

# Glossary of Muslim Terms

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## The 5 pillars of Islam

Refers to the five essential duties enjoined upon every adult Muslim man and woman. They are as follows:

i) *Shahadah* – The affirmation of faith, *Shahadah*, is the most fundamental of the five pillars of Islam. It involves testifying that there is no god (*ilah*) except Allah (the one God), and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. When a non-Muslim converts to Islam he or she is required to recite the *Shahadah*.

ii) *Salah* – The second pillar of Islam is *Salah*, which refers to the five daily prayers obligatory upon every Muslim at fixed times during the day. The *Salah* is offered facing the *Kaaba*. Before the *Salah* Muslims must undergo, *Wadu*, ritual cleansing which involves cleaning the face, hands, and feet with water. During the *Salah* Muslims must recite verses of the Qur'an from heart, and perform the prostration bowing their heads to the ground in glorification of God. According to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (*hadith*), the *Salah* is meant to be a personal conversation that the Muslim holds with God, and it is seen as a way of worship and expressing gratitude to God.

iii) *Zakah* – *Zakah* refers to obligatory charity enjoined upon Muslims. Each year Muslims must give a fixed amount in *Zakah* based on the value of their accumulated wealth to ease the suffering of the poor and the destitute. It is important to note that the *Zakah* is not seen merely as charitable alms-giving (which is called *sadaqa* in Islam), but as the *right* of the poor and the needy upon a certain portion of the wealth of richer Muslims.

iv) *Sawm* – Ritual fasting, *Sawm* is an obligatory practice for Muslims during the month of Ramadan. During this month Muslims must abstain from food, drink, and sexual intercourse from dawn till dusk. By observing the fast Muslims seek nearness to Allah, to express their gratitude to and dependence on him, to atone for their past sins, and to remind them of the poor people who are starving around the world. Moreover, during Ramadan Muslims are expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Islam by refraining from violence, anger, envy, greed, lust, harsh language, gossip and to try to get along with each other more than they usually would. All obscene and irreligious sights and sounds are also to be avoided.

v) *Hajj* – The pilgrimage is the fifth pillar of Islam. It involves traveling to Mecca, performing a series of rituals and prayers and is obligatory only upon able-bodied and financially capable Muslims. Although the obligation is to perform the Hajj once in a life-time, many Muslims choose to perform it multiple times. Muslims from all over the world travel to Mecca during the lunar month of Dhul-Hijjah to perform the pilgrimage, including the circumambulation of the *Kaaba*, a cubical edifice that Muslims believe was originally built by the prophet Abraham himself.

## Al-Azhar University

Is a prominent institution of higher learning, and is world-renowned as a seat of Islamic scholarship and education. Its school of theology (*Madrasah*) is especially respected by Muslims worldwide. Situated in Cairo, Egypt, Al-Azhar is one of the world's oldest operating universities. The university maintains a Sunni outlook in its teachings. The Islamic scholars who are trained at Al-Azhar, are considered some of the most reputable in the world. As a result the interpretation of Islamic texts given by them and their opinions on matters of the religion (*fatwa*) is given great weight by Muslims all over the world, and especially by Sunni Muslims. Over the years, the university has produced graduates who have gone on to hold important positions in the Islamic world. However, some of Al-Azhar's graduates have also proved to be very controversial, mainly due to their involvement in Islamic movements, both religious and political, around the world. The university library holds one of the largest collections of Islamic literature. Its collection includes 99,062 books consisting of 595,668 volumes of Islamic manuscripts and rare books, some dating back to the 8th century. The library is a center of attraction to researchers, students and other Islamic universities. The library does not collect non-Islamic literature. Al-Azhar also publishes a monthly magazine whose stated

purpose is to advertise religious rules, subjects related to Islamic literature, and basic jurisprudence (*shariah*), including sections on history, biographies, translated texts and news concerning the Muslim world.

## **Burka**

[Arabic] The *burka* is a loose outer garment worn by women in some Islamic traditions, designed with the purpose of cloaking the form and features of the body. It is usually made of light material, and is worn over regular ordinary clothing. A woman who wears a *burka* is not required to keep it on all the time, but only in front of strangers and when she is in public. Hence when a woman is in the privacy of her home and is in the presence of family members, such as her father, mother, husband, brothers, sisters, and uncles, she is not required to keep the *burka* on. The *burka* should however, be seen as an *interpretation* of the Qur'anic dictate, on both male and female Muslims, to dress modestly in public, known as *hijab*. And as such the *burka* is nowhere mentioned in the Qur'an or the *Hadith* by name.

