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The Muslim Community in History

The history of Islam has often been linked to the existence of an Islamic state or empire. From its beginnings, Islam existed and spread as a community-state; it was both a faith and a political order. Within centuries after his death, Muhammad's local Arabian polity became a vast empire, extending from North Africa to Southeast Asia. The development of Islam and state institutions (the caliphate, law, education, the military, social services) were intertwined. Again, the Prophetic period provided the paradigm for later generations. For it was in Medina that the Quranic mandate took on form and substance under the guidance and direction of the Prophet.

The Medinan community formed a total framework for state, society, and culture. It epitomized the Quranic mandate for Muslims as individuals and as a community "to transform the world itself through action in the world." [8] This aspiration and ideal has constituted the challenge for the Islamic community throughout much of its history. It inspired Muhammad to transform a local sheikdom into a transtribal state.

Muhammad and the Medinan State

Seventh-century Arabia was dominated by two great empires: the Byzantine (Christian), or Eastern Roman, empire and the Sasanian Persian (Zoroastrian) empire. In the middle was the Arabian Peninsula, composed of apparently weak and divided tribal societies. Within one hundred years, both empires would fall before the armies of Allah as Muhammad and his successors united Arabia under the umbrella of Islam, which provided a principle of organization and motivation. In time, a

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vast empire and a commonwealth of Islamic states would come to dominate much of the world. Its missionaries would be soldiers, merchants, and mystics. Islam would provide the basis of community identity and the rationale or legitimacy for rulers and their policies of expansion and conquest. Thus, for example, the wars of conquest were termed *fath*, "opening or victory" of the way for Islam. As Muhammad governed a transtribal state in the name of Islam, so too the Islamic community became associated with an expansive empire. Why and how did this come to pass?

Shortly after the surrender of Mecca, Muhammad turned his attention to the extension and consolidation of his authority over Arabia. Envoys were sent and alliances forged with surrounding tribes and rulers. The fiercely independent Bedouin tribes of Arabia were united behind the Prophet of Islam through a combination of force and diplomacy. As Muhammad was both head of state and messenger of God, so too were the envoys and soldiers of the state the envoys and soldiers of Islam, its first missionaries. Along with their treaties and armies, they brought the Quran and the teachings of their faith. They spread a way of life that affected the political and social order as well as individual life and worship. Islam encompassed both a faith and a sociopolitical system. Ideally, this new order was to be a community of believers, acknowledging the ultimate sovereignty of God, living according to His law, obeying His Prophet, and dedicating their lives to spreading God's rule and law. This was the message and vision that accompanied Arab armies as they burst out of Arabia and established their supremacy throughout the Middle East.

What is most striking about the early expansion of Islam is its rapidity and success. Western scholars have marveled at it. Muslim tradition has viewed the conquests as a miraculous proof or historic validation of the truth of Islam's claims and a sign of God's guidance. Within a decade, Arab forces overran the Byzantine and Persian armies, exhausted by years of warfare, and conquered Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Persia, and Egypt. The momentum of these early victories was extended to a series of brilliant battles under great generals like Khalid ibn al-Walid and Amr ibn al-As, which extended the boundaries of the Muslim empire to Morocco and Spain in the west and across Central Asia to India in the east. Driven by the economic rewards from conquest of richer, more developed areas, united and inspired by their new faith, Muslim armies proved to be formidable conquerors and effective rulers, builders rather than destroyers. They replaced the indigenous rulers and armies of the conquered countries, but preserved much of their government, bureaucracy, and culture. For many in the conquered ter-

ritories, it was no more than an exchange of masters, one that brought peace to peoples demoralized and disaffected by the casualties and heavy taxation that resulted from the years of Byzantine-Persian warfare. Local communities were free to continue to follow their own way of life in internal, domestic affairs. In many ways, local populations found Muslim rule more flexible and tolerant than that of Byzantium and Persia. Religious communities were free to practice their faith—to worship and be governed by their religious leaders and laws in such areas as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. In exchange, they were required to pay tribute, a poll tax (*jizya*) that entitled them to Muslim protection from outside aggression and exempted them from military service. They were therefore called the "protected ones" (*dhimmi*). In effect, this often meant lower taxes, greater local autonomy, rule by fellow Semites with closer linguistic and cultural ties than the hellenized, Greco-Roman elites of Byzantium, and greater religious freedom for Jews and indigenous Christians. Most of the Christian churches, such as the Nestorians, Monophysites, Jacobites, and Copts, had been persecuted as heretics and schismatics by Christian orthodoxy. For these reasons, some Jewish and Christian communities aided the invading armies, regarding them as less oppressive than their imperial masters. In many ways, the conquests brought a Pax Islamica to an embattled area:

> The conquests destroyed little: what they did suppress were imperial rivalries and sectarian bloodletting among the newly subjected population. The Muslims tolerated Christianity, but they disestablished it; henceforward Christian life and liturgy, its endowments, politics and theology, would be a private and not a public affair. By an exquisite irony, Islam reduced the status of Christians to that which the Christians had earlier thrust upon the Jews, with one difference. The reduction in Christian status was merely judicial; it was unaccompanied by either systematic persecution or a blood lust, and generally, though not everywhere and at all times, unmarred by vexatious behavior.[9]

A common issue associated with the spread of Islam is the role of jihad, so-called holy war. While Westerners are quick to characterize Islam as a religion spread by the sword, modern Muslim apologists sometimes explain jihad as simply defensive in nature. In its most general sense, jihad in the Quran and in Muslim practice refers to the obligation of all Muslims to strive (*jihad*, self-exertion) or struggle to follow God's will. This includes both the struggle to lead a virtuous life and the universal mission of the Muslim community to spread God's rule and law through teaching, preaching, and, where necessary, armed struggle. Contrary to popular belief, the early conquests did not seek to spread the faith

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through forced conversion but to spread Muslim rule. Many early Muslims regarded Islam solely as an Arab religion. Moreover, from an economic perspective, increase in the size of the community through conversion diminished Arab Muslims' share in the spoils of conquest. As Islam penetrated new areas, people were offered three options: (1) conversion, that is, full membership in the Muslim community, with its rights and duties; (2) acceptance of Muslim rule as "protected" people and payment of a poll tax; (3) battle or the sword if neither the first nor the second option was accepted. The astonishing expansion of Islam resulted not only from armed conquest but also from these two peaceful options. In later centuries, in many areas of Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia, the effective spread of Islam would be due primarily to Muslim traders and Sufi (mystic) missionaries who won converts by their example and their preaching.

The Caliphate (632–1258)

Given Muhammad's formative and pivotal role, his death (632) threatened to radically destabilize the community. Who was to lead? What was to happen to the community? The companions of the Prophet moved quickly to steady and reassure the community. Abu Bakr, an early follower of Muhammad, announced the death of the Prophet to the assembled faithful: "Muslims! If any of you has worshipped Muhammad, let me tell you that Muhammad is dead. But if you worship God, then know that God is living and will never die!" Nevertheless, the Prophet's death did plunge the Islamic community into a series of political crises revolving around leadership and authority. Issues of succession and secession were to plague the early community.

The caliphate (632–1258) has traditionally been divided into three periods: the "Rightly Guided Caliphs" (632–661), the Umayyad empire (661–750), and the Abbasid empire (750–1258). During these eras, a vast empire was created with successive capitals in Medina, Kufa, Damascus, and Baghdad. Stunning political success was complemented by a cultural florescence in law, theology, philosophy literature, medicine, mathematics, science, and art.

The Rightly Guided Caliphs

The caliphate began in 632 with the selection of Muhammad's successor. The first four caliphs were all companions of the Prophet: Abu Bakr (reigned 632–634), Umar ibn al-Khattab (634–644), Uthman ibn

Affan (644–656), and Ali ibn Abi Talib (656–661). Their rule is especially significant not only for what they actually did, but also because the period of Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs came to be regarded in Sunni Islam as the normative period. It provides the idealized past to which Muslims have looked back for inspiration and guidance, a time to be remembered and emulated.

The vast majority of Muslims (Sunni) believe that Muhammad died without designating his replacement or establishing a system for the selection of his successor. After an initial period of uncertainty, the Prophet's companions, the elders or leaders of Medina, selected or acknowledged Abu Bakr, an early convert and the Prophet's father-in-law, as caliph (*khalifa*, successor or deputy). Abu Bakr's designation as leader was symbolized by the offering of *baya* (oath), a handclasp used by the Arabs to seal a contract, in this case an oath of obedience and allegiance. Abu Bakr had been a close companion and a trusted adviser of Muhammad; he was a man respected for his sagacity and piety. Muhammad had appointed him to lead the Friday community prayer in his absence. As caliph, Abu Bakr was the political and military leader of the community. Although not a prophet, the caliph enjoyed religious prestige as head of the community of believers. This was symbolized in later history by the caliph's right to lead the Friday prayer and the inclusion of his name in its prayers.

Having resolved the question of political leadership and succession, Abu Bakr turned to the consolidation of Muslim rule in Arabia. Muhammad's death had precipitated a series of tribal rebellions. Many tribal chiefs claimed that their allegiance had been based on a political pact with Medina that ceased with the Prophet's death. Tribal independence and factionalism, long a part of Arab history, once more threatened the unity and identity of the new Islamic state. Abu Bakr countered that the unity of the community was based on the interconnectedness of faith and politics and undertook a series of battles that later Muslim historians would call the wars of apostasy. Relying on Khalid ibn al-Walid, whom Muhammad had dubbed "the sword of Allah," he crushed the tribal revolt, consolidating Muslim rule over the entire Arabian Peninsula, and thus preserved the unity and solidarity of the Islamic community-state.

