

attributes and imperfections (Example: God need rest- Exodus31:17) given to God by Jews and Christians. Judaism, Christianity and Islam share the same origin but Islam teaches that other religions have, in one way or another, distorted and nullified a pure and proper belief in One Absolute Almighty God by associating others with God and neglecting God's true teachings and mixing those with man-made ideas.

IMPORTANT ARTICLE OF BELIEF IN ISLAM

(1) Belief in Absolute Oneness of God: Muslims believe that there is only ONE God and that there is no deity or entity worthy of worship except One God. God has **no father or son or partner or equal**; God is Unique, Alone and ONE.

(2) Belief in Prophets and Messengers of God:

Muslims believe in all the Messengers and Prophets of God without any discrimination. All of them were mortals; human beings; with needs of food, clothing, etc.; endowed with Divine revelations and anointed by God to teach mankind. God has not left humanity without guidance for the conduct of their affairs. Since the creation of the first human, God has revealed His guidance to mankind through His prophets and messengers. The message of all the prophets is one and the same. They urged the people of their time to obey and worship God alone and none other. Whenever the teachings of a prophet were distorted by people, God sent another prophet to bring human beings back to the Straight Path. The chain of prophet 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 God to all. Muslims love, respect and follow them but do not worship any of them.

(3) Belief in the Revelations of God: Muslims believe in all scriptures and revelations of God, as they were complete and in their original forms. Muslims believe in the original scriptures that were given to previous messengers; for example David received the Zabur (Psalms), Moses the Torah and Jesus the Injeel (Gospel). However, the previous scriptures do not exist today in the original form in which they were revealed. The Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad as the final revelation of Guidance to all. Among all these revealed scriptures, it is only the Qur'an that remains unchanged, in its original revealed form.

(4) Belief in Angels of God: Muslims believe that God created Angels. Angels are made out of light and they follow every order of God. Angels always worship and obey God.

Muslims do not worship angels or ask them for help. Gabriel and Michael are name of two of several arch angels familiar to many of us but there are many others and their total number is unknown to us.

(5) Belief in the Day of Judgment and life after

death: Muslims believe in the Day of Judgment and eternal life after death. This world as we know it will come to an end, and all humans will be resurrected to stand for their final trial before God. Everything we do, say, make, intend and think are accounted for and kept in accurate records. They will be brought up on the Day of Judgment to be Judge by God.

On that day God will generously reward believers with good records and grant them Paradise forever. Non-believers and people with bad records will be fairly punished and cast into Hell. The real nature of Heaven and Hell are known to God only, but they are described by God in familiar terms in the Quran.

(6) Belief in Al-Qadr (Predestination): Muslims believe in the Ultimate Knowledge and Power of God to plan and execute His plans. Everything seen or unseen, understood or misunderstood/not understood happens with the knowledge, permission, order and will of God. God is Wise, Just, and Loving and whatever He does must have a planned motive, although humans may sometimes fail to understand it fully due to limitation of knowledge. God gave humans freewill to think, plan and make sound choices based on God's guidance and then put their trust in God. If things happen as they want they should praise God and if do not happen as they want they should still praise God, recognizing that God knows best.

SOURCES OF ISLAMIC INFORMATION

Quran (The primary source of Islamic information):

Quran is the final revelation of guidance from God to mankind. Quran is the inimitable and unique Arabic Speech or Word of God revealed to Prophet Mohammad by angel Gabriel in wording and meaning, which has been preserved in memory, and writing and reached us by numerous authentic continuous transmissions. The entire revelation of the Quran happened over a 23 year period. The Quran is unrivaled in its recording and preservation. **Unlike other scriptures that were changed with human interpolations and omissions, the Quran has remained unchanged (over fourteen hundred years now) and will remain so as God has guaranteed its protection.** The Quran is the last and final revelation to mankind a complete guide that covers all aspects of human life, and its relation to the life after death.

Hadith (Secondary source of Islamic information):

Hadith is the collection of commands, sayings, actions, expressed approvals/disapprovals and implicit approvals of Prophet Muhammad. It explains many aspects of the Quran and help us understand it. Hadith were also memorized and recorded meticulously by the Prophet's companions and passed on to successive generations.

FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Islam has five pillars or basic foundations of action. Acting correctly and sincerely on these foundations transforms a Muslim's life into one that is in harmony with nature and in conformity with the will of God. Faithful practice of these duties inspires a Muslim to work towards the establishment of justice, equality and righteousness in society, and the eradication of injustice, terrorism, falsehood and evil.

Testimony (First Pillar of Islam): An individual begins her/his journey in the path of Islam by taking the testimony of faith known as "SHAHADAH"- This is the first and primary pillar or foundation of Islam. The declaration with belief and sincerity, knowingly and voluntarily, of: La ilaha illa lahu Muhammadur rasulul lah. "There is no deity worthy of worship except God, Muhammad is the messenger of God"- Salvation begins with this declaration. This declaration is the basis of all actions in Islam, and the other basic duties and worship follow this affirmation.

Worship is an all inclusive term for all that God loves of external and internal sayings and actions of a person. This, of course, includes rituals as well as beliefs, social activities, and personal contributions to the welfare of society. Islam looks at the individual as a whole. One is required to submit oneself completely to God.

Some fundamental acts of worships in Islam:

Obligatory daily Prayers (Salah-Second pillar of Islam):

By the order of God a Muslim offers Prayer five times a day. Prayer establishes a direct personal and spiritual connection between an individual and her/his God, and is a constant and practical reminder of a person's duty to surrender to God. A Muslim offers daily Prayers once each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. The Prayers develop in a believer the qualities of self-discipline, steadfastness and obedience to God, leading one to be patient, honest and truthful in the affairs of one's life.

The Annual Fasting (Sawm-Third pillar of Islam):

By the order of God every year during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of Islamic lunar calendar, Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food, drink and sexual relations with spouse. It serves as a spiritual purification, nurtures patience and self-restraint, and keeps believers away