

Islam and Muslims

Islam is an Arabic word which in English means peace, purity, obedience, submission and commitment. Thus, Islam is to submit to the will of God and accept His Divine Commandments. Muslims do not worship prophet Mohammad peace be upon him (PBUH), thus *Mohammadanism* is a misnomer for Islam. Allah is the Arabic word for God, also used by Arabic speaking Christians and Jews.

Continuity of the Message

Islam is the last of divine messages revealed to mankind, calling for belief in the oneness of God. It is the same religion God revealed to all his messengers. *“Say, We believe in God and in what has been revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, and in (Scriptures) given to Moses, Jesus, and the prophets, from their Lord: we make no distinction between one and another among them and to God do we submit” Quran 3:84*

Who are the Muslim people?

There are about 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide. Muslims belong to many races, ethnicities, cultures and nationalities. Only about 18% of Muslims live in the Arab world. The largest Muslim population is in Indonesia. Muslims inhabit large areas of Asia and Africa. Muslims also live in Russia, China, North and South America, and Europe. The United States is home to more than seven million Muslims, many of whom are high-ranked professionals, doctors, engineers, researchers, and academicians. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the World.

Basic Beliefs

A Muslim believes in the oneness of God, all His messengers, scriptures, Angels, the Day of Judgment, life after death, and accountability in front of God.

Oneness of God

Islam reaffirms faith in the unity and sovereignty of God that makes human beings aware of the meaningfulness of the universe and their place in it. It frees them from fears and superstitions. It makes them conscious of the presence of Almighty God and their obligations towards Him. This faith must be reflected and translated into actions. Belief in one God requires one to look upon humanity as one family under the universal benevolence of God, the common Creator and Nourisher of all. Islam rejects the idea of chosen people. Islam makes faith in God and good action the sole key to salvation and success in this life as well in the life to come. It established a direct relationship with God open to anyone without any intercessor.

Human beings, the finest Creation

Human beings are the finest and highest creation of God. They are makers of their own destiny and are free in their will, action and choice. God has shown them the right path and the teachings of Prophets Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the life of Mohammad (PBUH) bear the best testimony of His message. A human being success lies in following the divine message and the teachings of His messengers. Islam stands for human dignity, equality, justice and freedom.

The Quran

The Quran is the last revealed message of God to humanity. It is the basic source of divine laws. It explains the basics of creed, morality, history of humanity, knowledge, relationship between God and human beings and human relationship in all walks of life. The Quran provides the guidance for institutionalizing social, economic and political justice. It was revealed to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) over a period of twenty-three years.

The Sunnah

The life of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) embodies the teaching of the Quran. His words and actions, *Sunnah*, are sources of guidance to Muslims and are the cornerstones of the faith.

Concept of Worship

To worship God is to know Him, love Him, act upon His laws in all walks of life, enjoin goodness and forbid evil, and serve Him by serving human beings. The Quran emphasizes the purity of intention in worship.

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Day of Judgment and the angels and the scriptures and the messengers; to spend of your wealth, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for setting slaves free, to observe prayers and give charity; to fulfill the contracts which you have made and in adversity, and time of stress; such are those who are sincere. Such are God conscious.” The Quran 2:177

Five Pillars of Islam

◆ *The profession of faith, Shahada:*

One who decides to become a Muslim professes the oneness of God and the mission of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) by saying “I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship but God and Mohammad is His servant and messenger.”

◆ *The Prayer, Salat:*

Islam prescribes prayers five times a day as a duty towards God. The prayer is a means to strengthen and enliven the belief in one God. It inspires human beings to be responsible and vigilant against evils and immorality.

◆ *Almsgiving, Zakat:*

Islam asks its followers to give two and a half percent (2.5%) of their net savings as *Zakat* to be spent on the poor and the needy. This precept teaches that the community has a right in the individual’s wealth.

◆ *Fasting the month of Ramadan, Siyam:*

Fasting is abstention from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from dawn to dusk and avoid all evil intentions and desires during the month of Ramadan. Fasting purifies the heart and teaches sympathy towards the poor.

