

Chapter 1 : The Islamic Birth Ceremony | Synonym

Islam is one of the largest religions in the world at the beginning of the 21st century. Islamic religious practices and rituals Five Pillars of Islam. The Five Pillars of Islam (Arabic arkan ud-Din, "pillars of the faith") are the five religious duties expected of every Muslim.

Islam teaches the importance of both belief and practice; one is insufficient without the other except for some Sufis. The following six beliefs are those that are commonly held by Muslims, as laid out in the Quran and hadith. Muslims believe that God is the creator of all things, and that God is all-powerful and all-knowing. God has no offspring, no race, no gender, no body, and is unaffected by the characteristics of human life. Belief in the Angels of God: The angel Gabriel brought the divine revelation to the prophets. Belief in the Books of God: Muslims believe that these earlier scriptures in their original form were divinely revealed, but that only the Quran remains as it was first revealed to the prophet Muhammad. Belief in the Prophets or Messengers of God: Twenty-five of these prophets are mentioned by name in the Quran, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Muslims believe that Muhammad is the last in this line of prophets, sent for all humankind with the message of Islam. Belief in the Day of Judgment: Belief in the Divine Decree: Muslims are asked to put their beliefs into practice by performing certain acts of worship. As in all faiths, since adherence to religious obligations and practices is a matter of individual choice, some people are very strict in performing these duties, while others are not. The five pillars or acts of worship in Islam The Declaration of Faith shahada: The first act of worship is the declaration that "There is no deity except God and Muhammad is the messenger of God. If someone wants to become a Muslim, he or she makes this profession of faith as an entry into Islam. Islam prescribes a brief prayer or ritual worship five times a day: Muslims perform ablution before prayer -- a brief prescribed washing of the hands, mouth, nose, face, arms and feet. One may pray alone or in a group in any clean location, including a mosque. The Friday noon prayer is special to Muslims and is done in a mosque if possible. Muslims face in the direction of Mecca when they pray. Muslims are required to give to the poor and needy. In addition to this prescribed charity, Muslims are encouraged to give as much as they can in voluntary charity throughout the year. Muslims are required to fast from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar calendar. People gather in the evenings for a festive breaking of the fast. When fasting, Muslims refrain from food, liquid, and sexual activity. During Ramadan, Muslims are also supposed to abstain from negative behaviors such as lying, gossip, petty arguments, and negative thoughts or behaviors, including getting angry. Muslims are required to start fasting when they reach puberty, although some younger children may also fast. People who are sick, traveling, menstruating, and pregnant or nursing may break their fast, but may make up the days later in the year. The elderly and people with disabilities are excused from fasting. Ramadan was the month in which the revelation of the Quran to Muhammad began. Therefore Muslims are encouraged to read the Quran during this month and often gather in the evenings in mosques to listen to recitations from the Quran. This is a day of celebration, prayers, feasts and gift giving. Pilgrimage to Mecca hajj: Every Muslim is required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, located in Saudi Arabia, once in their lifetime if financially and physically able. Mecca is home to the first house of worship of God, the Kaaba, said to have been built by the prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael. Muslims all over the world face towards the Kaaba when they pray. All outward symbols of rank and wealth are erased during the pilgrimage, as Muslim from every part of the globe come together for the purpose of worshipping God. Muslims who complete the pilgrimage are referred to as "Hajji" and greeted with great celebration and respect in their communities when they return. It falls on the tenth day of the month at the conclusion of the pilgrimage, and is celebrated by all Muslims with special prayers, feasts, gifts and the sacrifice of an animal usually a lamb or goat. The meat is distributed to relatives, friends and the needy. Islam contains many rules for daily life and human relationships. In Islam, everything considered harmful either to the body, mind, soul or society is prohibited haram , while whatever is beneficial is permissible halal. Islam prohibits Muslims from consuming pork, alcohol or mind-altering drugs. Muslims are required to eat meat that is butchered and blessed in an Islamic way. This meat is called "halal. There is no hierarchy of clergy in Islam, nor do Muslim

religious leaders have the power to forgive people of their sins. Every individual has a direct relationship with God without any intermediary. There are religious leaders or scholars, called ulema, who have studied and are experts in different aspects of Islam, such as Sharia, hadith, or Quranic recitation. It is also important to note that there is not one Islamic authority; so there are differences among Muslim scholars. Muslims are encouraged to share their faith with others. There is no formal ceremony for conversion. People must merely believe in and recite the shahada to convert to Islam. As in all cultures and communities, these rights are often violated. This is the result of the intersection of Islam with existing cultural norms, which may reflect male-dominated societies. In Muslim communities, women often have a strong influence in the family, the workplace, the religion and society in general. Since men and women are not supposed to date, parents arrange marriages in some Muslim countries. However, the ultimate decision lies with the prospective couple. In Western countries, prospective spouses usually meet in a family setting or a public place, and often choose their partner on their own, although they still seek the approval of their parents. Marriage in Islam is a mutual contract between a man and a woman to live together according to the teachings of Islam and to bring up their children in their faith. Although Islam permits men to practice polygamy, it is an exception, not the norm, and carries the condition that a man must treat his wives equally. Since the Quran says that no man can treat more than one wife equally, many Muslims consider polygamy forbidden. The family is considered extremely important in Islam. The Muslim family encompasses the entire circle of familial relationships, including in-laws. Obligations to parents and other relatives are strongly stressed. Extended family often live in the same house or neighborhood, and even when they do not, the family is quite close emotionally. Muslim women are permitted to participate in all walks of life as long as their modesty is not affected. Muslim women have the right to be educated, work outside the home, and contribute to society. Because of the influence of mothers on their children, it becomes even more important that women be educated. Both men and women are expected to present themselves in a manner that emphasizes modesty. Many Muslim women view hijab as liberating them from the male gaze. Men are also required to behave and dress modestly. The dress varies for women and men from culture to culture, and according to individual beliefs. Relations between Men and Women: Islam requires that Muslim men and women observe modesty in their interactions. Muslim men and women should relate as brothers and sisters, and avoid any interaction that might lead to sexual or romantic activity prior to marriage. Although this prohibition is often affected by Westernized ideas, Islam requires that both men and women remain chaste until marriage.

Chapter 2 : Muslim Praying Rituals In Life of Pi by Samantha White on Prezi

Significant minorities of people who are Muslim can also be found in Russia, China, and the Americas. The two most practiced denominations of Islam are Sunni (%) and Shi'a (%). Islamic Rituals for the Dying and Deceased. Most followers of Islam practice special rituals for preparing the dying and the deceased.

The Quran contains prohibitions against the consumption of pork and wine. The prohibition on wine is typically interpreted to mean a general prohibition on alcohol. Smoking is similarly prohibited. Charging exorbitant interest on loans, or usury, is also prohibited in Islam. Gambling is forbidden, as it puts both gamblers and their families at risk. Male circumcision is an important religious duty in Islam and required by believers to perform on their newborn sons. There is no single explanation for the origins of this practice. It may have been adopted from the Jewish practice. Some say it reinforces human submission to God, while others view the practice as an important preventive measure against infection. It is also done to imitate Muhammad, who was circumcised. The controversial practice of female circumcision that is present in many parts of the world does not have any religious authority as does male circumcision. Defenders of the practice do not cite religious evidence that it is required in Islam. Marriage is generally seen both as a civil contract in Islam as well as a religiously public and joyous ritual. Passages from the Quran are read, and there is usually a feast following the simple ceremony. Both men and women can initiate a divorce, and there is also a mechanism for annulling the marriage. However, divorce and annulment do not occur at the same frequency as they do in western societies. Prayers and other passages from the Quran are read for the dying person, who repents of sins and, when possible, performs rituals of purification. When possible, the dying person recites it as well. The body of the deceased person must be buried as promptly as possible, preferably by sunset on the day of the death, though Muslims handle this according to the laws of the land in which they live. The family of the deceased person is responsible for preparing the body for burial and for saying the funeral prayers, which are not typically said in the mosque. The body is buried in a plain white shroud. If the person went on pilgrimage to Mecca, then he or she is buried in the pilgrimage garments. Male relatives climb into the grave to arrange the body on its right side in a hollow niche in the wall of the grave. Each member of the assembled party throws soil into the grave, and a member of the party recites a blessing that summarizes the key beliefs of Muslims. Graves are marked with simple stone markers, to emphasize the equality of all people in death. The deceased repose in an intermediary state called the barzakh until God resurrects the dead on the Day of Judgment. How is Muslim behavior dictated by prohibitions? Why is circumcision important for Muslim boys? Describe the ceremonies that take place at death. Why is this the most important rite for Muslims? Try our 3 most popular, or select from our huge collection of unique and thought-provoking newsletters. You can opt out of these offers at any time.

Chapter 3 : Islamic Funeral Customs and Service Rituals: What you need to know.

Islam is an Arabic word meaning "surrender" or "submission." It is a faith that encompasses approximately one-fifth of humanity. Its adherents reside in almost every country of the world and comprise majorities in large segments of Africa, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and Asia.

Muslim Cemetery in Taipei , Taiwan Burial rituals should normally take place as soon as possible and include: Positioning the deceased so that the head is faced towards Mecca Makkah Al-Mukarramah. Bathing the deceased[edit] The corpse is washed ghusl , bathed , with the purpose to physically cleanse the deceased. Bathing the dead body is an essential ritual of the Sunnah of the Islamic prophet Muhammad , [7] and therefore a part of the Islamic Sharia. This should occur as soon as possible after death, preferably within hours. Orthodox practice is to wash the body an odd number of times at least once with a cloth covering its awrah parts of the body that should be hidden according to Sharia. In cases of violent deaths or accidents, where the deceased has suffered trauma or mutilation , morgue facilities mend the body and wrap it in a shroud to minimise fluid leakage prior to surrendering it to mourners for washing. Enshrouding the deceased[edit] The corpse is typically wrapped in a simple plain cloth the kafan. This is done to respect the dignity and privacy of the deceased with the family sometimes present. The specifics of this ritual, including the material, style, and colour of the cloth, may vary across regions. However, the shroud should be simple and modest. It is for this reason that Muslims have generally preferred to use white cotton cloth to serve as the shroud. Men may use only three pieces of cloth and women five pieces of cloth. Funeral prayer[edit] The Muslims of the community gather to offer their collective prayers for the forgiveness of the dead. This prayer has been generally termed as the Salat al-Janazah Janazah prayer. The Janazah prayer is as follows: Supplication for the deceased and mankind is recited. In extraordinary circumstances, the prayer can be postponed and prayed at a later time as was done in the Battle of Uhud. The exact manner, customs and style of the grave , the burial and so forth may vary by regional custom. The grave should be at right angles to the direction of the Qibla i. Mecca so that the body, placed in the grave without a coffin lying on its right side, faces the Qibla. Grave markers are simple, because outwardly lavish displays are discouraged in Islam. Graves are frequently marked only with a simple wreath , if at all. However, it is becoming more common for family members to erect grave monuments. In Middle Eastern cultures women are generally discouraged from participating in the funeral procession. The reason for this is that in pre-Islamic Arabia it was customary in Arabia for grieving women to wail loudly. Wailing at funerals is not permitted according to the Sahih Bukhari. Women are allowed to attend or be present if they do not wail or cry or hit themselves in grief, especially in an exaggerated excessive manner as it used to be done in old Arabia times. The lowering of the corpse and positioning of the soil-balls is done by the next of kin. In the case of a deceased husband, a male brother or brother-in-law usually performs this task. In the case of a deceased wife, the husband undertakes this if physically able to. If the husband is elderly, then the eldest male son or son-in-law is responsible for lowering, alignment and propping the deceased. Orthodoxy expects those present to symbolically pour three handfuls of soil into the grave while reciting a quranic verse meaning, "We created you from it, and return you into it, and from it we will raise you a second time". In a Tatar Muslim cemetery The corpse is then fully buried by the gravediggers, who may stamp or pat down the grave to shape. Commonly the eldest male will supervise. After the burial the Muslims who have gathered to pay their respects to the dead collectively pray for the forgiveness of the dead. This collective prayer is the last formal collective prayer for the dead. In some cultures, e. South East Asian Muslims, the surviving members of the deceased scatter flowers and perfumed rose water upon the grave as the last action prior to leaving the grave. Mourning[edit] According to Sunni Islam, loved ones and relatives are to observe a day mourning period. However, in case of emergencies such as visiting a doctor because of a health emergency, the widow can interact with non-mahram. Grief at the death of a beloved person and weeping for the dead is normal and acceptable. Grieving is allowed and a part of the death and burial process to allow one to come in terms with the loss of a person passing away as long as it respects the above. And those of you who die and leave widows behind, they should keep themselves in waiting for four months and

