

How do we know that the teachings of the Quran are universal and for all times? What is the exact teaching about Pardah in the Quran..is it covering the face, veil?

With regards to proof of its validity and universality, one must refer first to the promise God Himself has made in the Qur'an that *"Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian, (Al-Hijr, 15:10)* This is to reassure us that not even one word or punctuation mark in the Qur'an has been changed since its original revelation more than 1400 years ago. Now, why would God want to make sure that the Qur'an remains unchanged, unmodified? The logical answer would be so that generation after generation of mankind would be able to access the Qur'anic teachings in their most pristine and pure form, as they were revealed to the Holy Prophet (sa).

The very difference between the Qur'an and earlier revealed Scriptures is that they were changed and modified by people over time, to include and exclude as they saw fit. Thus, holes developed in their faith, because they were modifying their faith according to their limited understanding. The worst part was, as they started to modify it, they began to teach people that this modified teaching was indeed the word of God and this is how He envisioned the religion, when in fact, that was not at all what God had intended. Thus, the religions became diluted. When the Qur'an was revealed, God Almighty promised that this is such a complete and comprehensive guidebook for all of life's pursuits, and its validity is for all times, for all peoples (not just for Muslims) and God Himself will be the protector of it. It leads one to think that the Qur'an must hold such treasures of knowledge that God is taking such care to protect it, right?

For second part of Question, refer to Article on Purdah. This is an article I wrote a few years ago, perhaps it will help clarify some things.

Why are there different rules for men and women in Islam? Why are women supposed to cover themselves, not talk or laugh loud, not allowed to join certain occupations etc?

There are different "rules" for men and women in terms of social and physical roles because they are quite simply, "different". Science has shown that men's and women's brains are wired differently and as such they respond socially, emotionally and psychologically in different ways. It would only seem logical that their designated roles and spheres in life would also be somewhat different, so they can use their capacities in the best possible way.

The second part of the question deals with several issues actually, but the underlying theme is modesty. The reason why women may not be encouraged to join certain professions is because it does not provide a safe, secure and dignified environment for them. For example, a career as a flight attendant. It may seem very glamorous to some young women, that they would get to travel the world and learn about so many different cultures, see the world essentially. But let's examine the profession more closely: firstly, the job is really that of a glorified waitress. Isn't that what attendants do? They attend to people, they wait on people. While it is not disallowed to wait on people, imagine the type of clientele that flight attendants have to come in contact with repeatedly. Moreover, Airlines hire flight attendants largely based on their body shapes, attractive figures and beauty. Therefore, right off the bat you are competing with your looks and physical beauty as opposed to your intelligence, which is what Islam encourages. Then there is the matter of travelling around the world, you will be in the company (sometimes very close proximity) with men, who are all strangers, which of course, is forbidden in Islam. The whole scenario is one that will not be "worthy" of an Ahmadi Muslim women's dignity.

Women are most certainly allowed to work outside the home and procure gainful, productive employment, to be contributing members of society. However, they have to do so while remaining in the boundaries that are

determined by Allah Almighty. He is very well aware of what is safe and good for us and what is not. Therefore, He has made it easier for us to achieve our goals, but already giving us direction and guidance.

Why women cannot laugh loudly or speak loudly? I believe the answer would not be just limited to muslim women, it would be relevant for anyone-its just plain rude! Think about it, when you are in a mall, or office, or movie theatre and someone is talking or laughing loudly, do people not turn around and give them nasty looks? Or do they appreciate and applaud their loudness? Of course not, to act in such a "loud" way is synonymous in people's minds with "obnoxious" . So why would anyone want to identify themselves with such a group of people? Any self-respecting person would always speak in a calm, polite and dignified tone, and that applies to Muslim women as well.

**What is Shariah law? Why do some countries follow it and others don't?**

Shariah law, is law that is based on Islamic teachings. It was taught to us by the Holy Prophet (sa). Some countries have governments and citizens living in the land, all of whom belong to the Islamic faith. Therefore, they have decided that their basis for law will be Islamic law (since everyone is a Muslim). Some countries, although the governments are Muslim, not all of its people are Muslim, therefore, they offer a mixture of laws that apply to Muslims and non Muslims etc. Of course the problem is that different people will have different interpretations of the Shariah law and that leads to some of the chaos and disorder that we see today.

**Punishment for stealing used to be cutting off the thief's hand..that has changed, concept of jihad has changed, why can't the teachings about Pardah change according to changes in society?**

Please note that the punishment has not changed. It is very different to say that the punishment that is prescribed for stealing has "changed" or it is not being "implemented". They are two very different things. The punishment is prescribed in the Qur'an and as the Qur'an is valid for all times, the punishment has not changed from the Islamic point of view. It is still there. The fact is that in many places around the world the punishment is not meted out according to Islamic law anymore.

I am assuming from the question that is asked, that the intention of the questioner is to imply that why should we focus so much on modesty? Why not less emphasis? I hope I am correct in extrapolating that from the wording of the question.

The teachings of modesty, ie dressing/behaving in a modest and dignified manner, for both Muslim men and women is a teaching that is fundamental in Islam. The Holy Prophet (sa) once said that "hayaa sab ki sab khair hai" (ie modesty is all good, it brings about nothing but good on a believer). One must understand the logic and wisdom behind why it has been constituted in the first place.

What most people, even Muslims, do not understand, is that the primary purpose of our creation is to worship Allah Almighty. That is clearly stated in the Holy Qur'an. "I have not created the jinn and the men but that they may worship Me. "(51:57). Therefore, at every step of our lives, we must reflect on whether we are doing things, pursuing such activities, behaving in such a way that is attracting the pleasure of Allah and whether we are getting closer to Him or drifting further away from Him. God Himself has promised to be the Protector of those who are modest. He has promised that those women, who cover themselves and behave in a modest and chaste manner, He will Himself be the Guardian of those women. We learn from that, that indeed if we wish to develop our relationship with God, this is the way we must act. If we don't- then how can we attract the pleasure of God?

Furthermore, you gave an example in the question that the concept of jihad has changed with the times. It is true that battles used to be waged in hand to hand combat in the battlefields, and now they are waged through intellect, through arguments and through the pen. But this concept of jihad is only being followed by the Ahmadi's today. Would you not agree? The rest of the Muslims are still firm believers in the "old" manner of jihad, which is war and bombs and killing people. That is why we see so many "terrorists" and suicide bombers who commit their crimes in the name of Allah. So one must ask, how did the Ahmadi's come to realize that the times had changed and thus their concepts of what jihad was must, too. The answer lies in the blessing of khilafat. The Promised Messiah (as) of course introduced us to this, according to the Allah's wishes. But we (you and I) were not there at that time. So, how come, today, still, we are following his instructions? It is due to the system of successorship in Ahmadiyyat, that keeps the true teachings of Islam alive and through obedience to the Khalifa's, we are able to get closer to God Almighty, and the Khalifa's give us guidance in every aspect of life.

Following that same train of thought, we can then turn to the Khalifa of the time, to ask for guidance on how, the concept of modesty may have changed according to our time, in the present society. Fortunately, with regards to this question on modesty, our beloved Hudhur (aba) has already guided us with regards to how we much observe purdah and how we much act/dress/behave and conduct ourselves when we present ourselves in mainstream society. So, one only has to look as far as his instructions.

Lastly, if one were to agree that changes in purdah should follow the changes in society, then I would say that if anything, society has become more and more immodest, unchaste, immoral and lewd as time has progressed. "Changes" in our observance of purdah would mean that we must also loosen it a bit and be more flexible to "go with the times". Then is it not that we also will be joining the masses who are already headed towards an immoral existence? Instead of protecting ourselves against the "spiritual illnesses", we would essentially be abandoning our garments of protection and leaving ourselves exposed to it (both metaphorically and physically). How can that possibly lead us towards progress, success and a closer relationship with Allah Almighty?

**The people of Lot were destroyed because of their homosexuality or was there another reason too? What is the punishment for homosexuality in Islam? Is being gay by choice or nature???**

[7:81] And *We sent* Lot — when he said to his people, 'Do you commit an abomination such as no one in the world ever did before you?

