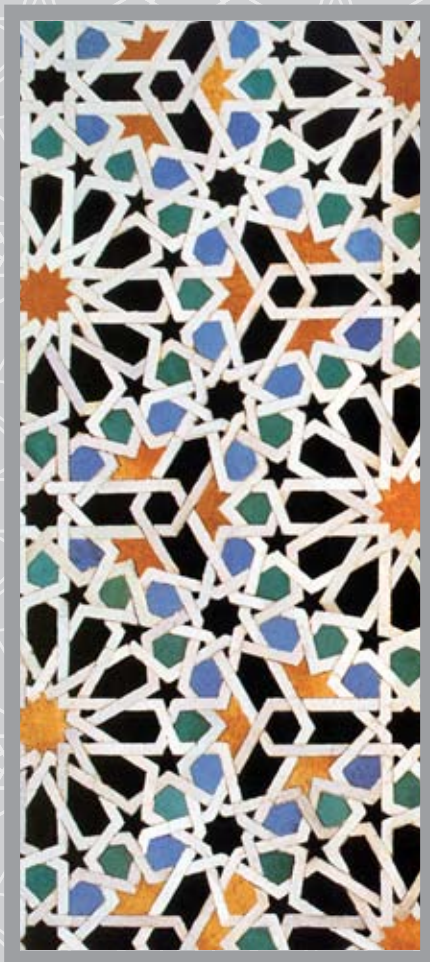


ISLAM

at a glance



**In the name of Allah,
the Compassionate, the Merciful**

What is Islam?

Islam is an Arabic word that means peace or surrender. As a term used to describe the faith, it means submission to the Will of God. Islam is not a new concept, since it goes back to the days of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and all the Prophets (peace be upon them) who have come to guide mankind onto the straight path. They all submitted themselves to the will of the One and only GOD, and they were all, therefore, Muslims.

Who is GOD?

The Arabic word for God is “ALLAH,” which means “The God”. He is the Supreme Being, who in the eyes, mind, and heart of a Muslim, is your God and my God, the God of the sun and the moon, the God of the believers and the unbelievers, the God of the Jews, the Christians, the Muslims, and all mankind. He alone created the earth and the heavens in six days. He knows no sleep nor does He get tired. He is beyond our imagination and comprehension. He is not limited to material, space, or time. He is from ever and He is forever. He is One and alone. All good attributes belong to Him. He is the Creator, the Protector, the Sustainer, the Merciful, the All-seeing, the All-hearing, and the All-knowing. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent. He is the Master of the universe and He is the Peace.

Who is Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him, PBUH)?

Muhammad is the Prophet of Islam. He is the seal (last) of all the Prophets. He is from the progeny of Ishmael, the first son of Prophet Abraham. God appointed him as His messenger to deliver His message of “The Oneness of God” to all mankind and to spread Islam as the salvation of humanity. This is the same message that Prophet Abraham (the father of monotheism) started almost 4000 years ago. It is the message which all the Prophets, including Noah, Moses, and Jesus, delivered; that there is no god but the One God and that none is worthy of worship but Him. This “Oneness of God” concept is called *Tawheed* in Islam. At the age of forty, the Divine revelation came down to Muhammad through the angel

Gabriel while meditating alone in the cave of Hira in Arabia (he received revelations for 23 years). During his lifetime, these revelations, called the Qur'an, were written and arranged under his supervision.

What is the Qur'an?

The Qur'an is the Muslim Holy Scripture. It is God's word, received by Muhammad through the angel of revelation, Gabriel. It contains 114 chapters called "*Suras*." The style of the Qur'an is unique, and unlike any other book, it does not follow a chronological order but rather that of length. The longest chapter appears in the beginning of the Book and the shorter ones towards the end. The Qur'an is written in Arabic, the same language in which it was revealed to the Prophet nearly 1400 years ago. Miraculously, nothing has been changed, added, or deleted.

