Some will charge that Muslims have no sound arguments with which to counteract non-Muslim scholarship, that for them the case is based entirely on faith and not on reason. I will therefore bring forward my arguments against their findings in future chapters, though I will first begin by recounting some passages from early Islamic history as a prelude to an in-depth look at the Qur’an.

Chapter Two

Early History of Islam: A Brief Look

1. Pre-Islamic Arabia

   i. The Geo-Political Condition

Arabia. Situated near the crossroads of three continents, at the heart of the Old World, the Arabian Peninsula juts out into one of the most recognizable features on the globe. Bordered by the Red Sea to its west, the Persian Gulf to its east, the Indian Ocean to the south and Syria and Mesopotamia to the north, it is famously arid but for the vegetation of the Sarawat Mountains, which anchor the western coastline. Despite the scarcity of liquid there are a few sources of underground water available, and these have produced oases which have long served as the backbone for human settlements and caravans.

The Arabian Peninsula has been populated since the earliest days of recorded history, the inhabitants of the Persian Gulf actually establishing city-states prior to the third millennium B.C.E. Many scholars consider this region to be the cradle of all Semitic races, though there is by no means a full consensus. Theories on this cradle include: Babylonia (the opinion of Von Kremer, Guille and Hommel); the Arabian Peninsula (Sprenger, Sayce, De Goeje, Brockelmann, and others); Africa (Nöldeke and others); Amurru (A.T. Clay); Armenia (Peersen); the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula (Philby); and Europe (Ungnad). Phillip Hitti, in his work, History of the Arabs, says:

"Though the term 'semitic' has of late come to be used in the West more generally with reference to the Jews because of their concentration in America, it is more appropriately applicable to the inhabitants of Arabia who, more than any other group of

---

1 Jauwād 'Ali, al-Muṣafar fī Tārikh al-'Arab Qabāl al-Islām, i:569.
3 ibid., i:231-32.
4 ibid., i:235.
5 ibid., i:238.
6 ibid., i:238.
7 ibid., i:232-33.
8 ibid., i:238.

---

people, have retained the Semitic characteristics in their physical features, manners, customs, habit of thought and language. The people of Arabia have remained virtually the same throughout all the recorded ages.  

Many hypotheses regarding racial origins emanate from linguistic research (and occasionally the information supplied by the OT), and much of this is neither scientific nor historically accurate. For example, the OT includes among nations of Semitic stock many who are not Semites, such as the Elamites and Ludim, while discarding many which are Semitic, such as the Phoenicians and Cannaanites. Given the myriad viewpoints, I subscribe to the notion that the Semitic races emerged from within Arabia. As to the question of who is or is not Semitic, Arabs and Israelites share a common ancestry through Abraham.

ii. Ibrahim and Makkah

At a fixed time in history Allah bestowed on Ibrahim (Abraham) a son in his old age, Isma'il (Ismael), whose mother Hajar (Hagar) — supposedly a slave — was a gift rendered by Pharaoh to Sarah. Isma'il's birth stirred great jealousy in Sarah's heart, and she demanded that Ibrahim cast out this 'bondwoman' and her son. Faced with this domestic squabble, he brought Hajar and Isma'il to the barren land of Makkah, to a harsh sun-bitten valley bereft of inhabitants, food, and even water. As he began the trek home, Hajar gazed at the emptiness around her in bewilderment, and asked him thrice whether he was deserting them. He made no reply. Then she asked whether this was the command of Allah, and he replied: yes. Hearing this she said, "Then He will not abandon us". And indeed He did not abandon them, causing the waters of Zamzam to eventually gush out of the sand at the infant Isma'il's feet; this spring made possible the first settlements in the area, with Juhum being the earliest tribe to settle there.

Several years later Ibrahim, on a visit to his son, informed him of a vision:

16 The translation of verses 103-6 has been dropped for brevity.
17 Qur'an 5:96.
18 The OT also mentions the name of Bakka in connection with pilgrimage. Quoting the King James Version, "Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools" [Psalm 84:6]. While most Bible translators render this passage as 'valley of Baca', some of them opt instead to treat it as an adjective rather than a proper noun. So we get 'valley of Weeping' [American Standard Version]; 'Dry Valley' [Contemporary English Version]; 'vale of tears' [Douay-Rheims Bible], etc. Interestingly the site of 'Baca' is unknown to biblical scholars. The CJE footnotes, "Dry Valley: Or 'Balsam Valley', the exact location is not known," and in the New American Bible, "Baca valley: Hebrew obscure; probably a valley on the way to Jerusalem". It is generally believed that King David himself authored this Psalm, longing for the opportunity to accompany the pilgrims on their journey. The site of the pilgrimage cannot be Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem for, as the name implies, it was constructed during the reign of King Solomon and did not exist in David's lifetime. For a more thorough discussion of the subject see A.S. Ghazali, The Only Son Offered for Sacrifice: Isaac or Ishmael?, Al-Mawrid, Lahore, 2004, pp. 125-37.

10 Jawāl 'Abi, al-Ma'āfīl, i:223.
11 ibid, i:224.
12 ibid, i:680. The OT declares that both Arabs and Jews are descendants of Shem, son of Noah.
13 King James Version (KJV), Genesis 21:10.
14 Al-Bukhari, Ṣaḥīḥ, al-Anṣārī, Ṣaḥīḥ no. 3364-65 (with Ibn Hajar's commentary).
Soon the roots of this supplication had visibly blossomed and Makkah was no longer desolate; gaining life in the presence of Allah's noble sanctuary, the waters of Zamzam, and a burgeoning population. It eventually became a central junction on the trade routes to Syria, Yemen, Taif and Najd, which is why "from the time of Aelius Gallus down to Nero all the emperors cherished the desire of extending their influence to the important station of Mecca and made tentative efforts in this direction." 21

There were naturally other population movements within the Arabian Peninsula. Of note were the Jewish refugees who, many centuries later, introduced Judaism to Arabia during the Babylonian Exile, settling in Yathrib (present-day Madinah), Khaybar, Ta'imah and Fadak in 587 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.22 Nomadic Arab tribes were also in flux. Banu Tha’labah (the tribe of Tha’lab) from the Qabita tribe stock also settled in Madinah; among their descendants were the tribes of Aws and Khuza’ah, later dually known as al-Ansar23 (Supporters of the Prophet). Banu Haritha, later known as Banu Khuzah, settled in Hejaz and displaced the earlier inhabitants, Banu Jarrah, 24 becoming the custodians of the House in Makkah. They were subsequently responsible for introducing idol worship.25 Banu Lakhm, another clan of Qabita origin, settled in Hijira (present-day Kufa in Iraq) where they founded a buffer state between Arabia and Persia (c. 200-602 C.E.).26 Banu Ghassan settled in lower Syria and founded the Ghassanid Kingdom, a buffer state between Byzantine and

19 Qur'an 14:37.
21 ibid, p. 256, quoting Lammens, La Merque à La Ville de L'Hegire (pp. 234, 239) and others.
22 Jassim’ Ali, al-Mafjam fi Tarikh al-Arab al-Islam, 1658; ibid, i614-18 contain very important information on Jewish settlements in Yathrib and Khaybar.
23 M. Mohar Ali, Sira an-Nabi, vol. 1A, p. 32.
24 ibid, vol. 1A, p. 32.
26 M. Mohar Ali, Sira an-Nabi, vol. 1A, p. 32.

