The Worlds of Islam: Afro-Eurasian Connections
600–1500

CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To examine the causes behind the spread of Islam
- To explore the dynamism of the Islamic world as the most influential of the third-wave civilizations
- To consider the religious divisions within Islam and how they affected political development
- To consider Islam as a source of cultural encounters with Christian, African, and Hindu cultures
- To increase student awareness of the accomplishments of the Islamic world in the period 600–1500 C.E.

C. Islam had already been prominent in the world between 600 and 1600.
   1. encompassed parts of Africa, Europe, Middle East, and Asia
   2. enormously significant in world history
   3. creation of a new and innovative civilization
   4. was the largest and most influential of the third-wave civilizations
   5. Islam’s reach generated major cultural encounters

D. In the year 2000, there were perhaps 1.2 billion Muslims in the world (22 percent of the world’s population).

II. The Birth of a New Religion
A. The Homeland of Islam
   1. unlike most religious/cultural traditions, Islam emerged from a marginal region
   2. Arabian Peninsula as home of nomadic Arabs (Bedouins)
      a. fiercely independent clans and tribes
      b. variety of gods
   3. Arabia also had sedentary, agricultural areas
   4. Arabia lay on important East–West trade routes
      a. Mecca became important as a trade center
b. the Kaaba was the most prominent religious shrine
c. the Quraysh tribe controlled local trade and pilgrimage
5. Arabia was on the edge of the Byzantine and Sassanid empires
a. so Arabs knew some practices of these empires
b. Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism had spread among Arabs

B. The Messenger and the Message
1. the prophet of Islam was Muhammad Ibn Abdullah (570–632 C.E.)
a. orphaned at a young age
b. became a prosperous merchant thanks to marriage to Khadija
c. took to withdrawal and meditation
2. beginning of revelations from Allah in 610 C.E.
a. revelations recorded in the Quran
b. when heard in its original Arabic, believed to convey the presence of the divine
3. radically new teachings
a. monotheistic
b. Muhammad as “the seal of the prophets”
c. return to old, pure religion of Abraham
d. central tenet: submission to Allah (Muslim = “one who submits”)
e. need to create a new society of social justice, equality, and care for others (the umma)
4. core message summarized in the Five Pillars of Islam
a. first pillar is simple profession: “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.”
b. prayer five times a day at prescribed times
c. generous giving to help the community and the needy
d. fasting during the month of Ramadan
e. pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj)
5. jihad (“struggle”) is sometimes called the “sixth pillar”
a. greater jihad: personal spiritual striving
b. lesser jihad/jihad of the sword: armed struggle against unbelief and evil
c. understanding of the concept has varied widely over time

C. The Transformation of Arabia
1. Muhammad attracted a small following, aroused opposition from Meccan elites
a. in 622, emigrated to Yathrib/Medina (the hijra)
b. created Islamic community (umma) in Medina
c. broke definitively from Judaism
2. rapid expansion throughout Arabia
a. military successes led to alliances
b. large-scale conversion
c. consolidation of Islamic control throughout Arabia by time of Muhammad’s death in 632
3. fundamental differences between births of Islam and Christianity
a. Islam did not grow up as persecuted minority religion
b. Islam didn’t separate “church” and state

III. The Making of an Arab Empire
A. The Arab state grew to include all or part of Egyptian, Roman/Byzantine, Persian, Mesopotamian, and Indian civilizations.
1. many both in and out of Arab Empire converted to Islam
2. Arabic culture and language spread widely
3. Islam became a new third-wave civilization

B. War, Conquest, and Tolerance
1. Arabic conquests were a continuation of long-term raiding pattern
2. new level of political organization allowed greater mobilization
3. Byzantine and Persian empires were weakened by long wars and internal revolts
4. limits of Arab expansion:
a. defeated Sassanid Empire in the 640s, took half of Byzantium
b. in early 700s, conquered most of Spain, attacked France
c. to the east, reached the Indus River
d. in 751, Arabs crushed a Chinese army at the Battle of Talas River

5. reasons for expansion:
   a. economic: capture trade routes and agricultural regions
   b. individual Arabs sought wealth and social promotion
   c. communal: conquest helped hold the umma together
   d. religious: bring righteous government to the conquered
   e. tolerant of Jewish and Christian faiths

6. conquest was not too destructive
   a. Arab soldiers were restricted to garrison towns
   b. local elites and bureaucracies were incorporated into empire

C. Conversion
   1. initial conversion for many was “social conversion,” not deep spiritual change
   2. Islam’s kinship to Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism made it attractive
   3. Islam was associated from the beginning with a powerful state—suggested that Allah was a good god to have on your side
   4. the state provided incentives for conversion
      a. earliest converts included slaves and prisoners of war
      b. converts didn’t have to pay the jizya
      c. Islam favored commerce
      d. social climbers were helped by conversion
   5. resistance to conversion among Berbers of North Africa, some Spanish Christians, some Persian Zoroastrians
   6. around 80 percent of the population of Persia converted between 750 and 900
   7. some areas (Egypt, North Africa, Iraq) also converted to Arabic culture and language
   8. Others like the peoples of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan have “Islamized” without “Arabizing”
      a. Persian language and culture had enormous influence on world of Islam

D. Divisions and Controversies
   1. a central problem: who should serve as successor to Muhammad (caliph)?
   2. first four caliphs (the Rightly Guided Caliphs, 632–661) were companions of Muhammad
      a. had to put down Arab tribal rebellions and new prophets
      b. Uthman and Ali were both assassinated
      c. civil war by 656
   3. result was the Sunni/Shia split of Islam
      a. Sunni Muslims: caliphs were rightful political and military leaders, chosen by the Islamic community
      b. Shia Muslims: leaders should be blood relatives of Muhammad, descended from Ali and his son Husayn
      c. started as a political conflict but became religious
      d. Shias identified themselves as opponents of privilege
   4. over time, caliphs became absolute monarchs
      a. Umayyad dynasty (661–750) was a time of great expansion
      b. Abbasid dynasty overthrew Umayyads in 750
   5. basic religious issue: what does it mean to be a Muslim?
      a. Islamic law (the sharia) helped answer the question
      b. reaction against the distraction of worldly success: Sufis
      c. the ulama and Sufism weren’t entirely incompatible—e.g., al-Ghazali (1058–1111)
      d. but there was often tension between the two approaches

E. Women and Men in Early Islam
   1. what rise of Islam meant for women remains highly controversial
2. spiritual level: Quran stated explicitly that women and men were equals
3. social level: Quran viewed women as subordinate, especially in marriage
4. Quran helped women in some ways (banned female infanticide, gave women control over their own property, granted limited rights of inheritance, required woman’s consent to a marriage, recognized a woman’s right to sexual satisfaction)
5. social practices of lands where Islam spread were also important in defining women’s roles
   a. early Islam: some women played public roles; prayed in mosques, weren’t veiled or secluded
   b. growing restrictions on women (especially in upper classes) under Abbasids
   c. veiling and seclusion became standard among upper, ruling classes
   d. lower-class women didn’t have the “luxury” of seclusion
   e. practices were determined by Middle Eastern traditions much more than by Quran
6. hadiths (traditions about Muhammad) developed more negative images of women
7. Islam gave new religious outlets for women, especially as Sufis and in the Shia tradition as mullahs

