219 - What Are the Merits of Islam?

the question

Why do Muslims think that Islam is true? Is there any factual basis?

Summary of answer

Among the merits of Islam is that it enjoins good characteristics such as truthfulness, patience, deliberation, kindness, humility, modesty, keeping promises, dignity, mercy, justice, courage...

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Why Islam is the true religion

This is a reasonable enough question for one who has not entered Islam , but one who believes in and practices this religion already knows the blessings which are his because of this religion. There are many reasons for this, which include the following:

- The Muslim worships One God, Who has no partner, and Who has the most beautiful names and the highest attributes.

Thus the Muslim’s focus and aim is concentrated, focused on His Lord and Creator; he puts his trust in Him and asks Him for help, patience and support; he believes that Allah is able to do all things, and has no need of a wife or son.

Allah created the heavens and earth; He is the One Who gives life and death; He is the Creator and Sustainer from Whom the slave seeks provision. He is the All-Hearing Who responds to the supplication of His slave, and from Whom the slave hopes for a response. He is the All-Merciful and All-Forgiving, to Whom the slave turns in repentance when he has committed a sin or fallen short

in his worship of Allah. He is the Omniscient and All-Seeing, Who knows all intentions and what is hidden in people’s hearts.

The slave feels ashamed to commit a sin by doing wrong to himself or to others, because his Lord is watching over him and sees all that he does. He knows that Allah is All-Wise, the Seer of the Unseen, so he trusts that what Allah decrees for him is good; he knows that Allah will never be unjust to him, and that everything that Allah decrees for him is good, even if he does not understand the wisdom behind it.

- The effects of Islamic worship on the soul of the Muslim include the following:

1. Prayer keeps the slave in contact with his Lord; if he enters it in a spirit of humility and concentration, he will feel tranquil and secure, because he is seeking a "powerful support," which is Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. For this reason, the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to say: "Let us find relaxation and joy in prayer." If something distressed him, he would hasten to pray. Everyone who finds himself faced with disaster and tries prayer finds strength, patience and consolation, because he is reciting the words of his Lord, which cannot be compared to the effect of the words of a created being. If the words of some psychologists can offer a little comfort, what do you think of the words of the One Who created the psychologist?

- Now let us look at Zakah (the poor due), which is one of the pillars of Islam . Zakah purifies the soul from stinginess and miserliness, and accustoms people to being generous and helping the poor and needy. It will bring a great reward on the Day of Resurrection, just like other forms of worship. It is not burdensome, like man-made taxes; it is only 25 in every thousand, which the sincere Muslim pays willingly and does not try to evade or wait until someone chases him for it.

- Fasting involves refraining from food and sex for an appointed time. It is a form of worship, and a way in which one can feel the hunger of those who are deprived. It is also a reminder of the blessings of the Creator, and it brings rewards beyond measure.

- Hajj is the Pilgrimage to the sacred House of Allah, which was built by Ibrahim (Abraham, upon whom be peace). By performing Hajj one is obeying the command of Allah and the call to come and meet Muslims from all over the world.
- Islam commands all kinds of good and forbids all kinds of evil . It encourages good manners and proper treatment of others.

What are the good characteristics in Islam?

Islam enjoins good characteristics such as truthfulness, patience, deliberation, kindness, humility, modesty, keeping promises, dignity, mercy, justice, courage, patience, friendliness, contentment, chastity, good treatment, tolerance, trustworthiness, gratitude for favours, and self-control in times of anger. Islam commands the Muslim to fulfil his duty towards his parents and to uphold family ties, to help the needy, to treat neighbours well, to protect and safeguard the wealth of the orphan, to be gentle with the young and show respect to the old, to be kind to servants and animals, to remove harmful things from the road, to speak kind words, to forgive at the time when one has the opportunity to take revenge, to be sincere towards one's fellow-Muslims, to meet the needs of the Muslims, to give the debtor time to repay his debt, to prefer others over oneself, to console others, to greet people with a smiling face, to visit the sick, to support the one who is oppressed, to give gifts to friends, to honour his guest, to treat his wife kindly and spend on her and her children, to spread the greeting of peace (salam) and to seek permission before entering another person's house, lest one see something private that the other person does not want one to see.

