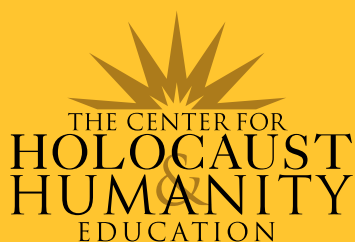


CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

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WHEN & WHERE DID THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS ORIGINATE?

JUDAISM began more than 5000 years ago; it is the oldest of the three Abrahamic religions: *Judaism*, *Christianity*, and *Islam*. The Bible recounts that God told Abraham to go to Canaan. It is now known as ISRAEL, named after Abraham's grandson. The land is often referred to as the Promised Land because of God's repeated promise to give the land to the descendants of Abraham.

Christianity originated in the 1ST century. The Bible recounts that Jesus was born in BETHLEHEM. Although the Western system for dating years is based on the birth of Jesus, historical evidence suggests that he was born around 4 BCE.

Muhammad proclaimed that he first received Allah's (GOD in Arabic) revelations in a cave near MECCA, in present day Saudia Arabia, beginning in 610 CE; he continued to receive new revelations until his death in 632 CE.



HOW & BY WHOM DID THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS ORIGINATE?

According to the Hebrew scriptures, ABRAHAM formed the first covenant with God, and MOSES received and presented to all the Jewish people the binding covenant of TORAH, or Jewish law, making God's law their own.

Christianity is founded on the life and teachings of JESUS CHRIST, a Jew. The religion is based on Jesus' teachings, sayings, healings, death, and resurrection.

Islam started with ADAM and was transmitted by God through Prophets such as ADAM, ABRAHAM, MOSES, and JESUS, all recognized in Islam; God finally preserved His message in the QUR'AN through MUHAMMAD, the last of the messengers. The word ISLAM means *submission* (to God's will) and *peace*.



אברהם ABRAHAM ابراهيم משה & MOSES موسى

Jewish tradition calls ABRAHAM the first *monotheist*, entering into a covenant with God that gave his descendants the Promised Land and committed them to worshipping God alone. According to the Hebrew Scriptures, he married SARAH who bore his son ISAAC, while fathering ISHMAEL with his maidservant HAGAR.

