

Essential Questions and Answers for new Muslims

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Electronic Edition - Version 1.00
Thursday 15 September, 2022

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2

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فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

**“So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord,
let him work righteousness and associate none
as a partner in the worship of his Lord.”**

The Noble Qur.aan - Soorah al-Kahf, Aayah 110

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Madeenah.com
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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

3

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*Islām means
“Complete sub-
mission to Allāh,
compliance to His
laws, and an aver-
sion to disbelief, its
people and prac-
tises.*

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1. What does Islām mean?

Islām means “Complete submission to Allāh, compliance to His laws, and an aversion to disbelief, its people and practises.

Islām does not technically mean peace, however peace is a part of Islām and it is the greeting of the Muslims – “assalāmu ‘alaykum” (peace be upon you).

Islām, as a religion, contains actions, statements and beliefs; its fundamental tenet is sincerity in worship.

2. How does a person become a Muslim?

A person becomes a Muslim by affirming the sole right of Allāh to worship, negating all false gods and deities, and affirming the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ. This is the meaning of

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولُهُ

Ash-hadu al-lā ilāha illa Allāh
wa ash-hadu anna muḥammadan ‘abduhū wa rasulūhu.

*I bear witness there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah.
I bear witness that Muḥammad is the worshipper and messenger
of Allāh.*

3. What are the 5 pillars of Islām?

They are the most fundamental actions of Islām which a person must accept and fulfill to be a Muslim. They are:

1. The testification that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh and Muḥammad is His final Messenger.
2. Establishing Ṣalāh – the 5 obligatory prayers which are prayed on a daily basis.
3. Zakāh: The obligatory charity on a person’s savings, given to the poor.
4. Ṣawm: Fasting the month of Ramadān.
5. Ḥajj: The pilgrimage to Mecca, obligatory once in a lifetime if a person is able to do so.

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which a person
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fill to be a Muslim.*

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4. What are the 6 pillars of Imān?

They are the most fundamental beliefs of a Muslim, which a person must accept to be a Muslim. They are:

1. Belief in Allāh: The Lord and Sustainer of Creation.
2. Belief in His angels: they are beings created by Allāh out of light, they cannot be seen. They were created to fulfil important responsibilities and tasks.
3. Belief in His Books: Allāh sent revelation to His Prophets and Messengers; the divine books include the Torah, the Injīl (Gospel) and the Qur'ān.
4. Belief in His Messengers: Throughout history, Allāh sent Prophets and Messengers to humanity in order to guide them to the truth, and how to worship Him. Nūḥ (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsa (Moses), 'Īsa (Jesus) and Muḥammad were all great messengers.
5. Belief in the Final Day: This worldly life is temporary, and Allah created the Hereafter as a permanent abode. He created Jannah (Paradise) for the righteous people, and He created Jahannam (Hell) for the evil people.
6. Belief in the Decree: We believe everything which occurs, only occurs with the complete knowledge and decree of Allāh.

5. Who is Allāh?

Allāh is the One God and true deity, who created everything and is deserving of worship.

{Say, «He is Allāh, [who is] One. Allah - the Sustainer [needed by all, and not in need of others]. He neither begets [offspring] nor is He born, Nor is there any equivalent [or equal] to Him.»}

[112:1 to 4]

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They are the most fundamental beliefs of a Muslim, which a person must accept to be a Muslim.

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6

6. What do Muslims believe about Allāh?

Belief in Allāh is based on three main principles:

1. Accepting His Lordship: He is the sole Creator, Sustainer and Controller of all existence.
2. Accepting His sole right to worship: He is the only One deserving of worship, and every other entity worshipped besides Him is false.
3. Affirming His names and attributes: He has beautiful names and lofty attributes. Every action of His is wisdom and justice.

7. What are some of the beautiful names of Allāh?

His main name is Allāh, He has other names which demonstrates His greatness. His beautiful names include:

1. Al-Ghafūr: The oft-forgiving.
2. Al-Raḥmān: The Beneficent and most Merciful.
3. Al-Karīm: The Kind and generous.
4. Al-Mannān: The One who bestows favours and bounties.
5. Al-Mu'min: The One bestows security and infuses faith.
6. As-Salām: The embodiment of peace.
7. Al-Qahhār: The all-prevailing and dominant.
8. Al-Hakīm: The most wise.
9. Al-'Alīm: The all-knowing.
10. Al-Qadīr: The all-able.

8. What is Tawḥīd?

Tawḥīd is the concept of singling out Allāh in every aspect of worship. Its opposite is Shirk i.e. associating partners to Allāh or directing acts of worship to other than Allāh.

{Then do not set up partners with Allāh [in worship] while you know [that He Alone has the right to be worshipped]} [02:22]

“

*Allāh is the One
God and true deity,
who created every-
thing and is de-
serving of worship.*

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Ascribing a son or partner to Allāh is Shirk, similarly supplicating, wearing amulets or invoking saints is Shirk. Tawḥīd is the greatest obligation, and Shirk is the worse type of sin.

