

SALVATION ACCORDING TO ISLAM

"So long as one can repeat the phrase, 'La ilaha ila Allah; Muhammadur-rasul Allah,' he can be a Muslim" (Jones, *Shadowland*, 115). The meaning of this phrase is "There is no God but Allah. Muhammad is the messenger of Allah". These are called the *shahadas* or testimonials (Miller, *The Qur'an Unveiled*, 46). These testimonials are considered a confession of faith and are together called the *Kalima* (Rieber, *A Resource for the Study of Islam*, 67).

There is no such thing as being in a saved state for a Muslim because salvation is considered a future state that will be determined at the judgment (Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 126). According to Islamic teaching, Allah will weigh the good deeds verses the bad deeds on the day of judgment and if one has worked enough good deeds in comparison to the amount of bad deeds, then salvation is his (Rieber, *A Resource for the Study of Islam*, 69). Adherents to Muslim then are in a constant state of doubt and insecurity while they wonder whether they have become aware of all their sin and performed enough works that Allah deems acceptable (Rieber, *A Resource for the Study of Islam*, 70).

There are even more doubts for a Muslim when *qadar* or predestination is considered. Islam teaches that Allah has predestined certain ones to hell and certain ones to heaven. Allah is depicted as actually rejecting certain ones from His guidance.

The following Qur'anic verses teach predestination (all scriptures from the Qur'an are taken from the Yusuf Ali translation):

*...Allah sets on the right path whom He pleaseth... (Surah 2:272)*

*Whom Allah doth guide,- he is on the right path: whom He rejects from His guidance,- such are the persons who perish. (Surah 7:178)*

*...Now Allah leaves straying those whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases: and He is Exalted in power, full of Wisdom. (Surah 14:4)*

*He will admit to His Mercy whom He will; But the wrong-doers,- for them has He prepared a grievous Penalty. (Surah 76:31)*

*Why should ye be divided into two parties about the Hypocrites? Allah hath upset them for their (evil) deeds. Would ye guide those whom Allah hath thrown out of the Way? For those whom Allah hath thrown out of the Way, never shalt thou find the Way. (Surah 4:88)*

Although Allah has already willed certain souls to punishment and certain souls to paradise, one who still attempts to "find the way" can possibly obtain salvation by following a certain standard of beliefs. In this study session the *Kalima* along with other essential beliefs will be examined as it has been instructed by the Islamic authorities. Beyond the confession and

belief system however, the Muslim is aware of Allah's judgment; therefore, Islamic doctrines on final judgment will be studied. However, the Muslim knows that in order to escape condemnation, he must work to be freed from Allah's punishment; so, a detailed review will be presented as to what Islam teaches regarding good works and it will be briefly compared to what the Bible teaches regarding salvation.

### **The *Shahadas* or *Kalima* and Mandatory Beliefs**

Belief and confession in Allah is necessary for salvation, but likewise a belief and confession in Mohammad being Allah's prophet is essential. Islam teaches that Allah had many messengers to many different people, but that Mohammad is the prophet that is to be followed above all. The *kalima* must be confessed in Arabic and must be believed according to Islamic teaching (see SHAHADA at <http://www.answering-islam.org/Index/index.html>).

The following verses in the Qur'an teach that one must utter the *shahadas*.

The Qur'an teaches that Allah is one and that a confession must be made:

*Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and ask forgiveness for thy fault, and for the men and women who believe: for Allah knows how ye move about and how ye dwell in your homes.*  
(Surah 47:19)

*In the case of those who say, "Our Lord is Allah., and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time): "Fear ye not!" (they suggest), "Nor grieve! but receive the Glad Tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), the which ye were promised! (Surah 41:30)*

The Qur'an teaches that Mohammad is Allah's prophet and that those who want to be right with Allah must be with him:

*Muhammad is the apostle of Allah. and those who are with him are strong against Unbelievers...*  
(Surah 48:29)

The use of Surah 48:29 however, is appealed to by the Sunni Muslims to support their demand for one to recite the *shahada* of Mohammad. Many Muslim's oppose this use of the Qur'an and claim there is no essentiality for any such confession ([http://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/real\\_shahada.htm](http://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/real_shahada.htm)). Those who are against the Mohammad *shahada* state that the hadith that is used by Sunnis also has within the same context of that account a command to confess Jesus as Allah's apostle (see *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 2, Book 24, Number 573; Volume 4, Book 55, Number 644; Book 56, Number 725; *Sahih Muslim*, Book 1, Number 43 as quoted in [http://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/real\\_shahada.htm](http://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/real_shahada.htm)).

