

Misconceptions of Islam pt2

MISCONCEPTION #6:

The Nation of Islam is a Muslim group.

Islam and the so called "Nation of Islam" are two different religions. NOI is more of a political organization since its members are not limited to a single faith. Muslims consider this group to be just one of many cults using the name of Islam for their own gain. The only thing common between them is the jargon, the language used by both. "The Nation of Islam" is a misnomer; this religion should be called Farrakhanism, after the name of its propogator, Louis Farrakhan.

Islam and Farakhanism differ in many fundamental ways. For example, Farakhan followers believe in racism and that the 'black man' was the original man and therefore superior, while in Islam there is no racism and everyone is considered equal in the sight of God, the only difference being in one's piety. There are many other theological examples that show the 'Nation's teachings have little to do with true Islam. There are many groups in America who claim to represent Islam and call their adherents Muslims.

Any serious student of Islam has a duty to investigate and find the true Islam. The only two authentic sources which bind every Muslim are 1. the Quran and 2. authentic or sound Hadith. Any teachings under the label of "Islam" which contradict or at variance with the direct understanding of fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam from the Quran and authentic Hadith should be rejected and such a religion should be considered a Pseudo-Islamic Cult. In America there are many pseudo-Islamic cults, Farrakhanism being one of them. An honest attitude on the part of such cults should be not to call themselves

Muslims and their religion Islam. such an example of honesty is

Bahatism which is an off-shoot of Islam but Bahais do not call themselves Muslims nor their religion, Islam. In fact Bahatism is not Islam just as Farrakhanism is not Islam.

MISCONCEPTION #7:

All Muslim men marry four wives.

The religion of Islam was revealed for all societies and all times and so accommodates widely differing social requirements. Circumstances may warrant the taking of another wife but the right is granted, according to the Quran, only on condition that the husband is scrupulously fair. No woman can be forced into this kind of marriage if they do not wish it, and they also have the right to exclude it in their marriage contract.

Polygamy is neither mandatory, nor encouraged, but merely permitted. Images of "sheikhs with harems" are not consistent with Islam, as a man is only allowed at most four wives only if he can fulfill the stringent conditions of treating each fairly and providing each with separate housing etc. Permission to practice polygamy is not associated with mere satisfaction of passion. It is rather associated with compassion toward widows and orphans. It was the Quran that limited and put conditions on the practice of polygamy among the Arabs, who had as many as ten or more wives and considered them "property".

It is both honest and accurate to say that it is Islam that regulated this practice, limited it, made it more humane, and instituted equal rights and status for all wives. What the Qur'anic decrees amount to, taken together is discouragement of polygamy unless necessity for it exists. It is also evident that the general rule in Islam is monogamy and not polygamy. It is a very tiny percentage of Muslims that

practice it over the world. However, permission to practice limited polygamy is only consistent with Islam's realistic view of the nature of man and woman and of various social needs, problems and cultural variations.

The question is, however far more than the inherent flexibility of Islam; it also is the frank and straightforward approach of Islam in dealing with practical problems. Rather than requiring hypocritical and superficial compliance, Islam delves deeper into the problems of individuals and societies, and provides for legitimate and clean solutions which are far more beneficial than would be the case if they were ignored. There is no doubt that the second wife legally married and treated kindly is better off than a mistress without any legal rights or permanance.

MISCONCEPTION #8:

Muslims are a barbaric, backward people.

Among the reasons for the rapid and peaceful spread of Islam was the simplicity of its doctrine-Islam calls for faith in only one God worthy of worship. It also repeatedly instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation. Within a few years, great civilizations and universities were flourishing, for according to the Prophet (pbuh), 'seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman'.

The synthesis of Eastern and Western ideas and of new thought with old, brought about great advances in medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, architecture, art, literature, and history.

Many crucial systems such as algebra, the Arabic numerals, and also the concept of the zero (vital to the advancement of mathematics), were transmitted to medieval Europe from Islam. Sophisticated

instruments which were to make possible the European voyages of discovery were developed, including the astrolabe, the quadrant and good navigational maps.

