

# He Asked About ISLAM



**an American boy  
questions a strange faith**

*a dialogue with internationally acclaimed author*

**UMM ZAKIYYAH**

# He Asked About Islam

*An American high school student was given the homework assignment to interview someone from a different faith, and he chose Muslims. Here are his questions and my answers.*

By Umm Zakiyyah

Special thanks to Aisha Al Hajjar of [AMANI Birth](#) for referring this project to me.

# **Part 1:**

## **Allah and Life After Death**

### **Question 1. Who is your God and why do you worship Him?**

My God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is the Creator, Owner, and Manager of all that exists, from what we see and from what we don't see, from what we know and from what we don't know. God (whom we call "Allah" in Arabic) is the God of all people—you, me, and all humans who have ever walked the earth. I worship Allah because He alone has the ability to hear and answer prayers and reward worship in this world and in the Hereafter.

### **Question 2. How can you get to know your God better?**

We come to know Allah better in three ways:

Reflecting on His signs all around us and within us: He created the heavens in the sky, the ground beneath our feet, and even the hearts in our breasts. These signs remind us that Allah created all of this and us for a very important purpose.

By praying to Him directly and asking for His guidance in all affairs: We do this by calling on Him alone, without the aid of "saints," prophets, or anything of His creation or our imagination.

Studying from the two revelations He has given to humans as a guide until the end of time, the Qur'an and the Sunnah:

The Qur'an is the final holy Book revealed to Allah's Messenger, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him; and the Sunnah is God's Wisdom that inspired the life, words, and actions of Prophet Muhammad.

### **Question 3. What do you have to do to live a good life in the eyes of your God?**

Allah requires us to do only this to live a good life: Believe in Him as He has asked us to, follow what His Messenger taught us, and continually repent from the mistakes and sins that we will all make while we live on this earth.

In the Qur'an Allah says,

*“Say [O Muhammad to all people], ‘If you [really] love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.’”*

*Ali'Imraan, 3:31*

### **Question 4. Where do you go after you die and how do you get there?**

After we die, all humans enter the grave, where they will remain until the Last Day. The first part of this journey begins when the Angel of Death seizes our soul until no more life remains in our limbs. We are then placed beneath the soil of the earth, our graves. Once there, we are asked three questions by the angels Munkar and Nakir pertaining to the life we lived on earth: *Who is your Lord? What is your religion?* and *Who is your Prophet [sent to you]?*

Humans remain in these graves until Allah resurrects all descendants of Adam. On this tremendous day, the bones will be reassembled, and they will be clothed with flesh and skin like we had in this world. During this resurrection, we will come from our graves in a drunken state, caused by the trepidation that afflicts us in the heart-wrenching knowledge that we must face our Lord for Judgment regarding how we passed our lives in this world.

Allah says,

***“Does man think that We shall not assemble his bones? Yes, We are Able to put together in perfect order the tips of his fingers.”***

*Al-Qiyaamah, 75:3-4*

We arrive at this point of resurrection as a result of our Creator simply saying “Be!” and it will be done.

The Day of Judgment stretches out for what would account for 50,000 years in this world. On this somber day, the sun will be drawn close to the earth such that the heat becomes excruciating. No one will be exempt from the distress suffered at this moment except those who lived a life of belief and righteousness in the world.

A Scale is placed before each person, and their deeds are weighed. Those whose scale is found heavy with good deeds will enter Paradise. Those whose scale is found light will enter the Fire unless Allah, from His infinite Mercy, pardons or forgives him. But pardon and forgiveness are only for believers, who worshipped Allah alone with no partners, sons, daughters, or intermediaries; for Allah does not forgive this sin if a person dies upon it.

Allah says,

***“Verily, Allah does not forgive that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives anything other than that to whom He pleases...”***

*Al-Nisaa, 4:48*

The people who, during their time on earth, turned away from the Truth once it reached them will not even be addressed on that Day. Their Creator will not look at them or speak to them, and their eyes will be blinded so that they will not gaze upon the Face of their Lord. These people will be driven into Hell immediately, trailing behind the false gods they used to worship.

