



An Overview Of

# Islam





# Islam

• **Islam:** Islam (lit. voluntary surrender or submission) means to fully submit to the Will and Law of God. It has the same root (S-L-M) as the Arabic word Salam (peace). As is clear from the connection between the words, it is through submission to God's Will and Law that a person finds peace.

• **Attitude to life:** The word Islam, therefore, is not a name that derives from a specific man or nation. Rather, it is descriptive of a state of mind and a whole way of living, thinking, and acting that God ordained for humankind.

• **Innate religion:** Islam is also defined as the religion of Fitrah (the natural inborn need for and awareness of God). According to Islam, every human is born with an innate knowledge of God and a natural inclination to believe in His Absolute Oneness.

• **One religion:** Islam introduces itself not as a new religion, but as a continuation of the same message of pure monotheism revealed by God to all of His prophets, beginning with Adam and ending with Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

**1** • **One God:** Islam is strictly monotheistic; there is only one God and no mediator between God and mankind. It is strictly anti-discriminatory; humanity has one origin, Adam, and God created Adam from dust.

• **Allah:** Allah is the name of the One True God and can never be used to designate any other being. It is absolutely unique to the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Lord of existence. In Arabic, it means 'the One exclusively worthy of deification and worship.' Arab Christians and Jews use the word Allah for God.

• **Definition of God:** In Islam, God is defined as the One Supreme, Eternal, All-Knowing, and Almighty God Who has no wife, son, partner, or equal. He is the Creator and Sustainer of everything. He is infinitely Great and Gracious, and is incomparable to any of His creations.

• **Absolute monotheism:** The belief in the Oneness of God and the worship of God alone is the foundation of the religion of Islam. Islam teaches that God alone gives life, causes death, brings good, removes distress, answers supplications, and forgives sins; therefore, no one has the right to be worshipped except Him alone.

• **Messengers:** Islam states that God's Religion was revealed through a long line of prophets and messengers. Each of them preached the Oneness of God and the worship of Him alone. Belief in them all, equally and without distinction, is a fundamental article of the Islamic faith.

• **Muhammad:** The final and complete revelation of Islamic faith was made through Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He is declared in the Holy Book of Islam, the Qur'an, as the pinnacle of moral excellence and the last and universal Prophet whose life, teachings, and spirituality, along with the Qur'an, provide the final and eternal guidance to all humanity – Arabs and non-Arabs alike.

•**Divine Books:** Belief in all the divine books is another fundamental article of Islamic faith. They include the Scrolls given to Abraham, the Torah given to Moses, the Psalms given to David, the Gospel given to Jesus, and, finally, the Qur'an given to Muhammad. Islam instructs that all the divine books come from the same source (God), contain the same message (worship of God alone), and essentially enjoin the same duties, orders, and prohibitions.

•**Qur'an:** Islam states that although scriptures prior to the Qur'an were once authentic, over time they have been lost, altered, concealed, or corrupted. Only God's Final Revelation, the Qur'an, has been preserved in its original form and provides authentic knowledge about God.

•**The present life:** According to Islam, the present life of this world is temporal. It was designed as a test of belief in and obedience to God, the outcome of which shall determine the location of a person's next eternal life (Paradise or Hell).

•**Accountability and the Day of Judgement:** Islam instructs that all humans who have lived on earth are accountable for their beliefs and willful actions. Everything one does, says, or intends in this world is accurately recorded by angels. These records of deeds shall be presented on the Day of Judgment, when the whole universe shall be destroyed and the dead shall be resurrected to be judged by God.

3

•**Requital is definite:** For Muslims, the certainty of the Day of Judgement gives substance and meaning to their lives. It also fills them with peace, as nothing good shall pass without reward and nothing evil shall pass unpunished.



• **Nothing is haphazard:** Islam teaches that everything happens in this universe by the Will and Decree of God. Whatever befalls a person, be it good or bad, could not have bypassed them, and that which bypasses them could not have befallen them. This is inclusive of every aspect of life beyond free will choice, that is, circumstances which a person does nothing to acquire or cause. Only by satisfaction with one's portion, through belief in and acceptance of destiny, are Muslims able to find peace of mind and contentment in this life – provided they have done all that can possibly be done in a given situation.

