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First Term:

STORY OF PROPHETS

Allah Almighty sent Prophets for the guidance of mankind, to show us the right way. Some of them came with the holy books, and the others showed us guidance through their preaching. Thus, from Adam (A.S) to Muhammad (P.B.U.H), every Prophet came to take out humanity from the pit of destruction.

SAYEDNA DAWOOD

His genealogy goes back through Judah, the son of Prophet Jacob (Ya'qub), to Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim). The figure of Prophet David is of extreme importance in Islam because he was one of the few prophets to receive a named revealed book. It says in the Quran that the Zabur, the Biblical Psalms, were given to David.

The story of Prophet Dawud follows the story of Musa. From the story of Prophet Musa we learned how the Banu Israel escaped from Egypt, and were left wandering in the desert around Palestine. Dawud was of the people of Banu Israel. When he was still very young, he joined the army of Banu Israel who were planning to fight the people of Jerusalem so that they could enter the holy land and live there. At that time, the people of Jerusalem were a strong and battle-hardened group of people called the Bilistines (it is an arab tribe from Kenaan called balesta.. hence after that changed to Felastin, the country). The Banu Israel were scared of fighting the Bilistines; they had only a few hundred soldiers on their side and the Bilistine army had thousands. The leader of the Bilistine army was a huge and fiercely strong man called Jalut, or Goliath. The Banu Israel were terrified when they saw Jalut's strength and size. But Dawud was incredibly brave, even though he was still so young. He stepped forward and said "I will fight Jalut." The leader of the army said, "You are too young." He was reluctant to let Dawud fight

Jalut and asked his soldiers if anyone else would volunteer. When no one else stepped forward, the leader finally agreed to let Dawud fight Jalut. When Jalut saw Dawud come towards him, he exclaimed “I will not fight such a young and weak boy.” Dawud had no sword or spear, not even a shield. He only had a slingshot as a weapon. He prayed to Allah and asked for His help. Then he was ready to fight. Dawud loaded the slingshot with a small stone. He pulled the sling back as far as it would go, aimed, and released it. The small stone went zooming through the air and hit Jalut directly on his forehead. Jalut fell to the ground with a thunderous noise, dead. A young boy, armed with nothing but a slingshot and a small stone asked for Allah’s help and defeated the mighty warrior Jalut, leader of the Bilistines! The Banu Israel then fought the Bilistine army and won the battle, even though they had fewer soldiers. Dawud, his family and his friends finally entered the blessed city of Jerusalem. Dawud as King of Jerusalem Years later, Allah blessed Dawud with something wonderful. He made Dawud a Prophet, and the King of Jerusalem. Dawud was sent special messages from Allah. These messages are called ‘revelations’ and all the revelations were put together in a book called the Zabur (Psalms). Allah also blessed Dawud with a beautiful and melodious voice. When he would recite the Zabur and glorify Allah, even the animals and birds would gather around him to listen and join in. Dawud had other blessings from Allah. He was renowned for his great wisdom, and ability to judge between people when they had disagreements. Another gift from Allah to Dawud was that when he held hard metal in his hand, it became soft and he could bend it any way he liked. Dawud was the King of Jerusalem for 40 years. During this time there was peace between the different tribes who lived in Palestine. Toward the end of his life, Dawud started to rebuild Masjid al-Aqsa. The blessed Masjid had first been built by Adam after he had built the Ka’bah in Makkah. After many years Masjid al-Aqsa lay in ruins and was rebuilt by Ibrahim. After generations, when Dawud was King of Jerusalem, Masjid Al Aqsa was again in need of rebuilding.

Rebuilding Masjid Al Aqsa was a huge project and, sadly, Dawud passed away before he could complete it. It was Dawud's son, Sulayman, who continued the work and completed rebuilding Masjid al-Aqsa. Dawud lived to be one hundred years old, and was buried in Jerusalem, though no one is sure where. May Allah's peace be upon him.

Zabur (Arabic: زبور) is, according to Islam, the holy book of Dawud (David), one of the holy books revealed by God before the Qur'an, alongside others such as the Tawrat (Torah) of Musa (Moses) and the Injil (Gospel) of Isa (Jesus). Some scholars equate the Zabur with the biblical book of Psalms

He was blessed with a miracle whereby he could soften iron in his hand and make out armors with them. This miracle has been mentioned in the Quran. (Surah Saba verses 10 and 11).

Although the tomb of Prophet Dawud (pbuh) is said to be located outside the old city of Al-Quds on Mount Zion, Islamic tradition believes that rather being his tomb, the site is in fact a 'maqam', which marks the place where he had once stayed.

The meaning of the name Dawud is: beloved'.

It is narrated that a woman once went to the Prophet Dawood (David) (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and said to him, "O Prophet of Allah, is your Lord just or unjust?" Prophet Dawood (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Woe to you woman, indeed He is Most Just and never acts unjustly." He then asked her, "What is your story?"

The woman said to Prophet Dawood (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him), "I am a widow, I have three daughters, and I provide for them from what I spin with my needles and yard. Yesterday, I wrapped my yarn in a cloth and went with it to the marketplace, intending to sell it and use the proceeds to buy provisions for my children. But while I was walking to the marketplace, a bird suddenly

swooped down and took my yarn and my cloth, after which it flew away. I sat there in a sad and miserable state, faced with the reality that I owned nothing that I could use to provide for my children."

As the woman was with Prophet Dawood (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) telling him her story, someone knocked on the door asking permission to enter. Permission was given and ten men entered, they were all businessmen, and each one of the ten men had 100 dinars in their hand. They said, "O Prophet of Allah, give this money to someone who is deserving of it." Prophet Dawood (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) asked, "What prompted you to bring this money?"

They said, "O Prophet of Allah, we were travelling in a sea vessel, when the waves began to roar tempestuously, and our ship began to sink. Then suddenly, as if out of nowhere, a bird came and dropped a red cloth that contained yarn inside of it. Using those materials, we worked to repair the hole in the ship that was causing us to sink. Not much time passed before the winds and waves calmed down and the hole was repaired. We then made an oath to Allah that each one of us would give 100 dinars in charity. This is that money, which you may give as a charity to whomsoever you please."

Prophet Dawood (may the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) and said to her, "A Lord Who does business for you on land and in the sea, yet you make Him out to be unjust!" then he gave the woman the entire 1000 dinars and said, "Spend it on your children."

From this story we are reminded of a principle which is taught to us in a narration of the Prophet Muhammad (May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) in which he said: "How amazing is the affair of the believer. There is good for him in everything and that is for no one but the believer. If good times come his way, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him, and if hardship comes his way, he endures it patiently and that is better for him." [Saheeh Muslim]

Prophet Dawood's life has been the epitome of wise judgments, bravery, and perseverance. He remained close to Almighty Allah throughout his life and never for once turned himself away from him.

It was narrated by the Last Prophet of Allah, Sayedna Muhammad (pbuh), that the best prayer with Allah is that of Prophet Dawood. He was sent with the Holy book Zabur upon the famous nation Bani Israel. Prophet Dawood persevered on the path of one God. He slept half the night and stood for prayer for the third part of the night, and then he would sleep for the sixth part of it. He used to observe fast one day and leave it the other day.

The Almighty Allah often tests prophets in many forms to see their reaction to a particular situation or towards certain people. **Prophet Dawood, the messenger of Allah**, was also tested similarly. Two brothers came to **Prophet Dawood** one day and asked for his judgment. One of them claimed that he has only 1 sheep and that his brother has 99, but he keeps asking him to have his only sheep and pressurizing him.

Right after his judgment was passed, the two brothers disappeared, and it was at that time, he realized he committed a mistake as the brothers were two angels sent by Almighty Allah. Prophet Dawood prostrated and asked for Allah's forgiveness, and Allah forgave him as mentioned in the Quran.

There are many lessons that we get to learn from the lives of Prophets as Allah chose them to be our guidance in every field and step of life. Some of the lessons that **Prophet Dawood** taught us in his life are:

1- Keep our faith strong

Throughout his life, Prophet Dawood prayed to Almighty Allah and he prayed so much that he was praised by the last messenger of Allah too. Whenever there was any problem that he countered, he always turned towards Almighty Allah for help. He kept fast one day, skipping the other, and stayed up for prayers when everyone was asleep. Through his

life, we get to learn how even when the Almighty destines you to be in a sacred position, even then, you don't stop praying to him. He was given the status of the king, yet he bowed only in front of Allah, the King of the worlds.

2- Make wise judgment

From the story of two men who came to Prophet Dawood regarding the judgment of sheep, we learn that even though he made a wrong judgment. But immediately after the men left, he realized that he should have made fair decision and repented. That's what our Prophets have taught us; we should always be fair in our judgments no matter what.

3- Earning money with hard work

Like every other Prophet of Allah, Prophet Dawood worked with his hands and earned money for a living. Another important lesson that we learn from his life is always working hard to earn a living no matter what high position you are in. No one can be above the Prophets, and if they lived while earning money, then so should us.

SAYEDNA SULAYMAN

Prophet Sulaiman (pbuh) was the youngest son of Prophet Dawood (pbuh) and was born in Jerusalem. ... During his 30 year rule over Palestine following the death of his father, Prophet Dawood (pbuh), he commanded his Jinns to restore Masjid Al Aqsa, which is located in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The Holy Quran reveals that Allah gave Sayedna Sulaiman certain superpower abilities. One of them was the power to control not only humans, but also the evil spirits. And likes this did (others obey his order), the evil ones of every kind of builder and diver.

So when Prophet Sulaiman became king he made du'a to Allah asking for a kingdom that no one has ever had or ever will have. ... Prophet Sulaiman was also given power to command winds, control both men and jinns, and he could understand the speech of ants.

Sulaiman was the son of Prophet Dawud (David). Dawud was the wise King of Israel and a noble Prophet of Allah (SWT). Sulaiman learnt from his father's vast knowledge and judgement and often joined his father during hearings. He was an observer and learned from him and occasionally contributed to the discussion. One day Prophet Dawud called his 19 sons in front of the chiefs and academic scholars of his kingdom. He then put forth the following questions:

1. Which thing is closest (nearest) to man?
2. Which is the farthest thing?
3. Which two things are attached to each other?
4. Which is the most amazement-creating thing?
5. Which two things remain unchanged?
6. Which two things are always different?
7. Which two things are opposed to each other?
8. What is the action the result of which is good?
9. What is that action the result of which is bad?

The sons of Prophet Dawud became confused and couldn't answer these questions. The youngest of the sons, Sulaiman stood up and gave the following answers:

1. The nearest things to a man is the hereafter (Life and Death – as one may die any moment);
2. The farthest things is the time which has passed away (which is not to come again);
3. The two things that are attached to each other is man's body with the soul;
4. The most awe-creating is the man's body (dead) without soul;
5. The two things which remain the same are the sky and the earth;
6. The two things which are different are the day and night;
7. The two things which are opposed to each other are life and death;
8. The action – the end of which is good – is patience and forbearance at the time of anger;
9. The action – the end of which is bad is haste at the time of anger.

Impressed by these answers Prophet Dawud appointed his son Sulaiman to take charge following his death. So, with the passing of time Sulaiman inherited the kingdom of Israel and was elected by Allah to continue his Prophethood. He asked Allah for a kingdom that would occur to none after him. Allah granted Sulaiman his wish and bestowed upon him many miracles, like the ability to control the wind which he used to travel at incredible speeds; the jinns which were under his command and a copper mine with which he used to make weaponry. He was even blessed with the ability to communicate with animals. [The Quran](#) makes mention of this:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا

يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

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Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Solomon and his soldiers while they perceive not."

فَتَبَسَّ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

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So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech, and said, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants."

SURAH NAML AYAT 18-19

Prophet Sulaiman and his battalion of men, jinns and birds, "came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Sulaiman and his soldiers while they perceive not." So [Solomon] smiled, amused at her speech, and said, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy into [the ranks of] Your righteous servants." [Surah Naml Ayat 18-19](#)

In his mission as a Prophet of Allah, Sulaiman built a prominent place of worship—the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. From there Sulaiman and his followers made pilgrimage to Makkah. On completion of their Hajj, they travelled to Yemen where Sulaiman witnessed the Yemeni's incredible water channeling mechanism. He desired to replicate this system in his own land, but knew that they had insufficient springs. Determined to find a way, Sulaiman set about looking for the Hoopoe bird, which had the ability to detect water underground. But the bird was nowhere in sight. Sulaiman who grew increasingly impatient exclaimed, "Why do I not see the Hoopoe bird— or is he among the absent? I will surely punish him with a severe torment, or slaughter him, unless he brings me a clear reason!"

Before long, the Hoopoe returned to his master with great news. But the hoopoe stayed not long and said, *“I have encompassed [in knowledge] that which you have not encompassed, and I have come to you from Sheba with certain news. Indeed, I found [there] a woman ruling them, and she has been given of all things, and she has a great throne. I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of Allah, and Satan has made their deeds pleasing to them and averted them from [His] way, so they are not guided, [And] so they do not prostrate to Allah, who brings forth what is hidden within the heavens and the earth and knows what you conceal and what you declare -Allah – there is no deity except Him, Lord of the Great Throne.”* [Surah Naml Ayat 22-26](#)

Prophet Sulaiman said, *“We will see whether you were truthful or were of the liars. Take this letter of mine and deliver it to them. Then leave them and see what [answer] they will return.”* [Surah Naml Ayat 27-28](#)

The Hoopoe bird flew back to Bilkis’s palace and dropped Sulaiman’s letter before her. He soon hid and watched what happened. Having noticed the letter, Bilkis began reading it, *“Verily! It is from Solomon. It reads: ‘In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful; be you not exalted against me, but come to me as Muslims.’”*

Bilkis immediately summoned her chiefs and sought their advice. They replied, *“We have great strength, and great ability for war, but it is for you to command; so think over what you will command.”* Bilkis, however, was not in favour of war as they were unaware of the size of Sulaiman’s army. She answered, *“Verily! Kings, when they enter a town, they despoil it, and make the most honourable amongst its people low.”* She decided, as a token of friendship, to send Sulaiman some valuable gifts through her messengers, who could also bring back information about Sulaiman’s army.

Sulaiman immediately learnt of Bilkis’s response through the Hoopoe. He decided to display the might of his army to her messengers. When the messengers arrived, all of Sulaiman’s army complete with animals,

such as lions and tigers, birds, men and jinn, gathered before them. Bilkis's messengers were indeed stunned by the size and variety of Sulaiman's battalion. His incomparable strength was eminent.

The messengers eagerly presented Bilkis's gift to Sulaiman with a pledge of friendship. Sulaiman replied, *"Will you help me in wealth? What Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you! Nay, you rejoice in your gift!"* Sulaiman then turned to the chief of her messengers and instructed: *"Go back to them. We verily shall come to them with hosts that they cannot resist, and we shall drive them out from there in disgrace, and they will be abased."* Shocked, the messengers soon returned to their Queen and conveyed Sulaiman's message together with an account of the magnificence of Sulaiman's kingdom.

Bilkis decided to meet Sulaiman in person, together with her officials. On receiving this news, Sulaiman decided to show Bilkis and her officials the power of the miracles bestowed to him by Allah. He asked his army, *"Which of you can bring me Bilkis's throne before they come to me, surrendering themselves in obedience?"* Ifrit, one of the powerful jinns, immediately responded to Prophet Sulaiman, *"I will bring it to you before you rise from your place. And verily, I am indeed strong and trustworthy for such work."* (27:30)

But Sulaiman remained silent, awaiting a better offer. Another jinn with knowledge of the scriptures spoke up, *"I will bring it to you before your glance returns to you."* And when [Solomon] saw it placed before him, he said, *"This is from the favor of my Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful – his gratitude is only for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever is ungrateful – then indeed, my Lord is Free of need and Generous."* (27:40)

"I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!" And in a split second the throne of Bilkis was brought from across 2,000 miles to Prophet Sulaiman. Sulaiman himself was amazed by the miracle Allah

had given him and praised his Lord immensely. Sulaiman then instructed the jinn, *“Disguise for her her throne; we will see whether she will be guided [to truth] or will be of those who is not guided.”* (27:41) He then ordered the jinns to build a palace with floors made of thin but solid glass, underneath through which rivers flowed.

When Bilkis arrived, her throne immediately caught her attention. Having noticed Bilkis’s reaction to the throne, Sulaiman asked, *“is your throne like this?”* Bilkis was thoroughly confused. She wondered if her throne actually got here or if it was possible that someone replicated it. She replied cautiously, *“it is as though it was the very same.”* Sulaiman judged her to be intelligent and diplomatic so he then invited her to his palace. When Bilkis was about to enter she mistook the glass floor for water and lifted her skirts. In the Quran it says, *“she thought it was a body of water and uncovered her shins [to wade through]. He said, “Indeed, it is a palace [whose floor is] made smooth with glass.” She said, “My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, and I submit with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds.”* (27:44) Bilkis realized that Sulaiman’s kingdom was indeed unlike any palace she had seen before. She witnessed his wisdom and humility along with his mighty power and accepted him as the messenger of Allah. She repented and embraced Islam along with her nation.

PROPHET SULAIMAN’S DEATH

Prophet Sulaiman lived and reigned in glory. Much of his public work was performed by the jinns as a punishment for making people believe that jinns had knowledge of the unseen. Sulaiman taught his people that Allah alone had such knowledge. Even Prophet Sulaiman’s death was a lesson in this regard.

The future is not known neither by the jinns nor by the prophets, but by Allah alone.

Sulaiman was seated, holding his staff, while he oversee some jinns working in a mine. The jinns, who were terrified of Sulaiman, were heavily focused on the building when Allah decided to take Sulaiman's life.

No one was aware of his death, until days later, a hungry ant began nibbling on his wooden staff. As it ate on, the staff broke and Prophet Sulaiman's body that was leaning on it fell to the floor. People ran to their Prophet, and soon realized that he had died long ago. Thus everyone learned that had the jinns possessed the knowledge of the unseen, they wouldn't have tormented themselves working hard, thinking Sulaiman was watching them. The life and death of Sulaiman is indeed full of miracles from which mankind can derive incredible lessons.

“And when We decreed for Solomon death, nothing indicated to the jinn his death except a creature of the earth eating his staff. But when he fell, it became clear to the jinn that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in humiliating punishment.” ([34:14](#))

SAYEDNA ZAKAREYA

Allah mentions many prophets by name in the Quran. However, we know that there are many more prophets. From the Sunnah, we come to know that Allah sent prophets to various nations and tribes of the past to guide them. In most cases, however, their people weren't receptive. The final prophet who Allah sent to mankind was Muhammad (PBUH). Among the earlier prophets, there are many famous ones. One of the ones with a very compelling story in the Quran is Prophet Zakariya (AS).

Prophet Zakariya (Zachariah) was an illustrious Prophet of the Israelites. He was one of the descendants of Prophet Sulaiman (peace be upon him). The name of his wife was al-Yashbi' who belonged to the family of Prophet Harun (peace be upon him). ... His wife and he were the symbols of piety and righteousness.

Prophet Zakariya is a respected prophet (Zachariah) in the traditions of Christianity as well as Islam. In the Quran and the Bible, we also know him as the father of Prophet Yahya (AS). We can find his story in the Quran in Surah Maryam, where Allah narrates details about him and his family.

Prophet Zakariya (AS) was one of the prophets from the Bani Israel. As we already know, Allah sent many prophets to this nation, and he was among them. He was one of Prophet Sulaiman's (AS) descendants. He earned his livelihood as a carpenter. Furthermore, he was a very righteous person. He was in charge of a temple, and there, he prayed to Allah and worshiped Him as a true believer. Prophet Zakariya (AS) was a very humble man and constantly remained thankful toward Allah. He lived a life of simplicity and was not at all extravagant in his lifestyle. Most of the people around them lacked qualities such as being obedient worshipers of Allah. However, Zakariya (AS) followed the law of Musa (AS), and he would live in the way Allah has commanded human beings to. He would spend long hours praying and preaching.

The people around him lacked the strong belief that he had. Rather than obey Allah and do the things He commands them to do, they followed their own whims and wishes. Hence, they would commit all kinds of evil deeds and partake in sin. As a result, they were deviating from the strong path that Zakariya (AS) was on. He was worried about what would happen, and he anxiously tried to make the people return to the straight path by preaching to them.

While we do not know the exact relation between Prophet Zakariya (Zachariah A.S) and Imran, we do know that they were related. Imran's wife gave birth to a girl who they named Maryam. Additionally, they vowed to make Maryam one of those humans who purely focused on the worship of Allah. However, while she was quite young, her father, Imran, passed away. As a result, there was considerable debate about who should look after her. According to various reports, Zakariya (AS) was either the brother-in-law or the uncle of Maryam. He was also a prophet, who people knew well for his moral values and ethical behavior. Hence, it made sense for him to be her guardian immediately. However, the people of Israel were all desperate to have this honor themselves.

And you were not with them when they cast their pens as to which of them should be responsible for Mary. Nor were you with them when they disputed. (Quran 3:44)

Allah narrates in the Quran how the people decided regarding Maryam's guardianship. They eventually proposed to write down their names and put them in a container. A child would then pick one out randomly. It was Zakariya (AS). However, the people weren't pleased with this outcome, and they cast lots once again. Again, the result was in his favor. Yet again, the obstinate people refused to accept it. Once again, they drew lots, and again, it was in his favor. Hence, the people had to eventually accept the outcome and let Allah's will takes its course.

so her Lord accepted her with good acceptance and caused her to grow in a good manner and put her in the care of Zechariah. Every time Zechariah entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said, "O Mary, from where is this [coming] to you?" She said, "It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account."(Quran 3:37)

Allah narrates in the Quran how Maryam grew up as a righteous woman. She always had the best manners and focused on Allah's worship. Additionally, she would stay away from the rest of the people in seclusion in her prayer chamber, as Allah describes in the Quran. Zakariya (AS) would frequently go and check up on her. When he would get there, he would find various assortments of food around her. He didn't bring it for her, so he wondered how it got there and asked her. She replied that it was a provision from her Lord, Allah.

Hence, Zakariya (AS) witnessed such miracles with his own eyes. He saw Allah bless and provide for Maryam after her father passed away. He himself was just a means for Allah to take care of her and provide her with shelter. Therefore, he had complete faith in Allah and always trusted that things would pan out in the best way. He had a burning desire at this point to have a child to continue preaching the message of Allah and Islam. Despite his advanced age, he never gave up hope.

[This is] a mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zechariah when he called to his Lord a private call [i.e., supplication]. He said, "My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white, and never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy [i.e., disappointed]. And indeed, I fear the successors after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from Yourself an heir Who will inherit me and inherit from the family of Jacob. And make him, my Lord, pleasing [to You]."(Quran 19:2-5)

At this point in his life, Zakariya (AS) was old. His wife was also barren, unable to bear children. However, he still made the dua to Allah because

he knew that nothing is impossible for Him. Allah has mentioned the dua multiple times in the Quran. Besides the above, he mentions this incident in Surah aal-Imran and Surah al-Anbiya as well, showing the immense importance of what took place.

In his dua, Zakariyah (AS) asked Allah to bless him with a child who would inherit from him and his family. Additionally, he made it a point to ask for an offspring who would be pleasing to Allah, not one who would displease and disobey Him. It was a truly beautiful and heartfelt dua, coming purely from the heart.

So the angels called him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber, "Indeed, Allah gives you good tidings of John, confirming a word from Allah and [who will be] honorable, abstaining [from women], and a prophet from among the righteous." He said, "My Lord, how will I have a boy when I have reached old age and my wife is barren?" He [the angel] said, "Such is Allah; He does what He wills."(Quran 3:39-40)

[He was told], "O Zechariah, indeed We give you good tidings of a boy whose name will be John. We have not assigned to any before [this] name." He said, "My Lord, how will I have a boy when my wife has been barren and I have reached extreme old age?" [An angel] said, "Thus [it will be]; your Lord says, 'It is easy for Me, for I created you before, while you were nothing.'"(Quran 19:7-9)

Allah responded to Zakariya's (AS) prayer and informed him that his wife would bear a child. Not only that, but He also told him that the child would be a prophet. Allah named the son Yahya, a name that He had not given to anyone before him. Thus, not only was Zakariya's (AS) prayer answered, but he received a great blessing from Allah. The prophet was scarcely able to believe what he had heard. He asked how he could have a child with a barren wife. The angel replied and told him that anything is easy for Allah. He does what He wills. Therefore, we can think of this as one of His miracles.

He said, “My Lord, make for me a sign.” He said, “Your sign is that you will not [be able to] speak to the people for three days except by gesture. And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the evening and the morning.”(Quran 3:41)

The Prophet asked Allah for a sign, and once again, Allah accepted his request. Hence, Zakariya (AS) accepted what was to come and was joyful and thankful toward Allah for all His blessings.

[Allah said], “O John, take the Scripture [i.e., adhere to it] with determination.” And We gave him judgement [while yet] a boy and affection from Us and purity, and he was fearing of Allah and dutiful to his parents, and he was not a disobedient tyrant. And peace be upon him the day he was born and the day he dies and the day he is raised alive.(Quran 19:12-15)

There are many lessons we can learn from this amazing story of one of Allah’s most beloved prophets.

Allah tells us on many occasions in the Quran that He is the best of planners. We see this come to fruition time and time again. People can have all kinds of plans, but everything that will ever happen has already been written. What Allah wills to happen will eventually come to pass, whether it’s something we are in favor of or not.

In the story of Prophet Zachariah (Zakariya AS), we see this pan out in the way he was worried about succession. He was wary that after him, there wouldn’t be anyone who would carry on his message and raise the voice for emaan and belief. However, after he asked Allah for offspring, Allah granted him that, despite his being in old age with a barren wife.

We also saw this effect in the part of the story when the people were deciding who would take care of Maryam. The people of Israel wanted to have this honor. Therefore, they drew lots, and every time, they came

out in favor of Zakariya (AS). Hence, while they may have wanted something else, Allah's command supersedes everything else.

When the prophet asked Allah for something, he didn't do it for a selfish purpose. He asked Allah to bless him with a child so that the child could continue to spread the word of Islam. He wasn't worried about his lineage so that his descendants could benefit from his belongings and wealth or uplift his name in the future. Instead, he wanted a child so that he would be able to keep raising the voice of Allah among people. The people of Israel weren't very receptive to his message, so a messenger was necessary to keep plugging at them and ensuring that they remain on the straight path. Zakariya's (AS) child would be able to understand Islam and continue to advocate for the worship of Allah.

Moreover, this also puts into perspective some of the selfish attitudes we see around us nowadays. People want children for all the wrong reasons. They want to show off, have them inherit wealth, and in some cases, make dynasties of rulers! These are not righteous reasons for wanting children whatsoever.

Sometimes, we may want something that is outrageous, impossible, or highly unlikely to happen. However, the reality is that Allah is the Lord and Creator of the universe, and everything is possible for Him. For that to happen, though, we have to ensure that we fulfill a certain set of criteria.

Many people ask for things without really having true faith. They might believe in Allah, but they will neglect some of the basic facts, such as offering the daily prayers, giving the annual poor-due, and fasting during Ramadan. A Muslim must ensure that he does the basic things that Islam requires from him. Then, he should ask for what he wants with sincere intentions as Zakariya (AS) did.

Additionally, we must also remember that while Allah has the power to grant any of our requests, He may not always do that. That is because

Allah alone has ultimate wisdom. We might ask for something that we think is beneficial, but it might not actually be good for us. He alone knows what is best for us, and He ordains for us accordingly.

It is said that he was in his 90s when Allah finally blessed him with a son, Yahya (AS). Through all these decades, Zakariya (AS) would keep preaching to his people to obey Allah and accept him alone as their Lord and Creator. However, the people kept going off the right path.

During Zakariya's (AS) time, the people of Israel would commit many types of evil deeds. They would commit various types of sins. Yet, the prophet never felt disheartened about his task. He persistently kept at it, and Allah was well pleased with his efforts. So much so that he granted his request for a child straight away. This is a great lesson for people nowadays. We often start doing the right thing, but we lose heart if people don't agree with us or follow our lead. However, that is the wrong attitude. What other people do shouldn't affect us. We should remain in the same way, focusing on doing good and always worshiping Allah, calling others to do the same.

[Prophet Zakariya](#) (AS) was one of Allah's beloved prophets. His story contains many lessons for us, and the way he took care of Maryam is also touching. Despite not making much headway with his people as he preached to them, he diligently kept at it, since that is what Allah asked him to do and sent him down for.

We must love and respect all prophets of Allah, and Zakariya (AS) is no different. In fact, due to his nature and attitude, he is undoubtedly a role model for Muslims alongside the other prophets. The purpose of reading such stories is to gain knowledge from them; however, it's also possible to be inspired, and that is a good thing too.

SAYEDNA YAHYA

According to the Quran, Yahya or John (in Christianity) was the son of Zakariya, and his tidings were foretold to his father by the angel, Gabriel ([Qur'an 19:7], [Qur'an 3:39]). ... Yahya is called a righteous, honorable and chaste person, as well as a Prophet of the Righteous

Yahya was exhorted to hold fast to the Scripture and was given wisdom by God while still child ([Qur'an 19:12]). He was pure and devout, and walked in the Presence of God. He was dutiful towards his parents and he was not arrogant or rebellious ([Qur'an 19:13]). Yahya has been praised in the Quran and God has sent peace on the day he was born. He, along with all the Prophets, will be resurrected one day ([Qur'an 19:15]).

His story was retold by Jafar to the Abyssinian King during the Migration to Abyssinia .

The veneration of Yahya prevailed amongst some Muslim groups who were partly influenced by Byzantine Christian practices. This veneration, according to Muslim scholar al-Bīrūnī, included a feast commemorating Yahya's beheading on the 29th of the Hebrew month of Av. A shrine existing through to modern times is the oratory (maqām) of Yahya, located in the congregational mosque of Damascus. Some early reports mention that Umayyad caliph al-Walid I unearthed the head of Yahya and placed it in a pillar in Damascus, which had an architectural capital shaped like a basket of palm leaves.

Other sources, such as the Iraqi scholar al-Harawī, mention that the head had been transferred to the city of Aleppo by Mu'izz al-Daula Thimal bin Salih of the Mirdasid dynasty in 1043. Historians Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Kindī and Ibn al-Adīm note that the head was then stored in the upper oratory of the Aleppo citadel within a basin made of marble. The head was later evacuated to the Aleppo congregational mosque due to invading Mongol forces who had burned down the Aleppo citadel and

upper oratory. There, according to Ibn Shaddad, it was buried west of the minbar (pulpit), with another oratory built for it. It thus became another spot of veneration for Yahya, and a place where some Syrians believed extra blessings (barakah) existed

Yahya/John, son of Zechariah), identified in English as John the Baptist, is considered in Islam a prophet and messenger of God (Allah) who was sent to guide the Children of Israel. He is believed by Muslims to have been a witness to the word of God who would herald the coming of Isa Masih (Jesus).

Yahya is mentioned five times in the Quran.

Yahya is also honored highly in Sufism as well as Islamic mysticism, primarily because of the Quran's description of John's chastity and kindness. Sufis have frequently applied commentaries on the passages on John in the Quran, primarily concerning the God-given gift of wisdom which he acquired in youth as well as his parallels with Jesus. Although several phrases used to describe John and Jesus are virtually identical in the Quran, the manner in which they are expressed is different.

In the Quran, God frequently mentions Zakariya's continuous praying for the birth of a son. Zakariya's wife, was barren and therefore the birth of a child seemed impossible. As a gift from God, Zechariah was given a son by the name of Yaḥya, a name specially chosen for this child alone. In accordance with Zakariya's prayer, God made Yahya and Isa, who according to exegesis was born six months later,^[7] renew the message of God, which had been corrupted and distorted by the Israelites.

The Quran claims that John the Baptist was the first to receive this name (Quran 19:7–10) but since the name Yohanan occurs many times before John the Baptist, this verse is referring either to Islamic scholar consensus that "Yaḥyā" is not the same name as "Yoḥanan" or to the Biblical account of the miraculous naming of John, which accounted that he was almost named "Zacharias" after his father's name, as no one

in the lineage of his father Zacharias (also known as Zechariah) had been named "John" ("Yohanan"/"Yoannes") before him. As the Quran says:

"O Zakaryya, indeed We give you good tidings of a boy whose name will be Yahya, and whose we never before have created sameness for.

He said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son, when my wife is barren and I have grown quite decrepit from old age?"

He said: "So (it will be) thy Lord saith, 'that is easy for Me: I did indeed create thee before, when thou hadst been nothing!'"

(Zakarya) said: "O my Lord! give me a Sign." "Thy Sign," was the answer, "Shall be that thou shalt speak to no man for three nights."

— *Maryam 19: 7–10*

Yahya was exhorted to hold fast to the scripture and was given wisdom by God while still a child.^[14] He was pure and devout, and walked well in the presence of God. He was dutiful towards his parents and he was not arrogant or rebellious. John's reading and understanding of the scriptures, when only a child, surpassed even that of the greatest scholars of the time. Muslim exegesis narrates that Isa sent Yahya out with twelve disciples, who preached the message before Jesus called his own disciples. The Quran says:

"O Yahya! take hold of the Book with might": and We gave him Wisdom even as a youth,

— *Maryam, 19:12*

John was a classical prophet, who was exalted high by God for his bold denouncing of all things sinful. Furthermore, the Quran speaks of John's gentle piety and love and his humble attitude towards life, for which he was granted the purity of Life.

According to Islamic tradition, Yahya used to go to the Haram esh-Sharif (Temple Mount) to deliver his sermons.

During the prophethood of Yahya, a conflict occurred between him and Herod Antipas, who wanted to divorce his first wife and take as wife his former sister-in-law. Yahya informed that the marriage might be incestuous and did not approve of the marriage. After this, Herod Antipas had Yahya imprisoned. Yahya was then decapitated. Yahya's head is believed to be inside the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus

In Islam, Yahya greeted Muhammad on the night of the Al-Isra al-Mi'raj, along with Isa (Jesus), on the second heaven. Yahya's story was also told to the Abyssinian king during the Muslim migration to Abyssinia. According to the Quran, Yahya was one on whom God sent peace on the day that he was born and the day that he died. According to Al-Suyuti, Ibrahim stated that since the creation of the world the Heavens and the Earth wept only for two people, Yahya and Husayn. According to a Hadith, Muhammad said: "*Every son of Adam will come on the day of Resurrection and he will have sin against him except Yahya ibn Zakaryya*". Many Muslims compare Yahya with Husayn. The heads of both Yahya and Husayn are believed to be in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria.

SAYEDNA ISSA

While Mary was praying in the temple, an angel in the form of a man appeared before her. Filled with terror, she tried to flee, praying: "Verily! I seek refuge with the Most Beneficent (Allah) from you if you do fear Allah."

(The angel) said: "I am only a Messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son."

She said: "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?"

He said: "So (it will be), your Lord said: That is easy for me (Allah): And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed, (by Allah). Quran Ayah 19:18-21

The Brith of Jesus

The angel's visit caused Mary great anxiety, which increased as the months went by. How could she face giving birth to a child without having a husband? Later, she felt life kicking inside her. With a heavy heart, she left the temple and went to Nazareth, the city in which she had been born where she settled in a simple farmhouse to avoid the public.

But fear and anxiety did not leave her. She was from a noble and pious family. Her father had not been an evil man nor was her mother an impure woman. How could she prevent tongues from wagging about her honor?

After some months, she could not bear the mental strain any longer. Burdened with a heavy womb, she left Nazareth, not knowing where to go to be away from this depressing atmosphere.

She had not gone far, when she was overtaken by the pains of childbirth. She sat down against a dry palm tree, and here she gave birth to a son. Looking at her beautiful baby, she was hurt that she had brought him into the world without a father. She exclaimed: "I wish I had died before this happened and had vanished into nothingness!"

Suddenly, she heard a voice nearby: "Grieve not, your Lord has placed a rivulet below, and shake the trunk of this tree, from which ripe dates will fall. So eat and drink and regain the strength you have lost; and be of good cheer, for what you see is the power of Allah, Who made the dry palm tree regain life, in order to provide food for you." For a while she was comforted by Allah's miracle, for it was a sure sign of her innocence and purity.

Mary Returns to the City with Jesus

She decided to return to the city. However, her fears also returned. What was she going to tell the people? As if sharing his mother's worry, the baby began to speak: "If you meet any person say: 'I have vowed to fast for The Beneficent and may not speak to any human today.'" With this miracle, Mary felt at ease.

As she had expected, her arrival in the city with a newborn baby in her arms aroused the curiosity of the people. They scolded her: "This is a terrible sin that you have committed." She put her finger to her lips and pointed to the child. They asked: "How can we speak to a newborn baby?" To their total amazement, the child began to speak clearly: "I am Allah's servant. Allah has given me the Book, and has made me a prophet, and has blessed me wherever I may be, and has enjoined on me prayers and alms-giving as long as I live. Allah has made me dutiful towards she who has borne me. He has not made me arrogant nor unblessed. Peace unto me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I shall be raised alive."

Most of the people realized that the baby was unique, for if Allah wills something, He merely says "Be" and it happens. Of course, there were

some who regarded the baby's speech as a strange trick, but at least Mary could now stay in Nazareth without being harassed.

Mary Receives News of Jesus - Qur'anic

Allah the Exalted revealed: And mention in the Book (the Qur'an, O Muhammad the story of) Mary, when she withdrew in seclusion from her family to a place facing east. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them; then We sent to her Our Ruh (angel Gabriel), and he appeared before her in the form of a man in all respects.

She said: "Verily! I seek refuge with the Most Beneficent (Allah) from you, if you do fear Allah."

(The angel) said: "I am only a Messenger from your Lord, (to announce) to you the gift of a righteous son."

She said: "How can I have a son, when no man has touched me, nor am I unchaste?" He said: 'So (it will be), your Lord said: That is easy for Me (Allah): and (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us (Allah), and it is a matter (already) decreed. (by Allah)." Quran Ayah 19:16-21

The Birth of Jesus - Qur'anic

So she conceived him, and she withdrew with him to a far place (ie., Bethlehem valley, about four to six miles from Jerusalem). And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said: "Would that I had died before this and had been forgotten and out of sight!"

Then (the babe "Jesus" or Gabriel) cried unto her from below her, saying: "Grieve not! Your Lord has provided a water stream under you; and shake the trunk of palm tree towards you, it will let fall fresh ripe dates upon you. So eat and drink and be glad, and if you see any human being, say. 'Verily! I have vowed a fast unto the Most Beneficent (Allah) so I shall not speak to any human being this day. Surah 22-26

Mary and Jesus Return to the City - Qur'anic

Then she brought him (the baby) to her people, carrying him. They said: "O Mary! Indeed, you have brought a thing Fariyya (an unheard mighty thing). O sister (i.e. the like) of Aaron (not the brother of Moses, but he was another pious man at the time of Mary)! Your father was not a man who used to commit adultery, nor was your mother an unchaste woman."

Then she pointed to him. They said: "How can we talk to one who is a child in the cradle?"

He (Jesus) said: "Verily! I am a slave of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a Prophet; And He has made me blessed wheresoever I be, and has enjoined on me prayer, and Zakat, as long as I live, and dutiful to my mother, and made me not arrogant, unblest. And Salam (peace) be upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive!" Quran Ayah 19:27-33

Allah's Message About Jesus - Qur'anic

Such is Jesus, son of Mary. (It is) a statement of truth, about which they doubt (or dispute). It befits not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should beget a son (this refers to the slander of Christians against Allah, by saying that Jesus is the son of Allah). Glorified (and Exalted be He above all that they associate with Him). When He decrees a thing. He only says to it, "Be!" - and it is.

(Jesus said): 'And verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him (Alone). That is the Straight Path. (Allah Religion of Islamic Monotheism which He did ordain for all of His Prophets).'

Then the sects differed (i.e., the Christians about Jesus), so woe unto the disbelievers (those who gave false witness saying that Jesus is the son of Allah) from the meeting of a great Day (i.e., the Day of Resurrection, when they will be thrown in the blazing Fire).

How clearly will they (polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) see and hear, the Day when they will appear before Us! But the Zalimun (polytheists and wrongdoers) today are in plain error. And warn them (O Muhammad) of the Day of grief and regrets, when the case has been decided, while (now) they are in a state of carelessness, and they believe not. Quran Ayah 19:34-39

Some Stories About Mary's Pregnancy

It was said that Joseph the Carpenter was greatly surprised when he knew the story, so he asked Mary: "Can a tree come to grow without a seed?" She said: "Yes, the one which Allah created for the first time." He asked her again: "Is it possible to bear a child without a male partner?" She said: "Yes, Allah created Adam without male or female!"

It was also said that, while pregnant, Mary went one day to her aunt, who reported that she felt as if she was pregnant. Mary in turn said that she, too, was feeling as if she was pregnant. Then her aunt said: "I can see what is in my womb prostrating to what is in your womb."

Jesus Upsets the Jews

The Jewish priests felt this child Jesus was dangerous, for they felt that the people would turn their worship to Allah the Almighty alone, displacing the existing Jewish tenets. Consequently, they would lose their authority over the people. Therefore, they kept the miracle of Jesus's speech in infancy as a secret and accused Mary of a great misdeed.

Jesus's Ability to Debate

As Jesus grew, the signs of prophethood began to increase. He could tell his friends what kind of supper waited for them at home and what they had hidden and where. When he was twelve years old, he accompanied his mother to Jerusalem. There he wandered into the temple and joined a crowd listening to the lectures of the Rabbis (Jewish priests). The audience were all adults, but he was not afraid to sit with them. After listening intently, he asked questions and expressed his opinion. The

learned rabbis were disturbed by the boy's boldness and puzzled by the questions he asked, for they were unable to answer him. They tried to silence him, but he ignored their attempts and continued to express his views. Jesus became so involved in this exchange that he forgot he was expected back home.

In the meantime, his mother went home, thinking that he might have gone back with relatives or friends. When she arrived, she discovered that he was not there, so she returned to the city to look for him. At last, she found him in the temple, sitting among the learned, conversing with them. He appeared to be quite at ease, as if he had been doing this all his life. Mary got angry with him for causing her worry. He tried to assure her that all the arguing and debating with the learned had made him forget the time.

