

<b>March 10<sup>th</sup> 632:</b> on his final hajj before he died, Muhammad gave a sermon at the oasis of Ghadir Khumm, in <b>Saudi Arabia</b> . 70,000 people attended Muhammad's Ghadir Khumm sermon.	At Ghadir Khumm Muhammad described Ali as 'mawla', meaning both 'friend' and 'authority'. Sunni accept Ali as a 'friend' of the community, Shi'a also perceive Ali's 'authority'.	<b>4 days before Muhammad's death:</b> Abu Bakr led the prayers. Sunni see this as a sign of Abu Bakr's rightful leadership. Shi'a consider Muhammad to have already indicated Ali's leadership.	<b>June 8<sup>th</sup> 632 CE:</b> Muhammad died in <b>Makkah, Saudi Arabia</b> , leaving behind a community of some 100,000 Muslims
While Ali was busy with Muhammad's funeral, a group gathered in a tented area known as a <i>saqifa</i> . They appointed Abu Bakr as leader.	Sunni present the choosing of Abu Bakr at the <i>saqifa</i> as a practical measure to ensure order. Shi'a see it as undemocratic.	<b>632-644</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Caliph</b> <b>Abu Bakr</b> Caliph= 'rightly guided' Arabs begin to expand, Abu Bakr rules from <b>Medina, Saudi Arabia</b> .	<b>634-644</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Caliph</b> <b>Umar I</b>  <b>644- 656</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Caliph</b> <b>Uthman</b>
Supporters of Abu Bakr see his leadership as s 'sunnah' (what the prophet intended), now known as 'Sunni'.	<b>656- 661</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Caliph</b> <b>Ali</b> Shi'a regard Ali the rightful successor to Muhammad	Shi'a regard Ali as the first <b>Imam</b> ; a spiritual leader chosen by God. The word Shi'a is a shortening of 'Shiat Ali' meaning 'followers of Ali'.	<b>661</b> Ali is murdered in <b>Kufa</b> (in Iraq) while praying at the mosque, by a group that think he should not be Caliph

## FACT FILE: ALI

### Ali ibn Abi Talib; 601 to 661.

Ali was a young cousin of Muhammad, later his son-in-law.

Ali's father was Muhammad's uncle. Muhammad was raised by Ali's father after his own father and grandfather died. Ali was born after Muhammad's marriage to Khadija.

Muhammad took Ali into his home when the boy was 5. At the age of 9 Ali became the first child and second person (after Khadija) to accept Muhammad as the prophet of God and Islam. Ali was active in supporting Muhammad as the new community at Medina grew and was a reliable general on the battlefield.

Ali married Muhammad's daughter Fatima. Muhammad referred to them as 'al-bayt'- his two dearest ones united together. They had four children, two sons; Hassan and Hussain. Ali continued to act as an envoy to Muhammad.

Ali was involved in the succession conflict from the start. Shi'a are those who supported his leadership after Muhammad's death. The word Shi'a is a shortening of 'Shiat Ali'; 'followers of Ali'. Ali's sons also became involved in leadership politics. The murder of Hussain is a key moment in Shi'a history, but is also acknowledged by Sunni as a tragedy.

Ali was the 4<sup>th</sup> Caliph but considered by Shi'a to be the first Imam; the first rightful spiritual leader after Muhammad.

Karbala is the place of a battle between Ali's son Hussain and the forces of Yazid. It wasn't a battle so much as an ambush- Hussain was attacked as he travelled with his family. Hussain was beheaded, his 6 month old son killed, the women and children taken into captivity. In Shi'a tradition members of the household of Muhammad (bayt) are the only correct leaders.

