and benevolence of Almighty God. Also, the belief in the Oneness of God is not simply an academic concept. It is a belief that also affects ones view of humanity, society and all aspects of life.

Question 6. What is the Quran?

It is the final revelation of the will of Almighty God to all of mankind, which was conveyed through the Angel Gabriel, in Arabic, to the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in its sounds, words and meanings. The Quran, sometimes spelled Koran, was relayed by the Prophet to his companions, which they memorised verbatim, and which has been publicly and continually recited by them and their successors until the present day. In short, the Quran is the book of guidance from God par excellence. The Quran is still memorised and taught by millions of people. The language of the Quran, Arabic, is still a living language to millions of people, so unlike the scriptures of other religions, the Quran is still read in its original language by countless millions of people. The Quran is a living miracle in the Arabic language; and it is incapable of being imitated in its style, form and spiritual impact. God's final revelation to mankind, the Quran, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty three years. The Quran, in contrast to many other religious books, was always thought to be the actual and real Word of God by those who believed in it. It was not something decreed by a religious council of men many years after being written. Also, the Quran was recited publicly in front of both the Muslim and non-Muslim communities during the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The entire Quran was also completely written down in the lifetime of the Prophet, and numerous companions of the Prophet memorised the entire Quran word-for-word as it was revealed. So unlike other scriptures, the Quran was always in the hands of the common believers, it was always thought to be God's word and, due to wide-spread memorisation, it was perfectly preserved. With regards to the teachings of the Quran, it is a universal scripture, and it is addressed to all of mankind, and not to a particular tribe or a 'chosen people'. The message that it brings is nothing new, but the same message of all of the Prophets, i.e. submit to Almighty God and worship Him alone without association of partners. As such, God's revelation in the Quran focuses on teaching human beings the importance of true monotheism and framing their lives around the guidance which He has sent. Additionally, the Quran contains the stories of the previous Prophets, such as Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus; as well as many commands and prohibitions from God. In modern times in which so many people are caught up in doubt, spiritual despair and 'political correctness', the Quranic teachings offer solutions to the emptiness of our lives and the turmoil that is gripping the world today. Alongside the Quran, Muhammad received another form of revelation from His Lord which is also preserved till this day, and is called the **'Prophetic Tradition'**. The Prophetic Tradition (Arabic: *Sunnah*) are the words, actions and tacit approvals of the Prophet Muhammad. It explains the Quran and details the beliefs and the acts of worship for a Muslim. Every Muslim is obligated to adhere to the teachings of the Prophetic Tradition.

Question 7. How Do Muslims View the Nature of Man, the Purpose of Life and the Life of the Hereafter?

In the noble Quran, God teaches human beings that they were created in order to worship Him, and that the basis of all true worship is knowledge of the Creator. Since the teachings of Islam encompass all aspects of life and ethics, piety is encouraged in all human affairs. Islam makes it clear that all human acts are acts of worship if they are done for God alone and in accordance to His Divine Law. As such, worship in Islam is not limited to religious rituals alone. The teachings of Islam act as a mercy and a healing for the human soul, and such qualities as humility, sincerity, patience and charity are strongly encouraged. Additionally, Islam condemns pride, haughtiness, rejecting the truth and being amazed with oneself. The Islamic view of the nature of man is also realistic and well-balanced. Human beings are not believed to be inherently sinful, but are seen as equally capable of both good and evil. Islam also teaches that faith and action go hand-in-hand. God has given people free-will, and the measure of one's faith is one's deeds and actions. However, human beings have also been created weak and regularly fall into sin. This is the nature of the human being as created by God in His perfect wisdom. The avenues of repentance are always open to all human beings, and Almighty God loves the repentant sinner more than one who does not sin at all and therefore hardly remembers his Lord. The true balance of an Islamic life is established by having a healthy fear of God as well as a sincere belief in His infinite mercy. A life without fear of God leads to sin and disobedience, while believing that we have sinned so much that God will not possibly forgive us only leads to despair. In light of this, Islam teaches that only the misguided despair of the mercy of their Lord. Additionally, the noble Quran, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, contains detailed information about the Hereafter and the Day of Judgement. Due to this, Muslims believe that all human beings will ultimately be judged by God for their beliefs and actions in their earthly lives. In judging human beings, Almighty God will be both merciful and just, and people will only be judged for what they were capable of. Suffice it to say that Islam teaches that life is a test, and that all human beings will be accountable before God. A sincere belief in the life of the Hereafter is key to leading a well-balanced moral life. Otherwise, life is viewed as an end in itself, which causes human beings to become more selfish, materialistic and immoral.

