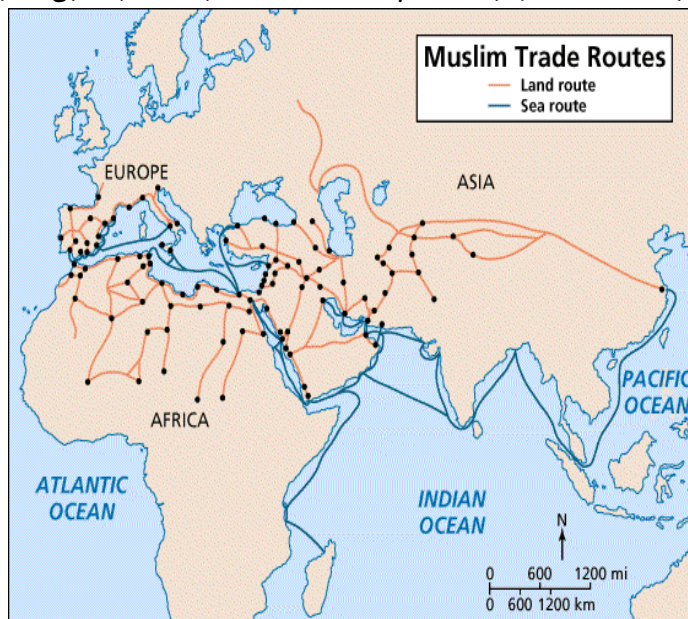


## Station #1: Society & the Economy:

Under the Abbassids, social mobility was possible through military, scholarly, or religious achievements. Even though society was flexible, there were still classes. Muslim society was made up of four classes. The upper class was made up of those who were Muslims at birth. The converts to Islam were the second class. The third class was the “protected people” (not Muslims). The lowest class was made up of slaves. However, one could escape slavery by their parents converting, marrying the owner or buying their freedom.

It was an honor to be a merchant, because Muhammad was a merchant. Merchants built a great trading network that spread across the Muslim world. With the spread of goods, Islam spread as well. It was spread by camel caravans to the Sahara. Traders also traveled the Silk Road in China. Some ideas exchanged, including the introduction of Arabic numerals and papermaking from the Chinese.

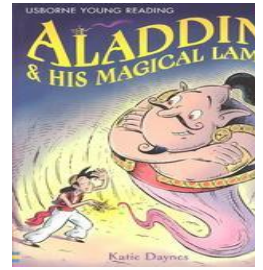
The Muslims used a money economy and began new ways of doing business. They bought and sold on credit opened banks to exchange currency and used bank checks.



1. How was social mobility possible?
2. How did merchants help to spread Islam?
3. Provide two examples of new ways Muslims of “doing business?”
4. Compare the view of merchants in Chinese and Muslim societies?

## Station #2: Literature:

Even though Mohammad could not read, he believed that learning was very important. He said, "Seek knowledge even as far as China."



The Qur'an is considered great Islamic literature. Prior to Muhammad, story telling was an important part of the Muslim culture. Stories were adopted from Indian, Persian, Greek, Jewish, Egyptian, and Turkish sources. A famous collection is Arabian Nights or *The Thousand and One Nights*. These stories have romance, adventure, and humor. Stories from this collection include "Aladdin and His Magic Lamp" or "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves."

### Ala-ed-din and one thousand and one Arabian Nights

*Ala-ed-din entered his bed chamber and took the Lamp and rubbed it. The Slave (Genie) appeared, saying, "At thy service! Ask what thou desires." So 'Ala-ed-Din answered: "I desire thee to make me equal to a royal and bring me clothes so rich that even the Sultan does not posses them. The Genie replied "I hear and obey." Ala-ed-din became clad in wealthy clothes, and was perfumed and scented. Although Ala-ed-Din was, in fact, a poor tailor's son, no one would have guessed it. Instead people would believe that he was the greatest son of the most powerful and wealthy king.*



Left: Muslim painting of Ala-ed-din



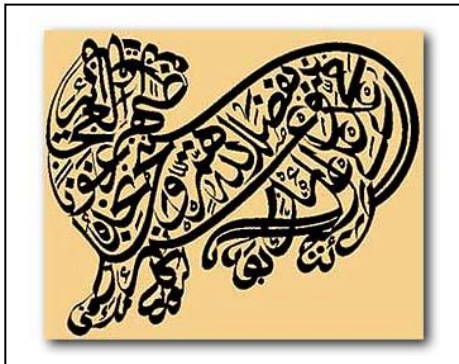
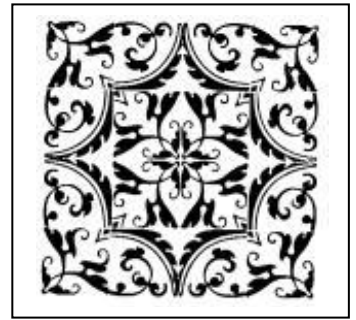
Right: Disney's portrayal of Aladdin

1. How did Muslims feel about learning?
2. What is considered the greatest piece of literature to Muslims?
3. If the story of Aladdin was created many years ago, how is it that we know about it?