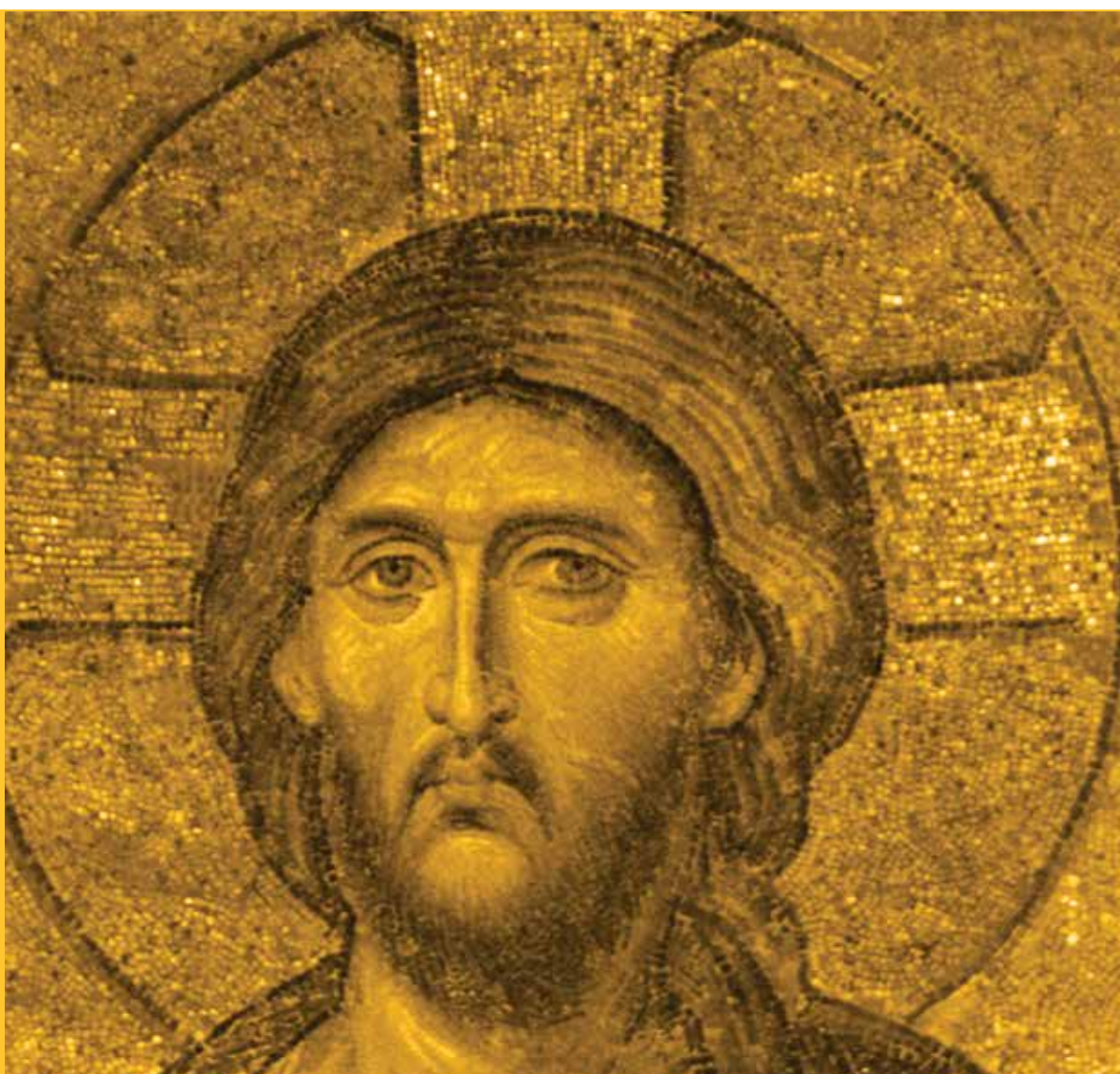
Judaism teaches that God appeared to MOSES and chose him to free the Children of Israel from Egyptian slavery and take them to the Promised Land. He led the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai. There, Jews believe, God gave MOSES the TORAH, which became the first five books of the Bible. MOSES was said to have led the Jews in their forty years of wandering in the desert of Sinai. He died just before the Children of Israel reached the Promised Land of Canaan, as a punishment for his disobedience to God. In addition to MOSES, there were prophets who were essential in reinforcing the sacred covenant of restoring justice and peace to all people.



יהושע JESUS عیسی

Because Christianity uses the Hebrew Bible as part of their Bible, Christians recognize the Jewish patriarchs and prophets. Much of the groundwork for Christianity comes from Judaism, including Jesus Himself, who was brought up in a traditional Jewish culture.

