

SECTION

4

HISTORICAL/
CONTEXTUAL
BACKGROUND OF
ISLAM



STUDY OF RELIGIONS, GOD'S CREATION AND HUMANKIND

Background to the Study of Religion

Introduction

Hello learner, you are welcome to section four of our course. In the previous section you were taken through the historical and contextual background of the development of AIR and Christianity. In this section you will be taken through the origin of Islam. Specifically focus will be laid on the Prophet Muhammad; his early life, marriage, revelation and early mission, persecution and migration to Madinah, to his death and the problems over his successor as well as the spread of Islam from Arabia through North Africa to Ghana. Just like Christianity this section will help you to understand that Islam is a foreign religion in Ghana despite its dominance in the religious space of Ghana. The studies in this section will further impart unto you with a sense of tolerance, respect, perseverance and peaceful coexistence. Moreover, this section will equip you with creative, collaborative, critical thinking, and communication skills as well as 21st century skills and competencies.

At the end of this section, you will be able to:

Describe the historical/contextual backgrounds of the three major religions in Ghana

Key Idea

Islam originated in the 7th century in the Arabian Peninsula, specifically in the region of Mecca. It began with the prophet Muhammad, who received revelations from Allah (God) through the angel Gabriel. After Muhammed death in 632CE his successor Abu Bakr spread Islam throughout the Arabian Peninsula, and it eventually spread to other parts of the world including Ghana.

HISTORY OF ISLAM: MAKKAH (MIGRATION) TO MADINAH AND BACK TO MAKKAH

Islam and Judaism connections

Both Islam and Judaism have Abrahamic roots. Abraham a patriarch for the Jews is also seen as a prophet in Islam for it is written “Strive for the cause of Allah in the way He deserves, for it is He who has chosen you, and laid upon you no hardship in the religion- the way of your forefather Abraham” (Qur’an 22:78).

Ibrahim (Abraham), the father of Judaism is also a prophet in Islam. The Qur’an states “Surely the people who have the best claim to a relationship with Abraham are those who followed him in the past, and presently this Prophet and those who believe in him; Allah is the guardian of men of faith” (Qur’an 3:68).

Islam and Judaism have some prophets or leaders in common. Some of the commonalities are in the table below.

Table 4.1: Common prophets or religious leaders shared by Jews and Muslims

ISLAMIC NAME	JEWISH NAME
Adama	Adam
Idris	Enoch
Nuhu	Noah
Ibrahim	Abraham
Ishak	Isaac
Musah	Moses
Dawud	David
Suleman	Solomon
Yunus	Jonah
Yahyah	John Baptist
Yusif	Joseph
Issah	Jesus

Source: Author’s construct

Islam recognises some Jewish histories. The most well-known is Abraham's sacrifice to God. Both the Qur'an 37:100-113 and Genesis 22:1-19 give an account of this event, however in Islam the child that was to be sacrificed was Ishmael while in Judaism and in Christianity that child was Isaac.

Islamic scripture recognises Jews and Christians as fellow believers in Allah. Muslims recognise Jews and Christians as people of the book. They revere the Torah (the five books of Moses) as a source for moral instruction.

“And (recall) when We took your covenant, (O Children of Israel to abide by the Torah and We raised over you the mount saying “Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous” (Qur'an 2: 63). Thus, Jews and Christians who uphold the teachings of the Torah would become righteous and gain reward from Allah. Quran 5:5a attests to this fact by indicating that “today all good things have been lawful for you. The food of the people of the book is lawful for you as your food is lawful for them...”

Activity 4.1: Textual reading

Using the Qur'an and Hadith together with other evidence, identify the links between the history of Islam and Judaism.

Summarise your findings and be prepared to share what you have learnt with your teacher or the rest of the class.

Birth and early life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

a. The birth of the Prophet

Prophet Mohammed bin Abdallah (PBUH) was born in Makkah on Monday 12th of Rabi-u-Awwal (20/04/570 CE) to Abdallah Ibn. Abdul Muttalib and Aminah bint. Abdul-Wahab. His paternal grandfather was Abdul-Muttalib. He belonged to the Banu Hashim family of the tribe of Quraysh in Makkah. Muhammad's (PBUH) father died two months before he was born. The woman who cared for him besides his mother was Thuwaybah (Suwaybah). Halimah bint Zuib of Banu Sa'd, a desert woman breast fed the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) because that was their tradition. The Prophet (PBUH) stayed with her and the husband, Harith Ibn. Abdul-Uzzah for four years before returning to his mother Aminah.

Aminah travelled with Muhammad (PBUH) and her slave girl Umm Ayman to Yathrib (Madinah). When they were returning from Madina to Makkah, Aminah fell ill and died at a place named Abwah and was buried there. Umm Ayman therefore brought Muhammad (PBUH) back to Makkah.

Abdul-Muttalib, his grandfather, assumed the responsibility of looking after Muhammad (PBUH). He died when Muhammad was eight years old. Then Abu-Talib, the uncle of the Prophet adopted Muhammad (PBUH) as a son at the age of eight.

When Muhammad (PBUH) was twelve years old, Abu-Talib travelled with him in a caravan of merchants to Syria (Sham). There they met a Roman monk by name Bahirah who observed something unusual about Muhammad (PBUH). That day, the sun was very hot and Bahira saw a cloud providing shade for Muhammad (PBUH) against the scorching sun. The monk had read in the ancient books about the coming of an Arab Prophet. He recognised in Muhammad (PBUH) the signs of prophethood. Bahira knew at once that he was the boy who had been destined to become the last Prophet. The monk then invited the whole caravan into his monastery and asked Abu Talib “In what way are you related to the child”? He said, “He is my son”. Bahira said, “It cannot be. His father should not be alive.” Then Abu Talib informed him that his father had died. Bahira therefore advised him to return with his nephew immediately and to protect him from enemies else he would be harmed.

