

ARAB SOCIETY AND CULTURE UPTO 750

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I MA HISTORY

E-CONTENT PREPARED BY

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INTRODUCTION TO ARAB SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The word 'history' is derived from the Greek word 'istoria' which means information or inquiry. History is a systematic account of the origin and the development of the human kind. It is the result of the interplay of man with his environment and his fellow men. It is the living past of man. It can also be seen as an attempt made by man through centuries to reconstruct, describe and interpret his own past. History is so multi-faceted a subject that no comprehensive definition of it can be given except in general terms. Most definitions of history point to its nature and scope or to the value of its study.

History is a branch of learning which helps man to mould his future. It provides an awareness of the development of human beings in economic, social, political and cultural fields and gives a sense of direction for the future.

Historiography

Historiography literally means the art of writing history. It is nothing but the history of history or the history of historical writing. Historiography tells the story of the successive stages of evolution or development of historical writings. It includes the evolution of the ideas and techniques associated with the writing of history and the changing attitudes towards the nature of history itself.

Sources of History

The materials from which the information about the past can be collected are called the sources of history. The sources can be divided into material and literary sources.

Material Sources

- Coins
- Pottery
- Cloths
- Remains of dwelling places and cities
- Ponds
- Dams
- Wells
- Forts, palaces and temples
- Inscriptions on rocks, walls, forts, pillars, metal and terracotta plates
- Shrines

Literary Sources

- ◆ Travelogues
- ◆ Poetry

- ◆ Biographies
- ◆ Autobiographies
- ◆ Diaries
- ◆ Records
- ◆ Religious texts and legends

Geographical features of Arabia

The land of Arabia comprises of mountains, plateaus, deserts, low lands and steppe land. The Arabian Peninsula is welded with the long range of mountains passing through the coastal area of the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. The peak of these mountain range is situated at Madain. The coastal area of the Red Sea is called Tihama. Najd is the central plateau of the northern Arabia. Apart from the coastal mountain range, a mountain region called al-Hijas(the barren) lies separating Tihama from Najd. Yemen, Hadramawth and Oman are some important geographical divisions blessed with vegetation. In addition to these there are some volcanic tracts called Al-Harrat in western and central regions of Arabia.

Desert divisions of Arabia Arabia stands at the crossroads of Asia, Europe and Africa. It is one of the driest and hottest regions in the world. As the land of desert the Arabian Peninsula is divided into three

1. Al-Nufud:

It is a stretch of land in northern Arabia covered by white or reddish sand. It is one of the driest deserts in Arabia. It receives occasional rainfall and it helps the growth of meadows and oasis. The rain also helps the formation of oasis in the southern valleys. Thus it turns into the paradise for camels and sheep. When an oasis becomes dry the Bedouins, the nomadic people of Arabia will be forced to lead their cattle to the next one. The desert with scattered oasis makes the Arab cattlemen nomadic

2. Al-Dahna:

It is a chain of red sand extended from the Great Nufud in the north to the Rub-al-Khali in the south. Like an area it stretches to the south-east of Arabia by a distance of 600 miles. Al-Dahna receives seasonal rainfall. It abounds with pastures attracting the nomadic

people and their cattle. But in the summer season its surface structure is always changing due to the formation of sand dunes.

3. Rub-al-Khali:

From the Al-Dahna in the north to Hadaramouth in the south lies the desert land named Rub-al-Khali. As its name indicates it is vacant in nature and it does not receive seasonal or occasional rain. Its climate is very hot and dry; it is unfit for human habitation. The highest peak in the Hijas mountain region is Sarah. The most important cities like Makkah, Madina (Yathrib), the port city of Jiddah and Thaif lie in the coastal area of the Red Sea. The volume and the density of population are higher than the desert region.

Climatic Condition of Arabia

Even though the Arabian Peninsula is surrounded with seas and water resources, it remains the hottest region of the world. These water bodies are not sufficient to break the hot nature of Arabia. The south-western and north-eastern monsoons evade the Arabian Peninsula, so Arabia does not have monsoon rain. Though coastal area receives occasional rain, it leaves very little moisture for the interior.

Flora of Arabia

The dryness of the atmosphere and the soil salinity prevent luxuriant growth of plants and vegetation in Arabia. Plants that are seen in the deserts are often seen in Arabia. Frankincense had been traded on the Arabian Peninsula and in North Africa for more than 5000 years. P.K Hitti says: 'The chief attraction for the Egyptians in South Arabia lay in the frankincense, which they priced highly for the mummification and in which that part of Arabia was particularly rich.

Frankincense which is used in centres of worship is grown in South Arabia. The South Arabians are an agricultural community. Many species of Acacia are found in South Arabia. Syria is the native place of olive trees. Fruits like pomegranate, apple, apricot, almond, orange, lemon, water melon and banana are also cultivated in certain parts of Arabia. Thaif is famous for grape cultivation and vine production

Dates

The climate and temperature of Arabia is very suitable for the growth and harvesting of dry fruits. Date palm is known as 'the queen of the Arabian flora'. It is the chief food of the Arabian people. To possess 'the two black gold' (aswadain) was the dream of the Arabian nomadic people. The two blacks stands for 'water' and 'dates'. Today, Arabia is the second largest producer of dates in the world.

Fauna of Arabia

The animal kingdom of Arabia includes panthers, leopards, hyenas, wolves, foxes and lizards. In the pre-Islamic poems there are descriptions of lions. Monkeys are found in the southern part of Arabia. Birds like prey-eagle, bustards, falcons, hawks and owls are seen in Arabia. Crows are abundant in the southern part of Arabia. Hud-Hud (hoop) is the common bird seen in the length and breadth of the Arabian Peninsula. Birds like lark, nightingale and pigeon occasionally appear in Arabia. The domestic animals of Arabia are mainly camel, horse, mules, cat, sheep and goat. To the Arabs, horse was the symbol of wealth and social status. Its feeding and care created many problems to the nomadic people of Arabia. Its value lies in its speed and performance. It was used for the purpose of racing and hunting. To the Arabs, camel, 'the ship of the desert' is the most useful animal. It is used as vehicle and important means of transportation. Without this animal the desert could not be conceived of as a habitable place. Camel was the constant companion of the Bedouin and his foster-father. He drinks its milk, eats its flesh, covers himself with its skin, lives in tents made of its hair, and uses its dung as fuel. The Arab life in ancient time totally depended on the camel. They used to refer themselves 'the people of camel'.

