

*"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness - to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; and to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakah, to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all period of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing" (Qur'an 2:177).*

### ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE

Islam provides definite guidelines for all peoples to follow in all walks of life. The guidance it gives is comprehensive and includes the social, economic, political, moral and spiritual aspects of life. The Qur'an reminds man of the purpose of his life on earth, of his duties and obligations towards himself his kith and kin, his community, his fellow human beings and his human existence before him so that he might put these high ideals into practice. In Islam, man's life is a wholesome integrated unit and not a collection of fragmented competitive parts. The sacred and secular are not separate parts of man: they are united in the nature of being human.

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in the year 570 AD in the city of Makkah in Arabia. He came of a noble family; he received the first revelation at the age of forty. As soon as he started preaching Islam, he and his followers were persecuted and had to face severe hardships. He was, therefore, commanded by God to migrate to Madinah, another city in Arabia. During a short span of 23 years, he completed his mission of Prophethood and died at the age of 63. He led a perfect life and set an example for all human beings as his life was the embodiment of the Qur'anic teachings.

### ISLAM'S RATIONAL APPEAL

Islam in its clear and direct way of expressing truth has a tremendous amount of appeal for any seeker of knowledge. It is a solution for all the problems of life. It is a guide towards a better and complete life, glorifying in all its phases, God, the Almighty Creator and the Merciful Nourisher.

### ISLAM - THE SOLUTION OF MODERN PROBLEMS

**The Brotherhood of Man:** A major problem, which advanced nations, can send man to the moon but they cannot stop man from hating and fighting his fellow man. Islam, over the last 1400 years, has shown in practice how racism can be ended. Every year, during Hajj, the Islamic miracle of real brotherhood of all races and nations can be seen in action.

**The Family:** The family which is the basic unit of civilization is disintegrating in all western countries. Islam's family system brings into a fine equilibrium the rights of man, wife, children and relatives. Islam nourishes human unselfishness, generosity and love in a well-organized family system.

### UNFRAGMENTED VIEW OF LIFE

Human beings live according to their view of life. The tragedy of secular societies is that they fail to connect the different aspects of life. The secular and religious, the scientific and the spiritual seem to be in conflict. Islam puts an end to this conflict and brings harmony to man's of life.

I. (pbuh) here stands for "peace be upon him"

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# ISLAM

*at a glance*

The Arabic word Islam means submission, peace and obedience. The religion of Islam is the complete acceptance and submission to the teachings and guidance of Allah (God) as revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

MASJID IBRAHIM

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## In the Name of Almighty Allah (God), the Merciful, the Compassionate

### ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

A Muslim is one who believes in God and strives for total reorganization of his life according to His revealed guidance and the sayings of His Prophet. He also works for building human society on the same basis. "Mohammedanism" is a misnomer for Islam and offends its very spirit.

The word 'Allah' is the proper name of God (Allah) in Arabic. It is a unique term because it has no plural or feminine gender.

### CONTINUITY OF MESSAGE

Islam is not a new religion. It is, in essence, the same message and guidance, which Allah revealed to all Prophets:

*"Say, 'We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismael; Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord. We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will (in Islam).'" (Qur'an 3:84)*

The message, which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), is Islam in its comprehensive, complete and final form.

Islam enjoins faith in the Oneness and Sovereignty of God (Allah), which makes man aware of the meaningfulness of the Universe and of his place in it. This belief frees him from all fears and superstitions by making him conscious of the presence of the Almighty Allah and of his obligation towards Him. Faith alone is not enough. It must be expressed and tested in action, hence, the "five pillars of Islam" which are the manifestations of faith. Belief in one God requires that we look upon all humanity as one family under the universal Omnipotence of God - the Creator and Nourisher of all. Islam rejects the idea of a chosen people,

making faith in God and good action as the only way to heaven. Thus, a direct relationship is established with God, without any intercessor.

### THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

1. **The declaration of faith:** To bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is His messenger to all human beings till the Day of Judgment. The Prophethood of Muhammad obliges the Muslims to follow his exemplary life as a model.

2. **Prayers:** Daily prayers are offered five times a day as a duty towards Allah. They strengthen and enliven the belief in Allah and inspire man to a higher morality. They purify the heart and prevent temptation towards wrongdoing and evils.

3. **Fasting the month of Ramadan:** The Muslims during the month of Ramadan not only abstaining from food, drink and sexual relations from dawn to Sunset but also from evil intentions and desires. It teaches love, sincerity and devotion. It develops a sound social conscience, patience, unselfishness and willpower.

4. **Zakah:** To pay annually 2.5% of one's net saving on which a year has passed as a religious duty and purifying sum to be spent on poorer sections of the community.

5. **Pilgrimage to Makkah:** It is to be performed once in a lifetime, if one can afford it financially and physically.

Besides these pillars, every action, which is done with the awareness that it fulfills the Will of Allah, is also considered an act of worship.

### MAN - THE FREE AGENT

Man is the highest creation of God. He is equipped with the highest of potentialities. He is left relatively free in his will, action and choice. God has shown him the right path, and the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) provides a perfect example.

Man's success and salvation lies in following both. Islam teaches the sanctity of the human personality and confers equal rights upon all without any distinction of race, sex or color.

The law of God, enunciated in the Qur'an and exemplified in the life of the prophet, is supreme in all cases. It applies equally to the highest and the lowest, the prince and the peasant, the ruler and the ruled.

### QUR'AN AND HADITH

The Qur'an is the last revealed word of God and the basic source of Islamic teachings and law. The Qur'an deals with the bases of creeds, morality, history of humanity, worship, knowledge wisdom, God (Allah)-man relationship, and human relationship in all aspects. These are comprehensive teachings on which can be built sound systems of social 'justice, economics, politics, legislation, jurisprudence, law and international relations, are important contents of the Holy Qur'an.

Muhammad (pbuh) himself was an unlettered man who could not read or write. Yet, the Holy Qur'an was committed to memory and writing by his followers under his supervision during his lifetime. The original and complete text of the Qur'an is available to everybody in Arabic, the language in which it was revealed. Translations of the meaning into many languages are widely used. Hadith, the teachings, sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), were meticulously reported and collected by his devoted companions, explain and elaborate the Qur'anic verses.

### CONCEPT OF WORSHIP

Islam does not teach or accept mere ritualism. It emphasizes intention and action. To worship God is to know Him and love Him, to act upon His law in every aspect of life, to enjoin goodness and forbid wrongdoing and oppression, to practice charity and justice and to serve Him by serving mankind. The Qur'an presents this concept in the following sublime manner.