b. The marriage of the Prophet

The Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) was twenty-five years old when he came into contact with a forty-year-old rich widow, named Khadijah bint Khuwaylid of the Quraysh tribe. Khadijah entrusted the management of her caravan business to the Prophet. Muhammed was so honest in his dealings with the woman that she was impressed by the Prophet’s virtues and expressed her desire to marry him. After consultation with his uncle, Muhammed (SAW) then accepted the proposal of Khadijah and agreed to marry her. Khadijah became the first wife of Muhammad. The marriage lasted for twenty five years. During Khadijah’s life-time, Muhammed (SAW) had no other wife except her. Apart from Ibrahim who died in infancy, all the children of the Prophet were born by Khadijah. Muhammed’s children with Khadijah were; Kashim, Abudallah, Zaynab, Rukayyah, Umm-Kulthum, Fatimah. Only his daughter Fatima survived to see Islam. The Prophet’s marriage to Khadijah was significant because, it helped him;

- to lead a successful and a comfortable life.
- to have access to all her wealth and property.
- to have children.
- to get protection against the Makkans’ persecution.
- have his first female adult to accept Islam outside the Quraysh tribe.
- get consolation from the Prophet (SAW) after his experience at cave Hira.

Prophet Muhammad's revelations, and early ministry in Makkah (Q26: 213-214)

The Call of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

When Mohammad (PBUH) was 40 years, Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) appeared to him in the cave Hira on the 27th day of the month of Ramadan in the year 610.C.E.

The angel said, Muhammad (PBUH), you are the messenger of Allah. I am the angel Jibreel". This was followed by other revelations about the One True God. The angel commissioned the Prophet to preach about Allah's oneness (Tauhid) in and outside Makkah.

The words of the angel to the Prophet marked the beginning of his call to the prophetic ministry. Mohammed was very disturbed after the encounter with the angel but his wife comforted him. His wife accompanied him to visit Waraqah Bin Nawfal, a Christian translator of the Hebrew Bible. After hearing Muhammad's (PBUH) story, he exclaimed; "This nation has seen a Prophet as prophesied in the old scriptures. The Great Spirit that Allah sent to Prophet Musah (Moses) has come to you. Surely, you would be the Prophet of your people. They would reject you, torture you, fight against you and expel you out of your own city. I wish I could live up to that time, I would support you strongly." (Uthman. U.H., 2021).

(Revelation of the Qur'an

The revelation of the Qur'an started in the year 610 CE, when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was forty years old. He retired to a cave Hira (ahar Hira) on the mountain of Light (Jabal Nur) about three miles away from Makkah for meditation and contemplation. During one of such visits to the cave in the month of Ramadan (month of heat), there appeared before him the arch-angel Jibriel, commanding him to read. Muhammad (SAW) said he could not read, but the angel repeated the instruction three times. Then Muhammad (SAW) replied what should I read. The angel Jabriel got held of him, shook him and said: "Read in the name of thy Lord Who has created, man from a clot of blood (congealed). Read: and thy Lord is Most Bountiful. Who has taught man by the pen, taught him that which he knew not." (Qur'an 96:1-5).

The revelations continued for twenty-three years during which time one hundred and fourteen (114) chapters of the Qur'an were revealed. The chapters (suawar) were divided into Makkah and Madinah suawar. Eighty-six chapters of the Quran were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in his thirteen years stay in Makkah while twenty eight chapters were revealed to him in his ten years stay in Madinah.

Persecution in Makkah and migration (Hijrah) to Madinah making a major turning point in Islam in 622CE

The Prophet (PBUH) started his mission of proclaiming the oneness of Allah in Makkah where many gods were worshiped (polytheism). He made a lot of converts from polytheism to Islam. The rich merchants of Makkah were threatened by the

religious revolution that was taking place within Makkah. The furious rich merchants and other idol worshipers, started persecuting the converts to Islam.

Some of the slaves who were converted to Islam were beaten to death. eg. Sumaya and her husband. The persecutors spread thorns and rubbish on the path the Prophet passed to the mosque. Big stones were placed on the chest of some of the converts to die. e.g Bilal Ibn Rubbah. The persecutors made loud noises around the Ka'abah when the Prophet stood to pray. Some of the followers of the Prophet were dragged on the ground.

These persecutions led to the migration (hijrah) the movement of the Prophet and his followers from Makkah to Yathrib, the present day Madinah in the year 622 CE. The major turning point in Islam during the *hijrah* are;

- *Muhammed (PBUH) was assured of his security during the pledge of Aqabah in the valley of Minah.*
- *It led to the establishment of the Islamic state in Madinah.*
- *It made the prophet to become the head of government and supreme judge who implemented Islamic laws as revealed to him.*
- *The Islamic faith spread to the arabian peninsula and other areas.*

Makkans – Muslims war to the capture of Makkah by Muhammad (PBUH) in (624-629CE)

Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions waged a Muslim-Quraysh War in December 629 to capture Makkah, convert them to Islam and to end the conflict between the Quraysh and Muslims.

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) signed a peaceful treaty with the Quraysh in 628 C.E known as the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. Two years after the treaty, the Quraysh violated it. The Prophet then announced that the peace agreement had been revoked. Subsequently, on the 10th of Ramadan, he left for Makkah accompanied by 10,000. This march was conducted in complete secrecy. Therefore the Makkans were completely taken by surprise. Faced with their numerical strength, the Makkans found themselves helpless. thereby conceding defeat. The Muslims had strict orders to shed no blood. The Makkans were told that they would be safe if they kept indoors or took refuge in the Kabah or in Abu Sufyan's house. The people of Makkah were submissive by adhering to the Prophet's instruction. The Prophet (PBUH) and his followers purified Kabah of all the idols. Then Bilal, went up on to the roof of the Kabah and gave the call to prayer (*Adhan*) and the companions said the thanksgiving prayer, led by the Prophet (PBUH). This peaceful conquest of Makkah led to mass conversion to Islam.

Activity 4.2 : Surfing the internet

Search for videos in the internet on how Makkah was peacefully conquered by the Muslims. or you may use the link below to watch the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6gH1wpKuh4>

What did you learn from the video? Share it with a friend.

