

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SEERAH

BY
HASSAN HATHOUT, M.D., Ph.D.

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○ Almighty God, guide our steps,
and chart our course on the straight path
May our deeds be solely devoted to You.
○ Lord, ease our sojourn on this earth
and alleviate our exit from it.
May our best day be the day we
behold Your glory
Your servant
who is destitute without You

Hassan Hathout

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ERRATUM

Page	Line	Wrong	Correct
4	8	black stone	Black Stone
10	17	tack	trick
14	10	The Prophet	Abu Jahl
19	2	night of power	Isra and Miraj
21	10	Al	Ibn Al
21	19	Khatab's	Omar's
29	11	Rome	Ar-Rum
34	19	Makka	Madina
50	17	of that	that
51	2	betroth	betroted
52	22	hi jab	hijab
53	5	was	(delete)
54	7	began	(delete)

AN BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE SEERAH OF THE PROPHET

This introduction to the *seerah* of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, (*pbuh*) is meant to whet the appetite of the reader for further study. However, one should be warned not to accept everything available in the hundreds of books of *seerah* extant today. Parts of the *seerah* have been transformed into legend and fairy tale. Consequently, it is important to discriminate carefully among its many books. It is also important to be aware of the difference between the *seerah* of the Prophet and the science of *hadith*. The *seerah* deals primarily with events in the life of the Prophet, while *hadith* deals primarily with his sayings and traditions.

THE EARLY LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

Muhammad was of the best Arab lineage, born into the Bany Hashem branch of the tribe of Qureish. His father died before he was born and his mother died when he was 6 years old. He was, consequently, put into the care of his grandfather, Abdel Muttalib. Muhammad was actually descended from the Prophet Ibrahim and made well aware of his lineage at an early age. "I am the answer to the prayer of Ibrahim," was one of his sayings, referring to the verse in the Quran that mentions Ibrahim's words spoken to God at the very time of constructing the kaaba. Soon thereafter, Halimah Al Saadia came to Makka to seek a baby from a rich family to nurse. When she could not find one, she took the orphan child, Muhammad, and became his foster parent. She was well aware of the many rewards and blessings that Muhammad showered upon her life.

The Prophet was aware of his orphanhood and was reminded in receiving revelation (*Sura Duha*) of his orphan status. Early in his life he worked as a shepherd, later as an assistant mer-

chant, and then as a merchant. He was appointed to work in commerce for Khadijah, a wealthy and respected lady. He proved himself to be very honest and capable, which won him her admiration. On his first trade trip to Syria, Khadijah sent one of her servants along to report on him. Upon return, both profits and reports were excellent. After that, Muhammad was acclaimed *Al Amin*, which means "The Honest."

Muhammad never indulged himself in the delinquencies of the young. His adolescence was tame, and he committed no sins in his adult life. He never worshiped idols, as was the common practice at the time. He was aware of the events around him, living through the War of *Fujjar*, and being party to *Helf Al Fodul*, a treaty among the Makkan tribes to consolidate strong members in protection of the weak. This particular treaty was praised by Muhammad even after he became a prophet. He said that this was a treaty in the *Jahiliyah* that he would be glad for Islam to embrace. In this comment he shared the thought that we can have positive experiences

with anyone, including our enemies. Muhammad's diplomacies render encouragement to seek goodness everywhere.

When the Qureish proposed to renew the building of the kaaba, which was reconstructed many times throughout history, several tribes fought among themselves over which should have the honor of placing the black stone in repository. So, they decided to consult the first man to arrive on the scene. It happened that Muhammed, *Al Amin*, was the first to arrive. He suggested they place the black stone on his cloak. Muhammed then invited one man from each tribe to join with others in collectively carrying it. Muhammed himself then put the stone into place.

THE PROPHET'S MARRIAGE TO KHADIJAH

Khadijah was one of the most prestigious women among the Qureish, and Muhammad, as mentioned, was working for her. She took the initiative and sent a messenger to Muhammad to explore his feelings about marrying her. In the beginning, Muhammad was surprised and humbled at the idea. In the end, he asked his uncle, Abu Talib, to go and request her hand in marriage. At the time of the wedding, Muhammad was twenty-five and Khadijah forty years old. Their marriage was happy and successful. Khadijah was known among the Qureish as *Al Tahirah*, "The Pure." Muhammad was always grateful to her for marrying him, for he was poor and she was very wealthy. He knew that she married him for his integrity.

PRELUDE TO REVELATION

As Muhammad progressed in age beyond twenty-five, a first sign appeared as a prelude to receiving revelation. His dreams always came true. Whatever he dreamt was realized. In fact, one of the traditions of the Prophet outlines that realizing dreams is one of forty parts of prophethood. At this point Muhammad, a wise and ever-thinking person, acquired the habit of going to a cave, called Cave Hira, to meditate without interruption or distraction.

THE FIRST REVELATION

One night when Muhammad was in the cave, the angel Gabriel visited him, grabbed him, and ordered him to read. Muhammed was shocked by the event and was surprised by the request. He answered the angel telling him that he could not read. The angel grabbed him again and repeated the request, and the first verses of the Quran were revealed (*Sura Al Alaq*).

