

Islam and Christianity

Islam and Christianity, the world's two largest Divine religions, have many beliefs in common, such as God's absolute existence, His eternal existence, His creation of the universe from nothing, and His control of all matter through His infinite might. Muslims and Christians oppose the same intellectual errors; struggle against atheism, racism, fascism, and moral degeneration; and use very similar methods to communicate the message of God's existence. Their common aim is to help all people know God so that they can build a world full of justice, one in which they can live in peace and tolerance. They act out of piety, respect, and love for God; follow the path of His messengers, and abide by His revelation.

There is also great harmony in terms of moral values. A human model that thinks only of its own interests is selfish, self-centered and lacking the exact opposite of the religious moral values espoused by Muslims and Christians alike. Muslims and Christians long for a world governed by love, honesty, compassion, devotion, justice, humility, and fraternity, and endeavor to bring such a world about. They also strive against the behavior forbidden by our Lord, such as prostitution, homosexuality, drug abuse, violence, and exploitation.

Both Christians and Muslims harbor a deep love of and respect for Prophet Jesus (pbuh), God's chosen messenger who was introduced to us in the Qur'an and made superior to the worlds: He [Jesus] is, "Held in honor in this world and in the Hereafter, and will be one of those who are near to God " (Quran 3: 45). He is a most valuable servant, one honored by God with various miracles and superior moral values.

Another important matter that needs to be emphasized is that Muslims, who believe in all of the prophets and books sent by God, respect the beliefs and values of both Christians and Jews. The Qur'an considers Judaism's Torah and the Psalms as well as Christianity's New Testament to be divine books, and regards Jews and Christians as People of the Book. The Qur'an describes Muslims as " those who believe in (the Qur'an and the Sunnah) which has been sent down (revealed) to you (Muhammad Peace be upon him) and in that which we sent down before [the Taurât (Torah) and the Injeel (Bible).," (Quran 2:4)

The phrase "what was sent down before you" is a reference to the Pages of Prophet Abraham (pbuh), the Torah of Prophet Moses (pbuh), the Book of Psalms of Prophet David (pbuh), and the Gospels of Prophet Jesus (pbuh). God's revelation to Prophet Abraham (pbuh) no longer exists. Nonetheless, sections compatible with the Qur'an regarding faith in God and His prophets; the love, fear, and respect of God; proper moral values and the like have survived to the present day. (God knows best.) God revealed these books as guides to the humanity: "He has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what was there before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel previously, as guidance for humanity" (Quran 3: 3-4). In another verse, God says of the Torah:

We sent down the Torah containing guidance and light, and the Prophets who had submitted themselves gave judgment by it for the Jews by what they had been allowed to preserve of God's Book to which they were witnesses. (Quran 5: 44)

In the Qur'an, God provides a great deal of important information about the theological or moral errors of some members of People of the Book. This does not mean, however, that all of them have gone astray, as the following verses state:

They are not all alike. Of the People of the Scripture there is a staunch community who recite the revelations of Allah in the night season, falling prostrate (before Him). (113) They believe in Allah and the Last Day, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency, and vie one with another in good works. These are of the righteous. (114) And whatever good they do, they will not be denied the meed thereof. Allah is Aware of those who ward off (evil). (Quran 3: 113-115)

And lo! of the People of the Scripture there are some who believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto you and that which was revealed unto them, humbling themselves before Allah. They purchase not a trifling gain at the price of the revelations of Allah. Verily their reward is with their Lord. Lo! Allah is swift to take account. (Quran 3: 199)

Exemplary Muslims live their lives according to the Qur'an, for it determines their value judgments, moral characteristics, and perspectives on life and other people. The same thing applies to their attitude toward the People of the Book, for they always approach them on a basis of tolerance, justice, and love. Thus, Muslims regard them not as the opposition, but as devoted believers in God. Anything else would be a violation of the Qur'an, since many of them have a sincere belief in God and may therefore hope for salvation.

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