## **Fatwa**

[Arabic] Fatwa is a legal statement in Islam, issued by a mufti or a religious lawyer, on a specific issue. A fatwa is issued when the Islamic point of view in a matter is unclear and is asked to make clear by a judge of the land. In matters of personal importance, an individual can also ask the mufti for a fatwa. It is imperative that the fatwa does not represent the personal opinion or biases of the mufti, but is based on Islamic principles as stated in the Qur'an, and established precedence by the Prophet as stated in the Hadith. The primary purpose of the fatwa is to elucidate a matter of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to other scholars, and thereby constitutes the thoughtful opinion of an Islamic Juror (*mufti*) based on scripture and the *hadith*. A fatwa is normally not binding on any Muslim, except on the scholar who pronounces it.

## **Hadith**

[Arabic. plural: Ahadith] The hadith is a collection of oral traditions relating to the words and actions of Prophet Muhammad. Together with the Qur'an, collections of hadith are regarded as the most vital sources for determining the Sunnah, or Muslim way of life, by all traditional schools of jurisprudence. There are three types of Hadith based on their contents, namely ones which contain a statement of the Prophet, ones which contain an action of the Prophet, and ones which contain the Prophet's affirmation of an action done by someone other than him. In general the Muslims consider ahadith to be an essential supplement to and clarifications of the Qur'an, Islam's Holy Scripture. In Islamic jurisprudence, the Qur'an contains many rules for the behavior expected of Muslims. However, there are many cases where the specific details of those rules and how exactly they are to be implemented in real life are absent in the Qur'an. Muhammad's example as is set down in the Hadith provides Muslims with guidance about how to carry out the laws of the Qur'an in real life. Muslims believe that they can look at the way of life, or *sunah*, of Muhammad and his companions to discover what to imitate and what to avoid. Muslim scholars also find it useful to know how Muhammad or his companions explained and interpreted the revelations in the Qur'an, or upon what occasion Muhammad received them, so that by employing their methodologies they too can interpret the Qur'an. Sometimes this will clarify a passage that otherwise seems obscure. Ahadith are a source for Islamic history and biography. For the vast majority of devout Muslims, authentic ahadith are also a source of religious inspiration.

## **Halal food**

Halal is an Arabic word which means "permissible" and *Halal* food is food that is permissible to Muslims by Islamic law. The chief source for what constitutes *halal* food is the Qur'an. According to the Qur'an any food is *halal* except "dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which the name of other than Allah hath been invoked; that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone

(altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety" (5:3). The verse goes on to explain that the laws of *halal* food may be dissolved when one's life is threatened by hunger or starvation. Alcohol, drugs and any other item of consumption which maims or impairs the body or any part of it is also forbidden (5:91). The *hadith* (traditions of the Prophet) outline how any animal (except fish) whose meat is *halal* has to be slaughtered in order for it to remain *halal*. Therefore any allowed meat which has not been slaughtered according to the guidelines set down by the Prophet is not permissible for consumption. In this regard, the Qur'an allows Muslims to eat the meat prepared by the People of the Books, namely the Jews and the Christians (meaning people who have received a scripture from God with His laws), because of the similarity found in them to the Muslim method of slaughtering. In practice, when *halal* meat is absent some Muslims will consent to eating *kosher* meat. However the general consensus is that the term *halal* and *kosher* are not interchangeable, and *kosher* meat should only be eaten in the absence of *halal* meat.

