

# Rise and Decline of Islam 1300-1700

Chapter 2.1: The Ottomans Build A Vast Empire

Chapter 2.2: Cultural Blending

Chapter 2: The Muslim World Expands  
1300-1700

Essential Questions:



1. What were the causes of the rise and decline of the Muslim Empires between 1300 and 1700?

> Islam is the second largest of the three major monotheistic religions, the others being Christianity and Judaism. Muslims believe that the Quran is God's word as revealed to the prophet Muhammad (570-632 C.E.) through the angel Gabriel.

> There are five basic beliefs of Islam:

Belief in one god. (Allah is the Arabic word for god, not believed to be a separate god from the Judeo-Christian version.)

Belief in prophethood (Muhammad and the ones before him)

Belief in the justice of God

Belief in the Imams (or Apostles) of God (Shiite belief)

Belief in the Day of Judgment

> The practice of Islam is based on "five pillars":

*Shahada*: to declare one's belief in God and the prophetic role of Muhammad;

*Salat*: to pray five times every day (dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening);

*Zakat*: to give charity to those in need;

*Sawn*: to fast from food, water, and other bodily pleasures during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan;

*Haj*: to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime if this is physically and economically possible.

- By 1300, Byzantium (Rome) was in decline. A small country occupied land between Byzantium and the larger Muslim areas.
- **Ghazi**: warrior for Islam
- One of the most successful ghazis was **Osman** (AKA Othman). His followers were called **Ottomans**.
- Othman built his small empire between 1300 and 1326, and his success was largely based on the use of gunpowder in guns and cannons.
- Othman's son, **Orkhan I**, was powerful enough to be declared "sultan" (king). In 1361, his armies conquered the 2nd largest city in Byzantium. The Ottomans were on the rise.

- The Ottomans treated conquered peoples well; they ruled through local administration, often improved peasants' lives and did not force non-Muslims to serve in the army... they had to pay a small tax instead.
- This progress of the Ottomans was briefly halted in the 1400s by a rebellious leader called **Timur the Lame** (AKA Tamerlane). He burned Baghdad to the ground and defeated the Ottomans in battle. He then set his sights on China.
- When he did that, the four sons of the sultan began fighting each other. Mehmed I defeated his brothers and took the throne.
- Mehmed's son, Murad II, defeated the Venetians, the Hungarians and started the major spread of the Ottoman Empire through 1566.

## Rise and Decline of Islam 1300-1700

- Murad's son, **Mehmed II** (AKA Mehmed the Conqueror), was the major spreader of the Ottoman Empire.
- When he took power, Constantinople's population went from over a million to 50,000. At the age of 21, he decided to conquer the city.
- In 1453, he attacked the city with cannons that fired 1200 lb. boulders.
- The city was captured in 7 weeks.
- Mehmed proved to be a capable ruler who opened Constantinople to people of multiple faiths and helped rebuild the city.
- The city is now called Istanbul.

- Mehmed II's grandson, Selim the Grim, came to power in 1512.
- While Cortez and his men were conquering the Aztecs in South/North America, Selim's armies were taking over Mecca, Medina and Cairo. Islam was spreading quickly.
- The Ottoman Empire reached its peak under Selim's son, Suleyman I (the Lawgiver, the Magnificent). By 1526, Suleyman's armies were well into Europe but was stopped by Charles V of Hapsburg.
- Suleyman's armies were part of the **devshirme** system, which captured conquered boys, converted them to Islam and trained them as soldiers.
- Even with the massive devshirme army, the Empire began to decline.

- Suleyman killed his ablest son and sent another into exile, so he was succeeded by his third son, Selim II (the Incompetent).
- Suleyman also set a bad pattern for future sultans. It became customary for sultans to strangle their brothers and keep sons uneducated in the harem. This led to a long line of weak sultans who ruined the empire.
- Despite this, the Ottoman Empire lasted into the 20th century.

### Chapter 2.2: Cultural Blending

#### Essential Questions:

- Explain how cultural blending results in new cultures
- Summarize the rise of the Safavid Empire

### Chapter 2.2: Cultural Blending

- Cultural Blending: the mixing of different cultures in new and exciting ways
- This blending can be caused by migration, pursuit of religious freedom/conversion, trade and conquest
- The results of cultural blending include: changes in language, religion, styles of government, use of technology and military tactics.
- Examples: Chinese characters in Japanese language, the spread of Buddhism, the spread of democracy, adaptation of architectural styles

### Case Study: The Safavid Empire

- The Safavids were originally members of an Islamic brotherhood named after its founder, Saf'i al-Din. In the 1400s, the Safavids aligned themselves with the Shi'a branch of Islam.
- The Safavids were squeezed between two powerful enemies, so they concentrated on building a strong army.
- In 1499, they began a campaign to seize modern-day Iran. It was completed two years later, led by the 14-year-old Safavid leader, Isma'il. He then took the title "shah" (king) and became a religious tyrant, demanding conversion to Shi'a Islam or death to all under his power. He executed all those belonging to Sunni Islam.

## Rise and Decline of Islam 1300-1700

- The Sunni, under Selim the Grim, later ordered the executions of all Shi'ite in the Ottoman Empire. An estimated 40,000 died.
- The largest battle between Selim and Isma'il was in 1514. In that battle, the Ottomans soundly defeated the Safavids.
- This also set the border between the two areas (Safavid and Ottoman). This border is still in place today, between Iran and Iraq.
- Isma'il's son, Tahmasp, learned from his father's mistakes. He began using artillery and expanded Safavid territory.
- Shah Abbas took the Safavid throne in 1587. He reformed the military and everyday life.
- He created two armies (including one loyal to just him) and gave them the best weapons of the time.
- He also opened Safavid lands to Christians in order to show tolerance of other faiths.

- Shah Abbas was intolerant of corruption. He harshly punished the corrupt and rewarded the capable/loyal. He also hired foreigners to fill positions in the government.
- His next move was to establish a Safavid capital at Esfahan. The city was designed to cover 4.5 square miles and be filled with artwork of various types.
- For all the good things he did, Shah Abbas made the same mistake that Suleyman made: he blinded or killed his ablest sons. Abbas' grandson, Safi, took over for Abbas.
- The Safavids declined just as the Ottomans had, but more quickly.
- The last shah, Afshar, expanded the empire but was so cruel that he was killed by one of his own troops. The Safavid Empire died in 1747.