Principles & Roots of Islam



2018 VERSION: Islam & Sikhism module – Gary R. Bunt

This module seeks to develop an academic framework for studying Islam, and incorporates elements that are integral to clarifying an understanding of the religion in its various contexts and dimensions.

No prior knowledge of Islam is assumed, and no specific faith/belief background is required.



Why Study Islam?



• **Politically,** in terms of international relations and domestic politics

• **Historically**, i.e. in understanding 'Christian-Muslim' relations in a variety of contexts, ranging from 'Islamic Spain' through to '9-11'.

• **Ethically**, decision-making processes in a variety of locations can be influenced by Islamic concepts, but do we really know what Islamic law is?

• **Domestically**: analysis of issues such as education, social services, law, media, and interfaith dialogue can all be informed by an understanding of Islam.

Islam lends itself to multi-disciplinary studies



Islam - a trans-global religion, with a presence on every continent, and expressed in many languages.



Islam is considered by many Muslims as a complete, holistic way of life





Keep a separate alphabetical notebook/record of all the Islamic terms, names and concepts you encounter during the module and your reading.

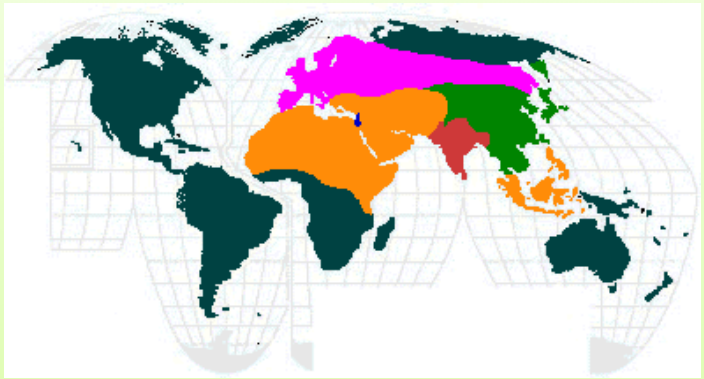


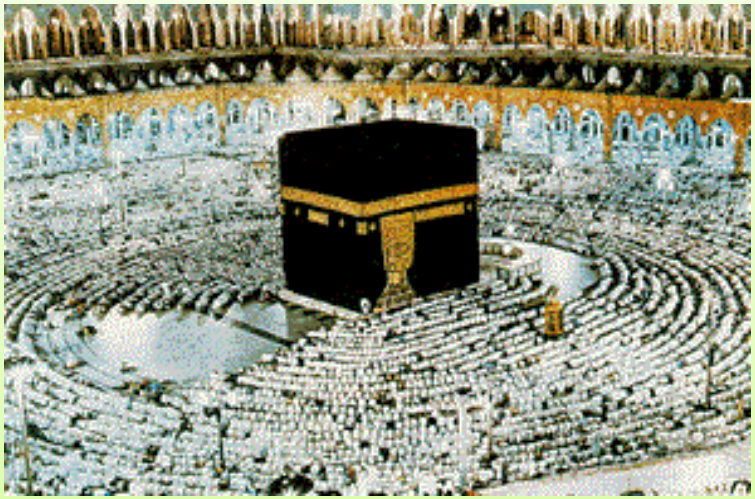
Where is Islam practised?

Over 1,000 million people, on every continent, practise Islam













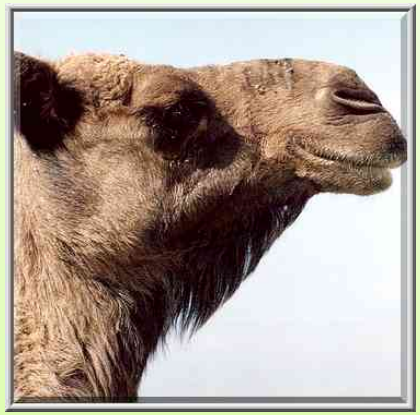
How to Study Muhammad and Islam



"Whoever obeys the Messenger verily obeys God." (al-Nisa, 4:80) [A]



What do we know about pre-Islamic Middle East?





first urban centres in Mesopotamia.

3500-3000 BCE [Before Common Era]:

Sumerian ascendance 3500 BCE.

Writing invented.

Subsequent civilisations in region include: Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian.





Code Hammurabi (c. 1752 BCE): family laws, inheritance: influenced subsequent Hebrew and Islamic law systems.

Includes specific divorce and family laws

Monogamous marriages

Harems

Veiling laws: veils for the upper classes “to differentiate between ‘respectable’ women and those who were publicly available.”

