

10th Grade Syllabus

Unit 1: Jewish Life in Babylonia / Geonic Period (600- 1000 c.e.)

Background information: Main centers of Jewish life: Palestine and Babylonia, Jewish community in Babylonia since destruction of 1st Bet Hamikdash. As Islam spreads through the Middle East, and establishes its capital in Baghdad (750 c.e.), Babylonia becomes most important Jewish Center

Lesson #1 How was the Babylonian Jewish Community Organized?

In Babel, there were 2 unique institutions that were responsible for the political and social lives of the Babylonian Jews. We will consider how these 2 institutions cooperated and how sometimes they found themselves in conflict

1. **Exilarch (Rosh Golah):** leader of the semi-autonomous secular administration of the Jews, acted as a representative of Bab. Community to the Muslim government, chief secular official. Seen as “nasi”, treated as royalty, appointed by caliph from house of David. Headed his own court, responsible for collecting poll tax (imposed by Muslim govt.) and other taxes, appointed judges for each community
1. **Geonim:** heads of the 2 main yeshivot of Babel, Sura and Pumbedita. . Provided religious guidance for Babylonian Jews. Collected taxes for Yeshivot. Greatest influence through Responsa, which dealt with many matters (e.g. marriage, divorce, business, civil law, kashrut, biblical interpretations etc) These responsa helped unify the Jews in the Muslim empire, because they came from a universally recognized central authority, which all Jewish communities were bound to. Yarhei Kallah also helped unify the jews (2 months a year Adar, and Elul) when men would gather at the Yeshivot and learn. The geonim were also responsible for the development of Halacha, corrected and made copies of the Talmud, explained the Talmud, which spread throughout the entire Jewish community. Also fought the Karaites

Unit 1: Sources

Lesson #1:1 The Treatment of the Exilarch

The following document is a description of how the Jews of Babylon treated the Rosh Golah. He was the closest thing that the Jews had to royalty, and so they treated him as such. The Jews were very proud of their "Davidic" rulers who represented them as a people at the court of the caliph. This description was written by Rabbi Natan haBavli (10th century), an important historian who authored "Akhbar Baghdad", a History of Baghdad. R. Natan is a major source of our information on the Geonim and Exilarchs.

And from then on [after the new rosh golah is officially appointed by the caliph], he does not leave his house to attend synagogue, and the people congregate and pray with him at all times – whether on weekdays, Sabbaths, or festivals. And if he wants to go out and pursue his needs, he rides in a carriage like the carriage of the king's ministers, in splendid clothes, with up to fifteen people walking after him... and when he passes a Jew they run up to him and seize him by the hand and implore him... until there are fifty or sixty gathered about him, until he reaches his destination. And he never goes out until he is followed by his entire cohort {group of followers}, and his progress resembles that of the king's ministers.

Questions:

1. How does the day-to-day conduct of the newly appointed rosh golah reflect his status?
2. Why do you think the exilarch acts as if he were a member of the caliph's court?

Lesson #1:2 "The Installation of the Exilarch"

This document, also written by R. Natan haBavli, describes the inaugural ceremony of the Exilarch. We can see how important he was to the Jewish community by all the preparations and fuss they made over this ceremony.

The community would gather in the synagogue on Thursday. The shofar was sounded to let all the people know. And when everyone heard it, each one of them would send him a gift. . .

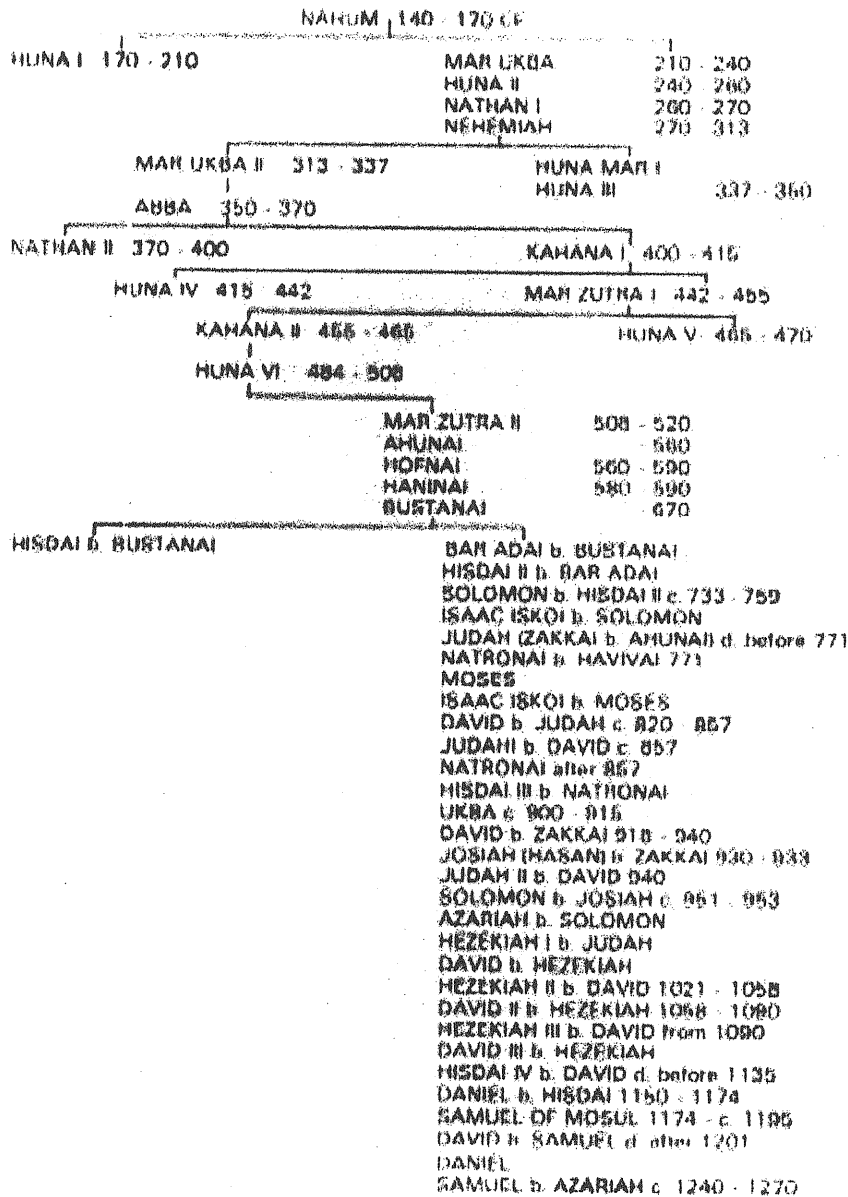
When he (exilarch) arose on Saturday to go to the synagogue, many of the prominent members of the community would join him in order to accompany him there. At the synagogue, a wooden dais has already been specially prepared for him...it was entirely covered with fine fabrics of blue, purple, and crimson silk.