Arabia, which lasted till 614 C.E.27 Banu Tayy occupied the Tayy Mountains while Banu Kinda settled in central Arabia.28 The common feature of all these tribes was their lineage to Ibrahim through Isma'il.29

This section is not meant to serve as a history of Makkah prior to Islam, but as a starting point for the closest ancestral family member of the Prophet who had a direct bearing on his life. For the sake of brevity I will pass over numerous details and pick up the trail with Qusayy, the great-great-grandfather of the Prophet.

iii. Qusayy Gains Full Control of Makkah

Some two hundred years prior to the Prophet's birth, Qusayy, a keenly intelligent, powerful and highly administrative chieftain, ascended within the ranks of Makkah's political scene. Taking advantage of the Byzantine interest in Makkah, he acquired their help in securing full control of the city while successfully remaining outside Byzantine influence and neglecting their regional interests.30

Qusayy married Hubba bint Hulail, the daughter of the Khaza’ite chieftain of Makkah; this chieftain’s death allowed him to assume further power and pass custody of the House into the hands of his descendants.31 The tribe of Quraish, scattered throughout the region, was finally brought together in Makkah and forged into a single unity under his leadership.32

The following is Qusayy’s genealogy in brief.33

27 ibid, vol. 1A, p. 32.
28 ibid, vol. 1A, p. 32.
29 ibid, vol. 1A, p. 32.
30 Ibn Qutiya, al-Ma’arif, pp. 640-41. The Byzantine Empire had a new prospect of extending their influence on Makkah a few generations later when a Makkani, ’Abdul Rabb al-Huwairith of the Asad clan, embraced Christianity. The emperors placed a crown on his head and sent him to Makkah with Ukase, ordering the Makkans to accept him as their king. But even his own tribe refused to accept him [The City State of Mecca, pp. 256-57, quoting as-Suhaili (Rashid as-sufi, 1446) and others].
iv. Makkah: A Tribal Society

Though developed as a city-state, Makkah remained a tribal society up until its conquest by the Prophet Muhammad. The mainstay of Arab society around which all social organization revolved, the tribe was based on the concept that the sons of any one clan were brothers and shared the same blood. An Arab would not have understood the idea of nation-statehood unless it was within the context of the nation-state of the tribe,

"which was a nation-state of relationship binding the family to the tribe, a state based on flesh and bones, on flesh and blood, i.e. a nation-state based on lineage. It was family connections that bound together the individuals in the state and gathered them into one unit. This was for them the religion of the state and its agreed and acknowledged law." 34

Every tribal member constituted an asset for the entire tribe, so that the presence of an accomplished poet, an intrepid warrior, or someone of famed hospitality within the tribe, generated honor and credit for all those of his lineage. Among the prime duties of every seaward clan was defense, not only of its own members but also those who temporarily came under its umbrella as

Muṭṭalib found himself embroiled in a fight with Ḥāshim’s widow over the custody of young Šu‘ba, in which he ultimately prevailed. With uncle and nephew returning to Makkah, people mistook the little boy to be the slave (ṣūr: Ḥab)[42] of Muṭṭalib. Hence Shabba’s nickname: Ṣabdu-r-Muṭṭalib.[43] Following Muṭṭalib’s death, Ṣabdu-r-Muṭṭalib inherited the duties of Sīqāt and Raʃīda.[44]

And having rediscovered Zanam, whose waters had been buried and forgotten beneath the weight of sand and neglect for many years, he gained such prominence and dignity that he effectively became the chief of Makkah. In earlier years he had made a vow that if granted ten sons, he would sacrifice one of them to an idol. Now, having been blessed with this number, ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib sought to fulfill his pledge by consulting with the Azīm[45] to find out whom to sacrifice. The name of his youngest (and favorite) son ‘Abdullāh appeared. Human sacrifices being distasteful to Quraish, the tribe conferred with a soothsayer who revealed that ‘Abdullāh could be ransomed with camels. The Azīm were consulted again, and the boy’s life was spared for the price of one hundred camels.

Delighted with this turn of events, ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib took his favorite son to Madinah to visit some relatives. There ‘Abdullāh married Amina, the niece of Wuhail who was their host and of the same ancestral tribe (Qassay’s brother founded Banū Zubara, Wuhail’s clan). ‘Abdullāh enjoyed the domestic comforts of home life for some time before embarking on a trade route to Syria. Along the way he fell ill, returned to Madinah and died. By then Amina had already conceived Muḥammad.

vi. The Religious Conditions in Arabia

In the time preceding Muḥammad’s prophethood, Arabia was thoroughly antagonistic to any religious reformation. For centuries the cult of pagan worship had withstood both the presence of Jewish settlements and foreign attempts at evangelization from Syria and Egypt. William Muir, in his The Life of Mahomet, argues that this Jewish presence helped to neutralize the spread of the gospel in two ways: first, by establishing itself in the northern frontiers of Arabia, and thus forming a barrier between the Christian expanses to the north and the pagan stronghold to the south. His second argument is that Arabian idolatry had formed a sort of compromise with Judaism, incorporating enough of its elements to diminish the exotic appeal of Christianity.[46] I do not concur at all with his theory. What the Arabs professed in fact was a distorted remnant of Ibrahim and Israil’s monotheistic faith, corrupted by centuries of superstition and ignorance. The legends which the Jews and Arabs held in common were, therefore, a result of their common ancestry.

