

THE ISLAMIC TRILOGY

VOLUME 1

MOHAMMED AND THE UNBELIEVERS

THE SIRA, A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

BILL WARNER, PHD

THE ISLAMIC TRILOGY SERIES

VOLUME 1

MOHAMMED AND THE UNBELIEVERS

VOLUME 2

THE POLITICAL TRADITIONS OF MOHAMMED

VOLUME 3

A SIMPLE KORAN

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AN ABRIDGED KORAN

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This book is dedicated to the millions of victims of jihad  
over the past 1400 years.

May you read this and become a voice for the voiceless.

## PREFACE

### THE CSPI TEACHING METHOD

The Center for the Study of Political Islam, CSPI, teaching method is the easiest and quickest way to learn about Islam.

#### *Authoritative*

There are only two ultimate authorities about Islam—Allah and Mohammed. All of the curriculum in the CSPI method is from the Koran and the Sunna (the words and deeds of Mohammed). The knowledge you get in CSPI is powerful, authoritative and irrefutable. You learn the facts about the ideology of Islam from its ultimate sources.

#### *Story-telling*

Facts are hard to remember, stories are easy to remember. The most important story in Islam is the life of Mohammed. Once you know the story of Mohammed, all of Islam is easy to understand.

#### *Systemic Knowledge*

The easiest way to study Islam is to first see the whole picture. The perfect example of this is the Koran. The Koran alone cannot be understood, but when the life of Mohammed is added, the Koran is straight forward.

There is no way to understand Islam one idea at the time, because there is no context. Context, like story-telling, makes the facts and ideas simple to understand. The best analogy is that when the jig saw puzzle is assembled, the image on the puzzle is easy to see. But looking at the various pieces, it is difficult to see the picture.

#### *Levels of Learning*

The ideas of Islam are very foreign to our civilization. It takes repetition to grasp the new ideas. The CSPI method uses four levels of training to teach the doctrine in depth. The first level is designed for a beginner. Each level repeats the basics for in depth learning.

When you finish the first level you will have seen the entire scope of Islam, The in depth knowledge will come from the next levels.

*Political Islam, Not Religious Islam*

Islam has a political doctrine and a religious doctrine. Its political doctrine is of concern for everyone, while religious Islam is of concern only for Muslims.

*Books Designed for Learning*

Each CSPI book fits into a teaching system. Most of the paragraphs have an index number which means that you can confirm for yourself how factual the books are by verifying from the original source texts.

LEVEL 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRILOGY AND SHARIA

*The Life of Mohammed, The Hadith, Lectures on the Foundations of Islam, The Two Hour Koran, Sharia Law for Non-Muslims, Self Study on Political Islam, Level 1*

LEVEL 2

APPLIED DOCTRINE, SPECIAL TOPICS

*The Doctrine of Women, The Doctrine of Christians and Jews, The Doctrine of Slavery, Self-Study on Political Islam, Level 2, Psychology of the Muslim, Factual Persuasion*

LEVEL 3

INTERMEDIATE TRILOGY AND SHARIA

*Mohammed and the Unbelievers, Political Traditions of Mohammed, Simple Koran, Self-Study of Political Islam, Level 3, Sources of the Koran, selected topics from Reliance of the Traveller*

LEVEL 4

ORIGINAL SOURCE TEXTS

*The Life of Muhammed, Guillaume; any Koran, Sahih Bukhari, selected topics, Mohammed and Charlemagne Revisited, Scott.*

With the completion of Level 4 you are prepared to read both popular and academic texts.

## INTRODUCTION

### KAFIR

The first step in learning about Islam is to know the right words. The language of Islam is dualistic. There is a division of humanity into believer and *kafir* (unbeliever). Humanity is divided into those who believe Mohammed is the prophet of Allah and those who do not.

Kafir is the actual word the Koran uses for non-Muslims. It is usually translated as unbeliever, but that translation is wrong. The word unbeliever is neutral. As you will see, the attitude of the Koran towards unbelievers is very negative. The Koran defines the Kafir.

In Islam, Christians and Jews are infidels and “People of the Book”; Hindus are polytheists and pagans. The terms infidel, People of the Book, pagan and polytheist are religious words. Only the word “Kafir” shows the common political treatment of the Christian, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, animist, atheist and humanist. What is done to a pagan can be done to a Jew or any other Kafir. Likewise, what is done to a Jew can be done to any other Kafir.

The word Kafir will be used in this book instead of “unbeliever”, “non-Muslim” or “disbeliever”. Unbeliever or non-Muslim are neutral terms, but Kafir is extremely bigoted and biased.

The Kafir is hated—

*40:35 They [Kafirs] who dispute the signs [Koran verses] of Allah without authority having reached them are greatly hated by Allah and the believers. So Allah seals up every arrogant, disdainful heart.*

A Kafir can be enslaved [Bukhari is a sacred text, see page xii.]—

*Bukhari 5,58,148 When some of the remaining Jews of Medina agreed to obey a verdict from Saed, Mohammed sent for him. He approached the Mosque riding a donkey and Mohammed said, “Stand up for your leader.” Mohammed then said, “Saed, give these people your verdict.” Saed replied, “Their soldiers should be beheaded and their women and children should become slaves.” Mohammed, pleased with the verdict, said, “You have made a ruling that Allah or a king would approve of.”*

A Kafir can be raped—

1759 *On the occasion of Khaybar, Mohammed put forth new orders about forcing sex with captive women. If the woman was pregnant she was not to be used for sex until after the birth of the child. Nor were any women to be used for sex who were unclean with regard to Muslim laws about menstruation.*

A Kafir can be beheaded—

47:4 *When you encounter the Kafirs on the battlefield, cut off their heads until you have thoroughly defeated them and then take the prisoners and tie them up firmly.*

A Kafir can be confused—

6:25 *Some among them listen to you [Mohammed], but We have cast veils over their [Kafirs'] hearts and a heaviness to their ears so that they cannot understand our signs [the Koran].*

A Kafir can be plotted against—

86:15 *They plot and scheme against you [Mohammed], and I plot and scheme against them. Therefore, deal calmly with the Kafirs and leave them alone for a while.*

A Kafir can be terrorized—

8:12 *Then your Lord spoke to His angels and said, "I will be with you. Give strength to the believers. I will send terror into the Kafirs' hearts, cut off their heads and even the tips of their fingers!"*

A Kafir can be made war on and humiliated—

9:29 *Make war on those who have received the Scriptures [Jews and Christians] but do not believe in Allah or in the Last Day. They do not forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden. The Christians and Jews do not follow the religion of truth until they submit and pay the poll tax [jizya], and they are humiliated.*

A Muslim is not the friend of a Kafir—

3:28 *Believers should not take Kafirs as friends in preference to other believers. Those who do this will have none of Allah's protection and will only have themselves as guards. Allah warns you to fear Him for all will return to Him.*

#### THE THREE VIEWS OF ISLAM

There are three points of view in dealing with Islam. The point of view depends upon how you feel about Mohammed. If you believe Mohammed is the prophet of Allah, then you are a believer. If you don't, you are a *Kafir*. The third viewpoint is that of a Kafir who is an apologist for Islam.

Apologists do not believe that Mohammed was a prophet, but they never say anything that would displease a Muslim. Apologists never offend Islam and condemn any analysis that is critical of Islam as being biased.

Let us give an example of the three points of view.

In Medina, Mohammed sat all day long beside his 12-year-old wife while they watched as the heads of 800 Jews were removed by sword.<sup>1</sup> Their heads were cut off because they had said that Mohammed was not the prophet of Allah.

- Muslims view these deaths as necessary because denying Mohammed's prophet-hood was an offense against Islam and beheading is the accepted method of punishment, sanctioned by Allah.
- Kafirs look at this event as proof of the jihadic violence of Islam and as an evil act.
- Apologists say that this was a historic event, that all cultures have violence in their past, and that no judgment should be passed. According to the different points of view, killing the 800 Jews was either evil, a perfect godly act or only another historical event, take your pick.

Apologists ignore the Islamic belief that the Sunna, Mohammed's words and deeds in the past, is the perfect model for today and tomorrow and forever. They ignore the fact that this past event of the beheading of 800 Jewish men continues to be acceptable in the present and the future, thus the fate of Kafirs today.

This book is written from the Kafir point of view and is therefore, Kafir-centric. Everything in this book views Islam from how it affects Kafirs, non-Muslims. This also means that the religion is of little importance. Only a Muslim cares about the religion of Islam, but all Kafirs are affected by Islam's political views.

Both the apologists and the Muslims believe in an authoritarian philosophy of knowledge. The Muslim accepts without question every aspect of the Sunna and the Koran. The apologist bows to the authority and opinion of the Muslims and never contradicts them.

The Kafir approach to knowledge is analytic or critical. Critical thinking seeks truth through the friction of debate in order to tease out the resolution of an idea. Authoritarians forbid critical thought for the simple reason that it cannot co-exist with authoritative thinking. Muslims forbid critical thinking by threatening and inducing fear. Apologists forbid critical thinking on the basis that offending any minority is a social evil. The

1 *The Life of Muhammad*, A. Guillaume, Oxford University Press, 1982, pg. 464.

offending speech is considered bigoted. The proof of bigotry is that the minority is offended. Even if the statement is true, it can still be called bigotry.

“Truth” has no meaning in authoritative knowledge. There are only thoughts that are allowed and thoughts that are forbidden. “Truth” is determined by appeal to authority, but only to the correct authority. Authoritative knowledge forbids debate. Those who want to debate are demeaned and insulted or simply locked out of the venue. Both political correctness and Islam agree that only “allowed” opinions may be expressed and “forbidden” opinions are declared to be bigotry—a moral evil.

Critical thinking, however, exists by debate. There are no forbidden ideas in critical or analytic thinking.

Notice that these different points of view that cannot be reconciled. There is no possible resolution between the view of the Kafir and the Muslim. The apologist tries to bring about a bridge building compromise, but it is not logically possible.

#### THE ISLAMIC BIBLE—THE TRILOGY

Islam is defined by the words of Allah in the Koran, and the words and actions of Mohammed, the *Sunna*.

The Sunna of Mohammed is found in two texts—the Sira (Mohammed’s life) and the Hadith. His words and actions are considered to be the divine pattern for humanity acceptable to Allah and the best source for these are the biographies, or Sira, by Ishaq and Al Tabari.

A hadith, or tradition, is a brief story about what Mohammed did or said. A collection of hadiths is called a Hadith. There are many collections of hadiths, but the most authoritative are those by Bukhari and Abu Muslim.

So the Trilogy is the Koran, the Sira and the Hadith. Most people think that the Koran is the “bible” of Islam, but it is only about 14% of the total textual doctrine. Statistically, Islam is 14% Allah and 86% Mohammed. The Trilogy, not the Koran, is the foundation of Islamic doctrine.

#### WHAT IS THE SIRA?

A. Guillaume translated Ishaq’s *Sirat Rasul Allah* in 1955, *The Life of Muhammad*. Biographies that had been derived from the Sira had been published, but it took nearly 1400 years for us to get the first full translation due to the lack of interest in Islam. The translation was a major work

since the length of the Sira was over half, 63%<sup>2</sup>, the length of the Old Testament. The Sira is 20.5<sup>3</sup> times as long as the Gospel of Matthew, so we know far more about Mohammed than Jesus. This does not include the even larger amount of material about Mohammed found in the Hadith.

#### WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS IN UNDERSTANDING THE SIRA?

The Sira is a prime source text that is formidable when taken as it is presented. If you pick up a copy of the Sira, you are immediately discouraged. The reasons are many:

1. It is a large book, 800 pages written in fine print.
2. Poetry accounts for about a quarter of the text and does not advance the plot.
3. Mohammed is reported as performing miracles, negating the statement in the Koran that he did not.
4. There is a very long endnotes section with additional information and technical comments.
5. The translation is done in a style that is academic. A single paragraph can be more than a page long.
6. A few chapters are lists of names that go on for pages.
7. The Sira is filled with unfamiliar Arabic names and terms.

