

The Life of Muhammad The Prophet

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Chapter 1

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Readers are requested to recite Sura e Fatiha for all the Marhumin of the family.

Chapter 2

Preface

This book was first published in 1971 as part of the Islamic Correspondence Course run by Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania.

The idea behind writing this book was to satisfy the needs of our new generation - the youths and the students who are unable to study the scholastic books written by the Muslim scholars and whose only source of information seems to be the biased writings of orientalists presented as "objective" and "authentic" studies.

The book became very popular. It was at once translated into Swahili and was serialized in Islam Affairs newsletter of Atlanta, Georgia (U.S.A). Since then, it has been reprinted several times in Dar-es-Salaam and Mombasa. Then I revised and expanded it in 1992. Now Al-Haj Mulla Asgharali M. M. Jaffer (President, World Federation of K. S. I. Muslim Communities) has kindly offered to publish it under his supervision. It is hoped that this edition will prove even more popular and useful.

I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr Athar Hussain (ex Secretary to the Govt. of U.P., India) and the late Nawwab Ahmad Husain Khan of Paryanwan (U.P, India) as well as to late 'Allama Sayyid 'Ali Haydar Naqavi and late 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husain Tabataba'i whose books, *Prophet Muhammad and His Mission*, *Tarikh-e-Ahmadi*, *Tarikh-e-A'immah* and *Tafsir Al-Mizan*, respectively, have provided the main structure of this book. May Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala increase their rewards.

S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

Dar-es-Salaam
August 10, 1999

Chapter 3

Creation

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The "Noor" (Light) is created

When Allah intended to create the creatures, He first created the "Noor" (Light) of Muhammad. Al-Qastalani (in *Al Mawahibu'l-Ladunniyah*, vol. 1, pp. 5, 9, 10) has quoted the Prophet's traditions to the effect as transmitted through Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari and 'Ali (a.s.). The well-known historian al-Mas'udi (in his *Maruju 'dh-dhahab*) quotes a lengthy tradition from 'Ali (a.s.) to the effect that when Allah created, first of all, the Light of Muhammad, He said to it: "You are My chosen one and the Trustee of My Light and Guidance. It is because of you that I am going to create the earth and the skies, lay down reward and punishment, and bring into being the Garden and the Fire." Then the tradition goes on to speak about the Family of the Prophet, about creation of the angels, of the souls of the world, of the covenant taken from the souls which combined the belief in the One God with the acceptance of Muhammad's Prophethood.

This is why Ibn 'Abbas narrates saying that the Prophet said: "I was Prophet when Adam was between soul and body (i.e. when Adam's creation was in its preliminary stages)" (at-Tabarani, *A Mu'jjam al-Kabir; Al Khasa'is al-Kubra*, vol.1, p.4).

Muhammad's Light adorned the 'Arsh (Throne) of God. When eons later, Adam was created, the Light was put in his forehead. It continued its journey, generation after generation, through numerous prophets and their successors till it came to Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.). From Ibrahim (a.s.), it came to his eldest son, Prophet Isma'il (a.s.).

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) said: "Verily Allah chose Isma'il from the progeny of Ibrahim, and chose Banu Kinanah from the progeny of Isma'il, and chose Quraish from the Banu Kinanah, and chose Banu Hashim from Quraish, and chose me from Banu Hashim." At-Tirmidhi has narrated this tradition from *Wathilah ibn al-Asqa'* and has said that this tradition is sahih (correct).

Abul-Fida quotes in his *Tarikh* (History) a tradition wherein the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) says: "Gabriel said to me: 'I looked at the earth from the east to the west, but I did not find anyone superior to Muhammad, and I looked at the Earth from the east to the west but did not find any progeny superior to the progeny of Hashim.'"

The Children of Isma'il (a.s.)

Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) had brought his eldest son Isma'il (a.s.) with his mother Hajirah (Hagar, Hebrew) from Kan'an to a barren valley which was later known as Mecca. He used to visit them once a year. When Isma'il was old enough to help him, Prophet Ibrahim built the House of Allah known as

the Ka'bah.

There was no water in the land when Isma'il and Hajirah were left there. The well of Zamzam miraculously appeared for Isma'il. The tribe of Jurhum, finding the well, sought the permission of Hajirah to settle there. During the annual visit of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), permission was given to them, and ultimately Isma'il married in the same tribe. He begot twelve sons; the eldest was called Qidar (Cedar, in Hebrew).

The Isma'ilites increased in number, thus fulfilling the promise of Allah to Ibrahim to multiply Isma'il exceedingly. (See Genesis 21:13)

The Isma'ilites, by and by, spread all over Hijaz. They were not organized and consequently had no power. About 200 years before Christ, 'Adnan from the children of Qidar arose to some fame. The genealogy of 'Adnan up to Qidar is not agreed upon. The Arabs have narrated various genealogies. The Prophet (s.a.w.w.), in order to emphasize the Islamic ideology that personal qualities, rather than genealogy, was the criterion of excellence, and with a view not to entangle himself in such unnecessary and useless arguments, ordered the Muslims thus:

"When my genealogy reaches 'Adnan, stop."

In the third century of the Christian Era (CE), there arose a leader named Fahr in that family. He was son of Malik, son of Nadhar, son of Kinanah, son of Khuzaymah, son of Mudrikah, son of Ilyas, son of Madhar, son of Nazar, son of Ma'ad, son of 'Adnan.

Some people think that this Fahr was called Quraish, and that is why his children came to be known as the Quraish.

In the 5th generation after Fahr, in the fifth century of the Christian era, a very powerful personality appeared on the scene. He was Qusayi, son of Kilab, son of Murrah, son of Lu'i, son of Ghalib, son of Fahr.

