A high-angle photograph of a large mosque interior. The floor is covered with a dense carpet of people in various colored prayer mats, all in a state of prostration (sujood) during prayer. The mosque features high ceilings with large, arched windows and a balcony with a blue railing. The lighting is warm, with chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious Most Merciful.
Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the
Worlds.
Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
Master of the Day of Judgement.
Thee do we worship and Thine aid we seek.
Show us the straight way.
The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
those whose (portion) is not wrath and who go not astray.*

Source: Qur'an 1:17

*This is the first chapter of
the Qur'an, the sacred
text of Islam. It is called
al-Fatihah, which means
"the Opening," and is
recited several times when
a person prays, or performs
the salat. Muslims pray to
one God whose name is
Allah.*



Chapter Eight

Islam

8

Read the text on the opposite page and the introduction below. Answer the following questions:

1. Who is Allah? What qualities does He possess?
2. What does this prayer suggest about the religion of Islam? Be specific.

Introduction

Islam is an Arabic word that means “submitting to God.” A person who follows the teachings of Islam is called a Muslim, “one who submits to God and finds peace in Him.” Specifically, Muslims are adherents of Islam who submit to the will of God. Islamic belief is captured in their creed, called the **Shahadah**, which states:

“There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”

Muslims believe that, in the seventh century, God sent a series of revelations through the Archangel Gabriel to a man named Muhammad, who is seen as the last Prophet sent to humanity by God. A **revelation** is a clear and vivid experience that teaches a profound, spiritual truth. Muslims believe that it is a special, infallible kind of inspiration reserved for only those who are appointed by God as Prophets. The revelations given to Muhammad by God proclaim the oneness of God and the need to submit to God through worship and righteous living.

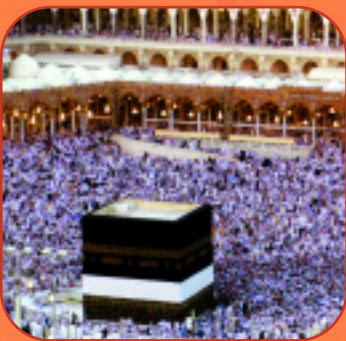
Islam is the third in succession of the three great faiths born in the Middle East. One of the key figures in the Islamic tradition is the Prophet Abraham. Abraham is also a patriarch of the Jewish faith and, by extension, is a significant figure in the Christian tradition. Muslims also view Noah, Moses, and Jesus as great prophets along with the Prophet Muhammad.

Islam is the second largest and currently the fastest growing religion in the world. It lays claim to 1.2 billion adherents. Over fifty nations hold a population wherein the majority are Muslims. This range of nations stretches from Indonesia in the east to Morocco in the west, with smaller Muslim populations in Europe and the Americas. According to Statistics Canada, there were over 250 000 Muslims living in Canada in 1991. More recent statistical analysis puts the number closer to 650 000 people, with the majority residing in urban centres such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.

Learning Goals

At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- explain the origins of Islam beliefs regarding creation, death, God, and the afterlife
- identify the role and contributions of Muhammad and the Caliphs in the history of Islam
- explain the origins of the Qur'an
- identify key passages from the Qur'an and explain their meaning and influence
- identify the origin and significance of Islamic beliefs, practices, festivals, and rituals
- demonstrate an understanding of fasting and prayer in the Islamic faith
- examine the role of symbols in Islam
- evaluate the impact of key events in the development of Islam around the world
- describe and compare the main religious groups within Islam
- analyze issues related to the status of women within Islam
- participate effectively in a group presentation



• **570 CE** Muhammad born in Makkah

• **610 CE** Muhammad receives his first revelation; the call to Prophethood

• **622 CE** The *hijrah*: Muhammad moves from Makkah to Madinah

• **624-628 CE** Battles of Badr, Uhud, the Trench

• **632 CE** Muhammad dies; the rule of the “Rightly-Guided” Caliphs begins

• **630 CE** Muhammad visits Makkah and wins the hearts of the Makkans

• **680 CE** Battle of Karbala; martyrdom of Husain, the Prophet's grandson

• **687 CE** Dome of the Rock, site of the Night Journey, built in Jerusalem





● **1930 CE** Abdul Aleem Siddiqui, the first Muslim missionary and scholar in Canada dedicates the first Canadian Mosque in Edmonton, Alberta; lectures in Edmonton and Toronto as part of his world travels

● **Early 1300s-1924 CE**

Era of the Turkish Caliphate

● **19th–early 20th century CE** Era of European Imperialism; many Muslim countries are under the rule of colonial powers. Muslims begin to immigrate to Canada; opportunities in farming and in building the trans-national railway

● **1947 CE** Areas of Muslim majority in British India form the state of Pakistan

● **1945 CE** Post-war Muslim immigration to Canada; skilled labour

● **1961 CE** First Islamic Centre in Toronto established by Regep Assim, founder of the Muslim Society of Toronto

● **1950-1970 CE** Muslim academics immigrate to Canada; Islamic studies established at McGill University (1952) and the University of Toronto (1962)

● **1980-2000 CE**

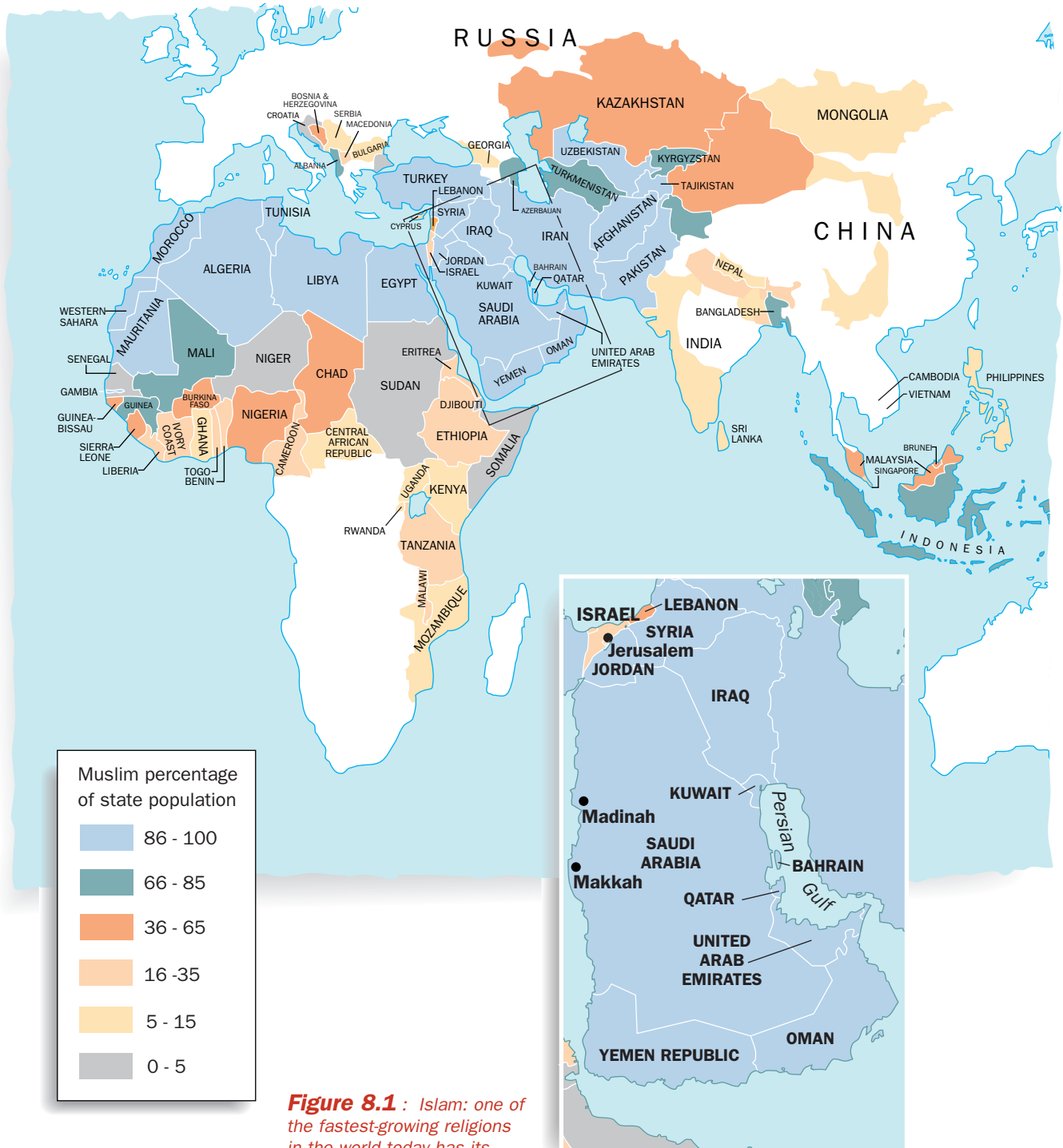
Increased visibility of Muslim presence in Canada through growth of Muslim religious and cultural institutions (e.g., mosques, Islamic schools, funeral homes, *halal* food stores, interest-free lending institutions)

● **1969 CE** First Mosque in Toronto dedicated by Dr. M. Qadeer Baig



Timeline

Islam



ORIGINS

Setting the Stage

Many ideals and customs of Arabian society at the time of Muhammad were transformed by the birth and development of Islam. Three systems in particular characterized Arabia in the sixth century.

