



In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to God, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we worship; And Thy aid do we seek. Show us the straight way; The way of those on whom Thou has bestowed Thy Grace; those whose [portion] Is not wrath; And who go not astray.

The Qur'an, Chapter 1  
"Fatiha" ("Opening Chapter")

# Islam

A special pull-out section from  
*Saudi Aramco World*, January/February 2002

## An Introduction

Facts about Islam and Muslims  
Masterpieces of Islamic Art  
Islamic Cultural Timeline  
Notable Muslims  
Recommended Further Readings

A limited number of copies of "Islam: An Introduction" is available upon request for use in your class or community group at no charge. Make your request to: Edna Catchings, Special Requests, P.O. Box 2106, Houston TX 77252.



يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا  
وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ

O mankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other, [not that ye may despise each other]. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is [he who is] the most righteous of you.

The Qur'an, Chapter 49  
"Hujurat" ("The Dwellings")  
Verse 13



## What is Islam?

Islam is the religion, and the way of life, of about one-fifth of the world's population. Its adherents, called Muslims, believe Islam is God's final message to humankind, a reconfirmation and perfection of the messages that God has revealed through earlier prophets.

## What do Muslims believe?

The central Muslim belief is that there is only one God, unique, incomparable, eternal, absolute and without peer or associate. He cannot be perceived in this world but through His works.

Other important tenets of Islam are that God is the Creator of all that exists; that His will is supreme; that He has sent messengers to humankind, of whom Muhammad was the "seal"—that is, the last; that the Qur'an is the very Word of God; that angels, immortal creatures, exist, as does Satan; that humans are responsible to God for their actions; and that, on Judgment Day, an all-knowing and merciful God will judge all mortals according to their deeds in this life.

## Who was the Prophet Muhammad?

Muhammad was the prophet through whom, Muslims believe, God sent his last revelation to humankind.

Muhammad was born around the year 570 in the Arabian city of Makkah, a city built on trade and on the flow of pilgrims to the Ka'bah, the shrine believed to have been erected by Adam, and which was then filled with idols from many cultures.

Muhammad was orphaned at age six. In his 20's, he went to work for a widow named Khadijah, who ran trading caravans. Working for her, he traveled widely and earned a reputation for trustworthiness. Later, and in spite of a considerable age difference, he married Khadijah.

In his late 30's, Muhammad took to meditating alone in a cave on Mount Hira, a few hours' walk outside the city. There, one day during the month of Ramadan, he heard a voice ordering him to "Recite!"

Three times, Muhammad replied that he could not: He was illiterate. But each time the command was repeated, and finally Muhammad received the first revelation:

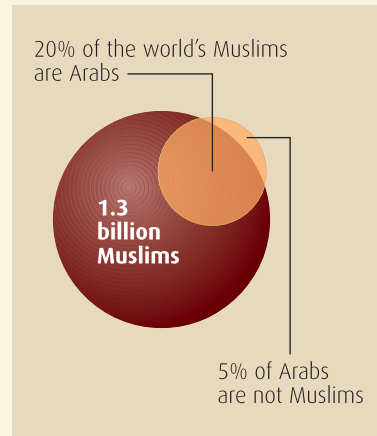
"Recite: In the name of your Lord who created, Created man from a clot. Recite: And your Lord is Most Bounteous, Who taught by the pen, Taught man that which he knew not."

The voice—it revealed itself as the Angel Gabriel—told Muhammad that he was to be the Messenger of God, and the revelations continued at irregular intervals for the 22 remaining years of Muhammad's life. The total of these revelations is the Qur'an, a word that means, literally, "recitation."

At first, Muhammad told only his wife and his closest friends of his experience. But as the revelations kept coming, they enjoined him to proclaim the oneness of God publicly—something that took courage, because most Makkans believed there were many gods (polytheism).

It was the eloquence of the revelations, and the ease with which listeners recognized in them true words of God, that led to the emergence of Muslims. But Muhammad also faced opposition from Makkan polytheists: To them, Muhammad's monotheism was a threat to their control of the Ka'bah—and the pilgrimage trade. In the early fall of 622, Muhammad and his followers emigrated from Makkah north to the town of Yathrib (later renamed al-Madinah). This emigration—known as the *hijrah*—marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar, because it was in Yathrib that the followers of Muhammad's teachings developed a society organized along the reformist lines of God's revelations.

