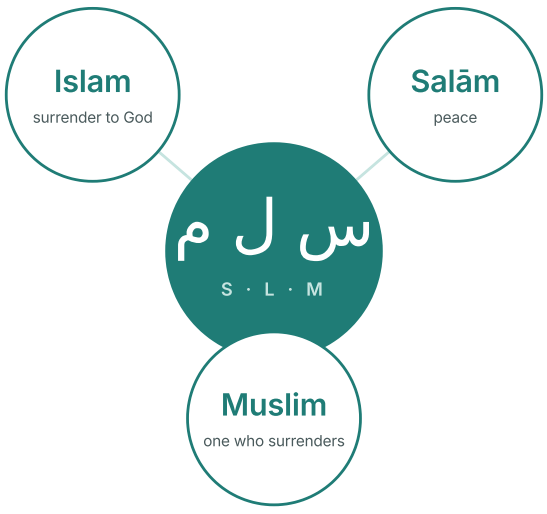
01

What is Islam?

Islam is a complete way of life built on one simple idea: turning your whole self toward the one God. Here is what the word means, who Muslims are, and how someone begins.

The meaning

One root, three connected words



Arabic builds words from three-letter roots. The root **S-L-M** carries the idea of wholeness and safety, and it gives us *Islam*, *salām* and *Muslim*.

Islam means handing your will over to God. This is not defeat. It is trust, the way a patient trusts a doctor who knows more than they do. Muslims believe that this trust brings peace, because God is all-knowing, all-wise and fair.

The Qur'an traces the name back to Prophet **Abraham**, who surrendered himself completely to the one God (22:78).

The people

Who are the Muslims?

≈ 2 billion

Muslims today: about one in every four people on earth.

A global family

Every race and nation. Most live in Asia and Africa; about one in five lives in the Arab world.

Largest community

Indonesia has the most Muslims of any country, followed by nations in South Asia.

One shared guide

The Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his family, the Ahl al-Bayt.

The first step

How does someone become Muslim?

1 Say the testimony

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ ٱللَّهِ

Ashhadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh, wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūl Allāh

"I bear witness that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God." Saying this sincerely is called the *shahāda*, and it is all it takes to enter Islam.

2 Keep learning

The shahāda opens a door; it does not finish the journey. Faith deepens over time, and the Qur'an itself says true faith grows as it "enters the heart" (49:14).

3 Live it

Belief gradually shapes daily life: prayer, honest work, kindness to family and neighbours, and care for those in need.

> "Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My blessing upon you, and chosen Islam as your way of life."
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> Qur'an 5:3 · meaning in English