



History of Islam

Arabic Names and Transliteration

Arabic names have different formats:

- Halid bin Valid = Halid, son of Valid
- Ibn Mesud = Son of Mesud
- Umm Kulthum = Mother of Kulthum
- Abu Bakr = Father of Bakr
- Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan = Muawiyah, son of (father of Sufyan)

Some people are well-known through their titles:

- Abu Hureyrah = Father of the Kitten
- Abu Jahl = Father of Ignorance

Some names have more than one transliteration to English:

- Uthman, Osman
- Umar, Omar

The definite article: Al=The. Example: Al-Kitab = The book

Four Righteous Caliphs (632-661)

Muslims After Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)

Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) died on June 8, 632 in Medina. He did not leave any successor (caliph). The Prophet and his rightly guided successors always followed the principle of consultation. Quran recommends counselling while solving the problems:

“And those who answer the call of their Lord and obey Him, and establish the Prayer in conformity with its conditions; and whose affairs are by consultation among themselves;” (Quran 42:38)

The companions selected Abu Bakr, the Prophet’s best friend, as their leader.

Abu Bakr (r.a.) (632-634)

After the prophet is died, several tribes left Islam, some started following false prophets. Abu Bakr struggled to suppress them. An army commanded by Halid bin Valid defeated them one by one. Muslims armies led by Amr bin As defeated Byzantine Empire in 634. Muslims extended their territories including south of Iraq and up to Palestine. Quran compiled as a book by a commission led by Zayd bin Sabit.

Umar (r.a.) (634-644)

Abu Bakr recommended Umar, Prophet’s second best friend, as the successor. Umar was known to have a tough and strong character, but very righteous and just as well. Conquests in his time:

- Battle of Kadisiyyah (636). An army commanded by Sa’d bin Ebi Vakkas defeated Sassanid empire. Shortly after Sassanid’s capital, Medain, is taken. Sassanid move their capital to Rey (Tehran).

- Damascus (635). Defeated Byzantine in Jordan, after that Damascus is taken.
- Jerusalem (637). An army led by Amr bin As and Halid bin Valid conquered Jerusalem.
- Alexandria (642). The conquest of Egypt is completed by Amr bin As.
- Tunis (642). An army led by Abdullah bin Sa’d.
- Battle of Nihavend (642). The end of Sassanid reign, Iran was fully conquered by Muslims.

Summary: During Umar’s reign, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Egypt was conquered. The fastest expansion of Muslims in throughout the history of Islam.

Umar shaped the foundation of Islamic governments:

An orderly and sophisticated justice system.

Established the department of treasury.

In 644, Umar was assassinated by a Persian slave in response to the Muslim conquest of Persia.

Umar (r.a.) in Jerusalem (637)

Patriarch Sophronius was in charge of Jerusalem. Sophronius refused to surrender the city unless Caliph Umar came and accept the surrender himself. Umar travelled alone with one donkey and one servant. The servant and Umar were taking turns to ride the donkey. When they are about to approach Jerusalem, his servant took the donkey. People of Jerusalem thought that servant was the caliph. People of Jerusalem were amazed that Umar’s clothe was a simple robe indistinguishable from his servant. Umar was one of the most powerful person in the world at that time.

Patriarch Sophronius and Umar made an act guaranteeing the safety of the people in Jerusalem:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. This is the assurance of safety which the servant of God, Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, has given to the people of Jerusalem. He has given them an assurance of safety for themselves for their property, their churches, their crosses, the sick and healthy of the city and for all the rituals which belong to their religion. Their churches will not be inhabited by Muslims and will not be destroyed. Neither they, nor the land on which they stand, nor their cross, nor their property will be damaged. They will not be forcibly converted.

Uthman (r.a.) (644-656)

Before passing away, Umar appointed six people to choose his successor among themselves. They choose Uthman (r.a.) who was one of the earliest people accepted Islam. Uthman was a member of wealthy Umayyad family in Mecca. He was strong supporter of Islam financially. Uthman relaxed strict monetary policies of Umar. Muslims as well as non-Muslims enjoyed an prosperous life during his reign. Umar never permitted receiving/giving gifts to mayors under his reign. Uthman removed this restriction as well. Uthman appointed people from his family, Umayyads, as mayors. Notable one is Muawiyah bin Abu Sufyan, his cousin, to Damascus. This created discontent among the companions of the prophet.

