**Week 2**

***What were the political and socio-economic realities of pre-Islamic Arabia? What was the significance of Mecca in pre-Islamic Arabia?***

* The near east was dominated by the roman-byzantine to the west and the Persian to the east
* Byzantines and sasanians had reached arrangements with leading clans, ghassanids and lakhmids who provide an element of administration in the frontier areas as well as a first line defense against their enemies.
* After the year 600 the capital has moved to Constantinople and Christianity had become the official religion in the ByzantinesEmpire.
* Massive loss of population after the mid of the sixth century because of desaters, natural and man-made.
* The Byzantine Empire faces at that time a lot of problem in the west and in the east!
* The system of limitanei, frontier guards who performed military services in exchange for land was abandoned and the army was composed then from Armenians and Arab.
* By the end of the sixth century the byzantine near east had effectively lost its classical aspect and going into a profound economic and social changes.
* There was in Syria and Egypt two different cultures and this difference was reflected in religion where there is 2 groups one monophysite(in Syria) and the other diophysite (the Copt)
* A significant proportion of the population was alienated from the ruling class both culturally and because the church they were devoted to was regarded as heretical and subject to dire official sanctions. But it is important to note that there is no evidence that the monophysites of Syria or the Coptscooperated with the Islamic conquests.
* The conquerors were actually welcomed in some part of Syria and there was no war with them.
* After the death of Maurice the emperor of the Byzantines, phocas became an emperor the Persians lunch a major invasion of the byzantine empire and they reach Egypt
* After phocas died came Heraclius who was able to restore the land taken by the Persians and control Syria Egypt and Jerusalem again.
* Heraclius faces numerous problems related to the military and maintenance of city walls and especially with the religions where he tried to find and agreement between diophysite and Monophysite views.
* Power of the Sasanian Empire was dynastic.
* Much of land on which the cultivators paid up to a third of produce since this was both rent and taxes(especially in Iraq)
* The emperor of the Persian Empire states a tax according to wealth of people on all members of society except the aristocracy and the priest of the official religion.
* Urban life and institutions played a smaller part in the life of the Sasanian Empire than of the byzantine.
* One of the most important aspect of the sasanian empire was aristocracy that was divided into 2 main groups :
1. The upper aristocracy composed of few great families but some of them were not persian at all but aramaean or arab (especially in Iraq)
2. Lesser aristocracy of dihqans composed of many families that live in villages and formed a link with the government.
* The sasanian had a state religion, Zoroastrianism, which was administered by a cast of priests called Magi, but it seems that it have only limited popular support; and it was challenged by other faiths notably the Nestorian Christianity, but the Magi tolerated the Nestorians and while none of them were themselves converted, even they marred Christian wives. As well as there was a Jewish community which seems to have been existence since the time of the exile?
* For most of the people in Iraq and Iran the Sasanian Empire with its attendant religion was alien and often oppressive and hostile and many of the people in this region shared neither language nor religion nor custom with their political masters. So it is not surprising that few of them were prepared to struggle to preserve the old order once the imperial army had been defeated
* As in Byzantium, this long term weakness had been exacerbated by short term problems notably the violent and unpredictable policies of the emperors.
* It was perhaps to deflect attention from these internal problems that the emperor began the Great War with the Byzantines.
* In this war the Persians reached Syria and Egypt but Hercules, the byzantine emperor was able to get this area back and go through Iraq. The Persian failed to lead any effective resistance to the enemy as well as the presence of other problems in that period of time such as extensive floods in the irrigated area in southern Iraq.
* IMPORTANT : in the territories it inherited from the sasanians as in those it took over from Byzantium Islam came into contact with a rapidly changing society and many of the social , economic and structural developments that are usually associated with the development of Islam society were in fact already under way in the sixth century if not before. It would be more accurate to say that it entered an already changing world and shaped and accelerated some of the existing trends. The dynamic development of the Islamic world can only be understood against this background.

**WEEK 3**

***What was the religious situation in pre-Islamic Arabia? How might Islam have been perceived as a threat to Meccan society?***

**THE ORIGINS OF ISLAM:**

Muslims looked at the time before them and called it the "Era of Ignorance" which is merely hinted at in the Quran and so the older religions of Mecca were rewritten or misrepresented and the attempt to reconstruct them is hard.

Meccans and their neighbors of Hijaz worshiped the way they lived, they worshiped their gods in shrines and Bedouins worshiped in transit (they carried their gods with them). Just before Islam, the sacred stones had been so much similar to humans in shape and many of them had names and personalities. However, there's a distinct notion to the Arab's worship of gods since each tribe had a divine patron that the group focused on and each of these deities was a lord of a shrine.

Bedouins came into the towns to worship their gods and this might seem commercial since the movement of an effigy into a certain shrine means that its followers will follow it if certain conditions were available such as security. In this way, Arabs would worship and trade together and then return to their normal lives. But to speak of these matters we have to rely on Muslim accounts since this was important to them because Muhammad must have adopted into Islam certain cults to fit the Meccan way of life and maintain a continuous link with the Abrahamic authentic past (such as the tahlil during the Hajj and 'umra, or the sacrificing of camels).

There seemed to be a chief god in mecca who was known in Syria and northern Arabia and the Kaaba was his house (Quraysh were called upon to disclaim all the other gods except one but they had so many idols in and around Kaaba). Allah was regarded as the high god and the most convincing piece of evidence is that all gods were represented by idols except Allah.

