

*Exploring*

ISLAM



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# Introduction

## **As-Salaamu Alaikum - Peace be Upon You.**

The purpose of this booklet is to present the authentic teachings of Islam. No specific version or unique interpretation of Islam is presented, but rather Islam is shown as it is without sugar coating it. There is only one Islam and only one example of how it is to be lived, which is through following what is laid out in the Qur'an, and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessing from God be upon Him).

Despite the fact that over one fifth of the world's population is Muslim, Islam is often misunderstood and misrepresented in the contemporary Western societies, some Muslims themselves do not help the situation by their actions.

It is hoped that by reading this you will gain an understanding of the true Islam. However, it must always be kept in mind that one can only understand true Islam by putting aside emotions and prejudices which often segregate us from reality. Just for a moment put aside any pre-conceived ideas and views, we ask you not to look at the media, or even Muslims, but understand Islam from the original fundamental teachings, and then make a decision.

At the end of the booklet there is information on how you can get further information and ask any questions you may have.



# Who is **ALLAH?**

**Allah** is simply the word for God in Arabic, just as in French it is 'Dieu' and 'Gott' in German. Muslims prefer to use the Arabic term Allah, as it has no plural or gender. This shows its exclusivity when compared to the word 'God' which can be made plural, i.e. 'Gods' or feminine, 'Goddess'.

Allah is not the name of a 'Muslim God', it is the same One God mentioned by Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad (Peace be upon them all), and is the same God worshipped by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. It should also be noted that Allah is the term used by Arabic speaking Christians and Jews when referring to God.

The word Allah is also a reflection of the unique concept that Islam associates with God. To a Muslim, Allah is the Almighty, the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe, who is similar to none and nothing is comparable to Him. The Prophet Muhammad was asked by his contemporaries about Allah. The answer came directly from God Himself, in the form of a short chapter in the Qur'an that is considered the essence of the Unity of God or the motto of monotheism;

*"Say: He is God, the One; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him."* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 112: verses 1-4)

Islam teaches that there is only One God who is Eternal, and has no partners or associates whatsoever in His Divinity. Simply, He is One, in every sense.

# Who was MUHAMMAD?



**Muhammad** (Peace be upon Him) was born in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, in the year 570 CE. His father, Abdullah, died a few months before Muhammad's birth, and his mother, Aameena, also passed away when he was six. Muhammad was initially under the guardianship of his grandfather until his death, and thereafter was brought up by his uncle Abu Talib. At an early age Muhammad was a shepherd tending sheep, and at the age of nine was taken by his uncle on a caravan journey to Syria so he could learn the art of trade.

Muhammad made a reputation for himself as a hardworking, honest merchant. He was known as Al Ameen - 'the trustworthy one', and was frequently called upon as an arbitrator to help settle disputes and disagreements.

At the age of 25, he married Khadeeja, who was a rich business woman 15 years his senior. Khadeeja had been impressed by the nature of this young man and had sent him a proposal for marriage. At this stage, Muhammad was a man of substance, respected in his community, admired both for his generosity and his good sense, and his future seemed assured. But Muhammad was uneasy and uncomfortable with the decadence and idol worship he saw around him, and as time passed he turned to meditating by himself in a cave.

Muhammad would spend many days in this cave named Hira, which was on a mountain on the outskirts of Makkah. It was on one of these occasions, when Muhammad was 40 years old, he received his first revelation from God via the Angel Gabriel who appeared before him and proclaimed, "Iqra" (which in Arabic can mean 'read' or 'recite'). Muhammad, who was illiterate, replied in fear, "I am not able to read!". This instruction from Angel Gabriel was repeated again twice to the fear stricken Muhammad as well as the first revelation from God;

*"Recite! In the Name of your Lord who created, Created man from a clinging substance. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous, who teaches by the pen, teaches man that which he knew not."* (Al-Qur'an Chapter 96:verses 1-5)

This heralded the start of his Prophethood, and 23 years of revelations from God to Prophet Muhammad (via Angel Gabriel), which formed the exact words of the Qur'an as it is with us now.

# What is ISLAM?

**Islam** is an Arabic word, which means voluntary submission to the will of Almighty God. A person who practices Islam is called a Muslim.

