

Chapter Seven: Abbasid Decline and the Spread of Islam to South and Southeast Asia



Remember . . .

Beginnings of Islam

- Islam rapidly spreads because of its ability to transcend tribal and regional divisions in Arabia
 - Spreads through military expansion of Islamic empire
- Sunni Muslims become the majority; support Abu Bakr
- The Rightly Guided Caliphs sometimes struggle but ultimately establish Muslim control
- Umayyads conquer many and expand, but lose legitimacy through extravagant lifestyles, and Abbasids rebel and overthrow them.

Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258)

- Capital at Baghdad
- Mid-9th c.: Abbasids began to lose control over vast empire
 - Caliphs grew dependent on advisors, who increased their power.
 - Luxurious living and many civil wars drained the treasury → increasing taxes → peasant revolts.
 - Shi'a revolts, assassination attempts against Abbasids
- Increase in mercenary armies (professional soldiers hired to serve in an army).
 - Aggressive; create social unrest; expensive.
- Caliphs attempted to build new cities and modernize old ones (extremely expensive)



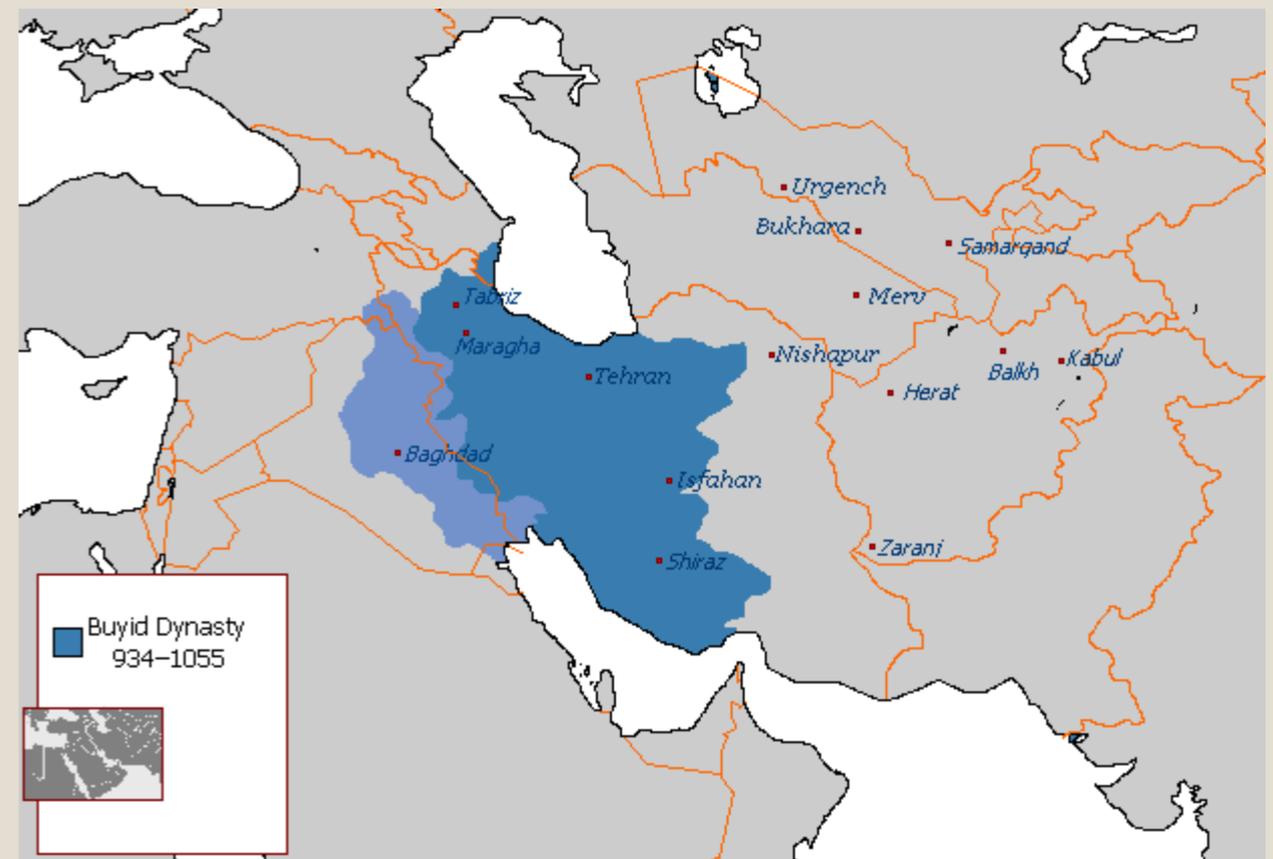
Women in Abbasid Caliphate

- Initially, women were not required to wear veils and were not secluded.
- During Abbasid period, freedom and influence of women declined: harems seclude women.
 - Abbasidian society was patriarchal and polygamous, provided husband can care for them equally.
 - Women began to be veiled: shield women from gaze of men
 - Abbasid wealth generated large demand for concubines and female slaves.



