THE LAST PROPHET OF ALLAH

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THE LAST PROPHET OF ALLAH

Some four thousand years ago, there lived in Syria (Sham) a good man, named Ibrahim (peace be upon him). He was a prophet of Allah. Allah sent him to lead his people to the right path. He loved Allah with all his heart and was a true Muslim. Allah was much pleased with Ibrahim and took him as a friend (Khalil). When Ibrahim grew old, Allah granted him two sons, Ismail and Ishaq (peace be upon them) He kept the younger one, Ishaq, with him but settled Ismail the elder one, in Mecca in Arabia. Arabia is to the south of Syria. Its greater part is a great desert. Only date-palms and bushes grow there. However, its western part is fertile. Mecca is situated in the western part of Arabia, near the Red Sea.

Ismail lived in Mecca with his mother Hajira. Ibrahim, with the help of Ismail, built a masjid (mosque) at Mecca to worship Allah.
This masjid is known as Ka‘aba or ‘Bait-u llah’ (the House of Allah). The Arabs began to gather in Mecca every year to pray to Allah. This was known as Hajj (pilgrimage).

Ismail had twelve sons. They were all hardworking, honest and truthful. They followed the faith of their father and grandfather. They made the land round Mecca fertile and grew many kinds of crops. Some of them took to trade and led their caravans to Syria to the north, Iran to the east, Egypt to the west and Yemen to the south.

Mecca soon became the trade and religious centre of the whole of Arabia. One of the Arab chiefs was named Quraish. The children of Ismail were, later on, known by the name of Quraish after this chief. The Quraish grew very rich. They grew in number and they became very powerful in the land. The Arabs not only respected them but also feared them. As time passed, most of the Quraish and the other Arabs left the faith of their forefathers, and began to worship many gods instead of Allah. They placed 360 idols of their gods in the sacred Ka’aba. They took to evil ways. They drank
wine. They gambled. Most of them hated their daughters and buried them alive.

In those days there was no strong government in Arabia. The Arabs were divided into several tribes. They followed their own chiefs and often fought among themselves. These fights sometimes continued for years.

With all these faults, they were a brave people and loved freedom. They were very generous also. There were no schools in Arabia in those days and only a few could read and write. But they had some very good poets.

The Qurais were divided into many clans. The clans of Banu Omayya and Banu Hashim were the strongest and most important of them all. They were not on good terms and fought with each other for leadership.

Birth and Boyhood of the Prophet of Allah.

Some five hundred and seventy years after Christ, (peace be upon him) there lived in Mecca a handsome young man named 'Abdullah. He belonged to the clan of Hashim. His father 'Abdul Muttalib was the head of the clan. He was wise and pious and the Arabs respected
him. ‘Abdullah was the youngest of his several sons. He was married to a good lady named Amina. Her parents lived at Madina, about 300 miles to the north of Mecca. Once in his early youth ‘Abdullah went to Madina. Madina was then called Yasrab. After a short illness there ‘Abdullah breathed his last. Soon after his death, Amina gave birth to a son. This boy was named Muhammad (the Praised One) by his grand father. The mother, however called him Ahmad. Like all other children of Mecca, Muhammad was also put under the care of a nurse. Her name was Halima. She belonged to the tribe of Banu Sa‘ad. This tribe lived in the desert. So Muhammad spent the first four years of his life among simple and brave desert folks. When four years old, Muhammad was brought back to his mother. Two years later, he lost his mother. His old grandfather now took him in his own care. But he too passed away when Muhammad was hardly eight. He, then, came under the protection of his uncle Abu Talib.

There were no schools in Mecca at that time. Muhammad, therefore, received no
education. He was unable to read or write. Besides, Abu Talib was not a rich man and Muhammad had to tend his sheep and camels. Thus, from his early boyhood, Muhammad led a hard life. Abu Talib was a trader. He often went to Syria and other countries. He loved Muhammad dearly, and often took him with him. This gave Muhammad training and experience and it made him a successful trader in the years to come.

Muhammad grew up to be a strong, handsome and intelligent young man. He was very pious and virtuous. He always avoided bad company and was truthful and honest. Everybody trusted him. He was fair in his dealings. People often put their money and other valuable things in his safe keeping. He always returned them in tact. For this reason he was called 'Amin'—(the Honest), and 'Sadiq'—(the Truthful).

Once the building of Ka'aba was damaged by flood. It was pulled down and built again. The sacred black-stone (Hajr-i-Aswad), was to be placed in the wall. Each tribe wished to have the honour of doing so. They were about to
fight over it. Just then Muhammad came there. Although he was a youth of 21, yet they trusted his wisdom. They asked him to decide the point. He knew the danger. So he spread a sheet of cloth and placed the stone on it. Then he asked the leaders of all the clans to lift the cloth along with the stone and carry it to its proper place. This they did joyfully. Then Muhammad took up the stone and placed it in its proper place in the wall. All were pleased and satisfied. Everybody praised the promising young man for his wisdom.

When he grew up he took to trade. He was very honest and fair in his dealings. He was loved by his fellow-traders. His fame spread far and wide. An Arab widow, Khudaija by name, heard of his honesty and piety. She was very rich and often sent caravans of trade to other countries. She took Muhammad into her service and sent him to Syria. Muhammad did his duty very well. Khudaija was highly pleased with him and soon afterwards they were married. Muhammad was then 25 years of age while Khudaija was his senior by 15 years. They both loved each other
and lived happily.

As time passed, Muhammad began to take more interest in his country-men. He believed in one God—Allah—and disliked idol-worship. He hated drinking, gambling and other evil practices of his people. The people of Mecca were very cruel to outsiders and often robbed them whenever they came to the sacred city. Muhammad felt it very much. So he collected some good men of the city and formed a party to protect the helpless visitors and pilgrims. This party was known as Hilf-ul-Fuzool. Its members took the following oath:

1. We shall fight lawlessness in the country.
2. We shall protect the travellers.
3. We shall help the poor.
4. We shall check the strong from being cruel to the weak.

He did not stop at this. He actually helped the poor, the aged and the widows. But he was not satisfied with the moral condition of the Arabs. He began to think over their evil ways and bad conduct. He grew silent and thoughtful. He often went to a hillock outside the city and sat
there in a cave called Hira.

There he prayed to Allah and thought over the sad plight of the slaves, the poor, the orphans and the widows. He often stayed there for days on end.

As the time passed, he began to see dreams which always came out true. This happy experience went on till he was 40 years old.

**Muhammad the Prophet.**

(Peace be upon him)

One day the angel, Jibrail came to him and said, “O Muhammad, Read”. “I do not know how to read.” replied Muhammad. Then the angel embraced him and said, “Read in the name of Allah who created. He created man from clot. Read, and your lord is Honourable, Who taught with the pen. He taught man what he knew not.” And Muhammad did read these words.

The angel then told Muhammad that Allah had chosen him as His Nabi (Prophet) and Rasul (Messenger). After this the angel disappeared. Muhammed knew that his mission was very heavy and full of dangers. He hurried back to his beloved wife, and said to her, “I have fear for my life. Wrap me up in a blanket.”
Now Khudaija was a wise and learned lady. She consoled her husband saying, "Do not fear. You love your kith an kin; and you help the poor, the helpless, the orphans and the widows. God will never give you up." Then she took Muhammad (peace by upon him) to his cousin Warqa bin Naufal. Warqa could read the Bible and other sacred books. When he heard the story, he said to Muhammad, "You have met the angel (Jibrail). He is the messenger of God. He brings divine messages to the prophets. God has chosen you as a prophet for the mankind".

A few days later, the Prophet lay asleep wrapped up in a blanket. All of a sudden he heard the voice of Jibrail again saying, "O You wrapped on! Arise and warn." This was the beginning of his mission. He was ordered to carry the message of Allah to mankind; and this he did for the rest of his life.

**Early Muslims**

Muhammad began to preach his religion Islam, with great zeal. Islam is a very simple religion. Even a young boy or a girl can understand it easily. It teaches that there is only one God and Muhammad is His Prophet.
LA ILAHA IL LAL LAHO MUHAMMAD UR RASUL ULLAH.
This is our creed which means: There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

Islam says that the worship of idols is bad. We should worship none but Allah. We should love all men, help the poor, give alms and tend the sick. We should respect women. We must not gamble or drink liquor. In short, submission to Allah, seeking his mercy and peace, and showing kindness towards mankind is the essence of our faith.

Muhammed had never told a lie before becoming a prophet. He was noted for his honesty, integrity and piety. When his eight years old cousin Ali heard of the new faith of Muhammad, he joined him. The same day, the prophet went to his bosom friend Abu Bakr, best known as Siddiq (the most truthful) and invited him to Islam. He atonce embraced the new religion. Then Zaid bin (son of) Haris, his freed slave, also became a Muslim (follower of Islam).

Abu Bakr was a very pious and wise man.
He was a rich trader of Mecca. The people of the city respected him. They often took their cases to him for decision. He helped the Prophet by preaching Islam. Through him many noble Meccans such as ‘Usman, Zubair, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Talha, Sa‘ad bin Abi Waqqas and others entered the fold of Islam. They were followed by Abu ‘Ubaida, Abdul Asad, ‘Usman bin Maz‘un, ‘Amir bin Fahira, Abu Huzaifa bin ‘Utba, Saib bin Usman and Arqum. Some of the slaves and poor men like Bilal, Yasir, his wife Sumiyya and his son ‘Imar, Khubab etc. also became Muslims. Many notable ladies, namely the Prophet’s aunt Um-mul-Fazl, Asma bint (daughter of) ‘Umais, Asma bint Abu Bakr and Fatima, sister of ‘Omar the great followed the Prophet. By and by the number of the Muslims increased. They gave up idol-worship and prayed to the only God, Allah. They loved one another and became brethren in Islam. dearer than blood brothers.

