

MUḤUMMED

— PEACE BE UPON HIM —

THE LAST MESSENGER



ISLAMIC OUTREACH
PROJECT

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The Last Messenger

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Muhummed Pbuh The Last Messenger

The aim of this book is to present to everyone who intends to know about Muhummed pbuh a clear picture of who he was and what his mission was including his link with the chain of all messengers sent before him in a concise yet comprehensive manner.

Muhummed Pbuh was born in 570 CE in the city of Makkah to Abdullah and Amina. Abdullah was the son of Abdul Muttalib the son of Hashim, who was a descendent of Prophet Ismaiel Pbuh- the son of Prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) Pbuh.

Muhummed Pbuh was sent with the last of God's testament called The Quran. The Qur'an is the last and final and not the first Book revealed by God. This book was revealed to the last of God's Messenger's, Muhummed Pbuh over a period of 23 years from the year 610 CE to 633 CE. The Quran tells us that when God created man on this planet earth, He had instilled the basic realities of His Deen (God's path) in man's nature. God revealed and instilled the following in Adam's (the very first man) very nature:

Man has a Creator who created him; He alone is his Lord, and as a natural corollary to this, He alone should be worshipped by him. This guidance was instilled in the very nature of all humans by God Almighty from day one and all mankind is predisposed towards finding their creator and establishing a relationship with Him. God Almighty explains this in the Quran as follows:

“(O Mankind) turn your face single-mindedly to the true Faith and adhere to the true nature on which God has created human beings. The mould fashioned by God cannot be altered. That is the True, Straight Faith, although most people do not know”. (Quran 30:30)

And that

“He (God) has ordained for you the same Deen (Guidance) which He ordained for Noah, and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammed), and that which We ordained for Abraham, Moses and Jesus commanding (them all) that you should uphold this Deen (guidance) and make no divisions in it. (However) Dreadful for the idolaters is that towards what you invite them. (But) God chooses for Himself whom He will, and guides unto Himself him who turns (toward Him).” (Quran 42:13)

Man has thus been sent in this world to be tried and tested, and, for this, he has been given a clear awareness of good and evil; he has been endowed with the freedom to exercise his will, and has been accorded sovereignty on this earth. This trial of his will continue till his death. If he is successful in this trial, he will be given the eternal blissful Kingdom of Heaven where he will be free from any worries, anxieties and regrets of the past as well as the fears of the future.

God also informed man from the very beginning that He, the Almighty, at various times, will keep sending His guidance according to man’s needs. If he accepts this guidance, he will not go astray, and if he evades it, he will lose his way and be eternally doomed in the Hereafter.

With this background in mind, God Almighty fulfilled His promise and provided guidance to mankind by selecting people from among them and through them delivered His messages and guidance to mankind.

This guidance contained moral and ethical teachings and the laws. The former obviously did not require any change, while the latter was revealed as per the needs of a people until the time of Abraham Pbuh. After Prophet Abraham, God’s directives crystallized in the form of a Single and a clear Path for all mankind. In the time of Moses Pbuh, when a formal state of the Israelites had been established, the Torah was

revealed and directives of the Laws regarding the collective society and administration were also revealed.

Later and during the time of Jesus Pbuh, when certain aspects of ethics and moral teachings were ignored by the people, they were made evident to them through the Psalms and Gospels. When the original texts of these scriptures became extinct, due to them being lost in the original languages, in which they were revealed and only translations of the translations being available now, the Almighty sent the last of His Messengers and gave him the Qur'an.

The Quran is thus the book that confirms the revelations given to earlier Prophets, though these might not be accessible to us, in the form they were originally revealed. The most sublime language and a rational message that directly appeals to the human heart have caused this Divine book to move nations and civilizations. It will continue to guide those who turn to God with a sincere heart, for all times.

The Quran describes this whole history and issue as follows:

“All Mankind were once one single community; (then they began to differ) whereupon God raised up the prophets as bearers of good news (of prosperity in return for faith and righteousness) and warners (against the consequences of straying and transgression), and He sent down with them the Book with the truth (containing nothing false in it) so that it might judge between the people concerning that on which they were differing. And only those who were given it differed concerning it, after the most manifest truths came to them, because of envious rivalry and insolence among themselves. But God, by His leave, (now through this Quran) guided the believers unto the truth about which they had disagreed: for God guides onto a straight path him that He wills”.
(2:213)

The Background

Earliest human forms as we know of it has been found in the form of fossils in the North African area. The oldest known evidence for anatomically modern humans (as of 2017) are fossils found at Jebel Irhoud, Morocco, dated about 300,000 years old. Similarly human civilization is no more than 10,000 years old and the history we have records of in some form is no more than a couple of thousand years old. During all these years of human existence on this planet God sent his Messengers with the message of truth, justice and mercy.

These Messengers or Prophets were sent to their particular nations or tribes in order to guide them towards their true nature of knowing and establishing a relationship with their creator. However, later God chose to send his message to humanity and be its torch bearers till the day of judgement, through the progeny of His messenger Abraham.

Nearly four thousand years ago, in the Sumerian town of Ur in the valley of the river Euphrates, lived a young man named Abraham. The people of Ur had once worshipped one true God but as time passed they forgot the true religion and started praying to idols, statues made of wood or clay and sometimes even of precious stones.

Even as a small child Abraham could not understand how his people, and especially his father, could make these images with their own hands, call them gods, and then worship them. He had always refused to join his people when they paid respect to these statues.

God had chosen this boy to not only become a Messenger of God but chose his whole progeny to deliver His messenger. Abraham had two sons Ismaiel from his wife Hagar and Isaac from his wife Sarah. Isaac's son Jacob was also called Israel and hence the progeny that descended through the ten children of Jacob or Israel are called Bani Israel or Children of Israel. Similarly, the progeny that descended through

Abraham's other son Ismaiel are called Bani Ismaiel or the children of Ismaiel.

Isaac's or Jacob's progeny settled in what is now known as Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon or the area called Kinnan. Whilst the son of Abraham called Ismaiel was settled in what is now Makkah. Prophet Abraham along with his son Ismaiel built the house of God Kabba in Makkah. The progeny of Ismaiel became the torch bearers of the way of Abraham in Makkah and the progeny of Isaac became the torch bearers in Kinnan.

All the Prophets that followed after the two sons of Abraham came from the children of Israel except the last messenger Muhummed Pbih, who came from the children of Ismaiel.

The Children of Ismaiel

Over the years Ismaiel's descendants increased and formed tribes which spread out all over Arabia. Its people never moved away from Mecca and always lived near the Kabba. One of the duties of the leader of these tribes was to look after those who came on pilgrimage to the Kabba. The, pilgrims would come from all over Arabia and it was a great honour to provide them with food and water.

Ismaiel Pbih married to a woman from the tribe of Jurham, who had migrated from Yemen and sought the permission of Ismaiel and his mother Hagar to settle in Makkah. The tribes from Yemen had migrated following the great flood of Maarib which destroyed the great nation of queen Sheeba. These tribes had migrated northwards and settled in Makkah and Yathrib (the old name for Medina).

The business community from Yemen had settled in Makkah on account of it being a trade route between Syria in north and Yemen in the south and the agriculture related farming communities of

immigrating Yemenies had taken to and settled in the Oasis laden fertile lands of Yathrib.

As time passed, however, the Arabs stopped worshipping the one true God directly and started bringing idols back with them from the different countries they visited. The earliest idol brought back, about 500 years before Prophet Muhammed Pbuh, was by a person named Amr bin Luhay, he belonged to the Khuzza tribe and was supposed to be a pious man, had brought it back from North Arabia during one of his travels. This idol was called Hubal, who was worshipped as the greatest of the 360 idols the Kabba contained, which probably represented the days of the year.

The image of Hubal was shaped like a human, with the right hand broken off and replaced with a golden hand. It had a vault for the sacrifice and that the offering consisted of a hundred camels. It was used for divination and contained in it seven arrows, placed before the image, which were cast for divination, in cases of death, virginity, and marriage.

Prophet's grandfather, Abdul Mutallib, whilst vowing to sacrifice one of his ten children had consulted the arrows of Hubal to find out which child he should choose. Similarly after defeat at the Battle of Badr, Abu Sufyan ibn Harb, leader of the Quraish army, is said to have called on Hubal for support to gain victory in their next battle, saying "Show your superiority, Hubal".

These idols were placed at the Kabba, which was no longer regarded as the Sanctuary of God, as Abraham had intended it.

Around 250 years before the birth of Muhammed Pbuh there was a threat from some neighbouring tribes to taking over the control of Kabba. At that time the leader of the Ismaiel's descendent tribes was a man named Qusay Ibn Kilab. He held the keys of the Kabba, being married to the daughter of the one who had held it before him.

Qusay demonstrated amazing leadership qualities by bringing together all the tribes of the children of Ismaiel and this coming together was called Taqarush (meaning to come together) and thus these tribes came to be known as the Quraish.

He managed to defeat the threat from outsiders and developed a primitive administration structure in Makkah which included dividing the duties to various subgroup of Quraish. Some took over feeding the pilgrims, some water supply, some look after and maintenance of Kabba and some the right to declare war. He also built a centre near Kabba called dar ul nadwa the house of consultation. He had full authority over all aspects of life in Makkah and controlled all these subdivisions of his administration. After Qusay's death, his son Abd Manaf, who had become famous during his father's lifetime, took over the leadership of Quraish. After him came his son Hashim.

It is said that Hashim was the first to begin the two great caravan journeys of Quraish, one in the summer to Syria and the north, and one in the winter to Yemen and the south.

It was during Hashim's time that the three famous markets of Makkah during the annual Hajj time became so well-known and were the source of all forms of fine arts and luxuries pouring into an otherwise arid desert surroundings. The three markets were called Ukaz which was open from 1st of Zul Qadah (the 11th Lunar month) to 20th.

The second one was Majana which opened from 21st to end of Zul Qadah and the third one was called Dhu Majaz which used to run from 1st of Zil Hijjah (the 12th month) to 8th and thereafter from the 8th till 13th Zil Hijjah the actual rituals of Hajj would take place. These markets would attract buyers and sellers from all over Arabia as well as the world. Performers from as far as India would make their way to them and goods like silk would travel from as far away as China.

As a result of these, Mecca grew rich and became a large and important centre of trade. One summer during his travels to north Hashim stopped in Yathrib (the old name for Medina) to trade in the market and there he saw a beautiful woman. She was Salma', the daughter of 'Amr ibn Zaid, who was from a much respected family. Hashim proposed marriage to her and was accepted because he was an honourable and distinguished man.

In time, Salma' gave birth to a beautiful son and as some of his hair was white they called him Shaybah (old), which in Arabic means grey-haired.

Unfortunately, Hashim became ill and died. Shaybah, a handsome, intelligent boy, grew up in his uncle's house in Yathrib. He was proud of being the son of Hashim ibn 'Abdi Manaf, the head of Quraish, guardian of the Kabba and protector of the pilgrims, even though he had not known his father, who had died while Shaybah was very young.

At Hashim's death his brother al-Muttalib took over his duties and responsibilities. He travelled to Yathrib to see his nephew, Shaybah, and tried to persuade his mother to give him up to him. It was obviously hard for Salma', Shaybah's mother, to let her son go with his uncle managed to get him and as he took him away he had to introduce him as his slave so that no one would be suspicious.

When Al-Muttalib returned to Mecca, entering the city at noon on his camel with Shaybah behind him. The people started calling him Abd al Muttalib', 'Abd' being the Arabic for 'slave'. Despite trying his best to shake off that initial name Al-Muttalib could not succeed in changing his name.

From that day on, however, Shaybah was always affectionately called Abdul Muttalib. On the death of al Muttalib, who died in Yemen where he had gone to trade, Abdul Muttalib took his place. He became the most respected member of his family, loved and admired by all. He was, however, unlike those Arabs who had given up the teachings of Abraham.

The Zamzam Well

The miraculous well of Zamzam had appeared at the feet of Prophet Ismaiel, when he was a baby and he and his mother Hager were left, by the will of God, in Makkah by Abraham. Ismaiel was to grow up in Makkah and become the custodian of the house of God Kabba. During the later years the tribe of Jurham had come from Yemen and settled near Kabba. Prophet Ismaiel in fact married a woman from this very Jurham tribe. Later down the lane of history the tribe of Jurham was expelled from Kabba after having caused corruption and before they left they filled the well of Zamzam with sand and it was lost.

Abdul Mutallib one day had a dream in which he was told to dig up Zamzam. When he woke up he was puzzled but the next day he had the same dream, but this time he was told where to find the well. Abdul Muttalib had one son at that time, and together they began to dig.

The work was so difficult that Abdul Muttalib made an oath to God that if one day he were to have ten sons to help him and stand by him, in return he would sacrifice one of them in God's honour.

After working for three days they finally found the well of Zamzam. Pilgrims have been drinking from it ever since. The years passed by and Abdul Muttalib did have ten sons. They grew into fine, strong men and the time came for him to keep his promise to God. He told his sons about the promise and they agreed that he had to sacrifice one of them

To see which one it would be, they decided to draw lots, which was the custom of Quraish when deciding important matters. Abdul Muttalib told each son to get an arrow and write his own name upon it and then to bring it to him.

This they did, after which he took them to the Kabba where there was a man whose special task it was to cast arrows and pick one from among them. This man solemnly proceeded to do this.

On the arrow he chose was written the name of Abdullah, the youngest and favourite son of Abdul Muttalib. Even so, the father took his son near the Kabba and prepared to sacrifice him.

Many of the Quraish leaders were present and they became very angry because Abdullah was very young and much loved by everyone. They tried to think of a way to save his life. Someone suggested that the advice of a wise old woman who lived in Yathrib should be sought, and so Abdul Muttalib took his son and went to see if she could decide what to do.

Some of the Meccans went with them and when they got there the woman asked, 'What is the price of a man's life in your area?' (Meaning if you kill someone what is the blood money you pay) They told her, 'Ten camels', for at that time if one man killed another, his family would have to give ten camels to the dead man's family in order to keep the peace among them.

So the woman told them to go back to the Kabba and draw lots between Abdullah and ten camels. If the camels were chosen, they were to be killed and the meat given to the poor. If Abdullah was picked then ten more camels were to be added and the lots drawn again and again until they finally fell on the camels.

On their return they did as they were told till they reached one hundred camels, and only then did the lot fall on the camels. Abdullah was saved and everyone was very happy. Abdul Muttalib however, wanted to make sure that this was the true result so he repeated the draw three times and each time it fell on the camels. He then gave thanks to God that He had spared Abdullah's life. The camels were sacrificed and there was enough food for the entire city, even the animals and birds.

The Parents of Muhammed Pbu

Abdullah grew up to be a handsome young man and his father eventually chose Amina, the daughter of Wahb, as a wife for him. It was a good match for she was the finest of Quraish women and Abdullah the best of the men. He spent several months with his wife but then he had to leave her and travel with one of the caravans to trade with Syria.

On his way back to Makkah from Syria Abdullah fell ill and had to stop off in Yathrib to recover but passed away whilst there. Amina was heartbroken to lose her husband and the father of the child she would soon give birth to. However, only God knew that this orphan child was destined to be the last of God's Messengers and a mercy to all mankind.

The Prophet's Birth

The year of Prophet Muhammed's Pbu birth is known as the year of the elephant. It is so named as it was in that very year that the elephant army of a king of Yemen by the name of Abrahah was destroyed miraculously, by God's special help without any army of Quraish fighting it. This event is mentioned in the Quran surah 105 The elephant.

Abrahah was an opportunist, a traitor and a highly prejudiced king of Yemen in 570 CE. He had betrayed the ruler of Abyssinia and had actually used his army to bring Yemen under his own control. After assuming control of Yemen, he not only killed its Jewish king but also ruthlessly exterminated Judaism from the land.

His prejudice for Christianity made him obsessed with the idea of converting the Arabs to Christianity. To execute his scheme, he built a grand cathedral in Sana, the capital of Yemen. He wrote to king Negus of Abyssinia, for whom he was deputising in ruling Yemen, that he had

built a unique cathedral towards which he intended to divert the Arabs to offer their pilgrimage and to demolish the Kabba.

He then made up a story that an Arab had violated the sanctity of the cathedral by relieving himself in it, only to justify an attack on the Kabba. Considering the traditional bravery and courage of the Arabs it is very unlikely that something like this might have happened. Even if the episode is assumed to be true, a person's individual misdeed is not enough to justify the exaction of revenge from a whole nation and to go as far as razing down the Kabba. It is quite evident that only to inflame the Arabs and to gain the support of king Negus that this lie was given a lot of air.

He finally launched an attack on Makkah with a sixty thousand army supported by nine or ten elephants in early part of the year 570 CE.

It was an event of recent occurrence, and everyone in Makkah and Arabia was fully aware of it. The Arabs believed that the Kabba had been protected in this invasion not by any god or goddess but by God the Almighty Himself. Then God alone had been invoked by the Quraish chiefs for help, and for quite a few years the people of Quraish having been impressed by this event, had worshiped none but One true God.

Thus on 9th day of Rabi al-Awwal, the third month of the Arab Lunar calendar, in the Year of the Elephant, 570 CE Amina gave birth to a son -Muhummed- who was going to be the Last of God's Messenger's to mankind.

Foster Care

As was the tradition in Makkah, Amina decided to send her son away from the city for his early years to the desert where he would become proficient in language and where it was healthier. Women from the desert used to come to Makkah to collect the new babies and they

would then keep them until they developed into strong children, for which they were well paid by the parents.

Muhummed Pbuh was taken up by a Bedouin woman, from the tribe of Banu Saad, called Halima. With her was her husband and baby son. They had always been very poor but that year things were harder than ever because there had been a famine. They wanted a rich child but couldn't find one and had to content themselves with taking an orphan with themselves. Little did she know what a precious baby her arms were carrying!

No sooner had they started on their return journey that Halima began to feed Muhummed pbuh and her milk suddenly increased and she had enough for him as well as her baby son. When they were back home, everything began to change. The land became green, and the date trees, one of their main sources of food, became laden with fruit. Even the sheep and their old she-camel began to produce abundant milk.

Halima and her husband knew that this good fortune had come because they had the new baby, Muhummed pbuh, whom they had come to love as if he were their own son. Again following the tradition, when Muhummed pbuh was two years old, Halima took him back to his mother. She pleaded with Amina, however, to let her keep him for another year. Due to a plague in Makkah he stayed with Halima for another year.

Years down the line, Shayma, the Prophet's foster sister came to visit him and reminded him of his childhood by showing him her shoulder and saying, "Messenger of God, I am your foster sister! And do you remember this bite that you bit me on my back while I was placing you up on my shoulder!"

This incident reminded the Prophet Pbuh of his childhood days and he began to vividly and fondly remember his days with the tribe of Banu

Saad, in spite of the fact that decades had passed since his stay with them.

When Halima finally took Muhammed Pbuh back to Amina, he was a healthy, strong boy. Later he would look back with joy on the time he had spent with Halima, and he always thought of himself as one of the Banu Saad.

The Orphan's Childhood

Muhummed Pbuh returned to live with his mother in Mecca when he was about three years old. Three years later Amina decided to take her son to visit his uncles in Yathrib. She told her maid, Barakah, to prepare everything they would need for the long journey, and then they joined one of the caravans going there. They stayed in Yathrib a month and Muhummed Pbuh enjoyed the visit with his cousins. The climate there was very pleasant and he learned to swim and to fly a kite.

On their way back to Makkah, however, Amina became ill and died. She was buried in the village at al-Abwa not far from Yathrib.

Muhummed pbuh returned sadly to Makkah with his mother's maid He was now six years old and had lost both his parents. He was then adopted by his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, who loved him dearly and kept him by his side at all times. It was the custom of Abdul Muttalib to sit on a blanket near the Kabba.

There he was always surrounded by people who had come to speak to him. No one was allowed to sit on the blanket with him, however, except his grandson Muhummed pbuh, which shows how close they were to each other. Many times Abdul Muttalib was heard saying:

'This boy will be very important one day.'

Two years later Abdul Muttalib became ill and Muhummed pbuh stayed by him constantly. Abdul Muttalib told his son, Abu Talib, to adopt Muhummed pbuh after his death, which he did. Abu Talib had many children of his own, but Muhummed pbuh immediately became part of his family. Prophet's other Uncle called Abu Lahab, despite being richer than Abu Talib, was a miser and did not take up any responsibility to support his nephew.

In a tribal society the elder carried the burden so it fell upon Abu Talib to look after and be a guardian of Muhummed Pbuh. Muhummed Pbuh thus became known as an orphan child and an orphan was the weakest of all in a tribal society. This bringing up as an orphan was a must for the Prophet to know exactly what he was destined to change and reform.

From a very early age, Muhummed Pbuh saw his society close up and had a first-hand experience of what the society really looks like for a weak person and how the rich and powerful go about their business. He became aware of the tribal allegiances with all its advantages and nuances. He was made to pass through this process to gain real insight into his time, place and set up.

Teenage of Prophet Pbuh

When he was still a young boy, Muhummed worked as a shepherd to help pay his keep. He was very conscientious to not be a burden on his Uncle who was of modest means. Whilst still in his teens, Muhummed accompanied his uncle on trading journeys to Syria, gaining experience in commercial trade, which was the only career open to him as an orphan. He also worked for his uncle tending to his sheep and cattle like a shepherd.

Being a shepherd is described as a duty that every Prophet has performed in their respective lives- due to it being a part of life in the

ages that the prophets lived and in a more metaphorical manner it conveys that the Prophets are to be the shepherds of mankind.

When he was 16 years of age he became part of a treaty called Hilful Fudhool (Treaty of the Good) or Alliance of the Good. This was an organisation that would help the traders coming to Makkah from outside who had no tribal protection. In a tribal set up if you are under nobody's protection you are vulnerable to cheating and people can take your stuff and not pay for it.

This group provided protection to such vulnerable people and made sure that no one defrauded them.

When Prophet Pbuh was a Messenger he said that this treaty was so good that if someone was to call him towards such a thing being a prophet he would be the first to join it.

In his late teens the young Muhammed Pbuh asked his uncle, Abu Talib's permission to marry his daughter named Fakhitah, but Abu Talib accepted an alternative proposal from Hubayra ibn Abi Wahb, a member of the wealthy Makhzum clan. Muhammed asked:

"Uncle, why have you married her off to Hubayra and ignored me?"

Abu Talib replied: "Nephew, they are our in-laws, and the noble is an equal for the noble." (Tabaqat, 109)

This cryptic reply might have meant that Abu Talib owed a favour to the Makhzum clan; but the more likely meaning was that Muhammed Pbuh had no money whilst Hubayra was a literate man, a poet and thus is described as "wise and influential". This incident made it crystal clear to Prophet Pbuh that money and influence is what matters in his society and made him see what it meant for his society.

He must have realised how despite belonging to a noble family and his own family- the family that he loves and who love him- he is still not good enough when it comes to choosing him as a son in law!

It seems that after this Prophet Pbuh concentrated on his work of becoming a proficient merchant. This is how an orphan usually reacts, as over the years their observations and disappointments come to teach them that there is very little if any that he or she can expect from people in particular and life in general!

However, the beautiful yet tender personality of this young Muhammed did not crumble under such pressures nor did it change to one of bitterness, vindictiveness or aggression as is commonly observed.

Little is known of Muhammed Pbuh during his later youth; available information is fragmented, but one thing is clear that that he became a merchant and “was involved in trade between the Indian ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.” Due to his upright character during this time, he acquired the nickname “al-Amin,” meaning “faithful, trustworthy,” and “al-Sadiq,” meaning “truthful.”

Working For Khadijah

Khadijah's father, Khuwaylid ibn Asad, was a merchant and one of the chiefs of the Quraish of Makkah. She had become a widow and was the wealthiest merchant in Makkah having inherited from her father and husband. Khadijah became a very successful merchant. It is said that when the Quraish's trade caravan travellers gathered to embark upon their summer journey to Syria or winter journey to Yemen, Khadijah's caravan equalled the caravans of all other traders of the Quraish put together.

Honorifics associated with Khadijah included, “Ameerat-Quraish (“Princess of Quraish”),” “The Pious One,” and “Khadijah Al-Kubra (“Khadijah the Great”).” It is said that she fed and clothed the poor, assisted her relatives financially and provided marriage portions for

poor relations. Khadijah was said to have neither believed in nor worshipped idols, which was atypical for pre-Islamic Arabian culture.

Khadijah, however, did not travel with her trade caravans; she employed others to trade on her behalf for a commission. Khadijah needed a co-worker for a transaction in Syria. She chose Muhammed ibn Abdullah for the trade in Syria, having known about the honorific titles "Al-Sadiq ("the Truthful")" and Al-Amin ("the Trustworthy" or "Honest") being used for Muhammed. Khadijah hired Muhammed, who was then in his early 20's, sending word that she would pay double her usual commission.

She sent one of her servants, Maysarah, to assist him. Upon returning, Maysarah gave accounts of the honourable way that Muhammed had conducted his business, with the result that he brought back twice as much profit as Khadijah had expected. Muhammed worked as a trader for Khadijah until he married her in 595 CE at the age of 25.

Marriage with Khadijah

By the time Muhammed PbuH was twenty-five he was famous for his honesty. He was respected by everyone, even the elders of Makkah. The purity of his nature increased with the years. It seemed he had an inner knowledge that other people did not have. He believed in one God-Creator of the world-and he worshipped Him with all his heart and with all his soul.

Muhammed PbuH had grown up as the finest of his people, the most kind, truthful and reliable person in Makkah. He was known among Quraish as 'the trustworthy' (al-Amin) because of the good qualities.

After his return from the trade caravans that he managed for Khadijah Muhammed PbuH seems to have made a great mark on her. Khadijah

saw a level of trustworthiness from her trader and blessings with her money she had never seen before.

Her servant Maysarah also told her what he saw of the noble and virtuous qualities and magnanimous generosity (in the character of Muhammed), and he mentioned Muhammed's clear, logical way of thinking. As a result, she started to think of marrying Muhammed. She told this to her friend Nafeesah bint Maniyyah, who then went to Muhammed with this proposal.

Khadijah was a widow and 40yrs of age and as well as being rich and highly respected she was also very beautiful. Many men wanted to marry her but none of them suited her. When she met Muhammed, however, she thought he was very special. Her friend, Nafeesah, asked Muhammed why he was not married.

Muhammed Pbuh, endowed with the amazingly pure, open, truthful, humble and a transparent personality said in the most innocent and factual manner "I do not think I have enough means to look after a wife"

Nafeesah replied: 'Supposing a rich, beautiful and noble lady agreed to marry you?' Muhammed wanted to know who that could be. The friend told him it was Khadijah. Muhammed was very happy as he had come to greatly respect and like Khadijah.

Thus it was mutually agreed and the marriage contract, in the simple style of antiquity, recites the mutual love of Muhammed and Khadijah; describes him as the most accomplished of the tribe of Quraish. Muhammed Pbuh provided a dowry of twelve ounces of gold and twenty camels, as the bridal gift to his beloved wife Khadijah.

Abu Talib, Muhammed's caring uncle, read the khutbah (sermon) of the marriage of Muhammed and Khadijah. In accordance with the tradition

established since Prophet Abraham and his son Ismaiel Pbu, he began the speech (khutbah) in the Prophetic style by offering thanks and praise to God for His mercy and for His countless gifts and blessings; and he concluded by invoking His mercy and blessings upon the newly-weds.

From Marriage till Prophethood

As proved by the later years the marriage of Muhammed and Khadija was most successful. Muhammed married no one else till Khadijah was alive. It was blessed with felicity unlimited for both husband and wife. Khadija dedicated her life to the service of her husband and of Islam. She spent all her vast wealth in strengthening Islam, and on the welfare of the Muslims.

Khadija had the same sense of mission as Muhammed had, and she demonstrated the same level of keenness as he had to see Islam triumph over paganism. The unparalleled level of commitment shown by her and her adding the weight of wealth and power that she enjoyed actually freed her husband from the necessity of making a living, and thus enabled him to devote all his time to the mission of conveying the message of God.

This is a most significant contribution she made to the work of her husband as messenger of God. She was the fulcrum that he needed in all the years before as well as after his responsibilities as the Last Messenger of God to all mankind.

Their marriage was a joyful one and Muhammed Pbu and Khadijah were well suited. Their life together, however, was not without some sadness. They were blessed with six children, two sons and four daughters. Sadly their first born, a son called Qasim, died shortly before his second birthday, and their last child, also a son, only lived for a

short time. Happily, their four daughters-Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatimah-all survived.

For a few years Muhammed Pbuh lived a calm and quiet life as a merchant in Makkah. His wisdom benefited many people. One such time was when Quraish decided to rebuild the Kabba. It was a difficult decision for them because they had to knock it down before rebuilding it and the people were afraid that God might be angry with them for knocking down His sanctuary.

At last one of the wise old men of Quraish decided to begin, then everybody followed him. They worked until they reached down to the first foundation that Abraham had built.

They decided to leave these stones where they were and build on top of them. Each tribe brought stones and they built the Kabba up until they reached the place where the black stone was to be set. This stone was laid by the Prophet Abraham himself at the eastern corner of the Kabba and from his time the circumambulation of the Kabba begins from it in an anticlockwise direction during the Hajj rituals. They then began to argue about who should have the honour of carrying the black stone and lifting it to its place in one of the corners of the Kabba.

They almost came to blows but fortunately one of the men offered a solution. He suggested that they should be guided by the first person to enter the place of worship. They all agreed and as Muhammed Pbuh was the first to enter. Upon seeing him enter everyone was pleased, because they all trusted him. They told him the cause of the argument and he asked them to bring a large cloak.

They did as he asked, and after spreading the cloak on the ground he placed the black stone in the centre of it. Then he asked a man from each tribe to hold one edge of the cloak and together to raise it to the height where the stone should be seen. When this was done, he took the stone off the cloak and put it into place himself.

This incident is a testimony of the wisdom and problem solving capabilities of Muhammed Pbuh as well as the knowledge of sensitivities and tribal structure of his society. His ability to prevent bloodshed in a manner acceptable to those involved in the issue was a harbinger of the leadership that he was destined to provide these very people in very near future.

This incident also highlights the respect and honour that Muhammed Pbuh commanded amongst his people as not a single soul objected to his placing the stone by himself.



Silver framed Black stone on the eastern corner of Kabba.

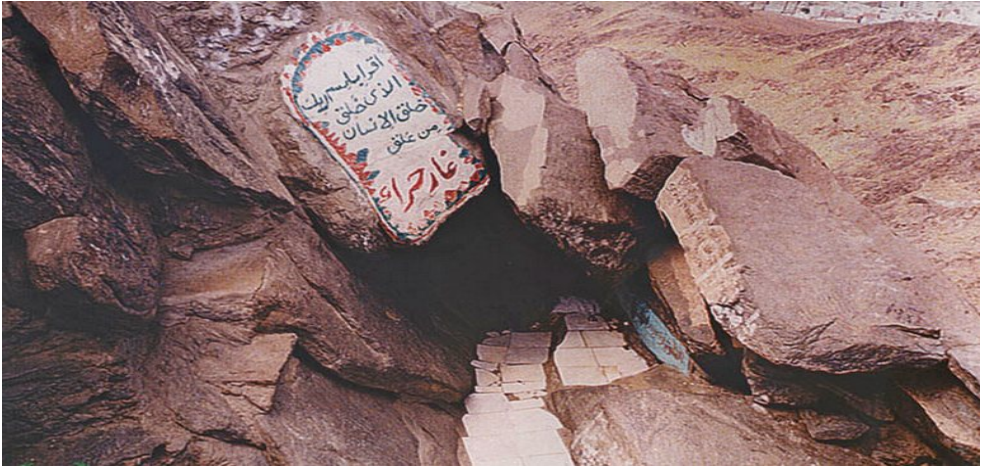
The Cave of Hira

At the age of around 35 Muhammed Pbuh started to go for Etikaaf, or seclusion as was the tradition of the Prophet Ibraheem amongst the Arabs. Prophet pbuh would go along with his family to spend time during Ramadhan in observing the tradition of Ibraheem. He used to go to a place called the cave of Hira. This place was chosen and used by his grandfather for the same purpose. His family used to spend last days of Ramadhan there and they would also share food and feed the poor

people of the society. He chose this place possibly to worship one true God away from the idol studded precincts of Kabba. This place also provided a panoramic view of his community away from the corruptions of material and faith that they had steeped into.

So he would go to Hira and think about it in the solitude there. This cave is located on a mountain called Jabal al-Nour which is 3 miles north of Makkah. Jabal al-Nour translates to “Mountain of Light.”

Cave of Hira is a small cave about 3.5 meters long and a little over 1.5 meters wide. It is in this cave that Muhammed (May the blessings and peace of God be upon him) found the solitude he needed to worship one true God.



Becoming a Messenger

God chooses any person that He wills to become His messenger or ambassador to mankind. This is not something that can be achieved by a person of his own accord or by undergoing any rigorous rituals of spiritual purification, trances, revels or nightly bead readings.

Nor can it be achieved by seeking it through various methods that humans have, over the years, come to associate with spirituality like

giving up of all worldly needs, not marrying, not eating certain foods, living away from community, not looking after one's self by giving up washing, cleaning, changing clothes, using perfume and so on.

In fact all of these and such actions are abhorred by God Almighty who says in the Quran,

“(O Muhammad), ask them, "Who has made it unlawful to maintain beauty and to eat the pure foods which God has created for His servants? They are made for the believers in this world and are exclusively for them in the life hereafter." Thus do We explain Our revelations to the people who have knowledge”. (7:32)

In the 40th year of his life, Muhammed began to have dreams replete with spiritual significance that were fulfilled according to their true import; this was actually the commencement of his divine revelation. As a result whilst being in his annual Etikaaf, it was in the very cave of Hira that in the year 610, when Muhammed (May the blessings and peace of God be upon him) was in his 40th year, he received his messenger-ship from God through the archangel Gabriel. When Angel Gabriel, appeared to him.

The Quran describes this first meeting in the following words

“He was taught by an angel, mighty in power, towering in character, endowed with wisdom. He appeared while he stood poised, being on the highest horizon. Then he drew near and came down within two bows' length or even closer. The Almighty then revealed to His servant that which He revealed. His heart did not deny his vision. And he beheld him once again near the farthest lote-tree, close to which is the Garden of Repose, when the lote-tree was being covered with that which was covering it. His sight did not falter nor lost its poise.” (53: 5-17)

The Quran mentions that this angel, Gabriel, was twice seen by the Prophet PbuH very clearly. In the first instance, he saw him in the higher horizon of our visible sky and in the second he saw him descending from the farthest lote-tree. The place of the farthest lote-tree is the one where this world of ours ends. It seems that this lote-tree divides our world from the divine realm which is beyond our observation. Neither are we aware of the boundaries of these two worlds nor of the reality of this sign called the lote-tree which bifurcates the two.

There is absolutely no possibility that this observation that he has stated could be a product of his fancy. The angel taught the Prophet pbuh the way an affectionate teacher instructs his pupil by going near him and bending over him. The Prophet fully grasped and understood this instruction. It is not that he heard some words coming from a distant source of which he was not sure what he heard and understood.

It is stated that at the instance of this second observation that his sight did not falter nor lose its poise; whatever he observed was observed with full concentration and attention. Because God Almighty made it possible for Muhammed pbuh to see Gabriel's descent from such a distance it might come to one's mind if Prophet's sight showed any signs of blurring or change. The Quran declares emphatically that he saw everything in the most distinct and a crystal clear manner.

The word used in the verse "Zaag" means "to bend or to distort" something. The implication is that the Prophet's sight did not bend from its correct angle in the observation of a divine manifestation; on the contrary, he observed everything from a correct angle. The other word used in the verse is "Taga" which means "to lose poise and balance".

The implication of the word is that though so numerous were the divine manifestations that words are unable to express them, yet his sight did not lose control the slightest. In fact, he deeply and fully observed, grasped and understood everything.

After this was fully grasped by the now Messenger of God he felt calmness however was overwhelmed by the incident and when he went out of the cave, he looked up at the sky and wherever he turned he saw the Archangel Gabriel. Little did he or anyone know at that time that this single man who, came down from that mountain of light was carrying with him a light that would shine till the judgement day in billions of hearts and minds!

And that billions of men, women and children would walk up that same mountain, taking this journey year after year, just to catch a glimpse of the tiny cave where God spoke to man again and for the last of His message.

In this state he returned to Khadijah. Who said those brilliant words, “I swear by God who has my soul in His hands, that you will be our people's Prophet.”

Muhummed Pbuh, now the Messenger of God, was pleased by her faith in him and felt fast asleep. Even a strong man, when he faces some problems, always turns to his wife for comfort even though she may be weak herself. If she gives her husband the comfort, the wife then, would be the arms he always turns to for shelter. When a man feels that his wife is supporting him, you cannot imagine the surge of energy he gets. And same is true for a wife in respect to her husband. Glory be to God who created such harmony and balance. God says in the Quran:

“And among His Signs is this that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, that you may find peace and tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect”. (30:21)

Khadijah then left the Prophet Pbuh sleeping and went to see her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Nawfal, to ask him what he thought about all that had happened. Waraqah was a very wise man who had read many books and had become a Christian after studying the Bible. He confirmed to

Khadijah that Muhammed had been chosen by God to be His Messenger. Just as the Archangel Gabriel had come to Moses before and had ordered him to guide his people, so, too, would Muhammed be the Prophet of his people.

But Waraqah warned that all the people would not listen to the Prophet and some would mistreat his followers. He must, however, be patient because he had a great message for all the world. He was very old and wished he was young so that he could help the Messenger when his people turn against him.

From that day on, the Archangel Gabriel came often to the Prophet (pbuh) and the verses he taught him, the last and final message from God to man, were memorised as well as written down, and are known to us as the Holy Quran.

The First Believers

After that momentous day in the month of Ramadan, Revelation came again and again to the Prophet (pbuh). He understood now what he had to do and prepared himself for what was to come. Only a strong and brave man, helped by God, can be a true prophet because people often refuse to listen to God's message. Khadijah and Waraqah were the first persons to believe the Prophet (pbuh) and accept as true what he brought from God. Through her, God made things easier for the Prophet (pbuh). Khadijah strengthened him, helped him spread his message, and stood up to the people who were against him.

Then the Revelation ceased for a time. The Prophet (pbuh) was upset and unhappy, thinking that God had left him, or that he might have angered God in some way so that God no longer thought him worthy of His message. It was during this period he had to go through so much of abuse from some of his opponents. A woman very rudely said:

“I am happy that the devil has left you now”

It was a very trying and difficult time so much so that Prophet Pbuh is said to have become extremely distressed and anxious. However, the Archangel Gabriel came back to him and brought this surah, or chapter, of the Qur'an:

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

“By the morning hours, And by the night when it is still, your Lord has neither forsaken you nor does He hate you, And indeed what is to come will be better for you than what has gone by. And verily, your Lord will give you (all i.e. good) so that you shall be well-pleased. Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter (and care)? Did He not find you unaware of the Right Way, and then directed you to it? Did He not find you in need and make you self-sufficient? Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness, and do not scold the one who asks for help; And proclaim the Grace of your Lord (i.e. the Prophethood and all other Graces)”. (Qur'an: 93.1-11)

This short surah captures in a brief yet profound manner the whole life of Muhammed Pbih up until his becoming the Prophet. How he was build up and developed from day one by God Almighty for this special mission.

The Prophet (pbuh) began to speak secretly of God's message to those who were close to him and whom he could trust. At that time Makkah was going through hard times. There was very little food to be had. Abu Talib, the Prophet's caring uncle, who had taken care of him after his grandfather's death, was finding it very difficult to feed his large family.

The Prophet (pbuh) said that he and another uncle, Abbas, who was a rich man, would each bring up one of Abu Talib's children in order to help him out. The Prophet (pbuh) took Ali and his uncle took Jafar under their respective guardianship. This provided an opportunity for Muhammed Pbih to repay his uncle's care and love that he had shown towards him when he most needed it.

To begin with, though, only the Prophet (pbuh) and his wife knew of his message and performing of the prayers called Salah. Then one day Ali, living with Prophet now, entered the room and found the Prophet (pbuh) and Khadijah praying. He was puzzled and asked what they were doing. The Prophet (pbuh) explained to him that they were praising God and giving thanks to Him. That night Ali stayed up thinking about all that the Prophet (pbuh) had said

He had great admiration and respect for his cousin. Finally he came to a decision and the next day he went to the Prophet (pbuh) and told him that he wanted to follow him. Thus Khadijah was the first woman to embrace Islam, the teachings which the Prophet (pbuh) brought from God, and Ali was the first young man. Shortly after they were joined by Zayd ibn Harithah, a slave, freed and adopted by the Prophet (pbuh) as his son.

The Prophet (pbuh) used to offer prayers secretly and one day Abu Talib happened to pass by and when he saw them he stopped and asked them what they were doing. The Prophet (pbuh) told him that they were praying and following the same religion as Abraham. He explained that, like Abraham, he had been ordered to guide the people to God's path. Abu Talib looked at his son, Ali, and said:

“Muhummed would never make you do anything that was wrong. Go with him. But I cannot leave the religion I now follow and which was followed by my father”. Then he turned to the Prophet (pbuh), saying, 'Even so, I promise you, Muhummed, that no one will hurt you as long as I am alive.' And with that Abu Talib went on his way.

At about this time the news of Muhummed Pbuh being the Prophet reached an honest, wise, and respected merchant of Makkah called Abu Bakr. He knew Muhummed (pbuh) well and believed he could never lie, so he went to find out for himself if the story were true. The Prophet (pbuh) told him that he had indeed been sent by God to teach everyone to worship the one true God. On hearing this from the Prophet's own

lips Abu Bakr knew it to be the truth and became a believer instantly. Later the Prophet (pbuh) was reported to have said that everyone he ever invited to accept Islam showed signs of disbelief and doubt, except Abu Bakr; when he was told of it he did not hold back or hesitate.

Because of his wisdom, honesty, and kindness people had always turned to Abu Bakr for advice. He was, therefore, a man of some influence and through him many people came to Islam. Among these was Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, the uncle of Amina, the Prophet's mother. The night before Abu Bakr came to visit him and tell him about Islam, Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas dreamt that he was walking in darkness. As he walked he saw the moon and when he looked at it he saw Ali, Abu Bakr, and Zayd, the Prophet's freed slave, beckoning to him to come and join them. When Abu Bakr told him about the Prophet's religion, he understood the meaning of his dream and went at once to the Prophet (pbuh) and declared himself a Muslim.

Another person brought to Islam by Abu Bakr was Bilal. One night Abu Bakr went to the house of Umayyah ibn Khalaf, one of the most important men of Quraish. Umayyah was out and Abu Bakr found only Umayyah's slave, Bilal, at home. Abu Bakr talked to the slave about Islam and before he left, Bilal, too, had become a Muslim. Later, when Umayyah persecuted Bilal for being a Muslim, Abu Bakr bought him and set him free.

On returning from a business trip to Syria, Uthman learned of Muhummed's declared mission. After a discussion with Abu Bakr, Uthman decided to convert to Islam, and Abu Bakr brought him to Muhummed to declare his faith. Uthman thus became one of the earliest converts to Islam, following Ali, Zayd, Abu Bakr and a few others. His conversion to Islam angered his clan, the Banu Umayyah, who strongly opposed Muhummed's teachings.

Abu Dhar is another of the earliest converts, he is said to have been a serious young man, an ascetic and a monotheist even before he accepted

Islam.. He was born to the Ghifar clan, found to the western south of Medina. Abu Dhar was apparently typical of the early converts to Islam, who were mainly young men, women and weaker sections of the society like slaves. Abu Dhar mentions that he had been offering morning and night time Salah (prayers) diligently even before his acceptance of Islam- in obedience to the way taught by Abraham Pbu. Thus the faith and practice of Abraham was still prevalent yet practised only by a very few men and majority of the population had either ignored or distorted it. Hajj, the annual pilgrimage is an obvious example of this fact as well.

The number of people following the Prophet (pbuh) began to grow. Sometimes they would all go out of the city to the mountains around Makkah to hear him recite the Qur'an and to be taught by him. This was all done very secretly and only a very few people knew about Islam in those early days.

This process of secretly inviting people to Islam continued for a period of three years.

The Open Invitation

After the three years of secret teaching of his mission had passed the Archangel Gabriel came to the Prophet (pbuh) and ordered him to start conveying the message openly to everyone.

“So proclaim openly what you are commanded, and turn away from those who associate partners with God.” (15:94)

The Prophet Pbu immediately utilised a method which was unique in its application and yet it was a well-known strategy to the Makkans. When there was an imminent danger of an enemy attack an observer, placed by the tribes at a specific height for keeping a watch, would take off his clothes or light fire or smoke in order to warn his people. Such a

person was called a Nazeer-e-Uryan (a naked warner). Prophet Pbh used this very strategy, well known to his community, and the Quran described him as a Clear or open warner instead of a naked warner thus keeping alive the traditional approach but at the same time being sensitive to the respect, dignity and honour of the messenger of God.

“Say (O Muhammed): I am not a new thing among the Messengers (of God) (i.e. I am not the first Messenger) nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am but a clear (or open) warner.” (Quran; 46:9)

In order to accomplish this task Muhammed Pbh went on top of a high rock on Mount Safa and called out to the Makkans in a loud and resonant voice:

O Sahaba! (O Community of Quraish, come here and convene, I have important news for you!)

The Makkans were puzzled. Who was shouting? Were they in the face of danger? Had an enemy invaded their land or was an important message to be forwarded to them? They did not delay in responding to this call and gathered on Mount Safa at once. What had happened? The person making this call was Muhammed-ul Amin (Muhammed the Trustworthy.) What did he want? What news did he bring? What was he going to say?

With great curiosity they asked, “O Muhammed, why did you gather us here? What are you going to announce?”

The Holy Prophet Pbh did not lag in his response. This was a moment when he had managed for all minds to be fully gravitated towards him, when all eyes filled with looks of curiosity were directly focused on him, when all ears had got their full attention, and when everyone was anxiously waiting. This is when he delivered the most eloquent

response which was full of care, concern and love for his community as well as being filled with several logical proofs:

Thus he began.....

“O Community of Quraish! Our example is like a man who sees the enemy and runs to his family and shouts “O friends!” since he is afraid that the enemy will harm and reach his family before he does.

O Community of Quraish! If I were to tell you there were enemy horsemen on the other side of this mountain and that they were about to attack you in the morning or towards the evening, would you believe me?”

They had never heard Muhammed-ul-Amin (Muhammed the Trustworthy PBUH) tell a lie nor say something that had surpassed the truth. In unison they all replied,

“Yes, we affirm your honesty because we have not seen anything but propriety from you. You are not a person who makes false allegations.”

After addressing the public, the Holy Prophet Pbih called each of the Quraish tribes by their own names and continued his speech:

“In that case, I inform you of a great punishment that is ahead. God the Exalted has commanded me to warn my closest kin of the punishment in the hereafter. I invite you to say, “God is One, there is no God beside Him.” I am His servant and Messenger. If you accept what I have said, then I guarantee that you will enter paradise. Also know that I cannot be of service to you in this world nor in the hereafter unless you say, “God is One, there is no other God but He.”

Abu Lahab, one of the Prophet's uncles who was among the listeners, and had always harboured a grudge against Muhammed Pbih- so much so that despite being his richest uncle he refused to be his guardian

when Muhammed was just 8 years old and had lost both his parents and his grandfather! Abu Lahab was baffled in the face of these words that addressed the mind, heart, and soul.

He took a rock in his hands and threw it straight towards the Master of the Universe Muhammed Pbuḥ and shouted, “May you perish for this! Is this what you have summoned us here for?”

Nobody else said anything in dissidence among those who were listening. They only dispersed into whispers of conversation among themselves. With his actions, Abu Lahab now deserved Divine punishment and enmity. He would pay dearly for his violent hostility, lasting grudge, and hate that he had towards God’s Messenger Pbuḥ.

Abu Lahab and his wife, Umm Jamil, were among the leaders of those that tortured and persecuted the Prophet Pbuḥ. Abu Lahab would continuously stalk our Beloved Prophet Pbuḥ, would strive to get the crowd to stop listening to him, and would attempt to instil doubts and apprehensions in their minds.

When Prophet Pbuḥ was inviting the crowds during the three grand markets of Hajj to testify to the Oneness of God and his own prophethood saying:

“O people! Say There is only One God (La Ilaha Illallah) so that you can save yourselves,”.

Abu Lahab would come from right behind and shout,

“O people! He is my nephew; he is lying to you, stay away from him.”

Abu lahab became the most zealous opponent of the message of God and his fate was ultimately sealed in Surah al-Lahab:

“Both hands of Abu Lahab have been broken and he himself shall perish. Neither did his wealth benefit him nor what he had earned. He

shall be cast into a blazing Fire; his wife too while carrying firewood. There will be a twisted rope round her neck.”(Quran- 111:1-5)

Here a question arises that in the whole of the Qur’an no enemy of the Prophet Pbuh has been mentioned by name; so what was special about Abu Lahab that he was mentioned by his name?

The answer to this question is that there can be several reasons for mentioning him by name; however, two of them are very significant. First, the nature of enmity between the Prophet Pbuh and Abu Lahab was extremely different from the one between him and his other enemies. The main difference which other leaders of Quraish had with the Prophet Pbuh was that they considered the religion preached by him to be against their ancestral religion; the reason for this enmity was not that they thought that this religion was a danger to their own person interests.

They had great respect for the lofty morals towards which he would call people. Many nobles among the Quraish held him in high esteem for urging people to be kind to the orphans, the needy and the slaves. They wanted that all these admirable efforts be undertaken. In this regard, they thought highly of the Prophet Pbuh because they found him to be an embodiment of exalted traits. The anger they had for him was because in his message he would censure their idols.

In Surah 109 Kafirun, it is mentioned that the Quraish were ready to compromise with him if he adopted a soft tone for their idols. On the other hand, the enmity of Abu Lahab was entirely for the protection of his personal interests. He was in charge of the treasury of the Kabba, which was called rifadah. He had taken such control of it that the greater part of the money received would go into his own pockets instead of being spent on orphans, the poor and the pilgrims.

As a result, he had become the Shylock of his times. When he heard the calls of the Prophet Pbuh towards lofty morals and the verses which

invited people towards the real objectives of building the Kabba, he felt that the time of his accountability was drawing near. If he did not make an immediate effort to curb the intensity of the Prophet's teachings, he would have to let go of all his vested interests from which he was being able to benefit at that time without any hindrance or impediment.

He thus rose to make a concerted effort to oppose the Prophet PbuH. Surah Humazah and some other surahs portray his character. People who agree or oppose a point of view whilst disregarding their personal interests have decency in them, even though their stance might not be correct; on the contrary, people who agree or oppose a point of view merely because of their personal interests are absolutely devoid of decency. It is because of this reason that there is a world of difference between the nature of enmity of Abu Jahal and Abu Sufyan (who were other chiefs of Quraish) and that of Abu Lahab.

And it is because of this very reason that the name of Abu Lahab was specially mentioned so that people come to know of the character of people who are the real enemies of the truth and how the Almighty deals with them.

The second reason is that naming him highlights the law of God regarding the criteria of success and failure. The real basis for association or disassociation with a prophet is your response to his call. People who become the companions and supporters of a prophet and adopt the path of God, even though they are not his relatives, are deserving of success. Whilst those who refuse to accept the truth and reject his message are the real losers, regardless of how closely they are related to the Prophet himself and despite being his kith and kin.

In order to delineate this reality, the incidents of Noah's son, Abraham's father and Lot's wife are mentioned with great emphasis in the Qur'an. For this very reason the name of Abu Lahab has been mentioned here: it should become evident from this mention that race and lineage have no status before God. A shepherd can become a loved

one of a prophet if he accepts his message and if an uncle of his rejects his message, his relation with God and the prophet will stand severed.

Dawah by Feast

After the crowd had dispersed at the Safa mount invitation by Prophet Pbh he stood alone looking at them dispersing. However, he did not give up and tried another strategy that was common and accepted in his society. A few days later the Prophet (pbuh) prepared a feast in his house for all of his uncles. After the meal he spoke to them and said,

'O sons of Abd al-Muttalib! I know of no Arab who has come to his people with a better message than mine. I have brought you the best news for this life and the next. God has ordered me to call you to Him. So which of you will help me?' All the men kept silent. Then Ali, his cousin, jumped up and said: 'O Prophet of God! I will help you.'

Then the men, looking at the weak young boy with his eyes watering due to infection, all burst into laughter mockingly pointing to Abu Talib (Ali's father) "Listen carefully! You are ordered to follow your own son!"

His message ignored by most of the people and his uncles, the Prophet (pbuh) continued to meet his friends secretly in a house near the hill of Safa. This house was provided by a young boy by the name of Arqam. Dar al-Arqam (house of Arqam) was a house, far from the eyes of the Makkans, where the Prophet (Pbh) used to meet his companions, new converts and those seeking information about Islam. It was chosen for its excellent location and set up. The house could be entered and exited secretly because it was in a narrow street, and the street could be surveyed from within. In the fifth year of the mission Arqam's house, which became known as the House of Islam, can be regarded as the first Islamic school, with Muhammed Pbh as the teacher and the first Muslims as its students.

But even though they kept to themselves, they were sometimes abused by those who would not believe. From one such incident, however, an unexpected conversion to Islam took place. One day, when the Prophet (pbuh) was returning home, speaking with his followers, he met Abu Jahl, a leader of Quraish, who hated the Prophet (pbuh) and his teachings. Abu Jahl started to insult him and to speak spitefully of Islam, but the Prophet (pbuh) made no reply and went on his way. He hit Prophet Pbuh on the head and yet Prophet Pbuh did not retaliate.

Later, Hamzah, one of the Prophet's uncles, who was a strong and brave warrior of whom people were quite afraid, heard how his nephew had been insulted. Filled with rage, he ran straight to the Kabba where Abu Jahl was sitting among the people and struck him a violent blow in the face with his bow. Hamzah then shouted,

“Will you insult him when I follow his message, and I say what he says? Hit me back if you dare!”

New converts were brought to Al-Arqam's house. This incident took place in the sixth year of the mission (615-616 CE), two powerful citizens of the Quraish tribe, Muhammed's uncle Hamza ibn Abdul Muttalib and Umar ibn Al-Khattab, entered the house of Arqam to announce their adoption of Islam. Umar's conversion brought the total of Muslims to forty men, after which the members of the group could offer prayers inside the precincts of Kabba as two strong and feared members- Hamzah and Umar were now backing the new converts.

Persecution Starts

Seeing this situation and looking at the influence that Muhammed Pbuh was having not only on the young and weaker sections of the society but even the most influential among them, the leaders of Quraish became angry and decided to come to a compromise so a group of them

went to his uncle, Abu Talib, who had promised to protect him. They told him to ask the Prophet (pbuh) to stop attacking their gods and their way of life, and in return they would give him whatever he wishes-wealth, women, status and even leadership.

But when the Prophet Pbuh rejected their offer they went back to Abu Talib and this time they told him that if he did not stop his nephew, they would fight them both. Abu Talib was very upset by this quarrel among his people, but he could not break his word to his nephew. He sent for the Prophet (pbuh) and told him what had happened, saying,

“Spare an old man like me and spare yourself; do not put a greater burden on me than I can bear.”

The Prophet (pbuh) thought that his uncle might abandon him and that he would no longer have his support, but nevertheless he answered,

“O my dear uncle, by God, if they were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left in return for my giving up this cause, I would not give it up until God makes the Truth victorious, or I die in His service.”

Abu Talib was deeply moved by this answer. He told the Prophet (pbuh) that he would support him for as long as he lived and encouraged him to go on conveying the God's message. From that time on, however hard the leaders of Quraish tried to convince Abu Talib to stop protecting his nephew, he always refused to listen to them.

In order to get rid of the Prophet (pbuh) and his followers, his enemies started persecuting those Muslims who were poor or weak, or had no powerful friends. One such person was Bilal, the slave of Umayyah ibn Khalaf. His master would take him out into the desert, tie him up, and leave him in the sun with a large stone on his chest. Fortunately Abu Bakr was passing by one day and saw Umayyah torturing Bilal, so he bought him from his master for a large sum of money and then set him free.

But not all persecuted Muslims were as fortunate as Bilal. Most of them suffered and some were killed. Among those killed was Summayya bint Khayyat, the first person to sacrifice her life for Islam-known as the first martyr. Thus the first person to accept Islam and to sacrifice their life were both women-Khadijah and Summayya. Summayya was a slave woman, her master being Abu Hudhaifah ibn al-Mughira. She was a woman with no affiliations whatsoever with any of the powerful clans or tribes of Arab. Her master married her to Yasir, who was originally from Yemen and had migrated to Makkah a few years before the advent of Islam. Through her union with Yasir, she bore a son named Ammar, one of the most steadfast companions of the Prophet (pbuh).

Ammar embraced Islam at a young age and it was him who introduced Islam to his parents. Her family being among the first of Muslims boldly proclaimed their new faith and did not keep it as a secret. But her master was determined to make an example out of them and this determination of preventing others to accept Islam led them to unleash an excruciating series of torture on the family of Yasir. Her master handed the family of Yasir to Abu Jahal for teaching them a lesson who in return undertook all possible means to make them renounce the new way of life and faith taught by Muhammed Pbu. However, the family of Yasir, especially Summayya was resilient and demonstrated an unparalleled level of perseverance in not giving up their faith. Summayya was a symbol of sacrifice and fortitude which was quite evident in the resistance she offered to the tortures of Abu Jahal.

As they didn't belong to any tribe or clan of the Arab, and there was no one who could defend them, Abu Jahal persecuted them to no end. They were publicly beaten and verbally abused by the tribe of their master. They were threatened and emotionally abused. When that did not shake the faith of Summayya and Yasir, Abu Jahal encased them in an iron cage and left them in the scorching heat to die. When the Prophet (pbuh) passed by them, he said to them,

“Be patient O family of Yasir. For your final destination is Paradise.”

Upon hearing the Prophet’s (pbuh) words, Summayya proudly recited, “I testify that you are the Messenger of God and that your promise is truthful.”

This only increased her determination and faith and no matter what Abu Jahal resorted to, he could not shake her faith, he could not make her denounce her religion. He couldn’t bear her stubbornness in refusing to oblige him. After several failed attempts, Abu Jahal lost his temper and in a moment of frustration he took his spear and stabbed her between her thighs mercilessly.

She passed away, leaving behind her sacrifice and resilience in the face of cruelty and torture as a legacy of being the first martyr in the history of Islam. Forever to be honoured and remembered for her determination and upholding the truth, forever to be known for her bravery and courage. Her husband was tortured and killed as well.

The Prophet (pbuh) always remembered her with respect and spoke of her in high praise. He used to address Ammar bin Yasir, after the death of his parents, sometimes very lovingly as ibn Summayya (the son of Summayya), in honour and respect of his mother. There are numerous accounts of such acts of patience and endurance of the early companions of Prophet Pbuh with one thing common in all i.e. all of them endured it patiently, knowing that they were doing the right thing and that their reward in the life to come would be greater than any happiness they could find on earth.

The first Hijrah (Immigration)

As the number of the Prophet's followers increased the enemies of the Muslims grew more and more angry. It was only five years since the Archangel Gabriel had first come to the Prophet (pbuh) and two years

since the Prophet (pbuh) had spoken out in public. The torture and persecution was becoming unbearable as they were now being killed mercilessly. So the Prophet Pbuh directed the Muslims to go to another country in order to live in peace. He said,

“It would be better for you to go to Abyssinia. The king there is a just man and it is a friendly country. Stay there until God makes it possible for you to return.”

The Muslims prepared for the journey. They decided to wait until night so that they could leave without being seen. The first sixteen left Makkah and, after reaching the shore of the Red Sea, crossed over to Abyssinia. Another eighty-three men and nineteen women followed, all hoping to be welcomed by the king and people of that country. This was the first Hijrah, or migration.

Armah or Ashamah commonly known as Al Najashi or Negus was the ruler of the Kingdom of Aksum who reigned from 614–631 CE. He is primarily known through the coins that were minted during his reign. It was his justice loving nature which Prophet Pbuh had alluded to that provided the shelter to the Muslim emigrants around 615–616 at Axum in current day Ethiopia.

The Meccans were furious when they discovered that these Muslims had secretly left the city for among them were the sons and daughters of many of the leading families of Mecca. The anger of the Meccans was even greater when they found out that the Muslims had been warmly welcomed in Abyssinia. The leaders of Quraish decided to send two men to the Abyssinian king in hopes of persuading him to send the Muslims back. These were Amr ibn al-As, a very eloquent and clever speaker, and Abdullah ibn abi Rabiah.

Before they met this king, they gave each of his advisers a gift, saying: 'Some foolish men from our people have come to hide in your country. Our leaders have sent us to your ruler to persuade him to send them

back, so when we speak to the king about them, do advise him to give them up to us.'

The advisers agreed to do what the Makkans wished.

Amr ibn al-As and Abdullah ibn abi Rabiah then went to the king and presented him also with a gift, saying:

'Your Highness, these people have abandoned the religion we have always followed in Makkah, but they have not even become Christians like you.'

The royal advisers, who were also present, told the king that the Makkans had spoken the truth and that he should send the Muslims back to their own people. At this, the king said,

'Those who have come to ask for my protection, settled in my country, and chosen me rather than others, shall not be betrayed. I will summon them and ask them about what these two men have said. If the Muslims are as the Makkans say, I will give them up and send them back to their own people, but if the Makkans have lied I will protect the Muslims.'

'Amr was very upset by this for the last thing he wanted was for the king to hear what the Muslims had to say. The king then sent for the Muslims. When they entered, they did not kneel before him as was the custom of the Abyssinians.

'Why do you not kneel before our king?' they were asked by one of the advisors.

'We kneel only to God', they replied.

So the king asked them to tell him about their faith. In reply to his request the cousin of Muhammed PbuH, Jafar bin Abu Talib delivered such an eloquent speech that the King himself commented that his one God is more eloquent than the multiple God's of Makkans. Jafar said:

“O King! We were plunged in the depth of ignorance and barbarism; we and our ancestors had turned from the faith of Abraham, who, with Ishmael, rebuilt the Kabba and worshipped only God. The strong among us lived by preying upon the weak. We obeyed no law and we acknowledged no authority save that of brute force. We worshipped idols made of stone or wood-images of our own making- and we knew nothing of human dignity. We adored idols, we lived in immorality, we ate meat that had not been slaughtered in the right manner, and we spoke abominations, we disregarded every feeling of humanity and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood were neglected. We did terrible things of which I dare not speak. To this has come a man sent by God raised among us, of whose birth, truthfulness, honesty, and purity we were aware; and he called to the Oneness of God and taught us not to associate anything with Him.

He forbade us the worship of idols; and he enjoined us to speak the truth, to be faithful to our trusts, to be merciful and to regard the rights of the neighbours and kith and kin. He ordered us to show respect to women, and never to slander them. Nor to eat the substance of orphans; he ordered us to flee from the vices, and to abstain from evil; to offer prayers, to give charity, and to observe fast.

“We have believed in him, we have accepted his teachings and his injunctions to worship one true God, and not to associate anything with Him, and we have allowed what He has allowed, and prohibited what He has prohibited.

“For this reason, our people have risen against us, have persecuted us in order to make us forsake the worship of God and return to the worship of idols and other abominations. The natural pity whereby a human lifts up his weaker brethren, in order to help him, is termed by these Makkans as upsetting the social order! They have tortured, injured and killed us, until finding no safety among them; we have come to your country, and hope you will protect us from oppression.”

The king, who was a Christian, was moved by these words. Amr had to think quickly of a way to win the argument. Cunningly he said to the king,

'These people do not believe in Jesus in the same way as you do'.

The king then wanted to know what the Prophet (pbuh) had said about Jesus.

Jafar replied by reciting a Surah from the Qur'an which tells the story of Jesus and his mother Mary.

“And make mention of Mary in the Scripture, when she had Withdrawn from her people to an eastern place, And had chosen seclusion from them. Then We sent unto her Our spirit and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. She said: Lo! I seek refuge in the Beneficent One from you, if you do fear God. He said: I am only a messenger of your Lord that I may bestow on you a faultless son. She said: How can I have a son when no mortal has touched me, neither have I been unchaste? He said: "So (it will be), your Lord said: 'That is easy for Me (God): And (We wish) to appoint him as a sign to mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a matter (already) ordained” (Quran 19:16-21)

The Negus asked, “What do you say about Jesus, the son of Mary?”

Jafar replied, “Regarding him, we only say what has been revealed to our Prophet.” “And what is that?” enquired the Negus. “Our Prophet says that Jesus is the servant of God and His Prophet, His spirit and His word which He cast into Mary the Virgin.” The Negus exclaimed, “By God, Jesus the son of Mary was exactly as your Prophet has described him.”

On hearing the words of the Quran and jafar, the Negus was moved to tears. To the Muslims, he said:

“The message of your Prophet and that of Jesus came from the same source...”

To Amr and his companion (the men who were trying to convince the Negus to hand over the Muslims), he said:

“Go. For, by God, not even for a mountain of gold will I surrender them to you.”

So the Muslims were given the king's permission to live peacefully in his country. Amr was given back the gift he had presented to the king and the two Meccans returned home, bitterly disappointed.

Life of Muslims in Abyssinia

The Muslims' stay in Abyssinia under the leadership of Negus was peaceful, harmonious and respectful. The Prophet's Companions were honest and gracious, and Muslims in general paid great respect to the people of Abyssinia. They were grateful to them for their hospitality and never interfered in the internal affairs of their nation except to offer help, aid, and support. They never denied the gratitude which was due to their hosts.

The Prophet's Companions who migrated to Abyssinia lived under the guardianship and authority of Negus. He observed their lifestyle, religious practices and dealings with others, all of which proved to him the truth of the religion they followed and their loyalty to it. This proves that a Muslim's behaviour should reflect his beliefs.

Muslims can be the best representatives of their religion if they but practice it to the best of their ability and hold fast to its teachings as conveyed through the Holy Quran and by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Gracious treatment of peaceful wider community members wherever we live can be one of the most effective channel of dawah (conveying message of Islam) whereas hostility and bigotry repel people from Islam and give an erroneous image of this noble religion.

This example is suitable and convenient for modern day application especially with nations states now based on citizenship rather than conquering each other or at war with each other. Muslims living in a non-Muslim majority can follow the example of the early Muslims who migrated to Abyssinia as this would allow for much needed harmonious interaction and exchange of ideas thus creating an environment where Muslims can contribute effectively in their respective societies.

When they migrated to Abyssinia, Muslims offered to fight alongside Negus and his army against his cousin who was seeking to usurp his throne, but he refused. When he won the war, they were overjoyed at his victory. But when the fighting erupted once more against Negus and his people, the Muslims insisted on joining his army and aid his cause. This they did willingly even though they were fighting alongside a non-Muslim army and for a non-Muslim leader. But it was their sense of responsibility towards the country they were living in and the support for truth and justice-which is the real reason to justify any war-that compelled them to join the army of Negus and fight for him.

After the migration some of the Muslims settled in Abyssinia whilst some migrated and left Abyssinia by sea for conveying the message overseas to East Asia. According to an Islamic tradition as-Sahabah Mosque is the oldest mosque built in Eritrea by the first Muslim Migrants when they first arrived in Abyssinia. They built a Mosque so they could pray, and named it al-Sahaba Mosque. Sahaba in Arabic means companions, and that is to imply that al-Sahaba Mosque was built by the companions of Prophet Muhammad P.b.u.h. That makes this Mosque the first in Africa. The mosque was renovated most recently in the twentieth century, and currently is occasionally functional.

There's another tradition which states that some early Muslim migrants may have travelled through or settled in Saylac (Somalia) as well.

Muslims stayed in Abyssinia up until 7 years after Prophet had migrated to Medina, making it a total of about 15 years. Jafar along with his wife Asma and children came to Medina in the 7th year of Hijrah.

The Boycott

It was now the sixth year of his Prophethood and the leaders of Quraish became even more alarmed and began to see Islam as a threat to the whole life of the city of Makkah. They were especially furious as now, due to the incident at Abyssinia, even their international ties and allies had been affected. They grew more and more furious and frustrated as the numbers of Muslims increased until finally they decided that the Prophet (pbuh) would have to be killed.

On hearing of these plans, Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, immediately sent a message to all the sons of Abdul Muttalib, asking them to protect their nephew, and this they agreed to do. Bear in mind that it was a tribal society and regardless of what the leader of the tribe—Abu Talib—said it had to be obeyed by the rest. And no tribe would accept any member of theirs to be killed by any other tribe or person.

When Quraish realized that they could not kill the Prophet (pbuh) because of this protection, they decided instead to punish the whole clan and tribe—the Banu Hashim—of Prophet Pbh. A declaration to this effect was hung at the Kabba. It stated that no one in the city was allowed to have anything to do with the entire tribe of Prophet (pbuh), or even to sell them any food or drink whatsoever.

They were put under a kind of social boycott and a siege in a small valley called Sheeb Abi Talib (Abu Talib's Valley). The Prophet, along with Abu Talib and clan members of Banu Hashim and Banu al-Muttalib were forced to withdraw from Makkah and live in Sheeb Abi Talib, which was a subsection of one of the gorges that ran down to

Makkah. The valley rested between Mount Abu Qubais to the south, and Mount Abyad to the north.

Obviously not many people from Banu Hashim were Muslims and yet due to the tribal culture and ties they showed loyalty to their kinsmen by suffering along with them. However, life grew more and more difficult and food was scarce. The hatred of the rest of Quraish for them grew so great that when the people from banu Hashim tried to buy supplies from a caravan passing near to Makkah, Abu Lahab, one of the Muslims' worst enemies, offered ten times the price of the goods to the merchant. By doing this he managed to stop the Muslims, from buying what they desperately needed.

