

## **KEY POINTS: Chapter 6**

### **Essential Question: *How in the span of a little over 100 years did Islam spread from the Arabian Peninsula to Asia and Europe?***

#### **Identify:**

**Muslims** – followers of the new faith and its prophet Muhammad      **Shayks** – leaders of tribes or clans  
**Medina** – city of the prophet Muhammad, established as an oasis, second to Mecca in trade  
**Mecca** – wealth and status because of visitors to Ka’ba, center of trade      **Umma** – community of the faithful  
**Bedouin** – nomadic      **Umayyad** – ruled before Muhammad defeated them and after death of Muhammad; persecuted Muslims  
**Ka’ba** – religious shrine in pre-Islamic Arabia, area of truce between bedouin clans and tribes      **Zakat** – tax for charity  
**Caliph** – political and religious successor to Muhammad

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**To what areas did Islam spread?** Africa, Asia, and southern Europe

**How did the Muslims serve the main civilized center of the classical era?**

Muslim merchants were in contact with Jewish, Armenian, Indian, and other regional commercial groups. They became prime agents for the transfer of food crops, technology, and ideas among many civilizations. They worked on philosophy, literature, mathematics, and science, which elevated Arabic to the international language of the educated and informed.

**What two cultural items unified Muslims?** Muhammad’s teachings and Arabic language

**Why was it difficult to maintain the vast Islamic empire?**

Political rivalries, vast cultural and linguistic diversity, and religious sectarianism

### **Desert and Town: The Arabian World and the Birth of Islam**

**In what ways were the Arabian towns based on Bedouin traditions?**

Founded by Bedouins, linked by kinship; Bedouins provided safety on trade routes, similar language and religion

**Describe the social organization of the Bedouin.** Shaykhs → Warriors → Slave families

**How did clan feuds affect Bedouin life?**

Drained resources and weakened the bedouins in relation to the neighboring peoples and allowed them to be manipulated and set against each other

**What details about Bedouin life support the idea that women in this society had higher status than women in neighboring civilizations?**

Tribal decent was placed through the mothers. Advice in assemblies was highly regarded. They wrote poems, which were the focus of Bedouin cultures. The groom had to pay a bride’s price to the bride’s family.

**What Bedouin practices favored men?** Warrior job, property control, inheritance, divorce, and polygamy

**Describe Bedouin culture including religion.** Poetry was composed and transmitted orally and was mostly about kinsmen’s heroics in war and clan’s great deeds. Some poets were thought to have had magical powers or were possessed by demons. The religion was a blend of animism and polytheism even though they recognized one god called Allah. However, Allah was not important to them as much as god of rain, etc. because those gods were relevant to daily life. They sacrificed and prayed little to Allah. Religion had little to do with ethics; tribal customs and codes of honor took care of that.

### **The Life of Muhammad and the Genesis of Islam**

**Why was Muhammad able to meet Christians and Jews?** In the merchant business

**When did Muhammad receive his revelations?** 610 or earlier

**What was the initial reaction from the Umayyads when Muhammad first introduced this new faith?** The Umayyads were threatened by Muhammad and his growing followers, fearing that Muhammad would take all of their power. More and more people followed Muhammad after seeing his revelations come true.

**When did Muhammad leave for Medina and why did he choose to go to Medina?** He left in 622 to Medina because the government there was divided by 2 bedouin and 3 Jewish clans so that it would be easier to spread his beliefs.

**What social changes came about for Arabs when they adopted this new faith?**

A form of monotheism, which no clan, tribe, or class division had, was given to the Arabs. It was Arab in origin, but equal to Christianity and Judaism in monotheistic beliefs. There was the possibility of the end of vendettas and feuds. It provided a single and supernaturally sanctioned source of authority and discipline. It provided an ethical system to heal deep social rifts in Arabian society. It promoted a moral code stressing responsibility of the strong and rich for the poor and weak. There was a stern and compassionate God and a strict, socially minded body of law.

**What are the “Five Pillars of Faith”?**

To say the profession of faith, pray facing Mecca five times a day, fast during Ramadan, donate money to charity, and make the Hajj at least once in your lifetime.

**Explain why Islam was an appealing religion to many.** As said in the previous question before the previous question.

### **The Arab Empire of the Umayyads**

**Why were the Arab military expeditions after 633 so successful?** Other empires around them were weakening.

**Why was Ali not chosen as the caliph?** They thought he was too young to assume the great responsibility of being caliph.

