Full Cast and Crew for *The Message* (1976)

**Arabic Title: Al-Risalah**

Cast and Crew Data Courtesy of IMDbPro.com

Directed by Moustapha Akkad


Leading Cast:

- Anthony Quinn as Hamzah, uncle of the Prophet
- Irene Papas as Hind, wife of Abu Sufyan; sister of Hudayfa and Waleed; daughter of Otba
- Michael Ansara as Abu Sufyan, leader of Mecca and husband of Hind

Alphabetically:

- Ahmed Abdelhalim as Uriqat, Prophet's bedouin guide
- Habib Ageli as Hudayfa, brother of Hind
- Mohammad Al-Gaddafi, Money Lender
- Nicolas Amer as Suheil, Meccan leader of Truce Committee at Hudaybiya
- Bruno Barnabe as Umayya, grandfather of Abu Sufyan
- John Bennett as Salool, king of Yathrib/Medina
- Martin Benson as Abu-Jahal, Meccan leader hit by Hamza at Kaaba and killed at Badr
- Robert Brown as Utbahl, Hind's father; killed by Hamza at Badr; brother Shayba was 3rd Meccan fighter at Badr and was killed by Ubada, the 3rd Muslim along with Ali and Hamza
- Donald Burton as Amr, Meccan leader who attempted to bring back Muslims from Abyssinia; later converted to Islam and brought Egypt under Muslim control
- Earl Cameron as Annajashi, The Negus; Abyssinian Coptic king to whom Jafar and the first Muslims fled
- George Camiller as Waleed, brother of Hind
- Ronald Chenery as Mosaab, early convert; led hijra negotiations with leaders of Yathrib/Medina
- Rosalie Crutchley as Somaya, wife of Yasser; mother of Ammar; first martyr
- Michael Forest as Khalid, Meccan ally at Uhud; later converts with Amr; becomes great Muslim general
- Salem Gedara as Wahshi, Abyssinian slave who kills Hamza at Uhud
- Michael Godfrey as Barra, early convert
- Garrick Hagon as Ammar, early convert; parents Somaya and Yasser are martyred by Meccans
- Gerard Hely as Sinan, Meccan convert who joins Muslims in Yathrib/Medina
- John Humphry as Ubada, 1 of 3 Muslims fighting 3 Meccans at Badr; killed Shayba, Hind's uncle
- Elaine Ives-Cameron as Arwa, Uthman's mother? In Kaaba early in film
- Neville Jason as Jafar, early convert and Prophet's cousin; son of Abu-Talib
- Richard Johnson as Narrator
- Hassan Joundi as Kisra, Persian Emperor
- Ronald Leigh-Hunt as Heraclius, Byzantine Emperor
- Damien Thomas as Zayed, Mohammed's adopted son
- Leonard Trolley as Silk Merchant, character at Yathrib/Medina

Note that there is no listing for Ali.
Moustapha Akkad, born on 1 July 1930 in Aleppo, Syria, studied film at UCLA, USC, and under American director Sam Peckinpah. Akkad said he wanted to create a film that would act as a bridge between Islam and the West. He later gained some notoriety in the West for his work on the first eight "Halloween" films.

To comply with Islam in filming The Message, Akkad could not depict or voice Mohammed, his wives (only Khadija is mentioned), daughters (not mentioned) or son-in-law (Ali). To overcome these prohibitions, Akkad chose Mohammed’s uncle, Hamzah (Anthony Quinn), to convey the role of the heroic, visible central character, and used several clever techniques to convey the presence of the Prophet and Ali. Muhammad Ali offered to play Bilal, the freed slave and early Muslim convert who gave the first call to prayer in Yathrib/Medina, but Akkad thought having the famous boxer appear in the film “would smack of commercialism.”

Although Muslim clerics at Cairo university Al Azhar approved the film, the Meccan establishment objected in part because they believed a popular film about the prophet would be demeaning. Thus, for years the film was banned in several Middle Eastern countries. Two versions--Arabic and English--were made with different actors. The Meccans successfully complained to the Moroccans, halting six months of work. Not accepting the arguments of the Meccans, Libyan ruler Muammar Gaddafi rescued the film by resuming its funding and providing locations in Libya to complete it. The two versions of the film cost $10,000,000, financed with funding from Morocco and Libya.