

# SUMMARY TO THE TRANSLATION OF THE GLORIOUS QURAN

## 1. EMPIRES AROUND ARABIA AT THE TIME OF THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

### Byzantine and Persian Empires at the time of the Prophet (PBUH)



### First Contact of Islam with World Movements

#### The contemporary Roman (Byzantine) and Persian Empire

1. The conflict between the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius and the Persian King Khasrau Parwiz (Chosroes II) is referred to in Surah 30. (Al Rum). It will therefore be convenient now to review very briefly the relations of those two great Empires and the way in which they gradually decayed before the rising sun of Islam. The story has not only a political significance, but a deep spiritual significance in world history.
2. If we take the Byzantine Empire as a continuation of the Empire that grew out of the Roman Republic, the first conflict took place in B.C. 53, when the Consul Crassus (famous for his riches) was defeated in his fight with the Parthians. If we go back further, to the time of the Greek City-States, we can refer back to the invasion of Greece by Xerxes in B.C. 480-479 and the effective repulse of that invasion by sea and land by the united cooperation of the Greek States. The Persian Empire in those days extended to the western (Mediterranean) coast of Asia Minor. But as it included the Greek cities of Asia Minor, there was constant intercourse in war and peace between Persia and Hellenic (Greek) world. The cities in Greece proper had

their own rivalries and jealousies, and Greek cities or parties often invoked the aid of the Great King (Shahinshah of Persia) against their opponents. By the Peace of Antalcidas, B.C. 387, Persia became practically the suzerain power of Greece. This was under the Achaemenian Dynasty of Persia

3. Then came the rise of Macedonia and Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire (B.C. 330). This spread the Hellenic influence as far east as Central Asia, and as far south as Syria (including Palestine), Egypt, and Northern Africa generally. Rome in its expansion westwards reached the Atlantic, and in its expansion eastwards absorbed the territories of Alexander's successors, and became the mistress of all countries with a Mediterranean seacoast. The nations of the Roman Empire "insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people" (Gibbon, chap ii).
4. Meanwhile there were native forces in Persia which asserted themselves and established (A.C. 10) the Dynasty of the Arsacids (Ashkanian). This was mainly the outcome of a revolt against Hellenism, and its spear point was in Parthia. The Arsacids won back Persia proper, and established the western boundary of Persia in a line drawn roughly from the eastern end of the Black Sea southwards to the Euphrates at point northeast of Palmyra. This would include the region of the Caucasus (excluding the Black Sea coast) and Armenia and Lower Mesopotamia, in the Persian Empire. This was the normal boundary between Persia and the Roman Empire until the Islamic Empire wiped out the old Monarchy of Persia and a great part of the Byzantine Empire, and annexed Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and gradually Asia Minor, finally extinguishing the whole of the Byzantine Empire
5. Another stage in Persian history was reached when the Arsacids were overthrown and the Sasanians came into power under Ardashir 1, A.C. 225. The Sasanian Empire was, in a sense, a continuation of the Achaemenian Empire, and was reaction against the corruptions of the Zoroastrian religion which had crept in under the Parthian Dynasty of the Arsacids. But the religious reforms were only partial. There were some interaction between Christianity and the Zoroastrian religion. For example, the great mystic Mani, who was painter as well as religious leader, founded the sect of Manichaeism. He flourished in the reign of Shapur 1 (A.C. 241-272) and seems to have preached a form of Gnostic faith, in which Alexandrian philosophy was mixed with Christian doctrine and the old Persian belief in the dual principle of Good and Evil. The Sasanians failed to purify religion and only adhered to fireworship in arrogance, luxury, sensuality, and monopoly of power and privilege, which is the office of Religion to denounce and root out. That office was performed by Islam.
6. When the seat of the Roman Empire was transferred to Constantinople (Byzantium) in the time of Constantine (A.C. 350), the conflict between Rome and Persia became more and more frequent. The true Peninsula of Arabia was never conquered either by Rome or by Persia, although its outlying parts were absorbed in either the one or the other at various times. It is interesting to notice that the Roman Emperor Philip (A.C. 244-249) was a born Arab and that the architecture of the Nabataeans in the city of Petra and in Hijr shows a mixture of Roman, Greek, Egyptian, and indigenous Arab cultures.
7. Arabia received the cultural influences of Persia and the Byzantine Empire, but was a silent spectator of their conflicts until Islam was brought into the main currents of world politics.

8. The Yemen coast of Arabia, which was easily accessible by sea to Persia, was the battleground between the Persian Empire and the Abyssinian Empire just across the Red Sea. Abyssinia and Arabia had had cultural and political relations for many centuries. Amharic, the ruling language of Abyssinia, is closely allied with Arabic, and the Amharic people went as colonists and conquerors from Arabia through Yemen. Shortly before the birth of the Holy Prophet, Abyssinia had been in occupation of Yemen for some time, having displaced a Jewish dynasty. The Abyssinians professed the Christian religion, and although their Church was doctrinally separate from the Byzantine Church, there was a great deal of sympathy between the Byzantines and the Abyssinians on account of their common Christian religion. One of the Abyssinian viceroys in Yemen was Abrahah, who conceived the design of destroying the Temple at Makkah. He led an expedition, in which elephants formed a conspicuous feature, to invade Makkah and destroy the Ka'bah. He met a disastrous repulse, which is referred to in the Quran (Surah 105). This event was in the year of the Prophet's birth, and marks the beginning of the great conflict which enabled Arabia eventually to obtain a leading place among the nations of the world. The year usually given for the Prophet's birth is 570 A.C., though the date must be taken as only approximate, being the middle figure between 569 and 571. The extreme possible limits. The Abyssinians having been overthrown, the Persians were established in Yemen, and their power lasted there until about the 7th year of the Hijrah (approximately 628 A.C.), when Yemen accepted Islam.
9. The outstanding event in Byzantine history in the 6th century was the reign of Justinian (527-565) and in Persian history the reign of Anawshirwan (531-579). Justinian is well-known for his great victories in Africa and for the great Digest he made of Roman Law and Jurisprudence. In spite of the scandalous life of his queen Theodora, he occupies an honourable place in the history of the Roman Empire. Anawshirwan is known in Persian history as the "Just King". They were contemporary rulers for a period of 34 years. In their time the Roman and Persian Empires were in close contact during peace and war. Anawshirwan just missed being adopted by the Roman Empire. If the adoption had come off, he would have become one of the claimants to the Byzantine throne. He invaded Syria and destroyed the important Christian city of Antioch in 540-541. It was only the able defence of Belisarius, the Roman general, which saved the Roman Empire from further disasters in the east. On the other hand the Turanian Avars, driven in front of the Turks, had begun the invasion of Constantinople from the western side. Justinian made an alliance with the Abyssinians as a Christian nation, and the Abyssinians and the Persians came to conflict in Yemen. Thus world conditions were hemming in Arabia on all sides. It was Islam that not only saved Arabia but enabled it to expand and to play a prominent part in world history after the annihilation of the Persian Empire and the partial destruction of the Byzantine Empire.
10. The sixth century of the Christian era and the first half of the seventh century were indeed a marvelous period in the world's history. Great events and transformations were taking place throughout the then known world. We have referred in the Roman Empire and the Persian Empire which dominated the civilized portions of Europe, Africa and Western Asia. The only two other countries of note in history in those days were India and China. In India there was the glorious period of Harsha Vardhana (606-647 A.C.), in which art, science, and literature flourished, political power was on a healthy basis, and religious enquiry was bringing India and China into closer relationship. The famous Chinese Buddhist traveler Yuang Chwang (or Yuang Tsang or Hsuan-Tsang) performed his pious pilgrimage to India in 629-45. In China, the glorious The'ang Dynasty was established in 618. The Chinese art of that Dynasty led the

world. In political power, China extended from the Pacific in the east to Persian Gulf on the west. There was unity and peace, and China-hitherto more or less isolated-received ambassadors from Persia, Constantinople, Magadha, and Nepal, in 643. But all this pomp and glitter had in it the seeds of decay. Persia and Byzantine collapsed in the next generation. India was in chaos after Harsha's death. The Chinese Empire could not long remain free from the "Barbarians": the Great Wall, begun in the third century B.C., was soon to be out of date. By about 683 the Khitans from the northwest and the Tibetans from the south were molesting China. The Germans, the Goths and the Vandals were pressing further and further into Roman Empire. From Asia, the Avars and the Turks were pressing both on the Romans and the Persians, and sometimes playing off the one against the other. The simpler and less sophisticated nations, with their ruder but more genuine virtues, were gaining ground. Into all that welter came the Message of Islam, to show up, as by galvanic action, the false from the truth, the empty from the eternal, the decrepit and corrupt from the vigorous and pure. The ground of History was being prepared for the New Birth in Religion.

11. Anawshirwan was succeeded on the Persian throne by an unworthy son Hurmuz (579-590). Had it not been for the talents of his able General Bahram, his Empire would have been ruined by the invasions of the Turks on one side and the Romans on the other. Eventually Bahram rebelled, and Hurmuz was deposed and killed. His son Khusraw Parwiz (Chosroes II) took refuge with the Byzantine Emperor Maurice, who practically adopted him as a son and restored him to the Persian throne with Roman arms. Khusraw reigned over Persia from 590 to 628. It was to him that the Holy Prophet addressed one of his letters, inviting him to Islam towards the end of his life. It is not certain whether the letter was actually delivered to him or to his successor, as it is not easy to calculate precisely synchronous dates of the Christian era with those of the earliest years of the Hijrah era.
12. In Arabic and Persian records the term Kisra refers usually to Khusraw Parwiz (Chosroes II) and sometimes to Khusraw Anawshirwan (Chosroes I), while the term Khusraw is usually treated as generic - as the title of the Kings of Persia generally. But this is by no means always the case. "Kisra" is an Arabic form of "Khusraw". The name of Anawshirwan has been shortened from the time of Firdawsi onwards to Nushirwan. The Pehlevi form is Anoshekeruwan, "of immortal soul".
13. The Byzantine Emperor Maurice (582-602) had a mutiny in his army, and his capital revolted against him. The army chose a simple centurion called Phocas as Emperor and executed Maurice himself. The usurper Phocas ruled from 602 to 610, but his tyranny soon disgusted the Empire, Heraclius, the governor (exarch) of a distant province in Africa, raised the standard of rebellion, and his young son, also called Heraclius, was sent to Constantinople to depose Phocas and assume the reins of power. It was the younger Heraclius, who ascended the throne of Constantinople in 610 and ruled till 642, who figures in Muslim history as Hiraql.
14. Khusraw Parwiz called himself the son of the Emperor Maurice. During his refuge at Constantinople he had married a Byzantine wife. In Nizami's Romance she is known as Maryam. According to some historians she was a daughter of the Emperor Maurice, but Gibbon throws doubts on that relationship. In any case, he used the resources of the Persian Empire to fight the usurper Phocas. He invaded the Byzantine Empire in 603. The war

between the Persians and the Romans became a national war and continued after the fall of Phocas in 610. The Persians had sweeping victories, and conquered Aleppo, Antioch, and the chief Syrian cities, including Damascus in 611. Jerusalem fell to their arms in 614-615, just 8 to years before the sacred Hijrah. The city was burnt and pillaged, the Christians were massacred, the churches were burnt, the burial place of Christ was itself insulted, and many relics, including the "true Cross" on which the Christians believed that Christ had been crucified, were carried away to Persia. The priests of the Persian religion celebrated an exultant triumph over the priests of Christ. In this pillage and massacre the Persians were assisted by crowds of Pagan Arabs to whom any opportunity of plunder and destruction was in itself welcome. It is probably this striking event-this victory of the Persians over the Byzantine Empire-which is referred to in Surah 30 (Al Rum) of the Quran. The Pagan Arabs naturally sided with the Persians in their destructive zeal, and thought that the destruction of the Christian power of Byzantium would also mean a setback to the Message of the Prophet, the true successor of Jesus. For our Holy Prophet had already begun his mission and the promulgation of Allah's Revelation in A.C. 610. while the whole world believed that the Roman Empire was being killed by Persia, it was revealed to him that the Persian victory was short-lived and that within a period of a few years the Romans (Byzantium) would conquer again and deal deadly blow to the Persians. The Pagan Arabs, who were then persecuting the Holy Prophet in Makkah, hoped that their persecution would destroy the Holy Prophet's new Revelation. In fact both their persecution and the deadly blows aimed by the Persians and the Romans (Byzantine) at each other were instruments in Allah's hands for producing those conditions which made Islam thrive and increase until it became the predominant power in the world.

15. The Persian flood of conquest did not stop with the conquest of Jerusalem. It went on to Egypt, which was also conquered and annexed to the Persian Empire in 616. The Persian occupation reached as far as Tripoli in North Africa. At the same time another Persian Army ravaged Asia Minor and reached right up to the gates of Constantinople. Not only the Jews and Pagan Arabs, but the various Christian sects which had been persecuted as heretics by the Romans, joined in the fray and helped the Persians. The condition of Heraclius became indeed pitiable. With all these calamities, he had to deal with the Avars who were attacking from the other side of Constantinople, which was practically in state of siege. Famine and pestilence added to the horrors of the situation.
16. In these desperate circumstances Heraclius conceived a brilliant plan. He knew that the Persians were weak in sea power. He used his sea-power to attack them in the rear in 622 (the year of Hijrah). He transported his army by sea through the Aegean Sea to the bay just south of the Taurus Mountains. He fought a decisive battle with the Persians at Issus, in the same plain in which Alexander the Great had defeated the Persians of his day in his famous march to Syria and Egypt. The Persians were taken by surprise and routed. But they had still a large forces in Asia Minor, which they could have brought into play against the Romans if Heraclius had not made another and equally unexpected dash by sea from the north. He returned to Constantinople by sea, made a treaty with the Avars, and with their help kept the Persians at bay around the capital. Then he led three campaigns, in 623, 624, and 625, along the southern shore of the Black Sea and took the Persians again in the rear in the region round Trebizond and Kars. Through Armenia, he penetrated into Persia and got into Mesopotamia. He was now in a position to strike at the very heart of the Persian Empire. A decisive battle was fought on the Tigris near the city of Mosul in December 627. before this

battle, however, he had taken care to get the alliance of the Turks and with their help to relieve Constantinople in 626 against the Persians and the treacherous Avars who had then joined the Persians.

17. Heraclius celebrated the triumph in Constantinople in March 628. Peace was then made between the two Empires on the basis of the status quo ante. Heraclius, in pursuance of a vow he had made, went south in the autumn to Emessa (Himis) and from there marched on foot to Jerusalem to celebrate his victories, and to restore to its place the Holy Cross which had been carried away by the Persians and was returned to the Emperor as a condition of peace. Heraclius's route was strewn with costly carpets, and he thought that the final deliverance had come for his people and his empire. Either on the way, or in Jerusalem, he met a messenger from the Holy Prophet carrying a letter inviting him to the True Faith as renewed in the living Messenger of the age. He apparently received the message with courtesy. But he did not realize the full import of the new World which was being shaped according to Allah's plans, and the future that was opening through the new Revelation. Perhaps in his heart he felt impressed by the story which he had heard from the Arabs about the Holy Prophet, but the apparent grandeur of his empire and the pride of his people prevented him from openly accepting the renewed Message of Allah. He caused a search to be made for any Arab who was sufficiently acquainted with the Prophet to tell him something about him. Abu Sufyan was then trading in a caravan in Syria. He was a cousin of the Prophet, and belonged to the Umayyah branch of the family. He was sent for to Jerusalem (Aelia Capitolina).
18. When Abu Sufyan was called to presence of Heraclius, the Emperor questioned him closely about this new Prophet. Abu Sufyan himself was at that time outside Islam and really an enemy of the Prophet and his Message. Yet the story he told - of the truth and sincerity of the Holy Prophet, of the way in which the poor and lowly flocked to him, of the wonderful increase of his power and spiritual influence, and the way in which people who had once received the Light never got disillusioned or went back to their life of ignorance, and above all the integrity with which he kept all his covenants - made a favourable impression on the mind of Heraclius. That story is told in dramatic detail by Bukhari and other Arabian writers.
19. The relations of the Persians Monarch with Islam were different. He -either Khusraw Parwiz or his successor received the Holy Prophet's messenger with contumely and tore up his letter. "So will his kingdom be torn up." Said the Holy Prophet when the news reached him. The Persian Monarch ordered the Governor in Yemen to go and arrest the man who had so far forgotten himself as to address the grandson of Anawshirwan on equal terms. When the Persian Governor tried to carry out his Monarch's command, the result was quite different from what the great Persian King of Kings had expected. His agent accepted the truth of Islam, and Yemen was lost as a province to the Persian Empire and became a portion of the new Muslim State. Khusraw Parwiz died in February 628. He had been deposed and imprisoned by his own cruel and undutiful son, who reigned only for a year and a half. There were nine candidates for the Persian throne in the remaining four years. Anarchy reigned supreme in the Sasanian Empire, until the dynasty was extinguished by the Muslim victory at the battle of Mada'in in 637. The great and glorious Persian monarchy, full of pride and ambition, came to an ignominious end, and a new chapter opened for Persia under the banner of Islam.

20. The Byzantine Empire itself began to shrink gradually, losing its territory, not to Persia, but to the new Muslim Power which absorbed both the ancient Empires. This Power arose in its vigour to proclaim a new and purified creed to the whole world. Already in the last seven years of Heraclius's reign (635-642) several of the provinces nearest to Arabia had been annexed to the Muslim Empire. The Muslim Empire continued to spread on, in Asia Minor to the north and Egypt to the south. The Eastern Roman Empire became a mere shadow with a small bit of territory round its capital. Constantinople eventually surrendered to Muslims in 1453.
21. That was the real end of the Roman-Byzantine Empire. But in the wonderful century in which the Prophet lived, another momentous Revolution was taking place. The Roman Pontificate of Gregory the Great (590-604) was creating a new Christianity as the old Christianity of the East was slowly dying out. The Patriarch of Constantinople had claimed to be the Universal Bishop, with jurisdiction over all the other bishops of Christendom. This had been silently but gradually questioned by the Popes of Rome. They had been building up a liturgy, a church organization and a body of discipline for the clergy, different from those of the Holy Orthodox Church. They had been extending their spiritual authority in the Barbarian provinces of Gaul and Spain. They had been amassing estates and endowments. They had been accumulating secular authority in their own hands. Pope Gregory the Great converted the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Great Britain to his form of Christianity. He protected Italy from the ravages of the Franks and Lombards and raised the See of Rome to the position of a Power which exercised ample jurisdiction over the Western world. He was preparing the way for the time when one of his successors would crown under his authority the Frankish Charlemagne as Emperor of Rome and of the West (A.C. 800), and another of his successors would finally break away from the Orthodox Church of Constantinople in 1054 by the Pope's excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Greeks.

#### **References:**

Among Western writers, the chief authority is Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: mainly chapters 40-42, and 45-46; I have given references to other chapters in the body of this Appendix: his delineation of the characters of Heraclius and Chosroes II is brief but masterly.

L. Drapeyron's French monograph, *L'Empereur Heraclius* (Paris, 1869) throws further light on an interesting personality.

A.J. Butler's *Arab Conquest of Egypt* (Oxford, 1902) gives a good account of Heraclius.

The famous French dramatist Corneille has left a play of Heraclius, but it turns more on an intricate and imaginary plot in the early life of Heraclius than on the character of Heraclius as Emperor.

Nizami, in his *Khusraw-o-Shirin* (571 H, 1175-66 A.D.) makes reference at the end of his Romance to the Holy Prophet's letter to the Persian King, and does attempt in the course of the Romance a picture of the King's character. He is a sort of wild Prince Hal before he comes to the throne. Shirin is an Armenian princess in love with Khusraw; she marries Khusraw after the death of his first wife Maryam, daughter of the Roman Emperor, and mother of an undutiful son who killed Khusraw and seized his throne.

Among the other Eastern writers, we find a detailed description of the interview of Abu Sufyan in Bukhari's Sahih (book on the beginning of Inspiration): the notes in the excellent English translation of Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss) are helpful.

Tabari's History is as usual valuable.

Mirkhond's (Khawind-Shah) Rawdah al Safa (translated by Rehatsek) will give English readers a summary (at second hand) of the various Arabic authorities.

Mawlana Shibli's otherwise excellent Sirah al Nabi is in this respect disappointing.

Mawlana Zafar Ali's Ghalaba-i-Rum (Urdu, Lahore, 1926) is interesting for its comments.

A note on the Persian capitals may be interesting. So long as Persia was under the influence of the Semitic Elamites, the chief residence of the rulers was at Susa, near the modern Dizful, about 50 miles northeast of Shustar. In the Median or Median period (say B.C. 700 to 550) the capital was, as we should expect, in the highlands of Media, in Ecbatana, the site of the modern city of Hamadan, 180 miles west of modern Tihiran. Ecbatana remained even in Sasanian times the summer capital of Persia. With the Achaemenians (B.C. 550-330) we come to a period of full national and imperial life. Susa was the chief Achaemenian capital from the time of Darius I onwards, through Persepolis (Istakhr) in the mountain region near modern Shiraz, and about 40 miles northeast of Shiraz, was used as the city of royal burial. Alexander himself, as ruler in Persia, died in Babylon, later when the centre of gravity moved north and northeast, other sites were selected.

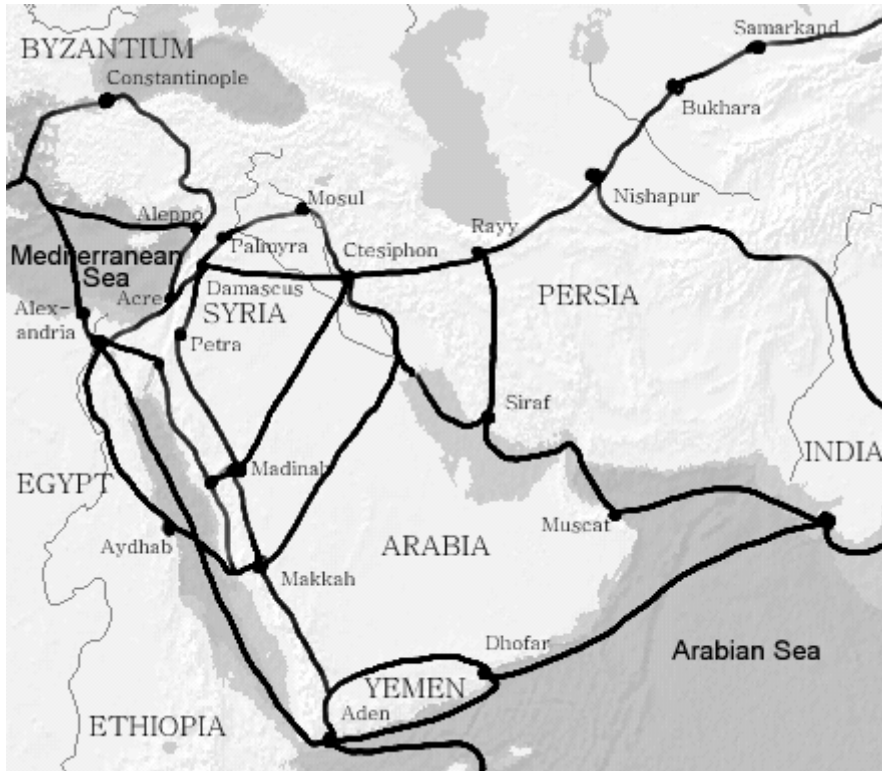
The Arsacids (Ashkanian) or Parthians were a tribal power, fitly called in Arabic the *muluk al Tawaif*, and had probably no fixed or centralized capital. The Sassanian took over a site where there were a number of cities, among which were Ctesiphon and Seleucia on opposite banks of the river Tigris. This site is about 45 miles north of the old site of Babylon and 25 miles below the later city of Baghdad. Ctesiphon and Seleucia were Greek cities founded by one of Alexander's successors, Seleucia being named after Seleucus.

This complex of seven cities was afterwards called by the Arabic name of Madain (the Cities). The Takht-i-Kisra (or Arch of Ctesiphon) still stands in a ruinous condition on this site. This seems to have been the chief capital of the Sasanians at the Arab conquest, which may be dated either from the battle of Qadisiyah or that of Mada'in (Both fought in 637 A.D.), after which Persia which then included 'Iraq came into Muslim Empire. The Abbasi Empire built Baghdad for its capital under Mansur in 762 A.D. when that Empire was broken up in 1258 A.D., there was some confusion for two centuries. Then a national Persian Empire, the Safawi (1499- 1736) arose, and Shah Salim established his capital in the northwest corner in Tabriz. Shah Abbas the Great (1587-1628) had his capital at the more central city of Ispahan (or Isfahan). After the Safawi dynasty confusion reigned again for about four decades, when the Afghans were in the ascendant. When the Qajar (or Qajar) dynasty (1795-1925) was firmly established under Agha Muhammad Khan. Tihiran (Tehran) near the Caspian, where his family originated, became the capital, and it still remains the capital under the modern Pehlvi Dynasty



## 2. SITUATION AT MECCA

### 2.1. "QURAIISH" THE TRIBE OF THE PROPHET (PEACE BE UPON HIM)



The tribe of Quraish was scattered throughout Hijaz until the time of Qusayy bin Kilab, the ancestor of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace). First of all, Qusayy gathered it in Makkah and this tribe was able to gain authority over the Ka'bah. On that very basis Qusayy was called *mujammi* (uniter, assembler) by his people. This man by his sagacity and wisdom founded a city state in Makkah and made excellent arrangements for the welfare of the pilgrims coming from all over Arabia, with the result that the Quraish were able to gain great influence among the Arabian tribes and lands.

After Qusayy the offices of the state of Makkah were divided between his sons, Abdi Manaf and Abd ad-Dar, but of the two Abdi Manaf gained greater fame even during his father's lifetime and was held in high esteem throughout Arabia. Abdi Manaf had four sons: Hashim, Abdi Shams, Al-Muttalib, and Naufal.

Of these Hashim, father of Abdul Muttalib and grandfather of the Holy Prophet, first conceived the idea to take part in the trade that passed between the eastern countries and Syria and Egypt through Arabia, and also to purchase the necessities of life for the Arabians so that the tribes living by the trade route bought these from them and the merchants living in the interior of the country were attracted to the market of Makkah. This was the time when the Sasanian kingdom of Iran had captured the international trade that was carried out between the northern lands and the eastern countries and Byzantine empire through the Persian Gulf. This had boosted up the trade activity on the trade route leading from southern Arabia to Syria and Egypt along the Red Sea coast. As against

the other Arabian caravans, the Quraish had the advantage that the tribes on the route held them in high esteem on account of their being keepers of the Ka'bah. They stood indebted to them for the great generosity with which the Quraish treated them in the Hajj season. That is why the Quraish felt no fear that their caravans would be robbed or harmed any where on the way. The tribes on the way did not even charge them the heavy transit taxes that they demanded from the other caravans.

Hashim taking advantage of this prepared the trade scheme and made his three brothers partners in it. Thus, Hashim obtained trade privileges from the Ghassanide king of Syria, Abdi Shams from the Negus, Al-Muttalib from the Yamanite nobles and Naufal from the governments of Iraq and Iran, and their trade began to flourish. That is how the four brothers became famous as traders and began to be called *ashab al-ilaf* (generators of love and affection) on account of their friendly relations with the tribes and states of the surrounding lands.