IV. Islam and Cultural Encounter: A Four-Way Comparison
   A. The Arab Empire had all but disintegrated politically by the tenth century.
      1. last Abbasid caliph killed when Mongols sacked Baghdad in 1258
      2. but Islamic civilization continued to flourish and expand
   B. The Case of India
      1. Turkic-speaking invaders brought Islam to India
      2. establishment of Turkic and Muslim regimes in India beginning ca. 1000
      a. at first, violent destruction of Hindu and Buddhist temples
      b. Sultanate of Delhi (founded 1206) became more systematic
   C. The Case of Anatolia
      1. Turks invaded Anatolia about the same time as India
      a. major destruction at early stages in both places
      b. Sufi missionaries were important in both places
      c. but in Anatolia by 1500, 90 percent of the population was Muslim, and most spoke Turkish
      2. reasons for the different results in the two regions
         a. Anatolia had a much smaller population (8 million vs. 48 million)
         b. far more Turkic speakers settled in Anatolia
         c. much deeper destruction of Byzantine society in Anatolia
d. active discrimination against Christians in Anatolia
e. India’s decentralized politics and religion could absorb the shock of invasion better
f. Turkish rulers of Anatolia welcomed converts; fewer social barriers to conversion
g. Sufis replaced Christian institutions in Anatolia
3. by 1500, the Ottoman Empire was the most powerful Islamic state
4. Turks of Anatolia retained much of their culture after conversion
D. The Case of West Africa
1. Islam came peacefully with traders, not by conquest
2. in West Africa, Islam spread mostly in urban centers
   a. provided links to Muslim trading partners
   b. provided literate officials and religious legitimacy to state
3. by the sixteenth century, several West African cities were Islamic centers
   a. Timbuktu had over 150 Quranic schools and several centers of higher education
   b. libraries had tens of thousands of books
   c. rulers subsidized building of major mosques
   d. Arabic became a language of religion, education, administration, trade
4. did not have significant Arab immigration
5. Sufis played little role until the eighteenth century
6. no significant spread into countryside until nineteenth century
E. The Case of Spain
1. Arab and Berber forces conquered most of Spain (called al-Andalus by Muslims) in the early eighth century
2. Islam did not overwhelm Christianity there
3. high degree of interaction between Muslims, Christians, and Jews
   a. some Christians converted to Islam
   b. Christian Mozarabs adopted Arabic culture but not religion
4. religious toleration started breaking down by late tenth century
   a. increasing war with Christian states of northern Spain
   b. more puritanical forms of Islam entered Spain from North Africa
   c. in Muslim-ruled regions, increasing limitations placed on Christians
   d. many Muslims were forced out of Christian-conquered regions or kept from public practice of their faith
   e. completion of Christian reconquest in 1492
V. The World of Islam as a New Civilization
A. By 1500, the Islamic world embraced at least parts of nearly every other Afro-Eurasian civilization.
B. Networks of Faith
1. Islamic civilization was held together by Islamic practices and beliefs
   a. beliefs/practices transmitted by the ulama, who served as judges, interpreters, etc.
   b. starting in eleventh century: formal colleges (madrassas) taught religion, law, and sometimes secular subjects
   c. system of education with common texts, sharing of scholarship throughout Islamic world
2. Sufism: branches of Sufism gathered around particular teachers (shaykhs) by the tenth century
   a. development of great Sufi orders by the twelfth/thirteenth centuries
   b. Sufi devotional teachings, practices, writings spread widely
3. many thousands of Muslims made the hajj to Mecca each year
C. Networks of Exchange
1. Islamic world was an immense arena for exchange of goods, technology, and ideas
a. great central location for trade
b. Islamic teaching valued commerce
c. urbanization spurred commerce

2. Muslim merchants were prominent on all the major Afro-Eurasian trade routes

3. exchange of agricultural products and practices between regions

4. diffusion of technology
   a. spread ancient Persian water-drilling techniques
   b. improvement of Chinese rockets
   c. adoption of papermaking techniques from China in the eighth century

5. exchange of ideas
   a. Persian bureaucratic practice, court ritual, poetry
   b. ancient Greek, Hellenistic, and Indian texts
   c. developments in mathematics, astronomy, optics, medicine, pharmacology

VI. Reflections: Past and Present: Choosing Our History

A. People look to history to understand the world we now inhabit.
B. What can history tell us about the Islamic world today?
   1. reminds us of central role in Afro-Eurasian world for over 1000 years
   2. followed by several centuries of Western imperialism
   3. when breaking with Western dominance more distant past an inspiration
      a. fundamentalists see early Islamic community as model for renewal
      b. Islamic modernizers look to achievements in science and scholarship as foundation for more open engagement with the West
   4. history reveals great diversity and debate in the Islamic world
   5. past points to considerable variation in the interactions of Muslims and others

CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Following are answer guidelines for the Big Picture Questions, Seeking the Main Point Question, Margin Review Questions, Portrait Question, and Documents and Visual Sources Feature Questions that appear in the textbook chapter. For your convenience, the questions and answer guidelines are also available in the Computerized Test Bank.

Big Picture Questions

1. How might you account for the immense religious and political/military success of Islam in its early centuries?
   - For the first time a shared faith in Islam allowed the newly organized state to mobilize the military potential of the entire Arab population.
   - The Byzantine and Persian empires were weakened by decades of war with each other and by internal revolts. The two empires also underestimated the Arab threat.
   - Merchant leaders of the new Islamic community wanted to capture profitable trade routes and wealthy agricultural regions.
   - Individual Arabs found in military expansion a route to wealth and social promotion.
   - Expansion provided a common task for the Arab community, which reinforced the fragile unity of the Islamic umma.
   - Arabs were motivated by a religious dimension, as many viewed the mission of empire in terms of jihad, bringing righteous government to the peoples they conquered.
   - Islam experienced success in attracting converts: Muhammad’s religious message was attractive to many, while Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians could find familiar elements of their own faiths in Islam.
   - Conquests called into question the power of old gods, while the growing prestige of the Arab Empire attracted many to Allah.
   - Although forced conversions were rare, living in an Islamic-governed state provided a variety of incentives for claiming Muslim identity. Merchants found in Islam a religion friendly to commerce and in the Arab Empire a huge and secure arena for trade, while people aspiring to official positions found conversion to Islam an aid to social mobility.
2. In what ways might Islamic civilization be described as cosmopolitan, international, or global?
   - The Islamic civilization embraced at least parts of virtually every other civilization in the Afro-Eurasian hemisphere.
   - It fostered a network of commerce and exchange that facilitated the spread of crops, technologies, and ideas.
   - The common commitment to Islam created an identity that transcended more local political and cultural identities in the Islamic world.

3. “Islam was simultaneously both a single world of shared meaning and interaction and a series of separate, distinct, and conflicting communities.” What evidence could you provide to support both sides of this argument?
   - At the core of a single Islamic world was a common commitment to Islam. The ulama through education and Sufis through their associations served to bind the Islamic world together. It also cohered as an immense arena of exchange in which goods, technologies, crops, and ideas circulated widely.
   - However, Islam was separate and distinct in that it was politically fragmented. It included numerous distinct and sometimes hostile religious traditions, including Sunni/Shia and ulama/Sufi splits. It embraced distinctive cultural traditions from sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia that resulted in different attitudes toward social and cultural norms, such as those concerning women.

4. What changes did Islamic expansion generate in those societies that encountered it, and how was Islam itself transformed by those encounters?
   - The populations of many regions converted wholly or partly to the Islamic faith.
   - Regions of the Islamic world were tied more closely together through trade and the exchange of technologies, crops, and ideas.
   - Older religious and political traditions were at times swept away or at least altered.
   - Islam was transformed through these encounters, especially when the norms of those societies that converted had an impact on the social and cultural implications of the faith.
   - The Islamic world, and the understanding of Islam itself, was shaped by contact with intellectual and cultural traditions like Greek philosophy.

5. **Looking Back:** What distinguished the early centuries of Islamic history from a similar phase in the history of Christianity and Buddhism?
   - Islam differed sharply from Christianity and Buddhism because its founder was not only a religious figure but also a political and military leader.
   - Moreover, from the start the Islamic community found itself constituted as a state. Because of this, Islam did not develop as clearly defined a separation between church and state as did both Christianity and Buddhism.
   - There were some similarities in their religious outlooks: all three religions were founded by single historical figures who had powerful religious experiences; all three provide a clear path to salvation; and all three proclaim the equality of all believers.
   - However, Islam’s conception of monotheism was stronger than that of Christianity; and each religion was shaped in part by the cultural traditions in which it emerged.

**Seeking the Main Point Question**

Q. In what ways did the civilization of Islam draw on other civilizations in the Afro-Eurasian world? And in what respects did it shape or transform those civilizations?

   - Islam drew on many pre-existing traditions during its first centuries including Abrahamic and Zoroastrian religious traditions, Persian language and artistic traditions, and Greek philosophy.
   - Wherever it spread it was adopted through the prism of local social and cultural traditions. In West Africa for instance, many older customs concerning women persisted in the new Islamic community.
   - Sufis in particular proved able mediators between local custom and Islamic principles. For instance, some converts in India practiced a “popular Islam” mediated by Sufi mystics that was not always so sharply distinguished from the more devotional forms of Hinduism.
   - In terms of transforming civilizations with which it came into contact, in the first centuries of the new faith areas of Iraq, North Africa, and Egypt converted to Islam and adopted important elements of Arab culture.
   - In other regions like Persia, widespread conversion to Islam occurred but much of the local culture was retained.
• In India a permanent Islamic civilization made up of 20 to 25 percent of the population was established along with an Islamic empire. Ultimately it led to hybrid faiths like Sikhism that mixed both Hindu and Muslim elements.
• In Anatolia, Islam arrived alongside Turkish conquest leading to both conversion to the Islamic faith and also profound cultural shifts including the widespread adoption of the Turkish language.
• In West Africa, Islam had a profound impact on trade and was used to legitimate political rule.
• In Spain, Islam established itself but also coexisted for a time with a pre-existing Christian culture.

