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# **POVERTY FAMINE WAR**

**Where is God  
and Why Does  
He Allow Pain  
& Suffering?**

**Answers to This Question  
and More Inside**

# What is Islam?

Islam is not a new religion, but the same truth that God revealed through all His prophets to every people.

For a fifth of the world's population, Islam is both a religion and a complete way of life. Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy, and forgiveness, and the majority have nothing to do with the extremely grave events which have come to be associated with their faith.

## Who Are The Muslims?

Over one billion people from a vast range of races, nationalities and cultures across the globe -- from the southern Philippines to Nigeria -- are united by their common Islamic faith. About 15% live in the Arab world; the world's largest Muslim community is in Indonesia; substantial parts of Asia and most of Africa are Muslim, while significant minorities are to be found in the Soviet Union, China, North and South America, and Europe.



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## What Does 'Islam' Mean?

The Arabic word 'Islam' simply means 'submission', and derives from a word meaning 'peace'. In a religious context it means complete submission to the will of God.

'Mohammedanism' is thus a misnomer because it suggests that Muslims worship Muhammad rather than God. 'Allah' is the Arabic name for God, which is used by Arab Muslims and Christians alike.

## What Do Muslims Believe?

Muslims believe in One Unique, Incomparable God; in the Angels created by Him; in the prophets through whom His revelations were brought to mankind; in the Day of Judgment and individual accountability for actions; in God's complete authority over human destiny and in life after death. Muslims believe in a chain of prophets starting with Adam and including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Elias, Jonah, John the Baptist, and Jesus, peace be upon them. But God's final message to man, a reconfirmation of the eternal message and a summing-up of all that has gone before was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through Gabriel.

## Do Islam & Christianity have Different Origins?

No. Together with Judaism, they go back to the prophet and patriarch Abraham, and their three prophets are directly descended from his sons Muhammad from the eldest, Ishmael, and Moses and Jesus from Isaac. Abraham established the settlement which today is the city of Makkah, and built the Ka'abah towards which all Muslims turn when they pray.

# Handling Grief and Stress

Instances of suicide or self-killing have been known throughout recorded history. It was known and discussed in the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations; it has been noted in the Jewish and Christian faiths and is mentioned in the classical Hindu books. Suicide or hara kiri is part of the ancient Japanese honour code and is noted in Asian cultures. It is not something confined to Western civilization and is even found in Muslim majority countries even though it is well known that it is something clearly prohibited in Islam. In the Quran there are sanctions against suicide.

*“And do not kill yourselves. Surely, God is Most Merciful to you.” (Quran 4:29)*

*“And do not throw yourselves in destruction.” (Quran 2:195)*

The Quran makes it clear that human life is sacred. Life cannot be taken without justification and the right to life is inherent in the tenants of Islam. Life itself is a gift from the Creator that we are obliged to care for. Suicide out of despair of God’s mercy or worldly problems is strictly forbidden. Prophet Muhammad, may God praise him, said: Whoever kills himself with something in this world will be punished with it on the Day of Resurrection.[1] It is a major sin and its punishment is subject to the will of God. If He wills, He will forgive it, and if He wills He will punish for it.[2]

Life is an unending succession of moments. At

the two extremes there are joyful moments that make our hearts soar and dark moments that plunge us into sadness and worry or even despair. Gladness and its opposite sadness are part of the human condition, however when we lose control over our emotions we can easily fall into despair. Despair is the feeling that we get when all hope has disappeared and it is a very dangerous situation. God tells us not to despair and particularly not to despair of His mercy. God has not abandoned us in face of the temptations and trials we face in this world; He is ever merciful and has equipped us with potent weapons. God, the Most Merciful, gives us clear guidelines and promises two things, if we worship Him and follow His guidance we will be rewarded with Paradise and that after hardship we will find ease.

*“But those who believe and do deeds of righteousness, We shall admit them to the Gardens under which rivers flow (i.e., in Paradise), to dwell therein forever. [It is] the promise of God, [which is] truth, and whose words can be truer than those of God.” (Quran 4:122)*

*“So verily, with hardship, there is ease.” (Quran 94:5)*

When Prophet Jacob was grieving and sad, he turned to God, and the Quran tells us that he beseeched God for relief.

*“He said: ‘I only complain of my grief and sorrow to God...’ (Quran 12:86)*

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also

*Continued on Page 8*

More people die because of

# SUICIDE

than from AIDS or homicide

The reality is that technological advancement and modernisation have not bought inner peace and tranquillity. Rather in spite of the creature comforts that modernisation has brought us, we are further away from inner peace than our ancestors were.

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# Why Does God Allow Pain & Suffering?

## War. Famine. Suffering.

Not a day goes by that the evening news does not report horrific stories of humanity in despair, and of worldwide misery. On a more personal level, many of us have been stricken with grief and depression in our day to day lives. A loved one passes away. A financial downturn. A cheating spouse. Why then does God allow bad things to happen to good people? This is a question that people of many religious faiths have struggled with for hundreds of years. It is one of the greatest stumbling blocks to faith and has led countless people to disbelieve in God altogether.

