

Name: _____

EQ: To what extent and in what ways are Islam, Christianity, and Judaism similar?

[Note: All sources not labeled are compiled from multiple sources, both primary and secondary]

Introduction to Islam and The Prophet Muhammad

It is generally thought that Muhammad was born a few months after his father's death. Before Mohammed was six, his mother also died. His grandfather took over the responsibility of raising the boy and sent him to live with the Bedouin Arabs. When his grandfather died, his uncle took care of him. It was from his uncle that he learned the business of buying, selling and transporting goods.

Muhammad was a caravan merchant in Mecca. At the age of twenty-five he married a wealthy widow, Khadijah. Muhammad was troubled by the idol worship of Arab merchants and moral ills of Arabian society. Mohammed used to go to a nearby cave on many evenings and meditate. One night in the year 610, the angel Gabriel visited Muhammad. He heard a voice saying, "Recite!" Muhammad replied, "What shall I recite?" The voice explained: "Recite in the name of your God, the Creator, who created man from clots of blood." Fearing he had gone mad, Muhammad hurried home and asked Khadijah to cover him with a warm coat. His shaking stopped, but then he saw the angel Gabriel again. It was a cousin of Khadijah, a Christian, who assured Khadijah that Muhammad was God's long awaited Messenger for the Arabs. With great hesitancy Muhammad realized that what he heard was God's call to make the divine message known to the Arabs. Muhammad's wife, Khadijah, became the first convert to a new religion, Islam, from the Arabic word for submission.

Muhammad began to spread the word of God. For several years Mohammed worked on caravans and traveled throughout Arabia. During his travels Mohammed met many Christians and Jews, and his Islamic revelations included many ideas, which were found in Christianity and Judaism. Soon Meccan merchants sought to kill Muhammad, believing that his message neglected Arabian gods and disrupted the pilgrim trade. In 622 Muhammad and his followers left Mecca for Yathrib on a journey known as the Hijra. The Hijra was a turning point for Islam. Muslim converts welcomed Muhammad, and the religion grew. Later Yathrib was renamed Medina, or "city of the Prophet," and 622 became the first year of the Muslim calendar.

1. Define:

1.1. *Islam* —

1.2. *hijra* —

2. Why do you think Islam means submission? What is Islam asking believers to submit to?

3. What made Muhammad believe he was the Messenger of God?

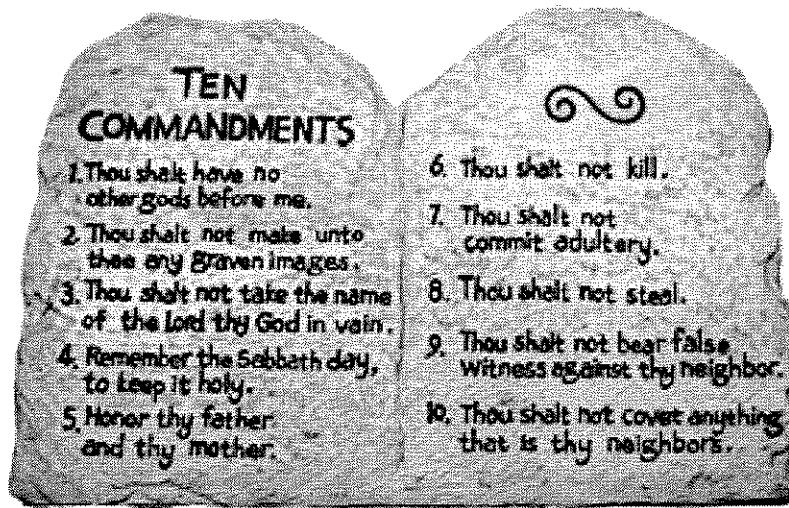
Task: Read each document about Islam and complete the questions. Keep in mind the essential question. Then complete the venn-diagram comparing Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

Document 1a—The Five Pillars of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam represent the duties of a Muslim and provide a spiritual foundation.