Hijaz on the eve of Islam -Period of Jahiliyah

The period prior to the Prophethood in 610 AD is known as the period of Jahiliyah (the period of ignorance). It was a period in which Arabs had no dispensation, no inspired prophets and no revealed book to guide them. Though they had faith in a supreme power they worshipped many gods and goddesses. So the religion was polytheistic in nature and idolatry was widespread. Morality was at its lowest ebb. Besides war and brigandage, wine and women were their favourite pastime.

Ayyamul Arabs:

Unlike South Arabia, the vast area of the Northern Arabia was populated by the nomadic Arabs. The history of the Bedouins is the history of their intertribal wars generally

called 'Ayyamul Arabs' - the days of the Arabs. These wars mainly focused on conquering the water resources and pastoral lands. Brigandage (Ghazw) often led to intertribal war. The causes of their wars were generally very silly and finally, when the rival tribes got exhausted they would come to terms with each other on the mediation of a third party. In Arabia wars did not beget kings but beget heroes. Arabian poets never got tired of singing their glorious deeds.

Basus War

It is the renowned war of the Ayyamul Arabs fought between the Christian tribes of Banu Bakr and Banu Thaglib for long 40 years. The war between two rival tribes was because of a dispute over a camel named 'Basus' which belonged to an old woman of Banu-Bakr. Basus was wounded by the Thaglib chief and the war continued by reciprocal raiding and plundering.

Dahis Ghabrah:

The war fought between the central Arabian tribes of Abs and Dubyan. It was on the dispute over the two horses named Dahis and Ghabrah.

Days of Bu'ath:

A long war fought between the Aws and Khazraj, the two leading tribes of Yathrib.

Harb ul Fijar:

Harbul Fijar is called 'fijar war' (transgression) because it was fought in the holy months (Muharram, Rajab, Dul-Ka'd, Dul Hajj). According to the tribal law, intertribal war was prohibited in these months throughout Arabia. Harb ul Fijar was fought between the tribes of Kinanah and Hawasin. The tribe Quraish was the ally of the Kinanah. So the Quraish also participated in the war helping the Kinanah. As the member of the Quraish, Muhammad, the young boy of 15 years participated in the war. The war ended with the peace committee named 'Hilful Fuzul' in which Muhammad was a member.

Socio-Political condition

Social condition of Arabia was very pitiable. The tribal wars, absence of a central political authority and lack of common code of conduct caused social degradation during Jahiliyyah period. Slavery was the order of the day. Women were considered as chattels according to the whims and fancies of man. They had no right of inheritance. Birth of a girl-baby was regarded as disgrace. Female infanticide was common in the time of Jahiliyyah. All the activities of the Jahiliyya people are summed up in three Ws- War, Wine and Women. Polyandry

and polygamy were the common practice of the nomadic Arabs. There was no formal system of education. A few could read and write among the pagan Arabs. However, they kept the purity of Arabic language.

Religious Beliefs

The religious beliefs of Bedouins represented the earliest and primitive form of Semitic religion. Pagan Arabs followed superstitious beliefs and practices. Like other primitive people, the Bedouin worshipped natural forces. Amr bin Luhayy introduced the idol of Hubul from Mesopotamia. Following this, each tribe brought their idols and installed them in their shrines. They believed in the Almighty God, Allah, but they followed polytheistic activities by the influence of the Syrians and the Persians

Apart from the Almighty and the chief deity, natural objects like trees, wells, caves and stones were sacred to the Pagans. They worshipped these forces out of love or fear. The agricultural community worshipped the sun and the pastoral community worshipped the moon. They believed that the angels were the daughters of God. Allata, Uzza and Manata were the chief deities of the pagan Arabs.

Economic Conditions

Arabia was a desert land situated between two great empires, the Sassanid Empire in the east and the Byzantine Empire in the north. The north Arabs were mainly traders. The south Arabs were mostly an agrarian community. Slavery was not only a social practice but also the backbone of the economic life of the Arabs. Like cattle, slave was a form of wealth to them and slave trade was widespread. They brought the slaves from the African countries for trade. Usury (interest) was a common economic practice. The upper and middle classes of the society exploited the poor and the needy. There was a wide gap between the rich and the poor. Makkah held an important position as the centre of the trade route and maintained trade contact with the Sassanid and Byzantine empires.

THE QURAISH:

The Quraish at first did not take the preachings of Prophet Muhammed seriously. Gradually they opposed him because his preachings began to affect their belief, custom and social structure. The Prophet emphasized the oneness of God (Tawhid), unity, equality and justice of mankind. The Quraish vehemently opposed his teachings. The opposition to his preaching came mainly from the Umayyads, an influential branch of the Quraish. As the

custodian of the K'aba, they used to get large sum of money from the pilgrims. This also placed them in a powerful position over the pagan Arabs. Their apprehension was that the spread of Islam in Arabia would curtail their source of income and their influence in the country. So they were determined to stop the new faith at any cost. Failing to stop the Prophet from his mission the Quraish began to persecute him and his followers.

UNIT-2

THE PROPHETIC PERIOD: MAKKAH

The lifetime of Prophet Muhammad is considered as Prophetic period in Islamic history. The prophetic period is divided into two as Makkah period and Madina period, based on his migration to Madina from Makkah in 622 C.E.

Birth and Childhood of the Prophet Prophet:

Muhammad was born in Makkah in 570 C.E in the Hashim family of the Quraish tribe. His father was Abdullah and mother Amina. His father died before his birth and he lost his mother when he was six years old. The orphaned Muhammad was brought up by Abdul Muttalib, his grandfather who was the chief of the Quraish, the most important tribe in Arabia. After two years, his grandfather also died. Thus he came under the protection of his uncle, Abu Talib. When he was twelve years old, Muhammad accompanied Abu Talib in a caravan to Syria. In this journey, a Christian monk named Bahîra happened to see the boy. The monk foresaw prophethood in the boy and advised his uncle to take care of him. Muhammad was illiterate but was an embodiment of honesty and good manners. Seeing his honesty people of Makkah revered him with the title of Al-Ameen, the most trusted. He took part in Hilful Fuzul, the significant peace committee of the tribes of Makkah.

The noble qualities of Muhammad attracted Khadeeja, a Quraishite and well-to-do merchant-widow. She was conducting business independently. She appointed Muhammad as the manager of her mercantile caravan to Syria. He managed the business affairs with great skill and honesty and Khadeeja was greatly impressed by the character and the personality of Muhammad. Eventually, she married him with the consent of her uncle Umar bin Asad. Muhammad was 25 and Khadeeja was 40 at the time of their marriage. Muhammad got a very devoted wife and Khadeeja found her husband honest, sincere and the most perfect. They had 6 children but only four daughters Zainab, Rukkiya, Ummu Kulthum and Fathima survived. Except

Fathima the other three daughters died in the life time of the Prophet. Fathima was married to Ali bin Abu Thalib.

