

GET TO KNOW ISLAM

# Hard questions

Some questions about Islam are difficult, and they deserve careful answers. This booklet gathers our answers to the hardest ones, with sources, so you can read them calmly and judge for yourself.

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# Islam and other faiths.

> The Qur'an addresses Jews and Christians as People of the Book, recognises their prophets and scriptures as coming from God, and affirms that religion cannot be forced. It also states clear differences: on the nature of Jesus, on the finality of Muhammad's prophethood, and on the Qur'an as the final revelation.

## Shared roots

Islam understands itself as the continuation of the faith of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, not as a new religion. The Qur'an tells Muslims to say that they believe in what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Jesus, making no distinction between the prophets, 2:136. Jews and Christians are addressed as People of the Book, ahl al-kitab.

Qur'an 3:64 invites the People of the Book to a common word: to worship God alone. Qur'an 29:46 tells Muslims to argue with them only in the best way and to say that our God and your God is one.

## Real differences

Islam does not accept the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, or the crucifixion as Christianity teaches them; Qur'an 4:157 states that Jesus was not killed or crucified but that it was made to appear so. It holds that earlier scriptures were revealed by God but that the Qur'an is the final, protected revelation, and that Muhammad is the last prophet.

Honest interfaith dialogue names these differences rather than smoothing them over. Muslims, Jews, and Christians can respect each other without pretending to believe the same things.

## Freedom and coexistence

Qur'an 2:256 states that there is no compulsion in religion. Qur'an 109 ends with the words "to you your religion, and to me mine". Qur'an 60:8 says God does not forbid kindness and justice towards those who have not fought Muslims over religion. In Medina the Prophet concluded agreements with Jewish tribes and received Christian delegations in his mosque.

Historically, non-Muslims under Muslim rule were protected communities with their own courts and worship but with a distinct legal status and a special tax. This arrangement was more tolerant than most of its contemporaries and less equal than modern citizenship. Muslim thinkers today debate how the principles behind it apply in states based on equal citizenship.

## Beyond the People of the Book

The Qur'an speaks mostly of Jews, Christians, Sabians, and the pagans of Arabia. Muslim jurists later extended protected status to Zoroastrians, Hindus, Buddhists, and others in practice. Qur'an 5:48 says God could have made all people one community but did not, so that they might compete in good works; the final settling of differences belongs to God.

Many Muslims read this as a basis for pluralism in society while holding firmly to their own faith as true.

## Interfaith life today

Muslims take part in interfaith councils, shared charity, and neighbourhood life across the world. Marriage between a Muslim man and a Christian or Jewish woman is permitted in classical law; Muslims also care for parents, children, and friends of other faiths, as the Qur'an requires.

If you belong to another faith, you can expect a Muslim to disagree with you about some things and to be commanded to treat you with justice and kindness about everything. Both are part of the tradition.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 2:136 · Qur'an 3:64 · Qur'an 29:46 · Qur'an 2:256 · Qur'an 60:8-9 · Qur'an 5:48 · Qur'an 4:157

# Jesus in the Qur’an: the verses.

> Jesus (‘Isa in Arabic) is named in the Qur’an about twenty-five times, and his mother Mary is the only woman it names; a whole chapter carries her name. The Qur’an honours Jesus as the Messiah, a word from God and a spirit from Him, a prophet who healed the blind and raised the dead by God’s permission. It also says plainly that he was a servant of God and not God’s son, and that he was not crucified but raised to God. This guide quotes the verses themselves so you can read them in full.

## Why Jesus matters in Islam

No one can be a Muslim without believing in Jesus. The Qur’an counts belief in all of God’s prophets as part of faith, names Jesus among them alongside Abraham and Moses, and asks Muslims to accept them all rather than some and not others (Qur’an 2:136).

In the Qur’an he is ‘Isa ibn Maryam, Jesus son of Mary, and he is named about twenty-five times. He is given titles given to no one else: the Messiah (al-Masih), a word from God, and a spirit from Him. His mother is the only woman the Qur’an names, and chapter 19 is called Maryam after her.

If you come from a Christian background, much of what follows will be familiar and some of it will not. The verses are quoted in full, in the translation used throughout this site, so that you can read what the Qur’an says rather than what others say about it.

قُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسۡمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسۡحَٰقَ وَيَعۡقُوبَ وَٱلۡأَسۡبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَآ أُوتِيَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمۡ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّنۡهُمۡ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ مُسۡلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

Say [O believers], “We believe in Allah and what has been sent down to us; and what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the descendants [of Jacob]; and what was given to Moses and Jesus; and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted.”

**Qur’an 2:136**

## Mary, chosen above all women

The Qur'an tells Mary's story at length twice, in chapter 3, named after her family, the House of 'Imran, and in chapter 19. She grows up in the temple under the care of Zechariah, and the angels tell her that God has chosen her and purified her.

The annunciation is told in both chapters. In chapter 3 the angels bring her "glad tidings of a Word from Him"; in chapter 19 the Spirit, understood by Muslims to be the angel Gabriel, appears to her in human form. Her question is the same in both: how can she have a child when no man has touched her? So is the answer: for God this is easy; He creates what He wills by saying "Be".

