

Definition

"Islam" means "surrender" or "submission". "Salam" (which means "peace") is the root word of "Islam". In a religious context the word "Islam" means "the surrendering of one's will (without compulsion) to the true will of God in an effort to achieve peace".

"Muslim" means "anyone or anything that surrenders itself to the true will of God".

Beliefs

Islam traces its roots through Prophet Abraham and back to the first humans Adam and Eve.

To become Muslim, a person of any race or culture must say a simple statement, the shahadah, that bears witness to the belief in the One God and that Muhammad is a prophet of God.

Muslims believe that God is one and incomparable and the purpose of existence is to worship God. The Islamic concept of God is that He is loving, merciful and compassionate. Islam also teaches that He is just and swift in punishment. However, Allah once said to Muhammad, "My mercy prevails over my wrath". So Islam teaches a balance between fear and hope, protecting one from both complacency and despair.

Muslims believe that God has revealed 99 of His names, or attributes, in the Qur'an. It is through these names that one can come to know the Creator. A few of these names are the All-Merciful, the All-Knower, the Protector, the Provider, the Near, the First, the Last, the Hidden and the Source of All Peace. Muslims neither worship Muhammad nor pray through him. Muslims solely worship the Unseen and Omniscient Creator, Allah.

Muslims accept the original unaltered Torah (as revealed to Moses) and the original unaltered Bible (as revealed to Jesus) since they were revealed by God. But none of these scriptures exist today in their original form or in their entirety. Therefore, Muslims follow the subsequent, final and preserved revelation of God, the Qur'an.

Five pillars of practice in Islam.

These practices must be undertaken with the best of effort in order to be considered a true Muslim:

- Testimony: Declaration of faith in One God and that Muhammad is a prophet of God.
- Prayer: Formal prayer five times a day.

- Alms giving: Poor-due "tax" - 2.5% of one's excess wealth given to the needy once a year.
- Pilgrimage: Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once, if physically and financially able.
- Fasting: Fasting during the daylight hours in the month of Ramadan.

Six articles of faith in Islam.

These are the basic beliefs that one must have in order to be considered a true Muslim. They are belief in:

- God: belied in the One God.
- Prophets: those chosen by God to be his messengers.
- Revelation: the original scriptures revealed to Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad.
- Angels: the belief in angels is fundamental to the faith
- Resurrection and Judgement: Muslims believe all mankind will be judged on their good and bad deeds. Belief in the "Day of Resurrection", is also core and will involve bodily resurrection
- Predestination: For Muslims, everything in the world that occurs, good or bad, has been preordained and nothing can happen unless permitted by God. According to Muslim theologians, although events are pre-ordained, man possesses free will in that he or she has the faculty to choose between right and wrong, and is thus responsible for his actions.