

## **ISLAM a personal response by Rukhsana Shah - Manager of Community Chaplaincy Project "Emerge" at HMP Downview.**

Does Islam mean peace, submission, tahid (oneness of God)? When we examine these concepts we arrive at the conclusion that the universe around us has been created in a perfect order from the movement of the galaxies to the wood worm's digestive system.

Just as gravity is invisible but self-evident, there are other divine laws, and when we align our action to the laws that have been created and maintained by God, we achieve success.

Submission means submitting our free will to God. Firstly one acknowledges the existence of one true God following him creates awe, gratitude and motivation. All sacred scriptures recognise the importance of moral values and how living by them brings a peaceful life.

### **ISLAMIC SPIRITUALITY**

Islamic spirituality is a marriage between the physical world and the internal state of a human being to produce outcomes beneficial to themselves and their environment.

Our human story begins thousands and thousands of years ago when The one true God created the soul or spirit of all humanity from the year dot to the last person on earth and asked "Am I not your Lord?" and we all regardless of gender race etc said "Yes".

We all have within us a divine spark of life but, more than that, it has the recollection of the covenant it made with the one true God, a consciousness and a capacity to possess spiritual insight. This ability enables humans to find Allah and to know Him. It is this phenomenal ability which shows you your ego is not your real self.

The Quran states the Allah is the light of the heaven and earth. This light exists in the heart of a believer, (not the ego but the true self) and when you become aware of Allah and act according to His principle the more this light increases. This has two benefits. The external benefit that God enables you to see the reality by sending this light of guidance. The other is you are not trapped in the frozen ego that has grown out from the various events in your life always keeping you preoccupied with regretting the past and feeling anxious or uncertain about the future.

Islam refers to this acquisition of knowledge as Noor or light. When we believe in the one true God and follow His messengers and His message He gives us internal light in the form of knowledge so our understanding of Him increases. Now we want to obey Him not out of necessity but out of love in our hearts.

There is an interesting Sufi story where knowledge and intellect are debating who is more superior. Each one claims superiority. Then knowledge says the name of God to intellect. Intellect then kisses knowledge on the forehead and admits its superiority

This knowledge which is received internally alters and shapes our reality so one never gets bored of life. We always have a fresh pair of eyes.

Aristotle the Greek philosopher said human happiness depends on discovery and a Muslim Sufi said God manifests Himself every second of the day. This discovery of God is Islamic spirituality which brings balance in life.