Meccans didn't only worship Allah, but they also worshiped his daughters. Moreover, Allah shared his sanctuary in Mecca with a powerful Arab idol called Hubal (it's believed that Abraham dug a pit in the Kaaba and the idol of Hubal was laid there). It's believed that Abu Sufyan called upon Hubal before the battle of Uhud. Finally, among the pictures that decorated the interior of the Kaaba there was one of Abraham as an old man but historians believe that the picture was of Hubal since Muhammad had it removed but allowed the picture of Jesus to be kept there.

The daughters of god were Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat and each was favored by certain tribes but all tribes venerated Al-Uzza which was the most recent and the dearest to the meccans. In addition, there were guardians of humans and singers of god (angels) among with the jinn.

Arabs of the Hijaz used sacrifice as a primary way to maintain a relationship with their gods. More than one type of sacrifice was known to the Arabs and Muslim authorities report of some animals offered to the gods and not being sacrificed. In addition to animal sacrifice, Arabs offered milk, grains, precious objects as well as enemies' hands to their gods to be kept in the Kaaba.

The best known pre-Islamic ritual taken into Islam is the Hajj. Pre-Islamic pilgrimage was not a single act but a complex one. The construction of the Kaaba is described in the Quran as the work of Abraham and Ishmael and this might have been the belief in quraysh.

The hajj originally had nothing to do with Mecca. Muslim hajj means the standing at Arafat followed by a procession to Mina and sacrifice there. Moreover, it was common knowledge that Sufa and not Quraysh held the religious offices and granted the ijaza at Arafat or Mina.

**PRE-ISLAMIC MONOTHEISM:**

Sources for Muhammad's religious ideas vary over a wide range and most writers seek Jewish or Christian sources.

Jewish scholars argue for a Jewish source but tend to forget that the Old Testament is also part of Christianity.

Christian scholars argue for a Christian source but are embarrassed by Muhammad's rejection of the Christian doctrine.

Islamic scholars never deny a relation with the Jewish or Christian communities but they refuse the idea that Qur'an is influenced by Judaism or Christianity declaring it to be the Word of God, directly communicated to the prophet by angelic mediation.

The author doesn't reject the idea of revelation as the description of Muhammad's experience although Islam is faced with the necessity of reinterpreting the medieval meaning of the word "Revelation".

We could argue about the prehistory of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula. If the Qur'an was understood by its hearers, then there must have been an Arabic religious vocabulary in Arabia. However, some terms in the Quran were of non-Arabic origins. The word Quran is an example, since it's related to Syraicqeryana. Technical terms of the religious vocabulary could have come from surrounding monotheistic groups and a number of this vocabularywas Arabized or correlated to the Arabic language. Since many words had parallels in Arabic, Arab philologists failed to recognize many of them as loanwords from Syriac or Aramaic (there's only evidence of loanwords in the early Mediniansuras of the Quran).

It's obvious that Christian and Jewish communities existed in Arabia but there is considerable evidence in Muslim texts that other monotheistic groups existed in Arabia.

The prehistory of Christians was revealed by the discovery of the Essene documents which suggest that Christian rituals were related to those of the Dead Sea community. However, it's improbable that the prehistory of Islam will be available in such details and we will have to rely on passages from the Quran for details.

The presence of a monotheistic group in Arabia is historically certain but it's been argued that these groups didn't gain much of a hearing in Mecca and if so, then Muhammad would have confronted them with a body of new ideas that was hard to accept. In the Quran, there are passages were the existence of pre-Islamic monotheism is acknowledged and clearly presented.

The "Tablets of Moses" were so familiar in Mecca and it's improbable that a Meccan was unaware of them. There seemed to be some similarities in some versus between these tablets and some suras in the Quran but there is no evidence that Muhammad had seen these tablets or derived his revelations from them.

Some versus in the Quran have no parallels and although they reflect general scriptural themes, they aren't found in the Torah or the Tablets of Moses. Other versus have verbal parallels in ancient songs.

Another argument for the presence of early monotheistic populations in Arabia is that some terms in the Quran had no meaning in Arabic nor can they be related to the Arabic roots, so they could have been understood only if they have already existed in Mecca.

One remarkable feature of the discourse of Quran is the absence of dogmatic slant which suggests an almost deliberate avoidance of the distinctive elements used in Judiasm or Christianity. A second remarkable feature is the linguistic form of the discourse. All the Quranic revelations are rhymed throughout but not in meter rather using a way called cooing (saj') which had a great advantage of facilitating memorizing the versus.

**A Reader on Classical Islam**

**Marriage with khadija:**

Khadija was a merchant woman of dignity and wealth. When she heard about the prophet’s truthfulness and honorable character she asked for him to carry her goods to the Syria accompanied by a lad called Maysara. When arrived there, the prophet stoped in the shade of a tree, when a monk comes and asks Maysara who is that man, because no man unless he is a prophet has stood under the tree. The prophet sold the goods and went back to Mecca. Along the ways Mayssara have noticed two angels shading the Messenger from the heat. Once khadija heard about all this, she proposed marriage.

**Muhammad’s call and first revelation:**

According to Aisha, when God desired to honor Muhammad and have mercy on his servants by means of him, the first sign of prophet hood was done through a vision resembling to the brightness of daybreak, which were shown to him in his sleep.

According to Ubayd’s , the night on which God honored him with his mission and showed mercy on his servants thereby Gabriel brought him the command of God. “He came to me, while I was asleep with a coverlet of brocade on which there was some writing and said recite”… “recite in the name of thy lord who created, who created man of blood coagulated Read! They lord is most beneficent who taught by the pen taught that which they knew not to men. I read and woke up from my sleep. When I was midway on the mountain I heard a voice saying Muhammad you are the Apostle of God and I am Gabriel”. Muhammad saw Gabriel in the form of a man with his feet astride the horizon. Revelation came fully to the Apostle while he believed in Him and in the truth of His message.

**Sadness, Doubt and consolation:**

The revelation stopped for a time so that the Apostle was distressed and grieved. Then Gabriel brought him the Sura of the morning in which his Lord who had so honored him swore that He had not forsaken him and did not hat him.

**The conversion of Ali:**

Ali the cousin og the prophet embraced the new faith, while the reaction of his father shows the enormous social difficulty of a Meccan rejecting the traditions of the fathers for the new traditions of the prophet. Ali was the first male to believe in the Messenger to pray with him and to believe in the divine message when he was a boy of ten. God favored him in that he was brought up in the care of the Messenger before Islam began.

**The Earliest Public Preaching of Islam:**

People began to accept Islam both men and women in large numbers. Then God commanded his Messenger to declare the truth of what he had received and make known his commands to men to call them to Him.

**The opposition of the Quraysh:**

When the Messenger openly displayed Islam a God ordered him his people did not withdraw or turn against him until he spoke disparagingly of their gods. They took great offence and started to treat him like an enemy. Abu Talib his uncle treated the Messenger kindly and protected him. In the beginning there was some attempt to bargain with Muhammad, but Islam started to spread among men and women and the Quraysh tried to seduce as many Muslim as possible. These broad promises were likely neither sincere nor altogether practical but they do attest to the magnitude of the threat that Muhammad was thought to pose to the social and commercial equilibrium of Mecca. Muhammad repeated his message and replied to the Quraysh that if they took the good advice of the Lord then they would have a portion of this word and the next if not he could only wait patiently the outcome until God decided between them. The Quraysh asked Muhammad, for proof of what he is saying. Example, they asked him to ask God to send his angel to contradict them but since Muhammad refused to ask God of doing such thing, they declared their total opposition and they said : we will not leave you and our treatment of you until either we destroy you or you destroy us.

**Persecution and Migration to Abyssinia:**

The Messenger continued on his way making public God’s religion and calling men upon them. In consequence his relationship with the Quraysh deteriorates and men withdrew from him in enmity. Not forgetting the Mecca is still very much a tribal society, Quraysh incited people against the companions of the Messenger who became Muslims and every tribe fell upon the Muslims among them beating them and seducing them from their religion. God protected the Messenger from them through his uncle Hamza. Upon what the Quraysh did, his uncle called the Banu Hashim and Banu al Muttalib to stand with him in protecting the Messenger. Quraysh kept on persecuting anyone who is known to become Muslim, and so the Messenger found best for his men to go to Abyssinia. This choice of place as a refuge dor muslims was a bit surprising, but Abyssinia has embraced Christianity long time ago a religion to which Muhammad have left an affinity. The Quraysh sent their own deputatuion to convince the Christian king of Abyssinia to send the Muslims back. The king held a public hearing on the matter and asked the Muslims about the religion they are forsaken there people, without entering to his religion or any other. Abu ja’far bin Abi taleb replied by telling him how they were people who worshiped idols but know they are following the God’s advice sent by the Messenger Muhammad. The king asked them if they had anything that came from God, and Ja’far read for him the sura called Mary. And so, the King believed them and said “ I will never give them up and they shall not be betrayed”

**The boycott:**

When the Quraysh perceived that the Messenger’s companion have settled in a land in peace and safety and that the king if Abyssinia is protecting them then they came together and they decided among themselves to write a document in which they would put a boycott on the Banu hashim and the Banu Muttalib that no one should marry their women or give or sell to them.

**Muhammad night’s Journey:**

The boycott of the Quraysh collapsed. The Messenger accompanied by Gabriel, went to see the wonders between heaven and earth in the back of a buraq , until he reached Jerusalem temple. There he found Abraham the friend of God, Moses and Jesus assembled with a company of prophets and prayed with them. 3 things were offered to the Prophet Water //if he takes it he will drown and his people also; wine which if he takes he will go astray and his people also, and milk which is he takes he will be rightly guided and his people also, and so the Prophet took the milk.

Another version of this story was that Gabriel came to him while he was asleep and stirred him with his foot then grabbed him by the arm and he brought him out the door to a shrine and there was a white animal had mule had donkey with wings. They mounted on it and it took them to Jerusalem. There he found Abraham, Moses and Jesus and he acted like their leader in prayer and came back the same night. In the morning the Messenger told the Quraysh of what happened and they didn’t believe him. They went to Abu Baker, to show that the Messenger is lying but they didn’t get to him. Instead he went to the Messenger and asked him what he saw, and the Prophet described Jerusalem temple in every detail that astonished abu baker and believed him directly.

**Losses, Personal, and political**

 In 619 C.E Muhammad was deprived from 2 strong supports, his uncle Abu Talib and his wife Khadija. Muhammad’s own desperation was matched by the implacable opposition of Abu Lahab. The conflict between the two men had by now descended to a deep personal animosity.

