

Key concepts

- The way Islam evolved in Madinah, with details added about how to practice religion in public; carry out the five pillars; trade fairly and organise family and social matters, became thought of as a model. Muslims look back on this as the ideal example to emulate and find guidance from.
- Muhammad was a leader in every field; political, social, economic and religious. He led a city of different tribes, some of whom subscribed to different religions such as Christianity, Judaism and others such as Zoroastrianism.
- The Hijrah was the move from Makkah to Madinah, to escape persecution and make a fresh start in the city where Islam could be practised openly. For the first time masjids/mosques could be built and prayers said openly without fear of persecution. Jumma (Friday) prayers became established, as well as many of the religious practices of Islam.
- Rules about trade, inheritance, marriage, daily life and so on were needed now that Muhammad was in control of a city, and not just a religious faction. The examples given at Madinah form most of the Sunna and Hadith collections and are used by Islamic scholars today to derive Shari'a legal rulings.
- The Hijrah marks the date from when all Islamic dates are calculated: after Hijrah (AH). This shows how significant it was in the development of Islam. The nature of Islam developed into a form ready to take on and defeat the Makkans, retake Makkah, and expand across the Middle East in the years to come.

- Muhammad had been invited to lead Madinah and resolve a tribal quarrel between different factions at the time. In deploying his political skills as peacemaker, Muhammad led those of different tribes and religions.
- Muhammad tried to foster equality through the concept of the Ummah (the brotherhood of believers) and by support for the poor, by Zakah payments. Arab practices such as the burial of baby girls was banned for Muslims.
- The Constitution of Madinah guaranteed the mutual protection of those of different faiths and tribes. However, some tribes of different faiths were banished in a couple of years.

Key quotes

- 'What made the Ummah a unique experiment in social organisation was that in Yathrib Muhammad finally had the opportunity to implement the reforms he had been preaching to no avail in Mecca.' (Aslan)
- 'It was Muhammad's aim for the umma in Madinah 'to build up a self-contained community which would hold together and maintain its position'. (Guillaume)
- 'The Medinan community formed a total framework for state, society, and culture. It epitomised the Quranic mandate for Muslims as individuals and a community 'to transform the world itself through action in the world'. It inspired Muhammad to transform a local sheikdom into a trans tribal state.' (Esposito)
- 'Muhammad's work in Medina 'became the paradigm for the Muslim empires that expanded throughout the Middle East after the Prophet's death, and the standard that every Arab kingdom struggled to meet during the Middle Ages'. (Aslan)

Key words

Constitution of Medina	arbitrator/arbitrator	hilf	the Ummah
mosque/masjid	Migration/ Hijrah	Qur'an / qur'anic	

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key questions, arguments, and debates

1. Was Madinah the ideal model for the establishment of Islam? Muhammad was the perfect person and so everything he did could be considered as the best example to copy. But were his examples a series of actions in different circumstances, or an actual model? Some argue that it was not a 'model' as such but a range of principles applicable in different ways; others that it was a 'model' that should be copied to the letter.
2. To what extent was Muhammad a leader for all the people of Madinah? Muhammad led the Muslims and developed the religious practices of Islam. But did that make him more distant from the Christians, Jews and others who lived in Madinah? Did the Constitution of Madinah guarantee equality? Or did the treatment of non-Muslims amount to making them 'second class' citizens? Why were some exiled and what did this mean for interfaith relations?