



# Islam, Mohammed and the Muslims

## Chapter 1

THE Islamic religion claims about 2 billion adherents in Asia, Africa and Europe, with growing numbers in the Americas. In recent years, Islam (often called Mohammedanism) and the Muslims have increasingly come to the fore, attracting worldwide attention as a result of the wide and sustained media coverage of terrorist acts of Islamic extremists. The continued fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, the terrorism of 9/11 in the United States, the bombing of the Spanish trains and the London Underground, Iran supporting Hezbollah and Hamas and the developing of nuclear weapons by Iran. All of these events have added to the general uncertainty of the Time of Trouble of this our day. This is due, in part, to the oil-rich Muslim countries exerting their influence on other nations, the Arab-Israeli and Iraq-Iran conflicts, the growing Black Muslim movement in the U.S. and their and Hanafi Muslims' acts.

Because of this wide publicity, many have wondered (and some have inquired of us) about the origin and history of Islam and the Muslims, Islam's doctrines and practices, whether or not the Muslims accept the Bible's Old and/or New Testament teachings, how their teachings compare with Bible teachings, what are the good points and the weaknesses in Islamic teachings, *etc.* We therefore present this treatise, hoping it will be informative and helpful to many.

The word *islam* means *submission—surrender—to the will of Allah* (Arabic for God). The name Muslim is also spelled Moslem (in some places Mussulman is used). It means literally, *one who submits, or surrenders, to the will of Allah.*

Muslims believe that Mohammed was God's Prophet. Mohammed (born 570 A.D., died 632) claimed that he received many revelations in Arabic from Allah (God) through the angel Gabriel. These form the Koran, or Quran (meaning *recitation, reading*), a book divided into 114 chapters, called *suras*. We will give some references to and quote from it. Having given these few preliminary explanatory remarks, we now proceed to set forth some pre-Islamic Arab history, a biography of Mohammed, an account of his successors and the growth of Islam, its holy writings, schisms and sects, and a comparison of its teachings with the Bible, especially the teachings of Jesus, manifesting the latter's great superiority.

### ARABIA BEFORE MOHAMMED

#### The "Days of Ignorance" in Arabia

Mohammed indicates that until he came, the Arabs had had no guide since Ishmael (other than perhaps the vague Luqman, or Lokman—said to have lived in David and Solomon's day; sura 31). These so-called "days of ignorance" (see sura 36: 1-5; 34: 43) show some strange contrasts.

Tribal life in Arabia bred a love of open spaces, a deep sense of loyalty to leaders and a fanatical desire for independence. Yet such was the Arabs' pride in physical prowess that they would readily follow a good leader into war. They were fanatically sensitive to points of honor. This bred in the worst of them a cruel disregard of the rights of others, and in the best a higher degree of chivalry, integrity and fidelity. Hospitality, even to strangers, was freely bestowed.

The Arabs had evaded assimilation into the Persian empire. They had no walled houses that could be attacked. "Home" to them was the expanse of desert land. Their swift movements, hardihood and knowledge of the desert made conventional warfare useless against them, while in sudden strikes their swords took a heavy toll. Although most Arabs were illiterate, their language was admirably suited to their life, containing expressions of beauty, wisdom and noble sentiment. Poets were a part of their fighting tribes.

Arab pride, however, was selfish; it often did not protect the vulnerable. A girl was married long before puberty, lest she bring dishonor on her father. In more brutal cases, young girls were even buried alive. Such terrible injustices prevailed as dark and evil products of their way of life, though some good men gave even their lives to save others from suffering and death under established customs. So low was the value placed on human life when compared with personal or tribal honor that accidental death caused by another was not distinguished from murder. Both were avenged by retaliatory killing. Blood money was despised, and feuds existed continually.

Social justice was haphazard, as "wise men," sorceresses and oracles were consulted in deciding vexed cases. Only where honor was not involved did fear of civil strife and slaughter lead to compromise and forbearance. Where tribes became small, or extreme admiration for a hero-figure was strong, loyalties would often swing toward another chosen clan or leader. Genealogies in pre-Islamic days were honored and often related but were very unreliable as to blood relationships, frequently owing more to adoptions into stronger tribes rather than to being born into them.

### **The Land—Mecca, Medina and Yemen**

Arabia is largely desert, with some tracks and caravan routes. Only two reliable motor roads, which converge at Riyadh, link the Persian Gulf with the Red Sea. Ancient customs and culture are still common, in Arab countries even today. Though most Arabian states are fabulously oil-rich, their social and technological progress has been very slow, inhibited by autocratic rulers and Islamic extremists. Before Mohammed's day, Arabia was saved from obscurity only by desultory trading, as caravans moved to and from old Sheba in the South, and from Mecca across to the Persian Gulf and on to Muscat, an Arabian port on the Gulf of Oman.

Mecca, then a place of artisans and merchants, had little to commend it other than the proximity of the sanctuary, or Kaaba, containing the famous Black Stone. Tribes gathered there, communicated and exchanged their produce. Idolatry and licentious rites abounded, which Meccans fought to retain when reform threatened.

About 200 miles north of Mecca was Yathrib, later called Medina, "City of the Prophet." Jewish colonists had settled there; some were said to have been even from Moses' day. Just prior to Mohammed's historic appearance, this influential Jewish population, in civil conflict with a powerful, idolatrous tribe of Arabs, was enslaved. Christian communities, too, existed in the South, largely of Gnostic origin, but strongly affected by Nestorius' teachings, which had an energetic missionary center in Iraq.

About 400 miles south of Mecca was the Yemen, the ancient Saba, by many believed to be the Sheba whose queen put difficult questions to Solomon (1 Kings 10). This part of Arabia was greatly influenced by Judaism in the first 500 years A.D., with many converts from Arab ruling classes, their subjects and neighboring tribes. Later, Christianity gained ground rapidly.

### Religion and the Kaaba

Before Mohammed, religion among the Arabs was, generally speaking, of two kinds—(1) the Sabeian (Job 1: 15; Isa. 45: 14; Joel 3: 8), an old form of Semitic idolatry of Mesopotamian origin and imbued with Hindu polytheism. Both Greek and Arabic writers attest that, among the early pagan Arabs, stones were worshiped; (2) the Hanyf (*sound in faith*) monotheists who linked themselves with Abraham through Ishmael. Mohammed knew of this link and used it in validation of his claim to supersede the Jewish prophets and Jesus, saying that Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian (sura 3: 60, 89; 4: 162; 16: 121).

A vague tendency to uniformity prevailed among the Arabs where the unity of God and morality were not at issue. Three months in the Fall and one in the Spring were holy months, in which no wars were fought and pilgrimages were made to holy places. The rest of the year there were constant wars or local skirmishes, and life was hard, poor and dangerous for most Arabs.

The Christianity of the East Roman Empire, centered in Constantinople, was carried orally into Arabia by settlers and traders. Zoroaster had stirred Persia with his monotheistic teachings, but although still active, these had become pale and corrupt in comparison to the powerful moral force felt in his day.

Judaism had degenerated into formalistic ritual observance and had lost much of that vital spark which incited Jews of former (and later!) days to heroism.

In the Mecca valley was the Kaaba, with its famous Black Stone. Legend says the stone (possibly a meteorite, about 7 inches in diameter) was given to Adam on his being barred from Eden, and that it originally was white but became black by absorbing the sins of those who kissed or handled it. The Kaaba (the legend says) was first set up by Adam, and later Abraham and Ishmael rebuilt it (sura 22: 27; 3: 91). Prominent from ancient times, it has been a focal point for all Arabs even to our day.

## Movement toward Reform and a Spirit of Unity

As Mohammed's day approached, changes were imminent. The Byzantine and Persian civilizations had strengthened Arabian trade routes. Commercial influences challenged the old ways. Emerging trade and wealth were endangered by fighting clans and nomads. Travelers to and from Greek and Persian cultures despised and ridiculed the customs of old Arabia; this galled the proud Arabs and prompted attempts at reform.

Jews for centuries—and Christians later—had filtered into lands north and south of Mecca. Their teachings stimulated discussion, promoted reform and attracted many converts. Typical of these was Warakah the Meccan (a relative of Kadijah, Mohammed's first wife). He became a Christian and is credited with translating at least the Nativity part of the Gospels into Arabic. This was useful to Mohammed in later years. Another, Zaid, was a great reformer of the old Sabeian religion in Mecca, proclaiming the unity of God, the evils of idolatry and the need for moral and religious changes.

A new spirit of unity pervaded the traditionally divided people, especially after the battle of Dhu Kar, when a daring Bedouin chief whose honor was at stake defied the full force of the Persian southern army and by courage and stratagem won a victory that shook the idea of the Persians' invincibility. The rising tide of Arab nationalism presaged a future conquest of the empire of the Khosroes (Persian kings of the Sassanid dynasty). Mohammed's claim to a Divine appointment came to an Arab world prepared for unification, ready to challenge the old ways, and to replace the debasement and debauchery inherent in idolatrous practices with a more civilized and disciplined order of society.

## THE LIFE OF MOHAMMED

### Origins and Early Life

Mohammed (meaning *praised*) was born in Mecca. His parents' names are given as Abdullah (*servant of Allah*) and Aminah (*secure*), of the Hashem family. The Hashemites were of the powerful Koreish tribe, which then predominated in Mecca. Arab genealogists alone make Koreish a person, in a fanciful line of tribal progenitors. Ali, Mohammed's cousin, declared the Koreish to be Nabateans, nomadic Semitic Arabian traders of about 500 B.C., who developed a remarkable civilization 200 years later centered in Petra, in Jordan.

Disinterested authorities agree that the origin of the Koreish tribe is unknown, although some say that they claimed descent from Joktan (Gen. 10: 22-30) and not from Abraham, a descendant of Peleg, Joktan's brother (Gen. 10: 25; 11: 17-27). From Joktan sprang the 13 tribes of Arabia (1 Chron. 1: 19-23). Many Biblical maps show Joktan's descendants as inhabiting the central and eastern Arabian highlands, where Mecca lies.

"Adopting" a tribe for such reasons as social acceptability, safety or honor was common, and any pre-Islamic Arab's true lineage remains at best a matter for conjecture. Thus we see that Mohammed's line of descent is uncertain; any search soon becomes lost in the obscurity of unrecorded genealogies, further confounded by the Arabic genius for imaginative invention.

Being of the prominent Hashem family and preeminent Koreish tribe, Mohammed could claim to be "Araba el Araba" (*an Arab of Arabs*). Similarly, the Apostle Paul referred to himself as a "Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. 3: 5). Mohammed was nevertheless of modest stock; his father was a merchant of the poorer kind, who died about the time he was born. He joined the large family of Abdul-Muttalib, his grandfather. He is said to have been nursed for about two years by Halima, wife of a Saadite shepherd, because his mother could not nurse him properly. When he was six, his mother died also (sura 93: 6-11). Two years later Abdul-Muttalib died, leaving the lad with his son, Mohammed's uncle Abu Talib.

Of Mohammed's boyhood years no records are available, but the generally accepted opinion is that he tended sheep and camels, as his half-brother Jafar is shown to have done. (In his later years Mohammed still cared for his own camel and branded with tar camels and sheep that were received as alms.)

