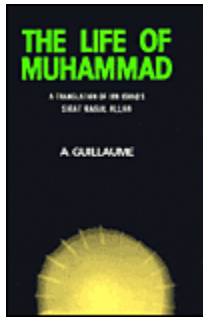


THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2007

The Life of Muhammad



The Life of Muhammad A short summary of Ibn Ishaq

Introduction

The earliest biography of Muhammad was written by Ibn Ishaq, a devout Muslim who lived from AD 704-767. His biography is respected and studied in Muslim universities around the world. The English translation is 690 pages long, not counting introduction, endnotes and indices. What appears below is an 18 page summary of Ibn Ishaq's The Life of Muhammad. The numbers in parentheses are the page numbers in the book. Some of the confusion in the summary below is due to my faulty understanding of a difficult text. Some of the confusion, however, is due to considerable lack of clarity in the English translation itself. At any rate, here is the life of the man a billion people revere as the greatest prophet of God and whom many love more than life itself:

Life of Muhammad

Muhammad was the son of Abdullah and Amina. He never knew his father who died while Amina was still pregnant (69). At one point in his childhood Muhammad and his brother were with some sheep behind their tents when Muhammad's brother ran for help saying that something was wrong with Muhammad. When asked what was wrong,

Muhammad, “standing up with a livid face” said, “Two men in white raiment came and threw me down and opened my belly and searched therein for I know not what.” They took him back to the tent and his [adoptive?] father said, “I’m afraid that this child has had a stroke.” Muhammad’s mother asked her other son if he feared that a demon had possessed Muhammad and he answered yes. Muhammad’s mother replied that “no demon had any power over her son who had a great future before him” (72).

When Muhammad was six years old his mother died and he was left in the care of his grandfather (73). Two years later his grandfather died and he went to live with his uncle, Abu Talib (79) who stood by Muhammad and protected him even into adulthood.

When Muhammad grew up, an older and very wealthy merchant woman named Khadija heard of his “honorable character” and hired him to take her goods to Syria (82). She would later become Muhammad’s first wife and faithful supporter.

When Muhammad reached the age of forty he began to feel like God was sending him “as an evangelist to all men” (104). He used to travel out to the “glens of Mecca” where “no house was in sight” and he began to hear voices saying “Peace unto thee, O apostle of Allah” but there was nothing there except “trees and stones.”

Once a year during the month of Ramadan, Muhammad would “pray in seclusion and give food to the poor that came to him.” After “he returned from his seclusion,” before returning home, “he would go to the Ka’ba,” the black square-shaped temple in Mecca, and “walk around it seven times or as often as it pleased God; then he would go back to his house until the year when God sent him, in the month of Ramadan” (105).

One day, Muhammad said that while he was sleeping, Gabriel came to him with something that had writing on it, and said “Read!” According to Muhammad,

“I said, ‘What shall I read?’ He pressed me with it so tightly that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said, ‘Read!’ I said, ‘What shall I read?’ He pressed me with it again so that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said ‘Read!’ I said, ‘What shall I read?’ He pressed me with it the third time so that I thought it was death and

said, “Read!’ I said, ‘What then shall I read?—and this I said only to deliver myself from him, lest he would do the same to me again. He said, “Read in the name of thy Lord who created, Who created man of blood coagulated. Read! Thy Lord is most beneficent, Who taught by the pen, Taught that which they knew not unto men.’ So I read it and he departed from me (106).

Muhammad woke up and began to wonder if he was demon possessed. Afraid that the local Quraysh tribes would think he was indeed demon possessed he considered throwing himself down a mountain to kill himself but on the way up the mountain he heard a voice saying he was the apostle of God (105-106). Instead of committing suicide, Muhammad decided to tell his wife, Khadija, of his dream and of his fear of demon possession (106). Khadija sought advice from her cousin who was a Christian. When he heard the story he assured her that Muhammad must be a prophet (107).

After that, Muhammad began receiving revelations. Khadija accepted his revelations as true, became his first convert, and helped him in his work (111). The first male to become a Muslim was Ali, at only 10 years old (114). Soon, however, men and women began to accept Islam in large numbers “until the fame of it was spread throughout Mecca” (117).

