

What Is Islam? – Appendix

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Appendix

A Muhammad's Life

This account of Muhammad's life is a brief outline based on the work of many Muslim scholars combing through thousands of ahadith. I think I have represented it accurately.

570 A.D. Muhammad born in Mecca to Āmena b. Wahab (see figure ?? for the location.) His father, 'Abdollāh died before he was born.

576 A.D. Muhammad's mother dies. After this he was raised by an uncle, Abu Tāleb, a relatively poor man.

Young Man Quoting from 'Ali Dashti's book [Das94] on page ten: In order that he might be occupied and help to pay for his keep, he was given the task of taking camels owned by Abu Tāleb and others into the plain to graze. He thus spent his days in the grim desert outside Mecca all alone . . . His uncle was a good and kind man, but had a large family and could not afford to give him the care which his cousins and other children of the same rank received . . . It is not difficult to understand why so little is known about the Prophet Muhammad's childhood and youth. There was nothing important in the life of an orphan brought up under the guardianship of an uncle. Nobody took enough notice to have any recollection of him as he was at that time.

595 A.D. Muhammad marries Khadija. Khadija was 40 and Muhammad was 25. She initially employed him to help with her trading enterprises. Muhammad impressed Khadija enough that she proposed marriage.

610 A.D. The first revelation of the Qur'an. Muhammad was about 40 years old. Quoting from Bukhari, volume 9, book 91, number 6982 as reported in [Spe06]: (The Prophet added), "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and again asked me to read, and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it anymore. He then released me and asked me again to read, but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read

(or, what shall I read?).’ Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me and then released me and said, ‘Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists). Has created man from a clot. Read! And Your Lord is Most Generous . . . [unto] . . . that which he knew not.’ ”

This was the first revelation that would span a 23 year career. But Muhammad was not convinced he was a prophet. According to `Ā`isha (later his favorite wife) and quoting from another section of the Bukhari as well as a source known as Ibn Ishaq as reported on page 42 of [Spe06]: “Then Allah’s Messenger returned with that (the Revelation), and his heart severely beating; (and the) muscles between his neck and shoulders were trembling till he came upon Khadija (his wife) and said, ‘Cover me!’ They covered him, till his fear was over, and after that he said, ‘O Khadija! What is wrong with me? I was afraid that something bad might happen to me.’ Then he told her all that had happened.” And he repeated to her his initial fears: “Woe is me poet or possessed.” He meant “poet” in the sense of one who received ecstatic, and possibly demonic, visions.

Khadija consulted others, and convinced Muhammad that it was an angel visiting him, that he was not going insane. Still there were a number of times that Muhammad considered suicide.

- 619 A.D.** Khadija dies. She was about 64 years old, and Muhammad was 49. She was his only wife up to this point. The uncle that raised him, Abu Tālib also dies.
- 620 A.D.** Six men from Yathreb (later named Medina) met with Muhammad and listened carefully. They had troubles at home between two feuding tribes, but hated the tribes in Mecca even more. This was their chance to drive a wedge in Mecca’s rival tribe (which Muhammad was part of) and perhaps break Mecca’s lock on the religious shrines.[Das94] page 78.
- 621 A.D.** Twelve men from Yathreb meet Muhammad on the outskirts of Mecca, and convert to Islam, pledging allegiance to Muhammad.
- 622 A.D.** Seventy three men and two women from Yathreb, inspired by the twelve of the previous year, meet with Muhammad in the same place. and concluded the second pact of ol-`Aqaba with him.

Muhammad has been preaching for 12 years, but has gained very few converts. Under cover of night Muhammad and his few followers flee to Yathreb. This event is known as the Hijra, and is the starting date of the Muslim calendar.

Quoting from page 81 of [Das94]: “After the move to Yathreb, however, he became a relentless warrior, intent on spreading his religion by the sword, and a scheming founder of a state. A Messiah was transformed into a David. A man who had lived for more than twenty years with one wife became inordinately fond of women.”

Muhammad makes agreements with the three Jewish tribes in Yathreb for mutual protection from invaders, and agrees that they should each stay with their respective religious practices.

623 A.D. The Muslims in Yathreb, having difficulty earning a living, turn to raiding caravans. The first is known as the Nakhla raid. The Muslims killed the leader and two other men, and escaped with all the caravan’s property.

This was the first of many raids, which included capturing both male and female slaves. The booty was split among the Muslims, with 20% going to Muhammad, including his share of slave women as a harem.

Muhammad *changes the direction of Muslim prayer from Jerusalem to Mecca* in Sura 2:142–150. This alarms the Jewish tribes.