## Ijtihad

Derived from the Arabic root word j-h-d, is a term pertaining to Islamic law that describes the process of arriving at a legal decision by independent interpretation of the Islamic legal sources: the Qur'an and the Sunnah. An *ijtihad* is to be made only in a situation where no legal precedent exists as set down in the Qur'an or the examples of the Prophet (Hadith), and where the novelty of the situation requires an Islamic Scholar (such as a mufti) to use his own independent interpretations to come to a decision. Such a decision should however, not be personally biased or otherwise motivated. Instead any judgment arrived at by *Ijtihad* must be in keeping with and in the spirit of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Where there is a clear precedence set by the Qur'an or the Hadith, judgments must be based on *taqlid*, "imitation" of the Prophetic example. A person who applies *ijtihad* is called a *mujtahid*, and traditionally has to be a known scholar of Islamic Law, an Islamic lawyer or an alim. To become a *mujtahid* in theological terms is similar to having a doctorate in divinity in Islamic *kalam*, or in legal terms to reaching the status of a high or Supreme Court judge. The word *ijtihad*, is itself revealing of the process involved in making it. It is derived from the Arabic root word j-h-d, the same root word that *Jihad* is derived from. The term *ijtihad* therefore denotes a struggle or mental effort, and implies that it is an act of deliberation requiring one to focus on his inner striving in the path of Allah. In fact some go as far as to call *Ijtihad*, a form of *Jihad*, and maintain that it is part of what the Prophet referred to as the "greater *Jihad*" in one of the Hadith. In effect, the criteria for a person allowed to make *ijtihad* are numerous. An understanding of the objectives of the *sharia* (Islamic law) and a thorough knowledge of its sources and methods of deduction are imperative. In today's world where no country is governed by Islamic law (*sharia*) *ijtihad* has become more of a theoretical and ideological exercise.

## Imam

[Arabic] The term *Imam* literally refers to a leader. Traditionally, and in the Islamic context it has been used to refer to the leader of a mosque, i.e. the one who leads the regular congregational prayers. In its broader sense, the term is used to refer to Islamic scholars, people with sufficient knowledge of the scripture, the *hadith*, and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*): the word *Imam* used in this context can perhaps be thought of as meaning a leader in Islamic knowledge. In Sunni Islam for instance, the four prominent scholars who started the four schools of thought in Islamic jurisprudence (*madh'hab*) are referred to as *Imams*. Along similar lines, a person who has the authority to uphold Islamic Law is called an *Imam*, and the first four *Caliphs* (governors) of the Muslim community after the death of Muhammad are also referred to as *Imams*.

**Among Sunnis**, a leader in this sense of the word can only be selected through consensus (*ijma*) from among the community. Bloodlines cannot dictate who will become the *Imam* (governor) of the Muslim community. Instead, he has to be entrusted power through the consent of

those he is to govern. According to Sunni understanding, the Imam (or Caliph) must never be thought of as having the spiritual power to introduce new divine laws. Instead, the "Caliph" can only enforce existing divine laws, namely those sent by Allah through Muhammad and as interpreted by scholars.

**The Shiite concept of Imam** differs significantly from the Sunni concept, and forms a vital part of the Shiite creed. Shiites believe that spiritual guidance is not limited to the Qur'an and the Hadith, but is also embodied in the person of the Imam of the Time, who is the Guardian and guide of all Muslims politically and spiritually. According to the Shiites, Muhammad appointed his cousin and son-in-law Ali as his successor Caliph. As a result the Shiites believe that the right to govern the Muslim community as Imams (leaders) passed on to Ali and his direct descendants, thus remaining within the lineage of Muhammad. Therefore *Imamah* or Imam-hood for Shiites is limited to the bloodline of Ali. The spiritual ascendancy of the Imam as set down by the will of God therefore allows an Imam to sanction new laws because he is believed to have direct contact with God. This direct contact makes an Imam infallible and invests in him the prerogative of interpreting the Qur'an, thereby gradually revealing its esoteric meaning. Sunnis reject this doctrine of infallibility. Shiites however, believe only these Imams have the right to be Caliphs, meaning that all other caliphs (governors), whether elected by consensus (*Ijma*) or not, are 'usurpers' of the Caliphate.