When the early Muslims prayed they often went to the glens around Mecca so their people could not see them praying. While Sa’d b. Abu Waqqas was praying with other Muslims “a band of polytheists” came by and “rudely interrupted them.” “They came to blows” and “the first blood to be shed in Islam” occurred when “Sa’d smote a polytheist with a jawbone of a camel and wounded him” (118).

Most Meccans did not turn against the Muslims until Muhammad “spoke disparagingly of their gods.” Then “they took great offense and resolved unanimously to treat him as an enemy.” But Muhammad was protected by his powerful uncle, Abu Talib (118). Yet “They were always talking about him and inciting one another against him” (119):

‘Then the Quraysh incited people against the companions of the apostle who had become Muslims. Every tribe fell upon the Muslims among them, beating them and

seducing them from their religion. God protected His apostle from them through his uncle” (120)

Many of the Quraysh “called him a liar, insulted him, and accused him of being a poet, a sorcerer, a diviner and of being possessed.” Muhammad, however, continued to proclaim his message and condemn their religion (130).

One day while prominent men of Mecca were talking about him, Muhammad began to walk around the temple of Mecca known as the Ka’ba. As he passed by these men “they said some injurious things about him.” When he passed by them the second time, “they attacked him similarly.” “Then he passed a third time, and they did the same.” This time Muhammad stopped and swore by God that he would bring them slaughter (131)!

Islam was spreading throughout Mecca in the tribes of the Quraysh, “though Quraysh were imprisoning and seducing as many of the Muslims as they could” (133). Since persecution wasn’t working, the Meccans tried to shut Muhammad up by negotiation. If he wanted money, they would make him rich. If he wanted honor or sovereignty, they would make him a prince or even a king. If he was demon possessed, “they would exhaust their means in finding medicine to cure him.” Muhammad would have none of it so they told him that they would not leave him alone “until we destroy you or you destroy us” (134).

The Quraysh continued to persecute the Muslims, “beating them, allowing them no food or drink, and exposing them to the burning heat of Mecca.” “Some gave way under the pressure of persecution, and others resisted” (143). For example, Bilal was a faithful Muslim slave who belonged to Umayya b. Khalaf. Umayya would take his Muslim slave out to the desert in the hottest part of the day, throw him on his back, and place a heavy rock on his chest saying, “You will stay here til you die or deny Muhammad” and worship the goddesses of Mecca (144).

One day Abu Bakr, one of Muhammad’s most faithful followers who would eventually be Muhammad’s successor, saw this slave being tortured. Abu Bakr said, “Have you no fear of God that you treat this poor fellow like this? Umayya responded saying, “You are the

one who corrupted him, you save him from his plight...” (144). Abu Bakr said he had a black slave who was not Muslim and was stronger than the slave being persecuted. He offered to trade slaves and the deal was accepted (144).

Although Muhammad escaped much of the persecution through the protection of his powerful uncle, Muhammad could not protect his followers so he suggested that they go to Abyssinia in Africa whose Christian king, Muhammad told them, “will not tolerate injustice.” Many Muslims followed Muhammad’s advice (146).

When the Quraysh heard this, they sent men to Abyssinia to force the Muslims to return. The case came before the king who said he would not surrender the Muslims to them. He then summoned the Muslims and asked them about their religion. They told him that they had been “an uncivilized people, worshipping idols, eating corpses, committing abominations, breaking natural ties, treating guests badly, and our strong devoured our weak” (150-152).

They said that Muhammad has summoned them to acknowledge God’s unity, to worship God “and to renounce the stones and images” which they had formerly worshiped. Muhammad had forbidden them from committing abominations, speaking lies, devouring property of orphans, or vilifying chaste women. On the other hand, they were commanded to worship God alone and not to associate anything with Him,” and to observe “orders about prayer, almsgiving, and fasting” (150-152).

Meanwhile, Muhammad became very pained about his estrangement from his people and “longed that there should come to him from God a message that would reconcile his people to him.” It wasn’t long before Muhammad got a revelation saying that the three goddesses of Mecca, al-Lat, al-‘Uzza and Manat were exalted and that their intercession was approved by Allah. The Quraysh “were delighted and greatly pleased at the way in which he spoke of their gods” (167).

Muslims, however, thought there must be some mistake since this seemed to contradict the essence of Muhammad’s monotheism. The issue was soon resolved when Muhammad got another revelation saying that Satan, not God, had told him the

goddesses' intercession was approved. Muhammad repented and "God annulled what Satan had suggested" (179).

