

# Modern Challenges & Islaamic Solutions

## Part 2

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## **Outline of the Course**

1. Morphological formation of the name "Allah"
2. The Qur'aan's Concise Definition of God
3. Submission
4. Submission in Islaam
5. Sharia
6. Law-making, the exclusive right of Allah
7. Parameters of Jihaad
8. Life is a Test
9. Types of Jihaad

### **Course objectives:**

1. To explain some of the misunderstood concepts in Islaam
2. To be able to refute false allegations against Islaam
3. To introduce virtues related to issues such as Jihaad, Sharia, etc.

QUESTION & ANSWER BUCKET

TRANSCRIPTS

ASSESSMENT

Multiple Choice Questions

Match the Columns

True or False

#### COURSE DURATION

Video	–	2 hours 30 min
Study Guide	–	30 min
Assessment	–	15 min
Total Duration	–	3 hours 15 mins

# Lesson 1: Modern Challenges and Islaamic Solutions – Part 6

## Commonly Misunderstood Aspects of Islaam: 'Allah'

### 1. Morphological formation of the name "Allah"

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, the name "Allah" is a composite of two words in Arabic: Al, which means 'the', and Ilaah which meaning a deity, linguistically, an object of worship that people put their faith and their hope and trust in it. Therefore, the word in Arabic means "the God". The word "Allah" is used by the Arabs, whether they are Muslim, Christian or Jews, to refer to the absolute deity. The Bible translated into Arabic refers to God as "Allah".

In Hebrew (the original mosaic language) and Aramaic (unanimously, the language of Jesus), similar words are used. In Hebrew, these words (El, Eloah, Alah, Elohim), all of these bear a striking similarity to the Arabic word for the Creator. In Aramaic, the word used is almost exactly the same as the Arabic term Alah. These three languages are Semitic languages; hence, the similarity.

It is very clear from the Qur'an that Allah is the Creator, the Sustainer, the controller of the heavens and the earth. And this was a fact acknowledged by the pagan Arabs. The pagan Arabs, who used to worship 360 Idols around the Kaaba at the time of Prophet Muhammad, never had an idol, or an image of Allah. If they were asked who the Creator of everything was, their immediate response would be "Allah" (Al Qur'aan: 23:84-89). The same would be their response to the following questions:

Who sends down the rain from the sky?

Who causes the crops to grow?

Who causes that which is living to die and brings that which is dead back to life.?

So, both in terms of the actual name of God, Allah, and of course, more importantly, the concept of God (the idea that Allah, the Creator, or God is a transcendent being, that God is different and distinct from the creation, and that God is the one who has brought the universe into existence), this concept of God, Allah, of the Creator, is also the same concept that is conceived by Judaism, Christianity and Islaam.

### 2. The Qur'an's Concise Definition of Allah

Suratul Ikhlas (Surah number 112) gives a very concise and lucid definition of Allah, in which Allah is described as:

i. **Ahad** Which means one and alone. This negates any concept that someone or something shares in the divinity of God, the absolute power over everything.

ii. **As-Samad** which means the one upon whom all things depend, while Allah depends upon nothing, Allah is in fact completely self-sufficient and free from all wants and needs. This is all understood in the term As-Samad.

iii. **He does not beget**; He gives birth to nothing. No son or daughter or whatever can be attributed to Him.

This is emphasising and making clear that Allah is distinct and separate and different from the creation.

iv. **Nor is He begotten**. He has no parents. Allah is distinct and separate and unique from His creation.

v. **And there is nothing like Him**. However wildly we go with imagination, we cannot have a picture similar to that of Allah. Our imagination will be limited to the created things that we have seen in our life. The most unnatural picture we have is to have the head of an animal on the body of another. But we remain within the created realm. To reduce Allah to some created being is indeed insulting to Allah.

The prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said that the universe in relation to the Kursi, which is smaller than the Throne, is like a ring thrown in vast a desert. The universe is 10 billion light years vast. Now this huge Kursi compared to the Glorious Throne of Allah is like a ring to the desert. And Allah is naturally far greater than the Throne.

To conclude, the concept of God in Islaam is a universal concept. The God of the Qur'aan is essentially the same God as the God of Moses, the God of Abraham, the God of Jesus, and the God in the Bible. And in fact, Allah is the same God that is universally recognised by human beings all over the world.

## Lesson 2: Modern Challenges and Islaamic Solutions – Part 7

### Commonly Misunderstood Aspects of Islaam: ‘Submission’

#### 3. Submission

Islaam linguistically, comes from the Arabic root S-L-M, which means peace. The word Islaam also means submission. In the context of religion, it means submission to the will of God. However, the word submission has a type of negative connotations antithetic to the freedom indoctrinated by the media.

However, in reality, the idea that we are free, is really propaganda. The idea of good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate, and right and wrong is in every society. And these things are taught in schools and at homes and also the media. These values vary from society to another. What is normal in one culture is not so in the other.

These channels have a very powerful effect in shaping the way that we look at the world. And in a very real sense, we are submitting to those ideas and to those concepts. We are not free to choose how to dress in schools for example. We are bound by laws and regulations that we have to submit to.

When you submit, you do something that maybe you don't necessarily want to do, but you do it because you are told to, or because you know that it's good for you, or that you know that if you do this other thing, it's bad for you. Often, we submit to an authority that we believe and that we understand, is more intelligent and more well informed than us. We have to submit to each expert in matters related to his specialisation.

No human being is free. Everybody submits to someone or something. The question is, ‘Who do you submit to? What do you submit?’ This is the real question. Imagine there is a person who is sold and resold as a slave. Imagine how will be his feeling when he is chained up in the market, thinking about the character of his next owner. Will he be tough or soft and kind?

Imagine a bunch of people save money to buy a slave and they come to the market and buy that slave who is thinking about his next master. Now having been bought by many, each one of them would want him to go by his instructions. And he will have to obey all. Such condition is unimaginably distressing.

However, this is typically the condition we are living. We have to submit to many people in our lives: the parents, friends, wife, husband, boyfriend, girlfriend, tradition, culture each demanding something different.

We are a slave to many masters, which one shall we please? Who shall we obey? Each one is calling us in a different direction. What a terrible, miserable, unhappy life most of us are leading.

#### **4. Submission in Islaam**

- i. Your master is the one and the only, i.e., Allah. He created you and knows what is good and what is bad for you. If you follow His guidance, you are the happiest. He is the All Wise, the All Knowing, the Oft Forgiving, and Most Merciful.
- ii. He has revealed His guidance in the Qur'aan, and sent His messenger Muhammad, as a living human example that you have to emulate. This is the real freedom. You are not a slave to any human being like you, or any worldly thing.
- iii. Islaam means submission to God. So, a Muslim is someone who submits themselves to the Will of God. This is the happiest, the most peaceful and tranquil way of life.
- iv. Islaam gives us guidance on every aspect of our life: how to deal with the creator and His laws; how to deal with the people around us and even the environment; how to enter the mosque and how to exit it and how to respond to the call of nature. We are guided in Islaam on each and everything related to our life.

## Lesson 3: Modern Challenges and Islaamic Solutions – Part 8

### Commonly Misunderstood Aspects of Islaam: 'Sharia'

#### 5. Sharia

The Sharia is the way; it is the way that leads us to the pleasure of God and Paradise where those people who have obeyed God, and submitted to and followed the commandments of God will abide forever.

The Sharia is really the practical side of how we should live our life in a way that is in submission to Allah

The only way to achieve Paradise is through obedience and submission to Allah, which is the meaning of Islaam. And such being the case, all prophets and messengers are in this sense, Muslim.

All the prophet proclaimed the same religion although at the legal level there were changes across the various communities. That was because of the needs and the capabilities each nation had. The interaction between human beings in general was a much simpler affair. And therefore, the guidance that we needed was much more basic.

But as human beings changed, and as humanity itself grew, and as the world changed, then individual communities needed specific guidance for those specific times, and for those specific places. But about 1400 years ago, when the Prophet Muhammad was born, the world had reached its final stage, humanity had entered into a final era. And it was time for a final message, a message that was not only for a particular place, and for a particular time, but a message that was suitable, a detailed guidance that was suitable for all humanity, all the way up until the day of judgment. And that was the guidance that has been revealed by Allah in the Qur'aan.

Sharia gives details to carry out the commands of Allah and enter Paradise. It involves details regarding:

- i. The acts of worship (Salaah, Zakaat, fasting, Hajj, and the like) in terms of quantity, quality, manner of performance, conditions, essentials, nullifiers, etc.
- ii. The belief in Allah
- iii. The laws through which and by which the human being should live their life.
- iv. The events that are going to happen before the Day of Judgment, the life in the grave, the Day of Judgment itself, and Paradise and Hellfire.
- v. The belief in Qadar which means the measurement and the decree, and that is the decree of God.



vi. Certain manners and etiquettes that are allowed, and what is prohibited

vii. The whole issue of financial transactions, what sorts of transactions are allowed and what sorts of transactions are prohibited.

So, we find that the Sharia is a comprehensive and complete way of life that has guidance for all aspects of human life. Moreover, Sharia teaches us how we live our life, in a way that is pleasing to God.

viii. Interaction between the human being, between the husband and the wife, between the ruler, and the ruled, between the teacher, and the students. All of these things are taught to us and detailed to us in the Sharia.

ix. The political system, or the law that governs the ruler and the ruled.

## **6. Law-making the exclusive right of Allah**

The Qur'aan also details laws, by which rulers should rule, and judges should judge. In fact, it is considered to be an essential aspect of God's unity and divinity. One of the essential aspects of God's oneness is that God gives the Sharia, which means in reality that Allah, God, the Creator, is the law maker. It is the unique and special attribute of God, that God and God alone, has the right and the knowledge to determine for human beings what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, what is lawful and what is unlawful, and if any human being, or a group of human beings, claims that they have the right or the knowledge to legislate in opposition to what God has legislated, then, in fact, they have claimed divinity for themselves; they have claimed for themselves to be equal with Allah.

Allah said, "No by your Lord, they can have no true faith until they make you [Muhammad], a judge in all disputes between them and find no resistance in their hearts against your decision and submit to it with a fuller submission".

It is an all-encompassing term that covers everything in the religion of Islaam, through which we seek the pleasure of God and aim for God's Paradise, and avoid Allah's anger and punishment.

## Lesson 4: Modern Challenges and Islaamic Solutions – Part 9

### Commonly Misunderstood Aspects of Islaam: 'Jihaad'

#### 7. Parameters of Jihaad

In several different places, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said and told the Muslim armies who are fighting, not to kill the women or children, not to chop down fruit bearing trees, not to cause any damage to churches, synagogues and monasteries and to leave the people there to dedicate their life to what they dedicated their lives to.

In fact, we find that the religion of Islaam has taught the best way; the best man has the best conduct. However, warfare is a reality of human life. Islaam is not a pacifist religion. Islaam is not a pacifist religion, but it is a peaceful religion. That means that Muslims are not expected that when they are being oppressed, when their lands are being invaded, when their communities and their religion is being insulted, that they should merely accept it. In such a situation, Muslims are ordered in the Qur'aan to resist such occupation and such treatment.

In fact, the Prophet Muhammad, May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, taught us that Allah does not love the oppressor. And Allah does not love those who allow themselves to be oppressed. So as long as we have the ability to resist oppression, then we should do that.

However, the Qur'an also tells us that in nearly every single place in the Qur'an, where Allah mentions fighting (Qitaal, in Arabic), Allah also mentions that if they are inclined to peace, then you should also incline to peace. So, Islaam does not seek to have a prolonged situation of aggression and conflict. In fact, peace should be the norm and the ultimate aim.

However, although the word Jihaad often refers to a physical conflict, in the Qur'aan, this word does have in the Sharia, a much broader meaning and a much broader context. Literally the word Jihaad means to struggle. This is what the actual word in Arabic means. In fact, it means to struggle to the utmost of one's ability, not to get money, take other people's property, collect booty, but for a noble aim.

The Sharia is the way that leads to Allah on this earth. That is when we will truly have real peace on this planet. So, Jihaad is the struggle in order to do that. And it could be primarily an internal struggle; the first place that the Jihaad takes place is within one's own self within one's own soul. This is known as Jihadun Nafs, the Jihaad against your own passions and your own desires.

#### 8. Life is a Test

Life is a test. Allah has created this world the way it is in order to test us, will we obey or disobey God, and the desires and the passions in man serve this purpose. Will we overcome them? This is the area where Jihaad first most takes place.

The pursuit of power, wealth, positions, and many more desires, beset human life, but the Jihaad of oneself is the fight to control these desires so that we are always within the boundaries of what the Sharia, the Islaamic law, teaches. We must not transgress or go beyond those limits set by God, must not commit what He has forbidden and must always stay within purview of Sharia.

### **What is unlawful is limited**

In fact, one of the beautiful things about the Sharia is that in general, everything is allowed, except those things that have been specifically prohibited. This is in terms of the worldly things.

In terms of ritual religious actions, the actual acts of worship, it is the other way around. When it comes to worshiping God, we can only worship God the way that has been prescribed by Him through his messenger; we cannot invent new ways to worship God.

