



Isis Omnia of Egypt, illustration. (Archive Photos)

ISLAM

The religion that God set forth for Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and MUHAMMAD proclaimed by the latter in Arabia in the 7th century, which enjoys the allegiance of approximately 1.2 billion persons, about one-sixth of the total estimated population of Earth. The name Islam, invariably preferred by its adherents to Muhammadanism (one of the archaic Western designations for the religion), is an Arabic word signifying “surrender,” and its believers call themselves Muslims, “those who have surrendered to God.” The world’s Muslims are centered chiefly in the northern and eastern parts of Africa and the western and southern parts of Asia. The largest national representations are those of Pakistan and Indonesia, but Islam’s traditional cultural centers have been the Arab world and Iran. Considered the fastest-growing religion in the world, Islam is expanding southward in both East and West Africa, as well as in the West, notably in the United States, where, ever since the conversion of the son of the founder of the Black Muslims to Sunnite Islam in the

1970s, the majority of African American Muslims have been “orthodox” Muslims. The subject will be treated in five parts: the origins of Islam; the Islamic creed; “The Five Pillars” and Islamic religious practice; Islamic law, theology, and mysticism; and modern trends in Islam.

Origins of Islam. Islam can never be disengaged from the life of the man Muḥammad. Born at MECCA in Arabia about A.D. 570, he belonged to a cadet branch of the Quraysh tribe, then prominent in Mecca, and in young manhood married the widow of a wealthy merchant. When he was about 40, he began to make a series of remarkable claims. He maintained that he was the bearer of a “recitation” (Arabic *QUR’ĀN*) transmitted to him by the Angel Gabriel and “the Spirit.” This Qur’ān, he claimed, was the final redaction of what *Allāh*, “the God of Abraham, Ismael, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Tribes [of Israel] . . . and Jesus” (Qur’ān 2.136) wished to communicate to the human race. It carried in itself, as he was ultimately compelled to insist, the power of invalidating the former Scriptures whenever they disagreed with it, although he readily allowed that those Scriptures (presumably including the whole of the Bible) represented divine revelation “in its original form” no less than the Qur’ān. He further regarded himself as a prophet, indeed as the last of the series of prophets or “messengers” whom God had sent to restore the purity of His religion; for not only had it been deformed by Jews and Christians, in his view, but it had also remained unknown to others, notably the Arabs. These claims enjoyed no striking success at Mecca, though Muḥammad steadily enlisted small numbers. In 622 he and his followers fled to MEDINA, a city some distance north of Mecca, an “emigration” (Arabic *HIJRA*), from which Muslims date their era. At Medina, Muḥammad added to the number of his followers and welded them together into a vital community and a military power, which was nearly ready, at the time of his death in 632, to extend itself by rapid conquests to mastery over much of Asia and Africa.

Various questions concerning Islam’s origins and, more particularly, concerning the sources of the material contained in the Qur’ān, arise naturally. The orthodox Muslim position is a flat denial that such sources could possibly exist. The Muslims do not deny that Muḥammad knew Jews and Christians; what they deny is that Muḥammad was, in any sense, the author of the Qur’ān. Although God’s revelations through Muḥammad are considered the ultimate authority in Islam, Muḥammad’s deeds and sayings (collected in the bulky Islamic traditions or Ḥadīth literature) are considered to exemplify the ideal way of life for the Muslim. There are variations in orthodox Muslim thought as to how the balance should be drawn between patterning one’s life after Muḥammad and following one’s own interpretation of Qur’ānic in-

junctions. Many Muslims do not deny that there were slight variants in the earliest versions of the Qur'ān or that the arrangement of the chapters according to length is an arbitrary one, but they hold that the present form, which was soon established, corresponds to a heavenly archetype of "the Book." The Islamic concept of revelation is thus considerably more rigid than is the Catholic, the Protestant Christian, or even the orthodox Jewish; for it excludes the notion of human, though divinely inspired, authorship of Scripture.

Jewish and Christian Influence. Non-Muslim scholarship has taken a different view of the matter. It has nearly always held that the major influences on Muḥammad must have been principally, but not exclusively, Jewish and Christian, and that those influences were colored by Muḥammad's own character and made over to conform to aspects and needs of the pre-Islamic Arabian mind. Within this broad framework, however, opinions have clashed. The prize dissertations of Abraham Geiger, the Jewish reformist, stimulated much of the modern scholarly discussion; in it he argued for a dominant Jewish influence on the Qur'ān. An opposing view, holding that influence to have been chiefly Gnostic, won the powerful support of Julius Wellhausen. The latter view was followed by many scholars until more recent studies, for example those by Charles Torrey and Abraham Katsh, persuasively argued again for a greater Jewish influence. It must also be noted that at the beginning of the 21st century, greater attention was paid to Muḥammad's reactions to the traditional religions of South Arabia.