Margin Review Questions

Q. In what ways did the early history of Islam reflect its Arabian origins?

• Islam drew on an older Arab identification of Allah with Yahweh, the Jewish High God, and Arab self-identification as children of Abraham.
• The Quran denounced the prevailing social practices of an increasingly prosperous Mecca and sought a return to the older values of Arab tribal life.
• The message of the Quran also rejected the Arab tribal and clan structure, which was prone to war, feuding, and violence. Instead, the Quran sought to replace this structure with the umma, the community of all believers.

Q. What did the Quran expect from those who followed its teachings?

• Submission to Allah was the primary obligation of believers. It was expressed in the first pillar of the faith: “There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.”
• The Quran outlined four further pillars that all devout Muslims must adhere to: 1) prayer five times a day at prescribed times, 2) generous giving to help the community and the needy, 3) fasting during the month of Ramadan, 4) pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj).

Q. How was Arabia transformed by the rise of Islam?

• A new religion emerged which drew widespread adherence amongst the Arab population.
• A new and vigorous state emerged bringing peace to the warring tribes of Arabia.

A distinctive society began to take shape that would serve as a model for Islamic communities everywhere.

Q. Why were Arabs able to construct such a huge empire so quickly?

• For the first time, a shared faith in Islam allowed the newly organized state to mobilize the military potential of the entire Arab population.
• The Byzantine and Persian empires were weakened by decades of war with each other and by internal revolts. They also underestimated the Arab threat.
• Merchant leaders of the new Islamic community wanted to capture profitable trade routes and wealthy agricultural regions.
• Individual Arabs found in military expansion a route to wealth and social promotion.
• Expansion provided a common task for the Arab community, which reinforced the fragile unity of the umma.
• Arabs were motivated by a religious dimension, as many viewed the mission of empire in terms of jihad, bringing righteous government to the peoples they conquered.

Q. What accounts for the widespread conversion to Islam?

• Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians could find familiar elements of their own faiths in Islam.
• From the start, Islam was associated with the sponsorship of a powerful state.
• Conquest called into question the power of old gods, while the growing prestige of the Arab Empire attracted many to Allah.
• Although forced conversion was rare, living in an Islamic-governed state provided a variety of incentives for claiming Muslim identity.
• In Islam, merchants found a religion friendly to commerce, and in the Arab Empire they enjoyed a huge and secure arena for trade.
• People aspiring to official positions found conversion to Islam an aid to social mobility.

Q. What is the difference between Sunni and Shia Islam?

• Sunnis held that the caliphs were rightful political and military leaders, selected by the Islamic community, while the Shia held that leadership in the Islamic world should derive from the line of Ali and his son Husayn, blood relatives of Muhammad.
• For Sunni Muslims, religious authority in general emerged from the larger community, particularly from the religious scholars known as ulama. Meanwhile, the Shia invested their leaders, known as imams, with a religious authority that the caliphs lacked, allowing them alone to reveal the true meaning of the Quran and the wishes of Allah.
• The Shia tradition included a messianic element that the Sunni tradition largely lacked.

Q. In what ways were Sufi Muslims critical of mainstream Islam?
• Sufism was sharply critical of the more scholarly and legalistic practitioners of the sharia; to Sufis, establishment teachings about the law and correct behavior did little to bring the believer into the presence of God.
• Sufis held that many of the ulama of mainstream Islam had been compromised by their association with worldly and corrupt governments.

Q. How did the rise of Islam change the lives of women?
• The Quran included a mix of rights, restrictions, and protections for women. It banned female infanticide, gave women the right to own property and granted them rights of inheritance, defined marriage as a contract between consenting parties, granted the right to sue for divorce under certain circumstances, and regulated polygyny. It also allowed men to have sexual relations with consenting female slaves, but only under the condition that any children born of these unions were free, as was the mother once her owner died.
• In practice, as the Arab Empire grew in size, the position of women became more limited. Women started to pray at home instead of in the mosque, and veiling and seclusion of women became standard practice among the upper and ruling classes, with special areas within the home becoming the only place where women could appear unveiled. Such seclusion was less practicable for lower-class women. These new practices derived far more from established traditions of Middle Eastern cultures than from the Quran, but they soon gained a religious rationale in the writings of Muslim thinkers.
• Other signs of tightening patriarchy, such as “honor killing” of women by their male relatives for violating sexual taboos and, in some places, clitorectomy (female circumcision), likewise derived from local cultures, with no sanction in the Quran or Islamic law. But where they were practiced, such customs often came to be seen as Islamic.
• Negative views of women, presenting them variably as weak, deficient, and a sexually charged threat to men and social stability, emerged in the hadiths, traditions about the sayings or actions of Muhammad, which became an important source of Islamic law.
• Islam also offered new outlets for women in religious life. The Sufi practice of mystical union with God allowed a greater role for women than did mainstream Islam. Some Sufi orders had parallel groups for women, and a few welcomed women as equal members.
• In Shia Islam, women teachers of the faith were termed mullahs, the same as their male counterparts.
• Islamic education, either in the home or in Quranic schools, allowed some women to become literate and a few to achieve higher levels of learning.
• Visits to the tombs of major Islamic figures as well as the ritual of the public bath provided some opportunity for women to interact with other women beyond their own family circle.

Q. What similarities and differences can you identify in the spread of Islam to India, Anatolia, West Africa, and Spain?
• Islam spread to India, Anatolia, and Spain in part through force of arms of Islamic armies, while Islam arrived in West Africa with Muslim traders.
• Sufis facilitated conversions by accommodating local traditions, especially in India and Anatolia, but played a smaller role in West Africa until at least the eighteenth century.
• In India, West Africa, and Spain, Islam became one of several faiths within the wider culture, while in Anatolia it became the dominant faith.

Q. In what ways was Anatolia changed by its incorporation into the Islamic world?
• A vast majority of the population converted to Islam from Christianity.
• Turkish conquerors also brought cultural transformation. The Turkish language predominated. Some Sufi religious practices derived from Central Asian Turkic shamanism took root. Turkic traditions of a freer more gender-equal life for women persisted.

Q. Summing Up So Far: “Islam had a revolutionary impact on every society that it touched.” What evidence might support this statement, and what might challenge it?
In terms of support, one could point to:

- the large number of conversions in places like Persia, Anatolia, and North Africa where earlier religious traditions came to be practiced by small minorities of the population.
- the role of Islam in facilitating long-distance trade.
- the emergence in India of hybrid religions like Sikhism.
- the role of Islam and Islamic law in shaping political culture in regions from India to West Africa.

In terms of challenging it, one could point to:

- the persistence of local social and cultural practices such as those concerning women in Anatolia or West Africa.
- the survival of Persian artistic traditions.
- the Christian reconquest of al-Andalus in Spain as an example of Islamic influence declining in a region.

Q. What makes it possible to speak of the Islamic world as a distinct and coherent civilization?

- At the core of that civilization was a common commitment to Islam.
- No group was more important in the transmission of Islamic beliefs and practices than the ulama, an “international elite” who created a system of education that served to bind together an immense and diverse civilization.
- The Sufi religious orders established an educational network and organized a variety of larger associations, some of which included chapters throughout the Islamic world.
- The pilgrimage to Mecca (the hajj) drew many thousands of Muslims to Mecca each year from all over the Islamic world.
- The Islamic world also cohered as an immense arena of exchange in which goods, technologies, food products, and ideas circulated widely.

