Week 7: Chapter 6: Part 1: Terms

“empty quarters” - the Rub‘ al Khali (Empty Quarter), also called the Great Sandy Desert, of the Arabian Peninsula, one of the hottest and most sparsely inhabited sand dune deserts of the world. Inner Oman extends from the Al ājar Mountains into the Rub‘ al Khali (Empty Quarter), the great sand desert of southern Arabia. Inner Oman contains a number of oases. Considerably more than half the area of Saudi Arabia is desert. Some desert areas are covered with shifting sand dunes, while others are more stable flat or rippled expanses of sand. Shaped and moved by winds, sand dunes take the form of long ridges or tall hills. Sand, gravel, or bare rock basins lie between the dunes. Few plants grow in these arid deserts, except in scattered oases supported by springs or wells. Three large deserts lie on three sides of the country’s central plateau: An Nafūd to the north, the Rub‘ al Khali to the south, and the narrow Ad Dahnā’ connecting these two on the east. The Rub‘ al Khali, one of the largest deserts in the world, has an area of about 650,000 sq km (about 250,000 sq mi), nearly as large as the U.S. state of Texas. (Wikipedia)

Bedouin – nomadic Arabs inhabiting desert areas of the Middle East and northern Africa. In ancient times their territory included only the deserts of the Middle East. The Muslim conquest of northern Africa in the 7th century opened vaster tracts to the Bedouins. Although they form only a small part of the population of these areas, they use a great deal of territory. (Encarta)

Clans/tribes - (Gaelic clann,”offspring”), group of families in a tribe who claim common ancestry. Although clans have existed for many years in all parts of the world, the term came to refer to those groups originating in Scotland and Ireland about AD1000 and today is applied almost exclusively to communities in Scotland living in specific areas and distinguishable by their surnames. Generally the members of a Scottish clan assume the same surname and adopt a tartan, a distinctive plaid pattern used in socks, kilts, and capes. Clans like the Campbells figured prominently in the history of Scotland and Ireland. Rebellions caused the British government to break up the clans. Their members were disarmed, and they were forced to discontinue wearing distinctive costumes.

Anthropologists sometimes use the term clan when referring to various groups of indigenous people throughout the world. Anthropologists use the word to describe a group of people who can trace their descent from a common ancestor, or who identify with a common totem or animal.(Encarta)

And tribes - group of people sharing customs, language, and territory, such as the Apache people of North America. Anthropologists stress the importance of kinship in tribes. Usually a tribe has a leader, a religion teaching that all its people are descended from a common ancestor, and a common language and culture. A tribe is often small in size, is fairly limited in its contacts with other societies, and is correspondingly ethnocentric in its view of the world. Experts disagree about the relative importance of linguistic, political, and geographical boundaries for defining tribal groups. Whatever
The definition of tribe is chosen, however, exceptions to it abound. The most important criteria for a tribe continue to be linguistic and cultural resemblances.

The word *tribe* has long been used by both anthropologists and laypersons, but recently it has come under attack as a derogatory term implying an inferior way of life. Moreover, its use is inconsistent; it is not, for instance, applied to modern European groups that meet the criteria of the definition. The designations *people* or *ethnic group* are generally preferred today. (Wikipedia)

**Mecca** - also Makkah (ancient Macoraba), city in western Saudi Arabia, located in the Al Ḥijāz (Hejaz) region, near Jiddah. Mecca is the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad (the founder of Islam), the center of pilgrimage for Muslims, and the focal point of their daily prayers. In Arabic, the city is known as *Makkah al-mukkaramah* (“Mecca the blessed”). Pilgrimage to the city is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and is required of all able adult Muslims at least once in their lifetimes. The pilgrimage (*hajj* in Arabic) is the defining factor in the growth and life of the city. The influx of close to 2 million pilgrims each year during the last month of the Islamic calendar is a grand human spectacle as well as one of the largest logistical and administrative undertakings in the world. (Wikipedia)