When the entire congregation is seated, the exilarch emerges from the place where he was hidden... The Gaon of Sura emerges after him and sits on the dais {stage}, after bowing to the exilarch, who would return the bow. After him, the Gaon of Pumbedita emerges and likewise bows to him and sits on his left...the Exilarch in the middle, the Gaon of Sura sitting on his right and the Gaon of Pumbedita on his left... then the exilarch delivers a sermon on the Torah portion of the day or permits the Gaon of Sura to deliver the sermon. And the Gaon of Sura offers permission to the Gaon of Pumbedita (to speak in his stead) and they honor each other, until the Gaon of Sura speaks.

Questions:

1. Describe the Inauguration of the exilarch?
2. Both of the Geonim bow before the exilarch. What can we learn from this?

BABYLONIAN EXILARCHS



Lesson #2: Can the Karaite "problem" be solved?

a. Who are the Karaites? 8th century, new Jewish group headed by Anan ben David, at first they were called Ananites, but by 9th century name changed to Karaites. They relied on the written Torah, as opposed to the oral Torah and rabbinic teachings found in the Talmud. Karaism spread rapidly for some decades, causing problems for the Jewish communities in the Middle East

b. Background info: In 760, Anan is rejected by geonim and his brother Hananiah is appointed exilarch. He starts trouble and is arrested, sent to jail, meets Muslim, hatches his plan to change his religion and therefore not under rabbis jurisdiction

c. 9th century- movement really began with Benjamin al-Nahawandi, stirred up due to opposition of Gaon.

d. Karaite beliefs

1. Reject validity of Talmud (yet over time material quietly incorp. Into their practice and law)
2. Reject authority of rabbis (individual is free to interpret as he understands) (but individual interp. Are soon controlled by recognized auth Karaitic scholars)
3. Asceticism (simple, harsh life) (these tendencies slowly fade away)
4. Social Justice- opposed to economic inequality and oppression (distaste for riches overcome by rising Karaitis aristocracy)

e. Meaning behind the Name

1. To Read (scripture)
2. To call, invite (i.e. missionizing)

f. Reaction of the establishment to the Karaites

Lesson #2:1 Saadiah Gaon "The Refutation of Anan"

One of the greatest challenges for the rabbis of Babel was the Karaites, a sect of Jews who did not believe in the Oral Law. Saadiah Gaon, one of the greatest rabbis of the 10th century, wrote this document in order to discourage Jews from joining the Karaites. He offers them the truth about the beginning of the sect, which was not so respectable.

Anan had a younger brother whose name was Hananiah. Now Anan was greater than his brother in knowledge of the Torah and older in years, but the scholars of that generation were not willing to set him up as exilarch because of the unmitigated {complete} unruliness {disobedience} and irreverence which characterized him. The sages, therefore, turned to Hananiah his brother because of his modesty, shyness, and fear of God, and made him exilarch. Then Anan became incensed, he and every scoundrel that was left of the Sadducees, and he secretly determined to make a schism {break, split} because he feared the government of that day. These heretics appointed Anan as their exilarch.

This matter was made known to the Muslim authorities on a Sunday and it was ordered that he be put in jail until Friday, when he was to be hanged, for he had rebelled against the government. There, in prison, he met a Muslim scholar who was imprisoned and was to be hanged also on that very Friday, for he had rebelled against the religion of Mohammed. The Moslem gave him a piece of advice, and this is what he said to him: "Are there not in the torah commands which may permit two interpretations?" Anan answered: "There certainly are." Then he said to him, "Take some point and interpret it differently from those who follow your brother Hananiah; only be sure your partisans agree to it, and don't fail also to give a bribe to the vizier. Perhaps he'll give you

permission to speak. Then prostrate yourself and say: "My lord King, have you appointed my brother over one religion or two? And when he will answer you: Over one religion, then say to him, "But I and my brother rule over two different religions!" Then you'll surely be saved, if you'll only make clear to him the religious differences between your faith and the faith of your brother, and if your followers agree with you. Talk like this and when the king hears these things, he'll keep quiet"

Through his sharp sophistry he taught them these things, and in order to save himself from violent death and to win a victory he spent a lot of money bribing his way until the king gave him permission to speak. . . . the King was pacified and reconciled to Anan.

Questions:

1. How were Anan and Hananiah different?
2. What led Anan to decide to form a new sect and to do so in secrecy?
3. What was the Muslim's jailhouse advice to Anan?

Lesson 2:2 A Karaite Account of Anan

This account comes from "Orah Zaddikim", a bibliographical work written by Simhah Isaac Luzki, a Karaite scholar. Even though this book was written in 1757, one thousand years after the rise of Anan, it follows the older Karaite historical tradition. According to this tradition, the Karaites are the original Jews and the Rabbanites are a group of heretics who have been perverting the original Jewish religion since the days of the First Bet haMikdash. According to this history, Anan is not the founder of a heresy, but the greatest Jewish reformer.

Now this is what happened in the days of Anan the Prince, a saintly and pious man. He was the greatest and most prominent scholar of all the Jewish sages and a very distinguished student of the written law and the oral law...a very pious and humble man, perfect and upright, fearing God and turning aside from evil. He was an aristocratic prince, of the seed of David...

