The Religious World

Communities of Faith

THIRD EDITION

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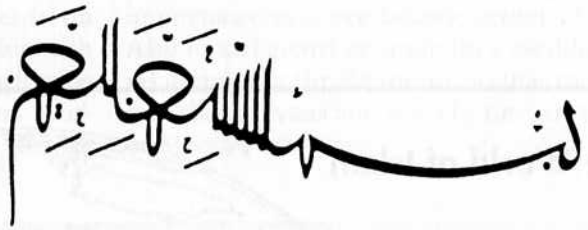
Chapter 9
Islam

Translation of the Quranic basmalah: *"In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful."*



slam is among the youngest of the world's major religions, belonging to the family of monotheistic faiths that also includes Judaism and ristianity. From its beginnings in what is now udi Arabia over fourteen hundred years ago, it grown and spread to include virtually every ner of the world. The majority of the followers Islam, called *Muslims,* live in the continents of ica and Asia (including the Asian regions of the mer Soviet Union and northwest China). ong the countries with the largest Muslim popions in Asia are Indonesia, Pakistan, Banlesh and India, the Arab Muslim countries of Middle East and the Gulf (in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, among other countries, where there are Arab Christians), Afghanistan, China, , Malaysia, and Turkey.

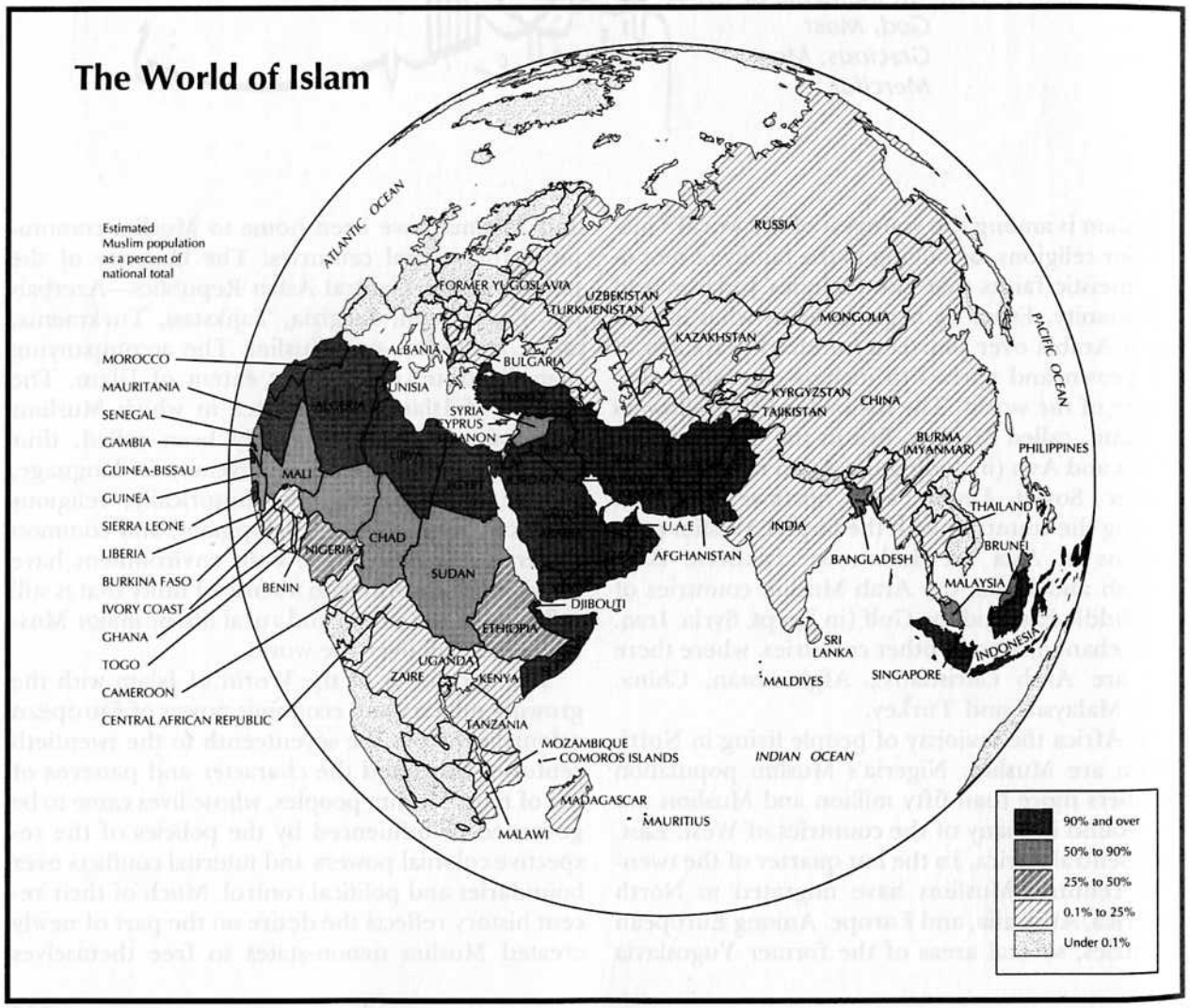
n Africa the majority of people living in North ica are Muslim; Nigeria's Muslim population mbers more than fifty million and Muslims are so found in many of the countries of West, East, nd Central Africa. In the last quarter of the twenieth century, Muslims have migrated to North America, Australia, and Europe. Among European countries, several areas of the former Yugoslavia and Albania have been home to Muslim communities for several centuries. The majority of the peoples of the Central Asian Republics—Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Tajikstan, Turkmenia, and Uzbekistan—are Muslim. The accompanying map illustrates the current extent of Islam. The "World of Islam," as the area in which Muslims predominate has traditionally been called, thus represents a great deal of diversity in language, culture and ethnicity. Yet historically, religious practices, institutional development, and common patterns reflected in the built environment have provided this world with a sense of unity that is still reflected in the urban and rural life of major Muslim centers all over the world.

The encounter of the World of Islam with the growing military and economic power of European colonialism from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries disrupted the character and patterns of life of most Muslim peoples, whose lives came to be governed or influenced by the policies of the respective colonial powers and internal conflicts over boundaries and political control. Much of their recent history reflects the desire on the part of newly created Muslim nation-states to free themselves

from dependence and to gain greater control over their affairs. The pressures and challenges generated by global politics and nation-building have not always made the task easy. The effort to create modes of life that would reflect past values and provide a sense of continuity with the Muslim heritage is still fraught with tension. But most Muslims continue to perceive Islam as more than a mere source of religious values. In their view, it still provides the basis for inspiring a whole way of life.

BEGINNINGS: ARABIA BEFORE ISLAM

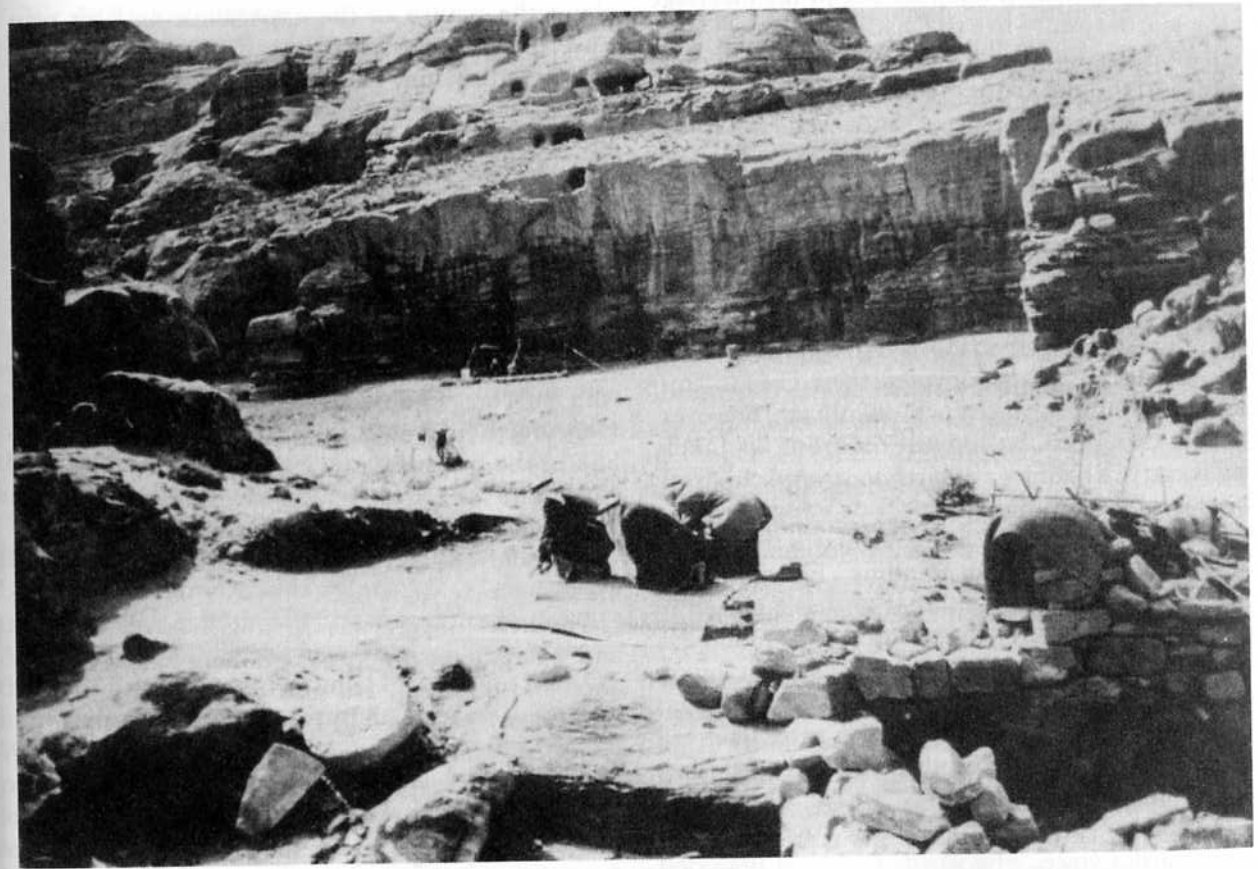
The Arabian peninsula, where Islam had its beginnings in the seventh century C.E., was mostly an arid region populated by nomadic tribesmen called Bedouins. To the north were Arab kingdoms that had contacts with the two major empires of the time, the Byzantine and the Persian Sassanian empires. In the south were other centers of ancient Arab civilization in Yemen. The peninsula was also dotted with growing urban centers and oases.



Among these, the most important was the city of Mecca. It served as a center for the caravan trade routes that crisscrossed the peninsula. Besides its significance as an important trading center, Mecca had a religious sanctuary to which the Arabs were drawn for annual rites of pilgrimage, which also became an occasion for expressing a shared cultural and linguistic heritage.

Bedouin life was governed by tribal custom. Primary allegiance was to the tribe, which formed the focal point of the nomadic existence. Economic life was based on the size of the tribes' camel herds, on occasional raiding of caravans, and on trading with settled city communities. In religious life each tribe possessed certain deities that its members worshiped. The sanctuary of Mecca contained shrines of some important goddesses, in addition to a host of other divinities. The presence of small Jewish communities and, to a lesser extent, Christians added an element of religious cosmopolitanism to the peninsula.

The importance of trade and caravan routes across Arabia led to the growth of a merchant community in Mecca. The merchants had developed their own organizations to control and consolidate their hold on the economy of Mecca and maintained the religious sanctuary to protect Mecca's importance as a pre-Islamic center of pilgrimage. Also to safeguard its trade they established cordial relations with the Bedouins, so that they might not raid the caravans and thereby destroy the mainstay of Mecca's economy.



Prayer Scene. *Muslims at prayer in a desert locale. Prayer carpets have been spread out and the worshipers are kneeling in the direction facing the Ka'ba in Mecca.* (Courtesy of Fred Denny)

THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

The Early Years in Mecca

It was in such a milieu that Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, was born about 570 C.E. Muslim tradition provides a record of the major events of his life, furnishing us with a picture of the man, his mission, and the impact of his personality and life on the Arab society of his time. The first years of his life were marred by the deaths of both parents and the grandfather who had come to take care of him. He grew up in the home of his uncle, Abu Talib, a merchant in the city. Much of his early life was spent helping his uncle, but as a young man Muhammad also came to be admired by other Meccans for his trustworthiness and sincerity. His reputation and personal qualities led to his marriage at the age of twenty-five to Khadija, a widow whom he had assisted in business; henceforth, he became an important and trusted citizen of Mecca.

Although a prosperous and well-established merchant in his own right, Muhammad never felt fully content to be part of a society whose values he considered to be materialistic and devoid of true religious significance. He sought such a significance in his own life by spending long solitary hours in a cave on nearby Mount Hira. There were others in Arab society, referred to as *hanifs,* or the "pure" ones, who also devoted their lives to contemplation and asceticism. Muhammad, however, did not choose to cut himself off from his family and society. Khadija gave birth to several children; two sons died in infancy, but four daughters survived, among whom the best known was the youngest, Fatima. Muhammad thus had ongoing responsibilities both as a father and as a citizen in Mecca's public life. His most profound moments, however, came through the acts of solitary meditation and self-contemplation on Mount Hira. Out of these experiences emerged the prophetic call that was to alter dramatically Arab and world history in times to come.

During one such evening in the cave, Muhammad heard a voice. The words he heard heralded a series of revelations that were to come to him for the rest of his life. They are recorded in the *Quran,* which is for Muslims a faithful recording of the entire revelation of God through Muhammad, his chosen Prophet to humankind. These first words called upon Muhammad to

> Recite: In the name of your Lord who created—created Man from a clot [of blood].
> Recite: Your Lord is Most Noble.
> Who taught by the Pen,
> taught Man what he did not know. (*Surah* 96:1–5)*

The initial effect of this experience was to plunge Muhammad into a state of anguish and fear. He hurried home to his wife, from whom he sought solace and help in understanding the significance of what had happened to him. These moments of anguish, plus the ambivalence he felt about the nature of the experience and his own uncertainty regarding the call, indicate that the role asked of him as not one he had consciously sought, nor one to which he was led by any self-seeking ambition. Into his human consciousness had erupted the full force of a revelatory experience. It was this reality that he gradually and steadily came to learn and believe, until he was at last driven to proclaim it as the truth. In addition, this comprehension of his role as a messenger of divine revelation helped him to understand his mission in the light of prophets and messengers who had come and gone in earlier times and places. Henceforth his work would represent a continuing link in the transmission of the message, which according to the Quran had begun ages ago and was being channeled through him to the society in which he lived, and beyond. At this time Muhammad was forty years old.

His first convert was Khadija, whose support and companionship provided necessary reassurance and strength. He also won the support of some close relatives and friends. Gradually he began to proclaim the message to others in Mecca. The Meccans responded initially with puzzlement

* Wherever the Quran is quoted in this chapter, the first Arabic numeral indicates the number of the *Surah* or chapter and the second set of numerals the number of the verses (*ayat*).

and even amusement. It astonished them to see a trusted and respected citizen claiming to be the recipient of a divinely revealed message that told them to forsake their gods, laws, and customs. Some even pronounced him mad. Muhammad persisted, however, preaching openly with increasing fervor.

The style and poetic quality of the early message, as preserved in the Quran, conveys a powerful sense of this message.

> In the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful.
> By the night as it enshrouds.
> By the day as it illuminates,
> by the creation of male and female,
> indeed your affairs lead to various ends.
> For those who are giving and committed,
> and who affirm moral excellence,
> We shall smooth their way.
> But for the niggardly and the vain,
> who reject moral excellence,
> We shall make things miserable.
> Their wealth will not save them
> as they perish,
> for guidance is from us
> and to us belong the Last
> and the First. (92:1–14)

The basic themes of the early message were the majesty of the One, unique God; the futility of idol worship; the threat of judgment; and the necessity of faith, compassion, and morality in human affairs. All of these themes represented an attack on the materialism and idolatry prevalent in Mecca and among the Bedouins.

These attacks resulted in mounting opposition from the tribe of Quraysh, which controlled Mecca. Because Muhammad was a member of the same tribe, the Quraysh tried at first to exert pressure on Abu Talib to stop his nephew from preaching; they then tried to bribe Muhammad by offering him an important role in Meccan affairs, but to no avail. When these efforts failed, the merchants began persecuting Muhammad and his small band of followers. In 615 some of the new converts had to leave their homes and seek refuge in Ethiopia. Meanwhile Muhammad continued to face opposition and hostility, which eventually extended to a commercial and social boycott of his family. Khadija, who had been a devoted companion, and Abu Talib, his uncle, both died during this period of trial. Muhammad's attempts to seek converts outside the city of Mecca failed. Persecution often turned to violence, endangering the lives and families of the converts. This period was emotionally for Muhammad the lowest point in his mission. A chapter of the Quran captures the mood exquisitely as it seeks to give solace to the Prophet:

> By the radiance of morning and the hush of night
> Your Lord has neither forsaken you nor left you forlorn;
> and the Last shall be better for you than the First.
> Your Lord shall give and you shall be satisfied.
> Did he not find you an orphan and shelter you?
> Did he not find you erring, and guide you?
> Did he not find you needy, and enrich you?
> As for the orphan, do not oppress him
> and as for the beggar, do not spurn him,
> and as for your Lord's blessing, declare it openly.
> (93)

Muhammad also drew comfort from the knowledge revealed to him about other prophets such as Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, each of whom had been persecuted, tested, and challenged by seemingly invincible forces. Their eventual success testified to divine support and ultimate victory. Sustained by these beliefs, Muhammad's community continued to adhere to the message, worshiping together and drawing courage from his example and leadership.

Some distance north of Mecca lay the city of Medina, then called Yathrib. It was an agricultural community with differences among its major groups. There was also a Jewish community there, so that the Arabs of the city were conversant with monotheistic beliefs. Following a meeting of some of its inhabitants with Muhammad, they invited him to come to Yathrib to arbitrate some of the differences among the various factions. They also responded favorably to his teaching and pledged him their support. Meanwhile, the Quraysh were plotting to kill Muhammad. Before such a plan could be put into action, he asked his followers in

Mecca to join those who had already left for Yathrib. Under the cover of darkness, he and his followers succeeded in eluding the pursuit of his enemies, arriving in the city that would henceforth carry his title—*Madinat al Nabi* (The City of the Prophet) or Medina, as it is generally known. This event in the year 622 is known as the *Hijrah,* or migration, the date from which the Islamic calendar would henceforth begin. The year of migration thus marks the first year of the new lunar calendar.

The Years in Medina

The city of Medina provided the first real opportunity for Muhammad and his followers to organize themselves into a community. The community included the Arab residents of Medina, some of whom had converted to the new teaching, and the Jews who lived there. The community was called the *Ummah.* Muhammad was recognized as its leader by virtue of his status as Allah's Prophet, and all the groups agreed to support each other in the event of Meccan opposition. The Jews were permitted to continue their way of life and recognized as the "people of the Book," to whom God had revealed a message in the past through other prophets. But Muhammad also sought to attract them to the new faith.

The growth of the *Ummah* in Medina, and Muhammad's continuing efforts to spread the new faith, antagonized the Meccans. For the new Muslim *Ummah,* the effort to win converts and exercise control over their own destiny signified a *jihad,* a struggle in the way of God. The word *jihad* literally means "struggle" or "striving." In early Muslim history it signified the military struggles to establish and consolidate the *Ummah,* the task of spreading Islam through preaching and conversion, and the effort to establish a social and economic order based on the teachings of the Quran. This struggle for power resulted in a series of military battles. The first of these, the Battle of Badr, took place in 624. The battle pitted the smaller, somewhat apprehensive army of Muhammad against the Quraysh contingent, which far exceeded them in numbers and weapons. Muhammad led the Muslims, organizing them in battle. The Muslims, standing their ground, eventually forced the enemy to withdraw and finally to flee from the field of battle. The victory was a tremendous boost to the growing *Ummah.* It reinforced their faith and morale, and consolidated their belief in Muhammad's divine mission and leadership.

In subsequent battles the Muslims became the dominant religious and political force in the region. It was then decided that those Muslims who had once been forced out of Mecca should now have an opportunity to visit it, and a truce was arranged. In a subsequent visit to Mecca in 629, Muhammad and his followers returned in triumph to take control of the city. The final victory was a peaceful one. To underline his ties with the city, Muhammad invited his enemies to embrace Islam, shun their past way of life, and become members of the *Ummah.*

In the next two years the new religion found many converts. Religious practices became established and a revealed "law" governed relationships within the *Ummah,* which now had its own distinctive Islamic identity. Muhammad sent emissaries to invite other Arab tribes to Islam, and also sent representatives to the rulers of surrounding states and to the emperors of Byzantium and Persia. It is clear that he envisaged his message as not being limited to the Arabs, but sought to spread the message of Islam beyond the borders of Arabia.

By 632 the *Ummah* embraced almost the whole of Arabia, its members bound together by the acceptance of the message and messenger of Allah. In the same year, Muhammad undertook his last visit to Mecca, a farewell pilgrimage to the sanctuary that had now become a symbol of Allah's revelation.

The Death and Significance of Muhammad

Muhammad died in Medina on the twelfth day of *Rabi al Awwal,* the year 10 of the new Muslim era. It is said that many of his followers refused to accept his death. Then one of his trusted compa

ions, Abu Bakr, reminded them of the Quranic verse that states:

> Muhammad is but a messenger. Many messengers before him have come and gone. Were he to die or be killed, would you take to your heels? Those who turn back cause no loss to Allah and He will surely reward those who are grateful to Him. (3:144)

Within the Arabian setting, Muhammad gave an impetus to the lives of his followers that was to lead them to spread Islam far beyond the borders of Arabia. His mission encompassed several goals, but primary among these were the goals of creating a society cemented by loyalty to Islam rather than to tribe; linking his people to the worship of One God who had chosen to speak to them through one of their own in their own language; and providing a framework of values, actions, and institutions that would continue to bind them together so that, in the words of the Quran, they might become "an Ummah of the middle way and a witness to humanity as the Prophet was a witness to them" (2:143).