So the problem with understanding the Sira is twofold. There is a large amount of material and then there is the matter of extraneous material. There are numerous poems that furnish color, but do not advance the plot or tell us anything about Mohammed. The first 69 pages give background history that builds up Mohammed's claim to royal heritage. The last 108 pages are additional notes that add details; but again, do not advance the story of Mohammed.

#### A SIMPLE, DIRECT APPROACH TO THE SIRA

The goal is to learn what Mohammed said and did as the prophet of Allah, so the first step is to remove what turns out to be extraneous material. What is considered extraneous?

---

2            Number of words in the Sira, including Hisham's notes is 375,400. Number of words in Old Testament is 593,500, or, the Sira is 63% of the Old Testament.

3            The Sira has 375,400 words, including Hisham's notes. The Gospel of Matthew has 18,300 words.  $375,400 / 18,300 = 20.5$ .

*Poetry*

Muhayyisa composed the following lines on the subject [killing Jews on Mohammed's orders]:

*My mother's son blames me because if I were ordered to kill him  
I would smite his nape with a sharp sword  
A blade white as salt from polishing  
My downward stroke never misses its mark.  
It would not please me to kill you voluntarily  
Though we owned all Arabia from north to south.<sup>4</sup>*

The amount of poetry included in the Sira goes on for pages. It is mostly heroic war poetry that taunts the enemy and praises the heroes, but it does not advance the plot or story. You learn nothing about Mohammed. Entertaining, perhaps. Informative, no. The poetry is very useful for some advanced scholarship, but it is not needed for our purposes.

*Miracles*

Here is a miracle reported in the Sira:

'One of the greatest hypocrites has died today.' And Rifa'a b. Zayd b. al-Tabut of whom the prophet said when there was a high wind as he was returning from the expedition against the B. al-Mustaliq and the Muslims had great anxiety: 'Don't be afraid; the wind is blowing because a great unbeliever is dead.' When he got back to Medina he found that Rifa'a had died the day the wind blew.<sup>5</sup>

Miracles do not take up much space, but they need to be pruned. Both the Sira and Hadith report miracles by Mohammed. He feeds the multitudes with a little food; he heals the sick, reads minds and can see the future. The Sira also reports that one of the taunts of his fellow citizens was that if Mohammed was working for Allah, why couldn't he perform a miracle and prove his divine authority? The Sira further records that his answer (the Koran repeats this) is that he is only a messenger, not a miracle worker. The Koran specifically agrees with this statement.

*Names Constitute Whole Chapters*

Here is a paragraph:

Abu Dharr, Burayr b. Junada al-Ghifari and al-Mundhir b. 'Amr, 'he who hastened to his death', brother of B. Sa'ida of al-Khazraj (286). Hatib b. Abu

4 *The Life of Muhammad*, A. Guillaume, Oxford University Press, 1955, pg. 369.

5 *Ibid*, pg. 246

Baita'a, ally of B. Asad b. 'Abdu'l-'Uzza and 'Uwaym b. Sa'ida brother of B. 'Amr b. 'Auf. Salman the Persian and Abu'l-Darda' 'Uwaymir b. Tha'laba brother of B. al-Harith (287). Some say 'Uwaymir was the son of 'Amir or of Zayd.<sup>6</sup>

Just like the “begats” section of the Bible, the Sira is filled with names. There is even one chapter that includes all of the participants in one battle. Islam has a concept called the Companions. These are people who knew Mohammed, served in his war campaigns or who helped him in some way. These names establish a royalty of Islam. So all of the names are a roll call of honor that gives glory and prestige to the Companions' descendents. But this is only genealogical information and does not explain Islam.

### *End Notes*

There are 109 pages of technical endnotes by Ibn Hisham who preserved the only copy of Ishaq's work. The original text by Ishaq has long since vanished. But Hisham took Ishaq's work and produced his own copy with his added information about Mohammed's life. Instead of placing the comments in the body of the text, he placed them all at the end. The notes are useful for the scholar but, again, they do are not useful in understanding the life of Mohammed.

In the paragraph above there are two numbers—286 and 287 which refer to endnotes. Here is endnote 287:

(287) Some say Uwaymir was the son of Amir or of Zayd.

Interesting, perhaps, but it does not add to our knowledge of Islam.

### *Arabic Names*

'Abdullah b. Abu Bakr b. Muhammad b. 'Amr b. Hazm told me on the authority of Yahya b. 'Abdullah b. 'Abdu'l-Rahman b. As'ad b. Zurara that the apostle said:<sup>7</sup>

As you can see, the names are another difficulty. They are Arabic and long, since an Arab's name included his ancestry. This cultural barrier is a large one for the first-time reader, so a one-word name is used where possible—Umar bin al Khattab becomes Umar. If a person does not play a large role, he is named by his function, for instance, Abdullah bin Atik is called “one of Sallam's assassins.”

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6           Ibd, pg. 234.

7           Ibid, pg. 235.

*The Margin Note Index*

This process of simplification—drop the endnotes, eliminate the poetry, miracles, and name lists—establishes a process. Anyone could sit down and read the simplified text and prepare a summary text in clear, modern English. An objection can be raised that the meaning of the original text can be destroyed in this editing process and this is a critical concern. There is a way to both present an easy-to-read story and be accurate.

The Sira has a series of margin note numbers. In Guillaume's translation, he puts the page number of Ishaq's original text in the margin as a reference note. Thus, an Arabic scholar can go back to the original Arabic and check the work. This margin note serves the same function for checking the accuracy of the summation editing. Here is an example of a summarized paragraph:

Ishaq 554 "Mohammed said, 'Kill any Jew who falls into your power.' Hearing this, Muhayyisa fell upon a Jewish merchant who was a business partner and killed him. Muhayyisa's brother was not a Muslim and asked how Muhayyisa could kill a man who had been his friend and partner in many business deals. The Muslim said that if Mohammed had asked him to kill his brother, he would have done it immediately. His brother said, 'You mean that if Mohammed said to cut off my head you would do it?' 'Yes,' was the reply. The older brother then said, 'By Allah, any religion that brings you to this is marvelous.' And he decided then and there to become a Muslim."

Notice the number Ishaq 554. It refers to margin note 554. So if we want to verify the accuracy of this summary, we can go to the original 554:

"The apostle said, 'Kill any Jew that fails into your power.' Thereupon Muhayyisa b. Mas'ud leapt upon Ibn Sunayna, a Jewish merchant with whom they had social and business relations, and killed him. Huwayyisa was not a Muslim at the time though he was the elder brother. When Muhayyisa killed him Huwayyisa began to beat him, saying, 'You enemy of God, did you kill him when much of the fat on your belly comes from his wealth?' Muhayyisa answered, 'Had the one who ordered me to kill him ordered me to kill you I would have cut your head off.' He said that this was the beginning of Huwayyisa's acceptance of Islam. The other replied, 'By God, if Muhammad had ordered you to kill me would you have killed me?' He said, 'Yes, by God, had he ordered me to cut off your head I would have done so.' He exclaimed, 'By God, a religion which can bring you to this is marvelous!' and he became a Muslim.

I was told this story by a client of B. Haritha from the daughter of Muhayyisa from Muhayyisa himself."

This strategy of elimination and summary rewrites gives us a Sira that is a story of about 200 pages.

Some may object that the summarizing process distorts the work, but any rework of original material has the potential to distort the work. It is unavoidable. But in this case, the rewrite is given an index key of the margin note numbers, 554 in the above example. So anyone can go back to the source and compare the rewrite with the original, making the work verifiable at every step. Using the margin note numbers as an index is part of the scientific method. This is important because it helps to make a more objective process. The index numbers also allow us to reference a correction.

#### TECHNICAL NOTES

Variant spellings of Mohammed (Muhammad), Koran (Quran), and other Arabic words are used today and the spellings used within were chosen merely for consistency's sake.

Text in parentheses is original to the source documents; text in brackets was inserted by the editors.

The story of Islam and Mohammed happened in an isolated part of the world, Arabia. There are no supporting documents from any other culture about a single event in Mohammed's life. Only after Mohammed's death and the Islamic invasion of the rest of the world are there any independent sources of Islamic history.

#### THE REFERENCE SYSTEM

Both the Ishaq and Al Tabari texts use a system of margin notes referring to the original page in the Arabic text. Examples of this system:

I 123 is a reference to Ishaq's Sira, margin note 123.

T123 is a reference to *The History of al Tabari*, State University of New York Press, margin note 123.

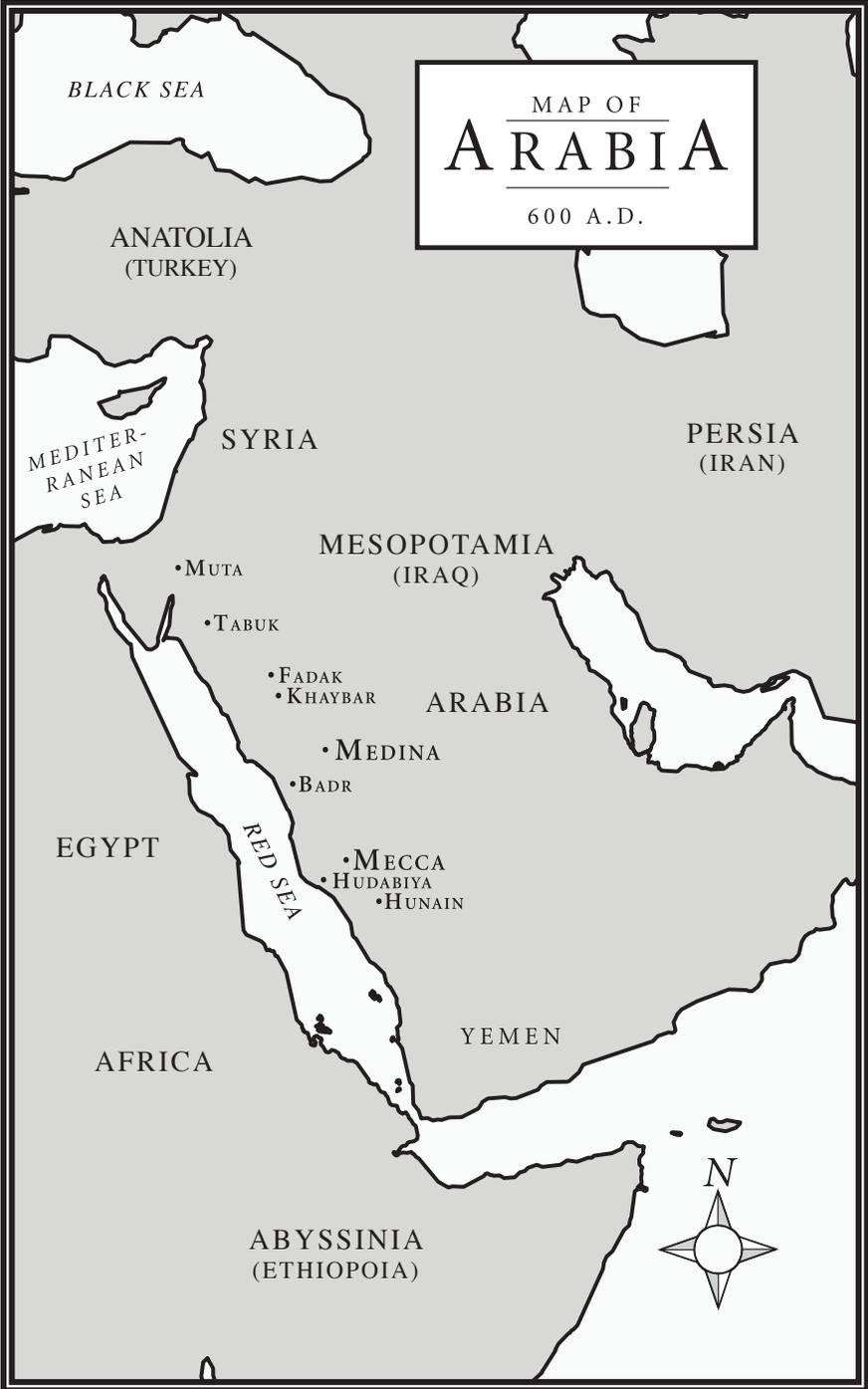
Other references within this work:

M123 refers to W. Muir, *The Life of Mohammed*, AMS Press, 1975.

