



# The Conquest of **MAKKAH**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Prophet ﷺ was born in Makkah and loved the city immensely. It was the city of his forefather Ibrāhīm ؑ. But it was the tyrant Quraysh who forced him to leave the city. The Prophet ﷺ said as he left Makkah for the Migration:

والله انك لأحب ارض الله الي و الي الله و لولا أهلك أخرجوني ما خرجت

By Allāh! You are most beloved land of Allāh for me and for Allāh. Had your people not expelled me, I would never have left.<sup>1</sup>

But Allāh promised His Beloved that he would return back to Makkah:

ان الذي فرض عليك القران لرادوك الي معاد

‘Verily, He who has given you (O Muhammad) the Qur’an will surely return you to the place of return [namely Makkah]’ (28:85).

This promise was fulfilled on the occasion of *Fath Makkah*, in the eighth year of Hijrah. This paper will briefly chart this faith-strengthening and heart-warming episode from the Prophet’s ﷺ life.

## THE BACKGROUND

In the sixth year of Hijrah, the Treaty of Ḥudaybiya was ratified between the Prophet ﷺ and the Makkans. In short, the Treaty had stipulated the following:

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1 p. 244. *Fuṣūl min al-Sīrah al-Taḥlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna*. Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muhammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999.

1. Both sides agreed not to fight for ten years.
2. The Muslims must go back to al-Madīna this year without performing Umra.
3. The Muslims may come the next year and stay in Makkah for three days only.
4. The Muslims shall not take back with them the Muslims living in Makkah.
5. The Muslims cannot stop any Muslim from choosing to remain in Makkah.
6. If a person went to the Prophet ﷺ from Makkah to al-Madīna, the Prophet would have to return them.
7. If any person went to the Makkans from al-Madīna, then the Makkans were not obliged to return them.
8. Neighbouring tribes were free to join either party.

In the seventh year of Hījah, the Prophet ﷺ and two thousand of his Companions performed the Umra. As the Treaty stipulated, they left after three days.

This last condition [Neighbouring tribes were free to join either party] was important in understanding how the Conquest of Makkah came about. According to the terms of the Treaty of Hūdaybiya, the Arab tribes were free to conclude covenants of friendship. So Banū Kināna sided with Quraysh and Banū Khuzā‘a sided with the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Tensions had always existed between Banū Kināna and Banū Khuzā‘a. On one particular night, Banū Kināna decided to attack some tribesmen from Banū Khuzā‘a as they camped near a well called *al-Watīr*. But this was not a one-off, isolated attack. Instead, Quraysh had secretly helped Banū Kināna in this attack. The arms and equipment had been supplied by Quraysh. They had been encouraged to attack by the likes of ‘Ikrima ibn Abī Jahl and in fact Şafwān ibn Umayyah, Hūwaytib ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzza and Suhayl ibn ‘Amr from Quraysh actually participated in the attack. This act contravened the

Treaty of Ḥudaybiya. Perhaps worse was the fact that it violated the sanctity of the Holy Ka'ba. Banū Khuzā'a entered the Holy Sanctuary in order to save their lives. But the people of Quraysh violated the sanctity of the Ka'ba and continued to kill them.

‘Amr ibn Sālim from Banū Khuzā'a quickly reported these atrocities committed against them to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in al-Madīna. The Prophet ﷺ promised him and his tribe that they would be assisted in this matter.

Meanwhile, the elders of Quraysh had realised the dangerous situation they had created by helping Banū Kināna to attack Banū Khuzā'a. They had violated the Treaty and could subject themselves to a revenge attack from the Muslims. So they decided to send their chief statesman Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥarb to al-Madīna in order to reassure the Prophet ﷺ that the Treaty was still in tact.

Upon his arrival, he went straight to his daughter Umm Ḥabība, who was married to the beloved Messenger. When he entered, he was about to sit on her mattress when Umm Ḥabība prevented him from doing so. ‘This is the mattress of the Messenger of Allāh’ she remarked. ‘You are an idolater and therefore impure.’<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ did not listen to the request of Abū Sufyān regarding the renewal of the Treaty. He contacted Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Alī and ‘Uthmān ؓ with the hope they could intervene on his behalf and reason with the Prophet ﷺ. All of them bluntly refused to do so.

Abū Sufyān returned to Makkah unsuccessful. He told his people that attempts to reaffirm the Treaty had been rejected.

