish did not want to loose their power and influence and resisted calls for social justice
- The Quraish were guardians of the Haram (Sacred house), and as pilgrims used to visit Macca, the Quraish were afraid of loosing this income if idol worship was abolished

It is not your wealth or children that brings you closer to God

“Never did We send a Warner to a population, but the wealthy among them said: “We believe not in the message with which you have been sent. We have more in wealth and in sons, and we cannot be punished”. Say: “Indeed my Lord enlarges and restricts the provision to whom He pleases, but most people do not understand. It is not your wealth nor your sons that will bring you nearer to Us in degree: but only those who believe and work righteousness, these are the ones for whom there is a multiplied reward for their deeds, while secure they reside in the dwellings on high “

Sa Ba 34 : 34-37

People follow tradition and resist change

“Just in the same way, whenever We sent a Warner before you to any people, the wealthy among them said: “We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we will certainly follow in their footsteps. “He said:” Even if I brought you better guidance than that which you found your fathers following? “. They said: “For us, we deny that you prophets are sent on a mission at all “

Az-Zukhruff 43 : 23 & 24

The Quraish accused Muhammad of being possessed, being a poet or a magician

“ Therefore proclaim the praises of your Lord: for by the grace of your Lord you are no vulgar soothsayer, nor are you one possessed. Or do they say: “ A poet, wait for him some calamity in due time! “

At-Tur 52 : 29 & 30

The Qur'an encouraged prophet Muhammad to patiently persevere

“ We know indeed the grief which their words do cause you. It is not you they reject: it is the signs of Allah, which the wicked deny. Rejected were the messengers before you. With patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrong, until Our aid did reach them. There is none that can alter the words and decree of Allah. Already you have received some account of those messengers “

Al-An'am 6 : 33 & 34

What do we learn from the prophet's life in Macca ?

- 1- Those calling for social justice, and inviting others to God will face great resistance and rejection, and their message will be distorted
- 2-Patient perseverance, determination and commitment should be our weapon, since we are inviting others to the truth
- 3-The leaders of the community will resist and fight any threat to their power and influence
- 4- It is important to support and strengthen those who believe and understand the difficulties that they face

Despite being rejected and abused Muhammad sought God's forgiveness for his people

Returning from Taif, heart-broken and rejected God sent the Angels at Muhammad's disposal: if he wished he could destroy Macca and Ta'if. His reply: No, I hope that among their descendants will be those who submit to God and follow His message

After Macca was opened, Muhammad forgave those who oppressed and tortured the Muslims. He said as prophet Joseph (PBUH) said: “ No blame on you today, may God forgive you” Yusuf 12 : 92

Isra'a (night journey) & Miraj (ascension to the heavens)

This occurred after the prophet went to Ta'if and was rejected and turned away

Allah wanted to strengthen His prophet's heart and to show him His power and the wonders of the heavens

Muhammad (PBUH) got God's instructions and the five daily prayers were ordained at that time

Isra'a (night journey from Macca to Jerusalem)

“ Glory be to Allah Who did take His servant for a journey by night from the sacred mosque to the farthest mosque, whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of Our signs: for He is the One who hears and sees all things “

Al-Isra'a 17 : 1

Hijra (immigration to Madina)

- After 13 years of inviting to Allah in Macca Muhammad only encountered resistance, rejection and abuse and few people believed in his message. It was time to move on and continue his effort in a new place
- A delegation from Yathrib came to Macca and gave their pledge to support Muhammad if he came to their city
- The Muslims immigrated to the new home of Islam to safeguard their convictions. Yathrib became known as the city of the prophet : Madina

If you cannot practice your religion, then immigrate to another safe place

“ When Angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, they say: “ In what plight were you? “ They reply: “ Weak and oppressed were we on earth”. They say: “ Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away from evil? “Such will find their abode in Hell, what an evil refuge”

