

TEXTBOOKS

PROPHET  
MUHAMMAD  
MUSTAFA ﷺ 1

Meccan Period

Osman Nuri Topbaş



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# Prophet Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ

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**PROPHET  
MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA**

صلى الله عليه وسلم

**-1-**

**Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ**





## PREFACE

### Muhammad Mustafa (saw)

-The first and last link in the chain of prophets, the light of existence, the mercy to the worlds-

Since the cause of all of creation's coming into being is the light of the Prophet Muhammad (saw), it is not possible for my inadequate words to fully express and illustrate his unparalleled and unique life which he lived in such a way that made him deserved to be called by Allah the Almighty as "His beloved". Nevertheless there are innumerable benefits in making an effort to understand him and help people understood him. And taking this into consideration, by writing about his life we consider it the greatest of honours to be able to have our share, even if only a little, from his model personality and to adopt his character. Just like a lamp covered with a piece of black felt with a needle hole on it enables the rays of light to radiate through, so too our words should be seen as an attempt to poke through this felt with a needle in order to open up a tiny hole in comparion to the reality and truth of the magnificent existence of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

Almighty Allah considers obedience to His Beloved Prophet as obedience to Himself. And He has informed us that the slightest form of disrespect shown towards him will bring all of our deeds to naught. He has made it a test of the piety of the hearts to value him and respect him. In His sight it is a sign of the greatest of ignorance to address him unfittingly. He has commanded us to invoke peace and blessings upon him and keep him in our thoughts at all times.

In fact, every day as we sit for the tashahhud at each prayer we recite the following: "As salamu alayka ayyuhan Nabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuhu", meaning "Peace be upon you o prophet, and His mercy and His blessings (be upon you)." Even though greeting a person during prayer invalidates one's prayer, Allah the Almighty has made sending greetings to the Prophet one of the obligatory acts of the prayer. This is because He is an endless light and a realm of mystery which can only be reached to the degree of intensity and sincerity of one's love for him.

We ask for Allah's grace and help i our statments which are the demonstartions of our attempts to comprehend and relate his blessed life.



My previous two volume book "Muhammad Mustafa (saw)" has attracted great interest and atten-

tion both in our own country and in various other countries. I have received advise and encouragement to revise and prepare it as a textbook at various Islamic educational institutions for our students who are the mirrors of our future to whom we will transfer the trust entrusted to us.

The textbook was prepared with the middle-school students in mind, and has been shortened and simplified accordingly and compiled into one volume. However I have preserved the technical terms and expressions which are a part of the Islamic and Qur'anic culture which need to be passed onto the new generations.

This work is divided into seven chapters at the end of which a set of 50 questions, including short-answer questions, fill-in-the-gap questions, and multiple choice questions each of which require information, memorisation, explanation, interpretation, comparisons, and attention.

In the selection and preparation of the questions the aim is to increase the knowledge of the students, to direct them to reflect upon the wisdom in each event, and to help them make a connection with today's world.

I am particularly thankful to my brothers Dr. Faruk Kanger, Ismail Gunday, Mubarek Erkul, and Dr. Alican Tatli who helped preparing the new revised version of this book. I pray that my Lord accept their efforts as ongoing charity (sadaqa-i jariya). I seek refuge in the endless mercy and compassion of my Lord in the hope that all faults and mistakes found in this book which are a result of my own incapacity and weakness be forgiven.

**Osman Nuri Topbaş**

Çamlıca, 2008

## MUHAMMAD (saw) BEFORE HIS PROPHETHOOD

### The Sultan of The Prophets

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah the Most High says about the Prophet Muhammad (saw):

**"Indeed you are truly vast in character"** (al-Qalam, 68: 4).

**"(O believers!) You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allah, for all who put their hope in Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much"** (al-Ahzab, 33: 21).

**"Allah and His angels call down blessings on the Prophet. You who have faith! Call down blessings on him and ask for complete peace and safety for him"** (al-Ahzab, 33: 56)

**"Whatever the Messenger gives you, you should accept and whatever he forbids you, you should forgo. Have taqwa of Allah – Allah is severe in retribution"** (al-Hashr, 59: 7).

