

PEOPLES: **LANGUAGES** – Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hebrew, Kurdish, English, numerous others
 ARABS in many ME countries (Semites; descendants of Abraham and other Semitic tribes)
 TURKS in Turkey (from central Asia)
 EGYPTIANS (Hamites, indigenous Africans with mixture of Arabs and many others)
 PERSIANS in Iran (Japhethites, Indo-European Aryans; originally from Indus Valley regions)
 KURDS (non-Arabs from Kurdistan area; 25+ million scattered in No. Fertile Crescent, esp. Turkey, Iraq, and Iran)
 JEWS in Israel (descendants of Jacob/Israel, esp. the tribes of Judah, Levi, Simeon, Benjamin, Dan, and others)
 many smaller groups (Armenian, Afro-Hamite, Asian, Afro-Asian, Pakistani, Greek, Azeri, Gilaki, Emirati, etc.)

CULTURES:

PATRIARCHAL (tribes, extended clans & families)
 ORIENTAL (Asian/Eastern not Occidental/Western)
 SEMITIC (languages, culture, traditions, etc.)
 MODERN - European/American influences (intrusions?)
 SECULAR

RELIGIONS:

ISLAM – Sunni & Shi'a
 CHRISTIANITY – Eastern, Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, LDS
 JUDAISM – (Ultra)-Orthodox, Cultural, Secular
 DRUZE, BAHA'I, various other religions

Cornerstones of Judaism

- ☆ BELIEFS of God, prophets, covenant people, Messiah (and/or Messianic Era)
- ☆ WRITINGS of the TaNaKh (*Torah* 'Law', *Nebi'im* 'Prophets', *Khetuvim* 'Writings' = Old Testament)
- ☆ TEACHINGS of the sages and rabbis (esp. as found in the *Talmud* 'Learning')
- ☆ PRACTICES of Sabbath ('Queen' of week), Food (*kosher* 'proper'), Holy Days (esp. Passover & *Yom Kippur*)

Purpose = demonstrate GOD'S TRUE WAY to the world; follow divine will leading to a messianic era

Pillars of Islam

- ﷵ declaration of belief (*shahada*: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet")
- ﷵ prayer five times daily (*salat*: pre-dawn, noon, late afternoon, sunset, late evening)
- ﷵ almsgiving and charity (*zakat*: 2.5% of net worth preferred or income? or savings?)
- ﷵ fasting during Ramadan (*sawm*: ninth month of Muslim lunar calendar; sunset *May 15 - June 14, 2018*)
- ﷵ pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*: at least once in a lifetime; 5-6 days during twelfth lunar month, *Aug. 20+, 2018*)

Process & Product: PURIFICATION of the soul and society in fulfillment of God's will

DEMOGRAPHICS: Middle East and (continental) United States COMPARISON:

(Comparing Size, Population, Gross Domestic Productivity, and Purchasing Power Parity per capita)

Size: ME = 2,780,000 square miles US = 3,018,000 square miles
Middle East is 92% the size of the continental United States (ME is 1/12th less in size).

Population: ME = 425 million US = 325 million
Middle East has 130% the population of the United States (ME has over 1/4th more people).

Economics: **Middle East has 25% (one-fourth) of the gross domestic productivity of the United States.**

Purchasing Value: **Middle Easterners have a "Purchasing Power Parity" of about one-fifth of US citizens.**

Middle Eastern Countries "POWER INDEX"

<u>"BIG FOUR"</u>	= about	77 % of the land;	70 % of the people;	72 % of the wealth
<u>"MIDDLE SIX"</u>	= about	22 % of the land;	25 % of the people;	17 % of the wealth
<u>"smallest seven"</u>	= about	1 % of the land;	5 % of the people;	11 % of the wealth

Key Prophecies yet to be fulfilled

Temple (s?) in Jerusalem in the Last Days

Two LDS prophets in Jerusalem

Missionary work with Jews/Muslims

Potential short-time peace in the Middle East

Armageddon (battle of "two myriads/armies of myriads/armies" against Israel, see Rev 9:16; 5:11)