An-Nesa'a 4 : 97

Problems facing prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Madina

- 1- Feud and war among the Arab tribes
- 2- The Jews controlled the economic life in Madina and were apprehensive about loosing their influence
- 3- The large number of immigrants from Macca placed enormous strains on the economic and social fabric of society in Madina
- 4- The threat from Quraish persists
- 5- The Muslim must learn their religion and the Da'wa (inviting to Allah) must continue

The prophet's plan to solve the problems in Madina

- 1-Every Muslim in Madina takes a brother from Macca to help him and supports him
- 2-The mosque is the focal point of activity
- 3-Pact of cooperation and non-aggression between Muslims and Jews
- 4- Prepare to defend your community against aggression, be alert and strong
- 5- Teaching the Muslims their Islam, and preparing the new generation of leaders

Muslims are like one body

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(The believers in their kindness, love and mercy towards each other is like one body; when one organ in that body gets sick, the rest of the body feels for it by exhibiting fever and staying awake at night)

Bokhari & Muslims

Pact of cooperation and non-aggression between Muslims & Jews

- The rights and liberties of both Muslims & Jews are protected and safeguarded: Their lives, possessions, freedom to worship and not being oppressed or forced to accept Islam
- In return cooperation is expected in protecting Madina against its enemies
- To live under the laws of the state and Muhammad as its leader

The Jewish position in Madina

- Initially they cooperated with the Muslims and lived up to the terms of the agreement
- Then they cooperated with the hypocrites in Madina and caused division among the Muslims; then they encouraged Quraish to invade Madina promising them to attack the Muslims from inside Madina
- Then they declared open warfare: So they were banished from Madina one tribe after the other
- The last Jewish settlement to be overtaken was at Khaybar

Present day Jews are not responsible for their forefather's mistakes

- Some Muslims who read the Qur'an take some verses out of historical context, and reach the conclusion that the Qur'an is against the Jews
- This is not correct, since the Qur'an praises the Jews and enumerates God's numerous blessings over the Children of Israel
- Each person stands on his own merit, and is not responsible or accountable for the sin or wrong-doing of someone else

God praises the Children of Israel in the Qur'an

- “ We appointed from among them leaders, giving guidance under Our command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in Our signs “ As-Sajda 32 : 24
- “ And We wished to be gracious to those who were oppressed in the land, and to make them leaders, and to make them heirs” Al-Qasas 28 :5
- “ O Children of Israel remember My favors on you, and that I preferred you over the nations “
Al-Baqara 2 : 47

Those who obey and confirm their faith are favored to God

- There is no favored nation or favored group of people over others. The reason the Children of Israel were favored at one time is that they had strong faith and patiently persevered
- After they broke their covenant with God, the Christians carried on the faith; then the Muslims followed
- We are favored by God if we are true to our convictions and live our lives as God commands

We are favored as long as we do good

“ You were (are) the best of people evolved for mankind: enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong, and believing in God.. “

Al-Imran 3 : 110

Battles that the prophet and the Muslims were involved in

- The battle of Badr: 300 Muslims faced a larger and better equipped army and won
- The battle of Ohod where Muslims were defeated because they disobeyed the prophet's orders
- The battle of the confederates or trenches when Madina was under siege
- The opening of Macca
- The battle of Hunain
- The battle of Tabuk

Muslims defended themselves and protected their state

The function of Muhammad (PBUH)

- 1- As God's messenger he delivered the Divine message
- 2- He explained the message
- 3- He applied the message in his life
- 4- He became an example to follow in his behavior and noble character
- 5- He taught and groomed a generation of leaders to carry on his mission
- 6- During his life, he served as head of state and leader of the Muslim nation

What does Muhammad represent to Muslims ?