One day Muhammad reported that he and Gabriel had been carried away from the "mosque at Mecca" to "the Masjid al-Aqsa" in Jerusalem where "he found Abraham, Moses and Jesus among a company of the prophets." Muhammad "acted as their imam in prayer." Two containers were brought to him, one with milk and one with wine. When Muhammad drank the milk and left the wine, Gabriel said Muhammad had been "rightly guided" because, he was told, "wine is forbidden to you." Muhammad then returned to Mecca in the morning and told the Quraysh people of his trip. "Most of them said...this is plain absurdity!" In fact, many Muslims even gave up their faith because of the story (181-183).

When asked what he thought of Muhammad now, Abu Bakr said if he says it, its true. Muhammad's wife Aisha used to say that Muhammad's body "remained where it was but God removed his spirit by night." A woman named "Hind" said,

"The apostle went on no night journey except while he was in my house. He slept that night in my house. He prayed the final night prayer, then he slept and we slept. A little before dawn the apostle woke us, and when we prayed the dawn prayer he said...I prayed with you last evening prayer in the valley as you saw. Then I went to Jerusalem and prayed there" (183-184).

She tried to persuade Muhammad not to tell anyone for fear that they would insult him but he wouldn't listen. She asked her black slave to follow Muhammad and listen to what he said. Muhammad reported his experience and, when asked for proof, he said that he passed a certain caravan in a particular valley (183-184).

Muhammad's wife Khadija and his uncle Abu Talib died in the same year. Khadija had been a faithful supporter who listened to his troubles while Abu Talib had been his protector. The Quraysh began to treat Muhammad "in an offensive way which they would not have dared to follow in his uncle's lifetime". Someone even threw dust on Muhammad's head (191).

In the following year—“before the duty of making war was laid upon them”—twelve of Muhammad’s helpers met at al-Aqaba and pledged themselves to Muhammad, promising not to steal, not to commit fornication, not to kill their offspring, not to slander their neighbors, and not to disobey Muhammad in what was right. They understood that if they fulfilled these, paradise would be theirs but if they “committed any of those sins it was for God to punish or forgive as He pleased” (199).

“When God gave permission” for Muhammad to fight, “the second [meeting at] Aqaba contained conditions involving war” which were not part of the first pledge. The men “Now they bound themselves to war against all” for Muhammad and God (208). Muhammad received a revelation saying, “Fight them so that there be no more seduction” away from Islam and “Until God alone is worshiped” (213).

After this permission to fight, the Ansar Clan pledged their support to Muhammad and the Muslims began to emigrate from Mecca to Medina in order to link up with the Ansar. Abu Bakr and Ali stayed behind in Mecca with Muhammad for a time, until he received permission from God to go to Medina (213).

Once Muhammad emigrated to Medina he made a “friendly agreement” with the Jewish tribes of Yathrib (Medina). Any disputes were to be resolved by Muhammad (232). Once Muhammad was established in Medina he instituted prayers, fasting, alms tax, legal punishments and spelled out that which was forbidden and prescribed (235).

Some Jewish rabbis, however, were hostile to Muhammad, annoying him with questions, introducing “confusion,” and trying to extinguish Islam. “They were joined by men from al-Aus and al-Kihazraj who had obstinately clung to their heathen religion” (239-240). Some Jewish rabbis came to Muhammad and said they would follow him if he would answer some questions. Their first question was, “Why does a boy resemble his mother when the semen comes from the man? Muhammad answered that “a man’s semen is white and thick while a woman’s is yellow and thin, and the likeness goes with that which comes to the top” (255).

“Some Muslims remained friends with the Jews because of the tie of mutual protection and alliance which had subsisted between them.” Muhammad, however, received a revelation forbidding Muslims to take Jews as intimate friends. He explained that the Jews would corrupt them and that the Jews had hatred concealed in their breasts. Muhammad told Muslims that while they believe in the Jews' holy books, the Jews didn't believe in the Muslim's holy book so “you have more right to hate them than they to hate you” (262-263).

One day Abu Bakr went to a Jewish school and called on one of their Rabbis to become a Muslim. The Rabbi's response enraged Abu Bakr who hit the Rabbi in the face saying “Were it not for the treaty between us I would cut off your head.” The Rabbi complained to Muhammad and Muhammad asked Abu Bakr about it. Abu Bakr said the Rabbi had blasphemed but the Rabbi denied it. Muhammad then received a revelation supporting Abu Bakr (263).