Q. In what ways was the world of Islam a “cosmopolitan civilization”?

- The Islamic world valued commerce and fostered vibrant networks of exchange. Muslim merchants plied the Silk Roads, Sea Roads, and Sand Roads of the Afro-Eurasian world, and the Islamic world promoted long-distance economic relationships by actively supporting a prosperous, highly developed, “capitalist” economy.
- Islamic civilization also facilitated a substantial exchange of agricultural products and practices. Rice, new strains of sorghum, hard wheat, bananas, lemons, limes, watermelons, coconut palms, spinach, artichokes, sugarcane, and cotton came to the Middle East from India. Sugarcane and cotton also came with knowledge of complex production processes. Some of these Indian crops subsequently found their way to Africa and Europe from the Middle East.
- Technology also diffused widely within the Islamic world. Ancient Persian techniques for obtaining water by drilling into the sides of hills spread to North Africa. Muslim technicians made improvements on rockets developed in China. Techniques for manufacturing paper also arrived in the Middle East from China and later spread from the Middle East to India and Europe.
- Ideas also spread, with Jewish and Christian precedents influencing Islamic thinkers; Persian bureaucratic practice, court ritual, and poetry influencing the elite in particular; and Greek and Indian scientific, medical, and philosophical texts being systematically translated into Arabic and studied throughout the Islamic world.
- Those traditions mixed and blended to generate a distinctive Islamic civilization that made many original contributions to the world of learning—including the development of algebra as a novel mathematical discipline, original work in astronomy and optics, and medicine and pharmacology.

Portrait Question

Q. What significance did Mansa Musa likely attach to his pilgrimage? How might Egyptians, Arabians, and Europeans have viewed it?

- Mansa Musa likely viewed his pilgrimage as fulfillment of a requirement of his faith.
- He may have seen it as an opportunity to raise his prestige and legitimacy as a ruler both at home and in the larger Islamic World.
- He may have expected it to convey baraka (spiritual power) which would legitimate his rule.
- He may have seen it as an adventure.
- In terms of Egypt, all the gold that Musa brought with him must have excited much interest even if it depressed gold prices.
- His followers’ willingness to pay over the odds for goods must have excited merchants and traders.
His interaction with the sultan and his willingness to end the practice of concubines may have strengthened elite views of Musa as a fellow Muslim ruler.

In Arabia his devout completion of the hajj pilgrimage rituals would have reinforced the impression that he was a devout Muslim.

His effort to recruit sharifs for his kingdom may also have reinforced his image as a devout ruler.

Europeans had no direct contact with Mansa Musa, so their view of him was likely shaped by secondhand stories of his remarkable amounts of gold and impressive entourage. These attributes made Musa seem a rich and powerful monarch.

Using the Documents and Visual Sources Features

Following are answer guidelines for the headnote questions and Using the Evidence questions that appear in the Document and Visual Sources essays located at the end of the textbook chapter. Classroom Discussion and Classroom Activity suggestions are also provided to help integrate the document and visual sources essays into the classroom.

Headnote Questions

**Document 9.1: The Voice of Allah**

Q. How does the Quran’s understanding of Allah resemble Jewish and Christian ideas about God, and how does it differ from them?

- In terms of similarities, all three believe in one all-powerful God who created everything.
- The God worshipped by all three faiths is the same.
- All three traditions present similar moral teachings from God.
- In terms of differences, the Jewish covenant has no equivalent in the Quran.
- The Quran does not touch on the Christian Trinity, nor does it define Jesus as God incarnate on Earth.

Q. What specific prescriptions for social life do these selections contain? Notice in particular those directed toward the weakest members of society. How would you describe the Quran’s view of a good society?

- Prescriptions for social life include not consuming the possessions of orphans and returning their possessions to them when they reach adulthood; being kind and speaking kindly to others and praying and spending charitably; and freeing slaves if they are deserving and making sure they receive their share of the wealth given by God.
- Students could say that the selections clearly define a good society as one where believers are charitable to the less fortunate, both by giving alms and protecting the interests of the most vulnerable under one’s care.
- In a good society, war is only fought against aggressors and those who surrender are treated leniently.
- Proof is required when one accuses a woman of infidelity and confinement in the hopes of repentance is the only punishment allowed.
- Men have responsibilities toward their wives.
- Christians and Jews are allowed to continue to practice their beliefs, but followers of Islam keep a social distance from them.

Q. What attitudes toward non-Muslims do these passages suggest?

- All Jews and Christians who believe in God and the Last Day and do righteous deeds shall be rewarded by Allah.
- Jews and Christians are on the right path; their prophets were true ones.
- Nonetheless, Muslims should keep their distance from Jews and Christians rather than becoming their allies.
- If non-Muslims wage aggressive war against Islam they should be fought, but Muslims should not initiate wars and should treat those that surrender leniently.
- Also, “there shall be no coercion in matters of faith” (p. 446).

Q. What circumstances surrounding the birth of Islam might help to explain the references in the Quran to fighting and warfare?

- Muhammad’s role as political leader of Medina during hostilities with Mecca may have made such revelations relevant.
- The unstable relationships between Arab clans made such revelations of pressing importance to early followers of Islam. Indeed, some of the language of the passage, particularly about driving those away who had driven you away, may refer to the experiences of nomadic pastoralists.
Q. The sacred texts of all religious traditions provide ample room for conflicting understandings and interpretations. What debates or controversies might arise from these passages?

- The Passage on Jesus: A debate could develop over which teachings of Jesus are authoritative. The text clearly recognizes Jesus as a teacher and a prophet, but many texts which lay out Jesus's teachings in the Christian tradition also include passages concerning his resurrection—something not recognized in the Quran.
- The Passages on Jihad and War: A debate concerning warfare could develop over what constitutes aggression on the part of opponents.
- The Passages on Tolerance: A debate concerning the extent to which other faiths should be accommodated in the Islamic world could emerge, especially around practical matters like what constitutes tolerance of other religious practices and in what ways can other religions be regulated so that they do not encroach on Muslims?

Document 9.2: The Voice of the Prophet Muhammad

Q. What portrait of Muhammad emerges from this record of his sayings and actions?

- Muhammad is portrayed as a wise religious thinker, and a teacher who responded to the specific questions of his followers and offered both philosophical and practical lessons to them.

Q. How do these hadiths reflect or build on the teaching of the Quran in Document 9.1?

- The opening lines of this selection offer Muhammad’s statement on the three most excellent works in the faith: belief in Allah and in his Apostle, jihad in the way of Allah, and an acceptable pilgrimage. These are all topics covered in the Quran selection.
- Throughout, charity and kindness to the poor and less fortunate is advocated, themes central to the selections from the Quran.
- The need for struggle or jihad is emphasized, building on the concept of just war in Document 9.1.

Q. What religious and social values do these hadiths highlight?

- The hadiths highlight the importance of the defense of the faith for all believers; the promise of a better afterlife; the promise of tenderness and compassion; the awareness of sinfulness; and the need for controlling passions.
- As for social values, the hadiths highlight the importance of charity toward those less fortunate; and of patriarchy, especially the natural inferiority of women to men.

Q. In what ways do these hadiths reflect common themes in many of the world’s “wisdom traditions,” and in what respects are they distinctly Islamic?

- Common themes include setting guidelines by which to live a happy life; the need to control passions; and the desire to provide a guide for social relations, for instance between men and women, rich and poor.
- They are distinctly Islamic in their strong emphasis on charity for the less fortunate; the idea of Jihad; emphasis on an acceptable pilgrimage to Mecca; the prohibition on looking at a woman, even without desire; and emphasis on an afterlife.

Document 9.3: The Voice of the Law

Q. What do you find most striking about the legal prescriptions in these passages?

- The breadth of topics covered in these laws
- The detailed issues directly addressed by the laws

Q. In what ways do these selections draw on and apply the teachings of the Quran and the hadiths?

- The selections “On Prayer” and “On Zakat” both address the practical application of two Pillars of Islam defined in the Quran.
- Other laws, such as those concerning marriage, looking at women, or the sale of fruit juice provide practical guidelines on how to comply with teachings in the Quran and the sayings of the hadiths.

Q. How does the role of law in early Islamic civilization differ from that of modern Western society?

- The law in early Islamic civilization represents an effort to interpret a set of religious principles for application in everyday life and for enforcement as law by the authorities, whereas in modern Western society many countries maintain a separation between church and state, and therefore possess law codes not based explicitly on interpreting religious principles but on a written or unwritten secular constitution.
• The law in early Islamic civilization regulates acts and behaviors that modern Western law codes would not address, like eating off of gold and silver plate, contact between men and women, and the wearing of silk.

Q. Why do you think the role of law was so central, so highly detailed, and so comprehensive in Islamic civilization?

• The lack of separation between church and state in early Islamic society meant that religious law played an important role in regulating all of society.
• The need to completely submit to Allah required a comprehensive set of laws.
• As the introduction to the document notes, Muslims gave more attention to law and correct behavior than some other religions that focused on theology and correct belief.
• Applying the teachings of the Quran and hadiths to daily life required highly detailed guidance.

