



**LEARNING**  
**ABOUT**  
**ISLAM**

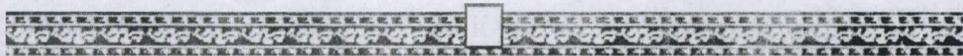
# LEARNING ABOUT ISLAM

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**The Voice of the Martyrs**

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*Cover photo: People from the Muslim country of Afghanistan.*



# Learning About Islam

## English Edition

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Remember them that are in bonds,  
as bound with them;  
and them which suffer adversity,  
as being yourselves also in the body.

Hebrews 13:3

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# INTRODUCTION

The material on Islam in this publication is taken from LINK International Bold Believers Activity Books on Nigeria, Egypt, Malaysia/Brunei, Turkey, Algeria/Tunisia, Libya, and Central Asian Lands.

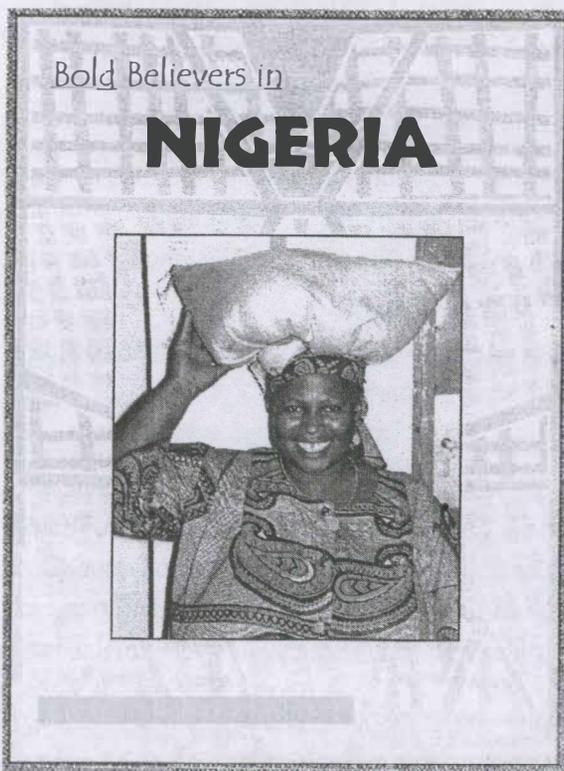
LINK International is a division of The Voice of the Martyrs, Inc. (VOM), a Christian missionary organization dedicated to serving the persecuted church.

LINK Bold Believers Activity Books, featuring many countries of the world. The books explore *LINK* newsletter topics and activities in greater depth for homeschoolers, Sunday school teachers, and families. (The *LINK* newsletter, for students ages 5 to 13, is published quarterly.) Students learn more about restricted nations from the maps, flags, crafts, recipes, and articles in the books. They are challenged to a greater awareness of the part they can play in influencing the world for Christ through prayer points, stories, activities, and Biblical answers to the beliefs of other faiths.

From the

# BOLD BELIEVERS IN NIGERIA

## Activity Book



# BOOKS WITHIN A BOOK

In his book *Operation Crescent Moon*, George John said, "There are now more Muslim missionaries in the world than Christian missionaries." In Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, Muslim missionary activity is growing. *Operation World* says of Nigeria that special "efforts are made to win over pagans and backsliding Christians."

The United States is not free from Muslim missionary efforts. There are more than 1,000 mosques (Muslim places of worship) in the U.S. and more than 150 full-time private Muslim schools for children.

In talking about Islam's "serious and powerful competition for souls" among African-Americans, *World* magazine (May 11/18, 1996) said, "For the black community, this new Islam challenge is real. For years we have enjoyed the luxury of our people either choosing our Christianity or going without. This is no longer the case. But hopefully this new challenge will help us sharpen our weapons, strap on our battle gear, and defend the faith like never before."

Some white and Hispanic youths in the U.S. are also converting to Islam. These young people say that Islam meets needs in their lives that Christianity does not meet. But in reality, the youth do not fully understand the salvation they are rejecting, or the religion they are joining.

Many Muslims are trained to defend their faith from an early age. Are you in training to defend your Christian beliefs?

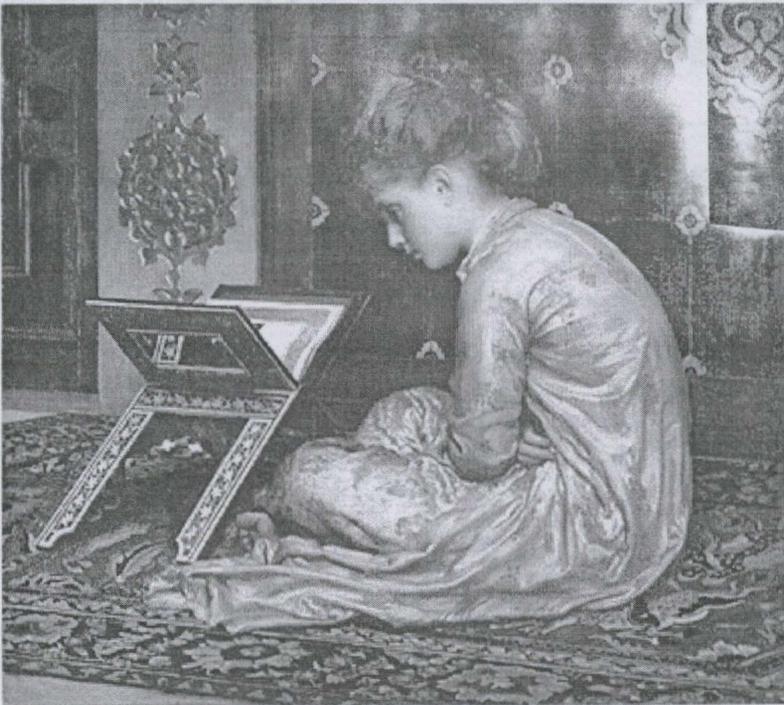
## Instructions:

To make two booklets, one about Christianity and the other about Islam, photocopy pages 6-17. Cut the pages in half along the dotted line. Staple the pages of each book together along the left sides. The Christianity booklet tells what Christians believe about God and Jesus. It addresses common misunderstandings that Muslims have about Christianity. Here are some ways you can use the booklets:

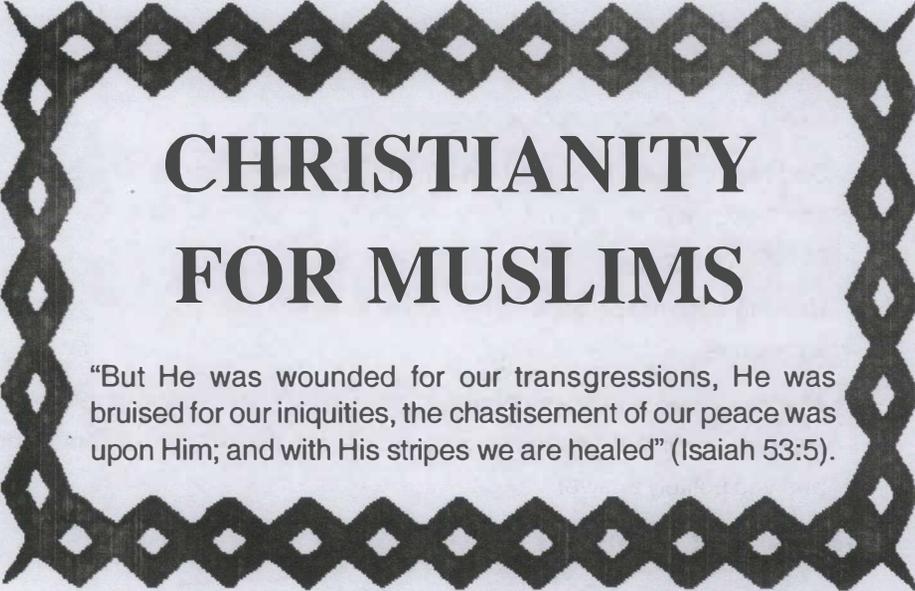
Study the booklets so that you will be better able to present your faith in discussions with or about Muslims. When witnessing, remember to love

those you are talking to instead of seeing them as a threat. The author of the book *Reaching Muslims for Christ* says, "Loving listening sends a powerful answer. When you listen in love, you are listening as God listens."

- Use the booklets to direct your prayers for Muslims.
- God may call you to serve Him among Muslims someday. The booklets can help prepare you and show you things you may need to learn more about.
- Use the information about Christianity to strengthen your own faith and knowledge.
- After you have studied the booklets, perhaps you would like to role-play a situation in which someone asks you questions about Islam or Christianity and you politely answer.



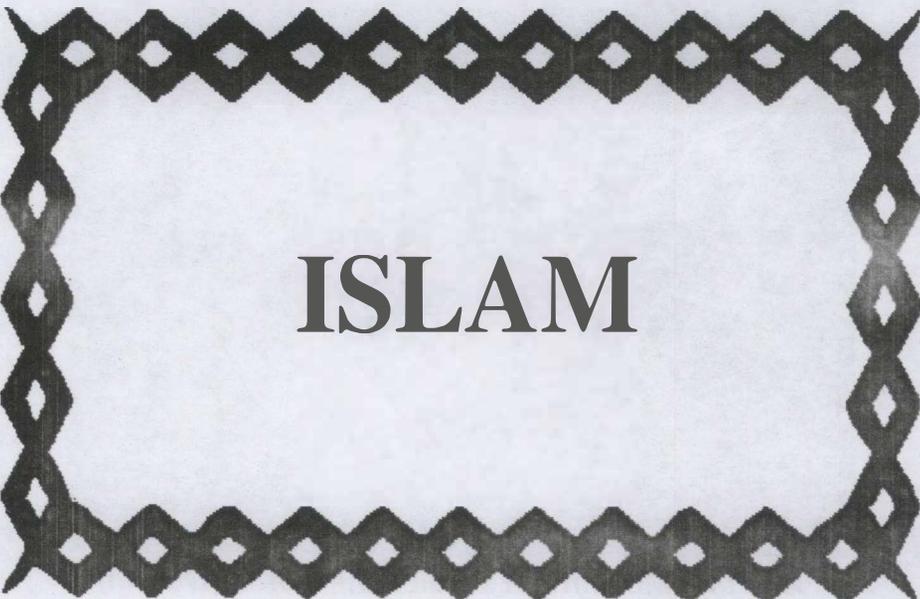
***A young Muslim girl studies the Koran (Qur'an)***



# CHRISTIANITY FOR MUSLIMS

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

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# ISLAM

# CHRISTIANITY

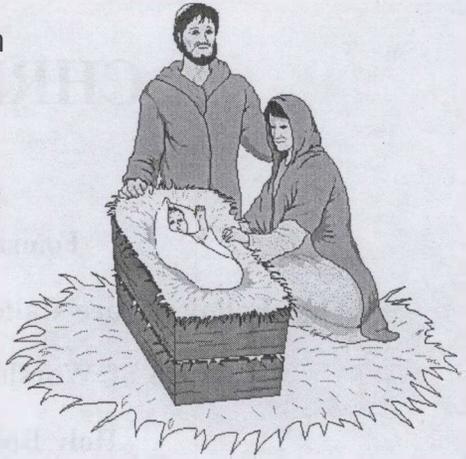
<b>Founder:</b>	<b>Jesus Christ</b>
<b>What Followers are Called:</b>	<b>Christians</b>
<b>Place of Worship:</b>	<b>Church</b>
<b>Holy Book:</b>	<b>The Bible</b>

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# ISLAM

<b>Founder:</b>	<b>Mohammed</b>
<b>What Followers are Called:</b>	<b>Muslims</b>
<b>Place of Worship:</b>	<b>Mosque</b>
<b>Holy Book:</b>	<b>The Qur'an</b>

Over 500 years before Mohammed lived, a man named Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a small town in Israel. The Qur'an (also spelled "Koran"), the Muslim holy book, tells about Jesus and some of His ancestors. It tells about His mother Mary, about His healing of the sick, and about the things Jesus taught people.

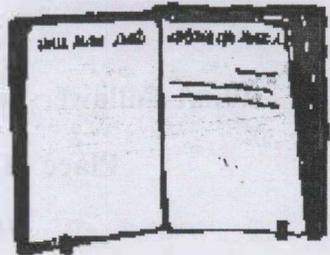


Followers of Jesus are called Christians. More stories about Him and His ancestors are found in the Bible, which is the Christian holy book.

---

Islam was started by a man named Mohammed. Mohammed was born in 570 A.D. in Mecca, a city in what is now Saudi Arabia.

Mohammed believed that he received messages from an angel. He told other people about the messages. The messages were written in a book called the Qur'an. People who believe what Mohammed said are called Muslims and their religion is called Islam. The Qur'an is their holy book.



