

The Most Frequently Asked Questions About Islam

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WHAT IS ISLAAM?

The word "Islaam" means peace attained through submission ; to be at peace with yourself and your surroundings by submitting to God and obeying his commandments. This is a unique religion with a name which signifies a moral attitude and a way of life. Judaism takes its name from the tribe Juda, Christianity from Jesus Christ, Buddhism from Goutam Buddha and Hinduism from Indus River. However , those who accept Islaam and submit to God are not called "Muhammadans" after Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) the last Prophet of God; they are called Muslims.

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WHO IS ALLAAH?

Allaah is the Arabic word for "one God", the same as Eloh in Armaic. Allaah is not God of Muslims only. He is God of all creations, because He is their Creator and Sustainer.

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WHO IS A MUSLIM?

The word "Muslim" means one who submits to the will of God. This is done by declaring that "There is no God except one God and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) is the messenger of God." In a broader sense, anyone who willingly submits to the will of God is a Muslim, thus all Prophets preceding the Prophet Muhammad(Peace and blessings of God be upon him) were Muslims. The Quraan specifically mentions Abraham who lived long before Moses and Christ that, "He was not a Jew or a Christian but a Muslim," because, he had submitted to the will of God. Thus there are Muslims who are not submitting at all to the will of God and there are Muslims who are doing their best to live an Islaamic life. One cannot judge Islaam by looking at those Muslims who have a Muslim name but in their actions, they are not living or behaving as Muslims. The state of being a Muslim depends upon the degree to which one is submitting to the will of God, in his

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beliefs and his actions.

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WHO WAS MUHAMMAD? (Peace and blessings of God be upon him)

In brief, Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) was born in a noble tribe of Mekkah in Arabia in the year 570 CE. His ancestry goes back to Prophet Ishmael (Peace be upon him), son of Prophet Abraham (Peace be upon him). His father died before his birth and his mother died when he was six years old. He did not attend any formal school. He was raised first by a nurse as it was a custom in those days, then by his grandfather and then by his uncle. As a young man, he was known as a righteous person who used to meditate in a cave. At age 40, he was given the Prophethood by God through angel, Gabriel, who appeared to Him in the cave of Hira, in Mekkah. Subsequently, revelations were received by Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon Him) for a period of 23 years. This book of revelations is called the Quraan. The Quraan has been preserved, unchanged, in its original form and confirms the truth in the Torah, the psalms and the Gospel. Quraan is the only scripture in existence today in its original Arabic text. All the earlier Divine Scriptures were entrusted by God to His messengers, to guard them and after the physical death of the Messengers, their followers were entrusted to guard them. However the followers failed in their duties therefore each subsequent Divine Scripture corrected the previous one. God has confirmed in the Holy Quraan firstly that this is His last and final revelation to mankind and secondly that He Himself will guard it till the Day of Judgment.

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DO MUSLIMS WORSHIP MUHAMMAD? (Peace and blessings of God be upon him)

No. Muslims do not worship Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) or any other Prophets. Muslims believe in all Prophets including Aadam, Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, Moses, and Jesus. Muslims believe that Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) was the last of the Prophets. They believe that only God is to be worshipped, not human beings or anything else.

WHAT DO MUSLIMS THINK OF JESUS?

Muslims think highly of Jesus (Peace be upon him) and his worthy mother, Mary. The Quraan tells us that Jesus was born of a miraculous birth without a father. "Lo! The likeliness of Jesus with Allaah is the likeliness of Aadam. He created him of dust, and then he said unto him: Be and he is" (Quran 3,59). He was given many miracles as a Prophet. These include speaking soon after birth in defense of his mother's piety. God's other gift to him included healing the blind and the sick, reviving the dead, making a live bird out of clay and most

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importantly, the message he was carrying. These miracles were given to him by God to establish him as a Prophet. According to the Quraan, he was not crucified but raised bodily into Heaven. (Quraan, Chapter Maryam)

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DO MUSLIMS HAVE SECTS?

