

The Middle East & The Islamic World

Problems with Centrism



The Middle East is ...



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- Today refers to three “strategic” points



The Middle East is ...

The Arab World



The Arab World



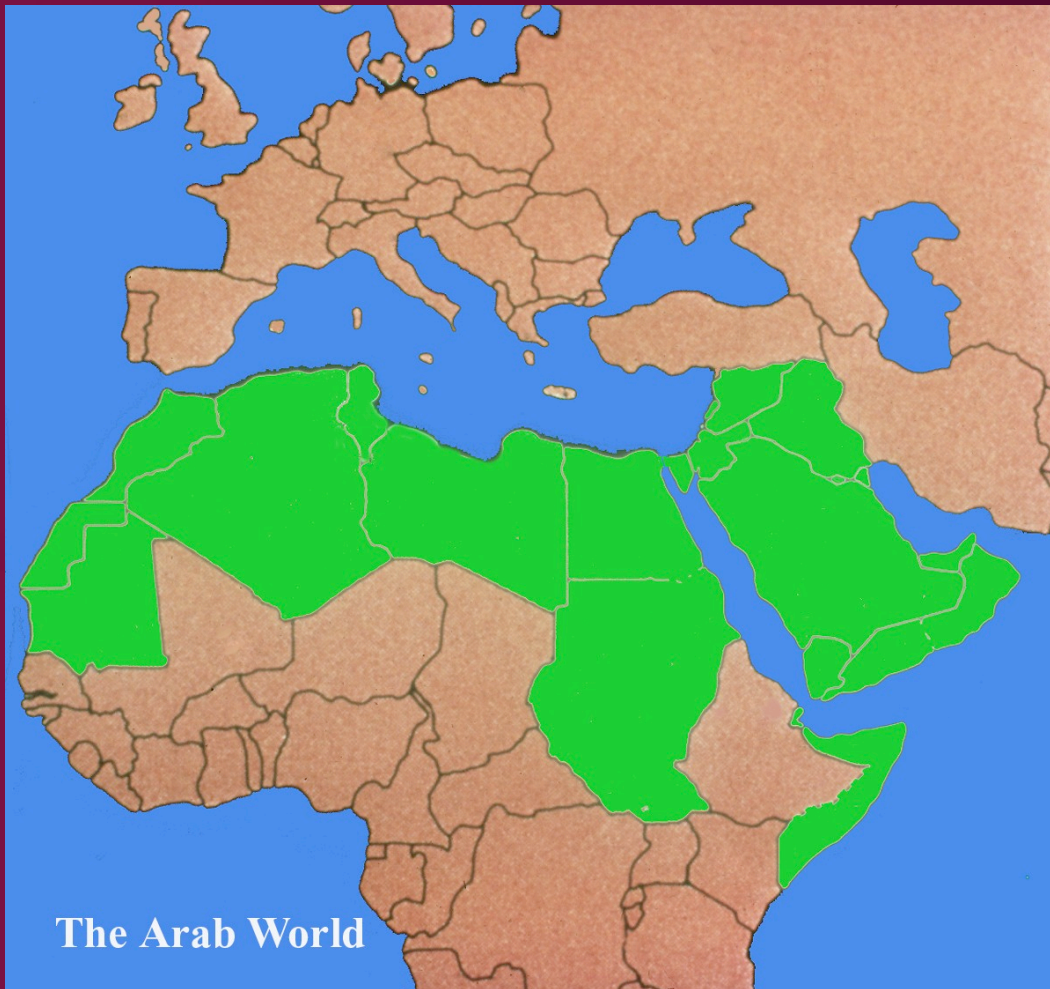
- Includes North Africa

The Arab World



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The Arab World



- Includes North Africa
- Comprises the nations of the Arab League

Linguistic Diversity

Languages of the Muslim World

Semitic:

- Arabic
- Berber
- Amharic, Tigrinya

Indo-European:

- Persian & Tajik
- Baluchi
- Kurdish
- Albanian
- Urdu, Pashto and Punjabi
- Bengali
- Indo-Iranian & Indian mixture

Turkic & Altaic group:

- Turkish, Azerbaijani, Uzbek, Uighur, Kirghiz

Austronesian group:

- Malay, Bahasa Indonesian, Filipino & Javanese

African group:

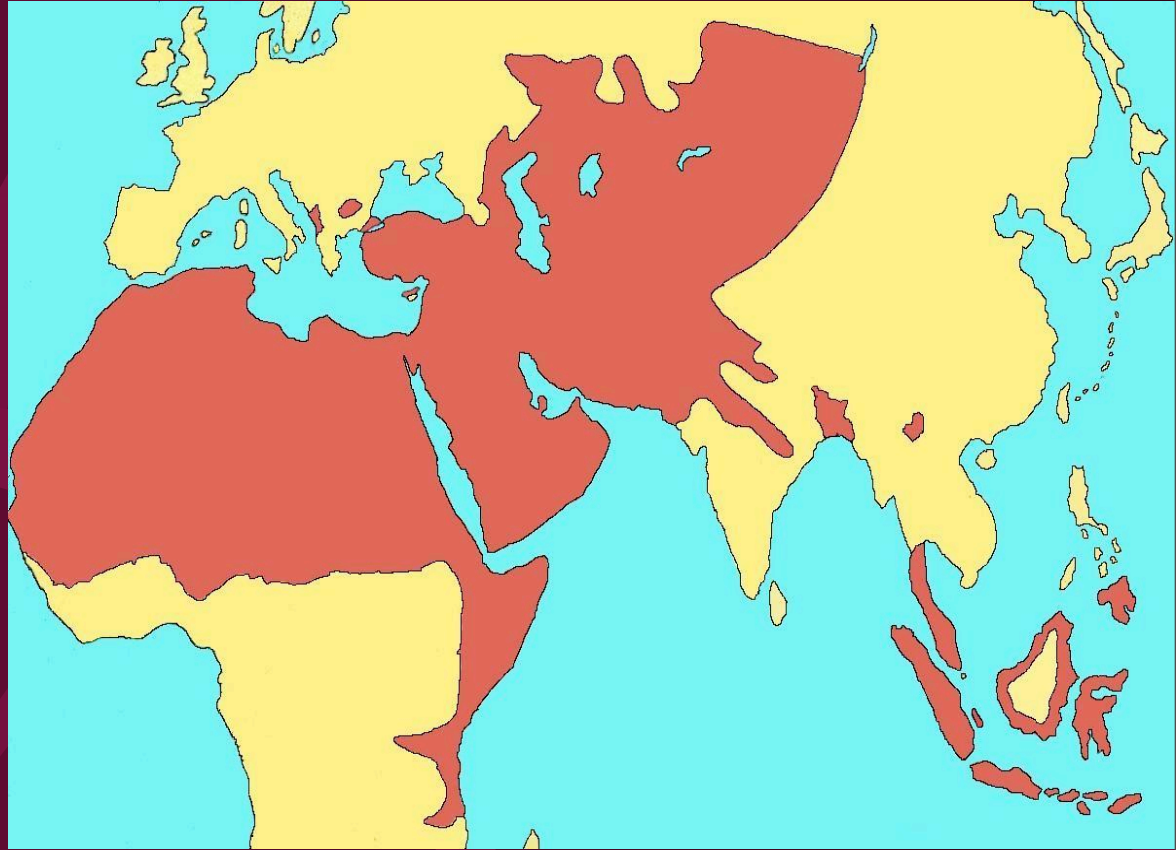
- Niger-Congo group
- Nilo-Saharan
- Chadic
- Somali and Oromo



The Arab World is ...

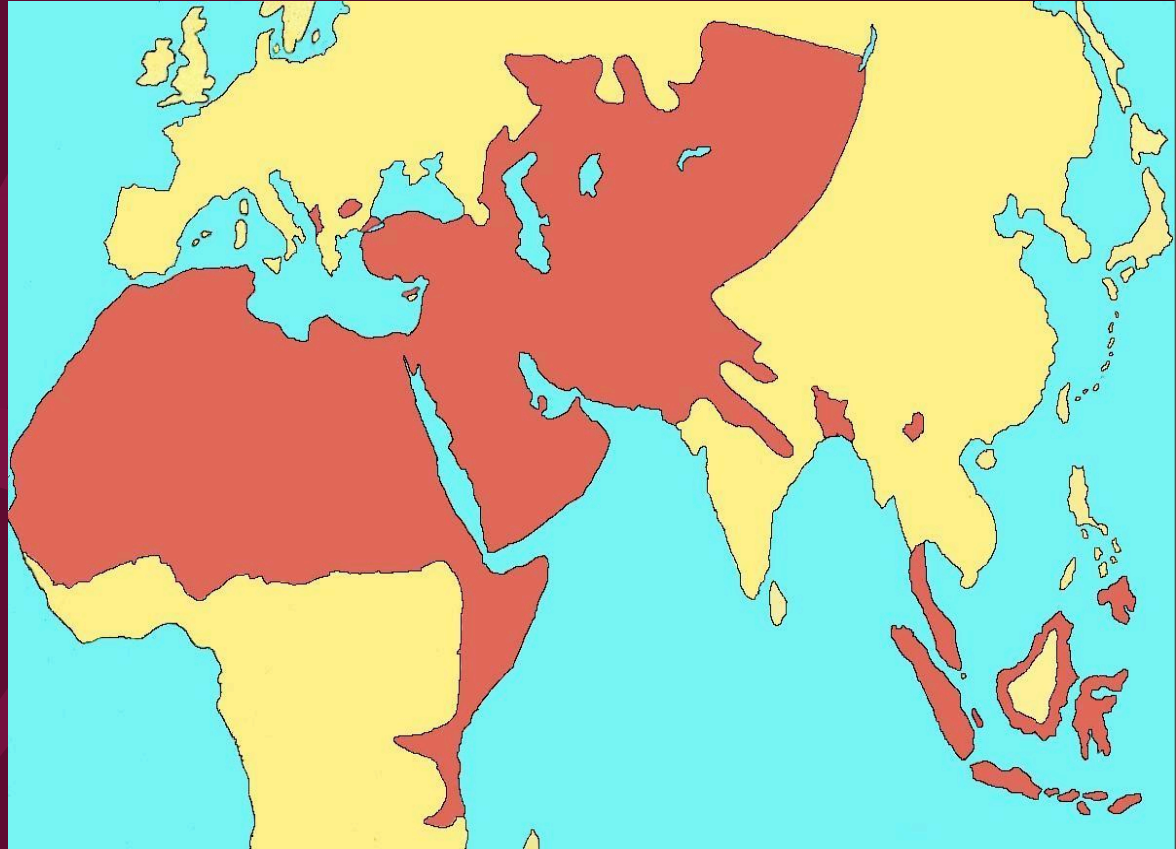
A Linguistic Term

The Muslim World is ...



