

What Does it Mean to be a Muslim?

The Concept of Submission to Allah

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Assalamu Alaikum, dear readers!

Have you ever wondered what it truly means to be a Muslim? You might have heard that Muslims pray, fast during Ramadan, and follow certain rules. But being a Muslim is about so much more than just practices or rules!

At the heart of Islam is a beautiful, deep concept called submission—the act of willingly turning our lives over to Allah, who created us, loves us, and knows what’s best for us.

Let’s take a journey together to understand this idea of submission to Allah and explore what it truly means to be a Muslim.

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1. Understanding the Word “Muslim”

To start, let’s talk about the word itself: “Muslim.”

The word “Muslim” comes from the Arabic root word “S-L-M”, which means “peace” or “submission.” So, being a Muslim means being someone who finds peace by submitting to Allah’s will. Just as rivers flow to the ocean, our lives flow toward Allah when we submit to Him. It’s not about being forced to do things; it’s about trusting Allah and wanting to live in a way that pleases Him.

2. Submission to Allah: The Core of Islam

Islam is the only religion with a name that emphasizes an action: submission. Submission means that we accept Allah as our only Creator, Guide, and Protector, and that we try to live according to His guidance.

Allah says in the Quran:

“Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam (submission to Him).” (Quran 3:19)

To be a Muslim, then, is to choose to live by Allah’s rules and guidance in every part of our lives, big or small. Submission to Allah isn’t just a belief—it’s a way of living that affects everything we do, from how we treat others to how we handle challenges.

3. Trusting in Allah's Wisdom

When we submit to Allah, we're saying, **"I trust Allah knows what's best for me."** Allah has infinite knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

He knows things we don't, and He guides us with love and care. Just like a loving parent who tells us not to touch a hot stove to protect us, Allah gives us rules and teachings to protect us, even when we don't fully understand.

Think about this: Imagine you're in a huge maze, and you're trying to find your way out. You're only able to see what's directly around you.

Now imagine there's someone watching from above who can see the whole maze. That person could guide you out of the maze easily. **Allah sees the entire "maze" of life** and can guide us out of any difficulty if we trust Him.

4. Obeying Allah's Commandments with Love and Gratitude

Being a Muslim means obeying Allah's commandments, but it's not simply about following rules. It's about obeying with love and gratitude. Allah has given us countless blessings —our families, food, water, the air we breathe, and even our abilities to think, feel, and move.

We obey Allah not only because it's the right thing to do but because we're grateful for everything He has given us.

Allah says in the Quran:

"And if you should count the favors of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Quran 16:18)

Obeying Allah is a way of saying, "Thank you, Allah, for everything you have given me." It shows that we appreciate His blessings and want to use them in the right way.

5. The Freedom in Submission

At first, the word “submission” might sound like losing freedom. But here’s something amazing: True freedom lies in submitting to Allah.

When we follow Allah’s guidance, we free ourselves from all the harmful things in life—greed, anger, jealousy, and selfishness.

Without Allah’s guidance, people can get lost, trying to find happiness in things that don’t really satisfy them, like fame or wealth.

By submitting to Allah, we find purpose and direction. We don’t have to search for endless ways to feel happy because we know that true happiness comes from pleasing Allah.

6. Submission to Allah Through Worship

One of the primary ways Muslims submit to Allah is through worship, or “Ibadah”. Worship in Islam is not just about rituals like praying or fasting; it includes every good action done with the intention of pleasing Allah.

The Five Pillars of Islam: Acts of Worship and Submission

Allah has given Muslims five important acts, known as the Five Pillars of Islam, to help us practice our submission to Him daily:

Shahada (Declaration of Faith): Saying “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger” is the first step in submitting to Allah, declaring our belief in His oneness.

Salah (Prayer): Praying five times a day reminds us of Allah throughout the day and helps us stay connected to Him.

Zakat (Charity): By giving a portion of our wealth to those in need, we show gratitude to Allah and help others as He has commanded.

Sawm (Fasting during Ramadan): Fasting teaches us discipline, empathy for the less fortunate, and strengthens our reliance on Allah.

Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca): Performing Hajj is an act of total submission and humility, where Muslims gather from all over the world to worship Allah together.

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7. Submission Through Following the Quran and Sunnah

To be a true Muslim, we follow the teachings of the Quran and the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Quran is Allah's direct guidance, a manual for how we should live. The Sunnah, or the Prophet's way of life, helps us understand how to put the Quran into practice.

Allah tells us in the Quran:

**"And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment."
(Quran 33:71)**

By following the Quran and Sunnah, we are submitting to Allah's wisdom and following the best example for human life. This shows our commitment to being true Muslims, and it brings us closer to Allah.

8. Submission in Our Everyday Actions

Being a Muslim isn't limited to prayer and worship—it affects every part of our lives. Islam provides us with guidelines through the Do's (what Allah loves) and Don'ts (what Allah forbids), as found in the Quran and Sunnah. These principles guide us on how to live a life of submission in every small or big action we do.

Here's how we can submit to Allah in our daily lives:

Showing Kindness to Others

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us to be gentle and kind, even when it's challenging. Allah says in the Quran: "And speak to people good [words]." (Quran 2:83). This means treating everyone around us, family, friends, and even strangers, with respect and kindness. Being kind to others, forgiving their mistakes, and avoiding anger or harshness is a powerful way to please Allah.

Being Honest and Truthful

Honesty is a fundamental quality in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of truthfulness, saying: "Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise." (Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim) Lying or being dishonest, on the other hand, is forbidden.

Allah says in the Quran: "And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]." (Quran 2:42). By being honest, even when it's hard, we show our submission to Allah.

Helping Those in Need

Helping others, whether through charity, assistance, or simply being there for them, is encouraged in Islam. Allah instructs us: "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression." (Quran 5:2)

Acts like giving charity, supporting those who are struggling, and offering a helping hand are all forms of worship when done for Allah's sake.

Avoiding Harmful Actions

Islam teaches us to avoid actions that harm ourselves or others. This includes harmful habits like lying, backbiting, wasting food, or misusing time. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm." (Sunan Ibn Majah)

Backbiting or speaking negatively about others is also a serious sin. Allah warns us: "And do not spy or backbite each other." (Quran 49:12) By avoiding harmful behaviors, we show that we respect Allah's commands.

Being Generous and Avoiding Greed

Islam encourages generosity and discourages selfishness or greed. Allah says: "And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive." (Quran 76:8) Being generous, sharing our blessings, and helping those in need all please Allah and reflect the kindness that Islam promotes.

Respecting Parents and Elders

Allah has commanded us to respect and honor our parents: "And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years.

Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination." (Quran 31:14) Being good to our parents, listening to them, and treating our elders kindly are all ways we can show our obedience to Allah.

Controlling Our Anger

Anger can lead to actions or words we may regret. Allah encourages us to control our temper, saying: "And when they are angry, they forgive." (Quran 42:37)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advised us to practice self-control and patience, which helps us avoid saying or doing things that may harm others or ourselves.

Guarding Our Modesty and Behavior

Allah instructs both men and women to act with modesty in the Quran: "Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do." (Quran 24:30)

By dressing and behaving modestly, we show respect for ourselves and others, demonstrating our submission to Allah.

Avoiding Envy and Jealousy

Jealousy and envy can damage relationships and make us unhappy. Allah warns us against this in the Quran: "And from the evil of an envier when he envies." (Quran 113:5)

Instead of feeling envious, we should thank Allah for the blessings we have and celebrate the successes and blessings of others.

Every good action can be an act of submission if done with the right intention. Even something as simple as smiling at someone is an act of kindness and a form of worship. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

“Your smile for your brother is charity.” (Sahih Bukhari)

By following these Do’s and avoiding the Don’ts, we shape our daily actions to be in line with Allah’s guidance, becoming better Muslims and stronger in our faith.

9. Learning Patience and Gratitude Through Submission

Life isn't always easy, and sometimes we face challenges or difficulties. Part of being a Muslim means learning to be patient and grateful in every situation.

When something good happens, we thank Allah. When something hard happens, we trust that Allah has a reason and that He is testing or teaching us.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Amazing is the affair of the believer, for there is good for him in every matter, and this is not the case with anyone except the believer.

If he is happy, he thanks Allah, and there is good for him; and if he is harmed, he shows patience, and there is good for him." (Sahih Muslim)

By being patient and grateful, we show our submission to Allah, trusting that He knows best.

10. Submission Leads to Peace and Happiness

When we submit to Allah, we find peace in our hearts. We don't have to worry about the future or be anxious about things we can't control, because we know that Allah is in control of everything. This peace and contentment is a gift that comes from true submission.

As Allah says in the Quran:

"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Quran 13:28)

By submitting to Allah, we feel at ease, knowing that He is always there for us, guiding and protecting us.

Conclusion: Submission as a Journey of Love and Trust

So, my dear friends, being a Muslim is more than just a label. It's a journey of learning, growing, and trying our best to live in a way that pleases Allah.

Submission to Allah means trusting Him, obeying His guidance, and embracing the peace that comes from knowing we're on the right path.

As Muslims, we're not alone on this journey. We have Allah's guidance, the Quran, the example of our beloved Prophet, and the support of our fellow Muslims.

By learning to submit to Allah with love and trust, we find true peace and happiness, and we draw closer to the One who created us.

May Allah guide us all to be true Muslims who submit to Him with sincere hearts.