

Islam 101

History

According to Islamic tradition, a man named Mohammed began receiving revelations from the angel Gabriel which came directly from god, known in Islam as Allah. These revelations were received in Mecca, a city in the Arabian Peninsula, now part of Saudi Arabia. Born in 570 A.D., Mohammed received revelations from approximately 610 A.D. until his death in 632 A.D. When Mohammed made his revelations known to local Jewish scholars in Mecca, declaring himself a prophet, he was rebuked. During the first few years (~5 to 7), only a handful of people came to Islam. Eventually Mohammed was driven out of Mecca and fled to the town of Medina. There, Mohammed made agreements with the local tribes, gained support, and raised an army. Many people were converted to Islam, and when Mohammed secured enough power, Mohammed returned to Mecca to conquer it. In Islam, Mohammed is considered the perfect example of a Muslim, therefore, anything he did is considered worthy of emulating. Significant examples include: Mohammed's killing of 500-700 Jews of the Qurayzah in Medina who were beheaded by sanction of Mohammed himself; and Mohammed's command to wage Jihad against non-Muslims until they accept or submit to Islam. These are accepted in Islam as authorized behavior.

The compilation of the revelations is contained in the Qur'an, which, in Islamic parlance, is considered "the uncreated word of God (Allah)." Because it is direct divine revelation, it can never be changed or annulled.

The Hadiths are the collections of the words and deeds of Mohammed as witnessed by those who traveled with him. There are many Hadith scholars and thousands of individual Hadiths. Hadiths are rated based on their "chain of transmission" which determines the authenticity of the individual Hadith. The most authoritative Hadith scholars are men named Bukhari and Muslim. Strongly authenticated Hadith by Bukhari is second in authority to Islam only to the Qur'an itself.

Islam is not just a religion, but a "complete way of life governed by Islamic Law (Shari'ah)."

Islam is the social, cultural, military, political, and religious life of a Muslim governed by Islamic Law. Theology is subordinate to the requirement to adhere to the Shari'ah. Islamic Law was formed from the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the 'way' of the Prophet) as detailed through the Hadiths.

Four Schools – In *Sunni* Islam, there are four doctrinal schools of law; the *Hanafi*, *Maliki*, *Shafi'ite*, and *Hanbali*. *Sunni* Islam makes up 85-90% of the Muslim world. It is to be noted that *Takfirism* and *Wahhabism* arise exclusively out of the *Hanbali* School of Islamic law, the form of Islamic law that is official in Saudi Arabia. *Shia* Islamic Law states that it uses the four *Sunni* schools as the basis for its law – though there are irreconcilable differences between *Shia* and *Sunni* law.

Ijma – or scholarly consensus, is the doctrine that holds when the grand *mujtahids* came together at one time and one place to discuss one issue where they unanimously agreed (based on four criteria), then the agreed upon ruling becomes an absolute rule in Islamic law that cannot be contravened or annulled. The four schools of jurisprudence agree in approximately 75% of the law. “Jihad” and relations between Muslims and non-Muslims are issues where there is scholarly consensus.

Abrogation – is an Islamic legal doctrine that holds that what was revealed later in the period of revelation to Mohammed controls or overrules those things that were revealed earlier where disagreement exists. Therefore, the peaceful verses of the Quran (“...there is no compulsion in religion”) are abrogated by chronologically later violent verses (“...fight and slay them (unbelievers) where you find them.”).

Jihad – from *Reliance of the Traveller (Shafi’ite Islamic Law)*, means to “war against non-Muslims ... to establish the religion (of Islam).” Also understood as “just war” or “holy war.” No other definition of ‘jihad’ has ever existed at any point in history in any authoritative Islamic Law. When Muslims cannot fight the jihad against non-Muslims, they are required to fight with the pen or mouth. If even this is not possible, Islam requires them to fight with their “heart” and hate/despise the unbelievers for the sake of Allah.

Islam divides the entire world into the Dar al-harb and the Dar al-Islam.

Dar al-harb – the world of the sword, the infidel and perpetual war. Countries that are non-Muslim reside in the *dar al-harb*. Individuals from the *dar al-harb* are designated as *harbi*, “enemy person, person from the territory of war.”

Dar al-Islam – the Land of Islam and peace. Peace on earth does not come until the entire world has been made of *Dar al-Islam*. Islam is under permanent *jihad* obligation to reduce the *dar al-harb* to non-existence.

Shaheed / Martyr – a Shaheed or Muslim martyr is a person who is killed while fighting the infidel, or the non-Muslim. When a Muslim dies, he is prepared for burial and buried within a short time, as prescribed by Islamic Law. He awaits the Day of Judgment at which time all the good and bad deeds of his life are weighed on a scale. If the bad outweigh the good, the person is cast into hell. If the good outweigh the bad, that person still must go through the fires of hell to be purified, and then he goes to Paradise/Heaven. A Shaheed is buried as he was killed so Allah can see he is a Martyr and is taken to Paradise/Heaven immediately. It is the only guaranteed way in Islam for a Muslim to get into Heaven.

Zakat – mandatory financial giving and one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Per Islamic Law, which comes directly from Sura 9:60 in the Qur’an, a Muslim must give 2.5% of their financial earnings – after expenses as calculated by a “Zakat Calculation” table – to eight (8) categories equally. Category seven (7) is “The Cause of Allah” and is defined as Jihad. This means that all Muslims are required, by Islamic Law, to support jihad – which the West calls terrorism.

The **Five Pillars of Islam** are the basic requirements of all Muslims and includes:

Shahadah – the statement of faith; there is no god but god (Allah) and Mohammed is his messenger.

Salah – five daily prayers

Zakat – almsgiving

Sawm – fasting

Hajj – pilgrimage to Mecca

The aforementioned information is understood as authoritative Islamic doctrine and taught at the most prestigious Islamic institutions in the world. This is also taught in Islamic schools at the elementary school level around the world, to include the majority of Islamic schools in the United States. To imply this information is not correct is to make a statement that the majority of the Muslim world understands and teaches an incorrect version of Islam.