

Hussein and the Sunni/Shia split

- ~570 - **Mohammed (the Prophet)** born in **Mecca**
- 610 - Mohammed starts receiving the word of God (**Allah**)
 - His teachings memorized by followers
 - Later written down as the **Koran**
 - Other source on God's will is the *sunna*: Mohammed's exemplary life, and to some extent that of his followers
- 622 - Mohammed flees Mecca with followers
 - They go to **Medina**
 - This flight (the **hegira**) is year 1 of Muslim calendar
- 624 - Mohammed's first victory against a Meccan caravan
- 630 - Mecca submits to Medina
 - Mohammed treats Meccans leniently
 - Many polytheistic Arabs convert to **Islam**
 - Mohammed now head of a growing state
- 632 - Mohammed dies
 - Leaves no instructions about succession
 - Despite 9 wives and many children, only his daughter **Fatima** survives him
 - Leaders pick his aging father-in-law, **Abu Bakr**, as 1st **Caliph** (successor)
- 634 - Abu Bakr dies, naming **Umar I** the 2nd Caliph
 - Umar continues religious and military expansion
- 644 - Umar I dies, leaving no designated successor
 - Leaders select **Uthman ibn Affan**, Mohammed's brother-in-law, as 3rd Caliph
 - Uthman makes enemies by seeming to favor Meccans
 - Issues an official Koran, orders all others destroyed
- 656 - Uthman assassinated by Medinan troops
 - Medina faction picks **Ali**, husband of Mohammed's daughter Fatima, as 4th Caliph
 - This faction called **Shiites (Shi'ites, Shia)**, or **partisans** of Ali
 - Shiites believe caliphs must be descendents of Mohammed, through Fatima and Ali
 - **Muawiyah**, governor of Syria and cousin of murdered Uthman, refuses to recognize Ali unless the killers are brought to justice
 - Muawiyah claims the caliphate
 - Supporters of Muawiyah later called **Sunni** or **Sunnite**
 - Sunni may mean "followers of the *sunna*"... or ...
 - Sunni may mean "middle of the road" (vs. the Shiite splinter group)
 - Possible implication: By not trying to catch Uthman's killers, Medinans were not following the *sunna*
- 657 - Shiites and Sunnis have inconclusive battle
 - Agree to arbitrate succession
 - Some followers of Ali so insulted that he finds this negotiable that they try to kill both
 - But only succeed in killing Ali
 - Muawiyah survives as Caliph
 - Ali's older son **Hassan** accepts a pension instead of the Caliphate
 - Ali's younger son **Hussein** agrees to wait until Muawiyah dies
- 680 - Muawiyah dies – naming his son as successor

- Hussein leads outnumbered Shiites to battle at **Karbala**; they are slaughtered
- Sunnis outnumber and dominate Shiites ever after
- Hussein's son **Ali** survives
- Ali's (thus Mohammed's) descendents are the **Sayids**

Ali: Husband of Mohammed's daughter Fatima, disputed 4th Caliph, supported by Medina faction, not recognized by Muawiyah, killed by Medinan zealots

Shiites: Partisans of Ali (Caliphs must be Mohammed's family)

Sunnis: Followers of the *sunna* (Ali was not legitimate, Medina faction didn't follow *sunna*)

Hussein: Ali's younger son, agreed to wait to be Caliph, betrayed by Muawiyah, lost battle that left Shiites dominated by Sunnis ever after

Ali: Hussein's surviving son; ancestor of Sayids (descendants of Mohammed)