What are the pillars of Islam?

Think of these pillars as the infrastructure of Islam. There are five such pillars:

1. The Testimony of Faith – (*Al-Shahadatan*): This pillar is the cornerstone of Islam and is comprised of the belief in the one universal God for all humanity and belief in all the Prophets as the messengers of God. It is to bear witness that there is no god but the One God, and that Muhammad is the last Messenger of God.

2. Prayer – (*Salah*): This pillar is the most noble act for a Muslim of communicating with God directly without any intermediaries. Muslims are commanded by God to keep the five daily regular prayers and show thereby their love of God, their obedience to His commands, and their sincerity in submitting themselves to His Will.

3. Charity or Poor-Due – (*Zakah*): This third pillar of Islam requires Muslim to pay 2.5% of their accumulated wealth annually to the poor and the needy. This act of worship purifies the heart of the giver from greed and selfishness, and of the recipient, the poor, of jealousy and hatred. It also purifies the society at large of social struggle, conflict, and injustice.

4. Fasting – (*Saum*): This pillar deals with fasting in the month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the Islamic year – Muslims follow the lunar year). Muslims fast from dawn

to sunset every day for the whole month and abstain from what it is normally permitted for them. They don't eat or drink until sunset. This act of worship teaches one discipline, sacrifice, and submission to the Will of God.

5. Pilgrimage – (*Hajj*): This last pillar requires a Muslim who has the financial means to go for pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime. Muslims observing this duty practice true brotherhood. People from all over the world, nearly three million people, gather before the One God in worship. During the pilgrimage, all Muslims see themselves as a single community; there is no rich or poor, no weak or strong, and no black or white. Everyone is equal in the eyes of God.

What are the articles of faith (Iman)?

Faith means 'to know' or 'to believe.' There are five articles of faith in which one must believe to be a true Muslim.

1. Belief in God – To believe in the One, Eternal, and Absolute God.

2. Belief in the Angels – Angels are another form of God's creation. God employs them to administer His kingdom, and they carry out His orders exactly and accurately. They are constantly engaged in the worship of God and have no inclination to sin.

3. Faith in the Books of God – Muslims are commanded by God to believe in the Books which He has sent down to mankind through His Prophets. Muslims have been informed of four Books (via the Qur'an): the Books of Abraham (*Suhuf*), the Torah of Moses (*Al-Taurat*), Psalms (*Zabur*) of David, and the Gospel (*Injil*) of Jesus Christ. Muslims believe that all Books sent down by God are true.

4. Faith in God's Prophets – Muslims are perhaps the only people in the world who consider belief in all the Prophets of God an article of faith. They believe in all His Prophets, for one who does not believe in any one of them is not a Muslim. All the Prophets were righteous humans and, therefore, the best models for humanity. Some scholars believe that God has sent 170 thousand Prophets to mankind, others suggest 240 thousand as more accurate. The Qur'an, however, mentions the

names of 25 Prophets. These 25 include Noah of the Ark, Abraham, the father of monotheism, his progeny Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Muslims believe that Muhammad is the seal (the last) of all the Prophets.

5. Belief in Life After Death – Muslims believe in resurrection after death and the Day of Judgement. They believe that the entire record of every person (all their good deeds and wrongdoings) will be presented before God for final judgement. The one who excels in goodness will be rewarded, and the one whose evils and wrongs outweigh his good deeds will be punished. Those who come out successful in this judgement will go to Paradise, and the doors of eternal bliss will be opened to them forever. But those who are condemned and deserve punishment will be sent to Hell.

What do Muslims celebrate?

