


Muhammad

Muhammad (Arabic: ^[1] *Muḥammad*, pronounced [muħħæmmæd] ( listen)^[2]), (or sometimes Muhammad ibn `Abdullah and also transliterated as **Muhammed**, **Mohammad** or **Mohammed**)^{[3][4]} (ca. 26 April 570 – 8 June 632)^[1] (Monday, 12th Rabi' al-Awwal, Year 11 A.H.), was the founder^[5] of the religion of Islam,^[2] and is considered by Muslims to be a messenger and prophet of God, the last law-bearer in a series of Islamic prophets, and, by most Muslims,^[6] the last prophet of God as taught by the Quran.^[3] Muslims thus consider him the restorer of an uncorrupted original monotheistic faith (*islām*) of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and other prophets.^{[4][5][6]} He was also active as a social reformer, diplomat, merchant, philosopher, orator, legislator, military leader, humanitarian, philanthropist, and, according to Muslim belief, an agent of divine action.^[7]

Born in 570 in the Arabian city of Mecca,^[8] he was orphaned at an early age and brought up under the care of his uncle Abu Talib. He later worked mostly as a merchant, as well as a shepherd, and was first married by age 25. Discontented with life in Mecca, he retreated to a cave in the surrounding mountains for meditation and reflection. According to Islamic beliefs it was here, at age 40, in the month of Ramadan, where he received his first revelation from God. Three years after this event Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "surrender" to Him (lit. *islām*) is the only way (*dīn*)^[9] acceptable to God, and that he himself was a prophet and messenger of God, in the same vein as other Islamic prophets.^{[6][9][10]}

Muhammad gained few followers early on, and was met with hostility from some Meccan tribes; he and his followers were treated harshly. To escape persecution, Muhammad sent some of his followers to Abyssinia before he and his remaining followers in Mecca migrated to Medina (then known as Yathrib) in the year 622. This event, the Hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar, which is also known as the Hijri Calendar. In Medina, Muhammad united the conflicting tribes, and after eight years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, his followers, who by then had grown to 10,000, conquered Mecca. In 632, a few months after returning to Medina from his Farewell pilgrimage, Muhammad fell ill and died. By the time of his death, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam, and he had united the tribes of Arabia into a single Muslim religious polity.^{[11][12]}

The revelations (or *Ayah*, lit. "Signs of God")—which Muhammad reported receiving until his death—form the verses of the Quran, regarded by Muslims as the "Word of God" and around which the religion is based. Besides the Qur'an, Muhammad's life (*sira*) and traditions (*sunnah*) are also upheld by Muslims. They discuss Muhammad and other prophets of Islam with reverence, adding the phrase *peace be upon him* whenever their names are mentioned.^[13] While conceptions of Muhammad in medieval Christendom and premodern times were largely negative, appraisals in modern history have been far less so.^{[10][14]} His life and deeds have been debated and criticized by followers and opponents over the centuries.^[15]

Names and appellations in the Quran

The name *Muhammad* means "Praiseworthy" and occurs four times in the Quran.^[16] The Quran addresses Muhammad in the second person not by his name but by the appellations prophet, messenger, servant of God (*abd*), announcer (*bashir*)^[Qur'an 2:119], witness (*shahid*),^[Qur'an 33:45] bearer of good tidings (*mubashshir*), warner (*nathir*),^[Qur'an 11:2] reminder (*mudhakkir*),^[Qur'an 88:21] one who calls [unto God] (*dā'i*),^[Qur'an 12:108] light personified (*noor*)^[Qur'an 05:15], and the light-giving lamp (*siraj munir*)^[Qur'an 73:1]. Muhammad is sometimes addressed by designations deriving from his state at the time of the address: thus he is referred to as the enwrapped (*al-muzzammil*) in Qur'an 73:1 and the shrouded (*al-muddaththir*) in Qur'an 74:1.^[17] In the Qur'an, believers are not to distinguish between the messengers of God and are to believe in all of them (Sura Al-Baqara 2:285). God has caused some messengers to excel above others 2:253 and in Sura Al-Ahzab 33:40 He singles out Muhammad as the "Seal of the Prophets".^[18] The Qur'an also refers to Muhammad as *Aḥmad* "more praiseworthy" (Arabic: , Sura As-Saff 61:6).