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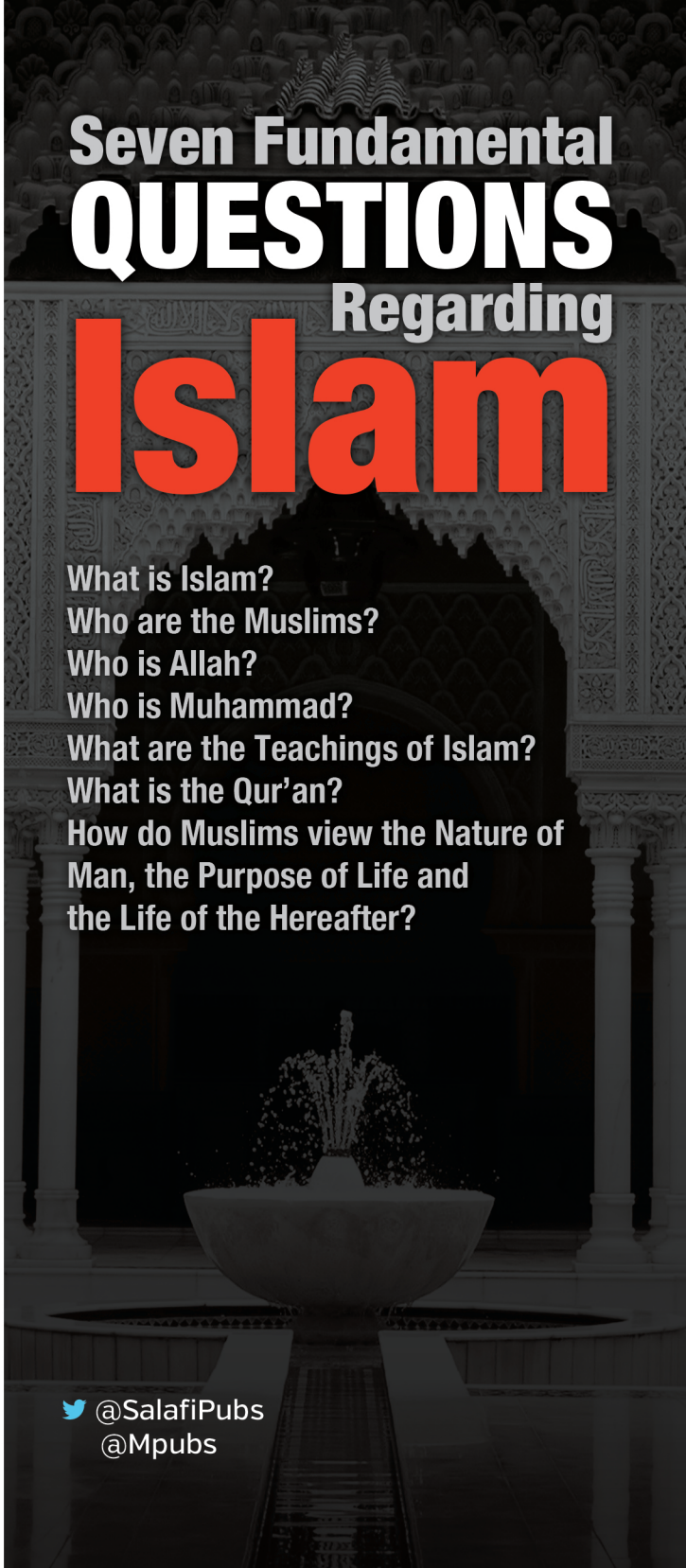
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Seven Fundamental QUESTIONS Regarding Islam

What is Islam?
Who are the Muslims?
Who is Allah?
Who is Muhammad?
What are the Teachings of Islam?
What is the Qur'an?
How do Muslims view the Nature of Man, the Purpose of Life and the Life of the Hereafter?