The Prophet ﷺ had decided that now was the perfect time to free the ‘Mother of All Cities (*umm al-qurā'*)’ from idol-worship and false, pagan beliefs. With confidence in Muslim manpower and

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2 p. 246. *Fuṣūl min al-Sīrah al-Taḥlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna*. Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muhammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999.

dependence on Allāh, he planned to attack Quraysh as quickly as possible, before they had any chance of preparation. He informed the Muslims of al-Madīna to prepare to journey to Makkah, as well as the neighbouring tribes in and around the city. However, he did not inform them of the reason for the journey; he only told a handful of his closest Companions like Abū Bakr.

The Prophet ﷺ set off from al-Madīna on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan 8 A.H. Neighbouring Muslim tribes also joined the Prophet so that the Muslims were eventually a large army of ten thousand Muslims.

During the march on one of these days the Prophet ﷺ saw a bitch lying by the side of the road with a litter of recently-born puppies which she was feeding. He was afraid that the dog may be molested and harmed by the passing army. So he told Ju'ayl of Damra to stand on guard beside the dog until all the men had passed.

They camped at a place called Marr-al-Zahrān, near Makkah, for the night. The Muslims were ordered to light fires outside their tents, thus illuminating the whole area brightly. When Abū Sufyān, Budayl [of Khuzā'a] and Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām came near [from the Makkans], they were astounded to find such a large number of Muslims camped outside Makkah. They were apprehended and brought in front of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He invited them to accept Islam and they did so. Abū Sufyān requested safety for the inhabitants of Makkah. The Mercy of all mankind declared:

من دخل دار أبي سفيان فهو امن ومن دخل المسجد فهو امن ومن التقي سلاحه فهو امن ومن أغلق بابه فهو امن

“Whosoever enters the houses of Abū Sufyān is safe. Whosoever enters the Ḥaram is safe. Whoever throws down his weapon is safe. And whosoever keeps the door of his house shut is also safe.”<sup>3</sup>

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3 p. 269. *Fuṣūl min al-Sīrah al-Taḥlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna*. Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muhammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999. See also, p. 173, *The*

Diplomatically, this was a brilliant move, because it gave comfort to Abū Sufyān who was otherwise a proud and privileged member of Quraysh. It also showed that the Prophet ﷺ wanted peace and safety before anything else for the Makkans.

Abū Sufyān entered Makkah ahead of the Muslims and announced:

O people of Makkah! Embrace Islam and you will be saved. Muhammad has come. He has such a formidable army that you cannot confront it successfully...enter your home and shut the door; you will not be harmed at all.

Meanwhile the Prophet ﷺ divided the ten-thousand string army into smaller units and appointed a commander for each unit. They were instructed to enter Makkah from different directions and keep their swords sheathed, unless the enemy attacked them first. None of the units experienced resistance upon entering Makkah, except the unit of Khālīd ibn Walīd ؓ. His unit was attacked by Quraysh led by ʿIkrima ibn Abī Jahl, Ṣafwān and Suhayl and so they fought back. Fifteen infidels were killed and two Muslims tasted martyrdom in the path of Allāh. ʿIkrima and Ṣafwān escaped on horses to the coast. Suhayl went to his house and locked the door.

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> Ramadan, the Prophet ﷺ entered the Kaʿba and proclaimed *Allāhu Akbar*. He mounted his she-camel and performed the *ṭawāf* of the Kaʿba. At the time, there were 360 idols situated in and around the Kaʿba. As he circulated the Kaʿba, he brought the idols down with his stick. As he did say, he read the verse: ‘Say (O Messenger!): *The truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Verily the false is ever a vanisher!*’ (17:81).

He then dismounted the camel and performed prayers at the Station of Ibrāhīm. Then he went to the well of Zamzam and performed ablution with its water. The infidels watched in admiration as the

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*History of al-Ṭabarī*, Volume VIII, Translated by Fishbein, M. State University of New York Press, 1997.

Companions eagerly rushed to the Prophet ﷺ, eager to catch any drops of Zamzam that had touched the blessed body of the Prophet ﷺ.

Having completed the prayers inside the Holy Ka'ba, the Prophet ﷺ came out and addressed the Makkans. 'O people of Quraysh! How do you think I will treat you now?' They replied: 'We expect mercy from our generously tempered brother.' The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'I am telling you now what Yūsuf said to his brothers: 'Today there is no reproach against you.' May Allāh Almighty forgive your sins. Today, I do not hold you accountable. Go, you are all free.'

