

# **OTHER FAITHS OTHER TRADITIONS**

## **The Crisis in Islam**

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## **WHO ARE THEY? ARE THEY EVIL AND WICKED?**

**The Rev. Franklin Graham**, November 16, 2002  
–appearing on NBC Nightly News

“We’re not attacking Islam, but Islam attacked us. The God of Islam is not the same God. He’s not the son of God of the Christian or Judeo-Christian faith. It’s a different god, and I believe (Islam) is a very evil and wicked religion.”

Islam “is a religion conceived in the pit of hell”

Prophecy-writer Michael Evans

***Beyond Iraq: The Next Move*** (2003)

## **A PEDOPHILE LEADER?**

**Rev. Jerry Vines**, past President of the Southern Baptist Convention called the Prophet Mohammed

“a demon possessed pedophile” during his key note address at the SBC Convention June 10, 2001

## **KILL 'EM OR CONVERT 'EM?**

**Anne Coulter, "This Is War: We Should Invade Their Countries"** posted online, **The National Review**, on September 13, 2001...she encouraged Western countries to -"invade (Muslim) countries, kill their leaders, and convert them to Christianity."

## **OR – ARE THEY JUST MISUNDERSTOOD?**

**"I hope that in the next century we will come to terms with our abysmal ignorance of the Muslim world. Muslims aren't a bunch of wackos and nuts. They are decent, brilliant, talented people with a great civilization and traditions of their own, including legal traditions. Americans know nothing about them. There are people in that part of the world with whom we are simply out of touch. That's a great challenge for the next century."**

**U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy,  
December 1999**

**There are more Muslims in the United States than Presbyterians and Episcopalians combined, more Muslims in John Wesley's England than Methodists, and the UN estimates that by 2025 nearly 1/3 of the world's inhabitants will be Muslim.**

**There are more than 13,000 Mosques in North America**

**How would you characterize someone who**

- ❖ **Believes in the literal, verbal inspiration of Scripture,**
- ❖ **Holds that Jesus is God's virgin-born Messiah, that Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, bodily ascended into heaven, and will one day return to do battle with the antichrist and in the end truly reign on earth,**
- ❖ **Believes in Satan and that Satan seeks to separate us from God,**
- ❖ **Believes that at death everyone will be judged with heaven as the reward for good deeds and hell the consequence of evil,**
- ❖ **does not believe in evolution and holds to a six-day, literal creation story,**
- ❖ **is a tee-totaler and strongly pro-life,**
- ❖ **is deeply patriotic and regards pacifism as a weakness**
- ❖ **and deploras the separation of church and state?**

**...A devout Muslim**

## THE PROBLEM (1) HOW TO DEFINE ISLAM

For example... "defining" Roman Catholicism

1. Ultra Conservative – Latin Mass, no salvation apart from Roman Catholicism
11. Conservative – Enthusiasts for John Paul II and Pope Benedict
111. Moderates – Liberals: 1) women clergy 2) optional celibacy 3) choice on birth control – 8 of 10 Catholics agree
- IV. Radicals – Vatican II was 'half-hearted', church needs serious change

**"Islam is not a uniform thing. In fact, there is no single authority for all Muslims, and for this reason, dialogue with Islam is always dialogue with certain groups. No one can speak for Islam as a whole; it has, as it were, no commonly regarded orthodoxy."**

(Source: then Cardinal Ratzinger, 1997 *"The Salt of the Earth"*)

## THE PROBLEM (2):

### GOING THROUGH A BAD TIME

**"Islam is one of the world's great religions. It has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught men of different races to live in brotherhood...but Islam, like other religions, has also know periods when it inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. It is our misfortune that we have to confront a part of the Muslim world while it is going through such a period and when most – though by no means all – of that hatred is directed against us."**

**Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam***



### **THE PROBLEM (3): IT ONLY FEELS PERSONAL**

"There is one thing that cannot be overemphasized. What is taking place now in the Muslim world is an internal conflict between Muslims, not an external battle between Islam and the West. The West is merely a bystander – an unwary yet complicit casualty of a rivalry that is raging in Islam over who will write the next chapter of this story."

**No god but God** by Reza Aslan, 2005 (p. 248)

### **THE PROBLEM (4): OUR IGNORANCE**

According to the August 29, 2005 issue of U.S. News and World Report there were 300 bombings in Bangladesh, all within a half hour, on August 17<sup>th</sup>.

"This Muslim nation of 144 million is at risk of becoming a jihadist hot spot. A Bangladeshi Islamist group, Jamaat ul Mujahideen is thought to be responsible but the group does not appear on U.S. terrorist lists..."

