

*Lecture Four*  
*Islamic Civilization: A*  
*Survey of Its Foundation*  
*and Growth*

# Stages in the Spread of Islam

Islam came out of Arabia, and within a century, it had spread far through both Arab and Persian influence.

The second stage saw the Turks expand outward in every direction, spreading Islam in their wake

The third stage witnessed the spread of Islam in the subcontinent in lands that today include parts of India as well as the whole of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The fourth stage saw the spread of Islam into black Africa, as in the other stages, mostly through Sufism, scholars, and merchants.

The fifth stage saw the spread of Islam into the Malay areas of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific.

From the seventeenth century onward there was the further spread of Islam in Western China and also into other regions of China.

The Medina community, where the Prophet is buried, is the ideal model of Islamic society.

The first four caliphs correspond in a certain way to the authors of the four Gospels in Christianity and are held in great religious esteem. It was during their rule that Islam spread into Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and in fact the rest of the Persian Empire.

# The Umayyads

The Umayyads were the first caliphate in civilization to establish an imperial model. This period of rule was witness to the creation of many basic Islamic social, legal, and political institutions

# The Abbasids

In the eighth century, they moved the capital from Damascus to Baghdad, where it became the center of a great intellectual flowering and flourishing of the arts and sciences.

They oversaw the rise of classical Islamic civilization, which many term the Golden Age of Islam.

The schools of law and legal and social institutions were established at that time.

The early Abbasid period corresponding to the ninth century was the period of the crystallization and formation of the classical schools of law, theology, philosophy, and Sufism.

Cultures and civilizations to which classical Islamic civilization became heir: Persian, Egyptian, Graeco-Alexandrian, Jewish, eastern Christian, and Indian.



# **The Integrating Power of Islamic Civilization**

Islam considered itself the last religion and believed that it could integrate the intellectual and spiritual heritage of previous religions and civilizations into its world view and intellectual edifice.

The role of religion and the Arabic language helped to unify the disparate regions of the Islamic world.

Persian influence was significant as well.

The Arabs, Persians, and Turks were builders of classical Islamic civilization.

Indian Muslims, black Africans, Malays, Chinese, and other ethnic groups played later roles in building Islamic civilization.

# **The Zones of Culture within Islamic Civilization**

Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Indian, black African, Malay, and Chinese cultures all exist within Islamic civilization.

Islam has attempted to create unity while preserving diversity throughout its civilization.

# **The Zones of Culture within Islamic Civilization**

This can clearly be seen in the art and architecture of various parts of the Islamic world.

Ease of travel, economic activity, and intellectual and cultural exchange led to greater unity—unity and local diversity.