

Anecdotes from the Life of The Prophet Muhammad

by

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Introduction

Unfortunately, this materialistic world has such a hold on our lives and thoughts that we spare little time, if any, to matters of the spirit, or for the betterment of the soul which survives this earthly being. It is only when calamities shake our very existence that we think seriously of Allah, but it might be too late then. Allah, in His Mercy, had been sending messengers to guide man, a rational being, to the mode of life which leads toward Him. Blessed are they who pay attention to the Divine Guidance and save themselves.

My object in writing this booklet is to give the reader a glimpse into the life of the greatest benefactor of mankind — the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's blessings be upon him) whose message is addressed to all mankind and holds good for all times to come. The very nature of this work demands that one should study the different biographies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, his sayings and actions as mentioned in the standard works like Sahih al-Bukhari, Muslim, etc., and make selections therefrom. I have freely borrowed from the numerous writings on the subject, and have selected the choicest and most typical of the anecdotes of the Holy Prophet and present them here in this handy form. I am confident that these will hold the readers' interest and appeal to them.

In the words of the Prophet Abraham (peace be on him), I also pray: "Our Lord, accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing" (Holy Quran, 2:127)

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Pen-Portrait of The Holy Prophet

The following is a pen-portrait of the Holy Prophet, as outlined in well-authenticated Books of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet. The Prophet was neither too tall nor too short; he was of medium stature. The Prophet's complexion was fair. Parts of his body that were exposed to the air and sun, such as the face, neck, ears and hands, were reddish or tanned, while parts covered by his clothes were white in color.

The Prophet's hair was curly and did not hang straight down, yet they were not too bushy. They are stated to have reached the lobes of his ears. The Prophet used to comb his hair, parting them in the middle of the head. In his beard and head, there were only seventeen gray hair, and never more than that. His beard was thick and not trimmed, and his mustache he wore clipped.

His face was neither long, nor circular, but slightly rounded. His forehead was wide, and the eyebrows were thin and full. Between the eyebrows there was a silvery luster. The eyes of the Prophet were large and open, deep and dark with a tint of redness. His eyelashes were long and so thick that they looked as if they were about to meet. His nose sloped downward in just proportion; his teeth were white and a little interspersed. His cheeks were firm rather than soft. His neck was neither long nor short. His breast, free from all malice, was broad and no part of it seemed more prominent than the rest. His shoulders were broad and overgrown with hair. Both his hands and arms were fleshy, his wrists long and his palms broad. His feet were wide set. His thighs and calves were fleshy. His body was moderately stout, even in his old age it remained muscular and sinewy. His gait was firm and his step steadfast. In walking he leaned forward and kept his paces close together.

Bismillah

(In the Name of Allah)

Praise be to Thee, my God, Lord of the Worlds;
O Merciful, Compassionate art Thou,
The King of all on the Day of Reckoning,

Thee only do we worship and adore.
 To Thee, Most Merciful, we cry for help;
 O guide us ever more on the straight path,
 The path of those to whom Thou gracious art;
 On whom Thine anger falls not then, nor now,
 The path of them from Thee that do not stray.

M.B.

Before The Call

In the year 570 of the Christian era, a son was born to Amina, wife of Abdullah, son of Abdul Muttalib, the head of the powerful and revered tribe of Quraish of Mecca in Arabia. Before the birth of the child, his father, Abdullah, had died. The grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, named the child Muhammad (meaning the praised one), while the child's mother, Amina, named him Ahmad [meaning one who renders praise (to God)].

According to the custom prevailing amongst the gentry, the child was handed over to a wet-nurse named Halima Sa'dia, with whom he stayed for a little more than four years at which time his mother took charge of him entirely. The young Muhammad was about six years old when his mother died and he was thus twice orphaned. His grandfather Abdul Muttalib then looked after him till the boy was eight years old, when Abdul Muttalib breathed his last. The upbringing of the boy then became the responsibility of his paternal uncle, Abu Talib, who looked after him till he grew up into manhood. The boy, however, was not taught to read or write and he remained illiterate in this sense for the rest of his life.

When Muhammad was twelve years old, he first accompanied his uncle Abu Talib on a business trip to Syria, via Palestine. It is stated that when they reached Basra, a place located in the south of Syria, a Christian monk, Buhaira by name, happened to see the lad and was struck with wonder. He told Abu Talib that he saw in the lad certain signs which indicated that he would one day be that

1. Note: The above is a free translation in rhyme of the opening chapter of the Holy Quran, which is recited repeatedly in all the five prayers of the day and night by a Muslim.

final and universal Prophet of God whose advent had been foretold both in the Old and the New Testaments. Buhaira also warned Abu Talib to guard Muhammad well, and especially against the Jews. In his youth, Muhammad preferred to indulge in trading and commercial activities, and by his truthfulness and honesty soon earned the titles of "al-Amin" and "al-Sadiq" (i.e., an honest and truthful dealer).

It was due to this good reputation that a rich widow, Khadijah by name, asked for his services in conducting business transactions on her behalf. It was in this connection that he again accompanied a caravan to Syria. On entering that country, the caravan camped near a church. There, another monk, Nastura by name, happened to see Muhammad. Nastura felt so interested in Muhammad that he went and brought some of his sacred documents and started reading them, at the same time looking Muhammad all over. On being questioned, Nastura remarked that the young man seemed to fit in with the signs and descriptions given of that last and greatest of the prophets whose advent had been foretold in their Holy Books. This was the second incident of its kind.

The courtesy and good work shown by Muhammad earned him the admiration of the rich and gentle lady Khadijah. Through proper channels, she proposed marriage to him, and this was duly solemnized. Muhammad was then only twenty-five years old, while Khadijah was forty. From this union, in due course of time, were born three sons and four daughters. All the sons died in infancy while the daughters lived and grew up.

The sacred house of God (Ka'ba) once caught fire and was burnt to the ground. However, when it came to affixing the sacred Black Stone onto the wall, a quarrel arose amongst the Quraish tribal leaders; they could not agree as to who should have the honor of handling the sacred stone. To avoid serious trouble, they agreed to choose a judge who would decide the issue for them. It is significant that Muhammad was chosen to be that judge, and he successfully resolved the difficulty of the tribal leaders. He spread a white sheet on the ground and put the Black Stone in the middle of it, and then asked all the tribal leaders to catch hold of the corners and edges of the sheet and carry the stone to its site. This

being done, Muhammad then picked up the stone and affixed it in its place. Everyone was pleased with this action. This incident indicates the respect and faith which the people reposed in Muhammad when he was only an ordinary citizen of Mecca. Coming events, it is said, cast their shadows before.

The Call

Although the Arabs had a concept of God as such, yet they kept idols and worshipped them. Muhammad, however, refrained from idol worship. Some years after his marriage to Khadijah, and when he was thirty-two or thirty-three years old, he would repair to the cave of Hira, near Mecca. There he would spend hours in meditation and praying to the one and only Allah. This went on till he was forty years of age, when one day an angel appeared and addressing him as follows: "Iqra" (i.e. read). Muhammad replied that he could not read, whereupon the angel pressed him to his bosom and again asked him to read, and again Muhammad replied that he could not read. After this process had been repeated three times, the angel said:

Recite...

"Read in the name of thy Lord Who creates...

Creates man from a clot,

Read and thy Lord is most Generous,

Who taught by the pen,

Taught man what he knew not." (96:1-5)

The angel then disappeared, and Muhammad came back to his house pale and trembling, and asked his wife to cover him up with a blanket. On her inquiry, he told her about this experience which had filled him with fear. Upon hearing this, Khadijah, his close companion who knew him as nobody else knew him and from whom he could not conceal anything, consoled him. She attested to the truth of the message in these words: "Joyful tidings do you bring. By Him in Whose hand is the soul of Khadijah, I will henceforth regard you as the Prophet. Allah will not suffer you to be dejected. Have you not been affectionate to your kinsfolk, kind to your neighbors, charitable to the poor, hospitable to the stranger, faithful to your word and ever a defender of truth?"

Lady Khadijah then took Muhammad to her cousin Warqa bin Naufal, who was a scholar and knew the biblical lore. She told Naufal as to what had happened. Warqa assured Muhammad that it was the same type of Divine message as was revealed to Moses. He said, "The mantle of prophethood is being put on your shoulders. Your preaching will invite opposition and a day will come when your people will turn you out of this city, for this has been the lot of prophets before you." After this, Muhammad continued to visit the cave of Hira. After some time the revelation started coming again, at which time Muhammad was enjoined to go and preach and make people believe that "There is no god but Allah¹, and Muhammad is His Prophet."

Faith And Persecution

As was foretold by Warqa, the preaching of the message of Islam to the idolaters of Mecca raised a storm of opposition, and this led to the persecution of the few followers of the Prophet Muhammad. A story is told of how Bilal, a black slave who had accepted the new faith, was laid upon hot sand at noon-time by his cruel, infidel master. That master then placed a large stone upon Bilal's chest; in his agony Bilal only exclaimed: "One God, one God..." and he would not recant. Hazrat Abu Bakr, the close companion of the Prophet, and who had the distinction of being the first among the men to have accepted the new faith, saw the persecution of Bilal. He took pity on him and bought Bilal from his infidel master, and then set him free. Bilal, on gaining his freedom, attached himself to the Holy Prophet. Later on, due to his possession of a loud and melodious voice, he was appointed by the Holy Prophet to recite the call to prayer, five times a day. To such heights of piety and goodness did Bilal reach, that the proudest of Arabs would bow their heads before him. Some of the other Muslim converts, both men and women, were not so fortunate, and were tortured to death. Yet more and more embraced the new faith, some doing so secretly, and others openly.