Although there may be some disagreement and confusion among Muslim's regarding the *kalima*, there is a near unity in Islam surrounding the *iman*. The *iman* are the articles of faith that are generated from certain Qur'anic passages. There is an example below.

The Qur'an teaches that one must believe in *iman* (the articles of faith) adopted by Islam.

The Islamic *iman* includes a belief in one god, his angels, his books, his prophets and the day of judgment:

*O ye who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and the scripture which He hath sent to His Messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denieth Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messenger., and the Day of Judgment, hath gone far, far astray. (Surah 4:136)*

The *iman* also includes a belief in predestination or eternal fate (Jones, *Shadowland*, 82):

*"Iman is that you believe in God and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers and the Hereafter and the good and evil fate [ordained by your God]" (Hadith of Gabriel, Al-Jami' al-sahih, 22, (no. 93)).*

### **The Judgment of Allah**

The belief in the day of judgment then motivates the Muslim to live his life performing various "good deeds". Islam teaches that these deeds may grant him salvation when judged. However, the deeds will only be beneficial if #1) the good deeds outweigh the bad deeds and #2) only if Allah has willed for him to have salvation (see predestination verses above).

The Qur'an teaches the Allah will judge by examining one's deeds and salvation only comes to those whose good deeds weigh more than the bad.

On the day of judgment, good deeds must be heavy and bad deeds must be light according to Islamic teaching:

*Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no more relationships between them that Day, nor will one ask after another! Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy,- they will attain salvation: But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls, in Hell will they abide. (Surah 23:101-103)*

Forgiveness is granted to those who are good enough based upon their good deeds:

*That He may reward those who believe and work deeds of righteousness: for such is Forgiveness and a Sustenance Most Generous. (Surah 34:4)*

### **Acceptable Good Works to Avoid Allah's Punishment**

Islam does not have any system of atonement, redemption or justification except through means of good works. The Muslim who believes salvation is in his future bases his belief on how many good deeds he has performed. These good deeds are literally his savior and nothing else. Abdul Sahib is quoted as stating the following, "Please remember that your savior is your

actions, nothing else. What you do on earth, what you intend to do, how you apply your Islam, what kind of person you are, all come to count on the Day of judgment. What you do while you are alive is what may save you" (Hashim, *Imam Basic Beliefs*, 57 as quoted in Rieber, *A Resource for the Study of Islam*, 67-68).

The Qur'anic teaching of good works includes salat (prayer), jihad (fighting or war), sawm (fasting), and zakat (almsgiving).

Ritualistic prayer is an essential good work according to the Qur'an:

*...be steadfast in prayer... (Surah 2:43)*

*O ye who believe! let those whom your right hands possess, and the (children) among you who have not come of age ask your permission (before they come to your presence), on three occasions: before morning prayer; the while ye doff your clothes for the noonday heat; and after the late-night prayer: these are your three times of undress: outside those times it is not wrong for you or for them to move about attending to each other: Thus does Allah make clear the Signs to you: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. (Surah 24:58)*

*Who believe in the Unseen, are steadfast in prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them; And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee, and sent before thy time, and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter. (Surah 2:3-4)*

*Verily, I am Allah. There is no god but I: So serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise. Verily the Hour is coming - My design is to keep it hidden - for every soul to receive its reward by the measure of its Endeavour. (Surah 20:14-15)*