Most of the Arabs and the people of Mecca, however, did not accept the new faith. They continued to worship their idols. They did not give up gambling, drinking and fighting.
with one another. As usual, they treated their slaves and women badly. When the Muslims increased in number, the people of Mecca began to torture them. They tied their hands and feet with strings, dragged them in the streets, and threw them on burning sand. They were given nothing to eat and drink and many of them died. But their faith in Islam was firm and they would not give it up even to save their lives. Sumiyya, a woman, was the first Muslima to be slain in the way of Allah. The Muslim slaves had to suffer the most. Bilal was a negro slave. He turned Muslim. But his master was yet an enemy of Islam. Bilal was made to lie on burning sand and a heavy stone was placed on his chest. But Bilal wouldn't give up Islam. At last Hazrat Abu Bakr took pity on him, bought him from his master and set him free. Abu Bakr was rich and generous. He bought many other Muslim slaves and freed them, too.

The Muslims suffered much at the hands of the Quraish of Mecca. At last the Prophet allowed them to leave Mecca, go to Habash (Ethiopia) and live there in peace. But the
Quraish sent their men to bring the Muslims back. They went to the court of Najjashi (Negus), the Negro king of Habash and asked him to turn the Muslims out of his country. But he was a kind and just ruler. He sent for the Muslims and asked them about the teachings of their religion. Then Hazrat Ja'afar bin Abu Talib, a cousin of the prophet, stood up and said: “O king we were an ignorant people. We worshipped idols. We used to eat dead animals. We did all kinds of evil deeds. We were not faithful to our relations and treated our neighbours badly. The strong among us looted and troubled the weak. Then God sent His Prophet. He was born of a noble family. He is very pious, honest and good. He told us that there is only One God. He asked us to give up idol-worship. He asked us not to tell a lie or take the property of the orphans and not to blame chaste and pious ladies. He asked us not to kill one another. So we accepted his call. At this our people turned against us and tortured us. So we had to leave our homes, relations and native land and come to your country for peace and safety.” Najjashi
was a wise king. He allowed them to live peacefully in his kingdom and sent away the Meccans.

The Meccans were put to shame. This made them furious all the more. They began to torture the Prophet and his companions more than before. They often threw dust on his head and spread thorns in his way. One day, when he was saying his prayer in the Ka’aba an enemy tried to strangulate him with a sheet of cloth. Luckily Abu Bakr saw this. He pushed the man away. Some of the enemies fell upon Abu Bakr and beat him severely. He fell senseless and was carried home by his people.

Hamza and ‘Omar Accept Islam

As time went on, the Quraish grew more cruel. One day a Quraish leader Abu-Hakam (Abu Jahl) hit the Prophet on the head and wounded him. Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet heard of it. He was a strong and brave young man. He had not yet become a Muslim but he loved the Prophet, his nephew, much. He went straight to Abu Jahl, and hit him on the head. Then he went to the Prophet and told him that he had taken revenge on Abu Jahl. But
the Prophet said, “I shall be happy only when you embrace Islam.” Hamza was moved by these words and at once accepted Islam.

Three days later, ‘Omar, who was not yet a Muslim went to kill the Prophet. He was a stout and brave young man. He was a good speaker as well. When he was going to the Prophet a man met him on the way and said, “Where are you going, ‘Omar. Your sister Fatima and brother-in-law Saeed have already turned Muslims.” ‘Omar flew into a rage and went to the house of his sister. They were both reciting the Holy Quran. ‘Omar knocked at the door. They hid the leaves of the Holy Quran and opened the door. ‘Omar began to beat his sister and her husband. At this Fatima said, “You may kill us but we will not give up Islam.” These words went down to the heart of ‘Omar. He had not heard the Holy Quran so far. He asked them to read the Quran to him. When he heard the words of Allah a change overtook him and he became a Muslim. With a drawn sword, he went to the Holy prophet. The Prophet was sitting in a house with his companions. When ‘Omar reached the door,
the Prophet went bravely to him and said, "'Omar will you not embrace Islam?" "I have come to embrace Islam," replied 'Omar. When the Muslims heard it they shouted" Allah-o-Akber (God is Great). Before this the Muslims were afraid of the Meccans and did not dare to say their prayers in the Ka'aba. But 'Omar was afraid of none. He took the Prophet and his companions to the Ka'aba for prayers. To the enemies he said, "I shall put to death those who dared to prevent us from praying here." Thus, for the first time, the Muslims said their prayers in the House of Allah (Bait-ullah.)

This displeased the Meccan chiefs much. First, they went to the Prophet and said, "If you give up your new religion we shall give you much wealth and make you our king." But the Prophet refused their offer. Then they went to Abu Tablb, the Prophet's kind uncle, and said to him, "Your nephew talks ill of our gods. If you do not stop him, he will find himself in trouble."