One day when a Jewish man was brought to Muhammad on the charge of committing adultery, Muhammad ordered both of them to be stoned. “When the Jew felt the first stone he crouched over the woman to protect her from the stones until both of them were killed” (266-267).

Thirteen years after his call, Muhammad “prepared for war in pursuance of God's command to fight his enemies and to fight the polytheists” (280). At first Muhammad made several raids on the Quraysh, including the first raid on Badr, but returned to Medina without fighting (281-286).

One day Muhammad sent Abdullah b. Jahsh and eight other Muslims with orders to “Lie in wait for Quraysh and find out for us what they are doing....” A Quraysh caravan came by and the Muslim raiders “decided to kill as many as they could of them and take what they had.” When they returned to Muhammad he rebuked them for fighting during the sacred month. Muhammad, however, later received a revelation relieving them “of their anxiety” in the matter. Muhammad took one-fifth of the booty and rewarded the raiders out of what was left over (288).

Muhammad then heard that a large caravan of Quraysh loaded with money and merchandise was coming from Syria led by Abu Sufyan b. Harb. Muhammad ordered the Muslims to attack the caravan, an attack which took place near the water of Badr. Muhammad encouraged his men saying that all those fighting “with steadfast courage advancing not retreating” would be rewarded with paradise if killed in the battle. When Muhammad saw them coming he cried, “O God, here come the Quraysh in their vanity and pride contending with Thee and calling Thy apostle a liar...Destroy them this morning!” Muhammad’s men routed their foe, killed many of their chiefs, and captured many of their nobles in this battle of Badr (289-294).

Muhammad then divided the booty including the captives equally among the Muslims (307). As Muhammad ordered one of the captives to be killed the captive pleaded, “Who will look after my children?” “Hell,” replied Muhammad, and the man was executed (308). Muhammad then divided the prisoners among his companions, telling them to treat them well (309).

One day Muhammad received a revelation saying, “I am with you so strengthen those that believe...I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, so strike off their heads and cut off their fingers, because they oppose God and His apostle.” The revelation went on to say that Muslims on the march who turn back in the face of the unbelievers are destined for hell (322).

In another revelation, Muhammad heard, “O prophet, exhort the believers to fight. If there are twenty steadfast ones among you they will overcome two hundred, and if there are a hundred of you they will overcome a thousand unbelievers for they are a senseless people.” Hearing that twenty Muslims were to fight two hundred enemy and that a hundred Muslims were to fight a thousand was quite a shock to the Muslims! Muhammad, however, soon received another revelation cancelling this one, saying instead that if their forces were less than half of the enemy’s they could withdraw and not fight (326).

Muhammad then made some more raids but returned to Medina without having to fight (360-362).

Meanwhile there was the affair of B. Qaynuqa so Muhammad assembled the Jews in their market and warned them of vengeance. They told Muhammad that he should not be deceived by the fact that he had won a battle against people who had no knowledge of war and that if Muhammad fought them he would find that they were real men! Muhammad then received a revelation about them: "Say to those who disbelieve: you will be vanquished and gathered to hell" (363).

After the Muslim attack at Badr, the Quraysh were then "afraid to follow their usual route to Syria" so they went by the Iraq route. Muhammad then sent a raiding party led by Zayd to meet one of the caravans which was transporting a large amount of silver. The men of the caravan got away, but Zayd captured its contents and brought the spoil to Muhammad (364).

Muhammad heard that Ka'b b. Al-Ashraf had composed poetic verses insulting Muslim women so Muhammad asked who would rid him of Ka'b. The response came from Muhammad b. Maslama who said he would kill the man but would have to tell lies. Muhammad told him to kill Ka'b if he could and to say whatever he needed. When the Muslims came to Ka'b's castle he suspected nothing. After some time Muhammad b. Maslama cried, "Smite the enemy of God!" He thrust his dagger into Ka'b's body and "bore down upon it until I reached his genitals, and the enemy of God fell to the ground." This attack "cast terror among the Jews, and there was no Jew in Medina who did not fear for his life" (367).