**An invitation from Yathrib:**

As his situation in Medina progressively deteriorate Muhammad turn to other places and other people. So he ended up in Yathrib later named as the City of the prophet or Madina were there was a mixed of Arabs and Jewish population. And so when God wished to display His religion openly and to glorify his prophet the time came when he met a number of Helpers, at one of Meccan’s fair. The people of Khazraj allied with him and promised to protect him from the Quraysh like they protect their own women and children.

 **A turn to Armed Resistance:**

When the Quraysh became insolent toward God and rejected his gracious purpose accused his prophet of lying and ill treated and exiled those who served him and proclaimed his unity , believed in his prophet and held fast to his religion, He have permission for His messenger to fight and protect himself against those who wringed them and treated them badly.

**The Hijjra, or Migration to Maddina:**

When God had given permission to fight the Messenger commanded his companions to emigrate to Madina and to link up with their brethren the Helpers. So they went out in companies and the Messenger stayed in Mecca waiting for the Lord’s permission to leave Mecca and migrate to Maddina. Thus the arrangement were now complete and the hijra , the migration of Muslims to Mecca began though gradually and with great caution. After a discussion of various possibilities it was Muhammad’s archrival Abu Jahl who took the floor. H e well how to play upon at least the religious anxieties of his fellow Quraysh. They decided each one to provide a young powerful well born aristocracies warrior that each of them should be equipped with a sharp sword and that each of them should strike a blow at him and kill him while he is sleeping. But that night Gabriel came to Muhammad and told him not to sleep in his bed tonight, instead ali slept their and covered himself with the prophet’s Hadrami which will be as his shield of danger since it covered the prophet and the Messenger of God. And so the plan failed. At Madina they were waiting Muhammad’s arrival. Ali stayed in Mecca then followed after a while and Muhammad ordered to build a mosque in Madina and he worked with the people so he would encourage the Muslims to work. And the first mosque was built.

**Week 4**

***What was the nature of the early community of Believers? How clear-cut were the community’s boundaries in the beginning? What can explain Muhammad’s success?***

**The birth of the Islamic State**

**Arabia in the 6th Century**

Neither Egypt nor Iran was an Arabic country. Tribes that spoke Arabic were united by a common language and affinity. This was an important key for the development of the Islamic State. This language eased communications and without it the success of the Islamic Empire and Islamic conquests was impossible. This constitutes the **ethnic and linguistic unity**.

Arabs had no political organization. However, there had been Arab kingdoms but controlled by outside powers such as Persian invaders. There had appeared Arab client states: the Ghassanids in Syria which was controlled by the Byzantines and Lakhmids in Iraq which was controlled by Sasanian rules. Ghassanids were leaders of Arab tribes who lived a pastoral existence along the borders of settled lands, and the Lakhmids had a fixed capital at Hira. But then, these systems had been swept away because of the change of policy by both Byzantines and Sasanians.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, tribes didn’t have lots of interactions together. Converts to Islam came as individuals or small groups and never as complete tribes. Islamic conquests made tribes settle where they formed cities protected by the government, such as Umayyad government.

Muhammad came from a trade community, where the trade was of two main kind: transit trade and trade of products in south Arabia; called Arabia Felix. The trade in Muhammad’s times constituted an exchange of goods and products. In order to overcome hostility between tribes, trades were accomplished in neutral places known as haram or hawta. In Mecca, Abraham found the haram but after he passed away, Qussay and his tribe Quraysh replaced the guardians and became the new holy family of the haram. This is where Muhamad the Prophet originates and his success is explained by his position with regard to the haram.

The inhabitants of Mecca were not a homogenous group. There were many slaves and tigers who were not members of the Quraysh and therefore there were many gaps between rich and poor people. There was no system of public justice, no police no courts, where safety and security of a man was dependant on lineage. Quraysh had control over the haram whereas other tribes such as the Makhzum were leaders in Meccan Society. There had been a competition for power and control in Mecca between clan of Hashim and Umayya.

**Early life of Muhamad**

Muhamad belonged to the clan of Hashim. Hashim was a man of wealth and generosity in contrast with his brother Abd Shams who was a poor man with a large family. His son Abd al Muttalib was of high importance in the tribe. This latter had four sons: Abu Lahab, Abd Allah, Al Zubayr and Abu Talib. Mumahad was the son the Abd Allah b Abd al Muttalib b Hashim, born in 570. His father died before he was born, and his mother and grandfather (abd muttalib) died later on at 6 and 8 yrs respectively. He worked in commerce and later on a business manager for Khadija, a wealthy Qurayshi widow, for his honesty who married him afterwards.
In year 610 he received the relevation of the Qur’an. His first conveyors were his wife Khadija and his cousin Ali b Abi Talib, and the rest conveyed as individuals or small groups.
Conservative elements in Mecca saw Muhammad’s call a threat to their positions, such as Abu Jahl of al Makhzum and Abu Sufyan of the Umayya who were the leading figures in Mecca at the time. This is because acknowledging Muhamad as the prophet of God meant to accept that he had a status superior to those Meccan leaders. For this reason, Muhamad’s activities and his followers were not tolerated anymore and they were subjected to increasing pressure. This took the form of exclusion, verbal attacks, commercial sanctions and physical violence. Under this abuse, some Muslims left Mecca to Ethiopia in 615 where they enjoyed the protection of the Christian ruler. Muhamad and some of his followers stayed in Mecca. They were protected by the clan of Hashim by its leader Abu Talib. Muslims turned to their non-Muslim relatives for protection but this changed when they moved to Medina.
The next stage of opposition was to isolate the clan of Hashim and to boycott them socially and commercially. This didn’t last long since relatives of the Hashim’s clan resumed contact later on.
in 619, both Khadija and Abu Talib died and this latter’s brother Abu Lahab took leadership of Hashim clan, and decided not to protect his nephew as his brother did so Muhamad’s position in Mecca was difficult. So, Muhamad tried to get help from neighboring city such as Ta’if and neighboring Bedouin tribes but they rejected. So the period between 619 and the Hijra in 622 was the crisis and toughest in his life since he began to preach his message.
After that, Muhamad was approached by inhabitants of the settlement off Yathrib (known as Medina after 622). The people of this community maintained their tribal distinctions and their systems of clan security. They were divided into two main tribes: the Aws and Khazraj, and three other tribes of Jews. The Aws and Khazraj were exhausted due to intensity of wars and needed a leader (outside power) to resolve the internal conflict. Under these circumstances, a group of Medinese approached Muhammad in 620. In 622, about 70 people from Aws and Khazraj in Medina, converts to Islam, met the prophet in Aqaba at night and thus he ensured that his position would be accepted by a considerable portion of the population. The Muslims moved to Medina in small groups, and the Prophet remained behind until he and Abu bakr made their way by vague paths to Medina and reached it in 622. This is the beginning of a new period.

