



Islamic Worldview

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدانا
لِلْإِسْلَامِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
الَّذِي هَدانا لِلْإِسْلَامِ
وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا
رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ الرَّحِيمِ

Islam Today: Demographics



- There are an estimated 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide, or 1/5th of world's population
- Growth without missionary efforts
- Islam is the third in succession of the three great monotheistic faiths born in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)
- Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world
- Only 18% of Muslims live in the Arab world, 50% in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia
- Indonesia has largest single Muslim community

(DeSantos, n.d.)



Islam Terms

- Islam: an Arabic word that means “submitting to God” and “peace”
- Muslim: a person who follows the teachings of Islam and “submits to God and finds peace in Him”. All creation is Muslim.
- Shahadah: “There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God”.
- Allah: Arabic name for God. It is preferred over other names because it has no gender affiliation and does not have plurality. You will never see an image of Allah. Muslims believe that He does not resemble any other form in creation in any way.

(“Islam”, n.d.)

Basic Tenets According to Sire

- 5 pillars: recite confession, pray 5 times a day, fast during Ramadan, give annually to poor, pilgrimage to Mecca
- Mandate: Set up Islamic state and governments
- Hadith: rules for everyday living
- Islam is final truth, superior to Judaism and Christianity
- Monotheistic
- Allah has no limitations, his power controls all events and determines boundaries of creature's choices, transcendence (greater than us) greater than immanence (present in world)
 - For example "None has the right to be worshipped except Allaah, alone, without partner. To Him belongs all sovereignty and praise and He is over all things omnipotent." (Al-Qahtaani, 1996 p. 265)
- Allah reveals himself through the Qur'an, an eternal book not independent from Allah

Source: Sire, 2009, pp. 244-277

Basic Tenets According to Sire

- Shaytan (Satan) wouldn't submit to man's authority so he fell
- Adam was forgiven after fall, no original sin, humans born with uncorrupted nature
- Humans live on probation to show worthy of heaven
- After death, either peaceful sleep or spiritual purgation of suffering for purification
- All good & evil deeds recorded, no guarantee of sufficient good to outweigh evil
- Martyrs, young children (before puberty), and mentally impaired assured paradise
- Our knowledge of Allah is general
- Allah is all-caring, all-forgiving, all-merciful but does not guarantee salvation; salvation is act of Allah's mercy

Source: Sire, 2009, pp. 244-277

Basic Tenets According to Sire

- Jesus was born of a virgin, taught, healed, did miracles, but Qur'an denies crucifixion and divinity.
- Prophets provide knowledge, Muhammad's writings in Qur'an are "preserved free from error or human interference" (Sire, 2009, p. 264)
- Qu'ran self-authenticating & source of right and wrong
- Qadr, Allah's predestination, places people into one of two categories: believers or enemies.
- Accept everything from God bila kayf "without asking why" and inshallah "if God wills" (Sire, 2009, p. 267)
 - For example: Muhammad appealed to tribes to leave idolatry and accept Islam, they asked if they would inherit his power, to which he replied "The whole affair lies in Allah's hands. He gives the power to whomever He desires." (Mujahid, 1979, p. 141)

Source: Sire, 2009, pp. 244-277

Two Main Branches of Islam

- Schism about 700 AD, for non-Koranic elements introduced into Islam, who would be Muhammad's successor, and worldliness/discrimination.
- Caused two main branches of Islam today:
 - Sunni recognize male heirs of the first 4 caliphs and muftis (or spiritual heads) elected according to Muhammad's instruction after his death
 - Shiite recognize descendants of only the 4th caliph—Ali (M's son-in-law & cousin), the only true descendent of Muhammad

Understanding Islam



- Islam is an important religion, which shares many beliefs and practices with Christianity and Judaism.
- Islam is a rational religion: “The vilest of creatures are those who choose to be deaf and dumb and do not use their reason.” (Qur’an 8:2)
- Muhammad reminded his followers that “The first thing God created was reason”. Therefore, believers must take personal responsibility for one’s actions and faith.
- Islam’s appeal lies in being able to connect the piety of faith, the covenant, and the mobilizing elements to produce powerful resistance to foreign intrusion. Crucial dimension is not economic but social.
- Sufism is the mystical dimension of Islam.