Abu Bakr's successor, Umar, initiated the great period of expansion and conquest. One of the great military leaders of his time, he added the title "Commander of the Faithful" to that of "Successor" or "Deputy of the Prophet of God." He also introduced a new method for the selection of his successor. On his deathbed, Umar appointed an "election committee" to select the next caliph. After due consultation, the

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council of electors chose Uthman ibn Affan from the Umayyad clan, a leading Meccan family. This was accompanied by the traditional sign of allegiance, the clasping of hands. Thus, based on the practice of the first three caliphs, a pattern was established for selecting the caliph from the Quraysh tribe through a process characterized by consultation and an oath of allegiance.

Before long, tribal factionalism and the threat of rebellion resurfaced in the community. Uthman's family had been among the strongest foes of the Prophet. Many of the Medinan elite, who had been among the early supporters of Muhammad, resented Uthman's accession to power and the increased prominence and wealth of his family. Although personally pious, Uthman lacked the presence and leadership skills of his predecessors. Accusations that the caliph was weak and guilty of nepotism fueled political intrigue. In 656, Uthman was assassinated by a group of mutineers from Egypt. The caliph's murder was the first in a series of Muslim rebellions and tribal fratricides that would plague the Islamic community's political development.

The Caliph Ali and the First Civil Wars

Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, succeeded Uthman as the fourth caliph. Ali was devoted to Muhammad and among the first to embrace Islam. He had married Fatima, the only surviving child of Muhammad and Khadijah, with whom he had two sons, Hasan and Husayn. Ali was a charismatic figure who inspired fierce loyalty and commitment. Many of Ali's supporters (Alids) believed that leadership of the Islamic community should remain within the family of the Prophet and that, indeed, Muhammad had designated Ali as his rightful successor and heir. For these partisans of Ali, later to be called Shii (*shiat-u-Ali*, party of Ali), the first three caliphs were interlopers who had denied Ali his rightful inheritance. However, their satisfaction and expectations were to be short-lived. Within the few short years that Ali ruled, the caliphate was racked by two civil wars. Ali's authority was challenged by two opposition movements: first, by a coalition headed by Muhammad's widow, Aisha (the daughter of Abu Bakr), and second, by the forces of Muawiyah, the governor of Syria and a relative of Uthman. Ali's failure to find and prosecute Uthman's murderers became the pretext for both revolts. In the first, Ali crushed a triumvirate led by Aisha, the youngest wife of Muhammad. The "Battle of the Camel," so named because it took place around the camel on which Aisha was mounted, marked the first time a caliph had led his army against another Muslim army.

Of greater long-range significance was Muawiyah's challenge to Ali's authority. Securely established in Damascus with a strong army, Muawiyah, the nephew of Uthman, had refused to step down and accept Ali's appointment of a replacement. In 657, at Siffin (in modern-day Syria), Ali led his army against his rebellious governor. Faced with defeat, Muawiyah's men raised Qurans on the tips of their spears and called for arbitration according to the Quran, crying out, "Let God decide." Although the arbitration proved inconclusive, it yielded two results that would have lasting effects. A splinter group of Alids, the Kharijites or "seceders," broke with Ali for having failed to subdue Muawiyah; Muawiyah walked away from Siffin and continued to govern Syria, extending his rule to Egypt as well. When Ali was murdered by Kharijites in 661, Muawiyah laid successful claim to the caliphate, moving its capital to Damascus and frustrating Alid belief that leadership of the community should be restricted to Ali's descendants. With the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty, the "golden age" of Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs came to an end and the caliphate became an absolute monarchy.

Despite the turmoil during the early caliphal years, Muslims regard the period of Muhammad and the first generation of companions or elders as normative for a variety of reasons. First, God sent down His final and complete revelation in the Quran and the last of His prophets, Muhammad. Second, the Islamic community-state was created, bonded by a common religious identity and purpose. Third, the sources of Islamic law, the Quran and the example of the Prophet, originated at this time. Fourth, this period of the early companions serves as the reference point for all Islamic revival and reform, both traditionalist and modernist. Fifth, the success and power that resulted from the near-miraculous victories and geographic expansion of Islam constitute, in the eyes of believers, historical validation of the message of Islam.

Organization and Institutions

The early caliphate established the pattern for the organization and administration of the Islamic state. Islam provided the basic identity and ideology of the state, a source of unity and solidarity. The caliph's authority and leadership were rooted in his claim to be the successor of the Prophet as head of the community. Muhammad's practice provided the model for governance. The caliph exercised direct political, military, judicial, and fiscal control of the Muslim community. He was chosen through a process of consultation, nomination, and selection

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by a small group of electors who, after pledging their allegiance, presented the caliph to the people for acceptance by public acclamation. The caliph was the protector and defender of the faith; he was to assure the following of God's law and spread the rule of God through expansion and conquest. The community was a brotherhood of believers, a society based on religious rather than tribal solidarity.

In general, the Arabs did not occupy conquered cities but established garrison towns nearby, such as Basra and Kufa in Iraq, Fustat (Cairo) in Egypt, and Qairawan in North Africa. From these towns, conquered territories were governed and expeditions launched. They were centered around a mosque, which served as the religious and public focal point of the towns. Conquered territories were divided into provinces, each of which was administered by a governor who was usually a military commander. The internal civil and religious administration remained in the hands of local officials. An agent of the caliph oversaw the collection of taxes and other administrative activities. Revenue for the state came from the captured lands and taxes.

The Islamic system of taxes took several forms: the tithe or wealth tax to benefit the poor and a land tax paid by Muslims; the poll tax and tribute, later a land tax, paid by non-Muslims. All revenue was owned, collected, and administered by the state. The distribution of revenue was managed by the registry at Medina through a system of payments and pensions based on priority in accepting Islam. The Muslims at Medina and the family of the Prophet enjoyed a special place of honor because of their closeness to Muhammad and their fidelity to God's call.

Muslim society was divided into four major social classes. The elites of society were the Arab Muslims, with special status given to the companions of the Prophet because of their early support and role in establishing the community. Next came the non-Arab converts to Islam. Although in theory all Muslims were equal before God, in fact, practice varied. Under the Umayyads, non-Arab Muslims were clearly second-class citizens. They continued to pay those taxes levied on non-Muslims even after their conversion. The *dhimmi,* or non-Muslim People of the Book (those who possessed a revealed Scripture, Jews and Christians), constituted communities within and subject to the wider Islamic community-state. In time, this protected status was extended to Hindus and Buddhists. Finally, there were the slaves. As in much of the Near East, slavery had long existed among the Arabs. Although the Quran commanded the just and humane treatment of slaves (16:71) and regarded their emancipation as a meritorious act (90:13; 58:3), the system of slavery was adopted in a modified form. Only captives in

battle could be taken as slaves. Neither Muslims nor Jews and Christians could be enslaved in early Islam.

Thus, religion played an important role in the government, law, taxation, and social organization of society.

The Umayyad Empire: Creation of an Arab Kingdom

The advent of Umayyad rule set in motion a process of continued expansion and centralization of authority that would transform the Islamic community from an Arab shaykhdom into an Islamic empire whose rulers were dependent on religion for legitimacy and the military for power and stability.

In 661, Muawiyah (reigned 661–80) laid claim to the caliphate and ushered in the Umayyad era (661–750): imperial, dynastic, and dominated by an Arab military aristocracy. The capital was moved to Damascus. This permanent shift from the less sophisticated Arabian heartland to the established, cosmopolitan Greco-Roman Byzantine city symbolized the new imperial age. From this new center, the Umayyads completed the conquest of the entire Persian and half the Roman (Byzantine) empire. When Muawiyah seized power, Islam had already spread to Egypt, Libya, the Fertile Crescent, Syria, Iraq, and Persia across Armenia to the borders of Afghanistan. Under the Umayyads, Muslims captured the Maghreb (North Africa), Spain, and Portugal, marched across Europe until they were halted in the heart of France by Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours in 732, and extended the empire's borders to the Indian subcontinent. The accomplishments of the Umayyads were indeed remarkable. Damascus became an even greater imperial capital than it had been under Byzantine rule. Umayyad rulers developed a strong centralized dynastic kingdom, an Arab empire. The more advanced government, institutions, and bureaucracy of Byzantium were adopted and adapted to Arab Muslim needs. Native civil servants and ministers were retained to guide and train their Muslim masters. In time, through a process of conversion and assimilation, language and culture, state and society were Arabized and Islamized. Arabic became the language of government as well as the lingua franca of what today constitutes North Africa and much of the Middle East. Islamic belief and values constituted the official norm and reference point for personal and public life.

Umayyad rulers relied on Islam for legitimacy and as a rationale for their conquests. Caliphs were the protectors and defenders of the faith charged with extending the rule of Islam. The basis of Umayyad unity

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and stability was the establishment of an Arab monarchy and reliance on Arab, in particular Syrian, warriors. Contrary to previous practice, hereditary succession, not selection or election, restricted the caliphate to the Umayyad house. This innovation, or departure from early Islamic practice, became the pretext for later Muslim historians, writing with Abbasid patronage, to denounce Umayyad rule as kingship and thus un-Islamic. In fact, a form of hereditary succession and dynastic rule became standard practice for the remainder of the caliphal period. Centralization and militarization of the state resulted in an increasingly autocratic and absolutist government supported and protected by its military.