Many people say that it was not Fahr but Qusayi who was called Quraish. The famous Muslim scholar, Shibli al-Nu'mani, writes: "Qusayi became so famous and achieved such a high prestige that some people say that he was the first man to be called Quraish, as Ibn Abdi Rabbih has written in his book *Al-'Iqdu'1-Farid*, clearly saying that as Qusayi gathered all the children of Isma'il from far and wide and made them leave the nomadic way of life, settling them around the Ka'bah, he was called Quraish (The Gatherer). Al-Tabari quotes caliph 'Abdul-Malik ibn Marwan as saying that "Qusayi was called Quraish, and that nobody was given this name before him."

When Qusayi came of age, a man from the tribe of Khuza'ah named Hulail was the trustee of the Ka'bah. Qusayi married his daughter and, according to Hulail's will, got the trusteeship of the Ka'bah after Hulail. Qusayi established many new institutions:

· He established Dar-un-Nadwah (Assembly House). It was there that discussions were held to settle important matters like war and peace, caravans assembled before going out, and marriages and other ceremonies were conducted.

· He established the system of Siqayah (making arrangements to supply water to the pilgrims during the *hajj* days) and Rifadah (to feed them during those days).

· It appears from al-Tabari that this system was followed in Islam up to his time, i.e. 50 years after Qusayi.

· He made arrangements for the pilgrims to stay at Mash'arul-Haram at night and illuminated the valley with lamps, thus making their stay comfortable.

· He rebuilt the Ka'bah and dug the first well at Mecca. Zamzam was filled up long ago and nobody knew of its actual location.

Arab historians unanimously say that he was generous, brave, and sympathetic; his ideas were pure, his thinking clean, and his manners very refined. His word was followed like a religion during his lifetime and even after his death. People used to visit his grave at Hajun (present day Jannat Ma'alla). No wonder that he was the undisputed chief of the tribe, which owed its strength and power to his leadership. To him had converged all the responsibilities and privileges of the tribe:

· The trustee of the Ka'bah (Hijabah),

· Chairman of Dar-un-Nadwah which he himself had established;

· He fed the pilgrims (Rifadah);

· He arranged to provide them with drinking water (Siqayah); The standard-bearer of the Quraish in wartime (Liwa), and

· The commander of the army (Qiyadah).

These were the six privileges, which were looked upon with great respect and before which all Arabia bowed down. The most wonderful aspect of his life is his selflessness. In all the accounts of his life, there never appears any hint that by being the undisputed leader of the tribe, he had gained anything for his own self.

Qusayi had five sons and a daughter: 'Abduddar was the eldest, then Mughirah (known as 'Abd Munaf). Qusayi loved his eldest son very much, and at the time of his death, he entrusted 'Abduddar with all the six responsibilities mentioned above.

But 'Abduddar was not a very able man, whereas 'Abd Munaf was acknowledged as a wise leader even during the life of his father, and his words were dutifully obeyed by the whole tribe. Because of his nobility and benevolence, he was commonly known as "generous." Thus, it came to pass that 'Abduddar shared all his responsibilities with 'Abd Munaf. And 'Abd Munaf virtually became the paramount chief of the Quraish.

'Abd Munaf had six sons: Hashim, Muttalib, 'Abdush-Shams, and Nawfil were the most famous among them.

There was no trouble while 'Abduddar and 'Abd Munaf were alive. After their death, a dispute started between their children concerning the distribution of the six responsibilities. A war had almost started before it was agreed upon that Siqayah, Rifadah, and Qiyadah should go to the children of 'Abdu Munaf, and Liwa' and Hijabah should remain with the children of 'Abduddar, while the chairmanship of Dar-un-Nadwah should be shared by both families.

Hashim

Hashim's name will always shine in the history of Arabia and Islam, not only because he was the great grandfather of the Holy Prophet, but in his own right because of his tremendous achievements.

He may well be compared with any great leader of his time. He was the most generous, the most prestigious, and the most respected leader of the Quraish. He used to feed the pilgrims during *hajj* with royal open-handedness. But the best testimonial to his benevolence is his title "Hashim" whereby he came to be known. Once, there was a great famine in Mecca. Hashim could not look silently at the sorry plight of the Meccans. He took all his wealth, went to Syria, purchased flour and dried bread, brought it to Mecca and daily slaughtered his camels for gravy; the bread and the biscuits were broken into the gravy and the whole tribe was invited to partake of it. This continued till the famine was averted and all the lives were saved. It was this extraordinary feat that earned him the name "Hashim," the one who breaks (the bread). Hashim's real name was 'Amr.

Hashim was the founder of the trade caravans of the Quraish. He obtained an edict from the Byzantine emperor, which exempted Quraish from all kinds of duties or taxes when entering or leaving the countries under his domain. He obtained the same concession from the emperor of Ethiopia. Thus, the Quraishites started taking their trade caravans in winter to Yemen (which was under the Ethiopian rule) and in the summer to Syria and beyond up to Ankara (under Byzantine rule). But the trade routes were not safe; therefore, Hashim visited all the dominant tribes between Yemen and Ankara and entered into agreements with all of them. They agreed that they would not attack the trade caravans of Quraish, and Hashim undertook on behalf of Quraish that their trade caravans would bring all their necessities to their places of abode and would buy and sell at reasonable prices. Thus, in spite of all the looting and plundering that prevailed in Arabia then, the trade caravans of Quraish were always safe.

It is to this achievement of Hashim that Allah refers in the Qur'an, counting it as a great bounty of God upon Quraish:

For the security and safeguard enjoyed by the Quraish, their safety during (their) journeys by winter and by summer, let them worship the Lord of this House who provides them with food against hunger, and with security against fear. (Qur'an, Ch. 106)

There was a pathetically pessimistic tradition in Quraish known as *Ihtifad*. When a poor family could not feed itself, it would go out to the desert and, entering a tent, remain there till death claimed all of its members one by one. They thought that nobody would know of their plight and, by thus starving to death, they would protect their honor.

It was Hashim who persuaded Quraish to actively combat the poverty instead of succumbing to it. His scheme: He joined one rich person with a poor one, provided that their dependents were equal in number. That poor person was to help the rich one during the trade journey. Whatever increase of

capital accrued by way of profit would be shared equally by both. Thus, there would be no need for *Ihtifad*.