*Read in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher,
who created, Created man out of a mere clot of
blood. Read for thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He who
taught man , with the pen, taught that which he
knew not.*

Muhammad was frightened, and ran to Khadijah and told her what had happened to him. She assured him that this must be something good and took him to her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Noufal, who was a learned Christian. When he heard the story, he said, "I swear that this came from the same source as *Namous* Moussa (the *Torah* of Moses). I believe that you are going to be the prophet of this nation. I also believe that your people will hurt

you. If I live long enough to see it, I will support you and join you.”

STAGES OF DAWA

The first stage of *dawa* was for the Prophet to call his relatives and close friends to Islam. He selected people around him he thought would respond to his call. At the end of three years, he had amassed sixty-three persons to join him.

The second stage was to engage the tribes. One day he went to the top of Mount Al Safa and started calling the tribes one by one, posing a question to them, "If I told you that behind this mountain there is an army getting ready to attack you, would you believe me?" They answered, "Well, of course. You are *Al Amin*, and we have never known you to commit a lie." Then he said, "I am here to warn you." He started explaining that they should worship Allah, the One and Only God, and immediately abandon worshipping idols. Many people, including his uncle, Abu Lahab, did not understand.

The third stage was calling the Arabs in general. Muhammad sent emissaries to other tribes outside Makka and to the tribes that were coming for pilgrimage.

The fourth stage was to carry the message outside Arabia to other nations, including the Roman Empire and Persia.

He was vehemently opposed by the Qureish, who spared no effort to thwart his way. The first tactic they used was character assassination. They tried to tarnish Muhammad's image and attack his integrity. They first said that he was a priest. Then they said he was crazy. Later they dismissed him as a poet. Eventually, they accused him of actual sorcery.

The second affront of the Qureish was to warn other tribes against joining Islam, using scare tactics. They decried the Prophet as a dealer in mystical powers, intending to create rifts between man and wife, father and son, and brother and sister. Another tack they took was to imitate the Quran to try to disprove its uniqueness. Naturally, all the Qureishi plots failed; Muslims repeatedly challenged them to produce even one verse equal in any way to the verses of the authentic Quran.

Rhetoric was another ploy used to challenge the Prophet with questions such as, "If this was

truly from God, ask Him to cause the sky to rain stones on us. Let your God move the mountains of Makka;" and "Let your God send with you angels from the heavens." Threats were also bitterly disseminated to discourage all members of the movement.

Then came the stage of torture and persecution. The enemies of Islam humiliated the Prophet in every way they could. They chased and stalked the weak among the Muslims, as in the case of the family of Yasser, who were severely beaten and tortured. Somaya, the wife of Yasser, was killed after being tortured, and became the first martyr in Islam. Another example was Bilal Ibn Rabah, a slave owned by a man from Qureish. Enemies of Islam pinned him down under the burning summer sun, held by a huge stone cast upon his chest, and asked him to renounce Muhammad and Islam. His answer was "*Ahad. Ahad.*" (He is the One. He is the One.) They were never able to extract a single word of renunciation from him. The torture of Bilal continued until Abu Bakr bought him and set him free.

They also tried to lure Muhammad into abandoning his call. They offered him through his uncle, Abu Talib, status as king, great wealth in accordance with his desires, and the best medical treatment that existed at the time. The Prophet's answer was, "If they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to leave this mission, I will not, until it is established or until I die trying to fulfill it." Enemies tried to assassinate Muhammad by throwing a large stone on him and they masterminded other plots to kill him, as well.

In the midst of all this, there were some bright moments. One was the story of Omar Ibn Al Khattab accepting Islam. He intended to approach his sister and her husband to discipline them for joining Islam behind his back. When he arrived at their home, however, he heard them reciting verses from *Sura Taha*. Immediately thereafter, he asked to read from the same sheet and was inspired upon the moment to proceed to the house of the Prophet and announce his desire to become a Muslim. Stories like this act as litmus tests for the divin-

ity of the Quran. Omar was also brought to an abrupt change in his life by the slightest contact with the Quran. He had been a rough and cruel man with good knowledge of the Arabic language. When he heard the Arabic of the Quran, he was touched by the verses and was quickly transformed by the divine nature of his experience.

The Qureish decided to boycott Muhammad and his people. They forbade any exchange of words, mutual trade, or intermarriage, and they determined to maintain their ostracism. This embargo continued for three years. It is interesting to note that Islam gained a lot of supporters during this period, because so many disdained the cruelty of the Qureish and sympathized with the Prophet and his people.