<p>Allah All Muslims must believe that there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammed is his prophet.</p>	<p>Prayer A Muslim must pray five times a day, facing the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia.</p>	<p>Charity A Muslim must donate money to the poor and less fortunate.</p>	<p>Fasting During the holy month of Ramadan in the Islamic calendar, Muslims cannot eat or drink during daylight hours.</p>	<p>Pilgrimage A Muslim must make at least one religious trip to the holy city of Mecca, in Saudi Arabia.</p>
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Document 1b — The Ten Commandments



1. How do the Five Pillars of Islam shape the lives of Muslims?

2. How are the Five Pillars of Islam similar to the Ten Commandments?

Document 2— Sacred Texts

- 1) **Qu'ran:** (Recitation) is the words of God. Muslims believe that it was revealed to Muhammad by the archangel Jibril (Gabriel). This was originally in oral and written form; they were later assembled together into a single book, the Qur'an. Its name is often spelled "Koran" in English. This is not recommended, as some Muslims find it offensive. The Qu'ran is the holy book of Islam. Many of the tales and people of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible can be found in the Qu'ran. The Qu'ran refers to Jews and Christians as "peoples of the books." Because the Qu'ran is the sacred word of God as revealed to Muhammad, it is the final authority on all matters.
- 2) **The Sharia:** Muslim scholars have developed a large body of laws by interpreting the Qu'ran and its teachings to daily life. This Islamic system of law, the Sharia, regulates moral conduct, family life, business practices, government, and other aspects of the Muslim community. Like the Qu'ran, the Sharia helped unite the many peoples who converted to Islam.
- 3) **Hadith:** Collections of the sayings of Muhammad. They are regarded as the **Sunnah** (lived example) of Muhammad. The Qur'an gives legitimacy to the Hadith. However, the writings are not regarded as having the same status as the Holy Qur'an; the latter is considered to be God's word. Some hadiths are:
 - a. *Avoid cruelty and injustice...and guard yourselves against miserliness, for this has ruined nations who lived before you.* Riyadh-us-Salaheen, Hadith 203.
 - b. *"It is better for any of you to carry a load of firewood on his own back than begging from someone else."* Riyadh-Us-Saleheen, Chapter 59, Hadith 540

1. How do the sacred texts of Islam shape and guide the lives of Muslims?

2. How does the Qu'ran refer to Jews and Christians? Why do you think they are called this?

Document 3—Holy People and Places

To Muslims, Allah is the same God worshipped by Jews and Christians, therefore the followers of Islam view Abraham, Moses, and Jesus as important prophets, with Muhammad as the final prophet. Muslims view Jesus just as a prophet, not as the Son of God. Muslims built a Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. It is there where Muslims believe Muhammad had risen into heaven. It is also the same site where a Jewish temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

1. Which holy people and places would be common to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity?

Document 4

In his call and message, Muhammad said that God is one. God is all powerful. He is creator of the universe. God expects people to share their worldly goods with others needier than themselves.

The Qu'ran says the good person, "Spends his substance however much he may cherish it upon his near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage."

According to Islam there is a judgment day. Splendid rewards in Paradise await those who carry out God's commands and terrible punishments in hell await those who disregard them.

Mohammed described Hell as:

"The damned shall be given the (burning) fruit of the tree zaqqam and they shall be forced to drink boiling water, which burns their insides."

Mohammed described Heaven as:

"They shall have a special place (in Heaven with delicious) fruits; they shall be in the gardens of pleasure (resting) on couches opposite of one another; a cup shall be bought to them filled with delicious drink; all who sip it will find delight."

1. What are some of the basic teachings and beliefs of Islam according to these passages?

Document 5

Source: Aslan, Reza. No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam. Random House. 2005.

"Muhammad aligned his community with the Jews in Medina because he considered them, as well as the Christians, to be part of his Umma [Community of believers]. Consequently, [...] he made Jerusalem [...] the direction of prayer [...] for all Muslims. He imposed a mandatory fast upon his community, which was to take place annually [... according to] the Jewish calendar [...]. He adopted many of the Jewish dietary laws and purity requirements, and encouraged many of his followers to marry Jews, as he himself did. (5:5-7).

