



No
Islam
but
Islam

FARZANA MOON

No Islam but Islam

By

Farzana Moon

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



No Islam but Islam

By Farzana Moon

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Farzana Moon

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-7118-4

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7118-1

For my kindred spirit
Damanjit Yakhmi,
dearest of friends

No Islam but Islam

FOREWORD

This book is about what Islam is, not about what Islam is *not*, as is proclaimed by mullahs when violence against Islam threatens their self-styled religion, endangering their lifestyle of zeal, orthodoxy and intolerance. Conceived as an antidote against those fundamentalists who do not denounce the evils of terror, murder and suicide bombing, this book strives toward delineating the compassionate side of Islam based on the life of the Prophet Muhammad. Paradoxically, Islam as a religion of peace and reconciliation was hijacked immediately after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. At the very inception of its rise to glory, it fell from the grace of purity in love, harmony and compassion. The message of Islam was sidelined if not forgotten, and Islam did rise—it rose to the pinnacle of expansion by the sword, under the weight of an astonishing mixture of dualities, in cruelty and compassion, in tolerance and intolerance, in killing and forgiving. Historically, Islam emerged as a power struggle between several factions, and even its great split into the major sects of Shia and Sunni, and further fragmentation into multiple sects, did not affect the dizzying speed of its conquests, along with the flourishing of the arts and sciences. Sadly, the arts of poetry, literature and architecture which allowed Islam to reach the zenith of its expression declined with the gradual onslaught of man-made laws and edicts in stark contrast to the precepts of Islam. Prophet Muhammad's last sermon on the last holy pilgrimage to Mecca, as detailed at the beginning of the first chapter, is the epitome of Islam as a universal message of love, equality and compassion for all God's creatures.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	ix
Chapter One.....	1
The Mount of Mercy	
Chapter Two	19
Islamic Festivals	
Chapter Three	33
The Prophet's Compassion	
Chapter Four.....	50
The Prophet's Wives	
Chapter Five	61
Hajj: Holy Pilgrimage	
Chapter Six	70
The Prophet's Character	
Chapter Seven.....	80
Caliphs in Succession	
Chapter Eight.....	89
The Second Caliph	
Chapter Nine.....	98
The Third Caliph	
Chapter Ten	107
The Fourth Caliph	
Chapter Eleven	116
Mu'awiya, the First Umayyad Caliph 661-680	

Chapter Twelve	120
The Great Split of the Year 680	
Chapter Thirteen	125
Sunni/Shia Islam	
Chapter Fourteen	134
Wahhabi Islam	
Chapter Fifteen	158
Ahmadiyya Islam	
Chapter Sixteen	165
The Taliban: No Islam	
Chapter Seventeen	173
Prophet Muhammad's Islam	
Conclusion	183
Bibliography	184
Index	186

CHAPTER ONE

THE MOUNT OF MERCY

Pass through this moment of time in harmony with nature, and end your journey in content, as an olive falls when it is ripe, blessing nature who produced it, and thanking the tree on which it grew.

—Marcus Aurelius

Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon on the Mount of Mercy

From the Prophet's sermon on Mount Arafat after *haji*: "My beloved friends, listen to my words, because I don't know if I will ever be with you here again after this year. Therefore listen to what I am saying, carefully, and take these words to those who could not be here today. My friends and family, your lives, property and honor are sacred for you until you appear before your Lord, just as you consider this month, this day and this city sacred. Return the things that are entrusted to you to their rightful owners. You will meet your Lord, and He will hold you answerable for your actions. You have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you. Treat your wives with love and kindness. Verily, you have taken them on the security of God, and their persons are made lawful unto you by the words of God. Free your slaves, following my example, and tell others to do the same. But if they wish to stay with you, see that you feed them with such food as you eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff you wear. And if they commit a fault which you are not inclined to forgive, then part from them, for they are the servants of God as you and me, and are not to be treated harshly. Know that we are all equal in the sight of Allah, and journey together in this world as a family of brotherhood and sisterhood. All of us belong to the line of Adam, and Adam was created from dust. This is a gift of knowledge for all who cultivate wisdom and humility. An Arab is no better than a non-Arab, nor is a white better than a black, or a black better than a white, except in piety. Nothing is allowed to a Muslim if it belongs to another, unless it is given freely and willingly, so do not oppress each other. I am leaving

behind me two things, the Book of God and my example, if you follow these two, you will never go astray. Spend freely of what is given to you, whether in prosperity or in adversity. Restrain your anger and pardon all, for Allah loves those who do good, as it has been revealed. This hajj is acceptable to Allah, only if we have love in our hearts for each and every one of God's creatures."

