A Latter-day Saint Perspective on Muhammad

By James A. Toronto


Viewing Muhammad from the understanding of the restored gospel provides greater knowledge of Heavenly Father’s love for His children in all nations.

Recently I received a phone call from two Church members in Los Angeles who had become acquainted with a Muslim neighbor from Pakistan. When they shared with him the story of Joseph Smith’s First Vision, his response surprised them. After stating that Muslims accept no prophets after Muhammad, he said that Joseph Smith’s story shared similarities with Muhammad’s. He said, "We believe Muhammad encountered a divine messenger who informed him of his new calling as prophet. He received revelations of new scripture that contains God’s word to mankind, and he established a community of believers that developed into a major world religion." Knowing little about Muslims and Islam or about Muhammad, the members were unsure in their responses.

The issues raised by this experience imply a broader question that is relevant for all Latter-day Saints in view of the Church’s global presence and the increasingly pluralistic societies in which we all live: What is an appropriate Latter-day Saint attitude toward other religions' claims of divinely inspired prophets, scriptures, visions, and miracles? The following may be helpful and is based on gospel insights I have gained over the years while studying and living in Muslim societies. Seeing Muhammad’s role in religious history from the perspective of the restored gospel provides great understanding of one of history’s most influential spiritual leaders, helps us appreciate Heavenly Father’s love for His children of all nations, and gives principles to guide us in building positive relations with friends and neighbors of other faiths.

Thoughts on Interfaith Relations

President Gordon B. Hinckley has consistently advocated dialogue and mutual respect in interfaith relations. He has admonished members of the Church to cultivate “a spirit of affirmative gratitude” for those of differing religious, political, and philosophical persuasions, adding that “we do not in any way have to compromise our theology” in the process. He gave this counsel: “Be respectful of the opinions and feelings of other people. Recognize their virtues; don’t look for their faults. Look for their strengths and their virtues, and you will find strength and virtues that will be helpful in your own life.”

President Hinckley’s emphasis on building interfaith understanding is rooted in fundamental gospel principles—humility, charity, respect for eternal truth, and recognition of God’s love for all mankind—taught by Jesus Christ and by ancient and modern prophets. The Savior repeatedly affirmed Heavenly Father’s boundless concern for the well-being of each of His sons and daughters, as in the parable of the lost sheep (see Luke 15). In the parable of the good Samaritan, He taught that one of the keys to true discipleship is to treat others kindly and compassionately in spite of political, racial, or religious differences (see Luke 10:25–37). He denounced intolerance and rivalry among religious groups and the tendency to exalt one’s own virtues and deprecate the spiritual status of others. Addressing a parable to those who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others,” Jesus condemned the pride of the Pharisee who prayed, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are” and commended the humility of the publican who implored, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (see Luke 18:9–14).
The Book of Mormon teaches that Heavenly Father “is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; … and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth” (Alma 26:37; see also 1 Ne. 1:14). Because of this love for His children of all nations, the Lord has provided spiritual light to guide and enrich their lives. Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed that God “is using not only his covenant people, but other peoples as well, to consummate a work, stupendous, magnificent, and altogether too arduous for this little handful of Saints to accomplish by and of themselves.”

Elder B. H. Roberts (1857–1933) of the Seventy also spoke on this doctrine: “While the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is established for the instruction of men; and it is one of God’s instrumentalities for making known the truth yet he is not limited to that institution for such purposes, neither in time nor place. God raises up wise men and prophets here and there among all the children of men, of their own tongue and nationality, speaking to them through means that they can comprehend. … All the great teachers are servants of God; among all nations and in all ages. They are inspired men, appointed to instruct God’s children according to the conditions in the midst of which he finds them.”

The Prophet Joseph Smith often expounded on this theme of the universality of God’s love and the related need to remain open to all available sources of divine light and knowledge. “One of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism,’ ” he said, “is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.” The Prophet exhorted Church members to “gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them.”

Church leaders continually have encouraged members to foster amicable relations with people of other faiths by acknowledging the spiritual truth they possess, emphasizing the similarities in belief and lifestyle, and teaching us to disagree agreeably. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke on this theme to members and nonmembers during an area conference in Tahiti: “Keep all the truth and all the good that you have. Do not abandon any sound or proper principle. Do not forsake any standard of the past which is good, righteous, and true. Every truth found in every church in all the world we believe. But we also say this to all men—Come and take the added light and truth that God has restored in our day. The more truth we have, the greater is our joy here and now; the more truth we receive, the greater is our reward in eternity.”

During October 1991 general conference, President Howard W. Hunter of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we seek to bring all truth together. We seek to enlarge the circle of love and understanding among all the peoples of the earth. Thus we strive to establish peace and happiness, not only within Christianity but among all mankind.”

Likewise, Elder Russell M. Nelson quoted a public statement issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1992, calling upon “all people everywhere to re-commit themselves to the time-honored ideals of tolerance and mutual respect. We sincerely believe that as we acknowledge one another with consideration and compassion we will discover that we can all peacefully coexist despite our deepest differences.” He then added: “That pronouncement is a contemporary confirmation of the Prophet Joseph’s earlier entreaty for tolerance. Unitedly we may respond. Together we may stand, intolerant of transgression but tolerant of neighbors with differences they hold sacred. Our brothers and sisters throughout the world are all children of God.”

**Latter-day Saint Interest in Muhammad**

One of the noteworthy examples of the Latter-day Saint commitment to treasure up true principles and cultivate affirmative gratitude is the admiration that Church leaders have expressed over the years for the spiritual contributions of Muhammad.

As early as 1855, at a time when Christian literature generally ridiculed Muhammad as the Antichrist and the archenemy of Western civilization, Elders George A. Smith (1817–75) and Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles delivered lengthy sermons demonstrating an accurate and balanced understanding of Islamic history and speaking highly of Muhammad’s leadership. Elder Smith
observed that Muhammad was “descended from Abraham and was no doubt raised up by God on purpose” to preach against idolatry. He sympathized with the plight of Muslims, who, like Latter-day Saints, found it difficult “to get an honest history” written about them. Speaking next, Elder Pratt went on to express his admiration for Muhammad’s teachings, asserting that “upon the whole, … [Muslims] have better morals and better institutions than many Christian nations.”

Latter-day Saint appreciation of Muhammad’s role in history can also be found in the 1978 First Presidency statement regarding God’s love for all mankind. This declaration specifically mentions Muhammad as one of “the great religious leaders of the world” who received “a portion of God’s light” and affirms that “moral truths were given to [these leaders] by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.”

In recent years, respect for the spiritual legacy of Muhammad and for the religious values of the Islamic community has led to increasing contact and cooperation between Latter-day Saints and Muslims around the world. This is due in part to the presence of Latter-day Saint congregations in areas such as the Levant, North Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia. The Church has sought to respect Islamic laws and traditions that prohibit conversion of Muslims to other faiths by adopting a policy of nonproselyting in Islamic countries of the Middle East. Yet examples of dialogue and cooperation abound, including visits of Muslim dignitaries at Church headquarters in Salt Lake City; Muslim use of Church canning facilities to produce halal (ritually clean) food products; Church humanitarian aid and disaster relief sent to predominantly Muslim areas including Jordan, Kosovo, and Turkey; academic agreements between Brigham Young University and various educational and governmental institutions in the Islamic world; the existence of the Muslim Student Association at BYU; and expanding collaboration between the Church and Islamic organizations to safeguard traditional family values worldwide. The recent initiation of the Islamic Translation Series, cosponsored by BYU and the Church, has resulted in several significant exchanges between Muslim officials and Latter-day Saint Church leaders. A Muslim ambassador to the United Nations predicted that this translation series “will play a positive role in the West’s quest for a better understanding of Islam.”

A cabinet minister in Egypt, aware of the common ground shared by Muslims and Latter-day Saints, once remarked to Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that “if a bridge is ever built between Christianity and Islam it must be built by the Mormon Church.” The examples of Latter-day Saint–Muslim interaction mentioned above, together with the Church’s establishment in 1989 of two major centers for educational and cultural exchange in the Middle East (Jerusalem and Amman), reflect the traditional attitude of respect for Islam that Church leaders have exhibited from earliest times. These activities represent tangible evidence of Latter-day Saint commitment to promote greater understanding of the Muslim world and witness an emerging role for the Church in helping to bridge the gap that has existed historically between Muslims and Christians.

Not shown are North America and South America, whose percentage of Muslims is less than 5 percent. North America has approximately 7 million Muslims, or 2.3 percent of the population, of which 5.5 million are in the United States. South America has approximately 1 million Muslims, accounting for 2 percent of the population. (Map by
Who, then, was Muhammad, and what is there in his life and teachings that has attracted the interest and admiration of Church leaders? What strength and virtues can we find in Muslim experience that, as President Hinckley has suggested, will be helpful in our own spiritual lives?

At the dawn of the 21st century, Islam is one of the largest and fastest-growing religions in the world. Muslims currently number more than one billion (almost one-fifth of the world’s population), concentrated primarily in Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, the Middle East, and North Africa, but with significant populations located in Europe and North America. Some even project that Islam will become the most populous religion in the world during the first half of this new century. The roots of this dynamic and, for some people, misunderstood religious movement can be traced back 14 centuries to the humble beginnings and founding work of Muhammad, whom Muslims consider to be the last of a long line of prophets sent by God to teach Islam to the world.

Muhammad (Arabic, “praised”) was born in 570 C.E. in Mecca, a prosperous city that was a center of caravan trade and religious pilgrimage in the northwest Arabian peninsula. Orphaned in early childhood, he lived a life of poverty as a youth, working as a herdsman for his family and neighbors, an occupation that gave him ample time and solitude to contemplate the deeper questions of life. Muhammad gained a reputation in the community as a trusted arbiter and peacemaker as indicated in the following account:

“At one time the Quraish [Muhammad’s tribe] decided to rebuild the Ka’ba [sacred shrine], to reset the stones above the foundations. In one of the corners they wanted to put the black stone, but could not decide who should have the honour of placing it there. They would have quarrelled violently if [Muhammad] the young man they all admired and trusted had not come by. They asked [him] … to settle the dispute. He told them to spread a large cloak and place the black stone in the middle. They did so. Then, he asked a man from each of the four clans who were in dispute to hold of a corner of the cloak. In this way they all shared the honour of carrying the stone.” 15

At the age of 25, Muhammad married a widow, Khadija, who was 15 years his senior and a prosperous caravan merchant. She knew of his reputation for honesty and hard work, and she made the proposal of marriage that turned out to be a successful and happy one, producing four daughters and two sons. For the next 15 years Muhammad was engaged with Khadija in running the family business and raising their family. It was during this period also that he retreated often into the solitude of the desert to pray, meditate, and worship. He had become dissatisfied with the corruption, idolatry, and social inequities that plagued Mecca; he sought for a higher truth that would provide peace, justice, and spiritual fulfillment for him and his people.

In 610 C.E., when he was 40, his spiritual seeking and preparation reached a culmination. According to Islamic history, one night while Muhammad was engaged in prayer and meditation on Mount Hira near Mecca, the angel Gabriel appeared to him to deliver a message from God (Arabic, Allah). 16 Three times the angel commanded that Muhammad “Recite! In the name of thy Lord who created, created man of a blood-clot. Recite! And thy Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen—Taught man that he knew not” (Qur’an 96:1–5). 17

For a period of 22 years, from 610 C.E. to his death in 632, Muhammad received communications that he said were from Allah, by way of the angel Gabriel, and that he memorized verbatim and recited orally to his disciples. These oral recitations of Allah’s mind and will are collectively referred to as al-Qur’an (“recitation”) by Muslims. However, Muhammad’s preaching against idolatry, polytheism, female infanticide, and other religious and social corruptions met fierce opposition in Mecca. His message was rejected in this early period in Mecca, and he and his fledgling community of converts, mostly a few family members and close friends, were shunned, persecuted, and even tortured.

Then a group of men came from the town Yathrib and asked Muhammad to act as an arbiter in the
squabbles which were ruining their town. Muhammad saw an opportunity to alleviate the suffering of his followers and agreed to leave Mecca. First he sent his followers, and then he himself went to the town, which would thereafter be known as Madinat an-Nabi (“City of the Prophet”), or simply Medina. This emigration (Arabic, hajra), from Mecca to Medina, took place in 622 C.E., the year commemorated as the starting point of the Muslim Hijri calendar. Muslims saw in the Hijra a fundamental turning point in the life of the prophet and in the nature of the Muslim community. From being a rejected preacher, Muhammad became a statesman, legislator, judge, educator, and military leader.

In Medina, the Muslims had freedom to establish themselves securely, develop their institutions for governance and education, and become a prosperous community, in contrast to their status in Mecca as a persecuted, marginal religious minority.

A few years after the Hijra, Muhammad was able to return to the city of Mecca, where his teachings were gradually adopted. Today Mecca is considered by Muslims to be the spiritual center of Islam and the holiest of cities, with Medina as the second and Jerusalem the third holiest cities.

In 632, at the age of 62, Muhammad died unexpectedly after a short fever. By any measure Muhammad was phenomenally successful during his career, even though his name and achievements have been the subject of controversy over the centuries in Western civilization. During the last half of the 20th century, however, non-Muslim historians have become more objective and complimentary, acknowledging that Muhammad’s achievements in both political and religious realms assure him a place as one of the most influential figures in history.

Contrary to Western civilization’s stereotype of Muhammad as a false prophet or enemy of Christians, Muslim sources portray a man of unfailing humility, kindness, good humor, generosity, and simple tastes. Though he smiled often, it is said he seldom laughed because, as one famous hadith (report of Muhammad’s sayings or actions) states, “If you knew what I know you would cry much and laugh little.” His gentle humor is evident in the following story:

“One day a little old woman came to him to ask whether old wretched women would also go to Paradise. ‘No,’ he answered, ‘there are no old women in Paradise!’ Then, looking at her grieved face, he said with a smile: ‘They will all be transformed in Paradise, for there, there is only one youthful age for all!’ ”

He dispensed wise and practical advice to followers. When a man asked if he needed to tie his camel up, since he already trusted in God’s help and protection, Muhammad replied: “First tether it, and then trust in God.” Some reports indicate that Muhammad’s family were poor and often hungry, only able to afford coarse bread at times. His statement, faqri fakhri, “My poverty is my pride,” reveals his joy in simple pleasures, and this saying was later adopted as a slogan by Muslim ascetics. He was especially fond of children, allowing his two young grandsons to climb on his back while he was performing prayers. A man once criticized him for kissing his grandson Hasan, saying, “I have 10 boys but have never kissed any of them.” Muhammad answered, “He who does not show mercy will not receive mercy.”

In his last speech in the mosque in Medina, given on the day he died, Muhammad displayed humility and magnanimity in bidding farewell to his community after more than 30 years of sacrifice on their behalf: “If there is any man whose honour I might have injured, here I am to answer for it. If I have unjustifiably inflicted bodily harm on anyone, I present myself for retribution. If I owe anything to anyone, here is my property and he may help himself to it. … Nobody should say: ‘I fear enmity and rancor of the Messenger of God.’ I nurse no grudge towards anyone. These things are repugnant to my nature and temperament. I abhor them so.”

With this view of Muhammad in mind, we can understand why Muslims commonly bless his name when it is mentioned in speech or writing, invoke his name in conversations, and celebrate his birthday. Pious Muslims strive to emulate his example in every aspect of life: mode of dress, style of grooming, table manners, religious rituals, and benevolence toward others.
The Teachings of Muhammad

Islamic life revolves around five basic principles that are outlined in general terms in the Qur'an and expounded in the teachings and customs (Arabic, sunna) of Muhammad. These five pillars are the witness of faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca. Some examples of Muhammad's teachings on charitable giving and fasting will illustrate his manner of teaching and his central role in Muslim life.

The principle of almsgiving is designed to care for the poor and to foster empathy in the community of believers. The Qur'an states that charity and compassion, not mechanical observance of rituals, define one's worthiness in God's sight (2:177). Muhammad's sayings clearly teach the practice of charity:

"None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."

"Each person's every joint must perform a charity every day the sun comes up: to act justly between two people is a charity; to help a man with his mount, lifting him onto it or hoisting up his belongings onto it is a charity; a good word is a charity; every step you take to prayers is a charity; and removing a harmful thing from the road is charity."

"Charity extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire."

"Smiling to another person is an act of charity."

"He who sleeps with a full stomach knowing that his neighbor is hungry [is not a believer]." 20

Muslims view fasting as having a dual purpose: to bring about a state of humility and surrender of one's soul to God, and to foster compassion and care for the poor in the community. Thus, fasting and almsgiving go hand in hand: denying of oneself cannot be complete without giving of oneself.

I was reminded of this principle among Muslims, and the profound influence of Muhammad’s example in their lives, while living in Cairo, Egypt, during the holy month of fasting, Ramadan. 21 My family and I were invited by a Muslim friend, Nabil, to participate in his family's evening meal in which they broke their fast. As we entered their modest apartment in one of the most impoverished quarters of Cairo, I noticed that one of the rooms was occupied by numerous peasant women (distinguishable by their black clothing) and their children. They were all sitting on the floor with food spread out before them on a cloth, quietly waiting for the call to prayer that marks the end of fasting each day. When I asked if they were his relatives, he replied: “No, I don’t know any of them. It is our habit to invite strangers off the street who cannot afford good food to share our Ramadan meal. We do this because it was one of the customs of our prophet, Muhammad.”

I was deeply moved by my Muslim friend's unselfishness and compassion for the poor, and humbled by his good example in practicing a principle that I had learned from the Bible years before but had rarely observed: “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; … but when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee” (Luke 14:12–14).

A Latter-day Saint Perspective

How, then, might Latter-day Saints regard the Muslim community? The most helpful approach is to recognize the truths and values we share with our Muslim brothers and sisters, even while politely acknowledging that theological differences exist. Certainly Latter-day Saints do not agree with Islamic teachings that deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, the need for modern prophets, or the principle of eternal progression. But by being humble and open to spiritual light wherever it may be found, we benefit from the religious insights of Muslims and affirm similarities in belief such as faith, prayer, fasting, repentance, compassion, modesty, and strong families as cornerstones of individual spirituality and community life. 22
In a recent meeting with Muslim dignitaries, Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles focused on the common spiritual heritage of Mormons and Muslims. After quoting a verse from the Qur'an, he observed:

“God is the source of light in heaven and on earth. We share the belief with you. We resist the secular world. We believe with you that life has meaning and purpose. … We revere the institution of the family. … We salute you for your concern for the institution of the family. … Mutual respect, friendship, and love are precious things in today’s world. We feel those emotions for our Islamic brothers and sisters. Love never needs a visa. It crosses over all borders and links generations and cultures.”

The Prophet Joseph Smith, in one of his most eloquent pronouncements on tolerance and compassion, encouraged the Saints to expand their vision of the human family, to view people of other faiths and cultures as our Heavenly Father does and not according to the “narrow, contracted notions of men.” He taught that the Father will take complex personal, political, and social circumstances into account at the last day and render final judgment based on a divine, merciful perspective that surpasses our limited human understanding:

“While one portion of the human race is judging and condemning the other without mercy, the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard; He views them as His offspring, and without any of the contracted feelings that influence the children of men, causes ‘His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ He holds the reins of judgment in His hands; He is a wise Lawgiver, and will judge all men, not according to the narrow, contracted notions of men, but, ‘according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil,’ or whether these deeds were done in England, America, Spain, Turkey, or India. He will judge them, ‘not according to what they have not, but according to what they have,’ those who have lived without law, will be judged without law, and those who have a law, will be judged by that law. We need not doubt the wisdom and intelligence of the Great Jehovah; He will award judgment or mercy to all nations according to their several deserts, their means of obtaining intelligence, the laws by which they are governed, the facilities afforded them of obtaining correct information, and His inscrutable designs in relation to the human family; and when the designs of God shall be made manifest, and the curtain of futurity be withdrawn, we shall all of us eventually have to confess that the Judge of all the earth has done right.”

In response to the interfaith dilemma raised by the Church members in Los Angeles, I was grateful to state that we belong to a church that affirms the truths taught by Muhammad and other great teachers, reformers, and religious founders. We recognize the goodness reflected in the lives of those in other religious communities. While we do not compromise revealed eternal truths of the restored gospel, we never espouse an adversarial relationship with other faiths. Rather, in accordance with modern prophetic counsel, we seek to treasure up that which is virtuous and praiseworthy in other faiths and to cultivate an attitude of “affirmative gratitude” toward them. As Latter-day Saints, we believe that it is vital to respect and benefit from the spiritual light found in other religions, while seeking humbly to share the additional measure of eternal truth provided by latter-day revelation.

**Sources on Latter-day Saint and Muslim Relations**


[Photos] Above: Muhammad said that he was called by Allah (God) through the angel Gabriel, depicted here by a 14th-century Muslim artist. (Upper left: Courtesy of British Museum, London.) Right: Muslims believe that the Ka’ba in Mecca is the house of God. It is the sacred sanctuary toward which Muslims from all over the world pray five times daily. (Photo by L. Al Faruqi, reprinted by permission of the Gale Group.)

[Illustration] Instead of depicting Allah or Muhammad in human form, Muslim religious art employs geometric and written forms that represent the divine and prophetic teachings of Islam. Here we see the name of God (Allah) written in Arabic, the original language of the Qur’an.

[Illustration] Right: One of the five pillars of Islam is the pilgrimage to Mecca. This 13th-century illustration shows pilgrims traveling to Mecca. (Inset: Illustration from *Maqamat,* by Al-Hariri, courtesy of Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris.)

[Photo] Below: A present-day view of the Great Mosque in Mecca and the Ka’ba (located in the center). Muslims consider Mecca the holiest city in the world. (Photo by Mohamed Amin, Camerapix, Nairobi.)

[Photo] Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (far right) and BYU professor Daniel C. Peterson (far left) with Muslim dignitaries at a reception held 10 February 2000 at the United Nations building in New York City to honor the Islamic Translation Series.

[Photo] Fasting during the daylight hours of the month of Ramadan is another of Islam’s five pillars. Here a family in Bahrain enjoys a predawn breakfast. (Photo by Christine Osborne.)

[Photo] Most Muslims—approximately 75 percent—live in south and southeast Asia, not the Middle East. Here Malaysian children study the Qur’an. (Photo by Christine Osborne.)

[Photo] Islam is growing rapidly throughout the world, as evidenced by this large new congregational mosque in Rome. (Photo © Foto Vasari.)

[Photo] The most important religious holiday in the Islamic world is the Feast of Sacrifice, which marks the conclusion of the pilgrimage. Here thousands of Muslims gather for communal worship at the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, Pakistan, to celebrate this feast. (Photo by Christine Osborne.)

[Photo] The nationality and dress of this pilgrim, one of two million from throughout the world, reflect the cultural diversity in Islam. (Photo by L. Al Faruqi, reprinted by permission of the Gale Group.)

**Notes**


2. In Conference Report, Apr. 1921, 32–33.


5. *Teachings,* 316.


11. The activities dealing with the family are coordinated by the World Family Policy Center at Brigham Young University that cosponsors an international interfaith coalition, the World Congress of Families, which includes representatives from many Muslim countries.


14. C.E. means Common Era, equivalent in time to the Christian A.D.

15. Iqbal Ahmad Azami, *Muhammad the Beloved Prophet* (1990), 14–15. The Ka’ba is the holy shrine in Mecca thought by Muslims to have been built by Abraham and his son Ishmael.

16. *Allah* is a contraction of *al-ilah*, meaning “the God.” It is the word used by all Muslim and Christian Arabs to refer to God and is also employed in Latter-day Saint scripture and practice in the Arabic-speaking world.


18. These anecdotes about Muhammad’s personality are found in Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (1985), 46–49.


20. The first three hadith cited here are from *al-Arba’in al-Nawawiyya* [Nawawi’s Forty Hadith] (1976), 56, 88, 98. The last two *hadith* were recorded by the author during conversations with Muslim friends and acquaintances.

21. During Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset for 30 consecutive days, abstaining from food, drink, tobacco, and other physical gratifications.


23. *Church News*, 3 Apr. 1999, 6, and author’s personal observation and notes.


* Muslims are followers of the religion Islam (meaning “submission to God”). Islamic scripture is contained in the Qur’an (Koran).

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**Notes**

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