

# ISLAM

## 20 ANSWERS FROM CATHOLIC ANSWERS

Let us start at the end and keep this in mind during our discussion! Page 68, last sentence.

**MUSLIMS** must see **CHRIST IN US**, and we must strive to speak to them on Christ's behalf so **HE** may draw them to himself.

# What is Islam?

- ▶ Founded in 610 AD by an Arab named Muhammad who lived near what today is Mecca, Saudi Arabia.
- ▶ *Islam* means ‘submission’; it’s beliefs are Allah’s (God’s) ordained way of existence, to which all creation must submit.
- ▶ Central creed, profession of faith known as the *shahada*, says there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.
- ▶ Made of 5 pillars; basic teachings with parallels in many religions: 1) belief in Allah and his revelations, 2) praying 5 times a day, 3) giving 2.5 percent or more of one’s income to Islamic causes, 4) fasting for 1 month a year during the Islamic calendar, 5) making a pilgrimage to Mecca to walk around the Ka’ba, a structure venerated as the first temple to Allah.
- ▶ Place of worship is a mosque.
- ▶ Largest populations are in Middle East, North Africa, Asia Minor, Central and Southeast Asia & some Balkan countries. Numbers increasing in Western Europe, Russia and China.

# Who was Muhammad?

- ▶ According to Islamic lore, was born in 570 to a rich man from Quraysh, a tribe from the western coast of Arabia by the Red Sea and raised by an uncle.
- ▶ While meditating in a cave, an unknown spiritual being suddenly grabbed him and asked him to read what was written on the ground 3 times - his wife and cousin determined this being was angel Gabriel. Gabriel designated him 'seal of the prophets'. These 'revelations' constitute the *Quran*, Islam's holy book.
- ▶ Islam bestows on Muhammad the title of *Al-Insan Al-Kamil* - the Perfect Man and holds him as the ideal model of Islamic belief and life. Any answers to Islamic faith and practice can be found in him.
- ▶ He died in 632 and was a MAN OF MANY CONTRADICTIONS.
- ▶ His religion became the greatest rival to Christianity the world has ever seen.

# What is the Quran, and how is it different from the Bible?

- ▶ The Quran is the literal, uncreated and eternal word of Allah perfectly communicated to Muhammad over 22 yrs (he was the 'messenger'). It is organized into 114 chapters called *suras*.
- ▶ The Bible is the inspired word of God to man over thousands of years. Has different authors in multiple languages and throughout diverse places.
- ▶ To question the Quran is considered blasphemy punishable by death. Muhammad's words and deeds are considered the perfect model of Islamic piety.
- ▶ The Bible is the story of God's relationship with humanity revealing His divine nature and final plan for man's salvation from his sins.

# What are the Satanic verses?

- ▶ During Muhammad's early years Satan entered his body and spoke words through him. The Quran contains then words of Satan.
- ▶ Also at this time the concept of abrogation or *naskh* was introduced - allowing Muhammad to renounce earlier revelations from Allah, and allows Muslims great leeway in their personal interpretations.
- ▶ *Naskh* facilitates *taqiyya* which permits Muslims to lie to non-Muslims about Islam if it is done 'in the cause of Allah'. Allowing passages of peace and religious tolerance to be 'abrogated' to more militant passages.

# What are the other sources of Islamic teaching?

- ▶ *Hadith* means ‘report’. Islam’s sacred tradition compiled by Muslim intellectuals centuries after Muhammad died and ranked according to accuracy, ranging from indisputably accurate to likely forged.
- ▶ *Hadith* adds historical and situational information to Quranic passages.
- ▶ Provides all information known about Muhammad’s life and works.
- ▶ Shia Muslims add that the imam (a supreme Muslim leader descended from Muhammad) can also be a source of information since Allah will grant him ‘revelation’. They have other hadith collections they alone use.

# What is the difference between the Sunni and Shia?

- ▶ Theologies differ primarily over the means of communicating and relating with Allah.
- ▶ For Sunni, 80% of all Muslims, divine revelation is sealed with the Quran and the life and deeds of Muhammed. No other communication will take place until the end of time.
- ▶ For Shia, divine revelation includes the Quran and tradition but also Allah's communications to Muhammed's descendants. Allah still speaks to men and divine revelation can change.
- ▶ Shia Islam fractures into many different sects. If two imams conflict over a 'new' revelation, a new sect forms.

