

ONENESS OF GOD

Key words: Tawhid, Monotheistic, Supremacy, Allah

Sunni and Shia Muslims believe there is one God (Allah). Tawhid is the belief there is only one God. This makes Islam a monotheistic religion. The

Arabic word for God "Allah" means the God that is "the one and only God". This belief is expressed in Surah 112 of the Quran.

" Say He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was he begotten. No one is comparable to him" 112:1-4

Supremacy of Gods will

Muslims believe God is the creator and controller of everything. Nothing takes place unless God allows it to happen. No matter whether something is good or bad Muslims believe it is Gods will. For Sunni Muslims, the **supremacy of Gods will** in an important article of faith.

THE NATURE OF GOD

Key words: Immanent, Transcendent, Omnipotent, Beneficent, Merciful, Justice.

Allah has revealed himself to people through Muhammed and the holy books. There are **99 names of God** in the Qur'an and Hadith (Muhammed's sayings), which can help Muslims to understand something of God's nature.

"there is no God but Him, the Creator of all things, so worship Him, He is in charge of everything. No vision can take Him in, but He takes in all vision. He is the All Subtle, the All Aware" 6:102-103

Muslims believe that God is **immanent**, within all things and close to his people. But is also **transcendent**, beyond all things.

God is **beneficent**, the source of all goodness. His generosity is seen in his gift to humans of life on earth. God acts with fairness and justice. He treats people equally and justly and requires that they do the same with their fellow human beings.

In Shi'a Islam there is a concept known as **Adalat**. This is the idea that God is just and fair and judges human actions, rewarding the good and punishing the bad.

KEY BELIEFS OF SUNNI AND SHI'A ISLAM

Key words: Sunni, Shia, Sunnah

Sunni Islam

Sunnis regard themselves as the orthodox branch of Islam. The name "Sunni" is derived from the phrase "Ahl al-Sunnah", or "People of the Tradition". The tradition in this case refers to practices based on what the Prophet Muhammad said, did, agreed to or condemned.

Shi'a Islam

. Shi'a have their own interpretation of Islamic laws and only accept sayings of Muhammed that have been passed down through Ali or his followers.

Shi'a and Sunni Islam hold many elements in common such as belief in God, the prophethood of Muhammed, guidance of the Quran and following the Sunnah. They only differ in interpretations of certain aspects of belief and law.

BELIEFS AND TEACHINGS (Islam) Sheet 1

ANGELS IN ISLAM

Key words: Angels, Jibril, Mika'il

Angels bring the word of God to the prophets or messengers of God. For Sunni Muslims the belief in angels is one of the six articles of faith. Angels are part of the unseen world, they are supernatural beings created by God from light.

Jibril

Jibril (Gabriel) is the angel most familiar to Christians and Jews as to Muslims. He is an archangel (a special angel with higher status) who is a trusted messenger of God. Jibril was the angel who relayed the Qur'an to Muhammed from God.

Mika'il

Mika'il (Michael) is another high-ranking archangel also known to Christians and Jews. Muslims believe Mika'il is an angel of mercy. God has assigned Mik'ail to reward righteous people for the good they do during their lives. God has also given him responsibility for sending rain thunder and lightning to earth.

The six articles of faith shared by Sunni Muslims

- 1) *There is only One God.*
- 2) *Angels communicate the message of God to humans*
- 3) *The Qur'an is the most important writing and highest authority in Islam.*
- 4) *Muhammed is the most important prophet of God.*
- 5) *The Day of Judgement is when all humanity will be judged by God and sent to paradise or hell.*
- 6) *The supremacy of Gods will means that God already knows but also makes happen everything that occurs in the world and in human lives.*

The five roots of 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam

- 1) *Tawhid: There is only One God.*
- 2) *Prophethood means accepting that Muhammed is God's last prophet, and that God's revelations through him are true.*
- 3) *God is just and wise, cannot do wrong, and holds humans accountable for actions.*
- 4) *The imamate accepts 12 imams, leaders of Islam and guard the truth of religion without error.*
- 5) *Shi'a Muslims believe life after death they will be resurrected to be judged by God.*

PREDESTINATION

Keyword: Predestination

Predestination is the idea that God knows or determines everything that will happen in the universe.

"Only what God has decreed will happen to us. He is our Master: let the believers put their trust in God" 9:51

Some Sunni Muslims believe that God has already determined everything that will happen in the universe. He has written down everything that will happen in a "book of decrees".

Predestination is linked to the Sunni belief in the supremacy of God's will. Some Sunni Muslims believe that because God's will is so powerful, he can determine everything that is going to happen. This view places greater emphasis on God's omniscience and less emphasis on human freedom.

Many Shi'a Muslims believe that God knows everything that is going to happen, but this does not mean he decides what is going to happen. This means that people still have free will, so they can make their own choices.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Key words: Akhirah, Resurrection, Heaven, Hell

Muslims believe death is not the end but the beginning of a new stage of life called **Akhirah**.