[7:82] 'You approach men with lust instead of women. Nay, you are a people who exceed *all* bounds.'

Yes, the main reason for the destruction of Hadhrat Lot's (as) people was their tendency towards homosexuality, as mentioned in the above two verses of Holy Quran. But remember that they were rebuked by Hadhrat Lot (as) and warned to change their behaviour (This warning also answers part of your other question that being homosexual is not natural but rather behavioural, because if it was by nature they wouldn't have been told to change their behaviour).

Now as for the question of the punishment, please refer to the following two verses of Holy Quran:

[4:16] And those of your women who are guilty of lewdness — call to witness four of you against them; and if they bear witness, then confine them to the houses until death overtake them or Allah open for them a way.

[4:17] And if two men from among you are guilty of it, punish them both. And if they repent and amend, then leave them alone; surely, Allah is Oft-Returning *with compassion and is* Merciful.

From the first verse it is clear that for woman to be found guilty there needs to be 4 witnesses, so there is no injustice. You will also see that the punishment is to be confined in houses. This punishment will make sure that they do not influence anyone else in the society. The time confined will also give them time to ponder on their behaviour and defeat the demon in them.

For men, as mentioned in second verse, there is a punishment. That punishment is first to be socially boycotted, if that does not make them change their behaviour then there will be some physical punishment. Islam's teachings are so beautiful in this manner that the first punishment is a social boycott. This boycott will affect them and their families because if they can't earn the bread for the family there will be trouble. This will make them realize their error and change their ways.

Now the very controversial issue raised by homosexuals is the debate of nature vs nurture. They are totally wrong to assume that this tendency is a part of their nature. Islam very clearly tells us that every child is born at "Din-e-Fitrat" meaning that by nature he/she is pure and Muslim. It is parents that will make that child Christian, Jew, Hindu or Atheist. God has created the world with a purpose and that purpose is to worship Him and procreate. How is procreation possible if people tend to be homosexual?

Allah's design is that everything has a purpose and Islam is very clear on this. Islam desires to create a harmonious, peaceful and moral society where every individual (man or woman) can live up to his/her full potential. How would you create a moral society where there is a free hand given to people with homosexual tendencies to influence others or to go against God's design?

Now, we just proved that this tendency is not natural then the question arises as to what is the actual reason. Very simple, if you allow your nurture to empower your nature this demon will overcome your natural tendencies. Khalifa IV (rh) once told us the reason why teens tend toward this. Both boys and girls go through a phase during early development. They start paying more attention to their own sex to compare their development with others to see if they are developing properly. If at that crucial and vulnerable point they are influenced by some predators who are victims of that predisposition, then this will affect them as well.

Now, remember that God loves his creation, He loves all of us. But there are certain immoral behaviours that He is displeased with. And this is one of those immoral behaviours. This particular behaviour is a hindrance to a person's spiritual progress and cause of Allah's displeasure, and we should try to avoid it.

Just as a side note, Islam is not the only religion to condemn this behaviour. Although, these days the Christian countries are forgetting their commandments and giving in to the demands of these people and their wickedness, their scripture was very clear at condemning these acts. We read in the New Testament:

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither the sexually immoral nor idolators nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor **homosexual offenders**, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanders, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians, 6:9-11)

At another point it is said: In the eyes of God, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had reached such an uncivilized and immoral condition that He destroyed them all, apart, that is, the prophet Lot and a few other

righteous people. People, therefore, who accept immoral practices as normal will gradually destroy themselves.

The Khalifas are elected by people unlike the prophets who are appointed by God. Their decisions may be based on their own beliefs or values. Some khalifas may have stricter approach towards things while others are more liberal. Why do we have to believe in Khilafat..why can't we just follow the prophets? how do we know they are right?

Let us start at the beginning. First, there is a Prophet who comes to this world, who is appointed by God. He brings a message to the people and they either believe or disbelieve. Those who join his fold, are labelled as "his followers". Correct?

