

**WORLD RELIGIONS: SESSION FIVE**  
**ISLAM: “SUBMISSION”**

**1. Intro to Islam**

- A. Muslim: “one who submits”
- B. Islam: “Submission”  
    *“In relation to Allah, religion is submission.” Qur’an 3:19*
- C. Muhammad
  - Lived 570 - 632 AD
  - Born in Mecca
  - Claimed to receive revelations from God beginning in 610 AD
- D. Qur’an: “reciting”
  - 114 chapters, called “surahs”
  - Arranged longest surah to shortest
  - Considered to be the very words of Allah, dictated to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel
  - Arabic language
- E. Sunna: the way of the Prophet
  - Muhammad’s life is the perfect example for how to interpret the Qur’an and live the Muslim life.
  - Stories about his life (what he said, did, approved of, disapproved of . . . )were collected and written down 120-150 years later; individual stories are called **HADITH** or traditions.
  - Indispensable guide for Muslim life

**“SHARIA” : ISLAMIC LAW**

- ▶Codified during 9th & 10th centuries
- ▶Qur’an + Hadith + Scholarly Consensus
- ▶Four Sunni schools, Two Shia
- ▶Mostly deals with religious life, but includes family, business, social and criminal law.

- F. Two eras in Muhammad’s life
  - 1. Meccan era: 610-622 AD
    - Message of monotheism
    - Continuity with People of the Book
    - Muhammad sees himself as “just a warner” and “a herald of good news to people who believe.”
    - Small group of followers
    - A persecuted prophet (opposition from the powerful Quraish tribe who controlled Mecca)
    - Muhammad and his followers forbidden to fight; *jihad* is a spiritual struggle to stay true to the faith.

## 2. Medinan era: 622-632 AD

- Migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina; this migration is called the *Hijra*.
- In Medina, large numbers accept Islam
- Treaties made with the Jewish tribes in the area
- Muhammad the head of a city-state. Laws established for religious and social life of the believers
- Permission to fight defensively; *jihad* is a physical struggle
- Caravan raids; 65 Campaigns and raids; Muhammad led 27 raids and fought in 9 battles (Muhammad a military leader).
- Eventually, harsher revelations regarding Jews and Christians. Change in the direction of prayer from Jerusalem (like the Jews) to the Kaaba in Mecca.
- Eventually, fighting in the cause of Allah made obligatory; martyrdom themes
- Conquest of Mecca in 630 AD
- Authority of Muhammad not to be questioned.

*"And when Allah and Allah's Messenger have decided a matter, it is not for a believing man or woman to have any choice in their decree; for anyone who defies Allah and Allah's messenger is already in error." Qur'an 33:36*

## G. The Big Split: Sunni and Shi'a

- 632 AD Muhammad died without a successor and no male children.
- Some favored selecting a new leader (Caliph) from Muhammad's blood line: Ali (his cousin and son-in-law). "Party of Ali."
- Some favored selecting the most capable leader who would follow the Prophet's sunna.
- The "Sunni" won out and Abu Bakr was selected as the first Caliph.(632-634)
- Fourth Caliph was Ali.(656-661)
- Ali's son, Hussein (Muhammad's grandson) was killed by the Muslim Umayyad army at the battle of Karbala (Iraq) in 680. This event is memorialized every year by Shi'a Muslims.
- The Shi'a developed some doctrines and practices that are different from the Sunni.
- Shi'a are in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria. About 15% of global Muslim population
- Sunni make up 85% of global Muslim population

## H. Sufism

- Mystical Islam (8th-9th Century)
- Focus on direct encounter, and ultimately a mystical union, with God, rather than legalism
- Unique beliefs and practices
- Other Muslims often see Sufism as unorthodox
- Widespread in India, Pakistan, Iran and Africa

## 2. Practicing Islam

### A. The Five Essential Beliefs

#### 1. Allah

- *The God*

- The Creator of the Heavens and the Earth
- Sovereign, Almighty, Eternal, Self-existent
- All-knowing, wise, just
- Benevolent, compassionate, merciful
- Forgiving
- Love?  
Allah loves the believers and those who obey him.  
There are no statements in the Qur'an of Allah's universal love for mankind.
- Doctrine of *Tawheed*: the "oneness" of Allah  
Allah has no equals: *"Say, 'It is Allah, unique, Allah the eternal, not begetting or begotten, not having any equal.'" Qur'an 112*  
Allah is not part of a trio: *"Those who say Allah is one third of three have certainly blasphemed for there is no deity but one Allah." Qur'an 5:72-73*  
Allah doesn't have sons: *"And yet they say, 'The Benevolent One has begotten a son.' You have certainly come up with a terrible thing. The skies are nearly rent asunder from it, the earth nearly splits, and the mountains nearly crumble that they should assign a son to the Benevolent One" Qur'an 2:88*

## 2. Prophets

- Islam accepts the Old Testament prophets, as well as Jesus and John the Baptist
- The prophets were sinless
- Muhammad was the final, universal prophet

### The "Prophet" Jesus

- Born of the virgin Mary, but fully human, not divine  
*"How can the creator of the heavens and the earth have a son without having a consort?"*  
*Quran 6:101*
- Did miracles (with Allah's permission)
- Preached the basic monotheistic message of Islam
- The *injl* (*Gospel*) came through Jesus
- Jesus prophesied the coming of Muhammad
- Jesus did *not* die on the cross
- He will return, first to judge Christians and break all crosses.

## 3. Judgment

- Each human being is born pure (and technically Muslim)
- Human beings have a strong tendency to stray from Allah
- Human beings need guidance, not a savior, so Allah sends prophets and scriptures.
- Allah will judge each person's thoughts and actions  
*"Then when the trumpet is sounded those whose balances are heavy (with good deeds) will be the happy ones, while those whose balances are light (with good deeds) are the ones who have lost their souls, to abide in hell."*  
*Qur'an 24:101-102*

- Allah offers the *possibility* of forgiveness  
*“Allah does not forgive idolatry of anyone or anything, but forgives all else for whomever Allah wills.” Quran 4:116*
- Allah will assign each person either to paradise or hellfire.

Paradise	Hellfire
<i>“They will recline on carpets lined with silk brocade, and the fruit of two gardens will be near at hand . . . In them will be women who restrain their glances whom no previous man . . . has deflowered.” Qur’an 55:54-56</i>	<i>“Those who repudiate Our [Allah’s] signs We will burn in a fire; when the skins are roasted, We will change their skins so they can taste the torment.” Qur’an 4:57</i>

- There is no assurance of salvation in Islam, with the exception of true martyrdom.

#### 4. Scriptures

- Allah gave the Torah to the Jews and the Gospel to the Christians, so they are called “People of the Book” (or “People of Scripture). (Note, however, that what Muslims mean by “Gospel” is not what Christians mean by that term.)
- According to Islam, Jews and Christians changed and distorted their Scriptures.
- The Qu’ran is the final, correct Scripture.

#### 5. Spirit Beings

- Angels
- Jinn (fire spirits)—can be similar to the biblical concept of demon, except that they are not *all* evil.
- Satan

### B. The Five Essential Practices (The Five Pillars)

1. *Shahadah*: The confession of faith  
*(I confess)... There is no Allah but Allah, and Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah.*
2. *Salat*: Ritual prayers said five times daily (dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, night)
3. *Ramadan*: Fasting during daylight hours (no water or food) during all the days of the month of Ramadan in the Islamic calendar
4. *Zakat*: 2.5% of wealth given to charity
5. *Hajj*: pilgrimage to Mecca once in a Muslim’s life (if they are able)

### C. Da’wah: The Call to Islam

*“He [Allah] who hath sent his apostle with guidance and the religion of truth to proclaim it over all religion though the pagans may detest it.” Qur’an 9:33*

*Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and debate with others in the most dignified manner. For your Lord knows best who is astray from the way of Allah, and knows best who are the ones who are guided.” Qur’an 16:125*