

Muhammad in Islam

SKETCHES OF MUḤAMMAD
FROM ISLÁMIC SOURCES

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM GOLDSACK

AUTHOR OF 'CHRIST IN ISLAM,' ETC.

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA

MADRAS ALLAHABAD CALCUTTA RANGOON COLOMBO

1916

PRINTED AT THE
S.P.C.K. PRESS, VEPERY, MADRAS
1916

PREFACE

THIS little book does not profess to offer a complete biography of the prophet Muḥammad. As its title suggests, it aims at presenting to the reader a number of pen-pictures of the great reformer, based upon purely Islāmic sources. It seeks to pourtray the place given to Muḥammad 'in Islām' and by Islām, and for that reason eschews the theories of non-Muslim authors. Not a few of the so-called 'biographies' of the founder of Islām written in India by modern Muslims are famous, chiefly, for their utter lack of historical accuracy. Their authors have given rein to an exuberant fancy, and have conjured up a picture of the great Arabian as untrue to history as to his own utterances which have been preserved to us by his contemporaries.

Every statement of importance made in the following pages is based upon Muḥammadan authorities, and when anything of special interest or value has had to be chronicled, we have invariably given the *ipsissima verba* of the authorities quoted; whilst care has been taken to give precise references for the guidance of those who wish to prosecute their enquiries further.

Our first and principal authority for information regarding the personality of Muḥammad is, naturally, the biographies written by his early followers, and it is a matter for sincere regret that the earliest of these is not now extant. Indeed more than one life of the prophet is mentioned by the early historians, of which no trace can now be found. It seems probable that Zuhri, who died in A.H. 124, was the first to write a biography of Muḥammad. It is at least certain that he compiled collections of the traditions bearing upon various aspects of the prophet's life and character, and there is but little doubt that later writers made good use of the materials thus collected.

Two other historians are mentioned in early Muslim annals as having compiled biographies of Muḥammad. These both belong to the second century of the Hijrah, and are named respectively Musá bin Okbá and Abú Mashar. None of the writings of these authors have come down to us. The same remark applies to the voluminous works of Madáiní who lived during the last half of the second century of the Muḥammadan era.

Another writer whose works gained a high place in the esteem of his contemporaries was Muḥammad bin Isháq, who died in A.H. 151. His collection of traditions relating to the prophet no longer exists, but his friend and disciple, Ibn Hishám, embodied in his *Ṣíratu'r-Rasúl* or *Life of the Prophet*, which

exists to the present day, the materials collected by Ibn Isháq. The work of Ibn Hishám is thus the earliest extant life of the prophet available for scholars at the present time; and no one can pretend to a very extensive acquaintance with the subject who has not studied the *Ṣíratu'r-Rasúl* of Ibn Hishám. This writer, who is justly famous in Muslim history, died in A.H. 213, and all succeeding biographers of the prophet have largely drawn upon his work for their materials. The reader will observe that in this brief memoir also we have had frequent occasion to quote this great author.

Another writer of repute, whose works have come down to us, is Muḥammad bin Sád, the secretary of the famous Wáqídí. He died in A. H. 230. This scholar was the author of no less than fifteen treatises, one of which was his famous *Ṣírat* or *Life of Muḥammad*. This work is, however, rather a collection of traditions grouped according to subject-matter, than a chronological record of the prophet's life; but it contains invaluable material for all who wish to study the subject at first-hand.

Our second source of information concerning the life of Muḥammad is the Traditions or *Aḥádíth*. These voluminous writings, which exist in many different collections, record the sayings and actions of the prophet, and give a vivid picture of his everyday life. Originally transmitted in oral form by the earliest 'companions' of Muḥammad they were

ultimately collected and reduced to writing, and have come down to us under the names of the most famous collectors. Of these latter Bukhárí and Muslim are deservedly famous. Both these scholars died in the middle of the third century of the Hijrah. Their works have been continually referred to in the present volume, as has also the Jámiu't-Tirmidhí.

Our third source of information relating to Muhammad is the Qur'án, together with the standard commentaries thereon. Whatever may be said to discount the value and importance of later tradition, it must be conceded that in the Qur'án we have contemporary evidence regarding much that intimately touches the life of the founder of Islám; and no pen-picture of the warrior-prophet would be complete that did not take into account the witness of the Qur'án. This, again, is richly supplemented by the commentators, who relate innumerable incidents in the prophet's life in order to elucidate some obscure passage or illustrate some ambiguous text. In our study of Muhammad in Islám we have referred continually to the great classical commentaries of 'Abbás, Baidáwí and the Jalálain, as well as to the later, and less authoritative commentaries of Qádarí, 'Abdu'l-Qádir, Raufi and the Khaláṣatu't-Tafásir.

One thing more remains to be said. We have, to some extent, followed the lead of some of the earlier biographers of Muhammad, and have chosen to

group the various chapters of the book according to subject-matter, rather than in strict chronological order; so that, whilst, in the main, the two great divisions in the prophet's career—his life at Mecca, and his life at Madína—have been observed, it has not infrequently happened that events belonging to the one period have been grouped with similar events belonging to the other. The endeavour has been made throughout to remain true to the title of the book, and to record only those events relating to the life of Muhammad which are found chronicled 'in Islám'.

December, 1915

W. G.

CONTENTS

PART I

MUHAMMAD AT MECCA

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. THE ARABS IN THE TIME OF MUHAMMAD | 1 |
| II. THE BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE OF MUHAM- MAD | 9 |
| III. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MESSAGE | 18 |
| IV. DISPUTATIONS WITH THE QURAISH ... | 29 |
| V. THE FLIGHT FROM MECCA ... | 48 |

PART II

MUHAMMAD AT MADINA

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LEGISLATION ... | 57 |
| II. THE PROCLAMATION OF JEHAD ... | 71 |
| III. MUHAMMAD'S RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS | 86 |
| IV. MUHAMMAD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN | 96 |
| V. THE DEATH OF MUHAMMAD ... | 107 |

MUHAMMAD IN ISLÁM

PART I

Muhammad at Mecca

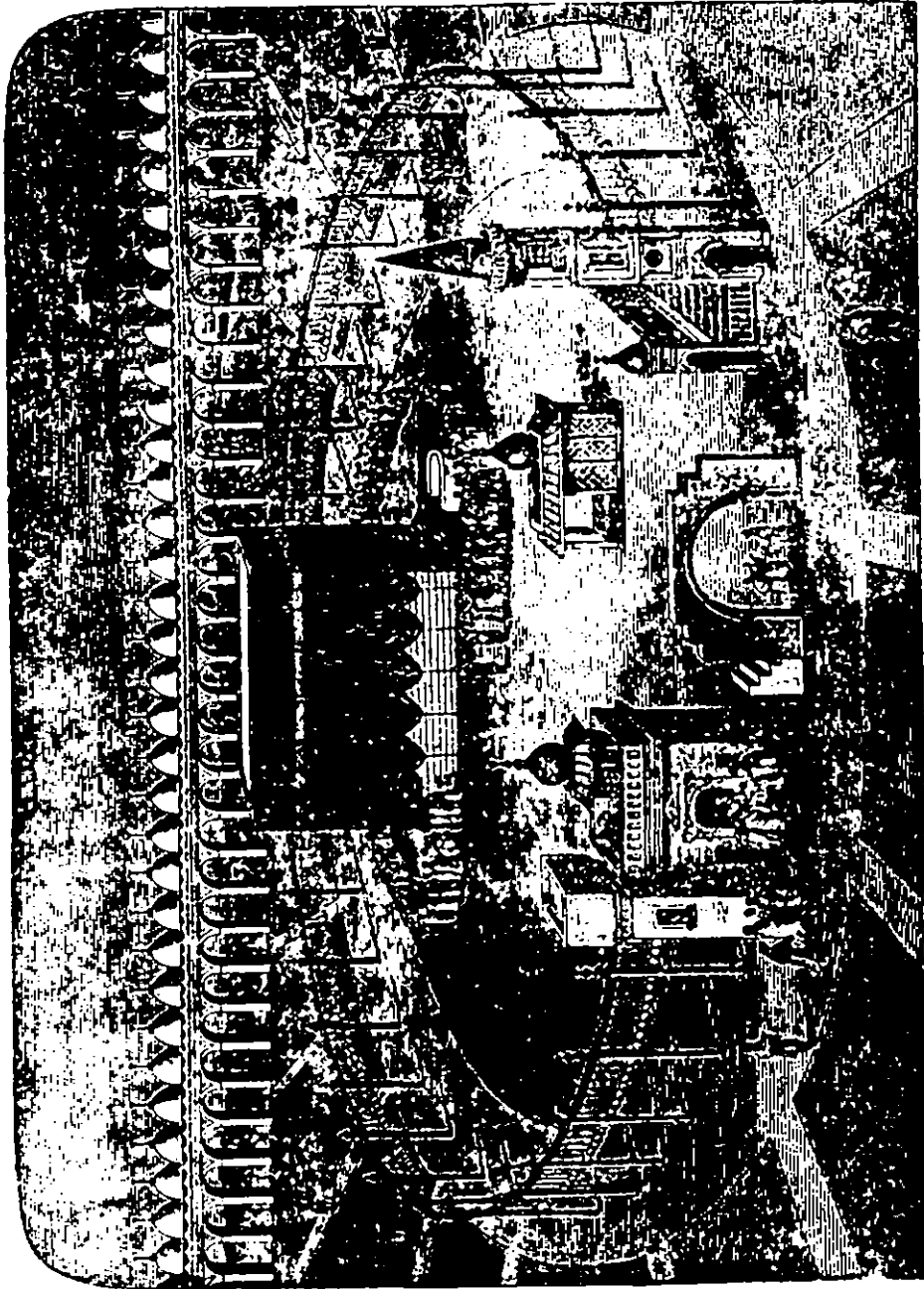
CHAPTER I

THE ARABS IN THE TIME OF MUHAMMAD

SOME slight acquaintance with the state of Arabia at the time of Muḥammad is necessary to a clear understanding of the man and his message. The materials for such knowledge are, fortunately, not rare. The Arabian historian, Abú'l Fida, in particular has left us many interesting details relating to the social and religious life of the pre-Islámic Arabs. He tells us, for example, that

وكانوا يحجّون البيت و يعتمرّون و يحرمون و يطوفون
و يسمعون و يقفون المواقف كلها يرمون الجمار و كانوا
يكبسّون في كل ثلث اعدام شهراً و حلق الختان و كانوا
يقطعون يد السارق اليماني *

' They used to perform the pilgrimage to the Ka'ba, where they put on the 'umra and ihram; and they



THE KA'BA AT MECCA

also performed the *ṭawāf* (circumambulation of the Ka'ba) and the running (at Mounts Ṣafá and Marwa), and the casting of stones, and at the end of every three years spent a month in solitary contemplation . . . and they performed circumcision, and cut off the right hand of thieves.' Ibn Hishám, in his *Síratu'r-Rasúl*, amongst other things, devotes a whole chapter to the idols of the Arabs, and gives many interesting facts regarding the idolatry of the people. Idolatry, it is true, held the chief place; but it is far from correct to say, with a recent Bengali biographer of Muḥammad, that 'idolatry reigned supreme'. Earnest theists there were who, under the name of Hanífs, eschewed the popular idol-worship, and gave themselves up to the service of the one God. Ibn Hishám, in his *Sírat*, p. 215, gives an illuminating account of these seekers after truth, and makes it clear that the knowledge of the one true God was far from being hidden from the Arabs. From the literature that has come down to us it is manifest that from long before the birth of Muḥammad the Supreme God was known and worshipped in Arabia. In pre-Islámic literature *Iláh* was used for the inferior deities of the Arabs, but the word with the definite article prefixed (*Al-Iláh*), contracted to *Alláh*, was the name given to the Supreme. The pagan poets Nabiga and Labid both repeatedly use the word 'Alláh' in the sense of the Supreme Deity, and the word is also used in the

same sense in the famous Mu'allaqāt. Indeed the temple at Mecca was known long before the time of Muḥammad as *Baitu 'llāh* or House of God.

There is ample evidence that Muḥammad had close and constant intercourse with the Ḥanīfs. Indeed, the Traditionist, Muslim, tells us that one of the chief reformers, Waraqa bin Naufal, was a cousin of Khadījā, the wife of Muḥammad; so that the great truth of the unity of God could easily have been learnt from him. This much is certain, that when Muḥammad began to preach, he adopted the very term Ḥanīf as the key-note of his preaching, and again and again asserted that he was simply sent to preach the religion of Abraham the Ḥanīf. Thus we read:

هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيَمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
حَنِيفًا *

'As for me, my Lord hath guided me into a straight path; a true religion, the creed of Abraham the Ḥanīf' [Súratu'l An'ám (vi) 161].

Besides the Ḥanīfs there were, at the time of Muḥammad, two other theistic sects in Arabia: the Jews and the Christians. These were not numerous in Mecca, but in Madína and the surrounding country many influential and wealthy Jewish tribes were to be found. As a matter of fact, some years prior to the birth of Muḥammad there existed in

South Arabia a Jewish kingdom which was, in the course of time, displaced by a Christian. This latter had its capital at Ṣan'a, a city lying some distance to the east of Mecca. These Jewish and Christian 'People of the Book' were, in comparison with their polytheistic neighbours, both learned and influential, and must have exerted a powerful influence upon the religious thought of the Arabs. It is clear, therefore, that Muḥammad himself could not but be influenced by the theistic teaching of these communities, and there is ample evidence that his intercourse with them was of the closest description. If the Qur'ānic stories of the Patriarchs, for example, be compared with the Talmudic perversions of Bible history which were current amongst the Jews of Arabia in the time of Muḥammad, it will be seen how largely he must have been indebted to the Jews for his ideas. The Qur'ān itself refers repeatedly to Muḥammad's conversations with the Jews, and there is no doubt but that at one time their relations were of the most cordial nature. It is clear from the records that Muḥammad was in the habit of questioning the Jews concerning their religion, and Muslim has preserved for us a tradition which puts this beyond doubt. He says:

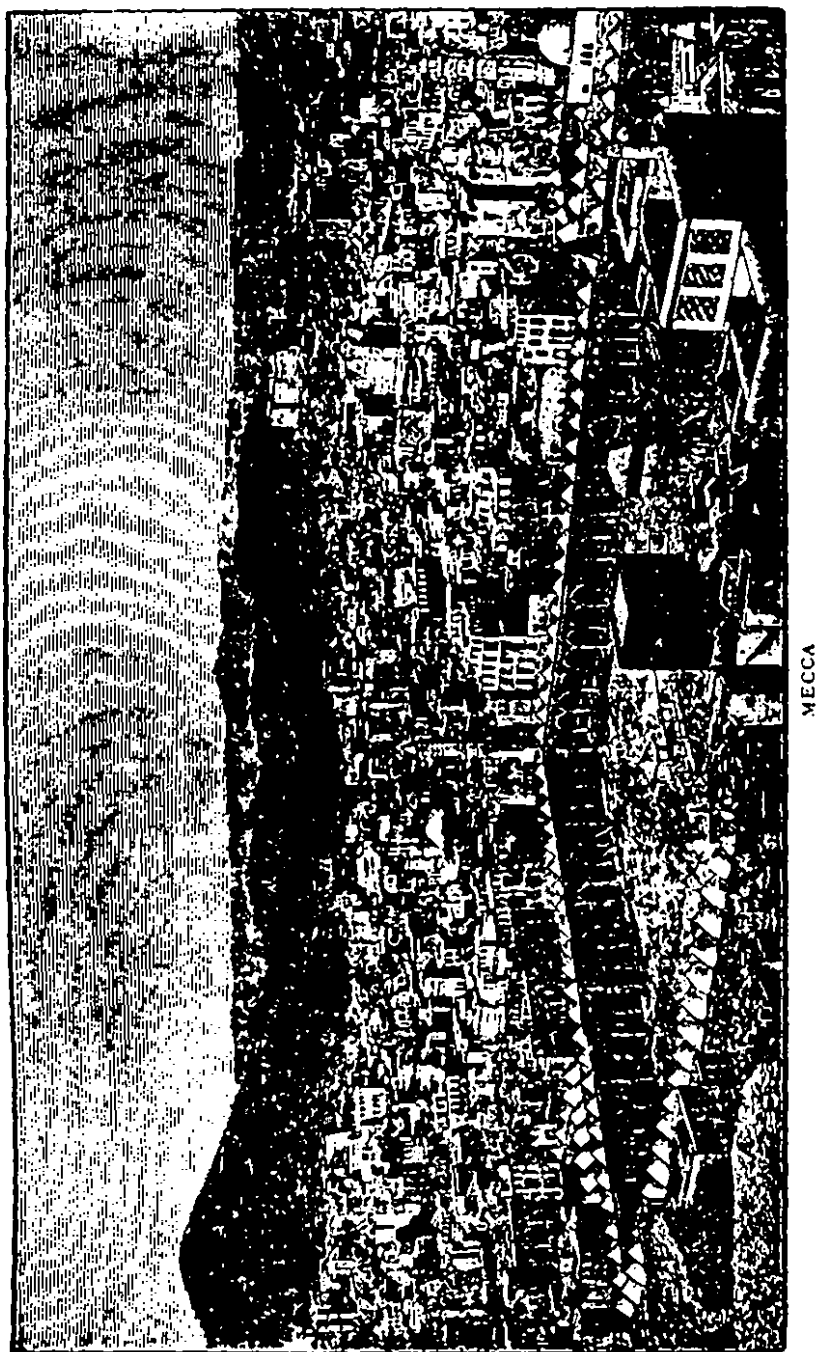
قال ابن عباس سألها النبي صلعم عن شيء من أهل
الكتاب فتكتموه إياة و أخبروه بغير فخرجوا قد أروا أن
قد خبروه بما سألهم عنه *

'Ibn 'Abbās said that, when the prophet asked any question of the people of the Book, they suppressed the matter, and in place of it told him something else, and went away letting him think that they had told him what he asked.'

