

Searching for happiness? A call to non-Muslims

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Happiness is a common goal that everyone strives to attain. Philosophers, intellectuals, doctors and artists alike, all are in search of the causes of happiness and ways to escape anxiety. The reality is however, that the solutions being presented achieve only partial or imaginary happiness. They are more or less like drugs, taken to feel temporary relief, but when their effect withdraws, anxieties return twice fold. This article before you invites you to ultimate happiness and will take you by the hand towards true success. An invitation from Dr. Saleh as Sindee of the Islamic University of Madeenah, Saudi Arabia.

Before you begin however, I would like you to take a moment and try and open your heart and mind to it, an intelligent individual searches for and accepts the truth, no matter where it lies.

A reality that cannot be denied is that permanent happiness cannot be achieved except by believing in God and following His guidance. Since it is He who created mankind, therefore it is He who knows what pleases, benefits, saddens and harms them. A number of philosophers have admitted that religious people lead content, worriless lives. So if believing in God leads to ultimate happiness, then how can this be achieved?

There are numerous religions and a variety of creeds, whoever analyzes them would realize that they differ in core issues making it impossible for all of them to be correct. So which is the correct religion, and which is the correct creed that God is pleased with and requires us to believe in? Which one of these creeds would guarantee us happiness in the life of this world and the hereafter?

Before I tackle these questions, we must first establish a correct basis, which we would then use to lead us to the correct religion and creed:

Any intelligent individual would agree that being raised upon a certain religion, in a society and with parents who adhere to that religion, does not necessitate that it is correct. So long as there aren't any other substantial evidences to prove and convince people that this is the case. Since it is intellect that distinguishes us from animals, we must apply our intellect when studying an issue as grave and important as this.

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A short journey into the world of religions and shifting through various creeds is a good method in arriving at the desired conclusion. In order to save you the time and effort, I say with full conviction and confidence; no matter how much you investigate this issue, you would only arrive at one reality, that the true and correct religion is Islam and true happiness and content lies with it.

Before you hastily rebut this statement and stop reading, please realise that completing the rest would not harm you in anything, and may benefit you.

You are an intelligent being, with intellect you distinguish things, and you can distinguish the truth from falsehood.

Why Islam?

An important question, indicating that the questioner is of sound mind and intellect, in response I say:

Islam is a religion that includes a number of characteristics that are absent from other religions, it contains substantial evidences that establish that it is the true religion sent by God. You can validate the authenticity of this statement by calmly and deeply thinking about the following:

Islam has a lot of merits and characteristics which makes it impossible to elaborate on all of them, however, I will present a few which can be summarised as follows:

1. Amongst the greatest merits of Islam, is that it fulfils the spiritual aspects of the human being and enables those who embrace it to have an ongoing connection with God. This makes it possible for them to be at ease spiritually. It shields them from chaos, being lost, and being spiritually anxious or psychopathic.

2. Another of Islam's merits is that it never contradicts intellect. All of the Islamic legislation and its rulings can be acknowledged intellectually, they can never contradict intelligence. This is why we find that when a gentleman who embraced Islam was asked why he did so, he replied:

'Islam never ordered me to do anything that I later wished that such an issue was not ordered, it also never forbade me from anything that I later wished that such an issue wasn't forbidden.'

It is difficult to accept a lot of principals that are present in other religions, principals that cause confusion, making one wonder about a lot of the essentials of other religions. On the other hand, we find that Islam respects intelligence, prohibits ignorance and condemns blind following.

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3. Islam converges both religious and worldly life; it attends to both spirit and body. Practicing Islam does not mean that one has to be isolated, following a specific demeanour. It does not prohibit indulging in the finer things in life. Rather, a Muslim can be religious as well as lead a normal life, indulging himself in the best life has to offer, allowing him to reach the highest of positions and to achieve the greatest of achievements.

4. Amongst the merits of Islam, is that it is a comprehensive religion. Every aspect of a person's life is regulated by Islam. There is not a problem except that a solution for it lies in Islam, which makes it possible to embrace and practice it in every time period or region. How can this not be the case in such a well organised religion, it has rules and regulations for every aspect of life, starting from the rulings of judging and resolving disputes, moving on to the rulings of buying and selling, trade, social and marital relations, and ending with regulations concerning greeting, the mannerisms of the walkways, as well as regulating how a person deals with even his own self in issues related to sleeping, eating and dressing. All these regulations are addressed in detail, causing the mind to pause in wonder. Know that Islam even provides directions on how to wear and remove footwear, it encourages people to use their right hand when eating, drinking, shaking hands, giving and receiving items. As for disliked affairs such as using the bathroom, the left hand is to be used. When it's time to sleep, Islam has wonderful directions regarding going to sleep and getting up. When two Muslims meet, Islam regulates how they should greet each other; a rider should initiate the greeting with a pedestrian, the young should initiate the greeting with the elderly, a small group should initiate the greeting with a larger group. These are but a few of Islam's many comprehensive regulations for all aspects of life.