2:123 is a reference to the Koran, chapter 2, verse 123.

B1,3,4 is a reference to *Sahih Bukhari*, volume 1, book 3, number 4.

M012, 1234 is a reference to *Sahih Muslim*, book 12, number 1234.



# IN THE BEGINNING

## CHAPTER 1

*3:32 Say: Obey Allah and His messenger, but if they reject it, then truly, Allah does not love those who reject the faith.*

### TO THE READER

It is important to read the Introduction. This is not an ordinary story and you must understand its context.

### THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET OF ALLAH

Fourteen hundred years ago in Arabia, there was an orphan who became the first king of Arabia. His name, Mohammed, would become one of the most common names in the world. He was to create a kingdom that would dwarf the Roman Empire. According to the god of the Arabs, he was the ideal pattern for all men, and he would make the god of the Arabs the god of all. The smallest detail of his behavior would set the pattern of life for billions.

Mohammed's father was called Abdullah, meaning "slave of Allah." There were many gods in Arabia at that time. Allah, a moon god, was the tribal god of the Quraysh, the ruling clan of Mecca. Allah was a high god of the many gods worshipped in the town of Mecca.

Mohammed was still in his mother's womb when his father died, and when he was five his mother died. His grandfather raised Mohammed and then he was orphaned for the third time when his grandfather died. His uncle, Abu Talib, then took him in. All were of the Quraysh tribe. These brief facts are about all of the history known about Mohammed's early childhood.

### MOHAMMED'S TRIBE—THE QURAYSH

When Mohammed was born, there was no nation of Arabia, no Arabian king, and no political unity. Society was tribal in nature; a person was not an individual so much as a member of a tribe. Blood relations were everything, and when people met the first question was, "What are your tribe and your lineage?" A person's name provided a clue to his lineage.

In fact, without a tribe, an individual was very weak and was fair game. Squabbling and fighting among clans were common and ruled by blood laws, which were the laws of retaliation and “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Under certain circumstances, blood money could be paid to the surviving kin.

The Quraysh tribe came to Mecca five generations before Mohammed under the leadership of Qusayy, who established the rituals of worship in Mecca. The Quraysh became the priestly tribe of Mecca, similar to the Levi or Cohen of the Jews, and were the nobility of the town holding the ceremonial offices. In addition, the Quraysh were traders and businessmen, blending religion and business when pilgrims came to town for religious services. Mohammed’s clan was the Hashim clan, which is still active in politics today.

#### MECCA AS A RELIGIOUS CENTER

Mecca in Mohammed’s day was very small, about a quarter mile by an eighth of a mile, and it was in an area of Arabia called the Hijaz. The climate of Mecca is dry, very dry, but when a heavy rain comes it causes huge runoffs so that Mecca will actually flood for a brief time.

There was a stone building in Mecca in the shape of a cube called the *Kabah* that was a religious site containing images of several tribal gods. There were at least six other square stone houses called Kabahs in other towns in Arabia; however, the legend about the Kabah in Mecca was that Abraham, the patriarch of the Jews, had built it. The Kabah was used for religious rituals and served as a community center. Rituals established by Qusayy included prostrations (bowing down to the earth), ritual prayers, circling the Kabah while praying, and drinking from the well called Zam Zam. Other rituals included throwing stones at pillars that symbolized the devil.

Stones played an important part in the religions of Arabia. The Kabah was made of stone and had the important Black Stone built into one corner. This stone was probably a meteorite as it was a composite of several stones melded together. It was small in size, roughly seven inches in diameter, and was touched only with the right hand and kissed by pilgrims. All of these native rituals were incorporated into Islam.

Each tribe had its gods and the moon god, Allah, seems to have been a male god of the Quraysh. There was not much of an organization of the Arabic gods, unlike the Greek and Roman gods, but children were named after them; for instance, Mohammed’s father was named after Allah, but his brothers were named after other Arabic gods.

## EARLY LIFE

### CHAPTER 2

3:131 *Obey Allah and His messenger so that you may receive mercy.*

1130-136,1501 The Sira says that Christians and Jews knew from their scriptures that Mohammed was coming, but these scriptures are unknown to them. Not only the monotheists but many Arab mystics and soothsayers are said to have prophesied the coming of Mohammed. According to the Sira all the religious world was waiting for Mohammed, and he was the fulfillment of all scriptures. Islam gives him a perfect lineage that goes back to Abraham of the Jews and from there back to Adam.

Ishaq's Sira repeatedly claims the conception, pregnancy, birth, and early childhood of Mohammed were all miraculous events, foreshadowing his recognition as prophet of all the world.

Miracles and noble lineage were standard fare for that time. In truth, very little is known of Mohammed's life before he was a grown man. The miracle stories were first recorded two hundred years after his death, and the Koran says he never worked any miracles. The later the history is recorded, the higher the number of miracles it contains. The number of miracles included in a text is a good indicator of when it was written.

#### CHILDHOOD

1115 Mohammed was eight years old when his grandfather died. He was then raised by Abu Talib, his uncle, who took him on a trading trip to Syria, a very different place from Mecca. Syria was a Christian country that was sophisticated and very much a part of the cosmopolitan culture of the Mediterranean. It was Syrian Christians who gave the Arabs their alphabet. At that time, the only writing in Arabic was business correspondence. There was no such thing as an Arabic book.

#### MARRIAGE

1120 Mohammed was grown when he was hired by a distant cousin, the wealthy widow Khadija, to act as her trading agent in Syria. Mohammed had a reputation of good character and good business sense. Trading between Mecca and Syria was risky business; it not only took skill to

manage a caravan but also to cut the best deal in Syria. Mohammed managed Khadija's affairs well and she turned a good profit.

I120 Khadija was well known among the Quraysh tribe. Sometime after hiring Mohammed as her business agent, she proposed marriage to him. They married and had six children. Their two sons died in childhood and the four daughters lived to adulthood.

I121 Khadija had a cousin, Waraqa, who was a Christian. To the north and to the east were the Christian areas of Syria and Turkey, but Christians were rare in Arabia.

#### REBUILDING THE KABAH

I122 When Mohammed was about thirty-five, the Quraysh religious leaders decided to rebuild the Kabah. It had been rebuilt several times before, but until then it had never had a roof and some religious objects inside had been stolen. One of the suspected thieves had his hand cut off and was banished from Mecca.

I123 A roof would make it more secure but would require wood, and wood was in short supply in Mecca. As luck would have it, a Greek ship had been driven ashore near Mecca, which is close to the Red Sea. The timbers of the ship would become the timbers and decking of the Kabah's first roof.

I124 To put on a roof, it was necessary to demolish the walls and rebuild them. Since the structure was old and shrouded in mystery, there was some anxiety about the demolition. But one of the Quraysh had the courage to start the task. With a brief prayer he removed the first stone. Nothing happened and he proceeded to demolish two corners of the stone structure. At the end of the day the Quraysh who were watching decided that if he lived through the night the task had not offended any of the gods of the Kabah.

I125 In the morning they all returned to the task and soon the Kabah had been demolished down to the foundation. Each clan fell to the task of collecting more stones so that the new Kabah would provide more support for its new roof. Once the new stone structure was completed, only one job remained: the ritual task of installing the Black Stone.

I125 Which clan would be privileged to install the most sacred part of the Kabah? The clans argued for days; bloodshed was threatened. They gathered at the grounds to settle the issue. One of the elders of the Quraysh suggested they let the next man who came through the door decide which of the clans should install the Black Stone. It was agreed and the next man through the door was Mohammed.

1125 Mohammed made a decision that would have pleased Solomon. He had them spread a cloak on the ground and place the Black Stone in the middle of it. Each clan had one of its members grasp the hem of the cloak and lift the stone into place; so the Stone was installed. Another small feud was avoided and, even better, everyone was happy. The carpenter who was a Copt (Egyptian) took the timbers from the Greek ship and built the first roof for the Kabah.

#### MONOTHEISM IN ARABIA

1144 The Arabs referred to monotheism as *Hanifiya* and to those who were monotheists as *Hanifs*. The strongest strain of monotheism by far was represented by the Jews. After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans as a result of the Jewish Zealots' rebellion, Jews dispersed throughout the Middle East, and there was a strong presence of Jews in Arabia. A few local Arabs were Christians, but the type of Christianity in the area of Mecca was unorthodox, with a trinity of God, Jesus, and Mary.

1144 Jews and Christians were "People of the Book." Since there was no book yet published in Arabic, this distinction was a strong one; all the sources of the Arabic religions were found in oral tradition and custom. The Meccans were aware of the Jewish Abrahamic account. Mecca was a long way from Syria where Abraham dwelt, but the Meccans claimed Abraham and Ishmael had built the Kabah in ancient times.

1144 At this time there was a monotheistic pull away from the ancient Arabic tribal religions with their local gods, all with different areas of influence in the world, but there was a tolerance for different religious beliefs. Often families in the same clan would include different deities in their worship. These other deities might be brought into the home by marriage outside the clan or tribe.

1144 There were a very few Christian Meccans. One of them went to Constantinople and served the emperor. Another later became a Muslim and then emigrated to Ethiopia where he converted back to Christianity.

1144-149 One monotheist, Zayd, was very interesting. He abandoned all religion and then created his own monotheistic religion. His prayers and rituals were a fusion of Judaic theology and tribal rituals, including prostrations and the use of the Kabah for a prayer focus. He said that Abraham prayed facing the Kabah. He publicly attacked and condemned his tribal members for their beliefs, and he condemned any form of worship of any god except the One-God. He submitted to the unnamed One-God. The One-God was to be feared, heaven was a garden, and infidels would burn in Hell. Much of his poetry used the same language as the

Koran. He referenced his worship to the Jewish patriarchs, as they were pure in their worship. Mohammed recognized Zayd as a precursor.

# THE FIRST DAYS OF BEING A PROPHET

## CHAPTER 3

*4:13 These are the limits set up by Allah. Those who obey Allah and His Messenger will be led into the Gardens watered by flowing rivers to live forever. This is the ultimate reward! But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and go beyond His limits will be led into the Fire to live forever, and it will be a humiliating torment!*

I150 Mohammed would take month-long retreats to be alone to perform the Quraysh religious practices. After the retreat, he would circumambulate (circle the Kabah) and pray.

I152 At the age of forty, Mohammed began to have visions and hear voices. His visions were first shown to him as bright as daybreak during his sleep in the month of Ramadan. Mohammed said that the angel Gabriel came to him with brocade embroidered with writing and commanded him to read. "What shall I read?" The angel pressed him and said, "Read." Mohammed said again, "What shall I read?" The angel pressed him again tightly and again commanded, "Read!" Again the reply, "What shall I read?"

The angel said:

*96:1 Recite: In the name of your Lord, Who created man from clots of blood.*

*96:3 Recite: Your Lord is the most generous, Who taught the use of the pen, and taught man what he did not know.*

T1150<sup>1</sup> Mohammed awoke from his sleep. Now, Mohammed hated ecstatic poets and the insane. His thoughts were that he was now either a poet or insane, that which he hated. He thought to kill himself by jumping off a cliff. So off he went to do just that. Half-way up the hill, he saw a being. "Mohammed," it said, "thou art the Apostle of Allah and I am Gabriel." He gazed at the angel and no matter which way he turned his head the vision was before his eyes. Mohammed stood and watched for a long time.

I153 He went back home to his wife, Khadija, and told her he was either crazy or a poet. She replied that he was neither, that perhaps the vision

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1. The T means that this is a margin reference from *The History of al-Tabari*.

was true; he was a good man, and Allah would not play tricks on him. She was elated and said she thought him to be a prophet and set off to tell her Christian cousin about the visions.