Islam is not a new faith, but it is a confirmation of the same message which was brought by all the Prophets including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, David, Moses and Jesus (Peace be upon them all). But the message which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is Islam in its comprehensive, complete and final form.

The message of Islam is not reserved exclusively for people from any particular area of the world. The message of Islam is for everyone in every part of the world, every background, and every colour.

The word 'religion', does not really describe Islam. Nowadays, when we use this word, it is usually referring to a person's spiritual beliefs, and as society is moving more and more towards secularism, religion is something that we do in private, or on a particular day of the week. Islam is more than just a religion, it is a complete way of life. It covers every aspect of our lives from birth to death. Islam teaches us what to do from the moment we wake up in the morning, until the moment we go to sleep. It teaches us how to interact with people around us, what to eat so we stay healthy, and how to conduct ourselves in business so we are fair and honest. No situation in life is excluded. This is what makes Islam different, unique, and more than just a religion.

Muslims take their guidance from the Qur'an, the words of God revealed to the final Prophet, Muhammad, as well as from the Hadith. The Hadith is the teachings, sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad. These were meticulously reported and collected by his devoted companions, and elaborate on, and help to explain the Qur'anic verses.

# What do Muslims believe?



## **The Fundamental Articles of Faith in Islam.**

The true, faithful Muslim believes in the following principle articles of faith:

- 1.** A Muslim believes in One God, who has no partners, and is the Supreme and the Eternal, the Infinite and the Mighty, the Merciful and the Compassionate, the Creator and the Provider.
- 2.** A Muslim believes in all the Messengers of God without any discrimination among them. Every known nation had a Messenger from Almighty God. They were chosen by God to teach mankind and deliver His divine message. The Qur'an mentions the names of twenty five of them. Among them Muhammad (Peace be upon him) stands as the last Messenger.
- 3.** A Muslim believes in all the scriptures and revelations of God. They were the guiding light which the Messengers received to show their respected people the right path of God. The scriptures God mentioned in the Qur'an are as follows:
  - a.** The original Scrolls as revealed to Abraham.
  - b.** The original Torah as revealed to Moses.
  - c.** The original Psalms as revealed to David.
  - d.** The original Injeel (Gospel of Jesus) as revealed to Jesus.
  - e.** The Qur'an as revealed to Muhammad (which is still available in its original form).Muslims believe that long before the revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad, most of the earlier books and revelations had been either lost or amended by humans.
- 4.** A Muslim believes in the Angels of God. They are purely spiritual and splendid beings whose nature requires no food, drink, or sleep. They spend their days and nights in the worship of God. They are honoured servants, assigned certain functions, and they act only by His command.
- 5.** A Muslim believes in the Day of Judgment. That this world will come to an end some day, and the dead will rise to stand for their final and fair trial. People with good records will be generously rewarded and warmly welcomed to the Heaven of Almighty God, and those with bad records will be punished in Hell.
- 6.** A Muslim believes in Fate, whether good or bad, which God has measured and ordained for all creatures. Also that God's knowledge and power are in action at all times and command over His creation, and that everything He does has a meaningful purpose, even if as humans we fail to understand it fully, or think it is bad.

# The Five Pillars of Islam

**Islam is founded on Five Pillars.**

**A practising Muslim's life is centred on these pillars.**

**1. The Declaration of Faith:** This is how an individual accepts Islam as their way of life. The following statement (called 'The Shahaada' in Arabic), must be made freely, with belief and understanding:

*"I bear witness that there is no deity worthy to be worshipped but Almighty God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger."*

It must be noted that anyone who affirms the Prophethood of Muhammad is acknowledging all the Prophets and Messengers of God that came before him.

**2. Prayers:** Daily prayers are offered five times a day as a duty toward God. They strengthen and enliven one's belief in God and inspire individuals to develop a higher morality. They purify the heart and prevent temptation towards wrong-doings and evil.



**3. Charity (Zakah in Arabic):** The literal and simple meaning of Zakah is purity. The technical meaning of this word is designated to the annual amount in kind or cash, which a Muslim with means must distribute among the rightful beneficiaries. The religious and spiritual significance of Zakah is much deeper.