Religious System

The people of Arabia held a belief in a variety of different gods in a form of religious expression known as **polytheism**. Polytheism was actively expressed in the practice of idolatry. **Idolatry** is the worship of different objects, usually in the form of sculptures and pictures, with each representing a specific spiritual quality. By the time Muhammad was born in

570 CE, Muslims believed the **Ka'bah**, a cube-shaped building that Abraham built to honour God, was filled with idols. These idols acted as a reflection of the polytheistic tradition of the citizens of Arabia. The citizens had many patron idols and they relied on them absolutely, as a part of their belief system. They believed idols granted them favours and success in all their endeavours. For them, these idols also afforded protection from adversity in battles and from other disasters and calamities.

Social System

Arabia was divided into groupings of people called tribes. Tribes emerged because the nomadic nature of desert life meant people were forced to move from place to place to find food and



Figure 8.2

Pilgrims worship around the Ka'bah in Makkah.

water. Sometimes groups of mountain dwellers would descend upon a family, steal their goods, and evict them from their land. As a result of this, alliances were formed as families united with other families to form clans. Later, these clans united with other clans to form tribes. Tribal life led to the establishment of a tradition of rivalry and bloodshed that characterized Arabia before the advent of Islam.

Women during this time were considered to be at the bottom of the social ladder, as proven by the increasing practice of female infanticide.

Economic System

The Makkan merchants earned their livelihood through trade with various regions beyond the Arabian peninsula, and their merchant caravans faced the danger of attack by tribal Arabs at all times. They waged armed conflicts to settle family vendettas and to revenge the murder of their own members. This was an integral part of their tribal honour and served as a face-saving system of private justice.

As well, the rich loaned money and other essentials of life to the poor and the needy at an increasingly high rate of interest, which made it impossible for the borrower to ever pay off the loan and thus earn freedom from economic tyranny.

Muhammad

Muslims believe the central figure in the emergence of the religion of Islam was the Prophet Muhammad. It was he who received direct revelations from God through the Angel Gabriel. With these revelations burned into his

heart, Muhammad would lead Arabia away from idolatry and into a belief in the oneness of God. Muslims regard Muhammad with great reverence, which they demonstrate by using phrases such as “peace be upon him” or the initials “pbuh” after mentioning the Prophet’s name.

Muhammad was born in 570 CE. At the time, the citizens of Makkah were building their economic strength through trade, while maintaining polytheistic customs in the form of idolatry. Muhammad was born into the tribe of Quraysh, the most respected tribe in Makkah. His father died shortly before his birth and his mother died when he was just six years old. After his mother’s death, the orphan Muhammad was first cared for by his paternal grandfather Abd al-Mutallib, the head of the Quraysh tribe, and later by his uncle, Abu Talib, a distinguished Quraysh merchant.

In his youth, Muhammad made journeys with his grandfather and his uncle as part of their merchant enterprises. By the time Muhammad had reached young adulthood, he had established a reputation as an honest and effective businessman, taking greater responsibility in his uncle’s business. In his mid-teens, Muhammad was taking caravans to far-off places, an outward sign of how much faith his uncle and guardian, Abu Talib, had in him. Along the way, Muhammad went through a number of significant spiritual experiences. He had always demonstrated a clear preference for monotheism along with an aversion to idolatry. He saw idolatry as the poison that was inhibiting the spiritual

growth of humanity. To Muhammad, idolatry was rooted in superstition and amorality; two qualities that had come to characterize his hometown of Makkah.

Muhammad also began to seek isolation for quiet reflection. The long journeys on the trade routes gave him plenty of time to think about life. When he was back in Makkah, he would retreat to the hills around the city to spend time in contemplation and meditation. It was as if the spiritual groundwork were being laid for something profound to happen.

At the age of twenty, Muhammad gained the respect of a wealthy widow named Khadijah. She engaged him to manage her business affairs. Khadijah was greatly impressed with Muhammad's honesty and integrity in his business dealings, and within a

short time she found him to be completely trustworthy. So impressed was Khadijah that she proposed to Muhammad, and despite the fact that she was fifteen years older than he, they were eventually married. Khadijah and Muhammad had a very happy marriage that lasted for twenty-five years. They were devoted to each other and to their community, giving away a great deal of their wealth to the sick and impoverished of Makkah.

Revelation

Things changed dramatically one day in the year 610, in the month of Ramadan (a month of fasting), when Muhammad was on retreat in order to meditate at the cave on Mount Hira. He felt an unusual presence—a presence that Muslims regard as the Angel Gabriel—who appeared to him,



Figure 8.3

Men wait their turn to enter the cave on Mount Hira outside the city of Makkah. Inside, standing in a reverential position (du'a), another man meditates. It was in this cave that the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad.

embraced him, and commanded him to read a passage. Muhammad responded by telling Gabriel that he could not (or would not) read, but Gabriel insisted. Finally, after the third embrace and the third request to read the following words, Muhammad agreed. Those words became embedded in his heart and he read:

Read! In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful. He Who taught (the use of) the Pen Taught man that which he knew not

Qur'an 96:1-5

For the next twenty-three years, Muhammad received a series of revelations. The revelations were assembled to form the sacred text of Islam called the Qur'an.

The revelations certainly changed Muhammad. He began preaching around Makkah, sharing the revelations that he received with anyone who would listen. Early on, few would listen. Because Muhammad spoke out passionately against idolatry and for the One God, the Quraysh were extremely angered, for they saw his message as a threat to their ancestral way of life. They also saw Muhammad as a threat to their superior social status as leaders of the community.

Muhammad continued with his mission for nine difficult years until Khadijah, his wife, died in 619. His uncle, Abu Talib, also died that same year. This became known as the "Year of Sorrow." Overcome with grief and feeling personally isolated, Muhammad was faced with another problem: his fellow Makkans displayed hostility toward him because of his preachings against idolatry. Soon, it became clear that Muhammad's life was in danger. With Abu Talib gone, and along with him the protection of family and tribe, Muhammad emigrated north to the city of Yathrib, which is now called Madinah (Medina). This event is known as the **hijrah**, which means "migration."

Muslims believe that before leaving Makkah, Muhammad went through two special experiences known as the "Night Journey" and "Ascension." The Night Journey involved Muhammad, accompanied by the Angel Gabriel, travelling on a winged horse, called the Buraq, from Makkah to Jerusalem. After arriving in Jerusalem, Muhammad and Gabriel ascended through the seven heavens. The Ascension itself is known as the **Mi'raj**. In the first heaven, they met Adam, then John and Jesus in the second heaven. They went through five more heavens meeting Joseph, Enoch, Aaron, Moses, and lastly Abraham. Finally Muhammad approached the Throne of God, eventually standing "within two bow lengths" of God Himself (i.e., very close). Muhammad was profoundly affected by the experience.

Profile:

The Prophets

According to Islamic tradition, God sent a series of prophets and messengers to guide mankind toward the Truth. The long line of prophets and messengers, numbering 140 000, begins with Adam, who God created and on whom God bestowed the first revelations. Muslims believe that there is no differ-

ence between the prophets. All of the prophets were given a message from God to deliver to humanity. There are several prophets who have influenced not only Islam, but Judaism and Christianity as well.

Prophet	Islamic Perspective	Jewish Perspective	Christian Perspective
Noah	Noah warned people of the error of their sinful ways, built an ark, survived the flood, rebuilt civilization and shared new laws governing God's creation.	Same as that of Islam.	Same as that of Islam.
Abraham	Abraham is one of seven prophets who received the Scriptures from God. He is mentioned frequently in the Qur'an. He taught people to abandon idolatry. Abraham proved to be the source of two great prophetic families: the Arab lineage through his son Ismael and Ismael's mother, Hagar. In the end, Abraham gave people a sense of their moral and religious obligations.	Abraham is seen as the patriarch of the Jewish faith. He taught people to worship the one God and abandon idolatry. Jews believe that the Hebrew line descends through Abraham's son Isaac, who was the son of Sarah. Abraham had two wives; Hagar and Sarah.	Same that of Judaism.
Moses	Moses was sent to proclaim the one God to the idolaters of Egypt. Moses, who is mentioned over 200 times in the Qur'an, is very highly regarded in Islam. Moses used miracles to demonstrate God's power over the Egyptians. He received God's law in the form of the Ten Commandments.	Agrees with the Islamic position. Also, Moses was sent by God to free the Hebrews from slavery, leading them out of bondage to the Promised Land. He was also sent to give the Jews God's law through the Ten Commandments.	Same as that of Judaism.

