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Every Sinner has a Future; Every Pious Person has a Past.

The Forgiveness of Sins in This Month's Issue




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AS IT IS FULFILMENT OF A DIVINE OBLIGATION AND IT IS A PATH TO PARADISE ACCORDING TO THE PROPHET ﷺ HIMSELF.

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Back To Basics

The "Who, What, Where,
When & Why" of Islam

Real Happiness and Inner Peace

Real happiness and peace can be found in submitting to the commands of the Creator and the Sustainer of this world. God has said in the Quran:

“Truly, in remembering God do hearts find rest.” (Quran 13:28)

On the other hand, the one who turns away from the Quran will have a life of hardship in this world. God has said:

“But whoever turns away from the Quran, he will have a hard life,

and We will raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.” (Quran 20:124)

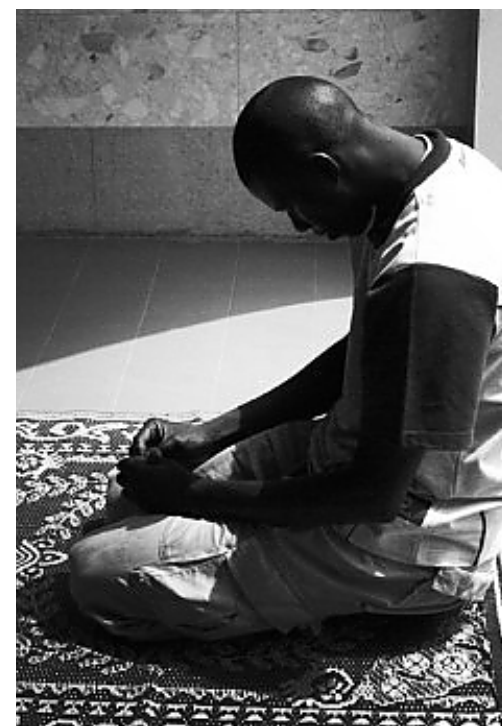
This may explain why some people commit suicide while they enjoy the material comfort money can buy. For example, look at Cat Stevens (now Yusuf Islam), formerly a famous pop singer who used to earn sometimes more than \$150,000 a night. After he converted to Islam, he found true happiness and peace, which he had not found in material success

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Forgiveness for All Previous Sins

When someone converts to Islam, God forgives all of his previous sins and evil deeds. A man called Amr came to the Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and said, “Give me your right hand so that I may give you my pledge of loyalty.” The Prophet stretched out his right hand. Amr withdrew his hand. The Prophet said: “What has happened to you, O Amr?” He replied, “I intend to lay down a condition.” The Prophet asked: “What condition do you intend to put forward?” Amr said, “That God forgive my sins.” The Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said: “Didn’t you know that converting to Islam erases all previous sins?”

After converting to Islam, the person will be rewarded for his or her good and bad deeds according to the following saying of the Prophet Muhammad: “Your Lord, Who is blessed and exalted, is most merciful. If someone intends to do a good deed but does not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him. And if he does do



it, (a reward of) ten to seven hundred or many more times (the reward of the good deed), will be recorded for him. And if someone intends to do a bad deed but does not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him. And if he does do it, a bad deed will be recorded against him or God will wipe it out.”

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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?

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 18% 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.

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.

How Does Someone Become Muslim?

Simply by saying 'there is no god apart from God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.' By this declaration the believer announces his or her faith in all God's messengers, and the scriptures they brought.

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Why Does Islam Seem Strange?

Islam may seem exotic or even extreme in the modern world. Perhaps this is because religion does not dominate everyday life in the West today, whereas Muslims have religion always uppermost in their minds, and make no division between secular and sacred. They believe that the Divine Law, the Shari'a, should be taken very seriously, which is why issues related to religion are still so important.

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.

What is the Ka'abah?

The Ka'abah is the place of worship which God commanded Abraham and Ishmael to build over four thousand years ago. The building was constructed of stone on what many believe was the original site of a sanctuary established by Adam. God commanded Abraham to summon all mankind to visit this place, and when pilgrims go there today they say 'At Thy service, O Lord', in response to Abraham's summons.

