In The Name Of Allah,
The Most Gracious
The Most Merciful
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
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(Web sites, Centres, Recommended Reading)
Publisher's Foreword

With the blessings of almighty Allah, 350,000 copies of "Discover Islam Your Birth Right" have been distributed so far. Now we are pleased to present the fourth edition by printing 150,000 copies. The three previous editions have provided an opportunity to a significant number of individuals world-wide, to understand and learn about Islam in its flawless form.

The fourth edition covers 15 topics. Although each of these topics is an independent subject and not linked with each other in terms of context and sequence, however, the reader might notice a slight repetition among various topics because of the multiplicity of references from the Qur'ān and the Bible. We have also updated the website links and addresses of Islamic centres.

We are pleased to inform you that the subjects in the book will be available very soon at www.discover-islam.net.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the organizations from whom we received the original literature for publishing this book. Special thanks are due to the following:

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We invite our dear readers to give their views, remarks and suggestions on this edition by contacting us on the following address:

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Translations of this edition are available in German, French, Spanish, Filipino & Chinese. A Russian translation has already been completed and will be available soon.

*Finally, we pray to Almighty Allah that this endeavor will be beneficial to all the readers.*
Introduction

Each person is born in a circumstance which is not of his own choosing. The religion of his family or the ideology of the state is thrust upon him from the very beginning of his existence in this world. By the time he reaches his teens, he is usually fully brain-washed into believing that the beliefs of his particular society are the correct beliefs that everyone should have.

However, when some people mature and are exposed to other belief-systems, they begin to question the validity of their own beliefs. The seekers of truth often reach a point of confusion upon realizing that each and every religion, sect, ideology and philosophy claims to be the one and only correct way for man. Indeed, they all encourage people to do good. So, which one is right? They cannot all be right since each claims all others are wrong.

Then how does the seeker of truth choose the right way?

God gave us all minds and intellects to enable us to make this crucial decision. It is the most important decision in the life of a human being. Upon it depends his future, consequently, each and every one of us must examine dispassionately the evidence presented and choose what appears to be right until further evidence arises.

Like every other religion or philosophy, Islam also claims to be the one and only true way to God. In this respect it is no different from other systems.

This book intends to provide some evidence for the validity of that claim.
However, it must always be kept in mind that one can only determine the true path by putting aside emotions and prejudices, which often blind us to reality. Then, and only then, will we be able to use our God-given intelligence and make a rational and correct decision.
The Reality of Jesus
Peace Be Upon Him

حقيقة يسوع علیه السلام
THE REALITY OF JESUS

The Islamic view of Jesus (Peace Be Upon Him) lies between two extremes. The Jews, who rejected Jesus as a prophet of God, called him an imposter. The Christians, on the other hand, considered him to be the son of God and worship him as such. Islam considers Jesus to be one of the great prophets of God and respect him as much as Abraham, Moses, Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Them) to mention but a few.

This is in conformity with the Islamic view of the oneness of God, the oneness of divine guidance, and the complementary role of the subsequent mission of God's messengers. Now, let us examine facts about Jesus one by one, to get a clear picture of him.

1- God Is All-Knowing ... But Jesus Was Not

When speaking of the day of judgement, Jesus clearly gave evidence of a limitation on his knowledge when he said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the son, but the Father" (Mark 13: 32 and Matt 24:36). But God knows all. His knowledge is without any limitations. That Jesus, of his own admission, did not know when the day of judgement would be, is clear proof that Jesus is not all-knowing, and that Jesus is therefore not God.

2- God Is All-Powerful ... But Jesus Was Not

While Jesus performed many miracles, he himself admitted that the power he had was not his own but was derived from God when he said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth
the Father do..." (John 5:19). Again he said, "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which has sent me." (John 5:30) But God is not only All-Powerful, He is also the source of all power and authority. That Jesus, of his own admission, could do nothing on his own is clear proof that Jesus is not all-powerful, and therefore that Jesus is not God.

3- God Does Not Have A God... But Jesus Did Have A God

God is the ultimate judge and refuge for all, and He does not call upon nor pray to any others. But Jesus acknowledged that there was One whom he worshipped and to Whom he prayed when he said, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." (John 20:17). He is also reported to have cried out while on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). If Jesus were God, then couldn't this be read, "Myself, myself, why hast thou forsaken me?" Would that not be pure nonsense? When Jesus prayed the Lord's prayer (Luke 11:2-4), was he praying to himself? When in the garden of Gethsemane he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."(Matt. 26:36). Was Jesus praying to himself? Jesus, of his own admission and by his own actions, acknowledged, worshipped, and prayed to another being as God is clear proof that Jesus himself is not God.

4- God's will Was Distinct From His Own

Perhaps the clearest indication we have that Jesus and God are not equal, and therefore not one and the same, comes again from the mouth of Jesus himself who said in (John 14:28) "My Father is greater than I." When someone
referred to him as a good master in *(Luke 18:19)*, Jesus responded: "Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is God..." Furthermore, Jesus drew clear distinctions between himself and God when he said, "I proceeded forth and came from God, neither came I of myself but He sent me." *(John 8:42)* Jesus gave clear evidence of his subordination to God, rather than his equality with God, when he said in *(Luke 22:42)*, "Not my will but Thine will be done" and in John 5:30, "I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which has sent me." That Jesus would admit that he did not come into the world on his own initiative but was directed to do so, that he would acknowledge another being as greater than himself, and that he would negate his own will in deference to affirming the will of another, give clear proof that Jesus is not the Supreme One and therefore Jesus is not God.

*According to the Bible, God is an invisible spirit...*

**5- But Jesus Was Flesh And Blood**

Christianity believes that God created man in His image: white, black or any else, male or female? This is according to Genesis 1:26: "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." But this contradicts Isaiah 40:18 and 25: "To whom then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him?.. To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? Saith the Holy One." See also Psalm 89:6: "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?" And Jeremiah 10:6,7 "For as much as there is none like unto thee, O Lord... there is none like unto thee." Finally, in I Kings we read: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth?
Behold, heaven and the heaven of heaven's cannot contain you." (8- 26-27) Our question is how does Jesus fit as being God? And how can God be born by a mortal one as any other mortal when it is clearly stated in the verse that heaven and earth cannot contain God.

While thousands saw Jesus and heard his voice, Jesus himself said that this could not be done with God when he said: "No man hath seen God at any time." (John 1:18). "Ye have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His shape." (John 5:37). So, Jesus said that no one had seen or heard God at any time. How then can Jesus fit as being God when his followers both saw and heard him? This is clear proof that Jesus was not God. During his lifetime, Jesus never claimed to be the Almighty God, Who is worthy of worshipping. Besides, he was frank in calling his people to worship the only One God, Who is in the heaven. Why shouldn't we surrender completely and be loyal to this One God, as Jesus (Peace Be Upon Him) did, and thus convince ourselves that Jesus (P.B.U.H.) was only a man and a prophet?

**Conclusion**

The Church recognises the Bible as the primary source of knowledge about God and Jesus. But since the Bible makes it clear that Jesus is not the Supreme Being and the Supreme Being is not Jesus, upon what basis have you come to believe otherwise?

It should be clearly understood that all the prophets and messengers of God right from Adam to Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Them All) preached the Oneness of God. Thus, their religion was Islam which means total submis-
sion to the will and commands of the only One God (Allah).

QUR'ANIC PERSPECTIVE OF JESUS

A Messenger of God

Jesus (P.B.U.H.) was just a messenger of God whose birth was a special miracle, without the intervention of the customary physical means. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an:

"Behold! The angels said: 'O Mary! Allah hath chosen thee and purified thee, chosen thee above the women of all nations. O Mary! Worship thy Lord devoutly: prostrate thyself and bow down (in prayer) with those who bow down.' This is part of the tidings of the things unseen, which we reveal unto thee (O prophet!) by inspiration: Thou were not with them when they cast lots with arrows, as to which of them should be charged with the care of Mary: Nor were thou with them when they disputed (the point). 'Behold!' The angels said: 'O Mary! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to Allah. He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity. And he shall be (of the company of) the righteous.' She said: 'O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man hath touched me?' He said: 'Even so: Allah createth what He willeth: When He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it, 'Be', and it is. And Allah will teach him the Scripture and wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel. And (appoint him) a mes-

16 The Reality of Jesus
senger to the children of Israel, (with this message): "I have come to you, with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave, and I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by Allah's leave; and I declare to ye what you eat and what ye store in your houses. Surely therein is a sign for you if ye did believe. (I have come to you), to attest the Torah which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was (before) forbidden to you; I have come to you with a sign from your Lord. So fear Allah and obey me. It is Allah who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is the way that is straight."

(Qur'an 3: 49-51).

Given that the Noble Qur'an denies the trinity and the sonship of Jesus (P.B.U.H.), what, according to the Qur'an, was the real mission of Jesus? The answer is that Jesus was a link in a long chain of prophets and messengers sent by God to various nation and societies whenever they needed guidance or had deviated from the teachings of Moses and other messengers. He was miraculously supported to prove that he was a messenger from God. However, the majority of the Jews rejected his ministry.

In another verse of the Noble Qur'an, Jesus (P.B.U.H.) confirmed the validity of the Torah which was revealed to Moses, and also conveyed the glad tidings of a final messenger who would follow him:

"And when Jesus, son of Mary, said, Children of Israel, I am indeed the messenger to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving glad tidings of
a messenger who cometh after me, whose name is the Praised One." (Qur'an, 61:6).

Note that "praised one" is a translation of "Ahmad" - Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H.) name. Careful study of the New Testament shows that Jesus (P.B.U.H.) refers to the same prophet in John 14:16-17: "And I will give you another counselor (Prophet Muhammad), to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth."

The usual explanation of this prophecy is that the counselor referred to is the Holy Spirit, but this explanation is excluded by a previous verse in John: "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the counselor will not come to you."

The characteristics of this counselor, as can be derived from the prophecy, are that he will stay forever with the believers, he will glorify Jesus, and he will speak what he hears from God. All these characteristics apply to Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.). He came six centuries after Jesus (P.B.U.H.). He came with a universal and everlasting message, fulfilling the prophecy that the counselor will stay forever with the faithful. He glorified Jesus as a great prophet. The Noble Qur'an attributes to Jesus (P.B.U.H.) miracles not mentioned in the Bible. Prophecies in the Old and New Testaments, as well as specific verses in the Qur'an, show how Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is rejected by Jews and Christians out of prejudice and misunderstanding, rather than careful study of the Bible.
Not more than a prophet

Mary, the mother of Jesus (P.B.U.H.) never claimed to be the mother of God. She was a pious and virtuous woman. The Noble Qur'an says:

"Christ, the son of Mary, was no more than a messenger; many were the messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food. See how Allah doth make His signs clear to them; Yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth!" (Qur'an, 5:75).

Like Adam in his creation

The Noble Qur'an recognizes the fact that Jesus (P.B.U.H.) had no human father, but this does not make him the son of God, or God himself. By this criterion, Adam would have been more entitled to be the son of God, because he had neither a father nor a mother. The Noble Qur'an draws attention to the miraculous creation of both in the following verses:

"Truly the likeness of Jesus, in God's sight, is as Adam's likeness; He created him of dust, then He said to him, 'Be' and he was." (Qur'an 3:59).

Not a son of God

Taking men for gods or sons of God was not a new thing. All ancient mythologies have fables of that kind. God says in the Noble Qur'an:

"The Jews call 'Uzair' a son of God, and the Christians call Christ as the son of God. That is a saying from their mouths; (In this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the truth!" (Qur'an, 9:30).
God also says in the Noble Qur'an:
"Say, He is Allah, The One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him." (Qur'an, 112:1-4).

In a chapter (surah) entitled "Maryam" (Mary), the Noble Qur'an tells us how Mary gave birth to her son, and how the Jews accused her when she brought the child home:
"Then she brought the child to her folk, carrying him, and they said, 'Mary, you have surely committed a monstrous thing. Sister of Aaron, your father was not a wicked man, nor your mother a woman unchaste.' Mary pointed to the child; but they said, 'How shall we speak to one who is still in the cradle, a little child.' And he said, Lo, I am God's servant. God has given me the Book and made me a Prophet. He has made me blessed wherever I may be and he has enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I live, and likewise to cherish my mother. He has not made me arrogant and unblest. Peace be upon me, the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised up alive."

(Qur'an, 19:29-33).

In the same chapter, following the above quotation, God assures Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) and, through him, the whole world, that what is told above is the TRUTH about Jesus (P.B.U.H.), although Christians may not accept it. Jesus is NOT the son of GOD. He was, clearly, the son of Mary. The verses continue:
"That is Jesus, son of Mary, in word of truth, concerning which they doubt. It is not for God to take a son unto Him. Glory be to Him. Whenever He determines a matter, He but says to it, 'Be', and it is."

(Qur'an,19:34-35).
After this strong statement about the nature of Jesus, God directed Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) to call the Christians to worship the One God "Allah":

"Surely Allah is my Lord, and your Lord, so serve him. This is the straight path." (Qur'an, 19:36).

The rejection of the very idea of God having a son is restated later in the same chapter in even stronger words: "And they say:

The All-merciful has taken unto Himself a son. You have indeed advanced something hideous. At it the skies are about to burst, the earth to split asunder and the mountains to fall down in utter ruins: That they have attributed to the All-merciful a son. It behooves not that the All-merciful should take a son. None there are in the heavens and earth but comes to the All-merciful as a servant." (Qur'an, 19:88-93).

Not God

On the day of judgement, Jesus (P.B.U.H.) will disclaim any knowledge of being worshipped as God. Allah, the Almighty, says in the Noble Qur'an: "And Behold! Allah will say:

"O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, "Worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah?" He will say: "Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, Thou wouldst indeed have known it. Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what in thine. For thou knowest in full all that is hidden." (Qur'an, 5:116).

The Noble Qur'an rejects the concept of the trinity; God
the father, God the son, God the Holy Spirit, as strongly as it rejects the concept of Jesus as the son of God. This is because GOD IS ONE. Three cannot be one. The Noble Qur'an addresses Christians in the following verses from the surah entitled "An-Nisaa" (The Women):

"People of the Book, do not go beyond the bounds in your religion, and say nought as to God but the Truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only the messenger of God and his word that he committed to Mary, and a spirit originating from Him. So believe in God and His messengers, and say not "three." To refrain is better for you. Allah is only one God, glory be to him - that He should have a son! To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth. God suffices for a guardian.

The Messiah will not disdain to be a servant of God, neither will the angels who are close to Him. Whosoever disdains to serve Him and walks proud, He will assuredly muster them to Him, all of them.

As for the believers, who do deeds of righteousness, We will pay them their rewards in full, and He will give them more, out of His bounty. As for those who disdain and walk proudly, He will punish with a severe punishment, and they shall not find, apart from God, a friend or helper." (Qur'an, 4:171-173).

Not crucified

The end of the life of Jesus on earth is as much involved in mystery as his birth. So how can it be deemed crucified when many Christian books affirm that his death was not certain? Allah says in the Noble Qur'an:
"That they said (in boast), we killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. "But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no certain knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not - Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise." (Qur'an, 4:157-158).

It is a sad fact of history that not many followed the "straight path" called to by Jesus (P.B.U.H.). He was only followed by a few disciples inspired by God to support him. The non-believers plotted - as they would against Muhammad, six centuries later - to kill Jesus. But God had a better plan for him and his followers, as the Noble Qur'an tells us:

"And when Jesus perceived their unbelief, he said, 'Who will be my helpers in the cause of God?' The apostles said, 'We are God's helpers. We believe in God: so bear witness to our submission. God, we believe in what you have revealed, and we follow the messenger. Inscribe us therefore with those who bear witness.' And they (the disbelievers) devised, and God devised (against them), and God is the best of devisors. When God said, "Jesus, I will take you to Me and will raise you to Me, and I will purify you (of the falsehoods) of those who do not believe. I will make your followers above the unbelievers till Resurrection Day."

