

Engaging with Islam

THE QUR'AN AND HADITH - SESSION 3

PART 1: Preparation and Discussion

Definitions

- Qur'an - The main Islamic holy book. The recommended translation is by Alan Jones.
- Sura - A chapter of the Qur'an.
- Sunnah - The practices and customs of Muhammad and his companions. The opposite of sunnah is *bid'a* which means innovation. The sunnah is recorded in books called the Hadith.
- Hadith - A short account of Muhammad's life or the life of one of his companions.

Qur'an Readings

Q1. The following readings are a selection of the various types of material in the Qur'an. Read them and discuss your observations.

Sura 1 is the opening chapter of the Qur'an and is recited during the Islamic prayers.

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the world;
Most Gracious, Most Merciful;
Master of the Day of Judgment.
You do we worship, and your aid we seek.
Show us the straight way,
The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not
wrath, and who go not astray. (Qur'an 1, Yusuf Ali)

Many suras in the Qur'an deal with the objections the Meccans had against Muhammad.

(Those who oppose Muhammad) say: "Why is not a sign sent down to him (Muhammad) from his Lord?" Say: "God has certainly power to send down a sign: but most of them understand not." (Qur'an 6:37, Yusuf Ali)

This sura is a reflection on God/Allah and the Day of Judgement.

When the Sky is cleft asunder;
When the Stars are scattered;
When the Oceans are suffered to burst forth;
And when the Graves are turned upside down;-
(Then) shall each soul know what it has sent forward and (what it has) kept back.
O man! What has seduced you from your Lord Most Beneficent?
Him Who created you. Fashioned you in due proportion, and gave you a just bias;
In whatever Form He wills, does He put you together.
No! But you do reject Right and Judgment!
But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you,-
Kind and honourable,- Writing down (your deeds):
They know (and understand) all that you do.

As for the Righteous, they will be in bliss;
And the Wicked - they will be in the Fire,
Which they will enter on the Day of Judgment,
And they will not be able to keep away therefrom.
And what will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is?
Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgment is?
(It will be) the Day when no soul shall have power (to do) aught for another: For the command,
that Day, will be (wholly) with Allah. (Qur'an 82, Yusuf Ali)

There are several suras about who to conquer, why, and how Islam's destiny is to rule the world.

Fight those who believe not in God and the Last Day and do not forbid what God and His Messenger (Muhammad) have forbidden - such men as practise not the religion of truth (Islam), being of those who have been given the Book (Christians and Jews) - until they pay the tribute (jizyah) out of hand and have been humbled. The Jews say, 'Ezra is the Son of God'; the Christians say, 'The Messiah is the Son of God.' That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming with the unbelievers before them. God assail them! How they are perverted! ... It is He who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion (Qur'an 9:29-33, Arberry, 48:28-29, 61:9)

The Qur'an and the Bible

The Qur'an often refers to the people and events recorded in the Bible, Bible commentaries, and apocryphal writings. It assumes that people know these stories, however, it never quotes them in the careful way the New Testament quotes the Old Testament, rather Muhammad retells the stories to illustrate a point he is making.

While Muhammad uses these stories he has little understanding about their significance: The Qur'an speaks of the six days of creation, but does not mention the seventh. It talks about the Exodus from Egypt, but not the Passover. It speaks of Aaron, but never as a priest. It talks about Abraham, but not God's covenant to bless the nations through him. It talks about Eden and Paradise but God's presence does not dwell there. There is no redemptive history, or story of salvation, in the Qur'an.

Q2. What is the effect of these omissions?

Muhammad also shows no understanding of the history of the Bible: In the Qur'an Jesus' mother is Mary/Mariam the sister of Moses and Aaron, the daughter of Amram (Ex. 15:20, Num. 26:59).

God exalted Adam and Noah, Abraham's descendants and the descendants of Imran (Amram) above the nations ... Remember the words of Imran's wife. "Lord", she said, "I dedicate to Your service that which is in my womb. Accept it from me" ... And when she was delivered of the child, she said: "Lord I have given birth to a daughter ... and have called her Mary" The angels said to Mary: "God bids you rejoice in a Word from Him. His name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary." (Qur'an 3:35ff, Dawood. Also 66:12)

Carrying the child (Jesus), she came to her people, who said to her: "Mary, this is indeed a strange thing! Sister of Aaron ..." (Qur'an 19:27-28, Dawood. Also 19:53)

The Qur'an has an outsiders view of Christianity and the Bible.

Muhammad also transforms the biblical characters into Muslims who teach Islamic theology; and so

in the Qur'an Jesus teaches Jihadist ideology (Q. 9:111), brought a book from God like Muhammad (19:30), practised Islam (19:31), was a prophet like Muhammad (4:171), predicted the coming of Muhammad (61:6), and Jesus' disciples called themselves Muslims (5:111). Muhammad does not include any of Jesus parables or teaching instead he uses the name of Jesus to promote Islam.

Q3. What would you say to a Muslim who said, "I have read the Qur'an so I know the message of the prophets."