624 A.D. Battle of Badr: the Muslims defeat the much larger Meccan army. This was a Muslim raid, led by Muhammad himself, on a heavily guarded caravan from Mecca. In Sura 47 Muhammad promises glory to those who fight whether they live or die, and condemns those who do not to hell.

There was a debate about what to do with the captives, kill them or ransom them. Muhammad sided with the “ransom” side of the argument, and so at least some of the captives escaped alive. However others were killed and a new Sura was revealed: “It is not right for a prophet to take captives before he has conquered the battlefield.” (Sura 8, verse 68) Muhammad was sorry he had allowed the ransoms.

The Muslim victory at Badr became a legend and a corner stone of Islam. It is still cited today by Jihadists—God will help them in battle

if they are faithful enough, and reward them if they die. In Sura 3:121–124 Muhammad uses this victory, which he claims was won with the help of 3,000 angels, to prop up his team when they lost a later battle.

There was so much booty from this battle that it required another Sura to settle. In Sura 8 Muhammad takes possession of all the booty, then distributes it according to his wishes and keeps 20% for himself.

Muhammad’s attitude towards the Jews and Christians hardens at about this time:

⁵¹ You who believe, do not take Jews and Christians as allies: they are allies only to each other. Anyone who takes them as an ally becomes one of them—God does not guide such wrongdoers.

— Sura 5:51, Oxford World’s Classics Qur’an

Muhammad uses a small riot that resulted in the death of one Jew and one Muslim man to authorize a siege of that whole Jewish tribe (one of three in the city.) After 15 days the Jews sue for peace. Muhammad wanted to kill them all, but other allies of the Jews argued strongly that they should be allowed to leave. Muhammad relented but forced them to leave all their possessions behind for the Muslims.

625 A.D. Battle of Uhud: Meccan army defeats the Muslims. Uhud is a mountain near Mecca. The Muslims returned to Yathreb in defeat, but Muhammad blamed the defeat on his followers not being Muslim enough (i.e. not listening enough to him.)

Some members of the Jewish Banu Nadir tribe (page 121 of [Spe06]) plotted to kill Muhammad. The plot was discovered before any damage was done. Muhammad ordered a siege of the whole tribe. Two weeks later the Jews sued for peace. They were allowed to leave the city with what they could carry on their camels. Muhammad distributed the booty keeping some for himself.

During this period Muhammad evidently ordered the assassination of a number of opponents. Some of the details can be found on pages 99 to 101 of [Das94].

627 A.D. Battle of the Trench—Meccans fail to take Yathreb and retreat. Hearing that a large army from Mecca was coming for battle Muham-

mad had a trench dug all around Yathreb. After a four week siege the weather turned against the Meccan army and they left for home.

The last Jewish tribe in Yathreb had (perhaps) planned to help the Meccans in this battle. They evidently did not actually do anything, but Muhammad did not care. He laid siege to the last Jewish tribe in Yathreb. After 25 days they sued for peace. Muhammad ordered the beheading of all the Jewish men in the city streets. The women and children were taken as slaves or sold.

628 A.D. Treaty of Hudaibiyya: truce with the Meccan alliance. Muhammad and 1500 men traveled to Mecca because Muhammad wanted to make the traditional polytheist pilgrimage to Mecca. The truce was drawn up outside Mecca, much to the dismay of his men because they thought the terms were not favorable to the Muslims. They were not allowed into Mecca that year, but evidently came back the next and were allowed into the city. The treaty was broken very quickly by both sides.

629 A.D. Muhammad and the Muslims raided the oasis of Khaybar where many of the Jews from Yathreb had gathered. Many were killed and their women and children taken as slaves. Others were allowed to leave or even stay as farmers, but only if they gave half their crops to the Muslims.

630 A.D. Truce broken by a tribe allied to Mecca; Mecca's surrender to the Muslims and acceptance of Islam. Paraphrasing from pages 98 and 99 of [Das94]:

When Mecca was conquered, a general amnesty was proclaimed, but certain exceptions were made. The Prophet gave orders for the killing of certain people where-ever they might be found:

- `Abdollah b. Sa'd b. Abi Sarh: he was for some time a scribe for Muhammad in Medina. He had made some alterations in the revelations with Muhammad's permission for clarity. After observing the number of these changes he concluded that the revelations could not be from God, so he left and joined the tribe in Mecca.
- `Abdollah b. ol-Khatal owned two slave-girls, named Fartanā and Qariba, who had sung satirical songs about the Prophet; both of them, as well as he, were put to death.