Syed Ameer Ali, in his *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, p. 57, candidly admits the influence of Jewish and Christian thought in the promulgation of Islām. Referring to the doctrines of the Docetes, Marcionites and Valentinians, certain heterodox Christian sects who had settled in Arabia, he says: 'Before the advent of Mohammed, all these traditions, based on fact though tinged by the colourings of imagination, must have become firmly imbedded in the convictions of the people, and formed essential parts of the folk-lore of the country. Mohammed, therefore, when promulgating his faith and his laws, found these traditions floating among his people; he took them up and adopted them as the lever for raising the Arabs as well as the surrounding nations from the depth of social and moral degradation into which they had fallen.' Another learned Indian Muslim, S. Khuda Bukhsh, in his *Essays: Indian and Islāmic*, pp. 9, 10, goes even farther, and freely acknowledges that, 'Muhammad has not merely accepted dogmas and doctrines of Judaism, minute Talmudical ordinances, but has even adopted in their entirety some of the Jewish practices, and far above all these, that which, indeed, constitutes

the very foundation of Islām, namely, the conception of a severe and uncompromising Monotheism.'

Thus it is seen that whilst, at the time of Muhammad, a polytheistic cult claimed the devotions of a large proportion of the Arabs, the country was far from being wholly given up to idolatry. On the contrary, there were numerous communities of Jews and Christians from whom Muhammad learned much of the true God, and who undoubtedly prepared the way for that preaching of the Unity which was to effect such a change in the life of the people.



CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

MUHAMMAD was born at Mecca in A.D. 570. His father's name was 'Abdu'lláh, and his mother's Ámina. Both belonged to the Quraish tribe of Arabs. The Quraish were the hereditary guardians of the sacred Ka'ba or temple at Mecca, and as such were held in the highest esteem by the Arabs. It is recorded that a few days after the nuptials of 'Abdu'lláh and Ámina had been celebrated, the former proceeded to Syria on a trading expedition. From this he never returned, for on the homeward journey he was attacked with illness and died before reaching his young wife. The latter, a few months later, gave birth to a son whom she named Muḥammad. A few weeks later Ámina, in conformity with a practice current amongst the city Arabs, handed over her infant child to a woman of the desert Arabs or Beduin named Ḥalímá, who undertook to nurse the fatherless child. The charge thus undertaken lasted for five years, at the expiry of which period the child was again returned to his mother.

In the *Qisāsu'l-Anbiyá* and other collections of traditions an extraordinary story is related of an

incident which is said to have befallen Muḥammad during his stay with Ḥalímá. The story goes that one day the child Muḥammad was playing with the other sons of Ḥalímá (though some reports declare that he was minding goats at the time) when suddenly two angels appeared. These promptly seized the child, and, throwing him on his back, opened his breast, and after washing it with pure water, extracted therefrom a black object, saying as they did so

هذا خط الشيطان منك يا حبيب الله *

'This is Satan's portion from thee, O, beloved of God.' This done, they restored the child's breast as before, and disappeared as suddenly as they had come !! This astounding story is gravely recorded in the celebrated *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih* and other Muslim works, and the exuberant fancy of Muḥammadan writers has delighted to enlarge upon the incidents there narrated in order to show that thus early Muḥammad was being prepared by God for his prophetic mission. Some affirm that Muḥammad's heart was thus cleansed, once for all, from all taint of sin; but it would appear that either the angels failed satisfactorily to accomplish their unwonted task, or that Muḥammad's personality was so strong that he was able to over-ride the intentions of God, for in the *Qīṣaṣu'l-Anbiyá* it is recorded that on a second occasion some years later,

when he was about to perform the *Mi'radj* or miraculous ascent to heaven, two angels again appeared, and after opening Muḥammad's breast in a similar manner washed it thoroughly with the famous Zem Zem water of the Ka'ba. Be that as it may, it is related that Ḥalímá became thoroughly alarmed at the story brought her by Muḥammad and his companions; and when to this were added not infrequent signs of epilepsy, she resolved to rid herself of so heavy a responsibility by returning the child to his mother. In the *Síratu'r-Rasúl* it is related that her husband also became concerned, and addressing Ḥalímá said, 'O Ḥalímá, I fear the child is possessed of Satan, therefore return him to his mother ere the malady further appear.' Ámina listened to the story with interest, exclaiming as she noticed the fears of the child's foster-parents,

افتخوفت عليه الشيطان *

'Do ye then fear he is possessed with Satan?' But the child was still young, and at last, yielding to the entreaties of his mother, Ḥalímá consented to keep him still another year. At the expiry of that period she finally, in Muḥammad's sixth year, brought him to Mecca, and once more placed him in the care of his mother.

Soon after Muḥammad's return to Mecca his mother took him with her on a visit to some relations at Madína. After some days spent pleasantly

there, they left on their return journey ; but Ámina fell sick soon after setting out, and after a short illness expired, leaving the orphan Muḥammad to face a cold world without the tender care of father or mother. His upbringing now devolved upon his aged grandfather 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib, who with tender affection watched over the young child's destinies. But 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib was an old man of eighty, and two years later he too passed to the great unknown leaving the orphan child in charge of his son Abú Ṭálib. The latter was a good and generous guardian and, until the day of his death many years later, carried out with faithfulness and solicitude the responsibility imposed upon him by his aged father.

In his tenth year Muḥammad accompanied his uncle Abú Ṭálib on a trading expedition to Syria, where he came into contact with the Christians of that prosperous country. From that date until his assumption of prophetship, thirty years later, there is little of special interest to chronicle in the life of the young Meccan. He was esteemed by his fellow-townsmen for his integrity and honesty of purpose ; and it is recorded that his upright behaviour gained for him the title of *Al Ámin*—the Faithful.

Abú Ṭálib's circumstances, however, were not good, and partly upon his advice Muḥammad was tempted to seek an independent livelihood. The opportunity soon presented itself, and one day the young Meccan found himself engaged by a wealthy

widow named *Khadíja* for a mercantile expedition to Syria. A few days later he departed on his business, having joined a caravan which was journeying thither on a similar errand ; and with such ability did he prosecute the business entrusted to him that, on his return, his mistress offered him her hand ; and a few days later the marriage was celebrated with great rejoicings. Muḥammad's age at this time was about twenty-five years, whilst *Khadíja*'s was not less than forty ; yet the match proved a thoroughly happy one notwithstanding. Six children were born to them, but nearly all of these died young. Other children of *Khadíja* by her previous marriage are mentioned, some if not all of whom had died previously. Concerning these there is an interesting tradition preserved in the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣṣabih*. One day, after Muḥammad's assumption of prophetship,

سَأَلْتُ خَدِيجَةَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ وَلَدَيْنِ مَاتَا لَهَا
فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ هُمَا فِي النَّارِ *

'*Khadíja* asked the prophet concerning her two children who had died in the time of ignorance (i.e. before Islám). The prophet of God replied : " They are both in the fire (of hell)."

There is no doubt that both *Khadíja* and Muḥammad were at one time idolaters. Early Muslim annals contain clear proof of this. In the *Musnad*,

for example (vol. iv, p. 222), it is recorded that they were both in the habit of worshipping idols before retiring to rest at night. Ibn Hanbal records the practice thus :

قال حدثني جابر لخديجة بنت خويلد انه سمع النبي
صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول لخديجة اي خديجة والله لا اعبد اللات والعزى
والله لا اعبد ابدا قال فتقول خديجة خل اللات خل العزى
قال كانت صنمهم التي كانوا يعبدون ثم يضطجعون *

‘Abdu’llāh said, “A servant of Khadija, daughter of Khualid, related to me that he heard the prophet say to Khadija, O, Khadija, by God I do not (now) worship al Lāt or al Azza, and by God, I never will (in future) worship them. He said, Khadija replied, Leave al Lāt and al Azza.” (‘Abdu’llāh) said “These were their idols which they were in the habit of worshipping, after which they retired to rest.” The Qur’ān itself is not altogether silent on the subject. In Sūratu’dh-Dhuḥā (xciii) 8, we read :

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ *

‘Did he not find thee (O Muḥammad), an orphan, and gave thee a home ; and found thee erring, and guided thee ?’ The famous commentator Jalālu’d-dīn in his comment upon this passage says :

والا وجدت ضالا عما انت عليه الان من الشريعة فهدي
اي هداك اليها *

‘Did he not find thee erring from the Divine law (Sharī‘at) upon which thou art now (standing), and guided thee to it ?’ One of the greatest Indian authorities, Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi, in his Persian commentary is even more explicit in his exposition of the passage. He says the verse refers to that period of the prophet’s spiritual history when ‘he, on attaining to maturity of understanding and wisdom, discovered that the worship of idols and the rites of darkness were mere trash . . . so he gave up the worship of idols, and parted company with those evil rites, and was led to the knowledge of the God of Abraham.’ Again in Sūratu’l-Faṭḥ (xlviii) 2, we read :

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا لِيُغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن
ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ *

‘Verily we have won for thee an undoubted victory, in token that God forgiveth thy earlier and later faults.’ Concerning this significant passage the commentator ‘Abbās writes thus of the ‘earlier’ sins referred to :

ما تقدم من ذنبك قبل الوحي *

‘That is, thy sins which preceded the descent of inspiration.’ ‘Abbās makes it clear that the Qur’ānic passage quoted refers to those sins of Muḥammad committed in his youth and early manhood ; in other words to the sins committed prior to his claim

to prophetship. As a matter of fact Muḥammad himself, in later years often referred to the sins of his youth, and his prayers for pardon are recorded at great length in the traditions of both Bukhārī and Muslim. As an illustration the following prayer of Muḥammad recorded in the *Mishkāṭu'l-Maṣābiḥ*, in the *Kitābu's-Ṣalāt* may be quoted :—

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ وَمَا
أَعْلَنْتُ وَمَا أَسْرَفْتُ وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي *

‘O God, forgive me the sins I have committed before and after (the descent of inspiration). (Forgive me) those I have concealed, and those I have proclaimed ; those which I have committed in excess, and those which thou knowest better than I.’

It is only natural to assume that Muḥammad, like his parents and guardians, took part in the idolatrous practices of his people. His parents, we know for certain, worshipped idols, and it is recorded in the Qur’ān that, for that reason, Muḥammad was prohibited from praying for them after their decease. In Sūratu't-Tauba (ix) 114, we read :

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ
كَانُوا أُولَىٰ قُرْبَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ *

‘It is not for the prophet or the faithful to pray for the forgiveness of those, even though they be of

kin, who associate other beings with God, after it hath been made clear to them that they are to be the inmates of hell.’

Although Muḥammad was in youth and early manhood an idolater, yet with the advance of middle age he became gradually weaned from the polytheistic practices of his countrymen. The influence of his Ḥanīf relations, and his Christian foster-son Zaid, not to speak of the Jews and Christians, gradually led him to the belief in one God, and prepared him almost insensibly for the great message which, he was soon to persuade himself, God had commissioned him to preach.

السماء والارض فنبئت منه رعباً حتي هويت الي الارض
فنبئت اهلي فقات زمّلوني فزملوني *

CHAPTER III

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MESSAGE

MUHAMMAD'S marriage with the wealthy widow *Khadija* gave him ample leisure for indulging in religious speculation. 'Whether in the bosom of his family or in the depth of solitude,' writes Syed Ameer Ali, in his *Life of Mohammed*, 'he passed his time in profound meditation. Solitude had indeed become a passion with him. Every year, the month *Ramadhán* he spent with his family on the Mount of *Hirá* devoting his time to prayer and to the succour of the poor and famished wayfarers who came to him.' In the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih*, in the *Kitáb Faḍáil Syedu'l-Mursalín* we have very detailed accounts, for which there is no space here, of the prophet's mode of life at this period. Suffice it to say that, as he brooded over the great unknown, mental visions and apparitions of angels came to him in his mountain retreat, and led him to believe that he held converse with the messengers of heaven. *Jábir* has preserved to us Muḥammad's own account of the beginning of these hallucinations of an overwrought brain in the following words,

فبينما انا امشي سمعت صوتاً من السماء فرفعت بصري
فاذا الملك الذي جاءني بعراء قاعد علي كرسى بين

'As I walked along I heard a voice from heaven and raised my eyes. And behold! an angel who came to me in (Mount) *Hirá*, seated upon a throne between heaven and earth. At this I feared greatly and fell upon my knees upon the ground. Then I returned to my household and said, Cover me up; and they covered me up' (*Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih*, *Bábu' B'ath wa bad'u'l-Wahí*). 'Áyesha, the favourite wife of the prophet, who doubtless received her information direct from the prophet himself, describes the first 'descent' of inspiration thus: 'The first revelations which the prophet received were in true dreams, and he never dreamt but it came like the dawn of day. After this the prophet became fond of retirement, and used to seclude himself in a cave in Mount *Hirá* and worship there day and night . . . till one day the angel came to him and said, "Read"! but the prophet said, "I am not a reader". Then, said Muḥammad, he took hold of me and squeezed me as much as I could bear, and he then let me go, and again said, "Read". I said, "I am not a reader." Then he took hold of me a second time and squeezed me as much as I could bear, and then let me go and said, "Read." And I said, "I am not a reader." Then he took hold of me a third time and squeezed me as much as

I could bear and said, "Recite thou in the name of thy Lord who created—created man from clots of blood—Recite thou! For thy Lord is the most Beneficent, who hath taught the use of the pen."

From this time onward, with the exception of one important interval, for a period of some twenty-three years Muḥammad continued to recite, as occasion required, various communications religious, social and political, which he declared he had received from the angel Gabriel. From a close study of the prophet's life it would appear that, at first, he was sincere in the belief that he was the chosen messenger of God to wean his fellow-countrymen from the gross idolatry which they practised; but, as time went on, ambition and the lust of power carried him away, and there can be no doubt that, later in his career, he deliberately forged 'revelations' in the name of the Deity in order to further his own ends.

The traditionists speak of one outstanding suspension of the 'revelations' which lasted, according to some, for three years. Others declare the period to be no longer than six months. Be that as it may, we are told by both Muslim and Bukhārī that, for a period, Muḥammad ceased to receive his angelic visitants. This circumstance so preyed upon his mind that, we are told, he seriously contemplated suicide and wished

يتردي من روس شواحق الجبل *

'to cast himself from the summit of some high mountain'. He was restrained however, so the story goes, by an angel, who assured him that he was a prophet despite the suspension of communications from God.

From the historians it is clear that Muḥammad suffered from some form of epilepsy, and fits, often accompanied by convulsions, were not rare. Muslim literature contains many references to this distressing malady, and we are told how Muḥammad was doused with cold water by his solicitous followers when such paroxysms began. Thus Bukhārī relates that Muḥammad said :

فَاتَّيْتُ خَدِيجَةَ فَقُلْتُ دَثِّرُونِي فَدَثَّرُونِي وَصَبُّوا عَلَيَّ مَاءًا
بَارِدًا *

'I went to Khadīja and said, "Wrap me up". Therefore they wrapped me up, and poured cold water over me.' In the *Mishkātu'l-Maṣābih*, in the *Kitāb Faḍḍil Syedu'l-Mursalīn* there is a tradition preserved by 'Ubādah-bin-u's-Ṣāmit that,

إذا انزل عليه الرحي كرب لذلك تربد وجهه *

'When inspiration descended upon him (Muḥammad) he became anxious on account of it, and his countenance became distressed.' It is clear from the narratives that have come down to us that these fits caused much anxiety to the prophet's followers.