After the death of the Prophet, Muslim scholars set about collecting material on his life, consisting of the *hadith,* a standardized report of things he did and said, transmitted by his companions or members of his family. These traditions were then passed on to succeeding generations. These *hadith* and the chain of transmitters were in turn submitted to a test of authentication to enable scholars to judge the relative validity of the accounts. The corpus of the Prophet's sayings and actions thus constitutes an important source of values in Islam. For Muslims, they are a model and represent an ideal pattern, referred to as the *Sunnah,* meaning custom or practice of the Prophet. The *Sunnah* provides Muslims with a pattern they can emulate. In so doing they look to Muhammad as an exemplary human being, who had realized in his own life the ideals of Islam revealed by God.

Muhammad's practice of prayer and devotion to God; his role as husband and parent; his example of humility, compassion, and justice, and his acts of kindness to children, orphans, the disadvantaged, and animals all serve as a model of proper conduct. It is this role of Muhammad envisioned as teacher, exemplar, and ideal that has the greatest impact on the ordinary lives of Muslims and is illustrated vividly in the *hadith,* given below as they have come to be recorded and preserved. Generally, each *hadith* is preceded by the name of a transmitter or chain of narrators and then a report of what "the messenger of God said."

> To pursue knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim, man and woman.
>
> The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of martyrs.
>
> Paradise lies at the feet of mothers.
>
> None of you (truly) believes until you wish for your fellow human being what you wish for yourself.
>
> Acting justly between two people is an act of charity, a good word is charity; and removing a harmful thing from the road is charity.
>
> Let those who believe in God and the Day of Judgment refrain from harming their neighbors, let them honor their guests and either speak good or hold their tongues.
>
> The one who shows concern for the widows and the disadvantaged is like one who struggles in the way of God or fasts by day and rises at night for prayer.
>
> Adore God as though you see Him; if you do not see Him, He nonetheless sees you.
>
> God said "Heaven and earth cannot contain Me, but the heart of my devotee does contain Me."

Imitation of the Prophet's behavior thus represents a goal of all Muslims. Although Muhammad is emulated and deeply loved as God's final messenger, he is not the object of worship. His tomb in Medina is visited by Muslims and prayers are offered there; but no attempts have been made to convert the tomb into an object of undue veneration, and no images or likenesses of Muhammad are preserved. Muslim tradition has resisted any such attempt to guard against possible deification of the person of the Prophet.

In their daily prayers, and whenever his name is mentioned, Muslims invoke blessings on Muhammad and his descendants as a continuing mark of remembrance and gratitude. In addition to being a model of piety and of continuing struggle at all

levels of life against adversity, his life is also a paradigm and ideal of spiritual life and love, of one who attained closeness and intimacy with God. Besides being the object of historical writing, his life has also been a rich source of poetry and folk literature written in praise and love of his work and example. Above all, for all Muslims he is the recipient of God's final message, enshrined for all time in the revelation contained in the Quran.

THE QURAN

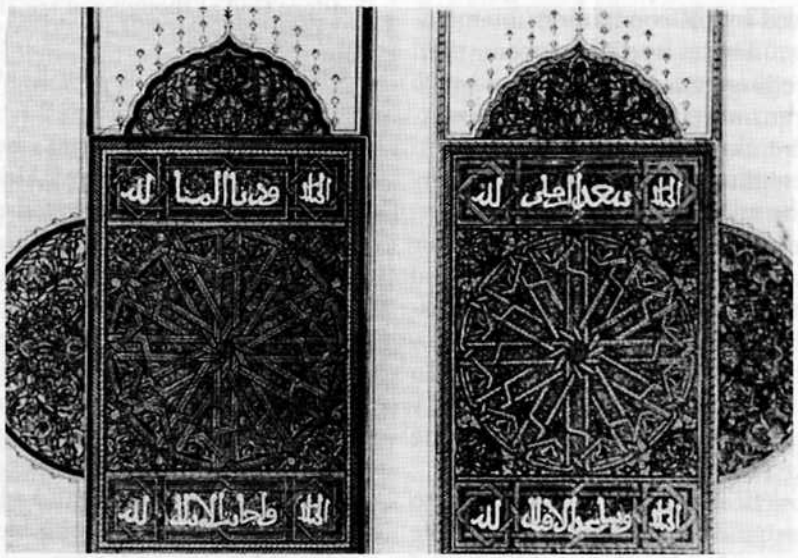
For Muslims, the Quran is the faithful and complete recording of all revelation that came in the form of divine inspiration to Muhammad. The language of the revelation was Arabic, and the work of systematizing and organizing the text of the revelation is believed by Muslims to have been undertaken by Muhammad himself.

Revelation came to Muhammad over a period of twenty-two years in the form of powerful, jolting experiences. Often, as described by Muhammad to others, it was like the tolling of a bell, holding him in its grip until it was over, sometimes leaving him shivering and cold. To those who doubted that the revelation was genuine, the Quran had this to say:

> By the stars as they retreat, your companion [Muhammad] is neither mistaken nor deceived. Nor is he speaking out of his own whims. Indeed his words are nothing but a genuine inspiration. He who is mighty in power, endowed with strength has taught him.
>
> Erect, away in the far horizon, he stood, then came closer and descended until he was two bows'-length away, drawing closer and revealed to His servant that which He revealed. The heart does not lie for he did have the vision. (53:1–11)

The process of revelation thus involved vision as well as audition. Elsewhere the medium of revelation is described as the "Spirit of Holiness" (16:102), which brought the message to Muhammad. According to the Quran the angel Gabriel was also a medium of revelation. It is this cumulative process revealed at successive intervals that is described specifically as the "Quran" in 17:106. The word literally means "recitation," and it was in this recited form that Muhammad conveyed it to his followers.

During his lifetime, this continuous revelation provided Muhammad with the basis on which the



Quranic Calligraphy. *A page from an ancient copy of the quran.* (Courtesy of Aramco Magazine)

religion developed. Whereas most of the revelations were memorized by the followers, Muhammad also had scribes put them down in writing. Certain individuals in the growing Muslim community were noted for their powers of memorization and recitation, and they acted as teachers of the new converts.

By the time of Muhammad's death, parts of the Quran existed in writing and had also been memorized by many of his followers. Soon after his death, attempts were made to establish a complete written text. The process was undertaken to eliminate any risk of violating the sacred text or of having differences regarding its contents. Since most of the transmission of the Quran among new converts was being done orally, it was also important to establish a fixed, written text. On the basis of Muhammad's own systematization and arrangement, a written text was compiled and copies sent to all areas of the new Islamic empire. For Muslims, therefore, the Quranic text has existed unchanged for fourteen centuries and is believed to contain the complete message revealed to Muhammad.

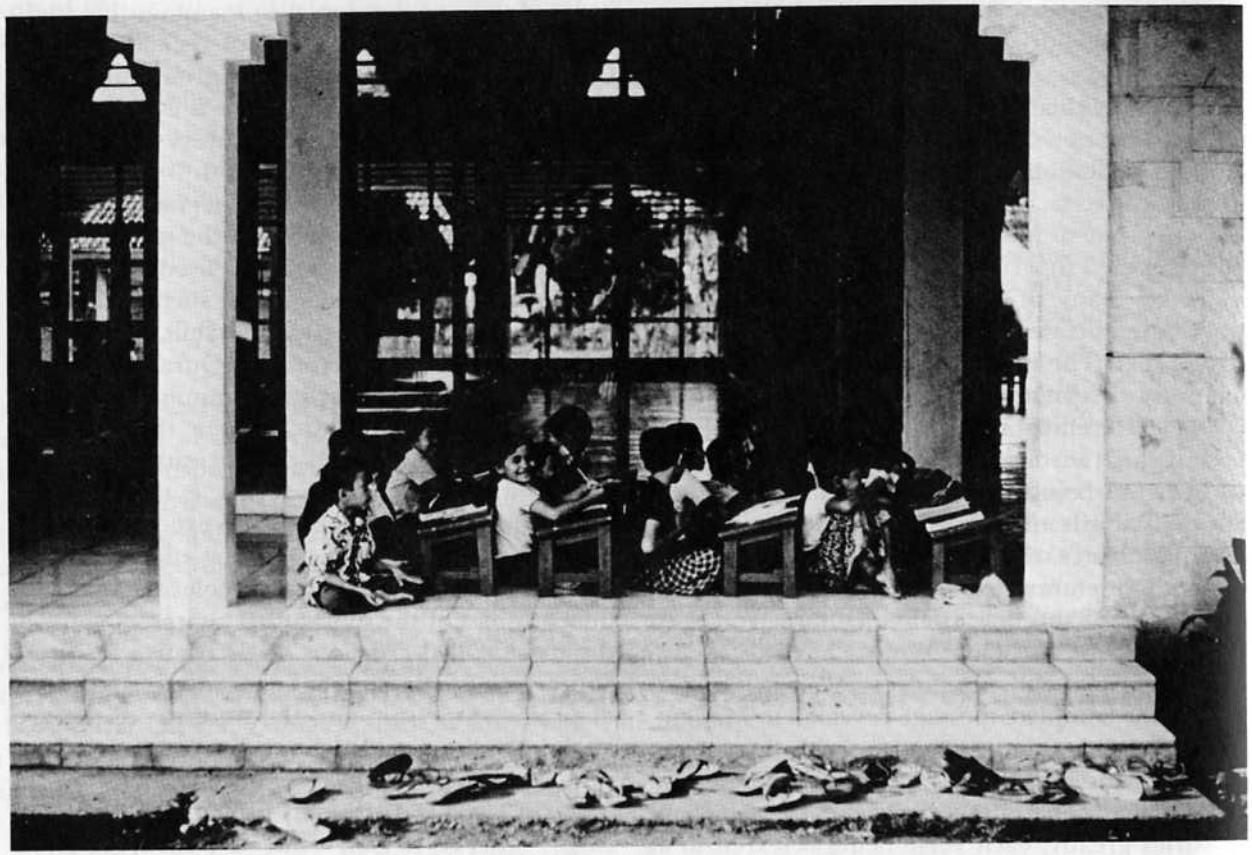
The Quran is divided into 114 chapters, each called a *surah.* The number of verses in each chapter varies greatly, each verse being referred to as an *ayah.* After a short opening *surah,* subsequent *surah*s are arranged according to length, from longest to shortest. The chapter titles either indicate the main content or refer to a word or phrase from the text. All of the chapters, with the exception of *Surah* 9, begin with the formula or *basmalah,*"In the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful." Chapters are also identified as having been revealed in Mecca or Medina or as having verses revealed in both places. Thus, Muslims also recognize a chronological order of revelation.

The aspect of recitation is the key to understanding the impact of the Quran on its hearers. The Quran is meant to be recited, to be heard, and to be experienced. It is impossible to convey the majesty and power of the Arabic recitation in any other language in which the Quran may be rendered. The power of the "Word of God" for a Muslim lies not only in its impact on the mind, but also on the heart. A science developed to maintain this tradition is that of proper modes of recitation of the Quran. Muslims often gather in groups and listen to practitioners of this art; there is even today an international competition held every year to find the best reciters of the Quran.

The language of the Quran pervades all walks of Muslim life, influencing even the mode of writing Arabic and other languages used by Muslims who adopted the Arabic script, such as Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Hausa, and Swahili. The art of calligraphy developed from the Quranic text represents much of the aesthetic impulse in Muslim art, and the written text is given the same devoted reverence as is the art of recitation. Calligraphy, in all its elaborate forms, is the means of providing an experience for the eye, as is the recited word for the ear. The art of calligraphy, coupled with illumination and coloring, has produced copies of the Quran that represent some of the most skilled creations of decorative art in Islam, which has in turn influenced the decoration of places of worship and the tradition of the arts in the Muslim world.

A variety of Quranic formulae, such as "in the name of God" (*Bismillah"*), "If God wills" (*"Insha'llah"*), "Glory be to God" (*"Subhanallah"*), are an integral part of the daily life of Muslims. Even the physical presence of the Quran is considered a source of blessing. Verses are recited during moments of personal and family crisis, occasions of celebration and joy, and the moments of birth and death; a copy of the Quran is given an honored place in the house, where it is generally placed at a level higher than other belongings and furnishings. Muslims often carry a text from the Quran on their persons in a small ornamental amulet.

The Quran also became the starting point for the Muslim search for knowledge. It provided a new language, a new tool of inquiry, a new mode of expression, and a means to explore new vistas of knowledge. The effort to understand the Quranic message gave rise to the sciences related to linguistics and grammar, primarily of Arabic. Muslim scholars also devoted themselves to clarifying and explaining the Quran through works of exegesis



A Quran School. *A children's Quran school, adjacent to a mosque, in Indonesia. Children learn to recite and memorize the Quran.* (Courtesy of Fred Denny)

known as *tafsir*. The study of the Quran has thus been at the heart of all Muslim scholarship and has given the intellectual and scientific endeavors of the Islamic world a great sense of unity in the quest for new knowledge.

QURANIC TEACHINGS: FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

The greatest impact of the Quran from the earliest period of Islam has been the worldview it teaches and the guidelines for daily life it provides. These have served as the basis for Islamic beliefs and practices that have continued to remain normative for all Muslims to the present. Among the beliefs, there are certain basic concepts that are regarded as fundamental for all Muslims.

Tawhid, *the Unity of God*

The central concept around which all Quranic teaching revolves is that of *tawhid*, the unity or oneness of Allah, the Quranic name for God. Such a concept emphasizes a rigorous monotheism, stating Allah to be a unique absolute Reality. It is best expressed in a Quranic chapter said to be revealed in response to questions asked of Muhammad concerning the nature of God:

Say: He, Allah, is One, the Ultimate Source,
He does not give birth, nor was He born [of anyone]
and there is nothing comparable to Him. (112)

The unity of God is emphasized repeatedly in the Quran and echoed in other verses such as the following:

And your God is One God,
There is no God but Him,
the most Gracious, the most Merciful. (2:163)

In denying plurality, the Quran rejects all forms of idolatry, disallows any association of other divinities with God, and specifically denies all other definitions of God that might compromise unity, such as the Christian dogma of the Trinity. Thus, in Islam Allah is the sole reality on whom the existence of everything else depends.

An aspect of this oneness is expressed in God's creative power. The Quran also refers to God as *Rabb al Alameen,* the Lord of all creation (literally "the worlds"). The whole of the cosmos, nature as well as humanity, is created and sustained by God. This notion of God's sovereignty is expressed in the well-known "verse of the Throne":

Allah, there is no god but He,
the Living, the Eternal,
Neither slumber nor sleep seizes Him.
To Him belongs what is in
the heavens and in the earth.
Who can intercede with Him,
except by His permission?
He knows what lies before
them and after them
and they know nothing of his knowledge,
save such as He wills.
His throne encompasses the heavens and the earth
and He never wearies of preserving them.
He is Sublime, the Exalted. (2:255)

Although One, God is known by many names, which are referred to in the Quran as "the most beautiful names" (7:180). Muslim tradition has established a sequence of ninety-nine of these names of God, and the Muslim rosary contains a chain of ninety-nine beads, in a thrice thirty-three arrangement, so that the names may be recollected during prayer. These names are also a key to understanding God, because they focus on divine attributes such as the *Compassionate, Merciful, Just, Mighty, First, Last, Eternal, One whom no vision can grasp,* and yet *He who is ever near.* Among the images used to portray God's nature, none is perhaps as striking as that of "light":

Allah is the light of the heavens and of the earth
The symbol of his light is a niche,
within which there is a lamp,
the lamp enclosed in a glass,
the glass as though it were a shining star
which is lit from a blessed tree—
an olive neither of the East nor of the
West, whose oil gives forth light though
no fire touches it—light upon light—
Allah guides to His light whom He pleases
and He strikes parables for humankind and
of all things He is aware. (24:35)

Although transcendent in nature, God is still close to creation. He is viewed as being as close to human beings as their jugular vein, responsive to human appeals, and, above all, universal: "To Allah belong the East and the West: wherever you turn, there is His Face. He is all-present, all-knowing" (2:115).

Communication from God

Next to *tawhid* comes the concept of God's revelation to creation, primarily through messengers who have communicated His will. In Islam such communication is seen as a process that has accompanied human history from its beginnings. It establishes as the purpose of this history the constant interaction between God and human beings. Continuing communication has come either through messengers, some of whom are named and identified in the Quran, or through scriptures that have been revealed to the messengers for their peoples. The Quran states, "To every people have we sent a messenger" (16:36) and "There is no people to whom a warner has not been sent" (35:24).

Among the ones identified by the Quran and

referred to repeatedly are biblical figures such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. All of them are seen as coming from the same One God:

> We have inspired you [Muhammad] as We inspired Noah and the prophets after him, as We inspired Abraham, Ishmael, Issac, Jacob and the tribes; and Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon; as we gave to David the Psalms and Messengers of whom we have spoken to you and others that we have not mentioned. (4:163–164)

God eventually spoke to Muhammad, who is regarded as the "Seal of the Prophets" (33:40), with whom this process of communication through messengers reached its most perfect stage in the revelation that is the Quran. This final revelation completed the process of communication, while at the same time it supersedes all previous revelations.

Muhammad and all the biblical and other prophets, however, are to be considered as human beings through whom God has chosen to communicate. They may be offered great respect, but in the Quranic view they can never be the object of worship, which is due to God alone.

Creations of God

Nature and the Universe. Although the primary means through which God communicates are messengers and revelation, the universe as a whole is also a sign from God. The Quranic universe unfolds in a harmonious pattern, each element in balance with the others, and it is this sense of natural order and equilibrium that is pointed out as a sign of God's creative power and unity. His power extends also to other created things in nature that are endowed with qualities that enable them to function in an ordered way. A good example cited in the Quran is the bee:

> And your Lord inspired the bee saying: "Make your hives in the hills and the trees" . . . there comes from them [bees] a finely colored drink, with the power to heal. Indeed here is a sign for those who ponder. (16:68–69)

The whole of nature is created to conform to God's will. In this sense all of creation can be understood to be paying homage to and worshiping God:

> The seven heavens and the earth and all that is in them glorify Him; there is nothing that does not praise Him but you do not understand their praise. (17:44)

Angels,* Jinn, *and the Unseen. Among God's other creations referred to in the Quran are spiritual beings such as angels, *jinn,* and those elements referred to as the "unseen." The function of angels is to protect and pray for forgiveness for all on earth and to undertake errands on behalf of God. The *jinn,* in contrast, may be good or bad, and human beings can often fall prey to such spirits and may even falsely worship them. The "unseen" is that which human beings have no direct knowledge of and constitutes a realm that lies beyond human understanding. Among the angels, mention is also made of Satan, the symbol of disobedience to God whose function is to lead people astray (4:119–120).

Thus, besides the realms of the cosmos and the natural world, the Quran recognizes a variety of other creations that have their function in an ordered, created universe. Nevertheless, the Quran's central message is for those regarded as the most honored among God's creation, human beings.

Human Beings. Humankind has a special place within creation (95:4), because in creating human beings, God endowed them with a capacity to know and respond to Him greater than that given to other creatures. They are also special because built into the human condition was the notion of choice, by which they could either fulfill their potential as the most honored among God's creation or sink to a level farthest away from God by disobeying or denying Him. This freedom of choice is best illustrated in the Quranic account of the creation of Adam. After shaping the form initially from clay, God endows full humanity by breathing his spirit into and endowing knowledge of all things to Adam. The process of all creation is, however, binary; everything comes into existence in pairs, as in Adam and Eve. After the creation, the angels

are commanded by God to bow to Adam; one of them, *Iblis,* or Satan, refuses, and will henceforth seek to lead humans away from God. Satan's first targets were Adam and Eve, who succumb, come to realize their error, are forgiven by God, and returned by Him to their original status. They are thus the symbol of two possibilities of human conduct. Those who accept the message are addressed as follows:

> O humankind! We have created you as male and female and have made you nations and peoples that you may come to know and understand one another. The noblest of you in the sight of Allah are the most committed. (49:13)

Those who choose not to accept this path are compared to those

> Who are like those who light a fire
> Which sheds a light all around
> And Allah puts out the light, leaving them
> in a state of darkness—deaf, dumb and blind.
> (2:17–18)

Ultimately, human conduct is subject to judgment, expressed in the Quran as a "Day of Resurrection." It is on this occasion that all individuals will realize the fruits of their actions:

> And the fate of every one we have made the individual's own responsibility [literally, fastened to one's own neck] and We shall bring forth on the Day of Resurrection, a record that will reveal all. (17:13)

Both heaven and hell are depicted with dramatic vividness in the Quran. The reward of heaven is described as

> Gardens of eternity which they will enter along with all of their ancestors, spouses and descendants who have acted righteously. From every gate will come angels greeting them "Peace be with you who persevered." Joyous will be the abode! (13:23)

Hell is portrayed as the antithesis of heaven, a place of suffering, punishment, and anguish, an inferno for the wretched.