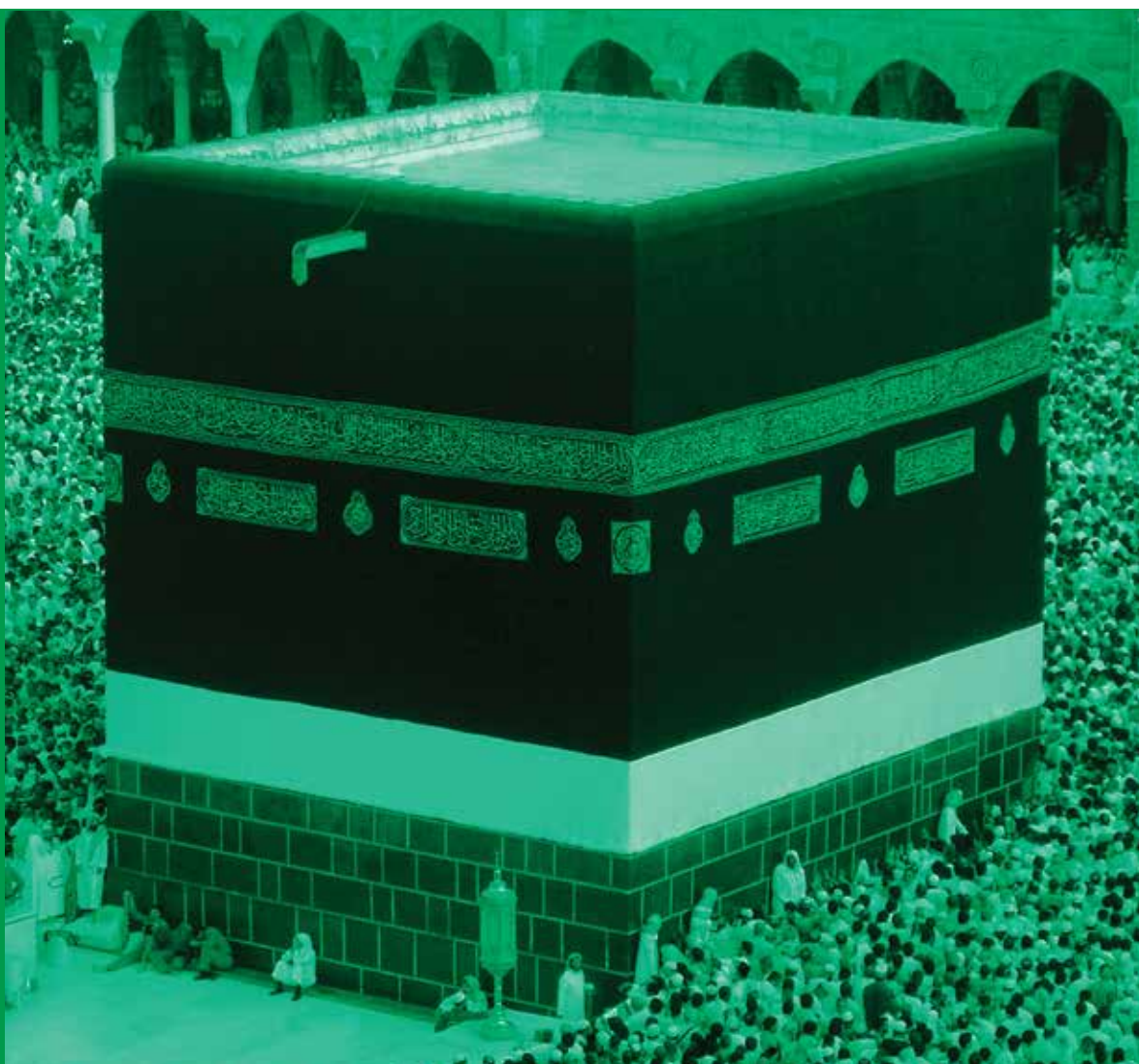
JESUS is also known as CHRIST. CHRIST is a theological title meaning *anointed* or *the anointed one*. It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *Mashiach* or MESSIAH. Christians believe that MARY, the virgin mother of JESUS, conceived JESUS through the HOLY SPIRIT. Her husband, JOSEPH, was only His adoptive father, as his real Father is GOD. JESUS preached in Galilee and Judea, with a message of repentance and forgiveness of sins through faith in the Kingdom of God. JESUS was executed by the Romans. He was crucified around 30 CE. Crucifixion was a long and painful process, and it was generally reserved only for convicted criminals.



מחמד MUHAMMAD محمد

For Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad is the final messenger, the recipient of the last of God's (ALLAH in Arabic) revelations preserved in its original form in the QUR'AN. Muslims believe God's message is perfected in the QUR'AN, the same message that existed since Adam. Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mary are all mentioned in the QUR'AN. Islam maintains that God communicated His message to all people in history. The prophets mentioned by name in the QUR'AN are primarily those in the Bible.

MUHAMMAD was born 570 CE in Mecca, Arabia to a family of the *Quraysh* tribe. In his early life he earned the title *trustworthy* (AL-AMIN) because of his honesty and because he was trusted by the people. At age 40, MUHAMMAD received his first revelation through the Archangel GABRIEL. After a brief gap, the revelations continued for a total of 23 years. MUHAMMAD and his few followers were persecuted for 13 years, preaching reform & monotheism to Meccan idolaters, and then were forced to migrate to Medina where MUHAMMAD established the first Islamic state. He was a preacher, statesman, soldier, teacher, and exemplary family man before his death in 632. His sayings and traditions, *Hadith & Sunnah*, are well-preserved as the second source of Islamic faith after the QUR'AN. He is the role model for how to apply the Qur'an to one's life.



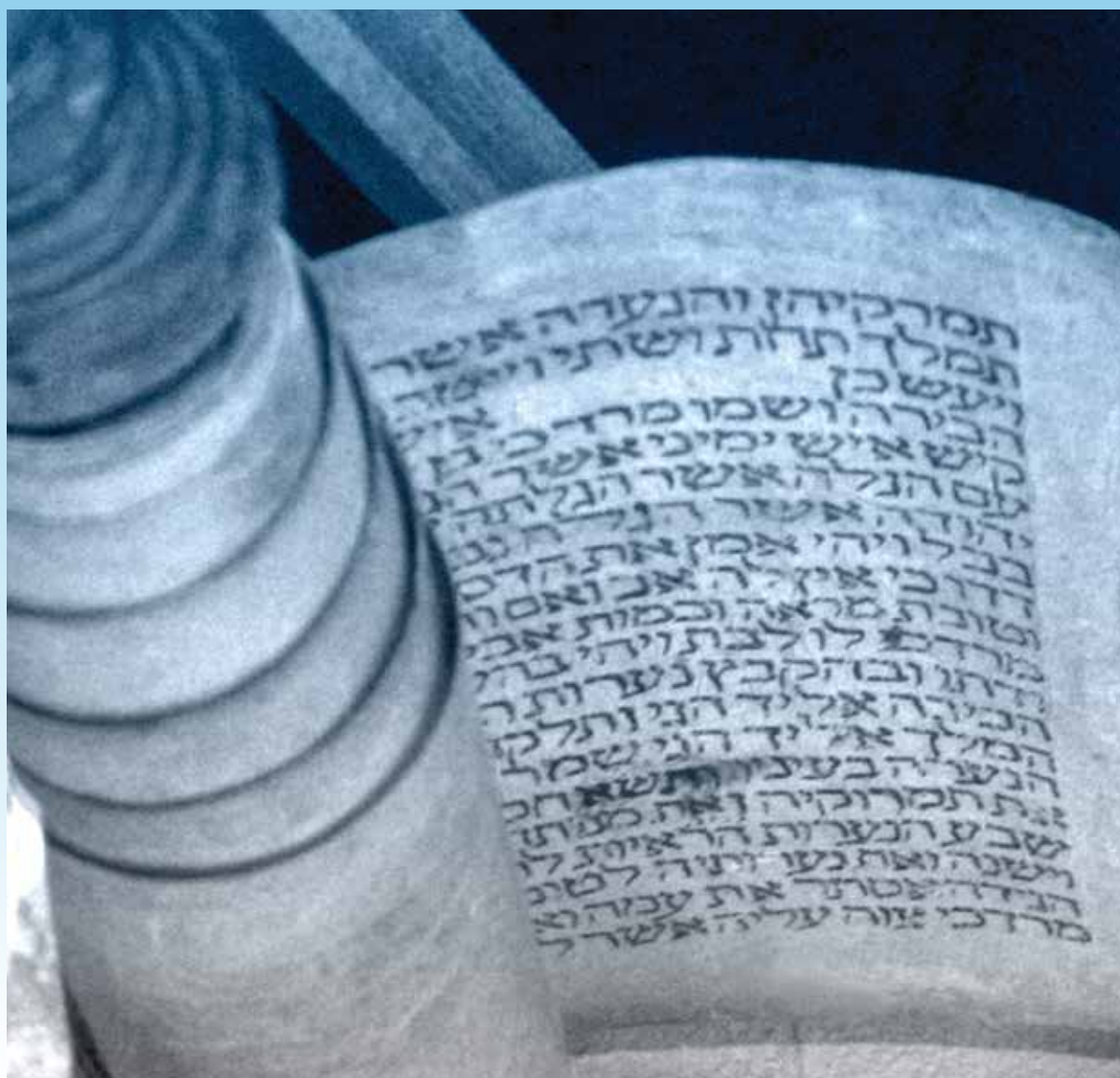