ten days. Then when they have fulfilled their term, there is no blame on you about what they do with themselves in accordance with the norms [of society]. And Allah is well acquainted with what you do. And there is also no blame on you if you tacitly send a marriage proposal to these women or hold it in your hearts. Allah knows that you would definitely talk to them. Of course you can say something in accordance with the norms [of the society]. And do not decide to marry until the law reaches its term. And know that Allah has knowledge of what is in your hearts; so be fearful of Him and know that Allah is Most forgiving and Most Forbearing. And Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.

Chapter 4 : Introduction: The Islamic Tradition

Muslims believe that following the complete way of life taught by Islam is the only way to attain real happiness in this life and afterwards as well. So after this long introduction, what are the practices and rituals of Islam?

Its adherents reside in almost every country of the world and comprise majorities in large segments of Africa, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and Asia. Approximately 6 million Americans follow Islam. The Prophet Muhammad, an aristocratic Arabian born and raised an orphan in the sanctuary city of Mecca, experienced a revelation in his fortieth year. He began to preach to his own people, most of whom initially persecuted him. After thirteen years of suffering with patience and endurance, he migrated to the nearby city of Medina. For over twenty-three years, beginning in C. Muslims believe the Quran was revealed from God through the archangel Gabriel. In it, a cosmology, a theology, and an elaborate eschatology are described. Although considered the youngest of the three great Abrahamic faiths that include Judaism and Christianity, Islam does not view itself as a new religion but rather as a reformed Abrahamic faith. Muslims believe that the Quran corrects distortions of previous prophetic dispensations while not departing from the aboriginal faith of humanity, which according to the Muslims is Islam, or sub-mission to one God. While Muslims believe all prophets have taught the unity of God and that their beliefs about God were the same, their actual practices have changed to suit various times and places. According to Muslims, this is why religions tend to differ outwardly, while retaining an essential inward truth common to them all. However, the Quran declares its message as uniquely universal applying to all people for all remaining time. Basic Beliefs of Muslims Islam is based upon five "pillars" that represent the bedrock upon which all else is based. The first pillar, which makes one a Muslim, is called the shahadah, meaning, "testimony" or "witnessing. Thus, nothing in creation can be associated with God, as creation has no real substantiation without the sustaining power of God. Indeed, creation is not God nor does it have any eternal qualities of the divine that are worthy of worship. Rather, creation is a theater of divine manifestations. Creation is seen as a place where analogies of the divine reveal themselves. The intellect of a person is the vehicle given by God to discern this truth about creation as indicated by several verses in the Quran. The second part of the declaration, Muhammad is the messenger of God, acknowledges the means through which this understanding of God has come. All prophets are special human beings capable of refracting divine light, acting like prisms that allow others to see it. The intensity of direct divine light is something only a prophet can bear. Muslims believe that the revelation given to Muhammad is like refracted green light, which lies in the middle of the light spectrum. Muslims consider Islam to be the most balanced of the prophetic dispensations, the "middle way. He abhorred extremes saying, "Beware of extremism in your religion. The second pillar of Islam is prayer. While people may supplicate anytime they wish to do so, there is a specific prayer every adult Muslim, female and male, is obliged to perform five times a day. The times are determined by the perceived movement of the sun as a way of reminding people of the temporal nature of the world. After the testimony of faith, prayer is considered the most important pillar. The third pillar of Islam is paying zakah, an obligatory alms given once every lunar year from the standing capital of every responsible adult. It is not an income tax, as income tax is prohibited in Islamic law, but rather a capital tax on wealth that has been stagnate for at least a year. According to the Quran, zakah is distributed among eight categories of people, the two most important recipients being the poor and the needy. The fourth pillar is fasting the entire lunar month of Ramadan, and it begins with the sighting of the new crescent for that month. Fasting entails abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations from dawn to sunset and is obligatory on adults healthy enough to do so. The fifth pillar is the Hajj , or pilgrimage to Mecca. Muslims believe Mecca to be the site of the first house of worship built by the Prophet Adam and his wife Eve and then restored millennia later by the Prophet Abraham and his son, the Prophet Ishmael. At the end of his mission, the Prophet Muhammad restored its monotheistic purpose by destroying the idols in it that the Arabs had been worshiping prior to Islam. The rituals performed in the pilgrimage follow the footsteps of Abraham and his second wife Hagar. The Hajj culminates on a vast desert plain where approximately 3 million pilgrims from almost every country on Earth gather every year and prepare for standing before God on

the Day of Judgment. Customs and Practices of Muslims Due to the broad cultural diversity in the Muslim world, Islam is a quilt of many colors rather than a monolithic faith etched in stone. The majority of Muslims have never considered Islam to be "straight and narrow" but rather "straight and broad. Most Muslim cultures manifest their own characteristics. For instance, the Islam of Indonesia, while essentially the same in its skeletal form, is quite different culturally from the Islam of Senegal. Muslims are required to wear modest clothes, and women are required to cover their hair and entire body except for the hands and face when in the presence of unrelated males. However, the bright colors of the women of Nigeria contrast sharply with the moribund black of the Arabian Peninsula—both are considered acceptable. Food and merrymaking also differ greatly, and Muslims, like other peoples, have diverse ways of enjoying themselves and appreciating the milestones of life such as weddings, births, graduations, and religious holidays. Religious music and chanting are widespread in the Muslim world, and Quran reciters with beautiful voices have statuses in some Muslim countries. Muslims attempt to adjust their view of the world with the lens of the Quran. The will of God is expressed in the Quran through both expectations and examples. The expectations are usually descriptions of how a believer should live his or her life, and various stories in the Quran provide positive and negative examples. The epitome of a positive exemplar is Moses, whose story is dealt with in great detail in the Quran. Struggle is at the root of life on earth, a spiritual survival of the fittest. The fittest are those closest to God; they are those who are "steadfast in prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them" Quran 2: Moses is given the Promised Land for his perseverance and steadfastness, and Pharaoh is destroyed by his own hubris and rebellion against the divine will. Between these two lies the struggle of humanity. Life is meant to be an arena whereby one struggles with good and evil. The Quran teaches that good and evil exist in the heart of every individual as well as in the society. The collective struggle is to work with others to make the world a more righteous place. In Arabic, this inward and outward struggle is called jihad. Because humans inevitably fall short morally and succumb to these destructive tendencies from time to time, a means of reestablishing spiritual balance is given, called tauba or atonement. While life is seen as a spiritual test and journey, it is also seen as being filled with blessings from God to be enjoyed: Thus, in Islam, marriage is highly recommended and celibacy is frowned upon. The Muslim savants of the past identified sexual relations between a wife and her husband as a foretaste of eternal bliss with God in the afterlife. The Prophet Muhammad encouraged marriage and stated, "There is no monasticism in Islam. The Prophet stated that humans were born innocent and later corrupted by their societies. Thus, parents are held responsible for maintaining that state of innocence and raising them with a sense of love and awe of the divine. Motherhood is highly regarded in the Quran and the prophetic tradition. The Prophet said, "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers. Death and Its Relevance to Muslims Death is a question of ultimate concern for every human being, and Islam has a very vivid portrayal of the stages of death and the afterlife. Death is likened to sleep in Islam; interestingly, sleep in Arabic is called "the little brother of death. In one poignant passage, the Quran reads, And spend something in charity out of the substance which We have bestowed on you before death should come to any of you and he should say, "O my Lord! Why didst Thou not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given largely in charity, and I should have been one of the doers of good. Muhammad advised, "Make much mention of the destroyer of delights," which is death. He also said, "Introduce into your gatherings some mention of death to keep things in perspective. When a Muslim survives a near-death experience, such as a serious car accident, an operation, or an illness, he or she will often remark, "My appointed time did not come yet. The funeral prayer is then performed, and the deceased is buried in a graveyard without a coffin, simply laid in the earth and covered. A person, usually a relative, informs the deceased of what is happening, as Muslims believe that the deceased can hear and understand what is being said. Muslims believe the dead person is not always aware of the transition, and so the one giving instructions informs the deceased that he or she has died, is being laid in the grave, and that two angels known as Munkar and Nakir will soon come into the grave to ask three questions. To the first question, "Who is your Lord? If however, the deceased does not pass this phase, then the grave is the first stage of chastisement. According to Islamic tradition, this blast signals the end of the world and kills any remaining souls on the earth. It is followed by a second blast that causes all of the souls to be resurrected. At this point, humanity is raised up and assembled on a plain. The Quran states, "On that day

We shall leave them to surge like waves on one another; the trumpet will be blown, and We shall collect them all together" Quran, p. From there, humanity will beg each of the prophets to intercede for them and hasten the Day of Judgment because the waiting is so terrible, but the prophets will refuse. Finally, all of humanity goes to the Prophet Muhammad. He will agree to intercede for them and ask that the Judgment commence. This intercession is granted to him alone. Then, each soul is judged based upon its beliefs and actions, which are weighed in the scales of divine justice. At this point, the two guardian angels assigned to all people throughout their adult lives will testify for or against them. According to the Quran, the limbs of each person will testify, and the earth herself is resurrected and bears witness against those who caused her harm. Next, a person will be given a book either in the right or left hand. For those given a book in the right hand, they pass the Judgment and are given the grace of God. For those given a book in their left hand, they fail the Judgment and are condemned to hell. However, at this point, prophets and other righteous people are allowed to intercede for their relatives, followers, or friends among the condemned, and their intercession is accepted. Once the Day of Judgment is over, humanity proceeds to a bridge known as the *sirat*, which crosses over hell. The saved cross it safely to the other side and are greeted by their respective prophets.

In addition to the Five Pillars of Islam, a number of further religious practices regulate the lives of Muslims and bring meaning to the most important of life's racedaydvl.com Quran contains.

