

Muhammad's Life

Muhammad was born around 570 A.D. in Mecca. His father, Abdallah, died before his birth, and his mother, Aminna, died several years later. His grandfather, and later his uncle, took care of him as a boy.

When Muhammad was about 25, he married a prosperous, Meccan businesswoman named Khadija who was 40 years old and previously married two times. It was Khadija, Muhammad's caravan trade boss, that proposed to him.

Around 610 A.D. while meditating and desiring divine inspiration, an apparition (the angel Jibril) appeared to Muhammad and forced him to repeat the revelation spoken to him. The content of this revelation is in the Qur'an in Sura al-'Alaq (96).

Throughout his life Muhammad experienced repeated revelations from an authority calling himself Allah, meaning *the God*. He was commanded to pray, warn his fellow men and preach change in conduct. He obeyed and started preaching what was revealed. The first convert was his wife Khadija. The first male Muslim was his nephew Ali.

As more people began to follow Muhammad's teaching of one God, prominent Meccans feared their idolatrous pilgrimage industry could be threatened. They began to oppose Muhammad with peaceful arguments, ridicule, threats, and finally beatings. While a minority, the Muslims patiently endured the persecution.

The first period of Muhammad's life in summary: Between 610 and 622 A.D., Muhammad acted as a peacefully warning prophet in Mecca.

After the death of Muhammad's uncle and his wife, the persecution reached its climax. The inhabitants of Yathrib, a city 210 miles north of Mecca, offered Muhammad asylum. Seizing the opportunity, Muhammad and about 80 companions emigrated to the area now called Medina.

This event was viewed with such importance that several years later, Muslims chose the date of the Hijra (Arabic for the emigration) in 622 A.D. as day one of the Islamic calendar. A new phase of Islam began with this move to Medina. There Muhammad founded a religious state, and from there he extended Islamic rule over most of the Arabian Peninsula. Since then it has not been possible to separate Islamic faith and state.

While in Medina, the Meccans continued to oppose Muhammad with economic boycotts and raids. Muhammad made a grave decision in deciding to react using force. He engaged in raids and warfare against the Meccans and later against Jewish and Christian tribes.

The second period of Muhammad's life in summary: He was no longer only a peacefully warning prophet as in Mecca, but in addition had become Allah's war waging monarch in Medina. It is important to distinguish these two phases of Muhammad's life; the first is peaceful and purely religious in Mecca; the second is, in addition, full of politics and coercion in Medina.

Most Muslims portray Islam as tolerant and peaceful in order to win sympathy in the West. When they do this they tell the truth, but at the same time they lie. It is true Muhammad was peaceful and tolerant in Mecca, but they hide Muhammad's life in Mecca, a mission of "religious" politics and "holy" war. They conceal the fact that Islam is only complete when it reigns as a religious state. This deception can be observed the world over. If Muslims are a minority they proclaim a religion of peace. As soon as they gain power they use politics and force to exert rule over that nation. Islam's goal is always a religious state.

Muhammad stabilized his political Islamic state in Medina. By the time of his death in 632 A.D. he had also succeeded in dominating much of the Arabian Peninsula, crushing every opposition to his religious and political rule.

Attacks and Wars of Muhammad

Muhammad used weapons to kill and commanded followers to kill and butcher many who opposed them. Two thirds of the biographies of Muhammad (holy books of Islam) concern the battles he undertook. In them, his followers recount more than 70 military engagements. Following are three such battles:

- ◆ In 624 A.D., in an effort to secure food and provisions for his followers, Muhammad decided to attack a caravan returning to Mecca. The caravan leader discovered the plot and requested reinforcements from Mecca and sped past the oasis of Badr where the ambush was planned. When Muhammad and his 300 Muslims arrived, they met an army of 1,000 Meccans. Unexpectedly, the inferior Muslim fighters defeated the heathen Meccan forces. Muhammad and his followers use this as a convincing proof that he was a true messenger of Allah. Ever since that time, fighting for Allah has become a central feature of Islam.

- ◆ After defeat at Uhud and no decision in the Battle of Khandaq (the trench), Muhammad explained this by telling his followers they did not fight wholeheartedly for Allah. He urged them to give everything (jihad) for the cause of Allah.