Prophet	Islamic Perspective	Jewish Perspective	Christian Perspective
Jesus	<p>Jesus was born miraculously by the Virgin Mary and, over the course of his life, performed many miracles. However, the Qur'an specifically denies that Jesus was the divinely appointed son of God. The Qur'an also does not support the belief that Jesus died on the cross. Instead it holds the position that Jesus never died and ascended into heaven and will return to aid humanity again in the future.</p>	<p>Holds no formal view of Jesus.</p>	<p>Jesus is the Son of God and part of the Holy Trinity. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered persecution, was crucified and died, and rose again after three days. He ascended into heaven and will return to judge the living and the dead.</p>
Muhammad	<p>Muhammad is "The Seal of the Prophets," the last of those who have come to convey the divine wisdom of God to humanity. As with every prophet he is afforded the highest spiritual prominence because he directly received the divine word of God. He instantly conveyed these Quranic revelations to all people. For Muslims, Muhammad is the last prophet, who completed the teachings of all the prophets who came before him. All the preceding prophets are regarded as "Muslims" in the sense that they all taught: a) belief in One God, and b) the importance of living a virtuous and moral life. These two fundamentals constitute "Islam" in the broadest sense of the word, i.e., submission to the Will of God.</p>	<p>Holds no formal view of Muhammad.</p>	<p>Holds no formal view of Muhammad.</p>

QUESTIONS

1. In general, what is the special role of the prophets?
2. What evidence is there that the religions of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have many similarities?
3. Why do Muslims consider Muhammad to be "The Seal of the Prophets"?

Muhammad in Madinah

The birth of an organized government and political system based on the religion of Islam occurred when God instructed Muhammad to move to Yathrib in 622 CE. The Muslim calendar starts from this event, known as the *hijrah* (migration). The city came to be known as al-Madinah or “the city” by the local people. Muhammad’s impact was so compelling that some referred to the city as Madinah al-Nabi, which means the “City of the Prophet.”

Within a short period of time, Muhammad was able to build a large community of Muslims in the city. Soon Madinah was united under the banner of Islam and the leadership of Muhammad. However, problems lay to the south. The Quraysh of Makkah were alarmed at the growing appeal of Islam. Increasingly, Muhammad was managing to persuade the pagan Arabs to give up all that they cherished—their ancestral worship of their idols upon whom they depended for their survival. They were convinced that Muhammad was bent on completely destroying them and their venerated way of life. The only solution seemed to be to annihilate Muhammad, since all other means of persuasion—offers of great wealth, absolute leadership of the Quraysh, and beautiful women—had all failed. Thus, the concern of the Quraysh, coupled with the rapid growth of Islam, led to confrontation on the battlefield.

Jihad has been translated by some to mean “holy war.” This is not an accurate translation. More precisely,

the term means “striving.” In other words, Muslims are called to strive to follow God’s commands. Early Muslims lived in an Arabia divided between the growing Muslim population of Madinah and the established Quraysh idol worshippers of Makkah.

Three battles proved to be significant in the unification of Arabia under the religion of Islam. All three battles called on Muhammad to defend Madinah and, more specifically, Islam. Here is a synopsis of the three events:

Battle	Synopsis
Badr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muhammad’s army of 313 defeats Makkah’s army of 1000.
Uhud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makkans return with an army of 3000 to score a victory. Despite their apparent victory, the Makkans return home instead of proceeding an additional three kilometres and sacking Madinah.
Battle of the Trench	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makkans return with an army of 10 000. Muhammad orders his men to build a trench around the city of Madinah. The Makkans are unable to take the city, thwarted by the trench and the hot desert climate.

Web Quest

To read the entire “Farewell Sermon” see <http://www.muslim-canada.org/farewell.htm>

These defensive battles solidified the position of Islam in Madinah. Disheartened, the Makkans returned home as Muhammad’s star continued to rise. Now Muhammad’s teachings were taken into consideration by both the people of Madinah and the people of Makkah. Muslim conversions steadily grew, many in Madinah and some in Makkah. Eventually, in 630 CE after two smaller pilgrimages, Muhammad led a group of 10 000 into Makkah, in what is commonly referred to as the “Conquest of Makkah.” Few opposed Muhammad’s return or his removal of idols from the Ka’bah. Before leaving the city, Muhammad appeared before the citizens of Makkah, reminded them of their ill deeds and their persecution of the Muslims of Madinah. At one point, he turned to the assembled crowd and asked, “Now what do you expect of me?” When the people lowered their heads in shame, Muhammad proclaimed, “May God pardon you. Go in peace. There shall be no responsibility on you today; you are free!” The effect of his words was felt immediately, prompting a shift in the minds of those assembled. In one remarkable moment the Makkans moved from a conquered people to a liberated people. Muhammad and his Companions left Makkah without leaving a single soldier behind. He appointed a Makkan chief to take charge of the city.

In 632, Muhammad, accompanied by 140 000 Muslims, visited Makkah to perform his last pilgrimage. He travelled south from Madinah to Makkah, stopping at Mount Arafat,

where he delivered what has come to be known as his “Farewell Sermon.” Dr. M. Hamidullah effectively summarizes the message of the sermon:

He addressed to them his celebrated sermon, in which he gave a resume of his teachings—belief in One God without images or icons; equality of all the believers without distinction of race or class; the superiority of individuals being based solely on piety; sanctity of life, property and honour; abolition of interest, and of vendettas and private justice; better treatment of women; obligatory inheritance and distribution of the property of the deceased persons among near relatives of both sexes, and removal of the possibility of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few. The Qur’an and the conduct of the Prophet were to serve as the bases of law and healthy criterion for every aspect of human life.

In one sweeping and profound sermon, Muhammad offered forgiveness to those who had done wrong in the past, while summarizing the core elements of Islamic teaching.

After the pilgrimage, Muhammad returned to Madinah where he came down with a fever. While he continued to lead prayers in the Muslim place of worship, the **mosque**, for a short time, it soon became apparent that he was seriously ill. A few weeks later in June of 632, he died at the age of 63.

Profile: *The Caliphs*

The death of Muhammad brought confusion to the Muslim community. After his death, the issue of leadership came to the forefront. The Prophet had been an incredibly gifted leader and, while there were many gifted leaders in the Islamic community, it was clear that no one could replace him. There were two claims to the Muslim leadership that surfaced immediately following the Prophet's death. The first came from the supporters of Abu Bakr who claimed that he should become the inaugural "caliph," or successor, to Muhammad. Abu Bakr, who was a close friend and Companion of the Prophet, was the candidate who proved to be a strong proponent of the faith and a loyal servant of Muhammad's in both Madinah and Makkah.

The second claim came from Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law. Some believe Muhammad publicly acknowledged him as his successor on a trip between Makkah and Madinah shortly before the Prophet's death. These competing claims came to a head and eventually Abu Bakr was chosen over Ali, who some felt was unfit for leadership because he was just thirty years old. The choice of first caliph created a political rift within the Muslim community that has lasted until the present day. The following is a brief account of the four caliphs and their contributions.

Caliph	Years as Caliph	Important Contributions
Abu Bakr	632–634	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> formed the separately written chapters of the Qur'an into a consolidated compilation solidified his leadership and suppressed Arab tribes who saw the death of the Prophet as an opportunity to turn against Islam continued the Muslim expansion initiated by the Prophet in the Middle East
Umar	634–644	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continued the expansion of Islam to Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Persia
Uthman	644–656	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> oversaw Islamic expansion west across northern Africa and east into northern India and to the border of China was criticized for showing favoritism to his relatives even though this was never proven. In the end, Uthman was assassinated. According to some historians, he was a victim of his own kindness.
Ali	656–661	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assumed leadership of a divided Muslim community was forced to defend his rule on the battlefield against the Umayyad family. This marked the first time that Muslim rose against Muslim in battle. was assassinated in 661

The first four leaders of the Muslim community are called the “Rightly-Guided Caliphs,” or *Rashidin*. All four of the caliphs were close Companions of Muhammad both in Madinah and Makkah. They possessed a thorough knowledge of the Qur’an, and they proved themselves to be devout adherents of the faith. Their significance is measured by their ability to hold the Muslim community together despite the existence of internal political conflict. After the *Rashidin*, the leadership of Islam shifted to a number of family dynasties that took the Muslim community into the next phase of its evolution. While the title of caliph survived, *in varying forms*, with certain members of

the ruling families, over time *the caliphate began to wane*, eventually disappearing after the devastation of World War One when it was abolished with the birth of the Turkish Republic in 1924.

QUESTIONS

1. Name the first four caliphs and outline their main accomplishments.
2. Why was Ali not chosen for the position of caliph until 656?
3. In your view, which caliph was the most important in the history of Islam? Why?

Figure 8.4

Prophet's Mosque in Madinah serves as Muhammad's place of burial (under the green dome).



Check Your Understanding

1. What is idolatry?
2. How did Muhammad win the approval and admiration of the Makkans in 630 CE?
3. What advice does Muhammad give in his Farewell Sermon?