Jesus Does Not Observe Sabbath

Jesus grew up to manhood. It was Sabbath, a day of complete rest: no fire could be lit or extinguished, nor could females plait their hair. Moses had commanded that Saturday be dedicated to the worship of Allah. However, the wisdom behind the Sabbath and its spirit had gone, and only the letter remained in the Jews' hearts. Also, they thought that the Sabbath was kept in heaven, and that the People of Israel had been chosen by Allah only to observe the Sabbath.

They made a hundred things unlawful on Saturday even self-defense or calling a doctor to save a patient who was in bad condition. This is how their life was branded by such hypocrisy. Although the Pharisees were guardians of the law, they were ready to sell it when their interests were involved so as to obtain personal gains. There was, for example, a rule which prohibited a journey of more than one thousand yards on the Sabbath day. What do we expect of the Pharisees in this case? The day before, they transferred their food and drink from their homes two thousand yards away and erected a temporary house so that from there they could travel a further thousand yards on the Sabbath day.

Jesus was on his way to the temple. Although it was the Sabbath, he reached out his hand to pick two pieces of fruit to feed a hungry child. This was considered to be a violation of the Sabbath law. He made a fire for the old women to keep themselves warm from the freezing air. Another violation. He went to the temple and looked around. There were twenty thousand Jewish priests registered there who earned their living from the temple. The rooms of the temple were full of them.

Jesus Receives His Prophethood

Jesus observed that the visitors were much fewer than the priests. Yet the temple was full of sheep and doves which were sold to the people to be offered as sacrifices. Every step in the temple cost the visitor money. They worshipped nothing but money. In the temple the Pharisees and Sadducees acted as if it were a market place, and these two groups always disagreed on everything. Jesus followed the scene with his eyes and observed that the poor people who could not afford the price of the sheep or dove were swept away like flies by the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus was astonished. Why did the priests burn a lot of offerings inside the temple, while thousands of poor people were hungry outside it?

On this blessed night, the two noble prophets John and Zechariah died, killed by the ruling authority. On the same night, the revelation descended upon Jesus . Allah the Exalted commanded him to begin his call to the children of Israel. To Jesus, the life of ease was closed, and the page of worship and struggle was opened.

Jesus's Message

Like an opposing force, the message of Jesus came to denounce the practices of the Pharisees and Saducees and to reinforce the Law of Moses. In the face of a materialistic age of luxury and worship of gold, Jesus called his people to a nobler life by word and deed. This exemplary life was the only way out of the wretchedness and diseases of his age.

Jesus's call, from the beginning, was marked by its complete uprightness and piety. It appealed to the soul, the inner being, and not to a closed system of rules laid down by society.

Jesus continued inviting the people to Almighty Allah. His call was based on the principle that there is no mediation between the Creator and His creatures. However, Jesus was in conflict with the Jews' superficial interpretation of the Torah. He said that he did not come to abrogate the Torah, but to complete it by going to the spirit of its substance to arrive at its essence.

He made the Jews understand that the Ten Commandments have more value than they imagined. For instance, the fifth commandment does not only prohibit physical killing, but all forms of killing: physical, psychological, or spiritual. And the sixth commandment does not prohibit adultery only in the sense of unlawful physical contact between a man and a woman, but also prohibits all forms of unlawful relations or acts that might lead to adultery. The eye commits adultery when it looks at anything with passion.

Jesus Denounces Materialism

Jesus was therefore in confrontation with the materialistic people. He told them to desist from hypocrisy, show and false praise. There was no need to hoard wealth in this life. They should not preoccupy themselves with the goods of this passing world; rather they must preoccupy themselves with the affairs of the coming world because it would be everlasting.

Jesus told them that caring for this world is a sin, not fit for pious worshipers. The disbelievers care for it because they do not know a better way. As for the believers, they know that their sustenance is with Allah, so they trust in Him and scorn this world.

Jesus continued to invite people to worship the Only Lord, Who is without partner, just as he invited them to purify the heart and soul.

Jewish Priests Try to Embarrass Jesus

His teaching annoyed the priests, for every word of Jesus was a threat to them and their position, exposing their misdeeds.

The Roman occupiers had, at first, no intention of being involved in this religious discord of the Jews because it was an internal affair, and they saw that this dispute would distract the Jews from the question of the occupation.

However, the priests started to plot against Jesus. They wanted to embarrass him and to prove that he had come to destroy the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law provides that an adulteress be stoned to death. They brought him a Jewish adulteress and asked Jesus: "Does not the law stipulate the stoning of the adulteress?" Jesus answered: "Yes." They said: "This woman is an adulteress." Jesus looked at the woman and then at the priests. He knew that they were more sinful than she. They agreed that she should be killed according to Mosaic Law, and they understood that if he was going to apply Mosaic Law, he would be destroying his own rules of forgiveness and mercy.

Jesus understood their plan. He smiled and assented: "Whoever among you is sinless can stone her." His voice rose in the middle of the Temple, making a new law on adultery, for the sinless to judge sin. There was none eligible; no mortal can judge sin, only Allah the Most Merciful.

As Jesus left the temple, the woman followed him. She took out a bottle of perfume from her garments, knelt before his feet and washed them with perfume and tears, and then dried his feet with her hair. Jesus turned to the woman and told her to stand up, adding: "O Lord, forgive her sins." He let the priests understand that those who call people to Almighty Allah are not executioners. His call was based on mercy for the people, the aim of all divine calls.

Jesus's Brings the Dead to Life

Jesus continued to pray to Allah for mercy on his people and to teach his people to have mercy on one another and to believe in Allah.

Jesus continued his mission, aided by divine miracles. Some Qur'anic commentators said that Jesus brought four people back from the dead: a friend of his named Al-Azam, an old woman's son, and a woman's only daughter. These three had died during his lifetime. When the Jews saw this they said: "You only resurrect those who have died recently; perhaps they only fainted." They asked him to bring back to life Sam the Ibn Noah.

When he asked them to show him his grave, the people accompanied him there. Jesus invoked Allah the Exalted to bring him back to life and behold, Sam the Ibn Noah came out from the grave gray-haired. Jesus asked: "How did you get gray hair, when there was no aging in your time?" He answered: "O, Spirit of Allah, I thought that the Day of Resurrection had come; from the fear of that day my hair turned gray."

The Miracles of Jesus - Qur'anic

Allah the Almighty said: (Remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): 'O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember My Favor to you and to your mother when I supported you with Ruh-ul-Qudus (Gabriel) so that you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity and when I taught you writing Al-Hikmah (the power of understanding), the Torah and the Gospel; and when you made out of the clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My Permission, and you breathed into it, and it became a bird by My Permission, and you healed those born blind, and the lepers by My Permission, and when you brought forth the dead by My Permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from you (when they resolved to kill you) since you came unto them with clear proofs, and the disbelievers among them said: 'This is nothing but evident magic.

And when I (Allah) put in the hearts of the disciples (of Jesus) to believe in Me and My Messenger, they said: "We believe. And bear witness that we are Muslims. " Quran Ayah 5:110-111

Jesus's Abilities and Disciples - Qur'anic

Almighty Allah also revealed: And He (Allah) will teach him (Jesus) the Book and Al-Hikmah (i.e. the Sunna, the faultless speech of the Prophets, wisdom, etc.), (and) the Torah and the Gospel.

And will make him (Jesus) a Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): "I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah Leave; and I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allah's leave. And I inform you of what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely, therein is a sign for you, if you believe. And I have come confirming that which was before me of the Torah, and to make lawful to you part of what was forbidden to you, and I have come to you with proof from your Lord. So fear Allah and obey me. Truly! Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him (Alone). This is the Straight Path."

Then when Jesus came to know of their disbelief he said: "Who will be my helpers in Allah's Cause?" The disciples said: "We are the helpers of Allah; we believe in Allah, and bear witness that we are Muslims (i.e. we submit to Allah)."

Our Lord! We believe in what You have sent down, and we follow the Messenger (Jesus); so write us down among those who bear witness (to the truth i.e. La ilaha ill Allah - none has the right to be worshiped but Allah).

And they (disbelievers) plotted (to kill Jesus), and Allah planned too. And Allah is the Best of the planners. Quran Ayah 3:48-54

Allah Sends the Disciples a Feast

Jesus continued calling people to Almighty Allah and laying down for them what might be called "the law of the Spirit." Once when standing on a mountain surrounded by his disciples, Jesus saw that those who believed in him were from among the poor, the wretched, and the downtrodden, and their number was small.

Some of the miracles which Jesus performed had been requested by his disciples, such as their wish for a "holy table" to be sent down from heaven.

Allah the Exalted said: (Remember) when the disciples said: "O Jesus, son of Mary! Can your Lord send down to us a table spread (with food) from heaven?" Jesus said: "Fear Allah, if you are indeed believers." They said: "We wish to eat thereof and to be stronger in Faith, and to know that you have indeed told us the truth and that we ourselves be its witnesses."

Jesus, son of Mary, said: "O Allah, our Lord! Send us from heaven a table spread (with food) that there may be for us - for the first and the last of us - a festival and a sign from You; and provide us sustenance, for You are the Best of sustainers." Allah said: "I am going to send it down unto you, but if any of you after that disbelieves, then I will punish him with a torment such as I have not inflicted on anyone among (all) the Alamin (mankind and jinn)." Quran Ayah 5:112-116

It was related that Jesus commanded his disciples to fast for thirty days; at the end of it, they asked Jesus to bring food from heaven to break their fast. Jesus prayed to Allah after his disciples had doubted Allah's power. The great table came down between two clouds, one above and one below, while the people watched. Jesus said: "O Lord, make it a mercy and not a cause of distress." So it fell between Jesus's hands, covered with a napkin.

Jesus suddenly prostrated and his disciples with him. They sensed a fragrance which they had never smelled before. Jesus said: "The one who is the most devout and most righteous may uncover the table, that we might eat of it to thank Allah for it." They said: "O Spirit of Allah, you are the most deserving."

Jesus stood up, then performed ablution and prayed before uncovering the table, and behold, there was a roasted fish. The disciples said: "O Spirit of Allah, is this the food of this world or of Paradise?" Jesus said to his disciples: "Did not Allah forbid you to ask questions? It is the divine power of Allah the Almighty Who said: 'Be,' and it was. It is a sign from Almighty Allah warning of great punishment for unbelieving mortals of the world. This is the kernel of the matter."

It is said that thousands of people partook of it, and yet they never exhausted it. A further miracle was that the blind and lepers were cured.

The Day of the Table became one of the holy days for the disciples and followers of Jesus. Later on, the disciples and followers forgot the real essence of the miracles, and so they worshipped Jesus as a god.

Allah's Questions to Jesus

Almighty Allah asserted: And (remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): "O Jesus son of Mary! Did you say unto men: 'Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?'" He will say: "Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner-self though I do not know what is in Yours, truly, You, only You, are the All-Knower of all that is hidden and unseen. Never did I say to them aught except what You (Allah) did command me to say: 'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord', And I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a Witness to all things. (This is a great admonition and warning to the Christians of the whole world).

If you punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, Verily You, only You are the All-Mighty the All- Wise."

Allah will say: "This is a Day on which the truthful will profit from their truth: theirs are Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise) - they shall abide therein forever. Allah is pleased with them and they with Him. That is the great success (Paradise). To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is therein, and He is Able to do all things." Quran Ayah 5:116-120

The Jews Plot to Kill Jesus

Jesus went on with his mission until vice knew that its throne was threatening to fall. So the forces of evil accused him of magic, infringement of the Mosaic Law, allegiance with the devil; and when they saw that the poor people followed him, they began to scheme against him.

The Sanhedrin, the highest judicial and ecclesiastical council of the Jews, began to meet to plot against Jesus. The plan took a new turn. When the Jews failed to stop Jesus's call, they decided to kill him. The chief priests held secret meetings to agree on the best way of getting rid of Jesus.

While they were in such a meeting, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, Judas Iscariot, went to them and asked: "What will you give me if I deliver him to you?" Judas bargained with them until they agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver known as shekels. The plot was laid for the capture and murder of Jesus.

It was said that the high priest of the Jews tore his garment at the meeting, claiming that Jesus had denied Judaism. The tearing of clothes at that time was a sign of disgust.

The Torture of Jesus

The priests had no authority to pass the death sentence at that time, so they convinced the Roman governor that Jesus was plotting against the

security of the Roman Empire and urged him to take immediate action against him. The governor ordered that Jesus be arrested.

According to the Book of Matthew, Jesus was arrested and the council of the high priests passed the death sentence upon him. Then, they began insulting him, spitting on his face and kicking him.

It was the Roman custom for the condemned to be flogged before they were executed. So Pilate, the Roman governor, ordered that Jesus be flogged. The Mosaic Law stipulates forty lashes, but the Romans had no limit, and they were brutal lashes. After that, Jesus was handed to the soldiers for crucifixion. They took off his clothes and kept them. They put a crown of thorns on his head to mock him. According to custom he carried his cross on his back to increase his suffering.

Jesus's Crucifixion - Bible Version

Finally, they reached a place called Golgotha, meaning the Place of Skulls, outside the walls of Jerusalem. Instead of giving him a cup of wine diluted with scent to help lessen the pain on the cross, the soldiers gave Jesus a cup of vinegar diluted with gall. Then they crucified him and, as a further mockery, two thieves with him. So it is written in the Bible.

Jesus's Crucifixion - Qur'anic

But the faith of Islam came with views quite different from that of the extant gospels with regards to both the end of Jesus and his nature.

The Glorious Qur'an affirms that Allah the Exalted did not permit the people of Israel to kill Jesus or crucify him. What happened was that Allah saved him from his enemies and raised him to heaven. They never killed Jesus; they killed someone else.

Allah the Almighty declared: And because of their saying (in boast), "We killed Messiah Jesus, son of Mary the Messenger of Allah," - but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of Jesus was

put over another man (and they killed that man), and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no (certain) knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not (i.e. Jesus, son of Mary): But Allah raised him (Jesus) up (with his body and soul) unto Himself (and he is in the heavens). And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, all-Wise.