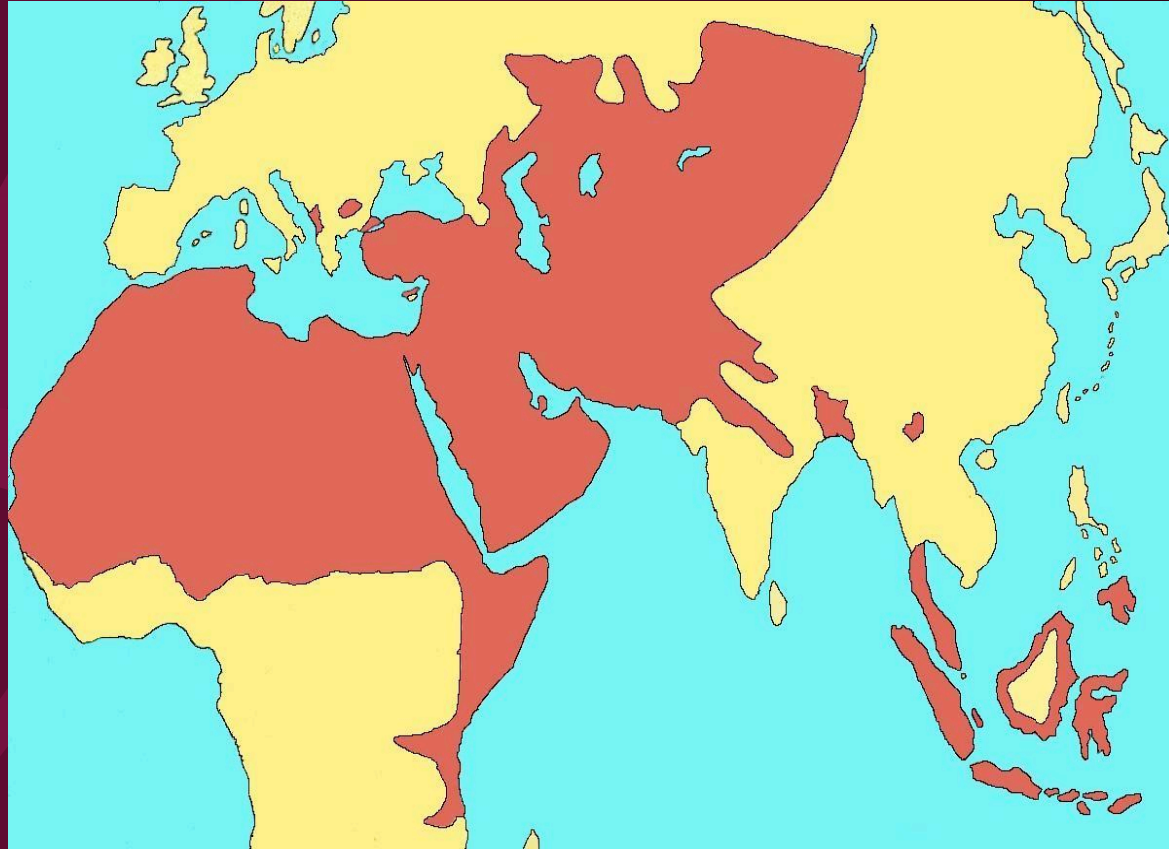
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- Most Muslims live East of Karachi, Pakistan



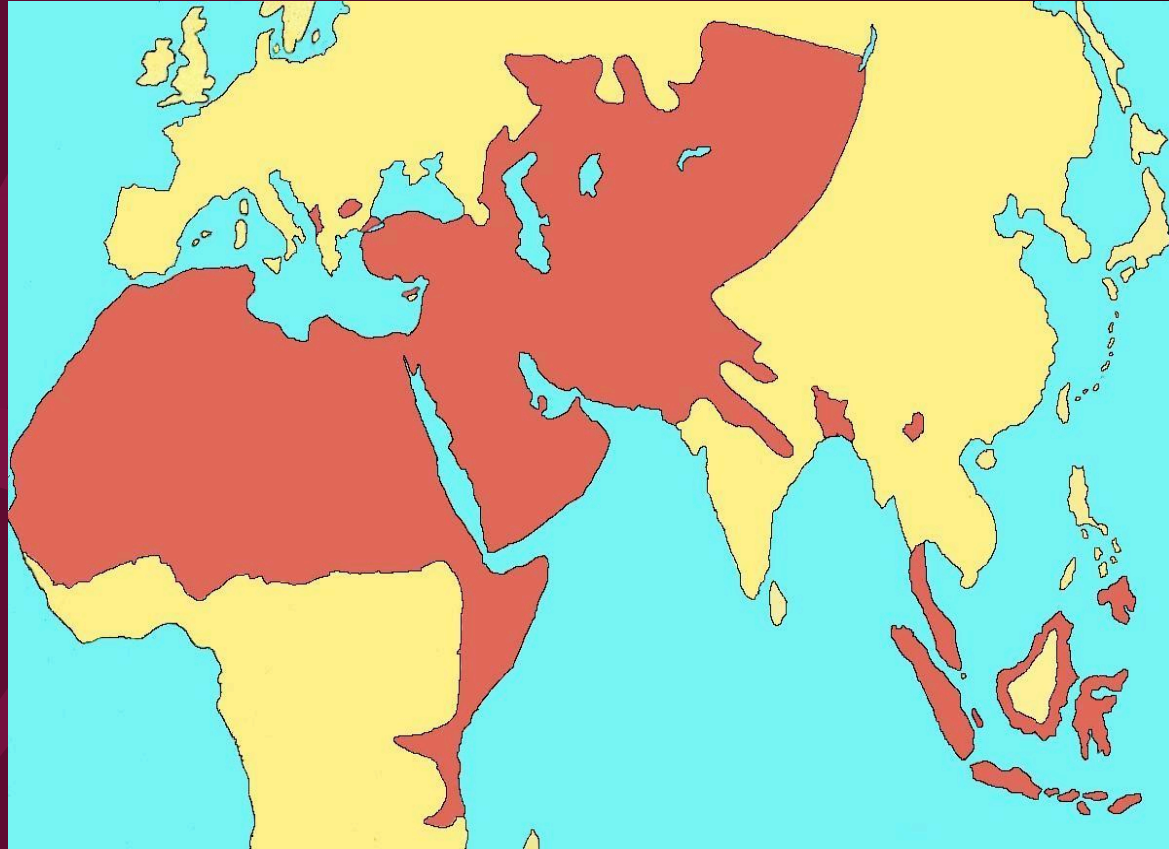
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- 30% in the South Asian Subcontinent



