



Transforming the Present, Shaping the Future

THE **UNITY** PROGRAM



SIXTH EDITION



Transforming the Present, Shaping the Future

THE UNITY PROGRAM



CHAPTER THREE

Introduction to Islam



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Introduction

Dear Reader:

This chapter is an introduction to the vast religious beliefs and practices within Islam. Although these lessons by no means cover all of the numerous ways Muslims express their religious tradition, these texts will give you a taste of Islam's richness. While this chapter aims to introduce you to some of the core tenets in Islam, a critical goal is to establish the fact that Islam is an extremely diverse religion, with more than 1.6 billion practitioners found worldwide.

We encourage you to draw parallels between the religious expressions in Islam and those found within Judaism (see Chapter Four for "Introduction to Judaism"). For example, as Arabic and Hebrew — core languages for Islamic and Jewish texts, respectively — are both Semitic languages, there are a number of linguistic parallels between the words found in the beginning of these lessons and those in Chapter Four. We also encourage you to seek out some of the differences between these two religious traditions, as mentioned in the beginning of Chapter One. Pointing out both the similarities and differences between these two religions is equally important.

Finally, we encourage you to be mindful of the fact that the study of Islam, like Judaism or any other religious tradition, is a life-long pursuit. We hope this chapter gives you a new appreciation and interest in this incredibly important religion.

Please note the following three points: (1) The reader will find different English spellings of Arabic and Hebrew words throughout this curriculum. Since many authors and scholars use various methods of transliteration [the act of spelling in the characters of another alphabet], we have not taken it upon ourselves to standardize the spellings of such transliterated words. It is

our hope that these different spellings will help the reader understand the tricky skill of transliteration as well as provide more examples of how to accurately pronounce certain non-English words and terms.

(2) It is well established that textbooks translated into a different language other than the one they were written in can lose an author's intended meaning. Religious texts are certainly no exception. Scholars will agree that one can never convey the same essence of a word or sentence of an *aya* in the Qur'an when translated from Arabic to English, for instance. With that in mind, we ask you to consider the complexities and difficulties encountered when reading translated religious texts. All translations are *de facto* interpretations.

(3) It is important to be aware that many Muslims praise the Prophet Mohammad by saying peace be upon him (PBUH) immediately after his name. This phrase is not mentioned in this curriculum since this book is considered an academic textbook for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Like many scholars, we have chosen to follow the common practice of omitting this phrase since its mention has no bearing on the intended meaning of the text. Thus, every time the Prophet's name is mentioned in this textbook, the phrase "PBUH" is implicit.

LESSON ONE: The *Jahiliyya* — Arabia before the Coming of Islam

Goals

- To understand the context in which Islam emerged (i.e., an exploration of the geography, society, values, and religious traditions in pre-Islamic Arabia).
- To introduce the following terms:
 - *Al-Jahiliyya* - Literally means “the Ignorance.” This term refers to the pre-Islamic age of the Arabian Peninsula, commonly referred to as “the Age of Ignorance”.
 - ‘*Asabiya* - A term that refers to strong feelings of tribal or group affiliation or attachment.
 - *Ghazwa* - Literally means, “raiding”. The pre-Islamic Arabian custom of attacking caravans for goods and camels.
 - *Hanif*- One who practices monotheism, but who is not a Jew, Christian, or Muslim (e.g. Abraham).
 - *Hejaz* - Western Region of Arabian Peninsula, encompassing Mecca and Yathrib.
 - ‘*Ird* - Literally means, “honor,” especially in the sense of the honor of males in pre-Islamic Arabia.
 - *Qasida* - Literally means “ode.” A form of pre-Islamic Arabian poetry.
 - *Sha`ir* - Poet.
 - *Shaykh* - An Arabic term used to refer to an elderly man, a tribal leader, or a religious man.

Sources

• (TEXT 1) Arabian religion and society reflected the tribal realities of the Peninsula. Arabia’s 1 million square miles (nearly one-third the size of the United States or Europe) were dominated by desert and steppe areas. Bedouin tribes pursuing a pastoral and nomadic lifestyle traveled from one area to another, seeking water and pasture for their flocks of sheep and camels. The landscape was dotted with oasis towns and cities. Among the more prominent were Mecca, a center of trade and commerce, and Yathrib (Medina), an important agricultural settlement. The principal sources of livelihood were herding, agriculture, trade, and raiding. Intertribal warfare was a long-established activity governed by clear guidelines and rules. For example, raiding was illegal during the four sacred months of pilgrimage. Its object was to capture livestock from enemy

Bedouin tribes with a minimum of casualties. Its ultimate goal was to weaken and eventually absorb other tribes by reducing them to a dependent or “client” status... Whether nomadic or sedentary, the peoples of Arabia lived in a Bedouin tribal society and culture. Social organization and identity were rooted in membership in an extended family. A grouping of several related families comprised a clan. A cluster of several clans constituted a tribe. Tribes were led by a chief (*shaykh*) who was selected by a consensus of his peers - that is, the heads of leading clans or families. These tribal elders formed an advisory council within which the tribal chief exercised his leadership and authority as the first among equals. Muhammad belonged to the Banu Hashim (sons of Hashim), a lesser clan of the powerful Quraysh tribe which dominated Meccan society.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

- (TEXT 2) The Arabs placed great emphasis on tribal ties, group loyalty or solidarity as the source of power for a clan or tribe. The celebrated rugged individualism of the Bedouin Arab ethos was counterbalanced by subordination to tribal authority and tribal customs, the unwritten oral law of society. Tribal affiliation and law were the basis not only for identity but also for protection. The threat of family or group vendetta, the law of retaliation, was of vital importance in a society lacking a central political authority or law.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

- (TEXT 3) Bloodshed within a clan left the perpetrator defenseless. The murder of someone outside the clan established a vendetta in which one clan was pitted against another, with anyone considered fair game for retaliation. The *lex talionis* ("law of retaliation") reigned supreme in pre-Islamic Arabia, and sometimes interclan and intertribal feuds continued over many years... Added to the pride of lineage and blood relationship, with its corollary that the outsider — the nonrelative — was an enemy and to be treated as one wished, is the sense of personal honor. This is known as *`ird* and was an individual's most valuable possession. Any attack on one's honor was grounds for deadly retaliation. The dishonor of a man — and it was the males who had *`ird* — could come especially through his women.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

- (TEXT 4) Poetry was the major form of artistic expression that the ancient Arabs had. It was more than art, really, because its inspiration was believed to be supernatural and its utterance surrounded by mysterious power. Poetry had its roots in religion... Scholars of Semitic languages continue to wonder how, in a largely illiterate culture, the Arabs (at least in the Hejaz and central Arabia) were able to develop a common poetic language, which we call classical Arabic.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

- (TEXT 5) The religion of Arabia reflected its tribal nature and social structure. Gods and goddesses served as protectors of individual tribes, and their spirits were associated with sacred objects — trees, stones, springs, and wells. Local tribal deities were feared and respected rather than loved, and the objects of cultic rituals (sacrifice, pilgrimage, prayer) and of supplication and propitiation were celebrated at local shrines. Mecca possessed a central shrine of the gods, the Kaba, a cube-shaped building that housed the 360 idols of tribal patron deities, and was the site of a great annual pilgrimage and fair. While these deities were primarily religious actors and objects of worship, beyond this tribal polytheism was a shared belief in Allah ("the god"). Allah, the supreme high god, was the creator and sustainer of life but remote from everyday concerns and thus not the object of cult or ritual. Associated with Allah were three goddesses who were the daughters of Allah: al-Lat, Manat, and al-Uzza... The system or ethical code of Arabia has been aptly termed a "tribal humanism," a way of life whose origins were not ascribed to God but were the product of tribal experience or tradition. It was epitomized by its key virtue, manliness, which emphasized bravery in battle, loyalty to family and protection of its members, hospitality, patience, and persistence — in sum, the preservation of tribal and family honor. This was accompanied by a fatalism that saw no meaning or accountability beyond this life — no resurrection of the body, divine judgment, or eternal punishment or reward. Justice was guaranteed and administered not by God, but by the threat of group vengeance or retaliation. Thus, Arabian religion had little sense of cosmic moral purpose or of individual or communal moral responsibility...

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

- (TEXT 6) Forms of monotheism did exist in Arabia alongside pre-Islamic tribal polytheism. Both Jewish and Christian Arab communities had been present in Arabia

before Muhammad. Jewish communities in Khaybar, Tyma, and Yathrib (later called Medina) were successful in agriculture and trade. While some Christians were settled in Mecca, most of the Christian communities were on the periphery of central Arabia (the Hijaz), along caravan routes in North and South Arabia. Particular contact with monotheism resulted from the caravan trade that brought Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian merchants to Mecca, a thriving commercial center, as well as from the travels of Meccan traders far and wide throughout the Middle East. Finally, in addition to biblical monotheism, native or pre-Islamic Arab monotheists, called *hanifs*, seemed to have existed. The Quran (3:95) and Muslim tradition portray them as descendents of Abraham and his son Ismail.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

- (TEXT 7) Arabia before Islam was a society where there were no rules, except that the strong dominated the weak. It seems reasonable to expect that a natural byproduct of such society would be the oppression of women... There are numerous reports of women having an inferior status. Female infanticide, for instance, was practiced by fathers who did not value their daughters as much as they valued their sons. In areas such as marriage, divorce and inheritance, women were often deprived of their basic rights — to choose their husbands freely, to divorce if ill-treated, or to inherit from their families. Even the poetry praising women focused primarily on their physical attributes; seldom was there any appreciation of moral beauty, indicating that women were more the subject of lust than respect.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

- (TEXT 8) Arabian tribal society, with its Bedouin, polytheistic ethos, provided the context for the rise of Islam. Of equal importance, this period was marked by the tensions and questioning that accompany change in a transitional society, for this was a period when cities like Mecca and Medina

were prospering and attracting many from a nomadic to a more sedentary life. The emergence of Mecca as a major mercantile center precipitated the beginnings of a new political, commercial oligarchy from within the Quraysh tribe; greater division between social classes, and a growing disparity between rich and poor strained the traditional system of Arab tribal values and social security — its way of life. This was the time and social milieu in which Muhammad was born.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

- (PHOTO 1)



www.ucalgary.ca/applied_history/tutor/imageislam/preislamSmall.gif (accessed July 23, 2010)

Study Questions

- What role did trade play in Arab economy and society?
- Describe the socio-cultural values of pre-Islamic Arabia (e.g., honor, women, camels, machismo, bravery, courage, poetry).
- What does *lex talionis* mean? What were some things that could have incurred *lex talionis*? [NOTE: This term means retaliation, and is a legal concept based on the premise of equal and direct retribution. Oftentimes this idea was relevant when there was a perceived insult to a specific person or tribe, something that threatened the individual's or group's honor.]
- What were the conditions of women in pre-Islamic Arabia? [NOTE: There were extreme patriarchal controls, virtually no legal rights, and female infanticide was a common practice.]
- What were the various types of religious systems that existed in pre-Islamic Arabia? [NOTE: polytheism, Judaism/Christianity, monotheism (*hanifs*).]
- Who were the tribe of Quraysh? What status did they have in pre-Islamic Arabia?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?**TRIVIA GAME**

What percentage of Muslims worldwide are Arab?

- A.** 80-85%
- B.** 60-65%
- C.** 30-35%
- D.** 15-20%
- E.** 0-10%

(Answers are located at the end of the chapter).

LESSON TWO: Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam

Goals

- To build on the previous lesson about pre-Islamic Arabia in order to shed light on the life and influence of Muhammad.
- To contextualize the events of Muhammad's life and his teachings within the pre-Islamic Arabian settings.
- To introduce the following terms:
 - *Hijra* - Literally means "emigration." This term often refers to the emigration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina, which took place in 622 CE.
 - *Islam* - Literally means "surrender" or "submission."
 - *Isra'* - In general, this term means a night journey. Within the Islamic context, it refers to the miraculous journey the Prophet Muhammad made from Mecca to Jerusalem on his way to Heaven.
 - *Mī'raj* - Literally means "ascension." This term often refers to the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad to Heaven on the night of his *isra'*.
 - *Muslim* - Literally means "one who has surrendered to God."
 - *Nabi* - Literally means "prophet." Commonly, Muslims refer to Muhammad as *the Prophet – Peace Be Upon Him*.
 - *Qur'an* - Literally means "recitation." The Qur'an is the sacred text of Islam.
 - *Rasul* - A term that means "messenger," referring to a designation of a *nabi* who offers a message to a specific group of people. NOTE: *Nabi* and *rasul* are not synonyms.
 - *Wahy* - A term that indicates inspiration. Within the Islamic context, it refers to the method through which the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad, which involved both verbal and mental inspiration.

Sources

• (TEXT 1) Muhammad ibn Abdullah (the son of Abd Allah) was born in 570 CE. Tradition tells us that he was orphaned at a young age. His father was a trader who died before Muhammad was born; his mother, Amina, died when he was only six years old. As a young man, Muhammad was employed in Mecca's thriving caravan trade... Muhammad became a steward or business manager for the caravans of a wealthy widow, Khadija, whom he subsequently married. Tradition tells us that at this time, Muhammad was twenty-five years old and Khadija was forty... Muhammad, who had become a successful

member of Meccan society, was apparently affected by [the changes in Meccan society]. He enjoyed great respect for his judgment and trustworthiness, as was reflected by his nickname al-Amin, the trusted one. This rectitude was complemented by a reflective nature that led him to retreat regularly to a cave on Mt. Hira, [a] few miles north of Mecca. Here, in long periods of solitude, he contemplated his life and the ills of his society, seeking greater meaning and insight.... At the age of forty, during the month of Ramadan, Muhammad PBUH the caravan leader became Muhammad the messenger of God. On the night Muslims call "The Night of Power and Excellence," he

received the first of many revelations from God. A heavenly intermediary, later identified by tradition as the angel Gabriel, commanded, "Recite." Muhammad responded that he had nothing to recite. Twice the angel repeated the command, and each time a frightened and bewildered Muhammad pleaded that he did not know what to say. Finally, the words came to him:

"Recite in the name of your Lord who has created, Created man out of a germ-cell. Recite for your Lord is the Most Generous One Who has taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know!"

With this revelation, Muhammad joined that group of individuals whom Semitic faiths acknowledge as divinely inspired messengers or prophets of God. Muhammad continued to receive divine revelations over a period of twenty-two years (610-632). These messages were finally collected and written down in the Quran ("The Recitation"), Islam's sacred scripture.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

- (TEXT 2) The first ten years of Muhammad's preaching were difficult, marked by Meccan resistance and rejection. While there was a trickle of converts, opposition to Muhammad was formidable. For the powerful and prosperous Meccan oligarchy, the monotheistic message of this would-be reformer, with its condemnation of the socioeconomic inequities of Meccan life, constituted a direct challenge not only to traditional polytheistic religion but also to the power and prestige of the establishment, threatening their economic, social, and political interests. The Prophet denounced false contracts, usury, and the neglect and exploitation of orphans and widows. He defended the rights of the poor and the oppressed, asserting that the rich had an obligation to the poor and dispossessed. This sense of social commitment and responsibility was institutionalized in the form of religious tithes or taxes on wealth and agricultural lands. Like Amos and Jeremiah before him,

Muhammad was a "warner" from God who admonished his hearers to repent and obey God, for the final judgment was near... Muhammad's rejection of polytheism undermined the religious prestige of the Meccans... as keepers of the Kaba, the religious shrine that housed the tribal idols. It threatened the considerable revenues that accrued from the annual pilgrimage and festival to this central sanctuary of Arabian tribal religion. This potential economic loss was coupled with the undermining of Meccan tribal political authority by Muhammad's claim to prophetic authority and leadership, and his insistence that all true believers belonged to a single universal community (*umma*) that transcended tribal bonds.

Muhammad was not the founder of Islam; he did not start a new religion. Like his prophetic predecessors, he came as a religious reformer. Muhammad maintained that he did not bring a new message from a new God but called people back to the one, true God and to a way of life that most of his contemporaries had forgotten or deviated from. Worship of Allah was not the evolutionary emergence of monotheism from polytheism but a return to a forgotten past, to the faith of the first monotheist, Abraham. The Prophet brought a revolution in Arabian life, a reformation that sought to purify and redefine its way of life. False, superstitious practices such as polytheism and idolatry were suppressed. Such beliefs were viewed as the worst forms of ingratitude or unbelief, for they contradicted and denied the unity or oneness (*tawhid*) of God. Polytheism, or association (*shirk*) of anything with Allah, was denounced as the worst of sins, idolatry. For Muhammad, the majority of Arabs lived in ignorance (*jahiliyya*) of Allah and His will as revealed to the prophets Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

- (TEXT 3) Muhammad introduced a new moral order in which the origin and end of all

actions was not self or tribal interest but God's will. Belief in the Day of Judgment and resurrection of the body added a dimension of human responsibility and accountability that had been absent in Arabian religion. Tribal vengeance and retaliation were subordinated to a belief in a just and merciful creator and judge. A society based on tribal affiliation and man-made tribal law or custom was replaced by a religiously bonded community (*umma*) governed by God's law.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

• (TEXT 4) **“The Life of Muhammad”:**

570 CE - Muhammad's Birth and Infancy

Muhammad was born in the year 570 in the town of Mecca, a mountain town in the high desert plateau of western Arabia. His name derives from the Arabic verb *hamada*, meaning “to praise, to glorify.” He was the first and only son of Abd Allah bin Al-Muttalib and Amina bint Wahb. Abd Allah died before Muhammad's birth and Muhammad was raised by his mother Amina, who in keeping with Meccan tradition entrusted her son at an early age to a wet nurse named Halima from the nomadic tribe of the Sa'd ibn Bakr. He grew up in the hill country, learning their pure Arabic.