- Two more women, Hend b. `Otba and Sārā, a freed slave of `Amr b. Hāshem, had also caused great annoyance to the Prophet, were condemned to death; but Hend finally professed allegiance and was spared.
- `Abdollāh b. Abi Sarh took refuge with a relative who kept him hidden for several days, then brought him to the Prophet requesting a pardon. After a long silence the Prophet said “Yes”, meaning that he reluctantly accepted. `Abdollāh professed Islam and departed. The Prophet, when asked the reason for the long silence, replied, “His Islam was not voluntary but from fear, so I was reluctant to accept it. I was expecting one of you to stand up and behead him.” When asked why he had not winked, the Prophet replied “God’s Apostle cannot have false eyes,” meaning that he could not falsely pretend silence while giving a sign with the eyes to kill.

The last major battle in Arabia was at the Wadi of Hunayn not far from Mecca. Muhammad had 12,000 men. The other side had fewer but in more strategic positions. Both sides lost many people, but the Muslims won the battle.

631 A.D. Raid on Tabuk. This was the beginning of Muhammad’s great expansionist plans. Tabuk was then part of the Byzantine empire. There was not a battle because the city’s defenders left before the Muslims arrived.

The Year of Embassies—Islam accepted by all the Arabian tribes. Muhammad concludes treaties of peace with the Christian chief of al-Aqaba and the Jewish tribes in the oases of Maqna, Adhruh, and Jarba to the south.

Muhammad’s plan was to drive out all non-Muslims from the Arabian peninsula.

632 Muhammad dies of some disease.

633 Qur’an collected into one volume by Abu Bakr (an early follower from Mecca.)

B After Muhammad

What follows is a short summary of Muslim history after Muhammad. See figure ?? for a map of the events in Europe.

632 A.D. Abu Bakr elected Islam's first Caliph. He was `A`esha's father, Muhammad's favorite wife (the one he married when she was nine years old.) Abu Bakr was the first of four "Rashidun" Caliphs, which means "righteously guided."

634 A.D. Abu Bakr dies, Umar elected Caliph (Hafsa's father, another wife of Muhammad.) He was the second Rashidun Caliph.

635 A.D. Damascus taken by Muslims.

636 A.D. Antioch taken by Muslims.

circa 637 A.D. Jerusalem taken by Muslims.

640 A.D. Most of Syria (formerly Christian) taken by Muslims. Umar appoints Muawiya governor of Syria. Muawiya later leads troupes to victory in Europe.

641 A.D. Most of Persia and Egypt taken by Muslims.

644 A.D. Umar murdered by a Persian slave. Uthman ibn Affan elected Caliph. He married two of Muhammad's daughters.

649 A.D. Cyprus taken by Muslims. This was the first major naval battle, with 1700 Muslim ships. The booty and prisoners (now slaves and harem additions) filled 70 ships. Later a Byzantine relief force drove the Muslims out of Cyprus. This was the first of the "Barbary Coast" pirate raids which did not end until the French took Algiers in 1830 A.D.

651 A.D. Crete raided by Muslims.

653 A.D. Rhodes raided by Muslims.

656 A.D. Uthman ibn Affan murdered by one of Umar's sons (Umar was the second Caliph.) Ali becomes Caliph. He is the last Rashidun Caliph.

661 A.D. Muawiyah I defeats the descendants of Muhammad and becomes Caliph, founding the Umayyad dynasty (in power until 750 A.D.)

668 A.D. Sicily raided by Muslims.

circa 670 A.D. Seven year siege of Constantinople by about 50,000 Muslims. It was not constant, but was determined. “Greek fire” helped save the city. It was a burning liquid poured down on the forces outside the city walls; fired in tubes at targets farther away, including ships.

711 A.D. Muslim conquest of the Iberian peninsula begins. The Muslims already control northern Africa. The Visigoths ruled the region at that time, with many small kingdoms often at war with each other. The Muslims were united and offered help to some factions already there in overtaking their enemies. Only later did they find out their new masters were worse than the old enemies. It only took three years to complete the conquest of most of Spain and Portugal, and start pushing into France. Jews, severely oppressed by the Christians, aided the invaders, who continued the oppression after winning the battles. Churches and Cathedrals were sacked and burned along the way because of their rich treasures and hated teachings.

There are reports of Muslim toleration of others. They are over stated:

The Christians and Jews were called “dhimmis” and they had to acknowledge the superiority of the Muslims in their daily life, which was to become one of the constant humiliations. They could not carry a weapon or ride a horse, only a donkey. They were not allowed to wear shoes but had to walk barefoot. A Christian who claimed Jesus was divine was automatically executed. A muslim who became a Christian or a Jew was also executed. The ringing of church bells was forbidden. Christian religions processions were banned. Non-Muslims had to stand aside if a Muslim passed them in the street. They could not wear anything which had green in it, as that was the color of Islam. If a Muslim assaulted them, they were not allowed to fight back but were only permitted to ask their aggressor to stop hitting them. Their status in many ways resembled that of the Untouchables in Hindu society. The dhimmis were the dregs, the people at the

bottom of the pile. If they failed to pay the tribute due their conquerors, they were enslaved or executed.

— Page 107 of [Fre98]

- 717 A.D.** Another Muslim siege of Constantinople. Perhaps 220,000 Muslims in the army and navy. Greek fire, Winter cold, and disease defeated the attackers. Something like 30,000 survivors returned to Arabia and North Africa.
- 718 A.D.** Defeated Spaniards begin “La Reconquista,” which was not completed until 1492 A.D. and did not make much progress for many years.
- 718—732 A.D.** Muslims push into France, burning Churches and Monasteries, enslaving the population. The more desirable young people were added to their harems (sometimes including young boys.)
- 732 A.D.** In October the Muslim army and calvary advancing on Tours (they wanted the loot in the basilica of St. Martin) was decisively defeated by the French infantry led by Charles Martel.
- 737 A.D.** Charles Martel’s brother Childebrand lay siege to Avignon and took it by storm. All of the Muslim defenders were put to the sword. He went on to take back Narbonne, Beziers, Montpellier, and Nimes.
- 739 A.D.** Marseille recaptured by Martel’s forces. The Benedictine monastery on the island of Lerins attacked by Muslims raiders who killed all but four of the monks. This was the first of the numerous raids by Muslim pirates that challenged the Christians for 1000 years.
- 741 A.D.** Charles Martel dies. His son “Pepin the Short” took over (father of Charlemagne.) Many of the local nobles pledged allegiance to Pepin. Together they drove out all the Muslims north of the Pyrenees.
- 750 A.D.** As-Saffah founds the Abbasid dynasty of Caliphs. He was a descendant of Muhammad’s uncle Abbas) They rule until 1258 A.D.
- 756 A.D.** Abd al-Rahman I, the sole surviving Umayyad ruler, arrives in Spain and sets himself up as the ruler of Muslim Spain, uniting previously divided factions. The Abbasids sent a force to depose him, but he sent masses of their decapitated heads back to Baghdad as a present.

788 A.D. Abd al-Rahman I dies. Hisham I takes over. 100,000 Muslim warriors flocked to his call for Jihad against the infidels in the Asturias and France. They invaded France, set fire to Narbonne, and marched on Carcassone where they were stopped by an opposing Christian force.

796 A.D. al-Hakam takes over after the death of his father, Hisham I. He concentrates on defeating his enemies among the Muslims, consolidating his rule. Thousands of potential rivals are beheaded. Crucifixion was common.

813 A.D. Al-Ma'mun becomes the seventh Abbasid Caliph. He supports the Mu'tazilite teachings. This starts a persecution of the people brave enough to maintain the previous Qadarite and Jabariyya teachings (these schools of thought will be discussed in chapter ??.) He is Caliph until 833 A.D.

822 A.D. Abd al-Rahman II takes over as Emir of Spain (second only the Caliph.)

827 A.D. Muslim conquest of Sicily begins. It took 75 years for them to complete the conquest. The occupation lasted 264 years.

It was to the amusement of the Saracens to profane, as well as to pillage, the monasteries and churches. At the siege of Salerno a Muslim chief spread his couch on the communion table, and on that altar sacrificed each night the virginity of a Christian nun. As he wrestled with a reluctant maid, a beam on the roof was accidentally or dexterously thrown down on his head: and the death of the lustful emir was imputed to the wrath of Christ.

— Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. 5, chapter 46

847 A.D. Ja'afar al-Mutawakkil becomes Caliph. He sides with the Ash'arite school against the Mu'tazilite. This begins a persecution of the Mu'tazilite school which is still in progress (see chapter ??.)

882 A.D. Abdallah is the new Emir of Spain.

912 A.D. Abd al-Rahman III the new Emir of Spain. He was more tolerant of other people in Europe and built Cordova's famous library of about 400,000 volumes. Scholars from all over Europe came to study, but this period lasted only about 100 years.

