

CLASS:-11TH

HISTORY NOTES

Central Islamic Islands

1. RISE OF ISLAM

Three Phases – Faith, Community & politics

(a) Faith :

Polytheistic Arabs :

- The Arabs divided into *Qabilas*. Each tribe had its own god or goddess, who was worshipped as an idol (*sanam*) in a shrine (*masjid*).
- The polytheistic Arabs were vaguely familiar with the notion of a Supreme God, Allah (possibly under the influence of the Jewish and Christian tribes living in their midst), their attachment to idols and shrines was more immediate and stronger.

Prophet Muhammad:

- He was born in Mecca in 570.
- During 612-32, the Prophet Muhammad preached the worship of a single God, Allah, and the membership of a single community of believers (*umma*). This was the origin of Islam.
- Around 612, Muhammad declared himself to be the messenger (*rasul*) of God who had been commanded to preach that Allah alone should be worshipped.
- In 622, Muhammad was forced to migrate with his followers to Medina. Muhammad's journey from Mecca (*hijra*) was a turning point in the history of Islam, with the year of his arrival in Medina marking the beginning of the Muslim calendar.

Scene before – 12 AD

- Between 950 and 1200, Islamic society was held together not by a single political order or a single language of culture (Arabic) but by common economic and cultural patterns.
- The Muslim population, less than 10 per cent in the Umayyad (a prosperous clan of the Quraysh tribe) and early Abbasid periods, increased enormously.
- The identity of Islam as a religion and a cultural system separate from other religions became much sharper, which made conversion possible and meaningful.

(b)Community

- Muhammad was to found a community of believers (umma) bound by a common set of religious beliefs.
- The community would bear witness (shahada) to the existence of the religion before God as well as before members of other religious communities. Muhammad's message particularly appealed to those Meccans who felt deprived of the gains from trade and religion and were looking for a new community identity.
- Those who accepted the doctrine were called Muslims.
- They were promised salvation on the Day of Judgment (*qiyamat*) and a share of the resources of the community while on earth.
- The Muslims soon faced considerable opposition from affluent Meccans who took offence to the rejection of their

deities and found the new religion a threat to the status and prosperity of Mecca.

(c) Polity

- After Muhammad's death in 632 AD political authority was transferred to the *Umma* with no established principle of succession.
- This created opportunities for innovations but also caused deep divisions among the Muslims.
- The biggest innovation was the creation of the institution of caliphate, in which the leader of the community (amir al-muminin) became the deputy (*khalifa*) of the Prophet.
- The twin objectives of the caliphate were to retain control over the tribes constituting the *umma* and to raise resources for the state.
- The main duties of the Khalifas were to safeguard and spread Islam.