

Christian-Muslim engagement

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Introduction and back ground

- Islam is taking the centre stage. Daily reported on in Cable news networks across the world.
- It has known much upsurge right around the world.
- It has moved from its traditional enclaves.

Why Islamic engagement?

- This has become essential because:
 1. Muslims are all over, at our very door steps
 2. Islams' influence is growing.
 3. May eclipse Christianity by the middle of 21st Century.
 4. Potential effects on Christian Missions.
 5. More indigenous Muslims increasingly sighted around.
 6. Theologically, claims to be an “upgrade” on both Christianity and Judaism.



Facts & Beliefs about Islam

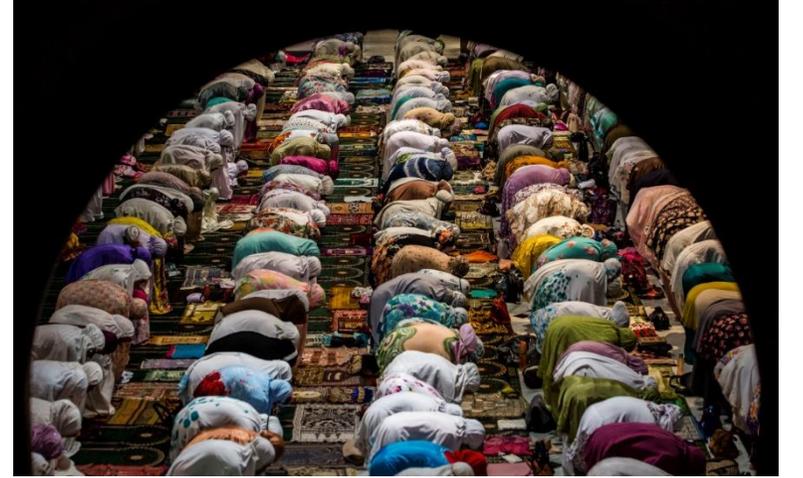
- Islam arrived on the scene from AD 610.
- Muhammad received intermittent revelations for 23 years from AD 610.
- Muhammad is the key figure having received message through Angel Gabriel.
- Original revelation was received at the Hira cave.
- Islam has grown to be a major religion spanning the globe. It is over 1.9 billion adherents strong.
- It grew in various ways including:

- Conquests/sword.
- Islamic Dawah e.g during Covid 19 crisis in Zambia...
- Networking and negotiation.
- In recent times, exploit the population strategy through multiple marriages.
- In mainstream academia, advocacy
- Changing the script, re-interpreting
- Dominante economic, political power in a given context

Sects within Islam

There are about 73 sects or more in Islam but the three chief ones are:

- Sunni
- Shia
- Sufi



Identifiers of Islam

Muslims are easy to identify, unless they conceal their identity:

- Culture
- Dress, Beard
- Practices (Prayer, dawah, alms giving, pilgrimage etc)
- Relationships (Umma)
- Jihad (greater and lesser etc)

The image features a silhouette of a city skyline against a warm, orange and yellow sunset sky. The skyline includes various architectural elements such as minarets, domes, and modern skyscrapers. Several airplanes are visible in flight against the bright sky. The text "What is Islam?" is prominently displayed in the center-right of the image in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

What is Islam?

Nature of Islam

- Claims to be the original faith of Abraham.
- Claims to be one of the Abrahamic faiths along side Christianity & Judaism.
- Islam basically is 'submission'
- A Muslim is one who submits (to Allah).
- Claims to be universal, Final religion
- Revolves around one unit deity



Beliefs

- Scriptures (al Kitab)
- Prophets
- Final judgement & Predestination
- Eternal life
- Heaven and Hell

Pillars

- Confession (*Shahada*)
- Prayer (*salah*) five times a day
- Fasting (*Saum*) during Ramadan month.
- Alms giving (*Zaka*) to help the weak, poor. A social security.
- Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) at least once in a life time to Mecca.

