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Carbondale, Illinois. This newsletter is named in
memory of Bilal ibn Rahab, a black Ethiopian slave
who became the comrade and closest friend of
Mohammad, the Prophet of Islam.

SPECIAL Id-e-Meelad Number

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جَبُ الْأَثِي Unlettered prophet الخ اللي المالية مُسنت جَبِعُ فَعَالَدٍ يَنْجِيهُ مَا كُرِدِهِ فَرَالِ وَمِنْ

Abul Qasim Mohammad Ibn Abdullah of the Arab tribe of Quraish was born in the city of Mecca, in what is now known as Saudi Arabia, in about 570 A.D. One author has put his date of birth as 29th of August 570 A.D. at a close approximation.

His father had died a few days before his birth. According to the custom of Quraish at that time, the child was given in the custody of a lady of Bedouin tribe. He lived with the desert tribe till he was five or six year old. He was returned to his mother, but she soon died. Thus the care of the doubly orphaned child devolved upon his grand-father Abdul-Muttalib. Three years later he lost his grand-father also. Then his uncle Abu-Talib took care of him and did not put anything material or moral he had above the protection and care of his brother's son.

In his boyhood Mohammad helped his folks in sheep grazing, tending camels and the like jobs. He remained unlettered and untaught by men. But he learnt from them and learnt to teach them and in the ensuing years really sent to oblivian the works of many a generations of philosophers and the learned.

As he reached the age of discretion every one in the town saw in him a very different personality, distinct and gently aloof from others. His charming noble appearance, his clean habits and above all his honest and straight forward behavior won for him the ungrudging name of Al-Amin ie., THE TRUSTWORTHY. He was trusted by all, for safe keeping of valuables—articles as well as personal secrets. He was called upon to settle the disputes and to help the needy. He established himslef as the living example of clean moral conduct, so rare among the people around him. He was hired as trade agent by a rich lady and he took several journeys in Arabia and to Syria for business purposes. The lady, who was a widow, afterwards married him.

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Mohammad used to retire in a cave, where he medidated upon the cruel and ignorant things in the society, and fervently prayed for true guidance and light to an unseen (od, of whom he had some knoledge from Jews and Christians and whose signs were so appearant to his searching soul.

When he was of forty years of age, he say a dazzling light in the cave and clearly heard someone saying to him Read Aloud! The frightened and puzzled man replied, I am unlettered I can not read, and again he was told that In The Name Of God Most Merciful Most Compassionate, Read Aloud!..., and so he did.

What he was given to read was simple message not startling and new for the mankind, but only fresh in its spirit, clear and unequivocal in its form, most sincere and convincing in its effect. This was the repetition of the eternal truth, we'l worth ever repeating, that there is no lord except one God. He who created the man, created him in the best mould. He in His mercy taught the man the pure and righteous way of enjoying his temporary sojourn on earth, within limits of time, distance cause and effect, and at the same time working his way toward the eternal like, attaining the pleasure of his Creator and thus fulfilling the purpose of Creation. Mohammad continued to receive the revelation for the next twenty three years, till a few months before his death his revealation declared that the book was completed.

The last twenty three years of Mohammad's life were the most trying, testing and revealing. When he first declared to be the messenger of God, only three people believed in lim. His wife, his cousin a young boy, and an elderly man of affairs. He was persecuted by his fellow men, tortured, abused and ridiculed. The chiefs of the powerful tribes conspired for his incarceration. and assasination. He and his followers were put to severe bodiay torture, saw stoppage of food and water, and were deprived of their property and families. Some of them died of the cruelties. One day in the town of Taif Mohammad was severely stoned by a mob on the instigation of the overlords of the place. The eye witness says that his shoes stuck to his feet with the drying blood. His freed slave Zaid was accompanying him. Zaid said why you don't curse these people so that the wrath of God would over take them., -- you are God's Prophet. So Mohammad sat down, raised his hands in prayer and said -- My Lord give these peoplethy guidance, they are just ignorant.

Let us see a few charges against Mohammad which had so enraged the whole nobility of Arabia. He was charged with destroying the honor of all Arabs by associating with black slaves, sharing food with lowly men, and giving the respect to Persians which was only due to the Quraish. He was charged with destroying the tradition by preaching against the killing of female infants. He was charged with blasphemy by preaching that their idols were mere pieces of stone or wood and were utterly powerless to drive

a fly from their faces. He was charged with seduction by preaching that the women had their rights and they should not be treated as goods and chattle. He was charged with creating rebellion by publicly declaring that a slave was just as equal a man as his master. He was charged with creating nuisance by denouncing gambling drunkenness and debauchery as sins. He was charged with destroying the livelihood of people by preaching against loot, plunder, and usuary. He was called majician, poet, and lunatic. He was very much blamed for the convincing effect he had in his speech. He was charged with corrupting the youth by telling them something which made them rebellious and contemptuous of the old ways.