Some, we are told, feared that he was possessed with an evil spirit. Others said that he was bewitched. Muḥammad himself seemed to favour the latter theory, though he was astute enough to use his affliction for his own interests; and he constantly associated his epileptic seizures with the visits of the angel Gabriel! Strange to say the traditions contain numerous and detailed references to Muḥammad's being bewitched, and Muslim writers seem to see no incongruity in a prophet of God being brought under the spell of sorcery. The fullest accounts of this extraordinary matter have been collected together in the *Mishkātū'l-Maṣābīh* in the chapter on miracles. One or two quotations must suffice here. The following is recorded by both Muslim and Bukhārī:

عن عائشة قالت سحر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
حتى انه ليخيل اليه انه فعل الشيء وما فعله *

'It is related from 'Āyesha that she said, "The apostle of God was bewitched, so much so that he imagined he was doing a certain thing, but (in reality) he had not done it." Then 'Āyesha continued that the prophet said, Two men came to me, one of whom sat at my head and the other at my feet. After that one of them said to his companion, 'What is the man's (Muḥammad's) illness?' The other replied, 'He has been bewitched.' The first asked, 'Who has bewitched him?' He replied,

'Labidu'l-'Asam the Jew.' He again asked, 'By what means?' He answered, 'By a comb and the hairs which fall from it, and by the film of a male date bud.' The first asked, 'Where is it?' He replied, 'In the well *Dharwān*.' Then the prophet went with some of his companions to the well and said, 'This is the well which has been shown to me.' The water of the well was soaked in Hīna, and its date-trees were (reflected in the waters as if they) were the heads of Satans. Then he (Muḥammad) brought the things out of the well. It is said that in the well was an image of Muḥammad made of wax with needles stuck into it, and a thread tied upon it with eleven knots in it. Then Gabriel brought the chapters imploring protection, every verse of which being repeated unloosed one of the knots, and the prophet of God received relief from every needle that was pulled out, until at length he was completely released from the enchantment!! Bukhārī (vol. iv. pp. 17-18) treats the matter at length, and the whole episode shows how completely Muḥammad shared with the people of his time a belief in witchcraft. As a matter of fact, many pages could be written, drawn wholly from Muḥammadan sources, showing the prophet's superstition regarding the evil eye, omens and the like. It may not be out of place here, by way of proof, to give one or two illustrations of the latter. In the *Mishkātū'l-Maṣābīh*, in the *Kitābu't-Ṭab-wa-ar-Ruqqa*

there is a tradition preserved by Muslim from Anas to the effect that,

رخص رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في الرقية من العين
والحمة والنملة *

'The apostle of God allowed the use of charms in the case of the evil eye, the bite of scorpions and boils.' There is also another tradition preserved by Muslim, and quoted in the same chapter, to the effect that Umm Ṣalmah said :

ان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم راي في بيتها جارية في
وجهها سقعة يعني صفرة فقال استرقوا لها فان بها النظرة *

'Verily the prophet saw a slave-girl in her house, in whose face there was a yellow look. Then he said, "Use charms for her, for verily in her is the evil eye."' Another tradition, recorded in the *Jā'ma Tirmidhi* in the chapter on medicine, runs thus :

ان اسماء بنت عميس قالت يا رسول الله ان ولد جعفر
تسرع اليهم العين فاستترقي لهم قال نعم فانه لو كان شيء
سابق القدر لسبقته العين *

'Asmá' bint 'Umais said, "O apostle of God, the children of Ja'far are quickly affected by the evil eye. Shall I therefore use charms (to protect them)?" He said, "Yes! for verily if there had been anything that could rival fate it had surely been the evil eye."'

Muḥammad's superstitious nature affected all the varied activities of his life, and whether walking or

sitting, eating or drinking he was ever in the habit of relying upon ejaculations and spells of various kinds for his protection from both genii and men. Thus there is a tradition, recorded by both Muslim and Bukhārī to the effect that Muḥammad on one occasion addressing his followers said :

اذا سمعتم صياح الديكة فاسئلوا الله من فضله فانها رأت
ملكاً و اذا سمعتم نهيق الحمار فتعوزوا بالله من الشيطان
الرجيم فانه راي شيطان *

'When you hear a cock crow, then ask God for his favours, for verily it has seen an angel; but when you hear an ass bray, then take refuge with God from Satan the stoned, for verily it has seen Satan'! On another occasion the prophet prescribed spitting thrice over the left shoulder as a means of defeating the wiles of the great enemy of men! Muḥammad's belief in the existence of genii led him into a bondage of fear which his followers have inherited to the present day, and the charge was often levelled at him by his enemies amongst the Quraish that he was possessed by one of these demons. Indeed evidence is not wanting that, at one time in his career, he himself had doubts as to the same thing.

At first Muḥammad proceeded quietly and in secret to propagate his doctrines; and his faithful wife Khadija was the first to proclaim herself a convert. Others soon followed, and in a few months

'Alí, Abú Bakr, Zaid and several others were counted amongst the little band of believers. In this way, during the course of two or three years, some forty or fifty Meccans, men and women, had embraced the new religion. This accession of strength brought the prophet courage to proclaim in public the great dual message of the unity of God and his own apostleship. At first the Quraish only mocked, but when the new preacher began to abuse their tribal gods and cast scorn upon their most cherished beliefs, active opposition began to take the place of passive indifference, and soon the little band of Muslims found themselves the objects of a bitter and relentless persecution. Muḥammad himself found in his uncle, 'Abú Ṭalib, an all-powerful protector from the machinations of his enemies; but his followers were not so fortunate, and the fury of the now thoroughly angry populace was vented upon their defenceless heads. At length Muḥammad, unable to protect them, and yet unwilling to lose them, hit upon an expedient for staving off the anger of the mob. It is recorded in the *Tafsíru'l Baiḍáwí* (p. 367) that a new convert named 'Umar bin Yasar was so bitterly persecuted by the Quraish that he finally apostatized and signalized the reality of his declension by roundly abusing the prophet. When, however, he was later brought face to face with Muḥammad, he declared that his apostasy was only feigned with a view to escape the persecution of his

enemies. His heart, he assured the prophet, was right. To this the latter replied that dissimulation under such circumstances was justified, and he dismissed his delighted follower with the words,

ان عادوا لك فعد لهم بما قلت *

'If they persecute thee again, then do thou return to them again and repeat what thou saidst before.' This extraordinary pronouncement upon the part of the prophet was so opposed to all standards of truth that a 'revelation' was thought necessary to justify it; and so, for all time, the pages of the Qur'án stand stained with an injunction sanctioning dissimulation. This passage is found in Súratu'n-Namal (xxvii) 104, and runs thus:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مِنْ أَكْثَرِ قُلُوبٍ مَظْمُونٍ
بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ
مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ *

'Whoso, after he hath believed in God, denieth Him; if he were forced to it, and if his heart remain steadfast in the faith (shall be guiltless); but whoso openeth his breast to infidelity, on such shall be wrath from God, and a severe punishment awaiteth them.' The above was not the only occasion upon which Muḥammad allowed his

followers to lie. It is recorded in the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābiḥ* in the *Kitābu'l-Adāb* that Muḥammad mentioned three circumstances in which his followers were permitted to lie. The tradition, which is attested by *Tirmidhī*, runs thus:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا يَجِزُ الْكَذِبُ إِلَّا
فِي ثَلَاثٍ كَذِبُ الرَّجُلِ امْرَأَتَهُ لِيَرْضَاهَا وَالْكَذِبُ فِي الْحَرْبِ
وَالْكَذِبُ لِيُصْلِحَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ *

'The apostle of God said, "Falsehood is not allowed except under three conditions: the falsehood of a man to his wife in order to please her; falsehood in war; and falsehood for the purpose of establishing concord between men."'

Even under the new conditions allowed by Muḥammad, the persecuted Muslims obtained little respite; and the anger and hatred of the Quraish grew more bitter each day, until at last, some five years after the first proclamation of Islām, Muḥammad was constrained to advise the drastic expedient of flight to Abyssinia. Thither, therefore, a small band of some fifteen Muslims, who were later joined by others, proceeded and found in the hospitable kingdom of a Christian king an asylum from the vengeance of their enemies.

CHAPTER IV

DISPUTATIONS WITH THE QURAISH

WITH the flight of his disciples the 'revelations' of the prophet gradually assumed a harsher tone. The unity of God, His power and wisdom in creation, together with the certainty of the resurrection and judgement, which were the great themes of the earlier chapters of the Qur'ān, now gave place to stern denunciations of the unbelieving Arabs. The severity of their future punishment in a grossly material hell is painted in lurid colours, and various prominent men from amongst his persecutors are singled out for bitter imprecations and curses. One or two specimens of the diatribes to which the unbelieving Quraish were compelled to listen will go far to explain the bitterness of their opposition to Muḥammad and his teaching. In the *Súratu'l-Hajj*, (xxii) portions at least of which were probably revealed a short time previous to the flight to Madína, the unbelieving Quraish are addressed in these terms: 'For those who have disbelieved garments of fire shall be cut out; the boiling water shall be poured down upon their heads. All that is in their bowels, and their skins, shall be dissolved; and there are maces of iron for them. So oft as

they, for very anguish, would fain come forth thence, back shall they be turned into it; and—"Taste ye the torment of the burning." "Súratu'l-Lahab (cxi) is undoubtedly earlier, and refers entirely to an uncle of the prophet of that name, whose opposition was marked by much bitterness and contumely. The prophet, however, was no whit behind his relative in the use of abusive language, as will be seen from the quotation given below from that chapter, which, let it be remembered, all good Muslims are bound to believe was written ages before the creation upon the tablets of heaven. The passage is as follows: 'Let the hands of Abú Lahab perish, and let himself perish! His wealth and his gains shall avail him not. Burned shall he be at the fiery flame, and his wife laden with fire-wood—on her neck a rope of palm fibre.'

It is not surprising that when the prophet attacked his enemies by name in this way, anger deep and bitter should have stirred them to revenge; and plots were soon on foot to bring the new propaganda to an end. There can be no doubt that it was solely owing to the loyal help and protection of his uncle Abú Tálíb, and to fear of the consequences which would follow any shedding of the prophet's blood that the latter was not summarily assassinated. On the other hand, opposition but seemed to encourage the prophet in his denunciations of idolatry and in the reiteration of his claims to

apostleship. The Qur'án, too, is again and again put forward as the word of God revealed from heaven for the guidance of men; but to every such claim the unbelieving Quraish had but one answer. 'He hath composed it himself', 'It is nothing but stories of the ancients', were the replies flung at the eager preacher. Ibn Hishám, in his *Síratu'r-Rasúil*, has related an incident of this period which throws a clear light upon the attitude of the unbelieving Arabs. One day, the story goes, Nazir bin Hárith stood up before the Quraish and recited to them certain stories of the Persian kings, and then continued,

والله ما محمد باحسن حديثا مني وما حديثه الا اساطير
الاولين اكتبه كما اكتبته *

'By God! the stories of Muḥammad are no better than my own. They are simply tales of the ancients which he hath written out as I have written mine.' Again when Muḥammad announced himself as a prophet who had been foretold in the Jewish and Christian scriptures the Quraish replied,

يا محمد لقد سألنا عنك اليهود والنصارى فزعموا ان
ليس لك عندهم ذكره صفته فارنا من يشهد لك انك
رسول الله *

'O Muḥammad, we have already asked the Jews and Christians concerning thee, but they have asserted

that there is no prophecy concerning thee with them. Therefore do thou show us who is able to bear witness concerning thee that thou art indeed a prophet of God' (*Tafsīru'l-Baidāwī*, p. 171). Again when the prophet repeated to the Quraish, in his own inimitable style, the stories of the patriarchs as he had learned them from the lips of his Jewish friends—stories, it should be remarked, which agree not with the historic narratives of the Taurāt, but with the apocryphal tales of the Talmud—the rejoinder of the Quraish was clear and immediate,

إِنَّمَا يَعْلَمُهُ بَشَرٌ *

'Verily a certain person teacheth him.' [*Súratu'n-Nahāl* (xvi) 104]. From the commentaries it is clear that this answer was based, not on mere conjecture, but on what was a matter of general knowledge, viz. that Muḥammad was in the habit of listening to the stories of the Bible from the lips of certain Jews and Christians, and then repeating them to the Arabs as revelations from heaven. Qází Baidāwī in his commentary upon the words quoted above makes it perfectly clear that the rejoinder of the Quraish was abundantly justified. He writes thus :

يعنون جبراً الرومي غلام عامر ابن الحضرمي و قيل جبراً
ويساراً كانا يصعان السيوف بمكة و يقرآن التورات

والانجيل و كان الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم يمرّ عليهما
و يسمع ما يقرؤانه *

It is said that 'the person alluded to was a Greek (i.e. Christian) slave of 'Ámir binu'l-Hudrami named Jabar. It is further said that the allusion is to Jabar and Yasár two sword-makers in Mecca. These used to read the Taurāt and Injíl, and the prophet was in the habit of passing by them and listening to what they were reading.' Madarak and Husain say the same. There can be little doubt, therefore, that Muḥammad was indebted to the Jews and Christians for his stories of the Old and New Testaments; consequently the objections of the Quraish to receiving them as a new revelation can be easily appreciated.

Another subject of endless debate between Muḥammad and the unbelieving Quraish was that of miracles. When the former announced himself as a prophet of God, and a successor of Moses and Jesus, his enemies retorted that the missions of these latter were authenticated by well-established miracles. Where, then, were his credentials? This demand upon the part of the Quraish for a 'sign' is alluded to again and again in the pages of the Qur'án, and the answer is always and everywhere the same. Muḥammad consistently disclaimed the power to work miracles. Signs, he replied, were in the power of God alone, and he was merely

a warner. One illustration, taken from a host of passages, must suffice. It is found in *Súratu'l-An'ám* (vi) 109, and runs thus,

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا
قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ *

'With their most solemn oath have they sworn by God that if a sign come unto them they will certainly believe it. Say (O Muḥammad), signs are in the power of God alone, and he teacheth you not thereby, only because when they were wrought ye did not believe.' The commentators tell us that the Quraish again and again came to Muḥammad and said, 'O Muḥammad, you yourself have told us that Moses with his rod split the rock and out of it there flowed water, whilst Jesus gave life to the dead. If thou, too, do but bring us a sign we will believe.' The traditions, it is true, contain numerous stories of fabulous miracles said to have been performed by Muḥammad, but these stories are obviously the fabrications of a later age, manufactured for the purpose of glorifying the prophet. The one contemporary record that has come down to us, the *Qur'án*, bears everywhere the clearest testimony to Muḥammad's inability to meet the demands of his contemporaries.

It may not be out of place here to mention the famous *Mi'ráj* or night-journey to heaven which fond tradition has ascribed to the prophet. The passage of the *Qur'án* which is said to allude to this event obviously relates to a vision, and runs as follows,

سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى
الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا *

'Glory be to Him who carried his servant by night from the sacred temple (of Mecca) to the temple that is more remote, whose precinct we have blessed, that we might show him of our signs.' The later traditionists have turned this simple record of a spiritual vision into one of the most extravagant stories of a bodily ascent to heaven ever invented by the fancy of man. Briefly the story as related in the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābilh*, the *Qiṣaṣu'l-Anbiyá* and other traditions is as follows: One night as Muḥammad lay asleep in his house at Mecca the angel Gabriel suddenly appeared at his side, and opening his breast took out his heart and washed it with water. Then again replacing it he mounted the prophet upon the back of a marvellous winged steed, named Buraq, which conveyed him in the twinkling of an eye to the famous temple at Jerusalem. Here the prophet prayed, and was thereafter taken to

heaven, where he held converse with the Almighty. The return to earth was accomplished the self-same night, and the *Mi'raj*, as this wonderful journey is called, is now claimed as one of the great miracles of the prophet, attesting his divine commission and setting the seal upon his prophetic claims.

The Qur'án, we have already remarked, distinctly states that this event was simply a vision ; and sober scholars like the late Syed Aḥmad Khán have felt compelled to adopt that explanation. This journey is alluded to in the 60th verse of Súratu Bani Isrá'íl (xvii) in the following words :

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّعْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ *

' We ordained the vision which we showed thee, and likewise the cursed tree of the Qur'án, only for men to dispute of.' Both the Jalálain and 'Abbás in their comments on this passage refer it to the *Mi'raj*. Muḥammad 'Abdu'l Ḥakim Khán in his commentary on the Qur'án (p. 400) says, ' All this was a magnificent vision shown unto the prophet during night, as clearly pointed out in the first verse of this chapter, " carried His servant by night " .' Ibn Hishám on p. 139 of his famous *Síratu'r-Rasúl* records that

ان عائشة زوج النبي صلعم كانت تقول ما فقد جسد رسول الله صلعم ولكن الله اسري بروحه *

' Verily 'Áyesha, the wife of the prophet, used to say that " the body of the prophet of God did not disappear, but God took away his spirit by night " .' The same author has preserved another tradition regarding Mu'áwiya bin Abú Sufyán to the effect that

كان ان سئل عن مسري رسول الله صلعم قال كانت رؤيا من الله تعالى صادقة *

' When he was asked about the night-journey of the apostle of God he said, " It was a truthful vision from God most high. " ' Yet another tradition to the same effect recorded by Ibn Hishám is that,

كان رسول الله صلعم يقول فيما بلغني تمام عيني وقلبي يقظان *

' The apostle of God used to say, " In what reached me, my eye was asleep, but my heart was awake. " ' From the testimony of these early Muslims it is clear that the *Mi'raj* spoken of in Súratu Bani Isrá'íl was nothing more than a dream or vision, and proves nothing regarding Muḥammad's ability to work miracles. The commentators of the Qur'án unanimously explain the words of the passage quoted, ' the temple that is more remote ', of the temple of Jerusalem, and in the chapter dealing with the famous night-journey in the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih* there is a tradition that Muḥammad said :

فركبته حتى اتيت بيت المقدس فربطته بالحلقه التي
تربط بها الانبياء قال ثم دخلت المسجد فصليت فيه ركعتين *

'Therefore I rode him (the beast Buráq) until I came to the Holy House (i.e. the temple of Jerusalem). Then I tied him to the ring to which the (earlier) prophets were wont to tie (their steeds).' He said, 'after that I entered the temple, and prayed in it two raqats.' Unfortunately for this story, the Jewish temple at Jerusalem was totally destroyed, as every educated person knows, by the Romans some centuries before the birth of Muḥammad, and was never rebuilt!! This fact has obliged not a few educated Muslims to reject the theory of a corporeal journey and content themselves with the explanation that it was a vision only. Thus the late Sir Syed Aḥmad Khán, in his *Essays* (p. 34) writes, 'All that Muḥammadans must believe respecting the Miráj is that the prophet saw himself in a vision transported from Mecca to Jerusalem, and that, in such a vision, he really beheld some of the greatest signs of his Lord.' Another educated Indian Muslim, Mirza Abul Fazl, in his *Selections from the Quran* (p. 181) says, in commenting upon the Qur'anic passage alluded to: 'This refers to the celebrated vision of ascension which Muḥammad had at Mecca some time before his flight to Madina.' Syed Ameer Ali, also, in his *Life of Mohammed* (pp. 58 and 59) says: 'This period is also

remarkable for that notable vision of the ascension, which has furnished worlds of golden dreams for the imaginative genius of poets and traditionists. They have woven beautiful and gorgeous legends round the simple words of the Koran. . . . Muir, to my mind, is quite correct when he says that, "the earliest authorities point only to a vision, not to a real bodily journey".' The fact is that, if the testimony of the Qur'án be accepted, then Muḥammad worked no miracle. His repudiation of such power was clear and oft-repeated. When challenged by the unbelieving Quraish to show a 'sign' the most he could reply was that the Qur'án was his only miracle. Thus he is reported as saying :

ما من الانبياء من نبي الا قد اعطي من الايت ما مثله
امن عليه البشر و انما كان الذي اوتيت وحياً اوحى
الله الي *
الله الي *

'There is no prophet but has been given a sign that men might believe on him, but that which has been given me is inspiration, i. e. God has sent inspiration to me.' The Qur'án says substantially the same thing. Thus we read in Súratu'l-'Ankabút (xxix) 49-50,

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ وَأَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ۝ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ
الكِتَابَ يَقْتُلِي عَلَيْهِمْ *

'And they say, "Unless a sign be sent down to him from his Lord . . ." Say : Signs are in the power of God alone. I am only a plain-spoken warner. Is it not enough for them that we have sent down to thee the Book to be recited to them ?'

