

# Islam in Southeast Asia



The word “Islam” means “submission to God”. Islam is monotheistic, requiring submission to Allah, the one and only God.

Muslims believe that the revelation of Islam was given to Muhammad who is revered by Muslims as the greatest prophet. He was born in AD570 in Mecca and died in AD632 in Medina, Saudi Arabia. During the month of Ramadan, Muhammad would often retreat to a cave. During one of these times Muhammad began to receive a revelation that he believed was from the archangel Gabriel. These writings form the basis of the Qur’an, the central religious text of Islam. In addition to the Qur’an, there is the book of ‘Hadiths’. The Hadith is comprised of the teachings of Muhammad, and its practice is an important part of the life of a Muslim.

There are more than 130 distinct Muslim people groups in Southeast Asia, representing the largest unreached people groups in the world! Each group expresses Islam using its own language, traditions, and culture.

### How many Muslims are there in Southeast Asia?

Country	Population	Muslims	%
Indonesia	245,000,000	213,000,000	87%
Brunei	413,000	266,000	64%
Malaysia	29,000,000	16,000,000	55%
Singapore	5,200,000	911,000	18%
Thailand	70,000,000	5,800,000	8%
Philippines	96,000,000	4,500,000	5%
Myanmar	49,000,000	1,200,000	2%
Cambodia	14,000,000	235,000	2%
Vietnam	90,000,000	33,000	0.04%

For most Muslims, Islam is an essential part of their cultural identity. For instance, most Malays believe that “To be Malay is to be Muslim.” Religion is not a choice, and it is a fact of life.

Source: [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)

Over 200 million Muslims call Southeast Asia home; they represent 40% of its population and 20% of Muslims worldwide.

Most Muslims have never heard the story of Jesus Christ. The Qur’an says that Isa al Masih (Jesus the Messiah) was born of a virgin. Isa is one of the most highly respected figures in Islam. He has the power to perform miracles, even bringing food from the sky. He has the power to chase away evil spirits, heal diseases, and even raise dead people.



The devout Muslim tries to live his life by the five pillars of Islam:

1. Recite the creed, confessing that: “There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His messenger.”
2. Offer ritual prayer 5 times a day, facing in the direction of Mecca.
3. Give at least 2.5% of his income to the poor.
4. Fast from dawn to sunset during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month.
5. Visit Mecca at least once in his lifetime.

Most Muslims have been taught that Christians are misguided, immoral people, eating pork, sleeping around, worshipping three gods, and making war when God loves peace. They are convinced that the Bible has been corrupted and cannot be trusted.

Many barriers such as poverty, lack of education, government prohibitions, ethnic tensions, and social pressure keep Southeast Asia’s Muslims from hearing the Good News. Only God can overcome barriers like these. By praying, you play a vital role in God’s work in Southeast Asia.

## pray

- Pray that this people group will have chance to hear and receive the Good News.
- Pray for God to remove spiritual strongholds and spiritual blindness.
- Ask God for dreams and visions that will lead this people group to follow Jesus even when there are no other Jesus-followers around them.