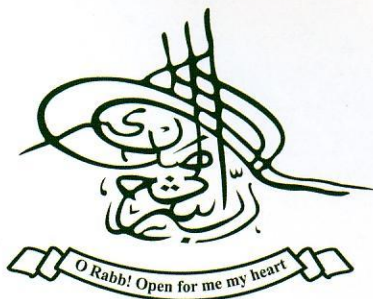


Bismillah-hir-Rahman-nir-Raheem
In the name of Allah (God), the Compassionate, the Merciful



Please accept our greetings of PEACE.

There are hundreds of immigrants entering this beautiful country of ours every day from all around the globe who belong to different religions which include Muslims. The impression Americans have about Islam and Muslims is mostly through the media, which has treated Muslims rather unfairly. They have been labeled as terrorists, fundamentalists and so forth. As a matter of fact, this image is far from the truth.

At the Institute of Islamic Knowledge we consider it our responsibility to inform the residents of North America about Muslims and their religion ISLAM just as we are obligated to tell Muslims around the world about America at large and United States in particular. We would like to enlighten the reader about some of the basics of Islam with the intention of building a bridge between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. This will create much better understanding and a sense of harmony between our community members, enabling all of us to live and work together with integrity and honesty in a peaceful atmosphere.

Islam is an Arabic word, which not only means submission (to God) but also means PEACE. It is our aim to clarify our position and dispel any false impression that exists about Islam and Muslims. We hope that by informing the reader about Islam, our daily interaction with each other will become more productive for our communities of God-Loving and God-Fearing people.

*May God Almighty bless you for taking the time
to read this booklet.*

*Your Well Wisher
Muhammad Farooq-i-Azam Malik
Chairman, Board of Trustees*

AT A GLANCE

ISLAM

What is **Islam**?
Is Islam a new **Religion**?
What is the distinctive **Feature** of Islam?
How does Islam relate to **Mankind**?

MUSLIMS

Who are the **Muslims**?
What are the **Pillars of Faith**?
Why Muslims use the word '**Allah**' instead of '**God**'?
How does someone become a **Muslim**?

PROPHETHOOD

What is **Prophethood** in Islam?
Who is **Muhammad**?
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How Islam views **Judaism** and **Christianity**?
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What is the **Ka'bah**?

COMMUNITY

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What is **Marriage** in Islam?
Why is **More than One Wife** permitted in Islam?
What does Islam say about **Parents and the Elderly**?
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What does Islam say about **Intoxicants and Gambling**?
What Islam say about **Business Interaction**?

CONCEPTS

What is the concept of **God** in Islam?
What is the concept of **Life** in Islam?
What is the concept of **Life after Death** in Islam?
What is the concept of **Sin** in Islam?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah (God), the
Compassionate, the Merciful

What is Islam?

Islam is an Arabic word which means peace, submission and obedience. It also means acceptance and commitment to abide by the teachings and guidance of God. One of the beautiful names of God is *As-Salâm* (The Peace). *Islam* also means to be at peace with God and His creatures. Being at peace with God implies complete submission to His will, Who is the source of all purity and goodness. Being at peace with His creatures implies living in peace within one's self, with other people and with the environment. Thus, *Islam* is a total system of living in peace. *Islam* is the same message and guidance which God revealed through all His Prophets to every people throughout the history of mankind. One who follows *Islam* is called a Muslim (an Arabic word which means, the one who submits to the will of God).

Is Islam a new Religion?

No! It is the same religion which was preached by all the prophets and is further elaborated through the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. God ordered him:

"Say: We believe in Allah and in that which was revealed to us, and in that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and in that

which was given to Moses and to Jesus and to other Prophets from their God; we make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we are Muslims."

Al-Qur'an 3:84

The religion of *Islam* is as old as humanity itself. It was in fact the religion of every prophet of God, who appeared in any part of the world. According to the *Qur'an*, *Islam* was the religion of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Jesus, peace be upon them all. However, it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, in its comprehensive, complete and final form.