## ONE GOD

Christians believe in one God. Jesus taught, "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Ten Commandments, which God gave through Moses, say, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3).

People of another faith may mistakenly think that Christians believe in three gods.

The Bible says that God reveals Himself in three expressions: as the Father who is the Almighty who sits on the throne, as Jesus Christ, and as His Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

Although we can never fully explain God, the three ways He reveals Himself—called the Trinity—can be partly explained by examples.

For example, the sun can be experienced as heat or light, or seen as a big ball in the sky. It is always all three, but it is still one sun.

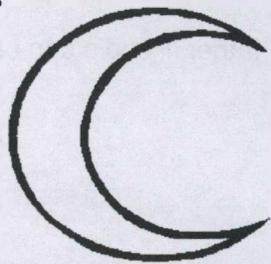
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## ONE GOD

Muslims worship one god, called Allah. They believe that they can know *about* Allah, but cannot be close to him or know him personally.

Some people say that Allah is the same God that Christians worship. But other people say that Allah cannot be the Christians' God. They point out that the God described in the Bible has very different qualities than the god, Allah, described in the Qur'an. Allah does not want to redeem mankind. Allah and God have different commandments for their followers, too. For example, the Qur'an says that Allah asks the angels to worship Adam.

Historians and experts on Islam tell us that in Mohammed's time, Allah was the moon god. The people of Arabia considered him the "most high god" among their 360 idols of other gods. That is why the Muslims adopted the crescent moon as their symbol



(even though Mohammed did not worship the moon after he started the Islamic religion). The moon is placed on the flags of many Muslim nations.

Today, Muslims say that the moon on mosques and flags is the sign of the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan.

## **WHAT IS GOD LIKE?**

Jesus taught that God is like a loving heavenly Father. Christians believe that God is completely holy and the Lord and Master of their lives. He loves people, even sinners! Yet He does not want people to continue to sin. He sent Jesus Christ into the world to seek and to save the lost (sinners) because of His great love for all people.

Jesus told a story to teach people about God's love. He said that if a good shepherd has 99 of his 100 sheep safely at home, he will leave them at home to go look for his one lost sheep. He will be very happy when he finds the one that was lost. God is like the good shepherd and He loves us even more than an earthly father could ever love his own family.

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## **WHAT IS ALLAH LIKE?**

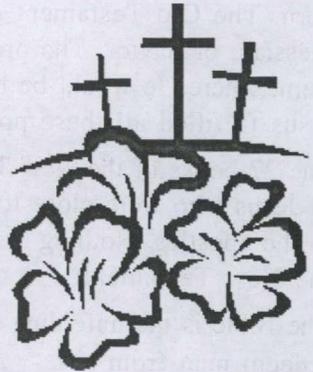
Muslims have 99 names for Allah. Some of the names are: truth, proud, powerful, giver of life, eternal, and dominant. "Love" is not one of Allah's names. Muslims see Allah only as a lord and master, not as a loving father. People can be Allah's slaves or servants, but not his children.

# JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Although Jesus never sinned and He brought peace and healing to those around Him, some people did not like Him. Religious leaders wanted to keep their power and influence and did not want their followers to listen to Jesus.

Jesus could have escaped from His enemies after they arrested Him. But He knew it was God's will for Him to lay down His life, and that by doing so, He was bringing salvation to those who believe in Him. Through Jesus' sacrifice, God made a way for people who believe in Christ to receive forgiveness for their sins and to have eternal life with Him.

Jesus rose from the dead to show that He had broken the power of sin and death over those who believe in Him. More than 500 eyewitnesses saw the resurrected Jesus before He ascended into heaven where He is alive with God today. He also lives within believers through His Holy Spirit.



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## WHAT MUSLIMS BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS

Muslims believe that Jesus did not die on the cross. Some Muslims say that somebody took His place on the cross, and that Jesus was taken up to heaven by Allah. Others say Jesus was taken down from the cross while He was still alive.

Muslims do not understand how any good could come from being caught and killed by enemies, as Jesus was. When their leader, Mohammed, was persecuted by enemies, he fled. He and all his followers moved from Mecca to the city of Medina in 622 A.D. Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina is called the *Hejira* [hih-JYE-ruh]. It is a very important event in Muslim history. The Muslim calendar even starts from the year of the Hejira.

## THE BIBLE

The Bible contains 66 books divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. It was written by more than 40 people over a period of 1,500 years in different places and in three different languages. Since God inspired the writing of the Bible, there is amazing agreement among all the books.

Sometimes people of other faiths have believed that the Bible has been changed over the years and is no longer the same as when it was first written. Discoveries of early versions over the years have proved this idea incorrect.

The 39 books of the Old Testament were already written when Jesus was born. The Old Testament contains many prophecies about the coming of a Messiah, or Savior. The prophecies tell what family the Messiah would come from, where He would be born, and events that would happen in His lifetime. Jesus fulfilled all these prophecies.

The 27 books of the New Testament were written either by disciples (apostles) of Jesus who were close to Him during His earthly life, or by someone close to the apostles. Nothing written after the death of the disciples is included in the New Testament.

The Bible is the unfolding story of God's relationship to man, and His plan to redeem man from sin.

---

## THE QUR'AN

The Muslim holy book, the Qur'an, is one book written from one source. The Qur'an contains 114 "suras," or chapters. The chapters vary in length from three verses to 286 verses.

Muslims believe that the Qur'an was dictated to Mohammed by an angel. However, Mohammed could not read or write, so the Qur'an was not put into book form until after his death. First, it was recited to Mohammed's followers, who either memorized it or wrote parts of it down. After Mohammed died, Muslim leaders tried to gather all the parts together into a book. By 657 A.D., there were so many different versions of the Qur'an that the fourth successor of Mohammed, Khalif Ottoman, ordered one official version to be created and the rest to be burned or considered unofficial versions.

Muslims believe that Arabic is the language of heaven. So although there are translations of the Qur'an in other languages, they believe that the true meaning can be fully learned only from the Arabic. Many Muslims who do not even understand Arabic read and memorize the Arabic version of the Qur'an for that reason.

## SALVATION

The Bible tells us the following about how we can be saved:

- Good works alone cannot get anyone to heaven.
- God is holy and sin is condemned.
- Everyone has sinned.
- Good works alone cannot cover sins or gain God's favor.
- Jesus' sinlessness enables Him to be the perfect sacrifice for sin.
- Whoever believes in Him is saved, not condemned. (See John 3:16-18 and Romans 1:16)

We do not have to, and could not if we wanted to, become so righteous on our own that God will save us because of our righteousness. Instead, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

---

## SALVATION

Islam is based on works. "Works" means that Allah will judge individuals by how many good and bad things they have done. If a person has done enough good things, he will go to heaven, Muslims believe. But no one knows how many good things are "enough." (See Romans 3:10 to find out how many people are righteous enough to deserve to go to heaven.)

Muslims try to do good works to please Allah, but they can never be sure whether or not he will be pleased and let them into heaven.

## GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. God loves the world so much that He gave the world Jesus, so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be lost, but have eternal life. (**See John 3:16.**)
2. God was in Jesus Christ, making peace between Himself and the world. In Christ, God did not hold the world guilty of its sins. Jesus brought us this message of peace. (**See 2 Corinthians 5:19.**)
3. Mankind lost a relationship with God through sin. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (**1 Corinthians 15:22**).
4. We need peace between us and God. Jesus forgives our sin and restores us to God. We must repent of our sins and confess them. (**See Acts 3:19 and 1 John 1:9.**)
5. We must believe in Jesus. (**See John 1:12.**)

Here is a prayer of salvation. (You may use your own words when praying to God.)

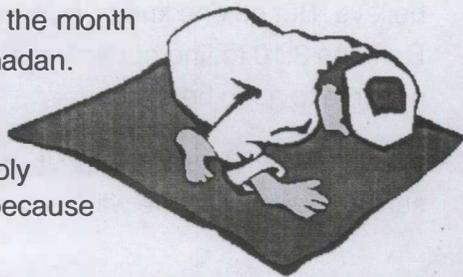
***"God, I know I have sinned and I am sorry. I turn from my sins. I ask You to forgive me. I believe Jesus died for my sins, so that they may be forgiven. I receive Him as my Savior and Lord. I want to follow and serve You. Thank You for answering my prayer. I accept Your forgiveness for my sins. In Jesus' name, amen."***

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## THE FIVE 'PILLARS' OF ISLAM

There are five "pillars" of Islam, things Muslims believe they must do to be a good Muslim:

1. Recite: "There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger."
2. Pray five times a day at certain times while facing the city of Mecca.
3. Give money to the poor.
4. Fast from sunrise to sunset during the month on the Muslim calendar called Ramadan.
5. Take a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime if the Muslim can afford it. (A pilgrimage is a trip made to a holy place. Muslims believe Mecca is holy because Mohammed was born there.)



## THE SON WHO LEFT HOME

Jesus told many stories to show what God is like. One of the stories is called "The Prodigal Son." Here is what the story says.

A man had two sons. The younger one said to the father, "Give me my share of your property." So the father split up what he owned between the two sons.

The younger son took all that was his and left. He went far away to another country. There, he wasted all his money on foolish things.

Soon after that, there was a famine in the land and no one had enough food. The son was hungry and needed money. So he got a job feeding pigs. He was so hungry, he was willing to eat pig food. But no one gave him anything.

The son knew that he had been foolish. He knew that his father's servants had more food than he did. He said to himself, "I will go home and tell my father that I have sinned against him and God. I will tell him that I am not good enough to be his son anymore, but I want to be one of his servants."

So that's what the son did. What do you think happened? Do you think the father allowed him to be a servant? Did he punish him? Maybe he had him arrested for trespassing.

(Turn the page to find out what happened.)

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## MORE ABOUT ISLAM

There are almost two billion Christians in the world, and almost four billion non-Christians. Of the four billion people who do not know Christ as their Savior, about 1.2 billion are Muslims.

There are more than 50 countries in which the majority of the citizens are Muslims. Most of the Muslims in the world live in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia; but there are Muslims in other places, too. Half of the Muslims are children under the age of 15.

In some Muslim countries, women must follow the rules of "purdah." These women live hidden lives and do not go outside very often. When company comes, they hide in their rooms or in the kitchen. If they must go outside, they cover themselves from head to toe with veils and robes.



While the son was still a long way from his father's house, the father saw him coming. The father had compassion for his son. He ran to his lost son and hugged him and kissed him. The son told his father that he had sinned against him and God, and that he would like to be a servant in his father's house.

But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet! Get our best food ready! We will have a feast, for my son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost, but now he is found!" So they began to celebrate.

Jesus told this story to show that God's love is greater than even an earthly father's love. God longs for sinners to come and be restored to Him through faith in His Son. That is why He sent Jesus to make a way for people to receive forgiveness for their sins through Jesus' sacrifice of His life.

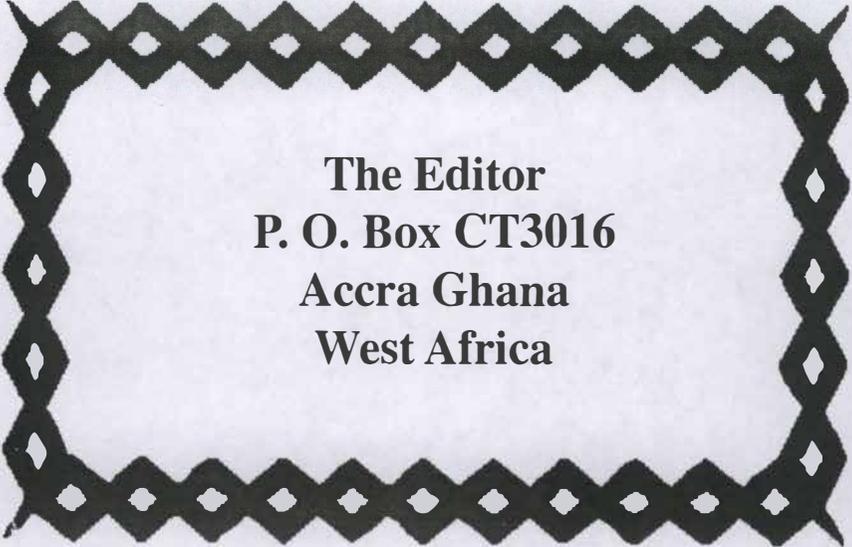
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The Qur'an says that a man may marry as many as four wives. Mohammed had several wives.

Today, in many places, violence by Muslims against Christians is on the rise. Former Muslims who have come to Christ are often treated especially harshly.

But there are also many Muslims who live peaceful, moral lives. They care for their families, are good citizens of their countries, and help those who are less fortunate. But still they are lost in God's eyes, and they need our prayers and concern.

The test of the truth of a person's faith is not whether or not they are peaceful, moral, and have a lifestyle that we admire. The test is whether or not they know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Pray that Muslims everywhere will pass this most important test of all.



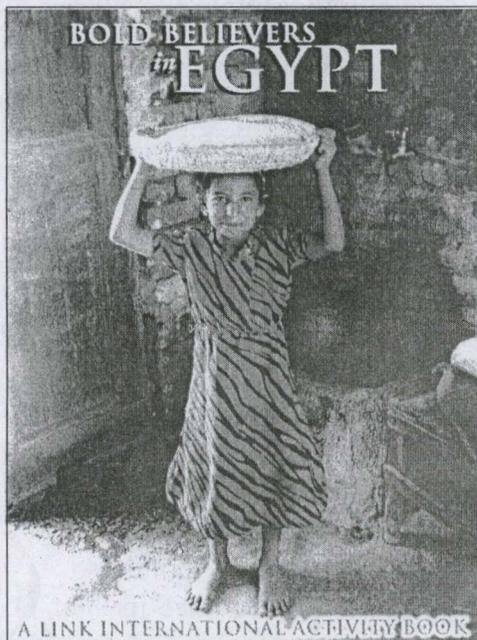
The Editor  
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Accra Ghana  
West Africa

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From the

# BOLD BELIEVERS IN Egypt

Activity Book



# ISLAM—A ONE PAGE OVERVIEW

A Muslim is someone who follows the teachings of the religion called “Islam.” Islam was started by Mohammed, a man who lived from 570 to 632 A.D. Mohammed was born in the city of Mecca, in what is now the country of Saudi Arabia.

## WHAT MUSLIMS BELIEVE

Muslims worship one god, called Allah. They believe that they can know *about* Allah, but cannot know him personally.

The Koran, the Muslims’ holy book, tells about Jesus. But Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, or that it is only through Jesus that we can go to heaven. They just believe that Jesus was a prophet and a good man.

## WORKS

The Islamic religion is based on works. “Works” means that Allah will judge each person by how many good and bad things he has done. If he has done enough good things, he will go to heaven. (See Romans 3:10 to find out how many people are righteous enough to deserve to go to heaven. Also look up Ephesians 2:8,9. Write down or discuss how Christianity is different from Islam, as shown in these verses.)

So Muslims do good works to try to please Allah. But they never can be sure if he will be pleased and let them into heaven or not.

There are five things Muslims believe they must do in order to be good Muslims:

1. Recite: “There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his messenger.” This is called the “shahada.”
2. Pray five times a day at certain times while facing the city of Mecca.
3. Give money to the poor.
4. Fast from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan, the Muslims’ holy month.
5. Take a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime. (A pilgrimage is a trip made to a holy place. Muslims believe Mecca is holy because Mohammed was born there.)



# UNDERSTANDING ISLAM— WHY CHRISTIANS CONVERT TO ISLAM

## PART 1: EGYPT

### BECOMING A MUSLIM IN EGYPT

Christians in Egypt are often given only the jobs no one else wants. Therefore, some Christians in Egypt are tempted to become Muslims because they hope to be able to get good jobs if they convert to Islam.

Christians know that their children will be treated better at school if they become Muslims. Their family will no longer be persecuted for their faith. They will not have to feel fearful, different, second-class, or hated any more. Sadly, every year thousands of Egyptian Christians give in to the temptations to convert to Islam.



### BECOMING A CHRISTIAN IN EGYPT

If an Egyptian Muslim becomes a Christian, there are many pressures for him to give up his faith and return to Islam. If a Muslim man becomes a Christian, his wife, if she is a Muslim, is encouraged to divorce him. He may lose his property and his children. His relatives may kill him or have him put in prison. The secret police may give him a hard time.

If a Muslim mother and father become Christians, their children will still be forced to pray to Allah, recite from the Koran, and take classes in Islam at school. Some children feel like they are Christians at home and Muslims at school, and they are confused.

Some new Christians give in to the pressures and return to Islam. Others keep their faith secret. Some boldly tell of their new love for Jesus, risking all for their Lord.

## STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT NEEDED

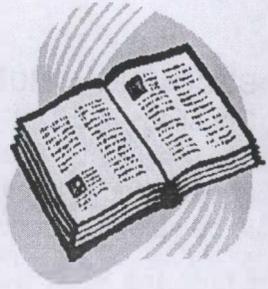
*"And David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him...but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God"  
(1 Samuel 30:6).*

*"He [Paul]...went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples"  
(Acts 18:23).*

*"...when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32).*

*"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).*

*"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain..." (Revelation 3:2).*



The Lord knows that His children need to be encouraged and to have their faith strengthened from time to time. The verses above tell us that God can strengthen us, we can encourage ourselves, and we can receive encouragement and strength from others.

### What Can You Do?



The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) seeks ways to strengthen and encourage Egyptian Christians who are facing trials and temptations. VOM workers visit Egypt to bring aid to Christian families and to let them know that their brothers and sisters in Christ around the world care about them. You can keep up with the work of VOM in Egypt and other countries by reading the *LINK International* and *The Voice of the Martyrs* newsletters. The newsletters can give you ideas about ways you can strengthen, encourage, and pray for struggling Christians around the world.

# UNDERSTANDING ISLAM— WHY CHRISTIANS CONVERT TO ISLAM

## PART 2: THE UNITED STATES

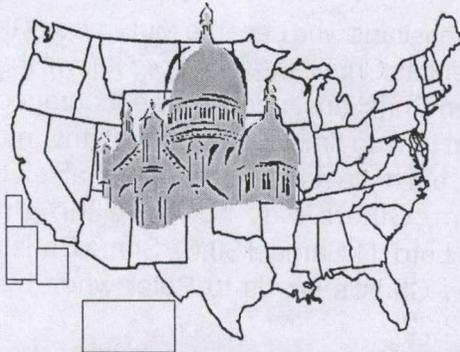
### Approximate Number of People in Some Faith Groups in the United States\*

Muslims – 7 million  
Hindus – 1.2 million  
Jews – 4 million  
Episcopalians – 2.3 million  
Jehovah's Witnesses – 975,000  
Presbyterians – 4 million  
Salvation Army – 450,000

\*Sources: *World magazine*, August 19, 2000; *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2000*.

*"In the United States...nearly 80 percent of the more than 1,200 mosques have been built in the past 12 years."* (CNN.com).

*"There is no better place to practice Islam than in the United States."* (American Muslim teenager quoted in *American Islam: Growing Up Muslim in America*, by Richard Wormser, 1994, Walker Publishing Co., New York).



## STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT NEEDED

“Until recently, it was unusual for Americans outside the black community to convert to Islam unless they married a Muslim. However, in recent years, a small but growing number of white and Hispanic Americans have converted on their own.” (*American Islam: Growing Up Muslim in America*).

Why would an American Christian who is not suffering persecution for his faith forsake the love and salvation of Christ to join the false religion of Islam?

- Some say they found friendliness and kindness among Muslims. (In Matthew 5:46,47, Jesus pointed out that even the unrighteous are friendly to those who are friendly to them, but that He expects more from His followers.)
- Some never studied the Bible. When they found some true things in Muslim writings, they decided that it must all be true. Balaam (Numbers 22-24), the slave girl (Acts 16), and some of the Pharisees (Matthew 5:20) all said some true things, but they were not approved by God.
- They do not say they became Muslims so they will go to heaven when they die. Muslims believe they will go to heaven if they do enough good works, but they do not know how much is enough. [Christians rely on Jesus Christ for their salvation, because they know that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).]

Muslims believe that heaven is a place where everyone enjoys all the earthly pleasures they want. But earthly things do not satisfy our longings for God. Those who trust in Jesus look forward to fellowship with God forever in heaven.

Some American Christians who became Muslims say they did not find strength and encouragement as Christians. The Lord knows that American Christians, as well as Egyptian Christians, need to be encouraged and to have their faith strengthened from time to time. Some “Christians” may have been born into Christian families, but have never had a personal relationship with Christ that strengthens them. Others may not have the strength to “encourage themselves in the Lord” (1 Samuel 30:6). Some Christians may need another Christian to follow Christ’s words to Peter when he said, “Strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

## To Think About

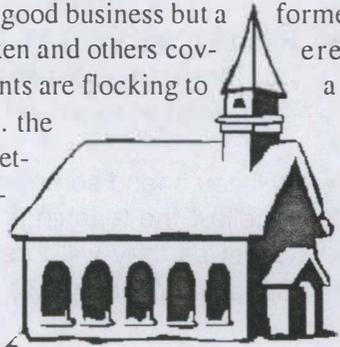
- Some converts to Islam have never studied the Bible. In 2 Timothy 3:16,17, it says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Considering these verses, what are some of the dangers for a Christian who is not grounded in God's Word? What is he missing that he could be getting from studying the Bible?
- Read Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28,29; and Hebrews 10:24,25. Do Christians have the responsibility to help each other grow in the Lord? If so, what are some of the ways these verses say this is to be done?
- Will you spend some time in prayer for Christians who may be tempted to follow the teachings of Islam? Ask that their roots will grow deep in Christ so they will forsake all false religions. (See the Parable of the Seeds in Matthew 13.)

Without Christian strength and encouragement, some Egyptian and American Christians may seek what they lack from non-Christian people or groups who might try to lead them away from the Lord.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO? #1

The following “What Can You Do” stories tell about American Christians and Muslims. Read each story and the questions and statements that follow. Then, in the blanks provided, write something you can do to “strengthen your brethren.”

The August 19, 2000, issue of *World* magazine tells about one area of Detroit, Michigan. “Although storefront churches...still hang on, they seem to have little visible impact in an area of decay where wildflowers surround a pile of mattresses in one yard.... Liquor stores apparently do a good business but a former [Christian church] building has some windows broken and others covered by faded, warped boards. Not far away, some residents are flocking to a yellow-brick building with a green-roofed tower.... the Islamic Center of America, which includes a banqueting room that seats 200...and a carpeted, furniture-less mosque.”



## STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT

- Have you ever thought about writing a thank-you note to a person who takes care of the grounds around your church? Although a neat yard alone does not make a church pleasing to God, it can show others that you care about your place of worship.
- Who cleans the inside of your church? Have you ever thanked them or prayed for them?
- Could you offer to do a project that would help those who keep your church looking nice?

## What I Can Do

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# WHAT CAN YOU DO? #2

Jeffrey Lang was raised in a Christian family in Connecticut. He went to Christian schools, and most of his friends were Christians. (His story is told in a book he wrote called *Struggling to Surrender: Some Impressions of an American Convert to Islam*, Amana Publications, Beltsville, Maryland, 1994.)

As an older teenager, Jeffrey quit going to church and began looking for truth outside of Christianity. When he did not find it, he went back to church with his parents for four weeks in a row. He listened carefully to each sermon, but said that the words seemed to be for someone else—for those who already were believers. So he watched others in the church to see how they were responding to the sermon. “They did not appear to be listening, just as they had never done so, as far as I could remember,” he said.



Jeffrey quit going to church again and later became a Muslim. There were many reasons why Jeffrey left Christianity, but might things have been different if the believers in his church had seemed eager to hear and follow God's Word?

## STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT

- What do you do during the sermon at your church? You never know who is watching you! Someone you know may be tempted to leave the church someday. Could they say, “My friends always listened closely to the sermon, so it must have been important. I'll ask them to explain their faith to me?”
- Do you look for opportunities during the week to talk with friends about something you learned at church so they can see that your faith is not something you just practice on Sundays?

### What I Can Do

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# WHAT CAN YOU DO? #3

A boy from an American Christian family who later became a Muslim said, "It bothered me to see so many people who said they believed in God and then went and did so many ungodly things. I felt myself outside my religion when I wanted to be inside. Christianity didn't make me feel [inside]... My parents were really unhappy [when I became a Muslim]."

(Source: *American Islam: Growing Up Muslim in America*)

## STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT

- Do you talk with your friends about godly people you know or hear about so they will know you value godly behavior?
- Is there someone you know who may feel like an outsider among Christians? If they are very shy, can you gently make friends with him/her? If he/she always seems to be getting into trouble with adults, can you be a good friend and a good example to him/her?
- Are you a godly example that someone seeking direction could turn to for help?
- Will you pray for American and Egyptian Christians who have become Muslims to return to Christ like the 'prodigal son returned to his father (Luke 15)?

What I Can Do

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# WHAT CAN YOU DO? #4

“Ever since childhood, I always noticed that I was ‘spiritual’ to say the least. For some reason, I found myself unlike the other children around me.... To begin with, I am of Latin American descent.... By the time I was 19, I [left] Christianity.” (From Sahabah.com.)

A young black man was upset about the racism around him. He began reading about Muslims. He liked the “harmony and justice” he found in Islam. Muslims were “kind and generous,” he said. Later, he became a Muslim. (From *American Islam: Growing Up Muslim in America*.)



