

ISLAM

"Islam" is the Arabic word for **submission** to the will of God (Allah), the name of the religion **originating** in Arabia during the 7th century through the Prophet Mohammed. Followers of Islam are known as Muslims, or Moslems, and their religion **embraces** every aspect of life.

Beliefs

Muslims believe that individuals, societies, and governments should all be **obedient** to the will of Allah as it is set forth in the Koran, which they regard as the word of Allah revealed to his messenger, Mohammed.

The Koran

The Koran teaches that Allah is one and has no partners. He is the creator of all things, and holds absolute power. All persons should commit themselves to lives of grateful and praise-giving obedience to Allah, for on the day of **resurrection** they will be judged. Those who have obeyed Allah's commandments will **dwell** forever in paradise, but those who have sinned against Allah and not **repented** will be **condemned** eternally to the fires of hell. Since the beginning of creation Allah has sent prophets, including Moses and Jesus, to provide **guidance** necessary for the **attainment** of eternal **reward**, a **succession** culminating in the **revelation** to Mohammed of the perfect will of Allah.

Shari'a

Shari'a is the sacred law of Islam, and **applies** to all aspects of life, not just religious practices. It describes the Islamic way of life, and **prescribes** the way for a Muslim to fulfil the commands of Allah and reach heaven. There is an annual cycle of festivals, including *Hijra*, the beginning of the Islamic year, and *Ramadan*, the month during which Muslims fast during the daylight hours. There is no organized **priesthood**, but great respect is accorded the *Hashim* family, **descendants** of Mohammed, and other publicly **acknowledged** holy men, **scholars**, and teachers, such as *mullahs* and *ayatollahs*.

Groupings

There are two basic groups within Islam. *Sunni* Muslims are in the majority, and they recognize the first four **caliphs** as Mohammed's **legitimate successors**. The *Shiites* comprise the largest minority group, and regard the *Imam* as the principal religious authority. There are over 700 million Muslims throughout the world.

Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. It is during this month that Muslims observe the Fast of *Ramadan*. Dates for *Ramadan* 2006 (or the Islamic year of 1427) are **24 September thru 23 October**.

Fasting - Ramazan

Fasting is one of the Five **Pillars** of the religion of Islam and one of the highest forms of Islamic worship. **Abstinence** from earthly pleasures and **curbing** evil intentions and **desires** is regarded as an act of obedience and submission to God as well as **atonement** for sins, errors, and mistakes. Called *Ramadan* (or *Ramazan*), Muslims fast during this holy month from the moment when it first starts to get light until sunset. Muslims fast as an act of faith and worship towards Allah, seeking to **suppress** their desires and increase their spiritual **piety**. Fasting together as a worldwide community - *Ummah* - **affirms** the brotherhood and equality of man before Allah.

Fasting helps one to experience how a hungry person feels and what it is like to have an empty stomach. It teaches one to share the sufferings of the less **fortunate**. Muslims believe that fasting leads one to **appreciate** the **bounties** of Allah, which are usually taken for granted - until they are missed!

Throughout the day Muslims are **encouraged** to go out of their way to help the needy, both financially and emotionally. Some believe that a reward earned during this month is multiplied 70 times and more. For this reason, Ramadan is also known as the month of charity and generosity.

To a Muslim, fasting not only means **abstaining** from food, but also **refraining** from all **vice** and evils committed **consciously** or unconsciously. It is believed that if one volunteers to refrain from

lawful foods and sex, they will be in a better position to avoid unlawful things and acts during the rest of the year.