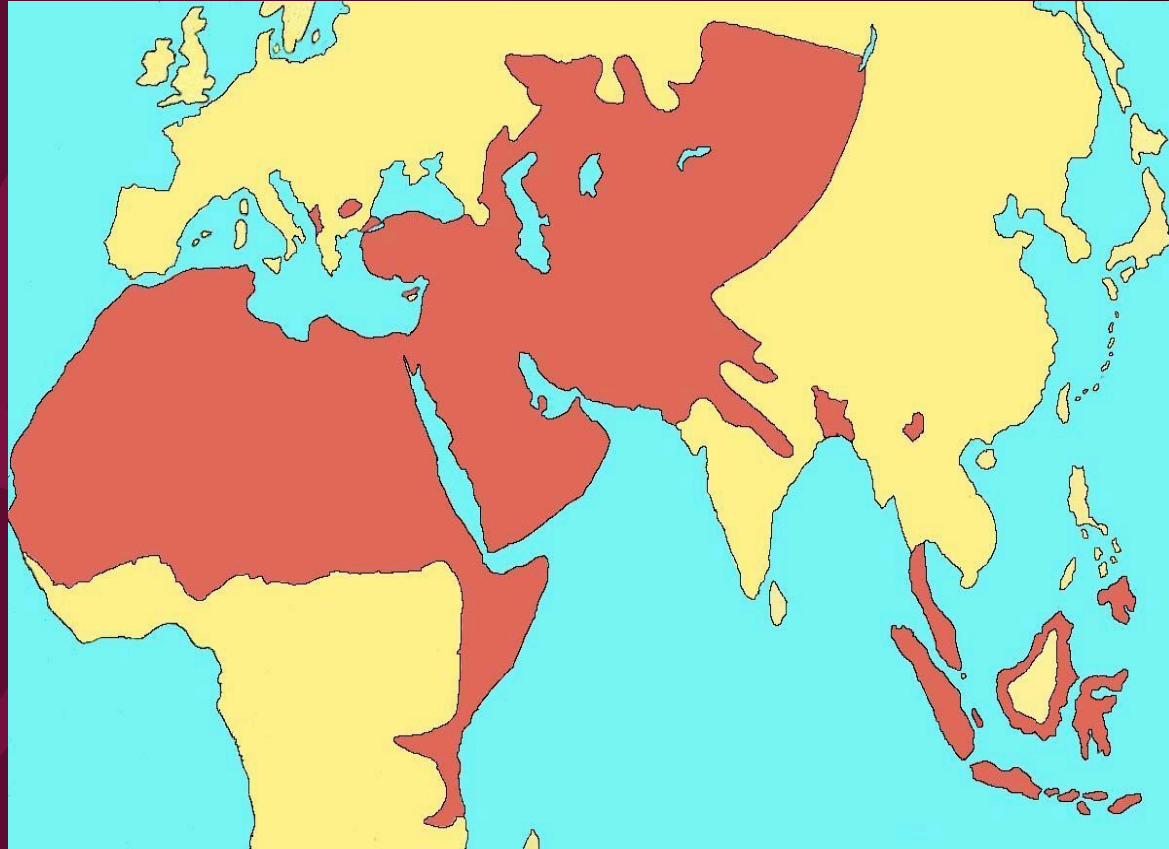
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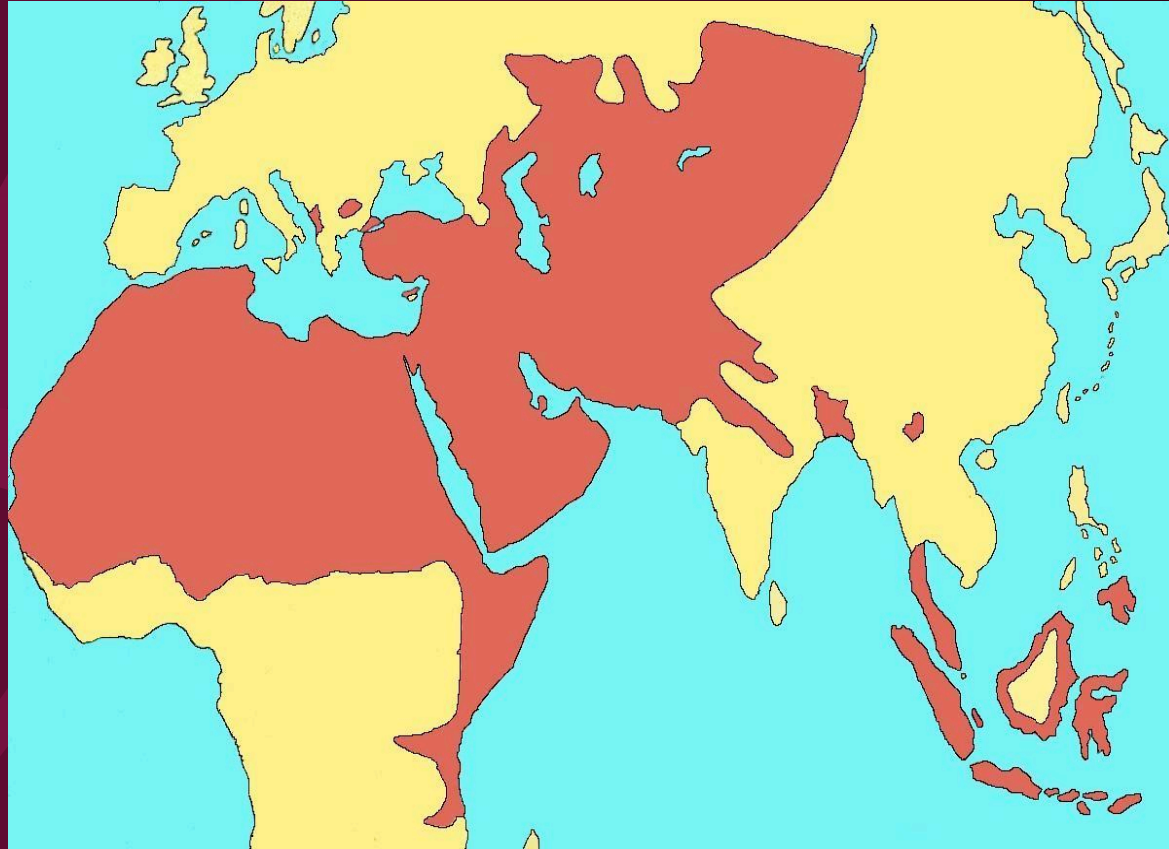
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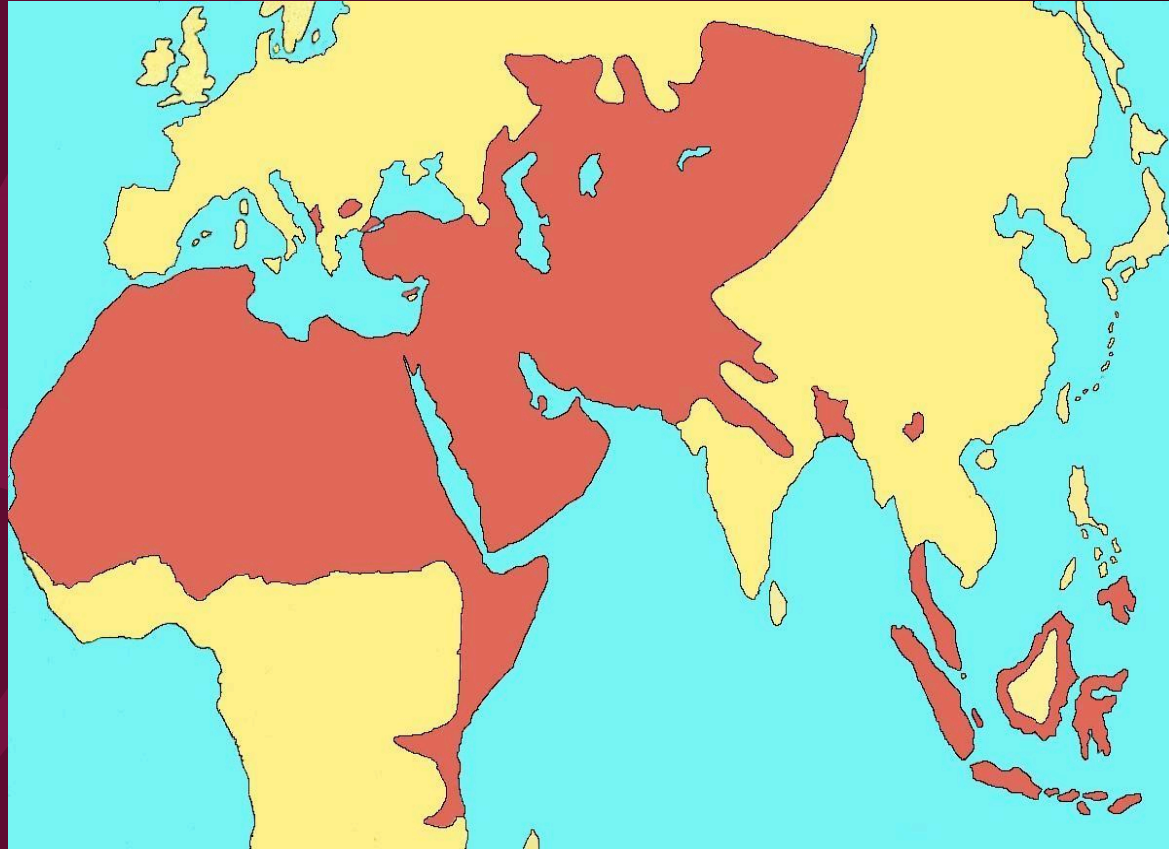
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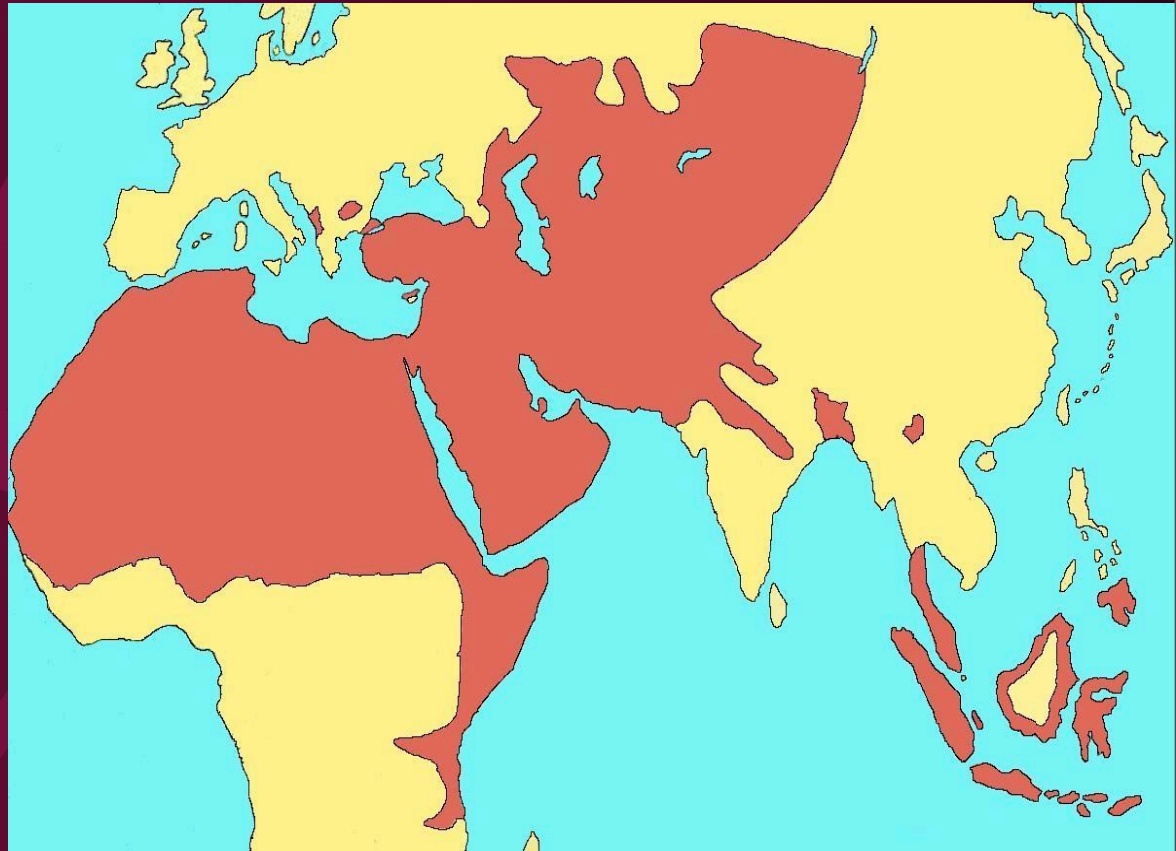
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- 6 to 10 million Muslims live in the United States



The Muslim World is ...

