

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC RELIEF ORGANIZATION

RESEARCH STUDY ON
MUSLIMS OF CENTRAL ASIA

**"OUR MUSLIM
BROTHERS OF
CENTRAL ASIA"**

BY
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Handwritten Arabic calligraphy in a stylized, bold script. The text is arranged in a central block with five vertical lines extending upwards from the top of the letters. The calligraphy includes various diacritical marks and decorative flourishes. At the bottom left, there is a small signature or date: "سنة ١٤١٦" (Year 1416).

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Buddhism, and Mazdeen religions. From (300-700 AD), the Sassanians established the Sassanid Empire under the leadership of the grandson of Zarathustrian, the high priest of Persia.

The 'Huns' Invasion.

The Central Asian regions were conquered and annexed by Empecor Wu-Di (156-87 BC) after he conquered Korea and most of China.

By 400 A.D., the nomadic tribes wondering with their herds of cattle and sheep in the vast stretches of wastelands between Kazakhstan, Siberia and Mongolia infiltrated into Central Asia. Due to extreme and very harsh climate and also rugged terrain of the region, unsuitable for pasturing and grazing, the more warlike warriors of these nomadic tribes known as 'Huns' invaded and occupied the warm and grassy lands which extended across India to the heart of Europe. The 'Huns' continued their invasion, occupying more lands in the Central Asia and Europe until the end of 600 A.D., when Islamic Empire started to develop and rise in Central Asia. The 'Huns' and other nomadic tribes by that time had started to mix with the inhabitants of the region who were mixed blood of Iranians, Macedonians, Mesopotanians and even Egyptians brought by Alexander the Great. This new race by the end of 600 A.D., had sufficient prominent features to be distinguished from the original native inhabitants and they were known as Turonians. The name "Turk" were given to the Turonian people whose ancestors belonged to the 'Huns' dwelling in the wasteland of the Central Asia, Siberia, and Mongolia. By 552 A.D., they had occupied

Central Asia and reached Volga River and to the east as far as the Yellow River in China. Later in 565 A.D., Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent and the Silk Road fell into their control.

Between 600-700 A.D., the Turkic Empire was divided into eastern and western segments. Due to internal wars, the eastern region became weak and it became a protectorate of Chinese Sui Dynasty.

Emergence of Islamic Power.

The Arabian Peninsular rose as the first Islamic country during Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.), the last Messenger of Allah towards mankind. The rise and rapid expansion of Islam towards the Central Asia came at the time when the Sassanid Empire of the Bactria Kingdom established by the grandson of Zarathustra of Persian dynasty (300-700 A.D.) was at a rapid decline.

The swiftness and rapid conquests of the Arab states were rather astonishing. By 632 A.D., the entire near east regions became Muslims. In 635 A.D., the Muslim Armies of Umayyad Arabs of Damascus, Syria, invaded the Sassanid Empire of Central Asia. The south frontiers of Central Asia fell to the Muslim Army in 650 A.D. The city of Marv (Mary) which formed an important city on the silk trade route in Turkmenistan (Fig. 1) fell to the advancing Muslim Army in 651 A.D. and Samarkand and Bukhara were occupied in 710 A.D. By 751 A.D., the Muslim Armies crossed east of the River Syr Darya into Talas in Kirgizia (Fig. 1), where they defeated the Chinese and the Turkic nomad armies.

Further spread of Islam into Kazakstan, Siberia

and the Chinese Sinkiang Province was the result of the Islamic Dawa, propagated by the Islamic Imams, scholars, teachers, traders and adventurers rather than by the armies. As Islam was accepted as the religion of Faith, Arabic literature became very important for daily life. It was spoken and also used for translation of Greek books although majority of people spoke Dari Persian or Turkic languages.

The spread of Islam in the Caucasus region between the Caspian Sea on the east and the Black Sea on the west came at very late date compared to Central Asia, and it spread throughout the time till the Bolshevik Revolution (1912). The spread of Islam in this region by the Persians, Arabs and the Turks were through Islamic Dawa which included propagation, sole practice and teachings which Islam guided during administration of the areas.

From 700 A.D. onwards, teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) spread across the Aral Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Urals and the Volga region. By 1000 A.D., Islam had become the only religion in the vast region stretching across Central Asia from the Pamirs high to the Crimean Peninsula. The plains of the Ural and Volga River and the steppes of Kazakhstan were dominated by the Turkic Muslim tribes. One of the major Muslim Turkic tribe which had the kingdom was the Seljuk Turks who swept across Asia Minor (Present Turkey) and finally settled there.

During the Muslim rule of the Central Asia and the vast stretch of land between Volga River to Mongolia, peace and tranquility prevailed. The region rose to be the most important

trading and educational center in the world. The Silk route became heavy with traders and the important cities like Samarkand, Taskent, Bukhara, Marv and Kokand flourished with wealth, grew larger and became important trading centers. Many learned scholars and pioneers of science, mathematics, astronomy, biology, medicine, philosophy and political sciences were born during the Golden Age of Islam.

The Emergence of Slovaks Russians and Othodox Church.

While Islam had reached the doors of Asia and became the sole religion of the Central Asia between River Volga and Caucasus in the west to the Sinkiang in China, Judaism was taking its roots in the south European countries and expanding northward into the forest of Russia to form the Khazar Kahanate of Judaism. The people collectively living in the forests during the Khazar Kahanate were referred to as 'Rus' probably the ancestors of present day Russians, belonging to the Slav people.

The three major linguistic groups of the Slavs had settled in the area before 500 B.C. The West Slavs settled near the center of the Vistula River where present Central Poland is located. The Middle Slav people settled in the plains between the Dnieper River and the eastern slopes of the Carpathian mountains which now form Belorussia. The East Slavs inhabited the valley of the Don River and some open steppes to the west of the river. However, the modern East Slavs are descended from both the Middle and East Slavs of the ancient times.

During the beginning of 900 A.D., the Slavs were widely scattered over the steppes and forests. Their agricul-

tural settlements stretched from Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea. The East Slavs had no regional political administration and no religion of their own. They were for centuries under the influence of the nomadic people who built empires in their lands such as the Scythians, Sarmatians, Goths, Huns, Avars and Khazars successively. They were then considered as tillers of the soil, tribute payers, conscript soldiers and even as slaves. Their scripts could not be written since they had no alphabets. It was only after the advent of Orthodox influence during the time of Vladimir that latin alphabets were introduced for writing.

During these time, the people in the Central Asia had many contacts with the Arabs, Persians and even Mongols who brought in their literature while the Religion of Islam had been already accepted in the Central Asia and Ufa and Khazan area, Bulgar-Volga region, Crimean Peninsula and the Caucasus regions. Arabic, Persian and Turkic were well spoken and written in the area and Arabic alphabets were already in use.

The East Slavs in the beginning of 900 A.D. were divided into ten tribes (Fig. 8) and they are as follows:-

Region	Tribes
North Russia (Valdai Hills)	Krivichi
Lake Ilmen	Slovene
North Pripyat River (Marshland)	Dregovichi
South Pripyat River (Marshland)	Drevliane
Desna Valley	Radimichi
Donets Valley	Sevekiane