

have become prominent and are regarded as the most authentic: Bukhari, *Muslim*, *Tirmidhi*, *Abu Dawud*, *Nasa'i* and *Ibni-Majah*.

### PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

*Muhammad* (pbuh), the final messenger of *Allah* and the best of creation, was born in *Makkah*, Arabia, in the year 571 CE. His father, *Abdullah*, died before his birth and his mother *Aminah* died when he was only six. Later on he was looked after by his uncle *Abu Talib*. He married *Khadijah* a noble lady of *Makkah* when he was twenty five. First he received revelation from *Allah* at the age of forty marking the beginning of his work as the messenger of *Allah*.

The people of *Makkah* at that time used to worship idols. The prophet (pbuh) invited them to *Islam*. Some of them responded favorably and became Muslims, while others rebuked him and turned against him. He continued to preach the message of *Allah* and, gradually, the number of his followers increased.

In the thirteenth year of his prophethood, in 622 CE, *Muhammad* (pbuh) migrated from *Makkah* to *Madinah*. The people of *Madinah* accepted him as their leader and he established the first Islamic state there. The Islamic calendar begins from the day of the migration (*Hijrah*) of the Prophet (pbuh).

The Prophet (pbuh) organized the early Muslims and preached the message of *Allah* with unmatched patience and wisdom. Eventually *Islam* was established in the whole of the Arabia and was set to make a tremendous contribution to the history and civilization of the world.

*Islam*, as a way of life, can solve all human problems, and is the only hope for the present as well as the future. The need is to practice it faithfully.

*Prophet Muhammad* (pbuh) died in 632 CE at the age of sixty three. He left behind the *Qur'an* and his *Sunnah* as the source of guidance for all generations to come.

### FESTIVALS

**IDUL FITR** one of the major festivals is observed on the first day after the month of *Ramadan*. On this day, Muslims express their joy and happiness by offering a congregational prayer. Special food is prepared, and it is customary to visit friends and relatives and to give presents to children to make the occasion lively and special for them.

**IDUL ADHA** begins on the 10th of the month of *Dhul Hijjah* and continues till the 12th. This celebration is observed to commemorate the willingness of *Abraham* when he was asked to sacrifice his own son *-Ishmael*. *Abraham* showed his readiness and *Allah* was very pleased. A lamb was sacrificed instead of *Ishmael* on *Allah's* command. Muslims offer congregational prayers on the day, and afterwards they sacrifice animals to seek the pleasure of *Allah*. The meat of the animal is shared amongst poor, relatives, neighbors and friends.

### MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Marriage is the basis of family life in *Islam*. It is a solemn and yet a simple contract between a man and a woman. Marriages are generally arranged by parents, but with the consent of the couple, as required by Islamic law (*Shari'ah*). marriages are performed in a simple ceremony in the presence of relatives, friends and neighbors.

*Islam* does not allow the free mixing of men and women; nor does it allow sex before marriage. Extra-marital sex is severely punishable. No discrimination is made on the basis of sex. Husband and wife are equal partners of the family and play their part in their respective fields.

### DIET

Muslims are encouraged in the *Qur'an* to eat what is good for them, and are specifically forbidden to eat 1. animals slaughter without invoking the name of *Allah* 2. pork 3. dead animals 4. the blood of animals. Islamic law requires an animal to be slaughtered invoking the name of *Allah*. All

varieties of alcoholic drinks are prohibited. These rules aim at rooting out the evil effects of food and drink in society.

### DRESS

Muslims must cover their body properly and decently. No particular dress is recommended.

- For men, covering from the naval to the knees is a must.
- For women, covering the whole body except the face and hands is compulsory. A woman must not wear a dress which rouses man's base feeling, e.g. transparent, skin-tight or half-naked dress.
- Pure silk and gold are not allowed for men.
- Simplicity and modesty are encouraged.

### SOCIAL MANNERS

Islam teaches decency, humility and good manners. A Muslim greets another Muslim by saying:

As-salamu 'Alaikum (*peace be upon you*)

and the reply is:

*Wa 'alaikumussalam (peace be upon you too).*

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



# ISLAM

## The Fastest Growing Religion in the World

.....Discover Why.



Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. Because Islam is a complete way of life. It tells man about the purpose of his creation and existence, his ultimate destiny, his place among other creatures and more importantly, it provides him with guidance to lead a balanced and purposeful life which will enable him to avoid the Hell-fire and be rewarded with a place in Paradise in the life after death.

The Arabic word Islam means voluntary surrender to the will of Allah and obedience to His commands. Allah is an Arabic word the proper name of God. Muslims prefer to use Allah rather than God.

### **MUSLIM**

A person who freely and consciously accepts the Islamic way of life and sincerely practices it is called a Muslim.

### **BASIC BELIEFS**

The three fundamental Islamic beliefs are:

- Tawhid- Oneness of Allah;
- Risalah- Prophethood;
- Akhirah- Life after death.