575 CE - Muhammad Becomes an Orphan

When Muhammad was five or six his mother took him to Yathrib (Medina), an oasis town a few hundred miles north of Mecca, to stay with relatives and visit his father's grave there. On the return journey, Amina took ill and died. She was buried in the village of Abwa on the Mecca-Medina Road. Halima, his nurse, returned to Mecca with the orphaned boy and placed him in the protection of his paternal grandfather, Abdul Al-Muttalib. In this man's care, Muhammad learned the rudiments of statecraft. Mecca was Arabia's most important pilgrimage center and Abdul Al-Muttalib its most respected leader. He controlled important pilgrimage concessions and frequently presided over Mecca's Council of Elders.

578 CE - Muhammad in Mecca in Care of an Uncle

Upon his grandfather's death in 578, Muhammad, aged about eight, passed into the care of a paternal uncle, Abu Talib. Muhammad grew up in the older man's home and remained under Abu Talib's protection for many years. Chroniclers have underscored Muhammad's disrupted childhood. So does the Qur'an: “Did God not find you an orphan and give you shelter and care? And He found you wandering, and gave you guidance. And he found you in need, and made you independent.” (93:6-8).

580-594 CE - Muhammad's Teens

When a young boy, Muhammad worked as a shepherd to help pay his keep (his uncle was of modest means). In his teens he sometimes traveled with Abu Talib, who was a merchant, accompanying caravans to trade centers. On at least one occasion, he is said to have traveled as far north as Syria. Older merchants recognized his character and nicknamed him El-Amin, the one you can trust.

594 CE - Muhammad Acts as Caravan Agent for Wealthy Tradeswoman, Khadija

In his early twenties, Muhammad entered the service of a wealthy Meccan merchant, a widow named Khadija bint Khawalayd. The two were distant cousins. Muhammad carried her goods to the north and returned with a profit.

595-609 CE - Muhammad's Marriage and Family Life

Impressed by Muhammad's honesty and character, Khadija eventually proposed marriage. They were wed in about 595. He was twenty-five. She was nearly forty. Muhammad continued to manage Khadija's business affairs, and their next years were pleasant and prosperous. Six children were born to them, two sons who both died in infancy, and four daughters. Mecca prospered too, becoming a well-off trading center in the

hands of an elite group of clan leaders who were mostly successful traders.

610 CE - Muhammad Receives First Revelation

Mecca's new materialism and its traditional idolatry disturbed Muhammad. He began making long retreats to a mountain cave outside town. There, he fasted and meditated. On one occasion, after a number of indistinct visionary experiences, Muhammad was visited by an overpowering presence and instructed to recite words of such beauty and force that he and others gradually attributed them to God. This experience shook Muhammad to the core. It was several years before he dared to talk about it outside his family.

613 CE - Muhammad Takes his Message Public

After several similar experiences, Muhammad finally began to reveal the messages he was receiving to his tribe. These were gathered verse by verse and later would become the Qur'an, Islam's sacred scripture. In the next decade, Muhammad and his followers were first belittled and ridiculed, then persecuted and physically attacked for departing from traditional Mecca's tribal ways. Muhammad's message was resolutely monotheistic. For several years, the Quraysh, Mecca's dominant tribe, levied a ban on trade with Muhammad's people, subjecting them to near famine conditions. Toward the end of the decade, Muhammad's wife and uncle both died. Finally, the leaders of Mecca attempted to assassinate Muhammad.

622 CE - Muhammad and the Muslims Emigrate to Medina

In 622, Muhammad and his few hundred followers left Mecca and traveled to Yathrib, the oasis town where his father was buried. The leaders there were suffering through a vicious civil war, and they had invited this man well known for his wisdom to act as their mediator. Yathrib soon became known as

Medina, the City of the Prophet. Muhammad remained here for the next six years, building the first Muslim community and gradually gathering more and more people to his side.

625-628 CE - The Military Period

The Meccans did not take Muhammad's new success lightly. Early skirmishes led to three major battles in the next three years. Of these, the Muslims won the first (the Battle of Badr, March, 624), lost the second (the Battle of Uhud, March, 625), and outlasted the third, (The Battle of the Trench and the Siege of Medina, April, 627). In March, 628, a treaty was signed between the two sides, which recognized the Muslims as a new force in Arabia and gave them freedom to move unmolested throughout Arabia. Meccan allies breached the treaty a year later.

630 CE - The Conquest of Mecca

By now, the balance of power had shifted radically away from once-powerful Mecca, toward Muhammad and the Muslims. In January, 630, they marched on Mecca and were joined by tribe after tribe along the way. They entered Mecca without bloodshed and the Meccans, seeing the tide had turned, joined them.

630-632 CE - Muhammad's Final Years

Muhammad returned to live in Medina. In the next three years, he consolidated most of the Arabian Peninsula under Islam. In March, 632, he returned to Mecca one last time to perform a pilgrimage, and tens of thousands of Muslims joined him. After the pilgrimage, he returned to Medina. Three months later on June 8, 632 he died there, after a brief illness. He is buried in the mosque in Medina [Al-Masjid al-Nabawi, "The Mosque of the Prophet"] Within a hundred years, Muhammad's teaching and way of life had spread from the remote corners of Arabia as far east as Indo-China and as far west as Morocco, France and Spain.

- (PHOTO 1) Calligraphic rendition of the name “Muhammad”



http://www.hamiddabashi.com/book_authority_islam.shtml (accessed July 23, 2010)

- What is the *hijra*, and what is its significance?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

Which of these great medieval voyagers traveled the farthest distance and wrote the most about their travels?

- A. Naser-e-Khosraw
- B. Marco Polo
- C. Ibn Jubayr
- D. Ibn Battuta
- E. Ahmad Amara

Study Questions

- What changes did Muhammad bring to pre-Islamic society?
- What was Muhammad's role in the shaping and dissemination of Islam?
- How is Muhammad seen in the context of the other “Abrahamic” religions?
- What are some of the traditions that show the place of honor that Muhammad occupies in Islam?
- How might Muhammad's early life have influenced his views on justice and equality in society?
- How did Muhammad receive what is known as the Qur'an?
- Who was the first convert to Islam?
- Why did the Meccans reject Muhammad's warnings?

LESSON THREE: The Qur'an

Goals

- To introduce students to the Qur'an, the most sacred text in Islam.
- To discuss the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.
- To analyze the structure, content, and ritual uses of the Qur'an.
- To introduce the following terms to the students:
 - *Bismallah* - The Arabic formula that precedes most Qur'anic *surahs*, meaning "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." It is also the word that Muslims say before starting to engage in activity, such as; eating, cooking, taking a test, driving, studying, departing one's house, getting into a vehicle, etc.
 - *Hafiz* - Literally means "protector." In the Islamic context this term refers to one who has memorized the Qur'an, thereby keeping intact and preserving the revelation.
 - *Ilmal-tajwid* - The science of reciting the Qur'an.
 - *Qur'an* - Literally means "recitation," and refers to the most sacred text in Islam, which is believed by Muslims to be the literal word of God.
 - *Surah* - A chapter of the Qur'an.
 - *Aya* - A verse of the Qur'an; also, a miracle or sign of God.
 - *Tafsir* - Refers to Qur'anic commentaries or exegesis.

Sources

• (TEXT 1) *Iqra*. This command, meaning, "Read," was the first word revealed of the Qur'an to Muhammad in the year 610 CE. He was sitting in a mountain cave, just outside the city of Mecca, thinking about the meaning of things, when a brilliant flash of light overcame him. A hidden voice commanded him to *read*. Its tone was both frightening and compelling. But Muhammad was an illiterate. He never learned how to read, so he meekly answered, "I can't read." Suddenly, he felt himself being squeezed so that the very breath seemed to rush out of him. When he could bear it no longer, the commanding voice repeated once more, "*Read*." Confused about what to do, Muhammad protested, "But I can't read!" The same crushing feeling overwhelmed him, and he could hardly stand it when the pressure was released and the voice ordered a third time, "*Read*."

Muhammad, not wanting another bout with the pain, answered, "What should I read?" The voice began to recite melodious-sounding words: "*Read in the Name of your Lord Who created humans from a clinging [zygote]. Read for your Lord is the Most Generous. He taught people by the pen what they didn't know before.*" (Qur'an 96:1-5)...

For the next 23 years he would receive revelations from God, carried by the archangel Gabriel. These revelations constitute the Qur'an, a name that literally means the *Reading* or the *Recital*. The Qur'an was given orally to Muhammad, and he would ask people to write down the verses he dictated [to] them. The Qur'an was, therefore, not revealed all at once. In fact, it grew larger over time until the last month of Muhammad's life when it took its final form of 114 chapters called *surahs*, each *surah* varying in length. The *surahs* comprise over

6,600 verses called *ayas* that cover a wide variety of subjects...

One of the many features of the Qur'an that Muslims consider miraculous is its style. Muhammad was not known to be a man of poetry before the Qur'an began to flow from his lips... The second miraculous aspect of the Qur'an concerns its content. The Qur'an covers a variety of subjects, including religious doctrine, law, social values, morality, history, prophets and their struggles, philosophy, and science. Without containing a single unified narrative on any of those subjects, the Qur'an skillfully weaves components of each into self-contained chapters that reference one and then the other to provide coherent essays appealing to a variety of listeners.

- Emerick, *Understanding Islam*

- (TEXT 2) The Qur'an traditionally is divided into three periods: the early Meccan Suras (most of the short Suras at the end of the Qur'an and other Suras or parts of Suras scattered through the rest of the Qur'an), the later Meccan Suras, and the Medinan Suras. The Qur'anic texts commonly put the terms "Meccan" or "Medinan" after the title of each Sura to indicate the phase of Muhammad's life in which it was revealed. The early and later Meccan Suras are believed to have been revealed to Muhammad before he made his famous emigration (*hijra*) to Medina in the year 622 CE., Year One of the Islamic or Hijri calendar.

The Suras from the early Meccan period focus on existential and personal issues. The later Meccan period brings in more extended discussions of sacred history and the prophets known in the Biblical traditions. The message of the Qur'an is more explicitly fitted into a prophetic lineage beginning with the creation of Adam, the first prophet of Islam, extended through the stories of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, John the Baptist, and Jesus, prophets of the Arab tradition such as Hud and Salih, and ending with Muhammad. The Suras from the

Medinan period reflect Muhammad's new position as a political, economic, social, and military leader, and so address a wider range of societal, historical, and legal issues. As ruler of a state, Muhammad was faced with an array of specific problems, some of which are answered with Qur'anic revelations...

Although the Qur'an views itself as representing the prophetic tradition of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as a document the Qur'an is approached differently than the Torah or the Christian Bible. Most Jews and Christians acknowledge that the Biblical texts may have been composed by a wide variety of authors over a long period of time, under divine inspiration certainly, but not necessarily by direct speech of the deity. On the other hand, Muslim consensus views the Qur'an as direct revelation to Muhammad. Muslim scholars, as well as many non-Muslim scholars, stipulate that the Qur'an was completed within the lifetime of one historical personage, Muhammad, and that many of the events of the Qur'an are reflections of the life and struggles of Muhammad.

Another key difference between Qur'anic and Biblical traditions is in narrative style. The Qur'an does not narrate the sacred history of the prophets in a linear fashion. With the exception of the account of the prophet Joseph (Sura 12), the Qur'an scatters its tales of the prophets throughout the text. Aspects of the story of Moses, for example, occur in 44 different passages in the Qur'an, but are never brought together in a single Sura.

- Sells, *Approaching the Qur'an*

- (TEXT 3) In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise, and thanks are Allah's, the Lord of the Alamin (mankind, jinn, and all that exist). The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The only Owner (and the only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e the Day of Resurrection) You (Alone) we worship, and you (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything). Guide us to the straight way.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (١)
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (٣)
 مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٤) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (٥)
 اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦)

- Qur'an 1:1-6

• (TEXT 4) When the earth is shaken with its final earthquake. And when the earth throws out its burdens. And man will say: "What is the matter with it?". That Day it will Declare its information (about all what happened over it of good and evil). Because your Lord will inspire it. That Day mankind will proceed in scattered groups that they may be shown their deeds. So, whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or small ant) shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it.

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُلْزَالَهَا (١) وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ
 أَنْفَالَهَا (٢) وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا لَهَا (٣) يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ
 أَخْبَارَهَا (٤) بَأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا (٥) يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ
 النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالُهُمْ (٦) فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ
 ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (٧) وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ (٨)

- Qur'an 99:1-8

Study Questions

- What was the Prophet Muhammad's role in the delivery of the Qur'an?
- How do Muslims view the Qur'an in relation to the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament? What are some of the differences between these texts in terms of content and form?
- (3) Why do Muslims place such emphasis on preserving the 'text' of the Qur'an? What is the significance of the Arabic text of the Qur'an, as compared to translations? How does this compare to the way sacred texts are seen in Judaism? What makes a text sacred?
- (4) What do Muslims regard as some of the miraculous elements surrounding the Qur'an?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

Identify the one Empire listed below that was not a Muslim Empire.

- A. Mamluk
- B. Safavid
- C. Ottoman
- D. Sasanian
- E. Byzantine

LESSON FOUR: The Prophet's *Sunnah* and the Sources of Islamic Law

Goals

- To expose students to *halal* eating practices and the role these play in people's daily lives.
- To introduce the concept of *sunnah* as a major source of guidance for Muslims.
- To present Islamic Law as the outlining of a Muslim's duty to God (i.e. ritual observances) and to humanity (i.e. social interactions).
- To introduce the following terms to the students:
 - *Fard* - A duty that is required according to Islamic law.
 - *Fiqh* - Islamic jurisprudence.
 - *Hadith* (plural: *Ahadith*) - Literally means account. Refers to traditions relating to the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.
 - *Haram* - A forbidden action in Islam.
 - *Ijma* - The consensus of the Muslim community. This term usually refers to the consensus of Islamic scholars.
 - *Ijtihad* - The process of using independent thought to create new Islamic legal opinions.
 - *Isnad* - The chain of reporters in a *hadith* that link a tradition back to the Prophet Muhammad. This chain is used as a test to authenticate the validity of a *hadith*.
 - *Makruh* - An action that is not recommended in Islam.
 - *Mubah* - An action deemed to be neither forbidden nor recommended, according to Islamic law.
 - *Qiyas* - Analogical reasoning; a method of understanding or creating Islamic law.
 - *Shari'a* - The entire canon of Islamic law.
 - *Sunnah* - Literally means "way" or "custom." This term refers to the behaviors and customs of the Prophet Muhammad.
 - *Ulama* - Scholars of Islam (the singular of this term is *alim*).

Sources

- (TEXT 1) Classical Islamic jurisprudence recognized four official sources, as well as other subsidiary sources. Quran: As the primary source of God's revelation and law, the Quran is the sourcebook of Islamic principles and values. Although the Quran declares, "Here is a plain statement to men, a guidance and instruction to those who fear God," it does not constitute a comprehensive code of laws. While it does contain legal

prescriptions, the bulk of the Quran consists of broad, general, moral directives – what Muslims ought to do. It replaced, modified, or supplemented earlier tribal laws. Practices such as female infanticide, exploitation of the poor, usury, murder, false contracts, fornication, adultery, and theft were condemned. In other cases, Arab customs were gradually replaced by Islamic standards.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

• (TEXT 2) Sunna of the Prophet: Quranic principles and values were concretized and interpreted by the second and complementary source of law, the Sunna of the Prophet, the normative model behavior of Muhammad. The importance of the Sunna is rooted in such Quranic injunctions as “obey God and obey the Messenger... If you should quarrel over anything refer it to God and the Messenger” (4:59) and “In God’s messenger you have a fine model for anyone whose hope is in God and the Last Day” (33:21). Belief that Muhammad was inspired by God to act wisely, in accordance with God’s will, led to the acceptance of his example, or Sunna, as a supplement to the Quran, and thus, a material or textual source of the law. Sunna includes what the Prophet said, what he did, and those actions that he permitted or allowed. The record of Prophetic deeds transmitted and preserved in tradition reports (*hadith*, pl. *ahadith*) proliferated. By the ninth century, the number of traditions had mushroomed into the hundreds of thousands... Recognition that many of these traditions were fabricated led to the development of the science of tradition, criticism and the compilation of authoritative compendia. The evaluation of traditions focused on the chain of narrators and the subject matter. Criteria were established for judging the trustworthiness of narrators – moral character, reputation for piety, intelligence, and good memory. Then a link by link examination of each of the narrators was conducted to trace the continuity of a tradition back to the Prophet... The second criteria, evaluation of a tradition’s subject matter, entailed an examination to determine whether, for example, a tradition contradicted the Quran, an already verified tradition, or reason.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

• (TEXT 3) Analogical Reasoning: Even the Sunna did not provide all that the Muslims needed for specific legislation and legal guidance. Thus there was created a practice of analogical reasoning known as *qiyas*,

which was nearly universally recognized as a third source of law... When a problem arose that neither the Qur’an nor the Hadith could resolve, an attempt was made to find an analogous situation in which a clear determination had already been made.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

• (TEXT 4) Consensus of the Community: The authority for consensus (*ijma*) as a fourth source of law is usually derived from a saying of the Prophet, “My community will never agree on an error.” Consensus did not develop as a source of law until after the death of Muhammad, with the consequent loss of his direct guidance in legislative matters... Consensus played a pivotal role in the development of Islamic law and contributed significantly to the corpus of law or legal interpretation. If questions arose about the meaning of a Quranic text or tradition, or if revelation and early Muslim practice were silent, jurists applied their own reasoning (*ijtihad*) to interpret the law.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

• (TEXT 5) Sometimes scholars have to get very creative to provide answers for the community. The word *Ijtihad* is the name for this process of coming up with definitive rulings that rely on a lot of independent thought. It is through this process that the corpus of Islamic Law is a living, breathing institution that can adapt to any age or circumstance. Recent legal rulings, called *fatwas*, have declared that it is allowed to say the call to prayer over a loudspeaker, to perform prayers in a spacecraft, to donate organs, and to trade stocks that are not connected with vice.

