

MALAYSIA / INDONESIA.

Lecture I \* Islam as a historical force.

We are confronted once again with one of the great innovating forces which periodically reconstitute both the political and the intellectual life of the region - in this case the force is Islam and its civilization. As with the so-called Hinduization of SEA, discussions of this process are richer in theory than in fact, even though we are now so much further into historical times. Indeed the theories themselves tend to be strikingly parallel: just as different scholars have variously argued that Indian civilization was brought by armed forces, by peaceful traders or by brahman intellectuals, similar arguments have been made concerning the propagation of Islam, the brahman intellectuals being replaced by their Islamic Muslim counterparts, the Sufis. Before discussing the role of Islam in SEA, however, it is necessary to have at least some idea of the prior history of Islamic civilization. It is not possible within the scope of this course to give even the most elementary account of the moral and intellectual renewal that Islam brought in its homelands and elsewhere, but a brief account of its temporal development will give some idea of its nature as a historical force.

It used to be fashionable to talk of monotheism as the natural religion of the desert, but in fact Mohammad was not a nomadic Bedouin, but rather born in an urban family, prominent citizens of Mecca. Mecca was already at the time of his birth - for which the traditional date is 570 A.D. - a wealthy commercial centre, with a virtual monopoly of the entrepot trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, and the intellectual and political leader of Western Arabia. Of the early life of the founder of Islam little is known: he was born into the Quraysh family, orphaned at an early age, and brought up by his grandfather and subsequent to the latter's death by his paternal uncle. He was for some time engaged in the caravan trade, married a wealthy widow and had children, of whom 4 daughters survived. He began to engage in meditation in a cave on Hira hill, outside the city, and in the year 610 began to receive revelations from the archangel Gabriel, which he wrote down and which taken in their entirety form the surahs

( chapters ) of the Quran. Because of the call to arise and warn his fellow-citizens to repent before the judgment of the world, he felt compelled to proclaim what was revealed to him. At the end of 10 years' labour, however, he had gathered only a small band of converts, and aroused first contempt and ridicule and later outright persecution. This was due not so much to religious conservatism as to the fears of prominent Meccans ( including some of his own family ) that the new doctrines would mean political changes, and would also injure the economic interests of the city - Mecca possessed a sanctuary, the Ka bah, dedicated to a pantheon of deities, which was a centre of pilgrimage for all Arabia and thus a considerable source of revenue for the city.

At the end of these 10 years he received support from an unexpected quarter. ~~200~~ The city of Medina, 200 miles north of Mecca, was suffering from a prolonged internecine conflict between rival Arab tribes. Exhausted by the conflict, they asked Mohammed to come to Medina to settle the dispute - an indication that his reputation as a man of spiritual stature and worldly wisdom must have been quite considerable. After lengthy negotiations to ensure his own security and that of his followers, Mohammed fled secretly from Mecca in the autumn of 622, and established himself at Medina. This move is known as the " Hijra " ( " Emigration " ) and the year 622 was ~~adopted 17 years later~~ <sup>adopted 17 years later</sup> as the first year of the Muslim ( Hijra ) era.

In Medina the Islamic ~~community~~ <sup>community</sup> assumed a definite political shape under a single leader. This development followed ~~in~~ naturally from Mohammed's conception of the community of believers - the Muslims, i.e. "those who submit " to God - as governing its entire life / a body according to the divine directives, not as a sort of church over-governed by the authority of a secular state. Two things were now necessary to ensure the survival of the Islamic polity - internal consolidation, and the bringing of Mecca within the fold. So long as Mecca, the most powerful city of the region, remained hostile, the Medina community was not safe. Mecca was subdued by a combination of military ~~star~~ strategy - Medina sat across her northern trade route and could intercept her

caravans - and skilful negotiations, so that finally, in 630, Mohammed was able to triumphantly re-enter the city of his birth. He had only 2 years left to him to instill into his former opponents in Mecca something of the moral earnestness of his earlier supporters, and to ensure that the genuine conversion of Arabia would continue beyond his own lifetime. It is an extraordinary tribute to the grip hold upon men which Islam ~~was~~ achieved in so short a time that not only did it outlast its founder, ~~however~~ but in fact gathered ~~their~~ <sup>its adherents'</sup> energies into an explosive dynamism which almost immediately transformed the power structure of the entire Middle-East.