After 30 days of fasting, the end of the month of *Ramadan* is observed with a day of celebration, called *Eid-ul-Fitr*. On this day, Muslims gather in one place to offer a prayer of thanks. It is traditional to wear new clothes, visit friends and relatives, exchange gifts, eat **delicious dishes** prepared for this **occasion**, and wait **patiently** for the next year

The Five Pillars of Islam are:

1. **Reciting** the two-fold **Creed** (*shahada*) (profession of faith) - 'There is no God but Allah' and 'Muhammad is his prophet' (or 'Muhammad is the Messenger of God').
2. Prayer (*salat*) - At five set-times a day while facing towards the city of Mecca.
3. Alms-giving (*sakat*) (*zakat* - means **'purification'**, an act of worship) - Both obligatory and voluntary giving to the poor.
4. Fasting (*saum*) - Especially during the 'holy' month of *Ramadan*.
5. Pilgrimage (*hajj*) - At least once in a lifetime - to Mecca, Saudi Arabia if at all possible, known as *The Hajj*.

The pilgrims who came to Mecca should walk around *Ka'aba* ("Cube") seven times, kissing and touching the Black Stone. The Black Stone was a **meteorite** to which great religious **significance** was attached even before Muhammad was born. Muhammad simply adopted this **pagan** practice and it became the "Islamic" pilgrimage of "*Hajj*" - one of the pillars of Islam today.



The Kaa'ba



No guarantee

While a Muslim may observe each of these pillars there is still no guarantee of salvation. Islam is based on a religion of self-**righteousness**. Muslims often think about the Day of Judgement where they believe Allah (or an angel) will take a balance and weigh each person's **deeds**. His hope is that his good deeds will outweigh his bad deeds, but even then Allah's judgement is based **solely** on Allah's will - not on justice.

Another **interpretation** is that man's deeds are written in a book and on the Day of Judgement Allah will open the book and the sum of a man's account will be placed in either his right or left hand. The only sure way to paradise is to die as a **martyr** during an Islamic Holy War, *Jihad*.

Muhammad

Muhammad is Islam's highest prophet, but the Qur'an also speaks often of Jesus, also known as *Isa*. The Qur'an also refers to Jesus as *Kalimat Allah*, which means The Word of God. Muslims do not believe in Jesus death on the cross, His resurrection and in His **deity**. Although Jesus is the second highest prophet in Islam, the *Isa* of the Qur'an is only one prophet among 124,000.

The Law

Islam **incorporates** rules for every aspect of life. Within the Qur'an and the *Hadith's* there is instruction for every detail of a Muslim's daily life. The *Shari'a* - the sacred law of Islam, applies to all aspects of life, not just religious practices. It describes the Islamic way of life, and prescribes the way for a Muslim to fulfil the commands of God and reach heaven.

Mecca, Saudi Arabia

Countless millions of Muslims, men and women from the four corners of the earth, have made the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the **birthplace** of Islam. In carrying out this journey they fulfil one of the five "pillars" of Islam (or central religious duties of a believer). The Prophet Mohammed said, "He who performs the *Hajj* with no **obscenity** or evil practices will come out as a newly born baby free from all sins". For the Muslims, the pilgrimage is therefore much more than something to be done. It is a **sacred** and **revered** journey. Yet without it they have less chance of getting into paradise.

Preparation

Before setting out a pilgrim should **redress** all wrongs, pay all **debts** and plan to have enough **funds** for his own journey and for the **maintenance** of his family while he is away. Certain Governments even **allocate** funds to assist pilgrims. Many religious **rites** are performed according to the Qur'an and tradition. The pictures we usually see are of a great **throng** of humanity circling the *Kaa'ba* (a cubical structure made of stone). Their circling of the *Kaa'ba*, the symbol of God's **oneness**, implies that all human activity must have God at its centre. It also symbolizes the unity of God and man. It is circled seven times and a prayer is **recited** each time round. According to some traditions, the *Kaa'ba* is the sole **remnant** of the original structure built by Abraham and Ishmael. While making their **circuits** pilgrims may kiss or touch the black stone. Perhaps the single most important reason for kissing the stone is that Mohammed did so.

Stoning of Satan

Another rite is 'The Stoning of Satan'. According to the Qur'an, Satan tempted Abraham and Ishmael three times to stop the sacrifice. Each time they responded by throwing stones at Satan. As pilgrims throw seven **pebbles** at the three pillars, they remember the story of Satan's attempt to **persuade** Abraham to **disregard** God's command to sacrifice Ishmael. Throwing the pebbles is symbolic of a humans' attempt to cast away evil and vice, the number seven symbolising infinity.