## **Jihad**

Derived from the Arabic root word j-h-d, which means to strive or to struggle. Put in the Islamic context the word means to strive in the path of God (as in jihad fi sabil Allah). Many verses in the Qur'an enjoin Jihad upon the Muslim as a sacred duty. Jihad is a broad concept that may take many forms. It may refer to a struggle to "improve one's self and/or society." It may be seen as directed against the devil's inducements, aspects of one's own self such as lust, or against a visible enemy. The five major categories of jihad that are recognized are Jihad against one's own self (self-perfection, and the struggle against Satan's inducements), Jihad of the tongue (The promotion of good and forbidding of evil through one's speech and writings), Jihad of the hand (Struggle of Good against Evil through performing charitable deeds, taking care of elderly people, and performing the pilgrimage &c.), Jihad of the pen (Striving for a better understanding of Good through the scholarly study of Islam, Ijtihad, and legal reasoning), and Jihad of the sword (Armed fighting in the defense of Good). Although all these forms fall under the term Jihad, it is easy to see how the last of the Jihads, i.e. Jihad of the sword may be the most conspicuous among them. In fact, the word Jihad has often been used by both Muslims and non-Muslims to solely refer to an armed struggle in the way of God. When used in this context, Jihad is the only form of warfare that a Muslim is allowed to take part in. The first commands regarding armed struggle that appear in the Qur'an tell the Muslims to "fight in the cause of Allah, against those who fight against you", and emphasizes the defensive nature of such a war. In fact acting by the Laws of the Qur'an during the armed conflict is as much a Jihad, as the combat itself. The Qur'an and Hadith are strict with regard to the laws of combat, and the killing of women, children and non-combatants, as well as damaging cultivated or residential areas is strictly forbidden.

## **Mecca**

[Shortened version of Makkah al-Mukarramah] Situated in Saudi Arabia, it is the most important of the three holy cities of Islam. The city's importance stems from the fact that it contains the *Kaaba*, a cubical granite structure in the direction of which Muslims are required to turn when performing their prayers (*Salah*) (Qur'an 2:142-145). Muslims who are able are required to make a pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to the Kaaba (Qur'an 3:96). Mecca is therefore central to two of the most essential Muslim practices. It is also the birth place of the prophet Muhammad, and it is here that he first started preaching the message of Islam.

## **Medina**

[Shortened version of al Madīnat al-Munawwarah] Situated in Saudi Arabia, it is one of Islam's holy cities. In the year 622 after facing severe persecution in Mecca the early Muslims migrated to the city of Yathrib (which later came to be known as Medina). Although smaller pockets of Muslim

refugees had migrated to the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia before this time, the migration to Medina was especially important. For on arriving there the Meccan Muslims found the major Arab tribes of the city to have already converted to Islam and felt as though driven out of Mecca Islam itself had found a new home in Medina. When the prophet eventually migrated to the city its name was changed from Yathrib to Madinat al-Nabi, translated literally as the City of the Prophet. In Medina the Muslims built their first mosque, and it is here that the Prophet was buried upon his death.

## Mosque

A mosque is a building used for public worship by Muslims. It is derived from the Arabic word, *Masjid*. The word *Masjid* itself is revealing of the purpose of a Mosque in that it is derived from the Arabic root word s-j-d, which refers to the act of prostration. The mosque is therefore meant to provide the believer with a place where he or she can prostrate in worship to God. The inside of the mosque has no furniture so as to allow as many worshippers as possible to line the room. In keeping with the idea of a monotheistic deity who "has no graven image" mosques are devoid of any and all forms of statues, images of live creatures, and idols. As a result mosques have been traditionally decorated with geometric designs and calligraphy of Qur'anic texts on the walls. Usually opposite the entrance to the prayer hall is the *qibla* wall. The qibla wall should, in a properly oriented mosque, be set perpendicular to a line leading to Mecca, the location of the *Ka'ba*. Congregants pray in rows parallel to the *qibla* wall and thus arrange themselves so they face Mecca. In the *qibla* wall, usually at its center, is the *mihrab*, a niche or depression indicating the *qibla* wall. The *mihrab* serves as the location where the Imam leads the five daily prayers. Each week during the 'Friday prayer' (*jummah*), a raised *minbar* or pulpit is placed to the side of the mihrab for the Imam or some other speaker to offer a sermon (*khutbah*) from. The absence of furniture makes the mosque a versatile building which can be used to host various events for the spiritual benefit of the community. Traditionally the mosque offers educational facilities to the community. Some mosques will have full-time/ part-time schools that teach both Islamic and general knowledge. Often the mosque is connected to a Madrassa, a religious seminary where Muslims can study the Qur'an, hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence to become Islamic scholars (*alims*) and / or Imams (in the Sunni sense).

## Sunni

[Also called Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l Jamah] Sunni Muslims form the largest denomination of Islam. The word Sunni is derived from the word Sunnah, which refers to the life of the Prophet Muhammad and the examples set by him as is recorded in the *Hadith*. Sunni Muslims are therefore distinguished by their careful adherence to the actions and words of the Prophet as set down in the Hadith. The only sources of religious guidance that a Sunni can appeal to are the Qur'an and the Hadith, and their interpretation by scholars. Therefore Sunnis reject the spiritual authority of any one man as the source of religious guidance over the Qur'an or the Hadith. Sunnis are sometimes called *Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l Jamah*, the word *Jamah* signifying that they form the 'majority' among the Muslims. The earliest divide between the Sunnis and the Shiites was however more of a political matter rather than a theological one. The Sunnis represent the branch of Islam that accepted the succession of Muhammad by Abu Bakr (not related to him by blood) who was selected by the *ijma* (consensus) of the *Shura* (a council of the companions of Muhammad). The Shiites by contrast, wanted Ali to become the Caliph (governor/successor). Ali was the cousin of the Prophet, hence related to him by blood, and according to Shiite sources he was chosen by Muhammad to be his successor after his death.

## Shiite

[Known also as Shi'a] The Shiites form the largest minority (5 – 10%) denomination of Islam. The term Shi'a is derived from the word Shiat-Ali (the faction of Ali), and signifies the fact that the denomination had its origin in the claim of Ali ibn Abi Talib, the cousin of the Prophet, to be the successor of Muhammad after his death. This is in contrast to the Sunni view which holds that the governor or Imam of the Muslim community is to be chosen by *ijma* (consensus). The Shi'a belief differs from that of the Sunnis in that they place a greater importance on the religious guidance of the family of Muhammad, who are called the Ahl-ul-Bayt, and his descendents who are known as

the Shi'a Imams. The Shiites claim that Muhammad had appointed Ali ibn Abi-Talib to be his successor after his death. Since Muhammad's only bloodline continued through his daughter Fatima and his cousin Ali, the rightful Imams to lead the Muslim community were believed to be Muhammad's grandsons through Fatima and Ali. Although the first three Caliphs (governors) of the Islamic state after the death of Muhammad were Sunnis, the Shiites claim that this is merely a historic occurrence, and not a matter of faith. Instead the *Imama* (Imam-hood) started with the fourth Caliph, Imam Ali ibn Abi-Talib. The belief that Muhammad's descendants are the true source of guidance through the ages sets Shiites apart from Sunnis, and subsequently has led them to discount the authority of some Hadith (sayings of the Prophet) narrated from Sunni sources, leading to a religious divide.

### **The relationship between Muhammad and Ali**

Ali ibn Abi Talib was the cousin of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. As his name shows Ali was the son of Abu Talib. Abu Talib who was Prophet's uncle took in Muhammad under his roof when he was orphaned at a young age. According to Muslim sources, Abu Talib cared for the young Muhammad as though he were his own son, and supported him throughout his life, although it is widely believed that he never became a Muslim himself. Once Muhammad came of age, he began to work for his uncle, and after his marriage with Khadija took responsibility of Abu Talib's son Ali. From the time of his birth Muhammad loved Ali, and is credited with giving the child his name which means "the exalted one". When Muhammad first reported to have received divine revelation the first person he confided in was his wife, Khadija, who immediately believed him to be the messenger of God. Ali who was then living in the house of Muhammad and was only about ten years old, was next to learn of Muhammad's prophethood. The young Ali promptly accepted Muhammad's report of receiving revelations, and was the first male to accept Islam. Ali stood firmly by Muhammad during the early years of Islam when the handfuls of Muslims in Mecca were being severely persecuted. In fact, when an attempt was made on the Prophet's life Ali proved his courage and devotion to Islam by lying on Muhammad's bed in his place, on the night the assassins attempted to kill him. Ali survived the plot and soon after the Prophet's migration to Medina followed him, and there was married to Muhammad's daughter Fatima. Ali had four children born to Fatima. It was only through Fatima and Ali that the progeny of Muhammad was perpetuated. Ali was very active in his service to Islam during the lifetime of Muhammad, and took part in every one of Islam's battles except the Battle of Tabouk. He was known to be an accomplished warrior, and Muhammad sent him as the head of many Muslim expeditions. Not only was Ali an able fighter, but Muslim sources contain many stories of his uprightness even in difficult situations. Muhammad's admiration for Ali is expressed in his sayings, such as the one where near the time of his death Muhammad is reported to have said, "O people, I am a human being. I am about to receive a message from my Lord and I, in response to Allah's call, (would bid good-bye to you), but I am leaving among you two weighty things: the one being the Book of Allah in which there is right guidance and light, so hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it. On exhorting (the Muslims) (to hold fast) to the Book of Allah he then said: The second are the members of my Household (Bayt). I remind you (of your duties) to the members of my family." The term, "members of my family" is understood by Muslims to mean Ali, Fatima, and their sons Husayn, and Hasan. According to Shi'a sources, Ali was promised succession after the death of Muhammad. The Shiites cite the incident of Ghadir Khumm, where Muhammad is supposed to have said, "For whomever I am a Mawla (Guardian) of, then 'Ali is his Mawla." However, Sunnis see this statement as Muhammad's appreciation of Ali's good qualities rather than as a prophecy of succession. Regardless of the matter of succession, Ali is respected and loved by Muslims of all denominations, whether they are Shiites or Sunnis.