Upper class women had power, influence (marriage, priestesses, businesswomen, property rights, legal rights)

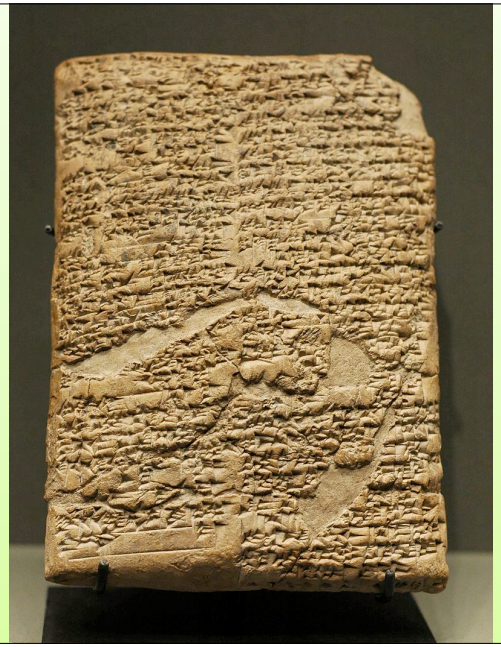
The Code of Hammurabi

Babylonian law code of ancient Mesopotamia, dating back to about 1754 BC.

one of the oldest deciphered writings of significant length in the world.

The sixth Babylonian king, Hammurabi, enacted the code, and partial copies exist on a human-sized stone stele and various clay tablets.

The Code consists of 282 laws, with scaled punishments, adjusting "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (lex talionis) as graded depending on social status, of slave versus free man



Code on clay tablet

In Persian Mesopotamia, **Zoroastrianism** was the predominant upper class religion. Zoroastrianism dated back to 1000 BCE: supreme God, presiding over a battle between good and evil spirits.



Faravahar (or Ferohar), one of the primary symbols of Zoroastrianism, believed to be the depiction of a Fravashi (guardian spirit)

Babylonia: conquered by Alexander (356-323 BCE):

[Alexander conquered Persia, Egypt, Babylon; crossed from Greece into Asia, Middle East then Indian continent - reached Kashmir, then mutiny of forces stopped progress].





Mediterranean: Greek societies. **Pantheistic.**

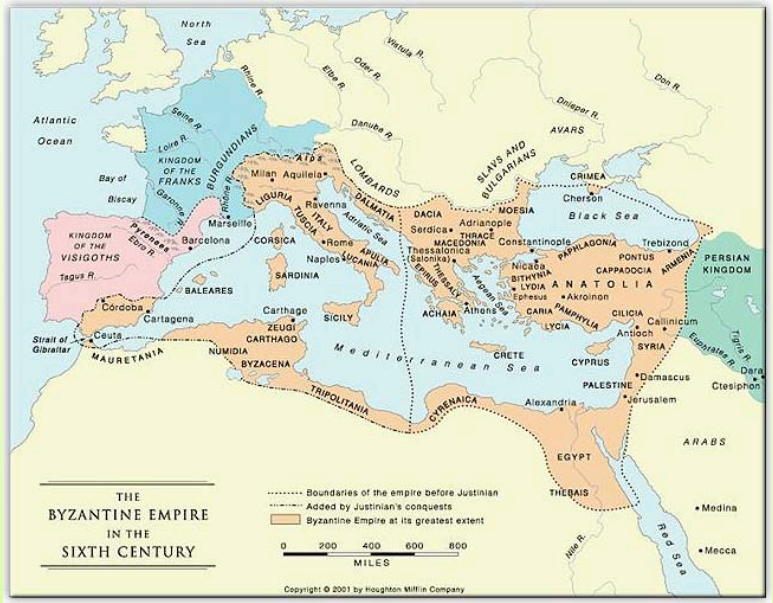


Parthians: kingdom on borders of Roman frontier on Euphrates. Withstands Roman power. Strong from 3rd century BC until 224 CE. Conquest by Sasanians.



Ancient Egyptian: structures of law, administration, property.





Languages:

Persian (varied forms),

Aramaic,

Arabic,

Hebrew.