This scheme was wholeheartedly accepted and put in effect by the tribe. This wise suggestion not only removed poverty from the Quraish but also created a feeling of brotherhood and unity among them.

These achievements were enough to justify a very long life. But our wonder knows no bounds when we learn that Hashim was only 25 years old when death overtook him at Gaza, Palestine, approximately 488 A.D. His grave is preserved, and Gaza is also called "Ghazzah Hashim," i.e. Hashim's Gaza.

Hashim was very handsome, and because of his looks and prestige, many chiefs and even rulers wanted him to marry their daughters. But he married Salma daughter of 'Amr (from the tribe of 'A Bani Najjar) of Yathrib. She was the mother of Shaibatul-Hamd (commonly known as 'Abdul-Muttalib) who was in his infancy when Hashim died.

'Abdul-Muttalib

Hashim had five sons: 'Abdul-Muttalib, Asad, Nadhlah, Saifi and Abu Saifi. But the last three had no children; Asad had only a daughter, Fatima bint Asad, mother of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. Thus, it was only through 'Abdul-Muttalib that the progeny of Hashim survived.

'Abdul-Muttalib was born at Yathrib (later named Medina) in his maternal grandfather's house, and he was only a few months old when Hashim died. After Hashim, his brother Muttalib succeeded him in all the privileges mentioned earlier. After some time, Muttalib went to Yathrib and brought his nephew to Mecca. When Muttalib entered Mecca with his nephew behind him on his camel, some people said: "This is the slave of Muttalib!" Muttalib said: "No! He is my nephew and son of my deceased brother Hashim." But the name stuck, though today few people know that the real name of 'Abdul-Muttalib was Shaibatul-Hamd.

Muttalib loved 'Abdul-Muttalib and looked after him very well. But 'Abdush-Shams and Nawfal were hostile towards him. At the death of Muttalib, 'Abdul-Muttalib succeeded him in the two privileges held by him, i.e. *Siqayah* and *Rifadah*.

In spite of the enmity of his own uncles, his personal virtues and qualities of leadership earned him in later days the title of "Sayyidul Batha" (the Chief of Mecca). He lived to the ripe age of 82. A carpet was spread for him before the Ka'bah and nobody dared to put his foot on it. In later days, this rule was broken only by the orphaned son of 'Abdullah (i.e. the Holy Prophet) who used to sit there and 'Abdul-Muttalib forbade Quraish from interfering with the child because, he told them, "This child of mine is to have a special dignity."

It was 'Abdul-Muttalib who had forbidden his children from using intoxicants. It was he who used to enter the cave of Hira during the month of Ramadan to spend the month in remembrance of Allah and in feeding the poor. Like his father and uncle, he used to feed and provide water for the pilgrims during the *hajj* season. During whole year, even the beasts and birds were fed from his house and accordingly, he was called "Mut'imut-tayr" (feeder of the birds).

Some of the systems originated by 'Abdul-Muttalib were later adopted in Islam. He was the first person to make Nadhr and fulfill it, to give one fifth (khums) of the treasure in the way of Allah, to forbid prohibited degrees, to cut a thief's hand, to make intoxicants unlawful, to forbid fornication and adultery, to discourage the system of killing the daughters, to discourage the *tawaf* around the Ka'bah without clothes, and to fix the compensation of manslaughter (killing someone by mistake unintentionally) at 100 camels. Islam adopted all these systems.

It is not possible to give the whole history of 'Abdul-Muttalib in this short chapter, but two important events must be mentioned: the recovery of Zamzam and the attempted attack on the Ka'bah by Abraha, the governor of Ethiopia over Yemen.

Hundreds of years ago, Zamzam was filled up and nobody knew where it was. (It is not the place here to give the details as to how and by whom it was filled up). One day, 'Abdul-Muttalib was sleeping in Hatim of the Ka'bah. Someone told him in a dream to dig the Taybah and get water. He asked where Taybah was, but the vision vanished without any reply. The same vision was repeated the second and the third day, but the names were changed every time. On the fourth day, he was told to dig Zamzam. 'Abdul-Muttalib asked where Zamzam was. He was told the signs. 'Abdul-Muttalib, with his eldest (and at that time the only) son, Harith, dug the place where Zamzam is today. On the fourth day the wall of the well appeared, and after some more digging, the water-level was reached.

At this success, 'Abdul-Muttalib cried "Allahu Akbar!" and said: "This is the well of Isma'il." The Quraishites gathered around him and started arguing that since the original well was the property of Isma'il, the recovered well, too, belonged to the whole tribe. 'Abdul-Muttalib rejected their claim, saying that it was given especially to him by Allah. The Quraishites wanted to fight and fill up the well then dig it up again.

At last, they agreed to put their case before the wise woman of the tribe of Sa'd in Syria. Every clan sent one man as its representative. 'Abdul-Muttalib, with his son and a few companions, were in the same caravan. But he had his separate arrangements. In the middle of a desert, the water which 'Abdul-Muttalib had was finished. The whole group was suffering from acute thirst. The leaders of the other party refused to give them any water. They were near their death. 'Abdul-Muttalib advised his group to dig some graves, so that when anybody died, others would bury him. Thus only one person, the last one to die, would remain unburied. They dug up their own graves. The opposite party was enjoying the scene.

On the second day, 'Abdul-Muttalib exhorted his companions that it was cowardice to succumb to death like that without making a last effort. Thus, he rode his camel, and the camel arose. In doing so, its foot hit the earth and Lo! A stream of cool sweet water appeared! 'Abdul-Muttalib cried "Allahu Akbar!" His companions, too, cried "Allahu Akbar!" They quenched their thirst, filled their water-skins, and then, 'Abdul Muttalib invited the opposite group to fill their water-skins from that fountain. His own companions objected, but he said, "If we do the same as they had done, there would be no difference between us and them."

The whole caravan gathered around that fountain. They drank and filled their water-skins. Then they said: "O 'AbdulMuttalib! By Allah! Allah has decided between you and us. He has given you victory. By Allah, we will never dispute with you about Zamzam. The same Allah who has created this fountain here in this desert for you has given Zamzam to you."

Zamzam became the personal property of 'Abdul-Muttalib. He dug the well deeper. Two deer made of gold, ~~some swords and coats of mail were found buried therein.~~ Again, the Quraish demanded a share in the treasure. Again, 'Abdul-Muttalib refused. At last, the dispute was decided by lot which gave the golden deer to the Ka'bah and the swords and the coats of mail to 'Abdul Muttalib; the Quraish got nothing.

It was then that 'Abdul-Muttalili dedicated one-fifth of his own share to the Ka'bah.

Chapter 4

The Year of the Elephant

The Year of the Elephant

The above-mentioned episode happened in his youth. Now we come to the most important event of his life which took place just eight years before his death. By then, he was the patriarch of the tribe.

The Ethiopian governor of Yemen, Abraha al-Ashram, envied the reverence in which the Ka'bah was held by the Arabs. Being a staunch Christian, he built a big cathedral in Sanaa (the capital of Yemen) and ordered the Arabs to go there for pilgrimage instead. The order was ignored. Not only that; someone entered the cathedral and made it unclean. The wrath of Abraha knew no bounds. In his fury, he decided to avenge it by demolishing and desecrating the Ka'bah itself. He advanced with a large army towards Mecca.

There were many elephants in his army; he himself rode a huge elephant. It was an animal which the Arabs had not seen before, thus the year came to be known as 'Amul-Fil (the year of the elephant) and it started an era for reckoning the years in Arabia. This remained in use until the days of 'Umar ibn al Khattab when, on the advice of Hazrat 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, he replaced it with the era of Hijra.

When news of the advance of Abraha's army came, the Arabian tribes of Quraish, Kinana, Khuza'ah and Hudhayl joined together to defend the Ka'bah. Abraha sent a small contingent towards Mecca to capture the camels and young people. The contingent captured many animals, including two hundred of 'Abdul-Muttalib's.

Meanwhile, a man from the tribe of Himyar was sent by Abraha to Quraish to advise them that Abraha had not come to fight them: his only aim was to demolish the Ka'bah. But if the Quraish resisted, they would be crushed. Then followed a frightening description of his huge army, which admittedly, was much larger and better equipped than all the tribes put together.

'Abdul-Muttalib replied to this ultimatum in these words: "By Allah, we do not want to fight him. So far as this House (the Ka'bah) is concerned, it is the House of Allah; if Allah wants to save His House, He will save it, and if He leaves it unprotected, no one can save it."

Then 'Abdul-Muttalib, with 'Amr ibn Lu'aba and some other prominent leaders, went to see Abraha. Abraha was informed before hand of the prestige and position of 'Abdul-Muttalib. Also the personality of 'Abdul-Muttalib was very impressive and aweinspiring. When he entered Abraha's tent, the latter rose from his throne, warmly welcomed him, and seated him beside him on the carpet. During the conversation, 'Abdul-Muttalib requested him to release his camels. Abraha was astonished. He said, "When my eyes fell upon you, I was so impressed by you that had you requested me to withdraw my

army and go back to Yemen, I would have granted that request. But now, I have no respect for you. Why? Here I have come to demolish the House which is the religious center of yours and of your forefathers and the foundation of your prestige and respect in Arabia, and you say nothing to save it. Instead, you ask me to return your few camels back to you?!"

'Abdul-Muttalib said: "I am the owner of the camels, (therefore, I tried to save them), and the House has its own Owner Who will surely protect it." Abraha was stunned by this reply. He ordered the camels to be released, and the deputation of Quraish returned.

On the second day, Abraha issued orders to his army to enter Mecca. 'Abdul-Muttalib told the Meccans to leave the city and to seek refuge in the surrounding hills. But he, together with some leading members of Quraish, remained within the precincts of the Ka'bah. Abraha sent someone to warn them to vacate the building. When the messenger came, he asked the people who their leader was. All fingers pointed towards 'Abdul-Muttalib. He was again invited to go to Abraha where he had a talk with him. When he came out, he was heard saying: "The Owner of this House is its Defender and I am sure He will save it from the attack of the adversaries and will not dishonor the servants of His House."

'Abdul-Muttalib then took hold of the door of the Ka'bah and, crying to Allah, prayed in the following words (of poetry):

(O Allah! Surely a man defends his own home, therefore, Thou shouldst protect Thy Own House. Their cross and their wrath can never overcome Thy wrath. O Allah, help Thy Own people against the fellows of the cross and its worshippers).

Then he, too, went to the summit of the hill, Abu Qubays. Abraha advanced with his army. Seeing the walls of the Ka'bah, he ordered its demolition. No sooner had the army reached near the Ka'bah than an army of Allah appeared from the western side. A dark cloud of small birds (known in Arabia as Ababil) overshadowed the entire army of Abraha. Each bird had three pebbles: two in its claws and one in its beak. A rain of the pebbles poured down from the birds, and in a few minutes, the whole army was destroyed. Abraha himself was seriously wounded; he fled towards Yemen but died on the way.

It is to this important event that Allah refers in Chapter 105:

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the Elephant? Did He not make their treacherous plan go astray? And He sent against them birds in flocks, striking them with stones of baked clay, so He rendered them like straw eaten up. (Qu'ran, 105)

Some historians have tried to minimize the impact of the Divine intervention by suggesting that the army perished because of an epidemic of smallpox. But such an explanation creates more puzzles than it solves. How was it that the whole army was seized by that epidemic just when it was advancing on the Ka'bah? How was it that not a single soldier survived that epidemic? Why was it that no Meccan caught that contagious epidemic? Moreover, if there was no epidemic in Mecca before or after the sudden burst of the plague, where did the epidemic come from?

