

Salahouddine Mosque

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1.0 The Mosque

Salahouddine mosque was found in 1990, when a group of Muslims bought a former marble factory to renovate it as a new center. These Muslims were composed of a diversity of nationalities, including a Canadian. The renovation was done entirely by volunteers, whether they were architects, engineers or other workers. Until now, all the funds for the mosque come from local contributions and donations. Similarly, all the people working in the center, whatever the function they occupy, are benevolent.

The mosque is affiliated to a large organization named A.I.C.P. (Association of Islamic Charitable Projects) which is spread worldwide in 40 countries across the six continents. A.I.C.P. is part of the Sunnite and objectively teaches the authentic knowledge of the religion, as taught by the Prophet. It also adheres to the school of Imam Ash-Shafiiyy as well as Malikiyy, Hanafiyy and Hanbaliyy. The organization stresses on moderation and is a voice against those extremist groups who sponsor violence, terrorism and the call for assassinations of government officials who rule by secular law. All these are foreign ideas contrary to the true teachings of Islam.

The leader and spiritual guide of A.I.C.P. is Shaykh Âbduallah al-Harariyy, born in Ethiopia in 1910, who spreads the correct knowledge of Islam with diligence, peace and devotion. Shaykh Âbduallah memorized the Qur'an by heart with tajwid rules (*tartil*) when he was only seven years old. He is a renowned Scholar of Tawhid, Fiqh, & the Hadith which he can narrates with continuous chains of narration linked all the way to Prophet Muhammad. In addition, he learned and mastered many other field of knowledge, such as the science of Arabic language and grammar, the science of the 14 different recitations of the Qur'an (Tafsir), the sciences of calculation, medicine and of the fundamentals of the Fiqh & others. He is a Scholar of Hadith (*Muhaddith*) and of its sciences.



1.1 Decisions in Salahouddine Mosque

The decisions of Salahouddine mosque are taken by a directive group of about ten people, who meets once a week to discuss about problems and issues. There is also a committee of public relations that organizes the activities, celebrations, and meetings with politicians. Both these two groups contain people of different nationalities with Canadians among them. Finally, there is a treasurer who takes care of all the funds and accountability.

1.2 Canadian Integration

As I mentioned earlier, Canadians are implied in the mosque since its foundation. Their number never stopped growing and they now represent about 10% of the mosque population. Most of the women convert following a marriage, while this is usually not the case for men. There are a lot of facilities for non-Arabs people, like Canadians and others. First, there are always people to translate the general lessons in French and in English. There are women translators as well as men translators. All Muslims also benefit from individual lessons if they wish, in English, French, or Arabic and these lessons accommodate the person's knowledge of the religion. For instance, my husband and his family have a weekly personalized lesson in Arabic, while I have my own lesson in French.

Besides that, I would like to mention that the members of the mosque are very nice and kind toward Canadian and non-Arab nationalities. I am myself Quebecoise and I converted to Islam around a year and a half ago. When I started to go to that mosque, I really felt welcomed and they gave me a lot of help, since they are the ones who taught me Islam properly. Moreover, I made a lot of new friends including new Muslims like I was and this made my conversion much easier. Non-Muslims are also welcomed to ask questions or to listen to a lesson. This was also a very good thing for me, because I

was able to bring my brother twice to the mosque, for him to ask his questions and get to know a little bit more about my new religion.



Shaykh (teachers of Islam) with some members of the mosque.

1.3 Activities of the Mosque

The activities of the mosque are very numerous, for all ages and touch a variety of fields. Here is an enumeration of them:

- Free General Lessons (for men & women) every Friday and Saturday evening (at around 7h30) with free supper on Friday.
- Friday's Prayer
- Daily prayer performed in congregation
- Lessons for women about Qur'an & religion in the week.
- An-Nour Cultural School on Saturday : Classes to learn Arabic language, Qur'an and Religion. The school has about 150 students from a very young age (about four years old) to adult. Most of the people organizing this are women.
- Scouts (They are part of scout Canada with the same certificates).
- Annual Summer Camp with sports activities as well as religious lessons.
- Barbecue on Sunday (in summer) with recreational activities.
- Soccer team for adults
- Free Auto-Defense classes
- Organization of Annual Hajj Trip

- Religious songs groups (Madih) for man, woman & kids



Kids performing Madih



Men & Women performing Madih



The Women group of Madih in Parc Jarry, Montreal

- Celebrations



- Parade, each year, in the streets of Montreal , to commemorate the Prophet's Birth (Al-Mawlid)



- Big program in Ramadan with free supper and lessons each day, in addition to daily Taraweeh prayers
- Annual Supper of Ramadan with Politicians, including municipal, provincial & federal deputies, as well as businessmen, senators, consuls and ambassadors of Arabic and Islamic countries.