Greek

Latin

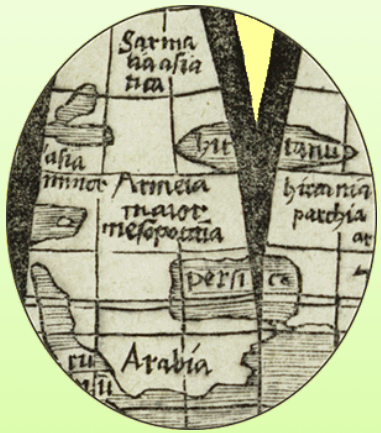
ARABIAN SOCIETY

Arabian society was influenced by the enormity of its desert, the development of sophisticated tribal systems, trading cities, and a highly developed literary tradition.

There were diverse religious perspectives, including a variety of gods and deities.

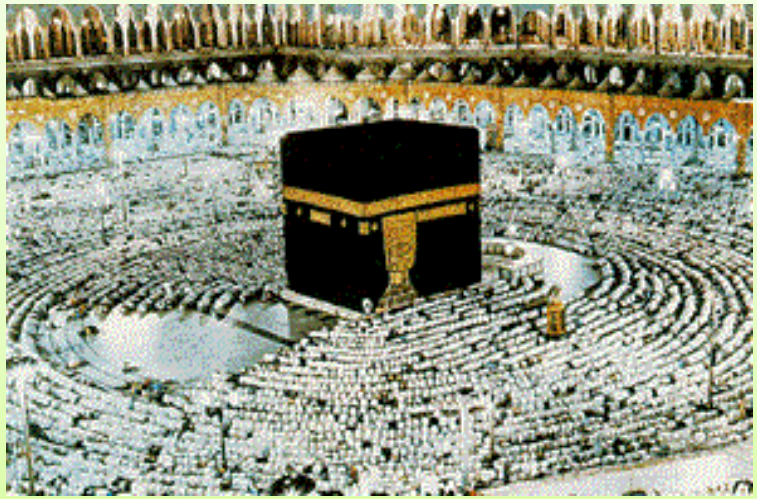
Arabian cultures comprised of nomads (Bedouin) in the desert, settled cultivators, and urbanised traders and craftspeople.







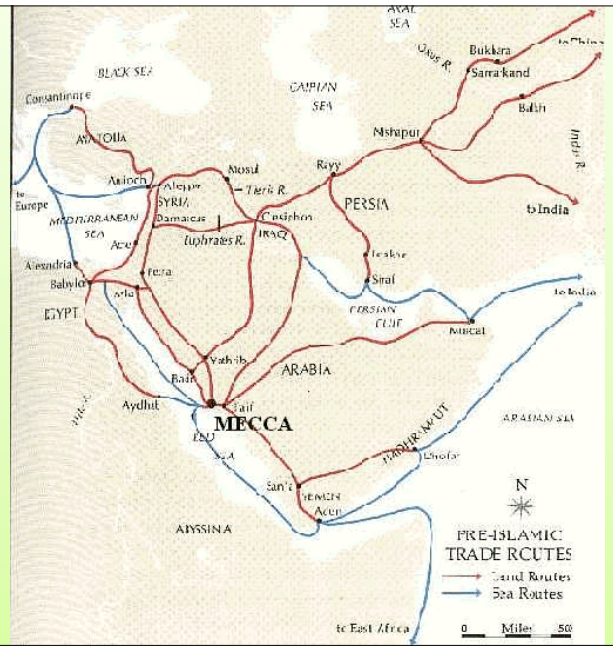
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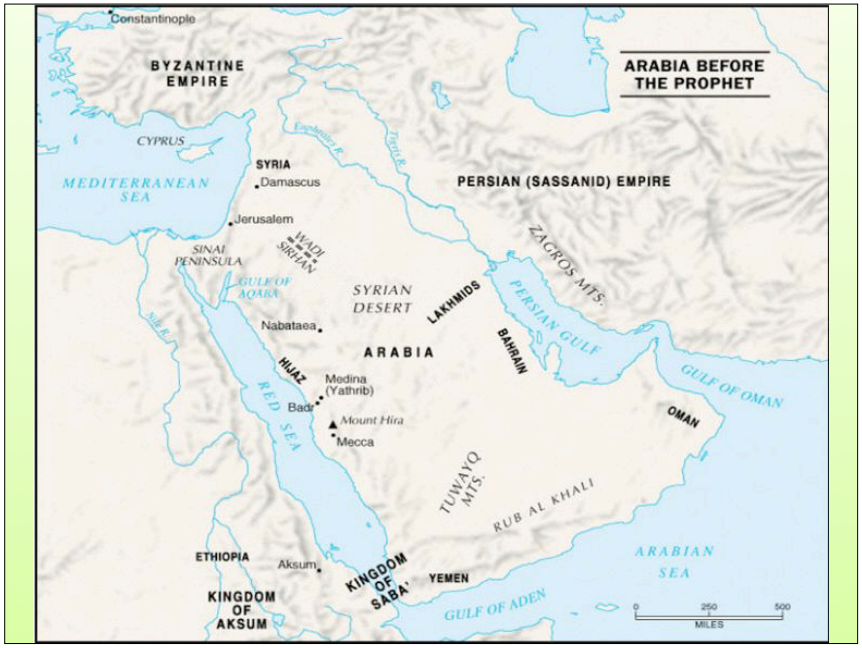
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The Middle East
in the 6th Century
Arab Kingdoms and Tribes
KINDAH
HAWDHAH
YAMAN
LALANDI
MANADHIRAH
GHASSANIDS
NAMES OF TRIBES
BYZANTINE EMPIRE
SASANIAN EMPIRE
ARABIAN SEA
RED SEA
PERSIAN GULF
ABYSSINIA
INDIA
Al-Bahr-al-Safi
Hadhramaut

