**Muhammad**

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*This article is about the prophet of Islam. For other persons named Muhammad, see [Muhammad (name)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_%28name%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%20%28name%29). For other uses, see* [*Muhammad (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_%28disambiguation%29)*.*



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| **ProphetMuhammadProphet, Messenger, Apostle, Witness, Bearer of Good Tidings, Warner, Reminder, Caller, Announcer** |
| Common [calligraphic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calligraphy) representation of Muhammad's name |
| **Born** | Muḥammad ibn `Abd Allāhc. 26 April 570(570-04-26)[Makkah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca), [Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Islamic_Arabia) (present-day [Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca), [Makkah Province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makkah_Province), [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia)) |
| **Died** | 8 June 632(632-06-08) (aged 62)[Yathrib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yathrib), [Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula) (present-day [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina), [Hejaz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hejaz), [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia)) |
| **Cause of death** | Illness (high fever) |
| **Resting place** | [Tomb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_places_of_founders_of_world_religions#Islam) under the [Green Dome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Dome) of [Al-Masjid al-Nabawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Masjid_al-Nabawi) in [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina), [Hejaz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hejaz), [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saudi_Arabia) |
| **Other names** | See [*Names of Muhammad*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_Islam#Names_and_titles_of_praise) |
| **Ethnicity** | [Arab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_people) |
| **Religion** | [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) |
| **Spouse** | [Wives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_wives)**:** [Khadijah bint Khuwaylid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khadijah_bint_Khuwaylid) (595-619)[Sawda bint Zamʿa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sawda_bint_Zam%CA%BFa) (619-632)[Aisha bint Abi Bakr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aisha) (619-632)[Hafsa bint Umar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafsa_bint_Umar) (624-632)[Zaynab bint Khuzayma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaynab_bint_Khuzayma) (625-627)[Hind bint Abi Umayya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm_Salama_Hind_bint_Abi_Umayya) (629-632)[Zaynab bint Jahsh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaynab_bint_Jahsh) (627-632)[Juwayriya bint al-Harith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juwayriya_bint_al-Harith) (628-632)[Ramlah bint Abi Sufyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramlah_bint_Abi_Sufyan) (628-632)[Rayhana bint Zayd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rayhana_bint_Zayd) (629-631)[Safiyya bint Huyayy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safiyya_bint_Huyayy) (629-632)[Maymuna bint al-Harith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maymuna_bint_al-Harith) (630-632)[Maria al-Qibtiyya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_al-Qibtiyya) (630-632) |
| **Children** | **Sons:** [al-Qasim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qasim_ibn_Muhammad), [`Abd-Allah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd-Allah_ibn_Muhammad), [Ibrahim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibrahim_ibn_Muhammad)[Daughters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogy_of_Khadijah%27s_daughters)**:** [Zainab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zainab_bint_Muhammad), [Ruqayyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruqayyah_bint_Muhammad), [Umm Kulthoom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm_Kulthum_bint_Muhammad), [Fatimah Zahra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatimah) |
| **Parents** | **Father:** [`Abd Allah ibn `Abd al-Muttalib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd_Allah_ibn_Abd_al_Muttalib)**Mother:** [Aminah bint Wahb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aminah_bint_Wahb) |
| **Relatives** | [Ahl al-Bayt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahl_al-Bayt) |

**Muhammad** ([c.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circa) 26 April 570 – 8 June 632; also [transliterated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transliterated) as **Mohammad**, **Mohammed**, or **Muhammed**; [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): محمد‎) (full name: **Muhammad Ibn `Abd Allāh Ibn `Abd al-Muttalib** [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): محمد بن عبدالله بن عبد المطلب ‎) was the founder of the [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_religious_groups%22%20%5Co%20%22Major%20religious%20groups) of [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Islam). He is considered by [Muslims](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim%22%20%5Co%20%22Muslim) and [Bahá'ís](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD%22%20%5Co%20%22Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD) to be a [messenger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messengers_of_Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Messengers%20of%20Islam) and [prophet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet%22%20%5Co%20%22Prophet) of [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_of_Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22God%20of%20Islam), and by Muslims the last law-bearer in a series of [Islamic prophets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_in_Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Prophets%20in%20Islam). Most Muslims consider him to be the last prophet of God as taught by the [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran%22%20%5Co%20%22Quran). Muslims thus consider him the restorer of an uncorrupted original [monotheistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotheism%22%20%5Co%20%22Monotheism) [faith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith) ([*islām*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S-L-M#Islam_.22Piety.2C_Faith.22)) of [Adam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_Adam%22%20%5Co%20%22Islamic%20view%20of%20Adam), [Noah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_Noah), [Abraham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_Abraham), [Moses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_Moses), [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_in_Islam) and [other prophets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam).

Born in [570 CE](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/570%22%20%5Co%20%22570) in the [Arabian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula%22%20%5Co%20%22Arabian%20Peninsula) city of [Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca%22%20%5Co%20%22Mecca), he was orphaned at an early age and brought up under the care of his uncle [Abu Talib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Talib_ibn_%E2%80%98Abd_al-Muttalib%22%20%5Co%20%22Abu%20Talib%20ibn%20%E2%80%98Abd%20al-Muttalib). 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meditation%22%20%5Co%20%22Meditation) and reflection. According to Islamic beliefs it was here, at age 40, in the month of [Ramadan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramadan%22%20%5Co%20%22Ramadan), where he received [his first revelation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_first_revelation%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%27s%20first%20revelation) from God. Three years after this event Muhammad started [preaching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawah%22%20%5Co%20%22Dawah) these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "[God is One](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawhid%22%20%5Co%20%22Tawhid)", that complete "surrender" to Him (lit. *[islām](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam%22%20%5Cl%20%22Etymology_and_meaning%22%20%5Co%20%22Islam)*) is the only way (*[dīn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deen_%28Arabic_term%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Deen%20%28Arabic%20term%29)*) acceptable to God, and that he himself was a prophet and messenger of God, in the same vein as [other Islamic prophets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam#Table_of_prophets.2Fmessengers_in_the_Quran).

Muhammad gained few [followers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahaba) early on, and was met with [hostility from some Meccan tribes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Muslims_by_the_Meccans%22%20%5Co%20%22Persecution%20of%20Muslims%20by%20the%20Meccans); 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina%22%20%5Co%20%22Medina) (then known as Yathrib) in the year 622. This event, the [Hijra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra_%28Islam%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Hijra%20%28Islam%29), marks the beginning of the [Islamic calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_calendar%22%20%5Co%20%22Islamic%20calendar), 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conquest_of_Mecca%22%20%5Co%20%22Conquest%20of%20Mecca). In 632, a few months after returning to Medina from his [Farewell pilgrimage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Farewell_Pilgrimage%22%20%5Co%20%22The%20Farewell%20Pilgrimage), Muhammad fell ill and died. By the time of his death, most of the [Arabian Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula%22%20%5Co%20%22Arabian%20Peninsula) had [converted to Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversion_to_Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Conversion%20to%20Islam), and he had united the [tribes of Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribes_of_Arabia%22%20%5Co%20%22Tribes%20of%20Arabia) into a single [Muslim religious polity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ummah).

The revelations (or *[Ayah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayah%22%20%5Co%20%22Ayah)*, 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 Quran, Muhammad’s life (*[sira](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirah_Rasul_Allah%22%20%5Co%20%22Sirah%20Rasul%20Allah)*) and traditions (*[sunnah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunnah%22%20%5Co%20%22Sunnah)*) are also upheld by Muslims. They discuss Muhammad and other prophets of Islam with reverence, adding the phrase *[peace be upon him](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_be_upon_him_%28Islam%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Peace%20be%20upon%20him%20%28Islam%29)* whenever their names are mentioned. While conceptions of Muhammad in [medieval](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval%22%20%5Co%20%22Medieval) [Christendom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christendom) and [premodern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premodern%22%20%5Co%20%22Premodern) times were largely negative, appraisals in [modern history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_history%22%20%5Co%20%22Modern%20history) have been far less so. His life and deeds have been [debated and criticized](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Criticism%20of%20Muhammad) by followers and opponents over the centuries.

**Names and appellations in the Quran**

The name *Muhammad* written in [Thuluth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thuluth%22%20%5Co%20%22Thuluth), a script variety of [Islamic calligraphy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_calligraphy%22%20%5Co%20%22Islamic%20calligraphy).

The [name](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_%28name%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%20%28name%29) *[Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_%28name%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%20%28name%29)* means "Praiseworthy" and occurs four times in the Quran. The Quran addresses Muhammad in the second person not by his name but by the [appellations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euphemism%22%20%5Co%20%22Euphemism) [prophet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam), [messenger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messengers_of_Islam), servant of God ([*'abd*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd_%28Arabic%29)), announcer (*bashir*)[[Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran)[2:119](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/002-qmt.php#002.119)], witness ([*shahid*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahid_%28name%29)),[[Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran)[33:45](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/033-qmt.php#033.045)] bearer of good tidings (*mubashshir*), warner (*nathir*),[[Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran)[11:2](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/011-qmt.php#011.002)] reminder (*mudhakkir*),[[Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran)[88:21](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/088-qmt.php#088.021)] one who calls [unto God] (*[dā‘ī](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawah%22%20%5Co%20%22Dawah)*),[[Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran)[12:108](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/012-qmt.php#012.108)] light personified (*noor*)[[Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran)[05:15](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/005-qmt.php#005.015)], and the light-giving lamp (*siraj munir*)[[Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran)[73:1](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/073-qmt.php#073.001)]. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Muzzammil%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-Muzzammil)*) in Quran [73:1](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/073-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22073.001) and the shrouded (*[al-muddaththir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Muddathir%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-Muddathir)*) in Quran [74:1](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/074-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22074.001). In the Quran, believers are not to distinguish between the messengers of God and are to believe in all of them (Sura [Al-Baqara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Baqara%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-Baqara) [2:285](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/002-qmt.php#002.285)). God has caused some messengers to excel above others [2:253](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/002-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22002.253) and in Sura Al-Ahzab [33:40](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/033-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22033.040) He singles out Muhammad as the "[Seal of the Prophets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seal_of_the_prophets)". The Quran also refers to Muhammad as *[Aḥmad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmad%22%20%5Co%20%22Ahmad)* "more praiseworthy" ([Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language%22%20%5Co%20%22Arabic%20language): أحمد‎, Sura [As-Saff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/As-Saff%22%20%5Co%20%22As-Saff) [61:6](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/061-qmt.php#061.006)).