Abu Talib, also a merchant (trading in fruits, spices and perfumes), was more prosperous than Mohammed's father. Mohammed was taken into the business and soon became a capable traveling agent. At 25, he attracted and was employed by a wealthy widow merchant, Kadijah. Shortly thereafter she, 15 years his senior, proposed marriage. Mohammed accepted and continued to live in Mecca, but as a successful merchant trader.

### **Religious Development and Visions at Mecca**

Mohammed was deeply contemplative, with a strongly marked moral earnestness (reflected in the teachings of the Koran). His poetical mind and predisposition for sententious, oracular speech marked him early. His character seems in large measure to have been gentle and sincere; he attracted unswerving loyalty from his closest companions throughout their lives. Mohammed's years of traveling were in many ways a preparation for his future work. Life with the camel trains of the old trade routes brought acquaintance with dangers and difficulties of many kinds, and developed men of resolution, resourcefulness and hardihood. His quick mind and perceptive eyes no doubt gathered much from the strengths and weaknesses of the cultures and religions he encountered. His journeyings took him to both backward and progressive nations, and among Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and pagans.

The humanitarian tendencies in Mohammed's teachings and in his effect on his "Companions" (Muslims of the first generation), allied to his mystical qualities, would not only have drawn him toward a desire for reform, but would have led him to seek religious reform as essential to reach the roots of the problems facing what he saw as a degraded world order. It is therefore not strange that in later years his desire for reform intensified and 13 years after his first marriage he

took those fateful steps which led him to renown as a religious teacher of worldwide and historic influence.

At 38, Mohammed began to withdraw himself from others in moods of deep contemplation and self-mortification. For two years he would periodically retire into a cave in Mount Hira, about three miles away on the road to Taif. There, in the grip of powerful emotions, he claimed to have revelations from God mediated through the angel Gabriel (sura 2: 91, 92; 81: 19-21; 64: 4). At first he confided these things to no one except Kadijah, other family members and his friend Abu Bekr.

Mohammed appears to have seen himself as a reformer of his people after the manner of Zaid, seeking a higher form of worship and a reform of evil social and religious conditions. At 40, however, he emerged to declare himself a prophet of God, sent to the Hashemites for the purpose of cleansing them. During the next three years, as these "revelations" continued, the matter spread to others, so that before he was 44, he had gathered some 40 followers, generally poorer people.

Mohammed would utter short, rhyming sentences, which were recorded by his literate hearers, or remembered by others. Such records as were made until his death were written on whatever was at hand—a palm leaf, a piece of leather, a stone or the shoulder blade of a camel—and collected by his wives for safe-keeping. They were later compiled, together with verbal accounts from his "Companions," into the suras (chapters) of the Koran. Some have claimed that he was probably an epileptic. Accounts show something of an abnormal physical condition at the time of his revelations, but no serious malady.

Regarding these early Meccan days, the Christian should find little fault with Mohammed, as he preached against gambling, alcohol, usury, idolatry, superstition and immorality, and upheld piety and taught belief in an all-mighty, all-wise, everlasting, indivisible, all-just yet merciful God. He seemed to pay little heed to the Kaaba in those formative years but looked rather to Jerusalem.

In his 44th year (613 A.D.), Mohammed proclaimed himself publicly to all at Mecca as a prophet sent by God to reform their religion and to put down all idolatry there. His message was "strange" to the traditionally minded Meccans; many feared the effect of his preaching on their moral license. They derided him and regarded his obscure utterances as ramblings of a lunatic. To the fanatically idolatrous this new doctrine was frankly subversive and intolerable. Persecution and ridicule mounted until new converts migrated, for safety's sake, to Abyssinia, Yemen and Yathrib. But this had the effect of advertising the new faith still further afield.

The Yathrib Jews, after suffering years of slavery, had then recently regained much civil liberty by victory in a battle with their tribal Arab oppressors. At this, the city's Arab inhabitants who had become accustomed to the Jews' crying for their Messiah to appear and to relieve them from the power of their adversaries, pondered with their customary superstition over the power of the Israelitish God. Thus the fugitive Meccan Muslims appeared as missionaries for a new phase

of the old Abrahamic, monotheistic faith. Some at Yathrib were converted to Islam, and many more were kindly disposed toward the newcomers.

Mohammed himself fled to Taif; there he made some converts, and had a profound effect on caravan people, who were renowned as news-bearers, and his fame spread across the Arab lands and even further afield.

To the sensitive Mohammed, the ill-treatment he met became a catalyst, as in his contemplative isolation his sense of purpose and destiny crystallized and led him to confront his persecutors. And so later he returned to Mecca with the same message. So great was the Meccans' fury that he fled for his life to Yathrib, where a friendly reception was assured.

### **Mohammed's Flight, or Hegira**

Mohammed's flight, or Hegira (*separation*), began on July 16, 622 A.D., marking the time from which all Muslim chronology is calculated. Beginning then, a year of 354 days was used—that is, 100 solar years equal about 103 Mohammedan years. Nov. 9, 1980 was the first day of the year 1401 for Islam. Mohammed was received in Medina with acclaim. Over 100 converted families had preceded him, and many others had been converted while on pilgrimage to the Kaaba.

Yathrib had been racked with civil strife, and Arabs were relieved to find one who could unite them. Furthermore, many feared that he, coming with the names of Jewish prophets on his lips, might be taken by the Jews as the Messiah. Jews were at first relieved to find an Arab they could agree with on the unity of God and the Divine commission of the Jewish Prophets. Even the Christians were comforted by Mohammed's almost reverential respect for Jesus as of those "sent" by God.

Mohammed quickly became leader, lawgiver and judge to a city, with the support of two powerful tribes. Yathrib became "Medinet-al-Nabi" (*the city of the prophet*), by which name (contracted for occidental usage to "Medina") it has ever since been known. At this time in Medina the seeds of an empire were sown.

### **The Founding of Islam**

Mohammed had come to see himself as the sum and seal of all the former prophets of the Jews and of Jesus. His superficial acquaintance with Judaism had stimulated his imagination, but this was no substitute for the deep study of the Jewish Bible and traditions required even to obtain a hearing before such a community. The early hopes of both Mohammed and the Medinan Jews were dashed when they rejected him outright as "their" prophet from God. Thus the enthusiastic introductions gave way to estrangement, and a bitter Mohammed subsequently formulated laws which relegated the "People of the Book" (sura 3: 62-64, *etc.*), Jew or Christian, to second-class citizenship, at best—a situation remaining in Islam until now.

Mohammed then turned his attention to local conquest. His countenancing and encouraging war with carnal weapons on opponents was a decisive step, probably occasioned by his mistakenly thinking it was the only way to provide the means of life for the newly constituted community.

After by force suppressing the Jews, a series of encounters with Meccans further isolated the new religionists, as he with his band of exiled companions and a marauding horde turned to brigandry and to plundering caravans, even in the months forbidden. As each grave doubt at such conduct arose among his followers, he countered by announcing a "revelation" which justified his course of action. Eventually his sheer success led to the swelling of his ranks by local tribesmen eager for booty.

It was at this time and because of Jewish sneers that a sudden "revelation" bade Mohammed turn his back when praying toward the Jewish "Kiblah" (*prayer-direction*), Jerusalem, so as to face instead the Kaaba. He initiated a new fast, the ninth month, Ramadan, to replace the Day of Atonement. Kissing the Black Stone in the Kaaba was authorized. Ramadan and some of its duties and ceremonies were a merger of the age-old customs of the Arabians, useful aspects of Judaism and the needs of a life of banditry.

### **The Battle of Badr and Empires Challenged**

A fateful battle was fought against a Meccan army in 624 at Badr, 180 miles north of Mecca. About 300 Muslims faced 600 to 1,000 Meccans. The battle appears to have been determined by personal combat between three champions from each side; all three Meccans were killed. The Meccan army fled and Mohammed proclaimed the victory as due to Divine assistance. To him the defeat of the Meccans confirmed the policy of *jihad* (holy war) against unbelievers (non-Muslims) as Divinely authorized. Muslims who died in battle were promised a future life with fleshly pleasures (such as dark-eyed women) in Allah's Garden of Delight, a condition painted with word-pictures to incite the Arabians to fanatical joy in fighting for Mohammed.

Later, however, the Meccans utterly routed Mohammed and his followers, badly wounding him. Muslim ranks later swelled with many warlike adventurers. There followed five years of plundering rich Jewish colonies, and bitter warfare with Mecca, *etc.* Acts of treachery, use of assassins, torture, public executions, personal vendettas and bloodshed abounded. Arabia, especially the Hijaz on the Red Sea coast, abounded in anarchy and destruction.

Eventually, Mohammed with a force of 10,000 marched on Mecca. It surrendered and he as civil, religious and military leader was acknowledged as master of all Arabia. On his triumphal entry into Mecca in 630 A.D., he caused the Kaaba's 360 idols (but not the Black Stone) to be destroyed. This policy won to Islam many Christian iconoclasts and some Jews who had long sought freedom from the encroaching influences of popular heathen practices.

Even before Mohammed's accession to power in Arabia, he had sent letters to rulers of the lands surrounding Arabia, inviting kings and peoples to convert to Islam. His letter to Heraclius,

Christian emperor of Byzantium, who ruled from Constantinople, reads as follows, according to Ibn Abbas:

### **Mohammed's Letter to Heraclius**

"In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Mohammed, the servant of Allah and His Messenger, to Heraclius, the Chief of the Roman Empire. Peace be with him who follows the guidance. After this, I invite thee with invitation to Islam. Become a Muslim and thou wilt be in peace—Allah will give thee a double reward; but if thou turnest away, on thee will be the sin of thy subjects. "And, O followers of the Book! Come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah, and that we shall not associate aught with Him, and that some of us shall not take others for lords besides Allah: but if they turn back, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims" (Bukhari, Book 1, Chap. 1).

Heraclius replied diplomatically, and the King of Ethiopia favored conversion, but the Persian monarch, Chosroes II, was outraged.

Mohammed's "sayings" continued apace and were remembered, or stored away when recorded. Early insinuations about his sanity died as he gained power. From his "Companions" came the validation of his sayings, as the substance of the Koran and Islamic orthodoxy. Then, too, was the time of Medina's theological elevation, which was to play a critical part later. Thus the Hegira began the setting up of a new, completely independent community.

Mohammed's final acts epitomized the character of the nascent Islamic Empire. On the one hand he prepared for war against Syria and on the other he made a pilgrimage to the Mecca Valley, and on Mount Arafat decreed for posterity the ceremonies of the "*Hajj*" (*pilgrimage*). Islam was to unite Church, state and the way of life of all its followers, in a mission to convert the world.

### **Death of Mohammed**

Mohammed died at 63, soon after his return from Arafat, on June 8, 632 A.D. With declining strength, he participated in public prayers as long as he could, and then was carried into his tent and died in the lap of Ayesha, his favorite wife, believing that his death was caused by a poisoning three years earlier by Zainab, a Jewish female slave. The consensus of opinion is that he died from office burdens and vitality reduced by "pleasure-taking in the harem" with his many wives.

Ali claimed that Mohammed had nominated him as his successor—a claim which later split Islam into its primary schism. Ayesha, Abu Bakr's daughter, insisted that Ali was not then present—but since her father was to succeed Mohammed, her evidence is not without suspicion. She continued opposing Ali until he acceded to the Caliphate in 656, when she was removed from influence until her death in 677.

