STUDY GUIDE

HISTORY OF THE ARABS

AD 570 TO 1258

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HISTORY OF THE ARABS

A.D. 570 TO 1258

Objective: It enables the students to familiarise with the various aspects of Islam and the history of the rise and establishment of Islamic Civilization.

Unit: I

Pre-Islamic Arabia and Muhammad Prophet:

Arabia - The cradle of the Semitic race - Mecca, Kaaba, the Quraysh - The Abyssinian - Geographical condition - The age of Ignorance (Jahiliya period) - Arab Kingdoms - Prophet Muhammad's Life and Teachings - Kuran The book of Allah Islamic doctrines and - beliefs- Five pillars of Islam

Unit: II

Early Caliphs and the expansion of Islamdom:

The Orthodox Caliphate Pious Caliphs, Abu Bakar, Umar, Uthman and Ali - Expansion and colonization Administration under the orthodox Caliphs - Struggle between Ali and Muawiah and the fallout.

Unit: III

Umayyads:

Umayyad Caliphate (661-750) - The Umayyad Caliphs-Golden Zenith of the Umayyads- Umayyad Administration - Socio cultural condition under Umayyads - Decline and fall of Umayyads.

Unit: IV

Abbasids:

Abbasid Caliphate, Abbasid Caliphs (750-1258) The Abbasid State and Society - Scientific and Literary Progress under Abbasids - Golden prime of the Abbasids - Fall of Abbasid dynasty.

Unit: V

Arabs in Spain and Egypt:

Islam in Spain-Cultural Progress in Islamic Spain - the Fatimids of Egypt - Administration, society and culture under Fatimids.

Text Books:

1.Philip K Hitti-"The History of the Arabs"

2. S. Selvin Kumar-"The Medieval Arabs"

Books for reference:

1. Ali K	-	A Study of Islamic History
2. Ameer Ali	-	History of Saracens
3. Arnold T.N.	-	Caliphate
4. AtharHussian	-	The Glorious Caliphate
5. KhudaBaksh	-	History of the Islamic Civilization
6. Muir W.	-	The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall
7. Zaiden J.	-	Omayyads and Abbasids

HISTORY OF THE ARABS AD 570 – 1258

UNIT – I

PRE – ISLAMC ARABIA AND MUHAMMAD PRODUCT

Arabic states

The Near East contains a peninsula which lies between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Today it consists of the states of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, plus the island state of Bahrain which sits in the Persian Gulf. Kuwait is also arguably an Arabian state, although its position close to the mouth of the Euphrates also sees it being included amongst the list of modern Mesopotamian states. Overall this region has been known as the land of the Arabs - Arabia - for at least three thousand years. Before that, however, the Canaanites were Semites, with origins which lay in the Arabian Desert.

Semitic-speakers formed a sub-group of the Afro-Asiatic language family which includes Hebrew (Israelites), Aramaic (Aramaeans), Arabic (Arabs), and Amharic (Ethiopians). They made their first appearance in the second half of the fourth millennium BC, migrating outwards into Egypt and Mesopotamia. A large number also entered the Levant where they blended into the existing - and already multi-racial - Neolithic populations of the various small cities of the time, most notably Jericho, where archaeology has backed up this arrival.

These Semitic-speakers quickly integrated into the Levant to create the Canaanite identity and culture which would dominate until the climate-induced social collapse at the end of the thirteenth century BC. The resultant period of migration, social collapse, and a short dark age reconfigured the entire region. Arabia remained home to nomadic tribes, but now an Arab identity began to be formed, at least as far as records-keepers of the first millennium BC great empires were concerned.

The first historical mention of Arabs from the southern deserts occurred in 853 BC, when they were involved in an alliance of states which defeated the powerful Assyrians under Shalmaneser III. Within a century two of those states had been conquered: Samaria by the resurgent Sargonite Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonians. The regional power change allowed Arab groups to migrate northwards, settling territory which had largely belonged

to Edom. The Edomites had also migrated, settling in the former Jebusite city of Hebron which Rome would know as Idumaea.

The situation in Babylonia (979-748 B.C) is extremely confused by this time, with various Kassite, Babylonian, and newly-arrived Chaldaean and Arabian groups vying for power, as well as some individuals who claim distant Elamite descent. Most of those who secure the throne achieve very little in the face of such a politically fragmented state.

Ben-Hadad (853 B.C) is a member of an alliance of states which also include Ammon, Arvad, Byblos, Edom, Egypt, Hamath, Kedar, and Samaria (seemingly despite recent conflict between Damas and Samaria). Together they fight Shalmaneser III of Assyria at the Battle of Qarqar which consists of the largest known number of combatants in a single battle to date, and is the first historical mention of the Arabs from the southern deserts (specifically Kedarites). Despite claims to the contrary, the Assyrians are defeated, since they do not press on to their nearest target, Hamath, and do not resume their attacks on Hamath and Damas for about six years (see feature link).

Philistines sack Jerusalem in Judah alongside Arabs and Ethiopians, who loot King Jehoram's house and carry off all of his family except for his youngest son, Jehoahaz. Between 722-720 BC, Moab, Philistia, Judah, and Edom rebel against Assyrian overlordship. The rising is apparently put down, as the next record shows Moab paying tribute to King Sargon II, but still apparently being led by a native ruler rather than a newly-installed governor. Moabite troops are subsequently used in Assyrian wars against the Arab tribes.

Shamash-shumi-ukin of Babylon rebels (649 B.C) against his brother in the Assyrian kingdom. Ashurbanipal soon besieges Babylon, bringing it back into the empire. Rebellions in support of Babylon by the Arabian Kedarites and Nabatu are also put down, possibly prior to Babylon's recapture. It takes two years of direct rule before a puppet ruler of Babylon is placed on the throne, while the son of the Nabatu chief, Natnu, is declared leader of their people (his father's fate is not recorded).

Nabonidus angers the Babylonians in 539 BC by trying to reintroduce Assyrian culture, including placing the moon god Sin above Babylon's Marduk in terms of importance. Perhaps because of that, resistance to Cyrus 'the Great' of Persia, when

he enters Babylonia from the east, is limited to just one major battle, near the confluence of the Diyala and Tigris rivers.

On 12/13 October, Babylon is occupied by Cyrus, who adopts an enlightened approach to his subjects, and allows the captive Judeans to return home. Arabia seems to be forgotten for a time, until the Persians invade Egypt in 525 BC and the province of Arabāya is soon created.

Ancient Egypt was conquered by the Persian empire under Cambyses in 525 BC, subsequently being annexed as a great satrapy until 404 BC. This was not without a hiccup, as Cambyses was seemingly defeated by the now-rebel Twenty-Sixth dynasty pharaoh, Psamtik III, who is theorised as enjoying a brief period of resurgence before finally being crushed by Darius I. The Achaemenid kings of Persia were subsequently acknowledged as pharaohs in this era, forming a twenty-seventh dynasty although, in their administrative terminology, it was an official satrapy or province.

Arabia around the oasis of Taymāʾ, which had belonged to the Babylonian empire, was only attached to the Persian empire during Cambyses' Egyptian campaign. Administratively it was added to the great satrapy of Mudrāya (Egypt). Between that and the earlier fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 BC it was probably one of several regions which lay 'unclaimed' until the Persians could get around to it.

However, due to a bond of friendship which was created in 525 BC, the Arabs did not actually enter any satrapy and were exempt from royal tribute (although individuals were counted as satraps of the region). Instead they brought the Persian kings a 'gift' of a thousand talents (around thirty tons) of frankincense a year. Herodotus also mentions an Arab camel corps amongst the various contingents which were levied for Xerxes' Greek expedition. These Arabs were armed with long bent-back bows.

During the Achaemenid period the term Arabāya related only to the northern part of today's Saudi Arabia and neighbouring states. Herodotus located the Arabs in the region between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, essentially along the coast from southern Palestine into northern Sinai. They also lived in the steppes of southern Mesopotamia. The central and southern areas were largely unknown territory. This use of Arabāya to designate a geographical rather than an administrative entity is paralleled in

the term 'Aribi' ('Arabu, Arubu'), which appears in Assyrian royal inscriptions beginning in 853 BC.

In the Old Testament the term 'Arab' designates inhabitants of the Syrian desert. In Babylonian economic and legal documents of the Achaemenid period some Arabs ('Arbāya') are referred to as residents of Babylon (having played a part in its history in the first millennium BC), along with Nippur, Sippar, Uruk, and other cities. The language which was being spoken by these Arabs is unknown, with the few preserved names (around twenty) not differing from Aramaic.

Psamtik III of Egypt is defeated at the Battle of Pelusium and Egypt is conquered by the Persian empire under Cambyses. Egypt becomes a vassal state, with Persian troops being supplied with water by the Arabs during their journey into Sinai. Many Egyptian temples are destroyed, but Cambyses spares the Jewish Temple on Elephantine. However, it seems that Psamtik is not immediately captured. Instead he, or the bulk of his forces, seek refuge around the Dachla Oasis. Cambyses follows him with an army of fifty thousand men and, according to Herodotus, the entire army disappears in the desert, presumably overcome by a sand storm (around 524 BC).

A highly favourable modern theory is that this story is created by Cambyses' successor to mask an embarrassing defeat. In this theory, Psamtik manages to reconquer a large part of Egypt and is crowned pharaoh in the capital, Memphis. It is Cambyses' successor in Persia, Darius I, who ends the Egyptian 'revolt' with a good deal of bloodshed two years after Cambyses' defeat, in 522 BC (or 521 BC). Satraps are appointed to govern Egypt and, presumably, they hold sway over Arabāya too. In tandem with Satrap Mazaeus of Khilakku, Bēlsunu of Ebir-nāri and Phoenicia leads fresh contingents of Greek mercenaries to put down the revolt in the Levant (principally led by Sidon). The main attack falls on Sidon but both satraps are repulsed. The Persian king himself is forced to follow up with a more direct intervention. It would seem to be after this date that Bēlsunu is replaced by one Dernes. He may be of lesser rank because he isn't given Ebir-nāri, only Phoenicia, plus Arabāya.

In 334 BC Alexander of Macedon launches his campaign into the Persian empire by crossing the Dardanelles. Much of Anatolia falls by 333 BC and Arsames falls (whilst also officially satrap of Arabāya and leading Arabian and Ethiopian contingents).

Alexander proceeds into Syria during 333-332 BC to receive the submission of Ebir-nāri, which also gains him Harran, Judah, and Phoenicia (principally Byblos and Sidon, with Tyre holding out until it can be taken by force). Athura, Gaza, and Egypt also capitulate (not without a struggle in Gaza's case). Mazaeus of Athura initially plays his part by opposing Alexander, but he eventually surrenders, and Alexander makes him satrap of Mesopotamia.

Arabāya (Arabia) seems to drift away from any centralised administration. It seems not to be included in Alexander's conquest of Egypt. Indeed, in 312 BC the most prominent Arab state, Nabataea, defeats an army from Argead Syria as it attempts to plunder Nabataean territory during the Wars of the Diadochi. The state turns into a fully recognised kingdom in the second century BC and survives until the second century AD.

The Arab invasion of the seventh century AD destroys any remaining Nabataean identity, incorporating them into the new Islamic empire. In the eighth century the Abbasids under Abu Muslim begin an open revolt in the emirate of Khorasan against established Umayyad rule of the empire which changes the empire's face and moves its focus to Baghdad.

In 909, thanks to the murder of the Aghlabid ruler of Ifriqiyya, Abdullah, and Ziyadat's massacring of his brothers and uncles, Ifriqiyya is conquered by the Fatimids. They also quickly conquer Morocco, Syria, Algeria, and Arabia, establishing holdings which oppose Baghdad until the latter's destruction by the Mongols in 1258. The Islamic empire is equally destroyed.

Subsequent Arab holdings are either largely fragmentary or are controlled from Egypt. Frequent wars break out between territories and feuds are often continued for years, resulting in ongoing bloodshed. In the sixteenth century ultimate regional power is taken by the Ottomans in Anatolia, but factional fighting continues in outlying territories such as Arabia which has Mecca as one of its main focal points.

By the start of the twentieth century and the conclusion of the First World War's disruptive regional influence, Arabia is largely part of Hashemite Transjordan. By that time, the focus for Arabia's independence is on the Saudi emirs of Riyadh.

Arabian Peninsula is a spacious diameter, with an area of about one million square miles, or at most one million and three hundred thousand square miles, and it includes the southwestern region of Asia. It is called the peninsula, because the water surrounds it from three sides, from the south, west and east, bordering the Arabian Golf and the Sea of Oman in the east, the Indian Ocean in the south, and the Red Sea in the west, and the Levant Valley is located in the north. Its northern border begins in Gana located on the eastern Mediterranean coast, passes by the Dead Sea and extends to eastern Jedan, then passes through Damascus, heading towards Euphrates and ends at Persian Gulf Geologists believe that it was connected to the African continent in the depths of time. Then it separated from North Africa with the appearance of Red Sea. Thus became surrounded by the water except from the north, and from here it is named the peninsula or (Arabian Peninsula) as it is called by Arab people themselves.

Divisions of Arabia:

The ancient geographers of Greece and Romans divided it into three sections 1. Rocky or Stony Arab Countries, 2. Desert Arab Countries, 3. Happy Arab Countries. Stone Arab country consists of the island of Sinai, which extends from the borders of Palestine to Red Sea, and is surrounded by a flint of stone flanked by rocky sparsely populated areas.

First is the desert that called by the Arabs: (Desert of Samawah), it is located in the north between Kufa and the Levant, and it is a flat land has no stone, and there are only a few water wells and resources. It is located to the south of the (desert of Samawah), and Aga and Salma mountains. They are known also as mountains of Shammar, and they are from the western range of mountain Al-Surat. They tend to the direction of east and extend to the plains in the north of the city.

Secondly is the desert that lies in the south, which is called: (the Empty Quarter). It is connected to the desert Samawah in the north and extends to the Arabian Gulf in the east. It is a large sandy desert dominated by the dryness and wilderness. There are trees and palm trees in a few parts of this area. There are no valleys have the water except a small number such as:

Sarhan valley in the north, Al- Ramah valley and Al-Dawasir valley in the south, where some rains fall, so the valleys are filled with the water.

Thirdly The desert created by volcanoes, it is "the heat means a land with black stones, grunt as if burned with fire" as mentioned by Yaqut Al-Himawi. (The hottest lands) are so many in Arab countries, especially around Medina, and Yaqut counted them in his book, The Glossary of Countries, about 19 hottest lands and well-known is: Tabuk, Harrat Salim, Harat Lalli, Harat Autas, Harat Glas, and Harrat Wagim

The happy Arab countries include Najd, Hejaz, Yemen and Oman. Najd is located in the South of the Badia Al-Sham, and it includes the middle of the Arabian Peninsula between Al-Hejaz and Al-Ahsa with the regional-Yamamah or al-Arud, where the city was deserted, and separates Najd from the hills of Amman, the desert of the Empty Quarter.

Hijaz is located in the south of the Sinai Island, and it runs along with the Red Sea from Ayila (Known by the name of Aqaba today) to Yemen. It was called Hejaz, because it separates between Tehama and Nad or between Tehama and al-Arud or between al-Yamama and al-Arud, and between Yemen and Najd Generally, Hoaz is a poor country with many valleys that are filled with the rainy water, and its climate is very hot, but it is mild in some cities such as Taif. Hijaz has a very big importance because of two major cities: Mecca and Medina, and it has received a great attention from the researchers, scholars and historians, because it is the cradle of Islam from which the new religion spread.

The countries of Yemen are located in the south of Hilar, which is rich with its fertile lands since ancient times. There is agriculture that depends on the water collected from the monsoons, which is available in good drainage. The most famous cities of Yemen are Sana'a, Aden and Najran, and the eastern city Hadramout is located on the coast of the Indian Ocean. There are so many mountains and valleys. Zefar city is located in the east of Hadhramaut, which is famous for the spices and fragrant vegetables, especially frankincense.

Oman is located at the end of the southeast of Arabian Peninsula, which is sprawling, includes a large land with the palm trees and plantations. It is famous for the skill of its inhabitants in the navigation, so the commercial relations between India and East Arabia have been established trade a long time ago.

First cradle for the semites it is believed that all the Semitic traditions indicate that the Arabian Peninsula is the first cradle for the Semites as they came and settled and lived a common life there. Arabian Peninsula, especially its central parts were not desert and barren as we see them today, but were fertile and suitable for living life and housing in ancient times, then they became dehydrated, obliterating their features and removing their civilization. It is also said that Najd is the first cradle in which the Semites were embraced, as it printed them with the indelible character of the desert. De goelj considered that the middle of the Arabian Peninsula is the first residence of Semitic race in General.

Arabian Peninsula has a great importance because of its geographical and natural location. It is not easy to be occupied by any occupier for extension, control and influence, because the vast sands of the desert surrounds it from all sides. It prevents the desires and policies of the occupier colonists, as it was like the stronghold of its people since the ancient time. Despite the existence of two great empires: Romans and Persians in their vicinity, their people were free in their social affairs throughout the ages.

Age of ignorance

It is the pre-Islamic era in the Arabian Peninsula, and it is usually intended (a time of ignorance and lack of knowledge), and if we look carefully at the Quranic verses in which the word "ignorance" is mentioned it becomes dear to us that the meaning of "ignorance" is not that corresponds to the lack of science or the little knowledge, but it is in the meaning of foolishness, anger and selfishness. In fact, "ignorance" that is against science has been frequently mentioned in this sense in the poetry of the ancient poets, pre-Islamic poets or the modern poets alike, as mentioned in one of the seven Pendants, which is attributed to the poet Antara: "If you are ignorant of what you did not know".

The word "ignorance" is not taken in the sense, which is the opposite of knowledge or the foolishness, anger and selfishness, but it is a word that is used as a situation of the Arabs before Islam or the time period that is before Islam, and this is supported by some modern historians, as Dr. Philip says: "Even: the word "ignorance" is usually interpreted in the era of ignorance or barbarism, but in the reality it means the period in which the Arabian Peninsula was free from any law and empty from any prophet or book inspired.

Semite Arabs

No doubt that Arabian Peninsula was the original homeland of Semites or their cradle in historical times before Islam, from which they spread to their neighboring regions and countries. The barrenness of the island and the fertility of the surrounding countries such as Iraq, Sham, and Yemen prompted them to migrate in the form of waves that followed each other in different times separated.

The word "Arab" in ancient history was synonymous with "Bedouin" or (Badia). God Almighty said by the words of Joseph: "It was better for me when He brought me out of the prison and brought you from the Bedouins", (Yusuf: 100) meaning that He brought you from the Badia. People of the Badia lived in vehicles from the land of Palestine from Badia Al-Sham. God reminded them about God's grace for the Ya'qub family, as He transported them from the desert to the urban area, and the family was reunited with Egypt. The word (Arab) expressions in the (Al-Muhit Dictionary) about the word (A'rab) means: The residents of desert especially, and this word has no singular.

The word "Arab" is mentioned in the holy Qur'an nine times to refer to the inhabitants of the desert. But when the Arabs came and settled in the cities and towns, they used the term (urban) for the people of cities and (Bedouins) for the people of the desert. The Saba'ites to the Gregorian date, if they mentioned some of the urban tribes and their Bedouins, said: "The so-called tribe and its Bedouins".

It clear that the true meaning of the word "Arab" is desert and the word "Arabia" means the desert of Arab Peninsula, Syria and the Sinai Peninsula. Greek historian Herodotus knew about the Arabian Peninsula, as his contemporary historians studied the word "Arab", and said that it is called the desert of the Arabian Peninsula in particular, as the Bedouins called the word (A'rab). The ancient historians of the pharaohs, Assyrians, and Phoenicians wanted to use the word Bedouins for the people of desert in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula and east of the Nile Valley is the spot between the Euphrates in the east and the Nile in the west. [Since the ancient times, the Arabian Peninsula includes two types of population: Bedouin and Urban. The Bedouin sees in urban people a legal prey for the sake of life, it means that he had the right to struggle for the survival. Therefore, the Arab neighbors of the Greek and Roman people considered the inhabitants of the deserts in general

(barbarians), i.e. brutes or they call them Saraqceni or thieves, and perhaps the word (orientalists) was derived from this last word.

The principal religious and commercial centro of Arabia was Mecos. From the very beginning Kaaba had been the place of prostration and the sanctuary. It was the first house established for mankind, blessed and guidance to the worlds. containing manifest signs, the station of Abraham, and whosoever enters is secure. Abraham made it his abode and he states that he had settled his family by it inspite of the fertility of the valley, in order to pray regularly.

The Bedouins of Arabia established contact with divinity by offering sacrifices. First the sinews of the hindlegs of the sacrificial animal, usually a camel. were severed, so that it fell over, thereupon its throat was cut with an archaic knife and the blood was made to drop upon the sacred stone". The Bedouins observed some religious restrictions such as no drinking of wine, no washing or combing, no sex contact with women, wear- ing nothing upon the head, and carrying no weapons.

The Arabs followed a kind of polytheism and their pantheon consited a hierarchy of Gods. The three important goddesses were 'Manat. Allat and Al.Uzza Manat represented the Greek Tyche Soteira, daughter of Zeus, the liberator of Man on the ses, in war, and in public assemblies Allat for Heaven and She was the Mother of Gods". Al-Uzzs performed duties almost like that of Allet and She received the glorious worship of the subjects more than other goddesses.

The Araba sacrificed their boys and girls for the morning star The Arab and Syrian ladies prayed to the morning star for enhancing their beauty by climb climbing on their roots and trees one very early morning. The priest of AlUzza was usually sinaked black woman and on occassions of danger to the temple she shouted, "Be courageous Al Uzza and protect thyself!" The Arabs believed that if that priest is harmed she will turn into black cinder.

The Arabs were practical. realistic, ready to strike a bargain or to compromise, hardy, enterprising and couragious. They possessed both communal loyalty and public spirit. Arabs exhibited their skills in pains taking and it helped them in establishing an empire in the seventh century. Their racial differences vanished with the. formation of the Arabicised

empire and they were very well recorded in history as Arab speaking peoples after the gospelisation of Muhammed the Prophet.

Kaaba

Kaaba, also spelled Ka'bah, shrine located near the centre of the Great Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and considered by Muslims everywhere to be the most sacred spot on Earth. Muslims orient themselves toward this small shrine during the five daily prayers, bury their dead facing its meridian, and cherish the ambition of visiting it on pilgrimage, or hajj, in accord with the command set out in the Qur'an.

The cube-shaped structure is roughly 50 feet (15 metres) high, and it is about 35 by 40 feet (10 by 12 metres) at its base. Constructed of gray stone and marble, it is oriented so that its corners roughly correspond to the points of the compass. The interior contains nothing but the three pillars supporting the roof and a number of suspended silver and gold lamps. During most of the year the Kaaba is covered with an enormous cloth of black brocade, the kiswah.

Located in the eastern corner of the Kaaba is the Black Stone.of Mecca, whose now broken pieces are surrounded by a ring of stone and held together by a heavy silver band. According to tradition, this stone was given to Adam on his expulsion from paradise in order to obtain forgiveness of his sins. Legend has it that the stone was originally white but has become black by absorbing the sins of the countless thousands of pilgrims who have kissed and touched it.

Every Muslim who makes the pilgrimage is required to walk around the Kaaba seven times, during which he or she kisses and touches the Black Stone. When the month of pilgrimages (Dhu al-Hijjah) is over, a ceremonial washing of the Kaaba takes place; religious officials as well as pilgrims take part.

The early history of the Kaaba is not well known, but it is certain that in the period before the rise of Islam it was a polytheist sanctuary and was a site of pilgrimage for people throughout the Arabian Peninsula. The Qur'an says of Abraham and Ishmael that they "raised the foundations" of the Kaaba. The exact sense is ambiguous, but many Muslims have interpreted the phrase to mean that they rebuilt a shrine first erected by Adam of which only the foundations still existed. The Kaaba has been destroyed, damaged, and subsequently

rebuilt several times since. In 930 the Black Stone itself was carried away by an extreme Shi'i sect known as the Qarmatians and held almost 20 years for ransom. During Muhammad's early ministry, the Kaaba was the qiblah, or direction of prayer, for the Muslim community. After the Muslim migration, or Hijrah. to Medina, the qiblah briefly switched to Jerusalem before returning to the Kaaba. When Muhammad's forces conquered Mecca in 630, he ordered the destruction of the pagan idols housed in the shrine and ordered it cleansed of all signs of polytheism. The Kaaba has since been the focal point of Muslim piety.

kiswah, black brocade cloth that covers the most sacred shrine of Islam, the Ka'bah (..) in Mecca. A new kiswah is made in Egypt every year and carried to Mecca by pilgrims. On it is embroidered in gold the Muslim profession of faith (shahadah) and a gold band of ornamental calligraphy carrying Qur änic verses. Each year during the major pilgrimage (ha), the kiswah is replaced with a white cloth that corresponds to the white ceremonial robes of the pilgrims and signifies entrance into a sacred state (aram). At the end of the hajj, the new kiswah is put in place, and the old one is cut into small relics that are sold to pilgrims. The custom of covering the Ka bah is pre- Islamic; the yearly renewal of the covering is an innovation that is said to have begun during the caliphate of Umar L. when the Ka'bah almost collapsed under the weight of too many kiswahs.

Muhammad The Prophet

Koreishi Family:

Mecca was the gate of Arbia and it was the stagng post for commercial caravans from yemen to Egypt and Syria. Also this city was prominent through ages as it possessed a small cubical stone building called Kaaba the seat of worship and pilgrimage of the Arabs. In meccs Koreishi family was the famous trading community and they were the people of the world engrossed in their business enterprises. Therefore everafterwards the Koreishi advent they. As a business class of that locality were very influencial the Koreishi chiefs intented to have a uniform religion throughout their land and quite truly could fulfill their end.

Birth of Muhammad

To the influential horse-dealer hashim in Mecca was born Abdul Muttalib in A, D. 497. The latter exercised of Khad supreme authority in this part of land from A. D. 520 to

tions. 579. He was the father of eighteen children and he took a rash oath to sarifice one of his sons in A D. 509 at the forty. I premises of the holy idols of Kaaba. His most loved son Abdullah, who was then about twenty four years of age, him end was fixed by him for that sacrifice and it was at the time the Koreishi chiefs rose against the barbarous action marriage and with the suggestion of a witch alias arraia the family goods wh substituted to his life some hundred camels. It was after shadows, this incident, Abdullah married Amina, the daughter of the Koret Wahb. chief of the family of the Zohri and to this couple and it is was born Muhammad 'the Glorified."

Muhammad. the 'much praised' was born in Meeca in August 5:0 that is five years after the death of Justinian After some time the child was fostered byHalima and she miraculously had a super abundant harvest. It is at his sixth year that Muhammad lost his mother and entered the house of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib. Fate tested Prophet that he lost his grand father within two years and he reached his uncle Abu Talib who took care on the boy in a paternal way.

When he was twelve, Prophet visited Syria and he met a Christian monk and he foretold the greatness of the Prophet. Later on he spent his time in guarding the flocks and took his share in business. He heard the legends of the Jews, Christians and also the divine revelations there.

Muhammad Marriage

It was this time Prophet came into the contact of Khadijah who entrusted to him some business obliga- tions. As Muhammad was honest in his dealings she conveyed her intention of marrying him at her age of torty. It inagurated the fortune of Muhammad that after his marriage she was a faithful companion and consoled him encouraged him, and strengthened him when he was wavering. The testimony of Abu Talib in the marriage of Muhammad was that, 'Although peor in goods which are but transient possessions. inconsistent shadows, my nephew Muhammad exceeds all the men of of the Koreishi in nobility of soul, virtue, and understanding' and it is true that Muhammad doserved this warm appreciation,

After a decade Muhammad devoted himself to deep thought in solitary.places. He realised that there is only one supreme God and not many. His cataleptic fits seized" him from time to time, and saw vivid dreams and began to feel the trevail of new ideas, It was on

such occasions the Lord Creator sent Gabriel and illuminated him with a divine light. With streaming perspiration Muhammad ran to Khadijah and told her his vision and he was disturbed whether it was God or Satan. Khadijah comforted him and said that it is God only and shaped his divine beginning and hence but for Khadijah's help on those Occasions Muhammad would never have become the prophet.

In the second time also Muhammad was of the same doubt and yet he managed to listen to Gabriel who assured and announced him that Allah, the lord of Heaven and Earth had chosen him as his ambassador to inform men of His holy will. Thereaffer the communica- tions of him became the divine revelations and were accepted with reverence. Thereafter Muhammad started teaching the revela tions to his people. As a teacher, with all devotion he inagurated his mission. In the beginning he revealed to his wife Khadijah, to his daughters, Ali, and Abu Bakr and impressed then that he is the messenger of God. In his preachings Muhammad was very careful to Keep certain limitations. He did not venture to speak the noble sanctity of Kaaba, its ceremonies, and the adoration of the Black Stone.

Preaching of Muhammad

Also he addressed his sermons to the men of his own race, the Koreishi and not to the richest and to the other races. Also he insisted that man must give account of his deeds and shall be rewarded for his virtue in paradise and punishment for his vices in hell.

His sermon created opposition and in one of the assem- blies, his uncle, Abu Lahab lifted a stone against him. Threats and abuses treaded regularly on his way. Abu Sufyan and Abu Hakam, 'The Father of Folly' became the two enemies of the budding Prophet.

Umar was sent to kill Muhammad and on the way he was miraculously converted by his sister Fatima and became an earnest believer like St. Paul. Thereafter persecution of the followers of Prophet increased and Abu Talib protected Muhammed and the kinsmen. It was at this time he lost his devoted protectors Abu Talib and Khadijah who parted him for ever to attain the eternal bliss. Muhammad mour ned for both of them. He said. "Never was there is a better wife than Khadijah, she believed in me when men despised me; she relieved my wants when I was poor and despised by the world". He consoled the loss by his marriage with Sauda and betrothel to Aisha, the young daughter of Abu Bakr.

While the people of Mecca were protesting to the words of Muhammad and the doctrine of one God, the pilgrims of Yathreb alias Medina were more prepared to listen to Prophet. Two years later, the people of Medina invited Muhammed and vowed that they will pray_only one God and to no other Gods. to obey Prophet and to be with him both in joy and sorrow and to confess truth. without fearing anyone.

Higira period

Prophet was preaching in Mecna again for thres months and it was at this time, he was Koreishi had vowed to murder him. Therefore Muhammad informed that the and Abu Bakr mounted on swift camels and made their flight and concealed themselves in a cave. sojourn for three days secretly in the cave of Mount Thau Aftar a he escaped with Abu Bakr to Medina. This event took place on 16th of July in A. D, 622 and it is reckoned as the Hegira-the era of Muslims.

The people of Medina received Muhammad with joy Alijoined them in Medina later, and Umar joined Muham med with his beautiful daughter Halsa. Uthuman alao foined him with his wife Rokayyah. Muhammad married Halsa and entrusted her the duty of keeping the case containing the inspired sayings of Muhammad - the Quran.

Prayer Hall

The preachings of Muhammad at Medina Hwas to inspire the Jews there and hence paid much attention to the frequent references of the Sabbath, and made them to turn towards Jerusalam as their holy place of worship. As the laws refused him to accept him a a the Messiah, he appointed Friday as the Sabbath, and eaked them to turn towards Mecca. In this way, the preach- ings of Muhammad was mostly to suit the convenience of the followers-a community of his own and it impressed the people of other faiths to turn towards the religion of Muhammad and to accept him as the Messiah. On failing in his efforts Muhammad created an independant cread of his own with some special features as to suit the growth of the religion that he preached among the people of his own in Medina. As his followers both men and women were suffering from home sickness, and left without relatives, he founded a system of brother. hood that could inspire a new life in them. This neighbour hood founded by him lasts in the Muslim community even today. Muhammad constructed the first mosque

there and it was only a simple building with the wood of date trees and from there his steadfast devotees summoned the faithful for prayer.

Political achievement

The caravan leader Abu Sufyan waged an attack on Muhammad at Badr, eighty five miles south west of Medina in A. D. 624. As Prophet inspired his men during war. they emerged successful and the Meccans were defeated. This battle signified the first military victory of the Muslims. In the following year Abu Sufyan avenged the Muslims in the battle of Uhud and Muhammad was wounded; ev nthen the battle was favourable to the Muslims. Viewing at the trends of Islamic struggles, in its character it was passing from defensive to offensive. It experienced the transformation from a message to religion community to state religion and proceeded in and at last ilonrished as a militant polity.

The rise of heathenism once again intented a war with the Medinese. Muhammad dug a trench and conceded himself Subsequently his attack on the lews resulted in the death of sixhnundred soldiers of the latter and they surrendered in A. D. 628 and paid tribute.

In A. D. 628 the "two mighty swords of Islam" namely Khalid Ibn Al Walid and Amir Ibn Al As became Muslims and they led the invasion of Mecca in January 630 in order to enter Kaaba Muhammad smashed the- idols there and declared the territory as 'haram' asto for bid the polytheists to visit the sacred place.

Without much delay Muhammad was flocked by men of far and near and he was honoured as 'Prince' Prophet in A. D 630-31 and therefore the year was named as the Year of Delegations. The Bedouins of Arabia joined the faith as soon as heathenism was yielding to a nobler faith and higher morality throughout the state. Muhammad was peaceful and was the head ot the pilgrims. It was perhaps his last triumph and on hist return to Medina. he had a severe headache and died on June 8 632

Muhammad was a symbol of unpretentious life He was mending his own clothes even at the days of his Dalory. Of Prophet's dozen wives his favourite was Aisha Muhammad loved his daughter Fatimah who was through Khadijah and Fatimah became the spouse of Ali. People instituted a canon to observe the life of a "Perfect Man" in Prophet to be imitated minutely. In the sermons he encouraged fraternity by saying. Know ye that every Muslim is a

brother unto-every other Muslim, and that you are now one brotherhood and to this exercise he made the mosques the public forums and military drill grounds and places of common worship. People stopped worshipping idols. feeding on dead animals, practising immorality, and deserting the families. A new order of llie had its dawn due to the teachings of Muhammad throughout Arabia and he was considered as the embodiment of all sciences, wisdom and theology."

Islam

Islam, major world religion promulgated by the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia in the 7th century CE. The Arabic term islām, literally "surrender," illuminates the fundamental religious idea of Islam—that the believer (called a Muslim, from the active particle of islām) accepts surrender to the will of Allah (in Arabic, Allāh: God). Allah is viewed as the sole God—creator, sustainer, and restorer of the world. The will of Allah, to which human beings must submit, is made known through the sacred scriptures, the Qurʾān (often spelled Koran in English), which Allah revealed to his messenger, Muhammad. In Islam Muhammad is considered the last of a series of prophets (including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Jesus), and his message simultaneously consummates and completes the "revelations" attributed to earlier prophets.

Retaining its emphasis on an uncompromising monotheism and a strict adherence to certain essential religious practices, the religion taught by Muhammad to a small group of followers spread rapidly through the Middle East to Africa, Europe, the Indian subcontinent, the Malay Peninsula, and China. By the early 21st century there were more than 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide. Although many sectarian movements have arisen within Islam, all Muslims are bound by a common faith and a sense of belonging to a single community.

The foundations of Islam

The legacy of Muhammad

From the very beginning of Islam, Muhammad had inculcated a sense of brotherhood and a bond of faith among his followers, both of which helped to develop among them a feeling of close relationship that was accentuated by their experiences of persecution as a nascent community in Mecca. The strong attachment to the tenets of the

Qurʾānic revelation and the conspicuous socioeconomic content of Islamic religious practices cemented this bond of faith. In 622 CE, when the Prophet migrated to Medina, his preaching was soon accepted, and the community-state of Islam emerged. During this early period, Islam acquired its characteristic ethos as a religion uniting in itself both the spiritual and temporal aspects of life and seeking to regulate not only the individual's relationship to God (through conscience) but human relationships in a social setting as well. Thus, there is not only an Islamic religious institution but also an Islamic law, state, and other institutions governing society. Not until the 20th century were the religious (private) and the secular (public) distinguished by some Muslim thinkers and separated formally in certain places such as Turkey.

This dual religious and social character of Islam, expressing itself in one way as a religious community commissioned by God to bring its own value system to the world through the jihād ("exertion," commonly translated as "holy war" or "holy struggle"), explains the astonishing success of the early generations of Muslims. Within a century after the Prophet's death in 632 CE, they had brought a large part of the globe—from Spain across Central Asia to India—under a new Arab Muslim empire.

The period of Islamic conquests and empire building marks the first phase of the expansion of Islam as a religion. Islam's essential egalitarianism within the community of the faithful and its official discrimination against the followers of other religions won rapid converts. Jews and Christians were assigned a special status as communities possessing scriptures and were called the "people of the Book" (ahl al-kitab) and, therefore, were allowed religious autonomy. They were, however, required to pay a per capita tax called jizyah, as opposed to pagans, who were required to either accept Islam or die. The same status of the "people of the Book" was later extended in particular times and places to Zoroastrians and Hindus, but many "people of the Book" joined Islam in order to escape the disability of the jizyah. A much more massive expansion of Islam after the 12th century was inaugurated by the Sufis (Muslim mystics), who were mainly responsible for the spread of Islam in India, Central Asia, Turkey, and sub-Saharan Africa.

Beside the jihad and Sufi missionary activity, another factor in the spread of Islam was the far-ranging influence of Muslim traders, who not only introduced Islam quite early to the Indian east coast and South India but also proved to be the main catalytic agents (beside

the Sufis) in converting people to Islam in Indonesia, Malaya, and China. Islam was introduced to Indonesia in the 14th century, hardly having time to consolidate itself there politically before the region came under Dutch hegemony.

The vast variety of races and cultures embraced by Islam (an estimated total of more than 1.5 billion persons worldwide in the early 21st century) has produced important internal differences. All segments of Muslim society, however, are bound by a common faith and a sense of belonging to a single community. With the loss of political power during the period of Western colonialism in the 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of the Islamic community (ummah), instead of weakening, became stronger. The faith of Islam helped various Muslim peoples in their struggle to gain political freedom in the mid-20th century, and the unity of Islam contributed to later political solidarity.

Sources of Islamic doctrinal and social views

Islamic doctrine, law, and thinking in general are based upon four sources, or fundamental principles (uṣul): (1) the Quran, (2) the Sunnah (“Traditions”), (3) ijmāʿ (“consensus”), and (4) ijtihad (“individual thought”).

Quran

The Qurʾān (literally, “reading” or “recitation”) is regarded as the verbatim word, or speech, of God delivered to Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel. Divided into 114 suras (chapters) of unequal length, it is the fundamental source of Islamic teaching. The suras revealed at Mecca during the earliest part of Muhammad’s career are concerned mostly with ethical and spiritual teachings and the Day of Judgment. The suras revealed at Medina at a later period in the career of the Prophet are concerned for the most part with social legislation and the politico-moral principles for constituting and ordering the community.

Sunnah (“a well-trodden path”) was used by pre-Islamic Arabs to denote their tribal or common law. In Islam it came to mean the example of the Prophet—i.e., his words and deeds as recorded in compilations known as Hadith (in Arabic, Ḥadīth: literally, “report”; a collection of sayings attributed to the Prophet). Hadith provide the written documentation of the Prophet’s words and deeds. Six of these collections, compiled in the 3rd century AH (9th century CE), came to be regarded as especially authoritative by the largest group in Islam, the

Sunnis. Another large group, the Shiʿah, has its own Hadith contained in four canonical collections.