In 630, after a series of battles, Muhammad peacefully reentered Makkah, where he cleared the Ka'bah of idols. Two years later, he took ill, and died on June 8, 632. His close companion, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, told the grieving Muslim community, "Whoever worshiped Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad is dead, but whoever worships God, let him know that God lives, and dies not."



## 10 Masterpieces of Classical Islamic Art

"Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts, the book of their deeds, the book of their words and the book of their art," wrote Ruskin. "Of the three the only trustworthy one is the last." The objects listed below, chosen by historians of Islamic art Jonathan M. Bloom and Sheila S. Blair, are only 10 pages from the vast "manuscript" of Islamic civilization, but they offer a sample of the riches of the whole.



1. **The Dome of the Rock**, Jerusalem, 692. The first great work of Islamic architecture. It was built over the rock from which the Prophet Muhammad made his miraculous ascent to heaven, which is described in Chapter 17 of the Qur'an.

2. **The Malwiya minaret**, Samarra, Iraq, mid-ninth century. This 50-meter (160') helicoidal tower of sun-dried and baked brick may have been modeled on ancient ziggurats. It symbolizes the power of Islam at the zenith of the Baghdad-based Abbasid caliphate.



## What is the Qur'an?

The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam. Muslims believe that it is the Word of God, transmitted by the Angel Gabriel, in Arabic, through the Prophet Muhammad. It is meant for all humanity, not for any exclusive group. At its heart is the teaching of monotheism, but the Qur'an provides guidance for every part of a believer's life, including aspects that in the West would be considered social, political or legal, and not religious. The Qur'an is considered by Muslims to complete God's earlier revelations.

Unlike the Bible, there is only one version of the Qur'an, unchanged since Muhammad received it. A number of his followers had carefully memorized each of the revelations, word for word—an achievement still common among serious scholars—and the text we know today was written down by the year 651. The Qur'an is also considered to be untranslatable, because no other language carries the full range of often subtle meaning that the Arabic of the Qur'an can convey. Thus Muslim scholars regard versions of the Qur'an in other languages to be interpretations rather than true translations, and in Arabic literature there is no work whose eloquence, clarity and erudition approach those of the Qur'an.



3. **The Mughira pyxis**, carved at Córdoba, Spain, 968. This small, exquisite box, carved from a cylindrical section of elephant tusk, is the most beautiful of the handful of known Islamic ivory carvings. Now in the Louvre in Paris.

4. **The minbar from the Kutubiyya Mosque**, Marrakesh, Morocco, 1137. This wooden pulpit, nearly four meters (13') tall, was carved in Córdoba by the descendants of the workmen who carved the Mughira pyxis. Hundreds of thousands of pieces of wood and bone are carved and fitted together with consummate artistry.

5. **The mihrab from the Maydan Mosque**, Kashan, Iran, 1226. (A *mihrab* is a niche in a wall of a mosque indicating the direction of the Ka'bah.) Composed of glazed ceramic slabs fitted into a complex, harmonious ensemble of calligraphy and arabesques, this is the acme of the difficult luster technique of overglaze decoration perfected by Persian ceramists. Now in the Islamic Museum of Berlin.

6. **The Baptistère of Saint-Louis**, Cairo, 1300. This hammered bronze basin, inlaid in silver and gold, is decorated on both the interior and the exterior with marvelous figural scenes showing hunters, servants and warriors. First made to catch water after hand-washing before prayers, it was only later used as a baptismal font by the French court. Now in the Louvre.



## How do Muslims practice their faith?

*I*slam, in Arabic, means “submission,” meaning submission to the will of God. It also means “peace,” the peace one finds through submission to God's will. Muslims accept five primary obligations, commonly called the “Five Pillars of Islam.” In practice, of course, Muslims can be seen observing all of these to varying degrees, for the responsibility of fulfilling the obligations lies on the shoulders of each individual. **The profession of faith (*shahadah*):** This is a simple statement: “There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”

**Prayer (*salah*):** Muslims pray five times a day—at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening—facing toward the Ka'bah, the House of God, in the Great Mosque in Makkah. They may pray wherever they are when prayer-time arrives, in any clean place, preferably in the company of

other Muslims. On Fridays at noon, Muslims are encouraged to pray as a gathered community in congregational mosques. There is a sequence of physical postures, fixed by tradition, for ritual prayer, and the prayers are said in Arabic regardless of the local language.