Mohammed left a princely harem, composed mostly of gift-women from admiring tribes and the daughters of conquered chiefs. This may not have meant a life of debauchery, as some of his religious opponents claim, although these women were obviously not merely ornamental. His children died young, except his daughter Fatimah, who married Ali.

### **Mohammed's Character a Paradox**

Because of the religious and military threat posed by Islam to the peoples of Europe and of Asia before its conversion, it is unlikely that history could have left us an unbiased account of Mohammed. Yet all testify that he was strange and in many ways self-contradictory, of fervent belief in one God of heaven and earth, with a moral earnestness and much given to sententious, oracular wisdom.

Mohammed was responsible, in an age of lawlessness and bestial cruelty, for some statutes providing protection for women, children, slaves and animals. Evidence abounds of his shrewdness as a judge, while as an administrator and statesman he bound together the wild, scattered tribes and the trading communities of Arabia, and gave them a sense of national unity, dignity and purpose. But he was not content to let teachings, preaching and good example do the conquering (the Christian Crusaders later made the same mistake).

In connection with furthering Islam, accounts of bloodshed and traffic in souls abound also. The slaughter of whole male communities, the enslaving of women and the bringing up of resultant orphans as Muslims, mar the image of Mohammed. The assassination of key opponents and other such barbarous acts recorded as done by his authority, add to the indications that, in his turbulent later years, he was unable to clear himself of his primitive Arab qualities.

Mohammed's bitterness against the Jews never ceased to abate. He believed from Christian teachings (Matt. 23: 37; Heb. 11: 37, *etc.*) that as a prophet sent to them by God, they sought his life. He nevertheless recognized the historic nation as having a peculiar relationship with God (sura 29: 45). The other side of his ambivalent view of them is shown in sura 9: 29; 3: 108, and in his treatment of the prosperous Jewish colony of the Khaibar Oasis—after defeating them he assessed a crippling levy of 50% of all their livelihood, reducing them to a permanent penury.

Mohammed's treatment of captured Jewish, Christian and other non-Muslim colonies is significant. He protected them from subsequent attack—even by Muslims—but extracted from them heavy taxes, which financed his continuing military expansion. The conquered peoples, "Dhimmis" (members of tolerated religions), were required to work hard for bare subsistence, and their cheap labor became the bedrock of the national economy, but with considerable hardship and indignity to themselves.

While the Koran's teachings under subsequent wise and moderate rulers permitted a bearable life to the Jews, they were open to interpretation by later Islamic zealots, such as the Caliph Omar, as a license to inflict severe oppression. It led others to massacre the Jews.

## Mohammed's Successors—the Caliphate

Mohammed left little or no instruction for the leadership and administration of the Muslim community. Following his death, at a meeting of the "Companions," Abu Bakr, Mohammed's father-in-law and intimate associate, was chosen as leader of Islam, with the title "Khalifat rasul-Allah" (*Successor to the Messenger of God*); hence the term Caliph.

The original, strictly orthodox Caliphate was centered in Medina, and the classical view was that all Islam would have a single ruler of Mohammed's tribe, the Koreish. The titles Sultan and Imam were introduced later and used almost interchangeably with Caliph until the World War, Phase I, placed an unendurable weight on the Caliphate.

In 1914 Turkey entered the war on the side of the Central Powers and sought to use Ottoman influence in Islam by proclaiming a *jihad*, summoning Muslims to fight for the Caliphate. But this aroused little sympathy in non-Ottoman Islam. Divided loyalties distressed Muslims in countries which opposed the Central Powers, exposing the weakness of the Ottoman claim. Turkey's military defeat, with loss of territory and credibility, and the abandonment of Islam under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, led to the abolishing of the Caliphate by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 1924. In 1926, despite attempts to revive pan-Islamic leadership, an International Caliphate Conference in Cairo officially declared the office vacant until all Islamic peoples could establish a unified policy.

### THE FIRST FOUR CALIPHS

#### Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali

Abu Bakr (c. 573-634 A.D.), of the Koreish tribe, a "Companion" on the Hegira, was originally a Meccan merchant. After his election as the first Caliph in 632 A.D., a tribal revolt was incited by "false prophets"—an event regarded by orthodox Muslims as the "rida" (*apostasy*). It was energetically suppressed, and isolated communities previously unaffected by Mohammed's teachings were quickly brought into the fold. Within a year Abu Bakr ruled the whole Arabian Peninsula.

In keeping with Mohammed's ambitions for Islamic expansion, expeditionary forces were sent against Palestine and Iraq, which found the "soft under-belly" of the two great rival empires quite unprepared for such pressures, and met with considerable success. Thus Abu Bakr, loyal to Mohammed and Islam, provided the initial driving energy for sensational later events. Before he died, he nominated as his successor Omar, his long-time associate and adviser, one of the "Companions."

A firm ruler, a born administrator and a fanatical Muslim, Omar laid down rules for conquered territories, as under his able leadership Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia and parts of Persia fell to Islam. He adopted the title "Commander of the Faithful." These conquests provided for the

Arab armies' upkeep and the enriching of Mecca and Medina. In 644 Omar was assassinated (no reason given) by an Iraqi workman in the Medina Mosque. The aging Othman, one of the first Muslims and Mohammed's son-in-law, was then elevated to the Caliphate.

The armies under Othman's generals maintained pressure on all fronts, while he organized Mediterranean fleets which wrested naval supremacy from the Greeks and led to the occupation of Cyprus, etc. He appears to have been the first to produce an authoritative Koran text, prepared by the "Companions" at Medina. Copies were sent to all the main Moslem-controlled cities. The strain of transition to an empire caused mutinies to flare up in Iraq and Egypt, and he was slain in Medina in 656.

Muslims of Medina, displeased by Othman's "weakness," recognized the redoubtable Ali, cousin of Mohammed by Abu Talib, son-in-law by Fatimah and respected warrior, as the next Caliph. Ayesha, Mohammed's widow, raised armed opposition at Basra, but Ali vigorously suppressed this in 656 A.D. Ali's deeply religious nature, his relationship to Mohammed and his claim to the Caliphate at Mohammed's death secured his place in Islamic history, but his policies led to internal strife and division, and loss of support by the Medinan Muslims when he transferred the capital to Kufa in Iraq (this later helped cause the Shiite schism).

Pressures mounted against Ali as Syria gained control of Egypt and attacked in Iraq, while former tribal supporters formed the earliest sect of Islam, the Kharijites (*seceders*), to oppose his policies. In 661 a Kharijite assassinated him at the Kufa mosque. He became the charismatic figure by which Islam was divided, as the Shiah party shortly thereafter rejected the first three Caliphs and adopted Ali as Mohammed's only true and direct successor.

Thus Mohammed's influence was maintained in these four successors. In 30 years they created an Islamic Empire reaching from the Indus River in the East to Tripoli in the West, and from the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus Mountains in the North to the African desert in the South.

The Koran was upheld long before it was written; it was carried orally by trained reciters, with the "Companions" supplying the stamp of orthodoxy. Groups of Arabic zealots were founded in the newly won territories, and rapid conversions were easily made of those not having any prior deep religious convictions. But Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians in general held to their beliefs and suffered consequently to a lesser or greater degree, according to the local Islamic governor's attitude.

The effect of elevation from primitive superstition, idolatry and the life of the marauding tribe, to life under the moral, political, social and religious doctrines of Islam, was startling. A strong Arabian challenge provided the necessary ethos for military enterprises, including invasion and territorial annexation.

Later Caliphs were not "Companions" of Mohammed, but "Followers On" (second generation Muslims) or "Followers of the Followers," etc.

## THE LATER CALIPHS

### The Omayyad Caliphs

The Omayyad house was ancient and aristocratic, connected with the Caliphate through Othman. At Ali's death, Muawiyah, head of the Omayyad house and governor of Syria, assumed power and removed the capital to Damascus. Following Muawiyah, twelve more Omayyad Caliphs reigned, but they did not distinguish themselves in ruling the Muslims. Factional troubles increased. Under Abdul-Malik (685-705 A.D.), some order was enforced on the turbulent empire. The struggle against Byzantium was resumed, and following an earlier but short-lived march to the Atlantic in 681, the Egyptian army moved into Northwest Africa to stay.

The new governor of Tangier, Tarik, invaded Spain with 7,000 N. African Berbers and 5,000 Arabs. He defeated the Visigoth King Roderic and occupied most of the Iberian Peninsula, including Gibraltar (Jabal Tarik). This assault on Europe is often called the Moorish invasion. Europe was threatened as Islamic forces penetrated from Spain into France; but Frankish Kings, especially Charles Martel (the Hammer), at the Battle of Poitiers in 732, stopped their further advance. Thus began the history of Islamic Spain, with its unique culture, which lasted until 1492.

Following Muawiyah's death, the Shiite supporters of Ali and his lineage bitterly opposed the Caliphate and the removal of the capital from Kufa. This opposition to "Sunna" (orthodoxy) has continued ever since. (Most Iranians are well-known present-day Shiites.) In 717, a blockade of Constantinople, involving the Syrian army (the mainstay of the Omayyads) and a fleet of 2,000 vessels, ended disastrously—a critical blow to the weakened Caliphate.

Factional violence again flared in the Islamic territories. Military defeats followed along the northeastern frontiers, and revolts in newly conquered Indian provinces forced withdrawals. Tribal rebellions, turmoil and bloody battles on all sides sapped the energies of Islam. Marwan II, last of the Omayyads, and most of his family, died violently in 750 A.D. Then emerged the Abbasid dynasty (descended from Mohammed's uncle Abbas).

### The Abbasid Caliphs

Under the Abbasid Caliphs, the capital was moved to Baghdad. The armies, prone to internal warring under the Omayyads, were quickly prepared for duties on various frontiers. The Arab language and religion were maintained throughout the empire for 200 years, after which the Persian tongue became the language of culture. The claim to legitimacy as true heirs of Mohammed was strongly maintained in the face of Shiite opposition, and "Sunna" was the basis upon which Abbasid culture was established.

Under more settled conditions and as frontiers were consolidated by treaties, commerce and industry grew. In Baghdad it was a brilliant period of intellectual development and material luxury, which spread over the whole Muslim world. Cultures as diverse as the Spanish and the Indian

were borne about by eager, restless scholars in a cross-fertilization of ideas which did much to highly elevate centers of learning, courts of administration and chambers of discussion.

Europe was at its darkest at this time. The Holy Roman Empire was forged between the Pope and the Frankish King. Europe, not yet recovered from the Barbarian ravages which had engulfed the Western Empire, looked fearfully on the two threatening "claws" of Islam, East and West. Even so, embassies were exchanged between Baghdad and the Emperor Charlemagne, and Christians were given more freedom to visit Jerusalem. The learning which filtered back to Europe set the newly emerging schools there alight with a new intellectualism to blend with their religious dogmas, initiating the slow rise of medieval scholastic learning.

As this age of Islamic glory passed its zenith, however, old enmities were revived. Local revolts broke out and chiefs gained a measure of independence. Baghdad itself fell into a state of near anarchy. The Shiites gained ground and the Abbasid dynasty staggered. Egypt and Spain fought out their histories almost independently. Palestine became a separate issue as in 1099 Crusaders from Europe took Jerusalem and held it until the great Islamic leader Saladin ended their occupation in 1187.

