

# THE BASICS OF ISLAM

A large, ornate mosque with a golden dome and intricate blue and green tilework. The building features a prominent central archway supported by columns, and a series of smaller arches along the facade. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

By Eric Johnson

UNDERSTANDING A GROWING WORLD RELIGION

## BASIC TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

- **Islam:** The monotheistic religion, submission to God
- **Allah:** One God
- **Muslim:** A follower of Islam and Allah
- **Muhammad:** The founder of Islam
- **Qu'ran (Koran):** Islam's holy scripture
- **Mosque:** A place of worship
- **Ka'bah:** The holy shrine located in Mecca



## WHERE MUSLIMS ARE LOCATED

- Indonesia: 229 million (87% of population)
- Pakistan: 240 million (97%)
- India: 200 million (14%)
- Bangladesh: 150 million (91%)
- Nigeria: 97 million (48%)
- 98% or higher: Maldives, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iran, Western Sahara, Yemen, Algeria, Morocco

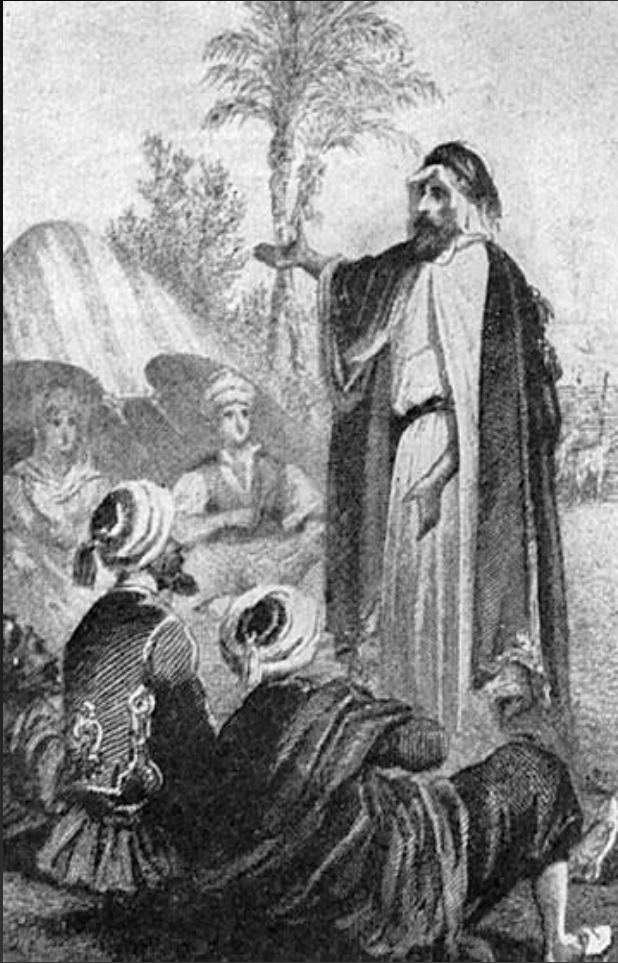


# THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

- AD 570-633
- Called the Seal of the Prophets
- Last/greatest of 124,000 prophets
- Name means “Praised One”
- Father (Abdullah) died before birth in Mecca
- Mother (Aminah bint Wahab) died when Muhammad was 6
- Raised for 2 years by grandfather (Abd al-Muttalib)
- At 8, raised by uncle, (Abu Talib)



# THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD



- Angels in attendance at birth
- Born clean and circumcised
- Grew up, illiterate, as a shepherd boy and trader
- At 25, married wealthy 40-year-old woman
- At 40 (AD 610), receives revelation from God through angel Gabriel (the Qur'an)
- Revelations continue rest of life
- Visits 7<sup>th</sup> level of heaven (from Jerusalem)

# THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

- Muhammad and his followers get persecuted from the pagans in Mecca
- In 610, Muhammad challenges people to forsake idolatry (360 deities in Ka'bah)
- In 622, they left Mecca for Medina (260 miles to north), called the Hegira, or Flight
- Marks the beginning of Muslim calendar
- Welcomed by Arabs
- Series of battles between Muhammad and Meccans lasts a decade
- Returns to Mecca in 630 without a fight, conquers city and replaces idols
- Muhammad dies in 632
- Sinless, though not divine



