

A N S W E R S
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theLighthouse

Answers for our Muslim Friends

Islam

- Islam means "*Submission*"
- Muslim – means "*one who submits*" to Allah through the teachings of Islam
- There were 1.8 billion Muslims in the world as of 2015 – roughly **24% of the global population** – according to a Pew Research Center estimate.
 - Most of the Muslims globally (62%) live in the Asia-Pacific region, including large populations in Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran and Turkey.
 - Indonesia is currently the country with the world's largest Muslim population, but Pew Research Center projects that India will have that distinction by the year 2050 (*while remaining a majority-Hindu country*), with more than 300 million Muslims.
 - Islam is currently the world's second-largest religion (after Christianity) but it is the **fastest growing major religion**.
 - If current demographic trends continue, the number of Muslims is expected to exceed the number of Christians by the end of this century.
- There are about 3.45 million Muslims of all ages in the U.S., or about 1.1% of the U.S. population.
 - Muslims will make up 2.1% of the U.S. population by the year 2050, surpassing people who identify as Jewish as the **second-largest faith group in the country**.
- Sunnis and Shiites are two subgroups of Muslims (*like Catholic and Protestant*)
 - The Sunni-Shiite divide is nearly 1,400 years old, dating back to a dispute over the succession of leadership in the Muslim community following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632.
 - Sunni - The largest branch of Islam. They accept that the first four caliphs (leaders) are the legitimate successors to Muhammad.
 - Shiite - The second-largest branch of Islam, believes only the caliph Ali and his descendants are the legitimate successors to Muhammad and reject the first three caliphs.
 - While the two groups agree on some core tenets of Islam, there are differences in beliefs and practices, and in some cases, Sunnis do not consider Shiites to be Muslims.
- **Timeline:**
 - **570 AD** - Muhammad is born in Mecca, Arabia (*now Saudi Arabia*).
 - **610 AD** - The Angel Gabriel visits Muhammad and tells him he is the messenger of God.
 - **610-632 AD** - Muhammad spreads the teachings revealed to him in Mecca and Medina, over a 22-year period, until his death.

- **632 AD** - Muhammad dies.
- **645 AD** - Muslims become divided into two branches, the Shiite and the Sunni, over a disagreement about future leadership.
- **650-652 AD** - The sayings/teachings revealed to Muhammad are collected in a book called the Quran.

Understanding Islam:

To understand Islam, you have to realize that Islam must be studied in the law, cultural and religious context of **seventh-century Arabia**.

- Muhammad made Seventh-century law, culture and religion in which he was born to the status of divine. **Islam is the deification of seventh-century Arabian law, culture and religion.**
- Islam seeks to religiously impose on the rest of the world its seventh-century Arabian law, culture and religious practices in its political expression, in its family affairs, in its dietary laws, in its clothing, in its religious rites, and in its language.
- Muhammad took the political **LAWS** which governed seventh-century Arabian tribes and literally made them the laws of Allah, their God.
 - In these tribes, the sheik or **chief of the nomadic tribes had absolute authority**.
 - Therefore, Islamic countries are inevitably ruled by dictators or strong men who rule as despots. There are 22 Arab nations today, and not one of them is a democracy. Democracy cannot flourish in Islam.
 - There was **no concept of civil or personal rights** in seventh-century Arabia.
 - Therefore Islamic law today does not recognize freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, or freedom of the press.
 - The more Islamic fundamentalism gains dominance, the more a nation is plunged back into the dark ages of seventh-century Arabia.
- Muhammad took ideas from the **CULTURE** around him:
 - Praying five times a day while facing Mecca in Saudi Arabia reminds the Muslim five times a day that he must bow in **obedience to Arabia**.
 - A Muslim is also required, often in the face of great hardship and great cost, to go on a pilgrimage to Arabia at least once in his life to worship at the Kaaba in Mecca.
 - Muhammad adopted the **pagan religious rite of a pilgrimage** to Mecca, which was already being widely practiced long before Muhammad was even born.
 - Muhammad, in order to **appease the merchants of Mecca** (*who made tremendous amounts of money by people coming there on pilgrimages*), put this requirement into Islam as part of his religion.

