

# Commerce and trade in christianity and islam assignment

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Commerce and trade play major roles in every civilization and is appreciated and needed by all, however, trade and commerce contrast with the religions, mainly Christianity and Islam. While Christianity appalls and forbids trading, Islam embraces it with open arms because their founder, Muhammad, was a merchant as well. The ideas of trade and religion changed from the time it began between 70-80 CE until the 15th and 16th centuries and both religions showed a change in their tolerance of commerce and trade.

Beginning from 70-80 CE, Christianity had a negative view on trading. In the Gospel of Matthew, it is stated that those who amass a great opulence have a more difficult time getting into the Kingdom of God because they have become very materialistic. When one becomes materialistic they tend to yearn for more and more wealth and therefore losing sight of God, however, St. Godric's life was recorded and told by Reginald , who was a monk of Durham in 1170, and in his life, St.

Godric was once a merchant. In his younger years, Reginald tells us that Godric was a successful merchant; he made good profits and benefitted greatly from his occupation. As the years continued, Godric became less interested in these material possessions and wanted a more solitude life, so he gave all of his superfluous assets to charity and became a hermit and lived in the light of God. In 1273, the Summa Theologica was written by St.

Thomas Aquinas and in his book he confronted the idea of trade and how it played a role in a person's mortality and in disparity with the Golden Rule. Aquinas believes that merchants and traders are con-artists and that trade is only fair when it compares to the Golden Rule of " Do unto others as you

would have them done unto you”, such as receiving a proper amount for an item and selling it to someone at the most reasonable price, and only then will trade be accepted by the Church. Since Muhammad was a merchant, his people saw no harm in trade and commerce whatsoever.

In the Muslim Qur’an, about 620-650 CE, it was taught that when a person is trading valuables, one must be honest, fair and be truthful of the items worth and then Muslims will have attitudes that will lead them into Heaven. Also in this passage, it is said, “ On the day of judgment, the honest, truthful Muslim merchant will take rank with the martyrs of the faith” and this statement shows how much trade was accepted and valued in the faith. In the fourteenth century, a Muslim scholar named Ibn Khaldun discusses his opinions on trade.

Ibn believes that trade is distasteful, dishonest, and deceitful to all and while he sounds as if he dislikes trade, which he does, he realizes and accepts that while trade and commerce is a disreputable business to be associated with, it is necessary to society not just in one area, but other empires and countries. Starting from the fourteenth century, the views on trade from each religion started to shift. As noted by Ibn Khaldun, he is a Muslim man who strongly disagrees with trade and so the Islamic religion begins to follow in his thoughts.

While the Muslims lean away from trade, the Christians begin to accept it into their religion and retract their forbidding of the industry. In document six, which is a document from the Christian point of view, all three letters discuss each person’s opinion on trade. In all of the letters, trade is lauded

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by the writers but in the first letter, the writer expresses that you can find beautiful and valuable treasures from merchants but if they are not in reasonable price ranges, do not waste time on that one piece of art unless the master artist is in need.

In the second letter, a mother writes to her son, who is a merchant, and she tells him that he must embrace the gift that has been given to him from God, that God has blessed him with all of his wealth. She also tells her son that since he has been blessed with his riches, he should not crave for more because he has enough to meet his requirements on living. Finally in the third letter, a man that is ordering wool declares that he shall pay the amount that was asked of him because the profit is in the name of God.

In the Islamic religion during the 15th and 16th centuries, trade is becoming frowned upon by an Islamic court decision because the choice made was that it is more important to live up to the goals of society rather than profit for ones well being. As times began to change, the religions began to change their opinions on trade and began seeing this business in different perspectives.

All seven documents have been written by scholarly people and some have excerpts from great, intellectual books such as the Bible, Qur'an, and Summa Theologica, but one group that was not included in these documents was the merchants themselves. Some merchants may have agreed with their religions on either being against or supportive of trade but might have traded in order to survive or others may have disagreed with their religious

beliefs and became involved in the business no matter how their religion viewed it.