### **The Mongol Invasions**

In 1220 A.D. Mongol armies under Genghis Khan began their historic devastation in northern and eastern Persia. As Attila the Hun was the "Scourge of God" to Christian Europe, so Genghis was regarded by many as God's retribution on a careless Islamic generation.

Forty years later Baghdad itself was invaded and sacked by Mongols under Hulagu, grandson of Genghis. The last Caliph of Baghdad, Al-Mustasim, was kicked to death in 1258. About this time the Mamelukes, previously slaves from lands near to the Black Sea, seized power in Egypt and consolidated their reign in time to withstand the southern thrust of the Mongols. Persia was restored to Islam three generations later, not by conquest but by conversion, as the Mongol Ghayan (1295-1304), abandoned Buddhism to become a Muslim.

Mongol pressure from Asia was resumed as the all-conquering Tamerlane (*Lame Timur*), after conquests in Asia, swept down from Samarkand to subdue all the Eastern Islamic lands south to Syria. He was a "good Muslim" and favored the mystic Sufi orders in Persia.

Across the great central lands of Asia from the China Sea to the West European approaches and southward to the Timor Sea in the East and to the gates of Egypt in the West, the fervor of Islam had not abated. By missionary zeal in traders and in travelers, it had spread under the religiously tolerant Khans before Tamerlane. Wherever the nine-tailed Mongol standard had been raised, as far afield as Northern China, Indonesia and from there to the Philippine Islands, Islam had won its converts. With Tamerlane came an end to tolerance of missionary activities by Christians and followers of other faiths, leaving Islam with a clear field.

## The Ottoman Turks

The Ottoman Turks, included among Islam's traditional fighting peoples, invaded and settled in Anatolia (Asia Minor) when Hulagu was establishing the Ilkhanate in Persia. Under Osman I (1259-1326), Ottoman forces invaded and took the territories north and south of the Marmara Sea, which links the Black Sea with the Aegean. Constantinople was taken in 1453. After a millennium of glory and power as a Roman, Christian and Occidental outpost in the East, it became a place of Ottoman, Islamic and Oriental expansion toward the West.

A hundred years later, the Ottoman empire reached into the Balkan States from the shores of the Eastern Adriatic, across the Carpathian Mountains to the northern shore of the Black Sea, as a menace to Christian Europe for centuries. Martin Luther in 1529 published a pamphlet "On the War against the Turks," which urged the Emperor to march against them, and later preached on the Islamic incursions as a fulfilment of prophecies from Ezekiel and Revelation (Gog and Magog) to punish corrupt Christendom.

The Ottoman empire swept around most of the Mediterranean's coastal lands almost to Gibraltar, then down through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf, and by the late 17th century the Hijaz and Yemen (where Islam began) were added. Yet it was during this time that decline set in, because of nepotism, corruption of officials, economic difficulties, factional rebellions and resistance to change by the dynastic rulers. Military defeats followed in the 18th century and in World War, Phase I, which resulted in the dissolution of the empire.

In World War, Phase I, Britain was held in landing at the Dardanelles in 1915 and in an advance up the Euphrates valley in 1916. But her moves in promoting disaffection among Islamic Arabs proved effective in Southern Palestine, and in 1917 General Allenby marched from Egypt and took Jerusalem while General Maude found success in Mesopotamia.

In the post-war settlement, Turkey, stripped of her empire, fell under Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, who broke up, abandoned or destroyed the old Islamic traditions and abolished the Caliphate. Several Arab states were set up.

## The Moghuls of India

The early influence of Arab rulers and Muslim missionaries among the Hindus of northwestern India was weakened by quarreling between Sunnite and Shiite Muslims, and by Hindu rebellions. The territories were later plundered by each new wave of Mongols, and Arabian sea commerce was jeopardized by the Portuguese under Albuquerque, in the early 16th century.

Baber, of Tamerlane's lineage, swept aside all opposition to set up a "Moghul" (Mongol) Empire over the greater part of India. His grandson Akbar, proclaimed Emperor at 13 in 1556, became the richest, most powerful monarch in the world in spite of a rift between Muslims and the native Hindus.

As Muslim culture was superimposed on the ancient Hindu legacies of literature, art, religion and custom, it was modified into a unique and distinctive form. It remains in India to our day as a legacy of former Islamic glory. Mosques and minarets speak of that time, while the Taj Mahal at Agra remains a monument of man's ability to express his higher aspirations in stone.

# Islam, Mohammed and the Muslims

## Chapter 2

### *ISLAM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY*

The World War, Phase I (1914-1918), left Britain and France with zonal responsibilities in the Gulf and Eastern Mediterranean regions respectively (the Sykes-Picot agreement), to administer partition of the Ottoman Empire. The Balfour Declaration (1917) further changed the political balance—with historic portent—by favoring a Jewish national home in Palestine. A British mandate over Palestine had been granted, and other political solutions were continually sought to reconcile French and British interests in the Middle East with rising nationalism, *etc.*, among the Islamic nations.

The World War, Phase II (1939-45), came with South Mediterranean coastal lands of Islam being overrun by the European combatants. In the aftermath, dynastic Arab rulers were beset by revolutionary movements of the political left, and many Jews migrated to Palestine in ever-increasing numbers from many lands. First France, then Britain, resigned politically manufactured and increasingly embarrassing responsibilities, and the current pattern of the Islamic world began to fall into place.

Following a United Nations resolution in Nov. 1947, calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, the State of Israel was established in May 1948. This event had and continues to have an incalculable effect on the future of Islam and the Muslims.

The economic power latent in oil (so-called "black gold"), in a world where "gun-barrel diplomacy" had given way to the power of an international assembly, was realized by those who possessed it. Islam has been divided between wealthy "oil-states," which have cast off Western control, and those without oil and dependent. As this economic power is wielded for political ends, the dependence of the greatest nations on Middle East oil has become ever more painfully apparent.

Islam still wars between its factions, and the voices of religious intolerance are heard, strident behind the new bulwark of oil-power. Islam still bows toward the Kaaba, but forces of political change threaten as Russian influence vies with the West's influence, and arms from both flood into this most sensitive political area of the world.

The arms buildup in the Middle East has reached huge proportions, and the world is tense, in fear of a major conflict of terrifying destructive potential, erupting across the lands where once the Caliphs ruled. This, it is feared, will draw in various nations and engulf the world in devastation from which hopes of survival would be more relevant than victory or defeat.

Yet in these later days of peril, with the power and vitality of great nations draining away in an orgy of buying and building weapons, the cries of Islam are heard again. Some cry for justice, others for a *jihad* against Israel. Some cry against the materialism of the West, and/or against the atheism of Russia. Some cry for the coming of the Mahdi (counterpart of the Jewish and Christian Messiah), and some for a homeland west of the Jordan. Sunnites and Shiites cry against each other, while the cries of nationalism are raised against any attempt to reunite Islam under one Imam, Sultan or Caliph.

The industrial nations of the world, conscious only of their need for oil, look on in fear and in Occidental or Far Eastern puzzlement at this display of Koranic "logic," and can only hope for the best, while feverishly seeking, by any means, to avoid the worst.

## WRITINGS AND TRADITIONS THAT ARE SACRED TO MUSLIMS

For a better understanding of writings and traditions that are sacred to Muslims, and of the rise of Islamic schisms and sects, a brief description of these may be helpful. It is often difficult to accurately convey the sense of oriental words to the occidental mind by translation. A reasonable approximation will suffice for present purposes.

### The Koran and the Hadith

(1) The Koran, the sacred book of the Muslims, contains teachings Mohammed claimed were revealed to him in Arabic (sura 26: 192-195) by God through the angel Gabriel. Parts of the Hadith (*tradition*) are more explicit on this than the Koran. The Koran is somewhat smaller than the Christian New Testament, with 114 chapters (called suras) arranged in order of length. Suras are not arranged chronologically because many are composite, embodying statements or discourses from different periods—not determinable with very much accuracy. The Koran's impact does not carry over in translation. When recited in Arabic to Arabs by one who is trained, it has a decided effect on its hearers, even after nearly 1400 years. The Koran text now in general use was prepared in the first century after Mohammed's death and has since remained the authoritative version.

(2) The Hadith (*tradition*) literally means a *saying* or *statement*. It is used also to denote the compendium of statements traceable to Mohammed's original "Companions," on what he said, did and/or approved. It is free from foreign influence and, in its six authoritative collections ("*al-sihah al-sittah*," the six genuine ones), largely free from accretions of non-"Companion" origin. Of these six the most scrupulously compiled is generally acknowledged as that of Al-Bukhari (died 870 A.D.).

### The Sunna, Ijma and Sharia

(3) The Sunna (*way*, or *custom*) is a pre-Islamic word; Meccans were reproved by Mohammed for clinging to the "sunna" of their fathers after his revelation of the unchanging "sunna" of God.

Strictly, "sunna" is used to describe those traditional usages not laid down in the Koran. In the Islamic sense, it is the primitive community's customs handed down orally—but differences occurred as to whether that community was solely that of Mohammed's day or if it should include also the community of Caliphs who were Mohammed's "Companions." The Hadith is the vehicle for the "sunna."

(4) *Ijma* (*consensus*) is a very difficult word to accurately define. It carries the sense of universal agreement and refers to the generally and traditionally accepted views of the Muslim world on what the Koran and the "sunna" mean in the formulation of Islamic doctrine and practice.

In its primary sense the *Ijma* has reference to the traditions and customs of the past, and is the historic justification whereby the beliefs and practices of the "Companions" of Medina gained and maintained authority. In a secondary sense it is a principle of toleration of differing "schools" within Islam, where these have resulted from conversion of peoples of other cultures who brought with them ways which modified the "sunna" for their own specific purposes. The "ijma" of the doctors and thinkers has always been subject, in final analysis, to the "ijma" of the community.

(5) The Sharia (literally, *path to the watering place*) covers the total way of life as explicitly or implicitly commanded by God and embodies all the doctrines (beliefs) and law (practice) of Islam. It is based on the Koran, Sunna, *Ijma* and "Qiyas" (analogical reasoning by which the meaning of the other three is interpreted).

### The Five Articles of Faith

(6) These are the basic tenets that Muslims are required to believe:

(a) There is only one true God, whose name is Allah, who is all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful.

(b) There are good angels, with Gabriel as chief, who appeared to Mohammed, and the *djinn* (fallen angels, really), with the Shaitan as the chief.

(c) There are four God-inspired books: the Torah (the five books of Moses), the Psalms of David, the Gospel of Jesus and the Koran. The Koran is the most important, because it is Allah's final word to mankind.

(d) The prophets are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah, Jesus and about 20 others. But the last and greatest, the sum and seal of all, is Mohammed.

(e) On the "last day" the dead will be awakened and guardian angels sent by Allah will witness to men's deeds and judge each one as worthy of entering Paradise (with sensual pleasures included), or else condemn them to a hell of eternal torment. Allah has determined what He pleases and no one can change what He has decreed.

## The Five Pillars of Faith

(7) These are duties Muslims are required to perform in order to attain salvation:

(a) Publicly stating the *Shahadah*: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

(b) Prayers and ritual washings five times daily.

(c) Paying *Zakat* tax—alms—a tithe of one's income.

(d) Fasting (in the daylight hours only) during Ramadan, the ninth month, and avoidance of any unworthy act, which would make the fasting meaningless.

