



# **Mohammedanism: Lectures on Its Origin, Its Religious and Political Growth, and Its Present State**

*C. Snouck Hurgronje*

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This looks at the history of Islam over the centuries up to the 19th century.

From the intro:

"There are more than two hundred million people who call themselves after the name of Mohammed, would not relinquish that name at any price, and cannot imagine a greater blessing for the remainder of humanity than to be incorporated into their communion. Their ideal is no less than that the whole earth should join in the faith that there is no god but Allah and that Mohammed is Allah's last and most perfect messenger, who brought the latest and final revelation of Allah to humanity in Allah's own words. This alone is enough to claim our special interest for the Prophet, who in the seventh century stirred all Arabia into agitation and whose followers soon after his death founded an empire extending from Morocco to China.

Even those who—to my mind, not without gross exaggeration—would seek the explanation of the mighty stream of humanity poured out by the Arabian peninsula since 630 over Western and Middle Asia, Northern Africa, and Southern Europe principally in geographic and economic causes, do not ignore the fact that it was Mohammed who opened the sluice gates. It would indeed be difficult to maintain that without his preaching the Arabs of the seventh century would have been induced by circumstances to swallow up the empire of the Sasanids and to rob the Byzantine Empire of some of its richest provinces. However great a weight one may give to political and economic factors, it was religion, Islâm, which in a certain sense united the hitherto hopelessly divided Arabs, Islâm which enabled them to found an enormous international community; it was Islâm which bound the speedily converted nations together even after the shattering of its political power, and which still binds them today when only a miserable remnant of that power remains. The aggressive manner in which young Islâm immediately put itself in opposition to the rest of the world had the natural consequence of awakening an interest which was far from being of a friendly nature. Moreover men were still very far from such a striving towards universal peace as would have induced a patient study of the means of bringing the different peoples into close spiritual relationship, and therefore from an endeavour to understand the spiritual life of races different to their own."



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