Islam gained many Muslims during this period, and even more after the addition of the positive influence of Omar. One of the people who joined Islam during this period was Musaab Ibn Omair, who was a significant man in the history of *dawa*. He was taught and trained by the Prophet and was sent to Madinah at the young

age of eighteen to call people to Islam. Mussaab helped make Madinah a Muslim city before it ever saw the Prophet. Another significant man who joined Islam early is Abu Dthar. He loved the poor and supported the weak. Hamzah, another uncle of the Prophet, was also a very important personality in the history of Islam. He became a Muslim when he learned that Abu Jahal was about to hurt the Prophet badly. He warned the Prophet with much concern and anger, and declared his belief in Islam and his devotion to protect the Prophet. The exceptional faith of Omar Ibn Al Khattab and Hamzah marks a turning point in the history of *dawa*.

EMIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

The persecution of Muslims in Makka continued and *dawa* appeared to face a blocked road. The Prophet decided that it would be beneficial for a group of Muslims to emigrate to Abyssinia. The king of Abyssinia, who was a Christian, was known to be just and fair. There was a good chance that Muslims would be safe there. The first band to go was composed of ten people, including Uthman Ibn Affan and his wife Rukayah, the daughter of the Prophet. Several groups followed until the total number reached eighty-three. Abu Bakr wanted to go, but the Prophet asked him to stay.

The Prophet sent messages to the Negus of Abyssinia, greeting him and informing him about the status of Jesus Christ and his mother, the virgin Mary, and about Islamic beliefs. He invited him to join Muslims in worshipping the Only God. He asked him to protect Muslims and welcome them in his land until the situation improved in Arabia.

In reaction, the Qureish sent two of their most prominent and cunning people, Abdullah

Ibn Aby Rabiaa and Amre Ibn Alaas, to try to reclaim the Muslims from Abyssinia. They attempted to convince the Negus to hand them back the people who had deserted and ridiculed the religion of their fathers. They made the point that the emigres had come to Abyssinia with no intention of joining the religion of that country.

They tried to drive a wedge between him and the Muslims by bringing up the issue of Jesus Christ and the difference in the way Jesus is viewed in Islam. Their plot did not work, because the Muslims, headed by Jaffar Ibn Aby Talib, the Prophet's cousin, read to the Negus what the Quran says about Jesus and Mary.

This caused the Negus to draw a line on the ground, using a stick in his hand, about which he declared that the distinction between Christianity and Islam was minuscule with only a thin line of difference. Despite the fact that only eighty-three Muslims immigrated to Abyssinia, many of whom went back to Makka, fifty percent of the population of Abyssinia is Muslim today.

The lesson we can learn from the *hijra* to Abyssinia is that the oppressed should not succumb, but go as far as they can to flee oppression, protect their faith and principles. It is also permissible to go to non-Muslim lands to propagate *dawa*.

PRELUDE TO HIJRA

Three years before *hijra* was the year of sorrow for the Prophet. His uncle, Abu Talib, died, soon followed by Khadijah, the Prophet's wife. The Prophet was very sad. The ferocity of the people of Qureish escalated after the death of Abu Talib and Khadijah, and the Prophet decided to take the *dawa* somewhere else. He went to Al Taif, which is about 120 miles from Makka.

He was received very badly there. Stones were thrown at him and he was injured. He sat beside a grove of grapes and said his famous prayer to God, complaining about his weakness and his helplessness, and asking God for support and guidance. He ended his beautiful prayer by saying that, if what was happening to him was not a result of God's displeasure with him, he would gladly endure it.

He went back to Makka entering under the protection of a man named Motam Ibn Odey who was not a Muslim. A few months later the incident of Isra and Mi-eraj took place in which he was taken by God from Makka to Jerusalem,

and then from Jerusalem to somewhere in the heavens. This night of power was a very significant incident, because it was the occasion on which Muhammad was granted a glimpse of the Truth. *Salat*, as we know it now, was ordained during this journey.

This miraculous event was also a litmus test for the believers. When Muhammad explained to his wife about the journey, she advised him not to tell anyone for fear of further ridicule. He insisted on telling everyone. His closest friend, Abu Bakr, believed him immediately. This is the reason Abu Bakr was called *Al Siddeeqe*. Some, whose belief was not strong, were turned away by the Prophet's story.

The Prophet started talking to the tribes one by one by going to their camps and many of them accepted Islam. A delegation from the two major tribes of Madinah, Awes and Khazraj, came to meet the Prophet in Makka. Some of them accepted Islam and the Prophet sent back Musaab Ibn Omair with them to Madinah to teach about Islam.

The next pilgrimage season people from Madinah came again and gave their pledge to the Prophet in what is called the first “pledge of Aqabah.” The pledge statement was a promise: not to equate anyone or anything with God, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to kill their children, and not to disobey the Prophet in any moral matters for which they had received instruction from him.

In the following year seventy-three men and two women came from Madinah to discuss with the Prophet the prospect of his possible relocation to their city. They were met by the Prophet’s uncle. He asked them if they were willing to defend the Prophet and protect him if he went to Madinah.

They assured him that they were committed to doing so. They also asked for assurance that the Prophet would stay with them and not yearn to go back to his hometown of Makka. The Prophet assured them that he would stay with them through the best and the worst of times. The Prophet then decided that it was time to emigrate to Madinah.

