

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 Judgement and individual accountability for actions; in the Almighty'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, Job, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Elias, Jonah, John the Baptist, and Jesus, peace be upon them. But the Almighty's final message to man, a reconfirmation of the eternal message and a summing-up of all that has gone before, was revealed to the Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the angel Gabriel (peace be upon him).

#### **How does someone become a Muslim?**

Simply by saying and believing that there is no god apart from the Almighty and Muhammad is the Messenger of the Almighty. By this declaration, the believer announces his or her faith in all the Almighty's messengers, and the scriptures they brought. After this declaration, he needs to practise on the different tenets of the faith in order to become a complete believer.

#### **Why does Islam often seem strange?**

Islam may seem exotic or even extreme in the modern world. Perhaps this is because religion does not dominate everyday life in the West today, whereas Muslims have religion always uppermost in their minds, and make no division between secular and sacred. They believe that the Divine Law, the Shari'ah, should be taken very seriously, which is why issues related to religion are still so important.

#### **Do Islam and Christianity have different origins?**

No. Together with Judaism, they go back to the messenger and patriarch Abraham, and their three prophets are directly descended from his sons.

Muhammad (peace be upon him) is from the elder son Ishmael (peace be upon him), while Moses (peace be upon him) and Jesus (peace be upon him) are from the younger son Isaac. Abraham (peace be upon him) established the settlement which today is the city of Mecca, and built the Ka'bah towards which all Muslims turn when they pray.

#### **What is the Ka'bah?**

The Ka'bah is the place of worship which the Almighty commanded Abraham (peace be upon him) and Ishmael (peace be upon him) to build over four thousand years ago. The Almighty commanded Abraham (peace be upon him) to summon all mankind to visit this place. This practice continues till today when millions of Muslims from all around the globe go to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage.

The Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "He who performs the pilgrimage and commits no wicked or sinful deed during it and does not disobey the Almighty, will return from it as pure and guiltless as he was at the time of his birth."

It is regarding this place that Malcolm X said, "Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and such overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practised by people of all colours and races here in this ancient holy land, the home of Abraham and all the other Prophets of Holy Scriptures. For the past week I have been truly speechless and spell bound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colours."

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## **WHAT IS ISLAM?**

**Who are Muslims?**

**What do they believe?**

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



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### What is Islam?

Islam is not a new religion, but the same truth that the Almighty revealed through all His prophets to every nation. For a fifth of the world's population, Islam is both a religion and a complete way of life. Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy, and forgiveness, and the majority have nothing to do with the extremely grave incidents which have come to be associated with their faith.

Islam means to achieve peace through wholly submitting oneself to the Almighty and accepting His guidance. The term Islam derives from the three-letter Arabic root, S (س), L (ل) and M (م) which means to submit. Commonly, Islam refers to the monotheistic religion revealed to the Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him), son of Abdullah, between 610 and 632 of the Gregorian calendar.

'Mohammedanism' is thus a misnomer because it suggests that Muslims worship Muhammad rather than the Almighty. 'Allah' is the Arabic name for the Almighty, which is used by all Muslims.

The name Islam was instituted by the Qur'an, the sacred scripture revealed to the Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him). For believers, Islam is not a new religion. Rather, it represents the same message of the Almighty's Oneness, a theme found in earlier monotheistic religions from Adam (peace be upon him) to Jesus (peace be upon him).

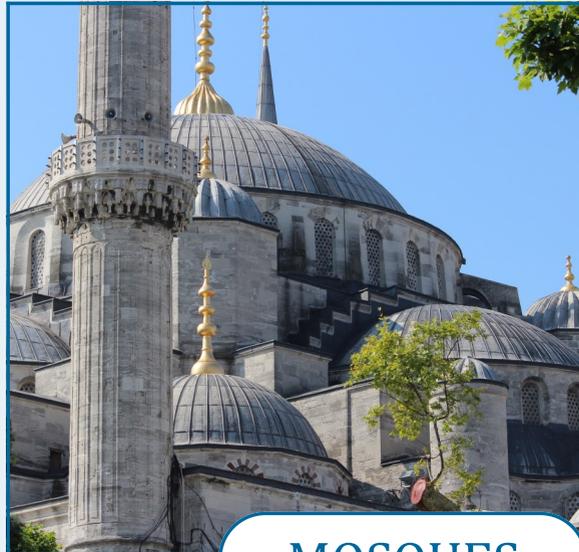
Though Islam can be described as a religion, it is viewed by its adherents in much broader terms. It's not just visiting the mosque once a week. Beyond belief in specific doctrines and performance of important ritual acts, Islam is practiced as a complete and natural way of life, designed to

bring the Almighty into the centre of one's life. Essentially, Islam is a world view, focused on belief in the One Almighty and commitment to His commandments.

### What is the Essence of Islam?

The Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him) mentioned the summary of the core of Islam as follows:

"Submission means that you should bear witness that there is no god but the Almighty and that Muhammad is the Almighty's messenger, that you



## MOSQUES

There are mosques all over the world where Muslims pray. This is the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey.

should perform the prayer, pay the obligatory charity, fast during the month of Ramadan, and make the pilgrimage to the Kabah in Mecca, if you have the means to go there." Faith means that you believe in the Almighty, His angels, His books,

His messengers, the Last Day, that you believe in pre-destination, both good and evil is from the Almighty and to believe in resurrection. You should worship the Almighty as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you.

### The Messengers

To believe in anyone as an apostle (messenger), simply means to hold every word of his as true, to regard his teachings and guidance to be the teachings and guidance of the Almighty, and to decide, once and for all, to lead one's life according to the precepts he taught.

Since the beginning of creation, the Almighty sent down guidance through selected people to convey the message to their fellow men. These chosen people are called Prophets or Messengers. The chain of prophethood began with Adam, then included Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Jesus, (peace be upon them all). These are but to name a few. Islam accepts all of them as Messengers. This chain then ended with the last and final messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The message of all the Prophets is one and the same. They all invited the people of their time to worship the Almighty alone. It was necessary to send prophets at different times to bring back straying human beings from deviation to the straight path.

### Who are Muslims?

One billion people from a vast range of races, nationalities and cultures across the globe - from the Fiji Islands in the east to Alaska in the west - are united by their common Islamic faith. The world's largest Muslim community is in Indonesia. Substantial parts of Asia and many countries of Africa are Muslim, while significant minorities are to be found in the Soviet Union, China, North and South America, and Europe.