**Sources for Muhammad's life**

Main articles: [Historiography of early Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historiography_of_early_Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Historiography%20of%20early%20Islam) and [Historicity of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicity_of_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Historicity%20of%20Muhammad)

Muhammad being a highly influential historical figure, his life, deeds, and thoughts have been debated by followers and opponents over the centuries, which makes a biography of him difficult to write.

**Quran**

A folio from an early [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran%22%20%5Co%20%22Quran), written in [Kufic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kufic%22%20%5Co%20%22Kufic) script ([Abbasid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbasid%22%20%5Co%20%22Abbasid) period, 8th–9th century).

The [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran%22%20%5Co%20%22Quran) is the central [religious text](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_text%22%20%5Co%20%22Religious%20text) of [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Islam) and Muslims believe that it represents the words of [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22God%20in%20Islam) revealed to Muhammad through the archangel [Gabriel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel%22%20%5Co%20%22Gabriel). Although it mentions Muhammad directly only four times, there are verses which can be interpreted as allusions to Muhammad's life. The Quran however provides little assistance for a chronological biography of Muhammad, and many of the utterances recorded in it lack historical context.

**Early biographies**

Main article: [Prophetic biography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophetic_biography%22%20%5Co%20%22Prophetic%20biography)

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

The earliest surviving written *sira* (biographies of Muhammad and quotes attributed to him) is [Ibn Ishaq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Ishaq%22%20%5Co%20%22Ibn%20Ishaq)'s *[Life of God's Messenger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirah_Rasul_Allah%22%20%5Co%20%22Sirah%20Rasul%20Allah)* written ca. 767 (150 AH). The work is lost, but was used verbatim at great length by [Ibn Hisham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Hisham%22%20%5Co%20%22Ibn%20Hisham) and [Al-Tabari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Jarir_al-Tabari%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%20ibn%20Jarir%20al-Tabari). Another early source is [the history of Muhammad's campaigns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-maghazi%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-maghazi) by [al-Waqidi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Waqidi%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-Waqidi) (death 207 of Muslim era), and [the work](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Book_of_the_Major_Classes%22%20%5Co%20%22The%20Book%20of%20the%20Major%20Classes) of his secretary [Ibn Sa'd al-Baghdadi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Sa%27d_al-Baghdadi%22%20%5Co%20%22Ibn%20Sa%27d%20al-Baghdadi) (death 230 of Muslim era).

Many scholars accept the accuracy of the earliest biographies, though their accuracy is unascertainable. 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".

**Hadith**

Main article: [Hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith%22%20%5Co%20%22Hadith)

In addition, the [hadith collections](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith_collection%22%20%5Co%20%22Hadith%20collection) are accounts of the verbal and physical traditions of Muhammad that date from several generations after his death. 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.

Western academics view the hadith collections with caution as accurate historical sources. Scholars such as [Madelung](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilferd_Madelung%22%20%5Co%20%22Wilferd%20Madelung) 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. Although usually discounted by historians, oral tradition plays a major role in the [Islamic understanding of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_views_of_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Islamic%20views%20of%20Muhammad).

**Non-Arabic sources**

The earliest documented Christian knowledge of Muhammad stems from [Byzantine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine%22%20%5Co%20%22Byzantine) sources. They indicate that both [Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews%22%20%5Co%20%22Jews) and [Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christians%22%20%5Co%20%22Christians) saw Muhammad as a "[false prophet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_prophet%22%20%5Co%20%22False%20prophet)". In the *[Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctrina_Jacobi_nuper_baptizati%22%20%5Co%20%22Doctrina%20Jacobi%20nuper%20baptizati)* of [634](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/634%22%20%5Co%20%22634), Muhammad is portrayed as being "deceiving[,] for do prophets come with sword and [chariot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chariot%22%20%5Co%20%22Chariot)?, [...] you will discover nothing true from the said prophet except human bloodshed." Another Greek source for Muhammad is the 9th-century writer [Theophanes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theophanes_the_Confessor%22%20%5Co%20%22Theophanes%20the%20Confessor). The earliest Syriac source is the 7th-century writer [John bar Penkaye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_bar_Penkaye).

**Pre-Islamic Arabia**

Main tribes and settlements of Arabia in Muhammad's lifetime

Main articles: [Pre-Islamic Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Islamic_Arabia%22%20%5Co%20%22Pre-Islamic%20Arabia), [Jahiliyyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jahiliyyah), and [Arabian mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_mythology%22%20%5Co%20%22Arabian%20mythology)

The [Arabian Peninsula](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabian_Peninsula%22%20%5Co%20%22Arabian%20Peninsula) 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca%22%20%5Co%20%22Mecca) and [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina%22%20%5Co%20%22Medina). Medina was a large flourishing agricultural settlement, while Mecca was an important financial center for many surrounding tribes. Communal life was essential for survival in the [desert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desert%22%20%5Co%20%22Desert) 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. Indigenous Arabs were either [nomadic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nomad%22%20%5Co%20%22Nomad) 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.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, gods or goddesses were viewed as protectors of individual tribes, their spirits being associated with sacred trees, [stones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baetylus%22%20%5Co%20%22Baetylus), springs and wells. As well as being the site of an annual pilgrimage, the [Kaaba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaaba%22%20%5Co%20%22Kaaba) 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All%C4%81t%22%20%5Co%20%22All%C4%81t), [Manāt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man%C4%81t) and [al-‘Uzzá](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-%E2%80%98Uzz%C3%A1%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-%E2%80%98Uzz%C3%A1). Monotheistic communities existed in Arabia, including [Christians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian%22%20%5Co%20%22Christian) and [Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews%22%20%5Co%20%22Jews). [Hanifs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanif) – native pre-Islamic Arab monotheists – are also sometimes listed alongside Jews and Christians in pre-Islamic Arabia, although their [historicity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicity_%28philosophy%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Historicity%20%28philosophy%29) is disputed amongst scholars. According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad himself was a Hanif and one of the descendants of [Ishmael](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishmael%22%20%5Co%20%22Ishmael), son of [Abraham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham%22%20%5Co%20%22Abraham).

**Life**

**Life in Mecca**

Main article: [Muhammad in Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_Mecca)

Muhammad was born and lived in Mecca for the first 52 years of his life (570–622). This period is generally divided into two phases, before and after declaring the [prophecy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophecy%22%20%5Co%20%22Prophecy).

**Childhood and early life**

See also: [Mawlid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mawlid%22%20%5Co%20%22Mawlid) and [Family tree of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_tree_of_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Family%20tree%20of%20Muhammad)

Muhammad was born in the month of [Rabi' al-awwal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabi%27_al-awwal%22%20%5Co%20%22Rabi%27%20al-awwal) in 570. He belonged to the [Banu Hashim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banu_Hashim%22%20%5Co%20%22Banu%20Hashim) clan, one of the prominent families of [Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca%22%20%5Co%20%22Mecca), although it seems not to have been prosperous during Muhammad's early lifetime. The Banu Hashim clan was part of the [Quraysh tribe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quraysh_%28tribe%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Quraysh%20%28tribe%29). Tradition places the year of Muhammad's birth as corresponding with the [Year of the Elephant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Year_of_the_Elephant%22%20%5Co%20%22Year%20of%20the%20Elephant), which is named after the failed destruction of Mecca that year by the [Aksumite king](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksumite_Empire%22%20%5Co%20%22Aksumite%20Empire) [Abraha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraha) who had in his army a number of elephants. 20th-century scholarship has suggested alternative dates for this event, such as 568 or 569.

Miniature from [Rashid-al-Din Hamadani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashid-al-Din_Hamadani%22%20%5Co%20%22Rashid-al-Din%20Hamadani)'s *[Jami al-Tawarikh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jami_al-Tawarikh%22%20%5Co%20%22Jami%20al-Tawarikh)*, c. 1315, illustrating the story of Muhammad's role in re-setting the [Black Stone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Stone%22%20%5Co%20%22Black%20Stone) in 605.

Muhammad's father, [Abdullah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd_Allah_ibn_Abd_al_Muttalib%22%20%5Co%20%22Abd%20Allah%20ibn%20Abd%20al%20Muttalib), died almost six months before he was born. According to Islamic 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halimah_bint_Abi_Dhuayb%22%20%5Co%20%22Halimah%20bint%20Abi%20Dhuayb), and her husband until he was two years old. Some western scholars of Islam have rejected the historicity of this tradition. At the age of six, Muhammad lost his biological mother [Amina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aminah_bint_Wahb%22%20%5Co%20%22Aminah%20bint%20Wahb) to illness and he became fully orphaned. For the next two years, he was under the guardianship of his paternal grandfather [Abd al-Muttalib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaiba_ibn_Hashim%22%20%5Co%20%22Shaiba%20ibn%20Hashim), of the Banu Hashim clan, but when Muhammad was eight, his grandfather also died. He then came under the care of his uncle [Abu Talib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Talib_ibn_%E2%80%98Abd_al-Muttalib%22%20%5Co%20%22Abu%20Talib%20ibn%20%E2%80%98Abd%20al-Muttalib), the new leader of Banu Hashim. According to [William Montgomery Watt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Montgomery_Watt%22%20%5Co%20%22William%20Montgomery%20Watt), 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."

While still in his teens, Muhammad accompanied his uncle on trading journeys to [Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria%22%20%5Co%20%22Syria) gaining experience in commercial trade, the only career open to Muhammad as an orphan. Islamic tradition states that when Muhammad was either nine or twelve while accompanying the Meccans' caravan to Syria, he met a Christian monk or hermit named [Bahira](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahira%22%20%5Co%20%22Bahira) who is said to have foreseen Muhammed's career as a prophet of God.

