

The PEACE be upon you

[*As-salamu 'alaikum*]

'*As-salamu 'alaikum*' showcases superbly why **Islam** is '**the perfected path**' to attain peace here and Paradise in the Hereafter.

The protocol of extending this greeting is the young saying it first to the elders, the walking to the one seated, the smaller group to the bigger group, and the one entering the house to those residing in it.

This greeting must not be said to one who is praying, reciting The Qur'an, taking ablution, during the *khutbah* in the Friday prayer and when in the toilet.

One initiating the greeting must be aware that he or she is also making a *du'a* or supplication to Allah to protect the one we are greeting from every kind of harm or evil.

Through this greeting one also enters into a covenant assuring the other person that he/she can expect only goodness from you.

When asked about the path to Paradise, the Prophet (pbuh) replied, "*You will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe until you love one another.*"

Shall I not tell you about something which, if you do it, you will love one another? Spread salam amongst yourselves." [Muslim]

Those in Paradise will be greeted, "*Salam!*" *A word from the Merciful Lord.*" [36:57]

Compared to the shallow secular greetings ('hello', 'hi', 'good day', 'good to see you'), the completeness and depth of the greeting, *As-salamu 'alaikum*, is truly inspiring.

It is from The One Who blessed mankind with Islam, The Perfected Path to Paradise.

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With The Name of Allah,
The Intensely Merciful, The Eternally Merciful

The PEACE be upon you *As-salamu 'alaikum*

As-salamu 'alaikum translates to "The Peace be upon you." Muslims say it as a greeting when addressing an individual Muslim or a group of Muslims.

Many pronounce *'alaikum* incorrectly. They are unaware that the first letter in this word, "ع", has a guttural sound that is articulated from the back of the mouth.

When asked which aspect of Islam is best, the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "*Feeding people and greeting those you know and those you do not know.*" [Bukhari]

While initiating the greeting is *Sunnah*, The Qur'an makes the reply mandatory: "*respond with a better one, or return the same greeting.*" [4:86]

When one is greeted, one has to assume that it is from a Muslim and respond as per Qur'anic decree.

As the greeting is a sign of one's Muslim identity, it is not said to non-Muslims. **It is permitted to greet non-Muslims if it helps to bond for sharing the Truth of Islam.**

If a non-Muslim initiates the greeting correctly, then it is proper to return it as this is more just and Allah commands the Believers to "*be just.*" [16:90, 5:8]

It is permissible to say this greeting to the opposite gender if there is no fear of it opening the door to *fitnah* (temptation).

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It must be said with full reverence as one is beginning the greeting with a Name of Allah, *As-Salam* (The Source of Peace).

Allah The Exalted taught this greeting to Adam (peace be upon him), who addressed the Angels with this greeting.

Allah decreed that Adam's (pbuh) greeting and the Angels' reply, "*As-salamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullah*" (The Peace and Mercy of Allah be upon you), to be the greeting of Adam (pbuh) and his offsprings until the end of this Creation. [Bukhari]

The complete form of the greeting is "*As-salamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh*" (Peace be upon you and the Mercy of Allah and His blessings). One responds in the complete form, too.

There is no requirement to follow-up this greeting with a handshake or hug.

However, when Muslims shake hands while greeting each other, their (minor) sins are forgiven before they part from each other. [Abu Dawud]

There must be eye contact when greeting, and one must wait for the other person to respond. The reply must be heard clearly.

When asked who should greet first, the Prophet (pbuh) replied that the one who is closest to Allah will greet first. [Ahmad]

Muslims are not permitted to refrain from greeting each other for more than three days: "*the better of them is the one who gives the greeting of salam first.*" [Bukhari]