The doctrine of ijmāʿ, or consensus, was introduced in the 2nd century AH (8th century CE) in order to standardize legal theory and practice and to overcome individual and regional differences of opinion. Though conceived as a "consensus of scholars," ijmāʿ was in actual practice a more fundamental operative factor. From the 3rd century AH ijmāʿ has amounted to a principle of stability in thinking; points on which consensus was reached in practice were considered closed and further substantial questioning of them prohibited. Accepted interpretations of the Qurʾān and the actual content of the Sunnah (i.e., Hadith and theology) all rest finally on the ijmāʿ in the sense of the acceptance of the authority of their community.

Ijtihad, meaning "to endeavour" or "to exert effort," was required to find the legal or doctrinal solution to a new problem. In the early period of Islam, because ijtihad took the form of individual opinion (ray), there was a wealth of conflicting and chaotic opinions. In the 2nd century AH ijtihād was replaced by qiyas (reasoning by strict analogy), a formal procedure of deduction based on the texts of the Qurʾān and the Hadith. The transformation of ijma into a conservative mechanism and the acceptance of a definitive body of Hadith virtually closed the "gate of ijtihad" in Sunni Islam while ijtihād continued in Shiism. Nevertheless, certain outstanding Muslim thinkers (e.g., al-Ghazali in the 11th–12th century) continued to claim the right of new ijtihād for themselves, and reformers in the 18th–20th centuries, because of modern influences, caused this principle once more to receive wider acceptance. The Quran and Hadith are discussed below. The significance of ijma and ijtihād are discussed below in the contexts of Islamic theology, philosophy, and law.

Doctrines of the Quran

God

The doctrine about God in the Quran is rigorously monotheistic: God is one and unique; he has no partner and no equal. Trinitarianism, the Christian belief that God is three persons in one substance, is vigorously repudiated. Muslims believe that there are no intermediaries between God and the creation that he brought into being by his sheer

command, “Be.” Although his presence is believed to be everywhere, he is not incarnated in anything. He is the sole creator and sustainer of the universe, wherein every creature bears witness to his unity and lordship. But he is also just and merciful: his justice ensures order in his creation, in which nothing is believed to be out of place, and his mercy is unbounded and encompasses everything. His creating and ordering the universe is viewed as the act of prime mercy for which all things sing his glories. The God of the Quran, described as majestic and sovereign, is also a personal God; he is viewed as being nearer to one than one’s own jugular vein, and, whenever a person in need or distress calls him, he responds. Above all, he is the God of guidance and shows everything, particularly humanity, the right way, “the straight path.”

This picture of God—wherein the attributes of power, justice, and mercy interpenetrate—is related to the concept of God shared by Judaism and Christianity and also differs radically from the concepts of pagan Arabia, to which it provided an effective answer. The pagan Arabs believed in a blind and inexorable fate over which humans had no control. For this powerful but insensible fate the Qurʾān substituted a powerful but provident and merciful God. The Qurʾān carried through its uncompromising monotheism by rejecting all forms of idolatry and eliminating all gods and divinities that the Arabs worshipped in their sanctuaries (ḥarams), the most prominent of which was the Kaʿbah sanctuary in Mecca itself.

The universe

In order to prove the unity of God, the Quran lays frequent stress on the design and order in the universe. There are no gaps or dislocations in nature. Order is explained by the fact that every created thing is endowed with a definite and defined nature whereby it falls into a pattern. This nature, though it allows every created thing to function in a whole, sets limits, and this idea of the limitedness of everything is one of the most fixed points in both the cosmology and theology of the Qurʾān. The universe is viewed, therefore, as autonomous, in the sense that everything has its own inherent laws of behaviour, but not as autocratic, because the patterns of behaviour have been endowed by God and are strictly limited. “Everything has been created by us according to a measure.” Though every creature is thus limited and “measured out” and hence depends upon God, God alone, who reigns unchallenged in the heavens and the earth, is unlimited, independent, and self-sufficient.

Humanity

According to the Qurʾān, God created two apparently parallel species of creatures, human beings and jinn, the one from clay and the other from fire. About the jinn, however, the Quran says little, although it is implied that the jinn are endowed with reason and responsibility but are more prone to evil than human beings are. It is with humanity that the Qurʾān, which describes itself as a guide for the human race, is centrally concerned. The story of the Fall of Adam (the first man) promoted in Judaism and Christianity is accepted, but the Quran states that God forgave Adam his act of disobedience, which is not viewed in the Quran as original sin in the Christian sense of the term.

In the story of the creation of humanity, Iblis, or Satan, who protested to God against the creation of human beings, because they "would sow mischief on earth," lost in the competition of knowledge against Adam. The Quran, therefore, declares humanity to be the noblest of all creation, the created being who bore the trust (of responsibility) that the rest of creation refused to accept. The Quran thus reiterates that all nature has been made subservient to humans, who are seen as God's vice-regent on earth; nothing in all creation has been made without a purpose, and humanity itself has not been created "in sport" but rather has been created with the purpose of serving and obeying God's will.

Despite this lofty station, however, the Qurʾān describes human nature as frail and faltering. Whereas everything in the universe has a limited nature and every creature recognizes its limitation and insufficiency, human beings are viewed as having been given freedom and therefore are prone to rebelliousness and pride, with the tendency to arrogate to themselves the attributes of self-sufficiency. Pride, thus, is viewed as the cardinal sin of human beings, because, by not recognizing in themselves their essential creaturely limitations, they become guilty of ascribing to themselves partnership with God (shirk: associating a creature with the Creator) and of violating the unity of God. True faith (iman), thus, consists of belief in the immaculate Divine Unity and islam (surrender) in one's submission to the Divine Will.

Satan, sin, and repentance

In order to communicate the truth of Divine Unity, God has sent messengers or prophets to human beings, whose weakness of nature makes them ever prone to forget or

even willfully to reject Divine Unity under the promptings of Satan. According to the Qurʾānic teaching, the being who became Satan (Shayṭān or Iblīs) had previously occupied a high station but fell from divine grace by his act of disobedience in refusing to honour Adam when he was ordered to do so. Since then his work has been to beguile human beings into error and sin. Satan is, therefore, the contemporary of humanity, and Satan's own act of disobedience is construed by the Quran as the sin of pride. Satan's machinations will cease only on the Last Day.

Judging from the accounts of the Qurʾān, the record of humanity's acceptance of the prophets' messages has been far from perfect. The whole universe is replete with signs of God. The human soul itself is viewed as a witness of the unity and grace of God. The messengers of God have, throughout history, been calling humanity back to God. Yet not all people have accepted the truth; many of them have rejected it and become disbelievers (kāfir, plural kuffār; literally, "concealing"—i.e., the blessings of God), and, when a person becomes so obdurate, his heart is sealed by God. Nevertheless, it is always possible for a sinner to repent (tawbah) and redeem himself by a genuine conversion to the truth. There is no point of no return, and God is forever merciful and always willing and ready to pardon. Genuine repentance has the effect of removing all sins and restoring a person to the state of sinlessness with which he started his life.

Prophecy

Prophets are men specially elected by God to be his messengers. Prophethood is indivisible, and the Qurʾān requires recognition of all prophets as such without discrimination. Yet they are not all equal, some of them being particularly outstanding in qualities of steadfastness and patience under trial. Abraham, Noah, Moses, and Jesus were such great prophets. As vindication of the truth of their mission, God often vests them with miracles: Abraham was saved from fire, Noah from the Deluge, and Moses from the pharaoh. Not only was Jesus born from the Virgin Mary, but God also saved him from crucifixion at the hands of the Jews. The conviction that God's messengers are ultimately vindicated and saved is an integral part of the Qurʾānic doctrine.

All prophets are human and never part of divinity: they are the most perfect of humans who are recipients of revelation from God. When God wishes to speak to a human,

he sends an angel messenger to him or makes him hear a voice or inspires him. Muhammad is accepted as the last prophet in this series and its greatest member, for in him all the messages of earlier prophets were consummated. The archangel Gabriel brought the Quran down to the Prophet's "heart." Gabriel is represented by the Quran as a spirit whom the Prophet could sometimes see and hear. According to early traditions, the Prophet's revelations occurred in a state of trance when his normal consciousness was transformed. This state was accompanied by heavy sweating. The Quran itself makes it clear that the revelations brought with them a sense of extraordinary weight: "If we were to send this Quran down on a mountain, you would see it split asunder out of fear of God."

This phenomenon at the same time was accompanied by an unshakable conviction that the message was from God, and the Quran describes itself as the transcript of a heavenly "Mother Book" written on a "Preserved Tablet." The conviction was of such an intensity that the Qurʾān categorically denies that it is from any earthly source, for in that case it would be liable to "manifold doubts and oscillations."

Eschatology (doctrine of last things)

In Islamic doctrine, on the Last Day, when the world will come to an end, the dead will be resurrected and a judgment will be pronounced on every person in accordance with his deeds. Although the Quran in the main speaks of a personal judgment, there are several verses that speak of the resurrection of distinct communities that will be judged according to "their own book." In conformity with this, the Quran also speaks in several passages of the "death of communities," each one of which has a definite term of life. The actual evaluation, however, will be for every individual, whatever the terms of reference of his performance. In order to prove that the resurrection will occur, the Quran uses a moral and a physical argument. Because not all requital is meted out in this life, a final judgment is necessary to bring it to completion. Physically, God, who is all-powerful, has the ability to destroy and bring back to life all creatures, who are limited and are, therefore, subject to God's limitless power.

Some Islamic schools deny the possibility of human intercession but most accept it, and in any case God himself, in his mercy, may forgive certain sinners. Those condemned will burn in hellfire, and those who are saved will enjoy the abiding joys

of paradise. Hell and heaven are both spiritual and corporeal. Beside suffering in physical fire, the damned will also experience fire "in their hearts." Similarly, the blessed will experience, besides corporeal enjoyment, the greatest happiness of divine pleasure.

Social service

Because the purpose of human existence is submission to the Divine Will, as is the purpose of every other creature, God's role in relation to human beings is that of the commander. Whereas the rest of nature obeys God automatically, humans are the only creatures that possess the choice to obey or disobey. With the deep-seated belief in Satan's existence, humanity's fundamental role becomes one of moral struggle, which constitutes the essence of human endeavour. Recognition of the unity of God does not simply rest in the intellect but entails consequences in terms of the moral struggle, which consists primarily in freeing oneself of narrowness of mind and smallness of heart. One must go out of oneself and expend one's possessions for the sake of others.

The doctrine of social service, in terms of alleviating suffering and helping the needy, constitutes an integral part of Islamic teaching. Praying to God and other religious acts are deemed to be incomplete in the absence of active service to the needy. In regard to this matter, the Qurʾānic criticisms of human nature become very sharp: "Man is by nature timid; when evil befalls him, he panics, but when good things come to him he prevents them from reaching others." It is Satan who whispers into a person's ears that by spending for others he will become poor. God, on the contrary, promises prosperity in exchange for such expenditure, which constitutes a credit with God and grows much more than the money people invest in usury. Hoarding of wealth without recognizing the rights of the poor is threatened with the direst punishment in the hereafter and is declared to be one of the main causes of the decay of societies in this world. The practice of usury is forbidden.

With this socioeconomic doctrine cementing the bond of faith, there emerges the idea of a closely knit community of the faithful who are declared to be "brothers unto each other." Muslims are described as "the middle community bearing witness on humankind," "the best community produced for humankind," whose function it is "to enjoin good and forbid evil" (Qurʾān). Cooperation and "good advice" within the community are emphasized, and a person who deliberately tries to harm the interests of the community is to be

given exemplary punishment. Opponents from within the community are to be fought and reduced with armed force, if issues cannot be settled by persuasion and arbitration.

Because the mission of the community is to "enjoin good and forbid evil" so that "there is no mischief and corruption" on earth, the doctrine of jihad is the logical outcome. For the early community it was a basic religious concept. The lesser jihad, or holy striving, means an active struggle using armed force whenever necessary. The object of such striving is not the conversion of individuals to Islam but rather the gaining of political control over the collective affairs of societies to run them in accordance with the principles of Islam. Individual conversions occur as a by-product of this process when the power structure passes into the hands of the Muslim community. In fact, according to strict Muslim doctrine, conversions "by force" are forbidden, because after the revelation of the Qurʾān "good and evil have become distinct," so that one may follow whichever one may prefer (Qurʾān), and it is also strictly prohibited to wage wars for the sake of acquiring worldly glory, power, and rule. With the establishment of the Muslim empire, however, the doctrine of the lesser jihad was modified by the leaders of the community. Their main concern had become the consolidation of the empire and its administration, and thus they interpreted the teaching in a defensive rather than in an expansive sense. The Khārijite sect, which held that "decision belongs to God alone," insisted on continuous and relentless jihad, but its followers were virtually destroyed during the internecine wars in the 8th century.

Beside a measure of economic justice and the creation of a strong idea of community, the Prophet Muhammad effected a general reform of Arab society, in particular protecting its weaker segments—the poor, the orphans, the women, and the slaves. Slavery was not legally abolished, but emancipation of slaves was religiously encouraged as an act of merit. Slaves were given legal rights, including the right of acquiring their freedom in return for payment, in installments, of a sum agreed upon by the slave and his master out of his earnings. A slave woman who bore a child by her master became automatically free after her master's death. The infanticide of girls that was practiced among certain tribes in pre-Islamic Arabia—out of fear of poverty or a sense of shame—was forbidden.

Distinction and privileges based on tribal rank or race were repudiated in the Qurʾān and in the celebrated "Farewell Pilgrimage Address" of the Prophet shortly before his death. All are therein declared to be "equal children of Adam," and the only distinction recognized

in the sight of God is to be based on piety and good acts. The age-old Arab institution of intertribal revenge (called thaʾr)—whereby it was not necessarily the killer who was executed but a person equal in rank to the slain person—was abolished. The pre-Islamic ethical ideal of manliness was modified and replaced by a more humane ideal of moral virtue and piety.

Fundamental practices and institutions of Islam

The five pillars

During the earliest decades after the death of the Prophet, certain basic features of the religio-social organization of Islam were singled out to serve as anchoring points of the community's life and formulated as the "Pillars of Islam." To these five, the Khārijite sect added a sixth pillar, the jihad, which, however, was not accepted by the general community.

The shahadah, or profession of faith

The first pillar is the profession of faith: "There is no deity but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God," upon which depends membership in the community. The profession of faith must be recited at least once in one's lifetime, aloud, correctly, and purposively, with an understanding of its meaning and with an assent from the heart. From this fundamental belief are derived beliefs in (1) angels (particularly Gabriel, the Angel of Inspiration), (2) the revealed Book (the Quran and the sacred books of Judaism and Christianity), (3) a series of prophets (among whom figures of Jewish and Christian tradition are particularly eminent, although it is believed that God has sent messengers to every nation), and (4) the Last Day (Day of Judgment).

Prayer

The second pillar consists of five daily canonical prayers. These prayers may be offered individually if one is unable to go to the mosque. The first prayer is performed before sunrise, the second just after noon, the third in the late afternoon, the fourth immediately after sunset, and the fifth before retiring to bed. Before a prayer, ablutions are performed, including the washing of hands, face, and feet. The muezzin (one who gives the call for prayer) chants aloud from a raised place (such as a tower) in the mosque. When prayer starts, the imam, or leader (of the prayer), stands in the front facing in the direction of Mecca, and the congregation stands behind him in rows, following him in various postures. Each prayer

consists of two to four genuflection units (rakah); each unit consists of a standing posture (during which verses from the Qurʾān are recited—in certain prayers aloud, in others silently), as well as a genuflection and two prostrations. At every change in posture, "God is great" is recited. Tradition has fixed the materials to be recited in each posture.

Special congregational prayers are offered on Friday instead of the prayer just after noon. The Friday service consists of a sermon (khuṭbah), which partly consists of preaching in the local language and partly of recitation of certain formulas in Arabic. In the sermon, the preacher usually recites one or several verses of the Quran and builds his address on it, which can have a moral, social, or political content. Friday sermons usually have considerable impact on public opinion regarding both moral and sociopolitical questions.

Although not ordained as an obligatory duty, nocturnal prayers (called tahajjud) are encouraged, particularly during the latter half of the night. During the month of Ramadan, lengthy prayers called tarāwīḥ are offered congregationally before retiring.

In strict doctrine, the five daily prayers cannot be waived even for the sick, who may pray in bed and, if necessary, lying down. When on a journey, the two afternoon prayers may be followed one by the other; the sunset and late evening prayers may be combined as well. In practice, however, much laxity has occurred, particularly among the modernized classes, although Friday prayers are still very well attended.

The zakat

The third pillar is the obligatory tax called zakāt ("purification," indicating that such a payment makes the rest of one's wealth religiously and legally pure). This is the only permanent tax levied by the Quran and is payable annually on food grains, cattle, and cash after one year's possession. The amount varies for different categories. Thus, on grains and fruits it is 10 percent if land is watered by rain, 5 percent if land is watered artificially. On cash and precious metals it is 21/2 percent. Zakat is collectable by the state and is to be used primarily for the poor, but the Qurʾān mentions other purposes: ransoming Muslim war captives, redeeming chronic debts, paying tax collectors' fees, jihad (and by extension, according to Quran commentators, education and health), and creating facilities for travelers.

After the breakup of Muslim religio-political power, payment of zakat became a matter of voluntary charity dependent on individual conscience. In the modern Muslim world it has been left up to the individual, except in some countries (such as Saudi Arabia) where the Shariah (Islamic law) is strictly maintained.

Fasting

Fasting during the month of Ramadan (ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar), laid down in the Qurʾān (2:183–185), is the fourth pillar of the faith. Fasting begins at daybreak and ends at sunset, and during the day eating, drinking, and smoking are forbidden. The Quran (2:185) states that it was in the month of Ramadan that the Quran was revealed. Another verse of the Quran (97:1) states that it was revealed "on the Night of Power," which Muslims generally observe on one of the last 10 nights of Ramadan (usually the 27th night). For a person who is sick or on a journey, fasting may be postponed until "another equal number of days." The elderly and the incurably sick are exempted through the daily feeding of one poor person if they have the means.

The hajj

The fifth pillar is the annual pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca prescribed for every Muslim once in a lifetime—"provided one can afford it" and provided a person has enough provisions to leave for his family in his absence. A special service is held in the sacred mosque on the 7th of the month of Dhu al-Ḥijjah (last in the Muslim year). Pilgrimage activities begin by the 8th and conclude on the 12th or 13th. All worshippers enter the state of iḥrām; they wear two seamless garments and avoid sexual intercourse, the cutting of hair and nails, and certain other activities. Pilgrims from outside Mecca assume iḥrām at specified points en route to the city. The principal activities consist of walking seven times around the Kaʿbah, a shrine within the mosque; the kissing and touching of the Black Stone (Ḥajar al-Aswad); and the ascent of and running between Mount Ṣafa and Mount Marwah (which are now, however, mere elevations) seven times. At the second stage of the ritual, the pilgrim proceeds from Mecca to Mina, a few miles away; from there he goes to ʿArafat, where it is essential to hear a sermon and to spend one afternoon. The last rites consist of spending the night at Muzdalifah (between ʿArafat and Mina) and offering sacrifice on the last day of iḥrām, which is the ʿid ("festival") of sacrifice. See Eid al-Adha.

Many countries have imposed restrictions on the number of outgoing pilgrims because of foreign-exchange difficulties. Because of the improvement of communications, however, the total number of visitors has greatly increased in recent years. By the early 21st century the number of annual visitors was estimated to exceed two million, approximately half of them from non-Arab countries. All Muslim countries send official delegations on the occasion, which is being increasingly used for religio-political congresses. At other times in the year, it is considered meritorious to perform the lesser pilgrimage (ʿumrah), which is not, however, a substitute for the hajj pilgrimage.

The most sacred place for Muslims is the Kaʿbah sanctuary at Mecca, the object of the annual pilgrimage. It is much more than a mosque; it is believed to be the place where the heavenly bliss and power touches the earth directly. According to Muslim tradition, the Kaʿbah was built by Abraham. The Prophet's mosque in Medina is the next in sanctity. Jerusalem follows in third place in sanctity as the first qiblah (i.e., direction in which the Muslims offered prayers at first, before the qiblah was changed to the Kaʿbah) and as the place from where Muhammad, according to tradition, made his ascent (miraj) to heaven. For the Shiʿah, Karbalāʾ in Iraq (the place of martyrdom of ʿAlī's son Ḥusayn) and Meshed in Iran (where Imām Ali al-Riḍā is buried) constitute places of special veneration where Shiʿis make pilgrimages.

Shrines of Sufi saints

For the Muslim masses in general, shrines of Sufi saints are particular objects of reverence and even veneration. In Baghdad the tomb of the greatest saint of all, ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Jilani, is visited every year by large numbers of pilgrims from all over the Muslim world.

By the late 20th century the Sufi shrines, which were managed privately in earlier periods, were almost entirely owned by governments and were managed by departments of awqāf (plural of waqf, a religious endowment). The official appointed to care for a shrine is usually called a mutawallī. In Turkey, where such endowments formerly constituted a very considerable portion of the national wealth, all endowments were confiscated by the regime of Atatürk (president 1928–38).

The mosque

The general religious life of Muslims is centred around the mosque. In the days of the Prophet and early caliphs, the mosque was the centre of all community life, and it remains so in many parts of the Islamic world to this day. Small mosques are usually supervised by the imam (one who administers the prayer service) himself, although sometimes also a muezzin is appointed. In larger mosques, where Friday prayers are offered, a khaṭib (one who gives the khuṭbah, or sermon) is appointed for Friday service. Many large mosques also function as religious schools and colleges. In the early 21st century, mosque officials were appointed by the government in most countries. In some countries—e.g., Pakistan—most mosques are private and are run by the local community, although increasingly some of the larger ones have been taken over by the government departments of awqaf.

Holy days

The Muslim calendar (based on the lunar year) dates from the emigration (hijrah) of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina in 622. The two festive days in the year are the Eids (ʿīds), Eid al-Fitr, which celebrates the end of the month of Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha (the feast of sacrifice), which marks the end of the hajj. Because of the crowds, Eid prayers are offered either in very large mosques or on specially consecrated grounds. Other sacred times include the “Night of Power” (Laylat al-Qadr; believed to be the night in which God makes decisions about the destiny of individuals and the world as a whole) and the night of the ascension of the Prophet to heaven. The Shiʿis celebrate the 10th of Muḥarram (the first month of the Muslim year) to mark the day of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn. The Muslim masses also celebrate the death anniversaries of various saints in a ceremony called ʿurs (literally, “nuptial ceremony”). The saints, far from dying, are believed to reach the zenith of their spiritual life on this occasion.

Islamic thought

Islamic theology (kalam) and philosophy (falsafah) are two traditions of learning developed by Muslim thinkers who were engaged, on the one hand, in the rational clarification and defense of the principles of the Islamic religion (mutakallimun) and, on the other, in the pursuit of the ancient (Greek and Hellenistic, or Greco-Roman) sciences (falasifah). These thinkers took a position that was intermediate between the traditionalists,

who remained attached to the literal expressions of the primary sources of Islamic doctrines (the Quran, Islamic scripture; and the Hadith, sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) and who abhorred reasoning, and those whose reasoning led them to abandon the Islamic community (the ummah) altogether. The status of the believer in Islam remained in practice a juridical question, not a matter for theologians or philosophers to decide. Except in regard to the fundamental questions of the existence of God, Islamic revelation, and future reward and punishment, the juridical conditions for declaring someone an unbeliever or beyond the pale of Islam were so demanding as to make it almost impossible to make a valid declaration of this sort about a professing Muslim. In the course of events in Islamic history, representatives of certain theological movements, who happened to be jurists and who succeeded in converting rulers to their cause, made those rulers declare in favour of their movements and even encouraged them to persecute their opponents. Thus there arose in some localities and periods a semblance of an official, or orthodox, doctrine.

Early developments

The beginnings of theology in the Islamic tradition in the second half of the 7th century are not easily distinguishable from the beginnings of a number of other disciplines—Arabic philology, Quranic interpretation, the collection of the sayings and deeds of Muhammad (Hadith), jurisprudence (fiqh), and historiography. Together with these other disciplines, Islamic theology is concerned with ascertaining the facts and context of the Islamic revelation and with understanding its meaning and implications as to what Muslims should believe and do after the revelation had ceased and the Islamic community had to chart its own way. During the first half of the 8th century, a number of questions—which centred on God's unity, justice, and other attributes and which were relevant to human freedom, actions, and fate in the hereafter—formed the core of a more-specialized discipline, which was called kalām ("speech") because of the rhetorical and dialectical "speech" used in formulating the principal matters of Islamic belief, debating them, and defending them against Muslim and non-Muslim opponents. Gradually, kalām came to include all matters directly or indirectly relevant to the establishment and definition of religious beliefs, and it developed its own necessary or useful systematic rational arguments about human knowledge and the makeup of the world. Despite various efforts by later thinkers to fuse the problems of kalām with those of philosophy (and mysticism), theology preserved its relative

independence from philosophy and other nonreligious sciences. It remained true to its original traditional and religious point of view, confined itself within the limits of the Islamic revelation, and assumed that these limits as it understood them were identical with the limits of truth.

The Hellenistic legacy

The pre-Islamic and non-Islamic legacy with which early Islamic theology came into contact included almost all the religious thought that had survived and was being defended or disputed in Egypt, Syria, Iran, and India. It was transmitted by learned representatives of various Christian, Jewish, Manichaean (members of a dualistic religion founded by Mani, an Iranian prophet, in the 3rd century), Zoroastrian (members of a monotheistic, but later dualistic, religion founded by Zoroaster, an Iranian prophet who lived before the 6th century BCE), Indian (Hindu and Buddhist, primarily), and Ṣābian (star worshippers of Harran often confused with the Mandaeans) communities and by early converts to Islam conversant with the teachings, sacred writings, and doctrinal history of the religions of these areas. At first, access to this legacy was primarily through conversations and disputations with such men, rather than through full and accurate translations of sacred texts or theological and philosophic writings, although some translations from Pahlavi (a Middle Persian dialect), Syriac, and Greek must also have been available.

The characteristic approach of early Islamic theology to non-Muslim literature was through oral disputations, the starting points of which were the statements presented or defended (orally) by the opponents. Oral disputation continued to be used in theology for centuries, and most theological writings reproduce or imitate that form. From such oral and written disputations, writers on religions and sects collected much of their information about non-Muslim sects. Much of Hellenistic (post-3rd-century-BCE Greek cultural), Iranian, and Indian religious thought was thus encountered in an informal and indirect manner.

From the 9th century onward, theologians had access to an increasingly larger body of translated texts, but by then they had taken most of their basic positions. They made a selective use of the translation literature, ignoring most of what was not useful to them until the mystical theologian al-Ghazali (flourished 11th–12th centuries) showed them the way to study it, distinguish between the harmless and harmful doctrines contained in it, and refute

the latter. By this time Islamic theology had coined a vast number of technical terms, and theologians (e.g., al-Jaḥiẓ) had forged Arabic into a versatile language of science; Arabic philology had matured; and the religious sciences (jurisprudence, the study of the Quran, Hadith, criticism, and history) had developed complex techniques of textual study and interpretation. The 9th-century translators availed themselves of these advances to meet the needs of patrons. Apart from demands for medical and mathematical works, the translation of Greek learning was fostered by the early ʿAbbasid caliphs (8th–9th centuries) and their viziers as additional weapons (the primary weapon was theology itself) against the threat of Manichaeism and other subversive ideas that went under the name zandaqah (“heresy” or “atheism”).

Five Pillars of Islam

Prophet left the revelations of Allah in the ribs of palm leaves and tablets of white stone and in the memory of men. The third orthodox Caliph Uthman (644-56) in the year 651 arranged it with the help of the copy of Abu Bakr, then in the possession of Hafsah, one of Muhammad's widows. It is believed by the Muslims that Quran is the word of Allah dictated through Gabriel to Muhammad and it is preserved in Heaven.

Quran has the Biblical parrellel in the historical narratives. The Old Testament characters like Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael. Lot, Joseph, Saul, David, Solomon Elijah. Job and Jonah are occupying an important part in Quran. The New Testament characters mentioned in Quran are Zachariah, Iohn, the Baptist, Jesus, Mary etc. The proverbs like, 'eye for an eve', 'camel and the needle' and 'house built upon the sand' are also used frequently.

Muslims believe that Quran is the divine word directly revealed to Muhammad the Prophet through Gabriel. When someone asked Prophet that how he has to be remembered in the future, he answered, 'Read the Quran'. The word Quran means to read or recite and is derived from the Arabic word 'Qaara' to read. A Muslim is expected to be guided by Quranic principles in his home, place of work, and worship. Therefore it suggests The Five Pillars as the religious duties.

The first Pillar is the profession of faith and it is the double-formula called la ilaha Illa-1-lah; Muhammadum rasulu-l-lah, which means, 'no god whatsoever but Allah; Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'. Muslims believe that God stands supreme and the

supreme reality, the pre existent, the creator, omniscient, omnipotent and the self subsistent. Muhammad is the messenger, the last of all prophets. The second pillar is prayer. Muslims insist the worshipper to be in a state of legal purity. Prophet expected his followers to worship five times a day. The congregational prayer is obligatory and it was on Friday and was particpated by the adult males. This promoted social equality and the consiousness of solidarity as a result the brotherhood.

Alms giving consitutes the third pillar of faith. It is an obligatory tax with the underlying principle of tithe. The money has to be used for supporting the poor, building mosques and for public welfare.Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam that a Muslim has to abstain from his food and drink from dawn till sunset. practise it. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims.

Pilgrimage is the fifth pillar of Islam Prophet said "And proclaim unto mankind the pilgrimage They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel they will come from every deep ravine". Every Muslim of either sex who can afford must visit Mecca once in the life time. Thereby it is socialising the gathering of the brotherhood of believers from the four corners of the earth. Another duty of a Muslim is the holy war alias Jihad. The expansion of Islam and the establishment of a prominent Caliphate was its outcome. As Arabia was surrounded by the non-Muslims it was inevitable and it propagated bloodshed of the Muslims to become a militant polity.

Arabs Kingdom

The Near East contains a peninsula which lies between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Today it consists of the states of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, plus the island state of Bahrain which sits in the Persian Gulf. Kuwait is also arguably an Arabian state, although its position close to the mouth of the Euphrates also sees it being included amongst the list of modern Mesopotamian states. Overall this region has been known as the land of the Arabs - Arabia - for at least three thousand years. Before that, however, the Canaanites were Semites, with origins which lay in the Arabian Desert.

Semitic-speakers formed a sub-group of the Afro-Asiatic language family which includes Hebrew (Israelites), Aramaic (Aramaeans), Arabic (Arabs), and Amharic

(Ethiopians). They made their first appearance in the second half of the fourth millennium BC, migrating outwards into Egypt and Mesopotamia. A large number also entered the Levant where they blended into the existing - and already multi-racial - Neolithic populations of the various small cities of the time, most notably Jericho, where archaeology has backed up this arrival.

These Semitic-speakers quickly integrated into the Levant to create the Canaanite identity and culture which would dominate until the climate-induced social collapse at the end of the thirteenth century BC. The resultant period of migration, social collapse, and a short dark age reconfigured the entire region. Arabia remained home to nomadic tribes, but now an Arab identity began to be formed, at least as far as records-keepers of the first millennium BC great empires were concerned.

The first historical mention of Arabs from the southern deserts occurred in 853 BC, when they were involved in an alliance of states which defeated the powerful Assyrians under Shalmaneser III. Within a century two of those states had been conquered: Samaria by the resurgent Sargonite Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonians. The regional power change allowed Arab groups to migrate northwards, settling territory which had largely belonged to Edom. The Edomites had also migrated, settling in the former Jebusite city of Hebron which Rome would know as Idumaea.

Ben-Hadad is a member of an alliance of states which also include Ammon, Arvad, Byblos, Edom, Egypt, Hamath, Kedar, and Samaria (seemingly despite recent conflict between Damas and Samaria). Together they fight Shalmaneser III of Assyria at the Battle of Qarqar which consists of the largest known number of combatants in a single battle to date, and is the first historical mention of the Arabs from the southern deserts (specifically Kedarites). Despite claims to the contrary, the Assyrians are defeated, since they do not press on to their nearest target, Hamath, and do not resume their attacks on Hamath and Damas for about six years.

Philistines sack Jerusalem in Judah alongside Arabs and Ethiopians, who loot King Jehoram's house and carry off all of his family except for his youngest son, Jehoahaz. Between 722-720 BC, Moab, Philistia, Judah, and Edom rebel against Assyrian overlordship. The rising is apparently put down, as the next record shows Moab paying

tribute to King Sargon II, but still apparently being led by a native ruler rather than a newly-installed governor. Moabite troops are subsequently used in Assyrian wars against the Arab tribes.

Shamash-shumi-ukin of Babylon rebels against his brother in the Assyrian kingdom. Ashurbanipal soon besieges Babylon, bringing it back into the empire. Rebellions in support of Babylon by the Arabian Kedarites and Nabatu are also put down, possibly prior to Babylon's recapture. It takes two years of direct rule before a puppet ruler of Babylon is placed on the throne, while the son of the Nabatu chief, Natnu, is declared leader of their people (his father's fate is not recorded).

Nabonidus angers the Babylonians in 539 BC by trying to reintroduce Assyrian culture, including placing the moon god Sin above Babylon's Marduk in terms of importance. Perhaps because of that, resistance to Cyrus 'the Great' of Persia, when he enters Babylonia from the east, is limited to just one major battle, near the confluence of the Diyala and Tigris rivers. On 12/13 October (sources vary), Babylon is occupied by Cyrus, who adopts an enlightened approach to his subjects, and allows the captive Judeans to return home. Arabia seems to be forgotten for a time, until the Persians invade Egypt in 525 BC and the province of Arabāya is soon created.

Ancient Egypt was conquered by the Persian empire under Cambyses in 525 BC, subsequently being annexed as a great satrapy until 404 BC. This was not without a hiccup, as Cambyses was seemingly defeated by the now-rebel Twenty-Sixth dynasty pharaoh, Psamtik III, who is theorised as enjoying a brief period of resurgence before finally being crushed by Darius I. The Achaemenid kings of Persia were subsequently acknowledged as pharaohs in this era, forming a twenty-seventh dynasty although, in their administrative terminology, it was an official satrapy or province.

Arabia around the oasis of Taymāʾ, which had belonged to the Babylonian empire, was only attached to the Persian empire during Cambyses' Egyptian campaign. Administratively it was added to the great satrapy of Mudrāya (Egypt). Between that and the earlier fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 BC it was probably one of several regions which lay 'unclaimed' until the Persians could get around to it.

However, due to a bond of friendship which was created in 525 BC, the Arabs did not actually enter any satrapy and were exempt from royal tribute (although individuals were counted as satraps of the region). Instead they brought the Persian kings a 'gift' of a thousand talents (around thirty tons) of frankincense a year. Herodotus also mentions an Arab camel corps amongst the various contingents which were levied for Xerxes' Greek expedition. These Arabs were armed with long bent-back bows.

During the Achaemenid period the term Arabāya related only to the northern part of today's Saudi Arabia and neighbouring states. Herodotus located the Arabs in the region between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, essentially along the coast from southern Palestine into northern Sinai. They also lived in the steppes of southern Mesopotamia. The central and southern areas were largely unknown territory. This use of Arabāya to designate a geographical rather than an administrative entity is paralleled in the term 'Aribi' ('Arabu, Arubu'), which appears in Assyrian royal inscriptions beginning in 853 BC.

In the Old Testament the term 'Arab' designates inhabitants of the Syrian desert. In Babylonian economic and legal documents of the Achaemenid period some Arabs ('Arbāya') are referred to as residents of Babylon (having played a part in its history in the first millennium BC), along with Nippur, Sippar, Uruk, and other cities. The language which was being spoken by these Arabs is unknown, with the few preserved names (around twenty) not differing from Aramaic.

Psamtik III of Egypt is defeated at the Battle of Pelusium and Egypt is conquered by the Persian empire under Cambyses. Egypt becomes a vassal state, with Persian troops being supplied with water by the Arabs during their journey into Sinai. Many Egyptian temples are destroyed, but Cambyses spares the Jewish Temple on Elephantine.

However, it seems that Psamtik is not immediately captured. Instead he, or the bulk of his forces, seek refuge around the Dachla Oasis. Cambyses follows him with an army of fifty thousand men and, according to Herodotus, the entire army disappears in the desert, presumably overcome by a sand storm (around 524 BC).

A highly favourable modern theory is that this story is created by Cambyses' successor to mask an embarrassing defeat. In this theory, Psamtik manages to reconquer a large part of Egypt and is crowned pharaoh in the capital, Memphis.

It is Cambyses' successor in Persia, Darius I, who ends the Egyptian 'revolt' with a good deal of bloodshed two years after Cambyses' defeat, in 522 BC (or 521 BC). Satraps are appointed to govern Egypt and, presumably, they hold sway over Arabaya too. In tandem with Satrap Mazaeus of Khilakku, Bēlsunu of Ebir-nāri and Phoenicia leads fresh contingents of Greek mercenaries to put down the revolt in the Levant (principally led by Sidon). The main attack falls on Sidon but both satraps are repulsed.

The Persian king himself is forced to follow up with a more direct intervention. It would seem to be after this date that Bēlsunu is replaced by one Dernes. He may be of lesser rank because he isn't given Ebir-nāri, only Phoenicia, plus Arabāya.

In 334 BC Alexander of Macedon launches his campaign into the Persian empire by crossing the Dardanelles. Much of Anatolia falls by 333 BC and Arsames falls (whilst also officially satrap of Arabāya and leading Arabian and Ethiopian contingents). Alexander proceeds into Syria during 333-332 BC to receive the submission of Ebir-nāri, which also gains him Harran, Judah, and Phoenicia (principally Byblos and Sidon, with Tyre holding out until it can be taken by force). Athura, Gaza, and Egypt also capitulate (not without a struggle in Gaza's case). Mazaeus of Athura initially plays his part by opposing Alexander, but he eventually surrenders, and Alexander makes him satrap of Mesopotamia.

Arabaya (Arabia) seems to drift away from any centralised administration. It seems not to be included in Alexander's conquest of Egypt. Indeed, in 312 BC the most prominent Arab state, Nabataea, defeats an army from Argead Syria as it attempts to plunder Nabataean territory during the **Wars of the Diadochi**. The state turns into a fully recognised kingdom in the second century BC and survives until the second century AD.

The Arab invasion of the seventh century AD destroys any remaining Nabataean identity, incorporating them into the new Islamic empire. In the eighth century the Abbasids under Abu Muslim begin an open revolt in the emirate of Khorasan against established Umayyad rule of the empire which changes the empire's face and moves its focus to Baghdad.

In 909, thanks to the murder of the Aghlabid ruler of Ifriqiyya, Abdullah, and Ziyadat's massacring of his brothers and uncles, Ifriqiyya is conquered by the Fatimids. They

also quickly conquer Morocco, Syria, Algeria, and Arabia, establishing holdings which oppose Baghdad until the latter's destruction by the Mongols in 1258. The Islamic empire is equally destroyed.

Subsequent Arab holdings are either largely fragmentary or are controlled from Egypt. Frequent wars break out between territories and feuds are often continued for years, resulting in ongoing bloodshed. In the sixteenth century ultimate regional power is taken by the Ottomans in Anatolia, but factional fighting continues in outlying territories such as Arabia which has Mecca as one of its main focal points.

UNIT – II

EARLY CALIPHS AND EXPANSION OF ISLAM

Islam began with Muhammad's revelation through his visit from the Angel Gabriel in a cave outside of Mecca in 610 AD. The umma (community of believers) grew under Muhammad as he spread his revelation (the word of God, especially the belief in one god). Muhammad and his followers were driven from Mecca, went to Yathrib (later called Medina) in 622- this journey was called the hijrah and marks Year 1 in the Islamic community since this is where we see Muslims come together bound by faith.

