

Mini-series: Why Muslims Believe

The following are a series of logical arguments on how Muslims have come to the conclusion that there are none worthy of worship other than Allah (God/ the Creator), and that Muhammad (peace and blessings upon him) is the final messenger of Allah. They are an example set of reasonings, discussed with numerous other Muslims, young and old, before being written in these treatises. They are by no means the only way a person can arrive at this conclusion.

1. Truth-Seekers

We'll start, as is appropriate with any endeavor to determine a code or lifestyle, with a description of our approach. Indeed, with faith it is much more than just a lifestyle. It is a view on both the observable world and a world we cannot observe with our senses or man-made tools.

It is reasonable for a man or woman to desire, seek out, and adopt an understanding of life that is as close to the truth as they can determine. This is assumed for all those who want to live their best lives, or in the least, something resembling a stable life with good outcomes.

Normally, a seeker is looking for something they don't have. In the case of the Truth seeker, there is an additional consideration. They remain open to the idea that they do not have complete understanding of a matter. They are open to the idea that there may be something new for them to learn; something that may challenge what they currently know.

A case for an un-biased truth seeker

Do you need to be unaffiliated in order to make unbiased decisions? No, you do not, as an argument can be made for biases being inescapable. The suggestion instead is to have values that you hold on to despite your affiliation. The values guide your actions and your decision-making. Your values say more about who you are than your religious, political, or social affiliations. To know your values, ask yourself "what kind of person do I want to be?" If you want to be a truth-seeker, remembering this will help you to put the truth before your desires, affiliations or biases.

Confirmation bias

Part of knowing yourself is understanding your own internal biases. When researching a matter, what is the mindset you are approaching your research with? Are you looking for the truth regardless of where it lies? Or are you just looking to support your argument? A Muslim Jurist famously said "before entering a debate I would ask God to present the truth upon the tongue of my opponent"¹. He was a man who learned to tame his ego.

¹ This saying was attribute to 10th century Jurist Imam Mohammad Bin Idris Al Shafi'y

How to Tame Your Ego

Ask yourself why? Do I want my voice to be heard or do I want the truth? Do I want others to have a good opinion of me or do I want the truth? Do I want to discredit others or do I want the truth? Whilst it might be possible to have both, you will likely sacrifice the one you want less for the one you want more. For the truth-seeker, the truth is always the dominant part of the equation.

The open heart

The open heart is the heart that looks for answers and tries to understand the world. It is a heart that takes its owner on a journey of learning and discovery. It is a heart that wants the truth and is willing to accept that the truth is sometimes confronting. I like the term Anti-fragile for such a heart. Anti-fragile is a term used to describe something that is not only resilient to unexpected forces, but also benefits from them.²

A Framework

To the sincere truth-seeker, it is not just a title. They take steps to ensure they have done what they need to arrive at the truth.

- They have a heart that is open to the truth.
- They are aware of their biases.
- They do not allow their ego to get in the way.
- They give it the time that it deserves.
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25 June 2021, 14 Zul Qi'dah 1442

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² Anti-fragile is a term coined by Naseem Taleb in his best-selling book by the same name.