Some members of the Mosque with Pierre Bourque & politicians



Shaykh & other members with deputies

2.0 What is Islam?

Practiced by over a billion of Muslims across the globe and being the main religion in more than fifty countries, Islam is, with no doubt, the fastest growing religion in the world. But why is it that so many people of all different races convert to Islam? To answer this question, here is a summary of the beautiful message of this religion and how people seeking for the truth chose Islam as their way of life.

Islam is the religion sent by God to all the Prophets including Adam, who is the first created human, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and the last Prophet Muhammad. In Arabic, Islam means submission. In fact, every day Muslims submit themselves to God by living the way he ordered us to do so. But how can we know about God's commands? The answer is, by the prophets. Since the start of the human creation, God sent many of them (124 000 prophets in total) to whom the revelation was given. God also gave many miracles and a higher intelligence to all the prophets, so that we would recognize their prophethood and therefore, believe that what they say is the truth. They all came with the same message that there is only one God. They also taught us the rules of Islam or, in other words, how to obey God. These rules could, sometimes, change from one prophet to another, but the belief in only one God always remains the same. For instance, in the time of Jesus, Muslims were ordered to pray twice a day and in a particular place. Now, according to the rules revealed to prophet Muhammad, Muslims have to pray five times a day, but in no specific place. One must always follow the rules of the last prophet that came which is, in our case, Muhammad, who is also the last prophet of all. No new prophet will come after him.

The laws of Islam concern every aspect of life, whether it is about nutrition, transaction, marriage, divorce, death or others. Despite of that, the religion is based on five matters: Declaration of faith, Prayer, Zakah, Fasting and Hajj.

1. **Declaration of faith (*Shahadah*):** The declaration of faith is to profess & believe that no one is God except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. This declaration (or the meaning of it), called the *Shahadah* in Arabic, has to be pronounced in order for someone to become Muslim.
2. **Prayer:** The prayer is performed five times a day, alone or in group. There is no specific place to perform it, but one must face the Kabah. In these prayers, the Muslim recites the first *surah* (part or chapter) of the Qur'an. The worshipper then inclines himself once and prostrates to God twice. This whole sequence is repeated one, two or three more times, depending on which of the five prayers is being performed.



The Haram Mosque in Makkah. In this mosque is the Kabah (the black building in the center) toward which Muslims pray. Prophet Adam was the first to build the Kabah. During his time, the Aqsa Mosque was also built in Palestine.

3. **Zakah:** The *Zakah*, or almsgiving, is accomplished by paying a certain portion of one's money (property, possessions & wealth) to the poor Muslims and those in need.
4. **Fast:** Each year, during the month of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food, drink and sexual relations with their spouses from dawn until sundown. The ones who are physically unable to fast, because of illness or old age, are excused from it. Fasting disciplines the Muslims and helps them to feel what poor people feel, making them more sensitive and caring for the less fortunate.
5. **Hajj:** The *hajj* is a pilgrimage to Makkah that is required, at least once during lifetime, by each Muslim who is physically and financially able. The rites of the hajj include standing on the plains of Arafat, turning around the Kabah seven times and going seven times between the hills of Safa & Marwa, as did Hagar (prophet Abraham's wife) during her search for water. Over two million people coming from every corner of the world go to Makkah each year.

2.1 Who is God?

God's personal name is Allāh. It has no gender (God is not a man, nor a woman) or plural and therefore, nothing else than the one true God can be called Allāh. God said, in the Qur'an:

﴿ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَى ﴾

which means : {Allāh has attributes that do not resemble the attributes of others.}

All of the attributes of Allāh have no beginning, no end & do not change, because change is an imperfect attribute of creatures. Some of them have been repeated more often in the Qur'an and among them are:

1. **Existence (Al-Wujud):** God exists with no doubt and he exists without a place. In fact, God created everything including the good, the bad, the beliefs, the light, the actions, the mobility, the movement, the light, the darkness, the place, and so on. So, since he was living without a place before he created it, why would he need it after he created it? As one may see, it is impossible that God would live in a place. Therefore, one cannot say that God lives inside of his creatures or that he sits on the throne. (The throne is the roof of paradise and it is the biggest creation of Allāh).
2. **Oneness (Al-Wahdaniyyah):** He exists without a partner or associate.
3. **Eternity (Al-Qidam):** There is no beginning to the existence of Allāh. Therefore, all of his attributes have no beginning as well.
4. **Everlasting (Al-Baqa'):** God's existence does not end.
5. **Non-neediness of others (Al-Qiyamu bin-Nafs):** He does not need anything. For instance, he does not need one to give him existence, because he has no beginning.
6. **Non-resemblance to the creation (Al-Mukhalafatu lil-hawadith):** Allāh said in the Qur'an:

﴿ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ﴾

which means : {There is nothing like him.} Indeed, everything you can imagine in your mind, Allah is different from it.

