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Knowledgebase Islam is one of the world’s major monotheistic religions, with over 1.9 billion followers worldwide. Founded in the 7th century CE by the Prophet Muhammad in the Arabian Peninsula, Islam means “submission to the will of God” and offers a complete spiritual and practical way of life. Its teachings are based on the Qur’an, believed to be the literal word of God, revealed to Muhammad beginning in 610 CE. Core religious beliefs about Islam include belief in one God (Allah), angels, divine scriptures, prophets, the Day of Judgment, and divine destiny. Muslims practice their faith through the Five Pillars of Islam: faith (Shahada), prayer (Salah), charity (Zakat), fasting (Sawm), and pilgrimage (Hajj). Islam has two main branches—Sunni and Shia—and several smaller sects, each with unique traditions. Throughout history, Islam has influenced science, art, law, and culture. Its legal framework, Sharia, shapes many aspects of personal and societal life, though its interpretation remains a topic of modern debate. Islam continues to shape global culture, politics, and interfaith relations today. “There is no deity except Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.” (Quran 47:19) History Early Islamic Period (632–750) The early Islamic period began with the establishment of the Rashidun Caliphate, which lasted from 632 to 661 and included the first four caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. This period was characterized by rapid military expansion, leading to significant territorial gains and the establishment of a political structure for the growing Muslim community. Following the Rashidun era, the Umayyad Caliphate emerged in 661, marking the transition to dynastic rule under Mu’awiya I, the governor of Greater Syria. The Umayyads maintained Syria as their power base with Damascus as the capital, significantly influencing the cultural and political landscape of the Islamic world during this time. Sectarian Developments The early Islamic community witnessed the emergence of various sects and interpretations of Islam. The Druze, for instance, is often considered a quasi-Muslim sect by some Sunnis due to their nonritualistic approach to religion, which does not involve traditional Islamic practices such as prayer or fasting. Additionally, the Ahmadiyya Movement, founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in British India, introduced distinct beliefs that diverged from mainstream Islamic thought. Ahmad claimed to be the promised Messiah and a subordinate prophet to Muhammad. These beliefs have led to the Ahmadiyya being rejected as heretical by many Muslims, resulting in persecution, particularly in Pakistan, where they are officially regarded as non-Muslims. Influence of Sufism Sufism in Islam Sufism, a mystical interpretation of Islam, also began to take root during the early centuries of Islam. Sufi congregations formed orders (tariqa) centered around teachers (wali), who traced their spiritual lineage back to Muhammad. Sufis played a crucial role in missionary and educational activities across various regions, contributing to the spread of Islam and the formation of distinct Muslim societies. The Sufi-influenced Ahle Sunnat movement, particularly the Barelvi movement in South Asia, claims a large following and showcases the significant impact of Sufism on Islamic practices. “And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein.” (Quran, 50:16) The Gunpowder Empires The centralized states of the gunpowder empires significantly influenced Islamic practices among their populations. In the Ottoman Empire, a strong symbiosis between the rulers and Sufism emerged, with the Mevlevi and Bektashi Orders enjoying close relationships with the sultans. In contrast, the Safavid Empire’s forceful conversion of Iran to Twelver Shia Islam resulted in the dominance of this sect within Shia Islam. Persian migrants to South Asia played a key role in spreading Shia beliefs, leading to the establishment of significant Shia communities outside of Iran. Beliefs and Practices Islamic beliefs and practices are deeply rooted in the faith’s foundational texts and manifest in its followers’ daily lives. Central to these is the framework of the Five Pillars of Islam, which serve as the core acts of worship and are viewed as essential for anyone striving to live a life aligned with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Core Beliefs At the heart of Islamic belief is the acknowledgment of the Oneness of God (Tawhid) and the importance of following the guidance revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims believe that the Quran, which is considered the literal word of God, provides a comprehensive guide for living a righteous life. Among the key beliefs is the Day of Judgment (Mi’ad), where individuals will be held accountable for their actions. The Five Pillars of Islam Shahadah: The Declaration of Faith Shahadah The Shahada, or the Declaration of Faith, is the first pillar of Islam. It is a statement affirming the oneness of God (Allah) and acknowledging Muhammad as His Messenger. The declaration is as follows: “أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله، وأشهد أن محمداً رسول الله” (“Ash-hadu an la ilaha illa Allah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasulu-Allah”), which translates to “I bear witness that there is no God but God (Allah), and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”. This statement is central to a Muslim’s belief and serves as the gateway to embracing Islam. Salah: Prayer Salah refers to the five daily prayers that are obligatory for all Muslims. These prayers serve as a direct connection between the individual and Allah, providing structure and discipline to a Muslim’s day. The five prayers are: Fajr: Before dawn. Dhuhr: Midday, after the sun passes its zenith. Asr: Afternoon. Maghrib: Just after sunset. Isha: Night. Salah is a way to constantly remember Allah, express gratitude, and seek guidance. The act of praying involves both physical and spiritual submission, as Muslims bow, prostrate, and recite verses from the Quran during their prayers. “Indeed, Salah is a prescribed duty that has to be performed by the believers at specific times.” (Quran 4:103) Each prayer consists of specific movements and recitations, and it is always performed facing the Kaaba in Mecca, the holiest site in Islam. Prayer not only fosters a personal connection with Allah but also promotes unity within the global Muslim community, as all Muslims, regardless of location, perform their prayers in the same manner. “Establish prayer, indeed prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing.” (Quran, 29:45) Zakat: Almsgiving Zakat is the obligatory giving of a portion of one’s wealth to help those in need. It is a form of social welfare that promotes economic justice and equality, ensuring that wealth is distributed more fairly across society. The word “Zakat” means purification and growth, symbolizing the purification of wealth through giving. Muslims are required to give 2.5% of their surplus wealth each year to eligible recipients, which include: The poor and needy. Zakat collectors. Debtors are unable to pay off legitimate debts. Travelers in need. New converts to Islam. Those in the path of Allah. “Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah’s blessings] upon them.” (Quran 9:103) Zakat is an essential component of Islamic finance and charity, aiming to reduce poverty, build a more equitable society, and help individuals grow spiritually by encouraging generosity and compassion. Sawm: Fasting during Ramadan The fourth pillar, Sawm, involves fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. During this month, Muslims abstain from food, drink, and other physical needs from dawn until sunset, promoting self-discipline and empathy for the less fortunate. “O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.”(Quran, 2:183) Fasting, a key act of worship in Islam, was prescribed for all Prophets and their followers, from Hazrat Adam (AS) to Hazrat Isa (AS). It enhances spiritual growth, physical health, and self-discipline by purifying the soul and controlling the desires of the nafs. Unique to humans, fasting fosters empathy for the needy and builds devotion to Allah. Even modern medical science acknowledges its health benefits. The Qur’an and Hadith emphasize fasting’s immense spiritual and physical rewards when observed sincerely. Hajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca “And proclaim to the people the Hajj; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel.” (Quran, 22:27) The Hajj is an annual pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim must perform at least once in their lifetime, provided they have the financial and physical ability to do so. It occurs during the Islamic month of Dhul-Hijjah and is the most significant act of worship for Muslims around the world. The rituals of Hajj trace back to the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), who is believed to have built the Kaaba with his son Ismail. Pilgrims undertake a series of symbolic acts that include: Ihram: Entering a state of purity by wearing simple white garments. Tawaf: Circling the Kaaba seven times. Sa’i: Walking between the hills of Safa and Marwah to commemorate Hagar’s search for water. Standing at Arafat: A day of prayer and reflection. Ramy al-Jamarat: Throwing pebbles at symbolic pillars representing Satan’s temptations. The conclusion of Hajj is marked by Eid al-Adha, a festival that commemorates Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to Allah. Hajj is a profound spiritual journey that symbolizes submission, equality, and unity, as millions of Muslims from diverse backgrounds come together in worship. Daily Practices and Customs Islamic traditions are not limited to these formal acts of worship; they permeate daily life. Muslims adhere to dietary laws known as Halal, which govern permissible foods and methods of preparation. Modesty in dress and behavior is also emphasized, often seen in traditional garments such as the hijab for women and the thobe for men. Community and Family Values Community and family play a significant role in the Islamic way of life. Communal prayers, especially the Friday Jumu’ah prayer, are essential for strengthening the bonds of the community. Family life is cherished, with particular respect for elders and a focus on nurturing the next generation. Celebrations Islamic celebrations, such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, hold special significance. Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan with communal prayers and feasting, while Eid al-Adha commemorates the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, with celebrations including the ritual sacrifice of an animal and sharing the meat with family and those in need. Branches of Islam Islam is divided into two major branches: Sunni and Shia, each encompassing various sects and interpretations. Sunni Islam Sunni Islam is the largest branch of Islam, comprising approximately 85-90% of the global Muslim community. Sunni Muslims adhere to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as recorded in the Hadith, and they follow four main schools of jurisprudence known as Madh’habs: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’i, and Hanbali. These schools were established based on the teachings of prominent scholars, including Abū Ḥanīfa, Malik ibn Anas, al-Shafi’i, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Sunni Islam emphasizes community consensus (ijma) and the importance of following the practices of the Prophet and the early Muslim community. Notable Sunni Groups Within Sunni Islam, there are several notable groups, including Salafism, which advocates a return to the practices of the early Muslims and often views various cultural and devotional practices, including those associated with Sufism, as innovations (bid’ah) that diverge from pure Islamic teachings. This has sometimes led to tensions and conflicts between Salafis and Sufi practitioners. Shia Islam Shia Islam represents a significant minority within the Muslim community, with around 10-15% of Muslims identifying as Shia. The Shia branch originated from a dispute over the rightful successor to the Prophet Muhammad, leading to the belief in a line of Imams who are considered the spiritual and political successors of the Prophet. The largest group within Shia Islam is the Twelvers (Ithna Ashariyya), who believe in a succession of twelve Imams, the last of whom, Imam Mahdi, is believed to be in occultation and will return as a messianic figure. Major Shia Sects In addition to the Twelvers, there are other Shia sects, including Ismailis and Zaidis, each with unique beliefs and practices. Ismailis, for instance, differ from Twelvers in their line of Imams and interpretative approaches to Islamic teachings. Other Branches and Sects Beyond Sunni and Shia Islam, several other smaller sects and movements exist, including the Druze, Ahmadiyya, and Ibadi. The Druze, while emerging from Ismaili Shia roots, consider themselves distinct and are often regarded as a nonritualistic religion, with beliefs that diverge significantly from traditional Islamic practices. Similarly, the Ahmadiyya community has faced controversy and persecution from mainstream Muslim groups for its distinct theological beliefs. Islamic Law and Ethics Islamic law, known as Sharia, is derived from the Quran and the Sunnah (practices of the Prophet Muhammad). It encompasses a comprehensive legal framework that governs the lives of Muslims, addressing a wide array of issues including personal conduct, family relations, and social justice. The sources of Sharia also include qiyas (analogical reasoning), ijma (consensus), and various interpretations of Islamic scholars over the centuries. “Indeed, We have sent down to you the Book in truth so you may judge between the people by that which Allah has shown you.” (Quran, 4:105) Foundations of Sharia The primary texts of Islam, the Quran and Hadith, form the basis of Sharia. They are supplemented by the practice of qiyas, which allows for the adaptation of legal principles to new situations not explicitly covered in these texts. This process has led to the recognition of a wide spectrum of legal opinions within the Islamic tradition, permitting variations in practice across different cultures and communities. Categories of Legal Rulings Islamic legal rulings are classified into five categories known as ahkam: mandatory (fard), recommended (mustahabb), permitted (mubah), abhorred (makruh), and prohibited (haram). This classification system allows for nuanced ethical and legal judgments, reflecting the complexity of human behavior and societal needs. Historical Context and Development After the death of Muhammad in 632 CE, early Muslim leaders began interpreting religious texts to establish Sharia, which became foundational for Islamic governance and social order. Over time, this led to the formation of distinct schools of Islamic jurisprudence, each with its interpretations and legal methodologies. “The best of generations is my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them.” (Bukhari) The Ottoman Empire’s 19th-century reforms attempted to codify these laws through statutes influenced by European models, particularly in civil matters, while personal status laws remained deeply rooted in traditional jurisprudence. Contemporary Issues In modern times, the role of Sharia in governance and its compatibility with secular legal systems has sparked significant debate. Islamic revival movements have called for a comprehensive implementation of Sharia, raising questions about human rights, gender equality, and freedom of thought within Muslim societies. As such, the interpretation and application of Sharia continue to evolve, reflecting both traditional values and contemporary challenges. The Best 10 Islamic Books Every Muslim Should Read Islam means to achieve peace – peace with God, peace within oneself, and peace with the creations of God – through wholly submitting oneself to God and accepting His guidance.The term Islam derives from the three-letter Arabic root, S (س)- L (ل)- M (م), which generates words with interrelated meanings, including “surrender”, “submission”, “commitment” and “peace”. Commonly, Islam refers to the monotheistic religion revealed to Muhammad ibn (son of) Abdullah between 610 and 632 of the Common Era. The name Islam was instituted by the Qur’an, the sacred scripture revealed to Muhammad. For believers, Islam is not a new religion. Rather, it represents the last reiteration of the primordial message of God’s Oneness, a theme found in earlier monotheistic religious traditions.Though Islam can be described as a religion, it is viewed by its adherents – a fifth of the world’s population – in much broader terms. Beyond belief in specific doctrines and performance of important ritual acts, Islam is practiced as a complete and natural way of life, designed to bring God into the center of one’s consciousness, and thus one’s life. Essentially, by definition Islam is a world view focused on belief in the One God and commitment to His commandments. What is the Essence of Islam? Prophet Muhammad mentioned in a narrative the best summary of the core of Islam as follows:“Submission means that you should bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is God's messenger, that you should perform the ritual prayer, pay the alms tax, fast during Ramadan, and make the pilgrimage to the House if you are able to go there.""Faith means that you have faith in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and that you have faith in the measuring out, both its good and its evil.""Doing what is beautiful means that you should worship God as if you see Him, for even if you do not see Him, He sees you." The Arabic word Allah literally means “The God”. Believers in Islam understand Allah to be the proper name for the Creator as found in the Qur’an. The name Allah is analogous to Eloh, a Semitic term found in the divine scriptures revealed to Muhammad’s predecessors Moses and Jesus (may peace be upon them all).The use of the term Allah is not confined to believers in Islam alone — Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews also use Allah in reference to God, demonstrating thereby that followers of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism believe in a common monotheistic Creator, a fact that many people are surprised to learn. One reason for this may be that English-speaking persons are accustomed to the term God, whereas believers in Islam, regardless of their native language, use the Arabic word Allah. This difference in usage may cause people to view the term Allah with reticence and uncertainty, preventing them from making the connection between the Arabic name and the accepted English equivalent term. Who is God in Islam?The Qur’an, the divinely-revealed scripture of Islam, contains numerous verses describing the nature of God. The role of human beings as creations of God upon the earth and their relationship with God are also discussed extensively in the sacred text: "Say: He is Allah, the One" (Quran 112:1) -"Allah, the eternally Besought of all" (Quran 112:2) -"He begetteth not nor was begotten" (Quran 112:3) -"And there is none comparable unto Him" (Quran 112:4) -"And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers knowing nothing, and gave you hearing and sight and hearts that haply ye might give thanks" (Quran 16:78) - "Vision comprehendeth Him not, but He comprehendeth (all) vision. He is the Subtile, the Aware" (Quran 6:103) - Muslims believe that God has no partners or associates who share in His divinity or authority and that God is transcendent, unlike His creations, and thus has no physical form. Nor is God believed to exist in (or be represented by) any material object. A number of divine attributes or “names,” which serve to describe God, are found in the Qur’an. Some commonly known attributes include the Most Merciful, the Most Forgiving, the Most High, the