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Forgiveness of Sins

by Aisha Stacey
www.IslamReligion.com



“O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of God: verily, God forgives all sins. Truly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Quran 39:53)

God did not create humankind for any purpose other than to worship Him. However being human makes us frail and forgetful while at the same time our humanity often causes us to become full of our own importance; proud and arrogant. Arrogance in turn often causes us to commit sins, and our forgetfulness often causes us to make mistakes that can easily lead to sinful behavior. God knows us well, He is our Creator. He has not abandoned us to our own imperfect nature; He has provided us with innumerable opportunities to turn to Him for forgiveness. In fact God loves that we feel remorse, and turn to Him seeking His forgiveness and comfort. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said to his companions, and to all those who follow them in righteousness, “If you did not commit sins, God would replace you with

other people who would commit sins, and ask for God’s forgiveness, and He would forgive them.” This is not an encouragement to sin, but demonstrates the infinite Mercy of God.

The door to forgiveness is always open

God, in His infinite wisdom has made seeking forgiveness easy. If we were not able to seek and obtain God’s forgiveness we would indeed be miserable people, full of despair and self-loathing. It is for this reason that there are no transgressions too big or sins too small that God will not forgive. All sins are forgivable and the door to forgiveness is wide open almost until the Day of Judgement is upon us.

“And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith to your Lord and submit to Him, before the torment comes upon you, then you will not be helped.” (Quran 39:54)

When God sees the sincere repentance from one of the believers – a person who truly turns God with both fear and hope – He not only forgives the sin, but He replaces the sins with rewardable good deeds. This is from God’s infinite mercy.

“Except those who repent and believe

and do righteous deeds; for those, God will change their sins into good deeds, and God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Quran 25:70)

God also forgives us our sins through the difficulties that we face in our lives. When we are stricken with illness or suffering from unfavourable circumstances, we will earn forgiveness if we bear our difficulties patiently, all the time seeking a reward from God.

Major and minor sins

Disobeying God is always a serious matter; however the scholars of Islam have divided sins into major and minor categories. Major sins are those sins that entail Allah’s curse or incur His wrath or are tied with the threat of punishment of Hell, which includes the sin of worshipping something other than God, which is the most grievous act a human being can commit. Other major sins include murder, sorcery and adultery. Minor sins are defined as acts that are displeasing to God but have no defined punishment mentioned in either the Quran or the authentic traditions. However they are not to be taken lightly because minor sins can easily lead on to major sins and God warned us to take minor sins seriously when He says, ***“...you counted it a little thing, while with God it was very great.” (Quran24:15)***

Prophet Muhammad advised us that, ***“Righteousness is in good character and morality, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in your soul, and which you dislike people finding out about.”***

Obtaining God’s forgiveness is easy

As mentioned before, sincere repentance is able to wipe out a person’s sins, forever and completely. It involves showing genuine remorse, praying for God’s mercy and forgiveness, and avoiding that sin in the future. In addition to this, God has also given us other ways in which to wipe the slate clean so that a person may begin again in the eyes of God, as if he or she was a new born baby.

These acts include a nonbeliever embracing Islam, and a person performing an accepted pilgrimage (Haji) to the House of God in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

“Say to those who have disbelieved [that] if they cease, what has previously occurred will be forgiven for them...” (Quran 8:38)

Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said, ***“Do you***

not know that accepting Islam destroys all sins which come before it?”

“Whoever performs Hajj for God’s pleasure and does not have sexual relations with his wife, and does not do evil or sins then he will return (after Hajj free from all sins) as if he were born anew.”

As for minor sins, God mercy is so complete that he forgives us our sins even as we perform obligatory acts. From the traditions of Prophet Muhammad we find several sayings that attest to this fact.

“He who performs ablution well, his sins will come out from his body, even from under his nails.”

“When the time for a prescribed prayer comes, if any believer performs ablution well and offers his prayer with humility and bowing, it will be an expiation for his past sins, so long as he has not committed a major sin; and this applies for all times.”

“... if he performs ablution completely and then goes to the mosque with the sole intention of performing the prayer, and nothing urges him to proceed to the mosque except the prayer, then, on every step which he takes towards the mosque, he will be raised one degree or one of his sins will be forgiven...”