- Emerick, *Understanding Islam*

• (TEXT 6) They ask you concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: “In them is great sin, and (some) benefits for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit.”

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ
وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ

مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْغَفْوَةُ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ (٢١٩)

- Qur'an 2:219

• (TEXT 7) O you who believe! Approach not As-Salat (the prayer) while you are in a drunken state until you know (the meaning) of what you utter, nor when you are in a state of *Janâba*, (i.e., in a state of sexual impurity and have not yet taken a bath) except when travelling on the road (without enough water, or just passing through a mosque), till you wash your whole body. And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes after answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (by sexual relations) and you find no water, perform *Tayammum* with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands (*Tayammum*). Truly, Allâh is Ever Oft-Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَرَىٰ
 حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنُبًا إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ
 حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرَضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ
 جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ
 تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ
 وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا غَفُورًا (٤٣)

- Qur'an 4:43

• (TEXT 8) Shaytan (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from As Salat (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ
 فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ
 الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ (٩١)

- Qur'an 5:91

• (TEXT 9) 'Abd al-Aziz b. Suhaib reported: They (some persons) asked Anas b. Malik, about Fadikh (that is, a wine prepared from

fresh dates), whereupon he said: There was no liquor with us except this Fadikh of yours. It was only this Fadikh that I had been serving to Abu Talha and Abu Ayyub and some persons from amongst the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) in our house. When a person came and said: Has the news reached you? We said, No. He said: liquor has been declared forbidden. Thereupon, Abu Talha said: Anas, spill these large pitchers. He (the narrator) said: They then never reverted to it, nor even asked about this after the announcement by that person.

- Hadith 4883

• (TEXT 10) Analogies cannot be constructed without the prior existence of an original case, a ruling (*hukm*) in the sources, and an effective cause that links the original case to the new case. Human reasoning basically consists of unrestricted reasoning, which does not depend on such requirements. For example, the Quran prohibits alcohol because it is an intoxicant. This prohibition can be extended, by analogy, to narcotic drugs. But no such analogy can be extended to a drug that only causes lapse of memory or blurs the eyesight, for want of the effective cause, intoxication. But these can be prohibited by human reasoning.

- Esposito, *The Oxford History of Islam*

• (TEXT 11) These five necessities are: religion, life, intellect, procreation, and property. These five necessities are derived from *Shari'ah* as necessary and basic for human existence. Therefore, every society should preserve and protect these five necessities; other human life would be harsh, brutal, poor, and miserable here and in the hereafter.

Reason and Revelation: Revelation, the Islamic Divine Law mentioned clearly that intellect is a necessity and must be preserved; since alcohol nullifies the ability of intellectualization, alcohol and any other substance similar to its effects, becomes prohibited. Now we all know that alcohol has

some benefits in it, Allah – the All Knowing – mentioned in the Qur'an that alcohol has some benefits, however, it is mentioned also that the harm of alcohol overweighs its benefits, and thus it is prohibited. Its use must be prevented by a set of legislations because it inflicts harm on all: society, family, and individuals. Allah, in His absolute wisdom, legislates for human beings benefits that sometimes they can't anticipate for themselves. Since alcohol causes harm, the command of prohibition was stated so clearly that no skill of interpretation or exegesis is needed.

Reason might prefer its own way of stating benefit and harm; however, reason is limited to its methodology, which is either deductive or inductive. Since deductive reasoning can't predict the future, then inductive reasoning is what we are looking for. The golden key for knowing benefits and harm is "experience," and the only road to it is "trial and error." Society from history and experience discovered that alcohol caused harm to individuals, young and old, causing illness, and as a fruit of experience the reason started to restrict the consumption of alcohol. Going further in rationality and experience, society realized that alcohol caused financial harm, by affecting both health and wealth of the society; reason sought more regulation of alcohol. Going further with rationality, reason realized that drinking and driving caused terrible damage to the life of people, property, family, and the society, thus rational legislation went further in restricting alcohol. Going further in experience, being advanced more in science and medicine the harm of alcohol starts to manifest itself with more acceleration, therefore, physicians realized that pregnant women who consume alcohol are destroying their fetuses, physically and mentally, and the harm inflicted on the fetus, the mother, the family, procreation, and society; therefore, more restriction is placed on alcohol. However, although the restriction of alcohol is ongoing, but not yet in a form of prohibition as that in divine law. After all, the route of reason in seeking more restrictions

on consuming alcohol is continually confirming the beneficial aspect of the divine law legislation; showing no contradiction between reason and revelation in morality.

- Mashhad, *Al-Allaf*

• (TEXT 12) O Mankind! Eat of what is lawful and clean on the earth and do not follow in the footsteps of Shaitan, surely, he is your open enemy.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ (١٦٨)

- Qur'an 2:168

• (TEXT 13) Forbidden to you (for food) are: *Al Maytah* (the dead animals – cattle- beast not slaughtered), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah's name has not been mentioned while slaughtering (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by strangling or violent blow or by a headlong fall, or by the goring horns-and that which has been (partly) eaten – by a wild animal – unless you are able to slaughter it (before its death) and that which is sacrificed (slaughtered) on An-Nusub (stone altars). (Forbidden) also is to use arrows seeking luck or decision; (all) that is *Fisqun* (disobedience of Allah and sin). This day, those who disbelieved have given up all hope of your religion; so Fear them not but Fear me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But as for him who is forced by severe hunger, with no inclination to sin (such as can eat these above mentioned meats), then surely Allah is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَمِ ذَآلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ الْيَوْمَ يَيسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي
وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ
غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٣)

- Qur'an 5:3

• (TEXT 14) O you who believe (in the oneness of Allah – Islamic monotheism)! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah, if it is indeed He Whom you worship. He has forbidden you only the Maytah (dead animals), and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols on which Allah's name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. Truly Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
وَأَشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ (١٧٢) إِنَّمَا
حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخَنزِيرِ وَمَا أَهْلَ
بِهِ لَغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ
عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (١٧٣)

- Qur'an 2:172-3

• (TEXT 15) Narrated by Salama bin al-Aqwa': In the evening of the day of the conquest of Khaibar, the army made fires (for cooking). The Prophet said, "For what have you made these fires?" They said, "For cooking the meat of domestic donkeys." He said, "Throw away what is in the cooking pots and break the pots." A man from the people got up and said, "Shall we throw the contents of the cooking pots and then wash the pots (instead of breaking them)?" The Prophet said, "Yes, you can do either."

- Hadith 405

• (TEXT 16) Narrated by Abu Tha'labah: Allah's Apostle forbade the eating of the meat of beasts having fangs.

- Hadith 438

• (TEXT 17) Narrated by `Aisha: A group of people said to the Prophet, "Some people bring us meat and we do not know whether they have mentioned Allah's Name or not on slaughtering the animal." He said, "Mention Allah's Name on it and eat." Those people had embraced Islam recently.

- Hadith 415

• (TEXT 18) Narrated by Rafi bin Khadij: The Prophet said, "Eat what is slaughtered (with any instrument) that makes the blood flow out, except what is slaughtered with a tooth or a nail."

- Hadith 414

• (TEXT 19) Shaddid b. Aus said: Two are the things which I remember Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) having said: Verily Allah has enjoined goodness to everything; so when you kill, kill in a good way and when you slaughter, slaughter in a good way. So every one of you should sharpen his knife, and let the slaughtered animal die comfortably.

- Hadith 4810

• (TEXT 20) Hallal Guidelines, which are located at the end of this chapter, immediately after the Bibliography, can also be found at the following url:

hma.jucanada.org/halal_guidelines.aspx
(accessed July 23, 2010).

Study Questions

Questions for TEXTS 1-5:

- Why are the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad given so much weight in the Islamic tradition?
- Explain the role of the chain of narrators (*isnad*) in *hadith* literature. Why is it essential that all *hadith* have a chain of narrators intact?
- How does the system of Islamic law retain a sense of fluidity? What are some of the structures that the system has in place that allow for a degree of flexibility?
- Compare the various components of Islamic law (*Qur'an*, *sunnah*, *qiyas*, *ijma*, *ijtihad*) to the system of checks and balances in the United States government.

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

Which of these countries possesses the largest Muslim population in the world?

- A.** India
- B.** Indonesia
- C.** Nigeria
- D.** Egypt
- E.** Saudi Arabia

LESSON FIVE: The Five Pillars (Part I)

Shahada & Salat

Goals

- To explore the first two pillars of the Islamic tradition, the *shahada* and *salat*.
- To introduce students to the following terms:
 - *Allah* - God. It is critical for students to know that “Allah” is not the name of the Muslim God, as is commonly taught, but is simply the Islamic term for God, based on the Arabic term for God. This is similar to the term “Adonai” that Jews use, which does not mean “the Jewish God” but means “God.” [NOTE: the terms Allah and Rabb are used by Arabic speaking Jews and Christians as well. Also, Hebrew texts use similar terms, such as Elohim and Ribono Shel Olam.]
 - *Salat*: The ritual Islamic prayer, performed five times daily.
 - *Rak`a*: A “unit” or section of prayer (*salat*).
 - *Sajood*: Position of prostration
 - *Ruku`a*: In prayer, bowing at the waist
 - *Fajr*: Morning prayers, which is the first prayer of the day: 2 Rak`ate
 - *Dhuhr*: The noon prayer and second prayer of the day: 4 Rak`ate
 - *Asr*: The afternoon and third prayer of the day: 4 Rak`ate
 - *Maghrib*: The fourth prayer of the day and occurs at sunset: 3 Rak`ate
 - *Isha*: The fifth prayer takes place at night: 4 Rak`ate
 - *Fard*: Required.
 - *Imam*: Means “leader.” This term refers to a person who leads congregational prayers.
 - *Jum`a*: Friday congregational prayers. Shorter rak`ate when Friday prayers are performed in the mosque. (Two sets of prayers rather than four).
 - *Ka`aba*: Found in the modern city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. This is the cube-shaped shrine that Muslims believe was built by the Prophet Adam, and later rebuilt by the Prophet Abraham. It symbolizes unity of all Muslims.
 - *Khutbah*: The “sermon” delivered to a Muslim congregation on Fridays and on religious festivals.
 - *Masjid*: A space of worship for Muslims. Also the term for a Mosque in Arabic.
 - *Mu`adhdhin* - One who gives the call to prayer (*adhan*).
 - *Niyya*: Literally means “intention.”
 - *Qibla*: The geographical direction of the *Ka`aba*. Muslims face this direction to offer *salat*, or the ritual prayer. Most mosques are built with a special area in the mosque designating the direction of the *Ka`aba*. (Some might argue that all mosques are built like this.) The first *Qibla* was the Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem and later got changed to the *Ka`aba*.
 - *Shahada*: The declaration of faith (“There is no God but God, and Muhammad is God’s messenger”).

- *Sunna*: literally means the prophet's sayings, actions, or what the prophet accepted of his followers' actions during his lifetime. When applied to prayer, it means the extra and non-obligatory prayers that the prophet performed and highly encouraged.
- *Tawhid*: The absolute oneness of God. This notion is the crux of Islam, and is often referred to as "radical monotheism."

Sources

• (TEXT 1) *Shahada*: A Muslim is one who proclaims (*shahada*, witness or testimony): "There is no god but the God [Allah], and Muhammad is the messenger of God." This acknowledgment of and commitment to Allah and His Prophet is the rather simple means by which a person professes his or her faith and becomes a Muslim, and a testimony that is given throughout the day when the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer. It affirms Islam's absolute monotheism, an unshakable and uncompromising faith in the oneness or unity (*tawhid*) of God. As such, it also serves as a reminder to the faithful that polytheism, the association of anything else with God, is forbidden and is the one unforgivable sin... The second part of the confession of faith is the affirmation of Muhammad as the messenger of God, the last and final Prophet, who serves as a model for the Muslim community. Molding individuals into an Islamic society requires activities that recall, reinforce, and realize the word of God and the example of the Prophet.

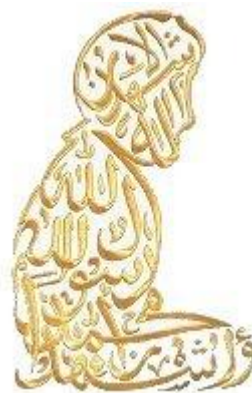
- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

• (PHOTO 1) A calligraphic rendition of the *Shahada*.



www.oozebap.org/biblio/images/shahada.gif
(accessed July 27, 2010)

• (PHOTO 2) A calligraphic rendition of the *Shahada*.



http://www.superluminal.com/cookbook/essay_many_flavors.html (accessed July 27, 2010)

• (TEXT 2)

Adhan (Call to Prayer)

Allahu Akbar/God is the Greatest

Allahu Akbar/God is the Greatest

Allahu Akbar/God is the Greatest

Allahu Akbar/God is the Greatest

Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah/I bear witness that there is no God but Allah

Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah/I bear witness that there is no God but Allah

Ashhadu anna muhammadar rasulullah/I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's messenger

Ashhadu anna muhammadar rasulullah/I bear witness that Muhammad is Allah's messenger

Hayya 'alal falah/Rush to success

Hayya 'alal falah/Rush to success

Allahu Akbar/God is the Greatest

Allahu Akbar/God is the Greatest

In the *adhan* for the *Fajr Salah* the following is added after: *Hayya 'alal falah*

Assalatu khairum minan naum/Prayer is better than sleep

Assalatu khairum minan naum/Prayer is better than sleep

- Sarwar, *Islam: Belief and Teachings*

• (TEXT 3) The foundation of Muslim devotion is the ritual prayer service known as *salat*. Although in English the term is often translated simply as “prayer,” that is a little misleading if it means the personal type of prayers of petition, intercession, or invocation associated with private Christian devotion. That sort of prayer is known as *du'a*. Though a prominent aspect of Muslim personal piety, it is not the same as *salat*. The *salat* is an intense, highly regulated, formal observance that features cycles of bodily postures climaxing in complete prostration in an orientation toward the Ka'ba in Mecca.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

• (TEXT 4) Ibn Hazm and Anas bin Malik said: The Prophet said, “Then Allah enjoined fifty prayers on my followers when I returned with this order of Allah. I passed by Moses who asked me, ‘What has Allah enjoined on your followers?’ I replied, ‘He has enjoined fifty prayers on them.’ Moses said, ‘Go back to your Lord (and appeal for reduction), for your followers will not be able to bear it.’ (So I went back to Allah and requested for reduction) and He reduced it to half. When I passed by Moses again and informed him about it, he said, ‘Go back to your Lord, as your followers will not be able to bear it.’ So I returned to Allah and requested for further reduction and half of it was reduced. I again passed by Moses and he said to me: ‘Return to your Lord, for your followers will not be able to bear it. So I returned to Allah and He said, ‘These are five prayers and they are all (equal to) fifty (in reward) for My Word does not

change.’ I returned to Moses and he told me to go back once again. I replied, ‘Now I feel shy of asking my Lord again...”

- Hadith 345

• (TEXT 5) *Time and Location*. Muslims are required to perform the *salat* five times daily: early morning, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and evening. In addition [to] the Friday congregational service, which features a sermon, the *salats* of funeral and the two eclipses (sun or moon) are also required... There are also *salats* that are recommended (*sunna*-performance rewarded, neglect not punished): supererogatory prayers offered along with the five *fard* ones, the *salat* of the two major annual festivals (performed in congregation), and a number of others... There are certain prerequisites for *salats*. Purification is the first one, as has already been noted and described. Next is the proper covering of the body: from the navel to the knees for males, and the whole body with the exception of the hands, face, and feet for females... Proper *niyya* [intention], is required... Finally, the worshiper is required to face in the direction of Mecca; this is known as *qibla* and is marked in mosques by a niche.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

• (TEXT 6) Before we begin to say *Salah*, we must first clean parts of our body... *Wudu'* is essential for performing *Salah*. We must not say *Salah* without first making *Wudu'*. The steps to take are:

a. Make *Niyyah* (intention) saying the *Tasmiya* (*Basmala* or *Bismillah*). *Bismillahir rahmanir rahim* (In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind.) Then wash both hands up to the wrists three times making sure that water has reached between the fingers.

b. Put a handful of water into the mouth and rinse it thoroughly three times.

c. Sniff water into the nostrils three times to clean them and then wash the tip of the nose.

d. Wash the face three times from right ear to left ear and from forehead to throat.

e. Wash the right arm, and then left arm, thoroughly from hand to elbow three times.

f. Move the wet palms of both hands over the head, starting from the top of the forehead to the neck.

g. Rub the wet fingers into the grooves and holes of both ears and also pass the wet thumbs behind the ears.

