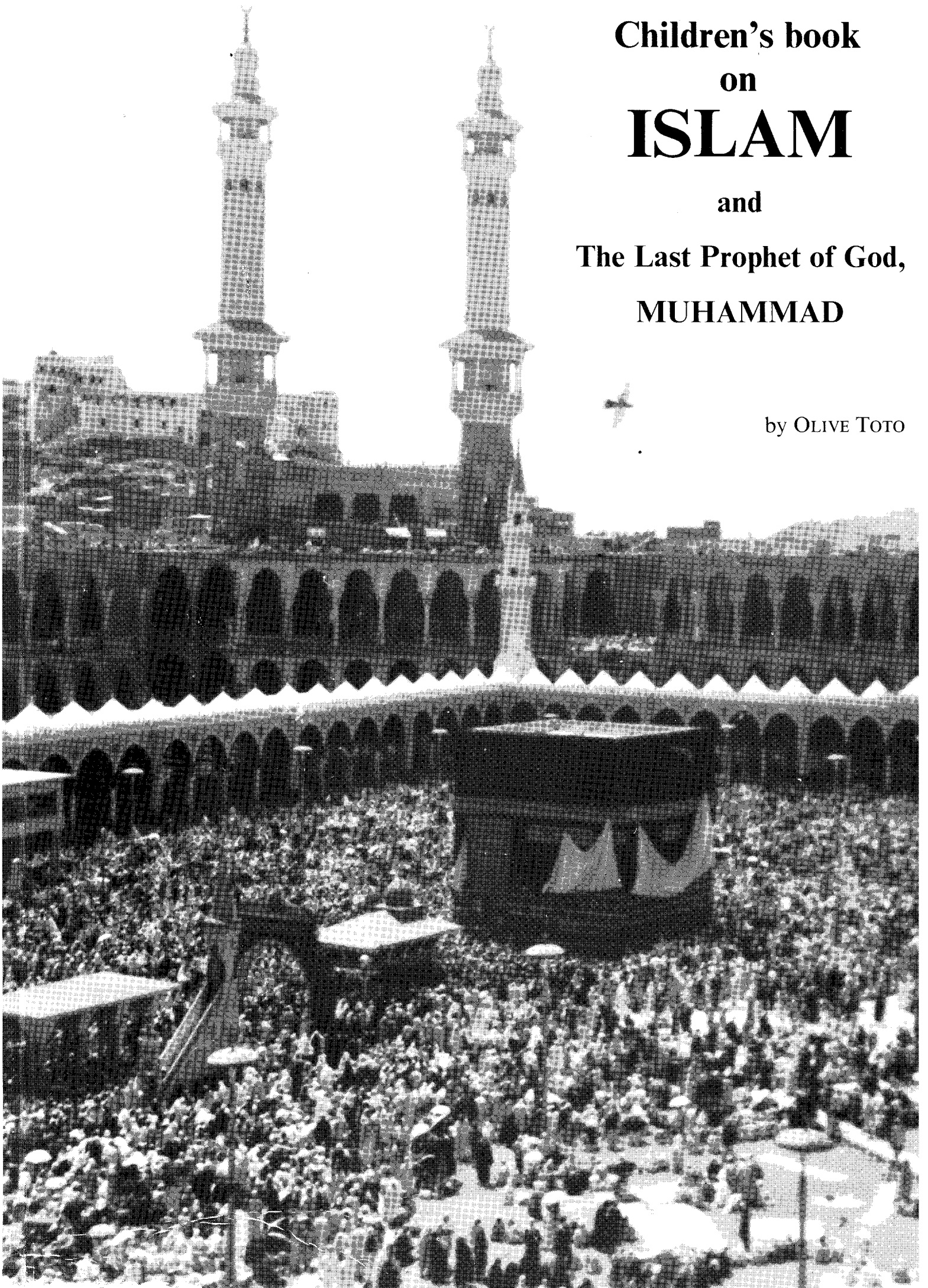


Children's book
on
ISLAM

and
**The Last Prophet of God,
MUHAMMAD**

by OLIVE TOTO



The photograph that has been used for the front and back covers of this book shows the Ka'bah in Mecca with many pilgrims gathered around it thanking God for giving them the health and strength to have made the journey.

Courtesy, Aramco World Magazine, New York, the U.S.A.
Photo by S. M. Amin.

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SET IN MONOPHOTO TIMES NEW ROMAN

DEDICATION

*Dedicated to Muslim children, the torch bearers
of Islam, all over the world, and to His Majesty
King Faisal Bin Abdul-Aziz, the Guardian of the
Holy Places.*

OLIVE TOTO

Children's Book
on
ISLAM
and
The Last Prophet of God
MUHAMMAD

By
OLIVE TOTO

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“Verily the religion with God is Islam” (The Qur’án 3:19)

A Little Talk on Islam

My dear little Children,

Perhaps you are four or even five years old. But I don’t think that you can read yet. I hope that your mother or father will read to you. Although you cannot read, I know you can understand the meaning of the words Yes and No. So you will be able to understand this talk. There are many pages for you in this book about Islam.

“What is Islam?” you will ask. Well, it is a religion. A way of life. “Now, what is religion?” you will ask. It is a teaching of God. The way He wants you to live. Something for you to believe in. Something to help you to be good, and believe in Him. If we say a man is religious, we mean that he is good, loves God, and follows what God taught him, through our last Prophet Muhammad. A religious man is one who has a religion and lives up to its ideals every day of his life.

God gave our Prophet lots of good advice for us and lots of wonderful words to put down in a book which is known as the Holy Qur’án. I can hear you asking “Who is God?” Oh! I know you children of four years of age. You are always asking, “What’s this? What’s that? What for and why?” But don’t be afraid; it is good to ask questions. If more grown-ups asked more questions, it would be a much better world to live in.

You know God is always near you, by your side helping you. He loves you and if you are really sorry for anything wrong you have done and mean not to be naughty again, He will forgive you. No one on this earth has seen God, but He walks beside you. He does not push you. God just guides you as your parents guide you across the road. Now, your parents will take your hand whether you want it or not when you are crossing a road because God has given them the love to look after you, and they will pass this love and sense on to you. God is unseen but everywhere, waiting for you to put out your little hand and say “God, help me please!” I don’t really mean to put out your hand, but that is how we grown-ups talk. We mean that God will help you, if you ask Him by saying a prayer. What is prayer? Well, have you ever heard someone say “I pray of you; do not do this or that”. By these words they mean, I beg of you, or I ask you, to listen to me. So in our little way we ask God to help and show us what to do. We also praise God. What do I mean by praise? I mean saying nice words to God. God is not in need of your nice words, but by saying them and loving God you become a nice person, if you really mean all you say. Prayer is talking to God, telling Him everything. He will hear you and understand. In this book I have given a description of the actions of prayers and the words of prayers in Arabic and English. Also photographs of a little boy whose name is Tariq saying his prayers.

“Oh!” you will say, “I am only four, or five years old; I cannot pray like that.” You can, you know, if you try. You will not remember all the prayers at first. But, however you pray God will hear you. But by doing these set prayers you will know that all the Muslims are saying or doing the same prayers as you are, and you will feel that you belong to one big family of Muslims—black, yellow, brown or white, all saying the same kind of prayer and all facing

in one direction towards a place called Mecca. The Prophet Muhammad prayed facing the Ka'bah, a building in Mecca, about which also I will tell you in another part of this book, and it is no ordinary building I can tell you.

The prayers and worship of God are performed five times a day. When you see the photos of the little boy at prayer in this book, you will notice how sometimes his forehead is right on the ground and sometimes he is bowing low. "Why does he bow so low?" you will ask. Well, you bow to an earthly king, then you should bow much lower still to the Heavenly King. God is better than any one. There is none like Him in the whole of the world or worlds. So why not bow as low as you possibly can and many times also?

I mentioned the Prophet Muhammad a little while ago. "Who is he?" you will ask. He is the man to whom God gave Islam. This Prophet (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him!) passed it on to us. There have been many prophets throughout the past years. A prophet is a man who brings messages from God to his people. The Prophet Muhammad was the last of these prophets and we believe that no more prophets will ever come and that there is no need for any more or any other message.

The message given to the Prophet Muhammad was in the form of a holy book called the Holy Qur'an, which was given in parts to our Prophet at different times and recorded and learnt by heart by many followers as well as being written down. The Holy Bible is a book for the Christians but a Christian does not believe that Jesus is a prophet as a Muslim does. Nowhere in the Bible did Jesus Christ say "I am God". Now, we Muslims believe in all the prophets; we leave none out and respect them all. Islam is the only religion which accepts all the prophets, leaving none out.

In this book there are many interesting items for the older person to read to you. As you are so very important, I felt I must give this little talk to you first.

I hope you enjoy what I have to tell you. Also I hope that your big brother or sister will also enjoy my talks in this book.

Assalamu 'Alaykum! (Peace be with you!),

OLIVE TOTO.



"God is Great"

Fifty Questions of Interest about Islam

My dear Boys and Girls of 12 years of age or even younger!

I know you know already that Islam is a belief in *One* and only *One God*, and that Muhammad is the *Last Prophet*. And also that Islam reveres all the prophets (the only religion that does this). I also know you know that our Prophet was born in Arabia and that his mother's name was Aminah and his father's name was Abdullah. But I have a few different questions that might interest you. So, my dear children, here they are. I know what it is like when one is at school; friends think all kinds of funny things about us Muslims, and therefore we must be ready to answer any questions whatever they are. Never get annoyed with anyone asking you any question, even if it seems silly to you. Always remember for many years Islam was misunderstood. Of course, not so much now. But even now, some people do not understand Islam. And it is your job, young as you are, to make Islam understood by all.

QUESTION 1. Name the religion which wants its followers to believe in only One God for Whom the word in Arabic is Allah, and the word in English is God.

Answer. Islam is that religion.

QUESTION 2. Name the religion that believes in all the prophets and the Prophet Muhammad as the Last Prophet.

Answer. Islam is the only religion that believes all that is said above.

QUESTION 3. What religion believes that Jesus is a prophet?

Answer. Islam is that religion.

QUESTION 4. What are the followers of Islam called?

Answer. Muslims.

QUESTION 5. Why cannot a Muslim call himself a Muhammadan?

Answer. Because, as you know, the Christians worship Jesus Christ or through him, therefore, they are called Christians. A Muslim does *not* worship Muhammad. So he must *not* be called a Muhammadan, because it gives a wrong impression.

QUESTION 6. A little girl asks this question with reference to the previous Answer: "But what if my teacher calls me a Muhammadan and I am too shy to correct her?"

Answer. Little Girl! If you let anyone call you a Muhammadan you are doing a lot of harm to all Muslims everywhere. Never be too shy to stand up for Islam if there is any likelihood of Islam being misunderstood. As for your teacher, she will admire you if you put your hand up and politely give the reason why you must not be called a Muhammadan.

QUESTION 7. Who gave the name of Islam to our religion?

Answer. God gave the name of Islam to this religion which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. A statement about this is in the Holy Qur'an (our Holy Book).

QUESTION 8. Does a Muslim need anyone to wash away his or her sins or did anyone die on a cross to save us?

Answer. No, definitely no. A Muslim must wash away his own sins with prayers to God if he is truly sorry. We Muslims believe that no man must die for us to wash away our sins, and that God could never want anyone to die for our sins.

QUESTION 9. Does a Muslim need a priest to confess to? Does he make confession in a confession box?

Answer. Islam is against such things, and there are no confession boxes. A Muslim prays straight to God Himself.

QUESTION 10. What is the meaning of the word Islam?

Answer. The word Islam means submission or to submit to God.

QUESTION 11. In Islam we have five important things to believe in. These important things we call "pillars". You can guess why they are called pillars. Because they hold Islam up; Islam rests on them. Please name these five pillars.

Answer. The five pillars of Islam are:

1. **AL-SHAHADAH** or the **DECLARATION OF THE FAITH** in One and the Only God and that Muhammad is His messenger. The words which are used in the declaration of the faith when one embraces Islam are: "I bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is His messenger."
2. **AS-SALAH** or **PRAYERS**. You already know that we pray five times a day at least. You will find full details of the Prayers in this book. Talking of prayers, I should like to tell you that our Prophet used to seek the blessing of God in all his actions.
3. **ZAKAH**. Islam requires all of us to give 2½ per cent of our yearly savings if over £10 for the aid of those who are poor and in need. If you do not have money or material things to give, you can give your love and help. That indeed is worth a lot. For there are many persons who are poor and in need of your love. So give what you can to all who are in need.
4. **AL-SIYAM** or **FASTING** during the month of Ramadan. A Muslim is told to fast each day during the month of Ramadan from daybreak to sunset. This means "no smoking", "no eating" and "no drinking" (of course, you already know a Muslim must never drink intoxicants nor eat pork).
5. **HAJJ** or **PILGRIMAGE**. Every Muslim who can afford to do so must pay a visit to the Ka'bah at Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime during the Pilgrimage season which happens during the month of Dhu al-Hijja, the last month in the Arabic or Muslim year.

QUESTION 12. What does Islam think of labour, or in other words, work?

Answer. Every kind of labour which enables a man to live honestly is respected by Islam.

QUESTION 13. I have my Holy Qur'an to believe in and follow. But how must I think about the other holy books?

Answer. We must respect all holy books because all holy books were brought by a prophet and from God. But it is sad to say that these holy books have not remained intact.

QUESTION 14. Why did we need the Last Prophet, the Prophet Muhammad, and the last Holy Book, the Holy Qur'án?

Answer. We needed a last prophet, who is Muhammad, because the Divine message many other prophets brought has been altered and misunderstood. We needed a last book because the Qur'án is the only book that has not been altered and will not and cannot be altered, as millions of Muslims know it by heart. If all copies of the Qur'án (which God forbid!) were burnt, the very next moment the Qur'án would spring to life again from the millions who know it by heart. So you see there is no chance of this book, the Qur'án, being lost or altered.

QUESTION 15. We have spoken a lot about God, but who is He?

Answer. He is the maker of everything. He made the worlds and all things in them. He tells us in the Holy Qur'án (which was revealed 1,400 years ago) about the worlds, not only this world. He is the Divine Power that watches over us and guides us. He has no family, sons or daughters. He is One, and only One. He sees everything. He knows everything. He forgives everything if one is truly repentant. He punishes those who do not repent or try to be good.

QUESTION 16. If someone asked you "Can Islam be understood by all?", what would be the answer?

Answer. It is the simplicity and common sense of Islam that appeals to all who accept it. "Why," one says, "I must have always been a Muslim because I always believed in One God and all the prophets. Of course, I did not know about Muhammad being the Last Prophet, but now I understand and see how sensible it is." These remarks I have really heard often.

QUESTION 17. Does Islam mention the poor and the orphans?

Answer. Yes, so much so that one can write a whole book about the subject.

QUESTION 18. Can a Muslim gamble?

Answer. A simple NO!

QUESTION 19. Can a Muslim drink alcohol?

Answer. Definitely NO, and one day all people will see the curse of drink.

QUESTION 20. What would you call Islam?

Answer. A religion; a way of life which must be in use always, not just for prayer time or on Fridays. Islam must always be with you in the home, in politics, in business, in marriage, in sleeping, eating, living and dying. It is what you, Boys and Girls, know by the common words—a must.

QUESTION 21. Name some of the things that Islam says it is wrong to do.

Answer. It is wrong to hate, steal, lie, to be jealous, or kill, and to have such pride that it becomes haughtiness; also it is wrong to be cruel to animals, to eat pork, and to drink alcohol or use bad language. It is wrong to rob in business or otherwise. Never sign a contract which you do not mean to keep. Never borrow and not pay back. It is a sin. Never incur debts which you will never be able to pay. Just ask your heart, "Is this right or wrong?" It will tell you if you are a Muslim. The Prophet once said, "Sin is that thing which hurts inside your chest."

QUESTION 22. Does a Muslim have any sacred animals as the Hindus have, such as for instance the cow?

Answer. No, none at all. "But all animals," said our Prophet, "must be treated with kindness."

QUESTION 23. Does a Muslim think of any river as sacred and holy?

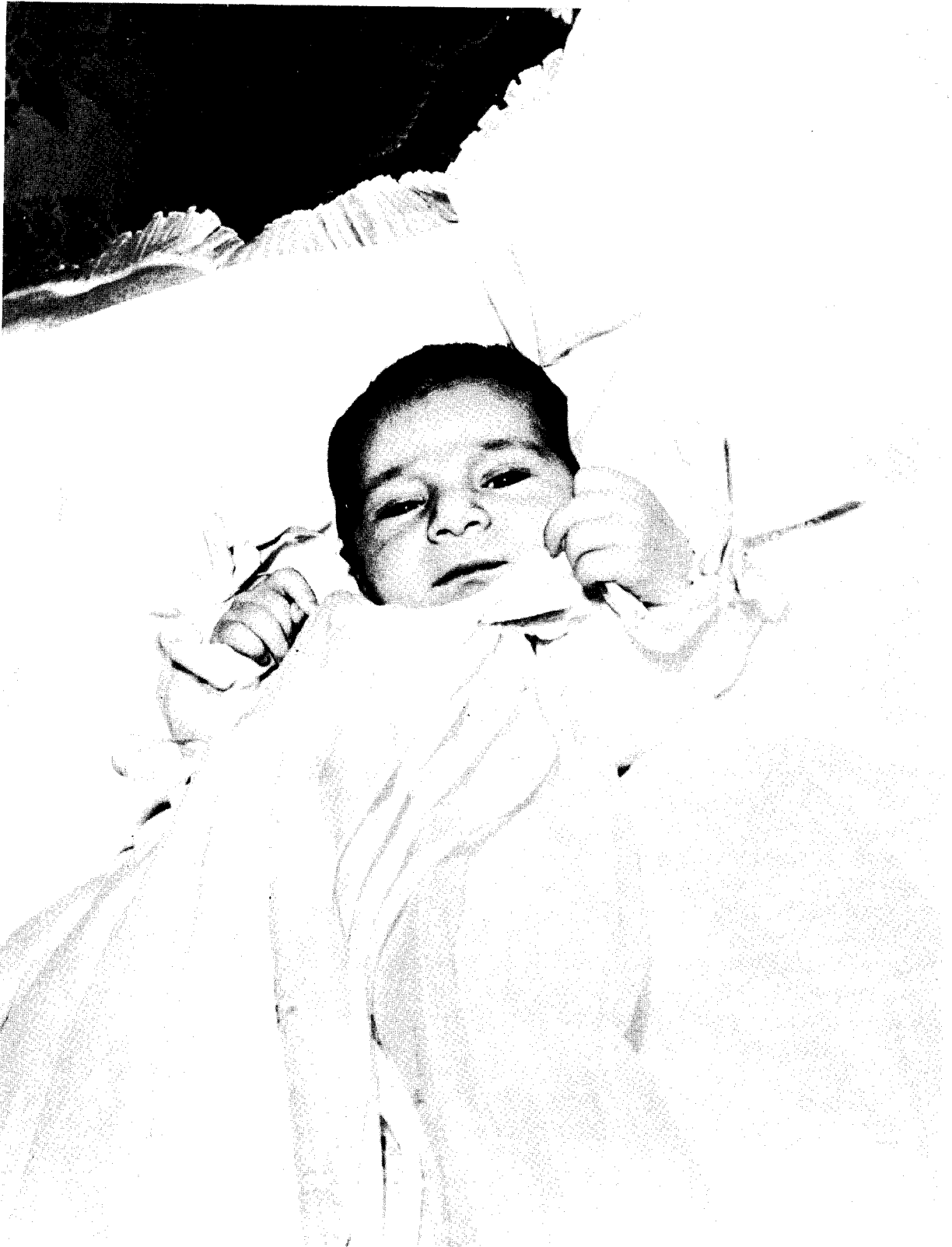
Answer. No.

QUESTION 24. Must a preacher be ordained before he can lead the prayers or give a sermon in a mosque?

Answer. No. There are no priests in Islam. But there are men trained to lecture and lead

Are babies born sinful ?

NO! NO! NO!



“Can any mother honestly believe her baby is born sinful? Can she believe that her cuddlesome little bundle was born sinful and that some man must say a prayer before it can go to heaven, if God calls it?”
A Muslim will never believe this. I doubt if any mother really would or does.

prayers and to study every point of Islam. These persons are called Imams, but any good man can stand up and lead the prayers in any mosque.

QUESTION 25. Will another prophet ever come?

Answer. No. The Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessing of God be upon him!) is the Last Prophet. No more prophets will ever come.

QUESTION 26. Does a prophet always bring a holy book or message?

Answer. We Muslims believe that he always brings a book and a message.

QUESTION 27. Are we born in sin? What does Islam say about this?

Answer. No. We are born sinless. But we can become sinful if we do not take God's advice and pray for help. I ask you or anyone, "Can any mother honestly believe her baby is born sinful? Can she believe that her cuddlesome little bundle was born sinful and that some man must say a prayer before it can go to heaven, if God calls it?" *A Muslim will never believe this.* I doubt if any mother really would or does.

QUESTION 28. Was the good woman Mary the Mother of God?

Answer. No. The good woman Mary was not the Mother of God. She was the mother of the Prophet Jesus. God has no mother.

QUESTION 29. Does a Muslim believe that Jesus is God or a part of God and that he took the shape of a man and came down to die for our sins?

Answer. No. A Muslim must not believe in this.

QUESTION 30. Does our Holy Book, the Qur'an, mention Jesus and his mother, Mary?

Answer. Yes. With great respect the mother of Jesus is mentioned, but only as a good woman, not as one to pray through or to; and Jesus as a good man and a prophet of God.

QUESTION 31. If I pray to God, does He benefit by it?

Answer. God does not benefit by your prayer. It is you who benefit. But God is happy that you turn to Him and seek Him out in prayer, asking His help in daily life. But always remember that it is you who need God, and please do not forget this: God can and does exist without you, but you cannot exist without God and His help.

QUESTION 32. How many times a day is a Muslim asked to pray?

Answer. Five times a day: (1) at daybreak to sunrise; (2) in the afternoon; (3) in the mid afternoon; (4) at sunset; and (5) before retiring to bed.

QUESTION 33. Does a Muslim say a few words (Du'a) before and after meals?

Answer. Yes. A Muslim says a few words (Du'a) before he starts anything and not only before meals. For instance, before he starts to drive his car, before he begins a journey or any job, he says: *Bismillah*. This is Arabic and means in English "In the name of God." A Muslim thanks God at the end of his job whatever it may be, with the words *Al hamdu lillah*, which means in English, "God be thanked."

QUESTION 34. Are there any statues or figures made of marble or of any other kind of stone or wood for the Muslims, as the Catholics have?

Answer. Not at all.

QUESTION 35. Are Muslims called to prayers by bell-ringing?

Answer. No. A human call brings the followers to prayers. This call is much better than a bell. A man calls out to his fellow men to come to prayers in the name of God. Any man can do this, but a special man who has a good voice does it, and is called a *Muezzin*. You may wonder why I say that a human call is better than a bell. Think for yourself a minute. This man has a heart; he feels happy to be going to call others to come and praise God. But that bell is just a piece of metal. It has no emotion. No heart-throbs to spur one on. This call is heard from the mosques and Muslim places of worship all over the world: "God is Great! God is Great! I bear witness that there is no god but God. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. Come to prayers! Come to prayers! Come to success! Come to success! God is Great! God is Great! There is no god but God."

When calling Muslims for the dawn prayer, the following words are added in the call:
"Prayer is better than sleep."

QUESTION 36. Does an Imam put on a certain kind of robe like a clergyman in England?

Answer. No. There is no special dress as the clergyman has, and no laces and embroidered robes as in the High Church.

QUESTION 37. Are there any nuns in Islam?

Answer. No. We believe in Islam that a woman should marry and have children and she can still say all the prayers that a good person should. But we know it is not God's wish for a woman to become a nun.

QUESTION 38. Are there monks in Islam?

Answer. No.

QUESTION 39. Does a baby have to be baptised in Islam?

Answer. No. But we do cry the call to prayers softly in a baby's ear when it is only a few days old, as it is the best thing for a baby to hear. But if anything should happen to the baby, that cry has not paved its way to heaven. As I said before, a baby is sinless and always goes to heaven, prayer or no prayer. But we like to let the sound of the call to prayers reach a baby's ear.

QUESTION 40. What does a Muslim do before he says his prayer?

Answer. A Muslim performs ablutions (as described later on in this book). The Arabic word for ablutions is *Wudhú*.

QUESTION 41. Does a Muslim say his prayers standing?

Answer. Yes, some part of it. But if he is ill, he can say his prayers in any position best suitable to himself. But if he is strong and healthy, then he has to follow a set form of postures. A Muslim starts his prayers standing, then he kneels, bows down and places his forehead right on to the ground so that the nose also touches it. No position is too humble when one is before God. In our prayers we stand, kneel, and place our foreheads touching the ground many times. I will give you a detailed description in the next pages of how to pray.

QUESTION 42. Can a Muslim say his prayers anywhere? Or only in a mosque?

Answer. A Muslim can say his prayers anywhere, in a church, or in a park or in a train, in fact, as I have said, everywhere. Any clean place can be a place of prayer. Our Prophet once said, "The whole earth has been made a mosque for me."

QUESTION 43. Does a Muslim keep Sunday as his holy day?

Answer. Every day is holy to a Muslim. We must meet on a Friday for congregational prayers soon after midday, when we have a short sermon and then prayers. A man can then leave the mosque and work as usual. A Muslim does not believe that God rested on the seventh day because our Holy Book says, "God is He besides whom there is no god . . . sleep does not overtake Him . . . His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not . . ."

QUESTION 44. Are women mentioned in the Muslim's Holy Book (the Qur'án)?

Answer. A woman is mentioned every time a man is mentioned in the Qur'án. Here is an example: The fasting men and the fasting women, the patient men and the patient women, etc. Never is the woman left out.

QUESTION 45. In Islam can a woman have her own property or did she have to wait, as in England until recently, to get her rights by a law passed in the British Parliament?

Answer. A woman was given her rights in the time of our Prophet 1,400 years ago. Her property did not become her husband's when she married. It is true a woman does not inherit the same as her brother from her parents. But it is argued that a male has more responsibilities and has generally to keep a family, whereas what a woman inherits she can keep for herself even after her marriage.

QUESTION 46. Did any of the prophets claim divinity?

Answer. No. None of the prophets claimed divinity. Besides being servants and messengers of God, they said they were human beings.

QUESTION 47. Does one need a rosary to say prayers?

Answer. No.

QUESTION 48. What is the Hadith?

Answer. It is the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad; the Last Prophet. There are many collections of our Prophet's sayings.

QUESTION 49. Is the Prophet Muhammad an historical figure?

Answer. Yes.

QUESTION 50. What did our Prophet say about mothers?

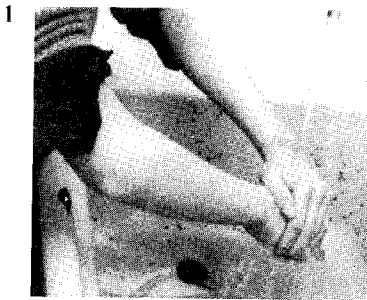
Answer. He said, "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers."

Goodnight, dear Children! Please learn these answers by heart. It is a duty you owe to Islam and yourself.

ABLUTIONS

Dear Children,

A Muslim must wash before prayers, or, as we grown-ups would say, "make ablutions." Little Haroun Khan is showing you in the photos below exactly what to do.



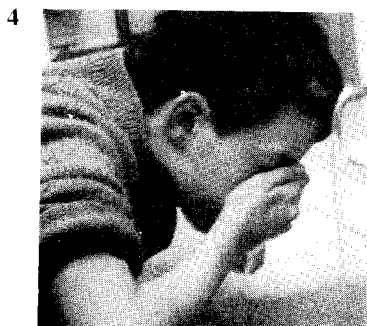
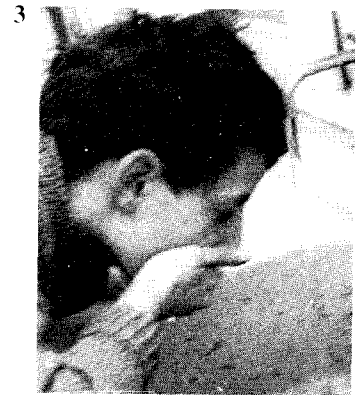
Action 1

Start washing with the right hand first up to the wrist three times and then do the same action to the left hand three times. Always use running water if you can. If not, pour water out of a jug or can. Do not place hands, feet or face into a bowl of water.



Action 2 and 3

Rinse the mouth three times after cleaning the teeth.



Action 4

Clean your nose inside and outside. The best way is to sniff water up three times and then wash the tip of the nose three times.



Action 5

Wash the face three times.

Little Haroun Ali Khan, the little boy in these photos, lives in London and is getting ready to sound the call for prayers. In the following pages you will see his brother Tariq Khan, showing us how to pray.



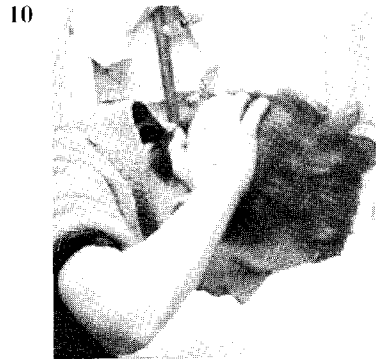
Actions 6, 7 and 8

Wash the arms from the wrist up to the elbow. Washing the right arm first three times and then the left arm from the wrist up to the elbow three times. In the photos I show the right arm. I know that you will know by these photos how to wash the left arm.

Wudhu—or washing before prayers

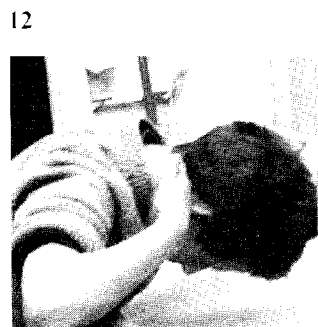
Wudhu is the Arabic word for Ablutions

Islam makes cleanliness its great cry and there are many sayings from our Prophet about cleanliness.



Actions 9, 10 and 11

Pass your wet hands over your head, starting from the top of the forehead, using the insides of the hands.



Action 12

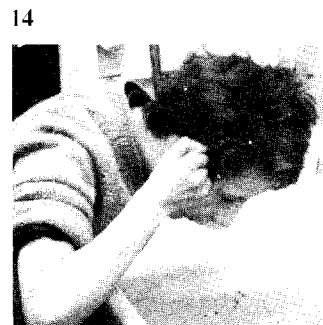
Pass the hands right over the back of the head to the neck, ending up by the ears.



Action 13

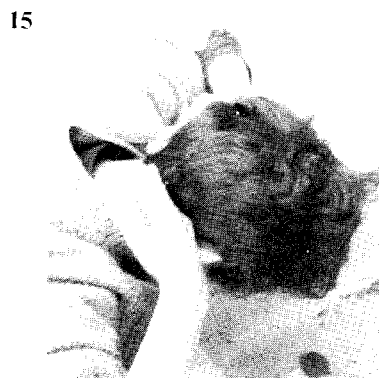
Put the forefingers into the ears and work around all the grooves of the ears and the ear holes as well. Work on both ears at the same time.

Wudhú is performed only when the whole of the body is clean otherwise a bath must be taken before the Ablutions.



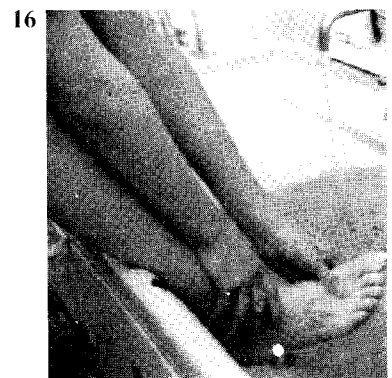
Action 14

Go around all the back of the ears with your thumbs and work upwards, then carry on with the next action.



Action 15

Turn your hands over and with the back of the hands wipe all around the back of the neck, ending up by the ears.



Action 16

Wash the feet up to the ankles three times, the right foot first. Having washed that three times, wash the left foot three times.

(Photos by Freda Khan)

O God! Help me to grow up into a perfect Muslim.



Khan

(Illustrated by Freda Khan)

THE ADHAN OR CALL TO PRAYERS

The Adhan or call to prayer, is to be said in a sufficiently loud voice, standing with the face towards Mecca, with both hands raised to the ears, touching the lobes of the ears. The Adhan consists of the following sentences (Adhan is an Arabic word and means call):

1. <i>Allāhu Akbar.</i> —“God is the Greatest.” (Repeated four times.)	Arabic	اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
2. <i>Ash-ha-du an lá il-la-ha-il-lal lah.</i> — “I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped but God.” (Repeated twice.)	..	أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
3. <i>Ash-ha-du an-na Mu-ham-ma-dar Ra- soo-lul lah.</i> “I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.” (Repeated twice.)	..	أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
4. <i>Hay-ya ‘a-las sa-lah.</i> — “Come to prayer.” (Repeated twice, turning to the right side.)	..	حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ
5. <i>Hay-ya ‘a-lal fa-lah.</i> — “Come to success.” (Repeated twice, turning to the left side.)	..	حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ
6. <i>Allāhu Akbar.</i> — “God is the Greatest.” (Repeated twice.)	..	اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
7. <i>Lá-il-la-ha il-lal lah.</i> —“There is no god but God.” (Once.)	..	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

The following sentence is added in the call to morning prayer after No. 5.

<i>As-sa-la-tu khay-run mi-nan nawm.</i> — “Prayer is better than sleep.” (Repeated twice.)	..	الصَّلَاةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّوْمِ
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Always face Mecca when giving this call.

AS-SALAH: THE PRAYER or THE WORSHIP OF GOD

- Prayers are said five times a day:
1. *Salatu'l' Fajr*
 2. *Salatu'l-Zuhr*
 3. *Salatu'l' 'Asr*
 4. *Salatu'l-Maghrib*
 5. *Salatu'l-'Isha'*

Prayer benefits you, not God. It helps you to feel God is near you, watching over you and helping you to use the sense of right and wrong which He has given you. You must really want to be good, or else your prayer is no good. Do not blame God if things go wrong. Search yourself and work things out. God has given you things all around you to help you in your daily life.

Now look at the prayer photos on the following pages. Note how each action all the way through means something: the way one starts a prayer with the hands to the ears, letting the whole world know that here is a wonderful proclamation—God is one; also, the way one goes on to the knees, humble before God, and even still more humble with the forehead touching the ground. Search for yourself and you will see a reason for all the actions in prayer—all adding up to submission to the will of God.

The Worship of God

Muslim prayers are made up of Rak'ahs, the meaning of Rak'ahs will be explained later. Some prayers are optional. The Arabic word for optional is Sunnah. And some are compulsory. The Arabic word for compulsory is Fard. Although we call the Sunnah Rak'ahs optional, no one leaves these Rak'ahs out from his or her prayers because the Prophet always performed them. Of course, we can say, and should say, as many voluntary prayers as possible. The word "voluntary" in Arabic is Nafil or Nafilah.

I will now tell you how many Rak'ahs to perform at each time of the prayers, also the meaning of the word Rak'ah and the actions which go to make up a Rak'ah, and I will give the positions of the prayers, illustrated with photos, and also the time of prayers, naming these by their Arabic names as all Muslims do.

Times of Daily Prayers

- Number one: THE FAJR PRAYERS—Are said at daybreak, consist of two optional (Sunnah) Rak'ahs, followed by two obligatory (Fard) Rak'ahs.
- Number two: THE ZUHR PRAYERS—Are said in the early afternoon between 12.30 p.m. and 1 p.m., consisting of four optional (Sunnah) Rak'ahs, followed by four obligatory (Fard) Rak'ahs, then come two more optional Sunnah Rak'ahs, except on Fridays when at the Jum'ah congregational prayers, the four obligatory Rak'ahs are reduced to two obligatory Rak'ahs (the word Jumu'ah is Arabic for the word Friday).
- Number three: THE ASR PRAYERS—Are said near tea-time, they consist of four compulsory (Fard) Rak'ahs only.
- Number four: THE MAGHRIB PRAYERS—Are said at sunset, with three compulsory (Fard) Rak'ahs, followed by two optional (Sunnah) Rak'ahs, then two voluntary (Nafil) Rak'ahs.
- Number five: THE ISHA PRAYERS—Are said at bed-time, consisting of four optional (Sunnah) Rak'ahs, followed by four compulsory (Fard) Rak'ahs, then two optional (Sunnah) Rak'ahs, and two Nafil (voluntary) Rak'ahs, followed by three compulsory Rak'ahs, but these three compulsory Rak'ahs are only said the last thing at night and are called Witr prayers. Many Muslims end the prayers with two Nafil (voluntary) Rak'ahs.

Please always remember, at the end of every second Rak'ah, and also to end each prayer, one always goes into position eight. (see page 25)

Please remember, the Fard prayer should be said in congregation, preferably in a mosque, with an *Imam* leading the service. If this is impossible, then two or three persons say prayers together. If this also is impossible, then one may say the Fard prayer by oneself.

In the following pages I have given an unusual way of transliteration of the prayers in Arabic, but you will be able to pronounce the Arabic words if you follow the sounds from the words I have shown you below.

a as in allow, another.

á as in car, bar.

u as in put, cushion, cushy.

ú as in fluke, flute, jute.

ai as in Bairam, Jain, maiden.

i as in listen, list, lit, lick.

í as in Biafra, justify, justification.

ou as in hound, house, found, pound.

on any of these letters, e.g. á. ú. í, means that the vowels are long.

˘ before or after a letter means that the sound is guttural.

POSITIONS OF PRAYER



POSITION 1



POSITION 2



POSITION 3



POSITION 4



POSITION 5



POSITION 6



POSITION 7



POSITION 8



Action A



Action B



Action C

The seven positions form a Rak'ah. The position 8 and actions A, B and C are used as described in the next few pages. *Photos by Asad Khan*

SALAH OR PRAYERS
(*Salah is the Arabic word for prayer*)

Now I will describe the positions and prayers.
ALWAYS FACE MECCA WHEN PRAYING



POSITION 1

Stand upright and recite these words:

“I intend to dedicate this prayer to God with so many *Rak'ahs*”.

Then place the hands to the ears and recite

Arabic: الله أكبر

“Alláhu Akbar” (God is the Greatest).

By the words *so many Rak'ahs* I mean that you should state the number of *Rak'ahs* you intend to do for the certain time you are going to say the prayers, whether it be at daybreak, lunch time, tea time, sunset or bedtime.