5. Another of Islam's merits is that it establishes good for mankind in all its regulations and safeguards them from evil; it is mankind himself who benefits from these regulations. When Islam prohibits alcohol or drugs for example, this is only because of the great harms they have over the mind and health of a person. You can witness the state of a drunken man, no longer human except in appearance. A lot of murders, disputes, traffic accidents and rapes would not have taken place were it not for consuming these mind altering products. Islam prohibits sexual relations outside marriage, this is so mankind can avoid destructive diseases such as aids and so on, and so societies can be free of bad manners and avoid the existence of a bastard generation, a generation that is deprived of a mother's love and a father's upbringing, a generation that may be burdensome on a society. Islam prohibits women from displaying their bodies publicly in the presence of strange men; this is because it considers women to be esteemed, preserved pearls, not some cheap merchandise, to be displayed for all to see. It does so to protect women from the wolves of mankind, those who are only concerned with satisfying their lusts, even if it is at the cost of a woman's honour, nobility, status and purity. On the other hand, Islam permits all harmless and beneficial drinks. It permits married couples to indulge in sexual relations within a happy home. In conclusion, Islam does not limit freedom, it only regulates it for the benefit of mankind and the society that we live in.

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6. A radiant aspect of Islam is that it pays a great deal of attention to praiseworthy manners and prohibits mankind from oppression, transgression and bad mannerisms. Islam is a religion of unity and mercy, it regulates an individual's relationship with his parents, relatives, neighbours, friends and all people. It sows the best of manners in those who believe in Islam and prevents them from leading a selfish lifestyle, it encourages them to help others, take other's feelings into consideration, such as the poor, orphans, the elderly and widows. They all have rights in Islam that must not be taken lightly by Muslims. Muslims shouldn't feel like they are bestowing favours upon others when giving them their due rights, rather these rights are obligations upon Muslims. It is considered to be a sin in Islam for one to go to sleep with a full stomach knowing that his neighbour is hungry. Islam even prohibits two people from whispering to each other in the presences of a third, taking his feelings into consideration. Islam goes even further than that, obligating treating animals kindly and prohibiting harming them. From the particulars of Islam in such issues, is that it prohibits slaughtering an animal while another watches, or sharpening a knife while it is watching, so that it is not killed twice. Truthfulness, trustworthiness, bravery, generosity, humility, abiding by promises are all mannerisms that Islam encourages, in addition to visiting the sick, attending funerals, being dutiful to parents, visiting relatives and neighbours, and striving to help others are all manners that are encouraged by Islam. On the other hand, Islam utterly prohibits mankind from oppression, lying, being conceited, jealousy, mockery and insulting or betraying others. It is impermissible in Islam to speak ill of a person in his absence, even if what is being said is true. It encourages people to take the middle ground regarding spending their money, neither being spendthrifts nor misers.

During times when a lot of societies complain about cold heartedness, materialism, being conceited and so on, we find that Islam has the solutions for all these problems.

If what has preceded has given you a summarised introduction to Islam and some of its merits, then it would be appropriate to mention here that Islam is a clear religion that can be easily understood by anyone, it is a religion that has its doors wide open, they do not shut for anyone who wants to open them.

Since understanding all the regulations of Islam with a short article like this is impossible, then expounding shortly upon its most important regulations should at least increase in further clarifying it for those who want to learn about it.

All of Islam's regulations and teachings are important, but some are more important than others, and there are six important articles of faith that one must believe in, and five pillars that have to be practiced.

As for the six articles that must be believed in:

1. Believing in Allaah (God) alone, associating no partners unto Him in worship. This is done by believing that Allaah alone is the creator of this universe and everything that is within it,

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and that it is He alone who disposes its affairs as He sees fit. Since this is the case, consequently worship can only be offered to Him alone. Worship is performing the regulations of Islam and implementing the legislation of Islam while believing that all other religions are false.