Umayyad society was based on the creation and perpetuation of an Arab military aristocracy that constituted a hereditary social caste. Syrian troops were the heart of the caliphs' powerful military. As the source of caliphal power and security, they were amply rewarded from the booty and tribute that poured into Damascus as a result of the conquests. Arab Muslims enjoyed special tax privileges, exempted from the more substantial taxes levied on non-Arab Muslims and non-Muslims. This preferential treatment became a source of contention, especially among non-Arab Muslims, who regarded their lesser status as a violation of Islamic egalitarianism. Their alienation contributed to the eventual downfall of the Umayyad dynasty.

Divisions Within the Islamic Community

As had been done from the time of the Prophet, critics and opponents used an "Islamic yardstick" to judge or condemn the Umayyads and legitimate their own actions and aspirations. Political, social, economic, and religious grievances were viewed through the prism of an Islamic ideal relevant to all areas of life. Thus, Umayyad practice incurred an opposition that ranged from Kharijites, Alids (Shii), and disgruntled non-Arab Muslims to the early legal scholars and mystics of Islam.

The Kharijites. The Kharijites originated in the time of the caliphs Uthman and Ali. They represent the earliest example of radical dissent in Islam and were the first, in a series of movements, to offer a different concept of the nature of the community and its leadership. Combining a rigorous puritanism and religious fundamentalism with an "exclusivist egalitarianism," the Kharijites emerged as revolutionaries who, despite their seeming lack of success in their own times, continue to inspire contemporary radical groups like Egypt's Takfir wal Hijra and Jamaat al-Jihad.

As previously noted, the occasion for the Kharijite secession from the main body of the community was Ali's submission to arbitration in his struggle with Muawiyah. For the Kharijites the situation was simple. Muawiyah had challenged the legitimate authority of the caliph; this grave sin rendered him an apostate or infidel, and thus Ali, and all true Muslims, had an obligation to wage jihad until Muawiyah desisted or was subdued. When the arbitration was announced, the Kharijites shouted, "Only God can decide." It was not the job of human beings to counter God's command and sit as judge. As a result, the Kharijites believed that Ali too was now guilty of a grave sin and no longer the legitimate head of the community. This early incident illustrates the basic Khariji beliefs. The Kharijites were extremist. They were very pious believers who interpreted the Quran and Sunna (example) of the Prophet literally and absolutely. Therefore, they believed that the Quranic mandate to "command the good and prohibit evil" must be applied rigorously and without compromise. Acts were either good or bad, permitted or forbidden. Similarly, their world was divided neatly into the realms of belief and un-belief, Muslim (followers of God) and non- Muslim (enemies of God), peace and warfare. Faith must be informed by action; public behavior must rigorously conform to Islamic principles if one was to be a Muslim. Therefore, any action contrary to the letter of the law constituted a grave sin that rendered a person a non-Muslim, subject to excommunication (exclusion), warfare, and death unless the person repented. Sinners were not simply backsliders but apostates who were guilty of treason against the community-state. All true believers were obliged to fight and subdue these nominal or self-styled Muslims.

Within their exclusivist view of the world and the nature of the Muslim community, the Kharijites incorporated an egalitarian spirit that maintained that any good Muslim, even a slave, could be the leader, or imam, of the community, provided he had community support. Their puritan absolutism demanded that a leader guilty of sin be deposed.

When the Kharijites broke with Ali, they went about establishing their vision of the true charismatic community based strictly and literally on the Quran and Sunna. Modeling themselves on the example of the Prophet, they first withdrew (*hijra*) to live together in a bonded community. From their encampments, they waged battle (*jihad*) against their enemies, seeing themselves as the instruments of God's justice. They were the people of God (paradise) fighting against the people of evil (hell). Since they were God's army struggling in a heavenly crusade against the forces of evil, violence, guerrilla warfare, and

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revolution were not only legitimate but obligatory in their battle against the sinful usurpers of God's rule. Defeated by Ali at Nahrawan in 658, they continued to lead uprisings and join in revolts against Muawiyah's Umayyad descendants and engaged in guerrilla warfare against subsequent Abbasid caliphs. A moderate branch of the Kharijites, known as the Ibadiyya, followers of Abd Allah ibn Ibad, founded Ibadi imamates in North (Tripolitania and Tahert) and East (Zanzibar) Africa, Yemen, and Oman. Their descendants still exist in small numbers in North Africa and in Oman, where the Ibadi faith is the official state religion.

Shii Islam. The first civil war between Ali and Muawiyah, which had resulted in the secession of the Kharijites and the alienation of Ali's supporters, came back to haunt the Umayyads. During the reign of Muawiyah's son, Yazid, a second round of civil wars broke out. One of these, the revolt of Ali's son Husayn, would lead to the division of the Islamic community into its two major branches, Sunni and Shii, and shape the worldview of Shii Islam.

When Yazid came to power in 680, Husayn, the son of Ali, was persuaded by a group of Alids in Kufa (Iraq) to lead a rebellion. However, when popular support failed to materialize, Husayn and his small band of followers were slaughtered by an Umayyad army at Karbala. The memory of this tragedy, the "martyrdom" of Alid forces, provided the paradigm of suffering and protest that has guided and inspired Shii Islam. For these partisans (*shia*) of Ali, the original injustice that had denied Ali his succession to Muhammad had been repeated, thwarting the rightful rule of the Prophet's family. Thus, the Shii developed their own distinctive vision of leadership and of history, centered on the martyred family of the Prophet and based on a belief that leadership of the Muslim community belonged to the descendants of Ali and Husayn.

The fundamental difference between Sunni and Shii Muslims is the Shii doctrine of the imamate as distinct from the Sunni caliphate. As we have seen, the caliph was the selected or elected successor of the Prophet. He succeeded to political and military leadership but not to Muhammad's religious authority. By contrast, for the Shii, leadership of the Muslim community is vested in the Imam (leader), who, though not a prophet, is the divinely inspired, sinless, infallible, religiopolitical leader of the community. He must be a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and Ali, the first Imam. He is both political leader and religious guide, the final authoritative interpreter of God's will as formulated in Islamic law. Whereas after the death of Muhammad,

Sunni Islam came to place final religious authority for interpreting Islam in the consensus (*ijma*) or collective judgment of the community (the consensus of the *ulama*, the traditional religious scholars), the Shii believe in continued divine guidance through their divinely inspired guide, the Imam.

Sunni and Shii Muslims also developed differing doctrines concerning the meaning of history. For Sunni historians, early Islamic success and power were signs of God's guidance and rewards to a faithful community as well as validation of Muslim belief and claims. For the Shii, history was the theater for the struggle of an oppressed and disinherited minority community to restore God's rule on earth over the entire community under the Imam. A righteous remnant was to persist in God's way against the forces of evil (Satan), as had Ali against Muawiyah and Husayn against the army of Yazid, to reestablish the righteous rule of the Imam. The lives of the suffering Imams, like that of Husayn, were seen as embodying the oppression and injustice experienced by a persecuted minority community. Realization of a just social order under the Imam was to remain a frustrated hope and expectation for centuries as the Islamic community remained under Sunni caliphal governments.

Rule of the Imam over the entire Muslim community was frustrated not only by "usurper" Sunni caliphs, but also by disagreements within the Shii community over succession. This led to three major divisions: Zaydi, Ismaili, and Ithna Ashari or Imami. The Zaydis claimed that Zayd ibn Ali, a grandson of Husayn, was the fifth Imam. The majority of the Shii recognized Muhammad al-Baqir and his son Jafar al-Sadiq as rightful heirs to the imamate. Unlike other Shii, who restricted the imamate to the descendants of Ali by his wife Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, Zaydis believed that any descendant of Ali could become Imam. They were political activists who, like the Kharijites, believed that the duty to enjoin the good and prohibit evil was incumbent on all Muslims at all times. They, too, rebelled against both Umayyad and Abbasid rule. The Zaydis were the first Shii to gain independence when Hasan ibn Zayd founded a Zaydi dynasty in Tabaristan, on the Caspian, in 864. Another Zaydi state was established in Yemen in 893, where it continued to exist until 1963.

In the eighth century, the majority of the Shii community split again into its two major branches in a dispute over whom the sixth Imam, Jafar al-Sadiq (d. 765), actually designated as his heir. While most accepted his younger son, Musa al-Kazim, some followed Ismail, the elder son. This resulted in the two major Shii communities, the Ithna Asharis, or Twelvers, and the Ismailis (sometimes called the Sev-

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eners). The numerical designation of each group stems from a crisis caused by the death or disappearance of their Imam and thus the disruption of hereditary succession. For the Twelvers, or Ithna Asharis, the end of imamate succession occurred in 874 with the disappearance of the twelfth Imam, the child Muhammad al-Muntazar (Muhammad, the awaited one). Shii theology resolved this dilemma with its doctrines of the absence or occultation of the Imam and his return in the future as the Mahdi (the expected one). For Shii, the Imam had not died but had disappeared and gone into hiding or seclusion. He would return as a messianic figure, the Mahdi, at the end of the world to vindicate his loyal followers, restore the community to its rightful place, and usher in a perfect Islamic society in which truth and justice will prevail. During the absence of the hidden Imam, the community was to await his return and be guided by its religious experts, *mujtahids*, those *ulama* (religious scholars) who interpret God's will, Islamic law, for the community. The Ismaili split into a number of subdivisions. For a major group of Ismailis, the line of Imams ended in 760 when Ismail, the designated seventh Imam, died before his father. Another group believed that Ismail had not died but was in seclusion and would return as the Mahdi. Others accepted Ismail's son, Muhammad, as Imam.

