**Significant Learning Outcomes**

- Familiarizes the establishment of Abbasid Khilafath.
- Explains political and administrative achievements.
- Analyses the contribution in the field of Medicine, Philosophy, Mathematics, Historiography, Astronomy, Alchemy and Theology,
- Develops sense of beauty and enjoyment through the analysis of art and architecture.
- Familiarises the literary contribution
- Identifies the social life and its peculiarities.
- Explains the causes of decay and downfall.

**Major Concepts**

- Polity and administration of Abbasids.
- Scientific and literary progress
- Development of theology, Islamic law and fiqh
- Social life
- Art and Architecture
- Abbasid culture and its features
- Baith ul Hikma.
- Downfall of the Abbasids
This chapter deals with the history of civilization during the medieval age. The medieval world under Abbasids excelled in both scientific and literary field. Hence it can be called a period of enlightenment even though the westerners, whose contributions were less in those days, referred it as dark age.

The reign of Abbasid was the era of greatest splendor of Arabs. The age of conquest has passed; that of civilisation has commenced. Abul Abbas (750-754 CE) who earned the title “Assafah” (blood shedder) was the founder of the most celebrated and long lived Arab dynasty for the establishment of caliphate. Abul Abbas got the assistance of great persons like Abu Muslim Khurasani, Abu Salma, Abdulla Bin Ali, Sulaiman Bin Ali, Khalid Bin Barmak etc. Ambar was the capital of Abul Abbas. The Persian office of Wazier was adopted by Abbasids. Abu Salma was the fist wazir.

Abu Jafar (754-775 CE) was the brother and successor of Abul Abbas. He assumed the title “Al Mansur” (the victorious). Abu Jafar faced many revolts but suppressed all the disorders. His uncle Abudulla Bin Ali, the Abbasid governor of Syria rebelled but failed and was killed treacherously. The Khurasani leader Abu Muslim also faced the fate of Abdulla.

He founded a new capital named Baghdad on the western bank of Tigris in 762 CE. Al Mansur was succeeded by his son Al Mahdi (775-785 CE) and Mahdi was followed by his son Hadi. After a short rule of one year Hadi died in 786 CE.
Battle of Nasbin and the threat of Abu Muslim

The uncle of caliph rebelled in Syria. Abu Jafer appointed Abu Muslim to face the threat. Abdullah Bin Ali and Abu Muslim fought at Nasbin. Abdullah Bin Ali was caught as prisoner and kept in royal custody. Abu Muslim, the greatest general of the age became more prominent with this victory. He could crumble the Abbasid power with his popularity and with his troops.

Harun Al Rashid (786 -809 CE) the brother of Hadi was saluted as the next khalifa who appointed his teacher and advisor Yahya Bin Barmak as wazir (Minister).

The legacy of the age is depicted in various books. Thousand and One Nights (Arabian Nights) is the best example for it.

The Barmakids were an influential family from Bactria with great political power under the Abbasids of Baghdad. Barmak leader Khalid became the Minister of finance under Al Saffah, the first caliph of the Abbasid dynasty. His son Yahya was the teacher of Harun Al
Rashid and rose as the most powerful man in the empire under Harun al Rashid. The Barmakids were remarkable for their majesty, splendor and hospitality. They are mentioned in some stories of the Arabian Nights.

It is believed that the Barmakids were priests of Buddist before converting to Islam. The Barmakid family was early supporters of the Abbasids. They were highly educated, respected and influential throughout Arabia, Persia and Central Asia. In Baghdad, the Barmakid court became a centre of patronage for the poets, Ulema and scholars.

Khalid ibn Barmak

Khalid ibn Barmak occupied distinguished positions under first two Abbasid Khaiaphs. He had risen to be the Wazir, following death of Abu Salma. Khalid was on such intimate terms with al-Saffah that his daughter was nursed by the wife of the Khalifa. Likewise, Khalifa’s daughter was nursed by Khalid’s wife. His son, Yahya ibn Barmak, at one time Governor was entrusted by Caliph al-Mahdi with the education of his son, Harun, the future Khalifa.

Under Abbasid regime Khalid rose to the headship of the department of Finance (diwan al-Kharaj). This department was concerned with Taxation and Land Tenure. Genuine budgets began to be drawn up for the first time and offices sprang up for various departments. The extensive staff of officials engaged in correspondence with the provinces and prepared estimates and accounts. An influential stratum of officialdom, the Irano-Islamic class of secretaries, was formed which considered itself as the main support of the state. In 765, Khalid ibn Barmak received the governship of Tabaristan and he crushed a dangerous uprising. During his governorship, Khalid, through a mix of firmness and justice, brought the province quickly into order and effectively curbed the unruly Kurds.

Yahya’s sons occupied high offices under al Rashid. Many Barmakids were great patrons of sciences, which greatly helped the propagation of Indian science and scholarship into the Islamic world of Baghdad and beyond. They patronized scholars and also credited with the establishment of the first paper mill in Baghdad. The power of the Barmakids in those times is reflected in the book of Thousand and One Nights. In it the Wazir Ja’far appears in several stories, as well as a tale that gave rise to the expression “Barmekide feast”. We know of Yahya ibn Khalid al-Barmaki (d. 805) as a patron of physicians and, specifically, of the translation of Indian medical works into both Arabic and Persian. In all likelihood however, his activity took place in the orbit of the caliphal court in Iraq, where at the behest of Hârûn Al-Rashîd (786-809) CE, such books were translated into Arabic. Thus Khurasan and Transoxiana
were effectively by passed in this transfer of learning from India to Islam, even though, undeniably the Barmaki’s cultural outlook owed something to their land of origin, northern Afghanistan, and Yahya al-Barmaki’s interest in medicine may have derived from no longer identifiable family tradition.”

**Disgrace and fall**

In 803 CE the family lost favour in the eyes of Harun al-Rashîd, and many of its members were imprisoned. The popularity and prestige of Barmakids by the time held suppressed ever. Historians Al-Tabari and Ibn Khaldun are of the opinion that their decline was gradual and not sudden. Their hypotheses are:

- **The Barmakids’ extravagance in spending to the extent that they overshadowed Hârun al-Rashid.** It has been said that Jafar ibn Yahya built a mansion that cost twenty million dirhams and that his father, Yahya ibn Khalid, had gold tiles on the wall of his mansion. Harun became upset on trips around and whenever he passed an impressive house or mansion, they told him it belonged to the Barmakids.

- **Fadl-ibn- Rabi, an Abbasid loyal civil servant very close to Hârun and a rival of the Barmakids,** poisoned the ear of Harun to assign spies to watch them, and that is how he found Jafar as a threat to Abbasids.

**The Barmakid Army:** Although technically this army was under the Abbasids, in reality, the soldiers gave allegiance to al-Fadl Ibn Yahya al-Barmaki, Ja’far’s brother; it numbered 50,000 soldiers. During their last days, al-Fadl ordered twenty thousand of them to come to Baghdad and claimed to create a legion under the name of the Karnabiya Legion. This made Harun very wary of their intentions.

The Governor of Khurasan at the time sent a letter to Harun reporting about the unrest in his province and blaming Musa ibn Yahya, another brother of Ja’far, for it.

**The Yahya Ibn Abdullah Al-Talibi incident:** In AH 176, Yahya Ibn Abdullah went to Persia and called for rule by himself in place of Hârûn. Many people followed him, and he became strong enough to cause unrest for the Abbasids. Harun managed to capture him and ordered that he be confined to house arrest at al-Fadl’s house in Baghdad. However, al-Fadl, rather than making sure he would not escape, gave him money and a ride and let him leave Baghdad. The Abbasids considered that a treason.
A number of canals, mosques and other public works owe their existence to the initiative and munificence of the Barmakids. Al Fadl, son of Yahya, bin Barmak is credited with being the first to introduce the use of lamps in the mosques during the holy month of Ramadan. They are also credited with the establishment of the first paper mill in Baghdad. Ja’far, another son of Yahya acquired great fame for eloquence, literary activity and pen-manship. P.K.Hitti argues that chiefly because of him, Arab historians regard the Barmakids as the founders of the class designated as ‘people of the pen’ (ahl al-qalam). The long neck which Barmakids possessed is said to have been responsible for the introduction of the custom of wearing high collars.

Collect the important features of Abbasid period under Harun al Rashid and make a note after observing the video, ‘Zindbad - the Sailor.’

_Arabian Nights_ is a collection of West and South Asian stories and folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Abbasid age. It is often known in English as the _Arabian Nights_, from the first English language edition (1706 CE), which rendered the title as _The Arabian Nights’ Entertainment_.

_Arabian Nights_
The Abbasid Khilafath the Cosmopolitan Empire

The tales themselves trace their roots back to ancient and medieval Indian, Arabic, Persian, Egyptian and Mesopotamian folklore and literature. In particular, many tales were originally folk stories from the Khalifath era, while others, especially the frame story, are most probably drawn from the work of Pahlavi Persian *Hazâr Afsân (A Thousand Tales)* which in turn relied partly on Indian elements. The main stories of *The Nights* are “Aladdin’s Wonderful Lamp”, “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves”, and “The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor”. The tales include historical tales, love stories, tragedies, comedies, poems, burlesques and various forms of erotica. Numerous stories depict jinns, ghouls, apes, sorcerers, magicians, and legendary places, which are often intermingled with real people and geography, not always rationally; common protagonists include the historical Abbasid caliph, Harun, his Grand, Jafar al-Barmaki, and the famous poet Abu Nuwas, despite the fact that these figures lived some 200 years after the fall of the Sassanid Empire in which the frame tale of Scheherazade.

Harun al Rashid defeated Byzantine emperor and recaptured the island of Cyprus and

Read the stories of Arabian nights and prepare a note on the life of Abbasid age.
Rhodes. Abbasid reached the zenith of its glory under al Rashid. The country became prosperous and the court marked a lavish style of living. Bagdad was the greatest commercial centre of the age and seat of learning and culture in the world.

Harun Al Rashid divided the empire between the sons and nominated Al Amin as the khalifa and assigned the region of Kurasan for Al Ma’mun. This aroused the struggle for power between Al Amin and Mamun which ended in the defeat of Al Amin and his assassination in 813 CE. Though Al Ma’mun crowned as khalifa he spent his days at Merv. His absence in the capital created disorder in different parts of the khilafath.

In 819 CE. Al Mamun reached Baghdad with the instigation of his friend and adviser Ali Al Riza (the Shiah Imam). Before his death, Al Mamun declared his brother Al Muhthasim as his successor. Al Muathasim was followed by his son Al Watiq. The period of Abbasid glory ended with him.

**Compare the disorder of the Mamun’s period with the civil war of Syria and Iraq.**

*Ali Ibn Musa Al-Ridha*, also called *Abu Al-Hassan*, is commonly known as *Ali Al-Ridha* the eighth Imam of Shiite faction. The Khalifa Mamun nominated Al al-Ridha as his successor. Al-Ma’mun even changed the black Abbâsid flags to green, the traditional colour of Shiites. Al-Ma’mun meant to appease the Shiite factions by these actions. He also ordered to mint coins with names of both Al-Ma’ mun and Ali al-Rida. Nomination of Ali Al Riza by Ma’mun gave rise to many troubles in the Khalifath.

**THE ABBASID ADMINISTRATION**

In Abbasid administrative structure the apex body was Khalifa and he possessed supreme power. Under the first five Khalifaths of Abbasids, the government continued more or less autocratic just like the Umayyads. In the period of great khalif Al Ma’mun, the government by the will of one man gave way to semi democratic one. A regular council of the state

**Conduct a discussion on the administration of the Abbasids and the modern states. Compare the representation of people in the khilafath under early Abbasids and under the Pious caliphs**
representing every community owing allegiance to the khalif was introduced. The representatives of the people enjoyed perfect freedom of expression. The Khalifa was assisted by a number of royal officials in the affairs of the state and day-to-day life of the palace.

Next to Khalifa stood the wazir which had a Persian origin. Grand wazir was practically the lieutenant of the khalifa and controlled the whole affairs of the state. He presided over the council of heads of various departments of the state. The internal peace was maintained by the department of Sahibu Shurtha (Police).

Khilafath was divided into several provinces. Each province was under an officer called Amir (governor) who was appointed by Khalifa.

Though the postal department was designed to serve the state it also handled private correspondence. Each provincial capital was provided with a post office. Imperial capital was linked to provincial capitals with convenient roads. The system of relay covered the route which conceded horses, camels and mules in many places. Pigeons were trained and used as letter carriers. Sahibul Barid was the post master of the province. He not only superintended the work of postal department but also kept Khalifa informed of all important provincial matters. Postal department also worked like the intelligence department.
According to Ibn – Khaldun the annual land tax paid by al-Sawad (lower Iraq, ancient Babylona) in cash, other than what was paid in kind, amounted in the days of al-Mamun was 278 Lakh dirhams; by Khurasan 280 Lakh by Egypt 23,040,000, by Syria – Palastine 14,724,000 and by all the provinces of the empire, 331,929,008 dirhams exclusive of taxes in kind.

History of the Arabs: P.K. Hitt P. 321

When al Mansur died the central treasury contained 600 lakh dirhams and 140 lakh dinars; when al Rashid died it had over 9000 Lakh and at the death of al-Muktafi (908 CE) the public treasures including jewellery, furniture and real estate amounted to 1000 Lakh dinars.

( History of the Arabs: P.K. Hitt P. 321.)

The Abbasid Khalifas were able to satisfy all needs of the state through the revenue. Land tax was the main source of Abbasids revenue. The tax was paid in cash or in kind. Tithes (income tax), Khums, Jiziya, Al fayy, etc were other sources of revenue.

The main sources of revenue in Abbasid period were:

- Land tax (kharaj)
- Tith or income tax (Ushr, Zakath, Sadakath)
- Tax levied upon mines and pastures
- Customs duties
- Tax on non Muslims in lieu of military service (jiziya)
- Salt tax and fishery tax
- Tax paid by shop keepers for the use of public places
- Tax upon mills and factories
- Import tax
- Tax on luxurious goods
The Abbasid Khilafath the Cosmopolitan Empire

Ghanima and Al-Fay

Islam divides spoils or booty into two categories, namely: ‘Ghanimah’ and ‘Fay’. If the spoils are obtained by actual fighting, the same are called Ghanimah. But if they are obtained without fighting i.e. the enemy surrenders or flees away, then they are called Fai. Different rules and regulations govern the treatment of Ghanimah and Fai and hence the same are dealt with separately.

“To the victor belongs the spoils” was a popular slogan not only among the heathen Arabs of the pre-Islamic period but also among many other nations of the world. So the common practice before the advent of Islam was that the entire booty obtained in a war was either divided by the victorious army or was usurped by the tribal chief or the king for his own benefit. Islam brought about a great change in this outlook. It restricted the claim of the conquering soldiers to four-fifth of the booty while one-fifth of it was reserved for the Islamic state to be used for the common benefit of the nation. During the reign of Caliph Umar this division of the spoils between the Islamic state and the conquering army was further restricted to chattels and movable assets. It was decided by consensus that the lands conquered from the enemy should be kept in the ownership of the state for the common benefit of the existing and future generations instead of dividing the same among the soldiers who took part in the fight.

Judiciary

The judicial administration of Abbasid khilafat had some peculiar features. The chief Qasi of Bagdad received the title “Qazi Al Kuzath”, which was introduced by Harun Al Rasheed. Abu Yusaf, the greatest scholar and disciple of Imam Abu Hanifa was the first Qasi Al Kusath who began his career under Al Mahdi. Qazis were well versed in Quran and Islamic scriptures. The cases of non Muslims were decided by their own ecclesiastical heads or magistrates.

Conduct a discussion on the need of the judiciary system
Imam Abu Yusuf

Yaqub ibn Ibrahim al-Ansari, better known as Abu Yusuf (735-798 CE) was a student of Imama Abu Hanifa (d.767) who helped spread the influence of the Hanafi school of thought. His writings and the government positions he held.

He served as the chief judge (qadi al-qudat) during reign of Al Rashid. His most famous work was *Kitab al-Kharaj*, a treatise on taxation and fiscal problems of the state. Abu Yusuf lived in Kufa and Bagdad. Abu Yusuf was raised poor but with a ferocious appetite for knowledge. His mother disapproved of his academic desires, insisting that he master some trade (the art of tailoring, according to some source) so as to help make ends meet. While it cannot be fully verified, stories suggest that he complied with his mother’s wishes, but also kept up his academic studies. His talent and commitment was eventually recognized by his teacher who became his mentor with Abu Yusuf as his star pupil. He is portrayed as an incredibly studious individual who was unceasing in his pursuit for knowledge and legal understanding. It is to be noted that he studied religious law and traditions in Kufa and Medina under a number of scholars including Abu Hanifa, Malik bin-Anas, al-Layth bin Sa’d and others. Under the guidance of Abu Hanifa, Abu Yusuf achieved incredible success and helped develop and spread the influence of the Hanafi school of thought.

Abu Yusuf lived in Kufa until he was appointed as the chief Qadi in Baghdad. What is known is that Abu Yusuf became a close acquaintance of caliph al-Rashid, who eventually granted him the title of Grand Qadi, or Qadi i-Qudat; the first time such a title had been conferred upon someone in Islamic history. While at the time it was meant as an honorific title, the Caliph frequently consulted Abu Yusuf on legal matters and financial policy and even bestowed upon him the ability to appoint other Qadis in the empire. This made the position of Grand Qadi equal to Chief justice of the modern-day. Abu Yusuf held the position of Grand Qadi until his death in 182 AH/798 CE.

Prepare a chart showing the various departments of the Abbasid period.
The Chief duties of Khazis were:
- Hearing and giving verdiction of various cases
- Acting as guardian for orphan, lunatics and the needy
- Imposing punishment on violators of religious laws
- Appointing judicial deputies in various places
- Presiding congregational prayers

The Qasis were regularly paid in cash and received up to 4000 dirhams per month in the time of Al Mamun.

Military
The Abbasids maintained a well organised military which was divided into many wings. Under early Khalifas Khurasani troops were the back bone of the military. The Arab troops were divided into the north Arabian (Mudaraite) and the south Arabian, (Yemenites). Al Muhthasim formed a new division made of Turks. The rank of officers were classified as Arif, Khalifa, Qaid, Amir etc.

The army consisted of infantry, cavalry, archers, the naphtha fireman (Annafathun), the hole makers and labour corps. The Abbasid army was supported by another wing consisting of engineers, physicians and surgons. Besides salary the troops got a share of booty (ghanima) according to the Islamic law.

Abbasid Khalifas gave due interest on the formation of navy. The sailors were at first drawn from Phoenician towns. Later it was from Syria and Egypt and the coast of Asia Minor. The Arab ships were of a larger size than the Byzantine ships. The general in command of the fleet was called Amirul Bahar from which the word admiral is derived. Mercantile navy was equally efficient.
Allama Iqbal has summed up the Muslim contribution to science in following words:

“Science was not brought into being by the west,
In essence it is nothing but the delight that lies in creation
If you ponder well, it is the Muslims who gave it life;
It is a pearl that dropped from our hands.
When the Arabs spread over Europe,
They laid the foundation of learning and science.
The seed was sown by these dwellers of the desert,
But the harvest was reaped by the west.
The spirit is from the flask of our ancestors.
Bring the fairy back, because
She hails from our Caucasus” (History of Islam pp.661-62)

The Abbasid age is considered as the age of civilisation and intellectual awakening. Al Mansu opened a translation centre for the preservation of ancient knowledge. Harun Al Rashid completed the work of his predecessor. Books and other learning material were collected by Mamun from various countries. It was nothing but the light house of knowledge in Abbasid age.

**Baithul Hikma**

Astronomy, Mathematics, Medicine, Philosophy, Alchemy, Geography and all other branches of knowledge were transmitted and studied in Baithul Hikma. The scholars from different countries reached Baith ul Hikma. The Abbasid admitted the scholars of different culture, language and region without considering caste or creed.

*There is no disease that Allah has created, except that He also has created its treatment* (Saheehul Bukhari 71.582).
**Medicine**

In Islam, the study of medicine began with the Prophet. Islam enjoyed cleanliness and hygiene such as there is much in holy Quran and Sunna which forms the basis of faith. The Prophet held that to visit the sick is an act of piety. Medical care was thus promoted by the Muslims as a matter of religious obligation. The science of medicine and surgery, the best index of peoples’ genius and the severe test to the intellectual spirit of faith were attained higher degree by Abbasids. Medicine had undoubtedly reached a high degree of excellence among the Greeks, but the Arabs perfected it and brought it close to modern standard. The Abbasids set up pharmacy and were the founders of institutions such as mental hospital, institution for the blind and institution for special diseases.

Al Musaiwiyah was the first writer who produced an original work on medicine in Abbasid Era. His work Firdousul Hikmath deals with various branches of medicine. Yahanabbi Musawiyeh wrote the first treatise in Arabic on eye deceases.

**Al Razi**

Aboobacker Mohammed Bin Zakariya Al Razi (D. 925 CE) was the greatest physician of Abbasid period. He wrote Kithabul Mansoori, a ten volume of treatise dealing with Greek medicine. Al Havi is his famous work in 10 volumes. He was the first physician who wrote on paediatric medicine. He believed in the curative values of sunlight and fresh air. He founded a hospital at Bagdad. Al Judari Wal Hasb is another work of al Razi.

**Ali Al Thabari**

Abul Hassan Ali Ibn Sahl Rabban Al Thabari (D. 858 CE) was one of the most renowned scholar in Abbasid age. The Abbasid khalif Al Muthasim took him into the service of the court where he continued under Al Muthavakkil.

His works are:

- Firdousul Hikma (paradise of wisdom)
- Thuhfathul Al Muluk (the king’s present)
- Hafsul Al Saheeh (the proper care of health)
- Kithabul Ruqa (the book of magic)
Abul Ali Al Hussain Bin Al Sina (Ibn Sina) known to the west as Avicenna was the most distinguished physician of Abbasid period. He was known as “the prince of physicians.” Ibn Sina believed in the value of fresh air and curative nature of sunlight. He warned against the danger of drinking water from polluted sources. With Avicenna Islamic medicine reached its peak. “The Canon of medicine” is his masterpiece.

His works are:
- Qanun fi Thibb (The Canon of Medicine)
- Kithabu Shifa un Nafs (The Book of Healing)
- Danish Nama – i – Ali (The Book of Knowledge)
- Andar Danish – i –Rag (On the Science of Pulse)
- Nozahat Al Majlis (Persian Poetry)

Ali ibn Al Abbas Al Majusi (Al Majusi) was considered as one of the three greatest physicians of the age. He was the court physician of the Ada Ud Dawla of Buwahhid dynasty.

His works are:
- Kamil Al - Sina’ah Al Thibbiyah (Science and Practise of Medicine)
- al - Kithabul Maliki (The Royal Book)
Mathematics
Islam encouraged its followers to maintain proper accounts. During the eighth century Abu Abdullah Mohammed Ibrahim Al Fazari translated “Sidhantha” a book of Indian mathematics from Sanskrit into Arabic. Through this Indian numerals were transmitted to Arabs. Mahmud Bin Mohammed Baqi wrote detailed commentary on the book of Euclid.

Al Khwarizmi
Mohammed Bin Musa Al Khwarizmi who flourished during the 9th century is known as “The Father of Algebra”. His outstanding work on Algebra is *Hisab Al Jabar wal Muqabalah*. It was through his work that Europe became aware of Indian and Arabic numerals.

His works are:

- *Kithabul Jama Wa Thafriq* (Elements)
- *Kithabul Jabar Wal Muqabalah* (The calculation of integration and equation)
Omar Al Khayyam

Omar Al Khayyam was a versatile genius who flourished in Seljuk period. He was a great poet. He prepared a calendar (Thaquim Jalali). He contributed in the field of Algebra.

Al Biruni

Al Biruni produced some important works on mathematics. He made a special study of the problems of numerical series and the determination of radius of the earth. He stayed in India for twenty years studied Sanskrit and produced his work on History ‘Kitab ul Hind’. He was charmed by Hindu Philosophy.
Astronomy

Ma’mun ordered to translate Sidhanda which gave great impetus to the astronomical studies. During the first half of the ninth century first regular astronomical observations were erected at Jundishapur (south west of Persia). An observatory was set up at Shamassiyah on the plane of Thadmore.

Al Chemy

In the study of chemistry the Arab introduced objective experiment. The father of Arabic chemistry was Jabir Ibn Hayyan, who flourished in Kufah. Western tradition credits him with the discovery of several chemical compounds Kithabul Rahma (the book of Mercy), Kithabul Thajmi (the book of concentration), Kithabul Zibag Al Sharki (the book of eastern mercury) etc are important works of Jabir Bin Hayyan.

He produced more than 22 works. But only five of them survived.
Another notable figure in the field of chemistry was Al Razi. His work Kithabul Asrar (The Book of Secrets) became a chief source of knowledge on chemistry and it was translated to many languages.

**Historiography**

In the domain of history Abbasid age made great progress. Baladuri, Al Masudi, Ibnul Athir And Tabari, Hamadani were the outstanding historians of this period. Baladuri who flourished under the Abbasids was a prominent historian. He wrote, ‘Futuh Al Buldan’ (history of conquest).

*Al-Baladhuri*

Ahmad Ibn Yahya al-BaladhuriTitle al-Baladhuri 892 CE. , the author of Kitab Futuh al-Buldan and Ansab al-Ashraf was a ninth-century historian. He was one of the eminent historians of his age, and spent most of his life in Baghdad and enjoyed great influence at the court of the caliph al-Mutawakkil. He traveled in Syria and Iraq, compiling information for his major works. He is regarded as a reliable source for the history in the early days of Arabs.

*Al Tabari*

Abu Jahfar Mohammed ibn Jarir Al Tabari (832 – 923 CE) who was born in Tabaristan, wrote Tarikh Al Rasool wal Mulk (Annals of the apostles and kings). His another work is Thafsirul Quran (commentary on Quran). Tabari arranged the events chronologically, tabulating them under the successive years of Hijra. His monumental work on universal history, the first complete work in the Arabic language, served as a source for later historians such as Miskawayah, Ibnu Al Athir And Abu Fida.
Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari.

Abu Ja’far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (224–310 AH; 839–923 CE) was a prominent and influential Persian scholar, historian and exegete of the Qur’an from Tabaristan, modern Mazandaran in Iran. Even today he is better known for his expertise in Islamic sciences (Qur’anic commentary and law) or history. He has been described as “an impressively prolific polymath. He wrote on such subjects as poetry, lexicography, grammar, ethics, mathematics and medicine.” His most influential and best known works are his Qur’anic commentary known as Tafsir al-Tabari and his historical chronicle Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk (History of the Prophets and Kings), often referred to Tarikh al-Tabari.

Ali ibn al-Athir

The Complete History and The Lions of the Forest acknowledge about the Companions Abu al-Hassan Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad a-Shaybani, better known as Ali ‘Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari, commonly known as al-Athir. Ibn al-Athir belonged to the influential and big Arab tribe Banu Bakr, who lived across upper Mesopotamia. Al-Athir lived a scholarly life in Mosul, often visited Baghdad and for a time traveled with Saladin’s army in Syria. He later lived in Aleppo and Damascus. His chief work was a history of the world, al-Kamil fi at-Tarikh (The Complete History). He died in the city of Mosul.

Al-Masudi

Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Ali al-Mas’udi (born c. 896 CE, Baghdad, died September 956 CE, Cairo, Egypt), was an Arab historian and geographer. He is sometimes
referred to as the Herodotus of the Arabs. Al-Masudi was one of the first to combine history and scientific geography in a large-scale work, *Muruj adh-dhahab wa ma’adin al-jawhr* translated *The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*, a world history. Another work *Isat-Tanbih wa-l-Ishraf* (“Notification and Review”). Al Masudi mentions his association with many scholars in the lands through which he travelled. His journeys took him to most of the Persian provinces, Armenia, Azerbaijan and other regions of the Caspian Sea; as well as to Arabia, Syria and Egypt. He also travelled to the Indus Valley, and other parts of India, especially the western coast; and he voyaged more than once to East Africa. He also sailed on the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean and the Caspian Sea.

**His works are:**

- *Muruj adh-dhahab wa ma’adin al-jawhr* (*The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*)
- *al - Tanbih wa-l-Ishraf*

**Collect the details of the efforts of early scholars of geography to measure the size of earth.**
Philosophy

Philosophy was flourished during this period. The following eminent philosophers contributed a lot in the field of philosophy and culture.

Al Kindi (d 873 CE)

Abu Yusaf Al Kindi known as “The Philosopher of Arabs” was the first Muslim thinker who systemised the study of philosophy among the Muslims. Al Kindi was more than a philosopher, he was an astrologer, alchemist, optician, music theorist and a professor in Baithul Hikma. Not less than 361 works are ascribed to him but most of them have been lost.

Al Farabi (d. 950 CE)

Mohammed Ibn Tarkan Abu Nasar Al Farabi was born in Trans Oxiana and lived in Bagdad. Al Farabi composed various psychological, political and metaphysical works of which the best known are the Risalath Fususul Hikam (epistle containing bezels of wisdom), Risala Fi Ara Ahl Al Madeena Wal Fadialah (epistle on the opinions of the people of the superiors city) and Al Siyasth Al Madaniya (political regime).

Ibn Sina (980 – 1037 CE)

Ibn Sina memorised the Quran at the age of 10. He tried to harmonise philosophy with religion, and explained religious dogmas in the light of reason. Some of his works are:

- Kithab Shifa Al Nafs (the book of the healing of soul) is the philosophical and scientific encyclopaedia of Ibn Sina
- Kithab Al Najath Al Nafs (the book of salvation of soul)
- Kithab Al Isharat Wal Thanbhihath (the book of hints and warning)

Al Ghazali

Abul Hamid Bin Mohamed Al Ghazali (1058-1111 CE), generally called Hujjath ul Islam, was the most richly endowed thinker of Islam. Within Islam he is considered to be a mujaddid or renewer of faith. Ghazali’s most famous book is Ihya ul Ulumuddin (revival of the science of religion). Ihya ul Ulumuddin is compiled in Persian and translated into many languages including Arabic, English, Turkish, Urdu and Malayalam. His works were in Persian and Arabic. More than 400 books attributed to him and Ihya is the most celebrated one.
Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058–1111), known as Al-Ghazali or Algazel to the Western medieval world, was a Muslim jurist, philosopher and mystic. Al-Ghazali has sometimes been referred to by historians as the single most influential scholar after the Prophet Muhammad within Islam he is considered to be a renewer (Mujaddid) of the faith, who, according to tradition, appears once every century to restore the faith of the community. His works were so highly acclaimed by his contemporaries that al-Ghazali was awarded the honorific title “Proof of Islam” (Hujjat al-Islam). Others have cited his opposition to certain strands of Islamic philosophy as a detriment to Islamic scientific progress. Besides his work that successfully changed the course of Islamic philosophy—the early Islamic NeoPlatonism that developed on the grounds of Hellenistic philosophy for example, was so successfully criticised by Al-Ghazali that it never recovered—he also brought the orthodox Islam of his time in close contact with Sufism. It became increasingly possible for individuals to combine orthodox theology (kalam) and Sufism, while adherents of both camps developed a sense of mutual appreciation that made sweeping condemnation.

**Mutazila**

During eighth century Wasil Bin Ata (D. 748 CE) founded the rationalistic school of the Mutazila. They rejected fatalism. They affirmed that all knowledge is attained through reason and must necessarily be so obtained. They recognise the supremacy of human intellect and believed that man could attain knowledge of Allah through his own reason. They held that The Holy Quran is the created word of God. Khalifa Al Mamun was an ardent advocate of Mutazila doctrine. He proclaimed Mutazila doctrine as the official religion of the state in
827 CE. This was continued by his successor. Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal was brutally persecuted by the officials of Mamun on his rejection of Muthazila beliefs. Mamun founded Mihna – the inquisition court which was to persecute the criticisers of Mutazila.

**Al Ashari**

Abu Hasan Ali Al Ashari (D. 935 CE) affirmed the supremacy of fate. He established the Muslim scholastic school of *kalam*. The school advocated the middle way between the rationalists and the traditionalists. They held the Quran as divine speech, uncreated and eternal. But the presentation in Arabic script for human understanding is a created work. This school held that divine quality such as wisdom, power and mercy were like the world of Allah eternal and uncreated. The Nisamiya school propagated Ashrafiya philosophy.

**Theology**

The early attention and interest of Arab Muslims towards the branches of learning was due to religious impulse. In Abbasid age theology developed as a branch of Knowledge. Quran was the basis of intensive theological as well as linguistic study. Next to holy Quran the Sunna, ie the deeds, utterance and silent approval of Prophet, stood as the most important doctrinal source. The Sunna was studied orally and Hadith writings were done in second century of Hijra. Though the Hadith not equally canonical with Quran, Hadith exerted and has equally great influence over the development of Islamic thoughts. According to Islamic belief Quran is revealed to Prophet Mohammed and all the words of Quaran are words of God. But in the case of Hadith it is the word of Prophet but the inspiration of Hadith from God. Hadith was approached as a discipline of knowledge and came to be known as “Ilmul Hadith” (knowledge of the tradition of the Prophet).

The Hadith(tradition) were arranged with reference to the authorities making the statements known as Musnad. In Musnad the Hadith are arranged subjectwise, those are referred a Musannaf.

**Major collection of Hadith are six known as Siha us Sitha(the six books):**

2. Saheeh Al Muslim by Imam Muslim (D 875)
3. Sunanu Abu Davud by Imam Abu Davud (D 888)
4. Jami Al Tirmudi by Imam Tirmudi (D 892)
5. Sunanu Annasi by Imam Nasai (D. 915)
6. Sunan Ibn Maja by Ibn Maja (D 886)
Al Siha us Sitha are the most authentic collections of Prophet’s tradition (Hadith). Collection of Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim ranked high and known as ‘two genuine books’ (Al Sahihain, ie authentic and authoritative). The Hadith sighted by both Bukhari and Muslim known as ‘Muthafakun Alaihi’ and stood as the most authentic record after Quran. The best known collection on masnad pattern is the collection of Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal (D 855). To identify the reliability Hadith is classified into various sections. They are termed ‘Saheeh’, ‘Hasan’ and ‘Daif’. (Zaeef).

**Islamic law and fiqh**

Islamic law is originated from Quran and Sunnah. So the Muslim regarded these laws as sacred and divine. Fiqh was the science through which the canon law of Islam (Shariah) communicated to later generations. The holy Prophet died in 632 CE. In his life time Muslims approached Prophet and clarified their doubts. But the demise of the Prophet and the expansion of Islamic republic necessitated a codified law. They approached Quran and Sunna to settle the problem. Islamic laws are developed because of deliberation and speculation of religious scholars. During the period of early Abbasids the principles of Islamic law were formulated and four Sunni schools came to be established. Besides Quran and Hadith Muslims depend upon two other subsidiary sources of law namely ‘Ijma’ and ‘Qiyas’. Ijma means the consensus of opinion of scholars while Qiyas denote analogical deduction of a scholar.

The traditional discourse between the Prophet and his appointee as Qadi over Yeman, Muadh ibn Jabal, sums up the Magna Carta of Islamic legal fundamentals:

Prophet: How will you decide when a question arises?

Muadh: According to the Book of Allah.

Prophet: And if you not find therein?

Muadh: According to the Sunnah of the Messenger of God.

Prophet: And if you not find therein?

Muadh: Then shall I apply my own reasoning.
1. **Imam Abu Haneefa’s school**
   In Iraq Imam Abu Haneefa (D 767) formulated the principles of jurisprudence. He gave prominence to the doctrine of ‘Qiyas’. Some jurists were of the opinion that the validity of ‘Ijma’ as a source of law was restricted to the companions of prophet. But Imam Abu Hanifa held that it is valid for the people of every age. He and his disciple including Abu Yousafa (Qazi Al Kuzath in the time of Harun Al Rasheed) worked on this project for 30 years and produced a comprehensive code of law. Unfortunately that code of law was lost and now only shorter version is available.

2. **Imam Malik’s school**
   Another school of law was developed under Imam Malik ibn Anas(Imam Malik, D 795 CE) at Madina. He laid great emphasis on the traditions and usages of holy Prophet and the precedents established by his companions. He attached particular weight to the customs and usages prevailing at Madina. He introduced the concept of ‘maslihat’ (public welfare) as the basis of analogical deduction. Imam Malik added ‘Istidlal’ (Juristic deduction) as the fifth source. Al- Muwatta is the work of Imam Malik.

3. **Imam Shafi’s school**
   In Syria another school of law sprang up under Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi (Imam Shafi D 819 CE). This school kept a middle line between the upholders of individual opinion and upholders of tradition. Imam Shafi belonged to the Quraysh family and studied under Imam Malik. He accepted only such traditions (Hadith) that could be projected back to holy Prophet. Imam Shafi allowed greater scope to ‘Ijma’. He was the first scholar who wrote on ‘Usul’ (principles of law).

4. **Imam Hambal’s school**
   Imam Ahmed Bin Hambal(d.855 CE) founded another school of law at Bagdad. He was a student of al-Shafi. This school represents uncompromising adherence to Hadith. Imam Ahamad was responsible for the defence of Sunnah against the Mutazila innovations. He was subjected to inquisition (mihina) and put in chains under Mamun. Imam Hambal collected 50000 tradition in his book Masnad.

**The social life under Abbasid rule**
The Khalifa was the supreme head of the khilafath. The Khalifah, the kith and kin of the Khalifa and high officials of khilafath lived in pomp and pleasure. Abbasid ladies like
Khaizuran, Ulayya, Zubaida and Buran even participated in the political affairs of the state. But towards the end of the 10th century women lost their position in the Abbasid society.

Petty officials, merchants and talented persons were the middle class of the age and constituted the middle class. Rich merchants had important position in Abbasid society. The transition of power from the hand of Umayyad to Abbasids was a great help to trade and commerce. The Abbasid Khalifa gave support to the progress of trade. Basara, Jeddah,

Dhimmis: Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians were considered as dhimmis.

Tunis, and Alexandria were great trade centres. The life of common people of Abbasid Khilfath was better than the life of medieval Europe and in any other part of the world. They were not brutally treated. The enslavement of ordinary people was not existed. Though they lived with limited life conditions they were free citizens. They were not denied the judicial access and royal helps. The life of slaves was just below to that of the common people. Slaves were mostly used for house hold purpose. The public works were also handled by the slaves. The Abbasid society was a cosmopolitan one. Arabs, Persians, Turks, Berbers, Kurds, Armenians, Greeks etc formed Abbasid society. The major religion was Islam. But Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and other religious people lived harmoniously. The Arab Muslims and Mawalis lived together. Dhimmis, Mawalis, Kharijites, Shias and Arab Muslim were
appointed to the royal services. The door of high posts were opened to all without any distinction. Through the accommodation of different sects under their contribution made the Abbasid Caliphate a Cosmopolitan Empire.

Collect the details of the status of women under Abbasids from book ‘History of Arabs’ (chapter XXVI) and compare it to the status of women in our society.

Music and Sculpture
Under Abbasids musical activities were promoted and patronised. Mahdi patronised Abdulla Bin Wahab and Basbas (Female singer). Dananir, a female singer enjoyed the patronage of Yahya Bin Barmak. The greatest musician of Abbasid age was Ibrahim Al Mosule, who flourished under Harun Al Rashid. He also served under Al Mamun and Muthawakil. Ibnu Jami, Bazal, Zalzal, Yunas Al Khathib etc were the prominent figures in the field of music under Harun Al Rashid. Abbasid khalifs and the relatives also proved their capacity in the field of music. Ibrahim Bin Mahadi (a step brother of Harun Al Rasheed), Khalif Al Watiq, Muntasir, Mutazz, Mutamid, Princes Olaiyah etc proved their musical ability in different style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of scholar</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al Masudi</td>
<td>Meadows of gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Farabi</td>
<td>1. Kithabul Musical Kabeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Style in Music</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. On the Classification of Rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahammed Al Qwarismani</td>
<td>Keys of Science (Theory of Music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Sina</td>
<td>Kithab-us- Shifa (Dealt Healing properties of music Book of Sufficiency in Music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibnu Al Haithm</td>
<td>Introduction to Harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam Ghazali</td>
<td>Music and Ecstacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most scholars of Abbasid period were either musician or wrote on music. Polo, chess, archery, horse riding, hunting etc became popular games in this period. The literary gathering was another attraction of the age. The aim of such gathering was to find out truth. It was a great chance to book sellers and they occupied an important position in the society. A number of cottage industries flourished in different parts of the khilafath. Rugs, tapestry, silk, cotton and woollen fabrics, satin, sofa and cushion as well as other articles of furniture and kitchen were made here. Khalifas gave proper attention to agriculture field. It was the main source of revenue. The improved irrigation facilities was great support from the side of the Khilfath.