In all other *Rak'ahs* (except when beginning a prayer) position 1 is used only for a split second without placing the hands to the

ears, positions 1 and 2 being almost combined.

POSITION 2

Take hands from the ears and place them on the chest or a little below. Place the right hand over the left. Then recite these words (in the first *Rak'ah* only):

Arabic:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ
اسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى حُدُوكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ
أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

Transliteration:

Sub há na kal-láhum ma wa bi ha m di ka wa tabára kasmuka wa ta`á lá jad du ka wa lá ilá ha ghairu ka. A`ú zu bil lá hi minash shaitánir rajim.

Translation:

“O God, glorified, praise-worthy and blessed is Thy name!

There is no god except Thee.

I seek refuge with God from the rejected Satan.”
Then recite always in every *Rak'ah* the first chapter of the Qur`án, which is:

POSITION 2
continued

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ
الرَّحِيمِ مَا لِكُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ إِيَّاكَ
تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ إِهْدِنَا
الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ
الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ
الْمَغضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Transliteration:

Bis mil lá hir Rah ma nir Rahim.
Al ham du lil láhi Rab bil `ála min. Ar Rah má nir Rahimi má li ki youmid Dín. Iy yá ka na` bu du wa iy yá ka nas ta`in. Ih di nas si rá tal mus ta qima sirá tal la zina an `amta `alaihim ghairil maghdú bi `alai him wa lád dáal lín. Amin.

Translation:

“In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee alone do we worship and to Thee alone do we turn for help. Guide us in the straight path—the path of those upon whom be Thy blessings, not of those upon whom be Thy wrath, nor of those who go astray. Amen!”

Then recite a short chapter of the Qur`án. The one, for instance, that is usually recited is:

Arabic:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَمَنْ يَكُنْ لَهُ
كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Transliteration:

Bis mil lá hir Rah má nir Rahim.
Qul hu wal láhu Ahad. Al-láh hus sa mad. Lam yalid wa lam yú lad wa lam ya kul la hú kufu wan ahad.

Translation:

“In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Say: He, God is one. God is He upon whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is equal to Him.”

Then recite

Arabic:

الله أكبر

Transliteration: Alláhu Akbar.

Translation: God is the Greatest.

Please remember:

Whilst in the standing position 2, recite only the first chapter of the Qur`án in the third and fourth *Rak'ahs*, if it is a *Fard* prayer.



POSITION 3

Bow down, placing hands on knees, keeping the knees stiff, and recite the words as stated below:

Arabic:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ

(Repeat three times.)

Transliteration:

Sub há na rab bi yal 'azim (repeat three times).

Translation:

"Glory to God, the Greatest!" (To be repeated three times.)



POSITION 5
continued

Transliteration:

Alláhu Akbar. Sub há na rab bi yal a'lá. (Repeat three times.)

Translation:

"Glory to God, the Most High!" (Repeat this sentence three times.)

Always remember: whenever you change a position in the prayer, say "Alláhu Akbar" (God is the Greatest).

Arabic:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



POSITION 4

Now stand upright and recite the words:

Arabic:

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ
رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ

Transliteration:

Sami' Alláhu li man hamidáh. Rab ba ná wa la kal hamd.

Translation:

"Our Lord has heard the one who has praised Him. Our Lord, praise be to Thee!"



POSITION 6

Sit upright, sitting on the left foot, keeping knees still on the ground. The right foot remains as in the kneeling position, that is, the toe touching the ground and hands placed on the knees. Recite the words as stated below:

Arabic:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Transliteration:

Alláhu Akbar.

Translation:

"God is the Greatest."

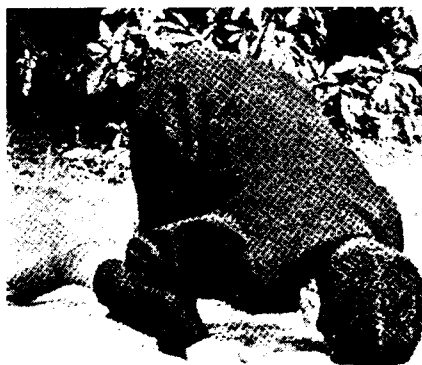
POSITION 5

From the standing position drop straight to the ground on the knees, placing the forehead on the ground, the nose and palms of the hands also touching the ground, and recite the words as stated below:

Arabic:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ. سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى.

(Repeat three times.)



POSITION 7

*continued
overleaf*

POSITION 7 (cont.)

Recite:

Arabic:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ. سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى.

(Repeat three times.)

Transliteration:

Sub-hà-na rab-bl-yal a'-là (repeat three times).

Translation:

"God is the Greatest. Glory to God the Most High!" (Repeat this sentence three times.)

POSITION 8

This position is used to connect the second and third *Rak'ahs* in a three-or-four *Rak'ah* prayer. It is not used to connect the first to the second nor the third to the fourth *Rak'ah* in any prayer. I will give you the prayers which are to be recited whilst in position 8. At the end of any prayer you must finish up in position 8.



Arabic:

التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالصَّيَّاتُ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ. أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

Transliteration:

At ta hiy yá tu lil láhi was sala wátu wat tay yi bá tu. As sa lá mu 'alaika ay yu han na biy yu wa rah ma tul láhi wa bara ká tu hú. As salámu 'alainá wa 'alá 'ibá dil láhis sáli hin. Ash ha du al lá ilá ha il-lal láhu wa ash ha du an na muhammadan 'ab du hú wa ra sú luh.

Translation:

"All prayers and worship given through words, action and wealth are due to God.

Peace be on you, O Prophet, and the mercy of God and His blessings!

Peace be on us and the righteous servants of God!

I bear witness that none deserves to be served but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger."

All prayers consist of more than one *Rak'ah*. One always starts a *Rak'ah* in a standing position.

The second *Rak'ah* also starts with position 1 (combined with position 2). But *do not* raise the hands to the ears. Just put the hands on the chest. Recite the prayers stated for position 2, that is, the first chapter of the Qur'an followed by another chapter of the Qur'an. Then carry on with the positions and prayers as in the first *Rak'ah*, that is, positions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; *but* after position 7 *go into position 8*, reciting the above words.

After those wonderful words addressed to God, one rises up and continues on with the third and fourth *Rak'ahs* according to the time of prayer and *Rak'ahs* required. But, for example, if a prayer consists of two *Rak'ahs*, at the end of the second *Rak'ah* whilst seated on the left foot (having already completed prayers and positions 6, 7, 8) and still in the last position 8, invoke the blessings of God upon the Last Prophet, Muhammad (May peace and blessings of God be upon him!).

This means that you must remember that if it is the final position, whether in a prayer of two, three, or four *Rak'ahs*, the following prayer of blessings on the Prophet Muhammad, called Darúd or al-Saláh 'ala al-Nabiy, is always recited. This is the prayer below.

Arabic:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ. اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ.

Transliteration:

Al-lá-hum-ma sal-li 'a-lá Mu-ham-ma-din-wa-a-lá 'a-li-Mu-ham-ma-din ka-maa sl-lay-ta 'a-lá Ib-raa-hee-ma wa 'a-lá 'a-li Ib-raa-hee-ma in-na-ka Ha-mee-dun Ma-jeed, Al-lá-hum-ma baa-rik 'a-lá Mu-ham-ma-din wa 'a-lá 'a-li Muham-ma-din ka-maa baa-rak-ta 'a-lá Ib-raa-hee-ma wa-a-lá 'a-li Ib-raa-hee-ma in-na-ka Ha-mee-dun Ma-jeed.

Translation:

"O God, exalt Muhammad and his followers as Thou didst exalt Abraham and his followers!

"Thou art Praised and Glorified.

"O God, bless Muhammad and his followers as Thou didst bless Abraham and his followers!

"Thou art Praised and Glorified."

The following Actions A, B and C, are always performed at the end of a prayer. Whether it be a two-*Rak'ah*, three-*Rak'ah* or four-*Rak'ah* prayer, always end in position 8 and seek the blessings of God for the Prophet Muhammad. Then actions A, B and C follow, and this ends the prayer.



ACTION A

Still in position 8, turn the head to the right and say:

Arabic:

اَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ

Transliteration:

Assalamu 'Alaykum wa Rahmatullah.

Translation:

"Peace be with you and the mercy of God!"



ACTION B

Still in the same position, turn the head to the left and again say:

Arabic:

اَسْلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ

Transliteration:

Assalamu 'Alaykum wa Rahmatullah.

Translation:

"Peace be with you and the mercy of God!"



ACTION C

Turn your head back to its normal position.

Raise your hands and give praise to God.

Please remember that when on the point of going to bed one performs a prayer of 4 *Rak'ahs*, 2 *Rak'ahs* and then 3 *Rak'ahs*. Now in the last *Rak'ah* of the 3 *Rak'ahs* when in position 4, recite the prayer given below in Arabic with its transliteration and translation in English.

Arabic:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَسْتَعِيْنُكَ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِكَ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْكَ وَنُثْنِيْ عَلَيْكَ الْخَيْرَ وَنَشْكُرُكَ وَلَا نَكْفُرُكَ وَنُحِبُّكَ وَنَتَرَكُ مَنْ يَفْجُرُكَ اَللّٰهُمَّ اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَلَكَ نُصَلِّيْ وَنَسْجُدُ وَابْتَغِيْ سَعْيِيْ وَنَحْنِدُ وَرَجُوْا رَحْمَتَكَ وَنَخْشَى عَذَابَكَ اِنَّ عَذَابَكَ بِاَكْفَرٍ مُّلْحِقٌ

Transliteration:

Al la-hum-ma inná-nas ta 'inu ka wa nas tagh fi ru ka wa nu' minu bi ka wa na ta wak kalu 'alai ka wa nuth ni 'alai kal khair wa nash kuru ka wa lá nak fu ru ka wa nakh la'u wa nat ru ku man yaf ju ru ka. Al la-hum-ma iyyá ka na' budu wa la ka nu sal lí wa nas ju du wa ilai ka nas'á wa nah fidu wa nar ju rah ma taka wa nakh shá 'azá bak. Inna 'azá baká bil kuf fári mul hiq.

Translation:

"O God, we beseech Thy help, and ask Thy protection and believe in Thee and trust in Thee and we praise Thee in the best manner and we thank Thee, and we are not ungrateful! We cast off and forsake him who disobeys Thee. O God! Thee do we serve and to Thee do we pray and make obeisance and to Thee do we flee and we are quick and we hope for Thy mercy and we fear Thy chastisement: for surely Thy chastisement overtakes the unbelievers."

Whenever a verse from the Holy Qur'an is read, or a prayer, one always begins with the words:

Arabic:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Transliteration:

Bis-mil-lá hir Rah-má-nir Rahim.

Translation:

"In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful."

Dear Children,

Some instructions I have repeated many times, this is because I want to make everything very clear to you.

PRAYER CHART

THE OBLIGATORY PRAYERS

Name of Prayer	Times of Prayer	<i>Sunnah</i> (Optional)	<i>Sunnah</i> (Optional Regular)	<i>Fard</i> (Obligatory)	<i>Sunnah</i> (Regular)	<i>Nafil</i> (Voluntary)	<i>Hajr</i> (Obligatory)
1 The Fajr	Between dawn and sunrise.	...	2	2	...	...	...
2 The Zuhr	After midday.	...	4	4*	2	...	...
3 The Asr	Between Zuhr and Maghrib, sometime before sunset.	...	...	4	...	...	...
4 The Maghrib	Soon after sunset	...	...	3	2	2	...
5 The Isha	Before retiring at night.	...	4	4	2	2	3

The four *Rak'ahs* marked * are replaced by two *Rak'ahs* on a Friday at Jum'ah Prayers. I have already told you that the Arabic word Jum'ah means in English—Friday. On this day a sermon is given and then the prayers are performed. After this one can go about one's daily work, and also before the Jum'ah Prayers if one so desires.

This prayer is held after midday.

The positions for prayers have been numbered and photos are included in the instructions in the previous pages.

Please always remember that at the end of every second *Rak'ah*, and to end each prayer, one always goes back again into position 8, having already done positions 6 and 7.

Positions for a two-Rak'ah prayer.

1st *Rak'ah*: Use positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

2nd *Rak'ah*: Use positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. In position 8 invoke the blessings of God on the Prophet Muhammad. Then, still in position 8, perform the actions and the prayers of A, B and C. This is the end of the two-*Rak'ah* prayer.

Positions for a three-Rak'ah Prayer:

Positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7—first *Rak'ah*.

Positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8—second *Rak'ah*.

Positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8—third *Rak'ah*. Remain in the last position 8 and invoke the blessings of God on the Prophet Muhammad; also perform the actions and prayers of A, B and C. This ends a three-*Rak'ah* prayer.

Positions for a four-Rak'ah Prayer:

Positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7—first *Rak'ah*.

Positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8—second *Rak'ah*.

Positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7—third *Rak'ah*.

Positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8—fourth *Rak'ah*. Remain in the last position 8 and invoke the blessings of God on the Prophet Muhammad; also perform the action and prayers of A, B and C. This is the end of a four-*Rak'ah* prayer.

Please remember too, that if the prayer has more than two *Rak'ahs*, then rise up after having done the

second *Rak'ah* with its positions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Stand for positions 1 and 2 and recite the first chapter of the Qur'an *only*, and then continue on with all prayers and positions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, and after the blessings on the Prophet Muhammad add Actions A, B and C. This would be for a three-*Rak'ah* prayer. If the prayer has four *Rak'ahs*, complete the third *Rak'ah* up to position 7. From position 7 rise straight up and start the fourth *Rak'ah*, doing positions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, ending in the same way as the prayer with two or three *Rak'ahs*, that is, ending with Actions A, B and C on the last position 8 after the prayers and the asking for the blessings on the Prophet Muhammad.

The Main Positions in Prayer are four in number. Here are the names in Arabic:

- (1) *Qiyam* قِيَام i.e. the standing posture.
- (2) *Ruku* رُكُوع i.e. bowing down.
- (3) *Sujood* سُجُود or *Sajdah* i.e. prostrating.
- (4) *Qu-ood* قُعُود i.e. sitting down in reverential posture.

Names of the five prayers in Arabic (*Salah* means prayer):

- (1) *Salah-ul-Fajr* صَلَاةُ الْفَجْرِ
- (2) *Salah-ul-Zuhr* صَلَاةُ الظُّهْرِ
- (3) *Salah-ul-'Asr* صَلَاةُ الْعَصْرِ
- (4) *Salah-ul-Maghrib* صَلَاةُ الْمَغْرِبِ
- (5) *Salah-ul-'Isha* صَلَاةُ الْعِشَاءِ



IQAMAH OR STANDING UP FOR PRAYERS

After the congregation has assembled, one of them, usually in the front row, announces the start of the prayers. This is done by sounding the words of the *Iqamah*, which are the same as those of the *Adhan*. But in the *Iqamah* each sentence is sounded once with the exception of numbers 1 and 7 which are repeated twice. Another difference is that the sentence *Qad qamat al-Salah* (repeated twice) is added after number 5. These words mean: the prayers are ready to start. After this the Imam begins the prayers by sounding the words *Allahu Akbar*.



*"Praise be to God the great" And (I begin) with His praise.
God Almighty is free from all defects.*

The Birth of a Baby

It was in the year 571 C.E. that a young mother-to-be was living in a town called Mecca in the desert land of Arabia. Alas, this mother was thinking, "My poor child, when it is born, will have no father, as my husband is dead."

Well, my young Readers, the day came when the baby was born. The mother cried with joy; for she had a baby boy. Although she belonged to the great tribe of Quraysh, she was poor, and would find it hard to find someone to help her look after her baby—but he would be rich in her love.

Little did she know that her lovely fatherless child had God watching over him with a great plan for the baby's future. This baby was to grow up and give out God's Message that God is One, and that He was going to make it clear to the world when the time was ripe that this baby (who would then be a grown-up man) was to be the Last Prophet to bring again the true religion.

Oh, yes! God had sent His Message before by a very good Messenger called Jesus—a good holy man was Jesus.

But, dear Children, the Prophet Jesus was misunderstood and, later, people started to worship him and made him God. So you see, a new Messenger was needed, and God chose this baby, whose name was Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him!).

Now, I must tell you something at this stage. When I was a child and a bit of a fighter, I used to say to myself, "If I say after Muhammad's name 'the peace and blessings of God,' why not say it also after all the prophets?" Now I know, of course, that I can do so. We pray for God's blessings on Muhammad—reminding ourselves all the time that Muhammad was a man in need of God's blessings, and that he is not God. This is how my mind as a child worked it out. I thought that if the Christians had said, "the peace and blessings of God be upon Jesus!", they would never have worshipped him because Jesus Christ NEVER said, "I am God."

Perhaps in your mind, dear Reader, you are thinking something else. You can reason things for yourself as long as you do not alter the religion which is the belief in One God—a loving God—who loves us all. Also, you must have a belief in all the prophets as good men and Muhammad as the Last Prophet. No one stops you from thinking and working things out. Islam—the religion Muhammad brought—is a religion of common sense.

I have started talking of other things because I suddenly remembered my childhood thoughts. Next time I will tell you more about the Prophet Muhammad. But for the present we shall think of the happy mother in the desert land of Arabia—poor but happy with God

above looking and guarding the mother who had in her arms a wonderful baby. Yes, all babies are wonderful to their mothers. But this baby's name would go down through the pages of history and religion. Muhammad, the founder of Islam, all through God's help.

Assalamu 'Alaykum.

Little Ones, I hope you have had a nice day. Yesterday we left our story of the baby Muhammad and a brave mother.

No woman was respected by the idolators but she had to be thankful that she did not belong to any of the tribes who made it a habit to bury baby girls alive. And yet with all these drawbacks this mother felt very happy. So happy that she wanted to cry aloud, "I have a son to carry on his father's name."

His father had died. It was true and the thought of this made her very sad. But now she had to think of the baby. Had his father lived, things would have been different. Yes! Fear would pass through her mind, because of the time and place he was born in. It was a bad time; for terrible things were going on. The Meccans would drink all night. They would parade around the idols and leave money for them, which of course the keeper of the idols kept.

Here was a little baby whose father, if he were still alive, would have commanded great respect from these people. But the fact that his grandfather was alive was a good thing. Poor little mother! She was a woman without her husband. What was her status in life at this time?

I can tell you, little Children, that it was very bad. You know by the word status I mean position, and her position as a woman without her husband was not good. Of course, her family was of a high rank, but she was poor. The future years did not seem very bright but this baby was only a day old. And its mother was not strong enough to worry any more. She took the little baby in her arms and rocked it to sleep, singing a little song as your mother sings to you. You and I could have said, "Sleep, little babe, you have a hard life before you. But a most honourable one. For you are to be the Last Prophet on this earth." This is what we can say today, because we know the whole history of how Islam came fourteen hundred years ago. To come back to the mother and baby, "I must," thought the mother, "send news to the baby's grandfather telling him that, thank goodness, the baby is fine and healthy."

The message was sent to the grandfather. Now would come the problem of finding a nurse for the baby, or rather a kind of foster-mother. The baby would be taken away by this foster-mother, who would have a child of her own and could feed another baby also, because she had plenty of milk for two. The grandfather arrived; tears came into his eyes. Yes, he was glad it was a boy. Grandfather gave a great look of admiration at this, his son's child.

"I will take my son's baby boy," thought he, "to the most important part of Mecca for all my friends to see."

The grandfather thought of his dead son whose name was Abdullah. Now here was another baby born into this noble family of Hashim. The little baby lay peacefully in his grandfather's arms, whilst on his tour through Mecca. Now, we will leave our baby for today, being carried around by a proud grandfather, and so off to bed you go, and don't forget your little prayer and may God bless you!

Dear young Readers.

Last time I started to talk about the baby Muhammad and his mother, whose name was Aminah.

Mecca in those days was not a huge place like London, but it was and is and will always be a very important place. Of course, it is bigger now. In those days idols were in a building

called the Ka'bah in Mecca, a place I will tell you about another time. Well, to this Ka'bah went Muhammad's grandfather with Aminah's baby, Muhammad, to give thanks for this baby's birth. The grandfather held in his arms something belonging to his dead son. His heart was full of joy. He had lost a son but had been given a grandson. What happiness! He knew he must give thanks to something or someone far above him, something or someone far above all (we could have told him it was God).

The grandfather brought the baby back to its mother, who told the grandfather that she had found a foster-mother for her baby. The name of the foster-mother was Halimah: she had offered to take the baby and look after it. It was the custom of high-class Arab families not to let the mother feed her own baby. Halimah knew that Aminah was not rich but she wanted to feed this little fatherless child. At that time the higher class babies never knew what it was to nestle in and take their mother's milk, the reason being it was thought that foster-mothers who came from the desert were very strong, and so the babies would be strong. Also the air of the desert is cleaner than elsewhere.

Muhammad stayed with Halimah for two years and loved her, and even when he grew up he never forgot the kind woman who looked after him so well. He remembered her all through his life. When Muhammad was six years of age, his mother took him to Medina. But for this poor little boy life seemed harsh to him; for on the return journey Muhammad's mother Aminah died after a sickness. She died in a place called al-Ababa, and there she was buried. So here, at the age of six is a poor little boy, who never knew his father and has also now lost his mother. At six years of age one really needs a father and mother. How well Muhammad knew what it was to be an orphan, and what great feeling he had for orphans in later years!

Muhammad was then taken along to Mecca by a young person, who although she was very young, looked after this little boy of six with love and care. Her name was Umm Ayman. She gave this little boy into the care of his grandfather, whose name was 'Abdul Muttalib. She then consented to look after this dear little boy, who had made her love him with all her heart; for he was so brave, and such a little man in his ways, always thoughtful. So she became his faithful nurse and companion.

The little boy's life was quite happy, until at the age of eight years—another blow! His grandfather died. How sad! You know how grandparents love their grandchildren and make them happy. Now this, another death. More sadness for this poor little boy. Shock after shock; death after death. Now at the age of eight—no mother, no father and no grandfather. So the little boy went to live with his uncle, who was Muhammad's father's brother—Abu Tālib who was a merchant. When Muhammad was twelve years of age his uncle said to himself, "This poor little chap has not had much out of life. I will do something for him which most children of his age have never done. I will take him on a mercantile journey to Syria next time I go." So Abu Tālib took this young boy of twelve years on this long journey (not like nowadays, when you can get anywhere in a very short time). This journey would take nearly six months.

The time came. The boy Muhammad was so happy. His uncle took him right up to Bosra in Syria. Muhammad came back from this journey with a knowledge which only travel could bring. He tried to help people around him. Always willing to help those in need: kind to dumb animals, never hurting them in any way, carrying the poor little lambs if they got hurt, and always helping old people. The folks around said what a good youth Muhammad was, with such purity of morals, which at that time was rare amongst the people of Mecca and everywhere.

But, of course, there are good and bad everywhere. The good people of Mecca were struck by the goodness and fair character of this youth, and by common consent of the citizens of Mecca he, Muhammad, was given the title of al-Amin, which means "The Trustworthy".

Muhammad in his youth tended the sheep, goats and camels of Mecca upon the neighbouring grazing grounds, valleys and hills, just as Jesus, Moses and other prophets had

tended the helpless animals with love. All prophets came from the East, and naturally were Easterners; nearly everybody did this job some time or the other. What a thing to remember --- all Holy Books, religions and prophets came from the East. When Muhammad was tending the sheep and camels, he must have felt how wonderful nature was and how this must all be ruled by someone supreme.

When Muhammad was twenty-five, his uncle said to himself, "Now my nephew has done what most of the boys do. He is grown up and twenty-five years of age. I want him to become a merchant." The uncle went to see a rich widow called Khadijah who also lived in Mecca, and as she employed people, he asked her if she would take his nephew Muhammad into her service and let him travel with her merchandise. Now, Khadijah knew that in Muhammad she would have a good person, truthful, honest and upright. So she said, "Yes. I will be happy to have such a person as Muhammad to look after my interests." So with Khadijah's servant, whose name was Maysarah, Muhammad started to travel once more along the route he had taken thirteen years before. Travel had not changed much over the thirteen years. Again he went as far as Bosra, a city about 60 miles to the east of the River Jordan. He also visited Aleppo and Damascus.

I know you must have heard of Damascus before, especially if you go to school. Yes, Muhammad was going along this way. But he did not know that one day he would be a prophet. I doubt if he even knew much about the prophets who had been there before him. All this was made clear to him afterwards when God called upon him to be the Last Prophet.

So now we have come up to the time when Muhammad is twenty-five years of age. Next time we will go on with the story of this great man's life who, as we see, knew what it was to have sorrow at a very early age and who grew up to be such a nice person, although he had very few years of mother-love and none of father-love, which so many of you have. In later years Muhammad is known to have said, "Paradise lies under the feet of your mother".

In the next story I will tell you, as I said, about the Ka'bah--a blackish-grey building to which Muhammad went when a baby in his grandfather's arms. I will have many facts and names to give you next time, because Muhammad's life is history and the Ka'bah is history. Who knows? One day at school you may be asked to write a composition on whatever you like.

Please remember, wherever you are, if you want to learn about Islam or the Qur'a'n you can do it. Be proud of your religion, and let no one call you a Muhammadan. Why do I say this? Because if you worship Christ you are a Christian. You do not worship anyone but One God, and Muhammad is His Last Prophet. We are Muslims, and our religion is Islam.

Assalamu 'Alaykum.

Dear Children,

On the opposite page you will see a photo of *The Ka'bah at Mecca, Saudi Arabia*.

The Ka'bah is the first house ever built for the worship of One God, therefore it is the oldest.

The Prophet Muhammad said, "No journey but for the three Mosques---The Ka'bah; this, my Mosque and the Mosque of Jerusalem." The pilgrims make it a great point to visit these places.

اللَّهُ

نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

GOD is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth.

My dear young Readers,

Last time we left Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him!) at the age of twenty-five, loved and honoured by all. Khadijah admired Muhammad, understood and respected him. All she had she wanted to be his. So he was asked through a friend called Nafisah if he would like to marry Khadijah. He knew that she was a good woman and accepted the proposal. But, again, sorrow for Muhammad. His baby boys did not live. One died at the age of two years, and the other one at a very early age. If anyone knew sorrow, Muhammad did. Did it harden his soul to mankind? Oh, dear no! He set to work more than ever to help orphans, widows and the poverty-stricken.

At the age of 36 years Muhammad started to look after 'Alí, the son of Abú Tálíb. As you know, Abu Tálíb was Muhammad's uncle who looked after him at the age of eight. Now at the age of 36 Muhammad is taking 'Alí into his house—'Alí is six years old. He will have all the love that is possible to give to him; for was it not 'Alí's father who had bestowed great love upon Muhammad?

About the same time in Khadijah's family there was a little slave boy called Zayd who was about the same age as 'Alí. Khadijah knew Muhammad would like this little slave. So she made a present of him to her husband.

How did the slave find his way into Khadijah's family? I will tell you. This little slave had been with the wife before she was married. In those days when the boys were captured in a fight, they were sold as slaves to anyone who liked to buy them. Khadijah's nephew had bought this little slave, who was the son of Hárithah belonging to a tribe in the south of Syria.

It came to the ears of Hárithah that his son was a slave in Muhammad's household. He came at once to Mecca and, being a wealthy warrior, offered a very large sum of money for his son's release. Muhammad called the slave boy and in front of his father said, "You can go with your father or stay with us. Do what you like." Zayd, the slave boy, said that he wanted to stay with Muhammad. Muhammad was so delighted that he said, "You may have your liberty, my Son. And henceforth you shall be treated as my son."

I will now tell you about the Ka'bah, which I described last time as a blackish grey building and very important. It stands in Mecca and many of your relatives would have seen

it when on a pilgrimage to Mecca, a journey which all Muslims are asked to do, if they can afford it, at least once. I will tell you about the pilgrimage another time. But, first of all, bear in mind that the unity of all Muslims is what this pilgrimage teaches, also equality and brotherhood, and that black, yellow, brown and white are all one in God's sight.

The Ka'bah is like a large cube to look at, and is very high. Muhammad had the feeling that to have idols lodged there was a great mistake. Perhaps he had heard how it had been built or rather rebuilt by his ancestors Abraham and Ishmael. I say heard, because Muhammad could not read or write. I have heard it said that the better class families did not think it right to toil at learning to read and write. It was left to the lower classes and they were hired out to read or write for others. Yes, Abraham wanted the Ka'bah for praying to the true God. He and his son had mixed the mortar for rebuilding this building; mixing chalk and mud to form the mortar.

The Ka'bah is a wonderful building. It stands upon a base two feet high which seems to present a sharp, inclined plane, and it is because of this, and the flat roof, that the building from a distance looks like a cube. Abraham did not place a roof on this building, but the family of Qusayy were the people who put the flat roof on, and also the first to build dwelling houses round the Ka'bah. After this Muhammad's tribe of Quraysh became custodians of the Ka'bah. The person to take charge was Muhammad's grandfather, Abdul Muttalib.

The Ka'bah stands in the centre of the Great Mosque at Mecca. It has only one door, about seven feet above the ground, at the south-east corner of this ancient building. Near this door is the famous Black Stone, which forms part of a sharp angle of the building at four or five feet above the ground. This Black Stone, or in Arabic *al-Hajar al-Aswad*, is an irregular oval stone only seven inches in diameter. It has not such a large diameter as perhaps you thought it had. It once cracked into about a dozen or so pieces but was joined together, and that is why the surface is not flat but wavy. Around these pieces, which are joined, is a border of reddish-brown cement, and around this reddish-brown border is a border forming a massive arch of silver gilt, the aperture for the stone being about eleven to twelve inches across.

Dear Children, try to remember these few particulars about the Ka'bah so that, when I mention the pilgrimage later on, in your mind you will see the Ka'bah as it is.

There are many more details about the Ka'bah. But if I tell you too many, you may forget them. But here is one thing more that I would like to tell you about.

On the top and down the sides and front of the Ka'bah is a covering of bright black silk and cotton material with a band of real gold thread around it, and upon this are worked in threads of gold some Qur'anic verses. This cover is called the Kiswah. Every time it is made, different Qur'anic verses are woven on it. The same verses are never used. The Kiswah used to come from Egypt and before it went to Mecca a wonderful procession would go through Cairo. I think I saw the last procession when I was in Cairo many years ago. Now this cloth is made in Saudi Arabia. By now you must have an idea of this wonderful building which was rebuilt quite a few times. When Abraham rebuilt the Ka'bah, he only had the foundation, and built up from that.

When Ishmael died, the building fell into the hands of a family who held it for a thousand years. Then another family took it for three hundred years, and another tribe who put the roof on. It was then taken over by Muhammad's tribe of Quraysh who thought that the building was too low. They rebuilt the bottom part until it reached the Black Stone. Now to put the Black Stone higher up would be a great honour for any tribe, because forever after the children who followed would say, "Ah! my grandfather or great grandfather put this Black Stone where it is; we are better than others." So a quarrel broke out amongst them. At last it was agreed amongst themselves that the first man to enter the gate of the enclosure should be the person to decide.

Who should enter the gate? None other than Muhammad. He was asked what they

should do. He could have said, "I or my people will raise this Stone." But that was not Muhammad. Oh, no! He was considerate and gentle even when young, and now at the age of thirty-five, a perfect gentleman, and from him we can learn how to step down and give others a chance. Self last. Here we see the good politician, as all politicians should be but are not. Muhammad spread out his cloak. He had the Stone placed upon it, and all the tribes there took hold of the cloak, and placed the Stone into its place in harmony and unity. And from that day to this, unity and brotherhood are at their best in Mecca.

Muhammad is now thirty-five years of age. But something very important happened when he was forty years of age. Next time I will tell you how we were given that wonderful gem—a rich and rare gem if used properly—and that is Islam. Islam means: Submission to the will of God.

Assalamu `Alaykum, little Ones! God bless you!

My dear Children,

May I tell you something more about our dear Prophet?

Muhammad (the peace and blessings of God be upon him!) was now 39 years of age, and for quite a while he had spent much time in contemplation and worrying over the state of affairs which existed at the time, such as the worshipping of idols and the wicked living of his people. He strove hard to get some light from somewhere. To set his mind at rest he would retire into a cave called Hirá which is inside the mountain called Jabal al-Núr and try to work things out. This cave is a little way from Mecca. Today the cave is of great importance: for it was there that Muhammad had his first important revelation, which forms the first five verses of the 94th chapter of the Holy Qur'án.

You know a revelation is quite different from a vision. Muhammad stayed in this cave searching for guidance, and a way to lead his people out of their bondage of lust, hate and all bad ways. It was in the month of Ramadan (which is the ninth month in the Muslim calendar) that Muhammad had his first revelation. And now, dear Children, as I pointed out, a revelation is different from a vision. In a revelation one is commanded by God and things are shown in a true light. Before this revelation he had spent most of his time in this cave, only going back to his family now and again. Khadijah, his wife, understood and loved him: so did his children. They all knew such a good man could not be thoughtless.

In Muhammad's first revelation the Angel Gabriel appeared.

"Read," said the Angel. "I cannot read," said Muhammad. Three times the Angel said, "Read". Three times Muhammad said, "I cannot read". The Angel hugged him tightly and said, "Read in the name of the Lord Who hath created"

Muhammad recited these words. The Angel left, and Muhammad rushed out of the cave, straight to his wife "Wrap me up", he said, "Wrap me up".

He was shivering. His wife wrapped him up in a cloth. Muhammad said, "I was afraid that I was going to die when Gabriel held me".

"You are not going to die", said Khadijah. "You are going to live, and from what you have told me I know that God is with you.

"You are always so kind to your kith and kin and all men. You help the helpless and spend your last penny on the poor, the widows and orphans.

"You are always generous and courteous to all guests. And you have always helped the righteous.

"God will look after you."

Khadijah knew Muhammad had found what he had been searching for, that is, the light of truth. She took him to Waraqah, who was her cousin, and told him the whole story. The cousin said, "I wish I were younger and could live long enough to see what happens when

you give this message to your people. The time will come that your people will turn against you when they know you are serious."

"Do you think my own people will turn me out?" asked Muhammad.

"Yes," said Waraqah. "they will turn you out. No man has ever come as you have, without having all his people around him become his enemies, but I believe in you, and if I live, I will give you great help." I am sorry to say Waraqah died shortly after this, and so could not help Muhammad in his great work. No revelations came to Muhammad for quite a long time. He became quite depressed, but his wife and family believed in him. Please remember, all you little Girls, who will grow up to be women, that Muhammad's first believer was a woman, Khadijah, his wife. If it had not been for Khadijah, Muhammad would have fallen ill; so forlorn was he. His health was not good. He lay for many a day wrapped up, hoping that he would get help from his God who had started to talk to him.

One day, as he lay wrapped up in a mantle, an angel appeared to him and said, "O thou enwrapped in thy mantle! Arise and preach!" Then Muhammad knew that he was God's messenger and a prophet. So now he has become The Prophet Muhammad, and must reclaim the people for the worship of God.

His next believers were the little slave boy Zayd, and 'Alí his nephew who were about fourteen years old. Maybe they were young, but they were very serious boys and knew what they believed in to be right. Abu Bakr, an old and trusted friend, joined Muhammad. Other friends also came forward. A small band of fifty people joined Muhammad in his belief. Now a change came about. The citizens of Mecca turned against Muhammad and his followers were persecuted. After three years an open opposition against Muhammad was organized and acts of violence started. A youth leading the prayers was attacked and he fought back. Islam does not say, "Turn the other cheek." It is common sense that one has to defend oneself.



A view of the mount known as *Jabal al-Nur*—the Mount of Light—situated near Mecca. The cave of *Hirā* lies in this mount. It was here that the Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation, which forms the first five verses of the 94th Chapter of the Holy Qur'an.

In the fourth year of his mission, Muhammad was given a friend's house to hold meetings for people who wanted to know about God. The name of this friend was Arqam. The house of Arqam was in front of the Ka'bah, and afterwards was named the "House of Islam." I feel it was the first mosque for the followers of Muhammad to pray in. Now, because so many believers were being harmed, Muhammad said that any followers without protection must go away to a foreign land. So eleven followers with their families set out for the port of Shueiba, and there, finding two vessels ready to sail, embarked quickly for Abyssinia. Here the king gave them refuge and received them with kindness. These were the first Muslim refugees sheltered in Abyssinia. But they could not stay away and after three months returned. It was at a later time that once more refugees went to Abyssinia.

One day even Muhammad's close relative Abu Jahl got very angry with Muhammad. You see, dear Children, it was whilst our Prophet was going around the Ka'bah (you know he used to run around the Ka'bah seven times every day remembering God). Well, Abu Jahl made him stop and then threw dust over him, because he felt Muhammad despised his gods—the idols in the Ka'bah. He was rude to Muhammad and treated him cruelly. All this had been seen by a maid who came from the house of 'Abdullah Ibn Jud'an. She saw an important man called Hamzah, who had just returned from hunting in the desert. He was going to go seven times around the Ka'bah before going to his house as was his custom. The maid told him the whole story of this insulting behaviour. When Hamzah heard the news, he was so angry and grieved that he made up his mind to join this small band of followers, and use his powers in their favour. This helped Muhammad.

Now, there was another man called 'Umar. He thought about things and decided to have his peace of mind by killing Muhammad, and his followers then would forget him. So he took his sword in his hand and went to Muhammad's house to kill him. 'Umar was a man of great influence in Mecca. He did not know that his sister Fátimah and her husband had become Muslims. On his way to the Prophet's house with his sword in his hand he met a man who had recently embraced Islam. Seeing the sword in his hand, the man said, "Where are you going?" 'Umar said, "To kill Muhammad". "Oh," said the man, "don't you know that even your sister and brother-in-law have embraced Muhammad's religion?" 'Umar was furious; he decided his relations must die first and then Muhammad. On reaching the house he heard his relatives reading verses that had been revealed to Muhammad from God. 'Umar was so furious that he beat his brother-in-law very badly. 'Umar snatched away these verses and started to read them. One could have heard a pin drop; so engrossed was 'Umar. His rage had calmed down; his breathing was once more like a human being's. Gradually, as he was reading the words, peace came into his heart. He was reading something that calmed his soul with its truth and beauty. It had set him thinking. On seeing this altered man, the followers talked to him, and soon the harsh and proud 'Umar joined Islam. 'Umar then went to the house of Arqam where Muhammad met him at the door. 'Umar said, "O Prophet of God! I declare my faith in God and believe in His Messenger". Things became much easier with 'Umar and Hamzah on Muhammad's side. They helped to carry on the work in public, and prayers were now said near the Ka'bah.