The testimony of the Qur'án as to Muḥammad's inability to work miracles is so clear that educated Muslims are perforce obliged to repudiate the extravagant and legendary tales of the later traditions, and candidly admit that Muḥammad did not work any miracle in proof of his mission. Thus Syed Ameer Ali, one of the greatest scholars that Indian Muḥammadanism has produced, says candidly on p. 49 of his *Life of Mohammed*, 'They asked for miracles to prove his mission. Remark his reply, "God has not sent me to you to work wonders. He has sent me to preach to you. If you will accept what I bring you, you will have happiness in this world and the next. If you reject my admonitions, I shall be patient, and God will judge between you and me." The sublimity of these words have been hardly recognized even to the present day. Disclaiming every power of wonder-working Muḥammad rests the truth of his divine commission entirely upon his teachings.'

Muḥammad not only recited his Qur'án to the people as a revelation from God, but he was also wont to claim for it a superiority over all other literary productions of the human mind. In short, the

Qur'án, he asserted, was incomparable, and he challenged men and genii alike to produce another book equal to it. Yet, strange to say, the commentaries and traditions contain evidence that portions of the Qur'án itself were, in reality, composed by others than Muḥammad. Thus, for example, the *Tafsíru'l-Baidáwí* (p. 164) repeats a story of an amanuensis of the prophet named 'Abdu'lláh bin Sa'ud bin Abi Sariḥ, which shows that he was responsible for at least one passage of the Qur'án. The story as quoted by Baidáwí is as follows :

عبد الله بن سعد بن أبي سرح كان كتب لرسول الله
فلم نزلت ولقد خلقنا الإنسان من سلالة من طين فلم يبلغ
قوله ثم انشأناه خلقا اخر قال عبد الله فتبارك الله احسن
المخالقين تعجبنا من تفصيل خلق الانسان فقال عليه السلام
اكتبها فكذلك نزلت فشك عبد الله وقال لئن كان
محمد صادقا لقد اوحى الي كما اوحى اليه ولئن كان
كاذبا لقد قلت كما قال *

'Abdu'lláh bin Sa'ud bin Abi Sariḥ was an amanuensis of the prophet. And when the words descended, "We created man of fine clay", and when the words were finished "then brought we forth him by another creation", 'Abdu'lláh exclaimed, "Blessed therefore, be God, the most excellent of creators. He has created man in a wonderful manner." Upon this (Muḥammad) said, "Write those words down,

for so has it descended." But Abdu'llāh doubted and said, "If Muḥammad speak truth, then on me also has inspiration descended, as upon him; and if Muḥammad speak falsely, then verily I but spake as he did." From the story as related by Baiḍāwī it is clear that Muḥammad was so pleased with the beauty of the expression used by his disciple that he immediately decided to give it the place in his Qur'ān which it still occupies to the present day.

In an authentic tradition handed down by Bukhārī the source of several other parts of the Qur'ān has been traced, making it abundantly clear that others there were amongst the contemporaries of Muḥammad whose beauty of expression and purity of style were no whit behind those of the prophet. The tradition is as follows :

قال عمر بن خطاب وافقت ربي في ثلاث قلت
يا رسول الله لو اتخذنا من مقام ابراهيم مصلي فنزلت واتخذوا
من مقام ابراهيم مصلي وقلت يا رسول الله ان نسائك
يدخل عليهن البر والفاجر فان مرتفن يحتجبين فنزلت اليه اية
الحجاب واجتمع علي رسول الله تساو في الغيرة فقلت لهن
عسى ربه ان طلقكن ان يبدلهن ازواجا خيرا منكن فنزلت
كذلك *

“Umar bin Khaṭṭāb said, “In three things I agreed with my Lord (that is with the Qur'ān). I said, O prophet of God, if we were to say our prayers in

Abraham's place, (it would be better). Then a revelation came down, “Take the place of Abraham for the place of prayer.” (The second is that) I said, O prophet of God, good and bad people come to your house; if you shut up your women, it will be better. Then came down the verse of the veil upon the prophet. (The third is that) the wives of the prophet were quarrelling, and I said to them, It may be that the Lord will divorce you, and give the prophet better wives than you in exchange. Then came down a revelation like I had spoken.’ The three verses suggested by ‘Umar are still to be found in the Qur'ān to-day, and differ in no respect from the rest of the Qur'ān.

Another argument used by Muḥammad to prove the divine origin of the Qur'ān was based upon its alleged indestructibility. God, Muḥammad affirmed again and again, was its Protector from all change and corruption, either by addition or subtraction. Thus, the Quraish were assured, the Qur'ān would remain for all time exactly as it was first dictated to the prophet by the angel Gabriel. There is even a saying of the prophet recorded to the effect that

لَوْ جُعِلَ الْقُرْآنُ فِي إِهَابٍ ثُمَّ أُلْقِيَ فِي النَّارِ مَا احْتَرَقَ *

‘If the Qur'ān be bound in leather and then cast into the fire, it will not be burned.’ We have no space here to show how seriously the text of

the Qur'ān has been corrupted since the time of Muḥammad. Suffice it to say, that the standard commentaries on the Qur'ān report innumerable various readings as well as mention many omissions from and additions to the original text. The curious reader may find these dealt with at some length in the book entitled *The Qur'ān in Islām* published by the Christian Literature Society for India.

The enemies of the prophet, though unable to do him personal injury, continually assailed him with their tongues. Now it was to denounce him as an impostor, and now to ply him with disconcerting questions. At other times ridicule and abuse were heaped upon him by those who had rejected his claims; and it is clear from the narratives that have come down to us, that the prophet's lot was far from a happy one. One of these incidents as recorded by Baiḍāwī may be mentioned by way of illustration. It is said that the Quraish one day came to the prophet with three questions; but he, not being able to answer them, bade them return again on the morrow. The next day found the prophet still unprepared, and, finally, his interlocutors were dismissed with a request to return some days later. The story as told by Baiḍāwī is as follows:

قالت اليهود لقريش سلوه عن الروح واصحاب الكهف
وذئ القرنين فسلوه فقال اتوني غدا اخبركم ولم يستثن

فابطأ عليه الرحي بضعة عشر يوما حتي شق عليه و كذبتة
قريش *

'The Jews said to the Quraish, "Do ye question him (the prophet) concerning the spirit, the companions of the cave, and Alexander the Great." Then they asked him; but he said, "Return ye to me to-morrow and I will answer you." But he neglected to mention a condition (i.e. if God will). Consequently inspiration delayed to come upon him for the space of some ten days, until the matter became grievous to him, and the Quraish called him a liar.' 'Abbās and Ibn Hishām (vol. i, p. 273) also relate the incident which, we are told, was the result of a plan concerted by the Jews for testing whether Muḥammad was really a prophet or not. Little wonder that his unsatisfied questioners at last withdrew in disgust, declaring Muḥammad to be an impostor and a liar.

Another matter concerning which the enemies of Muḥammad were constantly taunting him was the contradictions which were so palpably evident between various passages of the Qur'ān. If that book be studied with attention it will be found to contain a large number of such contradictions; and it is not to be wondered at that the unbelieving Arabs were quick to seize upon them in order to challenge the divine origin of the book in which they were found. Thus, at the first, when Muḥammad was a

defenceless man at Mecca, dependent upon the goodwill of the people for his very existence, we find him inculcating principles of toleration and mildness, but, later on, when at Madīna he found himself surrounded by a band of warlike Arabs, he changed his tone, and Jehād was consistently preached. Again, when Muḥammad first reached Madīna, after his flight from Mecca, he sought to win the goodwill of the many influential Jews resident there by making Jerusalem his *Qibla*, or place towards which prayer was to be offered. Later on, however, when these hopes failed, he again turned towards the sacred Ka'ba or temple of Mecca, when prostrating himself in prayer, in order to conciliate the Arabs who looked upon that ancient temple in the light of a national sanctuary. The Arabs, however, only mocked, and to Muḥammad's assurance that God was the author of the changes, replied that

انما انت مفتر متقول علي الله تأمر بشي ثم يبدولك
فتنه عند *

'Thou (O Muḥammad) art only a forger. Thou attributest thy words to God. Thou commandest a thing, and then changest thy mind and forbiddest it' (*Tafsīru'l-Baidāwī*, p. 366).

Thus the days passed by, and the Quraish remained unsatisfied and unbelieving. To their

demands for a miracle Muḥammad had replied that he was only a preacher. Their questions, brought with a view to apply a second test of Muḥammad's apostleship, were equally futile of results, and so they turned from the preacher in disgust, resolved more than ever not to tolerate in their midst one who, to their mind, was obviously an impostor and a fool.

CHAPTER V

THE FLIGHT FROM MECCA

FROM what has been written in the previous chapter, the reader will gather that, up to this point, Muhammad's mission at Mecca had been a very partial success. In fact, comparatively few of the Quraish had believed in him, and of those who had, many were from the humbler classes. These facts weighed heavily upon the prophet's mind, and at last, sad at heart, he began to seek for some other means of winning the faith and confidence of his tribesmen. The opportunity, when it came, brought with it the temptation to compromise. The prophet's 'fall' as it has been rightly called, happened thus. One day, we are told, Muhammad entered the Ka'ba at Mecca and began to recite Súratu'n-Najam (liii). Then, when he came to the words 'Do ye see al-Lát and al-'Uzza and Manát the third (idol) besides?' He added, with the hope of reconciling the Quraish, the following words

تلك الغرائيق العلي و ان شفاعتهم لترتدي *

'These are the exalted females, and verily their intercession is to be hoped for.' The Quraish were delighted, and joined the prophet in worship, saying

as they did so, 'Now we know that it is the Lord alone that giveth life and taketh away; that createth and supporteth. These our goddesses ask intercession for us with Him, and as thou hast conceded unto them a position we are content to follow thee.' But the compromise had cost the prophet dear. He was ill at heart, and soon repented of his mistake by repeating the words which now stand in place of those quoted above, 'What! shall ye have male progeny and God female? This were indeed an unfair partition. These are mere names: ye and your fathers named them thus. God hath not sent down any warranty in their regard.'

Such behaviour was well calculated to estrange his followers, and so deep were the murmurings occasioned by his words that the prophet was constrained to offer an explanation. The devil, he told his friends, was responsible for the whole incident. He it was who had placed the offending words upon his lips even as he had done with prophets before him; and so the oracle is made to say,

مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى

أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ *

'We have not sent any apostle or prophet before thee, but when he recited, Satan injected some

(wrong) desire. But God shall bring to nought that which Satan had suggested' [Súratu'l-Hajj (xxii) 51]. The inference intended to be conveyed by these words was that Satan had, in like manner, placed the praises of the Meccan idols upon the lips of Muḥammad.

The incident related above is such a grave one, and casts such an indelible stain upon the character of Muḥammad that we quote at some length in order to show that its historicity is vouched for by the highest authority. We quote, therefore, below, the account of the incident given by Mu'ālim :

قال ابن عباس و محمد ابن كعب القرظي وغيرهما
من المفسرين لما راى رسول الله قولي قومه عنه و مشق عليه
ما راى من مباحدهم عما جاءهم به من الله تمنى في نفسه
ان يائته عن الله ما يقارب بينه و بين قومه يحصره علي
ايمانهم فكان يوم في مجلس قريش فانزل الله تعالى سورة
النجم فقرأها رسول الله و حتي بلغ قوله افريتم اللات والعزي
ومناة الثالثة الاخرى القلي الشيطان علي لسانه بما كان
يحدث به نفسه ويتمناه تلك الغرائيق العلي و ان شفاعتهم
لترتجي فلما سمعت قريش ذلك فرحوا به *

'It is related by Ibn 'Abbās and Muḥammad bin Ka'bu'l-Qarzi, and other commentators besides, that

when Muḥammad saw that his people retired from him and opposed him, and rejected that (Qur'án) which he had brought them from God, he wished in his heart that such word would come to him from God by which friendship might be established between him and his people, and an inducement held out to them to believe. And it came to pass that one day he was in the temple of the Quraish when God sent down Súratu'n-Najm. Then the prophet recited it, and when he arrived at the words, "Do ye see al-Lát and al-Uzza and Manát the third (idol) besides?" Satan placed upon his lips what he had longed for in his heart: "These are the exalted females, and verily their intercession is to be hoped for." And when the Quraish heard this they rejoiced at it.'

Another form of the story is given in the *Mawāhibu'l-Luduniyyah* as follows :

قراء رسول الله صلعم بمكة النجم فلما بلغ افريتم اللات
والعزي و مناة الثالثة الاخرى القلي الشيطان علي لسانه تلك
الغرائيق العلي و ان شفاعتهم لترتجي فقال المشركون
ما ذكر الهتنا بخير قبل اليوم فسجد و سجدوا فنزلت هذا الاية
وما ارسلنا من قبلك من رسول ولا نبي الا اذا تمنى القلي
الشيطان في امنيته *

'The prophet was reading Súratu'n-Najm in Mecca, and when he came to the words, "Do ye see al-Lát

and al-Uzza and Manát the third (idol) besides?" Satan cast upon his lips the words "these are the exalted females, and verily their intercession is to be hoped for." And the idolaters said, "he hath spoken well of our goddesses." And he worshipped and they worshipped; and then was sent down this verse, "We have not sent any apostle or prophet before thee, but when he recited Satan injected some (wrong) desire." ' Baidáwí gives substantially the same story on page 447 of his commentary, and there is no reason whatever for doubting its genuineness. Ibn Athír, one of the early biographers of the prophet, tells us that it was owing to a rumour that the Quraish had embraced Islám which reached the Muslim refugees in Abyssinia, which led to their early return to Mecca. But if Muḥammad's association with Alláh of the Meccan deities pleased the Quraish, his subsequent repudiation of that act goaded them to madness, and they now resolved, at all costs, to crush the new cult ere it could do them further injury. To effect this they resolved to excommunicate the Muslim community and refuse all dealings with them. Not only did this ban of excommunication apply to Muḥammad and his immediate followers, but the whole clan of the Bani Hishám was included. These latter now withdrew to a secluded quarter of the city, and for a period of from two to three years suffered the severest privations. At length, however, their ene-

mies relented, and once more resumed business relations with Muḥammad's party.

Muḥammad now redoubled his efforts to win the Quraish to an acceptance of his message. He particularly aimed, it would seem, at the conversion of their leaders, and a story has come down to us of his persistency in preaching which throws a flood of light upon his character. The story as told by Baidáwí (p. 784) is as follows. One day Muḥammad was seated before a group of the leaders of the Quraish earnestly pressing upon them the claims of the new Faith, when a poor blind man named 'Abdu'lláh bin Umm-Maktúm drew near, exclaiming as he did so,

يا رسول الله علمني مما علمك الله *

'O apostle of God, do thou teach me something of that which God has taught thee.' But the prophet, intent upon gaining the ears of the Quraish leaders, and vexed at the interruption, frowned and turned away. Later on, being reprehended by God for his impatience, so the story goes, the prophet repented of his action and, seeking out the blind supplicant, loaded him with honours, and even, later on, made him governor of Madína! The historian further relates that such was the prophet's sorrow for his sin that whenever he met 'Abdu'lláh he was wont to say,

مرحبا بمن عاتبني فيه ربي *

'Welcome to the man for whose sake my Lord hath reprimanded me.' This event was of sufficient importance to claim notice in the Qur'án, where it is alluded to in these words, 'He frowned and turned his back, because the blind man came to him! But what assured thee that he would not be cleansed (by the faith) or be warned and the warning profit him? As to him who is wealthy, to him thou wast all attention. Yet it is not thy concern if he is not cleansed. But as to him who cometh to thee in earnest and full of fears, him dost thou neglect' [Súratu'l-'Abasa (lxxx) 1-8].