(Qur'an,3:52-55).

As the above verses indicate, Jesus (P.B.U.H.) was taken and raised to heaven. He was not crucified. It was certainly the plan of the enemies of Jesus (P.B.U.H.) to put
him to death on the cross, but God saved him, and someone else was crucified:

"And for their unbelief, and their uttering against Mary a grave false charge, and for their saying, 'We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of God.' Yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them. Those who are at variance concerning him are surely in doubt. They have no knowledge but only follow conjecture. It is certain that they killed him not. No indeed: God raised him up to Him: God is ever Almighty, Wise. There is not one of the people of the book but will believe in him before his death, and on Resurrection Day he will be a witness against them."

(Qur'an, 4: 156-159).

The Noble Qur'an does not explain who was the person crucified instead of Jesus, nor elaborate on the second coming of Jesus. However, commentators of the Noble Qur'an have always interpreted the last verse of the above quotation to mean that Jesus will return, and that all Jews and Christians will believe in him before he dies. This understanding is supported by authentic sayings (Hadith) of Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and upon all His messengers).

For more information about this subject:
www.al-sunnah.com
www.beconvinced.com
www.sultan.org
MARY AND HER SON, JESUS

Peace Be Upon Them

مریم و ابن‌ها عیسی عليها السلام
MARY AND HER SON, JESUS

The Noble Qur'an, the final testament which God Almighty revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) as guidance for all mankind, speaks highly not only of Mary, but also of Jesus, her son. According to the Noble Qur'an, Jesus (P.B.U.H.) is a prophet as are Noah, Abraham, and Moses (Peace Be Upon Them All). As far as Mary is concerned, the Noble Qur'an has hailed her as a model for the women of the entire world. The following discussion, based on the Noble Qur'an, will further explain this fact.

In the Noble Qur'an, Mary (P.B.U.H.) has been mentioned several times, especially in the chapters called "Al-Imran" and "Maryam", the Arabic name for Mary. When Mary was born, her mother prayed that her daughter should be given the protection of God, so she would lead a good life. God Almighty heard her plea and accepted Mary into His protection, under the care of Zackariah, the father of John "the Baptist." Allah the Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an:

"Behold! A woman of Imran said: 'O my Lord! I do dedicate unto Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service: So accept this of me: For Thou hearest and knowest all things.' When she was delivered, she said: "O my Lord! Behold! I am delivered of a female child!" - And Allah knew best what she brought forth. And the male is not as the female. I have named her Mary, and I commend her and her offspring to Thy protection from Satan the outcast." (Qur'an, 3: 35 - 36).

"Whenever Zackariah went into the sanctuary where
she was, he found her provided with food. He said: 'O Mary! Whence (comes) this to you?' She said: "It is from Allah. Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure." (Qur'an, 3: 37).

"Behold! The angels said: O Mary! Allah hath chosen thee and purified thee; chosen thee above the women of all nations. O Mary! Worship thy Lord devoutly; prostrate thyself and bow down (in prayer) with those who bow down." (Qur'an, 3: 42).

The Noble Qur'an further states that it is an awesome statement to accuse Mary of unchastity, as did the Jews:

"That they rejected faith; that they uttered against Mary a grave false charge." (Qur'an, 4: 156).

The Noble Qur'an also gives an account of the birth of Jesus by Mary. Just prior to Jesus' birth, Mary retired to an eastern place where she prayed. It was in this state that the angel appeared to her in the shape of a man. As she thought the angel was a man, she was frightened and asked him not to invade her privacy. God Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an:

"Relate in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the east. She placed a screen (to screen herself from them). Then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. She said: 'I seek refuge from thee in (Allah) Most Gracious: (come not near) if thou dost fear Allah.' He said: 'I am only a messenger from thy Lord, (to announce) to thee the gift of a holy son.' She said: 'How shall I have a son, seeing that no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste.'" (Qur'an, 19: 16-20).
Mary was naturally confused by this as she proclaimed that she had not been touched by any man, to which the angel then replied:

He said: "So (it will be): thy Lord saith: '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 (so) decreed. So she conceived him and she retired with him to a remote place.'

(Qur'an, 19: 21 - 22).

Mary, being human, suffered the effects of childbirth as any expectant mother would during these times. Allah the Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an:

"And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm-tree: she cried (in her anguish: 'Ah! Would that I had died before this! Would that I had been a thing forgotten and out of sight!' But (a voice) cried to her from beneath the (palm-tree): 'Grieve not for thy Lord hath provided a rivulet beneath thee. 'And shake towards thyself the trunk of the palm-tree: it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon thee. So eat and drink and cool (thine) eye. And if thou dost see any man say: I have vowed a fast to (Allah) Most Gracious and this day will I enter into no talk with any human being.'"

(Qur'an, 19: 23-26).

When Mary showed the baby to her people, they said that this was truly an amazing thing that had happened. The newly born baby (Jesus) replied to the people as shown in the following verses:

"At length she brought the (babe) to her people, carrying him (in her arms). They said: 'O Mary! Truly an amazing thing has thou brought! O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a man of evil nor thy mother a
woman unchaste!' But she pointed to the babe. They said: 'How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?' He said: 'I am indeed a servant of Allah. He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; and hath made me blessed wheresoever I be, and hath enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live. (He) hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable. So peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised alive.'

(Qur'an, 19: 27-33).

Even though Mary is the mother of Jesus and occupies the highest position among women, neither Mary nor Jesus has any divine attributes. The Noble Qur'an makes this clear in the following verses:

'They do blaspheme who say: "Allah is Christ, the son of Mary. "But said Christ: "O children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. "Whoever joins other gods with Allah, Allah will forbid him the garden and the fire will be his abode. There will be for the wrongdoers no one to help. They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a trinity: For there is no God except one God (Allah). If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them. Why turn they not to Allah and seek His forgiveness? For Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. Christ, the son of Mary, was no more than an apostle. Many were the apostles that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food. See how Allah doth make His Signs clear to them. Yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth! Say: "Will ye worship besides
Allah something which hath no power either to harm or benefit you? But Allah, He it is that heareth and knoweth all things." Say: "O people of the Book! Exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what is proper) trespassing beyond the truth nor following the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by, who misled many and strayed (themselves) from the even way." (Qur'an, 5: 72-77).

Jesus (P.B.U.H.) was born miraculously through the same power which had brought, Adam (P.B.U.H.) into being who had no father and mother:

"Truly, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He (God) created him of dust, and then said to him, "be!" and he was." (Qur'an, 3: 59). "Say: He is Allah the One and Only; Allah the Eternal Absolute, He begetteth not nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him." (Qur'an, 112).

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The Noble Qur'an ... The Holy Book of Islam
DO YOU KNOW THIS BOOK?

Humanity has received divine guidance through two channels: the word of Allah and the prophets who were chosen by Him to communicate His will to humanity. These channels have always functioned together, and if one is ignored or neglected, the will of Allah cannot be known with any degree of accuracy. The Hindus neglected their prophets and focused all of their attention on their books, which proved to be only word puzzles that eventually were no longer understood by the people. Similarly, the Christians, disregarding the Bible, attached importance only to the person of Jesus Christ and eventually deified him. This resulted in the loss of the very essence of Tawhid (monotheism) contained in the Bible.

As a matter of fact, the main scriptures revealed before the Noble Qur'an i.e. the Old Testament and the New Testament, acquired book form long after the days of the prophets. Moreover, the New Testament was not recorded in the language spoken by Jesus Christ, believed to be Aramaic, but in Greek. This was because the early Christians made no serious effort to preserve their revelation during the lifetime of their prophet. The Old and New Testaments, which together form the Christian Bible, now consist of translations of various individuals' accounts of the original revelations as well as the additions and deletions made by the faithful.

The Noble Qur'an, as the last revealed book of God, is extant in its original form. Allah Himself guaranteed its preservation. The entire Qur'an was recorded in written form during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad.
(Peace Be Upon Him) on pieces of palm leaves, parchments, bones, and other suitable surfaces.

Moreover, there were tens of thousands of his followers who memorized the whole Qur'an, and the Prophet himself used to recite it to the angel Gabriel once a year and twice when he was about to die.

After the Prophet's death, Abu Bakr, the first caliph, oversaw the collection of the Qur'an into one volume by the prophet's scribe, Zaid Ibn Thabit. This volume remained with Abu Bakr who, when he was about to die, entrusted it to his successor, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab who, in turn, passed it on to Hafsa, the Prophet's wife. It was from this original copy that Uthman, the third caliph, prepared several other copies and sent them to different Muslim territories.

The Qur'an was preserved so meticulously because it was to be the book of guidance for all humanity forever. Thus it does not address only the Arabs, even though it was revealed in their language. It speaks to man as a human being:

"O Man! What has seduced you from your Lord?"

(Qur'an, 82:6).

The practical nature of the Qur'anic teachings is established by the examples of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and of pious Muslims throughout history.

The Noble Qur'an's instructions are aimed at the general welfare of mankind and are based on possibilities within his reach. Its wisdom is conclusive in all of its various dimensions. It does not condemn or torture the flesh, nor does it neglect the soul. It does not humanize God nor
does it deify man. Everything is carefully placed where it belongs in the total scheme of creation.

Those scholars who allege that Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) wrote the Noble Qur'an claim something illogical. Is it logical to believe that an illiterate Prophet, who, until the age of forty, was not known for any scholarly or literary training or achievements, began all of a sudden to write a book that is without equal in literary merit and that could not be surpassed by the whole legion of the Arab poets and orators of the highest caliber?

Secondly, is it justifiable to say that Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), who was known to his people as Al-Amin (The Trustworthy) and who is still admired by non-Muslim scholars for his honesty and integrity came forth with a false claim, and on that falsehood trained thousands of individuals of character, integrity, and honesty who were able to establish the best human society that the world has ever known? Surely, any sincere and unbiased searcher of truth will come to believe that the Qur'an is the revealed book of Allah.

Lastly, could anyone living in the sixth century CE. utter such scientific truths as the Qur'an contains? Over the past few decades much interest has been shown in the scientific content of the Qur'an. Scientific data, which has been discovered in recent times, has been existent in this book for over 1400 years. In fact the very common origin of this universe is stated clearly by Allah, the Most High: 

"Do not the disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We parted them. And We made from water every living thing. Will they then not believe?"

(Qur'an, 21:30).
This parting of the heavens and the earth is more commonly known to scientists as the 'big bang'. It is also a fact that life originated from water and that every living cell is composed of 85% water. Without water life is impossible.

The mountains of the earth, like icebergs, have roots going deep into the ground. This ensures that they will not topple with their extreme heights - this is known as 'isostasy'. In this way the mountains are like the pegs which are used to anchor a tent. But this fact is already known to us when Allah says:

"Have We not made the earth an expanse and the mountains pegs?" (Qur'an, 78:6-7).

"... and (Allah) has cast into the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with you." (Qur'an, 31:10).

The embryological data, which is found in the Noble Qur'an, is astounding. Allah describes the formation of a baby inside the womb from the very moment the sperm reaches the ovum, to its formation into a human. This data, which was only discovered about 30 years ago, has amazed many Western scientists. Amongst them is Dr Keith Moore from the University of Toronto, Canada. Dr Moore is a recognized authority in embryological circles, with his university textbook being set as a standard text in many universities throughout the world. When Dr Moore was asked as to how this information in the Qur'an could be explained, he replied: "It could only have been divinely revealed."
What they say about the Qur'an

Without necessarily agreeing completely with their statements, we would like to quote some of the opinions of important non-Muslim scholars who have studied the Qur'an. Such comments show that the non-Muslim world is taking a more serious view of the Qur'an and that it is beginning to appreciate its truth. We appeal to all people who are seeking spiritual truth to study the Qur'an in light of the aforementioned points. Cast your preconceived notions aside and listen to what these people have to say.

However often we turn to it [the Qur'an], at first disgusting us each time afresh, it soon attracts, astounds, and in the end enforces our reverence... Its style, in accordance with its contents and aim, is stern, grand, terrible - ever and anon truly sublime. Thus this book will go on exercising through all ages a most potent influence.

Goethe

Quoted in T P Hughes'
Dictionary of Islam, p 526.

The Qur'an admittedly occupies an important position among the great religious books of the world. Though the youngest of the epoch-making works belonging to this class of literature, it yields to hardly any in the wonderful effect which it has produced on large masses of men. It has created an all but new phase of human thought and a fresh type of character. It first transformed a number of heterogeneous desert tribes of the Arabian peninsula into a nation of heroes, and then proceeded to create the vast politico-religious organizations of the Muhammadan
world which are one of the great forces with which Europe and the East have to reckon today.

G. Margoliouth

*Introduction to e.*

*M. Rodwell's*

*The Koran, New York Every man's Library, 1977, p. VII.*

A work, then, which calls forth so powerful and seemingly incompatible emotions even in the distant reader distant as to time and still more so as to mental development - a work which not only conquers the repugnance with which he may begin its perusal, but changes this adverse feeling into astonishment and admiration, such a work must be a wonderful production of the human mind indeed and a problem of the highest interest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind.

Dr. Steingass

*Quoted in T. P. Hughes'*

*Dictionary of Islam, pp. 526-7.*

That observation makes the hypothesis advanced by those who see Muhammad as the author of the Qur'an untenable. How could a man, from being illiterate, become the most important author, in terms of literary merits, in the whole of Arabic literature? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human being could possibly have developed at that time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronunciation on the subject?

Maurice Bucaille,

*The Bible, the Qur'an and Science, 1978, p 125.*
Here, therefore, its merits as a literary production should perhaps not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad's contemporaries and fellow countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organized body. Animated by ideas far beyond those which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilized nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history.

**Dr. Steingass**

*Quoted in Hughes' Dictionary of Islam, p. 528.*

In making the present attempt to improve on the performance of my predecessors, and to produce something which might be accepted as echoing however faintly the sublime rhetoric of the Arabic Qur'an, I have been at pain to study the intricate and richly varied rhythms which apart from the message itself constitute the Qur'an's undeniable claim to rank amongst the greatest literary masterpieces of mankind ... This very characteristic feature -that inimitable symphony' as the believing Pickthall described his Holy Book, 'the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy' -has been almost totally ignored by previous translators; it is therefore not surprising that what they have wrought sounds dull and net indeed in comparison with the splendidly decorated original.

**Arthur J Arberry**

*The Qur'an Interpreted London: Oxford University Press, 1964, p.X*
The outlook of the Muslim craftsman or artist, who is never concerned with display for its own sake, nor with progressing ever forward in his own ingenuity, but is content to submit a man's craft to God ... reflects, I believe, the memorable passage in the Qur'an, "whithersoever you turn there is the face of God and God is all-embracing, all knowing."

**Prince Charles'**

*Speech at Wilton*

A totally objective examination [of the Qur'an] in the light of modern knowledge leads us to recognize the agreement between the two, as has been already noted on repeated occasions. It makes us deem it quite unthinkable for a man of Muhammad's time to have been the author of such statements, on account of the state of knowledge in his day. Such considerations are part of what gives the Qur'anic revelation its unique place, and forces the impartial scientist to admit his inability to provide an explanation which calls solely upon materialistic reasoning.

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CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM

Allah, the Arabic word for God, is a unique term which has neither gender nor plural forms. It, therefore, alludes to the Islamic concept of the One and Only God, distinguished from all of His creations.

The One true God is a reflection of the unique concept that Islam associates with God. To a Muslim, Allah is the Almighty Creator and Sustainer of the universes, who is similar to nothing and nothing is comparable to Him. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was asked by his contemporaries about Allah; the answer came directly from God Himself in the form of a short chapter of the Qur'an, which is considered the essence of the unity or the motto of monotheism.

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
"Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not nor was He begotten, And there is none like unto Him."

(Qur'an, 112: 1-4).