Now, Abu Talib loved his nephew much. He was afraid of the Meccans and wanted to protect the Prophet. So he went to the Prophet and
said, "Do not speak against the idols because I can help you no more." But the prophet replied, "Let these men place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, even then I will not give up my work." Abu Talib was moved by the answer and said, "Go on with your good work. None shall injur you." But Abu Talib died soon and the prophet was left alone to face his enemies.

After this the prophet suffered more at the hands of his enemies. It became impossible for him to preach his faith in Mecca. So he went to the tribes in the country and invited them to accept Islam. During this journey he went to Taif, a town to the south-east of Mecca. The inhabitants of Taif were notorious for their wickedness. They ill-treated the Messenger of Allah. He was mocked at, abused and pelted with stones. He received many injuries and became unconscious. He was carried outside the town by his companion Zaid. When the prophet came to his senses, Zaid asked him to pray for the destruction of these wicked people. "I shall not pray for their destruction. They or their children may accept Islam," replied the
merciful prophet. Then he prayed to Allah, "O Allah, guide my people to the right path for they do not know me."

Hijrat......Flight to Madina

Thirteen years had passed in misery and pain, but the Meccans grew more fierce and cruel in their treatment of the Muslims. In the meantime a large number of the inhabitants of Yasrab (Madina) had embraced Islam. They invited the Holy prophet and his companions to come over to Madina. The prophet of Allah, at once, accepted the invitation and advised the Muslims to escape to Medina.

The Meccans would not let the Muslims carry their property with them. Some lost their children and wives also. But the Muslims loved their faith more than any thing else. They left their houses, property and business in Mecca, and in many cases travelled about 300 miles to Medina on foot.

But the prophet did not leave till his compaonions were gone. He detained his life-long friend and companion, Abu Bakr, to go with him. When the Meccans found the prophet alone they decided to murder him at night.
They surrounded his house and waited for him to come out. On the other hand, the prophet left for Madina the same night along with Abu Bakr. They hid themselves in a cave called Saur and stayed there for three days. They were served with food by Abdullah, son of Abu Bakr, and his servant. The Meccans searched for them and announced a reward of hundred camels to catch them alive. But they failed in their evil designs. After three days, they both rode to Madina and reached Quba, a suburb of Madina. Here he stayed for fourteen days and built a mosque—the first in the history of Islam.

Entry Into Medina

The Muslims of Madina were waiting for the arrival of the prophet for two weeks. On the day the prophet entered Madina, all the men and women, old and young, rushed out to welcome him. The young girls sang sweet songs in praise of their guest. The prophet entered the city riding a camel. The people followed him. Every one wished the prophet to live with him. But the prophet replied gently, “Let my camel choose. It will show
where Allah wishes me to stay.” At last, the camel stopped at the house of Abu Ayyub and the prophet stayed with this fortunate son of Islam. Abu Ayyub was really lucky to have the prophet as his guest.

The escape of the prophet and the Muslims to Madina is called Hijrat or departure. The Islamic year begins from that date. It is called the Hijri era.

The people of Madina helped their brethren from Mecca with houses, food and money. On account of this valuable help, they came to be known in history as Ansars (the Helpers). The Meccans, who went with the prophet to Madina were called Muhajirs (Immigrants).

**Life in Medina**

The first work the prophet of Allah did at Madina was to build a mosque. For this purpose Abu Bakr bought a piece of land where a simple mosque was built. Here the Muslims gathered for prayer five times a day. Now they had no fear of man when they said their prayers. They also discussed their problems in the mosque. Thus from the very outset, the mosque became a centre of the religious, social and
political activities of the Muslims.

There was a great fear of the attack of the Quraish of Mecca. The prophet was alive to the danger. So he gathered the Muslims and the Jews of Madina and formed a kind of alliance. They all agreed to fight their common enemies in case of attack and live peacefully as the citizens of Medina. Many tribes lived outside the city. The messenger of God went to them also and asked them to join the Muslims against any attack from outside. They, too, accepted him as their leader in time of war.

the Battle of Badr

The Quraish of Mecca did not let the poor Muslims to live in peace in Madina. They were very cruel. They wished to kill all the Muslims and destroy Islam. So they collected a strong army and marched towards Madina.

The Muslims were in a small number. They were poor and had a few weapons to fight. But their religion, property, women, children and lives were all in danger. There was no way out and they had to fight. So they took up arms against their enemies to save their religion,
their women, their children, their lives and their homes.

This was the first time when the Muslims took up arms against the enemies. It was in the second year of Hijrat. The Meccans were one thousand strong but the Muslims were three hundred and thirteen in all. There were old men as well young boys among them. They had only two horses and seventy camels to ride to the battlefield. The Muslims went outside Medina to stop the enemy. The two armies met at a place called Badr to the south of Medina.

Before the fight began the prophet prayed, “O Allah if these Muslims are killed today, there shall be left no one to worship Thee.” He, then, turned towards the Muslims and shouted, “Take courage. Stand firmly. Fight bravely. Shoot your arrows. You will certainly win.”