Hajj Pilgrimage Shahada Creed The verbal commitment and pledge that there is no deity but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. See Shahada Video for correct pronunciation. **Salah** Mandatory Worship [Prayer] It is the duty of every Muslim, male and female, after reaching the age of puberty, to perform five Salats Prayers at specific times during the day and night. These five specific times are: A ritual called Wudu Cleaning several parts of the body with water is a prerequisite to Salah. Muslims are strongly encouraged to pray in the masjid, but if that is beyond their ability, they can pray anywhere that is clean; Muslims do not make Salah in a bathroom. **Siyam** Fasting Fasting during the month of Ramadan the ninth month of the lunar calendar is from sun up to sun down only and is an obligation on every adult healthy Muslim, male or female. Fasting is total abstinence from eating, drinking, smoking, gum chewing, intimate relations, and taking anything into the body. Those who are ill or unable to fast for health or reasons of age are exempt from fasting. However, they should feed the poor one meal for every day they miss of fasting. Women who are pregnant, menstruating, or nursing, or any who are traveling, are also exempt from fasting. However, when their situation changes, they make up the days of fasting or feed the poor one meal for each day of fasting they missed. **Zakah** Charity Zakat is an annual obligatory charity on every Muslim, male or female, who possesses over the last year money or property that exceeds their minimum needs. The requirement is 2. It is also called a tax because it supports the government workers who are not free to make money elsewhere. **Hajj Pilgrimage** The performance of the pilgrimage to Makkah, Saudi Arabia is required once in a lifetime of every Muslim, if financially able, as well as physically able. Hajj begins every year during the month of Dul Hejja; Dul Hejja is the 12th month of the Islamic lunar calendar year. **Pillars of Faith** In Islam, there are six pillars of faith: Muslims believe in their existence, their names, their tasks, and descriptions as explained in the Quran and in the Sunnah Teachings of the Prophet. **Belief in the Books of Allah** Muslims believe that Allah from time to time revealed books to mankind through His Prophets. These books originated from the same divine source; they are all divine revelations. Muslims believe in the original text of these books when they were revealed. The five prominent divine books are: **Belief in the Prophets of Allah** Muslims believe that Allah sent Prophets to all mankind as messengers for their guidance. Muslims believe in their existence, their names, and their messages, as Allah and His Prophet informed about them. Prophets are void of divinity because divinity is exclusive only to Allah God the Almighty. They are all righteous, truthful, and pious men chosen by Allah to be models to all mankind, both their words and deeds being in accordance with the divine commandments. **Belief in Yawm al-Qiyama** Day of Judgement Muslims believe that the life of this world and all that is in it will come to an end on one appointed day, when everything will be annihilated. Allah will reward those who lead a righteous life and did good deeds by sending them to Paradise Jannah. Allah forgives whom He pleases of those who disobeyed His Command, or punish them in the Hellfire Jahannam. **Qada wal-Qada** Destiny, Divine Decree Muslims believe that since the whole universe is entirely under the direction and control of Allah, then everything that is or that happens in this universe, from the smallest to the greatest event is governed by Allah. Muslims put their trust in Allah only. They are required, however, to make a sincere effort to strive and do their best, and not simply sit back and let things take their course in blind resignation. Such belief gives a person a tremendous degree of inner certainty, confidence and peace of heart, especially in the face of afflictions. Moreover, he lives with the assurance that whatever is to come to any individual, including death, cannot fail to come at its appointed time. **Ebadat** system of worship , and **Muamalat** system of dealing. The main source that governs all the laws of Islam is Allah through two channels; the first is the Quran, the book of Allah, and the second is the Sunnah, which is the authentic recording of the sayings, traditions of the Prophet and whatever his companion said or did to which he showed no objection. In Islam it is prohibited to drink alcohol, use drugs, use interest, and all immoral conducts. It is also prohibited to eat the meat of pork, predators animals and birds and all dead animals. In Islam, every being

is entitled to enjoy a free and peaceful life, regardless of religious, geographical or racial considerations. If non-Muslims are living peacefully or even indifferently with the Muslims, there can be no grounds or justification to declare war on them or to begin hostilities, embark on any act of aggression, or violate their rights. And is not a declaration of war against other religions and certainly not against Christians and Jews, as some people want it to be perceived. This includes the struggle to overcome problems, difficulties, tasks, and temptations. Also it takes the form of calling people with the community to enjoin good and forbid evil. The religion of Islam guarantees the sanctity of life the life of a non-Muslim is considered as sacred as that of a Muslim , honor, property, and freedom to embrace and practice any religion they freely choose, and all other conducts as long as those conducts do not hurt others. To terrorize people or spread fear in any society or hurt others; all are considered major sins in Islam; Allah prescribed severe punishments for those who are involved in such actions. In some societies women are treated according to ancestral customs and tribal tradition, but in Islam they are treated with full respect and honor. Her femininity should not be exploited in any way, rather she is to be regarded and treated as human individual whose sexuality does not enter into her relationship with any person other than her husband. In Islam marriage cannot take place unless the female freely agrees to it and a dowry is given to her. Islam puts priorities for the husbands and wives. The responsibility for providing for the family is on the husband, while the responsibility to care for the house and raising the children is on the wife. These are the main priorities, but cooperation between the husband and the wife is required and highly recommended. Muslim women also are instructed by Allah in the Quran to wear as a minimum Hijab head covering. At home, with her immediate family like her husband children, brothers, uncles, grandfathers and other males family members who are forbidden to them to marry her , and with other women, a Muslim woman may take her outer garments off, and be free to beautify herself as she wants. Unlawful clothing and adornment: Gold and silk are prohibited to Men only, but lawful for Women. Sometimes culture and traditions interfere with religion, or even overshadow the religion. Some people claim that something in their culture or tradition is part of the religion, when it is not. Or do things that have no justification in Islam and are prohibited; yet that gets portrayed by others as the tenets of the religion of Islam. Also the beliefs and practices of Muslims should not be judged according to the beliefs and the laws of other religions since some lawful practices of one religion can be portrayed by other religion as unlawful or even wrong. Sometimes a conduct of certain people can be offensive to others and vice versa in spite of the fact that this conduct is not meant to offend others. For example Islam commands Muslims to lower their eyes when they are talking to people of opposite gender out of respect and honor for the others. This can be offending to other cultures where eye contact is very important when communication. To live in peace and harmony in this world, one should realize that people were created differently and vary in the colors of their skin, their languages, and in their religions, cultures, and traditions. Some people may be different, but it does not mean that they are bad or evil.