**Umayyad/Quraysh** - also Omayyad, first great Arab Muslim dynasty of *caliphs* (religious and secular leaders) founded by Muawiyah I in 661 and lasting until 750. Uthman ibn Affan, a member of the prominent Umayyad family of Mecca, had been elected to the caliphate in 644 to succeed Umar I, but his weakness and nepotism resulted in rebellion and he was murdered in 656. Uthman was succeeded by Ali, son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad and chief of the legitimist party, which believed that only a member of Muhammad’s family could rightfully hold the caliphate. Under the Umayyad dynasty, political and social ascendancy remained in the hands of a few Arab families from Mecca and Medina. This caused the Muslim population, which had grown enormously as the empire expanded, to become increasingly discontented, especially since the Umayyads had found it necessary to increase their income from taxation. Lands were now taxed without regard to religion, and Muslims were exempt only from personal taxes. Opposition centered in Persia where there was continued opposition to Syrian domination and where the legitimists allied themselves with the Abbasids, who claimed descent from Abbas, the uncle of the prophet Muhammad. The Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads in 750, killed the caliph, Marwan II, and gained the caliphate for themselves. Members of the Umayyad family were located and slain, except for Abd-ar-Rahman I, who escaped to Córdoba, Spain, in 756 to rule as an independent emir. The Abbasids moved the capital of the empire eastward to a new city, Baghdād, which they founded on the Tigris River. (Wikipedia)

**And Quraysh** - Muhammad was born in Mecca into the prominent Quraysh tribe in about 570. In about 610 Muhammad received a vision of the angel Gabriel, who proclaimed him a prophet of God. Reciting from an expanding collection of revelations in verse form, which would later become the Qur'an (Koran), Muhammad began preaching the religion of Islam (*islam*, Arabic for “to surrender,” that is, to the will or law of God). At first, Muhammad made few converts among the pagan Meccans who worshiped many
different gods. Over time Muhammad’s followers grew in number, and he began to be viewed as a threat by Mecca’s elite. Realizing their safety was at stake, in 622 Muhammad and his followers moved to Yathrib (later Medina), an oasis town north of Mecca. That migration (called the Hegira) would be later used to mark the initial year of the Islamic calendar. (Wikipedia)

**Ka’ba** – Most revered religious shrine in pre-Islamic Arabia; located in Mecca; focus of obligatory annual truce among Bedouin tribes; later incorporated as important shrine in Islam. (Encarta)

**Yathrib/Medina** - city in western Saudi Arabia, located in the Al Ḥijāz (Hejaz) region. Called Madinah al-munawwara (“Medina the Radiant”) in Arabic, the city is second to Mecca in spiritual importance among Muslims. The Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, emigrated from Mecca to Medina in 622. The emigration, known as the Hegira (hijrah in Arabic), marks the first year of the Islamic calendar. Medina was the seat of the first four caliphs, or rulers (literally, “successors” in Arabic) of Islam, who expanded the lands under Islamic rule through conversion and conquest after the death of Muhammad in 632. The city’s most important religious site is the Mosque of the Prophet Muhammad. The mosque contains Muhammad’s tomb as well as the tombs of other important figures from the early years of Islam. (Wikipedia)

**“bride-price”** - also known as bride wealth is an amount of money or property or wealth paid by the groom or his family to the parents of a woman upon the marriage of their daughter to the groom. (Compare dowry, which is paid to the groom, or used by the bride to help establish the new household, and dower, which is property settled on the bride herself by the groom at the time of marriage.) In the anthropological literature bride price has often been explained in market terms, as payment made in exchange for the bride's family's loss of her labor and fertility within her kin group. Compare this affinal practice with brideservice, which does not rely on a compensatory exchange idiom for ethnological interpretation.

The same culture may simultaneously practice both dowry and bride price.

Many cultures practiced bride price prior to any existing records.(Wikipedia)

**Muhammad** - (570?-632), last prophet of Islam, whose revelations, encompassing political and social as well as religious principles, became the basis of Islamic civilization and have had a vast influence on world history. (Encarta)

**Hijra (page 118 –timeline)** - Muhammad left Mecca just as his enemies were preparing to murder him, and he arrived in Medina eight days later. His emigration became known as the Hegira (Arabic hijrah) and marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

Muhammad was soon given supreme authority in Medina, and he began to establish the ritual practices of Islam and to carry out social reforms. He promulgated a charter that specified the rights and relationships of the Muslims, Jews, and other groups of the city.
The Meccans, meanwhile, persisted in their hostility, demanding the extradition of Muhammad and his Meccan followers. They were supported in Medina by a group, referred to in the Qur'an as the Hypocrites, who had submitted to Islam but were secretly working against it. This group in turn was aided by the three Jewish tribes that were residing in Medina. (Wikipedia)

**Ali** - in Arabic, Ali ibn Abi Talib (600?-661), fourth caliph of Islam and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. He was born in Mecca, the son of Abu Talib, Muhammad's uncle. Ali was one of the first converts to Islam and one of the most faithful followers of the Prophet. He married Muhammad's daughter Fatima, who bore him two sons, Hasan and Husayn. In 632, when Muhammad died, Ali claimed the right of succession. He was preceded in the caliphate, however, by Abu Bakr, Umar I, and Uthman ibn Affan, and did not become caliph until 656.

In the first year of Ali's reign he was forced to deal with a rebellion led by Aisha, whom Muhammad had married after the death of Fatima's mother and who bitterly opposed Ali's claim of succession. Although the rebellion was suppressed in late 656, disputes over Ali's right to the caliphate were not resolved. Muawiyah I, a member of Uthman's family, refused to recognize Ali as caliph and claimed the caliphate himself. This dispute continued until 661, when Ali was murdered at Al Kufah by a member of the Kharijite sect; Muawiyah I was then acknowledged caliph.

Dissension between Ali's adherents and his opponents continued to shake the Muslim world. This conflict led to the first and most important schism in Islam, between the Shias (adherents of Ali) and the Sunnis (orthodox Muslims). Ali is the ancestor of the Fatimid line of caliphs, who traced their descent from Ali and Fatima. (Wikipedia)

**Umma** - community of faithful within Islam: within Islam, the community of the faithful that transcended long-established tribal boundaries to create a degree of political unity.

**Zakat** - The third pillar of Islam is zakat, or almsgiving. A religious obligation, zakat is considered an expression of devotion to God. It represents the attempt to provide for the poorer sectors of society, and it offers a means for a Muslim to purify his or her wealth and attain salvation. The Qur’an, together with other Islamic traditions, strongly encourages charity and constantly reminds Muslims of their moral obligation to the poor, orphans, and widows; however, it distinguishes between general, voluntary charity (sadaqa) and zakat, the latter being an obligatory charge on the money or produce of Muslims (Encarta)

**Five pillars** (list) - During the ten years between his arrival in Medina and his death in AD 632, Muhammad laid the foundation for the ideal Islamic state. A core of committed Muslims was established, and a community life was ordered according to the requirements of the new religion. In addition to general moral injunctions, the requirements of the religion came to include a number of institutions that continue to characterize Islamic religious practice today. Foremost among these were the five pillars of Islam, the essential religious duties required of every adult Muslim who is mentally
able. The five pillars are each described in some part of the Qur’an and were already practiced during Muhammad’s lifetime. They are the profession of faith (shahada), prayer (salat), almsgiving (zakat), fasting (sawm), and pilgrimage (hajj). Although some of these practices had precedents in Jewish, Christian, and other Middle Eastern religious traditions, taken together they distinguish Islamic religious practices from those of other religions. The five pillars are thus the most central rituals of Islam and constitute the core practices of the Islamic faith. (Encarta)

Caliph - a spiritual leader of Islam, claiming succession from Muhammad. Any of the former Muslim rulers of Baghdad (until 1258) and of the Ottoman Empire (from 1571 until 1924). (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/caliph)

Abut Bakr - (573-634), first Muslim caliph (632-634), father of Aisha, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad. He was born in Mecca and became Muhammad’s most trusted follower, accompanying him on the Hegira. After Muhammad died, Abu Bakr was made caliph, or successor to the Prophet, by an assembly of the faithful. As caliph, Abu Bakr prevented some tribes from reverting to heathenism and fought successfully against Persia and the Byzantine Empire. He was succeeded by Umar I. (Wikipedia)

Ridda Wars - Most of Abu Bakr’s short reign was spent putting down a series of local rebellions against Islamic rule, known as the Wars of Apostasy, or the Riddah wars. Shortly after the news of Muhammad’s death reached them, many Arab tribes renounced their allegiance to Islam in favor of new, local prophets. This was less a religious choice than a political and economic one, since the tribes used this as an excuse to govern themselves and stop paying the zakat, or alms tax. Abu Bakr took part in some of the fighting, but the main military leadership was provided by Khalid ibn al-Walid. The Riddah wars established Medina’s authority over all of Arabia and the inclusion of all of Arabia in the ummah, or community of Islam.

After the Riddah wars, Abu Bakr looked to extend Islamic territory northward, into present-day Iraq and Syria. This area and the rest of the Fertile Crescent had been a battleground between the Byzantine Empire and the Sassanids of Persia for more than a century before the appearance of Islam. Already forged into an army by participation in the Riddah wars, and inspired by their new religion and the opportunity for plunder, the Arab Muslims successfully fought both the Byzantines and the Sassanids, whose forces were drained by years of warfare. Abu Bakr’s forces captured territory in southern Iraq, threatening the major Persian cities on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and also began to push into Byzantine Syria. (Wikipedia)

Jihads - in Islam, the struggle to please God. Jihad is the duty of all mainstream Muslims, who belong to the branch known as Sunni Islam. There are four ways they may fulfill a jihad: by the heart, by the tongue, by the hand, and by the sword. The first refers to the inner, spiritual battle of the heart against vice, passion, and ignorance. The second way means speaking the truth and spreading the word of Islam with one’s tongue. The third way involves choosing to do what is right and to combat injustice and what is wrong
with action, or one's hand. The fourth way refers to defending Islam and waging war against its enemies with the sword.

Although *jihad* has come to be equated with “holy war” in the West, most Muslims would argue that military action is only a small part of jihad and that this form of jihad should be undertaken only in self-defense or against injustice. They see the internal struggle to attain self-mastery and lead a virtuous life as far more important. In some countries, however, Muslim activists would like to see Islamic governments installed, and for them *jihad* encompasses a more revolutionary goal of replacing their country’s political leadership. Still other Muslim militants extend the concept of jihad to acts of terrorism against Western countries whose influence they view as harmful to Islam. (Wikipedia)

**Sassanian Empire** - The Sassanid Empire or Sassanian Dynasty is the name of the last pre-Islamic Iranian empire. It was one of the two main powers in Western Asia and Europe for a period of more than 400 years. The Sassanid dynasty was founded by Ardashir I after defeating the last Parthian (Arsacid) king, Artabanus IV and ended when the last Sassanid Shahanshah (*King of Kings*), Yazdegerd III (632–651), lost a 14-year struggle to drive out the early Arab Caliphate, the first of the Islamic empires. The Sassanid Empire's traditional territory encompassed all of today's Iran, Iraq, Armenia, the southern Caucasus (including southern Dagestan), southwestern Central Asia, western Afghanistan, parts of Turkey, parts of Syria, some coastal parts of the Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf area, and some parts of southwestern Pakistan. The Sassanids called their empire Eranshahr "the Iranian Empire" (Wikipedia).

**Byzantines** - Ancient Hist somebody from Byzantium: somebody who came from the ancient city of Byzantium or the Byzantine Empire. (http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861593838/Byzantine.html)

**Uthman** - After Umar's death in 644, Uthman ibn Affan, Muhammad's son-in-law and one of his first converts, was appointed the third caliph by a panel of six Meccan electors. Although an elderly man, he carried on Umar's policy of territorial expansion. Eventually, however, Uthman earned the enmity of many of his subjects, who felt he favored the Meccan aristocracy in political and commercial affairs. Uthman also antagonized the Islamic preachers by issuing an official text of the Qur'an (Koran), with an accompanying order to destroy all other versions. Rebellious Muslim troops from Al Kūfah (Iraq) and Egypt besieged Uthman in Medina and assassinated him in 656. (Wikipedia)

**Sunnis** - one of the two main branches of Islam. Shia Islam is the other. Sunni Muslims constitute the vast majority in the world Islamic community. The term *sunna* means the “way” or the “example” and refers to the example of the Prophet Muhammad. All Islamic groups and sects, however, accept the Sunna, along with the Qur'an (Koran), the sacred scriptures of Islam, as binding. Because it means the “way,” the term *sunna* may also be intended to distinguish mainstream Muslims from Shia Muslims, who follow a side path. (Wikipedia)
**Shi'ites** - the second-largest branch of Islam. Sunni Islam constitutes the largest branch to which the majority of Muslims belong.

Shia Islam emerged out of a dispute over the succession to Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. His successors, called caliphs, were both political and religious leaders of the *theocracy* (earthly kingdom under divine rule) that Muhammad had set up (see Caliphate). After the assassination of the fourth caliph, Ali, in 661, Ali’s supporters claimed that it had been Ali’s right to succeed Muhammad directly and that the previous caliphs had therefore been usurpers. They maintained that only the descendants of Ali and his wife, Fatima, Muhammad's daughter, were entitled to rule the Muslim community. Ali’s followers were known as the Shia (partisans), or Shiites. But the majority of the Muslim community, who followed the Sunna (way), rejected the Shia doctrine about the succession. (Wikipedia)

**Mu'awiya** - A companion of Mohammad who recorded Mohammad's Revelation. He became governor of Syria who opposed 'Ali in the Fitnah (civil war). Eventually 'Ali was murdered and his son Hasan declared caliph. Ultimately, however, Mu'awiya gained control and reunited the Ummah in 40/661, the Year of the Jamaa' (community). (http://www.answers.com/topic/mu-awiya)

**Karbala** - Note: When the word "Karbala" is used in the context of Muslim history or culture, it almost invariably refers to the events around the Battle of Karbala in which Hussain was slain, not the city that stands there today.

Karbala - is a city in Iraq, located about 100 km (60 mi) southwest of Baghdad at 32.61°N, 44.08°E. In the time of Husayn ibn Ali's life, the place was also known as al-Ghadiriyah, Naynawa, and Shathi'ul-Furaat. The estimated population in 2003 was 572,300 people. It is the capital of Karbala Province. Shi'a Muslims consider Karbala to be one of their holiest cities after Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Najaf. The city is best known as the location of the Battle of Karbala. (Wikipedia)

**Battle of Poitiers (Tours), 732** - After the breakup of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century AD, military organization fell into a decline. Europe lay open to invasion—by Avars and Bulgars from the east, the Vikings from the north, and the Moors from the south. The Franks, a Germanic tribe that occupied present-day Germany and France, adopted a crude version of the Roman system and managed to halt the invading Moors at the Battle of Tours in 732, but their tactics were primitive when compared with those of the Greeks and Romans.

At the same time, the armies of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire had considerable success in adopting the fast-moving, hard-hitting tactics of their enemies. One of the major innovations of Byzantine warfare was the horse-archer, a cavalryman able to shoot arrows to either side while riding at full speed.
Western Europeans attempted to deal with the persistent raids of the Vikings by creating a feudal system in which the aristocracy performed mandatory military service in return for its privileges. The mounted knight, who owed allegiance to one noble rather than to a national state, dominated medieval warfare. Fighting out of a spirit of adventure or for spoils, the Christian knight was in the forefront of the periodic Crusades mobilized to liberate the Holy Land from Muslim control. In the 14th and 15th centuries feudalism began to give way to nation-states, and kings began to form their own armies. The English longbow, the pike employed by massed infantry, and the introduction of gunpowder finally forced the armored knight from the field. Once again, armies became professional and military organization underwent a renaissance. (Wikipedia)

**Damascus** - capital and chief city of Syria, in southwestern Syria, on the Baradá River, near the Anti-Lebanon Mountains in the southwestern part of the country. The greater part of Damascus, including the rectangular ancient city, is on the south bank of the Baradá. Modern suburbs extend from the north bank. (Wikipedia)

**Mawali** - Although the Umayyads hoped to unify their growing state, they faced opposition on several fronts, mainly from the *mawali*, or non-Arab Muslims, and the Shia Muslims.

As Islam spread into the Fertile Crescent and beyond, non-Arabs began to convert to Islam. But since Islam was an Arab movement from its beginnings, the mawali constituted a second-class group. They were known as mawali (Arabic for “clients”) because they were forced to attach themselves to, and provide services for, Arab Muslim tribes or individuals. The mawali lived in suburbs built around the amsars and worked as farmers, shopkeepers, craftspeople, and unskilled laborers. They served in the Arab infantry and were paid a smaller share of the plunder than Arabs. Their hope for advancement was for the government to place the emphasis on acceptance of Islam over being an Arab. However, the Umayyads could not reward all Muslims equally or there would not be enough wealth from plunder to go around. Moreover, the local Muslim communities relied on taxes paid by the mawali. This practice troubled the mawali, and bred discontent, disloyalty, and, eventually, rebellion. (Wikipedia)

**Jizya** - Under Islamic law, *jizya* or *jizyah* is a per capita tax levied on a section of an Islamic state's non-Muslim citizens, who meet certain criteria. The tax is/was to be levied on able bodied adult males of military age and affording power. From the point of view of the Muslim rulers, jizya was a material proof of the non-Muslims' acceptance of subjection to the state and its laws, "just as for the inhabitants it was a concrete continuation of the taxes paid to earlier regimes." In return, non-Muslim citizens were permitted to practice their faith, to enjoy a measure of communal autonomy, to be entitled to Muslim state's protection from outside aggression, to be exempted from military service and taxes levied upon Muslim citizens (Wikipedia)

**Dhimmis (People of the Book)** - In Islam, the People of the Book are non-Muslim peoples who, according to the Qur'an, received scriptures which were revealed to them by God before the time of Muhammad, most notably Christians and Jews. The generally
accepted interpretation is that the pre-Islamic revealed texts are the *Tawrat*, *Zabur* and the *Injil*. They are roughly equivalent to the Jewish Torah, the Book of Psalms, and the Four Christian Gospels, respectively. (wikipedia)

**Hadiths** - the record of the Prophet Muhammad's precepts, actions, and life, which constitute his Sunna, or example. It is accepted as a chief source of Islamic belief and practice and is second in authority only to the Qur'an (Koran). The six canonical Sunni collections of Hadith, which date from the 9th century, and the corresponding Shia collections of the 10th and 11th centuries delineate the various relationships among individuals and between the individual and God. They include provisions of law, discussions of theological matters, such as methods of fasting and prayer, and codes of personal, social, and commercial conduct. (Wikipedia)

**Aisha** – circa 614-78), favorite wife of the Prophet Muhammad after the death of his first wife, Khadija. In order to strengthen ties with Abu Bakr, his chief adviser, Muhammad married Aisha, Abu Bakr's daughter, when she was about nine years old. Even after subsequent marriages of the Prophet, she remained devoted to him; she is known among Muslims as Mother of the Believers. After the death of Muhammad in 632, Aisha, a childless widow of 18, helped her father become first caliph, or ruler, of the Muslims. She remained politically inactive during his caliphate (632-34), but she later opposed the succession of Ali as fourth caliph (656-61) and incited an unsuccessful revolt against him. (Wikipedia)

**Zainab** – The daughter of Ali

**Abbasids (al-Abbas)** - (566?-653), paternal uncle of the Prophet Muhammad and of the fourth caliph, Ali. His full name was Al-Abbas ibn al-Muttalib. A rich merchant of Mecca, he initially fought against the new religion but was converted in 629. Thereafter he staunchly supported Islam with money and arms, and he accompanied his nephew on his march on Mecca in 630. Abbas was the forebear of the Abbasid dynasty of caliphs.

**And Abbasids** - dynasty of caliphs who ruled the caliphate of Islam from 750 until 1258. All of these caliphs were descended from Abbas, a member of the tribe of Quraysh of Mecca who was an uncle of the prophet Muhammad. The Abbasids seized the caliphate following the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty of caliphs, and held it until the Mongols sacked Baghdad and killed the last caliph of the line. For most of this time their court was in Baghdad, a town founded at the command of the second Abbasid caliph, al-Mansur (754-775) in 762.

For the first century or so of their caliphate, the Abbasids acted as the leaders of Islam both religiously and politically, despite the fact that during this period their authority was rejected by some. The peak of their power probably occurred in the reign of Harun ar-Rashid, who relied heavily on the Barmakid family of administrators. Following Harun’s death there was a period of civil war between his two sons, al-Amin and al-Mamun. Al-Mamun finally triumphed but the prestige of the family was damaged.
By the end of the 9th century the Abbasids were unable to exercise real religious or political authority. Their religious authority had been taken over by the religious scholars of Sunni Islam following the failure of the caliphs’ attempt to impose their will over them in the trial of strength known as the Mihna (833-847). As a result of this episode the caliphs were restricted to a largely symbolic role as merely nominal leaders of Sunni Islam. Followers of Shia Islam rejected the Abbasids completely. (Wikipedia)

**Battle of the River Zab** - The Battle of the Zab took place on the banks of the Great Zab river in what is now Iraq on January 25, 750. It spelled the end of the Umayyad Caliphate and the rise of the Abbasids, a dynasty that would last (under various influences and with varying power) until the 13th century. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Zab)

**Caliphate of Cordoba** - important kingdom of Muslim Spain. The first emir of Córdoba was Abd-ar-Rahman I, the sole survivor of the Umayyad dynasty at Damascus. His family was murdered by the competing Abasid dynasty and he escaped to Spain in 755. Following his rule, the authority of the emirate declined until 929 when Abd-ar-Rahman III assumed the title of caliph. Under his direction the capital city of Córdoba became the greatest intellectual center of Europe for 200 years. (Wikipedia)

**Baghdad** - capital of Iraq, in central Iraq, on the Tigris River. Baghdād was built by the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur in 762 on the western bank of the Tigris River, opposite an old Iranian village also named Baghdād. The original city was round, with three concentric walls. The innermost wall enclosed the palace of the caliph, the second wall defined the army quarters, and the homes of the people occupied the outermost enclosure. The merchants' quarters, or bazaars, were located outside the city walls. Within the next half century the city reached a peak of prosperity and influence under the caliph Harun ar-Rashid, whose reign is celebrated in the famous tales of the Arabian Nights. During this period the city expanded to the eastern bank of the Tigris, which later became the heart of Baghdād. Although past its zenith after Harun's time, Baghdād remained an important center of trade and culture for more than four centuries. (Wikipedia)

**Wazir** - Chief minister of the 'Abbasid caliphs and later a high government official in various Muslim countries. The office was originally held and defined by the Barmakids in the 8th century; they acted as the caliph's representative to the public, later serving a similar function for various sultans. In the Ottoman Empire the title could be held by several people at once; under Mehmed II the position of grand vizier, the absolute representative of the sultan, was created. (http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Wazir)

**Malwali** – or Muawiyah, was the first Umayyad caliph. Muawiyah stabilized the Islamic community after Ali's assassination. He moved the capital of Islam from Medina to Damascus which brought Muslim rulers into contact with more advanced cultural and administrative traditions of the Byzantine Empire. Muawiyah also ended the practice of electing the caliph when he named his son Yazid as his heir.
**Dhows** - Traditional Bahraini culture reflects its Islamic, mercantile, and Arab Bedouin roots. Graceful dhows, Arab boats used for fishing and diving for pearls, exhibit a high degree of craftsmanship, as do traditional jewelry and the elegant residences of rulers and merchants. (Wikipedia)

**Arab sailing ship:** a low-sided ship with one or two masts and triangular curving sails, used by Arab sailors in the Indian Ocean.

**Zanj slaves** – Arabic term for the East African coast – the non-muslim peoples of that area were taken as slaves.

**Ayan** – The wealthy landed elite that emerged during the early decades of the Abbasid rule.

**Week 7: Chapter 6: Part 2: Questions**

1. What was the nature of Bedouin society before Muhammad received his revelations?

Before Muhammad, the Bedouins were a people who lived around the uninhabitable regions of the Arabian Peninsula known as the “Empty Quarters.” The Bedouins, although technically one group of people, were divided by tribes and then sub-divided into clans. The clans were usually made up of an extended family. The clans lived together, however, the tribes only met in times of war or for special gatherings. The Bedouins were a war-like people. They fought invaders; however they also often fought amongst the different tribes. The reasons for these tribal wars were vengeance as well as fights over land such as oases.

