

HISTORY OF THE WORLD-BBC:THE ISLAMIC EMPIRE

Read the subtitles of the video. Then, watch the video.

***North /south:** norte / sur.
***East / west:** este / oeste.
* **Wisdom:** sabiduría
wise: sabio.

***Struggle:** luchar.
***Accurate:** preciso.
***Measure:** medir.
***The Earth:** la Tierra.
***Show:** mostrar, enseñar.
***Huge:** enorme.

***Rule:** gobernar..... **ruler:** gobernador.
***Subject:** súbdito.
***Young / old:** joven / viejo.
***Bring- brought - brought:** traer.
***Try:** intentar.
***Understand:** comprender.
***Gold:** oro **golden:** dorado.

***Angle:** ángulo.
***Change:** cambiar.
***Stick:** palo.
***Brass:** latón.
* **Figure:** cifra.
***Close = near:** cerca.

* **Geographical features:** accidentes geográficos.
* **Pick up:** coger.
***Remember:** recordar.
***Muslim:** musulmán.
***Hide- hid-hidden:** ocultar.

The year 827. A team of astronomers and mathematicians was at work in the Sinjar Desert, in **north-west** of Iraq. They were led by Muhammad Ibn Musa Al-Khwarizmi, an Uzbek scholar from the House of **Wisdom**, the great centre of Islamic learning in Baghdad, itself the **heart** of the new Muslim civilisation.

Al-Khwarizmi was **struggling** with one of the biggest scientific puzzles of the time, trying to **accurately measure** the circumference of the **Earth**. This trek across the desert was only the first stage in a Project which had been commanded by the Caliph of Baghdad, Al-Ma'mun, who wanted him to use his great scientific understanding to produce an accurate map of the world which would **show** the **huge** extent of the Islamic empire.

Islam already dominated an area bigger than the Roman Empire. By the ninth century, Muslim **rulers** had more than 30 million **subjects**, stretching from today's Pakistan in the East to Spain in the West. This is the age of vigorous, **young**, inquisitive Islam, **bringing** together ancient texts from all around the world, **trying** to **understand** them, pushing forward in science and maths. This is Islam's **golden** age.

Al-Khwarizmi's idea was to measure the sun's **angle** of the Earth until it **changed** by one degree. He worked out that his men had walked 64.5 miles before that angle changed. Using just **sticks** and a simple **brass** instrument, he calculated the circumference of the Earth to be 23.200 miles, a **figure** that, remarkably, is very **close** to the accurate calculation.

Al-Khwarizmi went on to create a series of charts, listing more than 2.000 cities, and **geographical features** right across the Islamic empire. Al-Khwarizmi was taking breakthroughs in trigonometry and arithmetics and putting them together and exploring them. His books were still being used hundreds of years later, and his real speciality was algorithms. In fact, the Word comes from the Latin version of his name, Al-Khwarizmi. And, of course, algorithms are essential in modern computer programming, so every time you **pick up** your mobile phone, **remember** there is an old Uzbek **muslim hidden** inside it.

At this time, the Islamic world had Christian Europe

***Surrounded:** rodeado.
 ***Glittering = sparkling:** brillante.
 ***Mud:** barro **muddy:** fangoso.
 ***Kingdom:** reino ... **King:** rey.
 ***Mosque:** mezquita.
 ***Praying hall:** sala de oraciones.
 ***Pray:** rezar.
 ***Pillars:** pilares.
 ***Marble:** mármol.
 ***Jasper:** jade.
 ***Column:** columna.
 * **Palm tree:** palmera.

surrounded. The Spanish city of Cordoba was a **glittering** western outpost of the Muslim world, and the second largest city on the planet after Baghdad. It was a **sparkling** rebuke to the more meagre, **muddy** Christian **kingdoms** of northern Europe. At its centre stands the Great **Mosque**. In its **praying hall** shimmer 850 **pillars** of marble, onyx and jasper, an imaginative mingling of Roman **columns** and the memory of palm trees in some distant oasis. Fusion architecture.



***Library:** biblioteca.
 ***Share:** compartir.
 ***Place:** lugar.
 ***Wonderful:** maravilloso.
 ***Greek:** griego
Greece: Grecia.
 * **Jewish:** judío.

Cordoba's Royal **Library** was said to hold 400.000 books, at a time when the largest Christian libraries contained a few hundred. And where East met West, ideas were **shared**. **Places** like Cordoba were **wonderful** at taking the news from one part of humanity and passing it on, to ancient **Greek** learning, **Jewish** philosophy, Hindu mathematics, Muslim astronomy and engineering, were passed to the Christian world.

***Destroy:** destruir.
 ***Torch:** antorcha.
 ***Call:** llamar.
 ***Dark Ages:** Edad Oscura.

Eventually, the Christians would **destroy** the kingdom of Al-Andalus, but not before one enemy had passed on the **torch** of learning to the next, so that what we **call** the **Dark Ages** was lit up by Muslim Spain.

***Find-found-found:** encontrar.

At this point, you might have assumed the islamic world would just keep advancing, that the future was scientific and Muslim. The answer to why it wasn't can be **found** in another story from the margins, from a world of remote grassland and forests...