- For financial and cultural reasons Islam adopted this pagan practice, which must be fulfilled even by the poorest Muslims as one of their five pillars of faith.
- One of the most demeaning practices of Islam is its barbaric **treatment of women**.
 - Women are considered property in the fundamental sects of Islam.
 - They are not allowed to have ownership of any kind of property.
 - Approximately 75 percent of Muslim women suffer female circumcision in a most barbaric, painful ritual designed to make them obedient and docile.
 - They are dressed from head to toe in clothes that cover all but the eyes, and often even these are covered by a veil. This is what nomadic tribesman wore in the desert in seventh-century Arabia and is still mandated as the dress code for Muslim women today!
 - All of this is a clear denial of civil rights to women and is reflective of the Islamic Arabian culture and its low view of Women
- The **RELIGIOUS** culture of Muhammad's world was very **animistic** (*belief that every natural thing in the universe has a soul*)
 - Every Arab tribe had its sacred **magic stones** that they believed protected the tribe.
 - Muhammad's tribe had adopted a **black "magical" stone** (*probably a meteorite or asteroid*).
 - The dominant religion just prior to Muhammad was **Sabianism**:
 - A religion in which heavenly bodies were worshiped.
 - The moon was viewed as a male deity, and a lunar calendar was used.
 - The pagan rite of fasting began with the appearance of the crescent moon. (*Fasting was later adopted as one of the five pillars of faith of Islam. Fasting in Ramadan, in the ninth month, already preexisted in the Arab culture before Muhammad was born.*)
 - The term "Allah" is a purely Arabic term used in reference to an **Arabian deity known to pre-Islamic Arabs**.
 - He was one of the many deities that already existed in Mecca.
 - The tribe into which Muhammad was born was particularly devoted to **Allah, which was the moon god and was represented by a black stone that was believed to have come down from heaven**.
 - In Arabia the sun god was viewed as female, and the moon was viewed as the male god.

- In pre-Islamic times, Allah, the moon god, was married to the sun god, and together they produced three goddesses called **The Daughters of Allah**.
- They were viewed as being at the top of the pantheon of Arabian deities, those 360 idols in the Kaaba (*a cube-shaped building in Mecca, the most sacred Muslim pilgrim shrine, into which is built the black stone believed to have been given by Gabriel to Abraham. Muslims turn in its direction when praying*) at Mecca.
- When Muhammad took control of Mecca, **he destroyed all the idols in the Kaaba except the stone deity, Allah**.
- The symbol of the worship of the moon god, Allah, in pre-Islamic Arab culture throughout the Middle East was the **crescent moon**. Today the crescent moon is on every flag of an Islamic nation. **Many Muslims don't even know why it's there**.

Muhammad:

- The "prophet" and central character of Islam
- Born in A.D. 570 and lived for 62 years, dying in 632.
- At the time he was born, Mecca (*Saudi Arabia*) was the center of trade and religious activity.
- Muhammad was a camel driver until the age of 25, when he met and married a lady who was 15 years his senior. She was 40 years old and wealthy.
- For the next 15 years, Muhammad ran the family fruit business in Mecca.
- At 40 years old he claimed to receive revelations. He went to a cave that was about three miles north of Mecca, to pray and meditate to "seek the truth."
- According to Muslim tradition, the angel Gabriel came to Muhammad in a cave.
- After meditating there off and on for two years, Muslims say, Muhammad received revelations during which he would go into epileptic fits. **He would shake, he would perspire, he would foam at the mouth.**
- He claimed he then received revelations from an angel of light that were written down into what is known as the Koran (*meaning "the recitation"*), the Islamic holy book.
- However, they were not written down until years later because Muhammad himself was uneducated and probably did not know how to write.
- The main message that Muhammad was communicating was that there was **no god but Allah**, that he was the one true god who created everything.
- The second thing he taught was that man is God's slave, and it is his first duty to submit to God and to obey him. Muhammad said that the chief duty of man is to submit to the will of Allah.

- The people at Mecca did not think too highly of this new prophet and his revelations and they began to criticize and attack him.
- In A.D. 622, he fled to Medina, about 280 miles north of Mecca. This was the beginning of Islam. In the Middle East, **everything is based upon the time that Muhammad fled to Medina**. That is the beginning of the Islamic calendar.
- In Medina he tried to convince Christians and Jews claiming that he was a prophet to the Jews and an apostle to the Christians.
- When they did not accept Muhammad as a prophet or an apostle, he rejected them and told the other people to pray to Mecca, to Allah, his tribal deity. He then began to receive more "revelations:"
 - Told to loot and steal from caravans that were passing through. There were many cases in which Muhammad and his followers would loot and rob caravans and then kill the men to satisfy his greed.
 - Told to kill and drive out all the Jews. One time he had 1,000 Jewish men brought together and had them all beheaded.
 - In A.D. 628, Muhammad received a revelation that Islam was to be exalted above all other religions, including Christianity and Judaism.
- The Koran and history report that he fought over 66 battles, killing tens of thousands of people.
 - Islam became known as the **religion of the sword**.
 - In 629 Muhammad raised up an army of 10,000 men. He returned to Mecca, where he had been raised, and conquered it.
 - **By force, he imposed Islam** on the rest of the Arabian tribes.
- Muhammad died in A.D. 632, having conquered much of the Arabian Peninsula. Islam then spread by the sword across North Africa.