Kill not your children for fear of want. We shall provide sustenance for them. As well as for you. Verily, the killing of them is a great sin. (17:31 Quran)

This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favor unto you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam. Whoso is forced by hunger, not by will, to sin; for him, lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful," Prophet Muhammad recited, his eyes shining with mirth. (5:3 Quran)

"Know you that what month is this? What territory this is? What day?"

"The sacred month! The sacred territory! The great day of pilgrimage—" several voices spluttered forth, filling the Mount of Mercy with the music of joy.

"Even thus sacred and inviolable God made His life and the property of each of you unto the other, until you meet your Lord." Prophet Muhammad's voice rippled above all, his arms held out. "O Lord! I have delivered my message and accomplished my work!"

"Yes, you have, Prophet. Yes, you have—" the pilgrims cheered.

"O God, I beseech Thee, bear Thou witness unto it," Prophet Muhammad prayed. "This is the day of true brotherhood and sisterhood, of devotion and repentance. This is the day when Allah is revealed to His servants, extending His Hands with generosity and immense blessing! We are promised that during these hours by Arafat, Allah will send down His mercy and forgiveness to those who are deserving and they will feel His presence!"

"The heart of the believer is between two fingers of the Infinitely Merciful" – the Prophet Muhammad

The Prophet's Night Journey to the Throne of the Beloved

The Prophet's cousin Ali had long since retired upstairs, and Ali's sister Umm Hani had dozed off in a corner by the window, while Muhammad slept soundly. The house itself was quiet when Muhammad's eyes were shot open by a sudden flood of light. Veils upon veils of shimmering light were dancing before his sight, revealing vistas infinite and boundless. All were expanding into One Circle of Unity, its shining globe a mirror bright. Gabriel was floating out of this mirror, appareled in the purity of light so dazzling that it appeared to cut through the very heart of the night, effacing all darkness. The silvery thatch of hair over his head was crowned by stars, and his wings were sprinkled with the colors of the rainbows. Muhammad could not tear his gaze away, the fires of joy and bliss leaping through his very soul into his shining eyes. Gabriel was commanding him to rise, and he was obeying much like the Pilgrim of Love, listening to the music of the night, which was bidding him to journey to the Throne of the Beloved.

The night itself, decked with brilliant stars was beckoning Muhammad to obey each and every command of Gabriel. In absolute surrender to his sight and senses, Muhammad had already followed Gabriel out on the road. Gabriel was drawing his attention toward a beautiful mare, its glittering wings spread out like a giant eagle in flight. The fire and brilliance of jacinth was contained in the eyes of this mare, her golden hair braided with moonbeams.

Her name is Buraq, Muhammad. Our heavenly mount to carry us on our Night Journey to the Lord of Power! Gabriel smiled, hoisting Muhammad up, and easing himself on its back with the swiftness of lightning.

Buraq whinnied with great delight, sucking in a cool draught of night air, and galloping over the wind toward the celestial skies. Muhammad was feeling light-headed, his eyes searching the expanse of the mountain upon which Buraq had planted her feet. Gabriel was commanding him to dismount and offer his prayers, expounding that the ground under their feet was the summit of Mount Sinai where Jehovah had given the tablets of stone to Moses. Muhammad was spellbound by this Journey awesome and ineffable. Astride Buraq with Gabriel behind him, Muhammad could feel the silken sails of the wind caressing his face. Their next halt was at Bethlehem, where Muhammad prayed at the very spot where Jesus was

born. Buraq was their holy guide, sailing up once again, and then swooping down in front of the temple in Jerusalem.

Muhammad was commanded to enter this Holy Temple, Gabriel beside him introducing him to Jesus and Moses. All three were kneeling in unison, offering prayers. Muhammad had barely finished his prayers, when he found himself outside the Temple. Gabriel was leading Muhammad toward a ladder balanced on Jacob's stone, planting his feet on the first rung, and bidding him to follow in the footsteps of Light and Trust. They were climbing the very rungs of the voids, each step light as a feather. In a flash, Muhammad was whisked into the mists of ether, standing face-to-face with Gabriel at the very gates of Paradise.

The portals of the heavens were flung open by Gabriel's command, and Muhammad was entering the First Heaven, made of pure silver, suspended low under the canopy of stars, and balanced by golden chains. Adam was the first one to greet Muhammad in this First Heaven, embracing him, and hailing him as the noblest of his children. Adam was leading him toward the Second Heaven where Noah stood welcoming. Muhammad was embraced by Noah, Jesus and John the Baptist, before being whisked away by Gabriel into the Third Heaven. The Third Heaven was the abode of the David and Joseph, Gabriel was expounding. In the Fourth Heaven, Enoch offered them warm welcome before they were flown to the Next. Muhammad had barely exchanged greetings with Aaron in the Fifth Heaven, when the Sixth Heaven with its entire splendor was calling him and he yielded to its glory where angels stood singing.