- 920 A.D.** Muslims defeat the armies of Leon and Navarre and sack Pamplona.
- 965 A.D.** Muslims pushed out of Grenoble.
- 972 A.D.** Muslim chief of the Sisteron district surrendered to the Christians and asked to be baptized. The region of Provence freed after a battle near Draguignan. Most of the defenders converted to Christianity. William of Provence gives Grimaldi a tract of land near St. Tropez in thanks. We now call it Manaco. It is still in the Grimaldi family.
- circa 1011 A.D.** Beber Muslims battle with ruling Muslims in Cordova and take over. Much of the city, including the library was destroyed by the Berbers.
- 1031 A.D.** Umayyad dynasty in Spain collapses. It is replaced by many war-lords each with their own small territory.
- 1085 A.D.** Alfonso VI of Castile recaptures Toledo from the Muslims.
- circa 1086 A.D.** Fear of Alfonso VI induces the mutually warring Muslim rulers to call for help from Yusuf, an experienced and successful military leader in North Africa. Yusuf is truly interested in Jihad and not in the decadent pleasures the Muslims in Spain had acquired. He brought with him four thousand black warriors from Senegal and Mali—the first time Europeans had seen black people. Alfonso VI attacked Saragossa, but was repelled by Yusuf's forces. Muslim Spain becomes a European colony of Africa. Fighting amongst the Muslims in Africa took precedence over maintaining the colony, which helped the Christians gradually win back Spain.
- 1091 A.D.** The Normans take back Sicily.
- 1094 A.D.** The battle of Cuarte is the first battle against the Almoravids (Yusuf's forces) that was won by the Christians. El Cid is the hero on the Christian side.
- 1096—1099 A.D.** First Crusade. Pope Urban II promoted the crusade to take the Holy land back from the Muslims. Jerusalem is taken in 1099 A.D.

- 1147—1149 A.D.** Second Crusade. Muslims had retaken part of Jerusalem, but this Crusade failed to defeat them.
- 1187 A.D.** Muslims capture Jerusalem.
- 1189—1192 A.D.** Third Crusade: an effort to retake the city of Jerusalem. Richard the Lion-Hearted captured Acre, but not Jerusalem.
- 1202—1204 A.D.** Fourth Crusade: Originally aimed at the Holy land again, but instead battled in eastern Europe. Constantinople was retaken. Lesser Crusades continued until 1291 A.D.
- 1212 A.D.** Las Navas De Tolosa: Alfonso VIII leads 100,000 men out of Toledo on June 20 to meet the Muslims. The much larger Muslim force marched out of Seville on 22 June to meet them. The battle started on 16 July. It was a disaster for the Muslims, and saved Europe for the Christians. Some estimates say 150,000 Muslim warriors were killed. The “Children’s Crusade” meets failure.
- 1212—1230 A.D.** Gradually the Christians push the Muslims out of all but five major cities: Cordova, Seville, Granada, Jaen, and Valencia.
- 1230—1248 A.D.** Granada, with an easily defended position, is the last Muslim city in Spain. Rather than fight, King Fernando III makes a treaty with them. They are not pushed out until 1492 A.D.
- 1250 A.D.** Most of Spain is now in Christian hands. In Turkey the origins of the Ottoman empire are rising.
- 1317 A.D.** The Christian city of Bursa in Turkey surrenders to Othman I, the founder of the Ottoman empire. It becomes its first capital.
- 1340—1480 A.D.** The Mongols converted to Islam and take over much of Russia and the Crimea.
- 1389 A.D.** Battle of Kosovo. An Ottoman force defeats a larger Christian force near Kosovo. The Ottoman ruler Murad died in the battle. His successor Bajazet ordered his brother to be strangled, and many other possible rivals killed. All of Murad’s sons (and there were many) were killed regardless of age. Then all the Christian prisoners are executed. This was the beginning of 500 years of Ottoman victories in Europe.

- 1453 A.D.** Constantinople taken by the Ottoman forces, renamed Istanbul.
- 1456 A.D.** Ottomans try to take as much of Europe as possible. They were defeated in Belgrade and Venice, but had many successes in other places.
- 1504—1546 A.D.** Muslim raids all along the Mediterranean coast. These are the “barbary pirates.” “Red Beard” is one of the pirate kings based in Tunis.
- 1565 A.D.** Muslim attack on Malta. Many days of vicious fighting, but the Island stays in Christian hands.
- 1683 A.D.** Muslims attack Vienna again (the first time was 1529 A.D.) Other European forces save the day for the besieged city. It was a huge defeat for the Muslims.
- 1685—1900 A.D.** The Ottoman empire is gradually pushed back towards Turkey.
- 1800—1950 A.D.** Roughly the time span of colonial domination of Islamic countries by European countries. Jihad begins to flower again after freeing the colonies.
- 1912 A.D.** First Balkan War between Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece, against Turkey.
- 1913 A.D.** Albania become independent of the Ottomans. The foundations of World War I.
- 1924 A.D.** Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey officially ended the Caliphate on 3 March 1924.

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