

Introduction to Islam



Today's Agenda

- ▶ **Basic Beliefs**
- ▶ **Origins of Islam**
- ▶ **The Qur'an**
- ▶ **Practice**
- ▶ **The Islamic Civilization**
- ▶ **Western Misconceptions
about Islam**
- ▶ **Q&A**

Definitions

► Islam

“Peace through submission to God”

► Allah

“Arabic word for God, also used for Arab Christians”

► Muslim Greeting

“As-Salaam Alaikum” = Peace be upon you



The basic beliefs of Islam are simple

- ▶ **Unity and Justice of God**
- ▶ **Angels**
- ▶ **Prophets**
- ▶ **Holy Books**
- ▶ **Day of Judgment**
- ▶ **Equality of all people before God**



Islamic values are common to most religions

- Enjoining the Good, forbidding the Evil
- Self exertion: urged to strive and act
- Pursuing social justice and fairness
- Humility and modesty
- Importance of family as basic social unit
- Pursuing truth and knowledge
- Worshipping God and serving humanity



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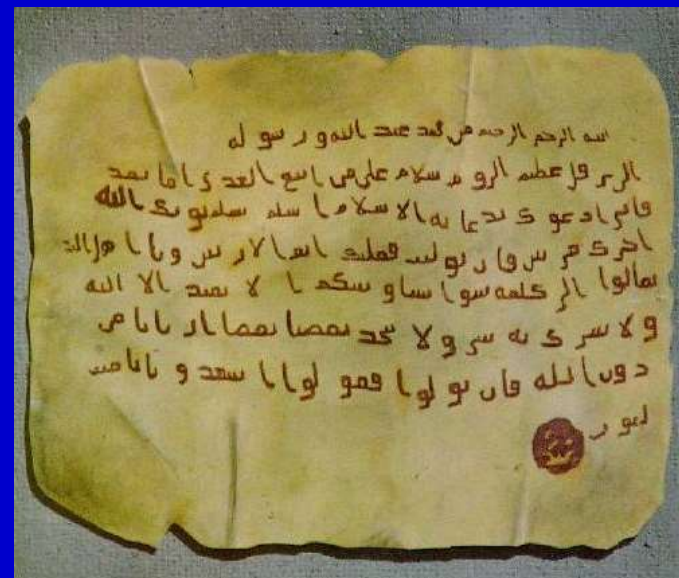
Islam originated in 7th Century Arabia

- ▶ Makkah was center for idolatry in Arabia
- ▶ Prophethood of Muhammad
- ▶ Persecution of early Muslims
- ▶ Reformation of prevailing pagan society in Makkah
- ▶ Conversion and union of Arabia under Islam
- ▶ Spread outward to Middle East, Asia, and Africa



Muslims believe that Muhammad was “the seal of the prophets”

- ▶ Lived 570-632 A.D.
- ▶ Descended from Prophet Abraham, part of ruling Quraysh tribe in Makkah
- ▶ Merchant known for honesty & trustworthiness
- ▶ First revelation, 610 A.D.
- ▶ Numerous attempts to bribe and assassinate him
- ▶ Persecuted, fled Makkah to Madinah in 622
- ▶ Temporal and spiritual leader of early Muslim community



61:6 And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of God (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of an Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad..."

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Muslims believe that the Qur'an itself is a miracle

76:23 *It is We Who have sent down the Qur'an to thee by stages.*

17:88 *Say: "If the whole of mankind were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.*

10:37 *This Qur'an is not such as can be produced by other than God. On the contrary it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book - wherein there is no doubt - from the Lord of the worlds.*



36:69 *We have not instructed the (Prophet) in Poetry, nor is it meet for him: this is no less than a Message and a Qur'an making things clear*