The Christianity of the 7th century was itself mired in corruption and myth, caught in a state of complete stagnation. Formally submitting Arabia to Christianity would have required, not religious persuasion, but the political coercion of a superior Christian power.[47] No such power bore down upon the pagan Arabs, and idolatry held Arabia in the tightest of grips. Five centuries of Christian evangelism had produced meager results: converts were limited to the Banū Ḥārith of Najrain, the Banū Ḥanifah of Yamāmah, and some of the Banū Ṭayy at Tayma.[48] In these five centuries, historical records do not show any incidence involving the persecution of Christian missionaries. This is vastly different from the fate which awaited Muḥammad and his earliest followers in Makkah, revealing perhaps that while Christianity was viewed as a tolerable nuisance, Islam was deemed overtly dangerous to the institutional fabric of pagan Arabia.


Covering the life of the Prophet of Islam is an immense undertaking, one that can easily fill volumes; copious literature is readily available on this topic for every interested reader. The aim of this section is somewhat different. In upcoming chapters we will discuss some of the prophets of Israel, including Jesus, and witness both their hostile reception by the Israelis and the rapid corruption of their divine teachings. Here, in lieu of retracing paths already carved out by other writers, I will simply offer a brief synopsis to complement such future references to Moses and Jesus.

[44] A procedure for picking a candidate randomly, using divining arrows that were kept under the protection of a certain deity.
[47] ibid., pp. 133-134.
[48] The Christian date is approximate. Invented using the model of the Islamic Calendar, it did not come into official public use until at least ten centuries after Jesus (most likely more), passing through several modifications. The Gregorian calendar as presently used goes back only to 1582 C.E./990 A.M. when it was adopted by the then-Catholic countries on the decree of Pope Gregory XIII, in a Papal Bull on 24 February 1582. [See Khalid Burg, "The Millennium Bug", Impact International, London, vol. 30, no. 1, January 2000, p. 5]. Modern writers project back the dates ficticiously, thus creating many problems in the dating of events.
i. The Birth of Muhammad

As mentioned earlier, 'Abdullah, Muhammad's father, died while Amina was in pregnancy. Muhammad was therefore born into precarious circumstances, a member of a poor but very noble family. Soon bereft of his mother as well, he became an orphan at the age of six and took to working as a shepherd in Makkah's barren landscape. Following in the footsteps of Quraish fashion, he began engaging in trade, and here his integrity and success as a merchant attracted the attention of an older and particularly intelligent rich widow, Khadija, who eventually married him. Muhammad was renowned throughout the city for this honesty and integrity in all matters; quoting Ibn Ishaq: "Prior to the revelations, Quraish regarded the Prophet as the trustworthy one" {Sahih}.51

ii. Muhammad, the Amin

There came a time when Quraish concurred on the necessity of rebuilding the Ka'ba. They allocated the work among themselves, each sub-clan gathering stones and assembling a portion of the structure by itself. As the construction reached the Black Stone (الحجر الأسود), a controversy ignited. Every sub-clan quarreled for the sole honor of depositing the stone into its appropriate corner, to the point where alliances were quickly formed and hostilities appeared inevitable. Abu Umayya, at the time the oldest man in Quraish, urged them to consent to the judgment of the first man entering the gate of the Holy Sanctuary. They agreed, so that the first to enter was none other than Muhammad. Seeing him Quraish exclaimed, "Here comes the amin, we are pleased with him as a judge." Here comes Muhammad." When he was informed of the dispute he asked for a cloak. Taking the stone and placing it on the cloak, he told each sub-clan to chuckle a side of the garment and lift it collectively. This they did, and once they were at the designated spot he raised the Black Stone and set it in with his own hands. With the controversy dissipated to everyone's satisfaction, the construction continued without incident.52

iii. Muhammad the Messenger of Allah

Blessed with an ideal nature and a hatred of idolatry, Muhammad never prostrated before Quraish's idols nor took part in any of their polytheistic rituals. Instead he worshipped one God, in whatever manner he thought best, his complete illiteracy precluding any knowledge of Jewish or Christian practices. Soon the time was ripe for his commission as Prophet and Messenger, and Allah prepared him for this task gradually. First he started beholding true visions.53 He noticed a rook saluting him;54 he also observed the Archangel Jibra'il (Gabriel) calling him from the sky by his name,55 and observed a light.56

'Aisha reports that the prelude of prophethood for Muhammad were his perfect dreams: for six months he witnessed visions so accurate that they seemed to materialize from the very fabric of reality. Then suddenly the first revelation descended upon him while he was secluded in the cave of Hira'; Jibra'il appeared before him and repeatedly asked him to read, countering Muhammad's insistence that he was illiterate by continuing the same demand, till at last he divulged to him the first verses of Sura al-Alaq:57

```
الْيَوْمِ يَوْمُ الْيَوْمِ

```

"Read in the name of your Lord and Cherisher, who created. Created man, out of a leech-like clot. Proclaim! And your Lord is Most Bountiful. He Who taught [the use of] the Pen. Taught man that which he knew not."

This was the first descent of the wāḥy (vé. 1:17: revelation), the very beginning of the Qur'an.

And so, unexpectedly at the age of forty, Allah summoned Muhammad with a simple message, sharply outlined and crystal clear: "لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله" ("There is no god except Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger"). And with this he was given a living eternal miracle, something to satisfy the intellect, capture the heart, and give rebirth to stifled souls: the Holy Qur'an.

iv. Abū Bakr and his Acceptance of Islam

The first man to embrace Islam outside the Prophet's family was Abū Bakr ibn Uqab (later nicknamed as-Siddiq), an experienced and well-respected

51 Ibn Ishaq, Sahih, 1:19; al-Bukhārī, Sahih, Bāḥil al-Waḥy, 2.
52 Muslim, Sahih, Fadilat, 2, p. 1782.
54 Ibn Ishaq, Sahih, Bāḥil al-Waḥy, 1:17.
56 Sura 96, see al-Bukhārī, Sahih, Bāḥil al-Waḥy.
57 Qur'an 96:1-5.
merchant, and a devoted friend of the Prophet. He asked him one day, "Is it true what Quraish claims regarding you, O Muhammad? That you have forsaken our gods, belittled our minds and disbelieved in the ways of our forefathers?" "Abū Bakr," he replied, "I am the Prophet of Allah and His Messenger. I was sent to convey His message... I call you to Allah with the truth, and it is for the truth that I am calling you to Allah, to the One Who has no associates. To worship none but Him, and to be supportive of those who obey Him". He then recited to Abū Bakr some verses from the Qur'an, which so captivated him that he forthwith announced his conversion to Islam.59