This epoch-making episode happened in 570 A.D. It was in the same year that the Holy Prophet

Islam was born to `Abdullah and Amina.

Chapter 5

Faith of Ancestors

Faith of the Ancestors of the Holy Prophet

It is the accepted belief of the Shi'a Ithna-Asheris, the Hanafis, and the Shafi'is that the ancestors of the Holy Prophet from 'Abdullah to Qidar ibn Isma'il, and from there right up to Adam, were true believers. They believed in the One and Only God and faithfully followed the Divine religion of the times. From Qidar to 'Abdullah, all of them followed the *Shari'ah* of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), which was the religion prescribed for them by God.

The famous Sunni scholar Imam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti has written nine books on this subject and has proved beyond doubt that all the ancestors of the Holy Prophet were true believers. Shaykh 'Abdu Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi has written: "All the ancestors of the Holy Prophet from Adam up to 'Abdullah were pure and clean from the uncleanness of disbelief and paganism. It was not possible for Allah to put that Holy Light (of the Holy Prophet) into dark and dirty places, i.e. the loin of a pagan man or the womb of a pagan woman. Also, how could it be possible for Allah to punish the ancestors of the Holy Prophet on the Day of judgement and thus humiliate him in the eyes of the world?"

The Holy Prophet himself has said: "I was always being transferred from the loins of the clean ones to the wombs of the clean ones."

'Allamah al-Majlisi has written that it is the unanimous belief of Shi'a scholars that the father, mother and all ancestors of the Holy Prophet followed the true religion, and his Light never entered into the loin of any pagan man or the womb of any pagan woman. Also, the accepted traditions say that all his ancestors were "Siddiqun" (Truthful Ones): They were either prophets or successors of prophets.

After Isma'il, all his ancestors were successors of Isma'il (a.s.). Other traditions specify that 'Abdu Muttalib was a "Hujjat (Proof) of Allah and that Abu Talib was his successor."

Amirul-Mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said: "By Allah, neither my father ever worshipped the idols, nor my grandfather 'Abdul-Muttalib, nor his father Hashim, nor his father 'Abd Munaf. They prayed facing towards the Ka'bah and followed the religion of Ibrahim."

If you look again at the preceding life-sketches of some of the ancestors of the Holy Prophet, you will find that many traditions established by them are now included into the tenets of Islam. Qusayy started the night-stay at Mash'arul-Haram during the *hajj*, and Allah kept that system in Islam. Can anybody think that Allah would confirm a religious rite established by a pagan?

Likewise, as we have seen the customs established by 'Abdul-Muttalib were adopted in Islam. ~~Could Allah glorify 'Abdul-Muttalib if he were a pagan?~~

Also, read again the events of the discovery of Zamzam and the appearance of the well in the desert. Read again the events of 'Amul-Fil, and see the firm conviction that Allah would surely save His House. That statement, repeated several times, shows that 'Abdul-Muttalib knew what was going to happen. Why was he so sure? There can only be one explanation: He was informed by Allah. And this in turn, proves the earlier statement that he was a "Hujjat" of Allah.

In all these events and narrations, he is always seen praying to Allah, and there is no hint from any quarter that he ever prayed to the idols of Quraish (to Hubal, Lat or 'Uzza). When he finds Zamzam, he exclaims "Allahu Akbar!" When he emphasizes anything, he swears by the name of Allah. When he stakes his claim, he says that Allah gave it to him. What further proof is needed to show that it was the family of True Believers?

The Holy Prophet said: "Jibril (Gabriel) said to me: 'I searched the east and the west of the earth, but I did not find anyone superior to Muhammad; and I searched the east and the west of the earth, but I did not find the children of any father better than the children of Hashim.'"

Also, the Holy Prophet said: "Verily, Allah chose Kinanah from the children of Isma'il, and He selected Quraish from Kinanah and chose the children of Hashim from the Quraish, and selected me from the children of Hashim."

'Abdullah

When, at the discovery of Zamzam, 'Abdul-Muttalib encountered the enmity of Quraish, he was quite worried because he had only one son to help him. He, therefore, prayed to Allah, making a nadh (vow) that if Allah gave him ten sons to help him against his enemies, he would sacrifice one of them to please Allah. His prayer was granted, and Allah gave him twelve sons, out of whom five are famous in the Islamic history: 'Abdullah, Abu Talib, Hamza, 'Abbas and Abu Lahab. The other seven were Harith (already mentioned), Zubayr, Ghaydaq, Muqawwim, Dharar, Qutham., and Hijl (or Mughirah). He had six daughters: 'Atikah, Umaymah, Baydha', Barraah, Safiyyah, and Arwi.

When ten sons were born, 'Abdul-Muttalib decided to sacrifice one of them according to his nadh. Lot was cast and 'Abdullah's name came out. 'Abdullah was the dearest to him, but he did not flinch from the decision of the fate. He took 'Abdullah's hands and started towards the place where sacrifices were offered. His daughters started crying and begged him to sacrifice ten camels in place of 'Abdullah. At first 'Abdul-Muttalib refused. But when the pressure of the whole family (and in fact the whole tribe) mounted, he agreed to cast lot between 'Abdullah and ten camels. Again the name of 'Abdullah came out. On the suggestion of the people, the number of the camels was increased to twenty, again, the same result. Repeatedly, the number was increased to thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty and ninety. But the result was always the same. At last the lot was cast between 100 camels and 'Abdullah. Now the lot came out for the camels. The family was jubilant, but 'Abdul-Muttalib was not satisfied. He said: "Ten times the name of 'Abdullah has come out. It is not fair to ignore those lots just for one lot." Three times more, he repeated the lot between 'Abdullah and 100 camels, and every time the lot came out for the camels. Then he sacrificed the camels and the life of 'Abdullah was saved.

It was to this incident that the Holy Prophet referred when he said: "I am the son of the two sacrifices." He meant the sacrifices of Isma'ii and 'Abdullah.