# MUHAMMAD: THE PROPHET



- Muslims attempt to follow His example (Sunna)
- In Qawwalis (a popular cultural event), Muhammad is praised: “If Muhammad had not been, God himself would not have existed.”
- His life, words, and behavior was passed on by his followers is described in The Hadith

# MUHAMMAD: THE PROPHET

- **Miracle-worker**
  - Showed doubting Meccans the splitting of the moon
  - Water flowed through fingers when 105,000 companions got thirsty
  - Caused it to rain
  - Former Muslim turned Christian dies, and the grave can't keep his body because it kept running away
  - Healings



## 2 MAJOR SECTS

### Sunni

90% of all Muslims

Muhammad's successor is elected

Authority of written traditions

Qur'an and Sunna (Haddith)

Guidance from principles by  
consensus of elders/ religious  
scholars (ulama)

Separation between political and  
spiritual leaders

### Shiite

Mainly found in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria

Successor through Muhammad's blood-  
line

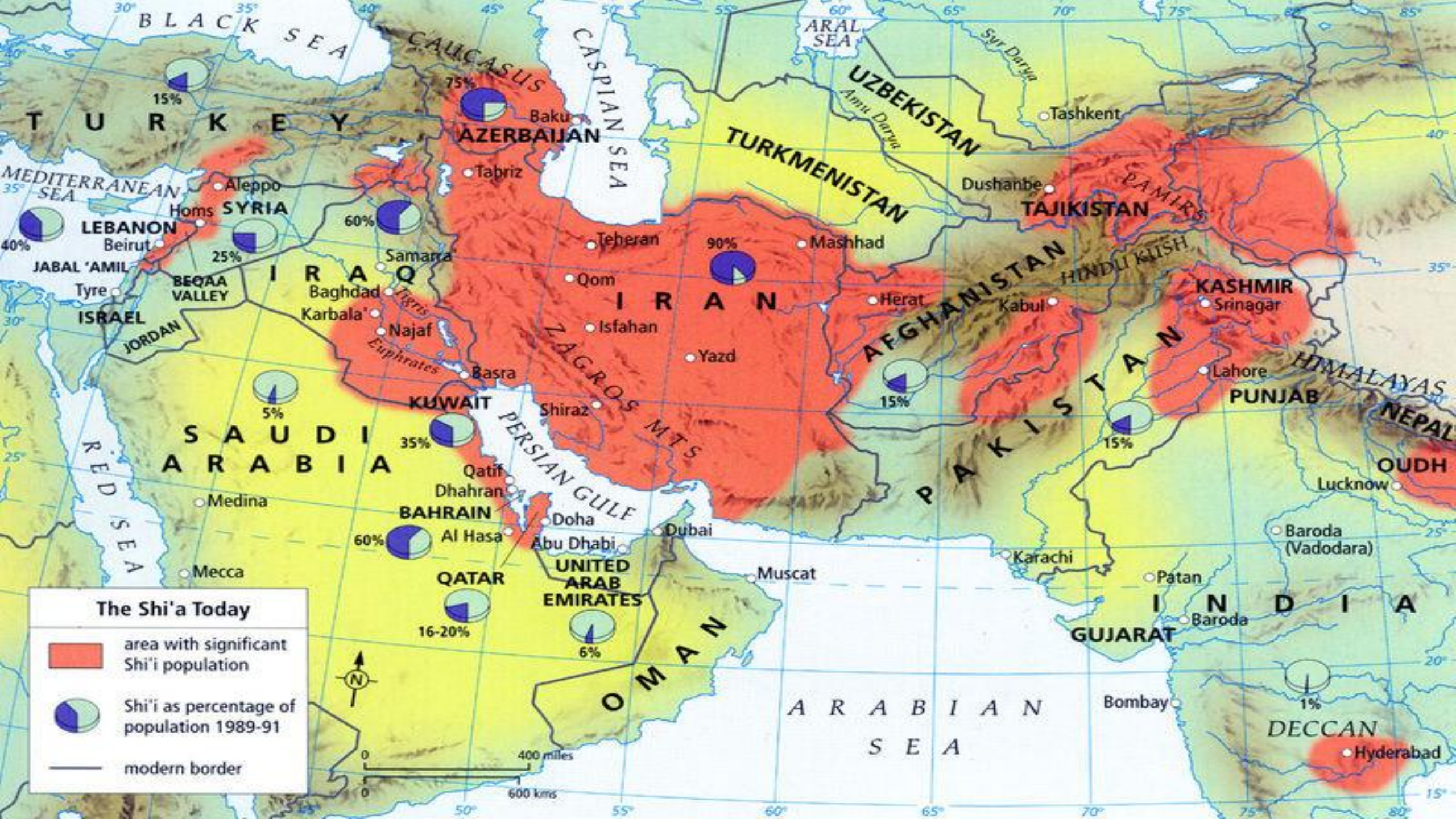
Ali, Muhammad's cousin/son-in-law

In 9<sup>th</sup> century, the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam became  
hidden

Await the return of 12<sup>th</sup> Imam (Mahdi)

Authority based

No separation



## SUFIS: A SMALLER ISLAMIC SECT

- **Mystical dimension of Islam  
(Whirling Dervishes)**
- **Influenced by yoga in Hinduism**
- **No worldly attachments**
- **See God in all things**
- **Reaction against formal, ritualistic approach of mainstream Islam**
- **Stress emotions/personal attributes of relational God**



# SCRIPTURE

- Moses: Tawrat (Torah)
- David: Zbur (Psalms)
- Jesus: Injil (Gospel)
- Muhammad: Qu'ran
- Only scripture that is reliable is Qu'ran
  - Torah, Gospels were corrupted by human hands
  - One Islamic teacher told me that the translators took \$ to change the words

# QUR'AN

- Literal word of God (“recitations”)