**Mumammad in Medina**

The hijra freed Muslems from Quraish’s hostility and pressure. Muhammad made agreements between the Muhajirun and the people of Yathrib so that he provides protection for his followers (Muhajirun), known as the “Constitution of Medina”. All believers were known as an umma, where they defend each other and fight as one unit. Other clauses dealt with the relationship with the Jews so that they fight by Muslims’ side and each one keeps his own religion. The documents also tried to solve the problems of justice within the city and relations with outsiders. Medina was to be a haram as Mecca was, and Muhammad was to be its founding holy man.
Later on, Muhammad and his followers focused on establishing authority in Medina and getting help from surrounding nomad tribes and attracting alliance so that he fights against Mecca, and the support of these tribes contributed to his success.
To spread Islam all over, it was necessary to fight Quraish but attacking Mecca was impractical so Muhammad’s attention was attracted toward the caravans for Quraish that passed near Medina. In 624, a caravan passed carrying valuable goods so when Abu Sufyan, the Meccan leader, knew that Muhammad was intending to attack it he passed it by the coast road and escaped without injury. He sent 950 men under the leadership of Abu Jahl to rescue the caravan and advanced to put an end to the threat of Muhammad. Here, Muhammad with a much smaller force of 89 Muhajirun and 230 Ansar was waiting for them by the wells at Badr where he scored a major victory due to his possession of the water-source mainly, and Abu Jahl was killed and prisoners and animals were taken.
Importance of Badr victory:

* Solved many problems for the Prophet, where its returns were used to help Muslims that were in distress.
* It destroyed much of the prestige on which the reputation and the trade of Quraish rested where Bedouin tribes would no longer look on Meccan leaders with the same respect.
* Consolidation of Muhammad’s position in Medina
* Kept the Munafiqun silent.
* Allowed the movement against the Jews.

To defend their prestige, Quraish sake a revenge so they took an army of 3000 fighter faced the Prophet and his followers near Uhud. Muslims stood against the Meccans, the Prophet sustained slight injuries and his uncle Hamza was killed in the battle. Eventually, Meccans retired from the battle at the nightfall and made their way back to their city and Muslims scored another victory.
The Jews were the only threat to the Prophet’s position in Medina. So, Muhammad and his followers surrounded them and forced them to leave Medina with all they could carry except their arms. The Muhajirun took over the Jews’ lands, and this disgraced Ibn Ubayy (the Prophet’s enemy in Medina) to exploit the setback at Uhud to restore his position.
Both Muhammad and Abu Sufyan tried to get allies from the Hijazi tribes and the results of these maneuvers became apparent in 627 where Abu Sufyan gathered an army of 10000 men, facing an army of 3000 men under Muhammad’s command. For this reason, Muslims dug a khandaq since they cannot afford an open conflict. So, Mecca’s army surrounded Medina and after weeks and after Jeweish tribe of Qurayza and Ibn Ubayy didn’t help the Meccans from inside, Quraish’s army melted away. After the khandaq’s battle, Muhammad had an undisputed authority within the city. Then, Muslims attacked the Jews remaining and forced them to surrender in order to eliminate their threat.
**After that, Muhammad began to spread his interests where the main object was to bring the trade route to Syria under Medinese control. He made agreements with tribes, mostly Christian, and invited them to Islam.
After the break with the Jews, the direction of the prayer (qibla) was changed from Jerusalem to Mecca (Ka’ba). Muhammad and a group of about 1500 individual went to Mecca, reached the haram, and camped by the well at Hudaybiya. This forced ten years of peace between Muhammad and the Meccans who were weak to fight this large group.
To secure the agreement of the Arab tribes, Muhammad send an army of 3000 men in 629 commanded by his adopted son Zayd b Haritha and they fighted with tribesmen of Judham, Lakhm, and Bali. In this campaign, Zayd himself and Ja’far b Abi Talib the second in command were killed. In 629, Muhamad set out from Medina with 10000 men to Mecca. They entered the city from different directions and this eventually was a victory over Quraysh where Muslims took control of the city.**