The boycott was devastating and they were forced to live in misery. It was so rigorously applied and food was so scarce that they had to eat the leaves of trees. The women, and more specially the children and suckling babies would cry with hunger which could be heard all over the valley. The Quraish told the merchants not to sell any goods to them. Prices were increased to prevent them from buying even essentials. Apart from some kind Quraishi people who secretly sent food to them they were totally abandoned. Despite such grim circumstances, the Prophet Pbuh never ceased inviting people to Islam. He was particularly active during the time of Hajj. It was at this time that he would speak to tribes that had travelled to Makkah from all over the Arab world. The three markets of Ukaz, Majanah and Dhu Majaz were his main target areas to convey his message.

This cruelty continued for three long years. Each year at the time of the pilgrimage to Makkah, people coming from all over Arabia were seeing the terrible cruelty and injustice of Quraish towards the whole tribe of Banu Hashim and this was causing embarrassment to them and denting their image of being the caretakers of Kabba and hosts of the house of God. Quraish began to feel ashamed of their harsh treatment, especially as many of the Muslims were their cousins and close relatives.

The Muslims of Abyssinia also managed to send envoys from King Negus to make the Quraish realise their tyranny and to end this oppression. Some of the kind hearted people from different clans of Quraish were also very unhappy with this cruelty and finally, at the end of three years, they were convinced that the time had come to put an end to this persecution and they decided to take down the notice hanging at the Kabba. To their astonishment, the sheet of paper had been completely eaten up by worms, all except the words, 'In Your Name, O God', which had been written at the top of the paper.

The year Of Sorrow

It was now almost the tenth year of Muhammed's Pbuh prophethood and the three years of boycott had taken its toll on everyone, more so on the weak and older. The two most important pillars of support for the person as well as the message of Muhammed Pbuh-Khadijah and Abu Talib- succumbed to the harshness of this boycott and both of them became ill and passed, just a few months apart.

Thus, the Prophet (pbuh) lost his beloved wife and friend, the first person to accept Islam and support him. She had been a refuge from all his troubles and, through her good-heartedness, the best company in his suffering. He had loved her very much. The Prophet Pbih loved her the most- even when he was ordered to marry other women as a Prophet Pbih.

With the death of Abu Talib came another serious challenge and it wasn't just the loss of a loving and caring Uncle! Abu Talib had been one of the most respected men in Makkah-one of the elders of Quraish and the head of his tribe. Even though he had never been a follower of Islam, he had protected the Prophet (pbuh) against his enemies. Not only was this a sad occasion for the Prophet (pbuh) but also a dangerous one. According to tribal Arab custom anyone who is under the

protection of another is safe so long as his protector lives. Now, with the death of his uncle, the Prophet's protection was gone.

To make matters worse the next head of his clan was Abu Lahab-the avowed enemy of Muhammed Pbuh and Islam. This emboldened the enemies and opponents of Muhammed Pbuh. The Prophet's enemies rejoiced to see him so sad, without a wife to console and comfort him, and without his uncle to protect him. They began to treat him worse than ever before. Even small children insulted him. One young man actually threw some filth on the Prophet's head, but the Prophet (pbuh) went home without making anything of it. When one of his daughters rushed, weeping, to wash it away, he comforted her saying, 'Do not weep my little girl, for God will protect your father.'

On another occasion as the Prophet Pbih was humbly absorbed in his prayer near the Kabba, Ukba approached him with a piece of cloth in his hand, threw it around his neck, pulled it tight and dragged him down until he fell upon his knees. At that moment Abu Bakr entered and saw what Ukba had done and released the Prophet Pbih, and in doing so turned to Ukba saying, "Would you kill a man just because he says that One True God is his Lord!"

Khadijah- The Beloved

She was indeed, the beloved and best wife for the best husband and had been blissfully married for twenty-five years. Her love and devotion to the message and to him were unquestionable. A cross word was never exchanged between them, they were the perfect couple and loved being in each other's company. Theirs was the perfect love story in its true sense.

Lady Khadijah had not only been the first to accept Islam but was also the first person in Makkah to realise the real Gem of a person that Muhammed Pbih was and accept him as a man, as a person, as an

individual over all the “strong and appealing” proposals that she had had for her marriage. Everyone in Makkah knew how truthful and trustworthy Muhammed is however the person who accepted him because of who is was and not because of where he came from or what status he had was none other than this amazing soul of Lady Khadijah. No wonder Muhammed Pbuh never forgot this and never ever gave the place that she had with him to anyone in his life than Khadijah-his beloved companion and soul mate.

Her faith was like the ever shining radiance of the brightest star that causes all the planets and stars to appear dim in the darkest hour of the night. Although Lady Khadijah had been born and brought up in a wealthy and luxurious family she never uttered a single word of complaint when she had to sacrifice everything in the cause of God and poverty came her way as a result. Instead of wailing for the loss of this materialistic world she was ever thankful to God for whatever came her way.

She was charitable and considerate, and never looked down on anyone, and lovingly treated members of her household in the same way as she did her family. Such was the love and care she gave them that none of the slaves or helpers wished to leave her service even when the family’s circumstances were changed and the material provisions were reduced.

Whenever she noticed or heard of someone in a distressed state she had always been there to lend a helping hand and like her beloved husband never turned anyone away. She always looked for the good in people and brushed away anything that might to others have appeared negative. She was both pure in heart, mind, and body and soul and was known as the Mother of Believers.

Lady Khadijah had been an exemplary mother who dearly loved her children, and raised them to be the best, most loving, obedient children of their time. Many were the days when she would be found fondly playing with them, or, much to their delight telling them the stories of other prophets that her beloved husband had narrated to her. When her two sons returned to God, she had been naturally saddened but her trust in God and her perseverance was found to be unparalleled. She never complained, and gently comforted her grieving daughters who missed their little brothers.

Lady Khadijah had been the most perfect wife, mother, friend and neighbour, those ladies fortunate enough to know her wished they had her qualities for she set the standard on earth for every woman who longed for Paradise in the life hereafter.

The Prophet Pbuh and his four daughters, ladies Zaynab, Rukayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatima were deeply sorrowed by their loss. However, peace and comfort descended upon them when the Prophet Pbuh gently and lovingly told his daughters that many years before, when he had been in retreat in the Cave of Mount Hira, the Angel Gabriel had visited him bearing greetings for their mother from her Lord.

Tenderly, the Prophet Pbuh told the children of the wonderful news Gabriel had given him, which was, that he should tell their mother that a palace of gold had been prepared especially for her in Paradise where she would no longer suffer from either noise or fatigue. The news of the Gabriel's message comforted his daughters greatly and they were content in the knowledge that God had called her home and removed her far from the enemies of her Lord.

Prophet Remarries

After the passing away of his beloved and faithful wife and his supportive uncle the Prophet pbuh had not only to look after his Prophetic mission in a new and dangerous environment but at the same time had to look after his children and household chores. This put him under a lot of strain and stress which was evident to one and all.

Noting this situation one of the ladies, named Khaula, met Prophet pbuh and suggested that he get married in order to take the pressure off him. She suggested two names Sauda, an older woman and a widow and Ayesha, the virgin. Prophet pbuh asked her to send the word and see what response she gets.

Both the ladies accepted the proposal of Prophet pbuh and Prophet pbuh brought Sauda home so she can look after the affairs of the house, being older and experienced especially to look after prophets young kids.

Ayesha's age

There is a huge confusion about the age at which Ayesha married Prophet pbuh. This confusion has arisen due to a couple of narrations mentioning her age being 6 at the time of his Nikah and 9 when she went to live with the prophet pbuh.

This however, is refuted by the very sources that claim her age to be so young. Lets look at the facts about her age which will clarify any confusion.

When Sauda went to Ayesha's house with the proposal her parents told her that Ayesha was already betrothed to a man named Mutim and she had been betrothed for a few years now but they were reluctant to solemnise the marriage on account of Ayesha's family having accepted Islam- Mutim's family were not Muslims. If Ayesha is supposed to be 6 years of age then it will mean that she was betrothed to Mutim when she was only 2 or 3! This was unacceptable even at that time.

Second aspect which refutes the alleged age is the fact that Ayesha's elder sister Asma was ten years older than Ayesha and she is well known to have passed away at the age of 100 years in 70 AH i.e. 70 years after the Migration of Prophet pbuh to Medina. This puts the age of Asma at the time of migration at 27 and since Ayesha was ten years younger than her so she was 17 at that time. This was the time when Ayesha married Prophet pbuh and then 2 to three years after migration she came to live with Prophet making her age to be 19 or more when she actually consummated the marriage.

There are multiple other reasons that provide evidence against the alleged age of Ayesha, Ayesha reports that she was feeling unwell and her hair was falling when her talk about being married to Prophet pbuh was around, this highlights her being going through puberty as this is one of the signs which some females undergo at puberty.

One of the reasons why the number 6 and 9 are mentioned in the narrations seems to be the fact that in Arabic the numbers are written like English wherein two words make up a number like 26 so it is a combination of 20 and 6. Same is the case with Arabic, it is highly possible that the narrators of the tradition missed out by mistake the ten and continued with only 6 and 9 in their report.

If you are interested in knowing the full details multiple books are available on this topic. One of the books recommended is "Ayehsa's real Age" By Mr Farooq khan.

Looking Beyond Makkah

Abu Talib had been the Prophet's last tie with Quraish and the hostilities now had assumed a new level with the Prophet Pbuh left without any protection from a material perspective- although he was under the direct protection of his Lord, as was proved by the future occurrences.

In accordance with the Sunnah or practice of God in relation to all His Messengers, Muhammed PbuH had now passed through all the phases of conveying his message to his people; like the previous messengers of God. These phases, according to the Quran are-

Dawah (Beginning the conveying of message with good news for those who accept and warning those who reject),

Indhaar-e Aam (Open and clear invitation with warning against the consequences of rejecting the truth in this world and the hereafter) and

Ittimam-e-Hujjat (Expressing the truth to its utmost level and presenting it to the audience leaving none of their doubts unanswered).

After these phases are complete, in accordance with the Sunnah or Practice of God, the next stage is of leaving his people- called Hijrah or migration. Muhammed PbuH, being the last and final messenger now started looking beyond Makkah as the Prophet (pbuh) now felt that Islam could make no further progress in Makkah because the hearts of Quraish were closed against him. He decided, therefore, to travel out of Makkah where he hoped to find support.

The nearest city was Taif, 70 miles in the south-east of Makkah, and he went there in late 619. Zayd bin Haritha, his freed slave and now adopted son, went with him.

Taif

Taif was and continues to be the place to go in summer for those living in Makkah, and it is known for its grapes, pomegranate, figs, roses, and honey. Anyone living in Makkah loves to visit Taif, even today, for its cooler weather and the beautiful scenery of its mountains. Most of the chiefs of Makkah had their gardens and summer houses in Taif as they would escape the arid and dusty environment of Makkah to enjoy the cool and salubrious nature in Taif.

Taif is also known for the manufacturing of traditional perfume called Ittar, and is known locally as the City of Roses. Taif also hosts the famous Market of Ukaz. At the time of Muhammed's Pbih visit, Taif housed an idol of the goddess Lat, and was frequented by pilgrims, this statue of Lat was one of the three Goddesses that the Arabs worshipped (Lat, Uzza and Manat) believing them to be angels and daughters of God.

At that time the city of Taif was dominated by the Thaqif tribe, which still lives in and around the city of Taif today. It has been suggested that Jewish tribes who were displaced by Ethiopian Christians in the Himyarite Kingdom wars settled near Taif. The walled city was a religious centre as it housed the idol of the goddess Lat, who was then known as "the lady of Taif." Its climate marked the city out from its dry and barren neighbours closer to the Red Sea. Wheat, vines, and fruit were grown around Taif, and this is how the city earned its title "the Garden of the Hejaz". Both Taif and Makkah were resorts of pilgrimage. Taif was more pleasantly situated than Makkah itself and the people of Taif had close trade relations with the people of Makkah. The people of Taif carried on agriculture and fruit- growing in addition to their trade activities.

These were the people of Taif, who had very strong ties with Makkan Quraish and their trade, economy and tourism all depended on having good relations with those in power at Makkah.

Upon arrival, the first thing that the Prophet PbuH did was meet the city's local leaders. He presented his message to the chiefs of the Thaqif tribe, who were three brothers. Then, he invited them to Islam. All three of them rejected the invitation and responded in the most sarcastic way. Although saddened by what they said, the Prophet PbuH did not give up or lose hope. Some reports suggest that he spent almost a week in Taif after this meeting inviting its people to Islam.

Nobody in Taif accepted his call. However, towards the end of his stay, some people seemed ready to accept his invitation and convert to Islam. The leaders of Taif were infuriated by this news. They sent a mob of young people to attack the Prophet (peace be upon him) and pelt him with stones.

Unfortunately, the attack succeeded. The mob forced Prophet Muhammed PbuH and Zayd out of town. Both men were wounded by the stones thrown at them, and their feet were soaked in blood. They walked for around 6 miles in a state of trauma from what had happened. Just outside Taif, they reached a garden with trees where they sat to rest and recover from the shock.

Whilst sat on a rock the Prophet PbuH raised his hands and made such a powerful and emotional dua-prayer- that it could move a mountain. He said:

“O God! To You alone I make complaint of my helplessness, the paucity of my resources and my insignificance before mankind. You are the most Merciful of the merciful. You are the Lord of the helpless and the weak, O Lord of mine! Into whose hands would You abandon me: into the hands of an unsympathetic distant relative who would sullenly frown at me, or to the enemy who has been given control over my

affairs? But if Your wrath does not fall on me, there is nothing for me to worry about.

I seek protection in the light of Your Countenance, which illuminates the heavens and dispels darkness, and which controls all affairs in this world as well as in the Hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Your wrath, or that You should be wrathful to me. And there is no power nor resource, but Yours alone.”

This powerful and beautiful supplication is a reminder that dua is the weapon of a believer. God immediately responded to the Prophet’s supplication and two things happened.

The hearts of the two owners of the garden were melted and they felt sympathy for Prophet Pbuh and God sent angels giving the option to Prophet Pbuh that if he so wished the whole population of Taif could be sandwiched by the two mountains-on account of their abuse of God’s Messenger. However, Prophet Pbuh- being a Mercy to all mankind- declined this offer in favour of a dua and hope of them accepting Islam in future.

“Rather, I hope that God will bring forth from their loins those who will worship God alone and not associate anything with Him.”

This came true as today Taif has a population of 1,200,000 people, predominantly Muslim. The Prophet Pbuh could have asked that those children who pelted him with stones be finished off. He could have asked the same for their intolerant parents. But he didn’t! He never took revenge for himself. He proved by his deeds that he really was a mercy to the world and only wanted the guidance to reach everyone and wanted what was best for all people-even those who abused and mistreated him.

The garden belonged to two wealthy men from Makkah and they saw the Prophet Pbuh resting in the shade of the tree. They had witnessed what happened in Taif and felt sorry for him, so they sent him some

grapes with their servant. He was a young man, Addas, who was a Nazirite (a believer in Jesus as a prophet from God).

The Prophet Pbuh accepted the gift. Before eating the grapes, he said out loud, “Bismillah” (In the Name of God). These words attracted the attention of Addas, who said that people here didn’t use these words. Prophet Muhummed Pbuh asked him where he was from. Addas answered that he was from Nineveh (a city in Iraq).

The Prophet Pbuh asked:

“You belong to the city of the righteous man Jonah, son of Matthew (Yunus ibn Matta)?”

Addas said, “Yes.” He was astonished by the question, as the Arabs did not know of Jonah. Thereupon Prophet Pbuh said:

“He is my brother. He was a prophet and so am I.”

During this discussion Addas accepted Islam and kissed the hands and feet of Prophet Muhummed (peace be upon him). Then he returned to his masters. The trip to Taif had still won a convert to Islam. Prophet Pbuh stayed 10 days in total in and near Taif inviting its common people to Islam.

Return back To Makkah

Return to Makkah now posed a very difficult challenge. The tribal society requires you to have protection of someone if you are to live amongst them. Muhummed Pbuh being under no protection due to the death of his uncle and his fierce enemy Abu Lahab having assumed the leadership of his clan had to ask someone to provide him the tribal security. Prophet Pbuh sent Zayd to seek asylum (Istijarah) for him among 4 nobles in the city. Three of them, Abd Yalil ibn `Abd Kalal

and then Akhnas ibn Shariq and Suhayl ibn Amr, refused but the fourth one, Mutim ibn Adi, responded positively.

Mutim ordered his sons, nephews and other young men of his clan to put on their battle-dress and then marched, in full panoply of war, at their head, out of the city. He brought Muhummed Pbuh with him, first into the precincts of the Kabba where the latter made the customary seven circuits (Tawaf), and then escorted him to his home. He was confronted by Quraish chiefs questioning him if he too had become a Sabae (a derogatory term used for abandoning of the faith of forefathers- which they used for Muslims). He replied in negative and mentioned that he was only providing protection to Muhummed and had not become one of his companions.

The Night Journey And The Ascent To Heaven

Almost as a gift to Prophet Pbuh after the severe year of sorrow and mistreatment at Taif God almighty took him to a journey that was an amazing miracle. One night as the Prophet (pbuh) lay asleep in the same spot where his granddad Abdul Muttalib used to sleep, next to the Kabba, he was taken by the Archangel Gabriel. Later the Prophet (pbuh) described what happened:

'I sat up and he took hold of my arm. I stood beside him and he brought me to the door of the mosque where there was a white animal for me to ride.'

The Prophet (pbuh) told of how he mounted the animal and, with the Archangel Gabriel at his side, was transported from Makkah to the mosque called al-Aqsa, in faraway Jerusalem. There the Prophet (pbuh) found Abraham, Moses, and Jesus among a group of Prophets. The Prophet Muhummed (pbuh) acted as their leader, or imam, in prayer. Then he was brought two jugs, one containing wine and the other milk.

He chose the milk and refused the wine. At this, the Archangel Gabriel said,

'You have been rightly guided to the fitrah, the true nature of man, and so will your people be, Muhammed. Wine is forbidden to you'.

The Prophet (pbuh) also related how he was shown the heavens and that he passed through Heaven's gates and saw countless angels. Among them was Malik, the Keeper of Hell. Malik stepped forward and showed the Prophet (pbuh) a view of Hell and the terrible plight of those who will suffer in that place.

Then the Prophet (pbuh) was taken up by the angels, through the seven Heavens, one by one, along the way he again saw Jesus, Moses, and Abraham, and the Prophet (pbuh) said that he had never seen a man more like himself than Abraham. He also saw John, Joseph, Enoch that is Idris, and Aaron. At last he reached the Lote Tree of the Uttermost, the sidrat al-muntaha (the edge of the universe) where no one had been before. Here the Prophet (pbuh) received Revelation.

There is disagreement amongst the scholars whether this journey took place in a dream or was a bodily transport, however regardless of its nature it is something that is real for Prophets of God as their dreams are one of the methods of revelation from God.

Preparation for the next Stage

Just because Prophet Pbuh was almost like a prisoner in his own city wherein he carried very little influence or weight, if any, he did not give up any part of his mission. On the contrary he became even more focused on approaching people from other places and the annual pilgrimage which lasted for months provided him the best place to convey his message. The almost three month long markets and rituals of Hajj that formed the part and parcel of Makkan society were used to its

full by Prophet Pbh and his companions to seek the listening ears and the observant eyes of those coming to Makkah from any and every corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

As a part of the contingents arriving for the annual fares and hajj were those coming from the city of Yathrib (old name for Medina).

Obviously, the people of Yathrib were addressed by the Prophet Pbh and his companions as well and this had the most significant of effects on the future of his mission. In order to understand why it was Yathrib that accepted Islam with open arms let us understand the society and reasons behind their decision.

Yathrib in 7th Century CE

Yathrib is the old name of Medina and is around 220 miles north of Makkah. It is a fertile place with oasis and palm trees being its signature marks. Medina is known to have been inhabited at least 1500 years before the Hijrah of Prophet Pbh, or approximately the 9th century BC. By the fourth century CE, Arab tribes began to encroach from Yemen-due to the floods, and there were three prominent Jewish tribes that inhabited the city around the time of Muhammed Pbh: the Banu Qaynuqa, the Banu Qurayza, and Banu Nadir.

It is reported that during the Persian Empire's domination in Hejaz, the Banu Qurayza served as tax collectors for the Persian Shah.

The situation changed after the arrival of two new Arab tribes, the Aws or Banu Aws and the Khazraj, or Banu Khazraj. At first, these tribes were allied with the Jewish tribes who ruled the region, but later revolted and became independent. Toward the end of the 5th century CE the Jewish rulers lost control of the city to the two Arab tribes. Most modern historians accept the claim of the Muslim sources that after the revolt, the Jewish tribes became clients of the Aws and the Khazraj.

Eventually, however, the Banu Aws and the Banu Khazraj became hostile to each other and by the time of Prophet's Pbih Hijrah (emigration) to Medina in 622 CE, they had been fighting for 120 years and were sworn enemies. The two of Jewish tribes-Banu Nadir and the Banu Qurayza were allied with the Aws, while the Jewish tribe of Banu Qaynuqa sided with the Khazraj. They fought a total of four wars against each other. Their last and bloodiest known battle was the Battle of Buath, fought a few years prior to the arrival of Muhammed Pbih. The outcome of the battle was inconclusive, and the feud continued.

One of the chiefs of Khazraj named Abdullah ibn Ubayy, had refused to take part in the battle, which earned him a reputation for equity and peacefulness. He was the most respected inhabitant of the city prior to Muhammed's Pbih arrival. The people were beginning to see him as the next King of Yathrib and it is reported that even a crown had been prepared for him to wear.

The three Jewish tribes of Medina constituted about 30 percent of the population however they were very good at controlling the lifeline of the city as they had control over markets and business. Since production and trade are two key elements for the development of a city, so the city of Medina was practically dependent on them. Although the farmers were mainly non-Jewish community but the trade and money lending were under Jewish control.

Economically the Jews of Yathrib were much stronger than the Arabs. This could be due to their origin from more civilized and culturally advanced countries of Palestine and Syria, they knew many such arts as were unknown to the Arabs; they also enjoyed trade relations with the outside world. They were in control of the business of importing grain into Yathrib and the upper Hijaz as well as exporting dried dates to other countries. Poultry farming and fishing also were mostly under their control. Their origins had made them good at cloth weaving too. They had also set up wine shops where they sold wine which they

imported from Syria thus making the community look up to these as sources of delicacies and if I may use the contemporary language “branded and sought after” goods.

The Banu Qaynuqa were especially skilled in crafts such as that of the goldsmith, blacksmith and vessel maker. In all these occupations, trade and business- being seen as “branded and special treats”- these Jews earned exorbitant profits (just like today people pay hefty amounts for a branded item regardless of its real value). In addition to these basic and usual business engagements the real and the most powerful occupation that the Jewish community had total control over was money lending.

The money lenders had managed to trap the Arabs of the surrounding areas. More particularly the chiefs and elders of the Arab tribes who were given to a life of pomp and show and of bragging and boasting to others. All their egos and lusts were being fed by the strength of this borrowed money and they were thus deeply indebted to these money lending Jews. They lent money on high rates of interest and then would charge compound interest, which one could hardly clear off once one was involved in it. Thus, they had rendered the Arabs economically hollow and had thus gained the power to play about the politics and economics of their city with ease.

Another important aspect of superiority of Jewish community of Medina that the Arabs had come to accept was their belonging to the chosen people of Prophets. As these Arabs were pagans and had not known any scriptures from God, they had accepted their spiritual leadership as well. The extent of this leadership can be seen in the vows that the people of Medina would take if their children did not survive. The Arab women in Yathrib used to vow to raise their child up as a Jew if the child survived, since they considered the Jews to be people “of knowledge and the book.” For this purpose the Jewish community had built schools wherein such children were trained and taught Judaism.

Yathrib was thus a deeply divided society, torn between the armed conflicts between its warring tribes and controlled by the interest sucking shrewd money lenders. There was no mutual cooperation or camaraderie even between the Jewish tribes or the Arab tribes, beyond material wants and needs. A society in chaos, division, economic exploitation and spiritual and moral crisis is what Yathrib was like before Muhammed PbuH arrived there. Yathrib needed purification of all its corruption and the Messenger of God PbuH provided that strong and pious leadership which was the panacea for all its ills.

The Pledges of People of Yathrib

The two strong Arab tribes of Yathrib, the Aws and the Khazraj, had heard from their Jewish neighbours many times that a Prophet would be coming to them. In fact the Jewish community would boast to these Arab tribes, at times of conflict and fights, that let our Prophet come and we will settle all score with you as he will lead by the will of God, those who believe in him, to victory and success.

When the time came for the annual pilgrimage to the Kabba in the 11th year of Prophethood of Muhammed PbuH, several people from Yathrib were going to attend it as usual. Among them were six men from the tribe of Khazraj. They had heard about Prophet Muhammed's message and thought that maybe he is the same Prophet that the Jews have been talking about. So they decided to go and speak to him during their stay in Makkah.

Hence during the pilgrimage season in the eleventh year of Prophethood (approximately 620 CE) the Prophet (pbuh) along with his two Companions Ali and Abu Bakr met with six men from Yathrib at a place called Aqabah in Mina. All of these men were from Khazraj clan. Prophet PbuH explained to them what Islam meant and recited the verses of Quran to them. When they heard the Quran it touched their hearts so deeply that they accepted his message and became Muslims, promising to return the following year. When they reached Yathrib

carrying Islam in their hearts, they told their relatives and friends what they had heard from the Prophet (pbuh) and many more people became Muslims.

Meanwhile the Prophet Pbuh continued his mission along with his small group of companions in Makkah. A year passed, after the first meeting, and the pilgrimage season came around again. As promised the by the six men the previous year, this time twelve men from Yathrib met the Prophet Pbuh at the same spot of Aqabah and gave him their Pledge. They were ten men from Khazraj and two men from Aws. This came to be known as the first pledge of Aqabah in history.

The delegation being formed of both Khazraj and Aws indicates that the activity of the delegation of Khazraj who embraced Islam the previous year had concentrated not only on their tribe but had managed at the same time to attract the men of Aws. This was, in effect, the beginning of the unification of these two ever warring tribes under the banner of Islam.

Ubadah bin Saamit said about the first Aqabah pledge,

“I was one of those who attended the First Aqabah Pledge and we were twelve men. We gave the Messenger of God Pbuh the same pledge that the women gave, and that was before warfare was made obligatory upon us: [We pledged] not to associate partners with God, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to kill our children, not to bring calumny upon one another and not to be disobedient [when ordered] to do a good deed. The Prophet Pbuh said:

‘Whoever among you fulfils his pledge will be rewarded with Paradise; and whoever indulges in any one of these [aforementioned acts] then his case rests with God The Exalted - it is up to Him to forgive or to punish.’ [Muslim]

The terms of this pledge were exactly the same terms that the Messenger of God Pbuh took as pledge from women afterwards, hence it became known later as the Pledge of Women.

The Prophet Pbuh was now satisfied that these people who were the chiefs of both the strong tribes of Yathrib are now capable of proclaiming Islam to their respective communities. As a result he sent with the Companions of the Pledge one of his trusted and talented young companion-Musab bin Umayr, to teach them the faith and the Quran. In Yathrib he came to be known as “Al-Muqri’ (the reciter)”, on account of his recital of the Quran to one and all and he would lead them in the prayer.

Dawah Skills of Musab

The Prophet Pbuh chose him on the basis of his skills, knowledge and character that best suited him to go to Yathrib. In addition to memorizing the revealed parts of the Quran, Musab had a great deal of tact, politeness, good manners, and wisdom, together with his strong faith and zeal for his faith. He was eloquent and had patience to listen to others as well as to put his point across in a polite and non-confrontational manner.

As a result of this amazing method of Dawah (invitation), within months he managed to convey Islam among all the households of Medina and win some of its great leaders to the side of Islam such as Saad bin Muadh and Usayd bin Hudhayr.

These were leaders of great repute in Yathrib and were thus influential in encouraging numerous of their tribesmen and others who followed them in embracing Islam. The mission of Musab bin Umayr succeeded in explaining the message of Islam to its audience and provided the basis of strengthening the ties of brotherhood between the various tribes and between them and the Prophet and his Companions in Makkah.

Musab stayed in Yathrib in the house of Asad bin Zuraarah. The Muslims were active in the Dawah under the leadership of Musab and soon there was not a single house in Yathrib wherein one or more persons had not accepted Islam.

The Second Pledge

Another year passed and in the thirteenth year of his Prophethood seventy three men and two women, all of whom were converts to Islam coming from nearly all Arab tribes present in Yathrib, came to meet Muhammed Pbu. They were coming to Makkah for pilgrimage and met him secretly by night, the group made what was known as the "Second Pledge of Aqabah". The guarantee of protection led it to be describe as "Pledge of War". Conditions of the pledge, many of which similar to the first, included obedience to Prophet Pbu, "enjoining good and forbidding evil" as well as responding to the call to arms when required.

The names of the ladies who formed part of this contingent are Nusaybah bint Kaab, from the Banu Najjar- the same tribe to which the great grandmother of Prophet Pbu belonged and Asma bint Amr from Bani Salamah.

A hadith attributed to Kaab ibn Malik reports this event as follows:

"We set out for pilgrimage and struck a rendezvous in mid Tashreeq Days (days of Hajj). We were accompanied by a celebrity and a notable of ours called Abdullah bin Amr bin Haram, who was still an idolater. We disclosed to him our intention of meeting Muhammed Pbu and exhorted him to join our ranks and give up polytheism lest he should serve as wood for Hell in the Hereafter. He promptly embraced Islam and witnessed the serious meeting at Aqabah'.

That very night we slept with our people in our camps. After a third of the night had elapsed, we began to leave stealthily and met in a hillock nearby. We were seventy three men and two women Nusaibah bint Kab from the Najjars and Asma bint Amr from Bani Salamah. We waited for the Messenger of God Muhummed until he came in the company of his uncle Abbas ibn Abdul-Muttalib who (though himself not a Muslim yet) adjured us not to draw his nephew away from the protection of his own kindred unless we were fully prepared to defend him even at the risk of our lives. He was the first to speak:

"O you people of the Khazraj — (the Arabs used to call the Yathrib people as Khazraj, whether from Khazraj or Aws on account of Khazraj being the leaders) — you all know the position that Muhummed holds among us. We have protected him from our people as much as we could. He is honoured and respected among his people. He refuses to join any party except you. So if you think you can carry out what you promise while inviting him to your town, and if you can defend him against the enemies, then assume the burden that you have taken. But if you are going to surrender him and betray him after having taken him away with you, you had better leave him now because he is respected and well-defended in his own place."

Kaab replied:

"We have heard your words, and now O Messenger of God, it is for you to speak and take from us any pledge that you want regarding your Lord and yourself."

The people from Yathrib asked the Messenger of God Muhummed PbuH about the principles over which they would take a pledge. The Prophet answered:

"To listen and obey in all sets of circumstances. To spend in plenty as well as in scarcity. To enjoin good and forbid evil. In God's service, you will fear the censure of none. To defend me in case I seek your help,

and debar me from anything you debar yourself, your spouses and children from. And if you observe those precepts, Paradise is in store for you.”

During these deliberations Abul Haitham interrupted and said:

“O Prophet of God! Between us and the Jews, there are agreements which we would then sever. If God grants you power and victory, should we expect that you would not leave us, and join the ranks of your people (meaning Quraish in Makkah)?” The Prophet Pbh smiled and replied:

“Nay, it would never be; your blood will be my blood. In life and death I will be with you and you with me. I will fight whom you fight and I will make peace with those with whom you make peace.”

After the negotiations concerning the conditions of allegiance had ended, and all of the audience were unanimously agreed to ratify it, two men of the early generation of converts who had embraced Islam in the eleventh and twelfth years rose to their feet to apprise the others of the serious step they were about to take so that they could give their pledge fully aware of the whole affair and consequently be ready for the sacrifice they were expected to make.

Abbas bin Ubada bin Nadlah, in this context, remarked:

“O you people of Khazraj! Do you know the significance of the pact that you are entering into with this man? You are in fact avowing that you will fight against all and sundry. If you fear that your property will be at stake or the lives of your nobles will be endangered, then leave him now, because if you do this after the pledge, it will be degrading for you both in this world and the world to come. But if you think that you can carry out what you are called upon to do in spite of the loss of precious lives and property, then undertake this heavy responsibility, and I swear by God, that herein lies the good of this world and that of the next.”

The other person to remind the audience was Asad bin Zurarah who also stood up and gave the following short address:

“Take it easy people of Yathrib! We have not covered that long distance except because we have had deep belief that he is the Messenger of God. We are already convinced that following him entails departure from the pagan Arabs even if it were at the risk of our life. Should you preserve in this course, holdfast to it, and your great reward is placed in the Hand of God, but if you are caught in fear, I admonish you to give it up just now, and then you would be more excusable by God.”

To these words of caution and reminder the men and women replied in unison,

“We have already considered the loss of property and the murder of our notables, yet we pay him allegiance. But what is our reward if we observe all the items of this pact?” The Prophet replied: "Paradise is in store for you." Then they asked him to stretch out his hand, and they all stretched out their hands and took the pledge.”

Only at that time did Asad bin Zurarah and Ubada come to realize the people’s resolve and readiness to sacrifice in the cause of God.

The Prophet Pbuh took the pledge from men and women and asked those involved to appoint twelve deputies to convey and teach Islam in Yathrib and taking responsibility in matters relating to the propagation of Islam regarding the people of their own tribe.

The Secret is Out

At this point, the secret meeting was discovered by an inhabitant in Aqabah and he informed the Quraish of Makkah. The following day, a large delegation that included the Makkan leaders set out for the camp of the Yathrib to protest severely against the treaty:

"O people of Khazraj, it transpired to us that you have come here to conclude a treaty with this man and evacuate him out of Makkah. By God, we do really hold in abhorrence any sort of fight between you and us."

The Yathrib polytheists were not aware of the secret meeting and swore by God that there was no truth in the report. Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul, who was hoping to be crowned as the king of Yathrib, refuted their allegations denouncing them as null and void, claiming that his people would never initiate anything unless he gave them clear orders.

At this point the Yathrib Muslims did not speak and the Makkans became convinced by the arguments of the Yathrib polytheists. However, they were not fully satisfied and kept investigating the matter. It was only after the Yathrib pilgrims had left the city that they realized the truth of the matter. In a fit of rage, they pursued the pilgrims.

After much effort, they arrested al-Mundhir bin Amru but he broke away from them. Saad ibn Ubadah was also captured. They tied his hands to his neck and dragged him by his hair. Heavily beating him, they brought him to Makkah. However, Mutim bin Adi reminded the Makkans of their business route through Yathrib, of which Saad was a leader, so they had to let him go.

The Second pledge at Aqabah was an important event as it preceded the migration to Yathrib (Medina). Following the pledges at Aqabah, Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) encouraged his followers to emigrate to Yathrib. As with the migration to Abyssinia, the Quraish attempted to stop the emigration. However, almost all Muslims managed to leave.