Hijra, EMIGRATION TO MADINAH

The Qureish were frightened by the prospect of the emigration of Muslims to Madinah. They felt that they could keep Muslims under control, if the Muslims would stay with them in Makka. It was clear to the Qureish that, by going to another place hundreds of miles away, the Muslims would have a chance to regroup and build alliances with other tribes. They were determined at any price to block the Muslims' attempt to emigrate.

Knowing this Qureishi mind frame full well, Muslims began to secretly flee Makka for Madinah, one by one. An exception was Omar Ibn Al Khattab, who openly announced to the Qureish that he was going to Madinah. Al Khattab proclaimed publicly that whoever wanted his wife to be widowed or his mother to lose him should feel free to prevent Khattab's emigration.

The Prophet himself started to prepare for his *hijra* to Madinah, prompted by the news that the Qureish were conspiring to kill him, using a group of Qureishi swords from different tribes, so

that Bany Hashem would find it impossible to take revenge on any one tribe. In absolute secrecy, the Prophet planned his journey to Madinah. He chose Abu Bakr to be his companion, selected a guide who was not Muslim, and took an obscure and lesser known route to Madinah.

The Prophet traveled by the stealth of night and asked his cousin, Ali Ibn Aby Talib, to sleep in his bed to confuse the enemies of Islam. Asmaa, the daughter of Abu Bakr, brought food to the Prophet's secret band of escapees. A shepherd aided them by herding his flock just behind them, in order to distract followers and to erase and muddy their tracks as they progressed.

On their way they stopped at a cave called the cave Thawr The Quran described their state thus, – Those who were bent on denying the truth drove him away, (and he was but) one of two: when these two were hiding in the cave (and) the Apostle said to his companion, *“Grieve not: verily, God is with us.”* (9-40)

On the way to Madinah they passed by a place called Queba, where Ali Ibn Aby Talib

was waiting for them. There they established the first masjid which still exists today.

There are lessons we should learn from the *hijra* to Madinah. First, we should perform *dawa* where it is secure and where there is freedom to practice it. Secondly, we should place trust where it rightly belongs. The Prophet selected a non-Muslim guide, because he was the fittest to do the job. He also trusted two very young ladies, Ayesha and Asmaa, with crucial tasks.

The people of Madinah were anxious to receive the Prophet and daily observed the horizon, looking for a sign of his arrival. When he finally arrived, he was received with joy and many people wanted the prophet to stay in their houses. Hoping not to offend anybody, the Prophet told the crowd that he would allow his camel to go its way, and wherever it parked he would stay. The camel went and sat at a place that belonged to the orphans of Bany Al Najjar, who happened to be of the tribe of the Prophet's mother. In that spot the house of the Prophet and his *masjid* were erected.

ESTABLISHING THE ISLAMIC STATE

The *hijra* to Madinah was so significant that Omar used it to mark the beginning of the Islamic calendar. It was the beginning of the movement of Islam from theory to practice. It began the fulfillment of Islam as a system of life. It was the first step in establishing the Islamic state.

The issue of separation between church and state is worth mentioning at this juncture. It raises an ongoing debate in the West. This separation is possible and actually recommended among Christian nations, because in Christianity there is no state. Constitutions and laws are artificially and bureaucratically constructed to safeguard societies. On the other hand, there is no church in Islam. No one can monopolize the word of God. The constitution is divine with the laws extracted from the book of God and the authentic traditions of His Prophet. Consequently, this issue is not applicable in the case of Islam.

The Prophet coupled the *Muhajireen* (immigrants) and the *Ansars* (supporters). They

became mixed by brotherhood, sisterhood and intermarriage. He was also instrumental in mending relations between the Awes and Khazraj, who had been arch-enemies.

The Prophet worked out the Treaty of Madinah, which was the first treaty in Islamic history. The main elements of the treaty were as follows:

1. Maintenance of the integrity of all tribes, including Jews
2. Equality under the leadership of the Prophet
3. Freedom of religion for all people
4. Allegiance to God and His Messenger as final arbiters
5. No collusion against the state
6. No favoritism in the application of law
7. No sheltering or supporting enemies of any tribe participating in the treaty

GOD'S PERMISSION FOR SELF- DEFENSE AND RETALIATION

Muslims, having withstood thirteen years of oppression, were eager to fight back, but were waiting for permission from God and His Messenger. That permission came in the verse, Permission (to fight) is granted to those against whom war is being wrongfully waged. *Verily, Allah has indeed the power to make them victorious.* (22-39)

At that very moment the ethics of war were laid down for Muslims. The Prophet established the following rules for fighting:

1. Only defensive war is permissible.
2. Self-defense against aggression is permitted.
3. War should always be the last resort (after exhausting all other conflict resolution).
4. Perpetrators are responsible to protect plants, animals, and the environment.
5. Non-belligerents/civilians must be protected.
6. The wounded should not be killed.
7. Dead bodies may not be violated in any way.
8. All religions must be respected.