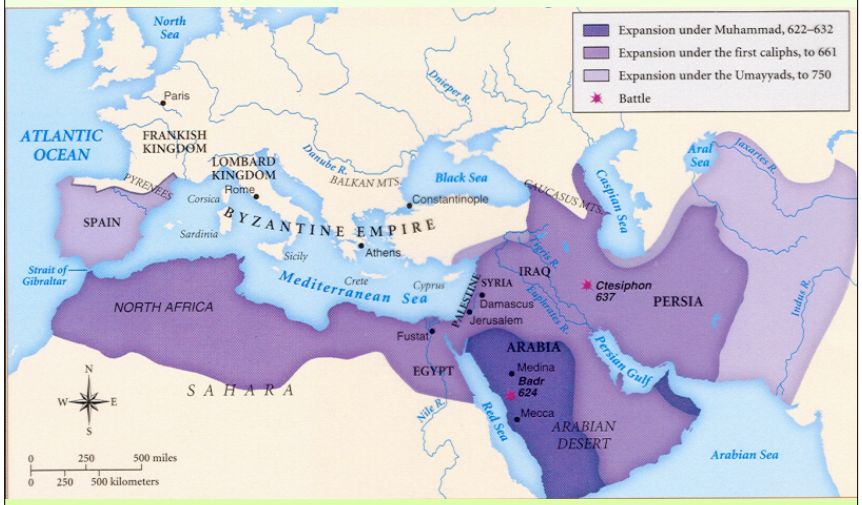
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MECCA
PRE-ISLAMIC
TRADE ROUTES
Land Routes
Sea Routes
PERSIA
ARABIA
EGYPT
YEMEN
ABYSSINA
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
PERSIAN GULF
RED SEA
ARABIAN SEA
to India
to East Africa
to Europe
N

44







Arab nomads and traders had travelled into Byzantine-Sasanian areas:
the so-called Fertile Crescent;
Mesopotamia; Persia; Babylonia;
Syria, the lower Euphrates (lower Iraq) and between Euphrates-Tigris (upper Iraq).

Tribal society, based on Bedouin ethos, was a significant influence.

Muhammad's own genealogy is linked into various tribes

His specific tribe is the Quraysh, who had an historical association with the Kabah in Mecca

Qur'an refers to 'religion of Abraham' (2:130)

Practices that God had commanded were to be instituted in the Kaba (God's sacred house) in Mecca.

Later scholars trace the origins back to the beginning of Creation.

Qur'an contains history of prophets from Adam onwards.

PRE-ISLAMIC ROLE OF KABAH

Seen as linked to Abraham

Abrahamic practices retained

Tribal idols

Pilgrims

Value of she-camels

Sira describes ancestors of Muhammad, and their roles in preservi Abrahamic traditions

"Remember We made the House a place of assembly for the people and a secure place; and take the station of Abraham (maqam Ibrahim) as a prayer-place (musalla); and We have a made pact with Abraham and Ishmael that they should sanctify My House for those who circumambulate it, those using it as a retreat, who bow or prostrate themselves there.

"And remember Abraham said: My Lord, make this land a secure one, and feed its people with fruits, those of them who believe in God and the Last day ...

***"And remember Abraham raised the foundation of the House, yes and Ishmael too, (saying) accept (this) from us, for indeed You are All-hearing and All-knowing."* Q 2:125-7:**

Al-ilah = the god

Southern Syria, Northern Arabia - Ka'ba was his house. High god, chief of pantheon.