<b>661- 680</b> <b>5<sup>th</sup> Caliph</b> <b>Mu'awiya</b> Self-appointed Caliph, presents himself as the heir of Abu Bakr and Umar I. Rules from <b>Damascus</b> .	Mu'awiya appointed his son Yazid as leader to the Caliphate he founded. Yazid ruled between 680 and his death in 683.	Hussain, Ali's younger son, refuses to accept the rule of <b>Yazid in Damascus</b> , declaring him unjust. Hussain is stationed in <b>Medina</b> .	<b>680:</b> Hussain is invited to <b>Kufa, Iraq</b> to lead by supporters of Ali who reject Yazid's rule. On the way Hussain is attacked and killed in <b>Karbala in Iraq</b> . His baby son is also murdered.
<b>661- 669</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Imam</b> <b>Hassan</b> Inherited from Ali on his death, as the rightful descendent.	Ali's son, Hassan, is given allegiance by all Muslims except Mu'awiya. Hassan leads the community for 6 months, but is challenged by Mu'awiya.	Hassan agrees to a treaty with Mu'awiya; to ensure Hussain's eventual leadership and maintain peace. Mu'awiya reneges on this treaty.	<b>669- 680</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Imam</b> <b>Hussain</b> Seen by Shi'a as the third Imam, inherited from his brother Hassan

## KARBALA TIMELINE

<b>March 10<sup>th</sup> 632</b> Sermon at Ghadir Khumm	
<b>4 days before Muhammad's death</b> Abu Bakr leads the prayers	
<b>June 8<sup>th</sup> 632 CE</b> Muhammad's death	
<b>632-644</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Caliph: Abu Bakr</b>	
<b>634-644</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Caliph: Umar I</b>	
<b>644- 656</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Caliph: Uthman</b>	
<b>656- 661</b> <b>4<sup>th</sup> Caliph: Ali</b>	<b>632- 661</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Imam: Ali</b>
<b>661- 680</b> <b>5<sup>th</sup> Caliph/ 1<sup>st</sup> Umayyad Caliph: Mu'awiya</b>	<b>661- 669</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Imam: Hassan</b>
<b>680- 683</b> <b>Rule of Yazid, Mu'awiya's son</b>	<b>669- 680</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Imam: Hussain</b>

## **ASHURA**

There are differences in the way Ashura is observed in Sunni and Shi'a Muslim communities because they remember different events.

'Ashura' means 'tenth'. It is the 10<sup>th</sup> day of Muhurram, the first month of the Muslim year.

### **Shi'a**

In Shi'a community Ashura commemorates the death and martyrdom of Imam Hussain at the battle of Karbala (680 CE). Other members of Hussain's family and companions were also killed, including his baby son. This place is marked by the tomb of Hussain in Karbala, which is in modern day Iraq.

Hussain was ambushed as he travelled to Kufa (in Iraq) from Makkah (in Saudi Arabia). He had been requested to make this journey by the Muslims who did not accept the rule of Yazid and wanted Hussain to lead in his place. Yazid forced Hussain and his companions to stop at Karbala without food or water. They were later ambushed and slaughtered.

As well as mourning the loss of Hussain, the leader chosen by God, Shi'a also focus on the struggle against oppression, sacrifice and justice. Shi'a wear black to symbolise mourning and no weddings or celebrations take place on this day. Ashura is sombre and reflective. Shi'a may gather at the mosque to listen to accounts of the Karbala tragedy, crying and beating their chests. They might reflect on the lessons to be learnt from Hussain's sacrifice and what they can take into their own lives. Groups might also watch a re-enactment of the ambush. They might process in public as in a funeral procession, sometimes bearing a coffin to represent Hussain. Some Shi'a flagellate, or whip, themselves, to intensely identify with the suffering of Hussain. This is a minority pursuit and is banned in some countries, such as Iran. In the UK, some Shi'a give blood instead, to symbolise their willingness to fight for justice.

Mosques are draped in black with large banners spelling Hussain's name. If they are able Shi'a visit Hussain's tomb in Karbala. In Iran the day is a public holiday.

### **Sunni**

Sunnis remember a different occasion on Ashura. On this day Musa (Moses) and the Hebrews are believed to have been saved from Pharaoh's army when God parted the waters of the Red Sea, as in the biblical book of Exodus. Sunnis might fast on the 10<sup>th</sup> Muharram (Ashura means 10<sup>th</sup> of Muhurram) to show gratitude to God.

Some Sunnis might also remember the martyrdom of Hussain on this day. Sunni do not view his death in a positive light but as a tragedy.