**4. Fasting in the Month of Ramadan:** During Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food, drink, and all sexual activities from dawn to sunset. In addition, they must refrain from evil intentions and desires throughout the whole of the year in general, and especially during the month of Ramadan. This communal fast seeks to instil within the individual feelings of love, sincerity, devotion, patience, unselfishness, and will-power, as well as to develop a sound social conscience.



**5. Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah):** To be performed once in a lifetime, if one can afford it financially and is physically able to. The Hajj pilgrimage has its roots in the time of Prophet Abraham. It is a spiritual quest of submission to God and purification of the heart.

# What is The Qur'an?

**The** Qur'an is the principle source of guidance for every Muslim. It is the source of Islamic teachings and laws. It deals with a variety of subjects including the basic beliefs of Islam, morality, worship, knowledge, wisdom, God-and-man relationships, and relations amongst human beings. It contains comprehensive teachings on which sound systems of social justice, politics, economics, legislation, jurisprudence, law and international relations can be built.

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the word of God and the final revelation from Him, to the whole of humanity.

*"He (God) has sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) with truth, confirming what was revealed before; And He sent down the Torah (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this as a guide in humankind; and He sent down the Criterion (the Qur'an)." (Al-Qur'an, chapter 3: verses 3-4)*

The Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) over a period of 23 years. In His lifetime it was memorised and cross-checked by His companions, and the 114 chapters remain exactly as they were revealed by Angel Gabriel fourteen centuries ago. The word 'Qur'an' translates to 'the Recitation'.

# The Qur'an - Some Facts

Since the Qur'an was revealed it has remained unchanged. There are no versions or editions. Any Qur'an found in any part of the world will match word for word with any other copy, millions of Muslims around the world have also memorised the complete Qur'an cover to cover.

Prophet Muhammad as well as being illiterate, was not an educated or travelled man, also bearing in mind the time when the Qur'an was revealed, it is amazing that it contains many facts which only recently have been discovered by science.



The Qur'an was revealed at a time when the Arab's beliefs were based on superstition and old legends. They had very little knowledge about subjects which are mentioned in the Qur'an, such as biology, physics, astronomy, key facts about the structure of the earth, and the creation of human beings.

Below are a few quotes from the Qur'an which illustrate this fact;

Here God speaks about the stages of embryonic development: *"And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop (or zygote) in a firm lodging (i.e. the womb). Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump (of flesh), and We made (from) the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is God, the best of creators."* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 23:verses 12-14)

Modern science has proven that mountains have deep roots which extend into the earth's surface; *"Have We not made the earth a resting place? And the mountains as stakes?"* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 78:verses 6-7)

Science has also shown how the mountains play an important role in stabilising the earth; *"And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift with you"* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 16:verse 15)

Scientists have also confirmed recently that the universe is expanding. (At that time the word 'space' was not known, and what lies beyond the earth was referred to as 'heaven'); *"And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are (its) expander."* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 52:verse 47)

# Women's Status in Islam

**The** status of women in Islam is particularly relevant in these times, due to the perceptions currently prevalent in western society. Muslim women are sometimes portrayed as 'oppressed' or as 'second class' to men. Nothing could be further from the truth, women have been given an equal status to men in Islam. In some cases, rights which were given to women 1400 years ago by Islam have only relatively recently been enjoyed by women in the West.

We must make a clear distinction between what Islam teaches, and cultural practices in some Muslim countries and societies, where historically a patriarchal culture dominates and women are denied their rights.



The rights and responsibilities of women are equal to those of men, but they are not necessarily identical. This difference is understandable because men and women are different, in their physiological and psychological make-up. With this distinction in mind, there is no room for a Muslim to imagine that women are inferior to men. Thus it is perhaps more apt to refer to the Islamic approach on gender relations, as one of “equity” rather than the commonly used word “equality”, which could be misunderstood to mean equality in every minute aspect of life, rather than overall equality.

Islam also recognises that women have precedence over men in certain situations, for instance as a mother. Thus when a man asked Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him): “Who is most entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?”, the Prophet replied, “Your mother.” The man asked, “Who is next?” The Prophet said, “Your mother.” Again the man asked, “Who is next?” The Prophet repeated, “Your mother.” The man asked for a fourth time, “Who is next?” The Prophet then replied, “Your father”.

Islam therefore recognises that men and women have different but equally important roles to play in building a cohesive and successful society.