Qur'an recitation is fundamental to worship in Islam

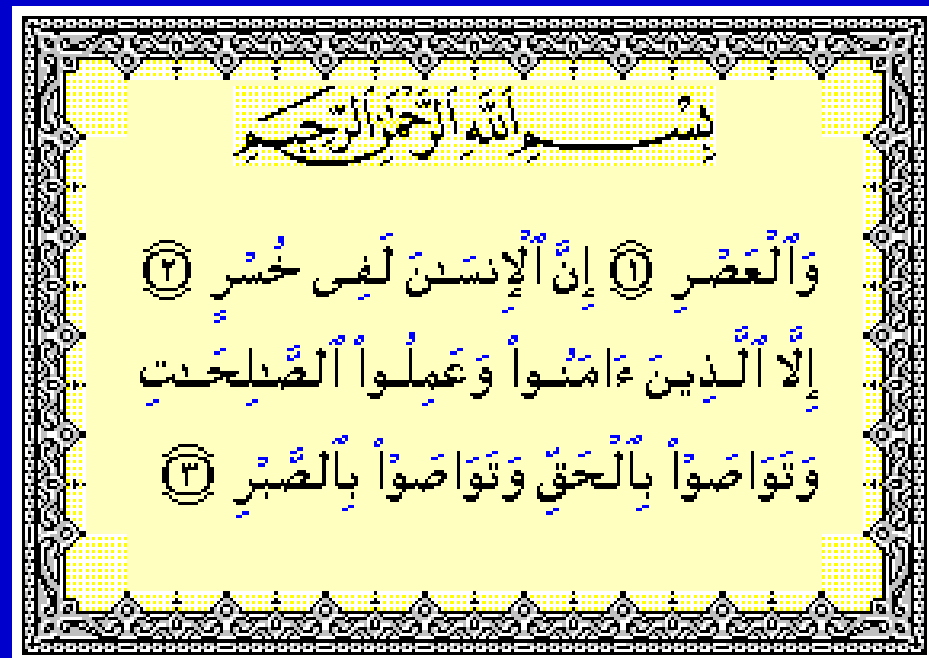
***In the Name of God, the Most
Merciful the Most Compassionate***

I swear by the time

Most surely man is in loss

***Except those who believe and do
good deeds, enjoin each other with
truth, and enjoin on each other
patience and constancy***

**Chapter 103 Al Asr
(The Time)**

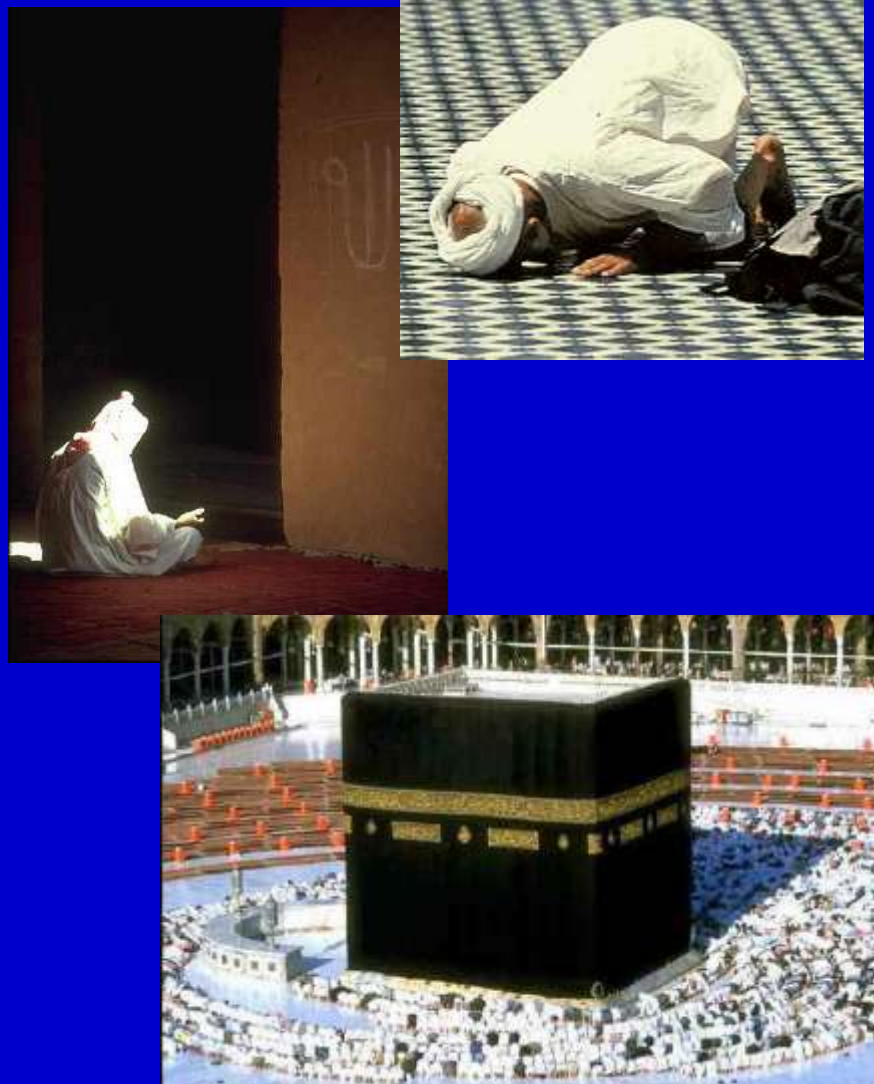


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Islamic practices common to all majority of Muslims