Shared Ka'ba with Hubal.

Daughters of Allah:
•Manat - goddess of fate
•Al-Lat – astral deity
•Al-Uzza – astral deity

•PILGRIMAGE WAS IMPORTANT FOR ECONOMIC REASONS
•CONFLICTS COULD BE SUSPENDED
•THERE WERE TEMPLES IN MANY LOCATIONS [II35], INCLUDING ON TRADE ROUTES



The primary sources Muslims use to study the life of the Prophet include:

- The *Qur'an* (Revelation received by Muhammad)
- *Hadith* (the sayings about and of Muhammad)
- *Sunna* (the actions of Muhammad)
- *Tafsir* (commentaries on meaning of the Qur'an)
- *Sira* (biographies about Muhammad).



Muhammad was born c. 570 C.E.

'Abd Allah (father)/Amina (mother)

Early life

Mother Amina died when Muhammad was 6 years old

Brought up by paternal grandfather Abd al-Muttalib b. Hashim (d.578-9??)

Then by Muhammad's uncle **Abu Talib (d.619)** (head of the Hashim clan)

Events in early life are in biographies, but may be apocryphal:

•Trading journeys to Syria

•Meeting the monk Bahira (and other holy men)



At the age of 25, Muhammad married Khadijah (businesswoman, twice married, his employer)

Children:

- **Abd Allah**
- **Al-Qasim**
- **Fatima**
- **Ruqayya.**
- **Umm Kulthum**
- **Zaynab bint Muhammad**

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN REGION

Hanifiya = religion of Abraham [II 98]

Tribal religions

Judaism (importance of Jewish tribes, miracles, prophecy) [II 94

Christianity

FIRST REVELATION

c.610 – Muhammad retreats to a cave on Mount Hira, in the month of Ramadan [II 105];

"The apostle would pray in seclusion on Hira every year for a month to practice *tahannuth* as was the custom of Quraysh in heathen days. *Tahannuth* is religious devotion." [II 105]

According to bibliographical sources, Muhammad had a pre-disposition towards meditation, and often secluded himself away

It was during this visit that he heard these words – revealed by God through the Angel Gabriel (Jibril):

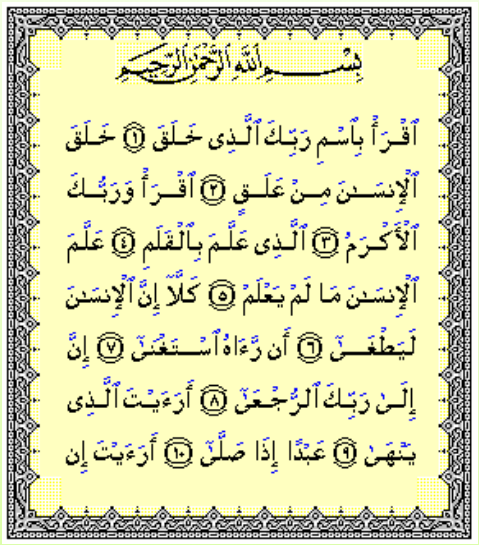
"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
Read in the name of your Lord, Who created
He created man from a clot.
Read, by your Most Generous Lord,
Who taught by the Pen,
He taught man what he did not know."

Surah al'Alaq 'the blood clot', 96:1-5; [F]

Recitation – al-Husary (Mujawwad)

Recitation – Abdul Rahman Al Sudais

Also Life of Muhammad – Yusuf Islam – 9'05" on


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ
الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ
الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ
الْإِنسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾ كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ
لَيَطْغَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ أَن رَّآهُ اسْتَغْنَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الرُّجْعَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي
يَنْهَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ أَرَأَيْتَ إِن

" ... By the Manifest Book. We have sent it down on a blessed night. We were then admonishing. Therein, every wise matter is determined, as a command from us. We have been sending forth revelations, as a mercy from your Lord."
Surah Dukhan: 44:2-6 'The Smoke'/'Mist' [F]

"We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power"
Surah Qadr 97:1 'The Night of Power' [A]

"Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong)...."

Surah Baqarah, 2: 185 [A]



"When the Qur'an is recited, listen to it and pay attention, that perchance you may receive mercy."

Gabriel teaches Muhammad how to pray. > Muhammad teaches Khadija first.

Then (possibly)

- **Ali (aged 10),**
- **Zayd,**
- **Abu Bakr**

What form did early Revelations take?