**“Treat women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers”**

**- Prophet Muhammad**

# Women's Rights in Islam

**"The best of you are those who are the best to their wives"  
- Prophet Muhammad**



## **Recognised as Individuals**

Whether single or married, women are recognised as individuals. Married women are not required to take on their husbands name as they retain their own identity as an individual.

## **The Right to Education**

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) stressed the importance of education for every individual. Many notable Muslim female scholars existed around the time of the Prophet, most notably the Prophet's wife Aisha. Education is an equal right for men and women in Islam.

## **The Right to Choose a Spouse**

In Islam a woman has the right to accept or reject a marriage proposal. The freely given consent of the women is a prerequisite for a valid marriage. Forced marriages are a cultural practice and have no basis in Islam.

## **The Right to be Maintained**

A married women is exempt from all household financial liabilities. She is entitled to complete provision and maintenance by her husband. It is her decision whether she wishes to work and whether she supports the family financially. As a daughter, she is entitled to security and provision from her father and brother respectively.

## **The Right to Retain Property**

A women's property/assets always remain hers to spend as she wishes. This right remains after marriage and her husband has no right over anything she owned prior to the marriage.

## **Right to Inheritance**

Islam gave women the right to inheritance, prior to this, in Arabia, women themselves were treated as property to be inherited by men!

## **Equal in front of God**

Men and women will be rewarded and held accountable equally by God, who states in the Qur'an that the only difference by which he will judge is piety and righteousness;

*"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Indeed, God is Knowing and Aware" (Al-Qur'an, chapter 49: verse 13)*

## **In Conclusion**

The mistreatment of women in some Muslim countries and societies is purely down to cultural attitudes and is not based on any Islamic teachings. Images of Muslim women as oppressed and submissive are stereotypical, and do no justice to the large number of Muslim women whose firm conviction in the Islamic concepts of family cohesiveness and happiness, and their own individuality, ensures their sense of self-fulfilment.

# Women's Dress in Islam



**Muslim** women dress simply, modestly and with dignity. Women must cover their hair and body in loose and unrevealing clothing. This is called 'hijaab'.

The word 'hijaab' is from the Arabic word 'hijaba' which means to conceal or hide from view. Hijaab is not merely a dress to cover the body, but more importantly it is to do with behaviour, manner, speech and appearance in public for men and women alike. The main reason for hijab is to deepen your relationship and faith in God, and it has been stated in the Qur'an that women must guard their modesty. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) described modesty as the distinctive quality of Islam.

*"Say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty ; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what must ordinarily appear thereof. "* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 24:verse 31)

*"Say to the believing man that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty ; that will make for greater purity for them, and God is well acquainted with all they do. "* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 24:verse 30)

The hijab frees women from being thought of as sexual objects or from being valued for their looks, or body shape rather than their minds and intellect. It allows women the choice not to conform to stereotypes and images portrayed by the media. Muslim women who wear hijab do not find it impractical or interfering with their daily activities in all levels and walks of life. In some cultures women are forced to wear hijab, but this is not what Islam tells us. The Qur'an clearly states:

*"There is no compulsion in religion",* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 2: verse 256)



Many women converts who have adopted the hijab have claimed that it has liberated them.

*"I couldn't be happier to get rid of my very short dresses and the pressure of the modern lifestyle... Today, hijab is the new symbol of women's liberation and that is why I choose to wear it"* (American convert to Islam)

*"I am a Japanese woman who embraced Islam in 2011 and I have adopted the hijab. Since wearing the hijab I have gained more self confidence, serenity and dignity."* (Japanese convert to Islam)



# What Islam Says About ... Jesus

**Just** as Christians do, Muslims also love and respect Jesus. Muslims believe Jesus to be one of the greatest of God's messengers, who was born miraculously to the virgin Mary (Maryam in Arabic), without any male intervention.

The Qur'an confirms this miracle birth,

*She said "My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?" (The angel) said, 'Such is God; He creates what He wills. When he decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is. (Al-Qur'an, chapter 3:verse 47)*

Just as all the earlier Prophets such as Moses, Abraham and Noah, Jesus was also sent by God with the same message to humanity: worship God alone and live according to his instructions.