Being alarmed at the departure of Muslims, the Makkans now plotted to assassinate Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) in order to uproot his mission completely. How to do it was a big question for them as Muhammed Pbhuh was under the protection of his clan and Mutim bin Adi.

The Quraish had closed their minds so utterly to the word of God, and grew so hard-hearted towards the Prophet (pbuh) and his followers, that they could not see anything beyond their tribal bigotry and blind following of their forefathers. They were so filled with rage and inebriated with ignorance that they even compromised and sacrificed their much cherished traditional values of valour and bravery in order to oppose Muhammed Pbh.

The Nadwa Meeting

After his companions had left for Yathrib, the Prophet (pbuh) stayed in Makkah, waiting for permission from God to leave the city. Abu Bakr and Ali stayed with him. There were also some Muslims whom Quraish had not allowed to leave. Abu Bakr kept asking the Prophet (pbuh) to allow him to go to Yathrib, but the Messenger of God (pbuh) kept saying,

'Do not be in a hurry; it might be that God will give you a travelling companion.'

The leaders of Quraish assembled in the house of their ancestor Qusay-Dar-ul-Nadwa-, as was customary when they had an important decision to make. They had to find a way of getting rid of the Prophet Muhammed (pbuh), before he was able to join his friends in Yathrib.

They delved seriously on preventing Muhammed Pbh from escaping to Yathrib. They met in all haste. After several milder expedients had been rejected, they decided that he should be killed. They agreed that one man should be chosen out of every tribe and that each man should strike a blow at him with his sword so that responsibility of the guilt would rest equally on all tribes. The Bani Hashim, Muhammed's own tribe, were much inferior and therefore would not be able to revenge their kinsman's death and would have to accept blood money instead.

The leaders of Quraish then left to carry out their plan to murder the Prophet (pbuh).

“And (remember, O Prophet,) how those who were bent on denying the truth were plotting against you, to confine you, or kill you, or to drive you out, they were plotting, But God was (also) planning; and God is the best of planners”. (Qur'an 8.30)

By this time the divine command to leave his people had come to Prophet Muhammed Pbh and he had arranged for almost all of his followers to leave for Yathrib.

Before the agreed upon night, on which Muhammed (pbuh) was to be killed, Prophet Pbh made a brilliant arrangement in order to thwart the murderous plan of Quraish. Prophet's Pbh house was initially under constant surveillance and then on that day besieged by the young men of the Quraish, who had seen large numbers of the Muslims leave the city and had planned to kill him as soon as he left his house.

However, Prophet Pbh, despite being opposed tooth and nail by the chiefs of Quraish, was renowned for his trustworthiness and keeping his word and trust. As a consequence people used to leave their valuable possessions and trusts with him. As a result of it, he was in possession of various properties of the members of public who belonged to the tribe of the Quraish, entrusted to him. Prophet Pbh asked his cousin Ali to stay behind to return them in order to fulfil his obligations on his behalf.

Prophet Pbh also asked Ali to wear his cloak and to lie down on his bed assuring him of God's protection. Ali had worn Muhammed's cloak, leading the assassins to think that Muhammed had not yet departed. Ali risked his life by staying in the house of Prophet Pbh, but ultimately survived the plot.

With the coming of darkness the young men of Quraish had gathered outside the Prophet's house, waiting for him to come out. After he had

made sure that Ali was safe, the Prophet (pbuh) left the house. At that very moment God Almighty saved the Prophet Pbuh miraculously by not letting the young men see him depart.

The young men waited the whole night and were furious when, in the morning, they saw Ali instead of the Prophet (pbuh) coming out of the house. They realised that their plan had failed completely. In the meantime, the Prophet (pbuh) went to Abu Bakr's house and told him,

“God has told me that now is the time for us to leave Makkah.”

“Together?” asked Abu Bakr.

“Together”, the Prophet (pbuh) replied.

Abu Bakr wept for joy, because now he knew that the travelling companion he had been promised was the Prophet (pbuh) himself. Together they travelled, not toward Yathrib, but in the opposite direction toward Yemen. Before dawn, they had covered a distance of about five miles, and then they took refuge in a cave on Mount Thawr. This strategy had been agreed with their trusted guide Abdullah bin Uraqah.

Unaware of the Prophet's escape, the would-be assassins began to interrogate Ali about the Prophet's whereabouts, but he pleaded ignorance. They then dragged him to the Kabba and kept him captive there, but he divulged nothing. Then they rushed to Abu Bakr's house and found that he had also disappeared. However, they did find his daughter, Asma, who refused to tell them anything. Her calm defiance enraged them, and a furious Abu Jahl slapped her so hard that an ear-ring flew from her ear.

The Quraish began searching for the Prophet and Abu Bakr and announced that there was a reward of one hundred camels for each fugitive brought back dead or alive.

Farewell My Beloved Land!

How to leave Makkah and cover a journey of more than 200 miles, without being noticed and followed by the Makkans, posed a significant challenge. Once again the amazing insight and planning of Prophet Pbh stands out as a beacon for all those who are faced with meagre resources and overwhelming opposition. He hired the services of a man named Abdullah bin Uraqah. This man was an excellent guide and tracker of routes. He was not only skilled in his field but was a very trustworthy individual as well, one who could keep a secret as well as his word even if lured by huge rewards to falter.

Abdullah bin Uraqah was not a Muslim and yet he was chosen and trusted for this extremely dangerous mission- one which was to make or break the whole mission! He was chosen based on his merit and this provides us guidance that it's the skill and merit that should form the basis of defining as to who gets the job and not any bias whatever the excuse for that bias may be.

Secrecy and extreme caution were the key to success of this journey, were it to come to its fruition. Therefore they agreed to meet up at the Mount Thawr. The Prophet Pbh loved the blessed land of Makkah and remarked,

“By God, you are the best and most beloved land to God. Had I not been driven away from you, I would not have left you.”

For three consecutive nights the Prophet Pbh and Abu Bakr remained hidden in the cave. Prophet Pbh continued to keep an eye on all the proceedings even whilst hiding for this purpose Abu Bakr's son, Abdullah, would pass his nights nearby. He would then return to Makkah so early in the morning that the Quraish had no idea that he had slept elsewhere. Each day in Makkah he collected information about the activities of the Quraish, and each night he updated the Prophet and Abu Bakr.

At the same time Abu Bakr's slave, Amir bin Fuhayrah, would graze Abu Bakr's goats near the cave so that both men could drink fresh milk. Early the next morning Amir would drive the goats back to Makkah along the same route that Abu Bakr's son took, to obscure his footprints. This made sure that the two companions of the cave did not starve of either food or information.

Meanwhile in and around Makkah it was a bounty hunting season, the mood was of search with the intent to catch or kill. Both and any of these were promised with a handsome reward of one hundred camels. The search parties had secured almost all exits and routes north and south of Makkah.

The Quraish and their trackers were extremely skilled in tracking down people. They had employed and encouraged the most skilled of trackers- those who could track the flight of a bird let alone the tracks of travellers-. Hence, eventually they came upon the mouth of the cave, and had they looked in whilst standing at the edge of the cave, they would surely have found the men they were hunting. With the Quraish so close to discovering their hiding place, Abu Bakr became very apprehensive and tense about the Prophet's safety. The Prophet reassured him,

“What do you think of two who have with them God as their third? 'Grieve not, for verily God is with us”. (Qur'an 9.40) .

After a few moments the search party concluded that no one could have entered the cave recently, as the spider's web-which was at its mouth- would have been broken and not be complete and the dove-whose nest was there- would not have nested there, and so they left without searching inside. At that time there was the thinnest of curtains separating Muhammed PbuH and Abu Bakr from certain murder and death, however God does whatever He pleases in the most mind boggling yet simplest of ways!

The Journey to Yathrib (Medina)

After the third day of their stay in the cave of Mount Thawr their hired Guide Abdullah bin Uraqaq arrived with the two camels which Abu Bakr had specially kept for this journey and were handed to Abdullah bin Uraqaq. Abu Bakr's slave, Amir bin Fahayra, accompanied them. Thus the four of them began the journey that was to shape the future of not only the Makkah or Medina but the whole Arab as well as the entire world.

Abdullah bin Uraqaq demonstrated a great sense of integrity and professionalism by keeping his word. This is especially important as he could have quite easily covered up his betrayal of Muhammed Pbuah under the garb of his faith and would have earned huge material gain as well as a hero's welcome and status amongst his own people. But he proved that merit and professionalism is something that a man of his word will value even in the most trying circumstances.

Soon he went on to prove not only his trustworthiness but the greatly skilled guide that he was. He first headed south toward Yemen, and then led the small group westward toward the Red Sea. Before reaching the sea, he veered north toward Yathrib, taking a seldom travelled route. This made it possible for them to avoid almost all those who were on the hunt for them, traversing all known routes.

They journeyed all night and half of the next day. Then they stopped, and the Prophet rested in the shade beneath a rock. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr found a herdsman who let him milk one of his goats. When the Prophet awoke, Abu Bakr gave him fresh milk. Then they pushed ahead.

The next day the Prophet and Abu Bakr passed the tent of Umm Mabad on the outskirts of Qadid, near Mashaal, about 80 miles from Makkah. They asked her whether she had anything for four weary travellers. She apologised, saying her goats were grazing far away, and the only one at

hand was a small goat that was unable to stay with the herd and didn't have a drop of milk to give.

The Prophet Pbuh asked her permission to milk it, and when he did, milk flowed from its udders. He filled a large bowl with milk and first let her drink. After that, each of the travellers drank their fill. When they had all finished, he milked the goat again and left the bowl of milk for the woman.

After they resumed their journey, the woman's husband returned. Umm Mabad told him what had happened, and she gave him such a complete description of the travellers that her husband exclaimed,

“That was the man from the Quraish that I've been hearing about. If I ever have the opportunity, I will join his followers.” Later both of them went to Yathrib and embraced Islam formally.

Umm Mabad's description of Prophet Pbuh remains the best in history so let us read it, she said after meeting him and his 3 companions.

“I saw a man of visible radiance and purity, beautiful appearance, bright faced, with neither protruding ribs nor a small head, handsome and fair. His eyes were deep black and large, and his eyelashes were lush. His voice was mellow and soft. The whiteness of his eyes was bright and his pupils were very black. His eyebrows were beautifully arched and connected. His neck was long, his beard densely full. When he was silent, he appeared dignified. When he spoke, he was eminent and crowned with magnificence. His speech was sweet, his words precise, neither too little nor too much. Like a string of pearls flowing down gradually.

He was the most striking and beautiful of people when seen from afar and the fairest of them when seen up close. He was medium height, neither agreeably tall nor scornfully short; a branch between two branches. Among the three he was the most radiant in appearance, the finest of them in stature. He was surrounded by companions. When he

spoke, they listened attentively. When he gave orders, they hastened to fulfil them. Honoured, served and surrounded by followers. He neither frowned, nor criticised'

When the Prophet and his Companions left Qadid, one of the bounty hunters by the name of Suraqa bin Malik spotted them. He thought he would capture the fugitives and take them back to collect the reward. As he charged ahead on his horse, it suddenly stumbled and he fell to the ground. He tried multiple times but now began to sink in sand upon which he called upon Prophet PbuH to save him.

The Prophet PbuH and his companions saved him and told him about a prophesy that one day the gold ornaments and crown of the king of Persia will be in your hands (this came true at the time of Umar being the Khalifah of Muslims and he made Suraqa wear those in front of all people to witness the truth of that prophesy).

Prophet PbuH asked him not to tell the Quraish of their whereabouts. Suraqa agreed, and asked to be given a letter of safe conduct for future security. The Prophet asked Amir to write the letter on a piece of tanned leather.

Suraqa then returned toward Makkah. He told all of the bounty hunters he met to go back because he had already searched the area and the fugitives were nowhere to be found.

The four travellers resumed their journey, and on the way, the Prophet soon met Burida bin Husayb Aslami along with seventy or eighty families of his followers. They all embraced Islam and prayed the evening prayer with the Prophet. Burida migrated to Madinah after the Battle of Uhud.

The Prophet also met Abu Tamim at Arj. As one of their camels had become weak Abu Tamim offered them a camel and sent along a slave who accompanied them all the way to Yathrib. Although Abu Tamim became Muslim, he chose to remain in Arj. He would later prove useful

to the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud by sending word through his slave, about the Makkans' advance toward Medina.

The Much Awaited Arrival

When the people of Yathrib heard that the Prophet (pbuh) had left Makkah and was on his way to their city, they anxiously awaited his arrival. Each morning they would go to the edge of the city to see if he were coming. Finally, on Monday, September 27, in the year 622 A.D., someone saw him in the distance and shouted to everyone, 'Here is Muhammed! (pbuh) the Messenger of God has arrived!' All the Muslims went out to greet him, shouting, "Allahu Akbar"! God is Great! Muhammed the Messenger of God has arrived!

The women and children sang songs to show how glad they were to see him. The Prophet (pbuh) with his friend Abu Bakr had reached a place called Quba, a few miles outside of Medina. After eight long days of travel they arrived in Quba.

The Prophet stayed at Quba in the house of Kulthoom bin Hadam. He stayed there for four days, during which time he laid the foundation of Quba Mosque.

Back in Makkah, Ali had stayed on for three days after the Prophet left. During this period he settled all of the Prophet's affairs in Makkah. He then left and met the Prophet in Quba, where he stayed in the same house as Prophet Pbih.

That Friday he left Quba with Abu Bakr . He sent a message to Banu Najjar, the house of his maternal grandfather, His kinsmen came to Quba with their swords hanging from their sides, and joined the Prophet on his way to Yathrib (Now to be renamed as Medina tun Nabi The City of The Prophet). When he arrived at the settlement of Banu Salim

bin Auf, it was time to perform the Friday congregational prayer. The Prophet led a hundred Muslims in prayer there.

After performing the Friday prayer, the Prophet and his entourage left for Medina. Jubilant crowds of men, women and children greeted him, and the narrow lanes of Medina resounded with their happy voices. Women and children sang their welcome in a song that even now is sung by Muslims in memory of that happy day when, like the full moon, the Prophet appeared among his people:

“The full white moon rose over us from the valley of wada. We must give thanks when called to God. You, who have been sent to us, bring commands that will be obeyed.”

As the Prophet rode through the streets of Medina, people would take hold of his camel’s halter and invite the Prophet to stay with them.

But the Prophet Pbuh, not wanting to hurt anyone’s feelings said,

“Let the she-camel go her way, she is guided by God.”

Finally, the she camel knelt, but the Prophet did not dismount. The animal rose to its feet again, ambled ahead for some distance, and then turned back and knelt in the same place it had before. The Prophet’s Mosque (Masjid Al-Nabawi) was erected on this very spot.

Many people vied with each other to give shelter to the Prophet, but it was Abu Ayyub Ansari who hurried to lift the saddle from the she-camel and took it to his home. The Prophet remarked humorously,

“A man must follow his saddle,”

Thus the honour of being the host of Prophet Pbuh went to Abu Ayyub. Asad bin Zurara took hold of the halter, so he was allowed to take care of the animal.

The Ansar (Muslims of Medina were called helpers or Ansar) chiefs were so happy and passionate about receiving Prophet PbuH that they tried to outdo each other in welcoming the Prophet. Each night the Prophet would receive at least three or four trays of food. Everyone wanted the Prophet to know that he had found a new home among his followers.

Abu Ayyub took such care that he pleaded with the Prophet PbuH to use the upper story of his house as he did not want to be disrespectful by staying on top of the ceiling of Prophets room. However, Prophet insisted on using the ground floor for ease of receiving people and more importantly for ease and privacy of Abu Ayyub. Eventually, the Prophet PbuH ordered the building of the Masjid and a room along it for himself. This masjid was built at the spot the she camel had stopped at. It was near a house which was used as a drying-place for dates and belonged to two young orphan boys named Sahl and Suhayl.

They offered to give it to the Prophet (pbuh) but he insisted on paying them for it, and so their guardian, Asad the son of Zurarah, who was present, made the necessary arrangements.

Prophet's Mosque

The Prophet (pbuh) ordered that a mosque and a place for him to live be built on the site. All the Muslims worked together to finish it quickly and the Prophet PbuH joined in. The Prophet's Mosque (as it came to be known as later, was about one hundred cubits in length and breadth. There were a few graves located on the land which had to be moved, as well as some date trees that had to be replanted.

The mosque's walls were made of earth and unbaked bricks; its roof was made from branches of date-trees, and tree trunks served as columns. Sand and pebbles were spread on the floor. The mosque had

three doors and the Qiblah (a niche in the wall where the leader of the prayer stands) was made to face the direction of Bait Al-Maqdis (Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem) for the first 18 months until the command to change the direction faced in prayer came, when it was changed over towards kabba.

The Prophet worked along with the Muhajireen (the Makkan immigrants) and the Ansar (the Muslims of Madinah) building the mosque. While they carried bricks, rocks and tree trunks, they chanted work songs to make their toil easier.

Two apartments were also built near the mosque for the Prophet's wives, Saudah bint Zam'a and Aishah bint Abu Bakr, whom the Prophet married soon after he arrived in Medina. These apartments were built of stone, mud, and date palms.

It was here that the Muslims would pray and meet to make important decisions and plans. The building was quite plain and simple.

At last the Muslims had a place free from all oppression all to themselves without the need to congregate secretly as they had to in Makkah. Now they began to perform all five prayers in congregation in the Prophet's mosque. The only problem was that the people were unsure of when each prayer would begin. So the Muslims would come to the mosque and wait for the prayer so as not to miss it. The Prophet (pbuh) wondered how to tell the people that it was time for prayers. He discussed it with his friends, and at first two ideas were put forward; that of blowing a horn as the Jews did, and that of using a wooden clapper like the Christians. Prophet Pbuh however, liked the idea of Umar who proposed that someone should be appointed to call out loudly, "Prayer is about to begin!"

The Prophet liked Umar's idea and put it into practice. Later, however, Abdullah bin Zayd bin related his dream, in which he heard a beautiful prayer call, to the Prophet, who realised that the dream was meant to be

fulfilled. He asked Abdullah to teach the words to Bilal bin Rabah, who had a strong and beautiful voice.

Bilal learned the words and called out to the Muslims in Medina:

Allah (God) is Most Great! Allah (God) is Most Great!

I testify that there is no deity except Allah (God)!

I testify that there is no deity except Allah (God)!

I testify that Muhammed is the Messenger of God!

I testify that Muhammed is the Messenger of God!

Come to the Prayer!

Come to the prayer!

Come to the Success!

Come to the Success!

Allah (God) is Most Great!

Allah (God) is Most Great!

There is no deity except Allah (God)!

The Brotherhood

After building the centre of all activities –Masjid e Nabawi or the Prophet’s Mosque, the Prophet Pbuh established the brotherhood between the immigrants and the hosts. The Prophet helped create a strong bond between the forty-five immigrants and their hosts by assigning each immigrant to a particular family in Medina. Each immigrant, therefore, was declared a member of the family he was

assigned to. They were to share each other's grief and suffering, and they were even allowed to inherit from each other. Later, however, the permission to inherit from each other was abrogated by a verse in the Qur'an limiting inheritance to blood kin.

This brotherhood was the most effective way of establishing and integrating the new comers in the new society. This has a great lesson for all times to come that the immigrants can only be truly integrated into a society by the welcoming nature of the host community. It is the host community that must play a major role in integration and not the other way round. The amazing level of generosity shown by the Ansar of Medina is praised and duly mentioned in the following Verse of the Qur'an:

“The Ansar love the Muhajireen who sought refuge with them, and there is no jealousy in their hearts for what the Muhajireen have been given. The Ansar give the Muhajireen preference over themselves, although they were in need of what the Muhajireen received.” (59: 9)

A classic example of their generosity is Saad bin Rabi- he was a wealthy Ansari and was paired with an immigrant, Abdul Rahman bin Auf. Saad not only offered Abdul Rahman half of his possessions, but also one of his wives.

“I have two wives,” he said. “Tell me who is more pleasing to you and I shall divorce her so that you may marry her.”

Abdul Rahman, however, did not take advantage of his host's generosity.

“May God bless your family and your possessions! Just tell me where the market is.”

Like most Makkans, he was a skilled merchant, and soon he was able to support himself with his earnings from the market. Shortly thereafter, he became a rich man and married a woman from the Ansar.

Whilst all this was happening in Medina there were still some Muslims in Makkah who were not able to win their freedom from the chiefs of Makkah and migrate. The Makkans rejoiced in the poorer Muslims' increased vulnerability and tortured them even more to make them renounce their faith. Waleed bin Waleed, Ayash bin Abi Rabia and Hisham bin Aas were some of such oppressed Muslims. The Prophet Pbuh would pray for them and supplicate against the oppressors who had held them back. The Muslims remained patient, however, and were finally rescued by their brothers in faith and taken to Medina.

Life in Medina

Immigration is never easy, it comes with two main difficulties i.e. missing your home and thus becoming home-sick and issues with adapting to new environment, culture and social and economic system. The immigrants from Makkah were no exception to these norms. Although they rejoiced over their freedom from the pagans, life in Medina posed its challenges. They soon became home-sick and as they had left their homes and belongings and now had to start all over again, they began to feel the stress. Furthermore, the climate did not suit the newcomers, and the new social set up with its differences in the available opportunities made their worries worse. Most of them had been traders, while the main occupation in Medina was agriculture-date cultivation.

Far from their homeland, penniless and clueless about sources of income and extremely apprehensive about their future- this is how they felt, like all such immigrants. Soon this stress started to take its toll on the new comers to Medina many of whom were soon stricken with Fever and ill health. The Prophet was aware of the great sense of displacement among the Muhajireen (immigrants), and he made the following prayer:

“O Allah (God)! Make Medina as dear to us as Makkah was, or even dearer! Make its climate salubrious and bless its fruits and grains!”

God Almighty granted the Prophet’s prayer. The immigrants regained their health and began to adapt and like their new abode. As they became engaged in establishing social and emotional ties in Medina, they found the city becoming more of a home to them.

World's First Written Constitution

After strengthening the brotherhood amongst the followers of Islam the Prophet Pbuh further consolidated the structure of Medina when he instituted common rules of conduct for all. However, Medina was also home to two other communities, the polytheists who had not accepted Islam, and the Jewish tribes. In order to avoid the kind of conflicts the Muslims had experienced in Makkah, the Prophet entered into a covenant with these two communities.

The covenant came to be known as the Meethaq e Medina or The covenant of Medina. This can quite frankly be described as the world's first ever written constitution of a state.

To understand the importance of this document let us look at the political scenario of Medina at that time. , Medina was almost in a state of anarchy, where tribalism prevailed. If the Arab section of the population was divided into twelve tribes of Aws and Khazraj, the Jews were divided into the ten tribes of Banu Nadhir and Banu Qurayza. Dissensions raged among them since generations. Some of the Arabs, having entered into an alliance with some of the Jews, had been on terms of hostility with other Arabs who, in their turn, were similarly allied to some other Jews.

These continuous wars had tired both the parties out and although there were some who were anxious to secure military help from outside tribes such as the Quraish, the peace-loving parties were getting preponderance in the city, and a considerably large section of people had begun to make preparations to install Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul as the King of Medina.

Keeping in view the tribal set up the Prophet Pbuh had appointed at the time of the Pledge of Aqaba twelve Muslims to represent him in twelve tribes, one in each, and thus tried to create a centralization of power. But apart from this every tribe had its independent sovereignty and decided its own affairs in its own Saqifa or shed, and there was no central urban organization in the city. Through the efforts of trained Daiees (like Masab Bin Umair) a considerable number of people in the city had accepted Islam in the course of three years.

However, religion was yet a domestic affair there and had not attained any political status. Persons belonging to different religions used to live in the same house. It was in this situation that the Prophet Pbuh came to Medina, where the following problems demanded urgent solution:

- (1) Definition of the rights and obligations, his own as well as those of local inhabitants.
- (2) Arrangement for the settlement and livelihood of the Makkan refugees.
- (3) An understanding with the non-Muslims of the city, particularly the Jews.
- (4) Arrangements for political organization and military defence of the city.
- (5) Compensation for the loss of life and property suffered by the refugees at the hands of the Quraish of Makkah.

In view of these objects the Prophet Pbuh, a few months after his arrival in Medina, had a deed drawn up, which has been referred to as a kitab and sahifa in the deed itself, and which obviously was written after a consultation with the people concerned. The terms kitab or sahifa, mean a "code of action" or a "chart of duties."

In fact it amounted to a declaration of the city of Medina as a city- state for the first time, and to the laying down of a code for its administration. Rousseau, Hobbs and other political scientists consider social contract between the rulers and the ruled as the beginning of state.

A patent and factual example of this is to be found in the Baiat (pledge) of Aqaba, in which the people of Medina accepted the Prophet as their leader, invited him to come to their country and agreed to obey his orders in weal and woe. This is the reason why the document under discussion was not of the type of a contract but was issued as a prescription and a proclamation. The very name kitab means a prescription and a command in Arabic as well as in the Quran.

One of the most significant aspects of this constitution is the declaration that all the parties in this document are constitute one Ummah i.e. one nation. This was included in the document as:

“The Ansar and many other tribes who signed a treaty with them were a distinct Ummah (nation).”

This document has two distinct parts consisting of 53 clauses:

The first 23 sections lay down rules affecting the "refugees" and "helpers" (Ansar) and the rest of them discuss the rights and obligations of the Jewish tribes of Medina. In both of them one sentence has been repeated, to the effect that the last court of appeal will be the Holy Prophet Pbuh himself.

Prophet Pbuh was thus not only able to put an end to the internecine conflict in medina but was also able to shape this chaotic conglomerate of hotch potch of everything into a centralised authority following nation. Thus laying down the foundations of the future administrative set ups that we see prevalent in today's societies.

(For detailed discussion of this constitution see the booklet “World’s first written constitution”)

Appearance of Hypocrisy

This constitution or covenant united the three communities of Medina and defined the Prophet as the undisputed head of state. Once everyone understood his rights and responsibilities, the Prophet PbuH began to actively form alliances with the neighbouring tribes and there were many who did not want to be part of any faction or fighting so peace deals and agreements began being signed with all neighbours.

This, however, meant that a totally new leadership had replaced all previous chiefs and every single one of the chiefs and tribes had to follow the commands of Muhammed PbuH. This was to happen for Muslims as their Prophet and for non-Muslims as their head of the state. Some people did not like the idea of losing their power and authority to an outsider! The most disgruntled and unhappy amongst them was a no surprise- Abdullah bin Ubay- the wealthy and very clever chief who was about to be crowned the King of Medina, when Prophet PbuH appeared on the scene.

This loss of his power and authority was seen by him as an insult to him from his people as well as the new leader. He grew extremely jealous of Prophet PbuH and together with his band of supporters started to find ways and means of getting back his lost power. He was a very shrewd politician and an eloquent diplomat hence, seeing the balance of power, he chose to side with Muslims and presented himself as one of the chiefs of the Medina who is a Muslim and therefore needs consulted on all matters.

He started to scheme with any and every opponent of Prophet PbuH in order to accomplish his mission. Thus anyone who did not like the new

set up in Medina became Abdullah Bin Ubay's supporter and followed his way of pretending to be a Muslim but in fact being its fierce enemy from within. Thus the seeds of hypocrisy were sowed in the city of Medina, which was to see numerous treacherous schemes unfold at the hands or behest of this morally corrupt section of the society. For they had no courage to accept or reject the truth openly and chose to be cowards-a quality that was totally unbecoming of the chivalrous Arabs.

The Triad of Enemies

Now almost two years had passed since the arrival of Muhammed PbuH in Medina and the socio-political set up had almost transformed therein. Medina was now home to Muslims-comprising of the Ansar (helpers) and Muhajireen (the immigrants)- the Jewish community- with its three main tribes of Banu Qaynuqa, Banu Nadhir and Banu Qurayza-, the Hypocrites-lead by Abdullah Bin Ubay and the pagans who still followed the religion of their forefathers.

In addition to its inhabitants, were the neighbouring pagan tribes, who had made some contact with Prophet PbuH and signed some peace deals. This new look Medina now had Muslims- who held the political power- on one side and the disgruntled Hypocrites, pagans and members of Jewish community on the other side. Not to forget the real and original enemies of Prophet PbuH- the Makkans.

This scenario gave rise to the nexus between the Makkans, Hypocrites and the Jewish community, all of whom saw Muslims in general and Prophet PbuH in particular as their common enemy. Makkans saw a loss of their paganism, political authority and trade whilst the Jewish community envisaged the rise of a power that would eventually take away their economic as well as the religious monopoly that they enjoyed in the status quo. The hypocrites saw their material loss and did not want to engage in any conflict that would jeopardise their

possessions, wealth and their current or potential material comforts and luxuries.

In spite of all the precautions that the Prophet Pbh took to ensure that Medina remained safe and peaceful, the Quraish were determined to destabilise the city. The Quraish sent word to the polytheists of Medina, ordering them to help drive out the Muslims. If the polytheists refused to help, the Quraish threatened to kill their children and capture their women. This was very significant as the people of Medina were farmers and not fighters whilst the Makkans were fighters and better equipped and skilled in art of war.

Prophet found out about the threats and convinced the polytheists not to give in to the strong-arm tactics of the Quraish. The Quraish seethed at the turn of events. Their frustration was apparent when Saad bin Muadh went to Makkah to perform Umrah, the minor pilgrimage. As he circumambulated the Kabba, with Abu Safwan Umayya bin Khalaf, he met Abu Jahl. Abu Jahl, the fierce enemy of Islam, vented out his anger at Saad by saying;

“So you find safety in Makkah while you have provided refuge to the faithless. By God, if you were not with Abu Safwan, you would not return home safe and sound.”

The Jews of Medina on their part tried to play on the old rivalry between the two tribes of Medina, the Aus and Khazraj, hoping to rekindle the bitter feud that would cause division in them and destroy their new found unity and strength. The hypocrites were fanning the fire along with whatever the Quraish and Jews were planning in and outside Medina. The Muslims community faced threats from both within and without. The danger of bloodshed grew so serious that the Muslims began keeping their weapons next to their beds at night. The Prophet was also protected by armed bodyguards.

It was under these circumstances that God gave permission to fight those who were being fought against. Before being organised into a community with a state and structure Muslims were asked to endure all forms of mistreatment and oppression as disorganised and ill-armed as well as poorly skilled groups can never help uproot oppression. Now that the Muslims had an organised set up in place they were allowed to fight back;

“Permission to take up arms is hereby granted to those who are attacked because they have been oppressed and God indeed has power to help them – those who have been unjustly driven from their homes, only because they said: “Our Lord is God.” (Quran, 22:39-40)

Military Preparations

Now that God had enjoined Muslims to fight in self-defence, the Prophet moulded the formerly oppressed, meek community into a military organisation that would fight to survive and would no longer tolerate the humiliation and oppression that they had endured for 15 long years. As a result archery and horsemanship were promoted as activities to excel in. The Prophet PbuH organised the Muslims into cavalry units called Saraya. Sometimes he would accompany these squadrons and the expeditions himself.

The cavalry units undertook four main tasks. Primarily they were to protect the outskirts of Medina and to gather intelligence about any suspicious activities.

Secondly, they worked to intercept any tribes or caravans passing through the area and would take possession of their belongings if they were seen as trespassing.

Thirdly, it was the responsibility of these cavalry units to make covenants with other tribes outside Medina. The Prophet PbuH saw the

need to develop good relationships with these tribes so that they would not ally with the Quraish.

Lastly, the units were entrusted with the task of spreading the message of Islam throughout Arabia and these expeditions had been more exploratory than anything else, but they had served to initiate Muslims into the conduct of warfare.

Battle of Badr

Prior to the battle, the Muslims and Makkans had fought several smaller skirmishes in late 623 and early 624, as the Muslim military expeditions (called *ghazawāt*) had become more frequent. Badr, however was the first large-scale engagement between the two forces. In the spring of 624, Prophet Pbuḥ received word from his intelligence sources that a trade caravan, commanded by Abu Sufyan and guarded by thirty to forty men, was travelling from Syria back to Makkah. The caravan was funded with the money that the Muslims had left behind in Makkah before their departure for Medina. The Quraish sold all their belongings and used the money to fund this caravan in order to mock the Muslims.

However, the Quraish had made up the story that the Muslims are planning to attack this caravan so they gathered a force of 1000 men strong to attack Muslims and accomplish what they had been trying for the past 15 years. Many of the Quraishi nobles, including Amr ibn Hishām, Walid ibn Utba, Shaiba, and Umayyah ibn Khalaf, joined the army. Their reasons varied: some were duped into going out to protect their financial interests in the caravan; others wanted to avenge Ibn al-Hadrami, the guard killed at Nakhlah just prior to this time; finally, those who conspired to spread the rumour wanted to take part in what was expected to be an easy victory against the Muslims. Amr ibn Hishām is described as shaming at least one noble, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, into joining the expedition

The Prophet Pbuh on his part was not only informed about all this by God but even shown in his dream by God Almighty the whole plan of this first and decisive battle that was to take place between the truth and falsehood.

“And recall when God showed them to you in your dream to be few in number. And had He showed them to you to be numerous, you (O Muslims) would have flagged and disagreed with one another about fighting them. But God saved you. Surely God knows what is hidden in the hearts (of men). (Quran 8:43)

God almighty had planned for the Muslims to meet with the Quraish army at the appointed time and place. However, in order to test the mettle of his followers and know the real strength of his troops-distinct from the hypocrites- the Prophet Pbuh mentioned the plan to public as a promise in the following words.

He told them that God had promised victory over either of the groups- the less armed caravan or the Quraish army. This led to exposing those who were strong of faith and those who were less so. The Quran describes this as:

“Behold! God promised you one of the two (enemy) parties, that it should be yours: (Some of) you wished that the one unarmed should be yours, but God willed to justify the Truth according to His words and to cut off the roots of those who reject the truth” (8:7)

When the word reached the Muslim army about the departure of the Makkan army. Prophet Pbuh immediately called a council of war, since the Ansar of Medina (Called Ansar or "Helpers" to distinguish them from the Quraishi immigrant Muslims) had only pledged to defend Medina. Under the terms of the Constitution of Medina, they would have been within their rights to refuse to fight and leave the army.

Abu Bakr was the first to speak at the meeting and he reassured Prophet Pbuh as did Umar and then Miqdad ibn Amr got up and said:

"O Messenger of God! Proceed where God directs you to, for we are with you. We will not say as the Children of Israel said to Moses: "Go you and your Lord and fight and we will stay here;" rather we shall say: "Go you and your Lord and fight and we will fight along with you."

Then the Ansar pledged to fight, with Saad bin Ubada declaring those ever-echoing golden words of faith, courage and motivation,

"O Messenger of God! We believe in you and we bear witness to what you have brought is the Truth. We give you our firm pledge of obedience and sacrifice. We will obey you most willingly in whatever you command us, and by Allah, Who has sent you with the Truth, if you were to order us to plunge our horses and ourselves into the sea, we will do that most readily and not a man of us will stay behind."