Some non-Muslims may do these things out of politeness or good manners, but they are not seeking reward from Allah or salvation of the Day of Judgement.

What is forbidden in Islam?

If we look at what Islam has prohibited, we will find that it is in the interests of both the individual and society as a whole. All these prohibitions serve to safeguard the relationship between the slave and his Lord, and the relationship of the individual with himself and with his fellow-man.

The following examples demonstrate this:

- Islam forbids the association of anything in worship with Allah and the worship of anything other than Allah, because this spells doom and misery.
- Islam also forbids visiting or believing soothsayers and fortune-tellers; magic or witchcraft that may cause a rift between two people or bring them together; belief in the influence of the stars on events and people's lives; cursing time, because Allah is directing its affairs; and superstition, because this is pessimism.
- Islam forbids cancelling out good deeds by showing off , boasting or reminding others of one's favours; bowing or prostrating to anything other than Allah; sitting with hypocrites or immoral people for the purposes of enjoying their company or keeping them company; and invoking the curse or wrath of Allah on one another or damning one another to Hell.
- Islam forbids urinating into stagnant water; defecating on the side of the road or in places where people seek shade or where they draw water; from facing the qiblah (direction of prayer) or turning one's back towards it when passing water or stool giving the greeting of salam (peace) to one who is answering the call of nature; and putting one's hand into any vessel before washing it, when one has just woken up.
- Islam forbids the offering of any nafl (supererogatory) prayers when the sun is rising, when it is at its zenith, and when it is setting, because it rises and sets between the horns of Shaytan (Satan); praying when there is food prepared that a person desires; praying when one urgently needs to pass water, stool or wind, because that will distract a person from concentrating properly on his prayer.
- Islam forbids the Muslim to raise his voice in prayer, lest it disturb other believers; to continue offering supererogatory prayers at night when one feels drowsy - such a person should sleep then get up; to stay up all night in prayer, especially one night after another; and to stop praying when there is doubt as to the validity of one's wudu - unless one hears a sound or smells an odour.

- Islam forbids buying, selling and making "lost and found" announcements in the mosque - because it is the place of worship and remembrance of Allah, where worldly affairs have no place.
- Islam forbids haste in walking when the iqamah (call immediately preceding congregational prayer) is given, and prescribes walking in a calm and dignified manner.
- It is also forbidden to boast about the cost of building a mosque; to decorate a mosque with red or yellow paint or adornments which will distract the worshippers; to fast day after day without a break.
- Islam forbids building over graves, making them high, sitting on them, walking between them wearing shoes, putting lights over them or writing on them.
- It is forbidden to disinter the dead or to take graves as places of worship.
- Islam forbids wailing, tearing one's clothes or leaving one's hair unkempt when a person dies.
- Eulogizing the dead in the manner of the times of Ignorance (Jahiliyyah) is also forbidden, although there is nothing wrong with informing others that a person has died.
- Islam forbids the consumption of riba (interest); all kinds of selling which involve ignorance (of the product), misleading and cheating; selling blood, wine, pork, idols and everything that Allah has forbidden - their price, whether bought or sold - is haram (unlawful); najash, which is offering a price for something one has no intention of buying, as happens in many auctions; concealing a product's faults at the time of selling; selling something which one does not own or before it comes into one's possession; undercutting, outbidding or out bargaining another; selling produce before it is clear that it is in good condition and free of blemish; cheating in weights and measures; and hoarding.
- A partner who has shares in a plot of land or a date palm tree is forbidden to sell his share without consulting his partners.