The Qur'an holds Mary up as an example for all believers, not only for women, and praises her truthfulness, her chastity and her devotion.

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَٰمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَٱصْطَفَىٰكِ عَلَىٰ نِسَآءِ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

And [remember] when the angels said, "O Mary, Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you over all women.

**Qur'an 3:42**

إِذْ قَالَتِ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ يَٰمَرْيَمُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ ٱسْمُهُ ٱلْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَمِنَ ٱلْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَيُكَلِّمُ ٱلنَّاسَ فِي ٱلْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِي بَشَرٌ ۖ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكِ ٱللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰٓ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾

[45] [Remember] when the angels said, "O Mary, Allah gives you glad tidings of a Word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary; honorable in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those near [to Allah]. [46] He will speak to people in the cradle and in maturity, and he will be one of the righteous." [47] She said: "My Lord, how can I have a child when no man has ever touched me?" He said, "Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees something, He only says to it 'Be', and it is.

**Qur'an 3:45–47**

وَٱذۡكُرۡ فِي ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ مَرۡيَمَ إِذِ ٱنتَبَذَتۡ مِنۡ أَهۡلِهَا مَكَانٗا شَرۡقِيّٗا ﴿١٦﴾ فَٱتَّخَذَتۡ مِن دُونِهِمۡ حِجَابٗا فَأَرۡسَلۡنَآ إِلَيۡهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرٗا سَوِيّٗا ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَتۡ إِنِّيٓ أَعُوذُ بِٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ مِنكَ إِن كُنتَ تَقِيّٗا ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَٰمٗا زَكِيّٗا ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَتۡ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي غُلَٰمٞ وَلَمۡ يَمۡسَسۡنِي بَشَرٞ وَلَمۡ أَكُ بَغِيّٗا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكِ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٞ وَلِنَجۡعَلَهُۥٓ ءَايَةٗ لِّلنَّاسِ وَرَحۡمَةٗ مِّنَّا وَكَانَ أَمۡرٗا مَّقۡضِيّٗا ﴿٢١﴾

[16] And mention in the Book [the story of] Mary when she withdrew from her family to a place towards the east. [17] She screened herself from them, then We sent to her Our Spirit [Gabriel] and he appeared before her in the form of a perfect human being. [18] She said, "I seek refuge in the Most Compassionate from you; [do not approach me] if you fear Allah." [19] He said, "I am only a messenger from your Lord to grant you a righteous son." [20] She said, "How can I have a son when no man has touched me, nor have I ever been unchaste?" [21] He said, "Thus it will be; your Lord says, 'It is easy for Me; We make him a sign for people and a mercy from Us. This matter has already been decreed.'"

**Qur'an 19:16–21**

وَمَرۡيَمَ ٱبۡنَتَ عِمۡرَٰنَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَحۡصَنَتۡ فَرۡجَهَا فَنَفَخۡنَا فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتۡ بِكَلِمَٰتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَكَانَتۡ مِنَ ٱلۡقَٰنِتِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

Also [the example of] Mary, daughter of 'Imrān who guarded her chastity, so We breathed into her through Our angel [Gabriel], and she firmly believed in the words of her Lord and His Scriptures and was one of the obedient.

**Qur'an 66:12**

## The birth of Jesus

Chapter 19 describes the birth itself. Mary withdraws to a distant place and, in the pain of labour, leans against the trunk of a palm tree, wishing she had died before this. A voice comforts her: a stream flows at her feet, and ripe dates fall when she shakes the trunk.

When she brings the child to her people, they accuse her. She says nothing and points to the baby, and Jesus speaks from the cradle. His first words declare that he is the servant of God, given the Scripture and made a prophet, and the passage ends with peace upon him on the day he was born, the day he dies and the day he is raised alive.

The Qur'an calls Mary and her son together "a sign for all people": the virgin birth is not something to be explained away but a miracle to be remembered.

* فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَٱنتَبَذَتْ بِهِۦ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ فَأَجَآءَهَا ٱلْمَخَاضُ إِلَىٰ جِذْعِ ٱلنَّخْلَةِ قَالَتْ يَٰلَيْتَنِي
مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَٰذَا وَكُنتُ نَسْيًا مَّنسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَنَادَىٰهَا مِن تَحْتِهَآ أَلَّا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ
سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَهُزِّيٓ إِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ ٱلنَّخْلَةِ تُسَٰقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ فَكُلِي وَٱشْرَبِي وَقَرِّي
عَيْنًا فَإِمَّا تَرَيِنَّ مِنَ ٱلْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِيٓ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ ٱلْيَوْمَ إِنسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾

22 So she conceived him and withdrew with him to a distant place. 23 The pains of labor drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said, "Oh, would that I had died before this and had been completely forgotten!" 24 Then he called her from beneath her, "Do not grieve; your Lord has provided a stream beneath you. 25 Shake the trunk of the palm tree towards yourself; fresh ripe dates will drop upon you. 26 Eat and drink, and be glad. And if you see any human being, say, 'I have vowed silence to the Most Compassionate, so I will not talk to any human being today.'"

