

Muslims at Mount Hira

## WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

### Messenger of God

During the month of Ramadan, as Muhammad sat meditating in a cave on Mount Hira, an angel in the form of a man came to him. The angel said, "Recite!" Muhammad said, "What shall I recite?" The angel overwhelmed Muhammad in an embrace, and then released him and said again, "Recite!" Muhammad repeated, "What shall I recite?" and again the angel overwhelmed him in an embrace. This happened a third time, after which the angel said, "Recite in the name of your Lord who created—created man from clots of blood." According to Muslim belief, on this and several other occasions, Muhammad heard the angel Gabriel calling him to be the messenger of God.

**Focus Question** What messages, or teachings, did Muhammad spread through Islam?



Muhammad's name, written in calligraphy

# The Rise of Islam

## Objectives

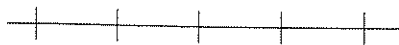
- Understand how Muhammad became the prophet of Islam.
- Describe the teachings of Islam.
- Explain how Islam helped shape the way of life of its believers.

## Terms, People, and Places

Bedouins	Kaaba
Muhammad	Quran
Mecca	mosque
Yathrib	hajj
hijra	jihad
Medina	Sharia

## Note Taking

**Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence** On a sheet of paper, draw a timeline like the one below and label the main events described in this section.



The religion of Islam, whose followers are called Muslims, emerged in the Arabian Peninsula. This region of southwestern Asia is mostly desert, yet it was home to many Arab tribes in the A.D. 500s. Nomadic herders called **Bedouins** (BED oo inz) moved through the desert to reach seasonal pasturelands for their camels, goats, and sheep. Competition for water and grazing land often led to warfare. Bedouins also traded with settled Arab tribes in oasis towns and protected the caravan trading routes.

## Muhammad Becomes a Prophet

Muhammad was born in the oasis town of Mecca around A.D. 570. Mecca was a bustling market town at the crossroads of several caravan routes. It was also a thriving pilgrimage center. Many Arabs came to pray at the Kaaba, an ancient temple that housed statues of pagan gods and goddesses. The pilgrims helped make Mecca's merchants wealthy. All weapons had to be laid down near the temple, making Mecca a safe and peaceful place to do business.

Arabia's deserts and trade centers shaped Muhammad's early life. In his youth, he worked as a shepherd among the Bedouins. Later, he led caravans across the desert and became a successful merchant. When he was about 25, Muhammad married Khadija (ka DEE jah), a wealthy widow who ran a prosperous caravan business. Muhammad became known for his honesty in business and was a devoted husband and father.

**Muhammad Becomes God's Messenger** Muhammad was troubled by the moral ills of Meccan society, especially greed. He often went to a cave in the hills near Mecca to meditate. According to Muslim belief, when he was about 40 years old he heard the voice of the angel Gabriel calling him to be the messenger of God. Muhammad was terrified and puzzled. How could he, an illiterate merchant, become the messenger of God? Khadija encouraged him to accept the call. She became the first convert to the faith called Islam, from the Arabic word that means "to submit to God." Muhammad devoted his life to spreading Islam. He urged Arabs to give up their worship of pagan gods and submit to the one true God. In Arabic, the word for God is *Allah*.

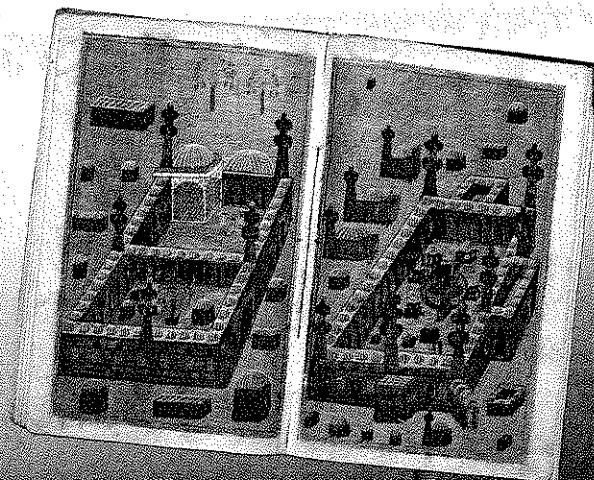
**The Hijra: A Turning Point** At first, few people listened to Muhammad's teachings. His rejection of traditional Arab gods angered Mecca's merchants, who feared that neglect of their idols would disrupt the pilgrim trade. In 622, faced with the threat of murder, Muhammad and his followers left Mecca for Yathrib, a journey known as the *hijra* (hih JY ruh). Later, Yathrib was renamed **Medina**, or "city of the Prophet," and 622 became the first year of the Muslim calendar.