God: the Merciful and the Just

With the exception of one, each of the 114 chapters of the Qur'an begins with the verse "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." In one of the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) we are told that "Allah is more loving and kind than a mother to her dear child."

But God is also Just. Hence evildoers and sinners must have their share of punishment, and the virtuous, His bounties and favours. Actually, God's attribute of mercy has full manifestation in His attribute of Justice. People
suffering throughout their lives for His sake and people oppressing and exploiting other people all their lives should not receive similar treatment from their Lord. Expecting similar treatment for them will amount to negating the very belief in the accountability of man in the Hereafter and thereby negating all the incentives for a moral and virtuous life in this world. The following Qur'anic verses are very clear and straightforward in this respect:

"Verily for the righteous, are gardens of delight, in the presence of their Lord. Shall We then treat the people of faith like the people of sin? What is the matter with you? How judge ye?"  (Qur'an, 68: 34-36).

Islam rejects characterising God in any human form or depicting Him as favouring certain individuals or nations on the basis of wealth, power or race. He created human beings as equals. They may distinguish themselves and get His favour through virtue and piety only.

The concepts that God rested on the seventh day of creation, that God wrestled with one of His soldiers, that God is an envious plotter against mankind, or that God is incarnate in any human being are considered blasphemous from the Islamic point of view.

God, the Unique

The Creator must be of a different nature from the things created because if He is of the same nature as they are, He will be temporal and will therefore need a maker. It follows that nothing is like Him. If the maker is not temporal, then He must be eternal. But if He is eternal, He cannot be
caused, and if nothing outside Him causes Him to continue to exist, this means that He must be self-sufficient. And if He does not depend on anything for the continuance of His own existence, then this existence can have no end. The Creator is therefore eternal and everlasting:

"He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Hidden: and He has full knowledge of all things."

(Qur'an, 57: 3).

He is Self-sufficient or Self-subsistent or, to use a Qur'anic term, Al-Qayyum. The Creator does not create only in the sense of bringing things into being, He also preserves them and takes them out of existence and is the ultimate cause of whatever happens to them.

"Allah! There is no god but He - the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there that can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. For He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory)."

(Qur'an, 2: 255).

God's Attributes

If the Creator is Eternal and Everlasting, then His attributes must also be eternal and everlasting. He should not lose any of His attributes nor acquire new ones. If this is so, then His attributes are absolute. Can there be more than one creator with such absolute attributes? Can there be for example, two absolutely powerful creators? A
moment's thought shows that this is not feasible.

The Qur'an summarises this argument in the following verses:

"No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others! Glory to Allah (He is free) from the (sort of) things they attribute to Him!"

(Qur'an, 23: 91).

"If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! But glory to Allah, the Lord of the Throne: (high is He) above what they attribute to Him!"

(Qur'an, 21: 22).

**The Oneness of God**

The Prophet Abraham (P.B.U.H.) found that his countrymen, including his father, were worshipping idols and stars. Abraham tried to show them how meaningless these activities were and the Qur'an narrated this:

He said, "Worship ye that which ye have (yourselves) carved?"

(Qur'an, 37: 95).

"When the night covered him over, he saw a star: he said: 'This is my Lord.' But when it set he said: 'I love not those that set.' When he saw the moon rising in splendour, he said: 'This is my Lord.' But when the moon set, he said: 'Unless my Lord guide me I shall surely be among those who go astray.' When he saw the sun rising in splendour, he said: 'This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).' But when the sun set he said: 'O my people! I am (indeed) free
from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah.'
"For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah." (Qur'an, 6: 76-79).

The Believer's Attitude

In order to be a Muslim, i.e., to surrender oneself to God, it is necessary to believe in the Oneness of God, in the sense of His being the only Creator, Preserver, Nourisher, etc. But this belief is not enough. Many of the idolaters knew and believed that only the Supreme God could do all this. However, that was not enough to make them Muslims. One must also acknowledge the fact that it is God alone Who deserves to be worshipped, and thus abstain from worshipping any other thing or being.

Having achieved this knowledge of the one true God, man should constantly have faith in Him, and should allow nothing to induce him to deny truth. When faith enters a person's heart, it causes certain mental states which result in certain actions. Taken together, these mental states and actions are the proof for the true faith. The Prophet said, "Faith is that which resides firmly in the heart and which is proved by deeds." Foremost among those mental states is the feeling of gratitude towards God, which could be said to be the essence of worship. This feeling of gratitude is so important that a person who denies the truth of Islam is called a "Kafir" which means one who is grossly ungrateful to God.

A believer loves and is grateful to God for the bounties He bestowed upon him, but being aware of the fact that his good deeds, whether mental or physical, are far from being commensurate with Divine favours, he is always anxious lest God should punish him, here or in the Hereafter.

46 Concept of God in Islam
therefore, he fears Him, surrenders himself to Him and serves Him with great humility. One cannot be in such a mental state without being almost all the time mindful of God. Remembering God is thus the life force of faith, without which it fades and withers away.

The Qur'an tries to promote this feeling of gratitude by repeating the attributes of God very frequently. We find most of these attributes mentioned together in the following verses of the Noble Qur'an:

"Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god - Who knows (all things) both secret and open; He Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
Allah is He, than whom there is no other god - the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), The Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him.
He is Allah the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or colours). To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names: Whatever is in the heavens and on earth doth declare His Praises and Glory: and He is the exalted in Might, the Wise."

(Qur'an, 59: 22-24).

For more information about this subject:
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Prophethood is not unknown to heavenly revealed religions, such as Judaism and Christianity. In Islam, however, it has a special status and significance.

According to Islam, Allah (the Arabic word for God) created man for a noble purpose: to worship Him and lead a virtuous life based on His teachings and guidance. How would man know his role and purpose of his existence unless he received clear and practical instructions of what Allah wants him to do? Hence the need for prophethood and accompanying guidance. Thus Allah had chosen from every nation one or more prophets to convey His Message to the people. The Noble Qur'an says:

"To every people (was sent) an Apostle: when their Apostle comes (before them) the matter will be judged between them with justice and they will not be wronged."

(Qur'an, 10: 47).

Allah says in the Noble Qur'an: "And verily, we have sent among every nation a messenger (proclaiming):

'Worship Allah (alone) and avoid evil.' Then of them were some whom Allah guided, and there were some upon whom straying was justified. So travel through the land and see what was the consequence of those who denied (the truth)."

(Qur'an, 16: 36).

Prophethood is Allah's blessing and favour that He may bestow on whom He wills. However, from surveying the various messengers throughout history, three features of a prophet may be recognised:
1- He is the best in his community morally and intellectually. This is necessary because a prophet's life serves as a model for his followers. His personality should attract people to accept his message rather than drive them away because of his imperfect character. After receiving the message he is rightly guided and infallible. That is, he would not commit any sin. He might make some minor mistakes which are usually corrected by revelation.

2- He is supported by miracles to prove that he is not an impostor. Those miracles are granted by the power and permission of God and are usually in the field in which his people excel and are recognised as superiors. We might illustrate this by quoting the major miracles of the three prophets of the major world religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Moses' contemporaries were excellent in magic. So his major miracle was to defeat the best magicians of Egypt of his time. Jesus' contemporaries were recognised as skilful physicians. Therefore, his miracles were to raise the dead and cure incurable diseases. The Arabs, contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) were known for their eloquence and magnificent poetry. So Prophet Muhammad's major miracle was the Qur'an, the equivalent of which the whole legion of the Arab poets and orators could not produce, despite the repeated challenge from the Qur'an itself. Again, Muhammad's (P.B.U.H.) miracle has something special about it. All previous miracles were limited by time and place, i.e., they were shown to specific people at a specific time. Not so with the Qur'an, the miracle of Muhammad (P.B.U.H.). It is a universal and everlasting miracle.
Previous generations witnessed it and future generations will witness its miraculous nature in terms of its style, content and spiritual uplifting. These still can be tested and will thereby prove the divine origin of the Qur'an.

3- Every prophet states clearly that what he receives is not of his own but from God for the well-being of mankind. He also confirms what was revealed before him and what may be revealed after him. A prophet does this to show that he is simply conveying the message which is entrusted to him by the One True God of all people in all ages. So the message is one in essence and for the same purpose. Therefore, it should not deviate from what was revealed before him or what might come after him.

Prophets are necessary for conveying God's instructions and guidance to mankind. We have no way of knowing why we were created? What will happen to us after death? Is there any life after death? Are we accountable for our actions? In other words, is there any reward or punishment for our deeds in this life?

These and so many other questions about God, angels, Paradise, Hell, etc. cannot be answered without revelation from the Creator and Knower of the unseen. Those answers must be authentic and must be brought by individuals whom we trust and respect. That is why, messengers are the select of their societies in terms of moral conduct and intellectual ability. The prophets are also miraculously supported by God and instructed by Him to affirm the continuity of the message. The content of the prophets' message to mankind can be summarised as follows:
1- Clear concept about God: His attributes, His creation, what should and should not be ascribed to Him.

2- Clear idea about the unseen world, the angels, jinn (spirits), Paradise and Hell.

3- Why has God created us? What does He want from us and what is the reward or punishment for obeying or disobeying Him?

4- How to run our societies according to His will? That is, clear instructions and laws that, when applied correctly and honestly, will result in a happy and ideal society.

It is clear from the above discussion that there is no substitute for prophets. Even today with the advancement of science, the only authentic source of information about the supernatural world are the revelations. Guidance can be obtained neither from science nor from mystic experience. The first is too materialistic and too limited whereas the second is too subjective and frequently too misleading.

God has sent a messenger (or more) to every nation. This is because it is one of God's principles that He will never call people to account unless He has made clear to them what to do and what not to do.

The Noble Qur'an mentions the names of 25 prophets and indicates that there have been others who were not mentioned to Prophet Muhammad. These 25 include Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. These, five are the greatest among God's messengers. They are called the resolute prophets. An outstanding aspect of the Islamic belief in prophethood is that Muslims believe in
and respect all the messengers of God with no exception. All the prophets came from the same One God, for the same purpose - to lead mankind to God. Belief in them all is essential and logical while accepting some and rejecting others is like rejecting all.

The Muslims are the only people in the world who consider the belief in all the prophets of God an article of faith. Thus the Jews reject Jesus Christ and Muhammad; the Christians reject Muhammad and in reality reject Moses because they do not abide by his laws. The Muslims accept them all as messengers of God who brought guidance to mankind. However, the revelation which those prophets brought from God has been tampered with in one way or the other.

The belief in all the messengers of God is enjoined on the Muslims by the Qur'an:

"Say ye: "We believe in Allah and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes and that given to Moses and Jesus and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord; we make no difference between any of them and we bow to Allah (in Islam)."

(Qur'an, 2: 136).

The Noble Qur'an continues in the following verses to instruct the Muslims that this is the true and impartial belief. If other nations believe in the same, they are following the right path. If they do not, then they are following their own whims and biases and God will take them to account. Thus we read:

"So if they believe as ye believe they are indeed on the right path; but if they turn back it is they who are in schism; but Allah will suffice thee as against them and He is the All-Hearing the All-Knowing."

(Qur'an, 2: 137).
There are, at least, two important points related to prophethood that need to be clarified. These points concern the roles of Jesus and Muhammad as prophets who are usually misunderstood.

The Qur'anic account of Jesus (P.B.U.H) emphatically rejects the concept of his 'divinity' and 'divine sonship' and presents him as one of the great prophets of God. The Qur'an makes it clear that the birth of Jesus without a father does not make him son of God and mentions in this respect Adam who was created by God without a father or mother:

"The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam: He created him from dust then said to him: "Be" and he was." (Qur'an, 3: 59).

Like other prophets Jesus also performed miracles. For example, he raised the dead and cured the blind and lepers, but while showing these miracles he always made it clear that it was all from God. Actually, the misconceptions about the personality and mission of Jesus found a way among his followers because the Divine message that he preached was not recorded during his presence in this world, rather it was recorded after a lapse of about a hundred years. According to the Qur'an he was sent to the children of Israel; he confirmed the validity of the Torah which was revealed to Moses and he also brought the glad tidings of a final messenger after him.

"And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of Allah (sent) to you confirming the Law (which came) before me and giving glad tidings of an apostle to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad.' But when he came to them with clear
signs they said, "This is evident sorcery." (Qur'an, 61: 6).
(Ahmad is another name of Prophet Muhammad which means the praised one).

However, the majority of the Jews rejected his ministry. They plotted against his life and in their opinion crucified him. But the Noble Qur'an refutes this opinion and says that they neither killed him nor crucified him, rather he was raised up to God. There is a verse in the Qur'an, which implies that Jesus will come back and all Christians and Jews will believe in him before he dies. This is also supported by authentic sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.).

The last prophet of God, Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) was born in Arabia in the sixth century A.C. The People of Mecca knew him only as a man of excellent character and cultured manners and called him AL-AMEEN (the trustworthy). At the age of 40, God appointed him a prophet and a receiver of revelations from God. He called the idolaters of Makkah to worship the one God and accept him as His prophet. The revelations which he received were preserved in his life-time in the memory of his companions and were also recorded on pieces of palm leaves, leather, etc...

Thus, the Noble Qur'an that is found today is the same that was revealed to him; not a syllable of it has been altered as God Himself has guaranteed its preservation. This Qur'an is the book of guidance for the entire human race for all times, and mentions Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) as the last Prophet of God:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men but (he is) the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the
Prophets: and Allah has full Knowledge of all things."
(Qur'an, 33: 40).

The Qur'an further speaks about the beautiful pattern of the prophet's life:
"Ye have indeed in the Apostle of Allah a beautiful pattern of (conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day and who engages much in the praise of Allah."
(Qur'an, 33: 21).

Allah is the name of God in the Arabic Language. Neither plural nor gender can be formed from it. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universes. He is the God of all people including the prophets such as: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad (Peace Be Upon All Of Them).

What They Say About Muhammad (P.B.U.H.)

Here we furnish some observations on Islam by great and acknowledged non-Muslim scholars of modern time. Truth needs no advocates to plead on its behalf, but the prolonged malicious propaganda against Islam has created great confusion even in the minds of free and objective thinkers. We hope that the following observations would contribute to initiating an objective evaluation of the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (P.B.U.H.).

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws and empires only they founded, if anything at
all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislation, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then-inhabited world; and more than that he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls. His forbearance in victory, his ambition which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire, his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death—all these attest not to an imposter but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold: the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with the words. Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he is?

Lamartine,

*Histoire de la Turquie,*

*Pans 1854, Vol.11, pp. 276-77.*

It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder; the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Makkah and Madina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran... The Mahometans object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet is the Apostle of God' is
the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honours of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ocklay

*History of the Saracen Empire,
London 1870, p 54.*

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

Bosworth Smith

*Muhammad and Muhammadanism,
London 1874, p 92.*

It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher.

Annie Besant,

*The Life and Teachings of Muhammad,
Madras 1932, p 4*
My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level.

Michael H. Hart,


"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him the wonderful man and in my opinion for from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

G.B. Shaw,

The Genuine Islam, Vol. 1, No.81936

For more information about this subject:
www.al-sunnah.com
www.beconvinced.com
www.sultan.org
Concept of Worship in Islam
CONCEPT OF WORSHIP IN ISLAM

The concept of worship in Islam is misunderstood by many people, including some Muslims. Worship is commonly taken to mean performing ritualistic acts such as prayers, fasting, charity, etc. This limited understanding of worship is only one part of the meaning of worship in Islam. The true definition includes almost everything in any individual's activities. It goes something like this, "Worship is an all inclusive term for all external and internal sayings and actions of a person that God loves." In other words, worship is everything one says or does for the pleasure of Allah. This, of course, includes rituals as well as beliefs, social activities, and personal contributions to the welfare of one's fellow human-beings.

Islam looks at the individual as a whole. He is required to submit himself completely to Allah as the Qur'an instructed the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) to do:

"Say (O Muhammad) my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death belong to Allah; He has no partner and I am ordered to be among those who submit, (i.e. Muslims)."

