

CHAPTER XI OUTLINE

I. Opening Vignette

- A. *By the start of the twenty-first century, Islam had acquired a significant presence in the United States.*
 - 1. More than 1,200 mosques
 - 2. About 8 million Muslims (some 2 million are African Americans)
- B. *The second half of the twentieth century saw the growing international influence of Islam.*
- 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 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 and Conquest

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 650s, 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
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

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 not 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: 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 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

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
3. Emergence of Muslim communities in India
 - a. Buddhists and low-caste Hindus found Islam attractive
 - b. newly agrarian people also liked Islam
 - c. subjects of Muslim rulers converted to lighten tax burden
 - d. Sufis fit mold of Indian holy men, encouraged conversion
 - e. at height, 20–25 percent of Indian population converted to Islam
 - a. monotheism vs. polytheism
 - b. equality of believers vs. caste system
 - c. sexual modesty vs. open eroticism
4. Interaction of Hindus and Muslims
 - a. many Hindus served Muslim rulers
 - b. mystics blurred the line between the two religions
 - c. Sikhism developed in early sixteenth century; syncretic religion with elements of both Islam and Hinduism
 - d. Muslims remained as a distinctive minority

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 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