(e) Making at least one *hajj*—pilgrimage to Mecca—with its rites, during one's lifetime.

(Thus we see that Islam teaches salvation by works, which is contrary to the Bible teaching of justification by faith—Rom. 3: 20; Eph. 2: 8, 9; Gal. 2: 16; Titus 3: 5.)

## ISLAMIC SCHISMS AND SECTS

Out of the foregoing criteria of Muslim orthodoxy, differences arose which at worst created schisms and at best variations among Muslims. Some divisions are not sects in the true sense, but are tolerated differences within Islam, for division has been made without physical separation. A description of divisions follows:

### The Sunnites and the Shiites

(1) The Sunnites are the orthodox Muslims, who form about 85 percent of the 2 billion Muslims of our day. They accept the "sunna" of the community as well as of the Koran. The enormous influence of "Araberthum" (the Arab teaching) retained a primitive and stable orthodoxy among the Sunnites. Medina, birthplace of the Koran and the Hadith, was the universal school of Islamic theology, and schools in other countries had purely local significance. Thus law and conformity has prevailed among the Sunnites.

(2) The Shiites (from *shia*, meaning *party*) are those Muslims who opposed the removal of the Islamic capital from Kufa to Damascus at Ali's death in 661 A.D. and sought to restore his house to the Caliphate. They regard as illegal the conduct of the community after Mohammed's death and the "sunna" of post-Mohammedan "Companions" to which it gave rise. The first three Caliphs—Abu Bakr, Omar and Othman—are not regarded by them as genuine successors to Mohammed. Ali is held to be the true successor; on this head, opposition of Shiites to Sunnites still continues, with occasional bloodshed. The Shiites are the main and historic schism of Islam

and claim about 15 percent of Muslims. After some early deviations under esoteric influences, they settled down into three main groups:

(a) The Imamis, who recognize twelve Imams, claimed to be God-ordained spiritual leaders inspired by a special spiritual force. The last Imam, Mohammed al Muntazar (*the Expected One*), disappeared about 873 A.D. and his return is still looked for. This group is strong in Persia and has followers in Syria, Iraq and India.

(b) The Ismailis are the followers of Ismail, whom they regard as the seventh Imam rather than his brother Musa. From the Ismailis came the Karmations (a revolutionary movement in the Middle Ages), the Egyptian Caliphate of the Fatimids (969-1171 A.D.) and the Assassins of modern India and East Africa. The wealthy Aga Khan in India is their spiritual and temporal head.

(c) The Zaidis are dominant in Yemen. Believing in a continuing line of Imams who have no supernatural qualities and who have descended from Ali's day, they accept also that the community of the Medinan "Companions" were justified in their "sunna" and their Caliphate before Ali, under circumstances then prevailing. Of the Shiites they are closest to the Sunni.

### **The Kharijites, Sufis and Wahhabis**

(3) In 675 A.D., shortly after Ali's Caliphate began, an opposition party called the Kharijites (*seceders*) was formed among the fanatically religious tribesmen of Mesopotamia and the Iraq border. In contention with Muawiya for the Caliphate, Ali had been selected by arbitration. While the majority upheld this, the Kharijites did not; they claimed that God alone was authorized to select (sura 6: 57-62). They separated and fought Ali and (later) against the Damascus Omayyad Caliphs.

The Kharijites were a hardy people, who fought bravely. Despite comparative fewness they warred against the Islamic orthodox establishment and were notorious for their cruelties. Their power was broken with great difficulty; since then they have played a very minor role, mostly in North Africa and Eastern Arabia.

(4) The Sufis (this word means *wearers of wool*—woolen clothing was associated with spirituality even in pre-Islamic times) were a speculative, philosophical and mystical group and movement, which arose as a pietistic alternative to the more formal primitive Arabic Islam.

During the third generation after Mohammed, a great apostasy occurred which left the mystics clearly defined from the "law-and-practice" followers of the Medinan school. The mystics formed orders and brotherhoods, some of which merged, while others fell away as Sufism evolved. Dwelling on such Koranic verses as sura 2: 115; 57: 3; 50: 16 and 8: 24, Sufism teaches asceticism, absolute extinction of the ego and prostration in prayer and humility before God. Much meditation on God's nature and created things is done and the spirit of devotion raises it to a high level of mystical meaning.

In early, formative years varied material was used by preaching ascetics. Christian, Buddhist, Jewish and Zoroastrian legends and Gnostic beliefs rubbed shoulders with Arabian folklore and stories from ancient Syria and Babylonia, as the Sufi "Qussas" (*story-tellers*) gave sermons and commentaries on the Koran. Christianity (much of it apocryphal) and Gnosticism were in evidence but modified into conformity with Islamic teachings, with blurred lines between separate beliefs where Sufism predominated. The Christian Second Advent teachings are interpreted in Islamic terms as the Mahdi's coming, and the predicted conditions at his arrival are much akin to those forecast for the time of Christ's return.

Sufism with its ecstatic spirit of devotion swept through Islam, affecting rulers, aristocrats, intellectuals and ordinary Muslims. It promoted missionary zeal, thereby carrying Sufi ideals to all the old Muslim territories. It carried Islamic teachings also into India, Central Africa and Central and Southeast Asia after the Islamic conquests, and later across the Mongol empire.

Without firm control of excesses to which fanaticism led many Sufis, a strain was placed on Ijma as it stretched to embody the new ways. Scores of Sufi orders arose; over 70 are still active. Some degraded forms of Sufism have led to drug-taking, fire-eating, wizardry, dervish-dancing and snake-charming, but in general it has many sincere, devout adherents. Inevitably, the very nature of extreme mysticism creates strong parallels, and similarities exist between Islam and Hinduism and the recently emerging Western mystical cults.

(5) The Wahhabi reform movement, begun in 1744 in Central Arabia by Mohammed Ibn al-Wahhab, fought against Sufism and deterioration in the observance of primitive Koranic beliefs and practices among the orthodox. It gained support and strength as by word and arms it attacked compromise. Central and Eastern Arabia were overcome and the Ottoman Empire was challenged as Mecca and an Iraqi strong point were captured. Although the political and military aspects of the Wahhabi uprising were soon ruthlessly put down, its influence, especially in Saudi Arabia, has lived on in many Arab-oriented, traditional forms of opposition to Sufism.

### **Babis and Bahais**

(6) The Babi movement arose in Persia in 1844 out of Shiite beliefs in the return of the last Imam (Mahdi, who disappeared about 873 A.D.) to establish peace and justice. It was founded by Mirza Ali Mohammed of Shiraz. The "hidden" Imam later allegedly made contact with followers through human agents styled "Bab." By using this title, Mirza Ali Mohammed taught that the Imam was communicating through him.

Later the Bab claimed to be the Mahdi, and his followers regarded him as a Divine being in the flesh. He commanded all rulers to be subject to him, beginning with the Shah of Persia. Shortly thereafter he and 20,000 were put to death, in a wave of frenzied persecution by the Shiite hierarchy and the state (1850 A.D.). Babi doctrine differs from Islamic orthodoxy in holding that Divine manifestation and revelation did not end in Mohammed and the Koran, although his teachings as to the Jewish Prophets and Jesus are adhered to.

The Bab referred to a successor God would manifest, linked by the mystical number 19 in a prophetic chronology, which gave rise later to Bahauallah and Bahaism. There are very few Babis today. The Bab's grave and shrine are on Mount Carmel in Israel.

(7) Mirza Husayn Ali (Bahauallah) founded Bahaism in Persia in the 1850s. Of noble lineage and a follower of the Bab's teachings, he was in 1853 put into prison by those who had caused the Bab's execution. There he became convinced he was the one foretold by the Bab.

As Bahauallah's fame and following grew, while still a prisoner he was transferred to Baghdad, then in 1863 to Constantinople, when in accordance with the Bab's mystical 19-year cycle (after 1844, when Babism was founded), he announced himself as "him whom God would manifest" and was named Bahauallah (*splendor of God*) by followers. Eventually he and his (Bahai) followers were imprisoned in Acre, where he died in 1892. Shiite persecution of Bahais continues in our day in Iran. Haifa, with the Bab's tomb nearby, is now the world center of Bahaism. There is a great center also near Chicago.

Bahauallah left his son, Abbas Effendi, called Abdul Baha (servant of Baha), as leader of the Bahais and interpreter of his message. He journeyed in Europe and America, lecturing on Bahai world peace views. Bahais believe all founders of religious movements are God-sent in a vast plan for mankind's uplift by education and promoting the brotherhood of all. They therefore advocate abolishing class, religious and ethnic prejudices and divisions. They have no priesthood or ritual form of worship. Abdul Baha's grandson, known as Shogi Effendi Rabbani (1896-1957), carried on the work. Since his death, it has been directed by a nine-member governing body elected by 27 custodians appointed by Shogi Effendi.

Bahaism's field is now worldwide, with local and national assemblies. Much missionary work is done through publications in over 350 languages, educational programs and personally. The movement is now far removed from its Islamic origins, though related through the claimed fulfilment of the Shiite prophecies about Mahdi.

## THE BIBLE SUPERIOR TO THE KORAN

When we consider the ignorance, superstition, cruelty, *etc.*, of the Arab world before Mohammed's day, we see that he was a reformer who brought a new national and social awareness and an unaccustomed and enduring unity to his people. He invested all his teachings with what he considered an unassailable authority by invoking upon them God's approval.

From Judaism, which supplied most of the raw material for Mohammed's understanding, came the strongly marked sense of justice and the concept of the line of prophets sent by God. From Christianity came the sense of universality lacking in Judaism and a glimpse of the resurrection of the world (John 5: 28, 29). From his personal experiences of received revelations (real, hallucinatory or by deception) came his sense of personal commission and office.

A basic weakness of Islam is that it was drawn from an imperfect understanding of the Old Testament, and also an almost total ignorance of New Testament writings—strange to relate, where Mohammed did understand them he seemed to accept them. One wonders what would have resulted if he had been exposed to Christian truth rather than to the errors and sectarianism which he so frequently encountered.

Mohammed labored under a great disadvantage in living when the true Church was entering its 1260-year Wilderness condition, which began in 539 A.D. (Rev. 12: 6; Psa. 107: 1-7). Most of the Christians he met were Nestorians, and Gnosticism's effects also were then widespread among Christians and Jews of the Middle East and Asia.

### **Mohammed's Claim for the Koran Refuted**

Mohammed claimed that the Koran replaced the Bible (both in the Old and New Testaments). But the Bible alone is God's revealed Word (Deut. 29: 29); it was completed and made unchangeable about 100 A.D., when the Apostle John transmitted the book of Revelation for the resurrected Jesus (Rev. 1: 1-3). The Bible clearly states, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22: 18, 19).

Through the substitution of the Koran with its errors, Mohammed and his "Companions" took away many of the true teachings of the Bible and *added* much—including much that contradicts the Bible. Rev. 22: 18 specifically addresses "every man that heareth [understandeth] the prophecy of this book [which Mohammed did not]" (compare Acts 17: 30). Jehovah in His infinite mercy will doubtless hold Mohammed much less responsible for setting aside His Word (John 17: 17; Isa. 55: 11) than those who have ignored His warnings after having come to know the Truth (Heb. 10: 26, 27; Matt. 6: 23). Mohammed's erroneous claim was not necessary to his early reform work, and this wrong step marks his departure into bypaths.