BELIEFS

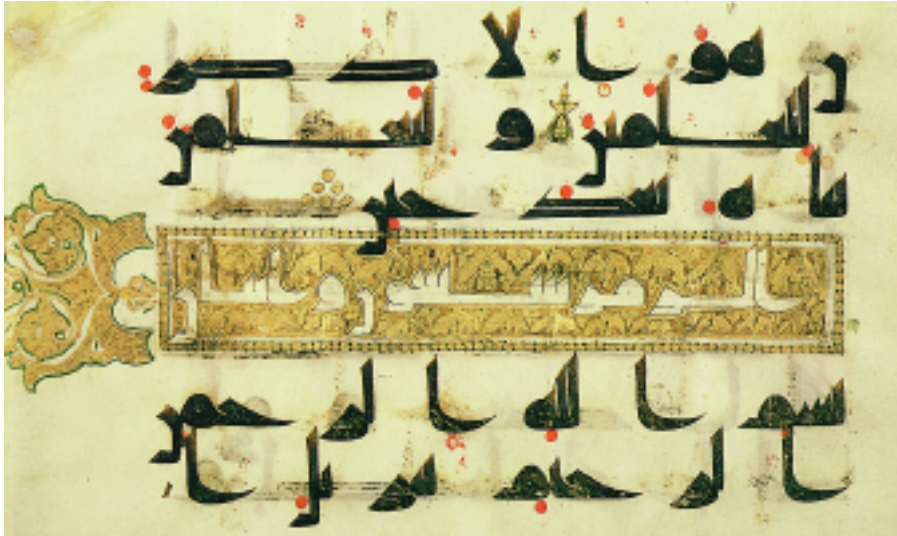


Figure 8.5

God's word, as revealed in the Qur'an, is the centrepiece of Islamic beliefs. Copying the Qur'an was the noblest of arts. This copy, transcribed in 1491 by the noted Ottoman calligrapher Shaykh Hamdullah and lavishly decorated with arabesque designs, is a worthy testament to Muslim faith.

For Muslims, beliefs are a purely personal affair. While it is regarded as a charitable act to guide others to the Truth and to dispel ignorance, Muslims are not called on to compel anyone to believe what they believe. From a Muslim perspective, to align oneself with the will of God (in order to accomplish “surrender” in the real sense of the word) is part of one's inner struggle.

Muslim belief is summarized in their creed, which is called the Shahadah (Figure 8.6):

“There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”

This creed is central to all of Islam. It is the organizing principle around which all other beliefs are formed.

Muslims owe their religious faith to Muhammad, the Messenger of God. One day, the Prophet Muhammad was asked about the nature of faith. He replied:

“Thou shalt believe in the One God, in His angelic messengers, in His revealed books, in His human messengers, in the Last Day (or Resurrection and final judgement) and in the determination of Good and evil by God.”

Hadith literature, Bukhari and Muslim



Figure 8.6
The Arabic script of the Shahadah

God

Muslims believe God's proper name is *Allah*. The monotheistic belief in one God created a shift from the idolatry and polytheism that characterized the Arabian belief system prior to Muhammad. By the time the Prophet received his first revelation, he was already convinced that there was only one God and that idolatry did not offer anything of spiritual significance to the people of Arabia.

The belief in an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God is central to the Muslim faith. God is one, but even though He is one, He is capable of doing all sorts of things. God is not only the creator, but the master of all.

God rules over Heaven and earth; nothing moves without His knowledge and permission. It is important to remember that the word *Islam* means "submission to God" or "surrender to God's will." Therefore, Islam is not only a belief in one God, but also a practice, spiritual as well as temporal. It is a complete code of human life and a way of life. Muslims believe that humans are limited in what they are able to know, and that God is the ever-present, compassionate guide who will lead them to knowledge and fulfillment. They believe failure to recognize this is a miscalculation and that surrender to God is the only answer.

Islam has two distinctive features:

- 1) Equilibrium between the temporal and the spiritual (the body and the soul), permitting a full enjoyment of all the good that God has created, enjoining, at the same time on everybody, duties toward God such as worship, fasting, charity, etc. Islam was to be the religion of the masses and not merely of the elect.
- 2) A universality of the call—all the believers becoming brothers and equals without any distinction of class or race or tongue. The only superiority that it recognizes is a personal one, based on the greater fear of God and greater piety.

Qur'an 49:13

Qur'an 7:32

The Day of Judgement

Muslims believe that every person living on earth has a soul that lives on earth for one lifetime and, upon the death of the body, moves on to an afterlife. The motto of Islam is summed up in the expression in the Qur'an that states: "Well-being in this world and well-being in the Hereafter." Hence a Muslim should not neglect one of these for the sole profit of the other.

Muslims believe that when a soul passes into the afterlife, God will reconfigure the person's physical body so he or she can stand before Him on the Day of Judgement. It is on this day that the soul is sent to Paradise or to Hell.

Paradise is described as an eternal abode of beauty and majesty. Muslims believe it is the just reward for a person who has lived a righteous life as a believer in one God. On the other hand, Hell is described as an abode of great torment and anguish. According to Islamic tradition, God does not wish to send anyone to Hell. However, if a person chooses to live an evil life, and works against the will of God without repentance, Hell is where the soul will be sent. Hell is a destination that can be avoided by sincerely submitting to God and obeying His commands. In the end, God will judge people's actions by their intentions and motives.

Check Your Understanding



1. Why is the Shahadah such a central belief for Muslims?
2. Briefly explain the Muslim concept of God. Is it similar to your concept? Discuss.
3. What is the Day of Judgement?
4. Outline your personal views on Paradise and Hell.

PRACTICES, RITUALS, FESTIVALS, AND SYMBOLS

Practices and Rituals

Muslims place a tremendous amount of emphasis on upholding the tenets of their faith. Specifically, this is demon-

strated through the Five Pillars of Islam. The Five Pillars were established in the Qur'an.

Pillar of the Faith	Description
<p>The first pillar: Shahadah—Declaration of faith</p>  <p>Figure 8.7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Shahadah</i> consists of two declarations: “There is no god but God” and “Muhammad is the Messenger of God.” • The <i>Shahadah</i> is Muslims’ announcement to the world that they sincerely believe in and follow the Qur’an.
<p>The second pillar: Salat—Mandatory prayer five times daily</p>  <p>Figure 8.8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five-times-daily <i>salat</i> (prayer) is mandatory (as opposed to other voluntary forms of prayer and supplication) and takes place before dawn, mid-day, late afternoon, after sunset, and after dark. Muslims recite prayers and perform a series of movements as part of the <i>salat</i>. • Prior to <i>salat</i> prayers, a person must perform a ritual cleansing known as wudu, which means “making pure or radiant.” • Sometimes a person may be required to clean the entire body in a process known as ghusl. The ritual cleansing of the entire body is mandatory after sexual intercourse, menstruation, nocturnal emissions, or childbirth. Voluntary <i>ghusl</i> is recommended on other occasions.

The third pillar:
Zakat—Mandatory
almsgiving



Figure 8.9

- Paying the *zakat* alms is compliance to a divine injunction gladly performed by sincere Muslims for the sake of and in the name of God. The word *zakat* means “to purify or increase.”
- Islamic law states that a person should give alms valued at 2.5 per cent of their surplus wealth over the period of one year.

The fourth pillar:
Sawm—Mandatory
fasting



Figure 8.10

- For the entire month of Ramadan, Muslims are forbidden to eat, drink, smoke, or have sexual relations from dawn until dusk.
- The Ramadan fast is an act of worship wherein the Muslim community dedicates a month to considering the benevolence of God and abstaining from some of the pleasures of life in order to develop spiritual purity.
- Appropriate exemptions and concessions are given for people who are old and infirm, or on a journey, as well as for very young children.
- The fasting month ends with a one-day festival called Eid al-Fitr. (See Festivals.)

The fifth pillar:
Hajj—
Mandatory
pilgrimage to
Makkah



Figure 8.11

- The mandatory hajj itself is undertaken by any Muslim in the world, male or female, who has the health and means to make the pilgrimage.
- The last day of the hajj commemorates the day God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Ismael at Mina. Pilgrims throw seven pebbles at three tall stone pillars that represent Satan.

Place of Worship at the Mosque

Figure 8.12

The first Canadian mosque:
Al Rashid Mosque in
Edmonton



Every Friday a little after midday, Muslims offer congregational prayers (*salat*) at the Muslim place of worship called the mosque. Friday congregational prayer is mandatory.

Most mosques possess certain features such as a dome and/or a tall tower called a minaret from which the call to prayer is issued by a person (who may use a loud speaker). One element common to all mosques is a steady supply of water to perform the *wudu* before prayer begins. Before entering the interior of the mosque, Muslims take off their shoes as a sign of respect. This helps in keeping the mosque clean for prayer. There are no seats in the mosque and worshippers are required to pray on a floor covered with carpets or other floor coverings. People who are physically challenged are permitted to use chairs, if necessary. The women pray separately from the men because, according to Muslim belief, this allows both genders to

avoid distractions and to concentrate more closely on God.

Inside the mosque, prayers are led by an **imam**, who delivers a sermon just before Friday prayers and after the *Eid* (festival) prayers. He speaks from an elevated platform called a *minbar*. While the imam acts as a prayer leader, he is not considered to be the Muslim equivalent of a priest. Often imams have jobs outside of the mosque and simply act as one of the members of the community who leads the prayer.

The final distinguishing feature of a mosque is a small arch on one wall that points to the Ka'bah in Makkah. This arch (commonly known as a *mihrab*) provides a focal point so that prayer is directed toward the Ka'bah. Congregational prayer takes place throughout the week but specifically on Friday after midday, at festivals, special occasions, and at funerals.