On another occasion Muhammad said, "Kill any Jew that falls into your power". Muhayyish b. Mas'ud obeyed Muhammad's command and killed a Jewish merchant. A man named Huwayisa began to beat Muhayyish saying that much of their wealth came from this merchant. Muhayyish responded saying if Muhammad ordered him to cut off Huwayisa's head, he would have done so. Huwayisa said that any religion that had this kind of power was wonderful, and he became a Muslim (369).

In one of the battles, the "Muslims were put to flight and the enemy slew many of them." An enemy got to Muhammad, hitting him in the face with a stone, breaking one of his

teeth and injuring his lip so that blood was running down his face. Muslims came to Muhammad's aid and Muhammad ordered them to bring the attacker to him. The attacker "died with his face on" Muhammad's foot (380).

After the battle, Utba and some women began to mutilate the bodies of the dead Muslims. "They cut off the ears and noses" and a woman named Hind made these body parts into "anklets and collars." "She cut out Hamza's liver and chewed it, but she was not able to swallow it and threw it away." "Then she mounted a high rock and shrieked at the top of her voice: We have paid you back for Badr..." (385).

When Muhammad found Hamza "with his belly ripped up and his liver missing and his nose and ears cut off" he said, "If God gives me victory over Quraysh in the future I will mutilate 30 of their men." Muhammad later pardoned some enemies and forbid mutilation (387). When he got home Muhammad handed his sword to his daughter Fatima, saying, "Wash the blood from this daughter for by God it has served me well today" (389).

When Muhammad went to B. al-Nadir to seek help in getting revenge for a murder, the men of B. al-Nadir agreed to help but then decided to drop a rock from the top of a building on Muhammad's head. Muhammad discovered the plot, went back to Medina and ordered his followers to prepare for war. The Jews of al-Nadir took refuge in their forts" so Muhammad "ordered that the palm-trees should be cut down and burnt." The men of al-Nadir called out to Muhammad, "you have prohibited wanton destruction... Why then are you cutting down and burning our palm-trees?" Eventually, the Jews reached an agreement with Muhammad that he would spare their lives and allow them to flee with whatever they could carry on their camels. Everything left behind became Muhammad's personal property but "he divided it among the first immigrants" (437-438). After the attack on al-Nadir, Muhammad stayed in Medina while sending out several other raiding parties (445-449).

A group of Jews went to the Quraysh in Mecca and "invited them to join in an attack" on Muhammad in order to get rid of him. The Quraysh were eager to take part. When Muhammad heard about their plans, he had a trench built around Medina, even

working on it himself. He encouraged his Muslim followers “with the hope of reward in heaven.” Some Muslims, however, began to sneak away to their families without Muhammad’s permission. Muhammad gave a speech warning them to “beware lest trouble or a painful punishment befall them.” Then the Quraysh laid siege to Medina with 10,000 troops against Muhammad’s 3,000. The situation for the Muslims “became serious and fear was everywhere” (451-453).

The siege lasted for nearly a month when some of the Quraysh beat their horses into dashing through a narrow part of the trench. Among them was Amr, the uncle of Muhammad’s friend Ali. Ali challenged Amr to dismount and Amr replied, “O son of my brother, I do not want to kill you.” Ali replied, “But I want to kill you.” Amr was enraged and “aimed a blow which cut deeply into the shield so that the sword stuck in it and struck his head.” But “Ali gave him a blow on the vein at the base of his neck and he fell to the ground.” Eventually, distrust between the attacking tribes caused them to abandon the siege against Muhammad and return home (454-460).

One day Muhammad received a revelation saying, “God commands you, Muhammad, to go to B. Qurayza” because God was about “to shake their stronghold.” Calling the Jews of Qurayza “brothers of monkeys,” Muhammad laid siege to their forts for twenty-five nights. The people of Qurayza finally surrendered to Muhammad who confined the captives in Medina while he had trenches dug in the market place. Muhammad then ordered the execution of every adult man of Qurayza. The captive Jews were brought out to the trenches in batches and the Muslims cut off their heads—estimates ranged from 600 to 900 men in all. Muhammad then divided their property, wives and children among his Muslim followers after selling some of them for horses and weapons and taking one-fifth for himself. Muhammad also chose “one of their women for himself.” He had proposed marriage to her but she “clung to Judaism.” She remained under his power until her death (461-466).