Resistance to Muhammad's message necessitated the development of an army to ensure the faith survived (jihad of the sword). Muhammad's army took Mecca and destroyed the idols at the kaaba in 630, unifying Mecca under Islam and marking a break from the past and the beginning of a new future.

The Prophet Muhammad died in 632 CE. This created a crisis within the Islamic community- who would become the next caliph (successor) to lead the young Islamic Empire? Resulted in a difference in opinion which led to the Sunni-Shi'a split (branches within Islam). Sunni chose Abu Bakr, Muhammad's close friend, while the Shi'a wanted Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law. The Sunni majority named Abu Bakr first caliph.

Pious caliphs (perfect caliphs)

Rashidun, (Arabic: “Rightly Guided,” or “Perfect”), the first four caliphs of the Islamic community, known in Muslim history as the orthodox or patriarchal caliphs: Abu Bakr (reigned 632–634), ʿUmar (reigned 634–644), ʿUthmān (reigned 644–656), and ʿAlī (reigned 656–661).

The 29-year rule of the Rashidun was Islam’s first experience without the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad. His example, however, in both private and public life, came to be regarded as the norm (Sunnah) for his successors, and a large and influential body of anṣār (companions of the Prophet) kept close watch on the caliphs to ensure their strict adherence to divine revelation (the Quran) and the Sunnah. The Rashidun thus assumed all of Muhammad’s duties except the prophetic: as imams, they led the congregation in

prayer at the mosque; as khaṭībs, they delivered the Friday sermons; and as umarāʾ al-muʾminīn (“commanders of the faithful”), they commanded the army.

The caliphate of the Rashidun, in which virtually all actions had religious import, began with the wars of the riddah (“apostasy”; 632–633), tribal uprisings in Arabia, and ended with the first Muslim civil war (fitnah; 656–661). It effected the expansion of the Islamic state beyond Arabia into Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Iran, and Armenia and, with it, the development of an elite class of Arab soldiers. The Rashidun were also responsible for the adoption of an Islamic calendar, dating from Muhammad’s emigration (Hijrah) from Mecca to Medina (622), and the establishment of an authoritative reading of the Qurʾān, which strengthened the Muslim community and encouraged religious scholarship. It was also a controversy over ʿAlī’s succession that split Islam into two sects, the Sunni (who consider themselves traditionalists) and the Shiʿah (shīʿat ʿAlī, “party of ʿAlī”), which have survived to modern times.

The religious and very traditionalist strictures on the Rashidun were somewhat relaxed as Muhammad’s contemporaries, especially the anṣār, began to die off and the conquered territories became too vast to rule along theocratic lines; thus, the Umayyads, who followed the Rashidun as caliphs, were able to secularize the operations of the state.

Caliph, Arabic khalīfah (“successor”), in Islamic history the ruler of the Muslim community. Although khalīfah and its plural khulafāʾ occur several times in the Qurʾān, referring to humans as God’s stewards or vice-regents on earth, the term did not denote a distinct political or religious institution during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. It began to acquire its later meaning and to take shape as an institution after Muhammad’s death (June 8, 632 CE), when Abū Bakr, a companion of the Prophet and an early convert to Islam, was elected by a majority of Muslims as the leader of the Muslim community and assumed the title khalīfat rasūl Allāh, “successor of the messenger of God.” Abū Bakr’s successor, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, is said to have first assumed the title khalīfat Abī Bakr (“successor to Abū Bakr”), because the title khalīfat khalīfat rasūl Allāh (“the successor to the successor of the messenger of God”) would have been cumbersome. ʿUmar also designated himself amīr al-muʾminīn, “the commander of the faithful,” which became an additional customary title for succeeding rulers.

Abū Bakr and his three immediate successors are known as the “perfect” caliphs or the “rightly guided caliphs” (al-khulafāʾ al-rāshidun), whose combined rule is idealized by the majority of Muslims for having been based on the concepts of shūrā (consultation), ijmāʿ (consensus) of Muslims, and bayʿah (allegiance). In contrast, subsequent rulers of the Muslim polity instituted dynastic rule, which violated the concept of shūrā and, therefore, was largely regarded as illegitimate, although it was often grudgingly accepted in a pragmatic vein.

Nevertheless, the title of caliph was borne by the 14 Umayyad rulers of Damascus and subsequently by the 38 ʿAbbāsid caliphs of Baghdad, whose dynasty fell before the Mongols in 1258. There were titular caliphs of ʿAbbāsid descent in Cairo under the Mamlūks from 1258 until 1517, when the last caliph was captured by the Ottoman sultan Selim I. The Ottoman sultans then claimed the title and used it until it was abolished by the Turkish Republic on March 3, 1924.

After the fall of the Umayyad dynasty at Damascus (750), the title of caliph was also assumed by the Andalusian branch of the family who ruled in Spain at Córdoba (755–1031; see also Caliphate of Córdoba), and it was also assumed by the Fāṭimid rulers of Egypt (909–1171), who claimed to descend from Fāṭimah (a daughter of Muhammad) and her husband, ʿAli.

According to the Shiʿahs, who call the supreme office the “imamate,” or leadership, no caliph is legitimate unless he is a lineal descendant of the Prophet Muhammad. Later, Sunni scholars insisted that the office belonged to the tribe of Quraysh, to which Muhammad himself belonged, but this condition would have vitiated the claim of the Ottoman sultans, who held the office after the last ʿAbbāsid caliph of Cairo transferred it to Selim I.

Abu Bakr (573-634)

Abu Bakr was the senior companion and was, through his daughter Aisha a father-in-law of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, as well as the first Caliph of the Rashidun Caliphate. He is known with the honorific title "al-Siddiq" by Sunni Muslims.

Abu Bakr was born in 573 CE to Abu Quhafa and Umm Khayr. He belonged to the tribe of Banu Taym. In the Age of Ignorance, he was a monotheist and condemned idol-worshipping. As a wealthy trader, Abu Bakr used to free slaves. Following his conversion to Islam in 610, Abu Bakr served as a close aide to Muhammad, who bestowed on him the title "al-Siddiq" ('the Truthful/Righteous'). The former took part in almost all battles under the Islamic prophet. He extensively contributed his wealth in support of Muhammad's work and among Muhammad's closest companions. He also accompanied Muhammad on his migration to Medina. By the invitations of Abu Bakr, many prominent Sahabis became Muslims. He remained the closest advisor to Muhammad, being present at almost all his military conflicts. In the absence of Muhammad, Abu Bakr led the prayers and expeditions.

Following Muhammad's death in 632, Abu Bakr succeeded the leadership of the Muslim community as the first Rashidun Caliph. His election was opposed by a large number of rebellious tribal leaders, who had apostatized from Islam. During his reign, he overcame a number of uprisings, collectively known as the Ridda Wars, as a result of which he was able to consolidate and expand the rule of the Muslim state over the entire Arabian Peninsula. He also commanded the initial incursions into the neighbouring Sassanian and Byzantine empires, which in the years following his death, would eventually result in the Muslim conquests of Persia and the Levant. Apart from politics, Abu Bakr is also credited for the compilation of the Quran, of which he had a personal caliphal codex. Abu Bakr nominated his principal adviser Umar (r. 634–644) as his successor before dying in August 634. Along with Muhammad, Abu Bakr is buried in the Green Dome at the Al-Masjid an-Nabawi in Medina, the second holiest site in Islam. He died of illness after a reign of 2 years, 2 months and 14 days, the only Rashidun caliph to die of natural causes.

Though the period of his caliphate was short, it included successful invasions of the two most powerful empires of the time, a remarkable achievement in its own right. He set in motion a historical trajectory that in a few decades would lead to one of the largest empires in history. His victory over the local rebel Arab forces is a significant part of Islamic history. Abu Bakr is widely honored among Muslims.

Abu Bakr's full name was Abdullah ibn Abi Quhafa ibn Amir ibn Amr ibn Ka'b ibn Sa'd ibn Taym ibn Murrah ibn Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy ibn Ghalib ibn Fihr. In Arabic, the name Abd Allah means "servant of Allah". One of his early titles, preceding his conversion to Islam,

was Ateeq, meaning "saved one". Muhammad later restated this title when he said that Abu Bakr is the "Ateeq". He was called Al-Siddiq (the truthful) by Muhammad after he believed him in the event of Isra and Mi'raj when other people didn't, and Ali confirmed that title several times. He was also reportedly referred to in the Quran as the "second of the two in the cave" in reference to the event of hijra, where with Muhammad he hid in the cave in Jabal Thawr from the Meccan party that was sent after them.

Early life

Abu Bakr was born in Mecca sometime in 573 CE, to a rich family in the Banu Taym tribe of the Quraysh tribal confederacy. His father's name was Uthman and given the kunya Abu Quhafa, and his mother was Salma bint Sakhar who was given the laqab of Umm ul-Khair.

He spent his early childhood like other Arab children of the time, among the Bedouins who called themselves Ahl-i-Ba'eer- the people of the camel, and developed a particular fondness for camels. In his early years he played with the camel calves and goats, and his love for camels earned him the nickname (kunya) "Abu Bakr", the father of the camel's calf.

Like other children of the rich Meccan merchant families, Abu Bakr was literate and developed a fondness for poetry. He used to attend the annual fair at Ukaz, and participate in poetical symposia. He had a very good memory and had a good knowledge of the genealogy of the Arab tribes, their stories and their politics.

A story is preserved that once when he was a child, his father took him to the Kaaba, and asked him to pray before the idols. His father went away to attend to some other business, and Abu Bakr was left alone. Addressing an idol, Abu Bakr said "O my God, I am in need of beautiful clothes; bestow them on me". The idol remained indifferent. Then he addressed another idol, saying, "O God, give me some delicious food. See that I am so hungry". The idol remained cold. That exhausted the patience of young Abu Bakr. He lifted a stone, and, addressing an idol, said, "Here I am aiming a stone; if you are a god protect yourself". Abu Bakr hurled the stone at the idol and left the Kaaba. Regardless, it recorded that prior to converting to Islam, Abu Bakr practiced as a hanif and never worshipped idols.

Acceptance of Islam

On his return from a business trip in Yemen, friends informed him that in his absence, Muhammad had declared himself the messenger of God and proclaimed a new religion. The historian Al-Tabari, in his Tarikh al-Tabari, quotes from Muhammad ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, who said:

I asked my father whether Abu Bakr was the first of the Muslims. He said, 'No, more than fifty people embraced Islam before Abu Bakr; but he was superior to us as a Muslim. And Umar ibn al-Khattab had embraced Islam after forty-five men and twenty-one women. As for the foremost one in the matter of Islam and faith, it was Ali ibn Abi Talib.'

Some Sunni and all the Shi'a believe that the second person to publicly accept Muhammed as the messenger of God was Ali ibn Abi Talib, the first being Muhammad's wife Khadija. Ibn Kathir, in his Al Bidaya Wal Nihayah, disregards this. He stated that the first woman to embrace Islam was Khadijah. Zayd ibn Harithah was the first freed slave to embrace Islam. Ali ibn Abi Talib was the first child to embrace Islam, for he has not even reached the age of puberty at that time, while Abu Bakr was the first free man to embrace Islam.

Subsequent life in Mecca

His wife Qutaylah bint Abd-al-Uzza did not accept Islam and he divorced her. His other wife, Um Ruman, became a Muslim. All his children accepted Islam except Abd al-Rahman, from whom Abu Bakr disassociated himself. His conversion also brought many people to Islam. He persuaded his intimate friends to convert, and presented Islam to other friends in such a way that many of them also accepted the faith. Those who converted to Islam at the insistence of Abu Bakr were:

- Uthman Ibn Affan (who would become the 3rd Caliph)
- Al-Zubayr (who played a part in the Muslim conquest of Egypt)
- Talha ibn Ubayd-Allah, his cousin and an important companion of the prophet.
- 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf (who would remain an important part of the Rashidun Caliphate)
- Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (who played a leading role in the Islamic conquest of Persia)

- Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah (who was a commander in chief of the Rashidun army in Levant)
- Abu Salama, he was a foster brother of prophet Muhammad.
- Khalid ibn Sa'id, (who acted as a general under the Rashidun army in Syria)

Abu Bakr's acceptance proved to be a milestone in Muhammad's mission. Slavery was common in Mecca, and many slaves accepted Islam. When an ordinary free man accepted Islam, despite opposition, he would enjoy the protection of his tribe. For slaves, however, there was no such protection and they commonly experienced persecution. Abu Bakr felt compassion for slaves, so he purchased eight (four men and four women) and then freed them, paying 40,000 dinar for their freedom.

The men were:

- Bilal ibn Rabah
- Abu Fukayha
- Ammar ibn Yasir
- Abu Fuhayra

The women were:

- Lubaynah
- Al-Nahdiah
- Umm Ubays
- Harithah bint al-Muammil

Most of the slaves liberated by Abu Bakr were either women or old and frail men. When the father of Abu Bakr asked him why he didn't liberate strong and young slaves, who could be a source of strength for him, Abu Bakr replied that he was freeing the slaves for the sake of God, and not for his own sake.

Persecution by the Quraysh, 613

For three years after the birth of Islam, Muslims kept their faith private. In 613, according to Islamic tradition, Muhammad was commanded by God to call people to Islam openly. The first public address inviting people to offer allegiance to Muhammad was

delivered by Abu Bakr. In a fit of fury, the young men of the Quraysh tribe rushed at Abu Bakr and beat him until he lost consciousness. Following this incident, Abu Bakr's mother converted to Islam. Abu Bakr was persecuted many times by the Quraysh. Though Abu Bakr's beliefs would have been defended by his own clan, it would not be so for the entire Quraysh tribe.

Last years in Mecca

In 617, the Quraysh enforced a boycott against the Banu Hashim. Muhammad along with his supporters from Banu Hashim, were cut off in a pass away from Mecca. All social relations with the Banu Hashim were cut off and their state was that of imprisonment.[clarification needed] Before it many Muslims migrated to Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). Abu Bakr, feeling distressed, set out for Yemen and then to Abyssinia from there. He met a friend of his named Ad-Dughna (chief of the Qarah tribe) outside Mecca, who invited Abu Bakr to seek his protection against the Quraysh. Abu Bakr went back to Mecca, it was a relief for him, but soon due to the pressure of Quraysh, Ad-Dughna was forced to renounce his protection. Once again the Quraysh were free to persecute Abu Bakr.

In 620, Muhammad's uncle and protector, Abu Talib ibn Abd al-Muttalib, and Muhammad's wife Khadija died. Abu Bakr's daughter Aisha was betrothed to Muhammad; however, it was decided that the actual marriage ceremony would be held later. In 620 Abu Bakr was the first person to testify to Muhammad's Isra and Mi'raj (Night Journey).

Migration to Medina

In 622, on the invitation of the Muslims of Medina, Muhammad ordered Muslims to migrate to Medina. The migration began in batches. Ali was the last to remain in Mecca, entrusted with responsibility for settling any loans the Muslims had taken out, and famously slept in the bed of Muhammad when the Quraysh, led by Ikrima, attempted to murder Muhammad as he slept. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr accompanied Muhammad to Medina. Due to the danger posed by the Quraysh, they did not take the road, but moved in the opposite direction, taking refuge in a cave in Jabal Thawr, some five miles south of Mecca. Abd Allah ibn Abi Bakr, the son of Abu Bakr, would listen to the plans and discussions of the Quraysh, and at night he would carry the news to the fugitives in the cave. Asma bint Abi Bakr, the daughter of Abu Bakr, brought them meals every day. Aamir, a servant of Abu Bakr, would

bring a flock of goats to the mouth of the cave every night, where they were milked. The Quraysh sent search parties in all directions. One party came close to the entrance to the cave, but was unable to see them. Due to this, Quranic verse 9:40 was revealed. Aisha, Abu Saʿid al-Khudri and Abd Allah ibn Abbas in interpreting this verse said that Abu Bakr was the companion who stayed with Muhammad in the cave. After staying at the cave for three days and three nights, Abu Bakr and Muhammad proceed to Medina, staying for some time at Quba, a suburb of Medina.

Life in Medina

In Medina, Muhammad decided to construct a mosque. A piece of land was chosen and the price of the land was paid for by Abu Bakr. The Muslims, including Abu Bakr, constructed a mosque named Al-Masjid al-Nabawi at the site. Abu Bakr was paired with Khaarijah bin Zaid Ansari (who was from Medina) as a brother in faith. Abu Bakr's relationship with Khaarijah was most cordial, which was further strengthened when Abu Bakr married Habiba, a daughter of Khaarijah. Khaarijah bin Zaid Ansari lived at Sunh, a suburb of Medina, and Abu Bakr also settled there. After Abu Bakr's family arrived in Medina, he bought another house near Muhammad's.

While the climate of Mecca was dry, the climate of Medina was damp and because of this, most of the migrants fell sick on arrival. Abu Bakr contracted a fever for several days, during which time he was attended to by Khaarijah and his family. In Mecca, Abu Bakr was a wholesale trader in cloth and he started the same business in Medina. He opened his new store at Sunh, and from there cloth was supplied to the market at Medina. Soon his business flourished. Early in 623, Abu Bakr's daughter Aisha, who was already married to Muhammad, was sent on to Muhammad's house after a simple marriage ceremony, further strengthening relations between Abu Bakr and Muhammad.

Military campaigns under Muhammad

Battle of Badr

In 624, Abu Bakr was involved in the first battle between the Muslims and the Quraysh of Mecca, known as the Battle of Badr, but did not fight, instead acting as one of the guards of Muhammad's tent. In relation to this, Ali allegedly later asked his associates as to

who they thought was the bravest among men. Everyone stated that Ali was the bravest of all men. Ali then replied:

No. Abu Bakr is the bravest of men. In the Battle of Badr we had prepared a pavillion for the prophet, but when we were asked to offer ourselves for the task of guarding it none came forward except Abu Bakr. With a drawn sword he took his stand by the side of Prophet of Allah and guarded him from the infidels by attacking those who dared to proceed in that direction. He was therefore the bravest of men.

In Sunni accounts, during one such attack, two discs from Abu Bakr's shield penetrated into Muhammad's cheeks. Abu Bakr went forward with the intention of extracting these discs but Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah requested he leave the matter to him, losing his two incisors during the process. In these stories subsequently Abu Bakr, along with other companions, led Muhammad to a place of safety.

Battle of Uhud

In 625, he participated in the Battle of Uhud, in which the majority of the Muslims were routed and he himself was wounded. Before the battle had begun, his son Abd al-Rahman, at that time still non-Muslim and fighting on the side of the Quraysh, came forward and threw down a challenge for a duel. Abu Bakr accepted the challenge but was stopped by Muhammad. Later, Abd al-Rahman approached his father and said to him "You were exposed to me as a target, but I turned away from you and did not kill you." To this Abu Bakr replied "However, if you had been exposed to me as a target I would not have turned away from you." In the second phase of the battle, Khalid ibn al-Walid's cavalry attacked the Muslims from behind, changing a Muslim victory to defeat. Many fled from the battlefield, including Abu Bakr. However, according to his own account, he was "the first to return".

Battle of the Trench

In 627 he participated in the Battle of the Trench and also in the Invasion of Banu Qurayza. In the Battle of the Trench, Muhammad divided the ditch into a number of sectors and a contingent was posted to guard each sector. One of these contingents was under the command of Abu Bakr. The enemy made frequent assaults in an attempt to cross the ditch, all

of which were repulsed. To commemorate this event a mosque, later known as 'Masjid-i-Siddiq', was constructed at the site where Abu Bakr had repulsed the charges of the enemy.

Battle of Khaybar

Abu Bakr took part in the Battle of Khaybar. Khaybar had eight fortresses, the strongest and most well-guarded of which was called Al-Qamus. Muhammad sent Abu Bakr with a group of warriors to attempt to take it, but they were unable to do so. Muhammad also sent Umar with a group of warriors, but Umar could not conquer Al-Qamus either. Some other Muslims also attempted to capture the fort, but they were unsuccessful as well. Finally, Muhammad sent Ali, who defeated the enemy leader, Marhab.

Military campaigns during final years of Muhammad

In 629 Muhammad sent 'Amr ibn al-'As to Zaat-ul-Sallasal, followed by Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah in response to a call for reinforcements. Abu Bakr and Umar commanded an army under al-Jarrah, and they attacked and defeated the enemy. In 630, when the Muslims conquered Mecca, Abu Bakr was part of the armyBefore the conquest of Mecca his father Abu Quhafa converted to Islam.

Battles of Hunayn and Ta'if

In 630, the Muslim army was ambushed by archers from the local tribes as it passed through the valley of Hunayn, some eleven miles northeast of Mecca. Taken unaware, the advance guard of the Muslim army fled in panic. There was considerable confusion, and the camels, horses and men ran into one another in an attempt to seek cover. Muhammad, however, stood firm. Only nine companions remained around him, including Abu Bakr. Under Muhammad's instruction, his uncle Abbas shouted at the top of his voice, "O Muslims, come to the Prophet of Allah". The call was heard by the Muslim soldiers and they gathered beside Muhammad. When the Muslims had gathered in sufficient number, Muhammad ordered a charge against the enemy. In the hand-to-hand fight that followed the tribes were routed and they fled to Autas.

Muhammad posted a contingent to guard the Hunayn pass and led the main army to Autas. In the confrontation at Autas the tribes could not withstand the Muslim onslaught. Believing continued resistance useless, the tribes broke camp and retired to Ta'if. Abu Bakr

was commissioned by Muhammad to lead the attack against Ta'if. The tribes shut themselves in the fort and refused to come out in the open. The Muslims employed catapults, but without tangible result. The Muslims attempted to use a testudo formation, in which a group of soldiers shielded by a cover of cowhide advanced to set fire to the gate. However, the enemy threw red hot scraps of iron on the testudo, rendering it ineffective.

The siege dragged on for two weeks, and still there was no sign of weakness in the fort. Muhammad held a council of war. Abu Bakr advised that the siege might be raised and that God make arrangements for the fall of the fort. The advice was accepted, and in February 630, the siege of Ta'if was raised and the Muslim army returned to Mecca. A few days later Malik bin Auf, the commander, came to Mecca and became a Muslim.

Abu Bakr as Amir-ul-Hajj

In 631 AD, Muhammad sent from Medina a delegation of three hundred Muslims to perform the Hajj according to the new Islamic way and appointed Abu Bakr as the leader of the delegation. The day after Abu Bakr and his party had left for the Hajj, Muhammad received a new revelation: Surah Tawbah, the ninth chapter of the Quran. It is related that when this revelation came, someone suggested to Muhammad that he should send news of it to Abu Bakr. Muhammad said that only a man of his house could proclaim the revelation.

Muhammad summoned Ali, and asked him to proclaim a portion of Surah Tawbah to the people on the day of sacrifice when they assembled at Mina. Ali went forth on Muhammad's slit-eared camel, and overtook Abu Bakr. When Ali joined the party, Abu Bakr wanted to know whether he had come to give orders or to convey them. Ali said that he had not come to replace Abu Bakr as Amir-ul-Hajj, and that his only mission was to convey a special message to the people on behalf of Muhammad.

At Mecca, Abu Bakr presided at the Hajj ceremony, and Ali read the proclamation on behalf of Muhammad. The main points of the proclamation were:

1. Henceforward the non-Muslims were not to be allowed to visit the Kaaba or perform the pilgrimage.
2. No one should circumambulate the Kaaba naked.

3. Polytheism was not to be tolerated. Where the Muslims had any agreement with the polytheists such agreements would be honoured for the stipulated periods. Where there were no agreements a grace period of four months was provided and thereafter no quarter was to be given to the polytheists.

From the day this proclamation was made a new era dawned, and Islam alone was to be supreme in Arabia.

Expedition of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq

Abu Bakr led one military expedition, the Expedition of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq, which took place in Najd, in July 628 (third month 7AH in the Islamic calendar). Abu Bakr led a large company in Nejd on the order of Muhammad. Many were killed and taken prisoner. The Sunni Hadith collection Sunan Abu Dawud mentions the event.

Expedition of Usama bin Zayd

In 632, during the final weeks of his life, Muhammad ordered an expedition into Syria to avenge the defeat of the Muslims in the Battle of Mu'tah some years previously. Leading the campaign was Usama ibn Zayd, whose father, Muhammad's erstwhile adopted son Zayd ibn Harithah, had been killed in the earlier conflict. No more than twenty years old, inexperienced and untested, Usama's appointment was controversial, becoming especially problematic when veterans such as Abu Bakr, Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas were placed under his command. Nevertheless, the expedition was dispatched, though soon after setting off, news was received of Muhammad's death, forcing the army to return to Medina. The campaign was not reengaged until after Abu Bakr's ascension to the caliphate, at which point he chose to reaffirm Usama's command, which ultimately led to its success.

Death of Muhammad

There are a number of traditions regarding Muhammad's final days which have been used to reinforce the idea of the great friendship and trust which is said to have existed between him and Abu Bakr. In one such episode, as Muhammad was nearing death, he found himself unable to lead prayers as he usually would. He instructed Abu Bakr to take his place, ignoring concerns from Aisha that her father was too emotionally delicate for the role. Abu

Bakr subsequently took up the position, and when Muhammad entered the prayer hall one morning during Fajr prayers, Abu Bakr attempted to step back to let him to take up his normal place and lead. Muhammad, however, allowed him to continue. In a related incident, around this time, Muhammad ascended the pulpit and addressed the congregation, saying, "God has given his servant the choice between this world and that which is with God and he has chosen the latter." Abu Bakr, understanding this to mean that Muhammad did not have long to live, responded "Nay, we and our children will be your ransom." Muhammad consoled his friend and ordered that all the doors leading to the mosque be closed aside from that which led from Abu Bakr's house, "for I know no one who is a better friend to me than he."

Upon Muhammad's death, the Muslim community was unprepared for the loss of its leader and many experienced a profound shock. Umar was particularly affected, instead declaring that Muhammad had gone to consult with God and would soon return, threatening anyone who would say that Muhammad was dead. Abu Bakr, having returned to Medina, calmed Umar by showing him Muhammad's body, convincing him of his death. He then addressed those who had gathered at the mosque, saying, "If anyone worships Muhammad, Muhammad is dead. If anyone worships God, God is alive, immortal", thus putting an end to any idolising impulse in the population. He then concluded with verses from the Quran: "(O Muhammad) Verily you will die, and they also will die." (39:30), "Muhammad is no more than an Apostle; and indeed many Apostles have passed away, before him, If he dies Or is killed, will you then Turn back on your heels? And he who turns back On his heels, not the least Harm will he do to Allah And Allah will give reward to those Who are grateful."

Saqifa

In the immediate aftermath of the death of Muhammad, a gathering of the Ansar (natives of Medina) took place in the Saqifah (courtyard) of the Banu Sa'ida clan. The general belief at the time was that the purpose of the meeting was for the Ansar to decide on a new leader of the Muslim community among themselves, with the intentional exclusion of the Muhajirun (migrants from Mecca), though this has later become the subject of debate.

Nevertheless, Abu Bakr and Umar, upon learning of the meeting, became concerned of a potential coup and hastened to the gathering. Upon arriving, Abu Bakr addressed the assembled men with a warning that an attempt to elect a leader outside of Muhammad's own tribe, the Quraysh, would likely result in dissension, as only they can command the necessary respect among the community. He then took Umar and Abu Ubaidah, by the hand and offered them to the Ansar as potential choices. Habab ibn Mundhir, a veteran from the battle of Badr, countered with his own suggestion that the Quraysh and the Ansar choose a leader each from among themselves, who would then rule jointly. The group grew heated upon hearing this proposal and began to argue amongst themselves. The orientalist William Muir gives the following observation of the situation:

The moment was critical. The unity of the Faith was at stake. A divided power would fall to pieces, and all might be lost. The mantle of the Prophet must fall upon one Successor, and on one alone. The sovereignty of Islam demanded an undivided Caliphate; and Arabia would acknowledge no master but from amongst Koreish.

Umar hastily took Abu Bakr's hand and swore his own allegiance to the latter, an example followed by the gathered men. The meeting broke up when a violent scuffle erupted between Umar and the chief of the Banu Sa'ida, Sa'd ibn Ubadah. This may indicate that the choice of Abu Bakr may not have been unanimous, with emotions running high as a result of the disagreement.

Abu Bakr was near-universally accepted as head of the Muslim community (under the title of Caliph) as a result of Saqifah, though he did face contention because of the rushed nature of the event. Several companions, most prominent among them being Ali ibn Abi Talib, initially refused to acknowledge his authority. Among Shi'ites, it is also argued that Ali had previously been appointed as Muhammad's heir, with the election being seen as in contravention to the latter's wishes. Abu Bakr later sent Umar to confront Ali, resulting in an altercation which may have involved violence. However, after six months the group made peace with Abu Bakr and Ali offered him his allegiance.

Reign

I have been given the authority over you, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me; and if I do wrong, set me right. Sincere regard for truth is loyalty and disregard for

truth is treachery. The weak amongst you shall be strong with me until I have secured his rights, if God wills; and the strong amongst you shall be weak with me until I have wrested from him the rights of others, if God wills. Obey me so long as I obey God and His Messenger. But if I disobey God and His Messenger, you owe me no obedience. Arise for your prayer, God have mercy upon you. (Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah 6:305, 306)

Abu Bakr's reign lasted for 27 months, during which he crushed the rebellion of the Arab tribes throughout the Arabian Peninsula in the successful Ridda Wars. In the last months of his rule, he sent Khalid ibn al-Walid on conquests against the Sassanid Empire in Mesopotamia and against the Byzantine Empire in Syria. This would set in motion a historical trajectory[68] (continued later on by Umar and Uthman ibn Affan) that in just a few short decades would lead to one of the largest empires in history. He had little time to pay attention to the administration of state, though state affairs remained stable during his Caliphate. On the advice of Umar and Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah, he agreed to draw a salary from the state treasury and discontinue his cloth trade.

Ridda wars

Troubles emerged soon after Abu Bakr's succession, with several Arab tribes launching revolts, threatening the unity and stability of the new community and state. These insurgencies and the caliphate's responses to them are collectively referred to as the Ridda wars ("Wars of Apostasy").

The opposition movements came in two forms. One type challenged the political power of the nascent caliphate as well as the religious authority of Islam with the acclamation of rival ideologies, headed by political leaders who claimed the mantle of prophethood in the manner that Muhammad had done. These rebellions include:

- that of the Banu Asad ibn Khuzaymah headed by Tulayha ibn Khuwaylid
- that of the Banu Hanifa headed by Musaylimah
- those from among the Banu Taghlib and the Bani Tamim headed by Sajah
- that of the Al-Ansi headed by Al-Aswad Al-Ansi

These leaders are all denounced in Islamic histories as "false prophets".

The second form of opposition movement was more strictly political in character. Some of the revolts of this type took the form of tax rebellions in Najd among tribes such as the Banu Fazara and Banu Tamim. Other dissenters, while initially allied to the Muslims, used Muhammad's death as an opportunity to attempt to restrict the growth of the new Islamic state. They include some of the Rabia in Bahrayn, the Azd in Oman, as well as among the Kindah and Khawlan in Yemen.

Abu Bakr, likely understanding that maintaining firm control over the disparate tribes of Arabia was crucial to ensuring the survival of the state, suppressed the insurrections with military force. He dispatched Khalid ibn Walid and a body of troops to subdue the uprisings in Najd as well as that of Musaylimah, who posed the most serious threat. Concurrent to this, Shurahbil ibn Hasana and Al-Ala'a Al-Hadrami were sent to Bahrayn, while Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl, Hudhayfah al-Bariqi and Arfaja al-Bariqi were instructed to conquer Oman. Finally, Al-Muhajir ibn Abi Umayya and Khalid ibn Asid were sent to Yemen to aid the local governor in re-establishing control. Abu Bakr also made use of diplomatic means in addition to military measures. Like Muhammad before him, he used marriage alliances and financial incentives to bind former enemies to the caliphate. For instance, a member of the Banu Hanifa who had sided with the Muslims was rewarded with the granting of a land estate. Similarly, a Kindah rebel named Al-Ash'ath ibn Qays, after repenting and re-joining Islam, was later given land in Medina as well as the hand of Abu Bakr's sister Umm Farwa in marriage.

At their heart, the Ridda movements were challenges to the political and religious supremacy of the Islamic state. Through his success in suppressing the insurrections, Abu Bakr had in effect continued the political consolidation which had begun under Muhammad's leadership with relatively little interruption. By wars' end, he had established an Islamic hegemony over the entirety of the Arabian Peninsula.

Expeditions into Persia and Syria

With Arabia having united under a single centralised state with a formidable military, the region could now be viewed as a potential threat to the neighbouring Byzantine and Sasanian empires. It may be that Abu Bakr, reasoning that it was inevitable that one of these powers would launch a pre-emptive strike against the youthful

caliphate, decided that it was better to deliver the first blow himself. Regardless of the caliph's motivations, in 633, small forces were dispatched into Iraq and Palestine, capturing several towns. Though the Byzantines and Sassanians were certain to retaliate, Abu Bakr had reason to be confident; the two empires were militarily exhausted after centuries of war against each other, making it likely that any forces sent to Arabia would be diminished and weakened.

A more pressing advantage though was the effectiveness of the Muslim fighters as well as their zeal, the latter of which was partially based on their certainty of the righteousness of their cause. Additionally, the general belief among the Muslims was that the community must be defended at all costs. Historian Theodor Nöldeke gives the somewhat controversial opinion that this religious fervour was intentionally used to maintain the enthusiasm and momentum of the ummah:

It was certainly good policy to turn the recently subdued tribes of the wilderness towards an external aim in which they might at once satisfy their lust for booty on a grand scale, maintain their warlike feeling, and strengthen themselves in their attachment to the new faith… Muhammad himself had already sent expeditions across the [Byzantine] frontier, and thereby had pointed out the way to his successors. To follow in his footsteps was in accordance with the innermost being of the youthful Islam, already grown great amid the tumult of arms.

Though Abu Bakr had started these initial conflicts which eventually resulted in the Islamic conquests of Persia and the Levant, he did not live to see those regions conquered by Islam, instead leaving the task to his successors.

Preservation of the Quran

Abu Bakr was instrumental in preserving the Quran in written form. It is said that after the hard-won victory over Musaylimah in the Battle of Yamama in 632, Umar saw that some five hundred of the Muslims who had memorised the Quran had been killed. Fearing that it may become lost or corrupted, Umar requested that Abu Bakr authorise the compilation and preservation of the scriptures in written format. The caliph was initially hesitant, being quoted as saying, "how can we do that which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless and keep him, did not himself do?" He eventually relented, however, and

appointed Zayd ibn Thabit, who had previously served as one of the scribes of Muhammad, for the task of gathering the scattered verses. The fragments were recovered from every quarter, including from the ribs of palm branches, scraps of leather, stone tablets and "from the hearts of men". The collected work was transcribed onto sheets and verified through comparison with Quran memorisers. The finished codex, termed the Mus'haf, was presented to Abu Bakr, who prior to his death, bequeathed it to his successor Umar. Upon Umar's own death, the Mus'haf was left to his daughter Hafsa, who had been one of the wives of Muhammad. It was this volume, borrowed from Hafsa, which formed the basis of Uthman's legendary prototype, which became the definitive text of the Quran. All later editions are derived from this original.

Death

On 23 August 634, Abu Bakr fell sick and did not recover. He developed a high fever and was confined to bed. His illness was prolonged, and when his condition worsened, he felt that his end was near. Realising this, he sent for Ali and requested him to perform his ghusl since Ali had also done it for Muhammad.

Abu Bakr felt that he should nominate his successor so that the issue should not be a cause of dissension among the Muslims after his death, though there was already controversy over Ali not having been appointed. He appointed Umar for this role after discussing the matter with some companions. Some of them favoured the nomination and others disliked it, due to the tough nature of Umar.

Abu Bakr thus dictated his last testament to Uthman ibn Affan as follows:

In the name of Most Merciful God. This is the last will and testament of Abu Bakr bin Abu Quhafa, when he is in the last hour of the world, and the first of the next; an hour in which the infidel must believe, the wicked be convinced of their evil ways, I nominate Umar ibn al Khattab as my successor. Therefore, hear to him and obey him. If he acts right, confirm his actions. My intentions are good, but I cannot see the future results. However, those who do ill shall render themselves liable to severe account hereafter. Fare you well. May you be ever attended by the Divine favor of blessing. Umar led the funeral prayer for him and he was buried beside the grave of Muhammad.

Appearance

The historian Al-Tabari, in regards to Abu Bakr's appearance, records the following interaction between Aisha and her paternal nephew, Abd Allah ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr: When she was in her howdah and saw a man from among the Arabs passing by, she said, "I have not seen a man more like Abu Bakr than this one." We said to her, "Describe Abu Bakr." She said, "A slight, white man, thin-bearded and bowed. His waist wrapper would not hold but would fall down around his loins. He had a lean face, sunken eyes, a bulging forehead, and trembling knuckles." Referencing another source, Al-Tabari further describes him as being "white mixed with yellowness, of good build, slight, bowed, thin, tall like a male palm tree, hook-nosed, lean-faced, sunken-eyed, thin-shanked, and strong-thighed. He used to dye himself with henna and black dye."

Though the period of his caliphate covers only two years, two months and fifteen days, it included successful invasions of the two most powerful empires of the time: the Sassanid Empire and Byzantine Empire. Abu Bakr had the distinction of being the first Caliph in the history of Islam and also the first Caliph to nominate a successor. He was the only Caliph in the history of Islam who refunded to the state treasury at the time of his death the entire amount of the allowance that he had drawn during the period of his caliphate. He has the distinction of purchasing the land for Al-Masjid al-Nabawi.

Sunni view

Sunni Muslims view Abu Bakr as one of the best men of all the human beings after the prophets. They also consider Abu Bakr as one of the Ten Promised Paradise (al-'Ashara al-Mubashshara) whom Muhammad had testified were destined for Paradise. He is regarded as the "Successor of Allah's Messenger" (Khalifa Rasulullah), and first of the Rightly Guided Caliphs—i.e. Rashidun—and as the rightful successor to Muhammad. Abu Bakr had always been the closest friend and confidant of Muhammad throughout his life, being beside Muhammad at every major event. It was Abu Bakr's wisdom that Muhammad always honored. Abu Bakr is regarded among the best of Muhammad's followers; as Umar ibn al-Khattab stated, "If the faith of Abu Bakr was weighed against the faith of the people of the earth, the faith of Abu Bakr would outweigh the others."

Shia view

Shia Muslims believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib was supposed to assume the leadership, and that he had been publicly and unambiguously appointed by Muhammad as his successor at Ghadir Khumm. It is also believed that Abu Bakr and Umar conspired to take over power in the Muslim nation after Muhammad's death, in a coup d'état against Ali.

Most Twelver Shia (as the main branch of Shia Islam, with 85% of all Shias) have a negative view of Abu Bakr because, after Muhammad's death, Abu Bakr refused to grant Muhammad's daughter, Fatimah, the lands of the village of Fadak which she claimed her father had given to her as a gift before his death. He refused to accept the testimony of her witnesses, so she claimed the land would still belong to her as inheritance from her deceased father. However, Abu Bakr replied by saying that Muhammad had told him that the prophets of God do not leave as inheritance any worldly possessions and on this basis he refused to give her the lands of Fadak. However, as Sayed Ali Asgher Razwy notes in his book A Restatement of the History of Islam & Muslims, Muhammad inherited a maid servant, five camels, and ten sheep. Shia Muslims believe that prophets can receive inheritance, and can pass on inheritance to others as well. In addition, Shias claim that Muhammad had given Fadak to Fatimah during his lifetime, and Fadak was therefore a gift to Fatimah, not inheritance. This view has also been supported by the Abbasid ruler Al-Ma'mun.

