

## *THE RELIGION OF ISLAM- MOHAMMED*

Abraham— Issac, Jacob, Jewish Nation      Ishmael-Much of Arab Nations  
Mohammed- Born in 570 AD orphaned and raised by uncle and grandfather. Early influence by Jews and Nestorian Christians. Married Khadija, 15 years his senior, a wealthy widow  
At age 40, experienced dreams from Gabriel in a cave where he often went. He was said to be illiterate but the dreams or revelations written would become sacred Quran.... Then oral traditions and sayings later codified into the Hadith. These are the books of Islam. He preached monotheism in an area of many idols and gods. He first preached in Mecca, but was persecuted and escaped to Medina in 622 (The beginning of the Islamic calendar -the Hejira) He returned to conquer Mecca in 630 (and died 2 years later, leaving no successor. Islam- means "submission" Muslim- "one who has submitted" Jihad- means "struggle" mostly in terms of warfare .  
Place of worship is a mosque- Most sacred in Mecca, followed by Medina, (burial place of the prophet)  
The imam is the worship leader or teacher at the mosque.  
Five main pillars of Islam-  
Shahdah- "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet" The confession  
Salah- Turning to Mecca to pray five times a day  
Sawn- Fasting during daylight hours during month of "Ramadan" (no water)  
Zakat- Setting aside 2.5% of income to benefit Muslim community  
Hajj- A once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca surrounding the Kaaba, said to be built by Abraham. Black Stone was meteorite that linked heaven and earth.

Mohammed and his followers spread the religion through conquest particularly in the 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>\*th</sup> centuries starting in Arabia, moving through the Mid-East, Jerusalem, Asia Minor, North Africa. Spain and was stopped by Franks in 732 in battle won by Charles Martel, keeping Islam out of France. Crusades began in 1095 by Roman Catholic popes to retake Jerusalem and Holy Land. Islam , however, continued to spread to other areas of India and eastward toward Indonesia. Today it is estimated over 1.8 billion claim the religion.

Dilemma of those conquered- Submit to Islam; live as second-class citizens and pay dhimmis or special taxes and no privileges; or be killed as an infidel. Many conquests involved slaughter and beheadings and taking women and children as sex slaves for the soldiers.

Shia and Sunni are two largest divisions but there are hundreds of sects. Major difference is over the successor to Mohammed- Sunni believe Abu Bakr was elected leader or Caliph. Shia believe it should have passed by inheritance to his cousin/son in law, Ali Bin Abu Talib. 80% of today's Muslims are Sunni. The Wahabi is a group mainly in Saudi Arabia that strictly seeks to return to ancient Muhammed teaching.

The Muslims believe in Jesus and the Bible, but believe it was changed and the Koran and Mohammed corrected it and that Jesus is not God, did not die on the cross and rise for our salvation. They believe both Mohammed and Jesus will return to earth and there will be judgment. Many speak of signs of end-times and a return of the Mahdi.

Salvation is based solely on works unless you are a martyr and receive automatic entrance to heaven and virgins and dining. Islam is fatalistic, meaning everything is controlled by Allah.

The Sharia law is the rule of the Caliphate and does not separate religion from political. Sharia law is harsh Women are highly restricted. Western culture is considered decadent.  
Islam does not believe in alcohol, and has strict dietary standards. They are polygamists. Mohammed had probably 13 wives and numerous other women, the youngest he married at age 9, his favorite Aisha.

With regard to present day Iraq , Iran and Afghanistan, these were tribal areas of various forms of Islam and other religions. Later, as part of Ottoman Empire which fell after WWI, all the area of Mid-East was placed under British "mandate." After WWII, these countries were arbitrarily formed with boundaries set. The so-called moderate Muslim of today does not accept portions of the Koran or Hadith and deny or reinterpret much of the history and Quran writings to form a "peaceful" version of Islam.