(Qur'an, 6:162-163).

The natural result of this submission is that all one's activities should conform to the instructions of the One to whom the person is submitting. Islam, being a way of life, requires that its followers model their lives according to its teachings in every aspect, religious or otherwise. This might sound strange to some people who think of religion as a personal relationship between the individual and God, having no impact on one's activities outside rituals.
As a matter of fact, Islam does not think much of mere rituals when they are performed mechanically and have no influence on one's inner life. The Qur'an addressed the believers and their neighbours from among the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) who were arguing with them about the change of the direction of the Qibla (the direction faced in prayers) in the following verse:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East or the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets, and gives his money out of love for Him to relatives and orphans, the needy, wayfarers, beggars and for the ransoming of slaves, who observes prayer and pays the poor-due, and who fulfils his promises when he has made them, and the patient in poverty and affliction and the steadfast in time of war, it is those who have proved truthful and it is those who are the God-fearing." (Qur'an, 2: 177).

The deeds in the above verse are deeds of righteousness and they are only a part of worship. The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) told us that: "Faith (which is the basis of worship) is made up of sixty or so branches: the highest of which is belief in the Oneness of Allah (i.e., there is no god but Allah) and the lowest on the scale of worship is removing obstacles and dirt from people's way."

Decent work is considered in Islam a type of worship. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said:

"No one has eaten better food than that obtained through the hard labour of his hands. The Prophet David (P.B.U.H.) used to earn his living through his own labour." Seeking knowledge is one of the highest
types of worship. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) told his companions that "seeking Knowledge is a (religious) duty on every Muslim." In another saying he said: "A person who follows a path for acquiring knowledge, Allah will make easy the passage to Paradise for Him." Social courtesy and cooperation are part of worship when done for the sake of Allah, as the Prophet told us: "Receiving your friend with a smile is a type of charity and putting some water in your neighbour's bucket is a charity."

It is worth noting that even performing one's own duties is considered a sort of worship. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) told us that whatever one spends for his family is a type of charity; he will be rewarded for it if he acquired it through legal means. Kindness to the members of one's family is an act of worship, as when one puts a piece of food in his spouse's mouth as the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) informed us.

It is clear from the previous discussion that the concept of worship in Islam is a comprehensive one that includes all the positive activities of the individual. This, of course, is in agreement with the all-inclusive nature of Islam as a way of life. It regulates human life on all levels: the individual, the social, the economic, the political and the spiritual. That is why Islam provides guidance in the smallest details. It is very encouraging to realise that all one's activities are considered by God as an act of worship. This should lead the individual to seek Allah's pleasure for his actions and always try to do them in the best possible manner, whether he is watched by his superiors or he is alone. There is always the permanent supervisor, who knows everything, namely, Allah.

64 Concept of Worship in Islam
Discussing non-ritual worship in Islam first is not to underestimate the importance of ritual worship. Actually, ritual worship, if performed in the correct manner, elevates man morally and spiritually and enables him to carry on his activities in all walks of life according to the Guidance of God. Among ritual worship, Salah (ritual prayer) occupies the key position for two reasons. Firstly, it is the distinctive mark of a believer. Secondly, it prevents an individual from committing all sorts of abominations and vices by providing him chances of direct contact with his Creator five times a day, wherein he renews his covenant with God and seeks His guidance again and again: "You alone we worship and to You alone we turn for help. Guide us to the straight path." Faith is also the foremost of the basic conditions for the success of the believers:

"Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers.

(Qur'an, 23: 1-2).

The same fact has been emphasized by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in a different way. He said:

"Those who offer their Salah with great care and punctuality, will find in it a light, a proof of their faith and a cause of their salvation on the Day of Judgment."

After Salah (praying), Zakah (the purification due) is an important pillar of Islam. In the Qur'an, Salah and Zakah have mostly been mentioned together. Like Salah, Zakah is a manifestation of faith that affirms that God is the sole owner of everything in the Universe, and what men hold is a trust in their hands to discharge as He has laid down:

"Believe in Allah and His messenger and spend of that over which He has made you trustees."

(Qur'an, 57: 7).
In this respect, Zakah is an act of devotion which, like prayer, brings the believer nearer to his Lord.

Apart from this, Zakah is a means of redistribution of wealth in a way that reduces differences between classes and groups. It makes a fair contribution to social stability. By purging the soul of the rich from selfishness and the soul of the poor from envy and resentment against society, it stops the channels leading to class hatred and makes it possible for the springs of brotherhood and solidarity to gush forth. Such stability is not merely based on the personal feelings of the rich but stands on a firmly established right which, if the rich denied it, could be exacted by force, if necessary.

Siyam (fasting from dawn to sunset in the month of Ramadan) is another pillar of Islam. The main function of fasting is to make the Muslim pure from "within" as other aspects of Shariah (Islamic Divine Law) make him pure from "without." By such purity he responds to what we can perceive in the Qur'anic Verse:

"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you; that you may gain piety."

(Qur'an, 2: 183).

In an authentic tradition, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reported Allah as saying with regard to one who fasts, "He suspends eating, drinking, and gratification of his sexual passion for My sake." Thus his reward will be according to God's great bounty.

Fasting awakens the conscience of all society at the same time, thus adding further strength to each individual. Moreover, fasting offers a compulsory rest to the over-
worked human digestive system for the duration. It also reminds us of those who are deprived of life's basic necessities throughout the year or throughout life. It makes us realise the suffering of other less fortunate brothers in Islam, and thus promotes a sense of sympathy and kindness for them.

Lastly, we come to Hajj (pilgrimage to the House of God in Makkah). This is a very important pillar of Islam. It manifests unity and dispels all differences. Muslims from all corners of the world, wearing the same dress, respond to the call of Hajj in one voice: LABAIAK ALLAHUMMA LABAIAK (Here I am at your service, O Lord!). In Hajj there is an exercise of strict self discipline and control where not only sacred things are revered, but even the life of plants and birds is made inviolable so that everything lives in safety:

"And he that venerates the sacred rites of God, it shall be better for him with his Lord" (Qur'an, 22: 30).
"And he that venerates the symbols of Allah, it surely is from piety of the hearts." (Qur'an, 22: 32).

Pilgrimage gives an opportunity to all Muslims from all groups, classes, organisations and governments from all over the Muslim world to meet annually in a great congress. The time and venue of this congress has been set by their One God 'Allah'. Invitation to attend is open to every Muslim. No one has the power to bar anyone. Every Muslim who attends is guaranteed full safety and freedom as long as he himself does not violate its safety.

Thus, worship in Islam, whether ritualistic or non-ritualistic, trains the individual to love his Creator more deeply and thereby gain an unyielding will and spirit to wipe out all evil and oppression from human society and make the Word of God dominant in the world.
LIFE AFTER DEATH

The question of whether there is life after death does not fall under the jurisdiction of science, as science is concerned only with classification and analysis of data. Moreover, man has been busy with scientific inquiries and research, in the modern sense of the term, only for the last few centuries, while he has been familiar with the concept of life after death since time immemorial.

All the prophets of God called their people to worship God and to believe in life after death. They laid so much emphasis on the belief in life after death that even a slight doubt in it meant denying God and made all other beliefs meaningless.

The very fact that all the prophets of God have dealt with this metaphysical question of life after death so confidently and so uniformly - the gap between their ages in some cases, being thousands of years - goes to prove that the source of their knowledge of life after death as proclaimed by them all, was the same, i.e. Divine revelation.

We also know that these prophets of God were greatly opposed by their people, mainly on the issue of life after death, as their people thought it impossible. But in spite of opposition, the prophets won many sincere followers.

The question arises: what made those followers forsake the established beliefs, traditions and customs of their forefathers, notwithstanding the risk of being totally alienated from their own community? The simple answer is: they made use of their faculties of mind and heart and realised the truth.
It is this consciousness that guides man regarding realities that cannot be seen. That is why all the prophets of God, while calling people to believe in God and life after death, appeal to the aesthetic, moral and rational consciousness of man.

For example, when the idolaters of Makkah denied even the possibility of life after death, the Noble Qur'an exposed the weakness of their stand by advancing very logical and rational arguments in support of it:

"And he makes comparisons for Us and forgets his own (Origin and) Creation: he says 'Who can give life to (dry) bones and decomposed ones (at that)?' Say (O Muhammad) 'He will give them life Who created them for the first time! For He is well-versed in every kind of creation!' The same Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold! Ye kindle therewith (your own fires)! Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like there-of? Yea indeed! For He is the Creator, Supreme in skill and knowledge (infinite)." (Qur'an, 36: 78-81).

On another occasion, the Noble Qur'an very clearly says that the disbelievers have no sound basis for their denial of life after death. It is based on pure conjecture:

"And they say: 'What is there but our life in this world? We die and we live and nothing but time can destroy us.' But of that they have no knowledge; they merely conjecture. And when Our clear signs are rehearsed to them, their argument is nothing but this: they say 'Bring (back) our forefathers if what ye say is true!' Say: 'It is Allah Who gives you life, then gives you death. Then He will gather you together for the Day of Judgment about which there is no doubt. But most men do not know." (Qur'an, 45: 24-26).
Surely God will raise all the dead. But God has His own plan of things. A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and then the dead will be resurrected to stand before God. That day will be the beginning of the life that will never end, and on that Day God will reward every person according to his or her good or evil deeds.

The explanation that the Noble Qur'an gives about the necessity of life after death is what the moral consciousness of man demands. Actually, if there is no life after death, the very belief in God becomes irrelevant, or even if one believes in God, it would be an unjust and indifferent God, having once created man but not being concerned with his fate.

Surely, God is just. He will punish the tyrants whose crimes are beyond count; having killed hundreds of innocent persons, created great corruption in the society, enslaved numerous persons to serve their whims, etc. Man has a very short span of life in this world, and as this physical world is not eternal, punishments or rewards equal to the evil or noble deeds of persons are not possible here. The Noble Qur'an very emphatically states that the Day of Judgment must come and God will decide about the fate of each soul according to his or her record of deeds:

"The Unbelievers say, 'Never to us will come the Hour.' Say 'Nay! But most surely by my Lord it will come upon you by Him Who knows the unseen, from Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or on earth: nor is there anything less than that or greater but is in the record perspicuous: That He may reward those who believe and work deeds of righteousness: for such is forgiveness and a sustenance most generous.' But those who strive against Our signs
to frustrate them, for such will be a penalty, a punishment most humiliating."

(Qur'\'an, 34: 3-5).

The Day of Resurrection will be the day when God's attributes of Justice and Mercy will be in full manifestation. God will shower His Mercy on those who suffered for His sake in the worldly life, believing that an eternal bliss was awaiting them. But those who abused the bounties of God, caring nothing for the life to come, will be in the most miserable state. Drawing a comparison between them, the Noble Qur'\'an says:

"Are (these two) alike? One to whom We have made a goodly promise and who is going to reach its (fulfillment) and one to whom we have given the good things of this life but who on the Day of Judgment is to be among those brought up (for punishment)."

(Qur'\'an, 28: 61).

The Noble Qur'\'an also states that this worldly life is a preparation for the eternal life after death. But those who deny it become slaves of their passions and desires, making fun of virtuous God-conscious persons.

Such persons realise their folly only at the time of their death and wish to be given a further chance in the world but in vain. Their miserable state at the time of death, and the horror of the Day of Judgement, and the eternal bliss guaranteed to the sincere believers are very clearly mentioned in the following verses of the Noble Qur'\'an:

"(In Falsehood will they be) until when death comes to one of them, he says: 'O my Lord! Send me back (to life), In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected.' By no means! It is but a word he says; and before them is a partition till the day they
are raised up. Then when the trumpet is blown, there will be no more relationships between them that Day nor will one ask after another! Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they are the successful. But those whose balance is light will be those who have lost their souls; in Hell will they abide. The fire will burn their faces and they will therein grin with their lips displaced. (It will be said): 'Were not My Verses (this Qur'an) recited to you, and then you used to deny them?' They will say: 'Our Lord! Our wretchedness overcame us, and we were (an) erring people. Our Lord! Bring us out of this. If ever we return (to evil), then indeed we shall be wrong-doers'. He (Allah) will say: 'Remain you in it with ignominy! And speak you not to Me!' Verily there was a party of My slaves, who used to say: 'Our Lord! We believe, so forgive us, and have mercy on us, for You are the Best of all who show mercy!' But you took them for a laughing stock, so much so that it made you forget My Remembrance while you used to laugh at them! Verily I have rewarded them this Day for their patience: they are indeed the ones that are successful. He (Allah) will say: 'How long did you stay on earth, counting by years?' They will say: 'We stayed a day or part of a day. Ask of those who keep count.' He (Allah) will say: 'You stayed not but a little, if you had only known! Did you think that We had created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back Us?' So Exalted is Allah, the True King: There is no God save Him, the Lord of the Supreme Throne!' (Qur'an, 23: 99-116).

The belief in life after death not only guarantees success in the Hereafter but also makes this world full of peace and happiness by making individuals most responsible and dutiful in their activities.
Think of the people of Arabia before the arrival of the prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) - they were a people that gambled, feuded, plundered and murdered. These were their main traits when they had no belief in life after death. Similarly the denial of life after death has its consequences not only in the Hereafter but also in this world. When a nation as a whole denies it, all kinds of evils and corruption become rampant in that society and ultimately it is destroyed.

**Happenings of the Day of Judgment**

"When the water (of Noah's flood) overflowed beyond its limits, We carried you (mankind) in the floating (Ark).

That We might make it a message unto you and that ears (that should hear the tale and) retain its memory should bear its (lessons) in remembrance.

Then when one blast is sounded on the trumpet. And the earth is moved and its mountains and they are crushed to powder at one stroke, on that day shall the (Great) event come to pass.

And the sky will be rent asunder, for that day it will be flimsy. And the angels will be on its sides and that day eight will bear the Throne of thy Lord above them.

That day shall ye be brought to Judgment: not an act of yours that ye hide will be hidden. Then He that will be given his record in his right hand will say: 'Ah here! Read ye my Record! 'I did really understand that my account would (one day) reach me!'

And he will be in a life of bliss In a high garden The fruits whereof (will hang in bunches) low and near.
'Eat ye and drink ye with full satisfaction; because of the (good) that ye sent before you in the days that are gone!
And he that will be given his record in his left hand will say:
'Ah! Would that my record had not been given to me!
'And that I had never realised how my account (stood)
'Ah! Would that (Death) had made an end of me!
'Of no profit to me has been my wealth!
'My power has perished from me!
(It will be said): 'Take him and fetter him;
'Then throw him in the blazing Fire.'
'Then fasten him with a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits!'
Verily, he used not to believe in Allah, the Most Great,
And urged not on the feeding of the poor.
So no friend has he here this Day, Nor any food except filth (from the washing of wounds).
Which none but sinners eat. (Qur'an, 69: 11-37)

Thus, there are very convincing reasons to believe in life after death.

First, all the prophets of God have called their people to believe in it.

Secondly, whenever a human society is built on the basis of this belief, it has been the most ideal and peaceful society, free of social and moral evils.

Thirdly, history bears witness that whenever this belief is rejected collectively by a group of people in spite of the repeated warnings of the Prophet, the group as a whole has been punished by God even in this world.
Fourthly, moral, aesthetic and rational faculties of man endorse the possibility of life after death.

Fifthly, God’s attributes of Justice and Mercy have no meaning if there is no life after death.

Allah is the name of God in the Arabic language. Neither plural nor gender can be formed from it. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the universes. He is the God of all people including the prophets such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad (Peace Be Upon All Of Them).

For more information about this subject:
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Misconceptions About Islam
MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ISLAM

Misconception 1:
Muslims are violent, terrorists, and extremists!