The Hadith

The Qur'an provides only a small part of the information a Muslim needs. The rest of this information comes from the example (sunnah) of Muhammad as recorded in books called *the Hadith*. Muhammad is the Islamic reformer, and what he accepts or rejects in a culture is a demonstration of the culture that Allah desires. Here is an example of a hadith that records Muhammad's sunnah (practice) for how to pray.

Narrated (told by) 'Umar bin Abi Salama: I saw the Prophet (Muhammad) offering prayers in a single garment in the house of Um-Salama and he had crossed its ends around his shoulders. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*: vol. 1, bk 8, no. 351)

It is because Muhammad has this reforming role that devout Muslims want to imitate his sunnah (example) in absolutely everything, and why the Hadith is so important.



PART 2: Video Presentation (21 minutes) <https://youtu.be/w7IeL8FTSgq>

The Qur'an

The Bible

Torah	Prophets	Psalms	Gospel
1500 years			

The Hadith

The Islamic Canon	
Qur'an	
Sunni Hadith	Shia Hadith
Al-Bukhari (d. 870 C.E.) Muslim (d. 875 C.E.) Abu Daud (d. 875 C.E.) Al-Tirmizi (d. 892 C.E.) Al-Nasai (d. 915 C.E.) Ibn Maja (d. 886 C.E.)	Muhammad ibn Yakub Al-Kulluni (d. 939 C.E.) Muhammad Al-Hummi (d. 991 C.E.) Tahir Al-Sharif Al-Murtaza (d. 1004 C.E.) Muhammad Al-Tusi (d. 1067 C.E.)

How to read the Qur'an.

The Qur'an	
Meccan Suras	Medinan Suras.

Muslim-Christian relations.

The Roman Empire has been defeated - In a land close by; but they, after (this) defeat of theirs, will soon be victorious - Within a few years. With God is the Decision, in the past and in the Future: on that Day shall the Believers (Muslims) rejoice - (Qur'an 30:2-4, Yusuf Ali)

Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. (Qur'an 16:125, Yusuf Ali)

(Y)ou will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe (to be) those who say: We are Christians ... (Qur'an 5:82, Shakir)

If any one disputes in this matter (about Jesus) with you, now after (full) knowledge has come to you, say: "Come! let us gather together, our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: Then let us earnestly pray, and invoke the curse of God on those who lie!" (Qur'an 3:61, Yusuf Ali)

Fight those who believe not in God and the Last Day and do not forbid what God and His Messenger (Muhammad) have forbidden - such men as practise not the religion of truth (Islam), being of those who have been given the Book (Christians and Jews) - until they pay the tribute out of hand and have been humbled. ... It is He who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may uplift it above every religion (Qur'an 9:29-33, Arberry, 48:28-29, 61:9)

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Do not greet the Jews and the Christians before they greet you and when you meet any one of them on the roads force him to go to the narrowest part of it. (Sahih Muslim: bk. 26, no. 5389)

The Quran itself is aware of this changing nature - Abrogation. See Quran 2:106 & 16:101.

The Qur'an *revolves* and *evolves* around Muhammad. There is an evolution in the teaching of the Qur'an with a spectrum of applications.

Applying the Qur'an - Which part of the Qur'an applies depends upon how your context *corresponds* to that of Muhammad.

PART 3: Discussion

Q4. Do you have any comments about the video?

Q5. Does the Qur'an contain any of the books of the Bible? Whose material does it contain?

Q6. Why is it not fair to compare the Bible to the Qur'an?

Q7. What would you say to the following comment? “Female circumcision is not mentioned in the Qur’an and is therefore not part of Islam.”

Q8. What two cities did Muhammad live in? How is this reflected in the Qur’an?

Q9. The Qur’an revolves and evolves around Muhammad’s life, thus it teaches changes over time. How do you apply the Qur’an accurately?

Answers

Q2. The Qur’an misses out the main point of every story.

Q3. You only know what Muhammad says about the prophets, not what the prophets say themselves.

Q5. The Qur’an only contains what Muhammad said; it has no books of the Bible in it.

Q6. No, because Islam is based on the Qur’an and Hadith, not the Qur’an alone.

Q7. Islam is not based on the Qur’an but on the Qur’an and Hadith and female circumcision is in the Hadith and Shariah.

Q8. Muhammad lived in Mecca and Medina, thus there are Meccan and Medinan suras. These suras can teach different things because when he lived in Mecca he was a powerless preacher but in Medina he made an army and started the first Islamic State.

Q9. To apply the Qur’an properly a Muslim needs to ask how their context corresponds to that of Muhammad.

PART 4: Activities

1. Have you done the following? Circle an answer.

Smile at a Muslim. Greet the Muslims you know. Yes/No.

Pray at home and at church for the Islamic world and the Muslims you know, and for Christians who are suffering under Islam. Yes/No.

Have you planned as a group which activities you will do? Yes/No.

2. Questions for Muslims

Ask if they know what books are in the Bible. Yes/No.