Most of Muhammad's followers were poor and were forced to undergo many hardships. No one could protect them and no one had any money to give them. If any slaves dared to become Muslims they were tortured terribly, because their masters, who owned their bodies and souls, would not allow this. Abu Bakr thought of a plan. He spent a lot of money on buying and setting slaves free. This was the first step towards the freedom of slaves. Islam started it. (When St. Augustine saw Angle slaves in Rome, he said, "They are angels, not Angles".) This was what I heard as a child at school. But he did not buy them nor set them free! I claim that Islam was first in starting to set the slaves free. Caliph 'Umar the Great once entered a city with a freed slave riding a camel whilst he, himself, was holding the reins. Democracy had started.

and also equality of mankind. One must realize it would have taken years to cure the slave system, as captives in war had often been made slaves. Besides so many people had slaves who did not want to be set free. Many more rich men joined Islam. They also bought slaves who otherwise would have been tortured because they had joined Islam.

The people of the Quraysh were up in arms against Muhammad. They would meet people at the city gates and important places, saying, "Don't meet this Muhammad: his followers will suffer hardships and Muhammad will be killed". After a little more than four years the citizens decided that Muhammad must be finished once for all by force: for, they said, if Muhammad succeeded in his mission, what would happen to the wealth that poured in at the feet of those idols? These idols always had offerings of wealth left with them, and the Quraysh looked after the idols, and, because of this, they had wealth and influence. But this new religion, if allowed to survive, they argued, would stop all this. Once more Muhammad was ill-treated with greater vigour. "Islam must go", the people of Mecca said, "and Muhammad must be killed". Only those few who loved Islam remained true.

Opposition had truly started. To say "kill Muhammad" was easy, but a murder of a member of a certain clan would lead to war, even if the clan was not in favour of one of its members. Murder was a different question, and that meant war. So Muhammad remained alive, hounded and treated shamefully, but allowed to live, and suffer. At least that is what his enemies thought, but God did not mean Muhammad to die. He had to live because he was to be the Last Prophet to bring the true belief in God. Suffer he would, but Islam would spread. It had to—this was God's wish.

Little Muslims, especially those of you who live in Europe, where Islam is still misunderstood, do your little part by talking about Islam. Let all your little friends at school know what Islam really is. If you know of any person who is saying something wrong about Islam, be not afraid, even if it is your teacher; just put your hand up and say, "Please, Teacher, that is not Islam", and tell what Islam allows, and does not allow. At school I always did so. Just remember, if Muhammad suffered so much, then you can have a little discomfort, which, I assure you, won't be much. Everyone loves a truth lover.



There is but One God. Muhammad is His Messenger.

My dear little Ones,

In the previous chapters I said how badly the slaves were treated by their masters if they showed any interest in Islam. Bilal, the slave of Umayyah Ibn Khalaf, was forced to lie down in the hot sand of the desert on his back with his face looking up to the scorching sun; with a heavy stone on his chest because he said, "I am a Muslim". He was an Abyssinian and he was the son of an Abyssinian slave girl. He was very dark, with Negro features, bushy hair, and very tall. His appearance was uncomely but he was very strong. "You remain in the scorching sun until you are dead or you give up Islam", said his master. Bilal could just manage to utter four words, "One only, one God". The stone became hotter and hotter from the sun on it.

This torture lasted for days, until one day, whilst the poor Abyssinian was being tormented, a frail, slender, slightly-built man appeared on the scene. This was Abu Bakr (the Prophet's great friend and later his father-in-law). After a discussion with the master of the slaves, Abu Bakr found that he could not make the master feel ashamed of what he was doing. Abu Bakr offered him a black slave who was much stronger than Bilal, because at that time Bilal was very weak and might even have died. The exchange was made and Bilal went off with Abu Bakr, a free man.

In later years Bilal became the Prophet's constant companion. He would always call the call to prayers, as long as the Prophet lived. Whenever a congregation assembled in the Mosque all eyes were fixed upon the African who gave such a clear and loud call to prayers. It must be remembered that when Muhammad made his triumphant entry into Mecca it was Bilal who first mounted the Ka'bah and sounded the call to prayers.

Another master blinded his slave girl, whose name was Zunnirah, because she would not give up Islam. Many others were treated in the same way and some died most terrible deaths.

The Prophet had every kind of insult thrown at him. His heart bled for these poor slaves. The Prophet had been offered riches and land if he would give up his idea of freeing the slaves, but he did not believe in slavery. "What would happen if he freed all the slaves?" said the masters. They again offered him power and kingship.

The Prophet's reply was, "I want neither riches nor am I fond of power or kingship. I am sent by God to give you glad tidings. I give you His message, and if you accept it, God will reward you, both in this world and the next. But if you refuse, I will leave God to judge between you and me."

They mocked at him and threw dust at him. They asked if he would perform miracles. "Why could he not change the hill of Safa into gold?" they said. "Why don't you make the book you talk so much about fall from Heaven?" and "Why not show us an angel?" Also, "Why not make the dead speak?"

And on they went asking this and that. In reply to all this the Prophet would say: "For myself I have no power to benefit, nor power to hurt, save that which God willeth. Had I

knowledge of the unseen, I should have abundance of wealth, and adversity would not touch me. I am to give warning and bear good tidings unto people who believe.” One day the Prophet Muhammad gathered together the Qurayshites telling them he had something important to tell them. He climbed up Mount Safa and called to the Qurayshites.

“Have you ever heard me tell a lie?”

With one voice they all replied, “We have not”.

Then the Prophet said, “If I were to tell you that hidden behind this mount is a very large army waiting ready to attack you, would you believe me?” “Certainly”, they all replied. “We have never heard you tell a lie”.

Then said the Prophet, “I am the Messenger of God and I have a message for you which is to give up idolatry and shun all kinds of evil. I am God’s Messenger and I tell you that severe punishment awaits you (worse than if that army of enemies were upon you), if you will not listen to this message and take notice of God’s word. Please listen, I beg of you, to what God has commanded me to tell you”. Abu Lahab, the Prophet’s uncle, rose up and with upstretched arms shouted, “If it is only for this talk that you have gathered us here, why call us together for a trifle like this? You will perish for this”.

Muhammad looked at his uncle without speaking; his face grew red and then pale; his eyes saddened. He could not breathe; he was hurt, not on the body, but in his heart. Holding out his hand towards his uncle, he told him that he would be punished. The crowd listened and many thought that the uncle had gone too far.

Tomorrow I will tell you about our Prophet’s visit to Tá’if where there were gardens with wonderful vines growing perfect grapes. So off to bed you go and don’t forget your prayers.

1400 years ago
grapes grew in Taif
and they still do today.



Dear Children.

Now let us continue on with our true story.

It was now six years since the Angel Gabriel gave to Muhammad the great message that he was to be the Last Prophet. Now Islam was spreading fast, with the two powerful citizens Hamzah and 'Umar helping the cause. It made a great difference to the spread of Islam. Hamzah was the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, whose great bravery had earned him the title of The Lion of God.

Many people were concerned and angry over Muhammad's success; others were very happy. The tribe of Quraysh formed themselves into a group and stopped all dealings with the Muslims. The tribe of Quraysh tried many times to do evil to Islam and its followers and had beaten the slaves who wanted to listen to Muhammad. They spread false rumours about the Prophet and yet these enemies had not succeeded.

Time passed and Muhammad, now at the age of fifty, had more sorrow. It was another death and this time his beloved wife Khadijah died, his companion, and his first convert to Islam. For 25 years he had her great support and understanding. Now she was gone; never would he hear her voice again giving him courage and hope. She was a staff for him to lean upon and all that one could wish for in a wife. He was so sad. It was terrible to see him like this. Now he had become a widower, suffering again but never complaining. He also lost at this time his uncle and guardian, who was so kind to him in his childhood and all his life. After a while the Prophet Muhammad married Sawdah, a widow of an emigrant to Abyssinia.

Muhammad now thought he must get more support for Islam. He started out for an important city called Tá'if, a place sixty miles to the east of Mecca. It was an important city. On arriving at Tá'if, he went to the three most important men of the city and told them that they should join him in his wonderful mission and help to spread Islam.

They did not seem to think it a wonderful mission or a wonderful faith. Islam to them was out. They would not support it. For some days the Prophet worked hard but gained nothing. Then the horrible mobs started to try and drive Muhammad out of the city; they hooted at him, pelted him with stones and at last compelled him to flee from the city. This mob drove him out, chasing him across a hot and sandy plain. At last, weary, sad and very unhappy, he hid himself in a garden, where he spent his time in prayer.

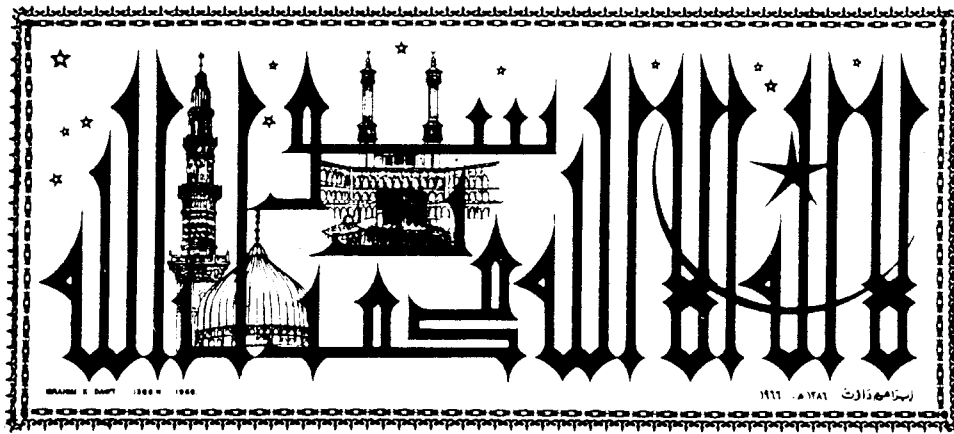
Here he was, unhappy and forlorn.

Whilst the Prophet was in this garden, he implored God, saying, "Oh, my God, I come to Thee alone to tell my troubles. Thou art the Most Merciful, and the Best Protector, I seek Thy shelter, grant it to me and peace to others". Now, here was our Prophet, not so young, at fifty years of age, unhappy and forlorn. Yes! But had he given up? No! He would rather die than give up the cause of Islam.

Now, the owners of the garden saw the Prophet and felt sorry for him in his tired and bruised condition. So they sent their servant, a man named 'Addas with grapes. Holding out his hand, the Prophet took the grapes and, as was his usual habit before eating anything, he said, "In the name of God" which in Arabic is Bis-millah. The slave asked the meaning of this phrase and it was explained to him. The slave was so very pleased that he kissed the Prophet's hand.

The owners of the slave warned him of how he would have to suffer, if he ever became a Muslim.

On Muhammad's return journey a ray of sunshine seemed to come, a ray of hope. It was this. At a place called Mina very near Mecca, Muhammad met a group of people who were attracted by his preaching and determination. They joined his mission and then took a pledge to support him. It was the first pledge in the history of Islam and it is known as The Pledge of 'Aqabah. It was made by twelve men then but, the following year, seventy men took a similar pledge. These men were a great support to Islam. In Medina the claims of the Prophet Muhammad now aroused great interest and a wish to know more about Islam was evident. A teacher was sent from Mecca to Medina, and Islam started to spread.



There is but one God. Muhammad is His Messenger.

The hopes of Muhammad were raised. Thinking so much about his work, he saw a great future for Islam, and felt thankful to God for giving him strength. In this year a great event took place. It was a journey called *Isrá* which means a night journey. On this journey the Prophet Muhammad was carried from Mecca to the Temple of Jerusalem where he started his Ascension on a winged horse. On arrival he was welcomed by all the previous prophets who had been to this world to give the same message—that God is One. God told him that his followers should pray five times a day. Now, this question of prayer had always been in Muhammad's mind, and now the answer had been given. There would be a set of prayers to go down through the ages. (I have already given you full information about these prayers and how to perform and recite them in the front pages of this book.) The time had come for the Prophet Muhammad to leave Mecca. God gave him a message telling him to go with his followers to Medina. So the Muslims left their homes and departed secretly in small parties to Medina till only Muhammad, Abu Bakr and 'Alí with their families, were left behind for a while.

"Now", thought the tribe of Quraysh, "it is time to finish Muhammad: kill him we must: and not be afraid. The time has come for him to die and die he must." They said, "We have thought about this before, but this time we must not fail." But God was watching all this. So God warned the Prophet and this is what happened. 'Alí, the cousin of Muhammad, loved him so much that he would give his life for him. Well! Now the time had come to prove this, because God had warned the Prophet of a plan made by the Qurayshites to kill him. The plan was that one young man from each clan (and there were forty clans) should get together and kill the Prophet. In this way no special clan could be blamed for the crime. And they knew that, if they were found out, the relatives of Muhammad could not fight against the forty clans. Hearing of all this, 'Alí knew that they would be watching the bed of Muhammad that night to see if he left it, because it was well known that no one would kill a person in his house. The bad men looked through the keyhole and saw someone whom they thought to be the Prophet in bed. But in reality the Prophet and Abu Bakr had quietly gone out and were going to hide in a cave in a mountain called Mount Thaur. The wicked men forgot the rule which was never to attack anyone in his own house. With one cry they dashed into the house, and were very angry when they saw 'Alí in the bed. They were furious and rushed out again to look for the Prophet. By now he and Abu Bakr, as I have said, were on their way to Medina: they had got away from Mecca by mingling with the crowds. After a short time they came to the cave. Now, the people who wanted the Prophet dead called a big meeting. Here it was announced that a great reward would be given to anyone who captured the Prophet.

Then the bad mob started looking everywhere for the person with a reward on his head. They wanted the money. They looked here: they looked there and they looked everywhere

but they could not find the Prophet. They were rushing around like mad people, asking everyone if they had seen anyone who looked like the Prophet. But no one had seen him. He had vanished.

A little way out from the Prophet's house, the mob started to look for any footprints which might give them a clue. At last they found some footprints which led them to the cave of Thaur.

Abu Bakr and the Prophet heard movements outside the cave. "We are lost", said Abu Bakr. "There are so many of the enemy and we are only two". "No", said the Prophet. "We are three; for God is with us". The Prophet felt very calm and he said, "God will protect us". Poor Abu Bakr really felt ill and sad; for here was the enemy right outside the opening to the cave. But look! What had happened? Abu Bakr held his breath. There, a stone's throw away, a dove had laid two eggs and green saplings were shooting up. No one could enter that cave without crushing the eggs and the green saplings. But what had happened now? You will never believe this. A spider had actually spun its web over the opening of the cave.

"Are they inside the cave?" asked one of the men. "Wait a minute", said another of the mob. "I am not wasting my time here; see those eggs and plants and now ask yourself, 'Could anyone get in there without breaking the web and crushing the plants and the eggs?' I, for one, am not wasting my time." They all agreed upon this and off they went, hoping to get the big reward for killing the Prophet. You know, dear Children, this was a terrible cave; it was full of insects and that was also why these bad men thought that no one was in the cave. It was also dark and dusty inside.

For three days these two men lived in that cave. Abu Bakr's daughter brought them food and water. They said their prayers and thanked God for all His mercies. In the evening of the third day Muhammad and Abu Bakr left the cave, led by a non-Muslim to guide them through the back paths leading to Medina. The reward for the Prophet's capture was still being offered. One man, whose name was Suraqah, was going along when he met a Bedouin who told him that he had seen two men walking by the seashore. Suraqah at once came to the conclusion that the Prophet and Abu Bakr must be these two men. He rushed to his horse and jumped on its back. The horse fell down and the man fell heavily to the ground. I should think that by now he was quite giddy and very angry. In this furious mood he chased them and came near to them. He got ready to draw his bow and shoot the Prophet with his arrow when suddenly the horse fell down once again and he was thrown to the ground suddenly. The man must have thought, "I am not meant to kill this man and I will not. This Prophet must succeed." He called to the Prophet, asking him to forgive him. With a wonderful smile the Prophet said to him, "One day you will wear the gold bangles belonging to the rulers of Persia". These words came true twenty-four years later when 'Umar presented him with some gold bangles which had belonged to the Emperor of Persia.

Many Muslims left Mecca for Medina wanting to be where the Prophet was. News spread around that the Prophet had left Mecca and was on his way to join his followers in Medina. A special body of people known as the Ansars, who had originally come from the Yemen but had been forced to move owing to terrible floods, had settled near Medina. The name of the Ansars meant "helpers". When these people became Muslims they were then given this name. These Ansars would rush out every day to see if the Prophet was arriving, as they had planned to give him a good reception. But for many days they would return home disappointed.

They did not know that the Prophet was staying with an important follower who was also an Ansar, and who had invited the Prophet to stay for some days. You must remember that in those days it took a long time to deliver a message. Also the Prophet was not aware of the fact that some Ansars were looking out daily for his arrival because they wanted to give him a royal welcome. But, as you know, he was busy building a small Mosque. The Prophet stayed for four days, Monday to Thursday, building the first Mosque in history.

Poor 'Ali having travelled from Mecca, arrived at Qubá (this was the name of the small place near Medina) where the small Mosque was being built. He was not too well, having had a terrible journey, and he was all alone. The road was very rough and stony from Mecca to Qubá.

Abu Bakr and others with loving hands finished this Mosque. You know the saying: "Loving hands make light work". That is why the Mosque was built so quickly. The Prophet and Abu Bakr, with some of his companions, now moved towards Medina. And what a reception they got!

The people ran out to meet them. Women sang songs from the house-tops to greet these noble guests who had taken so many risks to get to Medina. Now everyone wanted the Prophet Muhammad to stay with them. "Oh, please stay with me", one of them would say. "Oh, but you must stay with me!" another would beg.

The Prophet said, "Where my camel stops, there I will stay". The camel stopped in an empty space which belonged to two orphans. The orphans at once wanted to give the land to the Prophet. "No", said the Prophet, "I will buy this land". He made the orphans accept the money for their land. And do you know what he did with this land? I will tell you. Here he built another Mosque, a very important one, which would go down in history. It was just a simple Mosque, made with tree trunks, with the boughs forming a roof. A platform was made in the courtyard on which people without any homes could live. The Mosque was called al-Masjid al-Nabawi, meaning the Mosque of the Prophet. This still exists today; of course, not in its original form.

The next wonderful thing to happen was that the Prophet was chosen to be the chief of the city.

Medina offered to the Muslims the peace that helped the spread of Islam. We can safely say that the life of Islam started from Medina, although it was born in Mecca. Alas, in Mecca Muslims were hounded from pillar to post, not allowed even to say their prayers in their houses. But here in Medina they were saying their prayers in public and in a Mosque.

Now the question arose as to which was the best way to call all Muslims to meet together for prayers five times a day. Many suggestions were put forward but nothing was agreed upon. As Muhammad was wishing for a solution to this question, his wish was granted. A companion of the Prophet said, "Last night I had a dream. I dreamt I heard a voice saying 'God is the Greatest . . .'" he then went on to recite the whole of the call to prayers (Adhan). But the Prophet had already received a divine inspiration with the same words as the companion had dreamt.

Then said another companion called 'Umar, "I too had the same dream". The Prophet said that the words the men had dreamt should be the call for prayers.

This call is given all over the world today by men who are called Muezzins. I honestly believe that all persons, whether they are Muslims or not, must admit that this call sounds wonderful coming through the clear air proclaiming one's belief. It stirs one's heart and soul. There is nothing in the world so wonderful as that cry from the minaret proclaiming to the world that the time for prayers to God (the One and Only God) has come.

Now, at this time it was the custom of all people of the East, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim, to marry more than one wife. Every man had more than one wife: in fact, many. Then Muhammad was told by God that a Muslim could only take four wives if he could treat them alike! You know they had more than twenty in olden days, but Muhammad had one wife at first, whose name was Khadijah and only after she had died did he have more than one wife at a time. But, as I said before, it was the usual custom to have more than one wife. This custom was a way of looking after orphans and widows. You see, after a war the women were left without their husbands to protect them, and that left them helpless—not like nowadays when women are not so helpless.

Regarding the condition, “If you can treat them alike”, I must add here that it takes a prophet to treat four women alike. But that is a matter of opinion and God has given us brains to think things out for ourselves. Most Muslims now have one wife and many countries allow only one wife. When you grow older, you can study this point for yourself. Islam is common sense. But as this question seems to come up so much in the West from outsiders with the other remark, “Muhammad and the sword”, it is my duty, your duty, and all Muslims’ duty, to point out that we Muslims always say: “The ink from the pen of a scholar is more precious than the blood of a martyr”. Muhammad did *not* spread Islam by the sword. Yes! The Prophet Muhammad fought, but not to spread Islam. He fought to free the oppressed and also when asked by people who could not defend themselves. We are not taught to turn the other cheek. Who does? What country or leader when attacked by an army or persons does not defend itself or himself?

Later on, I will tell you about some of the battles in which the Prophet Muhammad took part. But again, I say, and I cannot repeat it too often, Islam was *never* spread by the sword; if it had been, many countries would be Muslim today. You know the Muslims conquered Spain but never forced Islam on the Spanish. The Muslims had no thumbscrew or stake, as were used on the Protestants by the Spanish Catholics in olden days. You know the Muslims came up as far as Sicily. I must add that they did not force their religion. But, as you know, there are Muslims in many countries—China, Russia, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Arabia, Nigeria and many other countries. One fifth of the world’s population is Muslim. Oh, yes! We are not a small community! Please remember this. Be proud of this fact.

As you already know, many places holy to the Christians and Jews are also holy to the Muslims. Christians, Muslims and Jews like to visit Jerusalem. You cannot be a Muslim if you do not respect Jesus. Call him an impostor and you are *not* a Muslim. The Holy Qur’án mentions Jesus and his mother with great respect and all the prophets are respected. But we count Muhammad to be the Last Prophet.

I always like to close my talk with some advice. This time I say especially to children in foreign countries away from their homes, and also those at home, that the Prophet Muhammad always told the truth and meant what he said. Try to follow him. Don’t even say to a person, “Can I help you?” if you do not mean it; for this action is an untruth. Never promise and not keep your promise. If your parents ask “Did you do this or that?”, give a truthful answer. Grow up to be a truthful man or woman. Such persons, who, if they sign an agreement, will keep their promises, whether in business or private affairs. We must hear the world say, “A Muslim’s word is his bond”. And if at school Muslim children get known for telling the truth, how wonderful! I say again to little Muslim children all over the world: live a Muslim life; be a shining example; tell the truth. The Qur’án says, “The Faithful are those who keep their trust, fail not in their words and keep their promises!” With these wonderful words I will close for now.

Dear Children,

On the next four pages I will show you some photos of the inside and outside of that great building known as The Dome of the Rock, or the Aqsá Mosque, at Jerusalem, which has many Muslim visitors from all over the world.

It is from this mosque that the Prophet Muhammad started his Ascension.

The Battle of Badr

Little Children, I am going to tell you about our Prophet and his battles of defence. Please remember our Prophet did not like fighting, but sometimes one is forced to defend one's people and must fight. And now I am giving you the history of how our Prophet was forced into a battle called the Battle of Badr.

The Prophet Muhammad was in Medina. He had with him many followers who had joined him from Mecca because they wanted to be near him. Of course, having left their homes, they were now poor because they had left Mecca without any belongings. Also their property had been taken by the Meccans. The Muslims, who were in Medina, wanted to give everything to these poor people who had come in. But these people said, "We must not have charity; we must work".

For example, one man was offered half of a business by his Muslim brother who was an Ansar but he refused saying, "I must help myself. Please show me the way to go to the Market and I will do something or the other to make a living, and manage to keep myself".

The man showed him the way and he started to work hard there. After a while he got better jobs and then went on to get his own business. In time he became a big businessman.

Other followers of the Prophet in the same position as this man kept their independence by becoming potters, builders, clerks or any other trade at which they could earn an honest living. It is true that they all did not become big businessmen but they were able to keep themselves and save a little. So much so that they helped towards a public fund or treasury which was called Bayt al-Mal. This fund or treasury was created to help anyone who wanted help. It worked perfectly and only those in need asked for help, because, you see, there were still a few poor men amongst them.

These followers of our Prophet did very good work and they became known to different people all over the place. The Idolators from Mecca heard of all this and it did not make them happy, as they were bent on destroying the Muslims. They were bent on destroying them even though they were now living in Medina. The Muslims were suspicious of this and needed all the friends that they could get. They had already made pacts with the people around them. These pacts were made in case the people in Medina were attacked by anyone from outside. The Prophet then asked the Jews to join in this pact, which they did.

It was agreed that each man should have his own religion without any outside interference. This meant that they would all join together if attacked and would defend Medina.

In Medina there was a man called 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy who would have been given a very good post if Muhammad had not arrived in Medina. Now, the Idolators in Mecca knew all about this and tried to get this man to cause a disturbance in Medina, but he was too clever to start any big trouble there. He knew that he would have to be very careful, and do things in an underhand manner. He remembered that there were a few tribes between Mecca and Medina who were against the Muslims. So he made up his mind that, whilst the Quraysh Idolators were stirring up these tribes, he would also work quietly on some half-hearted people inside Medina, so that there would be trouble from both inside and outside the city.

Small parties of men were sent by the enemy to look around and see if they could start trouble right near Medina, if not in it. People in Medina became aware of this and said, "Sooner or later we will be called upon to defend ourselves".

But the Prophet refused to allow them to fight unless they were really attacked. The interference from outside became so great that the people in Medina lived in constant terror of the Quraysh Idolators.

That night the Prophet received a revelation in which he was permitted to fight in defence only. Dear Children, you know this meant that, if they were going to be attacked, they could fight back. The Prophet wanted to find out what friends he had around Medina. So he sent a few men to the tribes around there to see how they felt. In reality some of these tribes had made

friendly pacts only just for their own safety, and perhaps would not have been any good if asked to come into Medina and defend it. This the Prophet had to find out. These men whom the Prophet sent had been told never to enter into anything that would end in a fight with anyone they met, as the people of the Quraysh were only waiting to start war on any pretext, and they would find one if they possibly could.

But an unfortunate thing happened. The leader of the group who was a good follower of the Prophet, and who had been especially chosen to do this job of seeing what was going on, had been given an envelope which he had been told to open after two days. The two days passed: the envelope was opened, and inside was a letter which stated that if this party would go to a certain place called Nakhlah, they would get certain information about what the Quraysh were planning to do.

So the party went to Nakhlah, and there they saw a few of the enemy belonging to the Quraysh tribe. The leader suddenly thought of how the Muslims had suffered through these people: how they had been robbed of their homes, lands and wealth which they had left in Mecca. Thinking of all this stolen property and how, with this, the enemy could buy arms to fight, the leader became angry and caught one of the men of the Quraysh and killed him. This, as you know, was absolutely against Muhammad's wishes, and now there would be an excuse for the tribe of Quraysh to fight and start a war. It was through this excuse that the battle of Badr came about.

By chance at this time a trading caravan was going along that way. A great enemy of Islam called Abu Sufyán was with this trading caravan and now he saw his chance to start war. He knew that he was really in no danger and that only one man from a group returning from Syria had been killed and that the followers of Muhammad were now far away and not one of them could be seen. But to make the most of this chance that had come his way he sent a message back to Mecca stating that all the people with him were going to be attacked. But in fact this caravan by now had already passed Medina and was quite safe.

Now here is the chance, thought the people in Mecca, to stamp out the people of Islam. So a great army was sent out and as this great army approached Medina, news reached Muhammad that this great army was on its way to attack. The Prophet thought that it was best to go outside the city and drive the enemy away; for he could not call upon all the tribes to come with him, because he had made a pact with them that they would only be expected to help if the enemy had entered the city. The people who had made the Pact with Muhammad came at once and offered to help him. They said, "We know that we are not compelled to help you but it is our wish to help you, and we will go outside the city with you".

That day a poor army only 313 strong consisting of men, boys, and helpers of all sorts came marching along. It was a poor pathetic army but their courage was great. Here they were marching along to keep off an army of more than a thousand men who were fully armed, and had planned this attack for months with great care and had been ready to fight at a moment's notice. This poor little untrained band of Muslims! What chance would they have? This band of faithful men—their only shining armour was their great belief in One God and the Last Prophet.

They marched until they reached a place called Badr. There the enemy were camping with their great supply of arms ready to fight at any minute. The Prophet saw how unhappy his men had suddenly become. He stopped for a while and prayed to God. "O God!" he said, "If Thou let this small army of these great believers perish, there will be no one left to worship Thee and to carry on the message".

After this prayer the Prophet felt better. He came to his men and said, "Soon shall the host be routed and they shall turn their backs". This was a revelation which came to our Prophet.

The enemy were in the best of spirits thinking, "Our time has come to win a great victory". The Prophet gave his followers instructions that they must not be the first to attack, but to let the Quraysh attack them first. In the olden days amongst the Arabs it was the custom for the

best three men of the army to step forward and call out to the other side to send three of their men to fight them. It was always taken for granted that the three men from each side would be of equal status and fighting ability. So the three men met each other, and the men from Mecca were killed. "What has happened?" thought the Quraysh. "We sent three of our best men: we must win. We have to win, we have been training for this great day for a long time. At any rate we will win this time", they all said.

Another three men were sent out; they were also killed. Now the fighting started everywhere. The Prophet went around helping all his believers with words of courage and seeing to all the wounded. His heart went out to one young boy whom he had tried hard to stop from fighting. This valiant youth had rushed out and was killed. This made the Prophet very sad. The leaders of the enemy were killed and seeing this the unbelievers turned and ran away. But eighty of them were taken prisoner.

When this battle had been at its highest, the Prophet had prayed to God to help the wounded on both sides. With tears streaming down his cheeks he prayed for the suffering. What a difference! The enemy had prayed to their gods for victory only. And now the Idolators were defeated and absolutely stunned. Would they never learn? History proves that they took years to understand the truth which was that Islam had come to stay. This was a sad day for the Meccans. Their gods had absolutely let them down!

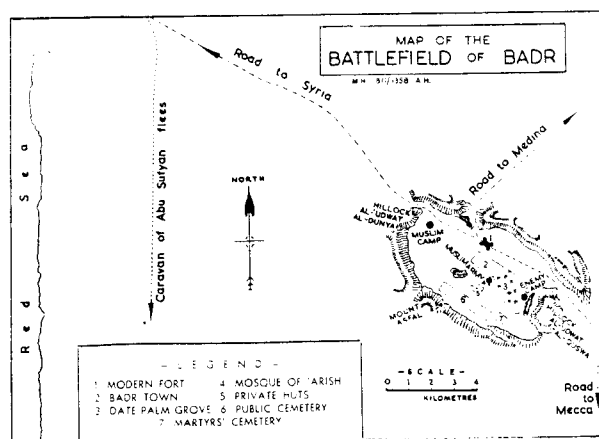
The tribes around Mecca and Medina were greatly impressed and many joined Islam. One reason was that they had heard how the prisoners had been treated with great kindness and had had the best of food whilst the Muslims only had dates, and the prisoners rode whilst the Muslims had to walk. What wonderful treatment the Prophet gave to his prisoners! But he did make prisoners, who could afford it, pay for their freedom: poor prisoners were set free without payment (ransom).

One prisoner was brought to the Prophet. "He must be punished", they said, "He has always been a very wicked man to us". But the Prophet said, "He must be set free".

In all these battles 'Ali was around helping the Prophet, ever ready and near him to sacrifice his life if need be. The Muslims returned to Medina, they were only left in peace for one year. But the Prophet would not set out to fight the Meccans. He only wanted to defend, if attacked, according to God's order.

Dear Children, God loves a fair fighter and a person who forgives. Remember this in your little battles. There are many kinds of battles. Some with the mind; some with the truth, and there are battles also with your actions. Whatever kind of a fight it is, always do the right thing and be a fair fighter, and again remember that Muhammad never used the sword to spread Islam. It was through his kindness that many prisoners did accept Islam.

I know I have mentioned this many times before but I cannot repeat this too often. For years I have had to listen to the sentence that Muhammad spread Islam with the sword. This we must keep denying as it is an untruth.



The Battle of Uhud

My dear Children,

I must tell you how the battle of Uhud came about. It was through a terrible man called Abu Sufyán, about whom you have heard before. Now he could not get over losing the battle of Badr. He had sworn to get even with the Muslims. He must get his revenge and finish the Muslims off, because this defeat meant that all the Meccan Idolators were in disgrace. So he and others made plans to attack Medina. They thought they had made plans so carefully that no one would ever know until it was too late. Now Muhammad's uncle who still lived in Mecca came to hear of this plan to finish the Muslims in Medina for ever. He watched the movements of Abu Sufyán and others to make out if anything was going to happen. He saw the planners start out as if they were going off in dead earnest for some attack. "Ah, that settles it", thought the uncle. "I must get word to my nephew Muhammad of this attack". And so he sent a message by a swift messenger. Muhammad called his followers and told them that he had heard that Abu Sufyán and some men were going to attack. "We must go out to fight them", the people of Medina cried. "No", said the Prophet, "we will wait for them to come to us". The people kept saying, "We must go to meet the invaders". At last Muhammad said, "All right, we go", and he went and put his armour on. You see, dear Children, only a year had passed by, and the Quraysh Idolators from Mecca were again ready for another fight against Muhammad and Islam. For a whole year this enemy had lived in anger and hate over their defeat at Badr. "What went wrong?" these infidels would say. "Did we not pray in the Ka'bah to our idol gods?" (In those days the Ka'bah was full of idols.) "They must have heard us and perhaps this defeat was to make us fight again and get complete victory. Our gods know how we hate Islam. They will, and must, help us."

Once again, with false hopes and hatred in their hearts, they all set out towards Medina. They were three thousand fully armed men. The Prophet's whole force was only a thousand men. They wished to have peace and live quietly in Medina. This, of course, was quite impossible with this great force marching towards them. Muhammad thought it was best to go out and meet these men. So he went with his one thousand followers to a certain place to make arrangements about fighting the enemy. But again this awful man, 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, turned up. With his cunningness and evil words, he got round three hundred of Muhammad's men and influenced them against fighting. 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy was a great hypocrite. But, as a matter of fact, our Prophet was already uneasy about these men. He had thought that they would not have the real feeling for the defence of Islam. This proved to be quite true; for it was when the enemy appeared in sight that 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy left with these three hundred men. I feel sure that our Prophet must have felt relieved to think that he was rid of such men whom he felt could not be trusted.

We must all realise that it is not easy to fight knowing you are outnumbered. But these brave seven hundred fighters set out to fight the enemy and arrived at a place called Uhud. They were feeling hurt at being let down by the three hundred frightened men.

The fighting started and the Muslims were having a wonderful victory over the Idolators who were so surprised because they could not realise what had gone wrong, and they certainly showed signs of their lines being broken. So they started running away quite dazed at the Muslims' success.

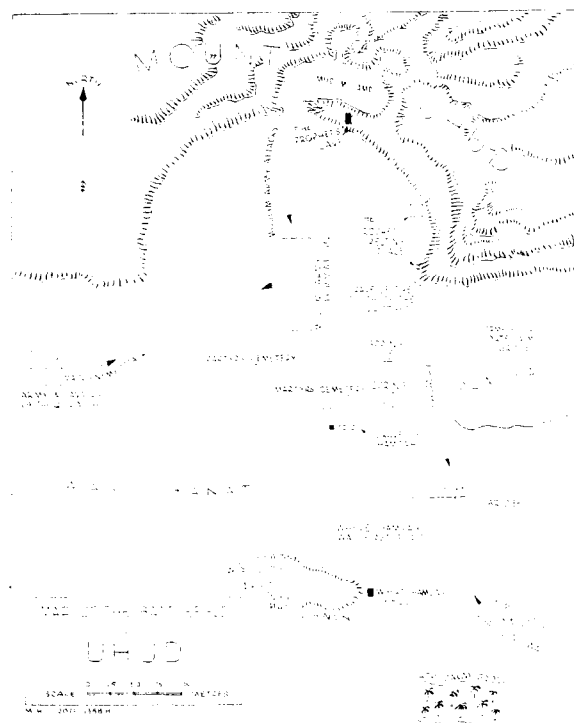
All of a sudden things seemed to take a turn for the worse for the Muslims. All this happened because the enemy was seen running away and looking done for. But strange to say something happened to Muhammad's group of archers whom Muhammad had told to stay at the rear of the army. These archers got over-excited and started to leave their posts at the rear to see what the enemy would leave behind for them to capture. It is true that the Idolators

were running away. But when they saw what was happening they started to charge into the back of the Muslim army, where the archers should have been. All this caused a terrible confusion, and all because the archers had not obeyed Muhammad's orders. This made it very difficult for him. He knew that he had told the archers to be at that certain spot, as it was the only weak spot, where the rocks of Uhud had an opening and that was why the Prophet had placed the archers there. The Prophet was behind the army, and the archers who had rushed forward. He could see what the enemy meant to do. Now to our Prophet there was only one course open and that was to warn the army that the enemy was at their backs. But if he did that, the enemy would hear where he was and kill him. But he had to warn them, even though it would make him a target for the enemy. So the Prophet shouted, "Rally to me: I am the Prophet of God". Hearing their Prophet's voice, they looked around and saw that the enemy was upon them. But at once they went to the defence of their Prophet. They defended him from the showers of arrows. But, alas, he was suddenly hit in the face by a stone thrown at him. He fell on the ground. The enemy had seen Muhammad fall; they rushed towards him, and so did Muhammad's army. They formed a ring around him and fought for their dear Prophet such a fight which was never to be forgotten. After all, dear Children, remember whose life they were defending! The vicious Idolators got so angry that they wished to kill the Prophet. "He must die. Has he not fallen down into a hole with a wound on his face? Are we not many more than Muhammad's men? Our gods surely are going to help us to win once for all", thought they.

Suddenly the word went around that Muhammad was dead. At once the army thought of giving up. But one man said, "Even if the Prophet is not amongst us, let us fight for the cause which He fought and died for". So the Idolators received such a good hiding that they ran away in fear of their lives. I am sorry to say that seventy Muslims lost their lives. These men need never have died, had not the three hundred men listened to 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy and stayed at home, therefore making the defence weak. For whatever one may say, we must realise those three hundred men would have made a great deal of difference on the battle-field and also if the archers had obeyed orders.

Here is another lesson for you, dear Children, and, that is, to obey.

But let us thank God that our Prophet was only wounded and not killed.



