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MUHAMMAD
OF
ARABIA

by
KHURSHID AHMED ENVER

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WITH
A FOREWORD

by
Hon'ble MR. A. K. FAZLUL HAQ
PREMIER, BENGAL

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MUHAMMAD
OF
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by

KHURSHID AHMED ENVER

THE
YOUNG PEOPLE PUBLISHING BUREAU
LAHORE

1939]

[RE. I

1st edition 1938

2nd edition 1939

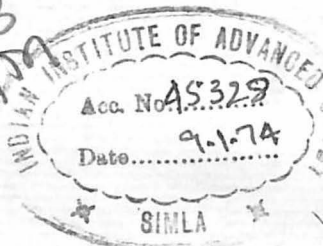


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Printed at the Ripon Printing Press, Bull Road, Lahore
by Mirza Mohd. Sadiq and published by Mr. Khurshid
A. Enver for the Young People Publishing Bureau, Lahore



TO
CAPTAIN MALIK KHAN MUHAMMAD
WHOSE
LOVE OF THE HOLY PROPHET
AND
DESIRE TO MAKE HIS LIFE AVAILABLE
TO YOUNG PEOPLE
WAS
A GREAT SOURCE OF INSPIRATION
TO THE AUTHOR

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FOREWORD

THE BOY

THE MAN

THE PROPHET

FOREWORD

IN the following pages Mr. Khurshid Ahmed Enver, one of the most enterprising of young journalists in India, has depicted for the benefit of the youths of our community a pen picture of our holy Prophet in manner and style entirely novel and fascinating. I have been asked to write a Foreword and I deem it a very great honour to have been called upon to do so.

I was allowed to have a look at this small treatise in order that I might be in a position to judge of its worth, and I can

honestly pay the greatest possible compliment to its excellence as a literary production, and the manner in which the facts have been cleverly set out. There is not a dull sentence in this book and the greatest possible testimony which I can give to its worth is the fact that when I began reading the treatise, I could not leave it till I finished it. The principal facts in our great Prophet's life have been brought out prominently and the whole story has been set out by means of a continuous narrative which never ceases to attract the attention of the readers. *All the statements made are based on incontrovertible facts and this enhances the value of the book.* I hope those interested in the education of Muslim youths will realise the worth of this book and place it in the hands of the young, so that the main facts of our great Prophet's life may be embedded in

the memory of the young and form a
beacon light for their guidance through-
out their life.

A. K. Fazlul Haque

CALCUTTA:

The 18th August, 1938.

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MUHAMMAD OF ARABIA

ABANDONED TO THE FLOODS.

THE BOY

“LET there be Light,” said Allah and there was Light.

It was on April 20, 571 A.D. that in the house of Abdullah was born a son.

Abdullah lived in Mecca, a town in Arabia. Arabia is a very old country and is well known for its deserts, dates and camels. The people of Arabia are known as Arabs. In those days Arabs were not very good people. They lived in clans and often fought with one another. They also gambled. Some of them were very cruel and buried their daughters alive. They did not believe in God and worshipped idols. They made dull statues with their own hands and placed them in the *Kaaba*, the House of God,

built by the old prophet Abraham. They worshipped those idols by dancing before them and by making offerings. Abdullah was also one of them and belonged to a clan known as Banu Hashim.

Abdullah did not live to see his son. He died a few months before the birth of his child.

The child's grandfather named him Muhammad. When the people asked him how that name had come to his mind the proud old man replied :

"I want that the world should praise my grandson,—he should become so great." The mother loved her fatherless son, who was very healthy and good-looking. So healthy was he that the people who came to see him thought that he was several months old.

Muhammad brought blessings with him. A famine had spread in Arabia, but soon after the birth of the blessed child it rained in torrents and the famine was no more.

AMONGST the Arabs it was a custom to send their children to the villages where they were fed upon the milk of village women. These women were paid for that,—and generally they looked after the children of rich parents. So no woman would accept Muhammad, whose father had died. But at last there came to Mecca a woman named Halima who gladly agreed to take the little child with her. She loved him as her own child and Muhammad was brought up with great care. She belonged to a clan which was well known for its good manners. Muhammad was very happy for he loved his nurse.

WHEN Muhammad was four years old, he, along with Halima's children, would look after the flocks of sheep. One day, when he had gone out in the forest, two angels came down, tore open his breast and filled it with divine light. The other children were frightened and ran home to their mother to relate this tale of terror.

On hearing this Halima ran to the forest crying. But, to her great surprise, Muhammad met her with smiling face and said: "Don't worry; they were two men dressed in white and they tore open my breast and filled it with something I don't know; but I am not hurt."