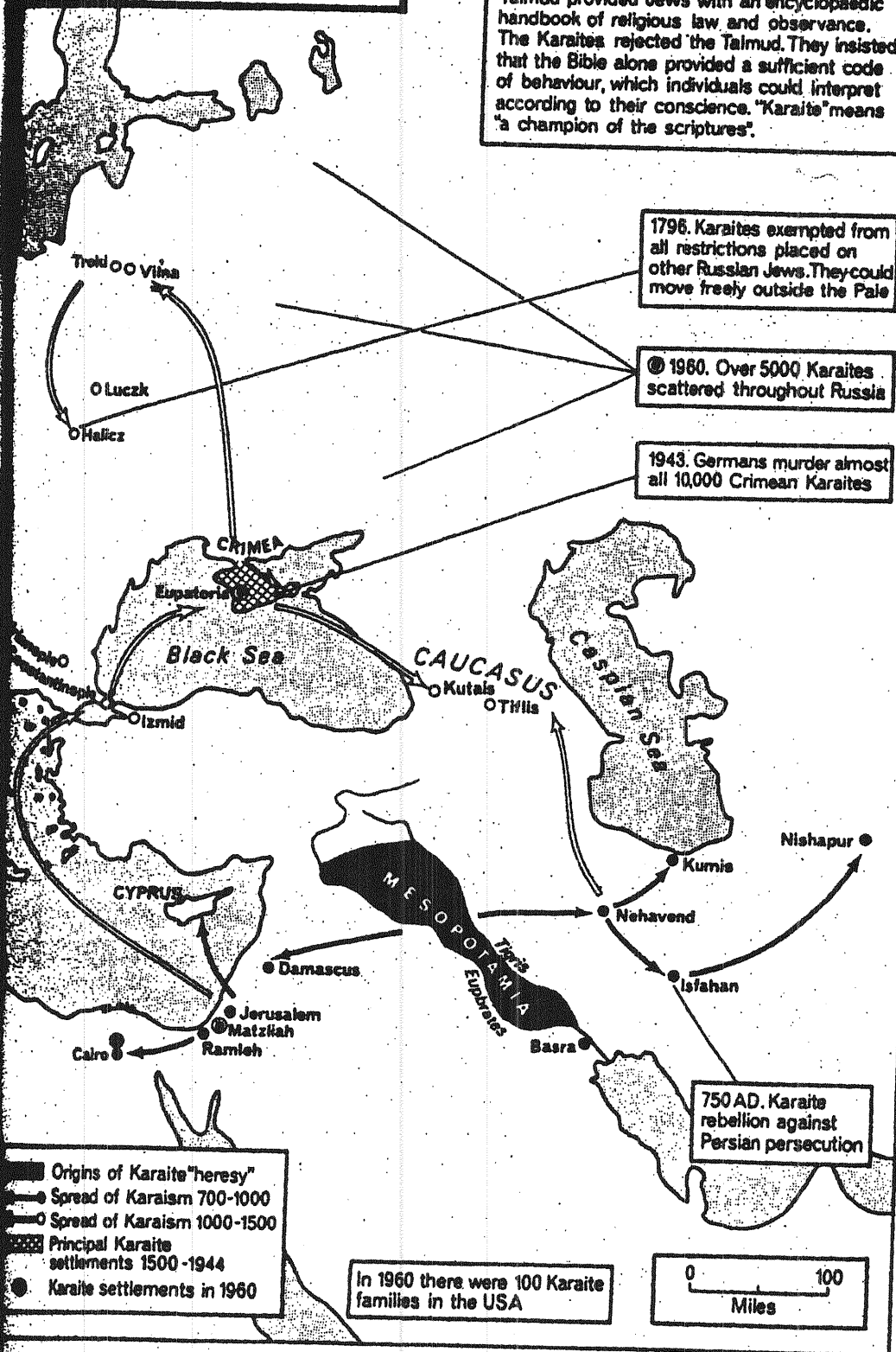
Because of his great wisdom and his unusual saintliness and modesty the whole house of Israel chose him and appointed him to be the president of the court and exilarch...

When Anan the Prince had been appointed, he clothed himself with a cloak of zeal and was very jealous for the Lord of hosts...and true Torah which had been in the possession of the Pharisees for so many generations. He desired to restore the crown of the Law to its pristine glory and began to preach in public and to argue against the oral law, to deny it and repudiate it completely. Now when the whole assembly of the Pharisees saw all this and heard this, these accursed scoundrels gathered themselves together and rose up against him and conspired to murder him. But since they feared the King too much to murder Anan, they went and defamed and slandered him to the monarch, saying that he rebelled against the law of the land and deserved death. But God, finding Anan's heart perfect, gave him favor and love in the eyes of the king, who had compassion on him and saved him from their hands so that he was left alive.

When Anan saw that the Pharisees would not hearken to his advice and would not accept his legislation, and were not willing to go back to the truth, he scorned the position of exilarch, loathed the leadership...and settled in the holy land where he built a synagogue...

THE KARAITES 700-1960

In 500 AD the publication of the Babylonian Talmud provided Jews with an encyclopaedic handbook of religious law and observance. The Karaites rejected the Talmud. They insisted that the Bible alone provided a sufficient code of behaviour, which individuals could interpret according to their conscience. "Karaites" means "a champion of the scriptures".



Lesson #3: Why did Saadia Gaon emerge as one of the most outstanding figures of the Geonic Period?

Saadia (ben Joseph) Gaon- one of the most famous of the geonim. Born in Egypt 882. After wandering and teaching in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, he came to Babylonia in 921 and became gaon of Sura in 928 (appointed by David b. Zakkai). died in 942. He was the first scholar to fuse together the Arabic and the Hebraic cultures. He is noted for his many writings in all subjects: halacha, poetry, liturgy, grammar, mysticism, polemics, Bible, and philosophy.

