



# محمد

FREEMAN-PEDIA

## PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA

Many different groups ruled the Arabian Peninsula (Persians, Rome)

- Some of the most inhospitable deserts in the world
  - *"All about us is an iron wilderness; a bare and black shining beach of heated volcanic stones... a vast bed and banks of rusty and basaltic bluish rocks... stubborn as heavy matter, as iron and sounding like bell metal; lying out eternally under the sand-driving desert wind."*
- Wide variety of **BEDUOIN** (*those in the desert*) TRIBES
  - Bedouin Ideal=WARRIOR
  - Living based primarily on Goat/Camel herding
  - Nomadic/Tribal: Ruler known as a **SHEIKH** (*SHAYKH*)
  - Used Camel to trade between Mediterranean & Persian Gulf
  - Small scale trade/agriculture developed around **OASES**
  - Harshness of Arabia led to dependence on Clan/Tribe
    - Clan cohesion reinforced by interclan rivalries
    - Generally fueled by territorial claims on pasture/water
- Larger trading cities/networks developed along the Red Sea
  - Larger cities (Mecca/Yathrib) were heavily tied to the Bedouins community
  - Most Important Arabian city: **MECCA**
    - Founded by the **UMAYYAD** clan (**QURAYSH** tribe)
    - Claim to Fame: Home of the **KA'ABA**
      - ❖ Most revered pre-Islamic religious shrine
      - ❖ Site of enforced Peace; Polytheistic center
      - ❖ Main god=ALLAH, symbolized by Black Stone
- Matrilineal (Men often "on the move")
  - Women revered (not secluded/veiled=Persia), NOT EQUAL!

Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad ibn Abd Allāh ibn Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim  
(Father of Kasim, Muhammad servant of Allah son of Muttalib, Destroyer of Evil)

# MUHAMMAD

PRAISEWORTHY, PROPHET, ANNOUNCER, WITNESS, WARNER, the LIGHT GIVING LAMP (PBUH)

Born into the Arabian world of nomadic clans, blood feuds, and polytheism

- Byzantine Empire & Sassanid (Persian) Empires attempted to gain more control over these trade routes
- Merchant/nomadic travel had brought monotheism to Arabia (Christ/Jud)
- **Born** in 570 CE into a prominent Meccan family (Father died pre-birth, Mother at age 6)
- Sent to live with Bedouins in the desert for his first few years (healthier than city)
- Raised by his paternal uncle, Abu Talib; Raised in Merchant tradition
- **Early 20s:** Worked as a trader for **KHADIJAH** (Older, Widow)
- Grew increasing dissatisfied with quest for wealth/material gain
- Spent time in the hills, mountains meditating
- It is here where Allah sends the Angel Jibril (Gabriel)



FREEMAN-PEDIA



Cave of Hira- 12 ft. deep cave believed to be where Jibril first revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad outside of Mecca

## PERSECUTION

- Revelations were written as the **OU'RAN** (*Recitation*)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Muslim= **KHADIJAH**
- Began to preach in Mecca
- Subsequent messages from Allah continued for years
- Local rulers (Umayyads) saw this new religion as a threat
- **Threat:** Local gods (*Ka'aba*)
  - Huge source of revenue
- Protected by his clan, but Umayyads threatened his life
- Fled to nearby Yahtrib

## HIJRA

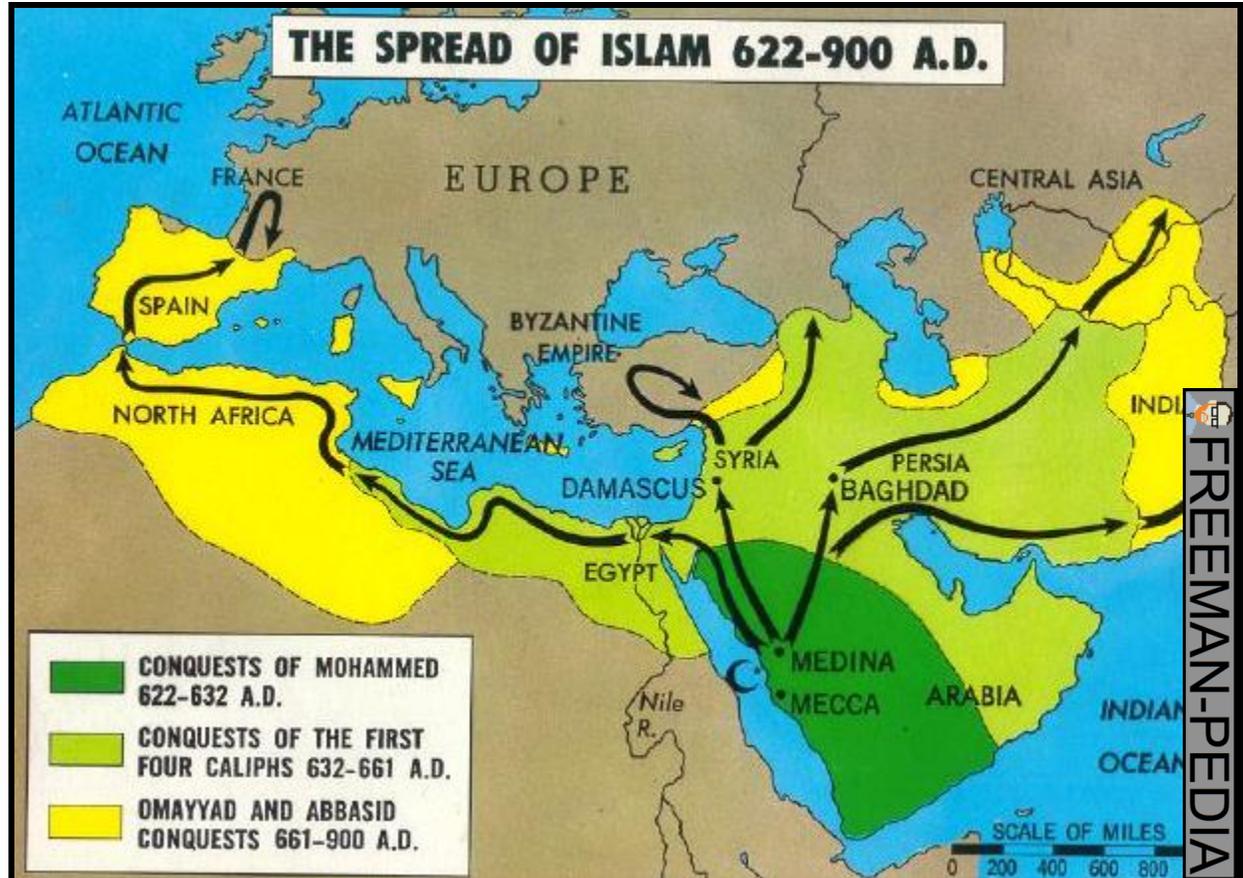
- 622: Flight to Medina
- Invited to Yathrib by relatives of his mother to settle ongoing violence there
- Secured safe passage with the help of his cousin **ALI**
  - Posed as the Prophet so that he M. could escape
- **Year 1** in the Islamic Calend.
- Settled violence in Yathrib
- Won new followers to Islam
- Islam began to rival Meccan religion...

## VICTORY

- Quraysh tribe of Mecca launched attacks on Medina
- Muhammad's victory was finalized by Treaty in 628
- 10,000 strong; Muslims could now visit the Ka'aba
- Muhammad returned in 629
- Smashed the idols in the Ka'aba
- Islam won over converts in Mecca (Umayyads)
- Became predominant religion in Arabia

# ARABS & ISLAM

- Initially Islam was an Arab Religion
  - One God (Allah)
    - Not beholden to any tribe/clan/class
  - Arab in origin; Equal to the other MONOTH.
    - (Even more so than JUD/CHR)
    - No Intermediaries
    - No Saints
    - No Priests
    - Angels are only messengers
  - Put an end to the Feuding/Vendettas
  - **UMMAH**- Community of the Faithful (Muslims)
  - Civil War energies channeled outward...
- Provided an **ETHICAL SYSTEM**
  - Taught the dignity of ALL believers
  - **Moral Code**= help the poor/sick/weak
  - **Sharia Law**= teachings/actions of Muhammad
- Appealed to nearly EVERYONE
  - Monotheism
  - Legal Code
  - Egalitarian
  - Sense of Community



“Submit to Islam and be safe. Or agree to the payment of the Jizya (tax), and you and your people will be under our protection, else you will have only yourself to blame for the consequences, for I bring the men who desire death as ardently as you desire life.”



“I am the noble warrior, I am the Sword of Allah, I am Khalid bin Al Waleed”.