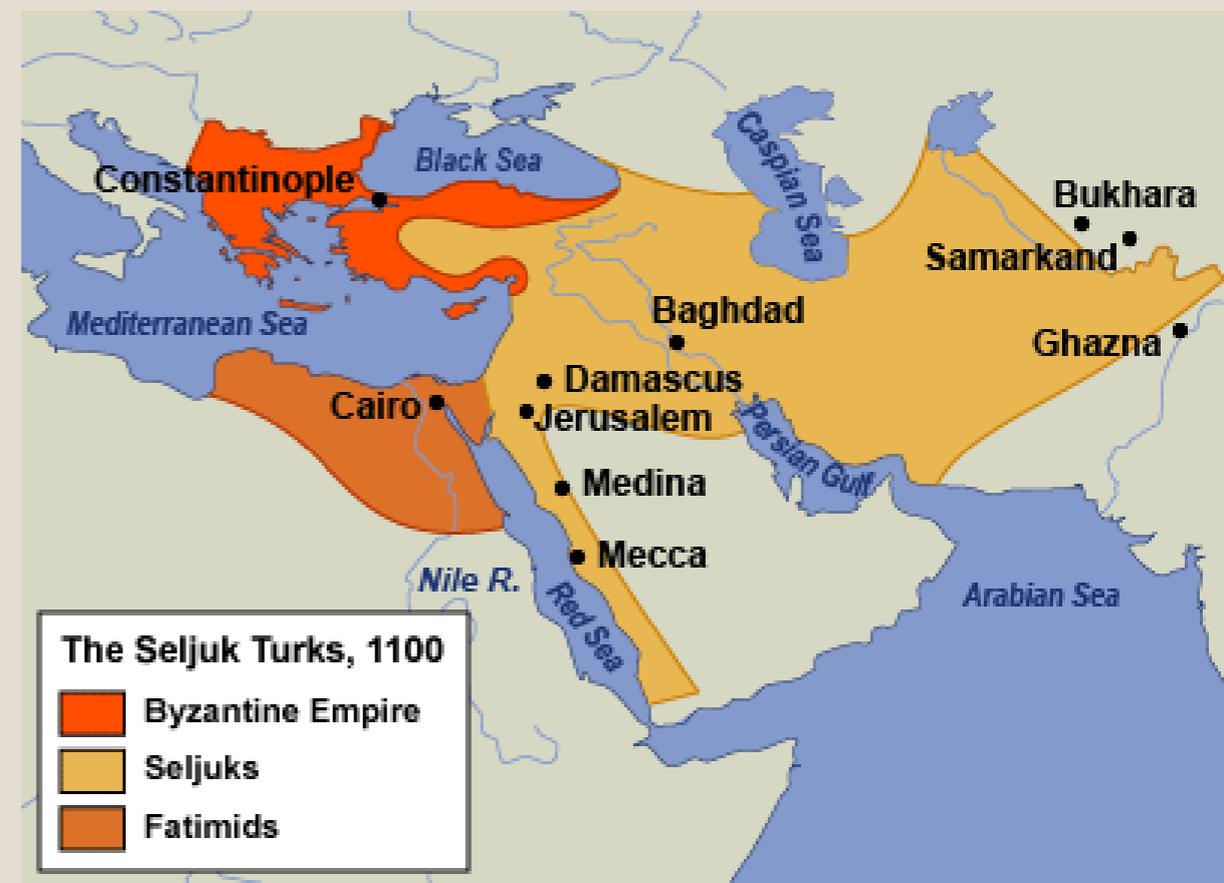
Buyids of Persia (945 - 1055)

- Abbasids' difficulties in managing vast empire lead to a loss of territory and loss of control in outer reaches of empire.
- Independent kingdoms (ex: Buyids of Persia) form with the aim to supplant Abbasids
- The Buyids of Persia captured Baghdad in 945 CE.
 - Buyids are Shi'a and reject the Sunni ideas of the Abbasids
- Abbasid caliphs became powerless and were controlled by Buyid sultans ("victorious")



Seljuk Turks (1055-1153)

- In one century, Buyid control is broken by the Seljuk Turks in 1055 CE.
 - Seljuks were Muslim nomadic invaders from Central Asia
 - Seljuks were staunch Sunnis; eliminated Shi'a Buyid sultans and eradicated Buyid influence
- Seljuks were – briefly – successful rulers
 - Defeated Byzantine forces
 - Saladin: successful ruler who fought Western Crusaders and recaptured most of Holy Land from European hands



Quick Review Question

What leads to the decline of Abbasid power? What two groups are involved in the weakening of Abbasidian power?

The Crusades

(1095-1289)

- 1095 CE: West European Christian crusaders invaded Muslim territory with the goal of capturing the Holy Land (June 1099)
- Abbasid chaos from Buyid and Seljuk invasions in empire makes Crusader invasion simple
- Saladin: leads Muslim opposition to Crusaders in Holy Land (12th c.)
- Cultural result of Crusades: Europeans recover lost Greek learning preserved by Muslim civilizations. Muslims, on the other hand, are mostly uninterested in European civilization.



Islamic Golden Age

- Political decline and social turmoil contrast with the urban affluence, inventiveness, expanding trade and intellectual/artistic creativity of the Abbasid Age.
- Increase in trade and intellectual creativity
- Schools, libraries, and institutes are created in large numbers by the 12th century (Cairo, Baghdad, Córdoba)
 - House of Wisdom in Baghdad established by Harun al-Rashid, 5th Abbasid caliph
- Ancient Greek, Roman, and Persian knowledge is preserved by Muslims.