And there is none of the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), but must believe in him (Jesus, son of Mary as only a Messenger of Allah and a human being), before his (Jesus or a Jew's or a Christian's) death (at the time of the appearance of the angel of death). And on the Day of Resurrection, he (Jesus) will be a witness against them. Quran Ayah 4:157-159

Almighty Allah also revealed: And (remember) when Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take you and raise you to Myself and clear you (of the forged statement that Jesus is Allah son) of those who disbelieve, and I will make those who follow you (Monotheists, who worship none but Allah) superior to those who disbelieve (in the Oneness of Allah, or disbelieve in some of His Messengers, e.g. Muhammad, Jesus, Moses, etc., or in His Holy Books, e.g. the Torah, the Gospel, the Qur'an) till the Day of Resurrection. Then you will return to Me and I will judge between you in the matters in which you used to dispute. Quran Ayah 3:55

Prophet 'Isa (as) (also known as Jesus) is the penultimate messenger of Allah (swt), sent around 570 years before the last and final Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (saw). He is, of course, an important figure in Islam, mentioned in the Qur'an several times. This article will set out seven things about 'Isa (as) which all Muslims should know!

Before we begin, we'd like to mention a few of the titles 'Isa (as) is given in the Qur'an:

Al-Masih: This is his most famous title - it means ‘The Messiah’. When ‘Isa (as) touched or wiped (in Arabic, *masaha*) those afflicted with an illness, they would be healed by Allah’s permission. [Tafsir Ibn Kathir]

Ruh: This means he was ‘a spirit’ from Allah. [Qur’an, 21:91]

‘Abdullah’ and ‘Mubarak’: He was ‘a servant of Allah’ and ‘blessed’. [Qur’an, 19:30-31]

‘Ayah’ and ‘Rahmah’: He was ‘a sign’ and ‘a mercy’. [Qur’an, 19:21]

‘Kalimah’ and ‘Wajeeh’: He was ‘a word’ from Allah and ‘highly honoured’. [Qur’an, 3:45]

Ul-ul-’Azm: Five messengers were called ‘those of determination’ - Nuh (as), Ibrahim (as), Musa (as), Isa (as), and of course their leader and our leader (Sayyid), Muhammad (saw). [Qur’an, 46:35]

Ibn Maryam: This means the son of Maryam (as), also known as Mary. Like Prophet Adam (as), ‘Isa (as) had no father. Moreover, his mother’s high standing with Allah is well-known - she has an entire Surah named after her in the Qur’an and she was visited and addressed by the Angel Jibril (as):

Now that we’ve covered his titles and some of his characteristics, let’s have a look at some very important aspects of Prophet ‘Isa’s (as) life!

1. He was born under a date palm tree by a freshwater stream

Regarding his miraculous birth, Allah says:

‘So she (Maryam (as)) conceived him and withdrew with him to a remote place. Then the pains of labour drove her to **the trunk of a palm tree**. She cried, “Alas! I wish I had died before this, and was a thing long forgotten!” So a voice (either ‘Isa (as) or Jibril (as)) reassured her from

below her, “Do not grieve! Your Lord has **provided a stream at your feet**. And shake the trunk of this palm tree towards you, it will drop fresh, ripe dates upon you. **So eat and drink, and put your heart at ease**. But if you see any of the people, say, ‘I have vowed silence to the Most Compassionate, so I am not talking to anyone today’”’. [The Noble Qur’an, 19:22-26]

This passage clearly indicates that Maryam (as) was alone when she gave birth to the Prophet ’Isa (as). She was under a date palm tree by a freshwater stream - not in a stable accompanied by Joseph the carpenter, as mentioned in the Christian nativity account.

We also know that she was in the valley of Bethlehem, some six miles south of Jerusalem.

’Isa (as) was, uniquely, not touched by the Devil at his birth:

2. He was born in spring or summer time

Undoubtedly, much of the western Christian world believes that the Prophet ’Isa (as) was born on 25th December. Muslim scholars have said that he was most likely born in spring or summer, based upon the previously mentioned ayah:

’And shake the trunk of this palm tree towards you, it will drop **fresh, ripe dates** (*rutaban janiyyan*) upon you’. [The Noble Qur’an, 19:25]

The Arabic word *rutab* in this ayah means ‘fresh, ripe dates’ and is further emphasised by the Arabic adjective *janiyy*, which indicates fruit ready for picking or picked at the right time, i.e. ripe. This is **unlikely to have taken place in the winter** but rather in the spring or summer. And Allah knows best.

Whether it was spring or summer time, his birth is a true miraculous blessing from Allah. The Prophet ’Isa (as) proclaims:

3. He was sent to guide the Children of Israel

In the Noble Qur'an, 'Isa (as) addresses the Israelites as 'Ya Bani Israeel' - 'O Children of Israel'.

Israel was a title of the Prophet Ya'qub (as), who had 12 sons from which the 12 tribes of Israel originate from. The Prophet Yusuf (as) is the most prominent of the twelve sons.

Unlike previous prophets, 'Isa (as) did not refer to them as 'Ya Qawmi' or 'my people' - because he was born without a father and therefore, technically, they were not his 'people'. His specifying 'Children of Israel' also indicates that he came to guide them and not the whole of humanity.

Guidance for the whole of humanity is a mission reserved for the Messenger of Allah (saw) alone:

4. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) visited his birthplace

On Al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj, the miraculous Night Journey and Ascension, the Angel Jibril (as) instructed the Prophet (saw) to dismount Buraq and pray in certain locations between Makkah and Al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Among these locations was Bethlehem, where 'Isa (as) was born. In Arabic, this is called *Bayt Lahm*, literally 'the house of meat'.

Later that night, the Prophet (saw) led all the prophets - including 'Isa (as) - in prayer in the Blessed Masjid Al-Aqsa.

Angel Jibril (as) then ascended with the Prophet (saw) from the Dome of the Rock through the seven layers of the sky. At the second layer, the Prophet (saw) met 'Isa (as) once more, along with 'Isa's cousin Yahya (as). SubhanAllah, they greeted him by saying, 'Welcome, O pious prophet and pious brother!' [Bukhari]

(For further details of this miraculous night journey, please refer to our article).

5. He will appear in Damascus in his second coming

Allah declares the second coming of the Prophet 'Isa (as) as an *'Ilm*, a sign that announces the Day of Judgement is close:

Allah describes the Prophet 'Isa (as) as speaking to people in *Al-Mahd* and *Kahlan*. [The Noble Qur'an, 3:46 and 5:110]

Al-Mahd means cradle (i.e. Isa (as) spoke at 40 days old, as his mother cradled him in her arms).

Kahlan means the age of maturity, around 30 to 50 lunar years old. Some scholars say this shows that the Prophet 'Isa (as) will continue calling people to Allah until he is 30-33 lunar years of age. It also alludes to his second coming, where he will descend at aged 30-33 once more.

There are many hadith which refer to the return of 'Isa (as):

'Isa, son of Maryam (as), will descend at the white minaret in the eastern side of Damascus, wearing two garments lightly dyed with saffron and placing his hands on the wings of two Angels. When he would lower his head, there would fall beads of perspiration from his head, and when he would raise it up, beads like pearls would scatter from it'. [Muslim]

'The Hour will not be established until the son of Maryam descends amongst you as a just ruler; he will break the cross, kill the pigs, and abolish the Jizyah tax. Money will be in abundance so that nobody will accept it (as charitable gifts)'. [Bukhari]

'Isa (as) will also pray in Masjid Al-Aqsa, behind Imam Mahdi:

“Isa the son of Maryam (as) would then descend, and their (the Muslims’) commander (Imam Mahdi) would invite him to come and lead them in prayer, but he would say, “No, indeed some of you are commanders over each other as Allah’s honour for this Ummah””.
[Muslim]

Thereafter, the Prophet ’Isa (as) ’would then search for him (the Dajjal) until he would catch hold of him at the gate of Ludd (a village near Jerusalem) and would kill him’. [Muslim]

Thus, ’Isa (as) is not only a significant figure in history - he also has an important role to play in the future.

6. He will be buried next to the Messenger of Allah (saw) in Madinah

We know that all the prophets (as) took an oath with Allah to believe in and aid their leader, the Messenger of Allah (saw):

’Remember when Allah took a covenant with the Prophets, (saying), “Now that I have given you the Book and wisdom and then if there comes to you a Messenger (the Prophet (saw)) confirming what you have, you must believe in him and support him. Do you affirm this covenant and accept this commitment?” They said, “Yes, we confirm.” He (Allah) said, “Then bear witness, and I will be with you among the witnesses””. [The Noble Qur’an, 3:81]

The Prophet ’Isa (as) also clearly foretold the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (saw):

’And (remember) when ’Isa the son of Maryam [as] said, “O Children of Israel! I am truly Allah’s Messenger to you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and giving good news of a Messenger who will come after me whose name will be Ahmad [saw]””. [The Noble Qur’an, 61:6]

What is unfortunately less-known is that the Prophet ’Isa (as) will eventually be buried next to the Prophet (saw) in Madinah:

On the authority of 'Abdullah bin Salam (ra) who said, 'The description of Muhammad [saw] is written in the Tawrah and 'Isa ibn Maryam [as] will be buried by him'. (One of the narrators) Abu Mawdud [ra] said, 'There is a place for a grave left in the house'. [Tirmidhi]

Muslim scholars have beautifully indicated that **the last action of the Prophet 'Isa (as) will be sending peace and blessings upon the Messenger of Allah (saw) at his final resting place in Madinah.**

'Isa (as) will then be buried by his side, as the divine rule is that Prophets are buried where they pass away:

'Aishah (ra) said, 'When the Messenger of Allah (saw) died, they disagreed over where to bury him. So Abu Bakr [ra] said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say something which I have not forgotten, he [saw] said, 'Allah does not take (the life of) a Prophet except at the location in which He loves him to be buried in". So they buried him at the spot of his bed [in the house of 'Aishah (ra)]'. [Tirmidhi]

7. The people of Paradise will have his age

Allah categorically states that the Prophet 'Isa (as) was neither killed nor crucified but raised into the heavens:

'And for their (Children of Israel) saying, "Indeed, we killed the Messiah, 'Isa, son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah [as]." **But they neither killed nor crucified him but it was only made to appear to them as so.** Even those who argue for this (crucifixion) are in doubt. They have no knowledge of it whatsoever, only making assumptions. They certainly did not kill him. **Rather, Allah raised him up to Himself.** And Allah is Almighty, All-Wise'. [The Noble Qur'an, 4:157-158]

Scholars mention that the age of the Prophet 'Isa (as) when he was raised was **around 30-33 lunar years of age**. It is very interesting to note that this is the age of the people of Paradise:

The people of Paradise will also resemble the Prophet Adam (as) in his height: 'All of them will look alike and **will resemble their father Adam (in stature), sixty cubits tall**'. [Bukhari]

Scholars have also indicated that the people of Paradise will have the incredible beauty of the Prophet Yusuf (as). After Al-Isra Wal-Mi'raj, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, 'I saw Yusuf (as) who had been given half of (world) beauty. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being'. [Muslim]

We pray that Allah makes us, our families and loved ones from the people of Paradise, amin!

We hope this article was of benefit for you. Please do share this article with friends and family, as the Prophet (saw) said, 'Whoever guides someone to goodness will have a reward like one who did it'. [Muslim]

THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE AN INTRODUCTION

The Umayyad dynasty which ruled over the Muslim world between 661-750 CE & 14 Caliphate, this dynasty was preceded by the Khulafa Ar Rashidon. It was one of the most powerful and expansive of the Islamic Caliphate, it was a kingdom. It began with the rulership of the companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) Muawiyah I (May Allah be pleased with him) after the civil strife. He established his centre in the city of Damascus where the Umayyads would rule the Islamic Empire for nearly 100 years. The Umayyad caliphate was brought to end in 750 CE when the Abbasids took control.

It ruled over a vast area, its achievements were numerous. The Umayyad caliphate expanded the Islamic empire into one of the largest empires in the history of the world. At its peak, the Umayyad Caliphate controlled the Middle East, parts of India, much of North Africa, and Spain. Historians estimate the Umayyad Caliphate had a population of around 62 million people, which was nearly 30% of the world's population at the time.

The Umayyads had divided the empire into provinces that were each ruled by a governor appointed by the Caliph. They also created government bodies called "diwans" that controlled and handled different government agencies.

This dynasty made many very important contributions to the Islamic world. Many of their contributions had to do with unifying the large empire and the many cultures that were now part of the empire. These included creating a common coinage, establishing Arabic as the official language throughout the empire, and standardising weights and measures. They also built some of the most revered buildings of the Islamic history including the dome of the rock in Jerusalem and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.

What goes up must come down. The empire expanded vastly, unrest among the people and opposition to the Umayyads increased. Many Muslims felt that the Umayyads had become too distant from Islamic principles and were not following the ways of Islam. Groups of people including the claimed 'followers of Ali', non Arab Muslims, and the Kharijities began to rebel causing turmoil in the empire. In 750, the Abbasids, a rival clan to the ummayyads, rose to power and overthrew the

Umayyad Caliphate. They took control and formed the Abbasid Caliphate which would rule much of the Islamic world for the next seven hundred years.

One of the Umayyad leaders, Abd al Rahman, escaped to the Iberian Peninsula (Spain) where he established his own kingdom in the city of Cordoba. There the Umayyads continued to rule portions of Spain until well into the 1400s, nearly 700 years of Islamic rule.

THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE; IN DETAILS

The shift in power to Damascus, the Umayyad capital city, was to have profound effects on the development of Islamic history. For one thing, it was a tacit recognition of the end of an era. The first four caliphs had been without exception Companions of the Prophet - pious, sincere men who had lived no differently from their neighbors and who preserved the simple habits of their ancestors despite the massive influx of wealth from the conquered territories. Even 'Uthman, whose policies had such a divisive effect, was essentially dedicated more to the concerns of the next world than of this. With the shift to Damascus much was changed.

In the early days of Islam, the extension of Islamic rule had been based on an uncomplicated desire to spread the Word of God. Although the Muslims used force when they met resistance they did not compel their enemies to accept Islam. On the contrary, the Muslims permitted Christians and Jews to practice their own faith and numerous conversions to Islam were the result of exposure to a faith that was simple and inspiring.

Photo: Medieval Muslims regarded the Great Mosque built by the Umayyads in Damascus as one of the wonders of the world.