The Qur'an teaches that one must physically fight or wage war (against Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindu's etc.) for Allah and that he loves those who do such:

*Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued. The Jews call 'Uzair a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth! (Surah 9:29-30)*

*But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, an seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surah 9:5)*

*Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure. (Surah 61:4)*

Fasting is to occur during certain religious months, special days and even on a weekly basis on days such as Monday and Thursday (Jones, *Shadowland*, 83):

*O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint,- (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (Should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it (With hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will give more, of his own free will,- it is better for him. And it is better for you that ye fast, if ye only knew. (Surah 2:183-184)*

*...and seek what Allah Hath ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast Till the night appears... (Surah 2:187)*

*The following hadith is recorded regarding the good work of fasting: "every good act that a man performs shall receive from 10 to 700 rewards, but the rewards of fasting are beyond reasons" (as quoted on <http://www.answering-islam.org/Index/F/fasting.html>).*

*Zakat* (almsgiving) is considered a means of purification and is a work that is usually performed along with prayer when one first becomes a Muslim (Huffard, *Christ or the Qur'an?*, 43):

*Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah. and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. (Surah 9:60)*

*...practice regular charity... (Surah 2:43)*

A final and brief word is appropriate when considering the Islamic teaching of salvation compared to that of Christianity. First, by embracing the doctrine of predestination, Islam leaves its followers in the dark as to whether they will be found righteous on the day of judgment. However, the teachings of the Bible and the forgiveness offered by Christ allows those who are faithful Christians to enjoy that "blessed assurance".

According to the Bible, God has not predetermined who is righteous and who is not, but rather God has given man choice as to whether he will be declared righteous (cf. Deuteronomy 30:19; Acts 10:37; 1 John 3:7; Psalm 119:172). Peter commanded that all are to make their "calling and election sure; for if you do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:12). If one obeys the words of the Bible and "walks in the light" (1 John 1:7) out of his love for Jesus (cf. John 14:15), then he can know he is right with God (cf. 1 Peter 1:4; Hebrews 6:19; 1 John 2:3; 5:13).

The Bible teaches that atonement, forgiveness, and justification in the sight of God is only possible through the blood of Jesus Christ (cf. Hebrews 9:22; 10:4, 10-12; Ephesians 1:7); hence, man cannot glory in the number of good works that he does, but can only stand justified if he loves God and has the blood of Jesus applied through obedience to His will (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:29-31; Titus 3:5; Colossians 1:14; John 14:15; Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16; Mark 16:15-16; Romans 6:1-10; 1 John 1:7). The Islamic teaching of salvation, however, does not involve a sacrificial love bestowed from Allah to man and therefore does not require that man have a sacrificial love for Allah. The Muslim then is in a constant state of motion with no concept of love for his god nor his fellow man. On the contrary, the Christian obeys the words of the Bible because of his love for God and because of a recognition of the love that God first bestowed upon him through the sacrifice of Christ (cf. Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10, 20-21; 5:2-3). "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Salvation, as taught by Islam, is void of any concept pertaining to the Muslim's love for his god. Rather, the Muslim follows the path of salvation paved by Islam in doubt (predestination) and his obedience is driven by a trembling fear of Allah with hopes that this god will accept his good deeds and that they will outweigh the bad. Comparatively, the Christian loves God, obeys His commands, and enjoys salvation through the love and grace that is available only in the atoning and forgiving blood of God's Son, Jesus Christ (cf. Mark 12:30; John 14:15; Hebrews 5:8-9). "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:5).

### **Review Questions**

- Question 1) How can the Muslim know he is saved? Cite phrases in specific Surahs.
- Question 2) What is the Kalima or Shahadas?
- Question 3) What is the Iman?
- Question 4) Explain the judgment of Allah.
- Question 5) Give details as to how salvation differs in Islam as compared to Christianity.

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Additional information taken from the following Websites: <http://www.islamicity.com>; <http://www.answering-islam.org/Index/F/fasting.html>; [http://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/real\\_shahada.htm](http://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/real_shahada.htm).