It is not surprising that after Mohammed's death there were a number of claimants to the authority, temporal as well as spiritual, that he had wielded - what is remarkable is that the movement survived at all, in a ~~warlike~~ society divided by clan and regional jealousies. Abu-Bakr was elected Mohammed's successor or Caliph, thus inaugurating the period known to Muslims as the " Orthodox Caliphate ", ~~lasting from~~ consisting of 4 caliphs ( Abu-Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali ) and lasting from 632 until 661 A.D. The political authority of the 4 caliphs seems hardly to have been stable : all but Abu-Bakr met violent deaths. The last of the 4, Ali, was Mohammed's son-in-law. After his murder, the political centre of Islam shifted from Arabia to Syria, where the second caliphate, the Umayyad, was founded, and the Meccan party took up the cause of Ali's ~~own~~ descendants ( through his sons, Hasan and Husayn, later " canonized " as martyrs ) ~~as~~ as an expression of Arabia's claims. Later, Ali's descendants were considered to have inherited a special spiritual as well as political power, and this veneration led to the growth of the Shi'ia sect. Shi'ism is the official religion of Persia, and the followers of the Aga Khan are one branch of this sect.

Despite the ever-present threats to their position at home, the " orthodox caliphs " led the Muslim armies in a series of rapid and brilliant campaigns abroad. Their advance into Northern and Eastern Arabia brought them into contact with the Eastern Roman Empire on one side, and the Persian empire on the other. The forces of these two giants were exhausted by long warfare against one another, and within 6 years of Mohammed's death all Syria and

Iraq were tributary to Medina. Persia and Egypt were added in another 4 years, and by the time of the death of the third Caliph the Muslim conquests had been extended up to Tripoli.

After the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate, the Muslim forces were centred on Damascus. In the ~~East~~ east, their conquests encompassed Central Asia and what are now regions of the U.S.S.R. ( the area around Samarkand ) right up to Kabul and the Indus river. In the west, they included Morocco and the Iberian peninsula ( Spain and Portugal ), penetrating even to the southern part of France. All this took place before 750, that is, in less than 120 years after the death of the founder of Islam. But perhaps more remarkable than the speed of the conquests ~~was~~ is the orderly character of the campaigns. The structure of law and government which Mohammed had laid down enabled the Caliphs to make of the Bedouin tribes a disciplined army instead of a disorderly rabble. It is true that the Muslim armies were conscious of a definite moral superiority to the civilizations - considered either heathen or infidel - which they encountered, but by and large this did not lead them to leave a trail of ruin and destruction, nor to the making of conversions by the sword. At first Muslim dominion signified to the people of the conquered countries little more than a change of masters, since there was no interference with their traditions and social institutions. Gradually, however, a new integration of peoples and cultures took place, as Arab elements began to penetrate the old Hellenistic and Persian cultures. The Arab colonies were not merely garrison towns and headquarters of armies, but also centres from which the new religion was propagated.

Nor was this exchange one-way. The Umayyad Caliphs had their governmental centre at M Damascus ( though Medina remained the centre of Muslim religious learning ) and here Islam was influenced by the Hellenistic traditions of the Eastern Roman Empire. Although Islamic civilization was enriched by ~~this new infusion~~ this new infusion, it did ~~not~~ lead to a certain tension between religious and secular institutions, as also to the rise of a profusion of new sects and heresies, which weakened the foundations of the Umayyad caliphate and led to its downfall in 750.