Besides being a highly respected merchant, Abū Bakr was also greatly regarded within Quraish. Taking it on himself to further the message, he began inviting to Islam all those he trusted among the people who frequented his quarters, and many embraced it, including az-Zubair b. al-'Awwām, 'Uthmān b. Affān, Ṭāhi b. 'Ubaidullāh, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās and 'Abdūl-Rahmān b. 'Auf. Abū Bakr became the Prophet's staunchest supporter, his faith standing him in good stead in every difficulty. In the case of the Prophet's nocturnal journey to Bait al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), some early followers were unable to rationalistically accept this occurrence and deserted Islam. Makkah's polytheists, keen to seize this opportunity and diversify Abū Bakr, goaded him so as to whether he believed that Muhammad journeyed to Jerusalem by night, returning to Makkah before dawn. "Yes, I believe it," he replied. "I believed an even stranger thing when he informed me that he was receiving revelations from Heaven".60

v. The Prophet Preaches Openly

After three years of preaching in secret, the Prophet was ordered by Allah to spread the word openly.

"Therefore expound openly what you are commanded, and turn away from those who join false gods with Allah. We are sufficient unto you against those who scoff."

59 Ibn Ibhīq, *Shaykh wa-al-Maghāzī*, the version of Ibn Bukair, p. 139. Here Abī Bakr’s questions do not mean that the Prophet once followed the way of the polytheists. It simply means, ‘Did you denounce openly?’

60 Abī-Shāmī, *Saba' al-Hinda*, iii:133.

61 Qur'ān 15:94-95.

At the outset the Prophet enjoyed some success, as the powerful chieftains were absent from Makkah. But upon their return they assessed the situation and, realizing the danger of this new faith, brought pressure upon the newly born Muslim community; some weaker people were made to revert to their old ways, while others stuck to their new beliefs. Cruelly and harassment spiraled daily and the Prophet, after nearly two years under its crushing weight, advised those who could not bear further persecution to migrate to Ethiopia.62 This offer, occurring in the fifth year of the prophethood, was taken up by less than twenty Muslims.63 A second migration to Ethiopia commenced not long afterwards, spurred by the polytheists’ increasingly desperate bid to raise the level of hardships and uproot Islam.64 Observing the failure of their strategy, the polytheists decided on a different approach.

vi. Quraish Offers Muhammad Great Temptations

The conversion of Ḥamzah (one of the Prophet’s uncles) was noted by Quraish with considerable alarm. ‘Uba bin Rab‘a, a chieftain, observed the Prophet praying in the Holy Sanctuary alone and informed the Quraishi assembly, "I will go to Muhammad with some proposals which he might accept. We will offer him whatever he seeks, and then he will leave us in peace". So ‘Uba went to the Prophet and said, "O my nephew, you are one of us, of the noblest of the tribe and of admirable ancestry. You have come to your people with a great matter that has divided their society and mocked their way of life, have insulted their gods and their religion, and stated that their forefathers were unbelievers, so pay attention to me and I will make you offers, and perhaps you will consent to one of them". The Prophet approved, and ‘Uba continued, "O my nephew, if you seek – with what you have brought – money, we will gather from our wealth so that you will be the richest among us; if you seek honor, we will make you our leader so that no decision can be made without you; if you wish sovereignty, we will make you king; and if this thing that comes to you is a bad spirit that you can see but cannot get rid of, we will find you a physician, and will use our riches in having you cured, for often a spirit possesses a man till he can be cured of it". Having listened patiently, the Prophet then replied, “Now listen to me:"

suspended, such that even basic provisions were banned. This ruthless, sweeping embargo stretched on for three years, during which the Prophet and his clan suffered immeasurably, carving out a precarious existence with nothing to eat but the tough leaves of the sparse desert vegetation.66

vii. The Pledge of `Aqaba

A decade of preaching and the Prophet had earned a few hundred steadfast followers, all enduring every conceivable form of persecution. During this time the new faith had also touched the ears and hearts of some people in Madinah, an oasis territory about 450 kilometers north of Makkah. These Muslims journeyed to visit him during each pilgrimage season; their numbers steadily grew until they finally met with the Prophet in secrecy at `Aqaba, in nearby Min`ah under cover of night, to make the following pledge:68 (1) Not to associate any partners with the one true God, Allah; (2) To obey the Prophet in all righteous matters; (3) To refrain from stealing; (4) And adultery; (5) And infanticide; (6) And slander.

In the following year a larger delegation (over seventy, including two women) again met with him during the pilgrimage season and invited him to migrate to Madinah. On that night they proclaimed the second pledge of `Aqaba, with a new added clause:69 (7) To protect the Messenger in the same manner as they would protect their own women and children.

Figure 2.2: The site where the ‘Aqaba pledge was made (an old mosque adorns the place). Photo by Anas al-Azami.

With this invitation the persecuted Muslim community finally found an outlet, a land that promised them shelter and hospitality.

ix. The Plot to Assassinate the Prophet

After the torment of the three-year boycott, much of the Muslim community took heed of this offer and began migrating. Realizing that any move by the Prophet northwards to Madinah would only delay an inevitable confrontation and serve to strengthen his cause, Quraysh knew that the time had come to purge their bitter enemy: in their assembly they finally reached a consensus on how to assassinate the Prophet.

Informing him of this plot, Allâh ordered him to hasten his preparations and migrate to Madinah with the greatest possible stealth. No one was aware of this except ‘Ali and Abu Bakr and the latter’s family. The Prophet asked ‘Ali to stay behind briefly in Makkah, for two reasons. First as a diversion: ‘Ali was to sleep in the same bed and in the same manner as the Prophet, with the bedcovers pulled over him, to trick those who were laying in wait with their daggers. Second, to return the valuables that men had deposited with the Prophet (for despite these trying times, people still entrusted him with their goods; his status as Makkah’s amîn had remained untouched).26

s. Muhammad in Madinah

Escaping from the assassination attempt by the grace of Allâh the Prophet commenced his migration, with the companionship of his most sincere follower and friend Abu Bakr, hiding for three days in the darkness of a mountain cave at Thaur.27 Madinah rang with an air of jubilation at his arrival, in the third Islamic calendar month of Rabi’ I, the streets resonating with excitement and poetry. With the incessant persecution lifted he set to work immediately, building a simple mosque that was nevertheless spacious enough to accommodate students, guests and worshippers for the daily and Friday prayers. Before long a constitution was drafted, outlining the responsibilities of the emigrants from Makkah and the inhabitants of Madinah towards each other, and towards the new Islamic state; and the Jews, their position and their responsibility towards the community and the state. This was, in fact, the first written constitution in the history of the world.28

27. ibid., vol. 1-2, p. 486.