**TAWHID** is the most important Islamic belief. It implies that everything in existence originates from the one and only Creator, who is also the Sustainer and the sole Source of Guidance. This belief should govern all aspects of human life. Recognition of this fundamental truth results in a unified view of existence which rejects any divisions of life into religious and secular. Allah is sole source of Power and Authority, therefore entitled to worship and obedience from mankind. There is no scope for any partnership with the Creator. Tawhid tells man that Allah is not born, nor is anyone born of Him. He has no son or daughter. Human beings are His subjects.

**RISALAH** means prophethood and messenger-ship. Allah has not left man without Guidance for the conduct of his life. Since the creation of

the first man, Allah has revealed His guidance to mankind through His prophets. The prophets who received books from Allah are called messengers. The message of all the prophets and messengers is one and the same. They urged the people of their time to obey and worship Allah alone and none other. Whenever the teachings of a prophet were distorted by people Allah sent another prophet to bring human beings back to the Straight Path. The chain of Risalah began with Adam, included Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and Jesus, and ended with Muhammad (peace be upon them all), as the final messenger of Allah to mankind.

The revealed books from Allah are: the Torah (Tawrah), the Psalms (Zabur), the Gospel (Injeel) and the Qur'an. The Qur'an, which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), as the final book of Guidance. It is unchanged and nobody can change it.

**AKHIRAH** means Life after death. Belief in Akhirah has a profound impact on the life of a believer. We are all accountable to Allah on the *Day* of Judgment when we will be judged according to how we lived our lives. A person who obeys and worships Allah will be rewarded with a permanent place of happiness in Paradise (Jannah); the person who does not do so will be sent to Hell (Jahannam), a place of punishment and suffering.

### **FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM**

Islam has five pillars or basic foundations to act. Acting correctly and sincerely on these foundations will transform a Muslim's life into the line of the Creator. Faithful practice of these duties inspires him to work towards the establishment of justice, equality and righteousness in society, and the eradication of injustice, falsehood and evil.

**SHAHADAH**, the first of the five basic foundations, is the declaration, knowingly and voluntarily, of:

*La ilaha illalahu Muhammadun rasulul lah*

"There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah"

This declaration contains the two basic concepts of *Tawhid* and *Risalah*. This is the basis of all actions in Islam, and the four other basic duties follow this affirmation.

**SALAH** (compulsory prayer) is offered five times a day. It is a practical demonstration of faith, and keeps a believer in constant touch with his Creator. The benefits of *Salah* are far reaching, long lasting and immeasurable. It develops in a believer the qualities of self-discipline, steadfastness and obedience to the Truth, leading him to be patient, honest and truthful in the affairs of his life.

The five daily prayers are:

- **FAJR** between dawn and sunrise
- **ZUHR** between midday and mid-afternoon
- **ASR** between mid- afternoon and sunset
- **MAGHRIB** just after sunset
- **ISHA** between nightfall and dawn

**ZAKAH** (welfare contribution) is a compulsory payment from a Muslim's annual savings. It is an annual payment of 2.5% on the value of cash, jewelry and precious metals; a separate rate applies to animals, crops and mineral wealth. Zakah can only be spent on helping the poor, needy, the disabled, the oppressed, debtors and other purposes as defined by the Qur'an.

Zakah is one of the fundamental principles of Islamic economy, which insures an equitable society where everyone has a right to contribute and share.

**SAWM** is the annual obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan -the ninth month of Islamic calendar. A Muslim every day of this month refrains from eating, drinking, smoking and sex, from dawn

to sunset. Sawm develops a believer's moral and spiritual standard and keeps him away from selfishness, greed, extravagance and other vices. (Sawm is an annual training program which increases a Muslim's determination to fulfill his obligation to the Almighty Lord.

**HAJ** (pilgrimage to the *House of Allah*) is an annual event obligatory on those Muslims who can afford to undertake it at least once in their lifetime. It is a journey to the *House of Allah* (*Al-Ka'bah*) in **Makkah**, Saudi Arabia in the month of *Dhul Hjjah*- the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. Hajj symbolizes the unity of mankind; Muslims from every race and nationality assemble together in equality and humanity to worship their Lord. The pilgrim, in the ritual clothing of *ihram*, has the unique feelings of being in the presence of his Lord.

### **THE QUR'AN**

*The Qur'an* is the final Book of guidance from Allah, sent down to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through the angel Gabriel (*Jibra'il*). Every word of the *Qur'an* is the word of Allah. It was revealed in a period of 23 years in the Arabic language. Muslim learn to read it in Arabic and many memorize it completely. Muslims are expected to try their best to understand the *Qur'an* and practice its teachings.

The Qur'an is unrivaled in its recording and preservation. The astonishing fact about this book is that it has remained unchanged even to a letter for over fourteen hundred years.

The Qur'an deals with man and his ultimate goal in life. Its teachings cover all aspects of his life and the life after death.

### **THE HADITH**

*The Hadith* is the collection of sayings, actions and silent approvals of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). It explains the *Qur'an* and how to practice it. *The Hadith* were recorded meticulously by the Prophet's companions. Six particular collections