

## Islam and Christianity Our Closest Rivals and Potential Friends

### Some Statistics (Pew Research)

- 1.6 Billion Muslims – roughly 23% of total population
- After Christianity, largest religious group
- Fastest growing – will exceed Christians by end of the century
- There have been women prime ministers in Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey
- Largest Muslim Populations:
  - Indonesia 209,120,000
  - Pakistan 176,190,000
  - India 167,410,000
  - Bangladesh 133,540,000

### Gabriel and Mohammed

- Islam means submission; one who submits is a Muslim (s-l-m)
- Arose in Arabia in early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, with Mohammed as the Prophet of God
- They worship Allah – not a proper name, it merely means ‘the God’ in Arabic
- Mohammed – long periods of isolation and silence as he meditated
- The Archangel Gabriel spoke to Mohammed over a period of years

### Night Journey of the Prophet

- According to tradition, Mohammed went on a nocturnal journey on his horse through the sky
- The place where he landed on the temple mount left an indentation – that is where the Dome of the Rock is today
- For this reason, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount are both holy to Muslims as well as Jews and Christians
- The Muslim authorities have jurisdiction over the temple mount
- Sacred Space is Dangerous Space

### Quran

#### Quran: Revelation from Allah

- Revealed to Mohammed – the Word or Message of God was behind a veil and sent down to the prophet
- Quran means ‘recitation’
- Earthly replica of heavenly exemplar; no real authoritative translation possible
- Mohammed illiterate
- Written on leather, bone, wood, stone, oral tradition
- Collected and put in ‘order’ by 4<sup>th</sup> (Abu Bakr) caliph, long after death of Mohammed
- 114 chapters, from longest to shortest – not in chronological order
- Not continuous narrative – plot, start, finish, etc.
- Many genres – narrative, parables, stories, regulations
- Over centuries, many interpretations of Quran (sound familiar?)

#### Peaceful Quran Passages

- Several verses call for violence against enemies and unbelievers – the context: Mohammed and his band of followers being assailed and persecuted by the elite in Mecca. These verses stem from the very early years of the movement, and were clearly intended for self-defense and survival. Unfortunately, extremist fundamentalist readers interpret these passages as being a valid command for all time and in every place. Also many verses calling for peace and compassion. Same problem as the Old and New Testaments.

- “We have appointed a law and a practice for every one of you. Had God willed, He would have made you a single community, but He wanted to test you regarding what has come to you. **So compete with each other in doing good. Every one of you will return to God and He will inform you regarding the things about which you differed.**” (Surat al-Ma’ida, 48)
- “God does not forbid you from being good to those who have not fought you in the religion or driven you from your homes, or from being just towards them. God loves those who are just.” (Surat al-Mumtahana, 8)
- “There is no compulsion where the religion is concerned.” (Holy Quran: 2/ 256)
- “You cannot guide those you would like to but God guides those He wills. He has best knowledge of the guided.” (Holy Quran/28: 56)
- All Quran passages must be contextualized, especially those that are violent
  - Check out: **Is The Bible More Violent Than The Quran?** By Philip Jenkins
  - <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=124494788>

### The Centre – the Kaaba in Mecca

#### Key Dates in Islamic History (PBS.org)

- **570 C.E.** Muhammad is born in Mecca. He comes from a noble family and is well-known for his honesty and upright character.
- **610 C.E.** According to Muslim belief, at the age of 40, Muhammad is visited by the angel Gabriel while on retreat in a cave near Mecca. The angel recites to him the first revelations of the Quran and informs him that he is God's prophet. Later, Muhammad is told to call his people to the worship of the one God, but they react with hostility and begin to persecute him and his followers.
- **622 C.E.** After enduring persecution in Mecca, Muhammad and his followers migrate to the nearby town of Yathrib (later to be known as Medina), where the people there accepted Islam. This marks the "hijrah" or "emigration," and the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In Medina, Muhammad establishes an Islamic state based on the laws revealed in the Quran and the inspired guidance coming to him from God. Eventually he begins to invite other tribes and nations to Islam.
- **630 C.E.** Muhammad returns to Mecca with a large number of his followers. He enters the city peacefully, and eventually all its citizens accept Islam. The prophet clears the idols and images out of the Kaaba and rededicates it to the worship of God alone.
- **633 C.E.** Muhammad dies after a prolonged illness. The Muslim community elects his father-in-law and close associate, Abu Bakr, as caliph, or successor.