THE HOLY TEXTS OF JUDAISM

The holiest texts in Judaism are the first five books of the BIBLE (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*), which Jews call the TORAH and believe that God gave to MOSES on Mount Sinai.

The Hebrew Scriptures, comprising the TORAH, the prophets, and the historical books called *the writings*, were codified by Jewish religious scholars somewhere between 200 BCE and 200 CE. They are identical to books in the *Old Testament* Christians read; 100 CE is the date of the earliest Old Testament canon.

At least one copy of the TORAH in Hebrew is kept in every synagogue in the form of a hand-written parchment scroll. Jews read a particular, set portion of the TORAH scroll each week in synagogue.

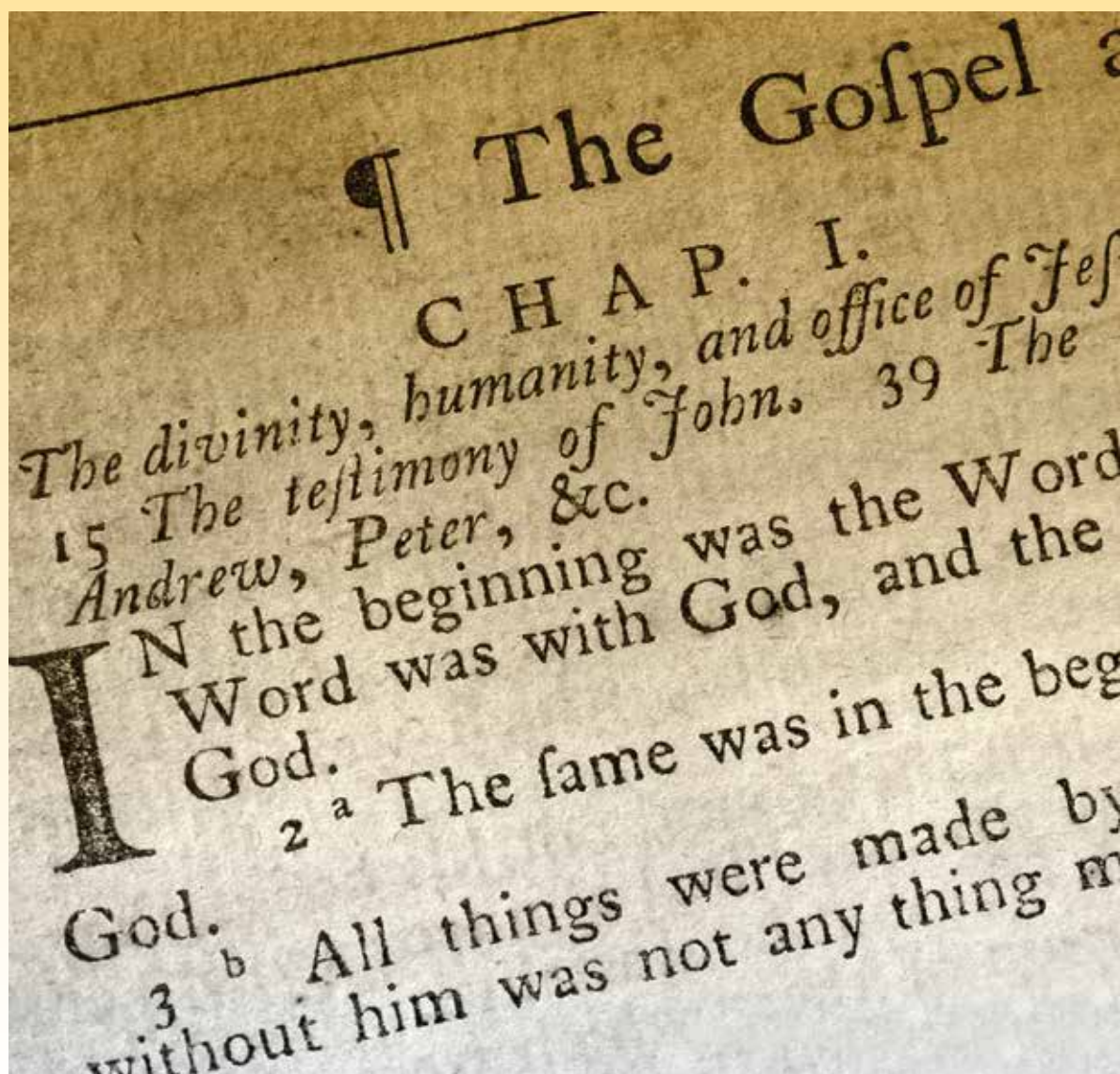
The TALMUD is a compendium of law and commentary on the TORAH applying it to life in later and changed circumstances.