Two Important Festivals in Islam

Dear Children,

There are two yearly very important festivals in the life of a Muslim. One is the 'Id al-Fitr, which in English means the "festival of breaking the fast". The second is the 'Id al-Adha, which in English means the "festival of sacrifice".

1) *'Id al-Fitr.*

In celebrating this festival (after one month's fast), the Muslim is thanking God for giving him the help and strength to have fasted throughout the past month from daybreak to sunset. This month is called the month of Ramadan and on the following day after a month's fast, this great festival is held. This festival is called the 'Id al-Fitr.

I must tell you that during the life of our Prophet many important things happened during this month. For instance, the Holy Qur'an started to be revealed to the Prophet (may the peace and blessing of God be upon him!) 1,400 years ago. I think you already know what I mean when I say the Holy Qur'an. But to make sure I will tell you. It is a book in which the word of God is recorded.

2) *'Id al-Adha.*

The Holy Qur'an says that all Muslims who can should go on a pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime to Mecca. If a Muslim goes on this pilgrimage he celebrates the 'Id al-Adha at a place called Mina, near Mecca. If you do not perform the Hajj, then you celebrate this festival wherever you are and join those in spirit who are at Mecca. A few hundreds of thousands of Muslims or even a few Muslims can get together and celebrate the 'Id al-Adha in a mosque, if possible, or anywhere else. But as I have said before, a Muslim is told in the Qur'an to go on a pilgrimage if he or she can afford it. But the pilgrim has to be sure not to leave his family in need by going off to Mecca and leaving it financially or otherwise troubled. The words in the Qur'an are: "If you can afford to go".

The Hajj is the name of the pilgrimage performed at the time when the pilgrim has to be present in Mecca before or on the seventh day of the twelfth month of the Muslim year.

Again I repeat if one goes on the Hajj, one must leave the family well cared for. What a practical religion Islam is! It is full of common sense. You just think about it. I am sure you would not like your father to go off and leave you hungry, because he was doing his religious duty. That is why Islam says that if one performs the Hajj (Pilgrimage) the family must be well provided for when it is left at home. Children, you must see what a wonderful religion Islam is, so full of common sense. If you are lucky enough to go to Mecca for the Hajj, you should thank God for giving you the great opportunity of feeling and seeing for yourself this great occasion, when humanity becomes one large family of all colours and all nationalities, all speaking different languages. Here the king and the beggar stand by the side of each other. They all gather together with one object only—to glorify God. They all repeat again and again, and wherever

an opportunity occurs, these words which are, "I am here at Thy service, O God!" A pilgrim can be heard repeating these words at all times of the day, even when he is walking along, because he really feels so near to God at that time. The pilgrim wears two sheets without any seams. One sheet goes around him like a skirt, the other goes over one shoulder and the upper part of the body but the head is uncovered. Now, all look the same; all men become equal.

Women pilgrims are not compelled to wear white, but many of them do. They can wear what they like and it is usually quite sober clothes that they wear, but their faces must *not* be covered. The first thing that one does when one goes to Mecca is to go to the Ka'bah to do the Tawáf. I have already explained to you all about the Ka'bah but not about the Tawáf. This is an Arabic word and it means "going around". All pilgrims go around the Ka'bah seven times. After having done this, the pilgrims face the Ka'bah and say prayers of two *Rak'ahs* only. The pilgrims also run seven times between the two hills called Safa and Marwah. These small hills are just by the side of the Ka'bah.

You will ask, "Why do they run up and down?" This action of running up and down brings back to the pilgrims the memory of Hagar who ran at this spot hopelessly looking for water for her tiny baby son; and also how at last when all seemed hopeless, God showed her a well of water. This well is still there to this day and is called the Zemzem. Most pilgrims bring back some of its water with them. By running up and down between the hills the pilgrims would, I am sure, feel hot and thirsty and would get to know a little of what Hagar felt when she was searching for water, knowing her child would die of thirst.

The pilgrims' next move is to go to 'Arafát. On the way some pilgrims like to stay in Mina. But some do not stay. The pilgrims must be in 'Arafát on the ninth day of Dhu al-Hijja (the month of Hajj). After sunset on this day the pilgrims must move to Muzdalifah. Here the Isha prayer is said. It is here that the pilgrims collect forty-nine pebbles to take to Mina with them when they will perform the religious rite of throwing stones at the devil (Satan), a rite whose details I will give later on.

On the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijja the pilgrim goes to Mina before noon for the 'Id al-Adha (The Festival of Sacrifice) where the pilgrim sacrifices an animal. This is his duty. The meat is given to the poor. The Qur'án says that it is not the meat of the animals that reaches God. But it is the good intention and the action of the pilgrim that reach Him. The sacrifice is only a symbol of devotion and obedience.

After this the pilgrim returns to Mecca and performs the Tawáf and the running between Safa and Marwah. All the time the pilgrim is saying a prayer.

When the Tawáf and running is completed, the pilgrim goes back to Mina to spend another three nights there.

You must remember that all this time hundreds of thousands of pilgrims are constantly on the move—one huge mass of white broken only by a colour here and there of a woman's dress.

When the pilgrims are back in Mina the two white unsewn sheets can be taken off and ordinary clothes worn. While at Mina the pilgrims have to do another rite to complete the Hajj ceremonies. This rite is the throwing of small stones at three short pillars at Mina. These pillars are a little distance from each other. What are these three short pillars? The story goes back to the time of the Prophet Abraham, who had been commanded by God to sacrifice his son. Whilst on his way it was in these three places that the devil (Satan) tempted him to disobey God. He picked up some stones and threw them at the devil. The devil moved a little farther away. Again he tried to tempt Abraham but the Prophet Abraham stoned him again. He moved away and appeared again a few paces farther away. The Prophet Abraham stoned him and he disappeared altogether. Each of these pillars marks the place where the devil had appeared to tempt Abraham. You see, the devil or Satan, is an evil one who likes us to do wrong.

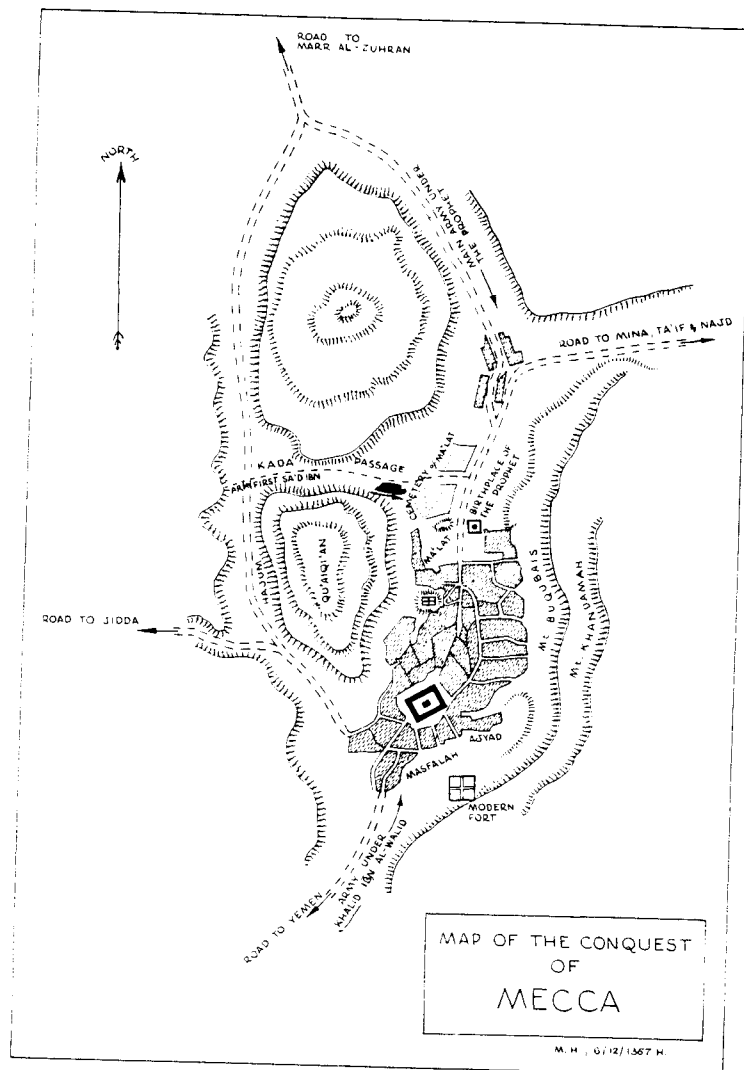
Now the last day of the Hajj has come for the pilgrims. If they are going away that very day

or whenever they wish to leave Mecca, they must go to the Ka'bah to do the Farewell Tawaf. The most wonderful experience of unity has been made, never to be forgotten for the whole of one's life.

Of course, all Muslims visit the three big mosques—the Ka'bah at Mecca, the Prophet's Mosque at Medina and the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem. All pilgrims visit the Prophet's burial place at Medina and ask God to bless his soul.

I wonder if you noticed that we Muslims remember so many actions of the Prophet Abraham mentioned in the Bible and also in the Qur'an. We remember Hagar and we hold a festival in memory of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ishmael. I think I can easily claim that we are the only people who have so much respect for all the Prophets of the Bible. Of course, these Prophets are of the Qur'an as well.

You already know that the Prophet Muhammad, after having lived for some time in Medina was not allowed to go to Mecca by the Quraysh. Nor were his followers. But the day came when our Prophet made Mecca a safe place for all Muslims to visit as and when they liked. It is worth remembering that the Prophet and his followers could not go to Mecca as you and I can do today as and when we like. In the next pages you will read how Mecca was made free for all Muslims to visit.



وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

*"We have not sent you (Muhammad) but as a mercy to all the nations"
(The Qur'an, 21: 107)*

Prophet Muhammad's entry into Mecca (630 C.E.)

The Ka'bah, so dear to our Prophet and his followers, was full of idols. The building so dear to the Prophet Muhammad was being used in the way of the unbelievers. It grieved him greatly.

Here is the history of how Mecca was taken away from these bad people and how the Ka'bah was again a place of worship for the true and only One God.

In the year 628 C.E. the people of Mecca agreed that they would be willing to let the Prophet Muhammad and his followers and also the Khuza'a tribe go freely to Mecca. This agreement was made at a place called Hudaibiyya outside Mecca. According to this agreement the Muslims were quite free to go to Mecca and visit the Ka'bah. This agreement was kept by the Quraysh for two years and during that time Islam became of great strength: for there was peace and no war or fighting against the followers of our Prophet by the Quraysh. But this did not please the enemies of Islam and they decided to break this agreement. A tribe called the Benu Bakr decided to do something against these followers of Islam. Some of the men of the Quraysh who also hated Islam met the men of the Benu Bakr tribe and started trouble. First of all, they thought they would get rid of the friendly Khuza'a tribe, who lived nearby. So these evil men of the Benu Bakr planned to swoop down in the dead of night to murder the Khuza'a. This they did. With warlike howls they killed many members of the Khuza'a tribe. They were dazed and could not collect their thoughts to fight the foe. So they fled to the Ka'bah. Here they felt they must be safe. For tradition had it that within the walls of the Ka'bah no blood must be shed. But how sad! These bad men went mad and so blood was shed even within the Ka'bah. What a pity! The streets of Mecca turned red with blood from the killings.

The Prophet was at that time in Medina. A message was sent to him. "Save us", it said, "and come to our help or else we will perish by the sword of the foe". This moved the Prophet's heart. What a cry of woe it was! He listened to their cry and at once sent the message to the Quraysh telling them that they must pay the blood-money to help the families of the Khuza'a who had been left without their relatives. He also asked them not to mix with the bad men of the Benu Bakr tribe and that the agreement of Hudaibiyya had been broken. Swiftly came back the reply: "We will not pay the blood-money. Yes, let the agreement be forgotten and exist no more". One man by the name of Abu Sufyan said to his friends. "No. Do not let this agreement go". You see, dear Children, Abu Sufyan could see into the future. He knew that they all would be punished one way or the other if the agreement was put aside. But the bad men of the Quraysh did not care or regret the killings they had done. They meant to make the Muslim blood flow again if they got a chance. "This could not go on", so thought the Prophet Muhammad. "I must see to it that Mecca is free and peace is reigning in it". He called his followers and told them that they must all prepare themselves to go to Mecca and take over the City without bloodshed. But amongst the followers there was a man called Hatib Ibn Abi

Balta, whose relatives lived in Mecca. Now Hatib thought that as soon as the Meccans would hear that Muhammad was at the city gates, they would kill his (Hatib's) relatives. So he sent a letter through a Meccan woman called Sarah. She was not a Muslim, but she had come to Muhammad for help. Hatib gave her money besides the money she had got from Muhammad. In this letter he told his relatives of the decision of the Prophet. But someone got suspicious and got the letter back from her and let her go on her way unharmed. But the followers of the Prophet said, "Hatib is a traitor; he must die". Hatib declared that he meant no harm. He was then forgiven because the Prophet insisted that he should go free. The Prophet also said, "All Meccans shall go free if God gives victory unto me".

It was the tenth day of Ramadan 630 C.E. when, with ten thousand brave men, Muhammad started out to take Mecca. He and his followers camped outside the city of Mecca that night and hoped to put the bad men of Mecca to flight. In order to overawe the Meccans, the Prophet had great fires lit around the city. The flames leapt up high so that they seemed to reach the sky. The followers all together cried *Allahu akbar*, which in English means "God is Great". With the fires all around and the loud cries of *Allahu akbar*, the Meccans thought that twenty thousand warriors were camping outside the city. Do you know that these evil men of Mecca gave up without any fighting? Out of the city came a great enemy of the Prophet who had even killed some of the Prophet's relatives. He hung his head in shame. "Forgive me," he said, "I have been your enemy for 20 years. I know I have done wrong and I bow to your God for forgiveness and also ask you to forgive me". Muhammad forgave him and gave the order to his men that when they entered the City, they must have pity on its inhabitants.

One of his generals, Khalid, went first into the City. Honestly his heart was full of pity for those frightened men. At least he thought that they were really frightened and sorry. But were they? Oh, no! When they saw Khalid approaching, all of a sudden they sent a shower of arrows at him and his men. Khalid forgot the Prophet's order. Without a thought he did the most natural thing to do at that time because, as you know, I have always told you that a Muslim does not turn the other cheek. He defended himself. Khalid fought back and in the battle 28 of the enemy were killed.

When the news reached the Prophet he was unhappy to think that some blood had been spilt. But this killing was not within the Ka'bah, as the men of Mecca had done. The killing done by Khalid was only to defend himself and his men. All the Muslims now had entered the city and Mecca was truly saved for you and me to visit the Ka'bah in peace and safety now and forever.

In accordance with the Prophet's command no one was taken prisoner and no one was compelled to become a Muslim. So when people even in these days say that the Prophet Muhammad used the sword to get his way, you refer them to his entry into Mecca where all non-Muslims were just allowed to go free. I must also tell you that this is the only example of its kind in history where the conqueror did not punish those who were at his mercy.

Why will people always like to think that the Muslims used the sword for spreading their religion? Why? I ask. When I was at school I heard stories of the infidels in occupation of the holy city of Jerusalem. But I was not told that the occupiers of the holy city had to love everything about the city because these people were *not* infidels but Muslims.

Dear Children, good night and God bless you!

Mecca as you have already read was not always free. Muhammad, through God's help, secured Mecca for all times. I have written here a poem for you about it. Why not learn it by heart?

The Conquest of Mecca

It was in the year 628 C.E.
The Hudaibiyya truce came to be.
In this the Muslims were quite free
To worship in Mecca, and the Ka'bah to see,
And worship as Abraham did before.

Now a certain tribe, the Khuza'as by name,
Had this freedom just the same.
And each did worship in his own way.

The truce was kept for two whole years,
And in that time Islam
Grew strong in the land of Abraham
And peace did reign supreme.

Now the tribe of Benu Bakr this peace could not
stand
So to the tribe of the Quraysh they went.
The tribe that twenty years had spent
In fighting Muhammad's men.
The Benu Bakrs knew this tribe would be glad
To see the Muslims very sad.

First, they must the Khuza'as slay,
And then they'd make the Muslims pay.
So the tribe of Benu Bakr and the Quraysh, too,
Planned just what they should do.
They swooped down in the dead of night,
And gave the Khuza'as a terrible fright.
Awakened by this sudden blow,
The Khuza'as seemed just not to know
How to fight back against the foe.

So to the Ka'bah's shelter they fled,
Hoping to hide from the enemy's wrath.
For in the tradition it was said,
"Within the Ka'bah's walls no blood there must be
shed."
But alas! How sad!
The enemy turned mad.
They killed some Khuza'as, and so blood was shed,
And surely the streets of Mecca turned red.

Away in Medina, Muhammad stayed.
In a message to him the Khuza'as prayed,
"Save us! And come to our aid,
Or we must perish by the hand of the foe!
Oh! How great is our cry of woe!"

Muhammad their cry did heed
And quickly rallied round in their need.
First, to the Qurayshites an order he sent, and it
was worded so:
"Pay blood-money for the Khuza'as you have slain.
Also no more with the tribe of Benu Bakr shall you
mix.
The Truce of Hudaibiyya must be destroyed.
Because of your actions it is null and void."

To pay blood-money the Qurayshites refused.
To give up Benu Bakr relations they did not choose.
As for the truce of Hudaibiyya, they agreed,
That should be null and void.

But Abu Sufyan, an enemy leader was he,
Tried hard for the truce to continue to be.
For into the future he could see,
He foresaw the Qurayshites would have to flee.
But, no notice of this man was taken,
And so the truce of Hudaibiyya was forsaken.

The blood of the Khuza'as, the Qurayshites had
spilled,
They with remorse were not filled.
Pay, they would not. With blood-money. No!
They still hoped to see the Muslims' blood flow.

Now the time had come,
Muhammad must strive,
To see Mecca City once more free,
And peace again reign supreme.
At last, compelled for freedom's sake,
Muhammad plans did have to make.
He called his followers one and all,
And they did answer to his call.

Plans were made for Mecca City to take,
But bloodless it must be.
This Muhammad wished to see.
Now one of Muhammad's followers,
Hatib by name,
Sent a letter to his kin,
Saying Muhammad was coming in.
For in Mecca his kin did stay.
He feared the foe might make them pay.

Muhammad's followers this found out,
And so the letter did not reach.
They sought him a lesson to teach.
Hatib, Muhammad did forgive,
But the followers thought he should not live.
To try and deliver such a letter,
At least put him in fetters.
Muhammad said, "No!
Hatib has repented.
His relatives live in Mecca, you see,
He only thought of seeing them free.
But, if God gives victory unto me,
Everyone there shall be free."

Muhammad moved towards Mecca that day,
The 10th of Ramadan, 630 C.E.
And with him ten thousand bold
Hoped Mecca City to hold.

They camped some miles outside that night,
And hoped the Qurayshites to put to flight.
Great fires were started all around,
The fires grew high, seemed to reach the sky.
"Allahu akbar!" the followers cried,
And that, too, seemed to reach the sky.
The Qurayshites looked out, and with awe they saw
The fires that lit the very sky.
And thought twenty thousand foes were nigh;
And so at once they all gave in.

To Muhammad, an enemy of long standing came,
He hung his head in shame.
Muhammad's worst enemy he had been for twenty
years or more,
Yet Muhammad forgave him all.
The man was so touched that in the end,
He to the will of God did bend.

The followers started out to enter the city.
Unto his followers Muhammad said,
"You must all have pity,
When you enter this fair City."
Now this request they meant to keep,
But one of the generals, Khalid by name,
Entered the city, his heart full of pity.
The greeting he got was of arrows and stones.

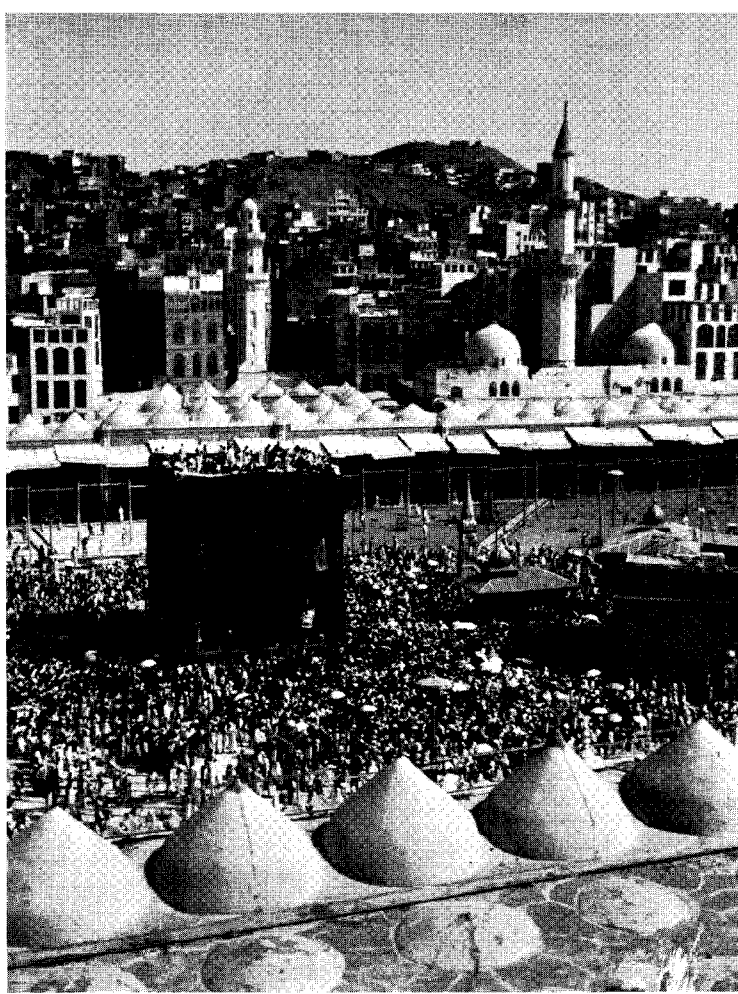
Khalid, Muhammad's orders forgot.
To save all around his heart was filled.
So he fought back,
Twenty-eight were killed.

When Muhammad heard this he was with sorrow
filled
To hear that enemy blood had been spilled.
But on hearing the story he realized,
Khalid to do this had been obliged.

And so the path of peace was paved,
And Mecca City truly saved.
Some became Muslims, others did not,
But the kindness of Muhammad they never forgot.

Now, listen, my friends, unto this day some people
say,
Muhammad used the sword to get his way.
This is not true, as you can see,
For all those non-Muslims
Were just set free.

*On the next page is a photo. I would like to call this study
A SILENT PRAYER FOR PEACE
(Photo by S. Amin for Aramco)*



The Pilgrimage to Mecca

The Hajj Regulations according to Islamic Law

The rites and ceremonies connected with the Hajj, which have not changed since the time of the Prophet, fall into various legal categories. The following are the principal ones:

(a) *Conditions which make obligatory the undertaking of the Hajj*

- (1) The intending pilgrim must be a Muslim.
- (2) He must have reached puberty.
- (3) He must be of sound mind.
- (4) He must be free (not a slave).
- (5) He must have the material means necessary, and must be certain that the pilgrimage-route is safe.

(b) *The basic rules (duties which are absolutely obligatory)*

- (1) A formulation of intention.
- (2) A stay at 'Arafát on the date fixed.
- (3) Circumambulation of the Ka'bah.
- (4) The seven-fold repeated short journeys between Safá and Marwah.
- (5) The shaving or cutting of the hair after all the rites have been accomplished.
- (6) The accomplishment of the rites in the prescribed order.

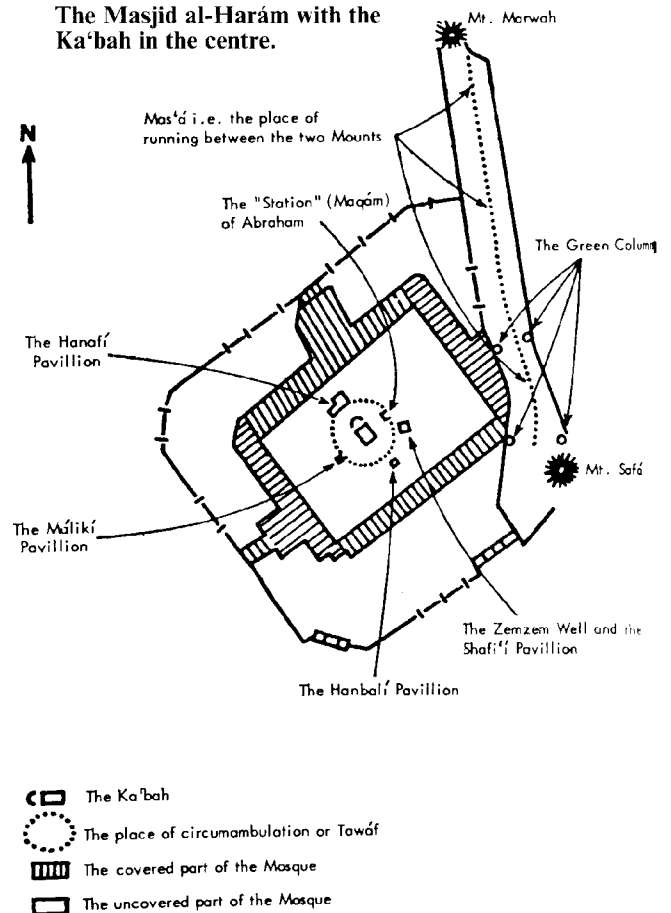
(c) *The obligations (or the things necessary)*

- (1) Self-consecration by the wearing of a special (un-sewn) garment as soon as the sacred territory is reached.
- (2) The stoning of the "Pillars of Satan".
- (3) The initial circumambulation.
- (4) A stay of one night at Muzdalifah.
- (5) A stay of two or three nights at Miná.
- (6) A final farewell circumambulation.
- (7) Abstinence from those things which are temporarily forbidden.

(d) *The traditional rites (recommended by the Prophet)*

- (1) The uttering of the words "Here am I" (*Labbayka*).
- (2) The ritual prayer of two Rak'ahs.
- (3) The drinking of water from the Well of Zemzem.
- (4) A visit to the Tomb of the Prophet at Medina.

The Masjid al-Harám with the Ka'bah in the centre.



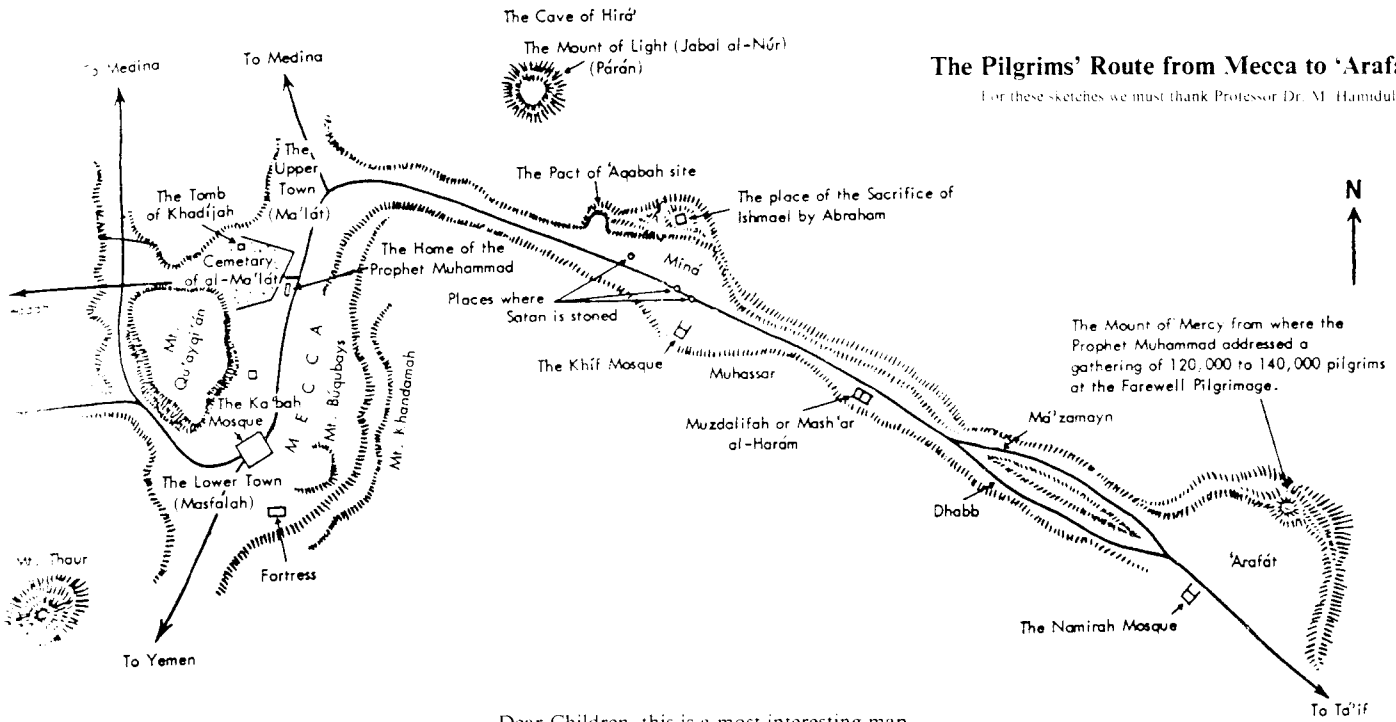
The covered part of the Mosque has been demolished and replaced by a much grander and more spacious building.
The Mas'á is now also covered.

(e) *The prohibitions applicable during the state of ritual consecration.*

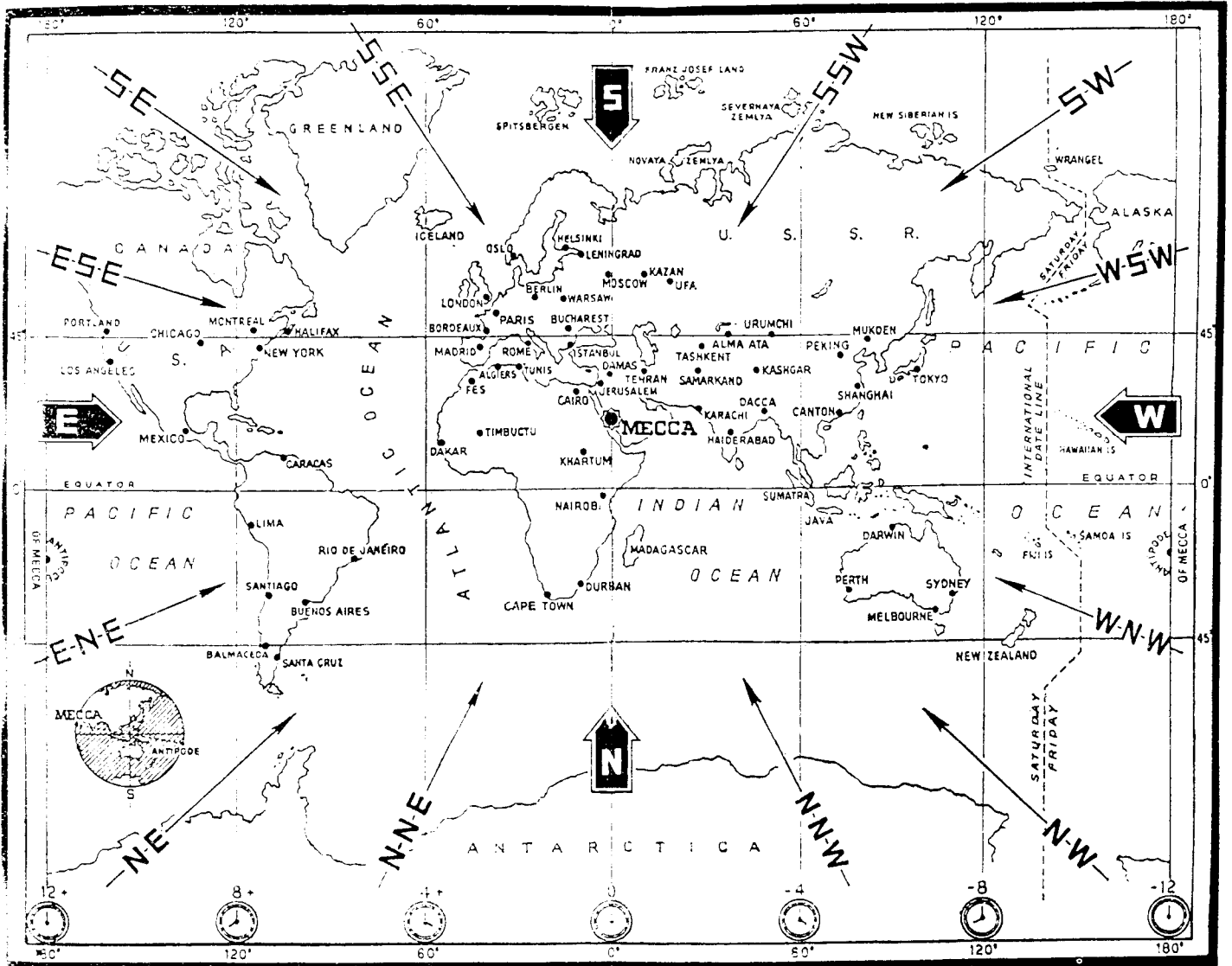
- (1) The wearing of sewn garments (for men only).
- (2) The wearing of headgear (for men only).
- (3) The wearing of a veil (for women only).
- (4) Anointing the hair.
- (5) Shaving or trimming the hair.
- (6) Cutting the nails.

The Pilgrims' Route from Mecca to 'Arafat

For these sketches we must thank Professor Dr. M. Hamdullah



Dear Children, this is a most interesting map.



- 7. Using perfume.
- 8. The killing of animals (except snakes, scorpions, and the like).
- 9. The felling of trees in the sacred territory (except during the course of normal agricultural and horticultural work).
- 10. Marriage.

MECCA. "the Centre of the world".

The map above made on the principle of Mercator's projection gives a vivid picture of the situation of Mecca—in the centre of the world.

In the Qur'an 42:7, Mecca is described as "The Mother of Towns" *Umm al-Qura* because it is destined to be the spiritual centre of the world. Already after the passage of 1,400 years since its advent, Islam is the most widespread religion of all religions of the world.

The arrows on the map show the direction in which the Muslims all over the world face the Ka'bah at Mecca when saying their daily prayers.

The Battle of Hunayn

Mecca was just settling down under the rule of the Prophet Muhammad, when after only a few days of peace, a tribe called Hawázin, under the leadership of Malik Ibn 'Awf, felt very disturbed because they lived very near Mecca and had a feeling that the influence of Islam would banish their idols.

So Malik Ibn 'Awf went to another tribe called the Thaqíf and suggested that they should join together and go out and fight Muhammad and Islam.

The Thaqíf lived in Tá'if, and, of course, you will remember how our Prophet was stoned and abused whilst in Tá'if. We already know that these people had no love for Muhammad or Islam, and now that 360 idols had been destroyed in Mecca, they were furious.

So out went these tribes towards Mecca, and took up their positions on top of a mountain called Hunayn.

Now, the Prophet heard of the meeting of these armies and knew they were going to prove a great danger to him and his men, Without any delay the Prophet gathered together his army which numbered 10,000 strong, and another 2,000 men who had recently adopted Islam joined the army. Some of these 2,000 were sincere and some were half-hearted. Thus the army of the Prophet was 12,000 strong.

This Muslim army was much larger than it had ever been before. Although the army of the enemy did not number more than 7,000, it had the advantage of a very good position which it occupied. Because Muhammad's army would be in the valley, the enemy would be on a higher and better position on the hill.

Everything seemed in their favour. Our Prophet got his men ready and set out towards the valley of Hunayn, which is situated between Mecca and Tá'if. He had first of all to find out what this was all about, because it looked like a plan to harm Mecca and Islam. I think the enemy must have guessed that our Prophet would come out to meet them. Perhaps that is why it kept to this good position on top of the hill.

Night was falling when Muhammad's army came to the district of Hunayn. So it camped there for the night.

Early in the morning, before it was light, Muhammad's army mustered ready for marching on to the Valley of Hunayn. The army formed itself into divisions. There were two divisions that day. The front division was under the Commander Khálid Ibn Walíd. This man had been an enemy of Muhammad in the battle of Uhud, which had been fought a few years before. In fact, it was he who had led his men to the back of Muhammad's archers, and almost won the day.

He had been a Muslim for two years now, and here he was leading a Muslim army. What trust our Prophet had!

Our Prophet was with the rear division of the army. Now on went these two divisions.

They arrived in the plain not far from the Hunayn hill whilst it was still twilight. Everything seemed ghostly in this light which was not the light of day nor the darkness of night. It was in between these lights when everything at that time appeared weird.

The enemy army saw Muhammad and his men. With one yell it swooped down on this army marching along. Khálid Ibn Walíd's division got such a fright that they turned around and ran as if the devil was after them.

Khálid Ibn Walíd saw his men running past with a terrific shower of arrows following them. The worst kind of arrows were being shot at them from the enemy. Some of the enemy were still on that high point which was a very good position for shooting arrows, and also they had made a point of scattering the horses and mules. With good bows and arrows and the swiftness with which they attacked, it was enough to frighten anyone.

What with the weird light of neither day nor night, and these arrows flying everywhere, it was really no wonder that Muhammad's army, at least the first front division, started to run off. When a man called Abu Sufyán, who had become a Muslim at the time of the conquest of Mecca, saw his fellow soldiers running away, he became his wicked old self again, and with a sarcastic smile, as the soldiers passed by him, he said to someone nearby, "These men will not stop running until they reach the sea".

Another man, the same kind as Abu Sufyán, said, "Now I see my father is being avenged". (His father had been killed whilst fighting the Muslims at Uhud.)

A third man said, "The magic of Islam has finished. It has ended today". But his brother who was more sincere, although before he had been a great idol-worshipper, said, "Do you for one minute think that God will forsake His religion? May you be cursed!"

Our Prophet must have thought it was a dream when his men from the first division came rushing past him. His division also joined these men and fled for their lives. As they rushed past their Prophet, he shouted, "Where, O my people, are you running?" But they could not hear him, and he got ready to mount his mule and charge into the enemy.