Theists have tried to reconcile God and evil in a number of ways. Some pagans claimed that God hates evil, but He is powerless to prevent it. This idea, however, is rejected in the Quran, because it questions God's status as The Almighty (Al-Azeez), The All-Powerful (Al-Jabbaar), The All-Strong (Al-Qawiyy), and The All Capable (Al-Qadeeir). Others have claimed that perhaps God is capable of removing evil, but He does not know when or where evil will happen. This idea relegates God to a fireman who only comes to the scene of a fire after half the building has burned down. Yet, this too is an unacceptable claim, for God's Names in the Quran include The All-Knowing (Al-Aalim), The All-Seeing (Al-Baseer), The All-Hearing (Al-Samee'), and The Constant Owner and Controller of Everything (Al-Maleek). In fact, it would be considered blasphemous to question God's Power: if God wanted to remove all evil on this earth, then nothing could prevent Him from that.

Polytheistic religions further another hypothesis: God is good, but there are other evil gods who frustrate His goodness and spread corruption on this earth. God is therefore locked in a struggle with these other deities. Perhaps Satan is a counter-god with whom God must constantly battle with. Yet this idea—of multiple gods—is categorically rejected in the Quran, which calls God as The One (Al-Wahid), The One and Only (Al-Ahad), The First (Al-Awwal), and The Last (Al-Akhir). The Quran stresses that there are no gods besides God; for example, the Quran says:



***"Your God is but one God; there is no god other than Him!" (Quran 2:163)***

With over a thousand verses to this effect, it would be impossible to believe in multiple deities; rather, there is one and only one supreme God.

The ancient Gnostics had such a troubling time reconciling the evil of this world with God that they concluded that God Himself must be evil. People who further this claim argue that God cannot possibly be All-Powerful and All-Loving at the same time. If God is capable of removing evil and does not do it, He must therefore be evil. Yet, this idea is unconditionally rejected in the Quran, which declares that God is The Most Loving (Al-Wadood), The Most Kind (Al-Barr), and The Most Generous (Al-Kareem). The Quran also refers to God as The Most Merciful (Al-Raheem), The Most Beneficent (Al-Rahmaan), The Most Forgiving (Al-Ghaffaar), The Lord of Infinite Grace (Dhul Fadl al-Adtheem), and the Ultimate Source of Peace and Safety (Al-Salaam).

Therefore, the Quran affirms that God is both All-Powerful and Most Loving; so how can these two qualities be reconciled, given the fact that the world is full of evil? The Islamic perspective is that God causes "bad" things to happen in order to achieve a greater good. God afflicts His servants

with suffering in order to mold them into the type of people He wants them to be. Through suffering, humans can develop qualities that last forever: steadfastness and patience in the face of great adversity, as well as great humility and meekness. Most importantly, suffering causes people to turn towards God for help; it establishes and differentiates the true believers from the false ones.

Human beings tend to forget God when they are prosperous and only remember Him when afflicted with suffering. The Quran gives the example of a ship: when the ship is smooth sailing, then the occupants do not remember God, but when the wind threatens to capsize the ship, suddenly the occupants of the ship begin praying sincerely to God. The Quran says:

***“Your Lord is He that makes the ship go smoothly through the sea for you that you may seek of His Grace, for He is Most Merciful to you. When distress seizes you at sea, you cry to nobody save Him (God), but when He brings you back safely to the land, you turn away (from Him). Most ungrateful is man.” (Quran 17:66-67)***

This example can be applied to our day-to-day lives. A person may forget God when his financial situation is good, but if he were laid off from work, then suddenly he'd be invoking God for help. When Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) declared God's Message, it was the poor and the slaves who made up the bulk of his followers. The rich and prosperous leaders of Mecca, on the other hand, continued to live a life removed from God. It is well-known that rich people—such as actors, singers, and other celebrities—live the most ungodly of lives. Meanwhile, the meek and needy cling to God more. This means that suffering is not necessarily a bad thing, and prosperity is not necessarily a good thing. God says in the Quran:

***“But it may happen that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing which is bad for you. And God knows and you do not know!” (Quran 2:216)***

This is all a part of human psychology: we forget God in good times, and we remember Him during times of distress. So God afflicts us with trials and tribulations so that we may turn to Him and seek His Grace. How many countless people have turned to God and were guided to Islam after having been afflicted with suffering upon suffering? An example that comes to mind is of a well-meaning politician who intends to do good, but once he comes to power, the system corrupts him.

Soon, he starts giving and taking bribes; he begins to live the ungodly life of a rich politician, wasteful and extravagant. Then suddenly, God causes him to be arrested; the man loses all of his wealth, his wife leaves him, and he rots away in jail. Finally, after having pondered over his gains and losses, the man turns to God. So bad things happened to this man in order that a greater good could occur. When he was prosperous, he was heading towards Hell, but when God afflicted him with distress, the man changed his course; the temporary suffering of jail is indeed a small price to pay for the Eternal Bliss in Paradise. In conclusion, we see that God causes bad things to happen to good people, in order that a greater good come to them in the long run.

Another good that comes out of suffering is that the soul is purified through it. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) declared:

***“By the One in Whose Hand is my soul (i.e. God), no believer is stricken with fatigue, exhaustion, worry, or grief, but God will forgive him for some of his sins thereby—even a thorn which pricks him.” (Musnad Ahmad)***

Some people describe a feeling of heartburn when they grieve. On a physical level, that may just be gastro-esophageal reflux disease brought on by stress and anxiety, but on a symbolic level, it represents the spiritual heart burning away sins like a powerful furnace. When a believer is struck with suffering, then God expiates some of that person's sins as a mercy. As a consequence, that person will not be punished for those sins in the Hereafter and thereby will be pushed towards Paradise.