- 1- Muhammad (PBUH) is God's messenger, and as such his orders are to be obeyed
- 2- Muhammad is an example to follow in his character and behavior
- 3- Muslims do not worship Muhammad: Muslims worship the One and Only God
- 4- Muhammad is human, and as such he has likes and dislikes; God corrects some of his conclusions if they are not correct
- 5- We cannot live as Muslims unless we follow the Sunnah of prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Qur'an alone is not enough

The noble character of Muhammad (PBUH)

- 1- His kindness and gentle nature
- 2-His caring and desire to guide to Allah's way
- 3- His truthfulness, integrity and trust-worthiness
- 4-His humility and ability to forgive
- 5-His sound judgment and wisdom
- 6-His patience, perseverance and commitment
- 7- His eloquence and ability to communicate
- 8- His justice
- 9- His worship and devotion to Allah

Allah praises the character of prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

“ You are indeed on an exalted standard of morals
and character “

Al-Qalam 68 : 4

“ We sent you but as a mercy to the worlds”

Al-Anbia'a 21 : 107

The kind and gentle nature of prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

“ It is through the mercy of God that you are kind and gentle with them; if you were severe or harsh-hearted, they would have left you. Therefore, pass over their faults and seek God’s forgiveness for them and consult them in your mutual affairs. When you have made d decision, put your trust in Allah, for Allah loves those who put their trust in Him “

Al-Imran 3 : 159

Muslims are encouraged to follow the example of Muhammad

“ You have indeed in the messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern of conduct for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who praises Allah often “

Al-Ahzab 33 : 21

The Family in Islam

Important concepts

- 1- Marriage is encouraged
- 2- There are rights and obligations for each husband and wife
- 3-We have duties towards our children
- 4- We have obligations towards our parents
- 5- Divorce is allowed under special circumstances
- 6- There are misconceptions about women in Islam

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 30 : 21

Marry the woman with morals

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(A woman is married for one of four reasons: for her beauty; and for her wealth; and for her ancestry and family position; and for her morals and religion. Chose the one with morals and religion, otherwise you will fail)

Bokhari & Muslim

The rights of the wife

- 1- To be respected as an equal partner with human dignity
- 2- To be provided for
- 3- To be cared for, loved and cherished
- 4- To be consulted and her opinion valued and to keep lines of communication open

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)

Men are leaders and guardians in their homes

“ Men are the protectors and guardians of women because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore, the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in their husband’s absence what Allah would have them guard.. “

An-nesa’ā 4 : 34

Men are no better than women

Some misunderstand this verse to imply that men are better than women and have been favored by God. This interpretation is wrong. No person is better than another person except by piety, righteous behavior, serving others and noble character.

“ The most honored among you in the sight of God is the person who is most pious (and of service to others “ Al-Hujerat 49 : 13

Duties of the wife

- 1- Caring for her husband and children
- 2- Taking care of her home
- 3- Learning and improving her mind
- 4- Cooperating with other families in the community
- 5- Not wasting her time in gossip or useless pursuits

Duties of the husband and father

- 1- Providing for his family
- 2- Taking care of his family and guiding them
- 3- Respecting and cherishing his wife
- 4- Setting a good example for his children

How the husband and father guides his family ?

- By setting an example through his character and behavior: we cannot ask our children to pray if we do not pray ourselves; we cannot ask them to be honest if we cheat others; we cannot ask them to tell the truth if we lie
- Children learn more from watching what we do, than from what we say

“ O you who believe protect yourselves and your families from a fire fueled by people and stone.. “

At-Tahreem 66 : 6

Rights of the husband

- 1- To be obeyed and respected as head of the family
- 2- To be provided with a tranquil home where he can rest, find peace and renew his energy
- 3- Not to ask him more than he can provide

God grants children as He wishes

“ To Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and the Earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows children male or female according to His will. Or He bestows both males and females and He leaves barren whom He will: for He is full of knowledge and power “

Ash-Shura' 42 : 49 & 50

Children are a blessing from God, we should raise them well

- If we are blessed with children, we should raise them well and make them aware of their duty in serving God
- We should love them, provide for them, give them a good education, set a good example, and make them feel secure.
- Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:
(Each one of you is a guardian, and is responsible and accountable for those under his authority)

Ahmad, Bokhari & Muslim

Our duties towards our parents

- 1- Honoring them and loving them: Not saying a word of contempt, or becoming impatient when they become old or forgetful
- 2- Taking care of them when they grow old and become dependant and in need of our help
- 3- Seeking God's forgiveness on their behalf
- 4- Honoring their relations and friends