Q. What do this document and Document 9.2 suggest about the problems that the early Islamic community confronted?

• Applying the teachings of the Quran required interpretation and guidance.
• Issues relating to the five Pillars of Islam, such as how and how much one should give in alms, were of concern to believers.
• The laws governing marriage (particularly what constituted a legal marriage, who could marry whom, and the number of women that a man could marry) were an area of debate.
• Relations between men and women were perceived to be fraught with potential dangers that needed to be addressed.
• Questions of acceptable dress and economic activities were debated.

Document 9.4: The Voice of the Sufis

Q. How would you define the religious sensibility of Rumi’s poetry?

• It is spiritual or mystical in character.
• His spirituality is that of a person seeking religious experience through personal engagement with God, not through rational thought.
• His spirituality has no single path or set of rules.
• It is based on introspection and personal piety rather than observance of ritual or law.

Q. How does it differ from the approach to Islam reflected in the sharia?

• Rumi’s approach does not define laws that must be followed nor does it define punishments for breaking laws.
• Rather, it defines a spiritual quest that is personal and introspective in nature, and has as its primary purpose a quest for personal contact with God.
• It defines religious life primarily as the search for direct contact with the divine rather than living according to rules laid down by God in the past.

Q. What criticisms might the orthodox legal scholars (ulama) have made regarding the Sufi understanding of Islam?

• Sufi teachings do not emphasize the importance of the commandments laid out in the Quran and instead emphasize a personal spiritual relationship with God. This difference in emphasis may lead followers astray as they neglect the teachings of the Quran in pursuit of their own spiritual fulfillment.
• His statement about not finding God at the Kaaba might be seen as detracting from the stipulation that all Muslims who are able must make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Visual Source 9.1: Muhammad and the Archangel Gabriel

Q. What impression of this encounter does the artist seek to convey by the posture of the two figures?

• The commanding presence of Gabriel is expressed through his standing pose with outstretched arm and pointing finger.
• Muhammad is in a seated position and is avoiding direct eye-contact with Gabriel which conveys his role as receiver of Allah’s revelations.

Q. What religious meaning might Muslims derive from the idea that the revelation to Muhammad came through an angelic messenger rather than directly from Allah?

• That Allah works through messengers like his prophet Muhammad.
• That even Muhammad did not come regularly into the direct presence of Allah, making his night journey in Visual Source 9.2 all the more remarkable.
Q. Traditional accounts of Muhammad’s encounter with the angel stress the mysterious and overpowering “otherness” of Divine Presence, which accounts for Muhammad’s initial fear and terror. What is the religious significance of such a depiction of the Divine? To what extent does this image convey that impression?

- In terms of religious experience, direct contact with the divine is a powerful spiritual experience. A number of traditions within the Islamic world seek similar experiences of the Divine Presence.
- This image depicts Muhammad in a calm pose not at the initial moment of fear and terror. Nonetheless, Gabriel is depicted as an otherworldly figure with wings, a crown, and a commanding presence.

Q. Muslims have traditionally stressed that their prophet was illiterate, based in part on his response to the angel: “I am not a reader.” Why might it be important to Muslims to believe that Muhammad was illiterate?

- To take away the possibility that his prophetic message was acquired through learning rather than revelation.
- To emphasize that Muhammad was a chosen messenger who conveyed the pure word of God without altering it through the prism of his own learning.

Visual Source 9.2: The Night Journey of Muhammad

Q. What significance might attach to the female head of the buraq?

- It makes the buraq an unmistakably mythical beast rather than just a common domesticated animal, emphasizing the otherworldliness of the event.
- The buraq made it possible for Muhammad to make such a lengthy journey in one night.

Q. What are the accompanying angels offering to the Prophet during his journey?

- The other angels bring a variety of items that might be meant to help the Prophet on his journey, or might be gifts of traditional hospitality for the Prophet, who is visiting the seven levels of heaven.
- Also, the angels may be acting like courtiers in a royal court, escorting an important visitor into the presence of God.

Q. What meaning might the artist seek to convey by the image of the world below and slightly to the right of the buraq?

- The ascent of Muhammad into heaven.

Q. What is the significance of Muhammad’s encounter with earlier prophets such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus? Note the Quranic reference to Jesus in Document 9.1.

- Muhammad is defined in the Muslim faith as the last great prophet in a tradition that included Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.
- Muhammad praying with these figures emphasizes that they all come from the same prophetic tradition and that Muhammad’s message is in accordance with his predecessors.
- It also physically reminds viewers that his message was the final word from God that provides insights beyond those of his predecessors.

Q. Review the discussion of the Sufi tradition of Islam on pp. 424–425. How might Sufis have understood the Night Journey? How does this Muslim metaphor for the spiritual quest compare with that of the Byzantine icon shown in Visual Source 10.3, p. 511?

- In the Sufi tradition, this story provides a metaphor representing each believer’s path to the truth, or to a closer relationship to God.
- Muhammad’s literal physical (or perhaps in a dream or vision) ascension through the seven heavens brought him close to God. For the Sufis, mystical ascension is also seen as a journey that brings the individual closer to God, but through the annihilation of one’s ego rather than through a physical journey.
- This image and Visual Source 10.3 are similar in that they both depict the journey to heaven in physical rather than just spiritual terms.
- However, the Muslim quest is less fraught with the forces of evil depicted by demons dragging believers from the ladder in the Byzantine image.
Moreover, the ladder in the Byzantine image implies a single path, whereas the Sufi tradition emphasizes that each person's path will be different.

*Visual Source 9.3: The Battle at Badr*

Q. What elements of this image might suggest a natural or human understanding of the Muslim victory at Badr? And what might indicate divine intervention as an explanation?

- In terms of natural or human understanding, the well-ordered ranks of horsemen convey the image of a powerful army capable of victory.
- The angel conveying news of the victory to Muhammad in the center of the image implies a divine support for Muhammad’s cause and perhaps a divine purpose in the victory.

Q. Documentary sources report only two horses and seventy camels on the side of the “believers” at this battle and suggest a more rag-tag group of fighters than the image portrays. Why do you think the artist presented a rather more impressive picture?

- The key to Muhammad’s success was careful drilling of his well-organized troops. The perfect lines of horsemen in this image convey this crucial factor in the battle.
- The artist may have felt it important to depict the followers of Muhammad as a powerful force.
- It is possible that this early army of “believers” came to represent the first of many Islamic armies and thus the artist sought to depict it as a powerful force.

Q. What religious meanings did Muhammad and Muslims in general extract from the battle at Badr?

- Because of the revelations associated with the victory, they took much away about the humane treatment of prisoners.
- They also took away a sense that Allah supported Muhammad and his forces, especially given how dramatically outnumbered they were by the forces from Mecca.

*Visual Source 9.4: The Destruction of the Idols*

Q. What view of pre-Islamic Arab religion do the images of the idols suggest?

- A polytheistic religion very different from the monotheistic Islamic faith
- An animist religion with Gods centered on idols

Q. What fundamental religious teachings or spiritual truths does this painting seek to convey? How might you understand the Muslim concern with idolatry?

- The gods of the pre-Islamic Arab religion were false idols that had to be destroyed.
- They could not be tolerated in the new Muslim faith which emphasized a single all powerful God.

Q. Some traditions suggest that Muhammad ordered pictures of Mary and Jesus within the Kaaba to be left intact. What purpose might this tradition serve?

- It emphasizes that Muhammad was the last in a line of prophets that included Jesus.
- It reinforces the idea that the “Religions of the Book” possess a rightful place within the Islamic world as defined in the Quran.

*Using the Evidence Questions*

*Documents: Voices of Islam*

1. **Defining differences within Islam:** In what different ways do the various voices of Islam represented in these documents understand and express the common religious tradition of which they are all a part? What grounds for debate or controversy can you identify within or among them?

- Document 9.1 is the most authoritative text in the collection, as it is believed by Muslims to be the direct revelation of God passed through the prophet Muhammad. It therefore expresses the religious tradition in terms of the God’s commands.
- Document 9.2 is a selection of sayings attributed to Muhammad. These sayings concern both the elements of the faith and practical advice on all manner of topics. They provide guidance in reading the Quran and for how to live one’s life.
- Document 9.3 is a selection of sharia laws that provide practical guidance in all aspects of life.
- Document 9.4 is a selection of poetry by Rumi that explores a more spiritual or mystical approach to Islam and provides some guidance as to how one can foster a closer, more personal engagement with God.
- The Sufi tradition focuses on a spiritual understanding of Islam, while the sharia focuses on adherence to law codes based on Islamic teachings. Their very different approaches and purposes could lead to debate or conflict.
- There is potential for debate in efforts to reconcile the teachings of the Quran and the hadiths,
perhaps most apparent here in the differences between the documents concerning the treatment and nature of women.