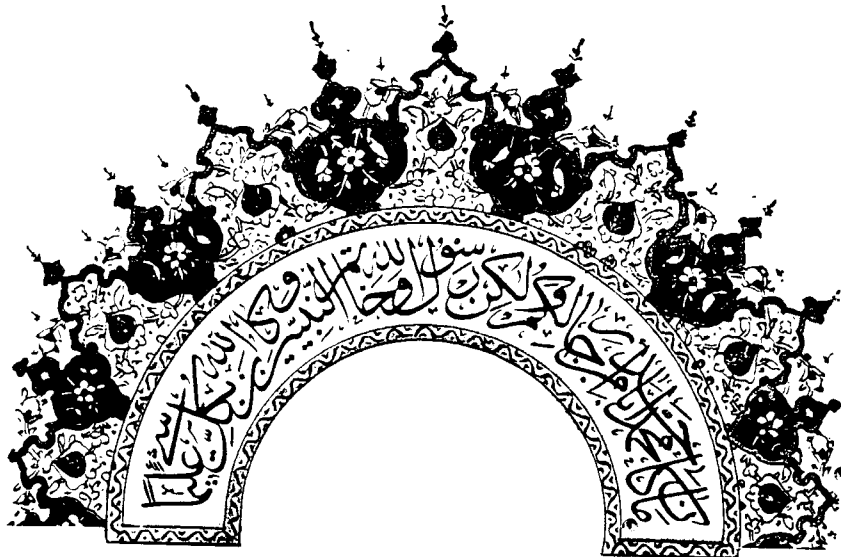
But his relative got hold of the mule's reins and would not let the Prophet go. This man had a great love for Muhammad. He was 'Abbas, Muhammad's uncle. He was such a large, strong man that Muhammad could not move with his hand on the mule's reins. Not only had he a big body but a terrific loud voice. He yelled at the top of his voice to the fleeing army, "O you Ansárs! O you who made a treaty under a tree! Remember what you said at that time and what you promised! Well, here is the Prophet who is alive! Come back to him!"

'Abbas's voice, loud and commanding, reached the army which was running away. It shook them. What were they doing, running away like this? At once they all turned around and came back to the Prophet, and then went on to charge at the enemy.

The enemy was by now in the valley. It could not realize what had happened. Muhammad's men charged at them and scattered them. They captured whomsoever and whatever they could. The enemy fled. And so ended the battle which seemed at first the Muslims were going to lose. But, thank God, it became a victory.

Dear Children, I want you to realize that many a battle which seems to be hopeless can sometimes become a great victory.

In writing these lines I am reminded of a verse of the Holy Qur'án 2:24 which reads: "*How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by God's permission, and God is with the patient.*"



“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of God and the last of the Prophets. And God has full knowledge of all things.”

(The Qur’án, 33:40)

“There is no prophet after me” (The Prophet Muhammad)

Forgiveness

I have already told you about Abu Sufyán. Now I will tell you about his wife called Hind. She was a very cruel person to anyone who had anything to do with Islam. She was in Mecca at the time when the Prophet Muhammad entered and took the city over, making it free for all Muslims to pray there in peace.

Hind had heard that Muhammad had destroyed the idols, and she thought, “I wonder what he will do to me?” Do you know why she asked herself this question? It was because she knew that she had done some dreadful things at the battle of Uhud.

It was here that the Prophet’s uncle called Hamzah had been killed. She had seen him lying there dead, but that was not enough for her. She went and did terrible things to the body. So great was her hatred that she had acted like a mad woman. And now here was the Prophet Muhammad who was this man’s nephew. Right here in the city where she was. “Well, surely he would punish her,” you would think.

No, dear Children, he forgave her.

Some wicked men were brought before the Prophet. He looked at these miserable creatures who had suffered a lot through fear and were now shivering before him, because they were the men who eight years before had driven Muhammad from Mecca. He said to them, “What kind of treatment do you expect from me?” And do you know what they had the cheek to say? I will tell you—it was this, “Mercy, O generous brother!” I ask you, had they shown any mercy or respect to any Muslim? And yet here they were asking for mercy. Now, this is where our Prophet showed his greatness. Personal feelings did not overcome him and he gave that wonderful answer which was, “Be it so. I say unto you as Joseph said to his brothers: ‘There is no reproach on you this day’; go, for you are free”.

What kind words to say! He did not even grumble at them. What a wonderful thing to do, and what a wonderful lesson for us all and that is: To forgive one when you have one at your mercy.

In Commemoration of the 1400th Anniversary of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'án.

Dear Children,

You must have heard all the older persons talking about the fourteenth centenary of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'án. Let me tell you something about this great event. Fourteen hundred years ago during the month of fasting called Ramadan the Holy Qur'án started to be revealed to our Prophet at Mecca. I have already given you a short description of how the revelation of the Qur'án came. All over the world the Muslims are remembering this great occasion and thanking God for this wonderful and great Holy Book with all its advice on how to live our daily lives. For instance, a king is told how to rule, a worker how to work; a child how to respect its parents; husbands how to treat their wives, and wives how to treat their husbands; statesmen how to conduct state affairs with honesty, soldiers how to fight and forgive. The Holy Qur'án announces loudly and clearly the fact that the Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him!) is the final Prophet. That is to say, no more prophets will come after him. In fact, every advice is there in the Qur'án for you to follow.

The Holy Qur'án was revealed and written in Arabic. The Prophet's mother tongue was Arabic. Today the meaning of the Holy Qur'án is written in many languages of the world. But even so all Muslims like to learn Arabic so that they can read the Holy Qur'án in Arabic. This is because the beauty of the Book shines out more in its original language. I am sure you must have seen the Qur'án printed in all shapes and sizes, down to the smallest one, which can be placed in a locket which is on a chain to hang around the neck. This little locket has a small magnifying glass to read with. There are some very valuable illuminated Qur'áns, that is to say, written in gold-leaf and fine colour inks. They are to be seen in museums and private libraries. I mean valuable in money, because, as you know, all Qur'áns are valuable in terms of sentiment. In every mosque one will find a Qur'án, valuable in sentiment, although perhaps not in money.

All Muslims have a great love for this Holy Book. Here is an example. A few days ago a devout Muslim friend came to see me with an illuminated manuscript of the Qur'án in his hand. He showed it to me with pride and joy. He said, "I have paid a heavy price for this Qur'án, but I am so happy". I replied, "You already have a Qur'án". "Yes," said he, "but I heard that this Qur'án was lying in a shop on the floor amidst papers and dust, and that it could be easily stepped on at any time. I went to the owner and asked to buy this Qur'án. At once the owner thought that this was of great value. And so it was. But not in money. He asked a high price from me. But I am so happy to have bought it."

So, as you can see, my friend became the proud owner of this Qur'án. And the greedy seller was happy with having charged too much. So great was the love and respect of this Muslim for his Qur'án that no sacrifice or money was too great for him.

Students studying Arabic always read the Qur'án, and some are so pleased and struck by its contents and wisdom that they become Muslims. This is happening all over the world today. The Holy Qur'án is considered to be the best written book that there is in Arabic. This fact is also accepted by non-Muslim scholars.

The Holy Qur'án is divided into 114 chapters, which in Arabic are called Surahs. Every chapter of the Qur'án but one begins with these words:

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate".

The first Chapter of the Holy Qur'án is repeated on our daily prayers several times. As you know, prayers are said five times a day. The constant cry of the Qur'án is "there is no god but God: there is nothing worthy of worship but God". (The Arabic name for God is Allah.)

Chapter, or Surah, 112 is a favourite one. It runs like this:

"Say, He is God alone. God the Unique. He gives not birth, nor is He born. Nor is there anyone like Him."

The Holy Qur'án emphasises these words: "God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting, the Eternal". The word eternal means one who lives for ever.

It is also repeated many times in the Qur'án that those who worship idols are condemned. By that it means to say that if one still prays to any idol or anything after one has been told of the One God, then one must be punished.

In the Qur'án God says to the Prophet Muhammad:

"O thou in thy mantle! Arise and warn."

This was because God wanted the Prophet to talk to mankind, warn it and give His message, because at the time of the Prophet many people worshipped idols and they had to be corrected.

Twenty-five other prophets are mentioned by name in the Qur'án. Many of these names are to be found also in the Old Testament. Amongst them is the name of Abraham, whose name is greatly respected by the Muslims.

An outstanding figure amongst the prophets mentioned in the Qur'án is that of Jesus, who is described as the Messiah, the prophet, and the son of Mary. The Qur'án says Jesus was a "servant of God". He has been mentioned many times in the Qur'án with honour and respect. The Jews always believed that Jesus was a false prophet. But the Qur'án absolutely denies this. Also it does not accept that Jesus died on the cross and strongly and emphatically denies the Holy Trinity. The Qur'án seeks to honour Mary, the mother of Jesus, with kind words about her. It states that she was a virtuous woman, because at that time many talked of her with disrespect.

This fourteenth centenary of the Revelation of the Qur'án is so important. As you know, the word centenary means the hundredth anniversary. Thus, the fourteenth centenary means the fourteen hundredth anniversary. The Qur'án is the only revealed Book that tens of thousands of people know by heart. For instance, in a small country like Turkey, with a population of about 30 million, there are 100,000 people who can recite by heart the Qur'án from cover to cover without a mistake.

Now you can understand why we are all so happy. It is because the Qur'án has existed in its pure, original state for 1,400 years, with its soul-inspiring words and prayers for all. A man who knows the Qur'án by heart is called a Hafiz.

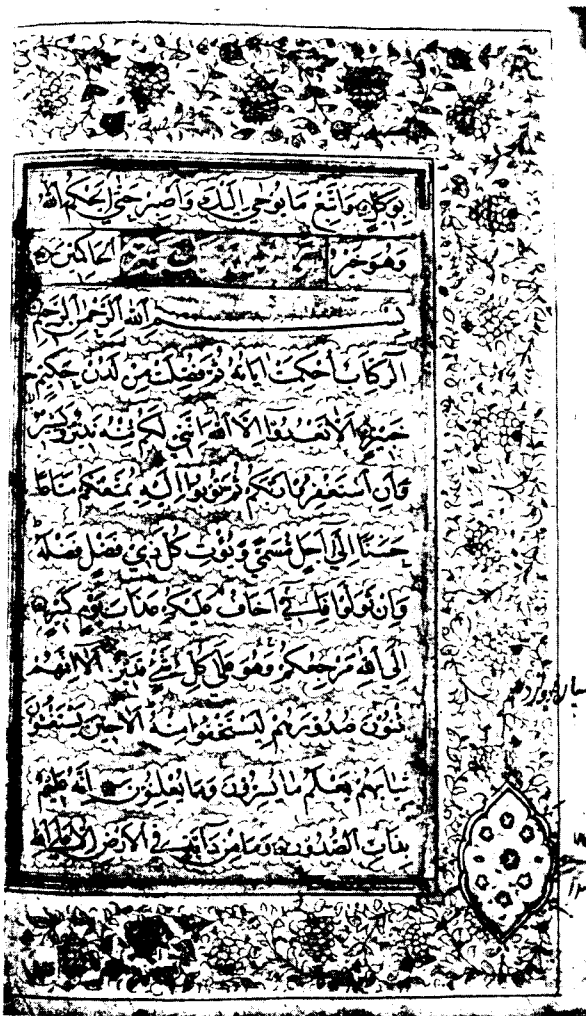
In schools, especially in England, they have a prayer called The Lord's Prayer. It is the Christian daily prayer. Whilst that prayer is being said, you can always say the first chapter of the Qur'án, which is:

"Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Master of the day of Judgement. Thee only do we worship and to Thee do we cry for help; guide us in the right path, the path of those to whom Thou hast been Gracious and with whom Thou art not angry, and not of those who go astray. Amen!"

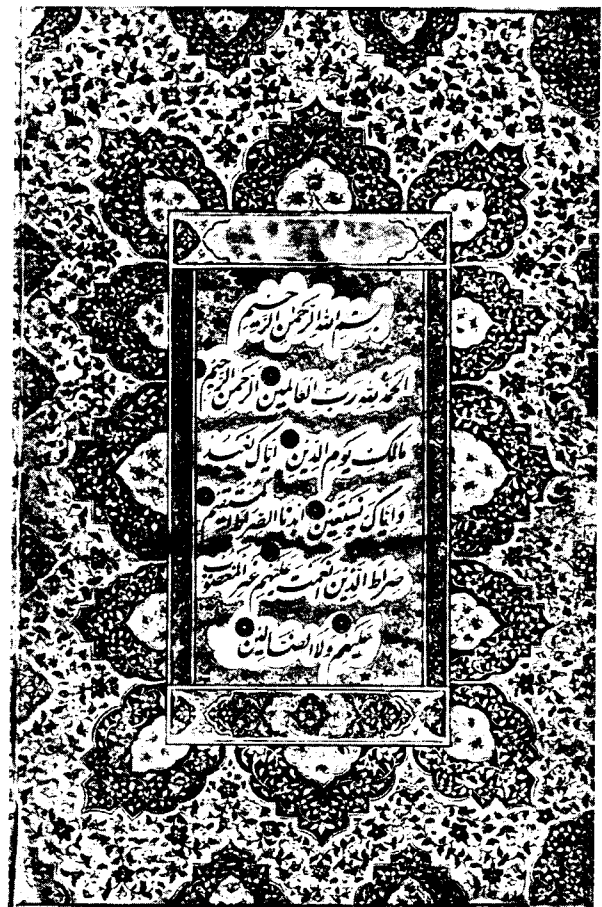
If you are at school, you must be five years old or more and there cannot be many words in this, the Muslim's prayer, that you are too small to understand. You may not understand the word "compassionate". It means "being sorry for those who suffer, pitying them with a view to helping them". Similarly, the word "merciful" means "showing kindness to one, especially if someone is in your power and to forgive any harm that is being done whether in thought, word or action". The phrase "Master of the day of Judgement" means "the day when our sins are brought up before us and God questions us about them." I am sure, your parents will explain any other word which is difficult for you to understand. May we thank God once again that the Qur'an has remained the same as it was 1,400 years ago, when revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

I think all that I have written may be of interest to you because you must know what the grown-ups are talking about today. When you hear them say anything about the Fourteenth Centenary of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, you will now feel so happy because you will understand them.

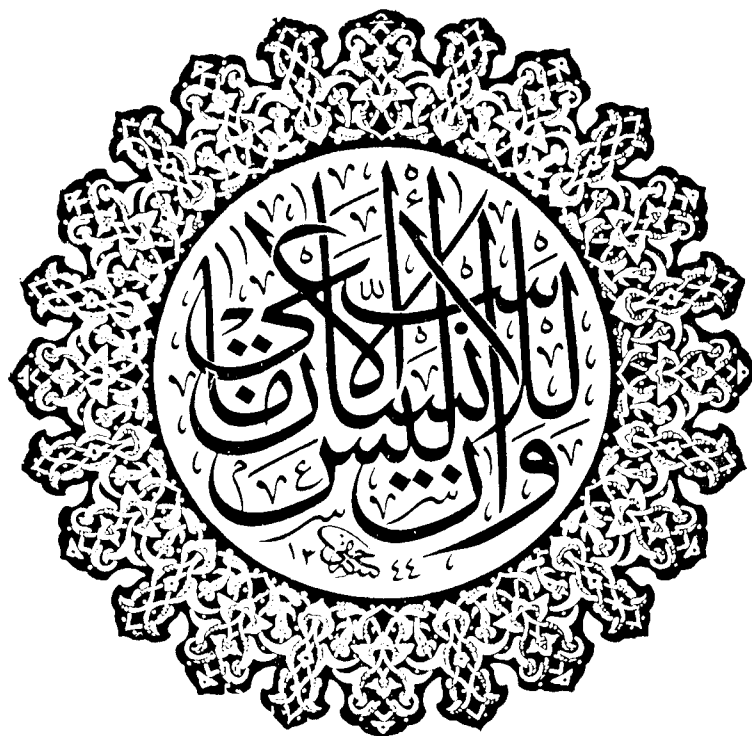
The Holy Qur'an



A page from the Holy Qur'an transcribed in elegant Naskh script. The marginal decoration and the inter-linear space is in gold wash.



A page from the Holy Qur'an transcribed in Nasta'liq characters in the 11th century C.E. The page has floral decoration executed in green, red, white and gold colours. One of the most rare specimens of Qur'anic calligraphy executed in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent.



"Verily for man there is nothing but what he strives for" (The Qur'an)

Respect Thyself

The palm trees in the oasis looked so tall and the water beneath them looked so clear and fresh. A man sitting by this water was saying to himself, "How I wish those dates on that palm tree were ready for me to eat".

For this man knew that if there was any fruit on that tree he would eat it and then drink the water, and go to sleep, because he had no food at home to eat nor work to do. "Well", thought the man, "I will beg from my friends and they will give me something to eat or some money to buy some food".

He did not seem to feel in the least ashamed of going and asking his friends for help. He thought of a very good man called Muhammad. He knew this man would not refuse him because he was always saying, "Do good unto others and also feed the starving".

Off this man went to the Prophet, and asked him for help. The Prophet looked at him and saw this man was strong and healthy. The Prophet said, "My good man, do you possess anything?" The man said, "I have only a cup to drink from, and a sheet of cloth with which I cover myself and a bedstead".

The Prophet said, "Bring two of these articles to me". This was done and then the Prophet asked his friends around, "Who will buy this man's goods?" At last someone bought them for two dirhams (a dirham was a coin used in those days; it was not worth very much but it would buy something).

The Prophet turned to the man and said, “Here are two dirhams, with one of these buy food, and with the other go and buy a piece of rope, then go into the woods and collect pieces of wood, tie them up, put them into bundles and sell the bundles in the market.”

Two weeks passed and then the man came back. He told the Prophet that he had saved fifteen dirhams, and that with some of the money he had bought cloth and food, and still had some money left. The Prophet asked, “Which is more praiseworthy—this way or to go on the day of Judgement branded with the mark of begging?” The man went away happy and proud, for now he had his self-respect back.

The Prophet disliked begging.

Generosity, he preached, is a great quality. It was his habit to distribute his wealth amongst the poor. In charity and alms-giving he did not differentiate between Muslim and non-Muslim. He would not mind serving his guests, even if they were non-Muslims. The Prophet would leave his bed at night to find out if his guests needed anything. One thing he detested most was begging. To the beggars he would not close his doors, but explain to them the undesirability of begging and show them the way to save themselves from this base habit.

IT IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

The Prophet Muhammad used to keep his clothes as long as he could and not buy new ones. But now he really needed some new shirts and so he took with him some money—it was eight dirhams—and went out to buy two long shirts. You know, I call them shirts but really they were more like robes because they reached almost to the ground. So he went to do his shopping. He had told his wife what it was he was going to buy with the money and, I can tell you, dear Children, that, as I have already remarked, he really needed those shirts. His own were very old and worn, but clean and tidy. And so he walked along, breathing God's good air. He had not gone far when something in front of him caught his eye. It was a bare shoulder that had caught his attention, a torn shirt and a bare shoulder. This was more than the Prophet could bear to see, and he became very upset to see such a thing.

“Oh, some poor old man! I must get him a new shirt”, the Prophet must have thought. And so he gave the poor man some of his money to buy a shirt. Knowing the Prophet and his kindness to others, I am not surprised at this. But what about the two shirts he was going to buy for himself? Well, you will find out soon enough. Now this is really what happened. Feeling quite happy that this poor man would now have a decent shirt, the Prophet continued on his way. Obviously he would now be able to afford only two very cheap shirts. Ah! but did he? O dear! No! And the reason was because he had come across a servant girl belonging to some Ansárs. She was crying very much and beside her on the ground lay a broken glass jar in a pool of oil. “I can't go back to my mistress”, she sobbed as she looked at the broken jar and the spilt oil. “What has happened?” asked the Prophet. The poor maid told him how she had let the jar of oil slip from her hand and how she dared not go back to her mistress and tell her what had happened. The kind Prophet gave her some of his money so that she was able to buy another jar of oil. But still she was frightened, saying that she had been so long getting the oil that she feared that her mistress would still scold her. The Prophet felt so sorry for her that he offered to go with her to the place where she worked and to tell her mistress what had happened. And, of course, we all know that everyone believed what the Prophet said because he was known never to tell an untruth. Well, dear Children, he took the maid to the house where she worked. But there was no reply to his knocking. Sadly he turned to go away and he must have felt very sorry that after all he would not be able to explain things to the girl's mistress. But as he turned away, he heard voices calling out to him. He turned and saw the women of the house coming out. They explained that when they saw that it was the good Prophet outside, they had wanted him and his goodness around for as long as possible and so they had kept hidden, feeling happy that he was near the house. Such a good man as he was would have a good influence on it. Then the mistress of the house came out and everything was explained to her. She turned to the maid and told her that for the Prophet to come to her house was a great honour and that because she had brought the Prophet to the house, she (the maid) would be forgiven.

The Prophet went away quite happy but he still had to buy his shirt, and now it would have to be just one shirt and the cheapest possible.

The Prophet arrived back home and showed his new shirt to his wife. “Eight dirhams and only one shirt of poor quality! What a bad buy!” she exclaimed. “Oh, no! Those eight dirhams have brought happiness to three people”, replied the Prophet. And I am sure that he must have said “*Al-ham-du-lil-láh*” having finished a good day's work of kindness; for he truly believed that it was better to give than to receive.

ISLAM

Muhammad the Prophet, God's servant was he,
Brought us a religion that had to be.
Islam's that religion that had to be.
It's just the religion for you and me.
It is so simple and has great charm.
Belief in One God can bring you no harm.

We have no belief in the blood of the lamb
To wash away our sins;
For what man does he has himself to blame.
He can rise to fame or sink in shame.
We need no one but God alone.
To Him we turn, when we wish to atone.
We are not born sinners, Muhammad did say,
And for your sins no one did pay.
'Tis you alone who must atone.

Now Islam is just common sense.
It never leaves you in suspense.
It has advantages a hundred and one.
Obedience is taught.
Alcohol is naught,
But a dreadful curse that must be fought.
It is a curse which brings one shame
And blots out many a man's fair name.

Muhammad also taught these words so fine:
"Cleanliness is next to Godliness."
Cleanliness of self and cleanliness of heart—
If we had these, from God we ne'er should part.
Muhammad taught us to be meek,
But not to turn the other cheek.
We have to fight sometimes, 'tis true,
Be sure it's on the defensive; for then you ne'er will
rue.
Only on the defensive did Muhammad ever fight.
Now in a war there still some prisoners must be.
Muhammad said: "Take care to treat them well till
they're set free.
"When you're the victor, treat your prisoners with
chivalry."

Islam knows no distinction of colour or of race.
God judges no man by his face.
To God we all are but one race.
Black, Yellow, Brown or White—
These all are equal in God's sight.
So let us fight with all our might—
For peace and unity.
How many wars would never have been fought,
If the world had learn'd as Muhammad taught:
"Brotherliness to all mankind."
Islam is not new—that is quite true.

Christianity with its doctrines came.
Religion did not keep the same.
Muhammad this harm had to see undone.
Never did Jesus say a God was he,
Nor did he say that "Three in one are we",
As a Muslim, Christianity I cannot decry;
But Islam had to come this message to bring:
"God is One. We revere all faiths
And in our hearts give all prophets a place.
Believing God is always near."

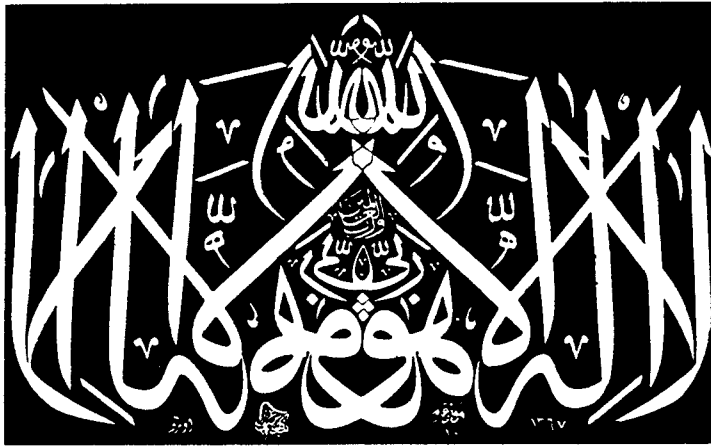
No prophet but Muhammad e'er did say:
"Paradise lies at the feet of the mother".
What wonderful words! We need no others
To teach us how to treat our mothers.
Islam lifts women to a high degree;
Gives them their full rights legally.
By Islam's law a woman's property
Whether single or married she be
Is still her own right lawfully.

Now Muhammad the Prophet was known to declare
Widows and orphans must have a share —
Not just of something that is to spare,
But of all you can give; so let it be theirs.
Far better this than many a prayer.
With never a deed what use is prayer?

In all walks of life we must practise Islam
And thus keep the world from the brink of harm.
We have wander'd, it's true,
But we need not feel blue.
With good men and true
The faith will renew.
Let our actions be worthy of the religion we hold!
Let us make it our task that the world should be
told,
As the flag of Islam we see unfold
With this message upon it aloft unroll'd:
"God is One. We revere all faiths
And in our hearts give all prophets a place."

So must we practise what we preach
Very easy just to teach;
But it's actions that will reach
To the utmost top.
Let the world know that the true Islam
Will keep mankind from mortal harm
And give prosperity.

OLIVE TOTO.



The Arabic writing above is the first half of the *Kalimah*, which in English means: “*There is but the One God*”

Dear little Ones,

This time I am writing for your bigger brother, so that he can perhaps give a talk at school about a very important man, our Prophet Muhammad. But he can read this to you, if he would be so kind.

I want to tell you about the simple life our Prophet led. Here is an example of his plain and simple living.

One day the Prophet lay sleeping on a mat. He had had a very tiring day and was in a deep sleep. The Prophet’s friend and follower called Ibn Mas’ud came into the room and saw him sleeping in a very uncomfortable position on a very rough mat. Just then the Prophet woke up and when he sat up, Ibn Mas’ud saw that there were deep marks on his back, which had been caused by the rough mat. Ibn Mas’ud said, “I beg of you to tell me or one of the others whenever you want to sleep, and a proper bed will be made up for you”. With kindness in his appealing eyes, the Prophet looked at Ibn Mas’ud and replied softly, “These worldly comforts are not for me. I am like a traveller who takes a rest under a tree in the shade and then goes on his way.”

This was quite true. The worldly comforts did not worry him. Our Prophet was always clean and tidy, but he would never worry if his bed was hard. Once a follower called ‘Umar, who, after the death of our Prophet, became the second Caliph, entered the house of the Prophet. He saw him lying on a mat woven out of dried palm leaves which felt very rough and uncomfortable. ‘Umar noticed that he had for his pillow a rough leather cushion. ‘Umar’s eyes filled with tears. “Why should this wonderful man have such hardships?” thought ‘Umar. Turning to him, ‘Umar said, “Please pray to God that He may grant His followers the worldly goods and comforts of life such as those enjoyed by the non-Muslims”. The Prophet looked hurt; his eyes were full of sad reproach. But he could see the man’s point of view. He consoled him by saying, “These worldly riches may be enjoyed by the non-Muslims; but the rewards and comforts of the world hereafter await the faithful only”.

Many of our Prophet’s friends tried to get him to have more of the comforts of life, but they never seemed to succeed. He just would not bother about them. One night his wife made up her mind that he must be made more comfortable. So she folded a very large mattress that he used into four parts instead of two, which he usually had. This made a great deal of difference.

When the morning came the Prophet asked, “What did I sleep on last night?” The wife replied, “The same mattress as you always use but I folded it into four instead of the usual two”. “Please always make it as it used to be”, said the Prophet. “Because of its being so soft, it might have made me oversleep and I would have been late for my prayers”.

All through his life, the Prophet had known hardships. He had never known what it was to have a father to talk to and love, because his father had died before he was born. It is true that he came from a family of high rank, but it was not rich. The Prophet had always to do his

share of work. He had looked after the sheep when he was quite young. When he was older, he went on trade missions along with the trade caravans to Syria. He had never led an idle life. But never did he boast about his ancestors or say that he was descended from a noble family. No, that would not have been our Prophet. God had given him brains. He used them properly as a Prophet of God should do.

He always gave good advice. He himself was a shining example in all things. As I said before, he never boasted. He could have done so, because the Prophet's grandfather had been a very important man in Mecca and was held in great esteem by the Meccans. But never did the Prophet dwell on this. He never once said in a haughty manner, "My grandfather was so-and-so". All through his life he was humble. This endeared him to people. It is true that he married a rich woman, but he still remained poor. He never had anything for himself. He always helped others. He looked after his nephew, `Ali, who became a hero of Islam.

All through his life Muhammad was generous and he taught others to be the same. His wife, A'ishah, relates how a woman came to the door begging with her two daughters. A'ishah had no food in the house except one date. She gave this one date to the woman. The woman split the date in half and gave a piece to each of her daughters, keeping nothing for herself. After a while the Prophet came home. She told him about this mother. He was very much touched. He said, "Whosoever is put to trial and tribulation because of his or her daughters and yet treats them well and gets the best he can for them in life, these noble actions will serve him as a screen from hell". All through his life his house was bare and food was not plentiful. Into his household he took Zayd, a slave, and treated him as his son.

All people knew him as an upright man with such a sense of honour that he had earned for himself the name of al-Amin, which in English means "the trustworthy". What a simple man! When he could have had all, he did not. He kept nothing for himself. The only luxury he kept for himself was a pair of yellow boots, and these had been presented to him by the ruler of Abyssinia. It was well known that he would not allow his servants to be scolded, even if they were awkward or made mistakes. He was so very kind to children. He would always pat their heads whenever he met them, whether they were rich or poor. Do you know he never struck anyone in his life? When asked to curse someone, he said, "I have not been sent to curse but to be a mercy to mankind". He never forgot to visit the sick. He went to every funeral he could. No job was too low for him, he milked his own goats, mended his clothes and boots. Whenever he spoke, it was to the point and with great expression. Those who listened to him were filled with love and reverence. And yet with all his seriousness he could laugh and play with the children and tell them fairy-stories. All children loved him.

After his first wife died—although he never forgot her—he married again. As was the custom in those days, he married this time more than one wife. He built a row of rooms for them, not as you would imagine, but something much more humble. Each room was separated by palm branches cemented together with mud. This formed the wall of the rooms. He would clean his own room and for months on end he would not have a proper meal. You see, he would have had plenty to eat if he had not shared it with others. His food was ordinary, of course. He loved dates and honey and milk but he could not get these often, so the meal he had with his people was water and dates. He shared whatever he had.

One bright spot in the Prophet's life was the Pledge of `Aqabah, a pledge which was given by twelve men at a place called `Aqabah. They took the following oath which ran:

"We will worship none save one God and protect the Prophet Muhammad as we protect our wives and children."

Then these twelve men set out determined to preach Islam, and this they did.

After ten years of struggle and slow results for our Prophet, with many hardships, such as the departure of all Muslims from Mecca to Medina, through all this our Prophet showed what a patient man he was. He never gave up. He was the hero of the day and one had to

love him. One just could not help doing so. It was only a question of time. Islam would conquer in the end. When the Prophet became ruler of Medina, he was the most beloved ruler in history. When Muhammad marched into Mecca, what was his attitude towards those enemies of his? Did he torture them? Did he destroy them? No, the only destroying he did was to destroy the 360 idols in the Ka'bah. With a staff in his hand he stood before each idol and pointed at it and said, "Truth has come and falsehood has fled away", and after these words, he would get his soldiers to cut each idol into pieces. Every idol was destroyed. Our Prophet freely forgave the Meccans. He forgave them for the humiliation and strife that they had caused him. His soldiers harmed no one, insulted no woman, and no house was robbed. In every phase of life our Prophet was a shining example. He was a husband, father, master, politician, warrior and ruler. He was a ruler of a nation of many tribes and ruler of a country twice the size of France. He governed his country as a Prophet should. He always used God's name before starting anything, whether it was great or small. *Bismillāh* would pass his lips, meaning in English "In the name of God". So let us finish these few words with *al-Ham-du-lil-lah* as he did when he finished anything. This in English means "God be praised!" What a beautiful phrase to use and remember!



“We have not sent you (Muhammad) but as a Mercy to (all) the Nations”. – The Qur’an 21:107

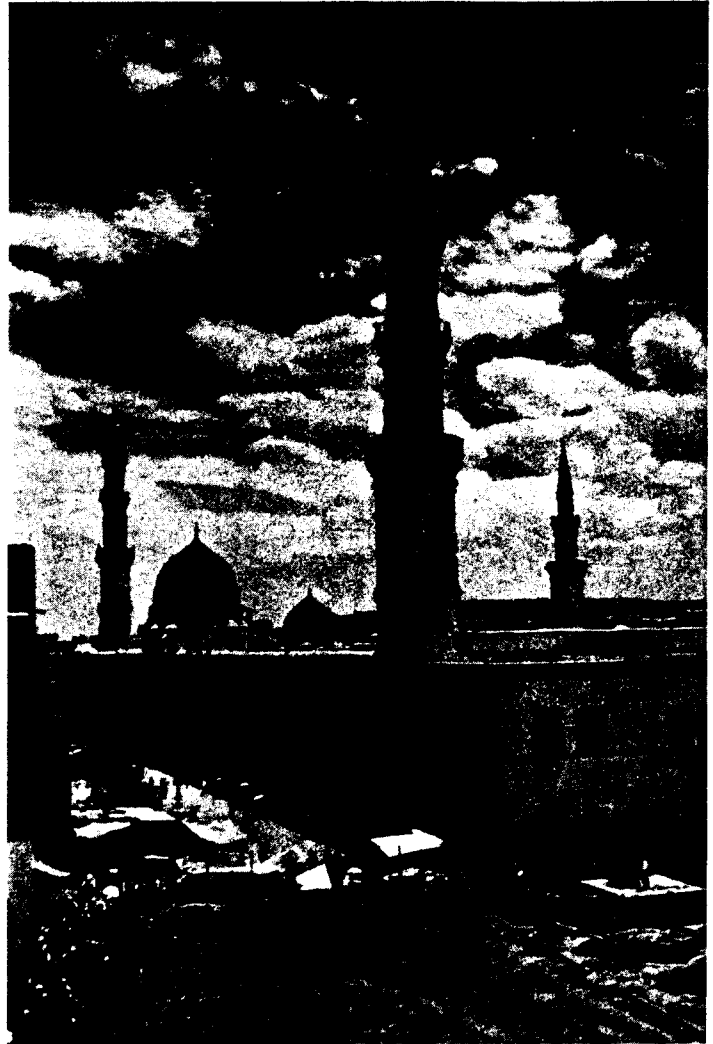
AN APPRECIATION OF MUHAMMAD

Muhammad, God’s servant, the strong in faith,
Came he from the tribe of Quraysh.
An orphan, a parent, a leader was he.
Muhammad the master so good and kind,
His like is very hard to find.
As a partner in marriage none better than he,
O God! help us like him to be.
Muhammad the helpful in the time of need,
Mended many a broken reed of mankind so
 much in need.
Full of pity, love and power.
God was with him every hour.
Muhammad, the conqueror in the days of yore,
Would enter a city, on his captives have pity.
War, he said, was forced on me,
But my captives must go free, and until such
 times they can be.
See you heed them, clothe and feed them.

Muhammad a leader was he as all politicians
 should be, upright, honest to the core.
Learn ye much from this man of yore.
Women he uplifted from their low degree.
Paradise, said he, lies at the feet of mother.
And of the new-born babes, said he,
Born in sin they cannot be.
Pagans around him everywhere,
Listened to his daily prayer.
Slay not your baby girls, said he,
And also let your slaves go free.
For this, he said, is God’s decree,
I beg thee, harken unto me.
The day did come the fight was done.
They heard his cry, O God is One.
And lowly too they knelt in prayer,
Saying God is everywhere.

Muhammad all prophets did surpass.
Because God willed him to be the last.
And so to him a book was given.
It is a book so rich and rare.
Where man can find a precious share
Of advice so freely given,
Which for centuries was hidden.
By man’s misunderstanding all,
And not listening to God’s call.
So through this book it shall be,
Once again God speaks to thee.

So gather these jewels so rich and rare.
With the likeness of which none can compare.
Jewels for all nations. God is so fair.
Race or colour, knoweth not He,
And that is how we all should be,
If we want world unity.



“The Prophet’s Mosque” at Medina, Saudi Arabia,
in whose left-hand corner is situated the mausoleum of
the Prophet Muhammad.

Muhammad, he would wish us all to listen,
When we hear God’s call.
Unity and brotherhood have not yet been understood :
We are not yet out of the wood ;
Islam is still misunderstood.
Here is your job to be done,
For the whole world must be won and one.

Olive Toto.

WHAT THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD BROUGHT US

One of Islam's great advantages is its simplicity. No mathematical problems—three ones are three, not three ones are one. We believe in one God—not three in one.

Another advantage is the fact that we are *not* born sinful. Now, if a person is about to die, there is no need for us to run around looking for a priest to say a prayer over him: or to baptize a baby who, without this, would not be saved or go to heaven.

We have no priesthood in Islam. Anyone can say prayers—but not to wash away our sins to make us ready for heaven because we are born sinful. No! We Muslims believe that no one is born sinful, especially an innocent babe. I am sure all mothers will agree on this point, that their babies are *not* born sinful. Therefore, we do not start life with a load on our shoulders, feeling that we have the disadvantage of being born sinful. No! We believe we come into this world *sinless*. Of course, we can become sinful, but to start life sinful—no! God sends us into this world with a clean slate to start life.

Another advantage is in the very name of our religion brought to us by the Prophet Muhammad that is, Islam. Islam means submission to God.

What a wonderful greeting Muslims give to each other! Assalamu alaykum! meaning "Peace be upon you!" Much better than "Good morning!" especially if it is a rotten morning. Even if this is short for "A good morning to you!" it is not so beautiful as "Peace be upon you!" Muhammad was born in the year 571 C.E. He brought a religion, in fact the only religion, which allows one to celebrate all the birthdays of the prophets (if one wishes to do so) and to respect all prophets. What better understanding can one have than this? Another advantage which the Prophet Muhammad brought to us, through God's grace, is brotherliness.

One day a young man said to me, "Is that all Islam can give, only brotherliness?" I said, "Do not use that word 'only'. Don't you know that brotherliness, if put into action, can cover everything? I mean true brotherliness, not the Cain and Abel type. If a man truly felt as a brother to a person, he would see that his morals were perfect also. If he had true brotherly love, would he rob his brother, fight his brother, or murder? Oh dear, no! So never belittle that word 'brotherliness'."

Now, we have a great advantage in being able to read a great deal about the founder of our religion—Muhammad, the man, the prophet. We can read of him in the Qur'an. We can also read of Jesus—the man and the prophet. One can follow all the advice given in the Qur'an and have the advantage of being quite up to date—not behind the times at all. There is political advice, marital advice, financial advice, legal advice, in fact all kinds of advice, even on war. By that I mean the defensive, not offensive.