**Qur'an 19:22–26**

فَأَتَتْ بِهِۦ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُۥ ۖ قَالُوا۟ يَٰمَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْـًٔا فَرِيًّا ۖ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَٰٓأُخْتَ هَٰرُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ
ٱمْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكِ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ ۖ قَالُوا۟ كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَن كَانَ فِي ٱلْمَهْدِ
صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ ٱللَّهِ ءَاتَىٰنِيَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا
كُنتُ وَأَوْصَٰنِي بِٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَٱلزَّكَوٰةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣١﴾ وَبَرًّۢا بِوَٰلِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا
﴿٣٢﴾ وَٱلسَّلَٰمُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدتُّ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾

27 Then she came to her people carrying him. They said, "O Mary, you have committed something monstrous! 28 O sister of Aaron, your father was not a man of evil, nor was your mother unchaste." 29 Thereupon she pointed to him. They said, "How can we talk to someone who is still a baby in the cradle?" 30 Jesus said, "I am a slave of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet. 31 He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I am alive, 32 and has made me dutiful to my mother, and has not made me an oppressor or disobedient. 33 Peace is upon me the day I was born, the day I will die and the day I will be resurrected."

**Qur'an 19:27–33**

وَٱلَّتِيٓ أَحۡصَنَتۡ فَرۡجَهَا فَنَفَخۡنَا فِيهَا مِن رُّوحِنَا وَجَعَلۡنَٰهَا وَٱبۡنَهَآ ءَايَةٗ لِّلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

And [remember Mary] who guarded her chastity; We breathed in her [garment] through Our Spirit [Gabriel] and made her and her son a sign for all people.

**Qur'an 21:91**

## His miracles and his message

The Qur'an lists Jesus' miracles more fully than those of any other prophet: he formed a bird from clay and breathed life into it, healed the blind and the leper, raised the dead, and told people what they had eaten and stored in their houses. Each time the Qur'an adds "by God's permission": the miracles are God's, worked through His prophet.

He was sent to the Children of Israel, confirming the Torah before him and bringing the Gospel (al-Injil), which the Qur'an describes as guidance and light. His message, as the Qur'an records it, is the message of every prophet: "God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path."

His disciples answer his call and declare themselves "helpers of God". The Qur'an also records Jesus announcing a messenger to come after him named Ahmad, a name of Muhammad. This is one of the verses Muslims point to when they say that the earlier prophets foretold the final one, and one on which Christian and Muslim readings naturally differ.

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ أَنِّي قَدۡ جِئۡتُكُم بِـَٔايَةٖ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ أَنِّيٓ أَخۡلُقُ لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلطِّينِ كَهَيۡـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيۡرِ فَأَنفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيۡرَۢا بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۖ وَأُبۡرِئُ ٱلۡأَكۡمَهَ وَٱلۡأَبۡرَصَ وَأُحۡيِ ٱلۡمَوۡتَىٰ بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِۖ وَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا تَأۡكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمۡۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَأٓيَةٗ لَّكُمۡ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤۡمِنِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

And [will send him as] a messenger to the Children of Israel, 'I have come to you with a sign from your Lord that I make for you from clay the figure of a bird, then breathe into it, and it will become a bird by Allah's permission; and I heal the blind and the leper, and bring the dead to life by Allah's permission; and I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses. There is a sign in this for you, if you are believers.

**Qur'an 3:49**

إِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ٱذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدتُّكَ بِرُوحِ ٱلْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ ٱلنَّاسَ فِي ٱلْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَٱلتَّوْرَىٰةَ وَٱلْإِنجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ ٱلطِّينِ كَهَيْـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًۢا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ ٱلْأَكْمَهَ وَٱلْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِيٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ عَنكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ فَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

Then Allah will say, “O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Holy Spirit – as you spoke to people in the cradle and in maturity. I taught you writing, wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel. You made something from clay in the shape of a bird by My permission and breathed into it, and it became a bird by My permission. You healed the born-blind and lepers by My permission, and you brought the dead to life by My permission. I restrained the Children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear signs, but the disbelievers among them said, “This is nothing but clear magic.”

**Qur’an 5:110**

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰٓ ءَاثَٰرِهِم بِعِيسَى ٱبْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُ ٱلْإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

And in their footsteps We sent Jesus, son of Mary, confirming the Torah that came before him, and We gave him the Gospel that contained guidance and light, confirming what came before it in the Torah; and guidance and admonition for the righteous.

**Qur’an 5:46**

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ ٱلتَّوْرَىٰةِ وَلِأُحِلَّ لَكُم بَعْضَ ٱلَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَجِئْتُكُم بِـَٔايَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ ﴿٥٠﴾ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَٱعْبُدُوهُ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

[50] And [I have come] confirming the Torah that came before me, and to make lawful to you some of what was forbidden to you; and I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear Allah and obey me. [51] Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is the straight path.”

**Qur’an 3:50–51**

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ عِيسَىٰ بِٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتِ قَالَ قَدۡ جِئۡتُكُم بِٱلۡحِكۡمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُم بَعۡضَ ٱلَّذِي تَخۡتَلِفُونَ فِيهِۖ فَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ ﴿٦٣﴾ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمۡ فَٱعۡبُدُوهُۚ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٞ مُّسۡتَقِيمٞ ﴿٦٤﴾

63 When Jesus came with clear signs, he said, “I have come to you with wisdom, and to clarify to you some of that concerning which you differ; so fear Allah and obey me. 64 Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord; so worship Him. This is a straight path.”

**Qur’an 43:63–64**

* فَلَمَّآ أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنۡهُمُ ٱلۡكُفۡرَ قَالَ مَنۡ أَنصَارِيٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِۖ قَالَ ٱلۡحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحۡنُ أَنصَارُ ٱللَّهِ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَٱشۡهَدۡ بِأَنَّا مُسۡلِمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

When Jesus sensed disbelief from them, he said, “Who are my helpers in the cause of Allah?” The disciples said, “We are helpers of Allah. We believe in Allah; so bear witness that we are Muslims.”

**Qur’an 3:52**

وَإِذۡ قَالَ عِيسَى ٱبۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ إِلَيۡكُم مُّصَدِّقٗا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ ٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةِ وَمُبَشِّرَۢا بِرَسُولٖ يَأۡتِي مِنۢ بَعۡدِي ٱسۡمُهُۥٓ أَحۡمَدُۖ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُم بِٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتِ قَالُواْ هَٰذَا سِحۡرٞ مُّبِينٞ ﴿٦﴾

And [remember] when Jesus, son of Mary, said, “O Children of Israel, I am truly a messenger of Allah to you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and giving glad tidings of a messenger after me whose name will be Ahmad.” But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said, “This is clear magic.”

**Qur’an 61:6**

## Servant, messenger, word and spirit

Who, then, is Jesus in the Qur’an? The fullest single answer is in 4:171. He is the Messiah, a messenger of God, “His Word that He bestowed upon Mary” and “a spirit from Him”. These are high titles. In the same breath the verse asks the People of the Book not to go beyond the truth about God, not to say “Three”, and to know that God is one and far above having a son.

The Qur'an explains the virgin birth by comparison with Adam, who had neither father nor mother: both were created by God's command "Be". It also says that Jesus and his mother ate food, a plain reminder that they were human, and that Jesus was a servant on whom God bestowed His favour.

Jesus' own first words in the Qur'an, from the cradle, are "I am a slave of God". Muslims see no contradiction between honouring him above almost every other human being and refusing to worship him: both, they say, are what Jesus himself taught.

يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَا تَغۡلُواْ فِي دِينِكُمۡ وَلَا تَقُولُواْ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلۡحَقَّۚ إِنَّمَا ٱلۡمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ٱبۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُۥٓ أَلۡقَىٰهَآ إِلَىٰ مَرۡيَمَ وَرُوحٞ مِّنۡهُۖ فَـَٔامِنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦۖ وَلَا تَقُولُواْ ثَلَٰثَةٌۚ ٱنتَهُواْ خَيۡرٗا لَّكُمۡۚ إِنَّمَا ٱللَّهُ إِلَٰهٞ وَٰحِدٞۖ سُبۡحَانَهُۥٓ أَن يَكُونَ لَهُۥ وَلَدٞۘ لَّهُۥ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِٱللَّهِ وَكِيلٗا ﴿١٧١﴾

O People of the Book, do not go to extremes in your religion, and do not say about Allah but the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His Word that He bestowed upon Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers and do not say "Three" [i.e., Trinity]. Cease; that is better for you. Indeed, Allah is the only One God. Glory be to Him! He is far exalted above having a son. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, and sufficient is Allah as a Disposer of Affairs.

**Qur'an 4:171**

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ ءَادَمَۖ خَلَقَهُۥ مِن تُرَابٖ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾

The similitude of Jesus before Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, "Be," and he was.

**Qur'an 3:59**

مَّا ٱلۡمَسِيحُ ٱبۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٞ قَدۡ خَلَتۡ مِن قَبۡلِهِ ٱلرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُۥ صِدِّيقَةٞۖ كَانَا يَأۡكُلَانِ ٱلطَّعَامَۗ ٱنظُرۡ كَيۡفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ ٱلۡأٓيَٰتِ ثُمَّ ٱنظُرۡ أَنَّىٰ يُؤۡفَكُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger. There were messengers who passed away before him, and his mother was a woman of truth; they both ate food. See how We make Our signs clear to them, yet see how they are deluded!

**Qur'an 5:75**

إِنۡ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبۡدٌ أَنۡعَمۡنَا عَلَيۡهِ وَجَعَلۡنَٰهُ مَثَلٗا لِّبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ﴿٥٩﴾

He was only a slave whom We favored and made him an example for the Children of Israel.

**Qur'an 43:59**

ذَٰلِكَ عِيسَى ٱبۡنُ مَرۡيَمَۚ قَوۡلَ ٱلۡحَقِّ ٱلَّذِي فِيهِ يَمۡتَرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ مِن وَلَدٖۖ سُبۡحَٰنَهُۥٓۚ إِذَا قَضَىٰٓ أَمۡرٗا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمۡ فَٱعۡبُدُوهُۚ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٞ مُّسۡتَقِيمٞ ﴿٣٦﴾

[34] Such was Jesus, son of Mary – a word of truth about which they are in doubt. [35] It is not befitting Allah to beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is. [36] [Jesus said], "Indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path."

**Qur'an 19:34–36**

## Where the Qur'an and Christian teaching part

The Qur'an is direct about the difference. It says that those who call God "the Messiah, son of Mary", or speak of God as "one of Three", have left the truth, and it puts into Jesus' own mouth the words "Worship God, my Lord and your Lord".

The most striking passage is a conversation on the Day of Judgement. God asks Jesus whether he told people to take him and his mother as gods. Jesus answers that he could never say what he had no right to say, and that he told them only what God commanded. Muslims read this as Jesus himself disowning his later deification, not as an accusation against him.

Behind these verses stands the Qur'an's shortest statement of who God is: one, eternal, neither begetting nor begotten. Christians and Muslims both say they worship the God of Abraham; the Qur'an insists that this God has no son and asks Christians to reconsider that one point. It does not ask them to stop honouring Jesus.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۖ وَقَالَ ٱلْمَسِيحُ يَٰبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱعْبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّى وَرَبَّكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَىٰهُ ٱلنَّارُ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ أَنصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾ لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَٰثَةٍ ۘ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ إِلَّآ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۚ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنتَهُواْ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾

[72] They have certainly disbelieved, those who say, "Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary." But the Messiah said, "O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." Whoever associates any partners with Allah, Allah has forbidden Paradise for him, and his abode will be the Fire. And the wrongdoers will have no helpers. [73] They have certainly disbelieved, those who say, "Allah is one of Three." None has the right to be worshiped except One God. If they do not desist from saying this, those who disbelieve from among them will be afflicted with a painful punishment.

**Qur'an 5:72–73**

وَإِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ ٱتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّيَ إِلَٰهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ سُبْحَٰنَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِيٓ أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ ۚ إِن كُنتُ قُلْتُهُۥ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُۥ ۚ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ عَلَّٰمُ ٱلْغُيُوبِ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَآ أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِۦٓ أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۚ وَكُنتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنتَ أَنتَ ٱلرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنتَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١١٧﴾

116 When Allah will say, "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you tell people, 'Take me and my mother as gods besides Allah?' He will say, 'Glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have no right. Had I said so, You would have surely known it. You know what is within myself, whereas I do not know what is within Yourself. Indeed, You are the All-Knower of all unseen.'" 117 I did not tell them except what You ordered me – 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' I was witness over them as long as I was among them. But when You took me up, You Yourself were the Watcher over them, and You are a Witness over all things.

**Qur'an 5:116–117**

قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌۢ ﴿٤﴾

1 Say: "He is Allah, the One; 2 Allah, the Eternal Refuge. 3 He neither begets nor is He begotten, 4 and there is none comparable to Him."

**Qur'an 112:1–4**

## The crucifixion and the raising of Jesus

The Qur'an addresses the crucifixion in one passage. It says that those who boasted of killing the Messiah did not kill him or crucify him, "but it was made to appear to them so", and that God raised him to Himself. Most Muslim commentators have understood that another person was made to look like Jesus and was crucified in his place; some have read the verse differently. All agree that Jesus was not defeated and that God took him up.

Chapter 3 records God's promise to Jesus: "I will take you and raise you up to Myself." For Muslims, Jesus is alive with God.

This is the sharpest difference between the two faiths, because the cross stands at the centre of Christian faith. The Qur'an does not present Jesus' suffering as the means of salvation: in Islam, God forgives directly, and no one carries another's burden. It is better to know this difference clearly than vaguely.

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا ٱلْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ لَفِى شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ ۚ مَا لَهُم بِهِۦ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا ٱتِّبَاعَ ٱلظَّنِّ ۚ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًۢا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَل رَّفَعَهُ ٱللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۚ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٥٨﴾

[157] and for their saying, "We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of Allah." But they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it was made to appear to them so. Even those who dispute it are in doubt about it; they have no certain knowledge other than conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. [158] Rather, Allah raised him up to Himself, and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

**Qur'an 4:157–158**

إِذْ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَىٰٓ إِنِّى مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَىَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَجَاعِلُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۖ ثُمَّ إِلَىَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ فِيمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And [remember] when Allah said, "O Jesus, I will take you and raise you up to Myself and deliver you from those who disbelieve, and make those who follow you above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then you will all return to Me, and I will judge between you concerning that over which you differed.