The name of the mother of 'Abdullah was Fatimah, daughter of 'Amr ibn `Aidh ibn 'Amr ibn Makhzum. She was also the mother of Abu Talib, Zubayr, Baydha', Umaymah, Barra and 'Atikah.

A year before "the year of the elephant," 'Abdullah was married to Aminah daughter of Wahb ibn 'Abd Munaf ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilab. In that very gathering, 'Abdul-Muttalib married Hala, daughter of Wuhaib, i.e. cousin of Aminah. Hala gave birth to Hamza, and Thawbiyah, the slave-girl of Abu Lahab, breast-fed him. She also gave her milk to the Holy Prophet for some time. Thus, Hamza was the uncle of the Holy Prophet and also his cousin as well as foster brother. Various traditions put the age of 'Abdullah at the time of his marriage at 17, 24 or 27 years.

'Abdullah went with a trade caravan to Syria. While returning, he fell ill and stayed at Yathrib (Medina). When 'Abdul-Muttalib sent Harith to look after him and bring him back, he had already passed away. 'Abdullah was buried in Yathrib. The Wahhabis walled up his grave and nobody was allowed to visit it. Then, in the 1970s the Wahhabis dug up his body together with those of his companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and buried them somewhere else under the pretext of extending the Mosque.

'Abdullah had left some camels, goats, and a slave-girl, Ummu Ayman. The Holy Prophet got it all as his inheritance.

Chapter 6

Birth

The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is born

Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was born in such a family on Friday, the 17th Rabi'-ul-Awwal, 1st year of 'Amul-Fil (corresponding to 570 C.E.) to bring the Message of God to the world. In Sunni circles, 12th Rabi'-ul-Awwal is more famous. Thus, the prayer of Ibrahim while constructing the Ka'bah was granted:

Lord! And raise a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thine verses, and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them, indeed Thou art the Mighty, the Wise (Qur'an, 2:129)

And the tidings of Christ came true:-

O Children of Israel! Surely, I am the messenger of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Torah and giving the good news of a Messenger who will come after me whose name will be Ahmed. (Qur'an, 61:6)

'Abdullah, father of the Prophet, died a few month before (or two months after) his birth, and his grandfather 'AbdulMuttalib took over the care and upbringing of the child. After a few months according to the age-long custom of the Arabs, the child was entrusted to a bedouin woman Halima by name, of the tribe of Bani-Sa'd, for his upbringing.

When he was only six years old, he lost his mother as well; so, the doubly-orphaned child was brought up by 'Abdul-Muttalib with the most tender care. It was the will of God that the Prophet should undergo all the sufferings, pains and privations incidental to human life in order that he might learn to bear them with becoming fortitude and raise his stature in human perfection. Not two years had passed before 'Abdul-Muttalib also expired.

'Abdul-Muttalib died at the age of 82, leaving the care and custody of the orphaned Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) to Abu Talib. Abu Talib and his wife, Fatimah Bint Asad, loved Muhammad more than their own children. As the Holy Prophet himself said, Fatima Bint Asad was his "mother" who kept her own children waiting while she fed the Holy Prophet, kept her own children cold while she gave him warm clothes. Abu Talib always kept the child with him day and night.

Abu Talib had succeeded 'Abdul-Muttalib in *Siqayah* and *Rifadah* and was an active participant in the trade caravans. When Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was 12 years old, Abu Talib bade farewell to his family to go to Syria. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) clung to him and cried. Abu Talib was so moved that he took the child with him. When the caravan reached Busra in Syria they, as usual, stayed near the

monastery of a monk, Buhayra. It is not possible to give here the full account of that visit. Suffice it to say that the monk, seeing some of the signs, which he knew from the old books, was convinced that the orphan child was the last Prophet-to-be. To make sure, he started a conversation with him, and at one point said: "I give you oath of Lat and Uzza to tell me... " The child cried out: "Don't take the names of Lat and Uzza before me! I hate them!" Buhayra was now convinced. He advised Abu Talib not to proceed to Damascus "because if the Jews found out what I have seen, I am afraid they will try to harm him. For sure, this child is to have a great eminence."

Abu Talib, acting on this advice, sold all his merchandise for cheaper prices than and then returning at once to Mecca.

Sacrilegious War (Harb-ul-Fijar) and League of Virtuous (Hilful-Fudhul)

At a place known as 'Ukaz, a great annual fair used to be held during the month of Dhul-Qa'dah during which war and bloodshed were forbidden. At the time of the fair, 'Ukaz presented a scene of pleasure and abandonment with its dancing girls, gaming tables, drunken orgies, poetic contests and shows of prowess ending frequently in brawls and bloodshed. At one of the fairs, war broke out between the Quraish and the Banu Kinanah on one side and the Qais 'Aylan on the other. This war continued for a number of years with a considerable loss of life and varying fortunes. The lewd scene of drunken affrays and the horrors of the war must have created a deep impression on Muhammad's sensitive mind. When the Quraish were ultimately victorious, a league was formed, on the suggestion of Zubayr, an uncle of the Prophet, to prevent disturbances of peace, to help victims of oppression, and to protect travelers. Muhammad took a very active interest in the functioning of this League which came into being as a result of a settlement known as Hilf-ul-Fudhul between Banu Hashim, Banu Taym, Banu Asad, Banu Zuhrah and Banu Muttalib. The League continued to function for half a century following the inception of Islam.

Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) marries Khadijah

Now, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was old enough to go with the trade caravans. But Abu Talib's financial position had become very weak because of the expenses of *Rifadah* and *Siqayah*, and it was no longer possible for him to equip Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) with the merchandise on his own. He, therefore, advised him to act as agent for a noble lady, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, who was the wealthiest person in Quraish. It is written that in the trade caravans, her merchandise usually equaled the merchandise of the whole tribe put together.

Her genealogy joins with that of the Holy Prophet at Qusayy. She was Khadijah daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn 'Abdul-'Uzza ibn Qusayy.