Although pre-Islamic Arabia was still distinctly pagan and, by comparison to Mediterranean lands, relatively uncivilized, it harbored numerous Jews and Christians. There is no difficulty in accounting for the presence of Christians there (see ARABIA, 5) or in explaining why those Christians tended to be Nestorians. The foremost Christian community was Najrān, under the Nestorian influence of the king of Hira. There were Jewish trading settlements at Teima, Khaybar, Medina, and cities farther south. They are occasionally mentioned in rabbinical literature and may have dated back to the 7th century B.C. There is evidence, too, of considerable numbers of Jewish proselytes among the Arabs. They do not appear to have possessed any higher learning, however, and it has been suggested that they had been affected by forms of heterodox thought in which both Christian and pagan notions had been incorporated.

Development of Muḥammad's Ideas. For those coming from a scholarly tradition that puts a heavy emphasis upon the written word, it is difficult to sift the Qur'ān and the tradition literature for historical information. It is cer-

tain that as a boy and young man Muḥammad knew, and was on friendly terms with, both Jews and Christians. He is reported to have heard the bishop of Najrān preach and to have met on a caravan a monk "well versed in the knowledge of the Christians" (Ibn-Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh [The Life of Mohammad]*, tr. A. Guillaume [London 1955] 79–81). (See BAHIRA LEGEND.) The first encouragement he received after his prophetic call, if one excepts that of his wife, came from her cousin Warāqah, "who had become a Christian and read the scriptures and learned from those that followed the Torah and the Gospel" (*ibid.* 107). At the same time he was familiar with various classes of Jewish scholars, whom he could name accurately, and there is reason to believe that many Jews, expecting the imminent advent of a messiah in Arabia, showed special interest in him. Finally, he was associated with a mysterious group that called itself the Hanifs (Arabic *ḥunafā'*, "the pure ones"), whose members, disgusted with idol worship, favored a monotheism incorporating elements from both Judaism and Christianity.

After Muḥammad began his preaching, he had constant and close contacts with Jews and Christians, but it is hard to say whether or in what manner he profited by them. His adversaries, among whom were many Jews and Christians, watched eagerly for indications of fraud; and Muḥammad was able successfully to assume a remarkably self-assured attitude toward any accusations of that sort. In the early Meccan period, to be sure, he was given to appealing, though somewhat vaguely, to Jewish and Christian authority for his teachings on the unity of God and on divine judgment: "All this is written in earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses" (Qur'ān 87.18). The only respect in which he then admitted differing from those Scriptures was that his own revelation was in the Arabic language: "Before [the Qur'ān] the Book of Moses was revealed, a guide and a blessing to all men. This book confirms it. It is revealed in the Arabic tongue" (Qur'ān 46.12). The late Meccan and early Medinese periods saw the greatest readiness on Muḥammad's part to absorb Jewish elements into Islam, for at that time his special aim was to win Jewish converts, especially among the Jews of Medina.

Changed Attitude toward Jews and Christians. For a time Muḥammad went out of his way to model Islam on the Bible, but later he assumed a sharply different attitude. That attitude stemmed, one suspects, from the unwillingness of Jews and Christians to accept his teaching. The Qur'ānic chapters of that later period clearly demonstrate Muḥammad's wish to disassociate Islam from Jewish and Christian "orthodoxy" and to establish the supremacy of his own religion by vigorous disputation and the use of force. Unsuccessful in his attempt to convince the Jews and Christians, he began to attack them

intellectually and physically. Only the Jews offered organized opposition. In the beginning they seem to have provided Islam with a number of false disciples. Nevertheless, they were incapable of prolonged or effective resistance to the growing Islamic power, and within a few years Khaybar and the other Jewish colonies in North Arabia had been vanquished.

Very probably Muḥammad had heard improvised translations of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. It is quite possible, too, that information concerning one group may have come from the other and that wherever Scripture is misrepresented or distorted, Muḥammad followed homiletical embellishments. Julian Obermann summed up the problem of Islamic origins very well:

What with the vast overlapping of Jewish and Christian lore, especially in the period and area involved [the general impression of greater Jewish influence on Islam], may be illusory or at least inexact, unless it be borne out by detailed evidence for each element under discussion. Obviously, Old Testament and even rabbinical materials might have been transmitted to Arabia by Christian channels; while seemingly New Testament matter might easily have been derived from rabbinical homilies. Indeed, the situation is of a kind that in a considerable number of instances we can go only as far as to demonstrate a given element in Islam as of Judaeo-Christian origin, but no further. (*The Arab Heritage*, ed. N. A. Faris [New York 1963] 59–60)

Islamic Creed. Islam has carefully maintained its distinction between faith (*imān*) and practice (*'ibādāt* or *iḥsān*). Faith, usually defined as “assent to that which comes from God, and confession to it,” has been formulated in a creed considerably more complicated than the *shahādah*, the simple profession of faith: “There is no god but God [*Allāh*], and Muḥammad is His messenger.” There are six classic articles in the otherwise varying Muslim creeds: concerning God, angels, the Holy Scriptures, prophets and “messengers,” resurrection and judgment, and predestination. Muḥammad’s monotheism began, no doubt, as a rejection of paganism; yet it was highly positive. It was, as he never ceased repeating, the monotheism of Israel. The God of Islam was Yahweh, without those truths about Him revealed by Christ. It is fairly certain that there were various interpretations of the Trinity in various Christian circles during Muḥammad’s lifetime, some of which may have included the Virgin Mary. The Qur’ān denies the Incarnation: “God is one, eternal. He did not beget and was not begotten” (Qur’ān 112.3). For Muḥammad there was no redeemer, no need for redemption, no original sin. Otherwise Allah is invested with nearly the same general attributes of Yahweh. The angels and archangels, even to their names, are those

of the Bible. Satan also figures, as do the “genies” (Arabic *jinn*) and other spirits similar to but not precisely identical with lesser devils.

