

SPREAD OF ISLAM

WITH KINDNESS AND FORGIVENESS

spread

Akhlaq (A)

In the Arab country of the seventh century, people were divided by their own greed and wickedness, and felt great fear in their hearts. They would pray to idols, and bury baby girls alive, having no respect at all for women. But the religion of Islam which was gradually revealed to Prophet Muhammad by God, began to change these ideas. It said that there must be dignity and equality for everyone, including women and slaves. Such teaching inspired some of the young men who heard it, and a small band of followers grew up. However it was also a threat to the former way of life, to the people in power and the slave-owners. As a result, there were those who hated Islam and who were determined to get rid of Muhammad.

On one occasion he was almost strangled. There were many plots to kill him but they failed. Dirt and stones were often thrown at him. It is said that one woman was in the habit of sweeping out of the dust from her house all over Muhammad as he passed every day on his way to the mosque. He would greet her with a friendly 'Assalamu Alaikum' which means "peace be upon you". One day he discovered that the woman was very ill. Immediately he went into the house, looked after her and did the housework until she was well again. She was sorry for having behaved so badly, and became a follower of the new faith.

In Arabia at this time transport was chiefly by means of a camel caravan. Muhammad travelled this way on many occasions and many stories are told of his encounters.

On one occasion, in the burning heat of the mid-day sun, the caravan stopped to rest the camels. The Prophet lay down under a nearby tree. He went to sleep as soon as his head touched the ground.

Now among the travellers was a man who hated Muhammad and his teachings. As he saw the Prophet lying down he thought that this was a wonderful chance to kill him. Quickly he ran towards him and took out his sword. The Prophet woke up, just as the man was about to strike. His enemy said "Muhammad, who can save you from me now?" The Prophet, who did not seem to be afraid, answered "Allah, the one Almighty God will

save me." The man was so surprised to find someone who did not fear death that he dropped his sword. At once the Prophet grabbed his attacker with one hand, picked up the sword with the other and said " Tell me now, who will save you from me ?" The man now saw that without faith he was lost, for he would surely die at the hands of Muhammad. How thankful he was when the Prophet allowed him to go free. The result was that this man became a devoted Muslim for the rest of his life.