

Understanding Islam

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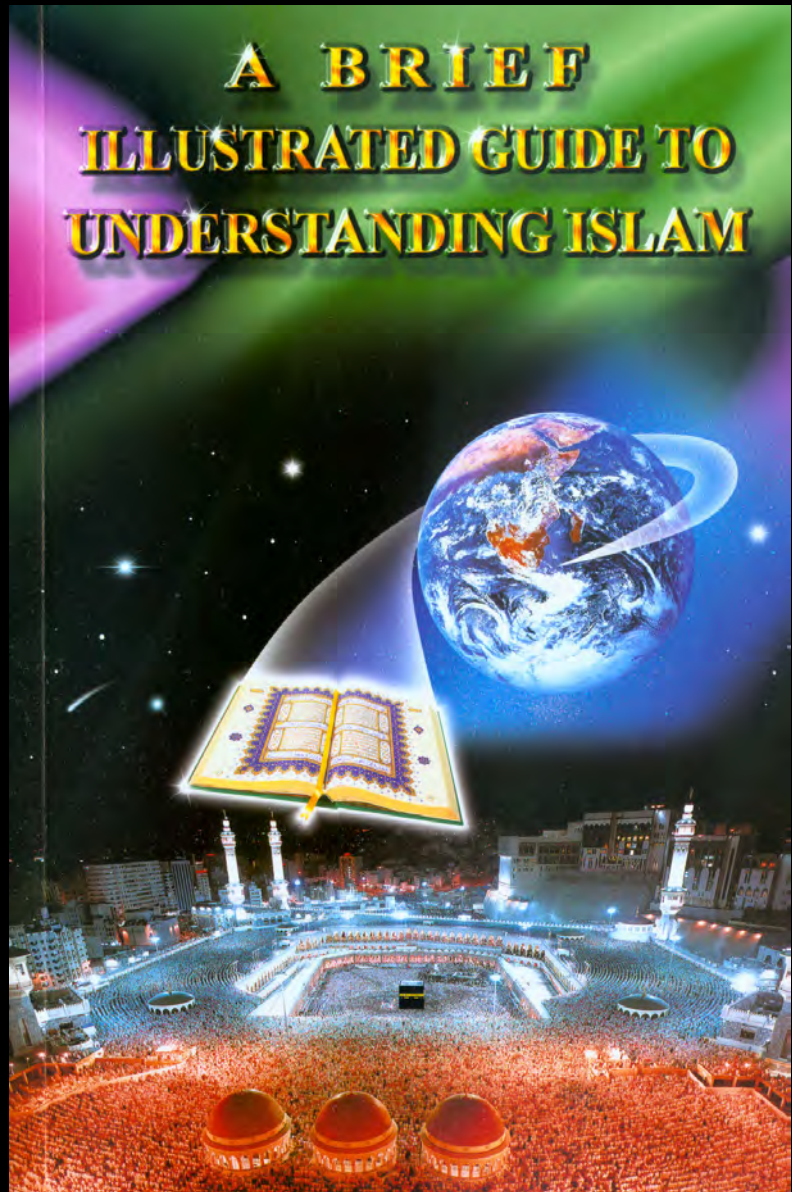


What is Islam?

- "The religion of Islam is the acceptance of and obedience to the teachings of God which He revealed to His last prophet, Muhammad." BIGUI, 45
- "Islam" and "Muslim" are derived from the Arabic word for "submission," not the similar word for "peace."

Sources

Our material from an Islamic perspective will largely be drawn from *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam*, 2nd ed., edited by I. A. Ibrahim and published by Darussalam of Houston, TX, 1997. Abbreviated here as "BIGUI."





Some Basic Islamic Beliefs

- Belief in God
- Belief in the Angels
- Belief in God's Revealed Books
- Belief in the Prophets & Messengers of God
- Belief in the Day of Judgment
- Belief in Divine Predestination



Belief in God

- "Muslims believe in one unique, incomparable God, Who has no son nor partner, and that none has the right to be worshipped but Him alone." BIGUI, 45
- Thus the deity of Jesus is rejected. Most Muslims believe the Christian Trinity consists of God, Mary & Jesus.



Belief in the Angels

- "Muslims believe in the existence of the angels, and that they are honored creatures. The angels worship God alone, obey Him, and act only by His command.
- "Among the angels is Gabriel, who brought down the Qur'an to Muhammad." BIGUI, 47



Belief in God's Revealed Books

- "Muslims believe that God revealed books to His messengers as proof for mankind and as guidance for them. Among these books is the Qur'an, which God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. God has guaranteed the Qur'an's protection from any corruption or distortion." BIGUI, 48
- The Bible is viewed as revealed by God but subsequently corrupted.



Belief in the Prophets & Messengers of God

- "Muslims believe in the prophets and messengers of God, starting with Adam, including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them).
- "But God's final message, a reconfirmation of the eternal message, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ... the last prophet sent by God." BIGUI, 48



Belief in the Day of Judgment

- "Muslims believe in the Day of Judgment (the Day of Resurrection) when all people will be resurrected for God's judgment according to their beliefs and deeds." BIGUI, 48
- Muslims do not (in general) have assurance that their sins will be forgiven.



Belief in Divine Predestination

- "Muslims believe in Divine Predestination, but this belief ... does not mean that human beings do not have freewill ... This means that they can choose right or wrong and that they are responsible for their choices."
BIGUI, 48



Belief in Divine Predestination

- "The belief ... includes ... four things:
 - God knows everything.
 - God has recorded all that has happened and will happen.
 - Whatever God wills to happen happens...
 - God is the Creator of everything."

BIGUI, 48-49



Comparing Christianity & Islam



- Consider the *Apostles' Creed*.
- We will first go through it as it stands.
- Then we will mark the items rejected by Islam with **red** type.

Apostles' Creed



- I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth;
- And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord,
- Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary,
- Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried...

Apostles' Creed



- He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead,
- He ascended into heaven,
- And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
- From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Apostles' Creed



- I believe in the Holy Ghost;
- The Holy Catholic Church;
- The Communion of Saints;
- The Forgiveness of Sins,
- The Resurrection of the body,
- And the life everlasting.



Apostles' Creed

- I believe in God **the Father** Almighty,
Maker of Heaven and Earth;
- And in Jesus Christ **His only Son, our Lord,**
- Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
- **Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried...**



Apostles' Creed

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- And sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
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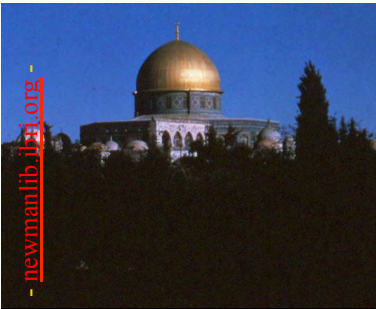
Apostles' Creed

- I believe in the Holy Ghost;*
- The Holy Catholic Church;
- The Communion of Saints;
- The Forgiveness of Sins,
- The Resurrection of the body,
- And the life everlasting.



The Five Pillars of Muslim Practice

- Confession of Faith (Shahada)
- Ritual Prayer (Salat)
- Obligatory Alms (Zakat)
- The Fast of Ramadan (Saum)
- Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)



The Confession of Faith

- Saying with conviction: *La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur rasoolu Allah* (There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah).
- By saying this with conviction, one becomes a Muslim.

BIGUI, 65



Ritual Prayer

- "Muslims perform prayer five times a day. Each prayer does not take more than a few minutes to perform." BIGUI, 66
- Prayers are performed at:
 - Dawn
 - Noon
 - Mid-afternoon
 - Sunset
 - Night



Obligatory Alms

- "Giving a specified percentage on certain properties to certain classes of needy people"
- The percentage on money is 2.5%
- People may also give as much or little as they wish in the form of voluntary alms or charity.

BIGUI, 66



The Fast of Ramadan

- "Every year in the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations." BIGUI, 67
- This is typically balanced by feasting during the dark hours of Ramadan.



The Pilgrimage

- "The annual pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Makkah is an obligation once in a lifetime for those who are physically and financially able to perform it.
- "About two million people go to Makkah each year from every corner of the globe."

BIGUI, 67-68

Sharing with Muslims

- Use God's Word.
- Be much in prayer.
- Be a genuine friend.
- Ask thought-provoking questions.
- Listen attentively.
- Present your beliefs openly.
- Reason, don't argue.
- Never talk down Muhammad or the Qur'an.
- Respect their customs.
- Persevere.

Use God's Word

- Muslims respect the sacred books:
 - Law of Moses
 - Psalms
 - Gospel
 - Qur'an
- Let the Word speak for itself.
- Start with the Gospels, Matthew & Luke.

Be Much in Prayer

- It is God, the Holy Spirit, who changes hearts and wins people to Jesus.
- Seek God's guidance, wisdom and power as you present the Word.

Be a Genuine Friend

- Saying "hello" isn't enough.
- If you really care, show it by:
 - Inviting them into your home,
 - Sharing your time,
 - Helping them with their problems.

Ask thought-provoking questions

- "Do you have the assurance that God will accept you?"
- "What does the Qur'an teach about forgiveness?"
- "May I show you what the Bible teaches?"
- Questions like these show that you have an interest in the important things in life.

Listen Attentively

- When you ask a question, courtesy requires that you listen to the answer, no matter how long it takes.
- You'll be surprised at how much you'll learn!

Present Your Beliefs Openly

- State what you believe:
 - Clearly & without apology,
 - Showing Scripture passages that support these beliefs.
- In this way, you put the responsibility for doctrine where it belongs – on the Word of God.

Reason, Don't Argue

- Argument may win a point but lose a hearing.
- On some points you can argue forever:
 - Achieving nothing,
 - Closing the person's mind against you.

Never Talk Down Muhammad or the Qur'an

- This is very offensive to Muslims.
- Think of how you feel when someone talks down Jesus or the Bible.

Respect Their Customs & Sensitivities

- Don't put your Bible on the floor.
- Don't appear to be too free with the opposite sex.
- Don't refuse hospitality.
- Don't make jokes about sacred topics:
 - Fasting
 - Prayer
 - God

Persevere

- Muslims have a lot of rethinking to do when they are confronted with the Gospel.
- We may rest in the assurance that:
 - God's Word will do its work,
 - In God's time.

For Further Information

- On Islam from a Christian perspective:
 - www.answering-islam.org
- On Islam from an Islamic perspective:
 - www.answering-islam.com



The End

May God help us to be kind to
Muslims