The Ismailis. The image of the Ismaili today as a prosperous merchant community, led by the Aga Khan, belies their early revolutionary origins.[10] The early Ismaili were a revolutionary missionary movement. They attacked and assassinated Sunni political and religious leaders, seized power, and at their peak, ruled an area that extended from Egypt to the Sind province of India. For the Ismaili, as for Shii in general, the Quran had two meanings, an exoteric, literal meaning and an esoteric, inner teaching. This secret knowledge was given to the Imam and through a process of initiation to his representatives and missionaries. The followers of the Imam, as distinguished from the majority of Muslims, constituted a religious elite who possessed the true guidance necessary for salvation and a mission to spread or propagate, by force if necessary, the message and rule of the Imam. Often functioning as secret organizations to avoid the Abbasid police, Ismaili also used *taqiyya* (to shield or guard), a common Shii practice that permits concealment of one's belief for self-protection or survival as a persecuted minority. The Ismaili consisted of a variety of such missionary communities or movements. During the early tenth century, one branch, the Qarmatians, attacked Syria, Palestine, and southern Mesopotamia, and set up their own state in Bahrain. Other groups

spread to North Africa and India. It was in North Africa and Egypt that the Ismaili Fatimid dynasty (named for Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, from whom the ruler claimed descent) was created. After an abortive attempt to conquer Syria, Ubayd Allah had fled to Qairawan (Tunisia), where he successfully seized power in 909, declaring himself the Mahdi and establishing a line of Fatimid Imams. In 969, Egypt was conquered and a new capital, Cairo (al-Qahira, the victorious), was built outside the older city of Fustat to celebrate the conquest of Egypt. The Fatimids established an absolute hereditary monarchy. The infallible Imam ruled over a strong, centralized monarchy that relied on its military and religious missionaries. From the tenth to the twelfth centuries, the Fatimids successfully competed with a weakened, fragmented Abbasid empire, spreading their influence and rule across North Africa, Egypt, Sicily, Syria, Persia, and Western Arabia to the Sind province of India. Although the state was Fatimid, the majority of the population remained Sunni. During this period, the Fatimid caliphate flourished culturally and commercially as well as militarily. Among its most enduring monuments was its religious center, the al-Azhar mosque in Cairo, which served as a training center for its missionary propagandists. Reputed to be one of the world's oldest universities, al-Azhar has remained an internationally recognized center of (Sunni) Islamic learning, training students from all over the Islamic world and issuing authoritative religious judgments on major issues and questions.

Although the Fatimids even managed to briefly capture Baghdad, their attempt to rule all of the *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam) came to an abrupt end in 1171 when Salah al-Din (Saladin) conquered Egypt and restored the Sunni rule of the (Seljuq) Abbasid caliphate. However, the Ismaili persist through several offshoots. The Nizari Ismaili began as a Persian-based sect under Hasan al-Sabah that broke away from the Fatimids in 1094. Called the assassins and guided by a series of Grand Masters who ruled from a stronghold on Mt. Alamut in northern Persia (thus each becoming known as the Old Man of the Mountain), they were particularly effective in murdering Abbasid princes, generals, and leading *ulama* in the name of their hidden Imam.[11] They struck such terror in the hearts of their Muslim and Crusader enemies that their exploits in Persia and Syria earned them a name and memory in history long after they were overrun and driven underground by the Mongols in 1258. A descendant of Hasan al-Sabah, Hasan Ali Shah, received the honorary title Aga Khan through marriage to the daughter of the shah. He fled to India in 1840 after a failed revolt in Persia. Centered in Bombay, these Nizari (Khoja) Ismailis were led by a series of Imams,

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known as the Aga Khan, whose personal fortunes have been matched by the wealth of remarkably successful and thriving Ismaili communities in East Africa, South Asia, Britain, and Canada. Currently, the Aga Khan oversees the spiritual and cultural life of the community. As its living Imam, he has been able to reinterpret Islam to respond to modern life. At the same time, he oversees extensive commercial and industrial Ismaili investments and supervises the many educational, medical, and social welfare projects of its philanthropic foundation.

The Druze. Among the sectarian offshoots of Ismailism were the Druze of Lebanon. The Druze date back to two Fatimid missionaries named Darazi (d. 1019) and Hamza ibn Ali, who had been encouraged by the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (reigned 996–1021) to spread the Ismaili faith in southern Lebanon. Al-Hakim was an eccentric ruler who took the title Imam and progressively came to believe that he was not only the divinely appointed religiopolitical leader but also the cosmic intellect, linking God with creation. Darazi and Hamza became leaders of a movement centered on recognition of al-Hakim as a divine incarnation, the highest or first cosmic intellect. This supernatural status became the excuse for his erratic, authoritarian behavior, which at times included the persecution of Ismaili, Sunni, and Christian leaders alike. When al-Hakim disappeared or was killed, they maintained that he had gone into seclusion to test the faith of his followers and would return to restore justice in the world. After Darazi's death, Hamza, now claiming to be the leader (imam) in Hakim's absence, organized and developed Hakim's cult into what became a separate religion. Hamza then disappeared, and was expected to return as the Mahdi at a later date with al-Hakim. In the interim, Baha al-Din al-Muktana served as the earthly link between Hamza and the community.

The Druze call themselves the unitarians, followers of al-Hakim who embodied and revealed the one true God. Forming a distinct religion, the Druze possess their own Scripture, the *Risail al-Hikma* (the Book of Wisdom), and law. The Book of Wisdom is a collection of letters from al-Muktana, al-Hamza, and al-Hakim. The Sharia, mosque, and *ulama* were replaced by Druze law, places of prayer, and religious leadership. The community is hierarchically organized. The two major divisions are the majority of ordinary members, the so-called ignorant, and the wise, those men and women who are initiated and as such can read the Scriptures and are expected to lead an exemplary life of regular prayer and abstention from wine, tobacco, and other stimulants. They can be recognized by the quality of their lives and their special dress or white turbans. Among the wise are a group of religious leaders

called shaykhs, noted for their learning and piety, who preside over meetings, weddings, and funerals. The head of the community is the *rais* (chief), who is selected from one of the leading families.

Historically, the Druze have been a secretive and closed community. They have steadfastly kept their texts, beliefs, and practices secret, carefully guarding them from outsiders. Regarded by both Sunni and Shii as heretics and living in a Sunni-dominated world, they too have followed the Shii doctrine of *taqiyya*, with its double meaning of caution and dissimulation for survival in a hostile world. Thus, although they do not observe the fast of Ramadan or pilgrimage to Mecca, when necessary they have outwardly followed the prevailing Sunni faith and a modified form of Hanafi (Islamic) law. Druze beliefs and practices emphasize solidarity; they neither accept converts nor marry outside the faith. They practice monogamy and endogamy and discourage divorce. The seven pillars or basic religious obligations reinforce a strong sense of community. They include speaking the truth to other members (though not necessarily to nonbelievers), mutual defense, and living separately from unbelievers. Unlike other monotheistic faiths, the Druze believe in the transmigration of souls until perfected souls cease to be reborn and ascend to the stars. At the end of time, when Hakim and Hamza return to establish a reign of justice, the faithful will be rewarded by being placed close to God. The Druze have survived in Syria, Israel, and especially Lebanon, where they number several hundred thousand.

Law and Mysticism

Dissatisfaction with Umayyad rule also resulted in the development of nonrevolutionary reform movements within society. The rapid geographic expansion and conquests brought the rise of new centers of power and wealth, an influx of "foreign" ways, and greater social stratification. The very success of the Umayyad empire contained the seeds of its downfall. With wealth and power came corruption and abuse of power, symbolized by the new lifestyle of its flourishing, cosmopolitan capital and the growth of new cities. This was accompanied by the infiltration of new ideas and practices. The strengths that came with acculturation were offset, in the eyes of some, by innovations that were seen as undermining the older Arab way of life. In addition to the disaffected Kharijites and Alids, a host of other critics sprang up who contrasted an idealized Medinan Islamic community with the realities of Umayyad life. This gave rise, in particular, to the growth of two Islamic movements or institutions, the *ulama* (religious scholars) and the Sufis (mystics).

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For a growing number of pious Muslims, who would become a religious and social class in the Muslim community known as the *ulama* (plural of *alim*, "learned" or scholar), Umayyad practice seemed more indebted to foreign innovations than to the practice of the Prophet and the early community. Arab power and wealth, not Islamic commitment and ideals, inspired and unified the empire. The behavior of many caliphs, the intrigues of court life, and the privileged status of new elites were regarded as having little to do with Islam. What the Umayyads had done was pragmatically necessary, because the Arabs had not had the institutions and trained personnel required for empire building, but their critics believed that the Umayyad system of incorporating the indigenous bureaucracy of the conquered lands inevitably produced an un-Islamic society based more on the command of the caliph than the command of God. The problem was epitomized by the application of Islamic law. God's law, they argued, should provide the blueprint for Muslim society. Yet, conquest and empire had introduced a diversity of cultures, lifestyles, and customs. The differing customary laws of Medina, Damascus, Kufa, and Basra, coupled with the caliph's decision and his judges' ability to settle disputes on the basis of their own discretion, resulted in a confused and often contradictory body of laws. Many asked, "Can God's will be discerned through so subjective a process; can His law for Muslims in Medina be so different from that in Kufa?" They responded that if all Muslims were bound to submit to and carry out God's law, then Islamic law ought to be defined clearly and with more uniformity. Maintaining that Islam offered a self-sufficient, comprehensive way of life based on the Quran and *sunna*, or custom, they argued that Islam must permeate every area of life. Umayyad practice and law should be brought into line with Islamic principles, and the institutions of the state should have as their source Islam and not the precedents of Byzantium.