Because of their business relations with Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Yaman and Abyssinia, the Quraish came across such opportunities and their direct contact with the culture and civilization of different countries so enhanced the level of their knowledge and wisdom that no tribe in Arabia could match and equal them. As regards wealth and worldly goods they became the most affluent tribe, and Makkah became the most important commercial center of the Arabian peninsula. Another great advantage that accrued from these international relations was that they brought from Iraq tile script which later was used for writing down the Quran. No other Arabian tribe could boast of so many literate people as Quraish. For these very reasons the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) said: "Quraish are the leaders of men." (Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyat Amr bin al As*). And according to a tradition from Hadrat Ali in Baihaqi, the Holy Prophet said: "First the leadership of the Arabians was in the hands of the people of Himyar, then Allah withdrew it from them and gave it to Quraish". The Quraish were thus prospering and flourishing when the event of Abrahah's invasion of Makkah took place. Had Abrahah at that time succeeded in taking this holy City and destroying the Ka'bah, the glory and renown of not only the Quraish but of the Ka'bah itself, would have faded away, the belief of the pre-Islamic Arabia that the House indeed was Allah's House would have been shattered, and the high esteem in which Quraish were held for being keepers of the House throughout the country would have been tarnished. Then, after the Abyssinian advance to Makkah, the Byzantium also would have taken the initiative to gain control over the trade route between Syria and Makkah: and the Quraish would have been reduced to a plight worse than that in which they were involved before Qusayy bin Kilab. But when Allah showed this manifestation of His power that the swarms of birds destroyed 60,000 Abyssinian troops brought by Abrahah by pelting them, with stones, and from Makkah to Yaman they went on falling and dying by the wayside, the faith of the Arabs that the Ka'bah indeed was Allah's House increased manifold, and the glory and renown of Quraish too was enhanced considerably throughout the country. Now the Arabs were convinced that they were under Allah's special favor; therefore, they visited every part of Arabia fearlessly and passed through every land with their trade caravans unharmed. No one could dare touch them with an evil intention. Not to speak of touching them, even if they had a non-Quraishite under their protection, he too was allowed to pass unharmed.

## **2.2. CHRISTIAN EXISTENCE**

In retaliation for the persecution of the followers of the Prophet Jesus Christ (peace be on him) in Najran by the Jewish ruler Dhu-Nuwas of Yemen, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yemen and put an end to the Himyarite rule there, and in 525 A. D. this whole land passed under Abyssinian control. This happened, in fact, through collaboration between the Byzantine empire of Constantinople and the Abyssinian kingdom, for the Abyssinians at that time had no naval fleet. The fleet was provided by Byzantium and Abyssinia sent 70,000 of its troops by it across the Red Sea to Yemen. At the outset one should understand that all this did not happen under the religious zeal but there were economic and political factors also working behind it, and probably these were the real motive, and retaliation for the Christian blood was just an excuse. Since the time the Byzantine empire had occupied Egypt and Syria, it had been trying to gain control over the trade going on between East Africa, India, Indonesia, etc., and the Byzantine dominions: from the Arabs, who had been controlling it for centuries, so as to earn maximum profits by eliminating the intermediary Arab merchants. For this purpose, in 24 or 25 B. C., Caesar Augustus sent a large army under the Roman general, Aelius Gallus, which landed on the western coast of Arabia, in order to intercept and occupy the sea route between southern Arabia and Syria). But the campaign failed to achieve its objective on account of the extreme geographical conditions of Arabia. After this, the Byzantines brought their fleet into the Red Sea and put an end to the Arab trade which they carried out by sea, with the result that they were left only with the land route. To capture this very land route they conspired with the Abyssinian Christians and aiding them with their fleet helped them to occupy Yemen.

The Arab historians statements about the Abyssinian army that invaded Yemen are different. Hafiz Ibn Kathir says that it was led by two commanders, Aryat and Abrahah, and according to Muhammad bin Ishaq, its commander was Aryat, and Abrahah was included in it. Then both are agreed that Aryat and Abrahah fell out, Aryat was killed in the encounter, and Abrahah took possession of the country; then somehow he persuaded the Abyssinian king to appoint him his viceroy over Yemen. On the contrary, the Greek and Syrian historians state that when after the conquest of Yemen, the Abyssinians started putting to death the Yamanite chiefs, who had put up resistance, one of the chiefs, named As-Sumayfi Ashwa (whom the Greek historians call Esymphaeus) yielded to the Abyssinians and promising to pay tribute obtained the Abyssinian king's warrant to be governor over Yemen. But the Abyssinian army revolted against him and made Abrahah governor in his place. This man was the slave of a Greek merchant of the Abyssinian seaport of Adolis, who by clever diplomacy had come to wield great influence in the Abyssinian army occupying Yemen. The troops sent by the Negus to punish him either warned him or were defeated by him. Subsequently, after the death of the king, his successor was reconciled to accept him as his vice regent of Yemen. (The Greek historians write him as Abrames and the Syrian historians as Abraham. Abrahah perhaps is an Abyssinian variant of Abraham, for its Arabic version is Ibrahim).

This man through passage of time became an independent ruler of Yemen. He acknowledged the sovereignty of the Negus only in name and described himself as his deputy. The influence he wielded can be judged from the fact that after the restoration of the dam of Marib in 543 A. D. he celebrated the event by holding a grand feast, which was attended by the ambassadors of the Byzantine emperor, king of Iran, king of Hirah, and king of Ghassan. Its full details are given in the inscription that Abrahah installed on the dam. This inscription is extant and Glaser has published it.

After stabilizing his rule in Yemen Abrahah turned his attention to the objective which from the very beginning of this campaign had been before the Byzantine empire and its allies, the Abyssinian Christians, i. e. to spread Christianity in Arabia, on the one hand, and to capture the trade that was carried out through the Arabs between the eastern lands and the Byzantine dominions, on the other.

The need, for this increased because the Byzantine struggle for power against the Sasanian empire of Iran had blocked all the routes of the Byzantine trade with the East. To achieve this objective, Abrahah built in Sana, the capital of Yemen, a magnificent cathedral, called by the Arabian historians al-Qalis, al-Qullais, or al-Qulais, this word being an Arabic version of the Greek word Ekklesia, church. According, to Muhammad bin Ishaq, after having completed the building, he wrote to the Negus, saying: "I shall not rest until I have diverted the Arabs pilgrimage to it." Ibn Kathir writes that he openly declared his intention in Yemen and got it publicly announced. He, in fact, wanted to provoke the Arabs into doing something which should provide him with an excuse to attack Makkah and destroy the Ka'bah. Muhammad bin Ishaq says that an Arab, enraged at this public proclamation somehow went into the cathedral and defiled it. Ibn Kathir says this was done by a Quraishite and according to Muqatil bin Suleman, some young men of the Quraish had set fire to the cathedral. Either might have happened, for Abrahah's proclamation was certainly provocative and in the ancient pre-Islamic age it cannot be impossible that an Arab, or a Quraishite youth, might have been enraged and might have defiled the cathedral, or set fire to it. But it may well also be that Abrahah himself got this done secretly by his own agent so as to have an excuse for invading Makkah and thus achieving both his objectives by destroying the Quraish and intimidating the Arabs. In any case, whatever happened, when the report reached Abrahah that the devotees of the Ka'bah had thus defiled his cathedral, he swore that he would not rest until he had destroyed the Ka'bah. So, in 570 or 571 A. D., he took 60,000 troops and 13 elephants (according to another tradition, 9 elephants) and set off for Makkah. On the way, first a Yamanite chief, Dhu Nafr by name, mustering an army of the Arabs, resisted him but was defeated and taken prisoner. Then in the country of Khath'am he was opposed by Nufail bin Habib al-Khath'am, with his tribe, but he too was defeated and taken prisoner, and in order to save his life he accepted to serve him as guide in the Arab country. When he reached near Ta'if, Bani Thaqif felt that they would not be able to resist such a big force and feeling the danger lest he should destroy the temple of their deity Lat, too; their chief, Mas'ud came out to Abrahah with his men, and he told him that their temple was not the temple he had come to destroy. The temple He sought was in Makkah, and they would send with him a man to guide him there. Abrahah accepted the offer, and Bani Thaqif sent Abu Righal as guide with him.

When they reached al-Mughammas (or al- Mughammis), a place about 3 miles short of Makkah, Abu Righal died, and the Arabs stoned his grave and the practice survives to this day. They cursed the Bani Thaqif too, for in order to save the temple of Lat they had cooperated with the invaders of the House of Allah. According to Muhammad bin Ishaq, from al- Mughammas Abrahah sent forward his vanguard and they brought him the plunder of the people of Tihamah and Quraish, which included two hundred camels of Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace). Then, he sent an envoy of his to Makkah with the message that he had not come to fight the people of Makkah but only to destroy the House (i. e. the Ka'bah). If they offered no resistance, there would be no cause for bloodshed. Abrahah also instructed his envoy that if the people of Makkah wanted to negotiate, he should return with their leading chief to him. The leading chief of Makkah at that time was Abdul Muttalib. The envoy went to him and delivered Abrahah's message. Abdul Muttalib replied:" We have no power to fight Abrahah. This is Allah's House. If He wills He will save His House." The envoy asked him to go with him to Abrahah. He agreed and accompanied him to the king. Now Abdul Muttalib was such a dignified and handsome man that when, Abrahah saw him he was much impressed; he got off his throne and sat beside him on the carpet. Then he asked him what he wanted. Abdul Muttalib replied that he wanted the king to return

his camels which he had taken. Abrahah said: "I was much impressed when I saw you but your reply has brought you down in my eyes: you only demand your camels but you say nothing about this House which is your sanctuary and the sanctuary of your forefathers." He replied: "I am the owner of my camels and am requesting you to return them. As for the House, it has its own Owner: He will defend it." When Abrahah said that He would not be able to defend it against him, Abdul Muttalib said that that rested between Him and him. With this Abdul Muttalib left Abrahah and he restored to him his camels.

One thing which becomes evident is that the tribes living in and around Makkah did not have the power to fight such a big force and save the Ka'bah. Therefore, obviously, the Quraish did not try to put up any resistance. The Quraish on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench (Ahzab) had hardly been able to muster & strength numbering ten to twelve thousand men in spite of the alliance with the pagan and Jewish tribes; they could not have resisted an army 60,000 strong. Muhammad bin Ishaq says that after returning from the camp of Abrahah Abdul Muttalib ordered the Quraish to withdraw from the city and go to the mountains along with their families for fear of a general massacre. Then he went to the Ka'bah along with some chiefs of the Quraish and taking hold of the iron ring of the door, prayed to Allah Almighty to protect His House and its keepers. There were at that time 360 idols in and around the Ka'bah, but on that critical moment they forgot them and implored only Allah for help. Their supplications which have been reported in the books of history do not contain any name but of Allah, the One. Ibn Hisham in his *Life of the Prophet* has cited some verses of Abdul Muttalib, which are to the following effect:

"O God, a man protects his house, so protect Your House; Let not their cross and their craft tomorrow overcome Your craft. If You will to leave them and our qiblah to themselves, You may do as You please."

Ibn Jarir has cited Abdul Muttalib's these verses also, which he had recited in his supplication; "O my Lord, I do not cherish any hope from anyone against them except You. O my Lord, protect Your House from them. The enemy of this House is Your enemy. Stop them from destroying Your settlement."

After making these supplications Abdul Muttalib and his companions also went off to the mountains.

Next morning Abrahah prepared to enter Makkah, but his special elephant, Mahmud, which was in the forefront, knelt down. It was beaten with iron bars, goaded, even scarified, but it would not get up. When they made it face south, north, or east, it would immediately start off, but as soon as they directed it towards Makkah, it knelt down. In the meantime swarms of birds appeared carrying stones in their beaks and claws and showered these on the troops. Whoever was hit would start disintegrating. According to Muhammad bin Ishaq and Ikrimah, this was smallpox, which was seen in Arabia for the first time in that year. Ibn Abbas says that whoever was struck by a pebble, would start scratching his body resulting in breaking of the skin and falling off of the flesh. In another tradition Ibn Abbas says that the flesh and blood flowed like water and bones in the body became visible. The same thing happened with Abrahah too. His flesh fell in pieces and there arose bores on his body emitting pus and blood. In confusion they withdrew and fled towards Yemen. Nufail bin Habib, whom they had brought as guide from the country of Khatham, was searched out and asked to guide them back to Yemen, but he refused and said: "Now where can one flee when God pursues? The split nose (Abrahah) is the conquered; not the conqueror."

As they withdrew they were continually falling by the bay and dying. Ata bin Yasar says that all the troops did not perish at the spot; some perished there and others perished by the wayside as they withdrew. Abrahah died in the country of Khath'am.

This event took place at Muhassir by the Muhassab valley, between Muzdalifah and Mina. According to the *Sahih* of Muslim and Abu Da'ud, in the description of the Holy Prophet's farewell pilgrimage that Imam Jafar as-Sadiq has related from his father, Imam Muhammad Baqir, and he from Hadrat Jabir bin Abdullah, he says that when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) proceeded from Muzdalifah to Mina, he increased his speed in the valley of Muhassir. Imam Nawawi has explained it saying that the incident of the people of the elephant had occurred there; therefore, the pilgrims have been enjoined to pass by quickly, for Muhassir is a tormented place. Imam Malik in *Mu'atta* has related that the Holy Prophet said that the whole of Muzdalifah is a fit place for staying but one should not stay in the valley of Muhassir.

This was such a momentous event that it soon spread throughout Arabia and many poets made it the subject of their laudatory poems. In these poems one thing is quite evident that everyone regarded it as a manifestation of Allah Almighty's miraculous power, and no one, even by allusion, said that the idols which were worshiped in the Ka'bah, had anything to do with it.

The Arabs describe the year in which this event took place as *Am al-Fil* (the year of the elephants), and in the same year the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be His peace) was born.

### **3. SITUATION IN MEDINA**

#### **3.1. EXISTENCE OF JEWS**

No authentic history of the Arabian Jews exists in the world. They have not left any writing of their own in the form of a book or a tablet which might throw light on their past, nor have the Jewish historians and writers of the non-Arab world made any mention of them, the reason being that after their settlement in the Arabian peninsula they had detached themselves from the main body of the nation, and the Jews of the world did not count them as among themselves. For they had given up Hebrew culture and language, even the names, and adopted Arabism instead. In the tablets that have been unearthed in the archaeological research in the Hejaz no trace of the Jews is found before the first century of the Christian era, except for a few Jewish names. Therefore, the history of the Arabian Jews is based mostly on the verbal traditions prevalent among the Arabs most of which had been spread by the Jews themselves.

The Jews of the Hejaz claimed that they had come to settle in Arabia during the last stage of the life of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). They said that the Prophet Moses had dispatched an army to expel the Amalekites from the land of Yathrib and had commanded it not to spare even a single soul of that tribe. The Israelite army carried out the Prophet's command, but spared the life of a handsome prince of the Amalekite king and returned with him to Palestine. By that time the Prophet Moses had passed away. His successors took great exception to what the army had done, for by sparing the life of an Amalekite it had clearly disobeyed the Prophet and violated the Mosaic law. Consequently, they excluded the army from their community, and it had to return to Yathrib and settle there for ever. (*Kitab al-Aghani*, vol. xix, p. 94). Thus the Jews claimed that they had been living in Yathrib since about 1200 B.C.