With the advent of the Umayyads, however, concerns and the problems inherent in the administration of what, by then, was a large empire began to dominate the attention of the caliphs, often at the expense of religious concerns - a development that disturbed many devout Muslims. This is not to say that religious values were ignored; on the contrary, they grew in strength for centuries. But they were not always

at the forefront and from the time of Mu'awiyah the caliph's role as "Defender of the Faith" increasingly required him to devote attention to the concerns which dominate so much of every nation's history.

Mu'awiyah was an able administrator, and even his critics concede that he possessed to a high degree the much-valued quality of hilm - a quality which may be defined as "civilized restraint" and which he himself once described in these words:

I apply not my sword where my lash suffices, nor my lash where my tongue is enough. And even if there be one hair binding me to my fellowmen, I do not let it break: when they pull I loosen, and if they loosen I pull.

Nevertheless, Mu'awiyah was never able to reconcile the opposition to his rule nor solve the conflict with the Shi'is. These problems were not unmanageable while Mu'awiyah was alive, but after he died in 680 the Shi'is resumed a complicated but persistent struggle that plagued the Umayyads at home for most of the next seventy years and in time spread into North Africa and Spain.

Photo: Facing al-Gharbiyah, the western minaret, a muezzin at the Umayyad Mosque calls believers to prayer.



The Umayyads, however, did manage to achieve a degree of stability, particularly after 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan succeeded to the caliphate in 685. Like the Umayyads who preceded him, 'Abd al-Malik was forced to devote a substantial part of his reign to political problems. But he also introduced much needed reforms. He directed the cleaning and reopening of the canals that irrigated the Tigris-Euphrates Valley - a key to the prosperity of Mesopotamia since the time of the Sumerians - introduced the use of the Indian water buffalo in the riverine marshes, and minted a standard coinage which replaced the Byzantine and Sassanid coins, until then the sole currencies in circulation. 'Abd al-Malik's organization of government agencies was also important; it established a model for the later elaborate bureaucracies of the 'Abbasids and their successor states. There were specific agencies charged with keeping pay records; others concerned themselves with the collection of taxes. 'Abd al-Malik established a system of postal routes to expedite his communications

throughout the far flung empire. Most important of all, he introduced Arabic as the language of administration, replacing Greek and Pahlavi.

Under 'Abd al-Malik, the Umayyads expanded Islamic power still further. To the east they extended their influence into Transoxania, an area north of the Oxus River in today's Soviet Union, and went on to reach the borders of China. To the west, they took North Africa, in a continuation of the campaign led by 'Uqbah ibn Nafi' who founded the city of Kairouan - in what is now Tunisia - and from there rode all the way to the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

These territorial acquisitions brought the Arabs into contact with previously unknown ethnic groups who embraced Islam and would later influence the course of Islamic history. The Berbers of North Africa, for example, who resisted Arab rule but willingly embraced Islam, later joined Musa ibn Nusayr and his general, Tariq ibn Ziyad, when they crossed the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain. The Berbers later also launched reform movements in North Africa which greatly influenced the Islamic civilization. In the East, Umayyad rule in Transoxania brought the Arabs into contact with the Turks who, like the Berbers, embraced Islam and, in the course of time, became its staunch defenders. Umayyad expansion also reached the ancient civilization of India, whose literature and science greatly enriched Islamic culture.

Photo: The minaret of the Great Mosque at Kairouan in Tunisia became the prototype for the majority of North African minarets.



In Europe, meanwhile, the Arabs had passed into Spain, defeated the Visigoths, and by 713 had reached Narbonne in France. In the next decades, raiding parties continually made forays into France and in 732 reached as far as the Loire Valley, only 170 miles from Paris. There, at the Battle of Tours, or Poitiers, the Arabs were finally turned back by Charles Martel.

One of the Umayyad caliphs who attained greatness was 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz, a man very different from his predecessors. Although a member of the Umayyad family, 'Umar had been born and raised in Medina, where his early contact with devout men had given him a concern for spiritual as well as political values. The criticisms that religious men in Medina and

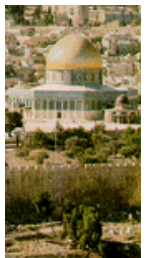
elsewhere had voiced of Umayyad policy - particularly the pursuit of worldly goals - were not lost on 'Umar who, reversing the policy of his predecessors, discontinued the levy of a poll tax on converts.

This move reduced state income substantially, but as there was clear precedent in the practice of the great 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, and as 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz was determined to bring government policy more in line with the practice of the Prophet, even enemies of his regime had nothing but praise for this pious man.

The last great Umayyad caliph was Hisham, the fourth son of 'Abd al-Malik to succeed to the caliphate. His reign was long - from 724 to 743 - and during it the Arab empire reached its greatest extent. But neither he nor the four caliphs who succeeded him were the statesmen the times demanded when, in 747, revolutionaries in Khorasan unfurled the black flag of rebellion that would bring the Umayyad Dynasty to an end.

Although the Umayyads favored their own region of Syria, their rule was not without accomplishments. Some of the most beautiful existing buildings in the Muslim world were constructed at their instigation - buildings such as the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and the lovely country palaces in the deserts of Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. They also organized a bureaucracy able to cope with the complex problems of a vast and diverse empire, and made Arabic the language of government. The Umayyads, furthermore, encouraged such writers as 'Abd Allah ibn al-Muqaffa' and 'Abd al-Hamid ibn Yahya al-Katib, whose clear, expository Arabic prose has rarely been surpassed.

Photo: The shrine of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built in an area revered by Muslims, Christians and Jews alike covers the rock from which Muhammad is believed to have ascended to heaven with the Angel Gabriel.



For all that, the Umayyads, during the ninety years of their leadership, rarely shook off their empire's reputation as a mulk - that is, a worldly kingdom - and in the last years of the dynasty their opponents formed a secret organization devoted to pressing the claims to the caliphate put forward by a descendant of al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, an uncle of the Prophet. By skillful preparation, this organization rallied to its cause many

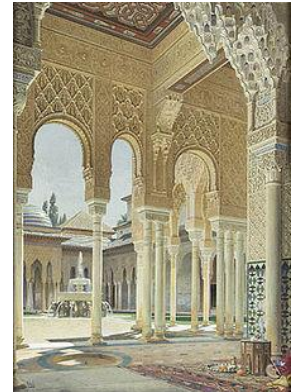
mutually hostile groups in Khorasan and Iraq and proclaimed Abu al-'Abbas caliph. Marwan ibn Muhammad, the last Umayyad caliph, was defeated and the Syrians, still loyal to the Umayyads, were put to rout. Only one man of importance escaped the disaster - 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Mu'awiyah al-Dakhil, a young prince who with a loyal servant fled to Spain and in 756 set up an Umayyad Dynasty there.

THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE IN AL-ANDALUS

The Arabs, under the command of Tarik ibn Ziyad, first began their war in southern Spain or al-Andalus in 711. A raiding party led by Tarik was sent to intervene in a civil war in the Visigothic kingdom in Hispania. Crossing the Strait of Gibraltar (named after the General), it won a decisive victory in the summer of 711 when the Visigothic king Roderic was defeated and killed on 19 July at the Battle of Guadalete. Tariq's commander, Musa bin Nusair crossed with substantial reinforcements, and by 718 the Muslims dominated most of the peninsula. Some later Arabic and Christian sources present an earlier raid by a certain Ṭārif in 710 and also.

The rulers of Al-Andalus were granted the rank of Emir by the Umayyad Caliph Al-Walid I in Damascus. After the Abbasids came to power, some Umayyads fled to Muslim Spain to establish themselves there. By the end of the 10th century, the ruler Abd al-Rahman III took over the title of Caliph of Córdoba (912-961). Soon after, the Umayyads went on developing a strengthened state with its capital as Córdoba. Al-Hakam II succeeded to the Caliphate after the death of his father Abd ar-Rahman III in 961. He secured peace with the Christian kingdoms of northern Iberia, and made use of the stability to develop agriculture through the construction of irrigation works. Economic development was also encouraged through the widening of streets and the building of markets. The rule of the Caliphate is known as the heyday of Muslim presence in the peninsula.

*Photo: The interiors of the Alhambra in Granada,
Spain decorated with arabesque designs.*



The Umayyad Caliphate collapsed in 1031 due to political divisions and civil unrest during the rule of Hicham II who was ousted because of his indolence. Al-Andalus then broke up into a number of states called taifa kingdoms (Arabic, *Muluk al-ṭawā'if*; English, Petty kingdoms). The decomposition of the Caliphate into those petty kingdoms weakened the Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula vis-à-vis the Christian kingdoms of the north. Some of the taifas, such as that of Seville, were forced to enter into alliances with Christian princes and pay tributes in money to Castille.

THE ABBASID CALIPHATE AN INTRODUCTION

The Rise of the Abbasid Empire (750-1517 CE) The Umayyad dynasty was overthrown by the Abbasids, a family from the holy city of Mecca, in 750 CE.

The Abbasids appealed to non-Arab Muslims (mawali), who remained outside the kinship-based society of the Arabs and were perceived as a lower class within the Umayyad Empire. The Abbasid dynasty descended from prophet Muhammad's youngest uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (566-653 CE), from whom the dynasty takes its name. Muhammad ibn 'Ali, a great-grandson of Abbas, began to campaign for the return of power to the family of Muhammad, the Hashimites, in Persia during the reign of Umar II, an Umayyad caliph who ruled from 717-720 CE. The Abbasids created a "Golden Age" and moved the empire's capital from Damascus, Syria, to Baghdad, in Iraq, in 762 CE. The Abbasids had depended heavily on the support of non-Arab Muslims (mawali) in their overthrow of the Umayyads. Abu al-'Abbas's successor, and Abbas Ibn Mohamad was the first Abbasi Cliphate.

Al-Mansur, welcomed non-Arab Muslims to his court. While this helped integrate Arab and Persian cultures, it alienated the Arabs who had supported the Abbasids in their battles against the Umayyads. The Abbasids established the new position of vizier (high-ranking government official) to delegate central authority, and delegated even greater authority to local emirs (a higher government authority).

Photo: The round city of Baghdad.



The Abbasids built Baghdad from scratch while maintaining the network of roads and trade routes established before the Umayyad Dynasty. Some of the goods being traded through Baghdad were ivory, soap, honey, and diamonds. People in Baghdad made and exported silk, glass, tiles, and paper. The Abbasids, who ruled from Baghdad, had an unbroken line of caliphs for over three centuries, consolidating Islamic rule and cultivating

great intellectual and cultural developments in the Middle East in the Golden Age of Islam. By 940 CE, however, the power of the caliphate under the Abbasids began to deteriorate as non-Arabs gained influence and the various subordinate sultans and emirs became increasingly independent.

The Decline of the Abbasid Empire

The Abbasid leadership worked to overcome the political challenges of a large empire with limited communication in the last half of the 8th century (750–800 CE). While the Byzantine Empire was fighting Abbasid rule in Syria and Anatolia, the caliphate's military operations were focused on internal unrest. Local governors had begun to exert greater autonomy, using their increasing power to make their positions hereditary. Simultaneously, former supporters of the Abbasids had broken away to create separate kingdoms in North Africa, Egypt, Palestine and Bukhara. While the local governors and military leaders of these regions ruled, they still gave their allegiance to the caliph in Baghdad. By 900 CE, the Abbasids controlled only central Mesopotamia, and the Byzantine Empire began to reconquer western Anatolia.

The Fatimid Caliphate (909–1171 CE)

Several factions challenged the Abbasids' claims to the caliphate. Most Shi'a Muslims had supported the Abbasid war against the Umayyads because the Abbasids claimed legitimacy with their familial connection to Muhammad, an important issue for Shi'a. However, once in power, the Abbasids embraced Sunni Islam and disavowed any support for Shi'a beliefs. This created further turmoil within the empire.

The Shi'a Ubayd Allah al-Mahdi Billah of the Fatimid dynasty

who claimed descent from Muhammad's daughter, declared himself Caliph in 909 CE and created a separate line of caliphs in North Africa. The Fatimid caliphs initially controlled Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, and they expanded for the next 150 years, taking Egypt and Palestine. The Abbasid dynasty finally challenged Fatimid rule, limiting them to Egypt. At this point, the Abbasid dynasty had fragmented into several governorships that were mostly autonomous, although they official recognized caliphal authority from Baghdad. The caliph himself was under "protection" of the Buyid Emirs, who possessed all of Iraq and western Iran, and were quietly Shi'a in their sympathies. The political power of the Abbasids largely ended with the Mongol conquest and the sacking of Baghdad killing 30,000 people in 1258 CE. Though lacking in political power, the dynasty continued to claim authority in religious matters until after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517 CE.

THE ABBASID CALIPHATE; IN DETAIL

The Abbasid Caliphate was the third caliphate to succeed the Islamic prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It was founded by a dynasty descended from prophet Muhammad's uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (566–653 CE), from whom the dynasty takes its name. They ruled as caliphs for most of the caliphate from their capital in Baghdad in modern-day Iraq, after having overthrown the Umayyad Caliphate in the Abbasid Revolution of 750 CE (132 AH). The Abbasid Caliphate first centered its government in Kufa, modern-day Iraq, but in 762 the caliph Al-Mansur founded the city of Baghdad, near the ancient Babylonian capital city of Babylon and Persian city of Ctesiphon. Baghdad became the center of science, culture and invention in what became known as the Golden Age of Islam. This, in addition to housing several key academic institutions, including the House of Wisdom, as well as a multiethnic and multi-religious environment, garnered it an international reputation as the "Centre of Learning".

The Abbasid period was marked by dependence on increasing inclusion of non-Arab Muslims in the ummah (Muslim community). Persian customs were broadly adopted by the ruling elite, and they began patronage of artists and scholars. Despite this initial cooperation, the Abbasids of the late 8th century had alienated non-Arab mawali. They were forced to cede authority over al-Andalus (current Spain and Portugal) to the Umayyads in 756, Morocco to the Idrisids in 788, Ifriqiya and Sicily to the Aghlabids in 800, Khorasan and Transoxiana to the Samanids and Persia to the Saffarids in the 870s, and Egypt to the Isma'ili-Shia caliphate of the Fatimids in 969.

The political power of the caliphs was limited with the rise of the Iranian Buyids and the Seljuq Turks, who captured Baghdad in 945 and 1055, respectively. Although Abbasid leadership over the vast Islamic empire was gradually reduced to a ceremonial religious function in much of the caliphate, the dynasty retained control of its Mesopotamian domain during the rule of Caliph al-Muqtafi and extended into Iran during the reign of Caliph al-Nasir. The Abbasids' age of cultural revival and fruition ended in 1258 with the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols under Hulagu Khan and the execution of al-Musta'sim. The Abbasid line of rulers, and Muslim culture in general, re-centred themselves in the Mamluk capital of Cairo in

1261. Though lacking in political power (with the brief exception of Caliph al-Musta'in of Cairo), the dynasty continued to claim religious authority until a few years after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517 CE, with the last Abbasid caliph being Al-Mutawakkil III.

History

The Abbasid caliphs were Arabs descended from Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, one of the youngest uncles of prophet Muhammad and of the same Banu Hashim clan. The Abbasids claimed to be the true successors of Muhammad in replacing the Umayyad descendants of Banu Umayya by virtue of their closer bloodline to prophet Muhammad.

The Abbasi dynasty is subdivided into **4 eras**:

1-The Rise 750-847 CE.

2-The Turkish (soldiers/slaves) influence 847-1055 CE.

3-The Seljuq influence 1055-1258 CE.

4-Mameluks influence 1261-1517 CE.

Second Term:

Abbasid Revolution (750–751)

The Abbasids also distinguished themselves from the Umayyads by attacking their moral character and administration in general. The Abbasid revolt was supported largely by Arabs, mainly the aggrieved settlers of Merv with the addition of the Yemeni faction and their Mawali. The Abbasids also appealed to non-Arab Muslims, known as mawali, who remained outside the kinship-based society of the Arabs and were perceived as a lower class within the Umayyad empire. Muhammad ibn 'Ali, a great-grandson of Abbas, began to campaign in Persia for the return of power to the family of Muhammad, the Hashemites, during the reign of Umar II.

During the reign of Marwan II, this opposition culminated in the rebellion of Ibrahim al-Imam, the fourth in descent from Abbas. Supported by the

province of Khorasan (Eastern Persia), even though the governor opposed them, and the Shia Arabs, he achieved considerable success, but was captured in the year 747 and died, possibly assassinated, in prison.

On 9 June 747 (15 Ramadan AH 129), Abu Muslim, rising from Khorasan, successfully initiated an open revolt against Umayyad rule, which was carried out under the sign of the Black Standard. Close to 10,000 soldiers were under Abu Muslim's command when the hostilities officially began in Merv. General Qahtaba followed the fleeing governor Nasr ibn Sayyar west defeating the Umayyads at the Battle of Gorgan, the Battle of Nahāvand and finally in the Battle of Karbala, all in the year 748.

Ibrahim was captured by Marwan and was killed. The quarrel was taken up by Ibrahim's brother Abdallah, known by the name of Abu al-'Abbas as-Saffah, who defeated the Umayyads in 750 in the battle near the Great Zab and was subsequently proclaimed caliph. After this loss, Marwan fled to Egypt, where he was subsequently killed. The remainder of his family, barring one male, were also eliminated.

Power (752–775)

Immediately after their victory, as-Saffah sent his forces to Central Asia, where his forces fought against Tang expansion during the Battle of Talas. The noble Iranian family Barmakids, who were instrumental in building Baghdad, introduced the world's first recorded paper mill in the city, thus beginning a new era of intellectual rebirth in the Abbasid domain. As-Saffah focused on putting down numerous rebellions in Syria and Mesopotamia. The Byzantines conducted raids during these early distractions.

The first change made by the Abbasids under al-Mansur was to move the empire's capital from Damascus to a newly founded city. Established on the Tigris River in 762, Baghdad was closer to the mawali support base of the Abbasids, and this move addressed their demand for less Arab dominance in the empire. A new position, that of the wazir, was also established to delegate central authority, and even greater authority was delegated to local emirs. Al-Mansur centralised the judicial administration,

and later, Harun al-Rashid established the institution of Chief Qadi to oversee it.

This resulted in a more ceremonial role for many Abbasid caliphs relative to their time under the Umayyads; the viziers began to exert greater influence. During Al-Mansur's time, control of Al-Andalus was lost, and the Shia revolted and were defeated a year later at the Battle of Bakhamra.

The Abbasids had depended heavily on the support of Persians in their overthrow of the Umayyads. Abu al-'Abbas' successor Al-Mansur welcomed non-Arab Muslims to his court. While this helped integrate Arab and Persian cultures, it alienated many of their Arab supporters, particularly the Khorasanian Arabs who had supported them in their battles against the Umayyads. This fissure in support led to immediate problems. The Umayyads, while out of power, were not destroyed; the only surviving member of the Umayyad royal family ultimately made his way to Spain where he established himself as an independent Emir (Abd al-Rahman I, 756). In 929, Abd al-Rahman III assumed the title of Caliph, establishing Al-Andalus from Córdoba as a rival to Baghdad as the legitimate capital of the Islamic Empire.

The Umayyad empire was mostly Arab; however, the Abbasids progressively became made up of more and more converted Muslims in which the Arabs were only one of many ethnicities.

Abbasid Golden Age (775–861)

The Abbasid leadership had to work hard in the last half of the 8th century (750–800) under several competent caliphs and their viziers to usher in the administrative changes needed to keep order of the political challenges created by the far-flung nature of the empire, and the limited communication across it. It was also during this early period of the dynasty, in particular during the governance of Al-Mansur, Harun al-Rashid, and al-Ma'mun, that its reputation and power were created.

Al-Mahdi restarted the fighting with the Byzantines, and his sons continued the conflict until Empress Irene pushed for peace. After several years of peace, Nikephoros I broke the treaty, then fended off multiple incursions during the first decade of the 9th century. These attacks

pushed into the Taurus Mountains, culminating with a victory at the Battle of Krasos and the massive invasion of 806, led by Rashid himself.

Photo: Decorated niche from the Abbasid mosque of Afrasiab, Samarkand in Sogdia, 750–825 CE.



Rashid's navy also proved successful, taking Cyprus. Rashid decided to focus on the rebellion of Rafi ibn al-Layth in Khorasan and died while there. Military operations by the caliphate were minimal while the Byzantine Empire was fighting Abbasid rule in Syria and Anatolia, with focus shifting primarily to internal matters; Abbasid governors exerted greater autonomy and, using this increasing power, began to make their positions hereditary.

At the same time, the Abbasids faced challenges closer to home. Harun al-Rashid turned on and killed most of the Barmakids, a Persian family that had grown significantly in administrative power. During the same period, several factions began either to leave the empire for other lands or to take control of distant parts of the empire. Still, the reigns of al-Rashid and his sons were considered to be the apex of the Abbasids.

Domestically, Harun pursued policies similar to those of his father Al-Mahdi. He released many of the Umayyads and 'Alids his brother Al-Hadi had imprisoned and declared amnesty for all political groups of the Quraysh. Large scale hostilities broke out with Byzantium, and under his rule, the Abbasid Empire reached its peak.

Photo: Gold Dinar minted during the reign of al-Amin (809–813)



After Rashid's death, the empire was split by a civil war between the caliph al-Amin and his brother al-Ma'mun, who had the support of Khorasan. This war ended with a two-year siege of Baghdad and the eventual death of Al-Amin in 813. Al-Ma'mun ruled for 20 years of relative

calm interspersed with a rebellion in Azerbaijan by the Khurramites, which was supported by the Byzantines. Al-Ma'mun was also responsible for the creation of an autonomous Khorasan, and the continued repulsing of Byzantine forays.

Al-Mu'tasim gained power in 833 and built the city of Samaraa.

His rule marked the end of the strong caliphs. He strengthened his personal army with Turkish mercenaries and promptly restarted the war with the Byzantines. Though his attempt to seize Constantinople failed when his fleet was destroyed by a storm, his military excursions were generally successful, culminating with a resounding victory in the Sack of Amorium. The Byzantines responded by sacking Damietta in Egypt, and Al-Mutawakkil responded by sending his troops into Anatolia again, sacking and marauding until they were eventually annihilated in 863.

THE AYYUBID SULTANATE

The Ayyubid dynasty, also known as the Ayyubid Empire, was the founding dynasty of the medieval Sultanate of Egypt established by Saladin in 1171, following his abolition of the Fatimid state of Egypt. A Sunni Muslim of Kurdish origin, Saladin had originally served Nur ad-Din of Syria, leading Nur ad-Din's army in battle against the Crusaders in Fatimid Egypt, where he was made Vizier. Following Nur ad-Din's death, Saladin was proclaimed as the first Sultan of Egypt by the Abbasid Caliphate, and rapidly expanded the new sultanate beyond the frontiers of Egypt to encompass most of the Levant (including the former territories of Nur ad-Din), in addition to Hijaz, Yemen, northern Nubia, Tarabulus, Cyrenaica, southern Anatolia, and northern Iraq, the homeland of his Kurdish family. By virtue of his sultanate including Hijaz, the location of the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina, he was the first ruler to be hailed as the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, a title that would be held by all subsequent Sultans of Egypt until the Ottoman conquest of 1517. Saladin's military campaigns in the first decade of his rule, aimed at uniting the various Arab and Muslim states in the region against the Crusaders, set the general borders and sphere of influence of the Sultanate of Egypt for the almost three and a half centuries of its existence. Most of the Crusader states, including the Kingdom of Jerusalem, became to Saladin after his victory at the Battle of Hattin in 1187. However, the Crusaders reconquered the coast of Palestine in the 1190s.

After Saladin's death in 1193, his sons contested control of the sultanate, but Saladin's brother al-Adil ultimately became the Sultan in 1200. All of the later Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt were his descendants. In the 1230s, the emirs of Syria attempted to assert their independence from Egypt and the Ayyubid realm remained divided until Sultan as-Salih Ayyub restored its unity by subduing most of Syria, except Aleppo, by 1247. By then, local Muslim dynasties had driven out the Ayyubids from Yemen, the Hijaz, and parts of Mesopotamia. After his death in 1249, as-Salih Ayyub was succeeded in Egypt by his son al-Mu'azzam Turanshah. However, the latter was soon overthrown by his Mamluk generals who had repelled a

Crusader invasion of the Nile Delta. This effectively ended Ayyubid power in Egypt. Attempts by the emirs of Syria, led by an-Nasir Yusuf of Aleppo, to wrest back Egypt failed. In 1260, the Mongols sacked Aleppo and conquered the Ayyubids' remaining territories soon after. The Mamluks, who expelled the Mongols, maintained the Ayyubid principality of Hama until deposing its last ruler in 1341.

Despite their relatively short tenure, the Ayyubid dynasty had a transformative effect on the region, particularly Egypt. Under the Ayyubids, Egypt, which had previously been a formally Shi'a caliphate, became the dominant Sunni political and military force, and the economic and cultural centre of the region, a status that it would retain until it was conquered by the Ottomans in 1517. Throughout the sultanate, Ayyubid rule ushered in an era of economic prosperity, and the facilities and patronage provided by the Ayyubids led to a resurgence in intellectual activity in the Islamic world. This period was also marked by an Ayyubid process of vigorously strengthening Sunni Muslim dominance in the region by constructing numerous madrasas (Islamic schools of law) in their major cities. Even after being toppled by the Mamluks, the sultanate built by Saladin and the Ayyubids would continue in Egypt, the Levant and the Hijaz for another 267 years.

THE MAMLUK SULTANATE

Mamluk, also spelled Mameluke, slave soldier, a member of one of the armies of slaves established during the Abbasid era that later won political control of several Muslim states. Under the Ayyubid sultanate, Mamluk generals used their power to establish a dynasty that ruled Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1517. The name is derived from an Arabic word for slave.

The use of Mamluks as a major component of Muslim armies became a distinct feature of Islamic civilization as early as the 9th century CE. The practice was begun in Baghdad by the 'Abbasid caliph al-Mu'taṣim (833–842), and it soon spread throughout the Muslim world. Moreover, the political result was almost invariably the same: the slaves exploited the military power vested in them to seize control over the legitimate political authorities, often only briefly but sometimes for astonishingly long periods of time. Thus, soon after al-Mu'taṣim's reign the caliphate itself fell victim to the Turkish Mamluk generals, who were able to depose or murder caliphs almost with impunity. Although the caliphate was maintained as a symbol of legitimate authority, the actual power was wielded by the Mamluk generals; and by the 13th century, Mamluks had succeeded in establishing dynasties of their own, both in Egypt and in India, in which the sultans were necessarily men of slave origin or the heirs of such men.

The Mamluk dynasty

This process was epitomized by and culminated in the establishment of the Mamluk dynasty, which ruled Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1517 and whose descendants survived in Egypt as an important political force during the Ottoman occupation (1517–1798). The Kurdish general Saladin, who gained control of Egypt in 1169, followed what by then constituted a tradition in Muslim military practice by including a slave corps in his army in addition to Kurdish, Arab, Turkmen, and other free elements. This practice was also followed by his successors. Al-Malik al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb (1240–49) is reputed to have been the largest purchaser of slaves, chiefly Turkish, as a means of protecting his sultanate both from

rivals within the Ayyubid dynasty and from the crusaders. Upon his death in 1249 a struggle for his throne ensued, in the course of which the Mamluk generals murdered his heir and eventually succeeded in establishing one of their own number as sultan. Thenceforth, for more than 250 years, Egypt and Syria were ruled by Mamluks or sons of Mamluks.

Historians have broken the era of Mamluk rule into two periods: one covering 1250–1382, the other, 1382–1517. Historians call the former the “Baḥrī” period and the latter the “Burjī”, because of the political dominance of the regiments known by these names during the respective times. The contemporary Muslim historians referred to the same divisions as the “Turkish” and “Circassian” periods, in order to call attention to the change in ethnic origin of the majority of Mamluks, which occurred and persisted after the accession of Barqūq in 1382, and to the effects that this change had on the fortunes of the state.

The Mamluks also sought to extend their power into the Arabian Peninsula and into Anatolia and Little Armenia; to protect Egypt’s rear, they strove to establish their presence in Nubia.