### Khalid Ibn al-Walid

Known as the “Sword of Allah”, Walid fought in over 100 battles under Muhammad and his successors defeating **both** Sassanids & Byzantines

# MOTIVES for ARAB CONQUEST

- Arab warriors were driven by many forces during their conquests
- 1. ISLAMIC UNITY
  - Faith provided common unity for a region divided amongst foreign rulers & civil war for centuries
- 2. BEDOUIN HERITAGE
  - Large part of culture was tribal conflict. This was redirected outward
- 3. WEALTH
  - As they conquered, Arabs shared in the spoils of conquest
  - “As an early Arab writer observed, the Bedouins forsook their life as desert nomads not out of a promise of religious rewards, but because of a ‘yearning after bread and dates’”
- 4. MISCONCEPTIONS
  - **NOT** to spread ISLAM (Gained Tax from Non-believers/would have to share loot)
  - **NOT** JIHADS, Holy Wars (They intentionally did not convert the people in the new lands)

## BELIEFS

- Muhammad was given the final divine message
  - Written in the Qur’an
  - Sacred book of Islam
  - Ethical/Legal/Political Guidebook
- **QUR’AN**= RECITATION
- **ISLAM**=SUBMISSION
- FORBIDDEN:
  - Gambling, Pork, Alcohol
  - Dishonest Behavior

## FIVE PILLARS

- 1. FAITH
  - There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger.
- 2. PRAYER
  - 5x a day to **QIBLA**
- 3. FASTING (RAMADAN)
  - During daylight hours
- 4. ALMS
  - \$\$\$/Time/Energy to help others
- 5. PILGRIMAGE
  - To Mecca; if you can afford to

## THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

<p>الشهادة</p> <p><b>Shahadah (Faith)</b></p> <p>To believe in no God but Allah and that Muhammad is his prophet and the messenger of Allah.</p>	<p>الصلاة</p> <p><b>Salah (Prayer)</b></p> <p>To pray five times each day: Fajr - Before Sunrise Zuhr - Early Afternoon Asr - Late Afternoon Maghrib - After Sunset Isha - Night.</p>	<p>الصوم</p> <p><b>Sawm (Fasting)</b></p> <p>To give up food and drink during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan.</p>	<p>الزكاة</p> <p><b>Zakah (Almsgiving)</b></p> <p>To give a share of personal wealth to help people in need and support the Muslim community.</p>	<p>الحج</p> <p><b>Hajj (Pilgrimage)</b></p> <p>To perform a pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in a lifetime.</p>
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# KEY CALIPHATE CONFLICTS

U M A Y Y A D

A B B A S I D

## BATTLE OF TOURS/POITIERS AKA BATTLE OF THE ROYAL PALACE OF MARTYRS

“The Muslims planned to go to Tours to destroy the Church of St. Martin, the city, and the whole country. Then came against them the glorious Prince Charles, at the head of his whole force. He drew up his host, and he fought as fiercely as the hungry wolf falls upon the stag. By the grace of Our Lord, he wrought a great slaughter upon the enemies of Christian faith, so that---as history bears witness---he slew in that battle 300,000 men, likewise their king by name Abderrahman. Then was he [Charles] first called "Martel," for as a hammer of iron, of steel, and of every other metal, even so he dashed: and smote in the battle all his enemies. And what was the greatest marvel of all, he only lost in that battle 1500 men. The tents and harness [of the enemy] were taken; and whatever else they possessed became a prey to him and his followers. Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine, being now reconciled with Prince Charles Martel, later slew as many of the Saracens as he could find who had escaped from the battle.”

-Chronicle of St. Denis, 1274



732

## BATTLE OF TALAS AKA BATTLE OF ARTLAKH

Ever heard of the Battle of Talas? Nope? No one has. No one knows exactly where it took place. No one knows exactly when it took place. But, this battle was a clash of Earth's two predominant powers in 751. From the west, the Abbasid army centered in Damascus (this was prior to the move to Baghdad) backed by Turkish fighters. The rapid expansion was bound to clash with the predominant power of Central/Eastern Asia, the Tang Chinese.

In July of 751, the armies of these two great empires met at Talas, near the modern-day Kyrgyz/Kazakh border. Chinese records state that the Tang army was 30,000 strong, while Arab accounts put the number of Chinese at 100,000. The total number of Arab, Tibetan and Uighur warriors is not recorded, but theirs was the larger of the two forces.

For five days, the mighty armies clashed.

When the Qarluq Turks came in on the Arab side several days into the fighting, the Tang army's doom was sealed. Chinese sources imply that the Qarluqs had been fighting for them, but treacherously switched sides mid-way through the battle.

Of the tens of thousands the Tang sent into battle, only a small percentage survived. And, with limited supply lines, the Abbasids could not advance further. Meanwhile, internal strife in China forced Tang interests back east leading to the downfall of the Tang Empire.

In addition to the tens of thousands of Chinese killed, a number were captured and taken back to Samarkand (in modern-day Uzbekistan) as prisoners of war.

It's not until half a millennium after the skirmish that Arab historians take note of Talas, in the writings of Ibn al-Athir (1160-1233) and al-Dhahabi (1274-1348).

While the battle did lead to an even greater Islamization of Central Asia, the most important thing about the Battle of Talas was the Abbasid capture of a Chinese papermaker, who spread the art of papermaking to the west.

751

# POST CLASSICAL CALIPHATES OF ISLAM

## Rashidun Caliphate

632-661 CE

THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS

الراشدون الخلفاء

- Muhammad chose no successor
- Abu Bakr became the 1<sup>st</sup> Caliph
- Under Umar's Decade
  - Established Islamic Calendar
  - Mesop, Syria, Egypt, Persia
- Uthman was Caliph @ 70
  - From the Umayyad Clan
  - Formal Qur'an created
- Ali was the 4<sup>th</sup> Caliph
  - Fought Civil War
    - Against Umayyads
- After Bakr, all three assassinated
- Brought Islam out of Arabia
- Exploited weakness of Persia/Byz.



## Umayyad Caliphate

661-750 CE

SONS OF UMAYYAH

أمية بنو



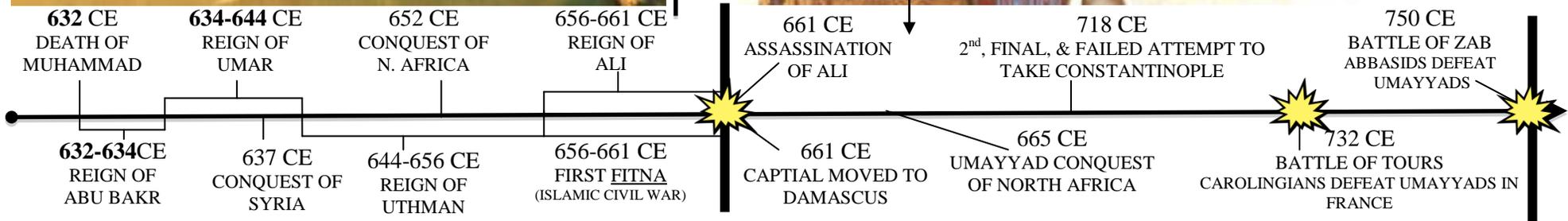
- Ali was assassinated
- Umayyad's proclaimed Mu'awiya the new Caliph
  - Remains the fundamental split in Islam today
  - Sunni= Councils/Elect. Should choose Caliph
  - Shi'a= Only Allah can choose (support Ali)
- Cont'd expansion of Rashidun Caliphate
- 7<sup>th</sup> Largest Empire EVER!
  - West: To the French Border
  - East: To India
- Moved Capital to Damascus
- Arab Dominated (Like Greek Hellenistic Emp)
  - Tolerant of **DHIMMI**-People of the Book
- Caliph's gravitated to Harem, Palaces, Luxury
  - Led to dissent throughout the Empire
  - Eastern Frontier warriors rallied around Abbas
    - Teamed with **MAWALI** (Non-Arab converts who wanted full acceptance)



