

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MUSLIM

Islam is a monotheistic (ie. belief in one god) religion and also a civilization that spans the length of fourteen centuries. It is known for its advances in technology, science, and medicine as well as its contributions to Western Civilization. Today, the over 1.6 billion people that practice Islam represent a variety of different racial and cultural backgrounds. Islam is similar to other monotheistic faiths like Christianity and Judaism; they even share similar beliefs: belief in angels, salvation, prophets. Where they divide is their stance on important religious figures like Moses and Jesus. In Islam, these figures - while equally important - are simply prophets of God, nothing more. The most significant prophet in Islam is Muhammad, who was given the Qur'an (ie. the Islamic holy book) by the Angel Gabriel.

There are six major beliefs of Islam that all Muslims follow:

## **BELIEF IN ONE GOD (ALLAH)**

Muslims believe that God is the creator of all things, is all-powerful and all-knowing, has no offspring, no gender, and no body.

## **BELIEF IN THE ANGELS OF GOD**

Muslims believe in angels who carry out God's will.

## **BELIEF IN THE BOOKS OF GOD**

God sent Holy Books to a number of his prophets, including the Qur'an given to Muhammad, the Torah given to Moses, the Gospel given to Jesus, the Psalms given to David, and the Scrolls given to Abraham.

## **BELIEF IN THE PROPHETS OR MESSENGERS OF GOD**

It is believed that God's guidance was revealed to the chosen few. Twenty-five prophets are mentioned by name in the Qur'an.

## **BELIEF IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT**

On the day of judgment, humans will be judged for their actions in life. Those who followed God's will shall be rewarded with paradise; those who rejected God's will shall be punished by hell.

## **BELIEF IN THE DIVINE DECREE**

It is the belief that everything that happens in one's life is preordained, and followers should respond with thankfulness and patience, even when bad things happen.

Muslims must also follow the five "Pillars of Islam":

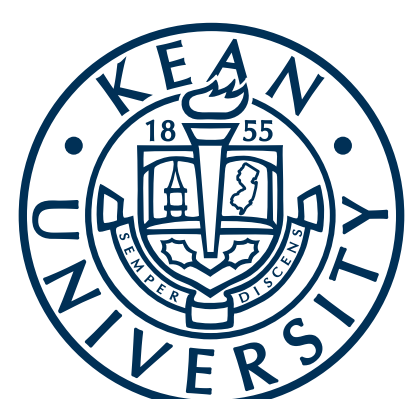
- 1 The Shahadah, a statement of faith all Muslims recite at least one time in their lives.
- 2 The Salat or Salah, a daily ritual prayer of faith done five times a day.
- 3 Zakat, a tax paid to benefit the poor or those in need.
- 4 Sawm, a fast done during the month of Ramadan.
- 5 Hajj, a pilgrimage every Muslim must do at least once in his/her life, if it can be afforded. The pilgrimage begins on the seventh or eighth day of the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar and ends on the 12th day of that same month.

# 6

major  
beliefs  
of Islam

# 5

pillars of  
Islam



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