# Primary Source Handout – Astronomy in the Islamic World

Source: Al-Jaghmīnī, \*Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hayʾa al-basīṭa\* (Compendium of Astronomy), 13th century. Translated and adapted for classroom use.

# Excerpt

“The heavens are composed of spheres, one within another, perfectly ordered and without gap or separation. Each sphere carries the star that belongs to it, and moves in a uniform circular motion. The Earth is fixed at the center of the universe, unmoving, while the celestial spheres revolve around it. The motion of the stars, though they appear irregular to our eyes, follows rules and patterns that can be described by geometry and mathematics.”

“The science of astronomy teaches us not only the positions of the heavenly bodies but also the harmony and perfection of the Creator’s design. The balance of the spheres, the constancy of their motions, and the order of the heavens testify to the wisdom of God. Thus, to study the stars is to gain knowledge of both the natural world and the divine order, for mathematics reveals the principles through which the heavens are governed.”

# Annotation Questions

1. According to the author, how are the heavens structured?

2. What role does mathematics play in understanding the universe?

3. How does this passage show the influence of belief systems on scientific thought?

4. What does this text suggest about the relationship between religion and science in the Islamic world?