The Umayyads had introduced into ~~Islam~~ the Islamic Caliphate the principle of hereditary succession, which was to hold until the abolition of the last Caliphate ( that of the Ottoman Turks in Constantinople ) in 1924. The Umayyad Caliphate with its capital at Damascus was followed by the Abbasid Caliphate with its capital at Baghdad, although another branch of the Umayyads ~~is~~ based at Cordova in Spain ruled there until 1031.

By the time of the Abbasid Caliphate, the first age of external conquest was over, and was succeeded by an age of internal development of Muslim civilization. The ninth and tenth centuries saw a tremendous development of industry, commerce, architecture and other arts as Persia, Iraq, Syria and Egypt made their individual contributions to ~~Islamic culture~~ the life of the Islamic people. The great diversity of cultures now within the Islamic fold had its effect on intellectual life as well : while religious studies continued in many different centres from Samarkand to Spain, literature and philosophy, drawing upon Greek, Persian and even Indian sources, broke out in new directions, often independent of orthodox Islam. The traditional " Muslim sciences " had been mainly Islamic history and Arabic philology: these were now expanded to include secular history and belles-lettres. Perhaps most significant of all was the influence of Greek thought. Greek medical and mathematical treatises were now translated, and their ideas developed by Persian and Arabic scholars, who specialized in algebra ( = Arabic " the compeller " ) , trigonometry and optics. Geography, astronomy, navigational and natural sciences also flourished. But while these sciences could exist alongside the religious culture without ~~affecting its radical~~ <sup>giving rise to basic conflicts,</sup> the influence of Greek logic and philosophy was more disturbing. The ulama saw its tradition of pure rationalism as a direct threat to the Faith, and this led to a determined effort to subordinate all intellectual thought to the authority of religion. This effort, where successful, had a restrictive effect upon Islamic intellectual life - those sciences which the orthodox could not use for their apologetics, such as mathematics and medicine, tended to be neglected. But it is

would be wrong to draw too black a picture of the stultifying pall of religious orthodoxy. The history of Islam saw many periods of great creative activity, as for instance in the Spain of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and even within the limits of the orthodox religious culture there was considerable intellectual development. The religious science which came to occupy the most prominent place was not theology, but law. Muslim law as it was developed went far deeper than Roman law, for it embraced all life, both human and divine. And apart from the intellectual exercises of the legists, Islamic law was the most powerful and effective agent in moulding the social law and the community life of the Muslim peoples. Because of its comprehensiveness, it exerted a steady pressure on all individual and social behaviour, setting a standard to which these conformed increasingly with the passage of time, in spite of the resistance of older laws and customs among the diverse cultures which had come to embrace Islam. The unity and uniformity of this legal system led to a striking convergence of social ideals and ways of life throughout the medieval Muslim world - at least in the Middle Eastern world. <sup>When we come</sup> ~~Turning~~ to the study of Islam in South-East Asia, it is important to bear in mind the central significance of the Law ( Fiqh ) to Islam, for it is in this area that the conflict between the new religion and older traditions - whether based on Indian religious and legalistic concepts or on the generally more powerful adat ( customary ) tradition - is most apparent.

At the end of the 10th century, the geographical area of Islam was but little wider than it had been in 750. But a great civilization had been built up, with a brilliant intellectual life, wealthy, with a considerable trade, and bound together by the authority of a supreme Law. But this Muslim civilization was to suffer much the same fate as the Roman Empire - a decline in military strength, leading to the domination of barbarians from beyond its frontiers. But again as in the case of the Roman Empire - and ~~size~~ of the central Chinese kingdom, over-run by barbarians at almost regular intervals - it imposed upon these barbarians its own religion, law, and civilization