Muslims believe that a day will come when God's purpose for the universe has been fulfilled. On this day the angel Israfil will blow a trumpet to announce that the world will be destroyed. The present world will be totally transformed into a new world (Akhirah). Everyone who has ever lived will be raised from the dead (resurrection) and judged by God.

Heaven and Hell: Heaven is described in the Qur'an as gardens of happiness. It is the reward for faith and good deeds.

The Qur'an describes hell as a place of fire and great torment. It is the punishment for those who reject God and do evil.

Belief in life after death is one of the six articles of faith for Sunni Muslims and one of the five roots of "Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam. Belief in life after death urges people to avoid sin and do the right thing it encourages human responsibility and accountability.

HOLY BOOKS IN ISLAM: **Key words:** Torah, Psalms, Gospel, Scrolls of Abraham

Muslims believe the Qur'an is the word of God, which was revealed to Muhammed via the angel Jibril over a period of around 22 years. It contains the foundation of every believer's faith. When Muslims read the Qur'an, they believe that God is speaking directly to them.

"This is the Scripture in which there is no doubt, containing guidance for those who are mindful of God." 2:2

The Qur'an contains a mixture of historical accounts and advice on how to follow God. There are 114 surah's (Chapters) in total.

The Torah: Muslims believe that the Torah was given to Moses (Musa). It is mentioned 18 times in the Qur'an.

The Psalms (Zabur): The Psalms were revealed to David, and are mentioned on three occasions in the Qur'an. Many Muslims believe these are similar to the Psalms in the Bible.

The Gospel (Injil) The Gospel is mentioned in the Qur'an and it is believed that this refers to a book divinely revealed to Jesus (Isa). It is thought that this Gospel has been lost but some of its message is still found in the Bible. The word Injil occurs 12 times in the Qur'an.

The scrolls of Abraham (Ibrahim) are also referred to in the Qur'an, but these have been lost and no longer exist.

BELIEFS AND TEACHINGS (Islam) Sheet 2

PROPHETHOOD AND ADAM

Key words: Prophet, Risalah, Iblis (Satan)

Muslims believe that God has chosen many prophets to bring the religion of Islam to people. This belief in the prophets and their importance is known as **Risalah**.

"every community is sent a messenger" 10:47

Prophets and messengers are important role models to follow, they were good people who lived according to God's will. Some of the most important prophets in Islam include Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus) and Muhammed.

Adam

Muslims believe that Adam was the first man on Earth and the first prophet of Islam. Created by God from the dust on the ground, he is regarded as the father of the human race and so is treated with reverence and respect.

Iblis (Satan)

God told the angels to bow down to Adam out of his respect and admiration for his knowledge, but Iblis refused. His defiance resulted in him being thrown out of paradise and he vowed to tempt humans to sin against God.

IBRAHIM

Key words: Ka'aba, Id-ul-Adha, Hajj

Ibrahim is the Arabic name for the prophet Abraham. Muslims believe that he fulfilled all the tests and commands given to him by God and so was promised to be the father of all nations.

"Who could be better in religion than those who direct themselves wholly to God, do good, and follow the religion of Abraham, who was true in faith? God took Abraham as a friend" 4:125

Ka'aba

This is a small building in Makkah. It is considered to be the house of God and the holiest place in Islam. Muslims believe that the original Ka'aba was built by Adam but it was destroyed by the flood at the time of Noah. With his son Ishmael, Ibrahim rebuilt it on the same site.

Id-ul-Adha

Muslims believe Ibrahim had a dream in which God asked him to sacrifice his son to him. God did not take the boy although Ibrahim was willing to sacrifice him, showing his willingness to be obedient and that he was a man of faith. During the festival of Id-ul-Adha each year, Muslims slaughter an animal to remember Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son.

Ibrahim is important in Islam because he was a man of faith who denounced the worship of idols, rebuilt the Ka'aba and gave the message that there is only one God. In Arabia at the time people worshiped many gods and statues.

MUHAMMAD AND THE IMAMATE

Key words: Caliph, Imam, Imamate

Muslims believe that Muhammed received the final revelation of Islam from God. He is known as the last and greatest of the prophets. The angel Jibril appeared to him with a message from God. For more than 20 years Muhammad received further revelations and these were combined to form the Qur'an, the Muslims most important holy book.

"Muhammed is not the father of any one of you men; he is God's messenger and the seal of the prophets: God knows everything" 33:40

The Imamate

The imamate is the divine appointment of the imams. The 12 Imams are Divinely guided leaders from the lineage of Prophet Muhammad. The last of the Imams is Muhammed al-Mahdi, who they believe has been kept alive by God and hidden somewhere on earth, and who will return with Jesus to bring justice and equality.

Shi'a muslims believe that the Imamate is important because people need divine guidance to know how to live correctly. They believe in each generation there has always been an Imam who is the divinely appointed authority on all matters of faith and law.