Madinah was composed partly of some Jewish tribes, and to a much larger extent of two Arab tribes, the Ans and Khazraj. Both tribes were linked to each other through blood-ties but were constantly at odds, occasionally taking up arms. The Jews regularly shifted their allegiance from one faction to the other, further exacerbating the situation. The Prophet’s arrival in Madinah heralded the entry of the new religion into nearly every house of the Ans and Khazraj, such that a new political situation became apparent; with the drafting of the constitution the Prophet became the supreme authority and leader of all the Muslims, as well as the Jews. Those who were not favorably inclined towards the Prophet deemed it unwise to oppose him openly, and for them two-facedness soon became a daily routine. These hypocrites (folus) sought to harm the Prophet and his followers through diverse means, with a zeal that continued unabated throughout most of his life.

The clear enmity between the Muslims and Arabia’s polytheists, in addition to the neighboring Jews and their wayward allegiances, resulted over the years in several ghazwât (battles) and a few more modest raids. The most prominent battles were: Battle of Badr, 17 Ramadan, 2 A.H.29; Battle of Uhud, Shawwâl, 3 A.H.; Battle of the Ditch (Jamâ‘atul Kitâb), Shawwâl, 8 A.H.; Battle of Bani Qurayza, 5 A.H.; Battle of Khilafar, Rabi’ I, 7 A.H.; Battle of Mu‘a‘a, Jumâ‘a I, 8 A.H.; Conquest of Makka, Ramadân, 8 A.H.; ‘I‘lâm and Ta‘if, Shawwâl, 8 A.H.; ‘I‘lâm and Tâ‘if, 8 A.H.; The Year of Deputations30; and Tabuk, Rajab, 9 A.H.

Though the Prophet’s adversaries in these battles were generally idolaters, they did on occasion include Jews and Christians who had allied themselves with Quraysh against the Muslims. I will mention a few incidents from some of these ghazwât, not for the sake of detail but rather to facilitate a comparison of Islam’s rapid spread under the Prophet’s leadership with the disarray of the Israelites’ desert wanderings at the time of Moses, and the struggles of the twelve Apostles during the time of Jesus.31

29. A.H. (After Hi‘jra) is the Muslim lunar calendar. Initiated during the reign of the second caliph, ‘Umar (and most likely earlier), it begins with the Prophet’s migration to Madinah (the Hijra).
30. Though not a battle, I have included this because it signifies pagan Arabia’s growing warmath and receptiveness towards Islam. Gharzaw (â‘âr) means to expend energy in the spread of Islam, and the Year of Deputations is a lovely example of Arab tribes coming to the Prophet, sans compulsion, and contributing to the spread of the religion by embracing it voluntarily.
31. See Chapters 15 and 17.
xi. Prelude to the Battle of Badr

News came to the Prophet that a huge caravan was passing by a route near to Madinah under the leadership of Abū Sufyān. The Prophet sought to intercept the caravan but Abū Sufyān, learning this, altered his route and dispatched a messenger to Makkah to request reinforcements. Consequently an army of one thousand men with seven hundred camels and horses was readied under Abū Jahl’s command, an imposing display of steel and strength marching northwards for an assault on Madinah.

Receiving intelligence concerning both the caravan’s new route and Abū Jahl’s army, Muhammad informed the people of the circumstances before them and sought their advice. Abū Bakr stood up and spoke boldly, and ‘Umar followed suit. Then al-Miqḍād bin ‘Amr rose and said, “O Prophet of Allah, go where Allah tells you to go and you will find us with you. By Allah, we will not say to you what Banū Isra’il 76 said to Moses, ‘Go, you with your Lord, and fight while we sit here [and watch].’” 77 But ‘Go, you with your Lord, and fight for you shall be our de-fenders until you conquered it’. His intrepid words fell gratefully on the Prophet’s ears, and he thanked him and prayed for him.

Then he exclaimed, “Advise me, O people,” by which he meant the Anṣār. There were two reasons behind this: (a) they formed the majority; and (b) when the Anṣār gave their pledge to him in ‘Aqaba, they made it clear that they were not liable for his safety till he entered their boundaries. Once there they swore to protect him as they would their own wives and children. Hence the Prophet’s concern that they might view with reluctance any attack on Abū Jahl’s daunting army, so long as it remained outside the boundaries of Madinah. When the Prophet had uttered these words, Sa’d bin Mu’ādh said, “By Allah, as if you meant us?” He replied, “Yes, no doubt”. Sa’d said, “We believe in you, we affirm your truth, we bear witness that what you have brought is the truth, and we have given you our pledge to hear and obey. So go wherever you want and we are with you; by the One Who has sent you with the truth, if you were to cross this sea and wade through it, we would wade through it with you, not a single man lingering behind. We do not abhor meeting our enemy tomorrow. We are skilled in warfare, dependable in battle. It may well be that Allah will let us show you something which will delight you, so take us along with His blessing.” 78 The Prophet, assured and encouraged by Sa’d’s words, pressed on to Badr with an army of 319 men, two horses and seventy camels. There they encountered the Quraisy forces: one thousand men (six hundred wearing chain mail), one hundred horses, and hundreds of camels. 79 By the day’s end the grace of Allah had shined brightly upon the Muslims; the polytheists suffered a catastrophic defeat, and the Islamic state ascended to maturity and became a renowned power in the Arabian Peninsula.

xii. The Execution of Khubaib bin ‘Adi al-Anṣārī

Khubaib, a Muslim captive, was procured by Sa’d bin ‘Amra. Umayya with the sole aim of having him publicly executed, as vengeance for his father who was killed at Badr. A mob gathered eagerly to witness the event. Among them was Abū Sufyān, who taunted Khubaib as they brought him out for execution, “I swear to you by God, Khubaib, do you not wish that Muhammad was here in your place so that we might behead him instead, and leave you with your family?” Khubaib replied, “By Allah, I would not like to see Muhammad in the place he is in now with even a thorn in his side, while I sit with my family”. Abū Sufyān growled, “I have never seen a man so loved as Muhammad is by his companions”. Then Khubaib was brutally dismembered, limb after limb, and was ridiculed as beasts of sweat and streams of blood gushed from every corner of his body, before he was beheaded. 80

xiii. The Conquest of Makkah

According to the conditions of the Ḥudaybiyyah peace treaty (6 A.H.), Arab tribes were given the option of joining whichever faction (the Prophet or Quraish) they desired an alliance with. As a result Khuzay’a joined the Prophet while Banū Bakr joined Quraish. Then Banū Bakr, acting against the conditions of the treaty and with the assistance of Quraish, attacked Khuzay’a; the Khuzay’a tribesmen scurried towards the sanctuary of the Holy Ka’ba but contrary to the accepted custom their lives were not spared. Khuzay’a brought their grievances to Muhammad and asked for justice. The