2. Believing in the angels. Angels were created by Allaah but we can not see them. They worship Allaah and never disobey Him; Allaah orders them to carry out a lot of the affairs of the universe. The angel Gabriel for example, may peace be upon him, he delivers Allaah's revelation to the messengers. Another is Mikayeel, may peace be upon him, he is charged with the affairs of rain. Amongst them are angels who are charged with writing the deeds of mankind, deeds which they will be held accountable for on the day of resurrection. It is essential to believe that these angels only act upon the order of Allaah and only do what He wills.

3. Believing in the Books of Revelation. This is done by believing that Allaah revealed books to His servants containing His words. Books that contain bliss for mankind, clarifying what pleases Allaah as well as what He dislikes. The Angel charged with delivering revelation to the Prophets is Gabriel, may peace be upon him, the greatest of angels. A prophet then conveys the revelation to the rest of mankind. Allaah has revealed many books, amongst them: The Torah, Allaah sent it to Moses, may peace be upon him. The Zaboor which was revealed to David, may peace be upon him. The Bible, which was sent down to Jesus, may peace be upon him, and the Qur'aan which was revealed to Muhammad, may peace be upon him. One must believe that all these books have been abrogated by the Qur'aan, meaning that it is now the only book that must be acted upon after the Prophet (Muhammad) was sent. Not to mention that the Qur'aan combines all the merits of past books and further supplements them. Know that the Qur'aan is from the greatest of evidences that this is an authentic religion, revealed by Allaah (God) the Majestic. The Qur'aan was revealed 1400 years ago. Since then to this day, no mistakes or contradictions were found in the Qur'aan, not even a single letter. Modern scientific discoveries revealed in the Qur'aan are still being discovered today. Since that time until today, nothing has been added to or subtracted from the Qur'aan, as is the case with previous revelations. It is for this reason that you can pick up a copy of the Qur'aan in the far east and find it to be exactly the same as one you picked up in the far west. If you were to come across a copy of the Qur'aan that is hundreds of years old, you would also find that it is exactly the same as one being printed currently, you wouldn't be able to find even one letter that is different. This is because of Allaah's protection over this Book, a Book that sealed all other religions. Speaking about the Qur'aan would take a lot of time, but it is enough for you to know that there is nothing like it, in terms of technique, the effect it has on people, and in terms of foretelling of future events as well as events that took place in the past.

4. Believing in the Prophets. This is done by believing that Allaah has chosen the best of mankind to send His revelation down to and ordered them to convey His religion to the

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people. There are numerous Prophets, amongst them are; Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, Lot, Joseph, Moses and others, may peace be upon all of them. Amongst them is Jesus, it is imperative to believe that he is amongst the best of Prophets, to love and respect him. Whoever hates him or denies the fact that he is a prophet is not Muslim. Likewise it is compulsory to believe that Allaah created him from only a mother, with no father, as Allaah was able to create Adam without neither a mother nor a father. Having mentioned this, we now know that Jesus is a noble messenger and not God, nor is he a son to God. He foretold of the coming of a prophet who would come after him; Muhammad son of Abdullah, the last of the prophets, there will be no prophet after him. Muhammad son of Abdullah, may peace be upon him, who was sent 1400 years ago, it is compulsory for every one who came after him to the Day of Judgment to believe in him, his message and obey his orders and prohibitions. All those who studied the biography of this messenger have agreed that he is a grand personality, who has been bestowed with the best of manners and the highest of characteristics by Allaah. He had characteristics which were not present in anyone before him and would not be present in anyone after him. Anything that you read about him, no matter how small it is, would confirm what I am saying. Allaah has also granted him proofs and evidences that establish the authenticity of his prophet hood, rendering having doubt in this fact intellectually impossible. Having been given such proofs and evidences of his prophet hood, whoever denies his truthfulness, would make it impossible for that individual to establish the truthfulness of any other prophet.

5. The last day. This is done by firmly believing that after this life of ours is over, there is another more complete life. There is an immense reward and magnificent luxuries in it, as well as punishment. Luxury is in Heaven and punishment in Hell. So whoever is righteous and believes in the religion of Islam would enter Heaven, a place which contains untold luxuries as well as bliss that cannot be imagined. All the luxuries present on earth cannot be compared to it at all. Whoever enters Heaven would continue to live in such luxuries for eternity, death does not exist therein. As for those who act upon evil and do not believe in Islam, they would end up in Hell, which contains fires and punishment that cannot be imagined, all of the fires of earth and forms of punishment cannot be compared to the punishment of the hellfire at all. The existence of punishment and reward after this life is an issue that is intellectually acknowledged, because it is impossible for this world to exist and then just diminish into nothingness. This is trifling about, and our Lord, the creator, does not engage in trifle activities.