- It is forbidden to consume the wealth of orphans unjustly; to bet or gamble; to take anything by force; to accept or offer bribes; to steal people’s wealth or to consume it unjustly; to take something for the purpose of destroying it; to undermine the value of people’s possessions; to keep lost property which one has found, or to keep quiet about it and not announce it, for it belongs to the one who recognizes it; to cheat in any way; to ask for a loan with no intention of repaying it; to take anything of the wealth of a fellow-Muslim, unless it is given freely, because what is taken because of another person’s shyness is haram (impermissible); and to accept a gift because of intercession.
- Celibacy and castration are forbidden, as is marrying two sisters, or a woman and her aunt (paternal or maternal), whether he marries the aunt after marrying her niece or vice versa, for fear of breaking the ties of kinship.
- It is forbidden to make deals in marriage, such as saying "Let me marry your daughter and I will give you my daughter or sister in marriage." Such reciprocal deals are a form of oppression and injustice, and haram.
- Islam forbids mut`ah (temporary marriage) , which is a marriage contract for a period of time agreed by the two parties, at the end of which the marriage expires.
- Islam forbids intercourse with a menstruating woman, until she has purified herself (by taking a bath after her period ends), and also forbids anal intercourse.
- A man is forbidden to propose marriage to a woman when another man has already proposed to her, unless the other man withdraws his proposal or gives him permission.
- It is forbidden to marry a previously-married woman without consulting her, or a virgin without seeking her permission.
- It is forbidden to wish (a newly married couple) "Bi’l-rafa wa’l-banᵊn (a joyful life and many sons)," because this is the greeting of the people of Jahiliyyah (ignorance), who hated daughters.
- The divorced woman is forbidden to conceal what Allah has created in her womb (if she is

pregnant).

- A husband and wife are forbidden to speak (to others) about the intimacies of married life.
- It is forbidden to turn a woman against her husband or to take divorce lightly.
- It is forbidden for a woman to ask for another's divorce, such as asking a man to divorce a woman so that she can marry him.
- A wife is forbidden to spend her husband's money without his permission, or to keep away from his bed without good reason, because the angels will curse her if she does that.
- A man is forbidden to marry his father's wife, or to have intercourse with a woman who is pregnant by another man.
- It is forbidden for a man to practice 'azl (coitus interruptus) with his free wife without her permission.
- It is forbidden for a man to return home from a journey late at night and startle his family, unless he has previously notified them when he will arrive home.
- A man is forbidden to take anything of his wife's mahr (dowry) without her consent, or to keep annoying his wife so that she will give up her wealth.
- Islam forbids women to make a wanton display of themselves (tabarruj).
- It also forbids extreme forms of female circumcision.
- Women are forbidden to admit anyone into their husband's home without his permission; his general permission is acceptable so long as they stay within the limits of shari'ah (Islamic law).
- It is forbidden to separate a mother and child (in case of divorce); to let one's womenfolk behave foolishly (in an immoral fashion) and not say anything; to let one's gaze wander everywhere; and to follow an accidental glance with an intentional glance.
- Islam forbids the eating of dead meat, regardless of whether it died by drowning,

strangulation, shock or falling from a high place; eating blood, pork and anything slaughtered in a name other than that of Allah or for idols; eating the flesh or drinking the milk of beasts that feed on filth and waste matter; eating the flesh of every carnivorous beast that has fangs and every bird that has talons; eating the meat of domesticated donkeys; killing animals by keeping them and throwing stones at them until they die, or detaining them without food until they die; slaughtering with teeth or nails; slaughtering one animal (for food) in front of another; or sharpening the knife in front of the animal to be slaughtered.

- In the area of clothing and adornment, men are forbidden the extravagance of wearing gold.
- Muslim men are forbidden to be naked or to expose their thighs; to leave their clothes long (below the ankles) and trail them on the ground for the purpose of showing off; and to wear clothes that will attract attention.
- It is forbidden to bear false witness; to make false accusations against a chaste believing woman; to accuse someone who is innocent; to utter lies; to slander and backbite; to call people by offensive nicknames; to spread gossip and malicious slander; to make fun of the Muslims; to boast about one's status; to shed doubts on a person's lineage; to utter slander, insults and obscenities; to speak in an indecent or rude manner; or to utter evil in public, except by one who has been wronged.
- Islam forbids telling lies; one of the worst kinds of lies is to lie about dreams, like fabricating dreams and visions in order to prove one's virtue, or make some material gains, or to frighten an enemy.
- Muslims are forbidden to praise themselves, or to talk in a secret way: two may not converse secretly to the exclusion of a third, because this is offensive.
- It is forbidden to curse a believer or someone who does not deserve to be cursed.
- Islam forbids speaking ill of the dead; praying for death; wishing for death because of some suffering that one is passing through; praying against one's self, one's children, one's servants or one's wealth.