#### Second Stage

- **638 C.E.** Muslims enter the area north of Arabia, known as "Sham," including Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq.
- **641 C.E.** Muslims enter Egypt and rout the Byzantine army. Muslims consider their conquest as the liberation of subjugated people, since in most instances they were under oppressive rule.
- **655 C.E.** Islam begins to spread throughout North Africa.
- **661 C.E.** Imam Ali is killed, bringing to an end the rule of the four "righteous caliphs": Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. This also marks the beginning of the Umayyad rule.
- **711 C.E.** Muslims enter Spain in the west and India in the east. Eventually almost the entire

Iberian Peninsula is under Islamic control.

- **732 C.E.** Muslims are defeated at Potiers in France by Charles Martel.
- **750 C.E.** The Abbasids take over rule from the Umayyads, shifting the seat of power to Baghdad.

### Turmoil

- **1000 C.E.** Islam continues to spread through the continent of Africa, including Nigeria, which served as a trading liaison between the northern and central regions of Africa.
- **1099 C.E.** European Crusaders take Jerusalem from the Muslims. Eventually Muslims defeat the Crusaders and regain control of the holy land.
- **1120 C.E.** Islam continues to spread throughout Asia. Malaysian traders interact with Muslims who teach them about Islam.
- **1299 C.E.** The earliest Ottoman state is formed in Anatolia, Turkey.
- **1453 C.E.** Ottomans conquer the Byzantine seat of Constantinople and change its name to Istanbul.
- Circa **1800 C.E.** Approximately 30 percent of Africans forced into slavery in the United States are Muslim.
- World War I ends with the defeat and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, which was the last of the Islamic empires. Many regions populated by Muslims in Africa and Asia are colonized by Europeans. Traditional religious ways of life are threatened and, in some cases, destroyed.
- **1948 C.E.** The state of Israel is created. Some Palestinian and Lebanese refugees flee to the United States, among them, Muslims and Christians.

### Bleeding Wounds

- The Crusades (even today, westerners are called ‘frangi’ in many Middle Eastern countries)
- Wars of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries between western nations and the Ottoman Turks (Vienna, Lepanto, Malta, Rhodes, etc.)
- Colonization of Muslim countries by Western powers (especially Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, North Africa)
- State of Israel – note that the British simultaneously promised Palestine to the Arabs and the Jews
- Great fear in West; Great resentment in East

### Sunni and Shia

- ‘The word “Sunni” in Arabic comes from a word meaning ‘one who follows the traditions of the Prophet.’ Sunni Muslims agree with the position taken by many of the Prophet’s companions at the time, that the new leader should be elected from among those capable of the job. The Prophet Muhammad’s close friend and adviser, Abu Bakr became the first Caliph of Muslim community’
- ‘Sunni Muslims counter that there is no basis in Islam for a hereditary privileged class of spiritual leaders, and certainly no basis for the veneration or intercession of saints. Sunni Muslims contend that leadership of the community is not a birthright, but a trust that is earned and which may be given or taken away by the people themselves.’
- ‘Sunni Muslims make up the majority (85%) of Muslims all over the world. Significant populations of Shia Muslims can be found in Iran and Iraq, and large minority communities in Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and Lebanon.’
- <http://www.religionfacts.com/shia>

- ‘Some Muslims believed that leadership should have stayed within the Prophet’s own family, among those specifically appointed by him, or among Imams appointed by God Himself.’
- ‘The Shia Muslims believe that following the Prophet Muhammad's death, leadership should have passed directly to his cousin/son-in-law, Ali bin Abu Talib. Shia Muslims have not recognized the authority of elected Muslim leaders, choosing instead to follow a line of Imams which they believe have been appointed by the Prophet Muhammad or God Himself. The word "Shia" in Arabic means a group or supportive party of people.’
- ‘Shia Muslims believe that the Imam is sinless by nature and that his authority is infallible because it comes directly from God. Shia Muslims often venerate the Imams as saints and perform pilgrimages to their tombs and shrines in the hopes of divine intercession.’ The successor of Muhammad be more than merely a political leader. The Imam must also be a spiritual leader, which means that he must have the ability to interpret the inner mysteries of the Quran and the Sharia.