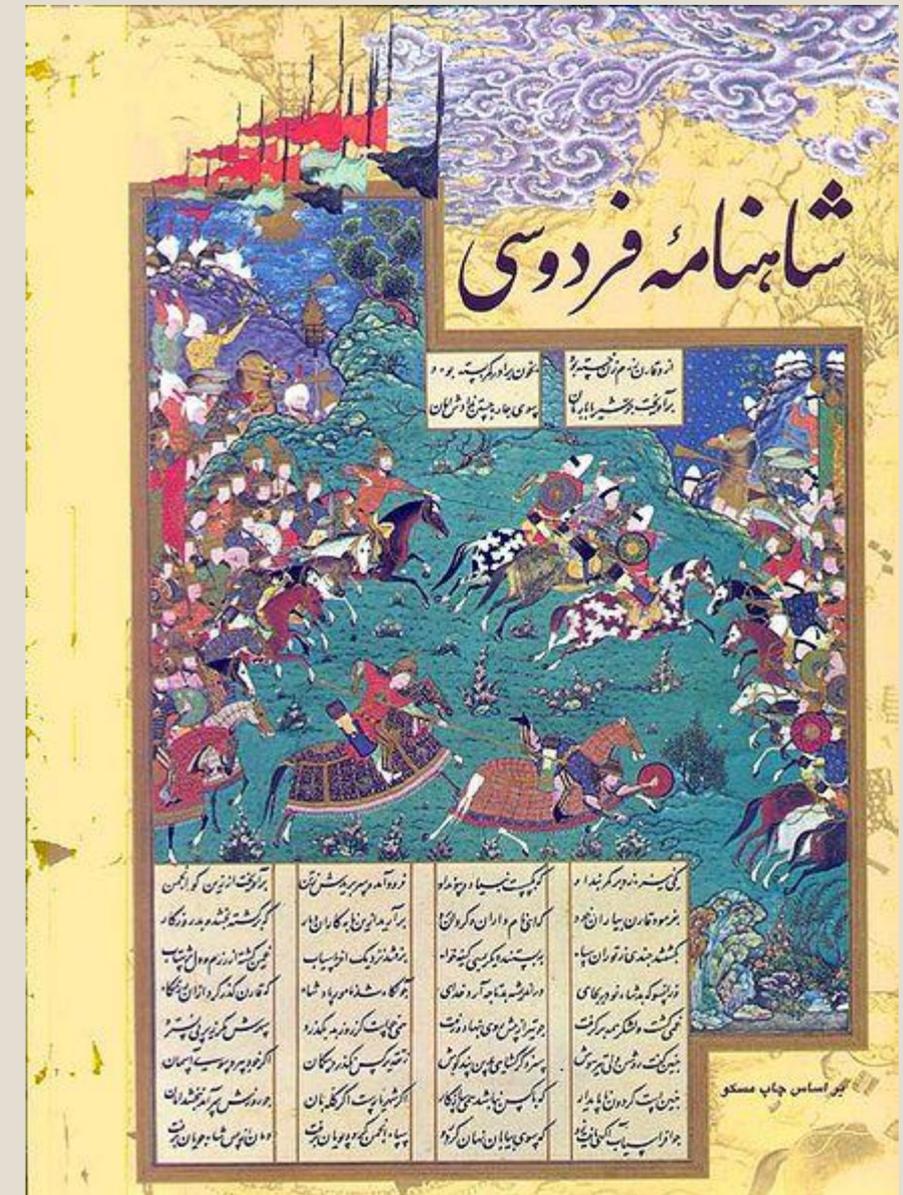
Islamic Golden Age: Math and Science

- Math: Algebra, trigonometry, geometry are strengthened.
 - Indian system of numbers is brought to Middle East by caravan traders
- Science: Improved astronomical instruments, medicine, hospitals
 - Interest in astronomy: refined astrolabe: measures position of stars
 - Optics; human anatomy
- Papermaking (Battle of Talas, 751)
- Scholars made some of the world's best maps: knowledge of seas and coastlines



Islamic Golden Age: Literature and Art

- Persian replaced Arabic as the language of Abbasid court and of “high culture,” as Arabic became the language of religion, law and the natural sciences.
- Great literary tradition emerges in this period
 - Firdawsi’s epic poem, *Shah-Nama*, a history of Persia from creation to Islamic conquest
 - *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*
- Calligraphy and arabesques illustrated poetry and writing.
- Architecture: minarets were built atop mosques

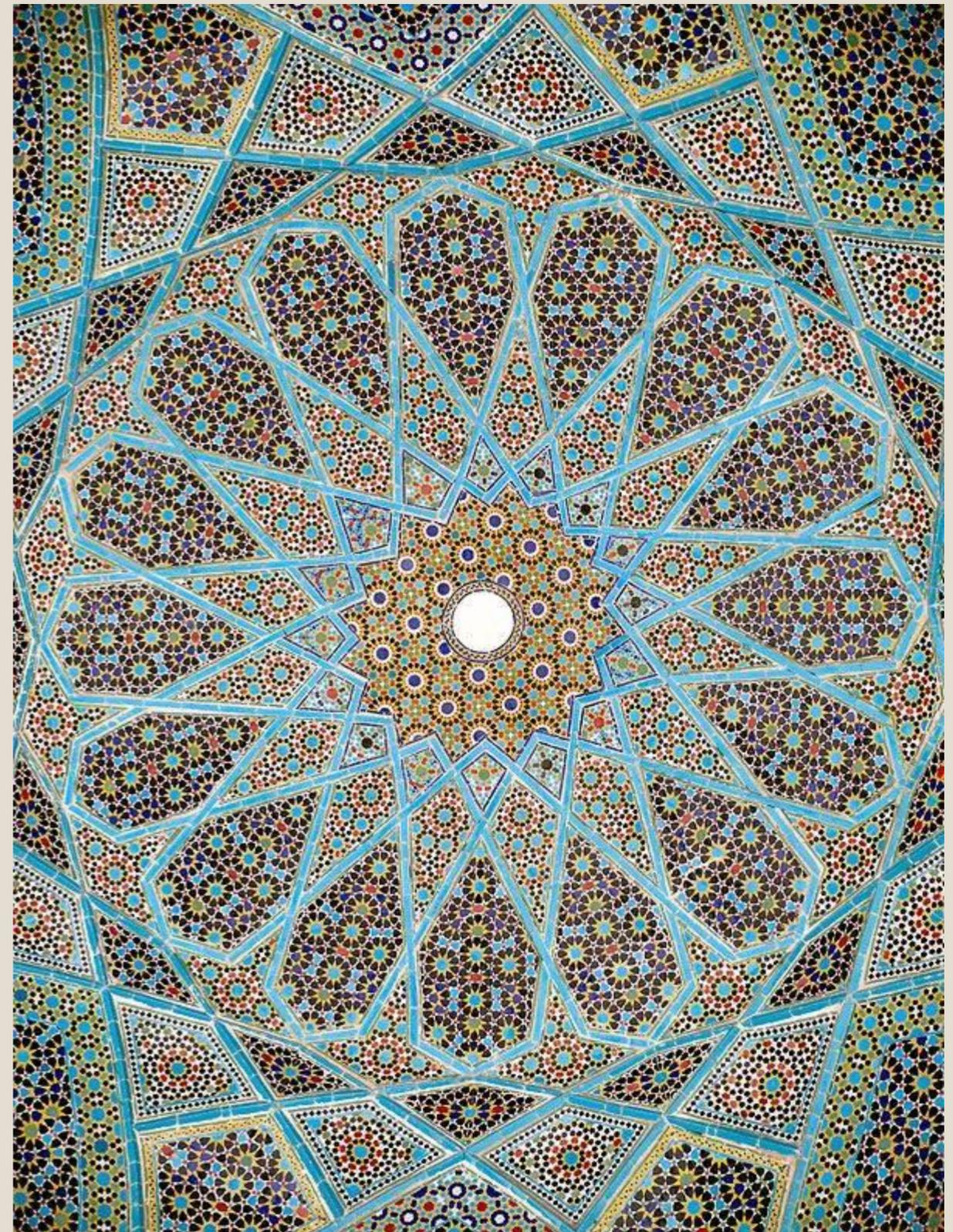


Quick Review Question

Why is the Islamic Golden Age so remarkable?
What are some cultural innovations from this period?