- The language is straightforward and easy-to-comprehend.
- The themes would have been familiar to some of the practitioners of other religions in Arabia:
- There is a single God.
- Humanity created by God.
- There is a Day of Judgement, Hellfire and Paradise.
- The power greater than humanity is God.

The Night Journey



Hijrah means migration. The Hijrah refers to the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina. This journey took place in the twelfth year of his mission (622 CE). This is the beginning of the Muslim calendar. The word hijrah means to leave a place to seek sanctuary or freedom from persecution or freedom of religion or any other purpose. Hijrah can also mean to leave a bad way of life for a good or more righteous way.

Glory to (Allah) Who did take His Servant for Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque whose precincts We did Bless in order that We might show him some of Our Signs: for He is the one Who heareth and seeth (all things). *Isra, 17:1*


بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ
ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا
ٱلَّذِى بَٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ
ءَايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ۝١
وَءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَجَعَلْنَٰهُ هُدًى
لِّبَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ أَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوا۟ مِن دُونِى
وَكِيلًا ۝٢ ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ

Al-'Isra 17 1-2



The Migration

•In Mecca, Muhammad's status became less and less secure. Finally, he decided to move to the town of **Yathrib**, where he had business contacts and where some Muslims lived.

•Muhammad and his community migrated to Yathrib, later known as Medina, probably in 622. This migration is known as ***al-Hijrah*** ('the Migration'), and marks year one of the Islamic (lunar) calendar.

•The tradition is that Muhammad was the subject of a murder plot, and that - along with his closest friend Abu Bakr, he hid in a cave in Thawr to the south of Mecca for three days.

•After an exhausting journey of two weeks, the Prophet entered Medina on Monday 27 September 622.This was in the thirteenth year after Revelation first appeared.

Consolidation

During a ten year period in Medina, Muhammad built up a community around Emigrants (***al-muhajirun***) and Helpers **(*al-ansar*).**

•According to tradition, Muhammad tried to eradicate tribal allegiances, creating a single community or ***ummah*** (community, people, nation) whose highest authority was God.

•The Revelations of this period demonstrate the development of this Muslim community, and the problems it faced. The rules became stricter, and Islam became more confident: many of the Revelations indicate what is prohibited, rather than what is allowed (proscriptive rather than prescriptive).

- It is thought that during this period the day of communal worship (***Jum'ah*** prayer: also title of 62nd Sura)) was decided (*Yawm al Jum'ah* - Friday). The direction of prayer (***qiblah***) was altered to face ***al-Masjid al-Haram*** or The Sacred Mosque in Mecca (described in *Surah al-Baqara,* the second Surah in the Qur'an).

- The call to prayer, the ***adhan***, was created (this consists of seven main parts, although there are variations depending on region, linguistic and legal variations).



"Allah is the Greatest (4 times)
I bear witness that there is no god but Allah (twice)
I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah (Twice)
Rush to Prayer (twice)
Rush to success (twice)
Allah is the Greatest (twice)
There is no god but Allah."

Recitation

Shi'a *adhan*

God is most great (4)
I testify that there is no God but God (2)
I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God (2)
I testify that Ali is the Wali (servant) of God
I testify that Ali is the proof of God
Come alive to the prayer (2)
Come alive to flourishing (2)
Come alive to the best work (2)
God is most great (2)
There is no god but God (2)

Adapted from Michael Sells *Approaches to the Qur'an*

- On Friday 17 March/2 A.H., 17 Ramadan: **Abu Sufyan,** a Quraysh leader, was en route with a rich caravan from Syria. He feared attack from Muhammad, who had decided to ambush him at **Badr**. A Medinan Muslim 'hypocrite' informed Abu Sufyan of a potential attack, and Abu Sufyan sent to Mecca for help.
- Meccan forces, under **Abu Djahl**, led out an army of over 900 (three times Muhammad's). Muhammad expected to meet a helpless caravan - and found at Badr that they were facing a military confrontation.
- Despite the fear within Muhammad's forces - and the assertion of certain followers that they were only bound to protect Muhammad in Medina - the forces were inspired by his leadership, and beat the Meccan army. Over 800 Meccan troops are routed.

Accounts of Badr suggest that Muhammad saw Gabriel, and that angels on horseback assisted the Medinan forces.

A miraculous sword - **al-awn** - is used in battle.

The concept of martyrdom is stressed. Within the various accounts, there is a theme that 'God has to decide' the fate of the forces.

In later years, there are further conflicts, where Muhammad and his followers are tested, including Uhud.

