

Islam Video Collection

The Bridge

Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1998

50 minutes, color

This video discusses the ways in which Islam influenced Western medicine by re-examining the medicine of the ancient Greeks. The video begins by briefly discussing the history of Greek medicine, focusing on the ideas of Hippocrates, who began ideas of treating illness using a purely scientific approach, without any magic. The idea of prevention was emphasized in Hippocrates' theory, which was very sophisticated for his time. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Greek texts were studied by the Muslims while western Europe was still practicing elementary medicine. The video discusses what was added by the Muslims to Greek medical theory in the 11th century, and how Islam encouraged equal treatment for all citizens. Next, the spread of Islam's medical practices moved to Spain where it was introduced to the West. The video then discusses the beginning of surgery in the West, and the unification of Eastern and Western medicine in the 13th century. The video concludes by discussing the plague in Europe and its influence on medical ideas. This video provides important historical background on the beginnings of Western medicine and its debt to the Islamic world.

Esposito

April 11, 2002

Color, 75 minutes

This is a video of a speech made by John Esposito at GVSU. Professor Esposito is director of Georgetown University's Center For Muslim-Christian Understanding. Esposito gives a talk in which he compares Islam, Judaism and Christianity. He discusses many of the stereotypes that Westerners have of Muslims and Arabs in general, which often stem from the first real exposure they had to Islam in the Iran Hostage situation in 1979. Esposito explains Islam's role in America, and how it has changed here over the past few decades. He also gives a brief history of how Islam began, and what things Muslims do or do not accept in Christianity. This includes a somewhat amusing discussion of the crusades including the current views of Muslims and Christians on these events. Esposito then tries to answer the question Westerners often ask in regard to Muslims: "Why do they hate us?" He attempts to give an explanation of the roots of anti-American sentiment. The causes and effects of September 11 are also briefly discussed. This talk is a good introduction to Islam and can help the viewer begin to understand the stereotypes which often exist between Muslims and Christians.

Five Pillars of Islam

The Islamic Information Service

117 minutes, color

This video provides an in-depth introduction by explaining the five pillars of Islam. It is best for those viewers who have little or no knowledge of the faith. The first pillar addressed is prayer, or Salat. The video explains what times of the day a Muslim is to pray and why. The video demonstrates in detail the necessary preparation for prayer. The second pillar explained is Shahada, which is the declaration of faith. Several Muslims explain what it means to declare your faith. The third pillar discussed is Zakat, or almsgiving. This is charity, but it is obligatory in Islam. To some Muslims it is known as the “divine income tax.” In theory, it can help eliminate disparity between the rich and the poor in ways both capitalism and communism fail to do. Ramadan, or fasting, is discussed next. Ramadan is actually the name of the month in the Muslim year in which Muhammad received his first revelation from God. This is the month in which Muslims fast to commemorate this event. Several purposes of fasting are discussed, and a dietitian and doctor are both interviewed about the health aspects of fasting. And finally the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, is discussed. This is a one-time requirement for all Muslims who are physically and financially able to go. The video explains the importance of Mecca to Islam and shows scenes of Muslims performing the Hajj at the Kaaba.

The Hajj

ABC News, Nightline (April 18, 1997)
22 minutes, color

This video is an episode of nightline broadcast on ABC news in 1997. This is most interesting for those viewers who already have some knowledge of Islam and the Hajj. The video follows an American Muslim reporter on his journey to Mecca where “a walk around the block is a walk around the world.” It is not very common that the pilgrimage can be seen by an American, as only Muslims are allowed into Mecca to make their pilgrimage. The story begins with the arrival of Michael Wolfe in Mecca for his second Hajj; he explains his thoughts and feelings as he goes through the many steps of the pilgrimage. This includes shedding his Western dress in exchange for a simple white robe, circling the Kaaba seven times, drinking from the holy well, reenacting an ancient drama, and taking a five day journey from Mecca, to Mina, then to Arafat, and then returning to Mecca with a stop at Muzdalifah. On this five-day journey Wolfe shares his experiences, including the reaction to a fire at one of the camps along the journey in which more than 340 pilgrims were killed. Wolfe also converses and comments on several other pilgrims of different nationalities in Mecca. Overall this video is very informative in showing exactly what the Hajj consists of, step by step, and how Muslims react to it as part of their spiritual journey.

Harm De-Blij Convocation

March 2001
Color, 51 minutes

This is the video of a GVSU convocation honoring Professor Harm De-Blij. He is being given an honorary degree for his work with the GVSU geography department. De-Blij is

a respected geographer who helped develop the department beginning in 2000. He gives a short speech during the convocation regarding what he considers some of the challenges of Islam. He discusses the rapid spread of Islam and its importance worldwide. He addresses issues in the Middle East, as well as in other areas of the world including Africa and the Pacific Rim. Toward the end of the speech, De-Blij presents his views regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and proposes a possible solution.