Twelvers also accuse Abu Bakr of participating in the burning of the house of Ali and Fatima. The Twelver Shia believe that Abu Bakr sent Khalid ibn Walid to crush those who were in favour of Ali's caliphate (see Ridda wars). The Twelver Shia strongly refute the idea that Abu Bakr or Umar were instrumental in the collection or preservation of the Quran, claiming that they should have accepted the copy of the book in the possession of Ali.

However, Sunnis argue that Ali and Abu Bakr were not enemies and that Ali named his sons Abi Bakr in honor of Abu Bakr. After the death of Abu Bakr, Ali raised Abu Bakr's son Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr. The Twelver Shia view Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr as one of the greatest companions of Ali. When Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr was killed by the Umayyads, Aisha, the third wife of Muhammad, raised and taught her nephew Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr. Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr's mother was from Ali's family and Qasim's daughter Farwah bint al-Qasim was married to Muhammad al-Baqir and

was the mother of Jafar al-Sadiq. Therefore, Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was the grandson of Abu Bakr and the grandfather of Jafar al-Sadiq.

Zaydi Shias, the largest group amongst the Shia before the Safavid dynasty and currently the second-largest group (although its population is only about 5% of all Shia Muslims), believe that on the last hour of Zayd ibn Ali (the uncle of Jafar al-Sadiq), he was betrayed by the people in Kufa who said to him: "May God have mercy on you! What do you have to say on the matter of Abu Bakr and Umar ibn al-Khattab?" Zayd ibn Ali said, "I have not heard anyone in my family renouncing them both nor saying anything but good about them...when they were entrusted with government they behaved justly with the people and acted according to the Quran and the Sunnah

Uthman

Uthman ibn Affan, also spelled by Colloquial Arabic, Turkish and Persian rendering Osman, was a second cousin, son-in-law and notable companion of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, as well as the third of the Rāshidun, or "Rightly Guided Caliphs". He played a major role in early Islamic history, and is known for having ordered the compilation of the standard version of the Quran. When Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab died in office aged 60/61 years, Uthman, aged 68–71 years, succeeded him and was the oldest to rule as Caliph.

Under Uthman's leadership, the Islamic empire expanded into Fars (present-day Iran) in 650, and some areas of Khorāsān (present-day Afghanistan) in 651. The conquest of Armenia had begun by the 640s. His reign also saw widespread protests and unrest that eventually led to armed revolt and his assassination.

Uthman was married to Ruqayya, and upon her death, married Umm Kulthum. Both his wives having been elder daughters of Muhammad and Khadija earned him the honorific title Dhū al-Nurayn ("The Possessor of Two Lights"). Thus, he was also brother-in-law of the fourth Rāshidun Caliph Ali whose own wife, Fātimah, was Muhammad's youngest daughter.

Early life

Uthman was born to Affān ibn Abi al-'As, of the Umayya, and to Arwa bint Kurayz, of the Abdshams, both wealthy clans of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca. Arwa's mother

was Umm Hakim bint Abd al-Muttalib, making Arwa the first cousin of Muhammad and Uthman his first cousin's son. Uthman had one sister, Amina. Uthman was born in Ta'if. The exact date is disputed: both 576 and 583 are indicated. He is listed as one of the 22 Meccans "at the dawn of Islam" who knew how to write. His father, Affan, died at a young age while travelling abroad, leaving Uthman with a large inheritance. He became a merchant like his father, and his business flourished, making him one of the richest men among the Quraysh.

Muhammad's time

Conversion to Islam

On returning from a business trip to Syria in 611, Uthman learned of Muhammad's declared mission. After a discussion with Abu Bakr, Uthman decided to convert to Islam, and Abu Bakr brought him to Muhammad to declare his faith. Uthman thus became one of the earliest converts to Islam, following Ali, Zayd, Abu Bakr and a few others. His conversion to Islam angered his clan, the Banu Umayyah, who strongly opposed Muhammad's teachings.

Migration to Abyssinia

Uthman and his wife, Ruqayya, migrated to Abyssinia (modern Ethiopia) in April 615, along with ten Muslim men and three women. Scores of Muslims joined them later. As Uthman already had some business contacts in Abyssinia, he continued to practice his profession as a trader and he continued to flourish. After four years, the news spread among the Muslims in Abyssinia that the Quraysh of Mecca had accepted Islam, and this acceptance persuaded Uthman, Ruqayya and 39 Muslims to return. However, when they reached Mecca, they found that the news about the Quraysh's acceptance of Islam was false. Nevertheless, Uthman and Ruqayya re-settled in Mecca. Uthman had to start his business afresh, but the contacts that he had already established in Abyssinia worked in his favour and his business prospered once again.

Migration to Medina

In 622, Uthman and his wife, Ruqayya, were among the third group of Muslims to migrate to Medina. Upon arrival, Uthman stayed with Abu Talha ibn Thabit before moving into the house he purchased a short time later. Uthman was one of the richest merchants of Mecca, with no need of financial help from his Ansari brothers, as he had brought the

considerable fortune he had amassed with him to Medina. Most Muslims of Medina were farmers with little interest in trade, and Jews had conducted most trading in the town. Uthman realized there was a considerable commercial opportunity to promote trade among Muslims and soon established himself as a trader in Medina. With hard work and honesty, his business flourished, making him one of the richest men in Medina.

Life in Medina

When Ali married Fatimah, Uthman bought Ali's shield for five hundred dirhams. Four hundred was set aside as mahr (dower) for Fatimah's marriage, leaving a hundred for all other expenses. Later, Uthman presented the armour back to Ali as a wedding present.

Battles

According to R. V. C. Bodley, during Muhammad's lifetime, Uthman was not an outstanding figure, was not assigned to any authority, and earned no distinction in any of Muhammad's campaigns. During the Battle of Badr, Muhammad excused Uthman to care for Ruqayya bint Muhammad, who was suffering from illness. Uthman had a reputation of favouring family members. One way he displayed this was his habit of splitting war booty among his relatives to the exclusion of the combatants. During the Invasion of Hamra al-Asad a Meccan spy, Muawiyah bin Al Mugheerah, the cousin of Uthman ibn Affan, had been captured. According to the Muslim scholar Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri, Uthman gave him shelter after getting permission from Muhammad, and Muhammad told him that if he was caught again after 3 days he would be executed. As such, Muawiyah was given a grace period of three days and arranged a camel and provisions for his return journey to Mecca. Uthman departed with Muhammad for Hamra-al-Asad, and Muawiyah overstayed his grace. Though he fled by the time the army returned, Muhammad ordered his pursuit and execution. The orders were carried out.

Muhammad's last years

In 632, the year Muhammad died, Uthman participated in the Farewell Pilgrimage. Uthman was also present at the event of Ghadir Khumm, where, according to Shia sources, he was among those who pledged allegiance to Ali.

Caliph Abu Bakr's era (632–634)

Uthman had a very close relationship with Abu Bakr, as it was due to him that Uthman had converted to Islam. When Abu Bakr was selected as the caliph, Uthman was the first person after Umar to offer his allegiance. During the Ridda wars (Wars of Apostasy), Uthman remained in Medina, acting as Abu Bakr's adviser. On his deathbed, Abu Bakr dictated his will to Uthman, saying that his successor was to be Umar.

Election of Uthman

Umar, on his deathbed formed a committee of six people to choose the next caliph from amongst themselves. This committee was:

- Ali
- Uthman ibn Affan
- Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf
- Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas
- Zubayr ibn al-Awwam
- Talha

Umar asked that, after his death, the committee reach a final decision within three days, and the next caliph should take the oath of office on the fourth day. If Talhah joined the committee within this period, he was to take part in the deliberations, but if he did not return to Medina within this period, the other members of the committee could proceed with the decision. Abd al-Rahman bin Awf withdrew his eligibility to be appointed as caliph in order to act as a moderator and began his task by interviewing every member of the committee separately. He asked them for whom they would cast their vote. When Ali was asked, he did not reply. When Uthman was asked, he voted for Ali, Zubayr said for Ali or Uthman and Saad said for Uthman.

Uthman was a rich merchant who used his wealth to support Islam yet at no time before his caliphate had he displayed any qualities of leadership or actually led an army. But despite this, he was chosen by the electors as the only strong counter candidate to Ali as he alone could to some extent rival Ali's close kinship ties with Muhammad.

R. V. C. Bodley believed that after Umar's assassination, Ali rejected the caliphate as he disagreed with governing according to regulations established by Abu Bakr and Umar, and that Uthman accepted those terms which he failed to honour during his ten-year caliphate.

Reign as Caliph (644–656)

In about AD 650, Uthman began noticing slight differences in pronunciation of the Quran as Islam expanded beyond the Arabian Peninsula into Persia, the Levant, and North Africa. In order to preserve the sanctity of the text, he ordered a committee headed by Zayd ibn Thabit to use caliph Abu Bakr's copy and prepare a standard copy of the Qur'an. Thus, within 20 years of Muhammad's death, the Quran was committed to written form. That text became the model from which copies were made and promulgated throughout the urban centers of the Muslim world, and other versions are believed to have been destroyed.

While the Shīʿah use the same Qur'an as Sunni Muslims, they do not believe however that it was first compiled by Uthman. The Shīʿah believe that the Qur'an was gathered and compiled by Muhammad during his lifetime.

Economic and social administration

Uthman was a shrewd businessman and a successful trader from his youth, which contributed greatly to the Rashidun Empire. Umar had established a public allowance and, on assuming office, Uthman increased it by about 25%. Umar had placed a ban on the sale of lands and the purchase of agricultural lands in conquered territories. Uthman withdrew these restrictions, in view of the fact that the trade could not flourish. Uthman also permitted people to draw loans from the public treasury. Under Umar, it had been laid down as a policy that the lands in conquered territories were not to be distributed among the combatants, but were to remain the property of the previous owners. The army felt dissatisfied at this decision, but Umar suppressed the opposition with a strong hand. Uthman followed the policy devised by Umar and there were more conquests, and the revenues from land increased considerably.

Umar had been very strict in the use of money from the public treasury—indeed, apart from the meagre allowance that had been sanctioned in his favour, Umar took no money from

the treasury. He did not receive any gifts, nor did he allow any of his family members to accept any gifts from any quarter. During the time of Uthman, these restrictions were relaxed. Although Uthman still drew no personal allowance from the treasury, nor did he receive a salary, as he was a wealthy man with sufficient resources of his own, but, unlike Umar, Uthman accepted gifts and allowed his family members to do likewise from certain quarters. Uthman honestly expressed that he had the right to utilize the public funds according to his best judgment, and no one criticized him for that. The economic reforms introduced by Uthman had far-reaching effects; Muslims, as well as non-Muslims of the Rashidun Empire, enjoyed an economically prosperous life during his reign.

Military expansion

During his rule, Uthman's military-style was more autonomical in nature as he delegated much military authority to his trusted kinsmen—e.g., Abd Allah ibn Amir, Mu'awiya I and Abd Allah ibn Sa'd—unlike Umar's more centralized policy. Consequently, this more independent policy allowed more expansion until Sindh, in modern Pakistan, which had not been touched during the tenure of Umar.

Muawiyah I had been appointed the governor of Syria by Umar in 639 to stop Byzantine harassment from the sea during the Arab-Byzantine Wars. He succeeded his elder brother Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan, who died in a plague, along with Abu Ubaidah ibn al-Jarrah, the governor before him, and 25,000 other people. Now under Uthman's rule in 649, Muawiyah was allowed to set up a navy, manned by Monophysitic Christians, Copts, and Jacobite Syrian Christian sailors and Muslim troops, which defeated the Byzantine navy at the Battle of the Masts in 655, opening up the Mediterranean.

In Hijri year 31 (c. 651), Uthman sent Abdullah ibn Zubayr and Abdullah ibn Saad to reconquer the Maghreb, where he met the army of Gregory the Patrician, Exarch of Africa and relative of Heraclius, which is recorded to have numbered between 120,000 and 200,000 soldiers, Although another estimate was recorded, Gregory's army was put at 20,000. The opposing forces clashed at Sabuthilag (or Sufetula), which became the name of this battle. Records from al-Bidayah wal Nihayah state that Abdullah's troops were completely surrounded by Gregory's army. However, Abdullah ibn Zubayr spotted Gregory in his chariot and asked Abdullah ibn Sa'd to lead a small detachment to intercept him. The

interception was successful, and Gregory was slain by Zubayr's ambush party. Consequently, the morale of Byzantine army started crumbling and soon they were routed.

Some Muslim sources (Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari) claim that after the conquest of northern Africa was completed, Abdullah ibn Sa'd continued to Spain. Other prominent Muslim historians, like Ibn Kathir, have quoted the same narration. In the description of this campaign, two of Abdullah ibn Saad's generals, Abdullah ibn Nafiah ibn Husain, and Abdullah ibn Nafi' ibn Abdul Qais, were ordered to invade the coastal areas of Spain by sea, aided by a Berber force. They allegedly succeeded in conquering the coastal areas of Al-Andalus. It is not known where the Muslim force landed, what resistance they met, and what parts of Spain they actually conquered. However, it is clear that the Muslims did conquer some portion of Spain during the caliphate of Uthman, presumably establishing colonies on its coast. On this occasion, Uthman is reported to have addressed a letter to the invading force:

Constantinople will be conquered from the side of Al-Andalus. Thus, if you conquer it, you will have the honor of taking the first step towards the conquest of Constantinople. You will have your reward in this behalf both in this world and the next. Although raids by Berbers and Muslims were conducted against the Visigothic Kingdom in Spain during the late 7th century, there is no evidence that Spain was invaded nor that parts of it were conquered or settled by Muslims prior to the 711 campaign by Tariq. Abdullah ibn Saad also achieved success in the Caliphate's first decisive naval battle against the Byzantine Empire, the Battle of the Masts.

To the east, Ahnaf ibn Qais, chief of Banu Tamim and a veteran commander who conquered Shustar earlier, launched a series of further military expansions by further mauling Yazdegerd III near Oxus River in Turkmenistan and later crushing a military coalition of Sassanid loyalists and Hephthalite Empire in the Siege of Herat. Later, the governor of Basra, Abdullah ibn Aamir also led a number of successful campaigns, ranging from the suppression of revolts in Fars, Kerman, Sistan, and Khorasan, to the opening of new fronts for conquest in Transoxiana and Afghanistan.

In the next year, AD 652, Futh Al-Buldan of Baladhuri writes that Balochistan was re-conquered during the campaign against the revolt in Kermān, under the command of Majasha

ibn Mas'ud. It was the first time that western Balochistan had come directly under the laws of the Caliphate and it paid an agricultural tribute. The military campaigns under Uthman's rule were generally successful, except for a few in the kingdom of Nubia, on the lower Nile.

Public opposition to Uthman's policies

Reasons for the opposition

Noting an increase in anti-government tension around the Caliphate, Uthman's administration decided to determine its origins, extent, and aims. Some time around 654, Uthman called all twelve provincial governors to Medina to discuss the problem. During this Council of Governors, Uthman ordered that all resolutions of the council be adopted according to local circumstances. Later, in the Majlis al Shurah (council of ministers), it was suggested to Uthman that reliable agents be sent to various provinces to attempt to determine the source of the discontent. Uthman accordingly sent Muhammad ibn Maslamah to Kufa, Usama ibn Zayd to Basra, Ammar ibn Yasir to Egypt, and Abdullah ibn Umar to Syria. The agents sent to Kufa, Basra and Syria reported that all was well—the people were generally satisfied with the administration, although some individuals had minor personal grievances. Ammar ibn Yasir, the emissary to Egypt, however, did not return to Medina. Rebels there had been issuing propaganda in favour of making Ali caliph. Ammar ibn Yasir, who had been affiliated with Ali, abandoned Uthman for the Egyptian opposition. Abdullah ibn Saad, the governor of Egypt, reported about the opposition's activities instead. He wanted to take action against Ali's foster son, Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, Muhammad bin Abi Hudhaifa, Uthman's adopted son, and Ammar ibn Yasir.

Uthman's attempts to appease the dissidents

In 655, Uthman directed those with any grievance against the administration, as well as the governors and "Amils" throughout the caliphate, to assemble at Mecca for the Hajj, promising that all legitimate grievances would be redressed. Accordingly, large delegations from various cities came to present their grievances before the gathering.

The rebels realized that the people in Mecca supported Uthman and were not inclined to listen to them. This represented a great psychological victory for Uthman. It is said, according to Sunni Muslim accounts, that before returning to Syria, the governor Muawiyah,

Uthman's cousin, suggested that Uthman should come with him to Syria as the atmosphere there was peaceful. Uthman rejected his offer, saying that he did not want to leave the city of Muhammad (viz., Medina). Muawiyah then suggested that he be allowed to send a strong force from Syria to Medina to guard Uthman against any possible attempt by rebels to harm him. Uthman rejected it too, saying that the Syrian forces in Medina would be an incitement to civil war, and he could not be party to such a move.

Armed revolt against Uthman

The politics of Egypt played the major role in the propaganda war against the caliphate, so Uthman summoned Abdullah ibn Saad, the governor of Egypt, to Medina to consult with him as to the course of action that should be adopted. Abdullah ibn Saad came to Medina, leaving the affairs of Egypt to his deputy, and in his absence, Muhammad bin Abi Hudhaifa staged a coup d'état and took power. On hearing of the revolt in Egypt, Abdullah hastened back, but Uthman was not in a position to offer him any military assistance, and so Abdullah was unable to suppress the revolt.

Several Sunni scholars, such as Ibn Qutaybah, Ali Ibn Burhanuddin al-Halabi, Ibne Abi-al-Hadeed and Ibne Manzur, reported that there were several leading Sahaba among those who called upon Uthman to step down for reasons such as nepotism and profligacy.

Rebels in Medina

From Egypt, Kufa, and Basra, contingents of about 1,000 people apiece were sent to Medina, each with instructions to assassinate Uthman and overthrow the government. Representatives of the Egyptian contingent waited on Ali, and offered him the Caliphate, but he turned them down. Representatives of the contingent from Kufa waited on Al-Zubayr, and those from Basra waited on Talhah, each offering them their allegiance as the next Caliph, but both were similarly turned down. By proposing alternatives to Uthman as Caliph, the rebels swayed public opinion in Medina to the point where Uthman's faction could no longer offer a united front. Uthman had the active support of the Umayyads, and a few other people in Medina.

Siege of Uthman

The early stage of the siege of Uthman's house was not severe, but, as the days passed, the rebels intensified the pressure against Uthman. With the departure of the pilgrims from Medina to Mecca, the rebel position was strengthened further, and as a consequence the crisis deepened. The rebels understood that, after the Hajj, the Muslims, gathered at Mecca from all parts of the Muslim world, might march to Medina to relieve Uthman. They therefore decided to take action against Uthman before the pilgrimage was over. During the siege, Uthman was asked by his supporters, who outnumbered the rebels, to let them fight, but Uthman refused, in an effort to avoid bloodshed among Muslims. Unfortunately for Uthman, violence still occurred. The gates of the house of Uthman were shut and guarded by the renowned warrior Abd-Allah ibn al-Zubayr, along with Ali's sons, Hasan ibn Ali and Husayn ibn Ali.

Death of Uthman

Assassination

On 17 June 656, finding the gate of Uthman's house strongly guarded by his supporters, some of the rebels, with Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr being one of them, scaled the neighboring houses and jumped into Uthman's. Then Muhammad approached Uthman and grabbed his beard, shaking it. Uthman pleaded with him to let it go, admonishing him that his father Abu Bakr would never have acted in such a manner. Muhammad responded by saying that if Abu Bakr had witnessed the deeds Uthman had perpetrated, he would have undoubtedly denounced Uthman. Later, as Uthman prayed to God for protection from Muhammad, the latter stabbed his head with a blade, and the other rebels followed suit.

According to a narration regarded as likely to be a legend by Madelung, Uthman's wives threw themselves on his body to shield him. Na'ila, one of his wives, extended her hand to block a blade. Her fingers were severed, and she was shoved aside. The following strike killed Uthman. A few of Uthman's slaves retaliated, and one of them succeeded in killing one of the assassins before being murdered by the rebels.

Funeral

After the body of Uthman had been in the house for three days, Naila approached some of his supporters to assist in his burial, but only about a dozen people responded, including Marwan, Zayd ibn Thabit, 'Huwatib bin Alfarah, Jubayr ibn Mut'im, Abu Jahm bin Hudaifa, Hakim bin Hazam and Niyar bin Mukarram. The body was lifted at dusk, and because of the blockade, no coffin could be procured. The body was not washed. Thus, Uthman was carried to the graveyard in the clothes that he was wearing at the time of his assassination.

Naila followed the funeral with a lamp, but, in order to maintain secrecy, the lamp had to be extinguished. Naila was accompanied by some women, including Uthman's daughter.

Burial

The body was carried to Jannat al-Baqi for burial. Apparently, some people gathered there, and resisted Uthman's burial in the Muslim cemetery. Accordingly, Uthman's supporters later buried him in the Jewish graveyard behind Jannat al-Baqi. Some decades later, the Umayyad rulers demolished the wall separating the two cemeteries and merged the Jewish cemetery into the Muslim one to ensure that his tomb was now inside a Muslim cemetery. The funeral prayers were led by Jabir bin Muta'am, and the dead body was lowered into the grave with little ceremony. After burial, Naila and Aisha wanted to speak, but were discouraged from doing so due to possible danger from the rioters.

Causes of anti-Uthman revolt

The actual reason for the anti-Uthman movement is disputed among the Shia and Sunni Muslims. According to Sunni sources, unlike his predecessor, Umar, who maintained discipline with a stern hand, Uthman was less rigorous, focusing more on economic prosperity. Under Uthman, the people became more prosperous and on the political plane they came to enjoy a larger degree of freedom. No institutions were devised to channel political activity, and, in their absence, the pre-Islamic tribal jealousies and rivalries, which had been suppressed under earlier caliphs, erupted once again. The people took advantage of Uthman's leniency, which became a headache for the state, culminating in Uthman's assassination.

According to Wilferd Madelung, during Uthman's reign, "grievances against his arbitrary acts were substantial by standards of his time. Historical sources mention a lengthy account of the wrongdoings he was accused of... It was only his violent death that came to absolve him in Sunni ideology from any ahdath and make him a martyr and the third Rightly Guided Caliph." According to Keaney Heather, Uthman, as a caliph, relied solely on his own volition in picking his cabinet, which led to decisions that bred resistance within the Muslim community. Indeed, his style of governance made Uthman one of the most controversial figures in Islamic history.

The resistance against Uthman arose because he favoured family members when choosing governors, reasoning that, by doing this, he would be able to exact more influence on how the caliphate was run and consequently improve the capitalist system he worked to establish. The contrary turned out to be true and his appointees had more control over how he conducted business than he had originally planned. They went so far as to impose authoritarianism over their provinces. Indeed, many anonymous letters were written to the leading companions of Muhammad, complaining about the alleged tyranny of Uthman's appointed governors. Moreover, letters were sent to the leaders of public opinion in different provinces concerning the reported mishandling of power by Uthman's family. This contributed to unrest in the empire and finally Uthman had to investigate the matter in an attempt to ascertain the authenticity of the rumours. Wilferd Madelung discredits the alleged role of Abdullah ibn Saba in the rebellion against Uthman and observes that few if any modern historians would accept Sayf's legend of Ibn Saba.

Bernard Lewis, a 20th-century scholar, says of Uthman:

Uthman, like Mu'awiya, was a member of the leading Meccan family of Ummaya and was indeed the sole representative of the Meccan patricians among the early companions of the Prophet with sufficient prestige to rank as a candidate. His election was at once their victory and their opportunity. That opportunity was not neglected. Uthman soon fell under the influence of the dominant Meccan families and one after another, the high posts of the Empire went to members of those families.

The weakness and nepotism of Uthman brought to a head the resentment which had for some time been stirring obscurely among the Arab warriors. The Muslim tradition

attribute the breakdown which occurred during his reign to the personal defects of Uthman. But, the causes lie far deeper and the guilt of Uthman lay in his failure to recognize, control or remedy them. According to R. V. C. Bodley, Uthman subjected most of the Islamic nation to his relatives, Bani Umayya, who were partially accursed during Muhammad's lifetime.

Appearance and character

The historian al-Tabari notes that Uthman was of medium height, strong-boned and broad-shouldered, and walked in a bowlegged manner. He is said to have had large limbs, with fleshy shins and long, hairy forearms. Though commonly described as having been very handsome with a fair complexion, when viewed up close, light scars from a childhood bout of smallpox were said to have been evident on his face. He had a full reddish-brown beard to which he applied saffron and thick curly hair which grew past his ears, though receded at the front. His teeth were bound with gold wire, with the front ones being noted as being particularly fine.

Unlike his predecessor Umar, Uthman was not a skilled orator, having grown tongue-tied during his first address as caliph. He remained somewhat apart from the other close Sahaba, having been an elegant, educated and cultured merchant-prince standing out among his poorer compatriots. This was a trait which had been acknowledged by Muhammad. One story relates that Aisha, having noted that Muhammad reclined comfortably and spoke casually with Abu Bakr and Umar, asked him why when he addressed Uthman, he chose to gather his clothing neatly and assume a formal manner. Muhammad replied that "Uthman is modest and shy and if l had been informal with him, he would not have said what he had come here to say".

Uthman was a family man who led a simple life even after becoming the caliph, despite the fact that his flourishing family business had made him rich. Prior caliphs had been paid for their services from the bayt al-mal, the public treasury, but the independently wealthy Uthman never took a salary. Uthman was also a humanitarian: he customarily freed slaves every Friday, looked after the widows and orphans, and gave unlimited charity. His patience and endurance were among the characteristics that made him a successful leader. As a way of taking care of Muhammad's wives, he doubled their allowances. Uthman was not completely plain and simple, however: he built a palace for himself in Medina, known as Al-

Zawar, with a notable feature being doors of precious wood. Although Uthman paid for the palace with his own money, Shia Muslims considered it his first step towards ruling like a king.

It was asked of Uthman why he did not drink wine during the Age of Ignorance, when there was no objection to this practice (before the revelation of Islam). He replied: "I saw that it made the intellect flee in its entirety, and I've never known of something to do this and then return in its entirety."

The general opinion of the Sunni Muslim community and Sunni historians regarding Uthman's rule were positive, particularly regarding his leniency; in their view, his alleged nepotism concerned the kinsmen he appointed, such as Muawiya and Abdullah ibn Aamir, proven to be effective in both military and political management. Historians, like Zaki Muhammad, accused Uthman of corruption, particularly in the case of Waleed ibn Uqba.

Perhaps the most significant act of Uthman was allowing Muawiya and Abdullah ibn Saad, governors respectively of Syria and Northern Africa, to form the first integrated Muslim navy in the Mediterranean Sea, rivalling the maritime domination of the Byzantine Empire. Ibn Saad's conquest of the southeast coast of Spain, his stunning victory at the Battle of the Masts in Lycia, and expansion to other coasts of the Mediterranean Sea are generally overlooked. These achievements gave birth to the first Muslim standing navy, thus enabling the first Muslim maritime conquest of Cyprus and Rhodes. This subsequently paved the way for the establishment of several Muslim states in the Mediterranean Sea during the later Umayyad and Abbasid eras, which came in the form of the Emirate of Sicily and its minor vassal the Emirate of Bari, as well as the Emirate of Crete and the Aglabid Dynasty. The significance of Uthman's naval development and its political legacy was agreed upon by Muhammad M.Ag, author of Islamic Fiscal and Monetary Policy and further strengthened by Hassan Khalileh referencing Tarikh al Bahriyya wal Islamiyya fii Misr wal Sham ("History of the Seas and Islam in Egypt and Levant") by Ahmad Abaddy and Esayyed Salem.

From an expansionist perspective, Uthman is regarded as skilled in conflict management, as is evident from how he dealt with the heated and troubled early Muslim conquered territories, such as Kufa and Basra, by directing the hot-headed Arab settlers to

new military campaigns and expansions. This not only resulted in settling the internal conflicts in those settlements, but also further expanded Rashidun territory to as far west as southern Iberia and as far east as Sindh, Pakistan.

Lasting Religious Impact

Uthman is credited with bringing unity to the current version of the Quran. Prior to Uthman's reign, the Qur'an did not formally exist as a fixed text, but was written in fragmentary form and as a spoken, recited work. Uthman observed this brought with it some challenges. For example, even men of the same tribe would at times disagree over how the Quran would be recited. Although some of the companions of Mohammed had attempted to bring together collections of the Quran, it had not yet been standardized. Anas bin Malik reported "Hudhaifa was afraid of their (the people of Sham and Iraq) differences in the recitation of the Qur'an, so he said to `Uthman, "O chief of the Believers! Save this nation before they differ about the Book ... So `Uthman sent a message to Hafsa saying, "Send us the manuscripts of the Qur'an so that we may compile the Qur'anic materials in perfect copies and return the manuscripts to you." Hafsa sent it to `Uthman. `Uthman then ordered Zaid bin Thabit, `Abdullah bin AzZubair, Sa`id bin Al-As and `AbdurRahman bin Harith bin Hisham to rewrite the manuscripts..." This caliphate order made by Uthman gave the final form of the Quran we have today, and although a few small variants do exist in some areas, most of the variant readings and recitations have been lost or destroyed.

Expansion of empire by four caliphs

The first four caliphs (successors) after Muhammad's death in 632 were called the "Rightly Guided" caliphs because they had all known Muhammad and followed in his example and by the Quran. Their rule was known as a caliphate.

They expanded the empire rapidly, extending the faith to new peoples. They invoked jihad (defensive jihad, or jihad of the sword) against non-believers who tried to resist their expansion. Once the empire was established, they demonstrated tolerance to conquered peoples. Conquered peoples were able to continue worshipping their respective faiths, but had to pay a tax called the jizya to be exempt from military service.

The order of the first four caliphs:

- Abu Bakr (632-634)
- mar (634-644)
- Uthman (644-656)- was assassinated
- Ali (656-661)- was assassinated

After Ali was assassinated, the elective system of choosing caliph (taken from ancient tribal custom where the community elects a leader) ended.

Caliphs and Dynasties of Islam

After the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, died in 632 the Muslim government called the Caliphate became the leader of the Islamic Empire. The first 4 caliphs are known in Islaic history as the Rashidun Caliphate, meaning the "Rightly Guided Caliphs". They were all closely related to Muhammed and were known for their leadership and Muslim piety. During their reigns, despite the challenges and instability they had to deal with, the caliphate grew from being a purely Arabian power, into the largest empire up to that point in world history covering territory from Egypt in the West to Persia in the East.

The first of the Rashidun Caliphate was Abu Bakr, and led from 632-634. Abu Bakr was known as "The Truthful". He successfully stopped rebellions in the region and firmly established the Caliphate as the ruler of the region. The second caliph was Umar ibn al-Khattab who ruled from 634-644. He greatly expanded the Islamic Empire and successfully took control of the Middle East and neighboring regions such as Egypt, Syria, and North Africa. The third caliph was Uthman from 644-656 who established an the official holy book of Islam, the Quran. The last caliph was Ali ibn Abi Talib who ruled from 656-661 and was known for his wisdom and speeches.

Ali was assassinated in 661 and shortly after the The Umayyad Dynasty took control of the Islamic Empire. Under this dynasty, the empire expanded rapidly to include parts of Northern Africa, Western India, and Spain. At its peak, it was one of the largest empires in the history of the world. The Umayyad unified the empire through several efforts such as making Arabic the official language and establishing common money and system of measurement.

Islamic Golden Age

During the Abbasid Caliphate, the Islamic Empire greatly contributed to advancements in many fields, including literature, philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, and art. This period is known as the Islamic Golden Age and lasted from 790-1258. During this period, Islamic culture placed high importance on education. The first public universities were founded in Baghdad, where philosophy and literature were studied.

Arab storytellers collected works from diverse sources and wrote many forms of literature such as poetry, history, theology, philosophy, and fables. Most famous was a collection of Arab folk tales called "One Thousand and One Nights".

Muslim scholars translated and preserved the work of Ancient Greek philosophers. Two philosophies came out of this period, Falsafah which was logic based on Greek philosophy, mathematics, and physics and Kalam, which is the explanation and rationale of Islamic religious beliefs.

Doctors studied Greek and Indian works and added to their ideas about medicine. There were hospitals in all of the major cities. Islamic medicine developed important medical treatments, including a way to surgically treat eye cataracts. Their ancient book of medicine is called "The Canon of Medicine which was used as a reference throughout the Islamic empire and Europe for centuries.

Islamic scientists built on the work of their Greek and Indian counterparts. They used astronomy for navigation, creating a calendar, and for religious practices like finding the direction of Mecca for prayer.

They built observatories to study the sky and invented the quadrant and astrolabe. The astrolabe is like a handheld model of the universe that can help astronomers identify planets and stars. It was also used by explorers to determine latitude on the seas.

Greek, Indian, and Chinese mathematics were also studied, including geometry and trigonometry, Islamic mathematicians pioneered the study of Algebra and helped establish it as a separate field of mathematics.

Indian numerals were adopted and popularized by the Persian mathematician Al-Khwarizmi. They became known as the Arabic numeral system and subsequently spread across the globe through trade. Further innovations included the use of a forerunner to the modern bank check.

Religious leaders forbade artists from depicting God or human figures in religious art. Instead of using these figures, Islamic artists created intricate patterns and designs such as arabesque (leaves and flowers), tessellations (geometric patterns), and calligraphy (the art of beautiful handwriting). These can be seen on different forms of art such as ceramics, paintings and mosaics. Persian, Arab, and Indian artists excelled at painting miniature works for book illustrations.

Muawiyah - Conflict between Ali and Muawiyah

After his election as the Caliph, Ali deposed Muawiyah from the governorship of Syria. Muawiyah did not accept the orders of Ali and refused to vacate office. While in all other provinces, oath of allegiance was taken to Ali, under the influence of Muawiyah no one in Syria took the oath of allegiance of his authority amounted to rebellion pure and simple. At the outset of his rule, Ali planned an action against Syria to suppress the revolt. Things however got complicated, and instead of being resolved got tangled with the lapse of time. Muawiyah enjoyed the support of the people of Syria. Ali was thus not able to take disciplinary action against Muawiyah as the Head of a State could ordinarily take against a defiant subordinate. If Muawiyah had to be deposed, military action was necessary against the people of Syria. That obviously meant the Muslims fighting against the Muslims. This was something repugnant to Islam, and as such when Ali gave the call to arms for a military action against Syria, the response from the people of Madina was very poor. Expedition against Syria had therefore to be deferred for some reason or the other. The delay worked to the advantage of Muawiyah, as thereby he consolidated his power.

Difficulties were created for Ali, when Talha and Zubair who had taken the oath of allegiance to him defected and were joined by Ayesha. Ayesha, Talha and Zubair occupied Basra and Ali had to lead a force against Basra instead of against Syria. Ali won the victory over the confederates but this was achieved at a heavy cost. Over ten thousand persons died in this battle and their death was deeply mourned by the Muslim world. That also proved to

be a drain at the limited resources at the disposal of Ali. When after the Basra campaign Ali turned to Syria, Muawiyah had become stronger, and things for Ali became all the more difficult.

Nomination of Umar as the Caliph

On his death bed, Abu Bakr nominated Umar as his successor. Ali not only took the oath of allegiance to Umar but also married his daughter Umm Kulthum to Umar, and quite contrary to the biased allegations, perfect cordiality prevailed between Ali and Umar. Ali held the office of the Chief Justice. He acted as the principal Counselor of Umar. He acted as Chief Secretary as well. The services of Ali were highly appreciated by Umar. In these circumstances the views expressed in some quarters that Umar was the worst enemy of Ali is far from truth and cannot be accepted.

The Caliphate of Umar - Battle of Yermuk

During the time of Abu Bakr the Muslims captured a greater part of Syria including Damascus. When Umar became the Caliph the Byzantines made strong preparations and concentrated a very large army at Yermuk with a view to expelling the Muslims from Syria. The Muslims had to evacuate Damascus, and the cities in Northern Syria with a view to facing the Byzantines in battle at Yermuk in Southern Syria. It was a critical state of affairs for the Muslims. At this juncture Umar was of the view that he should himself go to Syria to command the Muslim forces. Umar sought the advice of Ali on the point. Ali advised in the following terms: "God is the protector of the Muslims. He guards their secrets. God helped the Muslims when they were few in number, and could not face the enemy. God defended them when they could not defend themselves. When God helped the Muslims in the early years, we can depend on His help even now when we have gained in numbers. God is alive, and would never die. We are fighting in His cause. And we should have perfect faith that He would help us. If you yourself go to fight against the Byzantine and God forbid are defeated, that will cause a great confusion, and would demoralize the Muslims. That would create a precarious situation for the Muslims in the areas bordering Syria. The proper course for you would be to remain in Madina, and direct the operations from there. You may place a seasoned general in command of the Muslim forces in Syria. God willing, the Muslims would

be victorious. "Umar acted on the advice of Ali, and the Muslims won an astounding victory at the Battle of Yermuk.

The Caliphate of Umar - Conquest of Jerusalem

After the Battle of Yermuk, the Muslims won other battles in Syria and the Byzantines were forced to evacuate Syria when the Muslim forces attacked Jerusalem. The Lord Bishop of Jerusalem proposed to surrender Jerusalem in case Umar the Caliph of the Muslims came to take over the city himself. Some of the companions of Umar advised that the Caliph should not go to Jerusalem, and the Christians after having been defeated could not dictate terms. When the advice of Ali was sought he said: "I had advised you not to go to Syria when the war was imminent for in the case of defeat that would have led to demoralization on the part of the Muslims. Now that God has rewarded the Muslims with victory, and the Christians desire that the Ca1iph should come himself to get the surrender of Jerusalem, I would advise that the Caliph should go to Jerusalem, for he will be going there as a victor. The presence of the Caliph of the Muslims in Syria would add to the prestige of the Muslims and would be instrumental in converting the Christians to Islam. Jerusalem is not merely sacred to the Christians; it is sacred to the Muslims as well. It was from Jerusalem that the Holy Prophet ascended the Heavens, and the sanctity of the place demands that its occupation should be take a by no one other than the Caliph of the Muslims." Umar accepted the advice of Ali, and personally west to Jerusalem to obtain the surrender of the city.

The Caliphate of Umar - Ornaments of Ka'aba

In the Holy Ka'aba there were many ornaments which had been gifted by the devotees from time to time, and embellished the walls of the House of God. Umar was of the opinion that all such ornaments should be removed from the Holy Ka'aba. And used for the purposes of the State. Umar sought the advice of Ali, who advised as follows:

When Makkah was conquered, the Holy Prophet demolished the idols in the Holy Ka'aba, but he did not touch the ornaments which embellished the walls of the Holy Ka'aba. If there had been anything objectionable to the decoration of the walls of the Holy Ka'aba, the Holy Prophet would have removed them. As he did not do so, it means that there is no objection to such ornamentation now if such ornaments are removed, it would mean that you are depriving the House of God of something to which the Holy Prophet had not objected. I

would not advise you to do anything of which the Holy Prophet was aware but chose to take no action. " Umar accepted the advice of Ali and let the ornaments remain in the Holy Ka'aba.

UNIT - III

The Umayyad Dynasty (661-750)

The first depasty to take the title of Caliphate, was established in 661 by Muawiya (602-680 AD), who had served as the governg of Syria under the Rashidun Caliphate, after the death of the fourth caliph, Ali in 661 AD The Umayyads ruled effectively and firmly established the political authority of the Caliphate, rebellions were crushed with brute force, and no quarter was given to those who stirred uprisings.