What is the distinctive Feature of Islam?

The major characteristic of *Islam* is that through believing in all the Prophets and God's message revealed to each of them; it lays down the basis of peace and harmony among the people of the world.

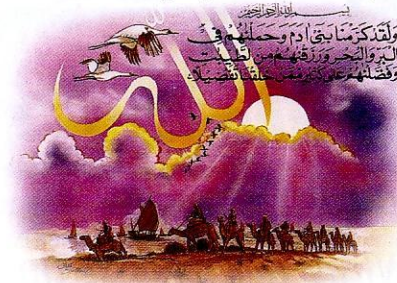
The great mission of *Islam* is not only to preach the above-mentioned truth, but also to correct those errors which had crept into the prevailing religions. Most important of all, *Islam* gathers in one book all those truths which were contained in earlier Divine revelations granted to previous Prophets for the guidance of mankind, and to meet all the spiritual and moral requirements of an ever-advancing humanity.

Muslims are encouraged to cooperate with all those who are faithful and God-conscious people, namely those who received scriptures (Torah, Psalms and Gospel) through His

Prophets. Christians and Jews are called the "People of the Book," and their Prophets and Scriptures are honored by the Muslims.

How Islam relates to Mankind?

Islam teaches that diversity among human beings is a sign of God's mercy and no one has superiority based on one's color, language or nationality.



Islam promotes the brotherhood of man, toleration of one another, sympathy for the unfortunate and cooperation for general human happiness. If there is any one religion in the world which has strove to eliminate racism, it is *Islam*. There is no distinction between men on account of mere birth in a particular family, particular profession, particular race or particular country, and that all human beings are equal. God created people of different colors, nationalities, languages and ethnic origins so that we may recognize one another.

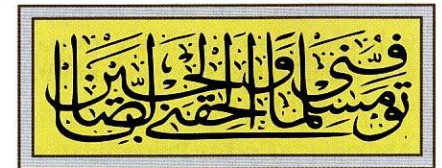
In *Islam*, superiority is based on the love and fear of God, doing good deeds, and maintaining high moral and spiritual qualities. In many respects *Islam* has regulated the relationships between men regardless of creeds, races or colors. One of the aims of *Islam* is to emphasize the oneness of humanity as a whole

and also the Oneness of the Creator of mankind and of all beings. *Islam* pronounces loudly, clearly, and with great emphasis that all people are, by nature, equal in all respects and that no one is better or superior to anyone else except through piety.

Who are the Muslims?

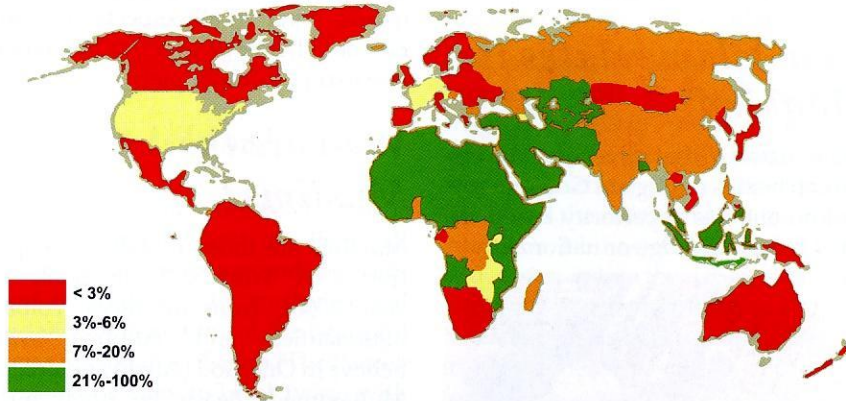
Muslims are those 1.9 billion people (per CIA World's Facts Book in year 2000), from all races, colors, nationalities and cultures who believe in One God (Allah) and accept Muhammad, peace be upon him, as the last Prophet. The majority of Muslims live in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Bosnia and other parts of the continents of Asia and Africa. Significant minorities are in India, China, Russia, Europe, North America (over 9.993 million in the USA) and South America.