- Given to Muhammad through Gabriel
- Revealed over 22 years and written in Arabic
- Memorized by Muhammad, given to companions
- Reviewed with Gabriel once each year

# QU'RAN

- About 2/3rds the size of the New Testament
- 30 sections, 114 “Surahs” from largest to smallest
- Memorized in entirety by many Muslims
- Muslims believe not even one letter has been changed
- Deals with all subjects concerning humans
- Wisdom, doctrine, worship, transactions, law
- Major theme is relationship between God and His creatures

## QUR'AN

- After Muhammad's death in 632, followers gathered the suras into the Qur'an
- Third caliph, Uthman, had scholars compile an official Qur'an and had other variant texts burned

## THE QUR'AN ON THE QUR'AN

- Surah 10:37: “This Qur’an is not such as can be produced by other than Allah; 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.”
- Surah 4:82: “Do they not consider the Qur’an (with care)? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy.”



# SHARI'A

- Constitutional law for Islam
- Sum of guidance governing all ritual, social, political and commercial actions
- Source for many of controversial criminal penalties such as cutting off limbs, stoning, beheading
- Four sources:
  - Qur'an
  - Hadith
  - Ijma (consensus of Islamic community and scholars (ulama))
  - Qiyas (analogical reasoning based on other sources)

## ISLAMIC THOUGHTS ON THE BIBLE

- Believe God had revealed a holy book to Jesus
- The Bible has been corrupted
- Underwent alterations, additions, and omissions
- Therefore, the Bible is not completely trustworthy
- This is why we need the Qur'an

## THE QUR'AN ON THE BIBLE

- Surah 2:75: “Seeing that a party of them heard the Word of Allah, and perverted it knowingly after they understood it.”
- Surah 27:78-79: “And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but (see therein their own) desires, and they do nothing but conjecture.”