***(\*This bolded text might be repeated in some of the following points)***

* The event of alkhandaq had showed that neither Mohamad nor the meccans were in a position to overcome each other by military force and that Mohamad would not be removed by internal dissension in medina.
* At the same time the meccans were suffering serious trading losses and Mohamad knew that the islam community would never reach its full potential without the energy and the expertise of the meccans.
* Mohamad aim to bring the trade route to Syria indermedinese control so he started to make aggrements with the byzantine, jews and the Christian tribes.
* Mohamad was more knee to win over mecca than to destroy it in violence.
* Mohamad decided to take the initiative and lead an expedition to Mecca, so he walked with about 1500 man to the Kaaba in order to make a peaceful pilgrimage.
* The muslims originally prayed in the direction of Jerusalem but after the break with the jews they changed their direction to the Kaabawhich was founded by Abraham and his son Ismail.
* The meccans made a truce with the muslims at that time but when the muslims wanted to do piligrimage the meccans live their city for 3 days.
* The prophet political instinct was telling him how Quraysh people can be very valuable to him as allies and not as enemies.
* The prophet at the same time continues what he was doing by making allies and converting people to islam
* The pressure on the meccans at that time increased and divisions began to appear in their ranks.
* Mohamad after this set out from medina with 10000 men toward mecca, when he reached mecca few people refuse his offer of life and security after this the kaaba was cleaned from the idols.
* Muslim mecca was threatened 3 weeks later by a great confederation of beduin tribes called the hawazin. But Mohamad defeat them at hunayn.
* The victory of hunayn, confirm MOhamad’s prestige and also cemented his alliance with the Quraysh
* This conversion of mecca made the ansar of medina feel uneasy since they wished to destroy mecca, and then they held a protest meeting complaining that the prophet was neglecting them but then he announced that he would continue to live in medina, but for the accident of birth he would considered himself a true medinese in every way.
* While mohamad was devoted his military to secure the raod to Syria the Islamic community began to find friends and allies using diplomatic ways.
* The last two years of his life Mohamad was in his house at medina and year 632 he announced his intention to make another pilgrimage to mecca but this time it was the great pilgrimage or the hajj and on his way back to medina he announced the expedition to Syria . but before this expedition the prophet became to ill and weak and he wasn’t able anymore to lead the prayers so this responsibility was given to Abu Baker and after a while the prophet died in Aisha’s home.
* The umma by the time of death of mohamad was a community which have no parallel in traditional Arabian society .previous temples and their holy families had had a limited authorities in contrary with ALLAH and Mohamad for which the whole world was their authorities. It was this factor that distinguishmohamad from other prophets.
* After the death of the prophet the take over of mecca added a new and very important element to the new elite , the meccan leaders. Where the ansar claimed that they should succeed and as well as the muhajirun.

**Constitution of Medina:**

After his arrival in Medina, Muhammad wrote the fifty clauses of the “Constitution of Medina” between the Muhajirun, the Ansar, and the Jews. It defines treaty relations of mutual aid between these groups, the actions to be made against those who break the treaties, and against persons in allied groups who commit crimes, along with the measures to take when such actions occur. Secondly, a section of this deals with the position of Jews in relation to other groups. This is strictly practical set of agreed procedures and it is not described as religious.

The ‘Shiite believe that the documents of ‘Ali were possessed by Ja’far al Sadiq. Let Ja’far’s copy be denoted as documents A and B, where the first document ‘A’ might be described in the term “made a brotherhood”. This term implies that Muhammad made alliances (hilf) between Quraish and the Ansar, and others say that it was between the Muhajirun and the Ansar. Further documents verify that Muhammad made two hilfs between the Muhajirun and Ansar: a brotherhood between them and a hilf. The Sirah which comes after the Constitution describes the “brotherhood” which the Prophet had set between the Ansar and Muhajirun.
When the Prophet came to Medina, he wrote a kitab between them and the Jews. The explicit version of this says that Muhamad made a sulh between him and the Jews. He introduced every tribe to their allies and places an ‘aman’ between this latter and him. He also made an agreement with them that they should not aid any enemy against him. However, when the Prophet came from Badr to Medina most of the Jews broke this alliance.
The next step in exploring the “Constitution” and the documents of which it is composed refers to Qur’an and the Traditions where it is probable that they contain some terms that explain the set of agreements present in the “Constitution”.

**Content:** the closure statement of document ‘B’ says that if any dispute rises over the contents of the document or its applications, the affair should be referred to Allah represented by his Prophet Muhammad at Medina.
The ‘Constitution’ is then divided in to 8 distinct documents where this division created problems. First of all, every agreement bears the signature of the contracting parties and the name of the person who wrote the document, but they lack the seal of the Prophet. Moreover, since the signatures are tiresome to copy, both Ibn Ishaq and Ja’far al Sadiq copied the transcript of the clauses of the “Constitution” without the seals.
The second problem lies in the chronology of the 8 documents. Consider document ‘F’; it declares that the Jawf of Yathrib is haram to the people of sahifah. This could be interpreted that the Medina is declared a haram or sacred enclave, but tradition places the creation of Haram of Medina after the Prophet’s return to Khaibar. The declaration of haram could also have taken place some time after the failure of the Prophet’s enemies to take Medina at the battle of al Khandaq, which made it a sacred enclave and showed its holiness by repelling the invaders. Also, this document opens with clauses in which the Jews are spoken of as paying nafaqah along with Muslims. However, many reasons can show that this clause has been misplaced and belongs to the next preceding document which deals with the Jews.