### **The Bible Alone is God's Word**

The Bible alone in its two parts is the fully integrated, harmonious and complete Word of God to mankind in this present evil world. Outstanding events recorded in the New Testament were foreshadowed in the Old: John the Baptist as the Messiah's forerunner (Isa. 40: 3, compare Mark 1: 2, 3); Jesus as Deliverer (Isa. 51: 9; 53: 1; 61: 1-3, compare John 12: 38; Luke 4: 17-19), as Redeemer (Isa. 59: 20; 52: 3, compare Rom. 11: 26; 1 Pet. 1: 18-20), as Messiah (Isa. 9: 6, 7, compare Eph. 1: 20-23), His crucifixion (Num. 21: 8, 9, compare John 3: 14, 15), and His death and resurrection (Psa. 16: 10, Jonah 2: 2, compare Acts 2: 31; Matt. 12: 40, 41). The twelve Apostles were foreshadowed in the twelve wells at Elim (Ex. 15: 27, *etc.*).

The New Testament in turn refers to the salient features of the Old as the source of its understanding, as proof of the validity of its teachings and as its guide to aspects of God's great Plan of the Ages which are yet future. Both Testaments combine harmoniously as one book in

witnessing ("the Mouth of the LORD"—Isa. 40: 5; Acts 3: 18-21; Matt. 4: 4) to the Divine Plan and its outworking in all its many facets.

As we shall see later, Mohammed mistakenly believed that both he and Islam were foretold in both Testaments. Nowhere is Mohammed, Islam or the Koran referred to in the Old or New Testament as having an active pre-Millennial part in God's Plan for accomplishing His purposes, either in the elective calling (Phil. 3: 14; Heb. 3: 1) or restitution (Acts 3: 18-21). On the contrary, Mohammed and all Muslims, together with the rest of the unenlightened "groaning creation" (Rom. 8: 22), must await the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom to become beneficiaries of the work of God, Jesus and the glorified Church under the terms of the New Covenant.

It is interesting nevertheless to note that the conscientious Muslim's willingness to submit to the will of Allah (Islam—*surrender, submission*), however doctrinally in error he may be now, will stand him in good stead when with the rest of the world of mankind he must submit in obedience to the rule of Christ or else lose life (Phil. 2: 9-11).

### **The Bible's Power**

The superiority of the Bible is shown in its supernatural power to promote the general good and in the fact that it has evoked bitter opposition from Satanically motivated sources of evil. Particularly during the Dark Ages the light of Bible truth was feared and its messengers were hated—the suppression of both was considered essential by the apostate Christian church (see *The Time is at Hand*, chap. 9).

The setting free of Bible truth by the worldwide publishing of the Bible in vernacular languages led to the partial uplifting and enlightening of the whole race, in the raising of the true torch of liberty, equality and fraternity, making impossible the absolute rule of the Papacy over the modern world. There followed wide reforms in the education and liberation of the "common man," such as his obtaining the right to vote, and in the establishment of rights for women and the protection of children.

In contrast the "light" of Islam, which led to the age of splendor in Cordova, Baghdad and Bokhara, came, not from the Koran, but was borrowed by Mohammed from Jews, Greeks, Hindus, Egyptians and Northern Aryan races. Significantly, this "light," while leading to the setting up of great centers of learning for the privileged (while Europe was still in medieval darkness!), did little or nothing to relieve the condition of the needy, the enslaved or the socially deprived (to this day zealot Muslims enforce social inferiority upon their women).

Furthermore, since the Koran has never been bitterly opposed, suppressed, counterfeited, distorted or discredited (as have the Bible's true teachings for over 1800 years), the indication is that Satan sees in the Koran's teachings no threat to his design to keep the world enslaved by deceit, and spiritually blind, deaf and dumb (2 Cor. 4: 3-6; Matt. 13: 15-17; John 5: 19—Diaglott).

## The Bible Inspired by God

The superiority of the Bible (God's written revelation) over other writings is shown in part in its compilation during about 1700 years from the writings of individuals of widely differing historical, social and cultural backgrounds. The harmony of its testimony and the unity of its presentation of God's Plan, from Paradise Lost (the Fall of Adam) to Paradise Regained (Restitution, in the Millennial Kingdom), bespeaks one Divine Author. Indeed, the New Testament (2 Pet. 1: 21) affirms that "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." The Bible is indeed "inspired" (inbreathed) of God (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17), so that through the Scriptures we by faith can have life—everlasting life (John 5: 39; 6: 63, 68).

Mohammed obviously was not "moved by the Holy Spirit," for since he sought to approach God directly and not as one justified by faith and under the blood-merit of Jesus, he could have no standing in God's sight, but was still in his sins. Ours is not to say from where or whom Mohammed's revelations came, but to show that they could not be from God, for Jehovah reveals His Truth only to the sanctified in Christ Jesus and only by the operation of His holy Spirit. His Spirit is in His Word—and that Word Mohammed did not have (John 15: 26; 16: 13).

We feel that no one who has carefully studied and has been properly enlightened as to the deep truths ("strong meat"—Heb. 5: 14) in such Bible books as Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, *etc.*, in the Old Testament, and in the Gospels, the Apostle Paul's epistles and Revelation in the New, could be led to believe that the Koran could replace any part of the Bible. Even those feeding on the "milk" of the Word (Heb. 5: 13), once having received and appreciated the forgiveness of sins and justification by faith that comes only by grace (not works, as Mohammed taught!) through faith in Jesus the Crucified One as Savior and King, should feel no yearning in the Spirit after the dead works (James 2: 20) required of followers of Mohammed.

The depth and breadth of the Koran's teachings as compared to the Bible seems to be as those of a shallow roadside puddle compared to the deepest ocean. Surely the only reason we can find for Mohammed's claim that the Koran replaced the Bible was his ignorance of the Bible in both word and understanding, except for the smallest part—and that garbled by those from whom he learned it.

This is in no way to downgrade Mohammed. Isaiah (Isa. 8: 20) clearly states, "To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Examining Mohammed's teachings in the Koran, it is evident that at best he had a *little* light, borrowed from the Bible, especially through what he heard about it from others.

For those who care to look more deeply into the structure, nature, content, purpose, history, canonicity and proof of the Bible as a Divine Revelation, a careful study of the book, *The Bible* (which we supply), is recommended. It will amply show that the Bible is far, far above the most elevated view one could take of the Koran or any other book ever produced.

# Islam, Mohammed and the Muslims

## Chapter 3

### CHRISTIANITY'S SUPERIORITY TO ISLAM

#### The Muslim a "natural man"

One of the main reasons for the rapid spread of Islam was the comparative ease of obedience to its requirements. The presenting and daily use of one's human all as an acceptable offering to God (acceptable because offered in the appointed way, *i.e.*, justified in God's sight by faith in the merit of Jesus' blood—see Rom. 3: 20-25; 5: 9), which the Bible shows is the Christian's "reasonable service" (Rom. 12: 1), done in unselfish, disinterested love (1 Cor. 13: 1-13), is unknown in the teachings of Islam. The unresentful endurance of trials of faith (1 Pet. 1: 6, 7; 4: 12), which are often caused by the enmity and persecutions of others and are experienced frequently by the footstep followers of Jesus, is comparatively unknown in Islam.

For the Muslim, it is enough that he regularly prays with a form of words, practices some self-denials, fulfills some rituals and makes pilgrimages. The deeper, inner spiritual life, which includes that "peace of God which passeth all [human] understanding" (Phil. 4: 7), coming as it does to the Christian by God's grace through the operation of the holy Spirit, is relatively unknown to the Muslim, for he is not spiritual, but natural (1 Cor. 2: 14).

#### Islam a Religion without a True Messiah

Jesus is the Son of God (Mohammed's disbelief notwithstanding). By Jesus' sacrificial death, foreshadowed in the Atonement Day's sacrificial bullock (Lev. 16: 3, 6, 11, *etc.*), God provided the Ransom-price and atonement for Adamic sin for all who believe and accept it by faith. This He did while the world was yet in its sins (John 3: 16, 17; Ezek. 18: 23, 32).

From long before His birth (Rev. 13: 8), Jesus was marked out as separate and distinct from Adamic stock (Matt. 1: 18, 21; Luke 1: 26-35), as a perfect man without blemish (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19), sinless and therefore blameless under the Law of Moses (which was the mark of a perfect man) both in his non-Adamic lineage (Son of God—Matt. 3: 17; 16: 16; Mark 15: 39; Luke 2: 41-49; John 11: 27) and in His life (Heb. 4: 15; 7: 26; 2 Cor. 5: 20, 21). Thus Jesus, and only Jesus, was found worthy in God's sight (Rev. 5: 1-14) by offering up His life as a Ransom-sacrifice in payment of the price incurred at the bar of God's justice for the sin of Father Adam (1 Cor. 15: 20-22, 45, 47), to redeem the Church (first) and also all the rest of mankind which was in Adam's loins when he sinned, from the penalty of death (1 John 2: 2). Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Mohammed was a son of Adam, even though many generations removed. He was born and died a sinner of Adam's race, in common with all others (Rom. 3: 10-16) who did not or do not

accept Jesus as their Redeemer. Those who do not believe in Mohammed are unloved by Islam, or Islam's Allah, as the unbelieving world was loved by God (Rom. 5: 8), even though subject to oppression and death!

Mohammed knew nothing of God's great Plan of the Ages for the reclaiming of the race from sin through Messiah and the restoring again of the willing and obedient to Edenic perfection through Him. His Son Jesus was originally the mighty Logos (John 1: 1-3), made flesh by His power, in the womb of a virgin (Isa. 7: 14; Matt 1: 18-25; John 1: 14). Jesus the Messiah died a perfect man, sinless and blameless before God (Heb. 7: 24-27) and was resurrected to the Divine plane of being, having become by His death the Savior of the whole world of mankind from the sin of Adam and its curse of Adamic imperfection, sin, sorrow and death. The understanding of Mohammed was not enlightened concerning these things, because the true Gospel of peace in its fullness never reached his ears in his lifetime (Rom 10: 14).

### **Kingdoms Compared**

The Muslims were instructed by Mohammed and other Islamic leaders to establish an Islamic Kingdom in this present world (2 Cor. 4: 4) by the power of the sword. The Christian is instructed to seek the future (Millennial and eternal) Kingdom of Christ, to strive for deliverance from the ensnarements of this present evil world (2 Cor. 1: 10; Rom. 8: 21; Gal. 1: 4), and to conquer the world, the flesh and the devil by the power of the holy Spirit (Matt. 6: 33; 2 Pet. 2: 9; 2 Tim. 1: 7, compare Zech. 4: 6). Furthermore, God's Kingdom was not to be set up by the conquering armies and carnal weapons (Matt. 26: 52; 2 Cor. 10: 4), for it was to be the gift of God to the Little Flock, the Body of Christ (Luke 12: 32; 1 Cor. 12: 12-27). Such a kingdom is infinitely more desirable to the humble seeker after truth and righteousness (Matt. 5: 6) than the Paradise of sensual satisfaction which is the only hope of Islam.