O Allah, Who has united snow and fire, unite all Thy faithful servants in obedience to Thy Law.

Muhammad's senses were intoxicated by the sweetness of music from the lips of the angels. His soul was a shuddering mirror of bliss and rapture so supreme that he did not even know that he was transported inside the shining vaults of the Seventh Heaven.

Prophet Muhammad was absorbed into a flood of divine Light, standing under the shade of a lote tree, beyond which in rippling waves upon waves of light were concealed many thrones of Allah. Muhammad was invited into the House of Adoration, embellished with rubies and jacinth, his gaze searching the Face of the Beloved. The scent of Paradise was in his breath, the perfume of nearness only two bow shots away from

the Throne of Allah. The Face of God was veiled in twenty thousand veils, and the glory which radiated from behind the veils was greater than fifty thousand suns caught inside the heart of one day. To the right of God's Throne was an inscription bright and dazzling.

There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger.

The golden tongue of this inscription itself was pouring the music of ecstasy and exaltation into Muhammad's soul as he stood gazing, rapt and dazzled.

O Muhammad, salute Thy Creator. One Voice imbued with love encompassing was the pulse of a caress and a command.

The shafts of pain and bliss were leaping from within Muhammad's heart, his own Fire of Love one embrace, ineffable. Sweetness upon sweetness from the very face of his Beloved were infused into each pore of his self-surrender, as he stood there annihilated, dazzled. His very soul was singing in ecstatic exaltation.

Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night from the sacred temple of Mecca to the Temple that is remote, whose precinct We have blessed, that We might show him of Our signs. For He is the Hearer and the Seer. (17: 1 Quran)

The Zen of Islam

I cast the garment of love over thee from Me. And this in order that thou mayest be reared under Mine Eye. (20:39 Quran)

Work not confusion in earth after the fair ordering thereof, and call on Him in fear and hope. Lo, the mercy of Allah is nigh unto good. (7:56 Quran)

Sanction is given to those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo, Allah loveth not aggressors. (2:190 Quran)

Women shall have the same rights over men as men have over them. (2:228 Quran)

And the women have rights similar to those of men in equity. I God will allow not the work of any worker from among you, male or female, to be lost. (3:196 Quran)

And whoso doeth good works, whether male or female, and he or she is a believer, such will enter Paradise and they will not be wronged the dint in a date-stone. (40:40 Quran)

He hath revealed unto thee, Muhammad, the Scripture with the truth, confirming that which was revealed before it, even as He revealed the Torah and the Gospel. (3:3 Quran)

And O Muhammad say: my Lord, forgive and have mercy, for Thou art best of all who show mercy. (23:118 Quran)

The faithful slaves of the Beneficent are-they who walk upon the earth modestly, and when the foolish ones address them, answer: Peace. (25:63 Quran)

O mankind, lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo, the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo, Allah is Knower, Aware. (49:13 Quran)

This it is which Allah announceth unto his bondsmen who believe and do good works. Say O Muhammad unto mankind: I ask of you no fee thereof, save loving-kindness among kinsfolk. And whoso scoreth a good deed, We add unto its good for him. Lo, Allah is Forgiving, Responsive. (42:23 Quran)

Enjoin ye righteousness upon mankind, while ye yourself forget to practice? And ye are the readers of Scripture. Have you then no sense? (2:44 Quran)

Woe unto each sinful liar. (45:7 Quran)

The way of blame is only against those who oppress mankind, and wrongfully rebel in the earth. For such there is a painful doom. (42:42 Quran)

Yet ye it is who slay each other and drive out a part of your people from their homes, supporting against them by sin and transgression. And if they came to you as captives ye would ransom them, whereas their expulsion itself was unlawful for you. Believe ye in part of the Scripture and disbelieve ye in part thereof? And what is the reward of those who do so save ignominy in the life of the world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be consigned to the most grievous doom. For Allah is not unaware of what ye do. (2:85 Quran)

A gift of welcome from the Forgiving, the Merciful. (41:32 Quran)

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds
The Beneficent, the Merciful
Owner of the Day of Judgment
Thee alone we worship, Thee alone we ask for help
Show us the straight path
The path of those whom Thou hast favored
Not the path of those who earn Thine anger
Nor of those who go astray (1:1 Quran)*

Ye who believe! Be steadfast witness for Allah in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allah. Lo, Allah is informed of what ye do. (5:8 Quran)

Teach Islam

Islam is the alphabet of love, with the Quran as its dictionary, seeking dialogue or conversation with the People of the Book and with people of all faiths who wish to study its message in the light of wisdom and understanding. Its 114 verses, beginning with *The Most Merciful, The Most Gracious, The Most Compassionate God*, and with the exception of only one *surah*, IX Al Bara, testify to a universal love for mankind. Though its verses appear harsh at first, poetic when one gets into the rhythm of reading, enveloping and enlightening at the same time, they are to be understood in the context of times when Arabia was caught up in the fever of greed, cruelty, debauchery, and drunkenness, not to mention violent conflicts between and within tribes. Blood feuds were common, slavery was rampant, women were oppressed, infant girls were buried

alive, and gods were revered and mocked with the same passion as the passionate needs and greed of men, striving toward riches and power.