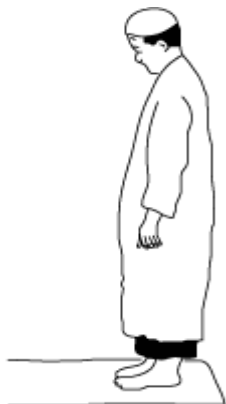
h. Pass the backs of the wet hands over the nape.

i. Wash both feet to the ankles starting from the right foot and making sure that water has reached between the toes and all other parts of the feet...

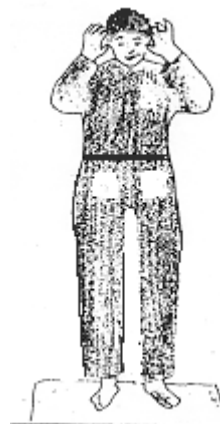
At the end of all the steps, recite: *Ash-hadu alla ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lahu wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan `abduhu wa rasuluh* (I testify that there is no god but God and God is One and has no partner and I testify that Muhammad is God's servant and messenger).

- Sarwar, *The Children's Book of Salah*

- (TEXT 7) (1) Face Mecca and begin by making a clear intention to pray:



(2) Stand straight up with your hands by your ears and say "Allahu Akbar" ("God is Great"):



(3) Then, fold your hands over your chest (right hand over left hand):



Say "In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Gracious," and recite:

- "Glory and praise to you, O God; blessed is Your name and exalted is Your majesty. There is no God other than You."
- "Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. You do we worship, and Your aid we seek. Show us the straight way, the way of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not the way of those who receive Your wrath, and who go astray" (Al-Fatihah, the opening chapter of Quran).
- Any chapter from the Quran of your choice.

(4) Say “Allahu Akbar” and bend forward with your hands on your knees:



And recite three times, “Glory be to my Lord, the Great”

(5) Stand up with your hands by your sides while saying, “God hears those who praise God. Oh our God, all praise be to You.”



(6) Say “Allahu Akbar” and prostrate yourself by kneeling with your forehead, nose, hands, knees, and toes all on the ground:



In this position recite three times, “Glory be to my Lord, the Most High.”

(7) Say “Allahu Akbar” and rise to a seated position with your lower legs folded under

your thighs, and with your hands on your knees:



(8) Perform steps 6 & 7 once again.

(9) Perform steps 3-8 once again.

(10) In the seated position, recite:



- “All compliments, all physical prayer, and all monetary worship are for Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and Allah's mercy and blessings. Peace be on us and on all righteous slaves of Allah.”

Keeping your hands as they are, lift up your right index finger and say:

- “I bear witness that no one is worthy of worship except Allah.”

Then lower your finger and say:

- “I bear witness that Muhammad is God's slave and Messenger.”

Continue reciting:

- “O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and on his family and his

true followers, just as you sent blessings upon Abraham and his family and his true followers. Surely, You are praiseworthy, the Great.”

(11) Turn your head to your right, saying:

“May peace and the mercy of Allah be upon you.”



Turn your head to your left, saying again:

“May peace and the mercy of Allah be upon you.”



- Canadian Society of Muslims, “How to Perform Salaat, the Islamic Ritual Prayer”

Study Questions

- How was this revolutionary in Arabia and why?
- What role does the *adhan* play in a Muslim community?
- How does it relate to the concept of the five pillars?
- What do you believe is the reasoning behind the establishment of five ritualized prayers?
- What are some of the benefits of *salat* from an Islamic perspective?
- Have students in the classroom prayed? What does prayer mean to you? Is it different when you pray alone or in a congregation? Why?
- Can you think of any drawbacks or hardships a Muslim might face in fulfilling this requirement?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

Which of the following North American-based Islamic organizations elected its first female president in 2006?

- A.** CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations)
- B.** ICNA (Islamic Circle of North America)
- C.** ISNA (Islamic Society of North America)
- D.** MAC (Muslim American Council)
- E.** MPAC (Muslim Public Affairs Council)

LESSON SIX: The Five Pillars (Part II)

Zakat & Sawm

Goals

- To explore the second two pillars of the Islamic tradition: *zakat* and *sawm*.
- To highlight the festivities and rituals surrounding the month of Ramadan.
- To introduce students to the following terms:
 - *ʿEidal-Fitr* - This term literally means “The Feast of the Fast-Breaking.” This is a festival denoting the end of the month of Ramadan.
 - *Ramadan* - A sacred Islamic month during which time, according to Islamic tradition, the Qur’an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims fast during Ramadan in order to commemorate this month.
 - *Sawm* - The Muslim ritual of fasting during the month of Ramadan, from dawn until dusk.
 - *Zakat* - This refers to a welfare contribution, a compulsory payment given from a Muslim’s annual savings.

Sources

• (TEXT 1) *Zakat*: Legal Almsgiving. The earliest documents we have concerning Muslim practices—the Qur’an and other contemporary and somewhat later sources—speak often of calling the people to worship by means of the *salat* and almsgiving by means of the *zakat*. These two basic religious activities are clear indicators of the importance of the vertical relationship between humankind and God through prayer and obedience, on the one hand, and the horizontal relationship of Muslims with one another through the giving of one’s wealth, on the other. Next in importance to worship is concern for others, both individual and as a community of Muslims. The *zakat* is a legal, obligatory act and considered a technical part of one’s service to God, in the sense of *ʿibada*. *Zakat* is not to be confused with charity, which is known as *sadaqa*. Muslims are commanded to give charity often and freely, with emphasis on discretion and concern for the feelings of the recipients. *Zakat*, however, is more like a tax payable once a year and computed as a percentage of one’s various forms of wealth. A manual of Islamic

practices written for English-speaking converts describes *zakat* as being owed on “three C’s: cash, cattle, and crops.” The Arabic word *zakat* has as one of its meanings “purity,” and although that sense is secondary, it does apply as a characterization of the wealth remaining to the owner after the alms tax has been paid. That is, the wealth is purified for the use of its owner... Before *zakat* is owed, a minimum amount of each type of wealth must be owned... *Zakat* is owed only by Muslims who have reached their majority (which most schools consider to be sixteen, provided the individual has declared himself or herself to be an adult), and the person must be sane.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

• (TEXT 2) This *Zakat* is a due imposed by the force of the law, an amount of money at a specified proportion. But in addition to this there is the institution of almsgiving which is imposed on the individual’s conscience without any fixed rate; it is at the discretion of the will and the conscience. It is the outward sign of charity and brotherly feeling, to both of which Islam attaches a supreme

importance; it is an attempt to establish the mutual ties of mankind and social solidarity by means of an individual perception of what is necessary and a personal concept of charity. It serves two purposes: first to establish an inner refinement of the consciousness; and the second, to foster a belief in the inherent solidarity of mankind... And the messenger says "You will never be Believers until you show charity". They said to him "O Messenger of Allah, all of us are charitable". He replied: "It is not a question of your charity to your neighbor, but of your charity to men in general." And thus he sets a lofty pattern of charity which is pure and universal to the point of making it a feature of faith.

- Sayyid, *Social Justice in Islam*

- (TEXT 3) *Sawm*: Fasting During the Holy Month of Ramadan. One of the Muslims' best-known religious acts is the month-long daytime fast during the ninth lunar month of Ramadan. From before dawn until sunset, those who are observing the fast are forbidden from eating, drinking, smoking, and marital relations. In addition, one may not chew or swallow any external matter or take medicine through any orifice. (It is permissible to receive necessary injections either in the muscle or vein). Breaking the fast intentionally is a very serious breach and carries substantial penalties. Eating or drinking unintentionally, however, is forgiven and does not break the fast. An example would be coercion; another would be momentarily forgetting what one has intended. One may brush one's teeth; rinse one's mouth; wash the body; swallow saliva; use external medications, ointments, and perfume; and even kiss one's spouse and children without breaking the fast. But intentional breaking of the fast is punishable—if it is the very serious breach brought on by sexual relations—by being required to fast for sixty days, to feed sixty people the equivalent of one meal each, or to give charity equal to a meal to sixty persons. This penalty is known

as *kaffara*, meaning "reparation, penance." If the fast has been deliberately broken by eating, drinking, or smoking, then one may renew one's vow and abstain for the rest of the day. But one should observe an additional day's fast after Ramadan to make up for the lapse. Fasting is prohibited for pregnant or menstruating women or to women who have just given birth. They may make it up later.

Travelers may keep the fast only if no undue hardship is experienced; otherwise they must make it up later. Old and feeble persons as well as minor children are exempt, as are the sick and the insane. If the old and feeble can afford it, they should give a meal to a needy person for each day of fasting missed. Children are encouraged to fast but should not be coerced in any way or punished harshly when they fail. As for the insane person, no religious duties are required at all. It is recommended that one eat immediately after the sun has set. One may then eat another, lighter meal before the next day's fasting begins, preferably just before dawn.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

- (TEXT 4) Fasting in Ramadan is a demanding spiritual discipline and enhances one's awareness of one's dependence on God and essential similarity with other human beings, especially the poor and hungry, thus one's religious awe is renewed, and one's regard for others is made keener. Notice the twofold relationship of verticality and horizontalism that we observed when describing the *salat*. The same is true of *zakat* and *sawm*. But Ramadan is by no means a lent, as in Christianity. It is a time of serious reflection, to be sure, but it is not a sad or even a somber period. Ramadan nights are joyful times, when friends and extended families gather for food and singing and simple entertainments. The mosque is visited, and some men even spend several days and nights there in spiritual retreat and vigil... The reciting of the Qur'an can be heard throughout Muslim neighborhoods long into the night.

Ramadan is one of the Muslims' most sacred times. In addition to its being the month during which the Qur'an first descended, it was also the month in which the fateful Battle of Badr took place in AH 2. Ramadan is the only month mentioned in the Qur'an (2:185).

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

• (TEXT 5) In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Verily we have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the night of Al Qadr (Decree). And what will make you know what the night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is? The Night of Al Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e., worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e., 83 years and 4 months). Therein descend the angels and the Ruh (Jibrail) by Allah's Permission with all Decrees. (All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allah to his believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn.

- Qur'an 97: 1-5

Many interpreters of this verse in the Holy Quran state that a thousand months is Allah's way of defining eternal time, as it cannot be described in worldly time. A single moment of enlightenment of the Noor of Allah is better than a thousand months and such a moment of recognition converts the night into a period of Spiritual glory and majesty, and every one of us should try to work towards this.

When the night of spiritual darkness is removed by the Noor of Allah, a wonderful peace and sense of security arises in the soul which lasts until this physical life ends and the glorious day of the spiritual world dawns, when everything will be on a different plane and the nights and days of this world will seem less than a dream. This is the meaning of "until the rise of dawn" and not the literal interpretation as many may construe or understand it. Surely, Allah's realm/time span is larger. Allah says in the Quran: Rise to pray in the night except a little (73:1).

Allah ordered Prophet Muhammad (salwaat) to spend most of the night in worship in order that his Lord may lift him to a higher elevation. Hazrat Ali (salwaat) and others would join him for the nightly meditation (Baitul Khayal) and would be rising up in station and spirituality: "Surely we will make to descend on you a weighty Word. Surely the rising by night is the firmest way to tread and the best corrective of speech" (73, 1-5).

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad, praise and peace be upon him, said: "Whosoever offers voluntary prayers during the Night of Power out of belief and charging Allah with its recompense will have his past sins forgiven." Hadith, compiled by Bukhari and Muslim Dai Nasir-i Khusraw explains the significance of this night saying: "You illuminate the mosques on the Night of Qadr and make it as bright as the day, while your hearts are as dark as the darkest night. Know that illuminations are not enough. When you light the lamps, remind yourselves that your dark hearts, without inner purifications, will not become enlightened by the lamps."

The Glory and Majesty of this night cannot be explained in any human terms. This Night is an opportunity to open out our hearts unto Him Who revealed the Holy Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad, who kept Allah's message ever living and appointed his heirs, the Imams, as the carriers of the Divine mission. At Gadhir Khumm, Prophet Muhammad (salwaat) reminded the believers of the Holy Institution of Imamat, he said: "I am leaving behind me two weighty things. The Holy Quran and my posterity. Verily if you follow them both you will never go astray. Both are tied with a long rope and cannot be separated till the Day of Judgment." This night is therefore, not only the Anniversary Night of the Holy Quran, but it is also the Anniversary of Hazrat Nabi, Muhammad's Prophethood

- *Layla tul Qadr [The Night of Power]*

- (PHOTO 1) *Iftaar* dinner at the White House.



http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/11/images/20021107-11_p23620-05-pm-515h.jpg (accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 2) A family *Iftaar*.



mk31.image.pbase.com/u36/yalop/upload/23614559.42500031w.jpg (accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 3) *`Eid al-Fitr* Prayers.



newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/40980000/jpg/_40980258_riyadh_afp416.jpg (accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 4) Decorating hands with henna for *`Eid al Fitr*.



newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/40980000/jpg/_40980252_henna_ap416.jpg (accessed July 27, 2010)

Study Questions

Questions for TEXTS 1-2:

- How does *zakat* differ from “charity”?
- What did the prophet Mohammed mean when speaking to his followers about charity?
- How do you interpret the notion that *zakat* purifies one’s wealth?
- Talk about the positives of charity. Are there any negatives?

Questions for TEXTS 3-4:

- What miraculous event does the month of Ramadan commemorate?
- How does the general mood of the month of Ramadan compare to the overall atmosphere of fast periods in other religions?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

One of architecture’s greatest achievements and contributions, and a wonder of the world, the Taj Mahal, is in fact a tomb that the ruling Emperor at the time built in memory of his wife. Under which Empire was this monument of love designed and constructed?

- A.** Mongol
- B.** Abbasid
- C.** Mughal
- D.** Ottoman
- E.** Mamluk

LESSON SEVEN: The Five Pillars (Part III)

Hajj

Goals

- To introduce the Islamic ritual of *Hajj*.
- To use the video *Inside Mecca* to illustrate these rituals, as well as the diversity of the Muslim *ummah*.
- To introduce the following terms to the students:
 - *Eid al-Adha* - Literally means “the feast of the sacrifice.” This term refers to the celebration at the end of the *Hajj* that commemorates the Prophet Abraham’s (or Ibrahim) near-sacrifice of his son, Ishmael (or Isma’il). Similar to the Hebrew word *Chag/Haj* which means holiday.
 - *Hajj* - The annual pilgrimage to Mecca, which is performed by every capable Muslim at least once in their lifetime, dependent upon health and socio-economic capabilities. The greater *Hajj* pilgrimage is performed during the month of *Dhu al-Hijja*.
 - *Ithram* - The state of ritual purity that one undertakes when performing the *Hajj*, involving specific dress and behaviors.
 - *Tawaf* - This term refers to the act of circumambulating around the *Ka’aba*.
 - *Umrah* - The lesser pilgrimage to Mecca. This includes most of the same elements of the *Hajj*, but may be performed at any time of the year.

Sources

- (TEXT 1) The believers, who for many years have directed their prayers toward Mecca, converge on the actual location, thus fulfilling a life’s wish of being at the center. The *Ka’ba*, a black-draped cubical structure in the middle of the Mecca sanctuary, is a true *axis mundi*, where heaven and earth and the aspirations and loyalties of all Muslims meet. It is the ‘navel’ of the earth, as some old sources characterize it.

- National Geographic News, *Mecca: Behind Geographic TV’s Rare Look Inside*

- (TEXT 2) The ordinary (which remains, to the observer’s eye, wholly ordinary) becomes significant, becomes sacred, simply by *being there*. It becomes sacred by having our attention directed to it in a special way... There is nothing that is inherently sacred or profane. These are not substantive categories, but rather situational or relational categories, mobile boundaries which shift according to the map being employed. There is nothing that is sacred in itself, only things sacred in relation... The *sacra* are sacred solely because they are

used in a sacred place; there is no inherent difference between a sacred vessel and an ordinary one. By being used in a sacred place, they are held to be open to the possibility of significance, to be seen as agents of meaning as well as utility.

- Smith, *Imagining Religion*

- (TEXT 3) **“Mecca: Behind Geographic TV’s Rare Look Inside”**

One out of every five people on Earth, or some 1.3 billion, practice Islam. Over 80 percent of these Muslims live outside the Middle East.

While followers of Islam are scattered around the globe, they share a single spiritual center — Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Muslim faithful throughout the world face Mecca during their five daily prayer sessions, and each year two million Muslims visit the holy city during the *hajj*, a sacred pilgrimage that represents the religious experience of a lifetime.

All adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable are expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. The *hajj* is an enormous melting pot

that gathers believers from over 70 countries and reveals the many faces of modern Islam.

“All races, all nationalities, all people in one place, concentrated, all in one direction worshipping the one God. This has to be very powerful,” Daisy Khan told National Geographic Television. Khan, a Muslim, serves as the executive director of the ASMA Society, an Islamic cultural and educational non-profit organization based in New York and New Jersey. During the five-day hajj, believers seek to become closer to God, ask pardon for their sins, and renew their spiritual commitment.