A Religious Term

Islam

إسلام

A World Faith

1. Basic Misconceptions

Not all Muslim are Arabs

Not all Arabs are Muslims

Most Muslims are not Arabs

Not All Muslims Practice Islam

2. Distinctions Need to be Made Between:

- Islam and Muslims
- Action of Muslims and Islam

Islam

- Originates in the Middle East, in the Arabian Peninsula, in the 7th Century
- Adherents are referred to as Muslims (literally those who commit to the will of God)
- View themselves as continuers and perfecters of the previous monotheistic traditions
- Al-Ma'ida (5:3) “This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion”

Principal Tenets of Islam

- Sura al-Baqara (2:146) is considered the Muslim Creed verse:
 - We believe in God and that which is revealed to us and that which was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, and that which was vouchsafed to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them, and to Him we have surrendered

Overview and Theological/ Political Implications

Islam as a **Universalist** religion that emphasizes

- egalitarianism
- peace
- comm(unity)
- reason
- giving/generosity

Islam emphasizes *deeds over words*:

Actualization > affirmation

this privileged law over theology, hence the importance of Law in Islam

Islam is a lay religion with no sacrament, no ordained priesthood, and no theological hierarchy

Articles of Faith in Islam (Belief)

- The **Shahada** – Declaration of Faith

Two parts form the declaration are:

- The affirmation of the unity of God
 - The role of Muhammad as His final messenger
- The Qur'an as the word of God
 - Life After Death

The Five Pillars of the Faith (Practice)



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- **Charity** – A portion of net income is donated to the poor in the community
- **Service** – The promotion of Islam both internally and externally

Prayer



Prayer

- Internal Aspects:
 - Personal connection to God
 - Obedience to His commands



Prayer

- Internal Aspects:
 - Personal connection to God
 - Obedience to His commands
- External Aspects:
 - Communal in nature (Friday prayers)



Fasting



Fasting



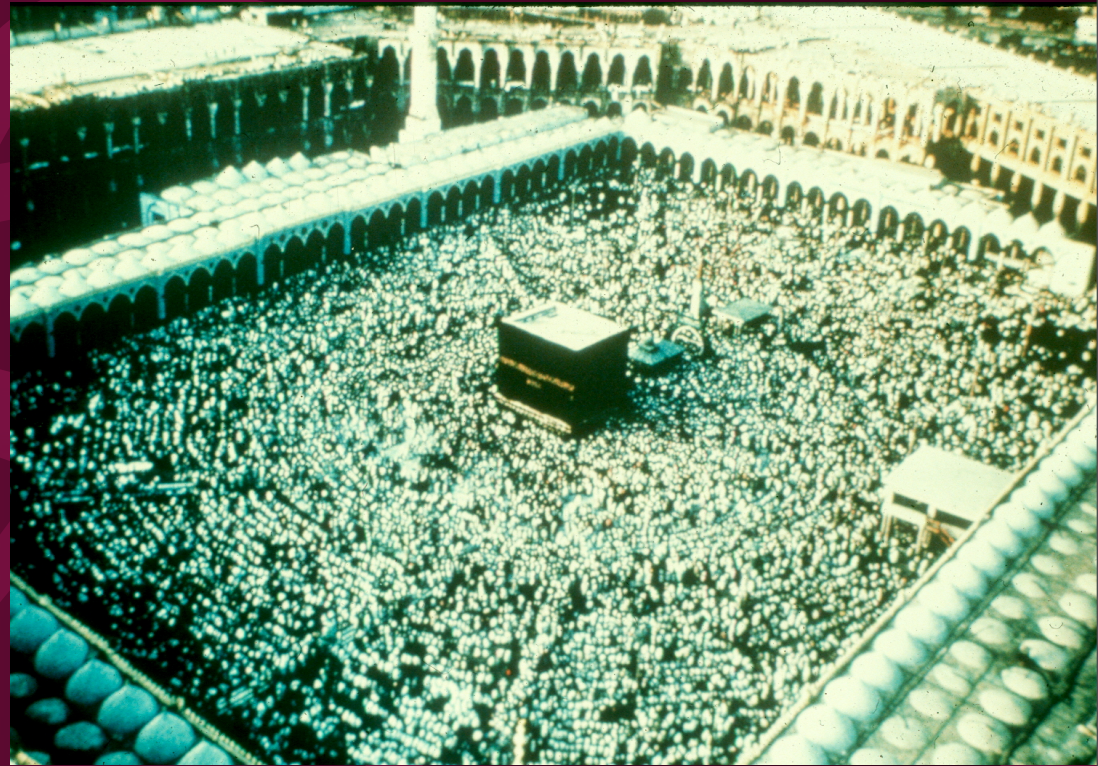
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Fasting



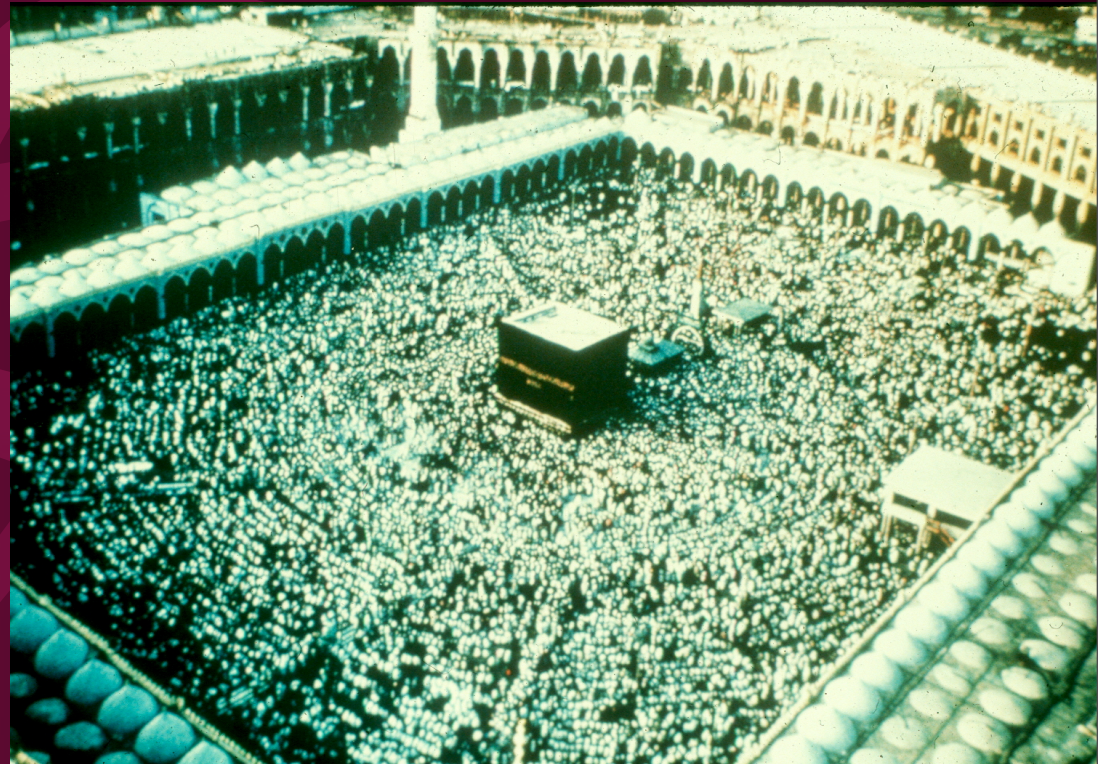
- Internal Aspects:
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- External Aspects:
 - Breaking of the fast is often a communal activity

Pilgrimage



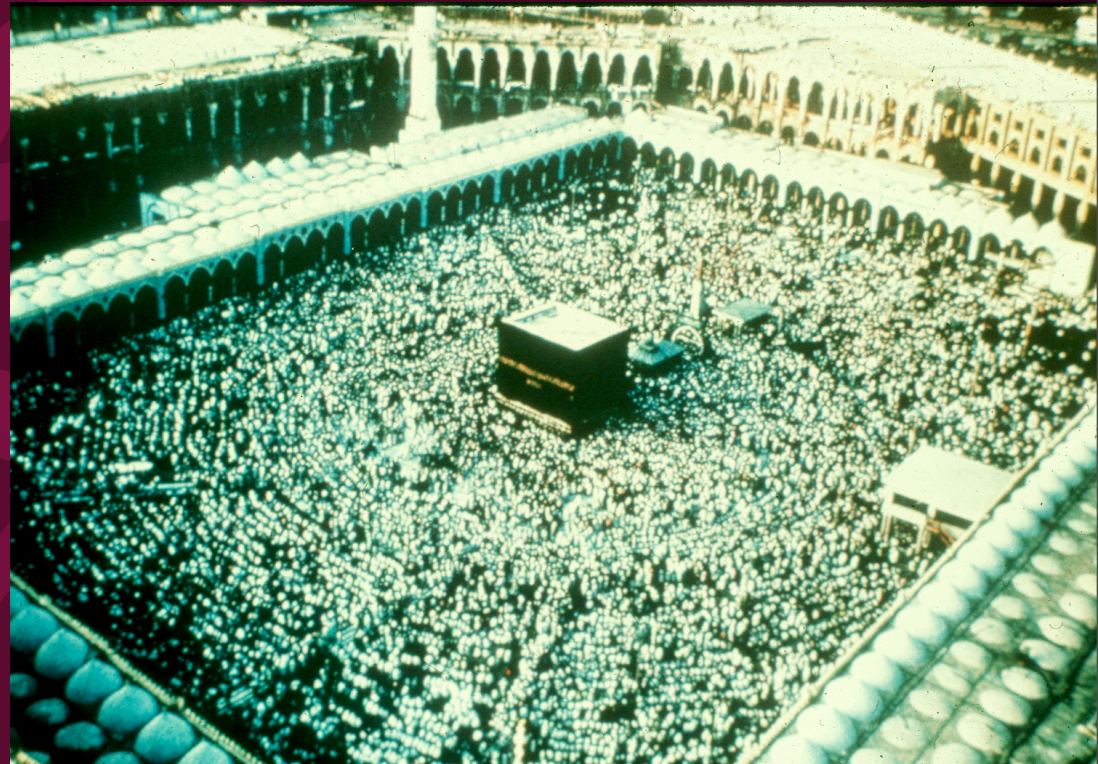
Pilgrimage

- Internal Aspects:
 - Personal association with the places and events of the early Islamic community