Yes. However Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) has stated clearly that only those who follow the injunctions of the Holy Quraan and his practices called Sunnah will be considered to be Muslims: they are known as Sunni.

WHAT ARE THE PILLARS OF ISLAAM?

These pillars are (1) the Belief (Eemaan) that there is no God worthy of worship but Allaah and that Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) is his Messenger. (2) Prescribed prayers (SALAAT) which are five times a day, (3) Fasting (SIYAAM) once a year, during the whole month of Ramadaan, (4) Charity (ZAKAAT) which is paid to the poor and needy once every year. (5) HAJJ which is the pilgrimage to Mekkah once in a lifetime if one can afford it physically and financially. Pillars are part of a building. The building in this case is the perfect human being who cares and protects the rights of all creations and fellow humans thus establishing a society in which justice and peace is supreme.

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP IN ISLAAM?

The purpose of worship in Islaam is to make the person God conscious. Thus the worship, whether it is prayer, fasting, or charity, is a means to an end and the end is to seek the pleasure of God by becoming God Conscious in thought and in action. Thus the God conscious is better placed to receive His bounties both in this world and in the Hereafter.

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DO MUSLIMS BELIEVE IN THE HEREAFTER?

God is just and therefore, in order to exercise His justice, He has created a system of accountability. Those who do good are rewarded in Paradise and those who do wrong are punished in Hell. Therefore, Muslims believe that the present life is a temporary one. It is a test and if we pass the test, we will be given a life of permanent pleasure in the company of good people in Paradise.

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WILL THE GOOD ACTIONS OF NON-BELIEVERS BE WASTED?

No. The Quraan clearly states that, "Anyone who has an atom's worth of goodness will also see it." By that it is meant that those who do not believe but have done good, they will be rewarded in this world for their good deeds. On the other hand, those who do good and have correct beliefs like Muslims, will be rewarded not only in this world but also in the world Hereafter. However, the final judgment is up to God Himself. (Quraan 2:62)

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WHAT IS THE DRESS CODE FOR MUSLIMS?

Islaam emphasizes modesty. No person is allowed to be perceived as a sex object. Guidelines both for men and women are that their dress should not either be too thin nor too tight to reveal body forms. Men, must cover the area from the knee to the navel and women, should cover all areas except hands and the face.

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WHAT ARE THE DIETARY REQUIREMENTS IN ISLAAM?

Muslims are told in the Quraan not to eat pork or pork products, dead animals or the meat of the carnivorous animals (as they eat dead animals), or drink intoxicants such as wine or use any drug products.

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WHAT IS "ISLAAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM"?

As opposed to Christianity, there is no concept of "Fundamentalism" in Islaam. The western media has coined this term to brand those Muslims who wish to return to the basic fundamental principles of Islaam and mold their lives accordingly. Islaam is a religion of moderation and a practicing Muslim can neither be a fanatic nor an extremist.

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WHAT IS THE ISLAAMIC YEAR?

The Islamic Year started with the migration (HIJRAH) of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) from Mekkah to Medinah in 622 CE . It is a lunar year of 354 days. 1997 CE is the Islamic year 1417 Hijri.

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WHAT ARE THE MAJOR ISLAAMIC FESTIVALS?

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'Eed-ul-Fitr marks the end of fasting in the month of Ramadaan and is celebrated with public prayers, feasts and exchange of gifts. 'Eed-ul-Adhaa marks the end of the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mekkah. After the public prayer, those who can afford, sacrifice a lamb, goat, cow or camel to signify Prophet Abraham's obedience to God, shown by his readiness to sacrifice his own son Ishmael.

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WHAT IS SHARI'AH?

Shari'ah is the comprehensive Muslim law derived from two sources: (a) the Quraan (2) the Sunnah or practices of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him). It covers every aspect of daily individual and collective living. The purpose of Islaamic laws is to protect individual's basic human rights to include right to life, property, political and religious freedom and safeguarding the rights of women and minorities. The low crime rate in Muslim societies is due to the application of the Islaamic penal laws. These however can only be applied in a society which has established all other Islaamic laws to ensure justice and protection of each other's rights.