Contributions:

1. Grammar: a. Sefer haEgron- Hebrew dictionary and a collection of rhymed words for poets
b. Sefer Tzakhut ha-Lashon ha_Ivrit- 12 sections, each devoted to one grammatical topic (first to lay foundation for systematic study of Hebrew language)
2. Liturgy: a. Siddur which included his own piyyutim (Poems) (still used by Yemenites)
3. Halacha: Saadia authored many short essays on Halachic topics including inheritance, business, & legal documents. He also wrote many responsa – the first to be written in Arabic
4. Philosophy: First Jewish philosophical work was written by Saadia “Sefer Emunot ve-Deot (The Book of Beliefs and Opinions) in which Saadia tries to reconcile Jewish tradition and Greek philosophy (the Jews at the time felt they had to choose one or the other). The topics of the book include: reason and revelation, divine providence, miracles, prophecy, Nature of God, and evil.
5. Bible: wrote commentaries on Torah, Mishnah, and Gemara, first to translate Torah from Hebrew to Arabic

Other Geonim and their Works:

- Sherira Gaon author of *Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon* written in 986-7, by the gaon of Pumbedita from 986- 1106. Grew as a result of a series of questions sent to Sherira from the Jews of Kairoan, who were seeking some understanding of the evolution of the Mishnah and Talmudic literature.(When and how they were all compiled etc)

Lesson #3: Saadiah Becomes Gaon (928)

This text tells us the story of how Saadiah came to be the Gaon of Sura. Since he was not Babylonian from birth, the chances of him becoming Gaon were quite slim. From this text, we get a glimpse of Saadiah's character. This account was written by R. Natan ha Bavli.

When the president of the academy at Sura died, the Exilarch [David ben Zakkai] was considering whom he would induct into the office and had decided on either Saddiah or Zemah ben Shahin. The latter was a learned man of a distinguished family. The Exilarch had sent first to Nissi Naharwani to be the head of the academy but he answered: "It cannot be. The head of the academy is called the 'Light of the World' while I am blind."

"Well, then, what is your opinion in this matter?" the Exilarch said to him. "Do what you like," he answered him. The Exilarch then told him what he thought of doing, that his choice had fallen on either Saadiah or on Zemah ben Shahin. Nissi told him to appoint Zemah and not Saadiah, even though the latter was a great man and a distinguished scholar. "He fears no man, however," he said, "and kowtows to no one because of his great wisdom, his spirit, his eloquence, and his fear of sin." "Well, my decision is already made" said the Exilarch, "I have decided on Saadiah".

So they inducted him into office at that time in the presence of Kohen Zedek {gaon of Pumbedita} and all the scholars and appointed him head of the college at Sura.

Questions:

1. Describe Saadiah's character:
2. Why do you think Nissi recommended Zemah over Saadiah?

SCEPHER AEMVNOT
Sefer
DE CAPITIBVS FIDBI

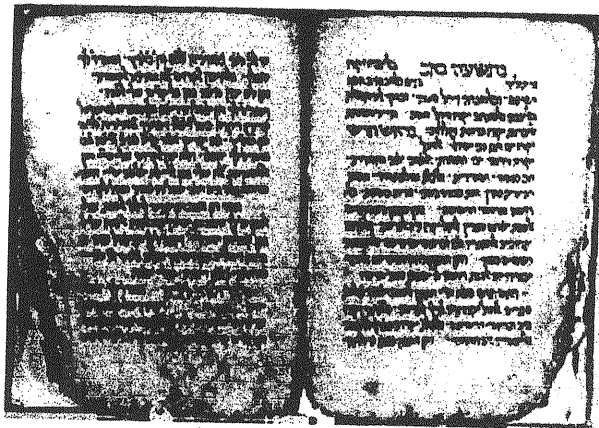
caetero R. SCAHADIAE
*principis sive philosophi
in Praga.*

Scriptura Arabica sive Hebraica cum translatione
R. Iudaicum Tibon: Theodoricus
interpretatione sive Latina
et Latina notata.



Amstelredamum
Apud Iohannem Blaeuw
an. 1647.

Sefer ha-emunot vedeat
(Saddiah's philosophy book)
Amsterdam, 1647



Siddur Saadya Gaon
15th Century

Lesson #4: What causes Saadiah's rise to power? How does he fall?

The Calendar Dispute: Palestine always had control of the calendar, determining new moons and holidays. Babylonians began to do their own figuring of the calendar. In 921/2, R. Aharon b. Meir of Palestine wanted to retain control over the calendar when a dispute erupted between Bab. and Pal. about the amount of days in the month (29 or 30). Saadia sides with Babylonia and moves there to help the rabbis try and correct R. Aharon's mistake (very serious matter, whole calendar could be thrown off because of this) Writes letters to persuade R. Aharon, but he refused to change his opinion. That year the Jews of Palestine followed their Rabbis, but everyone else followed Babel, which made Babel the undisputed center of Torah.

Saadiah's Struggle with the Exilarch: the story of this struggle reflects the character of Saadiah

Lesson #4: The Controversy (930)

Saadia became Gaon of Sura in 928. Soon after, he was engaged in a bitter controversy with David ben Zakkai, the exilarch who appointed him. The story of this struggle, written by R. Natan haBavli, reflects the character of Saadia.

Early on in Saadia's career as Gaon of Sura, he got caught into a disagreement with David ben Zakkai, the same exilarch that appointed him gaon. This disagreement between the two powerful men divided the Babylonian Jewish community and caused great

It was not long before a quarrel broke out between the exilarch and Saadia and Baghdad was divided into two parties. All the wealthy of Baghdad, the scholars of the academies and the prominent people of the city sided with Saadia.

The roots of the quarrel were some property that belonged to some men who were within the jurisdiction of the exilarch, and a large sum of money which fell to them through inheritance and which they desired to divide. They quarreled about it until they voluntarily agreed to give to the exilarch 10% of all that fell to them in order to settle the case. (10% was 700 gold pieces). So he issued the documents, sealed them, and ordered them to go to the Geonim who would confirm them {the legal papers of the exilarchs had to be confirmed by the geonim}

When the documents reached Saadia, he examined them and saw things in them that did not seem right to him. Nevertheless he spoke to the men courteously: "Go to Kohen Zedek, the gaon of Pumbedita, and let him sign this document first; then I will do so." Now he only said this in order to cover up the unseemly thing which was obvious to him but which he did not wish to make public. They did as he commanded and went to Kohen Zedek, and he put his seal on them.