Chapter 6 : Islam Beliefs and Practices

The five pillars of Islam - believing in Allah, performing ritual prayers, paying alms, fasting during the month of Ramadan and traveling to Mecca - are a guide of practices that a Muslim must adhere to in order to live life according to the teachings of Islam.

Rituals and Worship
Worship and Devotion in Daily Life
Muslims are united across boundaries of geography and culture through their observance of five practices known as the Five Pillars, or the Pillars of Islam. The Five Pillars are mentioned in the Quran, and are required of all Muslims. The Five Pillars are strong expressions of the Islamic ideals of equality and unity. The pillars of ritual prayer, the Ramadan fast, and the hajj are particularly powerful signs of Muslim egalitarian unity, since all Muslims in all places pray, fast, and go on pilgrimage at the same time. The profession of faith witnessing , or shahadah, very simply states that "There is no god but God Allah , and Muhammad is the messenger of God. It is also recited in daily prayer, and inscribed outside the doors and inside the domes of mosques. Ritual prayer, or salat, is a basic activity of daily life. Muslims are called to pray five times a day: The call to prayer is made by a muezzin , who calls out from the top of a tower, called a minaret. Before praying, one is expected to perform a ritual ablution, cleansing both mind and body. If water is available, the hands, arms, face, neck, and feet are washed. Prayers are performed facing in the direction of Mecca. While praying together is preferred to solitary prayer, Muslims can pray wherever they happen to be, whether alone or in groups. They can pray outdoors, at home, or in the mosque. It is obligatory for Muslim males to attend the mosque for the Friday noon prayer, a special time set aside for communal prayer. Islam discourages begging, and zakat allows poor people to find help without feeling disgraced. The practice also prompts us to confront our all-too-human tendencies toward greed, selfishness, and materialism. All Muslims who are able are expected to donate roughly 2. This includes total income, but also the value of livestock, produce, jewelry, real estate, and investments such as stocks and bonds. Initially, the collection and distribution of zakat was done by the state, which is why it is commonly called a tax. With the introduction of secular political systems, and especially the advent of the colonial state, zakat became an individual practice. In some countries, such as Pakistan and Sudan, the state has resumed collecting and distributing zakat, while Muslims in other areas can contribute to organized charities that collect and distribute donations to mosques, schools, libraries, and hospitals. In addition to the practice of zakat, Muslims are expected to respond with charity and generosity when called to do so in daily life.

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One misunderstanding that some people have about Islam is that they believe that Islam is simply about practicing a set of rituals. It is common to see and hear about the outwardly expressions of Islam such as prayers, fasting and the pilgrimage. It is also common to hear about the various restrictions Islam imposes such as prohibition of alcohol and pork, and the requirement for women to dress modestly. It is less common to hear about other aspects, so it may seem as if Islam is solely focused on rituals and restrictions. However, the reality is that Islam is meant to be a complete way of life for its followers. It includes a complete and logical set of beliefs, rituals, and a moral code that covers every action that a Muslim takes in their life. Since this question specifically asks about practices and rituals, only the physical, outwardly expressions of Islam will be discussed in this answer. You have probably seen pictures on TV or on the Internet of Muslims bowing and prostrating in prayers. You might have also seen pictures of the black, cube shaped structure that millions of Muslims visit and walk around during the annual pilgrimage. You probably also heard about how Muslims fast from dawn to sunset for one month a year, during Ramadan. Surely, you have seen women wearing the Hijab, or the veil covering their hair. You have probably wondered what are these people doing? Well, if you devote enough time to learn more about Islam, you will find that all these things are a small part of a complete way of life. There is a very logical explanation for everything that Muslims do. Islam does not require Muslims to blindly perform actions or rituals for no reason and with no explanation. Muslims believe that all requirements that God asks them to do or refrain from doing are for their own good. Muslims believe that following the complete way of life taught by Islam is the only way to attain real happiness in this life and afterwards as well. So after this long introduction, what are the practices and rituals of Islam? The following is a summary of some of the most important practices. The Muslim prayer is a combination of physical actions, verbal sayings, and an internal feeling in the heart. Muslims are required to be in a state of calmness, serenity and humbleness while performing their prayers. Once the prayer is started, a series of sayings and actions are performed. It also gives Muslims the opportunity to ask God for anything they desire. This could include asking for help in getting a job, passing an exam, having a child, asking God for forgiveness of sins or anything else. Muslims are required to pray at least five times every day, and are encouraged to pray extra prayers if they can. The required prayers have specific times that they are to be performed at. These are dawn, noon, mid afternoon, sunset and at night. Fasting means to refrain from having all kinds of food, drink and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset. Muslims are required to fast during the month of Ramadan every year. Ramadan is a month based on the lunar cycle, as opposed to the solar calendar used today by most people. Therefore, the start and end of the month of Ramadan change each year according to the lunar cycles. Ramadan can be either 29 or 30 days. Muslims are also encouraged to fast on other optional days. It is viewed as a way to cleanse the soul of all worldly desires and devote oneself completely to the obedience of God. It is also an opportunity for wealthy Muslims to experience life without food and drink for a day, which is meant to remind them of the poor and encourage them to have sympathy and to be generous in donating to help the poor and the needy. Also known as the Hajj, the pilgrimage is a physical and spiritual journey that every financially and physically able Muslim is expected to make at least once in their lifetime. Muslims travel to the holy city of Makkah, located in what is known today as Saudi Arabia, to perform the required rites of the pilgrimage. There, they are expected to spend their days in complete devotion to worship and to asking God for forgiveness and for anything else they wish to ask for. They also perform specific rituals, such as walking around the Kaaba, the black cube-shaped building located in Makkah. A very important aspect of Islam is giving charity to the poor. Muslims are required to give certain percentages of any type of wealth that they have accumulated. For example, Muslims must give 2.5%. It is important to note that this is not based on income, it is based on savings. A small portion of the money that is sitting in the bank accounts of wealthy people and not helping anyone is used every year to help the poor. This ensures some re-distribution of wealth among

