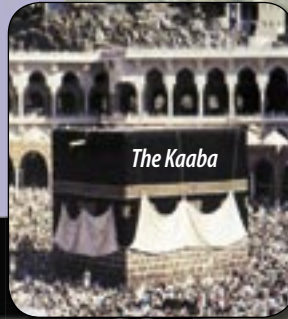


Arab and Islamic traditions ...



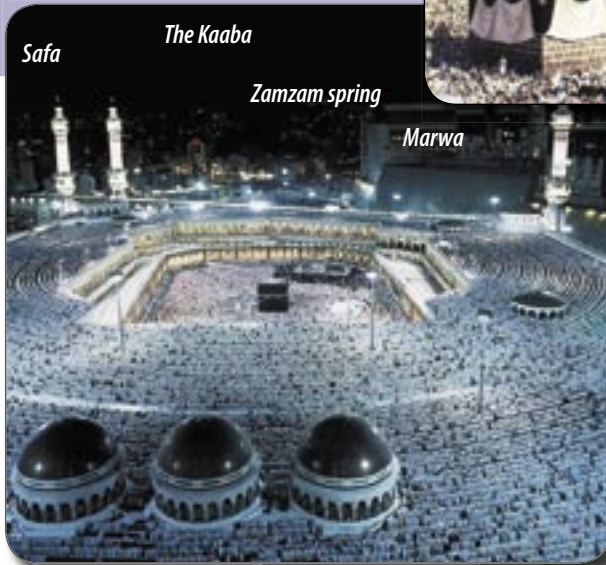
The famous Black Stone is surrounded by a silver casing. It is mounted on the lower Southeast corner of the Kaaba.

More pictures are available on various web sites. We recommend: <http://www.hajjinformation.com>
(The official Saudi site)



Al Haram Mosque
(The location of the Kaabah)

The City of Mecca



Important: the Bible does not teach the following.

Muslims believe the original Paradise was in the heavens. According to Arabian traditions, when Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise they fell to different parts of the earth: Adam to Sri Lanka, and Eve to Arabia. They were separated from each other for 200 years. Finally God permitted them to come together again at Arafat, near the actual city of Mecca, which was previously called "Becca" or "Bakkah." According to Muslims, Adam built the Kaaba, a small cubic building in Mecca,

as a place of worship. He is said to have died and been buried in Mecca. Eve was buried at the place which still bears the name Jiddah (Jeddah), meaning "maternal ancestor" in Arabic.

Muslims believe that Hagar and Ishmael went to the valley of Becca in Saudi Arabia when they had to leave the household of Abraham. Abraham eventually came to visit his son, and the two of them received a command from God to rebuild the Kaaba. (The original Kaaba was destroyed in the flood of



Jabal Al Nur Mountain
Hira Cave

Stoning of Satan site

The rocky hill "The Mountain of Mercy" where
Mohammed gave his farewell address in 632 AD

The Plain of Arafat: The white areas
above are tent cities provided for pilgrims
by the Saudi Hajj Services.

The City of Mina

Tunnel for pilgrims
(dashed line)

Noah.) The Angel Gabriel showed them the exact spot where they should build it on its original foundations. When the Kaaba was finished, Gabriel brought the famous "black stone" to be included in the construction. Some speculate that this stone was a meteorite or a great white sapphire from the Garden of Eden that was supposedly darkened by the sins of pilgrims.

Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his son Ishmael (not Isaac, according to Islam) in the area between the Kaaba site and Mount Arafat. He supposedly threw

stones at Satan when he was tempted to not obey God. Muslims still commemorate this temptation and Abraham's obedience by symbolically stoning Satan and sacrificing an animal (usually a sheep) at a location several miles from the Kaaba. Ishmael and Hagar are said to be buried near the Kaaba. Due to this understanding of history, one can see why Muslims believe Mecca is central to their religion.



The Roots of Islam

The roots of Islam are more complex than is commonly understood. Islam has at least seven different and related origins:

1) True and false Arabic spiritual beliefs which arose over thousands of years. Many of these came from the ancestors of the Arabs including Ishmael and Abraham's six other sons besides Isaac (Gen. 25:1-4). Many Arabs actually trace their ancestry to Joktan who lived before Abraham. (See Gen. 10:26-29). Some Arabs called "hanifs" followed these monotheistic traditions more closely than the general Arab population.

2) Various Jewish influences: Significant numbers of Jews were living in Arabia at the time of Mohammed. It can be seen from the Qur'an, Jewish writings and Mohammed's life that Jewish beliefs, practices, attitudes and actions influenced Mohammed in various ways.

3) Various Christian influences: Some Christians lived in Mecca and Medina during Mohammed's lifetime. It appears that many were not very holy or orthodox in their beliefs and/or practices. One Christian, related to Mohammed's wife Khadija, supposedly even encouraged Mohammed as a prophet.

- 4) Influences from spirits and paganism
- 5) Influences from Persian Zoroastrianism
- 6) Influences from the character, personality, and moral choices of Mohammed
- 7) Moral and cultural choices of the early Arabian Muslims after the death of Mohammed. In addition, Islam as we know it today has been shaped by

Please note that the word Allah is used for the word God in the Arabic Bible. Small numbers of Arabic speaking Christians also use the word "Al Ilaah".

Arabic text of John 1:1

فِي الْبَدْءِ كَمَا الْكَلِمَةُ ،
وَالْكَلِمَةُ كَانَتْ مَعَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ
الْكَلِمَةُ هُوَ اللَّهُ .
Allah

(“Roots of Islam” continued from p. 7)

1,400 years of history and a vast number of peoples and cultures on several continents.

Based on these origins it can be said that Muslims (1) know much about God which is correct, (2) believe many errors and misconceptions concerning God.

One Christian writer has described Muslim ideas and experience of God:

“It is as though a person in the dim light of dawn should look at a distant building. He sees the building, he perceives there is only one building, but he is unable to tell whether it is a residence or a factory. He is sure it only has one story, and is built of brick. But when he comes nearer, and views the

building in the clear light of day, he realizes that it is built of stone, not of brick, and instead of having only one story it has three. He now knows the building as it really is. When a Muslim looks toward God in the imperfect light of Qur’anic revelation and his own reason, he sees God’s power and will, but does not see God’s love. He sees God’s unity, but he does not see that he is Trinity in unity. Such true knowledge of God is possible only when one sees God in his Son Jesus Christ.”

Taken from: A Christian's Response to Islam by William M. Miller, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1976, (STL reprint 1986, pages 75-76)

Sept. 12, 2007

In the book of Genesis we read, “There was evening and morning, the first day.” Ramadan begins in a similar way.

Around the world Muslims will look to the heavens this evening, trying to see the crescent moon. If visible, it is the signal for the beginning of the month of Ramadan. (In most countries, religious authorities will proclaim the beginning of Ramadan). Fasting begins the next morning. Muslims will rise early to eat their breakfast before dawn, then they will not have anything to eat or drink till nightfall. This will be their daily practice for the next 29 - 30 days.

Important: The moon has never been an object of worship in Islam. No Muslim in the last 1,400 years has been encouraged to worship the moon. It was not a symbol of Islam until the rise of the Ottomans about 700 - 800 years after Mohammed. In Islam the moon is simply used to determine the dates of the Islamic calendar. For more information see our website: <http://www.30-days.net>