## **9. Types of Jihaad**

### **i. Jihaad against Satan**

One aspect of this internal struggle is the struggle against the archetypal enemy, the great and sworn enemy of human beings, Iblees, or Satan. Satan was one of the jinn, and he lived with the angels. When Allah first created the first human being Adam, Allah said to all the angels, I am going to create a successor on the earth.

And the angel said, O Allah, are you going to create a creature that is going to cause mischief and shed blood? But Allah said to the angels, I know what you do not know.

Further, Allah told the angels to bow down to Adam and they all bowed down except Iblis; he refused. And Allah said, O Iblis, what is wrong with you that you are not bowing with those who are bowing? And Iblis or the devil or Shaitan said, I am better than him. You made me from smokeless fire, and made him from clay.

Then Allah, the Creator was going to expel Iblis, but Iblis said, O God, give me a respite until the day they will be resurrected, so as to misguide human beings; I will take them away from your straight path. And I will bring them all with me to Hellfire except some chosen few. Therefore, our sworn enemy is Iblis.

And the devil attacks us with doubts about Allah, and doubts about His religion. And he stirs up within us our desires and our passions.

ii. Then we have the Jihaad of the tongue, or the jihaad of the pen. This is when a person speaks out against injustice, wrongdoing and tyranny. With their mouth, they try to forbid what is evil, and enjoin what is good, and to call people to the true message of Islaam

iii. Jihad with the sword, or the physical Jihaad that involves fighting. And again, this is specifically carried out to defend the religion of Islaam.

Fighting to show one's bravery, prowess, strength, in pursuit of wealth or booty and fighting to defend one's tribe for the sake of tribe is not Jihaad.

In fact, the Prophet Muhammad, May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, described Jihaad as the peak of the matter of Islaam. And it is this Jihaad, this struggle, this fight, to make obedience and submission to God, the uppermost.

That is essential and important to the success of the Muslim individual, and the Muslim nation collectively.

Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said that when we abandon this struggle to make Allah's word the highest, go farming, keep doing our business and just become content with our daily lives, Allah will allow our humiliation.

Jihaad is not to force Islaam on people. Allah said in the Qur'aan, "There is no compulsion in religion, truth stands out clear from error." Islaam means a willing submission to God.

To substantiate this fact, it is noteworthy to remember that no Muslim armies went to Malaysia or to Indonesia, the single most populous Muslim country in the world. In fact, Africa, the continent that has the most Muslims in it, especially Central Africa, had a few Muslim armies enter into it.

So many of the lands where we find Islaam today had no army to force them into accepting Islaam. In fact, we find a remarkable phenomenon taking place in the West, and that is the phenomenal spread of Islaam. It is the fastest growing religion in the West today. It is growing at astronomical rates not only in the West but in the world at large. And it is absurd to say that the Muslim army swept the world forcing Islaam at the point of the sword.

## Question and Answer Bucket

### 1. Is Sharia associated with terrorism?

**Ans.** No, this is totally wrong. if we mean by terrorism, the targeting of women and children and civilians, in order to achieve our military, political, religious, or ideological objectives, then it is absolutely clear from the Sharia (the Islamic law), that such a way of fighting or conducting one's affairs is not allowed.

the Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, had noticed after a battle that his companions were gathered around something, and he asked about the reason. And his companion said, O Messenger of God, it is a woman who was killed in the course of the fighting. And the Prophet Muhammad said, that is not one against whom war should be fought. If the Prophet Muhammad showed his disapproval of a woman being killed in the actual battlefield, then how possibly could Islam allow targeting of women and children as an act of warfare?

### 2. Is Islaam a militant faith?

**Ans.** Islaam is a religion of peace. Islaam even prohibits doing injustice to the belligerent enemies. Islaam tells us that when we find the enemies inclined to peace to

sign peace treaties with them. Fighting and military action is the last resort when all other means fail to achieve peace.

### **3. What is the difference between Sharia and human laws?**

**Ans.** Sharia is the truly just way of life, through which and by which the human beings should conduct their affairs, because the reality of the human being is that whenever we make laws, rulings or judgments, it is inevitable that those rulings and those laws and those judgments will be influenced by our own prejudices.

For example, if I belong to a particular section of society, a rich section of society, or the merchant class, or the priestly class, or whatever it may be, then inevitably, I will make laws and judgments that favour my outlook, that favour my caste, that favour my group, that favour my sect, etc. Similarly, if the poor people have authority to make laws, they will make laws that will benefit their situation.

But Sharia is a God-given law. That is why it is free from prejudice, injustice and partiality.