The Truth:
This is the biggest misconception in Islam, no doubt resulting from the constant stereotyping and bashing the media gives Islam. When a gunman attacks a mosque in the name of Judaism, a Catholic IRA guerrilla sets off a bomb in an urban area, or Serbian Orthodox militiamen rape and kill innocent Muslim civilians, these acts are not used to stereotype an entire faith. Never are these acts attributed to the religion of the perpetrators. Yet how many times have we heard the words 'Islamic, Muslim fundamentalist, etc.' linked with violence. Politics in the so-called "Muslim countries" may or may not have any Islamic basis. Often dictators and politicians will use the name of Islam for their own purposes. One should remember to go to the source of Islam and separate what the true religion of Islam says from what is portrayed in the media. Islam literally means 'submission to God' and is derived from a root word meaning 'peace'. Islam may seem exotic or even extreme in the modern world. Perhaps this is because religion does not dominate everyday life in the West, whereas Islam is considered a 'way of life' for Muslims and they make no division between secular and sacred in their lives. Like Christianity, Islam permits fighting in self-defense; in defense of religion, or on the part of those who have been expelled forcibly from their homes. It lays down strict rules of combat which include prohibitions against harming civilians and against destroying crops, trees and livestock.
NOWHERE DOES ISLAM ENJOIN THE KILLING OF INNOCENTS...

The Noble Qur’an says:
"Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. God does not love transgressors."
(Qur’an, 2:190).

"If they seek peace, then seek you peace. And trust in God for He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."
(Qur’an 8:61).

War, therefore, is the last resort, and is subject to the rigorous conditions laid down by the sacred law. The term 'jihad' literally means 'struggle'. Muslims believe that there are two kinds of jihad. The other 'jihad' is the inner struggle of the soul, which everyone wages against egotistic desires for the sake of attaining inner peace.

Misconception 2:
Islam oppresses women.

The Truth:
The image of the typical Muslim woman wearing the veil and forced to stay home and forbidden to drive is all too common in most people’s thoughts. Although some Muslim countries may have laws that oppress women, this should not be seen as coming from Islam. Many of these countries do not rule by any kind of Shari’ah (Islamic Divine Law) and introduce their own cultural standpoints on the issue of gender equity. Islam on the other hand gives men and women different roles and equity between the two is laid down in the Noble Qur’an and the example
of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Islam sees a woman, whether single or married, as an individual in her own right, with the right to own and dispose of her property and earnings. A marriage gift is given by the groom to the bride for her own personal use, and she keeps her own family name rather than taking her husband's. Both men and women are expected to dress in a way which is modest and dignified. The Messenger of God, Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said: "The most perfect in faith amongst believers is he who is best in manner and kindest to his wife."

Violence of any kind towards women and forcing them against their will for anything is not allowed. A Muslim marriage is a simple, legal agreement in which either partner is free to include conditions. Marriage customs thus vary widely from country to country. Divorce is not common, although it is acceptable as a last resort. According to Islam, a Muslim girl cannot be forced to marry against her will: her parents simply suggest young men they think may be suitable.

Misconception 3:
All Muslim men marry four wives.

The Truth:
The religion of Islam was revealed for all societies and all times and so accommodates widely differing social requirements. Circumstances may warrant the taking of another wife but the right is granted, according to the Noble Qur'an, only on condition that the husband is scrupulously fair. No woman can be forced into this kind of marriage if they do not wish it. Polygamy is neither mandatory, nor encouraged, but merely permitted. Images
of "shaikhs with harems" are not consistent with Islam, as a man is only allowed at most four wives only if he can fulfill the stringent conditions of treating each fairly and providing each with separate housing etc. Permission to practice polygamy is not associated with mere satisfaction of passion. It is rather associated with compassion toward widows and orphans. It was the Noble Qur'an that limited and put conditions on the practice of polygamy among the Arabs, who had as many as ten or more wives and considered them "property." It is both honest and accurate to say that it is Islam that regulated this practice, limited it, made it more humane, and instituted equal rights and status for all wives. It is a very tiny percentage of Muslims that practice it over the world. However, permission to practice limited polygamy is only consistent with Islam's realistic view of the nature of man and woman and of various social needs, problems and cultural variations. The question is, however far more than the inherent flexibility of Islam; it also is the frank and straightforward approach of Islam in dealing with practical problems. Rather than requiring hypocritical and superficial compliance, Islam delves deeper into the problems of individuals and societies, and provides for legitimate and clean solutions that are far more beneficial than would be the case if they were ignored. There is no doubt that the second wife legally married and treated kindly is better off than a mistress without any legal rights.
Misconception 4:
Muslims worship a different God.

The Truth:
Allah is simply the Arabic word for God. Allah for Muslims is the greatest and most inclusive of the Names of God, it is an Arabic word of rich meaning, denoting the One and Only God and ascribing no partners to Him. It is exactly the same word which the Jews, in Hebrew, use for God (Elohim), the word which Jesus Christ used in Aramaic when he prayed to God. God has an identical name in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; Allah is the same God worshiped by Muslims, Christians and Jews. Muslims believe that Allah’s sovereignty is to be acknowledged in worship and in the pledge to obey His teachings and commandments, conveyed through His messengers and prophets who were sent at various times and in many places throughout history.

Misconception 5:
Islam was spread by the sword and is intolerant of other faiths.

The Truth:
Many social studies textbooks for students show the image of an Arab horseman carrying a sword in one hand and the Qur'an in the other conquering and forcibly converting. This, though, is not a correct portrayal of history. Islam has always given respect and freedom of religion to all faiths. The Noble Qur'an says:

"God forbids you not, with regards to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them; for God loveth those who are just."

(Qur'an, 60:8).
Freedom of religion is laid down in the Noble Qur'an itself: "There is no compulsion (or coercion) in the religion (Islam). The right direction is distinctly clear from error." (Qur'an, 2:256). Christian missionary, T.W. Arnold had this opinion on his study of the question of the spread of Islam: "of any organized attempt to force the acceptance of Islam on the non-Muslim population, or of any systematic persecution intended to stamp out the Christian religion, we hear nothing. Had the caliphs chosen to adopt either course of action, they might have swept away Christianity as easily as Ferdinand and Isabella drove Islam out of Spain, or Louis XIV made Protestantism ...

It is a function of Islamic law to protect the privileged status of minorities, and this is why non-Muslim places of worship have flourished all over the Islamic world. History provides many examples of Muslim tolerance towards other faiths: when the caliph Omar entered Jerusalem in the year 634, Islam granted freedom of worship to all religious communities in the city. Proclaiming to the inhabitants that their lives, and property were safe, and that their places of worship would never be taken from them, he asked the Christian patriarch Sophronius to accompany him on a visit to all the holy places. Islamic law also permits non-Muslim minorities to set up their own courts, which implement family laws drawn up by the minorities themselves. The life and property of all citizens in an Islamic state are considered sacred whether the person is Muslim or not. Racism is not a part of Islam, the Noble Qur'an speaks only of human equality and how all peoples are equal in the sight of God:
"O mankind! We created you from a single soul, male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may come to know one another. Truly, the most honoured of you in God's sight is the greatest of you in piety. God is All-Knowing, All-Aware." (Qur'an, 49:13).

Misconception 6:
All Muslims are Arabs.

The Truth:
The Muslim population of the world is around 1.4 billion. 1 out of 4 people in the world is a Muslim. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the World. Muslims are a vast range of races, nationalities, and cultures from around the globe "from the Philippines to Nigeria" they are united by their common Islamic faith. Only about 18% live in the Arab world and the largest Muslim community is in Indonesia. Most Muslims live east of Pakistan. 30% of Muslims live in the Indian subcontinent, 20% in Sub-Saharan Africa, 17% in Southeast Asia, 18% in the Arab world, and 10% in the Soviet Union and China. Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan make up 10% of the non-Arab Middle East. Although there are Muslim minorities in almost every area, including Latin America and Australia, they are most numerous in Russia and its newly independent states, India and central Africa. There are about 8 million Muslims in the United States.
Misconception 7:
The Nation of Islam is a Muslim group.

The Truth:
Islam and the so-called "Nation of Islam" are two different religions. Muslims consider this group to be just one of many cults using the name of Islam for their own gain. The only thing common between them is the jargon, the language used by both. "The Nation of Islam" is a misnomer; this religion should be called Farrakhanism, after the name of its propagator, Louis Farrakhan. Islam and Farrakhanism differ in many fundamental ways. For example, Farrakhan followers believe in racism and that the 'black man' was the original man and therefore superior, while in Islam there is no racism and everyone is considered equal in the sight of God, the only difference being in one's piety. There are many other theological examples that show the 'Nation's teachings have little to do with true Islam. There are many groups in America, which claim to represent Islam and call their adherents Muslims. Any serious student of Islam has a duty to investigate and find the true Islam. The only two authentic sources that bind every Muslim are 1. the Noble Qur'an and 2. authentic or sound Hadith "Sunnah". Any teachings under the label of "Islam" which contradict or at variance with the direct understanding of fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam from the Noble Qur'an and authentic Hadith should be rejected, and such a religion should be considered a Pseudo-Islamic Cult. In America there are many pseudo-Islamic cults, Farrakhanism being one of them. An honest attitude on the part of such cults should be not to call themselves Muslims and their religion Islam. Such an example of honesty is Bahaism, which is an offshoot of
Islam, but Bahais do not call themselves Muslims nor their religion, Islam. In fact Bahaism is not Islam just as Farrakhanism is not Islam.

**Misconception 8:**

**Muslims are a barbaric, backward people.**

**The Truth:**

Among the reasons for the rapid and peaceful spread of Islam was the simplicity of its doctrine. Islam calls for faith in only One God worthy of worship. It also repeatedly instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation. Within a few years, great civilizations and universities were flourishing, for, according to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), "Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim 'Male & Female'". The synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas and of new thought with old, brought about great advances in medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, architecture, art, literature, and history. Many crucial systems such as algebra, the Arabic numerals, and also the concept of the zero (vital to the advancement of mathematics), were transmitted to medieval Europe from Islam. Sophisticated instruments, which were to make possible the European voyages of discovery, were developed, including the astrolabe, the quadrant and good navigational maps.
Misconception 9:
Muhammad was the founder of Islam and Muslims worship him.

The Truth:
Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) was born in Makkah in the year 570. Since his father died before his birth and his mother shortly afterwards, he was raised by his uncle from the respected tribe of Quraysh. As he grew up, he became known for his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity, so that he was sought after for his ability to arbitrate in disputes. The historians describe him as calm and meditative. Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) was of a deeply religious nature, and had long detested the decadence of his society. It became his habit to meditate from time to time in the Cave of Hira near Makkah. At the age of 40, while engaged in a meditative retreat, Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel. This revelation, which continued for 23 years, is known as the Noble Qur'an. As soon as he began to recite the words he heard from Gabriel, and to preach the truth which God had revealed to him, he and his small group of followers suffered bitter persecution, which grew so fierce that in the year 622 God gave them the command to emigrate. This event, the Hijra 'migration', in which they left Makkah for the city of Medina, marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. After several years, the Prophet and his followers were able to return to Makkah, where they forgave their enemies and established Islam definitively.

Before the Prophet died at the age of 63, the greater part of Arabia was Muslim, and within a century of his death Islam had spread to Spain in the West and as far East as China. He died with less than 5 possessions to his name.
While Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) was chosen to deliver the message, he is not considered the "founder" of Islam, since Muslims consider Islam to be the same divine guidance sent to all peoples before. Muslims believe that all the prophets from Adam, Noah, Moses, Jesus etc. were all sent with divine guidance for their peoples. Every prophet was sent to his own people, but Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) was sent to all of mankind. Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is the last and final messenger sent to deliver the message of Islam. Muslims revere and honour him (P.B.U.H.) for all he went through and his dedication, but they do not worship him.

"O Prophet, verily We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of glad tidings and a warner and as one who invites unto God by His leave and as an illuminating lamp."

(Qur'an, 33:45-6).

Misconception 10:
Muslims don't believe in Jesus or any other prophets.

The Truth:
Muslims respect and revere Jesus (Peace Be Upon Him), and await his Second Coming. They consider him one of the greatest of God's messengers to mankind. A Muslim never refers to him simply as 'Jesus', but always adds the phrase (Peace Be Upon Him) (abbreviated as (P.B.U.H.) here). The Noble Qur'an confirms his virgin birth (a chapter of the Qur'an is entitled 'Mary'), and Mary is considered the purest woman in all creation. The Qur'an describes the Annunciation as follows:

"Behold!" the Angel said, 'God has chosen you, and purified you, and chosen you above the women of all nations. O Mary, God gives you good news of a word
from Him whose name shall be the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, honoured in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near to God. He shall speak to the people from his cradle and in maturity, and shall be of the righteous.' She said: 'O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?' He said: "Even so; God creates what He will. When He decrees a thing, He says to it, 'Be!' and it is."

(Qur'an, 3:42-47).

Jesus (P.B.U.H.) was born miraculously through the same power which had brought Adam (P.B.U.H.) into being without a father:

"Truly, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, and then said to him, 'Be!' and he was."  

(Qur'an, 3:59).

During his prophetic mission Jesus (P.B.U.H.) performed many miracles. The Qur'an tells us that he said:

"I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it and it becomes a bird by God's leave. And I heal the blind, and the lepers, and I raise the dead by God's leave."

(Qur'an, 3:49).

Neither Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) nor Jesus (P.B.U.H.) came to change the basic doctrine of the belief in One God brought by earlier prophets, but to confirm and renew it. In the Noble Qur'an Jesus (P.B.U.H.) is reported as saying that he came:

"To attest the Torah which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden unto you; I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear God and obey me."

(Qur'an, 3:50).
The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said:

"Whoever believes that there is no god but Allah, alone without partner, that Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is His messenger, that Jesus (P.B.U.H.) is the servant and messenger of God, His word breathed into Mary and a spirit emanating from Him, and that Paradise and Hell are true, Allah will make him enter Paradise."

For more information about this subject:
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ISLAM & THE AIM OF LIFE
What is the purpose of my life?
What is the purpose of your life?
What is the purpose of our lives?

Such questions occur frequently to thinking people.

People answer these questions in different ways. Some people believe that the purpose of life is to get rich. But what will their purpose be after they have collected millions of dollars. So what? Then what? What will be their purpose after they get these millions of dollars? If the purpose of life is to become wealthy, there will be no purpose after becoming wealthy. In fact here lies the problem for some disbelievers or misbelievers. When they have amassed the money of which they have dreamt, their lives lose purpose, they live in tension and restlessness and suffer the panic of nothingness.

Can Wealth Be an Aim?

We often hear of a millionaire committing suicide and sometimes, not the millionaire himself but his wife, son, or daughter. The question is this: can aiming at wealth bring happiness to the individual? In most cases the answer is NO. Is the amassing of wealth a constant purpose? As we know, the child of five years does not look for wealth: he prefers a toy to a million dollars. The adolescent of eighteen does not dream of wealth because he is busy with more important things. The old man of ninety years does not care for money, he is worried more about his health. This proves that wealth cannot be a constant purpose in all the stages of the individual's life.

Wealth can do little to bring happiness to a disbeliever,
because a disbeliever is not sure about his end or his fate. A disbeliever does not know the purpose of life. And if he has a purpose, this purpose is doomed to be temporary or self-destructive.

What is the use of wealth to a disbeliever if he feels scared of the end and skeptical of everything? A disbeliever may gain a lot of money, but surely loses himself.

**Worshipping Allah as an Aim**

On the contrary, faith in Allah gives the believer the purpose in life he needs. In Islam, the purpose of life is to worship Allah. The term "Worship" covers all acts of obedience to Allah.

The Islamic purpose of life is a constant purpose. The true Muslim sticks to this purpose throughout all the stages of his life, whether he is a child, adolescent, adult, or an old man.

Worshipping Allah makes life purposeful and meaningful, especially within the framework of Islam. According to Islam, this worldly life is just a short stage. Then there is the other life. The first life and the second life are separated by death, which is a transitory stage between the two. The type of the second life a person deserves depends on his deeds in the first life. At the end of the death stage comes the Day of Judgment. On this day, Allah rewards or punishes people according to their deeds in the first life.