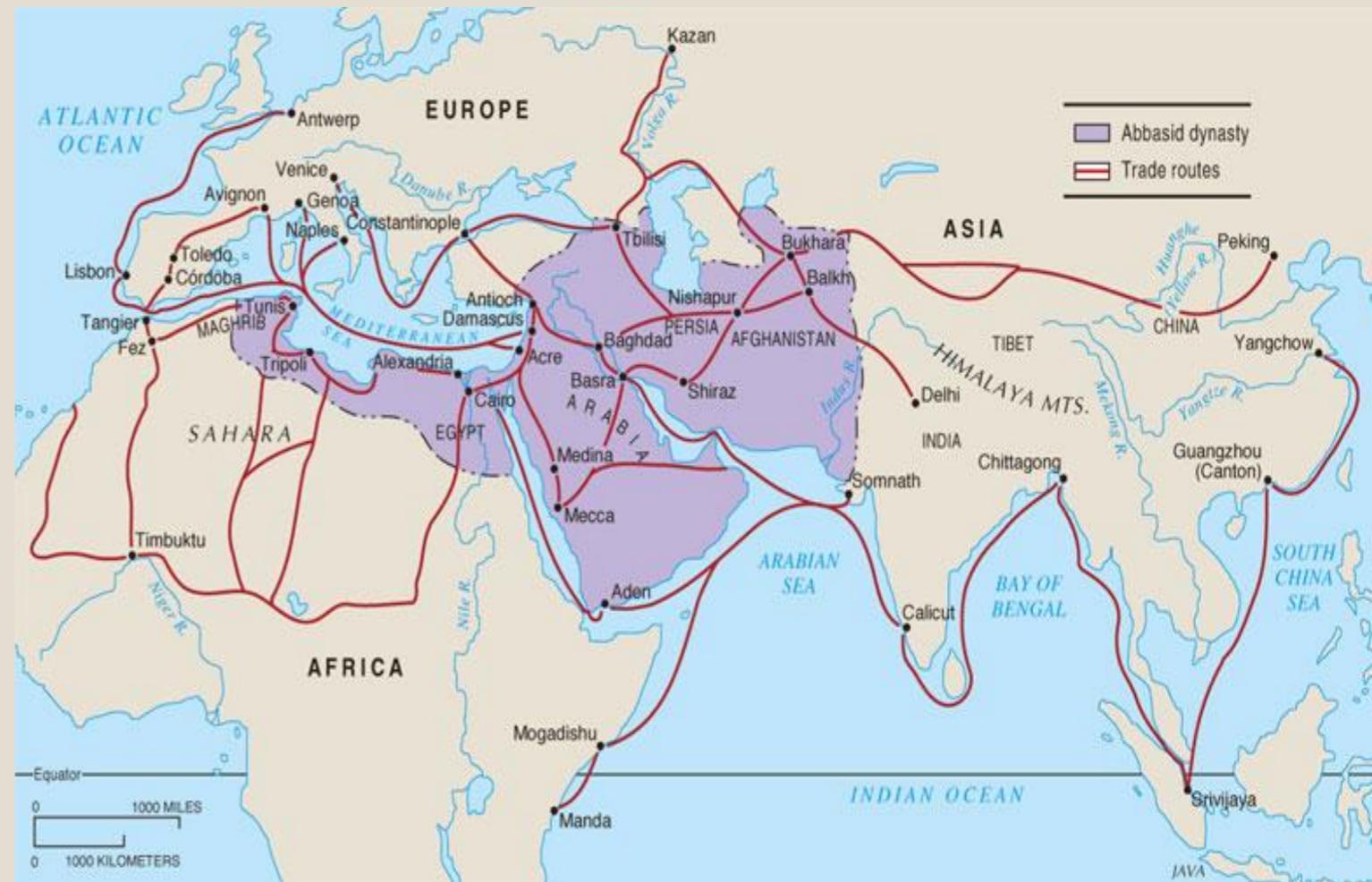
New Groups of Muslims

- Ulama (religious scholars) became more conservative and suspicious of non-Muslim influences and scientific thought
 - Disliked Muslims utilizing Greco-Roman knowledge; associated it with the aggressive Crusader culture
- Sufis are interested in mysticism, sought personal union with Allah through asceticism, meditation, songs, dancing or drugs.
 - Gained reputations as healers and miracle workers.