In childhood when he would go into

the jungles he would hear somebody say, "Peace be upon you, O Prophet of Allah!" and he would wonder and look around at stones in the mountain skirts.

When Halima's husband heard about the visit of the angels he was disturbed. He asked her to take the child back to his mother. She obeyed him and took Muhammad back to Mecca. She told his mother all the strange things that had happened to the boy, but his mother assured her that there was nothing to fear about. She took back her child and Muhammad began to live with his mother.

One day his mother took him to his father's grave in Medina. The little child gazed at it for some time and then said, "Father, I like the place where you are buried." He told his mother that he liked Medina and wished to stay there.

On their way back Amina, Muhammad's

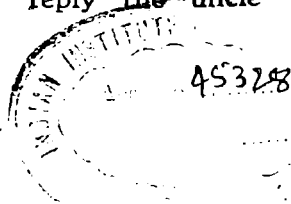
mother, died at Abwa, where she was made to rest. Muhammad came back alone with other women. When his grandfather saw him, he took him in his lap and wept bitterly. Now he loved little Muhammad even more for he had lost his mother also. But even the grandfather was snatched from the child a little later and Muhammad was left in charge of Abu Talib, one of his uncles.

MUHAMMAD did not mix with other children. He did not play with them and never did any mischief. He was modest and unlike other children was never obstinate.

One day when his uncle was preparing for a journey to Syria, he said that he also wished to go.

"You are a little child as yet, Muhammad," said his uncle affectionately, "and it is a long and tiresome journey."

"I am twelve now," replied Muhammad "and I am not afraid of anything." Hearing this brave reply the uncle agreed.



WHEN the caravan started, accompanied by his uncle, the beautiful child rode a camel, his long curly hair falling on his shoulders. All the way long a little cloud hung over his head, casting its shadow upon him and protecting him from the burning sun of the desert.

When the caravan reached Basrah, they met a Christian dervish. His name was Buheira. He looked deep into the child's face and said: "*This is the one who was awaited.*" From the top of his house he had seen the caravan approaching and a solitary cloud moving with it.

The dervish asked the Arabs to dine with him. After the dinner was over he turned to Muhammad's uncle and said:

“ This child is the last messenger from God. Take him away lest the Jews of this country should slay him.”

He also asked Abu Talib, “ What is this child to you ? ”

“ He is my son ” said the uncle.

The priest shook his head and said : “ His father could not have been alive.”

Thereupon Abu Talib told him that his father had died even before he was born and that he was his uncle.

At night when the people around were all asleep, the Christian priest came to Muhammad and talked to him. He asked him if he had any dreams. The little boy told him all the strange dreams that he had seen. The priest then saw on the child's back the Seal of the Prophethood and said : “ Surely Thou Art.”

When Abu Talib learnt all this he wondered, for he did not know what the prophets were. He asked Buheira who explained everything to him.

While they were talking there came galloping on horses a few soldiers from the Roman Emperor. They said: "Somebody has told the Emperor that the Prophet who will conquer his Empire one day is here and we want to arrest him."

"You search in vain," replied the wise Christian, "for if he is a prophet you shall not be able to arrest him."

After that Abu Talib hurried through his business and returned to Mecca.

THE MAN

EVEN in his youth Muhammad used to look after the herds of goats and sheep. He never made friends with bad men and preferred to remain alone. He was very honest, good and truthful and people respected him for these qualities. They gave him the name *Amin* and always trusted him.

Once a portion of the *Kaaba* was washed away by floods. All the clans joined hands to build it again. A quarrel arose over the setting up of the sacred black-stone. Every clan wanted that its chief should perform that good deed. But only one man could do it, and every one wanted to be that man. At last they decided that the man who happened

to come first to the *Kaaba*, next morning, should be asked to arbitrate and all of them would submit to his decision.

Next day Muhammad was the first man to enter the holy place. They were all glad, for the right person had come.

Muhammad solved the problem. "Take a big cloth," he said, and he offered his own *chadar*. He lifted the stone, placed it upon the cloth and called all the chiefs of different clans. He asked one to hold one corner and another to hold another, in such a way that every one of them held some part of the cloth. Thus they carried the stone and Muhammad set it at its right place. All were happy, for every one of them had shared the good deed equally.

THERE lived in Mecca an aged widow, named Khadija. She was a noble lady and people respected her. She ran a big business concern and her servants did trade on her behalf with foreign countries such as Syria and Palestine. She was looking for an honest man who should increase the trade. When she heard of Muhammad and his honesty, she sent him a request to trade for her in Syria and Muhammad gladly accepted the offer.

