

Name _____

Date _____

Islamic Empires

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Through the Middle Ages, in parts of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, various Islamic peoples were building impressive societies. There were the Turks, whose massive Ottoman Empire rose to power in 1299; the Mughals, who ruled India; and the Safavids in present-day Iran. These groups all shared the Muslim faith and, taken together, comprised the Muslim empires (or empires of Islam). These new imperial powers were marked by a close relationship between government and religion. They prospered throughout the Middle Ages, but by the end of the 19th century, all three had declined significantly. By the early 20th century, the last Islamic empire collapsed with the defeat of the Ottomans in World War I.

Which of the following was not a Muslim empire:

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| A. Mughal | B. Shiite |
| C. Ottoman | D. Safavid |
2. According to the Muslim faith, in about the year 610, the angel Gabriel visited Muhammad. He told Muhammad that he was a prophet of God, or "Allah" in Arabic. Muhammad told people in his hometown, Mecca (present-day Saudi Arabia), about this experience. Mecca's rulers didn't like what he was saying, so they kicked him out. Muhammad moved to Medina, and he and his followers began spreading their faith to nomadic tribes and ambushing caravans from Mecca. Finally, he rode back into Mecca and faced little resistance. He had become a religious prophet and political leader. Islam spread very quickly under the leadership of Muhammad. He combined military conquest with strategies that made it desirable in society to join the faith.

What was the difference between Muhammad's experience in Mecca around the year 610 and his experience when he returned to Mecca from Medina years later?

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| A. At first, he was welcomed as a prophet, and when he returned, he was shunned. | B. At first, his ideas were just becoming popular, and when he returned, he was fully embraced as a religious and political leader. |
| C. At first, the rulers of Mecca completely ignored him, and when he came back, the rulers were angry. | D. When he first went to Mecca, he was kicked out, and when he returned, he and his ideas were welcomed. |

3. The idea of the separation of church and politics was not a key principle for Muslims. Their religious leaders were (and often still are) their political leaders as well. This dates all the way back to the founding of the faith under Muhammad, who was both the spiritual and political leader of the Muslims. When he died in 632, the next leader was called a caliph, which means successor or representative. Caliphs were both the head of government and the head of the Islamic faith. One of the most famous caliphs was Harun al-Rashid (763-809). Rashid's reign was characterized by a great artistic and intellectual growth. Some say he is the hero in many of the stories in **The Thousand and One Nights**, a collection of Middle Eastern and Indian stories.

Which of these best describes the Muslim view of the relationship between religion and politics?

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| A. Politicians should not be involved in religion. | B. Religious leaders should not be involved in politics. |
| C. Religion and politics do not need to be separated. | D. None of the above. |

4. There are two major sects of Islam, or groups with different beliefs: the Sunnis and the Shias, or Shiites. The split between Sunni and Shia Muslims goes back to 661, when the fourth caliph after Muhammad, a man named Ali, was killed. A big disagreement ensued about who should be the next caliph. Sunnis believed that the first four caliphs, or heirs to Muhammad, were his rightful successors. Their descendants ruled the Arab world until after World War I. The Shias were (and still are) a smaller group. They thought that only one of those first four caliphs was legitimate—the one named Ali—and only his heirs should rule. It might seem like a small difference, but it meant that these people were telling their rulers, "You don't have the right to rule us." There is still a lot of tension between these two sects today.

Which of these is the key difference between Sunnis and the Shias?

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| A. Sunnis believe that the first four caliphs were Muhammad's rightful successors, while the Shias believe that only Ali was legitimate and only his heirs should rule. | B. Sunnis believe that a caliph should be the leader of the Muslim religion, while Shias believe that a caliph should only lead the government. |
| C. Sunnis believe that only Ali and his heirs should rule, while Shias believe that the first four caliphs were Muhammad's rightful successors. | D. Sunnis believed that the first four caliphs were Muhammad's rightful successors, while the Shias believed that the first three caliphs were Muhammad's rightful successors. |

5. The Seljuks were a Muslim dynasty of Oghuz Turkic descent that invaded southwestern Asia in the 11th century. They were nomads who decided to settle down in Persia (now Iran). They conquered what is now Iraq, and by 1070, they had moved to take what is today Syria and parts of the Byzantine Empire. The Seljuks fought challenges from the Mongols and other peoples before finally falling around 1200. Out of the ashes of the Seljuk kingdom rose the Ottoman Empire, founded by one of the last Seljuk kings, Osman. Around 1299, he began expanding his empire toward Europe. The Ottomans conquered Greece in 1352. In 1453, they took the seat of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople, which they renamed Istanbul. By 1517, they assumed control of Egypt on the African continent. Ottoman sultans maintained a forceful presence on the edge of Europe through the 1920s.

Which of the following best describes the expansion of the Ottoman Empire?

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| A. The Ottoman Empire was based in Persia, and its territory was contained to what the Seljuks had conquered before it. | B. The Ottoman Empire was able to take parts of Europe but never had territory on the African continent. |
| C. The Ottoman Empire was based in Persia, and eventually included Britain and Germany. | D. The Ottoman Empire expanded to parts of Europe and North Africa, including Greece and Egypt. |
6. The Islamic empires also spread through North Africa and later conquered Spain. The meeting of Arab and African peoples resulted in Swahili, which is both a language and a culture. The language itself is based in African Bantu, but it incorporates a lot of Arabic terms, probably because the Swahili people were Muslims and read the Qur'an. In Spain and other parts of Europe, Muslims were called Moors. The Muslims in Spain ruled a strong state that, some say, far exceeded the rest of Europe when it came to education, technological advances and philosophies. Christians and Jews were free to practice their respective religions, as long as they paid a special tax called Jizya. The Moors were centered in southern Spain in Andalusia. Their rule came to an end in 1492 when Christian leaders took control of Granada.

Which of the following statements is true of the Moors' rule of Spain?

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| A. The Moors made many notable technological and education advances. | B. The Moors forced Christians and Jews and to convert to Islam |
| C. The Moors made Swahili the national language. | D. The Moors rule ended when in 1792 when Christian leaders gained control. |

7. Mosques are the places of worship of Islam. Ancient Mosques can be found throughout the world wherever Muslim people gathered. One very famous mosque is the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Muslims believe that it was the place where Muhammad ascended into Paradise. The most distinctive features of mosques are their domes and minarets, the tall towers from which religious officials call Muslims to prayer. Muslims were required to pray toward Mecca, so they had to have a good sense of direction. Luckily, there was a tool that helped them orient themselves in the world. They borrowed the Greek astrolabe, a device used to determine the position of celestial objects like the sun, figure out prayer times and orient mosques and people toward Mecca. This device soon changed the world because it allowed sailors to navigate using the stars, which led to the great age of sea exploration.

Muslims traditionally pray

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| A. in churches that are oriented towards Jerusalem. | B. in synagogues that have no towers. |
| C. in mosques that have minarets. | D. in mosques that are oriented towards Medina. |

8. Despite some instances of hatred, misunderstanding and ignorance that exist today between Jews, Christians and Muslim, all three groups are closely related. The three religions are monotheistic, meaning they worship only one god. Additionally, Jesus and Moses are both prophets in the Qur'an.

Which of the following best describes the relationship between Islam, Christianity and Judaism?

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| A. Judaism is a polytheistic religion, unlike Islam and Christianity, which are monotheistic. | B. The three religions are very different, and there are no overlapping stories or figures in their religious texts. |
| C. The three religions share a belief in one god, and Jesus and Moses are part of the Qur'an. | D. All three religions see Muhammad as the son of God. |