Unique, and the Everlasting, among others. Are humans an image of God?In Islam, human beings, like other creations, are seen as completely unlike God, though they may aspire to exhibit various attributes manifested by God, such as justice or mercy. Furthermore, even while God is believed to be beyond traditional human perception, the Qur’an states:"His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and, unto Allah (all) things are brought back" (Quran 57:5) -For Muslims, God’s Oneness heightens the awareness that ultimately all life is bound by Divine Law emanating from a singular source and that life has a meaning and purpose which revolves around the consciousness of God’s presence.Moreover, belief in a singular Creator compels conscientious Muslims to view all humanity as one extended family and treat others with justice and equity. Respect for the environment and natural resources also follows from the Muslim view of God. The word Qur’an literally means “the reading” or “the recitation”, and refers to the divinely revealed scripture given to Muhammad. Since Muhammad is considered the last prophet of God, the Qur’an is believed to be the final revelation from God to humanity. The Qur’an is considered by Muslims to be the literal Speech of God given to Muhammad in the Arabic language. The chapters and verses of the Qur’an were revealed throughout Prophet Muhammad’s mission, over a span of close to twenty-three years, from 610-632 C.E. Contrary to common misconception, Muhammad is not the author of the Qur’an. Rather, he is viewed as the chosen recipient of and transmitter of the revelation and the ideal implementor of principles and commandments contained therein. The personal sayings or words of Muhammad are known as hadith, which are distinct from the divine origin of the content of the Qur’an.As verses of the Qur’an were revealed to Muhammad and subsequently repeated by him to companions and other fellow Muslims, they were written down, recited and memorized. The Prophet also typically led the formal worship five times daily, during which he recited the revealed verses according to the procedure that he established. The verses were also recited out loud by designated Muslims in the early dawn hours and prior to the worship times and other important occasions. In short, the Qur’anic verses played an immediate and practical role in the spiritual lives of Muslims from the outset. Before he passed away, the Prophet arranged the 114 chapters into the sequence we find in the Qur’an as we have it today. Scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, agree that the Qur’an has remained intact and unchanged to the present. The Qur’an as a scripture stands unique in this regard.Translations of the Qur’an exist in many languages throughout the world, including English, Spanish, French, German, Urdu, Chinese, Malay, Vietnamese, and others. It is important to note that while translations are useful as renderings or explanations of the Qur’an, only the original Arabic text is considered to be the Qur’an itself. The word Muslim literally means "one who willfully submits (to God)." Islam teaches that everything in Creation — microbes, plants, animals, mountains and rivers, planets, and so forth — is "muslim", testifying to the majesty of the Creator and submitting or committing to His divine laws. Human beings, also, are considered fundamentally ”muslim” (submitters to God) in their original spiritual orientation, but being unique creations endowed with abilities of reason, judgement, and choice, they may remain on a God-conscious, righteous path towards divine reward, or may veer away as a consequence of upbringing and life-choices.More commonly, the term Muslim refers to one who believes in the Shahadah (the declaration of faith containing the basic creed of Islam) and embraces a lifestyle in accord with Islamic principles and values. Anybody may be or become a Muslim, regardless of gender, race, nationality, color, or social or economic status. A non-Muslim who decides to enter Islam does so by reciting the Shahadah, (pronounced La-Ilaha Ila Allah, Muhammad-un Rasool Allah) witnessing that "there is no deity but Allah (God), and Muhammad is His Messenger." Where do Muslims live?Over 1.8 billion people throughout the world are adherents of Islam. Islam is the religion of diverse peoples living in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Central, East, South and Southeast Asia, Japan, Australia, and North and South America. The global spectrum of races, ethnicities and cultures finds representation in the worldwide Muslim community.Muslims throughout the world share the same essential beliefs, values, and God-centered approach to the world. Furthermore, all Muslims look to the Qur’an and the lifestyle and traditions of Prophet Muhammad for guidance in their daily affairs. In this respect, Muslims share a common Islamic culture, focusing on shared principles and values. At the same time, the ethnic, regional or material cultures of Muslims vary tremendously across the globe. Muslims exhibit different styles of clothing, different tastes for food and drink, diverse languages, and varying traditions and customs.Muslims view the diversity found throughout the world as a natural part of God’s plan for humanity and believe it contributes to Islam’s continued vitality and universal ethos. Consequently, rather than imposing arbitrary cultural uniformity, diverse cultural practices are encouraged and supported. So long as a given cultural practice or tradition does not violate teachings of Islam it is considered legitimate and possibly even beneficial. Why Don't Muslims Speak Out Against Terrorism? Islam teaches that Muhammad’s role as the final prophet of God was to confirm the authentic teachings of previous prophets and to rectify mistakes or innovations that followers of previous monotheistic faith traditions had introduced into the original religion of humankind. Muhammad is also viewed as the conduit for the completion of God’s guidance to humanity; the scope of his mission is seen as encompassing all people, rather than a specific region, group or community. Furthermore, his life serves as a perfect model of how to practice Islam fully."And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of good tidings and a warner unto all mankind; but most of mankind know not" (Quran 34:28) -Essentially, Muslims view Islam not as a “new” religion, since it embodies the same message and guidance that God revealed to all His messengers, but rather a reestablishment of the “primordial” religion of humankind, centered around recognizing God’s Oneness and adhering to His commands. The view of Islam as having achieved its final form through the scripture given to Muhammad and his own teachings is an important aspect of faith. Consequently, Muhammad is considered the final messenger of God, the “Seal” of the Prophets. Any claimants to prophethood after Muhammad, who died in 632 C.E., are not accepted by Muslims."Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets; and Allah is Aware of all things" (Quran 33:40) - The early life of Muhammad including his work as a merchant, his marriage to Khadijah, his early revelations and the persecution of early Muslims by his own Quraysh tribe. Prophet Muhammad lineage all the way to Adam whyIslam, CC0, According to Islam, men and women are spiritually equal beings created from a common origin. All of the religious obligations in Islam are incumbent upon both women and men. God’s mercy and forgiveness apply equally to men and women. The following Qur’anic verse, arguably the first gender-equity statement in any major scripture, illustrates this point:"Lo! men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah much and women who remember--Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward" (Quran 33:35) -As a consequence of physiological, psychological and other distinguishing factors embodied in men and women by the Creator, the rights, responsibilities, and roles of men and women are believed to naturally differ. Muslims believe that God has assigned the responsibility of providing financially for the family to men, and the important responsibility of fostering a God-conscious and righteous family to women. Such roles do not preclude women from having careers and earning income or men from helping to raise a family. Rather, they provide a general framework for Muslim society, designed to reinforce the concept of a nuclear family unit.The guidelines for men and women’s roles are also meant to ensure dignified and proper relations between people of the opposite sex. Minimal mixing of the sexes in Muslim societies should not be construed to imply inequality or confinement. Rather, such measures are designed to protect individuals from unsolicited attention, inappropriate sexual attraction, adultery and possibly other forms of violence such as rape.Since the seventh century the Qur’an specified the natural and inherent rights of women as well as men, and enjoins people to act in line with God’s teachings of justice and equity. Islam gave gave women the right to own and inherit property, the right to obtain an education, the right to contract marriage and seek divorce, the right to retain one’s family name upon marriage, the right to vote and express opinions on societal affairs, and the right to be supported financially by male relatives (husband, father, brother, etc.).Such rights were unheard of in the seventh century, yet were implemented to varying degrees in Muslim civilization throughout the last fourteen hundred years. It is also important to recognize that only in the last two centuries have such rights been available to women in Western societies. Clearly, common stereotypes regarding women’s rights must be carefully considered, and the current practice of Muslims in various countries and regions must be examined within the context of history and within light of the sources of Islam in order to ascertain the degree to which Muslim women are able to exercise their rights today. Prevailing cultural factors must also