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WAS ISLAAM SPREAD BY THE SWORD?

According to the Quraan, "There is no compulsion in religion"(2:256), thus, no one can be forced to become a Muslim. While it is true in many places where Muslim armies went to liberate people or the land, they did carry the sword as that was the weapon used at that time. However, Islaam did not spread by the sword. In many places where there are Muslims now, in the Far East like Indonesia, in China, and many parts of Africa, there are no records of any Muslim armies having gone there. To say that Islaam was spread by the sword would be to say that Christianity was spread by guns, F-16's and atomic bombs, etc., which is not true. Christianity was spread by the missionary work of Christians. Ten-percent of all Arabs are Christians. The "Sword of Islaam" could not covert all the non-Muslim minorities in Muslim countries. In India, where Muslims ruled for 700 years, they are still a minority. In the USA, Islaam is the fastest growing religion and has 6 million followers and no sword is around.

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DOES ISLAAM PROMOTE VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM?

No. Islaam is a religion of peace and submission and stresses the sanctity of human life. A verse in the Quran says (Chapter 5, verse 32), that anyone who saves one life, it is as if he has saved the whole of mankind and anyone who has killed another person except (in

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lieu of murder or mischief on earth), it is as if he has killed the whole mankind." Islaam condemns all violence which happened in the Crusades, in Spain, in the 2nd world war, or by acts of people like the Rev. Jim Jones, David Koresh, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, or the atrocities committed in Bosnia by the Christian Serbs. Anyone who resorts to violence is not practicing his religion at that time. However, sometimes violence is a human response of oppressed people as in Palestine. There is a lot of terrorism and violence in areas where there is no Muslim presence. For example, in Ireland, South Africa, Latin America, and Sri Lanka. Sometimes violence is due to a struggle between those who have and those who do not have, or between those who are oppressed with those who are oppressors. Unfortunately, the Palestinians who are struggling against oppression are called terrorists but not the armed Israeli settlers when they do the same. As it turned out in the Oklahoma City bombing, sometime Muslims are prematurely blamed even if the terrorism is committed by non-Muslims. God does permit defensive wars against organized oppression. Sometimes some misguided Muslims turn to violence as happens with all religions and countries of the world. To call all Muslims terrorists is completely false. Islaam is a religion of peace, harmony and submission to the laws of God Almighty.

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WHAT IS JIHAAD?

The word "Jihaad " means "Struggle", or to be specific, striving in the cause of God. Any struggle done in day-to-day life to please God is considered Jihaad. One of the highest levels of Jihaad is to stand up to a tyrant and speak a word of truth. Control of the self from wrong doings is the greatest Jihaad. One of the forms of Jihaad is to take arms in defense of Islaam or a Muslim country when Islaam is attacked. This kind of Jihaad has to be declared by the religious leadership or by a Muslim head of state who is following the Quraan and Sunnah.

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DOES ISLAAM PROMOTE POLYGAMY?

For Muslim men to have more than one wife is a permission which is given to them in the Quraan provided it is not done to satisfy lust but to meet social solutions and needs. This permission is given provided the person is capable of treating the wives equally. It is not an injunction. In the pre-Islaamic period, men used to have many wives. One person had 11 wives and when he became Muslim, he asked the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) "What should I do with so many wives?" and he said, "Divorce all except four." The Quraan says, "you can only marry 2 or 3 and up to 4 women if you can be equally just with each of them." Since it is very difficult to be equally just with all wives, in practice, most of the Muslim men do

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not have more than one wife. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) himself from age 24 to 50 was married to only one woman, Khadeejah (May Allaah be pleased with her). In the western society, some men who have one wife have many extra marital affairs. A survey was published in "U.S.A. Today" (April 4, 1988, Section D) which asked 4700 mistresses what they would like their status to be. They said that "they preferred being the second wife rather than the "other woman" because they do not have the legal rights, nor did they have the financial equality of the legally married wives, and it appeared that they were being used by these men." Historically, all the prophets except Jesus, who was not married, had more than one wife. So this is not something which Islaam has started; in fact, Islaam regulated it.