• **The antithesis of Islam:** Shirk (or associating others with God in His Divinity or worship) is the main invalidator of Islam and the only unforgivable sin in Islam.



# Muslims

- A follower of Islam is called a Muslim, which means one who surrenders or submits to God alone and rejects any partners or intermediaries between them and God.
  - It is in the sense of submitting oneself only to God and taking Him as one's sole Lord that the Qur'an calls Abraham and all prophets of God "Muslims" and designates their religion by one and the same name: Islam.
  - Muslims are not only followers of Muhammad; they also follow and honor Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the rest of the messengers of God (peace be upon them all).
  - A person cannot be a Muslim by force. To be a true Muslim, one must choose Islam out of free will and be fully convinced of it.
  - There are approximately 1.6 billion Muslims, constituting 23% of the world's population, making Islam the world's second-largest religion.
  - Muslims are not to be confused with Middle Easterners or Arabs. In fact, Muslims may be of any nationality, culture, or background.
- 5** • Less than 20% of the global number of Muslims is of Arab origin. Millions of Muslims live in non-Arab areas such as Indonesia, India, Iran, Turkey, Central Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Islam therefore unites people of different colors, classes, and nationalities into one brotherhood. The Qur'an says: "Indeed the believers are but brothers." [Qur'an 49: 10]





# The Five Pillars of Islam

Just as pillars uphold a building, Islam requires its followers to uphold their religion by practicing five basic acts of worship known as the Five Pillars of Islam. In order, they are:

## 1-First Pillar: Testimony of Faith (Shahada)



The Testimony of Faith is saying with conviction:

“I testify that there is no god except Allah, and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” One becomes a Muslim simply by making this Declaration of Faith.

The first part of the Declaration of Faith negates all false gods and affirms that there is only one true God worthy of worship – Allah.

The second part establishes the way in which Muslims must follow the path to God. By accepting that Muhammad is God’s Messenger, Muslims are pledging themselves to believe in what he said, obey what he commanded, avoid what he prohibited, and worship God according to his teachings.



## 2-Second Pillar: Prayer (Salah)



Salah is the daily obligation of offering five prayers in the direction of the Ka`bah (God's first House of worship) in Mecca.

Salah establishes and constantly renews the connection with God. The five prayers are spaced throughout the day at set times: dawn, midday, afternoon, sunset, and evening, which makes life and its activities revolve around seeking and remembering God.



Each prayer takes five to ten minutes to perform and consists of a repeated series of humble postures of standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting accompanied by glorifications, recitations from the Qur'an, and supplications.



Ablution is required before prayer, as well as cleanliness of clothes and location. A Muslim may pray individually or congregationally, at home, at work, or in any clean place, but congregationally in a mosque is preferred.



Each prayer is announced from the mosques by a call to prayer, known as the Azan, which consists of the following words: "Allah is Greater (more important than anything else). I testify that there is no god but Allah. I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. Come to prayer. Come to success."

### 3 -Third Pillar: Obligatory Charity (Zakah)

Zakah is the annual obligation of financially able Muslims to give a specific portion of their surplus wealth (2.5% of one year's total cumulative wealth) to certain classes of needy people.

In order to be liable to pay Zakah, a Muslim must (1) possess an amount of wealth that is equal to or exceeds the Nisab (minimum amount on which Zakah is due) (2) possess it for one lunar year without needing it. With these two conditions met, 2.5 percent of the total wealth should be paid for the upkeep of the poor and needy.

9

Zakah is designed so that, when paid in due time and amount to its deserving recipients in a given community, it will eliminate poverty and promote solidarity.



#### 4 -Fourth Pillar: Fasting Ramadan (Sawm)

Sawm is the annual obligation of every physically able adult Muslim to abstain from eating, drinking, and having sexual relations with one's spouse from sunrise to sunset. This abstention also entails forbearance from obscene language and any offensive behavior.

Exempted from Sawm are people who are sick, elderly, or on a journey, and women who are pregnant, nursing, or menstruating.

During Ramadan Muslims are encouraged to show greater generosity and increase their good deeds. Every day during Ramadan, special supererogatory night prayers are held congregationally in mosques after Iftar (breaking the Fast), during which a portion of the Qur'an is read on successive evenings so that by the end of the month the entire Qur'an has been completely recited.