Jesus, during his prophethood, performed many miracles by the will and permission of God, such as healing those born with deformities, giving sight to the blind, and life to the dead.

*"I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay, a figure like that of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by God's permission. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by God's permission" (Al-Qur'an, chapter 3:verse 49)*

However, Muslims do not believe that Jesus was God, nor the son of God, or that he was crucified. Islam teaches that Jesus was not crucified, but was raised up and will remain with God until his eventual return to earth. The second coming of Jesus is a shared belief between Christians and Muslims.

# What Islam Says About ... **Terrorism**

**Islam** does not permit terrorism in any form. The act of inciting terror, the bombing and maiming of innocent civilian men, women or children, are all forbidden and punishable acts in Islam.

Islam considers all life precious, and a special place is accorded to human life, *"...whoever kills a soul - unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely."* (Al-Qur'an, chapter 5:verse 32)

Here, the Qur'an equates the taking of one human life unjustly, with the killing of the whole of humanity.

Even in a state of war, Islam has set strict guidelines. Islam permits fighting to defend oneself, but it should never lead to injustice against others. God says in the Qur'an,

*"Fight in God's cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits"* (Al Qur'an, chapter 2:verse 190)

No crops, animals or infrastructures should be destroyed. Properties should not be damaged, and poisoning water sources is forbidden. The opposing side must be treated justly, with the wounded and prisoners of war given fair and humane treatment. More importantly, civilians are never to be harmed. Prophet Muhammad instructed, "Do not kill any elderly person, woman or child", "Do not kill people who are sitting in houses of worship", and "Do not kill the monks in their monasteries."

Unfortunately, in these times, the actions of a few individuals who have hijacked Islam are highlighted by the media to sell more papers and increase ratings, while millions of sane minded Muslims who condemn these inhumane acts, do not get a mention. This has further led to Islam sometimes being used as a scapegoat and exploited by some politicians to further their own causes and careers.

The question we should ask ourselves is that could a faith, followed by one fifth of the worlds population, actually condone the killing of innocent people?



# Was Islam Spread by the Sword?

It is a common misconception that Islam was spread by the sword. Forcible conversion is prohibited in Islam.

**Anyone who accepts the Oneness of God and the message from all the Prophets must do so by their own free will.**

*"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong." (Al Qur'an, chapter 2:verse 256)*

In the early days of Islam, there were military confrontations between the Muslim state and the then existing world powers of Rome and Persia. The areas conquered were put under Muslim administration and the populations were free to maintain their own beliefs. Muslims ruled Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon from the 8th century, and sizeable Christian communities have continued to exist in these areas over the past 13 centuries.

Muslims ruled Spain for 700 years and India for a 1000 years without the majority of the population converting to Islam.

The largest Muslim country in the world today, Indonesia, never saw a Muslim soldier. Islam spread there and in Malaysia and the Philippines by trade, as was the case in West African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Chad and Niger.

Finally, Islam is currently the fastest growing religion in America and the UK, with the majority of converts being women. This is happening without any soldiers or missionaries.



# Islam and the Financial System



**This** subject is particularly relevant in the current times, due to the financial crisis affecting the majority of the world. The economic problems we find ourselves in today are primarily caused by interest. These problems are evident in the UK and in the wider world. Many people are struggling with their monthly finances, or trying to keep up with interest payments to hold onto their homes. In some cases, people are driven to borrow money at extortionate interest rates just to feed their families. Further afield, interest on debt has had a crippling effect on many of the poorer, under developed countries of the world.

Interest has the effect of keeping less fortunate individuals struggling, while benefiting the wealthy who are in a position to lend money.

**Dealing in interest in any form is strictly forbidden in Islam, and is a major sin.**

Wealth is seen as a gift from God, and comes with responsibilities. A wealthy Muslim individual or corporation can lend money to individuals who are in need, but cannot charge interest. The wealthy will be judged by God on the Day of Judgement on how they have treated and dealt with the poor.



# Islam and Other Faiths

It is a mistaken belief that Islam does not tolerate other religions. In an Islamic state, Islamic law protects the rights of minorities and grants them the freedom of worship. In Medina, at the time of Prophet Muhammad, laws were put in place to ensure the peaceful co-existence of all the different faiths. At that time, various faith groups were present on the Arabian Peninsula including Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Polytheists.

