

WHAT IS ISLAM? (PART 1 OF 4): THE CORE OF ISLAM

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Description: The main message of Islam is the same basic message in all revealed religions, as they are all from the same source, and the reasons for disparity found between religions.

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Among the blessings and favors that God has bestowed upon humanity is that He endowed them with an innate ability to recognize and acknowledge His existence. He placed this awareness deep in their hearts as a natural disposition that has not changed since human beings were first created. Furthermore, He reinforced this natural disposition with the signs that he placed in creation that testify to His existence. However, since it is not possible for human beings to have a detailed knowledge of God except through revelation from Himself, God sent His Messengers to teach the people about their Creator Who they must worship. These Messengers also brought with them the details of how to worship God, because such details cannot be known except by way of revelation. These two fundamentals were the most important things that the Messengers of all the divine revelations brought with them from God. On this basis, all the divine revelations have had the same lofty objectives, which are:



1. To affirm the Oneness of God - the praised and glorified Creator – in His essence and His attributes.
2. To affirm that God alone should be worshipped and that no other being should be worshipped along with Him or instead of Him.
3. To safeguard human welfare and oppose corruption and evil. Thus, everything that safeguards faith, life, reason, wealth and lineage are part of this human welfare that religion protects. On the other hand, anything that endangers these five universal needs is a form of corruption that religion opposes and prohibits.
4. To invite the people to the highest level of virtue, moral values, and noble customs.

The ultimate goal of every Divine Message has always been the same: to guide the people to God, to make them aware of Him, and to have them worship Him alone. Each Divine Message came to strengthen this meaning, and the following words were repeated on the tongues of all the Messengers: "Worship God, you have no god other than Him." This message was conveyed to humanity by prophets and messengers which God sent to every nation. All of these messengers came with this same message, the message of Islam.

All the Divine Messages came to bring the life of the people into willing submission to God. For this reason, they all share the name of "Islam", or "submission" derived from the same word as "Salam", or "peace", in Arabic. Islam, in this sense, was the religion of all the prophets, but why does one see different variations of the religion of God if they all emanated from the same source? The answer is twofold.

The first reason is that as a result of the passage of time, and due to the fact that previous religions were not under the Divine protection of God, they underwent much change and variation. As a result, we see that the fundamental truths which were brought by all messengers now differ from one religion to another, the most apparent being the strict tenet of the belief and worship of God and God alone.

The second reason for this variation is that God, in His infinite Wisdom and eternal Will, decreed that all the divine missions prior to the final message of Islam brought by Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, be limited to a specific time frame. As a result, their laws and methodologies dealt with the specific conditions of the people whom they had been sent to address.

Humanity has passed through numerous periods of guidance, misguidance, integrity, and deviation, from the most primitive age to the heights of civilization. Divine guidance accompanied humanity through all of this, always providing the appropriate solutions and remedies.

This was the essence of the disparity that existed between the different religions. This disagreement never went beyond the particulars of the Divine Law. Each manifestation of the Law addressed the particular problems of the people it was meant for. However, the areas of agreement were significant and many, such as fundamentals of faith; the basic principles and objectives of the Divine Law, such as protecting faith, life, reason, wealth, and lineage and establishing justice in the land; and certain fundamental prohibitions, some of the most important of these being idolatry, fornication, murder, theft, and giving false witness. Moreover, they also agreed upon moral virtues like honesty, justice, charity, kindness, chastity, righteousness, and mercy. These principles as well as others are permanent and lasting; they are the essence of all the Divine Messages and bind them all together.

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