After this discussion the Prophet Pbuh ordered the troops to march and travel to the place called Badr. Prophet's Pbih army was approaching the wells where he planned to waylay the caravan, at Badr, along the Syrian trade route where the caravan would be expected to stop. At the same time the Quraish army reached the other end of the valley, whilst the caravan escaped right under their noses along the seaside.

In contrast to the commitment, dignity, honour and principled stand of the Muslim army was the arrogance, haughtiness plus the pomp and show of the Makkans when they came out. When the Makkans proceeded on towards Badr against the Muslims, they were accompanied by singing and dancing minstrels. Whenever the army halted, dancing and drinking parties were held. Also the army arrogantly vaunted its military power and numerical strength before the tribes and localities which fell on the way, and boasted of its invincibility.

What was even worse was the object of their fighting. Their only objective was to defeat the forces of truth and justice and to suppress those standing up for it.

The Quran describes this as:

“And be not like those who came forth from their homes boasting and exulting, with a desire to be seen of men, and hindering others from the path of God. God encompasses all that they do.” (8:47)

Finally, both the parties reached the valley of Badr at a similar time. All this happened according to the plan already set out by God, the Quran describes this as:

“(Remember) when you were on the near side of the valley, your enemy on the far side, and the caravan was below you (along the seaside). Even if the two armies had made an appointment (to meet there), both would have certainly missed it. But (You met) so that God might bring about a matter already decided. This was so that those who would die might die in clear sight of the Truth and that he who would remain alive might live (after) having clearly seen the Truth. God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” (8:42)

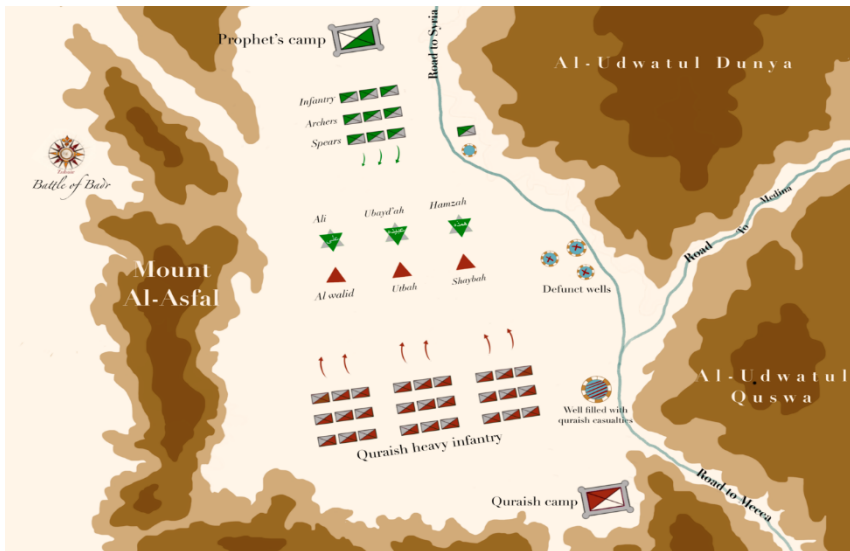
The Battlefield

The valley of Badr is surrounded by two large sand dunes to the east, called al-'Udwatud Dunya (the near side of the valley) and al-'Udwatul Qaswa (the far side of the valley). The Qur'an speaks of these two in Surah 8, verse 42. The west of the valley was covered by the al-Asfal Mountain (Jabal Al-Asfal) with an opening between it and another hill in the northwest.

Badr, ringed by high mountains, was accessible through three routes. One, called Udwatud Qaswa, lay in the south; the second, called Udwatud Duniya, approached from the north, and the third approached from the east and was used by the people of Medina as the main

thoroughfare to the settlement of Badr. There were some houses, wells and orchards in Badr, and for this reason Makkian caravans heading for Syria travelled along it and generally broke their journey there, staying anywhere from a few hours to a few days.

The Quraish had encamped in the south-eastern portion of the valley near the road to Makkah, while Prophet Muhammed PbuH and his army had encamped in some date-palms in the north. They had taken a well near the centre of the western margin of al-'Udwatul Dunya and destroyed the other wells near the road to Medina to prevent the Makkans from getting any water. Another well situated at the end of the road to Makkah was later filled with the dead bodies of the dead Makkans.



The Prophet led his men onward to Badr, and they arrived there the same night as the Quraish. The Prophet awarded the white flag of the main Muslim army to Musab bin Umayr . The Muhajireen (Makkan immigrants) were given a separate flag which was carried by Ali ibn

Talib, while the flag of the Ansar was borne by Saad bin Muadh. He chose young and dynamic personalities as the flag bearers as should be the case in battlefield.

The main flag was given to Musab who was well known and equally respected by both the ansar of Medina and the immigrants from Makkah.

The Muslims set up camp at Udwatud Duniya, but Hubab bin Mundhir advised the Prophet that they should move ahead and encamp at the well nearest the enemy so that they could store the water in reservoirs. He also suggested that the rest of the wells be filled up so that the Quraish would have no water. The Prophet took Hubab's brilliant advice and carried out his instructions.

The Muslims then made a small enclosure of palm branches in which the Prophet would stay while directing his men during the battle. A group of the Ansar youths were put under the command of Saad bin Muadh to act as lookouts.

After this, the Prophet walked around Badr with his men, saying,

“This is the spot where so and so will fall in battle tomorrow, God willing.”

He passed the night in prayer at the foot of a tree while a gentle rain fell and lulled the men into a refreshing sleep. God recounts his favour to the believers in the following verse:

“Remember how God enveloped you with drowsiness to make you feel safe. He caused rain to descend upon you from heaven so you could clean yourselves – rain that also removed Satan’s influence, strengthened your hearts, and made you stand firm in battle.” (8: 11)

The next morning (Friday, 17th of Ramadhan 17, in the 2nd year after Hijrah or 2 A.H.) the two armies came face to face. Prophet began to pray to his Lord:

“O Allah (God)! If this group is destroyed today, You will not be worshipped for ever. O Allah! If it is Your will that after this day You will not be worshipped for ever?”

In the enemy camp their leader Abu Jahl was engaged in his supplication as well for they believed that Prophet Pbuh and his followers had left faith so Abu Jahl also prayed:

“O God, destroy today the party that seeks to break kinship ties and believes in wrong-doing. O Allah! Help the party today which is much loved by you and provide us your decision.”

Man to Man Combat

The Quraish’s three best horsemen, Utbah bin Rabi’a, Shayba bin Rabi’a, and Waleed bin Utbah, stepped forward and challenged the Muslims to a single combat. In response, three members of the Ansar came forward, but the Quraish considered it below their dignity to fight anyone who was not of their own status. The Quraish had established their ethnic superiority and authority over all tribes of the Arabs and especially considered the people of Medina as farmers and thus inferior to them and no good as warriors.

The Ansar withdrew, and Ubaydah bin Harith, Hamzah and Ali came forward. Hamzah faced Shayba, Ali stood before Waleed, and Ubaydah accepted Utbah’s challenge. Hamzah and Ali both killed their opponents with ease, but Ubaydah and Utbah had wounded one another, and neither had the upper hand. Ali and Hamzah ran to Ubaydah’s aid and killed his opponent, and then brought Ubaydah, who had lost his leg, back to their ranks. Later he died of this injuries at Safra on the way back to Medina.

The Quraish smarted at having lost three men before the battle had even begun. They charged the Muslims, who, encouraged by their early

success, faced the onslaught without flinching. Proclaiming God's Oneness, the Muslims cried out:

“Ahad! Ahad!” (One God! One God!).

The battle proved decisively in favour of Muslims as all the leaders of Quraish got killed including Abu Jahl the leader of the Makkan army. The deep rooted ethnic and tribal conceit that the Makkans had embedded in their thoughts and hearts is visible even in his death. Abdullah bin Masood, who found Abu Jahl dying on the battlefield, placed his leg on his old enemies neck and said,

“Hasn't God disgraced you now, O enemy of God?”

Even as he lay dying, Abu Jahl was unrepentant.

“For what have I been disgraced? Is there anybody above the man you have killed? I only wish someone other than a farmer had killed me.”

Gazing at Abu Jahl's dead body, the Prophet said,

“He was the Pharaoh of his nation.”

With Abu Jahl's death the Quraish were humbled. They scattered, defeated by an army of men and the 1000 angels which the Quran describes, and thus ended the Battle of Badr. It was fought not for territory, riches, or honour, but to make belief in God prevail over rejection of the truth. The Muslims not only fought the rejecters of truth but had to fight against their father's, uncles, sons, brothers, cousins and friends as a result.

Umar killed his maternal uncle, Asi bin Hisham, while Abu Bakr faced his son, Abdul Rahman, and the Prophet's uncle Abbas was captured. Utbah bin Rabi'a, who was one of the first to challenge the Muslims in a preliminary duel, fought against his son, Abu Hudhayfah, one of the Prophet's closest Companions. Prophet Pbuh was fighting his own son in law Abdul Aas who was captured.

Blood ties were severed so that belief would prevail over disbelief. The day came to be called “Yaum Al-Fuqan” (the day of distinction), because on this day the battle lines were drawn not according to tribe, but according to belief in one true God.

Fourteen Muslims were honoured with martyrdom during the Battle of Badr (Six Muhajireen and eight Ansar). They were buried at Badr, and their grave sites are still known today. On the pagan side, seventy men were slain and an equal number were taken captive. Most of the dead were tribal notables and chieftains. In fact, the bodies of twenty-four pagan chieftains were thrown into a foul-smelling well.

The Prophet and his men stayed in Badr for three days. When he was about to begin his journey back to Medina, he stood over the well and called out to each chieftain by name:

“O son of so and so! Do you wish you had obeyed God and His Messenger? I have found that what my Lord promised me is true. Did you find your Lord’s promise true?”

“O Prophet,” Umar asked, “How can you talk to bodies which have no soul?” “They hear me just as you do, but they cannot answer,” the Prophet explained.

Mood in Defeated Makkah

The pagans who had managed to escape and save their lives as well as avoid capture carried the news of their crushing defeat and disgrace back to Makkah. However, the proud, haughty and extremely bigoted Makkans were unwilling to give the Muslims, either the ones who were still in Makkah or any others a chance to see them grieve. The Makkans prohibited mourning over their dead and captured, even though mourning was a way of their tribal culture to boast and extoll the greatness of their dead.

The defeat at Badr was no ordinary loss to Makkans, it was a loss of their pride, tribal superiority, religious rancour and what made it worse was the fact that it came at the hands of those whom they considered inferior in all aspects of life and especially in the battlefield!

Refraining from mourning, however, would not be easy. For example, Aswad bin Muttalib lost three sons at Badr, and he desperately wanted to lament for his dead sons. One night he heard a woman weeping uncontrollably and he assumed that mourning had been permitted. He immediately sent a slave to find out if it was so. He found out that mourning was still banned – the woman was crying for her lost camel. When he learned this, he raged:

“She cries because her camel is lost and restlessness has disrupted her sleep? Cry not over the camel, but over Badr where fortune fell on an evil day!”

Mood in Medina

The Prophet sent word to Medina of this great victory through his two companions as the people of Medina had been worried, especially as the hypocrites and Jews had spread rumours that the mighty Quraish had overpowered the Muslims. When the Prophet’s messengers arrived, the people shouted, “Allahu Akbar! God is Most Great!” The Muslims were jubilant. God had given them victory, and they were serene in their belief that God would reward those Muslims who fell in battle.

Upon hearing the news of the great victory, many of the citizens of Medina travelled toward Badr in hopes of being the first to congratulate the Prophet. They met the victorious Muslims in Ruha, and accompanied them back to Medina. The sight of the triumphant Muslims entering Medina with dozens of captives led many people to become Muslim.

Prisoners of War

Prophet PbuH specified the good treatment of the captives and commanded the Muslims to take good care of them. He forbade to bind them so tightly as to cause them injury. He commanded to share the food and drink with them and to walk along with them without mistreating anyone of them. Their treatment during their stay in Badr as well as the journey back to Medina was exemplary.

After reaching Medina, the Prophet held consultations regarding the prisoners of war. Abu Bakr said that they should let the Quraish buy their freedom, while Umar was in favour of executing all of them. The Prophet decided to set them free in return for ransom, which ranged from one thousand to four thousand dinars. Those who could not pay and were literate were required to teach ten Muslims each to read and write by way of ransoms. Those unable to do either were set free anyway.

An amazing part of this was the capture and subsequent ransom of Abdul Aas, the Prophet's son-in-law. Zaynab, the Prophet's daughter, who was the wife of Abdul Aas, was still in Makkah and she sent a necklace to ransom her husband. The Prophet recognised the necklace. He himself had given this to his daughter as a wedding gift. His eyes filled with tears, and he sought the consent of his Companions to free Abdul Aas without ransom. The Companions agreed, and Abdul Aas was freed on the condition that he would let Zaynab migrate to Medina. After he returned to Makkah, Zaynab was allowed to join her father in Medina.

Preparations for Revenge

After the defeat at Badr, Makkah was seething with the feelings of shame, humiliation, wounded pride and a terrible sense of defeat. This had the natural consequence of the intense desire to avenge the dead and more importantly to restore all that they deemed was lost.

When the survivors of the defeated Quraish at Badr finally managed to come out of their shock and intense grief they assembled at the house of consultation as was customary and spoke to their new leader-Abu Sufyan. They said, 'Muhummed has best men, so help us to fight him so that we may avenge those we have lost.'

In order to achieve this objective they agreed that everyone who had had a share in the caravan of Abu Sufyan should put his profits towards the cost of a new army, which would be three times as big as the one at Badr. The intense sense of hate, humiliation and vindictiveness of Makkans can be gauged by the following desires of men and women of Makkah.

Among those who joined the new army was an Abyssinian slave called Wahshi; who was known for his accuracy with the spear. His master, Jubayr ibn al-Mutim, said to him,

‘Go with the army and if you kill Hamzah, the uncle of Muhummed, in revenge for my uncle's death, I will set you free.’

When Hind, Abu Sufyan's wife, heard about this she sent an offer to Wahshi that she would clothe him in gold and silk if he would carry out his master's wish, for she too, wanted Hamzah dead because he had killed both her father and brother at Badr. She also vowed to chew Humzah’s liver upon his death.

However, the Quraish and their allies were considering all kinds of plans and schemes to kill Prophet Pbuh or to destroy Medina. As a result of these schemes only a couple of months after the return from Badr, Banu Sulaym began conscripting an army to invade Medina. In a pre-emptive strike, the Muslims raided their base and came back with booty.

Then Umayr bin Wahab Jumahi and Safwaan bin Umayya decided

to assassinate the Prophet. Umayr sneaked into Medina, hoping to carry out his mission, but was apprehended as soon as he entered Medina. God had revealed Umayr's motives to the Prophet, who in turn disclosed Umayr's plan to him. Umayr repented and became Muslim.

Jews of Banu Qaynuqa

Apart from the Makkans and their allies the third group that was most concerned about this huge development of Muslims becoming the most prominent power in the Arabian Peninsula was the ones having control on the economy of Medina-the Jewish community. Prior to Badr all such groups were seeing the arrival of Muhammed Pbuh and his becoming a leader of Medina as nothing more than normalisation of political problems and in a sense they were all happy to see the end of useless wars between themselves.

However, the crushing defeat of Makkans; who were the most powerful and the most honoured as regards warfare as well as spiritual authority; turned the tables completely. Muhammed Pbuh and Muslims as well as the whole state of Medina was now the number one priority for all such groups to get rid of.

Each tribe among the pagans and the Jews took it upon itself to keep up the pressure by harassing the Muslim state. The Jews of Banu Qaynuqa engaged in openly hostile acts, and when the Prophet Pbuh called on them to refrain, they mockingly boasted saying,

“Do not delude yourself, Muhammed, just because some native fools and simpletons have entered your fold. Should you ever fight against us, you will test our mettle as men of valour.”

The Prophet Pbuh responded with his customary patience, which brought forth even more provocation from Banu Qaynuqa. Banu Qaynuqa started a clash in the market place which resulted in the death of a Muslim and a Jew. This time the Prophet dealt with them firmly.

He ordered the Muslims to besiege the enemy. This was in the 10th month after Hijrah and after holding out a fortnight, Banu Qaynuqa laid down their arms. The Prophet PbuH expelled them, driving them towards Syria, where most of them died shortly afterwards.

After their banishment, Kaab bin Ashraf, who was an extremely wealthy Jewish poet, whose enmity for the Muslims and their Prophet was unrelenting started his open war against the state. Kaab would use his considerable poetic talent to compose and recite derogatory verses against the Prophet, his Companions, and the honour of the Muslim women, while he eulogised their sworn enemies and incited them to fight the Muslims.

Immediately after the Battle of Badr, he travelled to Makkah to stir up passions. To an already bloodthirsty and enraged Quraish, he orated at length, bidding them to extract vengeance for their defeat. Kaab was a skilled demagogue, and given the high esteem poetry and poets had in Arab society, his words worked as a spell on the Quraish. His call for revenge was welcome as was his assurance that the Quraish were on a higher spiritual plane than the Muslims.

He exhorted them to learn a lesson from what had happened with Banu Qaynuqa. The Quraish were a willing audience, and they swore to act on Kaab's advice. Having wound up his propaganda campaign against the Muslims, Kaab returned to Medina to continue his subversive acts against the Muslim state. He started meeting up with likeminded people from the pagans, hypocrites and the Jewish community of Medina in order to organise these disenchanted sections of Medinan society with a view to harm and hurt the Prophet PbuH and the state.

However, the Muslims used this very secret meeting of Kaab with people as a weapon to find and kill him for his subversion against the state. The pressures on the state of Medina was increasing and coming from all quarters thus. This culminated in the full-fledged onslaught at the next battle-Uhad.

Just before the battle of Uhad, in the 5th month of 3 A.H. (3rd year after Hijrah), the Quraish sent a trade caravan to Syria by way of Iraq. They were not overly concerned at the risks involved since the route went through Najd, far from Medina. However, a cavalry of two hundred men under the command of Zayd bin Harith swooped down on this caravan at Najd at a spring named Qardah.

Even though the men managed to flee, their possessions fell into the hands of the Muslims as did the caravan guide, Furat bin Hayyan. The humane treatment Furat experienced at the hands of his captors so impressed him that he became Muslim. When the booty from the caravan was evaluated, it's worth stood at a hundred thousand dirhams. With this raid, the Muslims had inflicted on the Quraish an economic defeat as devastating as the military one at Badr.

The Battle of Uhad

Now the Quraish had two humiliating episodes to live with, Badr and Qardah both of which were bitter losses, and it was time to channel all their anger and hatred into a military strike against the Muslims.

Preparations began at a furious pace as the Quraish launched a recruitment drive and admitted voluntary soldiers and anyone with a personal grudge against the Muslims, especially those who had lost fathers, sons or brothers at Badr.

Poets, who were the most important media of that time were brought in to incite the people with their words and songs of vengeance. All tribes who owed allegiance to the Quraish were also made to join the army. Women went with them to boost their morale and prevent them from taking flight. The Quraish ultimately mustered an army of 3000 soldiers with 300 camels, 200 horses and 700 coats of mail.

Abu Sufyan was the commander-in-chief of the Makkan army, and the valiant fighters of Banu Abdul Dar were appointed its standard bearers.

The proud and fearsome Makkan army advanced towards Medina, in the 10th month of 3 A.H., they reached the outskirts of the city and camped in an open field in the valley of Qanah below Mounts Ainain and Uhud.

The Prophet had been expecting the enemy for a week. He had already set up a patrol system around Medina to ensure the city's safety and had declared a state of emergency. When the Makkan army arrived, the Prophet sought the counsel of his Companions regarding further defensive measures.

His plan was to remain in the city, with the men facing the enemy at the entrance of lanes and alleys, and the women attacking from the rooftops of their houses. When the plan was outlined before the community, the Hypocrites among them, were happy not to be out on the battlefield. Their leader, Abdullah bin Ubay, supported the plan since he could then sit safely at home without being accused of falling back from the battle.

Some of the young men, however, were eager to meet the enemy in open combat, and pressed for a direct military encounter. The Prophet Pbuh agreed to their demands, and accordingly, he divided his army into three squads – one squad consisted of the Muhajireen (immigrants) with Musab bin Umayr as the flag bearer, another comprised of the Aws tribe with Usayd bin Hudair as the flag bearer, and the third unit consisted of Khazraj with Hubab bin Mudhir as the flag bearer.

The Prophet Pbuh set out toward Mount Uhud with 1000 men and inspected his troops at place called Shaykhayn. He spent the night there, and appointed fifty watchmen to guard the troops. However, after fajr prayer next day the Hypocrites struck the first blow. Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of hypocrites, chose to rebel against the Prophet at this point and withdrew with his 300 men.

Thus the Muslim army of 1000 had shrunk by almost a third to 700. Heading the truncated army, the Prophet Pbuh marched towards Uhud

through a short route leaving the enemy forces in the western part of the area. He descended into the valley of Mount Uhud, all the while keeping his back to the mountain.

Thus the enemy stood between the Muslims and Medina. By keeping the mount behind him he secured protection from any surprise attacks from behind.

An Important and Decisive Instruction

On Mount Ainain, which later became known as Mount Ramaah, he formed a unit of fifty archers under Abdullah bin Jubaur Al- Ansari , and instructed them to hold back the enemy and guard the backs of the Muslim troops. He stressed that under no circumstances were they to withdraw. They were to await his instructions regardless of which way the battle went.

The pagans also drew up their troops towards the battlefield, marching to the songs and cheers of their own women who whipped up their zeal. Moving through the rows and rattling their tambourines, they sang:

“If you go ahead, we shall embrace you, and spread carpets; if you retreat, we shall take offense and be estranged.”

They addressed the standard bearers reminding them of their duty:

“Look, Banu Abdul Dar! O defenders of your generation, strike violently with swords.”

After the first ritual encounter, the two armies set upon each other. Khalid bin Waleed, who was then head of the pagan cavalry, attempted three times to reach the rear. Each time he was pushed back by the shower of arrows launched by the Muslim rear-guards.

The Muslim soldiers concentrated their attack on eleven flag bearers of the pagans until they were all wiped out. As the enemy sank to the ground, the Muslim soldiers hurled themselves against the enemy. They charged into the ranks of the enemy forces and slew them in large numbers. Two Muslims, Abu Dunjana and Hamzah, fought with great prowess, and their heroic feats on the battlefield were to become legendary in Muslim military history.

Hamzah was killed by the javelin of Wahshi bin Harb, the Abyssinian slave, who with that successful throw earned his freedom from his master, later Hind cut open Humza's body and chewed his liver as she had vowed. Wahshi had sat behind a rock awaiting his chance to strike. As Hamzah stood deftly beheading Saba bin Arfat, Wahshi launched his javelin. It pierced Hamzah's abdomen and came out from between his legs. The Lion of God had fallen.

Despite the loss of Hamzah, the Muslims managed to overcome the Makkans who, faced with yet another defeat, began to flee. The pagan women also scattered as some of the Muslim soldiers gave chase. Some of the Muslim troops set about putting the fallen enemy to the sword and looting the enemy camp. It was at that point of perceived victory that events began unravelling.

The archers who had been entrusted with the safety of their brothers in faith disobeyed the Prophet's explicit orders and deserted their stations to join the looting. Forty of the rear guards descended the mountain and left the Muslims vulnerable to a comeback attack by the enemy.

When Khalid bin Waleed saw the sudden vacuum created by the disappearance of the Muslim rear-guards, he decided it was time to strike again. He and his men wiped out the ten archers guarding the rear. They then went around the mountain and surprised the Muslims from behind. Now that the Muslims were surrounded, Khalid's cavalymen raised a war cry and rushed back to retrieve their lost honour. Thus Khalid bin Waleed became the only commander in known

history to have remained undefeated in all his battles including his battle against the Prophet Pbuh. (Hannibal being the other undefeated commander)

The Rumour of Prophet's Death

In the sudden change of situation on battlefield only seven of the Ansar and two men of the Muhajireen were guarding the Prophet Pbuh. The pagans launched a full assault on them and killed all the seven Ansar with only two men around Prophet Pbuh the pagans directed their main attack at the Prophet. A rock flew at him, and he fell on his side. One of his lower right teeth was broken, his lower lip was cut, and his helmet was broken, exposing his head and forehead. As an enemy soldier thrust his sword at the Prophet Pbuh he caught his bone below the eye, and two rings from the Prophet's helmet pierced his face. Someone else struck the Prophet's shoulder with a blow so powerful that it left him in severe pain for about a month. Fortunately, he escaped severe injury because of his double coat of mail.

Even as the Ansar and Muhajireen were risking their own lives to keep the Prophet safe, he had incurred injury. Saad bin Abi Waqaas unleashed a volley of arrows at the pagans, and the Prophet kept supplying him with more arrows from his own quiver, saying encouragingly,

“Keep shooting. May my mother and father be sacrificed for you.”

There was Talha bin Ubaydullah fighting against the whole band of enemies, as if he were the only one on the field. By the end of the battle, he had 35 or 39 injuries. Talha shielded the Prophet from the enemies' arrows and swords with his hands until his fingers bled profusely and were palsied. As the arrows pierced his fingers, he gasped involuntarily.

With human efforts faltering, God sent down supernatural allies to the rescue of His Prophet. Jibreel (Gabriel) and Mikaeel (Michael) descended and protected him. More Muslims rushed to the Prophet, and they too defended him fiercely. The first to come to his aid was Abu Bakr along with Abu Ubaydah bin Jarrah. Abu Bakr saw the helmet rings embedded in the Prophet's face and tried to extract them, but it was Abu Ubaydah who succeeded in pulling out the metal rings with his teeth, losing two of them in the process.

Then they advanced together to sustain the severely wounded Talha bin Ubaydullah. Friend and foe alike gravitated toward the Prophet, who quite naturally was the focal point of the whole scene. Among the Muslims Abu Dujana, Musab bin Umayr, Umar bin al-Khattab and Ali bin Abi Talib, flanked the Prophet even as the pagan soldiers continued to swarm around him, their attacks penetrating deeper and deeper.

The Muslims took all possible measures to beat them back. Some of them were shooting arrows, others putting up defences, some fighting on fiercely while others resorted to deflecting arrows with their hands. The enemy targeted the Muslims' flag bearer Musab bin Umayr. Countless swords hacked at his right hand severing it. Musab transferred the flag to his left hand, and then upheld the flag on his knee supported by his chest and neck until his last breath.

Since Musab resembled the Prophet to a great extent, his killer, Abdullah bin Qama, thought that he had slain the Prophet and jubilantly shouted out that he had killed Muhammad. The news flew around the pagans who, in a surge of complacency, immediately eased the pressure on the Muslims.

When the Muslims saw themselves surrounded, they were overtaken by panic and disorder and failed to chalk out a cohesive plan. Some of them escaped to the south and reached Medina, while others fled toward the mountain pass and took refuge in a camp. Some of them ran toward the Prophet to protect him from the onslaught of the enemies.

Even as the majority of Muslims stood their ground, their efforts were ineffectual simply because they were disorganised. Disorder prevailed in the Muslim ranks so much so that the first row collided with the rear row. The result was that Yaman, the father of Hudhayfah, was killed at the hands of the Muslims themselves. Once the rumour of the Prophet's death filtered in, their morale plummeted even lower.

Grief stricken and lost, some of them simply abandoned the field, while others were infused with resolve and rallied saying,

“Come brothers! If Muhammed (pbuh) has been killed what will your lives be worth without him? Don't think about living or dying. Fight for God. Get up and die the way Muhammed (pbuh) died!”

The crisis receded only when Kaab bin Malik caught a glimpse of the Prophet, making his way to join the besieged Muslims. Kaab recognised the Prophet's eyes although his face was covered with the helmet. He cried loudly,

“O Muslims, rejoice! Here is the Prophet.”

Kaab's words galvanised the remaining Muslims, and they streamed to the Prophet's side. Within a short time thirty companies assembled around him. The Prophet Pbh decided against further combat, prudently choosing retreat. He made his way through the rows and successfully led his troops towards the mountain pass. The pagans lost two of their soldiers in a fruitless effort to stop them.

By retreating, the Prophet Pbh managed to save his army from further losses, losses that had come about from simple disobedience of his orders. Disobedience had changed the Muslim victory into catastrophe, but with God's help the Muslims were pulled back from the precipice. Whilst the Muslims were holed up in the ravine, some individual skirmishes continued between the Muslims and pagan soldiers.

During this period the pagans were looking for the dead bodies of Muslims and mutilating them on account of their hate and bloodthirsty nature after the battle of Badr. It was here that Hind bin Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan saw Hamzah's body, and in a gruesome act of vendetta she cut open his belly, extracted his liver, and chewed it, but as she could not swallow it, she spat it out.

Abu Sufyan and Khalid bin Waleed headed a few men and they tried to scale the mountain at different points to overtake the Muslims at several places. Umar, along with a band of Muhajireen, fought them back and forced them to descend. Saad bin Abi Waqqas shot three of their men dead with his arrows. Ubayy bin Khalaf made another effort to kill the Prophet, but was himself struck down. The Prophet used his lance to unhorse Ubayy, who bellowed like a wounded ox as he rolled down from his mount.

Abu Sufyan and Khalid bin Waleed decided after the last abortive attempt to defeat the Muslims that it was time to return to Makkah. They were satisfied at the damage they had wrought. Even though they had lost twenty-two of their own, they had killed a great number of Muslims. The Muslim body count stood at seventy. Forty-one of the martyrs were from the Khazraj tribe, twenty-four from the Aus, and four from the Muhajireen. A Jew was also killed.

The Defeated Muslim camp

At the Muslim camp, it was time to stock take and find some rest. When the Prophet finally sat down to rest, Ali fetched water for him to drink from Mehra, a stream in Uhud. The water smelled so unpleasant, the Prophet couldn't drink it. However, he washed his face with it and the rest he poured over his head. His wound started bleeding again, and Fatimah burnt a piece of matting and dressed her father's wounds with the ashes to stop the bleeding.

Muhammad bin Muslimah fetched fresh water that the Prophet drank gratefully. Because of his wounds, he prayed Zuhr sitting, and his Companions adopted the same posture. The Muslim men were joined by their women who tended to the injured. Among them were Aishah, Umm Ayman, Umm Sulaym and Umm Sulayt who fetched drinking water in leather flasks, and served it to the wounded.

A Dialogue Beyond battle

Ready to retreat and depart, Abu Sufyan came to the mount Uhad and had the following dialogue with Muslims:

Abu Sufyan appeared on Mount Uhud and shouted,

“Is Muhammed among you?”

Nobody responded from the Muslim side. Abu Sufyan then shouted:

“Is Abu Bakr, the son of Abu Qahafa among you?”

Once more he was met with silence. He shouted a third time:

“Is Umar bin Khattab among you?”

This call also went unanswered because the Prophet had forbidden the Muslims to make any reply.

The silence satisfied Abu Sufyan, who called out jubilantly,

“We have finally been relieved of those three.”

Hearing these words Umar impetuously roared:

“O enemy of God, all whom you named are alive, and God Almighty has more disgrace in store for you.”

Abu Sufyan said,

“Your slain have been mutilated. I neither ordered it nor disliked it.”

After that he cried, “Glory to Hubal.”

The Prophet instructed his Companions to counter,

“Allah (God) is the Highest and Most Majestic.” Abu Sufyan then shouted,

“We have Uzza while you have none.”

The Prophet bade his followers answer, “Allah is our Lord but you have none.”

Abu Sufyan reminded the Muslims of their loss, saying,

“What a glorious deed we have wrought. This is our revenge for Badr. Victory in war goes by turns; one wins today and the other tomorrow.”

Umar retorted, “The scores are certainly not even, for our dead have gone to Paradise and yours to Hell.”

Taken aback at Umar’s conviction, Abu Sufyan conceded,

“Your people consider it so, and if it is true we are losers.”

Then Abu Sufyan called Umar closer and said, “Umar, I ask you in the name of Allah if we have killed Muhammad.”

Umar swore, “By Allah, this is not true, and he is listening to what you say.” Abu Sufyan was convinced about the truth of Umar’s words and complimented his enemy, “To me you are more truthful and upright than Ibn Qama.” With his parting words, he issued a challenge,

“We shall meet again at Badr next year.”

The Makkan pagans rode their camels and kept their horses by their side to indicate the end of the battle and that they were headed back to Makkah. Their inexplicable decision to head back can only be described as a sign of God’s special protection for His Messengers, as promised in the Quran, for nothing stood between the pagans and Medina.

Had they pressed on they would have found no opposition in the defenceless city, but the course of history was destined to be changed by this seemingly defenceless and defeated tiny city of Medina!

After the departure of the enemy, the Muslims came to the battlefield to take care of the wounded and the martyred. Some of the dead were transported back to Medina, but the Prophet Pbuh ordained that the martyrs be brought back to the site of their deaths and that they be buried in battle dress without a bath and funeral prayer. He also buried two to three martyrs in a single grave. In some cases, he directed his Companions to shroud the martyrs in pairs. The martyr who had learned more of the Quran was lowered in the grave first. Paying tribute to their sacrifice in the cause of God, the Prophet said,

“I shall be a witness unto them on the Day of Resurrection.”

On his way back to Medina, Prophet Pbuh stopped to give solace to some women whose relatives had fallen in the field. His invocation of God’s blessings upon them comforted them immensely. Many of the bereaved Muslims bore their losses with patience and took comfort in knowing that their Prophet was safe, although they had lost their own loved ones in the bargain.

Strategy Back In medina

Back in Medina the Muslims spent the night on high alert. After all, they were still in a state of emergency. Exhausted and wounded, they were also overcome by deep sorrow and remorse at the actions of a few who had risked the life of the Prophet himself. They all insisted on guarding the Prophet. The Prophet Pbuh on the other hand, felt that it was far more important to monitor the retreating enemy’s movements carefully. He wanted to be prepared in case of a surprise attack on Medina.

So the very next morning, the Prophet Pbuḥ announced that all those who had fought in the Battle of Uhud should prepare to pursue the enemy. Every Muslim who had fought at Uhud the day before followed the Prophet out of Medina regardless of fatigue and injury. Thus they set out from Medina and camped at Hamra Al-Asad, eight miles away.

The pagans were camped at Rawha, thirty-six miles from Medina, holding a war council. They were trading abuse at each other and their leaders

“Why had they squandered the advantage by not entering Medina?”

At this moment, the Muslim camp was also pondering strategy. Mabad bin Abi Saeed Khazai, who was a well-wisher of the Prophet Pbuḥ, came to him at Hamra Al-Asad and discussed about the events at Uhud. The Prophet asked him to approach Abu Sufyan and use scare tactics to head the pagans off. Mabad accordingly reached Rawha, where the mood was in favour of returning back to Medina.

Mabad dismayed the pagans with his description of the ferocity of the Muslims and their extensive preparations for a new encounter.

“Muhummed has come out with a horde the like of which I have never seen. They are intent on revenge, and their mood is terrifyingly bloodthirsty. I think you will soon spot their vanguard appearing from behind this hill.”

