

CHAPTER 11

The Rise of the Moslem Empire

GETTING STARTED

1 Sometimes today in the Arabian Desert, you can still see Arab tribespeople in flowing robes and mounted on horses which they ride swiftly across the desert. These Arab equestrians appear suddenly at the top of sand dunes. Then just as suddenly they disappear.

In the years from 570 A.D. to 750 A.D., Arab tribes from Arabia swept from their homeland across northern Africa and into Europe. These Arabs were determined to spread a new religion to other parts of the world. While spreading this new religion, the Arabs succeeded in building a great empire that controlled the Mediterranean trade routes and became powerful enough to attack western Europe and the Byzantine Empire.

2 Before you begin reading the chapter lesson, survey the lesson. Begin your survey by reading the beginning of the lesson. Then look through the lesson and read the headings. Next, study the pictures and read the picture captions. Then study the map of the Moslem Empire on page 70. Finally, read the review section called "Summing Up" at the end of the lesson. This survey of the whole lesson will help you to discover the important ideas in this chapter.

Know the Main Idea

As you read the chapter lesson, try to remember the following important MAIN IDEA of the chapter.

The Moslem religion began in Arabia. The Moslems conquered and controlled a great empire in northern Africa, Spain, and southwestern Asia.

All the facts that you will learn in this chapter are related to this MAIN IDEA. The following questions will help you to understand the MAIN IDEA. Look for the answers to these questions as you read the lesson.

1. Who began the Moslem religion?
2. By what name did the Moslems call their god?
3. What belief helped to make the Moslems brave fighters?