**The First Life as an Examination**

Islam looks at the first life as an examination of man. Death is similar to a rest period after the test, i.e., after the
first life. The Day of Judgment is similar to the day of announcing the results of the examination. The second life is the time when each examinee enjoys or suffers from the outcome of his behavior during the test period.

In Islam, the line of life is clear, simple, and logical: the first life, death, then the Day of Judgment, and then the second life. With this clear line of life, the Muslim has clear purpose in life. The Muslim knows that Allah created him. The Muslim knows he is going to spend some years in this first life, during which he has to obey God. Because God will question him and hold him responsible for his deeds, whether done publicly or privately, because He knows all deeds of all people. The Muslim knows that his deeds in the first life will determine the type of his second life. The Muslim knows that this first life is a very short one, one hundred years, more or less, whereas the second life is eternal.

**The Eternity of the Second Life**

This concept of the eternity of the second life has a tremendous effect on the Muslim during his first life because the Muslim believes that his first life determines the shape of his second life. In addition, this determination will be through the judgment of Allah, the All-Just and Almighty.

With this belief in the second life and the Day of Judgment, The Muslim's life becomes as purposeful and as meaningful as possible. The Muslim's constant purpose is to go to Paradise in the second life.

In other words, the Muslim's permanent purpose is to
obey Allah, to summit to Allah, to carry out His orders, and to keep in continuous touch with Him through prayer (five times a day, through fasting (one month a year), through charity (as often as possible), and through pilgrimage (once in one's life).

**The Need for a Permanent Purpose**

Disbelievers have purposes in their lives such as collecting money and property, indulging in sex, eating, and dancing. But all these purposes are passing ones. All these purposes come and go, pass up and down. Money comes and goes. Health comes and goes. Sexual activities cannot continue forever. All these lusts for money, food and sex cannot answer the individual's questions to himself:

**So what?**

**Then what?**

However, Islam saves Muslims the trouble of asking the question, because Islam makes it clear to the Muslim from the very beginning, that the permanent purpose of the Muslim in this life is to obey Allah in order to go to Paradise in the next life.

We should know that the only way for our salvation in this life and in the Hereafter is to know for sure our Lord who created us, believe in Him, and worship Him alone.

We should also know our Prophet whom Allah has sent to all mankind, believe in him and follow him. We should know the religion of truth, Islam, which our Lord has commanded us to believe in, and practice it.

**For more information about this subject:**

www.islamworld.net
ISLAM & RATIONALITY
الأسلام و التفكير السليم
ISLAM AND RATIONALITY

Islam secures consistency and rationality of belief through its logical and rational principles. Islam is embraced strongly by its followers. Islam keeps the Muslim away from ideological confusion, because it has no illogical or irrational principles that are not consistent with one another.

Clear Concept of Allah

Islam does not cause confusion to the believer concerning Allah. Allah is one in Islam. Allah has no son or father. Allah has no parallel or equal.

According to Islam, Jesus (Peace Be Upon Him) is not the son of Allah. Jesus is Allah's apostle. So is Moses and so is Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Them). So are all Prophets and Apostles. Allah has no son or sons.

To believe that God is unique, and vastly superior to His creation, and yet has a son is inconsistent. This lowers God to a human, carnal level.

In today's Christianity, it is said that God had His son killed in order to save humanity. With all respect to our Christian friends, it is difficult to accept this, because it is against the justice and might of God. Why should God kill to save? It is unfair to kill an innocent person to save others. In addition, Allah does not need to kill anyone to save others. Allah can save without killing. Further, it is difficult to see the relationship between killing and saving. It is difficult to convince a person of how, if Allah kills his son, other men are saved. Further, it is difficult to convince people that Allah killed his only son, when he should protect him.
Allah Has No Son

In Islam, this issue is clear, logical, and rational. In Islam, Allah is one. Allah has no son. Allah does not kill. A person is not saved by God's killing another person. In Islam, you are saved or doomed by yourself and your deeds. In Islam, Allah shows us the right path and the wrong path through the Noble Qur'an. Our responsibility is to choose either path. Each one of us is saved or doomed according to his choice and, consequently, according to his deeds.

Allah is One

Islam does not have the concept of the Trinity, or the concept of "three in one." It is very difficult for the mind to accept or understand how one being can be father, son, and holy spirit simultaneously. Furthermore, Allah has no son and does not need sons, because Allah is the owner of everything and the Creator of all beings.

Jesus (P.B.U.H) did not say he was Allah. Jesus said, "I do nothing of myself." This would indicate that the miracles of Jesus are given to him by Allah, like all apostles before and after. He also said, "I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

This means that Jesus (P.B.U.H) refers to God as a father metaphorically, because he says that God is his Father and their Father. If Jesus is Allah, how did Allah kill him or have him killed? According to Islam, Jesus is a man, an exemplary man, a holy man, an apostle chosen by God to be a model for the people to whom he was sent.
No Mediation between Man and Allah

In Islam, there is no mediation between Allah and man. You do not need to visit a priest to confess or repent. In Islam, every Muslim has direct contact with Allah, no matter how weak, poor, or ignorant he is. In Islam, Allah is the God of all. Every Muslim decides by himself how near or how far he wants to be from God, depending on his free will and deeds. In Islam, there are no mediators between man and Allah.

No Clergy

In Islam, there are no men of religion, as in some other beliefs. In Islam, every Muslim is responsible for his own beliefs and for Islam in general. In Islam, there are scholars of religion, but there is no class of clergymen.

No Celibacy

In Islam, there is no celibacy, because celibacy is against human nature. Islam urges the Muslim to get married as soon as he can, because it is difficult for normal people to be religious and unmarried at the same time. Islam, as a rule, organizes human nature, but never destroys or goes against it.

Body-soul Balance

Islam establishes a wonderful harmony between the demands of the soul and the demands of the body. The religion that considers celibacy as necessary for purity goes against human nature and theoretically puts an end to the human race. Prophet Muhammad, (P.B.U.H.) says, "Your God has rights over you. Your body has rights over you. Your soul has rights over you. Give to each his due rights."
A Complete Code of Life

Islam is a religion, but not in the western meaning of religion. The western connotation of the term "religion" is something between the believer and God. Islam is a religion that organizes all aspects of life on both the individual and national levels. Islam organizes your relations with God, with yourself, your children, your relatives, your neighbours, your guests, and other brethren. Islam clearly establishes your duties and rights in all those relationships. Islam establishes a clear system of worship, civil rights, laws of marriage and divorce, laws of inheritance, code of behavior, what to drink, and what not to drink, what to wear, and what not to wear, how to worship God, how to govern, the laws of war and peace, when to go to war, when to make peace, the laws of economics, and the laws of buying and selling.

Islam is a complete code of life, and it is not for the mosque only. Islam is for life, daily life. Islam is a guide to life in all its aspects: socially, ethically, economically, and politically. Islam is a complete constitution. Islam keeps the Muslim away from confusion, because Islam is logical and rational. Allah is one and has no sons. Allah is not a trinity. Allah does not kill to save. No mediation is required between Allah and man. Islam organizes human nature, but does not go against it. There is no class of clergy in Islam nor is there celibacy. Islam is a complete code of human life.
MORAL SYSTEM OF ISLAM

نظام الأخلاق في الإسلام
MORAL SYSTEM OF ISLAM

Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights, for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respected under all circumstances. To achieve these rights, Islam provides not only legal safeguards but also a very effective moral system. Thus whatever leads to the welfare of the individual or the society is morally good in Islam and whatever is injurious is morally bad. Islam attaches so much importance to the love of God and love of man that it warns against too much of formalism. We read in the Noble Qur'an:

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayers, and practice regular charity, to fulfill the contracts which you made, and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and through out all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing."

(Qur'an, 2: 177).

We are given a beautiful description of the righteous and God-fearing man in this verse. He should obey salutary regulations, but he should fix his gaze on the love of God and the love of his fellow-men.
We are given four heads:

a) Our faith should be true and sincere.

b) We must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellow-men.

c) We must be good citizens, supporting social organizations and charities.

d) Our own individual soul must be firm and unshaken in all circumstances.

This is the standard by which a particular mode of conduct is judged and classified as good or bad. This standard of judgment provides the nucleus around which the whole moral conduct should revolve. Before laying down any moral injunctions, Islam seeks to firmly implant in man's heart the conviction that his dealings are with God who sees him at all times and in all places; that he may hide himself from the whole world but not from Him; that he may deceive everyone but cannot deceive God; that he can flee from the clutches of anyone else but not from God's.

Thus, by setting God's pleasure as the objective of man's life, Islam has furnished the highest possible standard of morality. This is bound to provide limitless avenues for the moral evolution of humanity. By making Divine revelations as the primary source of knowledge, it gives permanence and stability to the moral standards which afford reasonable scope for genuine adjustments, adaptations and innovations though not for perversions, wild variation, atomistic relativism or moral fluidity. It provides a sanction to morality in the love and fear of God, which will impel man to obey the moral law even without any external pressure. Through belief in God and the Day of Judgment it furnishes a force which enables a person to
adopt the moral conduct with earnestness and sincerity, with all the devotion of heart and soul.

It does not, through a false sense of originality and innovation, provide any novel moral virtues nor does it seek to minimise the importance of the well-known moral norms, nor does it give exaggerated importance to some and neglect others without cause. It takes up all the commonly known moral virtues and with a sense of balance and proportion it assigns a suitable place and function to each one of them in the total scheme of life. It widens the scope of man's individual and collective life - his domestic associations, his civic conduct, and his activities in the political, economic, legal, educational, and social realms. It covers his life from home to society, from the dining table to the battle-field and peace conferences, literally from the cradle to the grave. In short, no sphere of life is exempt from the universal and comprehensive application of the moral principles of Islam. It makes morality reign supreme and ensures that the affairs of life, instead of dominated by selfish desires and petty interests, should be regulated by norms of morality.

It stipulates for man a system of life which is based on all good and is free from all evil. It invokes the people, to practice virtue, but also to establish virtue and eradicate vice, to bid good and to forbid wrong. It wants that the verdict of conscience should prevail and virtue must not be subdued to play second fiddle to evil. Those who respond to this call are gathered together into a community and given the name 'Muslim'. And the singular object underlying the formation of this community (Ummah) is that it should make an organized effort to establish and
enforce goodness and suppress and eradicate evil.

Here we furnish some basic moral teachings of Islam for various aspects of a Muslim's life. They cover the broad spectrum of personal moral conduct of a Muslim as well as his social responsibilities.

**God-Consciousness**

The Noble Qur'an mentions it as the highest quality of a Muslim:

"The most honourable among you in the sight of God is the one who is most God-conscious."

(*Qur'an*, 49: 13).

Humility, modesty, control of passions and desires, truthfulness, integrity, patience, steadfastness, and fulfilling one's promises are moral values which are emphasized again and again in the Qur'an. We read in the Noble Qur'an:

"And God loves those who are firm and steadfast."

(*Qur'an*, 3: 146).

"And vie with one another to attain your Sustainer's forgiveness and to a Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, which prepared for the God-conscious, who spend for charity in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and restrain their anger, and pardon their fellow men, for God loves those who do good."

(*Qur'an*, 3: 133-134).

"Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong: and bear patiently whatever may befall you, this is true constancy. And do not swell your cheek (with pride) at men, nor walk in
insolence on the earth, for God does not love any man proud and boastful. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice, for the harshest of sounds, indeed, is the braying of the ass." (Qur'an, 31: 18-19).

In a way which summarizes the moral behaviour of a Muslim, the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said: "My sustainer has given me nine commands: To remain conscious of God whether in private or in public: To speak justly whether angry or pleased: To show moderation both when poor and when rich: To reunite friendship with those who have broken it off with me: To give to him who deprived me: To forgive those who do injustice to me: That my silence should be occupied with thought and my speech be remembrance of Allah: That my looking should be an admonition and That I should command what is right"

**Social Responsibilities:**

The teachings of Islam concerning social responsibilities are based on kindness and consideration of others. Since a broad injunction to be kind is likely to be ignored in specific situations, Islam lays emphasis on specific acts of kindness and defines the responsibilities and rights of various relationships. In a widening circle of relationships, then, our first obligation is to our immediate family - parents, husband or wife and children, then to other relatives, neighbours, friends and acquaintances, orphans and widows, the needy of the community, our fellow Muslims, all our fellow human beings and animals.

**Parents:**

Respect and care for parents is very much stressed in the Islamic teachings and is a very important part of a Muslim's expression of faith.

110 Moral System of Islam
"Your Sustainer has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life-time, do not say to them a word of contempt nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say: My Sustainer! Bestow on them Your mercy, even as they cherished me in childhood."  
(Qur'an, 17: 23-24)

Other Relatives:
"And render to the relatives their due rights, as (also) to those in need, and to the traveller. Do not squander your wealth in the manner of a spendthrift."  
(Qur'an, 17: 26)

Neighbours:
The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has said:
"He is not a believer who eats his fill when his neighbour beside him is hungry, and he does not believe whose neighbours are not safe from his injurious conduct."

Actually, according to the Qur'an and Sunnah a Muslim has to discharge his moral responsibility not only to his parents, relatives and neighbours, but to the whole mankind, animals and useful trees and plants. For example, hunting of birds and animals for the sake of game is not permitted. Similarly cutting trees and plants that yield fruit is forbidden unless there is a very pressing need for it.

Thus, on the basic moral characteristics, Islam builds a higher system of morality by virtue, of which mankind can realise its greatest potential. Islam purifies the soul from self-seeking egotism, tyranny, wantonness and indiscipline. It creates God-fearing men, devoted to their ideals, possessed of piety, abstinence and discipline and uncom-
promising with falsehood. It induces feelings of moral responsibility and fosters the capacity for self-control. Islam generates kindness, generosity, mercy, sympathy, peace, disinterested goodwill, scrupulous fairness and truthfulness towards all creation in all situations. It nourishes noble qualities from which only good may be expected.

For more information about this subject:
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المرأة في الإسلام
Women In Islam
WOMEN'S LIBERATION THROUGH ISLAM

Today people think that women are liberated in the West and that the women's liberation movement began in the 20th century. Actually, the women's liberation movement was not begun by women but was revealed by God to a man in the seventh century by the name of Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), who is known as the last Prophet of Islam. The Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet (Hadith or Sunnah) are the sources from which every Muslim woman derives rights and duties.

I. Human Rights

Islam, fourteen centuries ago, made women equally accountable to God in glorifying and worshipping Him - setting no limits on her moral progress. Also, Islam established a woman's equality in her humanity with men.

In the Noble Qur'an, in the first verse of the chapter entitled "Women", Allah says:

"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain has spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom you claim (your rights) of one another, and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (Kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you."

(Qur'an, 4:1)

Since men and women both came from the same essence, they are equal in their humanity. Women cannot be by nature evil (as some religious believe) or then men would be evil also.
Similarly, neither gender can be superior because it would be a contradiction of equality.

II. Civil Rights

In Islam, a woman has the basic freedom of choice and expression based on recognition of her individual personality. First, she is free to choose her religion. The Qur'an states:

"There is no compulsion in religion. Right has been made distinct from error." (Qur'an, 2:256)

Women are encouraged in Islam to contribute their opinions and ideas. There are many traditions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) which indicate women would pose questions directly to him and offer their opinions concerning religion, economics and social matters.

A Muslim woman chooses her husband and keeps her name after marriage.

A Muslim woman's testimony is valid in legal disputes. In fact, in areas in which women are more familiar, their evidence is conclusive.

III. Social Rights

Seeking knowledge is a mandate for every Muslim 'Male & Female'. This includes knowledge of the Noble Qur'an and the Hadith as well as other knowledge. Men and women both have the capacity for learning and understanding. Since it is also their obligation to promote good behavior and condemn bad behavior in all spheres of life, Muslim women must acquire the appropriate education to perform this duty in accordance with their own natural talents and interests.
While maintenance of a home, providing support to her husband, and bearing, raising and teaching of children are among the first and very highly regarded roles for a woman, if she has the skills to work outside the home for the good of the community, she may do so as long as her family obligations are met.