**Qur'an 3:55**

## The return of Jesus

Muslims believe that Jesus will return before the end of the world. The Qur'an alludes to this: chapter 43 calls him a sign of the Hour, and 4:159 says that the People of the Book will believe in him before his death, a verse that many commentators read as referring to his return.

The detail comes from the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, who said that the son of Mary will descend among you as a just ruler, break the cross, kill the swine and abolish the tax on non-Muslims, and that wealth will flow until no one accepts charity (Bukhari 3448; Muslim 155).

Muslims understand this to mean that Jesus will confirm the worship of God alone and that the disputes about him will end.

Jesus therefore has a place not only in the past of Islam but in its future. Beyond what the texts say, Muslims are told not to speculate about the time.

> وَإِنَّهُۥ لَعِلۡمٞ لِّلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمۡتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَٱتَّبِعُونِۚ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٞ مُّسۡتَقِيمٞ ﴿٦١﴾
>
> And he [i.e., Jesus] will be a sign of the Hour; so do not have doubt about it and follow me. This is a straight path.
>
> **Qur'an 43:61**

> وَإِن مِّنۡ أَهۡلِ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ إِلَّا لَيُؤۡمِنَنَّ بِهِۦ قَبۡلَ مَوۡتِهِۦۖ وَيَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ شَهِيدٗا ﴿١٥٩﴾
>
> There will be none from the People of the Book but will believe in him [upon his return] before his death, and on the Day of Resurrection, he will be a witness against them.
>
> **Qur'an 4:159**

## Christians in the Qur'an

The Qur'an speaks of Christians in more than one way. It criticises doctrines, as the verses above show. It also speaks warmly of Christian people: the verse that says believers will find Christians nearest to them in affection, "because among them are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant", is one of the best known in the book.

It promises that Jews, Christians and others who believe in God and the Last Day and do good "will have their reward with their Lord", and it tells Muslims to debate with the People of the Book only in the best way, saying "our God and your God is one".

The invitation of 3:64, to "come to a common term", that we worship none but God, is how the Qur'an frames the whole conversation: agreement on the one God first, and honesty about the rest. If you want to read further, chapters 3, 5 and 19 contain most of what the Qur'an says about Jesus; our guide to starting the Qur'an explains how to read it in context.

لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ ٱلنَّاسِ عَدَٰوَةً لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلۡيَهُودَ وَٱلَّذِينَ أَشۡرَكُواْۖ وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقۡرَبَهُم مَّوَدَّةً لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّا نَصَٰرَىٰۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنۡهُمۡ قِسِّيسِينَ وَرُهۡبَانٗا وَأَنَّهُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَكۡبِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

You will surely find that the most hostile people towards the believers are the Jews and those who associate partners with Allah, and you will surely find that the closest of them in affection to the believers are those who say, "We are Christians." That is because among them are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant.

**Qur'an 5:82**

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَادُواْ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ وَٱلصَّٰبِـُٔونَ مَنۡ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحٗا فَلَهُمۡ أَجۡرُهُمۡ عِندَ رَبِّهِمۡ وَلَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

The believers and those who were Jews, Christians, and the Sabians [before Prophet Muhammad] – whoever believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteous deed, they will have their reward with their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

**Qur'an 2:62**

قُلۡ يَٰٓأَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ تَعَالَوۡاْ إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٖ سَوَآءِۭ بَيۡنَنَا وَبَيۡنَكُمۡ أَلَّا نَعۡبُدَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ وَلَا نُشۡرِكَ بِهِۦ شَيۡـٔٗا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعۡضُنَا بَعۡضًا أَرۡبَابٗا مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّوۡاْ فَقُولُواْ ٱشۡهَدُواْ بِأَنَّا مُسۡلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

Say, "O people of the Book, come to a common term between us and you, that we worship none but Allah and associate no partners with Him, and that we do not take one another as lords besides Allah." But if they turn away, say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Allah]."

**Qur'an 3:64**

* وَلَا تُجَٰدِلُوٓاْ أَهۡلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ إِلَّا بِٱلَّتِي هِيَ أَحۡسَنُ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنۡهُمۡۖ وَقُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱلَّذِيٓ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡنَا وَأُنزِلَ إِلَيۡكُمۡ وَإِلَٰهُنَا وَإِلَٰهُكُمۡ وَٰحِدٞ وَنَحۡنُ لَهُۥ مُسۡلِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

Do not argue with the People of the Book except in the best manner, unless with those of them who transgress [against you]. And say, “We believe in what is sent down to us and what was sent down to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit.”

**Qur’an 29:46**

Translation: Rowwad Translation Center (QuranEnc)

**Sources & further reading:** Qur’an 19:16-36 · Qur’an 3:42-55 · Qur’an 4:157-159 · Qur’an 4:171 · Qur’an 5:72-75 · Qur’an 5:110-118 · Qur’an 5:82 · Sahih al-Bukhari 3448 · Sahih Muslim 155

## What does Islam teach about women?

Qur'an 33:35 addresses believing women and men in parallel as morally responsible people. Qur'an 4:32 recognises a share in what each earns. These are important starting points, but they do not mean that every rule in classical Islamic law is identical for women and men.