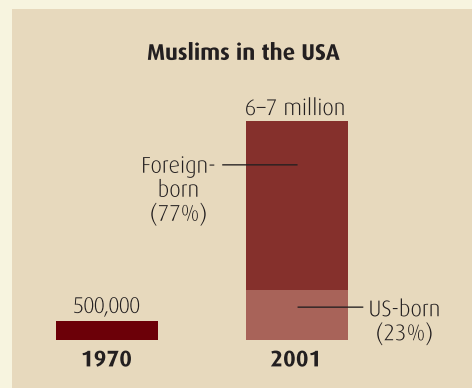
**Charity (*zakah*):** A fixed proportion of a Muslim's net worth—not just his or her income—is prescribed as a donation for the welfare of the community, whether that community is made up of Muslims, non-Muslims or a mixture.

**Fasting (*sawm*):** Every day from dawn to dusk during the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims must abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual contact; even more than at other times, they must also avoid cursing, lying, cheating and otherwise abusing or harming others.

**Pilgrimage (*Hajj*):** The journey to Makkah is obligatory for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to make it. Pilgrimage need be made only once in a lifetime, but it can be made several times if a Muslim wishes. The *Hajj* proper is made between the eighth and 13th days of Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, and every pilgrim carries out specified rituals at specific times. At any other time of year, Muslims can perform similar prayers and rituals and thus complete the ‘*Umrah*, or “lesser pilgrimage.”

## What is the Ka'bah?

The Ka'bah is the black cubical stone structure in the courtyard of the Great Mosque at Makkah. Muslims believe it was built by Adam and rebuilt by Ibrahim (Abraham) and his son Ismail (Ishmael). The Ka'bah is empty, and it is not entered except for a ritual cleaning each year. A black cloth covering, called the *kiswah*, embroidered in gold with Qur'anic calligraphy, is made for it each year. When Muslims pray, wherever in the world they are, it is the direction of the Ka'bah that they face. During the *Hajj*, pilgrims circle the Ka'bah seven times in a ritual called the *tawaf*, or circumambulation, which is also performed throughout the rest of the year.



# Notable Muslims

**Abu Bakr "al-Siddiq,"** ca. 570–634: One of the first followers of the Prophet who, in 632, became the first of the four "rightly guided" caliphs.

**'Umar ibn al-Khattab,** 592–644: Second of the four "rightly guided" caliphs. He originated most of the major political institutions of the Muslim state and helped stabilize the rapidly expanding Arab empire.

**'Uthman ibn Affan,** d. 656: Third of the "rightly guided" caliphs, married successively to two of the Prophet's daughters. Elected caliph in 644, he ordered the official collation of the Qur'an.

**'Ali ibn Abi Talib,** ca. 596–661: Cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. In 656 he became the last of the "rightly guided" caliphs.

**Harun al-Rashid,** 786–809: Fifth caliph of the Abbasid empire, he ruled during its apogee, as described in *The 1001 Nights*. Founder, with his son and successor **al-Ma'mun**, 813–833, of the Bayt al-Hikmah, or House of Wisdom, in Baghdad, where works from classical Greece were translated, studied and preserved.

**Ziryab (Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Nafi),** b. 789: Baghdadi musician, 'ud master and cultural innovator who became chief musician and *arbiter elegantiarum* at the court of Abd al-Rahman II in Córdoba in 822.

**Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj,** 817–875: Collector of the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (*hadith*).

Muhammad ibn Musa **al-Khwarizmi,** ca. 800–847: Mathematician, astronomer, geographer of Baghdad. He introduced algebra and Indian/Arabic numerals—as well as the words *algebra* and *algorithm*—to Europe in the 12th century.

Muhammad ibn Ismail **al-Bukhari,** 810–870: Compiler of *hadith*.

**Zubayda,** d. 831: Wife of Harun al-Rashid. Sponsored mosques, hostels and schools and backed improvements to the pilgrims' road from Kufa to Makkah, the *darb Zubayda*.

Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya **al-Razi,** 841–926: Physician, philosopher, alchemist, musician and mathematician, born in Rayy, Persia. Called **Rhazes** in the West. Islam's greatest physician and most freethinking philosopher, author of more than 200 books, including the first pediatric work, the first treatise on smallpox and measles, and a 25-volume medical survey.

**Firdawsi** (Abu 'l-Qasim Mansur), 940–1020: Great Persian poet, author of the 60,000-verse *Shahnama* (*Book of Kings*), the Persian national epic.

Abu 'Ali al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan **ibn al-Haytham,** 965–1040: Combined physical doctrines with mathematics. Known in the West as **Alhazen**. Wrote the *Kitab al-Manazir* (*On Optics*), in which he proposed a new theory of vision. Influenced Kepler and Descartes; extended Euclid's *Elements*.