## 5 -Fifth Pillar: Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)

Hajj is the once-in-a-lifetime obligation of every physically and financially able Muslim to go on a journey solely for God and to visit His Sacred House in Mecca. The process involves the sacrifice of time, money, and comforts all for God's Sake.

Hajj takes place during the first days of the lunar month of Dhul-Hijjah. The rituals of Hajj center around complete submission and devotion to God. As the pilgrims approach Mecca, they enter into a state of consecration known as Ihram during which they divest themselves temporarily of all marks of status and worldly distinction to assume the humble dress and condition of a pilgrim wholly devoted to God.

**Hajj is considered the largest annual religious gathering in the world.**





12



# Insights into the Five Pillars



The testimony of faith restricts and affirms divinity to Allah alone. Thus, Muslims must direct all acts of worship, such as prayer, supplication, sacrifice, fasting, charity, vows, reliance, hope, and fear to Him alone. Any Muslim who directs an act of worship to other than Allah is in fact worshipping a god besides or instead of Allah.

1 Shahadah



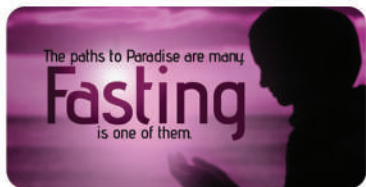
The timing and frequency of prayers keeps Muslims constantly connected with God and His Guidance and focused on the real purpose of life according to Islam, which is the relationship with one's Creator. Salah requires the full and conscious participation of the one praying, with mind, soul, and body.

2 Salah



Zakah literally means purification and growth. It signifies to Muslims the growth of their wealth through giving part of it away and the elevation and purification of their souls from possessiveness, greed, and selfishness.

3 Zakah



An entire month of abstaining from lawful carnal desires during daylight hours and practicing them again after sunset uplifts the spirituality of Muslims and strengthens their willpower and perseverance. Muslims also gain sympathy for hungry and needy people and a better appreciation of God's Blessings.

4 Sawm



All humans are created by the One God and as such are essentially equal. Of all the rituals of Islam, Hajj is the most representative of this concept of unity and equality of mankind – despite diversity. Hajj brings together people of different nationalities, cultures, and social backgrounds from all over the world to worship God as one massive unit.

5 Hajj



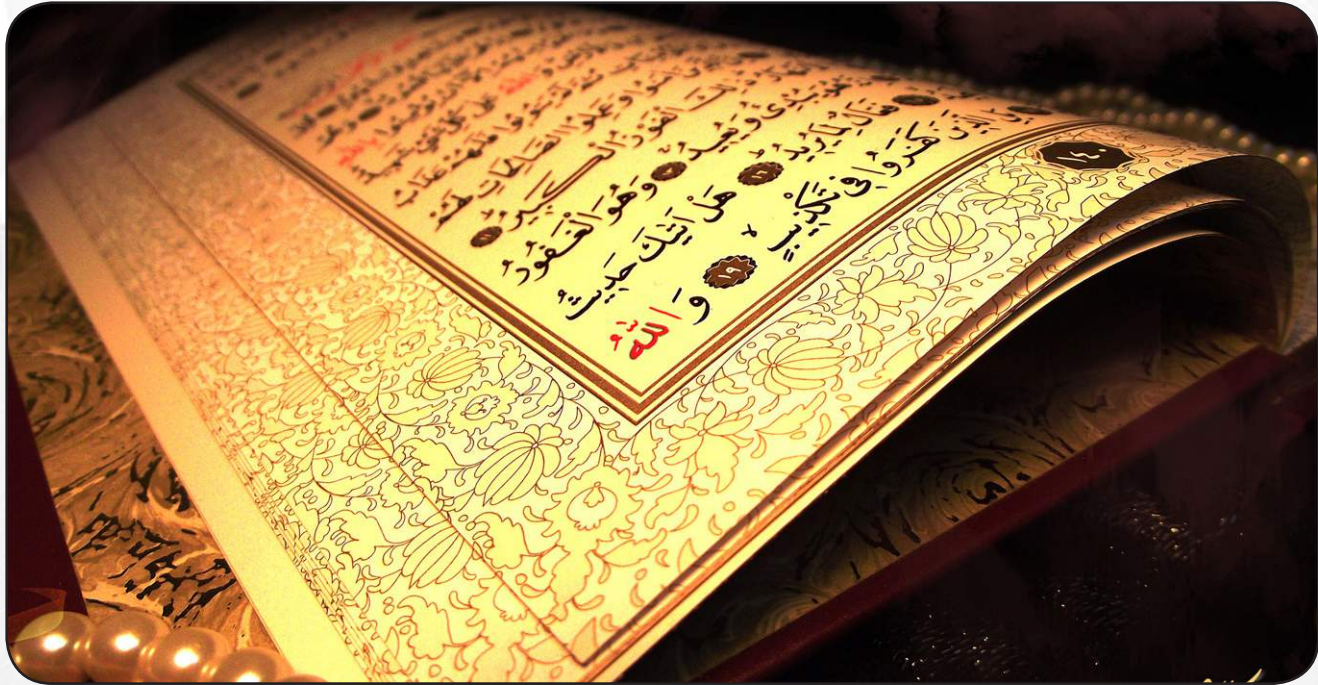
# Qur'an and Sunnah

## Qur'an

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the final, literal Word of God, which He revealed directly to Prophet Muhammad through the Archangel Gabriel over a period of twenty-three years. It is divided into thirty equal Juz', or parts, and consists of 114 Surahs, or chapters, varying in length from 3 to 286 verses. The Qur'an provides guidance in all aspects of life and is regarded as Prophet Muhammad's timeless miracle that shall forever remain authentic. Only the original Arabic version is divine. Any translation of the Qur'an is considered only an interpretation, a human endeavor, and not the original Holy Qur'an.







## Selected Qur'anic Chapters

• **The chapter of Al-'Alaq 96: 1-5:** “Read in the Name of your Lord Who created. He created the human from a clot. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught by the pen. He has taught the human that which he knew not.”

**Commentary:** Al-'Alaq, literally 'clinging clot,' is the first revealed chapter of the Qur'an, in which the humble origin of humankind is contrasted with the intellectual faculties and moral and spiritual potential that God placed within it, as proof of the Creator's Infinite Ability. The value and importance of knowledge, while acknowledging its source and creator, is also highlighted from the beginning of the Qur'anic message.

• **The chapter of Al-Fatihah 1: 1-7:** “In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of existence, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful, the Owner (Master) of the Day of Judgment. It is You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help. Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not the path of those who have incurred Your Anger, nor of those who have gone astray.”

**Commentary:** Al-Fatihah, literally the Opening, is a 7-verse Qur'anic chapter described by Prophet Muhammad as the greatest in the entire Qur'an. It establishes the foundations of Islamic belief, worship, and way of life which are detailed in the rest of the Qur'an.



• **The chapter of Al-Ikhlās 112: 1-4:** “Say (O Muhammad): He is Allah, the One God, the Self-Sufficient Master. He does not beget nor is He begotten, and there nothing equal or comparable to Him.”

**Commentary:** Al-Ikhlās, literally sincerity and purity of worship, was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he was asked to define God. The answer was the revelation of this short chapter of the Qur’an, which sums up the concept of Tawhid (Oneness of God) and is considered the essence of the Islamic creed.

# Sunnah

Sunnah, or the Way of Prophet Muhammad, refers to his life example, which comprises whatever he said, did, or approved of. Both the Qur'an and the Sunnah are considered divine revelations in Islam; but, unlike the Qur'an, the Sunnah is not the direct, exact Word of God. The Qur'an and the Sunnah are complementary. The Qur'an principally deals with the basics and the Sunnah gives the details and necessary explanations of the Qur'anic laws and specifies how to live by the dictates of the Qur'an.

## Selected Sayings of Prophet Muhammad

**Reliance:** "When you ask, ask God. When you seek help, seek it from God. Know that if people gather together to benefit you with something, they will not benefit you except with something that God has destined for you. And if they gather together to harm you with something, they will not harm you except with something that God has destined for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried." (Sunan At-Tirmidhy)

**19 Essence:** "Verily, God does not look at your shapes or wealth, but looks at your hearts and deeds." (Sahih Muslim)

**Excellence:** "God loves that when you do something, you do it with excellence." (Al-Mu`jam Al-Awsat by At-Tabarani)

**Mercy:** “Show mercy to those on the earth, and He Who is in the heaven will show mercy to you.” (Sunan At-Tirmidhy)

**Equality:** “Verily, your Lord is One and your father is one (Adam) There is no superiority of the Arab over the non-Arab, or of the non-Arab over the Arab, or of the red over the black, or of the black over the red – except by piety.” (Musnad Ahmad)

**Philanthropy:** “No one of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” (Sahih Al-Bukhary)

**Charity:** “Any Muslim who plants a seedling from which a human, an animal, or a bird eats, it is for him a charitable deed (of ongoing reward) until the Day of Resurrection.” (Sahih Muslim)

**Reform:** “Anyone of you who sees something evil, let them change it with their hand (by taking action); if they cannot, then with their tongue (by speaking out); and if they cannot, then with their heart (by hating it and feeling that it is wrong); and that is the weakest of faith.” (Sahih Muslim)





# Islam's View of the Universe

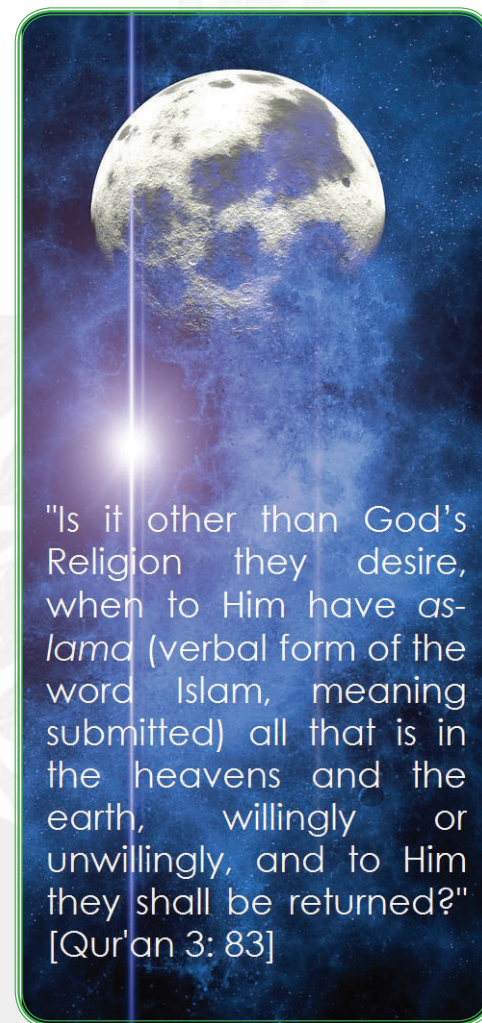
**“Make not mischief on the earth” (Qur’an 2: 11)**

**The universe is Muslim:** The Qur’an describes this entire universe and everything in it as God-glorifying and calls it ‘muslim,’ which in the literal sense of the word, means surrendered to God by submission to His physical laws.

**Trust:** Earth, creation, and nature have been placed in the hands of humankind as a trust, and not as property, to be used for the benefit of humanity and all created beings. It will be accounted for when life is over.

**Ethical link:** There is an ethical link in Islam between faith in God and love and mercy for His creation, stressed and encouraged by many Islamic teachings.

**21 God's book of nature:** Islam regards this universe as a vast book, replete with signs and wonders, which, like the Qur’an, must be read and explored to gain knowledge of God and His Power.



**Quest:** According to the Qur'an, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) read the Signs of God in the stars, the moon, and the sun, and understood that the One Who created them and the heavens and earth was his sole God (see Qur'an 6: 75-79).

**Reflection:** Meditation on God's Creation is an act of worship in Islam known as Tafakkur. Many Qur'anic verses invite humans to ponder their own creation and show inquisitiveness about this entire universe. For example, verses 17-19 of chapter 88 say:

“Do they not look at the camels, how they are created? At the sky, how it is raised? At the mountains, how they are rooted and fixed firm?”

**Cosmic Qur'anic verses:** Cosmic verses, exceeding one thousand, permeate the message of the Qur'an. Abundant references to the universe and its components and phenomena are given in the context of testifying to the unlimited Power, Knowledge, and Wisdom of the Creator and to the divine origin of the Qur'an.



## Islam's View of Life

**“Truly, to God we belong and truly to Him we shall return” (Qur’an 2: 156)**

**Special distinction:** According to the Qur’an, God created humans in the best form with the highest faculties of feeling and intellect, honoring and elevating them above many of His other creations.


**God’s vicegerent:** Every human has both the dignity and the responsibility to act as God’s vicegerent or representative on earth. The role of every individual is one of guardianship and betterment, which requires nurturing and acting according to God’s Qualities (truth, compassion, mercy, knowledge, and justice) and Law in every aspect of life towards every created thing.

**Individual responsibility:** Every human, and no one else, will bear the consequences of their actions, good or evil, during this life journey. Their time, knowledge, wealth, and strength are the most important assets of which they should make the best use for the benefit of themselves and others. On Judgement Day, every individual will be asked by God how they spent each of these.

**Actions with purpose:** The value of an action, as Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) teaches, depends on the intention behind it. Islam aims to instill actions with a meaningful purpose, specifically, with the real purpose of existence which God defined in the Qur’anic verse, “I have not created the jinn and humankind except to worship Me.” [Qur’an 51: 56]







**Life into worship :** Worship in Islam is as broad as life itself. Its concept encompasses not only ritual worship, but also behavior and common daily tasks. It thus allows the whole of one's life to be an act of worship, as long as every action is done sincerely with the pure intention of pleasing God and is consistent with His Way. Prophet Muhammad said, "Smiling in the face of your brother is an act of charity; enjoining good and forbidding evil is an act of charity; showing the way to a person is an act of charity; seeing for (assisting) a weak-eyed person is an act of charity; removing a rock, a thorn, or a bone from the road is an act of charity; and pouring out from your bucket into that of your brother is an act of charity." (Sunan At-Tirmidhy)

**Balance between the physical and spiritual:** Islam neither tortures the body to uplift the soul nor ignores the soul for the body to have pleasure. Rather, it creates a balance that satisfies the various human needs on both levels of existence: physical and spiritual. Prophet Muhammad said, "Your Lord has a right over you. Your self has a right over you, and your wife has a right over you. So give every owner of a right their right." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

**Paradigm:** “Truly to God we belong and truly to Him we shall return” represents an entire way of seeing the world and responding to experiences of loss and fear in this life. Every person belongs to God and every single thing they have is only a gift that is given to them on loan. It does not truly belong to them. Since God owns everything, anything taken away is simply God taking back what is His. A Muslim should say, respond, and react to it with this conviction and with faith in God’s Wisdom, in order to have unquantifiable peace and benefits.

**Inviolability:** Life is given by God, and He is the only One with the right to take it back. Suicide and self-destruction are forbidden. The crime of unjustly killing any human soul is as grievous as killing all humankind. Contrastingly, saving a human soul from being killed or legally retaliating for one unjustly killed (thus sparing any other potential victims) is as good as giving life to all humankind. This inviolability does not stop at human life, but includes animals, which it is forbidden to hunt or kill for sport, rather than for food or another useful purpose.

**Freedom:** Islam aims to bring humanity to God and free it from servitude to anything other than Him; to actually pull it out of the illusion that anyone or anything, independent of God, can benefit or harm, so that each person lives their life and deals with others with the right state of heart and true worship of God. “Let each of you ask his Lord for everything that he needs, even a lace for his shoe when it breaks,” said Prophet Muhammad.



IF ONLY YOU RELY ON GOD WITH DUE RELIANCE, HE WILL  
PROVIDE YOU WITH SUSTENANCE AS HE PROVIDES BIRDS;  
THEY GO FORTH HUNGRY IN THE  
MORNING AND RETURN SATISFIED  
IN THE AFTERNOON.

(HADITH RELATED BY AT-TIRMIDHY)



# Common Islamic Terms

- **Azan:**

Call to Prayer.

- **Hadith:**

A narrative record of the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad.

- **Halal:**

Whatever has been declared by Islamic law as lawful.

- **Haram:**

Whatever has been declared by Islamic law as forbidden.

- **Hijab:**

It literally means a cover or a screen and refers to the dress code of Muslim women.

- **Imam:**

A leader of congregational prayers, who can be any learned Muslim well versed in the Qur`an – as there is no priesthood or hierarchical clergy in Islam.

- **Ka`bah:**

The first and most ancient house of worship built on earth for the worship of God alone, located in Mecca. It was originally founded by the first man and Prophet of God, Adam, and re-constructed by Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael (peace be upon them all).



•**Masjid:**

A Muslim place of worship; a mosque.

•**Muezzin:**

Caller to prayer.

•**Mufti:**

A Muslim scholar qualified to issue an expert legal opinion known as a Fatwa.

•**Qur'an:**

Islam`s Sacred Book. Muslims believe that God revealed it to Prophet Muhammad word by word through the Archangel Gabriel (Jibril, peace be upon him).

•**Sahabah:**

Companions of Prophet Muhammad.

•**Sharia:**

Islamic Law. The Qur`an and Sunnah are the two primary sources of Sharia.

•**Sunnah:**

Actions, sayings, and teachings of Prophet Muhammad.

•**Tawhid:**

Belief in the Oneness of God.

•**Wudu` :**

Ablution.





# Common Islamic Phrases



1-When starting to do something, Muslims say, «**Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim** (In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful).»

2-When greeting someone, Muslims say, «**As-salamu `alaykum** (May Allah's Peace be upon you).» The appropriate response is, «**Wa `alaykum as-salam (May Allah's Peace be upon you too).**»

3-When thanking someone, Muslims say, «**Jazakullah khair** (May Allah reward you with the best).»

4-When planning to do anything in the future, Muslims say, “**Insha'Allah** (If Allah wills or Allah willing)” to show due respect to God by acknowledging that everything happens only by His Will.

5-When something serious or difficult to deal with happens, Muslims say, «**La hawla wala quwwata illa billah** (There is neither might nor power except with Allah).»

6-When praising God or expressing awe at His Power, bounties, or creation, Muslims say, «**Subhan Allah** (Glory be to Allah).»

7-When hearing about a death or sad news, Muslims say, «**Inna Lillahi wa inna ilyahi raji`un** (Truly to Allah we belong and truly to Him we shall return).»



# The Two Annual Islamic Feasts

After worship comes gratitude and celebration. Upon the completion of the two major acts of worship of fasting during Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca, the two festival occasions of Islam are celebrated. The significance of these two Islamic festivals is as follows:



**1-Eid Al-Fitr (the Festival of Breaking the Fast):** This is a three-day feast falling on the first day of the Islamic lunar month of Shawwal. It celebrates the successful completion of the month-long fast of Ramadan and the spiritual renewal and strengthened connection with God. A special charity, known as the Charity of Breaking the Fast, must be paid on this occasion so that the poor and needy can also celebrate.

**2-Eid Al-Adha (the Festival of the Sacrifice):** This is a four-day feast falling on the tenth day of the Islamic lunar month of Dhul-Hijjah. It marks the completion of the pilgrimage to Mecca and honors Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, in submission to God's Command and God's provision of a ram to be sacrificed instead. In commemoration of the occasion, Hajj pilgrims and all other Muslims who can afford it sacrifice a cow, buffalo, camel, goat, or sheep. The meat is divided into three and distributed among family, acquaintances, and the poor.

On the day of Eid, Muslims of all ages dress in their finest clothes and gather early in the morning in mosques and outdoor locations to offer the congregational Eid Prayer. After a short sermon, they exchange greetings and gifts before dispersing to enjoy visits with family and friends.

# An Overview Of Islam

designed by Reham Badr

As God is All-Knowing and Changeless, and human nature and needs are basically the same at all times, Islam believes that God's Message is the same for all humanity. Islam represents itself as a universal and perpetual message, preached not only by Prophet Muhammad, but by all the prophets of God before Muhammad, whose true followers were essentially Muslims, that is, they surrendered to God alone.

This booklet gives an overview of the universal message of Islam and its main components.



(+2)0229705165

@ <http://www.ahlan-group.com>

f /Ahlan.Explore

✉ [info@ahlan-group.com](mailto:info@ahlan-group.com)