If Mahomet will not go to the mountain . . .

Hi, Everyone! I am a book-worm. I *love* to read, though I am a hard-to-please, picky reader. *But* before beginning research for this novel, I had read only for pleasure, or out of interest.

Even though I lapped up non-fiction books (Zecharia Sitchin is a great favorite of mine and so are books on the Great Pyramid of Giza), I had never made an attempt to make notes or keep track of the material I was reading.

So this was my maiden research venture as well. I was well aware of my shortcomings in doing research:

· As I have mentioned time and again, I am a widow, a single-mom of three school-going children. When I first started writing the novel, they were 11, 9, and 6 years of age. My schedule revolved around their hours.

· Taking notes and referring to them was too tedious for me.

· Keeping facts and figures in my head and spouting them out at will when I need them is *not* one of my strengths.

· I needed a vast number of books for the research.

While we have wonderful libraries here (and I absolutely swear by the U.S. libraries and their inter-library-loan system), going there and spending hours and hours taking notes was not practical for me.

It was woefully apparent to me that my Mahomet was not going to make it to the mountain! The

mountain would have to come to me.

There and then I decided that I would buy every book I needed for the research. That was the only way I could have access to the books at a moment's notice.

Taking the decision was all very well, but were the books available?

Yes, yes, *yes* . . .! It is truly amazing how some websites are dedicated to providing rare books. It is truly amazing how writers are writing on *every* topic imaginable. I was *never* disappointed! Any obscure subject I thought of—judicial system in the British Raj, for one; prisons in the British Raj, for another—and at least one person has written a book on it.

My favorite website for buying the books was www.biblio.com They offered reasonable prices and had a very organized way of keeping track of my vast orders. A tip: if you find an out-of-print book you really want, snap it up. They disappear fast!

I was able to acquire all the Savarkar books in Marathi from the Savarkar Smarak in Mumbai. Without these my research—and so, naturally, my novel—would have been incomplete.

I do actually own all the books in that long list of reference books at the end of *Burning for Freedom* and many more besides.

This decision, though somewhat expensive, has been a lifer-saver for me in writing my novel. More on that next time.

Pip-pip.

Anurupa