**"You who have faith! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. Do not make your actions of no worth"** (Muhammad, 47: 33).

**"Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger will be with those whom Allah has blessed: the Prophets and the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. What excellent company such people are!"** (al-Nisa, 4: 69).

**"Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah and His Messenger, will have the Fire of Hell, remaining in it timelessly, for ever? That is the great disgrace"** (al-Tawba, 9: 63).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) himself is reported to have said:

**"Verily I was sent to perfect good character"** (Muwatta, Husnu al-khulk, 8).

**"All creatures in the heavens and the earth, except for the rebellious amongst the jinn and humans, know that I am the Messenger of Allah"** (Ahmad, Musnad III, 310)

**"Indeed, I leave two things with you with which if you hold onto them tightly you will never go astray: The Book of Allah and my sunnah"** (Muwatta, Qadar, 3).

Jalalluddin Rumi expresses his deep love for the Messenger of Allah as follows:

**"I am the slave and servant of the Qur'an as long as this life remains in this body; I am the dust upon the path of the chosen Muhammad (saw). If anybody transmits from me other than these words of mine, I am distant from that person and those words".**

In the following lines, Mehmed Akif Ersoy expresses how much in need is humanity for the Prophet Muhammad (saw):



*“Whatever this world has is given out of respect for Him  
His community is indebted to him as is every individual  
All of mankind is indebted to that Most Innocent one  
O Lord, raise us up with this belief on the Day of Judgement”*

### **The importance of recognising and knowing the Prophet Muhammad, in order to understand and live Islam.**

The character of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) is like a deep ocean.

He possessed so much more than all of the superior traits, both known and unknown, of the 124 thousand prophets that came before him, and he took his place at the peak of good character and virtues.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) is the only prophet and person in history whose life has been examined and established to the finest details. For all of the other prophets throughout history who guided humanity to Allah and goodness, only a small fraction of their beautiful traits have reached us. As for Muhammad (saw), the Prophet of the end of time, all of his actions, words, and his thoughts from the simplest one to the most perfect have been traced and recorded as much as they can be expressed with words. By the grace of Allah, all of these have come from centuries ago and will even reach to the last person alive before the end of time.

As human beings, we must adopt traits such as gratitude, resignation, contentment with the divine decree, patience in the face of tribulations, courage, sacrifice, contentedness, wealth of the soul, generosity, and humility in order to face the tribulations, trials, and surprises of our lives, and keep ourselves away from mischief and trouble. Moreover, we must keep balance and act with moderation in the face of the ups and downs and storms of our lives in this world and in response to any unrest or dissension that we may face with. In all of these matters, the Prophet Muhammad (saw), with his life of manners and purity, is the best exemplar for us and the most perfect guide ever to be presented to mankind by Almighty Allah. The duty that then befalls us in response to this everlasting favour of Allah is to try to learn about this blessed and pure life.

It is also of great importance to learn about the Prophet Muhammad (saw) in all aspects, in order to understand the aims of the Holy Qur’an and to perceive its subtleties. This is because with his 23-year long prophetic life, the Prophet Muhammad perfectly interpreted and personally lived in accordance with the teachings of the Qur’an. And this is why it is not possible for a Muslim to understand the Qur’an without learning about his life and his sayings.

Yet again, a Muslim can only correctly understand the culture of Islam by studying the life of the Prophet and thus achieving the required depth of feeling. People can reach the state of true maturity in their inner world in the extent of that they fill themselves with the spiritual energy and illumination that comes from him (saw), because his pure life is the sole and unrivalled portrait in which the principles and rulings of Islam are displayed in the finest detail.