Muslims. Also, Muslims are strongly encouraged to make charitable giving a habit. Most Muslims donate to charity on a weekly basis when they attend Friday prayer services at the Masjid, the Islamic place of worship. Before performing certain rituals, most importantly before prayers, Muslims are expected to perform a form of purification, known as ablution or "wudu" in Arabic. This involves washing the hands, face, arms and feet with water. Since Muslims are required to pray at least five times every day at various times throughout the day from dawn until the night, this ensures that Muslims maintain a high level of hygiene. The term "Animal Sacrifice" may sound weird, unusual or shocking to some people when they first hear or read it. But the reality is that the majority of people in the world do eat the meat of many different kinds of animals. Muslims believe that it is God whom has given us the right to kill these animals and eat them. Therefore, Muslims are required to mention God at the time the animal is killed. This reminds us that these animals were created by God and that God gave us the permission to benefit from them. This is why it is called a "sacrifice", and this is why it is considered a religious practice. Muslims are encouraged to perform animal sacrifice at special occasions in the Islamic calendar. In these special occasions, it is expected that part of the meat of the animal would be donated to the poor. This was just a quick overview of some of the main rituals and religious practices of Muslims. Although many people have heard about at least some of these practices, this is usually everything they have ever heard or learned about Islam. These practices are just a very superficial and physical aspect of Islam. A deeper study of the beliefs of Muslims would reveal the true beauty of Islam. It is hoped that the reader will continue to study this great religion, the fastest growing religion in the world today. With understanding comes tolerance, and with tolerance comes love and peace, all of which we need more of in our world today.

Chapter 8 : Lifecycle Celebrations: Islam And Islamic Life-Cycle Rituals

According to the Sunnah, or the accounts of the Prophet Muhammad's life, the Prophet is reported to have said that all children are born Muslim, they are later converted to other religions by their parents, for this reason there are relatively few rituals required by Islamic teaching at the birth of.

Browse Memorial Items Muslims view death as a transition from one state of being to another, not as an end. They believe that actions follow you to the afterlife. So, if you follow the law of the Koran and live a good life you will be rewarded in the afterlife. In death, you will be separated from the ugliness in the world. But if you live a dishonest and bad life, you will be separated from all the beauty of the world. Islamic funeral customs require that: The body be buried as soon as possible after death The body is turned to face towards Mecca, the holy center of Islam. Guests of the same sex should greet each other with a handshake and hug. A person sitting next to the body reads from the Koran. An Imam presides over the service. There is rarely an open casket. Guests should not take photos or use recording devices. The arms, legs, and hands of the body are stretched out in alignment with the body. The death is immediately announced to all friends and relatives. The body is bathed and covered in white cotton. A procession of friends and relatives follow. No discussion takes place at the time of burial, but all guests pray for the soul of the departed. After the body is buried, all guests go to the house of the family of the deceased. A meal is prepared and guests usually stay for the entire day. Family members may stay for the whole week. During this time, the family members socialize. It is believed that socializing helps to ease suffering. If arriving late, guests should simply join in. Under Islamic funeral customs, the mourning period officially lasts for 40 days. During that time, family members wear only black clothing. For one full year, the wife of the deceased continues to wear black, but the anniversary of the death is not observed. In the Islamic culture. The belief that the deceased has moved on to a pleasant afterlife is an important belief and helps the bereaved cope with their suffering.

Chapter 9 : RITUALS OF INFANT DEATH: DEFINING LIFE AND ISLAMIC PERSONHOOD

So, if you follow the law of the Koran and live a good life you will be rewarded in the afterlife. In death, you will be separated from the ugliness in the world. In death, you will be separated from the ugliness in the world.

