

Lesson 1 : WHAT IS ISLAM, WHO IS A MUSLIM?

Islam is submission to Allah سبحانه و تعالی. Submission means to give oneself physically, emotionally, and spiritually in the service of Allah سبحانه و تعالی. A Muslim is one who submits to Allah سبحانه و تعالی. How does a Muslim submit to Allah سبحانه و تعالی? Basic to a Muslim's belief is the testimony that Allah exists, and that He is One. A Muslim also believes that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم is the Last messenger of Allah

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

I bear witness that there is no god besides Allah, alone, with no partner. And I bear witness that Muhammad is his Servant and Messenger.

This statement of a Muslim's belief is called *Kalimah ash-Shahadah*.

Since we know the above to be true, it follows that the message brought by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the Qur'an, is Allah's سبحانه و تعالی final, perfect guidance for human kind. Therefore, in order to be successful in this life and in the Hereafter, one must study and live by the teachings and lessons of the Qur'an.

In the Qur'an, we find prescribed methods of worship and the fundamental laws of life, as Allah سبحانه و تعالی intended them. Every aspect of our lives is guided by these basic principles. When we have a question or find ourselves in danger of following the wrong path, we should turn to prayer and guidance of the Qur'an.

As Muslims, we should learn our role in this life through the example of Rasulullah ﷺ, documented in his words (*Hadith*) and actions (*Sunnah*). In fulfilling this role, we should try to become practical examples for our fellow Muslims as well as for all humanity. If we make a mistake, we should repent at once and try not to repeat our wrong-doing. This is the meaning of submission to Allah سبحانه و تعالی .

Thus, we can see that it is not enough for humans to simply believe in Allah سبحانه و تعالی and Rasullallah ﷺ . Allah سبحانه و تعالی wishes us to live in a way that reflects our sincerity in these beliefs.

In this course, we shall deal with the beliefs (*Aqa'id*) of a Muslim and what actions he/she is responsible for. The Qur'an and the *Sunnah* teach us what righteous belief is (*'Aqidah*) and describe the actions to enhance our belief. Allah سبحانه و تعالی tells us that He and our fellow human beings have certain rights over us, and we must consider it our duty to fulfill them. Allah سبحانه و تعالی rights over us are called *'Ibadat*. The rights of our fellow human beings are called *Mu'amalat*. The subject which teaches the details of our duties to Allah سبحانه و تعالی is called the *Fiqh*.