◆ *Pilgrimage, Hajj:*

Muslims are required to visit the Holy Mosque in Makkah for Hajj at least once in their lifetime if they can afford the trip financially and physically. The purpose is to pay tribute to Prophet Abraham, the patriarch of all monotheistic religions.

Most Commonly Asked Questions

◆ *What is Jihad?*

The concept of *Jihad* (which means striving) has been widely misunderstood in the west and is incorrectly translated as “Holy War” (no war is holy). *Jihad* refers to striving for excellence on several levels. The first two involve personal and individual spiritual and intellectual efforts to become a better Muslim. The second addresses efforts to improve society. The third and last level involves self-defense or fighting against oppression. Even on the battlefield, Islam teaches that civilians, women, children, noncombatants and religious figures are not to be harmed. Islam makes clear that there is no compulsion in religion (i.e. people cannot be converted by force or coercion).

◆ *How does Islam treat women?*

Islam does not discriminate against men or women because of their gender. Islam recognizes that both men and women, though different, have equal responsibility before God and humanity at large. God says in the Quran “*And both believing men and women are protectors of (or in charge) of one another: they (all) enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong.*” (9:71) Additionally, Islam grants women equal rights to contract, to enter into enterprise, and to possess independently. A woman’s life, property and honor are as sacred as those of a man.

◆ *Why Muslim women cover their heads?*

Muslim women observe *Hijab* (covering the head and body) as an act of submission to God. Secondly, *Hijab* is observed by women, and modest men’s dress, so that both may be evaluated for their intelligence and skills rather than in terms of appearance and sexuality. *Hijab* is widely misunderstood as a sign of oppression of women, but is in fact a sign of freedom and liberation.

For more information visit these web sites
www.islam.org or www.islamworld.net

VISION

The Islamic Center of Hawthorne seeks to promote peace and understanding and to honor and celebrate diversity in belief, culture, ethnicity and thought. It aims to inspire positive dialogue so that men and women of all faiths may partake more fully of the brotherhood and sisterhood of God’s intention as revealed in the Holy Quran. The Islamic Center of Hawthorne has the following services:

- ◆ Friday noon prayer and sermon: everyone is welcome to attend.
- ◆ Friday night program: adult lecture and Youth group lecture.
- ◆ Islamic Sunday School: a great opportunity for kids to learn Arabic, Quran, and Islamic studies
- ◆ Al-Huda Full time School: K-5th grade full time school promoting a strong moral character, a high level of academic achievement and a better learning environment.
- ◆ Speakers: for your event, or at your school, the Center can provide a speaker to address a variety of topics relating to Islamic faith and practices.
- ◆ Inter-faith community events that benefit all the community, such as car wash, health fair, safety day, etc.
- ◆ A tour in the Center with explanation about Islam and Muslims, please call for an appointment.

ISLAMIC CENTER OF HAWTHORNE

12209 Hawthorne Way, or PO Box 2285

Hawthorne, CA 90250

(Behind Hometown Buffet)

Phone (310) 973-8000, Fax (310) 978-4036

www.ich-la.org

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

ISLAMIC CENTER OF HAWTHORNE

Introduction to Islam

O Mankind! We created you from a single soul, male and female, and made you into tribes and nations, so that you may know one another. Verily the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply

conscious of Him. Behold, God is all knowing, all aware.

The Quran, 49:13

WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY OF FAITH

The Islamic Center of Hawthorne (ICH) was founded in Nov 1994 to serve the Muslim Community of many professions and ethnicities: we are business owners, engineers, nurses, doctors, teachers, mothers and volunteers. We are your neighbors and many of us are American citizens, by choice or by birth. We greet you with our greeting *Assalamu Alaykum*, meaning peace be upon you. We welcome you to come and visit any time!

MISSION

The Islamic Center of Hawthorne is a community of worship where people of the Islamic faith gather to pray, learn, have stronger families, and stronger communities thru sincere service to everyone. We stand for peace and love in the family, in the school, in the neighborhood, and in the cities around us. Our community strives to improve living conditions and promote family values, and strong moral system. We hold high regards for our friends of all other faiths, and work together for a stronger united community under God.