The Prophet Hood:

The Jahiliyya social order disturbed the mind of Muhammad and he wanted an eternal solution for it. His soul began to search for the truth. He loved solitude which brought him to the nearby hill of Makkah named Al Nur. He spent one month every year in the cave of Hira. He continued this practice for 15 years. In the month of Ramadan of 610 CE, while he was in meditation, the divine guidance dawned upon him. The angel Gabriel appeared and asked him "Read". He was surprised and replied "I cannot read." When asked for the second time Muhammad gave the same reply. Then the angel clasped him and released him. When the angel repeated for the third time, he asked "What shall I read?" The angel replied, "Read, Read in the name of your Lord, the creator, who created man out of a clot of blood, Read! Your Lord is most gracious. It is He who taught man by the pen that which he does not know". (The Qur'an 96:1-5) It was the first revelation. Thus Muhammad became the Prophet of the God at the age of 40. It was a turning point in the history of mankind-the beginning of a great mission to bring the mankind from ignorance to light of the truth. The revelations continued for 23 years. These revelations are called the Qur'an and were later compiled in the form of a text. The experience in the cave of mount Hira was exciting to the Prophet. He went home and described this unusual experience to his wife Khadeeja. She went to her cousin Waraqath-ibn-Noufal and narrated the strange experience of her husband. Waraqat, with his deep knowledge in scriptures prophesied that Muhammad must be the Prophet. Khadeeja was the first one to believe in the mission of Prophet Muhammad. She assured him that the God had chosen him for this high office because of his lofty character.

Besides Khadeeja, Ali, Zaid bin Harith, the freed slave of the Prophet and the daughters of the Prophet accepted the new faith. Outside the Prophet's family Abu Bakr, an ordinary merchant of Makkah and close associate of the Prophet Muhammad accepted Islam. During the first three years of his mission the Prophet preached his message secretly. The progress of the spread of Islam was slow but steady. In 613 C.E. the Prophet invited the Quraish to Islam publicly. He addressed the Makkans at Mount Safa and appealed them to believe that 'there is no God but Allah'

The Hijra

Following the second pledge of Aqba the Prophet advised his followers to migrate to Yathrib in small batches. Two of his close companions, his cousin Ali and Abu Bakr stayed back. The Quraish secretly knew the plan of the Muslims and decided to check them and murder the Prophet. The assassins grouped together outside the Prophet's home waiting for him to come out. Ali volunteered to sleep on the bed of the prophet. Before leaving Makkah, Prophet asked Ali to give back the trusts which the Quraish had entrusted with him. The Prophet forestalled the movement of the Quraish and left Makkah secretly with his close companion Abu Bakr. They remained hidden in the cave of Mount Thaur, outside Makkah for three days. They left Thaur and reached Madina on 23 September, 622 C.E. after six days of arduous journey. The importance of Hijra is reflected in its adoption as the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Muslims chose to date their history from neither the Prophet's birth nor his reception of the first revelation in 610, but from Hijra.

UNIT-3

SOCIAL FORMATION

Prophet Muhammad was not the founder of Islam; he did not start a new religion. Like his prophetic predecessors, he came as a religious reformer. The Prophet maintained that he did not bring a new message from a new God but called people back to one God and a way of life that most of his contemporaries had deviated from. The worship of Allah was not the evolutionary emergence of monotheism from polytheism but return to the faith of the Abrahamic tradition of monotheism. The Prophet brought a revolution in Arabian life, a reformation that sought to purify its way of life. Superstitious practices and idolatry were uprooted from the society. The Arabs lived in ignorance (Jahiliyya) of the real essence of the prophetic tradition of Abraham, Moses and Jesus. This Islam brought a reformation appealing a total submission to the will of God. The Muslims were bound by a common faith and committed to the creation of a justful society through the implementation of God's will. The Prophet rejected some existing beliefs and institutions and reformulated some practices to Islamic norms and values. Rituals such as the annual pilgrimage (hajj) and prayer(salat) were reintroduced. The Ka'aba remained the sacred centre, but all the idols were removed. When the holy

shrine came under the control of Islam Prophet Muhammad introduced a new moral order in which the driving force of all activities was not personal or tribal interest but God's will. A society based on tribal affiliation and man-made laws and customs were replaced by a religiously bonded community, governed by God's law

FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

The five pillars of Islam remain the core and obligatory practices of Muslims

1. THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

A Muslim is one who proclaims "there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God". It affirms Islam's absolute monotheism, an uncompromising faith in the oneness of God.

The second part of the confession of faith is the affirmation of Muhammad as the messenger of the God, the last and final Prophet.

2. PRAYER

Five times each day, Muslims are called to worship God by Muazzin (caller to prayer) from mosques. Muslims individually or in group, can perform their prayers (Salat-Arabic, Namaz-persian). The times of the prayer are daybreak, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and late evening. Ritually, prayer is preceded by ablutions (Wudu) that cleans the body. A special feature of the Friday prayer is a sermon (Khutuba) preached from a pulpit(Mimber).

3. Almsgiving (Zakat)

All capable adult Muslims are obliged to pay zakat in accordance with their wealth. A certain percentage of the accumulated wealth and assets is to be given to the poor. During the period of Islamic rule zakat was collected from individuals and distributed to the deserving people, under the supervision of state.

4. The fast of Ramadan.

Every year during the month of Ramadan, Islam prescribes a rigorous fast during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. All adult Muslims in good health should observe from dawn to sunset, abstinence, not only from food, drink and sexual activity but also from all kinds of wrong doings. The month of Ramadan comes to an end with a great celebration, Eid -ul-Fitr.

5.Pilgrimage: the Hajj.

Ramadan is followed by the beginning of the pilgrimage season. Every adult Muslim who is physically and financially able is expected to perform the annual pilgrimage (Hajj) to Makkah at least once in his or her lifetime. The hajj takes place during the twelfth month, Dhul Hajj of the Hijra calendar. Tenth Dhul Hajj is another day of celebration, Eid al Adha.

SAYINGS OF PROPHET:

In the year 632 C.E. the Prophet intended to perform Hajj along with his companions. He decided to celebrate the Hajj on a large scale. Messages were sent to whole parts of Arabia asking the Muslims to gather at Madina for the purpose of proceeding to Makkah for pilgrimage. At the time of Hajj, the Prophet addressed the people who assembled in the ground of Arafa.