9. Overtures of peace must be considered.
10. Respect must be given to the shahada, whether witnessed or assumed.
11. Prisoners of war must be protected.
12. Leaders bear right of counsel and responsibility to consult expert counsel from the community.
13. All spoils of war are subject to the Rulings of Anfal.

THE BATTLE OF BADR

The Muslims who were given permission to fight heard that a Qureishi caravan had gone to Syria and would be coming back soon. In retaliation for the great torture and oppression suffered, the Prophet agreed to attack this caravan. Word of the Muslim threat reached Abu Sufian, the leader of the caravan. He dispatched a message to the Makkans, who prepared an army to take on the Muslims.

The Prophet received the news of the Makkan army preparation and of the fact that the forewarned caravan had escaped. Upon revelation from God, he decided to go ahead with the campaign as planned. The Prophet lay in wait until the army came.

Then with God's support, the Muslim band of approximately three hundred, with only two cavaliers, defeated an army of more than a thousand fighters in seventy cavalry units. This was a crucial battle in the history of Islam. The loss of this battle would probably have meant the swift and certain end of Islam in human history.

In the second year of *hijra*, the *Qibla* was shifted from Jerusalem to the kaaba. A revelation came from God in the Quran, responding to the Prophet's desire to move the *Qibla*. Also in the second year, fasting was ordained and a great deal of jurisprudence was revealed and delineated through the messages of the Quran. Between Badr and Uhud there were several other, less significant military campaigns. At the same time, the Romans defeated the Persians, which fulfilled a prophecy in the *Sura Rome*.

THE BATTLE OF UHUD

The Qureish prepared a large army consisting of three thousand fighters and two hundred cavaliers, lead by Khalid Ibn Al Waleed. The Prophet knew about the Qureish intention to fight and he felt it prudent to dig in and build the Muslim defense around Madinah. However, many young Muslims, filled with insult, wanted to take on the Kaffir army directly. The Prophet yielded with reluctance to their demands. He ordered a group of archers to situate themselves at the top of Mount Uhud, instructing them to hold their ground under victory or defeat. In the beginning of the battle, the Muslims had the upper hand and the archers could see that clearly. They began to think the battle was finished and ignored the Prophet's order, coming down the mountain to gain some booty.

The archers' error was noticed by Khalid Ibn Al Waleed and he led his cavalry around the mountain and climbed up from behind. Waleed's warriors then descended on the Muslims like a storm and there was great chaos in the Muslim army. Hamazah, the Prophet's

uncle, was martyred. It was also rumored that the Prophet had been killed and that caused a great deal of confusion. The Muslims soon regrouped and fought back. An interesting fact about this battle is that the medical corps of the Muslim army was entirely female. One, when she saw the Muslim situation in the battle, took off her nursing gear and picked up a sword and shield and fought side by side with the men. It was ruled in this battle that there should be no screams as the martyrs were buried.

After the battle, it was expected that the Prophet would rebuke the archers who disobeyed him, but he did not. He acknowledged the human tendency to err. Afterwards, a verse of the Quran was revealed, commending the Prophet for his leniency, suggesting that this kindness was needed to retain the soldiers' bond under great stress. Moreover, the prophet was ordered to consult with his fighting team, a point of revelation that introduced the concept of consultation in Islam. It was by Allah's grace that you dealt gently with them; had you been harsh and hard of heart, they would have bro-

ken away from you. So, forgive them and pray to God for their forgiveness, and consult with them in your affairs. (3-109)

The following rulings were derived from the battle of Uhud:

Conscription could be ordered for those fifteen and older with allowance for earlier ages for those who were specially endowed. This ruling came about when the Prophet was selecting conscriptors and one boy was trying to stretch himself to look taller. The Prophet wanted to exclude him for his young age, but the boy proved himself to be stronger than average for his age.

A cooperative role for women was affirmed, since they had actively participated in battle. Suicide (euthanasia) was prohibited. A man who was severely injured in the battle committed suicide and the Prophet said that his lot was hellfire.

Public interest overrides private interest. It had been necessary for the army to cross through private quarters.

Martyrs were to be buried in their clothes without washing or shrouding.

Burial codes were developed, allowing more than one to a gravesite.

Affirmation of *Shura* as mentioned before.

BATTLE OF BANU NADHIR

Banun Nadhir was a Jewish tribe in Madinah that saw that the Muslims were severely battered by the battle of Uhud. At this point their true feeling towards Islam surfaced. Although they already held an antiwar pact with the Prophet, their chief, Kaab Ibn Al Ashraf, went to Makka with forty knights and formed a military pact with Abu Sufian.

These two, together with the Qureish, planned to take on the Muslims in one massive group offensive. The Prophet was forced to preempt their plot and resist. He blockaded the threefold force until they had to surrender. He allowed them to leave Madinah with whatever possessions they could carry and to come back every year to collect their harvest.