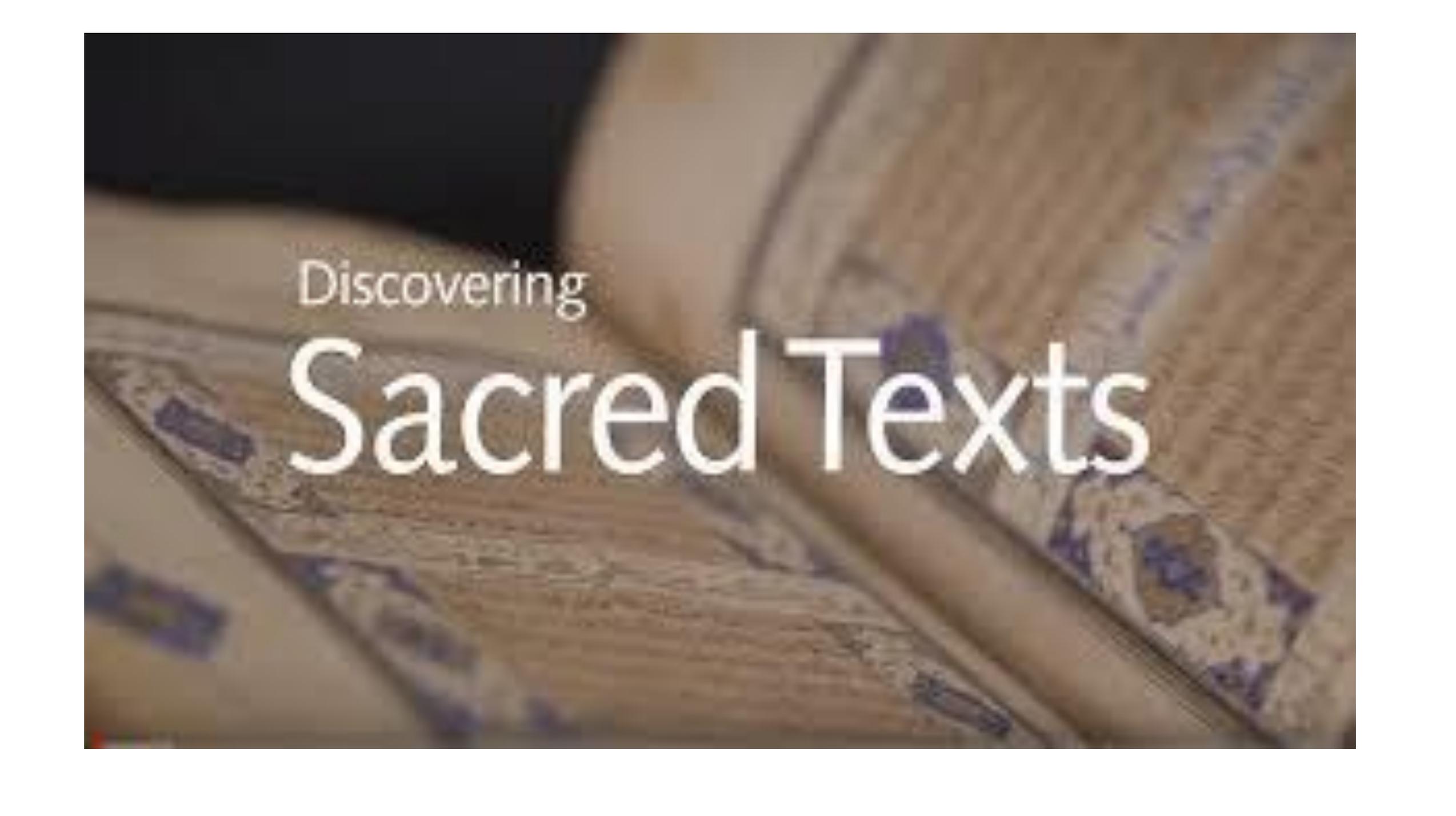
- For Shia, include Jihad

Islamic world view

Revolves around three major pillars:

- Tawhid
- Vicegerency
- Justice

These grids affect how a Muslims views or reacts to the world.

The background of the image is a close-up, slightly blurred photograph of an ancient manuscript. The paper is aged and yellowed, with visible lines of text written in dark ink. Some of the text is in Hebrew, with words like 'אשר' (asher) and 'אשר' (asher) visible. There are also decorative elements, including blue and red ink markings and what appears to be a small illustration or seal. The overall tone is historical and scholarly.

Discovering

Sacred Texts

Islamic sacred Scripture

- Muslims life revolves around these scriptures that shape the whole of life, including Jurisprudence, culture, behavior, practice etc.
- The Quran: Al-Kitab, Wahi
- Hadiths: Traditions, deeds and sayings of the Prophet.
- Sunna: Ceremonial practices, Haram, Halaal, ablution etc.



What to expect in Islamic engagement

- Attacks from Muslims around: Bible (inspiration & Nature), Gospels (injl), Corruption (Tahrif), Isa, Mary, Trinity
- Repetition
- Emotional responses
- Rare occasions, threats and violence
- Complaints (if in minority, unfair world!)



How best to engage with Islam

- Know thy position in Christ.
- Know the Bible's teaching.
- Take an interest in know what Islam is and stands for
- Know or understand the **Muslim world view**, note the various layers to overcome. The gospel is the power of God (Romans 1:16-17).
- Know how significance and centrality of the Quran is to Muslims.
- Understand how the Quran reads or functions.
- Know external sources: Sunna, Hadith etc.

- Muslims are communal and thus rarely make individual choices including conversion

Care for Novices from Islam

- They are vulnerable.
- They are in danger for having converted.
- Ostracised by their former community
- Need love and care

What to do (free to do...)

- Understand How Muslims think. Their world revolves around Tawhid.
- Exploit the similarities (monotheism, prayer, Prophets, Scripture, Mary (Myriam), Jesus (Isa, Masih), Jesus' return, Last Judgement, Hell & Heaven etc).
- Offer acceptable gifts, food (Halaal)
- Genuine interest and friendship.
- Appeal to the Quran where possible.
- Show love and care.
- Engage in healthy dialogue, using connectors e.g. sport
- Establish rapport and then build on it. Be consistent and honest from the start.



Blasphemy and Apostasy in Islam

Debates in Shi'a Jurisprudence

Mohsen Kadivar

Translated by: Hamid Mavani

What not to do

- Insult the Prophet or any of the prophets for that matter.
- Having images or depictions of the Prophet.
- Handling the Quran or any accepted scripture (e.g. Torah, ingil) badly.
- Offer pork products (i.e. Haram)
- Dress badly...
- Freely interact with the opposite sex/gender.
- Drinking alcohol
- Abruptly declare that God is Trinity, Jesus Son of God or God etc. You need to transition well

- Appear imposing, coercing.
- Take offence at attacks or repetitions.

Proposed Way forward

- Think of ways to effectively engage Muslims.
- Know that it is a long term project.
- Be intentional in Muslim evangelism.
- Know and understand the opponent. Know the Quran
- Prepare to engage as an apologist in ways that reflect the Christian faith. Debates are good but with a mission. Respectfully engage.
- Empower Christians to live the Christian life in Romans 12:1-2 style.
- Christians to have a stronger long term strategy including training.
- Muslims, like others are created in God's image, needing deliverance.

What is your view of Islam/Muslims?



References

- English Quran
- John Gilchrist