Now to the power of understanding, or lack of it.

As one reads the Divine Word of God, as one believes the Quran to be, with only one's limited intelligence, one tends to squeeze a handful of interpretations out of it, most of which become gilded with distortions, if not the victims of lies, depending upon the intent or the inclination of the author or scholar. If moved by zeal, such persons mold each interpretation into fire-brands, while to others who are guided by the purity of their own minds and hearts, the same verses lend the glow of well-preserved pearls. And yet, they melt against the hurricanes of lies and distortions. If one were to riffle through the pages of history, one would not fail to discover that many truths lie buried under mounds of lies, and that many lies have been repeated so often, by so many, and with such pious conviction, that if someone, even in this age and time, dared speak the truth, it would sound like a lie.

And yet, it is a difficult task, to know truth, since truth is a relative term. However, we do walk in its shadows of love and light, our hearts tortured with the longing to be good and to do good. It is even more difficult since the Scriptures speak to us in parables while we wade through the waters of doubt and conflict. The Quranic verse which cautions us not to fall into error, or to dispute with others in regard to different interpretations, becomes our guide, reminding us that we know not what we claim to know.

He it is who hath revealed unto thee Muhammad the Scripture wherein are clear revelations—they are the substance of the Book—and others which are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is doubt pursue, forsooth, that which is allegorical, seeking to cause dissention by seeking to explain it. None knoweth its explanation save Allah. And those who are sound of instruction say: we believe therein; the whole is from our Lord; but only men of understanding really heed. (3:7 Quran)

But before delving deep into more quotations from the Quran or Hadith, I am taking the liberty of sharing the loving life of the Prophet as a man, as a husband, as a father, and as a friend to all who sought his advice or friendship. History knows everything about him, no doubt, exploring all facets of his life, passion and ambition. Many faces and countless facets!

Harsh, stern, rebuking, commanding, and then kind, loving, forgiving. Yet, reading in between the lines, and gleaning facts with as much precision as my own limited intellect permits, I have attempted to portray the Prophet as I see him through the veils of the Hadith, the Quran, and history. Skipping quickly beyond his childhood, he emerges as a young man, endowed with wisdom and compassion. His friends call him *Al Amin*, meaning truthful. He has earned the respect of the young and old by the sheer virtue of his good manners. At the age of 25, when he marries a widow of 40 by the name of Khadija, twice married before and the mother of one son and two daughters, he loves and respects her with something verging on reverence, remaining faithful to her till her death. His character stands out in this happy marriage of 24 years, especially when polygamy was the norm, and men treated women as their property, marrying, divorcing or simply abandoning them as their whim or caprice dictated. Another outstanding characteristic which distinguished him from others was the shimmering ocean of love in his eyes which could never be dimmed, even by the fires of grief and adversity. When he was chosen as the Messenger of God, the light in his own eyes appeared to be his guide, wavering at times, but never dying under the assaults of insult, violence or persecution.

Peaceful by nature and averse to violence, he abstained from striking back, even in self-defense. Once, when pelted with stones and hounded by a mob, his shoes filled with blood, he almost collapsed with sheer pain and exhaustion, his followers asked him to curse his tormentors, but he prayed for their forgiveness instead, much in the manner of Jesus, when he said: *forgive them, O Lord, for they know not what they do*. Revelation upon revelation came to him to guide him toward patience, forgiveness, and compassion. And one night, as detailed above, he was taken to the Throne of God, on what came to be called his Night Journey. He shared the experience of this journey, in which he was taken to Jerusalem, then to the heavens, meeting all the previous Prophets, including Jesus, and finally before the Throne of God, meeting Allah, his Beloved, with his cousin. When this story was circulated amongst the Meccans, one of the Prophet's bitterest of opponents, Abu Jahl, accused him of making the story up. Abu Jahl told the Prophet to lift one foot up, then the other, with which he complied, and then he asked him to lift both his feet up, to which the Prophet replied that of course he could not. Abu Jahl mocked,

You can't even lift your two feet up in the air and you profess that you went to the highest of heavens.