In the case of Muslims, the Holy Prophet (sa) brought Islam to us, and the teachings are all contained in the Holy Qur'an. For Muslims to profess their faith in Islam, they have to believe in every single word that is contained in that book. They have to believe in every single teaching that the Holy Prophet (sa). The Qur'an itself contains a prophecy that a time will come when Khilafat (successorship) will be established on Earth and it will be the job of Khalifa's to guide us on the right path, and to stay true to the Islamic teachings that were brought to us originally by the Holy Prophet (sa). You see, over time, people tend to forget the original teachings and they tend to add in their own customs, traditions and rituals into the mix and then call it religion. But the original faith was something else, something different than what we see today.

In the case of Islam, the Holy Prophet (sa) prophesized that one day will come when Muslims will remain in name only, they will not be practicing Muslims, because their actions and deeds will be very far from the teachings of Islam. They will read the Qur'an but will not be able to interpret it correctly. He also told us when this time would come, ie there would be some signs to watch out for. Then he told us that when Islam reaches this type of state, there will come a man, a Promised Messiah who will come to revive the true teachings of Islam, the way it was revealed to the Holy Prophet (sa), and he will bring the true Islam back. That person of course is the Promised Messiah (as) who founded the Ahmadiyya Community. After his passing away, there will be a system of khilafat that will be established and his successors will carry on the same job, because the problems will be so many that one person in his lifetime cannot bring all the Muslims back to the pure Islam, it is a task that will take generations upon generations. Therefore, we see that the system of Khilafat has been established since 1906, since the Promised Messiah (as) passed away, and today we are under the guidance of the fifth Khalifa (aba).

You mentioned in your question that khalifa's are appointed by people and not by God. That is not true. In practical terms, yes there is an electoral committee who is responsible for voting on names proposed for Khalifa. However, this electoral committee is completely guided by Allah Almighty. He has utter control over whom He deems fit for this job, and you will hear that almost everyone who is in the committee is guided either through dreams, or instinct to vote for a certain person, due to their piety and prayers. In fact, Ahmadi's all over the world are shown dreams and signs about who will be the next Khalifa. So many people at once cannot possibly see a sign pointing towards the same person, if in fact it is not with Allah's will, right? Allah Almighty has promised victory to this Jama'at of His, therefore He guides every person towards making the right choice. As such, the Khalifa is also appointed by God.

The next part of the question was that some have liberal approach and some are strict. It has to do with the times. Sometimes, during a certain period of Khilafat, the situations in the world are such that it is important to be strict, because the influences are so strong that the Khalifa is concerned that Ahmadi Muslims may also be swept away into wrongful things. Therefore, he is strict with us and admonishes us to abstain from doing certain things, that he knows are going to be harmful for us. Then there are times when it is okay to be lenient

and flexible. The important thing to realize is that the Khalifa does not do anything against the will of Allah. If he even so tries, God will remove him. The other part is that this is the blessing of khilafat. With the changing circumstances of the world, we are guided in real-time on how to make better decisions for ourselves, because God is guiding Hudhur (aba) and we are guided by him.

**Evolution theory in Islam..what do we as Ahmadis believe in? Do other Muslims share the same views as ours?**

Regarding this question, I will try to give you a detailed answer but you can also refer to these clips of Khalifa Rabay (rh) Q and A sessions about evolution. <http://www.askislam.org/concepts/evolution/index.html>.

Under AskIslam.com, you will also see a section [www.askislam.org/religions\\_and\\_beliefs/index.html](http://www.askislam.org/religions_and_beliefs/index.html)

There are some questions relating to evolution in there as well.

Also you can refer to the book, Revelation, Rationality Knowledge and Truth, by Khalifa Rabay (rh) which has a section on Evolution.

**Why cant women be prophets or khalifas or have leadership role? there are women leaders for women but why cant women lead men even in prayer?**

You mentioned in the question above that Prophets are appointed by God. If that is true, then why did God not choose women to be Prophets? There must be a logical reason, right? There is immense wisdom behind why women cannot be prophets or Khalifa's. I shall guide you towards a clip of Faith Matters on MTA: <http://www.alislam.org/v/980.html> (see question 4 and 7)

For the other part of your questions, another clip of Faith Matters: <http://www.alislam.org/v/1879.html> (see question # 2).