The outcome of this movement was a burst of activity that would result in the development of Islamic religious sciences. Pious Muslims from all walks of life devoted themselves to the study of the Quran, Arabic language and linguistics, and the collection and examination of Prophetic traditions. In particular, in order to safeguard their beliefs and limit the power of the caliph, many devoted themselves to the formulation and explication of Islamic law. By the late Umayyad period, centers of law could be found in many cities of the empire.

Reaction to the excesses of empire contributed to the development of mysticism as well as law. Luxury, the pursuit of conquest and wealth, the transformation of the caliphate into a dynastic monarchy with the trappings of imperial court life, and the doubtful moral character of some of the Umayyad caliphs struck some pious Muslims as

standing in sharp contrast to the early example of Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs and the relative simplicity of life in Medina. They believed that Umayyad goals of power and wealth conflicted with and distracted from the true center and goal of Muslim life, Allah. Therefore, the early mystics preached a message stressing renunciation and detachment from worldly concerns and attachments for the pursuit of the "real" God. As we shall see, mysticism or Sufism became a major popular force within Islam that swept across the Muslim world, spreading its spirit of love and devotion.

Growth of "Islamic" Revolt

Despite the accomplishments of Umayyad rule, by the eighth century (720) anti-Umayyad sentiment had spread and intensified. It encompassed a variety of disaffected factions: non-Arab Muslims who denounced their second-class status vis-á-vis Arab Muslims as contrary to Islamic egalitarianism; Kharijites and Shii who continued to regard the Umayyads as usurpers; Arab Muslims in Mecca, Medina, and Iraq who resented the privileged status of Syrian families; and, finally, pious Muslims, Arab and non-Arab alike, who viewed the new cosmopolitan lifestyle of luxury and social privilege as foreign and an unwarranted innovation or departure from their established, Islamic way of life.

Opposition forces shared a discontent with Umayyad rule as well as a tendency to legitimate their own claims and agenda Islamically; they condemned Umayyad practice and policies as un-Islamic innovations and called for a return to the Quran and the practices of the Prophet and the early Medinan community:

> The ideology of a restoration of primitive Islam, with variants reflecting different trends, had conquered the masses, and, with the support of the majority of the learned men, became part of the programme of all, or nearly all, the leaders of parties. It triumphed when the Abbasids adopted it as their slogan.[12]

By 747, an opposition movement, with substantial Shii support, rallied behind Abu Muslim, a freed Abbasid slave. In 750, the Umayyads fell, and Abu al-Abbas, a descendant of the Prophet's uncle al-Abbas, was proclaimed caliph. Islam's capital was moved from Damascus to the newly created Baghdad, known in Arabic as the City of Peace. Under Abbasid rule, the Islamic community would become an empire remembered not only for its wealth and political power, but also for its extraordinary cultural activity and accomplishments.

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The Abbasid Caliphate: The Flowering of Islamic Civilization

Abbasid rule of the Islamic community ushered in an era of strong centralized government, great economic prosperity, and a remarkable civilization. Abbasid caliphs could be as autocratic and ruthless as many of their Umayyad predecessors. Indeed, Abu al-Abbas did not hesitate to take the title "the blood shedder" (*al-saffah*); he came to be remembered as Abu Abbas al-Saffah. The Abbasid caliphs consolidated their power by crushing their Shii supporters as well as their opponents. This betrayal further alienated the Shii from the Sunni majority. The name "Sunni" comes from their self-designation as *ahl al-sunna wal jamaa*, those who follow the Prophet's example and thus belong to his society or community.

The Abbasids came to power under the banner of Islam. Their seizure of power and continued dynastic reign were Islamically legitimated. However, the Abbasids took great care publicly to align their government with Islam. They became the great patrons of an emerging religious class, the *ulama* (religious scholars). They supported the development of Islamic scholarship and disciplines, built mosques, and established schools.

The Abbasids refined Umayyad practice, borrowing heavily from Persian culture, with its divinely ordained system of government. The caliph's claim to rule by divine mandate was symbolized by the transformation of his title from Successor or Deputy of the Prophet to Deputy of God and by the appropriation of the Persian-inspired title, Shadow of God on Earth. The ruler's exalted status was further reinforced by his magnificent palace, his retinue of attendants, and the introduction of a court etiquette appropriate for an emperor. Thus, subjects were required to bow before the caliph, kissing the ground, a symbol of the caliph's absolute power. Persian influence was especially evident in the government and military. Preempting critics of the previous regime, the Arab Syrian-dominated military aristocracy was replaced by a salaried army and bureaucracy in which non-Arab Muslims, especially Persians, played a major role. The Abbasids explained this change in terms of Islamic egalitarianism. More often than not, however, it was royal favor and fear, symbolized by the royal executioner who stood by the side of the caliph, that brought him prestige and motivated obedience.

The early centuries of Abbasid rule were marked by an unparalleled splendor and economic prosperity whose magnificence came to be immortalized in the *Arabian Nights* (*The Thousand and One Nights*),

with its legendary exploits of the exemplary caliph, Harun al-Rashid (reigned 786–809). In a departure from the past, Abbasid success was based not on conquest, but on trade, commerce, industry, and agriculture. The enormous wealth and resources of the caliphs enabled them to become great patrons of art and culture, and thus create the more significant and lasting legacy of the Abbasid period, Islamic civilization. The development of Islamic law, the Sharia, constitutes their greatest contribution to Islam. Since part of the indictment of the Umayyads had been their failure to implement an effective Islamic legal system, the Abbasids gave substantial support to legal development. The early law schools, which had begun only during the late Umayyad period (ca. 720), flourished under caliphal patronage of the *ulama*. Although Islam has no clergy or priesthood, by the eighth century the *ulama* had become a professional elite of religious leaders, a distinct social class within Muslim society. Their prestige and authority rested on a reputation for learning in Islamic studies: the Quran, traditions of the Prophet, law. Because of their expertise, they became the jurists, theologians, and educators in Muslim society, the interpreters and guardians of Islamic law and tradition. The judge (*qadi*) administered the law as it was developed by the early jurists, firmly establishing the Islamic court system.

In addition to law, the Abbasids were also committed patrons of culture and the arts. The process of Arabization, begun during the late Umayyad period, was completed by the end of the ninth century. Arabic language and tradition penetrated and modified the cultures of conquered territories. Arabic displaced local languages—Syriac, Aramaic, Coptic, and Greek—becoming the language of common discourse, government, and culture throughout much of the empire. Arabic was no longer solely the language of Muslims from Arabia but the language of literature and public discourse for the multiethnic group of new Arabic- speaking peoples, especially the large number of non-Arab converts, many of whom were Persian. Translation centers were created. From the seventh to the ninth centuries, manuscripts were obtained from the far reaches of the empire and beyond and translated from their original languages (Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Persian) into Arabic. Thus, the best works of literature, philosophy, and the sciences from other cultures were made accessible: Aristotle, Plato, Galen, Hippocrates, Euclid, and Ptolemy. The genesis of Islamic civilization was indeed a collaborative effort, incorporating the learning and wisdom of many cultures and languages. As in government administration, Christians and Jews, who had been the intellectual and bureaucratic backbone of the Persian and Byzantine empires, partici-

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pated in the process as well as Muslims. This "ecumenical" effort was evident at the Caliph al-Mamun's (reigned 813–33) House of Wisdom and at the translation center headed by the renowned scholar Hunayn ibn Ishaq, a Nestorian Christian. This period of translation and assimilation was followed by one of Muslim intellectual and artistic creativity. Muslims ceased to be merely disciples and became masters, in the process producing Islamic civilization, dominated by the Arabic language and Islam's view of life: "It was these two things, their language and their faith, which were the great contribution of the Arab invaders to the new and original civilization which developed under their aegis." [13] Major contributions were made in many fields: literature and philosophy, algebra and geometry, science and medicine, art and architecture. Towering intellectual giants dominated this period: al-Razi (865–925), al-Farabi (d. 950), ibn Sina (known as Avicenna, 980–1037), ibn Rushd (known as Averroes, d. 1198), al-Biruni (973–1048), and al-Ghazali (d. 1111). Islam had challenged the world politically; it now did so culturally. Great urban cultural centers in Cordoba, Baghdad, Cairo, Nishapur, and Palermo emerged and eclipsed Christian Europe, mired in the Dark Ages. The activities of these centers are reflected in the development of philosophy and science.