Activity 4.3: Discussion on the Origin of Islam

As a class (or in small groups), prepare a timeline to trace the origin of Islam from the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through his early life and call to prophethood.

Think about the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between Islam and Judaism?
2. What evidence do you have to explain the relationship between Islam and Judaism?
3. What scriptural references can you cite to support the events on your timeline?

Activity 4.4: Engaging with a resource person

Invite a professional such as a religious leader or historian to share their knowledge on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Your teacher may assist you to look for the resource person.

Prepare a set of questions that you could ask them during class discussion.

Table 4.2: Questionnaire

1	Example: Please Iman, who were the parents of the Prophet Muhammad?
2	
3	
4	
5	

If it is not possible to interview someone in class, try to find someone outside of the lesson to pose your questions and find out about more about the history of Islam.

THE DEATH OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

In the previous session, you learnt about the history of Islam with emphasis on migration from Makkah to Madina and back to Makkah. In this session you will learn about the death of the prophet Muhammad (PUBH) and the spread of Islam beyond Arabia.

The Farewell Sermon by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on Mount Arafat

Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) final sermon was delivered at Arafat during the Hajj of the year 632 C.E. on the ninth day of Dhul Hijjah (the 12th month of the lunar year). There were countless Muslims present with the Prophet (PBUH) during his last pilgrimage when he delivered his last Sermon.

After praising and thanking God, the Prophet (PBUH) addressed the congregation saying *“O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen these words to those who could not be present here today”*.

He asked his followers to:

- respect the life and property of all Muslims, just as they respect sacred time and place.
- return everything entrusted to them as they would like to have their possessions returned.
- avoid harming others, and remember that they'll be accountable to God for their actions
- avoid usury (interest). Thus, interest on financial transactions should be ignored but the principal can be kept.
- be fair in their dealings with one another.
- avoid injustice, and beware of Satan's influence.
- treat women with kindness and respect, recognising their rights and partnership.
- perform their daily prayers, fast during Ramadan, give Zakat, and perform Hajj if possible (if they have the means to do so).
- remember that all humans are equal, and superiority comes only from piety and good deeds. As such, they should not be unjust to themselves for they are answerable to God.
- follow the Quran and emulate His (PBUH) example, and share my message with others.

Muhammad (pbuh) suffered ailing health but continued to lead prayer until he couldn't and allowed abu bakr to lead prayers

Three months after returning from performing his last Hajj to Madinah, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) became seriously ill with fever and headache. In spite of his ill health, he continued leading prayers till he became too weak to go to the mosque. Before his death, he said his last prayer in the Masjid-e-Nabawi and made Abu Bakr, his closest companion, the Imam to lead prayers after his death.

The death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) - Died in 632CE after bidding farewell to his grandchildren and wives

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) died on Monday 12th of Rabiul Awwal 632 CE 10 AH (after Hijrah) in the room of Aisha. He was buried in the same place. Later when Abu Bakr and Umar died, they were buried to the right and left sides of the Prophet (PBUH) in the same room.

The disagreement over a true successor led to a major split in Islam between what became the Sunni and the Shia sects

On hearing of the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), a large number of Muslims gathered in the mosque in Madinah. Many people, including Umar were yet to come to terms with the reality of the death. Abu Bakr, entered the room of Ayisha and came out to declare, that “whoso worships Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad is dead, but whoso worships Allah, let him know that Allah lives and dies not.” He added that, “Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful” (Quran 3:144).

After a short while, somebody rushed in to the mosque with the revelation that the Ansar, or helpers (the natives of Madinah), had gathered at the Saqifah to elect a leader from among themselves. The Ansar’s proposed leader was Sa’d Ibn Ubaidah from the Banu Khazraj. Abu Bakr, with the company of Abu Ubaidah and Umar Ibn. Khattab, went to Saqifah to save Islam from collapsing.

The disagreement over who should succeed the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ultimately led to splits and the formation of different sects within Islam. The Ansar believed the leader should be a person from the Prophet’s family, namely Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, Ali. This became known as the Shia sect. The Muhajiruns believed that Abu Bakr should be the successor of the Prophet (PBUH). This group became known as the Ahlu-Sunnah, or Sunni sect.

The four rightly guided Caliphs (Rashidun 632-661 CE) and military conquest of Arabs

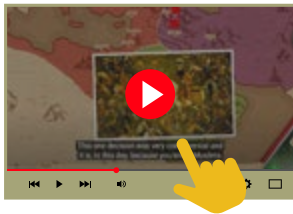
(a) Abu Bakr Ibn Quhaffah (632–634 C.E)

Abu Bakar bin Quhafah was the childhood friend of the Prophet (PBUH). He was born to Banu Tamim of the Quraysh tribe in 572CE. He accepted Islam at the age of 38 after hearing about the Prophet’s (PBUH) encounter with the angel at Hira. After the death of the Prophet (PBUH), Abu Bakr went to the *Saqifah* where the *Ansar* gathered to select Sa’d Ibn. Ubadah from the Banu Khazraj family in Madinah as a successor of the Prophet (PBUH). When he became the first of the four Caliphs of the Rashidun as

the Sunni Muslim believe, he fought against the false prophets, namely Sajah, Tulayha and Musaylima. Abu Bakr fought against the false successors of the Prophet (PBUH) in order to save Islam in 632 C.E in a battle known as the Riddas wars. His reign as the first Caliph of the Islamic empire experienced expansion in its boundaries because of his success in conquering neighbouring countries. The countries conquered during his reign include:

- i. **Iraq** where Abu Bakr sent a special army in 633 CE, led by Khalid ibn al-Walid
- ii. **Syria:** Abu Bakr also sent forces to Syria and conquered the Syrians in the Battle of Ajnadayn in 634 CE.
- iii. **Arabia:** Abu Bakr's forces unified the Arabian Peninsula under Islamic rule after a series of military campaigns against rebellious tribes. Abu Bakr died in 634 C.E, and was also buried by the Prophet (PBUH) in the room of Aisha.

The following video tells the story of early Islamic conquests under Abu Bakr.



(b) Umar ibn Khattab (634–644 C.E)

Umar bin Khattab was also born to the Quraysh tribe in Makkah. He was thirteen years younger than the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The words of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) enraged him as much as they did other notables of Makkah. He was bitter against anyone who accepted Islam.

One day, full of anger against the Prophet (PBUH), he drew his sword and set out to kill him. A friend met him on the way who informed him that Umar's own sister, Fatima, and her husband had accepted Islam. Umar went straight to his sister's house where he found her reading pages of the Qur'an. He fell upon her and beat her mercilessly. Bruised and bleeding, Fatimah told her brother, "*Umar, you can do what you like, but you cannot turn our hearts away from Islam.*" These words produced a strange effect upon Umar. What was this faith that made even weak women so strong of heart? He asked his sister to show him what she had been reading; he was at once moved to the core by the words of the Qur'an and immediately accepted the truth. He went straight to the house where the Prophet (PBUH) was staying and vowed allegiance to him. Umar made no secret of his acceptance of Islam. He gathered Muslims and offered prayers at the Ka'ba. This boldness and devotion of an influential citizen of Makkah raised the morale of its small community of Muslims.

Umar Ibn Khattab became the second Caliph and he spread Islam to some parts of Arabia. Through military warfare, he conquered many countries, including: Syria, Iran, Egypt Palestine, Persia (parts of it), Jordan and Lebanon.

He ruled from 634 to 644 CE and was the first to call himself "commander of the faithful". He was a strong leader who controlled policy and established the principles for administering the lands they conquered. Umar Ibn. Khattab died as a result of

assassination by Abu Lulu Firon in 644 C.E, and was also buried with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Abu Bakr in the room of Aisha, the wife of the prophet Muhammad (SAW).

(c) Uthman Ibn Affan (644–656 C.E)

Uthman bin Affan was born seven years after the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He belonged to the Omayyad branch of the Quraysh tribe. He learned to read and write at an early age, and as a young man became a successful merchant. Even before converting to Islam, Uthman had been noted for his truthfulness and integrity.

Uthman Ibn Affan became a very close friend of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr influenced him to become a muslim at the age of thirty-four. Some years later he married the Prophet's daughter, Ruqayya. She died and Kulthum,, another daughter of the Prophet (PBUH) was offered to Uthman in marriage. Uthman was known as 'Zuu Nurain' meaning the Possessor of the Two Lights because he had the high privilege of having two daughters of the Prophet (PBUH) as wives.

Uthman ibn Affan was a good companion and successor of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He was the third Caliph and expanded the Islamic empire to some parts of Arabia through military expedition. He captured parts of Persia (modern-day Iran). He also conquered Cyprus (the first Islamic conquest of a Mediterranean island) in 649 CE. Other countries conquered by Uthman are – Rhodes in 654 CE, Caesarea, a strategic city in Palestine, in 640 CE and some parts of the Byzantine Empire as well as the regions of Sistan (modern-day Afghanistan). Uthman was killed by his enemies in 656 C.E.

(d) Ali Ibn Abu Talib (656–661 C.E)

Ali Ibn Abu Talib was born in 600 CE in Makkah into the Banu Hashim family. He was the first cousin of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Ali grew up in the Prophet's own household. He married the Prophet's youngest daughter, Fatima, and remained in close association with the Prophet (PBUH) for nearly thirty years. Ali was ten years old when the Prophet (PBUH) had his call. One night, he saw the Prophet (PBUH) and his wife Khadijah bowing and prostrating. He asked the Prophet (PBUH) about the meaning of their actions. The Prophet (PBUH) told him that they were praying to God, the Highest and that Ali too should accept Islam. Ali said that he would first consult his father about it. He spent a sleepless night, and in the morning, he went to the Prophet and said, "When God created me, He did not consult my father, so why should I consult my father in order to serve God?" Ali therefore accepted the Islamic faith.

During the caliphate of Ali he did not conquer any new territory. Instead, his reign was focused on dealing with internal conflicts and rebellions within the caliphate (his reign). The caliphate was already in a state of civil war known as the First Fitna when Ali assumed power. He faced rebellions from Aisha, Talha and Zubayr, who were defeated at the Battle of the Camel in 656 CE. Ali also fought against Mu'awiya, the Governor of Syria, at the Battle of Siffin in 657 CE, but the conflict ended inconclusively.

Ali also had to deal with the Kharijites, a group that had initially supported him but later rebelled, declaring that “arbitration belongs to God alone”. He defeated them at the Battle of Nahrawan in 658 CE. Due to these internal conflicts, the expansion of the caliphate was halted during Ali’s reign. His focus was on restoring order and central control over the provinces. Ali’s strict anti-corruption stance also isolated some supporters. He was later killed by Abdul-Rahman Ibn Muljam in 661 CE.

Islam spread through military conquest, trade, pilgrimage and missionary works

1. **Military Conquest:** Islamic armies conquered vast territories, including the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. As a result, Islamic rule was established, and Islamic teachings were introduced to the conquered peoples making the conquered nations Islamic states.
2. **Trade:** Muslim merchants and traders travelled extensively, trading goods and sharing Islamic ideas and values with people they encountered. This helped to spread Islam to new regions and communities, especially countries in West Africa through the Trans-Saharan trade routes.
3. **Pilgrimage:** The Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah brought people from diverse backgrounds together, allowing them to learn about Islam and share their experiences with others. This helped to spread Islamic teachings and practices.
4. **Missionary Works:** Muslim scholars, mystics, and preachers actively engaged in da’wah (invitation to Islam), sharing the message of Islam with non-Muslims and encouraging conversion. This helped to spread Islam to new regions and communities.