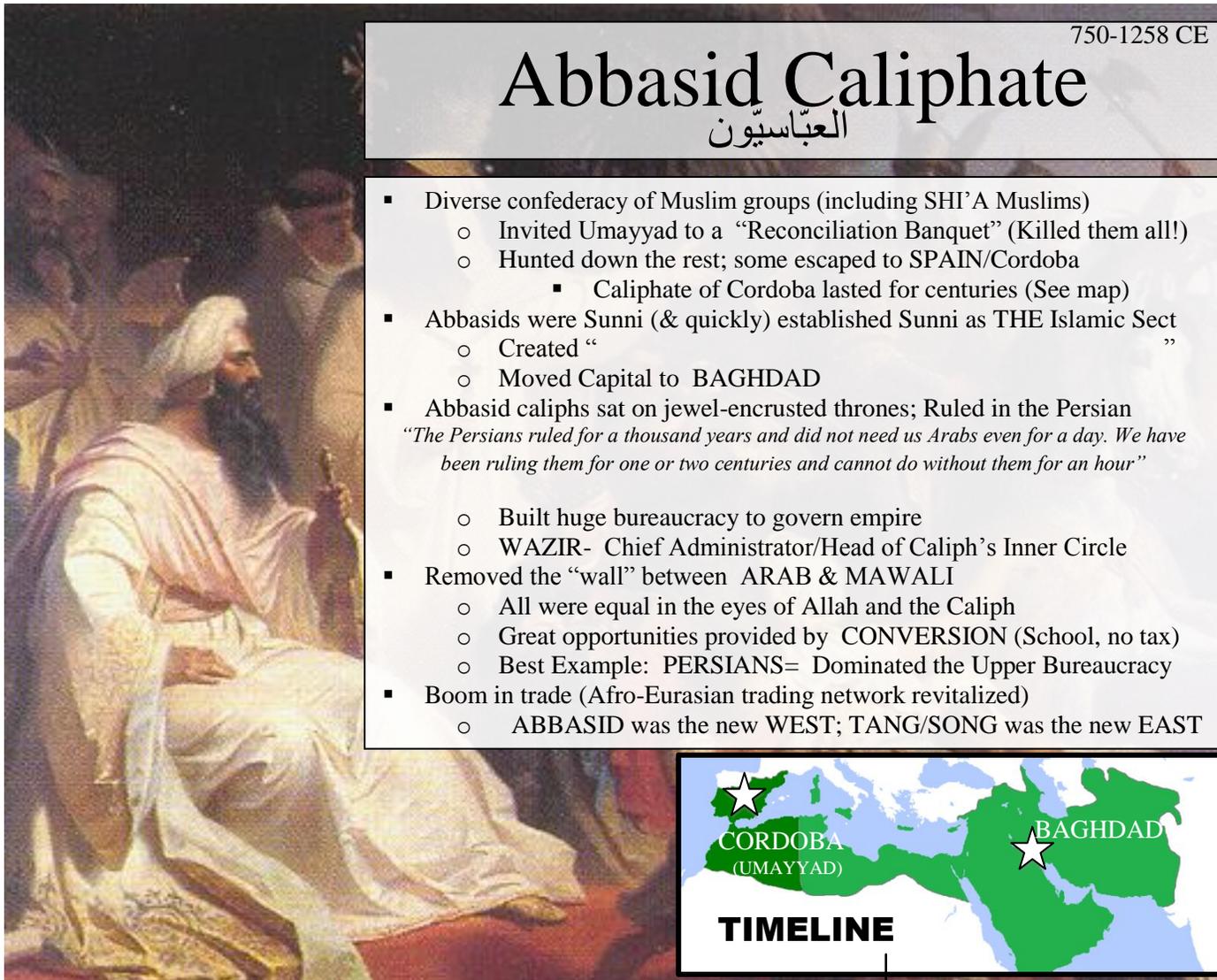
- Afghanistan
- Algeria
- Andorra
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- Cyprus
- Egypt
- France
- Georgia
- Gibraltar(UK)
- Iran
- Iraq
- Israel
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kuwait
- Kyrgyzstan
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palestine
- Portugal
- Qatar
- Russia
- Saudi Arabia
- Sudan
- Spain
- Syria
- Tajikistan
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- United Arab Emirates
- Uzbekistan
- Yemen
- Western Sahara

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TIMELINE



# POST CLASSICAL CALIPHATES OF ISLAM



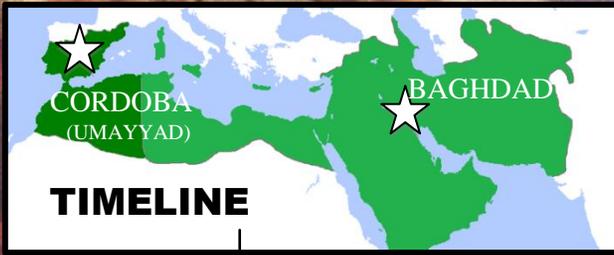
## Abbasid Caliphate 750-1258 CE

العباسيون

- Diverse confederacy of Muslim groups (including SHI'A Muslims)
  - Invited Umayyad to a "Reconciliation Banquet" (Killed them all!)
  - Hunted down the rest; some escaped to SPAIN/Cordoba
    - Caliphate of Cordoba lasted for centuries (See map)
- Abbasids were Sunni (& quickly) established Sunni as THE Islamic Sect
  - Created "
  - Moved Capital to BAGHDAD
- Abbasid caliphs sat on jewel-encrusted thrones; Ruled in the Persian
 

*"The Persians ruled for a thousand years and did not need us Arabs even for a day. We have been ruling them for one or two centuries and cannot do without them for an hour"*

  - Built huge bureaucracy to govern empire
  - WAZIR- Chief Administrator/Head of Caliph's Inner Circle
- Removed the "wall" between ARAB & MAWALI
  - All were equal in the eyes of Allah and the Caliph
  - Great opportunities provided by CONVERSION (School, no tax)
  - Best Example: PERSIANS= Dominated the Upper Bureaucracy
- Boom in trade (Afro-Eurasian trading network revitalized)
  - ABBASID was the new WEST; TANG/SONG was the new EAST



### Abbasids=Islamic Golden Age

*"the ink of a scholar is more holy than the blood of a martyr"*

During this period, the Muslim world became an intellectual center for science, philosophy, medicine and education as the Abbasids championed the cause of knowledge and established the House of Wisdom in Baghdad; where both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars sought to translate and gather all the world's knowledge into Arabic.

#### WORKS RECOVERED BY ABBASIDS

(That were unknown to the Europeans)

- Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy, Galen, Hippocrates

#### NOTABLE ABBASID INTELLECTUALS

**FIRDAWSI**

Wrote historical epic poem *Shah-Nama* tracing Persia from prehistory to Islam

**SADI**

Persian Shakespeare. Favorite author of Iran today. Wrote love poems.

**AL RAZI**

Classified all living substances into 3 categories: Animal, Veg, Mineral

**IBN RUSHD (AVERROES)**

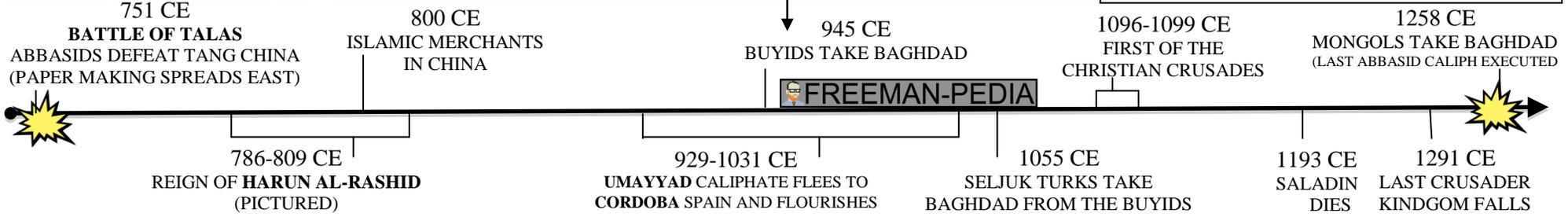
Lived in Cordoba. Polymath. Islamic Da Vinci. Translated/Defended Aristotle

**IBN SINA (AVICENNA)**

Polymath. Wrote books on medicine used as textbooks in Europe for centuries

**AL-JEBR, AL-GORITHMI**

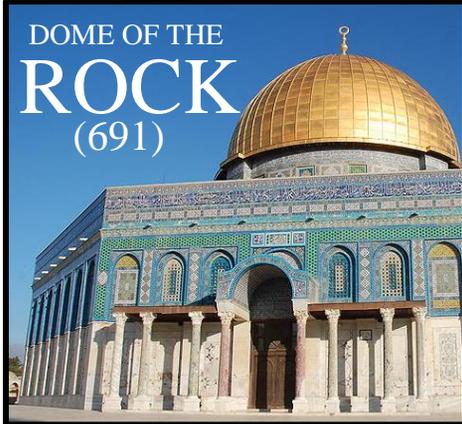
9<sup>th</sup> Century Mathematician who created Algebra



# Islamic Intellectuals

“The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr.”  
-Muhammad, *Hadith*

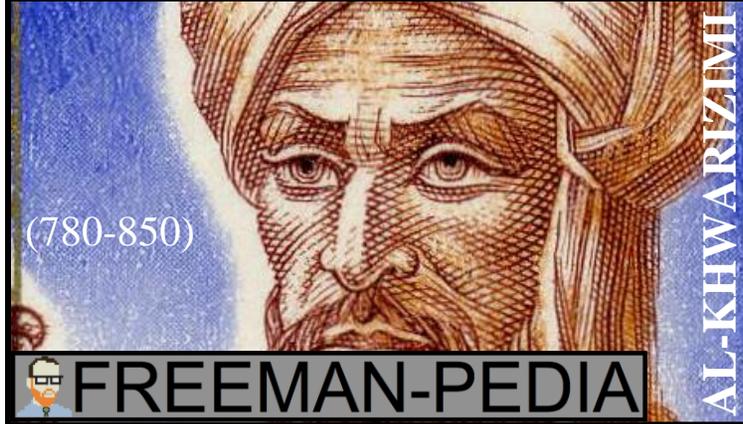
As the classical world fell, the Islamic Civilization quickly filled the intellectual vacuum. Below are some of history’s greatest thinkers, who lived and worked in the Islamic world.



In 621, the Angel Gabriel approached Muhammad. On the orders of Allah, Muhammad was given a white horse. He then travelled from Mecca to Jerusalem where he led the people in prayer. Next, he ascended to the 7 Circles of Heaven where he sees the other prophets (Abraham, John the Baptist, Moses, Jesus, etc.).

It is on the site of Muhammad’s ascension that the Dome of the Rock was constructed in 691. The “Rock” that is housed inside is believed to be the spot of Muhammad’s ascension. The spot is also one of the holiest sites in Judaism (who believe it is the spot where Abraham attempted to sacrifice his son, Isaac).

Octagonal in design, the Dome of the Rock was designed to compete with Christian and Jewish buildings in Jerusalem. It was meant to be a site for pilgrims, not an actual mosque.

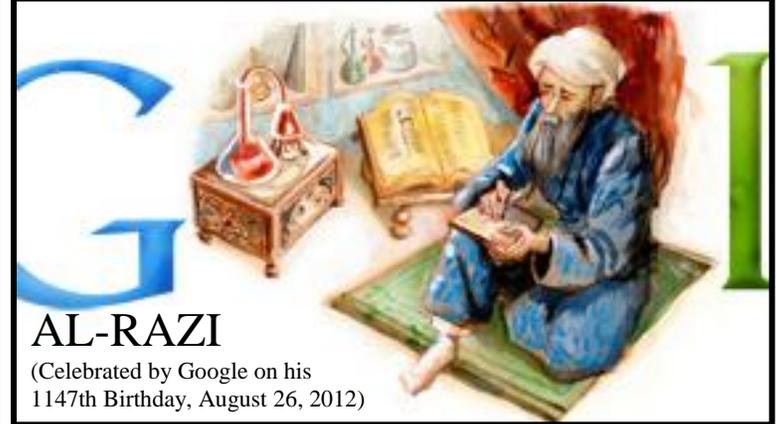


Known in the west as Algoritmi (due to the pronunciation in Arabic), Al-Khwarizimi was a Persian Polymath who studied mathematics, astronomy, and geography.

He is primarily remembered in the west for his work in the field of mathematics. Some of his contributions to this field include:

- The Decimal number system
- Introduction of Arabic numerals to the West
- Linear Equations
- Quadratic Equations
- Algebra\*
- From his book *al-Kitab al-mukhtasar fi hisab al-jabr wa'l-muqabala*
- Improved Ptolemy’s geographical estimates of earth
- Exact instructions on building an Astrolabe
- \*From earlier Indian and Greek sources

Al-Khwarizimi worked in Baghdad at the House of Wisdom where other intellectuals from as far as India and China gathered to study.



“The greatest and most original of all of the physicians,” Al Razi was a Polymath who wrote more than 50 books on the subject of Medicine. He was the chief doctor at the Baghdad hospital before opening his own medical school/hospital. He eventually went blind and died in 925.

He was the first to notice that Measles and Smallpox were two separate diseases.

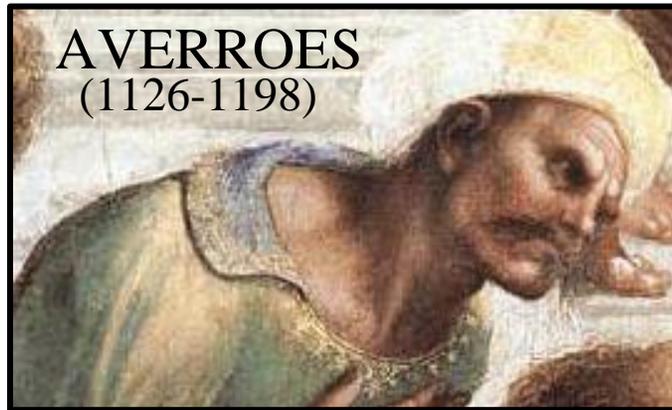
*“The eruption of smallpox is preceded by a continued fever, pain in the back, itching in the nose and nightmares during sleep. A swelling of the face appears, which comes and goes, and one notices an overall inflammatory color noticeable as a strong redness on both cheeks and around both eyes. Additional symptoms are: dryness of breath, thick spittle, hoarseness of the voice, pain and heaviness of the head, restlessness, nausea and anxiety. (Note the difference: restlessness, nausea and anxiety occur more frequently with ‘measles’ than with smallpox. At the other hand, pain in the back is more apparent with smallpox than with measles).”*

He was the first to correctly write on Allergies, Fevers, Pediatrics, Infectious diseases, etc. Below is his statement on Ethics in Medicine:

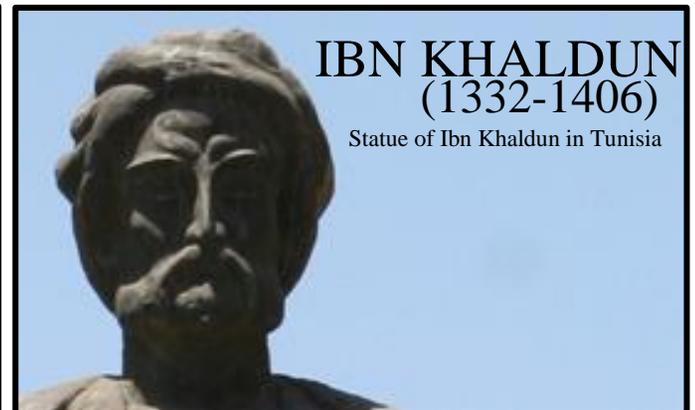
*“The doctor’s aim is to do good, even to our enemies, so much more to our friends, and my profession forbids us to do harm to our kindred, as it is instituted for the benefit and welfare of the human race, and God imposed on physicians the oath not to compose mortiferous remedies.”*



**AVICENNA**  
(908-946)



**AVERROES**  
(1126-1198)



**IBN KHALDUN**  
(1332-1406)

Statue of Ibn Khaldun in Tunisia

Islamic philosophy is divided into two eras. Before Avicenna and After Avicenna. Ibn Sina (or Avicenna) was the most important thinker of the medieval period. Memorizing the Qur'an at age 10, he was a polymath whose medical textbook was used in Europe into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Below is one of his most famous thought experiments:

**The Floating Man**

*“Imagine, a man floating in a room with zero sensory input, no sound, no gravity, no sensation of any kind, floating in complete darkness, no sensation even of his own body because no part of his body touches any other part — say the man was created this way, would he be capable of thought? Can the human mind have thoughts without any external sensory input? If so, what would this man be thinking? Would the floating man have awareness of anything?”*

Avicenna answers: *“Yes, even though the man has no awareness of his environment, or anything external to himself, he would at least be aware of his own existence.”* It's interesting to note how this idea is a precursor to Rene Descartes's famous philosophical statement: *“I think, therefore I am.”*

Dante's Inferno depicts a journey through hell. The first level of hell is reserved for great people who were not Christian. Dante depicts Avicenna and Averroes alongside Plato and Aristotle. He is one of history's greatest intellects and known in Persia as the “Doctor of Doctors”.

Another great Islamic Polymath, Ibn Rushd, or Averroes, was born in Spain and was a prominent Qadi (Judge).

Averroes wrote on a myriad of topics, but his work on Aristotle stands out as his greatest work. He attempted to reconcile Aristotle with Islam. In his time, philosophy was considered to be dangerous. He wanted to tie the principles of Aristotle with that of Islam. This is similar to medieval Scholasticism in Europe. It was the commentaries of Averroes that reintroduced Aristotle to the West. A few translations of Aristotle were available to the Europeans, but it wasn't until Averroes commentaries were available in Europe that the Europeans began to fully study Aristotle. Thomas Aquinas, the great European philosopher of the medieval era and leader in the field of Scholasticism, simply referred to Aristotle as, “The Philosopher” and Averroes as, “The Commentator.”

Like many other great people in history, he had little influence on the Islamic world he lived. His influence was not seen until centuries later when the Europeans discovered his

Ibn Khaldun was a Muslim historian who is considered one of the founders of modern historiography. He saw little fame during his life and his most famous work did not become well known until the 19th Century.

The Muqaddimah was meant to serve as a preface to his History of the World. But, most people even in his time saw it as a stand alone, independent work on the Social Sciences.

Ibn Khaldun believed that man is political by nature, and that man's interdependence creates the need for the political community. Ibn Khaldun argues that men and tribes need to defend themselves from potential attack by beast or even unjust men, and thus political communities are formed. The glue which holds such tribes together and eventually forms "royal authority" or the state, according to Ibn Khaldun, is 'asabiyah or group feeling.

Ibn Khaldun also anticipates Machiavelli by attempting to answer the question of whether it is better for the ruler to be feared or loved. Ibn Khaldun, like Machiavelli, answers that it is best to be both. However, unlike Machiavelli, Khaldun believes that if that is not possible then it is better to be loved than feared because fear creates many negative effects in the state's population.

**Below is his analysis of the Dynastic Cycle:**

*“The first generation retains the desert qualities, desert toughness, and desert savagery...they are brave and rapacious...the strength of group feeling continues to be preserved among them. They are sharp and greatly feared. People submit to them.*

*Under the influence of royal authority and a life of ease, the second generation changes from the desert attitude to a sedentary culture, from privation to luxury and plenty, from a state in which everybody shared in the glory to one in which one man claims all the glory...others are [in]...humble subservience...the vigor of the group feeling is broken...But many of the old virtues remain...because they [the people] had had direct personal contact with the first generation...The third generation, then, has (completely) forgotten the period of desert life and toughness...Luxury reaches its peak among them...Group feeling disappears completely...People forget to protect and defend themselves...In the course of these three generations, the dynasty grows senile and is worn out.”*

# MEANWHILE...

By the mid 9th century C.E., the Abbasid dynasty had begun to lose control over the vast Muslim empire that had been won from the Umayyads a century earlier. From north Africa to Persia, rebellious governors and new dynasties arose to challenge the Abbasid caliphs' claims to be the rightful overlords of all Islamic peoples. Paradoxically, even as the new heights of creativity and entered a new age of expansion. In architecture and the fine arts, in literature and philosophy, and in mathematics and the sciences, the centuries during which the Abbasid Empire slowly came apart were an era of remarkable achievement. At the same time, political fragmentation did little to slow the growth of the Islamic world through political conquest and, more importantly, enduring peaceful conversion. From the 10th to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim warriors, traders, and wandering mystics carried the faith of Muhammad into the savanna and desert of west Africa, down the coast of east Africa, to the Turks and many other nomadic peoples of central Asia, and into south and southeast Asia. For more than five centuries, the spread of Islam played a central role in the rise, extension, or transformation of civilization in much of the Afro-Asian world. The Islamic world also became a great conduit for the exchange of ideas, plants and medicines, commercial goods, and inventions both between centers of urban and agrarian life and between these core regions of civilization and the areas dominated by nomadic peoples that still encompassed much of the globe.

## DECLINE OF THE ABBASIDS

The vast Abbasid Empire gradually disintegrated between the 9th and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Revolts spread among the peasants, slavery increased, and the position of women was further eroded. Divisions within the empire opened the way for Christian crusaders from Western Europe to invade and, for a short time, establish warrior kingdoms in the Muslim heartlands. Political decline and social turmoil were offset for many by the urban affluence, inventiveness, and artistic creativity of the Abbasid age.

By the late 8th Century, courtly excess & **political divisions were apparent**

- Later leads to the **downfall** of the Abbasid Dynasty
- Shi'a revolts & assassinations would plague the Abbasids until its downfall
- Caliphs had multiple wives, courtiers, and concubines
- Decadence financially drained the later Abbasid Caliphs
- Succession from Caliph to Caliph was constantly challenged
  - Assassinations were common
  - Often successors would build up entire armies to prepare for succession wars



**Harun al-Rashid** (786-809) - (or Aaron the Upright/Just) - was the 5<sup>th</sup> and most famous Abbasid Caliph

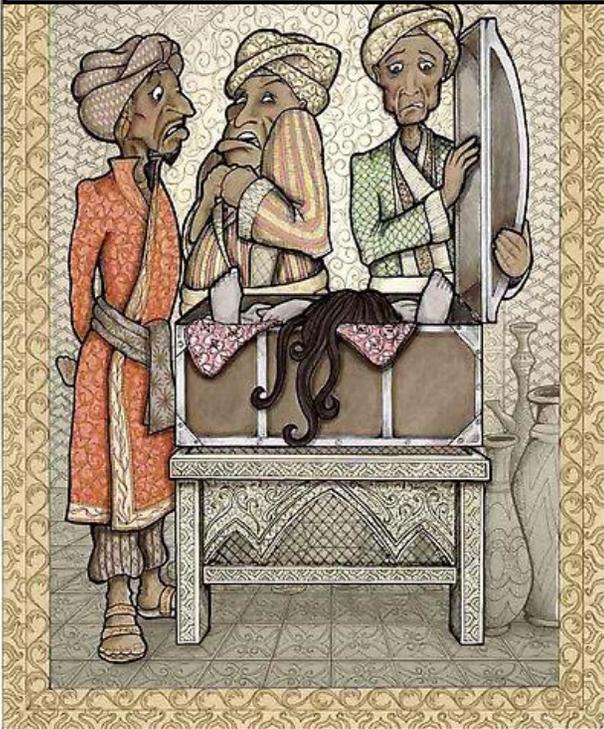
### HARUN al-RASHID

- Came to power upon the assassination of a previous Caliph
- Harun al-Rashid is the most famous & enduring Abbasid Caliph
  - Decadent ruler
  - Built huge mosques & palaces
  - Collected Huge treasure troves
- Visited by Charlemagne's emissaries from France
  - Sent Charlemagne's embassy home with luxuries
  - Water clock & an elephant
- Basis for the 1,001 Nights (see document)
  - Set in Baghdad of Harun
- Harun came to power @ 23
  - Hence, he became very dependent on a family of Persian advisors
  - Royal advisors gained more power at the expense of the Caliph
  - By the mid-9th Century, Caliphs became pawns to their Courts

# The TALE of the THREE APPLES

## Starring Harun al-Rashid as Himself

*From 1001 Arabian Nights*



THEY relate, O King of the Age and Lord of the Time and of these days that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid summoned his Wazir Ja'afar one night and said to him:

"I desire to go down into the city and question the common folk concerning the conduct of those charged with its governance, and those of whom they complain we will depose from office and those whom they commend we will promote." Quoth Ja'afar, "Harkening and obedience!"

So the Caliph went down with Ja'afar and the eunuch Masrur to the town and walked about the streets and markets, and as they were threading a narrow alley, they came upon a very old man with a fishing net and crate to carry small fish on his head, and in his hands a staff, and as he walked at a leisurely pace, he repeated these lines:

"They say me: 'Thou shinest a light to mankind  
With thy lore as the night which the Moon doth upright!'  
I answer, 'A truce to your jests and your gibes.  
Without luck what is learning?- a poor-devil wight! If  
they take me to pawn with my lore in my pouch, With  
my volumes to read and my ink case to write, For one  
day's provision they never could pledge me,

As likely on Doomsday to draw bill at sight.'  
How poorly, indeed, doth it fare wi' the poor,  
With his pauper existence and beggarly plight.  
In summer he faileth provision to find,  
In winter the fire pot's his only delight.  
The street dogs with bite and with bark to him rise,  
And each losel receives him with bark and with bite.  
If he lift up his voice and complain of his wrong,  
None pities or heeds him, however he's right,  
And when sorrows and evils like these he must brave,  
His happiest homestead were down in the grave."

When the Caliph heard his verses, he said to Ja'afar, "See this poor man and note his verses, for surely they point to his necessities." Then he accosted him and asked, "O Sheikh, what be thine occupation?" And the poor man answered: "O my lord, I am a fisherman with a family to keep and I have been out between midday and this time, and not a thing hath Allah made my portion wherewithal to feed my family. I cannot even pawn myself to buy them a supper, and I hate and disgust my life and I hanker after death." Quoth the Caliph, "Say me, wilt thou return with us to Tigris' bank and cast thy net on my luck, and whatsoever turneth up I will buy of thee for a hundred gold pieces?" The man rejoiced when he heard these words and said: "On my head be it! I will go back with you," and, returning with them riverward, made a cast and waited a while.

Then he hauled in the rope and dragged the net ashore and there appeared in it a chest, padlocked and heavy. The Caliph examined it and lifted it, finding it weighty, so he gave the fisherman two hundred dinars and sent him about his business whilst Masrur, aided by the Caliph, carried the chest to the palace and set it down and lighted the candles. Ja'afar and Masrur then broke it open and found therein a basket of palm leaves corded with red worsted. This they cut open and saw within it a piece of carpet, which they lifted out, and under it was a woman's mantilla folded in four, which they pulled out, and at the bottom of the chest they came upon a young lady, fair as a silver ingot, slain and cut into nineteen pieces. When the Caliph looked upon her he cried, "Alas!" and tears ran down his cheeks and turning to Ja'afar, he said: "O dog of Wazirs, shall folk be murdered in our reign and be cast into the river to be a burden and a responsibility for us on the Day of Doom? By Allah, we must avenge this woman on her murderer, and he shall be made die the worst of deaths!"