From the last sermon of the Prophet:

O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today. O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you....God has forbidden you to take usury (interest). O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you..... O People, listen to me in earnest, worship God, perform your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and offer Zakat. Perform Hajj if you have the means.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; white has no superiority over black, nor does a black have any superiority over white; [none have superiority over another] except by piety and good action....

O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me, and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O people, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Quran and, the Sunnah, and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and it may be that the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O God, that I have conveyed your message to your people.

Thus the Prophet completed his Final Sermon, and upon it, near the summit of Arafat, the revelation came down: "...this day have I perfected your religion for you, completed. "My Grace upon you and have chosen Islam for you as your religion..." (Quran 5:3).

Even today the Last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad is passed to every Muslim in every corner of the world through all possible means of communication. The meanings found in this sermon are indeed astounding; touching upon some of the most important rights God has over humanity, and humanity has over each other.

UNIT-4

ABU BAKR

After the death of the Prophet in 632 C.E., there arose a political crisis in the Islamic Republic. A leader was essential for the establishment of the new faith and the protection of the nascent Islamic Republic. Before the funeral of the Prophet, the Ansars gathered at the Saqifa Bani Sa'id (the council hall of Madina). They decided to elect Sa'd Ibn Ubaida as the head of the Islamic Republic. At this juncture Abu Baker, Umar and Abu Ubaida interfered. Abu Baker rejected the decision and suggested the names of either Umar or Abu Ubaida as the head. But Umar was not willing to accept the proposal. He pledged the oath of allegiance by holding the hand of Abu Bakr. Uthman, Abdul-Rahman Ibn Auf and other chief companions of the Prophet who had assembled there expressed their allegiance to him. Thus Abu Bakr became the first Khalifa of the Islamic republic.

Abu Bakr took the reign of Khilafat in a very critical situation. The unity of the Islamic state was in danger. With the demise of the Prophet many false prophets had risen up

triggering rebellion within the Islamic state. But Abu Bakr succeeded in destroying these false prophets and maintaining peace and order in the Islamic Khilafat.

The term 'khalifa' had wide connotation and the reflection of it is found in the inaugural speech of Khalifa Abu Bakr. He said, "O! People behold me charged with the case of the government, I am not the best among you, I need all your advice and help. If I do well, support me, if I mistake, counsel me...as I obey God and his Prophet, obey me. If I neglect the laws of the God and the Prophet, I have no more right to your obedience."

The Battle of Yamamah

Musailima possessed a powerful army of 40,000 men. Further he was supported by Banu Hanifa tribe under Sajjah, the false prophetess. But Sajjah was arrested by Khalid. The battle of Yamamah took place on the plain of Akraba. The army of Musailima fought with courage and the Muslims suffered much set back. But during the last phase of the war Musailima and his followers fled from the battlefield. Musailima and his followers fled from the battle field. The Muslim army chased and killed him. Thus, the Muslims gained victory.

About 1100 Muslims lost their lives in the battle. Among the slain, 70 were Hafids who had committed the Qur'an to memory. When this unexpected death of a large number of Hafids occurred, Umar suggested Abu Bakr to take immediate steps for the compilation of the Qur'an. A committee was set up under Zaid Ibn Thabit. They accomplished the mission and the copy was kept under Hafsa, the wife of the Prophet. After a reign of two and a half years, Khalifa Abu Bakr fell ill and he died in 634 C.E

Umar (634-644 C.E.)

On his death bed, Khalifa Abu Bakr suggested the name of Umar as his successor after consulting the principal companions of the Prophet. Soon after the death of Abu Bakr, Umar Ibn ul Khatab became the second Khalifa of the Islamic Republic. He became the Khalifa in the year 634 C.E. After assuming office, Umar concentrated both on the expansion and the administration of the Islamic state.

Expansion of the Islamic State under Umar The fertile land of Arabia was shared between the Roman Empire in the NorthWest and Persian Empire in the North-East. The barren desert alone was left out. The Islamic Republic began to gather strength: The Roman and the Persian powers considered Islam as a looming threat. They became agitated and started taking military action against the Muslims.

Byzantine and Persian Empires in 600 CE

Khalifa Umar simply continued the policies of his predecessor regarding foreign affairs. The hostility with Persian and Roman Empire had already been started. In response to the military actions Umar deputed his general against the big powers. The Persians were looking to take revenge upon Muslims for the defeat at Hafir. Thus a series of battles were fought between the Muslims and Persians in the border of Persia. In the Battle of Namarraq, Muslims emerged victorious. In the succeeding battle of Jasn, the Persians defeated the Muslims. But in another war which took place between Arabs and Persians at Buwaib, the Muslims again gained victory. The Persians could not forget the crushing defeat in the field of Buwaib.

Administration of Umar

Umar not only consolidated his empire but set up a great system of administration. Umar is rightly regarded as the greatest administrator of all time. He laid the foundation of a comprehensive democratic system in which efficiency in administration, individual participation in the functioning of the governmental institutions, freedom and social justice were the main pillars of the body of politics. As an excellent organiser and an efficient ruler of the Islamic Commonwealth he introduced many reforms for the welfare of the society. The Khalifa conceived an ideal social order envisaged in the Qur'an.

Majlis-ul-Shura

Being endowed with a democratic disposition, Umar systematically organised and expanded the Majlis-ul-Shura which was introduced by Abu Bakr. It was an advisory body, which consisted of the close companions of the Prophet such as Ali, Abu Ubaida, Uthman, Talha, Ibn- Zubair and Abdur Rahman Ibn Auf. The advisory council was frequently consulted in all important matters of the state. The council sat in the mosque for the regular session and resembled the cabinet in the modern political system. Umar stands as the greatest example of a true democrat in the history of the world. With love, people addressed him 'Amir ul Mu'mineen'

Provincial Administration

For the sake of efficiency and smooth functioning of the administrative system, Umar divided the commonwealth into several provinces. He placed each of them under an efficient governor. Makkah, Madina, Jazira, Basara, Kufa, Palestine and Egypt were the main provinces. The provincial governor was called Wali or Amir. He was the head of civil administration and the

religious leader in the province. He was also the commander of the army. He was appointed by the Khalif and was accountable to him.

The provinces were divided into districts: further into subdivisions. The district officers were known as Amils. These officers were appointed by the Khalifa in consultation with the advisory council and exercised strict control over them.

Revenue Administration

Umar introduced certain drastic changes in the revenue administration. He established the department of finance to regulate the revenue policies of the government. This department was called the Diwan and it was constituted on the Persian model.