- **The Treaty of Al-Hudaybiyya** was signed in the year 6 A.H.(627) This allowed for:

- access to Mecca for pilgrimage
- Muhammad's unarmed entrance into Mecca
- a pilgrimage in the year 7 A.H.
- a 10 year truce
- any tribe or person could join either side, or ally with it.

- The Treaty was significant because:

- It established diplomacy with the Quraysh (10 year Truce)
- It brought together diverse groups
- Islam/Muslims recognised as equal to other inhabitants of the region.

- **Entry into Mecca**

- In 8 A.H., according to some sources, Quraysh clients broke the truce of Hudaybiyya after a tribal skirmish. Following this, Muhammad secretly planned to prepare for war.

- Following some minor skirmishing, Muhammad's forces entered Mecca. He stated that its inhabitants should be given immunity, unless they resisted. He then prayed, before dressing in armour and mail, to go to the Ka'bah.

According to one tradition, the idols that were located in the precincts of the Ka'bah, fell to Muhammad. Ali then brought key to the holy sanctuary. After entering the sanctuary, and removing further idols, Muhammad went to the place of his first preaching in Mecca. His enemies sought amnesty and forgiveness, which he gave.

Muhammad's entry into his home city Mecca represents a time of conquest, reconciliation, fulfilment of objectives, and an assertion of power. Spiritual, economic and political power is demonstrated.

- In the year 10 A.H. (632) the first Islamic pilgrimage or **hajj** occurred in Mecca. During this pilgrimage, Muhammad gave what became known as the Farewell Sermon to Muslims, in which he stated:

"I am leaving you with the Book of God and the Sunnah of his Prophet. O men, harken well to my words. Learn that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood."

- A few months later in 632, Muhammad died - perhaps of a fever. He left no surviving sons who could be successors, although his daughter Fatimah played a significant role after his death.

570 Muhammad born; death of Muhammad's father, Abdullah.

576 Death of Muhammad's mother, Amina.

595 Muhammad marries Khadijah

610 First Revelation received

619 'Year of Sorrow': death of Abu Talib and Khadijah

620 Night Journey/mi'raj

622 Hijrah

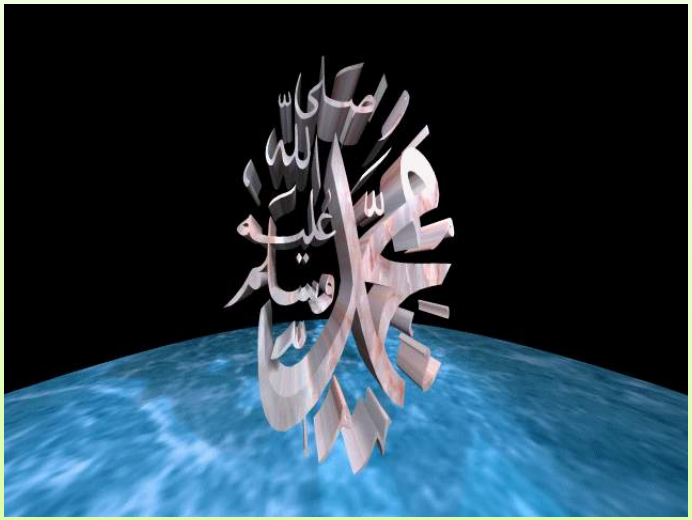
624 Battle of Badr

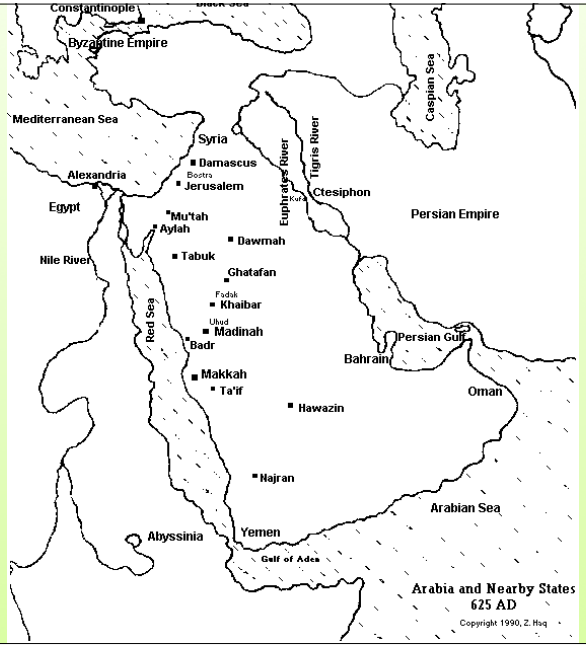
625 Battle of Uhud

628 Hudaybiyah Treaty

630 Surrender of Mecca

632 Final Pilgrimage of Muhammad; Final Sermon; death of Muhammad





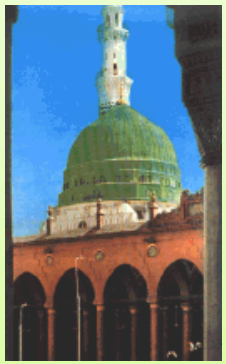


"Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory ..."