2. How did Islam address the fundamental problems in Arabian society?

The major ideas expressed by Islam which were vital to its success in Arabia are: monotheism, egalitarianism, and strong legal codes. The Arabian people at the time weren't necessarily devout to their scattered religions. The Bedouins worshiped different gods, ranging from the god of the moon, to animalistic gods. Islam was a straightforward religion that united the Arabians under one all-powerful god. The revelation of Islam in many ways united the Bedouins against outsiders and under a single ruler, or caliph. Egalitarianism, the doctrine that all people should have the same rights and be treated as equals, was popular in Islam, especially amongst the poor and slaves. The final way that Islam took hold in Arabia was its law-code. This law code eliminated inter-tribe warfare from Bedouin society, except in times of instability such as during the death of a caliph.

3. How was the succession dispute over the office of caliph finally settled?

After the short reign of several caliphs, the decision of succession was finally brought the forefront of Muslim life. The Muslims eventually split into two separate factions, the Sunni and Shi’a. The Sunnis and Shi’a had the same fundamental beliefs about Allah and life in general. The reason the two factions separated was because of the way they felt
about how caliphate succession should be handled. The Sunnis supported the claim of the Bedouin tribe Umayyad, to the succession of the caliphate. The Shi’a, on the other hand, backed the claim of Ali and the relatives of Muhammad, to the succession of the caliphate. These two sects have opposed and fought each other throughout history.

4. What was the nature and extent of the Umayyad Empire?
The Umayyad Empire was ruled by an Arab warrior elite and was an Arab, rather than Islamic empire. Though certainly followers of Islam, the ruling clans often showed little desire to convert others to the religion as doing so would exempt them from taxes that could be collected from Christians, Jews, etc. The empire began with the uniting of Arabia and soon conquered Mesopotamia, Persia and North Africa. By the 700s, they had reached India and had conquered Spain.

5. What events led to the fall of the Umayyads?
Growing dissatisfaction with the caliphs increasingly luxurious lifestyle helped spark revolts against the government. The massive spread of the empire also led to its downfall as many began settling in the borderlands, thus identifying themselves with that area rather than their leaders in far away Damascus. Settled warriors also saw their portions of funds dwindle despite having earned it by fighting in wars of expansion – discontented, they joined forces under the Abbasid party and began openly attacking the Umayyad. Those who had converted to Islam, but never enjoyed the full benefits soon threw their support behind the Abbasids, as did the Shi-ites, who had opposed the Umayyads from the beginning. After defeating the Umayyads in battle, the Abbasids offered a reconciliation dinner – all a farce to get the Umayyad family in one place so they could be slaughtered.

6. How did the Abbasid Empire differ from the Umayyad Empire?
The Abbasids soon rejected their old allies and moved the capital to Baghdad. Opponents were brutally suppressed while the formerly denounced luxurious lifestyles were expanded. Centralization allowed for effective tax collection and preservation of laws. The official executioner was perhaps the most telling – it came to symbolize the fact that the Abbasids placed themselves above Islamic law. It became increasingly difficult to gain an audience with the Abbasid caliph unlike the openness experienced under the Umayyads. Mass conversions to Islam were encouraged and those that converted were allowed equal standing amongst long-term followers.

7. What were the achievements of the Arab phase of Islamic development ending in 750?
Building of the great mosques, focus on religious, legal and political discourse, advances in science and mathematics, preservation of learning from the ancient civilizations – in particular the Greeks, adaptation of learning from trade (Indian system of numbers, etc) and fostering its spread
8. Did women in the Islamic world have more or less freedom than women in other contemporary societies? Explain.

Early treatment of women allowed for greater freedoms with Muhammad encouraging freedom in determining marriage partners, an end to infanticide, and legal rights for women in matters of inheritance and divorce. Women were able to pursue a wide range of careers and had more opportunities for education at their disposal than in any other civilization. Later years saw all of this change as women’s freedoms and movements became more and more restricted. Yet it must be noted that the position of the female never deteriorated to that of the other civilizations. Separated and veiled, women continued to be literate (in order to read the Koran/Qur’an) and Islamic law preserved the inheritance, property and divorce rights not seen in other areas.

9. How did the Abbasids keep alive the ideas of many ancient Greek and Roman writers?

The Abbasids took the writings of the Ancient Greeks and Romans, translated them into Arabic then sent them throughout the empire. A focus on continuing education and a thirst for knowledge assured the continued reading and discussion of the ideas present in the works. Eventually, through trade, war and conquest, the ideas found their way back to Europe,