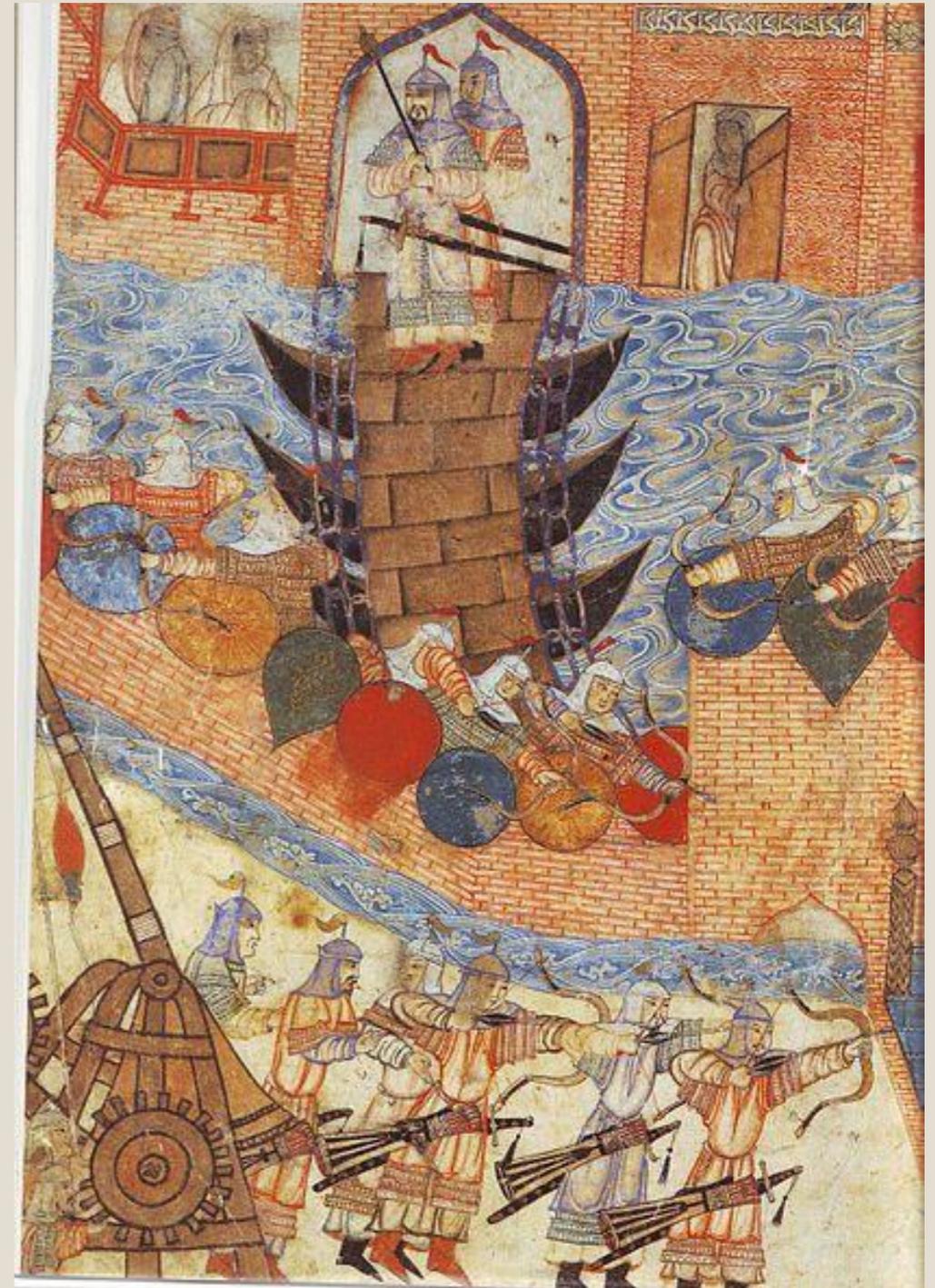
Islamic Trade

- Rapid urban growth and prosperity, which lasted until late in the Abbasid era
- The spread of Islam helps to create trade connections between various regions.
- Merchants remained wealthy; long-distance trade flourished from western Mediterranean to China
- Artists created mosques, palaces, tapestries, rugs, bronzes, jewelry, ceramics



The End of the Abbasids: 1258

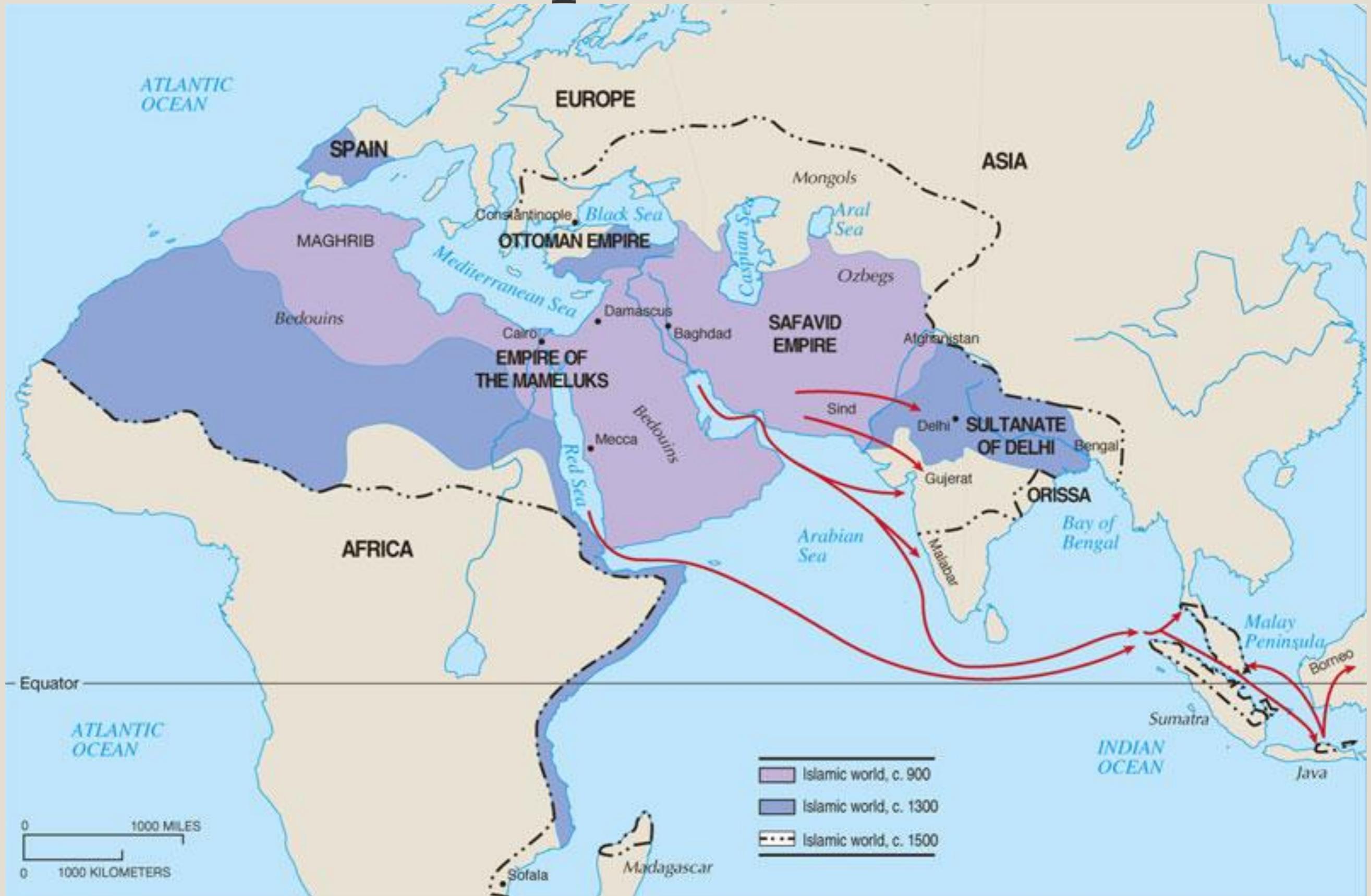
- Mongols (Central Asian nomadic invaders) were a threat to Islamic lands
- Ghengis Khan destroyed the Arabic kingdoms east of Baghdad in 1220s
 - His grandson, Hulegu, continued the assault in 1250s on Baghdad
- 1258 CE: Last Abbasid caliph (37th) was executed when Baghdad was invaded by the Mongols.