Islam recognizes and fosters the natural differences between men and women despite their equality. Some types of work are more suitable for men and other types for women. This in no way diminishes either's effort nor its benefit. God will reward both sexes equally for the value of their work, though it may not necessarily be the same activity.

Concerning motherhood, the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said: "Heaven lies under the feet of mothers." This implies that the success of a society can be traced to the mothers that raised it. The first and greatest influence on a person comes from the sense of security, affection, and training received from the mother. Therefore, a woman having children must be educated and conscientious in order to be a skillful parent.

**IV. Political Rights**

A right given to Muslim women by God 1400 years ago is the right to vote. On any public matter, a woman may voice her opinion and participate in politics. One example narrated in the Qur'an (60:12) is that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is told that when the believing women come to him and swear their allegiance to Islam, he must accept their oath. This established the right of women to select their leader and publicly declare so. Abdur-Rahman Ibn Auf con-
sulted many women before he recommended Uthman Ibn Affan to be the Caliph.

V. Economic Rights
The Noble Qur'an states:
"By Him Who created male and female; Verily, your efforts and deeds are diverse (different in aims and purposes)."
(Qur'an, 92:3-4)

In these verses, God declares that He created men and women to be different, with unique roles, functions and skills. As in society, where there is a division of labour, so too in a family; each member has different responsibilities. Generally, Islam upholds that women are entrusted with the nurturing role, and men, with the guardian role. Therefore, women are given the right of financial support.

The Noble Qur'an states:
"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend of their wealth (for the support of women)."
(Qur'an, 4:34)

This guardianship and greater financial responsibility that is given to men, requires that they provide women with not only monetary support but also physical protection and kind and respectful treatment.

The Muslim woman has the privilege to earn money, the right to own property, to enter into legal contracts and to manage all of her assets in any way she pleases. She can run her own business and no one has any claim on her
earnings including her husband. The Qur'an states:

"And covet not the things in which Allah has made some of you excel others. For men there is reward for what they have earned, (and likewise) for women there is reward for what they have earned, and ask Allah of His Bounty. Surely, Allah is Ever All-Knower of everything."  

(Qur'an, 4:32).

A woman inherits from her relatives. The Qur'an states:

"For men there is a share in what parents and relatives leave, and for women there is a share of what parents and relatives leave, whether it be little or much - a legal share."

(Qur'an, 4:7).

VI. Rights of a Wife

The Noble Qur'an states:

"And among His signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves that you may live in tranquility with them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for people who reflect."

(Qur'an, 30:21)

Marriage is therefore not just a physical or emotional necessity, but in fact, a sign from God! It is a relationship of mutual rights and obligations based on divine guidance. God created men and women with complimentary natures, and in the Qur'an, He laid out a system of laws to support harmonious interaction between the sexes.

"...They are garments for your and you are garments for them."

(Qur'an, 2:187).

Clothing provides physical protection and covers the
beauty and faults of the body. Likewise, a spouse is viewed this way. Each protects the other and hides the faults and compliments the characteristics of the spouse.

To foster the love and security that comes with marriage, Muslim wives have various rights. The first of the wife's rights is to receive mahr, a gift from the husband that is part of the marriage contract and required for the legality of the marriage.

The second right of the wife is maintenance. Despite any wealth she may have, her husband is obligated to provide her with food, shelter and clothing. He is not forced, however, to spend beyond his capability and his wife is not entitled to make unreasonable demands. The Qur'an states:

"Let the man of means spend according to his means, and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah will grant after hardship, ease."

(Qur'an, 65:7).

God tells us men are guardians over women and are afforded the leadership in the family. His responsibility for obeying God extends to guiding his family to obey God at all times.

A wife's rights also extend beyond material needs. She has the right to kind treatment. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: "The most perfect believers are the best in conduct. And the best of you are those who are best to their wives." God tells us He created mates and put love, mercy, and tranquility between them. Both men and women have a
need for companionship and sexual needs, and marriage is designed to fulfill those needs.

VII. Duties of a Wife

With rights come responsibilities. Therefore, wives have certain obligations to their husbands. The Qur'an states:

"The righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in the absence of their husbands their rights as Allah has enjoined upon them to be guarded."

(Qur'an, 4:34)

A wife is to keep her husband's secrets and protect their marital privacy. Issues of intimacy or faults of his that would dishonor him, are not to be disclosed by the wife, just as he is expected to guard her honour.

A wife must also guard her husband's property. She must safeguard his home and possessions, to the best of her ability, from theft or damage. She should manage the household affairs wisely so as to prevent loss or waste. She should not allow anyone to enter the house whom her husband dislikes nor incur any expenses of which her husband disapproves.

A Muslim woman must cooperate and coordinate with her husband. There cannot, however, be cooperation with a man who is disobedient to God. She should not fulfill his requests if he wants her to do something unlawful. A husband also should not take advantage of his wife, but be considerate of her needs and happiness.
VIII. Conclusion
The Qur'an states:

"And it is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter (for them), that they should (after that) have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he verily goes astray in error manifest."

(Qur'an, 33:36)

The Muslim woman was given a role, duties and rights 1400 years ago that most women do not enjoy today, even in the West. These are from God and are designed to keep balance in society; Islam is a complete way of life.

For more information about this subject:
www.jannah.org
www.sultan.org
www.islamworld.net
Family Relationships in Islam
FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS IN ISLAM

Islam is a complete way of life. It considers the family the cornerstone of Islamic society. It bases the atmosphere in the family on sacrifice, love, loyalty, and obedience. When we say "family" we mean the traditional definition of it, namely husband, wife and children. Grandparents are also part of the extended Muslim family.

It may be asked here: how does Islam organize family relationships? To answer this, we have to concentrate on husband-wife relationship and parent-children relationship.

As for husband wife relationship the following verse portrays the right Islamic atmosphere:

"And among His Signs is this: He created for you spouses from yourselves, that you might find rest in them, and He ordained between you affection and mercy."

(Qur'an, 30-21).

The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) also stressed these meanings when he said: (The best among you are those who are best to their families and I am the best of you to my family). He once exclaimed: (It is only the evil one who abuses them (women) and the honoured one is he who honours them). Once a man came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and asked: who is the person who is most worthy of my good companionship? The Prophet answered, "your mother, your mother, your mother then your father." That is why Islam made Paradise under the feet of mothers according to one tradition of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).
If we contemplate the Noble Qur'an, we find that it refers to parents-children relationships in four main places. Before it asks children to be good and loyal to their parents, it requires parents to be extremely careful in upbringing their children. In other words it asks parents to do their duty before asking for their rights.

Let us contemplate the following verses of the Noble Qur'an: In the chapter called Luqman (No.31) Allah says:

"And surely We gave Luqman wisdom saying: Give thanks unto Allah; for whosoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for (the good of) his soul. And whoever disbelieves, Allah is All-Independent, Worthy of Praise. And (remember) when Luqman said to his son while he was exhorting him: "O my dear son! Ascribe no partners unto Allah. Lo! To ascribe partners (unto Him) is a tremendous wrong indeed. And we have enjoined upon man to be careful of his parents- His mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years, so give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination. But if they strive with you to make you ascribe to Me as partner that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but deal with them nicely in the world, and follow the path of him who repents to Me. Then unto Me will be your return, and I shall tell you of what you used to do."

The Noble Qur'an then continues:

"O my son! Lo! Though it be but the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, and though it be in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. For Allah is Subtle, Well-Aware. O my son! Establish prayer, enjoin goodness, forbid iniquity and bear with
patience whatever may befall you. For that is the steadfast heart of things. Turn not your cheek in scorn towards people, nor walk on the earth with pretenses, for Allah loves not each braggart boaster. Be modest in your bearing and subdue your voice for Lo! The harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass."

(Qur'an, 31: 12-19).

These verses provide Muslim parents with the way they should bring up their children, unless they do so, they can expect rebellion and hatred from them; but the devoted parents have full right to what the following verses from chapter 17 enjoin. In this chapter called the Night Journey Allah says:

"Your Lord has decreed that you worship non but Him, and that (you show) kindness to parents. Should one or both of them attain old age with you, Say not 'Fie' unto them nor repulse them, but speak unto them a gracious word. And lower unto them the wing of submission through mercy and say: My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little. Your Lord is best aware of what is in your inner-selves. If you are righteous, then Lo! He was ever Forgiving unto those who turn (unto Him)."

(Qur'an, 17: 23-25).

These are the two main chapters of the Noble Qur'an that decide and clearly depict the Islamic relationship between parents and their children. It is a relationship based, as we see, on belief in Allah, and feeling that He observes all what we do and that we are accountable to Him even in the bad breath that we may release against our parents when we are angry. Even this has to be controlled.
Let us remember, however, that it is only parents who do their duty, who deserve this honorable treatment of their children. That is why when a parent came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and complained to him about the ingratitude of his son, the son said: He was ungrateful to me O Messenger of Allah, before I showed ingratitude to him. So the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not blame the son but disliked the attitude of his parent. This is a message to all parents.

The third place in the Noble Qur'an that refers to parents-children relationship is in chapter 46 called Al Ahqaf where Allah says:

"And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind toward his parents. His mother bears him with hardship and delivers him with hardship. His bearing and weaning are thirty months, till when he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: 'My Lord! Arouse me that I may give thanks for the favour wherewith you have favoured me and my parents, and I may do right acceptable unto you. And be gracious unto me concerning my seed. I have turned unto you repentant and Lo! I am one of the Muslims."

Concerning this type of child the Noble Qur'an has the following comment: "Those are they from whom We accept the best of what they do, and We overlook their evil deeds among the dwellers of Paradise - a promise of truth, which they have been promised (in the world)."

The Noble Qur'an then turns to the other category of children who are disbelievers and are, as a result, ungrateful to their parents. It declares:
"As for him who said to his parents: Fie upon you both! Do you threaten me that I shall be brought forth (again) when generations before me have passed away! While they too cry unto Allah for help and say: Woe unto you! Believe! Verily, the promise of Allah is true. But he says: This is nothing but fables of the ancient."

Commenting on this attitude Allah says:
"Such are those whom the Word concerning nations of the Jinn and mankind which have passed away before them has effect. Verily, they are the losers. And for each there will be degrees due to what they did; that He may recompense them in full for their deeds! And they will not be wronged." (Qur'an, 46: 15-19).

The forth and last place in the Noble Qur'an that refers to parents-children relationship is what is mentioned briefly in chapter 29 that says:
"We have enjoined on man to be good and dutiful to his parents. But should they strive to make you join with Me that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not. Unto Me is your return and I shall tell you what you used to do." (Qur'an, 29:8).

This verse refers mainly to the unbelieving parents who still have the rights of obedience on their Muslim children unless they ask them to rebel against Allah. In this case they should not be obeyed, but doing good to them should continue regardless of the difference of religion.

In conclusion, since the family is the corner stone of society, happiness and prosperity will only be achieved if par-
ents as well as children are committed to the guidance of the
Noble Qur'an, the only guidance proved to be successful.

For in that case all will fulfill their duties and rights in
the most satisfactory manner as we have seen earlier.

For more information about this subject:
www.islamworld.net
Islam is Your Birth Right
Mankind and the universe were not created by accident or chance, but according to the plan of the Creator, who is known as Allah. Allah, (the Arabic word for one God) is a unique term. Neither gender nor plural can be formed from it. Thus distinguishing the only one God (the Creator) from all other creations in Islam.

Islam is an Arabic word that denotes submission and obedience to Allah. It also means "peace" for it brings peace of mind as well as peace on the individual and the social levels. It calls for the complete acceptance of the teachings and guidance of God manifested through the Noble Qur'an and the life example of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Islam offers humanity the complete code of life, which, if followed in the right direction, will bring peace, harmony and success in both this world and the Hereafter.

A Muslim is "one who surrenders himself to God 'Allah' ". All Muslims believe in the Oneness of Allah, in the angels created by Him, in the prophets through whom His revelation was brought to mankind, in the Day of Judgment. The Muslims believe that nothing happens without the knowledge and permission of Allah. While we may not understand why certain things happen, it is part of the divine plan for our lives.

As The Noble Qur'an states that it is the duty of all individuals to learn about Allah and to live according to His will, we cannot accomplish this by ourselves, Allah has sent messengers and prophets to guide humanity. All
of these chosen individuals have brought the same message and have served as examples to their people of how Allah desires all human beings to live. Through these selected people, we have been told why mankind was created, what will happen to us after death, and what Allah expects of us.

**Continuity of the Message**

Islam is not a new religion. It is, in essence, the message and guidance, which God revealed to all His previous messengers. "Say:

We believe in Allah and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes and in (Books) given to Moses, Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord; we make no distinction between one and another among them and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam)."

*(Qur'an, 3: 84)*

All Muslims must accept all of Allah's prophets and messengers as legitimate, the Qur'an mentions twenty-five of them by name, among them Noah, Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, John, Jesus, and Muhammad. There are, however, many others who are not named.

Islam at the time of Noah was by following him, during the era of Abraham by following him, during the reign of Moses by following him, at the time of Jesus by following him, and at the time of Muhammad until the Day of Judgment is by following him, because he is the last prophet.
However, the message, which was revealed to the last of Allah's prophets, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), is Islam in its comprehensive, complete and final form.

This was necessary because the message delivered by the previous prophets and messengers had been corrupted or distorted by their followers. They had been mixed with philosophical speculations, superstitions, myths, and neglect. Therefore, Islam is not a new religion—it is a restatement of the original religion of Allah in its purest form and is designed to provide humanity with the uncorrupted message of Allah.

**God's Oneness and Uniqueness**

The cornerstone of Islam is the belief in the One and Only God, which is the faith in God's oneness and uniqueness. God has no partner, son, daughter, helper, or competitor. There is nothing that even remotely resembles Him, for He is unique. By repeating it in many varying formulations, the Qur'an has abundantly made this clear. One can observe this notion as summarized in the 112th Chapter of the Noble Qur'an: "Say:

**He is Allah the One and Only; Allah the Eternal Absolute; He begetteth not nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him."**

(Qur'an, 112).

Belief in the one and only God frees man from superstitious feelings of dependence on all sorts of imaginary powers or forces of nature and affirms to him that he depends exclusively on and is responsible to the one and only power that is real in the deepest sense of the word.

Furthermore, it requires that we look upon all humanity as one family under the omnipotence of God—the Creator and Nourisher of all.
Islam rejects the idea of the "chosen people", making pure intention, faith in God and good deeds as the only way to reach heaven. Thus, a direct relationship is established with God. It is open to all alike without any discrimination or intercession.

The Five Pillars Of Islam

In Islam, the term "worship" covers any action that one does in accordance with the will of Allah. It can be mental, physical, spoken, or otherwise. All such actions will be rewarded. There are five acts of worship that are so fundamental that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) grouped them together as the five pillars of Islam. Every Muslim is expected to fulfill these obligations. They are:

1-The Declaration of Faith:
Recognizing and acknowledging the monotheistic nature of Allah stands at the core of Islam. This consists of a public affirmation that "there is no god but Allah (God), and Muhammad is His Messenger." The Prophethood of Muhammad obliges Muslims to follow his exemplary life in every respect. One cannot be a Muslim until he states this fact in the presence of Muslim witnesses.

2-The Five Daily Prayers:
A Muslim must perform the five daily prayers. These must be performed at specific times, corresponding roughly with dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and nightfall. The prayers can be made in any clean place, but it is preferable to pray them in congregation in a mosque, for this communal undertaking acts as a reminder that all Muslims are equal. When many people are praying
together, it becomes clear that colour, economic status, social position, and all other artificial distinctions have no importance to Allah, for all Muslims are commanded to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, and prostrate themselves before Him. There are no exceptions. Prayers also elevate the individual to a higher level of morality, purify his heart, and help him to resist his desire to engage in forbidden activities.