7. **Power (Al-Qudrah):** His power is related to giving existence & annihilating what is intellectually possible.
8. **Will (Al-Iradah):** Everything that happens in this universe, whether it is good or bad, is under Allah's will. What God wants to happen, happens in the time he willed for it to happen. Seemingly, what he does not want to take place won't take place.
9. **Knowledge (Al-Īlm):** Nothing is absent from Allah's knowledge which does change. Our knowledge increases or decreases, but Allah's knowledge is a perfect attribute that always remains the same.
10. **Life (Al-Hayah):** His life is not like ours, since our life needs a combination of a body and a soul.
11. **Hearing (As-sam):** God hears what is hearable without an ear, or any other instruments.
12. **Sight (Al-Basar):** He sees all things that are seeable without any instruments.
13. **Speech (Al-Karam):** This is the attribute with which Allah orders, forbids & informs. His speech is not composed of letters or sounds & it is not a language. The Qur'an is called the speech of Allah because it is not authored by Prophet Muhammad or Angel Jibril. It indicates the eternal speech of God that doesn't resemble ours in anyway.

2.2 Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets

Muhammad was born in Makkah, around the year of 570, into the Arabian tribe of Quraych that worshipped idols. Since his father died before his birth and his mother passed away when he was only six years old, Muhammad was raised by his uncle Abou Talib. As he grew up, he became known for his truthfulness, generosity & sincerity, earning the name of Al-Amin, which means the trustworthy one. He was also called upon to arbitrate disputes and counsel his fellow Makkans. Muhammad had always believed in only one God & had long detested the decadence of his society. He was always concerned with the poor and the needy, the widows and the orphans, the slaves and the down-trodden. He was illiterate, unable to read or write and remained so till his death. Muhammad was not known as a statesman, a preacher, or an orator until he received the revelation at the age of forty, through the angel Jibril (Gabriel).

This revelation, known as the Qur'an, continued for the next 23 years. As soon as Muhammad started to recite the Qur'an and to preach what God revealed to him, he and his followers suffered from persecution from the unbelievers. The persecution became so severe that the Muslims emigrated to Madinah, under God's command, in the year of 622. Many people converted following this emigration. Several years later, they returned to Makkah (Mecque) where they forgave their enemies. Muhammad died at the age of 63, after most of the Arabian Peninsula had become Muslims. Within the next century, Islam spread from Spain to China. The rapid and peaceful spread of Islam was due, in part, to the truth and clarity of its doctrine.

From the time Muhammad received the revelation until his death, he always kept to propagate the message that there's only one God, even if he had to go through hardships and sufferings. His people even offered to accept him as their King and to lay all the riches of the land at his feet if only he would leave the preaching of his message. But he turned down their offers and continued to preach in the face of insults, social boycott and even physical assault. In all his actions, he was ever mindful and fearful of God. The collections of the sayings and actions of the Prophet are what is called the *Hadith* on which Muslims rely, in addition to the Qur'an.

2.3 The Qur'an

The holy Qur'an is a representation of the speech of God. It's a guideline on every aspect of life, such as wisdom, doctrine, worship and law. It also provides detailed teachings for a proper human conduct, an equitable economic system and a just society.

Despite the fact that Muḥammad was unlettered, all of Arabia stood in awe when hearing the wonderful eloquence of his message. The whole legion of Arab poets, preachers, and orators of the highest caliber failed to bring forth the equivalence of the Qur'an, which remains inimitable to this day.

The Qur'an was memorized by heart in its entirety by Muḥammad and his companions, and through the years kept on being memorized by thousands of people until today. It was also written down by scribes, who cross-checked it during the Prophet's lifetime. Not one word of its 114 surah (chapters) has been changed over the centuries. The Qur'an is in every detail the same unique and miraculous text that was revealed to Muḥammad fourteen centuries ago.