Somewhere about this time Muḥammad's wife Khadíja died. This occasioned the prophet great grief, and, until the day of his death, he ceased not to speak of her devotion and faithfulness. Misfortunes now followed one another in quick succession, for following shortly upon the death of his wife came the decease of his faithful protector and guardian Abú Ṭalib. This was a severe blow to the prophet, who was not slow to perceive that without the powerful protection of his uncle a further stay in Mecca would be attended with the utmost difficulty and danger. Weighed down by these losses, and hopeless of further success in Mecca itself, Muḥammad now resolved to preach his doctrines in the town of Ṭá'if situated some seventy miles to the east of Mecca. But the people of Ṭá'if were as strongly devoted to their idols as

those of Mecca; consequently after some ten days of futile endeavour to gain a hearing in Ṭá'if the prophet, insulted and wounded, was compelled to once again turn his weary steps towards his native city. We pass over the fabulous story of his preaching to and converting some genii on the way, merely remarking in passing that Sir Syed Aḥmad Khán merely describes them as a band of uncivilized Arabs.

Muḥammad soon consoled himself for the loss of his first wife by marrying, a little later, Sauda the widow of one of the Abyssinian refugees. This marriage was soon followed by another, the bride this time being the seven-year-old daughter of Abú Bakr named 'Áyesha. Meanwhile opposition to the prophet increased, and Muḥammad found himself obliged to restrict his preaching very largely to the strangers from other parts of Arabia who made the annual pilgrimage to Mecca or attended the numerous fairs which were held from time to time in various parts of the country. Several of these strangers from Madína eventually accepted the prophet's teaching, and these, upon their return to Madína, so successfully propagated the new faith there that, two years later, a band of over seventy persons made their way to Mecca and there pledged themselves to support the prophet's cause. This success soon suggested to Muḥammad the wisdom of a change of sphere, and a little later we find him

advising his Meccan followers to migrate *en masse* to Madína. This was eventually done, and a little later Muḥammad himself, accompanied by his faithful companion Abú Bakr, left behind him the insults and persecution of the Quraish and repaired to the northern city where an enthusiastic welcome awaited him from his devoted followers.

The Meccans were dumbfounded at the sudden departure of Muḥammad and his people, and made a determined though ineffectual attempt to intercept the former before he could reach his new asylum. Thus in the year A.D. 622, after thirteen years of almost fruitless effort in his native city, Muḥammad turned his back upon the companions of his youth and made the *Hijra* or flight to Madína. It is from this event that the current Muḥammadan era is counted.

PART II

Muhammad at Madina

CHAPTER I

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LEGISLATION

MECCA stands in the midst of a desert. On all sides bare, stony hills, entirely devoid of vegetation, present one of the dreariest and most inhospitable aspects it is possible to conceive. Madína, on the contrary, stands in a fertile plain. On all sides are charming gardens and fruitful date-groves. Even at the present day the cultivation of the date-palm constitutes one of the principal occupations of the inhabitants.

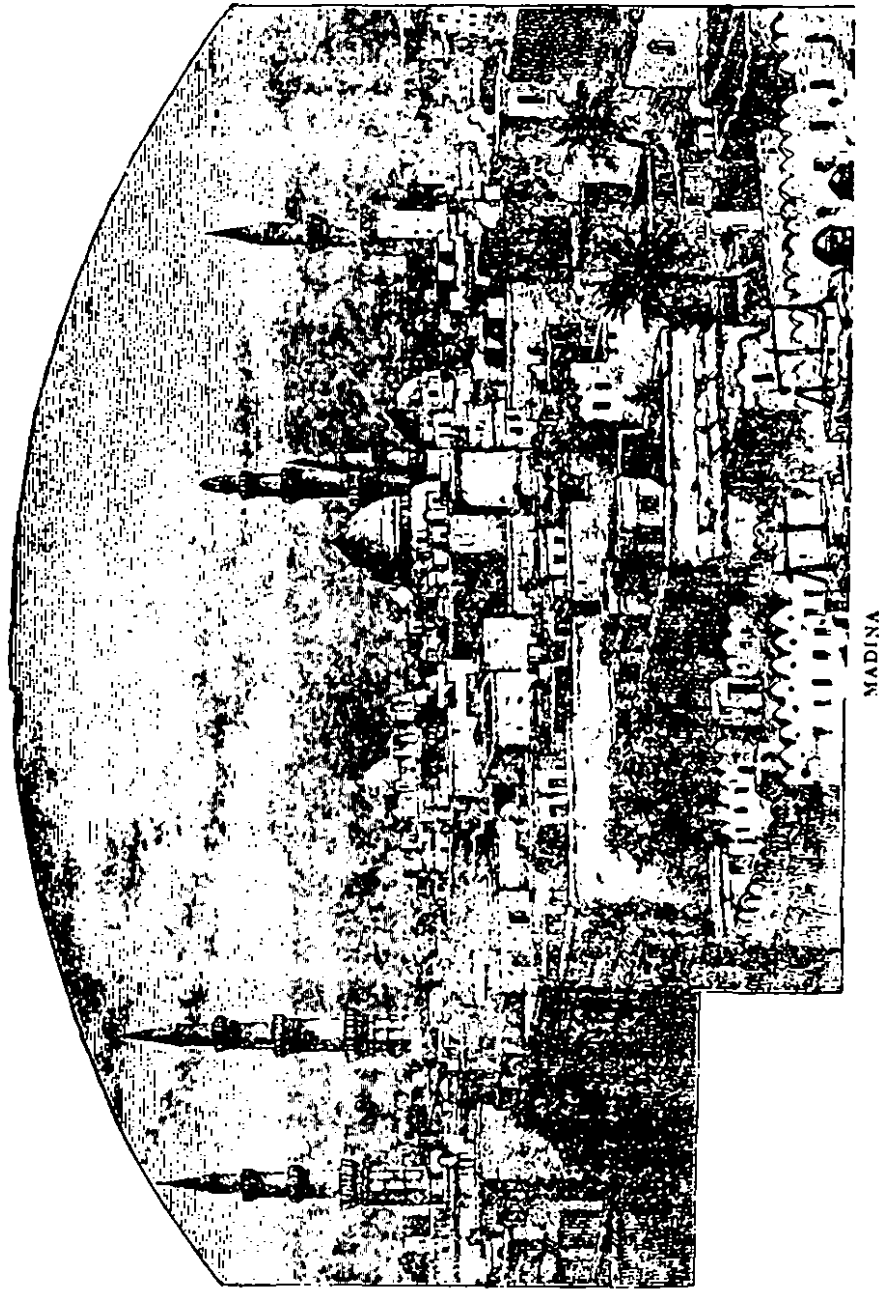
Before the time of Muḥammad the people of Madína were roughly divided into two classes, pagan Arabs and monotheistic Jews, though there were also a few Christian tribes settled in the surrounding country. Soon after the planting of Islám in the northern city, however, we find the people divided into four distinct groups. First of all there were the non-Muslim Arabs of Madina who, anxious to curry favour with the powerful leader who had settled in their midst, and yet unwilling to embrace

Islám, are designated by the Muslim historians with the epithet 'the Hypocrites'.

Second, there were those Muslims who had fled from Mecca with the prophet, and had taken up their abode, in a more or less destitute condition, at Madína. These were termed 'Refugees', and were ever afterwards given a high place of honour in the annals of Islám. Muḥammad himself was much attached to these, and always spoke with feelings of the deepest gratitude of the men and women who had left all for the Faith, and had shared with him the privations and dangers of the great flight from Mecca.

The third party in Madína consisted of the 'Helpers'. These were the people of Madína who had first embraced Islám, and had offered hospitality and assistance to Muḥammad and his Meccan disciples. These 'Helpers', as the first converts of Madína, were ever afterwards treated with the highest respect, and all who could boast the proud title of *Anṣār* were looked up to with admiration and regard.

The fourth group stood apart by itself. It consisted of several numerous and wealthy tribes of Jews who lived in and around Madína. These, for a time, enjoyed the patronage of Muḥammad who draw up a kind of treaty with them for mutual defence. This compact, however, did not last long, and, as we shall see in the third chapter, the time



soon came when the utter expulsion of 'the People of the Book', as the Jews were called, was considered by the prophet a political necessity.

One of the first acts of Muḥammad after his arrival in Madina was to call his disciples together and urge upon them the construction of a mosque for public worship. He himself, it is said, laboured with the rest in this work, and soon a substantial building of brick with a roof supported by the trunks of palm trees stood as a monument to the religious zeal of the Muslims. Adjoining the temple thus built, a row of humble dwellings gradually arose for the accommodation of the prophet and his wives.

It has already been remarked that Muḥammad at first strove to win the allegiance of the Jews; and, for this purpose, he addressed them as the 'People of the Book', and treated them with studied respect. In fact, it is clear from the records that have come down to us that he adopted not a few of their religious practices and incorporated them into his system. One of the principal means adopted by the prophet for winning the favour of the Jews was the adoption of Jerusalem as his *Qibla*, or place towards which prayer was to be made. This, it need scarcely be remarked, was a practice already observed by the Jews. The Muslims, we are told, had been in the habit of praying with their faces turned towards the sacred temple at

Mecca, but now, at Muḥammad's command, and for some considerable time after, the Muslim prayers were made facing north instead of south. At length, however, finding the Jews obdurate, and seeing no prospect of winning them to his side, Muḥammad determined once more to woo the favour of the Arabs by making the national sanctuary at Mecca again his *Qibla*. Thus one day the prophet, to the astonishment of the assembled worshippers, suddenly turned from north to south and once more said his prayers in the direction of the Ká'ba at Mecca. Such a drastic change demanded divine sanction, and so a 'revelation' was produced to satisfy the qualms of his bewildered disciples. It runs thus:

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا
فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ *

'We have seen thee (O Muḥammad) turning thy face towards every part of heaven; but we will have thee turn to a *Qibla* which shall please thee. Turn, then, thy face towards the sacred mosque (of Mecca), and wherever ye be, turn your faces toward that part' [Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 145-7]. Candid Muslim scholars have freely acknowledged this change of policy on the part of Muḥammad. Thus

Jalālu'd-Dīn, in his comments on the above passage, clearly states that Muḥammad,

كان صلي اليها فلما هاجر امر باستقبال بيت المقدس

تالفا لليهود فصلي اليه سنة او سبعة عشر شهرا ثم حول *

'used to pray towards it (i.e., the Ka'ba), but after the flight (to Madīna) he ordered (his followers) to turn towards the temple at Jerusalem in order that he might conciliate the Jews. So he prayed towards it for a year or seventeen months; after which he changed it again.' Abdu'l-Qadir, in his *Tafsīru'l-Madā'ihil Qur'ān* (p. 22) says,

”چاہتے تھے کہ کعبہ کے طرف نماز پڑھنے کا حکم آوے سو آسمان کے طرف منہ کر کے راہ دیکھتے تھے کہ شاید فرشتہ حکم لاوے کہ کعبے کے طرف نماز پڑھو“

'He (Muḥammad) wished that he might receive a command to pray towards the Ka'ba, and for this reason he kept his gaze fixed towards the heavens if, perchance, an angel might appear with a command to pray towards the Ka'ba.' It is not strange that, under such circumstances, the prophet soon found a means of gratifying his wish, and that a 'revelation' forthwith appeared to sanction the change.

A very large amount of space is devoted, in the traditions, to the prayers of Muḥammad; and the most minute particulars as to the time and manner in which prayer should be offered have been handed

down to us. From this mass of tradition we learn that the followers of Muḥammad, themselves most punctilious in the performance of all the necessary ablutions and minute forms of ritual laid down by him, were at times scandalized by his own violation of the very rules he had himself laid down. Muḥammad had, for example, told them that

ان الله لا يقبل صلات بغير طهور *

'Verily, God accepts not prayer without ablution.' Yet in the *Mishkātul-Maṣābīh* in the *Kitābu'l-Atāma* there is a tradition from 'Amr bin Umáyá to the effect that,

أَنَّهُ رَأَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَحْتَنُّ مِنْ كَقْفٍ شَاةٍ فِي يَدِهِ فَدَعَا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَالْقَاهَا وَالسَّكِينِ اللَّيِّ يَحْتَرِبُهَا ثُمَّ قَامَ فَصَلَّى وَلَمْ يَتَوَضَّأْ *

'Verily he saw the prophet cutting a shoulder of mutton which was in his hand. Then he was called to prayer; so he cast it down together with the knife with which he was cutting it, and then stood up to prayer, and he did not perform his ablutions.'

Tirmidhī relates that when the prophet entered the mosque he used to say,

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي وَافْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ *

'O my Lord, forgive me my sins; and open for me the gates of thy mercy.' Then, on leaving, he used to say,

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي وَأَنْتُمْ لِي أَبْوَابَ فَضْلِكَ *

'O my Lord, forgive me my sins; and open for me the gates of thy favour.' Bukhārī further relates with reference to the prophet's prayers that he used to remain silent at the time of uttering the *takbīr* and during the recital of the Qur'án. At length the prophet's friend and disciple Abú Huráirā addressing him asked, 'O prophet of God, what sayest thou in thy heart when thou remainest silent at the time of the *takbīr* and at the recital of the Qur'án?' The prophet replied:

أَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّنِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يَنْقِي الذُّوْبَ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْ خَطَايَايَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالنَّوْءِ وَالْبَرَدِ *

'I say, "O my God, remove from me my sins as thou hast removed the east from the west. O my God, cleanse me from my sins as a white cloth is cleansed from impurity. O my God, wash my sins with water and snow and hail."' (*Mishkātu'l-Maṣābīh, Kitābu's-Salāt*.) It is evident from a perusal of the many traditions relating to the prophet's

daily life, that he found the burden of ritual which he had imposed upon his followers greater than he himself could bear; and again and again his violation of those ritual observances is mentioned by the historians. Thus there is a tradition handed down by Ibn Mas'ūd, one of the companions of the prophet, that one day Muḥammad

صَلَّى الظُّهْرَ خَمْسًا فَقِيلَ لَهُ أَزِيدَ فِي الصَّلَاةِ فَقَالَ وَمَا ذَاكَ قَالُوا صَلَّيْتَ خَمْسًا فَسَجَدَ سَجْدَتَيْنِ بَعْدَ مَا سَلَّمَ وَرَوَايَةٌ قَالَتْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلَكُمْ أَنْسِيَ كَمَا تَنْسَوْنَ فَإِذَا أَنْسَيْتُ فَذَكِّرُونِي *

'performed the mid-day prayer in five raq'áts (or series of prostrations). Therefore it was said to him, "Have the prostrations been increased (from four to five)?" He said, "What do you mean?" They replied, "You made five series of prostrations." Then after the salām he made two prostrations and said, "Verily I am only a man like you. I forget as you do. Therefore when I forget, do ye remind me"' (*Mishkātu'l-Maṣābīh, Kitābu's-Salāt*).

Not only did Muḥammad lay down minute liturgical rules for guiding the devotions of his followers; but in the new mosque at Madína he also constituted himself the great law-giver for all time, and founded

a system of laws which were designed to govern every realm of life whether social, political or religious. It must be conceded that many of the regulations thus laid down were a vast improvement upon the conditions which ruled throughout Arabia previous to the promulgation of Islám; but by giving these laws a religious sanction Muḥammad gave them a permanent and abiding character, so that, for all time, Muslims are tied down to the legislation which governed the seventh century of our era. There can, under such circumstances, be no progress towards higher ideals. Slavery and polygamy, because sanctioned by the prophet in the seventh century, is the law for Muslims for all time.

Before the advent of Muḥammad an unrestricted system of polygamy prevailed amongst the Arabs, carrying with it abuses better imagined than described. Muḥammad, not being strong enough to destroy the system root and branch, attempted to modify its evils by restricting his followers to four wives. This reform, however, though good in itself, was quite nullified by Muḥammad's permission of an unlimited concubinage. He placed no restriction upon the carnal knowledge of female slaves or of women taken in war, even though the latter were married, and has thus perpetuated an evil which would not be tolerated in any civilized society to-day. Amongst the passages of the Qur'án sanctioning these shameful practices may be mentioned the following:

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِسُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ
مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مِثْلِي وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبْعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً
أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ *

'If ye are apprehensive that ye shall not deal fairly with orphans, then of the women who seem good in your eyes marry two or three or four. And if ye fear that ye shall not act equitably, then one only or the slaves whom ye have acquired' [Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 3].

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ ... الْمَحْضَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ
أَيْمَانُكُمْ *

'Forbidden to you . . . are married women, except those who are in your hands as slaves' [Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 24].

The history of the great wars of conquest which followed the decease of Muḥammad throws a lurid light upon the legislation quoted above; and even at the present day every Turkish massacre of helpless Armenians is accompanied by the rape and abduction to Muslim homes of hundreds of young girls and newly made widows.

Another great evil of Muḥammad's day, which he tried in vain to reform, was the practice of slavery. To his credit, be it said, he taught his followers to

be kind to their slaves, and even went so far as to teach that the emancipation of a slave was an act pleasing to God. But the simple fact remains that he allowed the buying and selling of human beings as slaves; and Muslims, all down the centuries which have passed since his day, have carried on this inhuman traffic under the full sanction of their prophet.