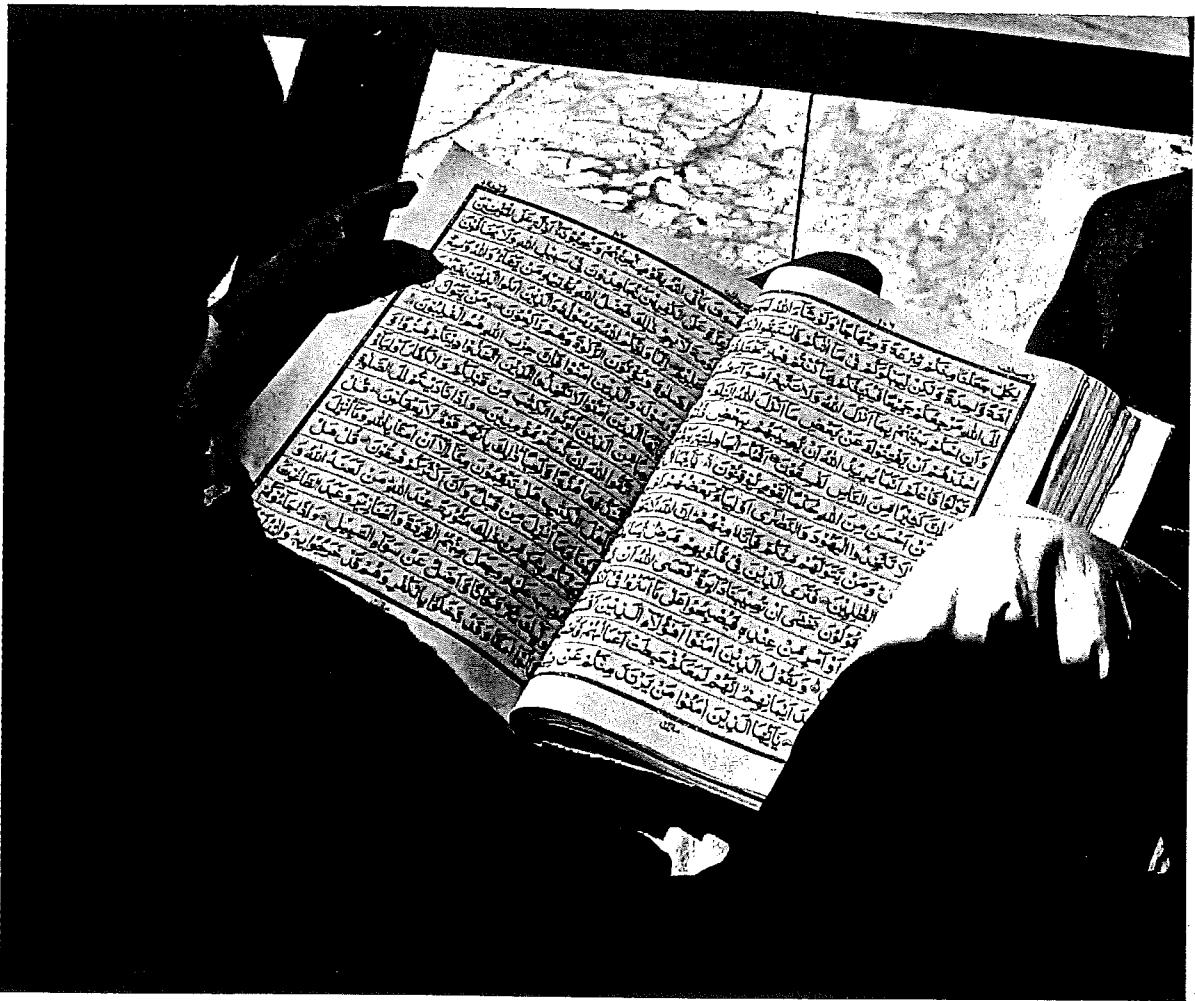
Know These Important Terms

Moslem religion	Hegira
Bedouins	Koran
Islam	Moors

Know the Years of This Chapter

Look at the time-line below. It shows the years of this chapter, 570 A.D. to 750 A.D.