"... God's Good Pleasure was on the Believers when they swore Fealty to thee under the Tree: He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down Tranquility to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy Victory;

And many gains will they acquire (besides): and God is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. **[Surah Fat-h (victory) 48: 1,18] [A].**

"I am leaving you with the Book of God and the Sunnah of his Prophet. O men, harken well to my words. Learn that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood."



After Muhammad



Who was to lead the Muslim community after the death of Muhammad?

- Ultimate sovereign in Islam is God: Muhammad was God's vice-regent on earth (***caliph*** - successor & deputy)

- After the death of Muhammad, there was the problem of who was going to lead the Muslim community. Muhammad was the Final Prophet - therefore no more Prophets would come to lead the community.

- There was a need for leadership, in order that the Revelation could be preserved - and Islam could develop and spread further (keeping the momentum established by Muhammad). There was also the need for an arbiter of disputes and maker of community decisions.

The first caliphs - **Abu Bakr** and '**Umar** - were associated with Muhammad, through marriage and clan ties.

There are a number of references to them within biographical sources relating to the Prophet.

"O men, if you worship Muhammad, Muhammad is dead; if your worship God, God is alive."



- **Abu Bakr** (r. 632-4) affirmed his authority with a series of military campaigns - which carried Islam into (and beyond) the frontier regions of empires. Abu Bakr maintained the momentum of Islam, and was drawn northwards to richer Syria and Iraq with his army, conquering Arabia and entering Palestine.

- These military campaigns were maintained by the second caliph '**Umar ibn al-Khattab** (r. 634-44), who conquered Damascus in 636. By the end of his reign, Islam could be found within the whole of Arabia, part of the former Sasanian Empire, and the conquered Syrian and Egyptian provinces of the Byzantine Empire.

- Tensions and conflicts re-surfaced in the reign of the third caliph, **'Uthman ibn 'Affan** (644-56) who was chosen after **Umar** was assassinated (in a private feud). 'Uthman - an early convert to Islam - came from one of the senior families that had followed Muhammad. Uthman sought to reconcile the factions disputing power.
- However, Uthman appointed members of his own clan as provincial governors. This aroused opposition, in Madina (from the sons of Companions and the Prophet's wife **A'isha** - and in **Kufa** and **Fustat**. Some tribes resented the domination of Meccans in their affairs. This unrest led to Uthman's murder in 656.



- The claimant to the title of caliph was **Ali ibn Abi Talib** (656-61), a Quraysh, an early convert to Islam, and a cousin of Muhammad who had married Muhammad's daughter Fatima. He was opposed, both by Uthman's clan, and by others who disputed his election's validity.

- **Ali** established himself as caliph in **Kufa**. His opponents based themselves in Basra. He defeated them, but was faced by a challenge from Syria.
- The governor of Syria was **Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan** (661-80)- a relative of Uthman. Their forces met at Siffin, on the upper Euphrates, where after fighting they agreed on arbitration.
- Ali agreed, but was deserted by some of his supporters, who did not want their position compromised. Ali's alliance grew weaker, and he was assassinated in Kufa. Mu'awiya proclaimed himself caliph, and Ali and Fatima's elder son Hasan consented.

- In 61AH/680 **Husayn** (Muhammad's grandson and Ali and Fatima's youngest son) led a force against the Umayyads.
- On 10th Muharram, at **Karbala** in Iraq, Husayn, and most of his family and followers were defeated and killed by an Umayyad force.

- The **Umayyad caliphate** maintained power for nearly a century.
- They became an Arab aristocracy, ruling over non-Arabs (including Muslims), utilising an imperial-style infrastructure, based in Syria, borrowing from pre-Islamic trends.
- The caliphate passed from father to son, with a capital in Damascus.





•Within one hundred years of Muhammad's death, there were Muslim communities as far apart as Spain and China. There were also significant divisions and power struggles, reflecting different political, tribal and religious interests.