Now, another thing Muhammad laid great stress on was manners. In the Qur`án it says, "Do not say so much as 'ough!' to your parents". Also, "Seek permission", says the Qur`án, "before entering anyone's abode". Now, these may seem little things—but it's the little things in life that count, and make life worth living and manners perfect. That is why I say Islam, if practised, leaves nothing wanting. It has a code for everyday life. Hygiene was also a great thing with the Prophet Muhammad, e.g., the five times washing for prayers and many other clean habits. Muhammad was known never to drink out of a cracked vessel. Even today I have heard people called "fussy" because they would not drink out of a cracked cup. During the war a great drive against cracks in cups, etc., was started. Soldiers were told of the dangers involved. But Muhammad knew this 1,400 years ago. You see, his sayings are always up to date. No other religion has so many day to day guidances.

You know, a Muslim has never been told to turn the other cheek, but in the Bible it says: "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other" (Luke 6, v. 29). No, we do not turn the other cheek—we defend ourselves—forgive, yes; that's different, but turn the other cheek, no!

We are very proud of the fact that:

Islam has definitely no colour bar. I hate to make comparisons, but, with some so-called Christians, there is a great colour bar. Someone will say Jesus was a foreigner, perhaps dark in complexion. Most people think of him as white. He may have been. Many Palestinians are; but, back to my point, there are churches in the world where coloured people are not allowed. I can make some excuse for clubs perhaps liking to have their own nationals, speaking the same language and having the same habits, but in a church, no! I can find no excuse. Praying to God but saying, "This is your God but you cannot pray in our church". That's what it amounts to when a coloured Christian is told he cannot go into some churches.

This could never happen in a mosque, or outside. Again I say, "There is definitely no colour bar in Islam".

The other day I heard a funny little story. A native of Africa, who was a Christian, was standing outside a church where he was not allowed in, and was feeling very sad. He stood outside wondering why he could not enter. Just then another stranger came up and stood looking in by the side of the African.

"I am a Christian," said the African, "but I cannot get in."

"That's nothing," said the stranger. "I am Jesus, and I have been trying to get in there for years."

Please do not think I forget the good work true Christians do.

Now in the olden days of Islam there was a true Muslim spirit prevailing everywhere. There were pensions and help for the poor. In fact, so well were the poor looked after that, when `Umar II wanted to find a poor man, he could find none. What a perfect State! Yes, that was our glorious past.

I can see sparks flashing from someone's mind and hear the words, "Yes, that's our glorious past history. We were wonderful then. Let's sit back and think about it all". Well, to that mind I say, "Yes, think of the past by all means, but don't let it make you a cripple, content to walk on one leg, leaning on the past". I say, "Do not lean on the past. Look to the future. Don't make the past your crutch. Lean on yourself. Walk straight and make future history. Let the past be a stepping-stone, not a crutch to put all your weight on. For surely, if you lean too hard it will break and you will become a cripple. Lean on Muhammad's teachings and the Qur`án and become strong".

The Muslims have the advantage of having their own United Nations Organization. By this I mean the Hajj and Mecca, where once a year all Muslims, who can, meet and pray and live for a few days. Muslims from all nations and of all colours, rich or poor, all dressed in white, ruler or citizen, pray side by side in Mecca as one united family.

Muhammad

The day was Friday. The Prophet and his followers had said their Friday prayers. (Friday is a day when the midday prayers are said with other Muslims in a congregation and a sermon is given.) The sermon was about being an honest citizen and doing God's will, which is the best thing on earth. A follower of the Prophet had led the prayers and given the sermon. Although the followers always wanted the Prophet to lead the prayers and sermon, he insisted that they also did this duty. He wanted them to understand that any good Muslim could lead the prayers and that it did not need a special person; only he must be a good person. Islam wanted all men to preach, not just some particular party of men of the priest class, because Islam has no priesthood. The Muslims have Imams. An Imam is a man who has studied the religion of Islam. He is not ordained, as in the Christian religion. As you know, any Muslim can preach Islam and lead the prayers so long as he has sufficient knowledge of Islam and prayers. No place has to be consecrated to make it into a place for prayers. The Prophet Muhammad once remarked, "I have been given by God some distinctions which the prophets before me did not have, one of these being that the whole expanse of the earth has been made a mosque for me."

Now, to come back to the story of the Prophet. After the Friday prayers the Prophet left the mosque and walked out with his followers. They all went away to their different jobs. The Prophet had to mend his shoes that day and also had a few things to get. So he went to the market, stopped outside the grain shop and there he saw sacks of grain which were being sold loose in small or large quantities. Whilst standing outside the shop by these sacks of grain, the Prophet put his hand down into the sack of grain and brought up a handful. The grain was wet inside that sack, although on the top it was dry. "What is this?" thought the Prophet. "Dry grain on the top and wet grain underneath". He called the shopkeeper, "Why is this grain wet underneath?" said he. "Oh!" said the shopkeeper, "it must have got wet through the rain touching it". "But why is it dry on the top and wet underneath? Now, to be honest you should show that wet grain on top so that any customer can see it," said the Prophet Muhammad. The man looked ashamed and the Prophet said in a gentle but stern voice, "Any man who cheats is not one of us". The Prophet went through the market. But before he went out he told the people around, "A really honest, God-fearing trader will be found amongst God's chosen people in the world hereafter".

The Prophet now had to go and say prayers over a person who had died. They took the body out to bury it. The prayer was offered only in a standing posture. This is always done in a funeral prayer. The Prophet then dropped a handful of earth on to the coffin and then the followers with their own hands put the first spadefuls of earth down. These followers had carried the coffin on their shoulders. Before the funeral the Prophet had asked, "Does this

person owe any debts and, if so, are arrangements being made for them to be paid off?" The Prophet was told that no debts were owing and so he performed the service. A few years later, when the Prophet was better off, he would pay any debt himself.

Please, little Ones, do not say "What a miserable story!" I keep saying that a Muslim must be a brave person and the truth should never be bitter. Death is just a long sleep without any pain. Many a person will say, "Fancy giving that talk to children". But as I often say, our little soldiers of Islam are realists and quite grown up in their thoughts. Our Prophet loved little children. I will tell you a little story. This happened on an 'Id al-Fitr day. (Now don't tell me you don't know what an 'Id al-Fitr day is. All right, I will tell you, in case you do not know.) It is a day of festival after a month of fasting. Now, as usual, on 'Id al-Fitr days, presents, sweets and everything nice was being given to each other by all the Muslims. The poor were being fed and given presents and alms. The 'Id al-Fitr prayers and sermons were over. Now came the 'Id fair, to be seen specially by the youngsters. In this fair were toys, sweets, merry-go-rounds, swings and everything that a child goes mad over. The fair was now in full swing. All the little 'Abdullahs, Hameedahs, 'Alis and Fátimahs, etc., were flocking to it in their very best new clothes (for, you know, all like to have new clothes on an 'Id day if they can). So, with their mothers and fathers went the children, holding their parents' hands.

How happy the Prophet Muhammad felt to see these cheerful young Muslims. His eyes wandered to a palm tree. It seemed that no one wanted to stand there today. Everyone was going to the same place—the fair. Ah! But what was this? It was a little figure, forlorn and in tattered clothes. It was a little boy. "What is he doing there on a day like this?" the Prophet thought. One could see from the boy's face what he was thinking whilst he watched those parents with happy children holding their parents' hands, smiling and asking questions, sometimes doing a little hop and jump. So full of joy were they at the thought of the fair. Oh! That little boy's eyes were so full of longing and sadness as he watched those children. All this the good Prophet noticed and his heart went out to this little one. The Prophet then knew that this little boy must be an orphan. He went up to him and said, "Let me be your father for today". He then placed that little boy upon his shoulders and set off to the fair. He went with the little boy laughing and happy. I am sure you and I know that the Prophet would make sure the little boy was never unhappy again because of his great love for little children.

The Prophet Muhammad also had great patience with his grandchildren, Hasan and Husayn. When they were very young they often found the Prophet at prayers with his forehead on the ground. They would climb on to his back. Did he get angry? Oh, dear, no! He waited until they got off his back and then he would say his prayers. Such was his love for children and the children all loved him. Now off to bed, little Readers, if it is your bed time. And don't forget your prayers.

KNOWLEDGE

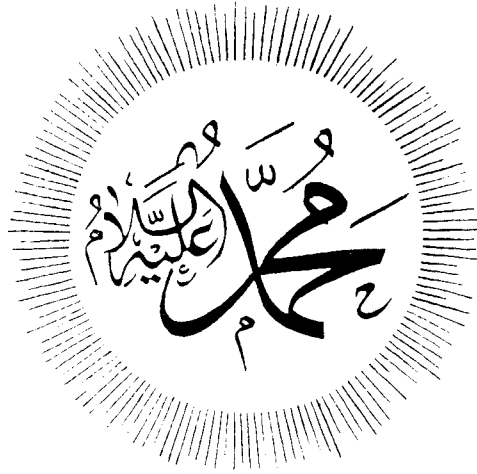
The Prophet had married a slave girl and she had given him a son. He was so happy that he had this son and named him Ibrahim. While Ibrahim was still a baby he became seriously ill. The poor little boy lay suffering. He had not been ill long when his father decided to send him and his mother away to a place called Nakhla, because that place enjoyed a better climate than that of Medina. Also Ibrahim's aunt lived at Nakhla, so that was another reason why it would be better to go there from Medina. So the sick child was taken to Nakhla. But sad to say he did not get better and soon it was necessary to send a message to the Prophet that his son was in agony and that he was dying. This news was a terrible shock to the Prophet.

His son was going to die! The shock of this news left him so weak that he barely had the strength for the journey. On arriving, his friend, Abdul Rahman Ibn Awf, showed him into the sick room. He leaned on his friend's shoulder for support. His son Ibrahim was lifted out of his cot and the Prophet nursed him on his lap. With tears in his eyes, the Prophet Muhammad said, "Oh, Ibrahim, we can do nothing for you". The tears poured down his face as he watched his poor son. "Oh!" he said, "If it was not that death is a fact known to all of us and which comes to us all, and I know that we shall all meet again after death, I would feel even worse than I feel now". He paused and then said, "The tears flow and the heart is full of sadness. These things we cannot control. But we must never in our sadness say words to God which he would dislike".

You know, dear Children, in sorrow some people grumble about God at that time and that is what the Prophet meant. You know, when one is in grief, one sometimes says too much in fact not really meaning it. When tears were in our Prophet's eyes someone turned to him and said, "Why do you weep when you have always told us not to weep?" The Prophet answered, "I don't forbid tears coming from your eyes; these cannot be stopped. But it is a sin to start making a noise of weeping and wailing". Ibrahim, I am sorry to say, died. He was buried in a cemetery near Medina. The Prophet went to the cemetery and said a prayer over his little son. Kind friends put the body into the grave and put all the earth back on to it. When this was finished our Prophet knelt down and patted the ground with his hand. Then with some water he made it all smooth and neat looking. His friends were watching all this. He turned to them and said, "This action of mine does nothing for the dead, but God likes to see every action completed and every thing perfect and tidy". Just then an eclipse of the sun happened. "Oh, what is happening at this time," the people asked. They also whispered, "It is a miracle. A sign because the son of our Prophet has died". The Prophet answered them at once. "The sun and moon are token of God's greatness. Their eclipse does not happen because of a death or birth. When you see an eclipse you should think how God is Almighty. You should thank Him for everything with a prayer". The Prophet wanted his people to seek knowledge not only about eclipses but about everything in life. He also wanted to see that all little children and grown-ups learnt to read and write. And when one has learnt something and knows about it, that is called knowledge, and knowledge, dear Children, is a good thing. The Qur'an tells us to say, "My Lord! Increase me in knowledge". It is said of the Prophet that he said, "Acquire knowledge. It helps a person who has it to distinguish right from wrong. It lights the way to heaven. It is our friend in the desert, our companion when we are lonely; also when we are friendless. It guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery. It is an asset amongst friends. It is an armour against our enemies".

I will leave you with the wise words for the day giving you plenty to think about on that wonderful word—knowledge.

*All events and sayings quoted about The Prophet Muhammad are quite true.
But in some of the following pages they have been put into short stories.*



Muhammad (*May peace be upon him!*)

The Prophet Muhammad was sitting in the Mosque. He must have been thinking, "How can I help my friends who are becoming the true believers of Islam?"

Only the day before a man had come to him bleeding and bruised because the unbelievers had stoned him, as he was known to be a follower of the Prophet. Just then a friend came up to him and said, "O Prophet of God! Tell me something about Islam that may be good enough for me, so that I may not ask any one about it when you have gone."

The Prophet slowly looked up, his face full of happiness that God had sent to him this man who wanted to get the right answer about Islam. Quickly and to the point he said to the man, "Say, I believe in God; and then keep on the straight path". (This means: follow the teachings of the Qur'an.)

This answer pleased the man very much.

"I would like to know", said another friend who had just come in, "O Prophet of God! Which is the best part of Islam?"

The Prophet replied, "It is that you give food to the hungry and extend greetings to all you know, and to those whom you know not". Just then a poor little hungry boy passed by. The friend got up; for he wanted to go and feed the little boy, and off he went. The Prophet must have hoped that this friend would be kind to the little boy, and that he would not talk to anyone afterwards about the good deed he had done. The Prophet turned to some friends around him and said, "One of the many good things that Islam expects from man is modesty". This means that one should not boast about the good deeds one has done, such as feeding a little boy. One should be thankful that one had the food to give him.

Muhammad got up from his place on the ground. He looked a fine figure. He was neither too short nor too tall; his serene look made him appear so stately that one almost imagined he was taller. Also his broad shoulders helped to give this effect; for he was a man with an impressive personality with his long beard, black hair and dark eyes.

Now Muhammad walked out into the sunshine. His clothes were neat and clean as usual, not of the best, but with no holes in them. His sandals were ordinary; he had mended them himself. Had he not always preached how praiseworthy it was for a man to toil with his hands? He looked altogether a surprising personality, full of vigour and determination. The Prophet looked around him. "How could anyone doubt that there is a God?" He must have said to himself, "Look at the sun at this time; look at the sky; look at everything, all crying out the fact that God is in His heaven, God of the universe, God the Almighty, and look at the trees with the birds in them".

In the far distance he saw his nephew 'Alí, and Zayd, at one time a slave boy. 'Alí, who was always at the Prophet's side was always anxious to learn more about Islam, and so was Zayd. These two young men would willingly have laid down their lives for the Prophet Muhammad. They were the first two to accept Islam after Khadijah. 'Alí was the first male to accept Islam being ever willing to live and die for Islam, which he did. How happy these two looked; for they were helping an old man to carry a load.

Just then one of the Prophet's companions hurried away to get water for a poor little dog. This pleased our Prophet very much. At once his mind must have flown back to another incident when a bad woman had seen a dog dying for want of water. She had taken off her shoe and lowered it into the well, using her long scarf to draw the water up. She then gave the water to the dog, and the poor little fellow was revived. A companion of the Prophet had then asked, "Do we get a reward for our good behaviour towards animals?" The Prophet's reply to this man was, "Yes, and this woman will surely go to heaven, and there is a reward for every good deed done to any living being that has a heart with blood pumping through it".

The companions standing nearby must have guessed what was passing through the Prophet's mind. To their minds also must have come the incident of how a man was passing by a well and felt that he could no longer stay without water. His mouth was so parched and dry. He went up to the well and looked down into it. It was very deep and dark down there, and also no rope and bucket to draw the water up. So, in desperation the man climbed into the well and down to the cool clear water. He drank the water with his cupped hands and came up a satisfied man. With a joyous feeling he was going to go on his way when just outside the well he saw a poor dog trying to eat the clay to see if he could get some moisture out of it, because of his thirst. The man knowing his own feelings of thirst felt that he could not leave this dog to die. So down into the well again he went and brought up some water in his shoe. This incident was known to have pleased our Prophet very much, because his love for animals and mankind was very great.

I keep telling you that the Prophet practised what he preached and always said, "Be kind to animals". It is well known that he was very kind to them. One woman was known to have kept a cat locked up in a room without food and therefore it died. The Prophet told his followers how great that woman's punishment would be because of her cruelty to the animal. All through his life the Prophet encouraged people to be kind to animals.

Dear Children, never forget this and try to copy the kind Prophet, who hurt no one in word or deed.

Again I say:

Whenever the Prophet said something he followed it up with actions. He had been known to have said, "Feed the hungry and sick; also free the captives of war and assist those who are poor, whether they be Muslim or non-Muslim". The Prophet was known to have gone hungry many a time, so that his wives could eat when there was not enough food for all.

The Prophet Muhammad was known to have said, "A person is not a perfect Muslim who eats his fill and leaves his neighbour hungry".

* * *

The time had come for prayers, but before prayers came the ablutions. So the companions started their ablutions. Then all of them stood in a straight line with the Prophet leading them, all facing towards the Ka'bah (a building which Abraham and his son rebuilt). I have explained about this to you before. And so the prayers were performed. Very often friends and followers would sit after prayers and listen to the Prophet's words of wisdom. These they knew to be of great value.

These same friends and companions had been at the Prophet's side when he had said those

words about the cat, and they never forgot them. They remembered how the Prophet had been walking down the road, when he saw a crowd in the street, and there was great excitement. The men were talking and saying, "Oh, he is a strong man; he knocks everyone down and no one can stop him". The Prophet had noticed a big, strong, ugly man, with many people standing around him saying, "He is great", and, "He is wonderful, and never gets knocked down". The Prophet said, "This is very bad; for when a man gets his blood heated with temper, he is liable to forget himself and behave like an animal in that state". Some people say that our Prophet said, "The tyrant shall not enter Paradise". And, dear Children, a bully, such as that man, is a tyrant. It is the strong man who can control himself when in a temper -- that is the one to be admired.

The day had gone, the night had come. Home went the Prophet to prayers and bed.

So now, if it is your bedtime, off you go to bed like a good boy or girl; say your prayers and then tomorrow, perhaps your mother or father will read some more pages to you.

Dear Children,

There are many more things I would like to say to you but, I am sorry to say that space does not permit me to do so. I have here a few very sad words to say to you. It is that our Prophet was called back to God on 8 June 632 C.E. I say sad, a word like this I should not really use when I am speaking about our Prophet's death because he was going to God, and for this we should be happy and brave. He suffered greatly in this world for the sake of Islam and he truly deserved the peace that awaited him.

Three months before he died our Prophet gave a farewell speech on 23 February 632. This speech was the most wonderful never to be forgotten. When you are older you must read it all. I will give to you just a few lines which, I am sure, will make you want to know all of the speech.

During the Farewell Pilgrimage of 632 C.E. there were present at 'Arafat between 120 to 140 thousand men and women. The Prophet Muhammad repeated his sermon again and again because everybody could not make it convenient to attend only one assembly.

The Prophet said, "I am a man like unto you. It is possible that you may not see me again in this place. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

"O people! listen to what I have to say and take it to

heart. You must know that every Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. You are all equal. (You enjoy your equal rights and have similar obligations.) You are all members of one brotherhood. It is forbidden for any one of you to take from his brother save what the latter should willingly give.

"All men from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab; also a non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab, except by good actions.

"O people! so understand my words. I have left with you something which, if you will hold fast to it, you will never fall into error -- a plain indication, The Book of God and the practice of His Prophet. So give good heed to what I say."

"And as regards your slaves, see that you give them to eat of what you yourselves eat, and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves. If they commit a fault which you are not inclined to forgive, then part with them; for they are the servants of the Lord, and they are not to be harshly treated."

When the Prophet Muhammad had finished his sentence and his crier Rabi'ah had repeated it, the Prophet Muhammad stopped and asked the audience if it had heard his words well. When everyone shouted to say that they had heard them, the Prophet turned his face upwards and said: "O God! Thou art my witness. I have conveyed Thy message."

On the facing page you can see a photograph with a tall pillar in the background. This marks the spot where our Prophet gave his last and most wonderful speech to the pilgrims at 'Arafat.

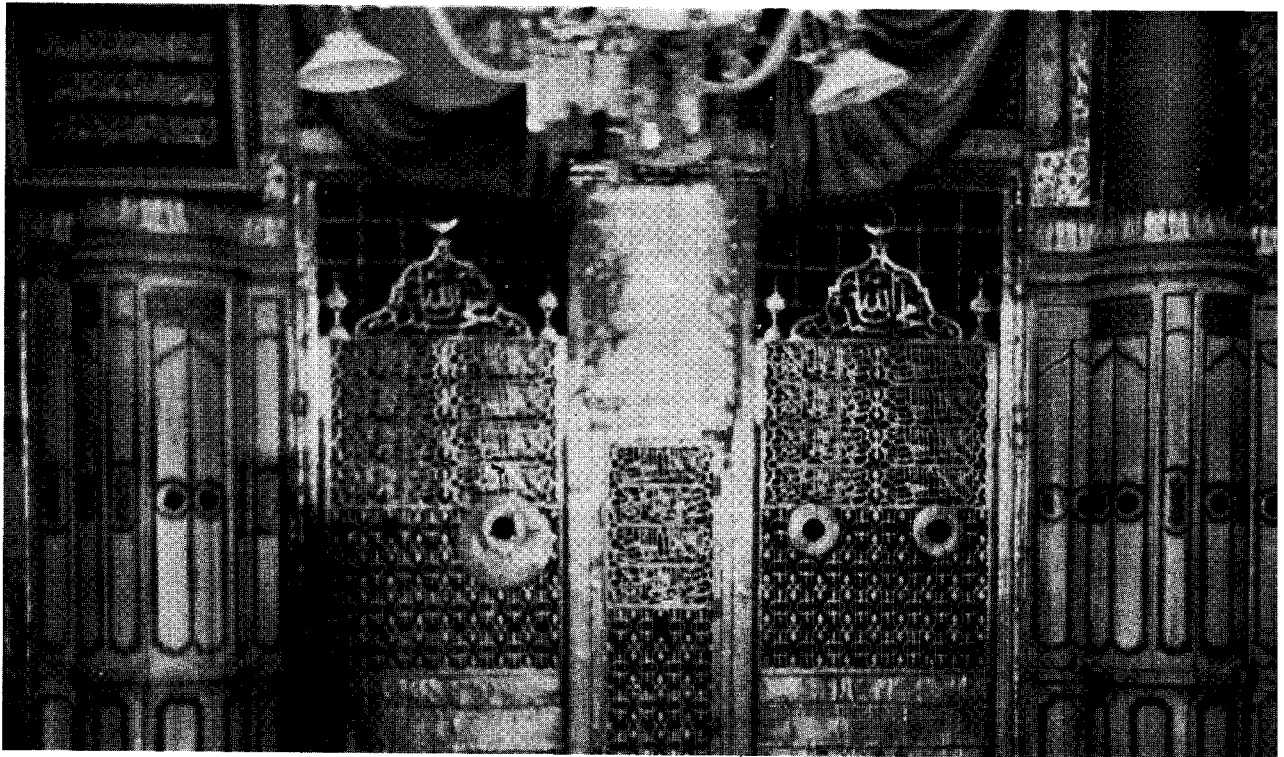
Photo: Arameco

The Gates of Solid Gold

My Dear Children,

Here on these pages are two photographs showing the gates of the tomb of our Prophet at Medina, Saudi Arabia, worked in solid gold in the best tradition of Islamic decorative art.

Behind these gates lies buried the great Prophet Muhammad (May the peace and blessings of God be upon him!) On the next page you will see a close-up view of one of these gold gates



Dear Children,

On this page you will see a wonderful piece of penmanship, otherwise known as calligraphy. The writing that you see is in Arabic and always reads from right to left. There is also a fancy border around this Arabic. Just inside this border at the top you see some Arabic words placed together in a most artistic manner, most wonderful words with which the Holy Qur'an opens. They are:

"In the name of Allāh (God) the Beneficent, the Merciful". The same words are repeated again in a straight line underneath. They are followed by two more lines in Arabic. All these lines are from the Holy Qur'an.

Under all this you can see a circle formed of many words in Arabic. Now these words are the ninety-nine Attributes or names of God, which all appear in the Holy Qur'an.

In the centre of this circle, containing the Attributes of God, is a black circle, and in it are the words, "Allāh (God) Whose Glory be manifest".

Now, if you look under the larger circle, you will see another two lines of Arabic. This is another verse from the Holy Qur'an.





“And hold fast, together, by the Chord of God and be not divided among yourselves.” (The Qur’án 3:103)

HE WANTED TO BE A HÁJÍ

Ahmad and Rasheedah were a rich man’s son and daughter.

Ahmad was twelve years old and Rasheedah nearly eleven years. They had everything money could buy. Their house was wonderful and so was the servants’ part of the house. In the servants’ part lived another little boy and girl, called Akbar and Zuhrah. These four children often played on the lawn, Rasheedah sharing her doll with Zuhrah whilst they pushed the large doll’s pram together around the lawn. Ahmad and Akbar played football together. Zuhrah and Akbar’s father had been a servant in the family for many years, serving faithfully the father of Ahmad whose name was Anwar. Their grandfather had also served Anwar’s father. So, you see, they were all part of the family and had been so for many years. But somehow or other Rasheedah and Ahmad had been spoilt, especially by their aunt, who had no children of her own.

Now, on the lawn sat these four children. Ahmad and Akbar were just talking and resting for a while. The girls were also busy with the dolly, dressing it in a new dress.

Ahmad turned to Akbar and said, “I am going to Mecca for the Hajj.”

“Oh!” said Akbar.

“Yes, when it is nearer the ‘Id al-Adhá, my daddy and all the family will go to Mecca *Inshá Alláh* (God willing), to perform the pilgrimage.”

Akbar said, “I wish I were going too. Oh! You are lucky.”

“Well, you cannot go and that’s that,” said Ahmad. “And when I get back you will have to call me Hájí.”

“I won’t *have* to call you Hájí.”

“Oh, yes you will,” said Ahmad. “Anyone who goes on the pilgrimage must be called Hájí and I am not going to play with you any more, unless you promise to call me Hájí when I come back from Mecca.”

“That’s a threat,” said Akbar. “And now because of this I will *never* call you Hájí—*never*.”

“If you don’t, then you are not a Muslim,” said Ahmad.

“Whoever told you that?” asked Akbar. “While you have been wasting your time I have been learning my religion each day. Please tell me where you read that a Muslim having performed the Hajj must be called a Hájí. You cannot answer me because there is no law such as that. Yes, I might have honoured you with that title, if you had not been a bully, and there is yet another thing—I cannot afford to go to Mecca. Are you better than I because you have money and can afford to make the pilgrimage? The answer is No! And another thing, my dear Ahmad, who are you to say I am not a Muslim? Don’t you know that it is not for you to say that I am not a Muslim? If I say that I believe in One God and in Muhammad as His Last Prophet, you or anyone else cannot say that I am not a Muslim, if I say I am. And I tell you God will punish you if you take such things into your own hands. The other day my daddy was

saying that it is a bad habit of some of us to say, 'Oh! So-and-so is not a Muslim'. My daddy said the other day he heard a little boy, old enough to know better, ask an English Muslim visitor if she had fasted. Her answer was, 'No'. The boy said, 'Then you are not a Muslim'. The visitor replied, 'My Son, God is my judge, not you. Leave it to Him, my dear! There are too many people declaring who is Muslim and who is not according to them. Again I say, leave that to God'.

"The Muslim visitor then went on to say, 'My Son, if a man says *Lá-iláhá Ill-la láh, Muhammad dur Rasul Lul-láh* (God is One and Muhammad is His Messenger), that should be enough for you and me'. She added, 'Let us look after our own actions first, little Boy'."

"Oh, you are jealous of me," said Ahmad. "All because I am going to be a Háji."

Ahmad gave Akbar a push and started to fight him, both rolling over and over. The two girls screamed and ran over to the boys. They tried to pull Ahmad off, but they could not. Out rushed Ahmad's father and pulled his son away from Akbar.

The girls told the story and, being good Muslims, they told the truth.

Ahmad's father was very angry and said, "Did I ever tell you that I must be called a Háji? No. And I would never tell you that. I am very much ashamed of you. You are not fit to go to Mecca, let alone be called a Háji."

"Oh! Daddy," said Ahmad, "I was only fighting Akbar and why not? His father is only our servant."

"Ahmad! How dare you say such things, when you know how our Prophet treated his servants with great love and respect? May God forgive you and me!" said the father with a sigh and tears in his eyes. "Pray hard to God, my Boy, to help you, and promise me that you will never say such things again."

Ahmad's mother and aunt, who had heard this conversation, now came out.

The father turned to them and said, "I am now determined not to take Ahmad with me for the pilgrimage." To his son he said, "I am going to make sure you will never forget this day, even when you are a grown-up man. You and all of us know that anyone, if possible, should perform the Hajj (pilgrimage), not for the sake of being called a Háji. That is never done, my Son. Friends may call one Háji as a mark of respect and many a man truly deserves this honour. Ahmad, you have behaved like an animal. I am going to take Akbar with your mother and sister; he shall go in your place."

"Why should Rasheedah, a girl, go?" Ahmad yelled. "Boys should go first."

"You are wrong, Ahmad," said his father. "Boys and girls and men and women can all go to Mecca for pilgrimage. In the Qur'an, my Son, you see both men and women are mentioned—the believing women and the believing men, the fasting women and the fasting men, and so on. Your sister has a full right to go to Mecca."

The father then said to his wife and sister, "These boys have been having a long talk and Ahmad could have learnt something if he had not started fighting." He then told the story about the Muslim woman visitor from England. "Now I know that woman," said he, "and I assure you that she helps the poor, feeds the hungry, and the servants love her and you never hear her saying who is a Muslim and who is not. She also teaches poor children. Actions speak louder than words. She is truly a Muslim."

Ahmad started to grunt and mutter.

"Remember this, my Son," said his father, "I am punishing myself as well by not allowing you to go to Mecca, because this was my greatest wish in life. It is true you have learnt to read your Qur'an by heart in Arabic. Now I want you to learn the Qur'an by heart in your own language. This task I give you whilst I am away and I hope the meaning sinks right into your brain and heart. Please enjoy reading and learning this Book. There is no compulsion in Islam. I am only guiding you as a father, who wants his son to try to be a good Muslim."

Ahmad started to stamp his feet in temper and then his father said, "I can see I have failed

in my duty having a son behave as you do. By God! I will try and make things right if it is the last thing I ever do. But you will not go with us in a few days' time. No. As I have said before, my Son, you must stay behind."

"I don't want to go," yelled the boy. "And I won't be a Muslim any more."

The father looked sadly at his son and said, "I cannot compel you to be a Muslim. One is a Muslim because one loves Islam. Ahmad! It is you who will lose a gem if you give up Islam. God gave you a present when he gave you Islam. You are not giving Him much. The way you are behaving you need God. Oh, how you need Him!"

Ahmad got up and ran off.

"Oh! My God!" said Ahmad's father. "Where have I failed? Do forgive me. Have I pushed my son too much? Or have I been too strict and also too slack?"

The father's cry was a cry of woe. What an unhappy man he was, with a heavy load on his mind!

The family started off the next day, all except Ahmad who stayed at home and in his place went the servant's son, Akbar. They travelled to Mecca, first arriving at Jeddah, which is the seaport. Here they all put on the regulation ceremonial clothes for the Hajj, dressed in white. The boys and men took two large pieces of unsewn white calico and placed one piece around themselves like a skirt, the other piece around the top half of the body, keeping the right shoulder bare, while the women went with heads covered by a scarf and their clothes were also white by choice.

They all arrived in Mecca the next day. The Ka'bah (the House of God) looked so great and massive. It was just wonderful.

Akbar wondered how Abraham and Ishmael felt when they rebuilt this massive building.

They started to walk around the Ka'bah. The father felt he could die. His great dream had always been to bring his son here. Suddenly he thought of Abraham, who had also been willing to sacrifice, even kill, his son, Ishmael, at God's wish, whilst he, Anwar, only wanted to teach his son to be a good boy and a true Muslim. Yet he felt he could die because his son was not with him. But what about Abraham? If God willed it, he would have lost Ishmael for ever. What a sacrifice! "I must try and get a little of Abraham's spirit in my heart," he said to himself. "God help me!" he said.

Suddenly a voice within him said, "You were right in the way you acted. Just trust in God and pray for peace."

The father felt as though a great load had been lifted from his heart. He walked around the Ka'bah with a light heart, saying, "O God! Here I come at Thy service." He knew that he had done the right thing for his son by not bringing him with him.

At home the little son, Ahmad, was thinking about the whole affair. He felt very sad. His aunt felt sorry for him. But she, with a heavy heart, told him how wrong he had been and that he must be a better boy.

He looked at her and said, "My dear Aunt! I am truly sorry."

"Now, go to bed," said she, and after prayers off he went. He soon fell fast asleep and dreamt that he was living 1,400 years ago in the time of the Prophet Muhammad and was in Medina. In his dream he walked along the road and, feeling tired, sat down. A man came up and sat down beside him. His clothes were different. This man had a very serene look on his face. He said to Ahmad, "You look unhappy, little man."

Ahmad cried and told his story and all about his wanting to go to Mecca. "Don't cry, little One!" said the man. "Those little diamonds dropping from your eyes and rolling down your face are the greatest jewels shining in the sun. Their value is priceless. Don't be ashamed of them. These tears are from your heart. You are truly sorry. But let me tell you; here we are not so far from Mecca. But we cannot go there because if we professed Islam there, we would be killed by the idol-worshippers."

“Oh!” said Ahmad, “But why?” (As you know, dear Children, dreams are often mixed up. But to the dreamer at that time they seem all right and this dream had a lot of truth in it. One minute Ahmad was living today whilst telling this man his life story and the next minute he had gone back to 1,400 years ago. But that is how dreams go. So back we go to Ahmad and his dream.)

“Oh!” said the stranger. “We cannot even pray in the open today. Things are very bad. We may be attacked at any time. As we are between Medina and Mecca a party of Idolators may find us and stone us, especially if they hear me repeating one of my Prophet’s revelations from God which are going to make a Holy Book, called the Holy Qur’án.”

“What kind of place have I come to?” asked Ahmad. “You cannot even go to Mecca. You cannot recite the Qur’án and you cannot say your prayers in peace. I have never appreciated home so much before and there was I worrying about not being called a Háji and here you are facing death because you mean to be called a Muslim.”

“Are you a Háji?” asked Ahmad.

“Here, my Son, we have no such thing. One day we know God will lead us back to Mecca and my Prophet will give us Mecca free of idols with God’s help. But in the meantime, my Son, many of us must die for Islam first. Those who live, live only for the day to be able to cry out aloud to everyone, God is One and Muhammad is His Last Prophet, and if a man says I am a Muslim, we shall never doubt him; for our Prophet said the other day that a man who calleth another Muslim a *Káfir* (non-Muslim), the same shall return upon him.”

“I will remember that,” said Ahmad. “Of course, it is slander and a lie, when one says a man is a *Káfir* when he is not. And I know,” he said, “that the Prophet has said, ‘a keeper of the fast who does not stop lying and slanders, God careth not for his leaving off his eating and drinking’ (in other words, fasting).”

“Please, go back home,” said the old man. “Remind your people of all these sayings. Tell them to live by the word of God and the advice of our Last Prophet and remember also these words from our Prophet, ‘Be persistent in good actions and refrain from evil deeds’. *Assalámu alaykum!* (Peace be with you!) Go home, little Boy, in peace.”

With those words ringing in his ears Ahmad woke up from his dream. He was quite worried for a minute and then he knew he had been dreaming and so he would not have to be persecuted for his religion.

He would tell people all about his religion, and talk to the many visitors who came to see his father. But what a lucky boy he was that he could worship in peace and some day go to Mecca in peace and to think that he had been such a bad boy to his father and disturbed him.

“But in my heart,” said he to himself, “I did not really mean I was not a Muslim. But now by my actions my father shall know that I am a Muslim in word and action, because I know that all I learnt about Islam in my dream is true.”

He told his aunt about his lifelike dream. She said, “You have learnt your lesson, young man! Please do tell your dream to some of the older people also because all the sayings of the old man in your dream are true.”

Ahmad went all through the Qur’án in his own language but he did not seem to be able to learn it by heart as he did with the Arabic. But he read and re-read it and his aunt said that he had become perfect in his knowledge of Islam.

The day came for the family to arrive home. Ahmad rushed out to meet them. He gave Akbar a big hug saying, “I am so glad to see you Háji.” Then he took Akbar into the garden to hear all the news. Of course, first of all, he thanked his father for leaving him at home. His father was astounded.

“Daddy,” he said, “I have seen and learnt many things which some people would never learn in a hundred years,” and with that he laughed and said to his sister, “Ah! I have been places and learnt much.”

“Oh! Oh! Do tell me,” said his sister.

“I will tell you later,” said Ahmad, “but first of all, I must listen to my Háji friend and hear about his pilgrimage.”

The aunt said to the mother and father, “Ahmad has been wonderful whilst you have been away. I have heard that he has been giving his pocket-money to a poor boy and helping the sick.”

“Alláh (God) be praised!” said the father.

In the garden sat Ahmad and Akbar.

“I prayed for you,” said Akbar.

“And your prayers were heard,” said Ahmad and so he told about his wonderful dream and ended it by saying, “and now we are all together once more, one big happy family.”

Ahmad’s father looked out of the window on to the same awful spot where Ahmad had been so naughty. Everything in the garden now looked the same as it had often done, with two girls in it and two boys playing—but was it? No. Not quite. Love and understanding now were there. The true Islamic feeling had been restored amongst these four again with two Hájis amongst them and all of them determined to grow up into good Muslims (which is not such a difficult task).

The father heaved a sigh of relief. Life was sublime and from his lips came the words, “I thank Thee, God, for Thy great mercy and for the dream which You sent to my son.”

THE CAMEL

One of the Greatest Marvels of Nature



The camel's ability to go without water for long periods has been a great mystery for many years. The idea that a camel carries water in its hump was exploded by Dr. Knut Schmidt-Nielson. He proved the camel does not drink water until it is really dried out. Then it can take sixteen gallons of water at a time. This water becomes conserved in its body tissues. The camel does not perspire. Its skin is always dry. It never pants and never leaves its mouth open. Many animals keep themselves cool by evaporating water from their skin by perspiring. Every drop of water in the camel goes into its tissues.

The camel loses 50 lbs. in 8 days and drinks 100 quarts in 10 minutes.