THE HOLY TEXTS OF CHRISTIANITY

In addition to the Hebrew Scriptures, Christians rely on the New Testament, the name given to the Christian Scriptures that were written after the birth of Jesus. They considered these writings sacred texts.

Of the books that became part of the *New Testament*, the oldest are the letters of PAUL, usually considered to have been written in the 40s and 50s of the first century. Other letters are thought to have been written over the next couple of decades. Of the four gospels, MARK is considered the earliest at about 68–70 CE, while JOHN is the latest at about 110 CE. ACTS is later than LUKE (around 100), and REVELATION was probably composed in the 90s.



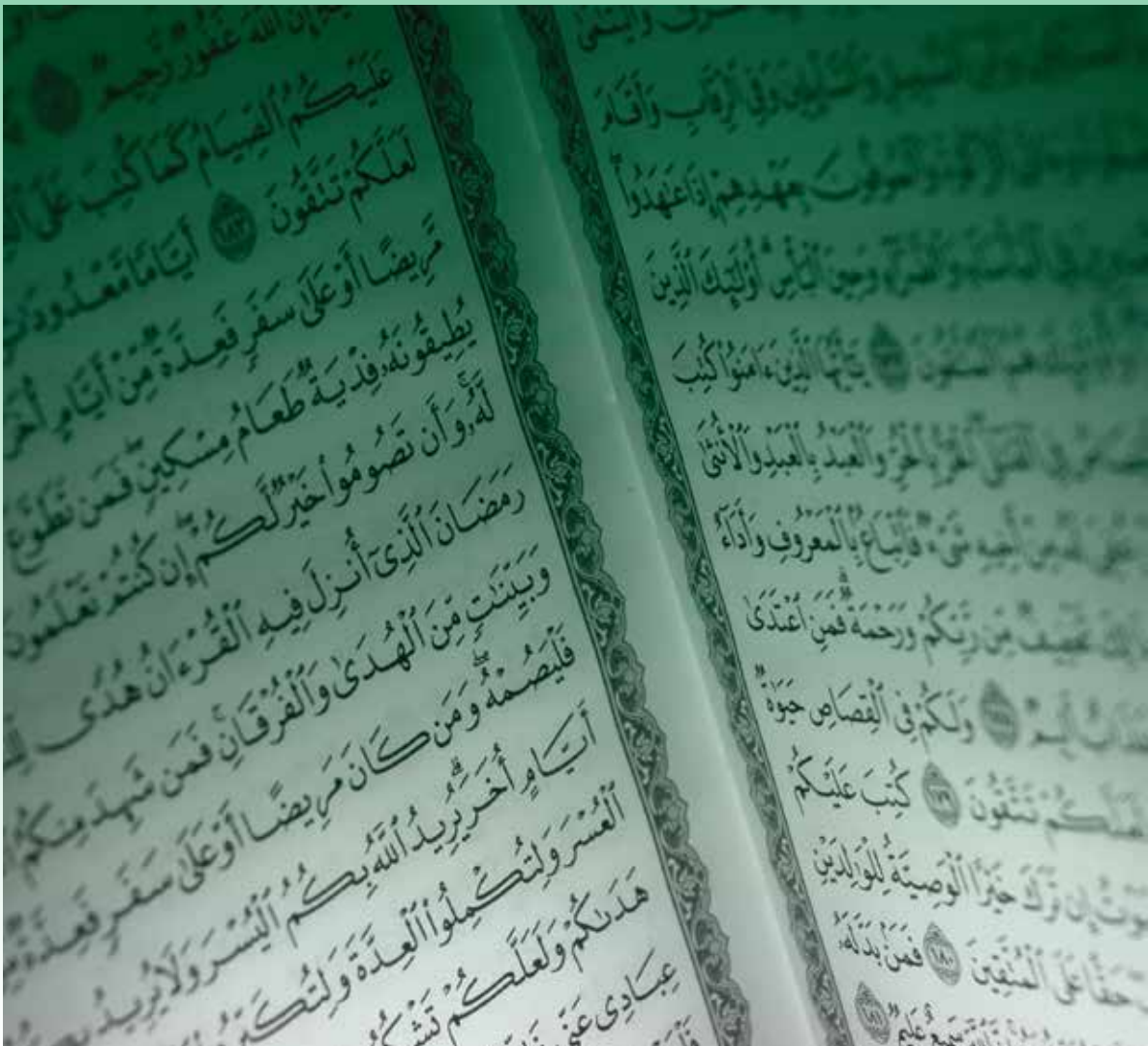
THE HOLY TEXTS OF ISLAM

Muslims believe that the QUR’AN is the actual word of God, revealed to MUHAMMAD by God (*Allah* in Arabic) through the Archangel GABRIEL.