1. This is the proper name applied to the Being Who exists necessarily by Himself, comprising all the attributes of perfection.

Muhammad once went to Taif, a town near Mecca, in the hope that the inhabitants would listen to his message patiently. Instead, those people mercilessly showered the Holy Prophet with stones. With blood flowing from the numerous wounds inflicted upon his body, Muhammad retraced his steps, all the while praying to Allah in these words:

“Guide them in the right path for they know not what they do.”¹

The Flight

The persecution of the Muslims grew in intensity to the extent that not only their means of livelihood were blocked, and their movements restricted, but their very lives were threatened. At that time, the Holy Prophet asked his followers to migrate to Abyssinia, a Christian country in Africa. Consequently, a group of Muslims, including women and children, emigrated to Abyssinia. The infidels even chased them to that African country, and tried to prevail upon the Negus, the King, to hand over the fugitives to them. Negus heard the case of the Muslims and was so favorably impressed by them that he allowed the Muslims to stay there in peace.

Some people from Medina, a town about two hundred miles to the north of Mecca, had come on pilgrimage to Mecca, and having heard the message of Islam, accepted it. They entreated the Prophet to grace their town with his presence. It was the thirteenth year of the Call and the conditions had become almost intolerable for the Muslims in Mecca. A number of them left by ones and twos for Medina, but the Prophet and a few of his close companions stayed on. Finally, the tribal leaders in Mecca met secretly, and decided to slay the Holy Prophet on a particular day when the Prophet would emerge from his house in the morning. By that time, not only Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet, had died but, what was more saddening for the Prophet, his good and faithful wife, lady Khadijah, had also passed away.

The Prophet came to learn of the evil intentions of his enemies through Divine revelation, and permission was given to him to

1. Jesus Christ, on being persecuted, had prayed:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

migrate to Medina. He asked Ali, his cousin and companion, to stay behind to settle certain transactions and to follow them later on. Abu Bakr, the Prophet's close friend, was to accompany him. In the dead of the night, the two quietly slipped away from the town, and took shelter in the cave of "Thaur," about three miles away from Mecca.

Next morning the enemy, finding that their prey had fled, formed a posse and tracked the fugitives almost to the mouth of the cave. Hearing their voices and the sounds of their footsteps, Abu Bakr felt afraid that they would soon be discovered. In this extremely critical situation, the Prophet did not despair. He remarked, "Do not be grieved, for surely Allah is with us." This tranquillity of mind could only have been Divinely inspired. It is also related that after the two fugitives had taken shelter inside the cave, some spiders had spun a cobweb across the rather small entrance to the cave, and a bird was seen nesting in a niche at the entrance. This seemed to have misled the trackers completely because they did not suspect the presence of any human being inside the cave; the trackers went away to search for the two fugitives elsewhere.

For three days and nights the fugitives remained inside the cave. Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, secretly brought them food, while Amr, the servant of Abu Bakr, would drive his goats to the vicinity of the cave, and thus manage to serve them with goat's milk. The enemy gave up the search after three days but they proclaimed a reward for whoever captured the Prophet, dead or alive. The two fugitives, finding the coast clear, continued on their trek to Medina. One day they saw an armed horseman coming after them. They waited for him to come near and saw him fit an arrow in his bow and prepare to shoot at them. Just then the rider's horse stumbled and its feet sank deep into a sand-pit; the rider himself was thrown off. Suraqa, the horseman, is reported to have recounted the incident later on thus: "Then it transpired to me that it was preordained that the Prophet's cause should triumph." Abandoning his evil intentions, Suraqa approached the Prophet with a penitent heart and begged his forgiveness. The Prophet forgave Suraqa, and gave him the good news that he had seen in a vision that Suraqa was wearing the gold bangles of the ruler of

Persia on his wrists. It may be remarked in passing that about twenty-four years later, in the regime of Caliph Umar, when Persia fell, Suraqa was sent for and made to wear the gold bangles of the Chosroes that formed part of the spoils.

The Prophet and his companion, Abu Bakr, finally arrived safely in Medina where they were welcomed by the Muslims and the local gentry. Here the Muslims were at last free to observe their religious duties without interference. The enemy at Mecca, however, were out to destroy this new religion and its founder before it got too strong for them. The Prophet and his small band of the faithful consequently had to fight at least three major battles for survival before the tide turned. Eventually, the Muslim forces, having grown sufficiently strong, turned the tables on the enemy.

The Battles

Says the Holy Quran:

“Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made, because they are oppressed. And Allah is able to assist them... Those who are driven from their homes without a just cause except that they say, Our Lord is Allah. And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters and churches, and synagogues and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered would have been pulled down. And surely Allah will help him who helps Him.” (22:39,40)

[1] Barely two years had passed since the Flight when a force of one thousand fully armed Meccans came to attack and annihilate the Muslims. The Muslims could only muster about three hundred and thirteen persons, and these included some boys and old men. Only two persons were on horseback, and there were only seventy camels to serve the rest. Most of the Muslims were poorly armed and it was only their faith, spirit and determination which gave them the valor to face a force of fully armed horsemen, more than three times their number. In a cottage near the battlefield of Badr, the Holy Prophet was lying prostrate before Allah, praying for Divine help and protection. His supplication was: “My Lord, if Thou alloweth this band of the faithful to be

killed this day, then nobody would be left in this land to worship Thee truly. O Living and All-Powerful Allah, I beseech Thee for Thy help and protection.” Then they saw the Holy Prophet come out of the cottage, a calm smile evident upon his countenance, He predicted the defeat of the enemy; and so it came to pass. The enemy lost seventy of their top warriors and fled from the field, leaving much spoils of war and prisoners in the hands of the Muslims. Only fourteen Muslims lost their lives.

[2] This unexpected defeat rankled in the hearts of the infidels, so they made war preparations again in real earnest. By the time another year had passed, they mustered a force of three thousand fully armed horsemen and set out for Medina. The Holy Prophet took counsel with his followers and it was finally decided to give battle to the enemy outside the town. The Muslim force consisted of one thousand persons as they left the town of Medina, but before long Abdullah bin Ubayy, who was a hypocrite, and in league with the Jews of Medina, deserted with three hundred of his followers. So it was only seven hundred Muslims who had to face a force of three thousand Meccans at a place called Uhud. The battle began and the spirited onslaught of the Muslims upset the ranks of the enemy. At this juncture, a band of archers whom the Holy Prophet had posted to guard the rear of his army, thinking that the enemy had been repulsed, left their posts to partake of the spoils. This action proved disastrous because an enemy general by the name of Khalid bin Walid¹ took advantage of the situation and made a cavalry charge from the rear. This upset the Muslim ranks and created much confusion. In this confusion, the Holy Prophet was wounded in the face and he fell into a hollow in the ground. The enemy rushed from all sides to slay him. The manner in which the handful of Muslims who surrounded the Prophet fought and defended him, forms a golden chapter in the history of Islam. Finally, the enemy attack was beaten back. They called it a day, hoping to fight another time. About seventy Muslims met martyrdom in this battle.

1. Khalid bin Walid later on accepted Islam and repented of his former opposition to Islam. He became the famous commander of the Muslim forces which conquered Syria some years later.

At one time during the battle, a rumor had spread that the Holy Prophet had also been killed. Some people who had fled from the field carried the sad news to Medina. Upon learning this, many women left for the battlefield to verify if this was true. A story is told of a Muslim lady of Medina who repaired in haste for the site of the battle at Uhud, and finally met a Muslim soldier coming from that direction. She asked him about the welfare of the Prophet. He instead told her that her husband had been killed. She recited: "To Allah we belong and to Him do we return." She again asked about the Prophet. The soldier then informed her about the death of her brother and also of her father. She again recited the same verse and asked about the Prophet in particular, whereupon the man thanked Allah, and said that the Prophet was only slightly wounded and was on his way home. On hearing this she heaved a sigh of relief and exclaimed: "All calamities, after this, seem light to me." All honor be to such true and valiant daughters of Islam.

[3] The Holy Prophet had to fight many skirmishes with his enemies every now and then, because they kept on harassing the Muslims and looting their goods and cattle. However, in the fifth year after the Flight, the Meccans assembled the biggest army of over ten thousand fully armed and equipped warriors and decided to wipe out the Muslims that time. The Holy Prophet, on hearing this alarming news, took counsel of the faithful and, on the suggestion of Salman Farsi, a Muslim convert from Persia, it was decided to dig a trench, fifteen feet wide and fifteen feet deep, to protect the exposed side of the town. It was decided to fight the enemy from within the entrenched area, using the town as a fort. The Holy Prophet distributed the labor in parties of ten men each, himself participating as an ordinary laborer. This shows the dignity which the Holy Prophet accorded to honest labor. In the course of excavation, they found a hard stone which resisted all efforts of breaking it. The Holy Prophet then took a pick-ax and struck hard at the stone. A spark of fire was emitted due to friction. The Holy Prophet raised a cry of "Allah-o-Akbar" (God is Great) and said that he saw in the flash a vision in which the keys of the palace of the Syrian king were awarded to him. There followed a second stroke of the pick-ax when the stone was split giving out another spark of light. Once more the cry of "Allah-o-

Akbar” was raised. This time the Holy Prophet saw in a vision that the Persian kingdom was handed over to him. At the third stroke the stone broke into pieces, and this time the possession of the kingdom of Yemen was promised to the Holy Prophet in a vision. This was a wonderful phenomenon to say the least, especially as the Muslims were hard pressed and fighting for their lives. This prediction about the future conquests of the Muslims, as they truly came about, could only originate from the All-Knowing God.