The battle now began. The enemies were well-armed. But the Muslims fought bravely. The prophet, then, took a handful of sand and threw it towards the enemy saying “May God cover the face of the Quraish with defeat.” These
words along with the sand reached the Quraish. They were filled with fear and fled. Seventy of their men were killed. Abu Jahl, the greatest enemy of the Muslims was among the slain. Seventy of them were captured alive and the rest escaped to Mecca. The prisoners were, later, set free after they paid the ransom or educated two Muslims each.

In this battle many of the Meccans on both sides were related to one another. Two uncles of the prophet namely Abbas and Abu Lahab and some of his cousins including Aqeel, brother of Ali, were on the side of the Quraish. Abu Bakr fought for Islam in this battle. His son Abdur Rahmañ was on the opposite side. He fought for the Quraish. Later, he became a Muslim. One day he said to Abu Bakr, “Father, once you were within my reach in the battle of Badr, but I did not kill you out of respect.” At this Abu Bakr replied, “If I had a chance I would not have spared you, for I love Islam more than I love you.” Such were the followers of Muhammad. They loved Islam more than anything else. They were willing to sacrifice every thing for the sake of Allah and the
prophet (peace be upon him).

The Battle of Ohud

The Quraish were defeated in the battle of Badr. This made them furious and they swore to take revenge. They raised funds and collected a strong army of three thousand brave warriors. They marched towards Madina. This time even the women went with them. They encouraged their men to avenge those who had been killed at Badr.

The prophet could collect only seven hundred men. This time the battle was fought near the mountain of Ohud which is only three miles from Medida. The fight began. It was really a great battle. The Muslims fought so bravely that the Meccans had to retreat. The prophet had left some men to guard a pass. They thought that the enemy was defeated and so they left the place without permission. No one was left to guard the rear of the Muslim army. The great general Khaild Bin Walid, who afterwards conquered Persia and Syria for Islam, was not yet a Muslim. He was with the Quraish. He noticed the mistake. He returned with his men and attacked the Muslims from behind.
The Muslims were caught unaware. Many of them were killed. Hamza, the brave uncle of the prophet, was also slain. Even the prophet himself was badly wounded and fell senseless into a pit. By that time some Muslims had rallied round the prophet and fought bravely. The Quraish ran away at last. The Muslims pursued them lest they should return.

Though the Quraish were defeated yet the Muslims suffered a great loss. Seventy brave and pious servants of Allah were killed in the fight. The Quraish women were mean and cruel. They cut ears, cheeks and noses of the dead and made garlands for themselves. Hinda, the wife of the Meccan commander Abu Sufyan cut the liver of Hamza and chewed it. Such were the enemies of the prophet before they accepted Islam.

The Battle of the Ditch or the Allies
The matter did not end with the battle of the Ohud. The Quraish could not tolerate to see the Muslims living in peace and prosperity. So they sent men to different Arab tribes to seek help against the Muslims. Even the Jews joined them secretly. So, two years later,
Abu Sufyan marched at the head of a band of 20 thousand enemies of Islam. The Muslims were aware of the danger. They would not, however, bow down to the enemy. This time the prophet dug a ditch round the city to check the attack. The Meccans did not expect it. They had to stay out. It was difficult to cross the deep ditch and attack the Muslims who numbered three thousand this time. They besieged the city for 24 days. At last they went away on account of internal rift and a strong dust storm.

The Jews of Medina

Some tribes of the Jews lived in Medina. They were mostly money-lenders and traders. When the Muslims from Mecca came over to Madina they also took to trade, because most of them were businessmen. So the Jews were displeased with the Muslims. They wanted to get rid of them. They broke their pact and joined the Quraish against the Muslims at the time of the battle of Ohud. For this reason one of their tribes was forced to leave Madina and settle at Khyber. These Jews attacked Madina along with the Quraish at the battle of
the Ditch. The Jews of Madina also took their side. So, when the enemy fled, the Muslims surrounded the Jews who were punished properly. Most of them joined their Kinsmen at Khyber. But the Jews did not behave like good neighbours. The prophet then led an army against them and after hard fighting the Jews gave in. Later in the days of Caliph 'Omar they were turned away to the North and settled in Syria.

The Conquest of Mecca

The battle of the Ditch was a turning point in the life of the prophet. The number of his followers increased. The Meccans dared not attack them anymore. The Muslims wanted to go to Mecca to perform Hajj (pilgrimage). So, in the sixth year of Hijrat the prophet went to Mecca for Hajj with a large number of his followers. The Meccans dared not stop them with force and made truce with the prophet for ten years. They allowed the Muslims to perform the Hajj next year. It was agreed that the Arab tribes were free to join the Muslims or the Quraish. This was a great triumph for Islam. The prophet then returned to Madina. The
Muslims were now free to move about in the country. A large number of the Arabs accepted Islam. Many tribes joined the Muslims as allies. The prophet wrote letters to the great kings and chiefs of his day inviting them to accept Islam. Some of them followed his call. Khalid bin Walid and many other Meccans became Muslims. This was disliked by the Quraish. But they were helpless. One day they broke the agreement and attacked a tribe which was an ally of the Muslims. The prophet, then, marched to Mecca at the head of ten thousand brave Muslims. The Meccans were taken by surprise. The prophet promised to spare any one who took refuge in the Ka‘aba or in his own house. Thus he entered Mecca peacefully.