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DOES ISLAAM OPPRESS WOMEN?

No. On the contrary, Islaam elevated the status of women 1,400 years ago by giving them the right to divorce, the right to have financial independence and support and the right to be identified as dignified women (Hijab) when in the rest of the world, including Europe, women had no such rights. Women are equal to men in all acts of piety (Quraan 33:32). Islaam allows women to keep their maiden name even after marriage, their earned money and spend it as they wish, and instructs men to be their protectors as women on the street can be molested. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) told Muslim men, "The best among you is the one who is best to his family". Some Muslim men, do oppress women today. This is because of their cultural habits or their ignorance about their religion. Female Genital Mutilations has nothing to do with Islaam. It is pre Islamic African Custom, practiced by non Muslims including Coptic Christians as well.

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IS ISLAAM INTOLERANT OF OTHER RELIGIOUS MINORITIES?

Islaam recognizes the rights of the minority. They are not required to do army service. To ensure their welfare and safety, Muslim rulers initiated a tax (JAZIA) on them. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) forbade Muslim armies to destroy churches and synagogues. Caliph' Umar did not even allow them to pray inside a church. Jews were welcomed and flourished in Muslim Spain when they were persecuted in the rest of Europe. They consider that part of their history as the golden era. In Muslim countries, Christians live in prosperity, hold government positions and attend their church. Christian missionaries are allowed to establish and operate their schools and hospitals. However, the same religious tolerance is not always available to Muslim minorities as seen in the past during the Spanish inquisition and the Crusades, or as seen now by the events in

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the former Yugoslavia, Israel and India. Muslims do recognize that sometimes the actions of a ruler does not reflect the teachings of his religion.

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WHAT IS THE ISLAAMIC VIEW ON :-

DATING and PREMARITAL SEX : Islaam does not approve of intimate mixing or informality between the sexes, and forbids premarital or extramarital sex. Islaam encourages marriage as a shield to such temptations and as a means of having mutual love, mercy and peace.

ABORTION : Islaam considers abortion as murder and does not permit it except to save the mother's life.

HOMOSEXUALITY and AIDS : Islaam categorically opposes homosexuality and considers it a sin. However, Muslim physicians are advised to care for AIDS patients with compassion just as they would for other patients.

EUTHANASIA and SUICIDE : Islaam is opposed to both suicide and euthanasia. Muslims do not believe in heroic measures to artificially prolong the life of a terminally ill patient.

ORGAN TRANSPLANTATION : Islaam stresses upon saving lives (Quran 5:32), thus, transplantation in general would be considered permissible provided a donor consent is available. The sale of the organ is not allowed.

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HOW SHOULD MUSLIMS TREAT JEWS AND CHRISTIANS?

The Quraan calls them "People of the Book ", i.e., those who received Divine scriptures before the advent of Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) Muslims are told to treat them with respect and justice and not fight with them unless they initiate hostilities or ridicule their faith. Muslim's ultimate hope is that they all will join them in worshipping One God and submit to His will. "Say (O Muhammad) (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) O people of the Book (Jews and Christians) come to an agreement between us and you that we shall worship none but Allaah, and that we shall take no partners unto Him, and none of us shall take others for Lords beside Allaah, and if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are those who have surrendered (unto Him)." (Quraan 3:64)

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QUESTION: Does Islaam and its Prophet and Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessing of God be upon him) have any historical links with the Bible? (Gospel and the Old Testament).

(All quotations are from the New King James Version.)

Yes, indeed there are many links. We quote as follows;

In the Old Testament, Genesis, 21:21 it is said: 'He (Prophet Ismaeel) dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his Mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.' Psalm 83: 4–6 talks about the enemies of among others Ishmaelites, and Hagrites (Hagar being the mother of Prophet Ismaeel). Psalm 84: 4–6 "4– Blessed are those who dwell in your House; They will still be praising You. 5– Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on the pilgrimage. 6– As they pass through the valley of Baca. They make it a spring; The rain also covers it with pools."

