

Part 1: The study of religions

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Beliefs and teachings

1.1

The Oneness of God and the supremacy of God's will

■ Introduction to Islam



▲ The word 'Allah' in Arabic

Muslims believe **Islam** was gradually revealed to humanity through various prophets over many centuries. It was first revealed to Adam, the first man. The final and most complete revelation was made to Muhammad in the seventh century.

The word 'Islam' in Arabic means 'surrender', 'obedience' or 'submission'. Muslims believe that they should surrender to the will of **Allah**.

Islam also means 'peace', as it is through obeying God's will that a person will achieve peace in themselves.

■ The Oneness of God

One of the most important beliefs in both Sunni and Shi'a Islam is **Tawhid**: the belief that 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 Qur'an:

“ Say, 'He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.' ”

Qur'an 112:1-4

This belief is repeated daily in the Shahadah: 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.'

A Muslim's most important duty is to declare faith in the one God. Muslims believe that God is an undivided entity. This means that God is not made up of different persons nor has a son. No one else and no other object has God's attributes or qualities. Muslims believe the only sin that God will not forgive is attributing God-like qualities to any other being or thing.

God is unique. There is nothing like God. No one can picture or describe God because there is nothing to compare God to. This is one reason why there are no images or pictures of God in mosques (the

Objective

- Understand Muslim beliefs in the Oneness of God and the Supremacy of God's will.

Key terms

- **Muslim**: one who has submitted to the will of God and has accepted Islam
- **Islam**: the name of the religion followed by Muslims; to surrender to the will of God; peace
- **Allah**: the Arabic name for God
- **Tawhid**: the Oneness and unity of God
- **monotheistic**: a religion that believes there is only one God
- **supremacy**: supreme power or authority; a quality of God

Links

To learn about the differences between Sunni and Shi'a Islam see pages 10-11.

Links

To learn more about the Shahadah see page 33.