T1150 When she told her cousin what Mohammed had said, he replied that this was wonderful news. He was sure the angel was Gabriel of the Torah (Old Testament) and that Mohammed was a prophet. She returned and told Mohammed what he had said. Mohammed felt better and went to the Kabah to pray. Khadija's Christian cousin, Waraqa, found him there and had him repeat his story. Waraqa agreed that surely Mohammed was a prophet.

Mohammed's visions, dreams, and voices were called revelations. A great many of these revelations were expressed in poetry that was easily memorized and recited. The recitations (*Koran* means recitation) were recorded and slowly grew into the complete Koran over the next twenty-three years.

#### THE FIRST CONVERT

I156 Mohammed's wife, Khadija, was the first convert. From the first she encouraged him, believed him. She knew him to be of good character and did not think him to be deceived or crazy.

Soon he stopped hearing voices or seeing visions and became depressed and felt abandoned. Then his visions started again and said:

93:1 *By the brightness of the noonday sun and by the night at its darkest, your Lord has not forgotten you, and He does not hate you.*

93:4 *Certainly the future will be better than the past, and in the end your Lord will be generous to you, and you will be satisfied.*

Then Mohammed began to tell others who were close to him of his visions.

#### PRAYER

I157 Mohammed began to pray with his new understanding. At first he did two prostrations with each prayer. Later he understood that he should use four prostrations per prayer and use two prostrations when he was traveling.

I158 Then, when he was on a mountain, he saw a vision in which Gabriel showed him how to perform ablutions (ritual cleansing with water) as a purification ritual before prayer. He went home and showed Khadija the way he now understood the prayer rituals should be performed and she copied him.

1158 Further inner visions made Mohammed pray at different times of the day.

THE FIRST MALES TO ACCEPT ISLAM

1159 A famine had overtaken the Quraysh and Mohammed's uncle, Abu Talib, had a large family. He was a well respected tribal leader but had fallen on hard times. Mohammed went to another uncle, Al Abbas, and they both went to Abu Talib and offered to help raise two of his children. One, Ali, went into Mohammed's house to be raised by him and Khadija. When Ali turned ten he joined Mohammed in his new religion, *Islam*, which means submission.

1162 Mohammed, his wife, and his nephew, Ali, started praying at the Kabah with their new rituals of ablutions and prayer with prostrations. A visitor asked about this new ritual and was told it was a new religion and that Mohammed had said he would receive the treasures of Rome and Persia.

1160 Mohammed and Ali used to go to the edge of town to practice their new ritual prayers. One day Abu Talib came upon them and asked what were they doing. Mohammed replied, "Uncle, this is the religion of Allah, his angels, and his prophets and the religion of Abraham. Allah has sent me as an apostle to all mankind. You, my uncle, deserve that I should teach you the truth and call you to Islam." His uncle said he could not give up the religion of his ancestors but that he would support Mohammed. He also advised Ali, his son, to keep up his relation with Mohammed.

1161 Next, a freed slave joined Mohammed. After him, Abu Bakr joined the new religion. Abu Bakr was a very influential man among the Quraysh. He was well liked and had an easy manner. He knew more of the lineage of the Quraysh than any other man. Such knowledge was of extreme value in a tribe that worshiped its ancestors. In addition, Abu Bakr was a prosperous merchant. He counseled many of the tribe about business and tribal matters. He was the first Meccan to preach the new religion in public and was influential in bringing many Quraysh to Islam. Until this time, Mohammed had been as private as possible about his new religion.

1161 A new element was added to the religion. It was not enough to say that Allah was god, but it was also necessary to renounce the tribal gods as well. Islam was not just an affirmation but a denial and opposition as well.

# PUBLIC PREACHING

## CHAPTER 4

*4:14 But those who disobey Allah and His Messenger and go beyond His limits will be led into the Fire to live forever, and it will be a humiliating torment!*

1166 Since the word was out, Mohammed began to openly preach his new doctrine. He had kept private for three years before going public.

*15: 92 By your Lord, We will certainly call them to account for all their deeds, so openly proclaim what you are commanded, and turn away from the polytheists.*

*15:95 Surely, We will defend you against those who scoff, who set up other gods with Allah.*

*26:213 Do not call upon any god but Allah, or you will be doomed. Rather, warn your close relatives, and be kind to the believers who follow you. If they disobey you, say, "I will not be responsible for your actions"*

*15:8 We do not send the angels without good reason. If We did, the Kafirs would still not understand. Surely, We have sent down the message, and surely, We will guard it.*

Those who listened to Mohammed's message and joined him were called *Muslims*, which meant "those who have submitted."

1166 Mohammed called together about forty of his kinsmen. He addressed them, "I know of no Arab who has come to his people with a nobler message than mine. I have brought you the best in this world and the next. Allah has ordered me to call you to him. So which of you will cooperate with me in this matter?" Mohammed's nephew, Ali, fat in the belly and thin in the legs, with watery eyes, said, "Prophet of Allah, I will be your helper in this matter." Mohammed laid his hand on Ali's back and said, "This is my brother, my successor, and my executor among you. Harken to him and obey him." The Quraysh laughed, got up, and said to Abu Talib, Mohammed's uncle, "He has ordered you to listen to your son and obey him." The Quraysh left.

1166 The Muslims went to the edge of Mecca in order to be alone to pray. One day a bunch of the Quraysh came upon them and began to mock them, and a fight started. One of the Muslims by the name of Saed, chief

of a Medinan Arab clan, picked up the jaw bone of a camel and struck one of the Quraysh with it and bloodied him. This violence was the first blood to be shed in Islam.

1167 When Mohammed spoke about his new religion, it did not cause any problems among the Meccans. After all, there were hundreds of religions in Mecca; it was a polytheistic culture and very religiously tolerant. Then Mohammed began to condemn their religion and rituals and worship. This was a new phenomenon. New religions could be added, and had been, but not to the detriment of others. The Meccans took offense and resolved to treat him as an enemy. Luckily, he had the protection of his influential uncle, Abu Talib.

1168 Some of the Quraysh went to Abu Talib and said to him, "Your nephew has cursed our gods, insulted our religion, mocked our way of life, criticized our civilization, attacked our virtues, and said our forefathers were ignorant and in error. You must stop him, or you must let us stop him. We will rid you of him." Abu Talib gave them a soft reply and sent them away.

1168 Mohammed continued to preach his religion and condemn the other religions. His relationship with the Meccans continued to deteriorate and men withdrew from him in dislike. He became the talk of Mecca and upset his tribe by saying the Quraysh's ancestors were burning in Hell and that the Meccans were wrong. It was not just that he was right or had a different way or even a better way, but that they were wrong.

1168 Mohammed continued to preach Islam and his relations with his tribal kin grew worse and men drew away from him and his condemnation of who they were.

1168 Abu Talib called Mohammed to him and told him to spare him the burden of the pain of the Quraysh resentment. Mohammed told him that if they gave him the sun and the moon he would not change until Allah had made him victorious. Even if he died he would not quit. Abu Talib could not stand to censor his nephew and let him go with his consent.

1169 The Quraysh saw that Abu Talib would not help. Mohammed continued to preach Islam and attack them and their lives. Mecca was a small town; everybody knew everybody else. Islam had split the town of Mecca and divided the ruling and priestly tribe. The Quraysh were attacked at the very ground of their social being.

1169 The Quraysh were desperate and approached Mohammed's protector with a desperate plea. "Here is our strongest and most handsome man. Adopt him for his intelligence and support. Give us Mohammed. He has opposed both your religion and ours, divided us as a people, and

mocked us for who we are. Let us trade our best man for your Mohammed so we can kill him. Then it would be man for man. Fair and just.” Abu Talib would not give Mohammed up.

1170 Things got much worse. Now there was open hostility in the town. Quarrels increased; arguments got very heated. Complete disharmony dominated the town. The tribe started to abuse newly converted Muslims, but Mohammed’s uncle was a respected elder and was able to protect them from serious harm.

#### THE FAIR

Mecca was a town with two sources of money. The first was trading. Mohammed had made his money in the caravan trade. The other was fees from pilgrims to the shrine of the Kabah, and fairs combined a little of both. All the tribes came for a fair where people would see old acquaintances and buy, sell, and trade goods. Since Mecca was one of several sacred or pilgrim sites, rituals for the different tribal gods were performed around the Kabah and Mecca.

1171 It was time for the fair and the Quraysh were in turmoil. They did not want the divisions and rancor that had come with Mohammed’s preaching not spread to the other clans outside Mecca. A group of concerned Quraysh talked and decided to meet with Al Walid, a man of respect and influence. He told them that all the visitors would come to them and ask about this man Mohammed and what he was preaching. It was a foregone conclusion that Mohammed would preach.

1171 But what could they agree on to tell the visitors so that there could be one voice. What would they call him? Was he possessed? Crazy? An ecstatic poet? A sorcerer? Who was he? What was he? Finally they agreed that Mohammed was a sorcerer since he separated a son from his father or brother or wife or other family.

1171 They split up and went out on the roadsides of town to speak with the travelers before they even got to Mecca.

1171 Mohammed delivered a message from Allah about Al Walid, the leader of the Kafirs:

*74:11 Let me deal with my creations, whom I have given great riches and sons to sit by their side, and whose lives I have made smooth and comfortable. And still he wants me to give him more. No, I say. He is an enemy of Our revelations. I will impose a dreadful punishment on him because he plotted and planned.*

*74:19 Damn him! How he planned. Again, Damn him! How he planned.*

*74:21 Then he looked around and frowned and scowled and turned his back with vain pride and said, "This is nothing but old magic; it is the work of a mere mortal."*

*74:26 We will certainly throw him into Hell.*

1172 The plan of hurting Mohammed by warning the visitors just made everyone more curious. When they heard Mohammed's soaring words from the Koran, many visitors were impressed. When they left they took all the stories from Mecca, the Quraysh, the new Muslims, and, of course, Mohammed. Soon all of that part of Arabia was talking.

1178 Circumstances would soon prove fortuitous for Mohammed that the Arabs of Medina were attracted to his message. Since half the people of Medina were Jews, the Arabs of Medina were accustomed to talk of only one god.

## ARGUING

### CHAPTER 5

*4:80 Those who obey the Messenger obey Allah. As for those who turn away from you, We have not sent you to watch over them.*

1183 Mohammed continued to preach the glory of Allah and condemn the Quraysh religion. He told them their way of life was stupid and insulted their ancestors, cursed their gods, mocked their religion, and divided the community, setting one tribesman against another. The Quraysh felt that this was all beyond bearing. Tolerance had always been their way: many clans, many gods, many religions. Another religion was fine; why did Mohammed demean the others?

1183 One day at the Kabah they were discussing Mohammed and his enmity toward them when Mohammed arrived. He kissed the Black Stone of the Kabah and started past them as he circumambulated the Kabah. Each time he passed by them they insulted him. On the third round, he stopped and said, "Listen to me, by Allah I will bring you slaughter." The Quraysh were stunned at his threat. They said, "Mohammed, you have never been a violent man. Go away."

1184 The next day many of the Quraysh were at the Kabah when Mohammed arrived. They crowded around him and said, "Are you the one who condemned our gods and our religion?" Mohammed answered that he was the one. One of them grabbed him and Abu Bakr, Mohammed's chief follower, pressed forward and said, "Would you kill a man for saying that Allah is his Lord?" They let him go. This was the worst treatment that Mohammed experienced.

#### THE STRONG MAN ACCEPTS ISLAM

1185 Hamza was the strongest and most stubborn man of the Quraysh and a great hunter. One day he returned from the hunt with his bow. It was his custom to go to the Kabah and to circumambulate the shrine before he went home. After he performed his rituals, he stopped and talked with the gathered Quraysh.

1186 Then, on the way home, he stopped to talk with a freedwoman of the Quraysh. She told him of the abuse that Mohammed had received from the Quraysh, in particular from Abu Umara. Now, Hamza had been

thinking about becoming a Muslim and this was the tipping point. He rushed out in a rage to find Abu Umara, who was back at the Kabah. Hamza charged him and struck him with his bow and bloodied his head. He challenged Abu Umara to try to get back at him and threatened him with greater harm if he ever insulted Mohammed again. Once Mohammed had the muscle of the tribe's strongest man, he suffered less harassment.