- Muslims are told not to eat the food that is directly in front of others or to eat from the centre of the dish or platter; rather they should eat from what is directly in front of them or thereabouts, because the barakah (blessing) comes in the middle of the food.
- It is forbidden to drink from a broken edge of a vessel, because this could cause harm; or to drink from the mouth of a vessel; or to breathe into it.
- It is forbidden to eat while lying on one's stomach; to sit at a table where wine is being drunk; to leave a fire burning in one's house when one sleeps; to sleep with Ghamr in one's hand, like an offensive smell or the remainder of food (grease); to sleep on one's stomach; or to talk about or try to interpret bad dreams, because these are tricks of the Shaytan.
- It is forbidden to kill another person except in cases where it is right to do so; to kill one's children for fear of poverty; to commit suicide; to commit fornication, adultery or sodomy (homosexuality); to drink wine, or even to prepare it, carry it from one place to another, or sell it.
- Muslims are forbidden to please people by angering Allah; to offend their parents or even to say "Uff" (the slightest word of contempt) to them; to claim that a child belongs to anyone but his real father; to torture by means of fire; to burn anyone, alive or dead, with fire; to mutilate the bodies of the slain; to help anyone commit falsehood; or to cooperate in wrongdoing and sin.
- It is forbidden to obey any person by disobeying Allah; to swear falsely; to swear a disastrous oath; to eavesdrop on people without their permission; to invade people's privacy or look at their private parts; to claim something that does not belong to one or that one did not do, for the purpose of showing off; to look into someone's else's house without permission; to be extravagant; to swear an oath to do something wrong; to spy on others or be suspicious about righteous men and women; to envy, hate or shun one another; to persist in falsehood; to be arrogant or feel superior; to be filled with self-admiration; to be pleased with one's arrogance.
- Islam forbids taking back one's charity, even if one pays to get it back; employing someone

to do a job without paying him his wages; being unfair in giving gifts to one's children; bequeathing everything in one's will and leaving one's heirs poor - in such a case the will should not be executed; writing a will that concerns more than one third of one's legacy; being a bad neighbour; or changing a will to the detriment of one or some of one's heirs.

- A Muslim is forbidden to forsake or shun his brother for more than three days, except for a reason sanctioned by shari'ah; to hold small stones between two fingers and throw them because this could cause injury to eyes or teeth; to include his heirs in a will, because Allah has already given heirs their rights of inheritance; to disturb his neighbour; to point a weapon at his Muslim brother; to hand someone an unsheathed sword, lest it harm him; to come (walk) between two people except with their permission; to return a gift, unless there is some shar'i objection to it; to be extravagant; to give money to foolish people; to wish to be like someone to whom Allah has given more of something; to cancel out his charity by giving offensive reminders of his giving; to wilfully conceal testimony; or to oppress orphans or scold one who asks for help or money.
- It is forbidden to treat with evil medicines, because Allah would not create a cure for this ummah which includes something that He has forbidden.
- It is forbidden to kill women and children in warfare; to boast to one another; or to break promises.
- Islam forbids betraying a trust; asking for charity that one does not need; alarming a Muslim brother or taking away his possessions, whether jokingly or seriously; changing one's mind after giving a gift, except in the case of a gift from a father to his child; practising medicine without experience; or killing ants, bees and hoopoe birds.
- A man is forbidden to look at the 'awrah (private parts) of another man, and a woman is forbidden to look at the 'awrah of another woman.
- It is forbidden to sit between two people without their permission; or to greet only those whom one knows, because the greeting is to be given to those whom you know and those whom you do not know.

- A Muslim is forbidden to let an oath come between him and good deeds; he should do what is good and make expiation for the oath.
- It is forbidden to judge between two disputing parties when one is angry, or to judge in favour of one party without hearing what the other has to say.
- It is forbidden for a man to walk through the market-place carrying something - like a sharp weapon - that could harm the Muslims, unless it is properly covered.
- A Muslim is forbidden to make another person get up, so that he can take his place.

There are more commands and prohibitions which came for the benefit and happiness of individuals and mankind as a whole. Have you ever seen any other religion that can compare to this religion?

Read this response again, then ask yourself: is it not a great pity that I am not one of them? Allah says in the Quran (interpretation of the meaning): "And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." [Al ‘Imran 3:85]

Finally, I hope that everyone who reads this will be guided to the correct way and to follow the truth. May Allah protect you and us from all evil.

And Allah knows best.