

Allah ... The Quran ...  
and Islam

# Arabia ... before Islam

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Before Muhammed (~ 570 – 632) and the rise of Islam ... religion on the Arabian peninsula was primarily polytheistic ... but there were both Jews and Christians present.

There were numerous Jewish settlements in Arabia by the 6<sup>th</sup> century ... Medina (Yathrib) ... one of the two holiest cities in Islam had a large Jewish population. There were Jewish tribes ... active in trade. An earlier Jewish kingdom existed in what is now Yemen.

There were numerous Christian settlements throughout the southern and eastern parts of Arabia but few in the areas of Muhammad's activities. There was little early interaction ... however ... it is thought that there were Christians (perhaps Nestorians) in Muhammad's family (on his wife's side).

# Supersessionism & Syncretism

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Islam ... although the latest of the three faiths reviewed ... through the Quran ... claims to be the *earliest* ... of the three ... the original faith.

This does not fit the definition of [supersessionism](#) ... but a belief that Islam is a return to a pristine ... early faith.

In reality, however there is [syncretism](#) ... with Judaism ... Christianity ... and with pre-Islamic Arab polytheism.

# The Formation of Islamic Scripture

# The Quran

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The **Quran** **لقرآن** ... literally means ... “the recitation.” It is the central religious text in Islam (etymologically meaning ... "voluntary *submission* to God")

- Muslims believe the Quran to be verbally revealed ... recited ... through the angel Gabriel (*Jibril*) ... from God ... to the prophet Muhammad gradually over a period of approximately 23 years beginning in 609 CE when Muhammad was 40, and concluding in 632 CE, the year of his death.
- Muslims believe that the Quran is the culmination of a long series of revelations from God that started with Adam, and includes the Torah of the Jews and the Gospels about Jesus. The Quran is the final revelation of God.
- Many prophets were sent to various nations (peoples) before Muhammad proclaiming ... Worship Allah alone ... and avoid the worship of false deities. Twenty prophets from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures are mentioned by name ... to include Noah (*Nuh*), Moses (*Musa*), Jesus (*Isa*) ...

# The Quran

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- The Quran did not appear as a complete text during Muhammad's life time, although some parts of it may have been written. Gabriel told Muhammad to recite ... not write. There was no attempt at writing down the complete "recitation" ... clearly oral ... until after the death of Muhammad.
- There are many stories in Islamic history about how the text came to be written down in its current form.
- By 650 CE, Islamic leaders noticed slight variations in Quranic texts. A committee was established to produce a standard text ... which was accomplished. Variant texts were destroyed.
- It wasn't until 1924 ... in Egypt ... that today's standard text of the Quran was produced.

# The Quran

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- The Quran is divided into 114 units ... each called a *sura* ... oftentimes referred to as chapters. The *sura* range in length from 286 verses to 3 verses. Each *sura* has a name.
- After *sura 1*, each *sura* appears in order of length ... longest *sura(s)* first ... followed by next longest ... etc. (There are a few exceptions to this rule. This may have occurred due to later editing of the text.)
- This system of organization has resulted in many problems in understanding the “complete” message of the Quran. The *sura(s)* are NOT chronological ... or thematic. Some *sura(s)* contradict the statements of earlier *sura(s)*.
- There is a *mother of the book* that has existed eternally in heaven. The “recitation” was made from this book. Because the Quran was presented (recited) in Arabic ... it can only be understood in Arabic. **Therefore any translation of the Quran ... is really not the Quran.**

# Hadith

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**Hadith** ... meaning ... “speech” or “report.”

- *Hadith(s)* ... are material about Muhammad ... things he did ... said ... events in his life and “words of God” not in the Quran ... passed on orally ... later in written form ... from early in Islam.
- They also include legal decisions in which Muhammad interprets and applies the Quran and gives specific guidance. Preaching-like material ... exhortations are also included.
- There are many *hadith(s)* ... there are many collections of *hadith(s)* ... they are not all the same ... they are not all believed to be authentic.
- One of the issues with Islam today is that some take the hadiths as revelatory ... as incarnational ... as the Quran itself. Many practices and even beliefs come from the *hadith(s)* ... not from the Quran. This leads to conflicts within Islam about what is truly Islamic ... and what is not.



# Islam

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There are numerous sects within Islam ... but the two largest groups are the *Sunni* and the *Shi'ites*. The Sunni make up ~ 84-90% of all Muslims today.

- After the death of Muhammad, Muslims who accepted Abu Bakr as the first Caliph became known as *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* "the people of tradition and unification" in order to differentiate them from *Shi'ites*, who rejected Abu Bakr's authority.