The references to earlier Scriptures in the Qur’ān are sufficiently vague to render their exact identification difficult. Only a few OT books are mentioned by name, and the Gospel (in the singular) is treated as though it were a book revealed to Christ. At first Muḥammad appealed to the authority of these books to uphold his own prophethood and religion, but later seemed to suggest that they had been hopelessly corrupted and falsified. Muslims have never felt obliged, therefore, to justify the inconsistencies and discrepancies (which exist in considerable numbers) between the Qur’ān and the earlier Scriptures in the forms in which they have come down to us. There is only one indisputable quotation from the Bible in the Qur’ān (that of Ps 36 [37].29 in 21.105), but scores of OT stories are repeated, in the main accurately, with many reminiscences of their Hebrew wording. There are also Talmudic stories, such as the lowing of Aaron’s calf (7.146) and Abraham’s trial by fire, a rabbinic play on Ur and the Hebrew *'ūr*, “fire” (21.68–70).

Muslims also distinguish prophets from “messengers”; the latter are believed to be holy men sent by God to teach specific peoples. Muḥammad is thus regarded both as the “seal” of the prophets and as the messenger to the Arabs. The Qur’ān mentions 8 messengers and 24 prophets, 4 of them Arabs and the rest Hebrews. The prophets include most of the major figures in the early history of the Hebrews, but exclude Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all of the minor prophets but Jonah. Despite the honor in which Abraham is held, the predominant figure in the Qur’ān is Moses. If one follows Theodor Nöldeke’s chronology of the chapters, Moses is mentioned more than 100 times in the chapters from the Meccan period alone. The angels refer to the Qur’ān in one passage as “a Scripture revealed since the time of Moses, confirming previous Scriptures” (46.30).

Christ, by contrast, is mentioned in only two chapters of the Meccan period, and references to Him throughout the Qur’ān are sparse. Many of Christ’s utterances as found in the canonical Gospels and elsewhere in the New Testament are not mentioned in the Qur’ān, and those that are mentioned frequently deviate from the text of the NT. Christ appears as a messenger born (by Virgin Birth) of the Virgin Mary. Indeed, he is often referred to as the “Son of Mary.” Some of the stories of His infancy, such as His speaking in the cradle (19.30–34; 5.109) and fashioning a live bird out of clay (3.43; 5.110), echo apocryphal writings known to have existed in Coptic, Syriac, and even Arabic versions. Muḥammad granted that Christ worked miracles, but denied that He was crucified.

That position, commonly taken by some Gnostics and Docetists, was expressed in the Qur'ān: "They [the Jews] declared: 'We have put to death the Messiah Jesus, the son of Mary, the apostle of Allāh.' They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did" (4.156). It has been argued from what is missing in the Qur'ānic narratives that much of Muḥammad's information about Christ must have come from Jewish informants. It is a widespread later Islamic belief, still current and not without Qur'ānic support, that Christ will return at the end of the world to slay the Antichrist. He is often called the "Word" of God and His "Spirit" in the Qur'ān, and "Messiah" is usually added to His name.

The Qur'ān bears strong witness to the resurrection of the flesh and the Last Judgment. Only heaven and hell are everlasting, although it appears that hell serves as a kind of purgatory for some Muslims and that Muḥammad (and, according to some theologians, other prophets as well) has intercessory powers with God for them. The Islamic belief in predestination is not as rigid as some commentators have made it to be. It has always been a live issue in Islamic theology, and the matter of working out an acceptable formulation has been left to the devices of the exegete and the ordinary believer. The Qur'ān says, for example, "God causes whom He wills to err, and whom He wills He guides; and you shall assuredly be called to account for your doings" (16.93).

The "Five Pillars" and Islamic Religious Practice. By the time of its conquests outside Arabia, Islam regarded itself as a universal religion for all mankind; so there has never been any perfect ethnic or linguistic tie among Muslims, though Arabic (in a special way, over a wider area and for a longer time), Persian, Turkish, and Urdu have come to be the principal languages of its expression. Islamic practice is a complex realm, ranging from the obligatory Five Pillars through the "necessary but not obligatory" on to the "voluntary" acts of the Muslim. The Five Pillars are as follows: the profession of faith in Islam, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage.

Orthodoxy. The profession of faith consists of the simple statement: "There is no god but God, and Muḥammad is His messenger." The believing recitation of this formula, preferably before witnesses, is sufficient in itself to make one a Muslim. Islam has no church, no priesthood, no sacramental system, and almost no liturgy. The pattern of belief and practice of the SUNNITES enjoys the adherence of all but a small percentage of Muslims. The SHĪ'ITES comprise the second-largest grouping of Muslims. Deriving from the political "partisans" of 'ALĪ and his heirs, they have developed distinct doctrinal, legal and ritualistic features. Sectarianism in Islam has

never had quite the same connotations as heresy in the Christian church, allowing for the acceptance of numerous religio-legal entities within the community of Islam.