Abu al-Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad **al-Biruni,** 973–1048: Astronomer, mathematician, geographer, physicist, historian. Born in (today's)

Uzbekistan, he wrote *A History of India* and *A Chronology of Ancient Nations* as well as other major works.

Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn 'Abd Allah **ibn Sina,** 980–1037: The "Leonardo da Vinci of the Muslim world," known as **Avicenna** in the West. Born in Bukhara, (today's) Uzbekistan. Wrote on theology, metaphysics, astronomy, philology, poetry and medicine, including *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* (*The Canon of Medicine*), a codification of all existing medical knowledge that was used as a reference in Europe well into the 15th century.

'Aisha bint Ahmad **al-Qurtubiya,** ca. 1000: Famed woman poet and calligrapher of Andalusia.

**Omar Khayyam,** ca. 1048–1125: Persian mathematician, astronomer and poet best known for the *Rubaiyat*; also helped reform the solar calendar.

Abu Hamid Muhammad **al-Ghazali,** 1058–1111: Persian astronomer, jurist, philosopher and mystic; **Algazel** to the West. Author of some 70 works, al-Ghazali won early fame as a lawyer in Baghdad but later relinquished his post to pursue the nature of knowledge.

Abu Marwan 'Abd al-Malik **ibn Zuhr,** 1091–1162: Physician, born Seville. Known to the West as **Avenzoar** and renowned for his surgical skills.

**Wallada bint al-Mustakfi,** d. ca. 1091: Poet of Umayyad Córdoba famous for her wit and eloquence, literary parties and love poetry.

Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad **al-Idrisi,** 1099–1180: Geographer, born Ceuta, Morocco and educated in Córdoba. Served in the court of Roger II of Sicily, for whom he produced *al-Kitab al-Rujari*, a geographical treatise which included the first scientific map of the world.

Abu al-Walid Muhammad **ibn Rushd,** 1126–1198: Philosopher, physician, jurist. Known as **Averroës** in the West. Active in Seville, Córdoba and Marrakech. "The Great Commentator" on Aristotle whose works, translated into Latin, gave Europeans their first substantive introduction to Greek philosophy.

**Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi,** 1138–1193: Founder of Ayyubid dynasty of Egypt and Syria; known as **Saladin** in the West. Ejected the Crusaders from Jerusalem in 1187 and garnered fame through chivalric battles with Richard the Lion-Hearted.

Muhyi 'l-Din al-Ta'i **ibn al-'Arabi,** 1165–1240: Mystic, born in Murcia, Spain. Author of some 400 works, including a summary of the teaching of 28 prophets from Adam to Muhammad.

Hafsa bint al-Hajj **al-Rakuni,** ca. 12th c.: Greatest woman poet of al-Andalus.

Badi' al-Zaman Isma'il ibn al-Razzaz **al-Jazari,** ca. 1150–1200: Engineer, inventor. His prescient *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices* gives detailed descriptions and drawings of clocks, irrigation machines, fountains, automata and other technologies.

Jalal al-Din **Rumi,** 1207–1273: Mystic, poet, born in Balkh, (today's) Afghanistan. After his death,

his disciples organized the Mevlevi order, sometimes called the "whirling dervishes."

**Ibn al-Nafis,** d. 1288: Physician of Damascus. Wrote compendium of Arab knowledge of ophthalmology. Proposed the theory of the pulmonary circulation of the blood.

'Abd al-Rahman **ibn Khaldun,** 1332–1406: Historian, sociologist. Born in Tunis, he served at courts in Andalusia and North Africa and taught at al-Azhar in Cairo. Author of *Kitab al-'Ibar* (*Universal History*), in which he treated history as a science and outlined reasons for the rise and fall of civilizations.

**Timur (Tamerlane),** ca. 1336–1405: Conqueror of an empire that included all or parts of today's Afghanistan, Persia, India, Turkey, Syria and Egypt. Equally famed for ruthlessness and the monuments he commissioned, especially in his capital, Samarqand.

**Sinan,** 1488–1587: Master architect of the Ottoman empire who designed, among many others, the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul and the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne.

**Süleyman I,** 1494–1566: Ottoman Sultan who guided the empire to the fullest extent of its power and prestige. A patron of the arts and sponsor of vast public works; the present city walls of Jerusalem are one of his many projects in that city alone.

Shihab al-Din **ibn Majid,** 15th c.: Navigator on Vasco da Gama's voyage from Portugal to India in 1497–1498.