These were the same people who:

- Called the Prophet ﷺ a liar, sorcerer and insane.
- Forced the Prophet ﷺ to live in a valley for three years.
- Attempted to murder the Prophet ﷺ.
- Forced him to leave his home town.
- Set the harsh conditions of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiya and prevented the Prophet from performing Umra.

After witnessing his unparalleled mercy, the people of Makkah came forward in large numbers to embrace Islam from the blessed hands of the Prophet ﷺ.

#### THE KEY OF THE KA'BA

Before leaving Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ asked the keyholder, 'Uthmān ibn Ṭalḥa, permission to enter the Ka'ba. When he rudely refused, the Prophet ﷺ politely said to him:

'O 'Uthmān! Remember a day will soon come when you will witness the key in my hand and I will give it to whom I please.'

On the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, 'Uthmān handed the key to the Prophet ﷺ, upon which he said: 'O 'Uthmān! Do you remember the time when you refused me the key and I told you that it would be in my hand one day?' 'Uthmān replied: 'O Messenger of

Allāh! Indeed, you said exactly that. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh.’ The Prophet ﷺ said to him: ‘Not only am I giving this key to you, but it will remain in possession of your future generations until the Day of Judgement. Whoever takes the key away from you will be most unjust.’

Today, the key still remains in the possession of ‘Uthmān’s descendants.

#### THE STAY IN MAKKAH

The Prophet ﷺ stayed in Makkah for fifteen days. During this time, he ordered all of the idols in the homes and elsewhere to be destroyed. Khālid ibn Walīd was sent to destroy the idol ‘Uzza at nearby Nakhlah and Manāt was also brought to the ground.

The Prophet ﷺ organised the affairs of the city, politically, socially and religiously.

On one of these fifteen days, the Prophet ﷺ stood on Mount Ṣafā and looked towards the Ka‘ba. There he devoutly prayed to Allāh and engaged in His remembrance. Some of the *Ansār* (the Medinese Muslims) saw this and thought that the Prophet ﷺ would now never return to al-Madīna and so they felt sad. The Prophet ﷺ learned of their feelings and told them:

يا معشر الانصار اني عبد الله ورسوله هاجرت الي الله واليكم فالمحيا محياكم و  
الممات مماتكم

"O group of Helpers! I am indeed the servant of Allāh and His Prophet. I migrated to Allāh and to you. So the living is your living and the dying is your dying."<sup>4</sup>

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4 p. 269. *Fuṣūl min al-Sīrah al-Taḥlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna*. Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muhammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999.

## THE STAUNCH ENEMIES OF ISLAM

The Prophet ﷺ granted a universal pardon to the same people that had expelled him from his home city, had caused bloodshed and havoc and had insulted the religion of Islam. However, there were fifteen individuals who were exempt from this pardon and therefore were to be sought and killed.

1. 'Ikrima ibn Abī Jahl
2. 'Abd al-'Uzza [or 'Abd-Allāh] ibn Khaṭal
3. 'Abd-Allāh ibn Sa'd ibn Abī al-Sarḥ
4. Habbār ibn al-Aswad
5. Ka'b ibn Zuhayr
6. Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah
7. Wahshī ibn Ḥarb
8. Hind bint 'Utba, the wife of Abū Sufyān
9. Al-Ḥārith ibn Ṭulāṭil al-Khuzā'i
10. Zuhayr ibn Umayya al-Makhzūmī
11. Ḥuwayrith ibn Nuqaydh
12. Miqyas ibn Ṣubāba
13. Sārah
14. Two singing girls who used to sing verses degrading the Prophet

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1. 'Ikrima ibn Abī Jahl

His crime: He had only days before organised an ambush to try to entrap Khālīd ibn Walīd as he approached Makkah. He had also inherited a great hatred for the Prophet from his father, Abū Jahl.

His outcome: He fled to the sea coast with the intention of going to Yemen. As he was about to board the ship, the captain instructed him to affirm the oneness of Allāh, otherwise he would not be allowed

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<sup>5</sup> p. 291, vol. IV. *Ziyā al-Nabī*, Pīr Muḥammad Karam Shah al-Azhari (English translation).

to board. This was in order to protect the ship from sinking. At this point, Islam entered his heart. He thought:

Why should I depart Muhammad? By God this is the same message he brought to us: that our God on the sea is the same as our God on land!<sup>6</sup>

His wife Umm Ḥākim became a Muslim and sought pardon directly from the Messenger on his behalf. She was granted it.

When he decided to embrace Islam, he came to Makkah and went immediately to the Prophet ﷺ. He accepted Islam and then spoke of the vast money and money he had spent against Islam. He promised the Prophet ﷺ that he would spend twice the amount now on helping Islam. He kept his promise. He was martyred in the Battle of Yarmūk.

## 2. ‘Abd al-‘Uzza [or ‘Abd-Allāh] ibn Khaṭal

His crime: He was a Muslim at first and came to al-Madīna before the Conquest. He had been sent by the Prophet ﷺ to collect Zakāh, along with another Muslim from the *Anṣār*. With him went a slave, also a Muslim, to serve him. He halted at a resting place and commanded the slave to slaughter him a goat and make him a meal; then he went to sleep. When he woke up, the slave had done nothing for him, and so he killed him.

He then became an apostate.<sup>7</sup>

His outcome: On the occasion of the Conquest of Makkah, he was armed and intended to fight the Muslims. He was killed by the Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

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6 p. 180, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Volume VIII, Translated by Fishbein, M. State University of New York Press, 1997.

7 p. 179, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Volume VIII, Translated by Fishbein, M. State University of New York Press, 1997.

8 p. 273-4. *Fuṣūl min al-Sirah al-Tahlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna*. Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muhammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999.

### 3. ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa‘d ibn Abī al-Sarḥ

His crime: He was a Muslim at first and in fact he was one of the scribes of the Prophet ﷺ. He then became an apostate and returned to Makkah, where he began to talk very negatively against the Prophet ﷺ.

His outcome: When he learnt that the Prophet ﷺ had excluded him from the general pardon, he sought refuge with ‘Uthmān ؓ, who was his foster-brother. ‘Uthmān gave him shelter for a while whilst matters calmed down in Makkah after the conquest. He then brought him to the Prophet ﷺ and asked for forgiveness on his behalf. The Prophet ﷺ did not answer at first but eventually, he forgave him and he accepted Islam.<sup>9</sup>

He became a great servant of Islam. He took part in many military expeditions in Egypt and in Africa.

He once supplicated: ‘O Allāh! Please the last action of mine the observance of the morning prayer.’ One morning, he performed ablution and began to offer the Fajr prayer. As he completed his prayer, he turned to his right and then to his left, but before concluding the prayer, he passed away.<sup>10</sup> He died in 58 A.H.<sup>11</sup>

### 4. Habbār ibn al-Aswad

His crime: Habbār had injured Zaynab bint Muḥammad when she was leaving Makkah for al-Madīna. She was pregnant when Habbār pushed her camel which led to her falling off. She eventually died from these injuries.

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<sup>9</sup> p. 179, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Volume VIII, Translated by Fishbein, M. State University of New York Press, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> p. 291-2, vol. IV. *Ziyā al-Nabī*, Pir Muḥammad Karam Shah al-Azhari (English translation).

<sup>11</sup> p. 272. *Fuṣūl min al-Sīrah al-Taḥlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna*. Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muhammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999.

His outcome: After hiding for some time, he eventually came to the Prophet ﷺ and sought forgiveness. He embraced Islam and the Messenger forgave him.

#### 5. Ka'b ibn Zuhayr

His crime: He was a poet who directed his poems against the Prophet ﷺ.

His outcome: Zuhayr sought forgiveness on his behalf. Ka'b came to the Prophet ﷺ and read the testification of faith. He then read some lines in praise of the Prophet ﷺ:

ان الرسول لنور يستضاء به  
منهد من سيوف الله مسلول

*Indeed the Prophet is certainly a light from which [other] lights  
are derived,  
And he is a sword from the swords of Allāh.*

As he heard this, the Prophet ﷺ removed his cloak and clothed him with it. The poem became known as the *Burda*.<sup>12</sup>

When Mu'āwiya ؓ became caliph, he requested this cloak from Ka'b for ten-thousand dinars. Ka'b said he would not part with it for any money in the world.<sup>13</sup>

#### 6. Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah

His crime: He was with 'Ikrima when they tried to ambush Khālid ibn Walīd. He spent his life persecuting the Muslims and insulting Islam.

His outcome: After the Conquest, he fled from Makkah and went to the sea with the intention of drowning himself to death. His cousin, 'Umayr ibn Wahb appeared before the Prophet ﷺ and sought

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12 p. 275. *Fuṣūl min al-Sīrah al-Taḥlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna*. Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muḥammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999.