- ◆ In 630 A.D. Muhammad stood with 10,000 Muslims ready to battle his hometown of Mecca. Knowing the Meccans would fight to the end for their pilgrimage income from the city's idol shrines, Muhammad offered the following compromise: "You, Meccans, become Muslims and obey Allah and me, the messenger of Allah, by destroying all idols, and in turn I will make sure that you will have an everlasting source of income. In the future Muslims, not idolaters, will come on pilgrimage to Mecca." This cunning plan worked for Muhammad and leading Meccan officials embraced Islam with little bloodshed. Today millions of Muslims obey Muhammad's revelations in the

Qur'an to do the Hajj (pilgrimage) and perform pagan rituals that have nothing to do with the monotheism of Islam.

Muhammad and the Jews

At the time of Muhammad's emigration, Medina consisted of two larger idolatrous tribes and three smaller Jewish tribes. Muhammad was invited to be the arbiter of their quarreling. He agreed on the condition that they sign a contract to defend him and his followers from attacks. As it became evident that Judaism and Islam could not go hand in hand, Muhammad began to abandon Jewish customs and institutions and the Jews tried to get out of their agreement. The ensuing end of the three Jewish tribes were as follows:

- ◆ In 624 A.D., one month after the Battle of Badr, the Bannu Qaynuqa' had their houses and land confiscated and distributed as booty among Muhammad's followers. They were forced to gather their belongings and leave Medina.

- ◆ The Bannu an-Nadhir were driven out of Medina in 625 A.D. with nothing but their lives because of a supposed divine warning Muhammad received that they were going to kill him.

- ◆ In 627 A.D. Muhammad overcame the Bannu Qurayzha. He then spent all the next day beheading the men while the women, boys and girls were distributed as slaves and their property and possessions distributed as booty.

Most of the Jewish remnant in Arabia assembled in the fortified oasis of Khaybar over 100 miles north of Medina. In 628 A.D. Muhammad, unprovoked, besieged their fortresses and overcame those who fought. He then butchered the leaders, took some slaves and distributed a wealth of booty.

Before the end of his life Muhammad had eradicated all political and religious relevance of Judaism in Arabia.

Muhammad's Wives

Muhammad had one wife, Khadija, until her death in 619 A.D. After that he legally betrothed 13 or 14 women and had sexual relations with others. Of his many wives, three arrangements are particularly troubling.

- ◆ Muhammad married 'A'isha, the daughter of his best friend, Abu Bakr, when she was six years old. He consummated marriage with her when she was nine. Islamic traditions state she brought her toys with her into the marriage.

- ◆ Muhammad fell in love with his daughter-in-law, Zainab, the wife of his adopted son, Zaid ibn Thabit. After receiving a special revelation from Allah allowing him to dissolve the marriage between Zainab and his son, he took her as *his* wife.

- ◆ At the fall of Khaybar, a Jewish beauty of the an-Nadhir tribe watched her husband, father and relatives get butchered. Muhammad coveted young Safiyya and, without regard for her trauma, he took her without delay as his wife and consummated marriage with her in his tent.

What a difference between Jesus and Muhammad! Instead of robbing and killing his enemies, Christ said, "love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." Instead of eradicating the Jews for their criticism, Christ allowed them to kill him. Instead of taking another man's wife, Christ said, "looking on a woman to lust for her is adultery in heart." We are called to share with Muslims this new level of holiness Christ brought to the world.

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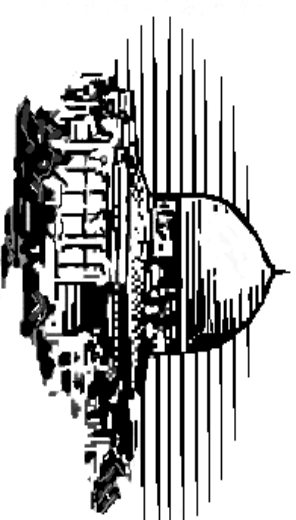
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The

Life of Muhammad



Jesus said, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword."
(Matthew 26:52)

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