

علي

Ali

*Mohammed's cousin
and adopted son*

Born in about AD 600 – died January AD 661 Ali was the cousin, adopted son and son-in-law of Mohammed. He married Mohammed's daughter Fatimah in AD 624. His name means "exalted, noble." He reigned over the Muslim empire as Caliph from AD 656 to 661. Shi'a (Shiite) Muslims regard Ali as the first true infallible Imam and consider he and his descendants (Hassan and Hussein) as the rightful successors to Mohammed. Disagreement over succession eventually split Islam into the Sunni and Shi'a branches. Ali encountered opposition and civil war during his reign. At about age 60 Ali suffered an assassination attempt while praying in the mosque of Kufa in Iraq - he died soon afterwards. The main mosque of Najaf, Iraq is supposedly his final burial place and has become a major Shi'a shrine dedicated to his memory.

Definition: *The Caliph is the title for the leader of the Islamic Ummah, the worldwide Islamic community or nation which should ideally be ruled by the religious law, the Sharia. The word is derived from the Arabic word which means "successor" or "representative." The early Caliphs in particular were seen as Mohammed's successors.*



حسن

Hassan

Born in March AD 625 died March AD 670 Hassan (Hasan) was the grandson of Mohammed and the son of Ali and Mohammed's daughter Fatima. His name means "handsome one." Hassan's succession to the Caliphate was contested and eventually he conceded in order to avoid bloodshed. He retired to a quiet life in Medina till he died, poisoned by his wife, many years later. He is regarded by all Muslims as a martyr.



The Shrine of Ali at Najaf, Iraq

Prayer Requests:

- ▶ *There are literally millions of Muslim men around the world who are named Ali, Hassan and Hussein. Pray for them to encounter the living Messiah (Acts 7:56 and 9:1-5).*
- ▶ *Millions of Iranians and Iraqis commemorate the memory of Hussein's death each year. Sometimes as many as 7-8 million pilgrims visit Karbala during that time. Many Shi'a men will cut and flail themselves, shedding blood in the memory of Hussein. A popular Shi'a saying tells us, "a single tear shed for Hussein washes away a hundred sins." Pray that Shi'as of Iraq and Iran could see the value of the blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18-19).*

حسين Hussein

Born January AD 626 at Medina in Saudi Arabia, died October AD 680 at Karbala in Iraq. Hussein was the second grandson of Mohammed through Fatima. His name means little Hassan, "the little handsome one." Hussein, son of Ali, is revered as a martyr, having died in a struggle for the Caliphate. The anniversary of his martyrdom is called "Ashura," which is a day of mourning and religious observance especially for Shi'a Muslims. Hussein's death was significant because it launched the Shi'a movement which is so prominent today in Iraq and Iran; they believe that Hussein should have been Caliph.