To consolidate their position in the Islamic world, the Mamluks revived the caliphate, which the Mongols had destroyed in 1258, and installed a caliph under their surveillance in Cairo. Their patronage of the rulers of the holy cities of Arabia, Mecca and Medina, served the same purpose. Spectacular success in war and diplomacy was underpinned economically by the Mamluks’ support of industries and crafts as well as by their restoration of Egypt as the principal trade and transit route between the Orient and the Mediterranean.

Among the most outstanding Mamluk sultans were Baybars I (1260–77) and al-Malik al-Nāṣir (1293–1341). The Mamluks’ failure to find an able successor after the latter’s death weakened the strength and stability of their realm. But the historians of the era date the beginning of the dynasty’s decline from the accession of the first Circassian sultan (Barqūq) in 1382, claiming that thereafter, advancement in the state and the army was dependent on race (i.e., Circassian descent) rather than on proved skill in the art of war, which had served as the chief criterion for promotion during the Turkish period. The increased importance assigned

to ethnic affiliation was, however, only one cause of decline; equally or even more important were economic and other factors.

Mamluk (Mameluke) of Ottoman Imperial Guard. The Mamluk fought Napoleon when he invaded Egypt but lost power in massacre of 1811 instigated by Muhammad Ali Pasha (1769-1849). Aquatint c1820.

THE OTHAMIN CALIPHATE

AN INTRODUCTION

The Ottoman Empire (1299 –1922 CE) was the one of the largest and longest lasting Empires in history.

It was an empire inspired and sustained by Islam, and Islamic institutions.

It replaced the Byzantine Empire as the major power in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Ottoman Empire reached its height under Suleiman the Magnificent (reigned 1520-66), when it expanded to cover the Balkans and Hungary, and reached the gates of Vienna.

The Empire began to decline after being defeated at the Battle of Lepanto (1571) and losing almost its entire navy. It declined further during the next centuries, and was effectively finished off by the First World War and the Balkan Wars.

At its peak it included:

Turkey- Greece- Bulgaria- Romania- Macedonia- Hungary- Egypt- Palestine- Jordan- Lebanon- Syria- Parts of Arabia- Much of the coastal strip of North Africa

There were many reasons why the Ottoman Empire was so successful:

Highly centralized. Power was always transferred to a single person, and not split between rival princes. The Ottoman Empire was successfully ruled by a single family for 7 centuries.

State-run education system. Religion was incorporated in the state structure, and the Sultan was regarded as "the protector of Islam".

State-run judicial system.

Ruthless in dealing with local leaders.

Promotion to positions of power largely depended on merit.

Created alliances across political and racial groups.

United by Islamic ideology.

United by Islamic warrior code with ideal of increasing Muslim territory through Jihad.

United by Islamic organisational and administrative structures.

Highly pragmatic, taking the best ideas from other cultures and making them their own.

Encouraged loyalty from other faith groups.

Private power and wealth were controlled.

Very strong military. Strong slave-based army. Expert in developing gunpowder as a military tool. Military ethos pervaded whole administration

After Baghdad fell to the Mongols, the Seljuks declared an independent Sultanate in east and central Asia Minor.

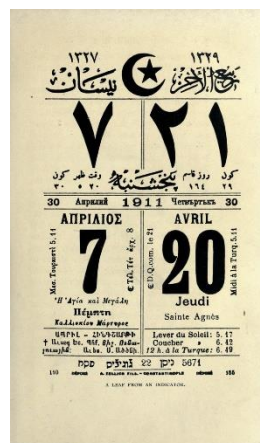
In 1301, Uthman, an Uzbek of the Ottoman clan, overthrew the Seljuk aristocracy and proclaimed himself the Sultan of Asia Minor.

THE OTHAMIN CALIPHATE. IN DETAILS

The Ottoman Empire stretched across Asia, Europe, and Africa beginning in the late thirteenth century. Centuries later, its growth slowed and it transformed in many ways.

Photo: 1911 Ottoman calendar shown in several different languages

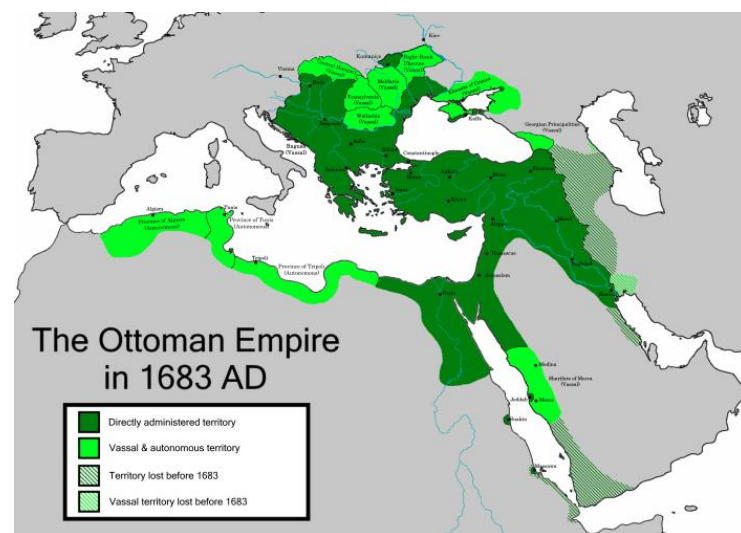
such as: Ottoman Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Hebrew, Bulgarian and French



The Ottoman Empire was founded in 1299 and rather quickly expanded from its origins as one of many Turkish states that rose to power after the decline of the Seljuq Turks in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey). But it really began to expand and consolidate power in the fifteenth century, especially after the conquest of Constantinople. Much of this success was a result of the Ottoman military and an elite fighting force called the Janissaries. The Janissaries were composed of young male, Christian slaves taken from wars in the Balkans (modern-day Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia, among others). They were raised in the Islamic faith and either became administrators for the sultan or members of the sultan's personal bodyguard and military. It was these troops that used new weapons, called harquebus, to make the Ottomans one of the first gunpowder empires.

The Ottoman Empire reached its greatest size in the late seventeenth century but lasted until 1922. It was one of the largest and most long-lasting empires in world history. At its greatest extent, the empire extended to three continents- stretching from the Balkans in southeastern Europe across Anatolia, Central Asia, Arabia, and North Africa, thanks in large part to the Ottoman military and its use of gunpowder.

Photo: Map of Mediterranean region with the borders of the Ottoman Empire at it's largest size highlighted in green.



Transformations and new directions

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Ottomans lost (and gained back) some important territories. Some historians say that this was partly to blame for the beginning of Ottoman decline. But it might be more accurate to consider this a period of transformation. For a few centuries the empire had grown under strong central authority. But now it was shifting and undergoing important changes. It's true that the Ottomans gained little territory after the seventeenth century. However, the Empire continued to exist into the twentieth century, just functioning differently than it had in the early centuries.

As the Empire stopped expanding, Ottoman leaders began to focus on consolidating territories that they already ruled. The borders of the Ottoman Empire became less fuzzy. The same was true of neighboring European and Asian states. The political structure started to shift around this time, too. For the first few centuries of its existence, the Ottoman Empire had been controlled by a chain of powerful warrior-sultans. They ruled and led military campaigns. But by the middle of the seventeenth century, this stable chain of sultans was interrupted. Many sultans were overthrown after only ruling for a short period of time. These short reigns were the result of political rivalries, military revolts, and resistance from elites.

At this time, European monarchies were becoming more centralized, meaning most European monarchs had absolute power over their territories and subjects. But Ottoman power was shifting mostly in the opposite direction. A civilian bureaucracy (an organized system of state officials) was becoming stronger as the sultans themselves gave up some power. At the top of this bureaucracy, powerful officials called viziers had a

lot of authority, but power was also becoming less concentrated in the capital. Instead, provincial officials gained more political control.

Central authority still mattered—but the balance had shifted. Local leaders and imperial officials worked with the sultan to manage the vast empire. Provincial leaders sent taxes to the capital. They also recruited soldiers for imperial wars. The capital and the provinces relied on each other for legitimacy. This was also the case with sultans and the powerful officials who controlled the political life of the empire.

An empire of nations

Since this one massive empire held territories across three continents, it's hard to imagine a single identity unifying all the peoples. In fact, there was no such single identity. Like the Qing dynasty in China and the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire was multi-ethnic and multi-religious. Islam did play a big part in the empire, however. The Ottoman state based its authority on religion. The first warrior-sultans expanded the empire in the name of Islam. Sultans claimed the title of caliph, or successor to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Alongside the sultans, religious scholars, called ulama, played a significant role in running the state. This was particularly true in the courts.

Photo: Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul.

Designed by Mimar Sinan in the 16th century.

Major example of the Classical Ottoman style.



Ottoman hierarchies

The millet system shows that clear boundaries between different social groups were important for Ottoman political control. There were even

Ottoman laws that specified the kinds of clothing that people in different communities could wear, much like those that existed in the Qing dynasty. Despite this, it's hard to simplify a set of rules governing Ottoman society. It was incredibly diverse. Generally, bureaucrats, religious scholars, and military officials had the greatest social power. Warrior-aristocrats, who were mostly Muslim, benefited from tax exemptions and the timar system of land grants. Under this system, in return for military service, warriors were given land.

Defeat and dissolution (1908–1922)

Young Turk movement

Declaration of the Young Turk Revolution by the leaders of the Ottoman millets in 1908

The defeat and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire (1908—1922) began with the Second Constitutional Era, a moment of hope and promise established with the Young Turk Revolution. It restored the Constitution of the Ottoman Empire and brought in multi-party politics with a two-stage electoral system (electoral law) under the Ottoman parliament. The constitution offered hope by freeing the empire's citizens to modernise the state's institutions, rejuvenate its strength, and enable it to hold its own against outside powers. Its guarantee of liberties promised to dissolve inter-communal tensions and transform the empire into a more harmonious place. Instead, this period became the story of the twilight struggle of the Empire.

Members of Young Turks movement who had once gone underground now established their parties. Among them "Committee of Union and Progress", and "Freedom and Accord Party" were major parties. On the other end of

the spectrum were ethnic parties, which included Poale Zion, Al-Fatat, and Armenian national movement organised under Armenian Revolutionary Federation. Profiting from the civil strife, Austria-Hungary officially annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. The last of the Ottoman censuses was performed in 1914. Despite military reforms which reconstituted the Ottoman Modern Army, the Empire lost its North African territories and the Dodecanese in the Italo-Turkish War (1911) and almost all of its European territories in the Balkan Wars (1912–1913). The Empire faced continuous unrest in the years leading up to World War I, including the 31 March Incident and two further coups in 1912 and 1913.

World War I

Main articles: Ottoman entry into World War I and Ottoman Empire during World War I

Admiral Wilhelm Souchon, who commanded the Black Sea raid on 29 October 1914, and his officers in Ottoman naval uniforms

The Ottoman Empire entered World War I on the side of the Central Powers and was ultimately defeated. The Ottoman participation in the war began with the combined German-Ottoman surprise attack on the Black Sea coast of the Russian Empire on 29 October 1914. Following the attack, the Russian Empire (2 November 1914) and its allies France (5 November 1914) and the British Empire (5 November 1914) declared war on the Ottoman Empire (also on 5 November 1914, the British government changed the status of the Khedivate of Egypt and Cyprus, which were de jure Ottoman territories prior to the war, as British protectorates).

The Ottomans successfully defended the Dardanelles strait during the Gallipoli campaign (1915–1916) and achieved initial victories against British forces in the first two years of the Mesopotamian campaign, such as the Siege of Kut (1915–1916); but the Arab Revolt (1916–1918) turned the tide against the Ottomans in the Middle East. In the Caucasus campaign, however, the Russian forces had the upper hand from the beginning, especially after the Battle of Sarikamish (1914–1915). Russian forces advanced into northeastern Anatolia and controlled the major cities there until retreating from World War I with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk following the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Arab Revolt

The Arab Revolt began in 1916 with British support. It turned the tide against the Ottomans on the Middle Eastern front, where they seemed to have the upper hand during the first two years of the war. On the basis of the McMahon–Hussein Correspondence, an agreement between the British government and Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, the revolt was officially initiated at Mecca on 10 June 1916. The Arab nationalist goal was to create a single unified and independent Arab state stretching from Aleppo, Syria, to Aden, Yemen, which the British promised to recognise.

The Sharifian Army, led by Hussein and the Hashemites, with military backing from the British Egyptian Expeditionary Force, successfully fought and expelled the Ottoman military presence from much of the Hejaz and Transjordan. The rebellion eventually took Damascus and set up a short-lived monarchy led by Faisal, a son of Hussein.

Following the Sykes–Picot Agreement, the British and French later partitioned the Middle East into mandate territories. There was no unified Arab state, much to Arab nationalists' anger.

Treaty of Sèvres and Turkish War of Independence

Mehmed VI, the last Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, leaving the country after the abolition of the Ottoman sultanate, 17 November 1922

Defeated in World War I, the Ottoman Empire signed the Armistice of Mudros on 30 October 1918. Istanbul was occupied by combined British, French, Italian, and Greek forces. In May 1919, Greece also took control of the area around Smyrna (now İzmir).

The partition of the Ottoman Empire was finalized under the terms of the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. This treaty, as designed in the Conference of London, allowed the Sultan to retain his position and title. Anatolia's status was problematic given the occupied forces.

A nationalist opposition arose in the Turkish national movement. It won the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923) under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (later given the surname "Atatürk"). The sultanate was abolished on 1 November 1922, and the last sultan, Mehmed VI (reigned 1918–1922), left the country on 17 November 1922. The Republic of Turkey was established in its place on 29 October 1923, in the new capital city of Ankara. The caliphate was abolished on 3 March 1924.

THIS BOOK

This book presents two themes:

First, the stories of the prophets from Dawud to the end of the story of Isa, peace be upon all of them. Through this, we discuss a part of the behavior of the Israelites with their prophets, learn about these prophets and what they endured in calling people to Tawheed (monotheism), and learn what a Da'eya (preacher) must have of patience.

Second, An overview of the history from after the Rashidun (rightly guided) Caliphate until our contemporary era. The history in this long period is discussed from four different perspectives: 1- political, in which the spread of Islam and the expansion of the state are discussed; 2- Scientific, in which the prominent scholars of different sciences and their effect on the current civilization are addressed; 3-Civilization, in which the cities and institutions that were built and the waqf system are summarized; 4- The fall of the Islamic state under the western colonization and the efforts made to liberate the Muslim countries.

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