Mirza Asad **Ghalib,** 1797–1869: Great poet of India, father of modern Urdu prose.

Jamal al-Din **al-Afghani,** 1838–1897: Journalist, reformer. A founder of modern Muslim anti-colonialism, he advocated a religious and cultural revival to counteract European influence.

Muhammad **Iqbal,** 1876–1938: Poet, philosopher, jurist and social reformer. He advocated the creation of a Muslim state in northwest India.

Muhammad Ali **Jinnah,** 1876–1948: First president of Pakistan.

**Um Kulthum,** 1908–1975: She combined traditional Arabic love poetry, contemporary musical forms and the cadences of religious songs to become the Arab world's greatest popular singer.

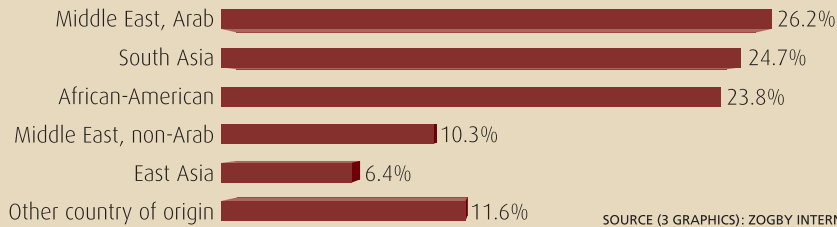
**Naguib Mahfouz,** b. 1911: Egyptian writer, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1988. His work features realistic depictions of middle- and lower-class Egyptians.

**Malcolm X,** 1925–1965: American civil-rights leader.

**Muhammad Ali,** b. 1942: Three-time world heavyweight champion boxer; became a Muslim in 1964.

**Ahmed H. Zewail,** b. 1946: Egyptian-born American chemist, winner of the 1999 Nobel Prize for imaging chemical interactions on an atomic scale.

### Percentage of American Muslims by heritage



SOURCE (3 GRAPHICS): ZOGBY INTERNATIONAL

## The Islamic Calendar

The Islamic calendar is based on a lunar year of 12 full lunar cycles taking exactly 354 and 11/30 days. Each new year in the Islamic calendar thus begins 10 or 11 days earlier in the 364 1/4-day solar calendar commonly used in the West. The 12 months of the Islamic year are:

Muharram, Safar, Rabi' al-Awwal ("Rabi' I"), Rabi' al-Thani ("Rabi' II"), Jumada al-Ula ("Jumada I"), Jumada al-Akhirah ("Jumada II"), Rajab, Sha'ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhu al-Qa'dah and Dhu al-Hijjah.

The first day of year one of the Islamic calendar was set as the first day of the *hijrah*, the Prophet's move from Makkah to Madinah: July 26, 622. The western convention in designating Islamic dates is thus by the abbreviation AH, which stands for the Latin *anno hegirae*, or "Year of the Hegira."

To roughly convert an Islamic calendar year (AH) into a Gregorian equivalent (AD), or vice versa, use one of the following equations.

$$AD = 622 + (32/33 \times AH)$$

$$AH = 33/32 \times (AD - 622)$$

## Why are modern numerals called "Arabic numerals"?

The modern numerals widely used today were probably developed in India, but it was Arabs who transmitted this system to the West. In 771, an Indian scholar arrived in Baghdad bringing with him a treatise on astronomy that used the Indian numerical system, which the Arabs admired because it was more economical than the Roman system. In time, they added a further improvement: the *sifr* ("cipher"), or zero.

## Arabic Writing

Most scholars believe that Arabic developed from Nabataean and/or Aramaic dialects spoken in northern Arabia and much of the Levant during the last thousand years before the Islamic era.

The Arabic alphabet has 28 letters. More complex than differing capital and small letters in English, each Arabic letter may have up to four forms, depending on where it appears in the word and which letters precede or follow it. The Arabic script is read from right to left.

The cursive nature of the script and the variability of the letterforms made it difficult to adapt Arabic for use with early printing presses. It is for this reason that the Arab world continued for some centuries after the time of Gutenberg to rely on handwriting for the production of books, especially the Qur'an. This was one of the reasons that calligraphy—"beautiful writing"—emerged as perhaps the most important Arab art form.