Quick Review Question

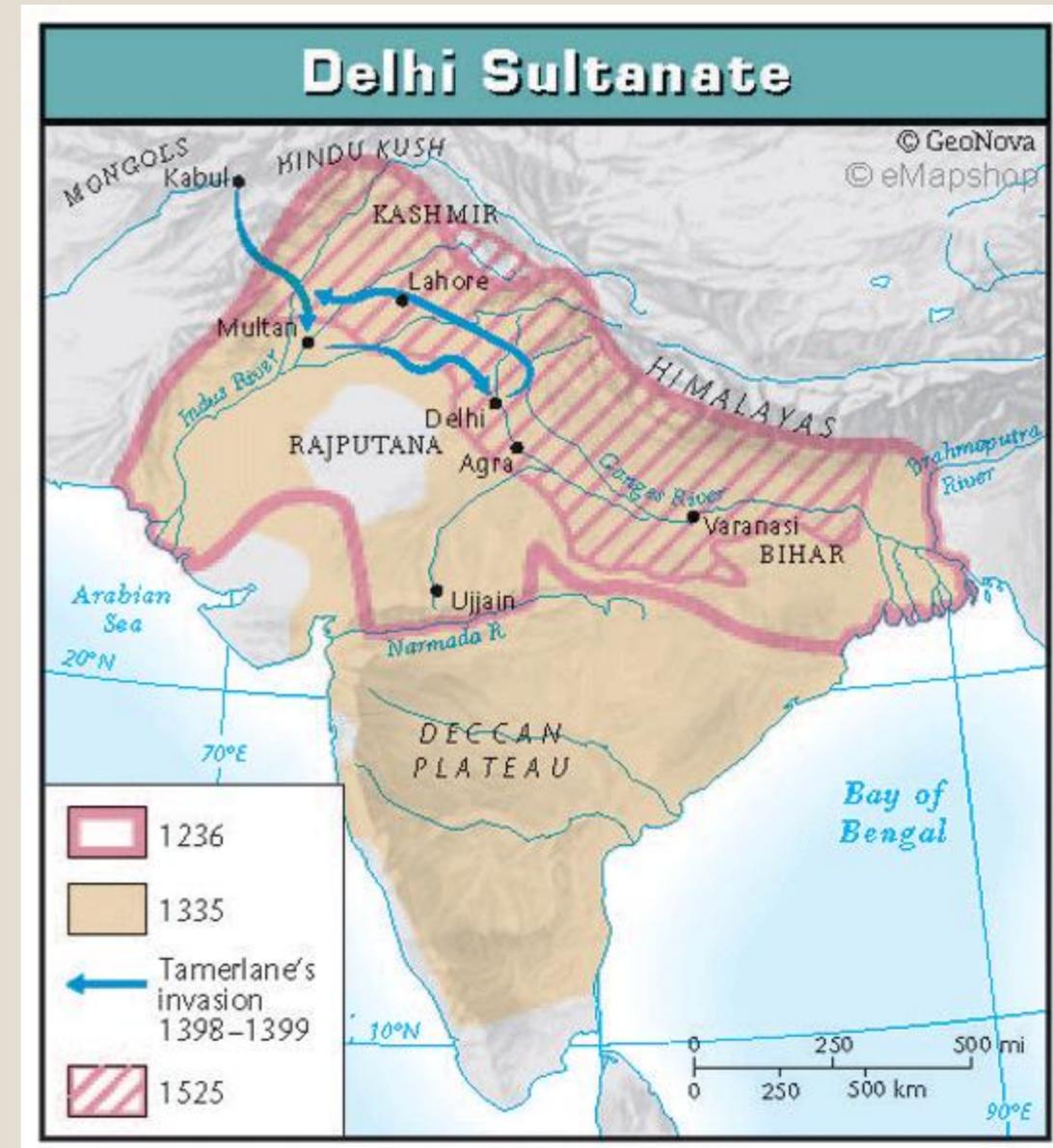
What two new groups of Muslims emerge during the Post-Classical period?

Islam Spreads to India



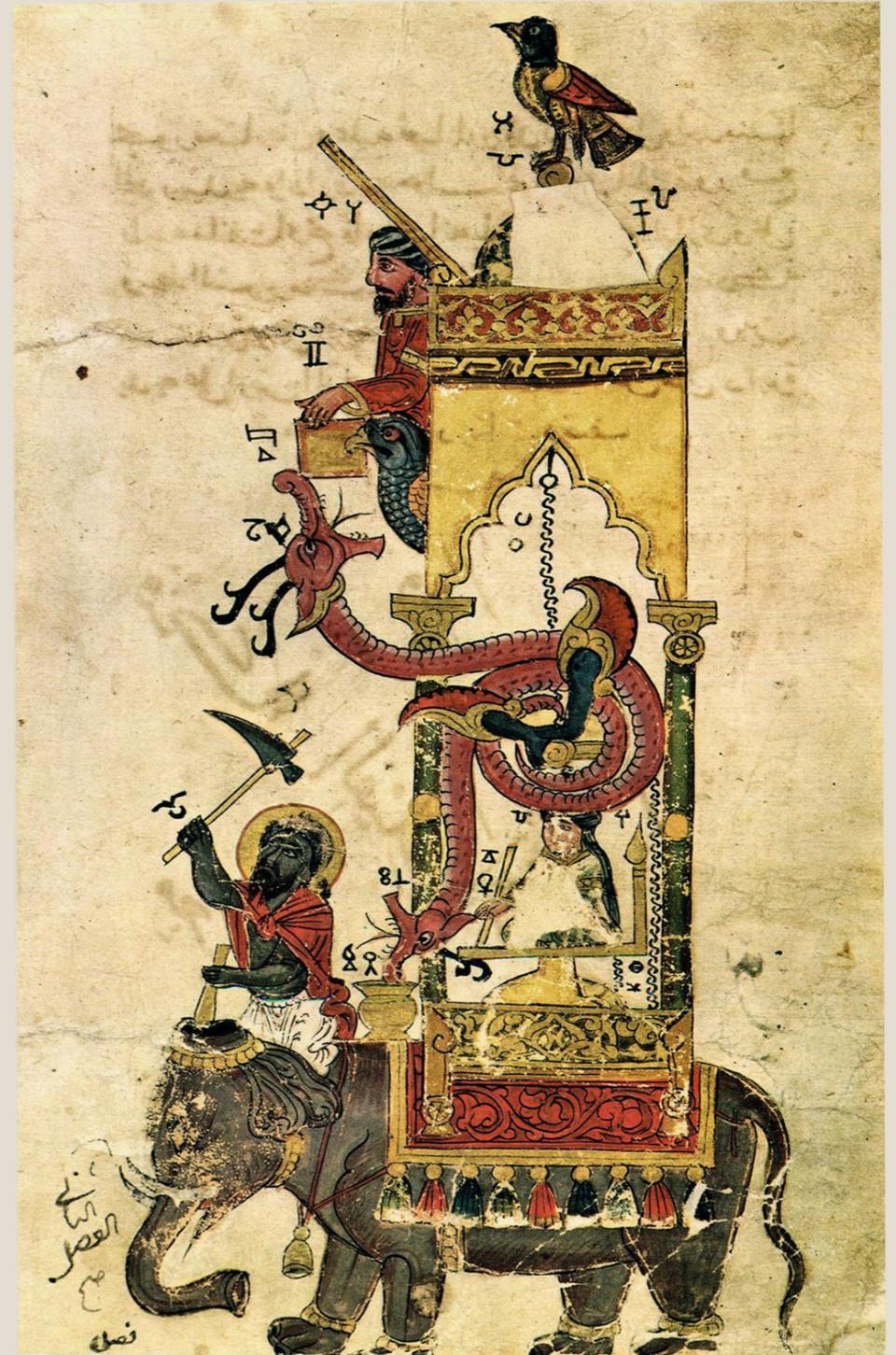
Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526)