"We just don't know very much about them", says one analyst"

## WHO ARE MUSLIMS?

The most important sentence in all of Islam is called the **shahadah**:

**"There is no God but God, and Mohammad is the messenger of God."**

Mohammed (early 7<sup>th</sup> century), over a 23 year period revealed the **Qur'an**, God's word.

The beginning of the Qur'an is used as a daily prayer by Muslims:

**"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 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."**

Muslims greet each other with: **slam alaikum** – peace be with you

"Islam" means peace, submission and commitment. Islam is peace through submission to living under new management – God's management. God is Allah...God is One.



## THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

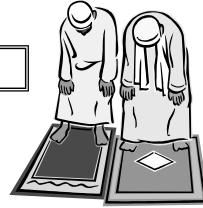
### The First Pillar: Shadadah (confession)

**Shadadah:** "There is no God but God and Muhammad is His Messenger"

- ❖ In his last sermon, shortly before his death, Mohammed declared "no prophet or apostle would come after him and that no new faith would be born after Islam".
- ❖ So basic is the shadadah to Islam that it is sewn into the national flag of Saudi Arabia
- ❖ To become a Muslim, you only need to confess the shadadah, with sincerity, before at least two witnesses in its arabic original (la ilaha illa Allah)..There are no other creeds or confessions or sacraments or priesthood or rights of initiation (such as baptism)
- ❖ The shadadah is whispered in the ears of each newborn and repeated daily at prayer and said over the body of a Muslim about to be buried.
- ❖ The daily call to prayer, shouted for centuries from Muslim minarets around the world, is also the shadadah
- ❖ The greatest sin is to associate or identify something with the Created (only Allah is Allah – not nature, not a person, only Allah)

## THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

### The Second Pillar: **Salat** (prayer five times daily)



Prayer five times a day

- Just before dawn .at noon .at midafternoon
- Just after sunset .again sometime around midnight

The devout are required to bow down before God and face in the direction of the Great Mosque of Mecca.

Mosque (masjid) means "place of prostration" or "house of prayer"

Every Mosque in the world has a niche (mihrab) pointing towards Mecca

When Moslems bow down they acknowledge the sovereignty and majesty of God. Islam is more than a religion – way of life that touches/involves every aspect of life.

The theme of divine transcendence undergirded by the ritual of washing of the hands, face, and feet – this cleansing (preferably with running water) is done before Salat.

A prayer mat/rug used to keep one free on contamination

Islam has no holy day or Sabbath but Friday is designated as a day for congregational prayer in the Mosque which Muslim Men (not women) are required to attend.



## THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

### The Third Pillar: **Zakat** ('charity' or 'poor tax')

Zakat – an obligatory almsgiving, 2.5% on one's annual income

- ❖ Muslims give additional offerings for charity
- ❖ Mohammed was an orphan (orphaned 3 times by the time he was 12)
- ❖ Caring for others important as a pillar



## THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The Fourth Pillar: **Sawm** (fasting during Ramadan)

**Ramadan** is the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the Islamic calendar  
Calendar is lunar so fast occurs at various seasons of year

**Purpose** – to cultivate self-discipline and encourage contemplation on the meaning of true submission to Allah

**Fast** begins at first light and continues through setting of sun – Muslims are not to eat any food or drink any liquid (even swallowing of spittle is forbidden). Sexual contact forbidden. Children, pregnant women and the ill are exempted from fasting.

**Reason** – when the Angel Gabriel first began to reveal the Qur'an to Mohammed, it was during the month of Ramadan – so the fast is also in remembrance of the giving of God's Word.



## THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

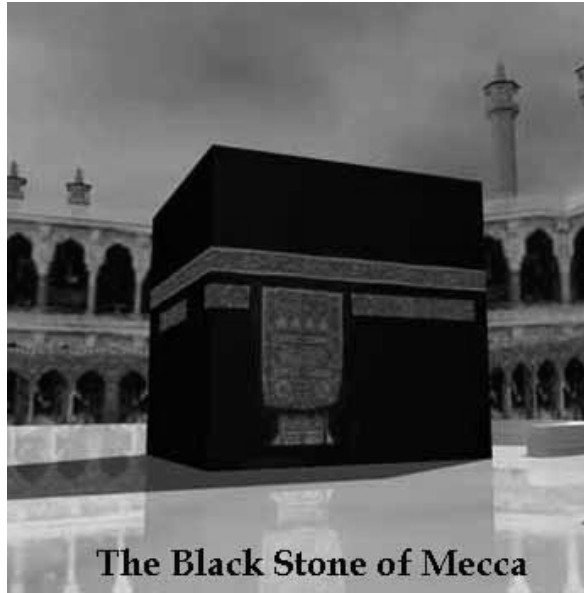
The Fifth Pillar:  
**Hajj** (pilgrimage to Mecca)

**Hajj** – the famous pilgrimage to Mecca. At least once in a lifetime, unless health or finances prohibit, one must make the pilgrimage.