The second Jewish immigration, according to the Jews, took place in 587 BC. when Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem and dispersed the Jews throughout the world. The Arab Jews said that several of their tribes at that time had come to settle in Wadi al-Qura, Taima, and Yathrib. (Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*).

As a matter of fact, what is established is that when in A. D. 70 the Romans massacred the Jews in Palestine, and then in A. D. 132 expelled them from that land, many of the Jewish tribes fled to find an asylum in the Hejaz, a territory that was contiguous to Palestine in the south. There, they settled wherever they found water springs and greenery, and then by business gradually integrated to the local environment. Ailah, Maqna, Tabuk, Taima, Wadi al Qura, Fadak and Khaiber came under their control in that very period, and Bani Quraizah, Bani al-Nadir, Bani Bahdal, and Bani Qainuqa also came in the same period and occupied Yathrib.

Among the tribes that settled in Yathrib the Bani al Nadir and the Bani Quraizah were more prominent for they belonged to the Cohen or priest class. They were looked upon as of noble descent and enjoyed religious leadership among their co- religionists. When they came to settle in Madinah there were some other tribes living there before, whom they subdued and became practically the owners of this green and fertile land.

About three centuries later, in A. D. 450 or 451, the great flood of Yemen occurred which has been mentioned in v. 16-17 of Surah Saba above. As a result of this different tribes of the people of Saba were compelled to leave Yemen and disperse in different parts of Arabia. Thus, the Bani Ghassan went to settle in Syria, Bani Lakhm in Hirah (Iraq), Bani Khuzaah between Jeddah and Makkah and the Aus and the Khazraj went to settle in Yathrib. As Yathrib was under Jewish domination, they at first did not allow the Aus and the Khazraj to gain a footing and the two Arab tribes had to settle on lands that had not yet been brought under cultivation, where they could hardly produce just enough to enable them to survive. At last, one of their chiefs went to Syria to ask for the assistance of their Ghassanide brothers; he brought an army from there and broke the power of the Jews. Thus, the Aus and the Khazraj were able to gain complete dominance over Yathrib, with the result that two of the major Jewish tribes, Bani an-Nadir and Bani Quraizah were forced to take quarters outside the city. Since the third tribe, Bani Qainuqa, was not on friendly terms with the other two tribes, it stayed inside the city as usual, but had to seek protection of the Khazraj tribe. As a counter measure to this Bani an Nadir and Bani Quraizah took protection of the Aus tribe so that they could live in peace in the suburbs of Yathrib.

Before the Holy Prophet's arrival at Madinah until his emigration the following were the main features of the Jews position in Hejaz in general and in Yathrib in particular:

1. In the matter of language, dress, civilization and way of life they had completely adopted Arabism, even their names had become Arabian. Of the 12 Jewish tribes that had settled in Hejaz, none except the Bani Zaura retained its Hebrew name. Except for a few scattered scholars none knew Hebrew. In fact, there is nothing in the poetry of the Jewish poets of the pre-Islamic days to distinguish it from the poetry of the Arab poets in language, ideas and themes. They even inter-married with the Arabs. In fact, nothing distinguished them from the common Arabs except religion. Notwithstanding this, they had not lost their identity among the Arabs. They had adopted superficial Arabism because they could not survive in Arabia without it.
2. Because of this Arabism the western orientalisks have been misled into thinking that perhaps they were not really Israelites but Arabs who had embraced Judaism, or that at least majority of them consisted of the Arab Jews. But there is no historical proof to show that the Jews

ever engaged in any proselytizing activities in Hejaz, or their rabbis invited the Arabs to embrace Judaism like the Christian priests and missionaries. On the contrary, we see that they prided themselves upon their Israelite descent. They called the Arabs the Gentiles, which did not mean illiterate or uneducated but savage and uncivilized people. Apart from the Arab chiefs, they did not consider the common Arabs fit enough to have equal status with them even if they entered Judaism. No historical proof is available, nor is there any evidence in the Arabian traditions, that some Arab tribe or prominent clan might have accepted Judaism. However, mention has been made of some individuals, who had become Jews. The Jews, however, were more interested in their trade and business than in the preaching of their religion. That is why Judaism did not spread as a religion and creed in Hejaz but remained only as a mark of pride and distinction of a few Israelite tribes. The Jewish rabbis, however, had a flourishing business in granting amulets and charms, fortune telling and sorcery, because of which they were held in great awe by the Arabs for their "knowledge" and practical wisdom.

3. Economically they were much stronger than the Arabs. Since they had emigrated from more civilized and culturally advanced countries of Palestine and Syria, they knew many such arts as were unknown to the Arabs; they also enjoyed trade relations with the outside world. Hence, they had captured the business of importing grain in Yathrib and the upper Hejaz and exporting dried dates to other countries. Poultry farming and fishing also were mostly under their controls. They were good at cloth weaving too. They had also set up wine shops here and there, where they sold wine which they imported from Syria. The Bani Qainuqa generally practiced crafts such as that of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker. In all these occupations, trade and business these Jews earned exorbitant profits, but their chief occupation was trading in money lending. More particularly the chiefs and elders of the Arab tribes who were given to a life of pomp, bragging and boasting on the strength of borrowed money were deeply indebted to them. They lent money on high rates of interest and then would charge compound interest, which one could hardly clear off once one was involved in it. Thus, they had rendered the Arabs economically hollow, but it had naturally induced a deep rooted hatred among the common Arabs against the Jews.
4. The demand of their trade and economic interests was that they should neither estrange one Arab tribe by befriending another, nor take part in their mutual wars. But, on the other hand, it was also in their interests, that they should not allow the Arabs to be united and should keep them fighting and entrenched against each other, for they knew that whenever the Arab tribes united, they would not allow them to remain in possession of their large properties, gardens and fertile lands, which they had come to own through their profiteering and money lending business. Furthermore, each of their tribes also had to enter into alliance with one or another powerful Arab tribe for the sake of its own protection so that no other powerful tribe should overawe it by its might. Because of this they had not only to take part in the mutual wars of the Arabs but they often had to go to war in support of the Arab tribe to which their tribe was tied in alliance against another Jewish tribe which was allied to the enemy tribe. In Yathrib the Bani Quraizah and the Bani an-Nadir were the allies of the Aus while the Bani Qainuqa of the Khazraj. A little before the Holy Prophet's emigration, these Jewish tribes had confronted each other in support of their respective allies in the bloody war that took place between the Aus and the Khazraj at Buath.



Such were the conditions when Islam came to Madinah, and ultimately an Islamic State came into existence after the Holy Prophet's (upon whom be Allah's peace) arrival there. One of the first things that he accomplished soon after establishing this state was unification of the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants into a brotherhood, and the second was that he concluded a treaty between the Muslims and the Jews on definite conditions, in which it was pledged that neither party would encroach on the rights of the other, and both would unite in a joint defense against the external enemies. Some important clauses of this treaty are as follows, which clearly show what the Jews and the Muslims had pledged to adhere to in their mutual relationship:

"The Jews must bear their expenses and the Muslims their expenses. Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and loyalty is a protection against treachery. They shall sincerely wish one another well. Their relations will be governed by piety and recognition of the rights of others, and not by sin and wrongdoing. The wronged must be helped. The Jews must pay with the believers so long as the war lasts. Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document. If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise, it must be referred to God and to Muhammad the Apostle of God; Quraish and their helpers shall not be given protection. The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib; Every one shall be responsible for the defense of the portion to which he belongs" (*Ibn Hisham*, vol. ii, pp. 147 to 150).

This was an absolute and definitive covenant to the conditions of which the Jews themselves had agreed. But not very long after this they began to show hostility towards the Holy Prophet of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) and Islam and the Muslims, and their hostility and perverseness went on increasing day by day. Its main causes were three:

First, they envisaged the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) merely as a chief of his people, who should be content to have concluded a political agreement with them and should only concern himself with the worldly interests of his group. But they found that he was extending an invitation to belief in Allah and the Prophethood and the Book (which also included belief in their own Prophets and scriptures), and was urging the people to give up disobedience of Allah and adopt obedience to the Divine Commands and abide by the moral laws of their own prophets. This they could not put up with. They feared that if this universal ideological movement gained momentum it would destroy their rigid religiosity.

Second, when they saw that the Aus and the Khazraj and the Emigrants were uniting into a brotherhood and the people from the Arab tribes of the surrounding areas, who entered Islam, were also joining this Islamic Brotherhood of Madinah and forming a religious community, they feared that the policy that they had been following of sowing discord between the Arab tribes for the promotion of their interests, would not work in the new system.

Third, the work that the Holy Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's 'peace) was carrying out of reforming the society and civilization included putting an end to all unlawful methods" in business and mutual dealings. More than that; he had declared taking and giving of interest also as impure and unlawful earning. This caused them the fear that if his rule became established in Arabia, he would declare interest legally forbidden, and in this they saw their own economic disaster.

For these reasons they made resistance and opposition to the Holy Prophet their national ideal. They would conspire with the hypocrites to create mischief and would cooperate with every group and tribe hostile to Islam. The people of the Aus and the Khazraj tribes were their special target, with whom they had been allied for centuries. Making mention of the war of Buath before them they would remind them of their previous enmities so that they might again resort to the sword against

each other and shatter their bond of fraternity into which Islam had bound them. They would resort to every kind of economical mean to harm the Muslims economically.

They had adopted this hostile attitude against the covenant even before the Battle of Badr. But when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and the Muslims won a decisive victory over the Quraish at Badr, they were filled with grief. They were in fact anticipating that in that war the powerful Quraish would deal a death blow to the Muslims.

The first Jewish tribe which, after the Battle of Badr, openly and collectively broke their covenant were the Bani Qainuqa. They lived in a locality inside the city of Madinah. As they practiced the crafts of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker, the people of Madinah had to visit their shops fairly frequently. They were proud of their bravery and valor. Being blacksmiths by profession even their children were well armed, and they could instantly muster 700 fighting men from among themselves. They were also arrogantly aware that they enjoyed relations of confederacy with the Khazraj and Abdullah bin Ubbay, the chief of the, Khazraj, was their chief supporter. At the victory of Badr, they became so provoked that they began to trouble and harass the Muslims and their women in particular, who visited their shops. By and by things came to such a pass that one day a Muslim woman was stripped naked publicly in their bazaar. This led to a brawl in which a Muslim and a Jew were killed. Thereupon the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself visited their locality, got them together and counseled them on decent conduct. But the reply that they gave was; "O Muhammad, you perhaps think we are like the Quraish. They did not know fighting; therefore, you overpowered them. But when you come in contact with us, you will see how men fight."

This was in clear words a declaration of war. Consequently, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) laid siege to their quarters towards the end of Shawwal (and according to some others, of Dhi Qa'dah) A. H. 2. The siege had hardly lasted for a fortnight when they surrendered and all their fighting men were tied and taken prisoners. Now Abdullah bin Ubayy came up in support of them and insisted that they should be pardoned. The Holy Prophet conceded his request and decided that the Bani Qainuqa would be exiled from Madinah leaving their properties, armor and tools of trade behind. (*Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Hisham, Tarikh Tabari*).

For some time after these punitive measures the Jews remained so terror stricken that they did not dare commit any further mischief. But later when in Shawwal, A. H. 3, the Quraish in order to avenge themselves for the defeat at Badr, marched against Madinah with great preparations, and the Jews saw that only a thousand men had marched out with the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) as against three thousand men of the Quraish, and even they were deserted by 300 hypocrites who returned to Madinah, they committed the first and open breach of the treaty by refusing to join the Holy Prophet in the defense of the city although they were bound to it.

Then, when in the Battle of Uhud the Muslims suffered reverses, they were further emboldened. So much so that the Bani an-Nadir made a secret plan to kill the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) though the plan failed before it could be executed. According to the details, after the incident of Bi'r Maunah (Safar, A. H. 4) Amr bin Umayyah Damri slew by mistake two men of the Bani Amir in retaliation, who actually belonged to a tribe which was allied to the Muslims, but Amr had mistaken them for the men of the enemy. Because of this mistake their blood money became obligatory on the Muslims. Since the Bani an-Nadir were also a party in the alliance with the Bani Amir, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) went to their clan along with some of his Companions to ask for their help in paying the blood money. Outwardly they agreed to contribute, as he wished, but secretly they plotted that a person should go up to the top of the house by whose wall the Holy

Prophet was sitting and drop a rock on him to kill him. But before they could execute their plan, he was informed in time and be immediately got up and returned to Madinah. Now there was no question of showing them any further concession. The Holy Prophet at once sent to them the ultimatum that the treachery they had meditated against him had come to his knowledge; therefore, they were to leave Madinah within ten days; if anyone of them was found staying behind in their quarters, he would be put to the sword. Meanwhile Abdullah bin Ubayy sent them the message that he would help them with two thousand men and that the Bani Quraizah and Bani Ghatafan also would come to their aid; therefore, they should stand firm and should not go. On this false assurance they responded to the Holy Prophet's ultimatum saying that they would not leave Madinah and he could do whatever was in his power. Consequently, in Rabi' al-Awwal, A. H. 4, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) laid siege to them, and after a few days of the siege (which according to some traditions were 6 and according to others 15 days) they agreed to leave Madinah on the condition that they could retain all their property which they could carry on three camels, except the armor. Only two of the Bani an-Nadir became Muslims and stayed behind. Others went to Syria and Khaiber.

### **3.2. HYPOCRITES OF MEDINA**

Before the Holy Prophet's emigration to Madinah the tribes of the Aus and the Khazraj, fed up with their mutual rivalries and civil wars, had almost agreed on the leadership of one man and were making preparations to crown him their king. This was Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the chief of the Khazraj. Muhammad bin Ishaq has stated that among the people of Khazraj his authority was never contested and never had the Aus and the Khazraj rallied to one man before this. (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, p. 234)

Such were the conditions when the voice of Islam reached Madinah and the influential people of both the tribes started becoming Muslims. When before the Emigration, invitation was being extended to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to come to Madinah, Hadarat Abbas bin Ubadah bin Nadlah Ansari wanted to defer this invitation for the reason that Abdullah bin Ubayy also might join in the declaration of allegiance and invitation to the Holy Prophet, so that Madinah might become the center of Islam by common consent. But the delegation that arrived in Makkah to declare their allegiance did not give any importance to the proposal of Abbas bin Ubadah, and a 11 its members, who included 75 men from both the tribes, became ready to invite the Holy Prophet in the face of every danger. (Ibn Hisham, vol. II, P. 89). We have given the details of this event in the Introduction to Surah Al-Anfal.