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 17 : 23 & 24

Our mothers deserve more gratitude than our fathers

“ We have enjoined on Man to be good to his parents: in difficulty and travail upon difficulty and travail did his mother bear him, and in years twain was his weaning, (hear the command), “ Show gratitude to Me and to your parents, to Me is the final goal “

Luqman 31 : 14

Prophet Muhammad advised us to be good to our parents

A man asked Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) :
Who is most deserving of my company? He
said: (your mother). The man asked: Who next?
He said : (Your mother). The man asked: Who
next? He said: (Your mother). The man asked:
Who next? He said: (Then your father)

Bokhari

**As our parents grow old they may
lose their faculties and need help**

“ It is Allah who creates you and takes your souls at death; and of you are some who are sent back to a feeble age, so that they know nothing after having known much: for Allah is all-knowing, all-powerful “

An-Nahl 16 : 70

Taking care of our parents is our path to paradise

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(How can a person witness Ramadan and his sins are not forgiven? And how can a person hear my name mentioned and does not send peace and greetings? And how can a person have his parents with him and does not enter paradise?)

Bokhari

Divorce is allowed in Islam when necessary

Counsel and help is advised when there are problems threatening the marriage:

“ If you fear a breach between them, appoint two arbiters, one from his family, and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation, for Allah has full knowledge and is acquainted with all things”

An-Nesa'a 4 : 35

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(One of the things allowed in Islam is divorce, but it is disliked by Allah) Abou Dawood

Separate on equitable terms, do not wrong each other

“ When you divorce women, and they fulfill the terms of their Idda (waiting period)either take them back on equitable terms or set them free on equitable terms, but do not take them back to injure them, or to take undue advantage; if anyone does that, he wrongs his own soul ”

Al-Baqara 2 : 231

“ But if they disagree and must part, Allah will provide abundance for all from his all-reaching bounty, for Allah cares for all and is wise ”

An-Nesa'a 4 : 130

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 and work, or the children are grown up, then there should be no problem

Why women inherit less than men?

At the time of Qur'anic revelation a man was responsible for his wife and family, as well as for his parents, sisters, other brothers, aunts and grand parents. He was obliged to take care of them and support them

A married woman is supported by her husband, and her own money is hers to do whatever she wishes: her husband has no authority over her money

Should we still follow inheritance laws today?

Women participate in community affairs

They voice their opinions and advance issues that are of concern to women

They can assume leadership positions

They lead prayers among themselves, but do not serve as Imam for other men, because in prayer men and women are separated to allow each person to concentrate and be devoted and not preoccupied or distracted during prayer.

Women conduct business and manage their own affairs and can serve as bosses for men

Women's testimony in murder or financial cases is half that of a man

Because at the time of Qur'anic revelation the nature of the society was structured in such a way that women had little exposure to financial matters, and few worked outside their homes. Therefore, their exposure and interaction with other men was limited, hence their experience in these matters was limited

Human dignity and accountability knows no gender bias

“Whoever works righteousness, man or woman and has faith, indeed to him/ her We will give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions “

An-Nahl 16 : 97

Jihad in Islam

Important concepts

- Fighting as portrayed in the news media is a minor aspect of Jihad which is called for only for defensive reasons, not for aggression or personal reasons
- Jihad implies the struggle to control our vain desires, and to resist Satan's temptations, and to live our life as good Muslims
- Fighting is only accepted if done in the cause of Allah
- Jihad has great reward

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 control our vain desires

Unless we control our vain desires, we become slaves to those desires :

“ Do you see the one who has taken his own passion and desire as his god? Could you be a disposer of affairs for him ? Or do you think that most of them listen or understand ? They are only like cattle: no, they are worse astray in path “

Al-Furqan 25 : 43 & 44

We should enjoy what is lawful in moderation

“ Say: “ who has forbidden the beautiful gifts of Allah, which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure (which He has provided) for sustenance ? “

Al-Araf 7 : 32

“ Those (God’s righteous servants) when they spend are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a balance between those extremes “