They ruled over a large empire, to which they added vast newly conquered areas such as that of North Africa (beyond Egypt), Spain, Transoxiana, parts of the Indian subcontinent, and multiple islands in the Mediterranean (but most of these were lost). Although the empire was at its ever largest size during their reign, internal divisions and civil wars weakened their hold over it, and in 750 CE, they were overthrown by the Abbasids (r. 750-1258 AD a rival Arab faction who claimed to be descended from the Propher's uncle Abbas)

After the death of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (570-632 AD). Abu Bakr (632-634 AD, a senior companion of the Prophet) took the title of the Caliph, hence forming the basis of the Islamic Caliphates (intermittently: 632-1924 AD) Abu Bakr was the first of the four initial caliphs referred collectively by the mainstream Sunni Muslims as the Rashidun Caliphs, while the Shia Muslims only consider the fourth one of these. Ali (a close companion and son-in-law of the Prophet), the sole legitimate candidate for the Caliphate.

In the Rashidun period, the armies of Islam launched full-scale invasions into Syria, the Levant. Egypt, parts of North Africa, the islands of the Greek archipelago, and the whole of the Sassanian Empire. These conquests were initiated by Abu Bakr and successfully carried on by his successors Umar (634-644 AD) and Uthman (644-656 AD). Uthman. however, was not a strong ruler and was murdered in his own house by rebels in 656 AD. His death marked the breaking point in the history of the Islamic empire: his successor Ali (r. 656-661AD) was pinned between handling a disintegrating realm and people insisting that justice be served to his dead predecessor.

Ali was faced with opposition, most notably from the governor of Syria, Muawiya (602- 680 AD) Muawiya was a cousin of Uthman; he refused to settle for anything less than

the execution of his kinsman's assailants. Civil war erupted, the First Fitna (656-661 AD). which ended with Ali's murder at the hands of an extremist group called the Kharjites. These zealots had made an attempt on Muawiya's life as well. but the latter survived with only a minor injury.

Muawiya I

Muawiyya's (661-680 AD) lineage is referred to as the Sufyanids (after his father Abu Sufyan), or sometimes as Harbites (afler his grandfather Harb). He was a shrewd politician and a strong diplomat who preferred bribery to warfare. He convinced Hasan (624-670 AD), the son of Ali, who had succeeded him in Kufa, to abdicate in his favor in exchange for a high pension. However, when he felt that someone posed a threat to his rule, he would take no risk and have them killed. The death of Hassan in 670 AD, who is said to have been poisoned by his wife, is often linked with him by Muslim historians, alongside that of many other supporters of Ali.

His 20-year reign, from his capital at Damascus, was indeed the most stable one that the Arabs had seen since the death of Umar, and his administrative reforms were just as excellent, such as the use of a police network (Shurta), personal bodyguards for his safety, diwans (for local administration, just as Umar had established) among others He initiated campaigns in parts of modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan and, in the west, all the way to the Atlantic coast of Morocco. He managed to regam territories lost to the Byzantines, but most of his gains were reversed after his death, owing to internal unrest.

Yazid I & the Second Fitna

Problems started when Muawiya appointed his son Yazid (680-683 CT) as his successor. The Arabs were not accustomed to dynastic rule and so Yazid's accession was met with much resentment, most notably from Husayn ibn Ali (626-680 CE). Hasan's younger brother, and Abdullah ibn Zubayr (624-692 CE), who was the son of a close companion of Prophet Muhammad. Today yazid is remembered as perhaps the most Negative figure in Islamic history.

In 680 AD, Husayn, convinced by the people of Kufa, marched to Iraq, intending to gather his forces and then attack Damascus Yazid, however, put a lockdown on Kufa and sent

his army, under the command of his cousin: Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad (d. 686 AD) to intercept Husayn's force. The two parties met in Karbala, near the Euphrates, where Husayn's army some 70 combatants (mostly family members and close associates) made a heroic stand and were all brutally massacred and Husayn beheaded. This sparked the second civil war of Islamic history-the Second Fitna (680-692 AD).

Yazid then ordered another army to attack the Medinans, who had rebelled due to their disgust over Yazid's character and actions, this culminated in the Battle of al-Harra (633 AD), where opposition was crushed. In the aftermath of the battle, according to some sources, Medina was subjected to plunder, pillage, rape, and murder. The Syrian army then proceeded to Mecca, where Abdullah had established his own realm. The city was besieged for several weeks, during which the cover of the Kalaba (Islamic holy site) caught on fire. Though Yazid's army retreated to Syria after their leader's sudden death (683 AD), the damage done by Yazid's army left an indelible mark in the hearts of the Muslims. Abdullah continued his revolt for another decade, claiming the title of Caliph (r. 683-692 AD) for himself, he earned the fealty of Hejaz. Egypt, and Irag while his opponents were barely in control of Damascus after their sovereign's death.

Foday Yazid is remembered as perhaps the most negative figure in Islamic history. His son Muawiya II (r. 683-684 AD) was proclaimed caliph after his death, but the sickly youngster wanted no share in his father's ill actions. He died just a few months later in 684 AD, bringing an end to the Sufyanid rulers. Apart from Damascus, the whole of the Umayyad realm had been tossed into chaos.

The Marwanids

Marwan ibn Hakam (r. 684-685 AD), a senior member of the Umayyad clan and a cousin of Muawiya, took over, with the promise that the throne would pass on to Khalid (Yarafs younger son upon his death. He had no intention of keeping this promise, now the empire was in the hands of the Marwanids (house of Marwan) also known as Hakamites (after Marwan's father Hakam). Marwan recaptured Egypt - which had revolted and joined the Zubayrid faction. But he could not contain Abdullah's revolt, as he died just nine months after assuming the office (685 AD). This task now fell upon the shoulders of his brilliant son. Abd al-Malik (r. 685-705 AD).

In 685. Al Mukhtar (622-687), started a revolt in Kufa and joined hands with Abdullah against the Umayyads. Al Mukhtar systematically hunted down all those who were involved in Husayn's murder. An army sent by Abd al-Malik under Ubaidullah (the general from Karbala) was crushed by the combined forces of the Kufans and Zubayrids, the defeated general was put to the sword.

He then declared his wish to establish an Alid Caliphate, using one of Ali's sons (although not from Fatima), Muhammad ibn al-Hanaffiya (637-700). This led to his parting ways with Abdullah who had claimed the Caliphate for himself from Mecca. Abd al-Malik then waited as his rivals weakened each other. In 687 Al Mukhtar was killed by Zubayrid forces during the siege of Kufa. Although Al Mukhtar died there and then. his revolt ultimately led to the evolution of Shi'ism from a political group to a religious sect.

With the threat in Kufa neutralized, Abd al-Malik shifted his attention towards Mecca, he sent his most loyal and ruthless general, the governor of rebellious Iraq. Hajjaj ibn Yusuf (1 661-714) to subjugate his rival. Although Abdullah stood no chance against Hajjaj's mighty army, he refused to surrender and died sword in hand in 692 the war was over.

Although he has not escaped the criticism for Hajjaj's cruel deeds. Abd al-Malik is credited for bringing stability and centralization to the empire. Most notably he Arabized the whole of his dominion, which in time helped the propagation of Islam, he also established official coins for his empire.

The construction of the Dome of Rock in Jerusalem took place under his canopy (691-692) it is conceivable that this was to balance his position against Abdullah, who at that time was in control of the Ka'aba. It was also during his reign that all of North Africa, including Tunis, was conquered (by 693) for good. The local Berbers, who accepted Islam, would become vital in carrying it all the way to Spain during the reign of his son.

Al Walid & Conquest of Spain

After ANd al Malik's death, his son Al Walst 1 tr 705-715) assumed the office who posed the boundines of his empire even farther Hajjaj continued to extend his influence over his sovereign two of his protégés Muhammad ibn Qasim (695-715) Qube Mushion (600-715) were successful in subjugating parts of modern day Pakistan and Transossana, respectively.

Muslim conquest of Spain started in 711 when a Berber named Tariq ibn Ziyad landed en the brun Peninsula on a mount that bears his name today Gibral-Tar. He defeated a erically superior army led by Gothic King Roderic (r. 710-712 g at the battle of Gudslee (711) after which, the land simply lay still for him to take.

Musa ibn Nusayr (640-716) the governor of Ifriqiya (North Africa beyond Egypt) remforced Tang with more men and the duo had conquered most of Al Andalus (Arabic for Spain the land of the Vandals) by 714 CE Musa was on the verge of incoding Europe through the Pyrenees, but at that fateful moment, for reasons not clear to historians, the Caliph ordered both of them to return to Damascus.

Walid had tried to nominate his own son as his successor, instead of his brother Sulayman. who was his successor by their father's covenant; naturally. Sulayman refused to let go of his claim Walid died before he could force his brother into submission, and Sulayman (715- 717) assumed the office; his brief reign was an abject failure. Sulayman had nothing but contempt for the late Hajjaj and released many people who had been held captive in Hajjaj's prisons

However, the dead governor's subordinates faced the full wrath of the new Caliph: Sulayman had many of the empire's dauntless generals and talented governors killed, as most of them had been handpicked by the aforementioned. Sulaymans then turned his attention towards Constantinople and sent a massive force to conquer the Byzantine capital in 717 AD. This venture was a costly and humiliating defeat, the damage was permanent and D ineversible, halted expansion, moreover, it was the first major setback against the Byzantines. Nearing his death, Sulayman realized that his own sons were too young to succeed him, be nominated his pious cousin Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz.

Umayyad Siege of Constantinople 717 AD

Umar 11 (717-720 AD) managed to rule for only three years as he was poisoned by his own family because of his unwavering stance on justice and on Islamic principles. This quality of his supplemented by many of his admirable actions such as stopping public cursing of Ali. facilitating conversion and halting attacks on much posthumous fame as he has often been dubbed as the fifth Rashidun Caliph peaceful neighboring empires, has earned him much posthumous fame as he has often been dubbed as the fifth Rashidun Caliph.

He stopped all military expeditions, knowing that the internal state of the empire needed to be improved before anything else. He had also entered negotiations with the non-Arab Muslims (Mawali in Arabic), who had opposed and resented Umayyad rule (since they had been violently repressed). Had he been given enough time, there was a fair enough chance that he might have succeeded, and the Abbasids might have never gained enough support against the Umayyads from Mawalis and Shia Muslims (of the Eastern Provinces).

Umar's successor, Yazid II (720-724), another son of Abd al-Malik, proved to be no better a ruler than the first one to bear his name. Whilst he was busy fondling with his favorite concubines in his harem, his ineffective governors had lost all control of the empire. Fortunately for the Umayyads, he died just four years after assuming control.

Restoration of Order

Yazid's brother and successor, Hisham (724-743 AD) had inherited an empire torn apart by civil wars and he would use all of his energies and resources to bring the kingdom out of this tumult. A strong and inflexible ruler. Hisham reinstated many reforms that had been introduced by Umar II but discontinued by Yazid II.

Some of his military expeditions were successful, others not so much: a Hindu revolt in Sindh (a province in modern-day Pakistan) was crushed, but a Berber revolt broke out in the western parts of North Africa (modern-day Morocco) in 739 AD. The Berbers had been stirred up by the fanatical teachings of Kharijite zealots (a radical and rebellious sect of Islam) and caused a great deal of damage, most notably, the deaths of most of the Arab elites of Ifriqiya at the Battle of Nobles (740) near Tangier. Attempts to crush the rebellion did not even come close to complete the objective, but the disunited Berbers soon disintegrated (743 AD) after they failed to take the core of Ifriqiya, the capital city of Qairouwan, but Morocco was lost for the Umayyads.

Coin of Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik

Al Andalus had also descended to anarchy, but Hisham was successful there. Under an able general named Abd al-Rahman al-Ghafiqi, the province was restored to order but further expansion into Europe was checked after the defeat at the Battle of Tours (732 against the Franks under Charles Martel (718-741)

Third Fitna

After Hisham's death in 743, the empire was brought to a civil war. Walid II-a son of Yazid II ruled from 743-744. before being overthrown and killed by Yazid III (744) -a son of Walid I. This sparked the Third Fitna (743-747), the third civil war in Islamic history as many tribes had also started revolting against the establishment amidst the chaos. Yazid III died just six months later and was succeeded by his brother Ibrahim who only managed to rule for two months before being overthrown by the elderly Marwan 11(744- 750)-a grandson of Marwan I. Umayyad rule ended with marwan's death but abd al- rahman carried on his family's hold on spain.

Marwan II was a strong military commander but lacked diplomatic skills, instead he crushed the uprisings with brute force and brought an end to the Third Fitna in 747 However, the Abbasids (an Arabian faction that claimed to be descendants of the Prophet's uncle: Abbas), had gained the support of the people of Khurasan (in Iran). His empire was not in a state to face a large scale uprising: his army was exhausted after years of warfare, the failing economy did not allow him to recruit more troops, and ineffective governors failed to realize the gravity of the Abbasid threat until it was simply too late.

By the end of 749, most of the eastern states had displayed the black standards of the Abbasids and the resentful tribes that he had subjugated with force were also allying with them. He faced the bulk of the Abbasid army near the Zab River (750), where his army was routed and he was forced to flee. He escaped to Egypt, intending to muster up his forces from western provinces, but the Abbasids caught up with him and killed him. Umayyad rule was over, and the first Abbasid ruler Abu Abbas (750-754) was declared the new Caliph in Kufa.

End of the Umayyads

The Abbasids showed no mercy to the Umayyads, all male members were slain, a surviving few retreated to their hideouts. Umayyad graves in Damascus were dug out and their remains torn apart and burnt except for Umar II, whose grave was spared because of his reputation. Then the Abbasids invited all of the surviving members to dinner on the pretext of reconciliation but, when they were seated at the table, at the signal of the new Caliph. assassins entered the room and clubbed them to death Abd al-Rahman 1, a grandson of the able Hisham, survived the horrible fate of his kinsmen. he managed to escape the Abbasids

and made a perilous journey across the empire and landed in Al Andalus, where he formed the Emirate of Cordoba in 756. which rivaled the Abbasid realm in elegance and grandeur.

The Umayyads were the first dynasty to take over the institute of Caliphate, transforming it into an inheritable title. They were responsible for bringing centralization and stability to the realm, and they also continued the swift military expansion of the empire. However, the Umayyads also had their fair share of wrongdoings and flaws that cost them their reputation. Yazid I committed horrendous crimes against the house of Ali and the people of Medina and Mecca to this day, he remains the most hated person in Islamic history. This hatred is especially well pronounced among Shia Muslims because of the massacre of Husayn and his forces at Karbala in 680 (this event is commemorated annually through the festival of Ashura by the Shias).

Yazid's actions have been extended over to the whole dynasty, and since most of the Umayyad caliphs were more or less secular and led luxurious lives (save a few such as Umar II and Hisham). they were viewed as being godless by pious Muslims of their time. Contemporary historians tend to glorify them while many Muslim historians (but not all) tend to demonize them. Despite their many flaws, the Umayyads were effective rulers and made notable contributions not only to the empire but Arabization of the empire - to Islam itself. perhaps unintentionally, with the Arabization of the empire-to Islam itself.

Administration of Umayyad

The first four caliphs created a stable administration for the empire, following the practices and administrative institutions of the Byzantine Empire which had ruled the same region previously. These consisted of four main governmental branches: political affairs, military affairs, tax collection, and religious administration. Each of these was further subdivided into more branches, offices, and departments.

Provinces

Geographically, the empire was divided into several provinces, the borders of which changed numerous times during the Umayyad reign. Each province had a governor appointed by the caliph. The governor was in charge of the religious officials, army leaders, police, and civil administrators in his province. Local expenses were paid for by taxes coming from that province, with the remainder each year being sent to the central government in Damascus. As the central power of the Umayyad

rulers waned in the later years of the dynasty, some governors neglected to send the extra tax revenue to Damascus and created great personal fortunes.

Government workers

As the empire grew, the number of qualified Arab workers was too small to keep up with the rapid expansion of the empire. Therefore, Muawiya allowed many of the local government workers in conquered provinces to keep their jobs under the new Umayyad government. Thus, much of the local government's work was recorded in Greek, Coptic, and Persian. It was only during the reign of Abd al-Malik that government work began to be regularly recorded in Arabic.

Military

The Umayyad army was mainly Arab, with its core consisting of those who had settled in urban Syria and the Arab tribes who originally served in the army of the Eastern Roman Empire in Syria. These were supported by tribes in the Syrian desert and in the frontier with the Byzantines, as well as Christian Syrian tribes. Soldiers were registered with the Army Ministry, the Diwan Al-Jaysh, and were salaried. The army was divided into junds based on regional fortified cities. The Umayyad Syrian forces specialised in close order infantry warfare, and favoured using a kneeling spear wall formation in battle, probably as a result of their encounters with Roman armies. This was radically different from the original Bedouin style of mobile and individualistic fighting.

Currency

The Byzantine and Sassanid Empires relied on money economies before the Muslim conquest, and that system remained in effect during the Umayyad period. Byzantine coinage was used until 658; Byzantine gold coins were still in use until the monetary reforms c. 700. In addition to this, the Umayyad government began to mint its own coins in Damascus, which were initially similar to pre-existing coins but evolved in an independent direction. These were the first coins minted by a Muslim government in history. Gold coins were called "dinars" while silver coins were called "dirhams".

Central diwans

To assist the caliph in administration there were six boards at the centre: Diwan al-Kharaj (the Board of Revenue), Diwan al-Rasa'il (the Board of Correspondence), Diwan al-Khatam (the Board of Signet), Diwan al-Barid (the Board of Posts), Diwan al-Qudat (the Board of Justice) and Diwan al-Jund (the Military Board)

Diwan al-Kharaj

The Central Board of Revenue administered the entire finances of the empire. It also imposed and collected taxes and disbursed revenue.

Diwan al-Rasa'il

A regular Board of Correspondence was established under the Umayyads. It issued state missives and circulars to the Central and Provincial Officers. It coordinated the work of all Boards and dealt with all correspondence as the chief secretariat.

Diwan al-Khatam

In order to reduce forgery, Diwan al-Khatam (Bureau of Registry), a kind of state chancellery, was instituted by Mu'awiyah. It used to make and preserve a copy of each official document before sealing and despatching the original to its destination. Thus in the course of time a state archive developed in Damascus by the Umayyads under Abd al-Malik. This department survived till the middle of the Abbasid period.

Diwan al-Barid

Main article: Barid

Mu'awiyah introduced the postal service, Abd al-Malik extended it throughout his empire, and Walid made full use of it. Umar bin Abdul-Aziz developed it further by building caravanserais at stages along the Khurasan highway. Relays of horses were used for the conveyance of dispatches between the caliph and his agents and officials posted in the provinces. The main highways were divided into stages of 12 miles (19 km) each and each stage had horses, donkeys, or camels ready to carry the post. Primarily the service met the needs of Government officials, but travellers and their important dispatches were also benefited by the system. The postal carriages were also used for the swift transport of troops. They were able to carry fifty to a hundred men at a time. Under Governor Yusuf bin Umar, the postal department of Iraq costs 4,000,000 dirhams a year.

Diwan al-Qudat

In the early period of Islam, justice was administered by Muhammad and the orthodox caliphs in person. After the expansion of the Islamic State, Umar al-Faruq had to separate the judiciary from the general administration and appointed the first qadi in Egypt as early as AD 643/23 AH. After 661, a series of judges served in Egypt during the caliphates of Hisham and Walid II.

Diwan al-Jund

The Diwan of Umar, assigning annuities to all Arabs and to the Muslim soldiers of other races, underwent a change in the hands of the Umayyads. The Umayyads meddled with the register and the recipients regarded pensions as the subsistence allowance even without being in active service. Hisham reformed it and paid only to those who participated in the battle. On the pattern of the Byzantine system, the Umayyads reformed their army organization in general and divided it into five corps: the centre, two wings, vanguards, and rearguards, following the same formation while on the march or on a battlefield. Marwan II (740–50) abandoned the old division and introduced the Kurdus (cohort), a small compact body. The Umayyad troops were divided into three divisions: infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Arab troops were dressed and armed in Greek fashion. The Umayyad cavalry used plain and round saddles. The artillery used the arradah (ballista), the manjaniq (mangonel), and the dabbabah or kabsh (battering ram). The heavy engines, siege machines, and baggage were carried on camels behind the army.

Social organization

Ivory (circa 8th century) discovered in the Abbasid homestead in Humeima, Jordan. The style indicates an origin in northeastern Iran, the base of Hashimiyya military power.

The Umayyad Caliphate had four main social classes:

1. Muslim Arabs
2. Muslim non-Arabs (clients of the Muslim Arabs)
3. Dhimmis (non-Muslim free persons such as Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians)
4. Slaves

The Muslim Arabs were at the top of the society and saw it as their duty to rule over the conquered areas. The Arab Muslims held themselves in higher esteem than Muslim non-Arabs and generally did not mix with other Muslims.

As Islam spread, more and more of the Muslim population consisted of non-Arabs. This caused social unrest, as the new converts were not given the same rights as Muslim Arabs. Also, as conversions increased, tax revenues (peasant tax) from non-Muslims decreased to dangerous lows. These issues continued to worsen until they helped cause the Abbasid Revolt in the 740s.

Non-Muslims

Non-Muslim groups in the Umayyad Caliphate, which included Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, and pagans, were called dhimmis. They were given a legally protected status as second-class citizens as long as they accepted and acknowledged the political supremacy of the ruling Muslims, i.e. paid a tax, known as jizya, which the Muslims did not have to pay, who would instead pay the zakat tax. If they converted to Islam they would cease paying jizya and would instead pay zakat.

Although the Umayyads were harsh when it came to defeating their Zoroastrian adversaries, they did offer protection and relative religious tolerance to the Zoroastrians who accepted their authority. As a matter of fact, Umar II was reported to have said in one of his letters commanding not to "destroy a synagogue or a church or temple of fire worshippers (meaning the Zoroastrians) as long as they have reconciled with and agreed upon with the Muslims". Fred Donner says that Zoroastrians in the northern parts of Iran were hardly penetrated by the "believers", winning virtually complete autonomy in-return for tribute-tax or jizyah. Donner adds "Zoroastrians continued to exist in large numbers in northern and western Iran and elsewhere for centuries after the rise of Islam, and indeed, much of the canon of Zoroastrian religious texts was elaborated and written down during the Islamic period."

Christians and Jews still continued to produce great theological thinkers within their communities, but as time wore on, many of the intellectuals converted to Islam, leading to a lack of great thinkers in the non-Muslim communities. Important Christian writers from the Umayyad period include the theologian John of Damascus, bishop Cosmas of Maiuma, Pope Benjamin I of Alexandria and Isaac of Nineveh.

Although non-Muslims could not hold the highest public offices in the empire, they held many bureaucratic positions within the government. An important example of Christian employment in the Umayyad government is that of Sarjun ibn Mansur. He was a Melkite Christian official of the early Umayyad Caliphate. The son of a prominent Byzantine official of Damascus, he was a favourite of the early Umayyad caliphs Mu'awiya I and Yazid I, and served as the head of the fiscal administration for Syria from the mid-7th century until the year 700, when Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan dismissed him as part of his efforts to Arabicize the administration of the caliphate. According to the Muslim historians al-Baladhuri and al-Tabari, Sarjun was a mawla of the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'awiya I (r. 661–680), serving as his "secretary and the person in charge of his business". The hagiographies, although less reliable, also assign to him a role in the administration, even as "ruler" (archon or even amir), of Damascus and its environs, where he was

responsible for collecting the revenue. In this capacity, he is attested in later collections of source material such as that of al-Mas'udi. Sarjun ibn Mansur was replaced by Sulayman ibn Sa'd al-Khushani, another Christian.

Muawiya's marriage to Maysun bint Bahdal (Yazid's mother) was politically motivated, as she was the daughter of the chief of the Kalb tribe, which was a large Syriac Orthodox Christian Arab tribe in Syria. The Kalb tribe had remained largely neutral when the Muslims first went into Syria. After the plague that killed much of the Muslim army in Syria, by marrying Maysun, Muawiyah used the Syriac Orthodox Christians against the Byzantines.

Tom Holland writes that Christians, Jews, Samaritans and Manichaeans were all treated well by Muawiyah. Muawiyah even restored Edessa's cathedral after it had been toppled by an earthquake. Holland also writes that, "Savagely though Muawiyah prosecuted his wars against the Romans, yet his subjects, no longer trampled by rival armies, no longer divided by hostile watchtowers, knew only peace at last. Justice flourished in his time, and there was great peace in the regions under his control. He allowed everyone to live as they wanted."

Legacy

The Umayyad caliphate was marked both by territorial expansion and by the administrative and cultural problems that such expansion created. Despite some notable exceptions, the Umayyads tended to favor the rights of the old Arab families, and in particular their own, over those of newly converted Muslims (mawali). Therefore, they held to a less universalist conception of Islam than did many of their rivals. As G.R. Hawting has written, "Islam was in fact regarded as the property of the conquering aristocracy."

During the period of the Umayyads, Arabic became the administrative language and the process of Arabization was initiated in the Levant, Mesopotamia, North Africa, and Iberia. State documents and currency were issued in Arabic. Mass conversions also created a growing population of Muslims in the territory of the caliphate.

According to one common view, the Umayyads transformed the caliphate from a religious institution (during the Rashidun caliphate) to a dynastic one. However, the Umayyad caliphs do seem to have understood themselves as the representatives of God on earth, and to have been responsible for the "definition and elaboration of God's ordinances, or in other words the definition or elaboration of Islamic law."

The Umayyads have met with a largely negative reception from later Islamic historians, who have accused them of promoting a kingship (mulk, a term with connotations of tyranny) instead of a true caliphate (khilafa). In this respect it is notable that the Umayyad caliphs referred to themselves not as khalifat rasul Allah ("successor of the messenger of God", the title preferred by the tradition), but rather as khalifat Allah ("deputy of God"). The distinction seems to indicate that the Umayyads "regarded themselves as God's representatives at the head of the community and saw no need to share their religious power with, or delegate it to, the emergent class of religious scholars." In fact, it was precisely this class of scholars, based largely in Iraq, that was responsible for collecting and recording the traditions that form the primary source material for the history of the Umayyad period. In reconstructing this history, therefore, it is necessary to rely mainly on sources, such as the histories of Tabari and Baladhuri, that were written in the Abbasid court at Baghdad.

Modern Arab nationalism regards the period of the Umayyads as part of the Arab Golden Age which it sought to emulate and restore. This is particularly true of Syrian nationalists and the present-day state of Syria, centered like that of the Umayyads on Damascus. The Umayyad banners were white, after the banner of Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan; it is now one of the four Pan-Arab colours which appear in various combinations on the flags of most Arab countries.

UNIT – IV

ABBASIDS

The Abbasid Dynasty: The Golden Age of Islamic Civilization

The Abbasid Caliphat was the third caliphate to succeed the Islamic prophet Muhammad. It was founded by a dynasty descended from Muhammad's uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (566–653 CE), from whom the dynasty takes its name. They ruled as caliphs for most of the caliphate from their capital in Baghdad in modern-day Iraq, after having overthrown the Umayyad Caliphate in the Abbasid Revolution of 750 CE (132 AH). The Abbasid Caliphate first centered its government in Kufa, modern-day Iraq, but in 762 the caliph Al-Mansur founded the city of Baghdad, near the ancient Babylonian capital city of Babylon. Baghdad became the center of science, culture and invention in what became known as the Golden Age of Islam. This, in addition to housing several key academic institutions, including the House of Wisdom, as well as a multiethnic and multi-religious environment, garnered it a worldwide reputation as the "Center of Learning".

The Abbasid period was marked by dependence on Persian bureaucrats (such as the Barmakid family) for governing the territories as well as an increasing inclusion of non-Arab Muslims in the ummah (Muslim community). Persian customs were broadly adopted by the ruling elite, and they began patronage of artists and scholars. Despite this initial cooperation, the Abbasids of the late 8th century had alienated both non-Arab mawali (clients) and Persian bureaucrats. They were forced to cede authority over al-Andalus (current Spain and Portugal) to the Umayyads in 756, Morocco to the Idrisids in 788, Ifriqiya and Sicily to the Aghlabids in 800, Khorasan and Transoxiana to the Samanids and Persia to the Saffarids in the 870s, and Egypt to the Isma'ili-Shia caliphate of the Fatimids in 969.

The political power of the caliphs was limited with the rise of the Iranian Buyids and the Seljuq Turks, who captured Baghdad in 945 and 1055, respectively. Although Abbasid leadership over the vast Islamic empire was gradually reduced to a ceremonial religious function in much of the caliphate, the dynasty retained control of its Mesopotamian domain during the rule of Caliph al-Muqtafi and extended into Iran during the reign of Caliph al-Nasir. The Abbasids' age of cultural revival and fruition ended in 1258 with the sack of

Baghdad by the Mongols under Hulagu Khan and the execution of al-Musta'sim. The Abbasid line of rulers, and Muslim culture in general, re-centred themselves in the Mamluk capital of Cairo in 1261. Though lacking in political power (with the brief exception of Caliph al-Musta'in of Cairo), the dynasty continued to claim religious authority until a few years after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517, with the last Abbasid caliph being Al-Mutawakkil III.

The Abbasid caliphs were Arabs descended from Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, one of the youngest uncles of Muhammad and of the same Banu Hashim clan. The Abbasids claimed to be the true successors of Muhammad in replacing the Umayyad descendants of Banu Umayya by virtue of their closer bloodline to Muhammad.

Abbasid Revolution (750–751)

The Abbasids also distinguished themselves from the Umayyads by attacking their moral character and administration in general. According to Ira Lapidus, "The Abbasid revolt was supported largely by Arabs, mainly the aggrieved settlers of Merv with the addition of the Yemeni faction and their Mawali". The Abbasids also appealed to non-Arab Muslims, known as mawali, who remained outside the kinship-based society of the Arabs and were perceived as a lower class within the Umayyad empire. Muhammad ibn 'Ali, a great-grandson of Abbas, began to campaign in Persia for the return of power to the family of Muhammad, the Hashemites, during the reign of Umar II.

During the reign of Marwan II, this opposition culminated in the rebellion of Ibrahim al-Imam [ca], the fourth in descent from Abbas. Supported by the province of Khorasan (Eastern Persia), even though the governor opposed them, and the Shia Arabs, he achieved considerable success, but was captured in the year 747 and died, possibly assassinated, in prison.

On 9 June 747 (15 Ramadan AH 129), Abu Muslim, rising from Khorasan, successfully initiated an open revolt against Umayyad rule, which was carried out under the sign of the Black Standard. Close to 10,000 soldiers were under Abu Muslim's command when the hostilities officially began in Merv. General Qahtaba followed the fleeing governor Nasr ibn Sayyar west defeating the Umayyads at the Battle of Gorgan, the Battle of Nahāvand and finally in the Battle of Karbala, all in the year 748.

Ibrahim was captured by Marwan and was killed. The quarrel was taken up by Ibrahim's brother Abdallah, known by the name of Abu al-'Abbas as-Saffah, who defeated the Umayyads in 750 in the battle near the Great Zab and was subsequently proclaimed caliph. After this loss, Marwan fled to Egypt, where he was subsequently killed. The remainder of his family, barring one male, were also eliminated.

Power (752–775)

Immediately after their victory, as-Saffah sent his forces to Central Asia, where his forces fought against Tang expansion during the Battle of Talas. The noble Iranian family Barmakids, who were instrumental in building Baghdad, introduced the world's first recorded paper mill in the city, thus beginning a new era of intellectual rebirth in the Abbasid domain. As-Saffah focused on putting down numerous rebellions in Syria and Mesopotamia. The Byzantines conducted raids during these early distractions.

The first change made by the Abbasids under al-Mansur was to move the empire's capital from Damascus to a newly founded city. Established on the Tigris River in 762, Baghdad was closer to the Persian mawali support base of the Abbasids, and this move addressed their demand for less Arab dominance in the empire. A new position, that of the wazir, was also established to delegate central authority, and even greater authority was delegated to local emirs. Al-Mansur centralised the judicial administration, and later, Harun al-Rashid established the institution of Chief Qadi to oversee it.

This resulted in a more ceremonial role for many Abbasid caliphs relative to their time under the Umayyads; the viziers began to exert greater influence, and the role of the old Arab aristocracy was slowly replaced by a Persian bureaucracy. During Al-Mansur's time, control of Al-Andalus was lost, and the Shia revolted and were defeated a year later at the Battle of Bakhamra.

The Abbasids had depended heavily on the support of Persians in their overthrow of the Umayyads. Abu al-'Abbas' successor Al-Mansur welcomed non-Arab Muslims to his court. While this helped integrate Arab and Persian cultures, it alienated many of their Arab supporters, particularly the Khorasanian Arabs who had supported them in their battles against the Umayyads. This fissure in support led to immediate problems. The Umayyads, while out of power, were not destroyed; the only surviving member of the Umayyad royal

family ultimately made his way to Spain where he established himself as an independent Emir (Abd al-Rahman I, 756). In 929, Abd al-Rahman III assumed the title of Caliph, establishing Al-Andalus from Córdoba as a rival to Baghdad as the legitimate capital of the Islamic Empire.

The Umayyad empire was mostly Arab; however, the Abbasids progressively became made up of more and more converted Muslims in which the Arabs were only one of many ethnicities.

In 756, Al-Mansur sent over 4,000 Arab mercenaries to assist the Chinese Tang dynasty in the An Lushan Rebellion against An Lushan. The Abbasids, or "Black Flags" as they were commonly called, were known in Tang dynasty chronicles as the hēiyī Dàshí, "The Black-robed Tazi" Al-Rashid sent embassies to the Chinese Tang dynasty and established good relations with them. After the war, these embassies remained in China with Caliph Harun al-Rashid establishing an alliance with China. Several embassies from the Abbasid Caliphs to the Chinese court have been recorded in the T'ang Annals, the most

Abbasid Golden Age (775–861)

The Abbasid leadership had to work hard in the last half of the 8th century (750–800) under several competent caliphs and their viziers to usher in the administrative changes needed to keep order of the political challenges created by the far-flung nature of the empire, and the limited communication across it. It was also during this early period of the dynasty, in particular during the governance of Al-Mansur, Harun al-Rashid, and al-Ma'mun, that its reputation and power were created.

Al-Mahdi restarted the fighting with the Byzantines, and his sons continued the conflict until Empress Irene pushed for peace. After several years of peace, Nikephoros I broke the treaty, then fended off multiple incursions during the first decade of the 9th century. These attacks pushed into the Taurus Mountains, culminating with a victory at the Battle of Krasos and the massive invasion of 806, led by Rashid himself.

Rashid's navy also proved successful, taking Cyprus. Rashid decided to focus on the rebellion of Rafi ibn al-Layth in Khorasan and died while there. Military operations by the caliphate were minimal while the Byzantine Empire was fighting Abbasid rule

in Syria and Anatolia, with focus shifting primarily to internal matters; Abbasid governors exerted greater autonomy and, using this increasing power, began to make their positions hereditary.

At the same time, the Abbasids faced challenges closer to home. Harun al-Rashid turned on and killed most of the Barmakids, a Persian family that had grown significantly in administrative power. During the same period, several factions began either to leave the empire for other lands or to take control of distant parts of the empire. Still, the reigns of al-Rashid and his sons were considered to be the apex of the Abbasids.

Domestically, Harun pursued policies similar to those of his father Al-Mahdi. He released many of the Umayyads and 'Alids his brother Al-Hadi had imprisoned and declared amnesty for all political groups of the Quraysh. Large scale hostilities broke out with Byzantium, and under his rule, the Abbasid Empire reached its peak.

After Rashid's death, the empire was split by a civil war between the caliph al-Amin and his brother al-Ma'mun, who had the support of Khorasan. This war ended with a two-year siege of Baghdad and the eventual death of Al-Amin in 813. Al-Ma'mun ruled for 20 years of relative calm interspersed with a rebellion in Azerbaijan by the Khurramites, which was supported by the Byzantines. Al-Ma'mun was also responsible for the creation of an autonomous Khorasan, and the continued repulsing of Byzantine forays.

Al-Mu'tasim gained power in 833 and his rule marked the end of the strong caliphs. He strengthened his personal army with Turkish mercenaries and promptly restarted the war with the Byzantines. Though his attempt to seize Constantinople failed when his fleet was destroyed by a storm, his military excursions were generally successful, culminating with a resounding victory in the Sack of Amorium. The Byzantines responded by sacking Damietta in Egypt, and Al-Mutawakkil responded by sending his troops into Anatolia again, sacking and marauding until they were eventually annihilated in 863.

Mamluks

In the 9th century, the Abbasids created an army loyal only to their caliphate, composed of non-Arab origin people, known as Mamluks. This force, created in the reign of al-Ma'mun (813–833) and his brother and successor al-Mu'tasim (833–842), prevented the

further disintegration of the empire. The Mamluk army, though often viewed negatively, both helped and hurt the caliphate. Early on, it provided the government with a stable force to address domestic and foreign problems. However, creation of this foreign army and al-Mu'tasim's transfer of the capital from Baghdad to Samarra created a division between the caliphate and the peoples they claimed to rule.

Fracture to autonomous dynasties (861–945)

Even by 820, the Samanids had begun the process of exercising independent authority in Transoxiana and Greater Khorasan, and the succeeding Saffarid dynasty of Iran. The Saffarids, from Khorasan, nearly seized Baghdad in 876, and the Tulunids took control of most of Syria. The trend of weakening of the central power and strengthening of the minor caliphates on the periphery continued.

An exception was the 10-year period of Al-Mu'tadid's rule (r. 892–902). He brought parts of Egypt, Syria, and Khorasan back into Abbasid control. Especially after the "Anarchy at Samarra" (861–870), the Abbasid central government was weakened and centrifugal tendencies became more prominent in the caliphate's provinces. By the early 10th century, the Abbasids almost lost control of Iraq to various amirs, and the caliph al-Radi (934–941) was forced to acknowledge their power by creating the position of "Prince of Princes" (amir al-umara). In addition, the power of the Mamluks steadily grew, reaching a climax when al-Radi was constrained to hand over most of the royal functions to the non-Arab Muhammad ibn Ra'iq.

Al-Mustakfi had a short reign from 944 to 946, and it was during this period that the Persian faction known as the Buyids from Daylam swept into power and assumed control over the bureaucracy in Baghdad. According to the history of Miskawayh, they began distributing iqtas (fiefs in the form of tax farms) to their supporters. This period of localized secular control was to last nearly 100 years. The loss of Abbasid power to the Buyids would shift as the Seljuks would take over from the Persians.

At the end of the eighth century, the Abbasids found they could no longer keep together a polity from Baghdad, which had grown larger than that of Rome. In 793 the Zaydi-Shia dynasty of Idrisids set up a state from Fez in Morocco, while a family of governors under the Abbasids became increasingly independent until they founded the Aghlabid

Emirate from the 830s. Al-Mu'tasim started the downward slide by using non-Muslim mercenaries in his personal army. Also during this period, officers started assassinating superiors with whom they disagreed, in particular the caliphs.

By the 870s, Egypt became autonomous under Ahmad ibn Tulun. In the East, governors decreased their ties to the center as well. The Saffarids of Herat and the Samanids of Bukhara began breaking away around this time, cultivating a much more Persianate culture and statecraft. Only the central lands of Mesopotamia were under direct Abbasid control, with Palestine and the Hijaz often managed by the Tulunids. Byzantium, for its part, had begun to push Arab Muslims farther east in Anatolia.