### **God's Covenants**

All of God's dealings with mankind are just, orderly, understandable (to the enlightened—Matt. 13: 16) and reliable, because He first draws up and announces His covenant. God has made a number of covenants, such as those with Adam, Noah, Abraham, *etc.* (Gen. 2: 16, 17; 6: 18; 12: 3; 22: 16-18; Psa. 89: 3, 4; Jer. 31: 31-33; Isa. 55: 1-3, *etc.*). The Jew approached God through the Mosaic Law Covenant. The Christian approaches God through Jesus, the greater than Moses (Deut. 18: 15-18), the great antitypical High Priest (Heb. 5: 1-10; 9: 11, 12), arranged under the Covenant which is not of works of the law, but of grace (Eph. 2: 8, 9). The world of mankind will in due time approach God under yet another covenant through Jesus and His glorified church as Kings and Priests, the Christ, which is Messiah, the promised Mediator of the New Covenant (John 1: 41; Heb. 5: 5, 6; Rev. 5: 9, 10; Jer. 31: 31). Muslims, however, have no such covenant relationship with God set forth in their Islamic teaching and practice. Furthermore, Mohammed's claim that the Koran replaced the Bible is in flat contradiction of the Scriptural statement that "the gifts and calling [under a covenant] of God are without repentance [God will not change His purposes]" (Rom. 11: 26-29). The Abrahamic Covenant is not yet fulfilled (the Koran notwithstanding), as in due time it must be (Isa 55: 11), in the blessing of the whole world of

mankind through Christ (Gen. 12: 2, 3; 22: 16-18; Gal. 3: 8, 16, 29). The Koran, covenant-less, can therefore have no effect whatever on the Bible, and certainly could never replace it.

### **The Blood That Sanctifies**

The Bible teaches that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin" (Heb. 9: 22). The Law of Moses directed that the covenant mediated by Moses between God and the Jews was to be sealed by the blood of sacrificial animals and maintained by the holding annually of the Day of Atonement in the Tabernacle arrangements. Subsequent offerings were acceptable under that blood alone, as the people brought their offerings to the gate of the Court and the Tabernacle, cleansed (typically) in God's sight by the sprinkling of that acceptable blood (Lev. 9: 16, *etc.*; see *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices*).

The New (Law) Covenant also is a blood-sealed covenant, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, the Righteous (Rev. 5: 1-14), which sealed the redemption from sin for all who believe in Him (Acts 13: 38, 39). Bulls' and goats' blood was no longer acceptable (Heb. 9: 1-28; 10: 1-39).

In Mohammed and in all Islam there was no "righteous blood," which could be shed sacrificially. No claims are made in the Koran for the remission of sin by the shedding of blood. From the outset until this day, therefore, followers of Mohammed have been "in their sins" and remain so until they accept Jesus as Savior and King, for "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12; 16: 31). The way of the Christian, therefore, is in keeping with the Divine requirement for the sanctification of His people (Heb. 13: 12). The way of Islam and the Muslims is not so.

## **THE BIBLE VS. ERRORS OF THE KORAN**

There are many subjects on which the Bible's teachings are directly contradicted by the Koran's statements, as the following few sample quotations and citations will show:

### **Jesus' Pre-existence and Human Birth**

The Bible clearly states that Jesus existed before his human birth as the Word, or Logos. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. ... The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him. ... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1: 1-3, 14, compare 3: 13; 8: 23, 42, 58). The Koran, on the contrary, says, "Jesus is as Adam in the sight of God. He created him of dust" (sura 3: 52). Unlike the Bible (Luke 1: 5—2: 7), the Koran gives a highly imaginative (rather than informed) account of Jesus' birth (sura 19: 1-37).

The Koran teaches that Jesus was no more than a servant of God, a Jewish prophet, and that it would be unseemly for God to beget a son, to have offspring.

## THE BIBLE STATES

"And to a voice from heaven saying, *This is my beloved Son*, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3: 17).

"These are written, that ye might believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*" (John 20: 31; see also Matt. 16: 13-17).

"Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant ... but *Christ as a son over his own house*" (Heb. 3: 5, 6).

"The law and the prophets were until John" (Luke 16: 16).

"God so loved the world that *he gave his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16, 17; see also Rom. 1: 3, 4, 14; Heb. 1: 2; 4: 14).

## THE KORAN STATES

"The Christians say, 'The Messiah is a son of God.' Such the sayings ... resemble the sayings of the infidels of old! God do battle with them! How are they misguided!" (sura 9: 30.)

"*Jesus is no more than a servant* whom we favored, and proposed as an instance of Divine power to the children of Israel" (sura 43: 59).

"In the footsteps of the prophets caused we Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow, confirming the law which was before him" (sura 5: 50).

"*It beseemeth not God to beget a son* ... They say: 'The God ... hath gotten offspring.' Now have ye done a monstrous thing!" (sura 19: 36, 91-93.)

Part of Mohammed's reasoning in this connection is apparent: "Sole maker of the Heavens and of the Earth! How, when He hath no consort, should He have a son?" (sura 6: 101), and again, "He ... hath taken no spouse neither hath he any offspring" (sura 72: 3). But that reasoning is based on false premises.

God requires no "wife" in the accepted sense (although He has covenants as symbolic wives—Isa. 54: 1-5; Jer. 3: 14; 31: 31, 32), for even in the physical creation we see, in the plant and animal kingdom creations, some which do not "mate" to reproduce their kind, but which embody both male and female qualities (as did Adam when created in God's likeness and image). Therefore, we reason, God is not limited in begetting offspring by the absence of a sexual counterpart. God's creative work is sometimes referred to in the Bible as a figurative begettal.

Additionally, the Bible states that angels are sons of God (Gen. 6: 2, 4; Job 38: 7) and that from the human family Jesus brings *many sons* to glory (John 1: 12; 1 John 3: 1, 2; Heb. 2: 9-11). All believers who correctly and sincerely pray to God as "Father" are children of God, actually or prospectively (Luke 11: 1, 2, 13; Eph. 5: 1; 1 John 5: 18). In fact, Adam himself was a son of God! (Luke 3: 38.) Surely God has sons!

God in His attribute of love figuratively joined Himself with the Oath-bound promise (symbolized in Sarah—Gen. 18: 10; 22: 16-18) as a symbolic "wife," and in due time from that union has come forth the Church. First He had joined Himself with the Law Covenant, as represented in Hagar, and from this union the nation of Israel, represented in Ishmael, was born as a symbolic son (Gen. 16: 15; Gal. 4: 22-31).

Yet again, God in the soon-coming Millennial Mediatorial Kingdom on earth will unite Himself with the New Covenant as His symbolic wife, represented in Keturah, Abraham's third wife, and as offspring He will give life to many figurative children (Gen. 25: 1-4), the "children of the resurrection," when Jesus and the Church, the Christ—Head and Body—will bring forth, on His behalf, those who, willing and obedient, will live forever on the earthly plane of being (Luke 20: 27-36). And so we see that Mohammed, despite good intentions, was not in accord with God in this matter, as in so many others.

The Bible clearly states in many places that Jesus was crucified and died for our sins (*e.g.*, Matt. 27: 35-50; John 19: 16-30; 1 Cor 15: 3, 4). But the Koran says concerning Jesus, "They slew him not, and they crucified him not, but they had only his likeness. ... They did not really slay him, but God took him up to Himself." Mohammed evidently believed that "a double," "a likeness" of Jesus, was crucified, and not Jesus Himself, and that *before the crucifixion Jesus was taken to heaven! This error of the Koran would vitiate the Ransom, the central doctrine of the Bible, which required the death of a perfect man, Jesus, as a ransom, a corresponding price, for Adam and his race* (Matt. 20: 28; 1 Tim. 2: 5, 6).

Incidentally, there is a tradition based on the Koran (sura 17: 1) that Mohammed was carried on a celestial steed Barak, accompanied by the angel Gabriel, "from the sacred temple of Mecca to the temple" at Jerusalem in a single night, from where he ascended by means of a celestial ladder to God and communed with Him!

### Angels and Intercession

The Bible teaches that man, even in his original condition of perfection, was made *lower* than the angels (Psa. 8: 4, 5; Heb. 2: 6, 7; 2 Pet. 2: 10, 11) and that not even God's holy angels, but only God and Christ, should be worshiped. However, according to the Koran, *God required the angels to worship the perfect Adam*: "When we said to the angels, 'Bow down and worship Adam,'" "Prostrate yourselves before Adam," they all prostrated them save Eblis, who was of the Djinn" (sura 2: 32; 7: 10; 17: 63; 18: 48; 20: 115). The leader of the Djinn, the evil spirits, is called "the Shaitan," or Eblis. His fall is said to have been due to his refusal to worship Adam and because of

it he was accursed! Also, he was given authority over those of mankind who were to be seduced by him.

The Bible tells us that the Church's advocate is Jesus (1 John 2: 1, 2), that it is Christ who makes intercession for believers (Rom. 8: 27, 34), that He *ever lives* to intercede (Heb. 7: 24; 9: 24) and that there is hope for eternal life in none other (John 14: 4, 6; 15: 4, 5; Luke 10: 22; Acts 4: 12; 16: 31). But the Koran gives the good angels the offices of Christ, as interceders and advocates on behalf of believers: "O our Lord!" the angels allegedly say, "forgive ... those who turn to thee and follow thy path; keep them from the pains of hell ... and bring them into the Gardens of Eden." "The angels celebrate the praise of their Lord, and ask forgiveness for the dwellers on earth" (sura 40: 7, 8; 42: 3).

### **The Comforter**

The Bible tells us that Jesus before His crucifixion and death promised His disciples that in His personal absence He would send them for their enlightenment, assistance and encouragement "the Comforter [or *Helper*, Greek, *parakletos*], which is the Holy Spirit (John 14: 26; 15: 26).

There is a similar-sounding Greek word, *periclytos*, which, when translated into Arabic, is *ahmed*, meaning *praised*, from the same root word *hamad* as Mohammed's name. Accordingly, Mohammed, evidently mistaking *parakletos* as being *periclytos*, wrongly took this as *a proof that he himself was the promised one!* And so we read in the Koran: "And remember when Jesus the son of Mary said, 'O children of Israel! of a truth I am God's apostle to you to confirm the law which was given before me, and to announce an apostle that shall come after me whose name shall be Ahmad!'" (sura 61: 6.)

Mohammed seems in the Koran to have downgraded Jesus from being God's only begotten Son to being no more than a servant of God, and seems in this instance to have upgraded himself to be the promised Comforter, all with a purpose—of exalting himself as the greatest, the sum and seal of all the prophets, the one who outshines all of them, even Jesus Christ!

### **Sin and Punishment for Sin**

The Bible teaches that devils and evil men seek to and do mislead mankind (Zech. 3: 1; James 4: 7; 1 Pet. 5: 8) and that God does not do so (Hab. 1: 13; James 1: 13-15). But the Koran plainly states: "God truly will mislead whom He will." "Verily God misleadeth whom He will." "And when they went astray, God led their hearts astray" (sura 13: 27; 35: 9; 41: 5).

The Bible clearly teaches that God created Adam perfect, "very good," in His own image and likeness and that Adam by disobedience against God sinned and went astray of his own free will with the whole human race in his loins, and that therefore all men are born in sin—sinners by heredity (Gen. 1: 26, 27, 31; Psa. 51: 9; Eccles. 7: 29; Isa. 53: 6; Rom. 3: 10-19; 5: 12-19; 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22).