Little is known of Muhammad during his later youth, and from the fragmentary information that is available, it is difficult to separate history from legend. It is known that he became a merchant and "was involved in trade between the [Indian ocean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ocean%22%20%5Co%20%22Indian%20Ocean) and the [Mediterranean Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea)." Due to his upright character he acquired the nickname "[al-Amin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amin_%28name%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Amin%20%28name%29)" (Arabic: الامين), meaning "faithful, trustworthy" and "al-Sadiq" meaning "truthful" and was sought out as an impartial arbitrator. His reputation attracted a proposal in 595 from [Khadijah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khadijah_bint_Khuwaylid%22%20%5Co%20%22Khadijah%20bint%20Khuwaylid), a 40-year-old widow who was 15 years older than he. Muhammad consented to the marriage, which by all accounts was a happy one.

Several years later, according to a narration collected by [Ibn Ishaq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Ishaq%22%20%5Co%20%22Ibn%20Ishaq), Muhammad was involved with a well-known story about setting the [Black Stone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Stone%22%20%5Co%20%22Black%20Stone) in place in the wall of the Kaaba in 605 C.E. The Black Stone, a sacred object, had been removed to facilitate renovations to the Kaaba. The leaders of Mecca could not agree on which clan should have the honour of setting the Black Stone back in its place. They agreed to wait for the next man to come through the gate and ask him to choose. That man was the 35-year-old Muhammad, five years before his first revelation. He asked for a cloth and put the Black Stone in its centre. The clan leaders held the corners of the cloth and together carried the Black Stone to the right spot, then Muhammad set the stone in place, satisfying the honour of all.

**Beginnings of the Quran**

See also: [Muhammad's first revelation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_first_revelation%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%27s%20first%20revelation), [History of the Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Quran), and [Wahy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahy%22%20%5Co%20%22Wahy)

The cave [Hira](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hira%22%20%5Co%20%22Hira) in the mountain [Jabal al-Nour](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jabal_al-Nour%22%20%5Co%20%22Jabal%20al-Nour) where, according to Muslim belief, Muhammad received his first revelation.

Muhammad adopted the practice of meditating alone for several weeks every year in a cave on [Mount Hira](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hira%22%20%5Co%20%22Hira) near Mecca. Islamic tradition holds that during one of his visits to Mount Hira, the angel [Gabriel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel%22%20%5Co%20%22Gabriel) appeared to him in the year 610 and commanded Muhammad to recite the following verses:

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.

—Quran, sura 96 ([Al-Alaq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Alaq)), ayat 1-5

After returning home, Muhammad was consoled and reassured by Khadijah and her Christian cousin, [Waraqah ibn Nawfal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waraqah_ibn_Nawfal%22%20%5Co%20%22Waraqah%20ibn%20Nawfal). Upon receiving his first revelations, he was deeply distressed and resolved to commit [suicide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide%22%20%5Co%20%22Suicide). He also feared that others would dismiss his claims as being possessed. 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. The initial revelation was followed by a pause of three years during which Muhammad further gave himself to prayers and [spiritual practices](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_practice%22%20%5Co%20%22Spiritual%20practice). When the revelations resumed he was reassured and commanded to begin preaching: "Thy Guardian-Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased."

A [depiction of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depictions_of_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Depictions%20of%20Muhammad) receiving his first revelation from the angel Gabriel. From the manuscript *[Jami' al-tawarikh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jami%27_al-tawarikh%22%20%5Co%20%22Jami%27%20al-tawarikh)* by [Rashid-al-Din Hamadani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashid-al-Din_Hamadani%22%20%5Co%20%22Rashid-al-Din%20Hamadani), 1307, [Ilkhanate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilkhanate%22%20%5Co%20%22Ilkhanate) period.

[Sahih Bukhari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahih_Bukhari%22%20%5Co%20%22Sahih%20Bukhari) narrates Muhammad describing the revelations as, "Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell" and [Aisha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aisha%22%20%5Co%20%22Aisha) reported, "I saw the Prophet being inspired Divinely on a very cold day and noticed the sweat dropping from his forehead (as the Inspiration was over)". According to [Welch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alford_T._Welch) these revelations were accompanied by mysterious seizures, and the reports are unlikely to have been forged by later Muslims. Muhammad was confident that he could distinguish his own thoughts from these messages. According to the Quran, one of the main roles of Muhammad is to warn the unbelievers of their eschatological punishment (Quran [38:70](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/038-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22038.070), Quran [6:19](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/006-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22006.019)). Sometimes the Quran 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 (Quran [41:13–16](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/041-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22041.013)). 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. Muhammad's mission also involves preaching monotheism: The Quran commands Muhammad to proclaim and praise the name of his Lord and instructs him not to worship idols or associate other deities with God.

The key themes of the early Quranic 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.

**Opposition**

See also: [Persecution of Muslims by the Meccans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Muslims_by_the_Meccans%22%20%5Co%20%22Persecution%20of%20Muslims%20by%20the%20Meccans) and [Migration to Abyssinia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migration_to_Abyssinia%22%20%5Co%20%22Migration%20to%20Abyssinia)

According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad's wife Khadija was the first to believe he was a prophet. She was soon followed by Muhammad's ten-year-old cousin [Ali ibn Abi Talib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali%22%20%5Co%20%22Ali), close friend [Abu Bakr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr%22%20%5Co%20%22Abu%20Bakr), and adopted son [Zaid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayd_ibn_Harithah%22%20%5Co%20%22Zayd%20ibn%20Harithah). Around 613, Muhammad began his public preaching (Quran [26:214](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/026-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22026.214)). 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.

The last [ayah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayah%22%20%5Co%20%22Ayah) from the [sura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sura%22%20%5Co%20%22Sura) [An-Najm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-Najm) in the Quran: "So prostrate to Allah and worship [Him]." Muhammad's message of [monotheism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotheism%22%20%5Co%20%22Monotheism) (one God) challenged the traditional order.

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. However, the Quranic exegesis maintains that it began as soon as Muhammad started public preaching. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quraysh_%28tribe%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Quraysh%20%28tribe%29), as they were the guardians of the Ka'aba. 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.

Tradition records at great length the persecution and ill-treatment of Muhammad and his followers. [Sumayyah bint Khabbab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumayyah_bint_Khabbab), a slave of a prominent Meccan leader [Abu Jahl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Jahl%22%20%5Co%20%22Abu%20Jahl), 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilal_ibn_Ribah%22%20%5Co%20%22Bilal%20ibn%20Ribah), another Muslim slave, was tortured by [Umayyah ibn Khalaf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umayyah_ibn_Khalaf%22%20%5Co%20%22Umayyah%20ibn%20Khalaf) who placed a heavy rock on his chest to force his conversion. Apart from insults, Muhammad was protected from physical harm as he belonged to the Banu Hashim clan.

In 615, some of Muhammad's followers [emigrated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migration_to_Abyssinia%22%20%5Co%20%22Migration%20to%20Abyssinia) to the [Ethiopian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopia%22%20%5Co%20%22Ethiopia) [Aksumite Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksumite_Empire) and founded a small colony there under the protection of the Christian Ethiopian emperor [Aṣḥama ibn Abjar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A%E1%B9%A3%E1%B8%A5ama_ibn_Abjar).

Muhammad desperately hoping for an accommodation with his tribe, either from fear or in the hope of succeeding more readily in this way, pronounced a verse acknowledging the existence of three Meccan goddesses considered to be the daughters of Allah, and appealing for their intercession. Muhammad later retracted the verses at the behest of Gabriel, claiming that the verses were whispered by the devil himself. This episode known as "The Story of the Cranes" (translation: قصة الغرانيق, transliteration: Qissat al Gharaneeq) is also known as "Satanic Verses". Some scholars argued against its historicity on various grounds. While this incident got widespread acceptance by early Muslims, strong objections to it were raised starting from the tenth century, on theological grounds. The objections continued to be raised to the point where the rejection of the historicity of the incident eventually became the only acceptable orthodox Muslim position.

In 617, the leaders of [Makhzum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makhzum%22%20%5Co%20%22Makhzum) and [Banu Abd-Shams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banu_Abd-Shams%22%20%5Co%20%22Banu%20Abd-Shams), two important Quraysh clans, declared a public [boycott against Banu Hashim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meccan_boycott_of_the_Hashemites%22%20%5Co%20%22Meccan%20boycott%20of%20the%20Hashemites), their commercial rival, to pressure it into withdrawing its protection of Muhammad. The boycott lasted three years but eventually collapsed as it failed in its objective During this, Muhammad was only able to preach during the holy pilgrimage months in which all hostilities between Arabs were suspended.

**Isra and Mi'raj**

Main article: [Isra and Mi'raj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isra_and_Mi%27raj%22%20%5Co%20%22Isra%20and%20Mi%27raj)

The [Al-Aqsa Mosque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Aqsa_Mosque%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-Aqsa%20Mosque), part of the [al-Haram ash-Sharif](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount%22%20%5Co%20%22Temple%20Mount) complex in [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem%22%20%5Co%20%22Jerusalem), is believed to be the "farthest mosque" to which Muhammad travelled in his night journey. The al-Haram ash-Sharif is the third holiest place on earth for Muslims.

Islamic tradition relates that in 620, Muhammad experienced the *[Isra and Mi'raj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isra_and_Mi%27raj%22%20%5Co%20%22Isra%20and%20Mi%27raj)*, a miraculous journey said to have occurred with the angel [Gabriel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel%22%20%5Co%20%22Gabriel) in one night. In the first part of the journey, the *Isra*, he is said to have travelled from [Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca%22%20%5Co%20%22Mecca) on a [winged steed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buraq%22%20%5Co%20%22Buraq) (*Buraq*) to "the farthest mosque" (in Arabic: *masjid al-aqsa*), which Muslims usually identify with the [Al-Aqsa Mosque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Aqsa_Mosque%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-Aqsa%20Mosque) in [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem%22%20%5Co%20%22Jerusalem). In the second part, the *Mi'raj*, Muhammad is said to have toured [heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jannah%22%20%5Co%20%22Jannah) and [hell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jahannam%22%20%5Co%20%22Jahannam), and spoken with earlier prophets, such as [Abraham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_Abraham%22%20%5Co%20%22Islamic%20view%20of%20Abraham), [Moses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_Moses), and [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_in_Islam%22%20%5Co%20%22Jesus%20in%20Islam). [Ibn Ishaq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Ishaq), author of the first [biography of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirah_Rasul_Allah%22%20%5Co%20%22Sirah%20Rasul%20Allah), presents this event as a spiritual experience whereas later historians like [Al-Tabari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_ibn_Jarir_al-Tabari%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%20ibn%20Jarir%20al-Tabari) and [Ibn Kathir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Kathir%22%20%5Co%20%22Ibn%20Kathir) present it as a physical journey.

Quranic inscriptions on the [Dome of the Rock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dome_of_the_Rock%22%20%5Co%20%22Dome%20of%20the%20Rock), adjacent to the [Al-Aqsa Mosque](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Aqsa_Mosque%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-Aqsa%20Mosque) in the [al-Haram ash-Sharif](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount%22%20%5Co%20%22Temple%20Mount). The Dome of the Rock marks the spot from which Muhammad is believed to have ascended to [heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jannah%22%20%5Co%20%22Jannah).

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-Maʿmur* (heavenly prototype of the Kaaba); but later tradition identified Muhammad's journey as having been from Mecca to Jerusalem.

**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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Year_of_Sorrow%22%20%5Co%20%22Year%20of%20Sorrow)". 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Lahab%22%20%5Co%20%22Abu%20Lahab) 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_visit_to_Ta%27if%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%27s%20visit%20to%20Ta%27if), 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. Muhammad was forced to return to Mecca. A Meccan man named Mut'im b. Adi (and the protection of the tribe of [Banu Nawfal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banu_Nawfal%22%20%5Co%20%22Banu%20Nawfal)) made it possible for him safely to re-enter his native city.

Many people were visiting Mecca on business or as pilgrims to the [Kaaba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaaba%22%20%5Co%20%22Kaaba). 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina%22%20%5Co%20%22Medina)). The Arab population of Yathrib were familiar with monotheism and prepared for the appearance of a prophet because a Jewish community existed there. They also hoped by the means of Muhammad and the new faith to gain supremacy over Mecca, as they were jealous of its importance as the place of pilgrimage. Converts to Islam came from nearly all [Arab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab%22%20%5Co%20%22Arab) 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_pledge_at_al-Aqabah%22%20%5Co%20%22Second%20pledge%20at%20al-Aqabah)*", or the "*Pledge of War*" Following the pledges at Aqabah, Muhammad encouraged his followers to [emigrate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra_%28Islam%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Hijra%20%28Islam%29) to [Yathrib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yathrib%22%20%5Co%20%22Yathrib). As with the [migration to Abyssinia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migration_to_Abyssinia%22%20%5Co%20%22Migration%20to%20Abyssinia), the Quraysh attempted to stop the emigration. However, almost all Muslims managed to leave.

**Hijra**

Main article: [Hijra (Islam)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra_%28Islam%29)

The Hijra is the migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE. In September 622, warned of a plot to assassinate him, Muhammad secretly slipped out of Mecca, moving with his followers to Medina, 320 kilometres (200 mi) north of Mecca. The Hijra is celebrated annually on the first day of the Muslim year.

**Migration to Medina**

Main article: [Muhammad in Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_Medina%22%20%5Co%20%22Muhammad%20in%20Medina)

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. There was fighting in Yathrib mainly involving its Arab and Jewish inhabitants for around a hundred years before 620. The recurring slaughters and disagreements over the resulting claims, especially after the [Battle of Bu'ath](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Bu%27ath%22%20%5Co%20%22Battle%20of%20Bu%27ath) in which all clans were involved, made it obvious to them that the tribal conceptions of blood-feud and [an eye for an eye](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eye_for_an_eye%22%20%5Co%20%22Eye%20for%20an%20eye) were no longer workable unless there was one man with authority to adjudicate in disputed cases. The delegation from Medina pledged themselves and their fellow-citizens to accept Muhammad into their community and physically protect him as one of themselves.

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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali%22%20%5Co%20%22Ali), Muhammad fooled the Meccans who were watching him, and secretly slipped away from the town with Abu Bakr. By 622, Muhammad emigrated to [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina%22%20%5Co%20%22Medina), a large agricultural [oasis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oasis%22%20%5Co%20%22Oasis). Those who migrated from Mecca along with Muhammad became known as [*muhajirun*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhajirun) (emigrants).

**Establishment of a new polity**

Main article: [Constitution of Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_Medina)

God!
There is no god but He,
the Living, the Everlasting.
Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep;
to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth.
Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave?
He knows what lies before them and what is after them,
and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge
save such as He wills.
His Throne comprises the heavens and earth;
the preserving of them oppresses Him not;
He is the All-high, the All-glorious.

—The "[Throne Verse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throne_Verse%22%20%5Co%20%22Throne%20Verse)", [2:255](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/002-qmt.php#002.255), revealed in Medina

Among the first things Muhammad did to settle down the longstanding grievances among the tribes of Medina was drafting a document known as the [Constitution of Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_Medina%22%20%5Co%20%22Constitution%20of%20Medina), "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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew%22%20%5Co%20%22Jew) and other "[Peoples of the Book](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People_of_the_Book)"). The community defined in the Constitution of Medina, *[Ummah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ummah%22%20%5Co%20%22Ummah)*, had a religious outlook but was also shaped by practical considerations and substantially preserved the legal forms of the old Arab tribes. It effectively established the first Islamic state.

Several ordinances were proclaimed to win over the numerous and wealthy Jewish population. But these were soon rescinded as the Jews insisted on preserving the entire Mosaic law, and did not recognize him as a prophet because he was not of the race of David.

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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sa%27d_ibn_Mu%27adh%22%20%5Co%20%22Sa%27d%20ibn%20Mu%27adh) (a prominent Medinan leader) to Islam. Those Medinans who converted to Islam and helped the Muslim emigrants find shelter became known as the [*ansar*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ansar_%28Islam%29) (supporters). Then Muhammad instituted [brotherhood between the emigrants and the supporters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brotherhood_among_the_Sahaba%22%20%5Co%20%22Brotherhood%20among%20the%20Sahaba) and he chose [Ali](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali%22%20%5Co%20%22Ali) as his own brother.

**Beginning of armed conflict**

Main articles: [Military career of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_career_of_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Military%20career%20of%20Muhammad) and [Battle of Badr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Badr%22%20%5Co%20%22Battle%20of%20Badr)

Following the emigration, the Meccans seized the properties of the Muslim emigrants in Mecca. Economically uprooted and with no available profession, the Muslim migrants turned to raiding Meccan caravans, initiating armed conflict with Mecca. Muhammad delivered [Quranic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran%22%20%5Co%20%22Quran) verses permitting the Muslims to fight the Meccans (see sura [Al-Hajj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Hajj%22%20%5Co%20%22Al-Hajj), Quran [22:39–40](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/022-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22022.039)). These attacks allowed the migrants to acquire wealth, power and prestige while working towards their ultimate goal of conquering Mecca.

The [Masjid al-Qiblatain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masjid_al-Qiblatain%22%20%5Co%20%22Masjid%20al-Qiblatain), where Muhammad established the new [Qibla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qibla%22%20%5Co%20%22Qibla), or direction of prayer

On 11 February 624 according to the traditional account, while praying in the [Masjid al-Qiblatain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masjid_al-Qiblatain%22%20%5Co%20%22Masjid%20al-Qiblatain) in Medina, Muhammad received a revelation from God that he should be facing Mecca rather than Jerusalem during prayer. As he adjusted himself, so did his companions praying with him, beginning the tradition of facing Mecca during prayer. According to Watt, the change may have been less sudden and definite than the story suggests – the related Quranic verses ([2:136](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/002-qmt.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22002.136)–[2:147](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/002-qmt.php#002.147)) appear to have been revealed at different times – and correlates with changes in Muhammad's political support base, symbolizing his turning away from Jews and adopting a more Arabian outlook.

In March 624, Muhammad led some three hundred warriors in a raid on a Meccan merchant caravan. The Muslims set an ambush for them at Badr. 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 624. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amr_ibn_Hish%C4%81m). Seventy prisoners had been acquired, many of whom were soon ransomed in return for wealth or freed. Muhammad and his followers saw in the victory a confirmation of their faith as Muhammad ascribed the victory to the assistance of an invisible host of angels. The Quranic verses of this period, unlike the Meccan ones, dealt with practical problems of government and issues like the distribution of spoils.

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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asma_bint_Marwan%22%20%5Co%20%22Asma%20bint%20Marwan) and [Abu 'Afak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_%27Afak%22%20%5Co%20%22Abu%20%27Afak), 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.

Muhammad expelled from Medina the [Banu Qaynuqa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banu_Qaynuqa%22%20%5Co%20%22Banu%20Qaynuqa), one of three main Jewish tribes. Although Muhammad wanted them executed, [Abd-Allah ibn Ubaiy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd-Allah_ibn_Ubaiy%22%20%5Co%20%22Abd-Allah%20ibn%20Ubaiy) chief of the [Khazraj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khazraj%22%20%5Co%20%22Khazraj) tribe did not agree and they were expelled to Syria but without their property. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijaz%22%20%5Co%20%22Hijaz).

**Conflict with Mecca**

The [Kaaba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaaba%22%20%5Co%20%22Kaaba) in [Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca%22%20%5Co%20%22Mecca) long held a major economic and religious role for the area. Seventeen months after Muhammad's arrival in Medina, it became the Muslim [Qibla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qibla%22%20%5Co%20%22Qibla), or direction for prayer ([Salah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salah%22%20%5Co%20%22Salah)). The Kaaba has been rebuilt several times; the present structure, built in 1629, is a reconstruction of an earlier building dating to 683.

Main article: [Battle of Uhud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Uhud%22%20%5Co%20%22Battle%20of%20Uhud)

The Meccans 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. In the ensuing months, the Meccans sent ambush parties on Medina while Muhammad led expeditions on tribes allied with Mecca and sent out a raid on a Meccan caravan. [Abu Sufyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Sufyan) subsequently gathered an army of three thousand men and set out for an attack on Medina.

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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Uhud) on March 23. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamza_ibn_%E2%80%98Abd_al-Muttalib), Muhammad's uncle and one of the best known [martyrs in the Muslim tradition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrdom_in_Islam). The Meccans did not pursue the Muslims further, but marched back to Mecca declaring victory. This is probably because Muhammad was wounded and thought to be dead. When they knew this on their way back, they did not return back because of false information about new forces coming to his aid. They were not entirely successful, however, as they had failed to achieve their aim of completely destroying the Muslims. The Muslims buried the dead, and returned to Medina that evening. Questions accumulated as to the reasons for the loss, and Muhammad subsequently delivered Quranic verses [3:152](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/003-qmt.php#003.152) which indicated that their defeat was partly a punishment for disobedience and partly a test for steadfastness.

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. 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. When Muhammad heard of men massing with hostile intentions against Medina, he reacted with severity. One example is the assassination of [Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ka%27b_ibn_al-Ashraf), a chieftain of the Jewish tribe of [Banu Nadir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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. Around a year later, Muhammad expelled the Banu Nadir from Medina to Syria allowing them to take some of their possessions because he was unable to subdue them in their strongholds. The rest of their property was claimed by Muhammad in the name of God because it was not gained with bloodshed. Muhammad surprised various Arab tribes, one by one, with overwhelming force which caused his enemies to unite to annihilate him. 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.

**Siege of Medina**

Main article: [Battle of the Trench](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Trench)

Allah is the Light
of the heavens and the earth.
The Parable of His Light is
as if there were a Niche
and within it a Lamp:
the Lamp enclosed in Glass:
the glass as it were a brilliant star:
Lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive,
neither of the east nor of the west,
whose oil is well-nigh luminous,
though fire scarce touched it:
Light upon Light!
Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light:
Allah doth set forth Parables for men:
and Allah doth know all things.

—The famous "Light Verse", part of the sura [An-Nur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-Nur), [24:35](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/024-qmt.php#024.035)

With the help of the exiled [Banu Nadir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banu_Nadir), the Quraysh military leader [Abu Sufyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salman_the_Persian). The siege of Medina began on March 31 627 and lasted for two weeks. 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. The Quran discusses this battle in sura Al-Ahzab, ayat (verses) 9-27, [33:9–27](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/033-qmt.php#033.009). During the battle, the Jewish tribe of [Banu Qurayza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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. 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; according to [Ibn Ishaq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Ishaq), all the men apart from a few who converted to Islam were beheaded, while the women and children were enslaved. Walid N. Arafat and [Barakat Ahmad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barakat_Ahmad) have disputed the accuracy of Ibn Ishaq"s narrative, however. Arafat believes that Ibn Ishaq's Jewish sources, speaking over 100 years after the event, conflated their account with memories of earlier massacres in Jewish history; he notes that Ibn Ishaq was considered an unreliable historian by his contemporary [Malik ibn Anas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malik_ibn_Anas), and a transmitter of "odd tales" by the later [Ibn Hajar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Hajar_al-Asqalani). Ahmad argues that only some of the tribe were killed, while some of the fighters were merely enslaved. Watt finds Arafat's arguments "not entirely convincing", while Meir J. Kister has contradictedthe arguments of Arafat and Ahmad.

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. Following the Battle of the Trench, he made two expeditions to the north which ended without any fighting. While returning from one of these (or some years earlier according to other early accounts), an [accusation of adultery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aisha#Accusation_of_adultery) was made against [Aisha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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 (sura 24, [An-Nur](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An-Nur)).

**Truce of Hudaybiyyah**

Main article: [Treaty of Hudaybiyyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Hudaybiyyah)

Although Muhammad had already delivered Quranic verses commanding the [Hajj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hajj), the Muslims had not performed it due to the enmity of the Quraysh. In the month of [Shawwal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shawwal) 628, Muhammad ordered his followers to obtain sacrificial animals and to make preparations for a pilgrimage ([*umrah*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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. 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-Hudaybiyya, just outside of Mecca. 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.

Imprint of Muhammad's seal, used in letters sent to other heads of state.

Negotiations commenced with emissaries going to and from Mecca. While these continued, rumors spread that one of the Muslim negotiators, [Uthman bin al-Affan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uthman), 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): بيعة الرضوان , *bay'at al-ridhwān*‎) or the "[Pledge under the Tree](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge_of_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. 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.

Many Muslims were not satisfied with the terms of the treaty. However, the Quranic sura "[Al-Fath](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Fath)" (The Victory) (Quran [48:1–29](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/048-qmt.php#048.001)) assured the Muslims that the expedition from which they were now returning must be considered a victorious one. It was only later that Muhammad's followers would realise the benefit behind this treaty. 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.

After signing the truce, Muhammad made an expedition against the Jewish oasis of [Khaybar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khaybar), known as the [Battle of Khaybar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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 Hudaybiyya. According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad also [sent letters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_letters_to_the_Heads-of-State) to many rulers of the world, asking them to convert to Islam (the exact date is given variously in the sources). Hence he sent messengers (with letters) to [Heraclius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclius) of the [Byzantine Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) (the eastern Roman Empire), [Khosrau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khosrau_II) of [Persia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sassanid_Empire), the chief of [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemen) and to some others. In the years following the truce of Hudaybiyya, Muhammad sent his forces against the Arabs on [Transjordanian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transjordania) Byzantine soil in the [Battle of Mu'tah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Mu%27tah), in which the Muslims were defeated.

**Final years**

**Conquest of Mecca**

Main articles: [Conquest of Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conquest_of_Mecca) and [Muhammad after the conquest of Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_after_the_conquest_of_Mecca)

A depiction of Muhammad (with veiled face) advancing on Mecca from [Siyer-i Nebi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siyer-i_Nebi), a 16th-century [Ottoman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) manuscript. The angels Gabriel, Michael, Israfil and Azrail, are also shown.

The [truce of Hudaybiyyah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Hudaybiyyah) had been enforced for two years. The tribe of [Banu Khuza'a](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banu_Khuza%27a) had good relations with Muhammad, whereas their enemies, the [Banu Bakr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banu_Bakr_ibn_Abd_Manat), had an alliance with the Meccans. A clan of the Bakr made a night raid against the Khuza'a, killing a few of them. The Meccans helped the Banu Bakr with weapons and, according to some sources, a few Meccans also took part in the fighting. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_money_%28term%29) 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 Hudaybiyyah null.

The Meccans replied that they would accept only the last condition. However, soon they realized their mistake and sent [Abu Sufyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Sufyan) to renew the Hudaybiyyah treaty, but now his request was declined by Muhammad.

Muhammad began to prepare for a campaign. 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. 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. Most Meccans converted to Islam and Muhammad subsequently had destroyed all the statues of Arabian gods in and around the Kaaba. According to reports collected by [Ibn Ishaq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Ishaq) and [al-Azraqi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Azraqi), Muhammad personally spared paintings or frescos of [Mary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_%28mother_of_Jesus%29) and [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus), but other traditions suggest that all pictures were erased. The Quran discusses the conquest of Mecca.

**Conquest of Arabia**

Main articles: [Battle of Hunayn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hunayn) and [Battle of Tabouk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Tabouk)

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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawazin) were old enemies of the Meccans. They were joined by the [Banu Thaqif](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banu_Thaqif) (inhabiting the city of Ta'if) who adopted an anti-Meccan policy due to the decline of the prestige of Meccans. Muhammad defeated the Hawazin and Thaqif tribes in the Battle of Hunayn.

In the same year, Muhammad made the expedition of Tabuk against northern Arabia because of their previous defeat at the [Battle of Mu'tah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Mu%27tah) as well as reports of the hostile attitude adopted against Muslims. With the greatest difficulty he collected thirty thousand men, half of whom, however, on the second day after their departure from Mecca, returned with [Abd-Allah ibn Ubayy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd-Allah_ibn_Ubayy), untroubled by the damning verses which Muhammad hurled at them. Although Muhammad did not make contact with hostile forces at Tabuk, he received the submission of some local chiefs of the region.

A year after the Battle of Tabuk, the Banu Thaqif sent emissaries to [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina) to surrender to Muhammad and adopt Islam. Many bedouins submitted to Muhammad to be safe against his attacks and to benefit from the booties of the wars. 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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zakat), the Muslim religious levy."

**Farewell pilgrimage**

An anonymous artist's illustration of [al-Bīrūnī](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Rayhan_Biruni)'s [*The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Remaining_Signs_of_Past_Centuries), depicting Muhammad [prohibiting intercalary months](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_calendar#Prohibiting_intercalated_months) during [the Farewell Pilgrimage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Farewell_Pilgrimage), found in a 17th-century Ottoman copy of a 14th-century ([Ilkhanate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilkhanate)) manuscript (Edinburgh codex).

Main article: [The Farewell Pilgrimage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Farewell_Pilgrimage)

In 632, 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). After completing the pilgrimage, Muhammad delivered a famous speech known as [The Farewell Sermon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Farewell_Sermon), at [Mount Arafat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Arafat) east of Mecca. In this sermon, Muhammad advised his followers not to follow certain pre-Islamic customs. He declared that an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action. He abolished all old [blood feuds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blood_feud) and disputes based on the former [tribal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/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](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_marriage_contract) with the Word of God, so come to your senses people, and hear my words ...” He told them that they were entitled to discipline their wives but should do so with kindness. He addressed the issue of inheritance by forbidding false claims of paternity or of a client relationship to the deceased, and forbade his followers to leave their wealth to a testamentary heir. He also upheld the sacredness of four lunar months in each year. According to [Sunni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni) [tafsir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tafsir), the following Quranic verse was delivered during this event: “Today I have perfected your religion, and completed my favours for you and chosen Islam as a religion for you.”(Quran 5:3) According to [Shia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia) tafsir, it refers to the appointment of [Ali ibn Abi Talib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali) at the [pond of Khumm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wadi_Rabigh#Ghadir_Al-Khumm) as [Muhammad's successor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succession_to_Muhammad), this occurring a few days later when Muslims were returning from Mecca to Medina.

**Death and tomb**

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, in the house of his wife Aisha. 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:

Rather, God on High and paradise. — Muhammad

[Al-Masjid al-Nabawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Masjid_al-Nabawi) (the Mosque of the Prophet) in [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina), Saudi Arabia, with the [Green Dome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Dome) built over Muhammad's tomb in the center.

He was buried where he died, in Aisha's house.

 During the reign of the Umayyad caliph [al-Walid I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Walid_I), the [Al-Masjid al-Nabawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Masjid_al-Nabawi) (the Mosque of the Prophet) was expanded to include the site of [Muhammad's tomb.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burial_places_of_founders_of_world_religions#Islam) The [Green Dome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Dome) above the tomb was built by the [Mamluk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mamluk_Sultanate_%28Cairo%29) sultan [Al Mansur Qalawun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al_Mansur_Qalawun) in the 13th century, although the green color was addded in the 16th century, under the reign of [Ottoman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) sultan [Suleiman the Magnificent](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suleiman_the_Magnificent). When [bin Saud](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saud_bin_Abdul-Aziz_bin_Muhammad_bin_Saud) took Medina in 1805, Muhammad's tomb was stripped of its gold and jewel ornaments. Adherents to [Wahhabism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabism), bin Sauds' followers destroyed nearly every tomb dome in Medina in order to prevent their veneration, and the one of Muhammad is said to have narrowly escaped. Similar events took place in 1925 when the [Saudi militias](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ikhwan) retook—and this time managed to keep—the city. In the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam, burial is to take place in unmarked graves. Although frowned upon by the Saudis, many pilgrims continue to practice a [ziyarat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziyarat)—a ritual visit—to the tomb.

Among tombs adjacent to Muhammad's are those of his companions ([Sahabah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahabah))—the first two Muslim Caliphs [Abu Bakr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr) and [Umar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umar)—, and an empty one that [Muslims believe awaits Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_in_Islam#Second_coming).

**Aftermath**

See also: [Rashidun](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashidun), [Muslim conquest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_conquest), and [Succession to Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succession_to_Muhammad)

Conquests of Muhammad and the Rashidun.

Muhammad united the [tribes of Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribes_of_Arabia) into a single Arab Muslim religious polity in the last years of his life. With Muhammad's death, disagreement broke out over who would succeed him as leader of the Muslim community. [Umar ibn al-Khattab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umar_ibn_al-Khattab), a prominent companion of Muhammad, nominated [Abu Bakr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr), Muhammad's friend and collaborator. Others added their support and Abu Bakr was made the first [caliph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliph). This choice was disputed by some of Muhammad's companions, who held that Ali ibn Abi Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, had been designated the successor by Muhammad at [Ghadir Khumm](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghadir_Khumm). Abu Bakr's immediate task was to make an expedition against the [Byzantine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine) (or [Eastern Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Roman_Empire)) forces because of the previous defeat, although he first had to put down a rebellion by Arab tribes in an episode referred to by later Muslim historians as the [Ridda wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ridda_wars), or "Wars of Apostasy".

The pre-Islamic [Middle East](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East) was dominated by the [Byzantine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) and [Sassanian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sassanid_Empire) empires. The [Roman-Persian Wars](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman-Persian_Wars) between the two had devastated the region, making the empires unpopular amongst local tribes. Furthermore, in the lands that would be conquered by Muslims many Christians ([Nestorians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nestorian_Church), [Monophysites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monophysite), [Jacobites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriac_Orthodox_Church) and [Copts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copt)) were disaffected from the [Christian Orthodoxy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Christianity) which deemed them heretics. Within only a decade, Muslims conquered [Mesopotamia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesopotamia) and [Persia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Iran), [Roman Syria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_conquest_of_Syria) and [Roman Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_conquest_of_Egypt). and established the [Rashidun empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashidun_empire).

**Early reforms under Islam**

Main article: [Early reforms under Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_reforms_under_Islam)

According to [William Montgomery Watt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Montgomery_Watt), for Muhammad, religion was not a private and individual matter but rather “the total response of his personality to the total situation in which he found himself. He was responding [not only]… to the religious and intellectual aspects of the situation but also to the economic, social, and political pressures to which contemporary Mecca was subject." [Bernard Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Lewis) says that there are two important political traditions in Islam – one that views Muhammad as a statesman in Medina, and another that views him as a rebel in Mecca. He sees Islam itself as a type of revolution that greatly changed the societies into which the new religion was brought.

Historians generally agree that Islamic social reforms in areas such as [social security](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_security), family structure, slavery and the rights of women and children improved on the [status quo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Status_quo) of Arab society. For example, according to Lewis, Islam "from the first denounced [aristocratic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristocracy_%28class%29) privilege, rejected hierarchy, and adopted a formula of the career open to the talents". Muhammad's message transformed the society and [moral order](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_ethics) of life in the Arabian Peninsula through reorientation of society as regards to identity, [world view](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_view), and the hierarchy of values. Economic reforms addressed the plight of the poor, which was becoming an issue in [pre-Islamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jahiliyyah) Mecca. The Quran requires payment of an alms tax ([zakat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zakat)) for the benefit of the poor, and as Muhammad's position grew in power he demanded that those tribes who wanted to ally with him implement the zakat in particular.

**Appearance**

A [*hilya*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilya) containing a description of Muhammad, by [Hâfiz Osman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%A2fiz_Osman) (1642–1698)

Ali gave the following description of Muhammad's physical appearance:

Muhammad was middle-sized, did not have lank or crisp hair, was not fat, had a white circular face, wide black eyes, and long eye-lashes. When he walked, he walked as though he went down a [declivity](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/declivity). He had the "seal of prophecy" between his shoulder blades ... He was bulky. His face shone like the moon. He was taller than middling stature but shorter than conspicuous tallness. He had thick, curly hair. The plaits of his hair were parted. His hair reached beyond the lobe of his ear. His complexion was *azhar* [bright, luminous]. Muhammad had a wide forehead, and fine, long, arched eyebrows which did not meet. Between his eyebrows there was a vein which distended when he was angry. The upper part of his nose was hooked; he was thick bearded, had smooth cheeks, a strong mouth, and his teeth were set apart. He had thin hair on his chest. His neck was like the neck of an ivory statue, with the purity of silver. Muhammad was proportionate, stout, firm-gripped, even of belly and chest, broad-chested and broad-shouldered.

The "seal of prophecy" between the Prophet's shoulders is generally described as having been a type of raised mole the size of a pigeon's egg. Another description of Muhammad was provided by Umm Ma'bad, a woman he met on his journey to Medina:

I saw a man, pure and clean, with a handsome face and a fine figure. He was not marred by a skinny body, nor was he overly small in the head and neck. He was graceful and elegant, with intensely black eyes and thick eyelashes. There was a huskiness in his voice, and his neck was long. His beard was thick, and his eyebrows were finely arched and joined together.

When silent, he was grave and dignified, and when he spoke, glory rose up and overcame him. He was from afar the most beautiful of men and the most glorious, and close up he was the sweetest and the loveliest. He was sweet of speech and articulate, but not petty or trifling. His speech was a string of cascading pearls, measured so that none despaired of its length, and no eye challenged him because of brevity.

Descriptions like these were often reproduced in calligraphic panels (*[hilya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilya%22%20%5Co%20%22Hilya)* or, in Turkish, *hilye*), which in the 17th century developed into an art form of their own in the [Ottoman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire).

**Household**

Main articles: [Muhammad's wives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_wives) and [Ahl al-Bayt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahl_al-Bayt)

The tomb of Muhammad is located in the quarters of his third wife, [Aisha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aisha). ([Al-Masjid al-Nabawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Masjid_al-Nabawi), [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina))

Muhammad's life is traditionally defined into two periods: [pre-hijra (emigration) in Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_Mecca) (from 570 to 622), and [post-hijra in Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_Medina) (from 622 until 632). Muhammad is said to have had thirteen wives or concubines. (There are differing accounts on the status of some of them as wife or concubine.) All but two of his marriages were contracted after the [migration to Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra_%28Islam%29).

At the age of 25, Muhammad married the wealthy [Khadijah bint Khuwaylid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khadijah_bint_Khuwaylid) who was 40 years old at that time. The marriage lasted for 25 years and was a happy one. Muhammad relied upon Khadija in many ways and did not enter into marriage with another woman during this marriage. After the death of Khadija, it was suggested to Muhammad by Khawla bint Hakim that he should marry [Sawda bint Zama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sawda_bint_Zama), a Muslim widow, or [Aisha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aisha), daughter of [Um Ruman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Um_Ruman) and [Abu Bakr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr) of [Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mecca). Muhammad is said to have asked her to arrange for him to marry both.

Traditional sources dictate that Aisha was six or seven years old when betrothed to Muhammad, but the marriage was not [consummated](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consummate%22%20%5Co%20%22Consummate) until she was nine or ten years old. While the majority of traditional sources indicate Aisha was 9 (and therefore a virgin) at the time of marriage, a small number of more recent writers have variously estimated her age at 15 to 24.

After migration to Medina, Muhammad (who was now in his fifties) married several women. These marriages were contracted mostly for political or humanitarian reasons. The women were either widows of Muslims who had been killed in battle and had been left without a protector, or belonging to important families or clans whom it was necessary to honor and strengthen alliances with.

Muhammad did his own household chores and helped with housework, such as preparing food, sewing clothes and repairing shoes. He is also said to have had accustomed his wives to dialogue; he listened to their advice, and the wives debated and even argued with him.

