Islamic Center of Blacksburg (ICB)
106 Southpark Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060

ISLAM: A Brief Introduction

Islam? Islam is an Arabic word for submission and peace. Submission: *total submission to and acceptance of God (Allah, the One and Only) and His will.* Peace: *inner peace (peace with oneself), peace with the Creator, as well as peace with all creations.* It is through the total submission to the Will of God that one reaches this form of peace.

With this definition and understanding of Islam, all of God's Prophets, peace be upon them (pbut), received the call to "Islam" since all of them preached the same message, i.e. the acceptance of God and total submission to His Will. In other words, Islam is not a new religion. What we refer to as Islam is nothing but the final revelation of the series. Islam acknowledges all previous Prophets and Messengers from God, starting with Adam (pbuh) and ending with Muhammad (pbuh). Islam acknowledges the messages of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (pbut), to name just a few.

Who is God in Islam? We know God through His attributes related to us in the Qur'an (The Qur'an is the last revelation from God and is the basic source of Islamic teachings and laws. It was revealed in Arabic to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and was scribed during his lifetime. Being the word of God, only translations of the meanings as understood by scholars are available in other languages):

"Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god- who Knows (all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme: Glory to Allah! (High is He) Above the partners they attribute to Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of forms (or color). To Him belong the Most Beautiful names: Whatever is in the heavens and on earth doth declare His Praises and Glory; and He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (59:22-24). Also: ***"And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Full of loving-kindness." (85:14).***

The Islamic teachings emphasize the Balance in God's Attributes. The Balance between His Magnificent Powers and Might, on one hand, and His Compassion, Mercy, Love, and Forgiveness on the other. He is Just. He is All-Knowing. He Does it all in balance and in wisdom, a balance beyond our understanding and a wisdom beyond our comprehension. He is the only one to be praised whether one be in health or in sickness, in richness or in poverty, in times of ease or in times of hardship.

Relationship between God and Human: The relationship between Allah and us humans in Islam is a direct one, with no mediators. In this direct relationship, we recognizes that there is no other party which can help, give, take, support, provide, or grant forgiveness but Allah. In such a direct relationship, we do not associate any other deities with Allah. Moreover, our faith and submission to Allah become complete and pure.

Salvation in Islam: Islam teaches that all humans are born sinless. We are only responsible for the sins we commit intentionally. Recognizing our human nature, Allah the Most Merciful, accepts our sincere repentance and forgives our sins.

Islam also teaches that true belief and righteous deeds are two key elements for one to attain Allah's pleasure and satisfaction. It takes both elements to establish healthy individuals and healthy societies. Belief alone is not sufficient; it must be practiced. Practicing the belief by doing righteous deeds maintains that belief and nourishes it.





Islamic Sources (Arabic)

Main sources of Islamic belief, legislation, and scholarship

- Quran: "the Arabic Qur'an" which Muslims worldwide attest as the REVEALED WORD of GOD
- Sunnah or Hadith: Authentic sayings and practices of Prophet Muhammad
- Agreed-upon-decisions of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh)

The Qur'an

- Last revelation from God to human beings
- Revealed in Arabic to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through Angel "Jibril" over 23 years
- Scribed by companions during the prophet's lifetime (Prophet Muhammad was illiterate)
- Preserved Textually and Orally (Recitation) without alterations or editing
- Quranic text and Recitation available today are identical to those at the Prophet's time
- Being the word of God, only translations of the meanings as understood by scholars are available in other languages

Hadith

- IS the authentic sayings, teachings, and actions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
- Documented in separate books; and is distinguished from the Quranic revelation
- Applications of Islamic principles
- Complementary Islamic teachings and laws

Hadith Authenticity

- Narrated by Companions
- Verified Authenticity of narration through rigorous scientific methodology
  - Authenticity Grade is cited for each Hadith
  - Chain of narrators are cited for each Hadith (directly from the Prophet (pbuh), through a chain of reliable transmitters, up until the time of its compilation)
- Two most highly respected compilations: Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, (sahih = authentic)