Questions about marriage, divorce, inheritance, testimony, education, or public roles should be examined separately. There are differences among legal schools, contemporary interpretations, state laws, and lived experiences. A general claim that everything is either equal or oppressive cannot explain those details.

It is also important to listen to women themselves. Religious ideals should not be used to dismiss discrimination or abuse. When exploring a contested issue, ask which text is cited, how it is interpreted, and how the rule affects people in practice. Our guide is an introduction, not a personal legal ruling.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 33:35 · Qur'an 4:32 · Yaqeen — Islam and women

## Why do some Muslim women wear hijab?

Hijab commonly refers to a head covering and modest dress, although the term has broader uses. Many Muslim women understand covering their hair as a religious obligation, following mainstream traditional interpretations of Qur'an 24:31 and related texts. Details and contemporary interpretations differ.

Modesty is not a teaching directed only at women: the preceding verse addresses men's conduct and gaze. Clothing also carries personal, cultural, and social meanings. Women may describe conviction, identity, privacy, pressure, or a changing relationship with the practice; one explanation should not be imposed on everyone.

A headscarf is not the same as a face veil, and Muslim women do not all dress alike. The most respectful way to learn about someone's choice or experience is to listen without assuming that her clothing tells you how intelligent, free, or devout she is.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 24:30-31 · Qur'an 33:59

## What does jihad mean? Does Islam permit terrorism?

Jihad means striving or exertion. Muslim sources and scholarship use it in different contexts, including moral and spiritual effort and, in legal discussions, armed struggle. Reducing it either to "holy war" or only to an inward struggle leaves out part of that history.

The existence of rules about warfare does not make violence unrestricted. Qur'an 2:190 connects fighting with limits against transgression; Sahih al-Bukhari 3015 reports a prohibition on killing women and children in warfare. These sources are relevant to rejecting the deliberate targeting of civilians.

Historical wars, extremist claims, and modern state actions still require specific examination. A group's use of religious language does not establish that its actions are justified. Equally, a responsible answer should not pretend that the history of Islamic law contains no discussion of armed conflict.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 2:190 · Sahih al-Bukhari 3015 · Qur'an 5:8

## What is Sharia, and is it the same as a country's law?

Sharia is commonly used for the divinely guided path of life in Islam, encompassing worship, ethics, and conduct. Fiqh is the human scholarly effort to understand practical rulings from religious sources. The distinction matters because interpretations can differ and develop.

A modern government's laws are not simply a transparent copy of a single, uncontested code called "Sharia." States select, interpret, codify, and enforce rules within particular political and legal systems. Muslim scholars and communities may disagree about those choices.

Ask about a specific issue: Which source, which school, which interpretation, and which jurisdiction? This is much more useful than treating the word as meaning only criminal punishments, or claiming that every policy adopted in its name represents all Muslims. This answer provides concepts, not legal advice.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 45:18 · Yaqeen — Shariah

## What does Islam say about other religions?

Islam holds that God sent prophets to every people, that Jews and Christians received genuine revelation, and that the Qur'an is the final message confirming and correcting what came before. It therefore sees itself as true and others as, at best, partial. At the same time, the Qur'an says there is no compulsion in religion, commands justice and kindness towards those who do not fight Muslims over faith, and says God will judge between communities on the Day of Resurrection.

Historically Muslim states gave Jews, Christians, and others protected status with their own worship and courts, an arrangement more tolerant than most of its time and less equal than modern citizenship. Today Muslims take part in interfaith work across the world. Our guide to Islam and other faiths sets out the shared ground and the differences in more depth.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 2:256 · Qur'an 5:48 · Qur'an 60:8 · Qur'an 2:62

## Can someone leave Islam?

People leave Islam, as they leave every religion, and the Qur'an addresses the possibility in several places, speaking of those who turn back after believing. In each case it describes loss and judgement in the life to come; it prescribes no earthly punishment and states that there is no compulsion in religion. On the evidence of the Qur'an, leaving Islam is a matter between a person and God.

Classical Islamic law, drawing on certain hadith and on the context of early wars in which apostasy meant joining the enemy, prescribed the death penalty for public apostasy by men, and this remains the law in a small number of countries. Many contemporary scholars argue that those rulings concerned treason rather than belief, and that freedom of religion is the Qur'anic position. This is a live debate within Islam and a source of real suffering for some who leave, which an honest introduction should acknowledge rather than hide.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 2:256 · Qur'an 4:137 · Qur'an 3:86-90 · Qur'an 18:29

## If God is merciful, why is there suffering?

Muslim discussions of suffering often consider human wrongdoing, the trials of earthly life, the limits of human knowledge, and accountability beyond death. Qur'an 2:155–157 acknowledges fear and loss; it does not present suffering as something believers never experience.

Human freedom can help explain some harm people cause, but it does not by itself explain every illness or natural disaster. The wider theological question has a long history, and different explanations should be weighed carefully rather than offered as a slogan.