Perhaps a skeptic may wonder why God does not merely forgive His servants without afflicting them with suffering on this earth or in the Hereafter. The response to this is that God does in fact forgive any and all sins, so long as His servant comes to Him penitent and seeking His Grace and Forgiveness. Such a man that comes to God seeking forgiveness, God will forgive him without any penalty punishment, nor any retribution whatsoever. God will wipe away his sins as if they never occurred. According to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whoever turns to God asking for penitence will be forgiven “even if they (his sins) are (numerous) like the flecks of foam upon the ocean, as numerous as all the grains of sand, as heavy as the mountains, and as many as the drops of rain and the leaves on all the trees.”

God forgives those who seek His Forgiveness,

*Continued Page 6*

and this is because He loves those believers who humble themselves before Him, those who seek penitence from Him, and those whose hearts cry because they disobeyed Him. The Quran says:

***“Truly, God loves those who repent.”  
(Quran 2:222)***

But what of the one who sins and never seeks God's Forgiveness? What about the one who continues to sin without any plans to stop? God does not let all sins go unpunished because this would lead people to become negligent and wicked. The enforcement of punishment on these sinners is for their own benefit, just as a father's enforcement of punishment on his son is for the child's own benefit. For example, a six year old boy sticks his fingers in an electric socket. His father, fearful that the boy may electrocute himself, punishes him for that. A parent threatens to punish his child only as a benefit for the child, even though the recalcitrant child might be too immature to realize that the punishment stems from his father's love and concern. If the child puts his fingers into the electric socket, it will be he himself—not his father—who will be electrocuted. Likewise, if we sin, we do this to our own detriment, and the Glory of God is unaffected. The worldly punishment therefore is a means, not the ends; the goal of the punishment is not to punish, but rather to serve as a strong deterrent.

If a father is too lenient with his son and does not say anything when the child puts his fingers in the socket, then the boy will not realize the gravity of what he is doing. He will then keep sticking his finger in the socket until one day he will get electrocuted and die. Likewise, if God does not send affliction down upon His servants, they might not ever realize the error in their ungodly ways until they reach spiritual death. For example, the philandering husband may never realize that his indiscretions will one day lead to the breakdown of his family unit, the compulsive gambler might not realize that his addiction will lead to bankruptcy, and the alcoholic might not realize that his drinking will lead to a life of misery and emptiness. So God sends down upon these people punishments, in order not only to expiate them of their sins, but also to alert and awaken them to their detrimental ways.

Imagine the child who knows that his parents won't do anything if he is caught doing drugs. This would be parental negligence, and it would lead to the child harming himself without any fear of repercussions. Therefore, a responsible parent will establish certain guidelines so that the child knows

that if he takes drugs, then he will be grounded. This causes the child to stay away from drugs for fear of being punished. Similarly, the creation of Hellfire—though it is a punishment—is also a mercy to mankind; through the threat of it, God creates much good. Hell-Fire is a punishment that God threatens upon His servants, so that they may fear God and thereby obey Him; such people will then become spiritual, righteous, and rightly guided. This will not benefit God, but rather it will only benefit themselves. God has no need for them, but they have a need for God in their lives.

But God gives His servants many chances and warnings before He condemns them to Hellfire. An analogy of this is of a police officer, who catches a speeding motorist. The first time she (the motorist) is caught speeding, the police officer gives her a warning. The second time, the police officer fines her \$50. The third time, he gives her a hefty fine of \$300. The fourth time, she receives community service hours, and the next time her license will be suspended, etc. Again, the police officer does not stop the woman for his own good; rather, it is for the motorist's own good, so that she does not get into a traffic accident and harm herself. This is like God's methodology: He afflicts people with minor punishments in this worldly life, so that they might realize the error in their ways. In other words, God allows bad things to happen to good people so as to punish them for their sins; this punishment serves as a warning in order that they may correct themselves in this lifetime and thereby avoid punishment in the Hereafter. Surely a motorist would rather be fined \$50 as opposed to being locked up in jail. Likewise, a believer would rather be punished in this lifetime as opposed to being thrown into Hell-Fire in the next life.

What this means is that when a believer is struck with some sort of calamity, he should take comfort in the fact that his sins are being forgiven by God. He should know that God will compensate him for every woe and grievance, and God is Most Just! Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told us that God will compensate His servants for even the minor hurt that comes from a thorn which pricks the skin. A believer who is going through a difficult time should never be ungrateful to God, nor should he question God's justice, because God will compensate everyone in the next life. This is God's Promise to humanity. A believer who is aggrieved by trials and tribulations should take heart in the fact that he is one of God's chosen ones, whom God loves enough not to punish in Hell but rather whom



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Allah said:

For indeed, with  
hardship will be ease

Qur'an 94:5

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said,

*“No misfortune or disease befalls a Muslim, no worry or grief or harm or distress – not even a thorn that pricks him – but God will expiate for some of his sins because of that.”[3]*

The religion of Islam is primarily concerned with making and keeping a connection with the One God. One of the biggest mistakes that people can make is to separate their worldly life from their religious life. The stressful situations that cause us to despair and feel unconnected to God always originate in the affairs of this world, such as emotional issues, financial stress, substance abuse or health issues. Especially in this new century one of the most common reasons for despair is a sense of isolation or detachment from others.