The enemy surrounded the town of Medina from all sides and a grim fight went on day and night. The food supply ran short and one day a Muslim warrior raised his shirt and showed the Holy Prophet the stone that he had tied on his belly to allay the severity of hunger. The Holy Prophet smiled and raised his own shirt showing the two stones tied on his belly. It was the twenty-seventh night of the siege when a violent wind-storm, blowing sand and gravel, struck the area where the enemy camp was located. The tents and their contents were blown away, and the fires were extinguished (this was considered an ill omen by the Arabs who were a highly superstitious people in those days). Chaos and confusion followed, and tribe after tribe started to slink away in the darkness. When morning dawned, the camp was entirely deserted. Thus again Allah saved the cause of Islam. This battle was called the Battle of Ahzab or the Confederates.

The Prophet's Missives to the Neighboring Monarchs

The mission of the Prophet Muhammad was not confined to his own people, like that of other prophets before him. It was universal and meant for the entire human race. It is thus mentioned in the Holy Quran:

- (i) “And We have not sent thee but as a bearer of good news and as a warner to all mankind, but most men know not.”
(34:28)
- (ii) “And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the nations.”
(21:107)

(iii) "Say: 'O Mankind, surely I am the messenger of Allah to you all.'" (7:158)

Consequently, the Prophet sent emissaries to the rulers of the neighboring countries, announcing to them his claim and inviting them to the faith of Islam. He sent Dehya, one of his companions, to the Court of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius. The Muslim envoy reached the Emperor when Heraclius was making a journey on foot to Jerusalem in fulfillment of his vow for his splendid victory over the Persians. The messenger was treated with great respect and the Emperor showed great interest in the claims of the Prophet. Heraclius wanted to know more of the character of the Holy Prophet. It happened that a caravan of some Meccan merchants was sojourning at that time in that part of the country. The Emperor summoned them to his presence. Abu Sufyan, their leader, was an inveterate enemy of the Prophet; he is responsible for the account of the interview which took place. The dialog that followed is reproduced below:

Heraclius: "What kind of family does he (the Prophet) come from?"

Abu Sufyan: "He belongs to a noble family."

H: "Did anyone among you ever put forward such a claim before?"

AS: "No."

H: "Who generally believe in him, the rich or the poor?"

AS: "It is mostly the poor that follow him."

H: "Are his followers increasing in number or are they falling off?"

AS: "They are increasing incessantly."

H: "Does any of his followers relinquish his faith after having once accepted it?"

AS: "No."

H: "Has he ever been guilty of treachery?"

AS: "Never."

H: "Which of you comes off victorious?"

AS: "Sometimes he is victorious and sometimes we are victorious."

H: "What does he bid you do?"

AS: "He bids us abandon the worship of our idols and adore one God; to give up the practices of our forefathers; to say prayers; to give alms; to observe truth and purity; to abstain from fornication and vice, and to respect the ties of kinship."

What Heraclius meant by these questions and what conclusions he arrived at after he received the above answers, becomes clear from what the Emperor himself had to say regarding this matter. With reference to his first question, he remarked that prophets had always been raised from respectable families, otherwise they could not have commanded popular respect. With regard to the second and third questions, the Emperor observed that had any of his tribesmen or ancestors laid claim to prophethood, or been a king before him, then one could have suspected him of trying to imitate them. From the seventh question he argued: "If he had never been guilty of falsehood with respect to man, he could not now be supposed to have been guilty of falsehood with respect to God." With regard to the remaining questions, the Christian King said that if what Abu Sufyan had said was true, there was no doubt as to the truth of the Prophet, for such were undoubtedly the signs of a true Prophet.

Having read the letter of the Prophet, Heraclius asked his chief men to meet him in the royal camp at Himms. There he addressed them as follows: "Ye chiefs of Rome, if you desire safety and guidance, follow the Arabian Prophet." However, they raised their crosses and waved them aloft in the air; thereupon Heraclius said that he only wanted to test their faith, and that he was satisfied with their firmness and devotion. The reasons of State seemed to have prevailed.

An original copy of one such letter sent by the Prophet to Maqawqis, the Christian king of Egypt, has been saved for posterity. This was discovered in the year 1858 C.E. by some French travelers at a convent in Upper Egypt. It is now preserved in the library of the Copt Brothers, Ahmim, Egypt. Dr. P.Badger, who deciphered it, has declared it to be genuine. The contents thus deciphered along with the facsimile and the English translation are given elsewhere in this book. It may be noted that the contents

of the letter tally with the wording as reported in the authentic Traditions of the Holy Prophet.

The Conquest of Mecca

In the eighth year of the Flight (i.e. 7 A.H.) the Holy Prophet was forced by circumstances to lead an army of ten thousand Muslims against the Meccans. This time the Meccans felt helpless and beaten. Hardly any resistance was offered and the Muslim troops entered Mecca and rid the Holy Ka'ba (the House of God) of all idols, and cleaned the place up. Abu Sufyan, the inveterate enemy of Islam, who should have expected no mercy at the hands of the Muslims, got a Muslim relation to take him to the Holy Prophet in the dead of the night, where he accepted Islam and begged for mercy and forgiveness which was granted to him. His wife Hinda, through her hatred of Muslims and in a spirit of vengeance, had indulged in the ghoulish act of actually chewing the liver ripped out of the dead body of Hazrat Hamza, the Prophet's uncle who was killed in Battle of Uhud. She deserved to be punished and expected no mercy to be shown to her. Yet she and many others like her did not know that they were dealing with a man who had been sent as a mercy to mankind. When these enemies were at last brought before him, the Holy Prophet said:

“What kind of treatment do you expect at my hands?”

“Mercy, O generous brother,” they replied.

“Be it so,” declared the Prophet, “I say unto you as Joseph said unto his brothers. There is no reproach on you this day; go, for you are free.”

The following narrative is related about Akrama, son of Abu Jahl (the most inveterate enemy of Islam, who was killed in the Battle of Badr). At the fall of Mecca, he fled in the hope of leaving Arabia and migrating to some other country. It is related that he boarded a sailing vessel which soon encountered a storm at sea. The sailors began praying to God for mercy and safety. Upon this, Akrama asked them as to why they did not appeal to their great idol-god Hubbal for help. The sailors replied that Hubbal might be the god on land, but at sea only God's rule prevailed. This gave a shock to Akrama, who said dejectedly: “If this is so,

then put me back on shore for I have witnessed that the idol-god Hubbal does not even rule on land." Akrama later on accepted Islam.

The Farewell Pilgrimage

It was in the year 10 A.H. when the whole of Arabia had accepted Islam as its religion, that the Prophet set out on a Pilgrimage to Mecca from Medina (where he resided). About 124,000 Muslim pilgrims had assembled at Mecca. The ultimate triumph of truth had taken place and the Prophet realized that his mission on earth had been fulfilled. "This day," the Divine word came to tell him, "Have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor to you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion." (5:3)

The sermon that the Prophet delivered on this momentous occasion is remarkable. He was mounted on a camel and the people were assembled all around him in the plain of Arafat. He addressed them as follows:

"O people! Lend an attentive ear to my words; for I know not whether I shall ever hereafter have the opportunity to meet you here. Do you know what day it is today? This is the Yaum-un-Nahr or the sacred Day of Sacrifice. Do you know which month this is? This is the sacred month. Do you know what place this is? This is the sacred town. So I inform you that your lives, your properties, and your honor must be as sacred to one another as this sacred day, as this sacred month and as this sacred town. Let those present take this message to those absent. You are about to meet the Lord Who will call you to account for your deeds.

"This day all sums of interest are remitted including that of Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib. This day, the retaliation for all murders committed in the days of ignorance is cancelled and, foremost of all, the murder of Rabi bin Harith is forgiven.

O people! This day Satan has despaired of re-establishing

his worship in this land of yours. However, should you obey him even in what seems to you a trifling, it will be a matter of pleasure for him. So you must beware of him in the matter of faith.

Then, O my people! You have certain rights over your wives, and your wives have certain rights over you. They are the trust of God in your hands. Therefore you must treat them with great kindness. And as regards your slaves, see to it that you give them to eat what you yourselves eat, and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves.

O people! Listen to what I say and take it to heart. You must know that every Muslim is the brother of every Muslim. You are all equal; you enjoy equal rights, and have similar obligations. You are all members of one common brotherhood. So it is forbidden for any of you to take from his brother save what the latter should willingly give. So do not tyrannize your people; do not usurp their rights."

Then the Prophet cried at the top of his voice: "O Lord! Have I conveyed Thy message?" And the valley resounded with the reply from a myriad of human tongues with one accord, "By Lord! Surely you have."

The Prophet's Demise

After his return from the farewell pilgrimage and about the end of the month of Safar, 11 A.H., the Prophet fell ill. Even in the course of his illness he would go out to the mosque to lead prayers as usual, but often felt too weak to speak. One day, after the prayer, he addressed the congregation, saying that Allah had offered a servant of His the choice between this earthly life and the life with Him, but he chose the latter. Thus he signified his approaching end. Thereafter his strength failed rapidly. "Lord! Blessed companionship on High," were the last words of his earnest prayer in whisper. It was on Monday, the 2nd of Rabi al-Awwul (in the year 632 according to the Christian era) when he breathed his last, at the age of sixty three. May the Lord shower His choicest blessings on him.

He was buried in the very room in the house of his wife

(Ayesha) where he died. Later on, his bosom companions, Abu Bakr, the first Caliph (Commander of the Faithful), and Umar, the second Caliph, on their deaths, were buried beside the Prophet. Later on, a mausoleum was built over these graves with the mosque adjacent to it. This shrine at Medina attracts thousands of pilgrims every year.

Knowledge and Learning

The unlettered Prophet said the following as to knowledge and learning:

- [1] Acquire knowledge. It enables its possessor to distinguish right from wrong. It lights the way to the heaven. It is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, and our companion when friendless. It guides us to happiness, it sustains us in misery. It is an ornament among friends, and an armor against enemies.
- [2] Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.
- [3] Go in search of knowledge even if you have to go to China (a very distant place).
- [4] Whoever honors the learned, honors me.
- [5] The knowledge from which no benefit is derived is like a treasure from which no charity is bestowed in the way of the Lord.
- [6] Excessive knowledge is better than excessive praying; it is better to teach knowledge one hour in the night than to pray the whole night.
- [7] Who are the learned? Those who practice what they know.

Muhammad: A Model of Veracity and Uprightness

The following very interesting episode from the life of the Holy Prophet gives a glimpse into his true character.

The day on which Ibrahim, his baby son, breathed his last was darkened by a solar eclipse. Some of the Arab tribes were singularly affected by the concurrence of the two events. They thought

that the eclipse took place on account of the sad demise, and that the father of the deceased, whose loss was mourned by even the celestial bodies, must surely be a true messenger. Consequently, they flocked to the door of the Prophet and requested him to make them Muslims. The Prophet, on hearing what they meant and what they thought, came out and told them plainly that the phenomenon they had witnessed had nothing to do with the birth or death of any mortal; and that if any of them had been induced under such an impression to accept him as a Divine messenger, he had better go away.

Incidentally, Ibrahim, the Prophet's only son, died in infancy. When he was dying, the Holy Prophet, accompanied by some of his companions, visited him. The Prophet's eyes were filled with tears and he exclaimed; "The eyes shed tears, the heart grieves, but we are reconciled to what our Creator has ordained for us; but your leaving us, O Ibrahim, makes us sad indeed." Thereupon one of his companions questioned him whether showing grief like this was proper for a prophet of God. The Holy Prophet replied that this was only human nature and an expression of God-given mercy and love.

No Compulsion in Religion

Says the Holy Quran:

"There is no compulsion in religion... the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error. So whoever disbelieves in the devil and believes in Allah, he indeed lays hold on the firmest handle which shall never break. And Allah is Hearing, Knowing."
(2:256)

[1] The following instructions were given to the troops dispatched against the Byzantines by the Holy Prophet:

"In avenging the injuries inflicted upon us, molest not the harmless inmates of domestic seclusion; spare the weakness of the females; injure not the infant at the breast, nor those who are ill in bed. Abstain from demolishing the dwellings of the unresisting inhabitants; destroy not the means of their subsistence, nor their fruit trees, and touch not the palm."

- [2] In the battle of Hunain, six thousand men of the Hawazin tribe (infidels) were taken prisoners, and they were all set free simply as an act of favor. Seventy prisoners were taken in the battle of Badr and it was only in this case that ransom was exacted, but the prisoners were granted their freedom while the war with the Meccan infidels was yet in progress. In no case was the religion of Islam forced upon them, nor was it offered as a price for their freedom.
- [3] After the conquest of Mecca, the leader of the tribal deputation of Banu Hanifa was Musailima. He accepted Islam along with the others, but on return to his home in Yamama, he apostatized and wrote to the Holy Prophet; "In prophethood, you and I are partners, hence you keep half the country, while I will rule over the other half." The Prophet replied: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah, to Musailima the liar; peace be on those who follow the right path. After this, note that the Earth belongs to Allah and He awards it to any of His bondsmen, as He pleases; and the end is good of those who fear God."

Even in this letter, there was no threat of punishment; on the other hand, the Prophet sent a responsible man, Rijal by name, to counsel Musailima to accept Islam again. Musailima refused and started another State within the State and collected an army to fight the Muslims. After the death of the Prophet, the first Caliph Abu Bakr sent an army against him, and after a fierce battle Musailima was killed. But it was as a rebel that he was punished, and not because he had turned an apostate.

Facility in Religion

- [1] It is related that a certain man, guilty of transgressing the religious law in a certain respect, confessed his fault to the Prophet, who said: "Set a captive or slave free." The man replied: "I cannot afford to do that." "Then keep fast for two months." "No," said he, "I am not strong enough." "Then go and feed sixty poor men," said the Prophet; and the man declined, saying, "I have not got the means." The Prophet kept silent for a little while. In the meanwhile, somebody

came and presented a basketful of dates to him. The Prophet turned towards his questioner and said, "Take this basket and distribute the dates among the poor." The man replied; "O Prophet of God, there is none so poor within the limits of this town as myself." The Prophet laughed and said; "So be it, go and distribute it amongst your family."

- [2] Muaz bin Jabal used to lead the prayers in a certain quarter of the town and, in his prayers, used to recite lengthy chapters of the Quran. A certain man complained to the Prophet that Muaz read such long chapters that it had proved to be a hindrance for him to say his prayers in Muaz's leadership. Abu Masud Ansari relates that he had never seen the Prophet angrier than at that time. He answered thus; "There are certain people who inspire aversion in the minds of others; everyone from amongst you, who happens to lead the prayers, should read short chapters, for in the congregation of those that pray, there are the weak, the decrepit, and the old."
- [3] Hazrat Ayesha (the wife of the Holy Prophet) reported that one of her friends got married. She met the bride again after a few months and noticed with somewhat of a shock that she was looking pale and sad and was shabbily dressed. Hazrat Ayesha asked her the reason why. She replied that her husband hardly took notice of her, as he kept fast during the day and prayed the whole night through. Ayesha reported this to the Holy Prophet who sent for the man and was very angry with him. "I pray in the night also, but I have my sleep as well," exclaimed the Prophet. "Similarly, I fast on certain days and eat and drink on other days." Afterwards, he directed the man to go and show love to his wife. He said that he was keeping fast, whereupon the Holy Prophet ordered him to break his fast and go home.

The Holy Quran says:

"...Allah desires ease for you, and He desires not hardship for you..." (2:185).

"And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am near. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way." (2:186)

How Islam Was Propagated

After the conquest of Mecca, tribes from all over Arabia accepted Islam and owed allegiance to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. For reasons of State, the Prophet sent his trusted companions as representatives to different parts of the country. Muaz, a companion young in age but mature in wisdom, was sent to Yemen. He got his caravan ready, rode his horse and came to the Prophet to bid him good-bye. The Prophet gave some very valuable advice to Muaz which he related afterwards to others. The Prophet told him to be patient with the illiterate people. "First of all, teach them that God is One," he said, "and after they have come to accept it as an unalterable truth, then only should you tell them about His Prophet Muhammad and his teachings." The Prophet further told Muaz to render justice that was tempered with mercy. Then the Prophet asked him that if he found no solution to a particular problem or case in hand in either the Holy Quran or in his (the Prophet's) actions or sayings, what was he supposed to do then. "I shall use my own judgment then," replied Muaz. At this the Holy Prophet expressed his entire satisfaction and exhorted him always to fear Allah and ask for His help and guidance. Before the Prophet left Muaz, he shook hands with him and expressed his fear that he probably would not meet him again in this life. Muaz could not but shed tears on hearing this. And so it came to pass that the Holy Prophet died shortly thereafter.

The Story of The Blind Man

One day, the Prophet was busy explaining the doctrines of Islam to an assembly of the leaders of the Quraish, when a blind Muslim, Ibn Umm Maktum by name, came and interruptingly asked the Prophet to teach him what God had revealed to him. The Holy Prophet was displeased by this untimely interruption and did not pay him attention. On this, the Prophet received Divine revelation which forms Chapter 80, entitled "He Frowned," of the Holy Quran:

1. He frowned and turned away,
2. Because the blind man came to him.

3. And what would make thee know that he might purify himself,
4. Or be mindful, so the Reminder should profit him?
5. As for him who considers himself free from need
6. To him thou dost attend.
7. And no blame is on thee, if he purify himself not.
8. And as to him who comes to thee striving hard,
9. And he fears...
10. To him thou payest no regard.
11. Nay, surely it is a Reminder,
12. So let him who will mind it.

The blind man had gone away by this time. The Prophet sent for him, spread his own cloth for him to sit on, and then asked him to question him about anything he wanted to know.

It will be noted that from the point of view of social etiquette, the blind man was in the wrong; but God Almighty wanted the Prophet to be indulgent towards others' weaknesses and have the best of manners, as the Holy Quran certifies: "And surely thou hast sublime morals." (68:4)

In Islam, mere rank in society, the wealth a person possesses, or the color of his skin does not confer any superiority on him. The Holy Quran says:

"O Mankind, surely We have created you from a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know each other. Surely the noblest of you with Allah is the most dutiful of you. Surely Allah is Knowing, Aware."
(49:13)

Thus in a mosque, when prayers are being led, a beggar may stand shoulder to shoulder with a wealthy man and none may say nay to him.

Muhammad as a Husband

In the religious history of the world there is no person who has done so much to elevate the position of women as the Prophet Muhammad. He gave them rights when they had none. "The

rights of women are sacred. See that women are maintained in the rights granted to them,” said he. Another saying goes: “That is the best of Muslims whose disposition is best; and the best of you are they who behave best to their wives.”

At the age of twenty-five, he married a well-to-do widow, Khadijah, who was then forty years old. He remained devoted to her till her death twenty-seven years later; and she was then his only wife and mother of his children. He was true to his wife all his life, and even after she was dead, he never forgot her. He always showed respect and consideration even for those whom Khadijah had associated. Later on he married a second time and his wife Ayesha was both young and beautiful. He liked her very much, but he never forgot his late wife Khadijah and always used to remember her with such affection that Ayesha once felt a little jealous and said to him, “Was she not old, and has not Allah given you a better one in her place?” “No,” replied Muhammad, “there can never be one better than her; she believed in me when others ridiculed me, she helped me when I was persecuted by the world.” No wonder, Professor T.W. Arnold called it “one of the most beautiful pictures of a perfect wedded life that history gives us.”

Respect For Parents

Says the Holy Quran:

“And thy Lord has decreed that you serve none but Him, and do good to parents. If either or both of them reach old age with thee, say not ‘fie’ to them, nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy, and say: My Lord, have mercy on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little.” (17:23-24)

- [1] Muawiyah bin Jahima relates: “I went to the Holy Prophet and told him that I was prepared to go to any holy war that he cared to send me to. The Prophet asked me if my mother was alive, and I replied in the affirmative. On this the Prophet said: ‘Go and serve your mother, as Heaven lies at the feet of mothers.’”

- [2] Abdullah bin Umar relates that the Prophet said: "Your Lord is pleased if you please your father; and He is displeased if you displease your father."
- [3] Anas relates that the Prophet said: "Whosoever wishes that his wealth may increase and that his life span be lengthened, then he should do good to his kith and kin."

The Prophet's Respect for Conventions

In the last ten days of the month of Fasting (Ramadan) the Prophet used to confine himself to a secluded place in the mosque and gave himself up to meditation, the saying of prayers, and to the reading of the Holy Quran. His food was brought to him there, and he slept there also. One evening his wife Safiyyah¹ came to the mosque and asked him to stick his head out of the window so that she could wash the hair, anoint and comb them. The Prophet did so. Afterwards, the Prophet undertook to see her off to her residence. It was dark already and as they were walking, two persons passed them by, and recognizing the Prophet, greeted him. The Prophet replied to them, but asked them to stop. When they did, he wanted them to know that it was his wife, Safiyyah, who was accompanying him. They vowed that they had not thought of anything evil, but the Prophet said that it was better to leave no doubt, as the devil had subtle ways of attacking a man's faith.

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1. Lady Safiyyah was the daughter of a big Jewish chieftain and after the fall of Khaibar Forts, was amongst the captives that had fallen into the hands of the Muslims. The Prophet liberated her and took her in marriage. The Prophet had not the means at that time to entertain his friends to a feast, as is customary. The companions were asked to come with their own meals, and eat it all together, which thus constituted the wedding feast.

She once complained to the Prophet that some women, out of jealousy or spite, called her a Jewess in a derogatory manner. The Prophet said: "Next time, you may tell them that your grandfather was Prophet Abraham and your father Prophet Moses, and your husband Prophet Muhammad; that would silence them."

His Respect For His Wet-Nurse

- [1] Once, while the Prophet was distributing meat, there came a woman who desired to see him. The Prophet met her and showed her every respect. He spread his own sheet for her. The narrator says that when he asked the people who that woman was, they said that she was the wet-nurse of the Prophet.
- [2] It is related that amongst the prisoners taken after the battle of Hunain was a woman, Shima by name. She came forward and told the Prophet that she was his foster-sister (the daughter of his wet-nurse). The Prophet failed to recognize her, and asked for proof. She exposed her waist and showed him his teeth marks on her back; for in childhood they used to play together and once in play he had bitten her. When the Prophet saw that he smiled and at once said: "Please, stay with us, and we will do all we can to make you comfortable." She and her friends were of course set free and allowed to go home with presents.

Love of Fellow-Men

Said the Holy Prophet Muhammad:

"Whoever is kind to the creation, God is kind to him; therefore be kind to man on the earth, whether he be good or bad; and being kind to the bad is to withhold them from badness."

The following poem "Abou Ben Adhem", by Leigh Hunt, illustrates what the sentiments of a true Muslim should be:

"Abou Ben Adhem... may his tribe increase...

Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace

And saw within the moonlight of his room,

Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,

An angel, writing in a book of gold.

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,

So to the presence in the room he said:

'What writest thou?'

The vision raised its head,

And with a look made of all sweet accord,
 Answered: 'The names of those who love the Lord.'
 'And is mine one?' said Abou.
 'Nay, not so,' Replied the angel.
 Abou spoke more slow, But cheerily still, and said,
 'I pray thee, then,
 Write me as one who loves his fellow-men'.
 The angel wrote and vanished; the next night
 He came again with a great wakening light
 And showed the names whom Love of God had blest,
 And lo. Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

Kindness Towards the Poor People

- [1] A poor old woman used to sweep the mosque in Medina, where the Holy Prophet used to say his prayers. She used to sleep in one corner of the compound of the mosque and was fed out of charity by members of the congregation. One day the Prophet noticed her absence and asked about her. He was informed that she had died the night before and had been buried. The people did not think it worthwhile to inform the Prophet about it. On this the Prophet rebuked them and forthwith asked to be taken to her grave, where he, in company with other people, recited the funeral prayers for the salvation of her soul.
- [2] Abu Huraira relates that the Holy Prophet said; "When a person sees a man who is wealthier and healthier than himself, he should think of those who are poorer and weaker than himself, so that he may not feel discontented and ungrateful." On another occasion, the Prophet said: "There is many a person who looks poor and disheveled and who may be rudely driven away from a door, but if he takes an oath by God, then God (out of regard and love for him) would see to it that what he has sworn for comes out true."

Love For Children

- [1] The Prophet loved children and was very kind to them, and whenever he found time he used to play with them. It sometimes happened that while he went into the sajdah (prostration that is part of the daily prayer), his two little grandsons, Hassan and Hussain, would climb over his back and ride on him. He would not remove them forcibly, but would wait till they came off, and only then would he continue his prayer.
- [2] It was an Eid day. The month of fasting had ended, and the great Muslim festival was being celebrated in the proper manner. Charity was extended to the poor and alms were distributed amongst the needy. The Eid prayer and the sermon were duly observed. Now the Eid fair was being held, where eatables, fancy articles, toys for children and merry-go-rounds were in full swing. People were flocking to it. Children in new clothes were accompanying their parents, and there was laughter and liveliness all around. It was then that the keen and kindly eyes of the Prophet noticed a small boy in tattered clothes, who was standing all alone under a palm tree and was looking longingly and sadly at the other children going to the fair. The Prophet then knew him to be an orphan. He went up to him and smilingly said, "Let me be your father for the day;" and then with a gentle jerk lifted him and put him astride his shoulder and talking and joking with the boy, soon brought a smile to the boy's face, as they both headed for the fair-ground.

Kindness To Animals

- [1] Amar Rami relates: "We were sitting in the company of the Prophet when a man came with a blanket wrapped round him, and said: 'O Prophet. I passed through a wood, and heard the noise of the young birds. I took them and put them into my blanket. Then their mother came fluttering round my head. I uncovered the young, and the mother fell down upon them. Then I wrapped them in my blanket, and here I have them.' Then the Prophet said, 'Put them down'. And when he did so,

the mother bird continued to fondle its young. On observing this the Prophet said, 'Do you wonder at the affection of the mother towards her young ones? I swear by Him Who hath sent me, verily God is more loving to His creatures than the mother is to these young birds.' Then he directed the man to return the young birds to the nest from which he took them, and let their mother be with them."

- [2] It was a hot summer in Arabia, and there was a great scarcity of water. A woman of ill-repute happened to pass by a well and noticed that a dog suffering from extreme thirst was running round and round the well, but could find no water to drink. Upon seeing this, the woman took pity on the animal. Taking her shoe, she tied it to a string, and dropped it in the well and thus drew out some water and offered it to the dog. The dog gratefully lapped up the water, wagged his tail and went away. This incident was seen by somebody who related it to the Holy Prophet. The Prophet was greatly touched by it and said that this act of mercy and kindness shown to a distressed creature of Allah drew His mercy in return, and that the woman's sins had been atoned for.

"Acrimu Al-Hirrah..." Respect the Cat

(A POEM BY MUSTAFA H.M.LEON)

Hast heard the story, how one summer's day
 Within a mosque, a cat once hap'd to stray,
 Just at the time God's Prophet had gone there,
 To make, as was his wont, the Zuhr prayer
 With measured tread, it step'd with noiseless feet,
 And, 'fore God's Prophet, calmly took its seat,
 And purring gently, sat there calm and still,
 Afraid of nought, suspicious of no ill,
 When lo! by Allah's will, e'er wise and good,
 The cat was seized with pains of motherhood,
 And 'twixt its pangs, common to all of earth,
 There in the mosque, to kittens three gave birth.
 "Remove the brute," then loudly one did cry,
 "To thus pollute the mosque, sure it should die."

"Say not such words," God's Prophet then did say,
 "Remove it not, in peace let it here stay,
 Do not a thing its feelings now to jar,
 Respect the cat, Acrimu al-hirrah,
 This cat hath only done that which it should,
 And hath performed its work of motherhood,
 What Allah hath decreed for all the race,
 As Nature's law, sure can be no disgrace,
 And Muslims learn from this the lesson, that
 Allah doth teach to all, Respect the Cat,
 Thy father honor, and thy brother love,
 Protect thy sister, but of all love,
 Respect thy mother, she it was who bear
 Thee in her womb, and lavished on thee care
 Known but to Allah; Muslims think of that,
 This cat a mother is, Respect the Cat. "

Charity

- [1] Lady Ayesha (wife of the Prophet) relates that once a woman, accompanied by her two daughters, came to her door and begged for alms. Lady Ayesha had no money or food in the house at the time except one date (fruit of the date-palm) which she gave to the woman. The woman, however, split the date in two halves and gave one piece each to her daughters, herself going hungry. After they had gone away the Prophet came in. Lady Ayesha related the incident to him. The Prophet was greatly touched by the sacrificing spirit shown by the mother of the girls. He said: "Whoever is put into trial and tribulation because of his or her daughters, but still treats them well and gets them fixed up in life, then this noble action will serve as a screen from hell."
- [2] Abu Amama relates that the Prophet said: "Whoever treats an orphan well and brings him (or her) up like his own child, then he and I would be together like this (and he showed his two fingers together) in Paradise."
- [3] Ibn Abbas relates that the Prophet said: "That person is not a true Muslim who eats heartily while his neighbor is starving."

- [4] Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas relates that the Prophet came to inquire about his health when he fell ill. Sa'd had plenty of wealth, and he wanted to give it all in charity, but the Prophet disagreed with him. Sa'd then suggested that half of his wealth could thus be set apart, but again the Prophet did not agree. It was only when he decided to give away one-third of his wealth that the Prophet gave his consent, though reluctantly. For Sa'd had one daughter and the Prophet desired that she should not be left in want.

Against Begging

Once a friend of the Prophet came to him and asked for some help. The Prophet asked him whether he possessed anything at all. He replied: "I have only a cup to drink from, and a sheet of cloth, part of which I use for covering myself, and part of which I utilize for spreading on the bedstead." The Prophet sent for both the things and asked if there was anyone who would care to buy those two articles; they were sold for two dirhams (dirham is a coin). The Prophet addressed the friend thus: "Here are the two dirhams; with one of them buy something to eat, and with the other buy a piece of rope and go into the woods and collect pieces of wood and sell them in the market." A fortnight passed, and the friend came to visit the Prophet again and informed him that he had saved fifteen dirhams and that with some of them he had bought cloth and with some of them he had purchased corn to eat. The Prophet said: "Which is more commendable and praiseworthy... this or going on the Day of Judgment branded with the mark of begging?" On another occasion he said: "Mind you, the upper hand is better than the one which is beneath it."

The Dignity of Labor

- [1] Maqdam bin Ma'di Karb relates that the Prophet said: "Nobody has eaten better food than the bread which a man earns out of the work done with his two hands. David, the Prophet of God, worked with his hands for his living."
- [2] Abdullah bin Umar relates that the Prophet said: "Pay the

workman his wages before the perspiration on his body (due to labor) dries up.”

- [3] Abu Huraira relates that the Prophet said: “God has said that on the Day of Judgment, He would take to task three persons in particular: one who enters into a covenant in the name of God and then lightly breaks it; the second who enslaves and sells a free person and spends the money on himself; the third who engages a laborer and takes full work out of him and then refuses to pay him his wages.”
- [4] Abu Huraira relates that the Prophet said: “God did not send a Prophet into this world who has not acted as a shepherd, tending goats and sheep, at one time or another.” And when the companions asked about him, the Prophet said: “Yes, even I used to tend goats owned by the Meccans and was paid a few coins for the same.”

On Buying and Selling

- [1] Abu Huraira relates that the Prophet was passing through the bazaar when he saw a heap of grain lying in front of a shop. The Prophet dug his hand into the heap and felt that the grain inside was a little wet. On this the Prophet questioned the shopkeeper about it, who replied that some of it had gotten wet due to rain. “You should have kept the wet grain on top of the heap so that the customer could see it; any man who cheats is not one of us.” said the Prophet.

On another occasion, he admonished those who hoarded grain in order to create artificial scarcity and then sold it at higher prices; they were committing a sin.

- [2] Ibn Umar relates that the Prophet forbade a Muslim to interfere in the business transaction or marriage negotiation of another Muslim, unless he had been permitted to do so.
- [3] Abu Huraira relates that the Prophet mentioned a certain businessman who had instructed his agents to be lenient and accommodating to those who owed him money, but were not in a position to pay on demand. He even forgave those who became bankrupt. “When he died,” said the Prophet, “God in

His mercy forgave him his sins, and sent him to Heaven.”

- [4] Abu Huraira relates that whenever a funeral prayer was to be said over the dead body of a Muslim, the Prophet always used to ask if the deceased owed any money or was in debt, and whether he had left any means to pay that debt. Only when he was assured that there were no debts outstanding against the person who had died, or that arrangements had been made to pay them off, would he take part in that person’s funeral prayer. Later on, due to the various conquests, the financial condition improved, and the Prophet used to pay the debts of deceased Muslims himself. He said: “They loved me better than their own lives, so I accept responsibility for their debts if any; while their belongings may be given to their heirs.”
- [5] Abu Saeed relates that the Prophet said that a really honest and God-fearing trader would be found amongst God’s chosen people in the world hereafter.

Sin and Salvation

- [1] Once the Prophet went with his companions to visit and inquire about the health of a Muslim who had been ailing and suffering from some unknown disease for a long time. They found the sick man very weak and reduced almost to a skeleton. He could hardly take any nourishment and yet he lingered on. The Prophet inquired about his sickness. The man whispered in a weak voice that he had prayed to God to punish him for his sins in this world instead of in the next, and that this might account for his troublesome and lingering illness. On hearing this, the Prophet admonished him; if God was to exact punishment for each and every sin and error that a man commits, then even he (the Prophet) could not escape altogether. He said: “We should always pray to God for His forgiveness and mercy and seek His help in keeping to the right path, because in that alone lies our salvation. Our prayer should be: ‘O Lord, grant us what is best of this world, and of the world hereafter, and save us from the punishment of hell.’”

It is related that the sick man followed this advice and in due course became well again.

[2] Muaz bin Jabal relates that he once asked the Prophet to tell him the means whereby he could escape punishment in the life hereafter and to get to Heaven. The Prophet replied: "You have asked me a very important question. This is possible only with Allah's help. First of all, you must worship the one and only God, say your obligatory prayers daily, give poor-rate every year as ordained, keep fasts in the month of Fasting and perform pilgrimage to the House of God in Mecca at least once in your lifetime. However, in addition to these, remember that giving alms turns away the wrath of God, while getting up in the night and praying to God will help to wash away your sins and raise you spiritually in the eyes of God. Further, strive in the way of the Lord; and give rein to your tongue which can cause much mischief."

The Worldly Life

Ibn Masud once saw the Prophet sleeping on a mat; when the Prophet woke up, there were marks impressed on his body by the roughness of the mat. Ibn Masud, on seeing this, begged the Prophet to let him or others know as to when and where he wanted to take a rest, so that they could make a proper bed for him. On this, the Prophet said that worldly comforts were not for him; he was like a wayfarer who took a little rest in the shade of a tree, and then went on the way to his real destination.

On another occasion, Umar saw the Prophet lying on a mat woven out of dried palm leaves, while his head was resting on a rough leather cushion. Umar's eyes were filled with tears, and he requested the Prophet to pray to God to grant his followers worldly goods and comforts of life like those enjoyed by the non-Muslims of Persia and Syria. Thereupon the Prophet chided him, but at the same time consoled him that although the worldly riches might be enjoyed by others, yet the rewards and comforts of the world hereafter awaited the faithful.

Sanctity of Human Life

- [1] Usama bin Zaid relates: “The Prophet sent us to fight certain trouble-makers of the Jahina tribe. I came across one person and was going to attack him with my spear, when he recited: ‘There is no God but Allah....’ In spite of that, I attacked him and killed him. Later on, I related the incident to the Prophet who said: ‘When he had admitted that there is no god but Allah, then why did you kill him?’ I argued that he recited those words to save his life. The Prophet replied: ‘Had you opened out his heart to verify it?’”... meaning thereby that when he could not be sure of that man’s true intention, he should have accepted what he had said and spared him.
- [2] Abu Darda relates that the Prophet said: “God in His mercy may forgive every sin, but two sinners cannot escape punishment... one who worships other gods and the other who kills a Muslim deliberately and without sufficient and valid reason.”
- [3] Jandab bin Abdullah relates that the Prophet said: “There was a person before you who received a wound in his hand. He could not withstand the pain and, taking a dagger, he cut his hand off and bled to death. Said the Lord God: ‘This man whom I gave life as a gift has made haste out of cowardice to end it, so I have forbidden his entry into Paradise.’”
- [4] Abdullah bin Umar relates that the Prophet said: “Whoever kills a non-Muslim belonging to a community with whom a truce has been declared, shall not enter Paradise.”

Sanctity of Property

Abu Huraira relates that a person came before the Prophet and said: “O Prophet of God, if a person comes to steal or snatch away my property by force, then should I yield to him?” The Prophet replied, “Don’t let him take your property, even if you have to fight for it.” The man said: “Supposing he kills me?” The Prophet replied, “You would then die the death of a martyr.” On this the man said: “But what if I kill him?” The Prophet said: “The thief would go to Hell, while there is no charge against you.”

Respect for Authority

- [1] Abdullah bin Umar relates that the Prophet said: “Beware, every one of you is a warden and has to answer for those under your control. Therefore the ruler who rules over his subjects will be questioned (by Allah) about them; a man is the head of the family and shall be questioned about them; a woman (wife) is the custodian of her husband’s house, property and children, and will have to answer for them....Beware, every one of you is a ‘shepherd’ and answerable for his ‘fold’.”
- [2] Abu Zarr relates that he requested the Prophet to appoint him governor of some territory. The Prophet patted him on the shoulder and told him: “O Abu Zarr, I find you too weak to bear the burden of governorship. It is a trust and a thankless job. I don’t relish it myself. Avoid leadership even if it be of a small group; and do not accept trusteeship of an orphan’s property (which is a very exacting job), if you can help it.”
- [3] Ibn Umar relates that the Prophet said: “It is incumbent on a Muslim to hear and obey his ruler, whether he likes him or not. However, if the ruler gives an order to commit a sin, then a Muslim is no longer bound to obey. There is no obedience to a creature in disobedience to the Creator.”