The Six Beliefs of Islam

1. God: There is one true God, named Allah.
2. Angels: They are the servants of God, through whom He reveals His will. The greatest angel is Gabriel, who appeared to Muhammad. Everyone has two "*recording angels*": one to record his good deeds, the other to record his bad deeds.
3. The Prophets: Allah has spoken through many prophets, but the final and greatest of these is Muhammad. Other prophets include Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.
4. The Holy Books: The Koran or Quran is the holiest book of Islam, believed to be Allah's final revelation to man. It supersedes all previous revelations, including the Bible. It contains Allah's word as passed on orally to Muhammad by Gabriel. It contains 114 chapters or Suras. Muslims also recognize the Law of Moses, the Psalms, and the Gospels but consider them to be badly corrupted.
5. The Day of Judgment: A terrible day on which each person's good and bad deeds will be balanced to determine his fate.

6. The Decree of God: Allah ordains the fate of all. Muslims are fatalistic. "If Allah wills it" is the comment of a devout Muslim on almost every situation or decision he faces.

The Five Pillars of Islam

1. Affirmation (Shahada): "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger." This is recited constantly by devout Muslims.

2. Prayer (As-Salah): Muslims are required to pray five times a day, kneeling and facing Mecca.

3. Almsgiving (Zakah): A worthy Muslim must give 2.5 percent of his income to the poor.

4. The Fast (Siyam): Faithful Muslims fast from dawn to dusk every day during the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, Ramadan, which is sacred.

5. The Pilgrimage (Al-Hajj): Muslims are expected to journey to Mecca at least once in their lifetime.

*Some have added a sixth Pillar of Faith to this list, known as The Holy War (Jihad). In the early years of Islam, and even often today, the intent is the **spread of Islam by force**. Islam regards itself as the universal religion. Jihad is viewed as service in the spread and defense of Islam. Today many Muslims who are schooled in Western values take Jihad figuratively to mean the spread of Islam through evangelism.

Answers for our Muslim Friends

A Different Gospel

- Islam teaches that God is so far above man in every way that He is virtually unknowable.
 - *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)*
 - *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)*
- He will send individuals to Paradise or Hell as He chooses.
 - *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, (Hebrews 9:27)*
 - *For we must all appear before the **judgment seat of Christ**, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)*
 - *Then I saw a **great white throne** and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. (Rev. 20:11-12)*
- Islam teaches that Jesus was a messenger of God, not the Son of God.
 - Muslims deny that Jesus is Almighty God come in the flesh. But the Bible says:

- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.** We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1-4,14).*
 - *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.** This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world (1 John 4:1-3).*
- Muslims deny that Jesus is divine.
 - *In Christ all the **fullness of the Deity** lives in bodily form (Colossians 2:9).*
- Muslims deny that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. (Most believe that Judas died in his place.)
 - *For **Christ also suffered once for sins**, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, (1 Peter 3:18)*
- They deny that He rose from the dead.
 - ***6** “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. **But he has risen! He is not here!** See the place where they had put him. (Mark 16:6)*
- Muslims deny that Jesus is the final, conclusive revelation of God.
 - *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has **spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven (Hebrews 1:1-3).*
- Islam teaches:
 - Allah chose Hagar and her son Ishmael for his covenant.
 - The God of the Bible chose Abraham’s other son, Isaac, as heir to His covenant.
 - *Genesis 17:18-22 **18** And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”**19** Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. **20** And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase*

*his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. **21 But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.***

- Allah is an impersonal being, impossible to approach or comprehend.
 - The God of the Bible befriends men like Abraham and talks with them
 - *Isaiah 41:8 "But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of **Abraham my friend**,*
 - *Exodus 33:11 "The LORD would speak to **Moses face to face**, as one speaks to a friend."*
 - *John 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, **I have called you friends**, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*
- Allah is a god of fear and terrorism that commands destruction upon those who refuse to convert to Islam.
 - The God of the Bible delights to show His boundless mercy. His gospel is the "Good News" of peace and forgiveness.
 - *Luke 6:36 Be merciful, even as your **Father is merciful**.*
 - *Hebrews 4:16 Let us then with confidence **draw near to the throne of grace**, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*
- Allah requires total obedience to Islam and weighs the works of people. Allah and the Koran relegate Jesus to just the last prophet before Mohammed, below his authority. Jesus was not the Way and could only point the way to Mohammed.
 - The God of the Bible can only be reached through Jesus Christ and trust in Him is the only way to Heaven.
 - *John 14:6 **6** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.***
- Allah required the works of Mohammed to complete his words of judgment to man.
 - The God Of The Bible sent His son who did the finished work of grace for man
 - *John 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "**It is finished.**" With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

Resources

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/09/muslims-and-islam-key-findings-in-the-u-s-and-around-the-world/>

<https://www.cnn.com/2013/11/12/world/islam-fast-facts/index.html>

Book: "Fast Facts on False Teachings" by Ron Carlson and Ed Decker