

Spread of Islamic Civilization to South and Southeast Asia

- I. Islamic Heartlands in the Middle & Late Abbasid Era
 - A. Disintegration of Abbasid Empire
 1. 9th-13th centuries
 2. Peasant & slave revolts
 3. Caliph Al-Mahdi- failed to reconcile moderate Shi'i to Abbasid rule
 4. Al-Mahdi- failed to choose successor / caused chaos for years to come
 - B. Imperial Extravagance & Succession Disputes
 1. Harun al- Rashid
 - a. Most famous of the Abbasid caliphs
 - b. Luxury & intrigues of court immortalized- *The Thousand & One Nights*
 - c. Dependent of Persian rulers / later caliphs became Persian pawns
 2. Harun al-Rashid's Death
 - a. Caused 1st of many civil wars of succession
 - b. Al-Ma'mun
 1. Emerged as winners
 2. Built large armies made of Turkic nomads
 3. Armies became centers of power for removing caliphs
 4. Social unrest
 - c. Imperial Breakdown & Agrarian Disorder
 1. Continual civil violence drained the imperial treasury
 2. Peasants had highest tax burden
 3. Agricultural villages abandoned & public irrigation fell into disrepair
 4. Bandits & vagabonds participated in peasant rebellion
 - C. The Declining Position of Women
 - a. Freedom Declines
 1. Freedom associated with the first centuries of Islam fades
 2. Male dominated / Patriarchal
 - b. Views of Women
 1. Incurable lust
 2. Segregated from society (except for family)
 3. Harem & veil symbolized subjugation to males
 - c. Class Divisions
 1. Elite wives & concubines veiled
 - a. Married at puberty
 - b. Domestic management & childbearing
 2. Poor women remain economically active
- II. Incursions & the Eclipse of Caliph Power
 - A. Nomadic Invasion
 1. Mid-tenth century breakaway former provinces challenge Abbasid rule
 2. 945- Buyids of Persia captured Baghdad
 - a. Caliphs become powerless puppets
 - b. *Sultans*- actual rulers
 3. 1055 Seljuk Turks defeated the Buyids
 - a. Ruled Abbasid empire for two decades

- b. Seljuks- staunch Sunnis who purged Shi'i
- c. Seljuk military power restored diminished power of Caliphate
 - 1. Egyptians & Byzantines defeated
 - 2. Anatolia- opened to settlement by Turkic nomads

B. Impact of Christian Crusades

- 1. Crusader- marked with the cross
- 2. 1096- Pope Urban II launched crusades to capture the holy land (Palestine)
- 3. Crusaders established rival kingdoms that pose no real threat
- 4. Commercial & Technological Revolution:
 - a. Commercial goods
 - b. Spread of scientific & mathematical knowledge
 - c. Europe recovers Greek learning

III. Flowering of Culture & Knowledge

A. Financing Arts & Science

- 1. Political turmoil did not stop development
- 2. Support
 - a. rapid urban development
 - b. Merchants amassed fortunes supplying trade from India, Southeast Asia, China, North Africa, and Europe
 - c. Artisans create:
 - Mosques
 - Palaces
 - Tapestries
 - Rugs
 - Bronze
 - Ceramics

B. Literature

- 1. Persian replaced Arabic as primary written language of Abbasid court
- 2. Arabic- remained language of religion, law, & sciences
- 3. Persian- became the language of high culture
- 4. Great works
 - a. Firdawsi's epic poem *Shas-Nama* (a history of Persia from its beginning to conquest)
 - b. Poets: Sa'di and Omar Khayyam in work *Rubiyat* blend mystical with commonplace work themes

C. Achievements in Science

- 1. Surpassed others in scientific & technological discoveries
- 2. Mathematics- major corrections to Greeks
- 3. Chemistry- created objective experiment
- 4. Al-Razi- classified all material substance into 3 categories:
 - animal
 - vegetable
 - mineral
- 5. Al-Bruni- calculate the correct weight of 18 major minerals
- 6. Mapping / cartography
- 7. Introduced through trade with China:

- paper making
- silk weaving
- ceramic firing

IV. Religious Trends & Expansion

A. Conflicting Trends & Divergent Patterns of Religious Development

1. *Sufis*- developed vibrant mysticism
 - a. Created innovative religious movement
 - b. Taught personal union with Allah through:
 - dance
 - meditation
 - asceticism
 - songs
 - drugs
 - c. Many gained reputation as healers & miracle workers
 - d. Some made the movement a central factor in the expansion of Islam
2. *Ulma*- religious scholars
 - a. conservative
 - b. Suspicious non-Muslim influences and scientific thought
 - c. Suspicious of Greek rationalism / insisted Quran was only source of knowledge
3. Expansion of Islam in Asia due in large part to the Sufis

B. Nomadic Invasion & the End of the Caliphate

1. Mongols- early 13th century threaten Islamic lands
2. Chinggis Khan destroyed the Turkic-Persian kingdoms east of Baghdad
3. 1258 Hulegu (Kahn's grandson) conquered Baghdad
4. Result- Baghdad becomes insignificant in Islamic world

C. Islam & South Asia

1. India
 - a. 7th century invasion
 - b. Indian society- its eclectic nature & caste system were contrary to Islam
 - c. Initially contact caused conflict / eventually subsided
 - d. Commercial & religious exchanges occurred in a society of Hindu subjects governed by Muslims
2. North India on the Eve of Muslim Invasion
 - a. North India divided between rival dynasties after fall of the Gupta in 5th century
 - b. Harsha- 7th century created a stable successor empire in the central and eastern Ganges Plains
 - c. Harsha- failed to united India's subcontinent
 - d. Under Harsha's rule society flourished / religious tolerance
3. 646 Harsha's Death
 - a. Empire collapses
 - b. Hindu culture continues to flourish, but political division in north leaves India open to Muslim Invasion
 - c. 711 – Umayyad general Muhammad ibn Qasim:

- treated Indian as “people of the book”
 - religious tolerance
 - lighter taxes
 - minimal conversion efforts did not change existing beliefs
 - d. India influences Islamic civilization:
 - science
 - mathematics (Arabic numerals)
 - Indian coast provided trading post for later expansion
4. Patterns of Conversion
- a. Muslims came as conquerors, but conversions were peaceful
 - b. Main carriers of Islam were traders & Sufis
 - c. Low & outcast Indian were welcomed
 - d. Decline in Buddhism turned attention to Islam
 - e. Other converted to avoid taxes
 - f. Muslim migrants fleeing 13th & 14th century Mongol invasion
- V. Spread of Islam to Southeast Asia
- A. 8th Century Muslim Gain Control of Indian Commerce
- 1. Islamic culture spread throughout Southeast Asia
 - 2. 13th century collapse of Shrivijaya
 - a. Ruled by Buddhist
 - b. Located in Strait of Malacca & northern Sumatra
 - c. Paved the way Muslim entry
 - 3. The spread of Islam from Malacca
 - a. Malaya
 - b. Java
 - c. Philippines
 - 4. Conversion Peaceful
 - a. Through trade contacts
 - b. Sufis
 - c. Adapt to local customs (accommodation essential to spread)
 - d. Bali (Buddhist Island) remained impervious to Islam

Conclusion: Legacy of the Abbasid Age

Despite instability of the Abbasid, Islam’s central position in global history was solidified. The expanding Muslim world linked ancient civilizations through conquest and commercial networks. Islam was the civilizer of nomadic peoples in Asia & Africa. Its cultural contributions diffused from great cities and universities. There were, however, tendencies that placed Muslims at a disadvantage in relation to rival civilizations, particularly to their European rivals. Political divisions caused exploitable weaknesses in many regions. Most importantly, the increasing intellectual rigidity of the ulama caused Muslims to become less receptive to outside influences at a time when the European world transformed its culture and power.