“Whoever fasted the month of Ramadan out of sincere Faith (i.e. belief) hoping for a reward from God, then all his past sins will be forgiven.”

Sins can also be forgiven by performing good deeds, again though we must strive to do these deeds completely for the sake of God not for some worldly reward. ***“...Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (small sins). This is a reminder for the mindful (those who accept advice).” (Quran 11:114)***

God has made it easy for us to seek and obtain His forgiveness however it does not come automatically; one must seek God’s forgiveness sincerely, knowing that it is only through God’s supreme mercy that anyone will enter Paradise. Prophet Muhammad said, “Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately, and rejoice, for no one’s good deeds will put him in Paradise.” His companions asked, “Not even you, O Messenger of God?” He replied, “Not even me, unless God bestows His pardon and mercy upon me.”

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: *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*

Examples of Sayings of Prophet Muhammad

'God has no mercy on one who has no mercy for others'

'None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself'.

'He who eats his fill while his neighbor goes without food is not a believer'.

'The truthful and trusty businessman is associated with the prophets, the saints, and the martyrs'.

'Powerful is not he who knocks the other down, indeed powerful is he who controls himself in a fit of anger'.

'God does not judge according to your bodies and appearances but He scans your hearts and looks into your deeds'.

'A man walking along a path felt very thirsty. Reaching a well he descended into it, drank his fill and came up. Then he saw a dog with its tongue hanging out, trying to lick up mud to quench its thirst. The man saw that the dog was feeling the same thirst as he had felt so he went down into the well again and filled his shoe with water and gave the dog a drink. God forgave his sins for this action'. The Prophet was asked: 'Messenger of God, are we rewarded for kindness towards animals?' He said, 'There is a reward for kindness to every living thing'.

The Quran Mentions

25

PROPHETS

most of whom are mentioned in the Bible as well.

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1. Adam
2. Idris (Enoch)
3. Nuh (Noah)
4. Hud
5. Salih
6. Ibrahim (Abraham)
7. Isma'il (Ishmael)
8. Ishaq (Isaac)
9. Lutf (Lot)
10. Ya'qub (Jacob)
11. Yusuf (Joseph)
12. Shu'ayb
13. Ayyub (Job)
14. Musa (Moses)
15. Harun (Aaron)
16. Dhu'l-kifl (Ezekiel)
17. Dawud (David)
18. Sulaiman (Solomon)
19. Ilyas (Elijah)
20. Al-Yasa (Elisha)
21. Yunus (Jonah)
22. Zakariyya (Zechariah)
23. Yahya (John)
24. Isa (Jesus)
25. Muhammad

Your deen is not complete unless you follow and obey the sunnah. In the Quran (ayat 59:7) Allah SWT says

“ TAKE WHAT THE MESSENGER BRINGS YOU. ”

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Who is Muhammad?

Muhammad was born in Makkah in the year 570, at a time when Christianity was not yet fully established in Europe. 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 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 the summit of Jaba al-Nur, the 'Mountain of Light' near Makkah.

How Did He Become a Prophet & Messenger of God?

At the age of 40, while engaged in a meditative retreat, Muhammad received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel. This revelation, which continued for twenty-three years, is known as the 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 Madinah some 260 miles to the north, 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.

How Did The Spread of Islam Affect The World?

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, 'seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman'. 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.

What Is The Qur'an?

The Qur'an is a record of the exact words revealed by God through the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad. It was memorized by Muhammad and then dictated to his Companions, and written down by scribes, who cross-checked it during his lifetime.

Not one word of its 114 chapters, Suras, has been changed over the centuries, so that the Qur'an is in every detail the unique and miraculous text which was revealed to Muhammad fourteen centuries ago.

What Is The Qur'an About?

The Qur'an, the last revealed Word of God, is the prime source of every Muslim's faith and practice. It deals with all the subjects which concern us as human beings: wisdom, doctrine, worship, and law, but its basic theme is the relationship between God and His creatures. At the same time it provides guidelines for a just society, proper human conduct and an equitable economic system.

Are There Any Other Sacred Sources?

Yes, the Sunna, the practice and example of the Prophet, is the second authority for Muslims. A Hadith is a reliably transmitted report of what the Prophet said, did, or approved. Belief in the Sunna is part of the Islamic faith.



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”.

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