Prayer. One of the most attractive aspects of Islam for the Christian is its steadfast devotion to prayer. There is a set form of ritual prayer, prefaced by ablutions and accompanied by "bowings" (Arabic *rak'ah*), for the five daily prayers prescribed by Islamic tradition and law. Muslims are called to public prayer by the muezzin (Arabic *mu'adhhdhin*) from the minaret of a MOSQUE. Many Muslims pray in the mosque only at noon on Fridays, when there is a sermon (Arabic *khuṭba*), although more devout believers may perform all of the prescribed prayers there. Formal prayer must be performed facing toward Mecca. There is a tradition also of private and contemplative prayer, largely associated with SUFISM.

Fasting. Muslims are obliged to fast during the entire month of RAMADAN, which, because of the lunar reckoning from the Hijra, may fall at any time of the year. It is a total fast, but only from daybreak to sunset. It is a community exercise. Those who are ill or on a journey during that time are exempted from it, but must fast an equal number of days later on. Muslim spiritual writers such as al-Ghazzālī emphasize that Ramadan implies more than mere fasting and is a time for repentance and drawing the heart nearer to God. Voluntary fasting during other times of the year, especially in expiation for sins, is recommended and practiced.

Almsgiving. Muslims are enjoined also to give alms (Arabic *zakāt*). In the early days of Islam free-will offerings were regarded as satisfying this obligation. Later, however, a formal tax of one-tenth or one-fifth of the income (according to circumstances) was imposed upon Muslims. A contribution of one-fortieth of the income was considered adequate by many later legists. In modern times almsgiving has generally reverted to a matter of free-will offerings. The Qur'ān distinguished the worthy objects of free-will offerings (relatives, orphans, travelers, and the poor; 2.211) from those upon whom the revenue of *zakāt* was to be expended (slaves and prisoners, debtors, tax collectors, those to be conciliated by the Islamic community, and those fighting in a holy war; 9.60).

Pilgrimage to Mecca. The fifth of the Five Pillars is the pilgrimage to Mecca (Arabic *ḤAJJ*). Every Muslim is expected to journey there once in his lifetime if he possesses the means. There are two types of pilgrimage: the lesser pilgrimage, which can be performed at any time of the year with an abbreviated ritual, and the greater pilgrimage, which must be performed on specific days during the month of Dhū al-Ḥijjah. When the pilgrim dons his simple white robes and enters into the state of *iḥrām*, he must abstain from all violence, sensual pleasures, and

adornment for the duration of the pilgrimage. When he reaches Mecca, he goes immediately to the Ka'bah, the black-draped cuboidal "holy house" in the central square. This is the shrine, important in pre-Islamic religion, that Muslims believe was built in its original form by Abraham. It was only fairly late in his career that Muḥammad unequivocally incorporated the shrine and pilgrimage into Islam. The first Muslims had prayed facing Jerusalem. After kissing the Black Stone, the Muslim circumambulates the Ka'bah, marches seven times between the hills of al-Safā and al-Marwah, and then journeys the 14 miles to Mount 'Arafāt for the ceremony of *wuqūf*, "standing before God," for which lengthy prayers are prescribed. On the return to Mecca he prays at Muzdalifah, casts stones at certain pillars believed to represent the sites of temptations of Ismael, and offers a blood sacrifice commemorating Abraham's sacrifice in Gn 22.13. After ceremonial tonsure and a second circumambulation of the Ka'bah, the pilgrimage proper is ended, although most pilgrims go on to Medina to visit Muḥammad's grave and other sites associated with his life.

Other Religious Customs. According to some Muslim opinion, the *jihād*, or holy war, is to be considered a sixth "pillar" of Islam. This obligation was formulated in quite general terms in the Qur'ān 2.190, 193: "Fight in the way of God against those who fight against you, but do not commit aggression. . . . Fight against them until sedition is no more and allegiance is rendered to God alone; but if they make an end, then no aggression save against the evildoers." Although holy war has lost much of its persuasive force after the period of Islamic expansion (the consensus amongst orthodox Muslims has been that holy war should not be waged when it appeared as though the Muslims might lose), there have been modern attempts to revive it, especially amongst "radical" groups as a means of protesting Western, particularly American, global hegemony.

Besides these major matters of practice, the Qur'ān and Islamic tradition have supplied many others. Circumcision, for instance, is universally practiced among Muslims as a matter of religious observance, although the Qur'ān does not mention it. Wine, pork, gambling, and usury are forbidden. So, too, strictly speaking, are the making of images, the veneration of saints, and the use of devotional objects. Since the Qur'ān envisioned a close-knit community of true believers, it also contained many regulations concerning guardianship, dowries, divorce, and inheritance, as well as a complete punitive system against theft, fraud, perjury, and murder.