Sources for Muhammad's life

Quran

The Quran is the primary source of information for Islam. It is the central religious text of Islam and Muslims believe it represents the words of God revealed to Muhammad through Gabriel.^{[19][20][15]} Although it mentions Muhammad directly only four times,^[21] verses can be interpreted as allusions to Muhammad's life.^{[10][18]}

Early biographies

Next in importance are historical works by writers of the 3rd and 4th centuries of the Muslim era.^[22] These include the traditional Muslim biographies of Muhammad (the *sira* literature), which provide further information on Muhammad's life.^[23]

The earliest surviving written *sira* (biographies of Muhammad and quotes attributed to him) is Ibn Ishaq's *Life of God's Messenger* written ca. 767 (150 AH). The work is lost, but was used verbatim at great length by Ibn Hisham and Al-Tabari.^{[24][25]} Another early source is the history of Muhammad's campaigns by al-Waqidi (death 207 of Muslim era), and the work of his secretary Ibn Sa'd al-Baghdadi (death 230 of Muslim era).^[22]

Many scholars accept the accuracy of the earliest biographies, though their accuracy is unascertainable.^[24] Recent studies have led scholars to distinguish between the traditions touching legal matters and the purely historical ones. In the former sphere, traditions could have been subject to invention while in the latter sphere, aside from exceptional cases, the material may have been only subject to "tendential shaping".^[26]

Hadith

In addition, the hadith collections are accounts of the verbal and physical traditions of Muhammad that date from several generations after his death.^[27] Hadith compilations are records of the traditions or sayings of Muhammad. They might be defined as the biography of Muhammad perpetuated by the long memory of his community for their exemplification and obedience.^[28]

Western academics view the hadith collections with caution as accurate historical sources.^[27] Scholars such as Madelung do not reject the narrations which have been compiled in later periods, but judge them in the context of history and on the basis of their compatibility with the events and figures.^[29] Although usually discounted by historians, oral tradition plays a major role in the Islamic understanding of Muhammad.^[35]

Non-Arabic sources

The earliest documented Christian knowledge of Muhammad stems from Byzantine sources. They indicate that both Jews and Christians saw Muhammad as a deceiving prophet, or at least certain circles did. In the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati* of 634, Muhammad is portrayed as being "deceiving[,] for do prophets come with sword and chariot?, [...] you will discover nothing true from the said prophet except human bloodshed."^[30] Another Greek source for Muhammad is the 9th-century writer Theophanes. The earliest Syriac source is the 7th-century writer John bar Penkaye.^[31]

Pre-Islamic Arabia

The Arabian Peninsula was largely arid and volcanic, making agriculture difficult except near oases or springs. The landscape was thus dotted with towns and cities, two prominent ones being Mecca and Medina. Medina was a large flourishing agricultural settlement, while Mecca was an important financial center for many surrounding tribes.^[32] Communal life was essential for survival in the desert conditions, as people needed support against the harsh environment and lifestyle. Tribal grouping was encouraged by the need to act as a unit, this unity being based on the bond of kinship by blood.^[33] Indigenous Arabs were either nomadic or sedentary, the former constantly travelling from one place to another seeking water and pasture for their flocks, while the latter settled and focused on trade and agriculture. Nomadic survival was also dependent on raiding caravans or oases, the nomads not viewing this as a crime.^{[34][35]}

In pre-Islamic Arabia, gods or goddesses were viewed as protectors of individual tribes, their spirits being associated with sacred trees, stones, springs and wells. As well as being the site of an annual pilgrimage, the Kaaba shrine in Mecca housed 360 idol statues of tribal patron deities. Aside from these gods, the Arabs shared a common belief in a supreme deity called Allah (literally "the god"), who was remote from their everyday concerns and thus not the object of cult or ritual. Three goddesses were associated with Allah as his daughters: Allāt, Manāt and al-'Uzzá. Monotheistic communities existed in Arabia, including Christians and Jews.^[36] Hanifs – native pre-Islamic Arab monotheists – are also sometimes listed alongside Jews and Christians in pre-Islamic Arabia, although their historicity is disputed amongst scholars.^{[37][38]} According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad himself was a Hanif and one of the descendants of Ishmael, son of Abraham.^[39]

Muhammad was born and lived in Mecca for the first 52 years of his life (570–622) which was divided into two phases, that is before and after declaring the prophecy.

Childhood and early life

Muhammad was born in the month of Rabi' al-awwal in 570. He belonged to the Banu Hashim, one of the prominent families of Mecca, although it seems not to have been prosperous during Muhammad's early lifetime.^{[10][41]} Tradition places the year of Muhammad's birth as corresponding with the Year of the Elephant, which is named after the failed destruction of Mecca that year

by the Aksumite king Abraha who had in his army a number of elephants. Recent scholarship has suggested alternative dates for this event, such as 568 or 569.^[42]