### The Five Pillars of Islam

- The five pillars of Islam are
- Declaration of Faith (Shahadah)
- Prayer (Salah)
- Charity (Zakah)
- Fasting (Sawm)
- Pilgrimage (Hajj)

### Shahada: Faith

- *Shahada* is a declaration of faith and trust that professes that there is only one God (*Allah*) and that Muhammad is God's messenger. It is a set statement normally recited in Arabic: *lā `ilāha `illā-llāhu muḥammadun rasūlu-llāh* " (There is no god but God (and) Muhammad is the messenger of God." It is essential to utter it to become a Muslim and to convert to Islam.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five\\_Pillars\\_of\\_Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Pillars_of_Islam)

### Prayer (Salah)

- Every Muslim is required to pray five times a day. The five prayers are
- Salat al-Fajr                      Dawn
- Salat al-Zuhr                      Noon
- Salat al-Asr                      Afternoon
- Salat al-Maghrib    Evening
- Salat al-Isha                      Night
- These five prayers are said at dawn, mid day, late afternoon, sunset and nightfall. The Prophet Muhammad (Sal Allahu Alayhi Wa Sallam) said, “The first act that the slave (of Allah) will be accountable for on the day of judgement will be the prayer. If it is good, then the rest of his acts will be good. And if it is evil, then the rest of his acts will be evil.”
- Muslims must wash before prayer; this washing is called wudu ("purification"). The prayer is accompanied by a series of set positions including; bowing with hands on knees, standing,

prostrating and sitting in a special position (not on the heels, nor on the buttocks). A Muslim may perform their prayer anywhere, such as in offices, universities, and fields. However, the mosque is the more preferable place for prayers because the mosque allows for fellowship.

### Charity (Zakah)

- Every Muslim is obligated to pay a portion of his or her wealth for the benefit of the poor and needy. *Zakat* means *purification* and *growth*. Our possessions are purified by setting aside a portion for those in need. This also increases social welfare and encourages economic growth.

### Fasting (Sawm)

- Every year in the month of Ramadan Muslims are required to abstain from food, drink and sexual intercourse from dawn to dusk. In addition, Muslims are expected to refrain from anger, envy, greed, lust, gossip, violence, bad language and other inappropriate thoughts and actions. Fasting is meant to encourage Muslims to seek nearness to Allah, be patient, and learn the hardships faced by the less fortunate.

### Pilgrimage (Hajj)

- Hajj is a pilgrimage to the Holy City of Makkah (Mecca). Hajj occurs every year during the month of Dhu'l-Hijjah. Every Muslim who is physically and financially able, is obligated to perform Hajj at least once in his or her lifetime.
- When the pilgrim is around 10 km (6.2 mi) from Mecca, he/she must dress in Ihram clothing, which consists of two white sheets. Both men and women are required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. After a Muslim makes the trip to Mecca, he/she is known as a hajj/hajja (one who made the pilgrimage to Mecca). The main rituals of the Hajj include walking seven times around the Kaaba termed Tawaf, touching the Black Stone termed Istilam, traveling seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwah termed Sa'yee, and symbolically stoning the Devil in Mina termed Ramee.