Festivals. Muslims celebrate many festivals. The most popular of them are the greater and lesser festivals

that mark the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. The greater festival, begun while fellow Muslims are sacrificing animals on the way back to Mecca, is celebrated with somewhat less enthusiasm than the lesser festival, which begins as soon as the new moon is visible after Ramadan. On that occasion there is great feasting and cheer, with exchanging of gifts. Paradoxically, it is also a favorite occasion for visiting the graves of one's departed relatives and friends. The birthday of Muḥammad (Arabic *mawlid al-nabī*) is marked with some solemnity, though rather less than one might have expected. Among the Shī'ites, the largest minority sect, the 10th day of the month of Muḥarram is the principal festival of the year. Shī'ism added two significant items to the Sunnite creed: first, a belief in a continuing divine "manifestation," particularly valuable with respect to Qur'ānic interpretation, in the descendants of 'Alī; second, a veneration for "the passion," for voluntary and innocent self-sacrifice to the point of martyrdom by the merits of which believers attain salvation and eternal life. These items, whose Christian parallels are obvious, are united in the liturgy of the 10th of Muḥarram, when Shī'ites commemorate the death of 'Alī's son Ḥusayn on Oct. 10, 680. Ḥusayn was killed in a skirmish between government troops and a small body of sympathetic supporters who were accompanying him to al-Kūfah in Iraq, where he intended to organize a revolt against the Umayyad caliphs of Damascus. The fate of Ḥusayn became a prototype and pattern for Shī'ite martyrdom and a symbol of the Shī'ite cause. In areas where Shī'ites are in a majority or at least represented in considerable numbers, this anniversary is preceded by nine days of rigorous religious discipline and culminates in a wild procession through the streets in which a catafalque for Ḥusayn is accompanied by horses, blood-smeared attendants, and numbers of naked young men flagellating themselves with chains and swords. The veneration of 'Alī and his sons has extended, it is interesting to note, to many of the Sunnite Muslims.

Islamic Law, Theology, and Mysticism. Islam is nothing if not the religion of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān is believed by Muslims to constitute God's final and consequently singular revelation to mankind. There has never been any universally or even widely accepted ultimate authority in Islam except the Qur'ān. Questions of its interpretation have always been, therefore, of fundamental and crucial importance. Necessarily the Qur'ān had to be supplemented in several ways. It was supplemented first of all by the custom (Arabic *sunnah*, hence the name Sunnite) of Muḥammad himself, established principally by means of the tradition literature concerning him and his companions, based in turn upon chains of more or less authentic transmitting authorities (Arabic *isnād*), subsequently evaluated by an intricately developed science. It

was obvious that traditions often conflicted; a man named Ibn-abī-al-‘Awja was executed in al-Kūfah in 772 after confessing that he had forged several thousand traditions complete with chains of authority that would be regarded as genuine.

Law. The weakness of this supplement soon became obvious and a more efficacious supplement, designed to counteract that weakness and to serve the needs of a rapidly expanding state, was provided by the employment of certain principles, such as consensus of opinion (*ijma’*), analogical deduction (*qiyās*), independent reasoning (*ijtihād*), and private opinion (*ra’y*) in the creation of an Islamic law (see ISLAMIC LAW). Four recognized schools of legal interpretation (Arabic *sharī‘ah*), namely the Ḥanafite, Malikiite, Shafi’ite, and Ḥanbalite schools, all eponymous, were inaugurated during the 8th and 9th centuries and have remained in force until modern times. Today, while the impact of the *sharī‘ah* has been abridged by the encroachment of modern civil law in certain areas of jurisprudence, there is at the same time a revival of the strict interpretation of the *sharī‘ah* in many parts of the Islamic world. Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, however, owing to the virtually unique identification of the religion of Islam with the government of any Islamic state, the *sharī‘ah* totally regulated the lives of Muslims. It extended to almost every detail of private life, comprehending all its religious, social, political, and domestic behavior. The offices of *qāḍī* (judge), *mufti* (legal expert), and *‘ālim* (lawyer, though very often used simply for “learned man”) rose to and maintained for many centuries positions that were of capital importance in Islamic life. In those places of the world where extensive Islamification of society is being attempted (such as the Sudan and Indonesia), as well as in those countries where the ruling factions have appropriated Islamic terminology to shore up their regimes (such as Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan), the *sharī‘ah* and the concomitant penal code (e.g., the amputation of the hand of the thief) is the law of the land.

Systematic Theology. Distinct from the sciences of the traditions and of legal interpretation, systematic theology (see KALĀM) began later in the 9th century, partially in response to quarrels between the traditionalists and the incipient legists and to the influx of late Hellenistic philosophical notions, but most evidently in opposition to a group of rationalistic Muslims in Basra and Baghdad called the MU‘TAZILITES. This group asserted a series of unpopular positions on current issues such as the “creation” of the Qur’ān, the unity and justice of God, the nature of salvation, and free will. Although their aim seems to have been to protect Islamic dogma from what they regarded as corruptions to which it was open, they made use of a naive and rudimentary philosophical pro-

cedure that associated them with the target of their own attacks. When they converted the caliph al-Ma’mūn to their viewpoints and instituted an inquisition (Arabic *mihnah*), they generated a serious ideological crisis within the Islamic community and a powerful reaction that began with the apostasy of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-ASH‘ARĪ (873?–935). Al-Ash‘arī, concerned mainly with the preservation of the pure transcendence of God, disenchanted with his Mu‘tazilite masters, and influenced by the thinking of Ibn-Hanbal, the founder of the legal school already mentioned, set about systematically to refute the Mu‘tazilite propositions. Few of his works have survived; but from those that have, it is clear that he himself so far advanced the methodology of treatment of these questions that his enduring reputation as the founder of Islamic theology and symbol of its orthodoxy appears justified. He was responsible for the disengagement of philosophy from this realm, enabling Islamic philosophers to go their independent ways, and for the close connection that developed between theology and the legal schools of the *sharī‘ah*.