Praying Correctly

Muslims are supposed to pray five times a day at specific times while facing the direction of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Muslim prayer is formal and ritualistic yet many Muslims do make every effort to be **sincere** and upright in performing their prayers. Muslim prayer is characterised by rules of respect and attitudes of politeness towards Allah. (Please note that all Arab speakers use this word for God — whether Christian or Muslim, though their ideas of God are significantly different.)

“Praying correctly and at the **appropriate** time is one of the greatest indications of (Muslim) faith and a great sign of true religion”. 1. Prayer is to be done with heart and body cleanliness, with cleanness of clothing and in a ceremonially clean place. The washing of the hands, nose, face, forearms, ears, and feet in preparation for Muslim prayer is important.

The words

Muslims place very strong emphasis on the exact **postures** and the words of their prayers (which are always in Arabic). Almost all Muslim prayer is **concerned** with reciting specific phrases from memory. In the course of the five regular prayer times a Muslim will **prostrate** himself before Allah a total of 34 times and he will repeat the following phrases:

“Allah is greater”

“Praised be my mighty Lord”

“Allah hears the one who praises him”

He will also recite the “*Al-Fatiha*” or another text from the Qur’an 17 times, the “*Shadada*” (Islamic creed), and the greeting of peace to all Muslims.



Vocabulary:

Page 1:

Submission	underkastelse
Originating	grundlæggende
Embraces	omfatte
Obedient	lydig
Resurrection	genoplivelse/opstandelse
Dwell	opholde sig ved/bo
Repented	angret/fortruet

Condemned	fordømme/dome
Guidance	vejledning
Attainment	evne/talent
Reward	belønning
Succession	efterfølgere
Revelation	åbenbaring
Applies	anvendes
Prescribes	hævde
Priesthood	præsteskab/gejstlighed
Descendant	efterkommere

Page 2:

Acknowledged	anerkendte
Scholar	videnskabsmænd
Caliphs	Kalif (gejstlige overhoveder I den muslimske verden)
Legitimate	lovlig
Successors	efterfølgere
Pillars	søjler
Abstinence	afholdenhed
Curbing	styre/kontrollere
Desires	lyster/begær
Atonement	soning
Suppress	undertrykke
Piety	fromhed

Affirms	erklære/bekræfte
Fortunate	lykkelig/heldig
Appreciate	værdsætte
Bounties	gavmildhed
Encouraged	opmuntre

Page 3:

Abstaining	afholde sig fra
Refraining	lade være med
Vice	fejl
Consciously	bevidst
Delicious	lækker
Dishes	ret (mad)
Occasion	anledning
Patiently	tålmodigt
Creed	trosbekendelse
Purification	renselse (for synd)
Meteorite	meteorsten
Significance	vigtighed
Pagan	hedensk

Page 4:

Righteousness	retfærdighed
Deeds	gerning

Solely	udelukkende
Interpretation	forklaring/fortolkning
Martyr	martyr/offer (person, der lider døden for en sag)
Deity	guddommelighed
Incorporates	forbindes med
Countless	utallig
Birthplace	fødested
Obscenity	uanstændighed
Sacred	hellig
Revered	æret

Page 5:

Redress	genoprette, råde bod på
Debts	gæld
Funds	kapital
Maintenance	kostpenge
Allocate	tildele/bevilige
Rite	ceremoni
Throng	skare/folk
Oneness	enhed
Recited	fremsagt
Remnant	rest/levning
Circuits	rundrejser
Rite	ceremoni

Pebbles	småsten
Persuade	overtale/overbevise
Disregard	ligegyldighed
Effort	anstrengelse
Sincere	oprigtig
Appropriate	passende

Page 6:

Postures	attitude
Concerned	angående
Prostrate	bøje sig dybt/kaste sig i støvet