By the 920s, North Africa was lost to the Fatimid dynasty, a Shia sect tracing its roots to Muhammad's daughter Fatimah. The Fatimid dynasty took control of Idrisid and Aghlabid domains, advanced to Egypt in 969, and established their capital near Fustat in Cairo, which they built as a bastion of Shia learning and politics. By 1000 they had become the chief political and ideological challenge to Sunni Islam and the Abbasids, who by this time had fragmented into several governorships that, while recognizing caliphal authority from Baghdad, remained mostly autonomous. The caliph himself was under 'protection' of the Buyid Emirs who possessed all of Iraq and Western Iran, and were quietly Shia in their sympathies.

Outside Iraq, all the autonomous provinces slowly took on the characteristic of de facto states with hereditary rulers, armies, and revenues and operated under only nominal caliph suzerainty, which may not necessarily be reflected by any contribution to the treasury, such as the Soomro Emirs that had gained control of Sindh and ruled the entire province from their capital of Mansura. Mahmud of Ghazni took the title of sultan, as opposed to the "amir" that had been in more common usage, signifying the Ghaznavid Empire's independence from caliphal authority, despite Mahmud's ostentatious displays of Sunni orthodoxy and ritual submission to the caliph. In the 11th century, the loss of respect for the caliphs continued, as some Islamic rulers no longer mentioned the caliph's name in the Friday khutba, or struck it off their coinage.

The Isma'ili Fatimid dynasty of Cairo contested the Abbasids for the titular authority of the Islamic ummah. They commanded some support in the Shia sections of Baghdad (such

as Karkh), although Baghdad was the city most closely connected to the caliphate, even in the Buyid and Seljuq eras. The challenge of the Fatimids only ended with their downfall in the 12th century.

Buyid and Seljuq control (945–1118)

Despite the power of the Buyid amirs, the Abbasids retained a highly ritualized court in Baghdad, as described by the Buyid bureaucrat Hilal al-Sabi', and they retained a certain influence over Baghdad as well as religious life. As Buyid power waned with the rule of Baha' al-Daula, the caliphate was able to regain some measure of strength. The caliph al-Qadir, for example, led the ideological struggle against the Shia with writings such as the Baghdad Manifesto. The caliphs kept order in Baghdad itself, attempting to prevent the outbreak of fitnas in the capital, often contending with the ayyarun.

With the Buyid dynasty on the wane, a vacuum was created that was eventually filled by the dynasty of Oghuz Turks known as the Seljuqs. By 1055, the Seljuqs had wrested control from the Buyids and Abbasids, and took temporal power. When the amir and former slave Basasiri took up the Shia Fatimid banner in Baghdad in 1056–57, the caliph al-Qa'im was unable to defeat him without outside help. Toghril Beg, the Seljuq sultan, restored Baghdad to Sunni rule and took Iraq for his dynasty.

Once again, the Abbasids were forced to deal with a military power that they could not match, though the Abbasid caliph remained the titular head of the Islamic community. The succeeding sultans Alp Arslan and Malikshah, as well as their vizier Nizam al-Mulk, took up residence in Persia, but held power over the Abbasids in Baghdad. When the dynasty began to weaken in the 12th century, the Abbasids gained greater independence once again.

Revival of military strength (1118–1258)

While the caliph al-Mustarshid was the first caliph to build an army capable of meeting a Seljuk army in battle, he was nonetheless defeated and assassinated in 1135. The caliph al-Muqtafi was the first Abbasid Caliph to regain the full military independence of the caliphate, with the help of his vizier Ibn Hubayra. After nearly 250 years of subjection to foreign dynasties, he successfully defended Baghdad against the Seljuqs in the siege of Baghdad (1157), thus securing Iraq for the Abbasids. The reign of al-Nasir (d. 1225) brought

the caliphate back into power throughout Iraq, based in large part on the Sufi futuwwa organizations that the caliph headed. Al-Mustansir built the Mustansiriya School, in an attempt to eclipse the Seljuq-era Nizamiyya built by Nizam al Mulk.

Mongol invasion and end

In 1206, Genghis Khan established a powerful dynasty among the Mongols of central Asia. During the 13th century, this Mongol Empire conquered most of the Eurasian land mass, including both China in the east and much of the old Islamic caliphate (as well as Kievan Rus') in the west. Hulagu Khan's destruction of Baghdad in 1258 is traditionally seen as the approximate end of the Golden Age.

Contemporary accounts state Mongol soldiers looted and then destroyed mosques, palaces, libraries, and hospitals. Priceless books from Baghdad's thirty-six public libraries were torn apart, the looters using their leather covers as sandals. Grand buildings that had been the work of generations were burned to the ground. The House of Wisdom (the Grand Library of Baghdad), containing countless precious historical documents and books on subjects ranging from medicine to astronomy, was destroyed. Claims have been made that the Tigris ran red from the blood of the scientists and philosophers killed. Citizens attempted to flee, but were intercepted by Mongol soldiers who killed in abundance, sparing no one, not even children.

The caliph Al-Musta'sim was captured and forced to watch as his citizens were murdered and his treasury plundered. Ironically, Mongols feared that a supernatural disaster would strike if the blood of Al-Musta'sim, a direct descendant of Muhammad's uncle Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, and the last reigning Abbasid caliph in Baghdad, was spilled. The Shia of Persia stated that no such calamity had happened after the death of Husayn ibn Ali in the Battle of Karbala; nevertheless, as a precaution and in accordance with a Mongol taboo which forbade spilling royal blood, Hulagu had Al-Musta'sim wrapped in a carpet and trampled to death by horses on 20 February 1258. The caliph's immediate family was also executed, with the lone exceptions of his youngest son who was sent to Mongolia, and a daughter who became a slave in the harem of Hulagu.

Abbasid Caliphate of Cairo (1261–1517)

Similarly to how a Mamluk Army was created by the Abbasids, a Mamluk Army was created by the Egypt-based Ayyubid dynasty. These Mamluks decided to directly overthrow their masters and came to power in 1250 in what is known as the Mamluk Sultanate. In 1261, following the devastation of Baghdad by the Mongols, the Mamluk rulers of Egypt re-established the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo. The first Abbasid caliph of Cairo was Al-Mustansir. The Abbasid caliphs in Egypt continued to maintain the presence of authority, but it was confined to religious matters. The Abbasid caliphate of Cairo lasted until the time of Al-Mutawakkil III, who was taken away as a prisoner by Selim I to Constantinople where he had a ceremonial role. He died in 1543, following his return to Cairo.

Islamic Golden Age

The Abbasid historical period lasting to the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258 CE is considered the Islamic Golden Age. The Islamic Golden Age was inaugurated by the middle of the 8th century by the ascension of the Abbasid Caliphate and the transfer of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad. The Abbasids were influenced by the Qur'anic injunctions and hadith, such as "the ink of a scholar is more holy than the blood of a martyr", stressing the value of knowledge. During this period the Muslim world became an intellectual center for science, philosophy, medicine and education as the Abbasids championed the cause of knowledge and established the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, where both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars sought to translate and gather all the world's knowledge into Arabic. Many classic works of antiquity that would otherwise have been lost were translated into Arabic and Persian and later in turn translated into Turkish, Hebrew and Latin. During this period the Muslim world was a cauldron of cultures which collected, synthesized and significantly advanced the knowledge gained from the Roman, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Egyptian, North African, Ancient Greek and Medieval Greek civilizations. According to Huff, "in virtually every field of endeavor—in astronomy, alchemy, mathematics, medicine, optics and so forth—the Caliphate's scientists were in the forefront of scientific advance."

Science

The reigns of Harun al-Rashid (786–809) and his successors fostered an age of great intellectual achievement. In large part, this was the result of the schismatic forces that had

undermined the Umayyad regime, which relied on the assertion of the superiority of Arab culture as part of its claim to legitimacy, and the Abbasids' welcoming of support from non-Arab Muslims. It is well established that the Abbasid caliphs modeled their administration on that of the Sassanids. Harun al-Rashid's son, Al-Ma'mun (whose mother was Persian), is even quoted as saying: The Persians ruled for a thousand years and did not need us Arabs even for a day. We have been ruling them for one or two centuries and cannot do without them for an hour.

A number of medieval thinkers and scientists living under Islamic rule played a role in transmitting Islamic science to the Christian West. In addition, the period saw the recovery of much of the Alexandrian mathematical, geometric and astronomical knowledge, such as that of Euclid and Claudius Ptolemy. These recovered mathematical methods were later enhanced and developed by other Islamic scholars, notably by Persian scientists Al-Biruni and Abu Nasr Mansur.

Christians (particularly Nestorian Christians) contributed to the Arab Islamic Civilization during the Umayyads and the Abbasids by translating works of Greek philosophers to Syriac and afterwards to Arabic. Nestorians played a prominent role in the formation of Arab culture, with the Academy of Gondishapur being prominent in the late Sassanid, Umayyad and early Abbasid periods. Notably, eight generations of the Nestorian Bukhtishu family served as private doctors to caliphs and sultans between the eighth and eleventh centuries.

Algebra was significantly developed by Persian scientist Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwarizmi during this time in his landmark text, Kitab al-Jabr wa-l-Muqabala, from which the term algebra is derived. He is thus considered to be the father of algebra by some, although the Greek mathematician Diophantus has also been given this title. The terms algorism and algorithm are derived from the name of al-Khwarizmi, who was also responsible for introducing the Arabic numerals and Hindu–Arabic numeral system beyond the Indian subcontinent.

Arab scientist Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen) developed an early scientific method in his Book of Optics (1021). The most important development of the scientific method was the use of experiments to distinguish between competing scientific theories set within a

generally empirical orientation, which began among Muslim scientists. Ibn al-Haytham's empirical proof of the intromission theory of light (that is, that light rays entered the eyes rather than being emitted by them) was particularly important. Alhazen was significant in the history of scientific method, particularly in his approach to experimentation, and has been referred to as the "world's first true scientist".

Medicine in medieval Islam was an area of science that advanced particularly during the Abbasids' reign. During the 9th century, Baghdad contained over 800 doctors, and great discoveries in the understanding of anatomy and diseases were made. The clinical distinction between measles and smallpox was described during this time. Famous Persian scientist Ibn Sina (known to the West as Avicenna) produced treatises and works that summarized the vast amount of knowledge that scientists had accumulated, and was very influential through his encyclopedias, The Canon of Medicine and The Book of Healing. The work of him and many others directly influenced the research of European scientists during the Renaissance.

Astronomy in medieval Islam was advanced by Al-Battani, who improved the precision of the measurement of the precession of the Earth's axis. The corrections made to the geocentric model by al-Battani, Averroes, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Mo'ayyeduddin Urdi and Ibn al-Shatir were later incorporated into the Copernican heliocentric model. The astrolabe, though originally developed by the Greeks, was developed further by Islamic astronomers and engineers, and subsequently brought to medieval Europe. Muslim alchemists influenced medieval European alchemists, particularly the writings attributed to Jābir ibn Hayyān (Geber).

Literature

The best-known fiction from the Islamic world is One Thousand and One Nights, a collection of fantastical folk tales, legends and parables compiled primarily during the Abbasid era. The collection is recorded as having originated from an Arabic translation of a Sassanian-era Persian prototype, with likely origins in Indian literary traditions. Stories from Arabic, Persian, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian folklore and literature were later incorporated. The epic is believed to have taken shape in the 10th century and reached its final form by the 14th century; the number and type of tales have varied from one manuscript to another. All Arabian fantasy tales were often called "Arabian Nights" when translated into

English, regardless of whether they appeared in The Book of One Thousand and One Nights. This epic has been influential in the West since it was translated in the 18th century, first by Antoine Galland. Many imitations were written, especially in France. Various characters from this epic have themselves become cultural icons in Western culture, such as Aladdin, Sinbad and Ali Baba.

A famous example of Islamic poetry on romance was Layla and Majnun, an originally Arabic story which was further developed by Iranian, Azerbaijani and other poets in the Persian, Azerbaijani, and Turkish languages. It is a tragic story of undying love much like the later Romeo and Juliet.

Arabic poetry reached its greatest height in the Abbasid era, especially before the loss of central authority and the rise of the Persianate dynasties. Writers like Abu Tammam and Abu Nuwas were closely connected to the caliphal court in Baghdad during the early 9th century, while others such as al-Mutanabbi received their patronage from regional courts.

Under Harun al-Rashid, Baghdad was renowned for its bookstores, which proliferated after the making of paper was introduced. Chinese papermakers had been among those taken prisoner by the Arabs at the Battle of Talas in 751. As prisoners of war, they were dispatched to Samarkand, where they helped set up the first Arab paper mill. In time, paper replaced parchment as the medium for writing, and the production of books greatly increased. These events had an academic and societal impact that could be broadly compared to the introduction of the printing press in the West. Paper aided in communication and record-keeping, it also brought a new sophistication and complexity to businesses, banking, and the civil service. In 794, Jafa al-Barmak built the first paper mill in Baghdad, and from there the technology circulated. Harun required that paper be employed in government dealings, since something recorded on paper could not easily be changed or removed, and eventually, an entire street in Baghdad's business district was dedicated to selling paper and books.

Philosophy

One of the common definitions for "Islamic philosophy" is "the style of philosophy produced within the framework of Islamic culture." Islamic philosophy, in this definition is neither necessarily concerned with religious issues, nor is exclusively produced by

Muslims. Their works on Aristotle were a key step in the transmission of learning from ancient Greeks to the Islamic world and the West. They often corrected the philosopher, encouraging a lively debate in the spirit of ijtihad. They also wrote influential original philosophical works, and their thinking was incorporated into Christian philosophy during the Middle Ages, notably by Thomas Aquinas.

Three speculative thinkers, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Avicenna, combined Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism with other ideas introduced through Islam, and Avicennism was later established as a result. Other influential Abbasid philosophers include al-Jahiz, and Ibn al-Haytham (Alhacen).

Architecture

As power shifted from the Umayyads to the Abbasids, the architectural styles changed also, from Greco-Roman tradition (which features elements of Hellenistic and Roman representative style) to Eastern tradition which retained their independent architectural traditions from Mesopotamia and Persia. The Abbasid architecture was particularly influenced by Sasanian architecture, which in turn featured elements present since ancient Mesopotamia. The Christian styles evolved into a style based more on the Sasanian Empire, utilizing mud bricks and baked bricks with carved stucco. Another major development was the creation or vast enlargement of cities as they were turned into the capital of the empire, beginning with the creation of Baghdad in 762, which was planned as a walled city with four gates, and a mosque and palace in the center. Al-Mansur, who was responsible for the creation of Baghdad, also planned the city of Raqqa, along the Euphrates. Finally, in 836, al-Mu'tasim moved the capital to a new site that he created along the Tigris, called Samarra. This city saw 60 years of work, with race-courses and game preserves to add to the atmosphere. Due to the dry remote nature of the environment, some of the palaces built in this era were isolated havens. Al-Ukhaidir Fortress is a fine example of this type of building, which has stables, living quarters, and a mosque, all surrounding inner courtyards. Other mosques of this era, such as the Great Mosque of Kairouan in Tunisia, while ultimately built during the Umayyad dynasty, were substantially renovated in the 9th century. These renovations, so extensive as to ostensibly be rebuilds, were in the furthest reaches of the Muslim world, in an area that the Aghlabids controlled; however, the styles utilized were mainly Abbasid. In Egypt, Ahmad Ibn Tulun commissioned the Ibn Tulun Mosque,

completed in 879, that is based on the style of Samarra and is now one of the best-preserved Abbasid-style mosques from this period. Mesopotamia only has one surviving mausoleum from this era, in Samarra. This octagonal dome is the final resting place of al-Muntasir.[89] Other architectural innovations and styles were few, such as the four-centered arch, and a dome erected on squinches. Unfortunately, much was lost due to the ephemeral nature of the stucco and luster tiles.

Foundation of Baghdad

The caliph al-Mansur founded the epicenter of the empire, Baghdad, in 762 CE, as a means of disassociating his dynasty from that of the preceding Umayyads (centered at Damascus) and the rebellious cities of Kufa and Basrah. Mesopotamia was an ideal locale for a capital city due to its high agricultural output, access to the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers (allowing for trade and communication across the region), central locale between the corners of the vast empire (stretching from Egypt to Afghanistan) and access to the Silk Road and Indian Ocean trade routes, all key reasons as to why the region has hosted important capital cities such as Ur, Babylon, Nineveh and Ctesiphon and was later desired by the British Empire as an outpost by which to maintain access to India. The city was organized in a circular fashion next to the Tigris River, with massive brick walls being constructed in successive rings around the core by a workforce of 100,000 with four huge gates (named Kufa, Basrah, Khorasan and Syria). The central enclosure of the city contained Mansur's palace of 360,000 square feet (33,000 m2) in area and the great mosque of Baghdad, encompassing 90,000 square feet (8,400 m2). Travel across the Tigris and the network of waterways allowing the drainage of the Euphrates into the Tigris was facilitated by bridges and canals servicing the population.

Glass and crystal

The Near East has, since Roman times, been recognized as a center of quality glassware and crystal. 9th-century finds from Samarra show styles similar to Sassanian forms. The types of objects made were bottles, flasks, vases, and cups intended for domestic use, with decorations including molded flutes, honeycomb patterns, and inscriptions. Other styles seen that may not have come from the Sassanians were stamped items. These were typically round stamps, such as medallions or disks with animals, birds, or Kufic inscriptions.

Colored lead glass, typically blue or green, has been found in Nishapur, along with prismatic perfume bottles. Finally, cut glass may have been the high point of Abbasid glass-working, decorated with floral and animal designs.

Painting

Early Abbasid painting has not survived in great quantities, and is sometimes harder to differentiate; however, Samarra provides good examples, as it was built by the Abbasids and abandoned 56 years later. The walls of the principal rooms of the palace that have been excavated show wall paintings and lively carved stucco dadoes. The style is obviously adopted with little variation from Sassanian art, bearing not only similar styles, with harems, animals, and dancing people, all enclosed in scrollwork, but the garments are also Persian. Nishapur had its own school of painting. Excavations at Nishapur show both monochromatic and polychromatic artwork from the 8th and 9th centuries. One famous piece of art consists of hunting nobles with falcons and on horseback, in full regalia; the clothing identifies them as Tahirid, which was, again, a sub-dynasty of the Abbasids. Other styles are of vegetation, and fruit in nice colors on a four-foot high dedo.

Pottery

Qasr al-'Ashiq palace in Samarra, constructed during 877–882 CE. Emir 'Amad al-Dawla wrote a poem about this palace. During the medieval period, it was referred to as "al-Ma'shuq" which means "beloved".

Whereas painting and architecture were not areas of strength for the Abbasid dynasty, pottery was a different story. Islamic culture as a whole, and the Abbasids in particular, were at the forefront of new ideas and techniques. Some examples of their work were pieces engraved with decorations and then colored with yellow-brown, green, and purple glazes. Designs were diverse with geometric patterns, Kufic lettering, and arabesque scrollwork, along with rosettes, animals, birds, and humans. Abbasid pottery from the 8th and 9th centuries has been found throughout the region, as far as Cairo. These were generally made with a yellow clay and fired multiple times with separate glazes to produce metallic luster in shades of gold, brown, or red. By the 9th century, the potters had mastered their techniques and their decorative designs could be divided into two styles. The Persian style would show animals, birds, and humans, along with Kufic lettering in gold. Pieces excavated

from Samarra exceed in vibrancy and beauty any from later periods. These were predominantly being made for the caliph's use. Tiles were also made using this same technique to create both monochromatic and polychromatic lusterware tiles.

Textiles

Egypt being a center of the textile industry was part of Abbasid cultural advancement. Copts were employed in the textile industry and produced linens and silks. Tinnis was famous for its factories and had over 5,000 looms. Examples of textiles were kasab, a fine linen for turbans, and badana for upper-class garments. The kiswah for the kaaba in Mecca was made in a town named Tuna near Tinnis. Fine silk was also made in Dabik and Damietta. Of particular interest are stamped and inscribed fabrics, which used not only inks but also liquid gold. Some of the finer pieces were colored in such a manner as to require six separate stamps to achieve the proper design and color. This technology spread to Europe eventually.

Clothing

The Abbasid period saw a large fashion development throughout its existence. While the development of fashion began during the Umayyad period, its genuine cosmopolitan styles and influence were realized at their finest during Abbasid rule. Fashion was a thriving industry during the Abbasid period that was also strictly regulated either by law or through the accepted elements of style. Among the higher classes, appearance became a concern and they started to care about appearance and fashion. Several new garments and fabrics were introduced into common use and no longer observed pious distaste for materials such as silk and satins. The rise of the Persian secretarial class had a large influence over the development of fashion and the Abbasids were highly influenced by the older Persian Court dress elements. For example, the caliph al-Muʿtasim was reportedly notable for his desire to imitate Persian kings by wearing a turban over a soft cap which was later adopted by other Abbasid rulers and called it the "muʿtasimi" in his honor.

The Abbasids wore many layers of garments. Fabrics used for the clothing seemed to have included wool, linen, brocades, or silk the clothing of the poorer classes was made out of cheaper materials, such as wool, and had less fabric. This also meant they wouldn't be able to afford the variety of garments that the elite classes wore. Elegant women would not wear

black, green, red, or pink, except for fabrics that naturally had those colors, such as red silk. Women's clothing would be perfumed with musk, sandalwood, hyacinth or ambergris, but no other scents. Footwear included furry Cambay shoes, boots of the style of Persian ladies, and curved shoes.

Caliph al-Mansur was credited with making his court and the Abbasid high-ranking officials wear honorific robes of the color black for various ceremonial affairs and events which became the official color of the caliphate. This was acknowledged in China and Byzantium who called the Abbasids the "black-robed ones." But despite the color black being common during the caliphate, many color dyes existed and it was made sure that colors would not clash. Notably, the color yellow needed to be avoided when wearing colored clothing.

Abbasid Caliphs wore elegant kaftans, a Persian robe made from silver or gold brocade and buttons in the front of the sleeves. Caliph al-Muqtaddir wore a kaftan from silver brocade Tustari silk and his son one made from Byzantine silk richly decorated or ornamented with figures. The kaftan was spread far and wide by the Abbasids and made known throughout the Arab world. In the 830s, Emperor Theophilus, went about à l'arabe in kaftans and turbans. Even as far as the streets of Ghuangzhou during the era of Tang dynasty, the Persian kaftan was in fashion.

Technology

In technology, the Abbasids adopted papermaking from China. The use of paper spread from China into the caliphate in the 8th century CE, arriving in al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) and then the rest of Europe in the 10th century. It was easier to manufacture than parchment, less likely to crack than papyrus, and could absorb ink, making it ideal for making records and copies of the Qur'an. "Islamic paper makers devised assembly-line methods of hand-copying manuscripts to turn out editions far larger than any available in Europe for centuries." It was from the Abbasids that the rest of the world learned to make paper from linen. The knowledge of gunpowder was also transmitted from China via the caliphate, where the formulas for pure potassium nitrate and an explosive gunpowder effect were first developed.

Advances were made in irrigation and farming, using new technology such as the windmill. Crops such as almonds and citrus fruit were brought to Europe through al-Andalus, and sugar cultivation was gradually adopted by the Europeans. Apart from the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates, navigable rivers were uncommon, so transport by sea was very important. Navigational sciences were highly developed, making use of a rudimentary sextant (known as a kamal). When combined with detailed maps of the period, sailors were able to sail across oceans rather than skirt along the coast. Abbasid sailors were also responsible for reintroducing large three masted merchant vessels to the Mediterranean. The name caravel may derive from an earlier Arab ship known as the qārib. Arab merchants dominated trade in the Indian Ocean until the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century. Hormuz was an important center for this trade. There was also a dense network of trade routes in the Mediterranean, along which Muslim countries traded with each other and with European powers such as Venice or Genoa. The Silk Road crossing Central Asia passed through the Abbasid caliphate between China and Europe.

Engineers in the Abbasid caliphate made a number of innovative industrial uses of hydropower, and early industrial uses of tidal power, wind power, and petroleum (notably by distillation into kerosene). The industrial uses of watermills in the Islamic world date back to the 7th century, while horizontal-wheeled and vertical-wheeled water mills were both in widespread use since at least the 9th century. By the time of the Crusades, every province throughout the Islamic world had mills in operation, from al-Andalus and North Africa to the Middle East and Central Asia. These mills performed a variety of agricultural and industrial tasks. Abbasid engineers also developed machines (such as pumps) incorporating crankshafts, employed gears in mills and water-raising machines, and used dams to provide additional power to watermills and water-raising machines. Such advances made it possible for many industrial tasks that were previously driven by manual labour in ancient times to be mechanized and driven by machinery instead in the medieval Islamic world. It has been argued that the industrial use of waterpower had spread from Islamic to Christian Spain, where fulling mills, paper mills, and forge mills were recorded for the first time in Catalonia.

A number of industries were generated during the Arab Agricultural Revolution, including early industries for textiles, sugar, rope-making, matting, silk, and paper. Latin translations of the 12th century passed on knowledge of chemistry and instrument making in

particular. The agricultural and handicraft industries also experienced high levels of growth during this period.

Status of women

In contrast to the earlier era, women in Abbasid society were absent from all arenas of the community's central affairs. While their Muslim forbears led men into battle, started rebellions, and played an active role in community life, as demonstrated in the Hadith literature, Abbasid women were ideally kept in seclusion. Conquests had brought enormous wealth and large numbers of slaves to the Muslim elite. The majority of the slaves were women and children, many of whom had been dependents or harem-members of the defeated Sassanian upper classes. In the wake of the conquests an elite man could potentially own a thousand slaves, and ordinary soldiers could have ten people serving them.

It was narrated from Ibn Abbas that Muhammad said:

- There is no man whose two daughters reach the age of puberty and he treats them kindly for the time they are together, but they will gain him admittance to Paradise.
- Whoever has three daughters and is patient towards them, and feeds them, gives them to drink, and clothes them from his wealth; they will be a shield for him from the Fire on the Day of Resurrection.'

Even so, slave courtesans (qiyans and jawaris) and princesses produced prestigious and important poetry. Enough survives to give us access to women's historical experiences, and reveals some vivacious and powerful figures, such as the Sufi mystic Raabi'a al-Adwiyya (714–801 CE), the princess and poet 'Ulayya bint al-Mahdi (777–825 CE), and the singing-girls Shāriyah (c. 815–870 CE), Fadl Ashsha'ira (d. 871 CE) and Arib al-Ma'muniyya (797–890 CE).

Each wife in the Abbasid harem had an additional home or flat, with her own enslaved staff of eunuchs and maidservants. When a concubine gave birth to a son, she was elevated in rank to umm walad and also received apartments and (slave) servants as a gift.

Treatment of Jews and Christians

The status and treatment of Jews, Christians, and non-Muslims in the Abbasid Caliphate was a complex and continually changing issue. Non-Muslims were called dhimmis. Dhimmis did not have all of the privileges that Muslims had and commonly had to pay jizya, a tax for not being a Muslim. One of the common aspects of the treatment of the dhimmis is that their treatment depended on who the caliph was at the time. Some Abbasid rulers, like Al-Mutawakkil (822–861 CE) imposed strict restrictions on what dhimmis could wear in public, often yellow garments that distinguished them from Muslims. Other restrictions al-Mutawakkil imposed included limiting the role of the dhimmis in government, seizing dhimmi housing and making it harder for dhimmis to become educated. Most other Abbasid caliphs were not as strict as al-Mutawakkil, though. During the reign of Al-Mansur (714–775 CE), it was common for Jews and Christians to influence the overall culture in the caliphate, specifically in Baghdad. Jews and Christians did this by participating in scholarly work.

It was common that laws that were imposed against dhimmis during one caliph's rule were either discarded or not practiced during future caliphs' reigns. Al-Mansur and al-Mutawakkil both instituted laws that forbade non-Muslims from participating in public office. Al-Mansur did not follow his own law very closely, bringing dhimmis back to the caliphate's treasury due to the needed expertise of dhimmis in the area of finance. Al-Mutawakkil followed the law banning dhimmis from public office more seriously, although, soon after his reign, many of the laws concerning dhimmis participating in government were completely unobserved or at least less strictly observed. Even Al-Muqtadir (r. 908–932 CE), who held a similar stance as al-Mutawakkil on barring non-Muslims from public office, himself had multiple Christian secretaries, indicating that non-Muslims still had access to many of the most important figures within the caliphate. Past having a casual association or just being a secretary to high-ranking Islamic officials, some of them achieved the second highest office after the caliph: the vizier.

Jews and Christians may have had a lower overall status compared to Muslims in the Abbasid Caliphate, but dhimmis were often allowed to hold respectable and even prestigious occupations in some cases, such as doctors and public officeholders. Jews and Christians were also allowed to be rich even if they were taxed for being a dhimmi. Dhimmis were capable of moving up and down the social ladder, though this largely depended on the

particular caliph. An indication as to the social standing of Jews and Christians at the time was their ability to live next to Muslim people. While al-Mansur was ruling the caliphate, for instance, it was not uncommon for dhimmis to live in the same neighborhoods as Muslims. One of the biggest reasons why dhimmis were allowed to hold prestigious jobs and positions in government is that they were generally important to the well-being of the state and were proficient to excellent with the work at hand. Some Muslims in the caliphate took offense to the idea that there were dhimmis in public offices who were in a way ruling over them although it was an Islamic state, while other Muslims were at time jealous of some dhimmis for having a level of wealth or prestige greater than other Muslims, even if Muslims were still the majority of the ruling class. In general, Muslims, Jews, and Christians had close relations that could be considered positive at times, especially for Jews, in contrast to how Jews were being treated in Europe.

Many of the laws and restrictions that were imposed on dhimmis often resembled other laws that previous states had used to discriminate against a minority religion, specifically Jewish people. Romans in the fourth century banned Jewish people from holding public offices, banned Roman citizens from converting to Judaism, and often demoted Jews who were serving in the Roman military. In direct contrast, there was an event in which two viziers, Ibn al-Furat and Ali ibn Isa ibn al-Jarrah, argued about Ibn al-Furat's decision to make a Christian the head of the military. A previous vizier, Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Bazuri, had done so. These laws predated al-Mansur's laws against dhimmis and often had similar restrictions, although Roman emperors were often much more strict on enforcing these laws than many Abbasid caliphs.

Most of Baghdad's Jews were incorporated into the Arab community and considered Arabic their native language. Some Jews studied Hebrew in their schools and Jewish religious education flourished. The united Muslim empire allowed Jews to reconstruct links between their dispersed communities throughout the Middle East. The city's Talmudic institute helped spread the rabbinical tradition to Europe, and the Jewish community in Baghdad went on to establish ten rabbinical schools and twenty-three synagogues. Baghdad not only contained the tombs of Muslim saints and martyrs, but also the tomb of Yusha, whose corpse had been brought to Iraq during the first migration of the Jews out of the Levant.

Arabization

While the Abbasids originally gained power by exploiting the social inequalities against non-Arabs in the Umayyad Empire, during Abbasid rule the empire rapidly Arabized, particularly in the Fertile Crescent region (namely Mesopotamia and the Levant) as had begun under Umayyad rule. As knowledge was shared in the Arabic language throughout the empire, many people from different nationalities and religions began to speak Arabic in their everyday lives. Resources from other languages began to be translated into Arabic, and a unique Islamic identity began to form that fused previous cultures with Arab culture, creating a level of civilization and knowledge that was considered a marvel in Europe at the time.

Holidays

There were large feasts on certain days, as the Muslims of the empire celebrated Christian holidays as well as their own. There were two main Islamic feasts: one marked by the end of Ramadan; the other, "the Feast of Sacrifice". The former was especially joyful because children would purchase decorations and sweetmeats; people prepared the best food and bought new clothes. At midmorning, the caliph, wearing Muhammad's thobe, would guide officials, accompanied by armed soldiers to the Great Mosque, where he led prayers. After the prayer, all those in attendance would exchange the best wishes and hug their kin and companions. The festivities lasted for three days. During those limited number of nights, the palaces were lit up and boats on the Tigris hung lights. It was said that Baghdad "glittered ‘like a bride." During "the Feast of Sacrifice.", sheep were butchered in public arenas and the caliph participated in a large-scale sacrifice in the palace courtyard. Afterward, the meat would be divided and given to the poor.

In addition to these two holidays, Shias celebrated the birthdays of Fatimah and Ali ibn Abi Talib. Matrimonies and births in the royal family were observed by all in the empire. The announcement that one of the caliph's sons could recite the Koran smoothly was greeted by communal jubilation. When Harun developed this holy talent, the people lit torches and decorated the streets with wreaths of flowers, and his father, Al-Mahdi, freed 500 slaves.

Of all the holidays imported from other cultures and religions, the one most celebrated in Baghdad (a city with many Persians) was Nowruz, which celebrated the arrival of spring. In a ceremonial ablution introduced by Persian troops, residents sprinkled themselves with

water and ate almond cakes. The palaces of the imperial family were lit up for six days and nights. The Abbasids also celebrated the Persian holiday of Mihraj, which marked the onset of winter (signified with pounding drums), and Sadar, when homes burned incense and the masses would congregate along the Tigris to witness princes and viziers pass by.

Military

In Baghdad there were many Abbasid military leaders who were or said they were of Arab descent. However, it is clear that most of the ranks were of Iranian origin, the vast majority being from Khorasan and Transoxiana, not from western Iran or Azerbaijan. Most of the Khorasani soldiers who brought the Abbasids to power were Arabs.

The standing army of the Muslims in Khorosan was overwhelmingly Arab. The unit organization of the Abbasids was designed with the goal of ethnic and racial equality among supporters. When Abu Muslim recruited officers along the Silk Road, he registered them based not on their tribal or ethno-national affiliations but on their current places of residence. Under the Abbasids, Iranian peoples became better represented in the army and bureaucracy as compared to before. The Abbasid army was centred on the Khurasan Abna al-dawla infantry and the Khurasaniyya heavy cavalry, led by their own semi-autonomous commanders (qa'id) who recruited and deployed their own men with Abbasid resource grants. al-Mu‘tasim began the practice of recruiting Turkic slave soldiers from the Samanids into a private army, which allowed him to take over the reins of the caliphate. He abolished the old jund system created by Umar and diverted the salaries of the original Arab military descendants to the Turkic slave soldiers. The Turkic soldiers transformed the style of warfare, as they were known as capable horse archers, trained from childhood to ride. This military was now drafted from the ethnic groups of the faraway borderlands, and were completely separate from the rest of society. Some could not speak Arabic properly. This led to the decline of the caliphate starting with the Anarchy at Samarra.

Although the Abbasids never retained a substantial regular army, the caliph could recruit a considerable number of soldiers in a short time when needed from levies. There were also cohorts of regular troops who received steady pay and a special forces unit. At any moment, 125,000 Muslim soldiers could be assembled along the Byzantine

frontier, Baghdad, Medina, Damascus, Rayy, and other geostrategic locations in order to quell any unrest.

The cavalry was entirely covered in iron, with helmets. Similar to medieval knights, their only exposed spots were the end of their noses and small openings in front of their eyes. Their foot soldiers were issued spears, swords, and pikes, and (in line with Persian fashion) trained to stand so solidly that, one contemporary wrote "you would have thought them held fast by clamps of bronze."

The Abbasid army amassed an array of siege equipment, such as catapults, mangonels, battering rams, ladders, grappling irons, and hooks. All such weaponry was operated by military engineers. However, the primary siege weapon was the manjaniq, a type of siege weapon that was comparable to the trebuchet employed in Western medieval times. From the seventh century onward, it had largely replaced torsion artillery. By Harun al-Rashid's time, the Abbasid army employed fire grenades. The Abbasids also utilized field hospitals and ambulances drawn by camels.

Civil administration

As a result of such a vast Empire, the caliphate was decentralized and divided into 24 provinces. In keeping with Persian tradition, Harun's vizier enjoyed close to unchecked powers. Under Harun, a special "bureau of confiscation" was created. This governmental wing made it possible for the vizier to seize the property and riches of any corrupt governor or civil servant. In addition, it allowed governors to confiscate the estates of lower-ranking officials. Finally, the caliph could impose the same penalty on a vizier who fell from grace. As one later caliph put it: "The vizier is our representative throughout the land and amongst our subjects. Therefore, he who obeys him obeys us; and he who obeys us obeys God, and God shall cause him who obeys Him to enter paradise."

Every regional metropolis had a post office and hundreds of roads were paved in order to link the imperial capital with other cities and towns. The empire employed a system of relays to deliver mail. The central post office in Baghdad even had a map with directions that noted the distances between each town. The roads were provided with roadside inns, hospices, and wells and could reach eastward through Persia and Central Asia, to as far as China. The post office not only enhanced civil services but also served as intelligence for the

caliph. Mailmen were employed as spies who kept an eye on local affairs. Early in the days of the caliphate, the Barmakids took the responsibility of shaping the civil service. The family had roots in a Buddhist monastery in northern Afghanistan. In the early 8th century, the family converted to Islam and began to take on a sizable part of the civil administration for the Abbasids.

Capital poured into the caliphate's treasury from a variety of taxes, including a real estate tax; a levy on cattle, gold and silver, and commercial wares; a special tax on non-Muslims; and customs dues.

Trade

Under Harun, maritime trade through the Persian Gulf thrived, with Arab vessels trading as far south as Madagascar and as far east as China, Korea, and Japan. The growing economy of Baghdad and other cities inevitably led to the demand for luxury items and formed a class of entrepreneurs who organized long-range caravans for the trade and then the distribution of their goods. A whole section in the East Baghdad suq was dedicated to Chinese goods. Arabs traded with the Baltic region and made it as far north as the British Isles. Tens of thousands of Arab coins have been discovered in parts of Russia and Sweden, which bear witness to the comprehensive trade networks set up by the Abbasids. King Offa of Mercia (in England) minted gold coins similar to those of the Abbasids in the eighth century.

Muslim merchants employed ports in Bandar Siraf, Basra, and Aden and some Red Sea ports to travel and trade with India and South East Asia. Land routes were also utilized through Central Asia. Arab businessmen were present in China as early as the eighth century. Arab merchants sailed the Caspian Sea to reach and trade with Bukhara and Samarkand.

Many caravans and goods never made it to their intended destinations. Some Chinese exports perished in fires, while other ships sank. It was said that anybody who made it to China and back unharmed was blessed by God. Common sea routes were also plagued by pirates who built and crewed vessels that were faster than most merchant ships. It is said that many of the adventures at sea in the Sinbad tales were based on historical fiction of mariners of the day.

The Arabs also established overland trade with Africa, largely for gold and slaves. When trade with Europe ceased due to hostilities, Jews served as a link between the two hostile worlds.

Decline of Abbasid Caliphate

Abbasids found themselves at odds with the Shia Muslims, most of whom had supported their war against the Umayyads since the Abbasids and the Shias claimed legitimacy by their familial connection to Muhammad. Once in power, the Abbasids disavowed any support for Shia beliefs in favor of Sunni Islam. Shortly thereafter, Berber Kharijites set up an independent state in North Africa in 801. Within 50 years, the Idrisids in the Maghreb and Aghlabids of Ifriqiya and soon the Tulunids and Ikshidids of Misr were effectively independent in Africa. The Abbasid authority began to deteriorate during the reign of al-Radi when their Turkic Army generals, who already had de facto independence, stopped paying the caliphate. Even provinces close to Baghdad began to seek local dynastic rule. Also, the Abbasids found themselves to be often at conflict with the Umayyads in Spain. The Abbasid financial position weakened as well, with tax revenues from the Sawād decreasing in the 9th and the 10th centuries.

Separatist dynasties and their successors

The following list represents the succession of Islamic dynasties that emerged from the fractured Abbasid empire by their general geographic location. Dynasties often overlap, where a vassal emir revolted from and later conquered his lord. Gaps appear during periods of contest where the dominating power was unclear. Except for the Fatimid Caliphate in Egypt, recognizing a Shia succession through Ali, and the Andalusian Caliphates of the Umayyads and Almohads, every Muslim dynasty at least acknowledged the nominal suzerainty of the Abbasids as Caliph and Commander of the Faithful.