Muhammad's father, Abdullah, died almost six months before he was born.^[43] According to the tradition, soon after Muhammad's birth he was sent to live with a Bedouin family in the desert, as the desert-life was considered healthier for infants. Muhammad stayed with his foster-mother, Halimah bint Abi Dhuayb, and her husband until he was two years old. Some western scholars of Islam have rejected the historicity of this tradition.^[44] At the age of six Muhammad lost his mother Amina to illness and he became fully orphaned.^[45] He was subsequently brought up for two years under the guardianship of his paternal grandfather Abd al-Muttalib, of the Banu Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe. When Muhammad was eight, his grandfather also died. He now came under the care of his uncle Abu Talib, the new leader of Banu Hashim.^[42] According to Watt, because of the general disregard of the guardians in taking care of weak members of the tribes in Mecca in the 6th century, "Muhammad's guardians saw that he did not starve to death, but it was hard for them to do more for him, especially as the fortunes of the clan of Hashim seem to have been declining at that time."^[46]

While still in his teens, Muhammad accompanied his uncle on trading journeys to Syria gaining experience in the commercial trade, the only career open to Muhammad as an orphan.^[46] According to tradition, when Muhammad was either nine or twelve while accompanying the Meccans' caravan to Syria, he met a Christian monk or hermit named Bahira who is said to have foreseen Muhammad's career as a prophet of God.^[47]

Little is known of Muhammad during his later youth, and from the fragmentary information that is available, it is hard to separate history from legend.^[46] It is known that he became a merchant and "was involved in trade between the Indian ocean and the Mediterranean Sea."^[48] Due to his upright character he acquired the nickname "al-Amin" (Arabic: أمين), meaning "faithful, trustworthy" and was sought out as an impartial arbitrator.^{[8][10][49]} His reputation attracted a proposal from Khadijah, a forty-year-old widow in 595. Muhammad

At some point Muhammad adopted the practice of meditating alone for several weeks every year in a cave on Mount Hira near Mecca.^{[50][51]} Islamic tradition holds that during one of his visits to Mount Hira, the angel Gabriel appeared to him in the year 610 and commanded Muhammad to recite the following verses.^[52]

he cave Hira in the mountain Jabal al-Nour where, according to Muslim belief, Muhammad received his first revelation. Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created- Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,- He Who taught (the use of) the pen,- Taught man that which he knew not. —Qur'an, sura 96 (Al-Alaq), ayat 1-5^[53]

According to some traditions, upon receiving his first revelations Muhammad was deeply distressed.^[54] After returning home, Muhammad was consoled and reassured by Khadijah and her Christian cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal. Shi'a tradition maintains that Muhammad was neither surprised nor frightened at the appearance of Gabriel but rather welcomed him as if he had been expecting him.^[55] The initial revelation was followed by a pause of three years during which Muhammad further gave himself to prayers and spiritual practices. When the revelations resumed he was reassured and commanded to begin preaching: "Thy Guardian-Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased."^{[56][57][58]}

A depiction of Muhammad receiving his first revelation from the angel Gabriel. From the book Jami' al-tawarikh by Rashid-al-Din Hamadani, published in 1307 AD, Ilkhanate period.

According to Welch these revelations were accompanied by mysterious seizures, and the reports are unlikely to have been forged by later Muslims.^[10] Muhammad was confident that he could distinguish his own thoughts from these messages.^[59] According to the Qur'an, one of the main roles of Muhammad is to warn the unbelievers of their eschatological punishment (Qur'an 38:70, Qur'an 6:19). Sometimes the Qur'an does not explicitly refer to the Judgment day but provides examples from the history of some extinct communities and warns Muhammad's contemporaries of similar calamities (Qur'an 41:13–16).^[17] Muhammad is not only a warner to those who reject God's revelation, but also a bearer of good news for those who abandon evil, listen to the divine word and serve God.^[60] Muhammad's mission also involves preaching monotheism: The Qur'an demands Muhammad to proclaim and praise the name of his Lord and instructs him not to worship idols or associate other deities with God.^[17]

The key themes of the early Qur'anic verses included the responsibility of man towards his creator; the resurrection of dead, God's final judgment followed by vivid descriptions of the tortures in hell and pleasures in Paradise; and the signs of God in all aspects of life. Religious duties required of the believers at this time were few: belief in God, asking for forgiveness of sins, offering frequent prayers, assisting others particularly those in need, rejecting cheating and the love of wealth (considered to be significant in the commercial life of Mecca), being chaste and not to kill newborn girls.^[10]

Opposition

According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad's wife Khadija was the first to believe he was a prophet.^[61] She was soon followed by Muhammad's ten-year-old cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib, close friend Abu Bakr, and adopted son Zaid.^[61] Around 613, Muhammad began his public preaching (Qur'an 26:214).^[62] Most Meccans ignored him and mocked him, while a few others became his followers. There were three main groups of early converts to Islam: younger brothers and sons of great merchants; people who had fallen out of the first rank in their tribe or failed to attain it; and the weak, mostly unprotected foreigners.^[63]

According to Ibn Sad, the opposition in Mecca started when Muhammad delivered verses that condemned idol worship and the Meccan forefathers who engaged in polytheism.^[64] However, the Qur'anic exegesis maintains that it began as soon as Muhammad started public preaching.^[65] As the number of followers increased, he became a threat to the local tribes and the rulers of the city, whose wealth rested upon the Kaaba, the focal point of Meccan religious life, which Muhammad threatened to overthrow. Muhammad's denunciation of the Meccan traditional religion was especially offensive to his own tribe, the Quraysh, as they were the guardians of the Ka'aba.^[63] The powerful merchants tried to convince Muhammad to abandon his preaching by offering him admission into the inner circle of merchants, and establishing his position therein by an advantageous marriage. However, he refused.^[63]

Tradition records at great length the persecution and ill-treatment of Muhammad and his followers.^[40] Sumayyah bint Khabbab, a slave of a prominent Meccan leader Abu Jahl, is famous as the first martyr of Islam, having been killed with a spear by her master when she refused to give up her faith. Bilal, another Muslim slave, was tortured by Umayyah ibn Khalaf who placed a heavy rock on his chest to force his conversion.^{[66][67]} Apart from insults, Muhammad was protected from physical harm as he belonged to the Banu Hashim clan.^{[68][69]}

After being persecuted by the Meccans, some of the early converts to Islam sought refuge in the Aksumite Empire (shown above).

In 615, some of Muhammad's followers emigrated to the Ethiopian Aksumite Empire and founded a small colony there under the protection of the Christian Ethiopian emperor Ashama ibn Abjar.^[10]

An early hadith known as "The Story of the Cranes" (translation: قصة ارناع الغالا, transliteration: Qissat al Gharaneeq) was propagated by two Islamic scholars, Ibn Kathir al Dimashqi and Ibn Hijir al Masri, where the former has strengthened it and the latter called it fabricated^[70] (see Science of hadith). The hadith describes Muhammad's involvement at the time of migration in an episode which historian William Muir called the "Satanic Verses". The account holds that Muhammad pronounced a verse acknowledging the existence of three Meccan goddesses considered to be the daughters of Allah, praising them, and appealing for their intercession. According to this account, Muhammad later retracted the verses at the behest of Gabriel.^[n.9] Islamic scholars have weakened the hadith^[71] and have denied the historicity of the incident as early as the tenth century.^[72] In any event, relations between the Muslims and their pagan fellow-tribesmen were already deteriorated and worsening.

In 617, the leaders of Makhzum and Banu Abd-Shams, two important Quraysh clans, declared a public boycott against Banu Hashim, their commercial rival, to pressurize it into withdrawing its protection of Muhammad. The boycott lasted three years but eventually collapsed as it failed in its objective.^{[73][74]}

Isra and Mi'raj

Islamic tradition relates that in 620, Muhammad experienced the Isra and Mi'raj, a miraculous journey said to have occurred with the angel Gabriel in one night. In the first part of the journey, the Isra, he is said to have travelled from Mecca on a winged horse to "the farthest mosque" (in Arabic: masjid al-aqsa), which Muslims usually identify with the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. In the second part, the Mi'raj, Muhammad is said to have toured heaven and hell, and spoken with earlier prophets, such as Abraham,

Moses, and Jesus.^[75] Ibn Ishag, author of the first biography of Muhammad, presents this event as a spiritual experience whereas later historians like Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir present it as a physical journey.^[75]

When he was transported to Heaven, he reported^{[citation needed][dubious – discuss]} seeing an angel with "70,000 heads, each head having 70,000 mouths, each mouth having 70,000 tongues, each tongue speaking 70,000 languages; and every one involved in singing God's (Allah's) praises." After calculation this would mean the angel spoke 24 quintillion (2.401×10^{19}) languages for the praise of Allah. This description is similar word for word to the description of an angel seen by Moses in "The Revelation of Moses".^[76]

Some western scholars of Islam hold that the oldest Muslim tradition identified the journey as one traveled through the heavens from the sacred enclosure at Mecca to the celestial *al-Baytu l-Ma'mur* (heavenly prototype of the Kaaba); but later tradition identified Muhammad's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem.^[77]

Last years in Mecca before Hijra

Muhammad's wife Khadijah and his uncle Abu Talib both died in 619, the year thus being known as the "year of sorrow". With the death of Abu Talib, the leadership of the Banu Hashim clan was passed to Abu Lahab, an inveterate enemy of Muhammad. Soon afterwards, Abu Lahab withdrew the clan's protection from Muhammad. This placed Muhammad in danger of death since the withdrawal of clan protection implied that the blood revenge for his killing would not be exacted. Muhammad then visited Ta'if, another important city in Arabia, and tried to find a protector for himself there, but his effort failed and further brought him into physical danger.^{[10][74]} Muhammad was forced to return to Mecca. A Meccan man named Mut'im b. Adi (and the protection of the tribe of Banu Nawfal) made it possible for him safely to re-enter his native city.^{[10][74]}

Many people were visiting Mecca on business or as pilgrims to the Kaaba. Muhammad took this opportunity to look for a new home for himself and his followers. After several unsuccessful negotiations, he found hope with some men from Yathrib (later called Medina).^[10] The Arab population of Yathrib were familiar with monotheism because a Jewish community existed there.^[10] Converts to Islam came from nearly all Arab tribes in Medina, such that by June of the subsequent year there were seventy-five Muslims coming to Mecca for pilgrimage and to meet Muhammad. Meeting him secretly by night, the group made what was known as the "Second Pledge of al-Aqaba", or the "Pledge of War".^[79] Following the pledges at Aqabah, Muhammad encouraged his followers to emigrate to Yathrib. As with the migration to Abyssinia, the Quraysh attempted to stop the emigration. However, almost all Muslims managed to leave.^[80]

Migration to Medina

A delegation consisting of the representatives of the twelve important clans of Medina, invited Muhammad as a neutral outsider to Medina to serve as chief arbitrator for the entire community.^{[81][82]} There was fighting in Yathrib mainly involving its Arab and Jewish inhabitants for around a hundred years before 620.^[81] The recurring slaughters and disagreements over the resulting claims, especially after the Battle of Bu'ath in which all clans were involved, made it obvious to them that the tribal conceptions of blood-feud and an eye for an eye were no longer workable unless there was one man with authority to adjudicate in disputed cases.^[81] The delegation from Medina pledged themselves and their fellow-citizens to accept Muhammad into their community and physically protect him as one of themselves.^[10]

Muhammad instructed his followers to emigrate to Medina until virtually all his followers left Mecca. Being alarmed at the departure of Muslims, according to the tradition, the Meccans plotted to assassinate Muhammad. With the help of Ali, Muhammad fooled the Meccans who were watching him, and secretly slipped away from the town with Abu Bakr.^[83] By 622, Muhammad emigrated to Medina, a large agricultural oasis. Those who migrated from Mecca along with Muhammad became known as muhajirun (emigrants).^[10]

Establishment of a new polity

Among the first things Muhammad did in order to settle down the longstanding grievances among the tribes of Medina was drafting a document known as the Constitution of Medina, "establishing a kind of alliance or federation" among the eight Medinan tribes and Muslim emigrants from Mecca, which specified the rights and duties of all citizens and the relationship of the different communities in Medina (including that of the Muslim community to other communities, specifically the Jews and other "Peoples of the Book").^{[81][82]} The community defined in the Constitution of Medina, Ummah, had a religious outlook but was also shaped by practical considerations and substantially preserved the legal forms of the old Arab tribes.^[10] It effectively established the first Islamic state.

The first group of pagan converts to Islam in Medina were the clans who had not produced great leaders for themselves but had suffered from warlike leaders from other clans. This was followed by the general acceptance of Islam by the pagan population of Medina, apart from some exceptions. According to Ibn Ishaq, this was influenced by the conversion of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh (a prominent Medinan leader) to Islam.^[84] Those Medinans who converted to Islam and helped the Muslim emigrants find shelter became known as the ansar (supporters).^[10] Then Muhammad instituted brotherhood between the emigrants and the supporters and he chose Ali as his own brother.^[85]

Beginning of armed conflict

Main articles: Military career of Muhammad and Battle of Badr

Following the emigration, the Meccans seized the properties of the Muslim emigrants in Mecca.^[86] Economically uprooted and with no available profession, the Muslim migrants turned to raiding Meccan caravans as an act of war, deliberately initiating armed conflict between the Muslims and Mecca.^{[87][88]} Muhammad delivered Qur'anic verses permitting the Muslims to fight the Meccans (see sura Al-Hajj, Qur'an 22:39–40).^[89] These attacks pressured Mecca by interfering with trade, and allowed the Muslims to acquire wealth, power and prestige while working towards their ultimate goal of inducing Mecca's submission to the new faith.^{[90][91]}

In March of 624, Muhammad led some three hundred warriors in a raid on a Meccan merchant caravan. The Muslims set an ambush for them at Badr.^[92] Aware of the plan, the Meccan caravan eluded the Muslims. Meanwhile, a force from Mecca was sent to protect the caravan, continuing forward to confront the Muslims upon hearing that the caravan was safe. The Battle of Badr began in March of 624.^[93] Though outnumbered more than three to one, the Muslims won the battle, killing at least forty-five Meccans with only fourteen Muslims dead. They also succeeded in killing many Meccan leaders, including Abu Jahl.^[94] Seventy prisoners had been acquired, many of whom were soon ransomed in return for wealth or freed.^{[87][95][96]} Muhammad and his followers saw in the victory a confirmation of their faith.^[10] The Qur'anic verses of this period, unlike the Meccan ones, dealt with practical problems of government and issues like the distribution of spoils.^[97]

The victory strengthened Muhammad's position in Medina and dispelled earlier doubts among his followers. As a result the opposition to him became less vocal. Pagans who had not yet converted were very bitter about the advance of Islam. Two pagans, Asma bint Marwan and Abu 'Afaq, had composed verses taunting and insulting the Muslims. They were killed by people belonging to their own or related clans, and no blood-feud followed.^[98]

Muhammad expelled from Medina the Banu Qaynuqa, one of three main Jewish tribes.^[10] Following the Battle of Badr, Muhammad also made mutual-aid alliances with a number of Bedouin tribes to protect his community from attacks from the northern part of Hijaz.^[10]

Conflict with Mecca

The attack at Badr committed Muhammad to total war with Meccans, who were now anxious to avenge their defeat. To maintain their economic prosperity, the Meccans needed to restore their prestige, which had been lost at Badr.^[99] In the ensuing months, Muhammad led expeditions on tribes allied with Mecca and sent out a raid on a Meccan caravan.^[100] Abu Sufyan subsequently gathered an army of three thousand men and set out for an attack on Medina.^[101]

A scout alerted Muhammad of the Meccan army's presence and numbers a day later. The next morning, at the Muslim conference of war, there was dispute over how best to repel the Meccans. Muhammad and many senior figures suggested that it would be safer to fight within Medina and take advantage of its heavily fortified strongholds. Younger Muslims argued that the Meccans were destroying their crops, and that huddling in the strongholds would destroy Muslim prestige. Muhammad eventually conceded to the wishes of the latter, and readied the Muslim force for battle. Thus, Muhammad led his force outside to the mountain of Uhud (where the Meccans had camped) and fought the Battle of Uhud on March 23.^{[102][103]} Although the Muslim army had the best of the early encounters, indiscipline on the part of strategically placed archers led to a Muslim defeat, with 75 Muslims killed including Hamza, Muhammad's uncle and one of the best known martyrs in the Muslim tradition. The Meccans did not pursue the Muslims further, but marched back to Mecca declaring victory. They were not entirely successful, however, as they had failed to achieve their aim of completely destroying the Muslims.^{[104][105]} The Muslims buried the dead, and returned to Medina that evening. Questions accumulated as to the reasons for the loss, and Muhammad subsequently delivered Qur'anic verses 3:152 which indicated that their defeat was partly a punishment for disobedience and partly a test for steadfastness.^[106]

Abu Sufyan now directed his efforts towards another attack on Medina. He attracted the support of nomadic tribes to the north and east of Medina, using propaganda about Muhammad's weakness, promises of booty, memories of the prestige of the Quraysh and use of bribes.^[107] Muhammad's policy was now to prevent alliances against him as much as he could. Whenever alliances of

tribesmen against Medina were formed, he sent out an expedition to break them up.^[107] When Muhammad heard of men massing with hostile intentions against Medina, he reacted with severity.^[108] One example is the assassination of Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf, a chieftain of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir who had gone to Mecca and written poems that helped rouse the Meccans' grief, anger and desire for revenge after the Battle of Badr.^[109] Around a year later, Muhammad expelled the Banu Nadir from Medina.^[110] Muhammad's attempts to prevent formation of a confederation against him were unsuccessful, though he was able to increase his own forces and stop many potential tribes from joining his enemies.^[111]

Siege of Medina

With the help of the exiled Banu Nadir, the Quraysh military leader Abu Sufyan had mustered a force of 10,000 men. Muhammad prepared a force of about 3000 men and adopted a new form of defense unknown in Arabia at that time: the Muslims dug a trench wherever Medina lay open to cavalry attack. The idea is credited to a Persian convert to Islam, Salman the Persian. The siege of Medina began on March 31 627 and lasted for two weeks.^[112] Abu Sufyan's troops were unprepared for the fortifications they were confronted with, and after an ineffectual siege lasting several weeks, the coalition decided to go home.^[113] The Qur'an discusses this battle in sura Al-Ahzab, ayat (verses) 9-27, 33:9-27.^[65] During the battle, the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza, located at the south of Medina, had entered into negotiations with Meccan forces to revolt against Muhammad. Although they were swayed by suggestions that Muhammad was sure to be overwhelmed, they desired reassurance in case the confederacy was unable to destroy him. No agreement was reached after the prolonged negotiations, in part due to sabotage attempts by Muhammad's scouts.^[114] After the coalition's retreat, the Muslims accused the Banu Qurayza of treachery and besieged them in their forts for 25 days. The Banu Qurayza eventually surrendered and all the men, apart from a few who converted to Islam, were beheaded, while the women and children were enslaved.^{[115][116]} Walid N. Arafat and Barakat Ahmad have disputed that the Banu Qurayza were killed on quite such a large scale.^[117] Arafat disputes large-scale killings and argued that Ibn Ishaq gathered information from descendants of the Qurayza Jews, who embellished or manufactured the details of the incident. Arafat relates the testimony of Ibn Hajar, who denounced this and other accounts as "odd tales" and quoted Malik ibn Anas, a contemporary of Ibn Ishaq, whom he rejected as a "liar", an "impostor" and for seeking out the Jewish descendants for gathering information about Muhammad's campaign with their forefathers.^[118] Ahmad argues that only some of the tribe were killed, while some of the fighters were merely enslaved.^[119] Watt finds Arafat's arguments "not entirely convincing",^[120] while Meir J. Kister has contradicted^[clarification needed] the arguments of Arafat and Ahmad.^[121]

In the siege of Medina, the Meccans exerted their utmost strength towards the destruction of the Muslim community. Their failure resulted in a significant loss of prestige; their trade with Syria was gone.^[122] Following the Battle of the Trench, Muhammad made two expeditions to the north which ended without any fighting.^[10] While returning from one of these (or some years earlier according to other early accounts), an accusation of adultery was made against Aisha, Muhammad's wife. Aisha was exonerated from the accusations when Muhammad announced that he had received a revelation confirming Aisha's innocence and directing that charges of adultery be supported by four eyewitnesses.^[123]

Truce of Hudaibiyyah

Although Muhammad had already delivered Qur'anic verses commanding the Hajj,^[124] the Muslims had not performed it due to the enmity of the Quraysh. In the month of Shawwal 628, Muhammad ordered his followers to obtain sacrificial animals and to make preparations for a pilgrimage (umrah) to Mecca, saying that God had promised him the fulfillment of this goal in a vision where he was shaving his head after the completion of the Hajj.^[125] Upon hearing of the approaching 1,400 Muslims, the Quraysh sent out a force of 200 cavalry to halt them. Muhammad evaded them by taking a more difficult route, thereby reaching al-Hudaibiyya, just outside of Mecca.^[126] According to Watt, although Muhammad's decision to make the pilgrimage was based on his dream, he was at the same time demonstrating to the pagan Meccans that Islam does not threaten the prestige of their sanctuary, and that Islam was an Arabian religion.^[126]

Negotiations commenced with emissaries going to and from Mecca. While these continued, rumors spread that one of the Muslim negotiators, Uthman bin al-Affan, had been killed by the Quraysh. Muhammad responded by calling upon the pilgrims to make a pledge not to flee (or to stick with Muhammad, whatever decision he made) if the situation descended into war with Mecca. This pledge became known as the "Pledge of Acceptance" (Arabic: بَايَاتُ الرِّدْوَانِ, bay'at al-ridhwān) or the "Pledge under the Tree". News of Uthman's safety, however, allowed for negotiations to continue, and a treaty scheduled to last ten years was eventually signed between the Muslims and Quraysh.^{[126][127]} The main points of the treaty included the cessation of hostilities; the deferral of Muhammad's pilgrimage to the following year; and an agreement to send back any Meccan who had gone to Medina without the permission of their protector.^[126]

Many Muslims were not satisfied with the terms of the treaty. However, the Qur'anic sura "Al-Fath" (The Victory) (Qur'an 48:1-29) assured the Muslims that the expedition from which they were now returning must be considered a victorious one.^[128] It was only later that Muhammad's followers would realise the benefit behind this treaty. According to Welch, these benefits included the inducing of the Meccans to recognise Muhammad as an equal; a cessation of military activity posing well for the future; and gaining the admiration of Meccans who were impressed by the incorporation of the pilgrimage rituals.^[10]

After signing the truce, Muhammad made an expedition against the Jewish oasis of Khaybar, known as the Battle of Khaybar. This was possibly due to it housing the Banu Nadir, who were inciting hostilities against Muhammad, or to regain some prestige to deflect from what appeared to some Muslims as the inconclusive result of the truce of Hudaibiyya.^{[101][129]} According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad also sent letters to many rulers of the world, asking them to convert to Islam (the exact date is given variously in the sources).^{[10][130][131]} Hence he sent messengers (with letters) to Heraclius of the Byzantine Empire (the eastern Roman Empire), Khosrau of Persia, the chief of Yemen and to some others.^{[130][131]} In the years following the truce of Hudaibiyya, Muhammad sent his forces against the Arabs on Transjordanian Byzantine soil in the Battle of Mu'tah, in which the Muslims were defeated.^[132]

Final years

The truce of Hudaibiyyah had been enforced for two years.^{[133][134]} The tribe of Banu Khuza'a had good relations with Muhammad, whereas their enemies, the Banu Bakr, had an alliance with the Meccans.^{[133][134]} A clan of the Bakr made a night raid against the Khuza'a, killing a few of them.^{[133][134]} The Meccans helped the Banu Bakr with weapons and, according to some sources, a few Meccans also took part in the fighting.^[133] After this event, Muhammad sent a message to Mecca with three conditions, asking them to accept one of them. These were that either the Meccans paid blood money for those slain among the Khuza'ah tribe; or, that they should disavow themselves of the Banu Bakr; or, that they should declare the truce of Hudaibiyyah null.^[135]

The Meccans replied that they would accept only the last condition.^[135] However, soon they realized their mistake and sent Abu Sufyan to renew the Hudaibiyyah treaty, but now his request was declined by Muhammad.

Muhammad began to prepare for a campaign.^[136] In 630, Muhammad marched on Mecca with an enormous force, said to number more than ten thousand men. With minimal casualties, Muhammad took control of Mecca.^[137] He declared an amnesty for past offences, except for ten men and women who had mocked and ridiculed him in songs and verses. Some of these were later pardoned.^[138] Most Meccans converted to Islam and Muhammad subsequently destroyed all the statues of Arabian gods in and around the Kaaba.^{[139][140]} The Qur'an discusses the conquest of Mecca.^{[65][141]}

Conquest of Arabia

Soon after the conquest of Mecca, Muhammad was alarmed by a military threat from the confederate tribes of Hawazin who were collecting an army twice the size of Muhammad's. The Banu Hawazin were old enemies of the Meccans. They were joined by the Banu Thaqif (inhabiting the city of Ta'if) who adopted an anti-Meccan policy due to the decline of the prestige of Meccans.^[142] Muhammad defeated the Hawazin and Thaqif tribes in the Battle of Hunayn.^[10]

In the same year, Muhammad made the expedition of Tabuk against northern Arabia because of their previous defeat at the Battle of Mu'tah as well as reports of the hostile attitude adopted against Muslims. Although Muhammad did not make contact with hostile forces at Tabuk, he received the submission of some local chiefs of the region.^{[10][143]}

A year after the Battle of Tabuk, the Banu Thaqif sent emissaries to Medina to surrender to Muhammad and adopt Islam. Many bedouins submitted to Muhammad in order to be safe against his attacks and to benefit from the booties of the wars.^[10] However, the bedouins were alien to the system of Islam and wanted to maintain their independence, their established code of virtue and their ancestral traditions. Muhammad thus required of them a military and political agreement according to which they "acknowledge the suzerainty of Medina, to refrain from attack on the Muslims and their allies, and to pay the Zakat, the Muslim religious levy."^[144]

Farewell pilgrimage and death

At the end of the tenth year after the migration to Medina, Muhammad carried through his first truly Islamic pilgrimage, thereby teaching his followers the rites of the annual Great Pilgrimage (Hajj).^[10]

After completing the pilgrimage, Muhammad delivered a famous speech known as The Farewell Sermon. In this sermon, Muhammad advised his followers not to follow certain pre-Islamic customs such as adding intercalary months to align the lunar

calendar with the solar calendar. Muhammad abolished all old blood feuds and disputes based on the former tribal system and asked for all old pledges to be returned as implications of the creation of the new Islamic community. Commenting on the vulnerability of women in his society, Muhammed asked his male followers to "Be good to women; for they are powerless captives (awan) in your households: You took them in God's trust, and legitimated your sexual relations with the Word of God, so come to your senses people, and hear my words ...". He also told them that they were entitled to discipline their wives but should do so with kindness. Muhammad also addressed the issue of inheritance by forbidding false claims of paternity or of a client relationship to the deceased and also forbidding his followers to leave their wealth to a testamentary heir. He also upheld the sacredness of four lunar months in each year.^{[145][146]} According to Sunni tafsir, the following Qur'anic verse was delivered in this incident: "Today I have perfected your religion, and completed my favours for you and chosen Islam as a religion for you." (Qur'an 5:3)^[10] According to Shia tafsir, it refers to appointment of Ali ibn Abi Talib at the pond of Khumm as Muhammad's successor, this occurring a few days later when Muslims were returning from Mecca to Medina.^[147]

A few months after the farewell pilgrimage, Muhammad fell ill and suffered for several days with a fever, head pain and weakness. He died on Monday, June 8, 632, in Medina, at the age of 63.^[148] With his head resting on Aisha's lap he murmured his final words soon after asking her to dispose of his last worldly goods, which were seven coins:

He is buried where he died, which was in Aisha's house and is now housed within the Mosque of the Prophet in the city of Medina.^{[10][149][150]} Next to Muhammad's tomb, there is another empty tomb that Muslims believe awaits Jesus