Finally, when the Quran comes to define ideal human behavior, moral and spiritual perspectives ultimately determine whether one reflects Islamic goals or not:

> By (the Token of) Time (through the Ages)
> Verily Man is in loss
> Except such as have Faith
> and do righteous deeds
> and join together
> in the mutual teaching
> of Truth, and of
> Patience and Constancy,
> (103, from the translation of Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran*)

A parallel is thus established between human beings, nature, and other creatures who submit to the will of God. In that sense all are *muslim* for they participate in a universal act of submission implied in the word *Islam.* However, it is only persons, because of their God-given capacity to know and respond to his message, who can attain through their own intelligence to the highest state of being *muslim.* Since human action can discover and conform to the Divine Will, this state implied both peace and fulfillment, thus actualizing "Islam" as the harmonious, nondichotomous order that results when all creation works in harmony rather than conflict with divine purpose.

Ummah: *The Community of Muslims*

The Quran regards individuals as part of a community, the *Ummah,* in which the totality of Islamic values and goals are expressed and realized. The *Ummah* was first accomplished during Muhammad's years in Medina.

> You are the best Ummah ever brought forth
> so that you might lead by right example and
> prevent wrong.
> (3:110)

The *Ummah* is thus the embodiment of the model behavior expected of society and individuals, and as such represents an example to other human societies. It also embraces the wider goal in the Quran of maintaining a balance between the material and spiritual aspects of life. It is significant that the *Hijrah* of the Prophet constitutes a major turning point for Muslim history, as it marks the transition of the early Muslims from a state where they could not give full expression in society

to Islamic norms to one where such norms could be given concrete expression in personal and social life. The implications of the *Ummah* as a basis of social, political, and moral order is examined in greater detail later in this chapter.

QURANIC TEACHINGS: MAJOR PRACTICES

During the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, the Quranic teaching on the practice of the faith and the organization of the community came to be elaborated and certain basic ritual practices emerged. These are often termed *pillars,* and have come to be regarded as religious practices that anchor human relationships with God and with others within the *Ummah.*

Shahadah, *the Profession of Faith*

"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger" (*"La ilaha illa Allah, wa Muhammad rasul Allah"*) is the statement of Muslim acceptance of the basis of Islam. This profession is whispered at birth, at death, during daily prayers, and at virtually all other events of significance in individual and community life. For a new convert to Islam, it represents the initial act of commitment that henceforth leads to an acceptance of all other aspects of Islam. The profession is also a statement of faith, inasmuch as it comprises essential elements of belief. The first statement (*"La ilaha illa Allah"*) affirms acceptance of the absolute unity of God and the second statement (*"wa Muhammad rasul Allah"*) relates this unity to the medium through which the Absolute becomes manifested. This manifestation thus makes it possible for human beings to respond to God in this world. The *shahadah* thus links God, the Prophet, and the believers.

Salat, Dhikr, *and* Du'a: *Acts of Worship*

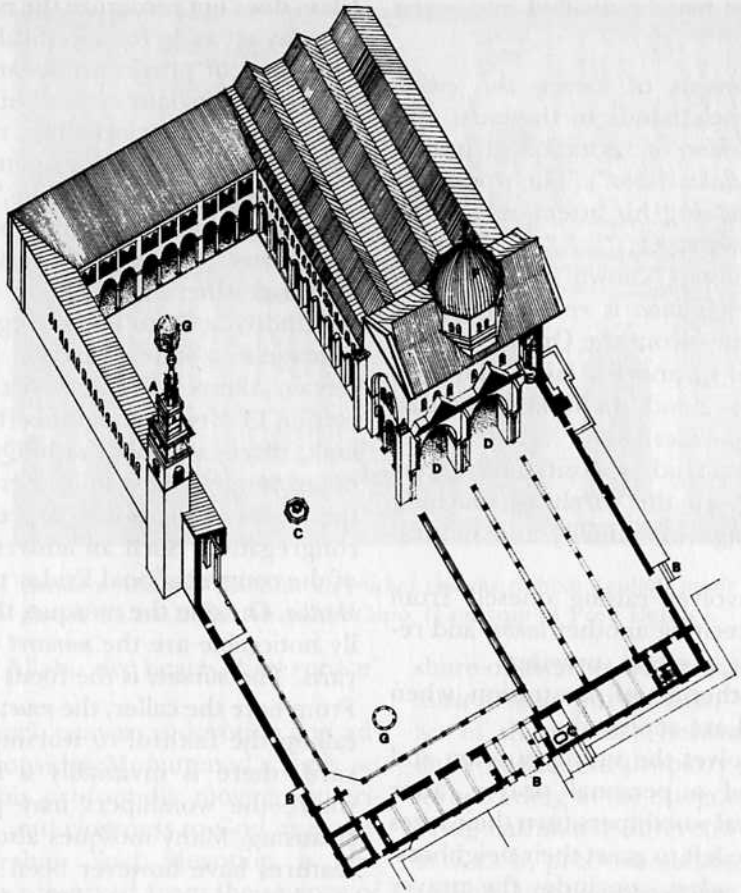
Three practices articulate the Quranic concept of worship. *Salat* is the formal ritual prayer for which both patterns and times are indicated, and further elaborated, based on Prophetic practice and tradition. *Dhikr* and *Du'a* represent individual attempts to draw near to God in a more personal relationship. These aspects of worship are referred to in the Quran as follows:

> Establish prayer [*salat*] at the two ends of the day and in the later part of night. Surely good deeds erase evil ones. This is a reminder [*dhikra*] for those who are mindful. (11:114)

Muslims may pray at any time, although the traditional times for ritual prayer are dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and late evening, some of which may be combined. When possible, Muslims are urged to join with others, particularly for the Friday congregational ritual prayer at noon. *Salat* is preceded by an act of ablution in which Muslims purify themselves. The cleaning involves the hands and the arms, the mouth and the nostrils, and finally the feet and the ankles. All mosques provide facilities for this act of cleansing. Running water is used if available. Where water is unavailable, sand or a stone is used for a symbolic cleansing of the same parts of the body. This act of ablution links water as the symbol of purity to the idea of prayer as the means of purification of the soul. The ritual of cleansing is therefore inseparable from the ritual of prayer itself, reflecting a commitment to the total state of outer and inner purity.

Any clean place may be chosen for prayer, although when possible Muslims are encouraged to pray with others at a mosque or other congregational spaces. Prayers are customarily performed on prayer carpets where these are available. These carpets are intricately decorated, the patterns incorporating a niche with a lamp in it. The niche is the symbol of orientation to Mecca and the lamp signifies illumination, the light of understanding and faith that comes through prayer.

The *salat* begins with a call to prayer often recited from the *minarets* that adorn a mosque, inviting the believers to hasten to the virtuous act of prayer. An individual competent in performing the prayer acts as a leader called *Imam,* with the congregation gathered behind him in straight rows. All face in the direction of Mecca, which serves as a point of orientation referred to as the *qiblah.* The prayer consists of two to four units,



The Great Ummayad Mosque of Damascus. *Profile of the Great Mosque of Damascus, shown in a cutaway diagram. The letters indicate the locations of* (A) *the* minaret *from which the call to prayer is made;* (B) *gateways through which worshipers enter the large courtyard;* (C) *the fountain and places for ablution where worshipers purify themselves ritually before proceeding to* (D) *the prayer halls where they stand facing the* qiblah, *the direction to Mecca designated by* (E) *the* mihrab. *The outside of a mosque is often characterized by* (F) *a dome; and some mosques have* (G) *a treasury for charitable contributions and other donations for activities related to the mosque.* (Courtesy of George Baumiller)

depending on the time, and involves the recitation of the first Quranic chapter—*al Fatiha:*

> In the name of Allah, most Gracious, most Merciful
> All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds
> The most Gracious, the most Merciful.
> Lord of the Day of Judgment.
> You alone we worship
> and from You alone we seek help
> Guide us on the right path,
> the path of those on whom you have bestowed grace,
> not of those with whom you have been displeased,
> nor those who have gone astray. (1:1–7)

In addition, other verses from the Quran are recited. The recitation is accompanied by bowing and prostration in a rhythmic cycle. Each complete ritual movement, known as *rak'ah,* follows a set pattern based on the example of Muhammad.

The pattern of *salat* may be divided into seven steps:

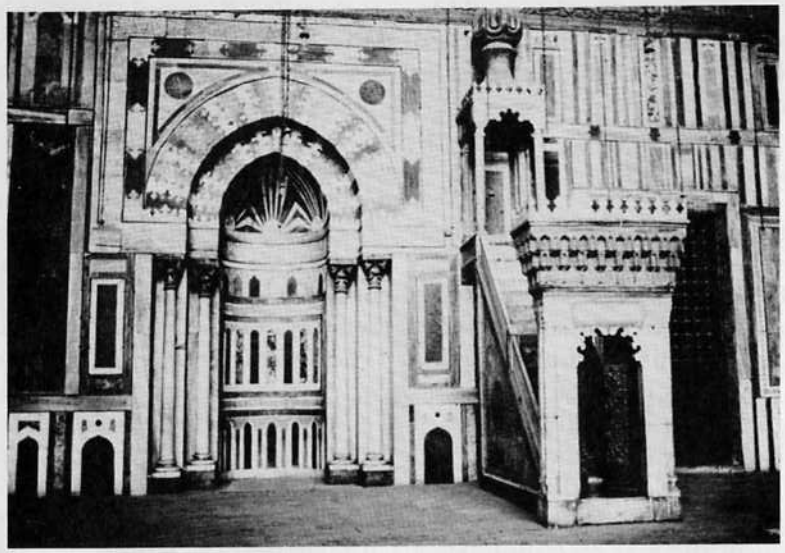
1. The first step consists of facing the *qiblah* (Mecca), raising one's hands to the ears, and pronouncing the *takbir,* or recitation of praise: "God is Great" (*"Allahu Akbar"*). The worshiper remains silent, readying his attention for the performance of the prayer.
2. During the second step, known as the "standing," the chapter *al-Fatiha* is recited together with additional verses from the Quran.
3. With the recitation of another *takbir,* the worshiper bows, with his hands on his knees, and in this bent position, praises God.
4. After resuming the standing position, the worshiper prostrates with the forehead touching the ground, as a sign of humility and submission.
5. The fifth step involves raising oneself from prostration while reciting another *takbir* and remaining in a sitting position, praying.
6. There follows another act of prostration, when the praises of God are repeated.
7. The final step involves the sitting position and silent recitation of a personal prayer, after which the individual worshipers turn their faces to the right and the left to greet their neighbors. This greeting, or *salam,* concludes the prayer proper. However, it must be noted that where additional *rak'ahs* are to be said, the first six steps are always repeated.

In the prayer the words of supplication and praise, the postures of submission, and the acts of cleansing all come together to symbolize the meaning of true worship, integrating the Muslim into a rhythm of universal adoration. The parts of the prayer also remind them of their created state, the sense of direction in life symbolized by the *qiblah,* the goal of purification necessary for spiritual life, and the fellowship of the *Ummah,* through which they participate in the worship of God.

On Friday, Muslims are enjoined to take part in a congregational prayer at noon. The prayer has a special social significance in most Muslim countries, where Friday is often a public holiday, although Islam does not recognize the notion of a "sabbath," or a day set aside for specifically spiritual activities. The times of prayer are meant to conform to the rhythm of the daily cycle of life so that the prayers complement other activities, rather than being an escape from the ordinary pattern of life.

The term *masjid,* "mosque," which has come to refer to the place of formal prayer in Islam, literally means "a place of prostration." It can thus be any place where the believer responds to God either individually or in congregation by paying Him homage in a state of purity. Most mosques share certain common features. Within, the *qiblah,* or direction to Mecca, is signified by a niche, called *mihrab,* often adorned with Quranic writings and other designs. Next to it, there is a rostrum called the *minbar,* from which a preacher addresses the congregation. Such an address is an integral part of the congregational Friday prayer and is called a *khutba.* Outside the mosque, the features most easily noticeable are the *minaret* and the open courtyard. The *minaret* is the focus of the call to prayer. From here the caller, the *muezzin,* chants the words calling the faithful to worship. Within the courtyard, there is invariably a fountain and places where the worshipers may perform the acts of cleansing. Many mosques also have domes. These features have however been adapted or incorporated in many parts of the Muslim world to vernacular architecture and by using local materials. The wide range of mosque designs, structures, and scale, indicate the key role of the mosque, in symbolizing the aspect of unity in Islam perhaps more than any other physical structure in the Muslim world.

Dhikr, remembrance of God, and *du'a,* a voluntary or private prayer, are the other forms of worship that complement the ritual prayer in Islam. They provide an opportunity for meditation and contemplation within the heart and a way of drawing closer to God. The ritual act of prayer, with its formal aspects and physical orientation to Mecca, is complemented by remembrance, which draws the individual inward, creating an inner sense of harmony and peace. The Quran emphasizes this aspect in the verse that states, "Surely in the



Inside a Mosque. *The* mihrab (*niche*) *and the* mihbar (*pulpit*) *inside the famous Sultan Hasan Mosque in Cairo.* (Courtesy of Fred Denny)

remembrance of Allah, do hearts find peace" (13:28).

The essence of such prayers is devotion and adoration. Muslims consider Muhammad's vigils on Mount Hira and his profoundly moving experiences of revelation and closeness to God as examples of such worship. Such devotion is also reflected in prayers preserved from the sayings of well-known devotees, such as a Muslim woman called Rabia, who lived in the eighth century:

> My Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty.[1]

The goal of these forms of worship, representing the devotional spirit in Islam, is to bring believers into daily communication with the Creator through public as well as personal and private actions.

Zakat, *Purification Through Sharing*

Many of the verses of the Quran that enjoin worship also make it obligatory for Muslims to pay a share of their wealth to the community. The word *zakat* means "purification," thus indicating that the act of sharing is a necessary prelude to making one's wealth and property pure. The amount varies according to the category of wealth or property, being calculated differently on agricultural products, cash, precious metals, and livestock.

The Quran also specifies the purposes for which dues from the *zakat* are to be used, including aid for the poor, the needy, and those heavily in debt who require assistance, as well as for education, health services, and facilities for travelers. The duty of *zakat* is coupled with that of charity, which may range from almsgiving to a kind act:

> Those who share their wealth in Allah's way may be compared to a grain which grows seven ears, each with a hundred grains. Allah grants an increase to whom He will. (2:261)

> A kind word of forgiveness is better than an act of charity followed by harm. (2:263)

Quranic injunctions, though they condemn the hoarding of wealth and economic injustice, also urged individuals and the community at large to act as trustees, through whose acts of sharing the

moral and spiritual vision of a just society could be fulfilled. An equitable sharing of justly earned wealth, through *zakat,* was thus a key element in redressing imbalance and poverty.

Ramadan, the Month of Fasting

The Quran prescribes fasting for all able, adult Muslims for the period of the month of *Ramadan* (the ninth month of the Muslim calendar). Fasting begins at daybreak and ends after the setting of the sun. The spiritual, moral, and physical discipline observed during these hours included a more intensive commitment to the values and practices of Islam as well as refraining from food, drink, and sexual activity. The month of Ramadan is singled out because the Quran was first revealed during that month, the night of the first revelation being described as the "night of power." On this night Muslims stay up, praying, remembering God, and reading the Quran until daybreak.

The rhythm of abstinence and quietude during the daylight hours of Ramadan alternates with times of feasting and socializing throughout the evenings. When the time of sunset arrives, the fast is broken in the traditional manner of eating a few dates and having a refreshing drink. Prayers follow, and then part of the night is spent sharing a meal with family and friends. The evenings reflect an air of gaiety, with most of the cities and towns alive with people, mingled with a stronger sense of piety reflected in prayers and intense reading of the Quran. The spirit of joy and festivity reaches its climax after the last day of fasting. The following day is called *'Id al Fiṭr,* a time of celebration, feasting, and sharing; this day is one of the major festivals in the Muslim year.

Fasting has significance in Islam at several levels: It commemorates the experience of revelation that was granted to Muhammad; it singles out a month in the changing lunar calendar during which all adult Muslims practice a common act of discipline, self-denial, and self-examination; it enlarges their sympathy and compassion for persons deprived of the daily means of survival; and finally it establishes a continuity of practice with religions such as Judaism and Christianity, in which fasting is recognized as an important practice.

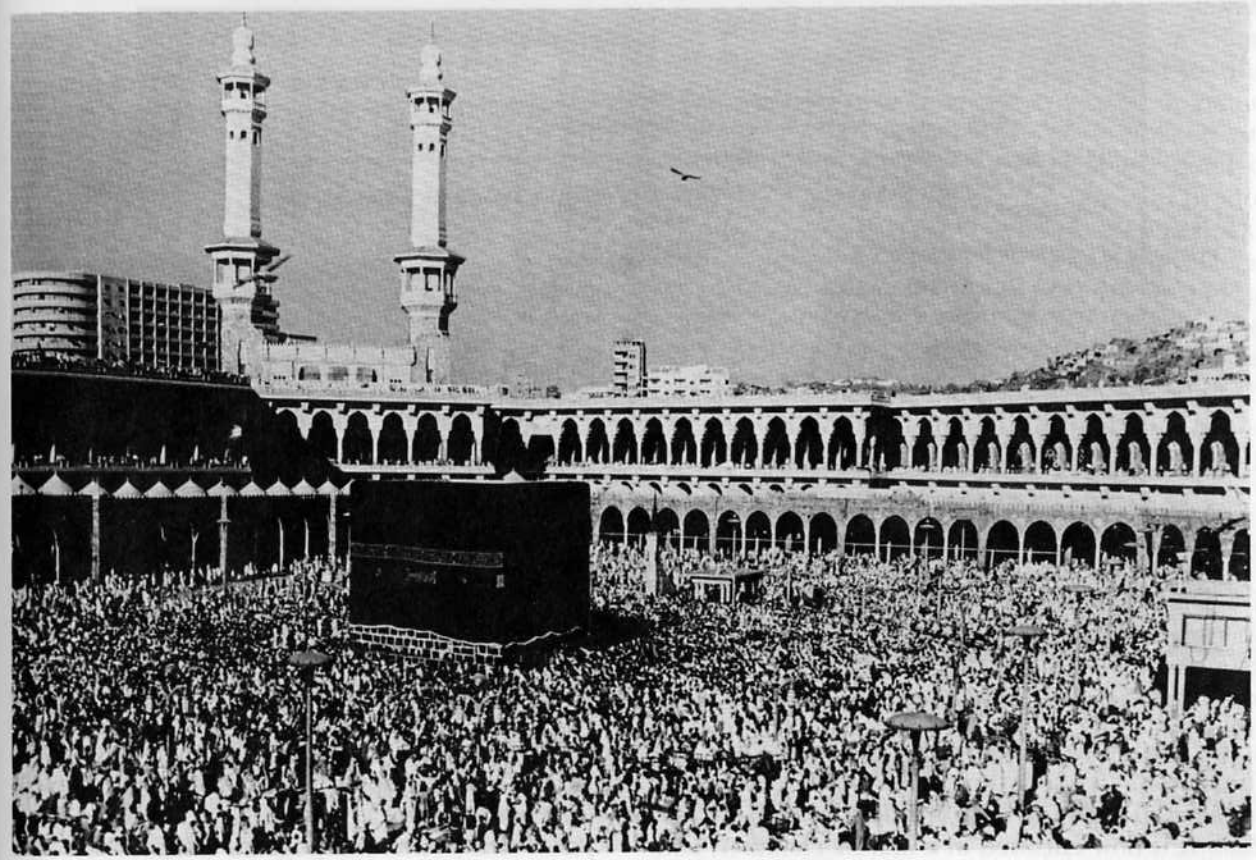
Hajj, *the Pilgrimage*

The ritual event that represents one of the peak experiences in the life of a Muslim is the *Hajj* or Pilgrimage to the sacred places of Islam in and around Mecca. This duty is prescribed for Muslims unless it becomes financially too burdensome or renders the individual and the family destitute. The *Hajj* takes place in "The Month of Hajj" (*Dhu-l-Hijjah*), the last month of the Muslim year.

The event can best be understood by tracing the steps through which pilgrims pass and noting the significance of the places and objects they encounter during the *Hajj.* The occasion begins even before departure from home for Arabia, for the period before departure is spent readying oneself emotionally and spiritually.

When the pilgrims arrive in the vicinity of Mecca, they enter into a state called *ihram* or sacredness. Men do this by putting on two seamless garments; women don a simple, modest gown and a headcovering. In this state, the pilgrims refrain from shaving hair, cutting nails, and wearing jewelry or other adornments; they also abstain from any acts of violence, hunting, and sexual relations. It is in this purified state that the pilgrims make a commitment to fulfill the duties that are to follow.

The sequence of rituals that follow lead most pilgrims first to the sanctuary of the *Ka'ba.* Before the rise of Islam, this sanctuary was used by the Arabs for their own religious festivals and to house the images of their divinities. When the Prophet conquered Mecca, he cleansed it of all its idols. In the Quran the *Ka'ba* is referred to as the "Sacred House" (5:97) and the "sanctuary established for humanity" (2:125). In Islam, therefore, the significance of the *Ka'ba* lies in its being the symbol of the initial human attempt to express a relationship with God. The Quran also refers to it as the "place of Abraham" (2:125), which he and Ishmael, his son, sanctified for the worship of the One true God. It is thus also the link between Islam and the tradition of Abraham.