Pilgrimage

- Internal Aspects:
 - Personal association with the places and events of the early Islamic community
- External Aspects:
 - Drawing together Muslims from every corner of the globe and every walk of life



Charity



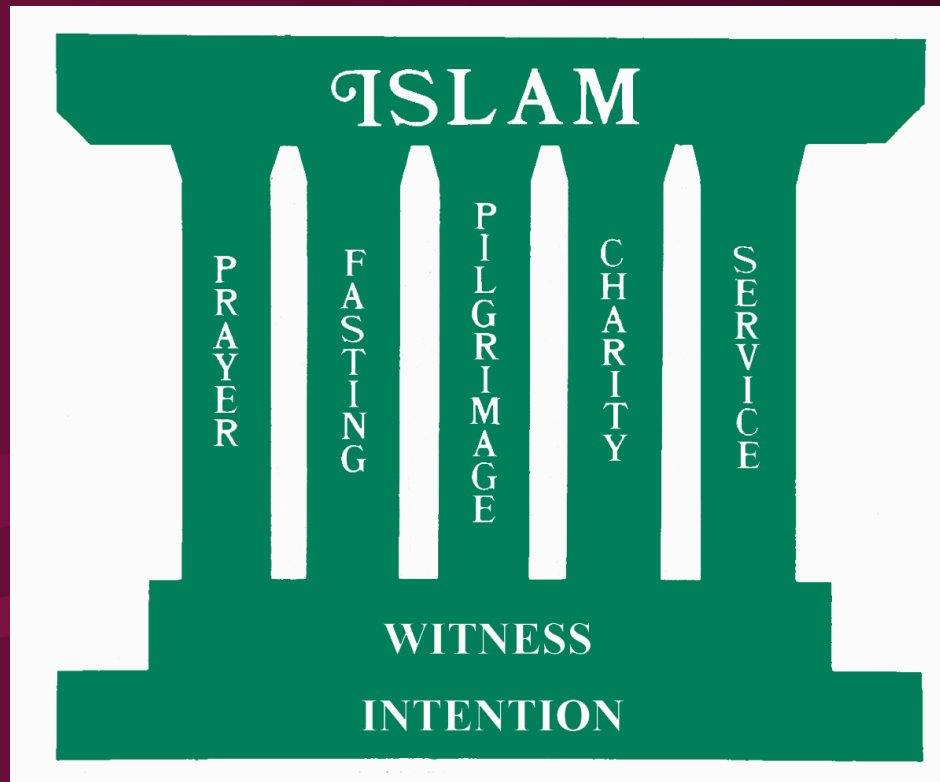
Charity

- Internal Aspects:
 - Benefit of giving help to the needy in the community

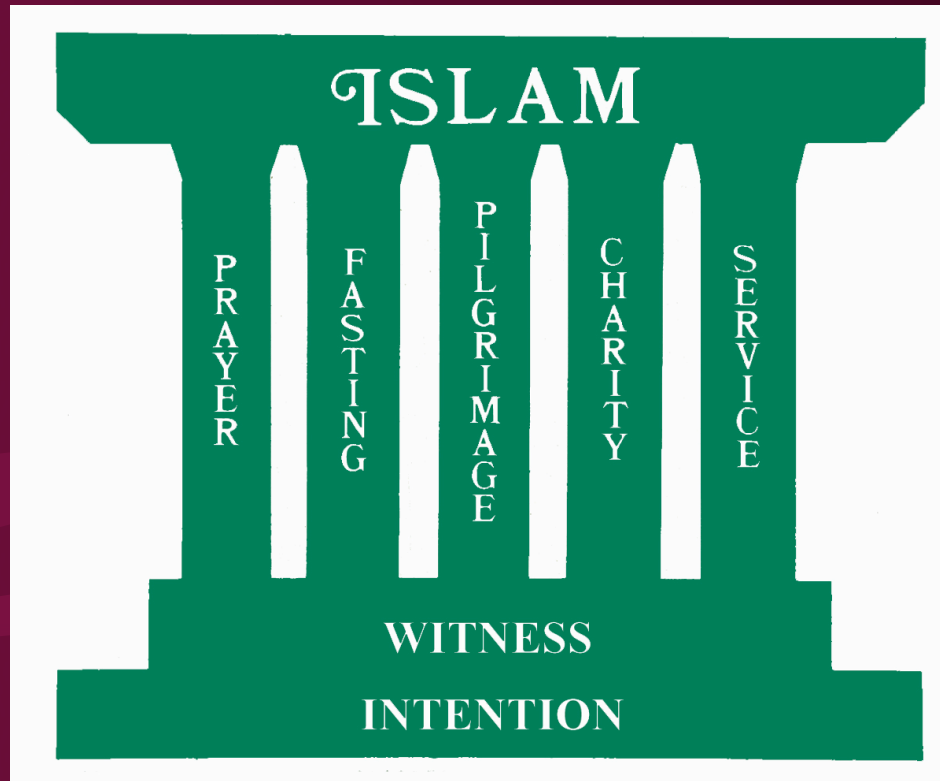
Charity

- Internal Aspects:
 - Benefit of giving help to the needy in the community
- External Aspects:
 - Creation of an informal social safety net
 - Less disparity between wealth and impoverished

Service

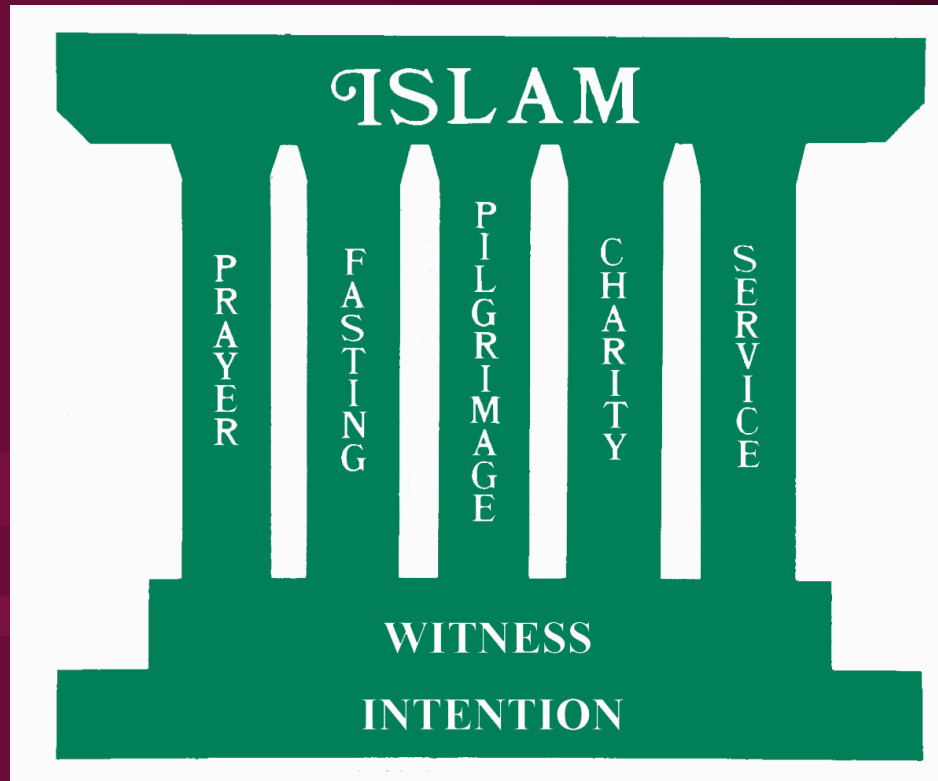


Service



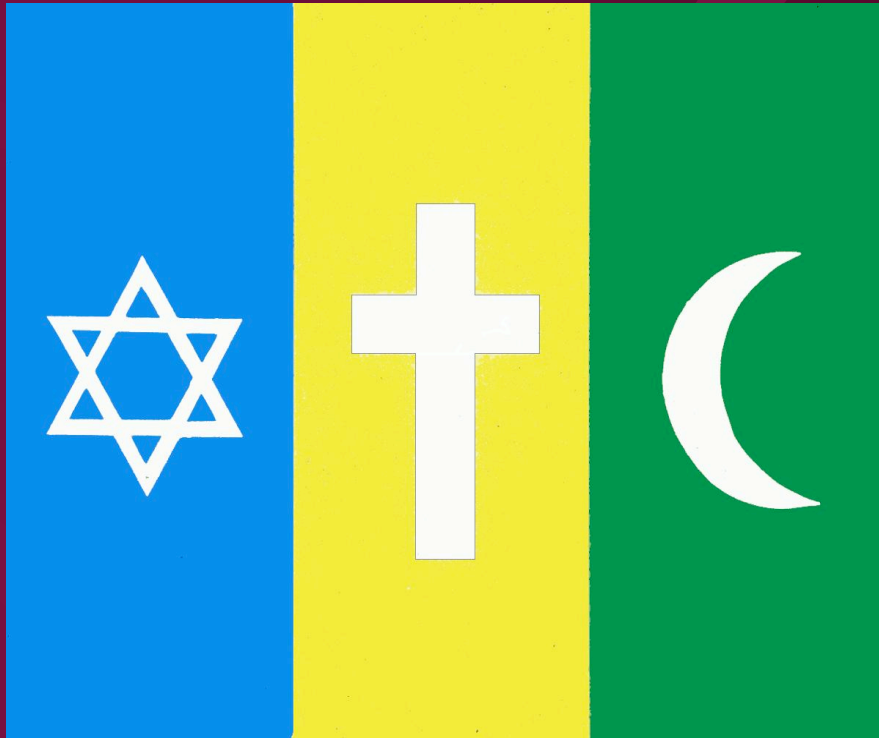
- May be translated as **Jihad**

Service



- May be translated as **Jihad**
- Two types :
 - (Internal) Greater Jihad: The internal struggle to be better.
 - (External) Lesser Jihad: The giving of oneself bodily in defense of religion or household