His enemies lay at the feet of the prophet. They had tortured him and the Muslims for 20 years. They forced them to escape to Madina. They attacked them many a time. So they deserved every punishment. But the prophet was a Mercy to mankind. He did not take revenge and forgave them all. No house was plundered, no women was molested and no person was killed. He even did not allow the
early Muslims of Mecca to take their houses back. When the Quraish begged for mercy the prophet said, “You will have it. Go, you are free.” He was a conquerer but he was unique in the history of man. Mankind had never known such a merciful conquerer. This treatment had a wonderful effect. The Quraish were moved by this kindness and accepted Islam.

The Holy prophet then went to Ka‘aba. There were 360 idols in it. They were thrown out and the sacred House of Allah was cleared of them for ever.

The victory at Mecca spread the fame of the prophet far and wide. The Arab tribes came one after another and embraced Islam. The prophet had told earlier, “A horseman will ride from the north of Arabia to the south and every where he will find the Muslims.” These words now came true for all the Arabs accepted Islam.

After that, the prophet marched towards Taif. On the way he forced certain tribes to live peacefully. The people of Taif were very vicious. They had once pelted the prophet
with stones and had wounded him. But now they begged for peace which was granted them. The prophet then returned to Madina.

the Last Pilgrimage

In the tenth year of the Hijrat the prophet declared his intention to go for Hajj without fear and hindrance. Many Muslims came over to Madina to accompany the prophet of Allah. A large number of them went straight to Mecca to join him there. The number rose to a hundred thousand lovers of Islam.

On the appointed day, the Muslims gathered in the plain of Arafat, outside Mecca. The Holy prophet rode a camel and addressed the Muslims for the last time, saying, "O people, listen to what I say and take it to your heart. You must know that every Muslim is the brother of the other Muslim. You are all equal in the eyes of your Maker. The greatest is the one who is most pious and most virtuous. You are all members of one common brotherhood. Your lives, your properties and your honour must be sacred to you like this day, this month and this city of Mecca.

Then, O my people, You have certain rights
over your wives and so have your wives also over you. They are the trust of Allah in your hands. So you must treat them with all kindness. As regards your slaves, see that you give them to eat of what you yourselves eat and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves."

Then the prophet looked up and cried at the top of his voice. "Oh Lord, bear witness, I have delivered Your Message."

The Muslims then dispersed and the Holy prophet returned to Madina with the Ansars and the Muhajirs.

The Death of The Prophet

The mission of the prophet was now complete. He had delivered the message of Allah to the people. The Arabs had accepted Islam. The law of the Quran ruled over the country. The divided Arabs were united with the bonds of love, faith, brotherhood, and equality. He had, under his guidance, trained a large number of his sincere and devoted followers to carry on his work. Now it was time for him to depart from this world.

About three months after his return from Mecca, the prophet fell ill. He knew that his
end was near. One day he went to the Masjid-i-Nabavi (the prophet’s mosque) and addressed the Muslims saying, “I have always tried to be kind and just to you. Have I done any harm to anyone of you? Let him come forward. Let him punish me for it. Do I owe anything to anyone? If so, let him stand forward.” A man stood up from the crowd and said, “You once took three dirhams from me, but you never gave them back to me. Please do so now.” “I thank you,” said the prophet. “I am glad you have saved me from shame before Allah.” The money was paid at once.

The Prophet made Abu Bakr the Imam (leader) to lead the prayers. He then asked the Muslims to remain united, to act upon the message of Allah and to follow his footsteps.

A few days later, the Prophet passed away at the age of 63. It was the 9th of Rabi-ul-Awwal in the eleventh year of Hijrat.

**His Habits**

The Holy Prophet of Islam was very simple in his habits. His dress was simple and rough. He loved cleanliness. He always kept his body and clothes clean. He had long hair on his
head. He kept his hair properly combed.

He loved his wives and children much. He helped them in the domestic work. He, at times, used to sweep the house, milk the goats, wash his clothes and mend his shoes and clothes.

He loved the orphan and the poor. He always looked after them. He would himself remain hungry to feed another person. Once he said to his beloved and learned wife Ayesha, "Love the poor and be kind to them; call them near you and Allah will call you near Him."

He was kind and merciful. He was merciful even to the animals. He forgave even his worst enemies after the conquest of Mecca. Once he was sleeping under a date-palm. An enemy passed that way. Seeing the Prophet asleep, he came to him to kill him. The Prophet woke up. The enemy drew his sword and said, "O Muhammad, who will save you now from my blood-thirsty sword." "Allah," replied the Prophet calmly.

A sudden fear came upon the man. He shook and the sword fell down from his hand. The Prophet took it up. Holding it above the man's head he said, "Who is there now to save
you?” "Alas none", replied the enemy. But Muhammad was merciful. He gave the man his sword back and let him go. The man was moved by this kindness. He came to know that Muhammad was not an ordinary man or a worldly king but a Prophet of Allah. So he embraced Islam forthwith.

His Religion

The religion preached by Muhammad is called Islam. His followers are known as Muslims who obey Allah fully. Islam teaches that there is only one God and Muhammad is his Prophet. This is the ‘KALIMA’ or the creed of the Muslims. One can become a Muslim by saying these words sincerely. God created heavens and earth and every thing between them. He knows every thing we do or think of. He was not born or made. Nor has He a son or a daughter. He has given us life. He gives us all things we need. We all depend upon Him. Every man shall die. If he does good in this life, Allah shall reward him in Paradise. If a person does evil he will be punished in the fire of Hell.

At first people worshipped Allah. Later
on, they forgot their creator and began to worship the things of nature and the idols of great men. Then Allah sent his Prophets to invite people to worship Him alone and give up idol-worship. These Prophets came to different nations at different times. Muhammad was the last of this line. He brought a message for all nations and times to come. Therefore a Muslim believes in all the Prophets and respects them. He believes in all the sacred books of the world. These books were revealed from time to time and the Quran is the last and the most perfect of all. Islam teaches that all men are equal. None is better than others on account of race, country, colour or wealth. The Prophet said, “Man will be saved only by his good deeds. Heaven is for those who do good. Hell is for the wicked.

Islam is a religion of peace. According to Islam all men are equal. Every body is free to follow any religion. “There is no compulsion in religion,” says the Holy Quran.

Men and women are equal in the eyes of Allah. A woman has rights against a man as a man has rights against a woman. A woman is
free to choose her husband. She inherits wealth as a man does. She can achieve spiritual greatness like any man. She can become great by her knowledge and virtueous deeds. She can achieve the highest place in society.

A Muslim is ordered to obey his parents, love his neighbours, respect the elders and show kindness to his juniors and the poor. He is asked to be good in thoughts and deeds. He is required to always keep his body and clothes clean. He has to pray Allah five times a day, to keep fast for a month every year, pay Zakat (property tax) once a year and go to Mecca for pilgrimage at least once in life.
SOME STORIES OF HIS LIFE

Faith in Allah

Our Holy Prophet had complete faith in Allah. Once he had gone in the desert. The day was very hot. He went under a tree to take rest. He hung his sword on a branch of the tree, lay down on the grass and fell asleep.

After some time an enemy came there. He saw the Prophet asleep, drew his sword and went to kill him. Luckily, Muhammad woke up and saw the man. The man said to Muhammad, “Who will save you now?” Muhammad was not at all afraid. He replied calmly, “Allah!” The man trembled with the fear of Allah. His hand shook and his sword fell down. The prophet of Allah took up the sword and said, “Who will save you now from this sword.” The man had no faith in Allah. So he replied, “None can save me except you. Kindly spare my life.” The prophet of Allah was most merciful. He forgave the enemy and let him
go. This kind treatment moved his heart and he became a Muslim.

Victory of Kindness

Samama was a chief of Najd, a province of Arabia. Najd, to the east, was a very fertile and produced wheat and many other crops. The Meccans always bought wheat from Najd. This prosperity made Samama were proud. He was a great enemy of the Muslims and killed many of them.

Once he fell into the hands of the Muslims. They brought him before the prophet of Allah. Samama knew that he had killed many Muslims and deserved death. The Holy prophet got him tied to a pillar in the courtyard of the mosque. Next morning, the prophet of Allah, came to him and said, “How do you do?” Samama replied humbly, “I am quite well. If you sentence me to death, I deserve it. But if you show mercy I shall be ever thankful to you.” Hearing these words, the prophet went away.

On the second day, the prophet again went to Samama and put the same question. But Samama had nothing to add. The same
question was repeated on the third day also and Samama gave the same reply. The prophet then set Samama free and let him go. Samama never expected this noble treatment. Muhammad had won his heart. He went to a nearby garden, took bath, changed his dress and went back to the presence of the Prophet of Allah. "I have come to embrace Islam" said he. "I hated you, I hated your religion and I hated your city the most. But, now, my love for you, for your religion and for your city is above that of everything else."

**Steadfastness**

Muhammad preached that there is no God but Allah. He asked his People not to worship idols. He told them to do good. The people of Mecca did not follow him. But Muhammad went on with his noble mission. Many good persons joined him. The Meccan chiefs wanted to put a stop to his mission. So, one day, they thought of a plan. They sent 'Utba, a chief, to the prophet. He said, "O Muhammad! your nation does not like your new religion. If you want wealth, we shall give a heap of gold; if you want kingdom, we
shall make you our ruler; and if you want to marry we shall give you any girl you like. You should only give up preaching your new religion.” These words had no effect on him. He replied calmly, “If the Quraish place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left one, I shall not at all give up my cause. I shall either fulfil my work or lay down my life for it.” Utba went away disappointed. He knew that nothing could shake Muhammad and such men always succeed in the end.