Then, when the Holy Prophet arrived in Madinah, Islam had so deeply penetrated every house of the Ansar that Abdullah bin Ubayy became helpless and did not see any other way to save his leadership than to become a Muslim himself. So, he entered Islam along with many of his followers from among the chiefs and leaders of both the tribes although their hearts were burning with rage from within. Ibn Ubayy in particular was filled with grief, for the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) had deprived him of his kingship. For several years his hypocritical faith and grief of being deprived of his kingdom manifested itself in different ways. On the one hand, when on Fridays the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) took his seat to deliver the Sermon, Abdullah bin Ubayy would stand up and say "O people, the Messenger of Allah is present among you, by whom Allah has honored

you; therefore, you should support him and listen to what he says and obey him." (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p. 111). On the other, his hypocrisy was being exposed day by day and the true Muslims were realizing that he and his followers bore great malice against Islam, the Holy Prophet and the Muslims. Once when the Holy Prophet was passing on the way Abdullah bin Ubayy spoke to him in harsh words. When the Holy Prophet complained of it to Hadrat Sa'd bin Ubadah; he said: "O Messenger of Allah, don't be hard on him, for when Allah sent you to us we were making a diadem to crown him, and, by God, he thinks that you have robbed him of his kingdom." (Ibn Hisham vol: II, pp. 237-238). After the Battle of Badr when the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) invaded the Jewish tribe of Bani Qainuqa on their breaking the agreement and unprovoked revolt, this man stood up in support of them, and holding the Holy Prophet by his armor, said: "These 700 fighters have been helping and protecting me against every enemy; would you cut them down in one morning? By God, I will not leave you until you pardon my clients." (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, pp. 51- 52). On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud this man committed open treachery and withdrew from the battlefield with 300 of his companions. One should note that at this critical moment when he so acted, the Quraish had marched upon Madinah with 3,000 troops and the Holy Prophet had marched out with only 1,000 men to resist them. Of these 1,000 this hypocrite broke away with 300 men and the Holy Prophet was left with only 700 men to meet 3,000 troops of the enemy in the field. After this incident the common Muslims of Madinah came to realize fully that he was certainly a hypocrite and his those Companions also were found who were his associates in hypocrisy. That is why when on the very first Friday, after the Battle of Uhud, this man stood up as usual to make a speech before the Holy Prophet's Sermon, the people pulled at his garment, saying "Sit down you are not worthy to say such things." That was the first occasion in Madinah when this man was publicly disgraced. Thereupon he was so filled with rage that he left the mosque jumping over the heads of the people. At the door of the Mosque some of the Ansar said to him, "What are you doing? Go back and ask the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) to pray for your forgiveness." He retorted "I do not, want him to pray for my forgiveness." (Ibn Hisham, vol. III, p. 111).

Then in A. H. 4 the Battle of Bani an-Nadir took place. On this occasion he and his companions supported the enemies of Islam even more openly. On the one side, the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his devoted Companions were preparing for war against their enemy, the Jews, and on the other, these hypocrites were secretly sending messages to the Jews to the effect: "Stand firm we are with you: if you are attacked, we will help you, and if you are driven out, we too will go out with you." The secret of this intrigue was exposed by Allah Himself, as has been explained in Surah Al-Hashr: 11-17 above.

But in spite of being so exposed the reason why the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) was still treating him kindly was that he had a large band of the hypocrites behind him. Many of the chiefs of both the Aus and the Khazraj were his supporters. At least a third of the population of Madinah consisted of his companions, as became manifest on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud. Under such conditions it was not prudent to wage a war with these internal enemies combined with the external enemies. On this very account, in spite of being fully aware of their hypocrisy the Holy Prophet continued to deal with them according to their apparent profession of faith for a long time. On the other hand, these people too neither possessed the power nor the courage to fight the believers openly as disbelievers, or to join hands with an invader and face them in the battlefield. Apparently they were a strong hand but inwardly they had the weakness which Allah has vividly portrayed in Surah Al-Hashr: 12-14. Therefore; they thought their well being lay only in posing as Muslims. They

came to the mosque, offered the prayers gave away the *zakat*, and would make tall oral claims to the faith, which the true Muslims never felt the need to do. They would offer a thousand justifications for each of their hypocritical acts by which they would try to deceive their compatriots, the Ansar, into believing that they were with them. By these designs they were not only saving themselves from the disadvantages which could naturally accrue if they separated themselves from the Ansar brotherhood, but also taking advantage of the opportunities to make mischief which were available to them as members of the Muslim brotherhood.

These were the causes which enabled Abdullah bin Ubayy and like minded hypocrites to get an opportunity to accompany the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) in his campaign against the Bani al-Mustaliq, and they simultaneously engineered two great mischiefs which could shatter the Muslim unity to pieces. However, by virtue of the wonderful training in discipline that the Muslim; had received through the pure teaching of the Quran and the companionship of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) both mischiefs were stopped in time, and the hypocrites themselves were disgraced instead. One of these was the mischief that has been mentioned in Surah An-Nur above, and the other which has been mentioned in this Surah.

This incident has been related by Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Nasai, Tirmidhi, Baihaqi, Tabari, Ibn Marduyah, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Jarir Tabari, Ibn Sa'd and Muhammad bin Ishaq through many reliable channels. In some traditions the expedition in which it took place has not been named, and in others it has been connected with the Battle of Tabuk. But the authorities on the battles fought by the Holy Prophet and history are agreed that this incident took place on the occasion of the campaign against the Bani al- Mustaliq. The following seems to be the real story when all the traditions are read together.

When after crushing down the power of Bani al- Mustaliq the Islamic army had made a halt in the settlement at the well of al Muraisi. Suddenly a dispute arose between two men on taking water from the well; One of them was Jehjah bin Masud Ghifari, a servant of Hadrat Umar appointed to lead his horse. The other was Sinan bin Wabar al-Juhani, whose tribe was an ally of a clan of the Khazraj. Harsh words between them led to fighting and Jehjah kicked Sinan, which the Ansar, on account of their ancient Yamanite tradition, took as a great insult and disgrace. At this Sinan called out the men of Ansar and Jehjah the Emigrants for help. Hearing about the quarrel Ibn Ubayy started inciting and calling the men of the Aus and the Khazraj to come out and help their ally. From the other side some Emigrants also came out. The dispute might have led to a fight between the Ansar and the Muhajirin themselves at the very place where they had just fought an enemy tribe jointly and crushing it had halted in its own territory. But hearing the noise the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) emerged and said : "what is this call of paganism? What have you to do with such a call? Leave it, it is a dirty thing." Thereupon the leading men of the two sides met and settled the dispute; Sinan pardoned Jehjah and peace was restored. After this every person whose heart was disaffected came to Abdullah bin Ubayy and they all said to him, "Until now we had our hopes attached to you and you were protecting us, but now it seems you have become a helper of these paupers against us. Ibn Ubayy was already enraged: These words made him burst out, thus: "This is what you have done to yourselves. You have given these people shelter in your country, and have divided your property among them. So much so that they have now become our rivals. Nothing so fits us and the paupers of Quraish (or the Companions of Muhammad) as the ancient saying 'Feed your dog to fatten it and it will devour you.' If you hold back your property from them, they would go elsewhere. By God, when we return to Madinah, the honorable ones will drive out from it the mean ones."

Zaid bin Arqam, a young boy, also happened to be present in the assembly at that time. He heard this and mentioned it before his uncle, and his uncle who was one of the Ansar chiefs went to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) and told him the whole story. The Holy Prophet called Zaid and asked him what had happened and he repeated every word of what he had heard. The Holy Prophet said, "Zaid, you are perhaps displeased with Ibn Ubayy; you might have been mistaken in hearing; you might have imagined Ibn Ubayy said this." But Zaid was sure and firm. He said, "No, I swear by God I have heard him say this and that."

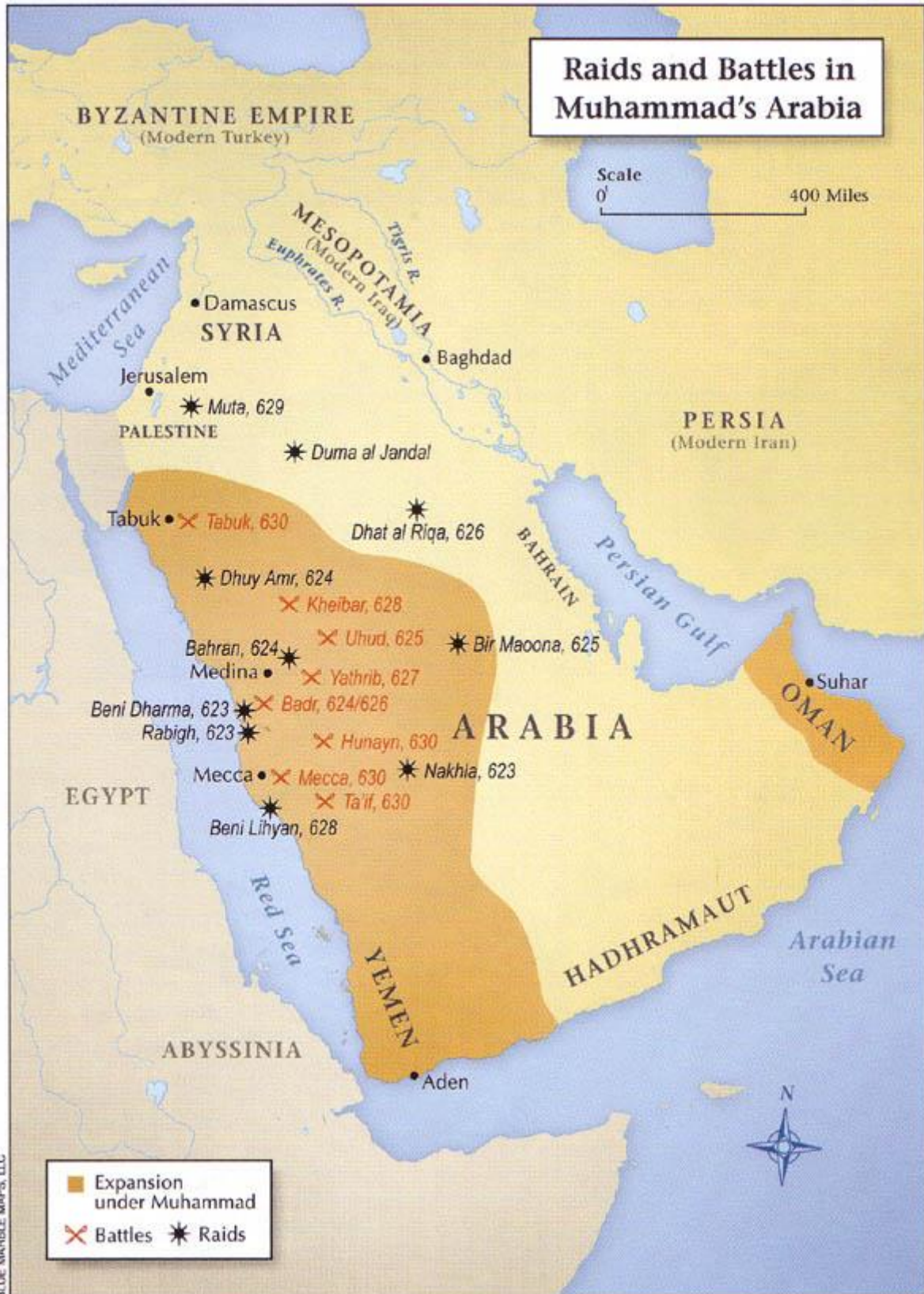
When Hadrat Umar came to know of this, he came to the Holy Prophet and said: "Please allow me to put this hypocrite to the sword. Or, if you do not think it is fit to give me the permission you may tell Muadh bin Jabal, or Abbad bin Bishr, or Sad bin Mu'adh, or Muhammad bin Maslamah from among the Ansar, to go and kill him." But the Holy Prophet said: "No, the people will say Muhammad kills his own Companions." After this he ordered the people to set off immediately, although it was at a time when the Holy Prophet was not accustomed to travel. The forced march continued for 30 hours at a stretch so that the people became exhausted. Then he halted, and as soon as they touched the ground they fell asleep. This he did to distract their minds from what had happened at the well of al-Muraisi.

By and by the news spread among the Ansar soldiers and it enraged them against Ibn Ubayy. The people advised him to go to the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) and request for his forgiveness, but he retorted : "You asked me to believe in him, and I believed in him; you asked me to pay the zakat on my property, and I paid the zakat too; now the only thing left is that I should bow down to Muhammad." This further enraged the believing Ansar and everyone' started reproaching and cursing him roughly. When the caravan was about to enter Madinah, Abdullah, the son of Abdullah bin Ubayy, stood before his father with a drawn out sword, and said: "You had said that when you reached Madinah, the honorable ones would drive out the mean ones. Now, you will know who is honorable you or Allah and His Messenger. By God, you cannot enter Madinah until the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be Allah's peace) permits you to enter." At this Ibn Ubayy cried out: "O people of Khazraj, look, my own son is preventing me from entering Madinah."

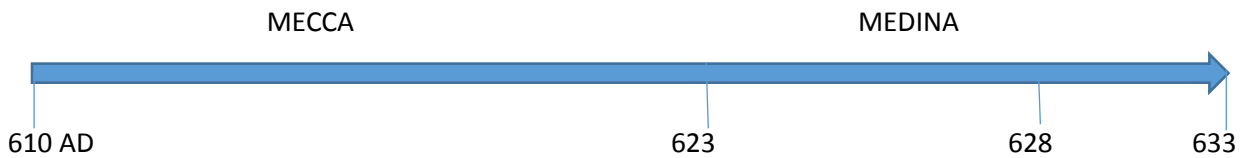
The people conveyed this news to the Holy Prophet, and he said : "Tell Abdullah to let his father come home." Abdullah said, "If this is the Holy Prophet's order, then you may enter." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said to Hadrat Umar: "Now what do you think, Umar? Had you killed him on the day when you asked my permission to kill him, many people would have trembled with rage. Today if I order them to kill him, they will kill him immediately." Hadrat Umar replied "By God, I realize there was greater wisdom behind what the Apostle of Allah said than what I said."