#### A TRIBAL CHIEF TRIES TO CUT A DEAL

1186 One day while the Quraysh were in council, one of the chiefs, Utba, offered to approach Mohammed to see if he could make a deal that would please everybody. Things were only getting worse, so the others agreed he should try. He went to the Kabah and found Mohammed. "Mohammed, you have come to us with an important matter, but you have divided the community, ridiculed our customs, and insulted our forefathers. See if any of my suggestions can help in this matter. If you want money, we will give you money. If you want honor, we will make you our king. If you are possessed, we will get you a physician."

1186 Mohammed said that he represented the only Allah, whose teachings were beautiful, and then he began to recite the glorious poetry and imagery of the Koran. The tribal chief was impressed with the beauty of Mohammed's words and left.

1186 When Utba returned to the Quraysh, he said, "Leave Mohammed alone; his words are beautiful. If other Arabs kill him, your problem is solved. If he becomes sovereign over all, you will share in his glory. His power will become your power and you can make money off his success." They replied that Mohammed had bewitched him.

#### MORE ARGUMENTS WITH THE MECCANS

1188, 189 Another group of Meccans sent for Mohammed to see if they could negotiate away this painful division of the tribes. They went over old ground and again Mohammed refused the money and power that were offered. He said they were the ones who needed to decide whether they wanted to suffer in the next world and he had the only solution. If they rejected him and his message, Allah would tend to them. One of the Quraysh said, "Well, if you speak for and represent the only true god, then perhaps this Allah could do something for us."

"This land is dry. Let your Allah make us a river next to Mecca," said another.

"We are cramped being next to the mountains. Let your Allah open up some space by moving the mountains back," said another.

“Our best members are dead. Let your Allah restore them to life and, in particular, send back the best leader of our tribe, Qusayy. We will ask Qusayy whether or not you speak truly,” said another.

1189 Mohammed said he was sent as a messenger, not to do such work. They could either accept his message or reject it and be subject to the loss. Then one of them said, “If you won’t use your Allah to help us, then let your Allah help you. Send an angel to confirm you and prove to us that we are wrong. As long as the angel is present, let him make a garden and fine home for you and present you all the gold and silver he could need. If you do this, we will know that you represent Allah and we are wrong.” The Quraysh wanted miracles as proof.

1189 Mohammed replied that he would not do so because such things were not what Allah had appointed him to do.

1189 Then one of the Quraysh said, “Then let the heavens be dropped on us in pieces as you say your Lord could do. If you do not, we will not believe.” Mohammed said Allah could do that if Allah wished or he might not if he wished not.

1189 They then said, “Did not your Lord know that we would ask you these questions? Then your Lord could have prepared you with better answers. And your Lord could have told you what to tell us if we didn’t believe. We hear that you are getting this Koran from a man named Al Rahman from another town. We don’t believe in Al Rahman. Our conscience is clear. We must either destroy you or you must destroy us. Bring your angels and we will believe them.”

1190 Mohammed turned and left. A cousin chased him and fell in beside him to talk. He said, “Mohammed, your tribe has made you propositions and you have rejected them. First, they asked you for things for themselves that they might see if you are authentic. They would have followed you. You did nothing. Then they asked you for things for yourself so they could witness your superiority over them and prove your standing with Allah. You did nothing. Then they said to bring on the punishments that your Allah has threatened and with which you have frightened them. You did nothing. Personally, I will never believe until you get a ladder up to the sky and then climb it while I watch and four angels come and testify that you are truthful. But you know, even if you did all that, I still don’t know if I would believe you.”

1190 Mohammed went home, sad and depressed. He had hoped they sent for him to announce their submission to Allah and his teachings. Instead, they had offered more resistance and questions.

1191 Mohammed decided to go to the Kabah and tell the Meccans what terrible punishments Allah had delivered to others in history who had not believed his prophets.

*73:15 Certainly We have sent an apostle to bear witness against you [the world], just as We sent an apostle to Pharaoh, but Pharaoh rejected the apostle, and We punished him severely.*

That was now one of his constant themes: “Allah destroyed others like you who did not listen to men like me.”

One of the Quraysh, Al Nadr, had been to Persia and learned many tales and sagas from the storytellers there. Al Nadr would announce, “I can tell a better tale than Mohammed.” Then he would proceed to tell them ancient fables and stories of Persia. “In what way is Mohammed a better story-teller than I am?”

1192 The Quraysh decided to send their storyteller to the Jews in Medina to ask for help. It took eleven days to get to Medina and eleven days to return. This was not a casual quest, as it took the better part of a month for the trip and visit. At Medina, Al Nadr told the rabbis about Mohammed: what he did, what he said, and that he claimed to be a prophet. Since they had their own prophets they must know more about the subject than the Meccans. What questions could they ask Mohammed that would prove whether or not he was a prophet?

1192 The rabbis said, “Ask him these three questions. If he knows the answers then he is a prophet; if not, then he is a fake.

“Ask him, ‘What is the spirit?’

“Ask him, ‘What happened to the young men who disappeared in ancient days?’

“Ask him about the mighty traveler who reached the ends of the East and the West.”

1192 Back in Mecca, they went to Mohammed and asked him the three questions. He promised to respond on the following day.

For fifteen days Mohammed waited for Gabriel to provide answers. The Meccans began to talk. Mohammed did not know what to do. He had no answers. Finally, he had a vision of Gabriel.

These were the Koranic answers to all the questions and statements of the Quraysh:

The question—what is the spirit?

*17:85 They will ask you about the spirit [probably the angel Gabriel]. Say: The spirit is commanded by my Lord, and you are given only a little knowledge about it. If We wished, We could take Our revelations away from you.*

*Then you would find no one to intercede with us on your behalf except as a mercy from your Lord. Surely His kindness to you is great.*

With regard to the question about what happened to the young men in ancient times:

18:9 *Do you believe that the Sleepers of the Cave and the Inscription [an unknown reference] were among Our signs? When the youths [the Sleepers] took refuge in the cave, they said, "Lord, give us Your mercy and cause us to act rightly." We drew a veil over them depriving them of their senses for many years. Then We roused them so that We could know which would best determine the number of years they lived in the cave.*

18:13 *We tell you their story truthfully. They were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased their ability to guide others. We gave strength to their hearts. Recall when they stood up and said, "Our Lord is the Lord of the heaven and the earth. We will worship no other god besides Him. If We did, then we would have certainly said an outrageous thing. Our people have taken other gods to worship besides Allah. Why don't they prove their existence? Who is more wicked than a person who makes up lies about Allah? When will you turn away from them and the things they worship besides Allah? Seek refuge in the cave. Your Lord will extend His mercy to you and cause your affairs to turn out for the best."*

18:17 *You may have seen the sun, when it rose, pass to the right of their cave and set to their left while they were in its spacious middle. This is one of the signs of Allah. Whomever Allah guides is rightly guided. Whomever He allows to stray will not find a friend to guide him.*

18:18 *While they were sleeping, you would have thought that they were awake [they slept with their eyes open]. We turned them on their right side and their left side. Their dog lay in the entrance with its paws stretched out. If you had come upon them, you would have certainly run away filled with terror of them. This was their condition before We awakened them so that they might question one another. One of them asked, "How long have you lingered here?" Some said, "We have been here a day or so." Others said, "Your Lord knows exactly how long you have lingered. One of you should take your money into the city and buy the best food possible. He should be courteous and should not let anyone know about you. If they should come upon you, they would either kill you or force you to return to their religion, in which case you would never prosper."*

18:21 *We made their existence known to the city so that they would know that Allah's promise is true and that there is no doubt about the Hour of Judgment. The people of the city argued amongst themselves about the affair. Some said, "We should construct a building over them. Their Lord knows all about them." The winners of the debate were those who said, "We will certainly build a temple over them."*

18:22 *Some say, "There were three, the dog being the fourth." Others say, "Five, the dog was the sixth." Still others say, "There were seven, and a dog made eight." Say: My Lord knows the exact number. Only a few know the truth. So do not become involved in arguments about them except on matters that are clear, and do not consult any of them about the Sleepers.*

As to the question about the mighty traveler:

18:83 *They will ask you about Zul-Qarnain []. Say: I will recite to you an account of him. We established his power in the land and gave him the means to achieve any of his aims. So he followed a path, until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy pond. Near by he found a people. We said, "Zul-Qarnain, you have the authority to either punish them or to show them kindness."*

18:87 *He said, "Whoever does wrong, we will certainly punish. Then he will be returned to his Lord, Who will punish him with a terrible punishment. But whoever believes and does good deeds shall be given a wonderful reward, and We will give them easy commands to obey."*

18:89 *Then he followed another path, until, when he came to the rising of the sun, he found that it rose upon a people to whom We had given no protection from it. He left them as they were. We knew everything about him. Then he followed another path until, when he reached a place between two mountains, he found a people living in a valley who could scarcely understand a single word. They said, "Zul-Qarnain, the people of Gog and Magog are terrorizing the land. May we pay you tribute so that you will build a strong barrier between us and them?"*

18:95 *He said, "The power which my Lord has given me is better than your tribute. Help me, therefore, with manpower. I will build a strong barrier between you and them. Bring me blocks of iron." Later, when he had filled the gap between the two mountains, he said, "Blow with your bellows!" When it had become as red as fire, he said, "Bring me molten lead to pour over it." So the people of Gog and Magog were unable to climb over the barrier or to go through it. He said, "This is a mercy from my Lord, but when my Lord's promise comes to pass, He will destroy it, because my Lord's promises always come true."*

18:99 *On that day We shall let them surge against one another like waves. The trumpet will be blown, and We will gather them all together. On that day We shall present Hell for all the Kafirs to see—Kafirs whose eyes were veiled from My signs and who could not even hear. What? Do the Kafirs think that they can take My servants to be guardians besides me? We have prepared Hell to entertain the Kafirs.*

The Quraysh had raised other questions. Mohammed was seeing and talking with angels. Could the Quraysh meet one of these messengers? If the god of Mohammed was so powerful, could not Mohammed do

miracles such as furnishing more water for Mecca or making the sky fall? Since Allah could do all things, why could not Allah furnish Mohammed great wealth?

The Koran's response:

17:90 *They [the Meccans] say, "We will not believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us; or until you have a garden of date trees and grape vines, and cause rivers to gush abundantly in their midst; or when you cause the sky to fall down in pieces, as you claim will happen; or when you bring us face to face with Allah and the angels; or when you have a house of gold; or when you ascend into heaven; and even then we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down a book for us which we may read." Say: Glory be to my Lord! Am I nothing except a man, a messenger?*

17:94 *What keeps men from believing when guidance has come to them but that they say, "Has Allah sent a man like us to be His messenger?" Say: If angels walked the earth, We would have sent down from heaven an angel as Our messenger. Say: Allah is a sufficient witness between you and me. He is well acquainted with His servants and He sees everything.*

Mohammed performed no miracles because Allah had not sent him for that. The proof of Mohammed's claims was the Koran.

The Quraysh had told Mohammed that the old stories from Persia were as good as his stories. So how were his stories proof of his being a messenger of God? The Koran's answer:

25:5 *They say, "These are ancient fables that he has written down. They are dictated to him morning and night."*

25:6 *Say: The Koran was revealed by Him who knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth. He is truly forgiving and merciful.*

The Quraysh were following the religion of their ancestors. Why was Mohammed's religion any better than theirs?