## What is *jihad*?

The Arabic word *jihad* means "to struggle or strive, to exert oneself" for a praiseworthy aim. The "greater struggle" is the personal one: the struggle to resist temptation, combat one's own evil traits and imperfections, and become a better person in God's sight. The "lesser struggle" is exertion for the sake of Islam, such as working for the betterment of Muslim society or trying to persuade nonbelievers, by tongue or pen or by example, to embrace Islam. The lesser struggle may also include physical combat for the sake of Islam and the Muslim community, especially in self-defense and if carried out according to the explicit limitations imposed by the Qur'an. Some modern thinkers liken *jihad* to the Christian concept of "just war."

**7. The Ahmad al-Suhrawardi Qur'an manuscript**, Baghdad, 1307. This is arguably the finest display of the calligrapher's art. The paper was polished to an impeccable smoothness, allowing the pen to glide effortlessly across a pearly surface. This was a multivolume manuscript for an anonymous patron, and it is now dispersed. The colophon is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

**8. The Ardebil Carpets**, Iran, 1539–40. These two enormous carpets were worked in 10 colors of silk and wool. Each has more than 25 million knots, making them one of the most splendid examples of the weaver's art. This one is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the other is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

**9. The Selimiye Mosque**, Edirne, Turkey, 1574. The breathtaking interior of the mosque is the masterpiece of the Ottoman architect Sinan, who created a huge and uninterrupted space under a towering dome. The centralized space of the prayer hall literally and symbolically embraces the community of believers and unites them under God's radiance.

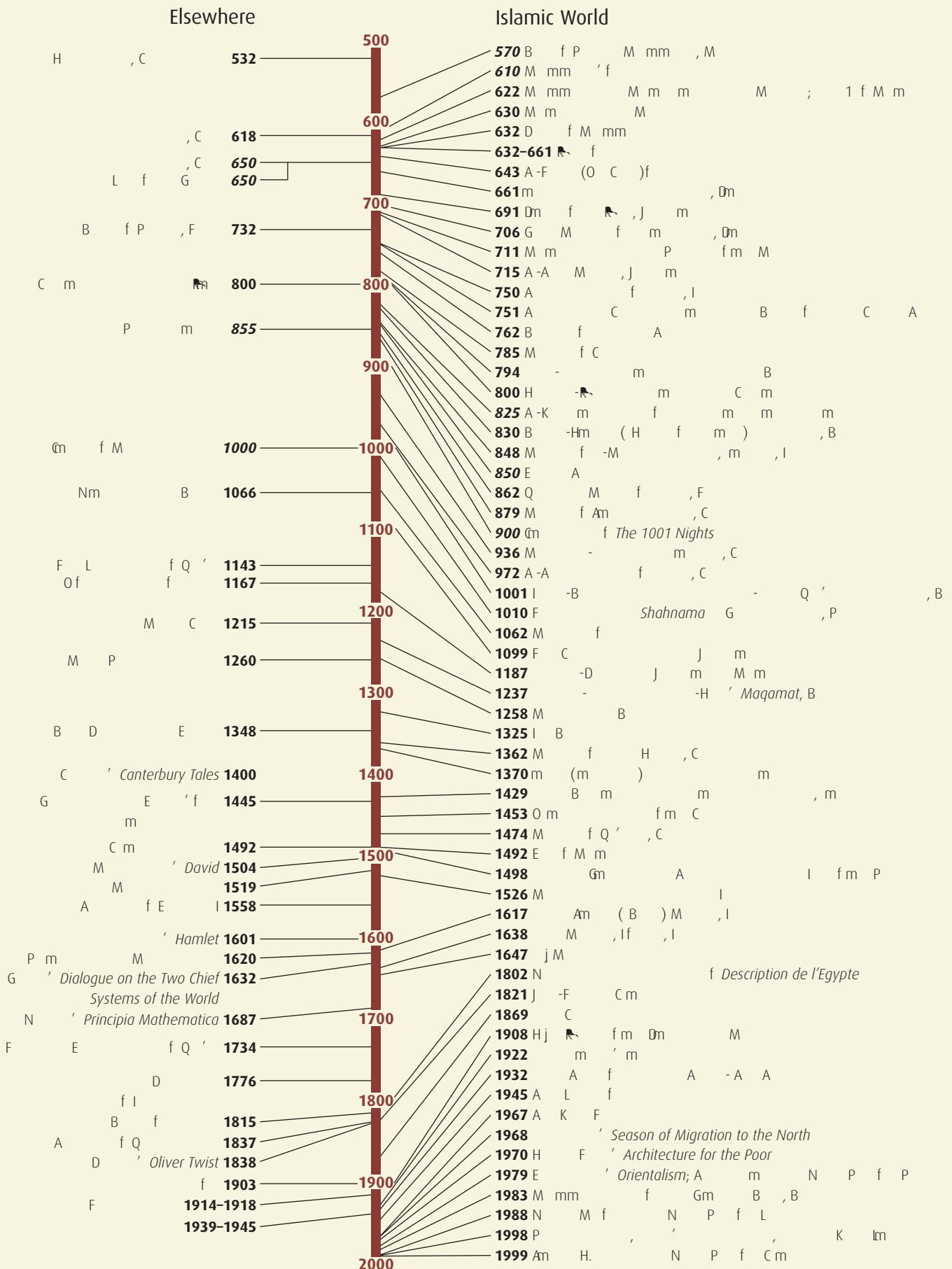
**10. The Taj Mahal**, Agra, India, 1647. This enormous white marble monument is set in a garden along the banks of the Jumna River, centerpiece of a complex designed to evoke the gardens of paradise that await believers.