Umayyad dynasty (661-750 CE): The conquest of Persia, Turkey, part of Spain and North Africa and India

Umayyad was the First Muslim Dynasty (661-750 CE)

The Umayyad dynasty became the first Muslim dynasty, ruling the Islamic Caliphate from 661-750 C E. Muawiya I (as the fifth Caliph), became the founder of the Umayyah dynasty. He moved the capital from Madinah to Damascus and then used the Syrian army to extend the empire. This army carried the war against Byzantium into Asia Minor, Constantinople, and eastward into Khorasan, Turkistan, and spreading along the northern coast of Africa, to some parts of Spain. The Syrian army was instrumental in the Umayyad caliphate’s rapid expansion, which made it one of the largest unitary states in the history of Islam. The Umayyad based army was able to establish a vast empire which lasted between the period of 661-750 CE.

Extension of Islam to Spain, Central Asia and India

The Umayyad caliphate was able to spread Islam to Spain, central Asia and India through their military conquests. The Syrian army under the leadership of general Tariq Ibn Ziyad conquered Spain in 711CE. Islam was therefore established and Shari'ah became the code of conduct in Al-Andalus. This gave Umayyads the opportunity to extend their empire into Western Europe.

The Umayyad Syrian army continued to spread Islam into the Indian subcontinent and conquered the Sindh region (present day Pakistan) in the early 8th Century. Umayyads used the Syrian army and the administrative centre in Damascus to establish one of the largest empires in the history of Islam, extending from Spain to central Asia. This rapid growth facilitated a fast spread of Islam across many areas.

The rise of science, mathematics and medicine in the Islamic empire

Prophet Encouraged the Pursuit of Knowledge:

During the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he encouraged and demonstrated the importance of seeking and preserving knowledge in several ways in Islam. He placed much emphasis on learning by ordering Muslims to seek knowledge even if it meant crossing oceans and continents, as in the famous statement "Seek knowledge even if it be in China". Islam encourages the use of reason and observation in the pursuit of knowledge. This is seen in the Quranic verse that indicate that "And whoso brings the truth and believes therein such are the dutiful"(Quran,39:33. Islam sees education as a continuation of worship to Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) indicated that "The best form of worship is the pursuit of knowledge". Knowledge gained enables its possessor to distinguish right from the wrong, it lights the way to heaven" (Quran,20:114).

Education or learning for the Prophet (PBUH) is a path to heaven. The Prophet (PBUH) assured his followers that whoever seeks knowledge will have the path to paradise for "Whoever takes a path upon which to obtain knowledge, Allah makes the path to Paradise easy for him"(Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 2646). Above all, Islam makes education an obligatory duty to its followers. "It is the duty of every Muslim to seek knowledge" (Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith 224).

Astronomy was pursued to locate the moon and to determine the direction in which to pray:

Astronomical observation and technology were essential for determining the correct direction of prayer (qibla) and the timing of the five daily prayers in Islam.

Muslims are required to face the direction of the Kaaba in Makkah during their prayers. Determining the qibla (direction) requires knowledge of one's geographical location and the position of the Kaaba. After the death of the Prophet (PBUH), several scientific discoveries were made to determine the direction and geographical location of the Kaaba. Muslim astronomers and timekeepers (muwaqqits) used tools like quadrants, astrolabes and celestial globes to precisely calculate the qibla direction and the prayer times based on the position of the sun.



Fig. 4.1: A girl with an astronomical telescope stargazing under starry sky

The Islamic calendar is also based on the lunar cycle, with each month beginning with the sighting of the new crescent moon. Observing the moon's phases was crucial for establishing the religious calendar and determining the timing of important Islamic holidays like Ramadan and Eid.

In summary, the pursuit of astronomy in Islamic societies was driven by the need to facilitate core religious practices like daily prayers and the lunar calendar. Astronomical knowledge and tools were essential for Muslims to properly orient themselves towards Makkah and observe the rhythms of the moon.

Advancement in Mathematics-Arabic numerals algebra, trigonometry, geometry:

After the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Islamic world experienced a remarkable period of scientific and intellectual advancement known as the Islamic Golden Age.

Here are some key points about how this period led to major advancements in Mathematics:

- i. **Patronage of Learning:** The early Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs actively encouraged the translation of Greek, Persian, and Indian texts into Arabic. This influx of knowledge from diverse civilisations laid the foundation for the Islamic Golden Age.
- ii. **Establishment of Centres of Learning:** The Abbasid capital of Baghdad became a hub of intellectual activity with the founding of the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikma), a major library and translation institute. Other centres like the Fatimid Cairo and Umayyad Córdoba also flourished.

- iii. Contributions in Mathematics: Al-Khwarizmi (c.780-850 CE) is considered the “father of algebra” for his pioneering work in developing algebraic methods and introducing the concept of algorithms.
- iv. Al-Kashi (c.1380-1429 CE) made significant advances in trigonometry, numerical analysis, and the calculation of π .
- v. Omar Khayyam (c.1048-1131 CE) made important contributions to algebra, geometry, and astronomy.



Fig. 4.2: Omar Khayyam

- vi. Spread of Arabic numerals: The adoption and spread of the Indian numeral system, which we now know as the “Arabic numerals”, was a major mathematical innovation that facilitated the development of algebra, calculus, and other branches of mathematics.
- vii. Patronage of Science: Rulers like the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun (813-833 CE) actively sponsored scientific research and the translation of texts, leading to a golden age of Islamic understanding of science and mathematics.

The Islamic Golden Age, fueled by the translation movement and the patronage of learning, allowed Muslim scholars to make groundbreaking contributions to the field of mathematics that laid the foundations for later European advancements.

Activity 4.5: Research

Use the following resources, library books, religious leaders or an expert in the study of religions or online resources to carry out further research and broaden your understanding on the historical and the contextual background of Islam. Your teacher may provide you with a prompt question to investigate and share your findings with the class.

- a. <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2018>
- b. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Islam

Activity 4.6: Engaging with a resource person

Your teacher may invite a professional such as an Imam, Islamic Scholar or a lecturer on Islamic studies to talk to you on the historical and contextual background of Islam.

Prepare a set of questions that you could ask during the discussion.

Table 4.3: Questionnaire

1.	E.g. <i>What is the historical context of Islam's emergence in Arabia, and how did it spread to Africa?</i>
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Activity 4.7: Discussion on the Caliphs

Take part in a discussion, either in small groups or your teacher may coordinate this as a class activity to share what you have learnt through this lesson and the activities you have completed. Consider the following questions in your discussion:

- a. Who were the first four Caliphs?
- b. What contributions did they make to the development of Islam?
- c. How did the institution of the caliphate ignite the debate over the true successor of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)?