Muhammad conducted the business with great success and when he came back he showed large profits. During his stay abroad he learnt much about other lands and their people which

helped him later when he was called upon to do greater things.

He did his work with great honesty and an honest worker always succeeds. Khadija began respecting him for his wisdom, intelligence and honesty and one day she expressed a desire to marry him. Muhammad spoke to his uncle about it and he agreed. Khadija also consulted her relations who gave their consent readily.

When the wedding took place no evil customs of the day were observed. Two big families of Arabia were united and the people of Arabia were pleased. Muhammad and Khadija lived happily.

MUHAMMAD was not an easy mixer. Deep thinking had become a habit with him.

One day he heard that a certain chief had buried his daughter alive. He was deeply moved. He talked about it to his wife and uncle. "How cruel these people are!" he said. "Is there no way to save these little lives?" But every one was helpless, for such were the customs of the land.

For one year Muhammad devoted himself to preaching against this inhuman practice. He approached all the big chiefs and succeeded in winning them over. They all admitted that "burying their daughters alive was an evil custom".

AFTER some time he began asking people why they worshipped the idols made by themselves. This annoyed them. That was their religion and the religion of their forefathers. But Muhammad was patient.

“What good can these idols do to you, when they cannot clean their own eyes?” he said. But people paid no heed.

Many a time Persian and Christian traders would come to Muhammad, praise their own monarchs and mock at the Arabs. Muhammad, however, was not discouraged. He wanted to make the Arabs a great nation.

ONE day an old woman who was a widow came to Khadija. She was very poor and had no relations to help her. She was too old and could not work. When Muhammad heard this tale of distress he said to his wife: "You should not eat or drink anything nor should you give me anything to eat or drink unless you have provided for this poor old woman."

Khadija gladly obeyed her husband.

ONE day when Muhammad was passing through a street, he saw a blind woman tumble and fall. The people laughed at her, but Muhammad's eyes were filled with tears. He supported the woman and led her to her house. After that Muhammad would carry meals to her house every day.

On another occasion a woman who was carrying a heavy load on her head passed through the street. The heartless people mocked at her. Muhammad was pained to see this. He rebuked the people and helped the woman.

MUHAMMAD had great respect for women. He had respected his mother, and his nurse. He also respected his wife.

“Women are the weaker sex, and require better treatment,” he said.

One day a man was beating his wife in the street while many people were standing and watching.

“Do not beat a woman or degrade her in public,” shouted Muhammad. “It is not chivalry to beat a woman, and you are all chivalrous.”

SOME TIME after Muhammad's marriage a son was born to Khadija. She loved the little child. While still young the child fell ill. The father tended his son day and night and the child got well.

Some time later the child fell ill once again. The loving parents did their best, but this time they could not save him. The flower was covered with dust. Khadija and Muhammad did not cry or wail. They wept silently.

MUHAMMAD had great sympathy for the poor slaves. He was always very kind to his own maids and servants, and loved them as his own children.

Khadija had a slave, his name was Zaid. In order that there should be no distinction between the master and the slave Muhammad treated him as his own child. He personally looked after him and brought him up with great care.

ONE day Muhammad saw a slave who was grinding wheat. He went near him and found that he was crying. He was ill, but his master was very cruel and had no sympathy for him. Muhammad sat down and ground the wheat for him and said, "Whenever you want to grind, send for me."

ABU SUFIYAN was Muhammad's greatest enemy. One day Muhammad came to know that one of Abu Sufiyan's slaves was ill and there was no one to look after him. Muhammad went to the slave and sat by his bed all night. Whenever the man cried with pain Muhammad told him that he was there to look after him, and that there was no reason to despair.

ONCE a chief whipped his maid-servant. The girl cried for help. Muhammad went to the rich man's house and told him not to be so cruel. The rich man was annoyed and would not have Muhammad interfering in his affairs.

"Nobody can stop me," said Muhammad. "I must stand by a poor and helpless woman."

All that night he could not sleep. He thought of the people of his country who were so bad as to be cruel to weak and feeble women. When Khadija found the cause of his worry she was deeply moved. The very next day she paid a heavy price for the maid and freed her from the clutches of her cruel master.

THERE was an old man who was ordered by his master to water his garden. His withered hands trembled when he carried water from the distant stream. Muhammad saw this and felt pity for him. He went up to him and offered himself to do the job. When he had finished the work he said, "Do remember me whenever you need my assistance again."