After, they came back to Saadia, to have him sign and confirm them. "You already have the signature of Kohen Zedek. You don't need my signature." He refused to reveal the reason, but finally he told them what he found wrong in the papers and why they were invalid.

They returned to the Exilarch and told him about it, so he sent his son to Saadiah . . . The exilarch sent him many times, but the son did not want to reveal to Saadiah all that his father had really told him to say. He made very effort to persuade him to sign the documents so as to avoid a break between Saadiah and his father on account of this. However, when his father tired him out with all this cominh and going, he became angry and raised his hand against Saadia saying: "If you don't sign the papers as my father wants you to, I'll hit you".

No sooner had the words left his mouth than the servants of Saadiah dragged his outside the door and closed the gates in his face. With tears streaming down his cheeks ha came back to his father who asked him what happened. He told him the whole story. As soon as his father heard this he deposed Saadiah and appointed Joseph ben Jacob to be head of the academy of Sura in his stead. But Saadiah too, when he heard of the action taken, in turn excommunicated the exilarch and sent for Josiah, the brother of David ben Zakkai, to be exilarch in place of his brother

. . . the quarrel between Saadiah and the exilarch was dragged on for seven years... after which a reconciliation had taken place between them and the quarrel had ceased.

Questions:

1. What was the cause of the controversy between the Exilarch and Saadiah?
2. What can we learn about each of the two men from this story?
3. If you were in Saadiah's place, what would you have done? What if you were exilarch?

Unit 2: Mohammed, Islam, and the Jews

Lesson #5: Where did Mohammed and Islam come from?

1. Mohammed born in Mecca, 571 c.e.
2. Mecca – major center of commerce & trade
3. As a merchant, Muh. Encountered Jews and Christians in his travels through Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Yemen etc.
4. These Jewish and Christian merchants preached monotheism and it's moral and ethical demands (what god wants from his people) e.g rewards for the righteous, punishment for sinners (stealing, adultery, murder etc.) Dealing fairly with people in business, treating people kindly, especially those less fortunate
5. The arabs (pagans) were receptive to these messages. Not satisfied with paganism, yet they were not really interested in becoming Jews or Christians (Question: Why not?)
6. Muhammed heard these preachers and believed that there was only one God, but that God had revealed his message to different cultures at different times in their own languages, yet he still hadn't revealed Himself to the Arab people.
7. According to Muslim tradition, during one of Muhammed's regular meditation sessions, he had a "theophany" revelation from God, in Arabic, (through the angel Gabriel) that he was chosen to bring the word of God to the arabs. (historians believe that it was muhammed's dissatisfaction with pagan idolatry combined with his contacts with Jews and Christians that brought him to Monotheism)
8. His first converts were members of his immediate family; he then began to preach to the people of Mecca. He had some success, but most of the Meccans rejected and opposed him. (Why? he threatened the religious and economic well-being of the city. Mecca was the leading religious center of Pagan Arabia, and its shrine, the Ka'ba, was the object of an important annual pilgrimage) They accused him of being mad

9. Muhhamed decided that Mecca was to inhospitable, he could not continue preaching there. In September, 622, Muhammed and 200 followers emigrated to Medina. This event, called the "Hijra" became a very important moment in Islamic history, It is the beginning of the Islamic Era (the opening of the Islamic calendar)
10. Muhammed is warmly received in Medina. His preaching was accepted by many there and the new religion began to spread.

What are the principles of Islam?

1. The Five Pillars- the duties of the Muslims

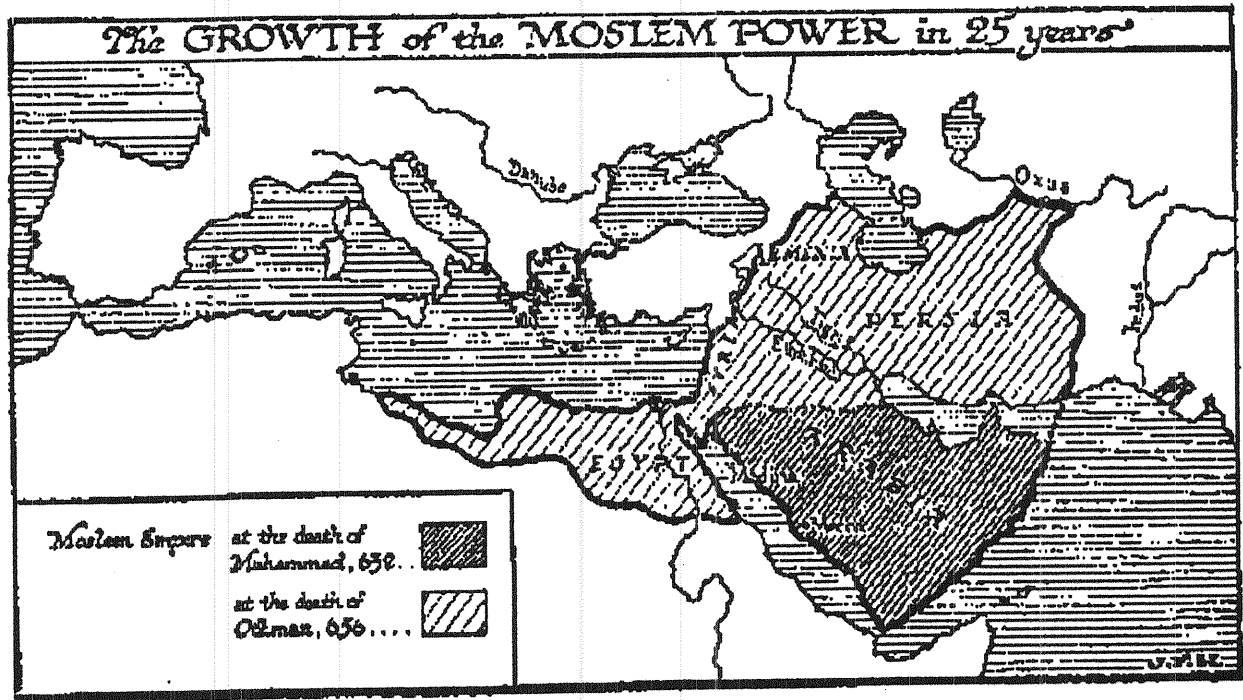
- a. Profession of Faith: a muslim is obligated to say the following statement: There is no G except Allah; Muhammed is his prophet. This has to be said out loud, it has to be understood, it has to come from the heart, said until death, recited correctly and declared without hesitation (this profession of faith is used in the call to prayer)
- b. Prayer: five times a day. Dawn, midday, afternoon, evening, and night.
- c. Charity: 2.5% of their income. \$ used to support the poor.
- d. Fasting: fast during Ramadan, which is the 9th month of the year (when they believe the Quran was revealed). They fast during the day and eat at night (month rotates through the year so the season varies)
- e. Hajj: Pilgrimage to Mecca during he 12th month of the Islamic calendar. Every Muslim is required to go on the pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime. Going to the Ka'aba
- f. 6th Pillar?? Jihad- the holy war to convert or subjugate the enemies of the Muslims