These barbarians were Turkish tribesmen from Central Asia, who now penetrated into the settled lands of Persia and Iraq. Since the work of conversion to Islam had begun while they were still in their Central Asian homelands, the establishment of Turkish Sultanates in Western Asia made at first little outward difference to the life of the Muslim community. The change of masters did, however, lead to a fresh wave of military expansion, into Asia Minor, Negro Africa and into India. The establishment of Muslim power and the growth of communities of Muslims in India was to be of considerable importance for South-East Asia. A line of Turkish chieftains had established a powerful kingdom at Ghazni in Afghanistan, and in 1001 Mahmud of Ghazni embarked upon a policy of raiding the rich and divided kingdoms of India. A league of Indian princes was formed to contain these attacks, but their forces were unwieldy and disunited, and were defeated by the smaller but more mobile force of the invader. The whole of northern India lay open, and between 1001 and 1027 Mahmud made 17 great raids on the western part: palaces and temples were looted, and enormous caravans of booty and slaves were taken back to Ghazni. The raids reached as far as <sup>at Peshawar</sup> Athiawar and Bundelkhand, and the great cities of Kanyakubja and Mathura were captured and plundered.

Mahmud did not however remain in India, for though Muslim chroniclers depict him as a staunch propagator of Islam, intent on converting the infidel and bringing India within the fold of the true faith, his expeditions were for the purpose of plunder rather than for the establishment of political hegemony. But the N.-W. Frontier and the Punjab were annexed to his kingdom, ~~which~~ as were certain small Arab principalities which had existed in Sind since 712.

Northern India retained its independence for about a century and a half after Mahmud, but it was hopelessly divided. The various princes had learned no lesson from the raids: they were still incapable of effective co-ordination, and their armies were still slow and unwieldy. At the end of the 12th century the three chief princes of Northern India were in a state of tripartite war.

A new Turkish ruling house supplanted the line of Mahmud in Afghanistan. In 1173 one of its rulers, usually known as Muhammad of Ghor, conquered Ghazni and its possessions in Punjab and Sind, and then turned his attention to the Hindu states. The resistance was led by ~~Rath~~ Prthviraja (one of the three princes

referred to above ) who patched up the quarrels and led a coalition army against Muhammad in 1191. This time the invader was defeated, but he returned the following year with a larger force, and in the ensuing battle the Hindu army was defeated and Prithviraja himself killed. He is remembered to this day as a model of chivalry and courage, and commemorated in many folk traditions.

Muhammad returned to Afghanistan, leaving his work of conquest to his generals, who successively occupied Delhi, Bihar ( where many Buddhist monks were put to the sword ) and Bengal. In 1206 Muhammad was assassinated, and his general Qutb-ud-din, a freed slave, became the first of the Sultans of Delhi. In Rajasthan and other outlying districts Hindu kingdoms continued, while regions with sharply defined natural boundaries, such as Kashmir, Assam and Nepal, retained their autonomy. These regions had always been effectively independent of their nominal overlords of the plains, and in general remained outside the mainstream of Indian political history. From now until the 18th century, Muslim rulers dominated northern India. <sup>In</sup> The south, perhaps more important for the history of south-east Asia, Hindu kingdoms held sway throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and it was not until the end of the thirteenth century that the Deccan felt the force of Islam. In the reign of Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji of Delhi ( 1296 - 1315 ) a series of brilliant raids, led by the eunuch general Malik Kafur, a ~~converted~~ Hindu convert, crushed the Deccan kingdoms, and for a time a Muslim sultanate was set up even in Madurai, in the extreme south.

But Hindu power in the Deccan was not finally crushed, however, for within a few years of these raids, in 1336, a new kingdom was founded at Vijayanagara on the Tungabhadra river. This kingdom established its hegemony over the whole Peninsula from the Krsna river southwards. Learning something of military strategy from their Muslim enemies, the kings of Vijayanagar maintained their independence until the middle of the 16th century and in a reduced form even later. European

travellers ( the Italian Nicolo dei Conti, who visited India in the arly 15th century and two Portuguese travellers coming ~~from~~ to Vijauanagar about 100 years later from the newly established Portuguese settlement at Goa ) have left accounts of the wealth and splendour of the kingdom. After the reign of the great king Krsna Deva Raya ( 1509-1529 ), however, the succeeding rulers unwisely embroiled themselves in the rivalries of the Muslim sultanates to their north, and in 1565 the ruler of Vijayanagar was utterly defeated by a coalition of Muslim Sultans, his capital was mercillessly sacked, and the greatness of its empire at an end.