- The sharia tradition draws on both the Quran and the hadiths to produce a set of laws for the faithful to live by, but it is possible to arrive at multiple interpretations from the teachings of these two holy texts, as can be seen in the four major schools of sharia law that have developed.
- There is also potential for debate between the sharia law and the Quran and hadiths.

2. Comparing religious traditions: How would you compare Islamic religious ideas and practices with those of other traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity?

- Like Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity, the Islamic faith is a universal religion open to all believers; has multiple traditions coexist within the faith; possesses a mystical tradition that focuses more on personal spirituality; and its basic teachings include rituals and practices that believers must undertake.
- However, the focus on law and correct behavior in many Islamic traditions is more pronounced than in some other faiths; the merging of church and state in the Islamic tradition is not as pronounced in the other traditions; and the Hindu faith possesses no single holy text, although both Buddhist and Christians have similar textual traditions to Islam.

3. Considering gender and Islam: How do these documents represent the roles of men and women in Islamic society? Pay particular attention to differences in emphasis.

- In Document 9.1 the roles of men and women are a central topic of concern. The selection implies that a woman’s role is primarily within the household. Two passages explicitly address the treatment of women and focus on marriage and their punishment within the household for immoral activities. Both men and women are equally responsible for fulfilling the basic requirements of the faith, although the passages that require believers to defend their faith through military action are likely directed primarily at men. The document also stipulates that both men and women should receive a share of inheritance. Women are to be punished for immoral behavior only when proof has been obtained, and then only until they repent.
- Document 9.2 emphasizes more clearly that women are naturally inferior to men, as illustrated in the passage noting that women were created from the rib of a man. It deals more directly with the roles of men and women in society, with women being identified as widows deserving charity; as objects of potential desire for men; as prone to acting carelessly, leading to slander; and as a potential source through which to control male desire if taken in marriage. Men’s roles include subjects to rulers; a band of youths, some of whom marry to avoid desire while others fast; and as fathers and sons.

- The passages in Document 9.3 emphasize regulation; thus many of the roles of men and women explored are in the context of regulating common activities like marriage and trade. Women are identified as owners of property subject to the zakat, wives in marriage, witnesses to marriages, sisters, slaves, free women, objects of male desire, and passengers on ships. The roles of men include owners of property subject to the zakat, husbands, witnesses to marriages, slaves, Caliphs, viewers of women, legal scholars, and passengers on ships. However, if both women and men are passengers on a ship, they must be segregated by a partition. Both men and women are forbidden to eat or drink or keep ointments in gold or silver vessels. Women are permitted to wear silk, gold, and silver, but men are not except for silver on a ring or weapon.
- Document 9.4 does not explicitly mention roles of either men or women, but rather speaks to a spirituality open to both genders.

4. Seeking additional sources: Notice that all of these sources derive from literate elites, and each of them suggests or prescribes appropriate behavior. What additional documents would you need if you were to assess the impact of these prescriptions on the lives of ordinary people? What specific questions might you want to pose to such documents?

- Students may find it helpful to have writings that better reflected the views of pastoralists living among the Arabs who converted, as well as illiterate commoners from cities like Mecca and Medina who converted.
- A document by one of Muhammad’s early followers, who undertook the flight to Medina with him, would be fascinating.
- Also helpful would be documents by subject peoples, both urban and rural, who converted as the empire expanded; by Muslim slaves; and by Muslim women.
- Documents by Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews, as well as members of other faiths who lived within the Muslim empire would be interesting.
• It might also be helpful to have documents that reflect the views of outsiders, that is, non-Muslims who traveled in the Muslim world.

**Visual Sources: The Life of the Prophet**

1. **Noticing point of View:** Consider these four visual sources together with the other images within the chapter. What general impression of the Islamic world emerges? What point of view, if any, is reflected in the selection of visual sources? Do they convey a positive, negative, or neutral impression of Islamic civilization? Explain your answer with specific references to various images.

   • Collectively, these images depict a wide range of cultural, social, intellectual, and religious aspects of Islamic civilization. An impression of wealth and sophistication comes through, and a sense of varied lifestyles and social classes are depicted.
   • Students could argue for a positive, negative, or neutral impression, although there is stronger evidence for a neutral or positive response.
   • In providing specific evidence, a strong answer will in some way recognize the wide variety of social, cultural, intellectual, and religious activities depicted in these images; their technical quality and the aesthetic beauty; specific features like the social interactions depicted; and the individual details that Persian miniatures are renowned for.
   • A strong answer would also address the varied ways in which the faith is depicted and especially the role of depictions of Muhammad in this tradition.

2. **Considering Muhammad:** Based on these images, how might you describe the understanding of Muhammad that they present? In what ways is Muhammad an exemplar for Muslims of a fully realized human being? Do such images have any usefulness for knowing “what really happened” as opposed to grasping Muslim views of their prophet?

   • Visual Sources 9.1 and 9.2 both depict Muhammad as a prophet through whom Allah brought his message to the faithful, emphasizing his spiritual role as the last great prophet in the Abrahamic prophetic tradition.
   • Visual Sources 9.3 and 9.4 depict Muhammad as a military commander and agent of religious change, emphasizing his role in leading the Arab world to the Islamic faith.
   • As far as an exemplar, these sources depict Muhammad fully engaged in both a spiritual life centered on submission to Allah and an active life in this world defending the faith. Combining these roles makes him an exemplar for the faithful.
   • In terms of knowing what really happened, these paintings were completed centuries after the death of Muhammad by artists working from available sources rather than first hand knowledge. This makes them more viable or grasping Muslim views of their prophet.
   • Visual Source 9.3 portrays Muhammad’s forces as far more powerful than even the historical accounts record adding to the idea that these images are best understood as views of the prophet by the devout.

3. **Comparing Muslim and Christian religious art:** What differences can you notice between the religious art of Islam, shown here, and that of Byzantine Christianity as reflected in the Visual Sources for Chapter 10?

   • Two of the Byzantine images were intended for veneration, while the third was created for inclusion in a religious instructional text. None of the Islamic images were intended for veneration or inclusion in religious texts.
   • Events from the lives of both founders are depicted in Visual Sources 9.3, 9.4, and 10.2, but the events depicted emphasize differences in their lives with Muhammad’s role as military and political leader depicted.
   • The narrative strategy of Visual Source 9.2 depicts a crucial moment in a single event, Muhammad’s night journey, whereas Visual Source 10.3, *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, depicts the spiritual journey of many souls, metaphorically using the image of a ladder. Thematically, both provide visual depictions of spiritual journeys that brought the participant closer to God. However, the emphasis on the threat of the forces of evil interfering in or even derailing the spiritual journey in Visual Source 10.3 has no equivalent in Visual Source 9.2.

4. **Reflecting on religious history:** What do these images reveal about Muslim understandings of their relationship to earlier religious practices? What did they accept from the past and what did they reject? How does that understanding compare with Buddhist and Christian views of their place in religious history?

   • Visual Source 9.4 depicts the rejection of pre-Islamic Arab religion.
   • Visual Sources 9.1 and 9.2 firmly place Muhammad in the Jewish and Christian prophetic tradition. The Archangel Gabriel in Visual Source
9.1 and the trip to heaven in Visual Source 9.2 emphasize this.

- Both Christian and Buddhist religious traditions build off of older traditions and so the Muslim experience is very similar to these other two faiths. Jesus was also in the Jewish prophetic tradition, even if Christians viewed his message as universal. The Buddha drew on the Upanishad tradition while challenging ideas about who could achieve enlightenment in this life.

5. **Comparing documentary and visual sources:** What do these images add to your understanding of Islam compared to what you derived from the documents?

- All of the Visual Sources offer further insight into how the life of Muhammad was understood centuries later.
- They also offer insight into Muslim traditions concerning visual depictions of the prophet.
- Visual Source 9.1 adds to one’s understanding of Muhammad’s first revelation, something not covered in the texts.
- Visual Sources 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4 depict events in the life of Muhammad that were not addressed in the documents.

**LECTURE STRATEGIES**

**Lecture 1: The Arab conquests**

This lecture strategy allows you to go into more detail concerning the Arab conquests than was possible in the textbook, exploring the reasons behind the vast expansion of Islamic rule in the seventh and eighth centuries C.E. from a variety of angles. Its objectives are:

- to review and highlight the lessons given in the textbook about the expansion—where, when, and why
- to consider conditions in the Persian and Byzantine empires, as well as in the Kingdoms of the Vandals and the Visigoths, that helped the Arabs in their conquests
- to consider in greater detail the geographical factors that helped shape the conquests
- to explore in greater detail the role of jihad thought in Islam.

Begin with a physical map of the Islamic world. Discuss the nature of early armies, including Arab reliance on sudden raids moving from desert into settled lands, the need for horses, and the potential of camels in this process. Then encourage the students to consider what the map can tell them about the conquests. Some questions to ask are:

- Did the Arab conquerors reach a “natural” limit to expansion because they moved into geographical zones that no longer favored their fighting style? (Consider, for example, the Taurus mountain range of Anatolia, the Hindu Kush, and the Pyrenees on the Spanish/French border.)
- What political reasons, drawing on earlier chapters, might also have limited the expansion (e.g., the defensibility of Constantinople and political consolidation under the early Carolingians in Francia)?

Move from there to present the fuller story of the conquests. This can be approached in a variety of ways. Some useful points to include are:

- the massive Byzantine-Persian war of the early decades of the seventh century, including Heraclius’s final victory and the devastating impact of the war on both states
- the nature of rule in both the Byzantine and Persian empires and how both systems oppressed large sectors of the population (through taxes, religious repression)
- the unpopularity of Vandal rule in North Africa
- the role of the caliphs in directing the course of the conquest
- the Arab culture of raiding
- the religious propulsion behind the conquests
- Arab moderation toward conquered peoples (I especially recommend using the Pact of Umar, which Caliph Umar made with the Christians of Syria after the initial conquest; there is a translation available at [http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/pact-umar.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/pact-umar.html))

**Lecture 2: Comparative mysticism**

Mysticism played an especially great role in the development of the medieval Islamic world, but of course the individual’s quest for direct, personal contact with the divine is common to most religions. From roughly 1100 to around 1500, mysticism flourished, especially in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The purpose of this lecture strategy is to
explore the common threads of the mystic tradition. Its objectives are:

- to encourage students to recognize how common mysticism is in world history, rather than seeing Islam as novel in this regard
- to compare mystic traditions
- to consider what makes some periods and regions more mysticism-oriented than others.

Enabling this lecture is a wonderful ongoing series of translations of works by mystics from a variety of religious traditions—Paulist Press’s *Classics of Western Spirituality*. If your library has some of these (surprisingly inexpensive) volumes, the lecture can be built around excerpts from the mystics’ own writings. You might construct a lecture around two mystics each from Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, using the following:

For Christianity:

- *Gertrude of Helfta: The Herald of Divine Love*
- *Julian of Norwich: Showings*

For Judaism:

- *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*
- *The Early Kabbalah*

For Islam:

- *Early Islamic Mysticism*
- *Ibn al’Arabi: The Bezels of Wisdom*

Discuss the “mystical path” in the three religions, including:

- who became known as mystics
- whether mystics were loners or part of communities
- biographical details of the mystics you have chosen to highlight
- tensions between mystics and the mainstream religious establishment
- regions where mystics were especially prevalent and possible reasons why
- gender issues and mysticism

It may be useful to refer to the chapter’s Document feature, particularly Document 9.4, during your lecture.

**Lecture 3: The golden age of Islam**

This lecture strategy allows the instructor to delve in greater detail into Islamic culture in the period before the Mongol conquests, as well as providing an opportunity to review Chinese and European material. Its goals are:

- to discuss in detail the Snapshot on p. 440, “Key Achievements in Islamic Science and Scholarship”
- to compare Islamic scholarly achievements to those of Tang and Song dynasty China
- to compare Islamic scholarly achievements to those of Byzantium and Western Europe during the High Middle Ages.

You may want to begin with the learning environment in the Islamic world of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Discuss literacy levels, the existence of lower schools as well as institutes of higher learning, and how class issues, gender, and region affected the ability to get a good education. From there, you can take a variety of approaches. Some possibilities:

- Focus the lecture on key inventions and discoveries, talking about the context in which the discovery was made and the use to which it was put (e.g., why did al-Khwarazim popularize the use of Arabic numerals and write a book on algebra?). Compare where possible with achievements in Europe and Asia.
- Focus the lecture on the demands imposed by Islamic society—in trade, in supporting a large population in the cities, in interpreting Islamic law, etc.—and how specific needs led to specific solutions from the community of scholars. Compare where possible with similar difficulties and solutions in Europe and Asia.
- Focus the lecture on the major figures cited in the Snapshot on p. 440, discussing the life circumstances that led to their achievements.

It may be useful to refer to the chapter’s Visual Source feature during your lecture.

**THINGS TO DO IN THE CLASSROOM**

**Discussion Topics**

1. **Misconception/Difficult Topic (large or small group). “The vexed issue of jihad.”**

Ask students to discuss the ways in which the term *jihad* is used in modern Islamic culture, compared to its historic meanings. Some possible approaches:
Classroom Activities

1. Close-reading exercise (large or small group). “Meeting the Quran.”

Choose one of the shorter suras of the Quran, such as:

- Number 43: Ornaments of Gold (interesting gender issues)
- Number 46: The Sand Dunes (interesting insight on Muhammad’s revelations)
- Number 48: Victory (after the Muslim conquest of Mecca)
- Number 58: She Who Plead (on divorce and other social issues)
- Number 77: Those That Are Sent Forth (on the Last Judgment)

Note: The suras of the Quran are traditionally arranged by length, with the longest at the beginning and the shortest at the end. Ask students to read the selected sura carefully, listing important points that can be garnered about Islam and/or conditions in Arabia at the time of Muhammad.


Choose three groups of students. Ask them to research and present to the class what their impressions would be if they were Arab visitors to Western Europe in the following times and areas:

- spies for Caliph Umar who go to the papal court in Rome ca. 640 C.E.
- emissaries of the caliph Harun al-Rashid who have brought an elephant to Charlemagne as a gift ca. 800 C.E.
- members of the ulama who have heard interesting tales about the University of Paris and have come to investigate the state of learning in Western Europe ca. 1200 C.E.

Note that it is important in each of these cases that the students acquire a reasonable understanding of Islamic society at the time they are presenting, which will of course have an impact on the degree to which they are impressed by or dismissive of the culture they are visiting.

3. Clicker question.

Does this chapter help you understand the problems of the modern Islamic world?

Class Discussion for the Documents and Visual Sources Features

Patriarchy in the Islamic Tradition (large or small group)

Build off Using the Evidence question 3 to address a common misconception among students that there is one patriarchal system under which women in the Islamic world live, and that it is unusually oppressive and restrictive. Split this discussion into two parts. First, ask students to find and compare the statements concerning women in the documents. Can they identify a single set of ideas that all the documents support? Do some seem to offer women more or less
protections? More or less status in society? Do they all define women as naturally inferior to men? Conclude by asking students to use the documents to advocate the least and most patriarchal system for women that the documents will sustain. What can we learn from these differences?

Then return to the documents in Chapter 5 and textbook pages (pp. 243–251) concerning patriarchy during the second-wave era in order to compare Islamic thinking about women with these earlier traditions. What similarities and differences can students identify? What can these comparisons tell us about patriarchy in general and Islamic ideas about patriarchy? Could the teachings of the hadiths, which treat women as naturally inferior, perhaps reflect the influence of Greek philosophical thinking, which had become a strong influence on Islamic thought by the ninth century when these hadiths were collected? Is this thesis strengthened by the selections from the Quran in the documents, none of which explicitly state nor imply that women were naturally inferior to men?

**Comparison: Comparing Chinese and Persian Elite Culture**

Draw on the visual sources here and in Chapter 8 to better understand how elites from two cultures displayed status. Ask students to carefully examine the images in the two features and identify those figures who are elites. Then ask them what specific features of these figures allow us to identify them as elite? Make sure that students note details like clothing as well as more contextual evidence like participation at a banquet. Once they have identified a set of common features, compare the two regions. Which features are shared? Which are not? Do the differences merely reflect the subject matter of the images or do they represent cultural differences in how elite status was displayed? You could expand this discussion by including the visual sources from Chapters 5 and 6.