At early stages in Medina, the term Mu’minun was explained as following: a Mu’min is a person who guaranteed aman or secutiry . The Muhajirun are called Quraish, but in later documents, it was showed that Quraish were known as Muhammad’s enemies. In addition, Muslim was a more general term than Mu’min and included Prophet followers from non-tribal classes. At this stage, the city was called Yathrib and not Medina.
The community, or ummah, motivate Mu’mins to take an action against aggressors even if he was a son of them. Also, Mu’mins are not to aid or shelter any aggressor, and tremendous measures will be taken against those who does this. The protection of God guarantees security of this community.
Document C deals with the Jews and states that they must pay nafaqah along with Mu’mins, but it constitutes them as an ummah, a community along with Muslims where each one has his own din. Document D deals with jews and their clients, which is an appendix to C. Document E says that Jews and Muslims must pay nafaqah (also an appendix to C). Document F is where Yathrib is declared as haram where Muhamad is called “Rasul Allah”. Document G states that the Quraish and anyone aiding them will not be protected, and Quraish will support each other against any party attackinh Yathrib. Document H says that any person staying or going out of Medina is safe except the criminal, where Allah is the protector of the person.

**Success:** Muhammad dispatched punitive expeditions when security was broken and made military demonstrations to induce other groups to join in the peace. However, his control of Arabia was gained by persuasive and political means. The tribes which accepted Islam had no need to make much change in their way of life and very shape and form of the security agreements concluded with them was unquestionably already familiar.

**Week 5**

***Why were the Islamic armies able to make such rapid military advances? How was the early expansion of the Believers organized? How were conquered non-Muslims to be treated?***

**ISLAMIC CONQUESTS:**

The appearance of the unifying ideology of Islam along with the political consolidation led to the birth of a powerful state that dominated more than tribes since its polity was centralized and unified so it integrated most tribes into itself.

This integration allowed the future conquests during which tribal groups had agents to supervise them and collect taxes (agents were either from Quraysh or Ansar). The existence of these agents is supported by various documents most importantly those that described the way taxes were levied on nomads. In some cases, the terms of the taxes depended on whether the tribal groups chose to embrace Islam or not.

There were 2 terms for the taxes: sadaqa and jizya. Sadaqa was levied especially on nomadic groups while jizya was levied on sedentary people who stuck to their Christian or Jewish beliefs. The Islamic population paid alms (zakat). The presence of a specific tax for the nomads shows that the state viewed them as members of different social class than settled people and it reflects the inferior position they occupied in the political order. The jizya could be waived if the group performed services for the Islamic state ('Umar said that the asawira would be free of jizya if they helped him in conquering Iraq).

These taxes support the idea that the political integration that began under Muhammad continued throughout the early conquests. Further evidence is the recruitment of tribesmen as the Islamic army moved into new territories. These newly recruited tribesmen were integrated as an organized army whose objectives and movements were controlled by the Islamic state.

The conquest period saw changes in the political formation of the state. By the end of the Ridda, Arabian society was classified into 3 strata: the ruling elite, loyal tribesmen, and a large population of conquered tribesmen. The ruling elite consisted of tribesmen from the Hijaz notably the Quraysh, Ansar from Medina, and the Thaqif of Ta'if. The bond between elites was emphasized by inter-marriages. The middle strata included tribes of Yemen and Sarat (they had close relations with the ruling elite tribesmen) and also included nomads from Hijaz who stayed loyal to Medina during the Ridda. The conquered tribesmen (lowest stratum) were integrated into the state by paying taxes but they had no role in executing or formulating the state policy.

At the beginning of the conquests, former rebels of the Ridda war were not recruited into the army since they were considered unreliable and unworthy of sharing the spoils of the conquest with the other loyal tribesmen. So, former rebels didn't have any active participation in the state and the elite provided a significant part of manpower in the Ridda wars but then a manpower crisis occurred due to the huge demand and 'Umar made a decision to start recruiting former rebels into the Islamic army.

This decision greatly increased the size of the middle strata (loyal tribesmen) and allowed the victory of Islam in central Iraq however it posed serious problems on the state leadership.

MEANS OF INTEGRATION:

The means used by the Islamic state to integrate tribal groups into itself were highly varied and they ranged from the ideological or idealistic to the venal.

Ideologically, the same factors that led to the integration under Muhammad continued during the conquests especially the idea of a unique universal God. This ideology made individuals and tribes strongly attracted to the religious message of Islam and led them to think that unification was necessary. So the true belief in the Islamic message was a key factor in the rise of the Islamic state in Arabia. Furthermore, depending on the individual, this ideology could serve as an important factor in the success of the integration.

In addition to the ideological factors there are many practical reasons by which the loyalty of individuals was secured by the state. As under Muhammad, material gain (booty) was effective for tribesmen to remain loyal but during the conquests, gift granting became more generalized and even institutionalized. Salary payments (ata) to warriors serving in the army were established and these payments formed a link between the benefits of the recruited tribesmen and the state in a way that the booty could not because now, tribesmen who rebelled did so at the cost of losing their payments. The ata was graded to reflect the priority of some individuals to the state and sometimes an unusual stipend was granted to people in recognition of a special status or to guarantee the loyalty of some individuals whose alliance was needed (for example, the asawira were granted sharaf al ata to fight alongside the Muslims). Tribesmen also became bound to the state when they received a share in the nasib land (lands won during the conquests).In addition, the organization of the army was a factor that prevented rebellions since it weakened tribal ties and strengthened the bond between individuals and the state.