- 7th century: Muslim invaders and traders carry Islamic civilization to India
 - 711: Sind in western India conquered
- 1170s: Indus River Valley conquered by Muhammad of Ghur
- 1206: creation of Delhi Sultanate, an Islamic state in the Indus River Valley and north-central India
 - Led by Sultan Wutbu I-din Aibak
 - Muslim rulers governed Hindu subjects, employ Hindus to govern over small communities
 - Although the Delhi Sultanate is militarily powerful, it does not establish a strong government in India



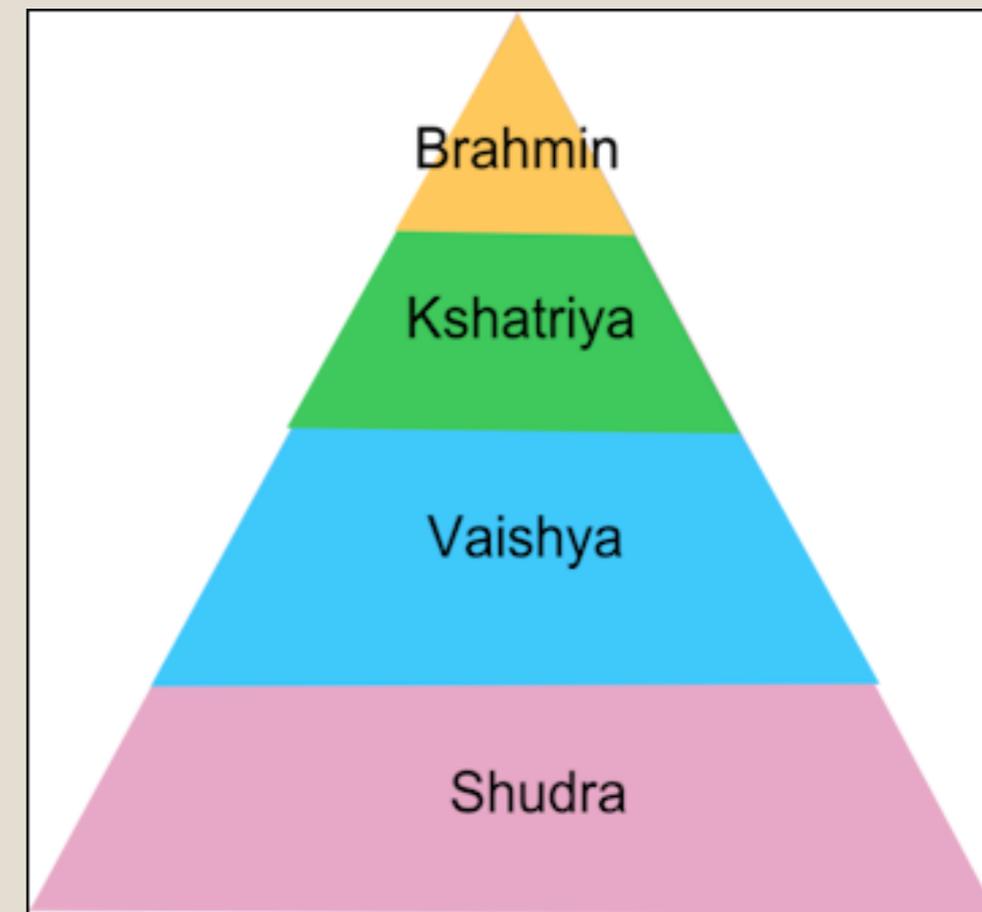
Islam in India

- Islamic civilization was enriched by Indian culture, while Indian achievements were passed to Arabs
- Muslims came as conquerors but interactions with Indians were generally peaceful via Sufi mystics and traders
- Additionally, colonies of Arab traders settled along India's coasts, and adopted local customs
 - Provided staging points for Islamic expansion to Southeast Asia.
 - Muslim communities adopted many Indian ways
 - Attempts were made to bridge the gaps between Islam and Hinduism.



Hinduism vs. Islam

- High-caste Hindus did not accept Muslims as equals and did not want to give up their caste spots to Muslims.
- Low-caste Hindus and untouchables liked the equality of Islam.
- Muslim Ulama stressed the incompatibility of Islam's principles with Hindu beliefs.
- Islam succumbs to the caste system; could not eradicate it. Hindus maintain dominance in the system.
- Majority of population in India remained Hindu, and India became the least converted of all regions where Islam spreads.



Hinduism vs. Islam

	Hinduism	Islam
Religion	Open, tolerant, polytheistic, inclusive of widely varying forms of religion, no emphasis on proselytizing	Unflinchingly monotheistic, proselytizing
Society	Rigid caste system	Egalitarian (all equal under God)

There were conversions though, and many were peaceful; Buddhists were the most numerous converts to Islam. WHY?