The reputation which Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) enjoyed for his honesty and integrity, led Khadijah to willingly entrust her goods to him for sale in Syria. He traded in such a way that the goods earned more profit than expected, and yet he was praised for his integrity, honesty and generosity. Khadijah was very much impressed. Only two months after his return to Mecca, he was married to Khadijah. He was twenty-five years of age and Khadijah was forty and a widow.

Reconstruction of the Ka'bah

In about 605 A.D., when the Holy Prophet was 35 years old, a flood swept Mecca and the building of the Ka'bah was badly damaged. The Quraish decided to rebuild it. When the walls reached a certain

height, a dispute arose between various clans as to whom should the honor of placing the Black Stone (Hajar Aswad) in its place go. This dispute threatened to assume serious proportions but, at last, it was agreed upon that the first person to enter the precincts of the Ka'bah the next morning should arbitrate this issue.

It so happened, that first person was none other than Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). The Quraish were pleased with the turn of the events because Muhammad was well recognized as the Truthful and Trustworthy personality.

Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) put his own robe on the ground and put the Black Stone on it. He told the disputing clans to send one representative each to hold the corners of the robe and to raise it. When the robe was raised to the required level, he took hold of the Stone and put it in its place. This was his judgement, which settled the dispute to the satisfaction of all the parties.

At this time, he had entered into several business partnerships and always acted with great integrity in his dealings with his partners. 'Abdullah, son of Abu Hamza, narrates that he had entered into a transaction with Muhammad (s.a.w.a.). Its details had yet to be finalized when he had suddenly left promising that he would return soon. When, after three days, he went again to the spot, he found Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) waiting for him. Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) did not remonstrate with him. He just said that he had been there for all those three days waiting for him. Saib and Qays, who also had business transactions with him, testify to his exemplary dealings. People were so impressed by his uprightness and integrity, by the purity of his life, his unflinching fidelity, and his strict sense of duty that they called him "al-Amin," the trusted one.

Chapter 7

The Age of Ignorance

The Age of Ignorance

It was an age of ignorance (*ayyamul-jahiliyyah*) in which, generally speaking moral rectitude and the spiritual code had long been forgotten. Superstitious rites and dogmas had replaced the tenets of the Divine religion.

Only a few Quraishites (the ancestors of the Holy Prophet and a handful of others) remained followers of the religion of Ibrahim (a.s.), but they were an exception and were not able to exert any influence on others who were deeply submerged in pagan rites and beliefs. There were those who did not believe in God at all and thought that life was just a natural phenomenon. It is about these people that the Qur'an says:

And they say: There is nothing but our life of this world; we live and die and nothing but time annihilates us.(Qur'an, 45:24)

Some believed in God but not in the Day of Resurrection or reward and punishment. It is again about their belief that the Qur'an says:

Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first. (Qur'an, 36:79)

While a few believed in God as well as in the reward and punishment in the life hereafter, they did not believe in Prophethood. It is about them that the Qur'an has said:

And they say: What sort of prophet is he that eats and goes about in the market? (Qur'an, 25:7)

But, by and large, the Arabs were idolaters. They did not, however, recognize idols as God but only as intermediaries to God. As the Qur'an has pointed out, they said:

We do not worship them save so that they may bring us nearer to Allah.(Qur'an, 39:3)

Some tribes worshipped the sun, others the moon. But the great majority, while indulging in idolatry, believed that there was a Supreme Being, the Creator of the heavens and the earth whom they called "Allah." The Qur'an says:

And if you ask them: Who has created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient?, they will cry out 'Allah'. Then whither are they going? (Qur'an, 29:61)

And when they sail in boats, they sincerely solicit the aid of Allah, but when He brings them safe to the land, behold! They ascribe others (with Him). (Qur'an, 29:65)

Christianity and Judaism, in the hands of their then followers in Arabia, had lost their appeal.

Sir William Muir writes:

Christianity had now and then feebly rippled the surface of Arabia and the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current, but the tide of indigenous idolatry and superstition, setting out from every quarter with an unbroken and unebbing surge towards the Ka'bah, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of the Ka'bah held the Arab mind in thralldom, vigorous and undisputed. After five centuries of Christian evangelization, it could only claim a sprinkling of disciples among the tribes, and as a converting agent was no longer operative.

The Dawn of Prophethood

It was a man from among themselves who was to lift the Arabs from their slough of ignorance and depravity into the light of faith and devotion to one God.

Because of its geographical position and connection by land and sea routes with the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, Arabia had been powerfully influenced by the superstitious beliefs and customs prevailing in many parts of these continents. But once it forsook disbelief and unbecoming practices, it could, as a result of the same geographical position, easily become the center of enlightenment radiating guidance and knowledge to the entire world.

When Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was 38 years of age, he spent most of his time in meditation and solitude. The cave of the mount Hira was his favorite place. It is there that he used to retire with food and water and spend days and weeks in remembrance of Allah. Nobody was allowed to go there except Khadijah and 'Ali. He used to spend the whole month of Ramadhan therein.

The period of waiting had come to a close. His forty years of life had varied experiences, and from the world's point of view, he had developed a maturity of mind and judgement, although in reality he was the embodiment of perfection from the very beginning. He has said: "I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay." His heart was overflowing with profound compassion for mankind and a pressing urge to eradicate wrong beliefs, social evils, cruelty and injustice. The moment had arrived when he was to be allowed to declare his prophethood. One day, when he was in the cave of Hira, Jibril (Gabriel) came to him and conveyed to him the following message of Allah:

Read in the name of thy Lord Who created, created man from a clot (of congealed blood): Read and thy Lord is most Bountiful, no taught with the pen, taught man that which he knew not. (Qur'an, 96:1-5)

These were the first *ayats* to be revealed, and the date was the 27th of Rajab, 40th year of elephant (610 C.E.).

