



ITHNA-ASHERI ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHWEST

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FACTS ABOUT ISLAM & MUSLIMS*

A recent study involving 232 countries and territories was conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (10/09). Results were reported on CNN and BBC and included the following:

- ◆ 80% of Muslims are non-Arabs
- ◆ Not all Arabs are Muslims
- ◆ 20% of Muslims live in the Middle East and North Africa
- ◆ The largest Muslim countries are non-Arab (Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh)
- ◆ Islam is the religion of almost one quarter of people on the planet (approximately 1.57 billion, which makes it the second largest religion in the world)
- ◆ There are more Muslims in Germany than in Lebanon
- ◆ There are more Muslims in Russia than in Jordan and Libya combined
- ◆ 300 million Muslims live in countries where Islam is not the majority religion
- ◆ Of the total Muslim population, 10-13% are Shia, 87-90% are Sunni
- ◆ Most Shias live in Iran, Pakistan, India and Iraq
- ◆ Europe is home to approximately 38 million Muslims
- ◆ Approximately 4.6 million Muslims live in the Americas, more than half of these are in the US
- ◆ According to the internet based group, *Adherents*, there are currently about 2.1 billion Christians, 900 million Hindus, and 14 million Jews worldwide (compared to 1.57 billion Muslims)

According to an earlier study, it is believed that of the Muslims living in the US, approximately.

- 42.0% are African-American
- 24.4% are South Asian
- 12.4% are Arab
- 5.2% are African
- 3.6% are Iranian
- 2.4% are Turkish
- 2.0% are Southeast Asian
- 1.6% are Caucasian American
- 5.6% have undetermined ethnic or cultural roots

- ◆ **Muhammad (pbuh)**
 - Descendant of Abraham (thru Ismael)
 - Born in 570 AD in Mecca
 - Received first part of the Revelation of the Qur'an in 610 AD
 - In 622 AD, he and 70 Muslims migrated from Mecca to Medina (the *hijrah* which marks the beginning of the Muslim era and calendar)
 - Died in 632 AD
 - Is considered a prophet Was only a special human being, and is not worshipped by Muslims

- ◆ **Women**
 - Two of the largest muslim countries have women president or prime minister
 - Indonesia: Democratic Republic - President, Ms. Dyah Permata Megawati Setyawati Soekarnaputri
 - Bangladesh: Democratic Parliamentary - Prime Minister: Ms. Khaleda Zia
 - Turkey and Pakistan have also had female heads of state
 - For a scholarly comparison of statements about women in the Qur'an and the Bible visit <http://www.twf.org/Library/WomenICJ.html>

*Many interesting facts about Islam can also be found at www.einaudi.cornell.edu

BELIEFS & OBSERVANCES

A Muslim believes in one supreme deity (Allah or God), all the divinely commissioned prophets of God, all the divinely revealed Books (the Torah, the Bible and the Qur'an), the Angels, the life after death, the Day of Judgment, and the concept of Heaven and Hell (reward and punishment for our deeds).

The Roots of Religion (Usool-e-deen) - Core Islamic beliefs from a Shia perspective

- ◆ Absolute oneness of God (Tawhid): God has no partners, no associates, no helpers, no consorts, and no sons. When He intends a thing, He only says to it "Be" and it "Is".
- ◆ Justice of God (Adl): God is just in His dealings with His creation.
- ◆ Belief in Prophethood (Nubuwwat): Belief in all of the prophets of God, including the last prophet, Muhammad, peace be upon them all.
- ◆ Continued guidance after the prophets (Imamat): Guidance after the prophets in the form of 12 divinely guided imams (spiritual guides) from among the descendants of the prophet.
- ◆ Day of judgment (Qiyamat): Belief in the day of judgment and resurrection of souls after death.

The Branches of Religion (Furoo-e-deen) – Core practices of Shia Islam

- ◆ Prayer (Salaat)
- ◆ Fasting during Ramadhan (Sawm)
- ◆ Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime (Hajj)
- ◆ Dues for the poor (Zakat)
- ◆ 20% of savings to charity (Khums)
- ◆ Striving to live with integrity and to uphold universal principles in the world (Jihad)
- ◆ Enjoining others to good deeds (Amr bin Ma'roof)
- ◆ Enjoin others to avoid sins (Nahi anil munkar)
- ◆ Love for those who love God, for the prophets, and for the progeny of Prophet Muhammad (Tawalla)
- ◆ Distance and dissociation from the enemies of God, the enemies of the prophets, and the enemies of the progeny of Prophet Muhammad (Tabarra)

ISLAM & VIOLENCE

The religion of Islam does not support, preach, or advocate violence, discrimination, or terrorism. Extremist groups who claim to follow Islam are no more representative of Islam than David Koresh is of Christianity, or Rabbi Kahana is of Judaism. The concept of jihad has been improperly translated as 'holy war'. Instead, jihad means 'struggle' or 'striving' and refers, in particular, to the personal struggle that every Muslim engages in to live a peaceful and good life. Islam teaches Muslims that they must "strive" or work hard to make their religion real in their lives and in their societies. This should be done by JIHAD on four levels:

1. **jihad of the tongue:** speaking about faith and the truth;
2. **jihad of the hand:** putting their faith into action by good works;
3. **jihad of the heart:** making their faith real as a spiritual force in their lives;
4. **jihad of the sword:** defending their faith when they fear it to be under attack;

**For information about reliable sources of information
about Islam and Muslims,
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