

Basic Belief

The message of Islam establishes worship centred on five basic obligations:

- 1 The utterance of the testimony that there is no deity worthy of worship but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. This is the basis of Islam in its entirety.
- 2 The establishment of the prayer by the individual and the community.
- 3 The payment of Zakat, an annual financial obligation paid by Muslims on specific wealth or capital they possess.
- 4 Fasting during the month of Ramadan.
- 5 The pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) once in a lifetime for those with the means to do so.



Islam Explained

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The Arabic word Islam means voluntary submission to the will of God and obedience to His commands. Allah is the Arabic word for the name of God.

The message of all the prophets and messengers is one and the same. They urged the people of their time to obey and worship God alone and none other.

Whenever the teachings of a prophet were distorted by people, God sent another prophet to bring human beings back to the straight path.

The Qur'an

The Qur'an is the final book of revelation from God, sent down to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh*) through the angel Gabriel. Every word of the Qur'an is the word of God. The Qur'an is unrivalled in its recording and preservation. The Qur'an has remained unchanged for over fourteen hundred years, a belief also upheld by non-Muslim scholars. Muslims believe the Qur'an is the last and final revelation to mankind. It covers all aspects of human life and its relation to the afterlife.

The Hadith

The Hadith is the collection of sayings, actions and tacit approvals of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It explains the Qur'an and how to practice it. The Hadith were preserved and recorded by the Prophet's companions and then transmitted to succeeding generations.

Marriage and Family

Marriage is the basis of family life in Islam. It is a solemn yet simple contract between a man and a woman. Marriages are arranged with the consent of the couple, as required by Islamic law.

Islam censures both premarital and extramarital sex and discourages open mixing between sexes. Men and women are unambiguously equal in the sight of God and in marriage play their part in their respective roles.

Dress & Attire

Muslims must cover their bodies with decency. When it comes to dressing, simplicity and modesty are encouraged. No particular dress is specified, however, dress that is suggestive, transparent or skin-tight may send the wrong signals to others, signals that are contrary to Islam's teachings.

Pure silk and gold are considered extravagant for men and are only worn by women.

Social Manners

Islam teaches decency, humility and good manners. Muslims greet each other by saying: as-salamu alaykum (peace be upon you) and the reply is: wa-alaykum as-salam (and peace be upon you).

Maintaining promises, truthfulness, justice, fair-play, helping the poor and needy, respect for parents, teachers and elders, love for children, and good relations with neighbours and relatives are the most valued virtues of a Muslim. Islam condemns enmity, hatred, backbiting, slander, blasphemy, ridicule, use of offensive names, suspicion and arrogance.

Conclusion

Islam comes from the root word 'sa-la-ma' meaning peace. When our individual and collective lives are in harmony with nature and with the will of the Creator, peace is inevitable. Islam, as a way of life, offers solutions to the problems of the human race and provides hope for the present and future. Our need today is to practice it faithfully.

THE CHAIN OF REVELATION



*(pbuh) 'peace be upon him' is a conventionally honorific phrase that is said after the mention of Prophets names. An extended variant 'peace & blessings be upon him' is a phrase used after mentioning the name of Prophet Muhammad to show respect and honour to him.