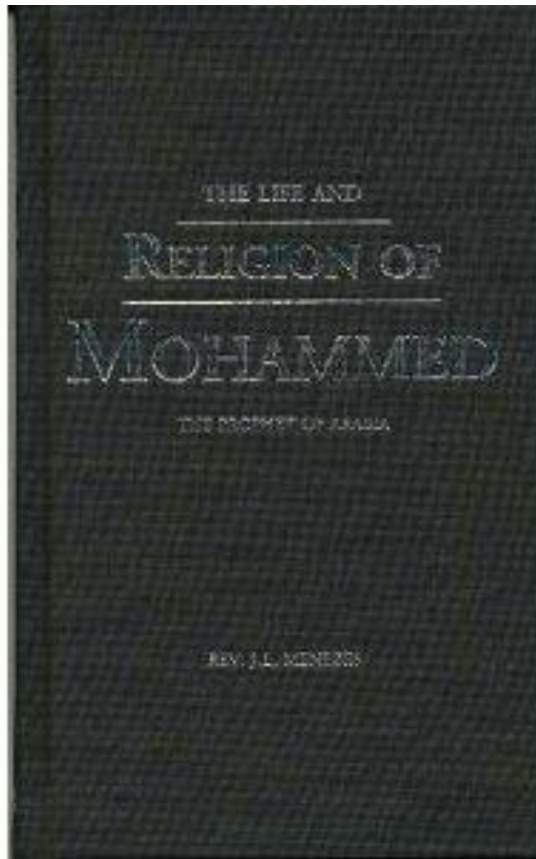


A Summary of Life and Religion of Mohammed the Prophet of Arabia by Rev. J. L. Menezes



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About the Author

Fr. J.L. Menezes was a Roman Catholic priest who devoted his life to missionary work in India where he undertook to convert the Indian Moslems to Christianity.

General Overview

The life and actions of Mohammed, prophet of Allah, are minutely described and assessed with an objective voice attempting to bring the truth of Christ to the Moslem world. The history of Islam and Arabia is examined and explained along with the effect that Islam has had on that region of the world. The inner workings, doctrines, and behaviors of the Moslems are presented and critiqued with great compassion. Good and bad aspects and effects of the Moslem religion are presented and compelling arguments are made for the abandonment of that religion by its adherents.

Part First: The Life of Mohammed

Arabia and its Inhabitants/The Political State of Arabia Before the Advent of Mohammed

An historical and geographical account of the layout and division of Arabia is given with topographical details including major bodies of water. The ancestry and internal categories of the Arabian tribes are described as well as economic and cultural details including trade customs. There are two major groups of Arabs one of which is directly descended from Abraham via Ishmael.

At the time of Mohammed's birth the Persian and Roman Empires are on the decline and many false prophets are appearing in Arabia along with the refugees fleeing the collapse of these two institutions. Most of the governmental forces surrounding Arabia are fragmenting and falling apart.

Birth of Mohammed and his Early Life

Mohammed's genealogy is traced back to Abraham and the circumstances surrounding his birth are described. The infant Mohammed is given to a Bedouin nurse according to the customs of his people and he is raised by this woman until he is five years old. As a very young child, he suffers seizures and is returned to his parents who give him unto the care of an uncle. His uncle raises Mohammed to become a powerful merchant.

Mohammed and Khadija/ Mohammed and Kaaba

At the age of twenty five, Mohammed marries a rich and powerful widow in Mecca named Khadija with whom he has four daughters. A brief overview of the role of women in Arab society is given.

Soon after his marriage, Mohammed begins to settle disputes between the tribesmen in Mecca and to make a name for himself among them. At this time, he adopts two sons because he and his wife have only daughters.

Mohammed and Anchorite

Mohammed weighs Christianity and Judaism against the various pagan religions of his own people and finds that his people lack true religion. He becomes solitary and takes to living in a cave near Mecca and

contemplating a return to the pure religious roots that are his people's birthright through Ishmael. Mohammed becomes convinced that his people need a true prophet.

Mohammed and his Revelations/ The First Converts of Mohammed

Mohammed takes his family to his cave for the holy month of Ramadan and convinces his wife that he is a prophet of God who receives visits from the angel Gabriel. His epileptic fits become more frequent and severe and he lets on that during these seizures he is communing with God. Mohammed goes on to gain a very small following from his extended family.

Mohammed the Prophet

Mohammed prepares a feast at which he announces himself to be the one true prophet of God and the spiritual guide of Arabia. The only guest who does not mock this declaration is his adopted son.

Mohammed and the Koreish Tribes/The Koreish League – Mohammed and his Followers Boycotted

Mohammed begins to preach in Mecca and gains a modest following. The tribe of Koreish conceives a hatred for him and makes a formal request to his uncle that he silence Mohammed. The uncle refuses and the tribesmen begin attacking Mohammed's followers some of whom are forced to flee Mecca.