be taken into account. Do Muslims believe in laws beside the religious law (Shariah)?The term Shari’ah means “the path” or literally “the way to a watering place.” Shari’ah is commonly used to mean divinely-revealed “Islamic Law,” which plays a central role in the lives of Muslims throughout the world. On a societal level, in some Muslim countries Shari’ah is implemented as the basis for the judicial system and for regulating the collective affairs of citizens. Other countries implement a hybrid of Shari’ah and civil law, while some others do not implement Shari’ah at all.Muslims living as minorities in countries such as the United States abide by the civil laws of the land. However, because of the importance of Shari’ah in enabling the practice of Islam as a complete way of life, Muslims may express a desire for implementation of Shari’ah for themselves. Interestingly, in England, Muslims have established a religious parliament that works with the British government to enable implementation of Muslim personal laws, which deal with matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other issues. What is Islam’s view on human rights and social justice?According to Islam, human beings are the noblest creations of God, endowed with consciousness and freedom of choice. The Qur’an states that God has made human beings His trustees or stewards on the earth. Muslims see this world as God’s field, and human beings as the caretakers. Muslims believe humanity’s ultimate task is to build a world that reflects the will of God. Thus, Islam is balanced in its concern for salvation in the Hereafter as well as peace and justice in the present world. Islam places great emphasis on social justice for all people. Muslims consider it an obligation to oppose all who exploit, oppress, discriminate, and deal unjustly with people."O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both (than ye are). So follow not passion lest ye lapse (from truth) and if ye lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever Informed of what ye do" (Quran 4:135) -Muslims understand the goal of Islam to be the spiritual upliftment of the individual and productive development of society. The ultimate consequence of rejecting God, His guidance and teachings is an unjust society. Conversely, the natural consequence of obedience to God’s laws and living according to His guidance is a society of peace, equality, freedom from want, dignity for all, and justice. What is Jihad?The Arabic word jihad means “struggle” or “exertion” and refers to any spiritual, moral or physical struggle. In the personal sphere, efforts such as obtaining an education, trying to quit smoking, or controlling one’s temper are forms of jihad.Jihad as a military action is justified in two cases: struggle to defend oneself, or others, from aggression and struggle for freedom of religion and justice. The Qur’an says: "They question thee (O Muhammad) with regard to warfare in the sacred month. Say: Warfare therein is a great (transgression), but to turn (men) from the way of Allah, and to disbelieve in Him and in the Inviolable Place of Worship, and to expel his people thence, is a greater with Allah; for persecution is worse than killing. And they will not cease from fighting against you till they have made you renegades from your religion, if they can. And whoso becometh a renegade and dieth in his disbelief: such are they whose works have fallen both in the world and the Hereafter. Such are rightful owners of the Fire: they will abide therein" (Quran 2:217) - and therefore must be thwarted. Systematic, forced conversion to Islam is a historical myth. Muslims defeated hostile forces and gained control of new lands where Islamic rule was established, yet non-Muslim inhabitants were not forced to become Muslims. Islam clearly condemns such actions: “There is no compulsion in religion.” (Qur’an, 2:256). In the course of time, many non-Muslims did find the message of Islam appealing and converted to Islam, resulting ultimately in the transformation of society at all levels.Because jihad is a highly nuanced concept, the term “holy war” is an inappropriate rendering or definition. In fact, for Muslims, war can never be holy, and the equivalent Arabic term for holy war "harb muqaddasa" never occurs in the Qur’an. Instead, war can be just or unjust, but never holy. What about all the terrorists?Contrary to popular misconception, Islam does not condone terrorism. Prophet Muhammad and his companions prohibited the killing of civilians and non-combatants in the course of warfare. The Qur’an says: "Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not, aggressors" (Quran 2:190) -Moreover, the Qur’an and the Prophet prohibited the torturing of prisoners and the senseless destruction of crops, animals and property.Struggle against injustice is a key, distinctive concept in Islam. Through the ages, the concept of righteous struggle has inspired Muslim peoples and movements to stand up against oppression and tyranny, as in the case of the wars of independence against colonialism.While some Muslim extremists may perpetrate acts of terrorism, this does not diminish the legitimacy of righteous struggle against oppression and injustice experienced by Muslims in many parts of the world. Indeed, such terrorists violate the teachings of Islam."O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is Informed of what ye do" (Quran 5:8) -In any case, there can be no such thing as “Islamic terrorism”, despite the fact that such terms have become a popular oxymoron. The adjective “Islamic” cannot be applied to what some misguided Muslims do. The Dark Ages where humans thoughts were oppressed, humans prosecuted and Europe was plagued by famine, wars and poverty. But what about the Muslim world? How did they create the first university? Who was Abbas ibn Firnas? And how did Al Khwarizmi lay down the foundation to computers (Hint: algorithm)? An estimated five to seven million Muslims live in North America, and of these, over two and a half million are Americans who have embraced Islam. The United States Department of Defense reports that there are currently more than 9,000 Muslims on active duty in the U.S. armed services. A number of leading American scientists, physicians, sports figures, and scholars are Muslim. Clearly, Muslims are part of the diverse fabric of the United States, playing a productive role in our society as neighbors, co-workers, colleagues, schoolmates, and friends. The diversity of Muslims in the United States is a hallmark of the community — virtually every race, ethnicity and culture is represented among American Muslims, making for a unique experience not found anywhere else in the world.Currently, there are more than 2150 masjids (mosques) throughout the United States, as well as over 400 Islamic schools (126 full-time), three colleges, 400 associations, an estimated 200,000 businesses, and over 200 publications, journals, and weekly newspapers. The history of Islam in the U.S.The history of Islam in the New World in some sense precedes that of the United States itself. Some researchers claim that certain artifacts, found in the Mississippi delta and other locales, antedating the European “voyages of discovery,” lend credence to the possibility of Arab or African expeditions. European sailing vessels, including those under Christopher Columbus’ command, often enlisted Muslim crew members, due to their expertise in maritime navigation.Later on, in American history, as many as 20% of the slaves brought to the United States from Africa were Muslims (before being forcibly converted to Christianity). Another group of Muslims, Spaniards known as Mudejars, established roots in the New World after the conquest of Granada in 1492 and the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain resulting from the Inquisition. The influence of these highly-skilled Hispano-Arab Muslim craftsmen and artists has had far-reaching effects in American architecture and design, which are still in evidence today, especially in the American Southwest.In the modern era, since the late 1800s, Muslims from all over the world, along with people of other faiths, have immigrated to the U.S. to make a better life for themselves and to contribute their unique talents and sensibilities to the ever-evolving American social matrix. In the last fifty years, a dramatic increase in native-born American Muslims and converts to Islam has taken place as well, providing new generations of Muslims prepared to interact fruitfully with fellow Americans and raise the contributions of the community to higher levels. Is Islam one of the most recent religions to come to the US? Or its roots are deeper in the fabric of this nation? And who are the current Muslims in America? This video is a view of Islam and Muslims in the US. We believe in and strive for the nobility of consciousness, truthfulness of expression and goodness of action. We believe that peace blossoms through love and justice and in times where “me” becomes “we” and “mine” transforms to “ours”.We believe that true faith inspires a deep reverence for life, love for the living, care for the environment, and an unwavering commitment to social justice. We believe that all creation is part of God’s (Allah’s) family while the best of people are those best to God’s (Allah’s) universal family.We are on a mission to empower, nurture, protect, and promote values that affirm human dignity, human rights and the integrity of creation while making the world healthier, peaceful, and more beautiful. We at IslamiCity invite you to please join us.Please DONATE generously to help sustain this public outreach initiative! Gates of the Prophet's Mosque, Medina Islam is an Abrahamic-monotheistic religion based upon the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah (l. 570-632 CE, after whose name Muslims traditionally add “peace be upon him” or, in writing, PBUH). Alongside Christianity and Judaism, it is a continuation of the teachings of Abraham (featured in both Jewish and Christian scriptures, considered a prophet in