



Ramadan Daily Quran Study, by Dr Zahid Aziz, 2023

Adapted and edited from *The Religion of Islam* by Maulana Muhammad Ali
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Fast 1: The Name *Islam* (اسلام)

- Among the great religions of the world, Islam has the distinction of bearing a significant and meaningful name. Its name points to its underlying reality. Muhammad was the name of the Holy Prophet through whom this religion was revealed, but the name of the religion as stated in the Quran is *Islam*. The Quran says:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

Fast 1

1



“This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion.” — 5:3

Out of all the world scriptures, the Quran is the only one which gives a name to the religion that it teaches. This name is in the Quran, and was not coined by the people who followed the Quran or by anyone else.

- The root-meaning of the word *Islam* is to enter into peace, and a Muslim is one who makes his peace with God and with fellow human beings.

Fast 1

2



- Peace with God implies complete submission to His will, and peace with fellow humans is not only to refrain from evil or injury to others but also to do good to them.

Both of these ideas are expressed in the Quran itself as the true essence of the religion of Islam:

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

“No, whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve.” —

2:112

Fast 1

3



The words “submits himself entirely” mean that a person should turn to God with all his heart and willingness and love and understanding. The word for “submits” here is *aslama*. So this is describing what Islam is. Those who do this, and continue to do it, will have no fear that they were on the wrong path, and they will not regret or grieve that they followed this path.

- We also read in the Quran:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ : “Surely the religion with Allah is Islam.”

— 3:19

Fast 1

4



What does this mean? In the verse before this (3:18), the Quran says that there is no god but Allah, and that Allah and His angels and the knowledgeable people who do justice, **all bear witness** that there is no god but Allah. In other words, Allah in His revelation to all prophets taught them that He is the One and only God, and the world created by God and the inner nature of every human also gives evidence that there is only one God.

Also, those people who have acquired knowledge of all kinds, and are fair-minded and not prejudiced (“who do justice”), give the same evidence. Therefore, submitting to the one God is the religion that God has sent. This is called *Islam*.



- This statement, “Surely the religion with Allah is Islam”, is not a biased and prejudiced statement by Muslims, saying that only our religion is true and from God. It is saying that because there is only one God the only religion He approves of is to worship Him and only Him.
- This is why when the Holy Prophet Muhammad brought this religion into the world, it wasn’t named after him or his nation or his country. Its name is not like the names Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc. The Prophet Muhammad is himself called a Muslim in the Quran. He was told by God to declare to people: “I am the first of those who submit” (6:163).



The word translated here as “those who submit” is *muslimīn* in the original. It is plural of “Muslim”. By “first” is meant that he is the foremost, and ahead of all, in submitting to God.

- In fact, the Quran calls the earlier prophets of God, who appeared before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as being “those who submitted”, *muslimūn* (literally, “Muslims”). After saying that the prophet Abraham submitted to God, the next verse runs as follows:
 - “And the same teaching did Abraham enjoin on his sons and so did Jacob: O my sons, surely Allah has chosen for you (this) religion, so die not unless you are submitting ones” (2:132).



- Those people who submitted themselves to God through the revelation which had come to their prophets are called ‘Muslims’ in the Quran. But they were not Muslims in the sense in which we understand what a Muslim is. Imagine a medical doctor who was practising medicine one hundred years ago. He was no doubt a doctor, perhaps even having the same letters of qualification after his name as a doctor does today. But that doctor of a hundred years ago was not treating patients like a doctor of today does, because medicine has advanced greatly since that time. He was a doctor *of his time*.



- Similarly, prophets before the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and their true followers, are called 'Muslims' because they followed the revelation given to them *for their times*. The various prophets were preachers of 'Islam', or how to submit to the One God, among different nations in different times. The Holy Prophet Muhammad is the last and most perfect exponent of Islam, or how to submit to the One God.