### Sufis – Friends of God

- Sufis- mystics – usually formed into religious orders
- So-called ‘whirling dervishes’ are merely one – the Mevlana Sufis founded by Rumi
- Ascetical and mystical practices
- Dancing, singing, chanting
- Mystical interpretations of texts
- *Zikr* – remembrance - God

### Jesus and Islam

- Jesus is the Messiah, but does not die for anyone’s sins
- Not divine – human, but the greatest of the prophets next to Mohammed
- Therefore, Islam does not believe in Trinity
- They believe in the Virgin birth
- They believe he performed miracles
- Did not die on cross (appeared that way; God delivered him)
- In the 114 chapters of the **Quran** Mohammed's name is mentioned in 4 places, however **Jesus** is mentioned in 25 places.
- Chapter 3 **Verses** 45-55 Calls **Jesus** "Word of God", "Spirit of God" "**Jesus** Christ".
- The **Quran** says that **Jesus** began speaking 2 days after being born.

### Mary (Maryam) in Islam

- Exalted role in Islam
- Mentioned 70 times in Quran – more than entire New Testament!
- Graced from her birth
- Annunciation by Archangel Gabriel
- Virginal conception and birth of Jesus
- Perpetual virginity implied but not defined
- Exalted titles
- Greatest woman who ever lived
- Jesus Son of Mary, not Son of God and not divine
- Great devotion – Muslim and Christian shrines
- Appearance in Egypt in 1969

### Nosta Aetate

- “The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth (Cf. St. Gregory VII, Letter III, 21 to Anazir [Al-Nasir], King of Mauretania PL, 148.451A.), who has spoken to men. They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God’s plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own. Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet, his Virgin Mother they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke. Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds and fasting.
- “Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.”

### John Paul II, address to a symposium on “Holiness in Christianity and in Islam,” Rome, May 9, 1985

- “All true holiness comes from God, who is called ‘The Holy One’ in the sacred books of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Your holy Qur’an calls God ‘Al-Quddus,’ as in the verse: ‘He is God, besides whom there is no other, the Sovereign, the Holy, the (source of) Peace’ (Qur’an 59, 23). The prophet Hosea links God’s holiness with his forgiving love for mankind, a love which surpasses our ability to comprehend: ‘I am God, not man; I am the Holy One in your midst and have no wish to destroy’ (Ho 11:9). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches his disciples that holiness consists in assuming, in our human way, the qualities of God’s own holiness which he has revealed to mankind: ‘Be holy, even as your heavenly Father is holy’ (Mt 5:48).
- “Thus the Qur’an calls you to uprightness (al-salah), to conscientious devotion (al-taqwa), to goodness (al-husn), and to virtue (al-birr), which is described as believing in God, giving one’s wealth to the needy, freeing captives, being constant in prayer, keeping one’s word, and being patient in times of suffering, hardship and violence (Qur’an 2:177). Similarly, St. Paul stresses the love we must show toward all, and the duty to lead a blameless life in the sight of God: ‘May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts in

holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints' (1 Th 3:12-13).”

### **John Paul II, address on his Visit to the Umayyad Great Mosque, May 6, 2001**

“As-salamu ‘alaikum!

“I give heartfelt praise to almighty God for the grace of this meeting. I am most grateful for your warm welcome in the tradition of hospitality so cherished by the people of this region. I thank especially the minister of the Waqf and the grand mufti for their gracious greetings, which put into words the great yearning for peace which fills the hearts of all people of good will. My jubilee pilgrimage has been marked by important meetings with Muslim leaders in Cairo and Jerusalem, and now I am deeply moved to be your guest here in the great Umayyad mosque, so rich in religious history. Your land is dear to Christians: Here our religion has known vital moments of its growth and doctrinal development, and here are found Christian communities which have lived in peace and harmony with their Muslim neighbors for many centuries.

“**We are meeting close to what both Christians and Muslims regard as the tomb of John the Baptist, known as Yahya in the Muslim tradition.** The son of Zechariah is a figure of prime importance in the history of Christianity, for he was the precursor who prepared the way for Christ. John’s life, wholly dedicated to God, was crowned by martyrdom. May his witness enlighten all who venerate his memory here, so that they - and we too - may understand that life’s great task is to seek God’s truth and justice. “The fact that we are meeting in this renowned place of prayer reminds us that man is a spiritual being, called to acknowledge and respect the absolute priority of God in all things. **Christians and Muslims agree that the encounter with God in prayer is the necessary nourishment of our souls, without which our hearts wither and our will no longer strives for good but succumbs to evil.** “Both Muslims and Christians prize their places of prayer as oases where they meet the all-merciful God on the journey to eternal life and where they meet their brothers and sisters in the bond of religion. When, on the occasion of weddings or funerals or other celebrations, Christians and Muslims remain in silent respect at the other’s prayer, they bear witness to what unites them without disguising or denying the things that separate.

“It is in mosques and churches that the Muslim and Christian communities shape their religious identity, and it is there that the young receive a significant part of their religious education. What sense of identity is instilled in young Christians and young Muslims in our churches and mosques? It is my ardent hope that Muslim and Christian religious leaders and teachers will present our two great religious communities as communities in respectful dialogue, never more as communities in conflict. It is crucial for the young to be taught the ways of respect and understanding, so that they will not be led to misuse religion itself to promote or justify hatred and violence. Violence destroys the image of the Creator in his creatures and should never be considered as the fruit of religious conviction.

“I truly hope that our meeting today in the Umayyad mosque will signal our determination to advance interreligious dialogue between the Catholic Church and Islam. This dialogue has gained momentum in recent decades; and today we can be grateful for the road we have traveled together so far. At the highest level, the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue represents the Catholic Church in this task. For more than 30 years the council has sent a message to Muslims on the occasion of ‘Id al-Fitr at the close of Ramadan, and I am very happy that this gesture has been welcomed by many Muslims as a sign of growing friendship between us. In recent years the council has established a liaison committee with international Islamic

organizations and also with al-Athar in Egypt, which I had the pleasure of visiting last year. "It is important that Muslims and Christians continue to explore philosophical and theological questions together in order to come to a more objective and comprehensive knowledge of each others' religious beliefs. Better mutual understanding will surely lead at the practical level to a new way of presenting our two religions not in opposition, as has happened too often in the past, but in partnership for the good of the human family.

"Interreligious dialogue is most effective when it springs from the experience of 'living with each other' from day to day within the same community and culture. In Syria, Christians and Muslims have lived side by side for centuries, and a rich dialogue of life has gone on unceasingly. Every individual and every family knows moments of harmony and other moments when dialogue has broken down. The positive experiences must strengthen our communities in the hope of peace; and the negative experiences should not be allowed to undermine that hope. For all the times that Muslims and Christians have offended one another, we need to seek forgiveness from the Almighty and offer each other forgiveness. Jesus teaches us that we must pardon others' offenses if God is to pardon us our sins (cf. Mt. 6:14).

**"As members of the one human family and as believers, we have obligations to the common good, to justice and to solidarity. Interreligious dialogue will lead to many forms of cooperation, especially in responding to the duty to care for the poor and weak. These are the signs that our worship of God is genuine.**

"As we make our way through life toward our heavenly destiny, Christians feel the company of Mary, the mother of Jesus; and Islam too pays tribute to Mary and hails her as 'chosen above the women of the world' (Qur'an, 3:42). The virgin of Nazareth, the Lady of Saydnâya, has taught us that God protects the humble and "scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts" (Lk. 1:51). May the hearts of Christians and Muslims turn to one another with feelings of brotherhood and friendship, so that the Almighty may bless us with the peace which heaven alone can give. To the one, merciful God be praise and glory forever. Amen."

**Francis, Address to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, March 22, 2013 (excerpt)**

- "...It is not possible to build bridges between people while forgetting God. But the converse is also true: it is not possible to establish true links with God, while ignoring other people. Hence it is important to intensify dialogue among the various religions, and I am thinking particularly of dialogue with Islam. At the Mass marking the beginning of my ministry, I greatly appreciated the presence of so many civil and religious leaders from the Islamic world..."
- **Francis, Message to Muslims throughout the world for the end of Ramadan, July 10, 2013; *To Muslims throughout the World*** -It gives me great pleasure to greet you as you celebrate '*Id al-Fitr*', so concluding the month of Ramadan, dedicated mainly to fasting, prayer and almsgiving.
- It is a tradition by now that, on this occasion, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. . . sends you a message of good wishes, together with a proposed theme for common reflection. This year, the first of my Pontificate, **I have decided to sign this traditional message myself and to send it to you, dear friends, as an expression of esteem and friendship for all Muslims, especially those who are religious leaders.** As you all know, when the Cardinals elected me as Bishop of Rome and Universal Pastor of the Catholic Church, I chose the name of "Francis", a very famous saint who loved God and every human being deeply, to the point of being called "universal brother". He loved, helped and served the needy, the sick and the poor; he also cared greatly for creation. I am aware that family and

social dimensions enjoy a particular prominence for Muslims during this period, and it is worth noting that there are certain parallels in each of these areas with Christian faith and practice.

- This year, the theme on which I would like to reflect with you and with all who will read this message is one that concerns both Muslims and Christians: Promoting Mutual Respect through Education. **This year's theme is intended to underline the importance of education in the way we understand each other, built upon the foundation of mutual respect.** "Respect" means an attitude of kindness towards people for whom we have consideration and esteem. "Mutual" means that this is not a one-way process, but something shared by both sides. What we are called to respect in each person is first of all his life, his physical integrity, his dignity and the rights deriving from that dignity, his reputation, his property, his ethnic and cultural identity, his ideas and his political choices. We are therefore called to think, speak and write respectfully of the other, not only in his presence, but always and everywhere, avoiding unfair criticism or defamation. Families, schools, religious teaching and all forms of media have a role to play in achieving this goal. Turning to mutual respect in interreligious relations, especially between Christians and Muslims, we are called to respect the religion of the other, its teachings, its symbols, its values. Particular respect is due to religious leaders and to places of worship. How painful are attacks on one or other of these! It is clear that, when we show respect for the religion of our neighbours or when we offer them our good wishes on the occasion of a religious celebration, we simply seek to share their joy, without making reference to the content of their religious convictions. Regarding the education of Muslim and Christian youth, we have to bring up our young people to think and speak respectfully of other religions and their followers, and to avoid ridiculing or denigrating their convictions and practices. We all know that mutual respect is fundamental in any human relationship, especially among people who profess religious belief. In this way, sincere and lasting friendship can grow. When I received the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See on 22 March 2013. . . , I said: "It is not possible to establish true links with God, while ignoring other people. Hence it is important to intensify dialogue among the various religions, and I am thinking particularly of dialogue with Islam. At the Mass marking the beginning of my ministry, I greatly appreciated the presence of so many civil and religious leaders from the Islamic world." With these words, I wished to emphasize once more the great importance of dialogue and cooperation among believers, in particular Christians and Muslims, and the need for it to be enhanced. With these sentiments, I reiterate my hope that all Christians and Muslims may be true promoters of mutual respect and friendship, in particular through education.

### **Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya (714-801 AD)**

- Born in Basra, Iraq – known for great holiness and piety. One of the greatest Muslim saints
- O God! If I worship You for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell  
and if I worship You in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise. But if I worship You for Your Own sake, grudge me not Your everlasting Beauty.
- One day, she was seen running through the streets of Basra carrying a pot of fire in one hand and a bucket of water in the other. When asked what she was doing, she said, "I want to put out the fires of Hell, and burn down the rewards of Paradise. They block the way to Allah. I do not want to worship from fear of punishment or for the promise of reward, but simply for the love of Allah.

### Rumi (1207-1273 AD)

- Persian origin; died and buried in Konya (Turkey)
- Greatest Muslim poet – books still in print and on best seller lists today!
- Huge literary output
- Great mystic and saint; Sufi
- Founder of Mevlana Sufi Order
- *On the seeker's path, wise men and fools are one. In His love, brothers and strangers are one. Go on! Drink the wine of the Beloved! In that faith, Muslims and pagans are one.*
- *The Light of Muhammad does not abandon a Zoroastrian or Jew in the world. May the shade of his good fortune shine upon everyone! He brings all of those who are led astray into the Way out of the desert.*

### Rumi's Wisdom

- I have seen the king with a face of Glory, He who is the eye and the sun of heaven, He who is the companion and healer of all beings, He who is the soul and the universe that births souls.
- That which God said to the rose, and caused it to laugh in full-blown beauty, He said to my heart, and made it a hundred times more beautiful.
- Don't grieve. Anything you lose comes round in another form.
- This is the essence of all sciences - that you should know who you will be when the Day of Reckoning arrives.
- <https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/r/rumi.html>
- However much I might try to expound or explain Love, when I come to Love itself, I am ashamed of my explanations... Love alone can explain the mysteries of love and lovers.
- When I die, I shall soar with angels, and when I die to the angels, what I shall become you cannot imagine.
- Grief can be the garden of compassion. If you keep your heart open through everything, your pain can become your greatest ally in your life's search for love and wisdom.
- Through Love all that is bitter will be sweet, Through Love all that is copper will be gold, Through Love all dregs will become wine, through Love all pain will turn to medicine.

### Laleh Bakhtiar (USA, 1938-Present)

- “Laleh's Quran translation, "The Sublime Quran" (2007), is the first translation of the Quran into English by an American woman. Her translation incorporates alternative meanings to Arabic terms that are ambiguous or whose meaning scholars have had to guess due to the antiquity of the language. Notably, her translation of Chapter 4, Verse 34 has gained a lot of attention. She translates the Arabic word *daraba* as "go away" instead of the common "beat" or "hit." Her Quran translation is used in many mosques and universities and has been adopted by Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad of Jordan.” (*Huffington Post*)

### Anousheh Ansari (USA, 1966-Present)

- “In 2006, Anousheh became the first Muslim woman in space. When asked about what she hoped to achieve on her spaceflight, she said, "I hope to inspire everyone -- especially young people, women and young girls all over the world and in Middle Eastern countries that do not provide women with the same opportunities as men -- to not give up their dreams and to pursue them. ... It may seem impossible to them at times. But I believe they can realize their dreams if they keep it in their hearts, nurture it, and look for opportunities and make those

opportunities happen.” (*Huffington Post*)

### Shirin Ebadi (Iran, 1947-Present)

- “In 2003, Shirin became the first Muslim woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. As a judge in Iran, she was the first woman to achieve Chief Justice status. However, she was dismissed from this position after the 1979 Revolution. As a lawyer, Shirin has taken on many controversial cases and in result, has been arrested numerous times.”
- “Her activism has been predicated on her view that, ‘An interpretation of Islam that is in harmony with equality and democracy is an authentic expression of faith. It is not religion that binds women, but the selective dictates of those who wish them cloistered.’”
- "I maintain that nothing useful and lasting can emerge from violence."
- *Huffington Post*

### Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize Winner (2013)

- Shot in the face by Taliban for persisting in her efforts to go to school and for advocating education for girls
- Activist for peace, equality, and education
- Voice of 60 million girls deprived of education
- She frequently urges world leaders to “send books, not guns”
- has shown that peaceful activism can persevere in the face of violence.

### Muhammad Yunus b. 1940

- Bangladeshi economist and founder of Grameen Bank
- The 2006 Nobel Peace Prize was jointly awarded to Yunus and Grameen Bank "for their efforts to create economic and social development from below"
- The first Bangladeshi and Bengali Muslim Nobel laureate

### Mohamed ElBaradei, Nobel Peace Prize Winner (2005) b. 1942

- known for his efforts "to prevent nuclear energy from being used for military purposes and to ensure that nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is used in the safest possible way."
- ElBaradei is also known for resistance to the Mubarak regime in Egypt.
- Legal scholar and diplomat
- Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the auspices of the United Nations, from 1997 to 2009.

### The Path Home

The extremists of all traditions belong to only one tradition - the tradition of extremism – *Eboo Patel*

‘No peace among the nations  
without peace among the religions.

No peace among the religions  
without dialogue between the religions

No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundation of the religions.’

*Hans Küng, Christianity: Essence, History, Future*

## Credits

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