Prophet Muhammad warned:

*"Whoever oppresses any Dhimmi\* , I shall be his prosecutor on the Day of Judgement."*

*(\*Dhimmi - non-Muslim citizen of the Islamic state)*

Islam is closely connected to the two other Abrahamic faiths, Christianity and Judaism. Muslims respect and love both Jesus and Moses, and Christians and Jews are referred to as 'People of The Book'. This phrase is a reference to the divinely revealed messages to both of these faiths.

In the Qur'an God states:

*"Indeed, those who have believed [in Prophet Muhammad] and those [before him] who were Jews or Sabeans or Christians – those [among them] who believed in God and the Last Day and did righteousness – no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve." (Al Qur'an, chapter 5:verse 69)*

Unfortunately these days, we see the persecution of minority faiths in some Muslim countries. These actions have absolutely no basis in Islamic teaching, and no true Muslim would condone this.



**"For you is your religion, and for me is my religion."**

**(Al Qur'an, Chapter 109: Verse 06)**

# Islam and the Community



## Neighbours and Community

Islam strongly emphasises the responsibility Muslims have towards their neighbours and the communities they live in. These responsibilities are regardless of the individuals faith or background. Many sayings of Prophet Muhammad emphasise this:

*"Anybody who believes in Almighty God and the Last Day, should serve his neighbour generously."*

*"The best companion in God's estimation is the one who is best to his companion, and the best neighbour in God's estimation is the one who is best to his neighbour."*

*"He will not enter Paradise whose neighbour is not secure from his wrongful conduct."*

*"He does not believe in me, who eats his fill while his neighbour beside him is hungry, and he knows about it."*

A true Muslim who practices these teachings, is the best of people in his dealings with his neighbours, and is most respectful, kind and considerate towards them.

## Charity (Zakah in Arabic)

The responsibility of caring for the wider community has also been addressed by one of the Pillars of Islam. To those who have the means, obligatory charity is a condition of being a Muslim. In an Islamic state, the collection of annual charity from the wealthy is an obligation of the state. This money is then used to assist the poor in that same community.

# The Purpose of Life



"Be in this world as if  
you were a stranger  
or traveller"

- Prophet Muhammad

**Why** are we here? Why did God create us? Is there life after death? Islam answers these questions very clearly.

Islam teaches that not only is this world temporary, but the time we spend on this earth is minuscule compared to the time we can expect after death. Prophet Muhammad compared this life to a drop of water from the oceans, with the rest of the oceans representing the time we will have in the next life.

The aim in this world is simply to recognise and worship the One God, our Creator, and to live our lives according to His instructions as taught by all the Prophets sent to guide us.

The concept of 'worship' in Islam, is much broader than the traditional meaning of the word. Worship in Islam can be defined as every action and thought that we have throughout the day. How we treat people around us, how we interact with our surroundings, how we treat the Earth, how we treat animals, everything is included in the definition of worship. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said that even a smile is charity. What he meant, was that even smiling at someone makes God happy with us.

Therefore, this short life is a test. A test to determine how we will spend the rest of eternity. Every human being can turn directly to God, and will be judged directly by God.

By understanding this concept of time and purpose of life on this earth, we can put into perspective what is important in this life. We shouldn't worry so much about the problems and trials we experience, and remember the ultimate goal.

# Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

"There shall be no compulsion in (acceptance of) the religion."

(Al Qur'an, Chapter 2: Verse 256)

**Islam** nowadays is often accused of being 'old fashioned' and 'not adapting to the times'. Especially as some other faiths have changed to be more accepting of modern ideas, even if they conflict with their original doctrines.

The position of Islam is simply that humans cannot change what has been laid down by God, even in the name of progress and modern thinking. Islam means to submit to the will of God, and the acceptance of God's laws, even if we sometimes do not fully understand the reasons behind them. It is the acceptance that if God created us, then he knows us better than we know ourselves.

Every human being has been given free will by God, and has the freedom to accept or reject any religious teachings. There is no compulsion in religion.

# Further information

We hope you have enjoyed reading this booklet and found it informative.

For further information and literature about Islam please visit our web site: [www.only1purpose.com](http://www.only1purpose.com).

If you have any questions, comments or wish to speak to someone, you can email us at:  
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