The agreement included the order for the beaten forces to leave Makka within ten days. However, Abdullah Ibn Obay lured the vanquished into rejecting the agreement, saying that he would fight with them with an additional thousand men. He said, "If you fight, we will fight with you, and if you leave, we will

leave with you.” This was a promise he could not fulfill. Nevertheless, Obay’s friends rejected the agreement, were blockaded and had to surrender a second time. The second time they were allowed to leave but without the previously offered land rights to crop production.

From this small campaign some additional rulings have been derived:

- 1- “Prayer of fear” was decreed.
- 2- *Khamr* (alcohol) was prohibited.
- 3- Cutting of the fruits of the trees of the enemy was allowed, although no cutting of trees per se.

THE BATTLE OF AHZAB (KHANDAQ)

The Qureish were able to recruit other tribes as allies and were preparing for the next round with the Muslims. The Prophet started negotiating with the Jews of Madinah. He offered them half of the Madinan date crop if they would promise not to assist the Kaffirs in forthcoming offensives. Consequently, there was a pact between the Muslims and the Jews to jointly defend Madinah.

On the other hand, the Prophet still knew that there was a secret alliance between the Jews and the Kaffirs. He knew he had to break this dangerous alliance. So he sent a new young Muslim to the Jews, who told them, "If the Qureish are defeated, they will go back to Makka and leave you at the mercy of Muhammad. It would be smart to ask the Qureish to let you hold six of their eminent young people to guarantee their unwavering stand. He then went to the Qureish and told them that "It appears the Jews have some second thoughts. They will ask you to give them six

of your young people to give them to Muhammad to appease him.”

These ploys and intrigues took their toll on the Kaffir forces. When the battle started, there were a few skirmishes. A mighty storm blew and the Qureishi army was torn apart and had to leave without a serious fight.

THE BATTLE OF BANU QUORAIZAH

Banu Quoraizah was one of the Jewish tribes in Madinah. In response to their betrayal of the Prophet and their alliance with the Kaffirs, the Prophet called his fighters to march on Banu Quoraizah. This was the famous battle of Ahzab. To motivate them to hasten, he told them not to pray Asr before reaching Banu Quoraizah. Some companions took it literally and refused to pray until they reached there. Others understood that the objective was to hurry and not an order to delay the prayer. The Prophet did not blame either group.

The following rulings were derived from the battle of Banu Quoraizah:

1. The Lawfulness of delaying prayer (combining Asr and Maghrib) was established.
2. Prayer by gesticulation in cases of severe illness or injury was established.
3. Rules of adoption and marriage were developed. (based on the Prophet's Marriage to Zainab, his cousin, having been divorced by Zaid who hitherto was considered to be his son by adoption.)

4. Ethics of visiting (guests securing permission and leaving soon after the meal) were outlined.

THE BATTLE OF BANUL MUSTALIQ AND THE INCIDENT OF THE LIE

Banul Mustaliq was another Jewish tribe which was preparing an army to fight the Prophet. The Prophet had to go and fight them. On the way back from the campaign, "The Incident of the Lie" took place. Ayesha, the Prophet's wife, who was with the campaign, could not find her necklace and went to look for it. The caravan left, thinking that Ayesha was already inside her camel's *Hawdaj* (a small tent carried on the camel's back).

When Ayesha returned, she found nobody. So she waited until a Muslim was passing by, who took her on his camel to Madinah. After that incident, someone spread rumors tarnishing the reputation of the mother of the believers. The Prophet and Abu Bakr were deeply hurt by it. Ayesha learned about it by accident much later. Verses from the Quran were revealed announcing her innocence to the relief of everyone.

Several rulings were derived from this incident:

- 1- Punishment for adultery
- 2- Punishment for tarnishing the reputation of women
- 3- Ethics for receiving and dealing with bad news
- 4- Legal specifications of four witnesses for the crime of adultery
- 5- The ruling of Mulaanah:
 - a. A husband, accusing his wife of adultery, with no other witnesses can swear four times that he saw her in the act. The fifth time he must curse himself, if he is lying.
 - b. The wife can do the same to prove herself innocent.
 - c. In either case they become separated forever.
6. Rule disallowing personal anger to interrupt charity

The Quran admonished Abu Bakr to continue his charity toward the spreader of malicious rumors about his daughter.

THE TREATY OF HUDAYBIYAH

The Prophet and the Muslims wanted to perform umrah and sent messengers to the Qureish informing them of their intentions, but the Qureish refused to allow pilgrimages to Makka. The Prophet wanted to send Omar Ibn Al Khattab to negotiate with the Qureish, but Omar suggested Uthman Ibn Affan instead, who he had greater influence with the Qureish. Uthman set forth, but it was soon rumored that he had been killed by the Qureish. Muslims now had no choice but to prepare for another battle.

The Prophet asked the believers who had originally wanted to perform umrah if they were ready to fight the Qureish with him. It was soon thereafter under a particular tree that they all gave their pledge to fight by the Prophet's side until death. As fortune had it, Uthman had not really been killed. He came back hand-in-hand with emissaries from the Qureish and the following terms were agreed upon:

1. The Qureish would allow the performance of umrah, beginning one full year after the signing of the agreement. During times of umrah,

the Qureish would temporarily vacate Makka.