PHOTO CREDITS: 1: DAVID H. WELLS 2: MICHAEL SPENCER 3: H. LEWANDOWSKI/ART RESOURCE 4: ERICH LESSING/ART RESOURCE 5: BILDARCHIV PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ 6: LOUVRE/ART RESOURCE 7: METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART 8: VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM/ART RESOURCE 9: VANNI/ART RESOURCE 10: NIK WHEELER



# Cultural Timeline of the Islamic World

*Italicized dates are approximate*



# Suggestions for Reading

**Readers who want to learn more about Islam will find interesting material in this list.** Some of the titles are recent, some are classic, and others did not get the attention they deserved when they were published. Without endorsing the views of individual authors, we encourage wide reading and comparisons of information and viewpoints presented. The books listed here are available in libraries and bookstores. Please do not order books from *Saudi Aramco World*.

**Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations.** Michael Sells. 1999, White Cloud, 1-883991-26-9, \$21.95 pb with cd. New translations of the Makkan *surahs*—often considered the most poetic and hymnic—with insightful commentary.

**The Essential Koran: The Heart of Islam.** Translated and presented by Thomas Cleary. Book Sales, 1998, 0-7858-0902-3, \$18.99 hb. The author has selected passages that, in his opinion, best lead the non-Muslim to understanding.

**The Hadj: An American's Pilgrimage to Mecca.** Michael Wolfe. 1998, Grove, 0-8021-3586-2, \$14 pb. The author, a recent convert, treads the path of earlier writer/explorers, but with less romantic zeal and more quiet wonder, while bringing to life the momentous experience of the contemporary Hajj.

**The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary.** Abdullah Yusuf Ali. 1987, Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 0-940368-31-5, \$25 pb; 0-940368-32-3, \$30 hb. A standard English version, with extensive notes.

**Ideals and Realities of Islam.** Seyyed Hossein Nasr. 2000, ABC International Group, 0-930637-11-X, \$17.95 pb. A lucid presentation of important aspects of Islamic religion and culture and their relationship to present-day society.

**Islam and Democracy.** John L. Esposito and John O. Voll. 1998, Oxford, 0-19-510816-7, \$19.95 pb. Using six case studies, the authors examine the relationship of the desire for an Islamic revival and the demand for political participation.

**Islam: An Introduction.** Annemarie Schimmel. 1992, State University of New York Press, 0-7914-1328-4, \$16.95 pb. A lifelong scholar's clear, insightful and reliable overview of the faith.

**Islam: A Primer.** John Sabini. 6th ed. 2001, AMIDEAST\*, 0-913957-17-8, \$11.50 pb. An easy-to-read, no-frills field guide to Islam's origins and beliefs, with notes on social customs and rituals such as hospitality, weddings and births.

**Islam: A Short History.** Karen Armstrong. 2000, Modern Library, 0-679-64040-1, \$19.95 hb. One of the best books on the shelf for non-Muslims who want to lay the foundation for a factual, sensibly panoramic understanding of Islam.

**Islam: A Thousand Years of Faith and Power.** Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair. 2000, TV Books, 1-57500-092-X, \$28 hb. The authors interweave cultural, political and religious history in this brisk and lively work.

**Islam in America.** Jane I. Smith. 1999, Columbia University Press, 0-231-10967-9, \$19.50 pb. An excellent panoramic view of the Muslim experience in America.

**Islam: Origin and Belief.** Emory C. Bogle. 1998, University of Texas Press, 0-292-70861-0, \$30 hb; 0-292-70862-9, \$19.95 pb. A very useful, widely accessible presentation aimed at general readers.