### **A list of important dates and events in Muslim history**

570 CE – Muhammad is born in to the tribe of Kuraysh to Abdullah and Amina.

596 CE – Muhammad is married to Khadijah.

610 CE – At the age of forty, Muhammad receives his first revelation from God. His mission as the messenger of God begins from this year.

615 CE – In the face of persecution and torture, Muhammad advises the weaker among the Muslims to seek refuge in the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia

620 CE – The Isra or the Night Journey takes place.

622 CE – Facing persecution in Mecca, Muhammad and his followers migrate to the city of Yathrib (Medina): a journey known to Muslims as the Hijra. It is from this year that the Muslim calendar begins. Treaties are signed between the Muslim and Jewish tribes of Medina.

624 CE – The battle of Badr takes place. The Muslim Army consisting of around 314 men faces the Non-Muslim Army of Mecca which is reported to have consisted of over 900 men and cavalry. Although much smaller in number, the Muslims gain a resounding victory.

625 CE – The battle of Uhud takes place. The Muslim forces number around 1000. Meccan forces number around 3000. The Muslims face a defeat at the hands of the Meccans. Muhammad himself is severely injured, but is defended by faithful Muslims who stand their ground.

627 CE – The Battle of the Trench takes place. The Meccans amass an unprecedented army, consisting of their allies from all over Arabia, and lays siege of Medina. The prophet and his companions dig trenches around the city to defend against attacks. One of the tribes of Medina betrays the Muslims and gives access to the Meccan forces through an untrenched part of the city. The Muslims are saved by a severe storm which gives rise to ill feelings between the Meccans and their allies. The siege is called off.

628 CE – Muhammad and his companions go to Mecca during the “sacred month” (when war was forbidden among the Arabs) to perform the pilgrimage, or the Hajj. The Muslims are denied entry. Instead a peace treaty (known as the Treaty of Hudaibia) is signed between the Muslims and the Meccans, preventing the parties from attacking one another for the next ten years. The Muslims are promised by the Meccans that they would be allowed to make pilgrimage the next year.

629 CE – The Muslims make the first pilgrimage to Mecca. The ranks of the Muslims swell as Islam spreads rapidly all across Arabia.

630 CE – The peace treaty of Hudaibia is breached by the Meccans. Muhammad and his followers march on the city of Mecca with 10,000 men. Orders are given that old or sick men, children, men who have dropped their arms, men who stayed in their homes or people who stayed in Abu Sufiyan’s (A Meccan chief) home were not to be harmed and no trees were to be cut. Thus, there was no bloodshed in the conquest.

631 CE – Most of the Arabian Peninsula becomes Muslim.

632 CE – Farewell Hajj, and the death of Muhammad.

632 CE – Abu Bakr becomes the first Caliph of Islam. He orders the compilation of the Qur’an.

634 CE – Umar ibn al-Khattab becomes the second Caliph of Islam. Under his rule Mesopotamia, parts of Persia, Egypt, Palestine, North Africa and Armenia comes under Muslim rule.

644 CE – Uthman ibn Affan becomes the third Caliph of Islam. Compilation of the basic text of the Qur’an is completed. He sends a copy of the Qur’an to each of the Muslim cities and garrison towns. Iran, most of North Africa, the Caucasus, and Cyprus comes under the rule of the Muslims.

656 CE – Ali ibn Abi Talib becomes the fourth Caliph of Islam.

661 CE – Ali ibn Abi Talib is assassinated. Thus ending the reign of the “four righteously guided Caliphs”, or in Islamic terms the end of the Khulafa-ur-Rashidun.