76 Children of Israel.
77 Qur’an 5:24.
78 A place in Yemen, others say the farther stone. Regardless, it means, “as far as you would go”.
81 ‘Urwa, at-Maghāzī, p. 177. Khubaib and Zaid were captured in the same incident and both were married at Tan’im, a short time apart. In the work of Ibn Ishaq [Ibn Hishām, Sīra, vol. 3-4, p. 172] this reply is attributed to Zaid.
Prophet offered both Quraisy and Banu Bakr three options, the last of which was to consider the Hadaihiyya truce as null and void. With an arrogant air Quraisy picked the third option. Realizing afterwards how unwise this was, Abu Sufyan went to Madinah to renew the truce, but returned fruitlessly.

The Prophet prepared for an attack on Makkah, and all the neighboring tribes bearing allegiance to the Muslims were invited to join forces. For twenty-one years Quraisy had perpetrated every conceivable form of hardship, persecution and cruelty on the Muslims, and now that the wheels had turned they were fully aware of what these preparations really meant. Dread and fear spread rampant in every alley and every house. Leading an army of ten thousand, the Prophet proceeded to Makkah on the 10th of Ramadan, 8 A.H. The Muslims camped at Marr az-Zahrān and Quraisy were completely ignorant of this fact. The Prophet did not seek to take the Makkans by surprise nor was he anxious for bloodshed; he wanted Quraisy to fully assess the situation before opting for a hopeless battle. In the meanwhile Abu Sufyan and Hakim b. Hizam had ventured out on a spying mission when they encountered 'Abbās, the Prophet's uncle. 'Abbās discussed the situation with Abu Sufyan and advised him to accept Islam. With Abu Sufyan's conversion the road was paved for a 'bloodless conquest'.

Abū Sufyān hurried to Makkah and cried at the top of his voice, "O Quraisy, this is Muhammad who has come to you with a force you cannot resist. He who takes refuge in the house of Abū Sufyān is safe, he who shuts his door upon himself is safe, and he who enters the Holy Sanctuary is safe". And so the Prophet returned to his birthplace, the very city which had menaced him a few years before with brutish spite and assassination, now bearing an army that marched bloodlessly through the veins of Makkah. The resistance was minor at best, and the Prophet soon stood at the door of the Kaaba and delivered a speech, concluding with, "O Quraisy, what do you think I am about to do to you?" They replied, "O noble brother and son of a noble brother! We expect nothing but kindness from you". And he said, "Go, for you are free". Thus was the clemency he granted the Makkans, to those who had persisted in the torture of Muslims for twenty years.81

83 Bosworth Smith says, "If he had worn a mask at all, he would now at all events had thrown it off; ... now would have been the moment to gratify his ambition, to satisfy his lust, to glut his revenge. Is there anything of the kind? Read the account of the entry of Mohammed into Mecca by side with that of Marcus of Sulla into Rome.... We shall then be in a position better to appreciate the magnanimity and moderation of the Prophet of Arabia". [In Mohammed and Mohammedanism, London, 1876, p. 142, quoted by A.H. Siddiqi, The Life of Muhammad, Islamic Research Academy, Karachi, 1969, p. 313.]
84 In the Yamamah region, a plateau in the central north-eastern region of the Arabian Peninsula.
85 Generally, apostasy is the desertion of one's religious faith.
86 Some refused to pay the zakat (obligatory alms) to the central government.
87 At-Tabari, Tāribh, iii:272.
88 Muslim, Sahih, Imām 32.
89 At-Tabari, Tāribh, iii:248.
bin al-Walid to Tulaibah bint Khawalid; Ikrima son of Abū Jahl, with Shuraib bint, to Musailama; Muhajirin son of Abū Umayya to the remnants of al-Awsad al-Anṣāri, then to Ḥadramawt; Khalid bin Sa‘id bin al-‘Aṣ to al-Hamzah, near the Syrian border; ‘Amm bin al-‘Aṣ to Quṣayr; and others; Hudhaifa bin Mi‘ṣ bin al-Ghafālīn to Nafa, on the Gulf of Oman; ‘Abd ‘A‘īb bin Harthama to Ma‘ṣar; ‘Umar bin Ḥajjāt to Banu Sulaim; Suraq b. Mu‘ārrin to Thā‘amah of Yemen; ‘Al’Awāl bin al-Hādhrami to Bahrayn; and Shurā Ibid. b. ‘Asma‘a to Yamāmah and Qudā‘a.90

Of these, perhaps the largest and fiercest battle was waged in Yamamah against Musailama, whose forces exceeded forty thousand and enjoyed very strong tribal ties in the area. Ikrima was initially sent to finish him, but because of his limited success he was dispatched to some other region. Shurahbīl, who had been sent to assist Ikrima, was now told to wait for the arrival of a new commander, Khalid bin al-Walid, who by the grace of Allah successfully vanquished Musailama’s imposing army.

Following the suppression of these rebellions and the return of the Arabian Peninsula to Muslim control, Abū Bakr next ordered Khalid bin al-Walid to march towards Iraq.91 There he encountered and defeated the Persians at Ubila, Lady’s Castle, Marzir, Ullias (Safar 12 A.H./May 633 C.E.), Walajah the river of blood (in the same month), Anghasia, and Ḥura (12 A.H./c. 634 C.E.),92 where he established his headquarters.93 After Ḥura he advanced to Anbar and discovered a fortified city with protective ditches. His terms for peace being accepted however, he proceeded to ‘Ain al-Tamr, a town straddling the desert three days west of Anbar.94 Here the enemy was a potent mixture of Persians and Arab Christians, some belonging to the Christian prophetess Sajī,95 in the ensuing battle the Christians fought more fiercely than the Persians. Both were defeated and the city fell to the Muslims.

ii. Military Advances in Syria

Regaining the Peninsula at the end of 12 A.H. (633 C.E.), Abū Bakr formulated a plan to conquer Syria. His first two choices of commander, Khalid bin Sa‘id bin al-‘Aṣ followed by Ikrima b. Abū Jahl, met with

limited success. So he divided the region into four zones and appointed a commander to each: Abū ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrāḥ to ‘Ims (in the western part of present-day Syria); Yazid b. Abī Sufyān to Damascus; ‘Amm bin al-‘Aṣ to Palestine; and Shurahbīl b. ‘Asma‘a to Jordan.