Covering Fundamentals of prayer In addition to these essentials, there are a number of normative practices of the Prophet which are strongly recommended as part of the ritual prayer, known as sunnah: From this, it is clear both prayer and the poor-due are obligations. However, to find the necessary details to complete the prayer, i. The Prophet s used to practice the ritual prayer constantly, outside the obligatory times. It is indeed hard, except to those who bring a lowly spirit. According to the scholars of Divine Law recommended acts are divided into three categories: Taharah - Purification A precondition of ritual prayer in Islam is that the worshipper be in a ritually pure state and perform his or her prayer in a ritually pure location. There are two levels of ritual impurity, each with its own remedy: This occurs as a result of menstruation, childbirth and sexual intercourse or emission. Approach not prayers with a mind befogged, until ye can understand all that ye say,- nor in a state of ceremonial impurity Except when travelling on the road , until after washing your whole body. This occurs due to answering the call of nature, bleeding, vomiting and sleeping. Its remedy is ritual ablution. The Holy Prophet said: Ablution is the key to prayer as prayer is the key to Paradise. The various schools of Islamic jurisprudence differ slightly in the precise details of ritual ablution and bathing. Emphasized in all, however, is the need to use pure water, free from all contamination, for pure water contains the secret of life and of revivifying what is dead. Allah would not place a burden on you, but He would purify you and would perfect His grace upon you, that ye may give thanks. Besides cleansing the body, the worshipper must also take care to ensure that his or her clothes are free from impurities that would nullify the prayer. Traditionally, shoes are removed before the prayer because of their tendency to retain impurities. The Messenger of Allah said: Therefore, whoever can increase the area of his radiance should do so. To gain the full benefit of ablution, the worshipper must perform it with the realization of its inner aspects, washing away the burdens and darkness of worldly life that distract him or her from Divine service. The extremities washed during ablution are the primary means of interacting with the worldly life, and these must be cleansed of the taint left by that contact. Ablution begins with washing the hands, signifying that the first level of spiritual energy is in the hands. Human hands contain a Divine Secret, for they are a reflection of the Divine Attribute of Power, which Allah has bestowed in a limited degree on humankind. Thus, hands are a source of change, control and healing. No other creature has been endowed with so great an ability to manipulate its surroundings, and the hands are the main physical instrument of that ability. The hand can act as a receiver of positive energy. The circle of the body, so clearly illustrated by Leonardo da Vinci, is reflected on a smaller scale in the circle of the hand. Energy can be drawn in through the hands and channeled throughout the body. When one rubs the hands together during ablution, one activates a spiritual code that Allah has given us within our hands: The friction between the two hands creates energy in the form of heat and rubbing them together under water locks in that energy, preventing it from escaping. The water keeps the energy that is generated by rubbing the hands together within the body, where it can be released later. During the process of ablution the hands are used to convey the water to each other limb and organ, thereby functioning as a dispenser of that divine energy. As the limbs and organs are washed in ablution, each undergoes similar spiritual alterations based on the water, the hands and their energy, and the various movements and recitations that are part of the ablution. For the believer to benefit from the water, it must be pure and clean, otherwise its secret blessings do not reach the body. On an esoteric level, ablution becomes a metaphor for purifying the heart. Water is always clean in its essence, so the degree of spiritual reception is dependent on keeping the water free from external impurities. If we expand the spiritual metaphor, the water symbolizes the remembrance of Allah. That remembrance is pure, in and of itself, but can be tainted by the darkness of negativity which derives from wrong intent, wrong will and wrong action. The most powerful energy we carry as human beings is our spiritual energy. Second to that is the physical energy of creativity, which manifests during the act of procreation. In the course of physically expressing this creative energy Allah has placed within us, we enter

into a state similar to the spiritual state of annihilation, but not related to the Divine Presence, on the contrary, it is related to the lower self. When this occurs, it is essential to wash the body completely, with the intention to restore the spiritual state of purity lost during the act. Purification of the heart blocks the influence of Satan on the believer. For this reason, the Prophet is reported to have said: Ablution is the weapon of the believer. Ablution protects the believer from four enemies of the soul: However, only through the remembrance of Allah can the believer maintain this defense throughout the day. At an even higher level of understanding, ablution signifies the state of dissolving the self in the Divine Presence. However, even after someone is purified, there is still a chance for him to exist. Timing The five times of obligatory ritual prayer are: From dawn to sunrise; Dhuhr: From mid-afternoon to sunset; Maghrib: From early evening to the middle of the night. In his yearning and seeking for Allah, Abraham holds a metaphorical debate within himself. His first inclination is to bow before a bright star that shines forth at night, taking it as his Lord. However, when that star sets, his intellect rejects it, seeking something greater as Lord. Seeing the Moon, he determines it to be his Lord until it too sets and he seeks something greater still. Seeing the Sun rise, he supposes it must be his Lord, but despite its blazing glory, it too sets. Finally, Abraham concludes that none of these heavenly bodies "and by inference, no created thing" could be his Lord, and thus sets himself firmly on worship of the Unseen Lord: I am free from all that ye associate with Him. I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, as one by nature upright, and I am not of the idolaters. Muslims consider the day to begin at sunset, with the evening Maghrib prayer. This holds tremendous significance on an esoteric, or spiritual, level. The masters of the science of Islamic spirituality, Sufism, see the cycles of prayer as symbolic of the cycles of creation itself. The sunset prayer represents the station of leaving existence. The night prayer, which follows it, represents the station of darkness and death, annihilation and nonexistence. Those on whom He has passed the decree of death, He keeps back from returning to life, but the rest He sends to their bodies for a term appointed. Awakening to pray just before dawn represents the return to life, the descent through the darkness of the womb to emerge into the light. Metaphorically, the worshipper moves from the station of nonexistence and annihilation back to the station of existence and rebirth. A new day has come, and with it the worshipper is reborn. The apex of existence is marked by the noon prayer, which begins just as the Sun reaches the peak of brightness. At the zenith, two kingdoms are present and the prayer joins them: The afternoon prayer takes place in a time that signifies the approach of the end, autumn and the last era of worldly life. The coming of the afternoon prayer thus represents the approach of Judgment Day and the Divine Reckoning that it brings. With the setting of the sun, life comes to an end. The worshipper returns to Allah, taking with him an account of his deeds. It is for this reason that Islam places a strong emphasis on the afternoon prayer. Thus, each day is a full life cycle, from creation out of nonexistence to Judgment Day and annihilation. Each day has its birth, life and death. In similar fashion the prayer times reflect the five major stages of life: This directional focus is called the qiblah. It is the goal of the pilgrimage, which is the fifth pillar of Islam. By facing this location in prayer, each Muslim aims and hopes to reach that holy location at some point in her or his life. This direction represented respect for the previous Divine dispensations brought by Moses and Jesus and the Israelite prophets. Later, Divine legislation altered the direction of prayer to face the Holy House in Mecca: Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction. Thus, wherever Muslims live, their prayers have a common focus: The name Prohibited Mosque was given because no one may act on bad desires there. While it is called a mosque, Allah made it more than that. In reality, it is a place where sins are utterly rejected, not only in their outward forms but also in their inner realities. There, even negative thoughts and intentions are considered blameworthy. Only pure, positive desires and good thoughts are accepted. Indeed, within the confines of that holy sanctuary, no hunting is allowed; even the cutting of trees and vegetation is proscribed. The focus of every worshipper is, and must be, a holy place. This assembly gathers in imitation of the heavenly kingdom, for all these circles have one center regardless of their distance from it. At the spiritual level, that center is the Divine Presence. If we remove the four walls, what do we find?