Activity 4.8 Music composition

Create a short piece of music or poem telling the story of the four rightly guided Caliphs in Islam. The following steps may be helpful in carrying out this activity:

- a. Study the lives and achievements of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali.
- b. Decide on a medium: music (lyrics and melody) or poem (verse and rhyme).
- c. Consider the tone and style: solemn, inspirational, or uplifting.
- d. Use the outline to craft a compelling story by highlighting each Caliph's unique strengths and accomplishments such as commitment to justice, compassion, and faith.
- e. Add a Melody (if music)
- f. Compose a melody, use instrumentation or vocals to enhance the emotional impact
- g. Review and refine the lyrics or poem
- h. Share Your Creation in class or with colleagues outside class through performance or posting it in your school social media handle after the approval by your teacher.

ISLAMISATION FROM NORTH AFRICA AND ITS ARRIVAL IN GHANA

In the previous lesson, you learnt about the formation of Islam and its expansion to other states outside Arabia. In this lesson, you will look at the events that led to the spread of Islam from the Northern part of Africa gradually to the shores of Ghana, how this happened and the key people involved. You will also be asked to consider how you as an individual may contribute in promoting the values of the religion to support the development of the country.

Activity 4.9: Reflective writing

Have you thought of how Islam came to the shores of Ghana? Take a few minutes of your time and think about this question. Get a blank sheet of paper or open a Word document and develop a question guide by following the instructions below on “How Islam Arrived in Ghana.”

Steps for the Question Guide

- Provide a heading, you could add an interesting caption or image.
- Note down the questions that were going through your mind.
- Arrange them in the form of a table or outline.

Present your questions to your Religious Studies teacher or your seniors in school to help you review their relevance and add any additional questions that come from your discussion.

Examples:

Table 4.4: Questionnaire

Question	Response
When did Islam reach Africa?	
How did it get to the continent?	
Did it just take over the continent at once?	
Which part of the continent at all did it first emerge?	
Why is it now found in most countries in West Africa including my country Ghana?	
Who introduced it to my country?	

You can refer back to your questions as you work through your learning and record the answers as you discover them.

Trade and Commerce and the Spread of Islam from North Africa to West Africa through Trans-Saharan Trade

On reaching North African soil in the 7th Century CE, Islam gradually spread through the various ancient empires within West Africa until it finally reached present-day Ghana. Trans-Saharan trade is believed to be the medium for this spread (NaCCA, 2023). For the religion to travel outside the corridors of the northern part of Africa, some strategies were adopted by Muslim merchants and other devout Muslims across the continent. These strategies are discussed below.

1. Traders initially adopted the containment (quarantine) strategy. With this strategy, traders kept the religion to themselves until they were approached by non-Muslims who came to purchase their goods (NaCCA 2023). Muslim merchants from North Africa traded in salt, kola, horses, etc., which were in high demand by their Western neighbours who traded in gold and other products demanded in the North. Through these business transactions, the message about Islam was preached to the non-Muslim traders. Those who accepted the faith sent it back home, spreading it in their communities.

2. Later, North African traders adopted the mixing strategy: They traveled out of their territory across the Sahara to live with non-Muslims of West Africa. They built good relationships with them, earned their trust, and introduced them to their religion (Islam).



Fig. 4.3: Muslim Traders Using the Sahara Trade Route

3. The reforms (Jihad): This was another strategy adopted to help the spread of Islam. Through the formation of Muslim movements, non-Muslim communities were introduced to a pure and genuine form of Islam (NaCCA, 2023). These movements engaged in radical transformations to change laws and unjust practices targeted at making living unbearable to those who needed a change in governance. These communities embraced the principles and values of Islam to govern their localities. Most of the leaders who spearheaded the movements developed a positive attitude to the religion upon their visits to the holy city of Makkah and other Islamic pilgrimage sites. These jihadist movements and how they operated will be covered in more detail further on.

The development of Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai empires and the spread of Islam

Communities across the Sahara gradually developed into kingdoms and great empires. These included the ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhai empires. There were also other kingdoms and empires which were developed in the West African region which may be covered in class discussion. The formation and growth of these kingdoms or empires were possible due to the influence of Islam. Let us study a few reasons for this assertion.

1. As Muslim traders from North Africa engaged in their trading activities, they moved further into other parts of Africa, specifically West Africa, and ended up spreading the religion through the various kingdoms and empires in the region. The Nubian desert (a part of the Sahara Desert to the east of the Sahara Desert)

served as the route for their mission. Muslim traders engaged in missionary works propagating the religion within the empires they traveled to. Among them were merchant scholars. Rulers of the empires gladly accepted the faith making it easy to be embraced by their subjects. Islamic knowledge and beliefs flourished in the following empires:

- a. Gao Empire in 985 CE, the first empire to formally embrace Islam. From Gao, the religion spread to;
 - b. Ghana Empire in (6th-13th century CE) following the activities and settlement of Muslim traders in the empire. The decline of the Ghana Empire in the 13th Century gave rise to the neighbouring Mali Empire.
 - c. Mali Empire (1240-1645 CE). The Mali Empire like the others, saw an impressive growth following the encounter its rulers had with Muslim merchants from North Africa. Mali served as a middle trader between North Africa and those around the Niger River (the forest zone of West Africa). Upon the decline of the Mali Empire, another empire emerged in the region. This was the Songhai Empire.
 - d. Songhai Empire (1460-1591 CE). The Songhai Empire embraced Islam through a trading relationship they established with the merchant-scholars from North Africa.
 - e. The Kingdom of Kanem (900-1390 CE). The people of the Kingdom of Kanem are said to have been introduced to Islam at the beginning of the 13th Century CE. Rulers of the Kingdom accepted Islam and embarked on pilgrimages to Islamic holy sites in North Africa and Arabia. To promote the spread of Islam in the land, a Muslim educational institution (madrasa) was established.
Kings and queens accepted the religion to gain favour from the Muslim traders and enrich themselves. Islam continued to spread within kingdoms in the West African zone. The Hausaland which emerged in the late 14th Century CE within the region also had contact with the religion (Cartwright 2019).
2. Merchant-scholars assisted non-Muslim traders in drafting trading tools such as contract laws, credit, and other trading documentation needed for an effective trade network. Some Muslim merchant scholars became clerks or scribes in the office of West African rulers. They served as advisors to kings and the writing skills they possessed helped in the administration of non-Islamic kingdoms or empires.