We should not claim to know why a particular person suffered, blame someone for their pain, or treat compassion as unnecessary because life is a test. Whatever one's philosophical answer, relieving suffering and standing against injustice remain practical responsibilities.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 2:155-157 · Qur'an 4:135

## If God knows everything, do people have free will?

Divine knowledge and human choice are not treated as a simple either-or in Islamic belief. Muslims affirm that God knows creation, while human beings are addressed as responsible for what they choose and do. Knowing a choice is not the same concept as forcing it.

How divine decree and human agency fit together has been explained in different ways by theological schools. A brief analogy cannot resolve every philosophical difficulty. The practical emphasis is that belief in decree is not an excuse to avoid responsibility, learning, or efforts to improve a situation.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 76:3 · Qur'an 81:28-29 · Forty Hadith of al-Nawawi 2

## Can someone value science and believe in Islam?

Science investigates the natural world through evidence, testable explanations, and revision. Religious belief also addresses questions of meaning, worship, and moral responsibility. Many Muslims see these as compatible activities, while recognising that particular claims can raise difficult questions.

Topics such as human origins are interpreted differently among Muslims. It is more useful to examine a specific scientific claim and a specific religious interpretation than to insist that there can never be tension—or that all religious belief must reject science.

The Qur'an encourages reflection on creation, but it should not be treated as a modern laboratory manual. Claims that a verse predicts a scientific discovery need careful attention to language, context, and the strength of the evidence. Faith should not depend on a sensational claim that has not been checked.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 3:190-191 · Yaqeen — FAQs with Islamic Apologetics

## What do Muslims believe about the crucifixion of Jesus?

Qur'an 4:157–158 says that those who claimed to have killed Jesus did not kill or crucify him, but that it was made to appear so to them, and that God raised him to Himself. Most Muslim interpreters have understood this to mean that Jesus was not crucified and that someone else was made to resemble him, though interpretations of the details vary.

Muslims also believe that Jesus will return before the end of time. This is one of the clearest differences between Islam and Christianity, and it is best acknowledged plainly in any conversation between the two faiths. The two agree on Jesus' virgin birth, his miracles, and his status as the Messiah sent to Israel.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 4:157-158 · Qur'an 3:55 · Qur'an 19:16-36

## What does Islam say about racism?

Qur'an 49:13 says that God made people into nations and tribes so that they might know one another, and that the noblest in His sight is the most God-conscious. In his farewell sermon the Prophet is reported to have declared that no Arab is superior to a non-Arab, nor a white person to a black person, except by piety. Bilal, an Ethiopian former slave, was chosen by the Prophet to give the first call to prayer.

Pilgrims on Hajj, dressed identically regardless of origin, experience this equality in practice; Malcolm X's account of it is well known. Muslim societies have nonetheless practised slavery, tribal prejudice, and colour-based discrimination, and some still do. The teaching is a standard against which Muslims, like everyone else, fall short, not a claim that they never have.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 49:13 · Qur'an 30:22 · Musnad Ahmad 23489

## How do Muslims approach marriage and dating?

Islam strongly encourages marriage and describes it as a source of tranquillity, love, and mercy. A marriage requires the free consent of both parties, witnesses, and a gift from the groom to the bride that remains her own property. Forced marriage is invalid in Islamic law. Sexual relationships outside marriage are not permitted, which is why dating in the sense of casual or sexual relationships before commitment is generally avoided.

How Muslims find a spouse varies greatly: through family introductions, friends, community events, and matchmaking apps. Many couples meet, talk, and decide for themselves with family aware and involved. Men may marry Jewish or Christian women in classical law; Muslim women are expected to marry Muslims, a rule some contemporary scholars have questioned. Practice differs by family and culture more than by doctrine.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 30:21 · Qur'an 4:19 · Qur'an 24:32 · Sahih al-Bukhari 5138

## Can Muslims care for family and friends of other faiths?

Qur'an 60:8 permits kindness and justice towards people who are not fighting or expelling believers because of religion. Qur'an 31:15 describes courteous companionship with parents even where there is a serious disagreement about worship. These are important foundations for relationships across religious difference.

Specific questions about religious ceremonies, marriage, or shared practices have their own scholarly discussions. They should not be collapsed into a demand to abandon every person you already care about. Explain your needs respectfully and make room for others' questions.

If a change of belief could bring threats or loss of essential support, careful planning and trusted help matter. You are not required by this website to disclose anything or make a public decision.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 60:8 · Qur'an 31:15

## Why do Muslims avoid interest?

The Qur'an forbids riba, usually translated as interest or usury, in strong terms, contrasting it with trade, which is permitted, and with charity, which is praised. The underlying concern is that money should not earn money by itself, at the expense of someone in need, without sharing in real risk. Debt relief for those in difficulty is commanded in the same passage.

Observant Muslims therefore avoid interest-bearing savings and loans where they can, and a global industry of Islamic finance structures mortgages, investments, and banking around partnership, leasing, and sale rather than lending at interest. Where no alternative exists, scholars differ on what is permitted out of necessity, and individual Muslims make different choices.

**Sources & further reading:** Qur'an 2:275-280 · Qur'an 3:130 · Qur'an 30:39



## Keep exploring

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