The principal sources of revenue were the poor tax (Zakat), the poll-tax (Jizya), the land tax (Kharaj), the spoils of war (Ghanima) and income from state property (Al fay). Zakat was assessed on cash, crops and animals. The assessment of landtax was based on the fertility of the soil and it was collected in instalments.

Jizya was paid by the non-Muslim citizens of the state in lieu of military service and with the guarantee of protection to their life and property. Those who joined the military service were exempted from this special tax.

Ushr was levied on the big estates and it was one-tenth of the produce. Excess revenue of the province was deposited in the public treasury known as the Bait- ulMa

The lion's share of expenditure went to the public institutions and the military organization. Public works such as construction of roads, canals, bridges etc. also received considerable share.

Umar took special interest in promoting agriculture by introducing useful land reforms. He ordered a thorough survey of lands, divided them into plots and fixed taxes on the basis of the fertility of the soil and the location of the land. Canals were dug and irrigation facilities were provided to the farmers. Tax was fixed after proper survey of the land.

Military Administration

Umar took proper care for the reformation of the army. He divided his armed forces into regular and irregular. The regular soldiers worked on a permanent basis and irregular army was raised in times of emergency in the form of volunteers. The two main wings of the army were the infantry and the cavalry. The salary of the soldiers was paid from the Bait- ul- Mal.

They were also given a share from the spoils of war. All the generals and commanders were appointed by the Khalifa at the capital.

Judicial Administration

Umar was a great champion of justice. For his sound discrimination and perfect sense of justice, he was called 'Al-Farooq'. He separated his judiciary from the executive for an effective administration of justice. He appointed Qadis for the administration of justice in the provincial towns. They were given full independence and were not under the authority of the provincial governors. They were directly responsible to the Khalifa.

Umar introduced pension system to the retired officials, disabled soldiers and physically handicapped persons. He appointed night watchmen. He constructed mosques, schools and orphanages in different parts of the Khilafat. He introduced rationing for the fair distribution of food grains.

It was Umar who introduced the Muslim Era, Hijra calendar corresponding to the migration of the Prophet from Makkah to Madina.

Assassination of Umar

Umar was brutally attacked by a Persian slave of Mughira, named Fairus (Abu Lu'Lu') while leading a public prayer at Masjid Un Nabawi. The attacker had personal grudge against the Khalifa. Umar succumbed to the wounds and breathed his last in the year 644 C.E.

Uthman (644-656 C.E.)

In his sick bed Khalifa Umar nominated a body of six notable persons to elect the next Khalifa from among themselves. They were Abdul Rahman, Sa'd, Zubair, Uthman, Ali and Thalha. The first three of them withdrew from being Khalifa and the last three remained. Being authorised by the council to make the final choice, Abudur Rahman consulted the prominent figures of the community and the tribal chiefs. The general opinion was in favour of Uthman. Thus Uthman became the third Khalifa of the Islamic Republic.

The Rashidun Empire reached its greatest extent under Khalifa Uthman, in 654.

The Khilafat of Uthman lasted for twelve years. The first six years of his rule was peaceful and witnessed great expansion of the Islamic state. But thereafter the discontent began.

At first, the resentment was against the governors of various provinces. They made charges against Amr Ibn As, the governor of Egypt. He was accused of appointing his kinsmen in

high posts. When the Khalifa replaced him with Abi Sarah, the mischief makers turned against Khalifa himself and alleged nepotism on him. Similar was the case with the dismissal of Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqas and the appointment of Walid ibn Aqba as the governor of Kufa. The Khalifa was charged with favouritism by the seditious people of Kufa. Soon, dissidents of Egypt and Kufa could master up people against the Khalifa.

Another charge raised against Uthman was the misappropriation of the public funds. It was alleged that he spent huge amount from the public treasury on his relatives.

Uthman's appointment of his inefficient and selfish cousin Marwan to a high position made him unpopular. Another ghastly but misinterpreted allegation against Uthman was that he burnt the copies of the Holy Qur'an.

The general discontent that arose out of some miscalculated policies of the noble Khalifa and the concentration of power in the hands of the Umayyads prepared the ground for conspiracy against the Khalifa. Actually, the allegations levelled against him were baseless.

Revolt against Uthman

It was Abdullah Ibn Saba who took the leading role in the conspiracy against Uthman. He received the support of Muhammed Ibn Abu Bakr. This conspiracy and the new resentment that arose against the Khalifa spread to Kufa where the leaders started denouncing the Khalifa in public. Eventually the dissident leaders from Egypt, Kufa and Basarah made a sudden attack on Madina. They forced the Khalifa to relinquish his office. Ultimately a group of conspirators entered and besieged Uthman's house and demanded his abdication.

Assassination of Khalifa

Ali, Talha and Zubair, the companions of the Prophet appointed their sons at the entrance of the Khalifa's house to protect him. But the conspirators sneaked into the house where the Khalifa was reciting the Holy Qur'an. Al Ghafiki, one of the conspirators stepped forward and caught the Khalifa. They stabbed the helpless Khalifa to death and triumphantly marched out. The news of Uthman's murder spread like wild fire and the city of Madina rocked with horror.

Ali (656-661 C.E.)

When Uthman was brutally murdered the Muslim nation was rendered leaderless and chaotic conditions prevailed everywhere in the commonwealth. It was necessary to entrust the leadership with a worthy person. There was no one more suitable than Ali for this high office. Therefore, the companions of the Prophet and the other prominent citizens of Madina approached Ali and requested him to take charge of the Khilafat. Finally in the mosque of the Prophet, Ali was sworn in as the new Khalifa.

The Civil War

Ali took over the reign of the state in an extremely critical situation. The seeds of troubles sowed by the rebels had grown beyond control. The Muslim nation was divided into two camps. There are three factors responsible for this chaotic situation. Firstly, the active supporters of Ali had participated in the conspiracy to overthrow Uthman. Among them were Ibn Saba, Malik al Ashtar and Muhammed Ibn Abu Baker. Secondly, there arose the cry for retribution (vengeance) for the blood of Uthman and Damascus was its epicentre. The blood-stained clothes of the murdered Khalifa were exhibited by Mu'awiya throughout the province of Syria.

He stood as the sole champion of the Umayyads. Thirdly some companions of the Prophet questioned the legitimacy of Ali's Khilafat.

Even though Thalha and Zubair first accepted Ali as the Khalifa later they turned against him because he was not willing to take immediate action against the murderers of Uthman.