Living My Religion

Yasser Qurashi

Yasser Qurashi is a student at Loyola Catholic Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario. He comes from a devout Muslim family that strives to practice their faith with as much sincerity as possible. Yasser's family immigrated to Canada when he was two years old. Both of his parents were born in the Middle East. They moved to Pakistan to pursue employment opportunities before coming to Canada. With this heritage behind him, Yasser represents a distinctive blend of traditional Muslim and Canadian Muslim culture.



Figure 8.13

Yasser honours his Muslim beliefs as faithfully as possible. Prayer is an important part of his life. Generally, Yasser prays on his own, usually in his bedroom at home, reciting his prayers aloud in Arabic while facing Makkah. While he does not speak Arabic, he does understand the words of the prayers he recites. His parents taught him the meaning of the prayers when he was very young and their teaching has remained with him throughout his life.

Yasser's parents have set a solid example of prayer and dedication for him to follow. His father, Khalid, prays regularly and attends Friday prayers at the Al-Falah mosque in Oakville, Ontario. Because the Friday prayers take place just after midday,

Khalid has made arrangements with his employer to go to the mosque on his lunch hour. Yasser's mother, Huma, is quite devoted to her prayer life. Her devotion has inspired Yasser to recognize the need to maintain an awareness of God's presence at all times.

The element of the Islamic faith that has had the most profound effect on Yasser is the Ramadan fast. He has been participating in the fast since he was nine years old, even though participation in the fast is not mandatory until the age of eleven. He sees Ramadan as a time to remember the importance of his faith. Every hunger pangs acts as a reminder of the sacrifice he has made for his beliefs. During Ramadan, his family wakes up between 4:30 a.m. and 6:30 a.m., depending on the time of the year, for an early meal and morning prayers. He then fasts for the day, trying to be mindful of the call for all Muslims to not only refrain from food and drink, but also to refrain from negative activities like social gossip. He ends the fast each day with a meal and evening prayers. Yasser follows the fast for the entire month of Ramadan and officially concludes the fasting month by celebrating the festival of Eid al-Fitr with his family and the Muslim community.

Yasser believes that he will always be a Muslim. While his high-school life has seen him introduced to a variety of different religious perspectives, he hopes he will maintain his belief in the truth and justice of Islam. After he finishes his education, and achieves financial security, Yasser plans on making the hajj to Makkah. Perhaps the pilgrimage to the roots of Islam will strengthen the beliefs he maintains today.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is prayer important to Yasser?
2. Where did Yasser learn to pray?
3. What element of the Islamic faith has had the most profound effect on Yasser?

Festivals

The Ramadan Fast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fast is celebrated during the month of Ramadan. It serves to draw Muslims closer to God and to develop spiritual piety, patience, and perseverance.
Eid al-Fitr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Festival of the Breaking of the Fast is held on the first day of the tenth month of the Islamic year. It celebrates the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and marks a period of spiritual and moral renewal for the Muslim community. People celebrate this day with great joy as they participate in family gatherings, giving gifts, and in giving donations to the poor.
Eid-al-Adha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Great Festival of Sacrifice is held on the tenth day of <i>Zul Hijjah</i> (tenth day of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar). The occasion marks Abraham's submission to the will of God and his willingness to sacrifice his son Ismael.
Milad ul-Nabi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The prophet Muhammad's date of birth was the 12 Rabi' Awwal, which is the twelfth day of the third month in the Islamic calendar. Birthday (Milad) celebrations are held throughout the month.
Mi'raj	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Mi'raj</i> celebrates the "Night Journey" or Ascension where Muhammad is taken by Gabriel from Makkah to Jerusalem and then on to Heaven. This festival is celebrated on the twenty-seventh of <i>Rajab</i> (the seventh month).
Islamic New Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The celebration of the New Year takes place on the first day of <i>Muharram</i>, the first month of the Islamic calendar.
The Shi'ah Observance of Muharram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The observance of <i>Muharram</i> takes place in the first ten days of the Muslim new year and is celebrated by Shi'ahs. The festival commemorates the martyrdom of Husain, the son of Ali, who was the grandson of Muhammad and was killed at the battle of Karbala in 680. Sunnis also commemorate the tenth of <i>Muharram</i> by fasting.

Figure 8.14

In Winnipeg, Shahina Siddiqui stuffs gift bags with candy for Muslim children, who will receive the gifts at the Feast of Ramadan.



Symbols

The use of symbols as an expression of faith is not present in Islam. Muhammad made it clear that people should not revere pictures or sculptures of animals or humans. Hence, there are no human or animal representations in places of worship. He said that it was God's work to create living things and it was wrong for humans to imitate this aspect of God. For this reason, Muslim art has tended toward rich patterns and colourful designs. From superb tapestries to brilliant calligraphy, Islam is adorned with a tremendous array of beautiful art. Couple this with the unique and awe-inspiring breadth of Muslim architecture, and one can see that Muslims have derived inspiration from their faith in the area of art.

Some symbols have come to represent Muslim nations. One common example is the star and the crescent moon. This symbol is used on the national flags of Turkey and Pakistan—two Muslim nations. The history of the symbol dates back to the Roman Empire when the city of Byzantium (later Constantinople and then Istanbul) adopted the crescent moon as a symbolic tribute to Diana, goddess of the hunt. In 330 CE, Constantine added the star in honour of Mary, the mother of Jesus. By the time Constantinople became a Muslim city in 1453 CE, the star and the crescent moon were a well-established symbol for the city. Some Muslim leaders adopted the symbol and, as time passed, it came to be associated with Muslim nations. Therefore, the star and the crescent moon is more an

historic symbol than a symbol of Islam.

Some believe a more fitting representation of Islam can be found in the national flag of Saudi Arabia (Figure 8.17). The Saudi Arabian flag has the *Shahadah* written in white against a solid green background. The colour green is said by some to have been the Prophet's favourite colour.



Figure 8.15

The national flag of Turkey



Figure 8.16

The national flag of Pakistan



Figure 8.17

The national flag of Saudi Arabia

Holy Places

Ka'bah and Prophet's Mosque



Figure 8.18

The Ka'bah in Makkah. Muslims revere the Ka'bah as the House of God. Their daily prayers are directed towards this cubical stone structure.



Figure 8.19

An interior view of the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, the first mosque in Islam.

Dome of the Rock



Figure 8.20
The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem is the third holiest site in Islam.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Ka'bah revered by Muslims?
2. Why is the Prophet's Mosque an important site to Muslims?

Check Your Understanding

1. What two declarations are made in the *Shahadah*?
2. Briefly describe the Five Pillars of Islam.
3. Why did Muhammad oppose the creation of symbols and icons?
4. How did the star and crescent moon come to represent some Muslim nations?
5. Why is the *Shahadah* against a green background considered by some to be a more fitting representation of Islam?

MILESTONES

Early Life

Figure 8.21

A father whispers the *iqamah*, the command to rise and worship into the left ear of his child.



Muslims believe that a child is born free of sin. Furthermore, the child is born pure and with a natural inclination toward goodness and virtue. As a creation of God, the child possesses an inherent understanding of the wisdom

and power of God, as well as an understanding of the nature of his or her relationship with God. The ceremony that is performed after a child is born is called the *Adhan*, which is also the call to prayer that is recited from the minarets in Muslim countries. The baby is washed and then the father, or some elderly person, whispers the Call to Prayer (the *Adhan*) in his or her right ear. In the left ear, the person whispers the Command to Rise and Worship. This is called the *Iqamah*.

Aqiqah

Seven days after the birth, or earlier, a name-giving ceremony called the *Aqiqah* is performed. The naming of a baby is important for a Muslim. Muhammad made recommendations for naming a child, saying that Abdullah, meaning “servant of God,” and Abdur-Rahman, meaning “servant of the Merciful One,” were the most pleasing names to God.

The ceremony starts with the father, an elderly relative, or a pious person reading from the Qur’an. The

announcement of the name of the child follows the reading. Muslims can choose between a family name, one of Muhammad's names, or one of the "Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names" that describe God. If one of the names of God is used, the name must be preceded by Abd (servant) as in the name Abdullah, which was mentioned earlier.

When the hair of the child is cut or shaved for the *Aqiqah* ceremony, its weight in silver (or the equivalent in currency) is distributed to the poor. The sacrifice of either a goat or sheep is made, and one-third of the meat is distributed to the poor. In most cases, male circumcision, called *Khitan*, usually takes place in the hospital. However, in some countries, such as Morocco, the procedure takes place when the boy is three or four years old.

Marriage

A Muslim marriage is a legally sanctioned union between a man and a woman, designed to bring happiness and companionship to both parties. The marriage contract affords both partners certain rights and obligations in the hope that their union will produce a family so as to please God. The status of marriage is made clear in the Qur'an:

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.

Qur'an 30:21

The hope of the Muslim union in marriage is the emergence of a strong family; a courteous, polite, and compassionate family whose members seek to know and live the will of God.

A Muslim marriage is based on a voluntary offer and acceptance by the bride and the groom. Quite often, the parents will give advice and help in selecting a spouse for their son or daughter. However, the parents' role is simply to help by counselling, and not by making decisions for the couple. The bride and groom have the last say in the matter.