The events of the hajj have long remained veiled from non-Muslims, who are forbidden even to enter the holy city of Mecca. But a team of Muslim filmmakers gained access to Islam's holiest place at the peak of the pilgrimage to document the holy event for National Geographic Television.

Holy City

Anisa Mehdi, the film's producer and director, said the crew's personal faith became an essential part of their film, noting that only Muslims could make such a film because only they can enter the holy city of Mecca.

“There is something ultimately universal about hajj... Something different types of people can relate to,” Mehdi told National Geographic Television. “It is a search for the divine and a search for self. It is a quest for absolution and for meaning in life. It is a chance to get a lot off your chest and to replenish the reservoir.”

The hajj is an event of religious devotion, but faith alone doesn't make it happen. For the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the hajj is both a sacred trust and a logistical challenge that keeps its organizers busy year-round.

Iyad Madani, Minister of Hajj for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, explained the enormity of the undertaking to Mehdi's film crew: “If you can, imagine having twenty Super Bowls in one stadium where two million people will come to the same stadium... Add to that [the fact] that these two million people will actually be taking part in playing the game as well. It may give you a glimpse of the preparations needed for hajj.”

The pilgrimage has changed over time, even as it has grown in size. Today's experience varies according to the wishes and wealth of the pilgrim — from long personal journeys of spartan comfort to package tours with air-conditioned tents.

Mecca is a modern city that's in the business of catering to pilgrims. The government of Saudi Arabia now provides pilgrims on hajj with water, modern transportation, and healthcare facilities.

The hajj takes place in the last month of the Islamic year. Because the lunar Islamic calendar (the Hijra calendar) has only 354 days the hajj moves about 11 days earlier each year. It takes about 33 years to make a full annual cycle. The next hajj, which falls in the year 1424 of the Hijra calendar, will take place this winter in late January and early February.

Radiant With Faith

Before entering the holy city, pilgrims undergo a ritual cleansing and declaration of intent to enter *ihram*, a state of spiritual readiness. All pilgrims dress in simple, uniform attire — two white sheets for men, loose dresses, and head scarves for women. Their goal is to become equal in the eyes of God.

“The most important thing to gain is brotherhood and sisterhood,” Khalil Mandhlazi, a Muslim from South Africa, told National Geographic Television.

During the hajj, pilgrims spend five days performing rituals and rites that commemorate the trials of the prophet Abraham and his family and symbolize the essential concepts of the Islamic faith.

All pilgrims visit Islam's most sacred shrine at the Grand Mosque, home to the *Ka'abah*, the place of worship that Muslims believe God commanded Abraham and Ishmael to build over 4,000 years ago. Muslim faithful believe Abraham was told by God to summon all mankind to visit the place.

Today millions heed the call, saying as they arrive “*Labbayka Allahumma Labbayk*.” (Here I am at your service, O God, here I am.) While at the Ka'abah, pilgrims perform *tawaf*, the rite in

which faithful circle the Ka'abah counterclockwise seven times.

During the hajj, pilgrims also hurry seven times between two small hills in a ritual known as the *sa'y*, to reenact the story of the search for water and food by Abraham's wife Hagar. They spend an entire day on the Plain of Arafat outside the city of Mecca offering prayers of supplication and thanks in what's often seen as a preview of the Day of Judgment. And they stone three pillars at locations where Abraham pelted a tempting Satan.

The close of the hajj is marked by a festival known as *Eid al-Adha*. The feast commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his own son at God's command. (According to belief, however, God allowed Abraham to sacrifice a lamb instead.) The event is celebrated in Muslim communities everywhere, but nowhere more so than in Mecca, where pilgrims have just completed the religious experience of a lifetime.

Few leave the hajj unchanged. "When you really want to go on hajj, you feel you've been invited: God wants me — and it's a really good feeling," said Fidelma O'Leary, a college professor and converted Muslim from Austin, Texas. "Then you get here and you look around and you see there's millions of other people, and you're like an ant. Your significance is suddenly down to zero. It's a paradox. But it's a good paradox."

- National Geographic News, *Mecca: Behind Geographic TV's Rare Look Inside*

- (TEXT 4) Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the House of Abraham, Muhammad, and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors...

There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to

believe never could exist between the white and the non-white...

America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white — but the "white" attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color.

You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) — while praying to the same God — with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the "white" Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana.

We were truly all the same (brothers) — because their belief in one God had removed the "white" from their minds, the "white" from their behavior, and the "white" from their attitude.

- Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

- (PHOTO 1) Pilgrims circling the *Ka'aba*.



www.campnet.net/detroit-mi/campphotos/hajj%20426.jpg (accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 2) *Masjid al Haram* in Mecca.



http://www.theodora.com/wfb/photos/saudi_arabia/grand_mosque_mecca_soudi_arabia_photo_2.jpg (accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 3) Pilgrims in *ihram*.



Previously accessed at:
www.time.com/time/asia/photoessays/meccahajj/5.html

Study Questions

Questions for TEXTS 1-3:

- What is the *Ka'aba*? According to Islamic tradition, who built the *Ka'aba*?
- Outline the major rituals of the *Hajj* as depicted in *Inside Mecca*. How do these events relate to the events in the lives of Abraham, Ishmael, and Hagar?
- What is *ihram*? Why is *ihram* an essential aspect of the *Hajj*? What does it denote?
- What is *zamzam*? What is its significance, in particular, to Hagar and Ishmael? What is its importance in regard to the establishment of the Muslim community?
- What festival marks the end of the *Hajj*?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

In which South Asian country (in 2002) did a violent massacre occur in which over 4,000 Muslims were killed, thousands of Muslim women were raped, and over 100,000 Muslim citizens were displaced?

- A. Pakistan
- B. Sri Lanka
- C. India
- D. Nepal
- E. Indonesia

LESSON EIGHT: The Six Articles of Faith/*Iman* (Part I) Monotheism, Angels, Prophets, and Scriptures

Goals

- To introduce students to the notion of the six articles of faith (*iman*).
- To study the concept of monotheism (*tawhid*) in Islam, as well as the Islamic view on angels, prophets, and divine scriptures.
- To introduce students to the following terms:
 - *Ahl ul kitab* - Literally means “People of the Book.” This term refers to those religious groups that have received revelations in the past (i.e. before Muhammad received the revelation of the Qur’an). This term usually indicates Jews and Christians, but can include also Buddhists, Hindus, Zoroastrians, and other text-based religious traditions.
 - *Injil* - The New Testament.
 - *Jinn* - This term refers to invisible spirits made of smokeless fire.
 - *Malaika* (singular *malik*) - Angels.
 - *Shirk* - Literally means “associating.” This term refers to the act of making others equal to God.
 - *Tawhid* - Literally means “unification.” This term refers to the Islamic doctrine of radical monotheism.
 - *Tawrat* - Torah.
 - *Zabur* - Psalms.

Sources

• (TEXT 1) The first doctrine of faith is the absolute unity of God, which is more than an intellectual assent to a proposition. The technical word for monotheism is *tawhid*, which means “making [God] one” by means of devotion and refusal to compromise on this point... Another name for Muslims is *muwahhidun*, “Unitarians,” or more dynamically, “upholders of the divine unity.” God is transcendent, far above all that we can think or say about him. He does not beget, nor is he begotten (Sura 112). Consequently, a doctrine such as the Christian Trinity is unacceptable and even offensive to Muslim sensibilities, because it suggests *shirk*, the “associating” of something with God, which is the one unforgivable sin in Islam.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

• (TEXT 2) Say “(O Muhammed): He is Allah the One; Allahus-Samad [Allah – the Self Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, (He neither eats nor drinks)]. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none coequal or comparable to Him.”

- Qur’an 112: 1-4

• (TEXT 3) The second doctrine is the belief in angels and their important work as messengers and helpers of God. Although most of the great angels are good creatures of God, one is evil. That is Iblis, or Satan, who was cast out of heaven after he refused God’s command to bow down to Adam (Qur’an 7:11-18). Iblis has a great host of evil followers of angelic origin. The angels, which have no sex, are made of light, whereas humans are created from clay. There are several angels mentioned by name in the Qur’an (for example, Jibril/Gabriel;

Mikal/Michael; as well as Harut and Marut, both fallen angels.) In addition to the angels are the supernatural beings, created of fire, known as *jinn* (sing, *jinni*). These were introduced [previously] as the invisible beings that possess poets, filling them with a special awareness and power in speech. One who is possessed by *jinni* is rendered *majnun*, “bejinned,” meaning insane. The *jinn* are much lower than the angels, being in most respect like humans. They have limited life spans, are either male or female, and can be either good or evil. The Qur’an speaks of some of them as having been converted to Islam (72:1-19). Generally they are feared by humans, for they are associated with the spooky and uncanny dimensions of life. So, although the stated doctrine is “belief in angels,” this heading also includes other supernatural beings.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

- (TEXT 4) The third belief concerns revealed scriptures and prophetic messengers. Muhammad was the last in a long and noble line of prophets who had been entrusted with bringing scriptures to their peoples. All prophets received their revelations from God by means of *wahy*, “suggestion,” or “idea-word inspiration.” All scriptures are entirely God’s work, but peoples before Islam – the Jews and the Christians – had corrupted their original messages to suit their own inclinations. The Qur’an, then, is the purest extant scripture on earth, because it has been preserved from tampering. God sent it as a mercy to humankind, so that they might be brought to the original, true faith of Abraham. Moses was given the Tawrat (Torah), David the Zabur (“Psalms”), and Jesus the Injil (“Evangel,” “Gospel”). The Qur’an lists some twenty-five prophets in a line from Adam to Muhammad: Adam, Nuh (Noah), Idris (Enoch), Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma’il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya’qub (Jacob), Dawud (David), Sulaiman (Solomon), Ayyub (Job), Yusuf (Joseph), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Ilyas (Elias or Elijah), al-Yasa’ (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Lut (Lot), Hud, Shu’ayb, Salih, Dhu’l-kifl (Ezekiel), Zakariyya

(Zecharia), Yahya (John), ‘Isa (Jesus), and Muhammad. Most of these names are also biblical, although David, Solomon, Adam, Abraham, and several others are not considered by Jews and Christians to be prophets. Hud, Shu’ayb, and Salih are old Arabian prophets with no clear biblical counterparts. With the exceptions of Ezekiel, Elijah, Elisha, Zecharia, Jonah, and John the Baptist, none of the usually recognized biblical prophets appears.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

- (PHOTO 1) Calligraphic rendition of the Shahada (“There is no God but God, and Muhammad is God’s Messenger”).



Previously accessed at:
www.byzantines.net/epiphany/images/shahada.gif

- (PHOTO 2) Angels standing and prostrating in prayer.



Previously accessed at:
www.geocities.com/khola_mn/myth/Angels.JPG

Study Questions

Question for *TEXT 1*:

- Why is *shirk* understood to be a major sin in Islam?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?**TRIVIA GAME**

What is the total number of countries that are predominantly Muslim (where Muslims make up at least 50% or more of the population)?

- A.** 40
- B.** 76
- C.** 55
- D.** 33
- E.** 22

LESSON NINE: The Six Articles of Faith/*Iman* (Part II) The Doctrine of the Last Day and Predetermination

Goals

- To continue the discussion on the articles of faith in Islam, but now focusing on the notion of the “Last Day,” as well as the tension between free will and predestination.
- To introduce the students to the following terms:
 - *Jahannam* - This term indicates the Islamic notion of Hell. The word itself stems from the Hebrew term, “*Gehenna*.”
 - *Jannah* - Literally means “the Garden.” This term refers to the Islamic belief in Heaven, also known as Paradise.
 - *Qadr* - Literally means “measurement.” This term refers to the belief that God has “measured out” or preordained certain elements of peoples’ lives.
 - *Yaumal-din*, *Yaumal-Akhir*, *Yaumal-Qiyama* - These terms respectively indicate the Day of Judgment, the Last Day, and the Day of Resurrection.

Sources

• (TEXT 1) The fourth fundamental Islamic belief is in a final judgment, around which cluster the details of Islamic eschatology, or “doctrine of the last things.” Many of the specifics of the Qur’an’s teaching concerning the Last Judgment have parallels and antecedents in other Near Eastern traditions, especially in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity. But the Qur’anic system, later greatly elaborated by the theologians, is unique and came to exert its own special influence on medieval eschatological thought and symbolism in non-Muslim regions, particularly Western Christendom (for example, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*), but also Asia. The doctrine of a final judgment of humankind is a corollary to the doctrine of *tawhid*, for it reveals the moral nature of God in relation to his creation. These two beliefs should be viewed as closely associated with each other. The judgment is the test of *tawhid*, but the divine unity precedes and subsists beyond the “last things.” Those faithful devotees of God and his true religion not only survive but also emphatically triumph on the Judgment Day, because they are included within the divine scheme of salvation and reward. The Sufis, or Islamic mystics, emphasize the ultimate union of the slave with his master...

The Last Judgment is set forth in many Qur’anic passages as the denouement of the historical process. It is known by such names as “the Day of Doom” (*yaum al-din*), “the Last Day” (*al-yawm al-akhir*), “the Day of Resurrection” (*yaum al-qiyama*), “the Hour,” “the Day of Distinguishing” (the saved from the damned), and others. The final judgment period descends swiftly, heralded by a peal of thunder, a shout, or a trumpet blast. The natural world is then turned upside down...

Then all humans, whether long dead or still alive, will be assembled before God, the judge. This was a peculiarly unsettling doctrine to the Arabians who did not normally believe in a bodily resurrection before the coming of Islam. One of the Qur’an’s mightiest achievements was to change completely this attitude toward one of religious dread of judgment *after* life and the grave... Each human being has a record book that will be examined at the Judgment, with each individual being handed his or her book in either the right or the left hand. This is symbolic of the association of the right with goodness and purity and the left with evil and pollution... It is important to note that in a society in which the protection and support of powerful clan members and patrons were normal and expected aspects of surviving difficult trials and judgments, the Qur’an

insists that each person stands before God absolutely alone. No one can intercede between God and a person, without God's permission on the Last Day...

The final outcome is either eternal paradise or eternal hell, the former a blissful retreat and the latter a horrible punishment of fire. There are numerous descriptions of both heaven and hell in the Qur'an, with considerable specific detail. Hell is known as *jahannam*, and is cognate with the Hebrew *gehenna*. The most common name is simply "the fire" (*al-nar*). There are punishing angels there who do not allow the damned any respite from their sufferings, which in addition to burning include drinking boiling water and eating a very bitter fruit. Heaven is often referred to as "the garden" (*al-janna*), and this is a very fitting symbol for luxuriant sheltered ease in a hot desert climate. All is comfortable and well appointed in the garden, where the saved recline on soft cushions and enjoy good food and heavenly drink that thrills and satisfies without intoxicating... The descriptions of heaven in the Qur'an do not comprise a unified or specific and systematically delineated landscape; they are more symbolic of bliss and joy than anything else. But they have had an enormous influence on the Muslims, whether interpreted symbolically or literally.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

- (TEXT 2) When the heaven shall be cleft asunder; when the stars shall be fallen and scattered; when the seas shall be burst forth; and when the graves shall be turned upside down (and bring out their contents); (then) a person will know what he has sent forward and (what he has) left behind (of good or bad deeds). O man! What has made you careless about your Lord, the Most Generous, Who created you, fashioned you perfectly, proportioned you, and gave you due proportion? In whatever for He willed, He put you together. Nay! But you deny Ad-Din (i.e., the Day of Recompense). But Verily, over you (are appointed angels in charge of mankind) to watch you, Kiraman (honourable) katibin-writing down (your deeds), They know all that you do. Verily, Al Abrar (the pious believers of Islamic Monotheism) will be in Delight (paradise); And Verily Al-Fujjar (the wicked,

disbelievers, polytheists, sinners and evil doers) will be in the blazing Fire (hell). Therein they will enter, and taste its burning flame on the Day of Recompense, And they (Al Fujjar) will not be absent there from. And what will make you know what the Day of Recompense is? Again, what will make you know what the day of Recompense is? (It will be) the Day when no person shall have power (to do anything) for another, and the Decision, that Day will be (wholly) with Allah.

- Qur'an 82: 1-19

- (TEXT 3) The Prophet – peace be upon him – said: If the end of the world approaches and one of you has a seedling (or plant) in his hand and if he can plant it before the end comes, let him do it.

- Hadith 12512

- (TEXT 4) The fifth and fundamental Islamic belief is the "divine decree and predestination," known in Arabic as *al-qada wa 'l-qadar*. This doctrine has been one of the most frequently and passionately discussed of all Islamic tenets. It has its basis in the Qur'an, which nevertheless does not unequivocally support the proposition that God decrees and determines all that happens from all eternity and "records" our acts and destinies down to the tiniest detail. A typical Qur'anic passage concerning predestination is "whomsoever God guides, he is rightly guided; and whom He leads astray, they are the losers" (7:178).

The Qur'anic view of the matter is impossible to pin down as either predestination or in favor of free will, for both views are embraced or at least implied: "He leads none astray, save the ungodly such as break the covenant of God after its solemn binding, and such as cut what God has commanded should be joined, and such as do corruption in the land — they shall be the losers" (2:26). There is a tension in this Qur'anic message between God's foreordaining and humankind's choosing. Certainly that message proclaims God's inscrutable, just, and sovereign decree, but it also describes a religious law and engenders a spiritual attitude that [is] unintelligible without moral responsibility. If this issue is joined only on the level of human logic, then it will probably end

up in favor of predestination. But God is far above what his creatures can imagine or comprehend, and his act cannot be gauged by human measures.

-Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

Study Questions

Questions for TEXT 1:

- How does Islam's vision of the afterlife mark a bold departure from that of pre-Islamic Arabia's notion of what happens after death?
- What role does repentance play in the outcome of one's afterlife?

Question for TEXT 2:

- What do Muslims regard as some of the miraculous elements surrounding the Qur'an?

Questions for TEXT 3:

- Why is TEXT 3 an extremely important *hadith* within the context of belief in the end of the world?
- Is Islam an apocalyptic religion? Why or why not?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

Built in 1905, the Grand Mosque in this city is also the largest mud brick building in the world. Where is it located?

- A.** Zanzibar, Tanzania
- B.** Giza, Egypt
- C.** Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
- D.** Djenne, Mali
- E.** Casablanca, Morocco

LESSON TEN: The Shi'i Tradition

Goals

- To highlight the diversity of the Islamic tradition by focusing on the Shi'i tradition within Islam.
- To introduce students to the following terms:
 - *Ahl ul Bayt* - Literally means "people of the house," but refers to the house of the Prophet Muhammad. This term usually refers to the Prophet Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan Ibn Ali, and Husayn Ibn Ali.
 - *Ahl al Sunna wa Jama`* - The largest denomination of Islam, which follows the example of Muhammad and the *sahaba*.
 - *`Ashura* - The tenth day of the month of Muharram, which commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn Ibn Ali at Karbala (located in modern day Iraq).
 - *Imamate* - Refers to the Shi'i conception of a line of rightful leaders of the Muslim community, which immediately followed the Prophet Muhammad.
 - *Sahaba* - A term denoting the companions of the Prophet Muhammad.
 - *Shi'at `Ali* - Literally means the party of Ali. This term indicates a denomination of Islam that claims that the Prophet Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, and his descendants, are the rightful rulers of the Muslim community.
 - *Ummah* - A term denoting the general Muslim community at large.
 - *Ziyara* - The ritual visiting of the tombs of Shi'i saints.

Sources

- (TEXT 1) **Article II. The Executive Branch**
(In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.)

Amendment XX – Presidential, Congressional Terms. Ratified 1/23/1933... If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning

of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President elect nor a Vice President elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified...

Amendment XXV – Presidential Disability and Succession. Ratified 2/10/1967... In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.

Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress...

- *The Constitution of the United States of America*

• (TEXT 2) Before he died in 632 CE, Muhammad had not left instructions as to the governance of the umma, nor, according to majority Muslim opinion, had he designated a successor to lead the Muslims. Some of the old guard quickly gathered to decide how to hold the people together and provide stable leadership and some form of continuity. Abu Bakr, `Umar, and Abu `Ubayda took it upon themselves to select Abu Bakr as the first *khalifa*, “deputy,” of the Prophet. They presented this decision in a peremptory manner to the Medinan community, and it was accepted, but not without some degree of resentment. This rather authoritarian and preemptive move on the part of the inner circle of companions went against the old Arabian ideas of tribal leadership, in which the *shaykh* was selected by a wider consensus as a first among equals who could fairly easily be overruled if he became overbearing.

Muhammad had no male heir, and even if he had had one old enough to assume leadership, it is unlikely that even the Prophet’s prestige could have smoothed the way for a son’s rule unless that son had had enormous native ability. Being of the Prophet’s immediate line probably would not have been sufficient, as seems to have been proven by certain features of the subsequent history of persons who had the closest ties to Muhammad’s family. The Shi`is, strong supporters of `Ali, who emerged during the early post-Muhammad years when the Muslim government was centered at Medina, came to claim that Muhammad had designated `Ali as his successor well before the Prophet’s death. This claim has never been accepted by the majority of Muslims, who eventually evolved into the Sunnis and

consider themselves the mainstream of Islamic faith and practice. The Shi`at Ali, “party of Ali,” developed a peculiar view of Islamic governance centering in the infallible imams, who descended from Muhammad by way of `Ali and Fatima.

- Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*

• (TEXT 3) The caliphate (*khilafa*) was founded in an atmosphere of urgency right after the death of the Prophet, who seems not to have prescribed any specific procedures or institutions for when he would no longer be the leader of the Muslims. The Shi`is, of course, contend that he had designated `Ali as his successor, a view that carries with it the corollary assumption that all other Islamic heads outside the Prophet’s line through `Ali and Fatima have been usurpers. The split between the Shi`is and the Sunnis since the earliest period has been mainly political, and the Shi`is presented an identifiable alternative quite early, with their characteristic `Alid loyalty (which was not restricted to Shi`is). But the Sunni movement itself, whose name is short for *ahl al-sunna w’al jama`a*, “the people of the [prophetic] sunna and the community,” did not take on its definitive characteristics until well after Shi`ism had established itself in various forms.

- Grieve, *A Brief Guide to Islam*

• (TEXT 4) Shi`a belief maintains that God has always provided His faithful with a Prophet, ever since Adam and the beginning of the world, and that He has promised that at no time will mankind be deprived of *hujjat*, or ‘proof’. After Muhammad, the Shi`a also maintain, all subsequent guidance from God will be sent only through Muhammad’s blood descendants, based on the Shi`a interpretation of verse 23 of Surah 42, *Al-Shura* (The Consultation), which is not, of course, accepted by Sunnis: “Say: ‘No reward do I Ask of you for this Except the love Of those near of kin.’” The Prophet’s ‘family,’ in Shi`a view, includes `Ali, al-Husayn, and the following ten Imams descended through al-

Husayn for a total of twelve. Through their heritage the Twelve Imams are considered to be infallible mediators between Allah and His creation and to have possessed the only true understanding of the hidden meanings of the Qur'an.

- Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*

- (TEXT 5) The pivotal event in Shi'i history occurred in the year 680 when Husayn [the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, and Ali's son] was martyred in Karbala, Iraq on the tenth day (ashura) of the Islamic month of Muharram. The ritual remembrance and reenactment of this tragic event every year has shaped Shi'i faith, personal and communal identity, and piety. It has come to symbolize the unique position of Shi'i Islam as a community that has been oppressed through the centuries, yet still loyal to God and the Prophets, first and foremost Muhammad, and all of the subsequent Imams from the *Ahl al-Bayt*, each of which are believed to be martyred, except for the twelfth "hidden" Imam. This Imam is said to be held in occultation waiting for the day when the historical struggles between good and evil, as symbolized in Shi'i rituals and beliefs, will culminate in the end of time, when he will reappear and usher in the final victory of justice over tyranny.

- Bouayad, *Introduction to Islam*

- (TEXT 6) Shi'a Muslims consider three additional practices essential to the religion of Islam. The first is *jihad*, which is also important to the Sunni, but not considered a pillar. The second is *Amr-Bil-Ma'rūf*, the "Enjoining to Do Good", which calls for every Muslim to live a virtuous life and to encourage others to do the same. The third is *Nahi-Anil-Munkar*, the "Exhortation to Desist from Evil", which tells Muslims to refrain from vice and from evil actions and to encourage others to do the same.

- Previously accessed at: zimbio.com

- (PHOTO 1) A Shi'i procession on `Ashura in London.



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/holydays/ashura.shtml> (accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 2) Imam Hussein Mosque in Karbala, Iraq.



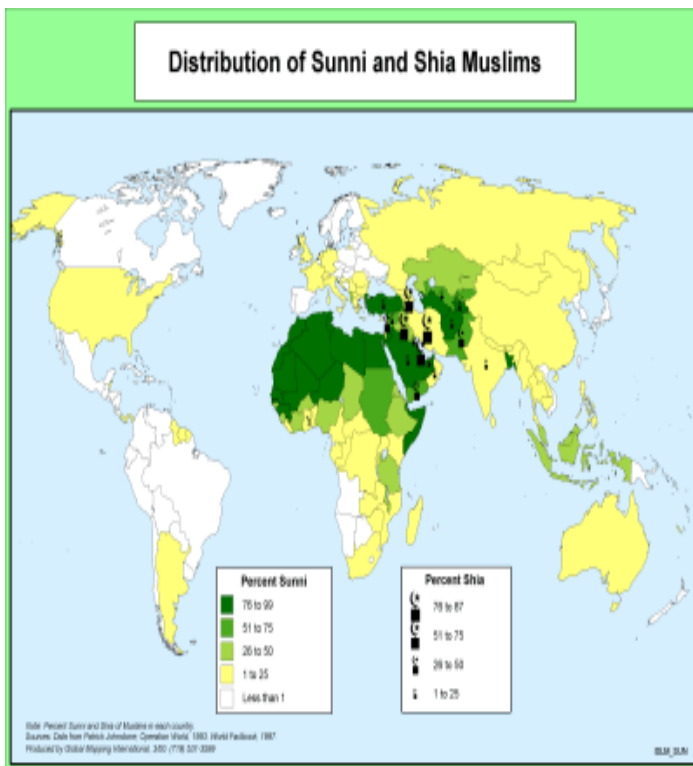
news.bbc.co.uk/media/images/39123000/jpg/_39123805_mosque_300245afp.jpg (accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 3) A family's pilgrimage to Karbala



news.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/spl/hi/middle_east/04/karbala_pilgrimage_journal/img/05.jpg (accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 4) World map indicating the distribution of Sunni and Shi'i Muslims.



<http://www.gmi.org/products/islamcdmaps.htm>
(accessed July 27, 2010)

Study Questions

- What is the concept of the *imamate*?
- What are the main differences in belief and/or ritual practice between Sunni and Shi'i Muslims?
- What do these differences translate into?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

Which of these buildings is the second largest Islamic building in the world?

- Medina Mosque/Prophet's Mosque, Medina, Saudi Arabia
- The Blue Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey
- Hassan II Mosque, Casablanca, Morocco
- Masjid-e-Sheikh Lotfollah, Eman Khomainsi Square, Esfahan, Iran
- Mosque of Mohammed Ali, Cairo, Egypt

LESSON ELEVEN: The Jaafari School

Goals

- To continue the previous lesson's goal of getting students to learn and explore more about Shi'ism by specifically focusing on the Jaafari school.
- To introduce students to definitions of the Jaafari school and to Imam Jafaar and his teachings.

Sources

• (TEXT 1) *Ithna 'Asheri*: It is an Arabic word that literally means 'Twelver'. The term Twelver means the belief that there are twelve true leaders or Imams after the Prophet Mohammed. As discussed in the previous chapter. The first Imam was Ali Ibn Abu Taleb. Please see below for a list of all Imams.

- Imam Jaafar As-Sadiq

• (TEXT 2) *'Jaafari' Muslims*: This is just another name for the Shia Ithna 'Asheri Muslims. It is named after Imam Jafar al-Sadiq the sixth Shiia Imam. Imam Jafari's main philosophy was to use the rule of reason as a primary source of law and to follow religiously the legal precedents set by the Prophet, as well as the previous imams. He was instrumental in openly elucidating and establishing Shia beliefs, law and practice. He had the opportunity to do this as the prevailing political conditions of the time, i.e., the decline of the Ummayyad dynasty and the establishment of the nascent Abbasid dynasty, created a brief period of intellectual freedom. Interestingly, it is important to note that his students included Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik Ibn Anas – two important Sunni scholars and founders of Islamic law. Abu Hanifa describes Imam Jaafar as "the most learned scholar I have ever seen."

Names of the twelve Shi'a Imams

1. 'Ali bin Abi Talib (632-661)
 2. Hasan bin 'Ali (661-669)
 3. Husayn bin 'Ali (669-680)
 4. 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin (680-712)
 5. Muhammad al-Bāqir (712-735)
 6. Ja'far as-Sādiq (735-765)
 7. Musa al-Kāzim (765-799)
 8. 'Ali ar-Riza (799-818)
 9. Muhammad bin 'Ali (818-835)
 10. 'Ali an-Naqi (835-868)
 11. Hasan al-'Askari (868-873)
 12. Muhammad al-Mahdi (873)
- [Living in Occultation]

Chart I: Prophet Mohammed's Family

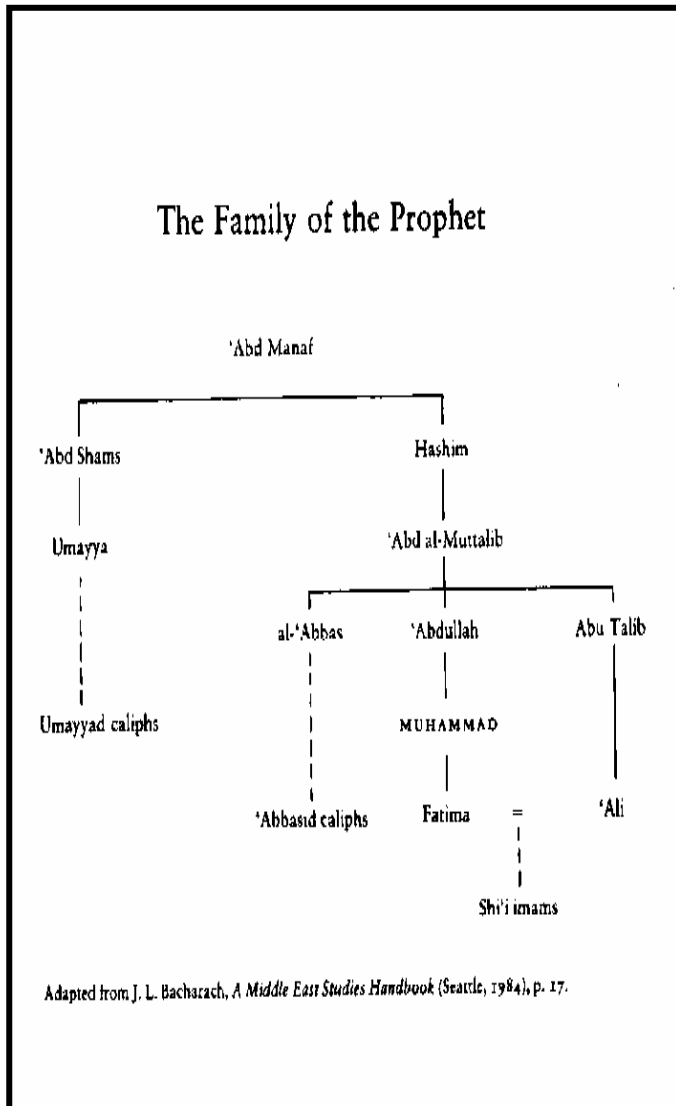
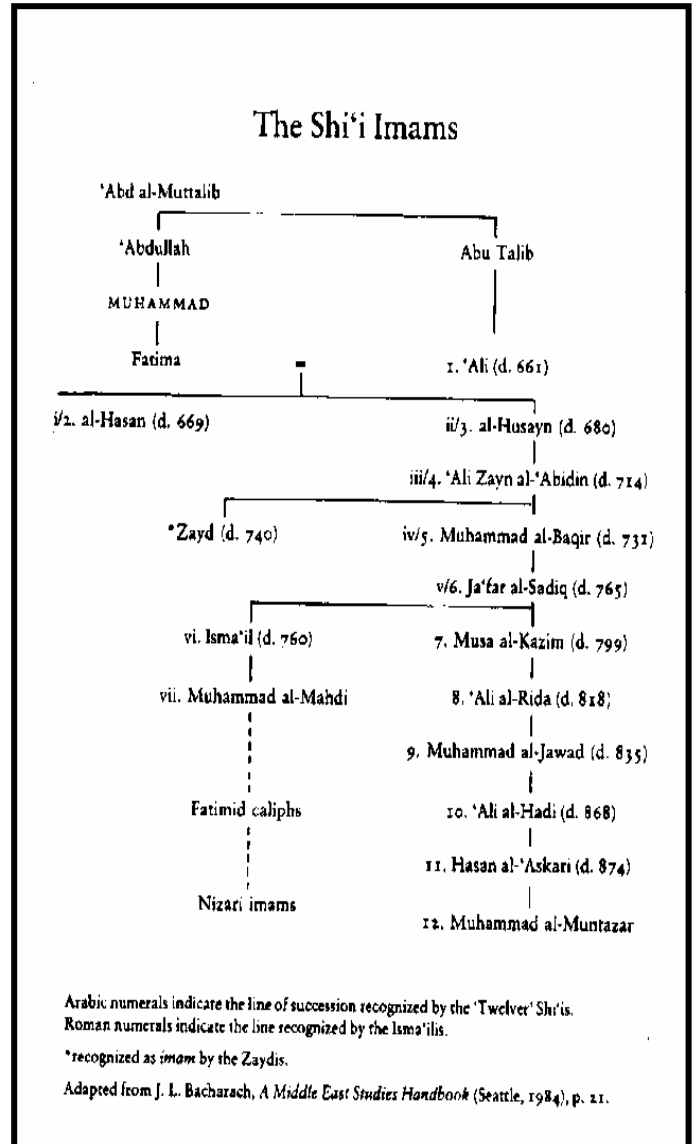


Chart II: Shi'i Imams



• (TEXT 3) **“The Sixth Imam, Jaafar Ibn Muhammad el-Sadiq”**

Up to the age of twelve years, Ja'afar (AS) was brought up under the guidance of his grandfather Imam Zainul Abedeen (AS) whose main concern was to worship his maker and reflect on the tragic events of Karbala and whose main avenue of teaching was through supplications.