- "*Shia*" is the short form of the historic phrase *Shī'atu 'Alī*, meaning "followers", "faction", or "party" of Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin Ali, whom the *Shia* believe to be Muhammad's successor in the Caliphate.

This original schism had to do with the successorship of Muhammad after his death.

# Allah

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- God (Arabic: الله *Allāh*) ... in Islamic theology is the all-powerful and all-knowing creator ... sustainer ... ordainer and judge of the universe.
- Islam emphasizes that God is strictly singular (*tawḥīd*) ... unique (*wāḥid*) ... and inherently One (*aḥad*) ... all-merciful and omnipotent.
- God exists without place.
- God ... is the only God. (29:46)
- The most frequent names ... titles ... or attributes ... of God are ... "the Compassionate" (*al-raḥmān*) ... and "the Merciful" (*al-raḥīm*).

# Islam ... Basic Beliefs

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**Islamic Monotheism** has three aspects ...

- To believe that there is only one Lord for all the universe and that is Allah.
- To believe that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah.
- Oneness of the Names and qualities of Allah ...
  - We must not name or qualify Allah except with what He or His Messenger has named or qualified him;
  - None can be named or qualified with the Names or qualifications of Allah;
  - We must believe in all the qualities of Allah which Allah has stated in His book or mentioned through His messenger without change ...

Source ... Translation and Meaning of The Noble Qur'an in the English Language ...  
Madinah, K.S.A.

# Muhammad

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**Muhammad** is the Messenger of Allah ...

- None has the right to be followed after Allah, but the Prophet Muhammad, as he is the last of His Messengers.
  - “Muhammad ... is the messenger of Allah and the last (end of the Prophets).” (33:40)
  - “And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain from it.” (59:7)
  - “Say (O Muhammad to mankind) : ‘If you (really) love Allah, then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism , follow The Qur’an and The Sunnah).’” (3:31)
  - “As for others than Muhammad, their statements are to be taken or rejected as to whether these are in accordance with Allah’s Book (the Qur’an) and with the Sunnah (legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statements) of the Prophet or not.

Source ... Translation and Meaning of The Noble Qur’an in the English Language ...  
Madinah, K.S.A.

# Submit

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**Islam** ... is based on the following five (principles):

- To testify (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is The Messenger of Allah).
- To perform (*Iqamat*) *As-Salat*.
  - Pray five times a day ... just as Muhammad did.
- To pay *Zakat*.
  - Annual tax for the Muslim community.
- To perform *Hajj* (i.e. pilgrimage to Makkah)
- To observe *Saum* (fast) during the month of Ramadan.

... believe in the Six articles of Faith

Source ... Translation and Meaning of The Noble Qur'an in the English Language  
... Madinah, K.S.A.

# Islam ... Basic Beliefs

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- **Allah** - Believe God Almighty is One, Unique, Unlike His Creation, Perfect in every way; Not like or in His Creation.
- **Angels** - Made from light, follow Allah's orders perfectly, never make mistakes and are never disobedient.
- **Books** - Torah (Old Testament), Suhoof (Scriptures of prophets), Zabur (Psalms), Enjil (Evangel or New Testament), Quran (Recitation to Muhammad).
- **Prophets** - Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus, Muhammad, and others mentioned in Books, peace be upon them all.
- **Resurrection** - All people, believers and disbelievers will be resurrected for Judgment Day in real flesh and blood bodies to be judged.
- **Divine Destiny** - Allah has complete control of all that happens, both good and evil and He has full knowledge of it all.

... From the Quran ...

# About the Quran ...

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- *“And if you [Arab pagans, Jews, and Christians] are in doubt concerning that which we have sent down [i.e. the Quran] to Our slave [Muhammad], then produce a Surah [chapter] of the like thereof and call your witnesses [supporters and helpers] besides Allah, if you are truthful.” (2:23)*
- *“And thus We have sent to you [O Muhammad] Ruh [a Revelation, and a Mercy] of our Command. You knew not what is the Book, nor what is Faith? But We have made it [this Qur’an] a light wherewith We guide whosoever of Our slaves We will. And verily, you [O Muhammad] are indeed guiding [mankind] to the Straight Path [i.e. Allah’s Religion of Islamic Monotheism].” (42:52)*

Source ... Translation and Meaning of The Noble Qur’an in the English Language ... Madinah, K.S.A.