The *hijra* was a turning point for Islam. In Medina, Muslim converts welcomed Muhammad and agreed to follow his teachings. They became a community of Muslims, or *umma*. Loyalty to the *umma* was based on Islam instead of old family rivalries. Muhammad created rules that governed and united Muslims and brought peace among the clans of Medina. As his reputation grew, thousands of Arabs adopted Islam. Meanwhile, Meccan leaders grew more hostile toward the Muslims. After Muslims attacked several caravans, the Meccans prepared for war.

After fighting battles with the Meccans, Muhammad triumphantly returned to Mecca in 630. He destroyed the idols in the Kaaba, the temple that he believed Abraham had built to worship the one true God. He rededicated the Kaaba to Allah, and it became the most holy place in Islam. For the next two years, Muhammad worked to unite the Arabs under Islam. Muhammad died in 632, but the faith that he proclaimed continued to spread. Today, Islam is one of the world's major religions.

**Checkpoint** How did Muhammad become the prophet of Islam?

The photograph below shows Medina as it appears today. The illustration shows both Medina (left) and Mecca (right) in 1160. What evidence do you see that Medina is an important pilgrimage site?

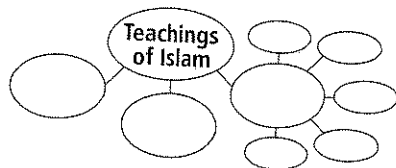


### Vocabulary Builder

mediate—(MEE dee ayt) *v.* to act as a go-between

### Note Taking

**Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas** Copy the web diagram below. As you read, fill in the outer ovals with the teachings of Islam.



## Teachings of Islam

Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam is monotheistic, based on belief in one God. The **Quran** (koo RAHN), the sacred text of Islam, teaches that God is all-powerful and compassionate. It also states that people are responsible for their own actions. Islam does not require priests to mediate between the people and God. Muslims believe that God had sent other prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, but that Muhammad was the last and greatest prophet.

**Muslims Study the Quran** To Muslims, the Quran contains the sacred word of God as revealed to Muhammad. It is the final authority on all matters discussed in the text. The Quran teaches about God's will and provides a guide to life. Its ethical standards emphasize honesty, generosity, and social justice. It sets harsh penalties for crimes such as stealing or murder. According to the Quran, each individual will stand before God on the final judgment day to face either eternal punishment in hell or eternal bliss in paradise.

Muslims believe that the Quran is the direct, unchangeable word of God. Because the meaning and poetic beauty of the Quran reside in its original language, all Muslims, including converts to Islam, learn Arabic. This shared language has helped unite Muslims from many regions throughout the world.

**Muslims Follow Duties** All observant Muslims perform five basic duties, known as the Five Pillars of Islam. The first is to make a declaration of faith. The second is to pray five times daily. After a ritual washing, Muslims face the holy city of Mecca to pray. Although Muslims may pray anywhere, they often gather in houses of worship called **masjids** or **mosques**. A mosque official called a **muezzin** (myoo EZ in) calls the faithful to prayer.

The third pillar is to give charity to the poor. The fourth is to fast from sunrise to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan—the month in which Muhammad received his first revelations from God. The fifth pillar is to make the **hajj**, or pilgrimage to Mecca, if a person is able. Pilgrims participate in ceremonies commemorating the actions of Muhammad, Abraham, and Abraham's family. Their simple attire symbolizes the abandonment of the material world for the sake of God.

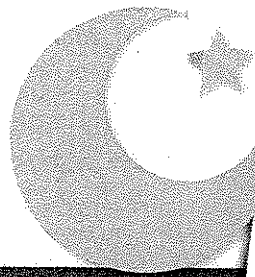
Another duty is **jihad**, or struggle in God's service. Jihad is usually a personal duty for Muslims, who focus on overcoming immorality within themselves. At other times, jihad may be interpreted as a holy war to defend Islam and the Muslim community, much like the Crusades to defend Christianity. However, just holy war may be declared only by the community, not by an individual Muslim or small group.

**"People of the Book"** Muslims, Jews, and Christians worship the same God. The Quran teaches that Islam is God's final and complete revelation, while Hebrew scriptures and the Christian Bible contain portions of earlier revelations. Muslims consider Jews and Christians to be "People of the Book," spiritually superior to polytheistic idol worshippers. Although there have been exceptions, the People of the Book have historically enjoyed religious freedom in many Muslim societies.

✓ **Checkpoint** What are the duties required of Muslims?

# THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

All observant Muslims perform five individual duties, known as the Five Pillars of Islam. These are based on Muhammad's example. The photograph below shows pilgrims praying at the Kaaba, the most important temple of Islam. Whenever Muslims pray, they face the Kaaba, which is located in Mecca. Find Mecca on the map and then read about the Five Pillars of Islam.



## 1. Declaration of Faith

The Muslim profession of faith is called the *shahada*. It states, "There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God." Muslims believe that God had sent other prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, but that Muhammad was the last and greatest prophet.

## 2. Daily Prayer



Muslims pray five times each day. After a ritual washing, they face Mecca and perform specific actions as they pray.

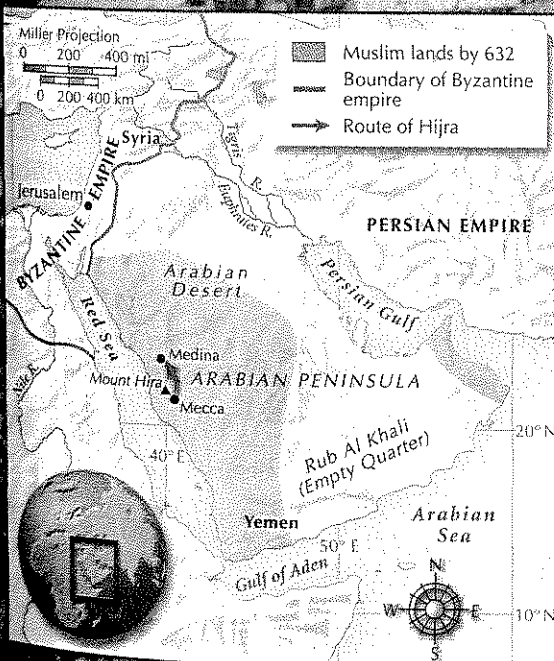
**3. Alms for the Poor**  
Muslims care for others by giving charity to the poor. In some Muslim countries, money is collected in the form of a tax called the *zakat*. Other Muslims give individual donations.

## 4. Fast During Ramadan

Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan. The sick and very young children are not required to fast. The children below are celebrating the end of Ramadan.

## 5. Hajj

Muslims who are physically and financially able must make a pilgrimage to pray at the Kaaba in Mecca at least once. More than two million Muslims visit Mecca each year for this purpose. Pilgrims wear simple garments that erase cultural and class differences so that all stand equal before God.



## Thinking Critically

- 1. Summarize** Describe the Five Pillars of Islam.
- 2. Draw Inferences** Why do Muslims perform the Five Pillars?





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## Islam: A Way of Life

Islam is both a religion and a way of life. Its teachings shape the lives of Muslims around the world. Islamic law governs daily life, and Muslim traditions determine ethical behavior and influence family relations.

**Sharia—Islamic System of Law** Over time, Muslim scholars developed the **Sharia**, a body of law that includes interpretation of the Quran, examples of behavior from Muhammad's life, and Muslim traditions. Similar to Jewish law, the Sharia regulates moral conduct, family life, business practices, government, and other aspects of individual and community life. It does not separate religion from criminal or civil law, but applies religious principles to all legal situations. Just as the Quran unifies Muslim beliefs, the Sharia unites Muslims under a common legal framework.

**Impact of Islam on Women** Before Islam, the position of women in Arab society varied. In some communities, women were active in religion, trade, or politics. As in most societies at that time, however, most women had limited rights. Arab women could not inherit property and had to obey a male guardian. Among a few tribes, unwanted daughters were sometimes killed at birth.

Islam extended rights and protection to women by affirming the spiritual equality of all Muslims. The Quran teaches that "Whoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, all such will enter the Garden." The Quran prohibited the killing of daughters, granted women an inheritance, and allowed women to reject a marriage offer. Islam also encouraged education for men and women so that all Muslims could study the Quran.

Although spiritually equal under Islam, men and women had different roles and rights. For example, women inherited less than men and had a more difficult time getting a divorce. As Islam spread, Muslims adopted practices of conquered peoples. For example, the practices of veiling upper-class women and secluding them in a separate part of the home were Persian customs. The Quran says that women should dress modestly, which has been interpreted in multiple ways. Still, women's lives varied according to region and class. In rural areas, peasant women often needed to work and did not wear a veil, but took care to dress modestly.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did Islam affect Muslim women?

## Assessment

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a section, write a  
its significance.

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Identify Point of View** Why were merchants in Mecca at first opposed to Muhammad's teachings?

### Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice  
Web Code: naa-1011

### Writing About History

**Quick Write: Choose a Topic** Compare and contrast one tradition of Islam (religious holidays, for example) to a similar

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# The Quran

The Quran, the holy scriptures of Islam, contains 114 *suras*, or chapters, which are divided into verses. Muslims believe that the Quran is the word of God as revealed to Muhammad. They also believe that God instructed Muhammad to arrange the chapters into the order in which they appear. The following excerpts from the Quran tell Muslims how to be righteous and faithful. They also encourage believers to fast and observe the holy month of Ramadan.

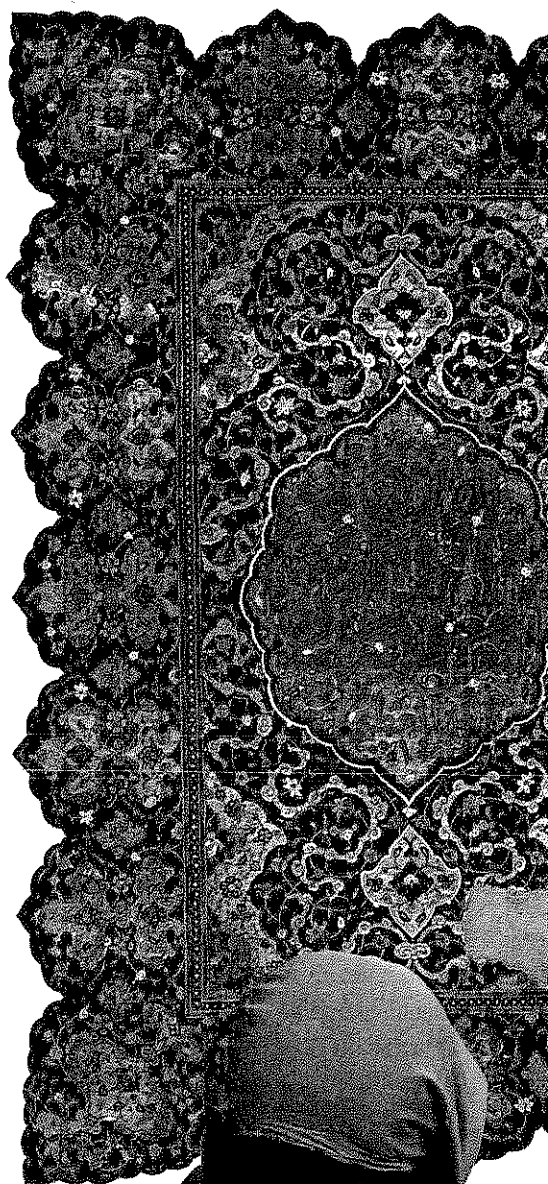
**R**ighteousness does not consist in whether you face towards the East or the West. The righteous man is he who believes in God and the Last Day, in the angels and the Book [Scriptures] and the prophets; who, though he loves it dearly, gives away his wealth to kinsfolk, to orphans, to the destitute, to the traveller in need and to beggars, and for the redemption<sup>1</sup> of captives; who attends to his prayers and renders the alms<sup>2</sup> levy; who is true to his promises and steadfast in trial and adversity and in times of war. Such are the true believers; such are the God-fearing.  
—The Quran 2:177

Believers, fasting is decreed for you as it was decreed for those before you; perchance you will guard yourselves against evil. Fast a certain number of days, but if any one among you is ill or on a journey, let him fast a similar number of days later; and for those that cannot endure it there is a penance ordained: the feeding of a poor man. He that does good of his own accord shall be well rewarded; but to fast is better for you, if you but knew it.

In the month of Ramadan the [Quran] was revealed, a book of guidance for mankind with proofs of guidance distinguishing right from wrong. Therefore whoever of you is present in that month let him fast. But he who is ill or on a journey shall fast a similar number of days later on.

God desires your well-being, not your discomfort. He desires you to fast the whole month so that you may magnify God and render thanks to Him for giving you His guidance. —The Quran 2:183–185

At the top, the intricate pattern of this Quran illustration echoes the calligraphy at the center, and, below, a young woman reads the Quran.



## Thinking Critically

- 1. Summarize Information** According to the excerpt above, to whom should righteous people give their wealth?
- 2. Analyze Information** In which situation can a righteous person avoid fasting during Ramadan?
- 3. Apply Information** How does this passage from the Quran support the Five Pillars of Islam?

The wide borders on the pages of this Quran ensure that the reader's fingers will not touch the sacred text.

1. **redemption** (rih DEMP shun) *n.* freedom from enslavement or captivity by payment of ransom

2. **alms** (ahmz) *n.* charity given freely to the poor