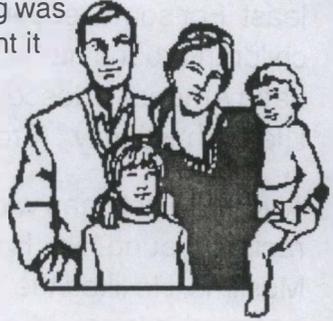
## STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT

- Are you “kind and generous” to new people you meet, even if they are different from you in some way?
- One definition of harmony is “pleasing interaction.” Discuss what pleasing interaction includes.
- Look at your library for a book about manners or etiquette. From the book, or from an adult, find three rules of etiquette that you did not know.

## What I Can Do

# WHAT CAN YOU DO? #5

After he became a Muslim, American Jeffrey Lang was often reminded by other Muslims of how important it is to respect one's parents. He believes that "selfishness and greed" are reasons why non-Muslims in America do not respect their parents as much as Muslims do. Muslims are told that it is wrong to even be impatient or annoyed with one's parents. (From *Struggling to Surrender: Some Impressions of an American Convert to Islam* by Jeffrey Lang.)



## STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT

- Christianity teaches "Honor thy father and thy mother." If someone did not know that, could they figure it out by the way the children in your church act toward their parents?

### What I Can Do

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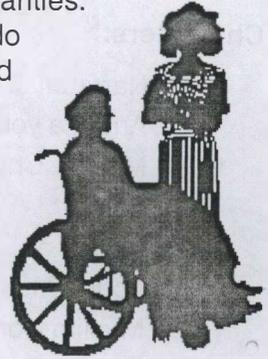
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# WHAT CAN YOU DO? #6

Muslims are asked to give 2.5% of their earnings to charities. Many Muslim young people do not have jobs, so they do volunteer work instead. Some young Muslims give food and clothing to the needy, and others visit people in hospitals and nursing homes.

An American Muslim girl said that non-Muslims at her school have different ideas than she does about volunteer work. "There are others in the class who do these things to get credit so it will look good on their records for college. It's not the same feeling for us. We don't want any rewards on this earth. We do this for [Allah's] sake, because he wants us to." (From *American Islam: Growing Up Muslim in America*.)



## STRENGTH AND ENCOURAGEMENT

- There is no reason why anyone should believe they must look to Muslims to learn the right attitude toward serving others. Both the Old and New Testaments teach us that God approves of helping those in need. Find three verses in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament that show this.
- Can you make a plan to spend time each week working on projects to help the persecuted church, praying for the needs of others, or otherwise serving those in need? Sometimes young people feel that they cannot participate in activities that are not organized and planned out for them by adults outside their families. If organized service activities are not available, ask God for guidance and work on a plan of your own.

## What I Can Do

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# A TIME IS COMING

## A One-Act Play\*

### Characters:

- Narrator
- Amar, a young Egyptian man
- Mark, a Christian young man
- Father
- Mother
- Young Muslim man with sword or dagger
- Muslim woman relative
- Four or five other young Muslim men with swords or daggers
- Several more Muslim men and women relatives

**Narrator:** In some Muslim countries, it is very dangerous for a Muslim to convert to Christianity. The converts may lose their jobs and property, suffer from persecution and terrorism, and may even be banished or killed by their own families. Some Christian churches are unwilling to risk baptizing them or accepting them as members. As a result, there are many “secret Christians” in Muslim countries who are afraid to confess their faith in Jesus.

This play is based on a true story about an Egyptian Muslim who became a Christian and what happened when he shared his faith with his family. As the play begins, the Christian convert, Amar [ah-MAHR], is studying the Bible with a Christian young man named Mark.

### Scene One

(Amar and Mark are sitting on a couch looking at the Bible together. They are dressed in Western clothing.)

**Amar:** Look at this, Mark! John 16 says, “A time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.”

**Mark:** That passage is part of what Jesus told his disciples before He was crucified. But it also sounds like what’s happening now in your life, doesn’t it?

**Amar:** Yes! My relatives took away my money and my passport and locked me in my room when I told them I was a born-again Christian.

(Mark looks very concerned and upset.)

**Amar:** Then a Muslim leader decided I was possessed, and he tortured me to try to get the “demons” out of me.

(Mark shakes his head and looks down.)

**Amar:** A Christian friend arranged for me to go into hiding in a safe place, but I may soon be found! I’m not sure I wasn’t followed here today! I could be killed at any time!

**Mark:** I’m sorry that you have suffered so much, Amar. My pastor told me you’d been persecuted, but I didn’t know all you had been through. Anyway, I’m glad you came here for Bible study. Hopefully no one will be suspicious of two young people getting together. I’ve enjoyed helping you learn more about following Jesus for the past few weeks.

**Amar:** And I thank you for your guidance. But now I have a personal problem that I would like for you to pray about.

**Mark:** Of course, Amar. What’s your problem?

**Amar:** A sympathetic cousin of mine told me that my father is very ill. I’d like to visit him. I haven’t been able to talk to him since I became a Christian and went into hiding. I love my father, and I want to explain to him why I became a Christian. And I’d like to give him an opportunity to accept Jesus as his Savior.

**Mark:** That sounds like a great idea!

**Amar:** (seriously) May be not so great. My family may kill me if I show up at my father’s house—as a good Muslim, my father may even order them to do so! And the shock of seeing his son who has become a Christian may kill him before I can even tell him about Jesus!

**Mark:** That *is* a problem. But no problem is too big for God. Let’s pray that you’ll get to share your faith with your father in safety.

(Mark and Amar bow their heads in prayer.)

*End of Scene One.*

## Scene Two

(Father is propped in a sitting position in bed. Many relatives in traditional Muslim clothing are sitting around the room. Others are waiting on Father, propping his pillow, preparing a tray of food on a table beside him, bringing him water, holding his hand. Mother is standing at the head of the bed.)

**Young Muslim man with sword or dagger** (at his side): (enters) Sir, I hate to disturb you with unfortunate news, but Amar is here and wants to see you. Just give me the word, Uncle, and we will take care of him for good so that you don't have to endure the disgrace of having a son who converted to Christianity!

**Father:** (somewhat weakly) Amar? No, no—send him in. (beckons with hand) (Amar enters. Four or five young Muslim men with swords or daggers at their sides follow him and stand guard at the door with the other young man with the sword or dagger. People in the room scatter to corners of the room and leave a pathway for Amar to his father's bed. All turn toward Amar. They are tense and ready for action.)

**Amar:** (nods politely to his father) Father. (nods to Mother) Mother. (Mother nods slightly toward Amar.)

**Muslim woman relative:** (loudly) How *dare* you come here and upset your father after what you've done! These men (gestures toward the armed men) would be doing Allah a service to kill you right now!

**Relatives:** (all talking at once, angrily, except for Mother, who stays quietly at the head of the bed throughout the scene, sometimes putting her hand on Father's shoulder) Yes! Disgraceful! He's an ungrateful son! I'm ashamed to know him! (etc. etc.)

(Father holds up his hand for silence; crowd calms down.)

**Young Muslim with sword or dagger:** (steps forward) Shall we kill him now, Uncle?

**Father:** (shakes his head toward man with weapon and gestures him away; man steps back) Son, I heard that you have become a Christian. I have also heard that threats, torture, and persecution have not changed your mind about following Jesus. As angry as your relatives here are today, I am sure that if you declared your allegiance to Allah and returned to Islam now, they would

forgive you and accept you back into the family. Would you consider doing that, Amar?

**Amar:** No, Father. I will not deny that Jesus is my Savior, and Lord of my life.

**Relatives:** (some shaking fists at Amar, looking at each other in horror; men with swords or daggers draw their weapons and hold them at their sides or in front of them; all relatives talk at once, saying such things as—) Away with him! Kill him! He has a demon! Have you ever heard such a thing? (etc., etc.)

**Father:** (again raises his hand for silence and talking dies down) I did not think you would deny Jesus, my son. (to the relatives, looking from person to person) Listen, everyone! (relatives lean forward expectantly) (anguished, voice breaking) My son is a better man than I am! (speaks clearly and forthrightly) I will now tell you that I, too, am a Christian. (relatives gasp, some put their hands to their chests, others shake their heads in disbelief saying, "No, no, it can't be," others moan, some sit or stand open-mouthed, one covers ears) I was baptized over 40 years ago and even briefly attended a school to prepare to be a Christian pastor. (to Amar) I have always prayed for you, son. My prayers have been answered. (lifts hands and eyes to heaven) Thank you, Jesus! (to Amar) God bless you, my son. Go in peace, *quickly!*

**Amar:** (joyfully grasps his father's hands in his) Thank you, Father. (runs out past astonished guards)

*End of Scene Two.*

### Scene Three

(Mother, in traditional Muslim clothing, is standing alone in an empty, dimly lit area. She is looking around anxiously, impatiently. She has a passport and money pouch in one hand.)

(Amar enters quickly, breathlessly.)

**Mother:** (rushing to him and hugging him) Amar! You came! I'm so glad you got my message!

**Amar:** (holding her empty hand in both of his in front of him) Mother. It's good to see you. But I was followed here and they will soon catch up with me, so I can't stay long. Why did you send for me?

**Mother:** Amar, I'm sorry to have to tell you the news like this. But after you visited our home last week, your cousins bribed a doctor to give your father a lethal injection. He died on Friday.

**Amar:** (hugging Mother, speaking sadly) I'm sorry, Mother. I expected something like this. (more joyfully) But I'm happy that Father is in heaven with Jesus.

**Mother:** (smiles) Here is the passport and money that your cousins took from you. Please use them to leave Egypt. You are not safe here. (holds out the passport and pouch to Amar)

**Amar:** (takes the passport and money and puts them in his pocket) Thank you, Mother! I've already made arrangements to live with a Christian family in the West. I was only waiting to get my passport replaced. But now I can leave right away! Thank you, thank you!

**Mother:** Go now, Amar. Hurry! God bless you!

**Amar:** (hugs Mother one last time and starts off, then turns back) Mother, one last thing—are you a secret Christian, too?

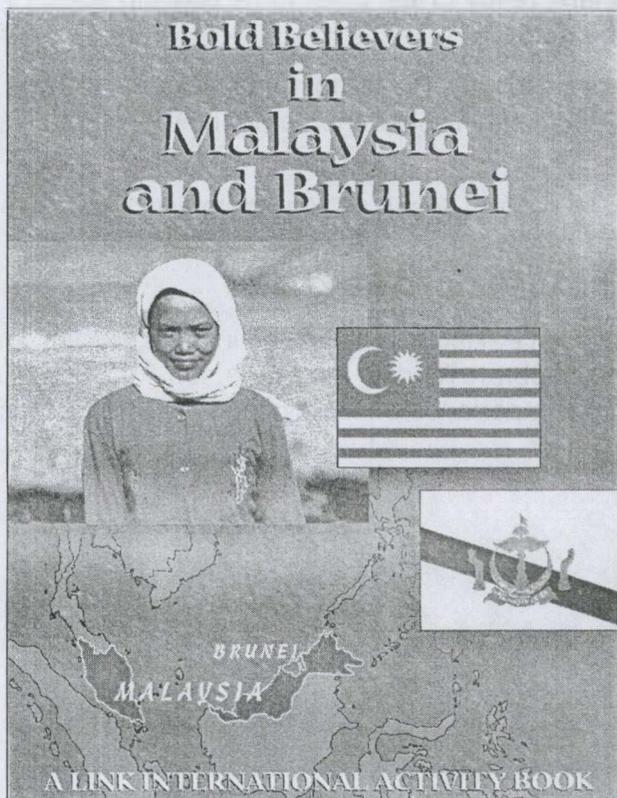
**Mother:** Amar, you must go quickly—I don't want to lose two loved ones in one week!

**Amar:** (looks questioningly at Mother) According to Muslim tradition, when I asked you if you are a Christian, you should have answered, "Thank Allah I'm a Muslim." But you did not! (pauses and both look at each other and smile—Amar starts away again) I may not see you again on earth, Mother, but I'll be praying for you.

**Mother:** And I for you, son. (follows Amar to side of stage and waves to him as he exits, then slowly returns to center stage, folds her hands, and looks to heaven) (with strong feeling) Please protect him, Jesus!  
*End.*

\*Based on a story in the June 1996 *Open Doors Newsbrief*.

From the  
**BOLD BELIEVERS**  
  
IN  
**MALAYSIA AND BRUNEI**



# READING AND MEMORIZING THE KORAN

## THE SPECIAL DAY

Little Bilquis was very excited! Today, the day she turned four years, four months, and four days old, was very special. It was the day she would start learning to read the Koran, the Muslim holy book.