These were the circumstances under which this Surah was sent down most probably after the Holy Prophet's return to Madinah.

#### **4. WARS FOR DEFENSE**



The above picture illustrates those battles which were forced on the newly formed Islamic State in the time of Mohammed (PBUH). The offenders were: Quraish, the 3 Jewish tribes of Medina, Hypocrites and their allies. Practically the whole Arabian Peninsula.



The whole period of Prophecy took 23 years. 13 years of them in Mecca and the rest 10 years in Medina.

1. In Mecca Islam was persecuted and Muslims were too weak to defend themselves. The Islamic revelations were dealing with Monotheism, Hereafter and Prophecy of Mohammed (PBUH)
2. After migration (Hijra, 622 AD) to Medina Muslims established a state which was surrounded from every side by enemies. Defense was inevitable. The revelations in this period gave instructions for the proper operation of a state, laws for economy, finance, social relations, and Jihad for defending the state.
3. The most intensive period of wars took 5 years (623-628) when external and internal enemies both wanted to eliminate Islam. Among the internal enemies were those 3 Jewish tribes who breached their covenant with the Islamic state and stood on the side of the offenders. This 5 years and the revelations serve as ammunition for politicians who want to set fire between Muslims and Jews. However it is a big mistake.
  - 3.1. The wars were waged only with 3 Jewish tribes and not with Judaism. Nobody can draw general conclusion.
  - 3.2. The Quranic verses in this 5 years concern only the three Jewish tribes and not the Jews in general
  - 3.3. The revelations before 623 condemn only those Jews who breached the Covenant between Moses and Allah however the meaning is general. It concerns everybody who breaches the covenants with Allah. Jews were brought up only as historical examples.
  - 3.4. After 628 there was no war between Muslims and Jews. Their relations became consolidated.

There in another important conclusion can be drawn from the two periods of Islam in Mecca and Medina. In Mecca Islam was followed congregationally and in Medina Islam was a state. The congregation is a group of believers gathered together around a thinker or teacher where Quran serves as basic cohesion between them. In Medina we see the state structure with institutes and administration where Quran provides the basic operational principles for the whole system. Islam is never "Church"!!! It cannot function as a religion which is under the regulation of a secular state. The secular state can recognize the existence of Islamic communities, also a dialog can exist between them but regarding legislation and jurisdiction so far there is no approach between Islam and Western administrations. In this case 60% of the Quranic revelations cannot be followed in Western civilizations. As long as Islam is treated as "church" and "faith" like other religions the problem will exist.

The Western type jurisprudence and Shariya can be harmonized.



## 5. RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT BEFORE THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

### 5.1. EGYPTIAN CHRONOLOGY AND ISRAEL

In order to get some idea of the comparative chronology of Egypt and Israel, we must first consider what data we have for Egyptian chronology. Israel's surviving records date from a time many centuries later than Israel's contact with Egypt. On the other hand, Egypt's records in monuments, inscriptions, tombs, etc., are rich absolutely reliable as far as they go. Of the surviving civilizations, Egypt and China go back furthest in time with historical material. Egypt has more interest for us, because geographically it was centrally situated, and it influenced and was influenced by almost every important cultural movement in Asia, Europe, and Africa, nothing happened in Mediterranean history that had not some points of contact with Egypt. The first broad division in Egyptian chronology is between the pre-Dynastic and the Dynastic periods. The pre-Dynastic period is all prehistory. But recent researches have shown a great deal of light on the culture of that period, and we know many more details about the arts and tools of that period in Egypt than we do for the corresponding periods of prehistory in other countries. With the first Egyptian Dynasty of rulers begins the Dynastic period.

What were the Egyptian Dynasties, and why is so much prominence given to them in Egyptian chronology? The reason is that though we can form a graphic idea of the sequence of events and in many cases of the details of events, arts, and crafts, manners and customs, cults and ceremonies, and social and economic conditions in the dynastic period, we are not yet able, except for occasional and isolated glimpses, to give any accurate figures of early dates to connect them with our chronology B.C. On the other hand, we have abundant materials to justify us in placing certain events or personages or ideas in some division of the Dynastic scheme. We can say that such and such ideas held sway under the 18th Dynasty or that such and such invasion, outwards or inwards, took place at the close of the 14th Dynasty. The Dynastic scheme rests mainly on the lists and fragments preserved from the writings of one Manetho, an Egyptian priest and annalist, who lived under Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II (B.C. 313-246), the inheritors of the Egyptian portion of Alexander's Empire. For his Egyptian history in Greek he had access to Egyptian records. His scheme of Dynasties therefore supplies a rough chronological framework into which can be fitted our ever-increasing detailed knowledge derived from Egyptian monuments, tombs, and excavations. His first Dynasty begins with the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, but its actual date B.C. has been placed at between such wide margins as 5500 B.C. and 3300 B.C.

The two Egypts may be considered distinct ethnical and perhaps geographical divisions, which tend to assimilate when they are united politically, but whose physical characteristics are different, as also their outlook when there is political division. Lower Egypt looks to the Mediterranean, and its population is mixed, containing almost all the Mediterranean and Arab elements, while Upper Egypt looks to interior Africa (Nubia, Sudan, Abyssinia, etc.), and its population tends to have more and more African characteristics. The whole of Egypt has had a ribbon development, the population and cultivation being confined to the banks of the Nile. Without the Nile Egypt would be just a desert

forming a link in the long chain of tropical and subtropical deserts stretching from the Sahara, the Libyan desert, the Arabian deserts, through the Persian, Baluchistan, Sindh, and Rajputana deserts, to the Turki and Gobi deserts in central Asia. But Upper Egypt is purely a long irregular line along the banks of the Nile, while Lower Egypt has the broad fan-like delta in which the many mouths of the Nile run into a very irregular coastline extending over about 200 miles. Lower Egypt had (and has) much marshland, and its low-lying configuration was subject to many physical changes, in the same way as invasions and foreign immigrations gave its population a less stable character. Its cities as Sais and Tanis (Zoan), were also less stable in character, and Memphis (near the site of modern Cairo) has to be just above the Delta. On the other hand the Capitals in Upper Egypt, such as Thebes (or NO), with their magnificent temples and tombs were safe above Nile waters in the highest inundations until the modern dam of Aswan was built many miles above them.

Even after the union of the two Egypts, the king wore a double crown. The boundary between Upper and Lower Egypt was never clearly defined, because in spite of frequent interruptions in the unity of the country, the identification of Egypt with the Nile made the unity of Egypt a political and economic necessity, the present boundary of Lower Egypt is just south of Cairo, making Lower Egypt include just the Delta. The tract between Cairo and Assiut is sometimes called Middle Egypt and is distinguished from the rest of Upper Egypt, which is higher up the river. There being such wide variations in the estimate of ancient dates by component authorities, the only practicable course is to refer ancient events to Dynasties according to Manetho's scheme. In the later dates it is sometimes possible to express a date in approximate figures B.C., but such figures are uncertain, whereas the sequence of Dynasties may be taken to be a stable fact in Egyptian history. Although some of Manetho's material, when it can be tested, has proved to be inaccurate. But we have only Manetho secondhand. The inaccuracies may be due not to Manetho but to his transmitters.

Thirty-nine such Dynasties are reckoned, and they may be grouped into Periods as follows:

1. The Old Kingdom, Dynasties I to VII, including the first three Dynasties, with a new orientation in Egyptian Art, and b. Dynasties IV VI, the Pyramid Period, during which the Great Pyramid and the second and third Pyramids of Ghizeh were built. The capital now came to Lower Egypt, to the site of Memphis, near modern Cairo.
2. The Middle Kingdom, Dynasties IX to XVII. In Dynasties IX and X the centre of gravity moved from Memphis in Lower Egypt to Middle Egypt. In the XIIIth Dynasty many of the great monuments of and near Thebes (Karnak, Luxor, etc.), were constructed. Perhaps the movement higher up the river was necessitated by foreign invasions in Lower Egypt. Dynasties XV to XVII are called the Hyksos Period, when a Syrian Dynasty was established in Lower Egypt, with a sort of lordship over the native Dynasties of Upper Egypt, and international connections in other Mediterranean countries.
3. The New Empire, Dynasties XVIII to XX, crowded with events. The dates now begin to be more definite: the period may be placed about 1580 B.C. and about 1200 B.C. the foreign Hyksos were driven out; the empire was extended to Syria and Nubia; perhaps even the Euphrates was reached. Some of the most wonderful works of Egyptian art date from this period.
4. The Dynasties of the Delta. Dynasties XXI to XXXI, including a Dynasty at Sais (on one of the western branches of the Deltaic Nile). But Assyrian and Persian invasions were now weakening the power of Egypt. The dates now became more certain. The XXIst Dynasty was roughly about 1100 B.C. the XXVIIth Dynasty was ended by the invasion of the Persian under

Cambyses in 525 B.C. the Persians held sway (with Egyptian local dynasties under them) until the XXXIst Dynasty, when the last Pharaoh fled to Ethiopia about 340 B.C.

5. The Egyptian Dynasties have now ended, we are in firm history: the Macedonian Period after Alexander's conquest, 332 B.C., and the Dynasty of the Ptolemies 323 B.C. to 30 B.C.; and the Roman Period 30 B.C. to 639 A.C. after which the Arab and Turkish conquests evolved modern Egypt and Muslim Egyptian civilization.

Having cleared the chronological background, we are now in a position to examine the data about Israel's stay in Egypt in order to see if we can get some idea of the time in Egyptian history when the contact took place. We saw that Dynasties XV to XVII were concerned with the Hyksos (or Shepherd) kings. They were foreigners from Asia, but it is not quite clear exactly what race they belonged to. Josephus supposed that they were Israelites, but that theory is untenable. It has been conjectured that they were Phoenicians, or Amalekites, or Hittites. In any case they were Semites. They founded a city called Zoan (Tanis) on one of the eastern branches of the Deltaic Nile, and were in close communication with the Hittite city of Hebron in the south of Palestine. That would be their own city, but their capital would probably be the same as the old Egyptian capital at Memphis when they were well-established. They were credited with having invented the Semitic alphabet of 22 letters, which (through the Phoenicians) is the parent of all modern alphabets. Their invention probably helped in the process of converting old Egyptian Hieroglyphics from picture-writing to phonetic writing.

As the Hyksos had close relations with Hebron in Palestine, and Abraham and Israel had settled in the Palestine country, a nexus would be established, by which the first Israelites would be attracted to Zoan in Egypt. It must also be remembered that southern Palestine was a poor country and subject to frequent famines, while Deltaic Egypt was well-watered by the Nile, and suffered famines only on the rare occasions when the Nile failed to inundate. The attraction of Egypt for the famine-stricken lands of the neighborhood would therefore be strong. And this is proved in the story of Joseph and his brethren. Can we form even a rough idea of the dates of the Hyksos occupation? At the latest the Hyksos period ended about 1600 B.C. Renan is therefore probably not far wrong when he places the Hyksos occupation about 2000 B.C. Possibly a date between 2000 B.C. and 1600 B.C. may be nearer the mark. If we suppose Joseph to have been the Wazir of one of the Hyksos Pharaohs in the Delta, there is no great violence of probabilities in the suggestion, as Joseph and the Hyksos would be of kindred races. In that case Joseph's date would fall somewhere between the 19th and 17th century B.C.

No reference to Joseph or Moses has been found in Egyptian records. The solitary reference to Israel (Ysraer, rl) in stele of Mer-en-Ptah or Mineptah (about 1225 B.C.) seems to refer to Israel in Palestine rather than to Israel in Egypt. At this we need not wonder, as the Pharaoh who honored Joseph was, strictly speaking, only a foreigner. When the reaction against the Hyksos took place and the Hyksos were overthrown, the Egyptian would not probably be anxious to remember the interrupted period or to preserve its memory. The Pharaoh who "knew not Joseph" looked upon Israelites as contemptible slaves, nor worthy of a thought except when they revolted, and then only as a despised race fit to be punished and kept in its place. It may be noticed, however, that the land of Goshen in which Israel dwelt and multiplied between the time of Joseph and the time of the Exodus, was a frontier tract of Egypt in the neighborhood of the Hyksos city of Zoan in the Delta.

In seeking the approximate date of Moses, we must again look to the probabilities of Egyptian history. It was formerly the received opinion that Rameses II (say about 1250 B.C.) was the Pharaoh who oppressed Israel in Egypt, and that the exodus may have taken place under his immediate successor Mineptah (say about 1225 B.C.). The vigorous policy of Rameses II and the spirit of his time would be consistent with this view. But this date is almost certainly too late. There are indications pointing to the Israelites having already been settled in Canaan by this time. The Hyksos were turned out by the XVIIIth Dynasty, which established the New Empire in the 16th century B.C. Thothmes I (Tethmosis I, about 1540 B.C.) is more likely, in the first flush of his nationalist campaign, to have oppressed the Israelites and led to the exodus. His date fits in better. And his character also accords with the description in sacred history. He centralized the monarchy and made it a military autocracy. Militarism went with the lust of war and foreign conquest. He carried his arms as far as the Euphrates. Slaves, plunder, and foreign tribute made Egypt opulent and arrogant, and he added many monuments to Thebes. We can imagine him in his splendid Court, scarcely paying any attention to Moses, and viewing all his complaints with an amusement mingled with contempt and impatience. But retribution was to come in Allah's good time. The men who followed Allah's message- Israel in the time of Solomon (a little after 1000 B.C.), and more completely, the Muslim in the time of 'Umar and his successors-became lords of the East and the West (Quran 7:137), and ancient Egypt's were eventually buried in the sands. It was this same Pharaoh, Thothmes I, who took for his partner on the Throne his daughter Hatshepshut. If Thothmes was the Pharaoh in Moses' story, we may suppose that it was this same celebrated strong-minded lady, pharaoh's daughter, who found the child Moses (Exod, 2:10), and brought him to her mother to be adopted into the family (Quran 28:9). Like her father, she was a great supporter of the national cults. Moses was nurtured in the palace, and learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians, then reputed to be the wisest of nations. With their own wisdom he foiled them. Thus in Allah's Plan the enemies of Allah and the enemies of Israel (Quran 20:39) were the very ones who were used as instruments for the purpose of Allah and the salvation of Israel.