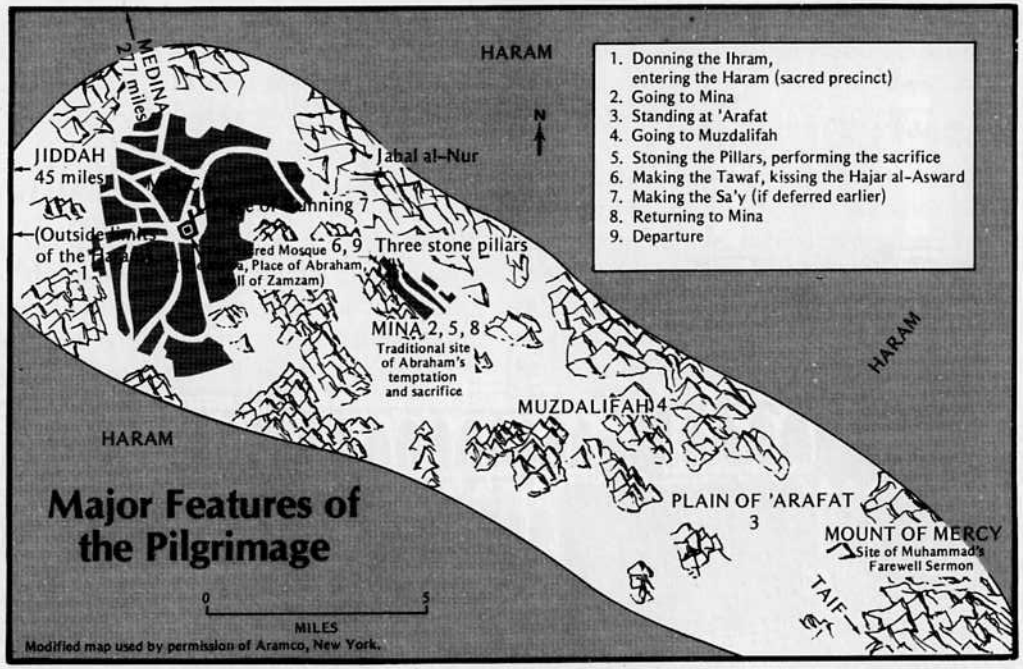


The Ka'ba. *The Ka'ba during the Pilgrimage.* (Courtesy of the Ministry of Information: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

The *Ka'ba* is not merely a structure signifying the physical axis of the Muslim world, the direction to which all Muslims turn in prayer. It also has a cosmic significance in Islam, for it is the symbol of the human encounter with the Divine for all times. As the symbolic center, it is the point toward which all Muslims converge daily for prayer and once during their lives, if possible, for pilgrimage.

The stone structure is located in the middle of the courtyard of Mecca's great mosque. It is about fifty feet high, cubical in shape, with its four corners aligned with the cardinal points of the compass. It is covered with a cloth, generally black in recent times, and embroidered in gold thread with verses from the Quran. In one corner of the *Ka'ba,* set within the wall, is the Black Stone, which Muslims, following the tradition of the Prophet while he was on Pilgrimage, kiss or touch. The stone is believed to be a relic that has survived from the time of Abraham.

Upon first entering Mecca, all pilgrims pay their respect to this central symbol of Islam. They perform the "circling" of the *Ka'ba,* going around it seven times in a counterclockwise direction. Having done this, the pilgrims embark on the *Hajj* proper. Moving away from the center, the pilgrims run between two spots called Safa and Marwa. This ritual (called *sa'y*) signifies the running of Hagar, Abraham's second wife, as she sought water for their son Ishmael. Islamic tradition states that when Abraham left Hagar and Ishmael there on his mission for God, he promised that God would not abandon them. When the small supply of dates and water ran out, Hagar ran between the two



spots, searching desperately for water for her thirsty son. The spot during her quest when water miraculously sprang forth is called the Well of *Zam-Zam*. It is now enclosed in a marble chamber, and pilgrims draw water from it to drink and take home to share with others as a symbol of God's mercy and care.

The next ritual takes the pilgrims from Mecca to Mina, a few miles away. After spending the night there, they proceed to the plains of Arafat. There the whole day is spent in remembrance, meditation, and prayer, and the pilgrims remain standing for as long as they can. In fact, the ritual is called "the Standing," and the pilgrimage cannot be considered complete without its performance. Just before sunset, everyone proceeds to Muzdalifah, a place between Arafat and Mina, where they spend the night.

Before daybreak the next day, the pilgrims leave to return to Mina. There they participate in a ceremony of stoning three pillars. The pillars symbolize evil, and the stoning, an act of repudiation. Tradition also recounts that the stoning has its roots in Abraham's rejection of Satan, who tried to persuade him to disobey God's command to sacrifice his son.

After this event, the pilgrims prepare for the festival of *'Id al Aḍha*, the Festival of Sacrifice. In commemoration of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, the pilgrims ritually slaughter a sheep, goat, or camel and give away a portion of the meat to the poor. Muslims all over the world celebrate the same event by performing an identical sacrifice, thus uniting in spirit to honor the end of the Pilgrimage. The pilgrims now gradually begin to resume their normal lives, but must await the final act of circling the *Ka'ba* seven times before they can no longer be considered in a state of *ihram*. After the circling, the pilgrims worship at a location called "the Place of Abraham" that is also within the courtyard of the mosque. The Pilgrimage is now completed and each pilgrim can be honored by the title of *hajji* for men and *hajjiyah* for women, a designation that brings much respect in the various communities to which the pilgrims now return.

The Pilgrimage is a dramatic reenactment of the founding of Islam. Historically, these rituals were performed by the Prophet Muhammad. But the rituals also remind pilgrims of an earlier time, the founding of the *Ka'ba* by Abraham as a sanctuary in which to worship God. Thus, the pilgrims are taken farther back into history, where the roots of Islam are traced in God's communication with Abraham. At the same time the state of *ihram* puts each pilgrim in a state of equality with all other pilgrims, affirming a sense of oneness and fellowship. Within the precincts of the *Ka'ba,* the pilgrims affirm the Quranic concepts of a God who has communicated with humans from time immemorial and of a community that is drawn from all over the world, of which each pilgrim is an integral part. The days of the *Hajj* mark a separation of the individuals from their daily lives to which they can now return with a renewed sense of commitment to God and to the *Ummah,* whose founding experiences they have witnessed and shared during the pilgrimage.

Other Significant Practices and Places

In addition to the practices of Islam mentioned above, Muslims observe and honor several important days and places because they are referred to in the Quran and are linked to the Prophet's life.

Besides the *Ka'ba* and the sacred places around Mecca, importance is given to the cities of Medina and Jerusalem, called *al-Quds,* "the Holy," in Arabic. Muslims revere Medina as the place that offered Muhammad safety and a home, as the city in which the *Ummah* was established, and as the site of the Prophet's mosque and tomb. Jerusalem is significant because it was the first point of orientation of prayer for the early Muslims. During Muhammad's early preaching in Mecca, the Quran enjoined Muslims to face in the direction of Jerusalem when praying. Later, the direction was changed to the *Ka'ba* in Mecca. The city is also associated with the "Farthest Mosque" referred to in connection with an event described in the Quran as the *miraj,* a journey into heaven by Muhammad (17:1). This night is commemorated by Muslims at special gatherings. Jerusalem is also the location of one of the earliest and best-known sites in Islam, the Dome of the Rock. This site is sacred to Muslims because it recalls Abraham, David, Solomon, and Jesus, as well as being the place associated with Muhammad's *miraj,* thus establishing a point of continuity among the great prophets sent by God and relating Muslims to the "People of the Book."

Two major festivals have already been referred to in connection with the month of fasting and the pilgrimage. Muslims also celebrate the birthday of the Prophet with great rejoicing and prayers. See Table 9–1 for a more complete description of the Islamic calendar.

LIFE IN THE UMMAH: *SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND MORAL ORDER*

The *Ummah* provides the setting or context in which Muslims practice Islam. The practices described above are acts of individuals set in a context that enables each Muslim to interact with fellow Muslims. In addition to this interaction at the level of ritual observance, the Quranic and Islamic tradition also provide a framework within which other

TABLE 9–1.
*The Islamic Calendar**

Month		*Special Days*
Muharram	1	New Year
	10	'Āshūrā'
Safar		
Rabi al Awwal	12	Birthday of Muhammad
Rabbi al Thani		
Jumada al Awwal		
Jumada al Thani		
Rajab	27	The night of Mi'rāj
Shaban		
Ramadan		The month of fasting
Shawwal	1	'Īd al Fiṭr
Dhu-l-Qaddah		
Dhu-l-Hijjah	10	'Īd al Aḍḥā

* The Islamic year is a lunar year, with twelve months, each calculated from new moon to new moon. Thus, it has no fixed relation to other calendars like that of the Common Era.

social and personal aspects of daily life are defined. It is in this sense that Islam can be said to address the totality of human life, so that the *Ummah* is not merely a religious community in the strictest sense of the word, but also a political, economic, moral, and social order. The word most often used in the Quran to define this totality of religious perspective is *din,* translated as "religion." This *din* as expressed in Islam consists of responding to God's will in all spheres of human life; its formal aspects are encompassed in a concept that reflects the idea of the "right path" that fulfills these comprehensive goals of organizing society. This concept is that of the *Shariah.*

The Shariah

The basis of political, moral, and social life in Islam is defined by the *Shariah,* often translated as "law" but having the connotation of the total sum of duties, obligations, and guidelines for the *Ummah.* Within a century of Muhammad's death, Islam spread very quickly outside Arabia; it is therefore necessary to understand the process of growth before looking in detail at how the concept of *Shariah* came to be developed in the Muslim community.

The Muslim Conquests. The conquests undertaken by Muslims after the death of the Prophet represent a spectacular military achievement. Within less than one hundred years, the area under Muslim rule stretched from the Atlantic to India, including most of what once was under Byzantine and Sassanian rule. The conquest of these territories carved out the central domain of what was to become the world of Islam. The initial period of conquest was followed by a long period during which Muslim rule was consolidated.

After the death of Muhammad, all territories were ruled from Medina by successors of Muhammad known as *caliphs.* The early Muslim community believed that such leadership was necessary to ensure continuity, preservation, and spread of the Islamic message. After the death of the first four caliphs, who are considered by most Muslims as model rulers, a series of Muslim dynasties came to rule the various conquered territories. During these conquests Muslims also attempted to spread their faith. Quranic and Prophetic practice required that the people of conquered territories be offered the option of converting to Islam or remaining true to their own traditions. If they chose to remain in their traditions, they became *Ahl al Dhimma* (people protected under Muslim rule), and were given the right to practice their own faith in exchange for paying a tax.

The actual process of Islamization of people in these conquered territories took a long time and was effected mostly through the work of Muslim preachers, traders, or rulers. On the whole the process of conversion to Islam was a peaceful one, although many earlier Western writers on Islam tried to portray conversion to Islam as having been undertaken by force. There were occasions when zealous Muslim rulers destroyed places of worship in certain areas and persecuted non-Muslims, but this was generally an exception to the rule. Most Muslims followed the Quranic injunction, "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:256), and attempted to spread their faith more by example than by coercion.

The Formation of Islamic Institutions. As the territories under Muslim rule grew, it became necessary to organize a common pattern of institutions and rules that would govern the lives of the people. Much of this early systematization and organization was carried out by Muslim thinkers and administrators who attempted to work largely within the framework defined by the Quran and the *Sunnah.* It is the resulting framework that is generally referred to as the *Shariah*—judicial in basis, but it has the wider connotation of a comprehensive system that regulated every aspect of life within the Muslim community and governed its relationship with non-Muslim subjects. At the political level the *Shariah* defined the nature of the Muslim state, the duties and responsibilities of the caliphs, the organization of institutions that would assure the security and well-being of its inhabitants, and the nature of relationships with both Muslim and non-Muslim states. At the social and personal level, it

provided for rules and regulations affecting economic, social, and family life. The *Shariah* also defined in detail the specifically religious duties incumbent on Muslims. For the *Shariah* to be implemented fully, the state had an organized system of courts and judges whose function it was to mediate disputes at all levels and to oversee the workings of the *Shariah* by administering justice through the courts. The individuals specializing in law were known as *fuqaha* or jurists (singular *faqih*), whose task was to define and systematize special legal prescriptions within the *Shariah*.

The totality of political, moral, and social order in Islam was thus given specific definition. It was not meant, however, to be a fixed system of rigid rules and regulations. Within the *Shariah* there was always a wider purpose of *maslah* (the public good), which enabled Muslim scholars to interpret and apply the *Shariah* in relation to existing conditions and places. Several schools of thought developed in various parts of the Muslim world, which applied the *Shariah* differently in cases where human and geographical conditions varied. Some scholars tended to be stricter in their interpretations than others, but on the whole the *Shariah* continued to provide for the world of Islam through its various schools, a common framework and code that gave that world much of its sense of unity until modern times.

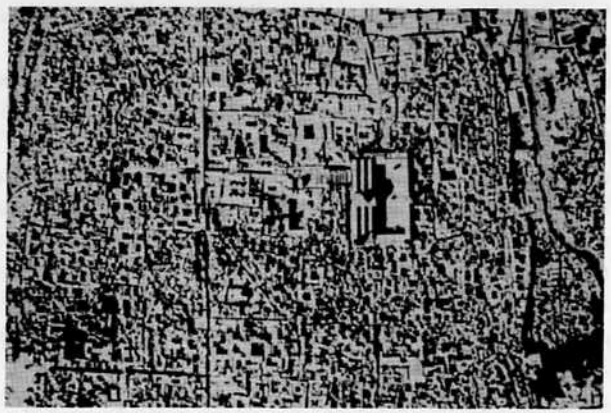
The "Model" Muslim City

One way to understand the influence of such an all-embracing system on daily life within society is to study the traditional Muslim city. Urban environments in Islam have varied according to time, place, and human condition, but it is possible by looking at the city to isolate those common aspects that illustrate Islam's role at the social and human levels. Such environments, though undergoing erosion at present, may still be recognized in the older, traditional parts of Muslim cities.

The Muslim city is by definition the space for an integration of Islamic values in the context of daily life. Its beginnings lay in the organization of a place of worship, which would constitute its center. Within this mosque, the *qiblah* established the point of orientation—toward the *Ka'ba*, the heart of Islam. Each city thus in its initial phase was an attempt to create an environment in which Muslims could put their faith into practice. The mosque was not just a place of worship; it became by extension a place of learning. Adjacent to most mosques were schools or, in the case of larger mosques, more elaborate centers of learning. Learning thus complemented worship, and encompassed a variety of disciplines. Some of these Muslim cities became seats of learning that attracted scholars from medieval European and Byzantine states. These institutions provided accommodation for the students and the teachers, both of whom were paid stipends. Students went through an organized program of study, which varied according to the subjects in which the institution specialized. The famous Al-Azhar mosque and university in Cairo, founded in the tenth century and still flourishing, offered a comprehensive curriculum and recognized students for their achievements by granting them titles. It has even been suggested that the system of gowns worn by teachers and students today in the West developed at this time.

Radiating from the mosque was a vast array of streets, which led to the commercial or market sector known as the *bazaar*, or branched off into dead-end streets that ended in houses. The *bazaar*, often covered, was organized in such a way that shops or boutiques dealing in common products were grouped together. Some commercial products, like meat, fish, or perishables, were kept as far from the center as possible to avoid an unpleasant environment around the mosque. Other products were not found in the *bazaar* because certain categories of food and drink are prohibited in the Quran; among these are pork, the meat of carrion, and all forms of alcoholic drink and intoxicants. The Quran also recommends that the name of God be pronounced when animals are being slaughtered for food.

Besides shops, there were also studios and workshops for artisans and craftsmen. Economic life was represented by the flow of human life, which was a



Old City of Damascus. *Aerial view of the traditional port, showing an urban form linking religious, social, and residential spaces.* (I. Serageldin and S. El-Sadek)

dominant part of city life during the daytime. The rules and regulations governing commercial activity were also defined in the *Shariah* and implemented by officials whose function it was to see that rules were applied. Certain practices such as gambling and games of chance are prohibited in the Quran, and the function of such officials was to see that these prohibitions were followed. Offenders, if found guilty by the courts, were liable to punishment.

Family Life and Housing in the City

Family life is a vital part of the Muslim social order and, based on Quranic injunctions, the *Shariah* defines in great detail the rules affecting marriage, orphans, inheritance, and other aspects of family life.

One of the major changes brought about in the status of the family from pre-Islamic Arab times was the provision of legal rights and status for women; these rights were defined in the context of family life. Female infanticide and unrestricted polygamy, practiced by certain pre-Islamic Bedouin tribes, were abolished.

The Quran permits a man to have a maximum of four wives at one time. However, equality in the treatment of wives is made a strict condition in such cases, as is a due recognition of each person's rights within a polygamous household (4:129). These strictures imply for many modern Muslims that monogamy is preferable. The Quran also recognizes the possibility of marriages breaking down, and allows for divorce after reasonable attempts have been made at reconciling the parties. Marriages are to be accompanied by the signing of contracts in which the husband is asked to specify the amount of settlement to be made to the wife in the event of a divorce. Divorced persons, widows, and widowers are also encouraged to remarry. Another area of family life touched upon in the Quran is that of inheritance.

> From that left by parents and close relations, there is a share for the men and a share for the women. Each one has a designated share, whether it be small or great. (4:7)

A particular concern is expressed for orphans and the disadvantaged. The overriding factor at all levels of personal and social life is a strong sense of justice:

> O you who believe
> Be firm in justice and as witnesses
> for God even though it be against
> yourselves, your parents or those close to you—
> rich or poor.
> (4:135)

It is the notion of intimacy and privacy, however, that dictates the way in which traditional Muslim dwellings are built and organized. Housing is set off from the commercial sector of the city. The concept of *haram* (and *harim,* meaning sanctuary), vulgarized in European literature as the "harem," is essentially a notion of protection because of the recognition that family life and personal life are private but vulnerable. The covering of the interior courtyards of traditional Muslim houses and the traditional clothing worn by Muslim men and women are means of protecting this vulnerability. In urban centers the system of *purdah* or veiling, a practice adapted by Muslims from cultures such as those of ancient Persia (present-day Iran), often became extensions of such practices, marginalizing women and, among certain classes of people in ur-

ban centers, effectively segregating them from public life and activity.

Beyond the mosques, the places of learning, the *bazaar,* and housing, there were fortifications, which exist now as monuments or have disappeared over time. Traditionally, the walls around cities acted as a layer of protection from outside attack and as a definition for those who lived within them. The city also maintained contact with the Bedouins, the farmers, and visitors through waystations built especially to provide rest and refreshment for those from the outside. Nomadic life, fast disappearing in the contemporary world, was a significant part of traditional Muslim life. The city often provided a point of contact between the nomadic and urban life-styles, enabling both to nourish and revitalize each other through a mutual exchange of ideas and energies.

Cemeteries generally fringe the edges of the city. At death, the body is carefully washed and wrapped in a seamless white shroud. The body is placed in a grave with its head facing Mecca and special prayers are said for the soul of the deceased.

Another distinguishing feature of the traditional Muslim city is the presence in it of nature. Most cities are endowed with gardens and fountains, which provide a welcome retreat in arid climates as well as places for social gatherings and family strolls. This quality of the presence of nature also lends the city a certain serenity and a congruence with the natural environment. The city does not appear to dominate its surroundings; rather, it seems to blend into them. The city is also enlivened by the festivities celebrating Muslim holidays and the joyous gatherings that mark weddings, births, and the circumcision of male children, which is a required practice in Islam.

In ideal terms, the physical form of the city in Islam—including the places of worship, work, family habitation, and institutions serving the city—can be said to symbolize the vision of unity in Islam. The architecture and the design, the gardens and the parks all echo the promises of the hereafter described by the Quranic paradise. The physical structures in a Muslim city are therefore meant to reflect the spiritual quality of life and the social and personal values enjoined by Islam.

For many Muslims in Asia and Africa, however, rural and village life still constitute a dominant pattern. In recent times, owing to a combination of neglect and natural disasters (such as droughts), desertification, and deforestation these small villages and nomadic populations have suffered increasing hardship, damaging community life and institutions, sometimes irreparably. Confronted with the deterioration in their built and natural environments, Muslim societies have begun to address specifically ways in which their conceptions of traditional aspects of law and ethics can be broadened to include issues of faith and environment and their impact on Muslim society.

GROUPS IN ISLAM

With the passage of time, the Islamic *Ummah* came to be composed of a number of groups. Each of these represented a synthesis based on a response to the foundations laid down by the Quran and developed in the life of the Prophet. Although the groups reflect divergent views on certain matters of practice and doctrine, it is not proper, strictly speaking, to classify them as "sects" in Islam. The idea of "sects" implies a centrally established body of doctrines or authority from which departures take place. Because no such "centralization" exists in Islam, the various groups may more properly be defined as schools of thought and practice, with no divergence concerning the fundamentals. Rather, they represent differing views as to how these fundamentals can best be fulfilled in the practical life and organization of the *Ummah.*

After the death of Muhammad, the Muslims had to wrestle with the immediate problems of growth and organization. Differences arose over the question of authority in the community. Because there were to be no more prophets, the issue revolved around how best the community could continue to implement the teachings of the Quran and the ideals of the Prophet, and which person was most capable of leading such a community. Some Muslims

felt that Abu Bakr, a respected early convert to Islam and father-in-law of the Prophet, was best suited to this task. Others favored Ali, the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet. Eventually, Abu Bakr came to assume this task; no immediate conflict erupted, and the unity of the community was maintained during that early period in spite of differences. Abu Bakr became known as *Caliph,* the term now used to designate the head of the Muslim *Ummah.* Before his death in 634, he nominated another respected Muslim leader, Umar, to succeed him. Umar in turn was succeeded by Uthman, a member of one of the leading families in Mecca. After the Caliphate of Uthman, Ali eventually became head of the Muslim community in 656.

This initial period of the history of Islam, together with the period of the Prophet, has come to be regarded retrospectively as a "golden age." It has been felt that in spite of existing differences, these leaders and the Muslim community strove to remain united, maintained the high standards set by the Prophet, and sought to reflect these standards in their personal lives and in the life of the growing Muslim state.

