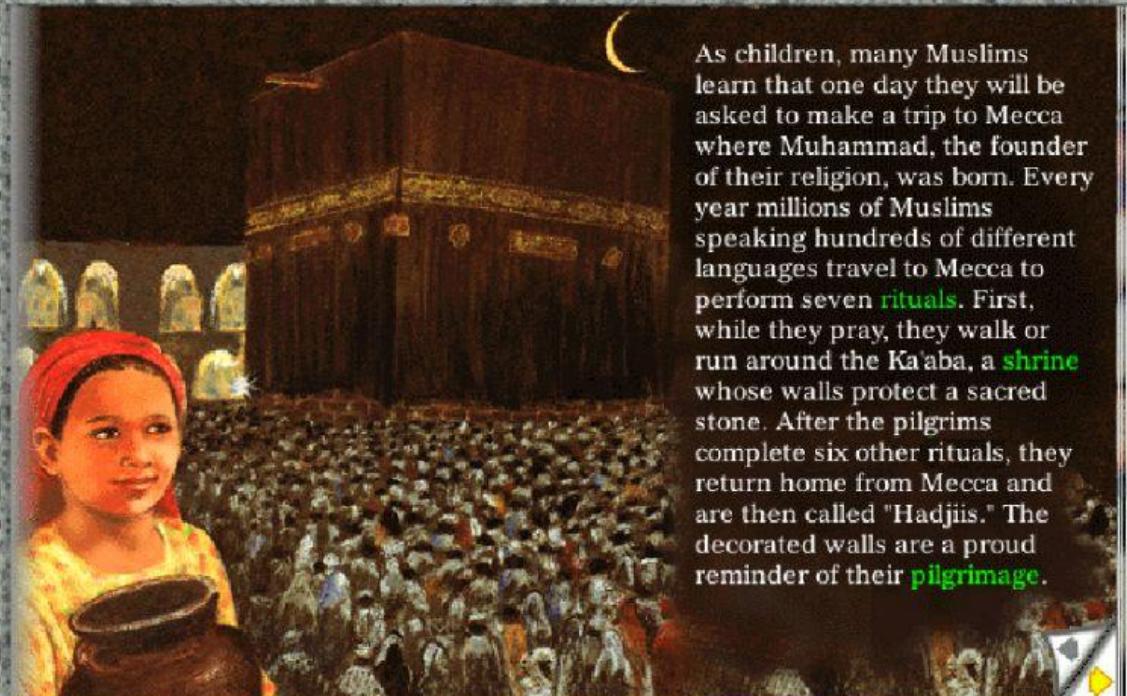


JOURNEY TO MECCA



As children, many Muslims learn that one day they will be asked to make a trip to Mecca where Muhammad, the founder of their religion, was born. Every year millions of Muslims speaking hundreds of different languages travel to Mecca to perform seven **rituals**. First, while they pray, they walk or run around the Kaaba, a **shrine** whose walls protect a sacred stone. After the pilgrims complete six other rituals, they return home from Mecca and are then called "Hadjis." The decorated walls are a proud reminder of their **pilgrimage**.

MAIN MENU MAP TABLE OF CONTENTS BEYOND THE WALLS READ NOTES HELP

Who was the founder of Muslims?

How many rituals do millions of Muslims perform when they travel to Mecca?

What is the Ka'aba?

What do the pilgrims do after they complete six other rituals?

Muhammad was born in Mecca about 570. His parents died when he was young, and he was raised by his grandfather and then by his uncle, Abu Talib. He lived in the desert where he tended sheep and camels. By accompanying his uncle on caravan journeys throughout Arabia and Syria, he learned about other parts of the world.

When Muhammad was 40, he is said to have had the first of a series of visions in which the Archangel Gabriel told him to carry the message that there was one true god, Allah. Muhammad began preaching his belief in Allah, but the people of Mecca were accustomed to worshiping many gods and ridiculed him. He was forced to leave Mecca in 622 and fled to Medina. His flight there is called the *hijra*. In Medina, Muhammad was welcomed and attracted a following. The Meccans repeatedly attacked Muhammad and his followers, but they were unable to defeat them. In 630, Muhammad conquered Mecca and made it the center of Islam worship. He died two years later in Medina.

When was Muhammad born?

Where did he live when he tended sheep and camels?

In 630, What did Muhammad conquer?

When did he die?