The Koran is the source of Islamic Law

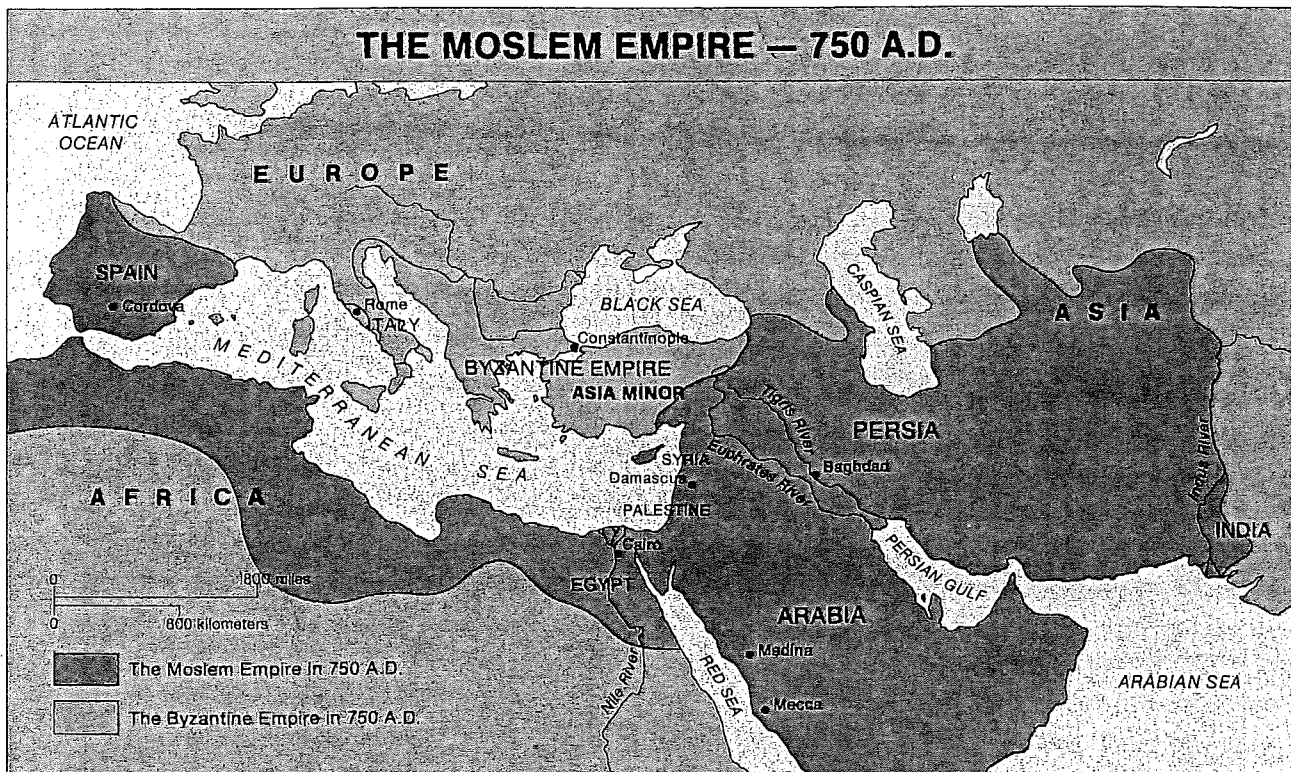
EXPLORING THE TIME

"There is no God but Allah, and Mohamed is his Prophet!" This cry was shouted by bands of people on horseback who rode out of Arabia in the early years of the 600's A.D. to spread a new religion—the **Moslem religion**. In this chapter, you will learn how the Arabs spread this new religion and how they built up a great and powerful empire.

The Arabs Lived in the Deserts of Arabia

Arabia was a hot, dry land in the southwestern part of Asia. It was surrounded on three sides by water—the Red Sea on the west, the Arabian Sea on the southeast, and the Persian Gulf on the northeast.

The Arabs, or the people of Arabia, moved from place to place as **Bedouins** (BED-OO-INZ), or desert wanderers. They



were divided into tribes, or groups. These tribes frequently fought each other.

Most Arabs worshiped many gods. They believed that these gods lived in trees and stones. Their holy city was Mecca (MEK-uh). An old temple called the Kaaba (KAH-buh) stood in Mecca. In the Kaaba was a sacred black stone, in honor of one of the most important Arabian gods.

The Moslem Religion Developed in Arabia

About 570 A.D., a boy named Mohammed (moh-HAHM-id) was born in Mecca. Mohammed was very poor and had little education. Later, he earned a living as a leader of camel caravans, or trading groups.

During trips across the desert, Mohammed met both Christians and Jews, and spent much of this time thinking about religion. Then, when he was forty years old, Mohammed began to preach a new religion to the Arabs. This new religion was called **Islam** (is-LAHM), or the Moslem religion. The people who accepted this religion were called Moslems.

At first, Mohammed's preaching made him so disliked in Mecca that he was forced to escape to the town of Medina (muh-DEE-nuh), which was about three hundred kilometres away. Mohammed's escape to Medina is called the **Hegira** (hih-JY-ruh), and it took place in 622 A.D. The year 622 A.D., therefore, became the first year of the Moslem calendar.

The Moslem Religion Was Based on Five Rules

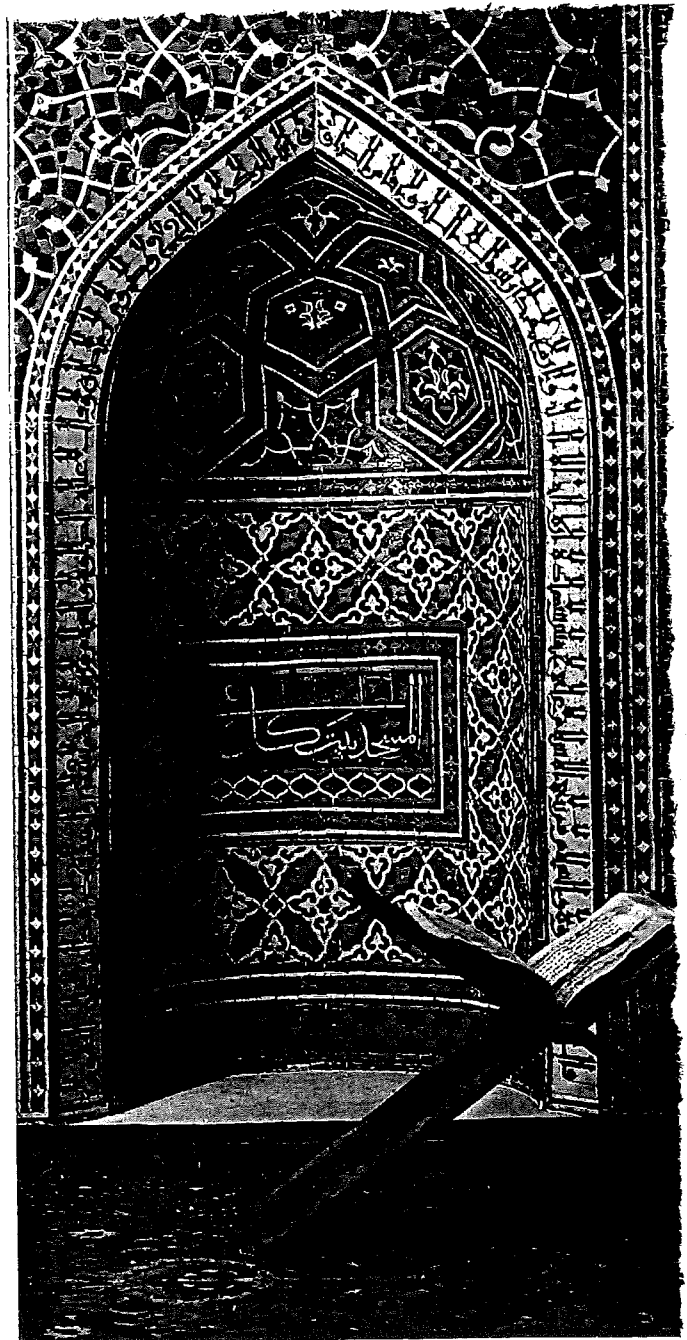
What was this new religion that Mohammed preached? The answer can be found in the Moslem holy book, the **Koran** (koh-RAHN). The Koran was written a few years after Mohammed died. It provides the religious rules that all Moslems must follow.