Islam, after whose name Muslims say, “peace be upon him” as well), although it does differ in some respects from both of these. The adherents of Islam are referred to as Muslims, of which there are around two billion in the world today, second only to Christians in number. Taking roots from humble beginnings in the Arabian Peninsula, the followers of Muhammad managed to conquer the superpowers of the time: the Sassanian Empire and the Byzantine Empire. At its peak (750 CE), the Islamic Empire stretched all the way between parts of modern-day Pakistan in the east and to Morocco and the Iberian Peninsula in the west. Although initially spread by conquest, Islam would later flourish through trade to expand beyond its initial borders and around the world. In the present day, it is the world's fastest-growing religion. The Prophet's Mission The Prophet – Muhammad ibn Abdullah – was born in 570 CE. He was a member of the Qurayshite clan of Banu Hashim, a highly respected faction despite their declining wealth. Orphaned at an early age, he was raised by his uncle Abu Talib, who is said to have loved him even more than his own sons. Muhammad became a trader and was renowned for his honesty (as it was a rare trait in Arabia in those days), and this honesty attracted the attention of a wealthy widow named Khadija who sent a marriage proposal, which he accepted, although she was 15 years older than him (he was 25 years of age at the time). Khadija's support for Muhammad was instrumental in the Prophet pursuing his mission. Muhammad began preaching the oneness of God to his family & close friends, & afterwards, to the general public. As he reached his late thirties, he began worshipping in seclusion, in a cave called Hira, in the mountain Jabal al-Nour (“Mountain of Light”), near Mecca. One day in 610 CE, the Angel Gabriel is said to have approached him with the first revelation from God – Allah (meaning “the God”). Muhammad is said to have initially reacted negatively to the revelation – he was perplexed and scared, he ran back home, shivering with fear – but later on he realized that he was a prophet of God. Muhammad began preaching the oneness of God to his family and close friends, and afterwards, to the general public. Arabia was polytheistic at the time and so Muhammad's preaching of a single god brought him into conflict with the Meccans whose economy relied on polytheism (merchants sold statues, figurines, and charms of the various gods) and the social stratification it supported. The Meccans took serious measures to stop him but he continued to preach this new faith as he felt he owed it to God to do so. In the year 619 CE, he lost both his uncle Abu Talib and his wife Khadija (a date known to Muslims as The Year of Sorrow) and now he felt alone in the world and sorely grieved, a situation worsened by the persecution he experienced in Mecca. Entrance to the Cave of Hira Help came in 621 CE, however, when some citizens of Yathrib (later known as Medina), who had accepted Islam, invited the Prophet and his companions to come to their city. In 622 CE, Muhammad fled Mecca to escape plots on his life (a flight known as the hegira, which marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar) and went to Yathrib. The city admired his teachings and wanted the Prophet to act as the ruler of the city and to manage its affairs. Muhammad encouraged his followers in Mecca to migrate to Yathrib, and they did so in batches. After most of his companions had left, he migrated with a trusted friend of his (and future father-in-law) named Abu Bakr (l. 573-634 CE). With their newfound base, the Muslims now wanted to strike back against those who had persecuted them. The Muslims started conducting regular raids or “Razzias” on Meccan trade caravans. These raids were technically an act of war; the Meccan economy suffered and now they were angered and decided to end the Muslims once and for all. The Muslims faced an attack from the Meccans at the Battle of Badr (624 CE) where 313 Muslim troops routed an army of around 1,000 Meccans; some credit this victory to divine intervention while others to Muhammad's military genius. After the victory at Badr, the Muslims became more than just a group of followers of a new religion, they became a military force to be reckoned with. Multiple engagements followed between the Muslims and other Arabian tribes, with a great deal of success for the Muslims. In the year 630 CE the doors of Mecca, the city from which they had fled in panic a decade earlier, were opened to the Muslim army. Mecca was now in Muslim hands and, against all expectations, Muhammad offered amnesty to all those who surrendered and accepted his faith. View of Mecca and the Sacred Mosque, 1900 By the time of his death in 632 CE, Muhammad was the most powerful religious and political leader in all of Arabia. Most of the tribes had converted to Islam and swore their allegiance to him. He died in his own house, in Medina, and was buried there as well. The site has now been converted to a tomb named “Roza – e – Rasool” (Tomb of the Prophet), which lies adjacent to the famous “Masjid al-Nabwi” (Mosque of the Prophet) in Medina and is visited by millions of Muslims every year. In his book, A History of Medieval Islam, scholar J. J. Saunders comments on the Prophet of Islam: His piety was sincere and unaffected, and his honest belief in the reality of his call can be denied only by those who are prepared to assert that a conscious imposter endured for ten or twelve years ridicule, abuse and privation, gained the confidence and affection of upright and intelligent men, and has since been revered by millions as the principle vehicle of God's revelation to man. (34) The revelations which are said to have been given to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel were memorized by his followers and, within a few years after his death, were written down as the Quran (“the teaching” or “the recitation”), the holy book of Islam. Quran, Sunna, & Hadith According to Muslims, the verses of the Quran, as dictated by the angel to Muhammad, are the words of God and the final revelation of divine truth to humanity. After Muhammad's death, these revelations were compiled in the form of a book by his father-in-law Abu Bakr (r. 632- 634 CE as the first caliph – the successor of the Prophet's mission and empire) so as to preserve them for future generations. In the life of the Prophet, these revelations were written individually on parchment or other materials, and these isolated revelations were later arranged in the sequence dictated by the

persécutés. Les Musulmans commencèrent à mener des raids réguliers ou "razzias" sur les caravanes commerciales mecquoises. Ces raids étaient techniquement un acte de guerre. L'économie mecquoise en souffrait, et les Mecquois, furieux, décidèrent d'en finir une fois pour toutes avec les Musulmans. Ceux-ci durent faire face à une attaque à la Bataille de Badr (624), où 313 Musulmans mirent en déroute une armée d'environ 1 000 Mecquois. Certains attribuent cette victoire à une intervention divine, d'autres au génie militaire de Mohamed. Après la victoire de Badr, les Musulmans devinrent plus qu'un simple groupe d'adeptes d'une nouvelle religion, une force militaire avec laquelle il fallait compter. De multiples engagements suivirent entre les Musulmans et d'autres tribus arabes, avec beaucoup de succès pour les Musulmans. En 630, les portes de La Mecque, la ville qu'ils avaient fuie dans la panique une décennie plus tôt, s'ouvrirent à l'armée musulmane. La Mecque était désormais aux mains des Musulmans et, contre toute attente, Mohamed offrit l'amnistie à tous ceux qui se rendaient et acceptaient sa foi. Vue de La Mecque et de la Mosquée Sacrée, 1900 À sa mort, en 632, Mohamed était le chef religieux et politique le plus puissant de toute l'Arabie. La plupart des tribus s'étaient converties à l'Islam et lui avaient prêté serment d'allégeance. Il mourut dans sa maison, à Médine, et y fut inhumé. Le site fut converti en un tombeau appelé "Roza-e-Rasool" (Tombeau du Prophète), qui se trouve à côté de la célèbre "Masjid an-Nabwi" (Mosquée du Prophète) à Médine et est visité par des millions de Musulmans chaque année. Dans son ouvrage intitulé "A History of Medieval Islam", l'historien J. J. Saunders commente sur le Prophète de l'Islam : Sa piété était sincère et sans affectation, et sa croyance honnête en la réalité de son appel ne peut être niée que par ceux qui sont prêts à affirmer qu'un imposteur conscient endura pendant dix ou douze ans le ridicule, les abus et les privations, gagna la confiance et l'affection d'hommes droits et intelligents, et fut depuis vénéré par des millions de personnes comme le principal véhicule de la révélation de Dieu à l'homme. (34) Les révélations qui auraient été données à Mohamed par l'ange Gabriel furent mémorisées par ses disciples, et, quelques années après sa mort, furent consignées par écrit dans le Coran ('l'enseignement' ou 'la récitation'), le saint livre de l'Islam. Coran, Sunna et Hadiths Selon les Musulmans, les versets du Coran, tels que dictés par l'ange à Mohamed, sont les paroles de Dieu et la révélation finale de la vérité divine à l'humanité. Après la mort de Mohamed, ces révélations ont été compilées sous forme de livre par son beau-père Abou Bakr (règne 632- 634 en tant que premier calife - successeur de la mission et de l'empire du Prophète) afin de les préserver pour les générations futures. Au cours de la vie du Prophète, ces révélations furent écrites individuellement sur du parchemin ou d'autres matériaux, et furent ensuite arrangées dans l'ordre dicté par le Prophète pour former le Coran. Les Musulmans mémorisaient les versets et les récitaient (ainsi, l'une des traductions de Quran est 'récitation'). Plus tard, on constata que les Musulmans de différentes origines récitaient les versets dans des dialectes différents. Un projet de normalisation fut donc entrepris afin de préserver les mots du message du Prophète. LES ADEPTES SONT TOUJOURS ENCOURAGÉS À APPRENDRE LE CORAN DANS SA VERSION ORIGINALE. Un soin