The camel was always a great mystery to mankind. But Professor Dr. Knut Schmidt-Nielson of the Duke University, Durham, U.S.A., helped the world to know a great deal more about this ship of the desert, as the camel is so often called. Our Holy Qur`án made reference to the camel 1,400 years ago when it said, "*Do they not look at the camels how they are made*", (The Qur`án 88-17)

Time and time again the Qur`án mentions the wonders of the world. It is for us to study this wonderful book.



"Do they not look at the camels how they are made" The Qur`án 88-17

Love your Prophet and your Parents

Jalal and Miriam were brother and sister. They laughed and played the whole day through and at the end of the day, before going to bed, they were taught a few lines from the Holy Qur'an and some of the prayer. The children were five and six years old. Tomorrow they were going to a small village school. Jalal was not very strong and could not go to school before, and now Miriam would go with him. So off to bed they both went. Mother and father said a prayer with them and the children went soundly to sleep. Oh, the day for school had come!

Jalal said to Miriam, "Some children cry the first day they go to school". "But we will not", said Miriam. "Father and mother say that a good Muslim is never a coward; he does what he has to do and is not afraid; and where learning is concerned a Muslim should learn well because our Prophet said that one should seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave". The father, standing by, said, "This means, start to learn when you are tiny and always learn something until your life ends". "And this is what you and I must do", said Miriam to her brother. The children had their breakfast, having thanked God for the meal before and after.

Father got the little cart ready to go to town to buy goods and food for his animals and also to sell the vegetables he had grown. But today the children must go with him because he had to take them to school. He put them into the cart and then gave them their books and some food. Then, with great respect, he handed them a book wrapped in a silk handkerchief. What do you think this book was? It was the Holy Qur'an which for many years the children of that family had all learnt to read from; and now Jalal and Miriam were going to learn to read from it. The book was old but clean and spotless. The children knew how to treat this holy book. Mother said goodbye and off the father and children went, the cart being drawn by a bullock. "Daddy," said the child Jalal, "Why do we take such care of this book, the Holy Qur'an?" His father said, "Surely you know it is the word of God. I have told you this before". "Yes", said the child, "but it is only paper and printed like other books". "Yes", said the father, "it is printed like other books and the paper is like other paper. But the book is a special book because we respect what is printed on the paper. When we realize what wonderful words are on the paper, and that it is the word of God, we therefore love and respect this book, with all its wonderful words, and keep it safe because it means so much to us Muslims and is respected by millions and millions. Now I am sure you will feel happy to keep this book safe". They both replied, "We most certainly will".

For years father and mother looked after these children, sacrificing all to give them a good education. The children learnt well. They were also taught the Qur'an and learnt many parts by heart. Time passed and Jalal was 16 years old now. He had learnt the Holy Qur'an by heart; so now he was a young Hafiz. One is called a Hafiz when one knows the Qur'an by heart from cover to cover. His sister was now 15 years of age and stayed at home with the

mother. Now Jalal started to study in another part of the country far from his home. He passed his exams, finished his studies and got a wonderful job with very good pay. He was now 21 years of age but he felt he knew everything better than anyone else. When he came home he felt his parents were not educated enough; also that his sister should have gone to college. He did not stop to think how the old people would have got on without her.

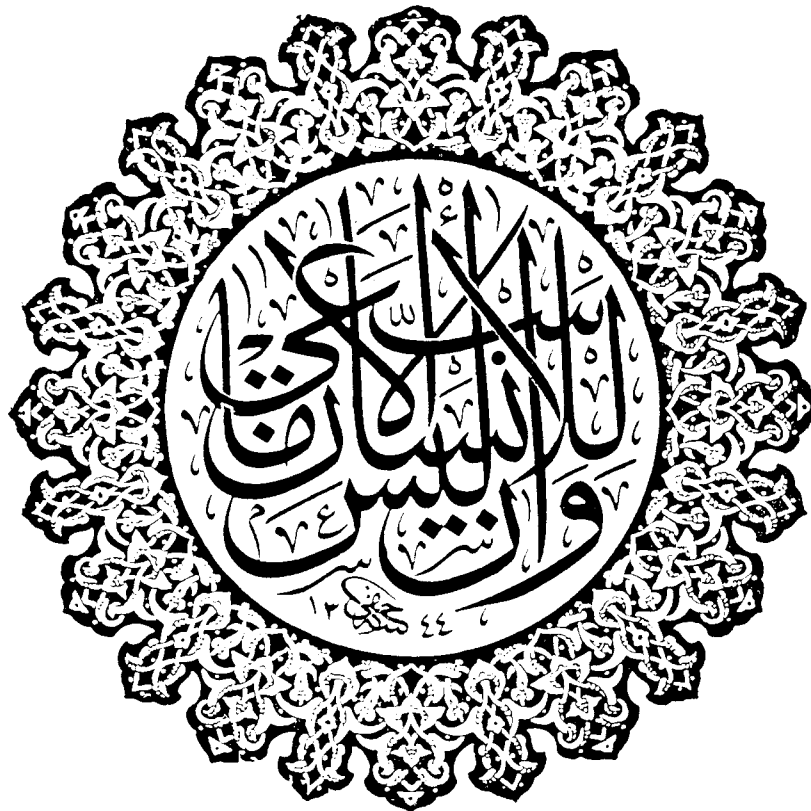
When he told Miriam about his views she said, "I do not think all this has made you a better man". His father and mother joined in the talk and they said, "My Son! We made you learn the Qur'an by heart and you loved it and you are a Hafiz, but you seem to have forgotten some things you learnt in the Holy Book". "Well", said the son, "I am rich", and then he became a little rude and haughty in his manner to his parents. "Son", they said, "you are being rude, sometimes you say things you do not mean. You know our Prophet said, 'Whosoever wishes that his wealth may increase and his span of life be lengthened, then he should do good to his kith and kin' ". "Yes", said the son, "I am sorry, I promise you both that I will be a better son and I will be happy with the wealth of your love. I am going to get a job nearer home and be near you; for it brings to my mind what I learnt by heart from the Holy Qur'an. It reads like this: 'And your Lord hath decreed that you serve none but Him, and do good to your parents. If either of them or both reach old age with you say not even 'fie' to them. Nor chide them but speak to them with generous words. And lower to them the wings of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord! Have mercy on them who brought me up when I was little' " (17:23-24)".

This was recited in Arabic by the son. The parents said, "*Al-hamdu lillāh*", which in English means, "God be praised!" And so once more the son came back to his parents and got a good job later on. Miriam grew up and married and went to look after her husband's mother. Jalal married and brought his wife into the family and she helped to look after Jalal's parents. This she did with great pleasure because she was a good Muslim. She always remembered the story of when Mu'awiyah Ibn Jahimah told the Prophet Muhammad that he wanted to go to fight in a holy war. Our Prophet is said to have asked, "Is your mother alive?" The young man said, "Yes". "Then go and serve your mother", replied the Prophet Muhammad.

These words would always go through Jalal's wife's mind. Jalal had a fine young son. He sent him out with grandpa, who took him to a sermon and also prayers. This little boy, whose name was 'Abdullah, sat for two hours through the prayers and sermon, but the sermon still went on. It seemed endless, 'Abdullah looked at his grandpa, who looked tired and worn. The grandson himself felt tired and worn out. His mind was on the sermon no longer. He thought of the games he was going to play with his friend tomorrow. "Oh", thought he, "I am being wicked. I must try to listen". But his little brain could not take it any more. He fell asleep and dreamt of the days of the Prophet, about whom the speaker was talking. It was a wonderful dream of how the Prophet loved little children.

Just then he felt a tug at his sleeve. He realized he had been asleep. "Come along", said grandpa, "I felt ashamed at your falling asleep. Even if the sermon was long, you should not have fallen asleep". The little boy started to cry. A friend nearby asked what the trouble was. "Come home with me", said the friend, "I want to tell you something". So back to the friend's house they went. Said the friend, "You seemed very upset when your grandson fell asleep. Well, listen to what happened in our Prophet's time. A certain man named Mu'az Ibn Jabal used to lead the prayers and give sermons and read long chapters from the Qur'an. One of the followers, who had been in Mu'az's congregation, went to the Prophet Muhammad and said, 'Mu'az recites and reads such long chapters that it interferes with my other prayers and proves a hindrance to me'. When the Prophet heard this he was upset and said, 'Mu'az is wrong. There are those who create aversion in the minds of others. Anyone from amongst you who happens to lead the prayers should read short chapters, because in the congregation there are the weak, the helpless and the old' ".

The friend telling this incident turned to the grandpa and said, "So you see the person who was wrong was the speaker and leader today. You yourself looked very tired". "I was", said the grandpa. "And now I see my little grandson can be forgiven". A smile spread over the little boy's face. He thought what a wonderful man his Prophet was. Just as he had seen him in his dream. So homeward grandpa and grandson went, hand in hand. It would soon be 'Abdullah's bedtime.



"Verily for man there is nothing but what he strives for" (The Qur'an)



“Verily for man there is nothing but what he strives for” (The Qur’án)

Bismilláh

My dear Children,

Ask your mummy and daddy please to read this story to you or perhaps that big brother of 12 years old may read it to you. He might even learn something. Who knows?

Bismilláh

He was just an ordinary man tilling the ground. It was time for him to leave off his work and eat the food he had brought with him. This man felt happy. He had just said a little prayer before his food, and now he was going to enjoy the food which his wife had packed for him. A little group of youngsters played nearby. They were too young to worry about class, creed or colour. One of them was the son of a rich man. The other two were from working class families.

The little group was playing away quite happily. Just then the little rich boy who was amongst the group left it and went to watch the worker who was eating his food. He gave the little boy a piece of his bread to eat.

“This is the best food I have ever tasted,” said the youngster.

“It also tastes very good to me,” said the worker. “For my Prophet Muhammad has said, ‘Nobody has eaten better food than the food which he earns from work done by his own two hands’.”

“But,” said the little boy, “my daddy does not work in the field as you do. I think that is why your food tastes better than ours.”

“What does your daddy do?” asked the man.

“He owns this field and has many people working for him, but he does not use his hands as you are doing,” said the boy.

“Dear little Boy,” said the worker, “perhaps your daddy works hard with his brain. I know your daddy well. He made a contract with me and has never broken it. He does not enslave me nor sell my labour out to others, He has always paid me the money due to me before the perspiration is off my brow. But, little One, I said a prayer over the bread which you have eaten; this your daddy does not do. My food is plainer than yours; but because I work hard, I enjoy it. You know, little One, my Prophet has said, ‘Pay a man before the perspiration is off his brow’. He has also said, ‘On the day of judgement God will not be pleased with a man

who enters into a promise and lightly breaks it, nor will He like the person who enslaves and sells a free person, and spends the money on himself'. The Prophet also says, 'God also dislikes the man who engages a worker and takes full work out of him and then refuses to pay him his wages'. Your daddy has never done any wrong in this direction. When you go home, little One, just ask your daddy to say these words, *Bismillāh* before you eat your food and you will all be happy."

The boy went home and told his father all that had happened. "Pouff," said the father. "The man you have been talking to is a follower of that man who claims that he is the Last Prophet. Why, he himself used to tend sheep and goats at one time and these animals were owned by the Meccans."

A follower of the Prophet who happened to be visiting the father at that time said, "I have heard what you said to your son. Our Prophet says that 'God did not send a prophet into this world who had not acted as a shepherd sometime or the other, looking after the sheep and goats'. But," added the follower, "you know nothing about God or His Last Prophet. You have never troubled to find out."

"Why, that is true," said the father. "I have never thought of that before. Come tomorrow, my dear friend, and we will have a good talk about this man whom you seem to believe in so much."

The little boy spoke up. "Please, teach daddy to say *Bismillāh*, I like the food that has *Bismillāh* said over it."

The follower turned to the little boy. "You know, *Bismillāh* means 'In the name of God', and what is better than to eat food upon which one has asked God's blessings?"

The little boy went to bed pleased with his day and quite tired out, saying *Bismillāh* to himself until he fell fast asleep.

The next day the little boy, whose name was Abu, jumped out of bed. He was so excited. Today he was going to see his uncle, who lived twenty miles away in a very fine house. And he always enjoyed himself when he went there. Abu called out to his father's slave whose name was Tariq. The slave came and washed Abu. He looked at the slave. "Why is he darker than my daddy?" he thought. "Of course! He is much older than my daddy."

But in reality this slave was younger. Hard work and sadness had made him look older. But even then Abu's father was better than some slave owners. Tariq had a wife. She had to work also. They had a little boy of the same age as Abu. His name was Mahmud. He also would grow up to be a slave. Perhaps Abu's father would give him to Abu.

Whilst Tariq was washing Abu, he said to Tariq, "Do you know anything about God and the Last Prophet?"

"Please, little One, I am not allowed to think," said Tariq. "And ask me no more questions. Your father bought me and my body to work and that is all."

"But," said Abu. "Yesterday a worker in the field said that my daddy paid what he owed and always paid for any work done. Why is he like this to his slaves?"

Tariq said, "Your father bought me from a trader, so he feels he owes me nothing, I am just a black body and lucky if I don't get beaten. My wife works all day long and your daddy lets us have a little food."

Just then Abu's father called out, "For goodness' sake, come along, Boy! We have a journey to take."

Abu said goodbye to Tariq and then rushed out to his father, who was standing by the door looking out into the garden.

"Daddy," said Abu, "who are you looking at?"

"I am looking at that boy of Tariq's, sitting there doing nothing and eating my food," said the father.

Abu looked and saw the boy was eating a piece of old dry bread. "Daddy," said Abu.

“he is only of my age. You don’t surely want him to work. And look at what he is eating. Only an animal would eat that dirty old piece of bread. He must be very hungry.”

Now Abu began to feel very sad. Yesterday, whilst he had been sitting with his daddy’s worker and eating his nice meal, over which *Bismillāh* had been said, he had asked the worker about the way his father treated Tariq and why.

The worker said, “Your daddy does not know what our Prophet said. He said many things about all men being equal but he also said, ‘Do unto others what you would have them do unto you and reject for others what you would reject for yourself’. Your daddy has you. He would like you to be treated with kindness and he would like you not to starve. But does he do unto Tariq what he would like to be done to himself? No. He does not. He could give little Mahmud better food than he does. We know some of us must work, but not as slaves.”

Now, this conversation had all come back to Abu. So he turned to his father and said, “Daddy, this little boy and myself are just six years old. Would you like to see anyone thinking that I should be working? Also you give me dates and milk and even too much to eat. I wonder if Mahmud said *Bismillāh* over that dry, horrible piece of bread.”

The father turned to his son and said, “Do you mean to tell me that you are still harping on what my worker told you yesterday? I tell you to forget it, my Son. Because if you listen to any followers of that Prophet, who says that there is only One God, when you grow up, you will not have a slave at all because he says, ‘All men must be free and that one should not keep a slave’. So, for goodness’ sake, come along,” said the father, “and I don’t want to hear any more of your *Bismillāh*.”

“Oh! that reminds me,” said Abu. “You promised that follower of the Prophet, whose name is Abbass, that you would see and talk with him today.”

The father then got very angry, “I have no time for such things, Boy.”

Abu felt hurt that his father could break a promise. The father saw his look and said, “All right. I will send Tariq to him and tell him not to come today.”

“Daddy,” said Abu, “do you know what I heard your friend Abbass say?”

“Well! What did he say?” asked the father.

Abu said, “Abbass told me that his Prophet said, ‘Shall I tell you who are the very worst amongst you? It is those who eat alone, whip the slaves and give charity to no one’. You do not whip Tariq, but you give him very little to eat.”

“Oh! So now my six-year-old son is telling me what to do,” said the father.

“No,” replied Abu, “I am only telling you what Abbass told me and if you think that I am being rude, then I am very sorry. You know the worker in your field told me of another saying from his Prophet which was meant for me.”

“That’s interesting,” said the father, “I thought I was the only one in need of words of wisdom.”

Abu knew his father was making fun of him. So he said, “These are the words. ‘God’s pleasure is in a father’s pleasure and God’s displeasure is in a father’s displeasure’. Daddy! are you free?”

“My dear Boy,” said the father, “If you do not stop this nonsense, I shall sell Tariq and his family. Also never talk to me about being free. Why, you don’t even know the meaning of the word free.”

“Oh! Daddy, I do.”

“What is the meaning then?” asked his father.

“Daddy,” said Abu, “I saw Tariq looking at a bird in the air, and I said, ‘Why do you look at that bird?’ He answered, ‘He is free’. I asked him if he would like to be like that bird. He did not answer at once. But when he did answer, he said, ‘Little One, you are free; no one owns you as a slave’.”

The father stopped talking.

Abu got into the caravan with his father and the servant. And Tariq was sent on his way. Whilst in the caravan going along, Abu could not stop talking about being free and about the poor little slave and his bread.

By now Tariq had set out on his three-mile journey to the house of Abbass. As he went along the sun started to beat down on to his back as it was nearing noon. He felt weary; for he had worked hard before setting out on this little journey. So when he arrived at the house of Abbass he was really thirsty. At the door of the house he could see the master, Abbass, who came out to meet Tariq and he greeted him with *Assalamu 'Alaykum*, which in English means "Peace be with you!" and this is a Muslim greeting.

"Peace," thought poor Tariq, "what peace shall I ever have? Anyhow," Tariq thought to himself, "this is the first time I have ever had such a greeting given to me." He then delivered his message and turned to go away. Abbass called him back and asked him to sit down on a bench which was there. Abbass then went into the house and brought out a cup of water and some dates.

"This is all I have to give you," said Abbass. "Please take it with God's blessings."

The slave grew a little bold and said, "Thank you, kind Sir. But, please tell me. Whose blessings did you say?"

"God's blessings," said Abbass.

"Do you mean the head idol?" asked Tariq.

"I do not mean the head idol," said Abbass. "I mean the true God. You cannot see Him but He is everywhere, guiding those who want Him."

"But He does not want me," said Tariq. "No one wants a black slave. No one wants to love me. They only want to beat me."

"My man," said Abbass, "our Prophet says that all mankind is one and that you must be freed."

"Freed?" remarked the slave. "How could I live without a master over me, ready to beat me?"

Abbass felt sad. He said to Tariq, "God is your only Master and He leads you. If only I could afford it, I would buy you and your family from my friend, so that you could be free to worship God if you wanted to."

"But if I believed in what you say," said Tariq, "even if it were true, I would most likely be killed or tortured. So even if your Prophet did say good words regarding us . . ."

"What words are you thinking of?" interrupted Abbass. "There are so many wonderful words of wisdom about our slave brothers."

Tariq replied, "Those words you told me a few minutes ago about clothing us."

"Ah! I know," said Abbass. "It is this that our Prophet says, 'They are your brothers, whom God has placed in your care. You must give them to eat of what you eat, and clothe them as you clothe yourselves'."

"Please tell me nothing more and let me live as I am living," pleaded Tariq.

"You are not living," said Abbass. "You are half dead. You do not even use your eyes and ears; they are your master's. If you used your ears, you would surely have heard that all the idols are going to be broken very soon. And if you used your eyes, you would surely have seen some brave follower of our Prophet saying his prayers to the One and Only God. Yes, I know you are a slave. But, please try to help yourself. For God helps those who help themselves. Please, Tariq, do not think I am being harsh; I am not. Now, from today onwards start by respecting yourself. And when you have done this I will help you in many ways to be happier than you are today. I will show you the way to God, my God, your God, the True God. But only if you wish it; for my religion compels no one to listen if one feels one cannot."

"This morning," said Tariq, "little Abu mentioned God and the Last Prophet and I felt afraid."

“Afraid of what?” asked Abbass. “You were not afraid of God and His Prophet. You were afraid of what your master might do to you, if you started to think for yourself.”

“Perhaps it is that,” said Tariq. “But I have a wife and child and now I understand why some slaves have been left in the terrible hot sun on the hot sand, tied down by their masters. I had heard the word Muslim whispered by some of the slaves but I took no notice.”

“Oh! You will find God in the end,” said Abbass. “and you will say prayers to Him.”

“Will that please Him?” asked Tariq.

“Your question is not so simple as it seems. Of course, it pleases God that you turn to Him, but, Tariq, He gains nothing out of it. It is you who gain. You are speaking of God as if He were a human being. God wants you to be pleased and happy. Talking to Him through your prayers and believing in Him helps you through all hardships. God wants nothing from you. But it helps you when you give your love to Him; for then your obedience to God will come naturally and then it is that God will be pleased with you, because even if you are not perfect you will have tried. And if you become a Muslim you are expected to believe in all the prophets and the Last Prophet, Muhammad, who brings Islam from God.”

Tariq, in his mind, could see the slave in the sand suffering because he wished to say “God is One”. “No,” he thought, “this is too much for me.” He jumped off the bench on which he was sitting and ran for his dear life as if he had seen a lion or tiger, and he did not stop running until he reached his home. His wife asked, “What is the matter?”

“Please ask me nothing,” said he. But all the time through his mind kept resounding the words of Abbass, telling him to use his ears and eyes. No! he could not. He would not listen. “I would suffer too much,” thought Tariq. “Could the words of Abbass be true when he had said that there is a God who even loves my family although we are slaves—and that a man is on this earth who is called the Last Prophet who says that myself and my family are as good as any other, and that there must be no slaves? Can it be true that someone loves my little Mahmud and that someone is watching over him? Oh, I must forget all this,” said Tariq to himself, “I must work and die—perhaps to be sold and parted from my family. No! this is too great a thing for me to believe in.”

While all this had been happening, Abu and his father were travelling in a caravan full of comfort and every kind of food. But Abu could not eat the food. He felt that it would choke him. Every time he tried to eat he could see in his mind’s eye that picture of poor little Mahmud, the slave child. And so he refused to eat anything.

His father got very angry and said sarcastically, “Say your *Bismillah* over this food as the worker told you to do and then you will enjoy it.”

“Daddy,” said the little boy, “the man in the field was happy when he said *Bismillah*. He was talking to his God. I may be only six years old but I feel much older than I did yesterday. I now know that the worker was happy with his God and that he had been good to everyone. Why, he even gave me some of his meal because, having played about and got dirty, he thought I was poor until I told him who I was. No, Daddy, I have no right to that word. I have no one to say it to.”

And so the journey came to an end. In those days it took longer to do twenty miles. Abu had eaten nothing. He felt he could not.

“Never mind,” thought his father, “we are now at his uncle’s house and he would never refuse to eat there.”

Father and son were met by the uncle and then they were taken inside to have a meal. The food looked lovely but as a slave passed it to Abu, he suddenly seemed to hear those words. “Your father bought me and my body”. He looked at the slave and said. “Are you bought? Is your body not yours?”

The father and uncle were horrified. But the slave pretended not to hear and as he placed the food down, Abu thought he heard the slave whisper something.

But he did not know what it was. "If only that slave would say *Bismillāh*," thought Abu.

Everyone started to eat but Abu could not eat. Every day for two days the same thing happened—Abu could not eat. He started talking to himself and crying. A doctor was called in, and also a pagan who was supposed to work wonders by magic. But still little Abu lay still and longed to go home to see little Mahmud. "I want to go home," whispered Abu.

The doctor said, "I can do nothing for him. Perhaps he will feel better tomorrow." The next day Abu was still ill. All he wanted was to see Mahmud eating nice food. The doctor was called in again. Now Abu would not stop talking and crying.

The doctor said, "I should take him home to his mother if I were you." So Abu was placed in the caravan on a nice mattress, and father and son started out on their homeward journey. Abu said that he would not eat until he got home. When he got home, he was so ill that he could not walk. He asked for Tariq to come out and carry him. Tariq picked Abu up. Abu put his arms around his neck. He loved Tariq and he closed his eyes whilst Tariq carried him slowly until they were indoors. Abu was brought in and placed on a couch.

Tariq said, "Little Boy, what ails you?"

Abu said, "I want to see your little son."

Tariq replied, "You must ask your father's permission first." The father said that the little slave boy could come in. The little boy, Mahmud, came in to see little Abu.

"What is the matter with you?" asked Mahmud.

"I was thinking all the time of you," said Abu, "and how you just eat only that horrible bread!"

"Do not worry about me," remarked little Mahmud. "I am only a slave boy."

"But I do care," said Abu, "and unless you eat with me I will not eat."

Little Mahmud replied, "I must not," and he ran away.

Abu's father was quite worried about his son. He called an old worshipper of an idol and asked him to pray for his son.

"I don't want him," said Abu. "I want to see your friend Abbass." Abbass was called and Tariq was sent to fetch him. Abbass walked along with Tariq. He would not let Tariq walk behind him. As they walked along Abbass asked him what was the matter with Abu.

Tariq said, "I do not know but I do know that he is very sad and ill. Perhaps the God you spoke to me about will help him, because, after all, he is not a slave."

Abbass stood still and looked at Tariq. "Can't you understand or don't you want to?" said Abbass. "I have told you God loves all alike if they are good. The wicked have to be punished but if they are sorry God will forgive them also." Abbass continued, "Tariq, black, yellow, brown or white, they are one in God's sight. Slave, rich man or poor man. But God says there must be no slaves."

Tariq sighed. "It is too difficult for me to understand," said he.

"It is too easy. That is the trouble with you," said Abbass.

As they entered the house Tariq whispered, "I believe in One God. So please teach me in secret. I do not wish my family to suffer." Abbass nodded his head. He was very happy. Abu's father came out and asked Abbass if he knew of any medicine to cure his son.

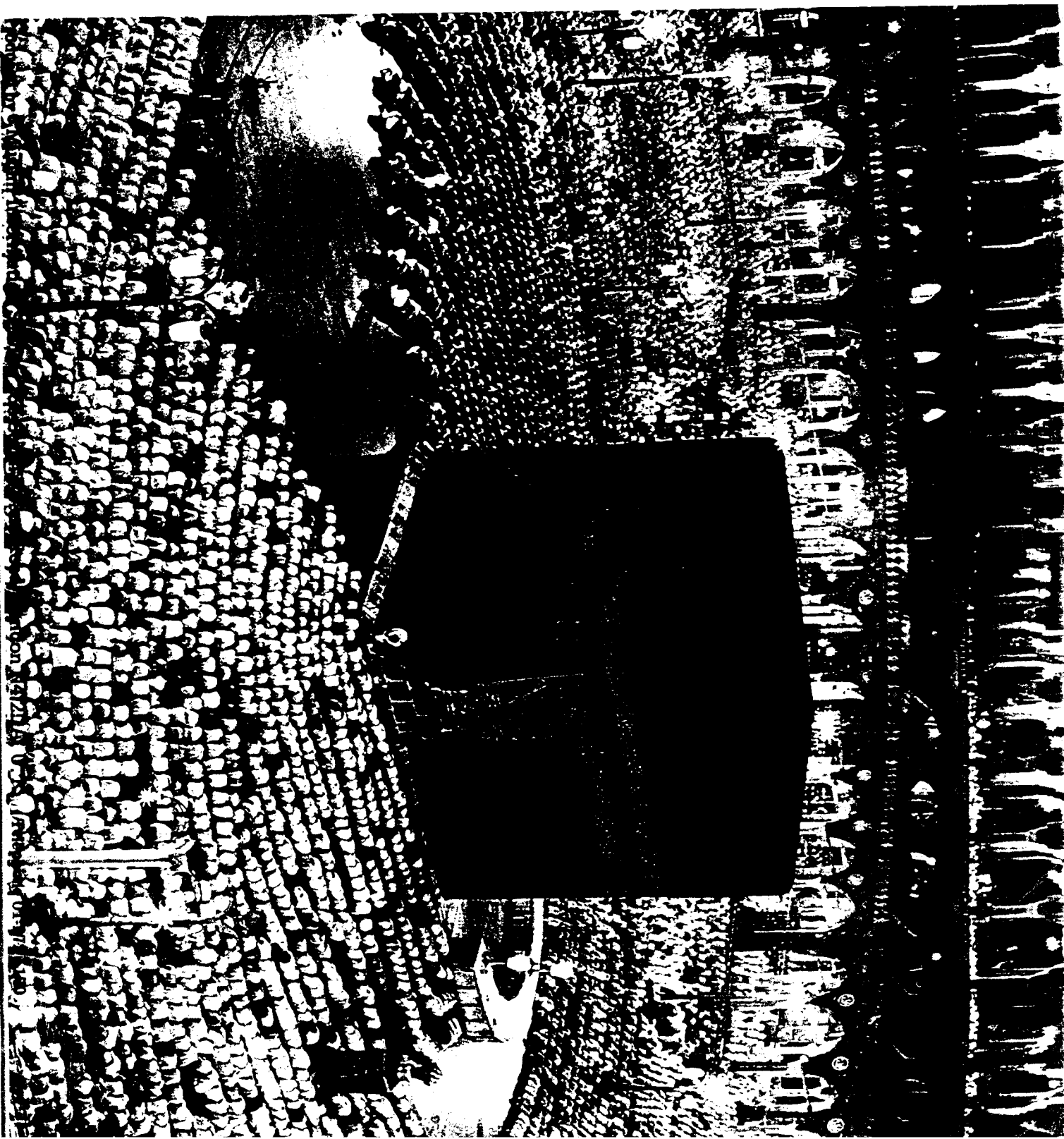
"Please let me see your son alone," said Abbass. He went in and saw the little boy. "What ails you, Son?" asked Abbass. The little boy told Abbass how unhappy he was because he loved his daddy and mummy but he knew it was not the way to treat anyone as the slaves were being treated.

"You are a very clever boy," said Abbass. "I am going to pray for you, and I will start my prayer with the words you know. Those words are *Bismillāh*." The prayer was said and then Abbass asked Abu to eat.

"I will eat only if my little slave boy eats with me," said Abu. Abu's father's permission was asked. Although he did not agree with such a thing he had to say Yes, because he knew that

his son's life was in danger and that he would not eat unless this slave boy ate with him. And so Abu ate with his little slave boy and got better.

When Abu grew up he became a Muslim, having been told all about Islam by Abbass. The little slave, also grown up, was a slave no longer. He worked for Abu and received a wage for his work. Strange to say, Abu's father did not torture Tariq when he heard that he had become a Muslim. He was really afraid that his son might start another hunger-strike if he touched Tariq. After many years Abu's father and mother became Muslims after seeing their son's way of life, and so Tariq and his wife received a wage and looked after Abu's father and mother. Needless to say, Tariq's wife became a Muslim, and, of course, Mahmud also became a Muslim. And so peace was brought about all through a worker impressing a little boy by his saying *Bismillāh* over his food.



His late Majesty King Abdul Aziz Al Sa'ud



This photograph of His Majesty Abdul Aziz Al Sa'ud, King of Saudi Arabia was taken a few years before he died.

His Majesty Abdul Aziz Al Sa'ud brought peace to the land and his son King Faisal says

"By God! peace must remain."

Dear Children, all Arabia is united today under Good King Faisal and he has worked so hard to keep it that way.

King Faisal thinks so much about the comfort of the Pilgrims who owe so much to the Saudi Royal Family, and most of all to His Majesty's father, King Al Sa'ud, who made it safe for the pilgrims to visit Mecca and Medina. King Al Sa'ud was the first man to have united the whole of Central Arabia since the days of Caliph 'Umar the Great.

Grandpa Looks Back

Ashraf sat with his mouth wide open. He was listening to his dear old grandpa, who was 88 years old. What was it that he was saying that could be of such interest to young Ashraf, who was eleven-and-a-half years old?

Well, I will tell you.

He was telling him about the time when he was a young man of twenty-one and how he had joined young Prince Ibn Sa'ud, who was about the same age as himself, and how he rode with this young prince throughout the country which, since 23 September 1932 C.E. has been known as Sa'udi Arabia. Grandpa had a twinkle in his eyes when he mentioned Ibn Sa'ud.

"Ah! That was a man," said he, "I and my companions rode the desert with him and never did he think himself above us. We rode together, ate together, prayed together, and when we had to, we fought together as one united body."

"But why did you fight at all?" asked little Ashraf.

"Ah! You may well ask this question when nowadays you can go anywhere, be it to Mecca or any other place, without being robbed or attacked. In those days this prince's father had been turned out of his city by someone who wanted this city for himself and, of course, the whole part of the country which was ruled by Ibn Sa'ud's father. This new ruler was not a good ruler. He had come to power by using force. The young Prince had left the city, called Riyadh, with his father and family. This country had been conquered and life had become unbearable for Ibn Sa'ud's father, so he did the only thing left for him to do, which was to leave Riyadh. For a while force and might had succeeded. The new ruler had got his way."

"Grandpa!" said little Ashraf, "is that why some people say, 'Might is right'?"

"I don't know about that," said grandpa. "I know people often say that. But, dear little One, I don't think they really mean it. A Muslim cannot possibly say such things because often in the time of Muhammad the Last Prophet (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him!), the enemy had great might and large armies. But that does not mean to say that they were right. Our Prophet says that actions should be judged according to their motives."

"Grandpa!" asked Ashraf, "is our dear King Faisal a grandson of Ibn Sa'ud, the same as I am to you?"

"No, little One, King Faisal is Ibn Sa'ud's son and he is carrying on as his father did, that is, with justice, good will and love for all."

"But, Grandpa! I know that Ibn Sa'ud did reign, but how did that come about when his father had left the city from where he ruled his people?"

"Ah! That is a long story, little One. But as I was telling about my being in the desert with King Faisal's father, Ibn Sa'ud, I will go back to that time and give you a short history as to how the whole thing happened," said grandpa.

"Prince Ibn Sa'ud had tried a few times to gain back the city, which was called Riyadh.

No men around Riyadh would help him because they were afraid of great punishment from the new ruler. Ibn Sa'ud had picked from his many friends 40 men, tried and true, also young and very willing to fight. Amongst these forty men, a few of them were from Kuwait, who had the feeling, like the rest of their countrymen, that Ibn Sa'ud and his father who at that time were living in Kuwait, must be helped.

"But Ibn Sa'ud had picked only 40 men this time, as he had a certain plan which seemed the only way for him to be successful because whatever attacks so far he had attempted, someone on the way seemed to find out, and news would get to Riyadh before he did. The result was that the enemy was always ready for him. This would happen because the people were poor and a great reward was being given to anyone who would tell if they saw Ibn Sa'ud in the direction of Riyadh. So the Prince thought of a plan. He decided to make everyone think that he and his friends had died in the desert. So these forty men just went out and did not come back. They stayed away from everyone and contacted no one. Weeks went by and nothing was heard of the Prince and his followers. The news started to spread around that they had died of hunger and thirst or of something or the other. There were many different rumours. This news got to the place and the person it was meant for. That is to say, the ruler in Riyadh.

"Now, news started to spread around that the ruler was happy at last. He must have thought: 'Now, I can do as I like, now that there is no Ibn Sa'ud to think about'.

"Weeks passed into months and then, on 15 January 1902, one fine night, in the full moonlight over the desert came riding a party of men. Their young Prince had a determined look in his eyes. He had made up his mind that they must win or die. Through the night they rode. They looked fine figures in the night but one could not say who was who, as their faces were covered, keeping the sand from their mouths. The group rested the animals for a while and the night became darker. On they went again, riding far into the night.

"At last they came to the city of Riyadh. The citizens of Riyadh were taken by surprise and were not ready for such a surprise attack. And so the Prince won the day with the support of his followers. That is how the family of Sa'ud regained their country. The frightened people of Riyadh were glad to have their Sa'udis back with them. Peace and happiness reigned once more. Now any wrongdoers would be punished and the Sa'udi ruler himself would listen to anyone who felt he had not had a fair deal. He did this at a set time every day and came in close contact with his people. They grew to love him more dearly than ever."

"Oh, that's a nice story because it ends well," said Ashraf. "I like a story with a nice ending. Was our country rich then?"

"No, little One, it became rich just after World War II, that is, after 1945 C.E. But oil was discovered in the ground in 1938 C.E. But you know it takes a few years before you get money from such a great project. And as soon as King Ibn Sa'ud had some money from this oil, he started to do many things for the whole of the country and his people and also for less fortunate people elsewhere. He worked hard day and night. He saw to it that schools were set up. He made our present King (who was then Prince Faisal) his constant companion, and Faisal also saw to the welfare of the country.

"King Ibn Sa'ud (whose full name was King 'Abdul 'Aziz Al Sa'ud) made sure that the bad men who stole anything must suffer, and that the punishment must be great. But he made it clear that if a person was really hungry, that would be a different story. The country became much safer. The road to Mecca was now very safe to travel and pilgrims need no longer travel in fear. Schools in the first instance were travelling schools, visiting different places with teachers on certain days."

"But," said little Ashraf, "I go to school every day."

"Yes," said his grandpa, "you not only have a nice school, you can also see how wonderfully the mosques in Medina and Mecca have been made larger and more beautiful. Also how many more pilgrims are coming for the Hajj now. In fact, all the year round we have

visitors. Yes, with the money, our country has had great improvements done to it. The roads, many of them, are first-class.

“The road to Tá’if, where our dear Prophet went along (if not exactly that road, it was very near to it), has been made wonderful. Yes, my little One, God has been good to us, and with our past and present good rulers we have done very well.”

“Oh, Grandpa!” chirped in Ashraf, “I do love your telling me about these things. Don’t go home yet. Please tell me some story about our Last Prophet, who was born in this country of mine.”

“Very well,” said grandpa, “just sit still and listen to me. You know I am never tired of talking about our Prophet. And so now I will start.

“Well, it was a hot and tiring day many years ago in the time of our Prophet, when suddenly from over a small hill there appeared a camel with a man on it. The camel moved slowly over the sand. As it came nearer, one could see that there was another figure leading the camel. Nearer came this party until it came up closer to a follower of our Prophet, who was watching this small party approaching. This follower looked again and saw that the man leading the camel was his beloved Prophet Muhammad, and riding the camel was a man by the name of ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Amr. The party came to a halt and gave greetings to each other. ‘Do not misunderstand the position you see me in’, said ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Amr, ‘our Prophet insisted that we should take it in turns to ride the camel. I refused but the Prophet made me ride. I know he felt that two of us would be too much for the camel, as it had come many a weary mile’. ‘Just like our Prophet’, said the follower. ‘He thinks for all mankind and loves the animals’.

“The Prophet then went on his way and arrived at his humble home. Outside his house there were four men waiting for him. They wanted him to go on a journey with them to visit a sick friend. Without hesitation the Prophet went with them. The men had food and provisions with them. They all rode along together and after two or more hours the time to eat came. But, first of all, they would have to collect fuel, which would be wood, for a fire and then they would cook. The four men divided the work equally amongst themselves and did not give a job to the Prophet. ‘My job is to collect wood’, said the Prophet. But the followers begged him not to trouble himself and to let them do the job. The Prophet at once said, ‘I do not like to give any distinction to myself. God does not like the man who considers himself superior to his companions’. So the Prophet did his share of work.

