

An Introduction to

Islam

The Universal Message of

Brotherhood, Equality, Freedom, Love, and Peace

Islam considers the entire World population as members of one family:

“O mankind! We have created you from one pair of male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most honored of you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous of you. Allah is All-Knowing, Aware.” Quran 49:13

“Those whose hearts are enlightened with love and kindness and have placed their trust in God are all like members of one body. Any time a member of this body is inflicted with pain, the remaining members can not rest in peace.”

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

Islam, as a religion, means peace, purity, obedience, submission and commitment to one God. Islam is the continuation and culmination of the same message that was revealed to the earlier Prophets of God:

“Say (O Muhammad): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants, and in (Scriptures) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord: we do not differentiate between any one of them, and to God we surrender.” Quran 3:84

Islam, the Way of Life

Islam offers a monotheistic view of life and definite guidelines for mankind to follow in all walks of life. It offers comprehensive codes of conduct and behavior, dealing with social, economic, political, moral, and spiritual aspects of life. Mankind is given basic guidelines to lead a purposeful life, to develop self-esteem, and to interact with others in civilized and equitable ways. Islam defines the purpose of life on this earth, the steps man has to take to find the right path, to excel in his endeavors, to make a difference on this earth, and to achieve enlightenment.

The Holy Quran is the word of God as it was revealed to the Messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It is the final chapter of the earlier Holy Books. This final message is the Criterion, the Guideline to differentiate between light and darkness and right and wrong. It is a blueprint for a new *Nation under God*.

The **Love of God** is the fundamental aspect of Islam. This love is the dominant factor in the lives of all Muslims and is reflected in the following **Pillars of Islam**:

Declaration of Faith (Shahada): To testify that there is no one worthy of worship except the Almighty God and Muhammad is His Messenger. (64:8, 11, 12)

Prayers (Salat): Praying five times a day is an enlightenment and empowering experience for the devout Muslims. This is a privilege bestowed upon the faithful by God to help them remain in the righteous path. (2:153; 11:115; 17:78; 29:54)

Financial Commitment (Zakat): This is a sacred commitment to God to financially help the needy, to support and contribute to the welfare of the entire community. (2:227)

Fasting (Sawn): It is written for all Muslims to refrain from eating and drinking from dawn to dusk during the holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan is the month of worship and adherence to all the Quranic teachings. (2:183-185)

Pilgrimage (Hajj): All Muslims are required to perform the Pilgrimage to the Holy House of Ka'ba in Mecca at least once in their lifetime, if they can afford it. This endeavor emphasizes the diversity in Islam, as the pilgrims from all over the World gather to worship One God. The Ka'ba was the first place of worship built, for people by Prophet Abraham. (3:96)

Iman (Islamic Concept of Faith)

Muslims believe in one God, His Angels and His Messengers, the Scriptures, the Day of Judgment, the Hereafter, and Accountability by all mankind for their words and actions. Iman is the total devotion and believing in Truth wholeheartedly such that it shall reflect in our thoughts, our words, and our deeds. There is no such thing as *blind faith* in Islam. (2:3-4; 2:285; 17:36)

Helping the Needy is considered an Act of Worship: *“It is not righteousness for you to turn your faces to the East and the West; But righteousness is he who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Scripture and the Prophets; and gives away his wealth, that is dear to him, to kinsfolk, orphans, the needy, the wayfarer, to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observes proper worship and pay Zakat. And those who keep their promise when they make one, and are patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are those who are sincere . . .”* 2:117

The Life of the Prophet Muhammad

He was born in the year 570 AD in the city of Mecca. He lost his father before he was born. He lost his mother when he was 6 years old. He was a self made person. Living such a righteous life, he was known as Muhammad the Truthful. At the age of forty he was chosen by God to lead humanity to the righteous path and deliver God's final message, the Holy Quran. Being the foremost role model for all Muslims, he devoted his entire life to spreading the word of Allah.

Islamic Values

Islam sets very high standards for mankind as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad.

Love and Friendship

“Say (O’ Muhammad to mankind) if you love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” 3:31

“Among His signs is that: he created for you spouses from yourselves that you might find tranquility in them, and he ordained between you love and mercy. Herein are signs for folks who reflect.” 30:21

Equality and Brotherhood

“O mankind! We have created you from one pair of male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another . . .” 49:13

“Believers merely form a brotherhood, therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah so you may receive mercy.” 49:10

Peace and Freedom

“And if they (enemy) incline to peace, then incline to it too, and trust in Allah . . .” 8:61

“The means for insight have now come unto you from your God. Whoever, therefore, chooses to see does so for his own good; and whoever chooses to remain blind, does so to his hurt . . .” 6:104

Truth and Justice

“O you who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that you deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty . . .” 5:8

The Most Commonly Asked Questions:

How does Islam treat the followers of other religions? *“Those who believe, including those who are Jews, Christians, and Saabean who believe in Allah and the Last Day and engage in good deeds, surely will be rewarded by their Lord, and no fear, or sadness shall come upon them.” 2:62*

What is the Value of Students and Scientists? *“. . . Allah will exalt those among you who believe, as well as those who are given knowledge, to high ranks . . .”58:11*

What is Jihad? Jihad Does NOT Mean Holy War, it literally means *Striving*. It is the total commitment to the righteous path and the utilization of everything in your power and your possession toward improving the society, which happens to be the cause of Allah. Jihad also means Self Defense, not Aggression: *“Defend yourself in the cause of Allah against those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression, for indeed God does not love the aggressors.” 2:190*

Status of Women in Islam: Men and women enjoy equal responsibility before God. Equality is one of the basic principles of Islam. Muslims are strongly forbidden to engage in any discrimination based on race, gender, financial status or national origin: “*The Believers, men and women, are protectors one of another; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong . . .*” 9:71 It is incumbent upon all Muslims to consult each other before making decisions; therefore, it is equally important that married couples engage in consultation to ensure the right decisions.

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| <p>To obtain additional copies write to: Masood Behshid P.O. Box 42005, Los Angeles, CA 90042</p> |
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