Mohammed gains ground with the Arab tribes and the Koreish tribe swears an oath to have no dealings with him or his associates. This oath is put in writing but a worm eats through the document and the Koreish take it as a sign from God and repent of their boycott.

The Death of Khadija and Abu Talib Mohammed a Polygamist

Mohammed loses his wife and his beloved uncle within weeks of one another and marries a widow. He then betroths himself to a seven year old girl and so institutes polygamy within Islam.

Mohammed Meets the People of Medina/The Pledge of Acaba

Mohammed preaches in the public places of Mecca and is heard by some pilgrims from Medina who admire him greatly.

Jews from Medina, thinking Mohammed might be their long awaited prophet, come to hear Mohammed speak and many become his faithful followers. Islam quickly spreads through Medina.

Mohammed's Fiction; The Greatest Pretended Miracle

Mohammed tells a story of how he was taken by Allah, on the back of a winged horse, from Mecca to Medina, to Jerusalem, to heaven, and there in heaven he spoke with Allah. His followers find this hard to swallow, but a friend of Mohammed's swears it is true and the grumbling ceases.

The Converts of Medina and the Second Pledge of Acaba/Koreish Fresh Persecution – Mohammed Flies to Medina – 'Hejira'

Mohammed's enemies rise to power in Mecca and he promises paradise to all who die defending the prophet.

The Koreish tribe begins to persecute Mohammed in earnest and he smuggles his followers out of Mecca to Medina. Mohammed follows to Medina where he is joined by the remainder of his followers.

Mohammed and the Sword

Mohammed lets it be known that Islam will spread by the sword and with violence he will overthrow the idols of the Arabian tribes.

Part Second: Mohammed at Medina

Mohammed at Medina/The First Mosque of Islam

Mohammed arrives triumphantly in Medina and erects the first Moslem mosque in that city. The mosque includes housing for Mohammed and for the poor among his followers. This first mosque later became the final resting place of the prophet.

Mohammed and the Jews/Mohammed the Law – Giver

Fighting breaks out between the Moslems in Medina and the Jews in Medina and Mohammed begins to harbor a great dislike for the Jews.

Mohammed begins to establish the customs of Islam and formalizes the call to prayer and the tradition of praying five times a day. He establishes Friday as the Moslem holy day and lays down dietary laws for Islam.

Mohammed a Belligerent/The Incentives of War

Mohammed sends his followers to harass the Koreish and make retribution for their treatment of him. He begins to rob caravans citing a vision from Allah blessing all retribution made against unbelievers.

Mohammed declares that a revelation from Allah requires him to make war on all unbelievers and promises a higher place in paradise to those who join in or fund holy wars. He also declares that one fifth of all booty taken in war is to be given to the prophet.

The Battle of Badr

A man killed during one of Mohammed's raids was an important member of the Koreish tribe which resulted in a bloody feud between Islam and that tribe. Mohammed attacked a rich caravan of Koreish tribesmen and slaughtered many men. He later declared that this was done with the aid of the archangels and referred to the attack as 'The Day of Deliverance.' All prisoners of this battle were executed if they refused to convert to Islam.

Mohammed and the Jews Again

Mohammed then turns his attention to the Jews in Medina and begins killing and exiling them tribe by tribe. Mohammed finally gains control of all of the land between Mecca, Medina, and the coast.

Mohammed a Debauchee

Mohammed begins to marry at a frantic pace and encourages his followers to do the same. He sets the limit of wives at four per man, but claims an exception to this rule for the prophet. He also does away with the custom of adoption in order to marry the divorced wife of his adopted son and claims that Allah sanctions the taking of concubines for all Moslem men.

The Battle of Ohod/The Battle of the Ditch/The Destruction of the Jews

The Meccans desire revenge on Mohammed and attack Medina. The battle goes well for Islam and the prophet is mistakenly proclaimed dead by the Meccans who then leave the field thereby saving Mohammed's life.

The exiled Jews raise an army and lay siege to Medina, but after a month of siege the attackers retire from the field. Mohammed vows vengeance and besieges the city of the Jews. When their city falls, Mohammed beheads the men and enslaves the women and children. This victory is much touted within the Koran.

Mohammed and Ayeshah

Mohammed's young wife Ayeshah is accused of adultery and Mohammed states that he has had a vision from the angel Gabriel declaring her innocence. He then institutes a law requiring four witnesses to accuse a woman of adultery with grave reprisals for false accusation.

Mohammed Visits Mecca

Mohammed wishes to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, but the Meccans bar him from the holy city. Mohammed sues for peace and a ten year treaty is signed lifting the Meccan ban on joining Islam.