Activity: 4.10: Map reading on the spread of Islam

Using the map below present a brief narrative on the spread of Islam from North Africa to West Africa and Ghana.

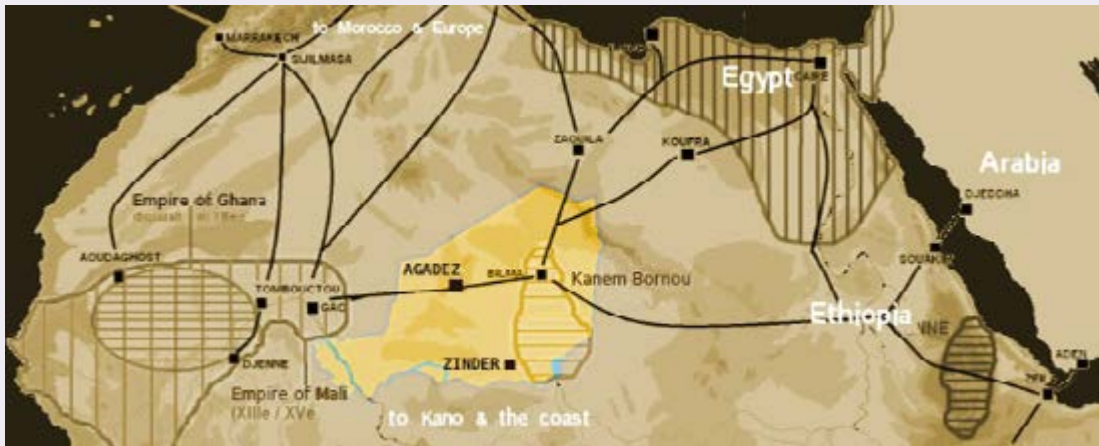


Fig. 4.5: Map of north and sub-Saharan Africa

A brief guide on the study of the map.

- a. Islam spread from the Middle East to North Africa in the 7th century- Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia and spread southward through trade routes and migrations.
- b. 8th century: Islam reaches the Sahara Desert region (Berber tribes).
- c. 11th century: Islam spreads to the Ghana Empire (present-day Mali and Mauritania)
- d. 12th century: Islam reaches the Mali Empire (present-day Mali, Senegal, and Gambia)
- e. 13th century: Islam spreads to the Songhai Empire (present-day Mali, Niger, and Nigeria).
- f. 15th century: Islam reaches the Hausa Kingdoms (present-day Nigeria).

Agents of Islamisation

1. Traders from some West African states introduced Islam to the forest part of West Africa through their trading activities. These merchants included:
 - a. The Jula Merchants from Mali and Cote d'Ivoire: The Jula Merchants, who were also scholars through their trade networks, spread Islam within the forest part of West Africa. Known for their knowledge in Islam, they established Muslim educational institutions (*madrasas*) and mosques to train and facilitate the spread of the religion within the forest zone. They also shared ideas about Islam with the non-Muslims they traded with. Jula Merchants traded in salt, kola nuts, etc. which were in high demand by the people of West Africa. The Jula traders actively preached Islam thereby winning many converts within the area and beyond.

- b. The Hausa merchants in Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea Bissau. Like the Jula merchants, the Hausa merchants spread Islam in Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, and other parts of West Africa by establishing trade routes and trading activities. (Hill 2009). There was also the establishment of *madrasas* and mosques which served as learning centres to impart knowledge and promote scholarship. The keenness to receive scholarships, or to be educated, contributed to facilitating the spread of the religion in the region. Again, through inter-marriage between Hausa merchants and the local people, Islam penetrated the West African states.
 - c. Mande, Hausa and Borno traders. These traders not only influenced the formation of the empires that emerged in West Africa but went on to carry Islam beyond the borders of these empires. Empires which were greatly influenced by the Mande, Hausa and Borno traders included the Mali, Ghana, and Songhai empires (Encyclopedia Britannica n.d).
 - d. Establishment of Muslim communities in many towns and cities. These communities operated as centres for Islamic education, assisting the spread of Islamic principles among the localities (Adegbite 2007). They also served as centres of trade.
2. Uthman Dan Fodio Fulani jihads and other jihads in West Africa. The adoption of jihads by some Muslims played a significant role in the Islamisation of most states within West Africa. Such actions aimed to make true Islam the established religion within a particular jurisdiction. Examples of such jihads include that which was championed by Uthman Dan Fodio, an Islamic Fulani scholar and theologian of the 19th Century who contributed to the spread of Islam in present-day Ghana. This was after Uthman Dan Fodio had led a successful jihad against the rulers of Hausa state in Northern Nigeria. His teachings and reforms deeply influenced the Islamic community in West Africa, and many of his followers migrated to Ghana carrying with them their Islamic beliefs and practices (Mediagh 2023). Beside Uthman's Fulani jihad, there were a series of jihad undertaken by some Muslim faithful. They operated just like Uthman to islamise the states or jurisdictions they conquered. E.g.; the jihad of al-Hajj Umar Tal in the 19th Century CE.
3. The imposed fundamentalist version of Islam in the reforms of the Almoravids movement. This was led by a devout Muslim, Abdallah Ibn Yasim, the Almoravids was an Islamic movement championing the establishment of a pure and genuine practice of Islam in West Africa and beyond. They were ready to fight against any insurgent (rebel) of pure Islam. In so doing, they assisted communities who required their help to formalise Islam in their society. They also embarked on numerous conquests within the Saharan trade routes and created Islamic states. They captured some towns in the Ghana empire, for example Aoudaghost, making it an Islamic community.
4. Sahel traders who brought Islam to Ghana: The Sahel traders were Muslim merchants, mainly Yarse and Wangara people of the Soninke of the Sahel-Sudan region. They played a vital role in the trans-Saharan trade network which connected North Africa and the people of West Africa. The Sahel traders moved southwards from the Sahel-Sudan region into Northern Ghana carrying with them the Islamic faith (Ebo-Sarbah 2023). They traded, intermarried and settled with local people.

They also passed on their beliefs, knowledge and skills establishing the religion in Ghana (Ebo-Sarbah 2023).

5. Hausa men and people from the north who were recruited into the British colonial army contributed as agents to the spread of Islam in Ghana. As they moved from community to community engaging in warfare, they influenced those they encountered with Islam (Aniegye 2013}. They did this by preaching the religion to their hearers and winning the admiration of other non-Muslims due to their effective fighting skills and the use of amulets which aided in their quests as soldiers.

In summary, trade and pilgrimage facilitated the spread of Islam from North Africa to West Africa and to Ghana.

Activity 4.11: Visit to a mosque or Islamic historical site

1. Prepare questions that you may ask an Imam during a visit to a mosque or an Islamic historical site about the spread of Islam to Ghana.

Table 4.5: Questionnaire

1.	E.g., How did Islam spread to Ghana?
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

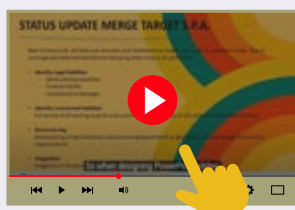
Visit a mosque or any Islamic historical site in your locality, or somewhere nearby, for a tour. Talk with the Imam or tour guide about the history of Islam in Ghana.

Asks the relevant questions you developed. Take notes, photographs and videos to shed more light on your understanding.

Develop a PowerPoint on your experience and with your teacher's approval, agree on a day to present your experience to your classmates.

Tips For a PowerPoint Design

Use this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQiln3CjtvM> or search from books on tips for powerpoint.



2. Script or write a short story on the influence of trade and pilgrimage to spread of Islam from North Africa to Ghana. If possible, record it as a video for screening.

Self-assessment tasks

Answer at least one of the following questions to support your review of this lesson:

- State four agents of Islamisation in Ghana.
- Explain the roles of four agents of Islamisation in Ghana.
- With relevant examples, evaluate the contributions of four agents of Islamisation in Ghana.

Review Questions

1. Create a chronological chart that shows significant events in the history of Islam and justify why each event was significant.
2. a. Represent the rightly guided caliphs in Islam in order of succession in a table form.
b. How did the rightly guided Caliphs contribute to the spread of Islam?
3. Explain the migration of Islam to Ghana?

Table 4.6: Chronological chart of events in the life and mission of the Muhammed (PBUH).

DATE	HISTORICAL EVENT
570 CE	Birth of Muhammad in Mecca to Abdallah Ibn. Abdul Muttalib and Aminah bint. Abdul-Wahab. (Father died before he was born).
575 CE	Death of Muhammad's mother died placed in the protection of his paternal grandfather, Abdul Al-Muttalib.
578 CE	Death of Abdul Al-Muttalib. The care of the prophet was unto paternal uncle, Abu Talib.
582 CE	Muhammad and his uncle abu Talib travelled to Syria.
595 CE	Muhammad married Khadija bint Khawalayd.
610 CE	Muhammad received his first revelation at the age of 40 in the Cave of Hira.
613 CE	Muhammad's first public preaching in Mecca.
614 CE	Muhammad commanded Muslims to flee to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) to escape persecution.
619 CE	Death of Khadija and Abu Talib.
622 CE	Hijrah-Muhammad and his followers left Mecca to Medina.
624 CE	Battle of Badr
625 CE	Battle of Uhud
626 CE	Khandaq
630 CE	Bloodless march to Mecca and conquering it.

Source: Author's construct

Extended Reading

- Life of the prophet
- <https://www.britanica.com/biography/Muhammad>
- <https://www.pbs.org/muhammad/timeline.html.shtml>
- <https://www.islamichistory.org/early-life-of-muhammed-saw/>
- The call of the prophet: <https://www.islamic-awareness.org/quran/sources/bbwaraqa>
- Waraqah statement to the prophet was an inspiration from -Deuteronomy 18: 15-18
- Revelation of the Qur'an.- Qur'an 96:1-5- <https://www.google.com/search?q=the+first+revelation+of+Muhammed+in+the+cave&client=app-meta-whatsapp-sa-r>
- Awal Issahak (2015), Islamic Religious Studies for Senior High Schools,pg 13-14
- <https://www.jstor.org>
- Jami` at-Tirmidhi, Hadith 2646
- Islamic textbook Chinchincherere Series chapter Three page forty-one.
- Quran, 96:1-5

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15. Hadith Book of Dawud 2436
16. Quran 62: 2
17. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad>
18. https://www.pbs.org/muhammad/timeline_html.shtml
19. <https://islamchistory.org/early-life-mohammad-saw/>

Glossary

WORDS	MEANING
Revelation	literally means unveiling or uncovering what is not known. It is God's guidance or inspiration. It is the communication of truth and knowledge from God to his children.
Surah	a chapter of the Qur'an.
Hijrah	this connotes migration which is described as Holy in Islam
Ummah	is used to refer to Islamic communities
Astronomy	the branch of physics that studies celestial bodies and the universe as a whole.
AH.	After Hijrah
Ansar	The native of Madinah
Dhul Hijja	the twelfth month of the Arabic calendar.
Caliphs	the four rightly guided successors of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).
Caliphate	The reign of the caliph
Conquer	To take control of something either by force or through victory in a conflict
Muhajaruns	The native of Makkah who followed Muhammed to Madinah during the migration
Qibla	The direction to Ka'abah
Shariah	Islamic law

Acknowledgements



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