The Origins of Islam

by D.M. Murdock/Acharya S

Mohammed, on a blue donkey, with the Archangel Gabriel; 'Siyer-i Nebi,' 1595; Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, Turkey

The Islamic World is no longer somewhere else… instead, Chicago, with its 50 mosques and nearly half a million Muslims, is part of the Islamic world.

The Harvard Pluralism Project

An April 2001 survey by CAIR found 69 percent of Muslims in America saying it is “absolutely fundamental” or “very important” to have Salafi (similar to radical Wahhabi Islamic ideology) teachings at their mosques (67 percent of respondents also expressed agreement with the statement “America is an immoral, corrupt society”).

Dr. Moorthy Muthuswamy

The Qur’an tells us: “not to make friendship with Jews and Christians” (5:51), “kill the disbelievers wherever we find them” (2:191), “murder them and treat them harshly” (9:123), “fight and slay the Pagans, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem” (9:5). The Qur’an demands that we fight the unbelievers, and promises “If there are twenty amongst you, you will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, you will vanquish a thousand of them” (8:65).

Institute for the Secularisation of Islamic Society

Since Islam is one of the world’s fastest growing religions, through conversion but mostly through reproduction, there is a tremendous need to address this subject, which, because of crazed Islamic fanatics, strikes fear in the hearts of many non-Muslims. Competing with Christianity, with some 270 million people dead in its name Islam represents one of the bloodiest and most repressive ideologies that humankind has yet come up with.

Shia Muslims in India celebrating the annual holiday of Ashura by mutilating themselves and their children in an act called

This subject is highly important not only because of Islam’s expansion and the coming together of its leaders from around the world, but also because certain Muslim leaders, anxious to rectify Islam’s bad rep, are making statements such as, “There are 1.8 billion Muslims in the world, and 99.9% are peace-loving” (Haitham Bundakji). Were this statement true, it would be both frightening in its enormity and reassuring in its docility. However, Islamic doctrine is anything but “peace-loving,” as it constantly calls for the slaying of “idolaters” and “infidels” (e.g.,Q 2:191, 9:5, 9:73), among other harsh commentary in the Koran as well as other texts such as the hadiths.

While this 1.8 billion figure seems to be high for the present, according to various predictions and stated Islamist goals Islam will sweep the world, but, contrary to the best wishes of some of its adherents, this invasion will not be peaceful. It would be safe to say that few non-Muslims would like to see this world taken over by Islam, which, along with Christianity, represents the worst of Oriental despotism. Many futurists and visionaries would like to see this planet pry itself free of religions, especially those stuck in the Dark Ages. Indeed, to those who enjoy the ultimate freedom of expression, these predictions and predations are chilling, because Islam is a fervid theocracy with little room for individuality, not to mention that it utterly denigrates the female aspect of creation.

Women Oppression and Cultural Bigotry

Four Muslim women in Kuwait City waiting for their (shared) husband. 'Kuwait law allows each Muslim husband up to four wives, who must be covered from head toe while in public and walk behind the man.' (Photo: SSgt. Derrick C. Goode, USAF)

This repression of the female is sadly ironic when one considers the roots of Islam, but it is not unexpected in a world that, for the past several thousand years, has done everything within its power to subjugate women simply because of physical differences, a male-domination need shared with the apes and other “lesser beasts.” While some may claim that this subjugation and enslavement of women is a cultural tradition, rather than a religious one, it matters not, for it comes hand-in-hand with religions which teach that there is some separate outerspace god who is exclusively male. In Islam, this god is interpreted through the minds of Muslims as being an Arab or Persian man, as opposed to the Jewish man of the Judeo-Christian ideology. This racist, ethnocentric, culturally bigoted and sexist interpretation of any “infinite” god would appear to be absolute nonsense. Yet, in what seems to be supreme arrogance and megalomania, many individuals would like the entire world to believe it is true.

What are the origins of Islam? Well, the Muslim religion is obviously built upon the Judeo-Christian tradition, but it is also a reaction to said tradition, which excluded and vilified the various Arab cultures. Like their Jewish brothers and sisters, the Semitic Arabs trace their lineage to the biblical patriarch Abraham, who is depicted in the Bible as having mated with Hagar the Egyptian, producing the progenitor of the Arab race, Ishmael. While the Jewish contingent interprets this tale to justify its own ethnocentric ideology, Muslims interpret it to fit theirs, claiming that “God” would make of Ishmael’s people a “great nation” (Gen 21:18). Typically, instead of searching for the truth about this tale, its proponents have turned it into a political competition for global domination.

The Fictional Patriarch

Like numerous biblical characters, Abraham is evidently a mythological construct, not a “real person.” As superb independent scholar Barbara G. Walker states in The Woman’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets (5-6) concerning Abraham:

“This name meaning ‘Father Brahm’ seems to have been a Semitic version of India’s patriarchal god Brahma; he was also the Islamic Abrama, founder of Mecca. But Islamic legends say Abraham was a late intruder into the shrine of the Kaaba. He bought it from priestesses of its original Goddess. Sarah, ‘the Queen’ was one of the Goddess’s titles, which became a name of Abraham’s biblical ‘wife.’ Old Testament writers pretended Sarah’s alliances with Egyptian princes were only love-affairs arranged by Abraham for his own profit—which unfortunately presented him as a pimp (Genesis 12:16) as well as a would-be murderer of his son (Genesis 22:10).

Abraham sacrificing Isaac; Rembrandt, 1635

“In the tale of Isaac’s near-killing, Abraham assumed the role of sacrificial priest in the druidic style, to wash Jehovah’s sacred trees with the Blood of the Son: an ancient custom, of which the sacrifice of Jesus was only a late variant. Jehovah first appeared to Abraham at the sacred oak of Shechem, where Abraham built his altar. Later Abraham build an altar to the oak god of Mamre at Hebron. Even in the 4th century A.D., Constantine said Abraham’s home at the Oak of Mamre was still a shrine: ‘It is reported that most damnable idols are set up beside it, and that an altar stands hard by, and that unclean sacrifices are constantly offered.'”

Allah—Remake of the Moon Goddess

This description of Abraham’s origins means that Judaism is built upon hoary myths, such that neither of its offshoot religions, Christianity and Islam, can truthfully claim to be of divine or “inspired” origin. As concerns the god of Islam, Allah, Walker (22) has this to say:

“Late Islamic masculinization of the Arabian Goddess, Al-Lat or Al-Ilat—the Allatu of the Babylonians—formerly worshipped at the Kaaba in Mecca. It has been shown that ‘the Allah of Islam’ was a male transformation of ‘the primitive lunar deity of Arabia.’ Her ancient symbol the crescent moon still appears on Islamic flags, even though modern Moslems no longer admit any feminine symbolism whatever connected with the wholly patriarchal Allah.”

Indeed, the Koran verifies Allah’s lunar or night-sky status: “Remember the name of our Lord morning and evening; in the night-time worship Him: praise Him all night long.” (Q 76:23) And at Q 2:189: “They question you about the phases of the moon. Say: ‘They are seasons fixed for mankind and for the pilgrimage.'”

In Pagan Rites in Judaism (97), Theodor Reik states, in a chapter called “The ancient Semitic moon-goddess”:

“All Semites had once a cult of the moon as supreme power. When Mohammed overthrew the old religion of Arabia, he did not dare get rid of the moon cult in a radical manner. Only much later was he powerful enough to forbid prostration before the moon (Koran Sure 4:37). Before Islamic times the moon deity was the most prominent object of cults in ancient Arabia. Arab women still insist that the moon is the parent of mankind.

Horned goddess Ishtar

“Sir G. Rawlinson traces the name Chaldeans back to the designation of the ancient capital Ur (Chur) to be translated as moon-worshipers. The Semitic moon-god was ‘the special deity and protector of women.’ The Babylonians worshiped the goddess Ishtar, who is identical with the great Arabian goddess and has the epithet Our Lady… She also has the title Queen of Heaven, which really means the Queen of the Stars. She was horned and was, as all lunar goddesses, represented by a heavenly cow.

“The Hebrew tribes, or rather their ancestors, were the latest wave of migrants from Arabia. The cult of their god was associated with Mount Sinai—the mountain of the moon. The experts assume that the name Sinai derived from Sin, the name of the Babylonian moon-god. In Exodus (3:1) Sinai is called the ‘mountain of the Elohim. This suggests that it has long been sacred.’

“In the Old Testament, which is a collection of much earlier, often edited writings, the moon appears as a power of good (Deut. 33:4) or of evil (Ps. 12:16). Traces of ancient moon-worship were energetically removed from the text by later editors. A few remained, however, and can be recognized in the prohibitions of Deuteronomy. In 4:19 the Israelites are warned: ‘And lest thou lift up thine eyes upon heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, and be led astray to worship them, and serve them,’ and in 17:3 the punishment of stoning is prescribed for the person who ‘hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven…’ The Lord predicts (Jer. 8:2) that the bones of kings and princes of Judah will not be buried, but spread ‘before the sun, and the moon, and all the hosts of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and whom they have worshipped.'”

In The Origin of All Religious Worship (25-26), concerning Arab astrotheology, which was a continuation of this ancient Semitic lunar tradition, Charles Dupuis states:

Presidential flag of Turkey

“The Moon was the great divinity of the Arabs. The Sarazens gave her the epithet of Cabar or the Great; her Crescent adorns to this day the religious monuments of the Turks. Her elevation under the sign of the Bull, constituted one of the principal feasts of the Saracens and the sabean Arabs. Each Arab tribe was under the invocation of a constellation Each one worshipped one of the celestial bodies as its tutelar genius.

“The Caabah of the Arabs was before the time of Mahomet, a temple dedicated to the Moon. The black stone which the Musulmans kiss with so much devotion to this day, is, as it is pretended, an ancient statue of Saturnus. The walls of the great mosque of Kufah, built on the foundation of an ancient Pyrea or temple of the fire, are filled with figures of planets artistically engraved. The ancient worship of the Arabs was the Sabismus, a religion universally spread all over the Orient. Heaven and the Stars were the first objects thereof.

“This religion was that of the ancient Chaldeans, and the Orientals pretend that their Ibrahim or Abraham was brought up in that doctrine. There is still to be seen at Hella, over the ruins of the ancient Babylon, a mosque called Mesched Eschams, or the mosque of the Sun. It was in this city, that the ancient temple of Bel, or the Sun, the great Divinity of the Babylonians, existed; it is the same God, to whom the Persians erected temples and consecrated images under the name of Mithras.”

Astrotheology at Mecca

One of the sites for this Arab worship of the “hosts of heaven” was Mecca. Regarding the Kaaba of Mecca, that holiest of Muslim holies, Walker (487) writes:

Black Stone (al-Hajaru-l-Aswad) in the Kaaba at Mecca, encased in a yoni-shaped silver frame

“Shrine of the sacred stone in Mecca, formerly dedicated to the pre-Islamic Triple Goddess Manat, Al-Lat (Allah), and Al-Uzza, the ‘Old Woman’ worshipped by Mohammed’s tribesmen the Koreshites. The stone was also called Kubaba, Kuba or Kube, and has been linked with the name of Cybele (Kybela), the Great Mother of the Gods. The stone bore the emblem of theyoni, like the Black Stone worshipped by votaries of Artemis. Now it is regarded as the holy center of patriarchal Islam, and its feminine symbolism has been lost, though priests of the Kaaba are still known as Sons of the Old Woman.”

And a translator of the Koran, N.J. Dawood (1), says:

“Long before Muhammad’s call, Arabian paganism was showing signs of decay. At the Ka’bah the Meccans worshipped not only Allah, the supreme Semitic God, but also a number of female deities whom they regarded as daughters of Allah. Among these were Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Manat, who represented the Sun, Venus and Fortune respectively.”

Arabian Matriarchy

Concerning the nation of Arabia, Walker asserts that, prior to the encroachment of Islam, it was a matriarchal culture for over 1,000 years:

“The Annals of Ashurbanipal said Arabia was governed by queens for as long as anyone could remember….

“Mohammed’s legends clearly gave him a matriarchal family background. His parents’ marriage was matrilocal. His mother remained with her own family and received her husband as an occasional visitor….

“Pre-Islamic Arabia was dominated by the female-centered clans. Marriages were matrilocal, inheritance matrilineal. Polyandry—several husbands to one wife—was common. Men lived in their wives’ homes. Divorce was initiated by the wife. If she turned her tent to face east for three nights in a row, the husband was dismissed and forbidden to enter the tent again.

Mohammed watches women in hell being tortured by a demon; 15th cent., Persia; 'Miraj Nama,' Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

“Doctrines attributed to Mohammed simply re-versed the ancient system in favor of men. A Moslem husband could dismiss his wife by saying ‘I divorce thee’ three times. As in Europe, the change from matriarchate to patriarchate came about only gradually and with much strife.

“…However, the history of early-medieval Arabia is nearly all legend. Like Buddha, Confucius, Jesus and other founders of patriarchal religions, Mohammed lacks real verification. There is no reliable information about his life or teachings. Most stories about him are as apocryphal as the story that his coffin hangs forever in mid-air ‘between heaven and earth,’ like the bodies of ancient sacred kings.

“With or without Mohammed, Islam succeeded in becoming completely male-dominated, making no place for women except in slavery or in the seclusion of the harem. Islamic mosques still bear signs reading: ‘Women and dogs and other impure animals are not permitted to enter.’

“Nevertheless, traces of the Goddess proved ineradicable. Like the virgin Mary, Arabia’s Queen of Heaven received a mortal form and a subordinate position as Fatima, Mohammed’s ‘daughter.’ But she was no real daughter. She was known as Mother of her Father, and Source of the Sun…”

Who Wrote the Koran?

As concerns the Koran, the Muslim holy book, Walker (513) says:

“Mohammedan scriptures, often erroneously thought to have been written by Mohammed. Moslems don’t believe this. But many don’t know the Koran was an enlarged revised version of the ancient Word of the Goddess Kore, revered by Mohammed’s tribe, the Koreshites (Children of Kore), who guarded her shrine at Mecca.

Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus, 'considered the single most fundamental writing about alchemy and the occult.'

“The original writing was done long before Mohammed’s time by holy imams, a word related to Semitic ima, ‘mother.’ Like the original mahatmas or ‘great mothers’ of India, the original imams were probably priestesses of the old Arabian matriarchate. It was said they took the scripture from a prototype that existed in heaven from the beginning of eternity, ‘Mother of the Book’—i.e., the Goddess herself, wearing the Book of Fate on her breast as Mother Tiamat wore the Tablets of Destiny. Sometimes the celestial Koran was called the Preserved Tablet. There was some resemblance between this and other legendary books of divine origin, such as the Ur-text, the Book of Thoth, and the Emerald Tablet of Hermes.

“As in the case of the Judeo-Christian Bible, the Koran was much rewritten to support new patriarchal laws and to obliterate the figures of the Goddess and her priestesses.”

In The Great Religious Leaders, Charles Frances Potter says of Mohammed, “It is very doubtful that he read any of the Bible: indeed, it has not been proved that he ever read anything, or wrote anything. He called himself ‘the illiterate prophet.'” Of course, much of the Koran is based on the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, combined with pre-Islamic Arab and other traditions.

Regarding the unoriginality of the Koran, Islam expert Dr. Daniel Pipes says (The Jerusalem Post, 5/12/00):

“The Koran is a not ‘a product of Muhammad or even of Arabia,’ but a collection of earlier Judeo-Christian liturgical materials stitched together to meet the needs of a later age.”

Biblical scholar Dr. Robert M. Price likewise concurs as to the pre-Islamic nature of various koranic texts:

“The Koran was assembled from a variety of prior Hagarene texts (hence the contradictions re Jesus’ death) in order to provide the Moses-like Muhammad with a Torah of his own….”

Islamic expert Dr. Gerd-R. Puin concludes:

“My idea is that the Koran is a kind of cocktail of texts that were not all understood even at the time of Muhammad. Many of them may even be a hundred years older than Islam itself. Even within Islamic traditions there is a huge body of contradictory information, including a significant Christian substrate….”

Thus, the Koran was not written by Mohammed.

The Yemeni Koran

Koran hoard from Sana'a, Yemen; 7th-8th centuries

Adding significantly to this important scholarship was the discovery in 1972 at Sana’a, Yemen, of thousands of parchment fragments from the Koran, consisting of possibly the oldest extant quranic manuscript ever found, dating to the 7th-8th centuries. Regarding these fragments, the professor who photographed them, Dr. Puin, remarks:

“So many Muslims have this belief that everything between the two covers of the Koran is just God’s unaltered word. They like to quote the textual work that shows the Bible has a history and did not fall straight out of the sky, but until now the Koran has been out of this discussion. The only way to break through this wall is to prove that the Koran has a history too. The Sana’a fragments will help us do that.”

Concerning the texts and Puin’s conclusions, The Atlantic Monthly‘s Toby Lester states:

“…some of these fragments revealed small but intriguing aberrations from the stand Koranic text. Such aberrations, though not surprising to textual historians, are troublingly at odds with the orthodox Muslim belief that the Koran as it has reached us today is quite simply the perfect, timeless, and unchanging Word of God…. What the Yemeni Korans seems to suggest, Puin began to feel, was an evolving text rather than simply the Word of God as revealed in its entirety to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century A.D.”

Others weighing in on the value of the Yemeni discovery have included Dr. Andrew Rippin, a professor of Islamic Studies:

Fragment of the Quran from Sana'a, Yemen

“The impact of the Yemeni manuscripts is still to be felt. Their variant readings and verse orders are all very significant. Everybody agrees on that. These manuscripts say that the early history of the Koranic texts is much more of an open question than many have suspected: the text was less stable, and therefore had less authority, than has always been claimed.”

In this same regard, Islamic history professor Dr. R. Stephen Humphreys summarizes the importance of the study of how the Koran was created and the Yemeni hoard in this quest:

“To historicize the Koran would in effect delegitimize the whole historical experience of the Muslim community. The Koran is the charter for the community, the document that called it into existence. And ideally though obviously not always in reality Islamic history has been the effort to pursue and work out the commandments of the Koran in human life. If the Koran is a historical document, then the whole Islamic struggle of fourteen centuries is effectively meaningless.”

The evidence reveals that the Koran was created over a period of decades, if not centuries, by a number of hands, rather than representing a single, divine “revelation” from the Almighty to Mohammed.

Who Was Mohammed?

Mohammed riding his magical steed; from 'The Apocalypse of Muhammad,' 1436, Herat, Afghanistan; Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris

Like that of Buddha, Jesus, Moses, et al., Mohammed’s historicity is questionable. He seems to be yet another religious figurehead invented to create a “state” religion. His “history” is full of fantastic legends, but even if we were to find a “historical person” there, it would not be one of very high or affable character. As Potter says:

“Of women, his taste ran to widows with a temper… For recreation he delighted in cobbling shoes. Perhaps his greatest joy was when he beheld the severed heads of his enemies.

“His dislikes were just as varied. He detested silk-lined clothes, interest charges, dogs, others’ lies, Jews and Christians. He hated poets, and said, ‘Every painter will be in hell.’

“He was inordinately vain. A clever woman poet satirized him. She was slain when asleep with her child at her breast, and the vengeful Muhammad praised her murderer. Once he tortured a Jew to find the location of hidden treasure and then had him killed and added the widow to his harem. Strange indeed was the character of the prophet. How could such a person inspire such reverence and devotion? It is one of the puzzles of history.

“It was not that he developed a great theology, either, for what little theology Islam has, worthy of the name, was built up after Muhammad had long been dead.”

According to the hadiths or hadees—records of the purported sayings and acts of Mohammed and his companions—the Prophet was indeed of a character that would repulse any decent human being. One after another of the hadiths discuss Mohammed’s insatiable sexual appetite, which included having sex with his “wife” ‘Aisha, who was 9 years old and had not even reached puberty. Various Islamic authorities have also claimed that Mohammed began “thighing” ‘Aisha when he married her at the age of six.

Mohammed with his followers enjoying a beheading; Turkish text 'Siyer-i Nebi,' 1338

As to how such a character could inspire such reverence and devotion, we would submit that it was because Mohammed and Islam were created by yet another faction of “the brotherhood” for purposes of competition with Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and other religions. As N.A Morozov says:

“…until the Crusades Islam was indistinguishable from Judaism and…only then did it receive its independent character, while Muhammad and the first Caliphs are mythical figures.”

Behind the creation of such ideologies are usually those who benefit the most, particularly “third-party” weapons manufacturers, since these divisive creeds are forever setting one culture against another.

‘Let My People Go!’

Despite the unconvincing attempts by well-meaning individuals to assert the pacificism of Islam, the fact is that it is a desert warrior’s religion and was not spread by peaceful means. As Gerald Berry says, in Religions of the World (62):

“Partly because he needed funds and partly because his followers were not skilled in agriculture as were the natives of Yathrib, [Mohammed] organized fighting bands to raid caravans. Having no ties with the older religions, he sent them out even in the peace months. This started Arabia’s Holy War. Mohammed’s whole movement took on the character of religious militarism. He made the Moslem fanatic fighters by teaching that admission to Paradise was assured for all those who died fighting in the cause of Allah.”

In the end, Islam, which means “submission,” is built upon older myths and traditions and was designed to usurp the power of Christians, Jews and women. While we have no quarrel with all Arabian culture, we do have a big problem with ideologies that are filled with half-truths and lies. Because of arrogance and bigotry, ancient cultures, along with their variety, justice and beauty, have become nearly obliterated. In effect, the Western monolithic religions represent a massive degradation of culture.

If this planet’s inhabitants would simply become educated to the origins of their traditions in full, we could live in a world of tremendous beauty and knowledge, as opposed to ugly, superstitious and repressive ideologies that are exclusionary and bigoted. Islam arose because of the repression of Christianity and Judaism, as well as an unbalanced female-oriented culture. Like those traditions, Islam is utterly out of balance, and we may all suffer for it, particularly if the predictions come true that Islam will be the most dominant religion in the world in the next decades.

As previously stated, there are few non-Muslim women or men who would wish to live in such a world. Because of this aversion, we would expect to see in the future innumerable ghastly battles and wars waged in the name of one god or another, as has happened far too often in the past, especially with these monotheistic Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All told, these three are responsible for the deaths of hundreds of millions of people, so why are they deemed “Great religions?” The “greatest” thing about them is their death toll.

If this world is to survive into the coming age, we will need as many people as possible to drop all of these divisive doctrines. What we need on this planet, right now, are honest, caring and whole human beings who are motivated not by potential favors and rewards from sadistic and ethnocentric deities in the sky but by innate decency and integrity. Only in this way can we all live in peace rather than fear, which is the weapon wielded by religion to convert the “faithful.”

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Quotes from the Koran

A Call to the Muslims of the World

The Massacres of the Khilafah

‘Islam is a Religion of Peace’

Allah the Moon God