

The Rise of Islam

Bounded by the Red Sea on the west, by the Gulf of Aden on the south, and by the Arabian Gulf on the east is the Arabian Peninsula: the birthplace of Islam. Within it, the tribe was the fundamental unit for the poetic Arabs following the simple lifestyle of nomadic pastoralism or trading. Tribal allegiance provided a strong political force as members of the tribe had a strong sense of belonging and they protected each other with their support being almost unconditional. This was the setting in which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) appeared.

The spread of the Prophet's message went through a Makkah stage and a Medina stage. The first stage lasted for thirteen years until the Prophet (PBUH) had to migrate. During it, he started his mission in secret by speaking about Islam to his close ones. The circle began slowly growing and in the span of three years, it eventually reached around forty converts. After that, by order of Allah the Almighty, the Prophet (PBUH) started openly spreading the message in Makkah and he did so for ten years until the backlash from Quraysh reached such a hostile point that he had to migrate to Medina in what is called Al Hijra, thus starting the second stage. Upon settling in Medina, he founded the first Islamic state where a mosque, known as Masjid Al Quba, was built; where brotherhood was established between the immigrants who came from Makkah and the supporters in Medina; where a covenant between him and the Jews was made; and where Jihad was permitted. The Prophet (PBUH) thus managed to overcome all of the difficulties he encountered while carrying out his mission and he succeeded in spreading the word of Allah. After the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Islam only continued to spread.

Given the fact that the Prophet (PBUH) had named no successor, there was a general agreement on making Abu Bakr the first leader after him, consequently starting the period of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali. Abu Bakr faced revolts that he successfully ended and he initiated military campaigns. He also oversaw Quranic compilation. Umar expanded Islamic rule, developed administrative structures, and established the Muslim calendar. Uthman continued the expansion and he compiled an authoritative Quran. His reign ended in assassination amid rebellion. Ali's Caliphate faced civil strife, notably with Muawiya. He implemented reforms but was also assassinated, ending the Righteous Caliphs era.

Activity: match the definitions given below to the following terms:

Arabian Gulf – Arabian Peninsula – tribe – nomadic pastoralism – allegiance – convert – covenant – successor – the Rightly-Guided Caliphs – strife

- A social group composed chiefly of numerous families, clans, or generations having a shared ancestry and language:
- Loyalty or commitment to a superior or to a group or cause:
- A shallow arm of the Arabian Sea between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula:
- The move from place to place based on the needs of animal herds:
- A person who changes their religious faith or other belief:
- A peninsula in West Asia, known as the birthplace of Islam:
- Angry disagreement or violent actions:
- The first four caliphs of the Islamic community, known in Muslim history as the orthodox or patriarchal caliphs:
- Someone or something that comes after another person or thing:
- A formal agreement or promise between two or more people: