



# Al-Mizan



**May Allah swt fulfill your duas.**

*May Allah swt forgive your sins, a sublime forgiveness that leaves no trace.*

*May Allah swt forgive your transgressions of His commands and any violations of the rights of people.*

*May Allah swt grant you strength and the resolve to overcome your shortcomings.*

*May Allah swt accept your duas, ibaadah and good deeds.*

*May Allah swt help you to attain khushu' and ikhlaas in your ibaadah.*

*May Allah swt make you love your Prophet (pbuh), your Deen and the Holy Quran, the way they deserve to be loved.*

*May Allah swt increase your Iman, your tawakkul and your yaqeen.*

*Aameen.*

**With duas, best wishes and heartfelt thanks from the members of the Board of directors, Islamic Center of Northland, KCMO.**

## THE CONCEPT OF UMMAH IN ISLAM

By Aisha Stacey (© 2018 IslamReligion.com)

Ummah (sometimes spelled Umma) is an Arabic word that is usually translated into English as nation. Thus, when someone from an English-speaking background hears the word Ummah defined, they immediately think of the nation state whose members live between a set of pre-defined borders. This however is not technically correct because Sha'b is the Arabic word that means nation. However, Ummah does not only define a group of people with common ancestry or in the same geographical region; it means this plus much more. Dictionary.com defines Ummah as the Islamic community, which is a somewhat better definition.

As is the case with many Arabic words, the common translation of Ummah as nation fails to identify the layers of meaning and the nuances of Arabic grammar. The root of the Arabic word Ummah is amma, meaning to go or to go and see. The word Imama means to lead, for example, the one who leads the prayer is the Imam. Also derived from this root is the word Umm which means mother, source or origin. The definition of Ummah is a community of believers bound together with a common purpose, to worship God and with a common goal to advance the cause of Islam.

The Ummah, or Muslim community, is a group of people from diverse backgrounds, ancestry, locations and nationalities. They are a community without borders yet united in a very real way. Though separated by distance and often constrained by borders they are united. They are one nation or community united under the guidance of the One God.

*"And verily this Ummah of yours is one Ummah and I am your Lord and Cherisher, therefore fear Me and no other." (Quran 23:52)*

In various translations of this verse the word Ummah is replaced by religion and in this context religion means a collective way of life or course of conduct followed by a community; in other words, an Ummah or nation of believers.

In the Quran God does not use the word Ummah exclusively to refer to the Ummah of Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. He often uses Ummah to refer to a

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group of people who share common religious beliefs. God tells us that in the beginning humankind was one Ummah but circumstances divided the people. Ummah is also mentioned in the Quran in relation to communities with their own messengers. For example, the Quran uses the word Ummah to refer to the communities of the past such as the Ummah of Prophet Moses or the Ummah of Prophet Jesus.

*"Humankind was one single Ummah. And God sent messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Scriptures in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed..." (Quran 2:213)*

*"To every Ummah (was sent) a messenger..." (Quran 16:36)*

Prophet Muhammad was sent to nurture an Ummah for the benefit of humanity, one designed to include all of humankind. He was commanded by God to transmit a divine message; both a guidance and a warning to all. And in the Quran God refers to the Ummah of Muhammad as the best community.

*"You are the best community (Ummah) raised up for (the benefit of) humanity; enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and believing in God..." (Quran 3:110)*

The Ummah of Muhammad is known throughout Islamic history and throughout the world as community of believers united in their devotion to One God. Anybody who embraces Islam becomes a member of the Muslim Ummah. All members, the believers, are united by a very special bond that resembles the ties that bind a close family. Muslims are brothers and sisters to one another. They should be incapable of being indifferent towards one another but instead should operate as one body or one community with a spirit of cooperation, good will, empathy and unity.

The example of the believers in their love, mercy and sympathy for one another can be compared to one body; when any part of the body aches the whole body responds with sleeplessness and fever.<sup>[1]</sup>

Prophet Muhammad was constantly concerned for the well-being of the Ummah. He worried not so much about their life in this world but fretted over their place in the Hereafter. He is known to have been distressed over the welfare of his Ummah to the point that he would cry until his beard was soaked with tears. My Ummah, my Ummah were the words he spoke in his supplications to God.<sup>[2]</sup>

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## HOW DID THE SPREAD OF ISLAM AFFECT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE?

By islam-guide.com (IslamReligion.com)

Islam instructs man to use his powers of intelligence and observation. Within a few years of the spread of Islam, great civilizations and universities were flourishing. The synthesis of Eastern



and Western ideas, and of new thought with old, brought about great advances in medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, architecture, art, literature, and history. Many crucial systems, such as algebra, the Arabic numerals, and the concept of zero (vital to the advancement of mathematics), were transmitted to medieval Europe from the Muslim world. Sophisticated instruments which were to make possible the European voyages of discovery, such as the astrolabe, the quadrant, and good navigational maps, were also developed by Muslims.

The Astrolabe: One of the most important scientific instruments developed by Muslims which was also used widely in the West until modern times.



Muslim physicians paid much attention to surgery and developed many surgical instruments as seen in this old manuscript.

## HOW MUSLIM INVENTORS CHANGED THE WORLD

By Paul Vallely (edited by IslamReligion.com)

From coffee to cheques and the three-course meal, the Muslim world has given us many innovations that we in the West take for granted. Here are some of their most influential innovations:

(1) The story goes that an Arab named Khalid was tending his goats in the Kaffa region of southern Ethiopia, when he noticed his animals became livelier after eating a certain berry.

He boiled the berries to make the first coffee. Certainly the first record of the drink is of beans exported from Ethiopia to Yemen where some Muslims drank it to stay awake all night to pray on special occasions. By the late 15th century it had arrived in Makkah and Turkey from where it made its way to Venice in 1645.

It was brought to England in 1650 by a Turk named Pasqua Rosee who opened the first coffee house in Lombard Street in the City of London. The Arabic "qahwa" became the Turkish "kahve" then the Italian "caffé" and then English "coffee".

(2) The ancient Greeks thought our eyes emitted rays, like a laser, which enabled us to see. The first person to realise that light enters the eye, rather than leaving it, was the 10th-century Muslim mathematician, astronomer and physicist Ibn al-Haitham.

He invented the first pin-hole camera after noticing the way light came through a hole in window shutters. The smaller the hole, the better the picture, he worked out, and set up the first Camera Obscura (from the Arab word "qamara" for a dark or private room).

He is also credited with being the first man to shift physics from a philosophical activity to an experimental one.

(3) A form of chess was played in ancient India but the game was developed into the form we know it today in Persia. From there it spread westward to Europe – where it was introduced by the Moors in Spain in the 10th century – and eastward as far as Japan. The word "rook" comes from the Persian "rukḥ", which means chariot.

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(4) A thousand years before the Wright brothers, a Muslim poet, astronomer, and engineer named Abbas ibn Firnas made several attempts to construct a flying machine. In 852 he jumped from the minaret of the Grand Mosque in Cordoba using a loose cloak stiffened with wooden struts.

He hoped to glide like a bird. He didn't. But the cloak slowed his fall, creating what is thought to be the first parachute, and leaving him with only minor injuries.

In 875, aged 70, having perfected a machine of silk and eagles' feathers he tried again, jumping from a mountain. He flew to a significant height and stayed aloft for ten minutes but crashed on landing – concluding, correctly, that it was because he had not given his device a tail so it would stall on landing. Baghdad international airport and a crater on the Moon are named after him.

(5) Washing and bathing are religious requirements for Muslims, which is perhaps why they perfected the recipe for soap which we still use today. The ancient Egyptians had soap of a kind, as did the Romans who used it more as pomade.

But it was the Arabs who combined vegetable oils with sodium hydroxide and aromatics such as thyme oil. One of the Crusaders' most striking characteristics, to Arab nostrils, was that they did not wash.

Shampoo was introduced to England by a Muslim who opened Mahomed's Indian Vapour Baths on Brighton seafront in 1759 and was appointed Shampooing Surgeon to Kings George IV and William IV.

(6) Distillation, the means of separating liquids through differences in their boiling points, was invented around the year 800 by Islam's foremost scientist, Jabir ibn Hayyan, who transformed alchemy into chemistry, inventing many of the basic processes and apparatus still in use today – liquefaction, crystallisation, distillation, purification, oxidisation, evaporation and filtration.

As well as discovering sulphuric and nitric acid, he invented the alembic still, giving the world intense rosewater and other perfumes and alcoholic spirits (although drinking them forbidden, in Islam). Ibn Hayyan emphasised systematic experimentation and was the founder of modern chemistry.

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(7) The crank-shaft is a device which translates rotary into linear motion and is central to much of the machinery in the modern world, not least the internal combustion engine. One of the most important mechanical inventions in the history of humankind, it was created by an ingenious Muslim engineer called al-Jazari to raise water for irrigation.

His Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices (1206) shows he also invented or refined the use of valves and pistons, devised some of the first mechanical clocks driven by water and weights, and was the father of robotics. Among his 50 other inventions was the combination lock.

(8) Quilting is a method of sewing or tying two layers of cloth with a layer of insulating material in between. It is not clear whether it was invented in the Muslim world or whether it was imported there from India or China.

However, it certainly came to the West via the Crusaders. They saw it used by Saracen warriors, who wore straw-filled quilted canvas shirts instead of armour. As well as a form of protection, it proved an effective guard against the chafing of the Crusaders' metal armour and was an effective form of insulation – so much so that it became a cottage industry back home in colder climates such as Britain and Holland.

(9) The pointed arch so characteristic of Europe's Gothic cathedrals was an invention borrowed from Islamic architecture. It was much stronger than the rounded arch used by the Romans and Normans, thus allowing the building of bigger, higher, more complex and grander buildings.

Other borrowings from Muslim genius included ribbed vaulting, rose windows and dome-building techniques. Europe's castles were also adapted to copy the Islamic world's – with arrow slits, battlements, a barbican and parapets. Square towers and keeps gave way to more easily defended round ones. The architect of Henry V's castle was a Muslim.



## INTRODUCTION TO MUSLIM SCIENCE

By Camilla Sayf (IslamReligion.com)

Few centuries before Jesus the outstanding Greek civilization came to exist, bringing into the world such knowledgeable minds as Aristotle, Euclid, Socrates, Galen and Ptolemy. Their contributions to philosophy, mathematics, geography, astronomy and medicine became the corner stone of modern science.

Then the Romans ceased control and subsequently Christianity arisen bringing together the calendar, as we know it – BC and AD. The Romans gave in to the invasion of barbarian tribes (Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Vandals), the forefathers of today's Europe. Devastated, the empire fell. Following its collapse, approximately from the late 5th century, began the period of the so called dark ages. It lasted until late 15th century when Columbus discovered America marking the rise of the Renaissance, otherwise known as the Revival.

Much has been written about the period of Antiquity, praising the Greco-Roman scientific and cultural achievements. The libraries are full of writings on the Renaissance, praising the brilliancy of that age. But there is almost nothing on the ten centuries in between. The European history bears records of mainly the ruling dynasties, religion, the feudal system, giving little attention to the development of science in that time. The image that Europe went from the splendor of Greece straight into darkness and then suddenly back into brightness has been dominating the scholastic thought for years. Devoid of any logic, this statement provokes reasonable doubts about the missing link of ten centuries long.

To explain this mysticism, one might want to take a closer look at the history of other parts of the world and especially the civilizations that existed in close geographic proximity to the European continent. It's absolutely astonishing that the period of the dark ages in north Europe coincides, and exactly, with the apogee of the Muslim civilization in the East and south Europe. Islamic civilization effectively came into being in 622 A.D. when Prophet Mohammed and his companions fled from hostile Mecca to Medina (Yathrib) where they found refuge and established the first Islamic state.

By the year 750 A.D. Islam spread and covered lands and countries from Spain to the borders of China. Along with Islam came new a new spirit of learning resulting scientific discoveries, and technology inventions. The importance of learning had been recognized by the Muslims as means

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of sharing creativity between nations thus contributing to their effective communication. The Prophet Mohammed urged his followers to seek knowledge recognizing the genuine achievements of the Chinese, Indians, Africans..etc.. Great thinkers as Al-Biruni, Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Idrissi, Al-Khindi, Ibn Sina, Al-Razi, Ibn Khaldun, Al-Khazin, Ibn al-Haytham, Al-Farabi, Al-Ghazali, al-Jazari and hundreds more, came various backgrounds.

Non-Muslim like Ishaq Ibn Hunayn and Hunayn Ibn Ishaq – Nestorian Christian scientists of the Abbasid court, or the astronomer Thabit Ibn Qurrah – a Sabean, or Hasadai Ibn Shaprut and Ibn Maimon –Jews from Muslim Spain and many more thrived and had respectable and influential positions in the Muslim societies. The Muslim civilization become the first and by far the most multi-ethnic example of humanity. With equal dedication, Arabs, Turks, Persians, Berbers and Kurds were seeking solutions to numerous societal problems in science, medicine, engineering, agriculture, .etc.. Their efforts resulted in spectacular architecture, creative art, libraries, hospitals, universities, geographic discoveries such as mapping of the world, observatories and basics of astronomy and much more – all were as George Sarton said:

"The miracle of Arabic science, using the word miracle as a symbol of our inability to explain achievements which were almost incredible...unparalleled in the history of the world." George Sarton

Due to the politics of the time, scientists to follow failed to acknowledge the crucial timing and the enormous contribution of the Muslim civilization to the development of modern science and technology. They advocated the presumption that Europe owes all its advances to ancient Greece. However, there are undeniable facts that during the Spanish re-conquest of Muslim settlements, Toledo in 1085 in particular, vast amounts of Muslim works were found and translated. Furthermore, the two centuries of the Crusades were not only filled with war and bloodshed, but also provided cultural interaction. All together, it makes it difficult to believe that the dark ages were really as dark as portrayed.

Without the enormous amounts of borrowings from the Muslim civilization, we would be without the Arabic numerals which we use daily for our calculations and mathematics, there would be a sufficient lack of agriculture, domestication of animals for food, clothing and transportation; spinning and weaving; building; drainage and irrigation; water wheels and windmills; metal-working and tools and basic weapons; sailing ships; astronomical observation; clocks, paper, writing and

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Prophet Muhammad said to his companions, "Does it please you that you will be one-fourth of the people of Paradise?" They answered, "God is Great." He added, "Does it please you that you will be one-third of the people of Paradise." They answered, "God is Great!" He said, "I hope that you will be half of the people of Paradise." [3]

Aisha, Prophet Muhammad's beloved wife narrated that she said, "O Messenger of God! Supplicate for me!" So, he said, "O God! Forgive Aisha her past and future sins, what she has hidden, as well as what she has made apparent." She smiled with joy. Prophet Muhammad said, "Does my supplication make you happy?" She replied, "And how can your supplication not make me happy?" Then Prophet Muhammad said, "By God, it is the supplication that I make for my Ummah in every prayer."

Every member of the Ummah is regarded as equal before God. There is no distinction between black and white and any colour in between. Islam brings everyone together into one community; all are equal members regardless of gender or status. It commands us to follow the guidance and heed the warnings contained in the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad. And it is only through piety can one person be raised above another.

Saheeh Muslim

Saheeh Muslim

Saheeh Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim



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the keeping of records; laws and civic life; coinage; abstract thought and most of our religious ideas and symbols. And as Wickens concludes,

"There is virtually no evidence for any of these basic things and processes and ideas being actually invented in the West." Wickens

This article was originally a review by the author, Camilla Sayf, dated Sat 05 July, 2003, on the publication *Introduction to Muslim Science*, by FSTC Limited (Foundation for Science Technology and Civilization).[1]

#### FOOTNOTES:

[1]Disclaimer: Not all views of this author are held by IslamReligion.com.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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