There are several interesting points in the above verses. The name Baca could be Hebrew whereas the word Mecca is Arabic. Added to this the fact that there is a designated House of God built by Abraham peace be upon him in Mecca where yearly pilgrimage was performed from the time of Abraham and Ismaeel peace be upon them both, even to this day. The valley of Baca could indeed be the same as the valley of Mecca. The above verses seem to place Hagar, Ismaeel and their children in the valley of Mecca where Prophet Muhammad, (Peace and Blessing of God be upon him), was born.

Isaiah, 21:12–17 mentions 12 . . . In the forest in Arabia you will lodge . . . 15 For they fled from the swords , from the drawn sword, from the bent bow, and from the distress of war. (Probable connection with the enemies mentioned in Psalm 83: 4–6 quoted above; also settlement in Arabia is confirmed; the verse 16 which follows, also confirms these verses are about Ismaelites, Kedar being the 2nd son of Prophet Ismaeel). 16 For thus the Lord . . . all the glory of Kedar will fall; 17 and the remainder . . . people of Kedar will be diminished . . .

Isaiah 42:1–13 These are very moving verses about 'God's elect servant' who will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. A point worth noting is that Gentiles are the non Jews and it was confirmed by Jesus peace be upon him that he was sent to the Jews. Moreover Muhammad peace and blessings of God be upon him is consistently named by God as Mustafaa which means 'elected' and 'Abd' which means 'servant'. Prophet Muhammad always referred to himself consistently as the 'servant of God'. The above verses cannot be about Jesus peace be upon him as many Christians believe, for at least two reasons. Firstly, the Christians and the Catholics describe him as the son of God and not the servant of God; whereas Prophet Muhammad is known exclusively as the Servant and the Messenger of God. Secondly, Jesus was sent exclusively to the Jews whereas Prophet Muhammad was sent among the

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Gentiles.

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ARE THERE ANY REFERENCES AND CITATIONS FROM THE BIBLE ABOUT THE COMING OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD? (Peace and Blessing of God Be Upon Him)

Yes. There are several citations in the Bible prophesying the coming of prophet Muhammad, (Peace and Blessing of God Be Upon Him). Isaiah 42: 4 says ' He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he has established justice in the earth; . . . The Ministry of Jesus peace be upon him lasted only three years and at the time of his departure from this world it could not be truthfully said that 'he established justice in the earth'. However, Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, preached for 23 years and most certainly 'established justice in the earth' before he departed from the earth. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that verses 1–13 refer to the coming of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him.

Deuteronomy 18:18 "I will raise for them a Prophet like you (Moses) from among their brethren and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them, all that I command him".

Let me make some comments about the above: Christians believe that this is a reference to Jesus peace be upon him. One important word here is "Prophet". Christians believe Jesus is the son of God not a prophet of God. Another important word is "brethren". If it were Jesus the word would have been "children" because Jesus peace be upon him came from the children of Isaac. Since Ismaeel peace be upon him was the brother of Isaac peace be upon him, the reference is therefore to the children of Prophet Ismaeel peace be upon him who will be brethren to the children of Isaac peace be upon him. Again the only Prophet from the brethren of the Jews and the Christians was Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings of God be upon him.

The next important phrase is "Like you (Moses)". Even a cursory comparison will show us that Jesus peace be upon him was very unlike Prophet Moses peace be upon him. Prophet Moses' birth was natural whereas the birth of Jesus was miraculous without a father, to a virgin, peace be upon her. Prophet Moses married and had children, Jesus did not marry and of course did not have any children. The ministry of Jesus peace be upon him lasted three years and did not see the laws of God establish in his time. Prophet Moses peace be upon him, preached the law of God for many decades and saw in his time, the law of God established. Comparing Prophet Moses peace be upon him, with Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings of God be upon him, brings out an amazing similarity. Muhammad's birth was natural, he was married and had children; preached the law of God for 23 years and saw in his own time God's Law established in his land.

