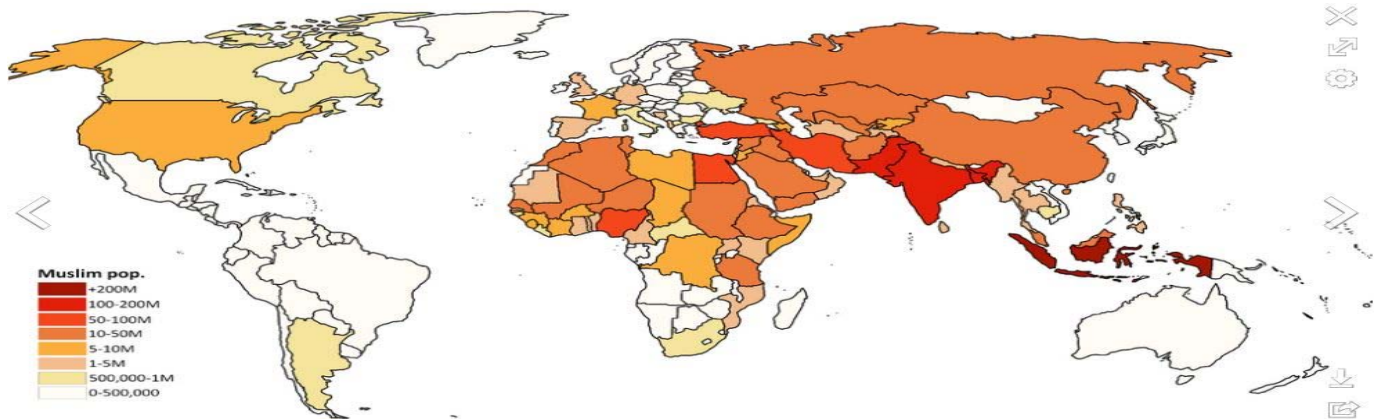


Islam



Origin/Founder: Islam was founded in Saudi Arabia, on the Arabian Peninsula around 600 CE. It is believed to have been revealed to humanity by the Prophet Muhammad. Those who follow Islam are called Muslims.

History: Mohammed was a deeply spiritual man, and he often spent time in meditation on Mount Hira. One night in 610 CE he was meditating in a cave on the mountain when he was visited by the angel Gabriel who ordered him to recite words which Mohammed came to believe were the words of God. The simple, clear-cut belief of only one God attracted many to the Islamic faith, and Mohammed would govern his followers until his death in 632 CE. After his death, arguments over leadership would lead to a division into two main groups: Sunni and Shi'a.

Symbols: While there is no official symbol of Islam, the crescent and star are most identified with the religion. During the 1800s, the crescent and star were the emblems of the Ottoman Empire and the nations that emerged from Persian territories, the majority of which were followers of Islam. During the 1970s, the symbol was embraced by Arab nationalist groups and the Nation of Islam.



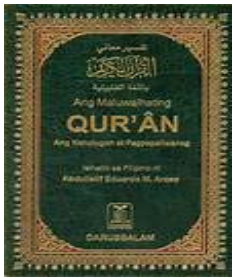
Tenets: While Islam shares many of the same prophets as Judaism & Christianity, including Moses and Jesus, Mohammed is considered the TRUE prophet. Unlike Judaism and Christianity, followers of Islam are not allowed to view or create artistic productions of Mohammed.

All aspects of a Muslim's life are governed by *Sharia*. Sharia law comes from a combination of sources including the *Qur'an* (the Muslim holy book), the *Hadith* (sayings and conduct of the prophet Muhammad) and *fatwas* (the rulings of Islamic scholars). Classical Sharia

manuals are often divided into four parts: laws relating to personal acts of worship, laws relating to commercial dealings, laws relating to marriage and divorce, and penal laws.

Deity: Islam is also a monotheistic religion; like Judaism and Christianity, they also believe in the God of Abraham. In Islam, he is named Allah, which is the Arabic translation of the name “God”.

Afterlife: Muslims believe that on a day decided and known only to Allah, life on earth will come to an end and Allah will destroy everything. On this day all the people who have ever lived will be raised from the dead and will face judgement by Allah. Muslims believe that they will remain in their graves until this day. Allah will then balance the good deeds a person has done in their life against the bad deeds. If the good outweigh the bad, the person will go to *Jannah*, a place of joy and bliss. If the bad outweigh the good, then the person will be punished in hell, *Jahannam*.



Scriptures: The holy book of Islam is the Quran (or Koran). It is believed to have been revealed by God (Allah) to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel over the span of about 23 years. The Quran is a book of guidance and lessons in 114 *surahs*, or chapters. Regarded as the most important miracle of the Prophet Muhammad, the Quran was put together after his death.

Practices: The 5 Pillars of Faith are the standards that all Muslims are expected to observe and complete in order to live a good and responsible life. They include believing in only one God and accepting that Mohammed is his messenger. Prayers must be completed 5 times a day while you are facing Mecca. You must fast during Ramadan and make charitable contributions throughout your life. Finally, those Muslims who can make the journey must make a pilgrimage to Mecca, a practice known as the Hajj.



For daily living practices, all Muslim followers must wear modest clothing. Depending on the group, women may be required to wear items like burqas or hijabs to cover up. In both public and private settings, genders are separated from each other unless they are married. The Quran also outlines some dietary restrictions, such as abstention from pork and alcohol.