Once a suitable match is found, a contract is prepared containing the various wishes of the bride and groom regarding the relationship itself and lifestyle issues related to property and money. Because the contract reflects the wishes of the couple, no Muslim officials need to be present for the signing. However, two Muslims must witness the marriage. As well, many Muslims prefer to hold the actual marriage ceremony, which includes the signing ceremony, in a mosque or in their home with an imam or a qadi (a person authorized to solemnize marriages) who reads from the Qur'an and concludes the formal part of the proceedings. The ceremony is followed by a family celebration.

Polygamy

For modern Western society, one controversial aspect of Islamic tradition is the practice of **polygamy**. Polygamy occurs when a person is married to more than one person at the same time. Within the Islamic tradition, polygamous marriages can provide

women with the opportunity to marry in societies where there are more women than men. It is also intended to provide an opportunity for widows to remarry. These situations prevailed during the time of Muhammad when some men died in battle, while others died from disease, illness, or old age. It was seen by Muslims then, as it is now, as a sign of great charity to marry a widow and spare her the hardship of having to fend for herself. Muslims believe it is a sign of great tolerance and understanding for a woman to agree to share her husband with another woman.

According to Islamic tradition, a Muslim man can marry up to four wives. Permission for this is given in the Qur'an:

If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans (then) marry women of your choice two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then only one or (a captive) that your right hands possess. That will be more suitable to prevent you from doing injustice.

Qur'an 4:3

One interpretation of this verse maintains that since it can be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to give equal time, intimacy, commitment, and love to more than one wife, then one wife (the number recommended in the verse in such cases) is most appropriate.

It is important to note that first, a man must obtain permission from his first wife before taking on a second, third, or fourth wife; and second, the vast majority of Muslims maintain monogamous marriages.

Divorce

While divorce is permitted within Islam, it is regarded as a last resort for a married couple. Even Muhammad discouraged divorce saying, "The most detestable of the permitted things in the eyes of God is divorce." Accordingly, it is not in the interests of the Muslim community to force people to remain married if they cannot grow together and form productive families. Therefore, a procedure exists whereby either the man or woman can obtain a divorce from the spouse. Divorce could be unilateral (initiated by one person), bilateral (initiated by both), or could be obtained through a court of law. The Qur'an insists that the two must first refer their disputes and quarrels to arbitration before deciding to give or to obtain a divorce. The Qur'an provides a detailed account of the procedure.

Death

Muslims approach death with a sense of hope as opposed to fear. Their hope is that they will reach Paradise and attain the beautiful vision of God's own countenance.

Muslims believe that the burial should take place preferably on the day that the person has died. The body is taken to the gravesite where people who have attended the funeral procession, as well as bystanders,

throw handfuls of earth into the grave while reciting chapters from the Qur'an, such as those that pertain to the Day of Judgement. After the burial, a short period of mourning is observed, usually for three days. Muslims believe that the deceased is visited by two angels who question the person about his or her life, faith, and deeds—both good and evil—while on earth.

Check Your Understanding

1. How is a young Muslim child introduced to the faith?
2. Briefly describe the Muslim approach to marriage.
3. Outline what happens during and after a burial in the Islamic tradition.

SACRED WRITINGS

The Qur'an

The holiest book in Islam is the Qur'an. The word *Qur'an* means "recitation." Muslims usually recite or chant the Qur'an aloud rather than read it silently. Muslims believe that the revelations that Muhammad received over a twenty-three-year period form literally the "Word" of God. They believe Muhammad was directly quoting God every time he received and conveyed a revelation to his community. Because of this, criticism of the Qur'an is not permitted by



Figure 8.22

The manuscripts of the Qur'an were never illustrated with human figures.

anyone at anytime. The book is comprised of God's actual words and, therefore, humanity is encouraged to learn and to understand the revelations but not to make them the target of disrespect or ridicule.

The belief that the Qur'an is the actual Word of God distinguishes it from other sacred writings. It is known as *wahi*, or revelation, and was "revealed" to the Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel, the angelic messenger of God. He conveyed the divine message to Muhammad, the human messenger of God. Muslims believe therefore that the Angel Gabriel conveyed the Qur'an in its unaltered form to Muhammad and hence to all of humanity. Due to nuances in the Arabic language, even a translation of the Qur'an into another language could not be considered a true rendering of the Qur'an.

According to Muslim belief, the Qur'an was not delivered to the Prophet Muhammad in one session as a complete book, but was revealed to him bit by bit, through the Angel

Sacred Text



Allah! There is no God but He the living, the Self-subsisting Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on Earth. Who is there who can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to his creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. For He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).

Qur'an 2:255

Figure 8.23

This passage from the Qur'an is known as the *Ayat-ul-Kursi* or the "Verse of the Throne." A throne is a symbol of power, knowledge, and authority. In this case, the throne is the seat of Allah, the Eternal and Absolute. Everything begins and ends with Allah. He is the ultimate Protector and Sustainer whose throne "extends over the heavens and the earth."

QUESTIONS

1. What does the throne represent?
2. Define the words omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. How does the "Verse of the Throne" demonstrate the omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence of Allah?
3. In your opinion, what is the most significant characteristic of Allah? Why?

Gabriel. The Prophet would then remember the messages himself and would teach them to his Companions, so that they could also memorize them. In other words, the Qur'an was transmitted orally by the Prophet to his Companions.

Eventually a manuscript of the Qur'an was prepared. The Qur'an exists in the world today in its absolute, original purity, not only as a written text, but also in the memory of hundreds of thousands of Muslims. Muslims believe that it is impossible for anyone to change even a dot of the Qur'an because each time the text is reproduced, it must be copied in accordance with the preserved original text.

The Qur'an is made up of **surahs**, or chapters, whose titles are derived from a significant incident or word that appears within the surah's text. Each surah is made up of a number of **ayats**, or verses. *Ayats* literally means "signs." Every surah except one, the ninth chapter, begins with the words, "In the Name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful."

Hadith (Sunnah)

The **Hadith** (or **Sunnah**) is the second source of Islamic Law (**Shari'ah**). The Qur'an itself is the first source of Islamic Law. There are three kinds of Hadith (Sunnah): (1) sayings directly associated with Muhammad, (2) an action or practice of Muhammad's or (3) his silent approval of someone else's actions. Using special standards, scholars classify the Hadith literature so as to determine its various grades of authenticity. Accordingly, a

Hadith is classified as sound, good, weak, or infirm. The Hadith literature further clarifies Muslim religious practices such as prayer and almsgiving, which are mentioned in the Qur'an.

Check Your Understanding

1. Why do Muslims treat the Qur'an with such reverence and respect?
2. What are Hadith? Why are Hadith important?

GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS

In the teachings of Islam, there are certain "external" duties such as prayer (*salat*), fasting, charity, and abstaining from evil and wickedness. These external aspects belong to the domain of Muslim law which contains rules and regulations that affect one's entire life. There are also "internal" duties such as faith, gratitude to God, sincerity, and freedom from egotism. The internal, or mystical, aspect is generally known as Sufism. Sufism derives its teachings and practices from the original sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and the Hadith.

Islam has two sects: the Sunnis and the Shi'ahs. Sufism belongs to, and is practised by, both the Sunnis and the Shi'ahs. *Sufis are not considered to be a separate sect.*

Both the Sunni and the Shi'ah sects, as well as the Sufis, believe in one God and that Muhammad is the Prophet of God. This is their core belief. However, there are some differing features that are noteworthy.

Sunni	Shi'ah	Sufi
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately eighty-five per cent of the world's Muslims are Sunnis. • The name is derived from the word <i>sunna</i>, which means "well-trodden path." • Sunni groups came into existence after the death of the Prophet. Over time, they have emerged as the most influential group in Islam. • They believe in building consensus within the community in order to arrive at a just and equitable society. • Sunnis follow the traditions of the Prophet as well as the four schools of Sunni law: Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali and Maliki. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known as the "party of Ali." Shi'ahs believe that, prior to the death of Muhammad, the Prophet chose his son-in-law, Ali, as his successor. Ali was not chosen as leader in favour of Abu Bakr creating a political division within the Muslim community. Later, these developed into doctrinal differences. • Shi'ahs believe that, after the death of Muhammad, a series of infallible leaders called <i>Imams</i> were to take charge of Islam and guide the community. • The Shi'ahs are a small but noticeable group within Islam, dominating politics and religious life in Iran and representing a vocal minority in Iraq, East Africa, Pakistan, and India. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Arabic word <i>suf</i>, which the word <i>sufi</i> is derived from, means "wool," so it is likely that the Sufis were named after the ascetic clothing that they wore. Others say that <i>sufi</i> is derived from the word <i>safa</i> which means "purity." • Sufism developed into a mystical philosophy of Islam. • According to the Sufi tradition, the goal is to develop spiritually, both inwardly and outwardly, in order to discover the reality of God. • Sufis emphasize sincerity and excellence, performing prayers and meditations. To develop a constant and deep concentration, the Sufis employ physical methods such as playing Sufi music, chanting the name of God over and over again, or dancing, as in the case of the whirling dervishes.

Check Your Understanding

1. Who are the Sunnis? Who are the Shi'ahs?
2. What are the possible origins of the word *Sufi*?
3. Which of the groups noted above is the most appealing to you? Why?

Community Study

The Canadian Society of Muslims



Figure 8.24 Syed Mumtaz Ali

The Canadian Society of Muslims (CSM) is a non-profit Islamic organization based in Toronto. The CSM was established in the 1960s and was formally incorporated in 1980 under the direction of its founder, Dr. M. Qadeer Baig, with the following main objectives:

To promote an interest in the intellectual, philosophic, and esoteric approach to research, development and understanding of Islamic culture and civilization ... and to co-operate with other organizations ... which have objectives similar in full or in part to the objectives of the corporation."

The goal of the CSM is to provide reliable Islamic information to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In conformity with the tenets of Islam, they try to promote tolerance and harmony, both among Muslims and non-Muslims. Their main ideology is from the Sunni-Hanafi perspective, although they do attempt occasionally to provide information from other schools of thought for informative and comparative purposes.

The current head of The Canadian Society of Muslims is Syed Mumtaz Ali, a Sufi scholar and expert on Muslim law.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of the Canadian Society of Muslims?
2. Visit the CSM Web site and read the article that is suggested in the Web Quest box. Jot down any questions that you have after reading the material. Be prepared to discuss these questions with your teacher or a representative of the Muslim community.

Web Quest

The Canadian Society of Muslims

<http://www.muslim-canada.org>

- An informative look at Islam from a Canadian and international perspective. Follow the links to other Muslim sites.
- The Canadian Society of Muslims recommends that students read the following article found on their web site: "An Introduction to Islam" —an excellent introduction, written by Dr. Qadeer Baig. <http://www.muslim-canada.org/introisl.htm>
- Recommended book: *Elementary Teachings of Islam* by Abdul-Aleem Siddiqui. Visit http://www.muslim-canada.org/elementary_1.html

CULTURAL IMPACT

Expansion of Islam

Figure 8.25

This astrolabe (a medieval navigational device and calculator), constructed in 1712-13, is just one example of the beautifully crafted scientific instruments invented by Muslims during the golden age of Islam.



Despite the turmoil surrounding the caliphate after the death of Muhammad, Muslims gained great influence in the Middle East and beyond. Muslims maintain that the Prophet and the early caliphs were forced to engage in either defensive or preventive military activities during their leaderships. These conflicts, combined with the appeal of Islam, led to the creation of a vast Islamic empire. Within 100 years of Muhammad's death, the Muslims had established control of a vast stretch of land from northern India to Spain and Morocco. Great Muslim cities began to

emerge and, while Europe slipped into the darkness of the Middle Ages, Islam thrived and became one of the most creative communities in the world: translating the works of the Greek philosophers, making strides in medical science, and establishing the Arabic system of numbers as the definitive mathematical system.

The golden age of Islam lasted for approximately 400 years. The decline of Islam was gradual, however, beginning around the thirteenth century CE and becoming most noticeable with the emergence of colonialism in the nineteenth century. During that time, countries such as Britain and France took control of many Muslim lands, resulting in what seemed like a decline in Islam under the pressure of colonial rule.

Things changed dramatically in the twentieth century. The discovery of oil brought with it wealth and power. Now the Islamic countries of the Middle East appeared to be in a position to use their trading power to control their destiny. The Islamic nations of the Middle East emerged as economic powers with the world turning increasingly to petroleum-driven machinery.

The twentieth century also saw Islam grow in areas like northern Africa and Indonesia, where Islam had already taken root in the past, but now became progressively stronger.

Skill Path

Working Effectively in Groups

The generation, analysis, and communication of information is playing an increasingly important role in our economy. Consequently, interaction is a major focus in today's workplace. More and more, teams are working together on difficult problems that individual workers cannot solve alone. Thus, the development of communication and social skills has become all-important in today's complex society.

Often in everyday life, we find ourselves in situations where we have to work efficiently and productively with a wide variety of people. Collaboration and cooperation are viewed as significant life skills. How do we master these skills and accomplish the task at hand effectively? Consider the following when you work in a group:

1. Develop a strategic plan.

Set your goals by determining what you want to accomplish and how you will get there.

2. Consider the rights and responsibilities of each group member.

Each member should

- be listened to;
- be valued;
- be respected;
- be free to present his or her own opinion without insult;
- do his or her fair share of work;
- work to his or her individual strengths;
- complete tasks on time.

3. Assign a role to each group member.

Successful group work reflects the appropriate assignment of roles to individuals. Below is a

list of possible roles for group members. Note that throughout the process, there can be many different roles assigned to each group member.

Recorder:

He or she records the group's ideas, decisions, and plans.

Encourager:

This positive individual supports everyone and motivates and encourages all group members.

Presenter:

The group spokesperson presents the group's work to the class.

Materials manager:

This organized individual finds and stores the group's disks, files, and other materials.

Chairperson:

He or she manages meetings and keeps the group moving forward.

Reflector:

This individual leads group members in looking back on how well they are progressing.

Question Commander:

The person in this role checks to see if anyone in the group has questions. If so, questions are asked and the group members try to respond.

In addition to the above roles, group members can take on additional roles throughout the process. For example, in order to gather appropriate research data, each member might

Use the "jigsaw" technique to help accomplish your goal.

- **Identify the issue.**
- **The issue down into parts that correspond to the number of people in your group, e.g., five members = five parts.**
- **Identify each group of five students as a "home group."**
- **In every group, identify an "expert" for each of the five parts of the issue.**
- **Assign each group member a number from one to five.**
- **Invite all students assigned number one to meet and discuss their part of the issue. Numbers two to five follow the same procedure.**
- **Home groups reform and share information.**

be assigned a role that reflects a different research format. For the sample topic below, Member one might be asked to interview a member of the Muslim group (see pages 294-95); Member two might be asked to create a questionnaire and distribute it to the group (see pages 153); and Member three might be asked to conduct Internet research on the group (see page 104).

Sample topic: Work in groups of three to create an informational brochure on a local Muslim group.

4. Present your group work.

There are several options for presenting group work. Options include assigning the role of spokesperson to one person in the group or having each group member present the results of his or her findings.

Remember to use visuals such as charts, diagrams, and illustrations in your presentation. Refer to these items directly when presenting your findings to the class. Try to display large copies of the visuals to ensure that all members of the class can see them. Refer to page 55 for tips on how to make an effective oral presentation.

To encourage active participation of all group members in the group presentation, you may consider assigning the following roles:

Materials distributor
Technician
Timekeeper
Checker of equal audience participation

Tips for group success

- Invite, do not confront.
- Respect the opinion and experiences of others.
- Focus on the group's strengths.
- Be organized.
- Divide work fairly among group members.
- Share and consult.

Practise It!

1. Work in groups of four or five to research the history of Islam. Remember to assign roles to each member, e.g., Internet researcher or interviewer. Present your findings to the class.
2. Work in groups of five to research and prepare an oral presentation on The Five Pillars of Islam. You may wish to refer to pages 55-56 for information on making oral presentations.



Figure 8.26

Malcolm X (1925-1965), an influential black Muslim leader in the United States, seen here with Martin Luther King Jr. (left), was assassinated in 1965.

Muslims in Canada

The Islamic presence in Canada has grown significantly since Muslim immigration began in the mid-nineteenth century. Initially, immigrants from Muslim countries were attracted to Canada by pioneering enterprises like the gold rush, farming, and the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The twentieth century saw Muslim immigration grow significantly. The first wave of immigrants arrived after the Second World War as Canada shifted from a war-oriented to a peace-oriented nation. Generally, this period was characterized by skilled workers' immigrating to Canada to help in the restructuring of the economy. It also saw the emergence of academic interest in Islam with the introduction of Islamic studies at McGill University in 1952 and at the University of Toronto in 1962. By the mid-sixties, Canada's immigration laws became

more favourable and many Muslims embraced the opportunity to start a new life in Canada. The increase of Muslim immigrants to Canada is evident in the following Canadian census data:

Year	Number of Muslims living in Canada
1971	33 000
1981	98 000
1991	253 000

Clearly, the Muslim presence in Canada has come a long way since the 1850s. Now boasting a population, by some estimates, of up to 650 000 people, Muslim Canadians are a clear and distinct religious minority group. Evidence of this can be seen through groups like the Canadian Society of Muslims (CSM) and the Sufi Study Circle at the University of Toronto.

Figure 8.27
Dr. M. Qadeer Baig



Both groups were founded by Dr. M. Qadeer Baig, a Sufi academic who immigrated to Canada in 1962. He was hired by the University of Toronto to conduct courses in Islamic Studies and Sufism. Shortly after

arriving in Toronto, Dr. Baig founded the Sufi Study Circle and was instrumental in the establishment of the Jami Mosque of Toronto. Later, in an effort to build awareness of Islamic issues for both Muslims and non-Muslims, he founded the CSM. Dr. Baig dedicated his life to teaching. In the 1970s, he led a successful campaign to remove discriminatory material about Islam from Ontario school textbooks. Dr. Baig died in 1988, but his work continues under the leadership of Syed Mumtaz Ali.

From the mid-nineteenth century to today, it is clear that Islam is having a profound effect on Canadian society. As each generation of Canadian students becomes more exposed to the religious tenets of different faiths, the level of tolerance and understanding increases.