Religious Toleration

Our Holy Prophet respected all the Prophets of Allah. He never spoke ill of other religious books. He preached toleration.

Once a delegation of the christians from Najran came to him. He had great respect for the christians. He taught the Muslims to believe in the truth of Christ and his book, the Injeel. So he asked them to stay in the mosque. On Sunday, like good christians, they wanted to say their prayer. They thought of going outside the mosque. The Holy prophet was also present in the mosque. “Where are you going,” he asked. “We are going out
for prayer," They replied. "Why don't you say your prayer in the mosque? This is a place for worship." They had never heard of such toleration in religion before. Muhammad had given a new lead to mankind. He stands unique in this respect. He demands our respect and praise for him.

Kindness to Slaves

Slavery existed in Arabia before Islam. Muhammad was against slavery. His wife Khadaija was a rich lady. She gave a slave named Zaid to serve her husband. But the prophet set him free at once. But Zaid did not leave Muhammad.

This Zaid, when quite young was separated from his parents. Some one picked him up and sold at Mecca. Now, his father and uncle went about in search of him. At last they reached Mecca. They learnt that Zaid was with Muhammad. They, therefore, went to the house of Muhammad and requested him to send Zaid with them.

The Holy Prophet sent for Zaid and allowed him to accompany his father. But Zaid refused to go. Muhammad to him was more kind
than his parents. Such was Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. He loved the slaves. He raised the slaves to kingship.

2. There lived an old woman in Medina. She used to sweep the Mosque of the Prophet. The Prophet of Allah was very kind to her.

Once she fell ill. Muhammad now and them went to look after her health. But she grew from bad to worse. One day her condition grew serious. There was no hope of her life. The Prophet said to his companions, “If she dies at night, do not forget to inform me.”

The woman died late at night. The companions did not think it proper to trouble the Prophet and buried her without informing him. Next morning, the Prophet heard of her death. He felt much sorry. So he went to her grave along with his companions. He stayed there for some time and prayed for her departed soul.

Freedom of Thought

There lived in Madina a slave girl named Buraira. She was married to Mughis a slave of the same city. Mughis loved his wife much. After some time Buraira got free. According to Islam, she could divorce her
husband after freedom. She did not like Mughis. So she divorced him.

But Mughis had great love for her. When Buraira refused to live with him, Mughis went to the Holy Prophet and told him the whole story. The Prophet sent for Buraira. When she came he asked her not to leave her husband. "Is it your order or an advice," asked Buraira respectfully. "It is my advice only," replied the Prophet of Allah. "I do not like Mughis and do not want to remain with him," told the young lady humbly. The prophet of Allah then let her go.

Divine Protection.

Safwan and 'Omair were two enemies of the Prophet Muhammad. Safwan lost his father in the battle of Badr while 'Omair's son was taken prisoner. They wanted to take revenge. So they chalked out a plan. 'Omair was to go to Madina to kill Muhammad while Safwan promised to look after his family.

'Umair poisoned his sword and set out for Madina. After a few days, he reached Madina and got down his camel. Luckily, 'Omar the great caught sight of him. He ran
to 'Omair, caught him by the neck and took him to the holy Prophet. Hazrat Muhammad told 'Omar to leave his neck. Then he said to 'Omair, "What has brought you to Madina?" "I have come to see my son," said 'Omar humbly. "It is wrong," said the Prophet. "You have come to kill me but you do not know that Allah is my protector." Then he told 'Omair about his plan which he had made with Safwan at Mecca. 'Omair knew that the Prophet was right. But who could tell the Prophet except Allah? The truth dawned upon him. So he said, "You are the Prophet of Allah. Only Allah could inform you. So I bear witness that there is none to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet."

Mercy to Mankind

The people of Mecca were the greatest enemies of Islam. For thirteen years they tortured Hazrat Muhammad and his followers, the Muslims. The result was that they had to leave their kith and kin, homes and property and run away to Madina. Even at Madina they were not allowed to live in peace. Again and again they led armies against the Muslims,
killing many of them. But they were defeated every time. At last the truth triumphed. The Muslims entered Mecca victorious. The Meccans deserved no pity. But Muhammad was a mercy to mankind. He sent for all the Meccans and said, “For twenty three years you tortured, looted and killed the Muslims. What do you expect in return?” “We have been in the wrong, but you are a kind brother,” they all cried with one voice. “There is no blame today against you; you are free,” announced the Messenger of Allah. The Meccans did not expect this mercy. Hazrat Muhammad had won their hearts with this unique act of mercy. Human history had never known such a merciful conqueror before. They all turned Muslims and the whole of Arabia came under Islam. This was the sword Muhammad always used to spread his religion.
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