Allah says,

***“Nay! Surely, they [evil-doers] will be veiled from seeing their Lord that Day. Then verily, they will indeed enter and taste the burning flame of Hell.”***

*Al-Mutaffifeen, 83:15-16*

Then a bridge will be laid over Hell Fire. This bridge is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword, and every person must cross it—for at its end is Paradise. Some people will slip and fall into Hell Fire. Others will cross safely and enter Paradise.

Once a person enters Paradise, they remain there for eternity; but Paradise is only for the believers. Some sinful Muslims will enter Hell-Fire before being admitted to Paradise. However, disbelievers remain in Hell-Fire for eternity—and they have no hope of pardon or escape.

People enter Paradise as a reward for having believed in Allah as He taught them and having followed the Messenger sent to them. When they receive this magnificent news on the Day of Judgment, their faces will

glow with immense happiness that emanates from their light of faith. These believers will gaze upon their Lord that Day, beaming with delight at this indescribable pleasure.

Allah says,

*“Some faces that Day will be shining and radiant,  
looking at their Lord [Allah].”*

*Al-Qiyaamah, 75:22-23*

After this monumental Day draws to a close, everyone will have entered their final abode—Paradise or Hell.

## **Question 5. What does Heaven and Hell look like?**

Paradise, which is often called Heaven, is the final destiny of all believers. Paradise is filled with delights and pleasures that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no mind or heart could even imagine.

Allah and His Messenger have shared with us a glimpse into this world of lasting bliss, wherein the smallest reward encompasses more than what a king enjoyed of riches and pleasures on earth, and wherein the greatest reward is beyond what any human could fathom on earth.

In Paradise, there will be gardens with rivers flowing beneath. Its inhabitants will wear garments of soft silk and drink from silver vessels that are clear as glass, and they shall have whatever they desire or hope for. Every man will have beautiful, large eyed companions as mates. Every woman will be endowed with a beauty that surpasses even the most phenomenal beauty of this world; and each time her husband comes to her, she will be more beautiful than before.

There will be large trees, expansive pastures, delicious fruit, and food that is pleasure itself. Much of this remarkable sustenance will remind believers of what they had eaten in this world.

Allah says,

*“And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous good deeds that for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow. Every time they will be provided with a fruit therefrom, they will say [in pleasant remembrance and delight], ‘This is what we were provided with before.’ And they will be given things in resemblance. And they shall have therein [in Paradise] purified mates, and they [the believers] will abide therein forever.”*

*Al-Baqarah, 2:25*

Believers who were friends or companions in this world will be reunited with a brotherhood inspired by the light of faith. Their hearts will be illuminated with purity, and their breasts will be free of any ill will that had ever come between them in the world. They will recline, laughing in lighthearted pleasure, on thrones of dignity, looking out at the expanse beneath them.

Allah says,

*“Verily, the pious will be in delight [in Paradise], on thrones, looking [at things from a high place]. You will recognize in their faces the brightness of delight. They will be given to drink pure sealed wine. The last thereof [of the wine] will be the [sweet] scent of musk, and for this let [all] those strive who want to strive [in obeying Allah].”*



The pleasures of Paradise are such that the person who has been given the least reward will imagine that there is no person granted more pleasures and blessings than he.

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In sharp contrast to Paradise, immeasurably so, Hell Fire is a place of misery and despair. The flames of Hell are sordidly black, and its seething heat is exponentially more excruciating than any blazing fire in this world. The Fire is kept burning by the aid of a most potent fuel that is more effective in inciting a powerful blaze than the black coal and dry logs we use in this world. And that potent fuel is none other than stones and humans.

Allah says,

*“Then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones,  
prepared for the disbelievers.”*

*Al-Baqarah, 2:24*

There will be no death or reprieve from this everlasting torment, and those in Hell Fire will cry out in agony, begging the people of Paradise to pour down even the smallest drink to them. But the people of Paradise will, in response, call out to the people of Hell, reminding them of what transpired between them on earth; they made fun of the believers and scoffed at Islam and the promise of eternal punishment, thereby selling their souls in preference for the paltry pleasures of the transient world instead of the eternal bliss rewarded for the sincere in faith.

Allah says,

*“And the dwellers of Paradise will call out to the dwellers of the Fire (saying), ‘We have indeed found true what our Lord had promised us. Have you also found true what your Lord has promised?’ They [the people suffering the agonizing torment of Hell] will say, ‘Yes!’ Then a crier will proclaim between them, ‘The Curse of Allah is on those who do wrong [through evil and disbelief].’”*

*Al-‘Araaf, 7:44*

Thus, those in Hell Fire will be filled with unbearable regret at having turned away from something as simple as saying “I believe in Allah.” They will suffer torments the like of which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no mind or heart could even fathom. They will be given to drink boiling fluid and the pus of infected wounds, and their thick skin will be burnt from their bones; and then the skin will be replaced anew to be tormented and burned again. And not even the least bit of reprieve will be offered to them, as they will be suffering an agonizing punishment that no human heart or mind can withstand with any patience, forbearance, or strength...yet their torment will only increase.

All of this because they took religion as a game and preferred disbelief to the light of faith in Islam, focusing on their transient joys and pleasures granted in this world.

Allah says,

*“And leave alone those who take their religion as play and amusement, and are deceived by the life of this world. But remind [them] with it (the Qur’an) lest a person be given up to destruction for that which he has earned, when he will find for himself no*

*protector or intercessor besides Allah, and even if he offers every ransom, it will not be accepted from him. Such are they who are given up to destruction because of that which they have earned [through disbelief and sin]. For them will be a drink of boiling water and a painful torment because they used to disbelieve."*

*Al-An'aam, 6:70*

The torment of Hell is such that the person who has the least torment—like that of an iron rod placed beneath his feet, the heat of which causes his brain to boil—will imagine that there is no person who is suffering more agony and torment than he.

## **Part 2:**

# **Laws, Sin, and Islam in Your Life**

### **Question 6. What are some of the most important laws in the Qur'an?**

Undoubtedly after the belief in God alone, the most important law in the Qur'an is that which enjoins kindness and dutifulness to parents.

Allah says,

*“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them an utterance of disrespect, nor shout at them, but address them in terms of honor.”*

*Al-Israa', 17:23*

Also amongst the most important laws of Islam are establishing the five daily prayers, remaining chaste until marriage, being kind to one's neighbors, giving wealth and support to the poor and needy, and guarding the tongue from saying anything that is harmful or sinful.

Allah says,

*“Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their prayers with all solemnity and full submissiveness. And those who turn away from vain talk. And those who pay Zakaah (obligatory charity upon one's wealth). And those who guard their chastity...”*

*Al-Mu'minoon, 23:1-5*

## **Question 7. If you do something bad and sin, what happens and how do you get forgiven?**

Allah says,

*“Say, O My slaves who have wronged their souls! Despair not of the mercy of Allah. Verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”*

*Al-Zumar, 39:53*

Also, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, said that Allah said:

*“O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it.”*

(Al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad, authenticated by Al-Albani)

Thus, Allah promises forgiveness to the one who sincerely repents. In Islam, true repentance requires leaving the sin, regretting the sin, and making a firm resolve never to repeat the sin again, with the help of Allah.

## **Question 8. What are the important holidays and traditions Islam?**

There are two major holidays in Islam, Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adhaa. Eid Al-Fitr occurs the day after Ramadan (the month of fasting) has ended, and Eid Al-Adhaa occurs on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Dhul-Hijjah (the last month in the lunar calendar) and corresponds with the day of sacrifice for those completing Hajj, the pilgrimage that is the fifth pillar of Islam.

## **Question 9. How has Islam shaped your life?**

I think the best answer to this can be found in my reflections on Tawheed, which refers to believing in Allah according to the teachings of Islam. For those reflections, I share with you my literary piece from the novel *Hearts We Lost*. This is entitled “On Tawheed: A Life It Touched”:

When I think of Tawheed and what it has done for me, I have difficulty finding the words. Shall I speak of how it closed my lips and opened my ears? Or how it closed doors to falsehood and opened my heart to truth? Or shall I speak of how it dried my anger and wet my eyes with tears? Or how it made me abandon my bed in love of my Creator and stand at night hoping for His Mercy? Or shall I speak of how it removed my confidence and filled me with humility, and engulfed me with fear? Or how it lessened my focus on what others are doing and forced me to focus on myself?

Or perhaps I can speak of how I feel like a prisoner in this world where so many are entrapped by Shaytaan[1], too busy with their desires to efficiently tend to their needs.

Or perhaps I can speak of my feelings when I pass a grave, how I reflect on what its dweller must be thinking, must be feeling, and how awful his regret, his pain. Or how much he would give just to be *me* at this moment, because I have in my grip what he will never have again.

And that is a chance.

A chance to say, *O Allah, forgive me!* or *Glory be to You!* Or a chance to fall down in prostration, promising to never sin again.

Or perhaps when I think of Tawheed in my life, I should not overlook how it has filled me with love of *emaan*[2] and hatred of disbelief. And perhaps I should mention too that it makes me say to my brothers and sisters, “I love you for the sake of Allah.”

Shall I mention that it has put me on edge? Because I do not know what tomorrow brings. For what guarantee do I have that the warm bed from which I woke this morning will be there tonight for my sleep? And what guarantee do I have that after being angry with my sister I will live to say *I'm sorry*? And what promise do I have that, though I made amends with my father yesterday, he will return today so I can do the same? And what promise from Allah do I have if I did not pray my *Salaah*[3] this morning that I can do it this afternoon?

And what guarantees me that simply because my mother woke me yesterday that tomorrow it won't be the Angel of Death?

Tawheed was changing my life before I was aware. It came to me unexpectedly, although I never knew it was missing. For I was born into Islam, reared upon the faith and grew up as a Muslim. My days were filled with Qur'an and exchanging the salaams. But as I reflect upon how Tawheed has shaped me, I cannot help wondering where I would be had its knowledge not penetrated my heart, and permeated my soul.

Yes I was Muslim. But I knew little of Allah. My lips said *I believe* but I cannot say that I actually did. I did not know the phenomenal power of *du'aa*[4], its power to change, its power to heal. And I didn't know of the Fire's frightening torment, or that its taunting flames could scald *my* skin. And I didn't think of Paradise except as a fairy tale, a mere dream. And little did I strive for it.

I had no reason to.

*For I knew nothing of emaan,  
How it rose or how it fell,  
And I knew nothing of kufr*[5],

*And that it could engulf you before you could tell.  
I did not even know there was anything special about being*

*Muslim*

*As it pertained to my soul.*

*For I'd viewed other faiths as one of many,  
Merely offering different paths to a single Goal.*

*So how has Tawheed changed me?*

*Should I say...*

*That it moved me to embrace Islam,  
Although I was a Muslim the previous day?*

*Some say, You're so lucky, when they hear how I was raised,  
To have a Muslim family, Muslim friends,  
They shower the praise.*

*But I force a smile,*

*Because they have no way to know.*

*That I struggle, like they, wherever I go.*

*Even if amongst those raised Muslim,*

*Like me.*

*The scorn, the misconceptions, the finding fault,  
With Islam, with the Sunnah[6]*

*With me.*

*But when I think of Tawheed touching my life,  
I'm shy to say what it has done for me.*

*For my road is just beginning,*

*And I've much before me.*

*My bags are still in my hands,*

*And my palms are still moist with sweat.*

*And I don't know if I'll benefit from my travel,*

*Because I haven't died yet.*

*For when Tawheed touches one's life  
It doesn't matter the changes it renders today*

*Because the fruits of pure belief*

*Cannot be tasted until*

*The much awaited, but fateful*

*Judgment Day[7]*

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[1] Shaytaan is the Arabic name for "Satan."

[2] *Emaan* is the Arabic word for "faith" or "belief." Here, it refers to belief in Allah based on the religion of Islam.



[3] *Salaah* refers to the five obligatory prayers Muslim pray daily.

[4] *Du'aa* is supplication or praying to Allah for something that is desired.

[5] *Kufr* is the Arabic word for “disbelief.” It refers to any belief system, way of life, or religion that is outside the realm of Islam.

[6] Sunnah refers to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad that are not found in the Qur'an.

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## **Part 3:**

### **Sects, Christians, and Jesus**

#### **Question 10. What are the challenges to practicing Islam?**

I think the challenges to practicing Islam depend largely upon each person's circumstance. Naturally, those Muslims who are fortunate enough to live in predominately Muslim societies do not face as many challenges as those who live in Western societies. However, for me personally, I find the biggest challenge to practicing Islam to be my own internal weaknesses, when I get diverted from being the best of myself.

#### **Question 11. Are there things that you don't understand about your religion?**

Certainly, when it comes to the limitless knowledge and wisdom of our Creator, there will always be matters that are beyond the realm of human comprehension and understanding. In that sense, I will never completely understand the knowledge and wisdom behind our life on this earth, our inevitable death, and human's ultimate entry into Paradise or Hell after we die. But when I become confounded by the vastness of this reality, I reflect on the words of Allah,

*"He [Allah] cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they [humans] will be questioned [about what they do]."*

*Al-Anbiyaa', 21:23*

However, regarding the veracity of my religion, there is nothing that inspires in me even the slightest doubt about the truth of Islam itself.

## **Question 12. What is the difference between Sunni and Shi'ites?**

This question is best answered by Muslim scholars, who have written volumes on this topic. But in simple terms, Sunnis are Muslims who follow Islam as it was originally taught to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. They are called “Sunni” because they follow the Sunnah, which means the way of the Prophet. Shi'ites split off from the teachings of orthodox Islam and exaggerated the spiritual status and Islamic authority of members of the Prophet's family. However, even amongst those who affiliate with Sunni Islam, there are those who believe in Islam in a way that was not taught by Prophet Muhammad even though their beliefs differ from Shi'ite Islam. Thus, this is a topic that requires careful and objective study from authentic Islamic sources.

## **Question 13. What are your views on Christianity and other religions?**

Christianity, in its original form (the monotheistic religion taught by Christ Jesus, the son of Mary), is no different from Islam, which is based on worship of Allah alone and belief in all His prophets and messengers, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad (who was prophesized in the Bible). The same is true for Judaism in its original form (the monotheistic religion taught by Prophet Moses to the Children of Israel). However, when the teachings of Christianity and Judaism strayed from their prophets' original teachings, they became new religions

that do not reflect the revelation of Allah or the teachings of Prophet Jesus and Moses. A similar phenomenon exists amongst Muslims: Some professed Muslims have strayed so far from the original teachings of Islam that they are actually following a new religion that has no connection to Islam in any way (the “Nation of Islam” in America is one well-known example). Therefore, the Islamic view of all religions is simply this: Those who historically believed in God alone and followed their prophets and messengers lived upon the truth and will be rewarded with Paradise in the Hereafter. Of these earlier generations of believers, Allah says,

***“Verily, those who believe and those who are Jews and Christians and Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day and do righteous deeds shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.”***

*Al-Baqarah, 2:62*

However, for those people living in modern times, the only religion of truth is that of Islam. Allah sent prophets to each generation of people to call them to the truth. The prophets Moses and Jesus were sent to the Children of Israel; and before them the prophets Noah, Abraham, Lot and many others were sent to their respective people, as specified by Allah. In our generation, the final prophet and messenger to all humankind is Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Whereas earlier prophets were sent to only a certain group of people, Prophet Muhammad was sent as the final prophet to all people until the end of time. Allah says,

***“Say [O Muhammad to the people],  
‘O mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the  
Messenger of Allah.’”***

*Al-'Araaf, 7:158*

Therefore, in today's world, any religion other than Islam will not be accepted by Allah in this world or in the Hereafter, and this includes beliefs systems that carry the name "Islam" but do not adhere to its foundational precepts. Allah says,

*"And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter, he will be of those who have lost [all spiritual good]."*

*Ali'Imraan, 3:85*

## **Question 14. What are your views on Jesus and who he is?**

Jesus the son of Mary, is a prophet and messenger who, by the will of Allah, was born to the Virgin Mary. This miraculous birth, wherein Jesus was born without a father, is similar to that of our father, Prophet Adam, who had neither a mother nor a father. Allah tells of Jesus' miraculous birth in the Qur'an,

*"She [Mary] said, 'O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has touched me?' He said, 'So [it will be], for Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He says to it only, 'Be!' and it is.'"*

*Ali'Imraan, 3:47*

Therefore, Jesus' birth was simply one of the many miracles that Allah decreed to happen to prophets and messengers on earth. These miracles are shown to us for the purpose of strengthening our faith in the truth of Allah's message, with which prophets and messengers are entrusted. **In John, 4:48**, the Bible reports Jesus himself as saying of these signs of God, *"Unless you people see*

*miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe."*

## **Question 15. How was the Universe and the world created?**

The universe and the world were created by Allah simply commanding them to come into being. Allah says,