Muslims have two occasions for celebration. The first celebration is *Eid Al-Fitr*, which marks the end of the fasting month — Ramadan — and is celebrated with public prayers, feasts, and exchange of gifts. The second celebration is *Eid Al-Adha*, which is celebrated at the end of the pilgrimage – Hajj – to Mecca. After the public prayers, those who can afford to sacrifice a lamb or a goat to signify Prophet Abraham's obedience to God when he was about to sacrifice his son Ishmael. According to Islam, Abraham was commanded by God to sacrifice his son Ishmael. God had him replaced by a lamb and it was this animal that was sacrificed instead. *Eid Al-Adha* is a commemoration of that event.

Holy places for Muslims:

- 1) The *Ka'bah* in Mecca is where Muslims go for pilgrimage. It is the first house of worship raised and built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. It is the holiest shrine in Islam.
- 2) The Prophet's Mosque (Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi) in Al-Madinah, about 250 miles north of Mecca.
- 3) The Al-Aqsa Mosque or the Mosque of the Dome of the Rock in Al-Quds (Jerusalem). It is where Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven.

Why do Muslim women cover their heads?

Muslim women who dress in this manner believe that God commanded them to dress modestly by showing only their faces and their hands.

What do Muslims eat?

Muslims basically eat almost all kinds of domesticated animals on which God's name has been pronounced prior to slaughter (this is called *Halal* meat). Pork and its by-products are prohibited in Islam and so are wine, liquor, and any kind of alcoholic beverage. Drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, crack, etc. are absolutely forbidden. Anything that clouds the mind is prohibited.

The Muslim world:

- Islam today consists of over one billion people world-wide. It is the fastest growing religion in America and Europe. Muslim Arabs, however, comprise about 18% of the Muslim population.
- Mohammedanism is a term that offends Muslims. They do not worship Muhammad, for God (*ALLAH*) alone is worthy of worship.
- Muslims also believe that Jesus will return to save mankind from evil.
- Muslims do not believe in original sin. They believe that every newborn is free from sin and is, therefore, innocent.
- Islam does not allow Muslims to impose their beliefs on others.
- Muslims consider the Christians and the Jews as the people of **The Book** (Bible).



Islamic History Timeline:

545 A.D. Birth of Abdullah, the father of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH).

570 A.D. Death of Abdullah, while his wife Amenah was pregnant with Muhammad (PBUH).

571 A.D. Birth of the Prophet.

577 A.D. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) visits Madina with his mother Amenah. Also, the same year, his mother died.

580 A.D. Death of Abdul Muttalib, the Prophet's grandfather, who took him into his custody after the death of his mother. Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, then took Muhammad (PBUH) to raise him.

583 A.D. The Prophet's journey to Syria in the company of his uncle, Abu Talib. He meets with the monk Bahira at Busra and is foretold of his prophethood.

594 A.D. The Prophet manages the business affairs of lady Khadijah and leads her trade caravan to Syria.

595 A.D. The Prophet marries Khadijah.

610 A.D. The first revelation in the cave at Mt. Hira. The Prophet is commissioned as the Messenger of God.

613 A.D. The invitation of Islam to the public.

615 A.D. Persecution of the Muslims by the tribe of Quraish. A party of Muslims leave for Abyssinia.

616 A.D. Another Muslim migration to Abyssinia.

619 A.D. Death of Abu Talib (the Prophet's uncle) and also his wife Khadijah. The year of sorrow.

620 A.D. Ascension to the heavens.

622 A.D. The Prophet and the Muslims migrate to Yathrib (later called Madinah).

624 A.D. Battle of Badr. The Prophet had received a command to fight his persecutors and the promise of victory.

628 A.D. Truce of Hudaibiyah. The Prophet addresses letters to various heads of states inviting them to Islam.

629 A.D. The Prophet performs the pilgrimage to Mecca.

630 A.D. Conquest of Mecca.

632 A.D. Farewell pilgrimage to Mecca. The death of the Prophet. Abu Bakr succeeds him as the first Caliph.



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**The Islamic Organization of North America
is a non-profit organization dedicated to
reviving the Qur'an in the hearts of Muslims,
while bringing its message to non-Muslims.**