God has promised us that He is well aware of the situations that we face and He has given us weapons with which to face them. In a series of articles on this site we discuss the weapons of patience, gratitude and trust.[4] However when it comes to despair, the condition that could in some situations lead a person to contemplate taking his or her own life, we need to dig a little deeper, we need to remind ourselves first and foremost that God is Merciful and that no matter what situation we find ourselves in He is ready to forgive and help.

God the most merciful, compassionate, and beneficent has instructed us to inculcate these attributes and treat each other with respect and fairness. This includes not leaving anyone alone with their problems and worries. A little bit of support and care might help someone avoid the sin of ending their own life. God also tells us not to mock, scorn, insult, abuse or put down one another.

*“O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one’s] faith. And whoever does not repent – then it is those who are the wrongdoers.” (Quran 49:11)*

Both God and Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, remind us that He will punish those of us who commit injustices or oppress others.

*“And whoever oppresses (commits injustice) among you, We will make him taste a great punishment.” (Quran 25:19)*

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said:

*“A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfills the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever covers the faults of a Muslim, Allah will cover his faults on the Day of Resurrection.”[5]*

Thus there is certainly a benefit in treating others well, especially in coming to the aid of friends or family members who are overwhelmed by life’s cruelties and injustices. However what of the people who feel alone, crushed by circumstance and are teetering on the edge of despair. How can a person suffering from suicidal thoughts bring themselves back from the brink?

This can be achieved in many ways; firstly by strengthening one’s relationship with God. This is achieved by reading the Quran, being mindful of Him and making lots of dua (supplication) to God. Next a person would do well to recognise Satan’s hand in this matter. He whispers frightening scenarios of poverty and helplessness. They are not true for God’s mercy conquers all. Cling to Him and to Islam even in the darkest hour and the longest night. Along with the weapons mentioned earlier God also gave us Prophet Muhammad, a mercy to all the worlds, to all the people. Trying to emulate him, this will make a despairing person calmer and closer to God.

If we are mindful that God has control over all things and that He ultimately wants us to live forever in Paradise, we can begin to leave our sadness and worry behind. If we face our fears and anxieties with complete trust in God and if we show patience and gratitude with all our circumstances, sadness and worry will disappear or at least feel lighter. Prophet Muhammad said: Indeed amazing are the affairs of a believer! They are all for his benefit. If he is granted ease then he is thankful, and this is good for him. And if he is afflicted with a hardship, he perseveres, and this is good for him.[6]

Footnotes:

[1] Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim

[2] As described by many noted Islamic scholars

[3] Saheeh Al-Bukhari

[4] <http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/3516/viewall/>

[5] Saheeh Al-Bukhari

[6] Saheeh Muslim

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## Why Does God Allow Suffering? - Continued

He wishes to purify in this life.

Another reason why God sends down trials and afflictions to people is so that they may be tested. The Quran declares:

***“Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, ‘We believe’, and that they will not be put to the test?” (Quran 29:2)***

This concept can be clearly understood if we take the analogy of marriage. A man might love and be loyal to his wife during good times, but when things become difficult, he might abandon her. For example, if she is young and beautiful, he will adore her; but if she gets cancer and thereby loses her physical beauty, the same man might abandon her. This shows that in reality he did not really love her. Similarly, a man should love God and obey Him in not only good times, but also trying times. Hypocrites might call to God’s Way when the weather is good, but as soon as the storm brews, they abandon their faith in God.

For example, during the time of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, there were many hypocrites who converted to Islam when it was beneficial for them to do so. In doing so, they were able to secure powerful positions in the Islamic government. But as soon as the going got rough, they began showing disbelief, even after they had claimed to believe; when a powerful enemy threatened to destroy the fledgling Islamic city-state, the hypocrites abandoned their faith. The enemies of Islam persecuted the early Muslims, torturing them, boycotting them, and even killing them. This really differentiated the true believers from the false ones; the true believers would stay true to God, even in the time of great adversity. Therefore, God tests the people, to differentiate the true believers from the hypocrites. God says:

***“Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, ‘We believe’, and that they will not be put to the test? And certainly We tested those before them, so that God will expose those who are true from those who are false.” (Quran 29:2-3)***

This idea is repeated in numerous verses in the Quran, such as:

***“God will not leave the believers in the state in which you are now, until He shall separate the wicked from the good.” (Quran 3:179)***

God’s Messenger promised his followers that by becoming Muslim, they would attain success. When the powerful enemy almost overwhelmed the

Muslim defenders, the hypocrites began to question the promise of the Messenger of God; they even began to question the All-Powerful nature of God. The Quran says:

***“Behold! They (the enemy soldiers) came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes (of the hypocrites) grew terrified and the hearts rose up to the throats, and you began to think unbefitting thoughts concerning God...And behold! The hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease began to say: ‘God and His Messenger promised us (victory) only to deceive.’” (Quran 33:10-12)***

The calamity made the hypocrites expose their disbelief, whereas it only made the true believers even more absolute in their faith. The Quran says of them:

***“When the believers saw the Confederate forces...it only added to their faith and their zeal in obedience.” (Quran 33:22)***

Therefore, God puts people to the test, to differentiate between the true from the false. Indeed, how can the worth of an object be ascertained unless it is put to the test? An automobile maker will test its cars to see how fast they can go and to see what type of crash they can withstand. Likewise, God puts His creations to the test, to see how faithful they will be, and to see if they will remain so when He causes them to crash. Will they fold up like a beat up lemon? Or will they be like the high-end car that can withstand much? God says:

***“And We shall certainly test you, until We know those of you who strive their utmost (for God) and who are the steadfast; and We shall test your reported mettle.” (Quran 47:31)***

Adversity and afflictions are actually a heavenly mercy, because they give the believers a chance to earn good deeds, by being patient and loyal to God. By passing the test that God puts them through, these believers open up the way for entrance into Paradise (i.e. Heaven). God says:

***“Or do you expect to enter Paradise without facing such trials as did those before you?” (Quran 2:214)***

And so people are tested with various trials and afflictions; poverty, hunger, fear, etc. are all various forms of God’s test. Even the loss of loved ones is one such trial. When the ungrateful one loses a loved one, he becomes bitter against God, challenging God as to why He caused his loved one to die. But the grateful believer will remain patient

*Continued Page 12*

# “Where is God?”

Some religions teach that “God is everywhere.” This is actually called “pantheism” and it is the opposite of our belief system in Islam. God tells us clearly that there is nothing, anywhere in the universe that resembles Him, nor is He ever in His creation. He tells us in the Quran that He created the universe in six days (the length of these days is unknown) and then He rose up, above His Throne. He is there (above His Throne) and will remain there until the End Times.

## “If God created everything - Then who created God?”

According to the Quran, God tells us that He is the only creator and sustainer of all that exists and that nothing and no one exists alongside Him, nor does He have any partners. He tells us that He is not created, nor is He like His creation in anyway. He calls Himself by a number of names and three of them are:

- A) *The First - (Al-Awal)*
- B) *The Last - (Al-Akhir)*
- C) *The Eternal, who is sought after by His creation, while He has no need from them at all. (As-Samad)*

He always has existed and He never was created, as He is not like His creation, nor similar to it, in any way.

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Muslims, too, await the second coming of Jesus. They consider him one of the greatest of God’s prophets to mankind.

# “If there is only one God, then why are there so many religions?”

God does not force anyone to submit to Him. He has laid out a clear path and then made it known to them the two ways (Heaven or Hell). The person is always free to make his or her own choice. There is no compulsion in the way of “Islam.” Whoever chooses to worship God without partners and is devoted to Him and is obeying His commands as much as possible, has grasped the firm hand hold that will never break. Whoever denies God and chooses some other way to worship or not to believe at all, for them there is an eternal punishment that is most horrible (Hell).

All religions originated with God and then people began to add or take away from the teachings so as to take control over each other. Man made religions are an abomination before the Lord and will never be accepted. He will only accept true submission, obedience and in purity and peace to His commandments.

## Crucifixion of Jesus Christ

The Biblical stories reproduced in Qur’an (e.g., Job, Moses, Joseph etc.) and the episodes relating to the history of the beginning of Muhammad’s Prophethood demonstrate that it is “God’s practice” to make faith triumph over the forces of evil and adversity.

*“So truly with hardship comes ease.”*

For Jesus to die on the cross would have meant the triumph of his executioners; but the Quran asserts that they undoubtedly failed: “Assuredly God will defend those who believe”; He confounds the plots of the enemies of Christ.

*“Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah .” And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.”*

*-- Qur’aan 4:157-158*

# What do Muslims Think About Jesus?

Muslims respect and revere Jesus, 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.' The 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, honored 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. -- Qura'n 3:42-7

Jesus was born miraculously through the same power which had brought Adam into being without a father:

*Truly, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. -- Qur'an 3:59*

During his prophetic mission Jesus performed many miracles. The Qur'an tells us that he said:

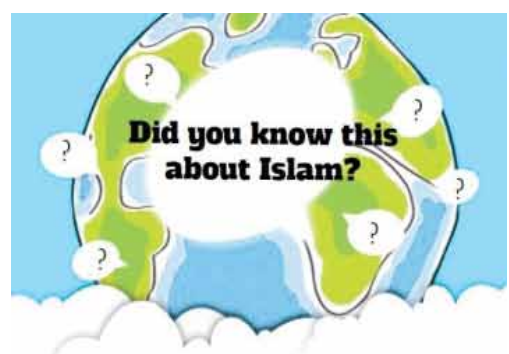
*I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it and it becomes a bird by God's leave. And I heal the blind, and the lepers -- Qur'an 3:49*

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

*To attest the law which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden 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 said:

*Whoever believes there is no god but God, alone without partner, that Muhammad is His messenger, that Jesus 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, shall be received -- Hadith from Bukhari*



## the crescent & star



is NOT a symbol of Islam. During the 19th century, it represented the Ottoman Empire. The same symbol was used in other national flags introduced during the 20th century, including the flags of Pakistan (1949), Malaysia (1948), Mauritania (1959) and others.



## means:

'the worshipped One' - One supreme being, One Creator.