Check Your Understanding

1. Describe the expansion of the Islamic empire after the death of the Prophet?
2. What effect did colonialism have on the Muslim community?
3. Why is Islam such a fast-growing religion today?
4. Who was Dr. M. Qadeer Baig? What did he accomplish after coming to Canada?
5. Research the important events in the life of Malcolm X. Write your own profile feature using the profiles in this book as a model.

Exploring Issues:

Women and Islam



Figure 8.28 A Canadian Muslim wears the hijab

For some Canadians, the role of women in Islam is unclear. Many feel that perhaps Muslim women are not treated as equals of men. Some Canadians wonder about the clothes worn by some Muslim women. As with most issues, this requires a little understanding and explanation.

The Muslim position on the status of women is clear: in the eyes of God, as emphasized in the Qur'an, women and men are equal. Both genders should constantly seek to please God. Frequently, the Qur'an refers to "believing men and women," which further emphasizes the equality of the sexes.

Lo! men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and

women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, and men who remember Allah much and women who remember—Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.

Qur'an 33: 35

This passage serves to demonstrate the call for both men and women to pursue the goals of charity, devotion, patience, and humility. In the end, the Qur'an calls on men to live with women "on a footing of kindness and equity." As well, women, along with men, are called upon to live modest and virtuous lives.

Most observers feel that the arrival of Islam markedly improved the conditions for women. Muslims are quite proud of the fair and equitable treatment that most women are accorded in Islam. However, non-Muslims often question the equality of women, particularly the question of dress. Contemporary Canadians enjoying much personal freedom and expression in dress, may find it hard to comprehend the conservative clothing and covering of some Muslim women. It could be that they are mistakenly "judging a book by its cover."

Judging a book by its cover: Hijab

Many Muslim women wear the **hijab** so as to be faithful to the Qur'anic suggestions dealing with modesty in their dress code. This suggestion of modesty in dress is not a demand, but rather a strong recommendation. There is no legal penalty for the neglect of this Qur'anic recommendation under the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the two main sources of law in Islam). At the time of Muhammad, while strictly obeying the recommended Qur'anic injunction of wearing the hijab, women often worked alongside men. Thus, it is not a question of "forcing" women to dress more modestly.

The hijab consists of a "veil," or head covering, similar to that worn by a Roman Catholic nun. Very few Canadian Muslims include covering the face, which is known as niqab. Many Muslims simply view the hijab as an essential part of their dress code, which is aimed at expressing a sense of modesty. As well, it is not only Muslims who prefer to adopt a more modest dress code; many religious people, whatever their faith, prefer to be conservatively dressed.

Pride and Identity

Increasingly, Muslim women in Canada declare that modesty in dress is a mark of liberation and pride in their faith and culture. They point out that modesty is a requirement for both men and women. Younger women living in the West say that the hijab enables them to maintain a distinct Muslim identity.

Many Muslims contend that a woman who dresses modestly (e.g. wears the hijab) will not attract unwanted attention to her body. Instead, attention will more likely be focussed on her personality, her ideas, and her intellect.

Judging a book by its content: Women and the Qur'an

The struggle to retain traditional religious values and practices in the modern world is a challenge for all faiths. We live in a world where freedom, personal expression and materialism seem to dominate. As part of this struggle, some religious groups may have lost sight of what truly obeying God means and have imposed harsh rules on their adherents that essentially take religious teachings to a distance far removed from what was originally intended. It could be said that Muslims have not escaped this trend either. Thus, if one is looking for oppression of women in some Muslim societies, he or she will find it.

In some cases, there is a clear disparity between the ideals expressed in the Qur'an and actual practice. There are some communities in Islam (the Taliban in Afghanistan, for example) that are regarded as being

too rigid in their interpretation of Islam. In certain cases, it is apparent that Muslim women are clearly not treated equally. However, to judge an entire religion on the actions of a small minority of extremists is clearly unfair and inaccurate. The vast majority of Muslims do not support the unjust treatment of women and believe that when injustice is seen, with respect to the treatment of women in the Muslim community, it is important to return to the roots of the religion (the teachings found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah) which clearly express equality and respect. Canadian Muslims will continue to face the challenge of maintaining their faith in a nation where diversity of expression is a central feature. It is likely that both they and Canada will be enriched by the experience.

QUESTIONS

- 1. How does the Qur'an view women? Be specific.**
- 2. What is the hijab? Why might some women prefer to wear it in the modern world?**
- 3. Do you believe that most Canadian youths dress immodestly? Explain.**
- 4. Does your school have a dress code? Do you support it?**

Activities

Check Your Understanding

1. Define the following terms: Allah, Islam, Muslim, jihad, mosque, Qur'an, revelation, Shahadah.
2. Write a point form biography of Muhammad (minimum: 15 points).

Think and Communicate

3. Make a bristol board display that outlines the origins, beliefs, and practices of Islam.
4. Make a detailed timeline of important dates in Muslim history.
5. Look for articles in the newspaper that deal with Muslim people or nations. Write a brief analysis of how the article(s) reflect or do not reflect Muslim beliefs.
6. a) Using a world map, outline the expansion of Islam from the time of the Prophet to the present. Make sure you indicate Muslim immigration to Canada.
b) Work in small groups to note the features of Islam that you believe explain its rapid growth and report your analysis to the class.

Apply Your Learning

7. Read the Exploring Issues feature on the hijab. Arrange a class debate that outlines the pros and cons of expressing modesty in one's appearance.

8. Compare Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the following chart:

Origins	Key People	Beliefs	View of God

9. Visit the Web site <http://www.religious-tolerance.org>. From the home page, select the link that will take you to the summary feature on Islam. Scroll down to the end of the article and select one of the links to another Muslim Web site. Based on your study of Islam, write a 200-300 word review of the site stating whether or not the site provides a clear and concise understanding of the main elements of Islam.
10. Find out if there is a mosque in your community. Contact the mosque and arrange to visit. Write a 300-500 word report about the visit and share the main points with your classmates.
11. Go to your school resource centre or library and research the following theme:
The treatment of the Muslim community in the popular media.
Are Muslims depicted in a fair way in major motion pictures and on television? Write a 300-500 word report or work with a partner and present your findings to the class in a 10- to 15-minute presentation.

Glossary

Allah [ALLA]. The name of God.

ayat [I at]. Translates directly to mean “signs,” but means “verses,” as in the Qur’an.

ghusl [goozle]. Ritual cleansing of the entire body; an act of purification so that an individual can participate in prayer, attend the mosque or touch the Qur’an.

Hadith [ha DEETH]. Traditions based on the teachings and sayings of the Prophet. They are the second source of law for Muslims; the Qur’an is the first source.

hajj [HADGE]. Pilgrimage to Makkah; the fifth Pillar of the Islamic Faith.

hijab [HIDGE ob]. A headscarf worn by women as a sign of modesty.

hijrah [HIDGE ruh]. The migration of Muhammad from Makkah to Madinah. The Islamic lunar calendar begins from the lunar year of the hijrah (622 CE).

idolatry [eye DOLL a tree]. The worshipping of objects, usually sculptures or paintings, as gods.

imam [im MAM]. Muslim prayer leader.

Islam [IZ lam]. Literally means “submission” or “surrender” to the will of God; a world religion that believes in one God and that the Word of God was sent via God’s holy Messenger, Muhammad.

jihad [juh HAD]. Literally means “striving”; striving to obey the commands of God; often translated by non-Muslims as “holy war.”

Ka’bah [ka BA]. A cube-shaped building that Abraham built under divine inspiration and dedicated to the One God.

Mi’raj [mirage]. The ascension of Muhammad into heaven.

mosque [MOSK]. Muslim place of worship.

Muslim. Literally means “one who submits” to the will of God; an adherent of the Islamic faith.

polygamy [puh LIGGA me]. The practice of having more than one wife at a time; under certain conditions, Islam allows for men to marry up to four wives.

polytheism. The belief in numerous gods.

Qur’an [kuh RAN]. The holy book of Islam, seen as God’s word and not Muhammad’s word even though Muhammad conveyed it.

revelation. A special infallible kind of inspiration (Arabic: *wahi*) reserved for only those who are appointed by God as Prophets (as distinct from a normal kind of inspiration experienced by other people).

salat [sal UT]. Ritual prayer (or service of worship) that takes place before dawn, early afternoon, late-afternoon, soon after sunset and then an hour and a half later in the evening; the second Pillar of the Islamic faith.

sawm. Mandatory fasting during Ramadan, the ninth month. Muslims may fast on several other occasions in addition to this; the fourth Pillar of the Islamic faith.

Shahadah [shaw HA da]. The Islamic creed or declaration of faith: There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God. It is the first Pillar of the Islamic faith.

Shari'ah [sher REE ah]. Islamic law; based on the Qur'an, the Sunnah (i.e., the example set by the Prophet).

Sunnah [SOON uh]. The practices, traditions, and example set by the Prophet.

surah [SIR ah]. A chapter in the Qur'an.

wudu [WOO zoo]. Ablution; ritual cleansing of certain parts of the body performed prior to *salat* prayers, other acts of worship and other religious practices; literally and spiritually means "making pure or radiant."

zakat [za CAT]. Giving alms to the poor and needy; the third Pillar of the Islamic faith.