# Do Muslims worship the same God as Christians?

- ▶ The difference between the Christian God and Islam's Allah is how they conceive of God's *nature*. And it's a difference that goes beyond Islam's rejection of the Trinity.
- ▶ In Christianity God's nature is *love*; God is good, God will never do anything inconsistent with his being.
- ▶ In Islam, Allah nature is *the force of the will*; to do what he will, when he wills it, as he wills it, on the basis he wills it so because he has willed it so.
- ▶ Since the Second Vatican Council attempts to better facilitate better interfaith relations, emphasis that both religions point to God's oneness, mercy and judgship over the world.

# What do Muslims believe about Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary?

- ▶ Mary is the only woman in the Quran, Surah (chapter) 19 is about her.
- ▶ Among Muslims, Mary is considered exceptionally pious and of the highest spiritual rank among women.
- ▶ Islamic belief in Jesus and Mary is an excellent example of the cognitive dissonance within itself. There is no question that Muhammad grievously sinned. Jesus and Mary are never depicted or described as sinning. Yet Muhammad is greater than both because Allah decrees it so.
- ▶ Muslims find repellent Christians belief in Christ's divinity. Allah has SOLE divinity.
- ▶ Missionaries will be successful in the measure they preach Our Lady of Fatima with full realization that the BVM will carry Muslims the rest of the way to her divine Son.

# What is the Islamic view of non-Muslims?

- ▶ The difference is significant because it is not merely about theological differences - it strikes to the difference of man's dignity and worthiness of life.
- ▶ Islam teaches that all creation is made to submit to Allah's will and is thus Islamic.
- ▶ A person's humanity is thus conditional upon and proportionate to his belief in and practice of Islam.
- ▶ A non-Muslim or apostate from Islam simply does not possess human dignity.
- ▶ *Maqbul* - Muslim can decide to abuse, harass, or even kill a non-Muslim for refusal to convert to Islam and there is no sin attached under Islamic law.
- ▶ *Jihad* - theology that justifies mistreating of less pious by more pious.

# How did Islam spread?

- ▶ Has almost always spread by violence.
- ▶ *Dar al-Islam* - house of Islam that consists of all Muslims and areas under Muslim control.
- ▶ *Dar al-Harb* - house of war and comprises of all non-Muslims and their properties.
- ▶ The understanding is that Dar al-Islam will assimilate the Dar al-Harb by divine decree - not as a matter of if, but when.

# What is sharia?

- ▶ Sharia is the practical application of Islamic theology in daily life.
- ▶ It means “way”, and it indicates the proper form of conduct for people, businesses and societies in accordance with Islamic law.
- ▶ Derives from Quran, the Hadith and theological writings of Islamic scholars.
- ▶ There can be a degree of diversity to application of sharia law. That is why those who do violence in the name of Islam and those who refrain from it, can both say they are correctly following their religion.

I have Muslims friends who are good and peaceful people. Doesn't that prove that Islam is a religion of peace and the Muslims terrorists are disobeying the teachings of Islam?

- ▶ Islamic theology can never formally separate itself from the use of violence in the cause of Islam; to do so would be to deny what it regards as Allah's literal revealed word and the example of Allah's prophet, the Perfect Man.
- ▶ The typical response from Muslim authorities to Islamic terrorism is, therefore ***silence!*** For to renounce violence is to renounce they also renounce Muhammed and the Quran.

# Isn't it unfair to criticize the Quran when the Bible also contains divine sanction of violence?

- ▶ No one questions that both Christians and Muslims have done horrible things.
- ▶ However when Christians do them, they were disobeying Jesus' command and example.
- ▶ Whereas Muslims can and do legitimately claim they are acting in accordance WITH Muhammed's command and example.

# During the Crusades, didn't Christian armies once do the same kinds of things we criticize Muslim terrorists for today?

- ▶ The Crusades were primarily a defensive response to centuries of military incursions by Islamic forces.
- ▶ The great majority of Crusaders had good intentions and behaved admirably - there were a few evil men.
- ▶ Violence in Christian history has always been situational.
- ▶ Violence in Islam is an intrinsic part of the theology that follows it where ever it goes, and is a natural product of Muhammed's life and teachings as the perfect model of Islamic practice.

# Is modern Islamic hostility towards the West a result of Muslim memory of the Crusades?

- ▶ Islam ultimately reigned victorious.
- ▶ There are very few Muslim records of the Crusades.
- ▶ A great problem for Islamic theologians are countries once under Islam rule are now firmly under 'infidel' rule. Examples; Spain and Israel.
- ▶ These countries are now in Dar al-Harb, an intolerable theological quandary.