2. A ten-year anti-war pact was signed.
3. Muslims were obliged to return all Qureishi defectors to their original tribe, while any Muslim defectors would be exempt from transfer.
4. All nonaligned tribes would be free to align with either concern.

When dictating the treaty to Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet used "In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, which the Qureish objected to. Consequently, these words were changed to, "In the Name of God When he used the phrase, "Muhammad, the messenger of God," they objected and the phrase was changed to "Muhammad Ibn Abdallah."

This was humiliating to the Muslims, causing a near rebellion in objection to the treaty. This treaty that seemed so humiliating at the moment was later made reference to in the Quran as, "a great victory, because it was a prelude to the recovery of Makka. It provided the Prophet with ten years of peace.

THE BATTLE OF KHAYBAR

The Jews of Khaybar were also conspiring against the Muslims. The Prophet was forced to meet the challenge and the Muslims were victorious. At the same time that the victory at Khaybar was taking place, the Muslim emigrants in Abyssinia started to return to Madinah, and the Prophet was very happy to receive them.

During this period the following rulings were established:

1. Eating donkey meat was prohibited.
2. Eating the flesh of carnivorous animals was prohibited.
3. Partnerships between providers of labor and providers of land (capital) were permitted.
4. Sexual relations/contact with pregnant captives was prohibited.
5. Honesty became the ethical requirement between parties, be they friends or enemies.
6. Making up for missed prayers was decreed allowable.
7. *Muta* (temporary) marriage was prohibited.

The year after the treaty of Hdaybiyah the Prophet and the Muslims performed umrah, as promised, and at this time Khaled Ibn Al Waleed and Amre Ibn Al Aas accepted Islam. The Prophet began to consider extending Islam beyond the confines of Arabia. He sent messengers to Hercules of the Romans, Kessro of Persia, Moqauqis of Egypt, Negus of Abyssinia, and to the rulers of Bahrain and Oman.

THE GREAT RECOVERY OF MAKKA

Although there was a ten-year, anti-war treaty in effect, eventually a pro-Qureish tribe attacked a pro-Muslim tribe. This was tantamount to the Qureish breaking the treaty. This forced the Muslims to consider the treaty null and void and to prepare to march on Makka. Here is an interesting personal story that occurred side-by-side with the great moments of battle:

A Muslim named Hatib Ibn Abi Baltaa sent a woman with a message to the Qureish, warning them of his own group's eminent attack. Information of the disloyal act reached the Prophet, who dispatched men to find the woman and retrieve the message. When the message was retrieved and the man's guilt was proven, it was expected that he would be charged with major treason. He went to the Prophet and apologized, telling him that he feared for his family in Makka and needed to gain favor with the Qureish.

The Prophet accepted the traitor's apology and did not allow anyone to harm him. This

story shows the Prophet's tolerance of the shortcomings and the weaknesses of human beings.

Abu Sufian wanted to meet with the Prophet to try to avert the Makkan battle, but he was denied entry and audience. He pressed on to attempt the intercession of Abu Bakr, Uthman, and Ali, but again failed. A huge Muslim army of 10,000 marched on Makka and entered with virtually no resistance. Abu Sufian accepted Islam. As a courtesy to him, the Prophet announced neutral zones of protection for vanquished residents that included: the kaaba, Abu Sufian's home, and all private homes behind closed doors.

Next the Prophet destroyed all the idols around the kaaba and ordered Bilal to recite the call to prayer (Adhan) from the top of the kaaba. Tribal chieftains came to surrender to the Prophet. Muhammad simply replied, "What do you think I am going to do with you? Go, you are all free." He had the opportunity and the power to take revenge on his former persecutors, torturers, and enemies, but he chose to start a new relationship with them based on love.

The conquest of Makka was the conclusion of the duty of *hijra*. The Prophet said, “No emigration after the conquest.” *Hijra* means escape from oppression and flight toward Islamic freedom and truth. The concept will be at the heart of the spirit of *dawa* until the day of judgment.

THE BATTLE OF HONEIN

After the conquest of Makka, there was another battle with the tribe of Honein. At this point, the Muslim forces had been seriously reduced, since many had joined Islam simply to be among the victors. The Prophet's troops were initially defeated, until the few real Muslims cut through the shaft, stood firm, and claimed again great victory. The total casualties in all the wars and battles that took place at the time of the Prophet were not more than 500 on both sides.

THE MARITAL LIFE OF THE PROPHET

The Prophet's marital life consisted of two phases: twenty-eight years in monogamous marriage to Khadijah and ten polygamous years after her death. His second marriage was to Sawdah, an old woman who refused initially. He proposed after that to Ayesha, the daughter of his closest companion, Abu Bakr.

A number of orientalists criticized the Prophet for proposing to Ayesha at a very young age, yet another man had proposed to Ayesha even before the Prophet. Abu Bakr did not accept the Prophet's proposal until he asked the other family if they were still interested in Ayesha. They were no longer interested for fear of that their son would become a Muslim. That cleared the way for Abu Bakr to respond positively to the Prophet's proposal. The evidence is clear that such things were done honorably in those days, and that Ayesha was extraordinary in her maturity.