We have seen the role played by nomadic peoples in the expansion of Islam into India and elsewhere during this period. The incorporation of these nomadic elements into Islamic society presented certain problems. Islam, as remarked above, had grown up within an urban civilization, and from the time of Mohammed himself had had to struggle to subdue tribal neighbours. The early method of dealing with the Bedouin Arabs - seeking to force or beguile them into a settled life - was now no longer applicalbe on account of the far greater numbers involved. While the new Sultans and their immediate retinues usually conformed to the norms of the settled communities which they now governed - at least within 2 or 3 generations - they themselves were seldom able to maintain complete control over their nomadic or semi-nomadic followers. The process of the civilization of these elements was eventually carried out, not by the imposition of the sacred Law, but by a new spiritual force which had grown up within urban Islam.

By this time most of the heretical and subversive movements which had been imported into Islam from the diverse cultures incorporated ~~into~~ by the Muslim conquests of Egypt, Persia, etc, had been extinguished. This did not, however, mean an end to spiritual movements. Now the devotional feeling of certainl sections of the community - mostly, it seems, urban artisans.- outside the circle of the guardians of the Law, found expression in various types of mysticism, for which the ~~Muslim~~ Arabic name is Sufism. This develooment too met with opposition from the orthodox, and with some persecution. It remained informal and personal for a considerable time, and only after some centuries of growth began to

organize itself into institutional forms. They mystics, whether as individuals or as members of organized brotherhoods (tarīqas) were the leaders in the task of conversion among the pagans and the superficially Islamized tribes. The most successful missions were often those of co-nationals of the tribesmen, uncouth or illiterate as they sometimes were. They laid the foundations upon which in later generations the refining influences of orthodox law and theology could be brought to bear.

This activity has some parallels with the work of the ~~monastic~~ <sup>Catholic</sup> organizations in Northern and Central Europe, but the missionary activity of the Muslims was peculiarly individual and unregulated. The Sufi movement was never fully co-ordinated with the orthodox scholastic organization, but always maintained its independence - at times, indeed, there was outright antagonism between the two branches. There was no central authority to bring them together - the Caliphate cannot be equated with the Papacy, for from Umayyad times onwards the theologians and legists had refused to concede ~~it~~ to it the authority to define orthodox dogma. Among the independent Muslim rulers, many resented any interference either by the Caliphs or by the orthodox scholars and legists of Mecca or Medina, and preferred their own spiritual directors, many of whom were Sufis. From the tenth century, the Muslim states diverged more and more from the path ~~laid~~ laid down by the Muslim theorists. They developed ethics of their own, often owing much to non-Muslim Islamic traditions. The legists waged an unceasing battle against this development, but on the whole unsuccessfully. Apart from the business of government, the personal life of the governing classes began to diverge ~~more and more~~ in many cases rather widely from the Muslim ideal. The middle classes in general, on the other ~~hand, continued to accept~~ <sup>hand, continued to accept</sup> the Muslim ideal - though it was an ideal increasingly coloured by the teachings of the Sufis.

A series of disasters which followed one another in Western Asia ~~in~~ in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries once again made alien tribes the dominating power in the Muslim world. A first invasion of heathen Mongols devastated the north-eastern provinces between 1220 and 1225. The second wave occupied Persia and Iraq, put an end to the historic Caliphate of Baghdad in 1258, and made the whole eastern Muslim world - with the exception of Egypt,

Arabia and Syria - tributary to the vast Mongol empire. The remnants were saved by a military cast, the Mamluks, descended from Turkish and Kipchak slaves, who seized political power in Egypt. Under Mamluk rule the old Arabic Muslim civ. continued for some 2 and a half centuries to flourish in the material arts ( esp. in architecture and metalwork ), but with a gradual decay of intellectual vigour.