And presently he added: "Now, as surely as we are descended from the Sons of Abbas, if thou bring us not him who slew her, that we do her justice on him, I will hang thee at the gate of my palace, thee and forty of thy kith and kin by thy side." And the Caliph was wroth with exceeding rage. Quoth Ja'afar, "Grant me three days' delay," and quoth the Caliph, "We grant thee this." So Ja'afar went out from before him and returned to his own house, full of sorrow and saying to himself:

"How shall I find him who murdered this damsel, that I may bring him before the Caliph? If I bring other than the murderer, it will be laid to my charge by the Lord. In very sooth I wot not what to do." He kept his house three days, and on the fourth day the Caliph sent one of the chamberlains for him, and as he came into the presence, asked him, "Where is the murderer of the damsel?" To which answered Ja'afar, "O Commander of the Faithful, am I inspector of murdered folk that I should ken who killed her?" The Caliph was furious at his answer and bade hang him before the palace gate, and commanded that a crier cry through the streets of Baghdad:

"Who so would see the hanging of Ja'afar, the Barmaki, Wazir of the Caliph, with forty of the Barmecides, his cousins and kinsmen, before the palace gate, let him come and let him look!" The people flocked out from all the quarters of the city to witness the execution of Ja'afar and his kinsmen, not knowing the cause. Then they set up the gallows and made Ja'afar and the others stand underneath in readiness for execution, but whilst every eye was looking for the Caliph's signal, and the crowd wept for Ja'afar and his cousins of the Barmecides, lo and behold! a young man fair of face and neat of dress and of favor like the moon raining light, with eyes black and bright, and brow flower-white, and cheeks red as rose and young down where the beard grows, and a mole like a grain of ambergris, pushed his way through the people till he stood immediately before the Wazir and said to him: "Safety to thee from this strait, O Prince of the Emirs and Asylum of the Poor! I am the man who slew the woman ye found in the chest, so hang me for her and do her justice on me!" When Ja'afar heard the youth's confession he rejoiced at his own deliverance, but grieved and sorrowed for the fair youth.

And whilst they were yet talking, behold, another man well stricken in years pressed forward through the people and thrust his way amid the populace till he came to Ja'afar and the youth, whom he saluted, saying: "Ho, thou the Wazir and Prince sans peer! Believe not the words of this youth. Of a surety none murdered the damsel but I. Take her wreak on me this moment, for an thou do not thus, I will require it of thee before Almighty Allah." Then quoth the young man: "O Wazir, this is an old man in his dotage who wotteth not whatso he saith ever, and I am he who murdered her, so do thou avenge her on me!" Quoth the old man: "O my son, thou art young and desirest the joys of the world and I am old and weary and surfeited with the world. I will offer my life as a ransom for thee and for the Wazir and his cousins. No one murdered the damsel but I, so Allah upon thee, make haste to hang me, for no life is left in me now that hers is gone."

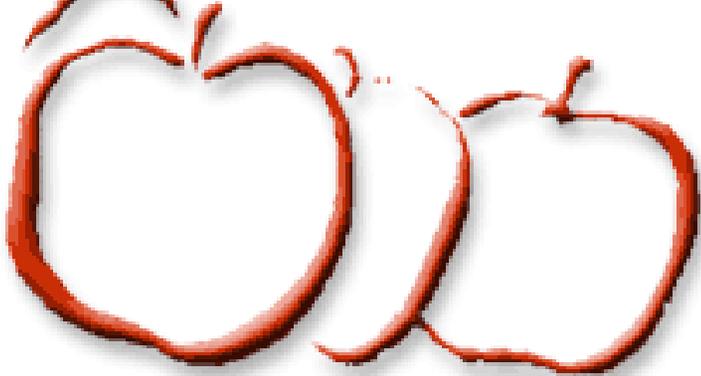
The Wazir marveled much at all this strangeness and taking the young man and the old man, carried them before the Caliph, where, after kissing the ground seven times between his hands, he said, "O Commander of the Faithful, I bring thee the murderer of the damsel!" "Where is he?" asked the Caliph, and Ja'afar answered: "This young man saith, 'I am the murderer,' and this old man, giving him the lie, saith, 'I am the murderer,' and behold, here are the twain standing before thee." The Caliph looked at the old man and the young man and asked, "Which of you killed the girl?"

The young man replied, "No one slew her save I," and the old man answered, "Indeed none killed her but myself." Then said the Caliph to Ja'afar, "Take the twain and hang them both." But Ja'afar rejoined, "Since one of them was the murderer, to hang the other were mere injustice." "By Him who raised the firmament and dispread the earth like a carpet," cried the youth, "I am he who slew the damsel," and he went on to describe the manner of her murder and the basket, the mantilla, and the bit of carpet- in fact, all that the Caliph had found upon her.

So the Caliph was certified that the young man was the murderer, whereat he wondered and asked him: "What was the cause of thy wrongfully doing this damsel to die, and what made thee confess the murder without the bastinado, and what brought thee here to yield up thy life, and what made thee say 'Do her wreak upon me?'" The youth answered: "Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that this woman was my wife and the mother of my children, also my first cousin and the daughter of my paternal uncle, this old man, who is my father's own brother. When I married her she was a maid, and Allah blessed me with three male children by her. She loved me and served me and I saw no evil in her, for I also loved her with fondest love. Now on the first day of this month she fell ill with grievous sickness and I fetched in physicians to her, but recovery came to her little by little, and when I wished her to go to the hammam bath, she said, 'There is something I long for before I go to the bath, and I long for it with an exceeding longing.' 'To hear is to comply,' said I. 'And what is it?' Quoth she, 'I have a queasy craving for an apple, to smell it and bite a bit of it.' I replied, 'Hadst thou a thousand longings, I would try to satisfy them!' So I went on the instant into the city and sought for apples, but could find none, yet had they cost a gold piece each, would I have bought them. I was vexed at this and went home and said, 'O daughter of my uncle, by Allah I can find none!' She was distressed, being yet very weakly, and her weakness increased greatly on her that night and I felt anxious and alarmed on her account.

HARUN al RASHID





"As soon as morning dawned I went out again and made the round of the gardens, one by one, but found no apples anywhere. At last there met me an old gardener, of whom I asked about them and he answered, 'O my son, this fruit is a rarity with us and is not now to be found save in the garden of the Commander of the Faithful at Bassorah, where the gardener keepeth it for the Caliph's eating.' I returned to my house troubled by my ill success, and my love for my wife and my affection moved me to undertake the journey, So I at me ready and set out and traveled fifteen days and nights, going and coming, and brought her three apples, which I bought from the gardener for three dinars. But when I went in to my wife and set them before her, she took no pleasure in them and let them lie by her side, for her weakness and fever had increased on her, and her malady lasted without abating ten days, after which she began to recover health.

So I left my house and betaking me to my shop, sat there buying and selling. And about midday, behold, a great ugly black slave, long as a lance and broad as a bench, passed by my shop holding in hand one of the three apples, wherewith he was playing, Quoth I, 'O my good slave, tell me whence thou tookest that apple, that I may get the like of it?' He laughed and answered: 'I got it from my mistress, for I had been absent and on my return I found her lying ill with three apples by her side, and she said to me, "My horned wittol of a husband made a journey for them to Bassorah and bought them for three dinars." 'So I ate and drank with her and took this one from her.' When I heard such words from the slave, O Commander of the Faithful, the world grew black before my face, and I arose and locked up my shop and went home beside myself for excess of rage. I looked for the apples and finding, only two of the three, asked my wife, 'O my cousin, where is the third apple?' And raising her head languidly, she answered, 'I wot not, O son of my uncle, where 'tis gone!' This convinced me that the slave had spoken the truth, so I took a knife and coming behind her, got upon her breast without a word said and cut her throat. Then I hewed off her head and her limbs in pieces and, wrapping her in her mantilla and a rag of carpet, hurriedly sewed up the whole, which I set in a chest and, locking it tight, loaded it on my he-mule and threw it into the Tigris with my own hands.

