

# Some Common Questions by Recent Converts

**Description:** Answers to questions frequently asked, by new Muslims, aimed towards putting the mind at ease and addressing early concerns.

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Category: Lessons > [Social Interaction](#) > [Coping with change](#)

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## (1) I have recently accepted Islam, do I need to change my name?

No, you don't have to change your name unless its meaning is Islamically objectionable. The Prophet did not order everyone who accepted Islam to change their names. Since Arabic names generally have meanings, he did change names with offensive or religiously objectionable meanings. And if the name is not Islamically objectionable, then it is *recommended* to take a Muslim name but one does not have to.

Even if your first name does contradict Islamic principles and changing it in official documents would cause you much distress or harm, then it suffices to change it amongst family and acquaintances

If you do change your name, do not change the family name or your father's name, even if it be an impermissible name, but just your first name. Allah says in the Quran:

**oeCall them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers, that is more just with Allah.” (Quran 33:5)**

## (2) I am uncircumcised male who just accepted Islam. Do I have to get circumcised?

It is better, but not required, to get circumcised after you accept Islam. If you fear that it will harm you, you can forgo or delay doing it. If you decide to go ahead with this meritorious act of worship, you need not go to extremes in hurrying to get it done. Make sure you find a good surgeon competent in circumcision before taking the step. The skin lesion takes about a week to completely heal. One of the benefits of having it done is that it makes it easier to clean yourself, and maintain cleanliness, after passing urine or emitting semen, both of which your clothes and skin should be free from during prayer.

### (3) Do I have to say the testimony of faith (*shahadah*) in front of people?

No. You do not have to utter the two testimonies:

*Laa ilaaha ill-Allah, Muhammad-ur-Rasool-ullah,*

...in front of people to be considered a Muslim in the sight of God. You *can* say it to yourself.

What is important is that:

- (i) you know the meaning of the testimony of faith
- (ii) you actually utter the two testimonies verbally
- (iii) your heart confirms it, you truly believe it, and intend to live by it to your best ability

The Messenger of God said:

**oeI testify that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. Every servant who meets Allah without doubting it will be admitted to Paradise."** (*Saheeh Muslim*)

He also said,

**oeNo one says '*La ilaha illa Allah*' truthfully from their heart and dies upon it, but they will be protected from the Hell-Fire (i.e. they will be admitted into Paradise) ."** (*Saheeh al-Bukhari* )

At the same time, it is perfectly fine, and to your advantage, to pronounce it publicly, like in a mosque, so people know you are a Muslim. In some countries one has to be registered as a Muslim, so, in the case of death, the person is given a Muslim burial. Also, it is good to get a letter at some point from your local Islamic center stating you are a Muslim. It may be useful when applying to go for the Hajj pilgrimage, or officially declaring a marriage in a Muslim country.

### (4) Why is it necessary to say the two testimonies verbally?

A testimony is literally something which is given verbally and announced, not kept in the heart. Thus the testimony of faith must be announced, and the Prophet himself would tell one who wished to accept Islam to pronounce it. Furthermore, it should be said in Arabic, as this statement is a specific prayer which is pronounced in Arabic.

### (5) What are the common Islamic greetings I should know

## for social occasions?

The most important ones are two. When you meet a fellow Muslim, the one initiating the greeting says, *'As-Salamu 'Alai-kum.'* The other responds, *'Wa 'Alai-kum us-salam.'* Men shake hands with men and women shake hands with women. Men who are not *mahram*<sup>[1]</sup> to women should not shake their hands.

Also, a Muslim says, *'Alhamdulillah,'* (All praise and thanks belong to Allah) on sneezing, and upon receiving good news or stating a pleasant state of affairs.

If one states that they will do something in the future, they should say, *oeIn shaa-Allah* (God-willing).

Also, if one praises something or someone, they should say, *oeBaarak-Allahu feeh* (may Allah bless it), or *Barak-Allahu feek* (may Allah bless you)," respectively.

All these sayings have been taught by the Prophet of Islam.

## (6) I have recently accepted Islam. I felt euphoric at the time, but sometimes I wonder if Islam is bringing me closer to God?

Without a doubt Islam brings a person closer to his Creator. God loves and wants you to be a Muslim. Rest assured of that. Islam links the human being to his true Lord through the belief in the oneness of God and through various acts of worship. The more one worships Allah, the more he draws near to Him. One will never be able to draw near to Allah except by first performing the obligatory deeds, as the Prophet, may God praise him, said:

*oeGod Almighty said, 'I have declared war on whoever shows enmity to a beloved slave of mine. My slave does not draw near to Me with anything I love more than by performing what I have obligated upon him, and he continues to draw near to Me with voluntary actions of worship until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. If he were to ask Me for something, I would give it to him. If he were to ask Me for refuge, I would give him refuge. (Saheeh Muslim) "* [This Prophetic narration is not to be taken literally, rather what is meant is that the person will act according to that which pleases God. For example, he will not look at impermissible things, will only listen to that which is useful and beneficial such as listening to the Quran, Islamic lectures, etc.]

Stick the course. Be patient. Allow yourself time to grow as a Muslim. Learning is important and so is making good Muslim friends.

(7) I am new to Islam but I don't know any Muslims, and I am scared to approach a mosque, is there anyone available to help me?

You are welcome to go through the e-learning content of our website. You can also contact us via the [support page](#) and we will be happy to put you in contact with fellow Muslims close to you. We pray to God to bless you, and to make you steadfast in holding fast to the truth. God is the One who guides to the path of truth and light.

(8) Someone told me that Muslims cannot have any relationship with non-Muslims, is this true? All my family are non-Muslims and I don't want to cut ties with my family.

Beware of false information. What you were told is incorrect. Islam encourages us to be kind and generous to our relatives whether they are Muslim or not. Especially, one's parents have great rights over us. You will find lessons where you will learn more about this.

(9) I heard that it is obligatory to attend the Jumu'ah Friday Prayer. What happens if my employer doesn't give me the time off to attend?

You do not have to necessarily tell your employer you attend Jumu'ah prayer. The Jumu'ah Prayer lasts about 45 min -1 hr, so you can use your lunch break. If need be, arrange to take a slightly longer lunch break and make up for the time. In any case, you have the right to ask your employer for time off for Jumu'ah Prayer on Friday. For specific legal advice, please contact the websites listed below.

## **USA**

[www.cair-net.org](http://www.cair-net.org)

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-relig.html>

## **UK**

[www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk)

[www.cre.gov.uk/index.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/index.html)

## AUSTRALIA

www.amcran.org

www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb

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Endnotes:

[1] The *mahram* of a woman are her father, grandfathers, and their brothers, the brothers of her grandmothers, as well as her own husband and brothers. The same applies to a man but in regards to the opposite sex.

The web address of this article:

<http://www.newmuslims.com/lessons/26>

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