## means:

anyone or anything that submits itself to the will of Allah



## means:

peace through the submission to 'Allah'

Jihad does NOT mean "Holy War" - It means to strive and struggle in trying to submit their will to the will of Allah



Muhammed was NOT the founder of Islam. Islam is the religion revealed to all Prophets of Allah - like Jesus, Moses and Abraham (peace be upon them all)



Muslims do NOT worship the "black box" (Kabah). It serves as a focal and unifying point among the Muslim people



By: Khalid Aleker  
N.B: Any good from this Islamographic is from ALLAH, the mistakes are my own

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*Why Does God Allow Suffering? - Continued*  
and submit his will totally to God, and in this way, God differentiates the true from the false. God says:

***“We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger, and the loss of wealth and lives and the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere, who say—when afflicted with calamity—“To God We belong, and to Him we shall return!” They are on those whom descend blessings from their Lord, and Mercy. Such are the rightly guided.” (Quran 2:155-157)***

It is not necessary that calamity is the only way God tests us. God’s testing may also be in the form of blessings, wealth, health, children, family, and the like. What the people do with such blessings is indeed a great test. Many celebrities and rich people are given great wealth, fame, and material goods, but they are not grateful to God for that, and instead live their lives in sin and wickedness. God says:

***“And know that your (worldly) possessions and your children are but a test, and that it is with God with Whom lies your highest reward.” (Quran 8:28)***

Therefore, we see that God tests the people through both adversity as well as blessing; but regardless of the type of test, the believers are those who remain grateful to God. The Quran declares:

***“You shall certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your lives; and you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you...But if you patiently persevere and be pious, then surely this will be of great resolution.” (Quran 3:186)***

In conclusion, when calamity befalls a believer, he should know that in it is much good, even if it is not apparent at first. Through affliction are sins expiated and souls purified; through trials are the steadfast tried by God, and only the resolute will be successful. It is upon these that God will bestow goodness in due time, either in this life or the life after death. God says:

***“And none shall be granted such goodness, except those who are steadfast.” (Quran 41:35)***

When calamity strikes us, we should take pride in the fact that we are similar to the righteous servants of God, of whom were the Prophets; all of them were put through trials and tests. Prophet Abraham and his son, peace be upon them, were both tested in a most severe way. God commanded Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son, Ismail, peace be upon them. This command no doubt would have

been very difficult for Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, and he no doubt would have been very saddened by the thought of losing his loved one. But Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, patiently persevered and obeyed God. Not only this, but even Ismail, peace be upon him, remained steadfast and obedient and offered himself to be sacrificed.

This test that God put Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, through was to test his determination. If Prophet Abraham or his son, peace be upon them, had been weak in faith, they would have both failed this severe test God rewarded them with a great reward on account of their strong faith and obedience to Him; right before Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, struck his son, a ram appeared and God told him to sacrifice it instead. As a reward, God promised to establish them as leaders on earth. God says of Prophet Abraham and his son, peace be upon them:

***“So when they had both submitted their wills (to God), and he (Abraham) had laid him (his son) down on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out unto him, saying: “O Abraham! You have indeed fulfilled the vision.” Thus, indeed do we reward the doers of good. Most surely, this was a clear test.” (Quran 37:103-106)***

The Quran says:

***“And remember that Abraham was tested by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled. He (God) said: ‘I will make you a leader to the nations.’” (Quran 2:124)***

No doubt when Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, was instructed to sacrifice his son, he might have been reluctant in that regard, but he did it out of obedience to God Almighty. This goes to say that even if one may dislike something there may be good in it. God says:

***“And it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. God knows and you do not know.” (Quran 2:216)***

Another example that comes to mind is that of Prophet Joseph, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. The Quran mentions many details of the trials and tribulations he faced in his life. His father loved him a great deal, which made his brothers very jealous of him. They conspired against him, and finally dumped him in a deep well. A company of travelers passed by the well, and one of them let down his bucket. He said, “Good news! Here is a boy.” And they took him as merchandise. With this, Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, was

sent to the far off land of Egypt as a slave. An Egyptian governor bought him, and Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, dutifully toiled away. As he was in the service of the governor, the test intensified, the governor's wife, who was very beautiful, tried to seduce Joseph. This was a great trial for Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, and he resisted her advances with steadfast perseverance. One day, the governor's wife ran after Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, so to seduce him by force, and she tore his shirt, whereupon her husband entered the room. She accused Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, of rape but Joseph denied it, and when the governor saw his shirt torn from the back, he asked his wife to repent to God Almighty. She schemed and came up with a plot to have Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him; she gave him one of two choices, to either approach her or to be thrown in prison. He chose the second and was put in prison for a period of time.

When we are struck with calamities, we should think of all the trials Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, went through: years of slavery and imprisonment. Yet, through it all, Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, remained steadfast to God. He never resented the calamities that had befallen him, but instead used the time to invoke his Lord. It was then—finally, after many years—that God rewarded Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, for his steadfastness. It was in that same jail cell that he met a man who had a dream; God gave Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, the gift of being able to interpret dreams. And so Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, interpreted his cellmate's dream, telling him that he (the cellmate) would go free and work

for the king. Indeed, the prophecy came true and the man did go free to work for the king.