ONE day Muhammad saw a small child shivering with cold. He had no clothes to protect him against the terrible chill. When Muhammad spoke to him he told him that he was an orphan and slave and that his master was very cruel to him. Tears rolled down Muhammad's cheeks when he listened to the lisping little child. He patted him affectionately.

Next day he met the same child again, carrying a big load that almost crushed him. Muhammad took the burden from him, carried it on his own shoulders and went along with him on his errand. Muhammad was very glad and said to the little boy, "Think of Muhammad when you are in trouble."

ONE evening Muhammad learnt that a slave was very ill. His master was a Jew and was as unkind to him as any heartless man could be. It was in a dark and dingy room that the sick man was lying and when Muhammad went to see him he took him to be another slave whom his master might have sent to look after him. He asked Muhammad, "Has my master sent you to look after me?"

"Yes, our Master has sent me to look after you," replied Muhammad and spent the night with the ailing man.

Next morning when the poor slave saw Muhammad sitting beside him, he wondered "Surely you will be a saviour of the slaves, O young chief!" he said.

AN ARAB owed some money to a Jew. The Jew was very unsparing. One day he was insulting the Arab right in the street. Muhammad saw this, went back home, brought the money and paid the Arab's debt. When he had released him from the grip of that usurer, he said, "Do not take a loan that you cannot repay."

ONCE Muhammad saw an Arab urging his camel to go faster. The camel was sick and was chafing under a heavy load. But his stern master whipped him.

"Be kind to your animal; he is old, sick and feeble," Muhammad said to the man.

He always had tender feelings for animals and scolded those who were cruel to them.

IN the streets of Mecca walked a little child weeping. He had clothes hardly to cover his body with and he was foot-sore. Muhammad, who had a great love for children, was moved to tears. He took the child in his lap. He was an orphan and was very hungry as he had not eaten anything for many days. Muhammad took him to his own house, gave him food to eat and clothes to wear and kept him as his own child until he was safely delivered to his relatives.

MUHAMMAD deemed it a cruelty to shoot the little birds. One day he said to his friend Abu Bakr, "I am hurt to see people killing little birds. If a big animal were shot it would appease the hunger of many persons, but even a dozen birds wouldn't fill one man's belly."

MUHAMMAD was a very honest and clean business man. The people with whom he dealt praised him on this account. They were, at times, immensely surprised to see his sincerity. Once he sold a hundred camels to a merchant. When the merchant had gone away with the camels, he learnt that one of the animals was lame. He took a swift horse and followed the merchant. After covering a long distance he overtook him and told him that one of the camels had a maimed leg, and that he had come to pay back its price, and to take back the camel. The merchant was stunned to see so honest a person.

MUHAMMAD always felt for his people. He knew that the Arabs were not as civilised as Persians and Romans. He hated idol-worship. He had descended from the House of Abraham. Certainly that could not have been Abraham's religion. He often thought over it and talked it to his friends. A few of them agreed with him. What was then the religion of Abraham? He wanted to know. He generally went out in a cave known as *Hira* and sat there for hours and hours together thinking deep thoughts.

AND once he dreamed a strange dream.
He saw a book descending from heavens.
The book shone with as radiant a light
as that of the sun. And he heard some-
body say that in that book the religion
of Abraham was writ.

AFTER a few days he again dreamt a dream. He saw that his uncle brought him a cub and placed it in his lap. When he took the little cub in his lap it began to talk. Next day he related this strange dream to his uncle. His uncle said, "The little cub is my son, Ali, which I gladly give you." And Muhammad was pleased to learn that. He went home, took little Ali in his lap and caressed him affectionately.

MUHAMMAD had a very great regard for his word, and whenever he made a promise he kept it. Once a business partner of Muhammad told him to wait for him at a certain place until he returned. But the man did not return. And to the utter surprise of that man and everybody's Muhammad waited there for three days and three nights. On the fourth day the man who had altogether forgotten about it, came and apologised.

Muhammad was quite cool and said, "I had promised to stay and I did. The real man is he who keeps his promise. But there is no fault of yours as you forgot it. If you have a bad memory you should neither take a promise nor give one."

ONE day Muhammad saw two men beating a third. He at once came forward to help the victim. The angry Arabs asked him not to interfere. But Muhammad replied, "I must help this man ; he is my neighbour."

MUHAMMAD was in the prime of his life. He was 37 when one day sitting as usual in the cave *Hira* he heard an unknown voice calling, "Muhammad, Muhammad, Muhammad, the goats are alone and the goat-herd shall descend from Heaven," and Muhammad looked round and wondered.

And the same year he again heard the unknown voice calling, "God loves His own people. And He also loves one who is kind to His people."

Muhammad came out of the cave and searched for one who spoke those words. But there was no one to be seen.

After a few days a very strange thing

happened. Muhammad's little daughter said to him, "Father, give me the moon that is on your turban."

"There is no moon on my turban," replied the loving father. But the little girl went on saying, "There is a big moon shining on your turban, father, a big moon shining on your turban."

IT was Muhammad's habit to go to the *Kaaba* every day. He did not worship those idols. He would go there even before the slaves of those idols would come in.

He would kiss the sacred black-stone which was fixed in the wall of the *Kaaba*. This stone had been there since the days of Abraham and was much revered.

TO serve God and His people was the main object of Muhammad's life. He devoted very little time to his business. Most of his time he spent in helping the poor and the needy. He looked after helpless women and orphans, in particular.

Every day the Meccans would see him carrying huge loads. These were the provisions for the poor women who could not buy, and Muhammad would do the buying for them. Not only that, he would carry their provisions on his own shoulders and safely deliver them at their doors. His enemies would laugh at him. Abu Sufiyan said to him one day, "You have disgraced your

family by carrying loads of the poor and the low people."

"I am the grandson of Hashim, who served the rich and the poor alike and never looked down upon those who were below him," replied Muhammad.

THE PROPHET

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1. 1.

AT last the happy moment arrived when Muhammad was called upon to do the magnificent duty for which he was sent in this world. It was on the 6th day of August, 610 A.D., that the All-Powerful God bestowed upon him His blessings, made him His own Messenger and told him to do His biddings. Now there he was Muhammad, the honest, the truthful, ready to accomplish the noble task entrusted to him.

At first Muhammad, the man, shivered when Gabriel, the Arch-angel, brought him the sacred message: "Muhammad, the man, was Muhâmmad the Prophet of God." He was to reform this world and to free it from the countless evils.

prevalent. There were princes who were cruel to the men of God. There were slaves who were chained and lashed by their masters. There were women who groaned under the cruelties of men. There were children who were orphans and had no one to look after them.

When Muhammad came home he told his wife and she was the first to believe in him. The second was Ali, a child; the third a friend, Abu Bakr; and the fourth a slave, Zaid. This small force began to preach the world's greatest religion. This naturally offended the Arabs. They sought the support of Muhammad's uncle. But Abu Talib refused them any help. He loved his nephew. Now Muhammad had to face many enemies. But this did not discourage him. "Save them from the sin of idol-worship and call them into the fold of Islam," was the commandment of Allah.

MUHAMMAD went up to Mount Safa one day and called out to all his kinsmen. When they had assembled, he said, "If I were to tell you that an enemy is advancing from behind the mountain, will you believe me?"

"Yes," was the reply that echoed in the deep valley of Safa. "We know that you are honest and truthful."

"And so I tell you," continued the Prophet. "If you will not believe in God, Who has created you, you will repent and a very unhappy lot shall be yours."

They were annoyed when they heard this. They scolded him and all of them went away, displeased.

Thus Muhammad made more enemies.

FOR about a year Muhammad went on preaching the great religion quietly. And now his followers numbered about forty. Great numbers. This was a good sign and it encouraged Muhammad. He went into the *Kaaba* and proclaimed the Oneness of God.

“What cheek!” said the slaves of the idols and fell furiously upon him. A friend named Hāris heard of it and ran to resist the attack of his enemies and rescue his beloved Prophet. They spared the Prophet but killed his friend.

ALL the Arab chiefs gathered together and went to Abu Talib, "We will kill your nephew," they said ; "he hates our gods and unbridles his tongue against them."

This disturbed Abu Talib. To fight them was not an easy job. He went to his nephew and warned him.

"Don't you worry, uncle," said Muhammad, "leave me to my God."

"If these people," he continued, "were to place in my one hand the golden sun and in the other the silvery moon I shall not shrink back. Either I will spread this religion of God or I will lay down my life for it."

The old uncle was impressed with this courage and he got up and said, "Carry on, my son, I am at your back as long as I live."

THEN came the days of persecution. The most inhuman atrocities were practised by the enemies of Islam and the poor followers of Muhammad bore them all gladly. With smiling faces they submitted to the cruelties wrought upon them. They were flogged to unconsciousness. They were placed upon burning sand and tied to red-hot stones.

One day they sent an Arab chief to Muhammad.

"What do you want Muhammad? he said, "the kingship of Mecca, a beautiful wife or huge wealth? We give you all. Leave us alone with our idols, they are our gods."