## **5.2. EGYPTIAN RELIGION AND ITS STEPS TOWARDS ISLAM**

Allah's Plan works silently but surely among all nations and at all times. In the most fantastic forms of religion appear gleams of His Light of Unity, calls to Islam, i.e. man's submission of his will to the Will of Allah. From that point of view, the religious history of Egypt from the most ancient times to the present day is most interesting, as is indeed the religious history of any country for which we have records of thought and development. That of India touches us dearly, but it is not directly relevant in

a translation and exposition of the Quran. The religious history of Israel is just an earlier chapter of the history of Islam, and our doctors and commentators have written in great detail about it.

Our people know very little of ancient Egypt and have shown little interest in it. It is a healthy sign that modern Egypt is showing much interest in it, and I hope that it will in time recognize in it a valuable unfoldment of religious ideas leading up to Islam. The field of Egyptology is vast and is being extended everyday by the diligent researches of archaeologists and scholars. I do not propose to write an essay on Egyptian religion. But I wish to put forward a few considerations to show how Allah's Plan and Will worked steadily, in Egypt as elsewhere. The eternal light of Unity and Islam shines in many ways, and its rays give light to the spiritual aspiration of mankind in the darkest periods. With a gifted and artistic people like the Egyptians, their religious sense was led, in spite of many rebuffs, gradually to a purer and purer conception of man's eternal destiny, until Muhammad's Message was preached to them in the very language in which it was originally preached in Arabia. And that language, Arabic, became and is now the language of the Egyptian people themselves.

In the pre-Dynastic Egypt, there must already have been a great deal of development in the religious conceptions which afterwards showed such vitality to Dynastic Egypt. The Old Kingdom, including the Pyramid Period, shows that the Egyptian mind was obsessed with the certainty of life after death. It was also impressed with ideas of grandeur, order, and precision in the universe-ideas which found eloquent expression in the grand conceptions and mathematical symmetry and simplicity of its architecture. Its massive dignity and repose are also reflected in the faces and poses of the figures in Egyptian statuary and painting. The unending expanse and the mystery of the desert seem to have acted on the Egyptian mind like a soporific and made it less active in mundane affairs and less practical in speculation than that of some other races of similar gifts. What mysteries are typified in the proportions of the Pyramids and their internal galleries and mysterious chambers, we shall probably never know with certainty. But a haunting sense of death and of the other world seems to oppress us in its atmosphere, as it does in the grim senses of the "Book of the Dead". As Prof. T.E. Peet remarks (Cambridge Ancient History, vol I, p. 354), "the Egyptian mind closely associated together men, gods, and the dead as merely three species of a single genus." Each of these is considered was subject to an irresistible force called Hike or Heka: hence the force of Magic, Incantations to the Dead, and Rites and Formularies in daily life.

The Middle Kingdom brings us face to face with fresh ideas. We have no data with which to appraise the influence of foreign cults and foreign ideas during the period. But knowing, as we do, how Egypt acted as a magnet to the world at large and how many points of contact the Euphrates valley civilizations and the Nile valley civilizations had with each other, we may well suppose a broadening of Egyptian culture and civilization in consequence. The Hyksos may have been Egyptianised in Egypt, but they could not have failed in their turn to contribute Syrian as Semitic ideas to Egypt. Among these were Monotheism, a patriarchal organization of society, and an impatience of priestly or caste denomination. These must have contrasted strangely with the chaotic Pantheon of countless deities.

The New Empire was the flowering period of Egyptian genius and requires special consideration. The crudities of the old pre Dynastic chaotic Pantheon had been in process of attrition through the centuries. Local gods tended to be absorbed into general gods. Some sort of rationalism and spiritualization had been going on throughout the Dynastic period. A process of systemization and

unification was now consciously undertaken. The primitive worship of animals had gradually been transformed into a system of animal gods, with human bodies and animal heads. The human bodies represented the anthropomorphic tendencies, while the animal heads became types of qualities. For example, - Anubis, with the dog emblem, was the doorkeeper, the messenger, the custodian of the dead. - Apis, or Hapis, the sacred bull of Memphis, symbolized the renewal of life, he was identified with Osiris; there were great rejoicing when a new Apis (a black bull calf) was found, and great mourning and costly burial when one died. - Thoth, the god of wisdom and magic, was symbolized by an ibis, that stately, mute, mysterious bird of passage in the Nile valley. In addition to the symbolism of animals, there was the worship of the great phenomena of nature, the Nile, the giver of agricultural bounties to Egypt, and the sun, which, as the god Ra, became the supreme god in Egypt. Then there was the myth of Osiris the good, who came to the earth for the benefit of mankind, was killed by the magic of Set, the power of evil, and reign as the judge of the dead in the lower world. His faithful wife Isis and his falcon-eyed son Horus figure in the mysteries. It is possible that the Osiris myth itself arose from a myth of the Nile, or the sun. There was a gradual perception of Monotheism, a realization that Allah is One and above names. But the picturesque forms, festivals, and representations remained, and as the priests of all grades enjoyed special privileges and monopolized knowledge and learning, the people remained ignorant. They were exploited and practically enslaved. It was in the midst of such conditions that Moses came. He came to rescue his own people from the bondage of Egypt, a task which he performed. But it must not be forgotten that his mission was also addressed to the king of Egypt, and to the people of Egypt. Here also he sowed the seed, although he did not reap the fruit. The king, the Pharaoh, was almost looked upon as a god, and looked upon himself as a god. He had to be humbled, and he was humbled. But Allah's purpose is not merely to humble. It is also to lead from darkness to light. If the particular Pharaoh was too hard hearted to respond, his descendant in the fifth or sixth generation made a public confession of the One True God, as we shall see presently. What of the people?

The wise men of Egypt, who were confronted with Moses, repented of their deceit, and saw the light by the Grace of Allah, according to the Quranic narrative. Though they were threatened and perhaps martyred, their fate must have opened the eyes of the people and prepared them for the remarkable religious revolution which we shall now proceed to describe. The Pharaoh of the Exodus was probably Thothmes I (about 1540 B.C.). The Pharaoh Amenophis IV (about 1350 B.C.) adopted the worship of the One Supreme God as the State religion. He had been a high priest of the Sungod at Heliopolis, but had begun to look upon the multiplicity of gods in the Egyptian Pantheon as a blot on Egyptian religion. His original name had been Ahmen-hotep ("Ammon is satisfied") as being devoted to Ammon the great god of the State religion at Thebes. He changed the name to Akhan-Aton ("Pious to Aton") and worshipped the Supreme God under the name of Aton. He abandoned the city of Thebes as being devoted to Ammon and founded a new city near the site of what is now Tel al Amarna, between Thebes and Memphis, and dedicated it to Aton the Supreme God. The clay tablets discovered at Tel al Amarna in 1887 throw much light on the relations of Egypt with her tributaries in Syria. The alphabet on the tablets is the Cuneiform of Assyria: the language is Semitic, and closely akin to Hebrew. Unfortunately the religious revolution of Amennophis IV did not last. The city was only inhabited twenty years. His second son-in-law and successor, Tutankh Aton, carried out a counter-revolution. He went back from Aton to the cult of Ammon. The recent finds from his tombs show what exquisite skill the artists and artisans of Egypt had been attained. The pure religion

remained established on the throne only for two generations but we need not suppose it was rooted out of the minds of the people.

The later Dynasties, XXI to XXXI, saw the decay of Egypt as a Power. The Assyrian and Persian invasions ultimately extinguished the freedom of Egypt. With the coming of Alexander the Great (332 B.C.) and the foundation of the city of Alexandria, a new era dawned on the culture of Egypt. It mingled with Greek and other thought, and became cosmopolitan in nature. Already in the time of Herodotus, the sensitive Greek mind had been impressed with the mystery and wisdom of Egypt. It now made the soil of Egypt cosmopolitan in religion, culture, and philosophy. The Ptolemaic dynasty held a broadly tolerant attitude, and even imported the rites of Serapis from the Black Sea and assimilated him to Apis the Bull of Memphis. The new cult of Serapis widely over the East, and later, when Egypt came under the Roman Empire (30 B. C.), into the very heart of the Empire. The Serapion in Alexandria, with its famous library, became for a few centuries the true intellectual center of the world. The very unfavorable picture drawn of Egyptian religion in Lytton's Last Days of Pompeii must be referred to the somewhat hybrid cult of Isis as practiced in foreign lands rather than to Egyptian religion generally. What course real Egyptian religion took in this period we have no means of judging accurately. In the light of earlier and later events we may suppose that the steady honest industrious Egyptian peasantry and people went on pursuing the even tenor of their career with the same mystic longing for a practical religion which was preparing them for purer forms of worship and a juster distribution of the fruits of labour.

Alexandria in the first centuries of the Christian era was resounding with the shouts of every kind of philosophy and the teaching of every kind of religious sect, from East and West, North and South, but mainly from the East, which was ever been a nursery of religious ideas. A special quarter was assigned to the Jews in the city. It became the true center of Hellenised Judaism, and may claim Josephus among its disciples. Neo-Pythagoreanism, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and Manichaeism found a home there Mithraism, which was so widely spread in the Roman Empire, especially in the army, in the first three centuries A.C., was probably represented on its philosophic side in Alexandria. Its intermixture of races, creeds, philosophies, and religions, produced an atmosphere of chaos, which was not cleared until the advent of Islam. But from a religious point of view our greatest interest in Egypt in the first seven centuries of the Christian era is in the development of Christianity itself. It is difficult to say even when exactly Christianity began to displace the older Egyptian cults. But when Christianity was well-established, we find Egypt one of its most important centers. But the new Christianity which was evolved out of the ruins of the Christ's simple teaching had four distinct attitudes towards organization, speculative doctrine, asceticism and mysticism.

1. The native Egyptians or Coptic Church was contemplative, ascetic, and mystical. Monasticism became so rampant that it seriously affected the growth of population and degraded the position of women.
2. The Alexandrian school developed on Greek lines-political, ambitious, speculative, philosophical, and liable to break up into numerous sects and heresies, each party trying to dominate and put down the others as heretical by the strong arm of the law.
3. The Bishop of Rome, when the seat of the Empire was transferred to Constantinople in 330, gradually developed political power in Italy. He inherited the Roman genius for organization, and the invasion of the Germanic tribes gave him an opportunity not only of extending the Roman Catholic Church over the whole of Central and Western Europe, but of establishing the Church as superior to the state when the Papacy became an

established political power. 4. The Orthodox Eastern Church, and all the sects which it fought in the East, tended ultimately to vanish before the advance of Islam. Had it not been for the vast Slav territories over which it obtained sway, in and around Russia and afterwards in Siberia, the Orthodox Eastern Church would have been reduced to a negligible position.

Before the Roman Catholic Church parted from the Orthodox Eastern Church, the united Church fought with and suppressed many so-called "heresies", some of which represented the view of primitive Christianity, and the scene of many of these doctrinal fights was in Egypt. The one that interests us most is Arianism. Arius was an Alexandrian Presbyter early in the fourth century A.C. and fought hard for the doctrine of Unity, the simple conception of the Eternal God, as against all the hair-splitting and irrational distinctions in the nature and persons of the Godhead, which finally crystallized in the doctrine of the Trinity, propounded and maintained with much personal acrimony by Athanasius. Athanasius himself was born in Alexandria and became Bishop of Alexandria. He may be counted as the father of Orthodoxy (as now understood by Christianity) and the real systematiser of the doctrine of the Trinity—"three in one and one in three." Up to the third century A.C. the Unitarians had been in the majority in the Christian Church, though subtle metaphysicians had started dispute as to the meanings of "God becoming man." The Logos or the Word, the Power of Allah, whether the Father and the Son were of the same substance or of similar substance, whether the Son could be said to have been created by the Father, and numerous questions of that kind. They do not interest us now, but they rent the Christians world into many jarring sects until the mission of our Holy Prophet dissipated the mists and reestablished the doctrine of Unity on a firm and rational basis.

The Christian Churches in the East, as well as the Germanic nations which came later into the fold, adhered to Unity although not in the pure form which was made clear in the Holy Quran. The issue was joined between Arius and Athanasius, and the first General Council on the Christian Church that of Nicaea (in Bithynia) in 325, decided against Arius and Unitarianism. The controversy, however, still continued to rage until 381, when the Council of Constantinople, called by the Emperor Theodosius the Great, confirmed the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity and declared it to be the only Orthodox one. Though controversies, protests, and persecutions continued long afterwards, we may take that date as the date of the fall of Christianity. Even in Western Christianity, as late as 496, Clovis, the Frankish king, was the only Christian sovereign sophisticated enough to follow the subtle doctrine of the Trinity. The others were brought into line by political power later. The Christian creed became narrower and narrower, less and less rational, more and more inclined in use earthly weapons to suppress the eternal truth of Allah. In 415 the Jews were expelled from Alexandria. In the same year and in the same city the beautiful, modest, eloquent philosopher and mathematician, Hypatia, was murdered—an outrage against both rationalism and the intellectual and religious position of woman in human society. The murder was a particularly brutal one. She was dragged from her chariot in the streets, stripped naked, and suffered a lingering death in a Christian Church. Her body was then cut to pieces and burned. The worst feature of the crime was the complicity of the Patriarch of Alexandria, who was not only the chief religious dignitary of the Orthodox Church in Egypt but the de facto repository of political power. Meanwhile the native Christian community—the Coptic Church—which had all along clung to the Monophysite doctrine, a corrupt form of Unitarianism, was out of the pale, and its members were held down as a depressed class by their Orthodox brethren.



The social conditions produced an amount of discontent, for which the redress came only with the advent of Islam. It was for this reason that the Copts and the inhabitants of Egypt generally welcomed the forces of Islam under 'Amr as deliverers in 639 A.C. the power was taken over by the victorious army of Islam from Cyrus (called Muqawqas in Arabic through the Coptic), the Patriarch of Alexandria, but it was used by the army of deliverance to enlarge the liberties of the Egyptians, to admit them into the universal brotherhood of Islam, and to improve the resources of the country for the benefit of the people. Except a negligible remnant of conservatives, the Egyptians as a nation accepted the religion, the language, and the institutions of the Arabs and embarked on a new course of history, which it is necessary to follow further in this note. It should be remarked, however, that what happened in Egypt happened generally in western Asia. The jarring sectarian irrational religious gave place before the triumphant religion of Unity and Brotherhood, and the Byzantine Empire receded and receded until it was swept out of existence.

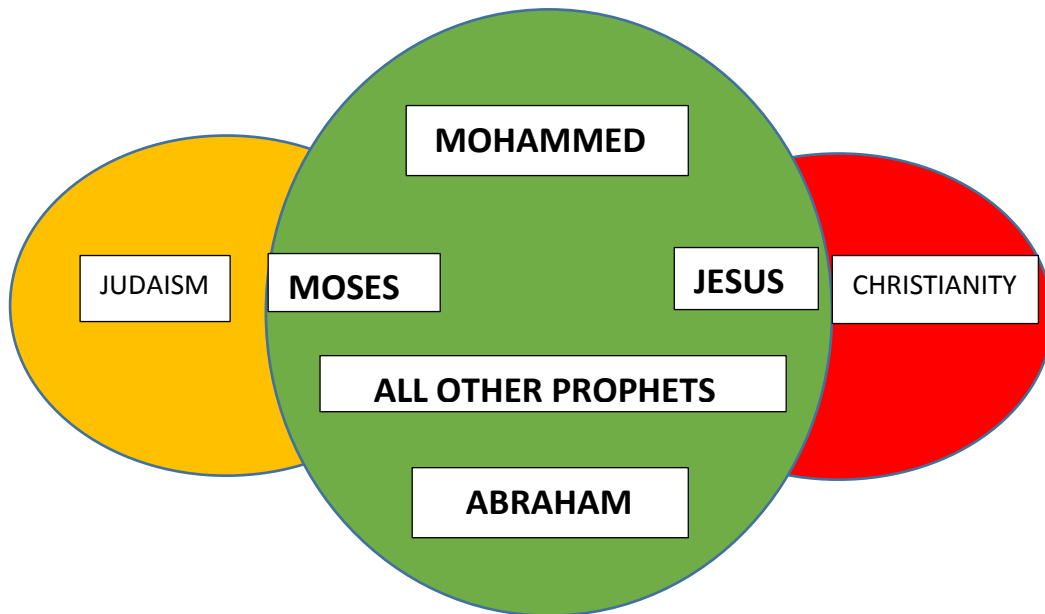
The feeble efforts made by the Emperor Leo the Isaurian in 726-731 to restrict the use of images were a reflection of the puritanical zeal of Islam. But they did not succeed in the area of his authority, and they completely alienated the Papacy from the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Bishop of Rome had been consolidating his power, and in the person of Gregory I (590-604) had already assumed the control of Italy and was seeking the aid and support of the Barbarian invaders who eventually became the pillars of the Papacy. The final and open rupture between the Orthodox Eastern Church and the Roman Catholic Church took place in 1054, but the earlier dates are remarkable. After the birth of the Holy Prophet of Islam the disruption of the Orthodox Christian Church (which had now become an anachronism) began.

When Islam was making its triumphant march in the 8th century after Christ, the original (Greek) Church began to take some steps to put its own house in order. But it had lost its mission, and the new Islamic people took its place. The Western Church has since worked on definitely new lines, and its offshoots among the Protestant Church have consciously or unconsciously, been influenced by the broad principles of Islam.

What the course of future religion may be and how Allah will unfold His All-Wise Plan is not given to us mortals to know. In the Islamic Brotherhood many changes have taken place and are taking place. Egypt, in spite of her many vicissitudes in the Islamic period, is in the intellectual forefront among the Arabic speaking nations of Islam. We pray that her people may be guided, through their educational, cultural, and religious channels, to work with a new spirit for the progress of Islam and the glory of Allah.

## **6. WHAT IS THE BASIC TACHING OF ISLAM ACCORDING TO QURAN?**

### **6.1. MONOTHEISM = ISLAM**



This is the basic scheme till today according to the Holy Quran. When Mohammed (PBUH) came he didn't bring new religion. Allah's wish was to unite the Monotheist religions to the same pure bases as it started with Abraham (PBUH). In the previous items we could see how the teachings of the Prophets were changed and became the religion only a cover of some very "human" action instead to remain "divine". As soon as religions were manipulated by humans like Churches or religious organizations the institutional interests prevailed over the pure Faith and the teachings of Monotheism were corrupted. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century of Arabia under the title Judaism some cabalistic tradition with strange interpretations of Torah was followed. Sure it was something different than the Mosaic laws. The same deviations happened with the Christianity, especially after the Council of Niceae in 325 A. D.

The first followers of the Prophet were those pagan Arabs, Christians and Jews who could comprehend Allah's wish for purification. The teaching were close to their hearts because they could discover their own original principles confirmed by Islam in a purer way.

**42:13 Originally there was only ONE religion:**

*The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah - the which We have sent by inspiration to thee - and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: Namely, that ye should remain steadfast in religion, and make no divisions therein: to those who worship other things than Allah, hard is the (way) to which thou callest them. Allah chooses to Himself those whom He pleases, and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him).*

**42:14 However due to human weakness religions divided into different sects:**

*And they became divided only after Knowledge reached them,- through selfish envy as between themselves. Had it not been for a Word that went forth before from thy Lord, (tending) to a Term appointed, the matter would have been settled between them: But truly those who have inherited the Book after them are in suspicious (disquieting) doubt concerning it*

**2:285. Islam recognizes the previous Monotheist Book, Prophets, and revelations in their original form:**

*The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles. "We make no*

*distinction (they say) between one and another of His apostles." And they say: "We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys*

**3:64 Islam calls other Monotheist religions to unite under the terms of the similar Belief:**

*Say: "O People of the Book! come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will)*

**5:51 This is an Aya which was misinterpreted during centuries in order to lit the fire of enmity:**

*O ye who believe! take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust.*

There are some misunderstandings about this verse. First of all we have to be aware about the love of Allah towards us. No matter we belong to which religion or affiliation the love and grace of Allah is there for us. Secondly, we cannot speak about people in general. If we state that Jews or Christians in general are bad they can also state that we Muslims in general are bad. Therefore we have to go down to the details and find the real point. Giving all my respect to H. E. Yusuf Ali, based on the above principles I'd like to suggest to change this English translation: "O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors: They are but friends and protectors to each other." My suggestion is: "O ye who believe! Take not **those** Jews and **those** Christians for your friends and protectors **who are** friends and protectors to each other (against you)." Even the Arabic text is giving this meaning. In my humble opinion the intention of Allah is to exclude from our friendship those Jews and those Christians who are each other's friends in order to establish alliance against us. The warning against them is logic. I think the ever loving Allah is not asking from us to exclude all Jews and all Christians categorically from our name list. Among them are also very nice and righteous people and our Quran confirms that.

**2:116 Islam doesn't accept the divinity of Jesus and regards blasphemy if one attributes to Allah a child.**

*They say: "(Allah) hath begotten a son" :Glory be to Him.-Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him.*

**4:157 Islam doesn't recognize the crucifixion and salvation of Jesus in the past.**

*That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.:- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not.*

The end of the life of Jesus on earth is as much involved in mystery as his birth, and indeed the greater part of his private life, except the three main years of his ministry. It is not profitable to discuss the many doubts and conjectures among the early Christian sects and among Muslim theologians. The Christian Churches make it a cardinal point of their doctrine that his life was taken on the Cross, that he died and was buried, that on the third day he rose in the body with his wounds intact, and walked about and conversed, and ate with his disciples, and was afterwards taken up bodily to heaven. This is necessary for the theological doctrine of blood sacrifice and vicarious atonement for sins, which is rejected by Islam. But some of the early Christian sects did not believe that Christ was killed on the Cross. – Some of them believed that some one else was substituted for him. - Others held that Christ never had a real physical or natural body, but only an apparent or phantom body, and that his Crucifixion was only apparent, not real. - The Marcionite Gospel (about A.D. 138) denied that Jesus was born, and merely said that he appeared in human form. The Gospel of St. Barnabas supported the theory of substitution on the Cross. The Quranic teaching is that Christ

was not crucified nor killed by the Jews, notwithstanding certain apparent circumstances which produced that illusion in the minds of some of his enemies: that disputations, doubts, and conjectures on such matters are vain; and that he was taken up to Allah.

**43:61 However Islam recognize Jesus as our Messiah before the Hour of Judgement.**

*And (Jesus) shall be a Sign (for the coming of) the Hour (of Judgment): therefore have no doubt about the (Hour), but follow ye Me: this is a Straight Way*

**49:13 The basic idea of Islam was the unification of Monotheist Faiths where the degree and honor between people was set up according to the righteousness of a person under the service of Allah's creatures.**

*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)*

This is addressed to all mankind and not only to the Muslim brotherhood, though it is understood that in a perfected world the two would be synonymous. As it is, mankind is descended from one pair of parents. Their tribes, races, and nations are convenient labels by which we may know certain differing characteristics. Before Allah they are all one, and he gets most honour who is most righteous.

**2:40 Islam recognizes the contemporary chosen status of the children of Israel. The Mosaic laws (shariya) was the evidence of this Covenant.**

*O Children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with Me as I fulfil My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me.*

**2:79 However this law has become victim of human manipulation**

*Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands, and then say: "This is from Allah," to traffic with it for miserable price!- Woe to them for what their hands do write, and for the gain they make thereby*

**2:87 Allah sent His Prophets to terminate human distortions and manipulations in order to restore His message in their original form and context. However usually mankind prefer the false way and refuse the Truth.**

*We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of apostles; We gave Jesus the son of Mary Clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the holy spirit. Is it that whenever there comes to you an apostle with what ye yourselves desire not, ye are puffed up with pride?- Some ye called impostors, and others ye slay*

**2:62 1400 years ago Islam didn't enunciate the Heaven as the place for only Muslims. It is the place for all righteous follower of any Monotheist Faith as far as Islam considers them as part of the Islamic thought.**

*Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,- any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve*

**Deuteronomy 18:18-19 Jews of Medina refused the Prophecy of Mohammed (PBUH). However among the oracles of the Old Testament there is a Prophet "from their fellow Israelites" who will raise up. Muslims consider the Arabs under this Prophecy.**

<sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. <sup>19</sup> I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.

**61:6 Words of Jesus confirmed the advent of Mohammed (PBUH), too.**

*And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: "O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of an Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said, "this is evident sorcery*

The mission of Jesus was to his own people, the Jews. Cf. Matt. 10:5-6. See also Matt. 15:24: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel;" also Matt. 15:26: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs."

"Ahmad", or "Muhammad", the Praised One, is almost a translation of the Greek word Pericyltos. In the present Gospel of John. 14:16, 15:26, and 16:7, the word "Comforter" in the English version is for the Greek word "Paracletos", which means "Advocate", "one called to the help of another, a kind friend", rather than "Comforter". Our doctors contend that Paracleots is a corrupt reading for Pericyltos, and that in their original saying of Jesus there was a prophecy of our holy Prophet Ahmad by name. Even if we read Paraclete, it would apply to the holy Prophet, who is "a Mercy for all creatures" (21:107) and "most kind and merciful to the Believers" (9:128).

**61:9 The often misunderstood verse which caused meaningless death of masses. This verse concerns for Monotheism as a whole and cannot be applicable for resolving the disputes between the different Monotheist sects.**

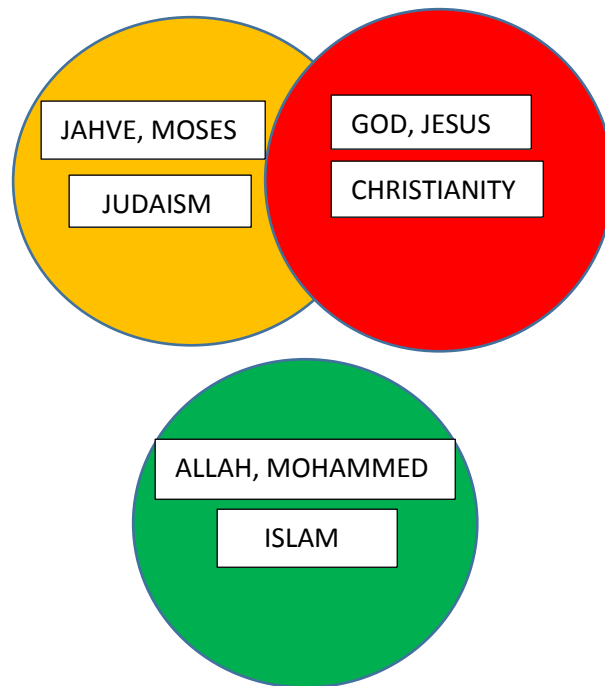
*It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, that he may proclaim it over all religion, even though the Pagans may detest (it).*

"Over all religion": in the singular: not over all other religions, in the plural. There is really only one true Religion, the Message of Allah submission to the Will of Allah: this is called Islam. It was the religion preached by Moses and Jesus; it was the religion of Abraham, Noah, and all the prophets, by whatever name it may be called. If people corrupt that pure light, and call their religions by different names, we must bear with them, and we may allow the names for convenience. But Truth must prevail over all.

**5:3 This is last revelation of Mohammed (PBUH). By this aya Allah sanctions His Words and Message according to the above mentioned context.**

*This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.*

## **6.2. WHAT IS THE ISLAMIC UNDERSTANDING TODAY?**



Today the religious understanding is quite different than it was 1400 years ago. Western societies have begun to globalize the world where moral and ethics is provided by the Judeo-Christian principles. The original teachings of Islam are misinterpreted and only those scholars come up into the surface who ignore the basic principles and fight with or against the globalizing powers. The external world and even part of Muslims think that Islam is a religion what these scholars are preaching while we go astray from the classical Islamic thinking every day more.