So the Islamic state had resources by which it decreased tribal ties which were the main obstacle facing the integration. And the stability of the new regime along with the effectiveness by which rulers were able to control tribesmen was a result of the elite's awareness of the strength of the tribal ties. Those ties provided means by which the state could classify individuals for its administrative purposes related to pay and military organization because the only way by which the state could keep track of the tribesmen was by tribal affiliation (tribesmen could lie about their membership in a military unit but couldn't lie about their tribal roots). Moreover, it became much more difficult for an individual to escape the army because now he had to do so at the sake of breaking his ties with his fellow tribesmen (and this wasn't encouraging).

The main challenge was to assure the loyalty of the tribal chiefs because they were the most likely and most able to run off and establish themselves as independent rivals. The elite sometimes resorted to the method of "conciliation of hearts" to assure the loyalty of the tribal chiefs. This method was used on Jarir B. Abdullah to guarantee his alliance during the conquests since the regime felt that an extra inducement to assure his loyalty was advisable.

The state could also guarantee the loyalty of tribal leaders by tying them to the state (inviting them to discuss governmental affairs), by means of marriage (already practiced by Muhammad), or by giving them special gifts of land to be held as private estate. In general, the state sometimes increased the strength of tribal leaders but in a way that didn't affect the regime but there were some exceptions when the state still viewed tribesmen as untrusted and suspicious (example, the ridda leaders).

THE STATE AND THE NOMADS:

The real success behind the rise of the Islamic state was its ability to keep the nomadic tribesmen under control. The early Islamic state was quite hostile to the nomadic way of life and this favoritism towards the settled people (which could have occurred because Muhammad and the elite were townsmen of the Hijaz) continued during the conquest period despite the great number of nomads who became associated with the state.

The elite's disdain to the nomads was not only disapproval for their way of life, but it was particularly because nomads were a potential danger on the state integration. Nomads were the ultimate source of power in Arabia and a war between two settled populations would depend greatly on which group mobilized a greater number of nomads.

The ruling elite's concern to control the nomads caused them to reserve the positions of power and important posts to the settled people. Nomadic groups were considered unreliable or of inappropriate background even if they had a history of loyalty to the state. The elites' actions towards the nomads was established by Muhammad who placed great emphasis on the settlement (Hijra) and the abandonment of the nomadic way of life so it seemed impossible to be a nomad and a Muslim in the true sense of the word. Nomads who embraced Islam were not considered to be the same as settled Muslims or were not really Muslims at all. To keep the nomads from asserting their power, the elite decided to recruit them into the army and allow their settlement in garrison towns in the desert away from their tribes. The garrisons were primarily established to control the non-Arab populations that were conquered, to defend Arabia from invasions, to function as a base for further campaigns, and to keep an eye on the Arabian and Syrian nomadic population.

CAUSES OF THE CONQUESTS:

The immigration of Arabs can't be explained by natural crisis (hunger or overpopulation) nor can it be explained as a result of the tribesmen's need to settle in richer lands. However, several factors can be suggested to explain the conquests. A major reason could be the ideological message of Islam that led the elite to think that it's their divine duty to organize these conquests. Some ruling elite may have believed that the expansion was God's will and hence decided to commence their invasions. Other factors could contribute to the adoption of the expansionist policy by the state. Possibly, most of the elite may have wanted to expand the boundaries of the state so as to secure the commerce in Arabia. There were other financial factors that led to the expansion, and these are mostly the acquisition of new lands, the ability to levy more taxes on the conquered population, and the booty in land and slaves.

Finally, it's possible that members of the elite saw the expansion as a way to assure their position at the top of the political hierarchy in the state. But in the absence of sources, the true reasons for the expansion remain mysterious.

**CONQUESTS AND DIVISIONS:**

The death of the prophet brought up some real problems to the Muslim community since he didn't leave any clear successor behind him and he made it clear that he was the seal of prophets and that no one can inherit his role. So a lot of questions arose specifically about the successor, his rights and influence, and his background. Questions about the formation of the elite and other political strata were also raised.

Among the most serious rivals of Islam was the BanuHanifa who were led by their self-claimed prophet Musaylima. Khalid b. al Walid led a war against them and won with a great slaughter in which Musaylima was killed and his followers agreed to the conditions of Medina.

The success of the Muslim conquests in Arabia was influenced by many factors:

* The most important is the continuing loyalty of the people of Hijaz to the umma.
* Hijazis were united unlike most of their rivals which were tribal groups.
* Muslims had the powerful ideological backing of the new religion.
* Of their opponents, only the Banuhanifa had religious objections towards Medina while all the others were fighting for independence, attachment to tribal traditions, and rejection of tax payments.
* The breakdown of the Persian empire in Bahrayn, Uman, and Yemen.
* Many men joined the Muslim community because of the opportunities it provided (Islam provided an opportunity for those who wished to abandon their Bedouin life and seek new destinies).

Abu Bakr died in 634, leaving Umar as his successor and setting the Muslim community to expansion after following the Prophet's traditions. Muhammad made it clear that Syria was the most important objective and that's why the successors considered expanding in that direction.