The main task before Khalifa Ali was to restore law and order and to consolidate his position in the state. But to punish the murderers was not an easy task. Large number of persons in Egypt, Iraq and Arabia were directly or indirectly connected with the assassination.

Battle of Camel

Khalifa Ali did not heed to the demands of Thalha and Zubair. So they withdrew their allegiance and started organizing the people against the Khalifa. They set out for Basara with their followers. On the way they met Aysa, the wife of the Prophet, who was returning from the pilgrimage. Being informed of the assassination of Uthman, she was greatly shocked. When she heard that Khalifa Ali was not ready to punish the assassins, she joined Thalha and Zubair and returned to Mecca with them. Khalifa Ali desired to avoid war and settle the matters with

Thalha and Zubair by peaceful means. He tried to negotiate with them but many of his followers were against it. As a result, the inevitable battle of Jamal took place. Aysa was present in the battle field on the back of a camel and hence the battle named as Battle of Jamthal (camel). Ali successfully managed to suppress the rebels. Talha and Zubair were killed . Thousands of Muslims from both sides were slain and Ayisha was taken as prisoner. Ali sent Ayisha back to Madinah with due respect under the escort of her own brother Muhammed Ibn- Abu Bakr. After this battle Khalifa Ali transferred his capital to Kufa.

Battle of Siffin Mu'awiya Ibn Abu Sufiyan was the governor of Syria. He was ambitious for power. He aimed at the Khilafat and started exploiting the situation that arose from the murder of Uthman to his advantage. After the murder of Uthman some Umayyads had gone to Syria to meet Mu'awiya. He stood at the head of the fraternity of the Umayyad family. This greatly strengthened the hands of Mu'awiya. The entire Islamic state, with the exception of the rebellious province of Syria had accepted the legitimacy of Ali's Khilafat. There was no confusion regarding the seat of the central authority. Mu'awiya was trying to conceal his ambition for the Khilafat and his rebellious designs under the cover of his demand for the revenge of Uthman's blood.

Mu'awiya was a shrewd man. He demanded that Ali should find out and punish the murderers or he himself should accept the responsibility of the murder. Ali ordered Mu'awiya to resign from the governorship of Syria. But he refused to obey. For the long 16 years of his vicerealty, he was getting ready for the office of Khalifa. He declared total war against Ali. The whole attempts of the mediators to bring about a compromise between the two failed. Finally Ali set out from Iraq and Mu'awiya from Damascus. The two armies met at Siffin, a place situated on the bank of Euphrates in 657 CE. The battle raged furiously for several days. When Ali's force was on the verge of victory, Amr Ibn Aas came forward with a trick. He ordered the Syrian troops to raise the copies of the Holy Quran on their lances and proclaimed: 'This is the arbiter between us.' The purpose was to create confusion in Ali's camp. Ali saw the danger and warned his troops against the cunning scheme . He wanted to continue the war till complete victory. But his soldiers clamoured to stop fighting and Mu'awiya escaped from the disaster.

Part of the Islamic Civil Wars

A body of arbitration was set up representing both sides. Amr ibn As and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari represented Mu'awiya and Ali respectively. Finally, Abu Musa and Amr met each with four hundred followers. The final verdict was to depose both Ali and Mu'awiya from their respective posts and to elect another Khalifa by general consensus. Then Abu Musa, the elder of the two stood up and declared the Kilafat of Ali null and void. At this juncture, Amr betrayed his colleague and proposed Mu'awiya to the vacant post. Emergence of the Kharijites The acceptance of the principle of arbitration had dire consequences. A large body of Ali's followers deserted his camp at Harrora and became an aggressive force. Later they came to be known as 'Kharijite'. They became blood thirsty enemies of Ali under the leadership of Abdullah-al-Rasibi. Power, dignity and pomp were not acceptable to this fanatical creed. Their oath was "No judgement but the Lord's alone (Arbitration belongs to Allah alone)." The Kharijites waged a war against Ali and both parties met at the battle field of Neharwan, where Ali defeated the Kharijites.

Assassination of Ali

Even after the defeat at Neharwan the Kharijites were not completely annihilated. They were still active and were determined on ending the rule of Ali. In January 661 CE, when Ali was on his way to the mosque for the morning prayer, a Kharijite conspirator named Abud ur Rahman Ibn Muljim struck him on the forehead with a poisoned sword. The Khalifa could not be saved from the fatal wound and breathed his last on Friday, 20th Ramzan 40 AH.

THE UMAYYADS

MU'AWIYA (661-680 C.E)

Mu'awiya, the son of Abu Sufyan was the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. He came into power in 661 C.E. by diplomatically, after the abdication of his predecessor al-Hasan, son of Ali. He was an eminent ruler, politician and a tactful administrator. Abu Sufyan, the father of Mu'awiya was the leader of the Quraish. On the conquest of Makkah, Abu Sufyan and his family embraced Islam. After his conversion to Islam, Mu'awiya served as the secretary of Prophet Muhammad.

During the Khilafat of Umar, he served under his brother Yazid, the governor of Palestine. When Yazid was assassinated in the battle of Yarmuk Khalifa Umar appointed Mu'awiya as the governor of Palestine. When Uthman became the third Khalifa, he was allowed to continue on the same post. Mu'awiya was a cousin of Uthman. As we discussed in the earlier chapter, Mu'awiya raised the cry of vengeance when Uthman was assassinated. He exploited the situation created by the murder. Refusing the Khilafat of Ali he declared himself the rival ruler in Damascus. This led to the second civil war among the Muslims, which was named the historical battle of Siffin (657 C.E.). The battle came to an end due to Mu'awiya's shrewd policy of arbitration. After the arbitration settlement Mu'awiya became the rebel governor of Syria. Even if Ali made preparations to advance to Syria against him, at first he proceeded against the Kharijites, another rival group at Naharwan in 658 C.E. Exploiting this situation, Mu'awiya sent an army under Amr-Ibn-As to Egypt and deposed Muhammed, the governor of Ali in Egypt. Mu'awiya strengthened his position after this victory. Realising the gravity of the situation, Khalifa Ali thought that it was better to have a deal with Mu'awiya. Thus Egypt and Syria came under the control of Mu'awiya and the rest of the Khilafath remained under Ali. After the battle of Naharwan, the Kharijites were plotting to assassinate Ali, Mu'awiya and Amr Ibn-ul Aas. They succeeded only in eliminating Khalifa Ali and the other two escaped from the trap of the Kharijites. On the assassination of Ali, the people of Kufah chose Hassan as the new Khalifah. But Hassan could not withstand the threat posed by Mu'awiya. Finally Hassan abdicated the Khilafat in favour of Mu'awiya by accepting a handsome offer of monthly pension. Thus Mu'awiya became the Khalifah of the entire Muslim world.