One day, the king had a dream. The story is narrated in the Quran:

***“And the king of Egypt said: ‘Verily, I saw in a dream seven fat cows, whom seven lean cows were devouring, and seven green ears of corn and seven others dry. O notables! Explain to me my dream if it be that you can interpret dreams.’” (Quran 12:43)***

Prophet Joseph's ex-cellmate, who was now in the service of the Egyptian king, immediately remembered Joseph. He informed the king about Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, and so Joseph was asked to interpret the dream, which he did. Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, told the king that there would be seven years of good harvest, after which would follow seven years of drought and famine. He advised the king to store up food during the seven years of prosperity, which could be used during the times of drought and famine.

The king was so pleased by Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, that he not only set him free but appointed him to a very high position in the government. And so God established a great deal of good through adversity; had Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, never been abandoned in the well by his brothers, nor sold into slavery, nor imprisoned wrongfully, he would never have been found by the king and appointed to a position of such great authority. Indeed, Prophet Joseph, peace be upon him, had to go through all that tribulation in order to attain that rank. Therefore, when we go through

*Continued Page 14*



“No Muslim is afflicted with harm because of sickness or some other inconvenience,

but that Allah will remove his sins for him as a tree sheds its leaves.”

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difficult times in life, we should be positive. It may be that God is propelling us to a greater good which may be unknown to us at that moment.

Prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, was also tested, although in a different way. He was given immense wealth and power; history attests to the fact that wealth and power corrupts. Yet, Prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, was one of the few kings who remained pious and God-fearing. The Quran says:

**“And certainly we tested Solomon...and he (Solomon) turned (to God).” (Quran 38:34)**

Indeed, all of God’s prophets were tested; this shows that God bestows trials upon His righteous servants, and we should feel proud to be in their company. We should also emulate their behavior, which was to remain steadfast in times of tribulation.

All of what has been stated in this article is extremely interesting, but it all boils down to the following question: how should we deal with grief when a calamity strikes? Every person on earth will face some grief in his life, and some more than others. People deal with grief in different ways, but how should a believer deal with it?

The first thing that a believer should realize is that the calamity is from God. The Quran declares:

**“All things (good and bad) are from God.” (Quran 4:78)**

Once we realize that it is from God, we should realize that God is the Most Loving (Al-Wadud) and the Most Kind (Al-Barr). Therefore, there is some good in whatever God has decreed for us, even if we do not immediately see what it is. God Almighty says:

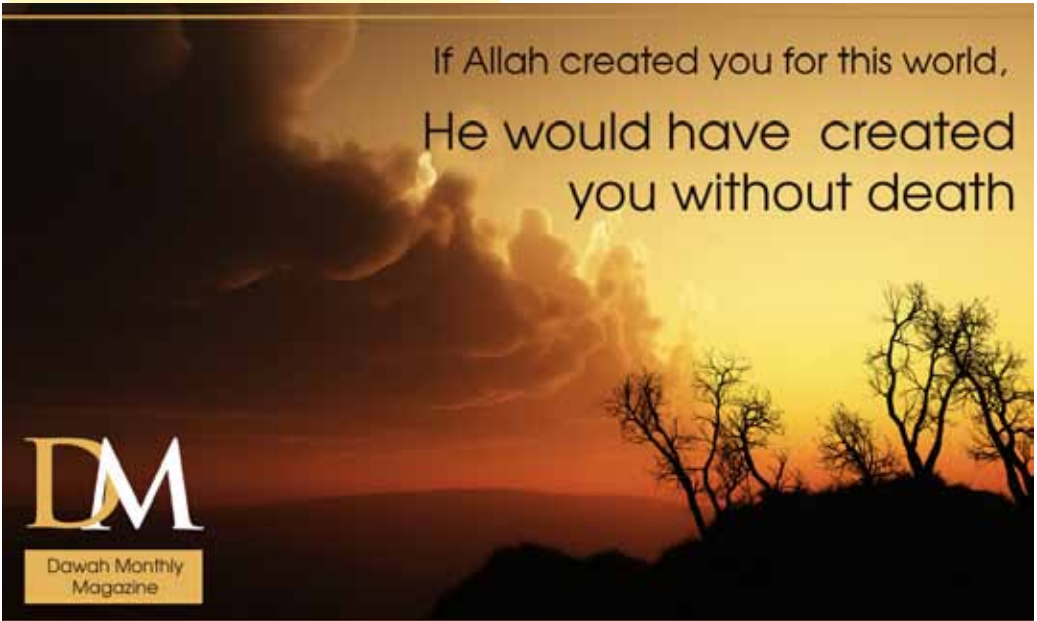
**“Perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.” (Quran 2:216)**

Imam Hasan al-Basri, a great scholar of Islam, said:

*“Do not resent the calamities that come and the disasters that occur; perhaps in something that you dislike will be your salvation, and perhaps in something that you prefer will be your doom.”*

For example, if a man is laid off, perhaps it will be a means to securing an even better job, which he might not have opted for had he not been fired in the first place. One of the benefits of calamity that we know about for sure is the fact that a person’s sins are forgiven by the will of God. Mus’ab b. Sa’d b. Malik narrated that his father said:

*“O Messenger of Allah, who are the most tested and tried people in this world? He answered: ‘The Prophets, and then who are similar to them (i.e. the god-fearing and pious). A man would be tested and tried according to his piety and faith. If the individual has strong faith, he would be tested and tried in a severer manner; similarly, if the man’s*