Mohammed and the Khaibar Jews/Mohammed Poisoned

Mohammed continues his persecution of the Jews and takes another of their cities, but instead of slaughtering these people, he lays a tax on them of one half of their yearly produce. He also takes one of their women and adds her to his harem.

The Jewish woman whom Mohammed took poisons a dish at his table and one man dies from eating it, but Mohammed spits out his portion and survives the attempt on his life.

Mohammed and Neighboring Chiefs/Mohammed and the Great Powers

The neighboring people hear of Mohammed's dealings with the Jews and begin to send him one half of their yearly produce and young women from their tribes, unsolicited in the hope that he will then leave them alone.

Mohammed invites the neighboring powers to join Islam sending envoys to Egypt, Byzantium, and Persia. Egypt and Persia respond favorably to his overture and he gains many converts, but Byzantium declines to set aside Jesus Christ in favor of Mohammed, the camel driver.

Mohammed Visits Mecca/Mohammed Takes Mecca/Mohammed and the Greeks

Mohammed makes another pilgrimage to Mecca, takes a twelfth wife, and gains a few more converts to Islam. After his return from the pilgrimage, Mohammed decides to march on Mecca and he succeeds in taking the holy city. The Meccans convert en masse and Mohammed leaves them to return to Medina after setting both a civil and a religious government in place.

Inspired by this easy victory, Mohammed decides to march on a province of the Byzantine Empire and suffers a major defeat in which he loses several of his generals and also his adopted son.

Battle of Honain/Hawazins and Shakifites Submit

The Arab tribes observe the fate of Mecca and begin to flock to the banners of Islam, but two of the larger tribes unite against the prophet. Mohammed rallies the armies of Allah and attacks. At first, Islam seems to be losing the battle, but they triumph and the tribal leaders take up the yoke of Islam.

Medina is now the capitol of an empire and some of the tribes that had hitherto resisted Mohammed convert to Islam and join him by donating all of the property of their gods to the prophet.

Mohammed and Christians/The ban Against Unbelievers

A community of Arabian Christians sends a deputation to Mohammed expecting that they will be well-received due to religious similarities, but the envoys hear of Mohammed's treatment of other sects and begin to fear oppression. Their fears are justified when Mohammed forbids the baptizing of Christian infants and eventually forces the Arab Christians to submit to Islam.

Mohammed sends word throughout his territories that all Jewish synagogues and Christian churches are to be burned and mosques built on their ruins. He formally bans the practicing of either religion within his lands.

Mohammed and his Domestic Troubles/Mohammed Changes his Policy

Mohammed's many wives begin to fight in earnest when Mohammed shows a marked preference for a Christian-born wife. The other wives rally behind a wife called Hafsah and rebel against the prophet. Mohammed threatens to divorce them all except for his Coptic girl who was the only wife to have born him a son. The son of the prophet mysteriously dies some little while later and his burial site is a holy place in Islam.

Mohammed begins to formalize his policies, both political and religious, throughout the whole of his empire. He consolidates his rule and institutes a single way of governing for the whole of his vast territory.

Mohammed's Last Pilgrimage/Mohammed's Last Year

Mohammed sets out for Mecca on what is to be his last pilgrimage to that place. While in Mecca, the prophet formally sets the rules for Meccan pilgrimage through all time. In order to solidify the month of pilgrimage forever, Mohammed changes the Arab calendar.

Mohammed's daughter gives birth to two sons whom the prophet greatly loves and sees as the continuation of his line. Mohammed splits his time between his grandchildren, receiving deputations from vassal states, and prayer. At this time, the last of the Arab tribes join Islam and Mohammed now holds all of Arabia, Persia, and Egypt.

Mohammed's Last Illness and Death/Mohammed's Burial

Mohammed's mind becomes tangled with fever and he retires from public life to the rooms of his beloved wife Ayesha and is soon unable to leave his bed. His faithful gather around him and he dies with a prayer on his lips.

News of the death of the prophet spreads throughout the Moslem empire and the people flock to the burial of Mohammed. The prophet is buried next to the first mosque in Medina and that place remains a Moslem pilgrimage destination to rival Mecca.

Mohammed's Person and Character

A description of Mohammed's personal appearance and manner is given in detail as well as an assessment of his character and tastes and a sketch of his mental workings, personal foibles, and beliefs.

The Successors of Mohammed

After the death of Mohammed, the people of Mecca and Medina fight over who will be his successor. Some favor his daughter's husband who would then be followed by the prophet's own grandsons while others favor Mohammed's close friend, Abu Bekr. Abu rises to power and is followed by Omar. Both of these men make great conquests of Christian and Jewish territory and gather together the scattered chapters of the Koran.

Eventually the husband of Mohammed's daughter, Ali, gains power and a deep divide among the Moslems occurs. Those in favor of the rule of Ali are known as Shiahs, and those against as Sunnis. This divide remains very much a part of Islam to this day. Bloody civil war between these two factions commenced and has yet to be concluded.