On time the Prophet (pbuh) said to Umar:

“In the future, fitna (discension and mischief) will fall down into your houses like the falling down of the drops of rain water. You will be the door holding this.”

Umar asked: *“Will this door be opened or broken?”*

Prophet replied: *“The door will be broken.”*

This narration indicates that Umar knew that he will be assassinated.

Reason for fitna: Many people become Muslim in short period of time. Not all had same purity of early Muslims, some with expectations.

Fitna emerged as a propaganda of dissension of the Uthman rule in Egypt, Kufa and Basra. A rebellion took control of Egypt, then it moved to Medina. Uthman promised to address the rebel's concerns, yet they were decided to kill the caliph. Although Uthman could suppress the rebellion, he choose to sacrifice himself in order not to divide the Islamic world.

Uthman and his family is assassinated in 656.

The conquests slowed down in this period: Armenia, Khorasan (Northern Iran) and some parts of northern Africa are conquered.

[Ali \(r.a.\) \(656-661\)](#)

After Caliph Uthman is killed, the government was in turbulence. The rebels took control of Madina, the capital. They decided to choose Ali (r.a.) to be next caliph. Although Ali was not happy that the rebels are not punished due to Uthman's death, he accepted to be the next caliph to stop the political turbulence. Ali was Prophet's cousin, embraced Islam when he was a child. He is a war hero, Islamic scholar and also son-in-law of the Prophet. He married Prophet's daughter, Fatima (r.a.). They had two sons: Hasan and Hussain. Prophet designated the family of Ali as his only descendants and said:

“I left two things for you. As long as you hold on these, you will not deviate from the right path. Qur'an and my family.”(Abu Davud)

The reign of Ali was dominated by internal conflicts.

[Battle of Camel \(656\)](#)

Prophet's wife Aisha, Talha bin Ubeydullah, Zubayr bin Avvam was unhappy that the rebels who killed the Uthman are not punished. They met with Ali's forces in Basra, Iraq. Although they resolved the conflict with an agreement, some hypocrites from both sides started the war, nevertheless. Zubeyr bin Avvam was killed in this war.

[Battle of Siffin \(658\)](#)

Umayyad family tried to stop Ali's caliphate. The mayor of Damascus, Muawiyeh declared that unless Uthman's killers found, he will not obey Ali. Amr bin As supported Muawiyeh. Two armies faced each other in the plains of Siffin (Syria). The war took three months. Many companions of the prophet from both sides are killed in this war. The war ended undecided, both sides agreed to accept the decisions of fair arbitrators. Abu Musa Ashari is chosen to be the arbitrator. Abu Musa decided that Ali should step down from the caliphate and Muslims should choose a new caliph.

Ali refused to accept the verdict of him stepping down, stating that it was contrary to the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the tradition of Prophet). Many broke away from Ali's coalition after Abu Musa's decision. A notable group is Kharijites ("those who leave"). They claim that Ali made an error by trusting the arbitrator, but not his own decision.

The Islamic world divided into three groups:

- Shiitu'l Ali (Followers of Ali). (These are not the today's Shiites)
- Followers of Muawiyah
- Kharijites (Others who opposed to both sides)

Kharijites were very aggressive those who do not think as they are. Kharijites later claim both Ali and Uthman are infidels. Ali defeated them in Nehrevan, most of them are killed in this war. Kharijites attempted the assassinations of Ali, Muawiyah and Amr bin As. Ali was assassinated by Ibn Mulcem Al-Kharijite. Muawiyah was injured during the attack, but survived. The assassin sent to Amr bin As killed a wrong person instead of him. After Ali's death, Muawiyah declared his caliphate in Damascus and the reign of Umayyad starts. During Ali's reign, the capital was moved from Media to Kufe, Iraq.