If Allah created you for this world,  
He would have created  
you without death

faith is weak, he would be tested accordingly. A person would be struck by calamities until he is sin-free." (Ibn Hibban #2901)

Fadl ibn Sahl said:

*"There is a blessing in calamity that the wise man should not ignore, for it [calamity] erases sins, gives one the opportunity to attain the reward for patience, dispels negligence, reminds one of blessings at the time of health, calls one to repent, and encourages one to give charity."*

The believer should turn to God when a calamity strikes. In this way, the calamity reminds the believer that his only purpose in life—the reason for his creation—is to worship God alone. This is in fact the meaning of our existence and the purpose of our life. God says in the Quran:

***"I created the jinn and humankind only to worship Me." (Quran 51:56)***

Oftentimes, when life is good and man is living in prosperity, he forgets to worship his Lord. It is only when calamity strikes that he remembers to invoke God. So, in this way, a calamity serves as a reminder to fulfill the purpose for which we were created. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said:

*"A calamity that makes you turn to God is better for you than a blessing which makes you forget the remembrance of God."*

Imam as-Sufyan said:

*"What a person dislikes may be better for him than what he likes, because what he dislikes causes him to call upon God, whereas what he likes may make him heedless (of worship)."*

Therefore, whenever calamity strikes, we should show our gratitude to God by saying "All praise is due to God" (Al-Hamdu Lillah). Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, commented:

*"How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him." (Sahih Muslim)*

When Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah was wrongfully imprisoned, he regarded it as a blessing that his enemies had enabled for him. Shaykh al-Islam used that time to increase his worship of God. He said:

*"What can my enemies do to me? ... My imprisonment is a religious retreat (an opportunity to worship God), my being killed is martyrdom, and my being expelled from my city is a journey."*

Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said:

*"There is no Muslim who is stricken with a calamity and (then) says what God has enjoined (to say): 'Verily, to God we belong and unto Him is our return; O God, reward me for my affliction and compensate me with something better' but God will compensate him with something better." (Sahih Muslim)*

We should remember that God tests those whom He loves most. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

*"The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When God loves a people, He tests them. Whoever accepts this, wins His Pleasure." (Al-Tirmidhi)*

And the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said further:

*"The path to Paradise is surrounded with difficulties."*

Calamity and grief is a way of having our sins forgiven in this life, so that we won't have to face the punishment for these sins in the next life. Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said:

*"Trials will continue to befall the believing man and woman—with regard to themselves, their children, and their wealth—until they meet God with no sin on them." (Al-Tirmidhi)*

God does not send calamity down upon us in order to destroy us, nor to shatter our will, nor to finish us off, but rather as a means of checking on us, to test our patience and faith. If it were not for trials and tribulations, a person would develop arrogance, heedlessness, and hardheartedness, which would lead him to the pits of Hell. So it is indeed a Mercy of God that He sends down upon us this remedy to cure us of these diseases of the heart, and to eliminate all evil elements in our personality that might lead to our doom.

When some calamity strikes us in this life, we should remember that God will recompense us, but we must show patience; the ultimate recompense will not even be in this life, but in the next one, and in this, we should take comfort. Abu Sufyan lost his eye in battle whilst defending the Muslims; he asked the Prophet to pray to God that he (Abu Sufyan) get his eyesight back. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, asked him if he would rather have his eye in this life or the next, and Abu Sufyan responded that he would rather have the recompense in the next life. Abu Sufyan would in fact go on to lose his other eye as well.

God says:

***"We shower Our Mercy upon whomever We will, and We never fail to recompense the righteous. Additionally, the reward in the Hereafter is even better for those who believe and lead a righteous life." (Quran 12:56-57)***

A believer must never despair in God's Mercy; he should not think that God will not get him out of this rut. In fact, the name of Satan in Arabic (Iblis) comes from the root word *ablasa*, which means "to despair". A certain calamity hit Satan (he was "demoted" when Prophet Adam was created); instead of thinking that this was something good from God, Satan despaired of God's Mercy, and thereupon began his hedonistic lifestyle. Likewise, when calamity strikes some people, they resort to booze and other sinful devices to ebb their pain. But the believers do not fall into despair, but rather they turn to God in worship. God reassures His creation:

***"By the Glorious Morning Light, and by the Night when it is still! The Guardian-Lord has not forsaken you nor does He hate you. And verily the Hereafter will be better for you than the present. And soon will your Guardian-Lord give you that wherewith you shall be well-pleased." (Quran 93:1-5)***

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# The Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon

This sermon was delivered on the Ninth Day of Dhul Hijjah 10 A.H. in the 'Uranah valley of Mount Arafat' (in Mecca).

After praising, and thanking Allah he said:

*“O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.*

*O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds. ALLAH has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn 'Abd'al Muttalib (Prophet's uncle) shall henceforth be waived...*

*Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.*

*O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your*

*women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.*

*O People, listen to me in earnest, worship ALLAH, say your five daily prayers (Salah), fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat (charity). Perform Hajj if you can afford to.*

*All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white; except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.*

*Remember, one day you will appear before ALLAH and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.*

*O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QURAN and my example, the SUNNAH and if you follow these you will never go astray.*

*All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people”.*

For Questions about Islam, Comments, Suggestions or other inquiries about this publication please contact: [Editor@DawahMonthly.com](mailto:Editor@DawahMonthly.com)

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