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The phrase: "I will put My words in his mouth", takes on great significance because Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings of God be upon him, was unlettered; he did not know how to read or write.

Normally God would put the message in the Prophet's mind. In this case attention is drawn towards "words" being put into the "mouth". Prophet Muhammad's sayings as well as eye witness accounts describe his receiving the verses of the Holy Quraan, and his tongue moving with the words being put in his mouth.

Turning to the New Testament, let us look at John 14: 15–16. It says: "14– If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16– And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another "comforter" (Helper in other versions), that he may abide with you forever". Also John 15: 26–27, John 16: 5–8 and John 16 12–14.

Jesus peace be upon him, spoke the Gospel in his native language which is Aramaic. The earliest translations were in Greek. It is very very interesting that the Greek word which was eventually translated into English as "Comforter" (Helper) is "Parqaleeta" and the meaning of this word is "one whom people praise exceedingly". It does not mean "the Holy Ghost" which is what we are told the so called "Comforter" means. I do not have the slightest clue as to how this meaning was given to the word Parqaleeta. What is even more fascinating is the fact that the name Muhammad has exactly the same meaning as Parqaleeta "one whom people praise exceedingly"! One of my friends wrote very beautifully in his book about the meaning of the word Muhammad: "The most praised one. He is praised upon earth and in the heavens, from the beginning to the end, by men jinn and angels, rocks and trees and animals, by prophets before him since Adam, by saints until Doomsday. As all of this cannot give him due praise, we beg God to praise him. He is the only One who truly knows the value and the mystery of His Muhammad and He is the only One who can truly praise him'. The celestial name of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings of God be upon him is Ahmad. I will quote from the Holy Quraan about the connection of Prophet Muhammad with the Bible as follows:

Chapter 61

5 "And remember Moses said to his people: "O my people! why do ye vex and insult me though ye know that I am the apostle of Allaah (sent) to you?" Then when they went wrong Allaah let their hearts go wrong: for Allaah guides not those who are rebellious transgressors.

6 And remember Jesus the son of Mary said: "O Children of Israel! I am the Prophet of Allaah (sent) to you confirming the Law (which came) before me and giving glad Tidings of a Prophet to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs they said "This is evident sorcery!"

Allaah is one of the 100 names of the One and only God. Allaah is the

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name of His Essence while the other 99 are the names of His Attributes.

As for "abide with you forever" since Prophet Muhammad is the final Prophet and the Holy Quraan the final Testament and Revelation from God, his teachings which are more or less the same as of all the other Prophets and Messengers of God, Divine teachings of God, he will abide in his teachings forever.

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QUESTION: I have read the Koran in paperback (which was a very short version without notes) and remember reading that Gabriel (Jibril) was partially responsible for it's content. If this is true, or any information you can give to help us understand the muslim position on the existence and purpose of angels would be most appreciated.

You have been misinformed about Angel Gabriel (God's peace be upon him). He was not responsible for any contents whatsoever of the Holy Quraan, the last revelation and testament of God to humanity. The Holy Quraan is the speech of God delivered through the last Messenger of God, Muhammad son of 'Abdullaah, May God's peace and blessings be upon him, to all the human race. Angel Gabriel, is the Messenger used by God Almighty to convey the verses of the Holy Quraan to Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. Angel Gabriel as a matter of fact was the Messenger between God and all his Prophets and Messengers, including Abraham, David, Moses, Jesus son of Mary etc. etc. may God's peace be upon them all. In all these cases Angel Gabriel was the conveyor of the messages, never responsible for the contents. The contents were always from God Himself. The reason for the succession of thousands of these Prophets and Messengers(May God's peace be upon them all) was because the messages and books were well guarded by the Prophets themselves as long as they were alive, but changed and corrupted by their followers with the passing of time, and The Lord of Mercy never wanted His creation to be without His True and uncorrupted Message and Guidance. Picking up the threads from the advent of Moses, peace of God be upon him, and the Book Torah given to him, soon after he passed away, his followers started to alter and corrupt the Book.