Dynasties claiming Abbasid descent

Centuries after the Abbasids fall, several dynasties have claimed descent from them, as "claiming kinship relation with Muhammad", that is, claiming an affiliation to the 'People of the House' or the status of a sayyid or sharif, has arguably been the most widespread way in Muslim societies of supporting one's moral or material objectives with genealogical

credentials." Such claims of continuity with Muhammad or his Hashemite kin such as the Abbasids foster a sense of "political viability" for a candidate dynasty, with the intention of "serving an internal audience" (or in other words, gaining legitimacy in the view of the masses). The Wadai Empire which ruled parts of modern-day Sudan also claimed Abbasid descent, alongside the Khairpur and Bahawalpur states in Pakistan and the Khanate of Bastak.

A common trope among Abbasid claimant dynasties is that they are descended from Abbasid princes of Baghdad, "dispersed" by the Mongol invasion in 1258 CE. These surviving princes would leave Baghdad for a safe haven not controlled by the Mongols, assimilate to their new societies, and their descendants would grow to establish their own dynasties with their Abbasid 'credentials' centuries later. This is highlighted by the origin myth of the Bastak khanate which relates that in 656 AH/1258 CE, the year of the fall of Baghdad, and following the sack of the city, a few surviving members of the Abbasid dynastic family led by the eldest amongst them, Ismail II son of Hamza son of Ahmed son of Mohamed migrated to Southern Iran, in the village of Khonj and later to Bastak where their khanate was established in the 17th century CE.

Meanwhile, the Wadai Empire related a similar origin story, claiming descent from a man by the name of Salih ibn Abdullah ibn Abbas, whose father Abdullah was an Abbasid prince who fled Baghdad for Hijaz upon the Mongol invasion. He had a son named Salih who would grow to become an "able jurist" and a "very devout man". The Muslim ulama on pilgrimage in Mecca met him and, impressed by his knowledge, invited him to return with him to Sennar. Seeing the population's deviation from Islam, he "pushed further" until he found the Abu Sinun mountain in Wadai where he converted the local people to Islam and taught them its rules, after which they made him sultan, thus laying the foundations of the Wadai Empire.

With regards to the Bastak khanate, Shaikh Mohamed Khan Bastaki was the first Abbasid ruler of Bastak to hold the title of "Khan" after the local people accepted him as a ruler, meaning "ruler" or "king", a title which was reportedly bestowed upon him by Karim Khan Zand. The title then became that of all the subsequent Abbasid rulers of Bastak and Jahangiriyeh, and also collectively refers in plural form – i.e., "Khans"– to the descendants of Shaikh Mohamed Khan Bastaki. The last Abbasid ruler of Bastak and Jahangiriyeh was

Mohamed A'zam Khan Baniabbassian son of Mohamed Reza Khan "Satvat al-Mamalek" Baniabbasi. He authored the book Tarikh-e Jahangiriyeh va Baniabbassian-e Bastak (1960), in which is recounted the history of the region and the Abbasid family that ruled it. Mohamed A'zam Khan Baniabbassian died in 1967, regarded as the end of the Abbasid reign in Bastak.

The Abbasid Caliphate, which ruled the Islamic world, oversaw the golden age of Islamic culture. The dynasty ruled the Islamic Caliphate from 750 to 1258 AD, making it one of the longest and most influential Islamic dynasties. For most of its early history, it was the largest empire in the world, and this meant that it had contact with distant neighbors such as the Chinese and Indians in the East, and the Byzantines in the West, allowing it to adopt and synthesize ideas from these cultures.

The Abbasid Revolution

The Abbasid Dynasty overthrew the preceding Umayyad Dynasty, which was based in Damascus, Syria. The Umayyads had become increasingly unpopular, especially in the eastern territories of the caliphate. The Umayyads favored Syrian Arabs over other Muslims and treated mawali, newly converted Muslims, as second- class citizens. The most numerous group of mawali were the Persians, who lived side- by-side with Arabs in the east who were angry at the favor shown to Syrian Arabs. Together, they were ripe for rebellion. Other Muslims were angry with the Umayyads for turning the caliphate into a hereditary dynasty. Some believed that a single family should not hold power, while Shiites believed that true authority belonged to the family of the Prophet Muhammad through his son-in-law Ali, and the Umayyads were not part of Muhammad’s family.

All these various groups who were angry with the Umayyads united under the Abbasids, who began a rebellion against the Umayyads in Persia. The Abbasids built a coalition of Persian mawali, Eastern Arabs, and Shiites. The Abbasids were able to gain Shiite support because they claimed descent from Muhammad through Muhammad’s uncle Abbas. Their descent from Muhammad was not through Ali, as Shiites would have preferred, but Shiites still considered the Abbasids better than the Umayyads.

A Persian general, Abu Muslim, who supported Abbasid claims to power, led the Abbasid armies. His victories allowed the Abbasid leader Abul `Abbas al-Saffah to enter the

Shiite-dominated city of Kufa in 748 and declare himself caliph. In 750, the army of Abu Muslim and al-Saffah faced the Umayyad Caliph Marwan II at the Battle of the Zab near the Tigris River. Marwan II was defeated, fled, and was killed. As-Saffah captured Damascus and slaughtered the remaining members of the Umayyad family (except for one, Abd al-Rahman, who escaped to Spain and continued the Umayyad Dynasty there). The Abbasids were the new rulers of the caliphate.

The Early Abbasids

The Abbasids had led a revolution against the unpopular policies of the Umayyads, but those who expected major change were disappointed. Under the second Abbasid Caliph, al-Mansur (r. 754–775), it became clear that much of the Umayyad past would be continued. The Abbasids maintained the hereditary control of the caliphate, forming a new dynasty. The alliance with the Shiites was short lived, and the Abbasids became champions of Sunni orthodoxy, upholding the authority of their family over that of Ali, and continuing the subjugation of the Shiites. Even Abu Muslim, the brilliant Persian general who engineered the rise of the Abbasids, was deemed a threat and executed. However, the Abbasids did prove loyal to their Persian mawali allies. In fact, Abbasid culture would come to be dominated by the legacy of Persian civilization. The Abbasid court was heavily influenced by Persian customs, and members of the powerful Persian Barmakid family acted as the advisers of the caliphs and rivaled them in wealth and power.

One of the earliest, and most important, changes the Abbasids made was to move the capital of the Islamic empire from the old Umayyad power base of Damascus to a new city—Baghdad. Baghdad was founded in 762 by al-Mansur on the banks of the Tigris River. The city was round in shape, and designed from the beginning to be a great capital and the center of the Islamic world. It was built not far from the old Persian capital of Ctesiphon, and its location reveals the desire of the dynasty to connect itself to Persian culture.

Baghdad grew quickly with encouragement from the Abbasid state, and it was soon the largest city in the world. At Baghdad, the Persian culture that the Umayyads had attempted to suppress was now allowed to thrive. Art, poetry, and science flourished. The Abbasids learned from the Chinese (allegedly from Chinese soldiers captured in battle) the

art of making paper. Cheap and durable, paper became an important material for spreading literature and knowledge.

Islamic Golden Age

The fifth caliph of the Abbasid dynasty, Harun al-Rashid (786–809), is remembered as one of history's greatest patrons of the arts and sciences. Under his rule, Baghdad became the world's most important center for science, philosophy, medicine, and education. The massive size of the caliphate meant that it had contact and shared borders with many distant empires, so scholars at Baghdad could collect, translate, and expand upon the knowledge of other civilizations, such as the Egyptians, Persians, Indians, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, and Byzantines. The successors of Harun al-Rashid, especially his son al-Ma'mun (813–833), continued his policies of supporting artists, scientists, and scholars. Al-Ma'mun founded the Bayt al-Hikma, the House of Wisdom, in Baghdad. A library, an institute for translators, and in many ways an early form of university, the House of Wisdom hosted Muslim and non-Muslim scholars who sought to translate and gather the cumulative knowledge of human history in one place, and in one language—Arabic.

At the House of Wisdom, important ideas from around the world came together. The introduction of Indian numerals, which have become standard in the Islamic and Western worlds, greatly aided in mathematic and scientific discovery. Scholars such as Al-Kindi revolutionized mathematics and synthesized Greek philosophy with Islamic thought. Al-Biruni and Abu Nasr Mansur—among many other scholars—made important contributions to geometry and astronomy. Al-Khwarizmi, expanding upon Greek mathematical concepts, developed Algebra (the word "algorithm" is a corruption of his name). Ibn al-Haytham made important contributions to the field of optics, and is generally held to have developed the concept of the scientific method.

A number of very practical innovations took place, especially in the field of agriculture. Improved methods of irrigation allowed more land to be cultivated, and new types of mills and turbines were used to reduce the need for labor (though slavery was still very common in both the countryside and cities). Crops and farming techniques were adopted from far-flung neighboring cultures. Rice, cotton, and sugar were taken from India, citrus fruits from China, and sorghum from Africa. Thanks to Islamic famers, these crops

eventually made their way to the West. Such Islamic innovation would continue, even as the Abbasid government fell into chaos.

Growth and slow decline

Due to several very capable caliphs and their advisers, the Abbasid Caliphate thrived through the early ninth century, despite the major challenges of ruling a massive and multiethnic empire. Besides being a great patron of the arts and sciences, Harun al-Rashid also brought the Abbasid Caliphate to its high point. Still, he had to deal with revolts in Persia and North Africa, and he removed from power the Persian Barmakid family, the source of many great advisers (supposedly after the adviser Ja'far impregnated the caliph's sister, though probably because al-Rashid feared their power would eclipse his own). Al-Rashid's son, Caliph al-Ma'mun not only continued his father's patronage by establishing the House of Wisdom, but he made a number of important independent innovations.

Al-Ma'mun adopted the radical Mu'tazili theology, which was influenced by Greek philosophy and held that God could be understood through rational inquiry, and that belief and practice should be subject to reason. He established the mihna, an inquisition in which the adherence of scholars and officials to Mu'tazili theology was tested, and they could be imprisoned or even killed if they did not follow the theology. As a result, al-Ma'mun's reign saw a growing division between the Isalmic sovereign and the Isalmic people. This division was exacerbated by his creation of an army of Central Asian soldiers loyal only to him. During al-Ma'mun's reign, the provincial governors, called emirs, became increasingly independent. The governor of Persia set up his own dynasty and ruled as a king, though he continued to recognize the Abbasid caliph. This trend of impendent governors would continue, causing major problems for the caliphate.

After the caliphate of al-Ma'mun, Abbasid power began to noticeably decline. The cost of running a massive empire and maintaining a large bureaucracy required steady revenues, and as the authority of the caliphate diminished it was able to collect fewer taxes. In order to stabilize the state finances, the caliphs granted tax-farms to governors and military commanders. These governors, with their own troops and revenue bases, soon proved independent-minded and disloyal.

The caliph al-Mu`tasim (833–842) furthered the gap between the caliph and his people. Expanding on al-Ma'mun's new army, he created his own military force of slave soldiers called ghilman (later know as "Mamluks"). As the elite guard of the caliph, these slaves began acting superior to the people of Baghdad, which inspired anger and led to riots. Instead of trying to diffuse the situation, al-Mu'tasim simply moved the capital away from Baghdad and settled in Samarra, 60 miles to the north. Away from the bulk of their subjects who lived in Baghdad, the caliphs became insulated from the problems of their empire.

Increasingly, the caliph's soldiers controlled Samaria, turning the caliph into little more than a puppet. When a caliph was not pliant, they simply killed him. Al-Muwaffaq, the brother of caliph al-Mu`tamid (870–892), tried to change this. Acting as his brother's regent, he had the caliph move the capital back to Baghdad, and from there al- Muwaffaq guided the caliphate to new prosperity and defeated the Zanj Rebellion, an uprising of African slaves that posed a major threat to the caliphate. Thanks to al- Muwaffaq, Abbasid power gained a new lease on life.

However, decline began anew under the reign of al-Muqtadir (r. 908–932), who was raised to the throne at the age of thirteen by members of the court who knew they could control him. For al-Muqtadir's long, twenty-five-year reign, he was too weak to do anything but act as a tool of various court factions. Under his caliphate, territory after territory broke free of Abbasid rule. By the end, Abbasid authority extended hardly beyond Baghdad. Al-Muqtadir was eventually killed by city guards after he bankrupted the state to the point where he could not even pay their salaries.

Al-Muqtadir's son, al-Radi (934–940) is often considered the last caliph to exercise any real authority. He tried to raise a powerful governor of Iraq who would hold power over all the other independent emirs. Thus, al-Radi created the title amir al- umara, "emir of emirs," for the governor of Iraq. This plan backfired, however, because the title effectively invested supreme authority in its holder, leaving the caliph simply as a figurehead. The Shiite Buyids soon took the title and held it as a hereditary position, becoming the de facto rulers of Iraq.

From this point on, the Abbasid caliphs became little more than religious figureheads. In the mid-11th century, the Buyids were ousted by the Sunni Seljuq Turks, who conquered

Iran, Iraq, Syria, and most of Asia Minor, forming a new and vibrant Islamic Empire. The Seljuqs continued to keep the Abbasid caliph as the titular ruler while exercising true authority over the empire as sultans.

The Fall of the Abbasids

Military Defeat, Financial Crisis, and Revolts

An unclear line of succession plagued the Umayyad dynasty throughout its reign, and civil unrest and tribal warfare often surrounded the naming of new caliphs. A clear decline began with the disastrous defeat of the Syrian army by the Byzantine emperor Leo III in 717. Soon afterward, caliph ʿUmar II (reigned 717–20) initiated fiscal reforms as a response to complaints from the increasingly discontented mawālī (non-Arab Muslims). This well-intended attempt to place all Muslims on the same footing led to financial crisis. Meanwhile, feuds between southern (Kalb) and northern (Qays) Arab tribes reduced military power and erupted into major revolts in 745. The mawālī became involved with the Hāshimiyyah, a religio-political faction that denied the legitimacy of Umayyad rule. In 749 the Hāshimiyyah, aided by the western provinces, proclaimed as caliph Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ of the ʿAbbasid family.

Loss to the Abbasids

The Abbasids were descended from an uncle of Muhammad. Seeing the weaknesses of the Umayyads, they declared a revolt in 747. With the help of a coalition of Persians, Iraqis, and Shites, they put an end to the Umayyad dynasty with a victory against them at the Battle of the Great Zab River in 750. The last Umayyad caliph, Marwān II, was killed while fleeing the forces of Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Saffaḥ.

When the Seljuq sultanate collapsed in the twelfth century, an opportunity presented itself for Caliph al-Nasir (1180–1225) to attempt to restore Abbasid power in Iraq. His long reign of forty-seven years allowed him ample time to reconquer Mesopotamia and further develop Baghdad as a center of learning. His chief rival was the Sultanate of Khwarezm, which ruled Persia. Supposedly, al-Nasir appealed to the Mongols, an expanding central-Asian nomad empire, for help against Khwarezm. Under al-Nasir’s less competent

successors, this backfired disastrously. The Mongols completely overran Khwarezm and then turned their attention to Baghdad.

The Mongols seem to have wanted to rule, as the Buyids and Seljuqs before them, by holding real military power but allowing the Abbasid caliph symbolic authority. Caliph al-Mu`tasim (1242–1258), however, refused to acknowledge their authority and offered these non-Muslims only insults and threats. Faced with Mongol invasion, he did little to prepare, and the Mongol hordes soon surrounded Baghdad. They captured the city in 1258 and sacked it. They trampled the caliph to death, and completely destroyed the city. They killed somewhere between 100,000 and a million people, destroyed all the books of the House of Wisdom and other libraries, burned down all the great monuments of the city, and left Baghdad a smoldering ruin. This marks the end of the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad, and the abrupt end of the Islamic golden age.

The Abbasid line was reestablished in 1261, in Egypt. The sultans of Egypt appointed an Abbasid caliph in Cairo, but these Egyptian caliphs were even more symbolic than the late caliphs had been in Baghdad, and were simply used to legitimize the power of the sultans. The authority of these caliphs extended strictly to religious matters. Still, the Egypt-based period of the Abbasid dynasty lasted over 250 years.

In 1517, the Ottoman Empire conquered Egypt. The last Abbasid caliph, al-Mutawakkil III, was forced to surrender all his authority to the Ottoman Sultan Selim I. This was the end of seven-and-a-half centuries of Abbasid history. However, under the Ottoman rulers the caliphate was once again wedded to a powerful Islamic Empire, which exercised true authority in the Muslim world.

The administration of Abbasids Caliphate

The replacement of the Umayyads by the Abbasids in the headship of the Islamic community was more than a mere change of dynasty. It was a revolution in the history of Islam as important a turning point as the French and Russian revolution in the history of the west. It came about not as the result of a palace conspiracy or a coup d'etat, but by the action of an extensive and successful revolutionary propaganda and its organization expressing the dissatisfactions of important elements of the Muslim population. Lewis throws light on the change of dynasty that completed a process of development in the organization of the state

which had already begun under the Umayyads from a tribal Sheikh governing by the unwilling consents of the Arab ruling caste (Bernard, 1950).

Whereas the early caliphs has been Arabs, whom anyone could approach and address by name the Abbasids surrounded themselves with the pomp and ceremonial of an elaborate and hierarchic system. In theory the caliph was still subject to the rule of the sharia, the holy law of Islam. But in practice, these checks on his authority were not effective since there was no machinery other than revolt for its enforcement. The Abbasid caliphate was thus a despotism based on military force claiming almost divine right to rule. The Abbasids were stronger than the Umayyads in that sense they did not depend on the support of the Arabs and could therefore rule rather than persuade. On the other hand, they were weaker than the old oriental despots were in that they lacked the support of an established feudal caste and of an entrenched priesthood. According to Lewis the change of dynasty completed a process of development in the organization of the state, which had already begun under the Umayyads. The caliph under the Abbasids became an autocrat claiming a divine origin for his authority, resting it on a salaried bureaucracy. In the new regime pedigree was no help to advancement, but only the favor of the sovereign, and an official hierarchy thus replaced the Arab aristocracy. With the foundation of their empire, the Abbasids introduced great changes in the mode and practice of administrative system. Actually the new regime was much impressed by the Persians and under their influence they adopted the sophisticated manners and etiquettes for their emperors. In emulating the example of the Persian kings they, went ahead of their Umayyad predecessors, who had previously introduced the Byzantine fashions. In the words of Hassan Ibrahim, “The adoption of such monarchic dignity with great pomp and show was the renaissance of the Sasanids kingship and Baghdad became just like the capital of the splendid Persian Empire”

The traditional centre of the great cosmopolitan empires of the near and Middle East. Ameer Ali adds that with the rise of the Abbassids, the situation in Western Asia alters. The seat of government was removed from Syria to Iraq; the Syrians lost the monopoly of influence and power they had hitherto possessed and the tide of progress was diverted from the west to the East. Furtherer conquests were stopped but not without advantage, as it helped the founder of Abbassid caliphate to consolidate their power, organize its resources, and promote the material and intellectual development of their subjects. The revolution was not

the victory of Abbasids over the Umayyads but it may be regarded as the victory of the Persianised over the Arabs, establishing under the cloak of Persiansied Islam a new Iranian empire in place of the fallen Arab kingdom. The Abbasids under the influence of the Persians adopted the concept of the divine right of Kingship. Mansoor (754-775) introduced the idea that he was conferred sovereignty from god and not by the people. In other words he claimed that he was bestowed the divine right of kingship from god, so he was not accountable to any person.

The Abbasids based their right of caliphate on the concept of the holy Prophet (peace be upon him). Their diplomacy was based on the fact that their sovereignty must be recognized as the spiritual and religious leadership on the Muslim world. Its main purpose was to distinguish their rule from that of the Umayyads. Such religious and spiritual up gradation of the institution of the caliphate was the main feature under the Abbasids (Ameer, 1975). Actually the only course now left under the critical circumstances was to reconstruct the institution of caliphate on religious basis so that they could survive in spite of their division and mutual rivalry, the originator of this scheme was al-Mansoor who is rightly regarded as the real founder of the Abbasid dynasty. He patronized Ulema and by enlisting their sympathies impressed upon the public mind that the caliphate belonged to the house of Abbas. He succeeded in replacing the famous tradition of the Holy Prophet "(peace be upon him), Al-Ayimma minalQuraish by Al-Ayimma minal-Abbas. On account of this belief among the Muslims, the dynasty lasted for centuries after it had lost all temporal power (Husaini, 1949). Husaini describes that, the Abbasids took great care to lay much emphasis on the religious character and dignity of their office as an Imamat (religious leadership). In about a century after the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty, the vicegerent of the Messenger of God (Khalifatu Rasulillah) become the vicegerent of God (Khalifatuallah) and God's shadow on the earth (Zillallahi ala'l -ard) (Husaini, 1949). Lewis adds that the new dignity of the caliph was expressed in new titles. No longer was he the deputy of the Prophet (peace be upon him) of god, but simply the deputy of God, from whom he claimed to derive the authority directly. Imamuddin is of the opinion that drawing lessons from the Umayyads the Abbasids had laid emphasis on their religious leadership and the more the caliphs became weak and figurehead a century after the establishment of their rule, the more honorific titles they adopted (Imamuddin, 1976). Moreover, special stress was laid on the religious character of the state, possession of and reverence to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Changes in Administration

The caliph used to wear the prophet's mantle and held his staff in his hand. Al Mutawakhil (847-861) was the first to receive such titles. It was the time when all effective powers had passed out of the hands of the caliph. According to Siddiqi, being the creature of a strong religious revival, the Abbasids took great care to lay much emphasis on the religious character and dignity of their office as an Immamat (religious leadership). They in a real sense succeeded in introducing a religious halo in the concept of caliphate. Their victory was generally regarded as the substitution of the true concept of caliphate for the purely secular state (Mulk) of the Umayyads. From the very beginning the idea was cultivated that authority should remain forever in Abbasid hands, to be finally delivered to Jesus (Isa), the Messiah. Later on the people were made to believe that if this caliphate was destroyed, the whole universe would collapse (Siddiqi, 1956). The Abbasid state introduced fundamental changes in the idea of the government and the caliphate. Whereas the Umayyads had been little more than heads of a turbulent Arabian aristocracy, the Abbasids reverted to the old type of oriental despotism with which the Persians had been familiar. Like the Sassanids they ruled with absolute authority over the olives and properties of their subjects. In short the Abbasids caliph was not merely a secular sovereign; he was the spiritual head of a church and commonwealth, the actual representative of the divine government (Siddiqi, 1956). Above all, the Abbasids succeeded in founding their state on the chief characteristic of an Islamic system via, equality, liberty, fraternity, social justice and toleration. On the basis of such grounds it would therefore, be fallacy to call it an absolute monarchy after the pattern of a Persian or Byzantine despotism, where no doubt absolutism; reigned supreme. On the other side, they removed all discrimination between the old and the new Muslims, and provided equal opportunities to all in every field of activity. Since the Abbasids had come to power with the help of the new Persian converts (Malawi), it was but natural that they must be accorded equal treatment in economic, political and cultural fields. So every office was filled with Persian maw lies, even the highest office of the grand wazir was thrown open to them. Such behavior provided incentive for the nonMuslim to embrace Islam.

Civil Administration

The most amazing feature off the Abbasid caliphate had been the preponderating number of non-Muslim in civil administration. "It seemed that in their own state the Muslims

were being ruled by the zhimis (non-Muslim)" (Siddiqi, 1956). Under the Abbasids the non-Arabs, as common subjects of a great and civilized empire, assumed their proper place as citizens of Islam. It gave practical effect to the democratic enunciation of the equality and brotherhood of man. The acceptance of this fundamental principle of racial equality helped the early sovereigns of the house of Abbas to build up a fabric which endured without a rival for over five centuries (Siddiqi, 1956). Bernard Lewis admits that "under the Abbasids, Zimmis were infinitely superior to those communities who differed from the established church in Western Europe in the same period. They enjoyed free exercise of their religion, normal property rights. They were very frequently employed in the service of the state, often in the highest offices. They were admitted to the craft guilds, in some of which they actually predominated. They were never called upon to suffer martyrdom or exile for their beliefs" (Bernard, 1950).

So "the Abbasid dynasty ruled the world with a policy of mingled religion and kingship, the best and most religious of men obeyed them out of fear". The religious organization filled the gap left by the breakup of Arab racial unity and served as the cement binging together the diverse ethnic and social elements of the population. The Abbasid dynasty claim itself to be dawlah (a revolutionary state) and indeed it departed from the Umayyed dynasty in many ways. The ascendancy of the Arabs was over and while the khurasanis became the caliph body-guards, the Persians occupied the key positions in the government, a new hierarchy of officers other than that of the Arabs (Ali, 1974). In short the dynasty though Arab in origin, was deeply personalized in cultural and administrative institutions. This was natural because the rulers of the new dynasty had risen to power with substantial help of their Persian supporters. The proximity of the new capital to Persia further helped the non-Arab elements to occupy positions of eminence in the administration of the new caliphate (Ali, 1974). The influence off the old Persian order of the Sasanids became increasingly strong and may Abbasid practices were a deliberate imitation of satanic habits which were now becoming known from Persian officials and from surviving Sasanid literature (Ali, 1974). With the passage of time Persian influences began to be felt in all fields of life. As it is known, Al-Mansur was the first to adopt the Persian characteristic, in which he was naturally followed by his subjects. Shaukat Ali writes that, "Abu Mohammed Ibanal-Muqaffa was perhaps among the earliest leading Persians who introduced swift persianization

of the socio-political institutions in Islam. He is credited with works relating to manners and duties of civil servants and court etiquette" (Ali, 1974).

The Abbasid caliph used to prove themselves as the protectors of Islam and created awe in the eyes of the devout Muslims by elaborating the court etiquette. The color of the early Abbasids was black; therefore banner was also black, bearing white inscription "Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the messenger of God". Emphasizing on the religious aspect in their court life, the caliph wore a black turban. On him rested the mantle of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and in his hand was placed the prophets (peace be upon him) staff. Quran was kept before him. One after another, the nobility first and then the others kissed the hand of the caliph. This was the form of paying homage (Hitti, 1949). The inscribing of the name of the caliph on the coinage became also the exclusive prerogative of the caliph during the Abbasid caliphate. The most important of them was the inclusion of the caliph's name in the khutba (payers). The inclusion of caliph's name in the khutba thus came one of the chief insignia of sovereignty and served as the only visible sign. The grant of a deed of investiture was the most important political prerogative enjoyed exclusively by the caliph. Since the latter was regarded as the chief source of power, no governor could be recognized as a legally constituted ruler unless he had obtained this deed from the caliphate. All the insignias were the symbols of sovereignty and were used for the recognition of caliph as the head of the state. They found their way in due course of time into the Islamic polity. As for their personal privileges, the Abbasid not only enjoyed their annuities but also shared in the booty (that of the Banu Hashim). Besides, they owned huge royal estates so much so that a separate department, Diwan un – Diya had to be established to administer the private estates of the Abbasid caliphs. Moreover it was obvious that the Abbasid state had given preference to law and order (Hitti, 1949). The army, too, belonged to the court, the nucleus of it being concentrated in the caliph's residence. In this respect, the Abbasids were much different from the early caliphs of Islam and even the Umayyads.

New institutions

Under the Abbasids new institutions were established. Among it the office of the Wizarat (Ministry) has special importance. The office did not exist under the pious caliphate, nor did it exist under the Umayyads. It was an Abbasid institution borrowed from the Persians. The first individual who was called wazir was Abu Salmah al Khallal under as

Saffah. According to Hitti, Wazir stood next to the caliph and acted as his alter ago (Hitti, 1949). But mostly under the Abbasids there was a concept of Wazarat-ut-Tafwiz (The unlimited), delegated with all of the sovereign powers; and vested with absolute and unfettered discretion in all matters concerning the state (Hitti, 1949). With the help of their Persian wazirs, the Abbasids were able to streamline the existing administrative structure. Another important figure was the executioner who was perhaps the most outstanding figure among the official personnel. The Arabs knew no executioner, and the Umayyad kept none; with the Abbasids he was indispensable. Mover over each sovereign on his side maintained a commissary called shahna at the pontifical court charged with the duty of keenly watching the moves of the game on the part of his rivals, for the struggle for predominating influence over the source of all legitimate authority was as great at Baghdad as in Papal Roma. The pattern, on the whole was taken from the Iranians, from who was also taken the office of the court astrologer (Hitti, 1949). According to Ameer Ali, with the loss of the Abbasid actual authority, the wazir also lost his predominant position, and his place was taken by the Ameer-ul-Umra, or general in chief. The Buwahids afterwards transferred the title to their own ministers, leaving to the pontiff only a secretary who bore the name of Rais-ur-Ruasa (i.e. Chief of the Chiefs). When the caliphs under the Seljuk sultans resumed their temporal power, they again nominated their wazir and the wazierate were combined in one person.

Titles

Under the latter Abbasids when the caliphate was declining, there sprang out some of the new titles that were bestowed by the caliph to the strongest and the most important personalities of the court. The first of them was the title of Sultan, which, for the first time was bestowed by Wasik upon Ashnas, the commandant of the Turkish guard. Then it was conferred to the Buyide princes when they rose to power. Later on it was conferred on mighty conquerors like Mahmud of Ghazni, Tughril, Alp Arslan, Malik Shah etc. The next title was created, that of Malik, kings which sometimes jointly with the designation of Sultan sometimes separately, but always with a qualifying phrase, was a bestowed on ruling prince. The first to obtain his honour was the great Nur ud din Muhammad Zangi who received from the caliph the title of al Malik al Aadil, the just king (Ameer, 1975). During this period of decline, we find another important personage decorated with the title of usta ud dar or

attendant of the palace. Under the weaker reigns, the Ameer ul Umra was also the ustad dar, and the Buyide princes did not hesitate to distinguish themselves by this title.

Local Administration

One thing that is important to conclude the topic is the natural aptitude of the people of the East, specially their love for local autonomy and hatred of centralization. Under such influence, throughout the Abbasides regime, each village and each town administered its own affairs. The government only interfered when disturbances arose, or the taxes were not paid. Such a policy, afterwards, developed the tendency of hereditary governorship. The Administration of Abbasids Caliphate 570 Consequently it resulted in the split of the mighty empire. As a matter of fact during the early Abbasid period, four independent Muslim kingdoms were established in the East, each with its own separate history. As time rolled on, several independent dynasties arose in the East also (Siddiqi, 1943). Consequently, like every other autocratic system, the Abbasid administration had built in centrifugal tendencies, which continued to aggravate as the dynasty, after its earlier successes and glories, moved swiftly towards its downfall (Siddiqi, 1943). Lewis discussing on the other aspects of the downfall of the Abbasides writes, that as long as Baghdad retained control of the vital trade route leading through it the political break-up did not impede, but seems in some ways actually to have helped the expansion of economic and culture life. But soon more dangerous developments appeared and the authority of the caliph led even in the capital itself (Bernard, 1950). The excessive luxury of the court and the overweight of the bureaucracy produced financial disorder and a shortage of money, later aggravated by the drying up of or loss to invaders of sources of metal. But the most disastrous situation was created from the time of Mu'tasim (833-842) and Wathiq (842-847).

From that time the caliphs gradually lost control to their own army commanders and guards, who were often able to appoint and depose them at will. These commanders and guards consisted to an increasing extend of Turkish Makluks. In the year 935 the office of Amir al Umara, or commander of Commander, was created in order to indicate the capital over the rest. Finally, in 1945, the Persian house of Buwaik, which had already established itself as a virtually independent dynasty in Western Iran, invaded the capital and destroyed the last shreds off the caliphs were at the mercy of a series of mayors of the place, most of them Persian or Turkish, ruling through the armed forces under their own command.

However the Abbasid caliph retained the status and dignity of the office of supreme sovereign of Islam, head of both church and state, or rather of the intermingled organism of the two, the caliphs real power had gone and his investiture of a Commander or governor was merely a formal post facto recognition of an existing situation (Siddiqi, 1943). During the decaying period of the Abbasids, the caliphs were mere puppets in the hands of the Amir al Umara, the Buwayhids and the Saljuqs, and were removed from the office as the courtiers desired. The situation in its own self concluded to the failure of Abbasids in 1258 A.D. through the attack of Halaqu Khan.

UNIT V

ARABS IN SPAIN AND EGYPT

The invasion of Spain:

In the second half of the 7th century AD, Byzantine strongholds in North Africa gave way before the Arab advance. Carthage fell in 698. In 705 al-Walid I, the sixth caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, the first great Muslim dynasty centred in Damascus, appointed Musa ibn Nusayr governor in the west; Musa annexed all of North Africa as far as Tangier (Tanjah) and made progress in the difficult task of propagating Islam among the Imazighen. The Christian ruler of Ceuta (Sabtah), Count Julian (variously identified by the Arab chroniclers as a Byzantine, a native Amazigh, or a Visigoth), eventually reached an agreement with Musa to launch a joint invasion of the Iberian Peninsula.

The invasion of Spain was the result both of a Muslim readiness to invade and of a call for assistance by one of the Visigothic factions, the "Witizans." Having become dispossessed after the death of King Witiza in 710, they appealed to Musa for support against the usurper Roderick. In April or May of 711 Musa sent an Amazigh army headed by Tariq ibn Ziyad across the passage whose modern name, the Strait of Gibraltar, derives from Jabal al- Tariq in July they were able to defeat Roderick in a decisive battle.

Capture of Merida:

Instead of returning to Africa, Tariq marched north and conquered Toledo (Tulaytulah), the Visigothic capital, where he spent the winter of 711. In the following year Musa himself led an Arab army to the peninsula and conquered Mérida (Maridah) after a long siege. He reached Tariq in Toledo in the summer of 713. From there he advanced northeast, taking Zaragoza (Saraqustah) and invading the country up to the northern mountains; he then moved from west to east, forcing the population to submit or flee. Both Musa and Tariq were recalled to Syria by the caliph, and they departed in 714 at the end of the summer, by then most of the Iberian Peninsula was under Muslim control.

New Society:

The rapid success of the Islamic forces can be explained by the fact that Hispano-Visigoth society had not yet succeeded in achieving a compact and homogeneous integration. The Jews, harassed by the legal ordinances of Toledo, were particularly hostile toward the Christian government. Moreover, the Muslim conquest brought advantages to many elements of society the burden of taxes was generally less onerous than it had been in the last years of the Visigoth epoch; serfs who converted to Islam (mawali, singular, mawla) advanced into the category of freedmen and enrolled among the dependents of some conquering noble; and Jews, who were no longer persecuted, were placed on an equal footing with the Hispano-Romans and Goths who still remained within the Christian fold. Thus, in the first half of the 8th century, a new society developed in Muslim Spain.

The Arabs were the ruling element; a distinction was made between baladiyyun (ie., Arabs who had entered Spain in 712 under Musa) and Syrians (who arrived in 740 under Balj ibn Bishr). Below them in status were the Imazighen, who made up the majority of the invading troops, whose numbers and influence continued to grow over the course of centuries because of their steady influx from Africa. Then came the native population who had converted to Islam, the musalimah, and their descendants, the muwallads many of them were also mawall (ie., connected by patronage with an Arab) or even themselves of Amazigh lineage. This group formed the majority of the population because during the first three centuries social and economic motives induced a considerable number of natives to convert to Islam. Christians and Jews who kept their religion came next in the social hierarchy, but their numbers decreased in the course of time. Finally, there was a small group of slaves (Ṣaqalibah) captives from the northern peninsula and other European countries- and black captives or mercenaries.

Dependent Emirates.

The period between 711 and 756 is called the dependent emirate because Muslim Spain, or Al- Andalus, was dependent on the Umayyad caliph in Damascus. These years were marked by continuous hostilities between the different Arab factions and between the various social groups. Nonetheless, Muslim expansion beyond the Pyrenees continued until 732, when the Franks, under Charles Martel, defeated the Muslims, led by the emir 'Abd al-

Rahman al- Ghafiqi, near Tours. This battle marked the beginning of the gradual Muslim retreat. A major Amazigh uprising against the Arabs in North Africa had powerful repercussions in Muslim Spain; it caused the depopulation of the northwestern peninsula, occupied at that time mainly by Imazighen, and brought the Syrian army of Balj to Al-Andalus, which introduced a new motive for discord. This situation changed with the establishment of an independent emirate in 756 by Abd al-Rahman I al-Dakhil, an Umayyad prince who, having succeeded in escaping from the slaughter of his family by the Abbasids and in gaining power in Al-Andalus, became independent of them politically (not religiously; he did not adopt the title of caliph).

The independent Emirate

The dynasty of the Andalusian Umayyads (756-1031) marked the growth and perfection of the Arabic civilization in Spain. Its history may be divided into two major periods that of the independent emirate (756-929) and that of the caliphate (929-1031)-and may be interpreted as revolving around three persons of like name Abd al-Rahman I (756-788). Abd al- Rahman II (822-852), Abd al-Rahman III (912-961)-and the all-powerful hajib (chief minister) Abu Amir al-Mansur (976-1002).

Abd al-Rahman:

Abd al-Rahman I organized the new Arab state. Vigorously checking all dissident elements, he endeavoured to base his power on the Eastern aristocracy affiliated with his house and heaped upon it property and riches, though he nonetheless treated it ruthlessly when it showed signs of rebellion. He protected the religious authorities who represented orthodoxy, and, through a series of punitive campaigns, he held in check the Christians of Asturias. In the eastern part of the country he was troubled by intrigues of the Abbasids, and in the north he had to cope with the ambitions of Charlemagne, who menaced the valley of the Ebro (Ibruh). As discussed above, Charlemagne failed; he was forced to raise the siege of Zaragoza, and in the course of his retreat the Basques attacked and destroyed his rear guard at Roncesvalles (778), an event which is celebrated in the great medieval epic The Song of Roland. The Franks had to be content with occupying the upper valleys of the Pyrenees. The Frankish advance ended with the Muslim seizure of Girona (Jerunda) in 785, Barcelona

(Barjelünah) in 801, and Old Catalonia, which were later taken back by the Franks and formed part of the Spanish March.

Hisham –I:

Abd al-Rahman I's successors, Hisham I (788-796) and al-Hakam I (796-822), encountered severe internal dissidence among the Arab nobility. A rebellion in Toledo was put down savagely, and the internal warfare caused the emir to increase the numbers of Slav and Amazigh mercenaries and to impose new taxes to pay for them.

Adminitrative and cultural progress.

Abd al-Rahman II inaugurated an era of political, administrative, and cultural regeneration for Muslim Spain, beginning a sharp "Orientalization" or, more precisely, an "Iraqization." 'Abd al-Rahman's most severe problems sprang from his restless vassals in the Ebro valley, especially the convert Banu Qasi family and the Mozarabs. Incited by the extremist chiefs Alvarus and Eulogius (the latter being canonized after his death), the Mozarabs sought to strengthen their Christian faith through the aura of martyrdom and began to publicly revile the Prophet Muhammad, an action punishable by death from 850 onward, according to Mozarabic sources. The emir sought to persuade the blasphemous to retract, but, failing in his attempts, he imposed the death penalty. The "vogue" of seeking martyrdom was a reaction of the conservative Mozarabic party against the growing "Arabization" of their coreligionists. The conflict ended in 859-860, and, despite official tact, this provocation by the Christians led to the execution of 53 and was finally disavowed by the ecclesiastical authorities.

Foreign Policy of Abdal-Rahman:

In foreign policy, Abd al-Rahman II conducted intensive diplomatic activity, exchanging ambassadors with the Byzantine Empire and with the Frankish king Charles II (the Bald) and maintaining friendly relations with the sovereigns of Tahart, who lent military support to Muslim Spain. He confronted the constantly growing incursions of the Vikings (Norsemen), whom he defeated in the vicinity of Sevilla. Furthermore, he established permanent defenses against the Viking invaders by creating two naval bases, one facing the Atlantic at Sevilla and another on the Mediterranean shore at Pechina near Almeria.