The cruelties of his opponents did niether stop him from preaching nor they could check the ever increasing number of his followers. When the Quraish chiefs were themselves tired of their cruelties, they tried to bribe him, offered him great wealth, and promised to crown him as the king of all Arabia. He rejected all those offers. Nothing could stop him from calling toward the way of God, the path shown by His true Prophets--Abraham, Mosses, Jesus and all others. There was no relaxation in persecution of his fellowers so he ordered all those who could afford, to take refuge in Abyssinia, where they received the best hospitality from the Christian king. The king suppressed all efforts of their being turned over to their enemies.

After 13 years of preaching in Mecca and the vicinity Mohammad left for Yathrib, afterwards called Medina, the City of Prophet. This flight, in 622 A.D. is called Hijera in Moslem History and their Calender runs from this year. Though he returned victorious to Mecca and cleaned the holy mosque of Abraham and Ishmael from the idols, but he soon returned to the city of his adoption. Mohammad died in about 633 A.D.

He left behind him a nation of devout God fearing men and a neat and clear way of life or a religion called Islam and a book of guidance called Quran, together with his own traditions and example of a MAN, a true servant of God.

Within a few hundred years after Mohammad's death, Islam spread from Arabia accross North Africa into Spain, into South Eastern Europe th accross Asia as far as the Philippines, carrying the message revealed to Mohammad, and before him to Jesus, Mosses and Abraham—the message of one God, the equality of all men, the dignity that man should reach through knowledge.

WHAT IS ISLAM

The religion advocated by Mohammad is called Islam. The followers of the religion do not see fit to call it Mohammadenism, because they do not believe that it is an invention of Mohammad himself. They believe that it is the repetition and continuation of the same message, guidance and light of God, given to the other prophets before Mohammad. In the very beginning of the second chapter of Quran the idea has been well clarified, where the believers are defined as those who believe in what is

before thee. . . I read here a quotation from Ameer Ali describing precisely the beliefs in Islam:

The principal bases on which the Islamic system is founded are (1) a belief in the unity, immateriality, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator; (2) charity and brotherhood of mankind; (3 subjugation of the passions; (4) the outpouring of a greatful heart to the Giver of all good; and (5) accountability for human actions in another existance.

To give a brief description of outward signs of Islam, I borrow a quotation from Geral L. Berry:

Islam is a rigorous religion, free from cant, pride and false humility. It advocates justice (even) in revenge and is a perfect equalizer of men. The Moslem is ordered to keep his contracts, aid the poor, honor measure, avoid waste, avoid all strong drinks and be truly humble. . . Its ethics when practiced are literally the Sermon on the Mount translated into daily life.

He (ie., Moslem) has five religious duties:

l. faith . . .

2. prayer . .

3. Fasting . . . throughout the month of Ramadan. . .

4. Charity . . .

5. Pilgrimage to Macca. . .once in lifetime. . .
Moslem worship has remained simple--no ritual, no ecclesiastical hierarchy, no priesthood, no alters or images no sacraments no holy days.

Since I have mentioned of prayer in Islam, I would like to close the discussion with the prayer, repeated several times in a day by a good Moslam, the opening chapter of Quran.

In the name of God Most Gracious Most Merciful,
Praise be to God, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds;
Most Gracious, Most Merciful;
Master of the Day of Judgement.
Thee do we worship, And Thine aid we seek.
Show us the Straight way.
The Way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
Those whose (portion) Is not Wrath,
And who go not Astray. Amen.

Saced Ahmad Nizami

The above is the text of a talk given at a reception in honor of birth of Mahammad the prophet of Islam . The text or any portion of it may be used without permission or acknowledgement. The editorial staff of BilAl The publication of Moslem : Y. usef Danesh Students Association Sothern Miss Linda Clark Illinois Univer -sity, Carbondale, Bill Perkins Illinois. Abdul Lateef Mr. Yousef Danesh, President Saced Ahmad Nizami 713 W. Freeman Carbondale, Ill. FADE U TOFT