After “the fight at the trench and the affair of the B. Qurayza were over, the matter of Sallam b. Abu’l-Haqayq...came up in connection with those who had collected the mixed tribes together against” Muhammad. Khazraj asked for Muhammad’s permission to kill Sallam who was in Khaybar and Muhammad granted it. Accompanied by Abdullah,

Khazraj came to Sallam's house and Sallam's wife answered the door. They told her they were Arabs in search of supplies. Once inside they bolted the door behind them and killed Sallam with the sword. When they came back to Muhammad, Khazraj and Abdullah both claimed to have killed Salam. Demanding to see their swords, Muhammad said, "It is the sword of Abdullah b. Unays that killed him; I can see traces of food on it" (483).

"Six months after the conquest of Qurayza" Muhammad "went out against B. Lihyan to avenge his men killed at al-Raji." "He made as though he was going to Syria in order to take the people by surprise" but the surprise failed and he returned to Medina (486).

Only a few nights later Muhammad received word that his milch-camels had been raided. The man guarding them had been killed and the man's wife had been captured. Muhammad ordered his men to pursue. The perpetrators were captured and their heads were removed (486-489).

In A.H. 6, Muhammad "received news that B. al-Mustaliq were gathering together against him." In the ensuing battle, Muhammad put them to flight, killing some of them and taking "their wives, children and property as booty." Muhammad distributed them among the Muslims but kept a most beautiful captive, Juwayriya d. al-Harith, for himself. She agreed to marry him in return for his agreement to release a hundred families of her tribe (490-493).

When Muhammad went on expeditions he would "cast lots between his wives" to see which one "should accompany him." On one particular occasion the lot fell to Aisha. On the trip a string of beads fell from her neck and she went back to look for them. The men thought she was in the howdah as they lifted it on the camel and the caravan left without her. Sulami "had fallen behind the main body" and when he saw her he told her to ride on his camel until they caught up to the rest. Some men began to spread rumors about the two of them, though Aisha knew nothing about it (493-495).

Now Arab people loathed and detested indoor privies such as foreigners had. Instead they went out to the open spaces of Medina to relieve themselves. One night as Aisha

went out, Umm Mistah told her what people were saying. Aisha cried so hard she thought her liver would burst. Muhammad asked his companions Ali and Usama b. Zayd for their advice in the matter. Usama spoke highly of Aisha but Ali said, "Women are plentiful and you can easily change one for another." Ali said that Aisha's slave girl would tell the truth. Muhammad called the slave girl and Ali "gave her a violent beating, saying, "Tell the apostle the truth." She said she knew only good of Aisha (495-496).

Not entirely convinced, Muhammad told Aisha just to repent if she had sinned but Aisha replied that she would never repent of something she didn't do. Suddenly Muhammad began to sweat profusely and he received a revelation saying that Aisha was innocent. Muhammad gave orders that those "most explicit in their slander" should be "flogged with the prescribed number of stripes" (496-497).

One day Abu Basir, a Muslim who had been imprisoned in Mecca, came to Muhammad asking for asylum. Muhammad pointed out that he had a peace treaty requiring him to return escaped captives. A delegation from Mecca had come to return a slave that had escaped from the Muslims and to retrieve Abu Basir. Muhammad told Abu Basir to return with them. On the way back, Abu Basir managed to kill one of his captors and escape. When he came back he told Muhammad, "Your obligation is over and God has removed it from you. You duly handed me over to the men and I have protected myself in my religion lest I should be seduced therein or scoffed at." This satisfied Muhammad and he allowed Abu Basir to go free (507-508).

Other Muslims confined in Mecca heard of what happened so they went out to join Abu Basir. About seventy of them camped by a road used by the Quraysh to travel to Syria "cutting to pieces every caravan that passed them" and killing every Quraysh they could get their hands on. Finally the Quraysh wrote to Muhammad asking him just to take them back in order to stop the killing. He did (507-508).

Muhammad then made peace with the Quraysh again "on condition that he should return to them those who came to him without permission of their guardians." Muhammad returned such men who came to him, but when women who had converted to Islam came to Muhammad, Muhammad received revelation saying that they should

not be returned (509).

One day Muhammad marched against Khaybar. When Khaybar workers came out in the morning and saw Muhammad's army they turned and ran. Muhammad cried, "Allah akbar! Khaybar is destroyed!" Muhammad "seized the property piece by piece and conquered the forts one by one." He also took captives including a woman named Safiya b. Huyayy. Although Kihya b. Kahlifa had asked Muhammad for this woman, Muhammad took her for himself. Muhammad, however, gave Kihya her two cousins. The rest of the women were distributed among the Muslims (510-511).