The Romans had acted accordingly, setting up four regiments of their own, Abū Bakr then amended his strategy and ordered his four generals to join together, in the process directing Khalid bin al-Walid to race swiftly to Syria with half his army to assume the position of commander-in-chief. There he was blessed with tremendous success, while elsewhere Muslim armies advanced swiftly against various other adversaries.

4. The Countries and Provinces Conquered During the Reigns of ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān

- Yarmūk or Wāṣūsa, 5 Rajab, 13 A.H. (Sept. 634 C.E.);
- Battle of Qādisiyah, Ramadān, 14 A.H. (Nov. 635 C.E.);
- Ba‘albak, 25 Rajab 1, 15 A.H. (636 C.E.);
- ‘Ims and Qinnasrin, captured in 15 A.H. (636 C.E.);
- Palestine and Quds (Jerusalem) in Rajab 2, 16 A.H. (637 C.E.);
- Capture of Madīan, 15–16 A.H. (636–7 C.E.);
- Jazira (Ruha, Rappa, Nasibain, Harrān, Mardīn), mostly inhabited by Christians, in 18–20 A.H. (639–40 C.E.);
- Conquest of Persia: Nehavand, 19–20 A.H. (640 C.E.);
- Egypt (excluding Alexandria) in 20 A.H. (640 C.E.);
- Alexandria in 21 A.H. (641 C.E.);
- Barqa (Libya) in 22 A.H. (642 C.E.);
- Tripoli (Libya) in 23 A.H. (643 C.E.);
- Cyprus in 27 A.H.96 (647 C.E.);
- Armenia in 29 A.H. (649 C.E.);
- Dhi as-Sawāt, naval war in 31 A.H. (651 C.E.);
- Azerbaijan, Deulaw, Marow (Merv), and Sarakhs in 31 A.H. (651 C.E.);
- Kirmān, Sijistān, Khurasan and Balkh, also in 31 A.H. (651 C.E.).

And so, after ruling 395 years, the curtain fell for the Sassanid (Persian) Dynasty at the hands of a newly born nation of three decades, which boasted

---

90. Aṣ-Ṭabari, Tārīkh, iii:249; see also W. Muir, Annals of the Early Caliphate, pp. 17–18.
91. According to the historian Khalīfa bin Khayyūt, this was in 12 A.H. [Ṭabari, i:106.]
94. Ibid., p. 85.
95. Ibid., p. 85.
5. Early Muslim History in Non-Muslim Sources

In the previous chapter we mentioned Y. Nevo, an authority within the new revisionist school who argues that external non-Muslim evidence must be found to verify every Muslim account. The absence of such corroboration entails that the Muslim side of the story be discarded as fiction.

In case of a conflict between both sources, he adds, the non-Muslim source is always preferred. Going through a massive collection of materials, R. Hoyland has done a commendable job in showing the non-Muslim evidence bearing on the rise of Islam and Muhammad. Many of these non-Muslim sources are contemporary and date only a few years after the actual events took place.

Among these, the earliest explicit reference to Prophet Muhammad is a Syriac manuscript written c. 640 C.E. by Thomas the Presbyter, who writes that, "In the year 945, Justinian, on 4 February at the ninth hour, there was a battle between the Romans and the Arabs of Muhammad (Syr pagiye al-Muhammad) in Palestine twelve miles east of Gaza. The Romans fled ... The Arabs ravaged the whole region."

In the history of ps.-Jausher, part of the Georgian historical corpus known as K’art’is thi’k’hooreba, we read that, "Muhammad (Geo Muhammadi), a descendant of Ishmael, teacher of the religion of the Saracen ... conquered all Arabia and Yemen," and was succeeded by Abi Bakr (Geo Abokh’ari), who "conquered Persia, entered Baghdad, and by force

100. Ibid, pp. 92-93.
102. In certain quotes, the three letter symbol inside parenthesis represents the time name of the language as defined by the ISO 639-2 code: Syr it Syriac, Geo is Georgian.
104. Hoyland, op. cit., p. 120. The precise dating leaves no doubts that it ultimately came from first-hand knowledge. The battle is dated 4th February A.D. 945 (634 C.E.) - 28 Dhil Q’ada 12 a.H. which fixes the date for the battle of Dhu’l-Ha‘tna near Gaza, and according to Muslim historians, took place from 21 Dhil Q’ada to the first of Dhil Hijja, 12 a.H. The Muslim army was commanded by Abi Umahna al-Buhli [N. Sobhah, Shukrâl'â, as-Sukhâb us-Sarâ'ir, al-Askar al-Falastinihun (Damascus: Dār al-Rawziyyah, 2000)].
105. In Christian writings the name Saracenas mean "those empty of Sarah" or "not from Sarah" or as in the case of K’art’is thi’k’hooreba, "the dogs of Sarah" [Hoyland, op. cit., p. 684, footnote 19]. A derogatory term, it was first used as reference to Arabs and was later on extended to encompass all Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs alike (see "Saracen", Encyclopaedia Britannica).
compelled innumerable people to abandon fire-worship, converting them to the Saracen [religion]."105 The author is also aware that the Muslims had their own holy book, the Qur'an (Gez Koran).106

In the Chronicle of Fredegar, there is a description of the Arab conquest which begins with Heraclius divining by means of astrology that "his empire would be laid waste by circumcised races," whereupon he commanded that all Jews throughout his empire be baptized and sought assurances from the Frankish king Dagobert that he would do the same.107 Describing subsequent events he writes that, "The Hagarines, who are also called Saracens ... had now grown so numerous that at last took up arms and threw themselves upon the provinces of the emperor Heraclius, who dispatched an army to hold them. In the ensuing battle the Saracens were the victors and cut the vanquished to pieces. It is said that the Saracens killed in this engagement 150,000 men."108 This is probably an account of the Battle of Yarmuk.