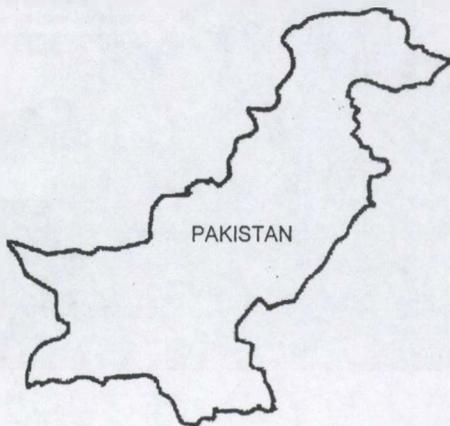
All her aunts, uncles, and many cousins had come to a great feast in honor of Bilquis' special day. Bilquis was dressed in her finest clothes. A teacher was there, ready to teach her the Arabic alphabet. Arabic is the language of the Koran.

It took seven years for little Bilquis to read the Koran all the way through for the first time. When she finished, her family held another big party in her honor.\*

\*Bilquis' story is told in the book *I Dared to Call Him Father* by Bilquis Sheikh, Chosen Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978.

## HONORING READERS OF THE KORAN

Little Bilquis lived in Pakistan, but children in other Muslim countries have special days to celebrate reading the Koran, too. Muslims all over the world place great importance on learning to read and memorize their holy book.

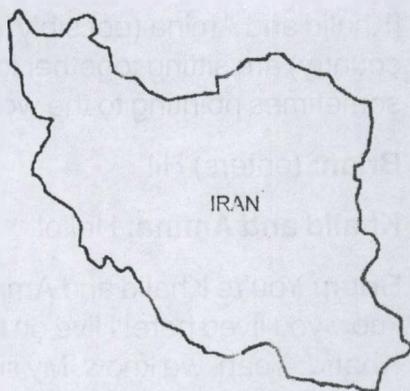


In some places, the special title “hafiz” is given to people who have memorized the entire Koran. Hafiz is then used as part of their name, as we use the title “Dr.” when talking to a medical doctor.

## A YOUNG HAFIZ

One hafiz is Mohammed Husayn Tabatabai, a boy from Iran. By age seven, he had memorized all 600 pages of the Arabic Koran.

Children as young as five have memorized the Koran, but Tabatabai is well known because he also seems to understand what he recites. He has been given a degree from a college and has appeared on television regularly in Iran.



## KORAN CONTESTS

Malaysia, Brunei, and other Muslim countries have Koran competitions to encourage children and adults to read and memorize the Koran. There is an international Koran reading competition in Malaysia.

In Brunei, the national Koran contests are held on a giant stone boat in a manmade lagoon outside the famous Omar Ali Saifuddin Mosque. Results of the district contests leading up to the national competition are reported in the news, along with other events of national importance. The Brunei competitions are becoming more high-tech, with students using CD-ROMs to study, and huge computerized screens at the contests to help the audience see the readers.

# BRIAN'S CHALLENGE

## A SKIT

### Characters:

- Khalid, a Muslim boy
- Amina, a Muslim girl and Khalid's sister
- Brian, a Christian boy

[Khalid and Amina (possibly in the traditional clothing of a Muslim country) are sitting together looking at a Koran and talking quietly, sometimes pointing to the words in the Koran.]

**Brian:** (enters) Hi!

**Khalid and Amina:** Hello!

**Brian:** You're Khalid and Amina, right? I've seen you at school. I didn't know you lived here! I live on the next block. (points to the "next block")

**Khalid:** Yeah, we know. My sister and I (gestures toward Amina) have seen you outside playing. Isn't your name Brian?

**Brian:** That's right! If you see my friends and me out playing, you're welcome to come join us. Do you like soccer?

**Khalid:** (excitedly) Yes, we do!

**Brian:** (looking at his watch) We're going to play in about 15 minutes. We could use some extra people. Can you come?

(Khalid and Amina look at each other, then back at Brian.)

**Amina:** This isn't a very good time for us to play.

**Khalid:** Amina's right. We spend about an hour every day after school studying the Koran. We're Muslims.

**Amina:** We're getting ready for a Koran reading competition at our mosque. We're very excited about it!

**Khalid:** But we could play another time, if you'd let us.

**Brian:** Well, sure, that would be okay. (sits beside them and points to the Koran) I'm a Christian, and I don't know much about the Koran. Is this it?

**Amina:** Yes.

**Brian:** What's it like? I mean, what's in it?

**Amina:** The Koran is a book of 114 *suras*, or chapters. There are anywhere from 3 to 286 verses in a chapter. We'd like to memorize it *all* someday!

**Khalid:** As Muslims, we believe the Koran was dictated to Mohammed, our prophet and founder, by an angel.

**Amina:** I think it's kind of like your Bible, right?

**Brian:** The Bible is the Christians' holy book, like the Koran is yours. But the Bible's not just one book written by one person. We learned in Sunday school that it has 66 books divided into two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible was written by more than 40 people over a period of 1,500 years in different places and in three different languages. God inspired the writing of the Bible, so there's incredible agreement among all the books.

**Khalid:** We've been taught that your Bible has been changed over the years, and it's not the same as when it was first written.

**Brian:** Really? That's strange. Archaeologists have found early versions, and they've proved that there's been very little change in the Bible!

**Amina:** Hmm. Interesting. You say there's agreement among all the 66 books. What do they agree about? What do they teach you?

**Brian:** Well, the Bible is a story of God's relationship to people. It tells about His plan to save us from the punishment we deserve for our sins.

(Khalid and Amina look at each other.)

**Khalid:** You believe that there's a way to pay for all your sins?

**Amina:** (thoughtfully, not looking at the others; talking to herself aloud) We believe we must try very hard to do good, and if we do enough good, Allah will let us into heaven. But sometimes I worry, because no matter how hard I try, I still do wrong.

**Brian:** (to Khalid) I can't pay for my sins, Khalid, but Jesus has saved me from them. That's the story the Bible tells.

**Khalid:** Wow! It must be a very special book for you! (Amina nods) Have you memorized it yet?

**Brian:** (hesitantly) Well...no. It's awfully long.

**Amina:** (sympathetically) We understand! The Koran is long, too. We've only memorized some of the chapters. So how much of your Bible *have* you memorized?

**Brian:** Uh, well, I think I could recite about ten memory verses when we worked on them in Sunday school last year.

**Khalid:** (encouragingly) Well, you must read it a lot and understand it very well! I know I would surely treasure a book that explained how to be saved from sin. How many hours a day do you study your Bible?

**Brian:** Hours? A day?? Uhhhh....

**Amina:** I would like it if you'd show us the parts that tell about Jesus saving people from their sin. Could you bring your Bible over and find those parts for us?

**Brian:** (slowly, confused) I'm not exactly sure....

**Khalid:** (interrupts) I'm surprised we haven't heard more about the Bible from Christians at school and in the neighborhood. If they

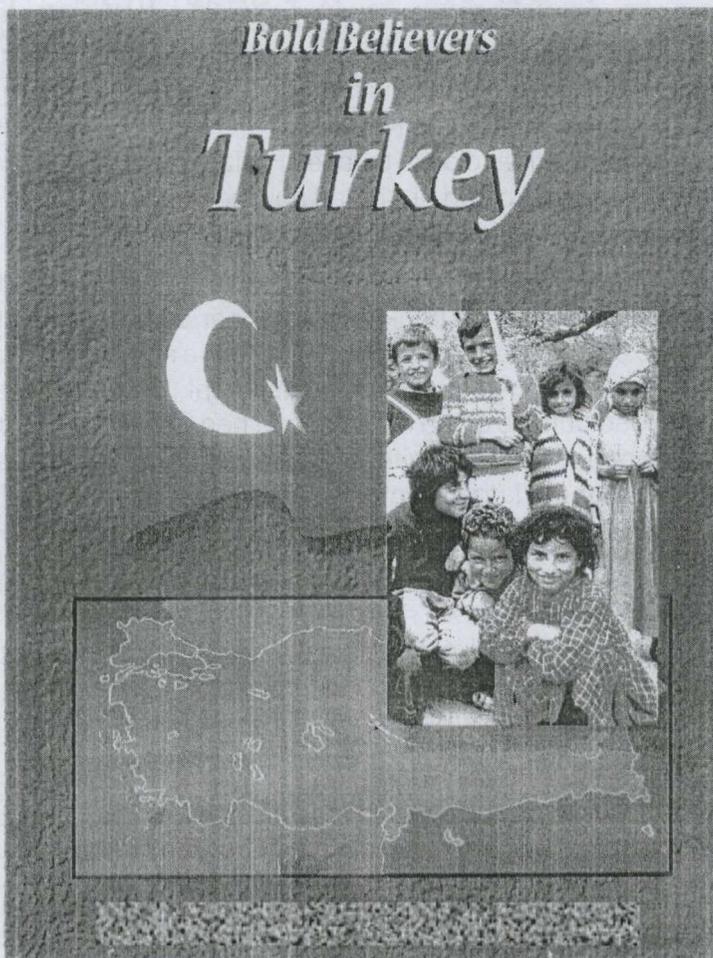
believe what it says, I would think they'd study it and talk about it all the time! I'm afraid I don't understand. (shakes his head)

**Brian:** (stands up, puts his hand on Khalid's shoulder) You know what, Khalid? I'm afraid I don't understand either. But I think I'll ask my friends if they want to have a Bible study before we play soccer today. And tonight after supper, I'm gonna ask my parents to help me study the parts about salvation. The next time you have questions for me, I'll be ready. (He smiles at Khalid and Amina and turns to leave. They wave and smile.)

### To Think About and Discuss

- In the skit, "Brian's Challenge," Brian expects to have another chance to talk to Khalid and Amina about the Bible. In real life, Christians often get only one chance to talk about Jesus with people they meet. Are you ready? If not, what would you have to do to get ready?
- How old were you when you started reading the Bible? How old do you think you will be when you finish reading it all the way through for the first time? Have you ever heard of anyone having a party to praise God for helping them read the whole Bible. Do you think Christians should do this?
- What are some other ways you can encourage younger children to want to read their Bible more?
- Is it important to memorize parts of the Bible? Why or why not? Is it more or less important to understand and be able to find certain passages that will help you be a good witness for Christ than it is to memorize verses?

From the  
**BOLD BELIEVERS**  
IN  
**TURKEY**



# AHMED: A BOY IN TURKEY

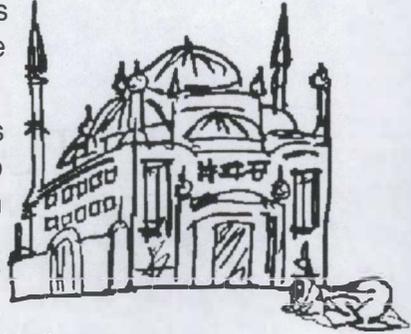
## CHAPTER 1: AHMED'S SCHOOL

Ahmed was a boy who lived in Kemer, a town in Turkey, in the early 1900s. He and his family, like most people in Turkey, were Muslims.

In Kemer, there were six mosques. Mosques are buildings where Muslims go to worship their god, Allah. Sometimes Muslim children go to school at a mosque, too.

When Ahmed was five years old, his father took him to the largest mosque in Kemer to start school. Ahmed's father told the teacher, Hafiz

Houssein, "The flesh and blood of Ahmed now belong to you. With them you may do as you like. Only his bones remain to me."



At the school, Ahmed said that a child who was being punished by Hafiz Houssein "would be put on his back on the floor and his bare feet held up in the air. Then the old teacher would take a stout cane and beat the boy on the soles of his feet. Many times after such punishment I was forced to crawl on all fours to the road outside of the mosque and beg one of the laborers of my father who happened to pass with a donkey to take me home. I never complained to either my father or mother and they never inquired as to the cause of the sudden loss of my power to walk. They. . . no doubt thought me justly punished."

Ahmed stayed in Hafiz Houssein's class for two years. "The only thing Hafiz Houssein taught us was the Koran," said Ahmed. "There were about ninety boys and girls in our class, and all day long we sat on cane matting with our feet crossed under us and shouted as loud as possible verses from the Koran, moving our bodies back and forth in time with our voices. The Koran is in Arabic. . .you can imagine ninety little boys and

A hafiz is someone who has memorized the entire Koran, which is the Muslims' holy book. The Koran is about as long as the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts put together. Hafiz is also a title of honor used for a hafiz. Do Christians honor and respect believers who have memorized God's Word from the Bible? Should they? If so, how? What do you think?

girls memorizing day after day a lot of unintelligible sounds. Occasionally our teacher would explain to us the meaning of a verse, but this was not necessary, as the repetition of the words, whether or not you know their meaning, is believed to have great merit in the eyes of Allah.”

## CHAPTER 2: AHMED’S PRAYERS

Muslims try to reach Allah by works. A Muslim believes if he has done enough good things, he will go to heaven. Muslims do not know about, or do not believe in, the salvation of Jesus Christ.

