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What did the omnipotent deity of the Quran want from his human creations? In the Meccan revelations, he demanded that they practice prescribed patterns of worship and behavior. They were to submit to his will and show their gratitude toward him as the provider of the bounties of the earth. Islam means submission, and the followers of the faith, Muslims, are those who have submitted to the will of God. In addition to matters of ritual, God set forth commandments on how human beings should relate to one another in their daily social intercourse. He warned the people of Mecca to pay more attention to the less fortunate in society and to moderate their search for wealth. The following bluntly critical passage demonstrates God's displeasure at practices in the Mecca of Muhammad's day:

No indeed; but you honour not the orphan,
and you urge not the feeding of the needy,
and you devour the inheritance greedily,
and you love wealth with an ardent love.

(Sura 89)

The Quran chastised those who were uncharitable and warned those who felt that their wealth had made them immune from punishment that God would be the final judge of their afterlife. The concept of the Day of Judgment was a central element of the faith. The revelations warned the people of Mecca that their deeds, their attitudes, and even their innermost thoughts would be assessed by the Almighty on Judgment Day. The theology of the Quran was thus basic and straightforward. Humans were instructed to obey the revealed will of an omnipotent God of judgment: Those who accepted him and followed all of his commands would be rewarded with paradise; those who rejected God and deviated from his commands would be condemned to the fires of Gehenna.

Muhammad's preaching attracted few converts and aroused considerable opposition during the Meccan period of his mission. After all, he posed a challenge to the social, economic, and religious structure of the city. Not only did he criticize the attitudes of the wealthy Quraysh merchants, he also condemned the religious practices that made Mecca a prosperous pilgrimage center. As the years passed and the Meccan opposition turned from scorn to threats of physical harm, Muhammad and his followers began to search for a more hospitable location. When an invitation came to them to settle in the city of Yathrib (later Medina), Muhammad accepted it.

Located some 200 miles (322 km) north of Mecca, Medina was a fertile oasis city suffering from the ravages of an extended blood feud among its several tribes. Muhammad was invited as a mediator and was promised by Medinan representatives that any Muslims who accompanied him would receive protection. In 622 the small community of Muslims gradually migrated from Mecca to Medina. The event, known as the *hijrah* (emigration), marks a turning point in the development of Islam: 622 is the first year of the Muslim calendar.

During his ten years in Medina, Muhammad's status rose dramatically. From a scorned prophet with few followers, he became the head of a small state and the dominant figure throughout Arabia. This transformation was achieved through a combination of warfare, negotiation, and preaching, the success of which seemed to confirm Muhammad's right not only to prophethood but to political leadership as well.

Muhammad consolidated his authority in Medina by convincing influential personalities in the city to embrace Islam and accept his leadership. Once he established his power base, he was able to take measures

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against the groups that continued to deny his prophetic and political authority. Among the latter were several Jewish tribes whose members would not accept the legitimacy of Muhammad's claim as the Prophet. Muhammad eventually expelled them from Medina and ordered their property confiscated and distributed among the Muslim emigrants.

Even as he was consolidating his position in Medina, Muhammad made plans to bring Mecca into the expanding Islamic community. His strategy was to disrupt the caravan trade on which Mecca's prosperity depended. Within a year of his arrival in Medina, he ordered the first of what would become an ongoing series of raids on Meccan caravans. The initial raid occurred during one of the sacred pilgrimage months, when, according to established custom, hostilities were to be suspended. This was disturbing to the many Muslims of Medina who continued to respect existing traditions. However, a divine revelation sanctified warfare against unbelievers and designated all Muslims who engaged in spreading Islam through force of arms as deserving of special merit.

In retaliation for Muhammad's attacks on their caravans, the Meccans launched several campaigns against the Muslims in Medina, but each time, the outnumbered Muslim forces managed to hold their own and even to gain limited victories. Muhammad emerged during these encounters as an innovative military tactician, and his success in thwarting the Meccans enhanced his prestige among the neighboring tribes. Many swore their allegiance to him not because they fully understood or accepted the religious message of Islam but because association with Muhammad's endeavor appeared to guarantee victory, and with victory came the spoils of war. The increasing size of the Prophet's forces and his effective alliances with the tribes enabled him to stifle the trade of Mecca to the point where the city's prosperity was seriously threatened. In 630 Muhammad led a force of 10,000 men to the outskirts of Mecca; demonstrating his qualities as a statesman, he promised the inhabitants that their lives would be spared and their property would remain secure if they surrendered the city and accepted Islam. The Quraysh leadership agreed to the terms, and the Prophet made a victorious entry into the city from which he had fled just eight years earlier. According to accounts of the occasion, Muhammad went to the Ka'ba and had the idols destroyed, proclaiming the shrine sacred to God. Mecca would remain a pilgrimage center, and the Ka'ba would become the focal point of the new faith.

In the years between the *hijrah* and the surrender of Mecca, Muhammad's leadership role became more complex. Medina developed into a small city-state with a treasury, a military, and an ever-increasing number of converts. The content of the Quran reflected the changing circumstances by offering instructions on how the expanded functions of the state were to be organized and how human beings should conduct their relations with one another. In these commandments, the all-embracing nature of Islam was established. For example, contracting a debt agreement as the Quran required—in writing before a witness—was a reli-

gious duty, and failure to follow the prescription was a sin. In this way, the details of marriage, inheritance, divorce, diet, and economic practice were made part of the religious experience of Muslims. Muhammad created a community (*ummah*) in which the laws of human behavior in daily life were prescribed by God.

It would be an exaggeration to call Arabia a cohesive, unified state after the surrender of Mecca. Nevertheless, the transformation created by the Prophet had been substantial. He had implanted the core concept of a community of believers united in their recognition of a single Supreme Deity and in their acceptance of that deity's authority in their daily lives; he had conveyed notions of social morality that forbade alcohol and the blood feud and that recognized the legal status of women and demanded protection for the less fortunate in society. Muhammad combined in his person the roles of prophet, state builder, and