During the Caliphates of Uthman and Ali, however, differences came to a head and eventually led to a civil war; and out of this conflict emerged the earliest groups in Islamic history. The basic issues in the conflict were twofold: power and authority over the growing Muslim domains; and issues of interpretation of the Quran, as it applied to the needs of a growing and diverse Muslim population.

The Kharijites (Khwarij)

The first of these early Islamic groups is known as the *Kharijites.* Muawiyah, who had been appointed as governor of the newly conquered province of Syria by Uthman, revolted against Ali when the latter became Caliph. During a fruitless attempt at arbitration, Ali was assassinated and Muawiyah seized the reins of power, initiating the rule of a dynasty called the Ummayads, after his ancestors. The seat of this dynasty was in Damascus in Syria. Those Muslims who felt that arbitration should not have been attempted left the army of Ali and came to be called *Khwarij* (those who "left"). It was their contention that no arbitration should have taken place, since the Quran did not allow arbitration in cases where right was clearly distinguished from wrong. In their view, Ali, by agreeing to arbitration, had compromised himself. Their differences with the rest of the Muslims led to much violence and their history was beset with warfare until they eventually ceased to be a factor in Islam.

Only one minor group of *Khwarij* has survived. They continue to represent the tradition of close fidelity to the Quran in matters that pertain to administration and justice, but are not as exclusive as their early predecessors in their relations with others. They are represented today in North Africa, Oman, and Zanzibar on the East Coast of Africa and call themselves *Ibadi.*

Among the other groups that subsequently developed, the two largest and most important are the Shia and Sunni. They represent two parallel syntheses that have emerged to provide frameworks for realizing their respective visions of Islam.

The Shia

The death of Muhammad marked the end of his prophetic mission. In Muslim belief he had been the last of the prophets, who had completed the divinely entrusted task of making known God's final revelation. In order to discharge his mission effectively, he had combined in his person religious, political, and military power.

After his death the early Muslim community was faced with the question of how effectively to maintain the sovereignty of the Muslim state and further the cause of Islam. The question involved them in a discussion and dispute regarding the position of head of the newly established Muslim state.

The Muslims who felt that Ali was best suited to assume leadership of the *Ummah* after the death of the Prophet eventually became known as the *Shia.* The word means "followers" and refers to those who gave their support to Ali. During the eighth

century these followers and others crystallized into a group with definite views about the question of authority, which they saw as being intimately linked to the issue of understanding and implementing Islam. They believed that the Prophet had specifically designated Ali as successor before his own death on the occasion of his "Farewell Pilgrimage," and that Ali was henceforth to represent a new institution called *Imamah* (from the Arabic word *imam,* meaning leader). Such an institution was meant to guarantee protection and continuing implementation of the Islamic message, and to assure that that message would continue to be interpreted for the *Ummah* by the person best suited to do so. The *Imamah* was to continue among the descendants of the Prophet, through Ali and Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, in a direct succession. Each Imam would be specifically nominated by his predecessor to be responsible for the community after his death. The Shia, like other Muslims, continued nevertheless to affirm that there would be no more prophets after Muhammad.

This belief in the *Imamah* as an institution to complement and sustain the work of the Prophet Muhammad is integrated by the Shia in their profession of faith, embodied in the *shahadah.* In addition to professing belief in the Unity of God and the role of Muhammad as a messenger, the Shia also profess that Ali, the commander of true believers, is the Friend (*Wali*) of God. Devotion to the Imams thus becomes a cardinal act of faith among the Shia. The Imam is believed also to possess divinely endowed knowledge and the capacity to provide spiritual guidance. This belief reflects the Shia view that in order to understand and implement the Quran and the *Sunnah,* it is necessary that the Imam be divinely inspired. He can thus provide both material and spiritual leadership, enabling Muslims to remain united both in affairs of state and those of faith. The Imams also act as intercessors, as does Muhammad, seeking forgiveness and welfare for persons who have sinned or are dead.

In time, Shia thought developed the view that a true understanding of the Quran was not limited merely to the literal aspects of revelation. There was also an inner dimension to the Quranic verses that could be grasped through the teachings of the Imams. The science of *tafsir,* consisting of the explanation of the outward significance and context of the Quran, was complemented among the Shia by the science of *tawil,* the analysis of the inner dimension and deeper meanings of revelation. In this respect the Shia contributed greatly to the intellectual tradition in Islam and influenced the development of philosophical and mystical thought in Islam.

On the death of Ali in 661, the *Imamah* devolved to his eldest son Hasan and then to a younger son Husayn. The latter is one of the great tragic figures of early Islam. In order to combat the growing and oppressive rule of the Ummayads and to affirm his role as Imam he refused to accept Yazid, Muawiyah's son and appointee, as the head of the Muslim community. Yazid sent troops to forestall any uprising, and in a brutal massacre Husayn and members of his family were put to death at Karbala in Iraq. This event shocked the Muslims, strengthened the opposition to the Ummayads, and rallied support to the cause of the Imams who succeeded Husayn.

These Imams, though constantly persecuted, maintained an active role in the religious life of the community. They contributed a great deal to the developing sciences of law, philosophy, and theology. In particular the sixth Imam, Jafar al Sadiq, played a key role in keeping alive the aspirations of the Shia. On his death the Shia split into two major divisions: One recognized the appointment of his son Ismail and continued to give allegiance to the successors of Ismail; the other supported a younger son, Musa al Kazim. The former group is known as the *Ismailiyya* and the latter as *Ithna Ashariyya.* On occasions, because of the insistence on the rights of their Imams to head the Muslim community and the emphasis on certain esoteric aspects of faith, each of these Shia groups has suffered persecution and been accused by other Muslims of holding heretical beliefs.

Ithna Ashariyya. After the death of Jafar al Sadiq there were six more Imams. The twelfth and last of these was called Muhammad al-Mahdi; he is

Shia Ritual. *A "Twelver" Shia gathering to commemorate Ashura in the city of Ray, Iran.* (Courtesy of Mohammed Torabi-Parizi)

believed to have gone into *ghaybah,* a state in which he is not perceived physically, a state of being hidden from the world. The *Mahdi,* or "messiah," will manifest himself when God wills and restore justice and peace on earth. In the meantime, he is in touch in a spiritual way with human beings, though they cannot physically perceive him. Because this group of the Shia believes in twelve Imams, it has come to be called *Ithna Ashari* ("Twelver").

In the physical absence of the Imam, the community is guided by individuals who strive to maintain and teach Islam. They are called *mujtahids,* or those who strive for knowledge. Those recognized for their additional knowledge and example are given additional titles, the highest among which is that of *ayatollah.* Although it is only on the return of the hidden Imam that the ideal society can be truly restored, the community, through the *mujtahid*s and *ayatollah*s (who represent the hidden Imam), strives to preserve the principles and practice of faith. These leaders receive their training in centers of Shi'ite learning that are found in Iraq and Iran.

In addition to the various Islamic practices, this group emphasizes the traditions and teachings of the various Imams as supplements to the Quran. They attach importance to these traditions and incorporate them into the concept of *Sunnah,* which in their tradition includes the sayings and actions of the twelve Imams, in addition to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. All of these constitute sources for the development of a specifically Ithna Ashari school of law. Acts of devotion to the Imams and visits to their tombs are also significant. Sanctuaries such as Najaf and Karbala in Iraq, Meshed and Qum in Iran, and others play a prominent part in their religious life.

The ritual practice that stands out most clearly, however, is the commemoration of the events leading to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn. During the month of *Muharram* this tragic event is depicted through sermons, recitations of poems, and a drama called *taziyah*—all of these practices being vivid reminders of the theme of good combating evil, the righteous sacrificing their lives in the cause of truth, and above all the passionate commitment in tribute to the figure of Husayn, who for the Shia is the embodiment of Islam's struggle for survival and triumph.

The Ithna Ashari School is the largest of the groups within the Shia. Although most of them are in Iran and Iraq, they are represented in many other parts of the Muslim world.

Ismailiyya. As noted earlier, this group differs from the Ithna Ashari by recognizing the line of Imams descended from Ismail, the eldest son of Jafar al Sadiq. The line of Imams continued until 1094, when a further split developed, dividing the Ismailis into two subgroups: The *Nizari Ismailis* gave allegiance to Nizar, whom they believed to have been designated by his father; the other group followed another son, Mustali, after whom they are known as *Mustali Ismailis.* It is the Mustali belief that after several successors their last visible Imam went into concealment. His successors, though hidden, are in touch with the community through a representative known as *dai.* This *dai* acts as head of the community until the appearance of an Imam, also called the *Mahdi.* The Mustali Ismailis live in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent and Yemen, and are scattered in small communities in East Africa and the Gulf.

Meanwhile the Nizari Ismailis have continued giving allegiance to a line of Imams whom they believe to be in direct succession from the Prophet and Ali. The present Imam of the Ismailis, Shah Karim al Husayni, is well known as the Aga Khan. The Ismailis, like other Shia, emphasize the spiritual dimension of Islam; but they believe that the Imam cannot disappear from the world and that his teachings and physical presence are necessary not only for understanding and maintaining a balance between material and spiritual life, but to ensure the implementation of Islam in the context of changing times and circumstances. The Nizari Ismailis are in Afghanistan, the Central Asian Republics, Iran, Pakistan, India, East Africa, Syria, and increasingly in the Western world, particularly in Britain, Canada, and the United States. The emergence in recent times of the Aga Khan Development Network has enabled this Muslim community and its Imam to make significant contributions to the developing Muslim world in the areas of health, education, social development, and the built environment. The programs highlight how private initiatives, building on Muslim values of service and voluntarism, can complement the efforts of governments and international agencies.

Zaydiyya. A final group among the Shia, the Zaydiyya, trace their origin to Zayd, one of the grandsons of Imam Husayn. His followers considered him an Imam and gave allegiance to him and his successors as individuals descended from the Prophet; by their example and military capability, the Zaydis believe, these successors can establish a just state. Most Zaydis are to be found at present in Yemen.

The Sunnis

The Sunnis represent the majority of Muslims. For them, as for other Muslims, the *Sunnah* has a central significance. But because of their particular

emphasis on the role of the *Sunnah* in their tradition, they have been called *Ahl al Sunnah* or *Sunnis*. Conformity to past tradition and practice is thus the cornerstone of the Sunni interpretation of Islam.

The position of Sunnism became defined as a response to questions concerning authority and practice that had also given rise to the Khwarij and the Shia. Much of the eventual content of Sunni thought developed as a result of its reactions to these other groups. In regard to practice, the Sunnis evolved a means of elaborating the *Shariah* by which their scholars developed, in addition to the Quran and the *Sunnah*, the concepts of *ijma*, consensus, and *qiyas*, analogy. According to *ijma*, a consensus of most scholars on the validity of a practice, followed by common agreement on it, was sufficient to establish the validity of the practice in *Shariah*. According to *qiyas*, the validity of a practice could be tested by scholars employing reasoning and the drawing of analogies with other laws of the *Shariah*.

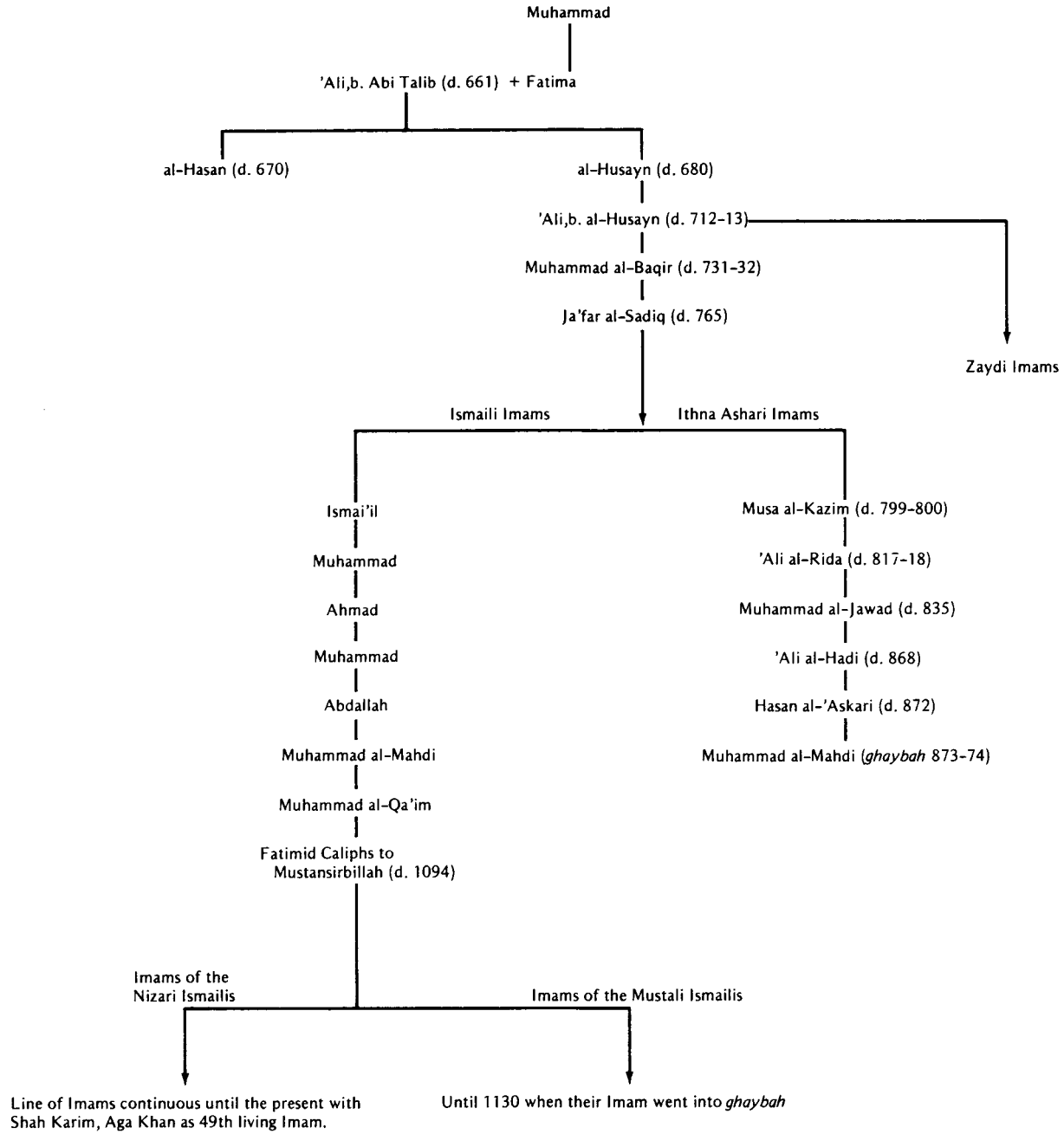
For instance, a parallel could be established between a case treated in the Quran or by the Prophet and newly arising issues. By considering the parallels the jurists could then proceed to a logical deduction. A specific example of this is their treatment of the Quranic command to put commercial transactions in writing so as to prevent fraud. By analogy, the Muslim jurists made it compulsory to register marriages officially, although the Quran makes no reference to such a requirement. The jurists, however, considered it to be a serious transaction of trust between two individuals to which the Quranic ruling ought also to apply. By thus checking agreement in the present and consistency with the past through *ijma* and *qiyas*, a flexibility was provided by which the scholars could accommodate practices not specifically referred to in the Quran and in the *Sunnah* but not contradictory to their spirit. The scholars and jurists thus acted as interpreters of Islam, assuming both universal application and a sense of continuity.

Nevertheless, certain minor areas of disagreement have led to variations in the interpretation of the *Shariah*. Four schools of law in Sunni Islam have developed, each named after the scholar responsible for defining its main features: They are Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali, and Hanafi. Each school has recognized the right of the others to disagree on minor points of interpretation, and therefore all four are considered as normative in Sunni Islam. Some of these schools have not always been as tolerant toward other groups in Islam.

The scholars in the Sunni tradition, generally referred to as *ulama* in Arabic or *mullah* in other languages, have acted as learned experts and teachers of Islam. They have received their training in a variety of schools, specializing in Quranic and legal sciences. In Sunni Islam they have played an important role as custodians of knowledge and protectors of the tradition.

Since the divine law was the basis on which a Muslim state was to be organized, the law in Sunni Islam also involved a definition of the nature of the state and politics. Like the Shia, the Sunni tradition accepted the necessity of having a head of state generally referred to as *Khalifah* (caliph). His role, as defined by jurists, was to act as the custodian of the state and the *Shariah*. Jurists developed elaborate theories that defined and circumscribed the conditions under which one could become a ruler and the duties and responsibilities that the ruler was to carry out.

Besides having its own specific systematization of matters related to the law and the state, Sunnism also defined itself in relation to the interpretation of doctrine. An interesting example of how this happened in early Islam is the controversy regarding Muslim attitudes to the "createdness" of the Quran. One group of Muslims, called Mutazilah, believed that the Quran, as it could be considered as the speech or word of God, should be regarded as created. This position was based on their view that the concept of the unity of God, *tawhid*, implied that God was pure Essence, and this belief would be violated if the Quran, the speech of God, were to be considered as uncreated and, therefore, part of this pure Essence. On this issue, the Mutazilah were supported by the Caliph in Baghdad, al Mamun (ruled 813–833), who set about imposing their view and persecuting those who rejected it.



The Shia Imams.

However, it was from their opponents, who could not accept the idea of the createdness of the Quran and who believed instead in its eternal nature, that the majority Sunni view came to be established and eventually accepted after al Mamun's death. Subsequent Sunni scholars, the main ones being al-Ashari (d. 935) and al-Maturidi (d. 944), used rational, theological tools to refute Mutazili arguments and defined Sunni theology regarding the nature of God and the Quran.

Sunnism continued to produce great scholars who sought to establish main doctrines and the practice of the majority against diverging points of view. One of the best known was al-Ghazali (d. 1111), who played a major role in establishing the validity of the Sunni position against the views of the philosopher and Shia groups like the Ismailis. Al-Ghazali's condemnation of certain views of the philosophers and Ismailis was aimed at discouraging departures from what he regarded as the established norms of Muslim belief and practice. In helping to consolidate the Sunni position, he also stimulated a greater concern for the dimension of religious experience as an integral part of acts of devotion and piety. His major work, entitled *Ihya Ulum al-din* (*The Revitalization of Religious Sciences*), has had a major influence on all subsequent Sunni thought.

Another important theologian and legal scholar was Ibn Taimiyah (d. 1328). His strong reaction to the growth of popular Sufism became the basis for much of the reform that developed in the Islamic world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like al-Ghazali, he became a strong defender of the Sunni position. In particular, he directed his writings and arguments against persons whom he felt to be exercising undue restraint in applying reason to the interpretation of basic Islamic concepts. He argued for a more literal and strict adherence to the Quran and *Sunnah* in thought and practice, occasionally rejecting some of al-Ghazali's views as well. His works have had a great influence on subsequent Muslim thinkers, who have argued for a return to the basic ideas and practices of early Islam.

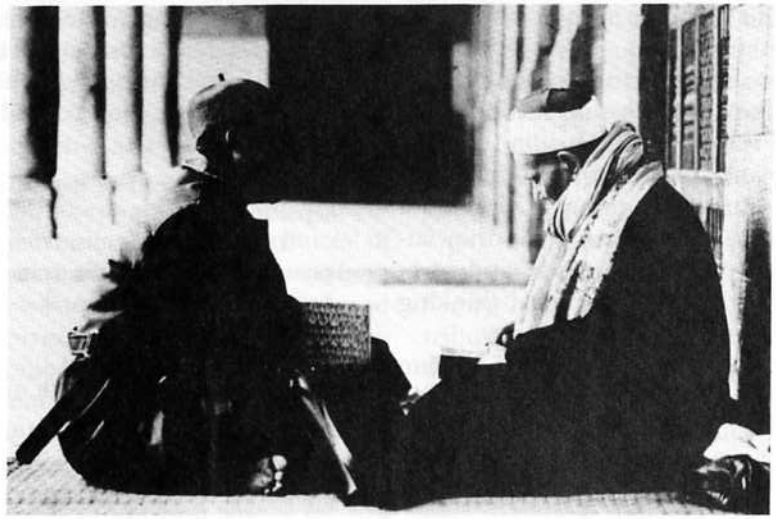
A Sunni thinker whose work went beyond theological concerns was Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406). He wrote a monumental work on history with a lengthy introduction on the nature and meaning of human history and social process, which has been considered as one of the most original works of the time—so much so that he has earned, among some modern European scholars, the title of "father of sociology."

In addition to these major groups, other Muslims in the course of Islamic history developed specific approaches to the understanding and practice of Islam. Groups such as the philosophers and the Sufis (discussed shortly) did not consciously establish "schools" of their own; but some of their interpretations of Islam are sufficiently divergent from Sunnism, in particular, to warrant identification as major groups.

The Muslim Philosophers

As the Muslim empire expanded, it came into close contact with cultures that had long-established intellectual roots. The most important of these were in the Mediterranean world, Persia (Iran), and India. Under the patronage of various rulers, academies were set up in which translations were made of scientific and philosophic works from Greek, Pahlavi (the language of Persia), and Sanskrit. Thus, there developed within Islam an intellectual tradition that undertook a study of these sources and created a new synthesis that would incorporate, modify, and further develop this heritage. One direct result was the rise of Muslim philosophers who, like other groups in Islam, began to address themselves to the intellectual problems raised by the Muslim encounter with other religious and intellectual traditions. The Mutazilah, mentioned earlier, were the first along with the Shia to emphasize rational and intellectual tools as means of explaining Quranic principles. Both of these groups in turn influenced later thinkers.