2. Books of Islam

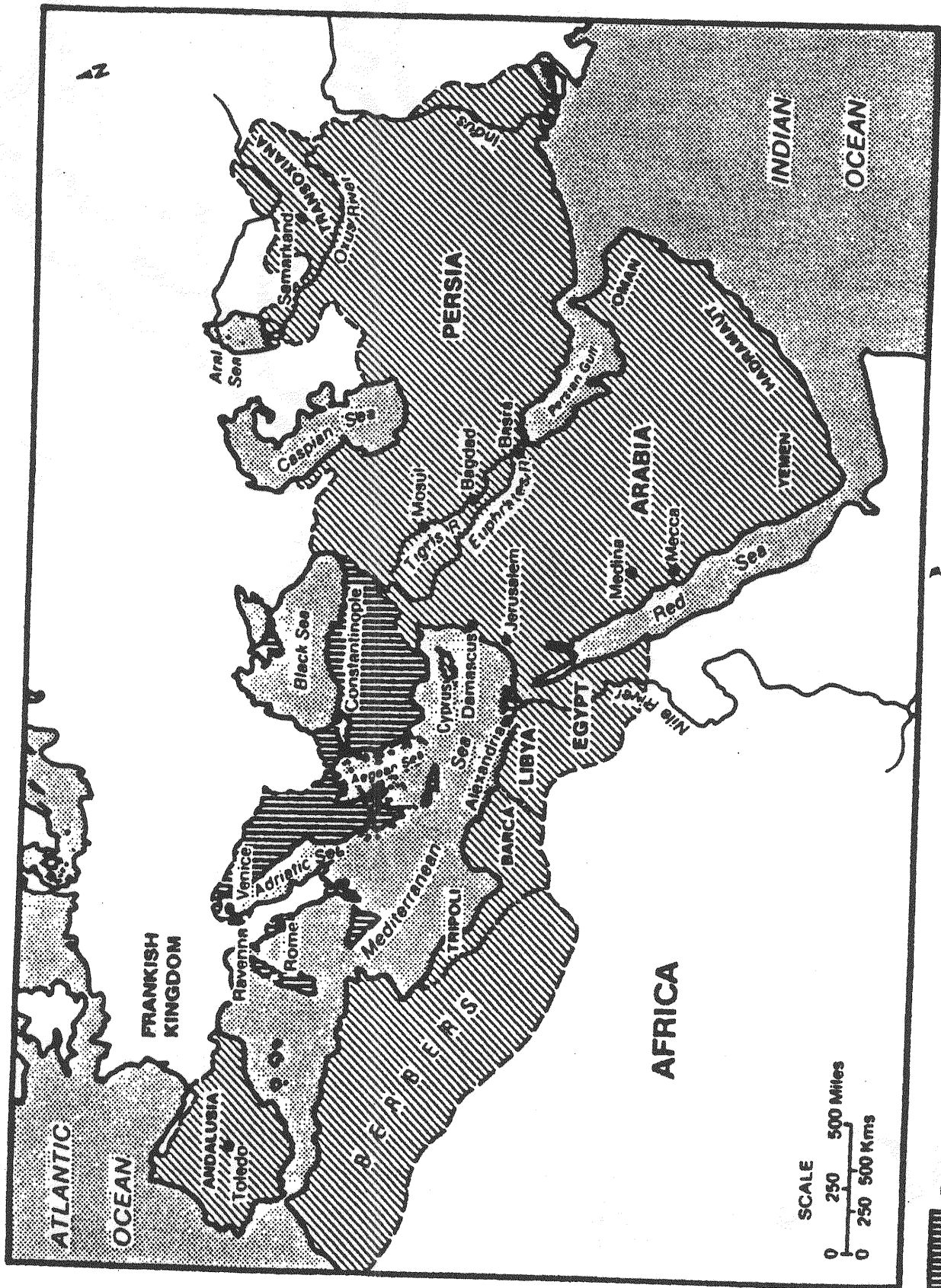
- a. Qur'an: holy scripture of Islam. Muslims believe that it was revealed to Muhammed between 610 and 632 (his death). It

contains 114 suras (chapters) arranged by their length. It is their religious guide and the source for Islamic belief. Contains all their commandments

- b. Hadith: oral tradition about Muhammed. What he said, what he did what he approved etc. These stories supplement the Qur'an
- c. Sunna: path of Muhammed- serves as a model for Muslim believers. Est. norm for religious practice



Moslem Empire, 750



Lesson #6: Muhammad and the Jews: In The Beginning...