# Doesn't Islam have a special relationship with Christianity and Judaism, because all three religions come from Abraham?

- ▶ All claim a common connection to Abraham but NOT Abrahamic religions.
- ▶ The Quran claims that God's blessing passed to Ishmael NOT ISAAC and it was Ishmael whom God told Abraham to sacrifice, NOT ISAAC.
- ▶ Only Muhammed the 'seal of the prophets' is descended from Ishmael.
- ▶ In Christianity law is written on the heart by grace.
- ▶ In Islam law is written in a book - a book that contradicts and cancels itself as Allah wills.

# Aren't Muslims pro-life, and our allies in the fight against secularism?

- ▶ To Muslims the value of human life is **CONDITIONAL** upon the sustained belief in and practice of Islam.
- ▶ All major Muslim schools of thought also agree that the soul does not enter into an unborn child until the fourth Month.
- ▶ In Islam marriage is essentially a sex contract for generating legitimate children.
- ▶ The Quran permits 4 wives and an unlimited number of sex slaves.

# Is Islam a threat to the Church?

- ▶ The threat it poses to the Church is both spiritual and material.
- ▶ Islam draws its power from its theology. Is the 'culmination of all Christian heresies.
- ▶ It insinuates itself into Christian teaching, people and ideas while rejecting its most important truths.
- ▶ Another threatening facet is its endorsement of aggression and violence against unbelievers.
- ▶ The Church and Islam have always been at opposition and always will because their theologies are irreconcilable.

# How do you respond to people who claim that it's not tolerant, charitable, or even 'Christian' to criticize Islam?

- ▶ Nothing you promise, say or do will ever be sufficient.
- ▶ Best not to engage from a political or secular angle but from a religious one. Your disagreements are based on your faith.
- ▶ 2 choices: 1) remain silent and passive or attempt to explain away differences and problems. 2) speak the truth boldly and unceasingly.

# What's the right way to dialogue with Muslims?

- ▶ Be a living witness by knowing the Faith and living it daily.
- ▶ Remember Our Lady of Fatima may be a bridge into dialogue.
- ▶ Guidelines: want to communicate the truth and not meant to 'win sides'.
  - ▶ FOCUS ON IDEAS, NOT EVENTS - once you establish that an IDEA is accepted by Islam, you can connect it to the action it bears.
  - ▶ KEEP THE CONVERATION TO ONE TOPIC ONLY - NO EXCEPTIONS - if person does not respect this request he/she is really not interested in dialogue.
  - ▶ SPEAK ONLY TO WHAT YOU KNOW DEFINITELY - say "I don't know" and not engage or find information, person's beliefs tell him/her to distrust and question everything you say.
  - ▶ CRITIQUE ISLAM ONLY FROM ISLAMIC SOURCES - focus first on a few major subjects, ex. Muhammed's treatment of apostates from Islam, permissibility of lying to further the cause of Islam and aggressive violence against non-Muslims.
  - ▶ KEEP MEN WITH MEN AND WOMEN WITH WOMEN - NEVER MIX THE TWO.

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- ▶ Be at peace at the reaction of others. You cannot force a soul to learn about me...
- ▶ You can give witness to My presence by talking about your love for Me and the graces you have received from Me.
- ▶ Talk about peace. Talk about joy. Talk about calm.
- ▶ Do not talk about the enemy. (There is too much emphasis placed on the minimal power of the ones who seeks destruction.)
- ▶ Fear nothing.

*“O Mary, God has chosen you and purified you, and elected you above all the women of the earth!”*  
*-Quran, 3:42*

- ▶ Our Lady of Fatima, one aspect that often goes unnoticed is the subtle connection with Islam. The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to the three shepherd children near the city of Fátima, Portugal, a place named after both a Muslim princess and the daughter of Mohammed.
- ▶ Besides attracting Christian pilgrims, the shrine at Fátima, Portugal, has also attracted Muslims in great numbers. They go to see the place where the Virgin Mary appeared in a city named after one of their most highly revered woman.
- ▶ **Venerable Fulton Sheen:** *“Since nothing ever happens out of heaven except with a finesse of all details, I believe that the Blessed Virgin chose to be known as “Our Lady of Fátima” as a pledge and a sign of hope to the Moslem people, and as an assurance that they, who show her so much respect, will one day accept her Divine Son, too.”*