Muhammad the prophet

- Born in Mecca (Saudi Arabia) around 570 AD where polytheism was prominent
- When about 40 years old, the angel Gabriel appeared to him in the form of a man, received visions and messages about the one true God, these were collected and written down about 40 years later as Qur'an
- Considered a mortal with extraordinary qualities
- Preached strong social justice message about equality and poverty
- Within 100 years of his death, Islam spread across the world, occupying more territory than the Roman Empire

(Dutch, n.d.)

Other Prophets

- Most significant prophets
 - Muhammad, Moses, Abraham, Adam and Noah
- Jesus is highly respected and considered as a great prophet by Muslims
- Qur'an re-affirms the miraculous birth and abilities of Jesus
- Muslims believe in the Second Coming of Jesus before the end of time

Freedom of Conscience

"There is no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clearly from falsehood; whoever rejects evil and believes in God has grasped the strongest rope that never breaks. And God is All Hearing and All Knowing"

Qur'an 2:256

("Islam, n.d.)

Beliefs

1. Belief in only One God. He is defined as Eternal, Absolute, Infinite, Compassionate and Merciful, the sole Creator and Provider.
2. Engage only in Righteous Actions in all areas: spiritual, intellectual and physical activity.
3. All God's creation is "Muslim". Only humans are given CHOICE to submit (be Muslim) or reject submission to God's will.
4. All children are born without sin and are Muslim. As they grow older, they make their religious CHOICE.
5. God created human beings with a body and soul. The body is a temporal host for this life, whereas the soul is eternal. It is the soul that will survive beyond death.
6. Universality of the call. All Muslims are brothers and equals without any distinction of class, race or tongue. Superiority is only based on the greater fear of God and greater piety.

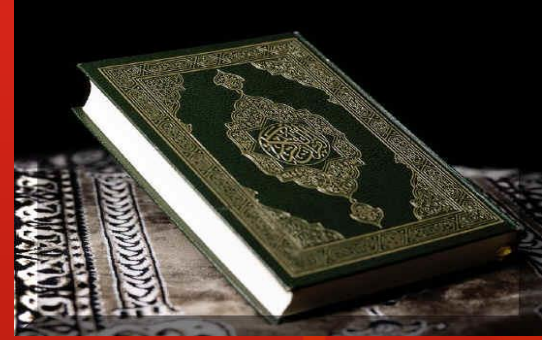
(DeSantos, n.d.)

The Pillars of Islam

1. Faith: ONE God and Muhammed the Prophet
2. Five daily prayers facing to Meca
3. Sharing: giving money to the poor is REQUIRED, not optional
4. Fasting during the month of Ramadan. Muslims cannot eat or drink anything during the daylight hours (period of spiritual and moral renewal)
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca: Once in their lives, IF they can afford it.
6. **Some authorities add a sixth pillar:** Jihad or Holy War in defense of Islam. Means active opposition to evil and injustice, more than literal warfare.

(Dutch, n.d.; Kash, n.d.)

The Qur'an



- Holy Book of Islam – Written in Arabic
- Muslims believe Allah revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad through Angel Gabriel over 23 years
- 114 suras (chapters), arranged from longest to shortest; longest chapter has 286 verses, the shortest has 3 verses; approximately 78 000 words in length
- Most suras are collections of Mohammed's teachings with no overall theme
- Suras are labeled by distinctive or unusual words found in each
- Principle source of Muslim faith and practice
- No historical chapters
- Strictly speaking, cannot be translated, only paraphrased

(DeSantos, n.d.; Dutch, n.d.)

Day of Judgment

- All humans will be bodily resurrected and assembled for final accounting of deeds
- Soul will move on to afterlife
- Upon the Final Judgment = world will end and we will stand before God to confront our own life and actions
- Desire for purified soul= heaven (eternal abode of beauty and majesty)
- Disbelievers and unpure soul= hell (abode of great torment and anguish)

("Islam, n.d.)

Muslims and other religions

- Muslims believe that God had previously revealed Himself to the earlier prophets of the Jews and Christians
 - “we are commanded by God to believe in all prophets, without discrimination. . . those who underwent particular hardship and particular suffering command our special love and reference. Jesus stands among that number” (Laylah, 2005, p. 1)
- Muslims therefore accept the teachings of both the Jewish Torah and the Christian Gospels
- They believe Islam is the perfection of the religion

(DeSantos, n.d.)

Human Equality

"O humankind! You were created from a single soul, male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes. So that you may know one another. Truly, the most honoured of you in God's sight is the greatest of you in piety. God is All Knowing, All Aware"

(Qur'an 49:13)

("Islam, n.d.)

Women's Rights



- According to Qur'an, men and women are equal before God
- Under Islamic law, women have the right to own property, receive an education and take part in community life
- Muslim women have many different styles of dress. (Very few cultures require women to cover their faces.)
- The treatment of women varies from country to country and family to family.
- In many Muslim countries there are cultural practices that are inconsistent and contrary to the authentic teachings of Islam

("Islam, n.d.; Braswell, 2005)

Islam and War

- Islam permits fighting in self defense, in defense of religion, or on the part of those who have been expelled forcibly from their homes
- Strict rules for combat, which includes prohibitions against harming civilians and against destroying crops, trees and livestock
- “Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. God does not love transgressors” (Qur’an 2:190)
- Jihad does not mean “holy war” but to strive, struggle and exert effort, no such thing as “holy war” in Islam
 - Jihad includes struggle against evil inclinations within oneself, struggle to improve quality of life in society, struggle in the battlefield for self defense or fighting against tyranny or oppression

(“Islam, n.d.)

Challenges for Islam

- Secularism vs. Dogmatism
- Terrorism: Shiite is not a synonym for "terrorist" or "extremist."
- Polygamy
- Jihad vs. Holy War
- Hijab: liberation or suppression
- Muhammad Cartoons: freedom of speech vs freedom of religion
- Appeal of Suicide Bombers
- Afghanistan's Taliban
- War on Islam

("Islam", n.d.)

Islamic Perspectives

- Traditional Islam: orthodox, non-modern, relying on Sunna and the holy book
- Neorevivalist (neofundamentalist) Islam: militant and radical Islam; resistance and revolutionary
- Pragmatists: accepting “the other,” faces up to this challenge by reminding us of the eternal, but Herculean, task of balancing utility, with responsibility and justice.
- Secularists: Benefiting from its “positive opportunities” in knowledge, science, and technology, without necessarily losing one’s cultural individuality: Arab-Islamic, Persian-Islamic, and Egyptian-Islamic identity.

(Monshipouri, 2009)

Reactions

- Traditionalists: globalization is a form of cultural invasion. It undermines our distinct “cultural personality.” It destroys our heritage and poses a threat to our “authenticity,” “beliefs,” and “national identity.”
- Islamic radicals: have been in fact strengthened by globalization. They benefit from an increase in the flow of information, speed of communication, and mobility more than any other political movements in the region.
- Pragmatic Islam: A democratizing and synthesizing Islam, reflecting influences from the bottom (grassroots and social movements), is better placed to respond to globalization.

(Monshipouri, 2009)

Conclusion

- Muslim identities are multiple, fluid, and contentious, and the construction of identity is influenced by the various and complex ways in which local cultures and globalization interact.
- There will always be cultural resistance to globalization.
- Muslims face two challenges: (1) to find a balance between their traditions and modern standards and practices and (2) to determine whose conception of change and modernity should prevail
- For the Western world, the task is to acknowledge the diversity of the Muslim world, and strive toward a solidarity based on mutual recognition and respect.

(Monshipouri, 2009)

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