MISCONCEPTION #9:

Muhammad was the founder of Islam and Muslims worship him.

Muhammad(pbuh) was born in Mecca in the year 570. Since his father died before his birth, and his mother shortly afterwards, he was raised by his uncle from the respected tribe of Quraysh. As he grew up, he became known for his truthfulness, generosity and sincerity, so that he was sought after for his ability to arbitrate in disputes.

The historians describe him as calm and meditative. Muhammad (pbuh) was of a deeply religious nature, and had long detested the decadence of his society.

It became his habit to meditate from time to time in the Cave of Hira near Mecca. At the age of 40, while engaged in a meditative retreat, Muhammad(pbuh) received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel. This revelation, which continued for 23 years is known as the Quran. As soon as he began to recite the words he heard from Gabriel, and to preach the truth which God had revealed to him, he and his small group of followers suffered bitter persecution, which grew so fierce that in the year 622 God gave them the command to emigrate.

This event, the Hijra 'migration', in which they left Mecca for the city of Medina, marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. After several years, the Prophet and his followers were able to return to Mecca, where they forgave their enemies and established Islam definitively. Before the Prophet saw dies at the age of 63, the greater part of Arabia was Muslim, and within a century of his death

Islam had spread to Spain in the West and as far East as China. He died with less than 5 possessions to his name.

While Muhammad (pbuh) was chosen to deliver the message, he is not considered the "founder" of Islam, since Muslims consider Islam to be the same divine guidance sent to all peoples before. Muslims believe all the prophets from Adam, Noah, Moses, Jesus etc. were all sent with divine guidance for their peoples. Every prophet was sent to his own people, but Muhammad(pbuh) was sent to all of mankind. Muhammad is the last and final messenger sent to deliver the message of Islam. Muslims revere and honor him (pbuh) for all he went through and his dedication, but they do not worship him. "O Prophet, verily We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of glad tidings and a warner and as one who invites unto God by His leave and as an illuminating lamp."(33:45-6)

MISCONCEPTION #10:

Muslims don't believe in Jesus or any other prophets.

Muslims respect and revere Jesus, upon him be peace, and await his Second Coming. They consider him one of the greatest of God's messengers to mankind. A Muslim never refers to him simply as 'Jesus', but always adds the phrase 'upon him be peace' (abbreviated as (u) here). The Quran confirms his virgin birth (a chapter of the Quran is entitled 'Mary'), and Mary is considered the purest woman in all creation. The Quran describes the Annunciation as follows:

"Behold!" the Angel said, "God has chosen you, and purified you, and chosen you above the women of all nations. O Mary, God gives you good news of a word from Him whose name shall be the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, honored in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near to God. He shall speak to the people from his cradle and

in maturity, and shall be of the righteous." She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?" He said: "Even so; God creates what He will. When He decrees a thing, He says to it, "Be!" and it is" (Quran 3:42-47)

Jesus (u) was born miraculously through the same power, which had brought Adam (u) into being without a father: "Truly, the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust, and then said to him, 'Be!' and he was." (3:59) During his prophetic mission Jesus (u) performed many miracles. The Quran tells us that he said: " I have come to you with a sign from your Lord: I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breath into it and it becomes a bird by God's leave. And I heal the blind, and the lepers, and I raise the dead by God's leave." (3:49) Neither Muhammad (pbuh) nor Jesus (u) came to change the basic doctrine of the brief in One God brought by earlier prophets, but to confirm and renew it.

In the Quran Jesus (u) is reported as saying that he came: "To attest the law which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden you; I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear God and obey Me. (3:50) The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Whoever believes there is no god but God, alone without partner, that Muhammad (pbuh) is His messenger, that Jesus is the servant and messenger of God, His word breathed into Mary and a spirit emanating from Him, and that Paradise and Hell are true, shall be received by God into Heaven. "(Hadith related by Bukhari).

Some more Misconceptions on Islam - good info page

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