Islam looked with disfavour on any representational art which savoured of idolatry. Therefore there was no painting and no painters in early days of Islamic rule. The Abbasid khalifa Al Mansur set up the dome of his palace with the figure of a horse man. Al Amin designed his pleasure boats like lions, eagles and dolphins. The Samarrah palace was decorated with exquisite frescos of female figure by Al Mustasam. Al Muthavakkil appointed Byzantine painters in his court.
Calligraphy

Calligraphy developed as a decorative art and through it the Muslims sought a channel of aesthetic expression. The great calligraphist Ali Bin Ubaida Al Rihani was patronised by Khalif Al-Ma’mun.

He invented the style of Raihani script. Ibn Muqla, Ibn Al Sitri, Yaquth Al Musthasmi etc were great calligraphist of the age. A college of calligraphy was set up in Qayrowan.
Architecture
The age of Abbasids was renowned for its architectural development. The Abbasids capital Bagdad itself shows their dominance in the field of architecture. Bagdad was a circular city enclosed by parallel walls. Palace of Khalifa was situated at the centre. The great mosque of Bagdad was attached to the palace. Though the Abbasid capital was destroyed by Mangols the present city was built on the ruins of old Bagdad. Abbasids built a new town Samarrah, great mosque of Samarrah and the palace Jaswaq Ul Khaqani. Raqqa was the favourite residence of Harun Al Rasheed.

Abbasids Palace

Other constructions
- Khalif Al Muthavakkil: Jafriya (A Town), Royal Masjid, Masjid of Abu Dulaf.
- Adadu Dowla (Muvahid): Hospital Complex on the banks of Tigris.
- Khalif Musthansir: Mustansiriya University on the banks of Tigris.
- Ibnu Tulun (Governor Of Egypt): Ibn Tuluni Masjid.
Baths

In Islam cleanliness is a part of faith. Arabia had no baths before Prophet Muhammed. In the period of Abbasids public baths became popular not only for ceremonial ablutions and for their salutary effects, but also as resorts of amusement and luxury. The bath-house comprised several chambers with mosaic pavements and marble lined inner walls. The traveller Ibn Batuta, who visited Baghdad in 1327, found in each of the thirteen quarters comprising its west side two or three baths of most elaborate kind, each supplied with hot and cold running water.

“Cleanliness is half the faith” (Eeman) Sahib Muslim

Education

The educational system of Arabs was further improved and elaborated by Abbasids. The educational institutions were graded and comprised of elementary schools, school of senior students and institution for advanced students. The formal education of the children usually began at the age of six. The elementary schools were generally attached to mosques and kids of both sexes studied together. Reading, writing, grammar, tradition, arithmetic etc included
in the curriculum. After elementary level senior students concentrated on the syllabus of theology, jurisprudence, lexicography, rhetoric and literature.

Astronomy, geometry, philosophy, music, medicine and other studies were included in the curriculum of advanced studies. The Abbasid khalif Mamun set up an academy know as Baithul Hikma started as a translation centre. Later it served as an institution for higher studies and scholars from different parts of the world gathered here.

Other institution of the age:

Nisamiya University, Bagdad was built by Nisamul Mulk, the minister of Seljuk ruler, Malik shah. Nisamiya University served many years to propagate Ashari doctrines. They resisted the Muatazila sect. Scholars like Imam Ghazzali taught at this centre.
Mustansiriya University, Bagdad was established by Khalifa Al Musthansir. Numerous colleges were set up in various parts of the country. Each college had separate principal or head. Libraries worked as an attraction of the educational institutions. Nisamiya university and Cordova university had a huge treasure of books (around four lakhs). The library of Tripolis had three lakh books while the library of Ray had four hundred camel load of books.

Prepare a seminar paper on the social life of the Abbasid age and its influence on modern age

The Fall of Abbasid Khalifath

The Abbasid caliphate extended from 750 CE to 1258CE. During the reign of Harun Al Rashid the Abbasid empire reached the zenith of its glory and prosperity. But during the later caliphs it began to decline.

Causes for the fall of Abbasids.
- Weakness of the later caliphs
- Enimity between the Shias and Sunnis
- Dissatisfaction of the non-Arab muslims.
- Luxurious life of the later caliphs
- Failure to annex the conquered territories with the empire.
- Formation of Turkish bodyguards.
- Decay of Arab faction and their moral values.
- Undefined rule of succession.
- Epidemics.
- Economic crisis
- Establishment of petty dynasties
- Foriegn invasion (sack of Bagdad by Hulague Khan)

In 1257 CE Hulagu came to Bagdad with a huge army for destructing the Abbasid caliphate. In January 1258 the Mangols destroyed the walls of the capital and crushed the city. They looted and destroyed the immortal knowledge of the world and the wealth. The caliph was rolled up in a rug and the Mangols rode their horses over him. His sons were killed. Bagdad was depopulated.
Summary

This unit is sufficient to give an overview of the important political aspects of the Abbasid age. The unit also deals with the scientific and literary progress of the period. The rise and fall of the Barmakid family and the outstanding features of the period of Harun al Rashid and its depiction. Alif Laila wa Laila, Abbasid administrative specialties, achievements of the eminent scholars, development of the Islamic theology, and the downfall of Abbasid are also discuss in it.

Prepare a chart showing the causes for the fall of Abbasids

Prepare an album of the historical sites and scholars of Abbasid period with the title ‘My Album’. Develop ‘My Album’ by adding more pictures of the following units.

T E Questions

- Examine the establishment of Abbasid Caliphate
- Prepare a note on the scientific and literary progress of Abbasids.
- Write a note on Abbasid administration.
- Illustrate the speciality of Abbasid art and architecture.
- Examine the downfall of Abbasids.
Significant Learning Outcomes

• Familiarizes with the establishment of Fatimid empire
• Differentiates among important Muslim dynasties.
• Identifies the different causes for the emergence of dynasties of Afro-Asian region.
• Appreciates the cultural development of the region.
• Identifies Muslim institutions of the region.
• Familiarises with important Muslim scholars of the period.
• Familiarises with crusades and its impacts.
• Explains different petty dynasties.
• Illustrates different invasions like that of the Mongols.
• Familiarises with the important intellectual contributions of the period.

Major Concepts

• The Fatimid empire in Egypt.
• Downfall of Fatimids
• The Seljuks
• Intellectual contribution under Fatimids
• Madrasatul Nizamiya by Nizam-Ul-Mulk
• Imam Ghazali
• The Ayyubid Empire
• The crusades
• Salah-Uddin Ayyubi
• The Mamluks
• Mongol invasion
• Intellectual contributions of Mamluks.
The Muslims of Africa contributed much in the field of science and literature under various dynasties like the Fathimaids, the Mamluks, the Ayyoobids, the Seljuks etc. The socio-political and cultural developments occurred during 10th and 16th centuries in Africa and Asia and significant battles like the crusades are discussed in this unit.

**The Fatimid Empire in Egypt (909-969 CE)**

The Ismaili movement prepared the way for the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty in North Africa. They claimed that the Fatimids descended from Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet. The Fatimids remained in Africa for sixty years. During this period they spread their rule from Morocco to Egypt. The Fatimids came to power with the support of Berber. After the conquest of Egypt, they transferred their seat of power from Tunis to Egypt where they constructed a new capital, the city of Cairo. From 969 CE until its final disintegration in 1171CE, the Fatimids empire was Egyptian-based.
The Fatimid khilafat was a major Shia’te Khilafat established in Tunisia in 909 CE by Said-Ibn-Husayn. He was proclaimed as the ruler under the title Imam Ubaidulla-al-Mahbi (909-934 CE), the descendant of Fatimah. Ubaidullah’s successors such as his son Abu-al Qasim Muhammed al Qaim (934-946) and grandson al-Muizz (952-975) followed his policy of aggression and expansion. Under al-Muizz his chief commander Jawhar, captured Egypt and lay out a new city al-Qahira (Cairo) in 969. It became the political, cultural and religious centre of the Fatimids. The great mosque-Al-Azhar was constructed in 971 in Cairo which was developed into a historic centre of learning-Al-Azhar University.

The Ismaili Movement

The Ismaili movement represented the most radical branch of Shiism. Its beginning goes back to the death of Ali-Jafar-al-Sadiq (765CE). With his death his followers split into two groups over the issue of the succession. The majority supported his son Musa and a small group stood with his elder son Imsail. These partisans of Ismail are known as Ismailis. From this split came the distinction between Ismaili Shii and Ithna Ashari Shii.