*"[Allah is] the Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, he only says to it, 'Be!' and it is."*

*Al-Baqarah, 2:117*

## Part 4:

# Burqas, Rites, and the Heart of Islam

### Question 16. Why do Muslim women wear burqas and is it required that they do?

Muslim women, like followers of orthodox Christianity and Judaism in earlier times, cover their bodies modestly with a large, loose outer garment called a *jilbaab* in Arabic. This covering has also been called hijab, abaya, and burqa. This garment covers a woman's entire body and reveals no more than her hands and face (or eyes). Muslim women cover in this way because they are obeying the instructions of their Creator when He said,

*"And tell the believing women to lower their gaze [from looking at what is forbidden], protect their private parts [from sin], and to not display their adornment [or beauty] except for that which normally appears thereof. And [tell them] to draw their coverings over themselves and to not reveal their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers or their husband's fathers, their sons or their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, their sister's sons or their women..."*

*Al-Noor, 24:31*

Yes, Muslim women are required to cover in this manner because Allah has instructed them to. Allah describes the response of the believers when they hear His instructions:

*"...And they say, 'We hear, and we obey.'"*

*Al-Baqarah, 2:285*

## **Question 17. How do you worship?**

We worship Allah in the way He taught us through His messenger, Prophet Muhammad. This includes praying and supplicating to only Allah without the aid of intermediaries, false gods, or through means humans invented or decided amongst themselves. This worship also includes obeying Allah by doing what He has commanded and leaving what He has forbidden, as well as seeking His pleasure in all our worldly affairs. To learn more about the Muslim prayer and lifestyle, view the informative videos and talk shows available at [TheDeenShow.com](http://TheDeenShow.com)

## **Question 18. Have you ever gone on a pilgrimage and what was it like? What do you have to do on a pilgrimage? Are there certain laws you have to fulfill when you are there?**

Yes, I have had the blessing to go on Hajj. It was a life changing experience that deserves a book in itself. However, in brief, it taught me this profound lesson: A successful life, like a successful Hajj, is achieved through focusing on your desire to please Allah while not allowing the distractions, “pushes”, and mistakes of others to distract you from this noble goal. You can learn about the rites and laws of Hajj by going to this site: <http://www.performhajj.com/advice.php>

## **Question 19. Is there any special foods related to Islam? Foods that are used in certain holidays or occasions? Are there any forbidden foods, and why are they forbidden?**



In Islam, all food is considered halaal (blessed and good) unless it has been expressly forbidden. However, some common foods you will find on certain Muslim holidays and occasions include dates and lamb. Any foods that are forbidden, like the meat of pig, are forbidden because Allah or His Messenger have forbade them.

## **Question 20. What would you say is the message at the heart of your religion?**

I would say the message at the heart of Islam is this: Worship Allah alone, and strive your best to live in the way that He taught through the life, example, and words of His final prophet and messenger, Prophet Muhammad. If you die upon this way of life, even if you fall short or sin at times, you are guaranteed Paradise in the Hereafter. Prophet Muhammad said,

*“If anyone testifies that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah Alone Who has no partners, and that Muhammad is His Slave and His Messenger, and that Jesus is Allah's Slave and His Messenger and His Word which He bestowed on Mary and a Spirit created by Him, and that Paradise is true, and Hell is true, Allah will admit him into Paradise with the deeds which he had done even if those deeds were few”* (Bukhari).

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## **About the Author**

Daughter of American converts to Islam, Umm Zakiyyah writes about the interfaith struggles of Muslims and Christians, and the intercultural, spiritual, and moral struggles of Muslims in America.

Umm Zakiyyah's work has earned praise from writers, professors, and filmmakers and has been translated into multiple languages. In 2008, Umm Zakiyyah was awarded the Muslim Girls Unity Conference Distinguished Authors Award. Umm Zakiyyah also writes under her birth name Ruby Moore.

*To find out more about the author, visit [ummzakiyyah.com](http://ummzakiyyah.com) or [uzauthor.com](http://uzauthor.com), subscribe to her [YouTube channel](#), follow her on [Twitter](#), or join her Facebook page at [facebook.com/ummzakiyyahpage](https://facebook.com/ummzakiyyahpage).*