II. Umayyad Caliphate (661-750)

[The Conflict with Prophet's Family](#)

After Ali's death, people in Kufe started following Ali's son Hasan (r.a.). In order to stop wars, Hasan accepted Muawiyah as the next caliph (661). The capital is moved from Kufe to Damascus. Muawiyah appointed his son Yazid, so the caliphate becomes a dynasty (680). Hussain (younger son of Ali (r.a.)) did not accepted Yazid as the next caliph. People of Kufe and many supporters of Ali gathered around Hussain.

[Battle of Karbala](#)

Hussain start travelling from Madina to Kufe. In the meanwhile, Yezid forces killed Hussain's supporters in Kufe. Yazid's forces surrounded Hussain's small group of 80 people in Karbala, Iraq. Except few children, all of them are killed by Yazid's forces (October 10, 680 or 10 Muharrem, 61). (This day coincides with the exodus in Islamic calendar). **This was the worst event ever happened in Islam world. It is universally condemned by all groups of Islam right now.** This brutality is commemorated throughout the Islamic history.

[Conquests](#)

- Northern Iran (Khorasan)
- Sind
- Armenia
- Northern Africa
- Spain (Tarik bin Ziyad)
- Parts of Turkistan
- Failed attempt to take Constantinople

[Umayyad's Decline](#)

Umayyad rulers suppressed the revolts of the family of Prophet by force (Shiite revolts). (Hussain's grandson and the

son of his are killed.) There are several Kharijites revolts in this period as well. Umayyad used force instead of negotiations in general. Umayyad discriminated non-Arab Muslims (called Mawali). Although Mawali are Muslim, Umayyad taxed them and did not give any position in the Government. This slowed down the spread of Islam. **Notable exception:** Caliph Umar bin Abdul-Aziz (717-720) was righteous and pious; helped Umayyad to reach its golden times. He made several improvements in government to eliminate barriers for other tribes and ethnicities. Islam spread quickly in his reign among non-Muslims.

III. Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258)

Rise of Abbasid Caliphate

Due to many political missteps, Umayyad lost the public confidence. Abbasid family are descendants of the Prophet's uncle Abbas (r.a.). Allied forces of Abbasid family and Shiites determined to end Umayyad rule. Abbasid revolted in Iraq and Shiites (led by Abu Muslim) revolted in Khorasan (Northern Iran). Umayyad reign is ended in 750. Abu Abbas become the first caliph of Abbasid dynasty. The capital is moved from Damascus to Baghdad, Iraq. Abbasids remove the extra tax taken from non-Arab Muslims. They establish equal rights to all Muslims. Many important government positions are assigned to non-Arab Muslims.

Golden Times of Abbasid

During Caliph Harun Al-Rashid (786-809) reign, Abbasid reached to their golden age. Persians and Turks took important roles in the government. In the 9th century, Abbasids and caliphs increasingly controlled by Turks (Seljuk Empire).

Conquests: Eastern Anatolia.

Umayyad continue their reign in Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain). Abbasid period is also very turbulent: Several Shiite, Kharijites and Kharmatees revolts.

Decline of Abbasid

In the 9th and 10th centuries, Abbasid lost control of the country. Several small governments established. Abbasid dynasty held on caliphate, which become symbolic but not powerful. Most important regional power was Fatimid (909-1171) in North Africa and Egypt. Fatimid's reign is ended by Saladin Eyyubi (who fought crusaders several times). Seljuk empire became the protector the Abbasids and caliphate.

Fall of Abbasid

Mongols invaded several regions of Abbasids. They crashed Seljuk empire. Genghis Han's grandson Hulagu invaded the Baghdad in 1258. During the invasion of Baghdad, universities, libraries and the most of Islamic knowledge is destroyed. Those who escape the Mongolian invasion established the caliphate in Cairo. During Abbasid period, the Islamic civilization reached to its peak. Ancient Greek philosophy books are translated to Arabic.

IV. Seljuk Empire (1040-1157)

Turks embracing Islam

Although the interaction with Turks and Muslims started during Umayyad's time, Umayyad's harsh behavior against Mawali prevented Turks embracing Islam.

Battle of Talas (751): Alliance of Turkish tribes and Abbasid defeated China. This war started positive interaction between Muslims and Turks.

In the 9th century, most Turkic tribes embraced Islam. After Caliph Harun Rashid, Turkish influence and protection to Abbasid caliphate increased. Seljuks protected the Abbasids against Shiites, Fatimid, and Kharmatees. After the Great Seljuk empire collapsed after Mongolian invasion, a smaller Seljuk empire continue to rule in Anatolia.

VII. Ottoman Empire (1299-1923)

Ottoman Establishment

After Seljuk reign in Anatolia ended by Mongols, small Turkic principalities ruled the different parts of Anatolia. House of Osman (Utman) was of them, later become the Ottoman Empire.

Rise (1299-1453)

They extended their territories into the land of Byzantines and Balkans.

- Bursa (1324), Thessaloniki (Selanik) (1387)
- Kosovo (1389). Serbia is annexed by Ottoman Empire.
- Battle of Nicopolis (1396). A large crusade failed to stop Ottomans.
- Battle of Ankara (1402). Mongols (Timur) defeated Ottomans, causing 20 years of disarray in the empire.
- Battle of Varna (1444). Murad II defeated Hungarian and Polish forces.
- Second battle of Kosovo (1448). Hungarians were defeated by Murad II.

Conquest of Constantinople (1453)

Mehmed II conquered Constantinople on May 29, 1453 at the age of 21. Mehmed allowed the Orthodox Church to maintain its autonomy and land in exchange for accepting Ottoman authority. (Ecumenical rights). Due to bad relations between the states of Europe and Byzantine Empire, the majority of the Orthodox population accepted Ottoman rule as preferable to Venetian rule. Greece accepted Ottoman rule without any battle.

Expansion (1453-1566)

Sultan Selim I (1512-1520) focused on unifying the Islamic world.

- Battle of Chaldiran (1514). Defeated Safavid Empire. Took control of Eastern Anatolia, northern Iraq and the province of Tabriz from Safavid.
- Battle of Marj Dabiq (1516). Defeated Mamluks. Took control of Egypt and Arabia.
- He become the first Ottoman caliph.

Suleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566) expanded the country to its largest border:

- Belgrade (1521).
- Hungary (1526). (Battle of Mohacs)
- Siege of Vienna (1529).
- Baghdad (1535).
- Romania and Moldova.
- Somalia and Horn of Africa.

Stagnation and Reform (1566-1827)

Ottomans experienced stagnation and decline in this period due to

- Corrupt rulers
- Incompetent Sultans and Ministers
- Ill equipped armies
- Advances in European armies

Ottomans stayed as a major force in Europe until the second siege of Vienna in 1683. After that, Ottomans lost European lands one by one throughout two centuries until the collapse of the empire. Jelali revolts (1595–1610), which caused widespread anarchy in Anatolia. The reforms by Selim III and Mahmud II did not stop the stagnation in the country.

Decline and Dissolution (1827-1923)

In 1839, the first Ottoman constitution is adopted. In 1876, Ottoman Empire become a monarchy. Parliamentary system is abolished by Sultan Abdulhamid II in 1878, later reinstated again in 1908. Russians ended Ottoman reign in Europe in the wars of 1877-1878. Wahhabis become important problem in 18th and 19th centuries in Arabia. Young Turks took control of the government in 1908. Ottomans allied with Germany joined World War I, experienced very turbulent times, which sealed the fall of the empire. Sultanate is abolished by Turkish National Movement in Nov. 1, 1922. The Caliphate is abolished by Turkish Government in March 3, 1924.

Examples of Islamic Advances in Sciences

Ibn Sina (Avicenna): Medicine and Philosophy

Al-Farabi (Alpharabius): Philosophy

Ibn Rusd (Averroes): Logic, Islamic philosophy

Ibn Khaldun: Sociology

Al-harizmi: Father of algebra, invented number zero, arithmetic.

Abu Musa Jabir bin Hayyan: Mathematics, Chemistry.

Algebra=Al Jabir

Ali Kuscu: Astronomy

Ulugh Bey: Astronomy, mathematics

Kâtip Çelebi: Historian and geographer.

Piri Reis: Ottoman admiral, geographer