13 p. 297, vol. IV. *Ziyā al-Nabī*, Pir Muḥammad Karam Shah al-Azharī (English translation).

forgiveness on his behalf. The Prophet ﷺ told ‘Umayr that he was willing to forgive him. In addition, the Prophet gave him his turban to show to Safwān as proof that he was willing to pardon him.

When ‘Umayr reached Şafwān, he was about to jump in the sea and so he quickly informed him that the Messenger was willing to forget his previous crimes. At first, Şafwān did not believe him. When he was shown the turban he changed his mind and came to the Prophet ﷺ. He requested two months to consider his faith. The Prophet ﷺ gave him four.

After the Conquest of Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ left to deal with Banū Hawāzin and so he borrowed forty thousand Dirhams and some armoury from Şafwān. He accompanied the Prophet ﷺ though he was still a non-Muslim. On the successful return from Hawāzin, the Prophet ﷺ gave him one hundred camels from the booty, followed by two more instalments of one hundred camels each. Şafwān was amazed by the Prophet’s generosity ﷺ and so he accepted Islam, before the four months elapsed.<sup>14</sup>

## 7. Waḥshī ibn Ḥarb

His crime: He was the one who assassinated Ḥamza ﷺ in the Battle of Uhud.

His outcome: He too was pardoned when he accepted Islam. He participated in the battles of Islam, and in fact was the one who killed Musaylima al-Kadhḥāb, the false impostor. So he used to say:

كما قتلت خير الناس قتلت شر الناس

Just as I killed the best of people (Ḥamza), I have also killed the worst of them (Musaylima).<sup>15</sup>

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14 p. 299-300, vol. IV. *Ziyā al-Nabī*, Pir Muḥammad Karam Shah al-Azhārī (English translation).

15 p. 276. *Fusūl min al-Sīrah al-Tahlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna*. Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muhammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999.

## 8. Hind bint ‘Utba

Her crime: She mutilated the body of Ḥamza in the Battle of Uhud.

Her outcome: Despite this the Prophet ﷺ forgave her and she accepted Islam.

### LESSONS FROM THE CONQUEST OF MAKKAH

#### *Universal Pardon*

The Prophet ﷺ as a mercy is not just a cliché but a reality (*ḥaqīqa*). It was not just a title or tag-line but his inherent nature.

In the most decisive moment, Allāh gave the Prophet ﷺ over his enemies. But the Prophet chose to forgive, thereby giving all of mankind a perfect example of goodness, truthfulness, nobility and compassion.

#### *Force without violence*

The Makkans trembled in fear when they saw the Muslims approaching the city. They were overcome by the *ru‘b* (awe) of the Prophet ﷺ. Yet, he did not display violence.

#### *Success without bloodshed*

Sahl ibn ‘Ubādah was one of the commanders of the smaller units ordered to enter into Makkah. He had the false impression that the time had come to conquer the city forcefully and take revenge from the atrocities Quraysh had committed. He said:

اليوم يوم الملحمة اليوم تستحل الكعبة

“Today is the day of slaughter. Today the Ka‘ba will lose its sanctity.”

The Prophet ﷺ immediately relieved him of his command and instated his son Qays ibn Sa‘d. He remarked:

كذب سعد اليوم اليوم يوم الرحمة يوم يعظم الله فيه الكعبة

“Today, Sa‘d has lied. Today, is the day of mercy, the today  
when Allāh will give grace to the Ka‘ba.”<sup>16</sup>

### *Winning hearts and minds*

Even the ones who became Muslims late on turned out to be dedicated servants of Islam.

### *Always praise Allāh*

Allah says in *Sūrah al-Naṣr*:

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ. وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا. فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ  
رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا.

*When comes the help of Allah and the Conquest. And you see that the people enter Allah’s religion in crowds. So glorify the praise of Allah and ask for His forgiveness. Verily, He is the one who accepts forgiveness (110:1-4).*

### Further reading

*Muhammad: His life based on the earliest sources.* Martin Lings. (Islamic Texts Society, UK, 1991). pp. 293-305.

*Ziyā’ al-Nabī* ﷺ. Pir Muḥammad Karam Shāh al-Azharī, Vol. IV; pp. 401-489.

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16 p. 254. *Fusūl min al-Sīrah al-Tahlīliyya fī Dhaw al-Kitāb wa-al-Sunna.* Professor Mahmūd Hilāl Hilāl Muhammad al-Sīsī. Al-Azhar University, 1999.