The QUR’AN is not altered in any way since it was first compiled during MUHAMMAD’S life (570-632 CE). It has been written down in Arabic and memorized in its original form by Muslims around the world—four of the original copies are still available.

The only authoritative text of the QUR’AN is in the original Arabic. Muslims regard translations of the QUR’AN into other languages as paraphrases or versions of the original.

The QUR’AN consists of 114 chapters (called *surahs*), which have names as well as numbers. They are not in chronological order, but according to instructions given by MUHAMMAD to the scribes based on divine revelation. The whole QUR’AN was transcribed during MUHAMMAD’S life.

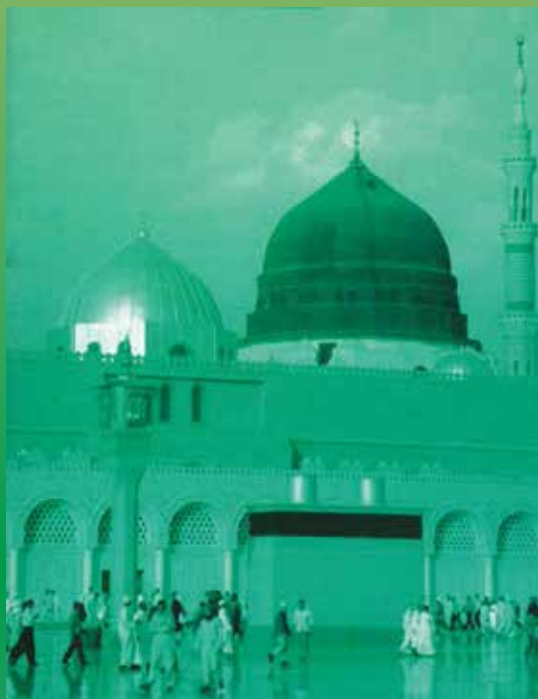


SACRED SPACES

The CHURCH in Christian Scripture is described as the *body of believers*. Christian church architecture can range from very elaborate to very plain and without ornamentation beyond a simple cross.