**Who was chosen as the caliph after Muhammad’s death?** Abu Bakr

**Why did early Arab warriors not care about finding converts?** They wanted more loot for themselves.

**What weak empire was overrun by the Muslim Arabs in 651?** Sassanid Empire in Persia

**What Christian groups supported the Muslim conquerors and why?** Copts and Nestorians

**What areas of the Byzantine Empire were conquered by the Muslims?**

Syria, W Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, N Africa, Mediterranean, S Italy

**Explain how the split between the Sunnis and Shi'is came about.** Sunni – Umayyads and Shi'i – Ali

**What battle marked the end of the Muslim advance in Europe?** Victory of Charles Martel and the Franks at Poitiers in 732

**What city became the Umayyad political center?** Damascus

**How were the early mawali treated during the Umayyad period?**

Had to pay property taxes, received no share of loot, difficult to get important positions in army or bureaucracy

**What economic sanction was placed on the dhimmis?** Had to pay jizya (head tax), commercial and property taxes

**Describe how Muslim women were treated during the Umayyad period.**

Greatly strengthened legal rights of women in divorce and inheritance, bride-price given to the bride not her father, active role in politics, no burkahs, wife range of occupations

**What led to the end of the Umayyad rule? When?**

Abbasid party challenged Umayyads in 747. Abbasids forged alliances with people who resented the Umayyads and defeated them. Umayyad reign ended in 750 after the Battle of the River Zab.

**What groups supported the Abbasid rebels?** Dissident groups that resisted the Umayyads, mawali

## **In Depth**

**How, when and why did the status of women in Muslim communities change over time?**

Centuries after Muhammad's death, Arab culture was influenced by the non-Arabs in Syria and Persia. They adopted the practices of veiling and seclusion. Women saw their job options decrease and men served as their messengers in legal and commercial matters.

**Why were the lives of lower class women not as restricted as women in the upper class?**

It seemed bad to them for a woman of high-class to have such influence and power, so they made eunuchs watch over them. The women's quarter was built separately from the main palace and was marked by the development of the harem. Lower-class women had to work to survive, whereas high-class women had slaves. Poorer women had to go out to do jobs and contributed to family income.

## **From Arab to Islamic Empire: The Early Abbasid Era**

**Where did the Abbasids build their capital?** Baghdad in Iraq near the ancient capital of Persia (Ctesiphon)

**Describe what the Abbasid court/government.** The growing corps of bureaucracy, servants, and slaves strove to translate Abbasid political claims into reality lived and worked inside the palace grounds in Baghdad. The bureaucratization was reflected by the wazir (chief administrator and head of caliph's inner councils). The people were threatened by the appearance of the executioner by the emperor at public events. A caliph could even condemn the highest Muslim noble to death. They placed themselves above Islamic law. It was hard to talk with the caliph. You would have to bribe and petition many officials, but you could only get to the wazir or his assistant.

**What was significant about the wazir?** The wazir oversaw the building of an administrative infrastructure that let the Abbasids project their demands for tribute to even the most distant parts of the empire.

**Why were mass conversions characteristic in the Abbasid period?** They didn't divide the booty anymore.

**What ethnic group increasingly came to dominate in Islamic rule during the Abbasid period?** Persians

**Describe what changes occurred in society/culture during the rule of the Abbasids.** The bureaucracy and servant class was expanding and there was a boom in commerce. It was a time of great urban expansion that was linked to a revival of the Afro-Eurasian trading network. Both government-run and privately owned workshops produced a wide range of products. The rise of the mawali was paralleled by the growth in wealth and social status of the merchant and landlord classes of the empire.

**Describe how slaves were treated in Muslim territories.** They were left to do much of the unskilled labor and were often attached to prominent families as domestic servants. Many served the caliphs and their advisors. It was possible for the most clever and ambitious slaves to rise to positions of great power. Many were eventually granted freedom or were able to buy it. Other unfortunate slaves had to drain marshlands, work on rural estates and government projects, or worked in the salt mines. Most of them were Zanj slaves that were captured on slaving raids in east Africa.

**What was the ayan?** Wealthy and deeply entrenched landed elite (some were experienced landlords, newcomers, and Arab soldiers who got money from the divided booty)

**Describe what significant achievements were made by the Muslims during the Abbasid period.**

Pharo's Lighthouse, greatest library in the ancient world, mosques, priceless Greek writings saved and rewritten in Arabic, spread the Indian numerical system throughout the empire, and contributed to the beginning of the early modern Scientific Revolution.

**What problems led to Abbasid decline?**

The Turks, who had converted to Islam, increasingly dominated political life. They carved out kingdoms within Abbasid realm that soon outstripped the caliphate in real military and political power.

**What achievements of the Muslims were most remarkable?**

Their civilization spanned so many different cultures and combined such a patchwork of linguistic groups, religions, and ethnic types. It had mediated successfully between the other centers of political life. It had deeply affected so many of the nomadic cultures that surrounded the pools of sedentary farming and urban life.