A New Paradigm: The Abrahamic Faiths



- All three trace authority to Abraham
- Common assumptions on:
 - God
 - Prophecy
 - Angels
 - Revelation
 - Judgment
- Known as *ahl al-Kitāb* or “People of the Book” in the Islamic tradition

Divisions within Islam



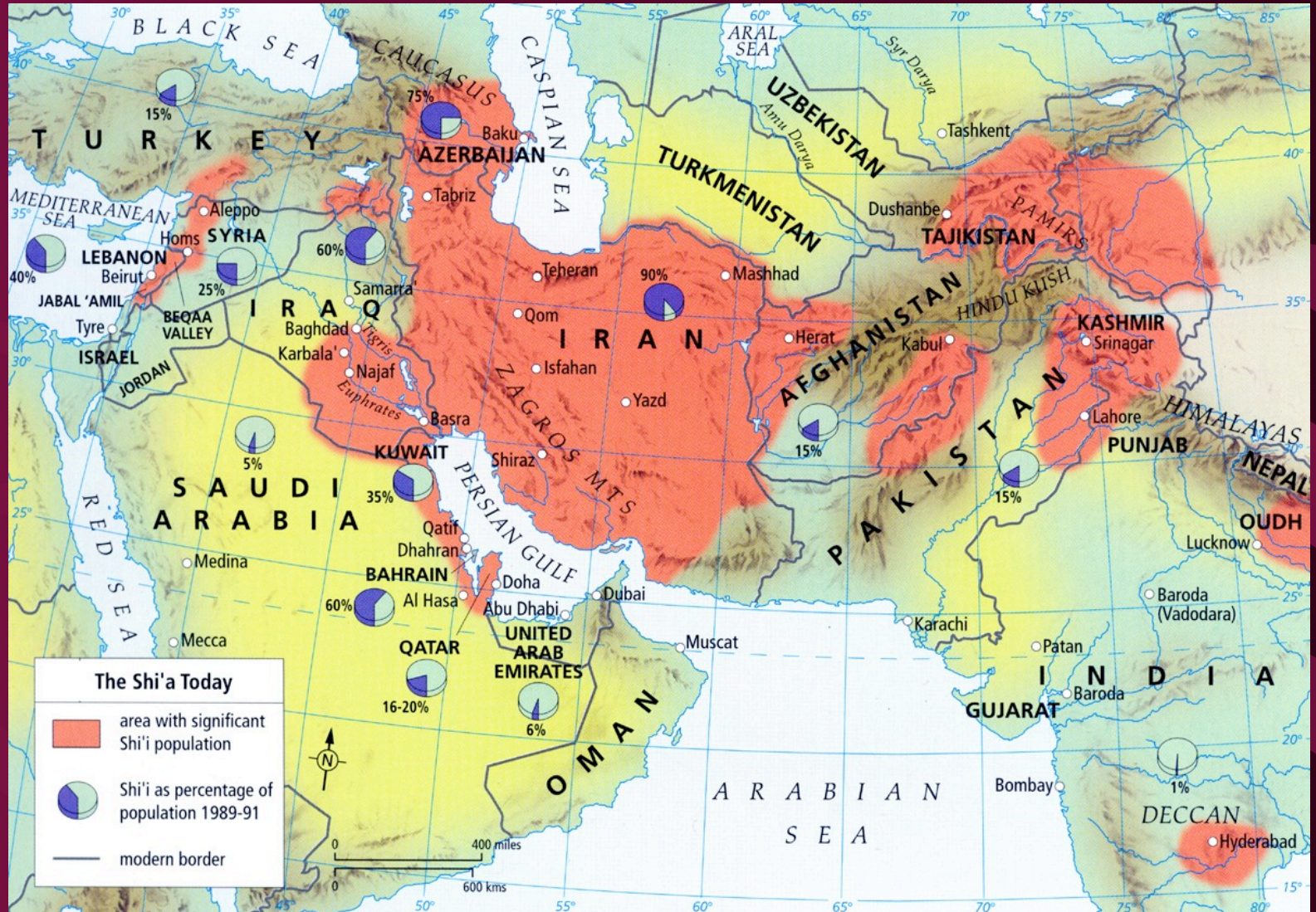
Divisions within Islam

- Two major sub-divisions:
 - **Shi'is:** follow the descendants of Muhammad's family through his daughter Fatima and his cousin, foster-brother, and son-in-law Ali (d. 661)
 - **Sunnis:** the followers of Muhammad's elected historical successors after his death in AD 632

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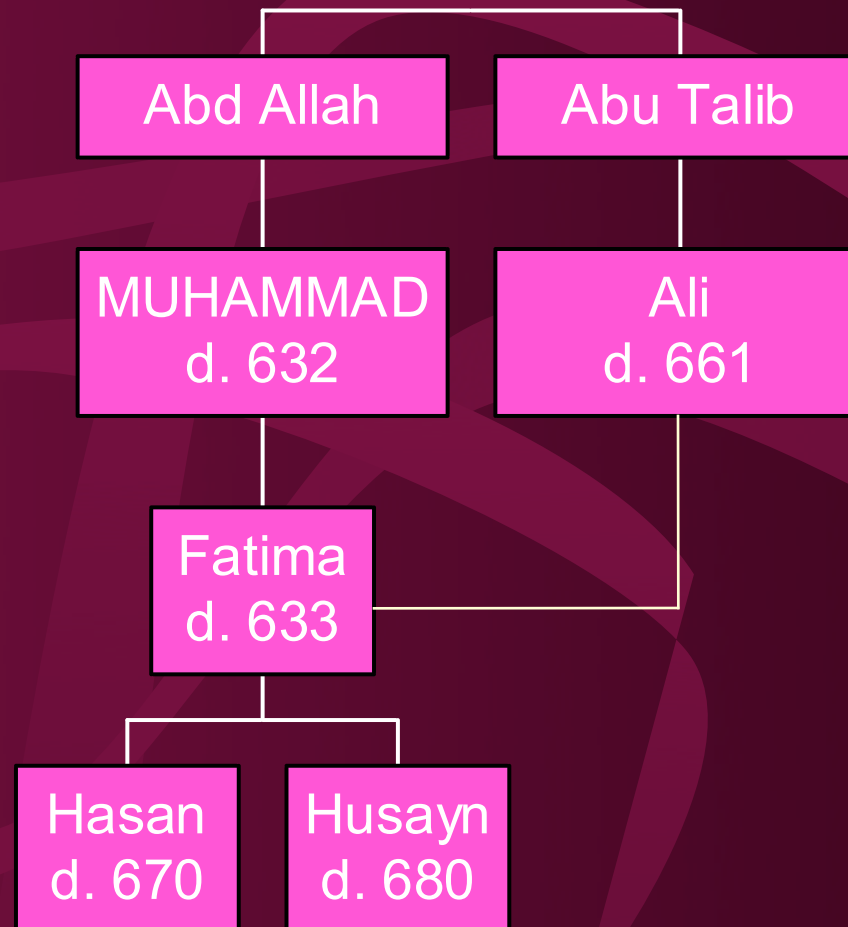
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- Percentages:
 - **Shi'is:** 10 – 15%
 - **Sunnis:** 85 – 90%

Shi'i Dominant Areas



Authority in the Shi'i Tradition

The Prophet's Family



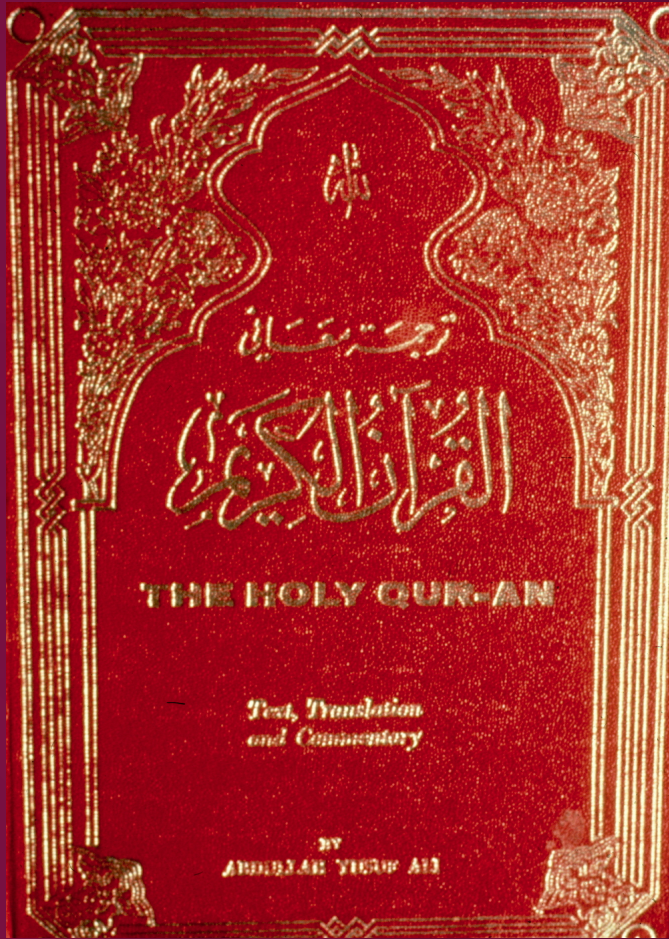
Authority in the Shi'i Tradition

- The principle of the Imamate (to interpret the Holy Qur'an and the *hadith*)
- Divine ordination (*nass*) designates the religio-political heirs for Shi'is
- Within the Shi'i tradition, there are differing views for the legitimate succession
 - Zaydis: Follow a different line after the death of the fourth Imam Ali Zayn al-Abidin (fivers)
 - Isma'ilis: Follow a different line after the death of the sixth Imam Jaffar al-Sadiq (seveners)
 - Ithna' Ashara: Majority of Shi'i follow this path, the 12th Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (occ. AD 941)