# 1<sup>ST</sup> OF 6 PILLARS OF BELIEF

- Belief in one God (Allah)
  - No partners
  - Every other deity is false
  - No one shares His divinity or his attributes
  - Not a man (God did not rest on 7<sup>th</sup> day or wrestle with anyone)
  - Rejection of Jesus as being God and the Trinity
  - “Say: ‘He is God, the One. God, to Whom the creatures turn for their needs. He begets not, nor was He begotten, and there is none like Him.’” (Surah 112:1-4)
  - Completely sovereign
  - 99 Most Beautiful Names (Surah 59:22-24)

## 2<sup>ND</sup> OF 6 PILLARS OF BELIEF

- Belief in the angels
  - Honored creatures created from light
  - Worshipper of Allah who act on His command
  - Every human has two angels, one good and other bad

## 3<sup>RD</sup> OF 6 PILLARS OF BELIEF

- Belief in God's revealed books
  - Qur'an
    - Revealed to Muhammad
    - Protection from corruption or distortion
  - Hadith
    - Oral traditions of Muhammad
    - Second, third-hand accounts of his actions/teachings
    - Mainly written down during reign of Umar II
    - Finished around 8<sup>th</sup> century AD

## 4<sup>TH</sup> OF 6 PILLARS OF BELIEF

- Belief in the Prophets/Messengers of God
  - Seven most important prophets before the most important prophet sent by God, Muhammad:
    - Noah
    - Abraham
    - Ishmael
    - Isaac
    - Jacob
    - Moses
    - Jesus

## 5<sup>TH</sup> OF 6 PILLARS OF BELIEF

- Belief in the Day of Judgment
  - The Day of Resurrection
  - All people will be resurrected for God's judgment according to beliefs/deeds
  - Paradise for those who were good Muslims
  - Hellfire for everyone else



## 6<sup>TH</sup> OF 6 PILLARS OF BELIEF

- Belief in Al-Qadar
  - Divine Predestination
    - Still, humans have free will
    - Everyone chooses between good and bad
      - God knows everything
      - God has recorded all that has happened and all that will happen.
      - Whatever God wills to happen happens, and whatever He wills not to happen does not happen

# 1<sup>ST</sup> OF 5 PILLARS OF FAITH

- Shahadah, the Testimony of Faith
  - Declared in Arabic: “La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadur rasoolu Allah”
  - Translated from Arabic: “There is no true god but God (Allah), and Muhammad is the Messenger (Prophet) of God.”
  - Most important pillar in Islam
  - To deviate from this is “shirk”

## 2<sup>ND</sup> OF 5 PILLARS OF FAITH

Salat (Prayer) 17 total cycles, performed 5 times a day in Arabic facing Mecca

- About 10 minutes each time
  - Dawn
  - Noon
  - Mid-afternoon
  - Sunset
  - Night
- Ritual washings beforehand (ablution or “wudu”)
- Head must be covered



## 3<sup>RD</sup> OF 5 PILLARS OF FAITH

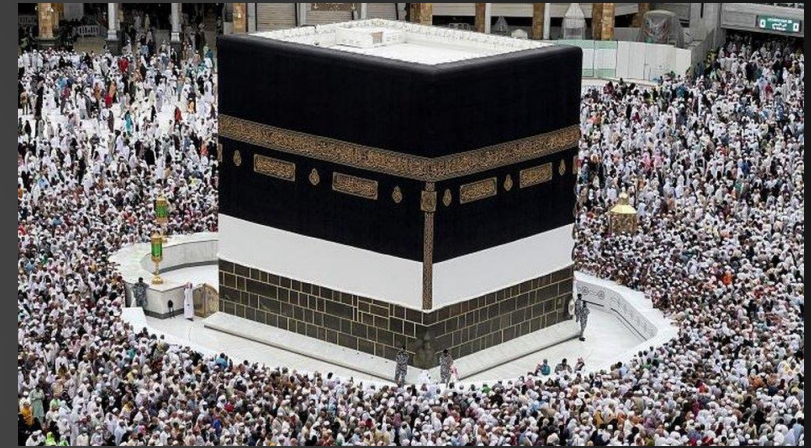
- Zakat: Giving a portion of wealth to poor
  - 1/40<sup>th</sup> (2.5%) of one's excess wealth/possessions
  - Muslims are free to give voluntary alms or charity
  - Some Muslim countries have a tax