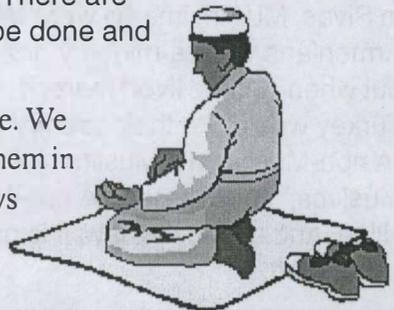
One of the things Muslims believe they must do to please Allah is to pray five times a day at certain times. But Ahmed’s prayers were not like the prayers of Christian children who know God as a loving Father. Instead, there were many rules about how he had to say his prayers.

“At noon [our class] was interrupted by the muezzin (holy crier) calling the faithful to prayer,” said Ahmed. “He stood on a balcony high on the minaret and in a trained voice gave his call, ‘God is great, god is great, there is no god but Allah, Mohammed is his prophet. Hurry to prayer! Hurry to redemption!’”

“Hafiz Houssein dismissed all his pupils and they went into the courtyard to prepare themselves for prayer. In the courtyard of every mosque there is a fountain where the faithful wash before presenting themselves to Allah. . . [Muslims] believe in demons, angels, genii, evil spirits, etc., and by the ceremony of washing before prayer, it is believed that these are thrust aside and a man can thus come in contact with Allah.”

“The rules for washing are very exact. First you must wash your hands, mouth, nose and face, each three times. This is followed by washing the arms to the elbows, the head and the neck, each once. Finally [the washing was] ended by washing the feet three times. There are many [rules about] how the washing should be done and as to the water to be used.”

“We all followed Hafiz Houssein into the mosque. We removed our shoes at the entrance and carried them in our hand. When a [Muslim] prays he must always face [Mecca]. Standing in regular rows, we waited for the imam to give the signal to begin.”



## Rules For a “Unit” of Muslim Prayer Recited by Ahmed

1. Stand up, look straight ahead, and say in Turkish, “My purpose is to perform midday prayers as Allah commands in four parts.”
2. Say in Arabic, “god is supreme,” and raise the hands to the ears.
3. Boys cross their hands over their stomach, girls over their chests.
4. Repeat a prayer of Mohammed and a verse from the Koran.
5. Recite a famous Muslim prayer and another verse.
6. Bend over and put the hands on the knees. Say three times, “I praise Allah.” Stand up with the hands by the sides. Say, “Who praises Allah, Allah hears his praise.” Fall on the knees and touch the ground with the forehead and say, “I praise god” three times. Repeat this another three times after rising to the knees and again touching the head to the ground.

This ended one unit of prayer. Ahmed and his classmates repeated the unit four times for Allah and six times for Mohammed. Before standing at the end of the last unit, they turned to the right and to the left and said to their neighbors, “Peace and mercy upon you.” Their neighbors replied, “On you be peace.” When praying alone, Ahmed turned to the right and left and said, “Peace and mercy upon you,” because he was taught that good and bad genii were on either side of him and he must respect them.

Besides the ten units of noontime prayer, Ahmed completed four units during morning prayers, eight in the afternoon, five at sunset, ten more two hours after sunset, and three “voluntary” units after the final prayers. So, like most strict Muslims, Ahmed prayed in this way 40 times every day.

## CHAPTER 3: AHMED JOINS THE ARMY

From age 7 to age 18, Ahmed went to different classes and schools where he learned more about Islam and other subjects. After graduating, he joined Turkey’s army. He was first sent to Sivas, a city in eastern Turkey.

In Sivas, Muslim imams were telling Turks that Armenians were bad people. Armenians were a minority group in Turkey. Today, Turkey is a democracy, but when Ahmed lived there, it had a Muslim government. (Many Muslims in Turkey would like their country to become a Muslim state again.)

“A non-Muslim in a Muslim state has no rights except as they are granted by Muslims,” said Ahmed. “A non-Muslim is called an ‘infidel.’ The infidel can be killed, and by Muslim law, it is not murder. His property can be stolen, and it is not theft.”

Most of the Armenians were Christians. During World War I when Ahmed was sent to Sivas, many Turks were afraid the Armenians would not be loyal to Turkey.

Ahmed's captain ordered him to take a group of Armenians into the mountains and kill them. Ahmed would not do it. So the captain put him in prison.

After three days, Ahmed told the captain he would obey. He took 33 Armenians into the mountains. But instead of killing them, he set them free. Another soldier told the captain what Ahmed had done, and Ahmed was sent to an army camp far away as punishment.



#### **CHAPTER 4: AHMED LEARNS ABOUT JESUS**

Ahmed stopped Turks from persecuting Christians many times while he was a soldier. Because of this, he became friends with leaders of Christian churches. One of them gave him a copy of the New Testament.

Ahmed began to understand that God sent Jesus to be his Savior. The Turks around him began to threaten him because he was friendly to Christians. So after the war was over and his army duties ended, he went to Athens, Greece, where he was baptized. "Today," wrote Ahmed in the early 1920s, "I am an exile from my native land."

Source of story (adapted from): *When I Was a Boy in Turkey* by Ahmed Sabri Bey, 1924, Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard Co.

# ANSWERS FROM AN EXPERT ON ISLAM

Dr. Saleem Almahdy is a Christian who was born and raised in an Islamic country. He has studied Islam and the ways of Muslims. Dr. Almahdy answered the following questions about Ahmed's story.

**Question:** Is a "unit" of prayer the same for Muslims today as it was when Ahmed was a boy?

**Answer:** Yes, but a Muslim today only prays the units for Allah and not the ones for Mohammed. So even though a strict Muslim today prays five times a day as Ahmed did, he prays fewer than 40 units a day.

**Question:** Is the washing ritual the same today?

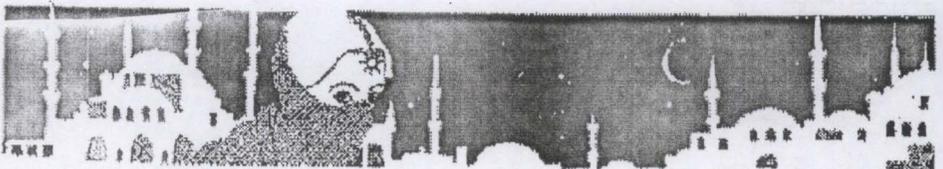
**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Do Muslims still greet the genii beside them when they pray?

**Answer:** Yes, but these days they say they are greeting angels, not genii.

**Question:** Are there Muslim children in the world today who are taught in the harsh manner that Ahmed was trained in his school in Turkey?

**Answer:** Yes, in some Islamic countries children are still trained in this way.



# UNDERSTANDING ISLAM

The following vocabulary words are found in *Ahmed: A Boy in Turkey*. Draw a line from each word on the left to the phrase on the right that tells something about the word. Then write the letter of the phrase in the blank in front of the word. Answers are in the Answer Key.

## Vocabulary Words from Ahmed: A Boy in Turkey

Word	Explanation
_____ 1. Mecca	A. Muslim place of worship
_____ 2. Koran	B. A holy city of Islam
_____ 3. Muezzin	C. Muslim holy book
_____ 4. Minaret	D. The one who calls Muslims to prayer
_____ 5. Mosque	E. Tower on a mosque
_____ 6. Imam	F. A Muslim prayer leader
_____ 7. Mohammed	G. The man who started Islam
_____ 8. Infidel	H. Favor granted for good works
_____ 9. Unintelligible	I. What Muslims call non-Muslims; an unbeliever
_____ 10. Merit	J. Spirits believed by some Muslims to have power over people; also spelled jinn or djinn
_____ 11. Islam	K. The religion of Muslims
_____ 12. Genii	L. Impossible to understand

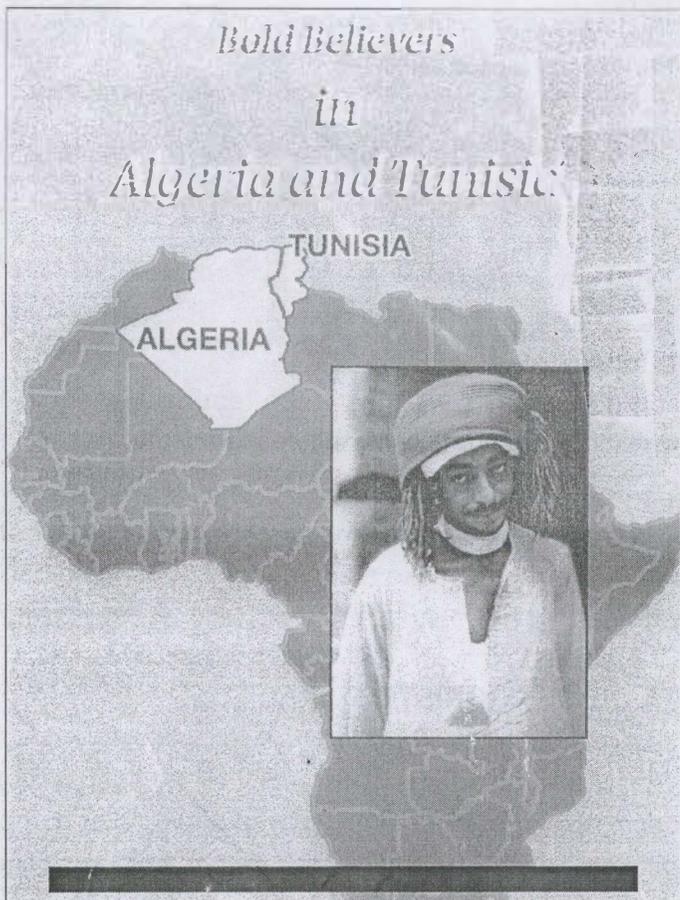
# CHRISTIAN ANSWERS TO ISLAM

The story of Ahmed told about Muslim beliefs and practices that he was taught. Match each Muslim practice or belief below with the Bible verse that relates to it by drawing a line from the belief to the verse. Answers are in the Answer Key.

## Muslim Practices or Beliefs With Related Bible Verses

Muslim Practices or Beliefs	Bible Verses
1. In his Muslim prayers, Ahmed repeated the same kinds of things 40 times a day.	A. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8,9). Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).
2. Ahmed's class recited verses from the Koran in Arabic, a language they did not understand.	B. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking (Matthew 6:7).
3. Muslims try to reach Allah by doing good works.	C. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue (1 Corinthians 14:19).
4. Ahmed washed himself before prayer, believing that doing so helped him come in contact with Allah.	D. Thou shalt not steal (Exodus 20:15).
5. Ahmed was taught that stealing from "infidels" (non-Muslims) is not really theft.	E. Unto Him [Jesus Christ] that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. . . be glory and dominion forever and ever (Revelation 1:5b,6b).

From the  
**BOLD BELIEVERS**  
IN  
**ALGERIA and TUNISIA**



# TERRORISM

The 1990s was a time of violence and unrest in Algeria. Many violent acts were carried out by terrorists.

*Terrorism* is using violence or threats, or scaring people, to try to force others to do what the terrorist wants. Terrorism is often carried out against innocent people who are not a danger to the terrorists.

What do the terrorists want? In Algeria, Muslim terrorists want the country to be ruled by Muslim law. Terrorists in some places want a homeland of their own, a different kind of government, or other big changes in the way things are.

Terrorists often use news reports to get their message to the public. TV reporters and others report on the terrorism, and in doing so, they tell what the terrorists want. The terrorists hope people watching the reports will believe in their cause.

But seeing reports of terrorism does not make many people who watch the reports believe in the terrorists' cause. Instead, it usually makes people angry at the terrorists. The terrorists make a big mistake when they think terrorism is a good way to reach their goals.

## OTHER MISTAKES TERRORISTS MAKE

In the book *Jesus—Friend to Terrorists* (a resource of *The Voice of the Martyrs*), the author tells about other mistakes that terrorists make.

- Terrorists believe that there are powerful people or groups who are the cause of all their personal or group's problems. They believe that getting rid of those powerful people will fix everything. It would not be smart to think that the same pill could cure many different

illnesses. It is also a mistake to think that one thing—getting rid of all your enemies or taking away their power—will cure all of a group's problems.

- Terrorists do not think about their ways. If they did, they would look at history and see that terrorism does not pay. Many times when an unjust government was forced from power by terrorists, a more unjust one has taken its place.
- Terrorists do not think about Jesus' question, "For what shall I profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"
- Terrorists do not think about how guilty they might feel after they have hurt someone.
- Terrorists do not think about how sad their families will be to know that they are terrorists or in jail. The families of the people they hurt will also be very sad.
- Some terrorists rebel against people in power just because they like to rebel. They don't really understand what they say they are fighting for.
- Terrorists do not know enough about God and His will.
- Terrorists do not know that the real secret of power over evil is love, mercy, goodness, good character, and servanthood as Jesus taught. They believe in using anger, hate, and greed to get power.