The flow of the Divine message which continued for the next twenty-three years had begun, and the Prophet had arisen to proclaim the Unity of God and the Unity of Mankind, to demolish the edifice of superstition, ignorance, and disbelief, to set up a noble conception of life, and to lead mankind to the

Commencement of the Mission

The task was stupendous. The Prophet, therefore, started his mission cautiously, confining initially to his own close relatives and friends. He was met with immediate success. His wife Khadija testified to his truth as soon as she heard the news of the revelation from God. Then his cousin 'Ali and his liberated slave and adopted son Zaid, readily accepted the new faith, Islam, "submission to the Will of God." The fourth was Abu Bala.

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in his book *Al-Isabah*, and 'Abdul Malik ibn Hisham in his book *A Sirah* have written that:

"Ali was the first to accept Islam and pray (offer salat), and that he accepted whatever was revealed to the Messenger by the Lord. At that time, 'Ali was only ten years old. After 'Ali, Zaid ibn Haritha accepted the Islamic creed and prayed and then Abu Bakr embraced Islam. The companions of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qarzi, Salman the Persian, Abu Dharr, Miqdad, Khabbab, Ab Sa'eed al-Khudri and Zaid ibn al-Arqam testify that 'Ali was the first to proclaim Islam. The celebrated companions have given 'Ali preference over others."

Justice Ameer Ali writes in his *Spirit of Islam*:

"It is a noble feature in the history of the Prophet of Arabia, and one which strongly attests the sincerity of his character, the purity of his teachings and the intensity of his faith in God, that his nearest relations, his wife, beloved cousin and intimate friends, were most thoroughly imbued with the truth of his mission and convinced of his inspiration. Those who knew him best, closest relations and dearest friends, people who lived with him and noted all his movements, were his sincere and most devoted followers."

John Davenport writes in his *Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*:

"It is strongly corroborative of Mohammed's sincerity that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household, who, all intimately acquainted with his private life could not fail to have detected those discrepancies which more or less invariably exist between the pretensions of the hypocritical deceiver and his actions at home."

Slowly the message spread. During the first three years, he gained only thirty followers. In spite of the caution and care exercised, the Quraish were well posted with what was going on. At first they did not take much note and only jeered at the Prophet and the plight of his followers. They doubted his sanity and thought him crazed and possessed. But the time had come for proclaiming the will of God in public.

Calling the Near Ones

After three years, the call came from Allah:

And warn thy near relations (Qur'an, 26:214)

This *ayat* (verse) ended the period of secret preaching and heralded the open proclamation of Islam.

Abu Muhammad Husain al-Baghawi (in his *Tafisir-Ma'alim ut-Tanzil*), Shaikh 'Ala'uddin 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi, known as Khazin al-Baghdadi, in his *Lubab-ut-Ta'wil*, best known as *Tafsir Khazin*, Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Husain al-Bayhaqi (in his *Dalail-un-Nubuwwah*), Jalaluddin as-Suyuti (in his *Jam'ul Jawami*), 'Ala'uddin 'Ali Muttaqi (in *Kanz-ul-'Ummal*), Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir at-Tabari (in *Tarikh-ur-Rusul-wal-Muluk*), Abu Sa'adat Mubarak ibn Athir al-Jazari (in *Tarikh-ut-Tamim Kamil*) and Isma'il Abul Fida (in his history, *Kitab-ul-Mukhtasar fi Akhbar-il-Bashar*) have quoted 'Ala' as saying:

"When the verse *Wa andhir 'Ashiratakal-aqrabin* was revealed, the noble Messenger called me and ordered me, 'O 'Ali! The Creator of the world has made me warn my people about their doom, but in view of the condition of the people and knowing that when I will give them the words of Allah, they will misbehave, I felt depressed and weakened and therefore I kept quiet until Gabriel came again and informed me that there should be no more delay. Therefore, O 'Ali, take a measure of food grain, a leg of a goat and a big bowl of milk and arrange for a feast, then call the sons of 'Abdul Muttalib unto me so that I may deliver to them the words of Allah.' I did what the Prophet had told me to do and the sons of 'Abdul Muttalib, who were about forty in number gathered together. Among them were the uncles of the Prophet: Abu Talib, Hamza, 'Abbas and Abu Lahab. When the food was brought, the Prophet lifted a piece of meat and tore it into small morsels with his own teeth and scattered the pieces on the tray and said, 'Start eating in the name of Allah,' All people present there had the food to their fill although the milk and the food were just sufficient for one man. Then he intended to speak to them, but Abu Lahab interfered and said, 'Verily, your comrade has entranced you.' Having heard this all of them dispersed and the Messenger did not get a chance to speak to them.

On the next day, the Messenger, of the Lord again said to me: 'O 'Ali? Make arrangements again for a feast as you had done yesterday, and invite the sons of 'Abdul Muttalib'. I arranged for the feast and gathered the guests as I was asked to do by the Prophet. Once they had finished the food, the Messenger addressed them thus: 'O sons of 'AbdulMuttalib, I have brought for you the best blessing of this world and of the next, and I am appointed by the Lord to call you unto Him. Therefore, who amongst you will help me in this cause in order that he should be my brother, my successor and my caliph?' Nobody responded. But I, although the youngest of the congregation, said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I am here to be your helper in this task.' The Prophet then patted my neck very kindly and said 'O my people! This 'Ali is my brother, my successor and my caliph amongst you. Listen to him and obey him.' Having heard it from the Prophet, they all burst into laughter and said to Abu Talib 'Hearken! You are ordered to obey and follow your own son! '"

This event has also been recorded by Thomas Carlyle in *Heroes and Hero Worship*, by Gibbon in *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Davenport in *Apology for Muhammad and The Koran* and by Washington Irving in *Muhammad And His Successors*, with all its details.

Abul-Fida, in *Kitabul-Mukhtasar fi Akhbaril-Bashar* states that some of the verses composed by Abu Talib prove the fact that he had accepted the Prophethood of the Prophet from the core of his heart. A translation of a few poetic verses is given here:

You have called me (to Islam) and I believe that you are truthful, straightforward and trustworthy
And there is no doubt in my belief that the religion of Muhammad is the best of all the religions of

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