Khadijah is said to have had four daughters with Muhammad—([Ruqayyah bint Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruqayyah_bint_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Ruqayyah%20bint%20Muhammad), [Umm Kulthum bint Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm_Kulthum_bint_Muhammad), [Zainab bint Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zainab_bint_Muhammad), [Fatimah Zahra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatimah))—and two sons—([Abd-Allah ibn Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd-Allah_ibn_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Abd-Allah%20ibn%20Muhammad) and [Qasim ibn Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qasim_ibn_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Qasim%20ibn%20Muhammad))—who both died in childhood. All except two of his daughters, Fatimah and Zainab, died before him. Some Shi'a scholars contend that Fatimah was Muhammad's only daughter. [Maria al-Qibtiyya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_al-Qibtiyya) bore him a son named [Ibrahim ibn Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibrahim_ibn_Muhammad%22%20%5Co%20%22Ibrahim%20ibn%20Muhammad), but the child died when he was two years old.

Nine of Muhammad's wives survived him. Aisha, who became known as Muhammad's favourite wife in Sunni tradition, survived him by many decades and was instrumental in helping bring together the scattered sayings of Muhammad that would form the Hadith literature for the Sunni branch of Islam.

Muhammad's descendants through Fatimah are known as *[sharifs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharif%22%20%5Co%20%22Sharif)*, *syeds* or *[sayyids](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sayyid%22%20%5Co%20%22Sayyid)*. These are honorific titles in [Arabic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language%22%20%5Co%20%22Arabic%20language), *sharif* meaning 'noble' and *sayed* or *sayyid* meaning 'lord' or 'sir'. As Muhammad's only descendants, they are respected by both Sunni and Shi'a, though the Shi'a place much more emphasis and value on their distinction

Zayd ibn Harith was a slave that Muhammad bought, freed, and then adopted as his son. He also had a [wetnurse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wet_nurse). [Muhammad owned other slaves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_and_slavery) as well, whom he bought usually to free.

**Legacy**

**Muslim views**

Main article: [Islamic views of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_views_of_Muhammad)

The [Muslim](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) [profession](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Profession_%28religious%29) of faith, the [Shahadah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahadah), illustrates the Muslim conception of the role of Muhammad – "There is no god except [the God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah), and Muhammad is the [Messenger of God](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Messenger_of_God&action=edit&redlink=1)." ([Topkapı Palace](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topkap%C4%B1_Palace%22%20%5Co%20%22Topkap%C4%B1%20Palace))

Following the attestation to the oneness of God, the belief in Muhammad's prophethood is the main aspect of the [Islamic faith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aqidah). Every Muslim proclaims in the [*Shahadah*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahadah) that "I testify that there is none worthy of worship except God, and I testify that Muhammad is a Messenger of God". The Shahadah is the basic creed or tenet of [Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam). Ideally, it is the first words a newborn will hear, and children are taught as soon as they are able to understand it and it will be recited when they die. Muslims must repeat the shahadah in the call to prayer ([*adhan*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adhan)) and the [prayer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salah) itself. Non-Muslims wishing to [convert to Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversion_to_Islam) are required to recite the creed.

According to the [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran), Muhammad is only the last of a series of [Prophets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam) sent by God for the benefit of mankind, and commands Muslims to make no distinction between them. [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [10:37](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/010-qmt.php#010.037) states that "...it (the Quran) is a confirmation of (revelations) that [went before it](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam), and a fuller explanation of the Book - wherein there is no doubt - from [The Lord of the Worlds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_Islam).". Similarly [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) [46:12](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/046-qmt.php#046.012) states "...And before this was the book of Moses, as a guide and a mercy. And this Book confirms (it)...", while [2:136](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/002-qmt.php#002.136) commands the believers of Islam to "Say: we believe in God and that which is revealed unto us, and that which was revealed unto [Abraham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham) and [Ishmael](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishmael) and [Isaac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac) and [Jacob](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob) and the tribes, and that which [Moses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses) and [Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) received, and which the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered."

Historian Denis Gril believes that the Quran does not overtly describe Muhammad performing [miracles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_miracles), and the supreme miracle of Muhammad is finally [identified with the Quran itself](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran_and_miracles). However, Muslim tradition credits [Muhammad with several miracles or supernatural events](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracles_of_Muhammad). For example, many Muslim commentators and some Western scholars have interpreted the Surah [54:1–2](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/054-qmt.php#054.001) as referring to Muhammad [splitting the Moon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Splitting_of_the_moon) in view of the Quraysh when they began persecuting his followers.

The [Sunnah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunnah) represents the actions and sayings of Muhammad (preserved in reports known as [Hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith)), and covers a broad array of activities and beliefs ranging from religious rituals, personal hygiene, burial of the dead to the mystical questions involving the love between humans and God. The Sunnah is considered a model of emulation for pious Muslims and has to a great degree influenced the Muslim culture. The greeting that Muhammad taught Muslims to offer each other, “may peace be upon you” (Arabic: [*as-salamu `alaykum*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/As-Salamu_Alaykum)) is used by Muslims throughout the world. Many details of major Islamic rituals such as daily prayers, the fasting and the annual pilgrimage are only found in the Sunnah and not the Quran.

The Sunnah also played a major role in the development of the Islamic sciences. It contributed much to the development of Islamic law, particularly from the end of the first Islamic century. Muslim mystics, known as [sufis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufi), who were seeking for the inner meaning of the Quran and the inner nature of Muhammad, viewed the prophet of Islam not only as a prophet but also as a perfect saint. Sufi orders trace their chain of spiritual descent back to Muhammad.

Calligraphic rendering of "peace be upon him", customarily added after Muhammad's name in writing. The phrase is encoded as a [ligature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typographic_ligature) at [Unicode](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unicode) codepoint [U+FDFA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_Unicode).

Muslims have traditionally expressed love and veneration for Muhammad. Stories of Muhammad's life, his intercession and of his miracles (particularly "[Splitting of the moon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Splitting_of_the_moon)") have permeated popular Muslim thought and [poetry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naat). Among Arabic odes to Muhammad, the [Qaṣīda al-Burda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qa%E1%B9%A3%C4%ABda_al-Burda) ("Poem of the Mantle") by the Egyptian [Sufi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufi) [al-Busiri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Busiri) (1211–1294) is particularly well known, and widely held to possess a healing, spiritual power. The Quran refers to Muhammad as "a mercy (*rahmat*) to the worlds" (Quran [21:107](http://www.cmje.org/religious-texts/quran/verses/021-qmt.php#021.107)). The association of rain with mercy in Oriental countries has led to imagining Muhammad as a rain cloud dispensing blessings and stretching over lands, reviving the dead hearts, just as rain revives the seemingly dead earth (see, for example, the Sindhi poem of Shah ʿAbd al-Latif). [Muhammad's birthday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mawlid) is celebrated as a major feast throughout the [Islamic world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_world), excluding [Wahhabi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahhabism)-dominated Saudi Arabia where these public celebrations are discouraged. When Muslims say or write the name of Muhammad or any other prophet in Islam, they usually follow it with [*Peace be upon him*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_be_upon_him_%28Islam%29) (Arabic: *sallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam*). In casual writing, this is sometimes abbreviated as PBUH or SAW; in printed matter, a small calligraphic rendition is commonly used instead of printing the entire phrase.

**Islamic depictions of Muhammad**

Main article: [Depictions of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depictions_of_Muhammad)

Muhammad's entry into Mecca and the destruction of idols. Muhammad is shown as a flame in this manuscript. Found in Bazil's *Hamla-i Haydari*, [Kashmir](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashmir), 1808.

In line with the [hadith prohibition against creating images of sentient living beings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aniconism_in_Islam), which is particularly strictly observed with respect to God and the Prophet, Islamic religious art is focused on the word. Muslims generally avoid depictions of Muhammad, and mosques are decorated with calligraphy and Quranic inscriptions or geometrical designs, not images or sculptures. Today, the interdiction against images of Muhammad – designed to prevent worship of Muhammad, rather than God – is much more strictly observed in Sunni Islam (85%–90% of Muslims) than among Shias (10%–15%). While both Sunnis and Shiites have created images of Muhammad in the past, Islamic depictions of Muhammad are rare. They have, until recently, mostly been limited to the private and elite medium of the miniature, and since about 1500 most depictions show Muhammad with his face veiled, or symbolically represent him as a flame.

No depictions of the Prophet dating from his lifetime survive. The earliest depictions come from 13th-century [Anatolian Seljuk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatolian_Seljuks) and [Ilkhanid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilkhanid) [Persian miniatures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_miniature), typically in literary genres describing the life and deeds of Muhammad. During the Ilkhanid period, when Persia's Mongol rulers converted to Islam, competing Sunni and Shi'a groups used visual imagery, including images of Muhammad, to promote their particular interpretation of Islam's key events. Influenced by the [Buddhist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism) tradition of representational religious art predating the Mongol elite's conversion, this innovation was unprecedented in the Islamic world, and accompanied by a "broader shift in Islamic artistic culture away from abstraction toward representation" in "mosques, on tapestries, silks, ceramics, and in glass and metalwork" besides books. In the Persian lands, this tradition of realistic depictions lasted through the [Timurid dynasty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timurid_dynasty) until the [Safavids](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safavids) took power in the early sixteenth century. The Safavaids, who made Shi'i Islam the state religion, initiated a departure from the traditional Ilkhanid and Timurid artistic style by covering Muhammad's face with a veil to obscure his features and at the same time represent his luminous essence. Concomitantly, some of the unveiled images from earlier periods were defaced. Later images were produced in [Ottoman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) Turkey and elsewhere, but mosques were never decorated with images of Muhammad. Illustrated accounts of the night journey (*mi'raj*) were particularly popular from the Ilkhanid period through the Safavid era. 19th-century [Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) saw a boom of printed and illustrated *mi'raj* books, with Muhammad's face veiled, aimed in particular at illiterates and children in the manner of [graphic novels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphic_novels); reproduced through [lithography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lithography) these were essentially "printed manuscripts". Today, millions of historical reproductions and modern images are available in some Muslim countries, especially Turkey and Iran, on posters, postcards, and even in coffee-table books, but are unknown in most other parts of the Islamic world, and when encountered by Muslims from other countries they can cause considerable consternation and offense.

**Other views**

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| A [series](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category%3AMuhammad) of articles on[**Prophet of Islam**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam)**Muhammad** |
| [**Life**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophetic_biography)[In Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_Mecca) **·**[Hijra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra_%28Islam%29) **·** [In Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_Medina) **·**[Conquest of Mecca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_after_the_conquest_of_Mecca) **·**[Wives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_wives) **·**[Farewell pilgrimage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Farewell_Pilgrimage) **·**[Family tree](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_tree_of_Muhammad) **·****Career**[Qur'an](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an) **·**[Hadith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith) **·**[Early reforms under Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_social_changes_under_Islam) **·** [Diplomacy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_as_a_diplomat) **·**[Military](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_career_of_Muhammad) **·**[Persecution by Meccans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Muslims_by_the_Meccans) **·**[Migration to Abyssinia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migration_to_Abyssinia) **·**[**Miracles**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracles_of_Muhammad)[Isra and Mi'raj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isra_and_Mi%27raj) **·**[Relics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relics_of_Muhammad) **·**[Splitting of the moon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Splitting_of_the_moon) **·**[Al-Masjid al-Nabawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Masjid_al-Nabawi) **·****Views by subject**[Jewish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_views_on_Jews) **·**[Christian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_views_on_Christians) **·** [Slavery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_views_on_slavery) **·**[**Succession**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Succession_of_Muhammad)[Farewell sermon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Farewell_Sermon) **·**[Saqifah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saqifah%22%20%5Co%20%22Saqifah) **·**[Pen and paper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith_of_the_pen_and_paper) **·**[Family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahl_al-Bayt) **·**[Companions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahaba) **·**[History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Islam) **·****Praise**[Durood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durood) **·**[Na'at](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naat%22%20%5Co%20%22Naat) **·**[Mawlid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mawlid) **·**[Haḍra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ha%E1%B8%8Dra%22%20%5Co%20%22Ha%E1%B8%8Dra) **·**[Madih nabawi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madih_nabawi%22%20%5Co%20%22Madih%20nabawi) **·**[Ya Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ya_Muhammad) **·****Perspectives**[Islamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_Islam) **·**[Jewish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism%27s_views_on_Muhammad) **·**[Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_in_the_Bible) **·**[Medieval Christian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_Christian_views_on_Muhammad) **·**[Historicity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicity_of_Muhammad) **·**[Criticism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Muhammad) **·**[Prophetic biography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophetic_biography) **·**[Depictions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depictions_of_Muhammad) **·**[Films](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_about_Muhammad) **·**[Depictions in film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depictions_of_Muhammad_in_film)  |

Non-Muslim views regarding Muhammad have ranged across a large spectrum of responses and beliefs, many of which have changed over time.

**Non-Western views**

[Mahatma Gandhi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) stated:

I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life.

**European and Western views**

See also: [Medieval Christian views on Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_Christian_views_on_Muhammad)

According to [Hossein Nasr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hossein_Nasr), earliest European literature often refers to Muhammad unfavorably. He has been maligned in various European sources for over a millennium. A few learned circles of [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages) Europe—primarily Latin-literate scholars—had access to fairly extensive biographical material about Muhammad. They interpreted that information through a Christian religious filter that viewed Muhammad as a charlatan driven by ambition and eagerness for power, and who seduced the Saracens into his submission under a religious guise. Popular European literature of the time portrayed Muhammad as though he were worshipped by Muslims in the manner of an idol or a heathen god. Some medieval Christians believed he died in 666, alluding to [the number of the beast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number_of_the_Beast), instead of his actual death date in 632; others changed his name from Muhammad to [Mahound](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahound), the "devil incarnate". [Bernard Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Lewis) writes "The development of the concept of Mahound started with considering Muhammad as a kind of demon or false god worshipped with [Apollyon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollyon) and [Termagant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Termagant) in an unholy trinity." A later medieval work, *Livre dou Tresor* represents Muhammad as a former monk and cardinal. [Dante's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dante_Alighieri) [*Divine Comedy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_Comedy) (Canto [XXVIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/28_%28number%29)), puts Muhammad, together with Ali, in [Hell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hell) "among the sowers of discord and the schismatics, being lacerated by devils again and again." [Cultural critic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_critic) and author [Edward Said](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Said) wrote in [*Orientalism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orientalism_%28book%29) regarding Dante's depiction of Muhammad:

Empirical data about the Orient...count for very little; ... What ... Dante tried to do in the [*Inferno*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inferno_%28Dante%29), is ... to characterize the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are ... only for Europe. Hence the vacillation between the familiar and the alien; Mohammed is always the imposter (familiar, because he pretends to be like the Jesus we know) and always the Oriental (alien, because although he is in some ways "like" Jesus, he is after all not like him).

After the [reformation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestant_Reformation), Muhammad was often portrayed as a cunning and ambitious impostor. [Guillaume Postel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guillaume_Postel) was among the first to present a more positive view of Muhammad. Boulainvilliers described Muhammad as a gifted political leader and a just lawmaker. [Gottfried Leibniz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz) praised Muhammad because "he did not deviate from the natural religion". [Thomas Carlyle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Carlyle) in his book [*Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_Heroes%2C_Hero-Worship%2C_and_The_Heroic_in_History) (1840) defines Muhammed as "A silent great soul, one of that who cannot but be earnest". [Edward Gibbon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Gibbon) in his book [*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_History_of_the_Decline_and_Fall_of_the_Roman_Empire) observes that "the good sense of Mohammad despised the pomp of royalty." [Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Martin_von_Bodenstedt) (1851) described Muhammad as "an ominous destroyer and a prophet of murder." Many of the later Western works, from the 18th century onward, distanced themselves from the polemical histories of earlier Christian authors. These more historically oriented treatments, which generally reject the prophethood of Muhammad, are coloured by the [Western philosophical](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_philosophy) and theological framework of their authors. Many of these studies reflect much historical research, and most pay more attention to human, social, economic, and political factors than to religious, theological, and spiritual matters.

[Simon Ockley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Ockley) wrote in his book [*The History of the Saracen Empires*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_History_of_the_Saracens) (1718);

The greatest success of Mohammad’s life was effected by sheer moral force...It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran. . . The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honours of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.

A 19th century depiction titled *"Muhammad preaching"* (1840–1850) by [Russian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia) artist [Grigory Gagarin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grigory_Gagarin)

[Reverend Benjamin Bosworth Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Bosworth_Smith) in his book *Muhammad and Muhammadanism* (1874) commented that;

...if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammed, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life...In Mohammadanism every thing is different here. Instead of the shadowy and the mysterious, we have history….We know of the external history of Muhammad….while for his internal history after his mission had been proclaimed, we have a book absolutely unique in its origin, in its preservation….on the Substantial authority of which no one has ever been able to cast a serious doubt.

[Alphonse de Lamartine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphonse_de_Lamartine) quoted in *Histoire de la Turquie* (1854) on Muhammad;

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means and outstanding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could dare compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad.

Never has a man proposed for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a goal more sublime, since this goal was beyond measure: undermine the superstitions placed between the creature and the Creator, give back God to man and man to God, reinstate the rational and saintly idea of [divinity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divinity) in the midst of this prevailing chaos of material and disfigured gods of idolatry.... The most famous have only moved weapons, laws, empires; they founded, when they founded anything, only material powers, often crumbling before them. This one not only moved armies, legislations, empires, peoples, dynasties, millions of men over a third of the inhabited globe; but he also moved ideas, beliefs, souls. He founded upon a book, of which each letter has become a law, a spiritual nationality embracing people of all languages and races; and made an indelible imprint upon this [Muslim world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_world), for the hatred of false gods and the passion for the [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God), One and Immaterial....Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of a rational dogma for a cult without imagery, founder of twenty earthly empires and of a spiritual empire, this is Muhammad.

It was not until the latter part of the 20th century that Western authors combined rigorous scholarship as understood in the modern West with empathy toward the subject at hand and, especially, awareness of the religious and spiritual realities involved in the study of the life of the founder of a major world religion.

[Annie Besant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_Besant) in *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad* (1932) wrote

It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme...

According to [William Montgomery Watt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Montgomery_Watt) and Richard Bell, recent writers have generally dismissed the idea that Muhammad deliberately deceived his followers, arguing that Muhammad "was absolutely sincere and acted in complete good faith" and that Muhammad’s readiness to endure hardship for his cause when there seemed to be no rational basis for hope shows his sincerity. Watt says that sincerity does not directly imply correctness: In contemporary terms, Muhammad might have mistaken his own subconscious for divine revelation. Watt and [Bernard Lewis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_Lewis) argue that viewing Muhammad as a self-seeking impostor makes it impossible to understand the development of Islam. [Alford T. Welch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alford_T._Welch) holds that Muhammad was able to be so influential and successful because of his firm belief in his vocation. [Michael H. Hart](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_H._Hart) in his first book [*The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_100) (1978), a ranking of the 100 people who most influenced [human history](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_history), chose Muhammad as the first person on his list, attributing this to the fact that Muhammad was "supremely successful" in both the religious and secular realms. He also credits the authorship of the [Quran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran) to Muhammad, making his role in the development of Islam an unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history.

**Other religious traditions**

See also: [Judaism's views on Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism%27s_views_on_Muhammad)

* [Bahá'ís](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD_Faith) venerate Muhammad as one of a number of prophets or "[Manifestations of God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manifestation_of_God)", but consider his teachings to have been superseded by those of [Bahá'u'lláh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%27u%27ll%C3%A1h), the founder of the Bahai faith.
* Muhammad is regarded as one of the [Saints of Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saints_of_Ecclesia_Gnostica_Catholica).
* [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints) neither regards Muhammad as a prophet nor accepts the Quran as a book of scripture. However, it does respect Muhammad as one who taught moral truths which can enlighten nations and bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.

**Criticism**

Main article: [Criticism of Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Muhammad)

Criticism of Muhammad has existed since the 7th century, when he was attacked by his non-Muslim [Arab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab) contemporaries for preaching [monotheism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotheism), [his marriages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_wives), and [military expeditions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_as_a_general). During the Middle Ages he was frequently demonized in European and other non-Muslim polemics. In modern times, criticism has also dealt with his sincerity in claiming to be a [prophet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet) and the laws he established, such as those [concerning slavery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_and_slavery).

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