



Contents

Chronology of Muhammad's life	xi
Names and places	xiii
<hr/>	
Chapter 1: Why a biography of Muhammad is relevant today	1
Is Islam a religion of peace? Why it matters	
Dueling Muhammads	
Why Muhammad matters	
Polite fictions are useless	
The purpose of this book	
Why I did not want to write this book	
Death to "blasphemers"	
Defending freedom of speech	
General notes	
<hr/>	
Chapter 2: In search of the historic Muhammad	19
What can we really know about Muhammad?	
The Qur'an	
The Hadith	
The Sira	
Historical fact and Muslim belief	
<hr/>	
Chapter 3: Muhammad becomes a prophet	33
Arabia before Muhammad	
Muhammad's early life	
Khadija	
The first visitation	
The suicidal despair returns	

Chapter 4: Muhammad's revelations and their sources	47
Borrowings from Judaism	
"Tales of the ancients"	
Borrowings from Christianity	
Other borrowings	
Revelations of convenience?	
The consequences	
Modern embarrassment	

Chapter 5: "A warner in the face of a terrific punishment"	73
Difficulties with the Quraysh	
The evolution of the command to wage war	
The Satanic verses	
The Night Journey	

Chapter 6: Muhammad becomes a warlord	89
The Hijra	
The covenant between the Muslims and the Jews	
The conversion of Abdullah and tensions with the rabbis	
The Hypocrites	
The Nakhla raid	
The break with the Jews and the change of qibla (direction for prayer)	

Chapter 7: "War is deceit"	103
The Battle of Badr	
Allah fights for the Muslims	
The problem of booty	
The Qaynuqa Jews	
Anger toward Jews and Christians	
Assassination and deceit	
The Quraysh strike back	

Assuaging doubts after Uhud
The deportation of the Banu Nadir

Chapter 8: **Casting terror into their hearts** **123**

The Battle of the Trench
Dealing with the Banu Qurayzah
Finding excuses for a massacre
The women of the Banu Mustaliq
Abdullah bin Ubayy and praying for one's enemies
The Treaty of Hudaibiyya
The raid at Khaybar
The poisoning of Muhammad
The spoils of Khaybar

Chapter 9: **Victorious through terror** **145**

The conquest of Mecca
Apostates to be killed
Muhammad at the Ka'bah
The Battle of Hunayn and mastery of Arabia
Invitations to Islam
The Tabuk raid
Collecting the jizya
The last pilgrimage: the rights of women and the
expulsion of the pagans
The murder of the poets
Muhammad's final illness
After Muhammad

Chapter 10: **Muhammad's legacy** **169**

The War on Terror
Pedophile prophet?
Misogynist?
Draconian punishments?
Warrior prophet?

Islamic tolerance?
A kinder, gentler Muhammad
The veneration of Muhammad
Imitating Muhammad today
Frightening reality
What is to be done

Acknowledgments	195
Notes	197
Index	215



Chronology of Muhammad's life

(All dates are approximate)

- 570 Muhammad is born in Mecca
- 595 Muhammad marries Khadija, who later becomes the first Muslim
- 610 Muhammad receives what he comes to believe is his first visitation from the angel Gabriel and revelation from Allah
- 613 Muhammad begins preaching Islam publicly in Mecca
- 615 Friction with the Quraysh causes some Muslims to leave Arabia for Abyssinia
- 619 Khadija dies
- 619 The Satanic verses incident
- 620 The Night Journey: Muhammad reports that he has been carried to Paradise and has met the other prophets
- 622 The Hijra: Muhammad and the Muslims flee to Medina
- 622 Muhammad consummates his marriage to the nine-year-old Aisha
- 624 The Nakhla raid and the beginning of violence in the name of Islam
- 624 The Battle of Badr: the Muslims overcome great odds to defeat the pagan Meccans
- 624 Muhammad and the Muslims besiege the Jewish Qaynuqa tribe and exile them from Medina
- 625 The Battle of Uhud: the pagan Meccans defeat the Muslims
- 625 Siege and exile from Medina of the Jewish Nadir tribe

- 627 The Battle of the Trench: the Jewish Qurayzah tribe betrays Muhammad
- 627 Muhammad beheads the males of the Qurayzah tribe and enslaves the women and children
- 628 Muhammad concludes the Treaty of Hudaibiyya with the pagan Meccans
- 628 Muhammad and the Muslims besiege the Khaybar oasis and exile the Jews from it
- 628 Muhammad is poisoned at Khaybar
- 630 Muhammad and the Muslims conquer Mecca
- 630 The Muslims prevail in the Battle of Hunayn and conquer Ta'if; Muhammad becomes the master of Arabia
- 631 The Arabian tribes remaining outside Islamic rule accept Islam
- 631 Warfare against the Christians: the expedition to Tabuk
- 632 Muhammad dies in Medina on June 8