Al-Furqan 25 : 67

Allah protects His righteous servants against Satan's influence

“ As for My servants, no authority shall you have over them.
Enough is your Lord for a disposer of affairs “

Al-Isra'a 17 : 65

“ Satan has no authority over those who believe and put their trust
in their Lord “

An-Nahl 16 : 99

“ If a suggestion from Satan assaults you, seek protection in Allah,
for He hears and knows all things. Those who are God-
conscious, when an evil thought from Satan assaults them, bring
Allah to remembrance, when lo ! They see right “

Al-Araf 7 : 200 & 201

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 3 : 186

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

Permission to fight was given because Muslims were wronged

“ To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they were wronged; and verily Allah is most powerful for their aid. Those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right, (for no cause) except they say: “ Our Lord is Allah “

Al-Hajj 22 : 39 & 40

* Fighting was permitted only in the second year after Hijra to defend the Muslim state against its enemies

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

Fight those who fight you, but do not transgress

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

Al-Baqara 2 : 190

Fighting to annex land or for personal reasons is not allowed in Islam

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

When peace is offered accept it

“ If the enemy inclines to peace, you too should incline towards peace and put your trust in Allah, for He is the One that hears and knows all things “

Al-Anfal 8 : 61

Paradise is the reward of martyrs

“ Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their possessions; for theirs in return is the Garden of paradise: they fight in His cause and kill and get killed. A promise binding on Him in truth through the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an, and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which you have concluded: that is the supreme achievement “

At-Tawba 9 : 111

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

Treat non-Muslims with kindness and justice

“ Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not because of your faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing with them kindly and justly: for Allah loves those who are just “

Al-Mumtahina 60 : 8

Do not take your enemies as your guardians

“ Allah forbids you, with regard to those who fight you because of your faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support others in driving you out, from turning to them for protection. It is such as turn to them in these circumstances that do wrong “

Al-Mumtahina 60 : 9

Argue not with the people of the Book except in the best possible way

“ Argue not with the people of the Book, except with means better, unless it be those of them who inflict wrong, but say: “ We believe in the revelation which was sent to us, and in that which was sent to you; our God and your God is One, and it is to Him we bow in Islam “

Al-Ankabut 29 : 46

Have normal relationship with Jews & Christians

Muslims can eat their food & Muslim men can marry Jewish or Christian women:

“ This day all things good and pure made lawful to you. The food of the people of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful to them. Lawful to you in marriage are chaste believing women and chaste women among the people of the Book revealed before you when you give them their dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigue “

Al-Maeda 5 : 5

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

These guidelines do not apply to the enemies of Islam who have shown repeatedly how much harm they desire and are willing to cause harm to Muslims

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 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 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 10 : 99

The prophet's saying can be misunderstood

(I have been commanded to fight 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 to the Quraish of 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.

Prophet Muhammad's sayings

(Whoever wrongs a non-Muslim, who has a covenant with the Muslims, will have to contend with me on the Day of Judgment)

Tabarani

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

Is there a Jewish bias in the Qur'an ?

Those who are ignorant take some Qur'anic verses out of historical context and conclude that the Qur'an is anti-Jewish. These verses only address problems that faced the Muslim community in Madina at the time of prophet Muhammad

The Qur'an in many other verses praises the children of Israel and enumerates God's many blessings over them, and that at one time they were favored by God because they patiently persevered and were righteous

Current day Jews should not be blamed for mistakes their forefathers committed

The Qur'an praises the Children of Israel

“ O Children of Israel remember the favors which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you to other nations “

Al-Baqara 2 : 47

“ And We wished to be gracious to those who were oppressed on earth, to make them leaders in faith and make them heirs “

Al-Qasas 28 : 5

“ And We appointed, from among them, leaders giving guidance under Our command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in Our signs “

As-Sajda 32 : 24

The Jizia is misrepresented

The Jizia is a small tax levied on non-Muslims in lie of protection. If the Muslims were unable to provide protection, the Jizia was returned.

It is much less than the Zakat (obligatory charity) ordained on Muslims. Non-Muslims do not pay Zakat

The Jizia is levied only on those who can afford to pay, but not on the poor, elderly , women or children

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
- 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

Extremists are a minority among Muslims

- These extremists represent a minority among Muslims, most of whom are peaceful and have the same hopes and fears as anyone in the Western world. They want a good life for themselves and their families. They do not hate non-Muslims and want to live in peace
- If you ask any Muslim in the Middle East they will tell you we love Americans and everyone would love to come and live here. What they dislike is American policy which they see as wrong and unfair and siding with rulers that are oppressing their own people

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

Why extremists hold such radical views ?

- **Lack of proper knowledge about Islam**

Their knowledge and application is based on old and wrong interpretation. They want to live as Muslims lived 14 centuries ago. Their teachings revolve around prayers and memorization of the Qur'an and blind obedience that does not allow for questions or critical thinking. Concepts are dogmas that are followed as sacred. They consider any view outside their own as wrong, even from fellow Muslims

Why Extremists hold such radical views ?

- Lack of democracy in many Muslim countries

Dissidents are not allowed to express their opinions, and many are jailed or even killed. Most Muslim countries are ruled by dictators who oppress freedom and have a monopoly on power.

America and the West must deal with governments and often turn a blind eye on violations of human freedom. Muslims see the West as collaborating with ruthless corrupt rulers

Why extremists hold such radical views ?

- **Poverty and lack of decent jobs**

It is easy for extremists to recruit young men who are hungry, desperate and vulnerable, and to brain wash them and program them into instruments of terror

The wealth of Muslim countries is usurped by corrupt dictators. Bribery is common and those in power only care about themselves

It is difficult to have human dignity or have hope when you are poor and unable to provide for your family

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

Islam is compatible with Western democracy

- Islam respects and safeguards human freedom and liberties. Among these is the right to express yourself and to think critically and oppose what you consider to be wrong. Islam is against oppression and transgression in all its forms
- Justice and equality are two basic concepts of government in Islam
- Citizens should respect the rule of law and obey those charged with authority
- The dignity of every human being is safeguarded, no person is better than another person because of lineage, wealth or power: what is important is character and behavior

Be just towards others and do not let your likes dictate your behavior

“ O you who believe stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor, for Allah can best protect both. Follow not your lusts, lest you swerve; and if you distort justice or decline to do justice, indeed Allah is well acquainted with all that you do “

An-Nesa'a 4 : 135

The equality of mankind

No person is better than another person because of his lineage, wealth, power or knowledge.

What determines our worth is our character and behavior:

“Indeed the most honored amongst you to Allah is the most righteous” Al-Hujerat 49 : 13

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: (Allah does not look at your faces or your wealth; He looks at your hearts and your deeds) Muslim

Is there an American Islam?

- Some Muslims would react strongly that this is inappropriate since there is only one Islam that is valid and applicable in all places.
- Others say: our understanding of how to live our life as Muslims changes according to the society that we live in.
- The difference is not in basic guidelines or principles of morality, rather in our interaction with others and how we face up to new challenges

Is there an American Islam?

- Concepts like the Oneness of God and being accountable to Him; that prayer, charity and fasting are duties obligated on mankind by God; and principles of morality like being truthful, honest, kind, forgiving, hastening in all good deeds, and helping those who need our help: these guidelines do not change with time and remain constant regardless of the society that we live in
- What changes is how we apply Islamic guidelines in our life: the way we dress is governed by modesty and not vulgarity; the form of government is guided by justice and consultation so that there is adequate representation and no dictatorship; our financial dealings are governed by helping the poor and needy, and not cheating others, and not hoarding our money, but allowing the wealth of the community to circulate and create jobs

There is nothing wrong in having an American form of Islam

- The Qur'an provides guidelines but does not restrict our choices
- The prophet's sayings must be understood in historical context and the spirit of the Hadeeth followed not the literal words
- As long as we are faithful to Islamic basic principles: basic beliefs, rituals of worship and ethics and codes of morality, we can come up with new answers to new challenges
- We should learn and incorporate what is good in the American experience
- Listen to new ideas and not be afraid of new interpretation of religious doctrine: religion is evolving and dynamic