- ▶ **Shahadah**
 - ▶ Declaration of faith
- ▶ **Salat:**
 - ▶ Ritual prayer 5 times a day
- ▶ **Zakat:**
 - ▶ Giving to charity
(minimum of 2.5% of wealth annually)
- ▶ **Sawm:**
 - ▶ Fasting during the month of Ramadan
- ▶ **Hajj:**
 - ▶ Pilgrimage to Mecca, for those who can afford the journey



What is the significance of the month of Ramadhan?

Purifying the conscience through fasting...

- ▶ Ninth month of the Islamic calendar
 - ▶ Lunar calendar shifts 12 days relative to the solar calendar each year. This year Ramahdan started on Nov. 6th and will likely end on Dec. 6th
- ▶ The Qur'an was revealed in this month
 - ▶ A time to read the Qur'an, reflect on your actions, and ask for forgiveness and guidance
- ▶ Abstaining from food, drink, smoking, and sex between sunrise to sunset
- ▶ As important is to stay away from lying, hurting another's feelings...
 - ▶ "Hear no evil, see no evil, do no evil"
- ▶ The end of Ramadhan is celebrated with the Eid holiday

2:183 O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint.

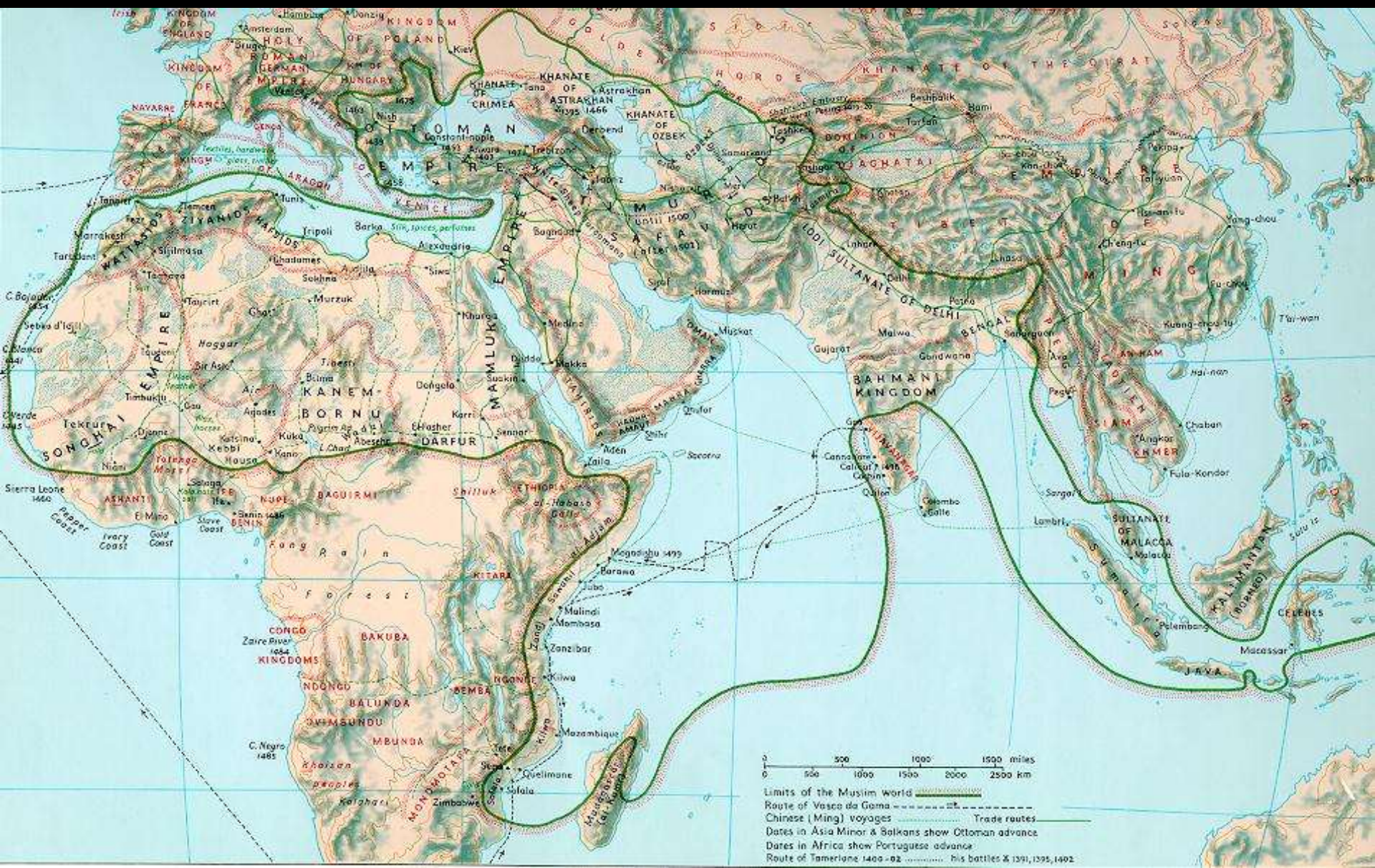
2:185 The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Qur'an was revealed, a guidance to men and clear proofs of the guidance and the distinction; therefore whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast therein, and whoever is sick or upon a journey, then (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days; God desires ease for you, and He does not desire for you difficulty...and that you may give thanks.