His successors Muhammad I (852-886), al-Mundhir (886-888), and 'Abd Allah (888-912) were confronted with a new problem, which threatened to do away with the power of the Umayyads the muwallads. Having become more and more conscious of their power, they rose in revolt in the north of the peninsula, led by the powerful Banu Qasi clan, and in the south (879), led by 'Umar ibn Hafsun. The struggle against them was long and tragic; Ibn Hafşün, well protected in Bobastro and in the Málaga mountains, was the leader of muwallad and even Mozarabic discontent in the south of Al-Andalus, but his defeat in 891 at Poley, near Córdoba, forced him to retreat and hide in the mountains. 'Abd Allah, however, was unable to subdue the numerous rebels and thus left a weak state for his grandson, the great 'Abd al-Rahman III. who from 912 was able to restore order. He subdued all of Al-Andalus, from Jaén (Jayyan) to Zaragoza (Suraqustah), from Mérida (Maridah) to Sevilla (Ishbiliyah), and the Levant. He even challenged Ibn Hafşun successfully especially after the latter's political error of reverting to the Christianity of his Spanish ancestors, a move that caused the desertion of numerous muwallads who regarded themselves as good Muslims. When Ibn Hafşun died in 917, his sons were forced to capitulate, and in 928 'Abd al-Rahman III captured the theretofore impregnable fortress of Bobastro.

The caliphate of Cordoba:

One of the first international political problems that Abd al-Rahman III faced was that of his juridical status vis-à-vis the Abbasid caliphate at Baghdad. As long as religious unity existed in the Islamic dominions, the Umayyads in Spain were resigned to acknowledge the religious leadership of Baghdad. However, when the heterodox caliphate of the Fatimids developed in Tunis after 910, Abd al-Rahman III proclaimed himself caliph and adopted the caliphal title of al-Naşir in 929. This new caliphate, the caliphate of Cordoba (Qurtubah), was to rule Al- Andalus for more than a century.

Al-Nasir's internal situation was already almost assured; the last bulwarks of resistance were not long in capitulating (Toledo, 933), and thereafter he was able to devote all his efforts to foreign affairs. As to Christian Spain, his successes were meagre, and, what was more serious, he suffered a severe defeat in 939 at Simancas (Shant Mänkas). Afterwards, however, the internal debilitation of the kingdom of León enabled him to restore his predominance on the peninsula by political means. He consolidated his position through a series of embassies to Otto I, the emperor in Germany and the most powerful figure in

Christian Europe, to the Christian sovereigns of the peninsula, to the pope, and to Constantinople. His sovereignty was also acclaimed by the corsair enclave in Fraxinetum (Frakhshinīt, modern-day La-Garde-Freinet), in southern France.

Fatimids Fight:

In Tunis the Fatimids fought the establishment of an empire that would reach as far as the Atlantic and encompass Al-Andalus. In order to forestall Fatimid hegemony in the Maghrib, the Islamic area of northwestern Africa, al-Naşir occupied the North African ports of Melilla (Malilah) and Ceuta (931). Intense naval warfare between the two western caliphates coincided with clashes on land in the Maghrib and attempts at subversive wars in the enemy states in northwest Africa. In the latter area, al-Naşir nearly overthrew the Fatimid caliphate by supporting the rebel Abu Yazid al-Nukkari; the conflict between the Umayyads and the Fatimids dragged on and ended in 969, when the latter conquered Egypt and lost interest in theMaghrib, thus leaving a power vacuum that was rapidly filled by the Umayyads.

Al-Hakam II:

Al-Naşir was succeeded by his son al-Hakam II (961-976), who adopted the caliphal title of al- Mustansir. His peaceful reign succeeded in resolving the problem of the Maghrib, thanks to the strategic ability of General Ghalib and the policy of the intendant, Abu Amir al-Ma afiri, who soon became the all-powerful al-Mansur (Spanish: Almanzor), the Victorious One.

Al-Mansur:

On al-Mustanşir's death, his throne was occupied by his son Hisham II al-Mu ayyad, a minor. Hisham grew up under the tutelage of his mother, Aurora, and of the prime minister, Ja'far al- Mushafi, who before long was liquidated by al-Mansur. The latter succeeded in eliminating all temporal power of the caliph, whom he dominated, and acquired complete power for himself. Al-Mansur won control over a great part of the Maghrib, which he transformed into the viceroyalty of Córdoba, and he halted the expansion of the Christian kings from the north through a series of raids-usually every six months-in which he sacked nearly every Christian capital on the peninsula. With the support of a professional army consisting predominantly of Imazighen, many of them recent arrivals from Africa who

obeyed him blindly, he managed to dispense with the Arab aristocracy, which for the most part was pro-Umayyad, and to hold in check the influence of the slaves, whose numbers had been increasing since al-Naşir had placed them in posts of high responsibility. But this balancing of forces-Arab aristocracy, Imazighen, and slaves could be sustained only by the strong hand of a ruler such as himself. Al-Mansur played the role of a grand lord. A protector of poets and scholars, he concealed his rationalism under a cloak of piety and was the darling of the faqihs (scholars versed in the traditions of Islam); he contrived to attract to himself the outstanding poets of the era. By the time of his death, he had won more than 50 raids and succeeded in leaving a robust and well-organized state for his son 'Abd al-Malik al-Muzaffar.

Al-Muzaffar (1002-08):

Al-Muzaffar (1002-08) continued his father's policies, hemming in Hisham II and fighting against the Christians, After Al-Muzaffar's premature death, his brother Abd al-Raḥmān Sanchuelo took the reins of power, but he lacked the fortitude to maintain the structure built by his father. An uprising that sought to vindicate the political rights of Hisham II resulted in Sanchuelo's death and brought about the beginning of the end of the Umayyad dynasty in Spain.

The ta ifas:

The death of Abd al-Rahman Sanchuelo in 1009 ushered in 21 years of unrest, during which the social and political unity among "Andalusians" (Arabs, Imazighen who had settled in Al- Andalus a long time earlier, and the population that had converted to Islam), Imazighen who had arrived fairly recently, and the slaves-fell apart. The consequence of those years of anarchy was the formation of numerous independent kingdoms, or ta ifas, which may be classified into the following: (1) "Andalusian" factions in the three capitals of the frontier area (Zaragoza, Toledo, and Badajoz), in the valleys of the Guadalquivir (Wadi Al-Kabir), and in the transition zone from the Ebro to the Tagus (Tajo) valley. (2) "new" Imazighen in Granada, Málaga, and four small southern ta ifas, and (3) groups of slaves in the east.

Internecine wars

The political history of the period comprises an uninterrupted series of internecine wars. Preeminent is the confrontation between the Arab factions, under the leadership of Sevilla (Ishbiliyah) and governed by the dynasty of the Banu Abbad, and the Imazighen. presided over by Granada. Little by little, Sevilla united southern Al-Andalus under its aegis, exclusive of Granada and Málaga. This state was ruled by al-Mu'tadid, a sovereign devoid of scruples, who pretended at first to have found the vanished Hisham II al-Mu'ayyad (at most, the pretender was a mat maker from Calatrava who bore some resemblance to the old caliph), and then by al-Mu'tadid's son, the poet-prince al-Mu tamid. In the east, except for a brief period when the petty state of Denia (Daniyah) built a powerful fleet that enabled it to stage incursions throughout the western Mediterranean as far as Sardinia, the various ta ifas preserved a certain static and dynastic equilibrium; farther to the north, the various ta ifas also spent their time embroiled in interminable internal quarrels.

This fragmentation facilitated the expansion of the Christian states of the north, which, lacking the demographic potential to repopulate the lands they had succeeded in occupying, wisely annexed only those that they were capable of repopulating and garrisoning. The Christian states also imposed a heavy economic burden of tribute on the ta ifas. Christian armies forced the Andalusian petty kings to buy peace by paying annual tribute, the famous parias. The tribute revitalized the economy of the Christian states, but it created sharp friction between the Muslim authorities and their subjects. The ta ifas constantly had to increase the yield from their imposts, and they constantly laid new and heavier tax burdens on their subjects; when cash was lacking, they devalued the currency, minting low-standard coins that were not accepted by the Christians. This in turn gave rise to new tax increases and to popular discontent, which was considerably aggravated by the legalistic party of the faqihs. Furthermore, the extravagant luxury and lavish public outlays of the local petty courts rendered Al-Andalus ripe for the foreign intervention that came when the Castilians occupied Toledo (1085), the key to the Meseta Central and to the entire peninsula. The factional chiefs, alarmed by the Christian advance, called in the help of the Almoravids, the powerful Amazigh confederation then exercising hegemony over northwestern Africa.

Culture of Muslim Spain:

Arab civilization in the peninsula reached its zenith when the political power of the Arabs began to decline. Immediately following the Muslim conquest in the 8th century, there

were no traces of a cultural level higher than that attained by the Mozarabs who lived among the Arab conquerors. All available evidence points to the fact that in this period popular works of medicine, agriculture, astrology, and geography were translated from Latin into Arabic. Many of these texts must have been derived from the Etymologies of Isidore of Sevilla and from other Christian writers. In the 9th century the situation changed abruptly: the Andalusians, who traveled east in order to comply with the injunction to conduct a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetimes, took advantage of their stay in those regions to enhance their knowledge, which they then introduced into their native country.

Literature:

In the 9th century there flourished such court poets as Abbas ibn Naşih, Abbas ibn Firmas, Yahya al-Ghazal, and the knight Sa'id ibn Judi. Towering above all these, however, was Muhammad ibn Hani, nicknamed the "Mutanabbi of the West" (Abu al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi was a 10th-century poet of Iraq), who by virtue of his religious ideas was obliged to forsake his native land and enter into the service of the Fatimid caliph al-Mu izz. In the 10th century al-Mansur assembled in Córdoba a notable group of court poets. Bards performed the functions of modern journalists, accompanying their protector on military expeditions and celebrating his exploits in verse, the singsong rhyme of which became engraved in the memory of the people of Al-Andalus. As al-Mansur chose the foremost talents of his time to serve as "poet-journalists"-men such as Ibn Darraj al-Qaştalli, al-Ramadi, Said of Baghdad, al-Taliq. and numerous others this occasional poetry sometimes attained literary heights. In the 10th century Ibn Faraj of Jaén deemed himself to possess sufficient background to compose the Kitab al-Hada iq ("Book of Orchards") the first anthology of Andalusian poets. This anthology was soon followed by one by the physician Ibn al-Kattani.

The highest peak in Islamic literature in Spain was attained during the era of the ta ifas, when the poet-king al-Mu'tamid established an embryo of an academy of belles lettres, which included the foremost Spanish intellects as well as Sicilians who emigrated from their native land before its conquest by the Normans. Other petty kings in the peninsula endeavoured to compete with al-Mu tamid, but they were unable to assemble a constellation of writers of comparable stature.

Among the outstanding poets of the 12th century in eastern Andalusia (the Andalusian Levant) were Ibn Khafaja of Alcira and his nephew Ibn al-Zaqqaq. To the era of greatest decadence, in the 13th century, belonged Abu al-Baqā' of Ronda and Ibn Sa'id. In the 14th century three court poets, Ibn al-Jayyab, Ibn al-Khatib, and Ibn Zamraq, preserved their verses by having them inscribed in the Alhambra.

Literature

In Arab literature, poetry possesses greater vitality than prose. Even so, there are several prose writers of importance. Ibn Shuhayd (c. 1035) was the author of a work that lent inspiration to Abu al-'Ala al-Ma arrī for his Risalat al-ghufran ("Epistle of Pardon"). The prolific Ibn Hazm of Córdoba (died 1064) wrote the delightful Tawq al-hamamah ("The Ring of the Dove"), which dealt with love and lovers and which is still popular today. The enormous output of Ibn Hazm includes Kitab al-Fisal, a history of religions that was not surpassed by Western scholars until well into the 19th century. He also was a leading exponent of the Zahirī school of jurisprudence, which stressed thorough knowledge of the Qur'an and the Hadith. He applied the principles of Zahirism to theology and denounced all non-literalist approaches to theology. Another polymath was the vizier-historian Ibn al-Khatib (died 1375). Two 12th-century anthologies of historical and literary works by Ibn Bassam and Ibn Khaqan are excellent sources of information concerning the apogee of Andalusian letters. Often the best grammars and dictionaries of a language are written by authors living in peripheral zones who endeavour to prevent gross errors being committed by their countrymen in the region. This perhaps explains why Al-Andalus, located at the western fringe of the Muslim world, produced works that to this day are used as texts in some traditional Islamic universities. From among these grammarians al-Zubaydi, tutor of Hisham II and Ibn Madah' of Córdoba, who proposed a drastic reform of grammatical methods, stands out. Ibn Mâlik of Jaén's didactic poem Alfiyya ("The Thousand Verses") constitutes an excellent handbook of grammar, and Abū Hayyan of Granada (died 1344), who emigrated to the cast, wrote an outstanding commentary on the Qu'ran as well as the first Turkish grammar. In the field of lexicology, the blind Ibn Sida of Denia (died 1066) is preeminent, author of a sort of "dictionary of ideas."

Noteworthy in the field of Qu'ranic science are Abû Amr of Denia and Ibn Fierro of Játiva, whose handbooks made possible the correct psalmodizing of the Qu'ran. In addition, various collections of hadiths (traditions referring to the Prophet) appeared, but none of these was of particular importance. In this area the Andalusians were imitators of the East, and figures such as Ibn Abd al-Barr, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and Ibn Aşim are of interest.

The first extant chronicles of Muslim Spain, such as the Ta rikh iftitah al-Andalus ("History of the Conquest of Spain") by Ibn al-Quṭiyyah, date back to the 10th century. In the 1a 'ifa era the preeminent Spanish historian is Ibn Hayyan of Córdoba (died 1076), whose mostly preserved Muqtabis is an anthology of historical texts collected from the works of his predecessors; however, he also wrote an original chronicle, the Matin. Of human interest are the Memoirs of the king Ziri Abd Allah, who was deposed by the Almoravids and who sought to justify in those memoirs his deeds as a statesman. In the Nasrid era is found the aforementioned Ibn al-Khatib. The works of the North African historians Ibn Khaldun (died 1406) and al-Maqqari (died 1631) supply much information concerning Al-Andalus.

The Arabs and Egypt:

The Arabs didnot spare the adjacent lands in the West. They attacked the grain producing Gift of Nile Egypt and also its capital Alexandria, the Byzantine naval base. Amr Ibn Al As took with him four thousand riders and with the blessings of Umar entered in the ancient land of the Pharaohs. In the eastern side Amr Ibn Al As captured al Farama and on proceeding further the castle of Babylon stood on the way. Cyrus, the patriarch of Alexandria with his commander in chiet Augustalis Theodorus opposed him in July 640. The fort was captured by the Muslims and Augustalis Theodorus fled to Alexandria. Cyrus was shut up in Babylon. The Byzantine leaders played their tricks to defeat the Muslims and the solidarity of the latter didnot permit them to hatch their tricks. After seven months, before April 642 Muslims emerged victorious.

Alexandria was the next target of Muslim attack. The city had 50 000 men and a strong Byzantine navy. When Muslims stressed more and more and after the death of Heraclius during to regime of Constans II (641-68) a truce was settled in November 8, 641 at Alexandria. They accepted to pay a fixed tribute of two dinars per adult head and a land tax payable in kind. Emperor Constaus il agreed to the conditions and thereby one of the loveliest

and prosperous provines of the Byzantine Empire was transfered to the Muslims. The Muslim soldiers seized 4000 villas, 400 baths and 40 000 poll ax paying Jews. From there Amr Ibn Al As marched west- ward and occupied Bargah. Also the Berber tribes of Tripolis offered their submission. Thereby the nascent Muslims could conquer Egypt, Bargah and Tripolis.

Fatimids in Egypt

The Fatimid conquest of Egypt (969) was a defining moment in Islamic history. It destroyed any semblance of central authority in the Muslim world, provoked the reaction of the Turks as defenders of orthodox (Sunni) Islam, impelled the Omayyads in Spain to declare their own Caliphate, launched the powerful Murabitun revolution in western Africa, denied the Muslims their last chance to conquer Europe and was the decisive ideological provocation that was answered by the eloquence of Al Ghazzali (1111). The cleavage opened by the Fatimid schism gave the Crusaders an opportunity to capture Jerusalem (1099). Finally, when the Fatimids left the center stage of history, they did so with a vengeance, contributing to the rise of the assassins. The assassinations, chief among which was that of Nizam ul Mulk (1092), perhaps the ablest administrator produced by Islam after Omar bin Abdul Aziz, played havoc with the Islamic body politic.

The principal rift occurred after Imam Ja'afar as Saadiq. When his eldest son Imam Ismail predeceased him, Imam Ja'afar, the sixth imam in the succession of the Imamate, nominated his second son Imam Musa Kadim as the 7th Imam. The majority of Shi'as accepted this nomination. However, a minority refused to accept this verdict, declared Imam Ismail to be the 7th Imam and recognized the Imamate only through his lineage. These are called the Fatimid Shi'as or the Seveners. From the Fatimids are derived the Agha Khanis and the Bohras, two powerful groups of Muslims who have played an important part in the politics of East Africa and in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

The Abbasids (750-1258) were even more ruthless towards Shi'a dissidence than the Omayyads. Shorn of any hope of political success, the Shi'a movements went underground. Our focus in this chapter is on the Fatimids. The confluence of several historical developments helped the Fatimid movement. In the 9th century, the consolidation of vast territories in Asia, Africa and Europe led to an enormous increase in trade. Prosperity ensued. Great cities sprang up and older towns grew larger. The movement of the rural population to

the cities, in search of protection from marauding tribesmen, assisted the urbanization process. Conversion to Islam was taking place at a rapid pace both in Asia and North Africa and the new Muslims found refuge in the cities from the pressure of their kinsmen who had not yet converted. Damascus, Baghdad, Basra, Kufa, Hamadan, Isfahan, Herat, Bukhara, Samarqand, Kashgar in Asia; Fustat, Sijilmasa, Tahert, Kairouan, Awdaghost and Tadmakka in Africa; Seville, Cordoba and Toledo in Europe became centers of trade. Colonies established by Muslim merchants existed as far away as Malabar in India, Zanzibar in Africa and Canton in China. Brisk trade stimulated the demand for manufactured goods such as brass work, gold jewelry, silk brocade, fine carpets and iron and steel products. Guilds arose in the urban centers, organized around specific trades and skills. The Fatimid movement zeroed in on these guilds to propagate their ideas.

Loss of political power

The Abbasid Caliphate also lost much of its political and military power after Caliph Mutawakkil was killed by his Turkish guards in 861. The emergence of the Turks was a new element in the body politic of Islam. Initially hired by the Caliphs as bodyguards to balance the established power of Arabs and Persians, the Turks displaced both the Arabs and the Persians and rose to control the destiny of the Caliphate itself. After Muktafi (d. 908), the Caliphs became mere pawns in the hands of Turkish generals. Sensing the political impotence of Baghdad, local chieftains in the far-flung provinces of the empire asserted their independence and established local dynasties. Idris, a great, great grandson of Ali ibn Abu Talib (r) established a Shi'a dynasty in Morocco (788). After the year 800, an Arab general Al Aghlab and his descendants exercised autonomous control over Algeria and Tunisia. In 868, a Turkish General Ibn Tulun seized Egypt and established the Tulunid dynasty. In the east, Tahir, a general who had helped Caliph Mamun in the civil war between the two brothers, Amin and Mamun, was granted autonomy over Khorasan. After the year 922, the Tahirids dropped any pretense of allegiance to Baghdad and ruled as independent rulers. In 932, Buyeh, a Persian, established a powerful dynasty at the borders of Persia and Iraq. The Buyids, who were Ithna Ashari Shi'as, quickly overran Basra and Kufa. In the year 945 they captured Baghdad itself and forced the Caliph to surrender effective power to the Alavis. But they stopped short of eliminating the Abbasids, partly because there was no single person who was acceptable as Imam to all Muslims and partly out of concern for the reaction of the Turks who were emerging as a powerful new military element. Nonetheless, the Buyids came

as close as the Ithna Asharis ever did in establishing their political control over the world of Islam.

The lineage of hidden imams from Ismail till the latter part of the 9th century is not clear, but in 875, one Hamdan Karamat, set up his operations near Baghdad. In 893, the Karamathians, as the followers of Karamat are called, captured Yemen under the leadership of Abu Abdallah. Using Yemen as his base, Abu Abdallah raised an army of Bedouins and Yemenis. In 903, he moved on Damascus and massacred its inhabitants. Basra was plundered in 923. The Karamathians were ruthless. They attacked caravans of Hajj pilgrims on the caravan routes from Basra to Madina and massacred thousands of men, women and children. In 928, they attacked Mecca and carried off the *Hijre Aswad* (black stone) from the Ka'ba to Bahrain where they set up their headquarters. There the black stone remained for 22 years until it was returned to Mecca in 950 upon orders of the Fatimid Caliph al Mansur. Baghdad moved swiftly to retake Damascus but in the meantime the Karamathian movement had spread to North Africa.

The Arabs called the territories that today comprise Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia *Maghrib al Aqsa* (the farthest western frontier). More often, this area is simply referred to as the Maghrib. Maghrib al Aqsa was the hinge around which the fate of Muslim Spain and southwestern Europe revolved. The region was an historic caldron of discontent and sporadic rebellion against external authority. In part, this was a reflection of the free spirit of the mountain Berbers and the desert Sinhajas. The Arab experience was no different from that of the Romans who had clung to fortified positions along the Mediterranean shores but were unsuccessful in subduing the Atlas mountain interior.

Tension between city dewellors and berbers

There was also tension between the Arab city dwellers and the Berbers who lived in the hinterland. The classical Islamic civilization was primarily urban. People congregated in towns and cities for safety as well as for economic opportunity. Resentment against the perceived haughtiness of the city dwelling Arabs surfaced time and again as rebellion against established authority. The Berbers welcomed new ideas that challenged the status quo as a vehicle for expressing their resentment and anger. For instance, in the year 900, a Persian Kharijite, Rustum, moved to the Maghrib and established his base there. He successfully challenged the local Aghlabid emirs who represented Abbasid authority. Support from the

Berbers and the Sinhaja enabled Rustum to established a Kharijite dynasty in southern Algeria centered on Sijilmasa. The Kharijites-an extremist group who espoused killing those who did not agree with them-rejected the claims of both the Sunnis and the Shi'as for leadership of the Islamic community and held that the Caliphate should be open to anyone, Arab or non-Arab. This seemingly democratic position was welcome to Berber ears. The Kharijites survived in isolated pockets long after the Rustamid kingdom disappeared. Ibn Batuta reported the existence of Kharijite communities in north central Africa as late as 1350. (The American traveler John Skolle has recently provided an account of the remnants of this community. He mentions in his travelogue a community around Ghardaja in Algeria, as "of the Ibadite faith. . . Muslim Puritans . . . driven south . . . in the 11th century.

South of the Atlas belt, the powerful Sinhaja tended their sheep and roamed freely, much as their ancestors had for centuries and acted as power brokers between the Berbers and the Arabs. There developed in the Maghrib a triangular relationship between the Berbers, the Arabs and the Sinhajas, much as there was a triangular relationship between the Arabs, the Persians and the Turks in Persia and Central Asia. Occasionally, there was a fourth element in this relationship, namely the Sudanese from sub-Saharan Africa, who were recruited by the Ikhshedids and later by the Fatimids, in their armed forces as a counterbalance to the power of the Berbers.

Conditions were ripe in North Africa for a revolutionary movement like that of the Fatimids. The Aghlabid rulers had become more interested in women and wine than in the affairs of state. Law and order had deteriorated to such an extent that people longed for deliverance by a Mahdi. In 907, Abu Abdallah, who had by this time lost Damascus to the Abbasids, proceeded to North Africa. By the sheer magnetism of his character and the force of his arguments, he converted the powerful Kitama tribe to Fatimid doctrines. In 909, taking advantage of the incompetence of Aghlabid Ziadatulla, Abu Abdallah moved on Salmania, driving out the Aghlabids. It was now time to invite the Fatimid Imam Ubaidullah who was living in Syria. After a harrowing travail, with Abbasid agents hot on his trail, Ubaidullah reached the Maghrib. He was arrested in Sijilmasa but Abu Abdullah moved with a powerful force on the town, freed his mentor and proclaimed Ubaidullah to be the long awaited Mahdi and the hidden Imam and the first Fatimid Caliph.

Ubaidullah al Mahdi

Ubaidullah al Mahdi, the first Fatimid Caliph, was an able general, a capable administrator, a shrewd but ruthless politician and was tolerant of the Sunnis who made up the vast majority of his subjects. He established a new capital, Mahdiya, near modern Tunis. His first act was to assassinate Abu Abdallah and eliminate any possibility of a challenge from that quarter. History repeats itself. The fate of Abu Abdallah was similar to that of Abu Muslim (d.750) who was disposed of by the Abbasids once they came to power. After consolidating his hold on Algeria and Tunisia, he moved west into Morocco displacing the floundering Idrisid dynasty (922). But his eyes were on the prosperous provinces of Spain to the northwest and Egypt to the east.

The conquest of Morocco provoked a response from the powerful Umayyad, Abdur Rahman III of Spain, who declared himself the Caliph in Cordoba (929) and the protector of Sunni Islam in Africa and Spain. There emerged at the same time three claimants for the Caliphate based in Baghdad in Asia, Mahdiya in Africa and Cordoba in Europe.

Ubaidullah died in the year 934 without realizing his dream of conquering Spain or subduing Egypt. His son Abul Kasim was a fanatic and tried to force his brand of Islam on everyone. He is best remembered for building a powerful navy and his raids on France, Italy and Egypt. To pay for these adventures, taxation had to be increased. The Berbers rebelled against this excessive taxation. Centered on Sijilmasa, which was a Kharijite stronghold, the rebellion gathered momentum and received support from the Spanish Umayyads. Abul Kasim was cornered in Mahdiya where he died in 946. His son Mansur, with the help of the Sinhajas, put down the rebellion in 947. To teach the Spanish Umayyads and the Moroccans a lesson, he stormed the Maghrib all the way to the Atlantic, devastating much of what lay in his path. All of North Africa except Mauritania was conquered. According to Ibn Khaldun, the Maghrib never fully recovered from the devastation caused by the Fatimid-Sinhaja invasions. The power of the cities in North Africa was destroyed. The social political vacuum created by this devastation was in part responsible for the germination of the Murabitun revolution, which was soon to engulf all of West Africa and Spain.

Muiz

It was under Muiz (d. 975) that the Fatimids achieved their greatest success. Muiz first turned his attention to the west. Taking advantage of the preoccupation of the Spanish Umayyad Abdur Rahman III with the Christians to the north, Muiz took Mauritania and

brought the Maghrib, with the exception of the small Ceuta-Tangier peninsula, under his control. The powerful Spaniards blocked any further advance to the west, so Muiz turned his attention to the east where conditions were much more favorable. The Buyid takeover of Baghdad (945) had so weakened the Abbasids that the Fatimids sensed their golden opportunity to capture Egypt. At the time, Egypt was under the military control of the Ikhshedids, a Turkish clan who had displaced the Tulunids (933) and ruled in the name of the Abbasids in Baghdad. Abbasid power in the eastern Mediterranean had been further weakened by Byzantine attacks in Anatolia, Crete and Syria. The Fatimids marched with a force of more than 100,000 Berbers, Sinhajas and Sudanese under a Turkish general Jawhar al Rumi and in a pitched battle on the banks of the Nile in 969, defeated the Ikhshedids.

New Capital

The victorious Fatimids entered Egypt and founded a new capital near old Fustat, which they named Al Qahira (Cairo, 969). With Egypt under his control, Muiz's armies fanned out into Syria and took Damascusin 973. Mecca and Madina fell soon thereafter. For almost a hundred years, it was the name of the Fatimid sovereigns in Cairo and not of the Abbasids in Baghdad that was taken after the Friday sermons in the great mosques of Mecca and Madina.

The Fatimids were bound to attempt a conquest of Asia to fulfill their vision of a universal Islamic Empire ruled by the Fatimid imams. In this attempt they were not to be successful. There were several reasons for their failure. The Karamathians, a splinter group among the Fatimids, considered the mainstream Fatimids soft on the Sunnis. The revolution they hoped for had not materialized. Instead, the Fatimids, with some exceptions, had established a working relationship with their Sunni subjects. The disgruntled Karamathians attacked Fatimid positions in Syria and twice invaded Egypt. They were beaten back with heavy losses but they controlled the military routes to northern Syria and hence effectively blocked a Fatimid advance into Asia.

Second, the Buyids who controlled Iraq and Persia resisted the Fatimids for ideological reasons. The Buyids considered Imam Musa Kadim to be the heir to Imam Ja'afar. They considered the Fatimids to be renegades who followed Imam Ismail after Imam

Ja'afar. Although the Buyids controlled Baghdad, they had established a working relationship with the majority Sunnis and had shied away from displacing the Abbasids. Third, there was a resurgent Byzantine Empire, which had built up its naval power, captured Crete and continuously challenged both the Abbasids and the Fatimids in the eastern Mediterranean. Fourth, the Seljuk (Turkish) presence in Persia and Central Asia was decidedly in favor of the Abbasids and tilted the balance of power in favor of orthodox Islam.

Egypt Fatimids

Egypt prospered under the Fatimids. No longer was the Nile valley a mere province, with its tax revenues carted off to far away Baghdad. It was now the center of an empire extending from the Euphrates to the Atlantic. Sitting astride the continents of Africa and Asia, Egypt controlled the trade routes from North Africa and Europe to India and the Far East. Gold flowed into Egypt from Ghana, providing a firm basis for a solid currency. The bazaars of Cairo were full of goods from East Africa, India, Indonesia and China. Alexandria became a port of exchange and a world-class trade center. European travelers such as William of Tyre marveled at the prosperity of Egypt. Italian merchants in Venice, capitalizing on the proximity of Egypt, became successful entrepreneurs. Venice grew in wealth and power and was to play an important role in the Crusades looming on the horizon.

Conversely, the loss of Egypt and North Africa meant that hard times had fallen upon Baghdad. Cut off from the Mediterranean by the Fatimids and the Byzantines, Baghdad became dependent for its trade on land routes to India and China. Loss of revenues meant loss of political power and the Caliphs in Baghdad became increasingly dependent on the Turkish sultans for their revenues. The sultans, in turn, raided India with increasing frequency in search of gold and plunder. Between the years 1000 and 1030, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna conducted no less than 17 raids into India. The territories of the Caliphate extended to no more than a few miles outside Baghdad. Since the power of the *fatwa* had been co-opted by the *ulema* from the earliest days of Islam, the Caliphate became, in effect, a wistful symbol of long lost Muslim unity. Decentralization set in, hastening the fragmentation of Asia into principalities and local kingdoms. This was a social political matrix almost tailor-made for the rise of the Seljuk Turks, who rose from nomads to become the masters of Asia.

Muiz died in 996 and his son Al Aziz became the caliph in Cairo. He was a consummate ruler and an able organizer. He appointed a well-known financier, Yakub bin Killis as his minister. Killis wisely managed the fiscal affairs of the far-flung empire.

Taxation was reduced, trade encouraged, currency stabilized and the empire prospered. Al Aziz also built a powerful navy as a counterweight to the resurgent Byzantines and the Umayyads in Spain. But he also recruited Turkish soldiers into his army to balance off the Berbers and the Sudanese, a decision that in time led to the takeover of the Fatimid dynasty by the Turks.

Al Hakim

Al Hakim succeeded his father Al Aziz as the caliph in 996, the same year that Pope Gregory V declared the Crusades against the Muslims. Al Hakim, an eccentric man, killed his regent Barjawan, forbade women to appear in the streets, prohibited business at night, persecuted the minority Jews and Christians and in 1009 began the demolition of churches and synagogues. This was a reaction to the laxity of his father who had married a Christian and was protecting his flank against charges of laxity leveled by the Sunnis. Perhaps also, he was suspicious of the Christians in his midst because the Crusades had started in earnest in 996 with attacks on North Africa.

The Fatimids controlled a vast empire, but they had to continually come to terms with the standards of moral rectitude and religious dogma of their subjects. The dominant opinion in the community, espoused by orthodox (Sunni) Islam, had always gravitated towards a consensus based on the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and the *ijma* of his Companions. Such consensus was the central axis around which Muslim history revolved, although at times the impact of peripheral opinions proved to be important. Al Hakim was faced with a rising military challenge from Christian Europe while guarding his rear against orthodox discontent with the perceived excesses of the Fatimids. His father Al Aziz was a compromiser who had tried to weld together a consensus of tolerance by marrying a Christian. Al Hakim began a drive to convert the Sunnis and the Ithna Asharis to Fatimid doctrines. A *Dar-ul-Hikmah* was established in 1004 in Cairo to impart training to Fatimid *da'is* (missionaries). Fatimid propaganda was extremely active throughout the Islamic world. There was even a Fatimid ruler in Multan in what is today Pakistan. In the year 1058, the Fatimids briefly controlled the suburbs of Baghdad itself. These attempts drew

an immediate reaction from Baghdad where the Abbasid Caliph Kaim denounced the Fatimids as renegades.

In 1017, two Fatimid *da'is*, Hamza and Darazi, arrived in Cairo from Persia. They preached that the divine spirit transmitted through Ali ibn Abu Talib (r) and the Imams had been transmitted to Al Hakim, who had thus became God incarnate. The doctrine was repugnant to the orthodox Egyptians. So, Darazi retired to the mountains of Lebanon where he found a more favorable reception. The Druze, followers of Darazi doctrines, are to be found in Lebanon and Syria today. They believe in reincarnation and Al Hakim as the reincarnate of God who will return at the end of the world.

Messianism as a reaction to political oppression is a recurrent theme in Islamic history. The belief that a Mahdi will return to re-establish a just world order after the example of the Prophet recurs in many parts of the Muslim world. This belief is to be found among the entire spectrum of Islamic opinion-Sunni, Twelver Shi'a and Fatimid Shi'a. It occurs with greater fervor in the Sudan, Persia and India. Concrete examples of this are to be found in the appearance of the Mahdi in modern Sudan in the 19th century; the movement of Uthman dan Fuduye in West Africa in the 19th century; the beliefs of the Mahdavi sect in India; the disappearance of the Twelfth Imam among the Twelvers; and the disappearance of the Seventh Imam among the Seveners. Messianism is not without its ideological pitfalls. Most Muslims managed their Messianism within the limits of *Tawhid* and stayed in the mainstream of Islam. The Fatimid positions on the transmutation of the soul, advanced by al Hakim, were rejected by orthodox Muslims as heresy.

Mustansir

The excesses of Al Hakim hastened the downfall of the Fatimids. Under Mustansir (1036-1096), civil strife took over. Berber, Sudanese and Turkish troops competed for power in the armed forces. In 1047 Hejaz broke away and the name of the Fatimid monarch was removed from the *khutba* in the great mosques of Mecca and Madina. The Murabitun revolution consumed the Maghrib in 1051. During the period 1090-1094, Egypt was hit with a severe drought of Biblical proportions and the economy was crippled. The Crusades-active first in Spain-descended upon North Africa and then on the eastern Mediterranean. In 1072, Palermo Sicily was lost to the Crusaders. By 1091 all of Sicily was under Latin control. Mahdiya, the first capital of the Fatimids, was attacked by sea.

Meanwhile, the Turks and the Fatimids fought for control of the Syrian highlands. Seljuk warriors regained Damascus from the Fatimids and reestablished the authority of the Abbasids all the way to El Arish. Under Taghril Bey and Alp Arsalan, all of West Asia except for a few strongholds like Acre and Jerusalem were taken from Egyptian control. The lines of control ran through a plateau embracing Jerusalem. Hostility between the Seljuks and the Fatimids prevented any effective coordination against the Crusaders who took Jerusalem by assault from the Fatimid garrison in 1099. The retreating Fatimids turned to assassination for vengeance. Under Hassan Sabbah, the assassins became an effective underground movement and wreaked havoc on the Seljuks with their cloak and dagger murders.

After Muntasir (d. 1096), the Fatimid court presented a long saga of murders and mayhem. Power passed on to the viziers who wielded their authority through intrigue and assassination. In 1171, the last of the Fatimid Caliphs, Al Aazid, died. Salahuddin abolished the Fatimid dynasty and Egypt passed once again into the Abbasid domain.

Civilizations are held together by transcendental ideas. After the first four Caliphs, Islamic civilization lost the transcendence of *Tawhid*. The Fatimids came to power promising to bring that transcendence back to the world of Islam. They captured half of the Islamic world but remained a minority elite ruling over a vast Sunni world. Umayyad Spain challenged their authority. Sub-Saharan Africa remained loyal to Abbasid authority. Yet, the Fatimid presence in Egypt marked a high point in the development of Islamic civilization. The monarchs in Baghdad, Cairo and Cordoba, each claiming to be the Caliph, competed with each other in establishing universities, encouraging learning, art and culture. The Fatimids established Al Azhar University, the oldest surviving institution of higher learning in the world, in 971 (We do note that the Qawariyun University in Fez Morocco claims to have been founded in 812 and is still functioning). Universities in Baghdad, Bukhara, Samarqand, Nishapur, Cairo, Palermo, Kairouan, Sijilmasa, and Toledo competed with each other in attracting men of learning. Artisans were encouraged to produce the finest work of art. Egyptian brocades, brass work and woodwork were valued throughout Europe and Asia. It was through Sicily, no less than through Spain, that Islamic ideas and knowledge were passed on to Europe. Even during the height of the Crusades, Latin monarchs employed and patronized Muslim scholars. The Sicilian monarchs considered it an honor to be buried in

caskets made in Egypt. Roger II of Sicily not only continued the University at Palermo which had been established by Muslims, he also patronized at his court the well known geographer al Idrisi, who was one of the finest scholars of the age.

Universal Community

Islamic history is animated by a vision to establish a universal community enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in God. But there have been different interpretations of this vision. In the 10th century there were at least four different versions of that vision. The Fatimids based in North Africa claimed the Imamate in the lineage of Imam Ismail. The Karamatians were also Fatimids but were extremist in their views and believed that their version of Islam be imposed on all Muslims, by force if necessary. The Buyids were Twelvers who believed in the Imamate in the lineage of Imam Musa Kazim. Then there were the Sunnis, the vast majority of the population, who accepted the Caliphate in Baghdad. In the 10th century, these conflicting visions collided on the political military plane. And out of this confusion emerged the victorious Turks, displacing both the Caliphate and the Imamate by a new military-political institution-the Sultanate.

The excesses of the age gave birth to a revolution–the Murabitun revolution in Africa–and provoked the dialectic of Al Ghazzali, which altered the way Muslims looked upon Islam itself. Their internal rivalry denied the Muslims their last chance to conquer Europe. In the 9th and 10th centuries, Europe lived in the age of imagination, dominated by the talisman and ruled by feudal lords. After the death of Charlemagne in 814, his Carolingian heirs fought among themselves for the remnants of the Frankish kingdom. Faced with Viking attacks from the north, Europe could not defend itself in the south and was militarily vulnerable. The mutual hostility between the Fatimids, the Umayyads and the Abbasids prevented them from exploiting this historic window of opportunity. The Aghlabid conquest of Sicily and their raids into southern Italy as far as Rome in 846 marked the farthest advance of Muslims into southern Europe. The armies of the Fatimids, the Umayyads, the Buyids and the Abbasids spent their energies primarily at each other's throats.

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