A record of the Arab conquest of Syria in 15 A.H./636 C.E. appears in a sixth century Syriac manuscript a few faint lines scribbled alongside the gospels according to Matthew and Mark. The text is poorly preserved and many of the readings are unclear or disputable. It reads, "In January [the people of] Hims took the word for their lives and many villages were ravaged by the killing of [the Arabs of] Muhammad (Syr Muhmed). ... On the twentieth of August in the year nined hundred and forty-seven there gathered in Gabitha [a multitude of] the Romans, and many people of the Romans were killed, s[ome fifty thousand]."109

A short Nestorian document, known as the Chronicle of Khuzistan, written c. 660 C.E., covers the period from the death of Hormizd son of Khusraw to the end of the Persian Empire. The chronicle recounts that, after a two year siege of Shushtar,110 a man from Qaṣr who lived there became friends with someone who owned a house along the walls, and together they conspired to let the Arabs in through a tunnel dug inside

the walls in return for a third of the city's spoils.111 Furthermore it gives a brief account of the Muslim invasions, "whose leader was Muhammad (Mḥmd). Neither walls nor gates, armor or shield, withstand them, and they gained control over the entire land of the Persians. Yazdgird sent against them countless troops, but the Arabs routed them all and even killed Rostam. ... Heraclius, the Byzantine king, sent armies against them, but the Arabs killed more than 100,000 of them."112

Figure 2.4: The ancient fortress city of Shushtar in the Khuzistan province.

Prior to the 7th century the Chinese had hardly even heard of the Arabs, but in 638 C.E. the Tang emperor Ta-tsung received an appeal from the Persian ruler Yazdgird III for help in ousting the Arabs who had invaded his territory. And as late as 737 C.E. various descendants of Yazdgird frequented the Tang court in hopes of securing aid to repel the Arabs.113 Some of the more interesting facts mentioned in the Chinese records pertain to Muslims daily life: that they offer ritual prayers five times a day, that women when going out cover their faces irrespective of social status, that every seven days the king comes out to perform religious services from a high pulpit and preaches to the multitudes, that their clothes are clean and their manners elegant, that when they quarrel among themselves they do not resort to brute force, and that "the people lack nothing of what the earth produces. [Their country] is the hub of the universe where myriad goods are abundant and inexpensive."114

105 Hoyland, op. cit., p. 684.
106 Ibid., p. 684.
107 Ibid., p. 218. The source is a Latin chronicle in 90 chapters, covering the period 584 until 692 C.E. (c. 22 A.H.) [ibid. p. 216].
108 Ibid., p. 218.
109 Ibid., p. 116-17. Due to the fragmentary nature of the document, whatever appears in brackets is unreadable and any letters/words given therein are conjectured. There is strong evidence that the author was a contemporary [ibid., p. 117]. The date of the battle, 20th August A.G. 947 (636 C.E.) corresponds to 12th Rajab 15 A.H.
110 An ancient fortress city in the Khuzistan province in southwestern Iran, approximately 92 km from Ahvaz.
111 Ibid., p. 184.
112 Ibid., p. 186.
113 Ibid., p. 243.
114 Ibid., pp. 244-47. These observations are based on the personal experience of Ching-hsing Chou, who was taken prisoner after the battle of Talas before being allowed to return to China in 762 C.E./155 A.H. The material itself appeared in a
6. Conclusion

Aside from the vast territory which had come under Muslim control, either through battles or deputations, the Prophet at his death left Muslims with the two greatest assets of all: the Holy Qur’ān and the sunna. His cause was taken over by thousands of Companions who had personally known him, lived alongside him, shared food and starvation with him, and unsheathed their blades at his side. These Companions had literally pledged their lives in every hour of need without trepidation. We can only guess at their sheer number, but given that Musailama’s forces of forty-thousand was only one of a dozen apostate armies that were successfully engaged and defeated simultaneity, the number must indeed be staggering. It is unlikely that they approached the 600,000 ‘men of fighting strength’ who crossed the sea with Moses (according to Exodus), but whilst that multitude wandered aimlessly in the desert sun, the Companions were blessed with one colossal military triumph after another. And all the while the new religion was scrupulously guarded, the entire realm’s management based on the foundations of the Qur’ān and sunna such that heresies were never given the opportunity to germinate or flourish. Such an environment proved extremely receptive to the preservation and propagation of the Muslim texts in their intact forms, as we shall see next.

---

115 The sunna constitutes the authenticated traditions of the Prophet, i.e. all his pro-erly verified words and deeds (along with the actions of others with which met with his consent). Hundreds of thousands of these traditions exist; a single tradition is termed hadith.

116 See p. 254.

---

CHAPTER THREE

REVELATIONS AND THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

From early Islamic history we now turn to face Prophet Muhammad’s message itself, to its nature as well as its link with the teachings of earlier prophets. Allah created humanity for the singular purpose of worshipping Him, though He is in no need of anyone’s worship as it adds nothing to His supremacy. The manner of worship was not left to the dictates of individuals or communities, but was explicitly delineated through prophets and messengers. As all messengers received their commission from the same Creator, so the core message remained essentially the same; only some of the practical details were altered. Nūḥ (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Iṣā’īl (Ismael), Ya’qūb (Jacob), Ištāq (Isaac), Yūsuf (Joseph), Dāwūd (David), Sulaimān (Solomon), Ḥūṣain (Jesus) and the countless others He sent forth each bore a message of finite scope, intended for a particular community at a particular time. These were all invariably corrupted or lost, nullifying the message and leaving its followers in the throes of idolatry, superstition or fabrication. With Muhammad however, the time was ripe for a message that was not hedged in by national boundaries or a particular epoch, a faith that could never be nullified because it was intended for all people and for all time.

Islam refers to the Jews and Christians as ‘people of the Book’. These three religions have a common patriarch in Ibrāhīm, and hypothetically worship the same God that was worshipped by Ibrāhīm and his sons Iṣā’īl and Ištāq. In discussing these religions we inevitably encounter some common terms, but though the words appear similar to the eyes the underlying implications often are not. For example, the Qur’ān states explicitly that everything in the universe has been created for the sole purpose of worshipping Allah, while in Jewish mythology the entire universe was created for the merit of the children of Israel. In addition the Israelite prophets supposedly indulged in fashioning images of false gods (Aaron) or committed adultery (David), while Islam insists on the virtuous character of all the prophets. Meanwhile, the Christian concept of a trinity— with Jesus being the sole member of the Godhead visible within church confines— thoroughly contradicts the precise Oneness of Allah in Islam. We will therefore briefly cover the nature of prophethood in the light of Islam; this will lay the groundwork for the