Islamic philosophy was the product of a successful transplant from Greek to Islamic soil, where it flourished from the ninth to the twelfth centuries. Muslim philosophers appropriated Hellenistic thought (Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus), wrote commentaries on and extended the teachings and insights of Greek philosophy within an Islamic context and worldview. The result was Islamic philosophy, indebted to Hellenism but with its own Islamic character. Its contribution was of equal importance to the West. Islamic philosophy became the primary vehicle for the transmission of Greek philosophy to medieval Europe. The West reappropriated its lost heritage as European scholars traveled to major centers of Islamic learning, retranslating the Greek philosophers and learning from the writings of their great Muslim disciples: men like al-Farabi, who had come to be known as "the second teacher or master" (the first being Aristotle), and ibn Sina (Avicenna), remembered as "the great commentator" on Aristotle. Thus we find many of the great medieval Christian philosophers and theologians (Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Abelard, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus) acknowledging their intellectual debt to their Muslim predecessors.

The enormous accomplishments of Islamic philosophy and science were the product of men of genius, multitalented intellectuals (who often mastered the major disciplines of medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy). They were the "renaissance" men of classical

Islam. Avicenna's reflections on his own training typifies the backgrounds of many of the great intellectuals of this period:

> I busied myself with the study of the *Fusus al-Hikam* [a treatise by al-Farabi] and other commentaries on physics and mathematics, and the doors of knowledge opened before me. Then I took up medicine . . . Medicine is not one of the difficult sciences, and in a very short time I undoubtedly excelled in it, so that physicians of merit studied under me. I also attended the sick, and the doors of medical treatments based on experience opened before me to an extent that can not be described. At the same time I carried on debates and controversies in jurisprudence. At this point I was sixteen years old.
>
> Then, for a year and a half, I devoted myself to study. I resumed the study of logic and all parts of philosophy. During this time I never slept the whole night through and did nothing but study all day long. Whenever I was puzzled by a problem . . . I would go to the mosque, pray, and beg the Creator of All to reveal to me that which was hidden from me and to make easy for me that which was difficult. Then at night I would return home, put a lamp in front of me, and set to work reading and writing. . . . I went on like this until I was firmly grounded in all sciences and mastered them as far as was humanly possible. . . . . Thus I mastered logic, physics, and mathematics.
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> The Sultan of Bukhara . . . was stricken by an illness which baffled the physicians. . . . . I appeared before him and joined them in treating him and distinguished myself in his service.
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> One day I asked his permission to go into their library, look at their books, and read the medical ones. . . . I went into a palace of many rooms, each with trunks full of books, back-to-back. In one room there were books on Arabic and poetry, in another books on jurisprudence, and similarly in each room books on a single subject. I . . . asked for those I needed . . . read these books, made use of them, and thus knew the rank of every author in his own subject. . . . When I reached the age of eighteen, I had completed the study of all these sciences. At that point my memory was better, whereas today my learning is riper.[14]

Islamic science was an integrated and synthetic area of knowledge. It was integrated in that Muslim scientists, who were often philosophers or mystics as well, viewed the physical universe from within their Islamic worldview and context as a manifestation of the presence of God, the Creator and source of unity and harmony in nature.[15] Islamic science was also a grand synthesis informed by indigenous and foreign sources (Arab, Persian, Hellenistic, Indian) and transformed by scholars and scientists in urban centers throughout the world of Islam. Thus, it constituted a major component of Islamic civilization, and in the eyes of many Muslims, a worthy complement to Islam's international political order. As one Muslim intellectual observed:

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> Islamic science came into being from a wedding between the spirit that issued from the Quranic revelation and the existing sciences of various civilizations which Islam inherited and which it transmuted through its spiritual power into a new substance, at once different from and continuous with what had existed before it. The international and cosmopolitan nature of Islamic civilization, derived from the universal character of the Islamic revelation and reflected in the geographical spread of the Islamic world, enabled it to create the first science of a truly international nature in human history.[16]

The legacy of Islamic civilization was that of a brilliant, rich culture. Its contributions proved to be as significant for the West, which in subsequent centuries appropriated and incorporated its knowledge and wisdom.

Thus during the Abbasid period, the comprehensiveness of Islam was clearly manifested and delineated:

> Islam—the offspring of Arabia and the Arabian Prophet—was not only a system of belief and cult. It was also a system of state, society, law, thought and art—a civilization with religion as its unifying, eventually dominating factor.[17]

For Muslim and non-Muslim alike, the political and cultural life of a vast empire, consisting of many tribal, ethnic, and religious groups, was brought within the framework of the Arabic language and Islamic faith.[18] Islamic civilization was the result of a dynamic, creative process as Muslims borrowed freely from other cultures. It proceeded from a sense of mission, power, and superiority. Muslims were the dominant force—masters not victims, colonizers not the colonized. The new ideas and practices were Arabized and Islamized. It was a process of change characterized by continuity with the faith and practice of Muhammad. Unlike the modern period, Muslims controlled the process of assimilation and acculturation. Their autonomy and identity were not seriously threatened by the specter of political and cultural domination. As with the early conquests and expansion of Islam, Muslims then (and now) regarded this brilliant period as a sign of God's favor and a validation of Islam's message and the Muslim community's universal mission.

The extraordinary spread and development of Islam was not without its religious conflicts. The same concern that had motivated the attempt by the *ulama* to preserve Islam in the face of caliphal whim and uncritical adoption of foreign, un-Islamic practices, led to conflicts between the *ulama* and those whom they sometimes regarded as their competitors, the Sufis and the philosophers. The *ulama* delineation of

law as the embodiment of the straight path of Islam set the criteria for belief and behavior in intellectual, social, and moral life and the pattern for orthodoxy (correct belief) or, perhaps more accurately, orthopraxy (correct practice). This vision of Muslim life as the observance of God's law did not always coincide comfortably with the Sufi emphasis on the interior path of contemplation and personal religious experience or the tendency of philosophy to give primacy to reason over the unquestioned acceptance of revelation. The tension between religious scholars on the one hand and philosophers and Sufis on the other was reflected in the life and work of a towering giant in the history of Islam, indeed in the history of religions, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali.

Ironically, the golden age of Islamic civilization paralleled the progressive political fragmentation of the universal caliphate. The relative peace, prosperity, and unity of the Islamic community, epitomized during the rule of Harun al-Rashid, was challenged internally by competing groups and externally by the Fatimids and the Crusades.

Governing a vast empire extending from the Atlantic to central Asia proved impossible. Abbasid political unity deteriorated rapidly from 861 to 945 as religious (Khariji and Shii) and regional differences, and particularly competing political aspirations, precipitated a series of revolts and secessionist movements. In Morocco, Tunisia, Iran, Syria, and Iraq itself, local governors, who were often army commanders, asserted their independence as heads of semiautonomous states. These regional rulers (amirs, or commanders), while continuing to give formal, nominal allegiance to the caliph, exercised actual rule over their territories, establishing their own hereditary dynasties. By 945, the disintegration of the universal caliphate was evident when the Buyids (Buwayhids), a Shii dynasty from Western Persia, invaded Baghdad and seized power, and their leader assumed the title commander-in-chief or commander of the commanders. Although Shii, they did not change the Sunni orientation of the empire and left the caliph on his throne as a titular leader of a fictionally unified empire. The Abbasids continued to reign but not rule. With an Abbasid on the throne as a symbol of legitimate government and Muslim unity, real power passed to a series of Persian (Buyid) and Turkic (Seljuq) military dynasties or sultanates. The sultan ("power," ruler), as chief of the commanders, governed a politically fragmented empire as the caliph helplessly stood by.

Sunni Islam was also threatened by two other developments during the Abbasid caliphate—the rise of the Fatimid dynasty and the Crusades. The Ismaili rebellion in Tunisia and subsequent establishment of a Shii imamate in Egypt constituted a serious religiopolitical challenge. The Fatimids claimed to be Imams and were not content to sim-

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ply govern Egypt, but, as we have seen, followed other Ismaili groups in sending their missionaries to spread their Shii doctrine. This Shii challenge elicited a religious as well as a military response as Sunni *ulama* moved to protect their version of orthodoxy in the face of Shii innovations. They were supported in their endeavors by the royal court, which wished to counter Shii anticaliphal sentiments. This contributed to a growing tendency among the Sunni *ulama* to preserve the unity of Islam through greater self-definition and standardization. In the face of the internal breakup of the central empire, this meant achieving a consensus on the corpus of Islamic law in order to protect and maintain the sociopolitical order.

Islam and the West: The Crusades and Muslim Response to Militant Christianity

Despite their common monotheistic roots, the history of Christianity and Islam has more often than not been marked by confrontation rather than peaceful coexistence and dialogue. For the Christian West, Islam is the religion of the sword; for Muslims, the Christian West is epitomized by the armies of the Crusades. From the earliest decades of Islamic history, Christianity and Islam have been locked in a political and theological struggle, because Islam, unlike other world religions, has threatened the political and religious ascendancy of Christianity. Muslim armies overran the Eastern Roman empire, Spain, and the Mediterranean from Sicily to Anatolia. At the same time, Islam challenged Christian religious claims and authority. Coming after Christianity, Islam claimed to supersede Christian revelation. While acknowledging God's revelation and revering God's messengers, from Adam through Jesus, as prophets, Islam rejected the doctrine of Christ's divinity, the finality of Christian revelation, and the authority of the church. Instead, it called on all, Jews and Christians as well, to accept finality of revelation and prophecy in Islam, to join the Islamic community, and to live under Islamic rule. Islam's universal mission had resulted in the spread of Muslim rule over Christian territories and Christian hearts. While conversions were initially slow, by the eleventh century large numbers of Christians living under Muslim rule were converting to Islam. Even those who had remained Christian were becoming Arabized, adopting Arabic language and manners. The European Christian response was, with few exceptions, hostile, intolerant, and belligerent. Muhammad was vilified as an imposter and identified as the anti-Christ. Islam was dismissed as a religion of the sword

led by an infidel driven by a lust for power and women. This attitude was preserved and perpetuated in literature such as the *Divine Comedy*, where Dante consigned Muhammad to the lowest level of hell. Christian fears were fully realized as Islam became a world power and civilization while Christianity staggered and stagnated in its Dark Ages.

By the eleventh century, Christendom's response to Islam took two forms: the struggle to reconquer (the *Reconquista*) Spain (1000–1492) and Italy and Sicily (1061), and the undertaking of another series of Christian holy wars—the Crusades (1095–1453).

Two myths pervade Western perceptions of the Crusades: first, that the Crusades were simply motivated by a religious desire to liberate Jerusalem, and second, that Christendom ultimately triumphed.

Jerusalem was a sacred city for all three Abrahamic faiths. When the Arab armies took Jerusalem in 638, they occupied a center whose shrines had made it a major pilgrimage site in Christendom. Churches and the Christian population were left unmolested. Jews, long banned from living there by Christian rulers, were permitted to return, live, and worship in the city of Solomon and David. Muslims proceeded to build a shrine, the Dome of the Rock, and a mosque, the al-Aqsa, near the area formerly occupied by Herod's Temple and close by the Wailing Wall, the last remnant of Solomon's temple.

Five centuries of peaceful coexistence elapsed before political events and an imperial-papal power play led to centuries-long series of so-called holy wars that pitted Christendom against Islam and left an enduring legacy of misunderstanding and distrust.

In 1071, the Byzantine army was decisively defeated by a Seljuq (Abbasid) army. The Byzantine emperor, Alexius I, fearing that all Asia Minor would be overrun, called on fellow Christian rulers and the pope to come to the aid of Constantinople by undertaking a "pilgrimage" or crusade to free Jerusalem and its environs from Muslim rule. For Pope Urban II, the "defense" of Jerusalem provided an opportunity to gain recognition for papal authority and its role in legitimating the actions of temporal rulers. A divided Christendom rallied as warriors from France and other parts of Western Europe (called "Franks" by Muslims) united against the "infidel" in a holy war whose ostensible goal was the holy city. This was ironic because, as one scholar has observed, "God may indeed have wished it, but there is certainly no evidence that the Christians of Jerusalem did, or that anything extraordinary was occurring to pilgrims there to prompt such a response at that moment in history." [19] In fact, Christian rulers, knights, and merchants were driven primarily by political and military ambitions and the

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The contrast between the behavior of the Christian and Muslim armies in the First Crusade has been etched deeply in the collective memory of Muslims. In 1099, the Crusaders stormed Jerusalem and established Christian sovereignty over the Holy Land. They left no Muslim survivors; women and children were massacred. The Noble Sanctuary, the Haram al-Sharif, was desecrated as the Dome of the Rock was converted into a church and the al-Aqsa mosque, renamed the Temple of Solomon, became a residence for the king. Latin principalities were established in Antioch, Edessa, Tripoli, and Tyre. The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem lasted less than a century. In 1187, Salah al-Din (Saladin), having reestablished Abbasid rule over Fatimid Egypt, led his army in a fierce battle and recaptured Jerusalem. The Muslim army was as magnanimous in victory as it had been tenacious in battle. Civilians were spared; churches and shrines were generally left untouched. The striking differences in military conduct were epitomized by the two dominant figures of the Crusades: Saladin and Richard the Lion-Hearted. The chivalrous Saladin was faithful to his word and compassionate toward noncombatants. Richard accepted the surrender of Acre and then proceeded to massacre all its inhabitants, including women and children, despite promises to the contrary.

By the thirteenth century the Crusades degenerated into intra-Christian wars, papal wars against its Christian enemies who were denounced as heretics and schismatics. The result was a weakening, rather than a strengthening, of Christendom. As Roger Savory has observed:

> An ironical but undeniable result of the Crusades was the deterioration of the position of Christian minorities in the Holy Land. Formerly these minorities had been accorded rights and privileges under Muslim rule, but, after the establishment of the Latin Kingdom, they found themselves treated as "loathsome schismatics." In an effort to obtain relief from persecution by their fellow Christians, many abandoned their Nestorian or Monophysite beliefs, and adopted either Roman Catholicism, or—the supreme irony—Islam.[20]

By the fifteenth century, the Crusades had spent their force. Although they were initially launched to unite Christendom and turn back the Muslim armies, the opposite had occurred. Amid a bitterly divided Christendom, Constantinople fell in 1453 before Turkish Muslim con-

querors. This Byzantine capital was renamed Istanbul and became the seat of the Ottoman empire.

The Sultanate Period: Medieval Muslim Empires

By the thirteenth century, the Abbasid empire was a sprawling, fragmented, deteriorating commonwealth of semiautonomous states, sultanates, governed by military commanders. It was an empire in name only. The fictional unity of a united Islamic community symbolized by the caliph in Baghdad, stood in sharp contrast to the underlying reality of its political and religious divisions. Invaded and ruled successively by the Buyids and then the Seljuks, Baghdad was completely overrun in the thirteenth century by the Mongols. Pouring out of Central Asia, the armies of Genghis Khan had subjugated much of Central Asia, China, Russia, and the Near East. In 1258, the Mongol army under Hulagu Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, captured Baghdad, burned and pillaged the city, slaughtered its Muslim inhabitants, and executed the caliph and his family. Only Egypt and Syria escaped the Mongol conquest of the Muslim empire. In Egypt, the Mamluks ("the owned ones"), Turkish slave soldiers who served as a sort of praetorian guard, seized power from their Ayyubid masters. The Mamluk sultanate successfully resisted the Mongols and ruled until 1517.

Although the destruction of Baghdad and the abolition of the Abbasid caliphate brought an end to the caliphal period and seemed to many an irreversible blow to Muslim power, by the fifteenth century Muslim fortunes had been reversed. The central caliphate was replaced by a chain of dynamic Muslim sultanates, each ruled by a sultan, which eventually extended from Africa to Southeast Asia, from Timbuktu to Mindanao, as Islam penetrated Africa, Central and Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe. Among the principal missionaries of Islam were traders and Sufi brotherhoods.

Muslim power peaked in the sixteenth century. Three major Muslim empires emerged in the midst of the many sultanates: the Ottoman Turkish empire, centered in Istanbul but encompassing major portions of North Africa, the Arab world, and Eastern Europe; the Persian Safavid empire, with its capital in Isfahan, which effectively established Shii Islam as the state's religion; and the Mughal empire, centered in Delhi and embracing most of the Indian subcontinent (modern-day Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh).[21] Baghdad's successors were the imperial capitals of Istanbul, Isfahan, and Delhi. Political as-

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cendancy was accompanied by a cultural florescence. As in Abbasid times, great sultans, such as the Ottoman Sulayman the Magnificent (reigned 1520–66), Shah Abbas in Persia (reigned 1587–1629), and the Mughal emperor Akbar (reigned 1556–1605) in India, were patrons of learning and the arts.

The Ottoman empire was the heir to the Mongol-Turkish legacy of Ghengis Khan and his successors. The fall of Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453 to the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II and the conquest of Byzantium realized the cherished dream of Muslim rulers and armies since the seventh century. The acknowledgment of Mehmet as "The Conqueror" throughout the Islamic world and his cosmopolitan capital at Istanbul, which sat astride both Europe and Asia, symbolized the power and mission of an emerging imperial giant.

The Ottomans drew on their Mongol-Turkish and Islamic roots and traditions, combining a warrior heritage with an Islamic tradition that believed in Islam's universal mission and sacred struggle (jihad), to establish themselves as worldwide propagators and defenders of Islam. They became the great warriors of Islamic expansion through military conquest. The titles taken by Ottoman sultans, such as "Warrior of the Faith" and "Defender of the Sharia," reflected this religiopolitical justification and rationale. Ottoman suzerainty was extended to the Arab Middle East and North Africa, incorporating such major Islamic cities as Mecca, Medina, Cairo, Damascus, and Tunis along with great centers of Islamic learning like Egypt's Al-Azhar and Tunisia's Zaytouna Mosque-University. Greece, Malta, Cyprus, Tripoli, the Balkans, and much of Eastern Europe were also absorbed. A besieged Europe struggled for its existence. After two centuries of confrontation, Ottoman forces were decisively turned back by the navies of Christian Europe at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The Ottoman defeat and the truce of 1580 in the Mediterranean "confirmed the frontier between Christian and Muslim civilizations that has lasted to the present day." In 1683 Ottoman expansion in Eastern Europe was checked by the failure of the siege of Vienna.

During the 1600s the Ottoman empire fully evolved. Istanbul, whose population of 500,000 was more than twice the size of any European capital, became once again an international but now Islamized center of power and culture. Scholars, artists, and architects from all over the Islamic world and Europe were commissioned, as Muslim conquerors also proved to be great builders of civilization as well. The skyline of Istanbul was transformed by the distinctive cupolas of palaces and mosques. The royal family lived in splendor in the Topkapi

Within a decade, he had conquered the rest of Iran, rapidly building an empire east of the Ottoman frontier. The creation of the Safavid dynasty made Shii Islam the official religion of an Islamic empire.