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SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS REGARDING ISLAM

Question 1. What is Islam?

Islam is an Arabic term that means: ***"To submit oneself to Almighty God by worshipping him alone, to yield in obedience to Him, and to free oneself from idolatry and those who worship other than Almighty God"***. Unlike the names used for other religions, the term Islam is not an attachment to any human being, time or location. For example, Buddhism was named after it's founder Gautama Buddha; Judaism refers to one of the sons of the Biblical patriarch Jacob (Israel), and Christianity is a reference to Jesus Christ. The term Islam on the other hand is a connection to the submission and worship of the one true Lord and Creator of the universe. Only by submitting one's will to Almighty God can one obtain tranquility both in this life and in the life of the Hereafter. Islam teaches that the Prophets ascribed to Judaism and Christianity were adherents of Islam, which is to submit wholeheartedly to the will of Almighty God and to worship Him alone without supplicating to anyone besides Him. For this reason, Islam is not a new religion but is the same divinely revealed ultimate truth that God revealed to all the Prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon them all.

Question 2. Who are the Muslims?

The Arabic word 'Muslim' refers to the one who has entered into Islam and submitted himself to Almighty God, yielded in obedience to Him, and abandons all forms of polytheism and idolatry. The message of Islam is meant for the entire world and anyone who accepts this message internally and externally becomes a Muslim. Some people mistakenly believe that Islam is a religion just for Arabs, but nothing could be further from the truth, since in actuality over 80% of the world's Muslims are not Arabs! Even though most Arabs are Muslims, there are Arabs who are Christians, Jews and atheists. If one just takes a look at the various peoples who live in the Muslim World, from Nigeria to Bosnia and from Morocco to Indonesia, it is easy enough to see that Muslims come from all different races, ethnic groups and nationalities. From the very beginning, Islam had a universal message for all people. This can be seen in the fact that some of the disciples of the Prophet Muhammad were not only Arabs, but also Persians, Africans and Byzantine Romans. Being a Muslim entails complete acceptance and active obedience to the revealed will of Almighty God. A Muslim is a person who willingly bases his beliefs, values and faith upon revelation from Almighty God. In the past, the word 'Mohammedans' was often used as a label for Muslims. This label is a misnomer and is the result of either wilful distortion or sheer ignorance. One of the reasons for the misconception is that Europeans were taught for centuries that Muslims worshipped the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, in the same way that Christians worship Jesus. This is absolutely not true since a Muslim is not permitted to worship anyone or anything besides God alone. The one who worships Muhammad, or any Prophet for that matter, is not considered to be a Muslim or a monotheist.

Question 3. Who is Allah?

Very often one will hear the Arabic term 'Allah' being used with respect to Islam. The word 'Allah' is simply the Arabic word for Almighty God, the one worthy of all worship without partners. If one were to pick up an Arabic translation of the Bible, one would see the word 'Allah' being used where the word 'God' is used in English. Actually, the Arabic name for the sole creator worthy of worship, 'Allah', is quite similar to the word for God in other Semitic languages. For example, the Hebrew word for God is 'Elah'. For various reasons, some non-Muslims mistakenly believe that Muslims worship a different God than the Prophets such as Moses and Jesus worshipped. This is certainly not the case, since the pure monotheism of Islam calls all people to the worship of the God of Noah, Abraham, Moses, John, Jesus and all of the other Prophets. Muslims believe that Jews and Christians have strayed from the way of the Prophets and have associated partners in worship with Allah. So they seek aid, deliverance and assistance from Prophets, saints and holy men and this opposes true monotheism. Or they may describe these created beings with the Attributes of the Creator, such as having the ability to see and hear everything. All of this is considered as idolatry.