## 4<sup>TH</sup> OF 5 PILLARS OF FAITH

- Sawm, Fasting during month of Ramadan
  - Ninth month of lunar Islamic calendar
  - Commemorates Muhammad's commission as a prophet
  - Once a year, Muslims fast from dawn until sundown
    - Abstain from food, drink, sex during daylight hours
    - Spiritual self-purification

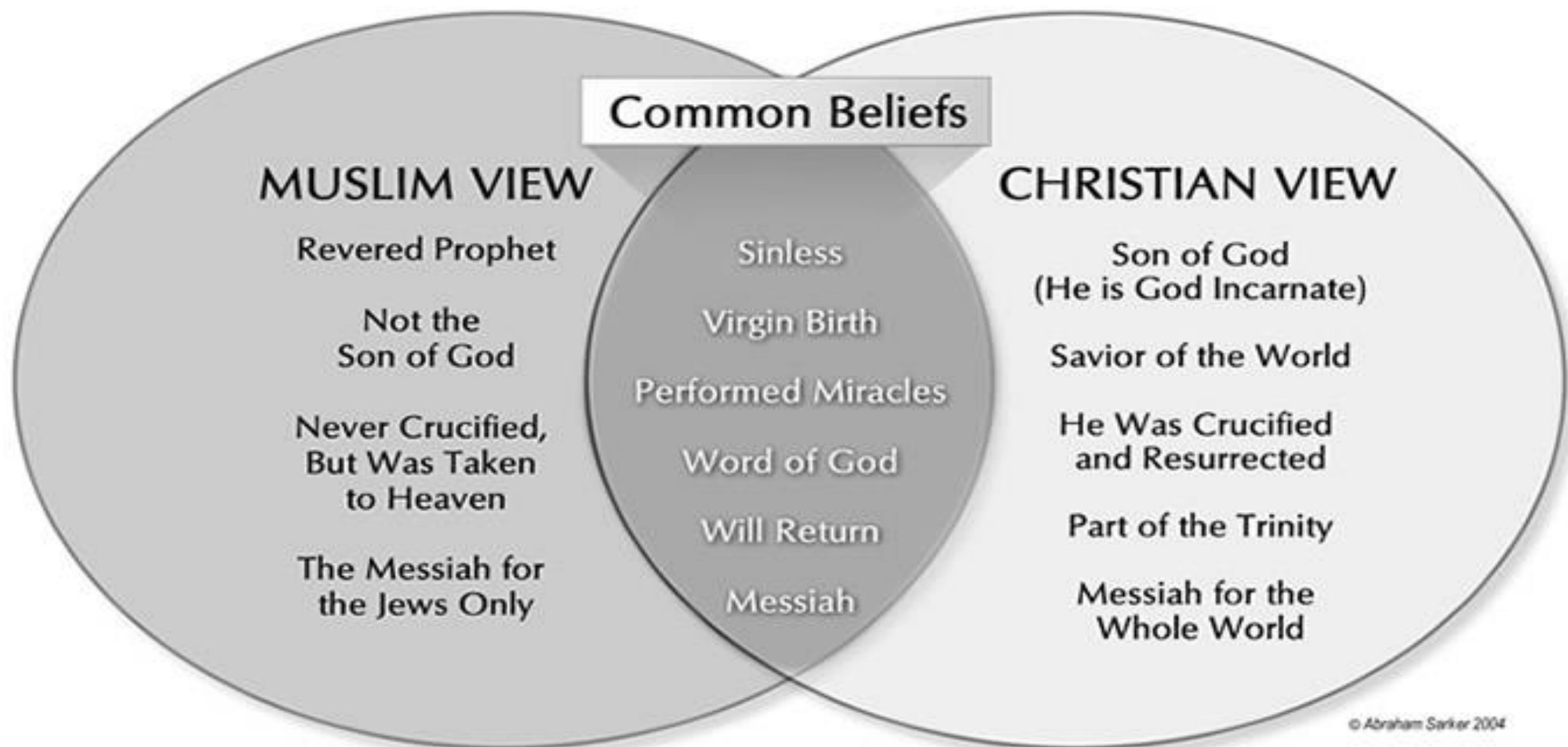
## 5<sup>TH</sup> OF 5 PILLARS OF FAITH

- Hajj, Pilgrimage to Mecca
  - Once in lifetime, if able
  - Twelfth month of Islamic calendar
  - Simple clothes, no distinction of class
  - Circling Kaaba 7x, 7x between hills of Safa and Marwa as Hagar did looking for water
  - End marked by a festival
  - Up to two million people each year