God in His Infinite Mercy sent a series of 11 Prophets(May His peace be upon them all), to convey to the followers of Moses (May God's peace be upon him) that they were changing and had changed the contents of the Torah. Three of these Prophets(May God's peace be upon them) were killed by them. This is why Jesus son of Mary(May God's peace be upon him), right in the beginning of his preachings made it clear, that he was not sent with a new message and that he was sent to take the people back to the original Message and Teachings of his predecessor, Moses, (Gods peace be upon him), meaning, the Torah

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thereby confirming what every Prophet and Messenger had emphasized before him: That the thousands of the Prophets and Messengers were sent by the same ONE and ONLY GOD with the same guidance ALL these prophets and messengers ensured that the True Word of God was never lost to humanity. They were certainly not sent to create thousands of religions! Of course the followers of Jesus son of Mary(Peace of God be upon him) did the same thing to his teachings. The major changes being: Making him the son of God instead of a great Prophet and Messenger of God that he is; making him God, calling him one of three gods, etc. etc. The changes went on to such a degree that there are now more than 60 versions of the Bible(Different versions not translations) and 72 sects. This is why the last Prophet and Messenger of God, Muhammad son of 'Abdullaah(Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) was sent with the Last Guidance, Revelation and Testament, the Holy Quraan to amend and correct the changes and corruption made to the True Gospel of Jesus, son of Mary(May God's peace be upon him). The coming of Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) was prophesied by not only Jesus, but also Moses and many other Prophets and Messengers of God(May His peace be upon them all). God promised that since Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him) is the last of the series of the Prophets and Messengers and since the Holy Quraan is His last Book of Guidance to humanity, He Himself will guard it from any changes or corruption's till the Day of Judgment. This is why this last Revelation which was sent 1418 years ago has remained unchanged, not even a word or a letter has been altered.

With regards to your question about the existence and purpose of angels, let me inform you that Angels were created by God Almighty from light and of course they cannot be seen by human beings. They are creatures who are pure and always willingly obedient to God and His commands. They carry out numerous chores. Michael (peace of God be upon him) is the angel in charge of clouds and rain. For every human being are appointed two recording angels one writing down his good deeds and the other his bad deeds. Angel Izrael (May God's peace with him) is the angel of Death. There are angels in charge of Paradise and there are angels in charge of Hell. There are 2 Questioning Angels who question the dead person as soon as he is buried. Then there are the Guardian angels. God says in The Holy Quraan that the number of angels that are in existence is known only to Him. This is by no means an exhaustive list. It will give a general idea.

By the way abridged versions of the Holy Quraan Translations are not considered by Muslims to be authentic because The Word of God Almighty cannot be given "Versions". There is only one Quraan and the 'Arabic Text must accompany every authorized translation.

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QUESTION: Does Islam believe in an eternal hell? Does it state in the Quraan that God has infinite mercy and that eventually all will become one with God?

Yes, the Holy Quraan which muslims believe is the Last Revelation from the One and only God, sent to humanity for its guidance, through the last Prophet and Messenger of God, Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, does state that there is an eternal hell. Those who were the True believers of each prophet and messenger and followed the book that he brought before it was corrupted and changed, will be awarded Paradise and those who disbelieved in each prophet and messenger of God and rejected his book, will be consigned by God to the hell where they will remain eternally. Those who believed in the book and the messenger / prophet before it was corrupted and changed, but did not fully obey its commands, will spend an appropriate time of punishment in the hell, after which they will be sent to paradise. The last Revelation from God, the Holy Quraan and the last Messenger Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, were sent because the Gospel sent through Jesus, peace of God be upon him, was changed and corrupted and Oneness of God Almighty and His Divinity which He does not share with His creation was changed into the concept of trinity and divinity of Jesus. Moreover God does create but is far above the blasphemous belief that He has a begotten son or begets children. The Holy Quraan was therefore sent to humanity to correct these changes and to bring us all back to His Oneness and His correct Guidance. Those who believe in the corrupted Bible and its in changes and reject the Holy Quraan and the last Messenger of God, Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, will be sent to the hell where they will remain eternally just as the Jews who rejected Prophet and Messenger Jesus, who was sent at that time with the Gospel to correct the changes and corruptions in the Torah of Moses, peace of God be upon him.