Background info: Jews in Arabia

1. Jews living in Arabia for centuries, since biblical times.
2. Jews lived in small communities.
3. Livelihoods included: date- growing, commerce, trade, crafts, and caravans
4. By the 6th century, Jews were integrated into the life and culture of the peninsula: Spoke Arabic, organized into clans & tribes, shared/assimilated the values of the desert society. They formed alliances, feuds etc. Even though there was a high degree of assimilation, **they were still a separate group with their own customs and characteristics. The Jews held on to their own identity.** (there are numerous mentions in Arabic lit. of many Jewish practices, such as Shabbat, Kashrut etc)

This all changes with the appearance of Mohammed

Muslim- Jewish relations begin when Muhammad arrives in Medina and comes into daily, face -to- face contact with a large, organized Jewish community (before this he had met only individual Jews who had come to Mecca to do business)

1. Medina (Yathrib) settled by Jewish farmers centuries before Muhammad arrived
2. Jews formed a majority of the population and were organized in tribes; Banu 'l-Nadir, Banu Qurayzan and Banu Qaynuqa
3. Also in Medina were 2 large coalitions of Pagan Arabs, some of whom invited Muhammad to Medina as their chief magistrate (judge).
4. The Jews had no part in this invitation!!! His arrival in Medina would only cause them problems, as the new Muslims would only be loyal to Muhammad, and would not keep their alliances with the Jews, which left the Jews unprotected.

5. When Muhammad arrived in Medina in September, 622, his position was precarious (unstable). Not everyone in Medina supported Muhammad, so he had to be careful until he could consolidate power.
6. One of his first acts was to issue a document that outlined the relationships between the different groups in Medina, like a constitution "Constitution of Medina".
7. This was only a temporary step and was soon abandoned by Muhammad when he no longer needed it (once he had enough power)
8. The document confirmed the Jews as members of the community with certain rights and responsibilities, only if they acted "appropriately" (very vague on purpose, so Muhammad can change their status later)

Unit 2: Sources

Lesson #6:1 Constitution of Medina

Muhammad made a pact with the Jews, confirming them in their religion and their possessions, and he stipulated certain conditions for them and imposed certain duties upon them:

[1] Any Jew who follows us shall have aid and comfort. Such a Jew shall not be oppressed nor his enemies aided against him.

[2] The Jews shall lay out funds along with the Believers as long as they are at war.

[3] The Jews have their religion, and the Muslims have theirs. This applies to their clients and themselves, except those who act wrongfully and sin, for they bring destruction upon themselves and their households.

[4] The Jews are responsible for their expenses, and the Muslims for theirs. Each, however, must aid the other against anyone who attacks one of the parties of the document.

[5] The Jews shall lay out funds along with the believers as long as they are at war.

[6] If they (the Jews) are called to make and maintain peace, they must do so. And if they call upon the Believers for the like of this, it is within their rights, except where one is fighting for the sake of the Faith.

Questions:

1. Who are the "Believers"?
2. The term "act wrongfully and sin" is purposely vague. Why is it written the way it is?
3. Why does Muhammad repeat himself in #2 and #5?
4. How can we understand #6? When can the Believers turn and attack the Jews?
How does this clause explain modern-day Muslim/ Jewish relations?

Lesson #7: How did the Jews of Medina react to Muhammad?

1. The Jews did not accept Islam. They were not convinced by Muhammad's claims to prophecy
2. The Rabbis and scholars of Medina openly contradicted what Muhammad had to say. He wasn't very knowledgeable about Biblical and Midrashic stories, and they were very happy to point out his errors. They attacked him where he was most vulnerable, and he could do nothing about it yet (he was preparing for war against Mecca and had to wait until he had enough power to punish those who had wronged him).
3. Muhammad's failure to draw the Jews to him led him to a new approach: coercion. He was convinced that the Jews rejected him out of pride and stubbornness. He knew that he was right and his teachings true and felt that whatever the Jews were using to contradict him must be false.
4. After his first significant victory over the Meccans in 624, Muhammad turned towards his enemies in Medina. He went after the weakest Jewish tribe first, Banu Qaynuqa, who surrendered unconditionally to the Muslims. Their property was seized and they were forced to flee, eventually settling in Syria (the 2 other tribes did not come to their aid. Perhaps they didn't realize the exact nature of the problem, that it wasn't a tribal affair, rather a religious one)
5. Banu 'l-Nadir were next. (626) (very wealthy and occupied some of the finest property in Medina). Muhammad accused them of plotting against his life and ordered them to leave Medina. They resisted, then surrendered on the condition that they were allowed to leave with all their possessions, except weapons. They settled in Khaybar Last Jewish Tribe: Banu Qurayza. In 627 Mecca attacked Medina. Qurayza contributed to the defense by giving supplies like spades, picks and baskets needed for a defense trench. But during the siege of Medina they remained in their forts, not fighting, which placed their loyalty in question. As soon as the Meccans left, Muhammad attacked the Jews. They held out for 25 days. They surrendered (wanting same terms as Nadir) but Muhammad wanted to make an example of them. All the men were beheaded (600-900) only 2 or 3 converted to save themselves. The women and children were taken as slaves.
6. In 628 the Muslims attacked Khaybar, killing all the Nadir men, and taking all their wealth and their women. The rest of the Jews were forced to surrender with terms: In return for their personal safety and the right to keep their homes and property, the Jews agreed to pay the Muslims half of their annual date harvest.
7. This kind of settlement with the Jews of Khaybar was repeated with the other Jewish tribes. It became the precedent (model) with which the Jews were treated. Once they were subdued and agreed to pay the tax, "jizya" they were shown tolerance.
8. Muhammad's power and influence grew and grew. In 632 Muhammad turned the "jizya" into a poll tax. That same year Muhammad died after a brief illness.
9. Some instability, for about a year. Soon the entire Middle East would be under Muslim-Arab rule

Lesson #7:1. Muhammad's Jewish Adversaries in Medina

Muhammad was invited to Medina by the Pagan Arabs who lived there. The Jews, who knew that they had nothing to gain by Muhammad's arrival, had no part in the invitation extended to Muhammad. When Muhammad arrived in Medina, preaching his new religion, the Jews reception of him was less than kind. The following is one description of the hostile attitude the Jews had toward Muhammad.

...At that time the Rabbis of the Jews began to manifest {show} their hostility toward Muhammad. They did it out of jealousy, envy and malice because Allah had conferred {granted} distinction on the Arabs by choosing him as His messenger from amongst them...