## **WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIANS DO ABOUT TERRORISM?**

- Remember that Jesus cares about terrorists. The Bible tells us that God wants "all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). One of Jesus' disciples was Simon the Zealot. We don't know if Simon was ever violent before he met Jesus, but we know that Zealots were Jews who sometimes used force against their Roman rulers.
- Terrorists often love their own people or country and are ready to give themselves to the highest ideals that they know about. Pray they will learn that they are showing their love in a very wrong way, and that there is a much Higher Power they can give themselves to.
- Pray the terrorists will know that only Jesus has the key to eternal peace. His truth is for all people in all places and all times. Pray they

will know that what they are fighting for can fail, but when someone has God on their side, they cannot fail.

- Many people look at terrorists with fear. Others look at them with hate. Remember that Jesus fears and hates no one.

**Activity**

- Tell about a story you have heard or read in the news about someone who used violence, threats, or computer hacking to try to further their cause. From what you know of the story, write two mistakes that the terrorists are probably making. (Use the information in this article about mistakes that terrorists make.)

1.

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2.

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Using the mistakes you wrote down as prayer starters, write a prayer for the terrorists.

# SHOULD WE HATE MUSLIM TERRORISTS AND OTHER PERSECUTORS?

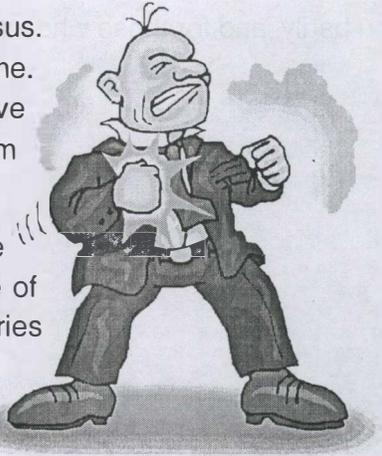
## RICHARD WURMBRAND AND THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

Richard Wurmbbrand was a pastor in the country of Romania. Communists, who do not like Christians, took over Romania. The Communists put Pastor Wurmbbrand in prison for 14 years. They treated him very badly, hoping he would change his mind about being a Christian.

But Pastor Wurmbbrand did not stop loving Jesus. Jesus helped him live through his prison time. Jesus also helped Pastor Wurmbbrand to love and forgive the Communists who treated him badly.

After Pastor Wurmbbrand got out of prison, he started The Voice of the Martyrs. The Voice of the Martyrs helps Christians who live in countries where followers of Jesus suffer for their faith, like Pastor Wurmbbrand did.

Pastor Wurmbbrand said that having bad feelings about Muslims "is wrong and is a danger to our own souls." He said when Muslims hurt Christians, "they will not succeed in making us hate them. They will give us an impulse to do more to bring them the Christian message." (An impulse is a sudden stirring up of the mind and spirit to do something.)



## TOM WHITE

Tom White is the head of The Voice of the Martyrs' USA office. In 1979, Communists in Cuba put Mr. White in prison for dropping booklets about Jesus out of an airplane that was flying over Cuba. He, too, learned to love

and forgive enemies who wanted to hurt him.

Mr. White said, "Jesus does not ask us to love. He commands us to love" (in Matthew 5:43,44). Mr. White said that we must tell others about the wrong things Islam teaches. But we must love Muslims.

### **LOVE, FORGIVE AND PRAY**

We feel hurt when we hear about the pain of Christians in other countries. If we can love the people who hurt these Christians, we will be sad about them, too. They are suffering from false beliefs. If no one tells them about Jesus, they will suffer forever. But the Christians they hurt will live forever in heaven with Jesus. Remember to love, forgive and pray for those who treat you badly, and for those who persecute Christians around the world.

# WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIFE IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

## TROUBLE FOR WOMEN IN ALGERIA

In Algeria, radical Muslims have sometimes thrown acid in the faces of women who did not wear a veil. Very strict Muslims believe that no one outside the family should see a woman or older girl without a veil.

A woman who won the 1,500-meter race to earn the first Olympic gold medal for Algeria has had rocks thrown at her by Muslims who do not like her wearing shorts when she races. Hassiba Boulmerka, who won her gold medal in the 1992 Olympics, is a Muslim. But, she explained, she is also a runner, and wearing traditional Muslim clothes and a veil would slow her down. But radical Muslims still do not want her to run in track clothes.



A 1984 "Family Code" [a code is a set of laws] said that women have the same standing under the law as children. The code keeps women from having many legal rights, and gives men more power and importance. Women who work outside the home have been threatened or killed by radical Muslims.

A Voice of the Martyrs worker who visited Algeria in 1999 said, "It is not easy for a woman to go outside her home unless she is accompanied by her husband, brother, or son. She cannot leave the house by herself. Most of the Muslims who convert to Christianity or who declare their faith in Christ are men. If a woman accepts Jesus and she lives in a house with a Muslim father or brother, she usually cannot confess her faith. It is very easy for her to be killed by her relatives. There are many women and girls who were Christians, but because their fathers are still Muslims, they endure severe persecution. Of course, they are never able to go to Christian worship services."

## FAVORITE CHILDREN

*“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a coat of many colors. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him” (Genesis 37:3,4).*

Parents in many Muslim lands have a favorite child like Jacob (Israel) did in Bible times. They show the favored child more love, and let his brothers and sisters know that they do not love them as much.

The children who are not loved as much as the favored child are sad.

They often get jealous, like Joseph’s brothers did. Girls in Muslim countries often learn at an early age that they do not have the rights and importance that their brothers have.

Pray that the children and their parents will come to know God, who “does not show favoritism” (Romans 2:11, NIV).

# SOME DIFFERENCES IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

What if someone said to you, "The Christian Bible says, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.' How is that different from Muslims? Don't they say the same thing?" Would you have an answer if someone asked you those questions?

Here is a table that can help you understand some of the differences between Muslim and Christian ideas about women.

## Differences Between Christian and Muslim Ideas About Women

Christianity	Islam
Though men and women have different roles (tasks), they are equal in God's eyes. (See Galatians 3:28.)	The Koran (the Muslim holy book) says, "Men have authority over women because Allah (the Muslim's god) has made the one superior to the other."
The Bible talks about Christians "submitting themselves to another" (Ephesians 5:21). It does not talk about people forcing others to submit to their wishes.	The Koran says that husbands may use physical punishment to make their wives obey. Laws and rules in some Muslim countries force women and girls to submit to the wishes of strict Muslims.
The Bible talks about "doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6). Husbands and wives are encouraged to care for one another.	Muslim laws and rules force many women to obey externally (on the outside), not "from the heart." Because they are not obeying from the heart, some Muslim wives keep secrets from their husbands in order to do the things they want to do. Sometimes children learn to behave in this way, too.
The Bible tells men to do like Christ, who gave His life for the Church. Husbands are to love their wives as themselves, and as Christ loved the Church. (See Ephesians 5:23.)	In many Muslim homes, nothing is as important as the husband's comfort. A woman's feelings are often not thought to be important.

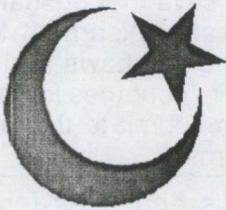
Sources include *Mini-Skirts, Mothers, and Muslims: Modelling Spiritual Values in a Muslim Culture* by Christine Mallouhi, Spear Publications.

# MUSLIM FACT CARDS

This page and the next four pages contain Muslim Fact Cards. Photocopy the pages, then cut them apart on the lines. If you want to make them thicker, glue the pages to poster board before cutting them. On the back of each card, write a prayer related to what is on the front of the card. For example, on the back of the card that says, "The Muslim holy book is called the 'Koran'" you might write:

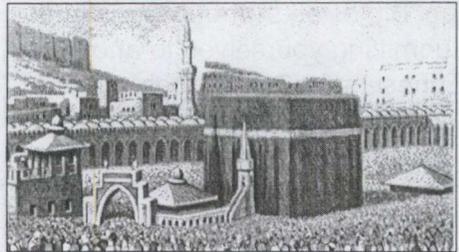
Dear God, please protect Christians who risk taking Bibles to Algeria and Tunisia so that all the Muslims in those countries will have the chance to read Your Word. Amen.

To make the cards last longer, laminate them or cover them with transparent contact paper.



## Muslim Fact

A Muslim is someone who follows the teachings of a religion called "Islam."  
[Christians follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. See Matthew 16:16,17.]



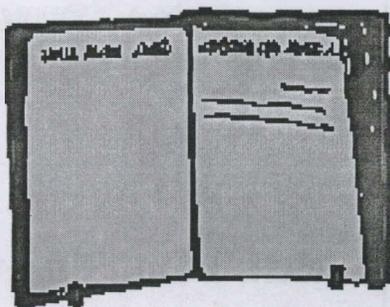
## Muslim Fact

Islam was started by a man named Mohammed. Mohammed was born in about 570 A.D. in Mecca (now in the country of Saudi Arabia). He died in 632 A.D. [Our Lord and Savior, Jesus, rose again after his death. See Romans 1:4.]



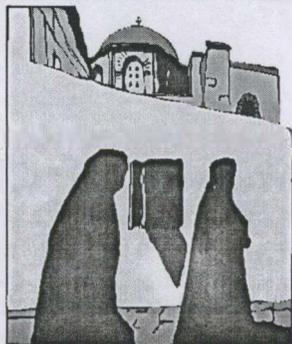
## Muslim Fact

A Muslim place of worship is called a “mosque.”



## Muslim Fact

The Muslim holy book is called the “Koran.” [The Christian holy book, the Bible, is inspired by God. See 2 Timothy 3:16.]



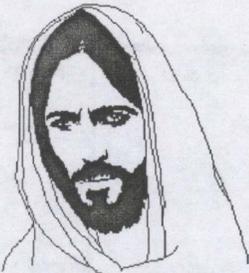
## Muslim Fact

Muslims worship one god, called Allah. They believe that they can know *about* Allah, but cannot know him as a loving father. [Christians know God as a loving Father who enjoys giving us good gifts. See Matthew 7:11.]



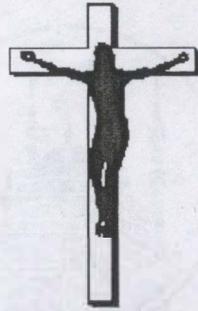
## Muslim Fact

Muslims have 99 names for Allah. Some of the names are: “proud,” “powerful,” and “dominant.” “Love” is not one of Allah’s names. [The Christian Bible says, “God is love.” See 1 John 4:8.]



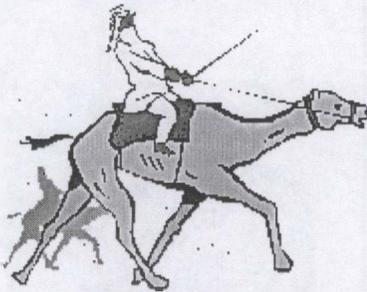
## Muslim Fact

The Koran tells about Jesus. But Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the son of God, or that it is only through Jesus that we can go to heaven. They believe that Jesus was just a prophet and a good man. ["Jesus said unto him, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John 14:6).]



## Muslim Fact

Muslims say that Jesus did not die on the cross. Instead, they say somebody took His place and that Jesus was taken up to Heaven by Allah. ["He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).]



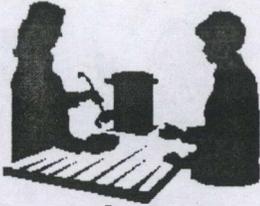
## Muslim Fact

Muslims do not understand how any good could come from being caught and killed by enemies, as Jesus was. When Mohammed was persecuted by enemies, he fled. He and all his followers moved from Mecca to the city of Medina in 622 A.D.

622 A.D. = 1 A.H.

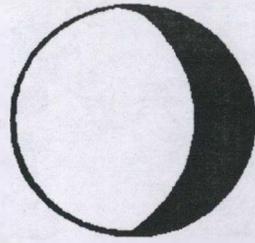
## Muslim Fact

Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina to escape persecution is called the *Hejira* [hij-JYE-ruh]. It is a very important event in Muslim history. The Muslim calendar even starts from the year of the Hejira.



## Muslim Fact

Islam is based on works. "Works" means that Allah will judge each person by how many good and bad things he has done. If he has done enough good things, he will go to heaven. So Muslims do good works to try to please Allah. But they never can be sure if he will be pleased and let them into heaven or not. ["For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).]



## Muslim Fact

The Muslim calendar has 12 months of 29 or 30 days each. A year is 354 days long. The names of the months are: Muharram, Safar, Rabi I, Rabi II, Jumada I, Jumada II, Rajab, Shaban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Zulkadah, and Zulhijjah.