In reply Muhammad read the message of God and told him : "God is only One,

come to Him and seek His forgiveness for the sins you have done." The Arab chief went back, tongue-tied.

"It isn't poetry that Muhammad talks, it is something much higher ; leave him and his religion alone," said he to his friends.

FOR many years the followers of Islam revelled in the tortures they were put to. The idol-worshippers of Mecca did not even spare the Prophet and often hurled abuses at him, threw stones at him and spread thorns in his way.

There was no escape from the heartless Meccans and, moreover, the true believers were poor, most of them being slaves, unequipped and unarmed. To fight the rich darlings of Arabia was beyond their power and the Prophet too, would not permit that. There was only one way out and that was to leave Mecca. The Prophet bade them go to Abyssinia. The ruler of Abyssinia was known as Negus and was a just king. So, many Muslims left for that country and settled there peacefully.

THERE appeared in the court of Negus ambassadors from Mecca. They brought huge presents for the Abyssinian king and sought back the victims of their stupid wrath. But Negus was a wise king.

"Let me first see the criminals you claim," he said. And the very next day the Muslims were called to his court.

"What is the religion you preach?" he asked. "Is it averse to Christianity and idol-worship both, that your countrymen have come to claim you as their culprits?"

"O noble King," replied Jafar, the leader of the emigrants, "we were a bad people; we worshipped the idols; we fought with one another; we buried our

daughters alive, we drank, we gambled and did all those things that were evil, but at last there was born amongst us a man to whom God revealed a book and made him His Prophet."

"What is the book revealed to your Prophet?" enquired Negus. And Jafar recited the "Surah Maryam".

The Negus was impressed. "Surely, this is same as the Bible. The same spirit works in both."

"What does your Prophet command?" he questioned.

"Do not worship the stones," replied Jafar. "Do not tell lies, do not shed the blood of your brethren. Look after the orphans. Respect your neighbours. Be kind to women. Offer your prayers and do the will of God. These are the things which have made our countrymen our foes."

"You shall not be handed over to your enemies," said Negus. "In our

land you can settle peacefully and have all the comforts." And he ordered the return of the Meccan ambassadors.

THE next year brought powerful additions to the religion of God. Hamza and Omar, both gallant and brave, renowned enemies of Islam, came to the Prophet and accepted his religion as the true faith for humanity.

This frightened the foes of Islam and they decided to form an organised opposition against Banu Hashim. Abu Sufiyan of Banu Umayya was their leader. They demanded that Muhammad, the enemy of their religion, should be handed over to them. They wanted to punish him for the insult he had done to their gods. But Banu Hashim would in no way surrender Muhammad. He was after all one of them.

This was the first serious signal of

hostility. All the Arab chiefs had united together and Banu Hashim were driven to take shelter in "Shaab-i-Abu Talib," a cavity in the hills. But the Meccans wouldn't have that even. They besieged that little haven that Banu Hashim had found for them. They also stopped their provisions and did not raise the siege for about three years. For three long years Muhammad and his followers lived in those hills and when there was nothing to eat the women and children fed upon the leaves of trees. And the men grew weak and feeble. But in no way were Banu Hashim prepared to betray Muhammad and purchase their freedom.

It was after three years that some of the less cruel Arabs felt for them and asked them to come back and resettle in their homes.

AND then Muhammad the Prophet was honoured with a call to visit the Heavens. The Arch-angel Gabriel appeared with *Buraq*—a winged-horse with a human face—ready to carry Muhammad on his sacred visit. There flew the light-winged *Buraq* with its venerable load to Jerusalem, where Muhammad offered his prayers and then it soared high into the Heavens. And it was far beyond the seventh heaven that Muhammad had the most sublime privilege of meeting Allah—the Beneficent—the Merciful—the Lord of the worlds.

EARLY next morning on his way to the *Kaaba* Muhammad met an old woman who trudged, weeping silently. Muhammad asked the cause of her grief.

"I grind for a Jew," she replied, "and as I had fever last night I am late to-day. I am afraid of him for he will beat me."

Muhammad took the load from her and said, "Don't you weep, I shall speak to the Jew." He went to the Jew along with her and said, "This woman is sick and aged, do not be harsh to her. Punish me instead if you must?"

The Jew looked aghast at Muhammad and said, "Did you go to the heavens last night and meet Jehovah?"

"I did," replied Muhammad, "but how do you know?"

“ It is thus written in our divine book that on his return from his visit to Jehovah, the last Messenger will help an old woman,” said the Jew and embraced the Prophet and his religion.