# Jesus

(Muslim and Christian Views)



# JESUS ACCORDING TO THE QU'RAN

- Surah 4:171: “Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a messenger of Allah... (Far Exalted is He ”above having a son.”
- Surah 5:75: “”Christ, the son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They had both to eat their (daily) food. See how Allah doth make His Signs clear to them; yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth!”
- Surah 19:35: “It is not befitting to (the majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”
  - Note to previous verse: “Begetting a son is a physical act depending on the needs of men’s animal nature. Allah Most High is independent of all needs, and it is derogatory to Him to attribute such an act to Him. It is merely a relic of pagan and anthropomorphic materialist superstitions.”



# JESUS ACCORDING TO THE QU'RAN

- Note from Surah 13:38: “All the Prophets of whom we have any detailed knowledge, except one had wives and children. The exception is Jesus...But his life was incomplete: his ministry barely lasted three years: his mission was limited; and he was not called upon to deal with the many-sided problems that arise in a highly organized society or State. We pay equal respect to him, because he was Allah’s Messenger.”
- Surah 4:48: “Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him, but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth; to set up partners with Allah is to devise a sin most heinous indeed.”
- Surah 9:30-31: “...the Christians call Christ the Son of God. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. Allah’s curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth!”

## CRUCIFIXION ACCORDING TO THE QU'RAN

Surah 4:157-158: “That they said (in boast), ‘We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah’—but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not—Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself...”

## TRINITY ACCORDING TO THE QU'RAN

- Surah 4:171: “Say not ‘Trinity’: desist: It will be better for you: For Allah is One God.”
- Surah 5:73: “They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them.”

# SIN ACCORDING TO ISLAM

- Original sin denied
  - Adam did not worship Allah, but he repented
- Sin did not transfer to rest of humanity
  - Every person is responsible for what he/she does
  - Therefore, no atonement is needed
- Note from Qur'an (2:223): "It was carnal-minded men who invented the doctrine of original sin. This is entirely repudiated by Islam, in which the office of father and mother is held in the highest veneration. Every child of pure love is born pure."

# SALVATION ACCORDING TO ISLAM

- All should fear Judgment Day
  - No assurance of salvation—left to the end
- Angels record good/bad deeds
- Goal is to accumulate credits
- Like a scale
  - Surah 7:8-9: “Those whose scale (of good) will be heavy, will prosper; those whose scale will be light, will find their souls in perdition, for that they wrongly treated Our Signs.”

# SALVATION ACCORDING TO THE QU'RAN

- Surah 6:160: “He that doeth good shall have ten times as much to his credit: he that doeth evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil: No wrong shall be done unto (any of) them.”
- Surah 29:58: “But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness—to them shall We give a Home in Heaven—Lofty mansions beneath which flow rivers—to dwell therein for aye—an excellent reward for those who do (good)!”
- Note from Surah 39:69: “Before the Throne of Allah, the book of each man’s deeds and motives will be placed wide open, which all may see; the Prophets and Preachers of Truth and the martyrs who gave their lives or made their real sacrifices in the cause of Truth, will be in the Court, to give evidence; and the decision pronounced will be absolutely just, for the Judge will not only be just, but He will know every fact and circumstance, and His wisdom will give due weight to everything great or small.”

# SALVATION FROM A MUSLIM'S PERSPECTIVE

- Benefit 1
  - Door to Eternal Paradise
    - Lowest in rank in Paradise will have 10x best on earth
    - No pain, sadness, death
    - Surah 4:57: “But those who believe and do good deeds, We will admit them to gardens (Paradise) in which rivers flow, lasting in them forever...”