6. Believing in Divine Decree. This is done by believing that everything that takes place in this world is due to Allaah's knowledge and will. Nothing except what He wills takes place, and what He does not will, does not take place. Allaah has written everything in a great book (the guarded scriptures). Believing in divine decree also includes believing that Allaah created everything.

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As for the five pillars that must be practiced:

1. Uttering a phrase that is the key to embracing Islam. It is a contract between a servant and his Lord, signifying that he is upon this religion: "Ashhadu an la ilaha ila Allaah, wa ashadu ana Muhammad `abduhu wa rasulahu." "I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allaah, and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger." It means that a person affirms and admits that worship must only be offered to Allaah alone, in addition to acting upon that, that the religion of Islam is the correct religion, the only true God deserving worship is Allaah, that all other gods are false and all other religions are also false [or abrogated].

2. The Prayer. It is only combination of specific as well as splendid sayings, actions and invocations. It is performed five times daily and doesn't take much time at all. In fact, a prayer may not take more than five minutes. Prayers are the link between a servant and his Lord; it enables a Muslim to be confident, mentally and spiritually at rest, calm and untroubled.

3. The Zakaat. A wealthy Muslim must give a small portion of his money to the poor, 2.5 percent of his wealth to be exact. It is a minute amount, but it enables the Muslim community to be conciliated and merciful amongst each other. It propagates brotherhood, love and concern amongst Muslims. I repeat, Zakaat is only to be given out by the wealthy, not the poor.

4. Fasting. What is meant by fasting, is that a person withholds from eating, drinking and sexual relations during the month of Ramadan every year, between sunrise and sunset. The sick, travellers and those with valid excuses are pardoned from fasting, they are permitted to eat and drink but must make up missed days the following year after their excuses have expired. Fasting has a lot of health, personal as well as social benefits. Amongst them are; giving the digestive system a break, allowing Muslims to grow spiritually and practice good mannerisms. It enables Muslims to be conscious of their needy brothers and sisters, those who are unable to find enough food to satisfy their needs throughout the whole year. Consequently, Muslims would treat them with humility and strive to help them.

5. Hajj. It is a form of worship that must be performed only once in a lifetime, in Makkah. The sick and those who are not financially able to perform it are pardoned from doing so. There are many magnificent benefits in Hajj; the gathering of Muslims from all around the globe in one place, getting to know each other and displaying love for one another. In addition, Muslims achieve spiritual purification and rectify their mannerisms due to experiencing such a spiritual environment in the shade of Hajj.

To proceed, this should be sufficient in expounding some of the merits of Islam. I call on all Non-Muslims, listen to an honest person who only wants good for you: Save yourself before death takes you by surprise, dying as a Non-Muslim, what a great loss that is.

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Do you know what dying as a Non-Muslim means? It means that you would enter the Hellfire, abiding therein for eternity. This is what Allaah promised those who die as Non-Muslims. So how can you be negligent of an issue as grave as this?

I'm going to ask you a question, I hope that you can answer it honestly:

What would you lose if you embrace Islam?

If you embrace Islam, you could continue living your normal ordinary life, but in a more spiritual, organised and pleasant fashion, and after death, tremendous delight and eternal luxury awaits you.

If you reached a level of conviction, knowing that Islam is the true religion, but fear that embracing Islam would bar you from indulging in pleasures that you cannot live without, then compare these temporary pleasures with eternal pleasure. Which of the two is more important?

Furthermore, you can embrace Islam and then gradually try to reduce such pleasures, and if you were to honestly invoke Allaah, He would surely aid you. In any case, embracing Islam and being sinful is better than not embracing Islam at all.

If your refusal of Islam is due to having a weak personality, the inability to make such a big decision, fearing what people may say about you, or people mocking you, know that these are just unrealistic thoughts. You would not be the first non-Muslim to embrace Islam, a lot of others have done so. They did not lose anything, their lives were not ruined nor do they have any regrets. Furthermore, can you possibly risk your own well being, contempt in the life of this world and in the hereafter just because you fear mockery or admonishment?

This affair is worthy of your time, contemplating upon it deeply.

My last words: Do not lose yourself! I ask Allaah to bless you with true guidance.

D. Saleh Abdul Azeez.

One who wishes only the best for you.