THERE were people who said that Muhammad was mad. He talked of his visit to heavens and his meeting with God. They mocked at him.

Then followed a period of trial for Muhammad. Abu Talib, the loving uncle, died. This sad occurrence was followed with another,—Khadija, the devoted wife, passed away.

THERE came in Mecca a caravan from Yathrib. The inhabitants of Yathrib were poor and were oppressed by the rich and powerful Jews.

Muhammad went to them and preached the religion of God. They accepted the great religion and requested the Prophet to come and live with them. They knew that to have the Prophet among them was to prepare a bed of thorns for themselves. Muhammad sent his followers to Yathrib and they converted the people to Islam. After that he went to Yathrib and selected his friend Abu Bakr to accompany him.

Abu Bakr, the devoted friend, was the proudest heart in Arabia. Muhammad had selected him as his solitary

companion on his way to Medina (Yathrib).

When the *Kafirs* of Mecca heard of Muhammad's impending success in Medina they again flared up and decided to murder Muhammad in his bed. They selected one man from each tribe for that devilish deed, so that Banu Hashim may not claim revenge from any one tribe.

THE evening sun was sinking in the golden west. A band of ruthless Arabs waited outside the Prophet's house. They wanted to murder him before he could fly to Medina. They surrounded the house from all sides and waited there all night. And next morning they broke into the house. But in the bed lay Ali and not Muhammad. The Prophet had left with his friend Abu Bakr, and Ali, the gallant cousin, had laid himself down on his bed,—the bed on which hovered shamelessly a hundred blades of naked weapons. The slaves of gods felt defeated. The Prophet had left the house under their very eyes. But struck blind with the divine light they had failed to observe him.

FOR three days and three nights Muhammad lived in a cave not far from Mecca. Many a time his enemies came to look for him, and once they were so near the mouth of the cave that Abu Bakr felt the danger.

"Grieve not" said the Prophet, "Allah is with us." And He was. Their own eyes deceived them for they could not see the Prophet and his friend sitting before them. They went away disappointed.

And then they set a prize of hundred camels for one who would capture Muhammad. But no one could molest the Prophet who proceeded to Medina. And on his way he built a mosque at Qabaa. Along with other labourers Muhammad carried on his shoulders the

huge stones and set them in the walls.
Thus was erected the first mosque in
the history of Islam.

FROM the Prophet's entry into Qabaa begins the Muslim Era, known as "Hijrah," which is in accordance with 20th September, 622 A.D.

In Medina the Prophet got an opportunity to do the will of God. The *Azan* as a call for the prayers was introduced, and the direction of prayers was changed from Jerusalem to that of *Kaaba*.

This success of Muhammad and the religion of God annoyed the Meccans. Soon after they sent a letter to Abdullah bin Abi, a chief of Medina asking him either to kill Muhammad or expel him from his town, or they would be obliged to invade. And so in Medina, too, the hostile forces began to work.

"Fight for your God with the people who want to fight with you" came the commandment and the Prophet obeyed.

THEN followed an era of battles. Meccans were busy preparing for an invasion of Medina. Abu Sufiyan, their leader, wanted to equip them properly. He had, therefore, managed to bring, along with a caravan of merchandise, a huge war supply from Syria.

To check the advance of that caravan seemed essential to the Prophet and his followers, for that would certainly reduce the power of the Meccans. The "Ansar" (the Muslim inhabitants of Medina) and the emigrants agreed to that and decided to attack that caravan.

An army of 313 set off from Medina. In the meantime the news had reached Mecca that the Muslim forces wanted to check the war supplies. There gathered

together a few big chiefs, collected an army of about one thousand and marched off to Medina. The little forces of the Prophet had reached a village named "Badr" and the Meccan army was also near at hand.

To face these odds was a difficult job but Muhammad and his followers were not afraid of that. A little battle was fought and the proud Meccans were defeated. All the big chiefs were either killed in the battle or taken prisoners, though released after a few days.

This overwhelming victory of Islam also silenced the Jews of Medina and other tribes who were secretly making preparations to oust the Muslims. But at the same time it excited the Meccans to avenge the defeat at Badr and they busied themselves in making elaborate preparations for another attack.

FATIMA, the younger daughter of the Prophet, was married to Ali. An armour, a piece of cloth and a sheep-skin was all that Ali gave as dower. And the Prophet gave to his daughter, a bedstead, a leather-cushion, two grinding stones and two earthen jars. This was the dowry. Thus was married the daughter of Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, the King of kings.