2:186 And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way

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The Islamic world by 1500



The Muslim world extends from Morocco to Indonesia

- ▶ Over 1 billion Muslims – every fifth person on the planet
- ▶ Only 20% are Arab
- ▶ Indonesia is the largest Muslim country
- ▶ 400 million Muslims in the Indian subcontinent
- ▶ Over 50 million Chinese Muslims
- ▶ Diverse cultural contexts, interpretations, and practices of Islam



The Muslim world today



The Muslim world is vast and diverse



New York



Timbuktu

Islam's contributions to science and philosophy

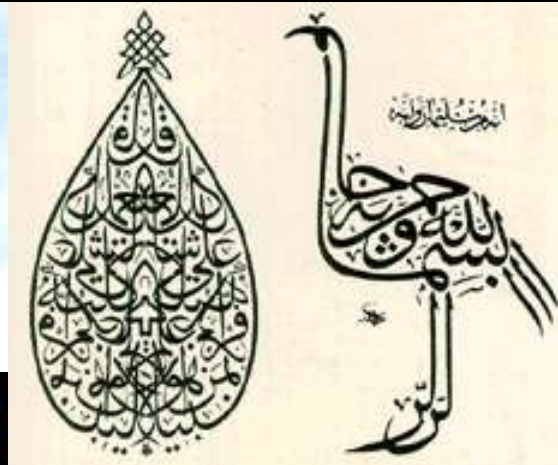
- ▶ **Mathematics** – use of zero, algebra, algorithms
- ▶ **Astronomy** – compass, navigation, celestial movements, observations, measuring the earth, solar calendars
- ▶ **Philosophy** – transmission of Greek philosophy, logic, commentaries
- ▶ **Medicine/Anatomy** – aorta, cornea, pancreas, colon



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Islamic art and architecture emphasizes geometric and calligraphic designs



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Islam is the fastest growing religion in the West

- ▶ Growing due to immigration and conversion
- ▶ Large Muslim minorities in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France
- ▶ Between 4-7 million Muslims in the United States
- ▶ More awareness post-September 11th
- ▶ Often misunderstood in the West



Islam is misunderstood in the West – at every level of society

- ▶ Jihad – Literally means struggle. No such term as “holy war” in Islam
- ▶ Women – Are not oppressed in Islam. Have equal rights terms of property, inheritance, education...
- ▶ Islam and other religions – Not intolerant of other faiths. Special respect for Abrahamic faiths
- ▶ Muslim does not mean Arab. Most Muslims are not Arab
- ▶ Islam is not anti-Western
- ▶ All terrorists are not Muslims
- ▶ Sharia Law does not mean stoning and chopping off of hands

"Just turn [the sheriff] loose and have him arrest every Muslim that crosses the state line."

*--Rep. C. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA),
Chairman of the House Subcommittee on
Terrorism and Homeland Security*

"Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith where God sent his Son to die for you."

*--Attorney General John Ashcroft,
Interview on Cal Thomas radio, November
2001*

"(Islam) is a very evil and wicked religion, wicked, violent and not of the same god (as Christianity)."

*--Rev. Franklin Graham, head of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association,
November 2001*