Part Third: The Koran

The History of the Koran/Traditions/Iman of the Creed of Islam

The Koran is a short book which reached its present form about twenty years after Mohammed's death. It is believed to be of purely divine origin, and was systematized by Mohammed's first successor, Abu Bekr. There are almost no variances of text in the Koran throughout the Islamic world; however, the book is fragmented, chaotic, and anachronistic. It is written in the Koreish dialect in rhythmic prose and divided into one hundred and fourteen chapters and thirty parts.

A text called the *Sunnah* was made to supplement the Koran as a book of laws and traditions. The Moslems are again divided on the *Sunnah* with the Sunnis adhering faithfully to that text, and the Shiahs following their own separate traditions.

The word *Islam* means submission and signifies complete submission to the will of Allah. Moslem is a Persian form of this word. *Iman* is a word describing the doctrines of Islam, and *Din* refers to the religious practice of Moslems.

The Explanation of the Articles of Faith/The Duties of Islam (Din)

Iman is divided into six articles which are here stated and elaborated upon. These articles are: 1) Belief in Allah 2) Belief in angels 3) Belief in books and their divine origin 4) Belief in prophets (among whom Moslems number Jesus Christ) 5) Belief in the resurrection and the Day of Judgment 6) Belief in the predestination of good and evil.

The four *Din* are prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca. Prayer includes spoken words, ritual washing, and precise gestures and posture. Moslems pray five times each day and their prayers must be offered in a mosque or any completely pure place. Friday is the Moslem holy day and is observed with public services and prayers.

Almsgiving is divided into the categories of legal and voluntary alms. Legal alms are a required portion of one's income given as alms, and voluntary alms are anything beyond that requirement that one chooses to give. Fasting is observed during the month of Ramadan in daylight hours and is very strict, but between sunset and sunrise there are no fasting rules. Pilgrimage to Mecca is required of every Moslem at least once in their lifetime and is a highly ritualized practice.

Negative Precepts of the Koran/Islam's Influence on Society

The Koran forbids the consumption of alcohol and narcotics, all gambling, divination, and the eating of any meat dead of itself. It also prohibits infanticide, which was widely practiced in that region of the world, and requires women to remain secluded and veiled at all times. It also forbids all forms of usury.

Islam falls short of Mohammed's intention of eradicating idolatry and raising the social prospects of the Arab world and instead seems to breed chaos, corruption, unsanitary habits, and illiteracy. Reform and civilizational progress are summarily opposed by the nature of Islam.

The Testament of the Koran on the Old and New Testaments/Summary

Islam asserts that while being of divine origins, the Old and New Testaments are corrupted documents and patently ignores the fact that these texts existed centuries before the advent of Mohammed. The Koran itself references both testaments freely and reverently and admonishes all Moslems to follow these texts. This is but one example of the fragmented nature of the Islamic religion.

The author asserts that he undertook this writing out of a desire to be of help to Moslems and to speak the truth. He also states that Mohammed was indeed a wonderful and charismatic man, but was also riddled with vice, corruption, and mental illness.

The Divine Inspiration of the Koran/The Author of the Koran/Causes of the Early Success of Islam

The divinely inspired nature of the Koran is proven, within Islam, by the fact that Mohammed was an uneducated man and therefore incapable of producing such a work. This claim is examined in light of the fact that the Koran is not a great – or even a coherent – work and constantly contradicts itself. These self-contradictions are given as further proof of its entirely human origin.

The Meccans asserted, before their mass conversion to Islam, that the Koran was written by a follower of Mohammed and not by the prophet or by the will of Allah. Scholarly research seems to bear out his interpretation of the facts and even points to specific individuals who are likely responsible for the authorship of the Koran.

Moslems believe that the rapid spread of their religion is proof of its divine nature, but the more likely explanation is that the religion suited the people of that time and place and it is widely known that once the Arabs took up Islam they spread it by bloody war and politics.

Part Fourth: Sects in Islam

Sects in Islam

There are currently about one hundred and fifty sects within Islam all of which claim direct and total authority from the Koran. Upon the death of Mohammed, internal argument broke out among the Moslems and the religion fragmented into groups with each group counting all others as infidels and claiming supremacy. All of the Moslem sects differ on interpreting the Koran. From time to time, a self-styled prophet will arise and create yet another tear in the fabric of Islam. The author entreats the Indian Moslems, for whom he is specifically writing, to examine the evidence presented and honestly assess their religion's validity.

Part Fifth: Conclusion

A Familiar and Friendly Talk

The author makes a heartfelt and compassionate entreaty to all Moslems to examine themselves, their prophet, and the fruits of their religion with open hearts and minds. He calls upon Islam to worship Jesus Christ and come home to the arms of the Holy Catholic Church.