A Muslim is a person who freely and willingly accepts the supreme power of God and strives to organize his or her life in accordance with His commandments. Hence a Muslim is any person anywhere in the world whose obedience, allegiance, and loyalty are to the One and Only God (Allah), the Creator of the Universe, and as such submits to the Divine Laws following the *Sunnah* (traditions) of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.



My Lord! Let me die as a Muslim and count me among the righteous

Muslim Population by COUNTRY



What are the Pillars of Imaan (Faith)?

Muslims believe in:

- One and Only God (Allah) with all His unique attributes;
- Angels created by Him;
- All the Holy Books originally revealed to the different Prophets, including the Torah, Psalms, Gospel (Bible) and the Qur'an;
- All the Prophets through whom God sent His Message to mankind including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad, peace be upon them all;
- The Day of Judgment (the Day of Resurrection - Life after Death) and individual's accountability (reward and punishment) for good and bad deeds / actions; and
- Al-Qadar (God's Pre-estimation), which means God knows everything. He knows what has happened and

what will happen.

Why Muslims use the word 'Allah' instead of 'God'?

The word 'Allah' is the combination of two Arabic words 'AL Ilâh' which means 'The God'; it is the proper name of the only Supreme Being Who exists necessarily by Himself. This word comprises all the attributes of perfection. This word is neither feminine nor plural and has never been applied to any other being. This word has no corresponding word in English or in any other language of the world. Allah is the One and Only True God's personal name. Nothing or no one else can be called Allah. That is why Muslims use the word Allah, His personal name, and not God.

It is interesting to note that Allah is also used for God in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, peace be upon him, and that all Arab Jews and Christians also use the word Allah for God.

How can someone become a Muslim?

Anyone who believes in One God and does not consider any other deity worthy of worship besides Him, all he or she has to do is to affirm the belief in the last Prophet of God Muhammad, peace be upon him through saying:

La Ilaha Illallahu Muhammad-ur-Rasoollallah



'There is no deity (god) except Allah (the One and Only True God) and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,' and then follow the Qur'an and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. This is called the Shahadah (bearing witness to the Truth).

What is Prophethood in Islam?

The Merciful and Loving God not only created human beings, but also arranged for their guidance through appointing Prophets throughout the ages from among the human beings. God revealed His will to the Prophets, peace be upon them all, and commissioned them to deliver that Message. In every known nation one or more Prophets were appointed. All the prophets of God were men of good character and high honor. Their honesty and truthfulness, their intelligence and integrity were beyond doubt.

The appointment of these Prophets from God is a clear manifestation of a strong link between Heaven and Earth,

between God and man. The purpose of Prophethood is to confirm what mankind already knows or can know, and to teach them what they do not or cannot know by their own means. Such as: why we are created? What will happen to us after death? Is there any life after death? Are we accountable for our actions? Similarly questions about God, Angels, paradise, and hell cannot be answered without revelations from the Creator and Knower of the unseen. It is also to help man to find the Right Path, and to do what is right and shun what is wrong. Prophethood is an eloquent expression of God's love for human beings and His will to guide them to the right way of belief and behavior. He provides true guidance to mankind, and then holds them responsible for their deeds. He gave them warnings through His prophets about the consequences of their wrongful deeds, and the good news of rewards for their good deeds.

The Source of Prophethood and the appointment of all the prophets is One and the Same: it is the One and Only God (Allah). The Prophet's aim is to serve God, to acquaint human beings with God and His Divine teachings, to establish truth and goodness, to help mankind realize the true purpose of their existence and to help them in living their lives in a purposeful way. It is on this basis that the Muslims make no distinction among any of the Prophets and accept their teachings as consistent and complementary to each other.

Who is Muhammad?

Muhammad, peace be upon him, is the last Prophet of God appointed for the guidance of the whole of mankind. He is answer to the prayer of Prophets