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QUESTION: Did I understand correctly that Muslims believe Jesus was just a prophet? How did the Quraan explain his death, burial, and resurrection as it is written in the Holy Bible? This is conflicting with what I was taught as a child.

I do understand your confusion. It has been my experience also that everything I was taught and everything I read in the past is not

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always true and correct. This, I have observed, is a human experience and by and large we discover this and make our adjustments as we go along. I also discovered that questioning sincerely everything BEFORE we accept anything to be correct is a very very valuable right given to all human beings by God. Contrary to common belief, God does not get upset if we do so! If we are sincere searchers of the Truth, He actually does help us and enlightens us. Would He not, if He loved us? Would He not help us find Him? Of course He would. The most fundamental question we must ask is: Who is He? Is He like you and me, flesh and blood, but a Super Man? Why only a Male, why not a female goddess? If He is flesh and blood, does He eat, drink and go to the toilet? Does He have children? If He is flesh and blood does He get sick, decay and die? If He dies, then who takes care of this vast Universe and the billions of human beings and other creatures? You will find that Islaam and the Holy Quraan, the last and final Revelation, have very fascinating and very convincing answers. You will find the answers to be simple, uncomplicated and singularly full of logic and acceptable. I am going to produce as under a quotation from the Holy Quraan about this subject:

Chapter 4 Verse Nos. 156–158

"And because of their disbelief and of their speaking against Mary a tremendous calumny; that they said (in boast)

'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary the Prophet and Messenger of God'; 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 God raised him up unto Himself; and God is Exalted in Power, Wise".

As regards God Himself, He is not flesh and blood. He is shapeless, formless Infinity, Who was always there and He is always going to be there: He is truly Eternal, Self subsisting and Truly Alive. He is not 'matter' because matter has to be created and He was not created, He is the creator of matter and everything that exists. He is not two or three or more. He is the One and only God. He does not have a son who is another god because God cannot be created. Hence the only sensible understanding is that there is only one God who does create human beings and other creation, but He does not share His Divinity with any of His creation. He did send human messengers (prophets, apostles) for guidance to humanity such as Noah, Abraham, David, Isaac, Solomon, Moses and several others (May God's peace be upon them all). Jesus son of Mary (May God's peace be upon him), is also a wonderful, kind, loving, wise, and a great prophet of God, just as Muhammad son of 'Abdullaah (May the peace and blessings of God be upon him) is, who was his successor and through whom the last book of Revelations, the Holy Quraan was sent to humanity to correct and rectify the mythical and false beliefs that had entered into the religion of Moses and Jesus, peace of God be upon them both. I am pleased to forward

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relevant quotations from the Holy Quraan as under:

Chapter 4 Verse 171

"O People of the Scripture! (The Bible and the Torah) Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter anything concerning God except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of God, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers, and say not "Three" (Trinity). Cease! (it is) better for you! God is only One God. Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that he should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And God is sufficient as Defender".

I will also happily quote as under the verses from the Chapter of Purity (of Monotheism), No112:

"Say: He is God, the One and Only;

God the Eternal, the Absolute;

He begetteth not nor is He begotten;

And there is none like unto Him"

I have dealt with your confusion in some detail. If you desire to press on with the pursuit of the Truth, which you will find most natural and easy to believe, please send us your postal mailing address. We shall be happy to send you more information in the form of brief books and literature, at no charge to you and I promise you that provided you are sincere and interested in your search, you have waiting for you the most pleasant and satisfying surprise.

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