Kinana b. al-Rabi had custody of the treasure from B. al-Nadir. He was brought to Muhammad who asked him about it and said, "Do you know that if we find you have it I shall kill you?" Kinana said, yes. Muhammad excavated the place and found some of the treasure but Kinana refused to produce the rest so Muhammad gave orders to have him tortured "until you exact what he has." They "kindled a fire with flint and steal on his chest until he was nearly dead." Then Muhammad turned him over to Muhammad b. Masalama who cut off his head in revenge for killing his brother (515).

After Kaybar had been conquered, al-Hajjaj b. 'Ilat al-Sulami asked permission of Muhammad to retrieve money owed him by some merchants of Mecca. Muhammad gave permission but al-Hajjaj said, "I must tell lies, O apostle." Muhammad said, "Tell them" (519).

When the men of Fadak heard what Muhammad had done to Khaybar they were terrified. They sent Muhammad "an offer of peace on condition that they should keep half of their produce." Muhammad "accepted their terms" and "Fadak became his private property." (523). After returning from Khaybar to Medina, Muhammad sent out numerous raiding parties and expeditions (530).

One day Muhammad said to Abu Sufyan, "isn't it time that you recognize that I am God's apostle?" Abu Sufyan said that he still had some doubts. Umm Salama told Abu Sufyan to "Submit and testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the apostle of God before you lose your head." Abu Sufyan converted (547).

When Muhammad and his armies finally attacked Mecca he instructed his commanders that they were “only to fight those who resisted them,” but that a few were to be killed no matter what. One of those doomed to execution was Abdullah b. Sa’d because he was once a Muslim who even wrote down Muhammad’s revelations, but he left the Muslim faith and returned to the Quraysh. Another was Abdullah b. Khatal who had also left the Muslim faith. Abdullah had two singing girls who “used to sing satirical songs” about Muhammad so Muhammad ordered them killed as well (Muhammad later granted one of them immunity). Another was al-Huwayrith b. Nuqaydh who used to insult Muhammad in Mecca (550-551).

Muhammad then conquered Mecca and ordered that their 360 idols be broken up and burned. He also ordered that the pictures in the Ka’ba (their temple) be erased, except the pictures of Jesus and Mary (552).

Muhammad “stood at the door of the Ka’ba and said...O Quraysh, God has taken from you the haughtiness of paganism and its veneration of ancestors.” Then he told them to go their way, they were free. The people of Mecca then gathered together to “do homage to the apostle in Islam” (552-553). “The Muslims who were present at the conquest of Mecca numbered 10,000” (557). Concerning the conquest of Mecca, Bujayr b. Zuhayr said, “We smote their shoulders and cut and thrust and shot them with our feathered shafts...we came back plundering what we would” (560-561).

After the conquest of Mecca, Muhammad went out with 2,000 Meccans and 10,000 of his companions to Hunayn. “When the polytheists were routed” the Muslims continued on to al-Ta’if (569, 574). After Muhammad left Ta’if and returned to Medina, Bujayr b. Zuhayr “wrote to his brother Ka’b telling him that” Muhammad “had killed some of the men in Mecca who had satirized and insulted him.” Bujayr advised his brother that if he valued his life he should repent and convert or else get to some safe place (597).

In A.H. 9, Muhammad sent Abu Bakr in command of the pilgrimage to Mecca “to enable the Muslims to perform their hajj while polytheists were at their pilgrimage stations.” Muhammad then received a revelation “permitting the breaking of the agreement”

between him and the polytheists. When the sacred months passed, the Muslims were to “kill the polytheists wherever you find them, and seize them and lie in wait for them in every ambush.” However, “if they repent and perform prayer and pay the poor-tax, then let them go their way” because “God is forgiving and merciful” (614-618).

After Muhammad conquered Mecca, Tabuk, and Thaquif, Arabs knew they could not fight Muhammad or even “display enmity towards him” so they came to him from all directions and converted to Islam “in batches” (628).

Muhammad ordered Surad and those of his people who had accepted Islam to fight the neighboring polytheists. After laying siege for about a month without success, they withdrew to the nearby mountains. When the inhabitants of Jurash pursued them, the Muslims killed a large number of them (642).

