**What do you know about Islam?**

The mass media is constantly trying to misguide the human beings about Islam. The world’s big powers are engaged in linking terrorism, extremism and radicalism with Islam. However, despite all negative propagandas, Islam is the most rapidly growing religion in the world and is predicted to outstrip Christianity in number of adherents by 2050.

Islam is the latest version of the Abrahamic religions, introduced by Adam the first human being and completed by the Prophet Muhammad over 1400 years ago in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Holy Book of Muslims is known as “The Qur’an” revealed to the Prophet by the archangel Gabriel during 23 years of his life. Unlike the holy books of Judaism and Christianity, which have been lost then reconstituted from different source materials and altered, the Qur’an has remained in its original form, untampered and untouched for the entire 1400 years until the present day.

At the core of Islamic teachings is an uncompromising monotheism called Tawheed; that God is one and incomparable to anything in creation even in His oneness. The religion is based on the Qur’an and the teachings and example of the Prophet through his Family and Companions. These teachings range from religious rituals like the daily prayers and the pilgrimage to Mecca, character development known as Akhlaq, legal precepts ranging from laws governing civil and criminal matters and civil and economic transactions, to rules of defensive warfare, and spiritual practices that bring us to closer God.

Islam is unique also in that it can be called the unifying theory of religions in that it sees itself as simply the last revelation of God to his prophets, 124,000 of whom He has sent to guide all mankind in every age from the time of Adam to that of the Prophet Muhammad. It is therefore the summation and clarification of all the religions that came before it. Thus the attitude of Islam to other religions is ecumenical and not divisive or exclusivist.

It holds very many beliefs in common with Judaism and Christianity such as angels, the Hebrew prophets, the virgin birth of Jesus and his bodily ascension to heaven, the continuation of individual existence after the death and the dissolution of the body, the resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgment, heaven and hell and the existence of the devil. However, it’s teachings about these subjects are somewhat different from that of its predecessors. For example, from an Islamic point of view, none of the prophets have ever been guilty of sin as has been mentioned about Noah, David and Solomon in the Bible, that Satan is not a fallen angel but a very powerful jinn or demon made of smokeless fire, that Jesus is a Prophet and not the Son of God and that he did not die on the cross, and that both Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree and are equally guilty for doing so.

Islam is represented by two major sects: the Shia and the Sunnis. The major difference between them is their opinion of the successorship to the Prophet Muhammad: Shias believe that the successorship rests with divinely authorized individuals from the Family of the Prophet that are infallible and are the most spiritual, knowledgeable and virtuous people of his community, whilst the Sunnis believe that his successors can be anyone in the community that can access this position regardless of the method used to achieve it. Outside this major difference their practice of the religion and their major beliefs are almost identical.