Al-Ash‘arī was the founder of the most influential school of Islamic theology; yet Ash‘arism differs considerably from the teaching of al-Ash‘arī himself. In the immediately succeeding centuries the work of al-Baqillānī, al-Juwaynī, and others continued and advanced the science. Later al-Ghazzālī, al-Rāzī, al-Ījī, and al-Jurjānī let their thought be formed by it. Eventually, however, it came to an intellectual standstill in stereotyped manuals for students. Its commanding position was not, of course, achieved at once. Its choice as an official system of the Seljuk sultanate and, later, of the Ottoman sultanate was doubtless instrumental toward that end. Still, it must be recognized that in the earlier period Ash‘arism had a powerful rival in the school of al-Maturidī of Samarqand. The basic impulses of the two schools seem to have been very similar and the differences between them relatively slight. Maturidism died out for reasons principally political. At any rate, by the 12th century the most potent challenges to Islamic theology were those emanating from outside the discipline, from the philosophers, notably Ibn Sīnā (AVICENNA), and from the Sufis.

Mysticism. Sufism (Arabic *ṣūf*, “wool”) is the name ascribed in general to the entire ascetical and mystical movement within Islam, as well as to its manifestations in the eremetical and regular religious life from the 8th century to the present. Questions concerning the origins of Sufism remain extremely difficult to solve, and there are still some matters on which scholarly opinion has differed with unusual sharpness. Louis Massignon sought to prove that the origins of Sufism lie wholly within the Islamic tradition of the Qur’ān and the *sunnah*, despite the surface facts that the Qur’ān says little that could be inter-

preted as a justification for the ascetic life as lived and loved by the Sufis and that the *ḥadīth* literature contains a number of explicit injunctions against it, for example: “There is to be no monasticism in Islam.” Other scholars have adduced origins in the remnants of Christian asceticism within Islam after its conquests, in Zoroastrianism (see ZOROASTER [ZARATHUSHTRA]), and even in direct and indirect Hindu and Buddhist influences, although these scholars have fallen to quarreling among themselves. In any case, it cannot be denied that from the 8th century onward there was an increasingly influential movement, to be classified in the realm of popular religion, which produced more and more individuals willing to retire from the world in order to pursue an ascetic and contemplative life. That they may have done so partly in response to social and political instabilities and current theological controversies pales before the simple fact that they did so and, in doing so, greatly affected the course of Islamic intellectual history. The convention of periodizing the history of Sufism is largely the result of Sufi hagiography itself. Certainly there were early Muslim ascetics, many of them with Shī‘ite leanings, who eventually grouped themselves together, were nourished by an esoteric reading of the Qur’ān and later by the writings of such mystics as al-Rabā‘ah and al-Ḥallāj, and who, increasingly as the decades wore on, sought a communal life based on common conviction and intention.

Influence of Ghazzālī. From the ranks of the early Sufis came popular preachers and original thinkers who firmly founded Sufism and so disturbed the orthodox legal-theological institution of Islam that they were regarded not only as disruptive, but as bad Muslims. Into this situation was born, in the 11th century, Abū-Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (see ALGAZEL [GHAZZĀLĪ, AL-]). Influenced by Sufism in his youth, he nevertheless turned to the traditional sciences and to philosophy in his education and brilliant academic career. This prize student of al-Juwayni soon became a leading professor in Baghdad. As suddenly as he turned against philosophy because of the works of Avicenna, which he refuted in a book entitled *The Incoherence of Philosophy*, he turned against the whole orthodox system and toward Sufism. He resigned his professorship at Baghdad and began a radical reconsideration of Islam that resulted in the nearest thing to a reformation that Islam has ever experienced. By combining and indeed harmonizing the Islam of the Qur’ān, the theologians, the legists, and the Sufis against the philosophers, he created, in his greatest work, *The Revivification of Religious Sciences*, a sensitive, well-structured, and comprehensive *summa* of Islamic religious thought. His achievements, like al-Ash‘arī’s, became an integral part of Islamic orthodoxy and transformed it by opening an entire new universe of thought. Through al-Ghazzālī’s

reforming efforts *kalām* gained a new vision and Sufism a new respectability. For many centuries philosophical, theological, and mystical writings in Islam bore the stamp of al-Ghazzālī’s thought.

The directions and extent of the development of that thought cannot be said to have fulfilled the plan or spirit of al-Ghazzālī himself. The marriage of Sufism with *kalām* was intellectual rather than practical. In practice the two went their separate ways. Philosophy, as has been noted above, had always gone its separate way. As a result, there was never again to be such a unified system of Islam as al-Ghazzālī’s, though each of the areas of thought mentioned deepened as a consequence of his system. Sufism, in particular, enjoyed an immense popularity during the succeeding centuries. As its theory continued to develop, however, a multiplicity of religious folk practices and heterodox notions were kneaded into it. The speculative aspects of later Sufism were combined in a new eclectic system by IBN ‘ARABĪ of Murcia (d. Damascus, 1240), who turned the movement in a more pantheistic direction and toward closer circles of initiates. The loose mosque communities of early Sufism gave way to larger confraternities and finally to religious orders (see ISLAMIC CONFRATERNITIES). Elements of the monastic, the eremetic, and the mendicant states were combined in various proportions in these orders. Normally, however, a postulant came to a monastery, became a novice, led a communal life under the direction of a *shaykh* or *pīr*, whose position was either elective or hereditary. Later he might go out preaching or on to another community, but the characteristic ritual of *dhikr* and his manner of life readily identified him as a Sufi (Arabic *faqīr*, Persian *darvīsh*).

One of the greatest of the Sufi summarizers was Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī, whose monumental *Masnawī* did more than other such compilations to inspire later Sufism and arrest its decline. Decline it did, however. The number of orders multiplied; observance was lax; and finally there was little left in the numerous popular lodges and clubs to suggest the grand origins of Sufism. Although Sufism still exists and is very influential on the modern frontiers of Islam, it enjoys nothing like its former glory.

Philosophy, too, responded to al-Ghazzālī’s challenge. Al-Rāzī (RHAZES) speaking for himself, set the field on a more clearly rationalistic basis in vindication of Ibn Sīnā. It was in Muslim Spain, however, shrinking in the face of the Christian *Reconquista*, which had begun in the 11th century, that the last truly great philosophical work was done in Islam. There, in the Almohad court of Abū-Ya‘qūb Yūsūf, Abū Bakr ibn Ṭufail wrote his *Ḥayy ibn-Yaqzān*, a philosophical romance owing a great deal both to Neoplatonic compendia and to Sufism. There, too,

one of the greatest Islamic philosophers, Ibn Rushd (AVERROËS), received his training. Rising quite literally to al-Ghazzālī's challenge in his work *The Incoherence of the Incoherence [of Philosophy]*, he rose to it even more profoundly and immortally in his series of commentaries upon the works of Aristotle, works that were very soon, in translation, to find a more appreciative audience in the new universities of Christian Europe and to influence very substantially the development of SCHOLASTICISM.

Islamic theology, on the other hand, grew more and more implacably hostile to what it regarded as the continuing innovations of Sufism and philosophy. As it did so, it strengthened its ties to the *sharī'ah*. In the work of Ibn-Taymīyah (1263–1328) the orthodox reaction was confidently and powerfully asserted in a return to fundamentalism. Thereafter, until modern times, the traditional disciplines and fundamental doctrines and principles of Islam engaged the energies of the orthodox thinkers completely. Though recent scholarship has discovered enough independent thought on the part of some Muslims to force a revision of the notion that the whole of the Ottoman period was one of intellectual sterility, it remains true that a basic unquestioning orthodoxy held the Islamic community fast together in a rigid system for centuries.

Modern Trends in Islam. The modern Muslim is true to these beliefs and practices and to this intellectual tradition, in his fashion. However thick may be the gloss of elements of "folk" Islam, the basic items in the creed and the Five Pillars are common, with only the slightest modifications, to all Muslims. In recent times there have been such stirrings within Islam, in response to various challenges from within and without, that the modern Muslim is by no means as fully complacent about the omniresponsive nature of his religion as his ancestors were. Few modern Muslims remain unaffected, in fact, by one or another of the more recent trends in Islam.

It is significant that the first impulse toward radical change in modern times came from Arabia. The low ebb to which Islam had sunk in the Arabian Peninsula by the 17th century, which apparently was virtually a return to primitive religion, gave rise to the movement called Wahhābism, founded by Muḥammad 'Abd-al-Wahhāb (1703–92), calling for a return to Islam's first principles and attacking laxity of morals and those innovations attributable, over the centuries, to Sufism and philosophy. It championed the severe Hanbalite legal code and the uncompromising interpretations of Ibn-Taymīyah. Having enjoyed the patronage of the Saudi tribal chieftains, whose descendants came to power over the entire peninsula after World War I, Wahhābism is now general within the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was followed by a daring

vindication of al-Ghazzālī by a Yemenite scholar, Muḥammad al-Murtaḍā (d. 1790). The introduction of Arabic printing into Egypt in 1828 led to the wide dissemination of standard theological works and evoked new controversy and thought. In northwest Africa Ahmad al-Tijāni founded in 1781 a new Sufi order. Later a new type of reforming congregation was organized along Sufi lines by Aḥmad ibn-Idrīs (d. 1837), whose disciples went on to establish other congregations in Libya and East Africa. A more revolutionary group was that of the al-MAHDĪ (Muḥammad Aḥmad; 1844–85) in the Sudan.