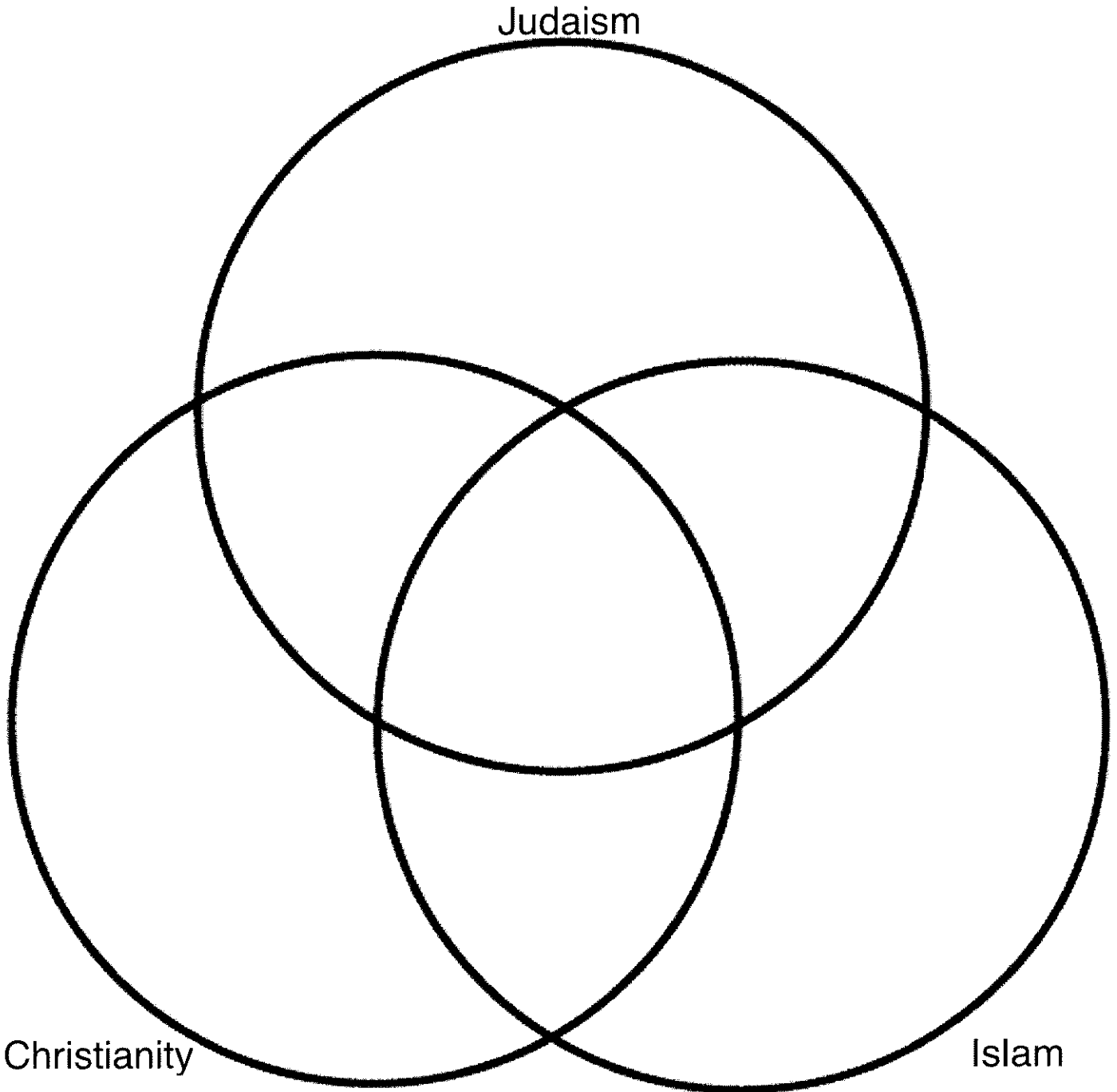
And while it is true that after a few years, Muhammad changed [some of these things] these decisions should not be interpreted as a 'break with the Jews', but as the maturing of Islam into its own independent religion"

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1. According to Reza Aslan, in what ways is Islam an outgrowth of Judaism?

Task:

1. View the following website from PBS — *Religion: Three Religions, One God*
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/themes/religion/>
2. Based on the PBS website, classwork documents, homework assignments, and your knowledge of global history, complete the venn diagram below.
3. Write a thesis statement, using an “Although... overall...” format that answers the essential question.



Thesis statement:
