

"HURT NO ONE SO THAT NO ONE MAY HURT YOU."

— MUHAMMAD (570-632) THE FAREWELL SERMON

ISLAM — An Overview

Inception: Muhammad 570-632 CE

Adherents: 1.5 Billion [EBI Estimate]

Primary Value Proposition: Submission to God

The Word of (about and/or attributed to) God:

- There is one God, Allah, who is the omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient creator and ruler of the universe.
- God is incomparable
- He is beyond all comprehension
- God guides humanity to the right way, "the holy ways."

Core Beliefs: Muslims believe that God is one and incomparable. Muslims also believe that Islam is the complete and universal version of a primordial faith that was revealed at many times and places before, including through the prophets Abraham, Moses and Jesus. God is described and referred to by certain names or attributes, the most common being al-rahman, meaning "the compassionate" and al-rahim, meaning "the merciful." The Sufi's especially held that union with God would yield an authentic inner experience.

Muslims believe that the purpose of existence is to worship God. He is viewed as a personal God who states "We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein" and responds whenever a person in need or distress calls Him. There are no intermediaries, such as clergy, between God and the creation that he brought into being by the sheer command "'Be' and it is." Muhammad said that "There is no compulsion in religion," for he was a man of religious experience, of prayer, and one deeply devoted to the religious ideal as he saw it.

Muslim contributions to philosophic thinking during the early Middle Ages included the preservation of key literature during the Dark Ages. This included the works of Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek thinkers. They championed mathematics as well. Some credit their devotion to literacy and numeracy with having jump-started the enlightenment.