Islam: Empire of Faith

Gardner Films, 2000

93 minutes, color

This video, recorded off air, gives a great background on Islam. It begins by giving an informative history of the prophet Mohammad's life, using reenactment to tell the story. The video explains how Mohammad went from being a young boy living with Bedouin to being known as the "trusted one" in many villages, eventually becoming the most important figure in Islam. As Mohammad's new religion gained popularity it became threatening to the pagan tribes of his time, who were very skeptical of his teachings. The video reenacts the conquering of Mecca by Mohammad and his followers, and the rise of Islam. Next, the contributions of Islam to the modern world are discussed. These include innovations in medicine, the beginnings of the scientific method, and the wide use of paper. The history of the crusades is also discussed and reenacted. The end of the video discusses the rise of the Ottoman Empire, which created order and bureaucracy in the region, and follows the history of this great empire to its eventual decline. This video gives a broad, yet interesting, history of Islam and its contributions to modern society.

Islam In America

The Christian Science Monitor (1991, 1992)

52 minutes, color

This video discusses the very basic aspects of Islam. It is suitable for an audience with little or no background on Islam. The video discusses the five pillars of Islam, using a different group of people in a different American city for each segment. Each of the five segments runs about 10 minutes. The first segment shows an Islamic elementary school in which children are being taught the five pillars of Islam, how to pray, and about the Quran. The next segment shows a family living in Cedar Rapids, IA, praying and also interviews them about different aspects of their religion in regard to living in the U.S. Also shown is the first mosque built in the U.S., which is located in Cedar Rapids. The video then shows a family in New England fasting during Ramadan. Next is a trip to a maximum-security prison near Houston in which several prisoners have converted to Islam during their sentences. The video follows their stories as they are released from prison and how their lives have changed because of their new religion. Also included is an American family preparing for the Hajj, and some Americans' thoughts on the journey, including some ideas on how the Hajj changed Malcolm X. Overall this video is a good introduction to the important aspects of Islam, and also manages to show some

differences in the religion being practiced in the U.S. versus the remainder of the Islamic World.

Muslims in Southeast Asia

MeccaCentric Da'wah Group/Astrolabe Pictures, 1998

105 minutes, color

This is a video of a talk given by John Esposito as part of a lecture series on Asia. Esposito begins his talk by addressing the stereotypes that many Westerners hold in regard to Islam. He explains how little Westerners knew of Islam before the Iranian revolution in 1979 compared to now. The Middle East or the Arab world is usually the first thing that comes to many people's minds when they think of Islam, and Esposito addresses this. He explains the importance of examining the role of Islam in South and Southeast Asia in order to understand the Islamic fundamentalism that is sometimes found in the Middle East. He proposes that it is necessary to examine what role Islam plays in the lives of Asians and how their governments handle this compared to those of the Middle East. Esposito specifically addresses Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia. In these countries Muslims are the majority. Esposito explains that although many of the countries from this region may seem similar geographically, they are very different culturally. Esposito also talks about several countries in which Islam is a minority, such as Singapore. Esposito gives a very interesting talk and he supports it with many stories of his own experience and travel, which support his points. Esposito's talk is concluded with a series of questions from the audience. This is an excellent video, especially for those viewers who have some knowledge of Islam but want to learn more about Islam in Southeast Asia.

Peoples of Islam

Color, 23 minutes

A short introduction to the Islamic world, featuring stops in West Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan and Southeast Asia. These emphasize the great variety within the Islamic world and discuss some of the challenges facing the people of these different regions.

Muslims in America

VHS, 22 minutes, 1995

Each night, the ABC News team bears witness to reality as it occurs throughout the world. Although originally planned as the next installment in a periodic Nightline series about different religions, this particular broadcast slightly alters its focus in light of the Oklahoma City bombing the previous month on April 19, 1995. In addition to examining the tenets of the Muslim faith, the special focuses on the hasty judgements made in connection to Muslims whenever a terrorist act occurs anywhere in the world. Several practicing Muslims in Cedar Rapids, Iowa-home to the oldest Mosque in the United

States-candidly talk about what it is like to be Muslims in America, living daily with the stereotypes cast on them by the uneducated. And ABC News' Ted Koppel speaks with John Esposito, Director of the Center for Muslim/Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, asking why Americans as a whole are so ignorant about the Muslim faith. Esposito explains the basics of the religion, pointing out the similarities and the differences between Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

Monsieur Ibrahim

DVD, 2003

Set in the early 1960s, an adolescent Jewish boy, mostly left to his own devices by an ineffectual father, makes friends with the worldly wise Persian man who runs a small neighborhood grocery. The unlikely friendship of young Jew and old Muslim make for an offbeat story line.