Among early Muslim philosophers, the most important was al-Farabi (d. 950). He defined the goals of Muslim philosophy on questions of metaphysics, ethics, and politics, and the relationship of these goals to Islamic society. His main aim was to pro-



Master and Pupil. *A teacher and student engaged in the study of the Quran.* (Courtesy of Fred Denny)

mote philosophical inquiry as a tool for interpreting and clarifying the basis of Islam in terms of doctrine and practice. His philosophical investigation led to a definition of the nature of a truly Islamic community. He also attempted to harmonize philosophy and religion by arguing that they were analogous, comparing the true prophet (Muhammad, in the case of Islam) to Plato's philosopher-king. He was also recognized for his commentaries and interpretations of the works of Plato and Aristotle, whose philosophies he attempted to reconcile with each other.

Another great figure in Islamic philosophy was Ibn Sina, known to the Latin West as Avicenna (d. 1061). His contributions to thought, medicine, and natural science have led to his recognition as one of the intellectual giants of the medieval period. Among the Muslim philosophers who followed, the best known are Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), known as Averroes, and Ibn Tufayl (d. 1186), both of whom lived and worked in Spain and North Africa during the twelfth century.

An excellent illustration of the attempts by Muslim philosophers to relate reason and revelation is the philosophical tale *Hayy bin Yaqzan,* written by Ibn Tufayl.[2] The story begins with the birth of a male child born through spontaneous generation out of natural elements. He is called Hayy bin Yaqzan, "Living, the son of Awake." The child, cared for by a deer, grows up on an island and, after learning to provide for himself, learns to explore, experiment, and eventually to speculate and philosophize. He becomes aware of his status as a rational being in the world and establishes a pattern of ethical behavior based on his perception of the living things around him and the movement of the planets. Ultimately, his consciousness develops to the point where philosophical abstraction leads him to meditation and ecstatic contemplation. The search for truth is expressed in terms of a rational process as well as profound religious experience. This stage of perfection is reached entirely through the use of his natural rational capacities.

In the story, Hayy is led to a nearby island where he encounters a human society bound by the norms that govern human life and regulated by rules derived from prophetic revelation. Although he recognizes the same truths expressed in the images of revelation that he has already arrived at through philosophy, he is unable to convince the people of the island of this link and thus to awaken in them an awareness of their full potentialities as rational

beings. He leaves the island to return to his own secluded and blissful life.

The tale highlights some of the problems faced by philosophers as they attempted to reconcile the roles of reason and revelation in Muslim thought, both for themselves and for the larger community. It is in this wider context that the role of Muslim philosophers needs to be evaluated, as they attempted to bridge the claims of reason and revelation and inspire ways of philosophical thinking among Muslims.

The refutation of some of the views of Muslim philosophers by the Sunni theologian al-Ghazali—and his charge that some of their views were unacceptable—created an unfavorable climate for the development of philosophy in some parts of the Muslim world. The study and development of philosophy flourished, however, in other areas, such as Persia. During the seventeenth century, Islamic philosophy gave rise to major thinkers like Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra. In their thought, philosophy came to be closely linked with some of the basic ideas underlying Islamic mysticism, or more properly Sufism.

The Sufis

The Sufis are Muslims who seek to understand and experience the dimension of Islam that relates to the cultivation of an inner life in search of divine love and knowledge. The same *sufi* is derived from *tasawwuf:* the act of devoting oneself to a search for an inner life. Sufis are also referred to as *faqir* or *dervish,* both meaning "poor" (in spirit), words that have become part of the English language. The word "sufi" may in part also be attributed to the use of *suf,* woolen garments, such as some early Muslim mystics wore.

The roots of Sufism lay in some of the early Muslims' experience of the Quran and their desire to understand the nature of the Prophet's religious experience: "From God we are and to Him is our return" (2:156). Verses of the Quran like this constituted the basis of what became the Sufi understanding of spiritual life. Sufis themselves often employed vivid imagery to describe their quest for religious meaning. The poet Rumi (d. 1273), whose *Mathnawi* is considered one of the great classics of Sufi literature, began his work by citing the analogy of a flute, made out of reeds, playing soulfully:

> Listen to the reed as it tells a tale, complaining of separation—, crying:
>
> "Ever since I was torn from the reed-bed, my complaint has brought tears to man and woman. I seek a heart torn by separation, that I may reveal the yearning of love."
>
> All those torn asunder from their source, long for the day they were one with it.[3]

The central image of the flute or pipe, as it is used in this passage and elsewhere in Sufi literature, mirrors the yearning of the soul, which, like the reed out of which the flute is made, has been separated from its source, namely God.

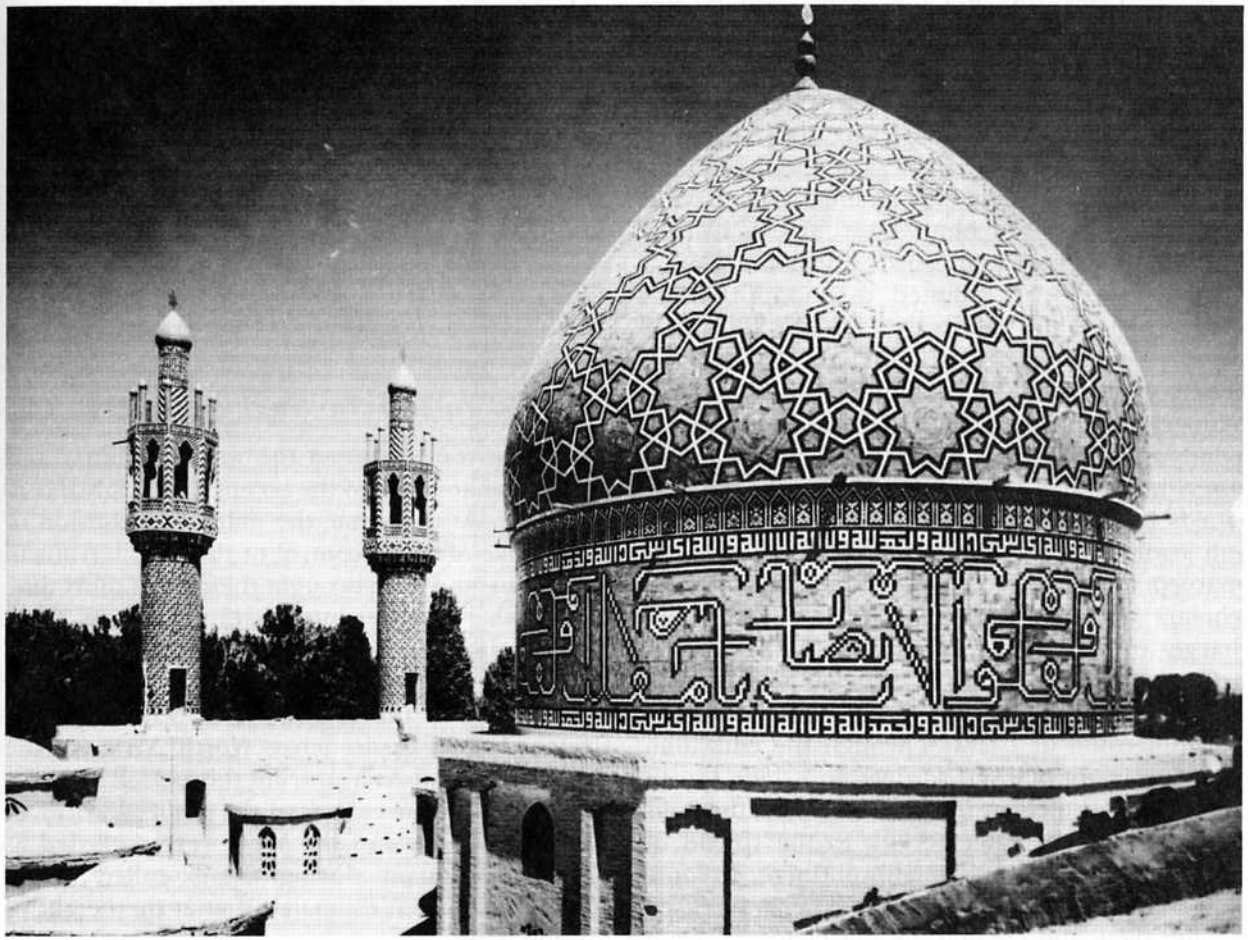
Since the major concern of Sufism was to enable an individual Muslim to seek intimacy with God, it was felt that such seekers must embrace an inner life, a path of devotion and prayer that would lead to spiritual awakening. In Sufism, therefore, the *Shariah* (law) has had a counterpart called the *Tariqah* (way) that complements the observance of Islam. The *Tariqah* is the journey and the discipline undertaken by a Muslim in the quest for knowledge of God, which leads ultimately to an experiential understanding of the true meaning of *tawhid,* or divine unity.

From this early stage, when Sufism was no more than a very intense and personal seeking of God on the part of certain Muslims, it developed into a system of mystical orders centering around the teachings of a leader. This gave rise to the establishment of several Sufi Orders in Islam, named after their founding teachers but also tracing their spiritual genealogy back to the teachings of the Prophet and Ali, whom they considered to have been endowed with the special mission of explaining the mystical dimension of Quranic teachings. By the thirteenth century these Orders had grown and spread all over the Muslim world. Muslims were attracted from all walks of life and from all groups in Islam, among them al-Ghazali and Ibn Sina. Later Jalal al-din Rumi, Ibn al Arabi (d.

1240), and many other important figures all over the Muslim world sought an experiential understanding of Islam by way of the Sufi path.

Within the Orders, the path or way began with the acceptance of a teacher as a guide. His teaching was aimed at enabling the disciple to develop discipline through strict, ascetic practices and by meditation on certain formulas, mostly attributes of God, from the Quran. By means of meditation, remembrance, and contemplation, the Sufi passed through several spiritual "stations," each representing the development of inner life, until finally through the experience of "annihilation" (*fana*) the true meaning of spiritual union with God was realized. Sufism taught that at this point the Muslim devotee had reached a true understanding of Islam, having finished the *Tariqah,* or path of discipline built on the *Shariah.*

The Sufi quest is described by the poet Attar (d. 1229) in a famous mystical poem called *Mantiq al-Tayr* ("The Conference of the Birds").[4] The poem depicts the quest of a large number of birds for the *Simurgh,* the mythic king of the birds. After many tribulations, and having crossed over seven valleys, thirty of the birds reach the end of their journey and come to the gate where the Supreme Majesty



A Sufi Mausoleum. *The dome and* minarets *within the courtyard that contains the shrine of a famous Sufi leader, Shah Niamatullah. The shrine is in Mahan, Iran.* (Courtesy of Mohammed Torabi-Parizi)

lived. The gatekeeper tests them and then opens the door. As they sit on the dais awaiting the king, an inner glow awakens in all of them at the same moment and they realize that the *Simurgh* has been with them all along, guiding them from within. They realize further that the goal of their quest was ultimately the recognition that their inner selves, together, represent the *Simurgh* (the Persian words *si* and *murgh* mean "thirty" and "birds," respectively). The parable thus illustrates the Sufi concept of the return of the soul to its original source—God Almighty—and the universal spiritual aspiration that provides a common bond and purpose among all human beings.

Much of the understanding and practice of Sufism has been based on Quranic formulations and on the model of Muhammad. For example, the Quranic admonition "and seek to remember Allah often" (62:10) contributed to the practice of meditation, and the Quranic statement that "In the messenger of God [Muhammad] you have a beautiful example of him whose hope is in God and the Last Day and who remembers God a great deal" (33:21) pointed to an appropriate model for the Sufi quest. In addition, Sufis have appealed to a saying attributed to Muhammad, "There is a means for polishing everything that removes rust; what polishes the heart is the remembrance of God." Nevertheless, certain Sufi observances, such as the use of music or dancing as aids to spiritual ecstasy and the veneration of Sufi leaders, were seen by some other Muslims as unacceptable. Conflicts with other groups and scholars in Islam have resulted, along with charges of heresy and unbelief.

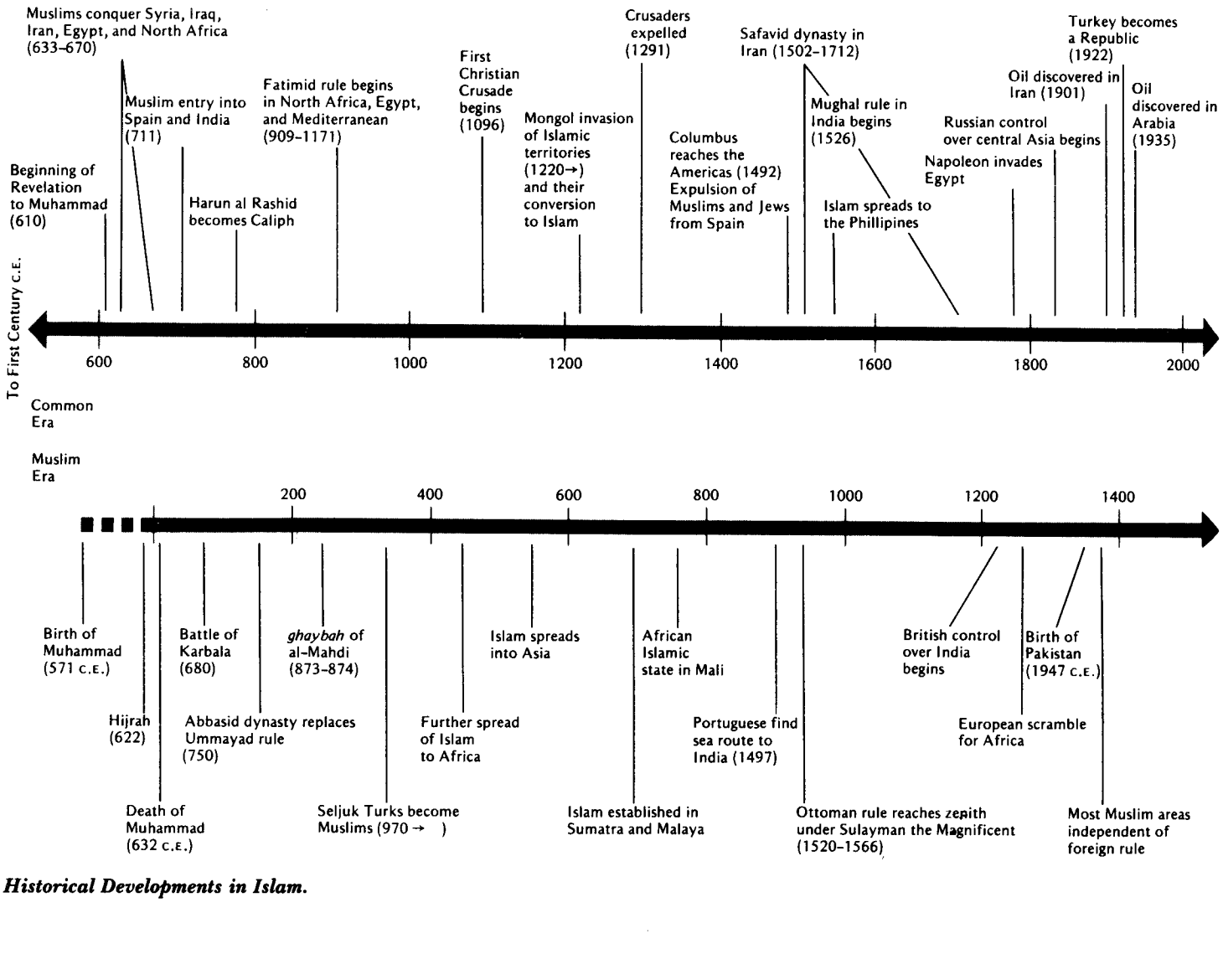
On the whole, however, Sufism has been responsible for creating a deeper awareness of the spiritual dimension of Islam. Through the education provided in the various Orders and their travels and preaching all over the Muslim world, the Sufis rendered an invaluable service to the spread of Islam in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Indonesia, Malaysia, and southeast Asia. They influenced Muslim piety and created the means to express it through their writings and works of art. Sufi poetry and literature in Arabic, Bengali, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Sindhi, Swahili, Hausa, and the languages of Indonesia and Malaysia represent the creative dimension of the synthesis of Islamic and local traditions and forms of cultural expression. Further, this literature provided them with a medium in their own language to express their particular sense of devotion and love for Islam and for the Prophet and to create a bridge for greater understanding of Islam among most non-Muslims in that area. On the other hand, a number of Muslims in the past, and even in the modern era, who have sought to restore Muslim practice to the norms of the Quran have accused Sufism of causing degeneration in Islam.

In addition to their contributions at the literary and cultural levels, some Sufi Orders have also acted as vehicles for political and social movements. To a significant extent, the national struggles in parts of the Muslim world in the nineteenth century derived their fervor from a common bond forged by allegiance to the Sufi Orders.

ISLAM IN CONTACT AND IN TRANSITION

Islam and the Medieval West

The interaction between the world of Islam and the West dates back to the seventh and eighth centuries C.E. At that time, the military expansion of Islam gave Muslims control of the Mediterranean and Spain, and even brought them for a short time beyond the Pyrenees into Southern France. Over the next six centuries this control was consolidated, and Spain became culturally as well as politically an integral part of the Islamic world, which by then stretched from Spain across North Africa to the Middle East and Asia. During this period the area became one of the centers of the civilized world, at a time when parts of the West were regarded as relatively stagnant during the so-called "Dark Ages." It has been estimated that at the height of Muslim power in Spain, one of every six persons in the peninsula probably was Muslim. The crystallization of a Hispanic–Muslim culture was accompa-



Historical Developments in Islam.

nied by the dominance of Muslim educational and legal institutions and the use of Spanish–Arabic as a kind of *lingua franca* for Muslims, Christians, and Jews who lived there. In 1492, Granada, the last stronghold of Muslim rule in Spain, fell; Jews and Muslims who refused to convert to Christianity were expelled, bringing to an end a long period of religious and cultural pluralism and co-existence between the three faiths.

The second major example of the interaction began as a military confrontation and, ironically, resulted in a fruitful influence on learning and culture. The military confrontation was initiated in the First Crusade, launched in 1095 by European Christians to recapture Jerusalem. By this time, the city and the "Holy Land" had been part of the Muslim world for over four hundred years, although pilgrimages by devout Christians to Jerusalem had continued since the Muslim conquest. Leaders of Christianity, the rulers of Europe, and the Byzantine Emperor joined in support of this Crusade. The result was the capture of Jerusalem, as well as the major cities of Antioch, Edessa, and Tripoli, where the Crusaders established themselves. The Muslims were slow to respond, but in due course a concerted effort was made to recapture these cities. In 1187 the Muslim general Saladin recaptured Jerusalem. The Crusades continued intermittently through the thirteenth century. By 1291 the remaining areas in the hands of the Crusaders had been recaptured and the Crusader Kingdom finally put to an end.

Although the Crusades failed in their military purpose of recapturing the "Holy Land" from the Muslims, they did have other enduring results. The most significant of these were the stimulation of economic contact between Europe and the Middle East and the transmission of learning from the universities of the Muslim world to the scholars and academies that were developing in Europe. One example was the effort of Frederick II, ruler of Sicily from 1215 to 1250, to house and translate into Latin manuscripts on philosophy, mathematics, and science preserved in Muslim centers of learning. In addition to the cultural interaction that took place in Spain, the legacy of Islamic civilization exercised a profound influence on medieval Western Europe.

The major Islamic influences on Spain were cultural and linguistic. This was reflected in varied ways, ranging from agriculture to arts and crafts, from war to philosophy, science, architecture, literature, and music. Another aspect of this cultural diffusion was the transmission of Muslim philosophy and science. As mentioned earlier, Muslim philosophers and scientists had sought to preserve and develop Greek learning. Indeed, many works of Aristotle and other classical Greek writers survived primarily through the efforts of these Muslim scholars. This heritage, in its classical form and in the developed form of Islamic philosophy and science (including mathematics, medicine, and astronomy), came to be transmitted through centers of Spanish Muslim learning in Cordova, Granada, and later in Seville and Barcelona. These centers attracted Jewish and Christian scholars from the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe, and provided the intellectual climate in which Jewish scholars such as Moses Maimonides produced their works. The philosophical commentaries and works of Averroes and the scientific and medical texts of Avicenna, among others, also played a role in stimulating the renewal of scientific and intellectual thought in Europe prior to the onset of the Renaissance. For instance, the works of Averroes exerted an influence on the famous medieval Christian theologian Thomas Aquinas.

Although "borrowing" is perhaps too simple a word to describe a process of cultural exchange, a large portion of this transmission continues to be reflected both in material culture and in the intellectual and cultural life of the West. Some examples of transmitted material culture are the Arabian horse, gum Arabic, tobacco, and muslin fabric; in mathematics, the most obvious are the Arabic numerals and the terms *algebra* and *algorithm;* in chemistry, terms such as *alcohol* and *alkali;* in astronomy, *zenith* and *nadir;* in military terminology, *admiral* and *arsenal;* and in agriculture and horticulture, a vast number of new plants, fruits, and vegetables that made their way into Europe and eventually to the Americas. All of this trans-

A Muslim Monument in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Courtesy of Yugoslavia National Tourist Office)

mission suggests that a cosmopolitan culture was forged in medieval times by the interaction of Islam with the Mediterranean world and with Europe, and that much of this heritage spread to and was further elaborated in the West. In recent times migration from many parts of the Muslim world has led to the emergence of small Muslim communities in most of the larger cities of Western Europe and Britain, in addition to the already established Muslim communities of Eastern Europe, such as in Albania and parts of the former Yugoslavia.