extrême fut apporté pour empêcher toute altération du texte. Cette tâche fut commencée à contrecœur par le successeur immédiat de l'empire de Mohamed, le calife Abou Bakr (qui avait peur de faire quelque chose que le Prophète n'avait pas fait), et fut achevée sous le règne du troisième calife, Uthman ibn Affan (ou Othman ibn Affan, règne 644-656). Pour les Musulmans, le Coran ne peut être correctement compris que lorsqu'il est lu - ou entendu - dans sa langue originale. Bien que des traductions exactes soient considérées comme acceptables par certaines sectes, les adeptes sont toujours encouragés à apprendre le Coran dans sa version originale. Après le Coran, une source importante de conseils pour les Musulmans est la vie du Prophète : ses manières (Sunna) et ses paroles (Hadith); ces deux sources complètent le texte du Coran. Le Coran est considéré comme la Parole de Dieu comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, mais les Musulmans sont également rassurés et guidés par la façon dont Mohamed se serait comporté dans certaines situations et, pour cela, la Sunna et les Hadiths sont importants. Par exemple, le Coran insiste sans cesse sur le fait qu'il faut "établir la prière et payer l'aumône", mais on peut se demander comment ? La réponse à cette question se trouve dans la Sunna et les Hadiths, qui indiquent clairement qu'il faut simplement faire comme le Prophète et agir selon ses instructions. En fait, dans de nombreux cas, le Coran déclare : "Obéissez à Allah et obéissez à son Prophète" (ce qui souligne l'importance de la Sunna et des Hadiths). Les Hadiths, tout comme les versets coraniques, furent compilés mais furent aussi conservés séparément du Coran, une fois encore pour éviter toute sorte d'altération des révélations divines. L'universitaire Tamara Sonn explique l'importance de ces éléments dans son livre Islam - A Brief History : En tant que parole de Dieu, il (le Coran) est co-éternel avec Dieu... L'audience globale de l'écriture est l'humanité dans son ensemble... Les Musulmans croient que le Coran réitère, confirme et complète les écritures antérieures (la Torah, les Psaumes et l'Évangile), appelant tout le monde à se souvenir et à respecter les vérités qu'elles contiennent... Ensemble, le Coran et l'exemple (appelé la Sunna) établis par le Prophète Mohamed comprennent les conseils dont les Musulmans ont besoin dans leur responsabilité collective d'établir la justice. (p.2 et suivantes) Le Coran fournit donc aux adeptes la parole de Dieu, tandis que la Sunna et les Hadiths donnent des conseils sur la manière d'observer cette parole et d'inclure ses préceptes dans la vie quotidienne. Abonnez-vous à notre newsletter hebdomadaire gratuite! Les Piliers de l'Islam Les actes de culte de l'Islam, ou les "piliers" sur lesquels repose le fondement de l'Islam, sont les obligations formelles que tous ceux qui choisissent l'Islam comme voie doivent reconnaître et respecter. Les Cinq Piliers de l'Islam sont: Shahada (témoignage, profession de foi) Salat (prière cinq fois par jour) Zakat (aumône/impôt payé pour aider le prochain) Sawm (jeûne pendant la période du Ramadan) Hajj (pèlerinage à la Mecque, au moins une fois dans la vie). Le Premier Pilier - la Shahada - est essentiel pour quiconque devenant musulman ; il s'agit de la reconnaissance de l'unicité d'Allah dans tous ses attributs et est communément exprimé par la phrase suivante : "Il n'est personne d'autre digne d'être adoré qu'Allah, et Mohamed est son Prophète". Le concept de Dieu dans l'Islam dicte qu'il est au-delà de toute imagination (le pronom 'il' n'est qu'une commodité d'usage, il ne dicte en aucun cas l'un de ses attributs) et le plus suprême; il est tout ce qui est dans l'univers, et tout se soumet à sa volonté; il en va donc de même pour les êtres humains pour vivre en paix. En fait, le mot 'Islam' signifie littéralement 'soumission', soumission à la volonté de Dieu. Nom d'Allah en Calligraphie Arabe Le Second Pilier est la prière quotidienne - la Salat - qui doit être offerte cinq fois par jour. Les hommes sont tenus d'offrir ces prières en assemblée dans des lieux de culte musulmans appelés Masjid (mosquées), tandis que les femmes peuvent prier à la maison. La conception de base des mosquées varie d'un endroit à l'autre et, dans la plupart des cas, de nombreux éléments de l'architecture locale y furent intégrés (par exemple, la Mosquée Bleue d'Istanbul reprend de nombreuses caractéristiques architecturales de la célèbre basilique Sainte-Sophie). Les espaces d'une mosquée sont répartis entre les fidèles hommes et femmes et l'imam qui dirige le service religieux. Le Troisième Pilier - la Zakat - consiste en une aumône qui doit être versée par toutes les personnes éligibles (ceux qui possèdent un certain montant de richesse dont ils n'ont pas l'usage) une fois par an à d'autres Musulmans défavorisés (bien que d'autres actes de charité soient également applicables aux non-Musulmans, la zakat est réservée aux Musulmans). Les non-Musulmans (connus sous le nom de dhimmi - personnes protégées) ont longtemps été tenus de participer par l'impôt connu sous le nom de djizya, bien que cette politique ait été abolie dans de nombreux pays musulmans depuis le début du 20ème siècle. Mosquée du Prophète, Époque Ottomane Le Quatrième Pilier - le Sawm - est le jeûne pendant le mois du Ramadan (neuvième mois du calendrier islamique). Pendant la période de jeûne, un croyant doit s'abstenir de manger, de boire et de s'adonner à tous les plaisirs, et consacrer son temps et son attention à Dieu. Le Ramadan encourage les croyants à se rapprocher de Dieu et à examiner leurs priorités et leurs valeurs dans la vie. Se priver de nourriture et d'autres distractions est censé permettre de concentrer toute son attention sur le divin. Le Cinquième Pilier - le Hajj - est le pèlerinage annuel à la Ka'aba, la Qiblah des Musulmans (la direction dans laquelle ils prient - un signe d'unité), à la Mecque. Le Hajj n'est obligatoire qu'une seule fois dans la vie, et seulement si l'on peut se le permettre et si l'on a la force de faire le voyage. Si l'on ne peut pas y aller, on doit au moins en exprimer le désir sincère et, si possible, contribuer au pèlerinage d'une autre personne. La Diffusion de l'Islam La Mecque, comme nous l'avons vu, était à l'origine la ville qui rejeta Mohamed et son message, mais elle devint ensuite le cœur de la foi (car elle abrite la Ka'aba), tandis que Médine, la ville qui accueillit le Prophète alors que personne d'autre ne le voulait, devint la capitale de l'empire. L'Arabie était située au carrefour de l'Empire Perse Sassanide (224-651) et de l'Empire Byzantin (330-1453). Comme ces deux superpuissances étaient presque constamment en guerre, les habitants de l'Arabie souffraient de la désorganisation de la région et, une fois unis sous l'égide de l'Islam, ils lancèrent une invasion à grande échelle dans ces deux empires pour faciliter une expansion rapide de l'Islam. L'auteure Robin Doak explique dans son livre Empire of the Islamic World : Les Byzantins étaient en concurrence pour le contrôle du Moyen-Orient. L'Empire Sassanide, ou Perse, dominait les régions situées au sud-est de Byzance (l'actuelle Istanbul) ... Ces deux empires étaient constamment en guerre l'un contre l'autre ... Pour financer ces guerres, les deux empires imposaient de lourdes taxes aux citoyens sous leur contrôle. Ces taxes, ainsi que d'autres restrictions, provoquaient des troubles dans les terres sassanides et byzantines, notamment parmi les tribus arabes vivant en marge des deux empires. (6) Les Arabes étaient à l'origine de nature tribale et manquaient d'unité. Ces tribus devaient être unies dans l'intérêt de la stabilité, et l'Islam devint le moyen de les lier ensemble. Après la mort du Prophète Mohamed en 632, la direction de la Oumma (communauté) musulmane fut prise par Abou Bakr, qui assuma le titre de calife (successeur du Prophète). Au cours de son bref règne de deux ans (632-634), il unifia toute la Péninsule arabique sous la bannière de l'Islam (car la plupart des tribus avaient délaissé la communauté), puis envoya des armées pour étendre sa domination sur les autres tribus arabes qui vivaient sous les dominations byzantine et sassanide. Ces campagnes se sont avérées si rapides et si fructueuses qu'à l'époque du troisième calife, Uthman, l'ensemble de l'Égypte, de la Syrie, du Levant et ce qui était autrefois la majeure partie de l'Empire Perse Sassanide étaient désormais aux mains des Musulmans, et toutes les tentatives de reconquête des territoires perdus furent repoussées avec l'aide des populations locales qui avaient pour la plupart accepté la domination musulmane. Le quatrième et dernier des "califes bien guidés" (comme les Musulmans sunnites appellent les quatre premiers) était Ali ibn Abi Talib (règne 656-661), fils d'Abu Talib. Ali passa la majeure partie de son mandat dans des querelles civiles constantes et l'expansion fut stoppée. Après la mort d'Ali en 661, Mu'awiya Ier (règne 661-680) lui succèda et fonda la Dynastie des Omeyyades. Mu'awiya Ier déclara son fils, Yazid Ier (règne 680-683), son successeur, mais celui-ci fut contesté par le fils d'Ali (petit-fils de Mohamed), Hussein ibn Ali (626-680). La faible force de Hussein fut vaincue à la Bataille de Kerbala en 680 par les troupes de Yazid, où il fut également tué. D'autres soulèvements furent aussi écrasés un par un, et les califes suivants de la Dynastie Omeyyade poursuivirent alors leur expansion militaire. Conquêtes Islamiques aux 7ème-9ème Siècles À la fin de la Dynastie Omeyyade (750), la Transoxiane (approximativement, Ouzbékistan et Tadjikistan actuels), certaines parties de l'actuel Pakistan, la totalité de l'Afrique du Nord et la Péninsule Ibérique (connue aussi sous le nom d'Al Andalus - 'Pays des Vandales', selon une interprétation) avaient été ajoutées à l'empire. Sous le règne des Abbassides (750-1258), quelques gains territoriaux mineurs furent réalisés, mais la période des conquêtes rapides antérieures par des raids militaires était terminée. Cette tendance fut relancée par le Sultanat Ottoman (1299-1922), qui prit ensuite