9. Who was Muḥammad?

Muḥammad ﷺ was the name of the final prophet and messenger of Allah, in a succession of prophets including Nūḥ (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsa (Moses) and ʿĪsa (Jesus). He was sent to mankind to remind them of their duty to worship Allāh, and to teach them how to worship Him. He is not worshipped like Jesus is by Christians, rather he is followed.

10. What is the Qurʾān?

Every Messenger sent by Allāh was given revelation, containing teachings to be conveyed to mankind. This revelation is the speech of Allāh. The Qurʾān is the final revelation sent to mankind through Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. It was revealed in Arabic, and is the ultimate miracle.

The teachings of the Qurʾān revolve around: descriptions of Allāh and His right to worship; information regarding the Hereafter, an encouragement to strive for Paradise and stay away from every action which leads to punishment; a mention of previous prophets and their people, as well as nurturing noble manners and morals.

11. What is Ḥadīth?

A Ḥadīth is a narration containing the statements, actions or descriptions of the Prophet ﷺ. Hadith is legislation like the Qurʾān. This is because the Ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ is also a form of revelation; the Prophet ﷺ would be inspired and taught how to implement the Qurʾān, this is why Allah said,

{He does not speak from [his own] inclination, it is only revelation sent down to him} [53:3 to 4]

12. What did Allah create us and place us upon the earth?

According to the Qurʾān, Allah created us for a number of objectives:

- For us to worship Him; living our life according to His laws.
- To know and learn about Allah.
- As a test, to see how we interact with everything around us.
- He divided us into tribes and nations, so we can know and learn from each other.

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Tawḥīd is the concept of singling out Allāh in every aspect of worship. Its opposite is Shirk i.e. associating partners to Allāh or directing acts of worship to other than Allāh.

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13. What do Muslims believe about death?

We believe this world is short and temporary, and we were placed on the earth to fulfil the above objectives. The eternal life is the Hereafter. The focus of the Muslim should be for the Hereafter, whilst fulfilling the rights and responsibilities of worldly life. We believe every person will be recompensed in the Hereafter for the good or bad a person did. The ultimate reward for goodness is Jannah (Paradise), and the ultimate punishment for evil is Jahannam (the Fire).

14. What good manners does Islām guide to?

Islām is a religion of manners and morals; It outlines rights and responsibilities. Some of the manners it guides us to are:

- Obedience to parents and keeping the ties of kinship.
- Truthfulness, integrity and trustworthiness.
- Being kind to neighbours and honouring guests.
- Lowering the gaze in front of the opposite.
- Courage and bravery in defending the truth and people's rights.
- Care for the environment and animals.
- Respect of elders, compassion for the young and venerating the people of knowledge.

15. What is Sunnah?

Sunnah is the general guidance and way of the Prophet ﷺ.

16. What do the words “Salaf” and “Salafi” mean?

The word Salaf refers to the early generations of pious scholars, beginning with the companions who were the people around the Prophet ﷺ, and then those who followed them upon goodness. We look to their understanding and implementation of the Qur'ān of the Sunnah.

A “Salafi” is a person who follows the above methodology. In essence, every Muslim must be a Salafi.

Salafi is not a mere label or a group, but the word is used when it is necessary to clarify the correct methodology.

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Every Messenger sent by Allāh was given revelation, containing teachings to be conveyed to mankind. This revelation is the speech of Allāh. The Qur'ān is the final revelation...

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17. What is Bid'ah?

A Bid'ah is any act of worship which is introduced into Islām i.e. something which he and his Şahābah (companions) did not perform, nor was it a part of Islām during their era.

18. What is the measure of good and evil?

Our ethics are taken from the teachings of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Ḥalāl (permitted matters) and Ḥarām (impermissible matters) have been outlined for us; good and evil has been clarified.

19. What is Şalāh?

Every Muslim is obligated to pray to Allāh 5 times a day like the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ taught. These prayers are called Şalāh. They are there to remind us about Allāh, and fulfil our duties towards him. The 5 daily prayers are a sign of a person's faith, they are the most important obligations in Islām. Men should perform Şalāh in congregation, in the Masjid.

20. How do I pray Şalāh if I do not know the words in Arabic?

When learning how to pray Şalāh, we should approach a knowledgeable person in the local Masjid. It has to be performed in the manner the Prophet ﷺ taught, in Arabic. However, for a new Muslim who does not know any Arabic or has not memorised the Şalāh, it is sufficient to repeat the following Arabic phrases throughout the Şalāh:

- Alḥamdulillāh : All praise is for Allāh.
- SubḥanaAllāh: Allah is glorified above any imperfection.
- Allāhu akbar: Allah is the greatest.
- Lā ilāha illa Allāh : There is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh.

The first passage a person should learn is Soorah al-Fātihah.

21. What is a Masjid?

A Masjid - translated as Mosque - is a place dedicated for the worship of Allāh. In a Masjid, the 5 daily Salah (Prayers) are established in congregation, as well as the Friday Prayer. It is a place of sanctity, security and tranquillity.