Consolidation of the Islamic Empire At the outset of the Khilafat of Mu'awiya, the Kharijites rose in revolt. They could not reconcile with Mu'awiya because they were totally against the arbitration settlement in the battle of Siffin. After a series of battles with the Kharijites, Mughira, the Umayyad governor of Kufah subjugated them and brought the situation under control. Meanwhile, during the time of the civil war between Ali and Mu'awiya the Byzantines had re-occupied North-Africa and the Muslims had lost the land. When Mu'awiya became the Khalifa of the Islamic State he sent an army under the commandship of Uqbath ibn Nafia and reconquered the land in 670 C.E. He founded the city of Qairuwan in North Africa. In 666 C.E. Mu'awiya sent a naval expedition to Sicily and gathered considerable spoils. With the help of the naval force the island of Rhodes and some part of Crete were conquered in 674 C.E. Mu'awiya

sent a force under his son Yazid for capturing Constantinople but it failed. Subsequently, places like Kabul, Khybar pass, Khurasan, and crossing the Oxus river and Jaxarter, Bukhara and Samarkend came under Mu'awiya. Mu'awiya's three prominent governors were Amr Ibn Aas in Egypt, Mughira in Kufa and Ziyad in Basara. They played important roles in consolidating the rule of Mu'awiya. In the later period of his life he nominated his son Yazid as his successor and appointed his agents in different parts of the Empire to get bai'ath for his son's nomination. Mu'awiya died in 680 C.E., after having ruled for twenty years as governor and another twenty as Khalifa. He used to say. "I apply not sword where my lash suffices, nor my lash where my tongue is enough". According to Philip K. Hitti, " He was not only the first but also one of the best Arab kings." Khilafat to Mulukiyat (Republic to Monarchy) The arrival of Mu'awiya as the head of the Islamic state was a turning point in the history of Islam. He brought about certain drastic changes in the Islamic political structure which ultimately led to the reversal of the democratic nature of the Islamic state into the monarchical system. • Republic was changed into Monarchy. • Personalisation of Baith-ul-Mal (Public Treasury). • Freedom of expression curtailed. • Shura (Advisory council) was abolished.

Yazid (680-683)

As nominated by his father, Yazid succeeded Mu'awiya in 680 C.E. On his accession he ordered the people to make oath of allegiance to him. But Hasain, son of Ali, Ibn Umar, Ibn Zubair and Abdurahman ibn Abubaker were against the Khilafat of Yazid. Their stand was that the Khilafat could not be replaced by hereditary monarchy.

Tragedy of Karbala

Hussain and Ibn Zubair remained adamant in their stand against the Khilafat of Yazid. Husain was undoubtedly the most deserving and capable man to lead the Islamic state by his qualities of honesty, chivalry, prudence, piety and forbearance. He remained in Madinah waiting for an opportunity to rise against the rule of Yazid. The people of Kufah were disappointed with the reign of Yazid and the misrule of the provincial governor of Yazid. They decided to select Husain as the Khalifa and invited him to Kufah. When the news reached Madinah, the companions of the Prophet warned Husain not to accept the offers of the fickle minded Kufans. The instability of the Kufans had been one of the major causes of Ali's helplessness against Mu'awiya. But

receiving the positive message from his messenger Muslim ibn Aqil, Husain decided to leave Madina for Kufah. He set out with about two hundred of his relatives and followers. They proceeded along the western bank of the Euphrates. On the way he got the news that Muslim ibn Aqil was killed in Kufa. Leaving Kufa, Husain diverted his march to the left of the western bank of Euphrates. Meanwhile Ubaidulla, Umayyad's governor of Kufa sent an army of 4000 men under Umar Ibn Sa'ad to encircle Husain's band. On the first day of the month of Muharram Husain pitched his camp on the plain of Karbala, on the bank of Euphrates at a distance of 74.26 kms to the North of Kufa. Ubaidulla wanted Husain's unconditional surrender. Majority of those who accompanied Husain were women and children and they were exhausted with the long journey and lack of food and other essentials. Hence Husain put forward three options for surrender. 1. He should be allowed to go to Makkah or Medina with his band. 2. He should be allowed to meet Yazid in Damascus. 3. He should be allowed to go to a border place to participate inside of muslim army But Ubaidullah ordered his commander to bring Husain to Kufa dead or alive. At last Husain was forced to enter into battle. It was a battle fought between two disproportionate armies. From the side of Hussain rose the cries of women and children. The relatives of the Prophet fell down one after another and at last Husain also was murdered. The Umayyad army rushed to the dying hero. They cut his head off, trampled on his body and with savage ferocity, subjected it to dishonour. All the male members of the Hashim family, who accompanied Husain were slain in the battle field except Zainul Abidin, the sick son of Husain

Consequences of the Karbala -Tragedy

The massacre of Husain and the members of the family of the Prophet was momentous one. The rift existed between the Hashimites and the Umayyads were further aggravated and ultimately weakened the Umayyad Empire. The Karbala incident divided the Muslims into two hostile groups forever. The horror of Karbala ran apace throughout the Islamic world. The Shias added the massacre of Karbala as a fresh fuel to their political growth. The tragedy of Karbala is regarded as one of the most horrifying events in the history of Islam.

Revolt in Makkah and Madina The tragedy of Karbala aroused violent reactions in Madina. People repudiated their Bai'ath to Yazid and drove away the Umayyad governor from the city. In Makkah, Ibn Zubair declared himself as Khalifa. Yazid sent a force under Muslim Ibn Uqba to attack Madina. The two forces met outside Madina and at last the people of Madina were

subjugated. After suppressing the revolt in Madina, the Syrian force proceeded to Makkah. He fixed catapults in the surrounding hills of Makkah and showered stones upon the inviolable sanctuary of Makkah. The siege lasted for 64 days. In the course of the siege the Ka'ba caught fire and the sacred Black stone got cracks.

Yazid, the Khalifa of the Umayyad dynasty died at the age of 38, after having ruled for only three years. During his period the state and the Muslim society faced great disasters. All the Muslim expeditions at his period failed. He is the most criticised ruler in the history of Islam. He was succeeded by Marwan I (683-685 CE).