3- Zakah (the purification due)
Zakah (the purification due) is a proportionately fixed contribution (2.5% of specified minimum amount annually) collected from the wealth and earnings of the well-to-do and rich. It is spent on the poor and needy in particular, and the welfare of the society in general. The payment of Zakah purifies one's income and wealth and helps to establish economic balance to reduce resentment and envy between a society's poor and rich classes. It also helps to achieve social justices in the society.

4- Fasting during the Month of Ramadan
Fasting, according to the Islamic definition, means total abstention from food, drink, smoking, conjugal relationships and evil intentions from dawn until sunset. It teaches love, sincerity and devotion. It develops patience, unselfishness, self-restraint, social conscience and willpower to bear hardships. And also it gives the body a much-needed rest and improves ones health by getting rid of excess weight.

5- Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah):
Hajj is an act of worship that is to be performed at least once in a lifetime, provided that one is physically and
financially able to do so. During this time, Muslims meet from all corners of the world in an international congregation for the sole purpose of responding to the call of Allah. It also reminds the participants that all Muslims are equal, irrespective of their geographical, cultural, or racial origins.

Sources Of Islamic Teachings
The Islamic way of life is based on the teachings and laws found in the Qur'an and the example (Sunnah) of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.):

1- The Qur'an:
The Noble Qur'an is the final revelation from God, given to Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Distinguishing between right and wrong, the Qur'an guides those who are willing to be guided along the path of God.

It was revealed in the pure Arabic language during 23 years of the prophetic mission and was immediately written down after every revelation. The revelations were also memorized by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions. In this way, every care was taken to preserve the Noble Qur'an from the very beginning. This was achieved so successfully that the Arabic text of the Qur'an we have today is exactly the same as was revealed to the Prophet more than 1400 years ago. Not even a single letter has yielded to corruption during the passage of centuries and so it will remain forever as promised by God:
"We have without doubt sent down the Message: and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."

(Qur'an, 15: 9)
Apart from clearly defining the basic ideas of Islam, that is the Oneness of God, the Prophethood and the Hereafter, the Qur'an deals with a variety of other subjects such as morality, worship, knowledge, law, politics, economics, etc. In other words, the Qur'an gives guidance for all walks of human life.

2-The Life Example (Sunnah) of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.):

In spite of the clarity and the inner coherence which the Noble Qur'an undoubtedly has, it was never intended to be used independently of the personal guidance of the Prophet. This guidance is embodied in the system of his Sunnah, that is, the authentic recordings of his deeds, utterances and his unspoken approval. Because of this reason, the true Muslim follows the life example of the Prophet in his daily life in addition to the Noble Qur'an. The following verse taken from the Noble Qur'an eloquently clarifies this:

"Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a good example to follow for him whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day and who engages much in the praise of Allah."

(Qur'an, 33: 21..)

Muslims: The Moderate Nation

Islam does not divide life into "spiritual" and "secular" realms. As all of life is thus unified and interconnected, Islam avoids the dangers of the extreme ritualism, secularism, or materialism that are found in other civilizations. Activities are not classified as belonging to the state or the individual, religion or daily life, but as belonging to Allah alone, Who has provided guidelines for individuals. These are to be followed in every aspect of their lives: individual, social, governmental, political, economical, spiritual, and
otherwise. Reflecting this moderation, the Qur'an has entitled the Muslims the "moderate nation".

**Islam: The Religion Of Equality**

Islam recognizes no man-made artificial distinctions based on colour, tribe, race, nationality, or otherwise. As all people come from the original couple-Adam and Eve-they are all one family and therefore equal before God. What distinguishes people from each other is their commitment to Islam:

"The most honoured in the sight of Allah is (he who is) most righteous."

*(Qur'an, 49:13).*

**What does Islam say about Terrorism?**

Islam, a religion of mercy, does not permit terrorism. In the Qur'an, God said:

"Allah does not forbid you from showing kindness and dealing justly with those who have not fought you on account of religion and have not driven you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves just dealers."

*(Qur'an, 60: 8).*

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) prohibits soldiers killing non-soldiers, and he would advise them (... Do not betray, do not be excessive, and do not kill a child).

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) classified murder as a major sin, and he warned that on the Day of Judgment, (The first cases to be adjudicated between people on the Day of Judgment will be those of bloodshed).

In the light of these and other Islamic texts, the act of inciting terror in the hearts of defenseless civilians, the
wholesale destruction of buildings and properties, the bombing and maiming of innocent men, women and children, are all forbidden and detestable acts according to Islam. Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy and forgiveness, and the majority of Muslims have nothing to do with the violent events some people have associated with Muslims.

**Human Rights in Islam**

Islam guarantees individual human rights. The following are some of these human rights that Islam protects:

* The life and property of all citizens in an Islamic state are considered sacred, whether a person is Muslim or not.

* Islam protects one's honour by prohibiting cursing and ridiculing others. Racism is not allowed in Islam, for the Qur'an speaks of human equality in the following terms:

  "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."

  *(Qur'an, 49: 13).*

* Islam rejects certain individuals or nations being favoured over others because of their wealth, power, or race. God created human beings as equals and distinguished from each other only on the basis of their faith and piety. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said:

  (O people! Your God is One and your forefather (Adam) is one. An Arab is no better than a non-Arab and a non-Arab is no better than an Arab, and a red person is
no better than a black person and a black person is no better than a red person, except in piety).

* One of the major problems facing mankind today is racism. The developed world can send a man to the moon but cannot stop man from hating and fighting his fellow man. Ever since the days of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), Islam has provided a vivid example of how racism can be eliminated.

**Criteria For Truth**

*How do you know if your belief system is true? Take a moment to look at the following list:*

* Are the teachings of your belief system rational? Do they conform to the norms of human reason and intellect?

* Is the creator of your belief system perfect? Allah, the Creator of Islam, is.

* Does your belief system contain superstitions or myths? Islam presents humanity with only true knowledge.

* Can your belief system withstand the discoveries and claims of modern science? Islam can and does.

* How accurate are your belief system's prophecies and predications? Islam's are always completely accurate.

* Could a person have devised your belief system? No one has ever been able to imitate the Noble Qur'an, although many have tried over the centuries.
What they say about Islam

Here are some of the opinions of non-Muslim scholars who have studied Islam. Such comments show that they are beginning to appreciate the faith of Islam:

"It (Islam) replaced monkishness by manliness. It gives hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind, and recognition of the fundamental facts of human nature."

Canon Taylor,
Paper read before the Church Congress at Walsingham, Oct. 1887 Quoted by Arnoud in The Preaching Of Islam, pp. 71-72.

"Sense of justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as I read in the Qur'an I find those dynamic principles of life, not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conduct of life suited to the whole world."


"History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated."

De Lacy O'Leary,

"The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam, and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue."

A.J. Toynbee,
"I am not a Muslim in the usual sense, though I hope I am a "Muslim" as "one surrendered to God", but I believe that embedded in the Quran and other expressions of the Islamic vision are vast stores of divine truth from which I and other occidentals have still much to learn, and Islam is certainly a strong contender for the supplying of the basic framework of the one religion of the future."

**W. Montgomery Watt,**


"Islamic culture in its traditional form has striven to preserve an integrated, spiritual view of the world in a way we have not seen fit to do in recent generations in the West. There is much we can learn from that Islamic world view in this respect."

**Prince Charles**

*Speech at Wilton*

**Islam Is Your Birthright**

Islam states clearly that everyone is born a Muslim and is therefore monotheistic by nature. We read in the Qur’an that humanity has been created with the natural disposition towards the Oneness of God. In the words of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.): "Every person is born with the innate religious faith (to submit to God Almighty)." Thus when an individual accepts Islam, he is not turning his back on any prior revelation but rather is returning to the original and true revelation of Allah and to his own nature as a creation of Allah. This being the case, Islam is your birthright—other religious or ideological systems are either corruption or outright denials of Islam.

Islam is not a new religion founded by Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), but a final restatement of the original revelation
that has been conveyed to humanity by messengers and prophets sent by Allah for that very purpose: "This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (Qur'an, 5:3). As the Qur'an is the final revelation and Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is the final prophet, humanity is obligated to accept it: "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." (Qur'an, 3:86).

Islam is your Birthright
THE CHOICE IS YOURS TO MAKE!

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كيف تصبح مسلماً
Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon Muhammad; His last messenger.

The objective of this literature is to correct a false idea spread among those willing to adopt Islam as their faith. Some people face difficulties on the basis of their mistaken belief that entering into the Islamic fold requires an announcement from the concerned person in the presence of high ranking scholars or sheikhs, or reporting this act to the courts or other authorities. It is also thought that the act of accepting Islam, should, as a condition, have a certificate issued by the authorities as evidence to that effect.

We wish to clarify that the whole matter is very easy and that none of the above conditions or obligations are required. For Allah, the Almighty, is above all comprehension and knows well the secrets of all hearts. Nevertheless, those who wish to adopt Islam as their religion are advised to register themselves as Muslims with the concerned governmental agency, as this procedure may facilitate many matters for them including the possibility of performing Hajj and Umrah.

If anyone has a real desire to be a Muslim and has the full conviction and strong belief that Islam is the true religion ordained by Allah for all human beings, he should pronounce the "shahada" (testimony of faith) without further delay. The Noble Qur'an is explicit in this regard, as Allah has stated:

"Truly, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam."

(Qur'an, 3:19)
In another verse of the Noble Qur'an, Allah has stated: "And whosoever desires a religion - other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who are lost."

(Qur'an, 3:85)

In addition, Islam is the only religion prevailing over all other religions. Allah has stated in the Noble Qur'an: "And to thee We have sent the Scripture in truth (This Qur'an) confirming the Scripture that came before it, and a witness over it...."

(Qur'an, 5:48).

Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him), said:

"Islam is based on five pillars; testifying that there is no god worthy to be worshipped but Allah, that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and His servant; performing the prayer; paying the Zakat (the purification due); fasting the month of Ramadan; and performing Hajj."

The shahada can be declared as follows:

"ASH-HADU ANLAA ILAHA ILLA ALLAH,
WA ASH-HADU ANNA MUHAMMADAN
ABDUHU WA RASUULUH."

The English translation is:

"I bear witness that there is no deity worthy to be worshipped but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

However, it would not be sufficient for anyone to utter only this testimony orally either in private or in public. One should believe in it from the heart with a firm conviction and unshakable faith. If he is truly sincere and com-
plies with the teachings of Islam in his daily life, he will find himself a new born person.

This will move him to strive more and more to improve his character and draw nearer to perfection. The light of the living faith will fill his heart until he becomes the embodiment of that faith.

What should be next after declaring the testimony of faith (Shahada) and then becoming a Muslim? He should know the real concept underlying this testimony, which means accepting the oneness of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), as the last of the Prophets, and meeting its requirements. He must behave accordingly applying this true faith to everything he says or does. What do the words of "Shahada" signify?

The significant point, which every Muslim must know, is the truth that there is no god to be worshipped other than Allah, (Glory be to Him). He is the only true God, Who alone deserves to be worshipped, since He is the Giver of life and Sustainer and Nourisher of mankind and all creation with His unlimited bounties. Man must worship Allah, Who alone is worthy of worship.

The second part of the "Shahada" i.e. "Wa asshadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh" means that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is the servant and chosen messenger of Allah. No one should be in any doubt about this matter. In fact, the Muslim has to obey the commands of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), to believe in what he has said, to follow his teachings, to avoid what he has forbidden, and to worship Allah alone according to the message revealed to him.
What is the meaning of worship? It simply means rendering sincere service, showing reverence for Allah. In a deeper shade of meaning, it implies total submission and complete obedience to Allah's commandments both in utterances and actions, whether explicit or implicit and in private or public.

**Worship falls into two categories:**
1- Visible (manifest or outward).
2- Invisible (concealed or inward).

Visible worship includes acts such as uttering the two parts of the "Shahada", performing prayers, giving Zakat (the purification due), observing the fast in the month of Ramadan, performing Hajj, recitation of the Noble Qur'an supplication, adoring Allah by praising Him, purifying our bodies before prayers, etc.

This type of worship is associated with the movement of the parts of human body. (actions).

Invisible worship is to believe in Allah, in the Day of Judgment, in the Hereafter, in the Angels, in the Books of Allah, in the Divine Decree of destiny (that good and bad are determined by Allah alone).

This type of worship does not involve movements of parts of the body but it surely has a bearing on one's heart which, subsequently, affects one's way of life (beliefs).

It should be borne in mind that worship not dedicated completely and sincerely to Allah alone, will he rejected as one form of polytheism or "shirk", which amounts to apostasy, from the Islamic point of view.
The next step for a devotee newly converted to Islam is to purify himself by taking a bath (total ablution). He should then resolve to comply with all the principles and rules of Islam in their entirety. He disowns all forms of polytheism and false beliefs. He should reject evil and be righteous. Such rejection of evil and being righteous is one of the requisites of the motto of Islam that is, Laa ilaaha illaa Allah..

Allah has stated in the Noble Qur'an:
"...Whoever disbelieves in false deities and believes in Allah, hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that will never break..."

(Qur'an, 2: 256).

We have to consider that when we declare from our hearts that "there is no God worthy to be worshipped but Allah" it implies on our part love, devotion, faith and obedience to the rules of Islamic legislation which are legally binding on all Muslims. It is a requirement of "there is no God worthy to be worshipped but Allah", to love for the sake of Allah and to reject for the sake of Allah. This is the finest anchor of belief which makes material the meaning of "AL-WALA" and "Al-BARA." It means that a Muslim should love and be loyal to his Muslim brothers. He should, as a practice, dissociate himself completely from the practices of unbelievers and refuse to be influenced by them, both in worldly and religious matters.

We conclude with a humble prayer to Allah that He may cleanse the hearts and souls of those who are genuine seekers of truth and may He bless the community of believers. Ameen.

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2. The Purpose of Creation by Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Dar Al Fatah.
3. The Best of Islaam by Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Dar Al Fatah.
4. A Simple Call To One God by Dr. Asra Rasheed Edited by Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Dar Al Fatah.
5. The True Religion of God by Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, Dar Al Fatah.
6. Concept of God in Major Religions by Dr. Zakir Naik
7. The Status of Women in Islam by Dr. Jamal Badawi.
8. Women's Rights in Islam - Protected or Subjugated? by Dr. Zakir Naik
9. Christian Muslim Dialogue by H.M. Baagil, M.D.
10. The way to happiness by Ghalib Ahmad Masri and Nathif Jama Adam.
11. Best way to live and die by (Yahya) Donald W. Flood.
12. Replies to the most Common Questions Asked by Non-Muslims by Dr. Zakir Naik

The Qur'an
1. The Interpretation of Meanings of the Noble Qur'an, by Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud Din Al-Hilali and Dr Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Maktaba Dar-us-Salam.
2. The Quran's Numerical Miracle by Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips- Abul Qasim Publications.
3. The Qur'an and Modern Science by Dr. Maurice Bucaille Edited by Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips - Dar Al Fatah.
4. The Amazing Qur'an by Gary Miller.
5. A Brief Illustrated Guide To Understanding Islam, Darussalam.
6. An Introduction to Understand The Qur'an 
   by Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi.

Biographies of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)
1. Muhammad, His Life from the Earliest Sources, by 
   Martin Lings, Islamic Texts Society.
2. The Sealed Nectar, by Safi-ur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, 
   Maktaba Dar-us-Salam.
3. What The Bible Says About Muhummed (PBUH) 
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Jesus and Christianity
1. The True Message of Jesus Christ, by Dr. Abu 
   Ameenah Bilal Philips, Dar Al Fatah.
2. Jesus, a Prophet of Islam by Muhammad 
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3. For Christ's Sake by Ahmad Thompson and 
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