

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْجَمْعِيَّةُ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةُ لِمَسْجِدِ كُوبَةِ الْيَابَانِ

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# A Brief Introduction to ISLAM

## What is Islam?

Islam is not a new religion, but the same truth that God revealed through all His prophets to every people. For a fifth of the world's population, Islam is both a religion and a complete way of life.

The Arabic word 'Islam' simply means 'submission', and derives from a word meaning peace. In a religious context it means complete submission to the will of God. Mohammadanism is thus a misnomer because it suggests that Muslims worship Muhammad, rather than God. 'Allah' is the Arabic name for God which is used by Arab Muslim and Christians alike.

## What do Muslims believe?

Muslims believe in One, Unique, Incomparable God; in the Angels created by Him; in the prophets through whom His revelations were brought to mankind; in the Day of Judgment and individual accountability for actions; in God's complete authority over human destiny; and in life after death. Muslims believe in a chain of prophets starting with Adam and including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Lot, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Elias, Jonah, John the Baptist, peace be upon them. But God's final message to man, a confirmation of the eternal message and a summing-up of all that has gone before was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the Angel Gabriel.

## What are the 'Five Pillars' of Islam?

Every action done with the awareness that it fulfills the Will of God is considered an act of worship. But it is the specific acts of worship termed the Pillars of Islam which provide the frame work of Muslim spiritual life. These are: The declaration of faith in One God and in the prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh), five daily prayers, fasting in the month of Ramadan, charity, and pilgrimage to Makkah once in a lifetime.

## Do Islam and Christianity have different origins?

No. together with Judaism, they go back to the prophet and patriarch Abraham, and

their three prophets are directly descended from his sons, Muhammad (pbuh) from the eldest, Ishmael, and Moses and Jesus (pbuh) from Isaac. Abraham established the settlement which today is the city of Makkah, and built the Ka'ba towards which all Muslims pray.

## How do Muslims view Jesus and Mary (peace be upon them)?

Muslims respect and revere Jesus and await his second coming. They consider him one of the greatest of God's messengers to mankind. The Qur'an confirms his virgin birth. He was born miraculously through the same power which had brought Adam into being without a father. There is a chapter in the Qur'an entitled Mary, and Mary is considered the purest woman in all creation and an example for believers.

## Who is Muhammad (peace be upon him)?

Muhammad (pbuh) was the last of messengers of God, sent to complete the religion of Abraham. He was born in Makkah in the year 570. As he grew up, he became known for his truthfulness, generosity, and sincerity, so that he was sought after for his ability to arbitrate disputes. The historians describe him as calm and meditative.

At the age of 40, he received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel. As soon as he began to preach the revealed truth, he and his small group of followers suffered bitter persecution, which grew so fierce that in the year 622 God gave them the command to emigrate from Makkah to the city of Medina.

After several years, the prophet (pbuh) and his followers returned to Makkah, forgave their enemies, and established Islam definitively. Before the prophet (pbuh) died at the age of 63, the greater part of Arabia was Muslim, and within a century of his death Islam had spread to Spain in the West and as Far-East as China.

## What is the Qur'an?

The Qur'an is a record of the exact words revealed by God through the Angel

Gabriel to the prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It was memorized by Muhammad (pbuh) and then dictated to his companions, and written down by scribes, who cross-checked it during his lifetime. Not one word of its 114 chapters, Suras, has been changed over the centuries, so that the Qur'an is in every detail the unique and miraculous text which was revealed to Muhammad (pbuh) fourteen centuries ago.

The Qur'an is the prime source of every Muslim's faith and practice. It deals with all the subjects which concern us as human beings: wisdom, doctrine, worship and law, but its basic theme is the relationship between God and His creatures. At the same time it provides guidelines for a just society, proper human conduct and an equitable economic system.

## How do Muslims view life and death?

Muslims believe that the present life is only a trial preparation for the next life. Basic articles of faith include the Day of Judgment, resurrection, Heaven and Hell. On the Day of Judgment the entire human race will be resurrected; everyone will appear before the Almighty God and face the consequences of their deeds in this life.

Belief in accountability to God and an everlasting life to come gives a sense and meaning to worldly life. It makes hardship easy, gives hope, and differentiates human beings from animals and inanimate objects. It also serves as a reminder against crime, corruption, immorality, and injustice.

## How does one become a Muslim?

Simply by saying 'there is no god apart from God, and Muhammad (pbuh) is the Messenger of God. By this declaration the believer announces his or her faith in all God's messengers, and the scriptures they brought.