Then Muhammad sent Khalid b. al-Walid to the people of b. al-Harith and gave them three days to accept Islam. If they refused, Khalid was to attack. They decided to accept Islam so Khalid wrote to Muhammad informing him of their decision. When the people of al-Harith were brought to Muhammad he asked them if they were the people “who when they were driven away, they pushed forward.” They remained silent so Muhammad said, “if Khalid had not written to me that you had accepted Islam and had not fought I would throw your heads beneath your feet” (645-646).

Muhammad “took part personally in twenty-seven” raids and “actually fought in nine engagements” (659-660). Muhammad had said, “fight everyone in the way of God and kill those who disbelieve in God. Do not be deceitful with the spoil; do not be treacherous, nor mutilate, nor kill children” (672).

“After the killing of Khubayb and his companions” Muhammad sent Amr b. Umayya and an “Ansari” out telling them to kill Abu Sufyan.” The Meccans recognized these men so they fled to a mountain cave. While they were there ‘Uthman b. Malik came by the entrance of the cave cutting grass for his horse. Amr told his friend that Uthman would reveal their location so they “stabbed him under the breast with the dagger” (673-674).

Amr then hid in another cave and someone from his own clan came by. They stayed together in the cave until the passerby started singing “I won’t be a Muslim as long as I live...” As soon as the singer was asleep Amr put the end of his bow in the other man’s eye and “bore down on it until” it came out the back of his neck. Amr then came across two men who were sent to spy on Muhammad. He ordered them to surrender and when they refused he shot one (with an arrow) and killed him. When the other surrendered, Amr bound his thumbs with bowstring and brought him to Muhammad. Muhammad laughed when he saw the prisoner and, after hearing all that happened, blessed Amr (674-675).

On another occasion, Abu ‘Afak “showed his disaffection” when Muhammad killed al-Harith b. Suwayd. Muhammad asked, “Who will deal with this rascal for me?” Salim b. ‘Umayr went right out and killed Abu ‘Afak for Muhammad (675).

On yet another occasion the daughter of Marwan was criticizing Islam and asking, “Is there no man of pride who would attack” Muhammad? When Muhammad heard it he said, “Who will rid me of Marwan’s daughter? Umayr b. ‘Adiy al-Khatmi went to her house that night and killed her. In the morning he reported what he had done and Muhammad told him, “You have helped God and His apostle, O ‘Umayr!” (675-676).

In the raid of Muharib, Muhammad “had captured a slave named Yasir, and put the slave in charge of his milch-camels.” Some men came to Muhammad saying they were “suffering from an epidemic and enlarged spleens.” Muhammad told them to drink the milk and urine of his milch-camels and they would recover. They drank it and recovered. Then they killed Muhammad’s shepherd-slave Yasar “and stuck thorns in his eyes and drove away his camels.” Muhammad sent Kurz B. Jabir who captured them and brought them to Muhammad who cut off their hands and feet and gouged out their eyes (677-678).

Muhammad “sent Usama to Syria and commanded him to take the cavalry into the borders of the Balqa and al-Darum in the land of Palestine.” Meanwhile, Muhammad began to suffer from the illness which eventually took his life. The pain overcame him as he was making the rounds to his wives. He asked their permission to be nursed in

Aisha's house and they agreed. His illness and pain worsened and after some time he "died with the heat of noon" (678-682).

After Muhammad died, Umar got up and told the people that Muhammad was not really dead but that he had gone to the Lord like Moses. Umar assured them that Muhammad would return to them and cut off the hands and feet of any men who say he's dead. When Abu Bakr heard this he addressed the people saying, O men, if anyone worshiped Muhammad, Muhammad is dead: if anyone worships God, God is alive, immortal." Then Abu Bakr recited the verse that says "Muhammad is nothing but an apostle" (682-683). After the people swore allegiance to Abu Bakr, Muhammad's body was prepared for burial on a Tuesday (687).

When Muhammad died many Arabs turned away from Islam, and "Christianity and Judaism raised their heads and disaffection appeared." According to one source, Muhammad's last words were, "Let not two religions be left in the Arabian Peninsula" (689).

(Ibn Ishaq. The Life of Muhammad. New York : Oxford University Press, 1955, 2006.)