Islam, Africa, and Asia

Although the focus here has been primarily on the interaction that took place between Islam and the Mediterranean world and Europe, it must be re-

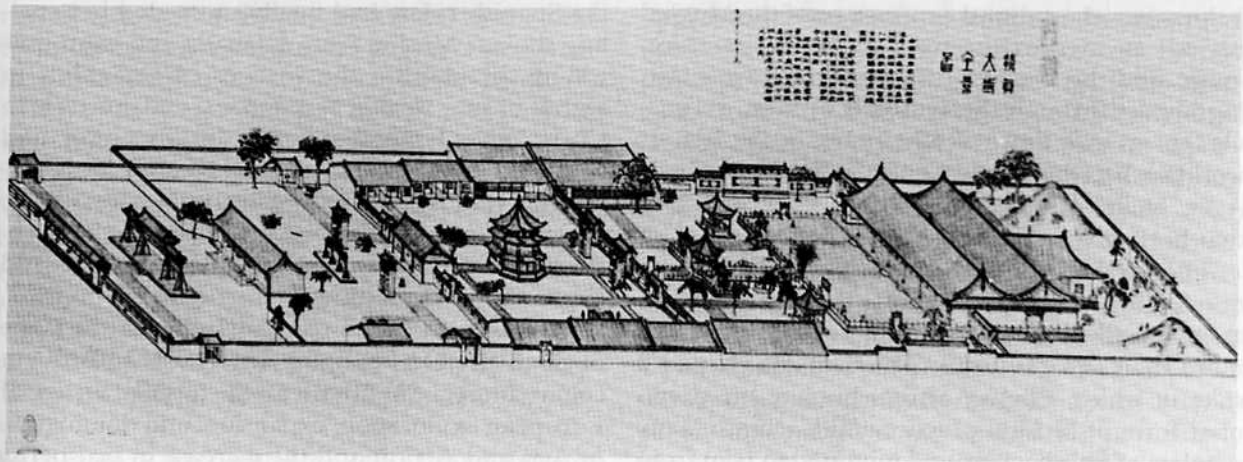
membered that a similar contact also took place between Islam and Africa and Asia. A major difference is that, whereas in most of Europe Muslim rule ended by the nineteenth century, much of Africa and Asia, where Islam established roots, retained and further extended its Muslim heritage. Muslims first came into contact with Africa during Muhammad's time, when a number of his followers sought refuge from persecution in Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). After his death, Muslim influence was extended to North Africa and the coast of East Africa. Over the centuries, Muslim traders, preachers, and Sufis acted as channels for the spread of Islam in West Africa, the Sudan, and into the African heartland. The confluence of Muslim and African cultures south of the Sahara led to a distinctive flowering of civilization. This change took place particularly during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries and is reflected in the rise of Muslim empires in West and Central Africa like the Songhay empire of Gao and Kanem-Bornu. Considerable assimilation of Islam and its culture took place, influencing in particular various African languages. The African Muslims were also stimulated to write their own languages in the Arabic script. Today, as Africa passes through an era of change, Islam continues to grow on that continent and retains strong roots in the areas where it had already established a strong presence.

In Central Asia, Islam faced successive waves of confrontations. The first confrontation was with the Turks, followed by the Mongols, and then the Tatars, who dealt a severe blow to the lands of Islam in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; but in time each of the three invading groups became Muslim and part of the Islamic world. After a long period of Mongol supremacy, Muslim rule in Central Asia was focused in small states, centered around major cities like Bukhara and Samarqand. The kingdom of Bukhara was the most powerful in the Central Asian region and a major center of trade along the famous silk route.

In India, the Muslims encountered an established religious and cultural tradition. Although this encounter often produced violence and led to intense mutual antipathy, the Indo-Muslim confluence produced a culture that is generally regarded as one of the finest to arise in the Muslim world. In the areas of mathematics, astronomy, music, and literature, the Muslims learned a great deal from the indigenous culture of India, which they built on and developed further in the course of their long rule. The dichotomy, however, that was part of Indo-Muslim culture eventually resulted in religious tensions and conflicts between Hindus and Muslims that could not be fully resolved (and are discussed later in this section).

In Indonesia, the situation developed somewhat differently. Wherever it spread in Indonesia and Malaysia, Islam interacted with the indigenous traditions to produce a synthesis of the two. As in Africa south of the Sahara, Islam spread into southeast Asia by means of traders coming from the heartlands of Islam. International trade routes, until late medieval times, were dominated by Muslim merchants and seafarers, and provided a ready channel for the flow of Muslim ideas and influence. Though it was the trading community that opened up these areas of Islam, the specific work of conversion was done by Sufi preachers. By the year 1500, Muslim communities had become established from Burma to Indochina, northern Sumatra, Malaysia, Borneo, and the Southern Philippines. In some of these areas, Muslim communities would continue to be a minority; in the areas now encompassed by the islands of Indonesia, they grew spectacularly. In centers like Java, Muslim civilization would be greatly enriched by interaction with local traditions where the *Shariah* co-existed with *Adat,* or customary law. Further east, Muslim influences and conversion also took place, along trading routes leading into Western China. Islam entered China through ancient trading ports and via the great silk route. The first major Muslim community in China was established as early as the eighth century and grew as trading contacts and cultural influences multiplied. Mosques were allowed to be built and Chinese and Muslim rulers exchanged embassies, gifts, and expanded trading contracts.

The foregoing account traces the various contacts and influences resulting from Islam's interaction with various parts of the world from the ninth



Islam in China. *This is a well-known complex, including "Great Mosque" in Xian, China. The architecture has been adapted to the style prevalent among Buddhist temples in the area.* (Courtesy of Mary Bush)

to the seventeenth centuries. By then Islam had attained its largest growth, and the territory of the world of Islam had tripled in size from the period of first expansion during the eighth century. At its peak, several major Muslim dynasties ruled this territory and the world of Islam at this time had achieved a high degree of cosmopolitanism in its culture and civilization, as well as a dominant position in global maritime and land trade.

The Period of the Great Empires

The largest of the Muslim states was the Ottoman Empire, based in Turkey. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it extended over Central Asia, parts of Europe and the Mediterranean, and most of the Middle East. Other large Muslim states were represented by the Safavid dynasty, which ruled Iran, and the Mughals, who ruled the Indian subcontinent. Smaller Muslim states were to be found in parts of Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia, and western China.

The three large empires were militarily powerful and had a strong established base of Islamic institutions at all levels of administration. In 1453 the Ottomans had captured Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire for a thousand years. Renamed Istanbul, the city gave the Muslims further control of trading and sea routes between Asia and Europe. For three centuries they were also one of the dominant military powers in the area.

Islamic law centers on learning, and administrative institutions were at the heart of the organization of the vast empire. During the reign of the famous Sulayman the Magnificent (reigned 1520–1566), Muslim law and learning had become fully integrated with state administration; the Sunni *ulama* were functioning fully as officials in the governance of the empire. During this period also the *Sultans* enhanced their prestige as patrons of Muslim culture by promoting the building of mosques, palaces, and learning institutions.

Under different circumstances, the Mughal dynasty was also able to give expression to a rich strand of Muslim civilization in India. Though Indian society remained predominantly Hindu, the Mughals under Emperors like Akbar (reigned 1556–1605) were able to extend their rule over a large portion of the Indian subcontinent and administer it through a centralized political system linked by Muslim law and institutions. Akbar, noted for his active interest in other religions, encouraged different groups to join together for discussions; but most of the *ulama* and some of Akbar's successors did not continue his policies. It

is, however, the cultural expressions of the Mughal period—in art, architecture, gardens, literature, music, and the fine arts—that were to leave a lasting impact through the synthesis of local, vernacular forms with those of other parts of the Islamic world such as Persia and Central Asia. The cities of Agra, Delhi, and Lahore still reflect elements of that heritage.

The Safavid rulers of Persia began as a Sufi order, but by the sixteenth century they had emerged as a Shia dynasty whose rule would extend for more than two centuries. The Safavids created a state in which Twelver Shiism became the dominant form of Muslim practice and learning. Many scholars of Shia background migrated to Iran from Iraq, Syria, and Bahrain and a number of learning institutions were established for the training of jurist-scholars. They generally were supportive of the state and even benefited from its patronage. However, they did succeed in maintaining a certain amount of autonomy and were often critical of politics that in their view did not accord with Islamic teaching. As in the Ottoman and Mughal empires, the Safavid rulers became major patrons of the arts, promoting building, learning, trade, and commercial activity on a large scale. Persia exercised a dominant influence on the language of culture and politics as far as Mughal India and the Persian centers of learning maintained the tradition of studying Islamic and ancient philosophy, which had declined elsewhere.

In spite of great regional diversity and variation of culture and life-styles, there extended throughout the territories of these empires and in the more remote centers of Muslim settlement a shared sense of belonging to a larger Muslim *Ummah.* Across all these regions, this common bond and self-identity was reinforced through pilgrimage, travel, trade, and the network of Sufi centers, teachers and learning institutions.

Two events, at the time unnoticed by most Muslims, that took place toward the end of the fifteenth century would, however, profoundly affect their subsequent history. The first was the journey of Christopher Columbus in 1492, which brought him accidentally to the Americas. During that year the Spanish rulers had finally succeeded in expelling the last Muslim from Granada and were now willing to subsidize the voyages of Columbus in search of new wealth, possessions, and converts to Christianity. Until that time Muslim power and control of sea and land had blocked trade and commercial ventures by most European states to the Orient; hence the desire to get around these obstacles and seek direct opportunities for wealth and expansion. The second event occurred in 1497, when Vasco da Gama reached India via the Cape of Good Hope in Southern Africa. The subsequent colonization of the Americas; the onset of an age of European exploration, expansion, and domination of Asia and Africa; and the increase in prosperity generated by economic growth and exploration would change drastically the balance of political and economic power in favor of Europe. By the nineteenth century all three Muslim empires and smaller states were faced with disintegration in the wake of this expansion and military dominance.

Even before the actual loss of political power by the Muslim world, certain areas saw an era of revivalism, which had resulted in attempts to revitalize the faith of Muslims. One such movement took place in Arabia and was led by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1792). He launched a movement whose primary purpose was to make Muslims in Arabia aware of an internal decay in their lives, which in his view could be put right only by returning to the Islamic practice of the early period (that is, the period of the Prophet and his immediate successors). His attack was primarily directed at practices that had developed among Sufi circles, involving visits to the tombs of saints. This attempt at reform based on the idealization of early Islamic history was aided by a cooperative effort on the part of Abdul Wahhab and the head of the Saud family, which subsequently gave Arabia its present name—Saudi Arabia.

Similar internal efforts at revitalization and reform also took place in India, where scholars like Shah Waliyullah (1703–1762) set about establishing schools of learning to stimulate greater thinking on the part of Muslims concerning their heritage. Their attempts at reform also influenced

revival among Sufi orders in Africa. In the nineteenth century several massive attempts were made to revitalize and unite Muslims in Central and West Africa by *jihad* movements. These *jihad* movements were military and educational efforts by leaders of Sufi Orders like Uthman Dan Fodio (d. 1817) in West Africa, Al-Hajj Umar (d. 1864) in what is now Senegal and Gambia, and Muhammad al-Sanusi (d. 1859) in North Africa.

DEVELOPMENTS UNDER EUROPEAN RULE AND INFLUENCE

By the end of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, European expansion and colonization had brought almost the entire Muslim world under direct European rule or influence. Britain controlled India, Malaysia, the Gulf area, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, and portions of West, Central, and East Africa. France exercised power in North Africa and part of West Africa, as well as the Middle East. The Russians had overrun Central Asia, and after the revolution of 1917 several of the large Muslim areas there were incorporated into the newly formed Soviet Union.

The East Indies and parts of Asia and Africa came under the control of other European powers such as Holland, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Those areas not directly colonized—such as Arabia, Turkey, Afghanistan, or Persia—were nonetheless affected by contact with Europe. Thus, there was virtually no area of any significance in the Muslim world that had not been a target of the scramble for colonies or influence. As in other colonized parts of the world, these Muslim regions faced a major disruption of their institutions and cultures during the colonial period.

At least two significant and irreversible trends accompanied the colonial period: The first was the fragmentation of the Muslim world at the political level, which in time would have serious consequences. Among them was the rethinking that accompanied the question of new political boundaries and identities. The Arab regions began to perceive Ottoman sovereignty in their countries as a form of oppression. Regional manifestations emerged, based on affiliations and bonds that went beyond previous notions of linkage based on Islam. Language, ethnicity, and a revised sense of territorial integrity became primary vehicles for the expression of a new force in Muslim cultural consciousness—nationalism. Such nationalism would often find inspiration from or ally itself with Muslim self-identification. It also projected opposition to European rule or control based on traditional historical rivalries between the world of Islam and the West. This rethinking of national identity marked a more secular orientation toward the definition of individual and national lives and boundaries, particularly among an emerging urban elite, educated, and influenced in European settings, institutions, and military academies. The revision of boundaries and the reorganization of power brought into question the role of traditional Muslim structures of authority and law, as well as the future linkages between those Muslim structures and ideas of democratic and constitutional forms of governance and organization.

The second trend would affect a seemingly self-sufficient and introverted community of learned scholars, Sufis, and jurists. The European domination of trade, communication, and military power was linked to ideas and methods increasingly associated with a "scientific" worldview that had emerged in the West. As in Europe, this pattern would call into question the primacy of worldviews based on religious or divinely based conceptions of knowledge and order. As Muslims became familiar with European books and newspapers translated into their own languages, they were led to respond to the new ideas with a reevaluation of their own faith and history and to reflect upon the relevance and value these ideas might have for their own role as custodians of Muslim learning and tradition.

Intellectual Expressions of Reform. One example of the response by nineteenth-century Muslim intellectuals to the influx of European ideas and values is to be found in the activities of Jamal al-din Afghani (1830–1897). Afghani was concerned primarily about the intellectual challenge posed by Western ideas of humanism and science.

He argued that the basic principles of Islam were not incompatible with science, but that Muslim thought during this period had allowed itself to lapse into intellectual stagnation. He sought to arouse a new spirit of inquiry among Muslim scholars that would reconcile Islam with the needs of a changing world of ideas. In addition, he struggled during his travels through the Muslim world to arouse among Muslims a sense of unity to combat the rule of European powers. He urged a form of Pan-Islamic federation of states. Afghani's patently ideological stance did not very often find favor among rulers who were more concerned with national goals, but he did influence individuals, among whom was an Egyptian scholar, Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905). Abduh, in his role as a leader of religious education and law, tried to put many of these ideas into practical use in Muslim institutions of learning. The changes came to be reflected in interpretations of law and in the curriculum of the religious schools, particularly at the University of al-Azhar in Cairo, regarded at the time as a major center of Muslim learning.

In the Indian subcontinent attempts were made at reconciliation between Muslims and Western ideals by scholars such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1889), Sayyid Amir Ali (1849–1928), and Muhammad Iqbal (1876–1938), a poet and philosopher. The efforts of Sayyid Ahmad led to the establishment of what eventually came to be called the Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh, India, where the curriculum reflected a desire to blend traditional Muslim studies with subjects dealing with the sciences of the day. Amir Ali also argued strongly for a reassessment of the social principles of the *Shariah* on the basis of a more contemporary interpretation of the Quran. Muhammad Iqbal tried in his works to fuse the concepts of faith and intuition. Basing his thought on that of the Muslim philosophers and the Sufis, as well as on contemporary Western philosophic thought, he tried to give a new direction to modern Muslim thinking by asserting that Quranic principles supported intellectual and spiritual life and that by reviving these principles Muslims could revitalize and reconstruct their contemporary social and community lives.

In the Sudan a Sufi leader by the name of Muhammad Ahmad succeeded in building a movement that was based on his claim to be the *Mahdi,* the divinely guided leader who was to restore true Islamic justice and rule. His efforts to establish a state lasted until the end of the nineteenth century, when the British occupied the Sudan.

The views of some of these intellectuals and leaders did not necessarily reflect those of all Muslim thinkers of the time. It was among those who did not espouse this "modernist" approach that alternative approaches arose, which in turn gave rise to organized movements. One of these was the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Brotherhood of Muslims), which developed in Egypt primarily as a result of the work and teachings of two individuals: Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949) and Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966). They believed that Islam, as a total way of life revealed by God, ought to be fully implemented uniformly in all Muslim countries. They regarded the emerging nationalism of various Muslim countries and the trend of Westernization as divisive elements. The truly Islamic state, if established, would embrace all Muslims, and its leaders would be elected and rule in consultation with the members of that state. The movement organized itself in Egypt to spread its views, but its activities were considered a threat to the goals of nationalism by the Egyptian government and the movement was declared illegal; its leaders were often imprisoned and either assassinated or executed. It managed to continue its work in other parts of the Middle East, and more recently has assumed a public role in political and social affairs.

A similar movement, called the *Jamat-i-Islami,* developed in India (and subsequently in Pakistan). It was founded by Abu Ala Mawdudi (d. 1979) and argued for an Islamic state based on the *Shariah;* it established itself as a political party to attain its goals. Although never attaining power, it continued to play a major role in determining the role of Islam in the life of Muslims of the subcontinent. In general, such movements sought inspiration by relating their goals to the model of Muslim life and organization, which they believed had been attained in the beginnings of Islam, in the community founded by God through Muhammad.

Political Expressions of Nationalism. All of the foregoing efforts were active at the same time as the movement to regain independence from European rule, a movement that began to intensify in the Muslim world in the twentieth century and that eventually led to the establishment of a host of independent Muslim nation-states. One significant issue in this process was that of which political forms and models of development these countries should adopt.

An early example was Turkey. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, known as Ataturk, the disintegrating Ottoman Empire was replaced in 1923 by a new secular state called Turkey. Ataturk believed that the influence of outmoded Muslim institutions and leaders had caused the Muslim peoples to fall behind Europe in progress and development. He therefore initiated a deliberate program of Westernization at all levels. This process limited the scope of the *Shariah* drastically. Government, education, and law were the areas most strongly affected. The position of the caliph was abolished and replaced by a republican form of government with Ataturk as President. A system of education modeled on a European pattern was set up and the application of Islamic law was limited to personal matters. Ataturk also attempted to abolish traditional forms of dress, replaced the Arabic script with a Latin one, and encouraged the integration of women into the new educational institutions and the work force of the country. Thus, a total revision of institutions took place: Islam continued to be a living force in the lives of most Turks, but it ceased to be a vehicle for transformation of traditional institutions into modern ones. Turkey had become a secular state.

At about the same time, Persia was also going through a phase of political change. The rule of the Safavids had been followed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by that of shorter dynasties. By the beginning of the twentieth century, a movement for constitutional reform had begun and a new constitution providing for a modern state had been promulgated in 1906. But intense rivalries and European involvement did not allow this process to be continued. In 1921 power came into the hands of a colonel called Reza Khan who, after proclaiming himself a new "Shah" (the Persian term for "Emperor") set about a policy of Westernization similar to that of Ataturk. In Iran,* the problem was complicated by the fact that the religious scholars, or *mullahs,* had always played a decisive role in influencing the life of the state. The policies of Reza Shah were continued by his son Mohammed Reza Shah. His policies of modernization, fueled to a large extent by growing revenues from oil exports, led to the increasing isolation of the *mullahs* from the political and economic life of the country. However, their close contacts with the people allowed the *mullahs* to build a network of opposition to what they regarded as alien, secular influences under the Shah. The more Western-educated desire to integrate contemporary developments with their Muslim heritage. A leading figure in this movement was Ali Shariati (d. 1977); in spite of continuing harassment by the state he was able to evoke a significant response among students and the younger segment of the population, who perceived rampant but superficial technological modernization and Western influence in Iran as detrimental to religious values and cultural identity. All of these groups united in calling for the creation of a more Islamic society in Iran. This opposition, in combination with other political and economic factors, eventually led to mass opposition to the Shah, followed by a revolution (led by Ayatollah Khomeini) that brought into existence the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.

Meanwhile, in British-ruled India, a movement had arisen among Muslims that led to the demand for an independent state. Their spokesmen, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, known as the founder of Pakistan, wished for the creation of a separate Islamic state. In 1947 the British partitioned what was then India; from the predominantly Muslim northwest and northeast areas, Pakistan was born, consisting of West and East Pakistan, separated by over one thousand miles and major ethnic and linguistic differences. In spite of these differences the desire for a unified state for all Muslims of the subcontinent had been an overwhelming force in

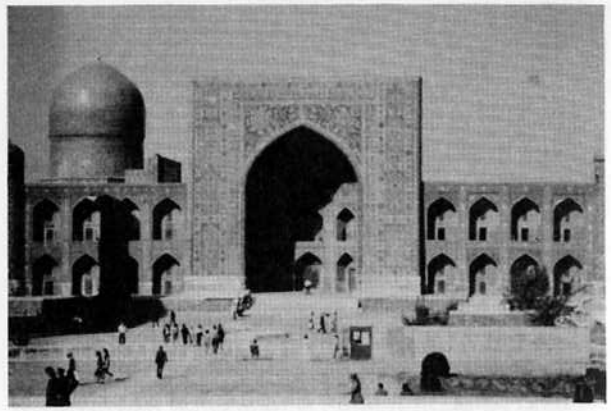
* The name of the country was changed from Persia to Iran in 1935.

the creation of the new Islamic state. The definition of this state, its form of government, the role of the *Shariah* in its legal system, and the diversity of its ethnic groups were all factors that eventually put great stress on the unity of Pakistan; the eventual dissolution of the two-part state led to the emergence of yet another new country, Bangladesh, which superseded East Pakistan in 1971. Today, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India together are home to almost three hundred million Muslims.