The ruse worked. The Makkan troops lost their bravado, and Abu Sufyan confined his response to a similar scare campaign. He decided to do some sabre rattling of his own. He instructed a caravan to scare the Muslims by saying that the Makkans were ready for another round. Meanwhile, Abu Sufyan and his soldiers hurried back to Makkah.

Having come close to defeat, the subdued Muslims who heard this warning were prepared to fight on. The threat of a renewed attack only stiffened their resolve. They responded by quoting the following verse:

“The Hypocrites said, “Verily, the pagans have gathered against you, so fear them!” But this increased the Muslims in faith, and they replied, “God is sufficient for us, and He is the best to determine our affairs.” (3: 173)

There was no further volley of threats, and the resulting claim is best described in the next verse:

“Thus they returned with the blessings and favour of God. No evil touched them, and they sought nothing but God’s pleasure, and God is munificent beyond measure.” (3: 174)

Aftermath of Uhad

It was now the 4th year after migration and Prophet Pbu^h sent two peaceful delegations to two different groups and both met with treachery and murder. In the second month of 4, A.H., a delegation of the Adal and Qara tribes came to the Prophet. They mentioned a surge of interest in Islam among their people, who wanted to know more about the faith. The Prophet sent ten of his Companions headed by Asim bin Thabit. At Ar Raji they were brutally massacred. At about the same time the Prophet Pbu^h sent off a contingent of seventy Muslims to Najd-at behest of an individuals call-who were well-versed in the Quran. They camped at Bir Mauna, where they were once again murdered treacherously.

Both incidents at Bir Mauna and Raji deeply anguished the Prophet . He had sent two missions of peace, and both had ended tragically in the same month. It is said that he received the news of both tragedies the same night.

Banu Nadhir (Jewish Tribe)

Banu Nadhir was one of the three powerful Jewish tribes living in Medina and as per the details recorded by Bukhārī although they had made a peace-treaty with the Prophet Pbu^h, however six months after

the battle of Badr they started to connive with the enemies of Islam which was against the terms of the treaty, and were also guilty of unsuccessfully plotting to murder the Prophet. Because of these crimes, the Prophet Pbuh asked them to leave Medina.

The Prophet went to Banu Nadir along with a few of his Companions to ask them to contribute towards the blood money of a particular case. They said to him,

“Abdul Qasim, we shall do accordingly. Take your seat here. We will fulfil your need.”

The Prophet waited while the Jews consulted privately with one another. However, they decided to murder the Prophet . They said to each other, “Who will carry this millstone and drop it on him?”

As the Prophet Pbuh sat waiting for his hosts to come back with their decision, Gabriel (Jibreel) descended and revealed the plot to him. The Prophet hurried away and set out for the road to his house.

The Prophet Pbuh therefore, on account of their conniving and plotting, sent Muhammed bin Muslimah to issue an ultimatum to the Jews – since they had forfeited their right to live with the Muslims, they were to leave Medina within ten days.

Any person from Banu Nadhir found after the lapse of the deadline would be put to death. After receiving this notice, they began preparing to leave. At that point, Abdullah bin Ubayy, the head of the Hypocrites, sent them a message urging them to stay on, for he had two thousand warriors ready to enter their fortress and defend them.

The Hypocrites had once more struck to undermine the Prophet’s position. Surah Al-Hashr refers to the tenuous alliance and how it was patched together with lies:

“Did you not observe the Hypocrites tell their faithless friends from among the people of the book, “If you are driven out, we will

accompany you. We will never obey your enemies, and if you are attacked, we will defend you.” But Allah is witness that they are liars.” (59: 11)

The Banu Nadhir felt emboldened at such shows of support from their purported friends. They sent a message to the Prophet that they were not about to leave Medina regardless of the consequences.

The Prophet responded by advancing his troops against them, he entrusting the safety of Medina to Ibn Umm Maktoom and the Muslim army flag to Ali. They laid siege to them as the Banu Nadhir took refuge in their fortresses and castles and showered arrows and stones at the Muslim army. Since their date graves and gardens stood as a buffer zone, the Prophet ordered his men to cut down the trees and set the gardens ablaze.

This act sank the spirits of Banu Nadhir. After six days of holding out – some say a fortnight- they agreed to lay down arms on condition that they would be allowed to go safely into exile. Their friends among the Banu Qurayza had failed to support them, as had the head of the Hypocrites and his allies.

“Their allies deceived them the way Satan does when he says to a man, “Disbelieve in God.” When the man listens to him and commits disbelief, Satan suddenly says, “I am not responsible for your decision. I fear God, the Lord of the Universe!” (59: 16)

The Prophet allowed the Jews of Banu Nadhir to take all their belongings except their arms. They demolished the houses, they had constructed by their very hands with great zeal and desire, by their very hands and carried with them whatever they could –even the doors, windows and beams of their houses. The Qur’an refers to this event in the following verse:

“God drove out the faithless tribe of Jews from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think that they would leave, and they thought

their fortress would protect from God! But God approached them in a way they did not expect by their own hands as well as by the believers. Reflect on this event, those of you who have eyes.” (59: 2)

Thus they left Medina, most of them settling in Khaybar while a small group migrated to Syria. The land confiscated from them was divided among the first Makkkan emigrants, while Abu Dujana and Sahl bin Haneef, two members of the Ansar, were given plots because of their financial situation.

The Prophet used part of the revenue from the land to maintain his wives for the whole year. The rest he spent on defence and for providing horses and arms for the Muslim warriors. Fifty coats of mail, fifty helmets and three hundred swords that had been seized were also distributed among the Muslim troops.

The verse of Quran further explains:

“And had God not destined exile for them, He would have surely punished them in this world and in the Hereafter for them is the torment of Hell.” (59:3)

The implication of the above verse is that the punishment of exile meted out to the Banu Nadhir was in fact a show of lenience to them. God’s wisdom entailed that-on account of them being believers in One God and therefore different than the pagans-no further punishment should be given to them so that if they have the ability to seek a lesson from this incident they are provided with such an opportunity. Had it not been for this, the Almighty would have sent a decisive punishment on them in this very world the way He did in the case of the Aad, the Thamud and the Pharaoh etc which totally ravaged and destroyed them.

The Hypocrites and the remaining Jews of Medina immediately raised two points to intensify their vicious propaganda against the Prophet Pbu and Islam. One of the objections raised by the Jews was that Muslims had chopped off many trees which had borne fruit. Though

these trees had been cut for war purposes, the Jews tried to portray the incident as spreading anarchy in the land even though Muslims claim to be reformers in the land.

The objective behind this objection was to cast doubts on the message of Islam in the eyes of people that his call was not that of religion; it is a mere tussle to attain political authority; the name of religion is being taken in this campaign, God forbid, only to deceive people.

The second question was raised by the Hypocrites regarding the left behind assets and wealth of Banu Nadhīr: they demanded that like the four-fifth share reserved for the soldiers from the spoils of war, these assets and wealth left behind should also be distributed in this same ratio to the army. However, the Quran regarded this wealth to be “fay” and not among spoils of war and directed that all of it be consigned to the public treasury for the poor and indigent and specially for the help of those immigrants who were driven out from their homes and deprived of their assets and property merely because of their religion.

In this regard, the Quran mentions Ansar and the early Immigrants and has praised them for their sacrifice and contentment that they are very generous for their immigrant brothers and give preference to their needs over their own. Only this attitude is befitting for the believers, in contrast to the hypocrites.

The Second Badr

At the beginning of the 8th month of 4th year after migration (4 A.H.) Abu Sufyan, as he had promised whilst leaving Uhud, prepared for another battle. The Prophet PbuH however, pre-empted his adversary in a march toward the battlefield. He camped at Badr, where he waited eight days for Abu Sufyan. He had with him a force consisting of 1500 soldiers and 10 horses. Ali bin Abu Talib was the flag bearer, while the administration of Medina was handed over to Abdullah Rawaha .

Abu Sufyan also set out with 2000 soldiers, including 50 cavalrymen, but from the start he appeared to be lacking fire. Upon arriving at the venue he remarked to his men,

“Battle is suitable when there is freshness and greenery throughout so that the animals can graze and we can also drink milk. But now as there is drought everywhere, I am going back. You people should follow me.”

Abu Sufyan’s entire army seemed to share his sentiments and tamely marched back without meeting the enemy. The Muslims, meanwhile, stayed on at Badr and carried out a number of business transactions. They sold their goods and made handsome profits. The Quraish had retreated without drawing a single sword, so the Muslims returned with their military reputation in high standing.

The feeble peace however lasted only one year- a year of relief but great preparation. He utilised this year to consolidate his position and improving the faith and education of his followers.

The Battle of the Trench

It was now the 5th Year after migration and about 18 months of no major disturbance had provided some reprieve to this newly formed state of Medina. However, a lot was going on behind the scenes during these months of apparent peace. The exiled Jews had consolidated their base at Khaybar, and having done so they began to dream of vengeance. Realising the need to rally as much manpower as possible, they went about seeking allies against the Muslims.

About twenty chieftains and leaders of Khaybar Jews went to the Quraish pledging support for a renewed military campaign. When the Quraish agreed, the Jewish delegation contacted Banu Ghatfan, and they also gave their consent. More and more clans were roped in, and

the plan was that each of them should move towards Medina simultaneously.

An army of ten thousand well equipped men were marching towards the tiny city of Medina, with thousands bent on coming to destroy it from its neighbourhood and from within its premises.

The Brilliant Strategy

When the news of the coalition reached Medina, the Prophet consulted with his Companions as to strategy. The Muslims being so heavily outnumbered, it was imperative that they come up with an impenetrable defence. Salman the Persian advised that the Muslims should dig a trench to keep the enemy away, and everyone approved of the suggestion.

Medina was naturally fortified on three fronts, with volcanic plains and granite hills to the east, west and south; the city was exposed only on the north, from where the enemy forces could launch an assault. Therefore, the Prophet chose to fortify that front. He marked the narrowest spot stretching between the east and west and covering a distance of about one mile.

Both belts were connected at this spot by the trench. In the west, the trench began from the north of the Sala hills and joined the end of the easterly belt at Shaykhayn.

The Prophet divided his men into units of ten with each responsible for digging forty cubits (60 feet). He himself participated in the task of digging the trench and carrying the loads of earth. It was a massive undertaking, and the Muslims worked steadily. Their morale soared as they relied on their faith in God and their devotion to His Prophet for moral sustenance.

The Companions sang praises of God and the Prophet joined in. When the Prophet sang the Companions responded. They bore with quiet

heroism the rigorous hardships before them, particularly the biting cold and gnawing hunger. A handful of barley was procured and cooked in rancid, foul smelling fat.

Swallowing the food was a challenge in itself. Once a man went to the Prophet complaining of debilitating hunger. As proof, each showed him a slab of stone tied to his belly to stave off the hunger pangs. The Prophet lifted his shirt. Tied to his abdomen were two slabs of stone.

On one occasion, Jabir bin Abdullah could not bear to see the Prophet assailed by severe hunger. He slaughtered a ewe, and his wife ground about 2 ½ kilograms of barley. He then went to the Prophet and discretely invited him and a few of the Prophet's Companions. The Prophet accepted the invitation, but brought everyone along – all one thousand of them. Everyone ate until he was full, but the pot remained replete and the bread continued to bake unchecked.

This and many other similar incidents of miracles boosted the moral as well as the faith of the companions of the Prophet PbuH.

Completed within a few weeks, the trench was – according to the estimates of Muhummed Hamidullah – approximately 5.5 kilometres (3.4 miles) in length, 9 meters in width, and 4.5 meters in depth.

The arrival of a massively large army so close to the walls of Medina posed an enormous threat to the Muslims. God mentions the mammoth military coalition in Surah Ahzaab:

“Behold! They marched upon you from above and below, and then your eyes spun around and your hearts leapt to your throats. You began to doubt God’s plan, yet in this was a trial for the believers and an immense jolt.” (33: 10-11)

But God Almighty kept the believers firm on that occasion. He says:

“When the believers saw the confederate forces, they said: “This is what God and His Messenger promised us, and God and His Messenger

have told us the truth.” And it only increased their faith and their submission to God.” (33: 22)

However, the Hypocrites among the Muslims were fearful and critical. They said:

“God and His Messenger have promised us nothing but delusions.”
(33: 12)

Once again the Prophet appointed Umm Maktoom caretaker of Medina and sent the women and children to take shelter in forts. He then set out with 3000 men and fortified his troops, keeping their backs to Mount Sala. In front was the trench that stood between the Muslims and pagans.

The Pagans arrogantly advanced toward Medina and the Muslims. As they approached, they caught sight of the trench and stopped in confusion.

“A novel device, a wily ruse!” Abu Sufyan exclaimed in amazement.

“This trick is totally unknown to the Arabs.”

Overwhelmed with fury, the pagans set about trying to find a point where they could cross the trench, but the Muslim archers kept them at bay. A hail of arrows showered the pagans so that they could neither leap across the trench nor fill it with earth.

The Quraish had no alternative way to attack Medina. Every morning they came out and attempted to cross the trench while the Muslims guarded every inch of the border and greeted them with arrows and stones. The pagans made several fruitless attempts to cross the trench and spent days huddled together trying to devise ways to launch their assault. The Muslims for their part were equally determined to make them give up.

So intent were they in protecting their lines that the Prophet and his Companions missed several prayers, and offered them late around or after sunset, for at that point the “prayer in times of fear” (Salaah Al-Khauf) had not yet been ordained upon them.

Despite these failed attempts the armies stayed for about 20 days to try and find a breach and destroy Medina. At one point during the siege, a few Quraish cavalymen managed to cross to the Muslim side via a narrow point of the trench. However, the bravery of Ali and other Muslims forced them to retreat.

While there were some minor skirmishes during the siege which lasted around twenty days, the confederate forces were unsuccessful. As the Makkan pagans had prepared themselves only for a short battle, the sources of provisions for both their troops and their mounts ran out. Meanwhile, the Muslims intercepted their food supplies loaded on twenty camels and sent by the Khaybar Jews.

Moreover, as the weather became extremely cold, the Makkans experienced increasing difficulty and panicked when their tents were destroyed by a heavy storm. They had approached the end of the month of Shawwal, and the sacred month of Dhu al-Qadah was fast approaching which meant that the season of pilgrimage was to start. Due to all these factors, Abu Sufyan knew that he could not win any significant gains, so he lifted the siege and left for Makkah.

Six Muslims were martyred and eight enemy soldiers killed in the Battle of the Trench, which was a triumph and turning point in the history of Medina.

Treachery of Banu Qurayza

Banu Qurayza was the last of three Jewish tribes left in Medina. After the Battle of Uhud, they had entered into a pact with the Prophet . But in the midst of the Battle of the Trench, Huyay bin Akhtab, the chief of

Banu Nadir, met Kaab bin Asad, the chief of Banu Qurayza, and got him to renege on the agreement.

After some initial hesitation, Kaab broke the covenant and sided with the Quraish and the pagans. The stronghold of Banu Qurayza lay to the south of Medina, which was where the Muslims had their fortifications and where they had left their women and children, while the men were massed along the north.

With the breach of treaty by Banu Qurayza, the Muslim women and children were imperilled. The Prophet rushed Muslima bin Aslam at the head of 200 men and Zayd bin Haritha with another 300 men to protect the Muslim women and children. Moreover, Saad bin Muadh and Saad bin Ubada were sent behind them to investigate the matter.

The Prophet's envoys found the Jews openly antagonistic. Banu Qurayza disparaged the Prophet saying,

“Who is the Prophet of God? We have not entered any pact with Muhammed.”

The two emissaries reported the situation to the Prophet in just three words, “Adal and Qara,” indicating that the treachery of the Adal and Qara tribes at Raji was being repeated by Banu Qurayza.

Prophet's political approach and diplomacy by way of creating a rift between the Jewish tribes and their allied Arab tribes, alongside his implementing an intense operation of intelligence also played an important role in the enemy's failure. One of the precautionary measures that the Prophet took during the battle in order to weaken the enemy's alliance relates to Nuaym ibn Mas'ud.

Leader of the Banu Ashja`, Nuaym had only recently become a Muslim, but no one had yet found out. Upon knowing of the alliance of the Jews and Quraish the Prophet Pjuh requested Nuaym who went to the Banu Qurayza and the Quraish separately and incited them against one

another. As such, the dissension which emerged in enemy ranks caused the separation of the Banu Qurayza Jews from them and thus saved the Muslim women and children from any harm.

On this occasion, too, the Hypocrites bared their fangs. Some of them bemoaned,

“Muhummed gave us his word that we would possess the treasure of Caesar and Chosroes, and here we are in such a plight that we feel unsafe even to answer the call of nature.”

Others among them fumed,

“The promise made to us by God and His Messenger was nothing but delusion.”

Some jeered at the Muslims, “O men of Yathrib, you cannot stand the onslaught. Go back!”

Another group of Hypocrites, after deciding to flee the spot, came to the Prophet seeking permission to go back, pleading that their houses were unprotected. All this brought to fore those who were really and truly faithful as well as those who were waiting for an opportunity to reveal their real selves.

On his return from the Battle of the Trench the Prophet Pbh entrusted the affairs of the state to Umm Maktoom and sent out an advance party under Ali towards Banu Qurayza who spotted the approaching Muslims and began hurling abuses at the Prophet Pbh.

Even before the Muslim forces got there, they shut themselves in their castles, too terrified to confront the Muslim warriors who arrived to lay siege. The long siege disheartened Banu Qurayza. Twenty-five days passed, and they finally surrendered to the Prophet . He imprisoned the men and kept the women separate.

At this point the hypocrites as well as the Jews of Banu Qurayza requested for appointing someone from their previous allies as the judge on their fate. Prophet Pbuh agreed to appoint the chief of their ally Saad bin Muadh-the chief of Aus tribe.

When Saad dismounted his ride and he was told that Banu Qurayza had declared their willingness to accept his verdict, he pronounced his judgment – the men were to be killed, the women and children to be taken captive, and the property to be divided among the Muslim community. This was in accordance with the Law of Moses in the Old Testament. They certainly did not expect it but their fate was sealed for the treachery and conspiracy against the state.

Some sources put the number of those killed at 400, while others place it between 600 and 700. Only one woman was put to death. She had thrown a hand mill at Khalaad bin Suwayd and killed him. Along with them, Huyayy bin Akhtab, the chief of Banu Nadhir was also killed. He was one of those twenty chief of the Jews who had orchestrated the alliance between the Quraish and Banu Ghatfan.

It was he who had swayed Banu Qurayza to break their pact with the Muslims, pledging them his support and saying he was ready to share their fate. He remained with them during the siege and their subsequent surrender, and was finally put to death with them.

Some individuals of Banu Qurayza had embraced Islam before the surrender and escaped punishment. The booty amounted to 1500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 2000 lances, 500 shields, and a large number of goods, vessels, and livestock. The Prophet then kept one-fifth of the date palms and the captives, and he divided the rest of the booty among the soldiers.

The Slander Against Ayesha

In the early part of the 6th year after migration (6 A.H.) Banu Mustaliq had sided with the Quraish and were preparing for an attack on the Prophet PbuH. With an army of seven hundred men, the Prophet surprised them who were encamped at a spring named Muraysi on the outskirts of Qudayd. Some of them were killed, their women and children were rounded up, and their property and livestock seized. The operation lasted two nights.

The journey back to Medina was long, and after a halt, late one night, the Prophet decided to break camp. Aisha, who realised she had lost her necklace, had gone off to look for it and returned to find the camp had moved on without her. Although her empty howdah (riding enclosure) seemed very light, the men who saddled it ascribed it to Aisha's diminutive frame. She, on the other hand, fell asleep unafraid.

Surely, they would discover her absence and would return for her, she thought. She lay sleeping until she was discovered by Safwan bin Muattal Salami, a Companion of the Prophet. Safwan, who was a heavy sleeper and a late riser, had been assigned to retrieve anything inadvertently left behind by the troops. His job was to follow the trail left by the troops. When he drew near, he recognised Aisha.

Silently, out of reverence for the Prophet's wife, Safwan brought his camel for her to mount. He held the camel's reins and walked ahead, and they travelled in this manner. It was noon by the time they caught up with the rest of the people, who had encamped shortly before.

The sight of Aisha's camel being led by Safwan gladdened the malevolent heart of Abdullah bin Ubay. Here at last was the perfect way to pierce the heart of the Prophet and tarnish the reputation of his favourite wife. He would begin a lie about how Aisha and Safwan had deliberately stayed behind together.

Insinuations and malicious lies were woven and embroidered until they began to look like the fabric of truth. Abdullah's friends and allies gleefully repeated the lies not just among themselves but to the general body of credulous Muslims, who were blinded by the sandstorm of lies swirling around them.

Aisha on the other hand, fell ill after her return to Medina and remained confined to bed for a month. Although Medina was buzzing with the scurrilous and false rumours of her clandestine meeting with Safwan, she was unaware of what was being said.

The only hurt she felt was that her husband would leave immediately after enquiring about her health without even sitting by her side! Moreover, he had nothing to say to her after exchanging greetings. The Prophet himself was considerably hurt that the community was giving credence to what could only be a lie.

His wives had to be beyond reproach, but since Aisha had unwittingly become a target of slander; he himself had to act to control the damage done to his household and the community at large. His anguish grew with the fact that he had not had a single revelation during this period. He consulted with his Companions about how he should deal with the situation affecting his household and all of Medina. Ali subtly advocated separation, but Usama and the others counselled otherwise.

When Aisha herself had recovered from her illness, and one night she went to relieve herself accompanied by Umm Mistah. In the darkness, Umm Mistah tripped over her sheet and then proceeded to curse her son. Aisha rebuked her for her imprecation, but the lady told Aisha she was justified in cursing him. After all, wasn't he also parroting the same lies about Aisha.

“What lies?” asked ‘Aisha. The whole story came rushing out and Aisha listened silently. When she returned it was to ask the Prophet's permission to go to her parents' house. Once she got there her parents

sorrowfully confirmed that all of Medina was whispering about Aisha and Safwan. The tears would not stop. Two nights and a day went by, and Aisha cried while her parents watched and wept too.

After the second night had passed, the Prophet came to see Aisha. Struggling with his own emotions, he said, as befitting the spiritual head of the community and her husband,

“Aisha! I have come to know of this and that about you. If you are innocent, God will bring your innocence to light. If you have sinned, then repent and seek Allah’s forgiveness, for He forgives those who repent.”

Aisha listened without tears. She asked her parents to reply on her behalf, but they sat mute with grief and reverence for the Prophet. Then Aisha spoke in ringing tones:

“By God, I know that the lie had been repeated so much so that it has stuck to your hearts and you people have taken it as true. Now, if I say I am innocent – and God knows well that I am innocent – you will not accept it as true. In case I confess anything – and God knows very well that I am quite innocent –you will take it as true. Thus, I for myself and for you, say what the father of Yusuf said: “...Patience is beautiful. I seek the help of God against what you assert.” (12: 18)

The character of Prophet PbuH in this the most difficult of tests- being so personal and so hurtful not only to him or his beloved wife but to the very concept of his message-is amazingly exemplary. He has to respond to liars without appearing to be using his authority to shut them up and has to comfort his wife who has taken to bed without speaking a word to her husband!

With the above mentioned words Aisha turned her back on the Prophet and lay down. At that moment God sent the Prophet a revelation.

When the state of inspiration ended, the Prophet was smiling. He said,

“O Aisha! God has declared you innocent!”

“Get up and face the Prophet, said Aisha’s mother to her daughter.

“By God! I shall not get up to face him. I shall praise God alone.”, retorted a hurtful heart of Aisha.

The verses that were revealed on this occasion pertained to the exoneration of Aisha and are to be found in Surah Al-Noor, verses eleven through twenty. They state clearly that the people who invented the lie about a chaste woman (whose only sin was negligence) had sinned and so had those who repeated it and believed it.

The verses specifically ordain punishment for slanderers and stipulate a code of conduct for Muslims to safeguard the chastity of their women. It is made a part of one’s faith to avoid suspicion, and to refuse to believe in, and or circulate slander. To repeat unfounded gossip is to defile oneself and society, to bring in discord, and to harm believing women, and in the following verses, God lays down strict punishment for slanderers.

His heart thus burdened with grief, the Prophet went to his Companions and recited before them the verses revealed concerning Aisha’s acquittal. In compliance with the divine injunction in the verses, he ordered punishment for the slanderers, eighty lashes to each of the two males and one female from among the Muslims who had repeated the lies.

Hassan bin Thabit, Mistah bin Athatha and Hamnah bint Jahsh, in bearing the punishment, escaped punishment in the Hereafter and were forgiven. However, Abdullah bin Ubay, the leader of the liars and his accomplices, got off unscathed, unrepentant. They face a far more terrible punishment in the Hereafter.

Lessons from this Incident

Prophet's Pbih conduct and attitude proved beyond any doubt his moral purity, nobility, fairness, tolerance and forbearance. If he had wished, he could have punished the people responsible for the attack severely. But he bore everything with patience until the Divine injunction came down from God. Later, he enforced the punishment only on those three Muslims whose guilt was established, and spared the hypocrites, who pleaded innocent, although it was them who were responsible for spreading the mischief.

The incident also highlights Ayesha's magnanimity. She did not allow the slander against her to colour her judgment of the people circulating it. Hassan bin Thabit had played a prominent role in the campaign of slander against her, yet she continued to treat him with due honour and esteem. When people reminded her that he was the man who had slandered her, she replied,

‘...he it was who used to rebut the anti-Islamic poets on behalf of the Holy Prophet and Islam’,

Thus she acknowledged his service to Islam more than his role in her slander. It is not easy to shun your personal grievances and not to allow the dictates of your ego to supersede your objective judgment. But she did and thus became one of the most prominent of ladies in world history.

Similarly, Abu Bakr and his family responded to the slander against their daughter with dignified silence in spite of being convinced of their daughter's moral character and the falsity of the accusation. Abu Bakr's own relative, Mistah bin Uthatha, whose whole family he had supported all along, continued heaping disgrace on Abu Bakr publicly, yet Abu Bakr neither severed his family relations with him nor stopped monetary help to him and his family.

After the revelation of verses 11-21 of Surah Nour absolving her from the accusation, Abu Bakr swore that he would no longer support Mistah bin Uthatha. This was because the man had shown no regard for the relationship nor for the favours that Abu Bakr had all along been showing him and his family.

However he reviewed his decision after the verse 22 of Surah Noor was revealed

“Do not let the people of virtue and affluence among you swear to suspend donations to their relatives, the needy, and the emigrants in the cause of God. Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not love to be forgiven by God? And God is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (24:22)

On hearing this verse, Abu Bakr immediately said:

"By God! We do want that God should forgive us."

And he again started helping Mistah in a more liberal manner than before. His example was followed by some other companions who had also sworn that they would discontinue helping those who had taken an active part in the slander. All of them revoked their oaths, wiping out the ill-will that had been created by the mischief.

The Treaty of Hdaybia

Shortly after the resolution of the slanderous campaign against Aisha, the Prophet Pbu had a vision. He saw himself and his Companions, entering the Sacred Mosque of Makkah, praying there and then shaving their heads. The Companions were informed forthwith that they were to perform Umrah shortly, and the Arabs living around Medina were also invited to join them on the journey. They, however, were sceptical about going into the stronghold of the Quraish.

It was a dangerous journey as people doubted if the Muslims would even make it to Makkah and back. However, it was the time of

pilgrimage and sacred months so the Quraish would have to risk losing their reputation of hosts of the house of God and hosts of the pilgrims to fight them.

The Prophet set out from Medina along with 1400 Muslims on Monday, the 11th month of the 6th year after migration (6 A.H.). He took along sacrificial animals. At Dhul Halifah, the animals were made to put on collars and their humps were slit, a clear indication that they were meant to be for sacrifice after performing Umrah. The Muslims then donned Ihram (the ritual state of being in pilgrimage dress) and entered the state of consecration.

The Quraish were encamped at Dhul Tawa, determined to prevent the Muslims from performing Umrah, even if it meant another war. They had dispatched Khalid bin Waleed to Qura Al-Ghamim near Usfan to block off the route to Makkah, and had called on the neighbouring tribe for support.

The Prophet consulted with his Companions about the situation, their choices being either to attack the allied tribes or to march ahead to the Kabba and fight those obstructing their worship of God.

Abu Bakr opined,

“We have come to perform Umrah, not to fight; hence we will fight only against those who stand in our way.”

The Prophet agreed with Abu Bakr, and it was decided to proceed on to Makkah.

At midday, the Muslims prayed. Khalid bin Waleed, who was watching their movements closely, decided that the Muslims were vulnerable to attack during prayer, especially while bowing and prostrating, and he decided to fall upon them at the next prayer.

But Khalid was foiled, for between Zhur and Asr, the Prophet received a revelation that the Muslims were not to pray a single congregation.

One group of Muslims was to pray while others stood guard, and then those who had stood guard would pray while the others kept watch. This special form of prayer was termed “Salaah Al-Khauf” (The Prayer in Times of Fear), for it was meant to be performed in times of danger.

The Prophet then decided to take another route to Makkah, and they arrived at Thaniyat Al-Murar to descend at Hdaybia. At this point the Prophet’s camel, Qaswa, knelt down, ignoring the repeated commands of the people around the Prophet. They shrieked,

“Qaswa won’t get up, Qaswa won’t get up!”

The Prophet said calmly: “Qaswa has not refused, for such is not her nature. He who restrained the Elephant is keeping her back. I swear by the One Who holds my life, that if the Quraish propose anything to me which is in keeping with the regard due to God, and ask me to show kindness, I will certainly accede to their request.”

The Prophet then chided the camel and she sprang up. He drove ahead and then halted at Hdaybia.

Negotiations at Hdaybia

The Quraish knew that they cannot fight the pilgrims so they would either have to prove that the Muslims had come with an intent to fight or frighten them away. They resorted to tactics of sending people to achieve these two ends. After the failure of sending Khalid and provoking the Muslims into fighting they now began sending envoys.

The first one of these was a man called Budayl bin Waraqa Khuzai, he appeared with a band of clansmen. They were well-wishers of the Prophet, and brought news of the Makkans determination to fight the Muslims and to prevent them from entering the Sacred Mosque.

The Prophet Pbh understood the reason why Quraish had tried to sent him with this scare tactics so he gave him an answer that put the ball

back into the court of Quraish. He said that he had come to perform pilgrimage and not to fight. However, he continued, if the Quraish insisted on fighting, he would fight back until God granted him victory or death.

Budayl bin Warqa went back and relayed the Prophet's message to the Quraish, who then sent Mikraz bin Hafs to parley with the Prophet. He too was told the same thing. Then came Halees bin Ikrama of Banu Kinana. When he appeared, the Prophet said to his Companions,

“This man belongs to a tribe that holds sacrificial animals in high esteem, so make them stand up.”

The Companions made the animals rise, and they themselves rose to greet Halees, chanting “Labbayk.” Hearing the call to God signifying that the Muslims were to obey, praise and worship Him alone, Halees was deeply moved. He remarked,

“Praise be to God! It is certainly wrong to stop these people from going to the House of God. Shall the people of Lakhm, Juzam and Hamir perform Hajj while the son of Abdul Muttalib is barred from the House of God? By the Lord of the Kabba the Quraish will meet their doom. These people have come to perform Umrah.”

Prophet's deep insight and knowledge of the culture and subculture of his people had managed to completely overturn the scheme and plot of the Quraish and this was a fatal blow to the tactics of Quraish.

The Quraish rebuked him for his outburst in defence of the Muslims. “Sit down! You are a simple nomad! You don't know their tricks.”

They then sent Urwa bin Mas'ood Thaqafi to try and cause trouble by creating division in the ranks of Muslims and by trying to provoke Prophet PbuH himself.

Urwa now tried the tactic that he was sent for in order to dissuade the Prophet from entering Makkah, pointing out the precarious situation of the Prophet:

“Have you heard of any Arab who has harmed his own people? And if the opposite comes to pass and you are defeated, I see sitting about you scoundrels who will leave you in the lurch.”

Prophet PbuH quickly understood his game plan and kept silent however Abu Bakr burst out furiously,

“Go suck the genitals of your idol, Lat! Shall we desert our Prophet?”

Urwah was waiting for anyone else to say something and closely observing the reactions of the companions. He would gesticulate frequently and touch the Prophet’s beard, at which Mugheera bin Shuba would indignantly throw off Urwah’s hand with the hilt of his sword:

“Keep your hand away from the sacred beard of the Prophet”

As Urwah watched the Prophet and his Companions interact, he was struck by the Companions’ love, loyalty, and respect for the Prophet , and he reported to the Quraish:

“O people! By God, I have been to the courts of kings and seen the splendour of Caesar, Chosroes and Najaashi, but by God, never have I seen any king so revered as Muhammed. I noticed that if he spat, his Companions ran to get the spittle on their hands and rubbed it on their hands and faces. If he asked for anything, they vied to comply with his order; if he performed ablution, they struggled to get the water he had used, and if he spoke, everybody listened rapt. Nobody dared even look straight into his eyes. Their [the Muslims] terms are reasonable. Accept them.”

Having failed once again in their provocations as a last resort the Quraish sent seventy to eighty boisterous youths who came down from Mount Tanyeem late one night and sneaked into the Muslim camp with

the intention of subverting the peace talks. Every one of them was rounded up, but the Prophet forgave their misconduct and set them free.

The incident embarrassed the Quraish and impelled them to seek peace.

At this point when the emissaries had come and gone, questioning the Muslims' motives. The Prophet PbuH decided to send his own emissary; Uthman bin Affan, to state that he had come only to perform Umrah. Uthman entered Makkah under the protection of Abban bin Sayeed Umwi and conveyed the message. The Quraish offered him the opportunity to circumambulate the Kabba, but he refused to do so while the Prophet himself was prevented from performing this act of worship.

The Quraish decided to keep Uthman with them for a while, perhaps to send him back after they had something concrete to offer the Muslims. But with the delay rumours had spread that he had been slain. Since the assassination of a messenger is a declaration of war, the Prophet had to prepare for war.

Standing under a tree, the Prophet exhorted his followers to take an oath. They came up swearing to remain on the battlefield and to fight unto death. Placing one hand on the other, the Prophet said, "This is the pledge on behalf of Uthman."

Just then, Uthman himself came up, and the believers were spared from going into battle, but they had proved their sincerity with their pledge. God revealed a verse referring to the sanctity of the covenant:

"God was pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto you beneath the tree." (48: 18)

This pledge under the tree came to be called, "Baya Al-Ridwan," or the pledge of those who had earned God's pleasure.

The Treaty

When the Quraish came to know of this oath of allegiance, they decided not to court war and sent Suhayl bin Amr to make peace. At the end of the prolonged talks, the following were agreed upon:

Firstly, the Prophet would go back that year with the Muslims without making Umrah. He was to come to Makkah the next year, stay for three days, and he and his followers were not to carry any weapons except swords in their sheaths.

Secondly, a truce was to be in effect for ten years. Also, whoever wished to form an alliance with the Prophet would be permitted to do so and, likewise, anybody could come to a similar agreement with the Quraish.

Lastly, anyone from the Quraish who escaped to Medina had to be returned to Makkah, but the Quraish were not required to extradite any of the Prophet's followers who returned to Makkah. The Prophet then sent for Ali and bade him write:

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Suhayl protested, "I do not recognise the Most Gracious you name."

The Prophet then asked Ali to write: In Your name, O God. He then dictated to Ali, "This is what the Prophet Muhammed has decided." Once again Suhayl objected,

"If we believed that you were God's messenger, we would not have turned you away from the House of God, not fought with you."

"I am God's Messenger even if you disbelieve me," replied the Prophet . He asked Ali to erase what he had written earlier and write

"Muhammed bin Abdullah" in place of "the Prophet Muhammed."

“By God, I cannot do it,” replied Ali. The Prophet however, asked Ali to point out the words to be rubbed out. Ali pointed them out and the Prophet expunged them. Thereafter two copies of the document were written – one for the Quraish and another for the Muslims.

The peace treaty was still in the process of being drafted when Abu Jandal, the Muslim son of Suhayl bin Amr, came on the scene, struggling in fetters, for his father had demanded he be returned to Makkah. The Prophet protested, “But the treaty is still being drafted. It has not been finalised.”

Suhayl said, “If it is so, then I am not prepared to make any agreement with you.”

The Prophet Pbu had to return him!

The Prophet Pbu said to him,

“Be patient and take your extradition as a source of immense reward. God will bestow His blessings on you and on other oppressed Muslims.”

The Mood after Treaty

After the peace treaty was finalised, the Prophet said to his Companions, “Get up and slaughter your animals.” None of them got up. The Prophet repeated this call thrice, but his words went unheeded. He then went to his wife Umm Salamah , and described to her the state of affairs. She advised the Prophet to sacrifice his animal and get his head shaved without talking to anybody.

The Prophet did so. Moreover, in order to encourage the Muslims and to give them something to cheer about, the Prophet also slaughtered a camel of Abu Jahl-which he had captured before-that had a silver ring

in its nostril. This made the Companions take note, and they sacrificed their animals and shaved their heads.

The Muslims were dejected and depressed about the treaty, which to them was weighted heavily in favour of the Quraish. However, their reverence for the Prophet kept them silent.

Their depression stemmed from two main reasons. They had marched out of Medina with the intention of performing Umrah, and here they were returning without even having entered Makkah. Then there was the matter of the clause which compelled them to return anyone coming over to them from the Quraish, while the Quraish were not bound to return any Muslim who had crossed over to their side. Poor Abu Jandal was being dragged back to Makkah against his will simply because his polytheistic father wanted him back.

The Prophet tried to console them saying that they would perform Umrah the next year in fulfilment of his dream. As for the second clause, he satisfied his men by saying that any Muslim who went to the Quraish was being sent by God to live and preach there, while anyone from the Quraish who came to them had come for shelter and would find it.

He was pointing towards the fact that several Muslims were still in Abyssinia, outside the jurisdiction of the treaty, and any Muslim from Makkah could simply flee there. Despite the Prophet's efforts to cast a favourable light on the situation, the treaty still seemed in favour of the Quraish. Umar bin Khattab asked,

“O Messenger of God, are we not on the path of truth and they on that of untruth?”

The Prophet assented: Umar then asked, “Are our slain not in Paradise and theirs in Hell?” The Prophet affirmed it was so.

“Why then should we accept unjust terms and leave when the issue has not been decided?” Umar asked, voicing what everyone wanted to say.

The Prophet replied, “O son of Khattab! As God’s Prophet, I cannot disobey Him. He will help us and will not allow us to be ruined.” Still seething with resentment, Umar went to Abu Bakr . He recounted his conversation with the Prophet and got the same answer from Abu Bakr, who added,

“Hold on to the stirrup of the Prophet until death, for, by God, he is right.”

God revealed the following verse concerning the treaty to strengthen the Prophet’s resolve and comfort the Muslims:

“Verily, I have granted you a manifest victory.” (48: 1)

Following this the Prophet sent for Umar and recited the verse before him. Umar remarked sceptically,

“Is this a victory, O Messenger of God?”

The Prophet replied, “Yes.” This firm assertion of the Prophet satisfied Umar, who went back silenced at last. Later, Umar was engulfed with guilt at having challenged the Prophet’s judgment, and he tried to atone for his lapse by giving charity, fasting, and praying, and freeing slaves in hopes of gaining forgiveness.

Women Refugees

Shortly after the Treaty of Hudaibia, some Muslim women came to the Prophet seeking asylum, while the pagans demanded their return. The Prophet rejected the pagans’ demand, saying that the treaty had nothing to do with the women.

God sent down his command:

“O you who believe! When believing women come to you as refugees, determine if they are actually believers, and God knows best as to their faith. And if you are satisfied that they are Believers, do not return them to the unbelievers, for they are no longer lawful wives for unbelievers, and unbelievers are not lawful husbands for them. But reimburse their former husbands the dowry they gave to them, and there will be no sin on you if you marry these women after giving them a dowry. Likewise, do not remain married to women who do not believe, and ask them to return the dowry you gave them. Let them also ask for what they spent while married to you. This is God’s decision: He judges between you, and God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.” (60: 10)

Alliances and Freedom for Makkans

The next three years from the 6 A.H. till 9 A.H. saw peace which was much needed by the Muslims and both Prophet PbuH as well as the Quraish entered into alliances during this period. One such alliance was the clan of Banu Khuzaa who sided with the Prophet in the wake of the recent treaty and ultimately joined hands with the Muslims. They had been allies of the Banu Hashim (the Prophet’s clan) even during the Age of Ignorance, while Banu Bakr, their rivals, went to the side of the Quraish and ultimately became the cause of the conquest of Makkah.

In the meantime, the Muslims who had been unable to leave Makkah continued to face persecution. One of them, Abu Baseer, escaped and headed straight for Medina. The Quraish sent two of their own men to the Prophet to demand his return, and the Prophet handed him over. At Adhul Hulayfa, Abu Baseer killed one of his captors, while the other, who escaped, reappeared before the Prophet saying,

“My companion was killed, and I too am about to be killed.” Just then Abu Baseer arrived on the scene, and when the Prophet rebuked him, and in fear of being sent back to the pagans, he fled and settled on the coast. Abu Jandal also escaped and joined Abu Baseer.

Henceforth everyone who fled Makkah after embracing Islam joined Abu Baseer. Eventually these Muslims formed a colony. With their new found strength, they began intercepting each and every trade caravan of the Quraish en route to Syria, falling on them and seizing their goods and men.

The Quraish were so unnerved by this new stronghold of Muslims on their doorstep that they pleaded with the Prophet to call the band of Muslims to Medina. The Quraish, for their part, guaranteed that anybody going to the Muslim side would be left in peace.

The truce that ensued with the Treaty of Hudaibia profoundly affected the spread of Islam. Muslims were able to mix with other Arabs and invite them to Islam with such success that more people became Muslim in the following two years than had done in the previous nineteen.

Even the elite among the Quraish, Amr bin As, Khalid bin Waleed and Uthman bin Talha appeared before the Prophet with the confession of faith on their lips, willing to give their lives, property, and power for God. As they came up to the Prophet, he remarked,

“Makkah has entrusted the lobes of its heart to us.”

The Prophet's letters to Monarchs

Once he had finalised the Treaty of Hudaibia, the Prophet was free to spread the word of God farther. He sent letters to monarchs and nobles of several lands inviting them to Islam and reminding them of their responsibility towards God.

Among these letters were the ones sent to The king of Abyssinia, Letter to Chosroes (Khusro Pervez), the king of Persia, Letter to Muqauqis, king of Alexandria and Egypt, Letter to Heraclius the Roman Emperor.

Heraclius had come walking to Jerusalem from Hims in Syria. His pilgrimage was an offering of thanks to God for the Roman victory over the Persians. Upon receipt of the Prophet's letter, he rushed a courier to bring forward any man familiar with the Prophet. A caravan of the Quraish headed by Abu Sufyan was in the area and was summoned before Heraclius and his courtiers. Heraclius inquired, "Who is closest to Muhammed in terms of lineage?" "Abu Sufyan," the people revealed.

Heraclius called Abu Sufyan closer and seated the others behind him. He then announced to the Quraish, "I shall ask him [Abu Sufyan] about him [the Prophet]. If he tells a lie, you should refute it." Abu Sufyan felt obliged to tell the truth.

Heraclius then summarised all he had heard:

You said that he is of noble lineage. Prophets always come from the best lineage. You said that none of you made such a claim before him. If it were so, I would say that he were imitating a claim made by someone.

You said that none among his ancestors happened to be a king. Had anyone among his ancestors been a king, I would have surmised that he was trying to recover his lost kingdom. I asked if you knew him to be untruthful before he claimed to be a prophet, and you said "No." I know that it is not possible for a man to be truthful to people but to mince the truth with regard to God.

You told me that the poor and the weak followed him. It is true that prophets are always followed by humble and the poor in the beginning. You said that they are gaining in numbers. Faith is always like that, for it goes on increasing until it triumphs. You told me that none had ever turned away from him and rejected his faith. It is a fact that faith once settled in the heart never leaves it.

You told me that he never broke his word. Prophets never break their promises. You said that he asked you to worship one God, not to associate anything with Him, bade you turn away from the idols and to offer prayer, practice truth, piety and chastity.

If what you have said is true, very soon he will conquer the ground that is beneath my feet. I knew that a prophet was about to appear, but I never thought that he would come from you. If it had been possible, I would have called upon him, and if I had been with him, I would have washed his feet.

Heraclius asked for the letter again and he read it out. The assembly erupted in surprise and alarm at the Prophet's message. Heraclius dismissed Abu Sufyan and his men to bring the situation under control. Outside, Abu Sufyan said to his men with foreboding,

“The affair of Abu Kabsha has grown so powerful that even the king of Banu Asfar (the Romans) fears him.” Each day Abu Sufyan grew convinced that Islam would prevail, until God favoured him with Islam.

Heraclius was so impressed with what he had heard that he presented Dihya bin Khalifah (the bearer of the letter) with money and expensive robes. Heraclius then went back to Hims, where he summoned his chiefs and courtiers in a closed assembly and addressed them,

“O Romans, if you desire safety and guidance so that your kingdom shall be firmly established follow this Prophet.” The gathering took flight like wild donkeys but found the doors closed.

When Heraclius saw his nobles' opposition to the message of Islam, he called them back and added, “What I just said was to test your constancy and faith. I am now satisfied of your firmness and devotion.” The courtiers lowered their heads, pleased at his words.

The Prophet Pjuh also sent letters to Haudha bin Ali, chief of Yamamah, to the ruler of Bahrain, to the rulers of Oman and so many

other notable chiefs of countries and powerful tribes in and around Arabia.

Thus the Prophet Pbuh within these three years had managed to convey his message to wide and far and the whole of Arabian Peninsula as well as the political powers of his time were addressed and conveyed the message with no ambiguity.

Battle of Khayber

The Jews living in the oasis of Khaybar, located about 90 miles from Medina in the north-western part of the Arabian Peninsula, in modern-day Saudi Arabia. Jewish tribes reportedly arrived in Hijaz in the wake of the Jewish-Roman wars and introduced agriculture, putting them in a culturally, economically and politically dominant position. Khayber had now become the hotbed of all conspiracies against Medina especially after Banu Nadhir had arrived there.

Jews living in Khaybar were planning to unite with other Jews from Banu Wadi Qurra, Taima', Fadak as well as Ghatafan Arab tribe to attack Medina. Scottish historian William Montgomery Watt notes the presence in Khaybar of the Banu Nadir, who were working with neighbouring Arab tribes to protect themselves from the Islamic community in Medina who had earlier sent into exile the Jewish tribes for violating the terms of the Charter of Medina and for conspiring to kill Muhammed Pbuh.

Leaving Medina in the care of Saba bin Arfatah Ghafari, the Prophet set out along a well-known caravan route. Halfway down, he diverted his troops to another route that led to Khaybar so as to block the Jews' escape to Syria. This took place in the 7th year after migration and after a two to three week siege, when all the forts seemed to fall into the hands of Muslims the Jews negotiated for peace. They agreed to go into exile with their families if they were guaranteed safe conduct. The Prophet acceded to their request. He also allowed them to carry

whatever they could along with loads of gold, silver, horse, and weapons.

However, if they hid anything, the agreement would be nullified. The Jews handed over two or three citadels to the Muslims, who also got a hundred coats of mail, four hundred swords, a thousand lances and five hundred Arabian bows. Moreover, they found some Hebrew scriptures that they returned at the request of the Jews.

The surrender was not completely unanimous. Some of the Jewish chiefs such as Kinana bin Abul-Huqayq and his brother contravened the terms that had been agreed upon and attempted to slip past with a huge hoard of gold, silver and jewellery. They thus lost the guarantee of safe passage and were killed for breach of their promise.

Among the prisoners was Kinana's widow, Safiyah bint Huayy bin Akhtab, who was later to become one of the Mothers of the Faithful with her marriage to the Prophet. Thus ended a long campaign which was in fact a series of battles for Khaybar, instead of a single event. At the close of hostilities, between fifteen and eighteen Muslims were martyred, while the number of Jews killed stood at ninety-three.

Although the terms of the surrender called for exile, which had been conceded in place of death, many of the Jews were reluctant to leave Khaybar. Here it must be borne in mind that when a Messenger of God presents his message to his nation and the nation refuses to accept it and then decides to fight God's Messenger then their punishment is either death by natural disasters sent by God or death at the hands of His Messenger's forces.

This is an unchanging law of God that has been remained immutable throughout history and can be seen implemented on the nations of Noah, Aad, Thamud, Lot and others. It is under this very law that the Quraish of Makkah were punished and the Jews of Medina were punished. However, Jews being the people of book and believers in one

true God were given respite to think again by allowing them to be exiled from the land of the Prophet.

After obtaining immunity, the Jews of Khayber submitted a new proposal before the Prophet. The implored,

“O Muhammed, let us stay to till this land, for we know more about it than you do. We will farm the land for payment of half its fruits and grain.” The Prophet granted their request, and subsequently the Jews lived in peace and security as wards of the Muslim state. However, during the caliphate of Umar, they resumed their subversive acts and were eventually exiled.

Immigrants from Abyssinia Arrive

At the end of the Battle of Khaybar, Amr bin Umayya Damri, the envoy of the Prophet to the king of Abyssinia, returned with the Muslim emigrants. A band of them marched towards Khaybar, hoping to join the war, while the rest of the returning exiles went to Medina. Among those who headed for the battlefield were Jafar bin Abi Talib and Abu Musa Ashari.

By the time they got to Khaybar, it had already been conquered, but the spoils of war were yet to be distributed. The Prophet kissed Jafar’s forehead in welcome and said,

“By God, I do not know which pleases me more, - the conquest of Khaybar or the arrival of Jafar.”

Along with those who actually fought in the battles, Jafar received a share of the booty for attempting to participate in Jihad. Abu Hurayrah, who is one of the main narrators of Hadeeth, was also among those who presented himself to the Prophet after the conquest. He had accepted the faith when he arrived in Medina, while the Prophet was away leading the campaign at Khaybar. After obtaining permission from the

authorities of Medina, he left for Khaybar to enlist in the Muslim army, but arrived after the war.

The Prophet is Poisoned

Now that peace prevailed and the threats of death and exile had receded, the Jews launched a different kind of warfare. They conspired to kill the Prophet. Through the wife of Sallam bin Mishkam, they presented a roasted goat to the Prophet.

Knowing that the Prophet relished the shoulder, she peppered that portion liberally with poison. One morsel was enough to warn the Prophet, who quickly spat it out saying,

“This is poisoned.”

Upon being summoned by the Prophet Pbuḥ, who wished to ascertain the facts, the Jews and the woman confessed their crime and said,

“We thought that if you were a pretender, we would get rid of you, but if you were truly a Prophet, the poison would be ineffective.”

At that the Prophet forgave them, but when Bishr bin Bara bin Marur died from eating the meat, the woman was killed as retribution.

The Property of Fadak

Once the Prophet arrived at Khaybar, he sent Mahisa bin Masood eastward to the township of Fadak. It was about a two day journey from Khaybar and is now known as Hayet in the Hail region of modern Saudi Arabia. The Jews there were also called on to accept Islam, but they deferred their reply, waiting to see which way the battle for Khaybar went.

The conquest of Khaybar propelled them into starting negotiations, and they petitioned the Prophet to grant them the same terms as the people of Khaybar. The Prophet accepted. The land of Fadak was allotted to the Prophet. From its income, he would spend on himself and Banu Hisham, his clansmen. He also used the money for charitable purposes, such as financing the marriages of needy young men. Prophet Pbuh and after him his family was to be the caretakers or guardians of this property which they could use as they pleased but could not take ownership of it.

The Dream of Umrah Comes True

A year had gone by since the Treaty of Hdaybia, and in accordance with the pact, the Muslims were now free to set out for Umrah. After handing over the affairs of Medina to Abu Rahm Ghifari, the Prophet started out for Makkah with sixty sacrificial camels.

As they neared Makkah, the pilgrims took with them only sheathed swords, adhering to the agreement at Hdaybia. They entered the city, mounted on his camel, Qaswa, flanked by his armed Companions, and chanting, “Labbyak,” the Prophet rode into the city. Thus they all moved towards the Kabba.

The Prophet Pbuh touched the Black Stone with a stick. Still seated on Qaswa, he circumambulated the Kabba, and the Muslims followed suit. They circled round the Kabba with their right shoulders uncovered in a display of their valour. After all, they had won the right to worship God in His Sacred Mosque in full view of the pagans.

The pagans of Makkah sat on mount Qayiqah north of the Kabba, observing the newcomers in amazement and reluctant admiration. They had heard that the pilgrims were a sickly lot, reeling under the fevers rampant in Yathrib, as they still referred to Medina, but what they saw was different. These were not feverish, emaciated men, but proud sturdy warriors who compared with the best of their own.

Thus, the Prophet's strategy succeeded. Well aware of the mentality of the Quraish, the Prophet had instructed his Companions to run while performing circumambulation in order to show off their strength to the pagans. However, they were not to run between the Yemini pillar and the Black Stone, for this position lay south, out of the pagan's range of vision.

The Liberation of Kabba

In Ramadan, the ninth month of the 8th year after migration (8 A.H.), God honoured His Messenger with the completion of his mission by liberating the Kabba from the impurity of paganism and idol-worship. The event was the greatest victory in the history of the faith. Through it, God elevated and exalted His religion and restored the house of God to its rightful owners and back to its original form and purpose.

He liberated His Sacred Mosque and His city from the clutches of ignorance and pagan rituals. The conquest of Makkah led to people entering Islam in multitudes. The seeds of the battle lay in the Treaty of Hdaybia. According to its terms, all parties were free to enter alliances with either the Quraish or the Prophet. Accordingly Banu Khuzaa, as previously mentioned, sided with the Muslims, while their rivals, the Banu Bakr, entered a pact with the Quraish.

The Banu Bakr and Banu Khuzaa had been feuding long before the advent of Islam and were in the midst of a rare peaceful interlude during the campaign of Hdaybia. With the mighty Quraish on their side, the Banu Bakr decided to capitalise on their strength, and in the 8th month of 8 A.H. they made a night raid on Banu Khuzaa as they camped at a spring called Wateer.

Banu Bakr killed more than twenty men of Banu Khuzaa and drove the rest into Makkah. Contravening all rules, they fought them even inside the sacrosanct city with the support of the Quraish, who clandestinely helped them with men and materials.

Since Banu Khuzaa were bound in allegiance with the Muslims and some of their men had embraced Islam, they reported the clash to the Prophet, who assured them, “By God, we shall protect you with what we protect ourselves.”

The Quraish, on the other hand, knew they had transgressed greatly grew worried about the possible consequences of violating the treaty. They therefore sent Abu Sufyan bin Harb to Medina to ratify the treaty and seek its extension. Abu Sufyan came to Medina on a mission, and while he was there he visited his daughter, Umm Habeebah who was married to the Prophet.

When Abu Sufyan made to sit on the Prophet’s bed, she rolled it up. His pride hurt, Abu Sufyan said,

“O daughter, I cannot understand whether you think the bed is too good for me or that I am too good for the bed.” She replied,

“The fact is, that it is the Prophet’s bed, and you are an unclean polytheist.”

“By God,” said Abu Sufyan, stung at his daughter’s succinct and unflattering description of him,

“Evil has come over you since you left me.”

Abu Sufyan then went to the Prophet and talked to him about ratifying the treaty but did not receive a reply. Then he went to Abu Bakr and asked him to speak on his behalf to the Prophet, but Abu Bakr refused. He then approached Umar, who not only rejected his offer, but also spoke to him rudely. Ali , when approached, pleaded his inability to intervene.

He suggested that Abu Sufyan simply announce a general cessation of hostilities and leave. Abu Sufyan proceeded accordingly and returned to Makkah. The Prophet, on the other hand, had started preparations for war. He issued orders to his Companions and had the news announced

among the Bedouins on the outskirts of Medina, even as he enjoined secrecy. He prayed,

“O God, confound the spies and the informers of the Quraish so that we may take them by surprise in their own land.”

Hatib bin Abu Baltaa, however, wrote a letter to the Quraish informing them that the Prophet intended to attack Makkah. He handed over the letter to a woman, promising to pay her for delivering it to the Quraish.

The Prophet who had received divine revelation about Hatib’s treachery, sent off Ali, Miqdad, Zubayr and Abu Marthad Ghanwi in pursuit of the woman. He said to them,

“Ride until you come to the meadow of Khakh. There you will find a woman travelling on a camel. She has a letter which you must take from her.”

They went off to find the woman, who denied having any such letter with her. Only after the men threatened to search her person did she draw the letter out from her tresses and hand it over to them. The company took the letter and returned to the Prophet who summoned Hatib. The Prophet said,

“What’s this Hatib?” Hatib offered him this explanation,

“I have my family in Makkah, but no kinsmen among the Quraishi so that they would protect my family. I have not done this to renounce Islam or to commit unbelief.”

Umar said furiously, “O Messenger of God, give me leave to cut off his head. He has committed breach of trust with God and His Prophet, and has turned Hypocrite.”

The Prophet accepted his excuse by saying,

“He was present at Badr, do you know Umar, perhaps God has looked favourably on those who were present at Badr and forgiven them”

At these words, Umar dissolved into tears saying,

“God and His Messenger know better.”

On The Way to Kabba

On Ramadan 10, 8 A.H., the Prophet left Medina for Makkah. Ten thousand Companions accompanied him. At Jahfa, the Prophet came across his uncle Abbas, who was en route with his family to Medina after converting to Islam.

On reaching Kadeed, the Prophet found fasting unbearable while travelling. He broke his fast and told his Companions to do the same. He then resumed his journey until he arrived at Marra Al-Dhahran around the time of Isha prayer.

Each soldier was instructed to light a fire for himself, and in this way ten thousand fires burned in the night, with Umar bin Khattab supervising the whole exercise. The spectacle of ten thousand campfires startled Abu Sufyan bin Harb, commander of the pagans. He brought along Hakim bin Hazam and Budayl bin Waraqa to observe the sight and said,

“Never have I seen a fire and troops as I find today.”

Budayl commented, “It’s probably Khuzaa.” Abu Sufyan dismissed his remark saying, “Banu Khuzaa are too inferior to have such a fire and force.”

As Abbas was making rounds on the back of the Prophet’s mule, he heard a voice and he called out in instant recognition, it was Abu Sufyan. He had come to see Prophet PbuH. Abbas said, “If any Muslim

learns of your presence, you will surely be killed. Here, ride on the back of my mule and I will take you to the Prophet.”

Umar rushed towards the Prophet to inform him of the unwelcome visitor. Abbas, on the other hand, spurred his mule ahead and reached the Prophet before Umar did. Umar, undaunted, followed them in and asked the Prophet for permission to kill Abu Sufyan.

Abbas, interjected, “I have given him shelter.” He then caught the Prophet’s head and said, “None will whisper with the Prophet tonight other than myself.” Umar repeatedly asked for the Prophet’s consent to kill Abu Sufyan, but the Prophet was silent.

Turning to Abbas the Prophet said, “Take him [Abu Sufyan] to your house and come to me in tomorrow morning.” Morning arrived and so did Abu Sufyan. The Prophet said to him,

“Woe to you Abu Sufyan, it is not time you acknowledge that there is no god but One true God?”

Abu Sufyan said, “May my mother and father be your ransom, how kind and noble you are. I think that if there had been another god besides God, he would have been of help to me on this day.”

The Prophet said again, “Woe to you Abu Sufyan! Is it not time that you acknowledge me as God’s Prophet and Messenger?”

Abu Sufyan said, “I still have some doubt as to that.” Abbas intervened saying, “Embrace Islam before you lose your head.”

Abu Sufyan then recited the confession of faith and thus he entered Islam.

Abbas said, “O Messenger of God! Abu Sufyan loves honour. Bestow some honour on him.” The Prophet said,

“Very well then, anyone who enters Abu Sufayn’s house is safe, he who shuts his door upon himself is safe, and he who enters the Sacred Mosque is safe.”

The same morning the Prophet left his camp for Makkah.

He instructed Abbas to take Abu Sufyan to a hill at the end of the valley, where he could review the Muslim troops on the march. Abbas obeyed the Prophet’s instructions and took Abu Sufyan to observe the Muslim army that surged like an ocean in front of him.

Different tribes marched by Abu Sufyan with their tribal colours, and as each marched ahead, he asked Abbas the name of the tribe, he mumbled gloomily, “What have I to do with them?”

Then the detachment of the Ansar with Saad bin Ubadah holding the flag. Saad passed Abu Sufyan and called out, “Abu Sufyan, today is a day of conflict and bloodshed. Today the Kabba will be made lawful for us.”

Abu Sufyan said, “O Abbas! Congratulations on the day of destruction and plunder.”

Finally, the Prophet himself passed by, flanked by the Muhajireen and Ansar who were completely covered in armour save their eyes. Abu Sufyan sighed and said,

“Abbas, who are these?” When Abbas told him that it was the Prophet approaching, accompanied by the Ansar and the Muhajireen, Abu Sufyan said,

“Who has the power to resist them? The empire of your nephew has assumed splendid proportions.”

Abbas said, “Such is Prophethood.”

Abu Sufyan said in resignation, “Yes, of course.”

Abu Sufyan took Saad's challenge very seriously, and he went to the Prophet and repeated what Saad had said. The Prophet was displeased with Saad's bragging and replied:

“Nay, the Kabba will be raised in honour today; the Kabba will be clothed today.”

Saying this, the Prophet took the flag from Saad and gave it to his son, Qays, for he was worried that in the euphoria of victory Saad might unleash terror on the citizens of Makkah.

As the Prophet passed by, Abu Sufyan hurried back to Makkah and announced loudly:

“O people of the Quraish, this is Muhammed who has come to you with an army you cannot resist. Now he who enters Abu Sufyan's house will be safe.”

“God destroy you, cried some of the Quraish in dismay.

“How can your house accommodate us all?”

Abu Sufyan added, “He who shuts his door upon himself will also be safe, just as he who enters the Sacred Mosque will be safe.” At that, the people dispersed to take shelter in their houses and in the Kabba.

When the Prophet arrived at Dhu Tuwa, he ordered Khalid bin Waleed and the left flank of the army to enter the lower part of Makkah via Kada. Anyone among the Quraish who resisted was to be killed. The army was to proceed and meet up with the Prophet at Mount Safa.

At this stage the Quraish assembled some of their men under Safwan Ibn Umayyah, Ikramah Abi Jahl and Sahl ibn Amr at Khandama and entrusted them with the last vestige of resistance against the Muslim army. If they too fell, there was no choice but to accept the Muslim supremacy over Makkah. And indeed that day there was no choice but to accept God's decree. After nearly twenty-one years of patience and

endurance of persecution, God's Messenger would finally enter His Sacred Mosque, victorious and unchallenged.

Khalid and his men passed the company and made short work of the Makkan resistance. Twelve of the pagans were killed and the rest took to their heels. Once he had dismissed this contingent, no barriers remained in Khalid's way. He and his men charged into Makkah, marching through the streets and by lanes without any opposition. Two men who got separated from them were killed. Finally, at Safa, Khalid and his men met up with the Prophet.

At last, the moment ordained by God arrived, and once again the Judgement has been passed against those who resisted God's Messenger. A miniature judgement day was once again witnessed by mankind in this world. The purpose of sending the Messenger's is to establish a miniature judgement day wherein all those who reject the true faith are punished and all those who believe are saved and prevail over their enemies.

Finally His servant and ambassador to mankind was free to worship Him alone without impediment. Humble in victory, flanked by his followers, the Prophet entered the Sacred Mosque reciting Surah Fath. He then kissed the Black Stone and circumambulated the Kabba. Within and around it were 360 idols that the pagans had placed over the years.

He prodded each with a stick in his hands reciting the following verses:

“Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Truly, falsehood is ever bound to vanish.” (17: 81)

“The Truth has arrived, and falsehood can neither prove nor disprove anything.” (34: 49)

The Prophet PbuH then wanted to enter Kabba but found that the Kabba door was locked. He said, "Who has the key?" and was told that

Uthman Ibn Talha had it. Prophet sent Ali to take the key from Uthman. Ali went to him and asked, "Can you please give me key?".

Uthman replied, "Why you are asking? Is someone at Makkah?".

Ali replied, "Muhummed wants this key to enter the Kabba."

Uthman refused to hand it over. Ali snatched key from him and brought it to Prophet Pbuh.

Prophet Pbuh however later told Ali to

“Return this key to its owner.”

Prophet Pbuh told Ali to return the key to Uthman Ibn Talha and to ask forgiveness for what he did. Ali went to Uthman and said to him:

“O Uthman, I am here to return to you this key which you gave me and please forgive me for this my deed.”

Uthman laughed at him and said, “First you came here to snatch the key from me and now you come to me to return the key”

Ali said, “I took the key from you, but the Prophet Pbuh asked me to return it to you.”

Uthman, impressed by this show of magnanimity, embraced Islam and the Prophet Pbuh handed the key to the Shayba family, announcing,

“Take it, O Children of Talha, eternally up to the Day of Resurrection, and it will not be taken from you unless by an unjust, oppressive tyrant.”

Thereafter Uthman ibn Talha was acknowledged as one of Prophet’s best companions.

Having opened the door all the idols inside the Kabba were removed and destroyed, and all the pictures rubbed out. Following this, the Prophet entered the structure with Usama bin Zayd and Bilal and shut the door. He then faced the front wall and stood at a distance of three cubits thereof, and keeping one pillar on his left, two on his right, and three at the rear, offered two Rakah in prayer. He then went around the Sacred Mosque praising and glorifying God.

All Forgiven This Day

By this time the whole of Makkah had assembled in the precincts of Kabba. The Prophet then opened the door of the Kabba. The area around the Kabba was packed with the Quraish, who apprehensively awaited his next step. The Prophet stood at the door of the Kabba holding its frame, while the Quraish arrayed themselves in front of him.

All his persecutors watched the whole purification of Kabba unfold in front of their very eyes. All of them humbled and conquered. The Prophet Pbuh however far from being inebriated with power or boastful with pride spoke at length, as he explained several injunctions of Islam and annulled all pagan practices.

He then asked the Quraish,

“O Quraish, what do you think I am about to do with you?”

“We hope for the best,” they replied. “You are a noble brother and son of a noble brother.”

The Prophet said simply: “Have no fear this day: go your way and you are all free.”

I say to you what Prophet Joseph said to his unkind brothers

“This day let no reproach or blame be against you. May God forgive you your sins: for He is the most merciful of the merciful!” (12:92)

The Prophet descended and sat in the Sacred Mosque. He then made it clear to everyone and declared by officially handing over the keys to Uthman bin Talha and said, “The key shall remain with you and none but a tyrant would take it from you.”

The Prophet then climbed Mount Safa until he could see the Kabba. He then raised his hands in prayer. When he had finished, the people came up to confess their faith and pledge their allegiance. Among those who became Muslim that day was Abu Qahafa, the father of his dear Companion, Abu Bakr, and the Prophet expressed great joy at his conversion.

Men and women gave their allegiance to Prophet PbuH whilst Umar bin Khattab sat below the Prophet’s seat, relaying the Prophet’s words to the people, and administering the oath of allegiance on behalf of the Prophet.

Adhan on Rooftop of Kabba

When it was time for Zuhr (afternoon) prayer, the Prophet asked Bilal to call the Adhan from the roof of the Kabba as a proclamation of the dominance of Islam. How pleasing to Muslim ears and how loathsome to the polytheists it was to hear the declaration of one true God’s supremacy in His Sacred Mosque. A declaration that had at its very heart the crushing defeat for multiple human societal vices.

A man was standing on top of the house of God, which was revered by the pagans as something unthinkable to be climbed on top of. A black man was given this honour thus cutting the very roots of any racist mentality. The next social set up to be shattered was the fact that it was a former slave who was bestowed with the honour of this great call.

It was not just a call for prayer but a very loud and clear declaration of the complete transformation that Makkah and Arabia had underwent in just 21 years of struggle lead by the greatest of all personalities Muhammed the son of Abdullah the servant and the Messenger of God (May peace and blessings of God be upon him).

The Prophet stayed for nineteen days in Makkah, during which period he obliterated every vestige of the Jahiliyah, the Age of Ignorance that preceded Islam. The Prophet erected pillars to demarcate the boundaries of the Sacred Mosque. Following this, the Prophet Pbuh made announcements that whoever believed in God and the Hereafter was to destroy any idols that remained in his house.

The Prophet dispatched Khalid bin Waleed to Nakhlah to demolish the temple of Uzza. The idol of Uzza was the chief and biggest idol of makkans and Khalid smashed it to pieces. Similarly other big and small idols were smashed and destroyed as a mark of God's messenger's triumph over the false gods and manmade superstitious belief systems.

Battle of Hunayn

The conquest of Makkah had silenced its citizens, but neighbouring tribes clamoured for a confrontation. A consultation took place between two powerful tribes of Banu Thaqif and Banu Hawazen. They said among themselves,

“As Muhammed has already won the war against his people, none remains to prevent him from fighting against us. Why should we not take the initiative?”

Accordingly, they decided to fight and mustered a large army under Malik bin Auf Nasari. They left their women, children and livestock in Autas while proceeding to the neighbouring valley of Hunayn with the troops, and lay in ambush.

When informed of the developments, the Prophet marched on at the head of twelve thousand soldiers from Makkah on Saturday, Shawwal 6, 8 A.H. He took one thousand coats of mail and other weaponry from Safwan bin Umayya on credit, and the administration of Makkah was entrusted to Uqab bin Usayd.

The Muslims exuded overconfidence because of their great strength. Some even exulted that they could not be defeated now for want of numbers, and the Prophet grew displeased at their arrogance. On the tenth of Shawwal, the Prophet reached Hunayn.

The Muslim soldiers were still in the process of descending when the enemy troops sprang on them like a swarm of locusts. The onslaught forced the Muslim flanks to fall back and they fled in terror, each up-heading of the other. Those in the rear followed suit, and a complete rout of the Muslims was in sight. This turn of events gladdened the hearts of the polytheists and the token converts to Islam.