**Islam: The View from the Edge.** Richard W. Bulliet. 1994, Columbia University Press, 0-231-08218-5, \$20 pb. The pervasive influence of Islam in everyday life is examined in light of religious conversion, migration, education and the drive by many modern Muslims to rededicate themselves to their religion.

**Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam.** Rudolph Peters. 1996, Markus Wiener, 1-55876-108-X, \$18.95 pb. Thorough discussion of the subject from the time of the Prophet to the modern day, with extensive use of source materials.

**The Life and Times of Muhammad.** Sir John Glubb. 2002, Cooper Square Press, 0-8154-1176-6, \$17.95 pb. Glubb Pasha, former commander of the famed Arab Legion, wrote nearly a dozen works on the Middle East, including this sweeping, readable account of the Prophet's life.

**The Light of Dawn: A Daybook of Verses from the Holy Qur'an.** Selected and rendered by Camille Adams Helminski. 1998, Shambhala, 0-939660-60-1, \$24.95 hb. An assemblage of verses from all 114 chapters of the Qur'an offers a gateway to the spiritual depth of Islam.

**Living Faith: Inside the Muslim World of Southeast Asia.** Steve Raymer. Asia Images Editions, 2001, 981-04-4207-6, \$45 hb. An informative and beautifully photographed account of daily life among the people in the region of the world where some 40 percent of all Muslims live.

**The Meaning of the Glorious Koran.** Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall. 1996, Amana, 0-915957-22-1, \$12 pb. An English rendering of the Holy Book, justifiably famous for the beauty and sensitivity of the language.

**Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet.** Karen Armstrong. 1993, Harper Collins, 0-06-250886-5, \$15 pb; 0-06-250014-7, \$23 hb. A respected western scholar provides a readable and sympathetic account of Muhammad's life, including contextual information about economics and politics of his time.

**Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources.** Martin Lings. 1987, Inner Traditions International, Ltd., 0-89281-170-6, \$19.95 pb. A well-narrated biography by a British Muslim scholar, based on traditional sources.

**Muhammad in Europe: A Thousand Years in Western Myth-Making.** Minou Reeves. 2000, NYU Press, 0-8147-7533-0, \$34.50 hb. A troubling examination of how politics have often distorted the West's perception of Muhammad.

**One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage.** Michael Wolfe, ed. 1999, Grove, 0-8021-3599-4, \$17.50 pb. Accounts by 23 pilgrims of a dozen nationalities who made their ways to Makkah between 1150 and 1990 illuminate the Hajj and Islam.

**The Oxford History of Islam.** John L. Esposito. 2000, Oxford, 0-19-510799-3, \$49.95 hb. An excellent resource in terms of breadth, edited by a thoughtful and well-regarded American scholar of Islam.

**The Road to Mecca.** Muhammad Asad. 2001, Fons Vitae, 1-887752-37-4, \$17.95 pb; 1999, Islamic Book Trust, 983-9154-12-5, \$24.95 hb. A fascinating and moving spiritual autobiography of one sophisticated westerner's journey into Islam.

**Towards Understanding Islam.** Abu 'a'la Maududi. 1994, Islamic Foundation, 0-860370-53-4, \$5.95 pb. A concise explanation of the main teachings of Islam by one of the greatest of modern Muslim thinkers.

**Understanding Islam and the Muslims.** 1990, The Islamic Texts Society, 0-946-62120-9, \$3.50 pb. An illustrated question-and-answer guide to basic beliefs. Excellent for discussion groups.

**Understanding Islam: An Introduction to the Muslim World.** Thomas W. Lippman. 1995, Meridian, 0-452-01160-4, \$14 pb. A concise but comprehensive survey of Islam both as a world religion and as a political-economic force, by a senior *Washington Post* correspondent.

**What Everyone Should Know about Islam and Muslims.** Suzanne Haneef. 1995, Library of Islam, 0-935782-00-1, \$9.95 pb. A clear guide to basic tenets and their expression in beliefs, worship, festivals, values and standards of conduct.

**Windows on the House of Islam: Muslim Sources on Spirituality and Religious Life.** John Renard, ed. 1998, University of California Press, 0-520-20976-1, \$55 hb; 0-520-21086-7, \$22 pb. A collection from more than 30 classical and modern writers and artists to help non-Muslims fathom what it means to be a Muslim.

\*AMIDEAST: 1730 M Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20036. Phone: 202-776-9600, fax: 202-776-7000, web: www.amideast.org.