Authority in the Sunni Tradition

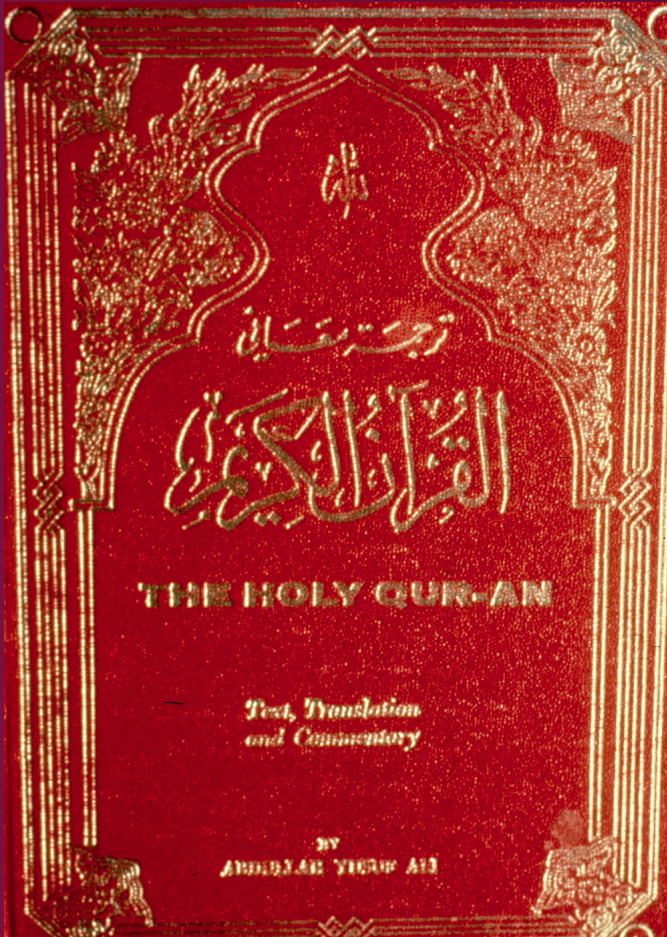
- Three levels of authority in the Islamic tradition:
 - The Qur'an
 - The Hadith
 - Consensus of the Community
 - Analogical Reasoning

The Holy Qur'an

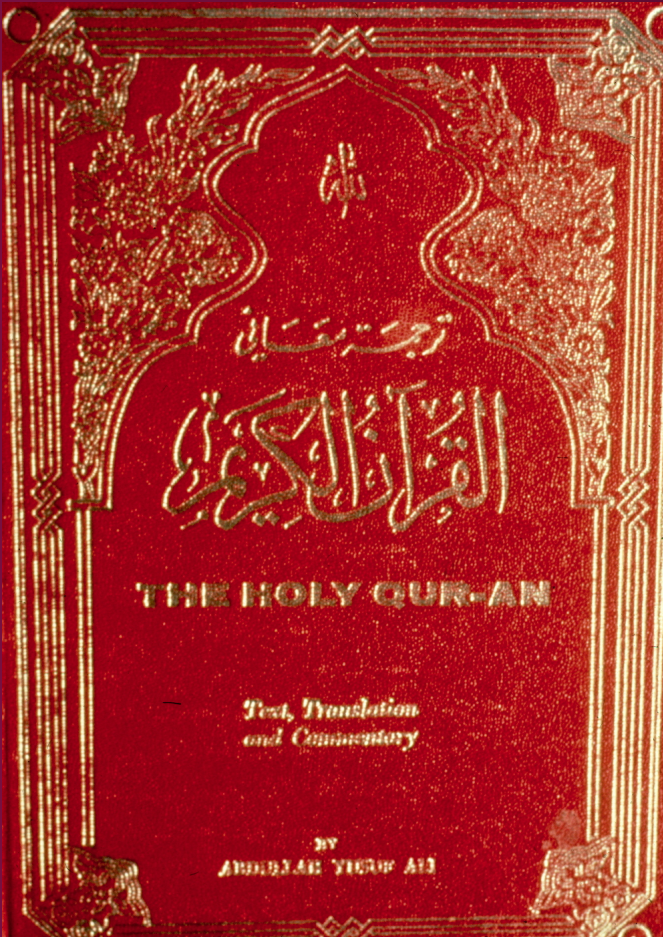


The Holy Qur'an

- Literally translated as “Recitations”

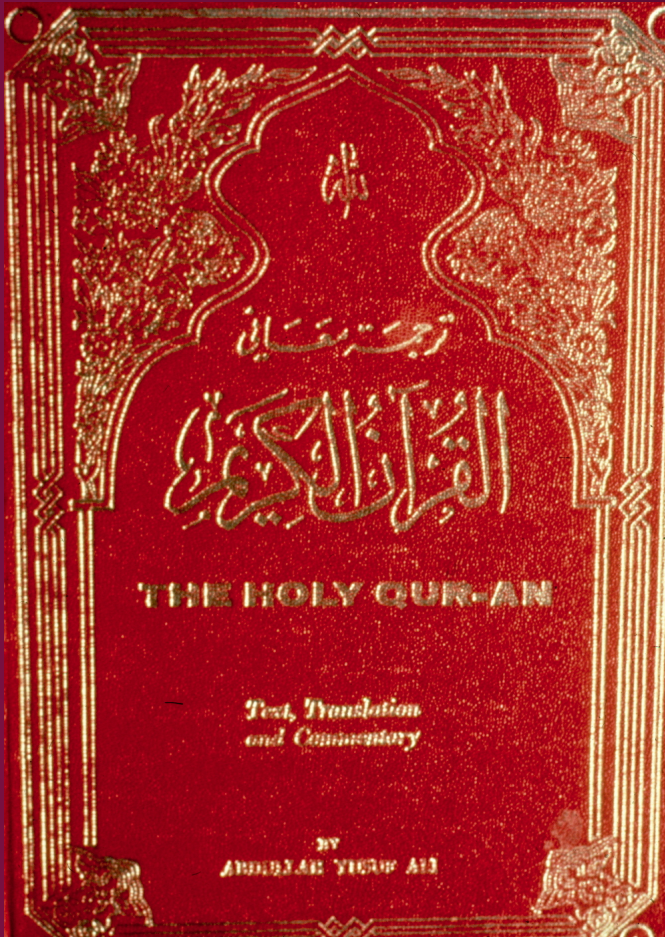


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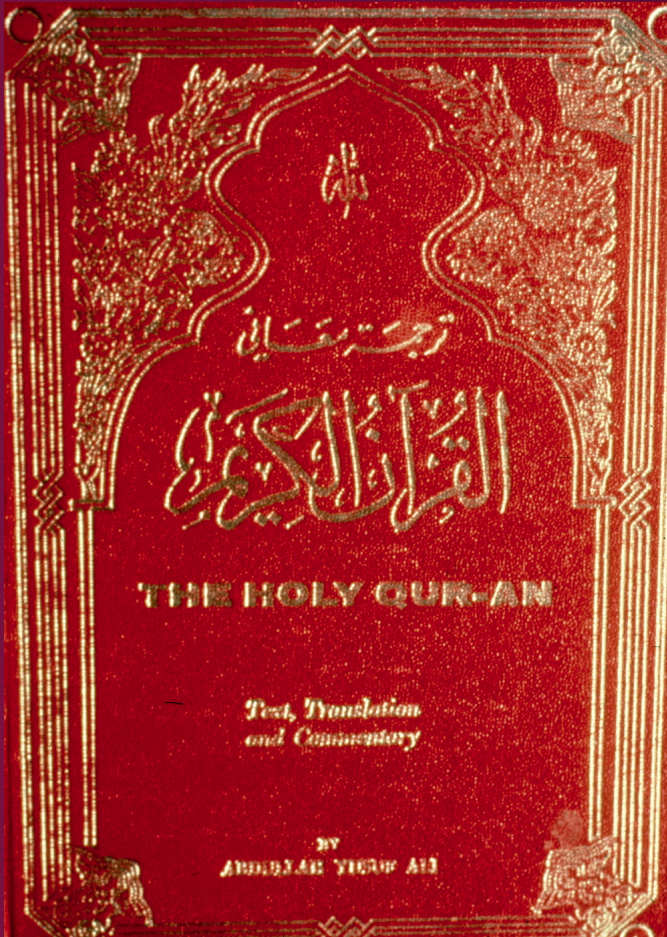
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The Holy Qur'an



- Literally translated as “Recitations”
- Comprised of 114 chapters (*surahs*) of varying length and a total of 6000 verses
- Internal organization of chapters is roughly from largest to smallest
- The Qur'an is believed by Muslims to be the literal word of God

Revelation of the Qur'an



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- Common date for the start of revelation is the month of Ramadan, AD 610



Revelation of the Qur'an

- Common date for the start of revelation is the month of Ramadan, AD 610
- Revelation was in Arabic from God, through the agency of Arch-Angel Gabriel, to the Prophet Muhammad.



Nature of the Qur'an



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- The Qur'an is only in Arabic – all translations are just “interpretations”



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Nature of the Qur'an



- The Qur'an is only in Arabic – all translations are just “interpretations”
- Form is poetic-prose
- Three approaches to the Qur'an:
 - Literalist
 - Apologist
 - Temporalist

Hadith



Hadith



- The deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad

Hadith



- The deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
- Used as a model for living

Hadith



- The deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
- Used as a model for living
- Compiled in the ninth century AD

Consensus of The Community



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- Religious scholars interpret the Qur'an and Hadith



Consensus of The Community

- Religious scholars interpret the Qur'an and Hadith
- Different communities interpret these two paradigms differently



Analogical Reasoning



Analogical Reasoning

- Using comparative reasoning to make judgments on issues not explicitly addressed in the Qur'an



Sharia'

- Combination of Qur'anic injunctions, examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammad and certain aspects of pre-Islamic custom
- *Sharia'* is the totality of religious, political, social, domestic and private life.
- Divided into two categories:
 - Regulations on worship and ritual duties
 - Regulations of a juridical and political nature

Principle Difference Between the Sunni and the Shi'i

- In the Sunni model, the Qur'an and *hadith* are interpreted by the community
- In the Shi'i model, the Qur'an and *hadith* are interpreted by an imam or a charismatic successor with direct link to the Prophet
- *Sharia* 'is legitimate for both traditions

Bias and Stereotypes

Western Notions of Islam and Muslims

- Views of Women
- Feminism
- Violence as Nature
- Pathology of Hatred
- Power of Oil
- The Religion of Islam

Western Notions of Islam and Muslims

Views of Women



VS.