It was the Rabbis of the Jews who would question Muhammad and harass him. They brought to him abstruse {difficult to understand} questions in order to confuse the truth with falsehood...

These then were the Rabbis of the Jews, men whose malice and enmity was aimed at Muhammad and his companions. They raised questions and stirred up mischief against Islam in order to extinguish it...

Questions:

1. Is the author of this source biased? Why?
2. According to the source, why did the Rabbis give Muhammad a hard time?

Why do you think that the Rabbis gave him a hard time?

Lesson #7:2 The Qur'an on the Jews

The Qur'an, Islam's holy book, contains many passages about the Jews. Based on the selections here, it is little wonder the Muslims have made the Jews their enemy.

Sura 2:61 "Wretchedness and baseness {wickedness} are stamped upon them and they were visited with wrath from Allah. That was because they disbelieved in Allah's revelations and slew the prophets wrongfully. That was for their disobedience and transgression"

Sura 4:44-46 "Have you not seen those who have received a portion of the Scripture? They purchase error, and they want you to go astray from the path...Some of the Jews pervert words from their meanings and say, "We hear and we disobey"...twisting with their tongues and slandering religion. But Allah had cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe not, except for a few."

Sura 4:160-161 "And for the evildoing Jews, we have forbidden them some good things that were previously permitted them, and because of their barring many from Allah's way. And for their taking usury which was prohibited for them, and because of their consuming people's wealth under false pretense. We have prepared for the unbelievers among them a painful punishment."

Sura 9:30-31 "They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords besides Allah, and so to the messiah son of Mary, though they were commanded to serve but one God. There is no God but He etc.

Sura 5:64 "The Jews say "Allah's hands are fettered {tied}". Their hands are fettered and they are cursed for what they have said... That which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase the arrogance and unbelief of many of among them. We have cast hatred and enmity among them until the Day

of Resurrection...They hasten to spread corruption throughout the earth, but Allah does not love corrupters!”

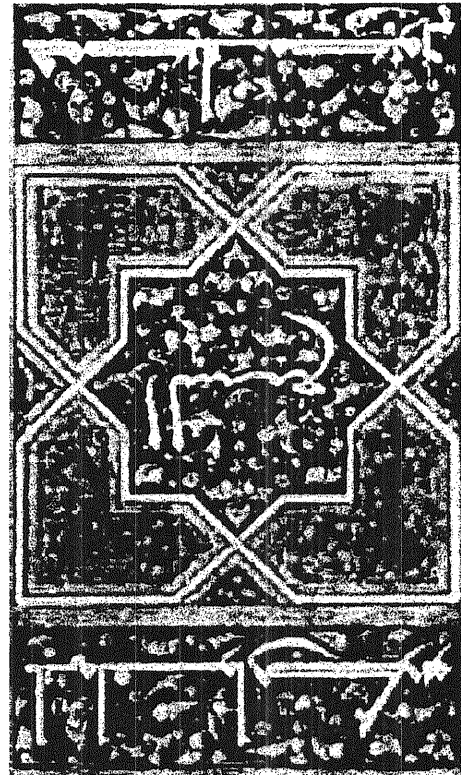
Sura 5:82 “Indeed you will surely find that the most vehement of men in enmity to those who believe are the Jews and the polytheists”.

Sura 5:51 “ Take not the Jews and the Christians as friends...Whoever of you befriends them is one of them. Allah does not guide the people who do evil”.

Sura 2:256 “There is to be no compulsion in religion. Rectitude {righteousness} has been clearly distinguished from error. So whoever disbelieves in idols and believes in Allah has taken hold of the firmest handle. It cannot split”.

Questions:

1. What accusations against the Jews are being made in the Qur'an?
2. According to the Qur'an, why are the Jews being punished? How are they punished? Who punishes them?



The Koran

Lesson #8: Islam and the Jews after Muhammad

1. Within 100 years, nearly the entire Middle East came under Muslim rule. (muslim armies defeated two great powers, Persian and Sassanian, just 15 years after Muhammad died)
2. By 711, the Muslims had conquered North Africa, Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, Pakistan, India etc and attempted to conquer Europe. They were successful in Spain (they were on the verge of conquering France but were finally defeated by Charles Martel)
3. The Muslim military successes made them a minority in the territories they had conquered. Usually they left the local administration in the hands of the native civil servants, who had more experience
4. Quran gives Jews and Christians a special status as "People of the Book" "Fight against those to whom the Scriptures were given, who believe not in Allah... until they pay tribute out of hand and are humbled" Therefore Jews were required to pay a poll tax and a land tax, as well as treated like second class citizens, permanent outsiders. *Dhimmi= protected people;*
5. Problem: how should they deal with their Non-Muslim subjects? Solution: Pact of 'Umar (attributed to Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab 634- 644). Basically terms of surrender. They were promised protection of life and property, as well as the right to worship freely, in return for their payment of the taxes. But they had to conduct themselves as a subject population, with restrictive laws aimed at discriminating and humiliating them.
6. The treatment of the Jews under Muslim rule was unpredictable, it was usually bearable, but was subject to the whims of the ruling Caliph. If a fanatic, extreme hardship for the Jews
7. Some positive aspects of life for the Jews: (Especially compared to Christendom's Jews)
 - a. Felt at home in Islamic/Arabic culture; spoke Arabic
 - b. Broader economic freedom under Muslims
 - c. Freedom of Mobility and settlement
 - d. not the only minority
8. Jews adapted relatively easily to Arab conquest, used to being subject, as opposed to Christian population
9. during this time, many Jews went from agricultural to a more cosmopolitan way of life, eventually resulting in the rise of a Jewish mercantile class which benefited from the conquest because of the expanded trade routes, est. of new cities and maritime trade on the Med.(sea trade preferable for Jews)
10. Umayyad Caliphate 660- 750 capital in Damascus, est. unified \$ system, secured roads, and encouraged international trade
11. Abbasid Caliphate 750- 1258 moved capital from Damascus to Baghdad (Babel)