Then the Prophet married the widow, Hafsa, daughter of Omar Ibn Al Khattab. She

was a difficult woman. Omar had tried unsuccessfully to betroth her to Abu Bakr and Uthman. When the prophet noticed Omar's distress, he proposed to her himself. Then he was married to Zaenab bint Khozaimah, widow of Obaidah ibn Al Harith, the first martyr in the battle of Badr. She needed someone to look after her.

Following that, he married Um Salamah whose husband was killed at Uhud. He also married Zeinab bint Jahsh, who was previously married to his adopted son. Then he married Um Habibah bint Abu Sufian who had been a Muslim very early and emigrated to Abyssinia. In Abyssinia her husband converted to Christianity, placing her in difficulty. She couldn't remain married to a Christian and couldn't return to her country for fear of persecution. The Prophet sent an emissary to request her hand in marriage, and she accepted.

Then he married Jowairiah bint Al Harith, who was a captive from the tribe of Banul Mustaliq. She wanted to pay her own price to her master to set herself free. She went to the

Prophet, seeking his help, and the Prophet proposed to her, paid her price to her master, and married her.

He also married Rayhanah bint Zayd, a captive from Banu Quoraizah, and Mary, who was sent to him as a gift from the ruler of Egypt. She became the mother of the Prophet's son, Ibrahim, who died in childhood, as had two earlier sons from Khadijah, Altayib and Alqasim. The polygamy of the Prophet is not to be emulated by Muslims. It was a unique right and responsibility given to him by God. Polygamy was not invented by Islam. It had previously existed in Judaism and Christianity. Islam served to regulate it within the social norms of the time.

The wives of the Prophet are called the mothers of the believers. The Quran states that they were not like other women. It was not permissible for them to remarry after the Prophet died. They were required to stay home. When they needed to speak to strangers, a hi jab or curtain was used appropriately to conceal them.

THE FINAL DAYS OF THE PROPHET

During the farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet gave the famous speech in which he hinted that it might be the last time he would be able to speak to his followers, a Quranic verse was revealed at that time was:

This day I perfected your religion for you, and completed my blessings unto you, and willed that Islam be your religion. (5-3)

Also Sura Nasr was revealed and all this indicated that the Prophet's life was near its end. Omar ibn Khattab cried when he heard Sura Nasr.

Shortly after that the Prophet became very ill and had to stay in bed at home. At that time, it was reported that he whispered something in his daughter Fatima's ear, upon which she cried. Then he whispered something else and she smiled happily. When she was asked about this, she said that her father had told her that he was given the choice between this life and the hereafter, and that he had chosen the hereafter. She revealed that her father's words had caused her to cry, because that meant that the Prophet

would soon die. Then he had added, "You, Fatima, will be the first of my relatives to join me there." This second whisper made her happy. Fatima was indeed the first of the Prophet's household to die after him.

Soon thereafter, the Prophet contracted a fever causing him began to request frequent pouring of water on his head to relieve the heat. Four days before he died, he was so sick that he asked Omar to get someone to dictate a letter for him. But Omar, fearing that the Prophet might be delirious, did not do it. The Prophet became briefly unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he never asked to transcribe again.

Throughout his illness, the prophet continued to lead the prayer, until he repeatedly fell unconscious during salat. At such times he asked Ayesha to appoint Abu Bakr to replace him. Instead, she passed the assignment to Omar, for fear the people might resent Abu Bakr for replacing the Prophet in such a traditional duty. When the Prophet heard Omar's voice, he was angry and insisted that Abu Bakr lead the

prayer. The following day, the Prophet went outside to pray and prayed behind Abu Bakr. The day after that, he went outside for the prayer again, looked at the Muslims praying, smiled in satisfaction, and went back in. The last time he spoke, he said, "Heed Allah in women and in what your right hands possess (your servants)." He died in Ayesha's arms.

His death was a great shock for the Muslims, to such an extent that Omar said, "whoever says that the Prophet died, I will cut his neck with my sword." Finally, Abu Bakr was able to get the people to their senses by reciting the verses of the Quran to them that clarify that Muhammad was none but a messenger of God, and that, if he died or was killed, no one should diminish their faith in any way. Abu Bakr was then selected, in a meeting between the representatives of Ansar and the *Muhajreen*, to be the Prophet's first successor.

About the Book

The book presents the Life of Prophet Muhammad in a simple style.

About the Authors

Hassan Hathout is a Physician, scientist, teacher, speaker, thinker, writer, poet and ethicist, as well as an Islamic scholar. He is one of those encyclopedic personalities reminiscent of older times. As an Egyptian American, he is bicultural and bilingual. Appalled by the distorted image of Islam in the West, he has made it his mission to explain Islam as it is. He is the author of more than a dozen books and unnumberable medical and non-medical papers and articles.

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