Western Notions of Islam and Muslims

Feminism



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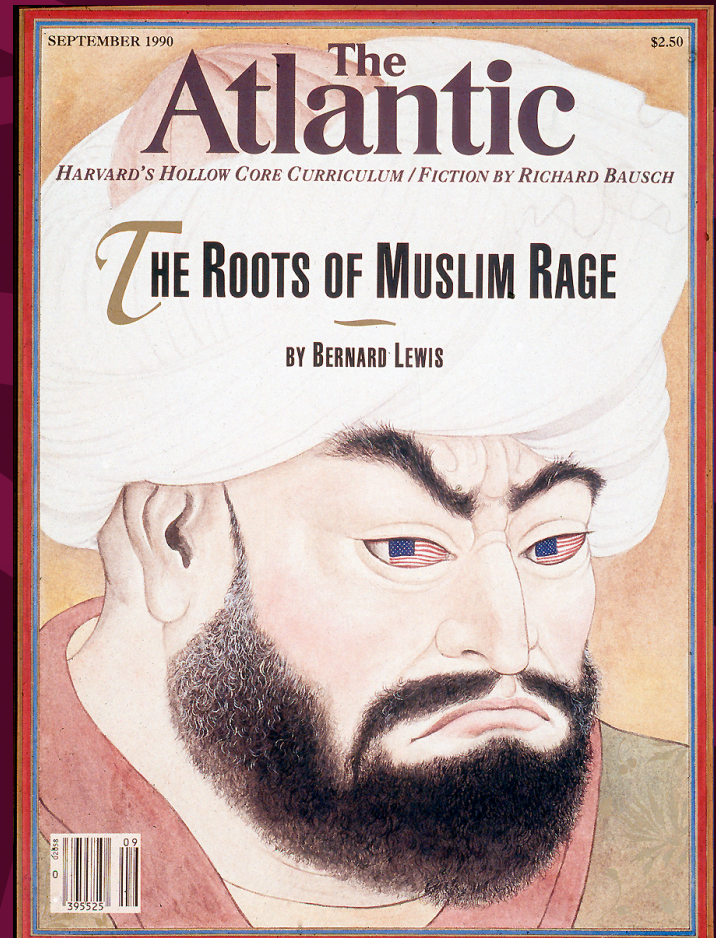
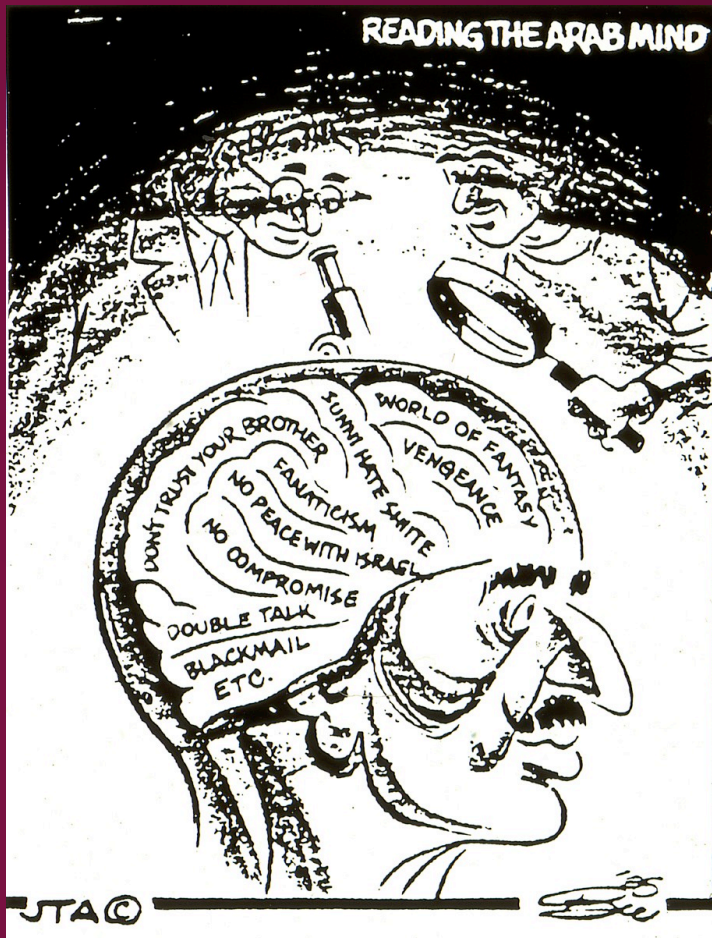
Violence as nature



Violence, the Islamic curse

Western Notions of Islam and

Pathology of Hatred



Western Notions of Islam and Muslims

Power of Oil



Western Notions of Islam and Muslims

The Religion

Islam is a religion from Hell

Hardly a day goes by that we don't see the wreckage that militant Islam brings upon this earth. I mean to focus in on the Shi'ite Moslems, responsible for hijackings, skyjackings, murder, hostage-taking, suicide missions, airport bombings and more, all in the name of *Jihad* or "Holy War."

Islam was founded by Mohammed, who was born in AD 570 in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. We believe Mohammed was an illiterate camel driver who exposed himself to the philosophical debates of the Middle East. He married a wealthy widow, which allowed him to spend time in the desert contemplating and praying. He claims to have had a visit by the angel Gabriel, who commanded him to proclaim his new faith. Over a span of 23 years, this "Gabriel" dictated the 114 chapters of their Bible, the Koran. The Koran is believed to be the divine will of Allah, the god of Islam.

Mohammed knew his cause was worthless without converts. Here is where modern-day Israel/Arab conflict began. The Jews refused to accept his new religion, so Mohammed resorted to what would become commonplace for the Moslems: eliminate the Jews by slaughter and banishment. He set a sordid



MIDDLE EAST UPDATE

with Jan Markell

example for his present disciples such as Gadhafi, Khomeini, Arafat, Assad, and more.

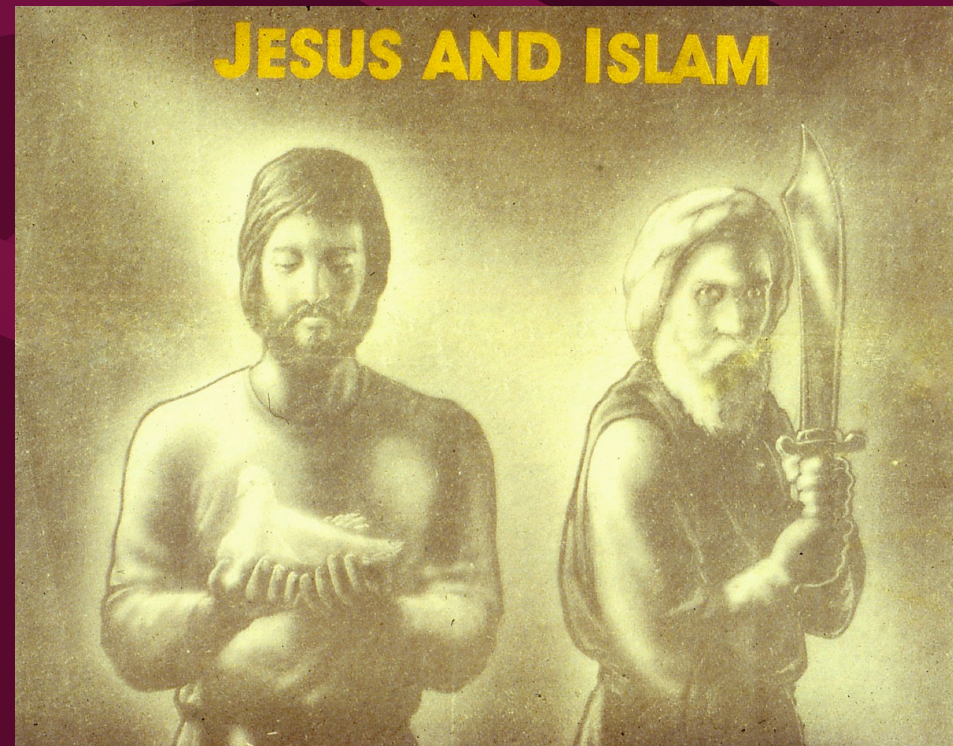
Islam is not like Christianity. We know that Christianity admonishes people to "turn the other cheek." However, the Koran urges adherents of Allah to "make war on those who believe not (in Islam)." Followers of Jesus are known, hopefully, by their love; the disciples of Allah and Mohammed are known for their cruelty and brutality. Islam gains followers through the edge of the sword. This has been true for centuries.

Islam is a religion conceived in hell. It was and is determined to destroy all Jews and Christians. Again I refer to fundamentalist extremists. They are the ones who claim "holy war" upon an "unbelieving" world. Their "holy war" is inspired by Satan himself. The flames of holy war lengthen and strengthen as Satan senses the imminent arrival of the Messiah.

The Bible makes reference frequently to "ruthless men

and" the most ruthless of the nations." I believe this applies to militant, fundamentalist Moslems, who eat animals alive, who blow up embassies and marine compounds, who cross Israel's border and hold a kibbutz nursery hostage, killing several children, who overtake Israeli busses and much more. Most of the violence in Israel today is taking place because it is rooted in Islam. The demonstrators are urged to act "on behalf of the homeland." Any method will do. The philosophy of militant is hate and fear. Their worldwide network keeps growing, and only God Himself can put it down and snuff out these destructive flames. That is exactly what the Bible tells us will happen to these "ruthless men."

Jan Markell is a freelance writer who speaks on Middle East issues. For more information, call 483-6038.



The Slippery Slope



The Slippery Slope

Ignorance

The background of the slide features a complex, abstract pattern of overlapping, wavy lines in various shades of purple and blue. The lines are thick and fluid, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is a textured, layered appearance that complements the title 'The Slippery Slope'.

The Slippery Slope

Ignorance
Misconception

The Slippery Slope

Ignorance

Misconception

Negative Images

The Slippery Slope

Ignorance

Misconception

Negative Images

Stereotypes

The Slippery Slope

Ignorance

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Reductionism

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