Twenty-two years had lapsed since then, yet the remembrance of the tragedy of Karbala was still fresh in his memory. So, as soon as Imam Ja'afar (AS) gained understanding, he was profoundly impressed by the continuous grief of his grandfather, so much so that he felt as if he himself was present during that tragedy. He also contemplated on the presence of his father Imam Baqir (AS), who was only three years old, at that tragic time. Imam Sadiq (AS) considered it his duty to convene the recitation gatherings (Majalis) about the sorrowful event of Karbala.

He was twelve years old when his grandfather expired. Then up to the age of 31, he passed his time under the guidance of his father Imam Baqir (AS). It was the time when Ummayyad politics was tottering and Muslims were approaching Imam Baqir (AS) in thousands. Their need for knowledge was fulfilled by the Imams of the Ahlulbayt.

In 114 Hijri (732 AD) Imam Baqir (AS) died, and the responsibilities of the Imamate devolved on the shoulders of Imam Ja'afar Sadiq. Hisham Ibn Abdul Malik was still ruling in Damascus and political disturbances were afoot. The passion of taking revenge on Bani Ummaya was strong and several descendants of Imam Ali (AS) were preparing themselves to overthrow the regime. Most prominent among them was Zaid, the respected son of Imam Zainul Abedeen (AS). His religious zeal and piety were known throughout Arabia. He was Hafiz of the Qur'an and he had taken upon himself the stand of removing the tyranny of the Ummayyads.

This was a very precarious juncture for Imam Sadiq (AS). As regards the tyranny of the Ummayyads, he agreed with his uncle Zaid for whom he had a great deal of respect. But his far sighted judgment as Imam could clearly see that Zaid's rising against the well organized Ummayyad forces will be of no avail. He therefore advised him not to start this venture. But Zaid was too far out in his zeal and he would not stop. Many thousands of Iraqis had sworn their allegiance to Zaid and he was quite optimistic about his success. He took his forces to Kufa, gave a great battle but was killed in the end. The Ummayyads were as brutal as ever. They hung the body of Zaid on the gates of the city of Kufa which remained there as a reminder for several years. One year after Zaid's death, his son Yahya gained the same path and received the same fate. Imam Sadiq (AS) was aware of all this but realized that this was not the time to take any such active part. His main occupation was to spread the religious sciences of Ahlulbayt as much as possible while time was on their side.

www.al-islam.org/kaaba14/9.html
(accessed July 27, 2010)

• (TEXT 4) **“Shi'i Political Ideology”**

Shiite political theory encompasses two terms – Imamate and Justice. According to Shiites the leadership of Muslims was divinely bestowed on Ali and his children. Imams are considered to be sinless, infallible, and divinely guided and appointed to rule all Muslims. Consequently, only Imams can lead Muslims according to God's Will. Unlike caliphs who might be considered accountable to people, Imams are responsible to God and their rule is independent from popular demand and political pressures. Furthermore, Imams are just individuals and can guarantee the justice of God on Earth.

The doctrine of Justice assumes divine justice and concludes that any injustice in Islamic world must be man-made. Social injustice is the result of social decay and political corruption and Muslims have the

responsibility to fight against injustice to restore the archetypal Muslim society.

Shiite Muslims are reminded of this important responsibility every year during the ninth and tenth of the month of Muharram when they commemorate Imam Husayn's (d. 680) martyrdom in Karbala. Imam Husayn refused to accept Yazid I (680-83) as the legitimate caliph, and with his family and companions, seventy-two people in total, stood against an army of thousands around Karbala where every one of them was martyred. As a result, Shiism became the religion of protest and Shiites have become the revolutionaries of Islam.

Shiites have always been the minorities in Islam and yet they consider themselves the legitimate branch of Islam. Politically, this suggests that majority is not always right. Imams are the only legitimate leaders and any other leader is considered a usurper of power. Shiites have been the idealists in Islam and throughout the history of Islam stayed away from politics until the Iranian revolution of 1978.

- Saeed Mortazavi

Study Questions

Questions for TEXTS 1-2:

- Summarize the meaning of "Jaafari Muslims."
- Why it is important to note that some of Imam Jafaar's students were great scholars and founders of the Sunni school of thought?
- What does this mean vis-à-vis the broader Sunni and Shi'i relationship?

Questions for TEXTS 3-4:

- What can we learn about Imam Jafaar from his unwillingness to take revenge?
- Why was he focusing mostly on spreading 'ilm, or knowledge?
- How is Shi'i political ideology different from Sunni political ideology?
- How is an Imam different from a Caliph? How does the difference between the concept of Imam and the concept of caliphate translate into political form? Do you believe this can bring tension between the two groups?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

Identify the country whose largest national minority group is not Muslim.

- A. China
- B. Malaysia
- C. India
- D. Russia
- E. United States of America

LESSON TWELVE: Diversity in Islam — Muslims and Islam

Goal

- To reinforce the notion of the diversity of the Muslim community, focusing on the diversity of culture, belief, and practice of Islam throughout the world.

Sources

- (TEXT 1) Islamic thinking is very diverse and cannot be captured by only one tradition: within this religion there are many varying trends. However, if these trends are not controlled and coordinated, there is risk that they may split even further and this would not be beneficial. It is true to say that there is only one Islam but there are different ways of being Muslim.

How is it that we can talk of one Islam? Because there is a common set of Islamic beliefs throughout the world: the five pillars are the same for both Sufis and Sunnis. Can we talk of diversity within Islam? Yes, because Islam has been a tradition in a huge cultural context, resulting in Asian Islam, African Islam and so on. In the West, the same has happened. The Islamic identity has taken on all of the cultural elements that surround it. Diverse trends have manifested themselves as multiple schools of thought that extend in all directions, creating numerous layers. At times these are simplified to being either 'moderate' or 'radical', but a distinction must be drawn between the differing levels (political and religious). It is possible to find people who are religiously very liberal-minded but authoritarian when it comes to politics, and vice versa. In Europe, there are at least six ways of understanding Islam. Understanding Islam entails an understanding of its different layers. Moreover, in teaching Islam it is necessary to firstly undergo training, obeying certain rules and scientifically studying these. One of the major problems is that very often people speak in the name of Islam when they are really speaking on their own behalf, or they speak out about things of which they are ignorant. The speaker was in favor of finding

areas that the various trends have in common by means of dialogue. One concept that should be made clear is that Arabic and Islamic are two different identities; some Arabs belong to other religions (Jews, Coptics and Christians). Although Islam has used the Arabic language to spread its word and religion, the Arabic culture embraces a number of cultures, only one of which is Islam. Nowadays, some Muslims conceal or water down their beliefs so as not to be identified as Muslim and fit in better at work, in society or in the family. Others, however, become radical and encourage anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, we should attempt to adapt our beliefs to those of the host society in such a way that cultural identity can be modified without having to renounce the Islamic culture. It is perfectly possible to be French and Muslim, for instance.

- Diversity within Islam

- (TEXT 2)

After waiting his turn to take part in a question-and-answer session during the "Islam in America" conference at Harvard last weekend, a young man approached the microphone, introduced himself, and said, "I'm a Muslim, and therefore, by



Precious Rasheeda Muhammad, organizer of the "Islam in America" Conference.

definition, I'm a feminist."

The statement drew laughter and brief applause from an audience of around 150 ethnically diverse men and women who dotted the blue and green seats of the Science Center's vast Lecture Hall B on Sunday morning. Although the young man quickly added that his declaration was not meant to be funny – but was made sincerely because "I think we are truly blessed by the religion of Islam, which has unfortunately been misused through the ignorance of both men and women to [hinder] the rights of women in Islam" – his statement was among several points of challenge to conventionally held views about Islam that the student-run conference elicited over three days.

Challenges to preconceptions ranged from the presence of the high-level professional and highly visible women who participated in the panel "Muslim Women as Leaders in America" to the traveling exhibit in the lobby of the Science Center showcasing artifacts, stories, and photos of Muslims in America as early explorers in the 17th century and as African-American slaves.

Such provocations were part of what Harvard Divinity School (HDS) student Precious Rasheeda Muhammad had in mind when she set her goals for this year's "Islam in America" conference. This was the second conference on the topic that Muhammad had spearheaded to help fulfill the field-education requirement of her master of divinity degree, which she anticipates completing this spring. Perhaps more important, the conference, subtitled "Domestic Challenges, International Concerns & Historical Legacies," was Muhammad's way of filling a gap in her Divinity School education concerning the study of American Muslims, especially African-American Muslims. "If people come to the conference, they will see African Americans, Latinos, Shiites, Sunis, and Sufis, among others," Muhammad said. "When the media talks about African Americans in relation to Islam, they nearly always discuss the Nation of Islam because it can be

controversial, but the Nation of Islam is probably one of the smallest groups among African-American Muslims.

"I wanted to do this conference with so many different Muslims, to let them tell their stories," Muhammad said, noting that many non-Muslim Americans may get to know just one practicing Muslim and base their entire understanding of Islam on that one person. She added that "Muslims, too, do not always have opportunities to meet with others who practice the same faith, albeit somewhat differently."

Other goals were to provide an academic forum on the growth and development of Islam in America, to address critical issues in the lives of American Muslims, to encourage Muslims to document their history, and to inform the larger community about these findings, and promote religious understanding. The student-run conference was co-sponsored by the Harvard Islamic Society, the Divinity School's Center for the Study of World Religions, and some 25 other organizations, as well as anonymous donors.

Sulayman Nyang, professor of African studies at Howard University and co-principal investigator of Project MAPS (Muslims in the American Public Square) at Georgetown University, launched the dialogue focus of the conference on Friday afternoon. Reflecting on the growth and size of American Islam (most scholars cite between 6 million to 8 million adherents in the United States), Nyang addressed American Islam's growing institutionalization, as well as its diversity...

Alexander Kronemer's talk and video clips from a television documentary on the life of the Prophet Mohammed, intended for public television, was also well-attended. Kronemer has undertaken the project with author Michael Wolfe, renowned for his writing on the hajj (the Muslim pilgrimage to Islam's holy city, Mecca, Saudi Arabia). Kronemer, a 1985 master of theological studies (MTS) graduate of the Divinity School, lectures and writes about religious diversity, Islamic

awareness, and cross-cultural communication.

“It’s an effort to help develop interfaith understanding,” Kronemer says of his work. “In order to achieve true pluralism, there needs to be understanding....

“What we’re trying to do is bring a balance,” Kronemer adds. “This isn’t to say that bad things don’t happen in the Muslim world. They do. But bad things happen all over the world, and yet somehow or other we seem to stigmatize the religion of all these people based on really in the end a handful of news items.”

The panel of greatest interest for many attendees was Sunday morning’s “Muslim Women as Leaders in America: Precedent & Present Day,” which again brought to light the diversity of Muslims and the roles of women in Islam. Despite their shared goals of promoting Islam and Muslim leadership among women, the panelists differed in their views and practices.

Ayesha Mustafaa, editor of *The Muslim Journal*, said that the issue of men leading prayer in the mosque is a “small item” within the prayer process and argued for placing more emphasis on aiding Muslim women in countries such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, India, and Pakistan. On the other hand, Amina Wadud, a theologian and author of “*Qur'an and Women: Re-Reading the Sacred Text From a Woman's Perspective*,” strongly challenged men’s exclusionary practice, calling it “male hegemony in Islamic public ritual.” Zakiyyah Muhammad, founding director of the Institute of Islamic Education in America and principal of a Muslim school, for her part, was more concerned with finding ways to bring Muslim principles to children’s education.

Panel moderator Leila Ahmed, professor of women’s studies in religion at HDS (and faculty adviser to Precious Muhammad and Al-Husein Madhany, an HDS student who assisted Muhammad on the project), noted that while the conference did not mark the

first time that Muslim women in leadership positions had come together at a conference, the range and experiences of the women in this panel represented something new.

Whether it was the women’s panel, the cumulative effect of the conference – or,



Merve Kavakci, Member of Turkish Parliament prevented from serving because of her refusal to remove her headscarf, participates in a panel discussion.

perhaps more likely, the kind of personal conversion experience Ayesha Mustafaa earlier in the day described as “the Islamic genetic code just woke up one day and kicked in” – near the end of the conference one woman chose to convert to Islam. Those participants and attendees milling about the auditorium between sessions became her witnesses as she “took shahadah,” or testified her faith by repeating three times in Arabic that “there is no God worthy of worship except Allah, and that Mohammed, peace be upon him, is his servant and messenger.” Thus, the conference on “Islam in America” brought yet another new voice and story into the religious landscape of American Islam.

- Cathy Armer, *Islam in America: Lessons in Diversity*

- (TEXT 3) Never before have Islam and the Muslims been held up to such relentless scrutiny. Never before have journalists devoted so many articles, interviews and analyses to the “Muslim world” or to “Muslims in the West.” And yet never has knowledge of Islam, of Muslims, and of their geographical, political and geostrategic

circumstances been so superficial, partial and frequently confused — not only among the general public, but also among journalists and even in academic circles.

When confusion is widespread, the dominant note is suspicion. Terms of reference are rarely defined, nuances barely acknowledged, areas of research sketched out in the most desultory fashion. Far too often journalists or public intellectuals present their findings in research projects, articles, television or radio broadcasts with the assertion that they have taken pains to distinguish between radicals and conservatives or average Muslims. But when we examine their offerings more closely, we note a striking lack of clarity and an atmosphere of incomprehension that can only generate suspicion and fear.

Let us begin with a simple proposition: The world of Islam is as complex as those of Buddhism, Judaism or Christianity, in terms of its intellectual, spiritual and religious currents. Conversely, we must not begin by classifying Muslims according to the schemas inherited from the colonial era, dividing them into “good” and “bad” Muslims, into “moderates” and “fundamentalists.” Not surprisingly, the former invariably seem to be those who share “our” values, leaving all others to be classified as dangerous, either outright or “potentially.”

Large numbers of politicians, intellectuals and journalists have adopted such a system, with a fine dusting of sophistication. It is a system as scientifically untenable and intellectually superficial as it is politically dangerous. Drawn either from ignorance (a serious matter in and of itself) or derived from the ideological construct of a new Islamic enemy (a far more serious matter), it is in fact a projection.

The time has come to call upon intellectuals and journalists to broaden their frame of reference. The time has come to learn to apprehend the Islamic dynamic in its own terms, through its own terminology, internal categories, and intellectual structures. The time has come, as they enter into another

referential universe, to make every effort to distinguish between that which gives that universe its unity and that which elucidates and makes possible its diversity.

Islam's Levels of Diversity

In the broadest sense, there is only “one” Islam, as defined by the unity of its Credo (al-’aq’da, the six pillars of faith), and by the unity of its practice (al-’ibadat, the five pillars of Islam). This unity, in both Sunnite and Shi’ite traditions, draws on shared recognition of two bodies of founding TEXTS (the Qur’an and the Sunnah). There may be disagreement over the authenticity of certain TEXTS, but common recognition of scripture-based sources and of the unity of faith and practice point to recognition of a single Islamic reference. At this level, the supreme level of unity with which all the world’s Muslims can identify, Islam is one.

There exists, however, a first level of diversity as old as Islam itself. From the very beginnings, and particularly among two of the Companions, Abd Allah ibn Umar and Abd Allah ibn Mas’ud, there were notable differences in reading and interpretation of the TEXTS. Literalist, traditionalist, reformist, rationalist, mystical and strictly political readings and interpretations appeared early on—a reality that has continued down to the present day. Not only was the history of Islam to witness the rise of more than 18 legal schools (nearly 30 when counting the Shi’ite tradition), diverse ways of reading the TEXTS also developed. Over the centuries, schools of thought emerged that reflected interpretations ranging from the literalist and traditionalist, to the mystical or reformist. Intellectual and often political confrontations accompanied and shaped the coexistence of these trends.

All of this understanding takes us far from the binary classification systems of “good” and “bad” Muslims. Religious outlook has, in fact, very little correlation with political posture. A rationalist or a liberal viewpoint in

religious terms does not necessarily correspond with a democratic outlook in the political sense, just as all conservatives are by no means supporters of dictatorship. Western journalists have often been misled — and have misled their public — by reductionism of this kind (which would not be tolerated in reference to Judaism or Christianity, where the fine points of political orientation are better known and understood).

Moving beyond this first level of diversity, we must take into account the multiplicity of cultures that today influence the way Muslims express their belonging to Islam. Though grounded in a sole Credo and in the same practices, the world's Muslims naturally partake of a multitude of cultural environments. From West to North Africa, from Asia to Europe and North America, stretches a rich variety of cultures that make it possible for individuals to respect the principles of Islam while adopting lifestyles, tastes, artistic expression, and feelings that belong quite specifically to one particular culture or another. Arab, African, Asian, North American, or European Muslims all share the same religion but belong to different cultures — a fact that wields a determining influence on their identities, their sense of belonging, and their vision of contemporary issues.

Islamism and the Perils of Reductionism

Many observers will easily recognize, in a broad sense, this elemental diversity in Islam. But they too hastily fall into another kind of reductionism, which can be equally nonfunctional and ultimately fraught with peril: the temptation to set Islam — with all the diversity we have outlined — against “Islamism” seen as an object of rejection or even opprobrium. Even though it is little more sophisticated than the first variant, this reductionism shifts perspectives. But it is ultimately founded on the same simplistic binary mode: “good” Muslims vs. “bad” Islamists.