# SAVLATION FROM A MUSLIM'S PERSPECTIVE

- Benefit 2
  - Salvation from hellfire
    - No second chances
- Benefit 3
  - Real happiness and inner peace
    - Submitting to commands of the Creator
    - “Truly in remembering God do hearts find rest.” Surah 13:28
- Benefit 4
  - Forgiveness for all previous sins
    - Muhammad said: “Your Lord, Who is blessed and exalted, is most merciful. If someone intends to do a good deed but does not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him. And if he does it, (a reward of) ten to seven hundred or many more times (the reward of the good deed), will be recorded for him. And if someone intends to do a bad deed but does not do it, a good deed will be recorded for him. And if he does do it, a bad deed will be recorded against him or God will wipe it out.”



# AFTERLIFE ACCORDING TO ISLAM

- Dead will be resurrected for judgment
- Each person will be rewarded based on
  - Beliefs
  - Deeds
- Paradise: Believers who believe no true god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger
  - Deep rivers of cool, crystal water, lush fruit, boundless fertility, and beautiful mansions
  - No fatigue, death, excess heat/cold
  - Chaste women, fulfillment of heart's desires

## AFTERLIFE ACCORDING TO THE QU'RAN

- Surah 2:82: “And those who believe and do good deeds, they are dwellers of Paradise, they dwell therein forever.”
- Surah 29:58: “But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness—to them shall we give a Home in Heaven.”
- Surah 4:124: “If any do deeds of righteousness—be they male or female—and have faith, they will enter Heaven, and not the least injustice will be done to them.”

## HELL ACCORDING TO THE QU'RAN

- Hellfire: Remains for all non-Muslims
  - Includes anyone seeking after any other religion
- Surah 3:32: 'Say, Obey Allah and His Messenger.' But if they turn back, Allah loveth not those who reject Faith."
- Surah 3:56-57: "As to those who reject faith, I will punish them with terrible agony in this world and in the Hereafter; nor will they have anyone to help. As to those who believe and work righteousness, Allah will pay them (in full) their reward: But Allah loveth not those who do wrong."

## HELL ACCORDING TO THE QU'RAN

- Surah 35:7: “For those who reject Allah, there is a terrible penalty: but for those who believe and work righteous deeds, there is forgiveness and a magnificent reward.”
- Surah 3:85: “And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and he will be one of the losers in the Hereafter.”
- Qur'an 3:91: “Those who have disbelieved and died in disbelief, the earth full of gold would not be accepted from any of them if it were offered as a ransom. They will have a painful punishment, and they will have no helpers.”

# JIHAD

- Different Muslims interpret this in different ways
- The word “Jihad” has variety of meanings
  - Greater Jihad: one’s personal struggle with sin
  - Lesser Jihad: holy war fought in defense of Islam
- Key verse: Surah 4:74: “Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter. To him who fighteth in the cause of Allah—whether he is slain or gets victory—soon shall We give him a reward of great (value).”

# WOMEN IN ISLAM

- Husbands in control
  - Allowed to only marry a Muslim man
  - Muslim men allowed to marry Christians/Jews
- A man can have up to four wives (Surah 4:3)
- Men can divorce their wives, but women don't have the same right
- Surah 4:34: "As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (next) refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them lightly."
  - The Pickethall translation says to "scourge them" in place of "beat them"

# WHY IT'S DIFFICULT FOR A MUSLIM TO CONVERT TO CHRISTIANITY

- Muslims believe Christians worship 3 gods
- Fewer Christian workers
  - Dangerous in Muslim countries
  - May even be illegal
- Hypocrisy they perceive with Christians
- Crusades: Never forgotten
- Religious/political system
  - Could lose family
  - Could be arrested in some countries for converting



## EVANGELISM TIPS

- Prayer!
- Love Muslims—they're people too!
- Don't stereotype Muslims as being terrorists
- One on one is better than in a group
- Don't argue
- Don't slander Muslim beliefs or doctrines  
(Muhammad/Qur'an)



# EVANGELISM TIPS

- Understand Islam by studying it
- Clarify terms
- Use the Bible
  - Respect the physical book (keep above waist)
  - Don't write in it in front of them
  - Don't put it on floor (as my student did)
- Point to Jesus/emphasize his parables (stories)
- Ask plenty of questions