

# Islam in america

Business



Islam is a monotheistic religion, which is articulated by the text of the sacred scripture Quran and by the teachings of Muhammad, which is considered to be the last prophet of God. People who practise Islam are called the Muslims. Islam was founded in Arabia during the 600's. After the death of Muhammad, his followers spread the religion to Africa and Asia and by 1000 they ruled vast lands from the North Africa and Spain in the West, to Palestine and Egypt in the Middle East, and to Central Asia and India in the East.

Besides, Muslims had a great impact on the development of American society. The purpose of the essay is to describe the key beliefs and practices of Islam, the history of it in the USA and status of this religion in America today. Key beliefs and practices The main belief of Muslims is that there is only one God, who is the all-powerful Creator of an ordered universe. Allah is transcendent and is referred to with the names that emphasize his power and superiority. There are 99 names that mentioned in the Quran, among which are: the Creator, the Life-Giver, the Opener and many others.

According to the theology of Islam, the main mankind's drawback is pride. In pride, human being attempts to act as if he was God and such actions are sure to damage the unity of God. Thereby pride is considered to be the cardinal sin while the cardinal virtue is submission to the religion and Allah. Speaking about the salvation, it needs to be mentioned that Muslim should live a life in such a way that is pleasing to the God in order to get a way to Paradise. Muslims believe that every person has an account of deeds, which is going to be used at the Day of Judgment and will determine one's eternal fate.

The doctrine of salvation tells that sinners and unbelievers will be condemned but in case of repentance they will be forgiven and enter Paradise. Generally, Islam teaches the eternal essence of the soul and an existence of transformed physical body after death. All Muslims will survive a Day of Judgment when they will be divided between Hell and Paradise. One of the key roles in Islam plays the issue of women. This issue is very controversial as there is nothing in Islam which makes women responsible for expulsion from paradise and misery of humankind.

According to the Quran women are equal to their male counterparts and they are liable for their actions as well as men are liable for their ones. Primarily, all women are mothers and precisely the role of mother gives a woman the highest respect to after the God. People who do not respect their mothers are considered to be the worst of sinners. Secondly, woman is a wife and a companion to man in all aspects of life. However, Muslim women had so many rights not always. Some centuries ago they were oppressed and denied basic human rights until the Muhammad's teachings led to important changes that helped to eliminate such cruel customs.

All the same even nowadays there are many things that are not very pleasant for Islamic women, namely the dress covering (hijab). Today not all Muslim women wear hijab, replacing it with the help of various headscarves and other things. In the USA, for example, the majority of women who follow Islam do not wear hijab. Besides all women are to tidy the house, to clean linen and to be obedient and quiet wife. They are not allowed to leave the house without permission and do not have a right to stay alone with other men. Eventually, these facts have lead to the appearance of Islamic

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feminism, which support women in Islam and advocate their rights, social justice and gender equality.

This form of feminism argues that our image of Islam was dominated by a patriarchal vision of this religion and according to it, women's identification with religious movements help women's emancipation. Brief History of Islam in the USA Before speaking about the status of Islam in present-day America, one should mention some information about its earlier development and arrival to the New World. The presence of Islam in American began with the Moriscoes and Spanish invaders. Later on many Muslim slaves were brought to American continent to work on the plantations. However, Islamic religion remained with the slaves and continued its developing with the arrival of incomers from Palestine, Lebanon (present-day Pakistan) on the early part of this century.

These immigrants included illiterate Arabs, who worked in the auto factories, or Muslim peasants, who lived in Sacramento. Later, in the early 50s, many Muslim physicians and other professionals arrived to America after their studies as they found the conditions here more hospitable. This period coincided with the period of the black movements in America and this period was precisely the one which saw the creation of the first Muslim communities in many states including Michigan, Indiana, Iowa, California and others. Thus, Islam began to gain new adherents among Americans. During this period Muslims formed in America several national Islamic groups (for example, the Muslim Students Association of the US and Canada) and their supporting institutions and held numerous national and regional conferences. Many

Muslims found their way back to religious roots and realized the value of Islamic faith.

Status of Islam in America today Nowadays there are many mosques, Islamic schools and centers throughout the country and all of them are able to minister to needs of all Muslims who live in the USA. Muslims in America are free to speak up for their faith in official and to make great contribution to the life of American nation. Nowadays, the number of Muslims in America is on the order of between five to eight million. This faith is considered to be the fastest growing one. The predominant Islamic group in the USA is African-Americans.

The next largest group is comprised by the immigrant communities, which come from many countries including those between Cambodia and Eastern Europe. The third largest group is the student community. And finally the smallest group includes Caucasian and other ethnic Americans. Generally, there are more than 7 million Muslims in the USA, who have built more than a thousand mosques, hundreds of Islamic schools, established over 500 associations and 200 thousand businesses, founded over 80 publications, newspapers and journals, etc. Today Islam (as well as Christianity and Judaism) teaches to live a pure life and follow the natural dictates of balanced mind and the Allah's guidance.

In the USA this religion has a unique opportunity to influence Islamic thinking all over the world. America's freedom for the ideas' exploration contributed to the development of new interpretation of Islam. Such a freedom carries the responsibility for Muslims to address current issues, among which are the

relations between the religion and modern science, Islamic approaches to religious diversity, attacks on Islam and gender roles.