The definition of “Islamism” is often vague, depending on the journalists, intellectuals and scholarly studies involved. We frequently hear of “political Islam” in the broad sense, of “Salafists” or “Wahhabis,” of “radical Islam” or even of al-Qaeda. The lines of demarcation between the different trends are rarely elucidated. All available evidence points to the conclusion that there is such a thing as a single “political Islam,” that it constitutes a threat, that whatever distinctions exist are at best insignificant and, at worst, the result of manipulation by Islamists propagating the image of “moderate Islamism” to lull the West.

Analyses of this kind are legion in Europe, where “experts” and journalists have generated a stream of reports and studies of the apparently monolithic universe of “political Islam.” Any scholar daring to apply such an approach to Christianity, Judaism or Buddhism would be immediately dismissed on grounds of superficiality and for the unscientific nature of his or her conclusions. Indeed, would it be possible to reduce political activity by Christians (political Christianity) to fundamentalism?

We know there are liberation theologians who reject a dogmatic reading of biblical scriptural sources who are deeply involved in politics on the left of the political spectrum. More toward the center, and sometimes quite to the right as well as to the left, we find Christian Democrats who are active in politics in the name of their Christian religious convictions. But who could possibly justify — in the analytical terms of the social and political sciences — relegating all these Christians to one single category, that of “fundamentalist — or even radical — political Christianity?” Who could claim that the most “moderate” of them are nothing but the objective, concealed allies of the “fundamentalists”; that the liberation theologian Leonardo Boff is nothing but the prettified face of Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre? One could only smile at such a fantasy-like approach to the Christian referential universe, but it seems that it can be quite easily accommodated — either

through ignorance or ideological bias — when the subject is “political Islam.”

Political Islam’s Complexities

Yet the study of Islamism — of “political Islam” — reveals complexities equally as significant as the study of Islam itself. Between the positions of the promoters of political liberation through Islam, such as al-Afghani and Abduh in the 20th century and the extremist positions of the leaders of al-Qaeda today, lies an ocean of difference, both in terms of the understanding of Islam and of political action.

What holds true for the study of the historical timeline applies as well to the comparative study of the words and actions of the modern-day movements that are active in politics in the name of Islam. It is impossible to reduce the Turkish experience under Recep Tayyip Erdogan, or the 25 years of Islamic political power in Iran, or the 80 years of activity by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to the same reading of the sources, to the same position on the political spectrum as that of al-Qaeda ideologue Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is quick to condemn both his predecessors and his contemporaries as traitors to the cause, even within the confines of political Islam.

Whether one agrees or not with the theses of these movements, systematic study and a serious effort to understand the forces at work within political Islam require a triple approach:

1. A study of the theological and legal underpinnings of the movements (literalist, reformist, mystical or other).
2. Knowledge of the historical depth of these manifestations; numerous movements and/or leaders, such as Erdogan in Turkey and Ghanoushi in Tunisia, have changed their positions in the course of their political involvement.

3. A detailed study of the national realities that have impinged on the growth and evolution of Islamist movements.

Only this kind of three-pronged examination can provide us with a proper framework for understanding the phenomenon of political Islam, far from ignorant reductionism or ideological manipulation of “the Islamist threat.” This inquiry is not about agreement or disagreement with this or that political-religious thesis, but of dealing scientifically with the matter under study.

Intellectuals, the general public, and journalists often find themselves pressed for time. Yet time, further study, greater effort, and intellectual humility are what are needed to understand the reality of Islam and of Muslims today, as well as the broad diversity of belongings and the demands expressed by political Islam. Our political simplifications may well reassure us, but they lead us only toward fear of the world. Reconciliation with the complexity of the Muslim world will, paradoxically, have the reverse effect.

Instead of seeing the “Other” as an emanation of “evil,” a goal that extremists pursue each day in the media, we must become aware of the existence of a multiplicity of views and of the millions upon millions of Muslims who, in their extraordinary political and religious diversity, daily turn their backs on violence, strive for democracy and freedom, and reject extremism. It is time for all of us to demonstrate humility, to appreciate the complexity that demands greater study, and the suspension of hasty and thus risky judgments. The hallmark of respect for others is to recognize in them the complexity we find in ourselves, to acknowledge their thirst for human dignity, and to realize that it, like ours, asks only to be respected.

- Tariq Ramadan, *Islam Today: The Need to Explore its complexities*

Study Questions

- What is the world population of Muslims?
- What is the world population of Jews? Name the four countries with the world's highest Muslim populations.
- What percentage of Muslims throughout the world are Arab?
- Is there more than one way to practice Islam?
- Do all those who consider themselves followers of Islam believe the same things?
- What accounts for this diversity?
- What are the advantages and challenges of this kind of diversity?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?**TRIVIA GAME**

This city has witnessed the flourishing of a great Islamic civilization established in 756 by an *Umayyad* prince, named Abd al Rahman. Mosques of architectural splendor were erected. Muslim, Jewish, and Christian relations witnessed a highpoint; characterized as being extremely cooperative, fruitful, and peaceful. Hundreds of years later the same city witnessed the destruction of the great Islamic civilization, the deterioration of harmonious inter-faith relations, the seizing, destruction, and permanent altering of Mosques into Churches.

Which city is this?

- A.** Istanbul
- B.** Cordoba
- C.** Isfahan
- D.** Jerusalem
- E.** Mecca

LESSON THIRTEEN: Conservative Islamic Notions of Modest Physical Presentation

Goals

- To explore conservative concepts of modesty in Islam, and to examine how these concepts are enacted in the lives of Muslims.
- To introduce students to the following terms:
 - *`Awra* - Refers to the parts of the body that should be covered by either males or females. Usually refers to the private parts, or more generally, those parts of the body that attract members of the opposite sex.
 - *Haya'* - A term denoting the qualities of bashfulness, timidity, and shyness.
 - *Hijab* - Literally means, "curtain"; the term refers to the practice of veiling in Islam, or the scarf itself.
 - *`Iffa* - Abstinence, chastity, purity, modesty.
 - *Tahara* - Cleanliness, purity, ritual purity, chastity.
 - *Zina* - Denotes the act of illicit sexual intercourse.

Sources

- (TEXT 1) Narrated by Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Faith (Belief) consists of more than sixty branches (i.e., parts). And Haya (This term "Haya" covers a large number of concepts which are to be taken together; amongst them are self respect, modesty, bashfulness, and scruple, etc.) is a part of faith.

- Hadith 008

- (TEXT 2) Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer for them. Verily Allah is All Acquainted of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts) and not to show off their adornment except that which is apparent.

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا أَرْوَاجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَرْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ (٣٠) وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنَاتِ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَى الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (٣١)

- Qur'an 24:30-31

- (TEXT 3) Verily, the Muslims (those submit to Allah in Islam) men and women, the believers men and women (who believe in Islamic Monotheism), the men and the

women who are obedient (to Allah), the men and women who are truthful (in their speech and deeds), the men and the women who are patient (in performing all the duties which Allah has ordered and in abstaining from all that Allah has forbidden), the men and the women who are humble (before their Lord-Allah), the men and the women who give Sadaqat (i.e, Zakat and alms), the men and Women who observe Saum (fast) (the obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the optional Nawafil fasting), the men and women who guard their chastity (from illegal sexual acts), and the men and women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues. Allah has prepared for the forgiveness and a great reward (i.e. Paradise).

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ
وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّالِمِينَ وَالصَّالِمَاتِ
وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ
كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا (٣٥)

- Qur'an 33: 35

• (TEXT 4) O children of Adam! Let not Shaytan I (devil) deceive you, as he got your parents [Adam and Hawwa' (Eve)] out of Paradise, stripping them of their raiments, to show them their private parts. Verily, he and Qabiluhu (his soldiers from the jinn or his tribe) see you from where you cannot see them. Verily, We made the Shayatin (devils) *Auliya* (protectors and helpers) for those who believe not.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُمُ
مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنزِعُ عَنْ مِّمَّا لِبَاسَ مِمَّا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْآتِهِمَا
إِنَّهُ يَرَاكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا
الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ (٢٧)

- Qur'an 7:27

• (TEXT 5) The Qur'an is unambiguous regarding the mandatory virginity of all Muslims. Legally, men and women are equally accountable for a breach of this responsibility. However, virginity is not recommended as a perpetual state. The sexual urge is a part of human nature, but one that must be restrained until a legal avenue for satisfaction of this urge is presented. *Zina* (adultery) and even the approach to *zina* is forbidden (Qur'an 17:32), extending virginity from a solely physical matter to a character obligation as well. When Muslims acquire the physical, psychological, and relative financial ability, they are instructed to marry and to pursue a fulfilling sexual relationship with their spouse. However, persons who absolutely cannot marry are encouraged to fast and discipline their bodies and minds until they may fulfill the obligation. This discipline is essential because a state of chastity allows unmarried Muslims to cultivate a positive relationship with God. One must act, dress, speak, and think like a virgin, in order to avoid drawing near *zina*. A breach of these ideals leads to both a state of chaos and the inability to fully participate in a relationship with God. These sexual ideals often translate into pressures on those individuals of a "suitable age" to marry. Finding a suitable spouse, without the dangers of unlicensed sexual activity, is an issue for many Muslims in the [North American] context. Dating without proper supervision is highly discouraged in most communities. Arranged marriage is performed in certain communities, increasing parental or kinship roles in the decision-making process and limiting the chance of *zina* between the couple. Many converts to Islam face the dilemma of having no long-established connections within the Muslim community, and therefore rely on religious leaders or *imams* to seek out potential spouses.

However, for all younger and potentially marriageable Muslims, there remains a tension between priorities of educational or financial success and stability, and marital and sexual security.

- "Virginity (Canada)," *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*

- (PHOTO 1) Men and women praying side-by-side in a mosque separated by a hall (Indonesia).



http://www.dismalworld.com/world_tour/early_morning_prayers_in_jakarta_indonesia.php
(accessed July 27, 2010)

- (PHOTO 2) Homepage of a Muslim dating/friend-making website.



Previously accessed at: www.naseeb.com

- (PHOTO 3) Men's hat from a "modest" Muslim clothing website.



Previously accessed at:
www.shukr.co.uk/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=mH1011&Category_Code=men-hats

- (PHOTO 4) "Modest" shirt for Muslim males.



Previously accessed at:
www.shukr.co.uk/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=UK&Product_Code=mQ1201

- (PHOTO 5) “Modest” Outfit for Muslim women.



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www.shukr.co.uk/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=wB3901&Category_Code=women-tops

- (PHOTO 6) Hijab, or headscarf, from a Muslim clothing website.



Previously accessed at:
www.shukr.co.uk/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=WH103&Category_Code=acc-hijabs

- (PHOTO 7) A woman wearing a *shalwar kamees*.



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- (PHOTO 8) A man wearing a *thobe* (also known as a *jalabiyya*).



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Study Questions

- What do you think are some qualities, traits, or markers of modesty in contemporary North American society?
- Do you know of guidelines (e.g., dress codes) in your school or in other schools that enforce rules based on the concept of modesty?
- To whom does the notion of modesty pertain in Islam?
- What, if any, are the differences in expectations for men and women in terms of modesty? Is this a similar notion to the one expressed in the Jewish text?
- Why are there restrictions placed upon the interactions between men and women?
- What difficulties might Muslims face regarding this concept in North America?

DO YOU REALLY KNOW THE ISLAMIC WORLD?

TRIVIA GAME

How many names for Allah (God) are given in the Qur'an?

- A.** 75
- B.** 99
- C.** 101
- D.** 33
- E.** 7

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APPENDIX: HALAL GUIDELINES

Halal: This is a term meaning something permissible and lawful in the Islamic faith.

Haram: This is a term opposed to halal, meaning impermissible and unlawful in the Islamic faith.

HARAM ANIMALS

The consumption of the following categories is prohibited for a Muslim, likewise any ingredient or product derived from them or contaminated with them is also prohibited in the Muslim diet.

1. Meat of swine (pig) including all its by-products.
2. Meat of animal upon which the name of Allah was not invoked.
3. Meat of dead animals (carrion).
4. Meat of strangled animals, preventing their blood from flowing.
5. Meat of animals dead through beating.
6. Meat of animals dead through falling from height.
7. Meat of animals killed by the goring of a horn.
8. Meat of animals devoured by wild beasts.
9. Carnivorous animals.
10. Birds of prey.
11. Reptiles.
12. Mules and Asses.
13. Pests such as rats and scorpions.
14. Insects excluding locusts.
15. Procreative organs of animals.

HARAM FLUIDS

1. All types and varieties of alcohol.
2. Blood.
3. Intoxicating drugs.

HALAL ANIMALS

The following categories are fit for Muslim consumption

1. All domestic birds.
2. All cattle.
3. Sheep.
4. Goats.
5. Camels.

6. All types of buck.
7. Rabbits.
8. Fish.
9. Locusts.

The aforementioned animals, excluding fish and locusts, will only be rendered as halal when they are slaughtered according to the following instructions:

[GUIDELINES FOR ABATTOIRS]

RULES FOR SLAUGHTERMEN

The following must be considered when selecting slaughterers:

1. He must be a Muslim of integrity from the 'Ahlus Sunnah-wal-Jamaah.'
2. He must understand the importance of the responsibility of Halal slaughter and be versant with the rules thereof.

RULES FOR HALAL SLAUGHTER

1. A slaughterman with the aforementioned qualities must invoke the name of Allah upon the animal to be slaughtered prior to slaughter by reciting "Bismillahi Allahu Akbar" or at the very least recite "Bismillah."
2. He must immediately slaughter the animal after the recital without any significant delay.
3. The knife used for slaughtering must be extremely sharp so that the animal suffers minimal agony and so that the slaughter takes place efficiently and easily.
4. At the time of slaughter all of the following arteries should be cut:
 - a) Trachea (windpipe).
 - b) Esophagus (gullet).
 - c) Both jugular veins.

In the event of all four arteries not being possible to cut, at least three of the mentioned four arteries must be cut. If less than three arteries were cut, the animal is not to be rendered as halal.

5. The cut must be conducted manually (i.e. by hand) and carried out swiftly. The knife must not be lifted before the cut is

complete and the cut must be below the Adam's apple.

6. It is heavily advised that the neck should neither be cut off completely nor broken, thus avoiding the severance of the spinal cord.

STUNNING

The issue of stunning is very delicate (whether done by captive bolt stun, electric head stun or electrified water bath), in the sense that there are many conditions and criteria that must be considered. First, for reason of the animal's welfare, the act of stunning is extremely disliked and, according to some, even reaches the stage of being haram (non-halal), as it causes the animal unnecessary suffering. Even more important is the question of how stunning affects whether or not the animal is fit for Muslim consumption.

The Islamic criteria that must be met while slaughtering the animals are clear-cut; any deviation from them will render the animal unfit for Muslim consumption. Among the guidelines established for a Halal slaughter is the unwavering fundamental that the animal must be alive at the time of slaughter, and the blood must be drained out.

Research by the FAWC in Britain showed that more than 35% of chickens die prior to slaughter due to stunning. It is also proven that a large amount of blood remains in the animal. The animal is also deprived of the effects of blessing/*tasmiyyah* as it would be unconscious at the time of slaughter.

The CCMT and HMA have also taken into account that there is no pressure from the Canadian Government forcing Muslims to adopt such inhumane methods of slaughter. Therefore, because of all the negative aspects of stunning, the CCMT and HMA have issued a blanket ruling disallowing stunning in any form.

CUTTING AND HANDLING OF HALAL MEAT

1. Pig slaughter is not permitted in the abattoir providing halal slaughter.

2. Halal slaughter must be conducted in the first shift of the day on a sanitized and cleaned line with sanitized equipment (in an abattoir that provides non-halal slaughter along with halal slaughter).

3. All equipment used for cutting, hanging, transporting, and further processing must be sanitized prior to halal production.

4. There must be no contamination of halal meat with non-halal meat either in the abattoir, processing areas, freezers, chillers or at the time of packing, loading, unloading and/or transportation.

5. Halal meat must be stored separately from non-halal meat at all times. This may be done by:

- a) Storing in a separate facility or,
- b) Storing in a separate compartment within the same facility. (This option should be a last resort.)

6. In the event of halal meat being stored in the same facility as non-halal meat, the following must be considered:

- a) All loose halal meat must be packed and stored in an isolated corner of the facility so that no kind of contact is made with non-halal meat.
- b) All halal meat must be labeled.
- c) The handlers of halal meat must be well versed with issues of contamination and understand halal.

Halal Foods Department, Jami'yyatul Ulama Canada (CCMT);

*http://hma.jucanada.org/halal_guidelines.aspx
(accessed July 29, 2010)*

ANSWER KEY TO:**Do You Really Know the Islamic World?
Trivia Game**

Lesson 1: D. 15-20% (although some sources go as high as 30%)

Lesson 2: D. Ibn Battuta – Morocco

Lesson 3: D. Sasanian

Lesson 4: B. Indonesia

Lesson 5: C. ISNA Islamic Society of North America

Lesson 6: C. Mughal

Lesson 7: C. India

Lesson 8: C. 55

Lesson 9: D. Djenné, Mali

Lesson 10: C. Hassan II Mosque, Casablanca, Morocco

Lesson 11: B. Malaysia

Lesson 12: B. Cordoba, Spain

Lesson 13: B. 99



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