le titre de Califat du Monde Islamique. L'Anatolie et le cœur de l'Empire Byzantin, Constantinople, furent conquis par les Ottomans en 1453. Ils fermèrent alors les routes commerciales connues sous le nom de "Route de la Soie" (qu'ils avaient fini par contrôler), obligeant les nations européennes à rechercher d'autres sources pour les marchandises auxquelles elles étaient habituées, lançant ainsi l'ère dite des Grandes Découvertes, au cours de laquelle les nations européennes envoyèrent des navires autour du globe pour 'découvrir' le 'Nouveau Monde'. Selon certains chercheurs cependant, le Nouveau Monde avait déjà été atteint par l'explorateur chinois musulman Zheng He (1371-1435) en 1421 (bien que cette affirmation ait été contestée à plusieurs reprises). L'Âge des Grandes Découvertes ouvrit le monde pour le meilleur et pour le pire, mettant en contact des peuples de cultures diverses à une plus large échelle qu'auparavant. Les conquêtes militaires des Ottomans permirent l'expansion de l'Empire Islamique, mais à ce stade la foi elle-même se répandit autant par le commerce que par la conquête, comme le soulignent M Ruthven et A Nanji dans The Historical Atlas of Islam : L'Islam s'étendit par la conquête et la conversion. Bien que l'on ait parfois dit que la foi de l'Islam s'était répandue par l'épée, les deux ne sont pas semblables. Le Koran (orthographe archaïque pour le Coran) déclare sans équivoque [dans la sourate 2:256], "Il n'y a aucune contrainte en religion". (30) Bien que le Coran comporte un certain nombre de versets prônant l'absence de contrainte en matière de conversion, on ne peut nier que l'Islam se répandit initialement par la conquête militaire. La plupart des populations locales des terres nouvellement conquises adhéraient à leurs anciennes croyances, certaines se convertirent de leur plein gré, mais il y eut également plusieurs exemples de conversions forcées (ce qui, ironiquement, est non-Islamique). À l'époque des Ottomans, cependant, c'est principalement le commerce qui permit à la foi de franchir les frontières, car de nombreux missionnaires se mêlèrent aux populations locales et étrangères, propageant la foi au cours de leurs voyages. Le Schisme Islamique : Sunnites et Chiites Malgré tout, pendant de nombreuses années, l'Islam n'était pas une foi totalement unifiée concernant la manière de l'observer. Après la mort du Prophète Mohamed en 632, ses disciples ne savaient pas qui devait lui succéder. Il fut décidé qu'Abou Bakr deviendrait son successeur - son calife. Un autre groupe, cependant, insistait pour que ce soit Ali, le cousin et gendre du prophète. Le tour d'Ali devait venir en effet en tant que quatrième calife, mais ses partisans - Shi'a Ali, 'partisans d'Ali' - affirmaient qu'Ali était le successeur légitime de Mahomet et, plus tard, prétendirent que les trois califes qui l'avaient précédé étaient des usurpateurs. Ces partisans d'Ali sont les Musulmans Chiites. La majorité des Musulmans, cependant, maintiennent qu'Abou Bakr, Omar ibn al-Khattab (règne 634-644) et Othman sont des successeurs légitimes de Mohamed au même titre qu'Ali, et les considèrent comme tels. Ces Musulmans sont connus sous le nom de Sunnites (adeptes de la Sunna ou de la voie de Mohamed). Ces deux groupes, au départ, n'étaient que des groupes politiques, mais ils évoluèrent ensuite vers des sectes religieuses. Les croyances de base de ces sectes sont presque identiques, l'exception principale étant le concept des imams. Les Sunnites considèrent les imams comme des guides ou des enseignants qui accompagnent les Musulmans sur le chemin de l'Islam (ou comme la personne qui dirige l'assemblée pendant la prière), le plus célèbre étant l'imam Abu Hanifa (699-767) - fondateur de l'école Hanafite de la pensée islamique Sunnite. Les Chiites, par contre, considèrent les imams comme un lien entre les humains et Dieu (semi-divin), et considèrent que seuls les descendants de Mohamed par l'intermédiaire d'Ali et de Fatima (fille du Prophète), et plus tard, seulement les descendants d'Ali (issus d'autres épouses), sont dignes de ce titre, comme l'imam Hussayn, le fils d'Ali, qui fut tué par l'armée omeyyade lors de la Bataille de Kerbala en 680. La perte de Hussayn est pleurée par les Musulmans Chiites lors de la fête annuelle de l'Achoura qui est dénigrée par les Musulmans Sunnites qui rejettent les revendications des Chiites concernant le rôle de l'imam et, bien qu'ils respectent Hussayn et considèrent sa mort comme tragique, ils ne le considèrent pas comme semi-divin comme le font les Chiites. En dehors de ce désaccord et de quelques autres différences théologiques, les deux sectes sont presque identiques. Malgré cela, leurs adeptes sont rivaux depuis presque aussi longtemps qu'elles existent, comme l'illustre la rivalité entre la Dynastie Sunnite des Abbassides et les Fatimides Chiites, les Ottomans Sunnites et les Safavides Chiites, etc. Héritage de l'Islam Malgré le recours initial à la conquête pour répandre la foi, et la violence sectaire qui persiste entre Sunnites et Chiites, l'Islam a grandement contribué à la culture mondiale depuis sa création. La Renaissance Européenne n'aurait jamais eu lieu si les Musulmans n'avaient pas préservé les œuvres des érudits romains et grecs classiques. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple, les travaux d'Aristote - si fondamentaux pour les développements ultérieurs dans tant de disciplines - auraient été perdus s'ils n'avaient pas été préservés et copiés par des scribes musulmans. Les travaux du polymathe musulman Avicenne (vers 980-1037) et de l'érudit Averroès (vers 1126-1198) non seulement préservèrent l'œuvre d'Aristote, mais l'enrichirent de leurs brillants commentaires. En outre, ils diffusèrent la pensée aristotélicienne dans leurs propres ouvrages. Avicenne écrivit le premier ouvrage collectif sur la médecine - Al-Qanun fi-al-Tib (Canon de la Médecine), qui était bien plus précis que les textes européens sur le sujet à l'époque. Al-Khwarizmi (vers 780-850), brillant astronome, géographe et mathématicien, développa l'algèbre, et Al-Khazini (11ème siècle) contesta et encouragea des modifications du modèle ptolémaïque de l'univers. Le café, boisson sans doute la plus populaire au monde aujourd'hui, fut mis au point par des moines Soufis musulmans au Yémen au 15ème siècle, et fut exporté par le port de Mokha, au Yémen (d'où l'association du mot "moka" avec le café). Les érudits, poètes, écrivains et artisans islamiques ont contribué au développement de pratiquement tous les domaines de la culture mondiale et continuent de le faire aujourd'hui. Il est regrettable qu'en Occident, l'Islam soit aujourd'hui si souvent associé à la violence et au terrorisme car, fondamentalement, l'Islam est une religion de paix et de compréhension. Les Musulmans du monde entier, soit un tiers de la population mondiale, suivent - ou du moins essaient de suivre - le chemin de la paix que Mohamed révéla il y a 14 siècles. Et son héritage de compassion et de dévouement au divin et au plus grand bien se poursuit encore aujourd'hui sous la forme de ses adeptes. Note de l'auteur : Nous remercions Joshua J. Mark pour son aide dans la préparation de cet article.

By: Islam Web Whoever takes part in internet chats on the international and Arab level may think that "it... More It was authentically reported on the authority of Ibn ʻAbbas, may Allaah be pleased with them, that the Prophet,... More A - Worshipping Allah Alone: This is the reason for which Allah created all that exists: Angels, Jinn, mankind,... More AA everyone, So very happy to find this website and to wonderful Islamic scholars like Imam Badawi teach us so that we may lifetime learn how to be a better Muslim. May Allah Bless you and Bless us all in the ap... Page 2 Philosophy & Religion Scriptures Islam, major world religion promulgated by the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the 7th century ce. The Arabic term islām, literally "surrender," illuminates the fundamental religious idea of Islam—that the believer (called a Muslim, from the active particle of islām) accepts surrender to the will of Allah (in Arabic, Allāh: God). Allah is viewed as the sole God—creator, sustainer, and restorer of the world. The will of Allah, to which human beings must submit, is made known through the sacred scriptures, the Qurʾān (often spelled Koran in English), which Allah revealed to his messenger, Muhammad. In Islam Muhammad is considered the last of a series of prophets (including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Jesus), and his message simultaneously consummates and completes the "revelations" attributed to earlier prophets.Retaining its emphasis on an uncompromising monotheism and a strict adherence to certain essential religious practices, the religion taught by Muhammad to a small group of followers spread rapidly through the Middle East to Africa, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, the Malay Peninsula, and China. By the early 21st century there were more than 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide. Although many sectarian movements have arisen within Islam, all Muslims are bound by a common faith and a sense of belonging to a single community.This article deals with the fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam and with the connection of religion and society in the Islamic world. The history of the various peoples who embraced Islam is covered in the article Islamic world. From the very beginning of Islam, Muhammad had inculcated a sense of brotherhood and a bond of faith among his followers, both of which helped to develop among them a feeling of close relationship that was accentuated by their experiences of persecution as a nascent community in Mecca. The strong attachment to the tenets of the Qurʾānic revelation and the conspicuous socioeconomic content of Islamic religious practices cemented this bond of faith. In 622 ce, when the Prophet migrated to Medina, his preaching was soon accepted, and the community-state of Islam emerged. During this early period, Islam acquired its characteristic ethos as a religion uniting in itself both the spiritual and temporal aspects of life and seeking to regulate not only the individual's relationship to God (through conscience) but human relationships in a social setting as well. Thus, there is not only an Islamic religious institution but also an Islamic law, state, and other institutions governing society. Not until the 20th century were the religious (private) and the secular (public) distinguished by some Muslim thinkers and separated formally in certain places such as Turkey. This dual religious and social character of Islam, expressing itself in one way as a religious community commissioned by God to bring its own value system to the world through the jihād ("exertion," commonly translated as "holy war" or "holy struggle"), explains the astonishing success of the early generations of Muslims. Within a century after the Prophet's death in 632 ce, they had brought a large part of the globe—from Spain across Central Asia to India—under a new Arab Muslim empire. The period of Islamic conquests and empire building marks the first phase of the expansion of Islam as a religion. Islam's essential egalitarianism within the community of the faithful and its official discrimination against the followers of other religions won rapid converts. Jews and Christians were assigned a special status as communities possessing scriptures and were called the "people of the Book" (ahl al-kitāb) and, therefore, were allowed religious autonomy. They were, however, required to pay a per capita tax called jizyah, as opposed to pagans, who were required to either accept Islam or die. The same status of the "people of the Book" was later extended in particular times and places to Zoroastrians and Hindus, but many "people of the Book" joined Islam in order to escape the disability of the jizyah. A much more massive expansion of Islam after the 12th century was inaugurated by the Sufis (Muslim mystics), who were mainly responsible for the spread of Islam in India, Central Asia, Turkey, and sub-Saharan Africa (see below). Beside the jihad and Sufi missionary activity, another factor in the spread of Islam was the far-ranging influence of Muslim traders, who not only introduced Islam quite early to the Indian east coast and South India but also proved to be the main catalytic agents (beside the Sufis) in converting people to Islam in Indonesia, Malaya, and China. Islam was introduced to Indonesia in the 14th century, hardly having time to consolidate itself there politically before the region came under Dutch hegemony. The vast variety of races and cultures embraced by Islam (an estimated total of more than 1.5 billion persons worldwide in the early 21st century) has produced important internal differences. All segments of Muslim society, however, are bound by a common faith and a sense of belonging to a single community. With the loss of political power during the period of Western colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of the Islamic community (ummah), instead of weakening, became stronger. The faith of Islam helped various Muslim peoples in their struggle to gain political freedom in the mid-20th century, and the unity of Islam contributed to later political solidarity. Islamic doctrine, law, and thinking in general are based upon four sources, or fundamental principles (uṣūl): (1) the Qurʾān, (2) the Sunnah ("Traditions"), (3) ijmāʿ ("consensus"), and (4) ijtihād ("individual thought"). QurʾānMuslim girl studying the Qurʾān.The Qurʾān (literally, "reading" or "recitation") is regarded as the verbatim word, or speech, of God delivered to Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel. Divided into 114 suras (chapters) of unequal length, it is the fundamental source of Islamic teaching. The suras revealed at Mecca during the earliest part of Muhammad's career are concerned mostly with ethical and spiritual teachings and the Day of Judgment. The suras revealed at Medina at a later period in the career of the Prophet are concerned for the most part with social legislation and the politico-moral principles for constituting and ordering the community. Sunnah ("a well-trodden path") was used by pre-Islamic Arabs to denote their tribal or common law. In Islam it came to mean the example of the Prophet—i.e., his words and deeds as recorded in compilations known as Hadith (in Arabic, Ḥadīth: literally, "report"; a collection of sayings attributed to the Prophet). Hadith provide the written documentation of the Prophet's words and deeds. Six of these collections, compiled in the 3rd century ah (9th century ce), came to be regarded as especially authoritative by the largest group in Islam, the Sunnis. Another large group, the Shiʿah, has its own Hadith contained in four canonical collections. The doctrine of ijmāʿ, or consensus, was introduced in the 2nd century ah (8th century ce) in order to standardize legal theory and practice and to overcome individual and regional differences of opinion. Though conceived as a "consensus of scholars," ijmāʿ was in actual practice a more fundamental operative factor. From the 3rd century ah ijmāʿ has amounted to a principle of stability in thinking; points on which consensus was reached in practice were considered closed and further substantial questioning of them prohibited. Accepted interpretations of the Qurʾān and the actual content of the Sunnah (i.e., Hadith and theology) all rest finally on the ijmāʿ in the sense of the acceptance of the authority of their community. Ijtihād, meaning "to endeavour" or "to exert effort," was required to find the legal or doctrinal solution to a new problem. In the early period of Islam, because ijtihād took the form of individual opinion (raʾy), there was a wealth of conflicting and chaotic opinions. In the 2nd century ah ijtihād was replaced by qiyās (reasoning by strict analogy), a formal procedure of deduction based on the texts of the Qurʾān and the Hadith. The transformation of ijmāʿ into a conservative mechanism and the acceptance of a definitive body of Hadith virtually closed the "gate of ijtihād" in Sunni Islam while ijtihād continued in Shiʿism. Nevertheless, certain outstanding Muslim thinkers (e.g., al-Ghazālī in the 11th–12th century) continued to claim the right of new ijtihād for themselves, and reformers in the 18th–20th centuries, because of modern influences, caused this principle once more to receive wider acceptance. The Qurʾān and Hadith are discussed below. The significance of ijmāʿ and ijtihād are discussed below in the contexts of Islamic theology, philosophy, and law. At Hearst Networks EMEA, we share stories that matter. A global broadcaster since 1995, we reach audiences in over 100 countries, including the UK, Nordics, Benelux, Central & Eastern Europe, Spain, Italy, Germany, Africa and the Middle East. Our stories are global and local, linear and digital, and always compelling. Personalities shine at Hearst Networks EMEA. Our culture embraces individuals, in all their daring, passionate, ambitious glory. Our people are our strength, and our differences are celebrated. We challenge each other, collaborate and come together, just as a family does; winning as a team and celebrating as one too. Everyone has a voice and should feel proud and free to run with their ideas, enjoying their successes and journey with us. And in such an evolving industry, tomorrow is always today. 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Learning is part of the journey at Hearst Networks EMEA and you'll be offered personal and professional development opportunities throughout your career with us. We'll do everything we can to see you thrive and grow. Islam, Major world religion founded by Muhammad in Arabia in the early 7th century ce. The Arabic word islām means "surrender"—specifically, surrender to the will of the one God, called Allah in Arabic. Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion, and its adherents, called Muslims, regard the Prophet Muhammad as the last and most perfect of God's messengers, who include Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others. The sacred scripture of Islam is the Qurʾān, which contains God's revelations to Muhammad. The sayings and deeds of the Prophet recounted in the Sunnah are also an important source of belief and practice in Islam.The religious obligations of all Muslims are summed up in the Five Pillars of Islam, which include the profession of faith (shahādah) in God and his Prophet, prayer (ṣalāt), charity (zakāt), pilgrimage (hajj), and fasting (ṣawm). The fundamental concept of Islam is the sharia—its law, which embraces the total way of life commanded by God. Observant Muslims pray five times a day and join in community worship on Fridays at a mosque, where worship is led by an imam. Every believer is required to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, the holiest city, at least once in a lifetime, barring poverty or physical incapacity. The month of Ramadan is set aside for fasting. Alcohol and pork are always forbidden, as are gambling, usury, fraud, slander, and the making of images. In addition to Eid al-Fitr, which celebrates the breaking of the fast of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Muhammad's birthday and his ascension into heaven. Eid al-Adha marks the culmination of pilgrimage to Mecca.Divisions occurred early in Islam, brought about by disputes over the succession to the leadership of the Muslim community (ummah). The Shiʿah argued that Muhammad had designated his son-in-law ʿAli ibn Abī Ṭālib as his successor. The Sunnis, who today make up the majority of Muslims, argued he did not designate a specific successor. Another significant element in Islam is the mysticism known as Sufism. The encounters with the West in the 19th and 20th centuries prompted the rise of fundamentalist movements that have voiced grievances they attribute to colonialism and a perceived decadence of Islamic society. In the early 21st century there were more than 1.5 billion Muslims in the world.

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