Umayyad Administration

The Umayyads of Damascus was the first dynasty in the history of Islam. The administrative system of Umayyads was entirely different from that of the pious Khalifas. They modelled the Byzantine administration to a great extent. The sovereign of the state was the Khalifa. He came to power through nomination or hereditary succession. He was assisted by a number of officers entrusted with various duties in the departments concerned.

- Diwanul Barid (Postal Department).
- Diwanul Khatam (Bureau of Registry).
- Diwanul Risala (Correspondence Department).
- Diwanul Kharaj (Finance Department).
- Diwanul Shurth Wal Jund (Police and Military Department).

Diwanul Khatam was created by Mu'awiya. The duty of which was to make and preserve one copy of each official document before sealing and despatching the original. Abdul Malik declared it a state archive in Damascus.

Provincial Administration As it was a vast empire, the entire state was divided into provinces for administrative convenience. Each province was under a governor named 'Amir' appointed by the Khalifa. He had full power in the administration of the province, except revenue. The main administrative divisions of the empire were Iraq, Hijaz, Armenia, Egypt and Africa. In the beginning the Umayyad empire comprised:-

- Syria-Palestine

- Al-Kufa including Al-Iraq
- Al- Basarah with Persia, Sijistan, Khurasan, Bahrain, Oman and Najd.
- Armenia.
- Hijas.
- Kharman and the frontier district of India.
- Egypt.
- Africa.
- Al- Yaman and the rest of the south Arabia.

The provinces were divided into districts. Each district was under the control of 'Amil' or the agents appointed by the Amirs with the consent of the Khalifa.

Revenue Administration The revenue administration of the dynasty was under a special officer named 'Sahibul Kharaj'. He was directly responsible to the Khalifa and not to the Amir. The Zakat, Jiziya , Ghanima, and Kharaj constituted main sources of the state revenue. "In the provinces all expenses of the local administration, state activities, soldiers' stipends and miscellaneous services were met from the local income and only the balance went to the Khalifal-treasury. Mu'awiyas measure of deducting the Zakat about 2.5 percentage from the fixed activities of the Muslims bears a close resemblance to the income tax of a modern state".
P. K. Hitti'

Military Administration The Umayyads maintained a well-set army on the model of the Byzantines. The Umayyad military consisted of five corps: the centre, two wings, vanguard and rearguard. The weapons were essentially the same, which were used by their predecessors. Al-Basra and al -Kufa were the main recruitment grounds for the army. The most important contribution of the Umayyads to Islamic military was the formation of a Muslim Navy and thereby Mu'awiya is called ' the father of Muslim navy'.

Judicial Administration In Judicial system the Umayyads followed the Islamic pattern. Separate Judiciary was set up for the Muslims and the Non-Muslims. There were regular series of Judges or Qadis succeeding one another.

Cultural aspects of the Umayyad period The Arab Muslims conquered the neighbouring new regions of Syria, Egypt, Iraq and established a strong administration. It gave a novel face to the administrative system and a cultural edifice to the Islamic Khilafat. A new era of intellectual development sprang up in the Islamic realm. Language, Poetry and literature The scientific study of Arabic language and its grammar began to cater to the linguistic needs of the neo-Muslims who wanted to study the Qur'an. The founder of the Arabic grammar is Abu Aswad Adduwali who flourished in Basarah. Adduwali was followed by Al Khalil Ibn Ahmad who was the first to compile an Arabic dictionary. Poetry was the single most important expression of literature in the Islamic world. The advent of the Umayyad regime set the stage for the return of poetry to its old popularity. Umar Ibn Abi Rabi'a was famous for romantic poetry. Hammad al -Rawiya's collection of Mu'allaqath poems brought him glory. Lyric poetry reached its heights in the Majnun -Laila romance. Majnun was the typical hero of unrequited love poems throughout the Arab World. Umayyad period also witnessed the revival of eulogistic and epic poetry of the pre-Prophetic style. Akmal, Farsdaq, Jarir the Frisco were poets who adorned the courts of the Umayyad palaces. Many Umayyad Khalifas were poets. Ibn Muqaffa translated a collection of fables written in Sanskrit entitled Kalila wa Dimna. Due to this work Ibn Al Muqaffa is often called the father of Arabic prose. The Qur'an and Hadith laid the foundation of the theology and jurisprudence during this period. The most renowned jurists were Al Hasan Al Basari and Zuhar al Basari, highly esteemed as the transmitter of the Tradition Chadi (5). The origin of the religious sects within Islam can be traced back to Al Basari. Arabic historiography began at this time, started in the form of tradition, Sira literature (biographies) and Maghazi (conquests), were the important form of history. Kitabul Muluk Wa Akhbar al Ma'adin (The book of Kings and the History of the Ancients) of Abid ibn Sahriya was an important work which got wide publicity and acceptance. Umayyad period witnessed the rudiments of many religious and philosophical movements such as Mu'athazilites, Khadarites and Jabarites. Mu'athazilism was the first school of rationalism flourished in the first half of the 8th century.

Scientific Contribution Throughout the classical and the medieval Islamic History, majority of Muslim scholars and scientists were the students of medicine. Often they practised as physician also.

Muslims obtained the medical knowledge at the Damascus court of Umayyads from their Greek, Syrian and Iranian physicians. The medical books were translated into Arabic mainly by Ibn Uthal, the physician of Mu'awiya and Thayadud of Al-Hajjaj.

In addition to Medicine, Mathematics and Astronomy, the Arab scholars investigated and brought about fundamental redefinitions in natural science. . Architecture with a religious variety was the principal representation of the buildingart in Islamic history. The 'Mihrab', a niche in the wall of the mosque indicating the direction of prayer was a later addition to mosque structure. Al Walid and Umr ibn Abdul Aziz are credited with this introduction. The minaret was introduced by AlUmayyads. Syria is the original home of the 'Minarat'. Until the days of Abdul Malik and Al-Walid architecture was not a matter of serious interest. Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the mosque of the Umayyads in Damascus are the two important monuments of the period. Apart from the religious structure the Umayyads constructed a few other monuments also. The list of the Arabian physicians in the first century of Islam is headed by Harith Ibn Kalada of Al Thaif. "He was the first scientifically trained Arab physician and won the honorary title 'the Doctor of the Arabians'".

Genealogic tree of the Umayyad family. In blue: Khalifa Uthman, one of the four Rashidun Khalifas. In green, the Umayyad Khalifas of Damascus. In yellow, the Umayyad emirs of Córdoba. In orange, the Umayyad Khalifas of Córdoba. Abd Al-Rahman III was an amir until 929 when he proclaimed himself Khalifa. Prophet Muhammad is included (in caps) to show the kinship of the Umayyads with him.

