

Why should anyone choose Islam?

By Shaikh Ahmad Kutty

Islam is the rational choice for anyone who wishes to have a faith that does full justice to the demands of the three faculties of man: physical, intellectual and spiritual. Here is a concise listing of Islam's unique features:

- 1) Islam is the only religion whose sources are authentically preserved and thus remains immaculately free of all human tampering and interpolations.
- 2) The Islamic scripture is free of mythical elements that are incongruous with modern man's understanding of the world.
- 3) The Qur'an—the Islamic scripture—is fully compatible with the established facts of science; it clearly contains the signature of the author of the universe—as attested to by many objective seekers of truth, coming as they were from diverse religious and intellectual backgrounds. It also movingly records natural phenomena and enjoins the followers of the faith to respect and preserve nature and the creatures with whom we share the planet.
- 4) The Qur'an upholds the role of reason and equates those who fail to use their reason as being intellectually imbeciles; this is a far a far cry from the teachings of many religions which assume incompatibility of reason and revelation.
- 5) Islamic beliefs and practices are simple, natural and appeal to both reason and common sense.
- 6) In regards to most of the teachings of Islam, their benefits can be easily demonstrated by evidence of the human experience and by the objective observation of facts. Take for instance Islam's ban of alcohol: statistics reveal that abstention from intoxicants alone could spare humanity from untold misery and suffering. The valuable resources

squandered for intoxicants can alone solve all poverty related problems of the world. Add to this, the Islamic pillar of *zakah*. If only the world's rich were to part with 2.5 % of their excess wealth, humanity would have tackled the problem of poverty very easily.

7) Islam takes into account all of the God-given instincts and faculties of man/woman and therefore gives us a balanced program of life that caters to all of the basic needs of humans - physical, intellectual and spiritual, unlike many religions and ideologies which exaggerate one at the expense of the other.

8) Islam provides for us a living example of such a balanced role model in Prophet Muhammad, whose life, unlike those of the great heroes and prophets of other religions, is an open book easily accessible for anyone.

9) The Islamic story of creation is free of any of the consequences of the 'stigma' of original sin which has weighed heavily in the consciousness of a large segment of humanity, often proving to be highly volatile, and resulting in hysterical explosions in both the individual and collective dimensions.

10) The Qur'an is anti-classical in its approach to knowledge, and stresses experiential knowledge, a fact which combines authentic science with authentic spirituality.

11) The Qur'an provides answers to questions that haunt every intelligent person, questions related to life after death, an area which is almost totally mysterious in other traditions.

12) Islamic teachings about the essential identity of human beings and its stress on human brotherhood can break the barriers separating humans from one another. This can save humanity from the dire consequences of nationalism and racism which tend to break up humanity artificially by creating and sustaining perpetual conflicts.

13) Islam promises us nothing but total freedom, liberation and bliss and the highest fulfillment and contentment that humans are capable of attaining.

14) Islamic history has provided us with a model society where justice, compassion, truth and transparency of justice were implemented at the human and natural levels.

15) Islam dispenses with all intermediaries between man and God and allows all humans to freely contact God, thus eliminating hierarchies and other sources of religious exploitation that has characterized religious history throughout the ages.