31:21 *Yet there are those who dispute Allah without knowledge nor a Scripture to enlighten them. And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has sent down," they say, "No, we will follow the path that we found our fathers following." Even if it is Satan inviting them into the doom of Fire?*

#### THE QURAYSH LISTEN TO MOHAMMED'S READING

1203 Three of the Meccans decided, each on his own, to sit outside Mohammed's house and listen to him recite the Koran and pray. As they left, they ran into each other. The Quraysh were opposing Mohammed and here they were sneaking around to hear him. So they agreed that, since

they didn't want Mecca to know they were Quraysh listening to Mohammed, they would not do it again nor would they tell anyone what had happened. But on the next night they all three did the same thing, and on the third night they did it again. They then talked among themselves. The first one said, "I heard things I know and I know what was meant by them. And I heard things I don't know and I don't know what was intended by them." The second agreed. The third said he had always had a competition with one of Mohammed's recent converts. They had both fed the poor and helped the oppressed. They had always been equals, but now his friendly rival claimed he had a prophet and his friend did not. Hence, he was now superior. He said, "But I can never believe in this man, Mohammed."

1204 So the next time Mohammed called upon them to submit to Islam, they said, "Our hearts are veiled; we don't understand what you say. There is stuff in our ears so we can't hear you. A curtain divides us. You go follow your path and we will follow ours."

The Koranic response to their veiled hearts:

*17:45 When you recite the Koran, We place an invisible barrier between you and the Kafirs. We place veils over their hearts and deafness in their ears so that they do not understand it, and when you mention only your Lord, Allah, in the Koran, they turn their backs and flee from the truth. We know absolutely what they listen to when they listen to you, and when they speak privately, the wicked say, "You follow a mad man!" See what they compare you to. But they have gone astray and cannot find the way.*

# TROUBLE

## CHAPTER 6

5:95 *Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and be on your guard. If you do turn back, know that our Messenger is only bound to deliver a plain announcement.*

1217 All of the clans of the Quraysh began to persecute those Muslims they had any power over. If Mohammed attacked them, they would attack him through his converts. One slave, Bilal (to become famous later), was physically abused. He was placed in the hot sun with a huge rock on his chest and told to deny Islam. He refused. This was repeated until Abu Bakr, a chief Muslim, took notice and asked how long the owner would abuse him. The owner said, "You are one of those who corrupted him. You save him." So Abu Bakr offered to trade a stronger, black, Kafir slave for Bilal. Then Abu Bakr freed Bilal. Abu Bakr did this with six other Muslim slaves as well.

### MIGRATION TO ETHIOPIA

1208 Since the Quraysh were resisting Islam and being hard on the Muslims, Mohammed sent many of his followers to Ethiopia as the Christian king there was tolerant of their religion. Eighty or ninety Muslims left Arabia to cross the Red Sea to Ethiopia.

1217 The Quraysh decided to send two men to Ethiopia to persuade the king to send the Arabs back to Mecca.

1218 They took gifts of fine leather goods since leather work was prized there. They gave the leather work to the generals of the king's army and told them, "Foolish people from our country have moved here. They have forsaken their religion and have not accepted yours. They have an invented religion. Our nobles have sent us to see the king so that he will return these people to our country." The generals agreed and went to the king to recommend he do as the Meccans had suggested. The king refused. To surrender someone to whom he had extended protection would violate his word, and his word was law and not to be changed.

1224 A member of the Abyssinian royalty, called the Negus, became convinced of the truth of Islam. He was accused by the Christians of leaving his religion. The Negus wrote on a piece of paper, "There is no god but

Allah and Mohammed is his prophet. Jesus was a Muslim, born of Mary, conceived without a father.” He then pinned the statement under his shirt over his heart. [These are classical Islamic statements.] When the other Abyssinians accused the Negus of leaving Christianity and they said, “Jesus was the Son of God.” The Negus placed his hand over his heart (and the paper with the statement) and told the Christians, “I testify that Jesus was no more than this.” The Christians took him at his word and left him. When Mohammed heard this, he prayed for the Negus when he died. [This is a classical example of *taqiyya*, sacred deception.]

#### UMAR ACCEPTS ISLAM

1224 Umar was a strong and stubborn man whom no one would attack. (Umar would later become a *caliph*—a supreme political and religious leader—and a successor when Mohammed died.) When some of the Muslims moved to Ethiopia, he was saddened to see them go. Up to that time he had joined in harassing the Muslims.

1225 His sister and her husband had both converted to Islam, but they concealed their conversion to avoid censure. One day Umar strapped on his sword and decided to go to the house where he knew Mohammed was holding a meeting with his converts. Umar had violence on his mind when he ran into a friend who asked him where he was going in such a rush. Umar told him, “I am going to cause trouble for Mohammed, the apostate, who mocked our religion and insulted our faith. I am going to kill him.” His friend said, “You had better go straighten out the affairs of your own family. Your sister and brother-in-law have submitted to Islam.”

1226 Umar wheeled and headed for his sister’s house. She and her husband were listening to a Muslim reading from the Koran when Umar came storming up to the house. The reader jumped up and hid himself, and Umar’s sister hid the page of the Koran under her thigh. But Umar had heard the reading. “What was that garbage I heard just now?” he said angrily. His sister said, “Oh, you didn’t hear anything.” Umar bellowed, “I hear that you and your husband have become followers of Mohammed.” He grabbed his brother-in-law. His sister rose to defend her husband and Umar struck her hard. She cried out, “Yes, you are right. We have converted. Do as you will.” Her face was bleeding and Umar regretted hitting her.

1226 He saw a corner of the hidden paper and said, “Give me that piece of paper, now.” Umar could read, not a usual thing in Mecca. His sister said she was afraid to give it to him. Umar said not to worry; he would not destroy it. She replied, “You are unclean. Only the clean may touch the

Koran.” Umar washed his hands and started to read. He was captured by the lofty words and said, “What fine and noble speech this is.”

1227 At that, the person who had been reading the Koran stepped out of hiding and said, “Come to Islam, Umar.” Umar replied, “Lead me to Mohammed, that I may submit to Islam.”

1227 Umar headed to the house where Mohammed was meeting with his companions. When Umar arrived and knocked at the door, one of the companions looked out and said in fear, “It is Umar and he has his sword on.” Hamza, the strong man, said, “Let him in. We can handle him.” Umar entered the room and told Mohammed that he wished to become a Muslim.

1224 Once he was a Muslim, Islam had two men, Umar and Hamza, who could defeat any man in combat. After that, there was less physical harassment of the Muslims.

#### THE BOYCOTT

1230 The Quraysh were frustrated. Mohammed attracted converts from the ancient religion of their forefathers and still attacked everything about the Meccans’ way of life. He condemned their ancestors, gods, customs, religion, and community. What could they do about this division of their city and tribe? Someone came up with the idea of a boycott. They would allow no marriages between the Quraysh and the Muslims and no buying or selling of food. All of the points were agreed upon, and they went so far as to write up the boycott on paper and hang it in the Kabah. Mohammed cursed the writers, but the boycott went on for two or three years. Naturally, like all boycotts, it cut off the normal suppliers of food. Others merely stepped in and replaced the suppliers to the Muslims. In fact, Mohammed’s mission went on undisturbed. He worked both in public and in private during the boycott.

1233 The battle of words went on. The Quraysh mocked, argued with, and laughed at Mohammed. Mohammed revealed new verses of the Koran that began to reflect the war of words. Abu Lahab and his wife are an example of how Mohammed and Allah responded. To understand the Koran’s reference to them, it helps to know that Abu Lahab’s wife once threw some thorns in front of Mohammed, hence the reference to wood as fuel for Hell’s fires.

111:1 *Let the hands of Abu Lahab [Mohammed’s uncle and an opponent] die and let him die! His wealth and attainments will not help him. He will be burned in Hell, and his wife will carry the firewood, with a palm fiber rope around her neck.*

Another Meccan won a place in the Koran:

104:1 *Woe to every slanderer and backbiter who gathers wealth and hordes it for the future. He certainly thinks he will keep his wealth forever. No! He certainly will be flung into Hell, and who will teach you what Hell is?*  
 104:6 *It is the Fire kindled by Allah that will rise above the hearts of the damned and close over them in towering columns.*

The tension Mohammed introduced into Mecca and his tribe became part of daily life.

1235 A Muslim blacksmith was owed money for his iron work and went to claim his debt. The debtor pointed out that in Mohammed's heaven there would be much luxury and gold, so he would meet the smith there and pay him with some of the excess gold lying around in heaven. The Koranic response:

19:77 *Have you seen someone who rejects Our signs and says, "I will certainly be given wealth and children?" Does he have knowledge of the unseen, or has he made peace with Allah? No! We will certainly record what he says and prolong his period of punishment. We will inherit the things he speaks of, and he will come before Us, poor and alone.*

1235 A Meccan told Mohammed, "You stop cursing our gods or we will start cursing your Allah." So Mohammed stopped cursing the Meccan gods. An ongoing theme of Mohammed was to tell of ancient civilizations that did not listen to their prophets and suffered terrible downfalls. A competing storyteller boasted that he could tell better stories. The Koran's reply:

45:6 *These are among the signs of Allah, which We truthfully recite to you. What teachings will they believe in if they reject Allah and his signs?*  
 45:7 *Woe to every sinful liar who hears the signs of Allah and still persists in vanity and pride as if he had never heard them. Tell him of a terrible punishment. When he becomes aware of Our signs he takes them for a joke. There will be a shameful penalty for people such as this. Hell is waiting for them. Neither their possessions nor the false gods can protect them in the least. They shall have a grievous punishment. Those who reject the signs and guidance of their Lord will receive a punishment of painful torment.*

1238 A Meccan took an old bone to Mohammed, crumbled it up, and blew the dust toward Mohammed. He asked, "Will your Allah revive this bone?" Mohammed said, "Yes, I do say that. Allah will resurrect this bone and you will die. Then Allah will send you to Hell!"

1239 Some Meccans approached Mohammed and said, "Let us worship what you worship. Then you worship what we worship. If what you worship

is better than what we worship, then we will take a share of your worship. And if what we worship is better, then you can take a share of that.” The Koran’s reply:

109:1 *Say: O you Kafirs!*

109:2 *I do not worship what you worship, and you do not worship what I worship. I will never worship what you worship, and you will never worship what I worship. You to your religion, me to my religion.*

#### THE SATANIC VERSES

T1192 Mohammed was always thinking of how he could convert all the Meccans. It came to him that the three gods of the Quraysh could intercede with Allah on their behalf. As Mohammed put it, “These are the exalted high flying cranes whose intercession is approved.” The Meccans were delighted. The Muslims were happy. When Mohammed led prayers at the Kabah, all the Meccans, Muslim and Kafir, took part. The Quraysh hung about after the combined service and remarked how happy they were. The tribe had been unified in worship, as before Islam.

T1192 When the news reached Ethiopia, some of the Muslims started for home. But then trouble appeared. Mohammed’s inner voice told him he had been wrong. Meccan gods could have no part in his religion. Satan had made him say those terrible words about how the other gods could help Allah.

22:52 *Never have We sent a prophet or messenger before you whom Satan did not tempt with evil desires, but Allah will bring Satan’s temptations to nothing. Allah will affirm His revelations, for He is knowing and wise. He makes Satan’s suggestions a temptation for those whose hearts are diseased or for those whose hearts are hardened. Truly, this is why the Kafirs are in great opposition so that those who have been given knowledge will know that the Koran is the truth from their Lord and so that they may believe in it and humbly submit to Him. Allah will truly guide the believers to the right path.*

53:23 *These are mere names. You and your fathers gave them these names. Allah has not acknowledged them. They follow only their own conceits and desires, even though their Lord has already given them guidance.*

T1192 The retraction by Mohammed made relations between the Muslims and Meccans far worse than it had ever been. The Koran mentions a tree of Zaqqum which guards heaven. It represented a terrible barrier. After the retraction some Meccans started mocking it and said the tree of

Zaqqum was a date palm that gave buttered dates. The Koran replied to this little joke:

*44:43 Surely the Zaqqum tree [the tree of Hell] will be food for the sinners. Like molten brass, it will boil in their bellies like the boiling of scalding water. (It will be said) "Seize him and drag him down to the middle of Hell. Torment him by pouring boiling water on his head." (Say) Taste this: You thought that you were powerful and honorable! This is the thing that you doubted.*

#### PROTECTION

1244 Like Mohammed, Uthman (later to become a caliph) had protection from a powerful tribal leader. In Arabic society there were rules governing how tribes, clans, and individuals extended protection, and most of Uthman's new Muslim brothers did not have the protection Uthman enjoyed. In sympathy with his fellow Muslims, Uthman decided to forfeit his protection. He went to his uncle and told him thenceforth Allah would be his sole defense. His uncle said they must go to the mosque (Kabah) and announce his decision to the community. The oath of protection had been public, and the renunciation would have to be public as well. Uthman told those present that his uncle was an honorable man but Uthman wanted only the protection of Allah.