Shii Islam was effectively imposed in Iran through a process of persecution and doctrinal interpretation. Shah Ismail imposed Twelver Shii Islam upon Iran's Sunni majority to unify his rule. He sought religious legitimacy and leadership by asserting that he was a descendant of the twelfth (hidden) imam and a *mahdi*, or divinely guided reformer. Thus, the shah was both temporal and spiritual ruler, emperor and messianic messenger. The religious pretensions of Safavid rulers were symbolized by their title, "Shadow of God on Earth." Rival Islamic groups or interpretations of Islam (Sunni and Sufi) as well as non-Muslim communities were suppressed. The Safavids enforced their own brand of Shii religiopolitical ideology and identity in an attempt to legitimate their political authority and to forge a new Safavid Shii Iranian bond of solidarity. A full-blown Shii alternative to Sunni Islam was skillfully developed. Sufi ideas, philosophical doctrines, and popular religious practices such as saint veneration were selectively appropriated. Emphasis was placed on the veneration of sacred "Shii" persons: Husayn, the imams, and their families. Visits to their shrines replaced popular Sufi village shrines. Sunni persecution of Ali and his family was commemorated, while the first three caliphs were ritually cursed as usurpers. The martyrdom of Husayn at Karbala, the scene of the original massacre of Husayn and his followers by Sunni forces, became a central religious symbol, ritually reenacted during the sacred month of Muharram in passion plays which emphasized mourning, self-sacrifice and atonement. Karbala served as an alternative pilgrimage site to Mecca, which was under Ottoman control. Shii *ulama* from Iraq, southern Lebanon, and Bahrain were brought to Iran as missionaries and became part of the state-created and controlled Shii religious establishment, responsible for preaching Shii doctrine and manning the schools, universities, seminaries, and courts.

The Safavid empire reached its zenith guided by the genius of its most celebrated sultan, Shah Abbas (1588–1629). From his capital in Isfahan, he oversaw an ambitious program of state building, implementing administrative, military, economic, and religious reforms. Generous religious endowments supported the building of major religious monuments, schools, mosques, and hospitals. As with the Ottomans, the *ulama* and their educational and judicial institutions were brought within the Safavid state bureaucracy.

The splendor and accomplishments of the Ottomans in the Arab Middle East and Eastern Europe and the Safavids in Iran were matched

by those of India's Mughal dynasty, which was founded in the sixteenth century. North India had long been the scene of Muslim penetration and conquest, with the invasions of Arab soldiers in the seventh century and the establishment of the Turkish and Afghan dynasties of the Delhi sultanate (1211–1556). Muslims in the Indian subcontinent were a minority ruling a vast Hindu majority. In fact, Muslims never actually ruled all of India.

The Emperor Akbar (1565–1605) made the Mughal empire a reality. During his long reign, through conquest and diplomacy he significantly extended Muslim rule into major areas of the subcontinent. The emperor initiated policies to foster greater political centralization and the social integration of his Muslim and Hindu subjects. Religious learning, tolerance, harmony, and syncretism were hallmarks of Akbar's reign. Royal patronage sponsored the building of schools and libraries. A policy of universal tolerance and abolition of the poll tax as well as a tax on Hindu pilgrims fostered loyalty among Hindus, who constituted the majority of his subjects. Akbar encouraged the study of comparative religions and built a House of Worship, where religious scholars from various faiths engaged in theological discussion and debate. Sufi brotherhoods who followed a more flexible, eclectic approach in their encounter with other faiths enjoyed court favor. Their emphasis on religious synthesis, which stressed similarities rather than religious differences, was preferred to the rigid legalism of the more conservative *ulama*. The power of the *ulama* was circumscribed, and their ire incurred by a state-sponsored religious cult, the religion of God or divine religion (*din illahi*), which emphasized the truth to be found in all religions. They took special offense at the Infallibility Decree of 1579, which recognized the emperor, rather than the *ulama*, as the final authority in religious matters.

Ulama opposition to Akbar's eclectic religious approach and legacy was joined to that of religious reformers such as Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624), a member of the Naqshbandi Sufi brotherhood, who rejected religious assimilation and advocated a more pronounced emphasis on the Islamic basis and character of state and society. However, it was the emperor Aurangzeb (1658–1707) who dismantled Akbar's pluralistic system of governance. Aurangzeb implemented the *ulama*'s more exclusive (rather than Akbar's inclusive) religiopolitical order, which emphasized implementation of Islamic law (including the prohibition of alcohol and gambling), a subordinate political and social status for non-Muslims, reimposition of the poll tax, and the destruction of Hindu temples.

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The political and religious accomplishments of Akbar and his successors were accompanied by the florescence of Mughal art. Mughal painting and architecture reflected both Persian and Ottoman influences. As with its Safavid and Ottoman counterparts, Mughal art reached great heights in manuscript illustration and miniature paintings as well as the design and building of religious and public monuments—grand mosques, forts, and palaces. Perhaps the most famous product of this period is the Taj Mahal, built in Agra by Shah Jahan, a grandson of Akbar, as a memorial to his beloved wife.

Despite the division of the Muslim world into separate sultanates, a Muslim traveler across this vast area could experience an international Islamic order that transcended state boundaries, particularly in the urban/intellectual culture of cities and towns. All Muslim citizens were members of a transnational community of believers, citizens of the *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam) who, despite differences of interpretation, professed faith in one God, His Prophet, and revelation. All were bound by the Sharia, Islamic law, and obligated to observe the Five Pillars of Islam. The Islamic city reflected this common framework and culture in its organization and institutions (mosques, legal codes and courts, schools and universities, Sufi convents, religious endowments, a political establishment of sultans, military commanders, and soldiers as well as a religious establishment of *ulama* and Sufi shaykhs or *pirs*—scholars and mystics).

Despite variations and the individual policies of some rulers, the imperial Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal sultanates demonstrated a somewhat common Islamic ideological outlook and approach to state organization, support, and use of Islam. Rulers bore the title "sultan" (the one who possesses power or authority). Their rule was based on a blend of military strength and religious legitimacy. The sultan appropriated the caliph's charge as defender and protector of the faith. Islamic law continued to enjoy pride of place as the official law of the state. Religion not only supported the state but was itself supported by state patronage. In particular, many of the *ulama* became part of a prosperous religious establishment that assisted the sultan's attempt to centralize and control the educational, legal, and social systems. They educated the military, bureaucratic, and religious elites in their schools, supervised and guided the interpretation and application of Islamic law in the Sharia courts, and oversaw the disbursement of funds from religious endowments (*waqf*) for educational and social services from the building of mosques and schools to hospitals and lodges for travelers. During this time, a number of the nonofficial

ulama in particular developed strong international linkages. Many people came from far and wide to study at Mecca and Medina or at the renowned al-Azhar University in Cairo. After years of study and interchange, they returned to their home territories or took up residence in other parts of the Islamic world. Scholars, in particular, often traveled throughout the Muslim world to study with great masters and collect Prophetic traditions and reports about the Prophet's words and deeds. Islamic learning and interpretation possessed truly international character due to the sacrifice and commitment of these learned men. As the *ulama* developed and prospered, so too did the Sufis. Their eclectic, syncretistic tendencies enabled Islam to adapt to new environments and absorb local religious beliefs and customs. This complemented and enhanced the general process of adaptation pursued by the sultans and attracted droves of converts as Islam spread at an astonishing rate in Africa, India, and Southeast Asia. Established Sufi orders, like the Naqshbandi, spread from the Indian subcontinent to the Mediterranean, becoming vast international networks, and new orders sprang up and prospered.

Within the diversity of states and cultures, Islamic faith and civilization provided an underlying unity, epitomized by a common profession of faith and acceptance of the Sharia, Islamic law. Islam provided the basic ideological framework for political and social life, a source of identity, legitimacy, and guidance. A sense of continuity with past history and institutions was maintained. The world was divided into Islamic (*dar al-Islam*, the abode of Islam) and non-Islamic (*dar al-harb*, the abode of warfare). All Muslims were to strive to extend Islam wherever possible. Thus, merchants and traders as well as soldiers and mystics were the early missionaries of Islam. The sultan was the protector and defender of the faith charged with extending the Islamic domain. Citizenship, taxation, law, education, social welfare, defense, and warfare were based on Islam. The *ulama* for their part successfully asserted their role as protectors and interpreters of the tradition. Thus, both the political and the religious authorities, the "men of the sword" and the "men of the pen," appealed to Islam to legitimate their authority. For the majority of believers, there was a continuum of guidance, power, and success that transcended the contradictions and vicissitudes of Muslim life, and validated and reinforced the sense of a divinely mandated and guided community with a purpose and mission.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, the power and prosperity of the imperial sultanates were in serious decline. The decline of the great Muslim gunpowder empires coincided with the Industrial Revolution and modernization in the West. The emergence of modern Eu-

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rope as a major military, economic, and political power ushered in the dawn of European colonialism. Internal political disintegration (the rise of semiautonomous regional and provincial governments), military losses, a deteriorating economy affected by European competition in trade and manufacturing, and social disruption signaled the dénouement of Muslim imperial ascendancy. The Safavid empire fell in 1736; dynastic rule would not be reestablished until the end of the century under the relatively weak Qajar dynasty. The Mughal empire lingered on in name only, subservient to Britain, until 1857, when India was formally declared a British colony. Only the Ottoman empire survived into the twentieth century, when it collapsed and was dismembered by the British and the French during the post–World War I Mandate period. As we shall see, the social and moral decline of these great Muslim empires would contribute to a wave of Islamic revivalist movements throughout much of the Muslim world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.