“He visited the sick man and said a prayer for him and came home again. He was met by one of his followers, who said, ‘I have just been amongst some of those unbelievers. You really must curse them’. Thereupon Muhammad looked sad and said, ‘I am not sent for this. I was sent to be a mercy to mankind’. The follower felt ashamed. The Prophet went into his house. His servant, Anas, then turned to the man and by Anas’s face you could see he thought that the man had been stupid to ask the Prophet to curse anyone. ‘Do you know?’ said Anas, ‘I have served the Prophet for ten years and he has never had the slightest expression of displeasure on his face, nor has he said to me ever, ‘Why did you do this?’ or ‘Why did you not do that?’ I have heard from one of his followers that he is known to have said, ‘He shall enter the garden of bliss that hath a true, pure and merciful heart’. Do you know that our Prophet said? ‘Verily God hath made me a humble servant and not a haughty king, and whosoever is humble to men for God’s sake, will be exalted’.”

Ashraf jumped up and said, “I must tell all this to my brother when I get home. I will also tell him how King Faisal’s father regained his country and served his people, and I think that is why our King Faisal spends all his money on good causes because his father showed him the way how not to be a haughty king but a guide for his people, doing as our Prophet would have liked him to do. Grandpa, I feel happy. I shall always remember that brave Prince who never gave up. And now, please may we go home? And I can say a prayer tonight of thanks to God for all He has given us.”

Little Salim learns about Saladin (Saláh-ud-din Al-Ayyúbi)

Salím was ploughing through his homework. He was a little Cypriot Turk living in England, one of the 2,000 or more children who lived in England, as their people could not live in peace in Cyprus (being Muslims and Turkish).

Well, Salím sat over his homework. He was doing the first part, which was arithmetic. There he was, biting his nails and sighing. “Don’t bite your nails”, said his mother, “It is very bad; you know you are twelve years old and should know better”. “Oh!” said Salím, “this arithmetic will drive me mad”. “Salím, haven’t you even finished your arithmetic yet? After that, what else have you to do?” “History”, replied Salím. “I’ve got to do an essay on that infidel called Saladin”. “I am very good at history”, said his mother, “I will help you if you like, after you have finished your arithmetic”.

Half an hour later Salím called out, “Mama, I have finished my arithmetic; now for that infidel chap”. “Salím!” said his mother, “Whatever are you talking about? I thought you were joking when you called Saladin an infidel”. “Oh!” said Salím, “I know very little about him. I first heard of him when I was ten years old and I know that my teacher called him an infidel. But that was two years ago, so I must find a history book to get details for my essay”.

“Son,” said the mother, “you are a Muslim. Saladin was a Muslim and I am a Muslim. Are you an infidel?”

“Mama, what are you saying? Of course I am not an infidel.”

“Nor was Saladin,” said his mother, “and never let me hear you call anyone an infidel unless you are certain. I have taught you about Islam and I have taught you the Holy Qur’án, but I have failed in a very important matter. I have not instilled in you a pride in our Muslim history, its caliphs and its heroes. I will buy all the books for you and try to make up for this. But straight away I will tell you about Saladin, the true Saladin, and not as your teacher told you, and I pray that I will be forgiven for my mistake in not telling you before.

“My dear Son, Saladin was a great man, his real name was Saláh ud-Din Al-Ayyúbi. He was born in the year 1137 C.E. at Tekrit (then in Kurdistan). Tekrit is 100 miles from Baghdad in Iraq. Saladin’s father and uncle were both great warriors from Kurdistan and they were also adventurous mountaineers.

“Sultan Nureddin made Saladin’s father Governor and his uncle vice-Governor

of Damascus. It was in this city that Saladin spent his childhood, except for a few years, which he spent in a school in Baalbek, in the Lebanon. In Damascus he was taught to write poetry and to learn all about the Qur'án. Riches never appealed to him, and all through his life you will find that he never did anything to gain money or riches.

“When he was a young man, his uncle asked him to accompany him on an expedition to Egypt. ‘By God,’ exclaimed Saladin, ‘I would not go even if the sovereignty of that country was offered to me!’ ‘The sovereignty of that country will be offered to you if you make good,’ replied his uncle. This did not tempt Saladin, but to please his uncle he went with him. Trained by his uncle, Saladin became a brilliant fighter and the enemy was defeated. Saladin’s uncle was then made Grand Vizier of Cairo, the capital of Egypt. The uncle seemed to want a life of ease and turned all his cares of the government over to young Saladin. The uncle died soon afterwards and, as the second in command to his uncle, Saladin was now selected as Governor of Egypt. He was very young for this appointment, but he accepted it and was a great success. He tried to unite the Muslims of other countries and said, ‘If we all fight together against the Crusaders, we can get back to our Holy Land and will be able to pray to God in peace’. ‘Because, you know, these European Christian kings thought that it was great sport and adventure always to be fighting the Muslims, they called themselves the Crusaders and put on armour which had a large cross on it. The Muslims had always respected the Holy Lands. I really think that the crusades were an excuse for King Richard, with his band of followers, to go off wandering.

“Now at that time Saladin set off on a mission to drive the Crusaders out of the Holy Land. After much fighting he returned to Egypt, where he found that the Caliph of Egypt had died.

“Saladin was then appointed the Caliph of Egypt. He ruled generously but if he had to fight, he would, and that meant that he would fight any enemy who tried to disturb his Muslim country. He became a wise and able administrator, a great military leader and a very capable diplomat. Under him, both Egypt and Syria became rich in culture; he enriched Cairo and Damascus with colleges, citadels and aqueducts. The remarkable architectural achievements during his rule still stand today. He was never too busy, even in battle, to say his prayers. And it is reported that he prayed eight times a day. He always told his friends that it was in answer to his prayers that God had given such strength to his arm.

“It was the strength of that arm that drove the Crusaders gradually back out of the Holy Land. At the end of his greatest victory, at Hittin, on 4 July 1187 C.E., he ordered that the King of Jerusalem and the other noble prisoners be brought to his headquarters, where he invited them to his tent, treating them with respect and cordiality. (He promised the king his freedom within a short period. A promise which was kept, despite the fact that Guy de Lusignan went on to fight him after his release.) After the battle at Hittin, Saladin went on to besiege Acre and then took Caesarea, Nazareth and Sidon. Saladin rose far above the standard of conduct which was the usual conduct expected from a conqueror. His treatment of his enemies in time of war, both wounded prisoners and civilians, was an example to all. After each battle Saladin would visit the field of battle to ensure that the sick and wounded were taken to shelter and treated by members of his medical staff irrespective of race or religion.

“The Crusaders fought Saladin fiercely. They had the idea that these places were their holy places alone. They also seemed to have forgotten that, to a Muslim, Jerusalem is a very important place, because both Jesus and Muhammad had great associations with that place. Since a Muslim believes in both as prophets, he has to respect every inch of the soil of Jerusalem. This is even forgotten today by most people when they talk about the Holy Land, and some think that it should belong to the Jews. Today one hears this kind of talk, but one should never forget that only Muslims and Christians respect Jesus.

“But to come back to my story. Saladin entered Jerusalem and said, ‘I have done this with God’s help’. Saladin was known to be a generous man; he was thoughtful, a good Muslim,

kind to all and a clean fighter. After the fall of Jerusalem on 2 October 1187 C.E., which was the crowning of his victories, he showed great mercy towards the inhabitants of the Holy City. To all those who chose to remain he allowed them to live, trade and worship as before. To those who preferred to return to Europe, he ordered that they were to be permitted to take all of their belongings and when they were delayed in Alexandria on their way home, because the Venetian and Genoese navigators demanded very high fares from them, not only the food but also the cost of their passage was paid by Saladin.

“When King Richard was ill, Saladin sent him peaches preserved in snow, Saladin disguised as a doctor cured King Richard of his illness. On another occasion, when a Christian Commander’s sister was being married inside the besieged city of Kerak, Saladin gave orders that there was to be no firing upon the castle whilst the wedding ceremony was being performed. A marriage was to him, and to all Muslims, a religious occasion, when a man promises to look after a woman. But a Muslim never says ‘until death us do part’, because we live on this earth and one cannot make such a vow in marriage, because we may not suit each other, but if we do, we would like to continue in the Life Hereafter. In Islam, if both parties agree to part, they can get a divorce after six months. You see, dear Salim, I am telling you this because because people often think the wrong things about us Muslims.

“In history there are many stories of Saladin, who always remained a poor man because he gave away all he had. Saladin, at the age of 50, had reached the height of his glory. But his health had begun to decline and it was all he could do now to defend Palestine against its enemies. Although his doctor had told him to rest, he was unable to do so. Sometimes he did not eat for two days, but he would always lead his soldiers into battle.

“King Richard, a great fighter, although misguided, especially when he called the Muslims ‘infidels’, would not leave Saladin alone. He had found a good fighter in Saladin and, being one himself, began to look upon this fight as a sport. But Saladin was only interested in the protection of Islam and his people and not in having a fight for fun or sport.

“In the midst of his illness and misfortune, Saladin was still renowned for his generous deeds. When his soldiers besieged the city of Acre and took a number of prisoners, which included the treasurer of the King of France, Saladin ordered them to be taken to his tent and given robes of honour. He then entertained them at a great party and then gave them good horses to carry them to Damascus. Saladin had a very hard time at the siege of Acre, and many a time he had to cry out to his troops, ‘On for Islam! On for Islam!’ Finally, he succeeded in taking Acre, but in doing so he suffered a great loss of men and material. It is said that during the prolonged siege of Acre in 1190 C.E. as a result of a victorious battle, many prisoners were brought to Saladin, amongst whom there was an elderly man. Questioning him on the reason for his coming such a long way, and learning that it was for a visit to the Holy Land, he allowed the man to proceed on his pilgrimage and gave him gifts and presents.

“Saladin then returned to Jerusalem, because he had heard that King Richard was turning his attention in that direction and was hoping to recapture it from the Muslims. Thus Saladin had to strengthen the walls of Jerusalem and prepare to defend it. Although still suffering from his illness, Saladin started to do heavy manual work. He carried heavy stones on his back and in every way was a shining example to his men. After saying his prayers in his tent in the morning, he would work until noon. After prayers and a short rest out of the glare of the sun, he would return to his work again. The only distinction was that he had a royal tent with a light inside. Historians report that everyone said of Saladin, ‘This man never sleeps, this man never eats and this man never despairs’. His words to his companions were, ‘God will perform a miracle and save this city’.

“And you know, dear Salim, what happened was really like a miracle. It was on a Friday when King Richard advanced and was seen by the people of Jerusalem. Saladin and his forces were really not strong enough for a great fight, but they were ready to do or die for the sake of

Jerusalem and Islam. Historians say that all day Saladin prayed in silence to God, and God listened to his words. Well, Saladin and his soldiers waited for the enemy and, to the amazement of them all, the enemy came no closer to Jerusalem but, instead, marched straight on into Egypt. The enemy knew that the rainy season was coming and their armour would rust, and also that their food supplies would be spoiled. We also know that King Richard's soldiers were very fed up. It is said that it was for these reasons that King Richard was anxious to go home. A truce was signed between Saladin and King Richard and shortly afterwards, on 9 October 1192 C.E., King Richard sailed for England.

"Before leaving, Richard wrote to Saladin, saying, 'I will return shortly and bring about your defeat'. To this Saladin replied, 'If it be the will of God, I can think of no man worthier of bringing about my defeat than you'. We know that all through Saladin's life civilian populations were well treated; women, children and elders especially. Saladin showed a truly magnanimous spirit when he conquered anyone.

"Again, I repeat that if King Richard had stopped to think, or had known what Islam was, there would have been no need to fight the Muslims, since they and their leader, Saladin, would have guarded all the Holy places. A Muslim, according to the Qur'an (14:67), must respect Churches, Mosques and Synagogues, in fact, all places where one worships God. There was a strict prohibition against killing and looting prisoners of war. Saladin never wavered, although this fact almost led to a mutiny amongst his troops, because these soldiers were very badly treated by the Crusaders and, after all, one can stand only so much and then one can take no more from a cruel enemy.

"I am sorry to say that Saladin died a year after the treaty was signed. Saladin died at the age of 55 on 4 March 1193 C.E. On his deathbed he told his son, 'I came into this world with nothing and after many years of warfare, I go out of the world with nothing. Avoid bloodshed; for blood never sleeps. Follow the way of peace; for this alone is the way of God'. One of his greatest enemies in the field was Renauld de Sagette of Tyre, who said, 'There is no adversary as generous, as loyal to his word as Saladin'. When Saladin died in Damascus, this greatest of history's heroes, this man who ruled a great nation of tremendous wealth and power, was found to possess one gold piece and 47 dinars. Saladin was buried on the same day as his death, in the garden house in the citadel of Damascus, at the hour of 'Asr prayer. His burial service and his grave were those of a poor man. He had left no money because he had given it all away. And thus passed away a man whom even his greatest enemies had to admit was a fine warrior and a kind, humble man.

"Here are some important dates you may like to remember because they should be of great interest to you, Salim. Remember, Saladin was a *Muslim* hero.

- 1137 C.E. Birth of Saladin (Saláh ud-Dín Ayyúbi) at Tekrit in Kurdistan (now Iraq).
- 1164 C.E. Saladin began the conquest of Egypt.
- 1174 C.E. Completed the conquest of Egypt.
- 1175 C.E. Saladin was made Sultan of Syria.
- 1187 C.E. Defeated the Crusaders at Jerusalem.
- 1189 C.E. Began the seige of Acre.
- 1191 C.E. Acre gave in to Saladin.
- 1192 C.E. Peace treaty signed between Richard and Saladin.
- 1193 C.E. Death of Saladin."

"I will learn these dates by heart," said Salim. "Now," said his mother, "you must get to know about other Islamic heroes, but right now I will leave you to get on with the rest of your homework."

Libya, My Libya

Umar Mukhtár you have gone,
But your name forever will live on.
In 1860 you were born,
In the land of Libya so forlorn.

You must have had a golden horn,
From which you sounded those words,
so loud and clear,
Telling the Libyans not to fear;
For God had heard their cry of woe,
and would deliver them from the foe,
You grew up to be a man,
and died a martyr in that fair land.
We know you did not die in vain,
May God bless your comrades who died
when thrown from the plane.
May the nation who did this die of shame!
For never with cruelty does one get fame.

Umar Mukhtár,
Your country today has its liberty,
Because men like you died to set it free.
It was in the year 1931,
In the month of September,
A day we will always remember,
You stood that day in the market square,
Wishing no one your fate to share.
The Italians had ordered your friends to be there,
To show them that this would be their fate,
If they tried to lift Libya out of its
sorrowful state.
The crowd at you could not stare,
And so to God they offered a prayer,
You looked so serene standing there,
As if in the world you had not a care.

You knew your end was very near,
It seemed as though you were seeing from our
Holy Book
Those wonderful words which are here,
“And reckon not those that are killed in
God’s way as dead,
Nay, they are alive and are provided
sustenance from their Lord.”

They hanged you, it’s true,
But martyrs like you are very few,
Many of your friends, so very sad,
Determined more than ever to take their stand,
And drive the Italians out of the land.
They all fought without any fear,
Feeling your spirit was very near.

Umar Mukhtár, so very dear,
We feel that you are very near,
And silently for you we shed a tear.
God sent you to us
more than a hundred years ago,
And you saw us through
many a year of woe.
You died, it’s true, before your country was free;
Its glory you did not live to see.

Umar Mukhtár,
You are now at rest,
And we know that God knows best.
You died a martyr to set your country free,
May the blessings of God abide with thee!

OLIVE TOTO

UMAR AL-MUKHTAR

Umar lived in Benghazi, an important port town of Libya. He was ten and a half years of age. Everyone would say to him, "You have a wonderful name."

So one day Umar asked his mother, "Why does everyone remark that I have a wonderful name?" His mother replied, "My son! It is not so much the name as it is the person bearing this name who has made it so wonderful."

"Now, who can that be?" asked Umar.

"He is Umar Mukhtar, who has suffered a great deal for us.

"Is he the same person I have heard daddy's friends talk about?" asked Umar.

"Yes," said his mother, "he is. The Italians promised to do so much for us and they did nothing and so our friend first was very disappointed.

"But you said . . ."

"Don't ask any more questions," interrupted his mother. "The less you know about what is going on in these days, the better it will be for you. There are too many soldiers about."

Just then there was a knock at the door. It was roughly pushed open and two Italian soldiers appeared. They pushed Umar's mother to one side. Umar ran after one of the soldiers, who was looking everywhere. It was the older of the two soldiers who spoke to Umar. "What's the matter with you, boy? Speak up."

Umar looked at the soldier and said, "Did not your Prophet Jesus teach you not to push a mother about?"

The soldier stood still and looked at this little boy.

"What are you saying, little fellow? First of all, Jesus is not a prophet. When I pray, I pray to Jesus Christ, our Lord. But I have not come here to talk to you. I have a little son about your age back in Italy." He looked sad when he said this.

Umar plucked up courage and said, "Do you know Jesus is my Prophet and that we only pray to one God and that the last Prophet is the Prophet Muhammad."

The soldier said a few more words and went out muttering, "We will find that Umar Mukhtar if it is the last thing we do on this earth."

Umar went to his mother, "You have said that I must live up to my name Umar, or rather, I must be like that wonderful man. But, mother, he is a big man and that makes a difference. You cannot expect me to be the same as he is, just because my Christian name is Umar."

"Umar! Whatever are you saying?" his mother said. "Don't you know you have not a Christian name? You are not a Christian."

"I know that," said Umar. "But that soldier asked me what name I was christened with. I said to him, 'We are not christened in Islam, but my first name is Umar.' 'Oh well,' he said, 'that is your Christian name.' But as you had told me not to argue with these soldiers I was going to say no more. But one soldier said, 'This boy knows nothing. He is a perfect little heathen.' I then shouted back at them. 'I am not a heathen. I pray to one God and I don't have to be christened to make me God's child or wash away my sins because I am supposed to be born sinful.' The soldier then said, 'But you are born sinful.' I said, 'That is what you think but my religion tells me that I am a Muslim and that I was born sinless.'"

Umar's mother asked, "What happened then?"

"Well, mother," said Umar, "I knew I had said too much, so then I kept quiet. The other soldier mentioned the name of Umar Mukhtar with great anger. Mother, please tell me all about Umar Mukhtar. If we had another baby, would you call him Mukhtar?"

"At present I am not brave enough," said his mother, "because, my dear boy, this great man is fighting against these bad people who are making us unhappy and they want to kill him and anyone who thinks differently from them."

"Umar," said his mother, "again I say, please do not talk to these soldiers. It is their duty to find out all they can about us, and they only want to know if you know of anything that will help them."

"Very well," said Umar. "I will not talk to the soldiers, and I will think of the other Umar who has given up his home and everything to help us."

Umar went back to school. But he did not care much for his school and he did not like going. He

wanted to be a doctor when he grew up because he meant to help his people, who had not many doctors. Sometimes he thought he would be a teacher, as he did not like the way his teachers taught. Or, perhaps, it was that his country might need him. If it became free, he would help it. His little mind was always thinking about things and not feeling too happy, because his parents were never very happy with the Italians around.

On his way back from school, Umar knocked at his father's friend's door. The friend answered the door and Umar went in. Umar knew what the Qur'an had said regarding obtaining permission to enter anyone's house. He knew the words of the Qur'an 24:27-28, which read:

O you who believe! do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and saluted those who live therein... And if you do not find anyone therein, then do not enter until permission is given to you. And if it is said to you, Go back, then go back.

Umar noticed how happy his father's friend looked. Umar said, "You look very well."

"Yes," he said, "I have heard news about my son, who I know is wounded and is in hiding. But now he is better."

"You must not talk to me about these things," said Umar, "my mother says I talk too much and the soldiers may find something out. But I won't say a word to them ever."

The father's friend, whose name was 'Abdullah, said, "You are a good boy and can be trusted, young as you are. We are going to say our prayers now, and then I must go out to my friend to see if he has any more news about my son."

The prayers were said and Umar went on his way. He arrived home and had his Qur'an lesson. He was taught for half an hour each day by his bigger brother, who was studying very hard. Sometimes the brother would quote some of our Prophet's sayings about learning, such as:

"The best of you are those who have learnt the Qur'an and teach it," and "Say is it possible for those who know and those who do not know to be equal?"

Then little Umar would think for a while and to show his brother that he was not such a dunderhead he would give another Islamic quotation such as:

"Acquire knowledge. It enableth the professor to distinguish right from wrong. It lighteth the way to heaven. It is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude. It is our companion when friendless. It guideth us to happiness. It sustains us in misery. It is an ornament amongst friends and an armour against one's enemies.

And then his big brother would tease him a little bit about how clever he was for a little boy of his age and how he could think for himself and argue.

After his supper, Umar was thinking of going to bed

when a tap was heard at the window. Umar's father opened the window and there was his friend, 'Abdullah. "Come in," said the father. "No one is here and Umar is just going to bed."

'Abdullah came inside and said, "Things are getting very bad. Graziani, that Italian Governor and butcher, has ordered his men to kill all people who are wounded in any kind of fighting. 'We want no prisoners,' he has told his men.

"And you know," said 'Abdullah, "my son is out with these brave men of ours fighting. How I wish our dear Prophet was here. There were bad men like Graziani when he was alive but they were conquered and the right prevailed. We shall be all right one day, God will see to that."

With a sigh, the two men bade each other goodbye. Umar had gone to bed thinking that tomorrow was Friday and after his morning lessons he would go to the mosque for prayers and a short sermon. The morning came. Lessons were over and Umar went to the mosque with his father. Umar listened to the sermon. The speaker spoke about unity — unity of all things. "Our religion," he said, "starts with unity — One God. We should be at one with our God, united in our efforts to please God. Also in prayers we have unity. We prayed today as one great unit of an army, all in straight lines, all in unison. But my dear men, unite in your ideas. Let no man fall out of line regarding his religion. Also never try and be more clever than others. Remember all Muslims must be united and the day when all Muslims unite, that will be the day, because then you and all Muslims will be free men. Islam's presence is like a belt around the world. It stretches far and wide."

And so the preacher went on, giving many truths about what one should do in the name of Islam. He asked them to study the map and then they would understand what he meant about Islam being like a belt around the world.

Umar's father walked out with 'Abdullah, who quietly said, "My friend, all is not well. Umar Mukhtar's health is not at all good and I hear he is still being hunted and is fighting whenever he has the chance."

Umar's father looked sad and took Umar home. Umar felt very unhappy. He had his Qur'an lesson and was sitting at the table when a knock came at the door and in rushed 'Abdullah. "They've shot him. They've caught him... He might be dead," he was muttering.

"'Abdullah! What are you saying? Who is shot? Who might be dead?"

"Umar Mukhtar," 'Abdullah said, as he stumbled into a chair.

"Where? When?" asked Umar's father.

"I hear," said 'Abdullah, "that whilst in Berola he and his horse were shot. But no one knows where he is now. But we know he is not dead. Many of us and all political prisoners are ordered to go to the square in Souluk. We are not sure why, but we can guess. It is

said that as Umar Mukhtar came out from his Friday prayers, and was about to mount his horse he was shot and as he was going to be killed he said, 'I am Umar Mukhtar.' Thereupon the Italians stopped and took him away and placed him in a secret place. The talk is that tomorrow he will die."

That day in all the houses there was great sadness. The next day Umar saw his father and begged of him to take him with him.

His father said, "No. I cannot take you to such a place." Umar said, "I know what is going to happen. So, please, let me go. If you do not, I shall feel bad about this all my life. Tomorrow I shall be eleven years of age, and we have suffered so much in our little lives that young boys of my age feel like old men in these times. Souluk is only fifty kilometres to the west of Benghazi. I must go, please! I want never to forget that day."

"Son," said the father, "you shall go. You speak like a grown up man. You are very brave."

And so the next day, 16 September, Umar, his father and his friend, 'Abdullah, started out for Souluk. They arrived at the stated place. Lo and behold! A tall gallows had been erected; all were horrified. All the political prisoners had been ordered and taken to this spot. They were all standing around looking dazed.

Umar Mukhtar was brought to the gallows with enough chains on him for ten men. His wounds were not healed. He looked calm but ill. A murmur went through the crowd but the guns were looking at them. In case they made one move they would be shot.

And so a great man passed from this earth. They had hanged a man 75 to 80 years of age. He became one of the world's great martyrs.

Umar wept. His father said, "Umar! I wanted you to stay at home but now you are here, you must be a man and in your sorrow, remember how much sorrow our Prophet Muhammad had. Through suffering we should all become better men. Our God will deliver us from oppression but we must help ourselves as well."

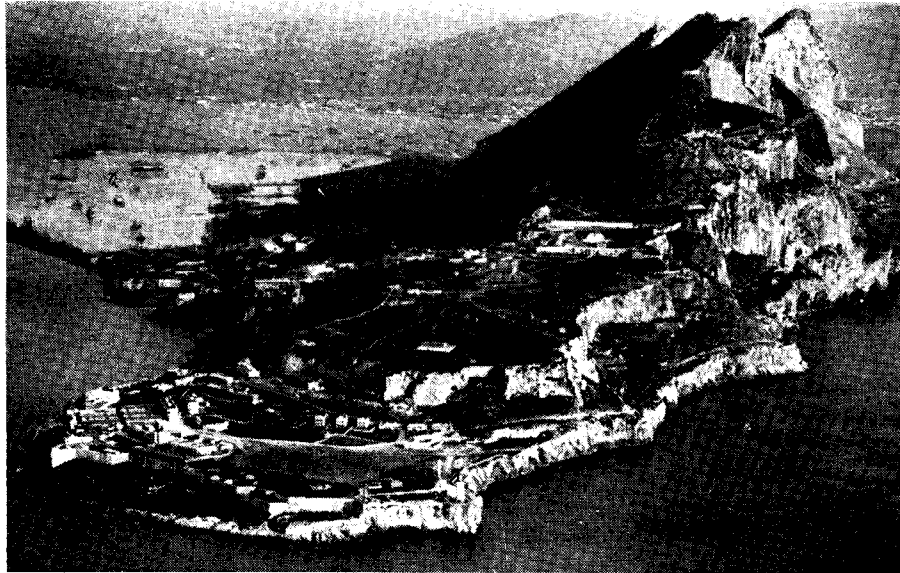
Umar and his father went towards their home. But first they visited a friend who was ill. This friend said, "I have heard that after Umar Mukhtar was taken a prisoner at a place called Berola he was taken at once by a warship on a sea voyage to Benghazi, and there he was placed in a garage. Graziani had offered freedom to Umar Mukhtar if he would forsake his people. He refused."

Just then another friend said that news had come that a pardon for Umar Mukhtar had arrived, but too late. Graziani had made it purposely too late. (This Graziani died in disgrace a few years later in his own country—a man tried by his own people for his crimes and disgraced. He died in prison.)

Umar grew up to see his country wealthy in freedom, education and oil, with Islam to guide them. He became a statesman and to this day he thinks of this sad affair. But he also thinks how lucky they are

today to have their freedom. Our little Umar, as I have said, is grown up now. He also helps his country.

Sometimes Umar will say, "Look at the difference. The man who had Umar Mukhtar killed dies in shame. Whereas Umar Mukhtar died in glory and his name lives on for ever. And a grand mausoleum stands in Benghazi to keep the memory of this great man for ever fresh."



Gibraltar
Gibraltar is derived from the Arabic "Jabal Tariq", meaning the Rock of Tariq. Tariq is the Muslim General who conquered Spain.

Daddy talks about Muslim Spain

Sádiq was twelve years old. He had lived in England since he was ten and a half years old. His father had brought him from Pakistan and had sent him to school in England.

Sádiq had told his teacher that he was a Muslim (not a Muhammadan). Thereupon she had said, "I suppose your parents would object to your hearing about Jesus in our scripture lessons."

Sádiq went home and told his father what the teacher had said. Sádiq's father was a well educated man. He knew that to understand one's religion and tell others about it, one must also know about other religions. And so Sádiq took a message back to his teacher which said that his father did not mind his son hearing about Jesus because Jesus and Abraham and all the prophets in the Bible were his prophets in Islam too. But, of course, the father had added that Sádiq could not pray to Jesus or say "Through Jesus Christ, our Lord" at the end of a prayer, because in Islam there is only One God and the Muslims prayed to or through no one but direct to God.

"I am not narrow-minded," the father had said. "I know it is good for my boy to know all religions. Nor am I afraid that he will forget his Islam, because we practise our faith in our home and my little boy sees his parents praying and talking about their religion. Also, we make it a point to follow the sayings of our Prophet in all our dealings and our little boy will learn to appreciate Islam in this way. Because I do not say that my son must not listen to other religions does not make me feel my duty is ended. Our family gives him a living example of our faith in our daily life."

The little boy's teacher was greatly impressed. "I wish all Muslims were like that," she said.

The father, on hearing about her remarks replied, "All real Muslims are like that and tell your teacher that she should read what our Prophet has said about tolerance and knowledge."

Sádiq got on very well at school. He came home one day from school and said, "Daddy, our school is going to Spain. Can I go too?" His father thought for a while and then said, "What part of Spain, my Son?"

"I think the South of Spain," answered Sádiq.

The father looked at his son and said, "Don't you think of anything when you hear the South of Spain mentioned?"

"No," answered the boy. "I think of nothing except the nice sun and at school I have seen fine buildings and fine gardens in a book."

"Did not your teacher tell you who built those fine buildings?" asked the father.

"No," answered the boy.

"That settles it. My Son, you must go to Spain and see what we Muslims have done in the past. Sit down, my boy, and hear about Southern Spain and our glorious past.

"Southern Spain," said the father, "was conquered by the Arabs and the Berbers, who both came from North Africa—the part which today is called Morocco. Spain would have resisted the Arabs much longer than she did, had it not been for the fact that inside Spain the people were oppressed and unhappy because their king was behaving in a very bad manner.

"It is said that an important man called Count Julian, who was the Governor of Ceuta, was fed up

with the bad ways of his king and some of his countrymen. So he planned to ask for help from the Arabs and Berbers and, as you can guess, the slaves in Spain certainly would not have fought hard for their masters, because their Spanish masters had never treated them kindly. The slaves thought, 'We have nothing to lose even if the Arabs did come to Spain.' The rich governors, indulging themselves in too much wine and luxury, would not care to fight unless they were forced to. Now this Count Julian, who was very angry and disgusted with the king whose name was King Roderick, decided to call the Arabs and Berbers for help.

"Although Count Julian before had been against these Muslims, he set out to hold a conference with them. He visited Músá Ibn Nusayr, the Arab Governor of North Africa, who was the man who had attracted the Berbers to Islam. Julian told Músá how wonderful Spain was and offered Músá the use of his ships and offered to show him the way to conquer Spain. Músá was both surprised and suspicious. So he sent a message to the Caliph at Damascus, Syria, asking him for advice and instructions. In reply, the Caliph warned Músá to be very careful. Accordingly, a small army of only 500 men went in Julian's four ships to the coast of Andalusia, which was in the South of Spain. Their general was named Tarif. This happened in the year 710 C.E. Tarif was very successful and to this day the port which Tarif conquered is called Tarifah.

"This satisfied the invaders that Julian meant what he had said when he had offered to help them. But Músá was still careful, as was the Caliph in Damascus. He gave orders that the Muslim army must not be sacrificed.

"In the year 711 C.E. King Roderick had to go and put down a revolt amongst some of his people in the north of Spain, who were very dissatisfied and had started to fight. Now here was Músá's chance and he dispatched a general called Táriq off to Spain. Such great success did Táriq have that he was very pleased with himself. He landed at the Rock of the Lion, which now bears Táriq's name and so it is called Jabal Táriq, or, as we say it today, Gibraltar, meaning the Rock of Táriq (in the Arabic language). Táriq then captured a place called Carteya. King Roderick heard all about this and was amazed. He rushed back with his army, which was a very large one, but most of his men were fed up and having heard of Táriq's success, they meant to go over to his side, because they knew that Táriq would be good to them and not treat them as their king did. And also in Roderick's army were many ill-treated slaves, and many others who thought that by helping the Arabs, they would be free from Roderick's domination and that when they were free they would be able to drive out the Moors. You know that the word 'Moor' should only be used for the Berbers of North Africa and Spain, but generally we

use it for Arabs and all Muslims who were in Spain, including the Berbers, and that is how I use this word throughout this talk.

"To come back to the army of Roderick. It was six times larger than that of the Moors, and Táriq, not knowing that any of the enemy were going to come over to his side, felt a little disheartened and cried out to his men, 'My men, before you is the enemy and the sea is at your back; there is no escape for you save in valour and resolution.' But they shouted back, 'We will follow thee, O Táriq.' The Moors then rushed forward and fought; even then the battle lasted one whole week. King Roderick kept on shouting to his army for support but in the end he gave in. Little did he know that the Muslims would rule southern Spain, which, as I have said, was called Andalusia, and which is two-thirds of the Spanish peninsula, for eight hundred years.

"The Moors worked wonders with a place called Cordova. It became the marvel of the Middle Ages at a time when Europe was steeped in nothing but ignorance and superstition. Historians also admit that civilisation and learning were at their best in Andalusia when under the Moors. Andalusia had had many rulers but never were there any that ruled as well as the Moors. Historians say that the Spaniards were far happier than they had been for years. For instance, their last conquerors (the Gothic rulers) had persecuted the Spaniards, hoping to make them join their faith. It is openly admitted that no one was ever compelled to join Islam and that, amongst many other things, was why they preferred the rule of the Moors. They never had any religious riots and it is said that Músá, the Governor, married the widow of Roderick. I am sure that she must have become a Muslim. The slaves were now being treated much better but no Christian was compelled to free his slave. No Muslim owned a slave to use him just as a slave; by this I mean that a slave was no longer a parcel belonging to a master. The Muslims would give land to these slaves, let them work on it and ask for a share of the returns of the produce. If a slave became a Muslim, the law was that once he had said, 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger', the slave must be freed.

"There were many ups and downs in the eight hundred years of the Muslim rule. At the beginning of this rule many Moors came across into Spain to compete in learning and in the arts. By the years 912 to 961 C.E. Moorish Spain had reached the height of her glory and fame. The capital of Cordova was a great centre of learning and was known everywhere. It had more than 100,000 houses and its seventy libraries were filled with very valuable books. There were also nine hundred public baths built and made to look very attractive. Here and there were mosques and palaces of Moorish design with their courtyards. They also had bookshops where the best of books were sold.

“Southern Spain became the greatest of countries for trade, art and learning. Students flocked to it; businesses flourished. Looms sprang up for weaving wool. The silkworm was brought from the East and established there and from the cocoons of the silkworm silk was woven into material. Glasswork, leatherwork and stationery were made and designed in Cordova. The University of Cordova in the Great Mosque was the best in the world. It had Christian and Muslim students from all over the world. In fact, the Moors had made this place and age a golden dream come true, never to be forgotten.

“For many years the Moors flourished and were happy through the results of their toil. But, alas, as usual when people get mighty, they forget the main points of brotherhood and a few years later some of the Moors would turn against other Moors and conflict would arise. The enemy saw their chance and grabbed at it. They thought that this wonderful reign had gone on for so long and for so many years that if they got rid of the Moors, it would still remain the same and that, having had eight hundred years of Moorish rule and education, they would be able to carry on in the same way on their own.

“The Spanish from the North fought the Moors and managed to drive them out and so, once more, Cordova was in their hands. They set to work to crush Islam and its followers, of whom many were put to death. For a while the Christian rule seemed all right because of the Muslim foundations of learning, etc., but then deterioration set in. The looms almost ceased to work; the baths were not used; the arts and crafts of leather-and glass-work suffered badly because there were no Moors there to look after these crafts. It was not the great city it had been. The students no longer flocked to Cordova; it was no longer the centre of learning. Only aged Moors were left in Cordova and perhaps some widows and children. This was a black period for all and the Moors suffered terribly at the hands of the fanatics.

“City after city fell. The small Muslim state of Granada survived until 1491 C.E., and then it surrendered. Islam and its culture was left behind in the buildings and books, and many of these buildings can be seen today. The Spanish had a king called Ferdinand to speed them onwards. He hated the Moors and Islam. Already 200,000 Moors had been killed but he meant to wipe every single one out. This he himself did not quite succeed in doing; for altogether there were 500,000 Muslims left. Seventy-five years afterwards the Spanish made up their minds to finish the Moors off. They sent the Moors out under escort of the army in the direction of Africa; many died on the way but some of them did reach it. There were still a few left, but since these Moors would not become Christians, many were tortured and put to death. Decay was fast setting into the land of Spain; the Spanish had killed the people who had made them great.

“The people of Spain had become their own hangman. Spain sank into a period of darkness. She busied herself with the inquisition of the Muslims and anyone who was not a Catholic. Everyone who refused to become a Catholic was put to death and so died the greatness of Moorish Spain through this Spanish narrow-mindedness. As I said before, many of the fine buildings remain to this day and now they prove a source of income to Spain through tourists wishing to see these wonderful buildings of Moorish architecture and their gardens, all designed and made by Muslims.

“Here are a few of these fine places to see, my Son, when you visit Spain. First, I would like to mention the Mosque at Cordova, which even today is the largest covered Mosque in the world; it has 999 pillars in Moorish style.

“The Alhambra is a wonderful palace in Granada. Here you must be sure to see the courtyard, with its stone lions and fountains. Water is seen to be coming out from the mouth of every lion.

“There is also a glorious garden in Granada, well planned with plants and wonderful flowers. It is called the Generalife Gardens.

“In Seville there are many buildings built by the Moors. In many cases Mosques have been turned into churches. In fact, you can see Muslim architecture in Toledo and other places all over the south.

“I for one feel that if the Moors had strictly followed the Prophet’s teaching, they would not have lost Spain. Petty jealousies and vanity can ruin any nation, even though the rot may only be in the top ranks. But such a weakness is like a maggot; it eats everything away. But, I am sure, you must have noticed how the Muslims had no Inquisition to torture the Christians.”

“Oh,” said Sádiq, “I shall be proud to be able to go to Spain.”

“Now, don’t forget your homework,” said his father and off Sádiq went, a very happy boy.

From this true story, dear Children, you can learn the lesson always to think of the Prophet’s teachings and be united and then you cannot go wrong. I do want you to be proud of the great Muslim glories which we still have in Spain.

We have a great past, dear Children. Shall we try to make a glorious future? You can, if you are honest and true in everything.

Good-night, dear Children, and may God bless you!

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ