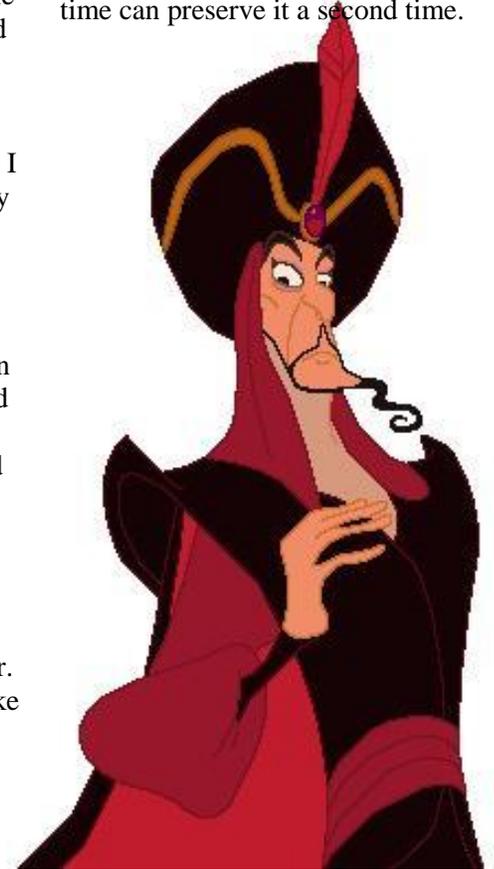
"So Allah upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful, make haste to hang me, as I fear lest she appeal for vengeance on Resurrection Day. For when I had thrown her into the river and one knew aught of it, as I went back home I found my eldest son crying, and yet he knew naught of what I had done with his mother. I asked him, 'What hath made thee weep, my boy?' and he answered, 'I took one of the three apples which were by my mammy and went down into the lane to play with my brethren when behold, a big long black slave snatched it from my hand and said, "Whence hadst thou this?" Quoth I, "My father traveled far for it, and brought it from Bassorah for my mother, who was ill, and two other apples for which he paid three ducats." 'He took no heed of my words and I asked for the apple a second and a third time, but he cuffed me and kicked me and went off with it. I was afraid lest my mother should swinge me on account of the apple, so for fear of her I went with my brother outside the city and stayed there till evening closed in upon us, and indeed I am in fear of her. And now, by Allah, O my father, say nothing to her of this or it may add to her ailment!"

"When I heard what my child said, I knew that the slave was he who had foully slandered my wife, the daughter of my uncle, and was certified that I had slain her wrongfully. So I wept with exceeding weeping and presently this old man, my paternal uncle and her father, came in, and I told him what had happened and he sat down by my side and wept, and we ceased not weeping till midnight. We have kept up mourning for her these last five days and we lamented her in the deepest sorrow for that she was unjustly done to die. This came from the gratuitous lying of the slave, the blackamoor, and this was the manner of my killing her. So I conjure thee, by the honor of thine ancestors, make haste to kill me and do her justice upon me, as there is no living for me after her!"

The Caliph marveled at his words and said: "By Allah, the young man is excusable. I will hang none but the accursed slave, and I will do a deed which shall comfort the ill-at-ease and suffering, and which shall please the All-glorious King."

Then he turned to Ja'afar and said to him: "Bring before me this accursed slave who was the sole cause of this calamity, and if thou bring him not before me within three days, thou shalt be slain in his stead." 

So Ja'afar fared forth weeping and saying: "Two deaths have already beset me, nor shall the crock come off safe from every shock. In this matter craft and cunning are of no avail, but He who preserved my life the first time can preserve it a second time.



The Ja'afar in this story is unrelated to Aladdin's Jafar. However, there was only one Vizier named Jafar!

By Allah, I will not leave my house during the three days of life which remain to me, and let the Truth (whose perfection be praised!) do e'en as He will." So he kept his house three days, and on the fourth day he summoned the kazis and legal witnesses and made his last will and testament, and took leave of his children weeping.

Presently in came a messenger from the Caliph and said to him: "The Commander of the Faithful is in the most violent rage that can be, and he sendeth to seek thee and he swearth that the day shall certainly not pass without thy being hanged unless the slave be forthcoming," When Ja'afar heard this he wept, and his children and slaves and all who were in the house wept with him. After he had bidden adieu to everybody except this youngest daughter, he proceeded to farewell her, for he loved this wee one, who was a beautiful child, more than all his other children. And he pressed her to his breast and kissed her and wept bitterly at parting from her, when he felt something round inside the bosom of her dress and asked her, "O my little maid, what is in the bosom pocket?" "O my father," she replied, "it is an apple with the name of our Lord the Caliph written upon it. Rayhan our slave brought it to me four days ago, and would not let me have it till I gave him two dinars for it." When Ja'afar heard speak of the slave and the apple, he was glad and put his hand into his child's pocket and drew out the apple and knew it and rejoiced, saying, "O ready Dispeller of trouble!"

Then he bade them bring the slave and said to him, "Fie upon thee, Rayhan! Whence haddest thou this apple?" "By Allah, O my master," he replied, "though a he may get a man once off, yet may truth get him off, and well off, again and again. I did not steal this apple from thy palace nor from the gardens of the Commander of the Faithful. The fact is that five days ago, as I was walking along one of the alleys of this city, I saw some little ones at play and this apple in hand of one of them. So I snatched it from him and beat him, and he cried and said, 'O youth, this apple is my mother's and she is ill. She told my father how she longed for an apple, so he traveled to Bassorah and bought her three apples for three gold pieces, and I took one of them to play withal.' He wept again, but I paid no heed to what he said and carried it off and brought it here, and my little lady bought it of me for two dinars of gold. And this is the whole story."

When Ja'afar heard his words he marveled that the murder of the damsel and all this misery should have been caused by his slave. He grieved for the relation of the slave to himself while rejoicing over his own deliverance, and he repeated these lines:

"If ill betide thee through thy slave,  
Make him forthright thy sacrifice.  
A many serviles thou shalt find,  
But life comes once and never twice."

Then he took the slave's hand and, leading him to the Caliph, related the story from first to last, and the Caliph marveled with extreme astonishment, and laughed till he fell on his back, and ordered that the story be recorded and be made public amongst the people. But Ja'afar said, "Marvel not, O Commander of the Faithful, at this adventure, for it is not more wondrous than the History of the Wazir Nur al-Din Ali of Egypt and his brother Shams al-Din Mohammed."

Quoth the Caliph, "Out with it, but what can be stranger than this story?" And Ja'afar answered, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will not tell it thee save on condition that thou pardon my slave." And the Caliph rejoined, "If it be indeed more wondrous than that of the three apples, I grant thee his blood, and if not I will surely slay thy slave." So Ja'afar began in these words the... (Ja'afar tells Harun the tale of Nur al-Din Ali and his son Badr al-Din Hasan)...

When the Caliph Harun al-Rashid heard this story from the mouth of his Wazir, Ja'afar the Barmecide, he marveled much and said, "It behooves that these stories be written in letters of liquid gold." Then he set the slaves at liberty and assigned to the youth who had slain his wife such a monthly stipend as sufficed to make his life easy. He also gave him a concubine from amongst his own slave girls, and the young man became one of his cup companions. (\*\*\*)*In reality, Ja'afar is later beheaded for having an affair with Harun's sister, Abbasa.*



*One Thousand and One Nights* is a collection of West and South Asian stories and folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age. It is often known in English as the *Arabian Nights*, from the first English language edition (1706), which rendered the title as *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*. The work was collected over many centuries by various authors, translators, and scholars across West, Central, South Asia and North Africa. The tales themselves trace their roots back to ancient and medieval Arabic, Persian, Indian, Egyptian and Mesopotamian folklore and literature. In particular, many tales were originally folk stories from the Caliphate era, while others, especially the frame story, are most probably drawn from the Pahlavi Persian work *Hazār Afsān* which in turn relied partly on Indian elements.

What is common throughout all the editions of the *Nights* is the initial frame story of the ruler Shahryār and his wife Scheherazade and the framing device incorporated throughout the tales themselves. The stories proceed from this original tale; some are framed within other tales, while others begin and end of their own accord. Some editions contain only a few hundred nights, while others include 1,001 or more.

After Harun's death, a series of Civil Wars occurred over who would succeed him

- Al-Ma'mun won the civil war
- His heirs built their own armies in anticipation of the struggle that would follow his death
- The winner of the next succession battle recruited an army of 4,000 slaves that he later increased to 70,000 upon gaining the throne
- This mercenary force gained power on their own
- They murdered at least 5 Caliphs, placing their choice of the next Caliph on the throne
- Leaders of the slave army became the de facto rulers of the Abbasid Caliphate

# IMPERIAL BREAKDOWN & AGRARIAN DISORDER

Civil violence, controlling the slave army, etc. drained the treasury alienated the Abbasid subjects

- Caliphs built new capitals to the west to avoid the chaos that had taken hold of Baghdad
- Added to the treasury deficits
- Expense fell to the peasants
- Financially & Militarily
  - Many villages were abandoned due to pillaging and over taxation in the richest areas of the empire

Irrigation works fell into disrepair

- Peasants died from:
  - Flood
  - Famine
  - Violence
- Others :
  - Fled to the wilderness
  - Formed Bandit Gangs
  - Joined Vagabond groups that roamed the streets

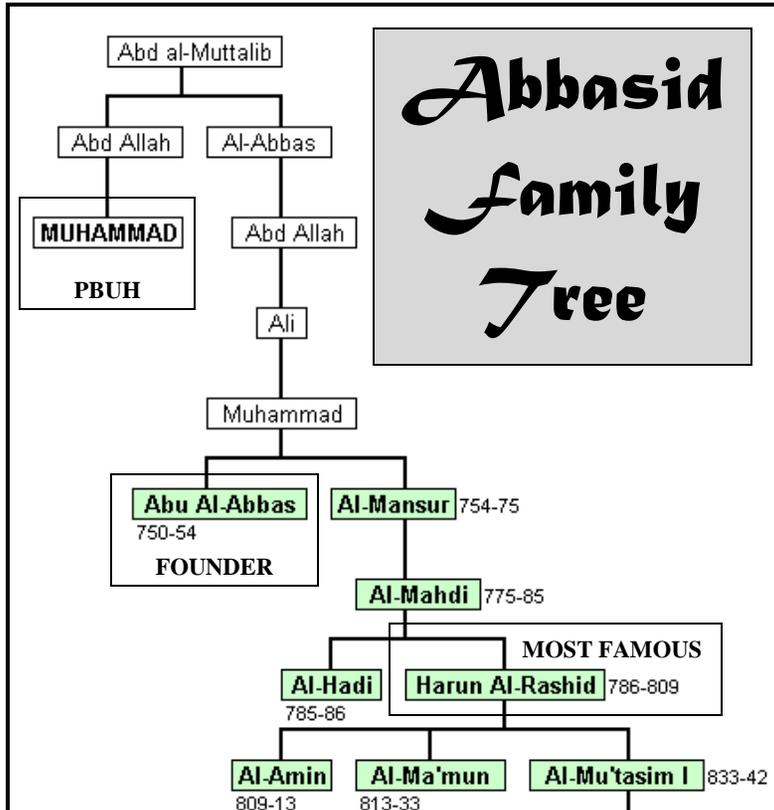
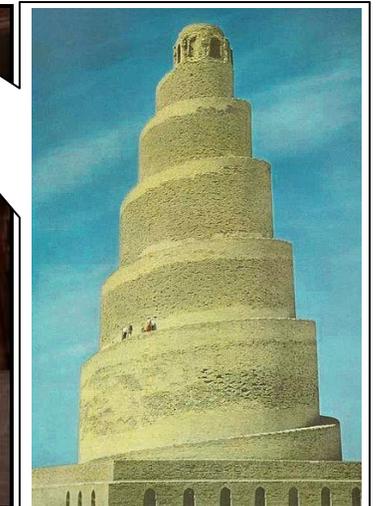
**The GREAT MOSQUE of SAMARRA, 851 (Largest in the world; Tallest Minaret)**  
**Destroyed by Hulegu Khan (Only Wall & Minaret remain)**



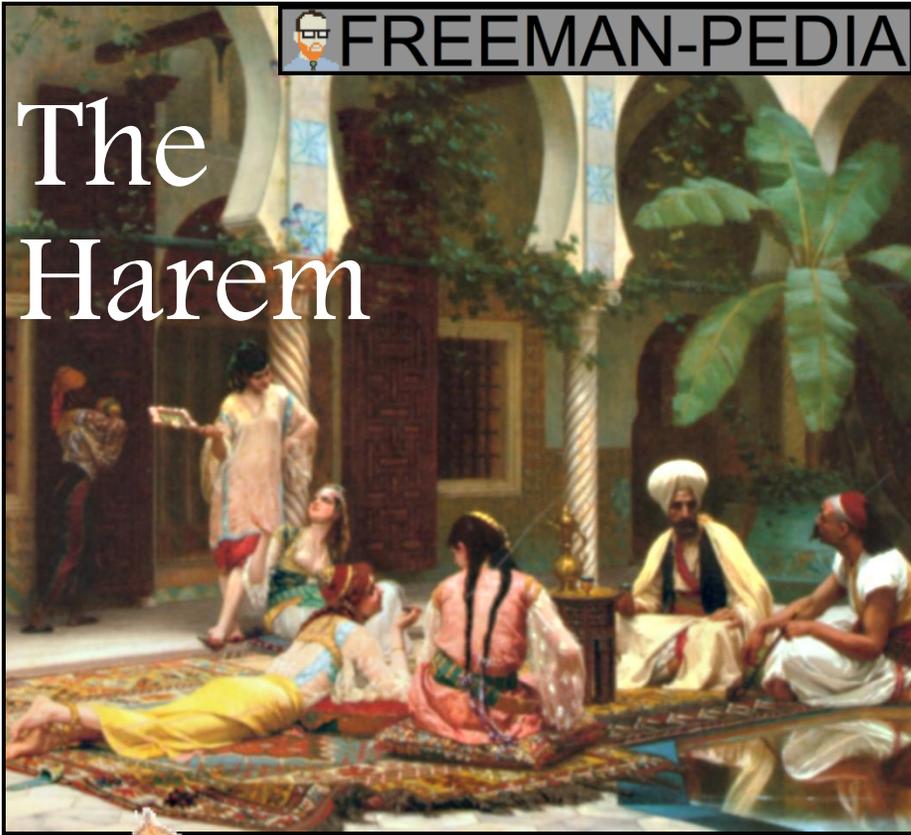
**FREEMAN-PEDIA**



Caliph's Palace, Baghdad



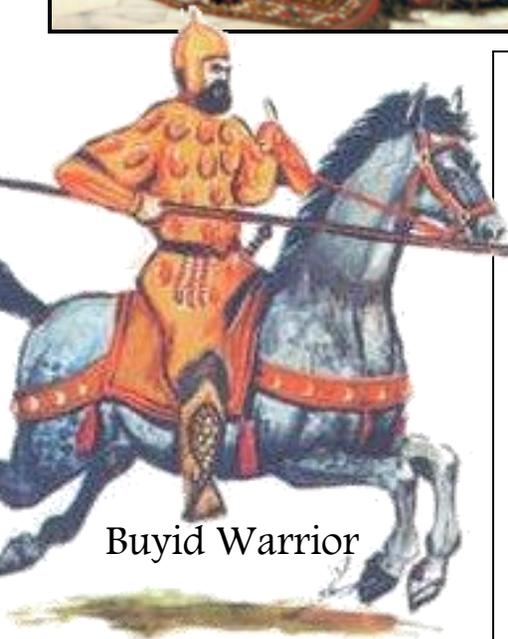
# The Harem



## DECLINING POSITION of WOMEN in FAMILY/SOCIETY

Two signs of Declining Role of Women

- **Harem**
  - The Harem was an Abbasid creation
  - Wives/Concubines of Abbasid
  - Concubines were slaves who could gain freedom by bearing sons
  - One Caliph had 4,000
  - Most bought/caught in surrounding regions
- **The Veil**
  - Female seclusion had been practiced in some areas of the ME since Antiquity
  - Wives/Concubines of Abbasid Caliphs were restricted to forbidden quarters
- Some of the best educated people were slaves
- Caliphs spent more time with concubines than with their wives
- Slave women were free to travel and did not have to wear the veil
- Poor women worked
- Rich women had no career options
  - Most married at 9
  - Devoted life to serving husbands
  - Women & Concubines maneuvered to get their sons succession to the throne
- By the end of the Abbasids, the freedom & influence women had enjoyed early on



Buyid Warrior

## NOMADIC INCURSIONS & the ECLIPSE of CALIPHAL POWER

Caliphs were too preoccupied to prevent territorial losses to the empire

- Areas close to the capital broke away (Egypt, Syria, etc.)
  - Regional areas supplanted Abbasid power as the predominant leaders of the Islamic World
  - **EXAMPLE: Buyids of Persia**
    - Invaded and conquered Baghdad
    - After this, Caliphs were puppets controlled by families like the Buyids
- Buyid leaders took the title of Sultan
- “Victorious”
  - Controlled the Caliph but did not stop the disintegration of the empire

## The Crusades

SELJUK TURKS faced immediate threat to the West

- Christians attempting to retake the Holy Land
- Initially, Successful (1096, 1099)
  - Muslims Divided, Surprised
  - Muslims, Jews Massacred
- Crusaders controlled ME off/on for 200 Years
- Finally, kicked out by Saladin (Last Eur. in 1291)
  - Sal’s Chivalry/actions gained him respect & praise in ME & Eur (Richard the Lionheart)
- **IMPACT: Greater on CHR than MUSLIMS**
  - Intensified Eur. desire to increase trade
  - Ex. Swords, Math, Chess, Rugs, Coffee, etc.



Seljuk Warrior