

The rise of islam: reasons for it's success

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



The Rise Of Islam: Reasons For it's Success * The twenty first century recognizes Islam as the second largest religion in the world. The initial rise of Islam in the 7th century in the city of Mecca, modern day Saudi Arabia, was extensive and rapid. In its first few centuries Islam spread as far as the west near the Atlantic Ocean and Far East in Asia. To deduce why Islam's initial expansion was so successful and rapid calls for an understanding of three major factors, the life the pioneer of Islam Mohammed, Islam's innate tolerance, and the concept of jihad. * Much of what actually made Islam's expansion strong and successful can be credited to the prophet Mohammed. Learning from life experiences and the world around him Mohammad was able to give Islam its core values and content. His life experiences and personality are said to be the foundation and backbone of Islam, as well as a key factor to its nearly invisible expansion. Muhammad was born in 570 CE and became an orphan at a young age. His experiences being impoverished and orphaned in a society that heavily relied on family tribal relations greatly influenced his desire to make his followers accountable for the economic welfare of all community members, not just family. There are many quaranic verses that exemplify this humility, for example " And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude. " The idea that a person was just as responsible for their neighbor as their family was not only something new at the time, but largely appealing to highest and lowest of societal classes. Appealing to those members of society who felt alienated allowed for a feeling of belonging and economic help, and a strong sense of dignity to those who had more than enough wealth needed

to survive. Thus the more he preached his message and revelations, the more followers from all societal class joined Islam. * Mecca, in the 7th century, was a large trading city and a common meeting ground for many businessmen and merchants of different races, religions, classes, and regions. The diverse experiences and people he encountered, as well as the social tensions he experienced because of vast economic inequality, allowed the prophet to understand and relate to many people of different walks of life. He strongly emphasized the disregard of differences like race and class, and pushed for equality among all people. This view on equality is shown throughout the Quran, " Allah commands you that . . . when you judge between people (i. e., of any race, religion, family, class, etc.), you judge with justice." and "' Mankind is a single nation." Mohammad's pursuit of universal equality and brotherhood furthered its appeal, not only among the poor and the alienated, but people of different backgrounds, classes, and races. Mohammad's revelations gave guidance to people and communities that were largely independent of one another and allowed for a solution to the problem of large economic inequalities among people. Islam was thus not only universal, but also free of discriminations, allowing all ' "people from different countries, speaking diverse languages, attended gatherings of Mohammad" Unlike another popular religion at the time, Judaism, Islam did not designate a chosen people, but instead encouraged everyone that heard Mohammad's revelations to join the religion, regardless of age, sex, class, and race. * The second major factor in Islam's expansion also relates to justice among all people, meaning Islam's toleration and respect of non-Muslims and other religions. Muhammad believed that since all people

derived from the same heavenly father there was no reason not to treat them with respect and toleration, even if they chose not to convert. This desire for tolerance is exemplified in Mohammad's conquest of Mecca, the Battle of the Trench, and excerpts from Quran. * The conquest of Mecca appealed to the prophet Muhammad in order to stop the injustices and oppression that was occurring under the reign of Abu Sufyan. After Abu Sufyan's willingly converted to Islam Muhammad entered the city of Mecca nearly unopposed. As many Meccans knew, this was a city that treated Muhammad so unjustly and cruelly during the time of his revelations and went as so far as Muhammad and his followers getting kicked out of the city. After Sufyan's conversion Mecca and his old persecutors were at the mercy of Muhammad. Wanting to lead by example, no houses were robbed and not a single man or woman were hurt in the process of Mohammad's followers and soldiers entering the city. He also granted amnesty to the entire population and was quoted as reciting, " Surah Al-Fat-h (Victory), Verily We have given you (O Muhammad) a manifest victory. That Allah may forgive you your sins of the past and future, and complete His Favor on you, and guide you on the Straight Path; and that Allah may help you with strong help. " He did not force any individuals to convert, but instead he sent his followers to preach all over Mecca to anyone who would listen. This was extremely rare of conquerors at the time, in religious matters he was regarded as " one of the most tolerant rulers of all time. " * Another example of Islam and Muhammad's toleration was displayed at the Battle of the Trench. This is a battle where Banu Nadhir wanted to seek revenge against Muhammad and his Muslim followers; he contracted Medinians, Jews, and Christians as allies

to fight with him. When Muhammad received wind of this news he contemplated what he should do and asked for advice among his peers and friends. Solomon advised Muhammad to build trenches around the city of Medina in order to defend the city, to, which Muhammad agreed. In three days Muslims built a trench around the city of Medina so that hopefully no blood would be shed, even among his enemies. This battle not only demonstrates the prophet's rigid self control and humility, but also his elevated view of human worth, Muslim or not. * Although Muslims do not worship Muhammad, a main goal of all Muslims was and still is to emulate him in all aspects of life. So it no surprise that the Quran also revealed and explain how Muslims should be tolerant human beings. The most common aspect of conquering was to permit Christians and Jews, which are regarded as ' people of the Book', to keep practicing their religion without persecution while paying a small tax that was often lowered than their previous rule. For example, " Forgive and show indulgence to them...Whosoever surrendereth his purpose to God while doing good, his reward is with his Lord; and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve" As well as, " If you argue with the people of the scriptures, do it in an amicable manner. But (do not argue) with those of them who are unjust and unfair. Say to them, " We believe in that which is sent to us, and that which was sent to you. Our God and your God is only One, and to Him we submit. " At the time of his conquests this was highly unusual for conquerors to be so tolerant, by doing so Muhammad secured the lives of Muslims and the conquered alike. In the nineteenth century a French traveler by the name of Elisee Reclus proclaimed that " Muslim Turks allowed all the followers of different religions

to perform their religious duties and rituals, and that Christian subjects of the Ottoman Sultan were more free to live their own lives than the Christians who lived in the lands under the rule of any rival Christian sect. " * The third major factor that lead to Islam's vast expansion is the concept of jihad. Early Islam also benefited from territorial conquests through the idea of Jihad throughout Muhammad's life through the Arabian Peninsula, throughout the world thereafter. The concept of Jihad is displayed throughout the Quran, and is said to be a religious duty of all Muslims. The literal translation of jihad from Arabic means ' striving', meaning striving to live a moral life by defending and fighting for Islam's spread. Although, this ambiguous concept can be interpreted in violent and non-violent manners the concept of warfare jihad did not fall into place until after the prophets death laid out by the Sharia, which is a code of conduct interpreted from the Quran. Nevertheless, Muhammad, being the great warrior the he was, did outline the concept of Jihad several times in the Quran, hoping his followers would strive to spread Islam and Islamic rule. For example, " O Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is Hell, - an evil refuge indeed" and " Therefore listen not to the Unbelievers, but strive against them with the utmost strenuousness. " Although these verses may seem violent in nature, Muhammad was not in the habit of killing the conquered or forced conversions, his only goal was to spread Islam. His actions displayed that although his was a powerful leader, he was still a spiritual leader to be emulated. During Islamic conquests Muslim soldiers were also motivated by Jihad because they knew God, as well as Muhammad, promised them acceptance into Heaven if they died trying to

expand Islam With the help of Muhammad's humility, military and political power, as well as the concept of jihad Islam reached the entire Arab Peninsula, and the world after the prophets death * In conclusion, Muhammad was the pioneer of his time by being able to rise above the values and injustices of era. He was a military, political, and religious leader that sought equality for all people, regardless of race, sex, class, gender, and religion. Islam success and vast spread through his lifetime, and thereafter, can be attributed to the life the pioneer of Islam Mohammed, Islam's innate tolerance, and jihad. The combination of these three major factors lead to the fastest expansion in history, as well as the second largest religion today.

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