1244 Then one of the Meccans repeated a verse, "Everything but Allah is vain."

"True," said Uthman.

The Meccan quoted further, "And everything lovely must inevitably cease."

1214 This was apparently a contradiction of Uthman's new faith. "You are a liar!" he cried. "The joy of Paradise will never cease." A Meccan who was there said, "Oh, men of the Quraysh, you never used to argue like this. What is going on?" Another Quraysh said, "It is one of those fools who follow Mohammed. They have left our religion and insult us at every turn. Just ignore him." Then Uthman objected vigorously. A man of the Quraysh stood up and hit Uthman in the eye with a mighty blow and blackened it. Uthman's uncle said, "See, if you had remained in my protection, this would not have happened." Uthman replied, "No, my good eye needs what happened to my bad eye for Allah's sake. My Allah is stronger than you." His uncle said, "Come on, my nephew. My protection is always available if you ask." Uthman strode out of the Kabah.

1246 Abu Bakr decided that he would emigrate rather than put up with the daily harassment that went on between the Quraysh and the Muslims.

He decided to go to Ethiopia. Traveling on the road he fell in with an Arab, Al Dughunna, whose brother was the head of a powerful clan. When Al Dughunna found out that Abu Bakr was leaving Mecca, he told him to come back to Mecca with him and he would offer Bakr protection so that he would not be bothered by the other Meccans.

1246 And so Bakr went back to Mecca and Al Dughunna publicly made known his protection of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr had the habit of reading the Koran in public places and crying as he read. This affected the women and the young of the Quraysh. So one of the Quraysh went to Al Dughunna and asked why he had given protection to one who was injuring the Quraysh with his public displays of weeping over the Koran. "Tell him to go to his own house and do as he pleases but stay out of public."

1246 Al Dughunna did so. He told Bakr he did not mean to harm the Quraysh by protecting him. Why didn't he just go home and be pious there? He should stop the public displays of piety. Abu Bakr asked him to retract his protection instead. And that is what Al Dughunna did.

1246 After that, one of the Quraysh threw dust at Abu Bakr while he was at the Kabah. Such was the persecution of the Muslims by the Quraysh.

#### ENDING THE BOYCOTT

1248, 249 The boycott was a hard piece of business for the Quraysh. Mecca was a small town, and many of those being boycotted were friends and family by marriage or kin. Just as with all boycotts there had been subtle cheating and help for those being boycotted. It was hard to eat well, buy new clothes, and marry, all the while knowing that others in the small town were suffering from the boycott. There began to be quiet talk about ending the boycott. Because many did not want friends and family to suffer, they began to hold clandestine meetings on the subject. A large meeting was held at the Kabah, where the boycott document was still posted. A boycott needs a very large majority to succeed and there wasn't one in Mecca. The Quraysh were too soft-hearted to press the issue and the boycott failed.

The Quraysh had always had a moon god called Allah. They had always started all documents with the phrase, "In thy name, O Allah." So both Muslims and Kafirs argued with each other and cursed each other and swore in the name of Allah.

#### THE POET'S PROFITABLE SUBMISSION

1252 Al Dausi was a poet of some standing in Arabia, and when he visited Mecca he was warned to stay away from Mohammed. Mohammed had done the Quraysh much harm and broken the harmony of the tribe.

Al Dausi was warned that Mohammed might bring such divisions to his family as well. When he went to the mosque, however, Mohammed was there. Since he had been warned about him, he was curious to hear what Mohammed said when he prayed. He liked what he heard and followed Mohammed home. They spoke for some time and Al Dausi decided to submit to Islam.

1253 He returned home. His father was old and came to greet his son. Al Dausi said to him, "Go away, Father, for I want nothing to do with you or you with me." His father said, "Why, my son?" Al Dausi said, "I have become a Muslim." The father replied, "Well, then, I shall do so as well."

1253 His father then entered his home and told his wife, "Leave me. I will have nothing to do with you." She cried, "Why?" Al Dausi said, "Islam has divided us and I now follow Mohammed." She replied, "Then your religion is my religion." He then instructed her in Islam.

1254 Al Dausi preached to his tribe but without the success he'd had with his family. He went back to Mecca and spoke with Mohammed. "Mohammed, my people are too frivolous for Islam. Put a curse on them." Mohammed told him to go back and continue to preach Islam. Some success followed. Years later when Mohammed left Mecca and became a military success, Al Dausi and his group of eighty families of converts showed up in Medina in time for the capture of Khaybar. The Jews of Khaybar were rich, and much treasure was taken from them, and Al Dausi and his group got to share in the wealth taken by war.

#### SOME CHRISTIANS FROM ETHIOPIA SUBMIT TO ISLAM

1259 Some Christians from Ethiopia came to see Mohammed in Mecca. After extended conversations, they decided to accept Islam. Abu Jahl of the Quraysh said to them, "What a wretched group you are. Your people sent you here to get information, and what do you do? You go and renounce your religion and believe everything Mohammed tells you. What a stupid bunch you are." They gave him a pleasant reply and went back to Ethiopia.

#### MOHAMMED'S SOURCE?

1260 There was one Christian in Mecca in whom Mohammed took a particular interest, a slave who ran a booth in the market. Mohammed would often speak with him at length. This led the Quraysh to say that what Mohammed said in the Koran actually came from the Christian slave. The Koran's response:

16:103 *We know that they say, "It is a man that teaches him." The man [his name is uncertain] they point to speaks a foreign language while this is clear Arabic.*

16:104 *Allah will not guide those who do not believe, and they will have a painful punishment. Those who do not believe in Allah's revelations forge lies. They are the liars.*

The Meccans asked Mohammed why his angel never appeared to them as well as to Mohammed. They would like to see, hear, and speak with this Gabriel. Other Meccans made fun of Mohammed and mocked him. The Koran:

6:8 *They say, "Why has an angel not been sent down to him?" If We had sent down an angel, their judgment would have condemned the Kafirs suddenly, and no time would have been granted to them to repent. If We had made him an angel, We would have sent him as a man, and We would have caused confusion in a matter in which they are already confused. Messengers before you were mocked, but the scoffers were destroyed by the thing they mocked.*

#### THE NIGHT JOURNEY

1264 Mohammed said that one night, as he lay sleeping, an angel nudged him with his foot. Mohammed awoke, saw nothing, and went back to sleep. This happened again. Then it happened a third time. Mohammed awoke and Gabriel took his arm. They went out the door and before them was a white animal, half mule and half donkey with wings on its feet so it could move to the horizon at one step. Gabriel put Mohammed on the white animal and off they went to Jerusalem to the site of the Temple.

1264 There at the Temple were Jesus, Abraham, Moses, and prophets from Christian and Jewish scripture. Mohammed led them in prayer. Gabriel brought Mohammed two bowls. One was filled with wine and the other with milk. Mohammed took the one with milk and drank it. That was the right choice.

1265 When Mohammed told this story at the Kabah, the Quraysh hooted at the absurdity of it. Actually, some of the Muslims found it too hard to believe, too, and left Islam. One of them went to Abu Bakr and told him Mohammed had visited Jerusalem the night before. Bakr said they were lying. They told him to go and hear for himself. Mohammed was still at the mosque telling his story, and Abu Bakr said, "If he says it then it is true. He tells me of communication with Allah that comes to him at all hours of the day and night. I believe him."

1265 Aisha use to said Mohammed never left the bed that night; however, his spirit soared. The Koran had something to say to those Muslims who did not believe Mohammed.

*17:60 Remember when We said to you, "Your Lord encompasses mankind." We created the vision which We showed you and also the cursed tree [the tree of Hell] in the Koran to be a trial for men. We terrorize and warn them, but it only increases their great wickedness.*

1266 Mohammed reported that Abraham looked exactly like him. Moses was a ruddy-faced man, tall and thin, with curly hair. Jesus was light-skinned with a reddish complexion and freckles and lank hair.

1268 Mohammed next reported that, after the prayers in Jerusalem, Gabriel brought a fine ladder. He and Gabriel climbed the ladder until they came to one of the gates of heaven called Gate of the Watchers. An angel was in charge there and had under his command twelve thousand angels. Each of those twelve thousand angels had another twelve thousand angels under him. The guardian angel asked Gabriel who Mohammed was. When Gabriel said it was Mohammed, the angel wished Mohammed well.

1268 All the angels who greeted Mohammed smiled and wished him well, except for one. Mohammed asked Gabriel who was the unsmiling angel. He was Malik, the Keeper of Hell. Mohammed asked Gabriel to ask Malik if he would show him Hell. So Malik removed the lid to Hell and flames blazed into the air. Mohammed quickly asked for the lid to be put back.

1269 At the lowest heaven sat a man watching the spirits of men passing by. To one he would say, "A good spirit from a good body." And to another spirit he would say, "An evil spirit from an evil body." Mohammed asked who the man was. It was Adam reviewing the spirits of his children. The spirit of a believer excited him and the spirit of an infidel disgusted him.

1269 Mohammed saw men with lips like a camel's. In their hands were flaming hot coals. They would shove the coals into their mouths and the burning coals came out of their rectums: these were those who had stolen the wealth of orphans. Then he saw the family of the pharaoh with huge bellies, and he saw women hanging by their breasts: these women had birthed bastards while married. Mohammed said that Allah hates women who birth bastards because the bastards are outsiders who deprive the true sons of their inheritance and they learn the secrets of the harem, which is to be totally private from outsiders.

1270 Mohammed was then taken up to the second heaven where he saw Jesus and his cousin, John, son of Zechariah. In the third heaven he saw Joseph, son of Jacob. In the fourth heaven, Mohammed saw Idris (a

prophet). In the fifth heaven was Aaron, son of Imran, handsome with a long beard and white hair. In the sixth heaven was a dark man with a hooked nose. This was Moses. [*Ed.* There is no accounting for the seemingly contradictory terms “ruddy” and “dark” describing Moses in 1266 and 1270.] In the seventh heaven was a man sitting on a throne in front of a mansion.

1270 Every day seventy thousand angels went into the mansion, not to come out until the day of resurrection. The man on the throne looked just like Mohammed; it was Abraham. Abraham took Mohammed into Paradise where there was a beautiful woman with red lips. Mohammed asked to whom she belonged, for she was very attractive to him. She was Zaynab, the wife of his adopted son, Zaid. When he got back, Mohammed told him of this.

1271 When Gabriel took Mohammed to each of the heavens and asked heaven’s guardian angel for permission to enter, he had to say whom he had brought and whether they had a mission. The guardian angel would then say, “Allah grant him life, brother, and friend.” When Mohammed got to the seventh heaven Allah gave him the duty of fifty prayers a day. When he returned and passed Moses, Moses asked him how many prayers Allah had given him. When Moses heard that it was fifty, he said, “Prayer is a weighty matter and your people are weak. Go back and ask your Lord to reduce the number for you and your community.” Mohammed went back and got the number reduced to forty. When he passed Moses, the same conversation passed. This repeated until Allah reduced the number to five. Moses tried to get Mohammed to go back and get the number reduced even further, but Mohammed felt ashamed to ask for less.

#### THE MOCKERS

1272 Mohammed continued to preach Islam and condemn the old Arabic religions. There were those of the Quraysh who defended their culture and religion and argued with Mohammed. Mohammed called them mockers and cursed one of them, “O Allah, blind him and kill his son.”