In Malaysia first prize in the national lottery is an all-expense paid Hajj to Mecca.

Why **Mecca**? The birth place of Mohammed. It was there that he cleansed the cube-shaped shrine, called the **Kabah**, which formerly housed many idols – at one time Mohammed's father had been the custodian of the shrine.

Islam has no atonement or understanding of salvation. Some Muslims (Shiites) believe that every step toward Mecca in the course of the Hajj blots out a sin committed in the past, while to die in route is to be numbered with the martyrs.



The Black Stone of Mecca

## KABAH



### REVIEW: THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

1. Confession (**Shadadah** "There is no God but God and Muhammad is His Messenger")
2. Prayer five times daily (**Salat**)
3. Alms for the Poor (**Zakat**)
4. Fasting during Ramadan (**Swam**)
5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (**Hajj**)

## **THE SHARIAH**

شريعة

### **The Core of Islam**

Shariah – Islamic law as derived from the Qur'an and the Hadith (stories and antidotes of the prophet and his earliest companions. The Shariah has been developed by the Ulama (clerics)

### **3 ALTERNATIVES FOR INCORPORATING THE SHARIAH INTO A LEGAL SYSTEM**

1. Accept Shariah as a legitimate source of civil law – but choose to ignore it in all but the most obvious family, divorce, or inheritance cases – example is **Egypt and Pakistan.**

## THE SHARIAH – ALTERNATIVE #2

2. Fully adopt the Shariah to the state with no attempt to modernize it or adapt it to contemporary norms of law and society – example is **Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.** (under the Taliban)

## THE SHARIAH – ALTERNATIVE #3

3. Attempt to use the traditional values of the Shariah with modern principles of democracy and human rights through a comprehensive reform methodology – only one state has attempted it, Iran – but the experiment was cut short when they went to war with Iraq (US backed Iraq)

## IMPORTANT DATES IN MOHAMMAD'S LIFE

**570** Muhammad born in trading city of Mecca. Orphaned 3 times by age 10. Raised by uncle who taught him trade of caravan manager.

**595** Muhammad marries Kdahijan, owner of the caravan – rich widow 25 years his senior. Have several children – monogamous relationship for 24 years (later in life he adds other wives, by special permission he exceeds the Qur'an limitation of 4 wives).

**620** during month of Ramadan, while meditating in a cave on Mt. Hira, he receives first of the revelations that would become the Qur'an. He memorizes the revelation – others write it down – he recites it back to Gabriel to make sure it is free from error.

**620** is also the year of the Night Journey – Angel Gabriel takes him to Jerusalem to site of where the Dome of the Rock now stands, Muhammed meets Jesus, Moses, Abraham and Adam – this is why Jerusalem is a sacred city to Moslems.

## IMPORTANT DATES IN MOHAMMAD'S LIFE

**622** Political infighting and corruption causes Muhammed to flee to Medina. Turning-point – from now on Islam is political, military and religious and it is impossible to separate them. Muhammed becomes a military leader – mostly successful. 622 marks the beginning of Islam (the 'flight to Medina' or Hirja now denotes history – each year after 622 is A.H. (after the Hijra).

**623 (8 A.H.) Muhammad** leads army of 10,000 against Mecca and destroys the idols at the Kabah.

**632** Muhammad dies and is buried in Medina. Problem with succession leads by 732, to a major split in the Muslim world. The **Sunni Muslims** look back to the first 4 Caliphs – who consolidated power at Muhammad's death – as Islam's golden age. On the other hand **Shiites** (from shiat ali, Ali's party) see the first three caliphs as usurpers who should have allowed Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, to succeed him in the first place.

90% of the world's Muslim's are **Sunnis**

**Shiites** (nearly 10%) mostly concentrated in Iran

**Sufi** (The Whirling Dervishes) follow the teaching of Jalaluddin Rumi (d.1273). They spin rhythmically while chanting the 99 names of God.

## **NEXT WEEK**

### **Islam and the West**

**(Ties that Bind and Wounds that Scar)**

Where we will pick it up next week:

"Broadly speaking, Muslim fundamentalists are those who feel that the troubles of the Muslim world at the present time are the result not of insufficient modernization but of excessive modernization, which they see as a betrayal of authentic Islamic values. For them the remedy is a return to true Islam, including the abolition of all the laws and other social borrowings from the West and the restoration of Islamic Holy Law, the shari's, as the effective law of the land. From their point of view, the ultimate struggle is not against the Western intruder but against the Westernizing traitors at home. Their most dangerous enemies, as they see it, are the false and renegade Muslims who rule the countries of the Islamic world and who have imported and imposed infidel ways on Muslim people."

Bernard Lewis, ***The Crisis of Islam***