American Muslims

- No one knows how many Muslims exist in the USA
- Most are professionals with good education : Doctors, Engineers, teachers
- 40-50 % come from Pakistan & India
20-30 % come from Arab countries
10-15 % are African American
5 % come from Indonesia, Africa and Eastern Europe

American Muslims

- The first phase was building mosques in every American city
- Then building schools
- Social and support structures
- Political organizations
- Little coordination between different groups or organizations

Sources of strength

- American Muslims are well educated and earn decent income
- They have vision and understand their role and are active in their community
- Their children have less hang ups and more involved
- They are building the infrastructure of the future

Sources of weakness

- Some came with baggage and hold on to old dogmas
- Some refuse to interact or become part of American society
- Some want to follow the literal word and do not view Islam as progressive or able to adapt to a Western democracy
- Some are fearful of and not comfortable in associating with non-Muslims
- Some enforce rigid upbringing of their children and impart to them their narrow view of Islam

Priorities and vision for the future

- To enjoy the freedom and opportunity this country provides, and to live our lives aware of our duty to serve God and be good to our neighbors and be involved in our community
- To raise our children well : good education, morals and sense of responsibility
- To support institutions and social structures
- Cooperate with others and offer solutions to problems facing our country
- We belong here and are a part of this nation and add to its diversity

Human interpretation of God's message

It is human beings who must understand God's message and apply it in their lives.

They are guided by basic guidelines and doctrine in their religious tradition, and by basic principles of morality

To question and criticize religious teachings is not bad if the goal is to understand how these teachings apply to our life today. The writings of old scholars is not sacred, since they lived in a different time and approached problems based on their knowledge and experience.

Human interpretation of the Divine text

As human beings we need not only a Divine text, but also a human messenger/ prophet that explains God's message and applies it in his character and behavior, and becomes an example to follow

With time God's message takes on a certain form and religious tradition. From time to time scholars add to and amplify this message. Therefore, religion becomes a dynamic and evolving concept, rooted in history but given various interpretations suited to our times and addressing our problems and challenges

We need both a divine text and a human messenger

“ How would you deny faith while the signs of God are rehearsed unto you, and among you live His messenger ? However holds firmly to God will be shown a way that is straight “

Al-Imran 3 : 101

The prophet may be dead but his message and example are alive

We know a lot about prophet Muhammad (PBUH) : his sayings and his life story; what he stood for; how he struggled and solved problems; his character and faith.

All these qualities guide our life as Muslims every day of our life, whether we live here in America or any other place on earth, if we reflect and derive lessons and apply it in our life

As human beings we are limited in our ability to understand certain concepts

We do not understand the innate nature of God

We have not seen the Angels

We struggle to understand resurrection and life
after death

We do not understand the nature of the Soul

We do not know what will happen tomorrow, but
God knows the future

Look at God's creation

“Indeed the creation of the heavens and earth is more difficult than the creation of man, but most people do not know “

Ghafir 40 : 57

“If all the trees on earth were pens and the oceans were ink, with seven oceans behind it to add to its supply, the words of Allah would not be exhausted, for Allah is exalted in power, full of wisdom “

Luqman 31 : 27

No vision can comprehend God

“ No vision can grasp Him: but His grasp is over all vision. He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things “

Al-An'am 6 : 103

Think of and consider God's attributes

“ The most beautiful names (attributes of perfection) belong to Allah: so call on Him by His names; and shun such as use profanity in His names: for what they do, they will soon be requited “

Al-Araf 7 : 180

How to approach things that we do not understand?

- To realize that as human beings we are limited in our ability to understand certain concepts:

“They ask you concerning the Spirit, say: “The knowledge of the Spirit belongs to my Lord. The knowledge imparted to you is indeed limited” Al-Isra’ā 17 : 85
- The way to think about God is to consider His attributes and reflect on His creation
- We need to accept and have faith though we do not have direct proof

Consider your own creation

“ Soon We will show them Our signs in the furthest regions of the earth, and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth”

Fusselat 41 : 53

“ Do they not reflect in their own selves? Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and all between them except for just ends and for a term appointed, yet among mankind there are many that deny their meeting with their Lord “

Ar-Rum 30 : 8

As human beings we are fallible and we make mistakes in judgment

What is important is to realize that we can make mistakes, and be willing to correct our mistakes. This cannot happen until we are willing to listen to and consider different points of view.

Extremists , or hard-liners consider their own view as infallible and are not willing to listen to, debate or argue with others who differ with them. If you do not share their views, then you are against them. There are no grey areas

Moderate Muslims understand that their own views could be wrong, and other views right. They are willing to listen and consider. It is only through this process of discussion, analysis and reflection that the truth becomes apparent and accepted, and false ideas rejected. Therefore, as Muslims we should not be afraid of innovation or new ideas, nor of making mistakes then correcting our mistakes.

Muslims differ in their interpretation of God's message

Critical thinkers

Other Muslims understand that old scholars lived in a different society, and that their opinions are not written in stone. They note that some of these great scholars changed their rulings based on new information and different circumstances. They understand that the Qur'an asks us to think and consider and reach conclusions that help us in our life. They realize that Ijtihad (critical thinking to come up with solutions to new problems) should always be available

Muslims differ in their interpretation of God's message

The traditionalist

Some are traditionalists and view the opinions of old scholars as sacred and cannot be changed. Their logic is this: Those scholars heard from the prophet and witnessed the revelation of the Qur'an, and knew the Arabic language. If they had any doubt, they asked the prophet for clarification. Since their knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah is better than our understanding, then their opinions are better than our opinions. Therefore, we should be followers and not innovators in religious matters. They say God has completed his religion, and nothing was left out, therefore, there is nothing new. It is not up to us to devise new concepts or new guidelines in Islam. Those who follow this way of thinking are dogmatic and unwilling to listen to opposing points of view. They feel safe and secure in following old established religious doctrine, and are uncomfortable when confronted with new ideas

Different groups in Islam

- Sunni Muslims represent the majority of Muslims and believe that any Muslim who is qualified and righteous can be a ruler
- Sh'ite Muslims are a minority and believe that only those who are descendants of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have the authority to rule
There are other differences relating to obedience to the Imam, certain rituals performed and where they get their religious information

The Twelve Imams

Sh'ite Muslims believe in 12 Imams that have the right to rule over Muslims, starting with Ali (the prophet's cousin and his son in law) and his two children : Hasan & Hussein, and their descendants

The last Imam disappeared and in his absence the Ayatu Allah (sign of God) or religious leaders govern. Since the religious leaders represent the absent Imam obedience to them is obligatory

Sh'ite Muslims give 20 % of their income to religious theocracy

They commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in Karbala' by beating themselves as a sign of remorse

Shi'ite Muslims

- Live in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Yemen and north Africa
- They believe in the Qur'an and in prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- Their books of Hadeeth are different from Sunni Muslims, since they only accept a Hadeeth related by their scholars

Shi'ite Muslims

- The idea of a Shi'ite sect developed in the second and third century after Hijra
- The Shi'ite were oppressed by the Umayyad rulers and also by the Abbasid rulers
- Their oppression and isolation from power influenced their thinking: you can say things that you do not believe in to protect yourself and avoid reprisals: Tuqqiyya

Bringing Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims together

Many attempts occurred in the past to bridge the differences and to bring scholars together

The most recent attempt was the effort to reach out to Christians in “ Common words “, when Muslim theologians, both Sunni & Shi'ite signed a document along with Christian theologians stating the common bonds between Muslims and Christians. It is a beginning that may foster cooperation and dispel misunderstanding

Muslim Jewish dialogue

Has been occurring in America for many years,
one such group exists here in Cincinnati

What it has accomplished is a better understanding
and appreciation of each group's faith and
tradition, and the development of common
bonds and friendship between individuals

The goal is apply this understanding and allow the
children to come together