All Moslems were required to follow five important rules. First, Moslems were required to worship only one God, Allah, and they were required to accept Mohammed as Allah's Prophet, or messenger. Second, all Moslems were required to pray five times a day, facing toward Mecca. Third, all Moslems were required to fast, or not eat, from sunrise to sunset during the one holy month of the year. Fourth, all Moslems were to treat other Moslems as brothers and sisters. Fifth, all Moslems were to visit Mecca at least one time in their lives.

Islam Tried to Help Moslems Lead Better Lives

The Moslem religion, or Islam, also had many other rules. Moslems were not allowed to eat pork or to drink liquor. Moslems were not allowed to gamble, or to bet. And Moslems who had slaves were supposed to treat their slaves well.

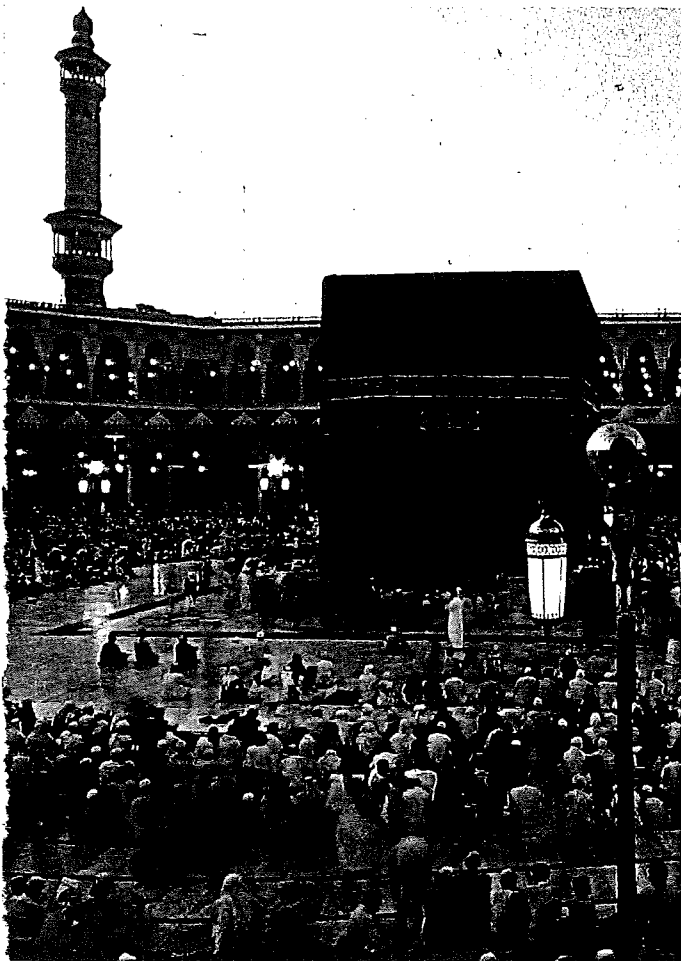
Many people were attracted to the Moslem religion because it taught familyhood among people. But Moslems also believed that they must make people of other religions become Moslems. They believed that any Moslem who died fighting for his religion entered the Moslem heaven—which the Koran described as a very pleasant and wonderful place.