Meanwhile, a revived and in some respects brilliant Muslim civ. grew up in the Mongol dominions. It too excelled in architecture and the fine arts, inc. that of miniature painting. Spiritually it was rooted in Sufism. In spite of 2 ~~virulent plagues~~ <sup>great plagues</sup> " and the destructive campaigns of Timur ( Tamurlane ) in the fourteenth century, which reduced Persia itself to a state of exhaustion, Persian culture moulded the intellectual life of the new Islamic empires that were growing up on each side - in Turkey and in India.

The expansion of the Ottoman Empire in Asia and North Africa and the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India in the 16th cent. brought the greater part of the Muslim world once more under the government of powerful and highly centralized civil states. A marked feature of both Empires was the emphasis on orthodoxy and the sacred Law. Church and state were not unified, since the military and civil polity was constructed on indep. non-Islamic lines, but re-inforced one another in an alliance which lasted into the 19th cent.

Yet the mystic stream of Muslim intellectual life continued to broaden. The seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw the apogee of the Sufi brotherhoods. The greater orders spread a network of congregations from end to end of the Islamic world, while smaller local orders and sub-orders grouped the members of different classes and occupations into compact communities. Apart from this, Islamic culture both under the Ottomans and in India tended to live on the heritage of the past, preserving, but scarcely adding to, its intellectual inheritance. The Muslim establishment directed itself primarily to the task of unifying and stabilizing Muslim society according to accepted standards. The measure of unity achieved is indeed striking : the one notable exception was Persia, where

the Shi'ite doctrines were revived and established as the state religion.

The eighteenth century was a time of decline for both the Mughals and the Ottomans. The Mughal state was undermined by the Mahrattas, and its sway finally ended by the establishment of British power. The Ottomans lingered longer the empire was - ~~they were~~ known in the 19th century as "the sick man of Europe" - and finally, having lost the Arab lands in the 1st W.W. ( Lawrence of Arabia ) the Turkish people were reduced to a smaller ~~and~~ but more homogeneous political unit consisting of the lands of Anatolia and Eastern Thrace.

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The result of this expansion over 13 cents. is that Islam is today the dominant religion in a wide belt of territory which extends across N. Africa and Western Asia up to the Pamir. mountains and thence e' wards through Central Asia into China proper ( its spread in this country is still shrouded in obscurity ) and s'wards into Pakistan. In India it is only c. 1/10th of the pop. but it becomes dominant again in the Malay Pen. and through the chain of the Indon. islands, tapering away in the Phils. On the e' w'n coast of the Indian Oc. it extends down a narrow strip of the African coast to Zanzibar and Tanganyika, w. discontinuous groups continuing into S. Africa. In Europe Muslim communities exist in most of the Balkan countries and in the s'n U.S.S.R. - also few M.E.'n immigrants in N. and S. America ( now also Turks in Aust. )

Of all the gt. religions, Islam embraced, prior to Xian missionary activity in the 19th cent., the gtest diversity of races. Originating among Arabs and other Semitic peoples, it spread among Persians, Caucasians, Mediterranean Europes, Slavs, Turks, Tartars, Chinese, Indians, Indonesians, Bantus and W. African Negroes. Its numerical strength at the present day is difficult to estimate because of unreliable population estimates for many of the regions concerned, but the following figures ~~will give~~, though approximate, will give some idea of the situation : ~~the~~ about 115,000,000 for ~~the~~ the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent ( the majority of course being in Pakistan ) and ~~about~~ somewhat more than 90,000,000 for Malaysia and Indonesia; between 70 and 75 million for the Arabic-speaking lands; some 20 mill. in Persia and 12 mill. in Afghanistan; 25 mill. in Turkey. The size of the Muslim communities in the Asiatic territories of the U.S.S.R. , in Chinese

Turkestan and in China proper is particularly difficult to estimate, but there are at least 30 mill. There are also some 35,000 Muslims in Negro and East Africa, and about 3 million in the Balkans and South Russia. "In all, therefore, Islam may claim some 400 mill. adherents, or about one seventh of the total estimated pop. of the world.

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