Muslim Year	Muslim New Year Begins	Ramadan Begins
1422	26-Mar-01	16-Nov-01
1423	15-Mar-02	6-Nov-02
1424	4-Mar-03	26-Oct-03



## Muslim Fact

Ramadan, the ninth month, is a special month for Muslims. During Ramadan, older children and adults fast from sunrise to sunset. Over the month, Muslims read the Koran from start to finish one time.

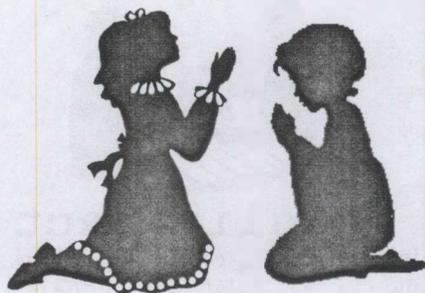
## Muslim Fact

Muslims pray five times a day at certain times while facing Mecca. They kneel, bow, and make other motions in the same way whenever they pray. There are rules about how to wash before prayer, and what to say during the time of prayer.



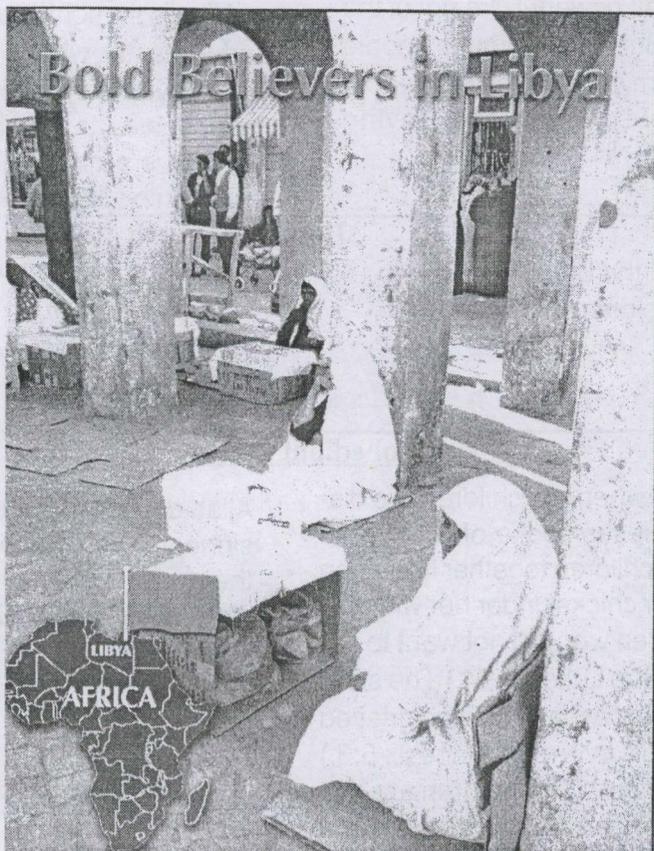
## Muslim Fact

Besides observing Ramadan and praying, there are three other things Muslims must do to be good Muslims. They must recite "there is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger," give money to the poor, and take a special trip to Mecca at least once in their lifetime.



Pray daily for the people of the world. Let God teach you about His love for the unsaved. Then you can join Christians all over the world who are eagerly waiting for a mighty move of God among the Muslim people.

From the  
**BOLD BELIEVERS**  
**IN**  
**LIBYA**



# GOD AND ALLAH

Some people say that Allah is the same God that Christians worship. But other people say that Allah cannot be the Christians' God. They point out that the God described in the Bible has very different qualities than the god, Allah, described in the Koran, the Muslims' holy book.

Allah is not described as wanting to redeem mankind; that is, to save mankind from sin. Allah and God have different commandments for their followers, too.

## Differences Between God and Allah

God	Al-
<b>Relationship to People</b>	
God is the all-powerful Creator of the universe. But He also wants people to know Him, not just to know about Him. He wants a close, loving relationship with His children.	Allah is thought to be an all-powerful master who is not active in the day-to-day struggles of humans on earth. He does not have or desire a close father-child relationship with his servants.
<b>Love</b>	
The God of the Bible loves everyone, even sinners.	Allah does not love disobedient sinners. There is no story in the Koran like the prodigal son story of the Bible. (See Luke 15.)
<b>Disobedient People</b>	
God is sad when His children are disobedient. Jesus spoke of wanting to gather His children together like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings—even children who did not want to follow Him. (See Luke 13:34.) The story of Noah tells us that God was grieved by mankind's evil. (See Genesis 6:6.) God is sad when His children are disobedient, because He loves them and wants what is best for their good and His glory.	Allah does not love disobedient sinners. There is no story in the Koran like the prodigal son story of the Bible. (See Luke 15.)

## Differences Between God and Allah (continued)

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God

Allah

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### Being Known

- God's Word tells us what He is like.
- Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). That tells us more about what God is like.
- God's creation tells us more about Him (Romans 1:20).

God reveals Himself so that we can be in a close personal relationship with Him.

Muslims believe they can know *about* Allah, but cannot know him personally. He cannot be known, they believe. He reveals his will, but not himself, to mankind.

# BIBLE ANSWERS TO ISLAM

Some Muslim beliefs are listed on the left below. Bible verses are on the right. Draw a line from each Bible verse to the Muslim belief it refutes. (To refute something is to prove it false.) Answers are in the Answer Key.

## Muslim Beliefs That Are Refuted By Bible Verses

Muslim Beliefs	Bible Verses
1. The creator of the world does not love sinners.	A. "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10.) (See also 1 Timothy 2:3,4)
2. The creator of the world cannot be known—he is unknowable.	B. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).
3. The creator of the world does not seek to redeem [save from sin] those lost in sin.	C. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).
4. The creator of the world is not like a father to humans.	D. "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). (See also Jeremiah 9:23,24.)
5. The Koran does not say that the creator of the world ever loved anyone who did not love him first.	E. "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

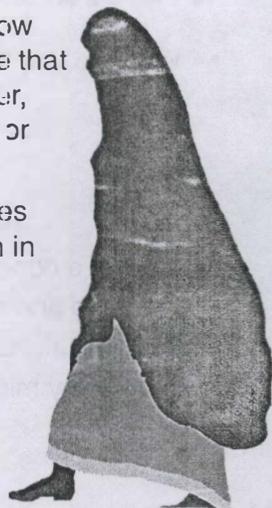
# MUSLIMS AND PET DOGS

## RULES IN ISLAM

Just as in Christianity, different groups of Muslims follow different practices. For example, not all Muslims agree that women should wear a veil. In some countries, however, Muslim officials punish women who do not wear veils or other coverings.

A Muslim website on the Internet lists over 100 activities that some conservative Muslims believe are forbidden in Islam. The list includes:

- Playing tag
- Scaring another Muslim
- Flying pigeons
- Confessing your sins
- Playing drums anywhere but a wedding
- A wife going shopping without asking her husband first
- Drawing pictures of animals



Less conservative Muslims might not agree that all of those activities are sinful.

## DOGS IN ISLAM

Some Muslims believe it is all right to keep dogs as watch dogs or hunting dogs but not as pets. One of several reasons these Muslims think it is bad to keep dogs is their belief that angels do not go places where there are dogs. Other reasons and beliefs given in Muslim writings for the rule against having pet dogs include:

- Dogs spread diseases
- Rich people treat their dogs better than they treat their neighbors or relatives
- Dogs bark at guests
- Dogs lick plates and bowls used by humans

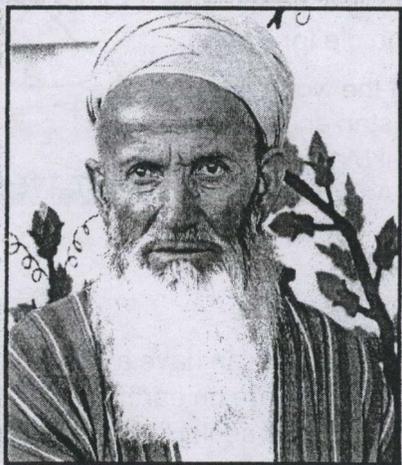


## To Research and Think About

- What do you think of Muslim rules that forbid having dogs as pets?
- Look in a concordance to find out where dogs are mentioned in the Bible and read some of the passages listed. In the Bible, are dogs usually talked about in a favorable light or an unfavorable light? Why might this be the case?

From the  
**BOLD BELIEVERS**  
IN  
**CENTRAL ASIAN LANDS**

**Bold Believers in**  
**Central Asian Lands**



# KINDS OF MUSLIMS

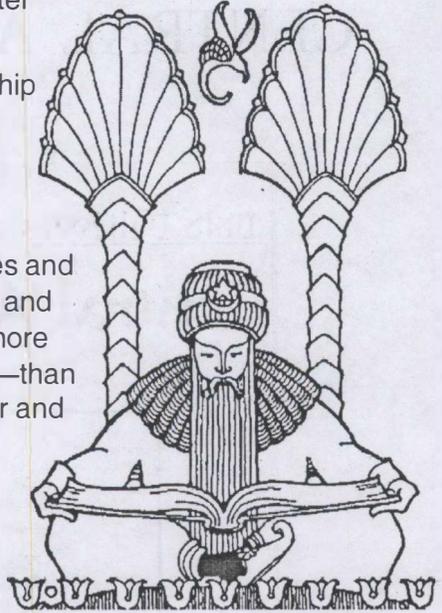
## SHI'ISM AND SUNNISM [SHEE-ihz-uhm, SOON-ee-IHZ-uhm]

Islam has two main branches. The majority of Muslims are Sunnis [SOON-eez]. Some Muslims are Shi'ites [SHEE-ites].

The Shi'ites and the Sunnis agree on the five things that must be done to be a good Muslim and on many other beliefs. They do not agree on who should have been the leader of Islam after their founder Mohammed died.

Sunnis say that it was right that leadership was passed from Mohammed down to leaders called "caliphs" [KAY-lihfs] (also spelled "khalifs"). Shi'ites believe the leadership should have been given to someone in Mohammed's family. Shi'ites and Sunnis also celebrate different festivals and follow different traditions. Shi'ites give more power to their imams—Muslim leaders—than Sunnis do. Shi'ites also give great honor and respect to Muslims who die for Islam.

Most of the Muslims in the world—and in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan—are Sunni Muslims. The majority of Muslims in Azerbaijan are Shi'ites. Azerbaijan's neighbor, Iran, has Shi'ism as its state religion.



## SUFIS [SOO-feeZ]

Muslims do not believe that they can have a close personal relationship with their god, Allah, while they are on earth. But God has created them, and all people, with the desire to seek Him (Acts 17:27).

Perhaps that is why the Sufi practices began. They did not find God in Muslim rituals and works. So they started a tradition of trying to find Him in other ways.

Sufis were named after the simple robe made of wool (suf) that they wore. Many lived in groups away from other people, like monks.

Some of the ways Sufis have tried to find God are by chanting one word or phrase over and over, trying to give up all desires, meditation, and even walking through fire. One group of Sufis who try to find God by wild dancing are known as “whirling dervishes.” But the only thing the Sufis found is just another kind of works. They have not found the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

### **LILIAS TROTTER, MISSIONARY TO SUFIS**

In the late 1800s, a British missionary named Liliat Trotter went to the African country of Algeria to work with Muslims. She found many Sufis in the desert there.

Miss Trotter understood the Sufis’ desire to have a personal relationship with God. It made her very sad to see how hard they tried to find God in all the wrong ways. She longed to share the Good News of Jesus with the Sufis. Then they could come to Him and find rest from their constant labors to reach God.

Miss Trotter thought a lot about how to reach the Sufis in a way they could understand. She found more time to think when she was forced to rest in bed with a serious illness. While she was sick, she wrote a book called *The Sevenfold Secret*. The book told about “the seven I am’s” from the Book of John. It told the Sufis how to meet the needs of their souls by looking to Jesus, who said, “I am....” the Bread of Life, the Light, the Door, the Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the Way, and the Vine.

Miss Trotter got sicker and sicker. At last she went to be with her Father in heaven. Missionaries after her were helped by her book for the Sufis and by her example. She refused to consider anyone as impossible to reach for Jesus, even the desert Sufis. (From *A Passion for the Impossible: The Life of Liliat Trotter* by Miriam Huffman Rockness, Harold Shaw Publishers.)

Today there are many secret Sufi sects in the desert country of Turkmenistan. Pray for Christian laborers to go to them and to other Central Asian Muslims to show them how to fulfill their deep desire for God through the Savior, Jesus Christ.

# ANSWER KEY

## Understanding Islam

1 - B

2 - C

3 - D

4 - E

5 - A

6 - F

7 - G

8 - I

9 - L

10 - H

11 - K

12 - J

## Christian Answers to Islam

1 - B

2 - C

3 - A

4 - E

5 - D

## Bible Answers to Islam

1 - B

2 - D

3 - A

4 - E

5 - C

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