WITH an army of 700 the Prophet went to meet the enemy numbering thousands, led by Abu Sufiyan. The rival forces met at "Uhad". The women from Mecca had also come to inspire their gallant warriors, with Hindah, Abu Sufiyan's wife at the head of them all. She was one of the bitterest enemies of Islam. And she was spared by a Muslim soldier for she was a woman and to kill a woman, however bad she could be, was not a heroic deed. The odds were great. The Meccans surrounded the little army on all sides. The Muslims put on a heroic defence, but it ended in a defeat for them. The Prophet was wounded in this battle.

THE fire of hostility again kindled in the neighbouring tribes. A chief of Nejd approached the Prophet with a request for some learned Muslims to be sent to Nejd in order to preach the great religion to his people. The Prophet agreed and seventy dervishes were sent along with him. But the cruel monster murdered all of them. Only one was spared to carry this tale of horror. And never was the Prophet more shocked to hear a news than this.

MUSLIMS of Medina had yet to fight another battle. Twenty-four thousand Meccans invaded and besieged Medina. The Muslims had dug a ditch round the town which made the conquest a problem for the advancing enemy. They continued the siege for a month and finally came to skirmishes, in which they were always defeated. And finally the Muslim sword brandished and fell heavily on the plumed helmets of the proud Meccans. They lost their courage and wanted to retreat when all of a sudden there rose a furious sandstorm and they flew along with it, beaten.

The Jews of Medina, who too had played the traitors during the battle, were entirely subdued.

“ INVITE people into the fold of Islam ” was the commandment of Allah and Muhammad obeyed. He issued letters to all the big kings of the world asking them to embrace Islam, the religion of God. The Cæsar of Rome showed every regard for the letter and replied, and the King of Egypt sent some beautiful presents. The Negus entered into bonds of fraternity. But the proud Emperor of Persia was offended. He tore the Prophet's letter to pieces. But after a few years Persia, once the Proud Persia, lay at the Muslim conquerors' feet.

THE Jews raised once again the standards of hostility. The battle is known that of the Khyber, and their power was totally crushed. And after some time the conquest of Mecca was also complete. The idols of the *Kaaba* were shattered to pieces and from its roof sounded the call of muezzin.

THE Prophet had pitched his tents of camel skin outside the town of Mecca. Tender-hearted as he was, he had given a chance to the vanquished enemy to repent and ask forgiveness of Allah.

Then came to meet him some of the traitors who now claimed his kinship.

"Your cousins have come to meet you, O Victorious Prophet," said a messenger.

"I don't think I have anything to do with them," replied the Prophet.

The messenger went back and told them what the Prophet had said.

They were disappointed. They had spent their lives fighting against the religion of God, and so the Prophet would not care to look at them.

“We will go out in the forest and starve ourselves to death,” they said.

When the Prophet heard that, he took pity on them and forgave them.

ABU SUFIYAN, the relentless foe of Islam, was brought before the Prophet. He shivered with fear, ignominy and shame. The friends of the Prophet insisted upon the execution of the man who had done greatest wrongs to the cause of Islam. But the Prophet pitied him. He not only forgave him but also proclaimed that any one taking refuge in Abu Sufiyan's house will be spared. It was a rare honour and Abu Sufiyan was proud of that, and also of becoming a Muslim.

“ FIGHT against those who are stubborn and show resistance. They should be immune who shut themselves into their houses or seek refuge inside the walls of the *Kaaba*. Do not kill women and children and also spare the old and aged,” were the orders of Muhammad before he led the victorious army into the town.

And then he forgave his greatest enemies.

For about a year after the conquest of Mecca some occasional revolts were suppressed. And then followed the era of reformation, of laws and canons, of rules and regulations.

The religion was made complete.

THE PROPHET was ill. In fact he had received the call. One day he went to the pulpit and said, "If ever I injured any one by word or deed, he can gladly take his revenge."

The Muslims shook their heads. "Never has our Prophet injured us in any way," exclaimed all of them. But, to everybody's surprise, one of them came forward and said, "You tickled me with your finger on my naked back, now take off your shirt so that I should also tickle you and have my revenge."

The Prophet smiled and said, "I am ready."

He was jovial by nature. He had actually tickled the Arab.

"Come inside my room," he added,

“and I will take off my shirt, for none has ever seen me naked.” And when the Prophet took off his shirt, the avenger ran and kissed the Seal of the Prophethood, and fell on his feet and kissed them and cried, “Forgive me, O Prophet, it was a way that I had devised to see and kiss the Seal.”

The Prophet smiled and said, “Go, the gates of hell shall be closed upon you.”