A Prayer Niche

The Moslems Conquered Many Nations and Built a Great Empire

When Mohammed was forced to leave Mecca, his followers began a holy war



The Kaaba in the city of Mecca. Moslems try to visit Mecca at least one time in their lives.

against the city. By 630 A.D., Mecca was conquered and it became the holy city of Islam. The Kaaba temple in Mecca and the sacred black stone were taken over by Islam.

By the time that Mohammed died in 632 A.D., most Arabians were Moslems. After Mohammed died, one of his closest friends became the leader of the Moslems.

In the last half of the 600's A.D., the Persian Empire and the Byzantine Empire

were at war. These wars weakened both empires at just the same time that the Moslem armies began to spread the Moslem religion. The Moslems easily conquered Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, northern Africa, and the Mediterranean islands. Later, the Moslem armies even conquered a part of India.

In the early 700's A.D., a group of Moslems called Moors crossed from northern Africa into Europe and soon conquered most of Spain. The Moslems now had a huge empire that reached from Spain to India.

The Moslems Divided Western Europe from the Byzantine Empire

The Moslem victories greatly weakened the Byzantine Empire. And the Moslem victories also weakened the European nations. The Moslems gained control of the Mediterranean trade routes and cut down the trade between western Europe and the Byzantine Empire. As a result, the western part of the old Roman Empire was almost completely cut off from the eastern part.

SUMMING UP

Islam, or the Moslem religion, developed in Arabia. The great leader who began the Moslem religion was Mohammed. After Mohammed's death, Moslem armies spread the Moslem religion to many lands, and they built a great empire. By the early 700's A.D., the Moslem Empire controlled the Mediterranean trade routes and divided the Byzantine Empire from the nations of western Europe. In the next chapter, you will read about the great culture that was developed by the Moslems.

UNDERSTANDING THE LESSON

Do You Know These Important Terms?

For each sentence below, choose the term that best completes the sentence.

1. Mohammed started a religion called the (**Mogul religion/Moslem religion**).
2. Arab tribes who moved from place to place were called (**Bedouins/Mohammedans**).
3. (**Kaaba/Islam**) is another name for the Moslem religion.
4. The escape of Mohammed from Mecca is called the (**Medina/Hegira**).
5. The (**Koran/Casbah**) is the holy book of the Moslem religion.
6. The (**Moors/Ashanti**) were a group of Moslems who conquered most of Spain.

Do You Remember These People and Events?

1. Tell something about each of the following subjects.

Mohammed Moors

2. Explain how each of the following developments took place.
 - a. Islam tried to help Moslems lead better lives.
 - b. The Moslems were able to conquer a great empire in northern Africa and in southwestern Asia.
 - c. The Moslem victories weakened the Byzantine Empire.

Can You Locate These Places?

Use the map on page 70 to locate the following places. Tell how each place is related to the events in this chapter.

Arabia	Byzantine Empire
Syria	Palestine
Medina	Persia
Egypt	northern Africa
India	Spain
Mecca	western Europe

Do You Know When It Happened?

Why are the following years important in Moslem history?

570 A.D. 622 A.D.

Do You Remember the Main Idea?

Which one of the following ideas is the MAIN IDEA of this chapter?

1. The Moslem religion began in Europe, and it quickly spread over southwestern Asia and northern Africa.
2. The Moslem Empire stretched from Spain to India.
3. The Moslem religion began in Arabia. The Moslems conquered and controlled a great empire in northern Africa, Spain, and southwestern Asia.

What Do You Think?

From what you have read in this chapter, try to answer the following thought questions.

1. Do you think that the rules of the Moslem religion were easy to follow?
2. How do you think the Moslems' conquest of Spain affected the other peoples of western Europe?
3. How do you think the Arabs felt toward Mohammed when he first began to preach the Moslem religion to them?