Jews and the Prophet

Due to his generosity and hospitality, the Holy Prophet sometimes had to borrow money or provisions from Jews who were the traders and money-lenders in Medina. When the Prophet came to hold the position of a virtual ruler in Medina, it so happened that a Jew, whom he owed some money, came up to him and addressed him very harshly and rudely and demanded his dues. “You, Bani Hasham,” he said tauntingly, “never pay back when you once get something out of another person.” Umar, a bosom friend of the Prophet, was much enraged at the insolence of the Jew, and wanted to teach him a lesson in good manners. But the Prophet reprimanded him by saying: “O Umar, it would have been best for you to have advised both of us... me, the debtor, to repay the debt with gratitude, and him, the creditor, to demand it

in a more becoming manner.” Then he paid the Jew more than his due, and the latter was so much impressed with the Prophet’s sense of justice and fairness that he accepted Islam.

[2] Once the Prophet was sitting by the side of a road, engaged in a discourse with his companions. They saw a funeral procession approaching from a distance and it appeared to be that of a Jew. When the procession came near, the Prophet stood up at attention out of respect for the dead and the companions followed his example. After the procession had passed by, someone asked the Prophet as to why he had shown reverence for the deceased Jew. The Holy Prophet was displeased upon hearing this, and told him that they must show respect to the deceased, irrespective of their religion or the community to which they belonged; the case of the deceased rested with Allah.

The Prophet’s Treatment of Christians

Some of the Christian Fathers came to the Prophet to discuss with him the merits of the true religion. Muslim hospitality lodged them in houses surrounding the mosque of the Prophet. For a Muslim, the whole of the Earth is his mosque; the Christian guests had to find a church in which to offer their prayer, and there was no church to be found. The Prophet came to their rescue by offering them his own mosque. Allah neither begets, nor is He begotten. Yet the very place where Allah was worshipped, now became a place of worship for those who believed in the begotten Son of God. The Prophet’s tolerance and generosity went further in the granting of concessions to non-Muslims under his rule. The following historical documentation illustrates this further:

“To the Christians of Najran and the surrounding territories, the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion, and their property... to those present as well as to the absent, and others beside. There shall be no interference with (the practice of) their faith or their observance, nor any change in their rights or privileges. No bishop shall be removed from his bishopric nor any monk from his monastery, nor any priest from his priesthood. They shall continue to enjoy everything, great and small, as they hitherto did. No image or

cross shall be destroyed. They shall not oppress, nor be oppressed. They shall not practice the rights of blood-vengeance as in the Days of Ignorance. No tithes shall be exacted from them, nor shall they be required to furnish provisions for the troops.”

A Captive Christian Lady and Muhammad

Muhammad was compelled to wage wars, but never was a sword drawn except as the last resort to defend human life and secure safety for it. These battles proved useful in one way: they furnished occasions for the revelation of the nobility of the character of the Prophet, especially when dealing with the defeated and the prisoners of war. On one such occasion, after the defeat of the clan Tayy of Yemen (South-West Arabia), a band of Christian prisoners were brought before the Prophet. Amongst them was seen a group of women led by Safana, the daughter of Hatim, a widely famed Christian philanthropist. When the Prophet came to know of her lineage, he showed her great respect. He informed her that the generosity of her father called for a tender treatment of his daughter. “God loves those who are kind to His creatures,” said the Prophet to the lady. “And Islam aims at inculcating the higher virtues, and consequently, it must recognize them wherever they exist.” So saying, the Prophet set Safana free. Emboldened by this kind treatment, the lady came to the rescue of her fellow-prisoners, and entreated the Prophet to also set her companions free, as otherwise her liberty remained unattractive. Thereupon the Prophet liberated them all and had them escorted back to their homes.

The Prophet’s Bravery

[1] Although the fall of Mecca had virtually broken the back of their resistance, the infidels offered one more battle at Hunain to the Muslim, amongst whom were many new converts to Islam. Being inexperienced and untried, they fell into an ambush laid by the enemy, and retreated in disorder. The Prophet, with some faithful and brave companions, was left to face the brunt of the blow. The same unfailing source of solace — unswerving faith in Divine help and implicit con-

viction in the final triumph of his cause — sustained him then as before. He shouted repeatedly, “I am the Prophet, there is no untruth in it. I am the son of Abdul Muttalib.” Abbas, one of his companions, called out with his stentorian voice: “O hosts of Helpers, O the companions of the tree!”¹ On hearing this, the faithful took heart, and shouting: “Here we are at thy command.” They rallied round the Prophet, and fought with such bravery that the enemy was defeated, and much spoils of war and prisoners fell into the hands of the Muslims.

- [2] Once at Medina, there was an alarm during the night that a party of the enemy was going to make a night-time attack. Men woke up and armed themselves in a hurry and rushed towards the danger-spot. Shortly, they saw a lone rider approaching them in the darkness, and so they prepared to confront him. However, when the rider came nearer, they found to their surprise that it was the Holy Prophet Muhammad himself; on hearing the alarm, he had jumped on the bare back of a horse and ridden off in the darkness to reconnoiter. He soon reassured his people that there was no cause for alarm and everything was all right.

Humor of the Prophet

- [1] The Holy Prophet had a keen sense of humor and ready wit. Once a man asked for a ride, and the Holy Prophet replied that he would give him a baby camel to ride. Thereupon the man remarked that the baby camel would be of no use to him. The Prophet replied that a camel gave birth to a camel, and that every camel was once a baby.
- [2] An old lady once paid a visit to the Prophet, and wanted to be reassured if her good deeds would entitle her to enter Paradise. The Prophet, with the hint of a smile on his lips, told

1. The ‘tree’ referred to was the acacia tree at Hudaibiya under which the Prophet took a pledge from his companions to serve, fight and, if need be, die for the cause of Islam.

her that no old woman would enter Heaven. Thereupon the lady became depressed and frightened. The Prophet then relieved her anxiety by telling her that everyone would be made young again before entering Heaven. The old lady heaved a sigh of relief and went home happy.

- [3] Once the Holy Prophet and his cousin Ali were seated next to each other, eating palm-dates out of a bag. The Prophet thought of playing a joke on Ali. After eating a date, he would quietly slip its stone into the pile lying in front of Ali. When they had finished eating the dates, the Prophet remarked, "Let us see who has eaten most of the dates." When they looked down, surely the pile of stones lying in front of Ali was bigger and higher. On this, the Prophet smiled. However, realizing the joke, Ali countered by saying: "Ah, sure, it seems you were so hungry that you ate your dates along with the stones." On this, both of them burst into laughter.

Appendix "A"

Out of the many religions in the world, today only Islam and Christianity can be called worldwide missionary religions. While Islam enjoins its followers to honor and respect the founders of other religions of the world, it is a pity that quite a few of non-Muslim writers have not done justice to Islam and its founder. This is so despite the fact that it can be proved that all the known founders of the Faith had predicted the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, the final and universal Messenger of Allah. Some of these are quoted in Appendix "B".

Still, there have been some great non-Muslim writers, mostly Christian by faith, who have been just and fair enough when commenting on Islam and its founder Muhammad (Allah's blessings be upon him). For the first time in Western literature, it was Goethe, the famous German poet and philosopher, who represented Muhammad unreservedly as a prophet — a true prophet of God. A few of the other similar opinions and quotations are given below:

- [1] "The most successful of all the Prophets and religious personalities" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th Edition).
- [2] "The driving force of his life was his belief in the unity of Allah and his desire to bring his people to this belief.... He showed deep sincerity and must have been a man of unusual personality and charm, for he not only bound to himself men of different types, but also kept their devotion....
 "...In his private character he showed amiability, loyalty, tenderness towards his family and a forgiving spirit. He lived at the height of his power in extreme simplicity...." (Chamber's Encyclopedia, under the headline "Muhammad").
- [3] "They called him a prophet, you say? Why, he stood face to face with them, bare, not enshrined in mystery, visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes, fighting, counseling, ordering in the midst of them; they must have seen what kind of a man he was, let him be called what you like.
 "No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During the three and twenty years of rough actual trial, I find him something of a hero, necessary

for that of itself....”

(Thomas Carlyle in his Essay “Hero as Prophet” in his book “Heroes and Hero-Worship”)

[4] “Other men have been monotheistic in the midst of idolaters but no other man has founded a strong and monotheistic religion. The distinction in his case was his resolution that other men should believe...certainly he had two of the most important characteristics of the Prophetic order. He saw the truth about God which his fellow men did not see and he had an irresistible inward impulse to publish this truth....”

(Dr. Marcus Dodds, about Muhammad in his book: “Muhammad, Buddha and Christ”)

[5] “We shall see, moreover, that the Koran is an exceedingly human document, reflecting every phase of Muhammad’s personality and standing in close relationship to the outward events of his life; so that here we have materials of unique and incontestable authority for tracing the origin and early development of Islam as do not exist in the case of Buddhism or Christianity or any other ancient religion.”

(Professor R.A. Nicholson: Literary History of the Arabs, London 1914)

[6] “By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Muhammad is a threefold founder, of a nation, of an empire and of a religion... Muhammad to the end of his life claimed that title only with which the highest philosophy and the truest Christianity will one day, I venture to believe, agree in yielding him, that of a Prophet, a very Prophet of God....”

(R.Bosworth Smith: Muhammad and Muhammadanism, London 1874)

[7] Bernard Shaw, the famous writer and critic, opined that if a man like Muhammad were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it much needed peace and happiness.

[8] “In his private dealings he was just. He treated friends and strangers, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, with equity, and was beloved by the common people for the

affability with which he received them, and listened to their complaints."

(Washington Irving: *Mahomet and His Successors*, London 1909, p.193)

[9] "...His (Muhammad's) memory was capacious and retentive, his wit easy and social, his imagination sublime, his judgment clear, rapid and decisive. He possessed the courage of both thought and action; and although his design might gradually expand with his success, the first idea which he entertained of his divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius."

(Edward Gibbon: *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London 1838-39, Vol. 5, p.335)

[10] Mahatma Gandhi, the great Hindu leader, on reading a book on the life of the Prophet, wrote in his newspaper, 'Young India,' from which an extract is given below:

"...I became more than convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These, and not the sword, carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle.... It is enough for me to know that he was a man among millions who tried to walk in the fear of God, died a poor man, wanted no grand mausoleum for his mortal remains and did not forget even on his death-bed the least of his creditors."

[11]He (Muhammad) was gifted with mighty powers of imagination, elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feelings... He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended his own clothes, milked the goats and waited upon himself, relates summarily another tradition. He never first withdrew his hand out of another man's palm, and turned not before the other had turned....

"He was the most faithful protector of those he protected,

the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence; those who came near him loved him; they who described him would say, 'I have never seen his like either before or after.' He was of great taciturnity; but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said."

(Stanley Lane-Poole: *The Speeches and Table Talk of the Prophet Muhammad*, London 1882, Introduction, pp.27-29).

[12] James A. Michener, the famous American writer, contributed an article entitled "Islam, the Misunderstood Religion" in the May 1955 issue of *The Reader's Digest* (American Edition). Some extracts from the article are given below:

"...Later he (Muhammad) became head of the State, and the testimony of even his enemies is that he administered wisely.... In his final years, he was invited to become a dictator or a saint, but he rejected both temptations, insisting that he was an average man to whom God had sent another of His periodic messages to the world...."

"Muslims think it particularly ironic when Muhammad is charged by Western writers with having established a voluptuous religion. Among drunkards, he abolished alcohol, so that even today all good Muslims are prohibitionists. Among the lazy, he ordained individual ritual prayers five times a day. In a nation that reveled in feasting, he instituted a most rigorous daytime fasting a full month each year...."

"Western writers have based their charges of voluptuousness mainly on the question of women. Before Muhammad, however, men were encouraged to take innumerable wives; he limited them to four only and the Koran is explicit that husbands who are unable to maintain strict equality between two or more wives must confine themselves to one...."

Appendix "B"

PROPHECIES ABOUT PROPHET MUHAMMAD

PROPHECIES IN THE BIBLE

[1] "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."

(Deut., 18:15)

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command them."

(Deut., 18:18)

Note: The Brethren of Israel could have no other meaning but of "Ishmaelites" (Arab descendants of Ishmael, son of Prophet Abraham); and these never had any prophet but Muhammad. Further in Deut., 34:10, we read that "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses."

[2] Another prophecy in clear terms is mentioned in Deut. 33:2: "And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them."

In the above verse "coming from Sinai" refers to the appearance of Moses; rising up from Seir, that of Jesus; it was at these places that these prophets received the Divine Call. Now, Paran (Faran in Arabic) is admittedly the ancient name for the hilly range in the Hejaz, Arabia; from there arose Muhammad from the descendants of Ishmael, as Genesis 21:21 also points to it. The reference to "ten thousands of saints" alludes to the ten thousand saintly followers with whom the Holy Prophet Muhammad made a triumphant entry into Mecca.

[3] In another prophecy, Isaiah 21:13-15, the land of Arabia and a "flight" are specifically mentioned. It may be noted that the flight of the Holy Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina was to escape persecution, and was momentous enough so that the Muslim Era commences from then onwards.

[4] "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may

abide with you for ever."

(John: 14:15-16)

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

(John: 14:25-26)

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

(John: 16:7-8)

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak and he will shew you things to come."

(John: 16:12-13)

Although the above prophecies point to the advent of another prophet after Jesus, yet Christian theologians have tried all they could to apply these to the Holy Ghost. The words "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you," however, are too clear to need any comment. For the study of the New Testament clearly shows that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost even before he was born. Then it speaks of Jesus himself as receiving the Holy Ghost in the shape of a pigeon. Obviously the use of the words "Holy Ghost" in the prophecy is intended to signify that the Promised One would have such an inseparable union with the Holy Ghost that his advent might be taken, metaphorically of course, as the coming of the Holy Ghost itself.

The words "That he may abide with you for ever" are significant, as Muhammad claimed to be the last of the Prophets. Then again, "He will guide you into all truth," as the prophecy says, is corroborated by the Holy Quran, which says:

- (i) "This day I have made perfect for you your religion," (5:3)
- (ii) "Say, the truth has come and falsehood has vanished," (17:81)
- (iii) According to the Holy Quran, the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad was expressly foretold in sacred books of all the religions. The Holy Quran says: "And when Allah made a covenant through the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Book and Wisdom... then a Messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you shall believe in him and you shall aid him. He said: Do you affirm and accept my compact in this (matter)? They said: We do affirm. He said: Then bear witness, and I (too) am of the bearers of witness with you." (3:81)

PROPHECIES IN HINDU SCRIPTURES

Likewise, in Hindu scriptures too there are several prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muhammad. A few of these are in the Puranas. The one in the Bhavishya Purana is the clearest of all. The fifth word from left to right is the name of the Holy Prophet. It gives even the name of the country of the Prophet: "Marusthalnivasinan"... denizens of the desert (Arabia). The prophecy, which is translated from the original Sanskrit text, runs as follows:

1. Just then an illiterate man with the epithet teacher, Muhammad by name, came along with his companions.
2. Raja (Bhoja in a vision) to that Great Deva, the denizen of Arabia, purifying with the Ganges water and with the five things of cow offered sandal-wood and pay worship to him.
3. O denizen of Arabia and Lord of the Holies, to thee is my adoration. O thou who hast found many ways and means to destroy all the devils of the world.
4. O pure one from among the illiterates, O sinless one, the spirit of truth and absolute master, to thee is my adoration. Accept me at thy feet.

(Bhavishya Purana, Parv 3, Khand 3, Adhya 3, Shalok 5-8)

Then again:

"O people, listen this emphatically; the man of praise

(Muhammad) will be raised among the people. We take the emigrant in our shelter from sixty thousand and ninety enemies whose conveyances are twenty camels and she-camels whose loftiness of position touches the heaven and lowers it."

"He gave to Mamh Rishi hundreds of gold coins, ten circles, three hundred Arab horses and ten thousand cows."

(Atharva Veda, Kanda 20, Sukta 197, Mantras 1-3)

PROPHECY IN THE PARSI SCRIPTURE

The Parsi religion is one of the oldest religions in the world. It has two collections of scriptures... the Dasatir and the Zand Avasta. In Dasatir, Number 14, which is associated with the name of Sasanil, a clear prophecy about the advent of the Prophet Muhammad is given. The translation from the original Pahlavi (Persian) language is given below:

"When the Persians should sink so low in morality, a man will be born in Arabia whose followers will upset their throne, religion and everything. The mighty stiff-necked ones of Persia will be overpowered. The house which was built (referring to Abraham building the Ka'ba in Mecca) and in which many idols have been placed will be purged of idols, and people will say their prayers facing towards it. His followers will capture the town of Persia and Taus and Balkh and other big places roundabout. People will embroil with one another. The wise men of Persia and others will join his followers."

BUDDHA'S PROPHECY

Buddha has prophesied the advent of a "Maitreya," and the prophecy is so famous that some of the Christian missionaries, Hindu Pundits and Theosophist propagandists have tried to apply it to their own reformers. Almost all Buddhist books contain this prophecy. It is in Chakkavatti Sinh nad Suttanta D. III 76. It goes as follows:

"There will arise in the world a Buddha named Maitreya (the benevolent one) a holy one, a supreme one, an enlightened one, endowed with wisdom in conduct, auspicious, knowing the universe; an incomparable charioteer of men who are tamed, a master of angels and mortals, a blessed Buddha even as I have now arisen in the world, a Buddha endowed with these same qualities. What he has realized by his own supernal knowledge, he will publish to this universe with its angels, its friends and its archangels and to the race of philosophers and Brahmins, princes and peoples, even as I now, having all this knowledge, do publish the same unto the same. He will preach his religion, glorious in its origin, glorious at its climax, glorious at the goal, in the spirit and the letter. He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and thoroughly pure, even as I now preach my religion and a like life do proclaim. He will keep up the society of monks numbering thousands, even as I now keep up a society of monks numbering many thousands."

(Edmunds, 'Buddhist and Christian Gospels,' Vol. II, pp. 160-161; "Coming World Teacher" by Pavri, p.23)

The term "Maitreya" is found in all books on Buddhism with slight differences of pronunciation.

[a] "Maitreya" in Sanskrit means loving, compassionate and merciful, benevolent.

(Sanskrit-English Dictionary by Monier Williams, and "Buddhism" by the same author, p.181).

[b] "It is also the name of Buddhista, the coming blessed one who is the fifth Buddha of this world." (ibid)

[c] It originates from Maitai which stands for friendship, goodwill (ibid, p.128).

Now the Holy Quran has described the Prophet Muhammad as such:

- [1] "And we have not sent thee but as a mercy to the nations."
(21:107)
- [2] "Certainly a messenger has come to you from among yourselves: grievous to him is your falling into distress, most solicitous for you, to the believers (he is) compassionate, merciful." (9:128)

Besides, Maitreya, the promised one, has been described as a guide to the whole of mankind. It is mentioned in overt terms that he will be the last of the prophets, that no Buddha will come after him. In the historic literature of the Buddhists, it is mentioned as a fact that the Promised One is earnestly awaited everywhere.

The description above fits in only with the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Note: For a detailed study on the subject, the reader is referred to the book "Muhammad in World Scriptures," Vols.I and II, by Maulana Abdul Haque Vidyarthi.