

THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

A TRANSLATION OF ISHĀQ'S
SĪRAT RASŪL ALLĀH

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
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authority of Abū Salama b. 'Abdu'l-Rahmān—God save me from attributing to the apostle words which he did not say—was as follows: he praised and glorified God as was His due and then said: O men, send forward (good works) for yourselves. You know, by God, that one of you may be smitten and will leave his flock without a shepherd. Then his Lord will say to him—there will be no interpreter or chamberlain to veil him from Him—Did not My apostle come to you with a message, and did not I give you wealth and show you favour? What have you sent forward for yourself? Then will he look to right and left and see nothing; he will look in front of him and see nothing but hell. He who can shield his face from the fire even with a little piece of date let him do so; and he who cannot find that then with a good word; for the good deed will be rewarded tenfold yea to twice seven hundred fold.¹ Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessing.

Then the apostle preached on another occasion as follows: Praise belongs to God whom I praise and whose aid I implore. We take refuge in God from our own sins and from the evil of our acts. He whom God guides none can lead astray; and whom He leads astray none can guide. I testify that there is no God but He alone, He is without companion. The finest speech is the Book of God. He to whom God has made it seem glorious and made him enter Islam after unbelief, who has chosen it above all other speech of men, doth prosper. It is the finest speech and the most penetrating. Love what God loves. Love God with all your hearts, and weary not of the word of God and its mention. Harden not your hearts from it. Out of everything that God creates He chooses and selects; the actions He chooses He calls *khira*; the people He chooses He calls *muṣṭafā*; and the speech He chooses He calls *ṣāliḥ*. From everything that is brought to man there is the lawful and the unlawful. Worship God and associate naught with Him; fear Him as He ought to be feared; Carry out loyally towards God what you say with your mouths. Love one another in the spirit of God. Verily God is angry when His covenant is broken. Peace be upon you.

THE COVENANT BETWEEN THE MUSLIMS AND THE MEDINANS AND WITH THE JEWS

The apostle wrote a document concerning the emigrants and the helpers in which he made a friendly agreement with the Jews and established them in their religion and their property, and stated the reciprocal obligations, as follows: In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is a document from Muhammad the prophet [governing the relations] between the believers and Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib, and those who

¹ Or, perhaps simply 'seven hundredfold'. Here, as in the rest of the sermon, there is an allusion to the Quran. Cf. 34. 36 where commentators differ as to the exact meaning of *ḍif*.

followed them and joined them and laboured with them. They are one community (*umma*) to the exclusion of all men. The Quraysh emigrants according to their present custom shall pay the bloodwit within their number and shall redeem their prisoners with the kindness and justice common among believers.

The B. 'Auf according to their present custom shall pay the bloodwit they paid in heathenism; every section shall redeem its prisoners with the kindness and justice common among believers. The B. Sā'ida, the B. 'l-Hārith, and the B. Jusham, and the B. al-Najjār likewise.¹

The B. 'Amr b. 'Auf, the B. al-Nabīṭ and the B. al-'Aus likewise.²

342 Believers shall not leave anyone destitute among them by not paying his redemption money or bloodwit in kindness (283).

A believer shall not take as an ally the freedman of another Muslim against him. The God-fearing believers shall be against the rebellious or him who seeks to spread injustice, or sin or enmity, or corruption between believers; the hand of every man shall be against him even if he be a son of one of them. A believer shall not slay a believer for the sake of an unbeliever, nor shall he aid an unbeliever against a believer. God's protection is one, the least of them may give protection to a stranger on their behalf. Believers are friends one to the other to the exclusion of outsiders. To the Jew who follows us belong help and equality. He shall not be wronged nor shall his enemies be aided. The peace of the believers is indivisible. No separate peace shall be made when believers are fighting in the way of God. Conditions must be fair and equitable to all. In every foray a rider must take another behind him. The believers must avenge the blood of one another shed in the way of God. The God-fearing believers enjoy the best and most upright guidance. No polytheist³ shall take the property or person of Quraysh under his protection nor shall he intervene against a believer. Whosoever is convicted of killing a believer without good reason shall be subject to retaliation unless the next of kin is satisfied (with blood-money), and the believers shall be against him as one man, and they are bound to take action against him.

It shall not be lawful to a believer who holds by what is in this document and believes in God and the last day to help an evil-doer⁴ or to shelter him. The curse of God and His anger on the day of resurrection will be upon him if he does, and neither repentance nor ransom⁵ will be received from him. Whenever you differ about a matter it must be referred to God and to Muhammad.

The Jews shall contribute to the cost of war so long as they are fighting

¹ These all belong to al-Khazraj.

² These all belong to al-Aus.

³ Presumably the heathen Arabs of Medina are referred to.

⁴ *Muhḍith*. Commentators do not explain this word and it is somewhat obscure. Possibly it means 'adulterer' here, though a wider meaning suits the context better. Cf. W. 690.

⁵ See Lane, 1682a. Originally the phrase referred to the bloodwit. *Ṣarf* meant compensation and 'adl the slaying of a man in revenge. Finally it came to mean anything excessive, so that here it would be sufficient to say 'no excuse would be received from him'.

alongside the believers. The Jews of the B. 'Auf are one community with the believers (the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs), their freedmen and their persons except those who behave unjustly and sinfully, for they hurt but themselves and their families. The same applies to the Jews of the B. al-Najjār, B. al-Ḥārith, B. Sā'ida, B. Jusham, B. al-Aus, B. Tha'laba, and the Jafna, a clan of the Tha'laba and the B. al-Shuṭayba. Loyalty is a protection against treachery.¹ The freedmen of Tha'laba are as themselves. The close friends² of the Jews are as themselves. None of them shall go out to war save with the permission of Muhammad, but he shall not be prevented from taking revenge for a wound. He who slays a man without warning slays himself and his household, unless it be one who has wronged him, for God will accept that. The Jews must bear their expenses and the Muslims their expenses. Each must help the other against anyone who attacks the people of this document. They must seek mutual advice and consultation, and loyalty is a protection against treachery. A man is not liable for his ally's misdeeds. The wronged must be helped. The Jews must pay with the believers so long as war lasts. Yathrib shall be a sanctuary for the people of this document. A stranger under protection shall be as his host doing no harm and committing no crime. A woman shall only be given protection with the consent of her family. If any dispute or controversy likely to cause trouble should arise it must be referred to God and to Muhammad the apostle of God. God accepts what is nearest to piety and goodness in this document. Quraysh and their helpers shall not be given protection. The contracting parties are bound to help one another against any attack on Yathrib. If they are called to make peace and maintain it they must do so; and if they make a similar demand on the Muslims it must be carried out except in the case of a holy war. Every one shall have his portion from the side to which he belongs;³ the Jews of al-Aus, their freedmen and themselves have the same standing with the people of this document in pure loyalty from the people of this document (284).

Loyalty is a protection against treachery: He who acquires aught acquires it for himself. God approves of this document. This deed will not protect⁴ the unjust and the sinner. The man who goes forth to fight and the man who stays at home in the city⁵ is safe unless he has been unjust and sinned. God is the protector of the good and God-fearing man and Muhammad is the apostle of God.

¹ Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, v, Berlin, 1889, p. 70, renders 'Lauterkeit steht vor Trug' and accuses Sprenger and Krehl of inexactness. S. has 'sie müssen loyal und nicht schlecht handeln' where a general truth is in question. Suhayli says the meaning is 'Piety and loyalty stand in the way of treachery' (ii. 17).

² For the meaning of this word cf. 519. 4 where *biṭāna* clearly has such a connotation.

³ This is not clear to me.

⁴ For this idiom cf. Sūra 6. 24.

⁵ Or 'in Medina'. Whether Medina is meant or not the passage stands self-condemned as a later interpolation because the town is consistently called Yathrib.