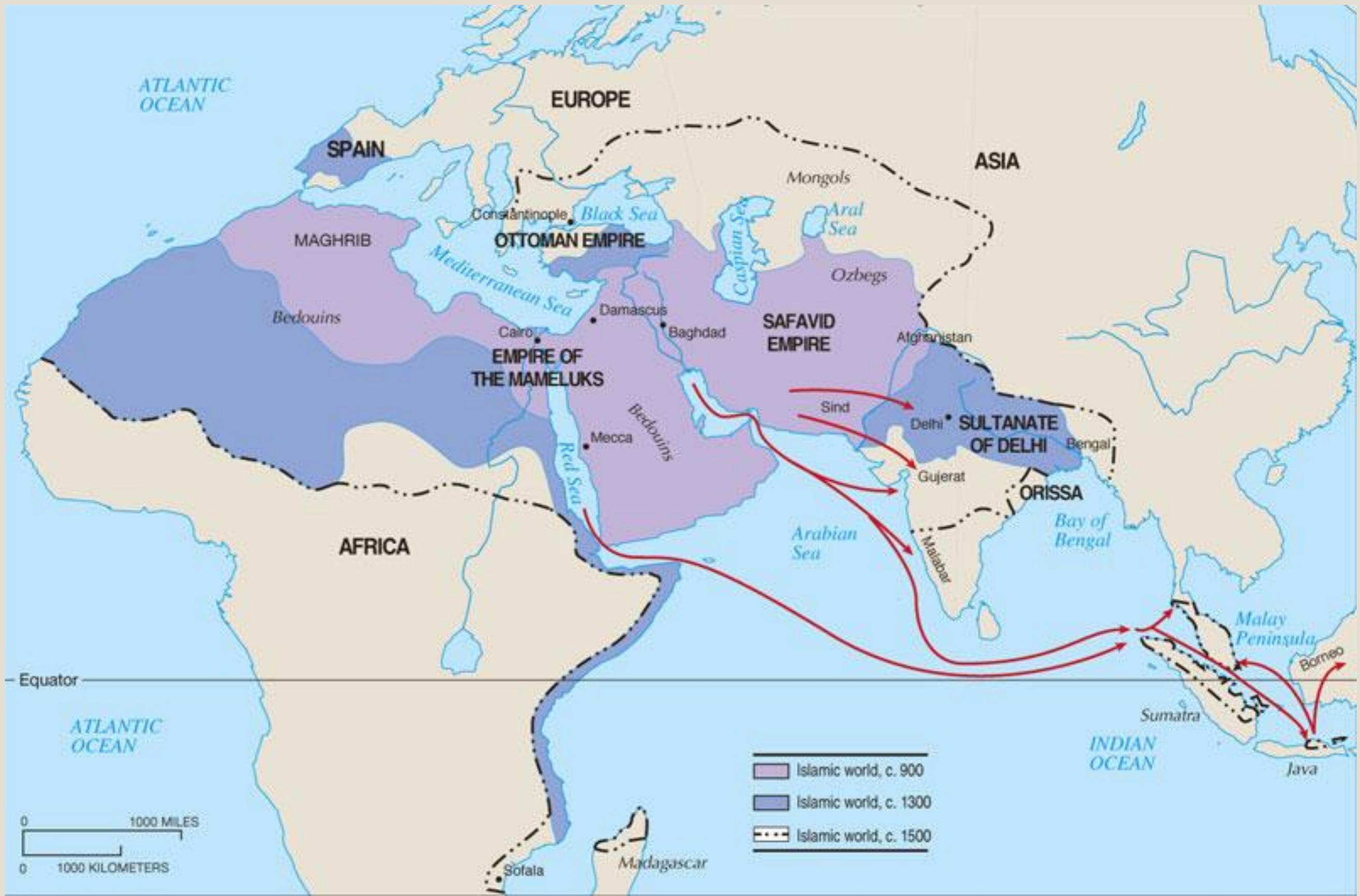
	Buddhism	Islam
Religion	Open, tolerant of other religions, multiple forms of Buddha, proselytizing	Unflinchingly monotheistic, proselytizing
Society	Belief that individuals are equal; renounces caste	Egalitarian (all equal under God)

Quick Review Question

Why is Islam ultimately incompatible with
Hinduism?

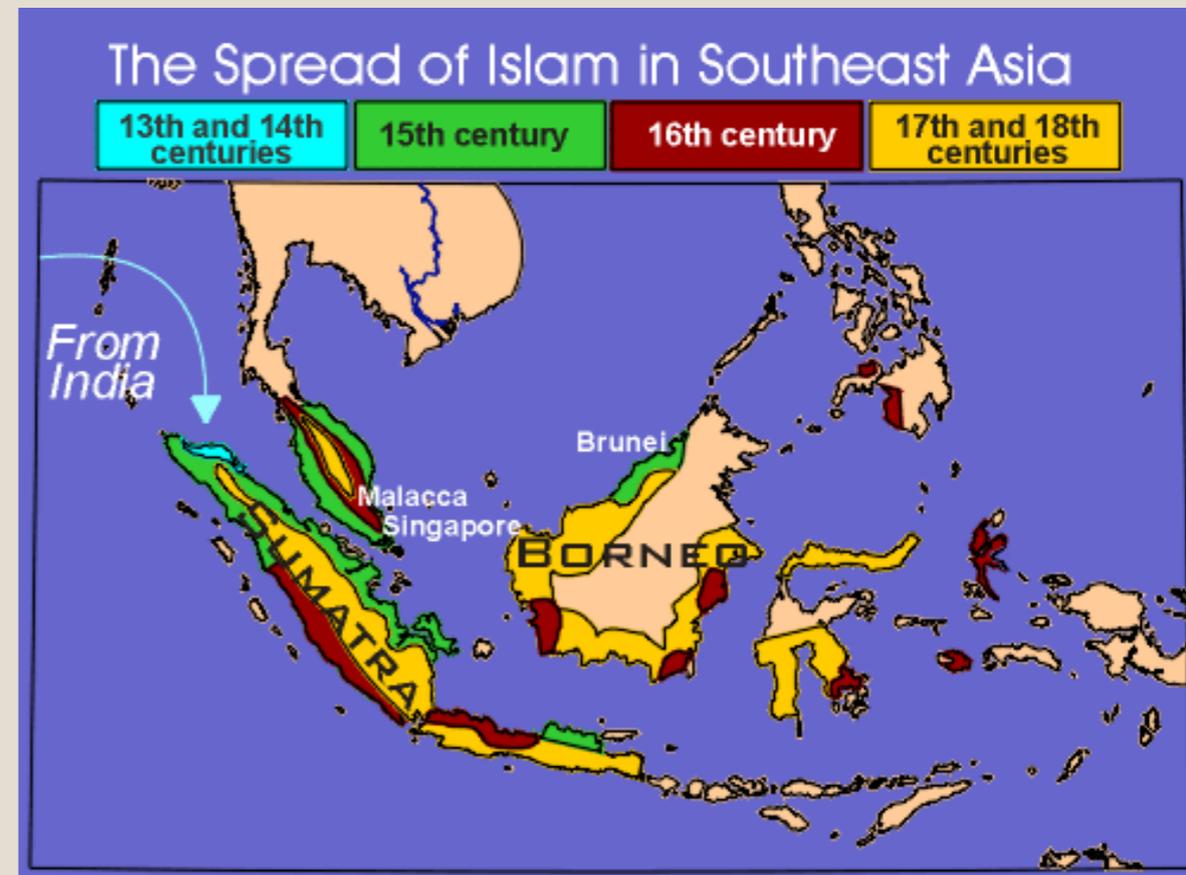
What happens to the Indian caste system under the
Delhi Sultanate?

Islam Spreads to Southeast Asia



Islam in Southeast Asia

- After Islam reaches India, Islam continues to spread east; result of trading contacts and Sufi conversion efforts rather than military conquests.
- 8th c.: Muslims had gained control of Indian Ocean commerce
 - Southeast Asian sailors and traders interacted with Islamic traders
- Coastal cities were most receptive to Islam; most exposed to a variety of cultures due to interactions with others through trade
- Conversions were generally peaceful: New believers combine Islamic teaching/rituals with elements of local religion.
- Islamic law ruled legal transactions.



Quick Review Question

Why is Islam successful in Southeast Asia, as opposed to South Asia?