The Muslim refugees in Madīna at first experienced very great privations. Many of them were penniless. Muḥammad himself, more than once, endured the pangs of hunger. Tirmidhī tells us that many were reduced to a diet of dates and barley. A foolish and mistaken pronouncement on the part of Muḥammad, made at this time, added not a little to the privations of the Muslims, who were largely dependent upon the bounty of the believers of Madīna for their daily food. We have already remarked that many of the inhabitants of Madīna and its suburbs were engaged in the cultivation of the date-palm: an occupation at which they had acquired considerable skill. Artificial fertilization was generally practised, and many had become prosperous in consequence. But in the *Mishkātu'l-Maṣābīh* it is recorded that when Muḥammad arrived in Madīna he forbade this practice. The result was that when the time of the date harvest came round the disappointed Muslims found their own trees bare, whilst those of their non-Muslim neighbours were loaded with beautiful

clusters of fruit. At this the disconcerted Muslims repaired to Muḥammad and informed him of their state. The prophet is recorded as making the following reply:

انما انا بشر اذا امرتكم بشي من امر دينكم فخذوا
به واذا امرتكم بشي من رائي فانما انا بشر *

'I am only a man. When, therefore, I command you anything concerning your religion, then accept it; but when I command you anything as a matter of my own opinion, then—verily I am only a man' (*Mishkātu'l-Maṣābīh*, *Kitābu'l-Imān*). Needless to say, the prophet's reply did little to fill the hungry mouths of his disconcerted disciples or to avert the ruin which was staring them in the face.

In the next chapter we will endeavour to show the reader how Muḥammad solved the problem, and changed the poverty of his followers into wealth.



CHAPTER II

THE PROCLAMATION OF JEHÂD

THE inhabitants of Madîna, it has already been remarked, were largely engaged in the cultivation of the date-palm. The people of Mecca, on the other hand, were essentially merchants, and their caravans were continually visiting Syria and other countries for the purpose of trade. Muḥammad himself, in his younger days, had visited the latter country more than once, and every year at certain seasons the richly-laden caravans of the Quraish might be seen verding their way northwards to the great markets at Basra, Damascus and other cities. These bands of Meccan merchants generally passed along the great caravan route which led past and near Maḍîna, but there was another route sometimes adopted by travellers which passed along the eastern shores of the Red Sea. Muḥammad now conceived the idea of ameliorating the distress and poverty of himself and his companions by plundering the caravans of the Quraish, and with this object he furnished and sent forth several armed bands with instructions to intercept and plunder certain caravans of whose movements he had obtained information.

The primary motive for these expeditions was plunder for the purpose of relieving the pecuniary wants of the refugees in Madína. Later on the religious motive of proselytism made its influence felt, and wars were undertaken, not merely for plunder, but for the spread of Islám. The references to these expeditions of Muḥammad found in Muslim history are so full that it is easy to arrive at definite conclusions regarding them. Thus the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih* has a long chapter devoted entirely to the subject of *Jehád*, and deals at length with the division of the spoils and other matters relating to such religious warfare. Statements of Muḥammad are there recorded which make it clear that he not only initiated plundering expeditions against the Quraish and other tribes, but gave those thieving expeditions, which were not infrequently accompanied by murder, divine sanction by pretending that they had been authorized by God Himself! Thus there is a tradition preserved by Bukḥarí to the effect that,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ
فَلَمْ تَحِلَّ الْغَنَائِمُ لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا ذَلِكَ بَانَ اللَّهُ رَأْيِي صَعَفْنَا
وَعَجَزْنَا فَطَيَّبَهَا لَنَا *

'Abú Huraira records that the apostle of God said,
"Plunder was not made lawful for any before us.

The reason that (it is now made lawful) is that God has looked upon our weakness and helplessness. Therefore He has made it proper for us'' (*Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih*, *Kitábu'l-Jehád*). These words of the prophet are clear, and leave no doubt that Muḥammad intended to plunder and to claim divine sanction for so doing.

At first the Muslims were unsuccessful, and more than one band returned without any spoil. Such an expedition is recorded by one 'Abdu'lláh bin Ḥawálah, who said,

بَعَثَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِنَغْنَمَ عَلَى أَقْدَامِنَا
فَرَجَعْنَا فَلَمْ نَغْنَمْ شَيْئًا *

'The apostle of God sent us to plunder on foot; but we returned without having looted anything' (*Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih*, *Kitábu'l-Fitán*). At first Muḥammad did not personally accompany these expeditions, but at length, being wearied of the ill-success of his followers, and realizing that something was needed to stir their enthusiasm, he placed himself at the head of a large band and sallied forth in search of prey. The historian Waqidi mentions no less than nineteen such expeditions which were led by the prophet in person.

The first occasion on which the Muslims were successful was connected with a small expedition at

which Muḥammad was not present. From ancient times it had been a custom of the Arabs to observe the month of the annual pilgrimage as sacred. In it all war was considered unlawful, and the lives and property of all were safe from one end of Arabia to the other. This same custom had given Muḥammad, when a persecuted and discredited man in Mecca, full liberty and opportunity to preach his doctrines to the crowds of pilgrims who were in the habit of visiting Mecca at the time of the great annual festivals. It is recorded however that on a certain occasion Muḥammad despatched a small band of armed Muslims to a place called Nakla in order to intercept and loot a small caravan of the Quraish of whose movements he had information. This band of Muslims drew near the Quraish encampment during the sacred month, and by shaving their heads and feigning themselves pilgrims disarmed the suspicions of the latter. Then suddenly, without warning, the treacherous Muslims threw aside their disguise and fell upon the unsuspecting travellers. These they either killed or drove away, after which they pillaged the caravan and returned laden with the spoil to Madīna. This is said by the Muslim historians to have been the first spoil taken by the followers of Muḥammad, and, needless to say, it roused them to redoubled efforts to intercept and despoil the rich caravans which continually travelled to Syria and other lands.

Some time after the events narrated above Muḥammad received information that a large caravan belonging to the Quraish under the leadership of a man named Abú Sufyán was returning from Syria richly laden with merchandise. The opportunity was not to be lost, and Muḥammad placed himself without delay at the head of a large band of followers and proceeded to intercept the caravan. Bukhārī says very distinctly that the Muslims went out for the express purpose of plundering Abú Sufyán's caravan. The latter, however, was wide awake, and learning of the intended attack despatched a messenger on a swift camel to Mecca for help, and himself led his caravan by a different route than that intended, and escaped safely out of Muḥammad's hands. In the meantime a large party from Mecca proceeded in search of the caravan, and at a place named Bedr were confronted by the followers of Muḥammad. Here a sanguinary conflict took place, and, though largely outnumbered, the latter proved the victors and carried off many prisoners and much booty. Many of the prisoners taken by the Muslims, were, in spite of their entreaties for mercy, cruelly put to death, and their bodies thrown into a well. This shocking outrage is thus related in the *Mishkāt*, in the chapter on *Jehād* :

عَنْ قَتَادَةَ قَالَ ذَكَرَ لَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ عَنْ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ

أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمَرَ يَوْمَ بَدْرٍ بِأَرْبَعَةٍ وَعِشْرِينَ
رَجُلًا مِنْ صَنَادِيدِ قُرَيْشٍ فَقَذَفُوا فِي طَوْبِيٍّ مِنْ أَطْوَأِ بَدْرٍ *

'It is related from Qatáda that he said, "Anas the son of Málik related to us from Abú Talha that verily the prophet of God on the day of Bedr gave command (for the death of) twenty-four of the leaders of the Quraish, and they were thrown into one of the wells of Bedr." Amongst the men thus murdered was a man named 'Uqba bin Abú Mu'ait. Ibn Mas'úd, who was himself present at the battle of Badr, has related a tradition with regard to him which has been collected in the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih* in the chapter on *Jehád*. It runs as follows :

وَعَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمَّا
أَرَادَ قَتْلَ عَقْبَةَ بْنِ أَبِي مُعَيْطٍ قَالَ مَنْ لِلصَّبِيَّةِ قَالَ النَّارُ *

'It is related from Ibn Mas'úd that verily when the apostle of God wished to kill 'Uqba bin Abú Mu'ait he, ('Uqba) said, "Then who will take care of my children?" (Muḥammad) replied, "Hell-fire". And thus saying the prophet ordered the unfortunate 'Uqba to be despatched forthwith.

The records preserved to us—and they are very voluminous—of the battle of Badr and the events

that followed it go to show that violent dissensions at once broke out amongst the Muslims as to the division of the spoil. These became so serious that Muḥammad was constrained to call in the help of a 'revelation' in order to quell the tumult; and so the following passage was recited as coming from God Himself:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ *

'They will question thee about the spoils. Say, "The spoils are God's and the Apostle's."'

Those apologists for Islám who would have us believe that the early Muslims only fought in self-defence ignore the testimony of both the Qur'án and the traditions. The plain fact is, the word 'plunder' is writ large over the whole literature dealing with that period, and the *Hidáyah*, the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih* and other works are full of minute directions for the proper division of the plunder taken in such marauding expeditions. Thus even in the time of Muḥammad himself legislation was enacted for the regulation of those devastating wars, which, under the name of *Jehád*, were soon to drench the world in blood. Muḥammad, however, was careful to protect himself from the charge of robbery and murder by pretending that these plundering forays were authorized by God himself. Thus we find him stating that,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَضَّلَنِي عَلَى الْأَنْبِيَاءِ أَوْ قَالَ فَضَّلَ أُمَّتِي عَلَى الْأُمَمِ
وَحَلَّ لَنَا الْغَنَائِمَ *

'Verily God has given me precedence over the prophets.' Or he said (according to another tradition) 'He has given my followers precedence over other nations by the fact that He has made plunder lawful for us.'!! The prophet's own practice is thus described by Anas, whose tradition has been preserved by Muslim. He tells us that,

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَغِيرُ إِذَا طَلَعَ الْفَجْرُ
وَكَانَ يَسْتَمِعُ الْإِذَاانَ فَإِنْ سَمِعَ إِذَاانًا أَمْسَكَ وَالْآخَرَ *

'The prophet of God used to plunder in the early morning; and he used to listen for the call to prayer. If he heard the call to prayer he withheld (from plundering); otherwise he plundered.' The plunder of villages was sometimes accompanied by the total destruction by fire of what property the ruthless bands could not carry away with them. Thus a tradition from Abú Dáud relates that,

عَنْ عُرْوَةَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أُسَامَةُ بْنُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ عَهْدَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ اغْرُ عَلِي أَبْنَا صَبَاحًا وَحَرَّقَ *

'It is recorded from 'Urwa that he said, "Usáma informed me that the apostle of God ordered him to raid (the village of) Ubná in the morning, and

then burn it"' (*Mishkátu'l-Maṣḍbiḥ, Kitábu'l-Jehád*). The Urdu commentator of the *Mishkát* significantly remarks with regard to the tradition just quoted that,

اس سے معلوم ہوا کہ جائز ہی غارت کرنا اور جلانا کفار
کے شہروں کا *

'From this it is known that it is lawful to raid and burn the cities of infidels.'

The history of Islám after the battle of Badr till the death of the prophet is largely a history of such crimes. Many of the plundering bands were led by Muḥammad in person; others were despatched under the leadership of his trusted followers. Not all were successful, but the news of the ill-gotten wealth which now began to flow into the laps of the Muslims fired the cupidity of the Arabs, and, attracted by the lust of plunder, large numbers now began to flock to the prophet's standard. The Quraish at Mecca were now thoroughly alarmed, and the plunder by the Muslims of a rich caravan which attempted to reach Syria by a route lying to the east of Madína roused them to the danger which threatened them. They resolved therefore to take drastic steps to secure to themselves an open road to the great markets of the north, and for this purpose an attack in force on the Muslims at Madína was determined upon. An army of some 3,000 men was collected together, and at a place

called Uhud near Madína the Muslims were badly defeated and Muḥammad himself wounded.

The Muslim defeat at Uhud occasioned no little searching of heart amongst the Muslims who not unnaturally asked how it was that the prophet who had declared that he had won the battle of Badr by the help of thousands of angels, should now be beaten and wounded. To answer these questionings numerous 'revelations' were produced, and the friends of those who had fallen in the battle were comforted by the assurance that the 'Martyrs' who had thus died 'in the way of God' were now enjoying the voluptuous joys of a material paradise. From a wealth of such passages we select one by way of illustration.

لِلشَّهِيدِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ سِتُّ خِصَالٍ يَغْفِرُ لَهُ فِي أَوَّلِ دَفْعَةٍ وَيُرَى
مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَيَجَارُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ وَيَأْمَنُ مِنَ الْفَزَعِ
الْأَكْبَرِ وَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ تَاجُ الْوَقَادِ الْيَاقُوتَةِ مِنْهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ
الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا وَيَزُوجُ ثَلَاثِينَ وَسَبْعِينَ زَوْجَةً مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ
وَيُشَفَّعُ فِي سَبْعِينَ مِنْ أَقْرَبَائِهِ *

'A martyr has six privileges with God. His sins are forgiven with (the shedding of) the first drop of blood; he is shown his reclining-place in paradise;

he is delivered from the tortures of the grave; he is preserved safe from the great fear (of hell); a golden crown is placed upon his head, one of the pearls of which is better than the world and all therein; he is married to seventy-two of the *houris* (of paradise), and his intercession is accepted for seventy of his relations.'

The battles of Badr and Uhud brought about a striking change in the tone of the prophet's teaching. Before the battle of Badr, and when the number of his followers was comparatively small so that he had cause to fear the enmity of his neighbours, he consistently adopted a tone of humility and conciliation. There was to be 'no compulsion in religion' and his followers were enjoined to 'speak kindly' with those who differed from them in religious matters. Later, however, when he found himself surrounded by an ever-growing band of warlike Arabs, the call to fight for the Faith grew louder and more insistent. Hereafter *Jehád*, as this religious warfare was called, occupied one of the chief places in the prophet's teaching. There is a tradition, preserved by both Muslim and Bukhárí to the effect that Abú Dharri

قال سألت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أي العمل افضل

قال ايمان بالله وجهاد في سبيله *

'Said, "I asked the prophet what is the best action? He said, Belief in God and *Jehád* in the

way of God.''' Those chapters of the Qur'án which were revealed at this time and later are full of the same subject, and the faithful are again and again exhorted to fight until Islām be established as the one and only faith. Thus we read :

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحَرَامُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ
وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ
فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ *

'And when the sacred months are past, kill those who join other gods with God wherever ye shall find them, and seize them and besiege them and lay wait for them with every kind of ambush; but if they shall convert and observe prayer and pay the obligatory alms; then let them go their way for God is gracious, merciful' [Súratu't-Tauba (ix) 5].

Even for Jews and Christians there was no escape; and exemption from the death of the sword could only be purchased by embracing Islām or paying a yearly tax. This intolerant law is stated thus in Súratu't-Tauba (ix) 30 :

قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ

مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ *

'Make war upon such of those to whom the Scriptures have been given as believe not in God, or in the last day, and who forbid not that which God and His apostle have forbidden, and who profess not the profession of the truth, until they pay tribute out of hand, and they be humbled.'

Jehád, the prophet declared, was an eternal obligation, for, said he :

الجهاد ماض الى يوم القيامة *

'*Jehád* will continue until the day of resurrection;' and he encouraged his followers to fight with the certain hope of heaven as its reward. Thus he is reported as saying :

من جاهد في سبيل الله وجبت له الجنة *

'Whoever makes *Jehád* in the way of God, paradise is his necessary reward.' The motive for fighting quickly changed. At first it was purely the desire for spoil which animated the Muslims, and which was held out as the great inducement to them to fight; but later the spread of Islām became the dominating motive. They were to fight 'until the religion was all of God.'

Apostasy from the faith was to be rewarded with death, and at times Muḥammad allowed his baser

passions to lead him to the most inhuman mutilation of the victims of his anger. Thus it is recorded in the *Mishkātū'l-Maṣābiḥ*, in the chapter upon Retaliation, that on a certain occasion some Muslims renounced the faith, and when fleeing from Madīna took with them some camels belonging to the prophet. They even went so far as to kill one of the herdsmen who were minding the camels. They were eventually caught and brought before Muḥammad for sentence. The crime was a serious one, and merited a severe punishment, but that meted out to the unfortunate culprits must have shocked even the most hardened of Muḥammad's followers, for it is recorded that he

فَقَطَعَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَرْجُلَهُمْ وَسَمَلَ أَعْيُنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ
حَتَّى مَاتُوا *

'Cut off their hands and feet, and put out their eyes. Afterwards he did not staunch the blood until they died.' Another tradition describing this terrible atrocity records that hot irons were driven into their eyes, after which they were cast out upon the stony plain in the burning sun. And when they begged for water it was not given them until finally they died.

In the face of what has been quoted in this chapter from purely Muslim sources, and these sources of the very highest authority, it is futile for

modern apologists for Islām to say, as they still do, that Islām is a religion of toleration, and that Muḥammad never sanctioned the use of force in the propagation of his religion. The facts are against them; and though a partial quotation of Meccan and early Madīna 'revelations' may appear to support their contention, a careful study of the later portions of the Qur'ān, and of the utterances of Muḥammad as preserved in the traditions, leaves no possible room for doubt that he both taught and practised the spread of his religion by physical force.

failed to see that the Jews were but mocking his Meccan birth, and, instead, took their words as serious advice, for, Baiḍāwī proceeds

فوقع ذلك في قلبه فخرج مرحلة *

'That (advice) appeared pleasing to him; so he set out and went a day's journey.' After which the inevitable 'revelation' caused him to return.