**Classroom Activities for the Documents and Visual Sources Features**

**Just Warfare in the Islamic and Christian Traditions (large or small group)**

Both the Islamic and Christian traditions struggled with the problem of when, if ever, warfare was justified. This activity gives students the opportunity to compare the thinking of these two related traditions. Ask students to compare the passages concerned with warfare and jihad in the documents with roughly contemporary Christian thinkers by assigning extracts of the works of Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Ask students to identify similarities and differences between the two traditions. What aspects of the two traditions hint at the shared common heritage of these two faiths? What makes each tradition distinctive?

**Critical Analysis (large or small group): Depictions of Muhammad, the Buddha, and Jesus**

The depictions of Muhammad engaging in a variety of activities from prophetic encounters to warfare provide an opportunity to compare Muhammad to the Buddha and Jesus. Bring into class further images of these religious figures and ask students to compare them. What can a comparison of the three figures tell us about Muhammad’s life and the founding of Islam? In what ways did his example shape Islam? Did the Buddha and Jesus similarly shape their faiths?

**WHAT’S THE SIGNIFICANCE?**

**Abbasid caliphate:** Dynasty of caliphs who ruled an increasingly fragmented Islamic state from 750 to 1258, eventually becoming little more than figureheads. (*pron.* ah-BASS-id)

**Al-Andalus:** Arabic name for Spain (literally “the land of the Vandals”), most of which was conquered by Arab and Berber forces in the early eighth century C.E. (*pron.* al-AND-ah-loos)

**al-Ghazali:** Great Muslim theologian, legal scholar, and Sufi mystic (1058–1111) who was credited with incorporating Sufism into mainstream Islamic thought. (*pron.* al-gha-ZAHL-ee)

**Anatolia:** Ancient name of Asia Minor, part of the Byzantine Empire that was gradually overrun by the Turks and that now is the Republic of Turkey. (*pron.* an-ah-TOLE-ee-yah)

**hijra:** The “flight” of Muhammad and his original seventy followers from Mecca to Yathrib (later Medina) in 622 C.E.; the journey marks the starting point of the Islamic calendar. (*pron.* HIJ-ruh)

**House of Wisdom:** An academic center for research and translation of foreign texts that was
established in Baghdad in 830 C.E. by the Abbasid caliph al-Mamun.

**Ibn Battuta**: Fourteenth-century Arab traveler (1304–1368) who wrote about his extensive journeys throughout the Islamic world. (pron. IB-uhn ba- TOO-tuh)

**Ibn Sina**: One of the greatest polymaths of the Islamic world (980–1037), a Persian who wrote prolifically on scientific (especially medical) and philosophical issues; he is often known as “Avicenna,” the Latinized form of his name. (pron. ibn SEE-nah)

**Jizya**: Special tax paid by dhimmis in Muslim-ruled territory in return for freedom to practice their own religion. (pron. jeez-YAH)

**Madrassas**: Formal colleges for higher instruction in the teachings of Islam as well as in secular subjects, founded throughout the Islamic world beginning in the eleventh century. (pron. MAH-dras-ahs)

**Mansa Musa**: Muslim King of Mali (ca. 1280–ca. 1337) who famously undertook a pilgrimage from his West African homeland to the holy city of Mecca (pron. MAN-sa MOO-sa).

**Pillars of Islam**: The five core practices required of Muslims: a profession of faith, regular prayer, charitable giving, fasting during Ramadan, and a pilgrimage to Mecca (if financially and physically possible).

**Quran**: Also transliterated as Qur’án and Koran, this is the most holy text of Islam, recording the revelations given to the prophet Muhammad. (pron. kuh- RAHN)

**Sharia**: Islamic law, dealing with all matters of both secular and religious life. (pron. sha-REE-ah)

**Sikhism**: A significant syncretic religion that evolved in India, blending elements of Islam and Hinduism; founded by Guru Nanak (1469–1539). (pron. SEEK-ism)

**Timbuktu**: Great city of West Africa, noted as a center of Islamic scholarship in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. (pron. tim-buk-TOO)

**Ulama**: Islamic religious scholars. (pron. oo-leh-MAH)

**Umayyad caliphate**: Family of caliphs who ruled the Islamic world from 661 to 750 C.E. (pron. oo-MY-ad)

**Umma**: The community of all believers in Islam. (pron. UM-mah)

### FURTHER READING

- Selected Internet Resources: Islamic Sites, http://www.library.yale.edu/neareast/islamicsites.html. An excellent list of links to Islamic texts, art, and medicine, created by the Yale University Library.

### LITERATURE

• Ibn al-'Arabi. The Bezels of Wisdom. Trans. R. W. J. Austin. New York: Paulist Press, 1980. Ibn al-'Arabi was a Sufi born in Spain in the twelfth century; he is known as “the greatest master,” and this work is perhaps the greatest text of medieval Sufism.

• Sells, Michael, trans. Approaching the Qur’an: The Early Revelations. Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1999. A beautiful translation of the early suras of the Quran, with a useful introduction and commentary. With under fifty pages of Quran (plus commentary), the volume is short enough for effective classroom use. It also includes a CD of Quranic recitations.


FILM

• The Andalusian Epic: Islamic Spain. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1999. 27 minutes. Examines the expansion of Islam into Spain.

• The Arabs Make Their Entrance: Islam and Empire. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1999. 26 minutes. Charts the rise of Islamic civilization from Muhammad to the Umayyad dynasty.

• Essentials of Faith. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2006. 24 minutes. Examines the Five Pillars of Islam and the role of cultural and political influences in shaping the practice of Islam.

• Hajj: The Pilgrimage. Insight Media, 1999. 53 minutes. Examines the fifth pillar of Islam, the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca.

• Islam and Christianity. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1993. 30 minutes. Explores the relationship between Christianity and Islam.


• Islam: Empire of Faith. Two-part series. PBS Home Video, 2001. 90 minutes each. Examines Islam and Islamic society from their emergence to the twentieth century.

• Journeys into Islam. Four-part series. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2004. 47–52 minutes each. Examines the spread of Islam into Africa and Asia since the time of Muhammad.

• Once upon a Time: Baghdad during the Abbasid Dynasty. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1999. 26 minutes. Explores Baghdad at its height, with references to cultural accomplishments and political developments of the Abbasid dynasty.

• When the World Spoke Arabic: The Golden Age of Arab Civilization. Seven-part series. Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1999. 26–27 minutes each. This series explores the most significant cultural, scientific, and technological achievements of the Islamic world.

ADDITIONAL BEDFORD/ST. MARTIN’S RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER 9

PowerPoint Maps, Images, Lecture Outlines, and i>clicker Content

These presentation materials are downloadable from the Media and Supplements tab at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer/catalog, and they are available on an Instructor’s Resource CD-ROM. They include ready-made and fully customizable PowerPoint multimedia presentations built around lecture outlines that are embedded with maps, figures, and selected images from the textbook and are supplemented by more detailed instructor notes on key points. Also available are maps and selected images in JPEG and PowerPoint format; content for i>clicker, a classroom response system, in Microsoft Word and PowerPoint formats; the Instructor’s Resource Manual in Microsoft Word format; and outline maps in PDF format for quizzing or handouts. All files are suitable for copying onto transparency acetates.

Documents and Essays from Worlds of History: A Comparative Reader, Fifth Edition

The following documents, essays, and illustrations to accompany Chapter 9 are available in the following chapters of this reader by Kevin Reilly:

Chapter 7:

• Selections from the Qu’ran
• Ibn Ishaq, The Life of Muhammad: Missions to Kings
• Peace Terms with Jerusalem
• The Epic of Sundiata
Chapter 10:

- Ibn al-Athir, *Causes of the Crusade*
- Ibn al-Qalanisi, *The Damascus Chronicle*
- Ibn al-Athir, *The Conquest of Jerusalem*

**Online Study Guide at bedfordstmartins.com/strayer**

The Online Study Guide helps students synthesize the material from the textbook as well as practice the skills historians use to make sense of the past. Each chapter contains specific testing exercises, including a multiple-choice self-test that focuses on important conceptual ideas; a flashcard activity that tests students on their knowledge of key terms; and two interactive map activities intended to strengthen students’ geographic skills. Instructors can monitor students’ progress through an online Quiz Gradebook or receive email updates.

**Computerized Test Bank**

This test bank provides over fifty exercises per chapter, including multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, short-answer, and full-length essay questions. Instructors can customize quizzes, add or edit both questions and answers, and export questions and answers to a variety of formats, including WebCT and Blackboard. The disc includes correct answers and essay outlines.