But Imam Ata Ullah Kaleem, Missionary Incharge, USA, in a tract "What is Islam?" says, "Islam does not support the idea that man is born in sin." Thus Islam on this subject also flatly contradicts the Bible.

The Bible clearly states, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," "the soul that sinneth it shall die" (Rom. 6: 23; Ezek. 18: 4). And *death* according to the Bible means *cessation of life, of conscious existence*—not merely *separation from God* (see BS 461—a copy free on request).

Accordingly, the Bible says plainly, "*The dead know not any thing, there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [sheol], whither thou goest*"; when a person dies, "*in that very day his thoughts perish*" (Eccles. 9: 4, 5, 10; Psa. 146: 4). *Sheol* (which is translated *hades* in the New Testament Greek; Psa. 16: 10; Acts 2: 27-34) is *the unconscious condition of the first death state*. *Gehenna* is the Second Death—*utter, complete and eternal annihilation*, which is symbolized by the lake of fire (Rev. 20: 14, 15; 21: 8). *All hope for a future life is based on a resurrection awakening from the sleep of the first death state; if there were no resurrection, those fallen asleep in Christ would be perished, out of existence forever* (Job 14: 12-15; John 11: 24; Acts 26: 8; 1 Cor. 15: 18).

Those who have examined carefully and unbiasedly the Scripture testimony (John 5: 39; 2 Tim. 2: 15) have cast off the errors engrafted on Christianity in the Dark Ages, including the devil-inspired, blasphemous heathen doctrine of eternal torment in a fiery hell. Satan's first lie, "ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3: 4; John 8: 44), gave rise to grievous errors among men such as the consciousness of the dead, the immortality of the soul and eternal torment. (For a careful examination of this entire greatly misunderstood subject, including an examination of every text in the Bible where the word *hell* is found, see our *Life—Death—Hereafter* book.)

Mohammed believed in and taught the God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torment in a fiery hell as God's punishment after death for the unbelievers and the wicked. The Koran states: "As for the infidels. ... They shall be the inmates of the fire, to abide therein eternally." "He shall say, 'Enter ye into the Fire with the generations of djinn and man who have preceded you' ... As oft as a fresh generation entereth, it shall curse its sister ... the last comers shall say 'O our Lord! ... these are they who led us astray: assign them therefore a double torment of the fire.' He will say, 'Ye shall *all* have double.'" "The word of thy Lord shall be fulfilled, 'I will wholly fill hell with Djinn and men'" "We will surely cast him into Hell-fire. ... Over it are nineteen angels." "It hath seven Portals; at each Portal is a separate band of them" (sura 3: 112; 7: 36-39; 11: 120; 15: 44; 64: 26, 30).

## Paradise

The Bible uses the word *Paradise* as another name for the Garden of Eden, the blissful abode of our first parents, Adam and Eve. The Arabic Bible says "God planted a paradise eastward in Eden" (Gen. 2: 8). Because of Adam's sin, he lost that Paradise for himself and his race. The Bible declares that when God's Kingdom is re-established on earth, in "the times of restoration of all

things" (Acts 3: 21 ASV), the whole earth will be made a Paradise, like the garden of Eden (Ezek. 36: 35, 36; Isa. 35: 1, 2; Rev. 21: 1-4; 22: 3) and mankind will be restored also, and live together in peace, happiness and harmony with God and one another (see BS No. 408—a copy free on request).

Also, the Bible uses the expression "the paradise of God" (Rev. 2: 7) in a figurative sense to describe the glorious position in heaven for the Church, selected in the Gospel, or Church Age. But neither this Paradise nor the restored Paradise on earth is described in the Bible as a place of sensual, sexual indulgence. In fact, the Bible shows that those who will be in Paradise will be "as the angels of God in heaven"—*i.e.*, sexless (Matt. 22: 30; Luke 20: 34-36).

But the condition of those in the Paradise promised to faithful Islamites in the Koran differs considerably from and is vastly inferior to the descriptions given in the Bible of that future blissful estate for the faithful in God's Paradise. Mohammed describes Paradise as a place of sensual delights for males. The condition of the females is not described, other than that the wives of the faithful will accompany them to Paradise (to see their husbands attended by dark-eyed maidens?).

The Arab's thinking was colored by the poor, arid ground and the waterless heat of the desert lands where most of them lived. The Koran says, "Two gardens ... in each two fountains flowing ... in each two kinds of every fruit ... on couches with linings of brocade shall they recline. ... Therein shall be the damsels ... whom nor man nor djinn hath touched before them ... and ... two other gardens ... of dark green ... with gushing fountains ... fruits and palm and the pomegranate. In each, the fair, the beauteous ones ... with large dark eyeballs ... whom man hath never touched, nor any djinn ... *their spouses* on soft green cushions and on beauteous carpets shall recline" (sura 55; see also 56).

How different this is from that high and holy condition of restored mankind promised in the Bible, when under the New Covenant, aided by the holy Spirit (Joel 2: 28) and under guidance from the Christ, they will have been drawn out of sin's miry pit into a sexless, sinless state, in the image and the likeness of God (Gen. 1: 26, 27)!

### **The Heavenly and the Earthly Salvation**

Furthermore, Mohammed shows no knowledge of the proper distinction between the heavenly and the earthly salvation. The existence of a class of Divine beings, the Church, or Bride, of Christ, raised to their immortal (death-proof) condition from out of this evil world (Acts 15: 14; Rev. 5: 9, 10), for the future purposes of God, and additionally the calling out from the world of other elect classes as subsidiary parts of His eternal purpose and Plan (Eph. 1: 11, 3: 9-11), are nowhere mentioned in the Koran. The "Gardens of Delight," with fountains, fruits and dark-eyed maidens, are the rewards promised in the Koran. Such rewards and conditions are not to be compared with those in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, leading to Ages of Glory in which are things beyond man's imagination, but which are held in the mind of God, until His due time. Surely the rewards for obedience promised in the Koran really dishonor God, when we consider

the true rewards of either the elect (1 Cor. 2: 9, 10; 1 John 3: 2) or the non-elect (Isa. 35: 10; Rev. 21: 1-7), which He in His great love offers to His creatures (Heb 11: 6).

### The True Hope of Mankind

A study of Church history shows that at the end of the sixth century, when Mohammed began his work, the Dark Ages were setting in. Satanic errors were more and more replacing the great truths of Apostolic times, and sectarian influences and nominal Christians (the "tares" of Matt. 13: 25-40) abounded. Such "Christian" teachings as Mohammed encountered were but a very small part of the whole—and even those he met were mixed with Dark-Age errors and sectarian influences, so that he saw but very little of the full light of the Gospel and the all-embracing Divine Plan of the Ages.

In consequence, such deep and solemn truths as were brought forth in the Apostolic writings of Paul and other Apostles, all given by Divine inspiration, do not appear in the teachings of Mohammed. The understanding of the Ransom, the Blood of Atonement, the Sin-offering, Spirit-begetting, the High Calling, the identity of the Messiah, the World's High Priest, the New Covenant, the Millennium, Restitution and many other wonderful truths fundamental to the understanding of God's great Plan, are nowhere to be found in any of the Islamic writings, such as the Koran or the Hadith.

In consequence, and in spite of his reverence for "Allah," the Muslim's concept of religious truth, apart from being largely erroneous, is pale and insignificant beside the rich and grand designs of the mighty Jehovah as He has revealed them through His servants (Amos 3: 7; Psa. 25: 14; John 15: 15) to such as feed at the table of His Word, on a "feast of fat things" (Psa. 23: 5; 63: 4, 5), which by the grace of God shall be made available to all mankind in due time in the Millennial Mediatorial Reign (Isa. 25: 6-8; Rev. 22: 16-17).

The Koran teaches submission only, which is a ritual acceptance of the Articles and Pillars of the Islamic faith. This requirement falls far below the calling of the Christian, to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, in justification and consecration and to develop those wonderful fruits (graces) of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22; Eph 5: 8-10) in both duty love (Matt. 22: 37-40), and unselfish, disinterested love (1 Cor. 13: 1-13). The doctrine of "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, man's life for man's life," so prevalent among Muslims in the past, is still strong in Islam today. Doubtless Muslims would take kindly to the saying "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy" (Matt. 5: 43), but the higher injunction (v. 44), "love your enemies," sounds very strange to them, for what has been enjoined upon them from the earliest days of the Community at Medina is to slaughter the enemies of Islam, to "strike off their heads then, and strike off from them every finger-tip." This, because they have opposed God and his apostle. ... 'This *for you!* Taste it then!' ... when ye meet the marshalled hosts of the infidels ... whoso shall turn his back to them ... shall incur wrath from God: Hell shall be his abode and wretched his journey thither. So it was not ye who slew them, but God ... and those shafts were God's, not thine." "O believers! retaliation for blood-shedding is prescribed to you: the free man for the free and the slave for the slave and the woman for the woman" (sura 2: 173; 8: 12-17).

How different is Mohammed's bitter harangue to justify the slaughter of opponents, from the majestic teaching of Jesus, "Love your enemies, do good to them ... which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on one cheek offer also the other ... For if ye love them [only] which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same" (Luke 6: 28-33).

Assuredly God and Jesus have set a pattern for the Christian (John 3: 16, 17; Eph. 2: 2-6; Rom. 5: 6-8) which is far above the highest moral injunction in all Islam, for the end (aim) of the commandment for the Christian is not slavish obedience, but *love* (1 Tim. 1: 5).

The superiority of Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, to Mohammed, the founder of Islam, is the superiority of the living (Rom. 6: 9; 14: 9; Heb. 7: 24, 25) over the dead (which Mohammed assuredly is, even according to Muslim belief). Beyond the resurrection in the Ages of Glory, and supposing Mohammed gains everlasting life, in "that day," this superiority will still be maintained, eternal and immeasurable, as the superiority of immortality over mortality, and as that of the Divine, spiritual nature over that which is flesh.

By the grace of God and in His due time, Muslims will be granted an opportunity to submit (under the terms of the New Covenant, a form of "Islam," *submission*, yet unknown to them) to the healing, uplifting influences of Christ in His Millennial Mediatorial Reign. Together with all the willing and obedient of mankind, "the ransomed of the Lord" (Isa. 35: 10), they will be granted the joy of perfect humanity and everlasting life in a perfect earth—a reward far, far above their highest hopes—but not consisting of sensual pleasures in "Gardens of Delight." In Paradise restored (Acts 3: 19-21) they will have joy evermore as God's children, a relationship made possible especially because of the good offices of Christ (Luke 20: 35, 36; Rev. 21: 1-6).

We encourage Muslims, as all others, to approach God and make prayerful supplication in the name of Jesus, for spiritual enlightenment and nourishment and direction in this evil day. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55: 1).

## WORLDWIDE ISLAMIC CONVERSION EFFORTS

Islam is on the move on a scale that is world-wide. Spreading throughout the world is a rising tide of Islam, originating in Arabia. One Muslim leader says: "Unless we win London to Islam, we will fail to win the whole of the western world." They speak with determination. At the present time there are 100 mosques in London, and 607,000 Muslims. In 1977 the Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre was built in Regent's Park at a cost of 7.5 million dollars. It was recently stated by the Vatican, that the Islamic faith is now the largest religious group in the world surpassing the Catholic denomination.