

Islam and chambers essay sample

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



The life of Islam began around 610 in the town of Mecca in the country of Arabia by a middle-aged man named Muhammad. Through the years Islam has had its trials and errors. However, today Islam holds the faith of around 800 million followers.

Hot and dry deserts, steppes, and wastelands are the homelands of the Arabs, but they were able to overcome these harsh conditions. Arabs were very “ proud of their family, language, skill, and way of life” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 180). The Arabs were in a time of turmoil when Muhammad first appeared. Having political power the Byzantines, Persians, and Abyssinians constantly trying to conquer the Arabs was a political strain; religious turmoil wasn't any less of an explosion.

Born between the years of 570 and 571 in the city of Mecca, Muhammad combined pagan, Christian, and Jewish ideas for the Arabian religion of Islam. The angel of Gabriel came to Muhammad in 610 telling him to preach the words of Allah, the Islamic god. Only a handful of relatives clung to his teachings at first. “ Reflected in his native city, Muhammad accepted an invitation to expound his ideas in Medina” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 180). This migration in 622 is called the hijra. The hijra marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Important to Muhammad's career, the hijra allowed him to become the governor of Medina, but it also caused for his preachings to be more and more about “ public law, administration, and the practical problems of government” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 181). After being successful with converting people in Medina, Muhammad decided in 624 to march against the Meccans. He was successful, and he took Mecca in 630.

The only pagan shrine Muhammad kept in the city was the Kaaba, a temple built by the prophet Abraham.

Within the Islamic religion, the Koran is a collection of prophecies written down in 651 or 652, but the true author is Allah. The Koran praises Allah for his knowledge power, justice, and mercy. Muslims are those who submit “ to the will of Allah,” and according to Muhammad this was the most important guideline to follow (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 182). A major difference between Christianity and Islam is that Islam doesn’t acknowledge a separate clergy, and the Koran passed the word of Allah through Muhammad and the caliphs. Allah provided all of the necessary laws that the Islamic people needed, and the caliphs were primarily the “ military chief and a judge” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 182).

After Muhammad’s death in 632 until 750, Islam expanded very rapidly. When it came to war, the Arabs were diligent on desert terrain, and they were able to conquer their enemies. Warriors who died during war against non-believers were promised a substantial eternal reward. Christians and Jews were partially tolerated because they were both people of the Bible, and in order to practice their religion, they needed to pay a small tax to the Arabs. Many Persians, Greeks, and Semitics were willing to convert because of the similarities of Islam to their previous religion. Because the Arabs conquered many new lands and people, they allowed the new men to take ranks in the government. “ This move added stability to Arabic Rule” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 183).

The Umayyad family was the first line of blood rulers on the Arabic Empire. Muslims, under the Umayyad Empire, were able to conquer North Africa; they overran a Spaniard kingdom. The biggest loss under the Umayyad rule was when the Muslims were defeated at Tours in 732 by Charles Martel. This defeat marked the final advance and stabilization of Islam over the next hundreds of years.

After growing to an enormous size, an internal war destroyed the unity of Islam. After the death of Muhammad, teachers and scholars introduced a new orthodox to Islam. The people who accepted this orthodox were known as Shiites, and those who rejected the new belief were Sunnites. The Shiites believed the only rulers of the Islamic community were descendants of the fourth caliph, Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali. Shiism stirred up a lot of protests and revolts. The growing divisions and internal rifts destroyed the Umayyad Empire. The Umayyad family was brutally massacred by a descendant of Muhammad's uncle, Abbas. The Abbasid caliph moved the capital to Baghdad, and it survived until 1258. Only one Umayyad family member survived, and he created an independent caliphate in Spain. Several independent caliphates began to show up everywhere.

It Islamic economy and society were prosperous despite the divisions among the Islamic community. Agriculture and a pastoral economy were vital along the caravan routes. Trade among the cities and towns allowed for some unity. Damascus and Toledo were known for their steel; Cordoba traded its leather; and the Eastern towns were known for their silk, linen, and cotton. Technology was borrowed from Byzantium, India, and China, and the official

language of Islam was Arabic. “ A vigorous urban life, concentrated in the cities of Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba, distinguished medieval Islamic society” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 185). Their streets were filled with merchants, artisans, and beggars.

The role of women changed from the beginning of Islamic religion to what the role of women is today. Women played a large role in conversion during the early days of Islam. The Koran placed a huge importance on family, and women received support from their husbands. As years, passed the roles of women became more and more restrictive. “ Muhammad had urged his wives to live in seclusion” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 185). These rooms of seclusion were known as harems. After puberty all women were required to live in harems. If women left the confines of their homes, they were required to wear a veil covering the face and the head.

The Arabic culture contributed so much to global culture. They gave several contributions in mathematics, medical education, astronomy, and philosophy. In mathematics, the Arabs added the number zero to the Hindus' intricate numbering system. Algebra was also developed by the Arabs. Al-Razi wrote around 140 medical descriptions; astrologers and astronomers were responsible for the astrolabe and the improvement of the tables of antiquity. Averroes was the most vital Islamic philosopher. He “ wrote commentaries on Aristotle and exerted a profound influence on Christian as well as Islamic philosophy” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 186).

Islamic decline was first apparent due to the growing military weakness caused by the new invasions on their home front. Christians were

determined to take back the Iberian Peninsula, and the Christians were successful in doing so. The Seljuks conquered Baghdad in 1055, and in 1099 Jerusalem broke free from Islamic control during the First Crusade. Warriors were no longer receiving salaries, but instead they were given land. This added to the decline by weakening “central authority” (Chambers et al, 2010, p. 187). Despite the decline of Medieval Islamic civilization, the life and prosperity of the religion is one for the textbooks. Chambers defined Islam as a strong religion. This is still true to this day.

Bibliography

Chambers, M., Hanawalt, B., Rabb, T. K., Woloch, I., & Tiersten, L. (2010). *The Western Experience* (10th ed). New York: McGraw Hill.