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We believe this world is short and temporary, and we were placed on the earth to fulfil the above objectives. The eternal life is the Hereafter.

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22. What should I do before I go to a Masjid?

It is recommended for a person to perform Wudū at home, purify their intentions, wear appropriate clothes, use fragrance and walk to the Masjid in a state of tranquillity. A man in a state of major impurity i.e. after sexual intercourse or a wet dream - should not enter the Masjid until he has bathed.

23. What should I do when I enter a Masjid?

It is recommended to enter into the Masjid with the right foot, and before sitting to pray 2 Rak'ah (2 units of Salah). Whilst waiting for the Salah to start, you should occupy your time with Dhikr (remembering Allah), reciting Qur'an or reading a book. Whilst it is permitted to talk in the Masjid about worldly matters, however we should not go to the extremes of making the Masjid a place of mere socialising, joking or worldly discussions.

24. What is Du'ā?

A Du'ā is a supplication i.e. when a person asks Allāh for something. A Du'ā can be made at any time, in any place and in any language however there are certain etiquettes that a person should observe when making Du'ā such as raising the hands as Muslims do, addressing Allāh using His beautiful names, showing your need to Allāh, not being hasty and maintaining hope in Allāh.

25. What is Dhikr?

Dhikr are statements which contains the remembrance, praise and glorification of Allāh.

They must be said in Arabic, as taught by the Prophet ﷺ. Examples include: "SubhānaAllāh", "Alhamdulillah", "Allāhu Akbar" and "Lā ilāha illa Allāh".

The quieter the Dhikr, the better and more sincere.

26. What should I prioritise learning?

It is an obligation upon every Muslim to learn about Islām. You should begin by learning about the basics of Islāmic belief which are summarised by the 6 pillars of Imān, read about the life of the Prophet ﷺ and his daily practices, and also learn how to pray correctly and recite the Qur'an.

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Islām is a religion of manners and morals; It outlines rights and responsibilities. Some of the manners it guides us to are...

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27. How do I go about learning and seeking knowledge?

The Islamic method of learning is to study with a qualified teacher, usually in a Masjid or in an Islamic institute. You have to ensure that you learn the authentic Islam, as opposed to Islam which has been mixed with cultural practices. A good indicator of being taught properly is to make sure everything is being referenced with evidences from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.

28. How do I deal with different Muslim groups and sects?

The Muslims should not be divided into different groups and sects, rather we should follow the pure teachings of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth, according to the understanding of the early Muslims – this is known as the Salafi methodology, i.e. the methodology of following the Salaf – as explained above.

Your focus should be on learning, and trying to relate everything back to the way of the companions and the scholars who succeeded them. Do not feel embarrassed to ask questions, or ask for an evidence from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth to verify any claim.

Simply put, if an act of worship was not performed by the Prophet ﷺ, we should not perform it. If the understanding or implementation of an Āyah from the Qur'ān or Ḥadīth is not in line with the Salaf, it is an error.

29. Do I have to change my name when after accepting Islām?

It is recommended for a person to change their name to a Muslim name, moreso if one's previous name contains a bad meaning. A name should be chosen considering its meaning and/or an Islamic personality.

30. What is circumcision?

Circumcision is a procedure to remove the foreskin from the penis, to maintain hygiene, health and purity. Without circumcision, when urine is discharged from the urethra, it is not discharged completely and droplets of urine collect under the foreskin which is both unhygienic as well as a possible cause of infections.

Male circumcision is considered to be an obligation for every new born baby, and if an uncircumcised adult accepts Islam, he should also get himself circumcised with medical experts. Your GP is usually the first point of contact for this.

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A “Salafi” is a person who follows the above methodology. In essence, every Muslim must be a Salafi.

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12

31. How do I interact with my parents, non-Muslim family members, social circle and colleagues?

As Muslims, we are encouraged to maintain our family ties – regardless of whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim. In fact, as a Muslim your kindness, relationship and obedience towards your non-Muslim parents should be even better, and your relationship with your siblings should be stronger.

Similarly, your social circle and colleagues, you can maintain relationships with them especially if it will be an avenue of showing them Islām. However, as Muslims we are not allowed to obey people if it necessitates disobedience to Allah. For this reason, we cannot partake in Christmas celebrations, new year festivities, gatherings where alcohol is drunk etc...

32. How can I achieve a balance between being a Muslim and my professional life?

Islām guides us to a life of balance between working towards the Hereafter as well as fulfilling worldly rights and responsibilities. This is exactly what is mentioned in the Qur’ān,

{But seek, through that which Allāh has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allāh has done good to you} [28:77]

Balance is therefore attained through aiming for worldly success within the boundaries of the Sharī’ah: earn and spend what is Ḥalāl, avoid Ḥarām, rectify your relationship with Allāh and rectify your relationship with people; fulfil your worldly duties but keep your ultimate focus towards the Hereafter.

Note: If you are new Muslim, or a Muslim who would like to learn about Islam, but are unsure where to start, feel free to send an email to us and we will try to signpost you to a local or online institute which will be appropriate inshaAllah. Email: admin@madeenah.com

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