The response in the Koran to those who argued with Mohammed:

15:94 *By your Lord, We will certainly call them to account for all their deeds, so openly proclaim what you are commanded, and turn away from the polytheists.*

15:95 *Surely, We will defend you against those who scoff; who set up other gods with Allah. But they will come to know. We know that your heart is troubled at their words, but celebrate the praises of your Lord, and be one*

*of those who bow down in adoration. And serve your Lord until death overtakes you.*

1272 A common tale in Islam is that one day Mohammed stood with the angel, Gabriel, as the Quraysh performed the rituals of their religion. Among them were those who defended their culture and religion. When the first Quraysh passed by Gabriel, Gabriel threw a leaf in his face and blinded him; he caused the second one to get drowsy, which killed him; he caused the third man to develop an infection which killed him. Later, Gabriel caused the fourth man to step on a thorn that killed him, and he caused a brain disease to kill the last man who dared to not worship Allah.

#### MOHAMMED'S PROTECTOR AND MOHAMMED'S WIFE DIE

1278 Mohammed's protector was his uncle, Abu Talib. When he fell ill, some of the leaders of the Quraysh went to his bedside and said to him, "You are one of our leaders and are near dying. Why don't you call Mohammed to see if we can't work out some solution to the pain and division in our tribe? Why doesn't he leave us alone, not bother us, and we will not bother him? We will have our religion, and he can have his."

1278 So Abu Talib called Mohammed to his side, saying, "Nephew, these men have come so that you can give them something and they can give you something." Mohammed said, "If they will give me one word, they can rule the Persians and the Arabs, but they must accept Allah as their Lord and renounce their gods."

1278 The Quraysh said, "He will give us no agreement. Let Allah judge between us," and they left.

1278 Mohammed turned his attention to his dying uncle. He asked him to become a Muslim, so Mohammed could intercede for him on judgment day. His uncle told him, "The Quraysh would say that I only accept Islam because I fear death, but I should say it just to give you pleasure." He drifted off, but as he died his lips moved. His brother put his head close to Abu Talib and listened. He then said, "Nephew, my brother said what you wished him to say." Mohammed's reply was, "I did not hear him." Mohammed left. The man who had raised Mohammed, protected him from danger, and taught him his occupation as businessman died. Later references state that Abu Talib went to Allah's Hell.

After Abu Talib's death, the pressure on Mohammed was greater. As an example, one of the Quraysh threw dust at Mohammed as an insult.

Khadija died the same year as Abu Talib. The death of his wife had no political effect, but it was a blow to Mohammed. His wife, Khadija, was his chief confidante and she consoled him.

MARRIAGE

M113<sup>1</sup> About three months after the death of Khadija, Mohammed married Sauda, a widow and a Muslim.

M113 Abu Bakr had a daughter, Aisha, who was six years old. Soon after marrying Sauda, Mohammed was betrothed to Aisha, who was to become his favorite wife. Mohammed was in his early fifties. The consummation would take place when she turned nine.

M031,5977<sup>2</sup> *Aisha reported Mohammed's having said: I saw you [Aisha] in a dream for three nights when an angel brought you to me in a silk cloth and he said: Here is your wife, and when I removed the cloth from your face, lo, it was yourself, so I said: If this is from Allah, let Him carry it out.*

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1. The M refers to Sir William Muir's, *The Life of Muhammad*. The number is the page number.

2. An M reference with two parts is from Abu Muslim's Hadith, *Sahih Muslim*.

## POLITICAL BEGINNINGS

### CHAPTER 7

8:20 *Believers! Be obedient to Allah and His messenger, and do not turn your backs now that you know the truth. Do not be like the ones who say, "We hear," but do not obey.*

1279 After Abu Talib's death, Mohammed needed political allies. He went to the city of Taif, about fifty miles away, with one servant. In Taif he met with three brothers who were politically powerful. Mohammed called them to Islam and asked them to help him in his struggles with those who would defend their native religions.

1279 One brother said that if Mohammed were the representative of Allah he would go rip off the covering of the Kabah, Allah's shrine.

1279 The second brother said, "Couldn't Allah have found someone better than you to be a prophet?"

1279 The third brother said, "Don't let me even speak to you. If you are the prophet of Allah as you say you are, then you are too important for me to speak with. If you are not, then you are lying. And it is not right to speak with liars."

1280 Since they could not agree, Mohammed asked the three brothers to keep their meeting private. But Taif was a small town and within days everyone knew of Mohammed's presence. Taif was a very religious town following the old ways of the Arabs. Mohammed kept condemning them and their kind, until one day a mob gathered and drove him out of town, pelting him with stones.

1281 Half-way back to Mecca, he spent the night. The Koran says that jinns<sup>1</sup> came to hear him pray when he arose for his night prayer:

46:29 *We sent a company of jinn so that they might hear the Koran. When the reading was finished, they returned to their people with warnings. They said, "O, people! We have heard a scripture sent down since the days of Moses verifying previous scriptures, a guide to the truth and the straight path. O, people! Hear the Messenger of Allah and believe Him that He will forgive your faults and protect you from tormenting punishment."*

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1. Islam has an entire world of spirits called jinns (genies). They can influence humans for good or bad.

## PREACHING BACK IN MECCA

1282 When the fairs returned to Mecca, Mohammed went out to the crowd of visitors and told them he was the prophet of Allah and brought them the Koran, saying they should abandon their ancient religions and follow him. When he was finished with his preaching, a Quraysh who followed him told the audience to ignore Mohammed, that he was just trying to get them to abandon their ancestors' religions.

1283 One of the chiefs of a visiting tribe was taken with the power of Mohammed. He said, "By Allah, if I could take this man from the Quraysh, I could eat up all of Arabia with him." He asked Mohammed, "If I give allegiance to you and Allah gives you victory over your enemies, will we have authority over you?" Mohammed replied that Allah gave authority where he pleased. The chief said back, "So we protect you with our arms and lives and you reap the benefit! Thanks, but no thanks."

1285 Mohammed approached one visitor, who said, "Perhaps you have something like what I have." He handed Mohammed a scroll of Luqman<sup>1</sup>. Mohammed said, "This is fine, but I have something better, a Koran which Allah has revealed to me." The visitor said Mohammed's Koran was fine poetry, but he was not converted.

## THE BEGINNING OF POWER AND JIHAD IN MEDINA

Medina was about a ten-day journey from Mecca, but since ancient days the Medinans had come to Mecca for the fairs. Medina was half Jewish and half Arab, and there was ongoing tension between the two. The Jews worked as farmers and craftsmen and were literate. They were the wealthy class, but their power was slowly waning. In times past the Arabs had raided and stolen from the Jews. The Jews retaliated by saying that one day a prophet would come and lead them to victory over the Arabs. In spite of the tension, the Arab tribe of Khazraj were allies with the Jews.

1286 When the members of the Khazraj met Mohammed, they said among themselves, "This is the prophet the Jews spoke of. Let us join ranks with him before the Jews do." They became Muslims. Their tribe was rancorous and divided, and they hoped that Islam could unite them. Soon every house in Medina had heard of Islam.

1289 The next year when the Medinan Muslims returned to Mecca, they took an oath to Mohammed, the first oath of Aqaba (so named because of the location outside Mecca where the pilgrims had set up camp; the "oath of Aqaba" is an established term in Islamic literature). They returned to

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1. Luqman was a philosopher and a writer of wisdom.

Medina and soon many Medinans submitted to Islam. This first oath of Aqaba was called the oath of women and was not a blood oath.

1294 The next year at the fair in Mecca, many of the new Muslims from Medina showed up. During the early part of the night about seventy of them left the caravan to meet with Mohammed. He recited the Koran and said, "I invite your allegiance on the basis that you protect me as you would your children." (This was a blood oath.) The Medinans gave their oath. One of them then asked about their now-severed ties to the Jews of Medina. If they helped Mohammed with arms and they were successful, would he go back to Mecca? Mohammed smiled and said, "No, blood is blood, and blood not to be paid for is blood not to be paid for." Blood revenge and its obligation were common to them. "I will war against those who war against you and be at peace with those at peace with you."

1297 Mohammed told them to appoint twelve leaders to take charge of the people's affairs.

1299 One of the Medinans said to those taking the pledge, "Do you realize what you are committing yourselves to in pledging your support to this man? It is war against all. Quit now if you think you will give him up after losing your property and your best are killed. But if you think you will be loyal to your oath even if you do lose your property and your best are killed, then take him, for it will profit you now and in Paradise." They asked what they would receive for their oath; Mohammed promised them Paradise. They all shook hands on the deal.

*B4,52,207 I [Salama] gave the pledge of allegiance to Allah's Apostle and then I moved to the shade of a tree. When the number of people around the Prophet diminished, he said, "O Ibn Al-Akwa! Will you not give to me the pledge of allegiance?"*

*I replied, "O Allah's Apostle! I have already given to you the pledge of allegiance."*

*He said, "Do it again." So I gave the pledge of allegiance for the second time."*

*I asked, "O Abu Muslim! For what did you give the pledge of allegiance on that day?"*

*He replied, "We gave the pledge of allegiance for death."*

The Medinans retired to the caravan for the night.

1304 The second oath of Aqaba had conditions of war that were not in the first oath. Now the Muslims of Medina were bound to war against all for Allah and Mohammed. For faithful service they would go to Paradise for complete obedience.

1301 In the morning the leaders of the Quraysh came to the caravan. They had heard that the Medinans had come to invite Mohammed to Medina and had pledged themselves to war against the Quraysh. The Quraysh wanted no part of war with the Medinans. But there were Medinans in the caravan who had not heard of the pledge and were puzzled by their protests.

1301 One of the Quraysh was wearing a new pair of sandals. A Medinan Muslim called out to a friend, "You need to get some new sandals like the ones on this young Quraysh." The Quraysh took them off and threw them at the speaker. "Whoa, don't get them riled up," said the friend. "Give him back his sandals." "No," said the Muslim. "It is a good omen. I shall steal what he has in war."

#### BACK IN MEDINA

1304 Back in Medina the Muslims now practiced their new religion openly, but most of the Arabs still practiced their ancient tribal religions. The Muslims would desecrate the old shrines and ritual objects. They broke into houses and stole the ritual objects and threw them into the latrines. On one occasion they killed a dog and tied the dog's body to the ritual object and threw it into the latrine.

#### THE OPENING WORDS OF WAR

1313 Until now the tension in the Quraysh tribe over the new religion had been resolved by words. Curses and insults had been exchanged: Mohammed condemned the ancient religion and customs on an almost daily basis, and the Quraysh mocked Mohammed and abused lower class converts. What blood had been drawn had been in the equivalent of a brawl. Dust had been thrown in the face of Mohammed, but no real violence had occurred and no one had died. Then there came a new kind of word:

*22:39 Those who have been attacked are given permission to fight because they have been persecuted, and surely Allah is able to make them victorious.*

And the end of war would come when Islam ruled:

*22:41 But surely Allah will help those who help Him in His cause. Allah is strong and mighty. Allah will surely help those who, once we establish them as leaders in the land, pray regularly and pay the poor tax and command what is right and forbid what is wrong. And the final outcome of all things is in Allah's hands.*

This was jihad, fighting in Allah's Cause. Those who resisted Mohammed were worse than killers, and their reward would be death and Hell.

*2:190 Fight for the sake of Allah those that fight against you, but do not attack them first. Allah does not love aggressors.*

*2:191 Slay them wherever you find them. Drive them out of the places [Medina] from which they drove you. Idolatry is more grievous than bloodshed. But do not fight them within the precincts of the Holy Mosque unless they attack you there; if they attack you put them to the sword. Thus shall the Kafirs be rewarded: but if they mend their ways, know that Allah is forgiving and merciful.*

*2:193 Fight against them until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme. But if they desist, fight none except the evil-doers.*

#### EMIGRATION

1314 Allah had given permission to fight. The Muslim Medinans had pledged to support Mohammed in war and help the Muslims from Mecca. The Muslims in Mecca left and went to Medina.

# MOHAMMED IN MEDINA