All of these movements, true to the inherent identification of the two within Islam, had political as well as religious aspects and goals. After Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the subjection of various portions of the Islamic world to non-Muslim colonial powers, the issues were sharpened. The differences separating Muslims were stressed, in an attempt to unite them under a caliphate in defense of Islam. Such a pan-Islamism was advocated by Jamāl-al-Dīn al-Afghāni (1839–97), who traveled widely throughout the eastern Islamic countries propagating his theories and influencing other movements. He inspired revolutions in Egypt and Iran and laid the basis for more recent popular movements combining Islamic fundamentalism with a political program. The uncompromising attitude of the Muslim Brotherhood, for example, retained many of al-Afghāni's ideas. A different movement, a syncretism not unlike or unrelated to Unitarianism and the Ramakrishna mission in Hinduism, led the Bābis and Bahais out of Islam completely (see BABISM; BAHA'ISM). An apostolic group of a related tenor, called the AḤMADIYYAH, is viewed with considerable suspicion by both Sunnite and Shī'ite Muslims.

One of al-Afghāni's disciples, the Egyptian *shaykh* Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), instituted a more interesting though ultimately less influential line of thought by separating the political from the religious side of the question. 'Abduh was the first great Islamic modernist, a man of enormous ability who attempted to reformulate Islamic doctrine in the light of advances, especially in the sciences, achieved in the West, confident that his efforts would only confirm the truth of Islam. The scene of his work was al-Azhar in Cairo, and it was published in the traditional form of a commentary on the Qur'ān. As carried on by his pupil Rashīd Ridā (1865–1935), however, the attempt came some way back toward Ibn-Taymīyah and a new doctrinal rigidity. More successful, perhaps, was the effort of the Indian Muslim Muḥammad Iqbāl (1876–1938), whose attempts at harmonizing Islam with the thought of Western writers on philosophy and mysticism, in his poetry and a prose work entitled *The Recon-*

struction of Religious Thought in Islam, closely resemble that of al-Ghazzālī.

The role of Islam in recent history has been such as to mingle and cloud such elements. Modernization, in particular industrialization, has started in the Muslim world with such force and momentum that nothing could possibly remove its effects or call a halt to it. Basic religious and social institutions are changing. Increased mobility, opportunities for livelihood, education, and political responsibility have accelerated the process. What further forms Islam's response to them might take is unclear. Certainly the secularism of Turkey and some of the Arab countries has not met with wide acceptance, but there is still little clarification of issues among modern Muslims. Israel's expansion beyond its 1948 borders resulted in an Islamic "revival," with many Muslim Palestinians returning to traditional religious practices. Various "radical" groups in the Middle East and elsewhere that have advocated violence as a legitimate means of overthrowing illegitimate political leaders, or subverting an undesirable social order, have a strong religious rhetoric. Especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall, certain elements in the Islamic world have increasingly seen the West, especially the United States, as a threat to Islamic society and traditional values. It remains to be seen how the relationship between Islam and the West, and Islam and Christianity will be negotiated in the 21st century.

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[J. KRITZECK/C. WILDE]

ISLAMIC ART

Islam, among the world's major religions, is usually thought to have avoided significant aesthetic expressions

of its major spiritual tenets. One will not find in Islamic art the artistic equivalents of Gothic cathedrals with their sophisticated reflection of Thomist thought, of Byzantine icons with their spiritual effectiveness, or of Buddhist sculptures with their involved iconographic programs and their pietistic quietness. And yet the artistic creation of Islamic civilization could not, any more than the creation of any culture, escape the needs and ideals of its faith. In this context of the relationship of the faith of ISLAM to Islamic art a brief presentation will be made here of the monuments that were erected between the 7th and the 17th centuries in the vast area that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Bengal. Since it will not be possible to mention either all monuments or all problems, this article will concentrate on three topics: it will first define the features of the faith that had a direct influence on the arts, then proceed to explain the major elements of Islamic religious architecture, and finally show that the faith had an influence on representational and decorative arts as well.

The Faith of Islam and Art. There is, first of all, one major area in which the faith of Islam requires some sort of monumental expression. This is the MOSQUE, from Arabic *masjid*, "a place to prostrate one's self [in front of God]," as in prayer. In a strict sense, the individual act of prayer, the main purely religious obligation of the Muslim, could be accomplished any place. But Islam is also a communitarian social order and, at least once a week, prayer is meant to be a congregational experience as well as a private one: "O ye who believe, when the call is heard for the Friday prayer, haste unto remembrance of God and leave your trading" (Qur'an 62.9). In the early years of the Muslim community the private house of the Prophet in MEDINA (a simple courtyard with rows of columns on its southern and northern sides and private rooms to the east) became almost accidentally the place of gathering of the small band of faithful, and it was only later that it acquired the sacred value of being the first mosque. As the Muslim world grew and conquered, the mosque maintained its function as the place where the community assembled, learned, fulfilled some of its financial obligations, and proclaimed its allegiance to temporal rulers.

Liturgy and the Mosque. The mosque, in short, meant to serve all activities of the community, thereby emphasizing the key Muslim point of the inseparability of social order from allegiance to certain beliefs. Its main physical requirement was space, as large a space as would accommodate the body of believers available in any one community. From the very beginning it acquired three further needs: an orientation (the *qiblah*), since prayer is to be directed toward MECCA, the first and unique sanctuary of God; a device for calling the faithful,