## Station #3: Art & Architecture

The Islamic religion had a major effect on the arts of the Muslim world. The Qur'an banned the worship of idols, meaning that artists were not allowed to portray God or human figures in religious art. The artwork done by the Muslims was very detailed and decorated with geometric patterns. These designs were found in rugs, textiles, and glassware.



Muslim artists were also proficient in calligraphy, which is an Arabic script. Verses from the Qur'an that were written into buildings as well as artwork used this style of writing. The belief is that the words of Allah should look as beautiful as the words themselves.

← Calligraphy

Islamic architects borrowed heavily from the Byzantine Empire which used domes and arches. An example of this use can be seen in the Dome of the Rock, a famous mosque in Jerusalem.

Dome of the Rock

Geometric Pattern

Great Mosque at Samarra



1. Describe the artwork that was done by the Muslims.
2. What is the Arabic script called? Where can one find this script?
3. Name 2 major characteristics found in buildings? Which empire do you think had an influence on the Muslim style?

## Station #4: Science, Medicine & Math:

**Math:** Islamic scholars studied both Greek and Indian mathematics before making important contributions of their own. The most well-known Islamic mathematician was al-Khwarizimi, who pioneered the study of algebra (from the word al-jabr) and trigonometry.

**Astronomy:** Islamic scholars were also skilled in astronomy. They studied eclipses, the rotation of the planets, and calculated the circumference of the earth to within a few thousand feet. They developed the astrolabe; a device that determines latitude by measuring the position of the stars. This all paved the way for exploration in later centuries.



al-Khwarizimi

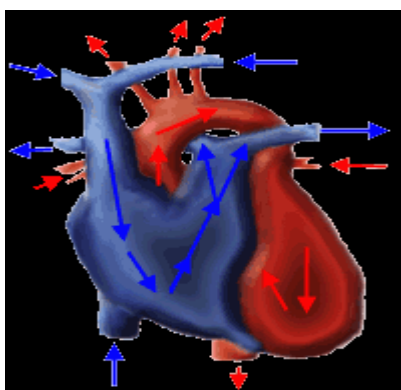


Diagram of blood flow in the heart

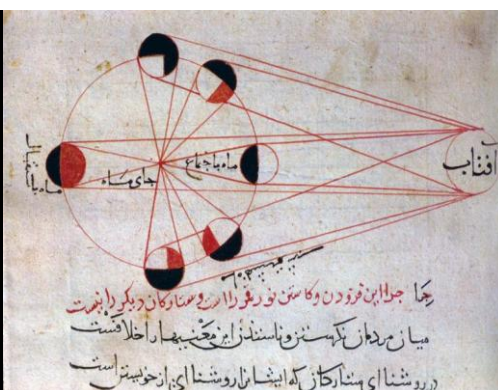


Diagram of lunar eclipse

**Medicine:** There were also tremendous breakthroughs made in the field of medicine. Muslim doctors were the first to discover that blood pumped in and out of the heart. The government set up hospitals and they had a department equivalent to an emergency room. Physicians and pharmacists had to pass many exams. Physicians made home visits as well as jail visits.

Muslims came up with over 4,000 prescriptions for the treatment of diseases. Pharmacists were the first to make bitter tasting medicines taste yummy. They supported the concept of treating the body and the mind; believing that hopeful comments led to a quicker recovery. They also had asylums for the mentally ill.

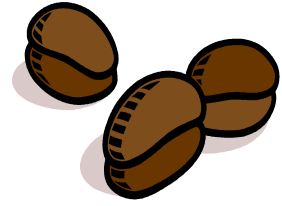
They learned how to treat eye diseases and save many people's eyesight. They wrote many important books, which were often translated into Latin and used by European doctors. This had unfortunate consequences. Many of the illustrations were reproduced incorrectly and misinterpreted, which led to confusion, errors and mistrust.



1. Name two things that the Muslim doctors achieved that still affect our society today.

2. What field(s) of mathematics excelled in Arabia?

## Station #5: Coffee:



The Arabs started using Coffee as a drink about 1000 AD. At first this had religious values. Legend: A dervish named Omar discovered coffee as a religious experience. While in exile in the desert, Omar had a vision of his dead mentor who showed him the coffee tree; he picked up the fruit and roasted the seeds. He used water to soften the seeds, but this failed, so he drank the resulting fluid. This gave him a feeling of energy and well-being, which he took as a sign from God.

Coffee spread rapidly through the Arab world as a religious drink. Then it became considered a medicine prescribed by doctors.

Later, coffee lost its religious association and became a drink for social events. Coffee houses opened in Mecca and became centers of music, gambling and discussion. The discussion ranged from religious, social and political topics that sometimes encouraged revolt. The governments tried to shut down coffee houses three times in the 16<sup>th</sup> century but failed.

Muslims were forbidden wine and no other drink was as satisfying as coffee. Eventually coffee became a part of social life at home. In Turkey it became so important that a woman could divorce a man who failed to supply her with coffee.

1. Why did coffee become so important?
2. What uses did coffee have throughout history?
3. What drink has significant religious/medicinal/social importance in the U.S.A.