In Indonesia an independence movement that combined elements of nationalism and Islam led to the expulsion of the Dutch colonial power and to political independence in 1949. Under Sukarno, who became president of Indonesia, a policy of "Indonesian socialism" was implemented to create national and economic unity. His policies, however, were unsuccessful and led to internal conflict and the eventual establishment of military rule in Indonesia. Today, Islam continues to be a major force in Indonesia, which is recognized as the country with the largest population of Muslims in the world; but Indonesian political and social life includes other religious traditions as well.

Muslim populations in North and West Africa also succeeded in their struggle for independence during this period. In Algeria, which was regarded by the French as an integral part of France and where many of the French had made their homes, a long drawn-out revolution finally ended in 1962, after much bloodshed and the eventual departure of French settlers. Some of these movements received their momentum and organization from allegiance to Muslim institutions such as Sufi Orders, or were organized by individuals who claimed leadership on the basis of leading Islamic movements. An example of the latter was the revolt against the British led by the Mahdi of Sudan.

A whole series of nation-states had thus emerged in the present century. Most of them, at the time of attaining independence found themselves facing fundamental political, economic, and social challenges that were far different from those faced by Muslims in the past. Indeed, the new map of the former "World of Islam" proved to be very different from that of the age of Muslim empires



Registan Square, Samarkand, Uzbekistan. *The buildings within this complex include three* Madrasas *in this famous central Asian city.* (Courtesy S. Ozkan/Aga Khan Award for Architecture)

and European rule. New boundaries had been created, not everywhere following any logical national or cultural contours. Many ethnic and sectarian groups found themselves incorporated into nation-states, in which long-standing rivalries would have to be negotiated and revised. These nation-states embodied a wide variety of political structures and authority, from monarchies to republics, representative democracies, military regimes, and tribal confederations. Nationalism would prove in the short run to be a dynamic force in uniting diverse populations; but it would in the long run struggle and weaken as older ethnic and sectarian identities asserted themselves, putting a great deal of strain on relationships among neighboring nations and peoples. Just as in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe, there was no assurance that these new nation-states embodied a framework facilitating a smooth transition into the new era of independence and sovereignty. It is also worth noting that developments in most of the Muslim nation-states since the end of the Second World War came to be influenced by the long period of superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. As both sought to influence direction in Africa and Asia, their struggle invariably caused many Muslim nation-states to seek an alliance with

one or the other—often based on considerations that did not take account of local needs, cultural values, or priorities. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the struggle for supremacy between two centralized world powers, will have a major effect on these Muslim nation-states as they reevaluate their priorities and roles in a changed world order. And as the various regions of the former Soviet Union reorganize themselves, the predominant Muslim Central Asian Republics, no longer subject to hegemonic socialist doctrine, are reconstituting themselves better to relate their past traditions to contemporary realities.

Islam in the Americas

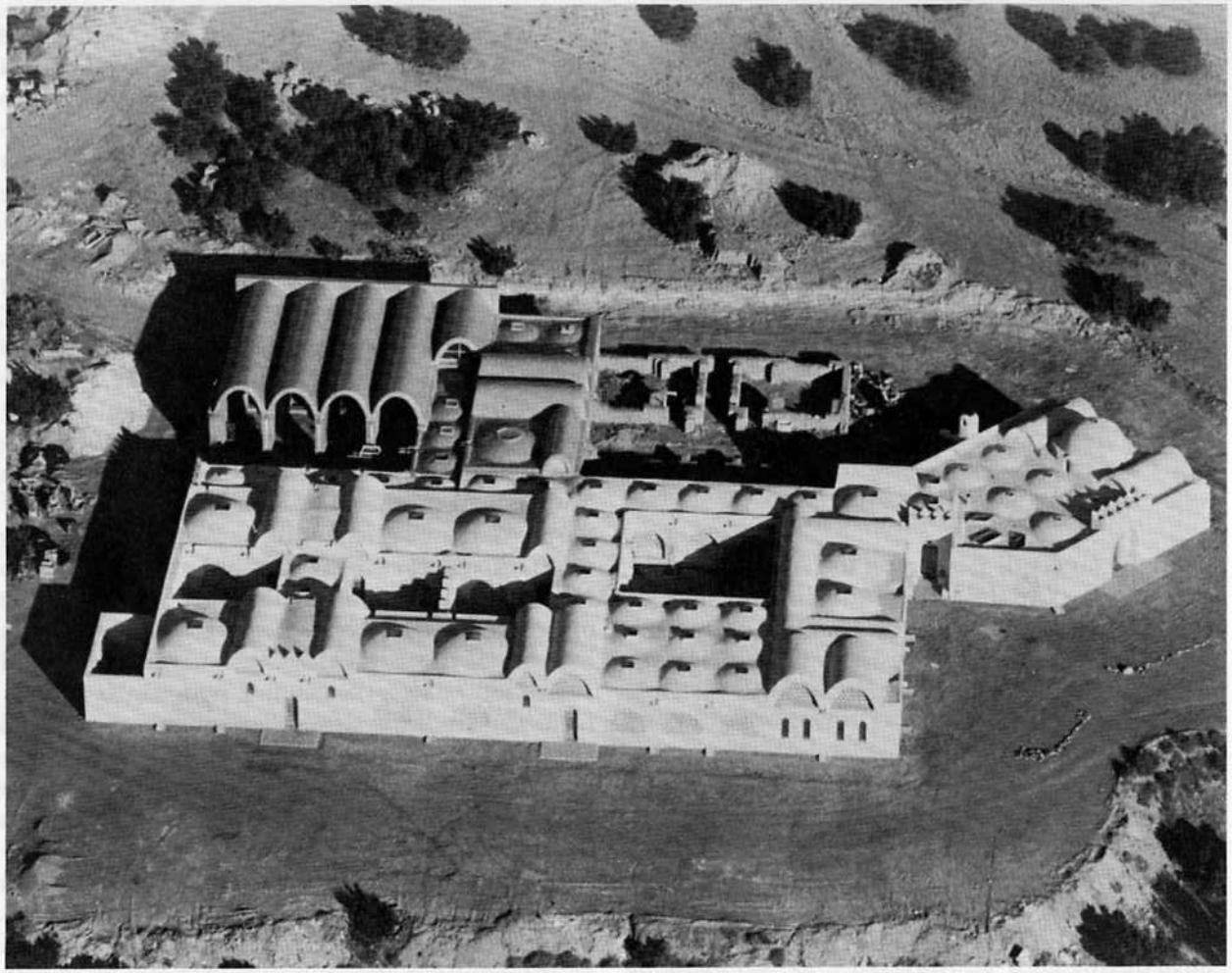
The first contact of Islam with the Americas probably dates back to the time of the Spanish voyages of exploration in the sixteenth century. It is uncertain whether there were many among the Spaniards who still retained their Moorish–Islamic heritage.

We can, however, be more certain about the fact that among the many blacks who were forced to come to America under the yoke of slavery there were many Muslims from the Islamic regions of West Africa. Although the memory of Islam may have survived among the early generation of slaves, the inhuman conditions under which they served and the imposed standards of slavery all but eliminated any traces of their religious heritage.

In the Caribbean, indentured Muslims who had been brought from India settled in what is now Guyana. Elsewhere, Muslim communities developed in Trinidad and Suriname. Today Muslims also live in many other Latin American countries. In the United States, it was not until the twentieth century that among some of the descendants of involuntary immigrants a recovery of the awareness of an Islamic heritage began to develop. The figure responsible for this process was a black man who would eventually call himself Elijah Muhammad. He learned about Islam from a somewhat mysterious figure named Wali Farrad, who claimed to have come from Mecca to awaken among the black people of America an awareness of their lost Islamic heritage. The task of doing this was left to Elijah Muhammad, who was designated as "the messenger of Allah." He became a figure of great controversy; but it is clear that his primary motivation was to provide his followers with a sense of self-identity and dignity, long denied to them, based on the past link with Islam. The movement, which became known as the "Nation of Islam," found many converts, among whom were the civil rights leader Malcolm X and the boxer Muhammad Ali.

After Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, the role of leader was assumed by his son Warith Deen Muhammad (Wallace Muhammad). The name of the movement was changed to World Community of Islam and eventually to the American Muslim Mission. Under Warith Deen Muhammad the movement has sought to receive recognition as a member of the worldwide Muslim community and attempted in its practice and philosophy to conform to standards generally common among all Muslims. He has tried to deemphasize some aspects of legend and controversy associated with Elijah Muhammad, in particular the exclusively "black" nature of the movement and the definition of his role as messenger of Allah. Although the group is not without its internal differences, the American Muslim Mission now considers itself as representing the interests of Islam in North America; it counts among its goals the fostering of greater awareness of traditional Islam among its adherents. It has also recently sought to abolish its separate organizational framework and to identify more fully with the larger Muslim community in America, while still continuing to promote economic and social development at the local level.

In addition to this group there are now in North America other Muslims, descendants of immigrants from all parts of the Islamic world, who attest to a strong Islamic presence. There are more than six hundred centers serving Muslims and several newly established mosques in the major cities of the United States and Canada. Active organiza-



Dar al Islam Complex. *The Muslim Presence in North America: The Dar al Islam Complex near Abiquiu, New Mexico.* (Courtesy of Dar al Islam. Photograph by Paul Logsdon)

tions of Muslims serve the needs of local communities as well as international Muslim students. The Muslim presence is now a very visible part of the religious landscape of North America.

ISLAM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

The new Muslim states and communities that constitute the world of Islam today are expressing, in varying degrees, a need to relate their Islamic heritage to questions of national and cultural self-identification and development. This phenomenon, which has drawn worldwide attention, is however part of a global process affecting virtually all religions, and points to the continuing vitality and persistence of the religious dimension in contemporary life. In the Muslim world, as elsewhere, domestic or international conflict has in some cases come to be expressed in religious terms, causing a great deal of misunderstanding and confusion regarding the role of Islam in contemporary Muslim societies.

Because the modern conception of religion fa-

miliar to most people in the West assumes a theoretical separation between religious and secular activity, the integration of these perspectives in Muslim discourse, particularly in political life, appears alarming and often retrogressive. Where the language of politics expressed in religious terms has in some cases become allied with radical change or violence, it has led to distorted conceptions of the relationship between Islamic values and change. In general, such conceptions have derived from experience with change in a small number of Muslim countries that have gained recognition because of the presence of important natural resources such as oil or because their geopolitical location is of strategic importance in international affairs. The unfortunate preoccupation with immediate and primarily political implications and dimensions of change overlooks much of the larger process in which diverse Muslim societies are dealing with the relationship between their Islamic heritage and their contemporary life.

It must be noted that the practice and influence of Islam in all these areas did not cease during the period of colonial rule, nor in the period immediately following the attainment of sovereign status. Rather, the traditional role of Islam in shaping political, social, and cultural life came to be undermined or curtailed. The recent emphasis and debate has been on reviving the traditional role, which many Muslims believe was eclipsed to the detriment of their societies. Further, the loss of economic and political power and the emphasis on nationalism as ideology has affected Islam's role in assisting societies to adapt to changing conditions and to redress the balance against dominant, alien influences. The discussion about Islam's role in political and cultural life has become much more pronounced recently and involves a definition of sociopolitical issues in traditional religious terms. It is against this background—the effort to create continuity with past values based on the conception of Islam as a total way of life—that the general phenomenon sometimes called the "resurgence" of Islam can best be understood.

In the varied responses, no one trend can be identified as typical, for the influence of Islam in these diverse areas is neither monolithic nor homogeneous. Some of the responses to change have led to internal conflict and an increasingly aggressive stance against outside influences. In most cases, however, Muslim states have shown an increasing recognition of global interdependence; wider contacts among Muslims today may serve to shrink the divisive effects of national and ethnic boundaries. Various international organizations and activities now link Muslims with each other and with the rest of the world and have become vehicles for addressing common problems and needs. There has also been greater emphasis on the role of private, indigenous institutions, which complement the work of governments and international agencies, to promote greater self-reliance, to decrease dependence on foreign aid, and to solve social and developmental problems. Education has led to greater self-awareness of how the Islamic heritage can be integrated within the framework of contemporary institutions and needs, and this has led in most areas of the Muslim world to a greater interest in retaining and adapting, within the context of the Islamic heritage, institutions, laws, educational principles, modes of architecture, and patterns of urban, rural, and social life. Islam has just entered a new century: Its fifteenth promises to be at least as dramatic as any that has preceded it.

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1. Margaret Smith, *Readings from the Mystics of Islam* (London: Luzac, 1972), p. 11.
2. Ibn Tufayl, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, L. E. Goodman, trans. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1972).
3. Jalal al-din Rumi, *Mathnawi* (London: Luzac, 1926), part one, vss. 1–4.
4. Farid al-din Attar, *The Conference of the Birds*, C. S. Nott, trans. (Berkeley: Shambala, 1971).

GLOSSARY

adhān (*uhd-haahn*) the call to prayer made from a mosque five times a day. The giver of *adhan* is known as a *muezzin* (*mu'adhdhin*).

Allāh (*uhl-laah*) the Quranic term for the one true God.

dār al-Islām (*daahr-uhl-is-laahm*) the World of Islam, the territory where Islam is most prevalent.

dhikr (*dhi-kruh*) invocation or remembrance of the names of God, one of the meditative practices, particularly in Sufism.

dīn (*deen*) the concept of religion in the Quran.

du'ā (*doo-aah;* the apostrophe represents the Arabic glottal stop) voluntary prayer, in addition to **salat.**

al-Fātiḥah (*uhl-faah-ti-huh*) the title of the opening **surah** (chapter) of the Quran.

fiqh (*fik'-uh*) literally "understanding"; the term applied to the science of Islamic law. The specialists or legalists are called *faqih* (pl. *fuqaha'*).

ḥadīth (*huh-deeth*) a report recording a saying or action of the Prophet Muhammad.

Ḥajj (*huhjj*) the pilgrimage to Mecca and its environs during the month of pilgrimage. When visited at other times during the year, the visit is called *'Umrah.*

Hijrah (*hij-ruh*) the Prophet's emigration from Mecca to Medina in 622, the year from which the Muslim lunar calendar dates.

'Id (*'eed*) festival; there are two major *'Id* in the Muslim year: the *'Id al Adhā* (the Festival of Sacrifice), part of the concluding ceremonies of the pilgrimage; and *'Id al Fiṭr* (the Festival ending the fast of Ramadan).

iḥrām (*ih-raahm*) the state of sanctity and purity during the pilgrimage.

ijma *or* **ijmā'** (*ijj-maah*) consensus of scholars reflecting their unanimous opinion at any given time.

Ijtihād (*ij-ti-haahd*) literally "exerting oneself," the personal intellectual effort to understand Islam. One who exercises *Ijtihād* is called a *mujtahid.*

Imām (*i-maahm*) leader, generally referring to the person who leads others in prayer. In the past the term was used interchangeably with *caliph,* for the head of the state and occasionally as an honorific title for very learned religious scholars. Among the Shia, the Imam is a divinely appointed leader, succeeding the Prophet. He possesses spiritual knowledge and guides Muslims to an understanding of the inner meaning of revelation as well as implementing Islamic values according to changing times and circumstances.

jihād (*jih-haahd*) struggle in the way of Islam; also applied to armed struggle for the cause of Islam. The one who fights is called *mujahid.*

jinn (*jin*) spirits and invisible beings referred to in the Quran.

Ka'ba (*kuh-buh*) the cubic structure in Mecca, the focal point of ceremonies of pilgrimage and the direction to which all Muslims turn for prayer.

Khalīfah (*khuh-lee-fuh*) Caliph, the title adopted by the rulers of the Muslim community after the death of Muhammad.

Khwārij (*or* **Kharijites**) (*khwaah-rij*) those among early Muslims who separated themselves from the rest of the community and established themselves as a distinct and often militant group.

Mahdī (*muh-dee*) the title given by the Shia to the hidden Imam whose return is awaited.

masjid (*muhs-jid*) mosque, the place of worship in Islam.

Mawlid (*muv-leed*) the birthday of the Prophet, a day of celebration and remembrance.

miḥrāb (*mih-raahb*) the niche in the mosque that marks the *qiblah,* the direction toward Mecca.

minbar (*min-buhr*) the pulpit in the mosque for preaching.

Miraj *or* **Mi'rāj** (*mih-raahj*) the event in the life of Muhammad when he experienced the **isra'** or "ascent" into heaven, the night commemorated by Muslims with special prayers and remembrance.

Muḥarram (*muh-huhr-rum*) the month of the Muslim year of special significance to the Shia, who commemorate the memory and martyrdom of their Imam Husayn during the first ten days of Muharram, the tenth day being known as *'Ashūra'* (*aah-shoo-raah*)

Qāḍī (*kaah-dhee*) an official appointee of the state as judge to administer the **Shariah.**

qiblah (*kib-luh*) the direction of Mecca toward which Muslims turn in ritual prayer.

qiyās (*ki-yaahs*) analogy, a principle in law, enabling scholars to use analogous reasoning.

Quran *or* **Qur'ān** (*kur-aahn*) the revelation of God to Muhammad in its collected form.

rak'ah (*ruhk-uh*) the unit of ritual prayer, during which a Muslim performs the specific required actions.

Ramaḍān (*ruh-muh-dhaahn*) the month in which fasting is practiced.

salām (*suh-laahm*) the greeting of peace exchanged by Muslims; more fully, *salam alaykum:* Peace be upon you!

ṣalāt (*suh-laaht*) the ritual prayer in Islam.

ṣawn (*sawn*) fasting, particularly during the month of Ramadan.

shahādah (*shuh-haah-duh*) the act of witnessing or attesting to the formula—"There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." This formula is known as *kalima.*

Shariah *or* **Shari'ah** (*shuh-ree-yuh*) the concept of the right way, formalized as law and code of conduct.

Shia *or* **Shi'ah** (*shee-yuh*) the group of Muslims who initially supported the claims of 'Ali and his descendants to the headship of the Muslim community and subsequently developed into a distinctive religious group within Islam. Among the various subgroups the most important are the *Ithna 'Ashari,* the *Isma'ili,* and the *Zaydi.*

Ṣūfi (*soo-fee*) the Muslims who seek through the path of reli-

gious experience and spiritual discipline to acquire personal knowledge and intimacy with God.

Sunnah (*sun-nuh*) the custom or tradition of the Prophet that complements the Quran as a source for Muslim faith and practice.

Sunnī (*sun-nee*) the term used to designate the group in Islam called *ahl al Sunna wa'l Jama'a* (The People of the Tradition and the Majority).

Sūrah (*soo-ruh*) a chapter of the Quran.

tafsīr (*tuhf-seer*) explanation of the Quran with primary emphasis on the study of the context and meaning of revealed verses.

takbīr (*tuhk-beer*) the recitation of praise, "Allahu Akbar," which means "God is Great."

Ṭarīqah (*tuh-ree-kuh*) the path of discipline leading to knowledge of God, also a Sufi Order or group.

Tawhīd (*toh-heed*) the doctrine of Divine Unity.

ta'wīl (*taah-weel*) explanation and analysis of the inner meaning of Quranic verses.

Ulama *or* **'ulamā'** (*ul-luh-maah;* the first *u* is as in *pull*) plural of *'alim,* the learned scholars and custodians of religious knowledge. In Iran they are called *mullah* and also referred to with other titles, the highest among which is that of *ayatollah,* meaning "sign of God."

Ummah (*um-muh;* the first *u* is as in *pull*) "community," an inclusive concept signifying Muslims as well as those under Muslim protection.

wuḍū (*wu-dhoo;* the first *u* is as in *pull*) the act of ablution or cleansing prior to the performance of ritual prayer.

zakāt (*zuh-kaaht*) the act of almsgiving as a means of purification.

ziyārah (*zee-yaah-ruh*) (pl. *ziyārat*) visits paid, particularly among the Shia and the Sufis, to places where the Imams or other pious figures are buried.

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gious experience and spiritual discipline to acquire personal knowledge and intimacy with God.

Sunnah (*sun-nuh*) the custom or tradition of the Prophet that complements the Quran as a source for Muslim faith and practice.

Sunnī (*sun-nee*) the term used to designate the group in Islam called *ahl al Sunna wa'l Jama'a* (The People of the Tradition and the Majority).

Sūrah (*soo-ruh*) a chapter of the Quran.

tafsīr (*tuhf-seer*) explanation of the Quran with primary emphasis on the study of the context and meaning of revealed verses.

takbīr (*tuhk-beer*) the recitation of praise, "Allahu Akbar," which means "God is Great."

Ṭarīqah (*tuh-ree-kuh*) the path of discipline leading to knowledge of God, also a Sufi Order or group.

Tawhīd (*toh-heed*) the doctrine of Divine Unity.

ta'wīl (*taah-weel*) explanation and analysis of the inner meaning of Quranic verses.

Ulama *or* **'ulamā'** (*ul-luh-maah;* the first *u* is as in *pull*) plural of *'alim,* the learned scholars and custodians of religious knowledge. In Iran they are called *mullah* and also referred to with other titles, the highest among which is that of *ayatollah,* meaning "sign of God."

Ummah (*um-muh;* the first *u* is as in *pull*) "community," an inclusive concept signifying Muslims as well as those under Muslim protection.

wuḍū (*wu-dhoo;* the first *u* is as in *pull*) the act of ablution or cleansing prior to the performance of ritual prayer.

zakāt (*zuh-kaaht*) the act of almsgiving as a means of purification.

ziyārah (*zee-yaah-ruh*) (pl. *ziyārat*) visits paid, particularly among the Shia and the Sufis, to places where the Imams or other pious figures are buried.

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