With the object of gaining the good-will of the Jews Muḥammad made constant laudatory references to their ancient Scriptures. They were 'the word of God', and 'a light and guidance for men' which the Qur'án was but sent down to confirm. But the Jews would have none of Muḥammad or his Qur'án; rather they ridiculed and lampooned the prophet upon every possible occasion. Thus when Muḥammad approached them with questions concerning their ancient Scriptures they hid the matter from him and told him instead some legendary tales from their traditions. Muslim has preserved for us a striking utterance of Ibn 'Abbás with reference to this practice of the Jews. He says:

قال ابن عباس فلما سأل النبي صلعم عن شيء من أهل الكتاب فكتموه آية وأخبروه بغيره فخرجوا قد أروا أن قد خبروه بما سألهم عنه *

'Ibn 'Abbás said that, when the prophet asked any question of the People of the Book, they suppressed

CHAPTER III

MUHAMMAD'S RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

It has already been remarked that at the time of the flight from Mecca numerous and powerful tribes of Jews were settled in and around Madína. At first Muḥammad made repeated attempts to win them to his side. He not unnaturally hoped that as he came preaching the unity of God the monotheistic Jews would receive him with open arms, and welcome him as an ally in the fight against idolatry. But to all his advances the Jews had one reply. No prophet, they said, could arise out of Israel. Syria and Palestine were the home of the prophets, and Mecca could never produce a true successor to Abraham and Moses and David. Indeed in the *Tafsíru'l-Baiḍáwí*, (p. 381) it is recorded that the Jews ridiculed the prophet in these words:

الشام مقام الانبيا فان كنت نبيا فالحق بها حتي
نومن بك *

'Syria is the home of the prophets. Therefore if thou art indeed a prophet, repair thither that we may believe on thee.' For once Muḥammad's natural astuteness seems to have deserted him. He

the matter, and in place of it told him something else, and went away letting him think that they had told him what he asked.'

Moreover it is difficult not to believe that Muḥammad's egregious mistakes regarding Bible history afforded a constant butt for the ridicule of the Jews. We have no space to refer at length here to these anomalies, but if the reader of this book will take the Bible and the Qur'án and compare the histories of any of the Patriarchs as recorded in those books, he will quickly see how very far the Qur'án is from 'confirming' the words of the former. One who was so ignorant of Bible history as to confuse Mary the mother of Jesus with Miriam the sister of Moses and Aaron, could scarcely expect much respect from an intelligent and educated community such as the Jews of Madína were—and he received none. The latter at length began to lampoon the prophet in verse, and this so stirred his anger that he renounced for ever all hopes of winning them to his side, and, instead, embarked upon a campaign of murder and oppression which only ended with the complete expulsion of the Jews from the city and its neighbourhood.

In the *Síratu'r-Rasúl* there is preserved to us the story of a Jewess named 'Aṣm ábint Marwan which illustrates the new policy that was adopted by the prophet. This woman had incurred the displeasure of Muḥammad by composing some verses in which

he was held up to ridicule. When this reached the ears of the latter he was filled with rage and exclaimed, 'Shall I not exact satisfaction for myself from the daughter of Merwan?' A Muslim named 'Umair bin 'Udai heard the words of Muḥammad, and, rightly interpreting them as a desire for the death of 'Aṣmá entered her house at night and brutally murdered her. On the following day he acquainted the prophet with the accomplishment of his purpose. The latter on hearing of the death of 'Aṣmá exclaimed, 'Thou hast helped God and his apostle, O 'Umair.'

Another murder carried out about this time at the direct instigation of Muḥammad was that of a man named Káb-binu'l-Ashraf. This is fully detailed in the *Síratu'r-Rasúl* (vol. ii, p. 73-4). Briefly the story is as follows: becoming annoyed with Káb, the prophet one day exclaimed, 'Who is for me in the matter of Ibnu'l-Ashraf?' A disciple of the prophet immediately exclaimed, 'I am for thee in his affair, O apostle of God; I shall kill him.' Then, after consulting with Muḥammad, and taking with him several companions, the murderer stole forth to the house of Káb, and having enticed him outside on the pretence of pawning some arms, foully murdered him in cold blood.

Another Jew killed by the direct orders of Muḥammad was an old man named Abú Ráfi. His story as related by Bukhárí is as follows:

بعث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم رهطاً إلى أبي رافع
فدخل عليه عبد الله بن عتيك بيته ليلاً وهو نائم فقتله *

'The prophet of God sent a party to Abú Ráfi. Then, when he was asleep, 'Abdulláh bin 'Atík entered his house at night and killed him.' These murders and others mentioned by the historians, for which we have no space here, led the Jews to see that their very existence was at stake, and as one by one, the neighbouring Jewish tribes were attacked and their goods plundered they were driven to despair. Not a few in order to save their lives apostatized and embraced the faith of the conquerors. Thus Ibn Hishám tells us in his *Sirat* p. 186, that numbers

ظهروا بالإسلام واتخذوه حنة من القتل *

'pretended to have embraced Islám; but they (really only) embraced it as a protection from being killed.'

The terror of the Jews was intensified by a fearful calamity which overtook a Jewish tribe called the Bani Quraiza. This is related at length in the *Síratu'r-Rasúl* (vol. iii, pp. 9-24); the *Kitábu'l-Magházi*, (p. 125), the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣábiḥ* in the *Kitábu'l-Jehád* and other books, and briefly is as follows: the Bani Quraiza had in one of the wars of Muḥammad acted in a hostile and treacherous manner which called for reprisals on the part of the Muslims. When, therefore, Muḥammad obtained the necessary

leisure he put himself at the head of a large band of armed men and attacked the Bani Quraiza. These latter shut themselves up in their fortresses, and only capitulated when compelled by the pangs of hunger and the sufferings of their wives and little ones. Their prayers for mercy were unheeded, and the decision as to their punishment was given into the hands of their bitter enemy Sád bin Mu'ádh. This latter was, at the very time, suffering from wounds received in battle, and immediately advised that all the males over puberty should be slain, and the women and children given into slavery. Muḥammad, upon hearing the verdict exclaimed:

حكمت بحكم الله *

'Thou hast ordered according to the command of God' (*Tafsíru'l-Baiḍáwí*, p. 556 and *Síratu'r-Rasúl*, vol. iii, p. 92). Trenches were forthwith dug in the bazaar at Madína, and between six hundred and nine hundred Jewish males were beheaded in cold blood. The number of the murdered is stated differently by different authors, due probably to the fact that the corpses were not counted, but only approximate estimates made of their number. The lowest number given is six hundred, whilst Ibn Hishám says that

المكثرون لهم يقول كانوا بين الثمانمائة والتسعمائة *

'he who amongst them estimates the number highest says they were between eight hundred and nine

hundred.' Then, proceeds the same biographer of the prophet,

ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قسم اموال بني قريظة
ونساهم وابناهم علي المسلمين *

'The apostle of God divided the property of the Bani Quraiza and their wives and their children amongst the Muslims.'

The inhuman massacre narrated above, which has cast an indelible stain upon the character of Muḥammad, is referred to thus in the Qur'ān: 'And He caused those of the people of the Book who had aided (the confederates) to come down from their fortresses, and He cast dismay into their hearts. Some ye slew. Others ye took prisoners. And he gave you their land and their dwellings and their wealth for an heritage—even a land on which ye had never set foot' (Súratu'l-Aḥzáb xxxiii. 26). Amongst the share of the plunder claimed by Muḥammad was a beautiful woman named Raiḥána, whose husband had just been murdered by the orders of her captor.

Another Jewish tribe to feel, later on, the heavy hand of Muḥammad was that inhabiting the fertile oasis of Khaibar, situated about a hundred miles to the north of Madína. These Jews had done nothing to incur the resentment of the Muslims, but their wealth and prosperity were well known to the freebooters who now ruled over Madína, and a strong

force under the leadership of the prophet himself was soon on its way to attack the unsuspecting Jews. The latter were overcome, and were compelled to hand over enormous booty to the conquerors. The latter allowed the Jews to remain in possession of their lands on the condition that one-half of the produce should be regularly remitted to Madína! The importance of this raid may be judged from the fact that Ibn Hishám devotes no less than eighteen pages to his account of the expedition and the events connected with it. One of the latter is of special interest, and may be mentioned here. It is related that the widow of one of the Jewish slain, named Zainab bint Ḥarith, resolving to avenge herself upon Muḥammad, cooked some mutton and having poisoned it placed it before him. Muḥammad, as well as some of his companions, ate of the poisoned meat, and one of the latter died in consequence. Muḥammad himself escaped death, though he suffered severe pains; and he was wont to declare that until the day of his death he felt the effects of the poison he had taken. When the woman Zainab was brought before Muḥammad, the latter asked the reason for the attempt upon his life, and was met by the following reply:

فقلت ان كان ملكا استرحت منه وان كان نبيا

فسأخبر *

'I said (to myself) "If he is (only) a king, we shall be rid of him; but if he is a prophet, then he will be informed (regarding the poison)."'

Another event indicating the hostility of Muḥammad and his party to the Jews is that relating to a Muslim named Tíma bin Ibriq, who, so the story goes, stole a coat of mail from a neighbour and hid it in a bag of flour. Tímau being suspected, he in conjunction with some others, endeavoured to cast the blame upon an innocent Jew named Zaid-bin-u's-Samín. Muḥammad himself, we are told, not wishing to punish his disciple, determined to make a scapegoat of the Jew by inflicting upon him the legal punishment for theft, namely, amputation of the hand. He was, however, miraculously restrained from carrying out his unjust intention and was ordered, instead, to ask pardon from God for his momentary weakness (*Tafsíru'l-Baiḍáwí* on *Súratu'n-Nísá* iv. 106).

Muḥammad's latest utterances regarding the Jews and Christians were characterised by the deepest enmity and hostility. When he was a helpless and persecuted man at Mecca he could say, 'Dispute not, unless in kindly sort, with the People of the Book, save with such of them as have dealt wrongfully with you, and say ye, "We believe in what hath been sent down to us, and what hath been sent down to you. Our God and your God is one, and to him are we self-surrendered."' At Madína,

on the other hand, when he found himself a powerful chieftain surrounded by warlike Arabs, he addressed his followers thus, 'Make war upon such of those to whom the Scriptures have been given as believe not in God, or in the last day, and who forbid not that which God and His Apostle have forbidden, and who profess not the profession of the truth, until they pay tribute out of hand, and they be humbled' (*Súratu't-Tauba* ix. 30).

وَلَمْ يَصِيبْ وَاحِدًا أَصَابَ النِّسَاءَ وَالطَّيِّبَ وَلَمْ يَصِيبِ
الطَّعَامَ *

CHAPTER IV

MUHAMMAD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN

A STUDY of the life of Muḥammad makes it clear that he had a special weakness for women; and a very large part of the traditions, and no small part of the Qur'án, is occupied with the record of what the prophet of Islám said and did in connexion with the other sex. From a perusal of these records certain outstanding facts emerge. These are so obvious that we propose in this chapter to content ourselves very largely with quoting the Muslim authorities dealing with the subject and letting the reader make his own deductions.

The traditions relating to Muḥammad's love of women are considerable in number; but we content ourselves in these pages with quoting two or three by way of illustration. One of the best known is that related by 'Áyesha, the wife of the prophet, and quoted in the '*Mishkátu'l-Maṣábiḥ* in the *Kitábu'l-Adáb*. It runs as follows,

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
يُعْجِبُهُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا ثَلَاثَةُ الطَّعَامِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالطَّيِّبِ فَاصَابَ اثْنَيْنِ

'It is related from 'Áyesha that she said, "Three things of the world pleased the prophet: food and women and perfumes. He obtained two of them, but did not obtain the third. He obtained women and perfumes, but he did not obtain food." In the same chapter there is recorded a tradition from Anas that,

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حُبِّبَ إِلَيَّ الطَّيِّبُ
وَالنِّبَاءَ *

'The apostle of God said, "Perfumes and women are beloved by me."'

Again, in the *Mishkát*, in the chapter on *Jehád*, there is another tradition from Anas to the effect that,

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْءٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَعْدَ النِّسَاءِ مِنَ الْخَيْلِ *

'It is related from Anas that he said, "There was nothing more dear to the prophet, after women, than horses." These testimonies are from the prophet's own family and those who knew him best;

and they explain the otherwise inexplicable traits in his character which stand revealed in the course of the present chapter. When Muḥammad's own followers spoke of him thus, it is no surprise to find his enemies taunting him with a sensuality unbecoming in a prophet of God. Thus in the *Tafsirul-Madi'hil-Qur'an*, p. 255, it is stated that

بعضے یہودی حضرت صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کو طعن دیتے
تھے کہ یہ نکاح بہت کرتے ہیں اور ہمیشہ عورتوں میں
مشغول ہیں اگر یہ پیغمبر ہوتے تو انکو عورتوں کا خیال نہ ہوتا *

'Certain Jews taunted his majesty saying, "This person contracts numerous marriages, and is continually engaged with women. If he had been a prophet, he would not have given thought to women."'

Some modern apologists for Muḥammad pretend that his many marriages were only a practical form of charity designed to make provision for the elderly widows of his deceased followers! Muḥammadan history shows that this defence is worthless and untrue. Muḥammad's wives were not all widows, neither were they all old. Some were young virgins, others were the unfortunate widows of those he had slain. Moreover it is an historical fact, attested by Muḥammadan writers, that, in addition to his more than a dozen wives, Muḥammad kept

concubines to minister to his lust. In the *Mishkātul-Maṣābiḥ*, in the chapter on marriage it is related that

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ إِنْ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَزَوَّجَهَا وَهِيَ
بِنْتُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ وَزَفَّتْ إِلَيْهِ وَهِيَ بِنْتُ تِسْعِ سِنِينَ
وَلَعَبَهَا مَعَهَا *

'Āyesha said, Verily the prophet married her when she was a girl of seven years of age. And she was taken to him as a bride when she was nine years of age; and her play-things were with her.'

Another incident mentioned in both Qur'an and traditions relates to a woman named Zainab bint Jahsh, and shows even more clearly the absurdity of the contention that Muḥammad's polygamy was inspired only by motives of generosity and kindness. Zainab was the wife of Zaid, the adopted son of Muḥammad. The latter was known as 'Zaid the son of Muḥammad'. One day, the Muslim chronicler informs us, Muḥammad suddenly visited the house of Zaid and beheld his daughter-in-law in a costume which ill concealed her beauty. The passions of the prophet were excited, and he cried out in an ecstasy

سبحان الله مقلب القلوب

'Praise be to God Who turneth the hearts (of men).'
Zainab overheard the remark, and forthwith

acquainted her husband with the fact. The latter divorced Zainab, who was then married by the prophet. The latter, to still the murmurs of his astonished disciples, immediately produced a 'revelation' sanctioning this extraordinary procedure; and for all time the pages of the Qur'án stand disfigured with this parody of inspiration:

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاهَا لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ فِي أَزْوَاجِ أَدْعِيَائِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا *

'And when Zaid had settled concerning her to divorce her, we married her to thee, that it might not be a crime in the faithful to marry the wives of their adopted sons, when they have settled the affair concerning them' (Súratu'l-Aḥzáb xxxiii. 37).

The real reason for this new marriage of the prophet is clearly stated by the Jalálain in their commentary on the passage. They there state definitely that

فزوجها النبي لزيد ثم وقع بصره عليها بعد حين فوقع
في نفسه حبها وفي نفس زيد كراهتها *

'The prophet married her (Zainab) to Zaid. Afterwards, some days later, his gaze fell upon her, and there fell into his heart love of her; but in the heart of Zaid there arose aversion to her.' This story needs no comment. It shows the prophet of

Islám in a most unlovely light, and gives the lie to those who affirm that his marriages were only a form of benevolence intended for the benefit of indigent widows.

Another matter, referred to in the Qur'án, which throws a lurid light upon the character of Muḥammad, is that mentioned in the first two verses of Súratu't-Taḥrím (lxvi), where we read,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكَ تَبْتَغِي مَرْضَاتِ
أَزْوَاجِكَ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ - قَدْ قَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَجَارَةً أَيْمَانَكُمْ *

'Why, O prophet, dost thou hold that to be forbidden which God hath made lawful to thee, from a desire to please thy wives, since God is lenient, merciful? God hath allowed you release from your oaths.' With regard to this passage the commentators tell us that Muḥammad became so attached to his Coptic concubine Mary that his wives became justly indignant at the prophet's neglect of them in favour of the menial foreigner. Their anger became so pronounced that, in order to please them, the prophet took an oath that he would in future abstain from the company of the Coptic slave-girl. At length, however, finding the self-imposed prohibition irksome, and being resolved to once again seek the embraces of Mary, he announced the divine pleasure in the words from the Qur'án quoted above, and

proceeded forthwith to resume his visits to that lady. In the *Tafsiru'l-Baidāwī*, p. 745, it is stated that the incident which brought the opposition of the prophet's wives to a head was the following:

روي انه عليه السلام خلا بمارية في يوم عائشة او حفصة
فاطلعت علي ذلك حفصة فعاتبته فيه فحرم مارية فنزلت *

'It is said that he (the prophet) was alone with Mary on the day of 'Āyesha or Ḥafṣa. But Ḥafṣa, becoming aware of the fact, scolded him. Therefore he proclaimed Mary as forbidden to him; and after that this verse (allowing him the dissolution of his oaths) came down.' 'Abbas, in his comment on the same passage, says of Ḥafṣa,

شق عليها كون ذلك في بيتها وعلي فراشها *

'The matter became grievous to her from the fact that it happened in her house, and on her bed,' and so 'to please his wives' Muḥammad vowed abstinence from the embraces of the slave-girl Mary. And for this the world is asked to believe that God addressed Muḥammad in the words quoted above, in which he is allowed the breaking of his oath and the resumption of his illicit relations with a slave-girl!!