Abu Sufyan remarked, "Their (the Muslims) fight will not stop until they reach the sea." Kildah, Safwan's brothers, rejoice, "The spell of their sorcery has ended today!"

Another brother said, "Receive the glad tidings of the defeat of Muhummed and his followers! He will never be able to unite them."

Safwan, expressing his tribal rancour and bias, chided those who mocked the Muslims and said, "By God, I would rather be defeated by a man from the Quraish than a man from Hawazen."

While his troops scattered in confusion, the Prophet remained steadfast on the battlefield. He pressed ahead, spurring his mule and declared:

"Verily, I am the True Prophet. I am the son of Abdul Muttalib."

Prophet Pbuh stood firm along with Abu Bakr, Ali, his uncle Abbas, and a few companions at his side. Abbas then called to the Muslims to return and not to abandon the Prophet (pbuh). Ashamed at what they

had done, and seeing the Prophet (pbuh) facing the enemy almost alone, the Muslims quickly returned to fight.

The Muslim squadrons returned to the valley one after another. Peace descended upon the Prophet and the believers, and an unseen army fought side by side with the Muslims who began to fight with fresh resolve. The Prophet took a handful of dust and threw it at his enemies saying,

“May their faces be disfigured.” At this the enemies’ eyes were stung by the dust, and from that moment on they became confused and helpless. In disarray, they fled the battleground.

The Muslim army pursued their terrified enemies, killing some and capturing others with ease. Along with the captured soldiers, the Muslims also rounded up the women and children of their enemies. Only moments before the Muslims had appeared to be on the verge of defeat, but God almighty reunited them and endowed them with victory. Witnessing the Prophet’s miraculous triumph, many pagans embraced Islam. At the end of the day the Muslims won but not before having learned a hard lesson about the danger of pride.

The Test of Faith at Tabuk

With the conquest of Makkah, the Muslims’ long struggle with the pagans of Arabia had all but ended. Despite several minor skirmishes, here and there, Islam was destined to spread over the entire peninsula. It was then that a foreign power took notice of the political ascendancy of the Muslims.

The Romans, having grown confident after their success against the Persians, began to look toward Medina and plan an assault against the Muslims, whom they viewed as a threat to their authority.

The Muslims' successful face off with the Roman forces at Muta had inspired many of the local tribes to seek independence. This was because only 3,000 Muslims had chased away a 200,000 strong Roman army at Muta. On the other hand, the Romans reasoned that if the Muslims were defeated, the rebellious tribes would be subdued permanently, and Arabia would disintegrate into an insignificant collection of bickering tribes that it had always been.

Hearing of the imminent Roman expedition against the Muslims, the Prophet asked the Muslims to prepare for what seemed an impossible task in the middle of the hot summer. At the time, the dates had just ripened, and people rested beneath the shady trees, seeking respite from the sun and exertion. The journey to Tabuk promised to be gruelling.

As preparations got underway, the Prophet urged the wealthy to donate handsomely to the battle fund and spend in the way of God, and many of his more fortunate Companions complied, contributing generously. Abu Bakr donated four thousand dirhams, which was his entire fortune. The Prophet asked him, "What have you left for your family?"

"For them I have left only God and His Messenger," he replied.

Umar gave half of his wealth, and Uthman bin Affan donated ten thousand dinars, three hundred camels with saddles, and fifty horses.

Abdul Rahman bin Auf gave eight thousand dirhams worth of silver, Abbas, Talha, Saad bin Ubada and Muhummed bin Maslama also contributed much. Asim bin Adi gave thirteen thousand five hundred kilograms of dates. Those with less wealth gave according to their abilities, and some could only donate a kilogram or so of food. The Muslim women gave their ornaments towards the cause.

The poorer Muslims also wanted to take part in the march to Tabuk, and they came to the Prophet to ask for camels or horses to ride. "I have nothing for you to ride," said the Prophet. They could not hide their disappointment, and tears rolled down their cheeks. However, Uthman,

Abbas and some other Companions were able to find mounts for those who needed them.

As the Muslims prepared for the difficult mission, the Hypocrites set about the task of running the project before it even began. They taunted those who donated so much of their wealth to the project and ridiculed those who contributed little. They also mocked the Prophet's determination to face the formidable Romans.

When asked to explain their remarks, they said they were merely jesting. As the time for departure drew near, the Hypocrites and the Bedouins offered their excuses for not joining the expedition and sought permission to stay in Medina. The Prophet wisely allowed them to stay behind. Some Muslims also stayed behind, unable to make up their minds whether or not to go.

The Prophet put Muhummed bin Maslama in charge of Medina. With 30,000 men, the Prophet set out for Tabuk on a Thursday, in the 8th month of Rajab, 9 A.H. There were so few camels that eighteen men rode each one in turn. They also had so little food that they had to eat leaves which made their lips swell.

In spite of the scarcity of camels, they were forced to slaughter some of them so that they could drink water from their stomachs and intestines. The Muslim forces halted at Al-Hijr, the land of the Thamud. They were a nation to whom the Prophet Saleh was sent.

As the Muslims travelled through the bleak land of the rebellious Thamud, the Prophet bade his men heed the consequences of disobedience to God:

“As you enter the houses of those who wronged themselves, fear that you may also meet the same fate that befell them.”

The chastened Muslims covered their heads and walked swiftly across the valley. The Prophet's army reached Tabuk after a journey of about

four hundred kilometres (about 250 miles). When the Romans learned that the Muslims had crossed four hundred kilometres of desert to challenge them, they lost courage and elected not to face them in combat.

Nevertheless, the Prophet camped in Tabuk for twenty days in order to intimidate the Romans and their Christian Arab mercenaries by his sheer presence. The Prophet also received several delegations from the neighbouring Arab tribes and signed many treaties with tribes who were interested in making peace with Arabia's new rulers.

While returning back to Medina, the Prophet and his men passed through a mountain pass. Most of the men took a route through the valley, while the Prophet took another pass accompanied by only two of his Companions, Ammr and Hudhayfah bin Yaman.

Twelve Hypocrites from among the Muslims saw the Prophet's virtually solitary state as a great opportunity to assassinate him. After masking themselves, they followed him, waiting for the right moment.

Suddenly, they rushed toward him on their mounts, but the Prophet told Hudhayfah to strike the faces of their horses with his shield. With this action, God sent terror into the hearts of the Hypocrites, and they fled.

They rode back to mingle with the rest of the squadron, but the Prophet told Hudhayfah each of their names and their intention. From that day on, Hudhayfah was called the trusted confidant of the Prophet.

Hypocrites Mosque

The Prophet had promised to perform the inaugural prayers in a newly built mosque in Qubaa, just outside Medina, on his return from Tabuk. He had been asked to do so when he was in the midst of planning the Tabuk expedition.

The Prophet Pbuh on his return from Tabuk was informed by Gabriel that the mosque had been built by the Hypocrites. The mosque was to serve as a meeting place for the Hypocrites where they could plot their various subversive activities to weaken Islam. By having the Prophet pray there, they hoped to legitimise their gatherings.

Thus forewarned of the threat to the Muslim nation from a mosque built on subversion rather than on piety, the Prophet immediately sent men to Qubaa to demolish it.

Social Boycott of 3 Men

Three Muslims had also failed to join the Tabuk expedition. They were Kaab bin Malik, Murra bin Rabi and Hilaal bin Umayya. Since they were able-bodied men, their decision not to participate in Jihad was a serious matter. The Prophet asked them to await God's decision on the matter.

In the meantime, the Prophet forbade other Muslims from speaking with them. As they awaited God's verdict in the solitude of their homes, these three men suffered tremendously. They felt engulfed by darkness, and their souls were in deep distress. After forty days had passed, the Prophet ordered the three men not to sleep with their wives.

Finally, after fifty days, God accepted their repentance, and the following verse was revealed:

“And (God has forgiven) those three who did not join (the Tabuk expedition. While they waited for God's decision), the world closed in on them and they became dejected. Then they realised that refuge lies only with God, and then He forgave them so that they would repent. Indeed God is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.” (9: 118)

This verse was received with great celebration. The world opened up again for the three men who had been shunned by their fellow Muslims.

Everyone congratulated the men, and they gave charity to show their thankfulness.

Adi bin Hatim

The Prophet's mission continued as he tried to persuade as many people as possible to accept his call to Islam. He was sent as a decider of the fate of his people based on their response to his mission. Anyone who rejected his message was destined to be punished according to the law or Sunnah of God. God punishes those rejecting His ambassador by either sending natural disasters on them or by the hands of His Prophet and his followers.

In accordance with this law the Prophet Pjuh had to purify whole of the Arabian Peninsula from idolatry and restore it to its original form and purpose to be the centre of propagation of the message of one true God. Part of this mission was to destroy all false gods born out of ignorance and polytheism and to establish worship of God alone.

Accordingly, in the 9th month of 9 A.H., the Prophet sent Ali bin Abi Talib at the head of a squadron of one hundred and fifty men riding camels and horses to demolish Fils, the idol of the Banu Tai. The squadron carried a black flag and a small white flag into the town of the legendary Hatim Tai. Hatim was a Christian by faith and legendary for his generosity.

They rounded up camels and goats and captured the women and children. Safana, the daughter of Hatim Tai, was among the women captured. The squadron then returned to Medina with the captives.

The Prophet, out of respect for Safana's status as the great Hatim's daughter, and as a sign of how God favours and responds to generosity of a person, released her without ransom and even provided her with conveyance. Safana went directly to Syria, where her brother, Adi bin Hatim, had taken refuge.

There she related the amazing kindness and virtues of the Prophet Pbuḥ, remarking that even her brother could not have acted in a like manner. She then advised Adi to present himself before the Prophet and ask for mercy.

So eloquent was Safana about the Prophet's magnanimity that Adi took his sister's advice and appeared before the Prophet without even applying for safe conduct.

Adi observed the mannerism as well as the dealings of Prophet Pbuḥ. While Adi was still with the Prophet, he looked around and saw the meagre amount of material resources that Prophet had-a tiny room, straw filled couple of cushions, a course mat and a handful of utensils-then a man called on the Prophet complaining about lack of food. Then another man came up to complain about highway robbery. Adi wondered if this was the man chosen by God as His ambassador to all mankind!

After they left, the Prophet turned to Adi and said:

“Adi! If you live long enough, you will see a woman donning ornaments, travel from Hirah (in Iraq) by camel. She will go round the Kabba without fear for her safety. She will not fear anyone except God. In addition, you will conquer the Persian Emperor and take his treasure. Furthermore, if you live long enough, you will see a person come out with a handful of gold and silver searching for a needy person to give it to, but he will find none.”

To envisage a women with full make up and ornaments travelling from Iraq to Makkah on a camel- passing through all those robbers and tribes that would pounce on any such easy prey- was incomprehensible at that time as was conquering Persia and abolition of poverty. However,

Adi didn't expect this and accepted and embraced Islam wholeheartedly. Adi did live long enough to see each of the Prophet's

prophecies fulfilled as Islam took root in the peninsula and beyond, and the Muslims grew in number and wealth.

Three Deaths in Medina

Towards the later part of 9th year of migration Abjar, the king of Abyssinia, passed away. He had given the Muslims refuge when they were weak and oppressed by the Makkan pagans. Later, when he recognised that Islam was a continuation of the teachings of Abraham, Moses and Jesus, he embraced Islam.

The Prophet offered funeral prayers for him in absentia when he received the news. Then in the next month of the same year, the Prophet's daughter, Umm Kulthoom also died. The Prophet led her funeral prayer and buried her in the graveyard at Medina, Baqi.

Deeply saddened at her death, the Prophet recognised the grief of her bereaved husband, Uthman, and said to him, "If I had a third daughter, I would have given her to you in marriage."

A couple of months later in Dhul Qa'dah, Abdullah bin Ubay died. Ever merciful, the Prophet prayed for his forgiveness and even led the funeral prayer. Umar asked the Prophet not to lead the prayer for the dead Hypocrites, but the Prophet would not be dissuaded. Later, however, God revealed verses instructing the Prophet not to offer funeral prayers for the Hypocrites.

Hajj Led by Abu Bakr

When the Prophet conquered Makkah, he put Atab bin Usayd in charge. Everyone, Muslims, polytheists included, performed Hajj under his authority, but they performed it in the same manner as during the days before Islam. In the year following the conquest of Makkah (9 A.H.), the Prophet sent Abu Bakr to lead the pilgrims in performing Hajj. Abu Bakr set out for Makkah with three hundred Muslims.

He took twenty of the Prophet's camels for sacrifice. After Abu Bakr left, the opening verse of Surah Al-Taubah were revealed. These verses contained an important announcement for tribes that had covenants with the Muslims. Any covenant that had not been honoured would be broken, and any tribe that did not have a covenant with the Muslims would have a grace period of four months.

Covenants that had been honoured would remain valid. The Prophet sent Ali to Makkah to inform every one of the new verses. On the day of the sacrifice, Ali recited the new verses to the pilgrims. Abu Bakr then sent a band of people to announce that from the next year, polytheists would not be allowed to perform Hajj, nor would anyone be allowed to practice the perverted tradition of circumambulation of the Kabba in the nude.

The Year of Delegations

Most of the Arab tribes had watched the struggle between the Quraish and the Prophet with the greatest of interest, believing as they did that God would protect the Kabba, and that the forces of Evil would not be able to conquer those of Truth.

The Arabs had seen God repulse the Abraha's army and his great elephant when they tried to destroy the Kabba. Now they witnessed God granting victory to Muhammed Pbu, and allowing him to smash all idols into pieces without any consequences, they saw it as a sign that Islam was the true religion.

Convinced that Muhammed was the Prophet and Messenger of God, the various Arab tribes began sending delegations to meet the Prophet. Some came to ransom captives while many others came to embrace Islam. Most of these delegations visited Medina following the conquest

of Makkah in the year 9 A.H., which became known as the year of delegations.

The delegations that visited the Prophet were, in fact, instrumental in spreading Islam among the desert-dwelling Bedouins. Although each delegation came with different aims and objectives, the Prophet made the same profound impression upon those he dealt with, and his fame spread throughout Arabia.

Here was a man who had defeated the greatest tribe in Arabia, and yet he chose faith over wealth, mercy over revenge, and work over luxury. Many delegations accepted Islam after simply meeting with the Prophet, and they would in turn, encourage their tribes to discard paganism and become Muslim.

There were numerous such delegations however I will limit this topic to describing the events that happened with the Christian delegation only.

The Christian Delegation from Najraan

In Southern Arabia lay the territory of Najraan, a large tract, which a speedy horse could traverse from one end to another in a day. Its seventy-three settlements were protected by 120,000 Christian soldiers, and when the Prophet wrote to the Bishop of Najraan inviting him to accept Islam, the Bishop asked his advisors what he should do.

He then informed the people of Najraan about the letter from a man claiming to be a Prophet. After consultations, it was decided that a delegation of sixty men would be sent to meet the Prophet. The delegation consisted of about forty-five scholars and fifteen assistants. The Prophet Pbuh welcomed them and invited them to Islam, but they refused, saying they were “Believers” long before the Prophet had begun his mission.

The Prophet Pbuh summarised his talk with the delegation after having had a detailed discussion with them by saying,

“There are three things, that keep you from finding your way to Islam – venerating the crucifix, eating pork, and claiming that God has a son.”

“Who then,” the delegation challenged the Prophet, “is like Jesus, a man born without a father?”

The Prophet Pbuh replied, “God has replied to this question by revealing the following verse:

“The similitude of Jesus in God’s sight is that of Adam: God created Adam from dust, and then He said to him, “Be,” and Adam came to life. This is the truth from your Lord, so do not be among those who doubt. If anyone argues with you about Jesus now that you know the truth, tell him: Come, let us gather our sons, women, and ourselves, and we will pray to God and ask Him to curse those who lie.” (3: 59-61)

The Prophet recited these verses to the delegation and asked them to accept God’s challenge and invoke a curse upon those who were wrong about Jesus. The delegation discussed it among themselves.

“If he is actually a prophet,” they concluded, “and we ask God to curse those who are wrong, then we will all be destroyed.”

Therefore they prudently agreed to pay Jizya tax and not be punished on account of rejecting the message of God. It must be kept in mind that paying Jizya tax to live under Prophet’s command was a mercy from God towards the people of book (Jews and Christians) who were given respite on account of their belief in one God to consider their faith in this world.

They were to pay one thousand sets of clothing twice a year as Jizya. In return for the payments, the Prophet guaranteed peace, security and freedom of religion in Najraan.

When the Christians of Najraan arrived to Medina, Prophet Pbh allowed them to pray in the mosque where the Muslims also prayed. This invitation was not only the first example of Christian-Muslim dialogue, but it was the first time that Christians prayed in a mosque. While Prophet Muhammed Pbh and the Najrans were not able to reach common ground on all theological issues, he nonetheless gave them a place to stay near his home, and even ordered Muslims to pitch their tent.

When they asked for a place to pray he said to them that the mosque is the house of God so call upon God in here. He allowed them to pray inside his mosque which was an amazing display of tolerance and common grounds, something which today's world seems to be unfamiliar with.

Upon leaving Medina, the Najran Christian leaders told Prophet Pbh:

“O, Abu al-Qasim, we decided to leave you as you are and you leave us as we are. But send with us a man who can adjudicate things on our properties, because we accept you”. The Christians left Medina with a written guarantee that Prophet would protect their lives, property, and freedom to practice Christianity.

In response to their request of sending a trustworthy Muslim with them to make sure these conditions were met. The Prophet sent Abu Ubaydah bin Jarrah with them. In the course of the journey back to Najraan, two members of the delegation accepted Islam under the influence of Abu Ubaydah.

The dialogue with and the treatment of Christians of Najraan by the Prophet Pbh cannot be described as mere tolerance because toleration is only the absence of religious persecution. Prophet Muhammed Pbh in reality embraced the otherness of Christians, thus laying the true foundations of what is now called as religious pluralism.

The Farewell Pilgrimage

Ten years after his migration to Medina and 23 years after the start of his mission as a Messenger of God Islam had spread over the entire Arabian Peninsula. A great number of people capable of carrying the message of Islam worldwide arose in the coming years. It was at this point that Prophet Pbuh announced that he would perform Hajj, and a large number of people flocked to Medina to accompany him.

On Saturday, 26th of the 11th month, Dhul Qadah, 10 A.H. the Prophet left Medina. A week later, the Prophet reached Makkah. After praying the dawn prayer, he entered the Sacred Mosque. The Prophet Pbuh had already said,

“Tell the people that Umrah can be performed during Hajj.”

This was in reference to the common misconception and belief of pagans that Umrah could not be performed during the time of Hajj. Prophet Pbuh revived and reformed the practices of faith which Prophet Abraham and Ismaiel had initiated among the Arabs including the reform of Hajj rituals.

The Prophet then circumambulated the Kabba, and performed seven circuits between Mount Safa and Marwa. Then on Dhul Hijjah 8, the Prophet went to Mina, where those who had shaved their heads assumed Ihraam again. In Mina the Prophet performed the noon, afternoon, sunset, evening, and dawn prayers. He left Mina after sunrise for Arafat.

A tent was set up for him in the valley of Namirah. As the sun was setting, he mounted his camel and rode into the valley of Arafat. Pilgrims began gathering around him and waited to hear what was to be one of his most important speeches. He began by glorifying God, testifying that God was the only One true God, and that he Muhammed, was His Prophet and Messenger.

The Last Sermon

“O people listen: I know not whether I shall meet you here again after this year. Your blood, your property and your honour are as sacred this day, this month and this city. Behold! I declare that all pagan customs and everything from the Days of Ignorance are beneath my feet. Abolished also is the practice of spilling blood for revenge. The first case of blood revenge that I abolish is that of the son of Rabi’a bin Harith, who was nursed by the Banu Saad and killed by Banu Hudhayl.

Moreover, the usury of the Days of Ignorance is abolished, and the first practice of usury I abolish is that of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib. Now all usury is abolished. Fear God regarding women! You have taken them as a trust from God, and intercourse with them has been made permissible by the words of God. You have rights over them – one of which is that they must not allow someone you dislike into your home.

If they do so, you are within your rights to chastise them, but not severely. It is their right over you that you should feed them and clothe them in a fitting manner. I leave behind something. If you hold fast to it, you will never go astray and that is the Book of God. Now, if you are asked about me on the Day of Judgement, how will you respond?”

The Prophet’s Companions replied, “We will testify that you have conveyed the message and fulfilled your mission.”

The Prophet raised his index finger towards the sky and then pointed toward the people,

“O Allah (God), be witness! O Allah (God), be witness! O Allah (God), be witness!”

After the Prophet had finished addressing the people, he received a revelation from God:

“Today I have perfected your Deen (path of God) for you and completed My favour upon you, and I have chosen Islam as your Deen.” (5: 3)

After the Prophet ended his address, Bilal made the prayer call (Adhan) and the final prayer call (Iqamah), and the Prophet led the people in the shortened noon prayer. Following that, Bilal called another Iqamah, and the Prophet led the people in the shortened afternoon prayer. Thus, the Prophet demonstrated how travellers should combine and shorten prayers.

After completing the rituals of Hajj the Prophet Pbuh donned his ordinary clothes and he went to the people of Banu Abdul Muttalib, who were serving Zamzam water to the pilgrims. He said,

“Banu Abdul Muttalib, continue drawing water from the well. I would join you in this task, but I fear people would try to take over your rightful duty.” They gave the Prophet some Zamzam water which he drank.

The Prophet delivered two more addresses, on the 10th and 12th of Dhul Hijjah, stressing the same points he had made in his sermon on the plane of Arafat. It was during these days before his last address that he received Surah Al-Nasr.

“When God’s (ultimate) help comes and the victory (is achieved), and you (O Prophet) see the people embracing God’s Way in crowds, then glorify the praises of your Lord and seek His forgiveness, for certainly He is ever Accepting of Repentance.” (110:1-3)

Back to Medina

After performing the farewell circumambulation the Prophet PbuH left Makkah to begin his journey back to Medina. As he approached the city of Medina, and its landmarks grew visible, the Prophet called out,

“Allahu Akbar (God Is Greatest)” thrice and said:

“Nothing is to be worshipped except God. He is the One. He has no associate. Dominion and all praise are His, and He has power over all things. We are returning, repenting, praising and bowing before our Lord. God has proved that His promise is true, and He has helped His slaves. Victory is His alone.”

These were not just words but an expression of the whole history of his mission which had finally come to fruition. A single orphaned child with hardly any support in a society that gives no space to such weak and meek and the same single, totally illiterate, man, when 40, came running down the mountain scared for his life.

And yet here he was at 63—not only had he managed to transform the orphan to the greatest leader the Arabs had ever known but during the short course of just 23 years had without a doubt become the sign of God’s judgement- the law of reward and punishment was there for anyone with an iota of sense to see!

Prophet’s Last Months of Life

It was more than two years since the episode of the poisoned meat served to the Prophet and it had almost receded in the memories of people when he began showing signs of poisoning. The poison gradually took root in his system and the Prophet’s health deteriorated. Prophet PbuH began to express through his words and his actions that he expected to pass away soon.

Each Ramadan the Prophet would perform Itikaf (seclusion in the mosque) during the last ten days of the month. In the 10th year after his migration during Ramadan (10 A.H.), however, he performed Itikaf for the last twenty days of the month, saying that during this time, Gabriel completed the recitation of the Quran with him twice rather than the usual practice of once.

This was to ensure that the whole of the last testament from God was vouchsafed to mankind in exactly the manner that God intended, with each chapter and verse placed exactly where God has ordained.

The Prophet told his daughter Fatimah, that he thought his time was at hand. Also, while bidding farewell to Muadh, who was travelling to Yemen, he said, “O Muadh, after this you may not see me again, and you will soon pass by this mosque of mine and my grave.” Muadh began to weep at these words.

It is worth learning the lessons from this beautiful advice that Prophet Pbh gave Muadh whilst he was being appointed the governor of Yemen. The Prophet Pbh took hold of his camel’s reigns and walked with him quite a distance and gave him the following advice:

“Verily, you are coming to a people among the people of the Book, so call them to testify there is no god but one true God and I am the Messenger of God. If they accept that, then teach them that God has obligated five prayers in each day and night. If they accept that, then teach them that God has obligated charity to be taken from the rich and given to the poor. If they accept that, beware not to take from the best of their wealth. Be on guard from the supplication of the oppressed, for there is no barrier between it and God.” (Muslim)

“Make things easy and do not make things difficult. Give glad tidings and do not repel people. Cooperate with each other and do not become divided.” (Bukhari)

“Beware of luxury. Verily, the servants of God do not live luxuriously.”
(Ahmed)

“Make your character excellent for the people, O Muadh” (Muwatta)

After all the above instructions the Prophet PbuH asked him:

“How will you judge?

Muadh said, “I will judge according to what is in the Book of God.”

The Prophet then asked:

What if it (the issue) is not in the Book of God?

Muadh replied, “Then with the Sunnah (established practice) of the Messenger of God.” The Prophet further asked:

What if it is not in the Sunnah of the Messenger of God?

Muadh replied, “Then I will strive to form an opinion (by using reason).”

The Prophet then praised his answers and remarked:

“All praise and thanks are due to God who has made suitable the messenger of the Messenger of God.” (Tirmidhi)

There are so many learning points in this amazing advice. The Prophet instructed Muadh to introduce Islam to the people in small gradual steps, starting with the most important beliefs, the testimony of faith and belief in one true God (Tauheed), and moving onto the next pillars of prayer and charity.

Invite people to Islam in gradual steps and once they understand and accept one aspect then introduce the other ones instead of expecting people to become the best of the best overnight. Most people will find it difficult to apply every obligation in Islam all at once, so counselling

them to begin applying Islam gradually will make it easier for them to enter into Islam fully.

Making the transition to Islam easier for people was an important part of the Prophet's instructions. The Prophet instructed Muadh to make things easy for people and not to repel them by harshness. To cooperate with the people and not to be a dictator over them, for being too hard on them would cause division.

The advice mentions the prohibition of alienating people by mentioning the fear of God and warnings alone without including glad tidings and massive rewards that are in store for them. The Quran was revealed gradually over twenty three years, so people and society should be given the duties of Islam gradually.

The Prophet specifically warned all the rulers and leaders by instructing Muadh not to wrong or oppress anyone, even if they are not Muslims, because God always responds to the supplication of the oppressed. It may take time but oppression finally causes the end of the tyrant's rule.

The Prophet warned Muadh, and through him all leaders to come, not to use his position of authority to live extravagantly, but rather he should practice Taqwa (god consciousness), spending his wealth in charity and renouncing the vanities of worldly life.

The Prophet gave Muadh clear instructions for properly applying Islamic guidance and principles if nothing explicit can be found in the Quran and Sunnah. One of the major reasons for the decline of Muslim ummah has been the ignoring of this explicit guidance which provides guidance and development in all phases of human progress that societies undergo.

The advice to Muadh should form the foundation for any leader to guide his methods and strategies in order to bring positive changes in his society.

Travel To Uhad

About a month before his passing away the Prophet pbuh went with his companions to the place wherein the battle of Uhad had taken place and as if saying a goodbye to both the alive and the dead he wanted to remind his companions of the dangers of falling a prey to the superficial charms of wealth and provisions. How fitting were his following words against the background of Uhad wherein the Muslims were defeated after having gained victory on account of disobeying messengers command and the greed for worldly possessions!

Here is what he said,

Uqba b. Amir reported God's Messenger Pbuh as saying: God's Messenger offered prayer over those who had fallen matyrs at Uhud. He then climbed the pulpit as if someone is saying good-bye to the living and the dead, and then said: *“I shall be there as your predecessor on the Cistern before you, and it is as wide as the distance between Aila and Juhfa (Aila is at the top of the gulf of 'Aqaba). I am not afraid that you would associate anything with God after me, but I am afraid that you may be (allured) by the world and (vie) with one another (in possessing material wealth) and begin killing one another, and you would be destroyed as were destroyed those who had gone before you”*. 'Uqba said that that was the last occasion that he saw God's Messenger on the pulpit.

This last talk is so relevant & befitting for us all even today!

The Prophet's Illness

On the last Monday of Safar, the second month of the 11th year of the Prophet's migration (11 A.H.) he attended a funeral at Baqi. When he returned, Aisha told him that she had a headache.

“Nay, it is I who have a headache,” the Prophet said, “O Aisha, my head.”

Although the Prophet’s illness worsened, he still gave each of his wives his time by staying with a different wife each day. When he was with his wife Maymoona, he asked her whom he was to stay with the next day. Knowing that he wanted to be with Aisha, his other wives waived their rights in favour of Aisha. Supported on both sides by Fadl bin Abbas and Ali bin Abu Talib, the Prophet went to stay with Aisha.

As Prophet’s health worsened he went out and led the people in prayer. He addressed them, saying,

“Your predecessors made graves of their Prophets and ancestors into places of worship. I forbid you to do this. May God curse the Jews and Christians for turning their prophets’ graves into places of worship. You must not turn my grave into an idol to be worshipped.”

The Prophet asked that anyone whom he owed anything to should come forward, for he did not want to meet his Lord without first being forgiven by those he had wronged, or without having repaid his debts.

The Prophet then turned toward his followers and related:

“God gave one of His slaves a choice between the treasures of this world and that which lies with God. The slave chose that which lies with God.”

As the Prophet’s illness intensified one day he said, “Let me write something for you so that you will never go astray.”

Umar, however, protested, “The Prophet is in great pain. We have the Quran, and this is enough for us.”

This led to a dispute among the Companions at the Prophet’s bedside, and he said to them, “Sit down (meaning leave it).”

That same day, the Prophet ordered that all Jews, Christians and polytheists be turned out from the Arabian Peninsula, in accordance with the Sunnah (practice) of God that the rejecters and deniers of the Messenger of God are to be either punished by being killed or by banishing them from the land of the Messenger, which in this case was Arabian Peninsula.

He also stressed that delegations to Medina were to be received with honour and respect, exactly as he used to receive them with. He stressed the importance of prayer and the just treatment of slaves and servants. In closing he said:

“I leave you with two things. As long as you hold them tightly, you will never go astray: they are the Book of God and my Sunnah.”

Abu Bakr Leads Prayer

In spite of the severity of the Prophet’s illness, he continued to lead prayers. However, that Thursday, when it was time for evening prayer, the Prophet took a bath to try and ease his pain. When he tried to get up, however, he lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness he bathed again, but fell unconscious when he was about to get up. He bathed a third time, and a third time he blacked out when he tried to get up.

He then sent word to Abu Bakr to lead prayer. Abu Bakr led seventeen prayers because of the Prophet’s deteriorating health. Between Saturday and Sunday, the Prophet felt a little relief. Two people supported him and took him to the Mosque to perform the noon prayer. At that time, Abu Bakr was leading prayer. The Prophet sat on his left, and Abu Bakr followed the Prophet in prayer while the others followed him.

On Sunday, the Prophet set his slaves free, gave away his last seven dinars in charity, and bequeathed his weapons to the Muslim army. When night drew near, Aisha sent her lamp to a woman in the

neighbourhood to drop a little tallow in it. The Prophet's coat of mail had been pawned with a Jewish individual for about seventy-five kilograms of barley. Such was the way God's final messenger was leaving to his final abode with his Lord.

On Monday morning, Abu Bakr was leading prayer when the Prophet lifted the curtain of Aisha's house, which adjoined the Mosque, and looked at the people in prayer. He smiled, and Abu Bakr moved backwards a little thinking that the Prophet wanted to come and lead the prayer.

The people, when they saw the radiance of the Prophet's face, were overtaken by such happiness that they almost interrupted their prayers. The Prophet, however, gestured to them all to complete the prayer. And he went back behind the curtain.

Later that day (other sources indicate it was later that week), the Prophet called his daughter Fatimah. He whispered something to her, and she burst into tears. He then whispered to her again, at which she smiled. Aisha asked Fatimah what the Prophet had told her, but she said he had asked her to keep it a secret.

After the Prophet's death, Fatimah revealed that her father had first told her he would not recover from his illness, and this had made her cry. Then he told her that of his children, she would be the next to join him, which had made her smile.

Fatimah was so distressed at her father's agony, she cried,

“O the pains of my dear father!” The Prophet replied, “After this day, your father will suffer no more pain.”

The Prophet then called Fatimah's sons, Hasan and Husain, and kissed them. His wives were nearby, and he counselled them. His pain was gradually increasing, and he put a sheet over his face and would uncover it only when he was out of breath. He would repeat his earlier

instruction that no two religions were to flourish in Arabia. Finally, he repeated over and over again to take care of your:

“Prayer, prayer... your slaves and subordinates.”

Towards The Creator

The Prophet’s strength began to weaken further, and Aisha held the Prophet against her between her breast and throat. Just at that moment, her brother Abdul Rahman bin Abi Bakr entered the room, holding a root (Miswaak) used to clean teeth. Aisha saw the Prophet looking at the Miswaak, so she asked him if he wanted it, and he nodded. She took it, and after chewing the end a little to soften it, she gave it to him.

A bowl of water was kept near the Prophet, and he dipped both his hands into it and wiped his face saying,

“There is no god but Allah. Verily, these are the pangs of death.”

He either lifted up his hands or pointed his forefinger toward heaven. His voice was weak, but Aisha could hear him speak as he raised his eyes and repeated three times:

“With the blessed from among the prophets, the ever truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous! O Allah (God), forgive me and have mercy on me. I choose to be with the exalted companions! O Allah (God), the exalted companions!”

With these final divine words he left for heavenly abode, no day had been brighter than the day the Prophet came to Medina, and no day was darker than the twelfth of Rabi’ Al-Awwal, 11 A.H., the day he died. (Sallal Lahu Alyhe wa Sallam- May Peace and Blessings of God Almighty Be Upon him for ever and ever)

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Tabaqat Ibn Saad

Seerah Ibn Hisham

Tareekh Tabari

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Seerah By Shibli Nomani

References from Books of Hadith include Bukhari and Muslim

This effort of compiling a Book on the life of our beloved Prophet Pbuh was completed by the Taufeeq (grace and facilitation) of God Almighty on 26th Dec 2020 at Airdrie, Scotland UK. Alhumdulillah.

Dedication:

I dedicate this humble effort to my parents, my loving wife, Allison and my dearest sister, Snober, as without these two pillars of support for me I would not be able to dedicate my time for neither writing this book, translating the Quran nor conducting any Dawah activities. May Allah (God Almighty) accept this from all of us and make it a source of salvation for us all in the hereafter. Aameen


Dr Irfan Jehangir


Activities Through Islamic Outreach Project

- Weekly Dawah stalls and dawah tours throughout the UK
- Dedicated Youtube Channel IOP
- Revert's Support Programme
- Weekly Reverts class Online every Tuesday 7pm UK time on YouTube and Skype
- Face to face reverts classes in Birmingham Central Mosque and Airdrie Islamic Centre Scotland
- Free Copies of Quran in about 50 world languages including English available free of cost to the wider community
- Braille Quran available in English for visually impaired



ISLAMIC OUTREACH
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