The Red Sea Trade Route

The Fatimids succeeded in building up the Red Sea trade route as the primary artery of international (East-West) trade, thereby attracting the trade away from the Persian Gulf. Of all periods in Arab history, merchants probably enjoyed the greatest freedom of operation and the least interference from government in the early Fatimids period. Egyptian navy assured protection on the eastern Mediterranean. It opened up a way between western Europe and Islamic world. The prosperity of Fatimid Egypt became famous all over Europe.

Al Aziz Billah (975-996) was the next ruler and was succeeded by Al-Hakim (996-1021). He was a pleasure loving ruler. Al Hakim (996-1021), the third Fatimid caliph was a ruler with some eccentric behaviour. So his period is interpreted as a symptom of internal crisis. It created unrest and dissatisfaction and finally challenged the stability of the state. Under his successors this tendencies intensified which led to the decline of the empire.
Malik was a royal title assumed by the vizirs during the Fatimid period.

In the course of time the caliphate declined rapidly and in 1171 Egypt was conquered by the Ayyubids.

The main factors which caused the decline of the empire were:

- Continuous conflict between the battalions of the state and the state authorities.
- The subsequent famine occurred in the country.
- Rise of Salahudhin Ayyubi.
- The decisive policy of importing Turkish and Negro mercenary troops of Abbasids.
- The dissatisfaction of Christians under the Fatimids.

Druzes

Al-Hakim, the Fatimid caliph himself disappeared in 1021 CE under strange circumstances. His followers believed that he disappeared because of his divine power and there emerged in the course of time a religious sect- the Druzes.

Intellectual Contributions

During the Fatimid period in Egypt great impetus was given for the intellectual awakening by the Khalifas and viziers. The vizier, Ibn Killis, was an outstanding patron of learning. He established an academy and spent one thousand Dinars per month for its improvements.
During his time many famous intellectuals lived in the Fatimid court like the physician Muhammed-al-Tamimi, historians Muhammed-Ibn-Yusuf-al-Kindi and Ibn-Salamah-al-Qudai.

Some caliphs of this period were patrons of learning and men of high culture. Al-Aziz was a poet and lover of learning. He made the Al-Azhar Mosque an academy. The wealth of the Fatimid court and the encouragement given by the Khalifas to the scientists drew many scholars to Cairo. Al-Hakim’s court was fortunate to have Ali-Ibn-Yunus the greatest astronomer and Ibn-ali-Hasan-Ibn-al-Haytham, the principal Muslim physicist.

**Darul Hikma**

The Fatimid caliphs established schools, colleges, public libraries and scientific institutions. The Dar-al-Hikma (Dar-al-Ilm) was one of the most remarkable foundations of the Fathimids, which was established by al-Hakim in 1005 CE for the teaching and propagation of the extreme Shiite doctrine. Al-Hakim instituted a fund out of which an amount of 257 dinars was to be spent for copying manuscripts, repairing books and for general maintenance. The hall was connected with the royal palace and contained a library and rooms for meetings. Its curriculum comprised of Islamic subjects, astronomy and medicine. Though closed in 1119 by al-Malik-al-Afdal because of its heretical teaching, the academy survived until the advent of the Ayyubids. Ibn-al-Haytham, who was born in al-Basrah tried to measure the annual overflow of the Nile.

Prepare a seminar paper on bait-ul Hikma and Darul Hikma as centers of higher learning.
About a hundred works on Mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and medicine are ascribed to Ibn Hytham. The chief work of al-Haytham on optics was *Kitab-al-Manazir* which was influential in the development of optics in the middle ages. In his work Ibn-al-Haytham opposes the theory of Euclid and Ptolemy. Another important work composed in Egypt in the days of al-Hakim is *al-Muntakhab fi-Ilaj-al-Ayn*. (Selected material on the treatment of the eye) by Ammar-ibn-Ali- al-Mawsili. The royal library of Fatimids was instituted by Al-Aziz. This royal library attained privileged position in the cultural history of the dynasty. At the time of Al-Muntasir, the library was enriched with two lakh books and 2400 Quranic copies.

**The Seljuk Empire (1040-1100CE)**

Around the middle of the eleventh century as the Fatimid empire was entering the phase of its decline, a new empire appeared in the eastern part of the Islamic world, the Seljuks. They ruled the fertile crescent together with the Iranian lands. The Seljuks existed for a relatively short period but made a great impact on the social and cultural life of the region they ruled. The empire was the product of a mass movement of Turkish nomads from the central Asia. This was in the second quarter of the eleventh century. These nomads were led by a family called the Seljuks, which later come to refer to the entire group in 1040 CE. The Seljuks became the undisputed masters of Iran and then advanced to the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, Baghdad.

**Seljuks**

- Petty Dynasty
- Coming from Kirghiz steppes of Turkestan in 956 CE
- Seljuk was the head of clan of Turkoman Oghuz
- Tughril Beg-founder.

Tughril Beg from the Seljuk family assumed the official title al-sulthan. He is considered as the real founder of this dynasty which ruled from 1040 CE to 1100 CE. Under Tughril Beg the Seljuks became the prominent nation in Asia. He was succeeded by his nephew Alp-Arsalan (1063-1072) and the later’s son Malik Shah (1072-1092CE) cover the most brilliant period of Seljuk ascendancy over the Muslim East. In the second year of his reign Alp Arsalan (hero-lion) captured Ani, the capital of Christian Armenia, a Byzantine province. Soon after that he resumed hostilities with the everlasting Byzantine foe. In 1071 CE Alp Arsalan won the decisive battle of Manzikart and took the Byzantine emperor as the prisoner.
Alp Arsalam was succeeded by his son Malik Shah (1072-1092). His reign opened a new era in the history of the Seljuks. The beginning of his reign was disturbed by some rising which were ultimately defeated. Throughout the reign of Malik Shah Nizam-al-Mulk piloted the ship of the state in the name of the Sulthan.

Nizam-al-Mulk was an illustrious Persian vizir. He became the guiding hand throughout the administration of Alp-Arsalam and Malik Shah. All the power was entrusted with Nizam-al-Mulk. As suggested by Nizam-al-Mulk, Malik Shah called a conference of astronomers at his newly erected observatory in 1074-75 and commissioned them to reform the Persian Jalali calender (Tarikh). Nizam-ul-Mulk was a learned man. He composed Siyasat Namah as part of a competition suggested by Malik Shah.

Nizam-ul-Mulk founded a learning centre named Nizamiya (Madrasa) in 1065 CE. He wrote the famous book Siyasat-Nama. The Nizamiya was consecrated as a theological seminary of sunni Islam.

The credit must be given to Nizam al Mulk for extending the Madrasa system into other parts of Islamic world and for making the madrasa the primary teaching institution for a new sunni political and social order. Al-Ghazzali was a professor in Nizamiya for four years (1091-1095). Other eminent teachers were Baha-al-Din Ibn Jubayr and Ibn-al-Athir.

Imam Ghazzali was the greatest philosopher, scholar and sufi during the Seljuks period. At the age of 34 he was appointed as head of Madrasat-al-Nizamiya, Baghdad. He wandered about 12 years along Syria, Palastine, Hijaz etc. After that he returned to Baghdad. The
collapse of Fatimid empire paved the way for the emergence of a new Syro-Egyptian empire, founded by Salahudin (Saladin) Ayyubi.

**Ayyubid Empire (1171-1250)**

Ayyubid empire was a petty dynasty, built by Salah-Al-Din. The word Ayyubi was derived from the name of Najmudheen Ayyubi, father of Salah-al-Din. In 1171 Salahuddin decided to terminate the Fatimid Caliphate. The death of Nuruddin in 1174 gave Salahuddin a free hand and he took up the consolidation of his power in Syria. After confirming his control over Syria in 1187, he concentrated on the war against the crusaders. In that year he achieved a smashing victory over the crusaders at the Battle of Hittin which resulted in the capture of Jerusalem. This event led to the third Crusade. Salahuddin died in 1193 after consolidating the Muslim force against the crusaders.

His important achievements are:

- The victory over the Crusaders,
- The restoration of Egypt as the centre of a Muslim empire.
- Strengthening of Sunni Islam as the dominant sect in the lands of Shia dominated Fatimid Egypt.

Under his rule the Madrasa system was further expanded. Al-Azhar, once a centre of Ismaili shia education, was transformed into a bastion of Sunni orthodoxy.

After Salahudin’s death the Syrian part of his empire broke into a network of small principalities ruled by his Ayyubid relatives. But Egypt remained unified under a single ruler. Several Ayyubid branches reigned over Egypt, Damascus and Mesopotamia descended from other members of the Ayyubid family controlled over Hamath and al-Yaman. Egyptian Ayyubids were the chief branch contested with their Damascene Kinsmen for the sovereignty over Syria. The north Syrian branches were swept away in 1260 CE by the Tartar invasion.

The end of Ayyubid rule in Egypt in 1250 came about as a result of an increased recruitment of Turkish slave troops - Mamluks. The last Ayyubid ruler al-Malik-al Salih recruited them in large number.

**The Crusades**

The crusades that we refer to here are the wars fought by the Christians of Europe against the Muslims of the West Asia to capture the holy land of Palastine.
The crusades can be divided into three stages.
- A period of conquest initiated by the Christians extending to 1144 CE
- A period of Muslim reaction inaugurated by Zanjir and culminated under the Ayyubids and the Mamluks.
- A period of civil and petty wars.

Salah-Ud-Din Ayyubi and the Crusades.
Salah-Ud-Din Ayyubi was born at Takrit in 1138 CE. His father Najmuddin Ayyubi was a treasury officer under the Seljuks. Like his father Salah-Uddin also opted a military career. He soon became a distinguished lieutenant under Nur-ud-din Sangi. Salah Udin determined to send out the Christians from the Middle East. He realized that he had to build up a strong and united Muslim state to achieve this aim. So he exhorted the petty Muslim rulers to unite themselves under Nur-ud-din-Zangi.

With the demise of Nur-ud-din the unity was challenged but dissolved with the emergence of Salah ud Din Ayyubi. Keeping Egypt as his base Ayyubi aimed at the consolidation of his power in Syria. He succeeded in his effort by virtue of diplomacy and warfare. With Syria firmly in hand Salahud Din was able to concentrate on the war against crusaders in 1187. He consolidated the Muslim territories of Egypt, North Syria and Mesopotamia. The Muslims from Cairo to Baghdad gathered around him. The Muslims had made a truce with the Christians, when the truce was violated, Salah-ud-din demanded a compensation.
When the Christian refused this demand, Salah-ud-din declared war on July 1\textsuperscript{st} 1187 CE and captured Tiberias. On 3\textsuperscript{rd} July 1187 he met 20,000 Christian soldiers in the battle field Hittin which resulted in the capture of Jerusalem and restoration of that city to Islamic rule.

The fall of Jerusalem led to the third Crusade (1189-1192CE). The Christian rulers of Europe- the German emperor Frederck Barbarossa, King of France Philip Augustus, Richard I, the ‘Lion Hearted’ of England led the third Crusade.

The crusaders were able to recapture the important fortress of Acre. But they were unable to recapture Jerusalem. After hard fighting, they settled in 1192 for a truce with Salah ud Din. Salah ud Din died in the following year.

**Results of Crusades.**

The crusades resulted in far reaching consequences in the history of the world.

- It led to the occupation of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 CE.
- It saved Europe from Muslim conquest.
- The first crusade helped to enhance the power and prestige of the Pope.
- Caused to the formation of a number of religious and military brotherhoods.
- It caused great demoralization in the Christian church.
- It led to the break down of Feudalism.
- Interest in the study of Geography was stimulated.

**Mamluks in Egypt**

The Mamluks were the slave rulers, ruled over Egypt from 1249 CE to 1517 CE. It was founded by Shajjar-al-Dur, the widow of al Salih.

**Mamluks 1249-1517**

- The name indicates a dynasty of slaves
- Contains various races and nationalities
- Formed a military oligarchy
- Consolidated West Asia

Among the Mamluks the fourth ruler al-Malik-al Zahir Baybars (1290-1277) is considered as the real founder of the dynasty who deliverd the final blows to the crusaders. He was a distinguished general under Qutuz. Baybars ambition was to be a second Salah-al-Din against the crusaders. In 1263 Baybars took al-Karak from Ayyubid. Thus during the
middle of the 13th century there emerged a new regime. The Mamluks made Egypt the primary political and cultural centre of the eastern Arabs. The rise of the Mamluk in Egypt was the result of many events by the death of the Ayyubid sultan al Malik al Salih in 1249. He had created a corps of Turkish Mamluk soldiers. These Mamluks stationed in the barracks on an island in the Nile and they became known as the Bahirs.

‘Bahir’ is the common Arabic term in Egypt for the ‘Nile’

**Bahri (1250-1382 CE)**
- Originally the purchased Bodyguards of the Ayyubid sultan Al Salih.
- They were Turks and Mangols
- 24 Bahri Mamluks Army Commanders and Sultans

Baybars was succeeded by Qalawun (1279-1290 CE). Akka was the only place of military importance during the time of Qalawun. On the war preparation against Akka he was died and succeeded by his son al-Ashraf (1290-1293 CE). With the fall of Akka one of the most dramatic chapter in the history of Syria was closed.

The sack of Baghdad by the Mongols reduced the importance of Baghdad. This siege of Iraq enhanced the importance of Egypt. Hostility between the Mamluks and the Mongols created a barrier between the Arabic speaking lands under Mamluks rule and Persian speaking Mongol dominions. The military advancement of the Mongols was effectively blocked by the Mamluks.

**Contribution of the Mamluks**

Early Mamluks were efficient rulers. They encouraged scholars. The Muslims of 13th century excelled in two branches of science—medicine and astronomy. The renowned philosopher, Nasir-al Din Thusi was the head of the famous Il-Khanid observatory. Qalawun built a great hospital headed by Abu-al-Hassan who explained the process of circulation of blood. Many books were written on veterinary science in Mamluk period. Following Ibn-Maymun several physicians came from Jewish community. Al-Athar composed an Arabic work on pharmacy.

In the social sciences the main contributions under the Mamluks were in biography. The best and foremost biographers were Shams-Al-Din and Ahmad –Ibn-Muhammed ibn Khallikhans. Muhammed ibn Khallikhan’s main work was Wafgat-Ali-Ayan-Wa-Anba- Abna-Al-Zaman, which contains 865 biographies of the most distinguished Muslim personalities in history. The most eminent of Mamluk historians was Taqi-al-din Ahmed Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442 CE). His important work was Al-Mawaiz-Wa-Al Itibar-Fi-Dhikr-Al-Khitat A-Al-Athar.
Mangol Invasion
Timur Lang was born in 1336 CE in Trans Oxiana. In 1380 CE Timur initiated a series of campaigns in which he gained Afghanistan, Persia, Faris and Kurdistan. In 1393 he captured Baghdad and in the following year overran Mesopotamia.

Timur swept over northern Syria in 1400 CE. The city’s schools and mosques of the Nurid and Ayyubid were destroyed. Hamah, Hims and Balabakk fell in turn. The Egyptian army under Sultan Faraj was routed and Damascus was captured in February 1401. Of the Damascen scholars, skilled labourers and artisans, the ablest were carried away by Timur to his capital Samarkand.

Timur invaded Asia Minor, crushed the Ottoman army in Ankara on July 21, 1402 and took Sultan Bayazid I as prisoner. He captured the former capital Brusa and Smyrna. Timur died in 1404 CE. It was a relief to the Egyptian Mamluks.

Battle of Marj Dabiq
The fate of the Mamluks was determined by the Battle of Marj Dabiq, which was fought between the Ottoman Sultan Salim I and the Mamluk ruler.

The two armies met on August 24, 1516 at Marj Dabiq, north of Aleppo. Qansawh entrusted the command of the left wing to Khair Bey. The Turkish army was better equipped with modern weapons and won the battle. Thus ended the glory of Mamluks forever.

The later Abbasid period witnessed the emergence of many petty dynasties in different parts of the empire. Out of these the most powerful dynasties were the Fatimids, the Seljuks, the Ayyubids and the Mamluks. During the reign of these dynasties there were many cultural and educational developments. These dynasties contributed renowned personalities like scientists, poets, historiographers, architects etc. With the coming of the Mangols these dynasties declined.

TE Questions
1. Who was the founder of Fatimid dynasty?
2. Examine the contributions of the Seljuks.
3. Analyze the reasons and results of the crusades.
4. Evaluate the role of Darul Hikma in the intellectual development of Egypt.
5. Point out the reasons for Mangole invasion of Syria.
6. Explain the service rendered by Salahuddin Ayyubi.
7. Analyze the developments of science and literature under the Mamluks.