The Qur'ān enacts that a man having more than one wife must spend his time equally with each in turn. Muḥammad himself at first carried out this enactment, and visited in regular succession the

houses of his various wives. But, in the course of time, finding special delight in the company of 'Āyesha he solved the difficulty by producing another 'revelation' granting him a dispensation from the irksome rule; and allowing him to choose those of his wives whom he would and when he would. This astonishing piece of 'revelation', which Muslims are bound to believe as the very word of God, is found in *Sūratu'l-Aḥzab* (xxxiii) 51 and runs as follows:

تُرْجِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ مِنْهُمْ وَتُرْهِي إِلَيْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَمَنْ
إِبْتَغَيْتَ مِمَّنْ عَزَّائَتْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكَ *

'Thou mayest decline for the present whom thou wilt of them, and thou mayest take to thy bed her whom thou wilt, and whomsoever thou shalt long for of those thou shalt have before neglected; and this shall not be a crime in thee.'

We make no comment on the facts related above, but we ask the reader to ponder the comment of 'Āyesha, the favourite wife of the prophet, when first this 'revelation' was rehearsed to her. It is recorded in the *Mishkātu'l-Maṣḍbiḥ*, in the *Kitābu'n-Nikāḥ*, that she exclaimed

ما اري ربك الا يسارع في هوات *

'I do not see thy Lord, except that He hastens in (the fulfilment) of thy amorous longings'!!

That Muḥammad's estimate of woman was of the lowest description cannot be doubted. His many utterances with regard to the weaker sex make it clear that he looked upon woman as a necessary evil, and as a species of being far inferior to man. As is well-known, he gave the latter the right to beat their wives in these words,

وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ
وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ *

'But chide those (wives) for whose refractoriness ye have cause to fear; remove them into beds apart, and scourge them' (Súratu'n-Nisá' iv. 34). Women, we are told in the *Mishkát*, used in times of war to both fight as well as administer help to the wounded; but it is recorded that Muḥammad forbade them receiving any share of the plunder. His opinion of them may be gathered from the following description of them recorded in the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih*, in the *Kitābu'l-Riqaq*, namely, that,

النساء حبائل الشيطان

'Women are the nets of Satan.' Bukhārī records a statement of the prophet to the effect that he said

قمت علي باب النار فإذا عامة من دخلها النساء *

'I will stand against the door of hell, and behold! the majority of those who will enter will be women.'

Another tradition to the same effect, quoted by both Bukhārī and Muslim, records that the prophet said,

رايت النار فلم ارك اليوم منظراً قط افطع ورايت اكثر
اهلها النساء *

'I saw (in a vision) hell-fire; and I never saw, as I saw to-day, such an absolutely repulsive sight. And I saw that the majority of its inhabitants were women.'

The same recognised inferiority of the woman is seen in the legislation which provides that the testimony of a man is equal to that of two women. Thus in the Qur'án it is enacted that in the case of debt 'Call two witnesses of your people; but if there be not two men, let there be a man and two women of those whom he shall judge fit for witnesses' (Súratu'l-Baqara ii. 181). The *Mishkát* also quotes the prophet as saying that

شهادة المرأة مثل نصف شهادة الرجل *

'The testimony of a woman is equal to half the testimony of a man.'

Muḥammad not only legalised polygamy upon earth: he promised it in heaven. Many of the sayings on the subject, attributed to him in the traditions, are so coarse and indecent that we dare not quote them here. One of the less vulgar must suffice as an illustration before we bring this

unpleasant subject to an end. It is found in the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih* in the chapter describing Paradise and runs thus,

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ادني اهل الجنة
الذي له ثمانون الف خادم و اثنتان وسبعون زوجة *

'The apostle of God said, "The most insignificant of the people of Paradise is he who has seventy thousand servants and seventy-two wives."'

CHAPTER V

THE DEATH OF MUHAMMAD

HAVING subjugated the Jews living near and around Madīna Muḥammad proceeded to despatch armed bands of his followers to the more distant tribes of Arabia, demanding, in the case of idolaters, either instant acceptance of Islām or death by the sword. In the *Jāmi'u-Tirmidhi*, vol. ii, p. 468, it is recorded that Muḥammad sent his followers forth in these words,

امرت ان اقاتل الناس حتي يقولوا لا اله الا الله *

'I am commanded to fight against men until they say, "There is no god but God"'; in other words, until they embrace Islām. Needless to say, hundreds chose the 'easy way' of Islām, and thus found a refuge from the bloody swords of the Muslim bands which now swept the country on every side.

Muḥammad now determined to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca; and in the sixth year of the Hijrah he proceeded, accompanied by a large band of his followers, to the metropolis. But the Quraish refused an entrance; and after some parleying a treaty was drawn up at a place near Mecca named Hudaibiya in which it was stipulated that the

Muslims should return to Madína without performing the pilgrimage, but on the following year they should be granted full permission to enter Mecca free from molestation. Bukhárí has preserved an interesting account of this treaty which is found in the *Mishkàtu'l-Maṣābih*. Ibn Hishám has also recorded it at length in his *Síratu'r-Rasūl*, vol. iii, p. 159. The former tells us that 'Alí was chosen as the prophet's amanuensis on this occasion, and that when Muḥammad bade him write the words 'A treaty between Muḥammad the prophet of God and Suhail bin 'Amr', the latter objected to the term 'apostle of God', remarking that if the Quraish acknowledged that, there would be no necessity for opposing Muḥammad at all. The latter then turned to 'Alí and told him to cut out the words 'apostle of God', and write in their stead the words suggested by Suhail, viz. 'Son of 'Abdu'lláh.' To this 'Alí objected saying, 'By God I will never cut it out.' Then, the narrative proceeds,

أخذ رسول الله صلعم الكتاب وليس يحسن يكتب
فكتب هذا ما قاضي محمد بن عبد الله *

'The apostle of God took the writing, and though he did not write well, wrote what he had ordered ('Alí), viz. "Muḥammad son of 'Abdu'lláh." This story is interesting as affording a proof that Muḥammad, despite modern Muslim assertions to the con-

trary, was able to read and write. Other occasions are mentioned of Muḥammad writing, some of which are referred to in this book.

After the ratification of the treaty of Ḥudaibiya with the Quraish Muḥammad returned to Madína. In the following year he once more appeared before Mecca with a numerous band of followers, and, in terms of the treaty, was granted the opportunity of performing the various ceremonies connected with the pilgrimage. The treaty of Ḥudaibiya, amongst other things, provided that there should be peace between the Muslims and the Quraish for a period of ten years, but in the year following that in which Muḥammad made the pilgrimage, he found some pretext for breaking the treaty, and one day suddenly appeared before Mecca at the head of an army of ten thousand men. The Quraish were unprepared, and the city was won without a blow. Various campaigns followed, having for their object the subjugation of the surrounding tribes, and messages were also despatched to the Emperors of Rome and Persia calling upon them to embrace the faith.

Amidst these incessant campaigns the apostle still found leisure to promulgate fresh laws; and 'revelations' covering every conceivable sphere of life continued to issue from his lips. Some of this teaching sounds strangely out of place in this twentieth century; yet all good Muslims are bound to accept it as a revelation from the God of heaven. In the Qur'an,

for example, it is recorded again and again that the purpose of God in creating mountains was to prevent the earth from shaking! Meteors are gravely described in the same book as darts thrown at the devils by the angels, when the former attempt to listen by stealth to the converse of heaven! Long and realistic descriptions of heaven and hell form a special feature of the prophet's teaching. Both places are described as material. Heaven is a place of shady trees and cooling streams, where the carnal appetites run riot, and rivers of wine flow to satisfy the thirst of men. Hell is a place of physical agony which God, according to the express teaching of the Qur'án, has sworn to fill with men and genii. Indeed, we are told in the same book, He has created men for the purpose. Even Muslims will not escape a purgatorial punishment in the fires of hell; and there is a famous verse of the Qur'án which declares that everyone will enter the place of torment.

Far from Muḥammad being, as some modern Muslims maintain, an intercessor for them at the throne of God, the Qur'án repeatedly declares that there will be no intercession whatever at the judgement day. Even in the Traditions, which are admittedly contradictory on the subject, Muḥammad is represented as addressing his daughter Fátima in these words,

يا فاطمة انقذي نفسك من النار فاني لا املك لكم
من الله شيئاً *

'O Fátima, save thyself from the fire; for verily I am not able to obtain anything from God for you.'

The prophet not only confessed his inability to save others, he even declared his ignorance of his own future. Thus Bukhárí has preserved a statement of his to the effect that,

والله لا ادري وانا رسول الله ما يفعل بي ولا بكم *

'By God, although I am an apostle of God, I do not know what will be done to me or to you.' The same statement also occurs in the Qur'án, in the Súratu'l-Ahqáf. In the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣābih*, in the *Kitābu'smu'llāh* he is reported as saying that,

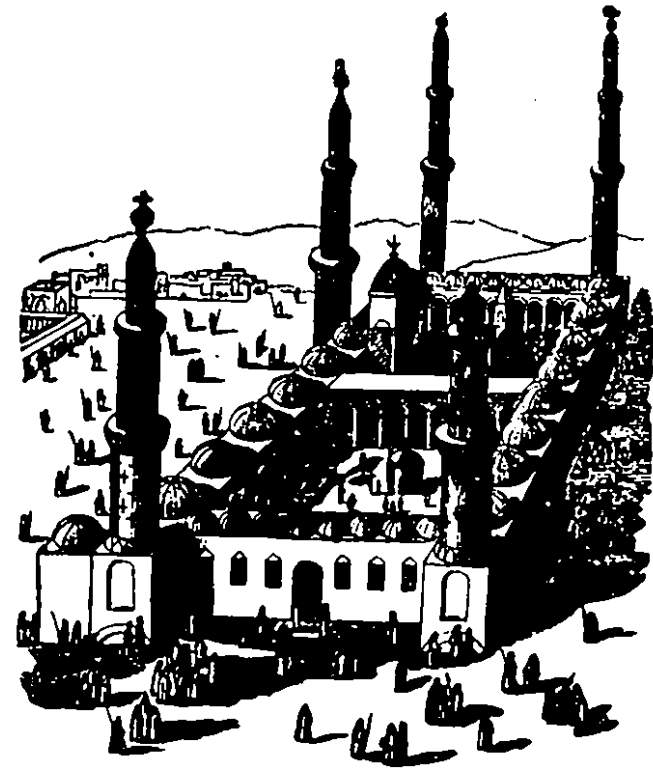
لَنْ يَنْجِيَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ عَمَلَهُ قَالُوا وَلَا أَنْتَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
قَالَ وَلَا أَنَا إِلَّا أَنْ تَعْمَدَنِي اللَّهُ مِنْهُ بِرَحْمَتِهِ *

"The works of none of you will ever save him." (His disciples) said, "Not even you, O apostle of God?" He said, "Not even I, unless God cover me with His mercy." So concerned indeed was the prophet regarding his own future destiny that he instructed his followers to pray for him in these words,

اذ تشهد احدكم في الصلوة فليقل اللهم صلي علي محمد
وعلي ال محمد وارحم محمد و ال محمد كما صليت
وباركت وترحمت علي ابراهيم وعلي ال ابراهيم *

‘When any one of you (in his prayers) bears witness (concerning God and His apostle), then let him say, “O God, bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, and have mercy upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad as thou hast blessed and had mercy upon Abraham and the family of Abraham.”’ To the present day, the wide world over, Muslims repeat this prayer for the welfare of their prophet.

In the eleventh year of the Hijrah Muḥammad fell sick. Persistent fever rapidly weakened him, and it was soon seen that he was seriously ill. He seems to have had some premonition of his coming end, for he appointed Abú Bakr to take his place in the mosque as leader of the prayers, and then, in the quiet of his own, or rather ‘Āyesha’s, room called for pen and ink in order to add something to his previous teaching. But the fire which had blazed so fiercely was fast flickering out, and Muḥammad did not live to add the words that were to complete his religion and prevent his followers ever after from straying. The incident is important for two reasons. It proves that Muḥammad could read and write, and it suggests that he left his system incomplete. Bukhārī records the incident thus from Ibn ‘Abbās. ‘When the apostle of God approached his death, and a number of people were in the room, amongst whom was ‘Umr bin Khaṭṭab, he said,



THE TOMB OF MUHAMMAD

هَلُمَّا اَكْتُبْ لَكُمْ كِتَابًا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدَهُ *

"Come, I will write for you a writing (so that) after it you will never go astray." Then 'Umr said, "He is certainly overcome with pain; and, moreover, you have the Qur'ān. The word of God is sufficient for you." Then a division arose amongst those who were present in the room, and they began to wrangle. Some said, "Bring him pen and ink in order that the prophet of God may write for you". Others of them agreed with 'Umr. At length, when they made a great noise and confusion, the prophet of God said, "Leave me". A little later Muḥammad breathed his last in the room of 'Āyesha, and there, where he had died, the prophet of Arabia was buried to await the great day when every one shall give an account of himself to God.

Thus passed away a great personality. The purpose and limits of this little book forbid a fuller treatment of his life. Many interesting and important facts have been omitted; but we have tried, in what we have written, to remain true to the title of the book, and give only what is found 'in Islām' itself. The picture which the Muslim chronicles have given us is not an altogether lovely one, and we now leave the reader to judge whether, and in what respect, Muḥammad may be considered as indeed a Prophet of God.

INDEX

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 'Abdu'llāh bin Sa'ud, 41. | <u>Khadīja</u> , 5, 15, 25. |
| 'Abdu'llāh, father of Muḥammad, 11. | <u>Khaibar</u> , 92. |
| 'Abdu'l-Muṭṭalib, 14. | Lying, allowed, 27. |
| Abū Ṭālib, 14, 26, 30. | Meteors, 110. |
| Abū Bakr, 26, 112. | Mary, the Copt, 101. |
| Abū Rāf, 89. | Mi'rāj, 35 ff. |
| Abū'l-Fīda, 3. | Miracles, 33. |
| 'Alī, 26. | Mountains, 110. |
| Āmina, 11. | Muḥammad, birth of, 11. |
| Abyssinia, 28. | .. his heart is cleansed, 12, 13. |
| Arabs, state of before Islām, 3. | .. his epilepsy, 13, 21. |
| Apostasy, punishment for, 83. | .. visits Syria, 14. |
| 'Āshma-bint-Marwan, 88. | .. marries <u>Khadīja</u> , 13. |
| 'Āyesha, her marriage, 99. | .. an idolater in early life, 15. |
| Bedr, battle of, 75. | .. his inspiration, 19, 21. |
| Bani Quraiza, 90. | .. wished to commit suicide, 20. |
| Christians in Arabia, 6, 9. | .. is bewitched, 22. |
| Circumcision, 4. | .. forbids artificial fertilisation, 68. |
| Children, fate of, 15. | .. his superstitions, 23. |
| Fitrat, 20. | .. unable to work miracles, 33, 39. |
| God, pre-Islamic conception of, 4. | .. his ascent to heaven, 35. |
| Ḥalīmā, 11, 13. | .. prays towards Jerusalem, 46. |
| Hanīfs, 5. | .. his compromise with idolatry, 46. |
| Ḥafsa, 102. | .. his mistakes, 65, 68. |
| Hirā mount, 18. | .. his cruelty, 84. |
| Heaven, 105. | |
| Hell, 104. | |
| Ḥudaibiya, treaty of, 109. | |
| Idolatry of Arabs, 4. | |
| Jabar, 33. | |
| Jehād, 72 ff. | |
| Jews, in Arabia, 5. | |
| .. Muḥammad's treatment of, 86. | |
| Kāb-binū'l-Ashraf, 89. | |

INDEX

- | | |
|---|---|
| Muhammad, his massacre of the Bani Quraiza, 90. | Oaths, 101. |
| „ poisoned by a Jewess, 93. | Paradise, see under ' Heaven.' |
| „ his attitude towards women, 96 ff. | Pilgrimage, 3, 106. |
| „ marries Zainab, 100. | Polygamy, 66, 105. |
| „ released from his oaths, 101. | Plunder, 72, 78. |
| „ performs pilgrimage to Mecca, 109. | Qibla, 46. |
| „ not illiterate, 108, 112. | Quraiza, Bani, 90. |
| „ his teaching, 109, 110. | Qur'án, first revelation of, 18. |
| „ unable to save, 111. | „ Jewish teaching in, 32, 42. |
| „ to be prayed for, 111. | „ not incomparable, 41. |
| „ his death, 114. | „ corruption of, 43. |
| Muslims, persecution of, 26. | „ contradictions in, 45. |
| „ flight to Abyssinia, 28. | Slavery, 66, 67. |
| Nakla, 74. | Tíma bin Ibriq, 94. |
| Nazir-bin-Hárit̥h, 31. | Uḥud, battle of, 79. |
| | 'Umar bin Yasar, 26. |
| | 'Umar bin Khattāb, 42. |
| | 'Uqba bin Abū Muait, 76. |
| | Women, Muhammad's attitude towards, 96. |
| | „ may be scourged, 104. |
| | „ inferiority of, 104, ff. |
| | Waraqa, 5. |
| | Yasár, 33. |
| | Zaid, 17, 26, 99. |
| | Zainab bint Hārith, 93. |
| | Zainab bint Jahsh, 99. |