# Islamic Monotheism

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- *“And argue not with the people of the Scripture [Jews and Christians], unless it be in [a way] that is better [with good words and in good manner, inviting them to Islamic Monotheism with His Verses], except with such of them as do wrong; and say [to them]: ‘We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you; our Ilah [God] and your Ilah [God] is One [i.e. Allah], and to Him we have submitted [as Muslims]’” (29:46)*

A claim that the God of revelation for Jews and Christians ... is God ...

# Islamic Monotheism

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Islam's most fundamental concept is a strict monotheism called *tawhīd*, affirming that Allah (God) is one and incomparable (*wāḥid*).

*“Say [O Muhammad]: ‘He is Allah, [the] One. Allah the Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, [He neither eats nor drinks], He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.’”* (112:1-4)

Clearly a response to Christian belief ...

*“He is the First [nothing is before Him] and the Last [nothing is after Him], the Most High [nothing is above Him] and the most near [nothing is nearer than Him]. And He is the All-Knower of every thing.”* (57:3)

# The Same God ?

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*“... our Ilah [God] and your Ilah [God] is One [i.e. Allah] ...”*

But ...

From a Muslim perspective ... The Torah and the Gospels are considered true revelations from God ... but over time for various reasons ... Jews have corrupted the Torah ... and Christians have corrupted the Gospels ... and so ... do not understand the revelations as originally provided by God.

# To Jews

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Concerning the Jews ...

*“Do you [faithful believers] covet that they will believe in your religion inspite of the fact that a party of them [Jewish rabbis] used to hear the word of Allah [the Taurat (Torah)], then they used to change it knowingly after they understood it.” (2:75)*

Jews had the correct revelation from God ... their leaders altered the revelation ... on purpose ... in order to deceive the people ... and the people believe what their leaders have taught them.

# To Christians

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Concerning Christians ...

*“O people of the Scripture [Christians]! Do not exceed the limits in your religion or say of Allah aught but the truth. The Messiah, Isa [Jesus], son of Maryam [Mary], was [no more than] a Messenger of Allah and his Word, [“Be!” – and he was] which he bestowed on Maryam, and a spirit [Ruh] created by him, so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not: “Three [trinity]!” Cease! [it is] better for you. For Allah is [the only] One Ilah [God], glory be to Him [Far exalted is He] above having a son. ... (4:171)*

Christians have blasphemed ... literally insulted God ... by claiming that He has a son ... implying that God must have “partners.”

# To Jews and Christians

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*“They [Jews and Christians] took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah [by obeying them in things which they made lawful or unlawful according to their own desires without being ordered by Allah], and [they also took as their Lord] Messiah, son of Maryam [Mary], while they [Jews and Christians] were commanded [in the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] to worship none but One Ilah [God – Allah] La ilaha illa Huwa [none has the right to be worshipped but He]. Praise and glory be to Him [far above is He] from having the partners they associate [with Him]. (9:31)*

*Shirk ... the worship of others along with Allah.*

# Predestination ?

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Allah has complete control of all that happens, both good and evil and He has full knowledge of it all. (from Six articles of Faith)

*“And those who disbelieved say: ‘Why is not a sign sent down to him [Muhammad] from the Lord?’ Say: ‘Verily, Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides unto Himself those who turn to Him in repentance.’” (13:27)*

*“... and many of mankind prostrate themselves to Allah. But there are many (men) on whom the punishment is justified. And whomsoever Allah disgraces, none can honour him. Verily, Allah does what He wills.” (22:18b)*

# Islamic Monotheism

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The indivisibility of God implies the indivisibility of God's sovereignty which in turn leads to the conception of a universe as a just and coherent moral universe rather than an existential and morally chaotic one.

The universe (creation) is good ... and orderly ... it has “submitted to Allah” ... therefore the universe is Muslim ...

To attribute divinity to a created entity is the only unpardonable sin mentioned in the Qur'an.



# Comparison

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- Islamic theology identifies God as described in the Qur'an as the same god of Israel who covenanted with Abraham.
- Islam and Judaism alike reject the Trinity of Trinitarian Christianity, instead teaching that God is a singular entity beside whom no one else should be worshiped.

God is One ... but the understanding of God ... and what God demands of his creation is anything but one ... between the faiths ... and internal to the faiths ...

# What is God like?

Attributes ... Characteristics

# Islam

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Allah, a supreme, personal, and inscrutable God, will punish those who turn to other gods and fail to recognize His chosen messenger, Muhammed.

*Islam* ... surrender ... submission (to the rule of God).

*“Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam.”* (3:19)

*“But no, by your lord, they can have no Faith until they make you [O Muhammad] judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept [them] with full submission.”* (4:65)