Question 4. Who is Muhammad (ﷺ)***?***

The last and final Prophet that the Almighty God sent to humanity was the Prophet Muhammad, peace of God be upon him. Muhammad (ﷺ) conveyed, explained and lived the teachings of Islam the same as all the previous Prophets. Even though other religious communities claimed to believe in and worship one God, over time they had corrupted their beliefs by taking their Prophets and saints as intercessors with Almighty God. Some religions believe their prophets to be manifestations of God, 'God incarnate' or 'the son of God' and so on. All of these false ideas lead to the creation being worshipped instead of the Creator. In order to guard against these falsehoods, the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, always emphasised that he was a human-being tasked with the preaching of God's message. He taught Muslims to refer to him as 'the Messenger of God and His servant'. To Muslims, Muhammad is the supreme example for all people. He was the exemplary Prophet, true worshipper, military leader, ruler, teacher, neighbour, husband, father and friend. Unlike other Prophets and messengers, the Prophet Muhammad lived in the full light of history. Muslims do not need to have mere 'faith' in his existence and teachings. They know it to be a fact proven by historical records! Even when his followers only numbered a few dozen, Almighty God informed Muhammad that he had been sent as a mercy to all of mankind. Because people had distorted or forgotten God's previous messages, God took it upon Himself to protect the message revealed to Muhammad. This was because Almighty God promised not to send another Messenger after him. Since all of God's Messengers have preached the message of Islam, i.e. submission to the will of God and the worship of God alone, Muhammad is actually the last Prophet of Islam, not the first!

Question 5. What are the Teachings of Islam?

The foundation of the Islamic faith is the worship of Allah alone without any associates. This means to believe that there is only one Creator and Sustainer of everything in the Universe, and that nothing is divine or worthy of being worshipped except for Him. Truly believing in monotheism means much more than simply believing that there is one God as opposed to two, three or four. There are a number of religions that claim belief in one God and believe that ultimately there is only one Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Islam, however, not only insists on this, but also rejects the use of all intermediaries between God and man, and insists that people approach God directly and reserve all worship for Him alone. Muslims are obligated to call upon Allah alone with their supplication, they seek aid from Him, they seek refuge in Him alone and so on. The greatest falsehood is the claim that God does not aid and forgive His creatures directly. By over-emphasising the burden of sin, as well as claiming that God cannot forgive you directly, false religions seek to get people to despair of the Mercy of God. Once they are convinced that they cannot approach God directly, people can be mislead into turning to false gods for help. These false gods can take various forms, such as saints in tombs and graves, angels, or someone who is believed to be the son of God or God-incarnate. In almost all cases, people who worship, pray to, or seek help from a false god do not consider it to be idolatry. They claim to believe in one supreme God, yet they supplicate to and worship others beside God as a means of coming closer to Him. In Islam, there is a clear distinction between the Creator and the created. There is no ambiguity in divinity. Anything that is created is not deserving of worship and only the Creator is worthy of being worshipped. Some religions falsely believe that God has become part of His creation and is therefore one with His creation, and this has led people to believe that they can worship something created in order to 'reach' their Creator - these religions claim that God exists within idols, humans and animals. However, God (i.e. Allah) is the Most High, distinct and separate from His Creation, not intermingled with it! Muslims believe that God is unique, and that He cannot be encompassed, He has no son, partners or associates. According to Muslim belief, Almighty God does not beget nor was He begotten (with no children and no parents), neither literally, allegorically, metaphorically, physically or metaphysically! He is absolutely unique, ever-living and eternal. He is in control of everything and is perfectly capable of bestowing His infinite mercy and forgiveness to whomever He chooses. That is why He is called the All-Powerful and Most-Merciful. Almighty God has created the world for man, and as such wants the best for all human beings. Muslims see everything in the Universe as a sign of the creatorship