Some churches focus on the preaching of the *Word of God* and they also are contextually focused on the pulpit where the *Word* is preached.

Altars occupy a prominent place in *Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican*, and other highly liturgical denominations. They are used to hold and to prepare the bread and wine used in the Eucharist. In *Protestant* churches, a table serves as the centerpiece of the holy communion service, a remembrance of Jesus' death and resurrection.



A MOSQUE is a place of worship for followers of the Islamic faith. Muslims often refer to the mosque by its Arabic name, **Masjid** (pl. **Masajid**). The word *mosque* in English refers to all types of buildings dedicated for Islamic worship. The primary purpose of the mosque is to serve as a place where Muslims can come together for prayer, including the Friday congregational prayer, the *Jumma*.

They are not only places for worship and prayer, but also places to learn about Islam and meet fellow believers. Most mosques have elaborate domes, minarets for calling worshippers to prayer, and large open prayer halls. Mosques originated on the Arabian Peninsula, but now exist on all the world's inhabited continents.

TEMPLE, SYNAGOGUE, and SHUL all mean the same thing to followers of Judaism—they are all *houses of worship*. Distinctions between the three have to do with the traditions of faith and matters of ritual for *Reform, Conservative*, and *ORTHODOX* Jews, respectively. Each space is considered a place of worship and prayer, as well as a center of learning.

Jewish teaching also suggests that *any* space may be considered a space of worship, whether it is one's home or a public venue, because a commitment to Judaism is as much an individual endeavor as it is a call to a congregation.



THE CORE BELIEFS OF JUDAISM

- There is a single, all-powerful God, who created the universe and everything in it.
- Jews are directed to be like God, to be KADOSH (*sacred*). KEDUSHA: seeking the sacred is central to Jewish beliefs. Judaism imagines a world in which each and every action has the potential for KEDUSHA.
- Each action or obligation that brings KEDUSHA into the world is called a *mitzvah*. Doing a *mitzvah* is the key that allows each person to experience the sacred. The *mitzvah* of TIKKUN OLAM (to be God's hands here on Earth and help repair the world) is central to Jewish belief.
- Judaism tends to be more focused on the actions of *mitzvah* than faith alone.



THE CORE BELIEFS OF CHRISTIANITY

- There is one God who reveals Himself in three *persons*: FATHER, SON (*Jesus Christ*), and HOLY SPIRIT. However, these three persons are regarded as a unity, sharing one *substance*.
- God has created the world distinct from Himself but is believed to be active within it as a *Creator, Sustainer, and Sanctifier*.
- Belief in JESUS' teachings:
No one can earn God's mercy or be righteous in His eyes, but one can know His infinite forgiveness and mercy through turning to Him
Following the Sermon on the Mount and being a witness in daily life
Belief in Heaven



THE CORE BELIEFS OF ISLAM

- Belief in one, omnipresent, almighty God who created the universe and all in it; belief in *prophets, revelations, angels, the hereafter, and divine decree*.
- Islam encompasses all aspects of earthly life, governed by Islamic law (*sharia*) and organized around FIVE PILLARS: *belief in God* and His messengers, *daily prayers, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage* (HAJJ).
- ISLAM means *total submission to God's will, achieving peace* within.



COMMON BELIEFS

ALL HUMAN BEINGS AND THE SOURCE OF LIFE ARE CREATED BY GOD.

MONOTHEISM, A BELIEF IN ONE GOD

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE CONCERN FOR OTHERS

THE PURSUIT OF PEACE

ALL THREE RELIGIONS EXPRESS PEACE IN THEIR SALUTATIONS:

For Jews, SHALOM ALEICHEM means *May peace be unto you.*

For Muslims, AS SALAAM ALAIKUM means *The peace be with you*, and the response WA ALAIKUM AS SALAAM means *And to you, the peace.*

For Christians, *May peace be with you.*