In short, a young person who wishes to be upright and trustworthy; a teacher of Islam who wishes to invite people to the way of Allah with beautiful advice and wisdom and who has taken upon the duty of his message; a statesman who wants to rule his nation with justice and virtue; the

head of a family who presents a model for the members of his family with his excellent behaviour; a father who is compassionate and kind to his children and his wife; a skilled and capable commander who understands how to encourage and lead people; for all of these and more there is the most beautiful and unchanging standard and measure for every Muslim of all ages and all levels displayed in the life of the Messenger of Allah (saw).

Without a doubt learning about and teaching the life of the Messenger of Allah (saw) will revive mankind and bestow upon him a perfect life.

### The History and Sanctity of the Ka'bah

The word '*ka'bah*' which lexically means 'a cube-shaped object' is mentioned in the Qur'an in two places. Ka'bah, which is stated in the verses by various names such as '*al-Bayt*' (The House), '*Baytullah*' (The House of Allah), '*Bayt al-atiq*' (The Ancient House) '*Bayt al-haram*,' '*Bayt al-Muharram*' (The Sacred House), '*Masjid al-haram*' (The Sacred Mosque) is also known among the public as '*Ka'bah al-Muazzama*' (The Grand Ka'bah).

When the Prophet Adam was sent down to earth, he was given the duty of building a place of worship at the present site of the Ka'bah in Mecca (Tabari, History, I, 124).

In the Holy Qur'an Allah Most High says:

**"The first House established for mankind was that at Bakka, a place of blessing and a guidance for all beings"** (Al-i Imran, 3: 96).

In response to a question by Abu Dharr (ra), the Messenger of Allah (saw) replied that the first mosque built on earth was 'Masjid al-Haram' and the second one was 'Masjid al-Aqsa' (See Bukhari, Anbiya, 10). Thus the valley of Mecca was also chosen and made holy, along with the first human being. After the Flood, the Ka'bah was buried under sand for a long period of time. Many years later when the Prophet Abraham arrived in Mecca to leave his wife and son there, he said to his son Ismail (as):

**"My Lord has commanded me that we will build a House and you will help me".**

The Prophet Ismail along with the angel Gabriel carried stones and the Prophet Abraham built the walls of the Ka'bah. The marble block, known as the Maqam-i Ibrahim, upon which the footsteps of the Prophet Abraham can still be seen today, worked like an elevator in the construction of the Ka'bah.

The Holy Qur'an states:

**"And when Ibrahim built the foundations of the House with Isma'il: 'Our Lord, accept this from us! You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing'"** (al-Baqara, 2: 127).

1 The House of Allah is built on a foundation approximately 1.5 m wide. Its outer dimensions are 10.7 x 12 m and its height is 15m. In the walls of Ka'bah which are built with stones of basalt brought from the environs of Mecca there are approximately 1614 stones of various sizes. In its eastern corner there is the 'Hajar al-Aswad', or the Black Stone in a silver protective case, placed approximately 1.5 m high. This stone is the mark of the beginning and end of tawaf. The door of the Ka'bah is 2 m high and is located in the Northeastern wall. The part of wall between the Black Stone and this door is called 'Multazam.' (Kamil Miras, Tecrid Tercemesi, VI, 17-20)

When the construction of the Ka'bah was complete, the Prophets Ibrahim and Isma'il prayed to Allah as follows:

**"Our Lord, make us both Muslims submitted to You, and our descendants a Muslim community submitted to You. Show us our rites of worship and turn towards us. You are the Ever-Returning, the Most Merciful. Our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from them to recite Your Signs to them and teach them the Book and Wisdom and purify them. You are the Almighty, the All-Wise"** (al-Baqara, 2: 128-9).

Allah then commanded the Prophet Abraham to invite all people to perform the pilgrimage to the Ka'bah:

**"Announce the Hajj to mankind. They will come to you on foot and on every sort of lean animal, coming by every distant road"** (al-Hajj, 22: 27)

Upon receiving these divine instructions, the Prophet Abraham climbed up the mountain of Qubays and called out in all directions, informing the people that Allah had made it obligatory for people to visit the Ka'bah and perform the pilgrimage (Kamil Miras, *Tecrid Tercemesi*, VI, 20, 21).

After making this proclamation, the angel Gabriel came to the Prophet Abraham and showed him the limits of Safa and Marwa and of the '*Haram-i Sharif*', (the Holy Sanctuary). He also told him to place a stone to mark out each site and later taught him all of the required rites of the Hajj.

After that everyone who came to visit Hijaz, from near and far, also began to visit the Baytullah. The Ka'bah thus became an important centre of religion and captured the attention of all humanity.

This is why the Ka'bah was subjected to many attacks by many pagan tribes who were jealous of its holiness. In the centuries before the outrageous assault by the Ruler of Yemen, Abraha, three other pagan rulers from the Yemen had wanted to destroy it. During one of these attacks, certain people from the sons of Huzayl, provoked one of these rulers to destroy the Ka'bah and take the treasure hidden there. The reason they tried to do this was because they wished to be rid of the dominion of these rulers and the sons of Huzayl believed in the sanctity of the Ka'bah. They knew from past experience and history, that any attack made upon the Ka'bah would be the cause of ruin and destruction of its attackers.

As the Yemenese ruler and all of his soldiers set out to destroy the Ka'bah, they were left buried in the sand.

Upon the warnings and guidance of the Jewish scholars who were with them the Ruler abandoned his evil intent towards the Ka'bah and subsequently showed respect and honour for the Baytullah and towards the people of Mecca and promised to show them favour. Thus they were saved from destruction (Ibn Hisham, I, 19, 20; Abdurrazzak, V, 153).

From then on the belief that the Ka'bah and thus Mecca and the people of Quraysh, were under divine protection became well established amongst the people.

After the Prophet Abraham, acts of worship performed at the Baytullah continued according to the principles of *tawhid*<sup>2</sup>, until the time when people began to worship many gods. However when idol-worship began to appear in Mecca, the idolaters began to place various idols both in

2 *Tawhid* – belief in the oneness of Allah (Translator's note)



and around the Ka'bah. Despite this the Ka'bah was never associated with idols and continued to be remembered as 'Baytullah'.

When Mecca was conquered, the idols in the Ka'bah were smashed and the inside and outside of the Ka'bah was washed with zamzam water under the supervision of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Until this day the Ka'bah is washed with zamzam and rose water, cleaned, and scented with beautiful fragrances, and its covering is also replaced with a new one on the Day of Arafah, the day before the *eid al-adha*.<sup>3</sup>

There were certain duties in regards to the Ka'bah which have been in place ever since the day it was built. At that time these duties were carried out by the Prophet Isma'il. They were then taken up by his son, and then later by the Jurhumites and then passed onto various tribes until eventually the tribe of Quraysh took these duties upon themselves.

These duties that were as follows:

**Sidana:** The task of caring for the curtains and cover of the Ka'bah and the

possession of the key, which was considered as the most honourable one.

**Sikaya:** Offering fresh water to the pilgrims and taking care of the well of Zamzam.

**Ridana:** Feeding, hosting, and housing the poor pilgrims.

In the Age of Bliss (Asr-i Saadah) these duties were shared amongst the leading families of Mecca. The second caliph, Umar (ra), later allocated money from the treasury for these services and they were later made more organised. During the rule of the Ottomans, funds were allocated every year for services of the Ka'bah from the Haramayn fund.

### The Ka'bah under the Divine Protection and the Year of the Elephant

Built by the command of Allah, the Ka'bah was always under Almighty Allah's protection. One example of this was the event which is known in history as the event of the Elephant. Abraha, the ruler of the Yemen, had a temple built in San'a with the help of the Roman emperor. He, however, became angry when the people did not show it as much esteem as he desired. He thus decided to

3 The eid al-adha is the Feast of Sacrifice celebrated at the end of the duty of hajj. (Translator's note)

destroy the Ka'bah, which had always been accepted by the Arabs as holy and was oft frequented by them. He gathered a great army and set off for Mecca. There were large elephants in the army. Just like the tanks of today these elephants meant a destructive war power at the time. Abraha assumed that if he destroyed the Ka'bah, he could direct people's attention and esteem to his own temple.

Abraha had become so wild with rage, in shock he said to Abdulmuttalib who had come to him to retrieve his usurped camels:

"I have come here to destroy the Ka'bah. And you are still thinking only of your camels". Abdulmuttalib replied:

"The Ka'bah has an owner who can defend it."

Finally Abraha gave the command to his army who had neared Mecca, to begin the attack the Ka'bah. However the elephants suddenly stopped moving. Out of nowhere the sky began to be filled with birds called *ababil*. These birds carried stones of baked clay on their feet and began to drop them down upon the army of Abraha. These stones killed whomever they hit. In an instant the surrounds of Mecca became a burial ground of men and elephants. These tiny birds of *ababil* were able to overpower elephants which weighed tonnes. The year that this terrifying divine miracle took place was called the 'Year of the Elephant.' From that time on, the Year of the Elephant was considered to be a new beginning in history for the people of Quraysh.

Allah the Almighty mentions this event in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

**"Do you not see what your Lord did with the Companions of the Elephant? Did He not bring all their schemes to nothing, unleashing upon them flock after flock of birds, bombarding them with stones of hard-baked clay, making them like stripped wheat-stalks eaten bare?"**

(al-Fil, 105: 1-5).

The Ka'bah had been built in accordance with the command of Almighty Allah. It was made holy and blessed as a place of worship of Allah. Thus it was ever under divine protection. The punishment for the disrespect shown by Abraha toward this place of worship would remain a warning to all other similar attempts until the end of time.

In another verse it is said:

**"Who could do greater wrong than someone who bars access to the mosques of Allah, preventing His name from being remembered in them, and goes about destroying them? Such people will never be able to enter them – except in fear. They will have disgrace in this world and in the hereafter they will have a terrible punishment"** (al-Baqara, 2: 114).

Due to his increasing oppressive and tyrannical nature, Abraha had eventually come to believe that he was infinitely powerful and great. In response to this Allah the Almighty destroyed him, not with terrifying lions, tigers or poisonous snakes, but rather with very weak and powerless birds and tiny stones smaller than chickpeas. In the same way, Allah destroyed wild and arrogant men such as Pharaoh, Nimrod and Goliath with smaller creatures and thus displayed their weakness and the senselessness of their pride and arrogance.

And so Abraha who had left Yemen in great pomp and pride was forced to return crawling in a wretched state with a tattered body. This state of his is an evident lesson for us that the proud and arrogant are disgraced while still in this world.



### The Prophet Abraham and the Hanif way

Despite the fact that idol-worship was widespread in Mecca, the belief of *tawhid* had not completely disappeared. This belief in the oneness of Allah that the Prophet Abraham (pbuh) taught was continued by a small proportion of people. The religion of the Prophet Abraham was called the *Hanif* way and its followers were called '*Hunafa*'. The word '*hanif*' means the one who abandons what is crooked and moves towards what is upright, who is upright in their actions, upright in their direction, fleeing from false beliefs and believing in the One God.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

**"(The people of the Book say to the Muslims): "Be Jews or Christians and you will be guided." Say: "Rather adopt the religion of Ibrahim, a man of natural pure belief. He was not one of the idol-worshippers""** (al-Baqara, 2: 135).

**"Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian. but a man of pure natural belief (*hanif*)– a Muslim. He was not one of the idol-worshippers"** (Al-i Imran, 3: 67)

The term *hanif* was also used for those who, in the Period of Ignorance turned away from all manner of misguidance and idol-worship and turned towards Allah, following the religion of Abraham and believing in the oneness of Allah. Some of these people included Waraqa ibn Nawfal, Abdallah ibn Jahsh, Uthman ibn Huwayris, Zayd ibn Amr, and Kuss ibn Saïda. They considered it repulsive to bow and beg before lifeless and mute idols, who had no power to speak of. Allah's Messenger (saw) said about Waraqa:

**"I saw him in the centre of Paradise wearing a robe embroidered with silk".** About Zayd he said:

**"On the Day of Judgement, He will be raised up as a separate community between mine and that of the Prophet Isa"** (Haythami, IX, 416).

According to Islamic scholars, the mother and father of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) were also *hanifs*.

Thus the way of the *hanif* is nothing other than Islam. This is why Almighty Allah commanded the Prophet Muhammad to follow the *hanif* religion of the Prophet Abraham:

**"Ibrahim was a community in himself, exemplary, obedient to Allah, a man of pure natural belief. He was not one of the idol-worshippers... Then We revealed to you: 'Follow the religion of Ibrahim, a man of pure natural belief. He was not one of the idol-worshippers'"**(al-Nahl, 16: 120, 123).

This is why the term '*hanif*' was used for Islam. A sincere, genuine Muslim was described using the attribute of '*hanif*'.

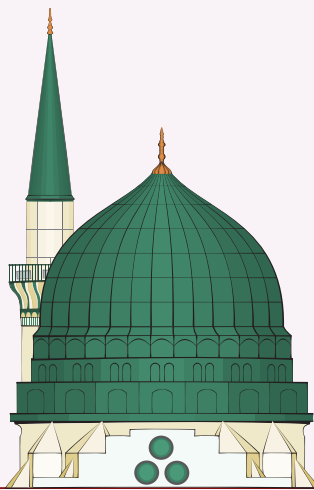
The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said:

**"I was sent with the tolerant *hanifi* way"** (Ahmad, V, 266. Also see Bukhari, Iman, 29).





# PART ONE



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## THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW)



## THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW)

### The Pure Lineage of the Prophet Muhammad (saw)

The father of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was Abdullah and his mother was Amina. His blessed lineage goes back as far as Adnan, the most honourable of the tribe of Kayzar, a son of the Prophet Ismail.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was a member of the most noble and pure of families, from the tribe of Quraysh, from both his mother's and his father's side.

He mentioned this in a hadith:

**"From amongst the sons of Ibrahim, Allah Most High chose Ismail. From the sons of Ismail He chose the sons of Kinana and from the sons of Kinana He chose the Quraysh. From the sons of Quraysh He chose the sons of Hashim (Bani Hashim). From the sons of Hashim he chose Abdulmuttalib and from the sons of Abdulmuttalib He chose me"** (Muslim, Fadail, 1; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1).

Whenever the lineage that the Messenger of Allah belonged to split into two branches, Allah Most High would place the Messenger on the best one. The light that illuminated the universe came down all the way down to him from the time of the Prophet Adam and all the way through a chain of the most pure of mothers and fathers (Ahmad, Musnad I, 210).

### The Marriage of Abdullah to Amina

At that time all traces of the belief of tawhid left from the Prophet Abraham had disappeared. The Ka'bah had been filled with idols of various tribes and clans. The well left over from the time of the Prophet Ismail was closed and not being used.

Once when the Prophet's grandfather, Abdulmuttalib was sleeping in the Hijr of the Ka'bah, he saw a dream in which he was told to dig the well of Zamzam. Then he was given a sign to indicate where he was to dig.



When Abdulmuttalib began to dig the Quraysh tried to prevent him saying: “We will not let our mosque be dug up”. Feeling helpless Abdulmuttalib made a vow that if Allah gave him ten sons and they reached to the age old enough to protect him he would sacrifice one of them near the Ka’bah.

A short time later when the Quraysh witnessed some extraordinary states and signs in Abdulmuttalib, they softened and allowed him to dig the well of Zamzam. Abdulmuttalib then began to dig and he was able to uncover the well.

In time Abdulmuttalib had ten sons and they reached the age old enough to protect their father. He was then told in his dream to keep the promise he had made years ago. First he sacrificed a lamb and then a cow but in each dream he had he was asked for something greater. When he asked what was greater, he was told: “You had vowed that you would sacrifice one of your sons”.

He then gathered his sons together and asked them to obey him in order to fulfill his vow that he had made to Allah. They did not oppose him and said:

“Be true to your promise and do as you wish”.

When casting lots, Abdulmuttalib prayed as follows:

“O Allah! I had vowed that I would sacrifice one of my sons for you. I am going to cast lots amongst them so let the lot fall to whomever you wish”.

The lot fell to Abdullah, the father of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). When Abdulmuttalib tried to take his son to the Ka’bah in order to sacrifice him, the Meccans tried to stop him, fearing that sacrificing children would become a habit amongst the Arabs. In search of another solution they persuaded Abdulmuttalib to go and consult a wise woman who asked him:

“How much is the ransom for a human being?” He replied: “Ten camels”.

The woman then advised him as follows:

“In that case cast lots between Abdullah and ten camels. If the lot falls to Abdullah add ten more camels and then cast lots again between Abdullah and twenty camels. Increase the number of camels until the lot falls to them.”

Abdulmuttalib did as she said and cast lots between Abdullah and ten camels. The lot fell to Abdullah. He added ten more camels and cast lots once more but once again the lot fell to Abdullah. He repeated this until the number of camels reached one hundred at which point the lot fell to the camels. In order to be certain Abdulmuttalib repeated the lots three times and each time the lot fell to the camels. Seeing this he cried out in happiness: “*Allahu Akbar*” (“God is most Great”). They then sacrificed the camels and distributed the meat to the poor people. (Ibn-i Hisham; 163-168; Ibn-i Sa’d, 83-85; Hakim, II, 604/4036).

Because both Ismail, the grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad and Abdullah, his father were chosen for sacrifice, the Messenger of Allah once said: “I am the son of two sacrificed ones” (Hakim, II, 609/4048) and he came to be known as ‘*Ibn-i Dhabihayn*’ (the son of two sacrificed ones) (Hakim, II, 604/4036).

Out of his own brothers and the other youth from the Quraysh, Abdullah was the most beautiful one both in terms of physical beauty and character. He was also superior to them in intelligence (Halabi, *Insan al-Uyun* I, 51-62).

Abdumuttalib married his son to Aminah, the daughter of Wahb ibn Abdu Manaf, the leader of the tribe of Bani Zuhra.

The lineage of Aminah was as follows: Wahb ibn Abdu Manaf ibn Zuhrah ibn Kilab ibn Murrah. Since Zuhrah was the brother of Qusayy ibn Kilab, the ancestor of Bani Hashim, the lineage of Aminah and Abdullah connects at Kilab (Ibn-i Sa'd, I, 59-60)

### **The Death of Abdullah**

A short time after his marriage, Abdullah travelled to Damascus with a trade caravan from Quraysh. After finishing his business he returned but fell ill on the journey back home. When he arrived in Medina he said to his friends: "Let me stay here a little while with my (maternal) uncles, the sons of Najjar". He remained there for one month. Despite all of his uncles' efforts he did not recover and passed away there in Medina where he was later buried. Abdullah was only twenty five years old when he passed away (Ibn-i Sa'd, I, 99).

When she received the news of her husband's death, Aminah wept for days and began to recite dirges expressing how she would never be able to find another like him, how much he was loved by everyone, and how generous and merciful he was.

### **News and Events that Foretold the Coming of the Prophet Muhammad**

Before the Prophet Muhammad (saw) was born many divine signs appeared. It was as though the entire universe were longing for him.

Above all, Allah Most High took vows from all the previous prophets that they would believe in the Prophet Muhammad and be his helper. It is stated in a verse of the Holy Qur'an:

**"Remember when Allah made a covenant with the Prophets: 'Now that We have given you a share of the Book and Wisdom, and then a messenger comes to you confirming what is with you, you must have faith in him and help him.' He asked, 'Do you agree and undertake my commission on that condition?' They replied, 'We agree.' He said, 'Bear witness, then. I am with you as one of the witnesses'"** (Al-i Imran, 3: 81)

After completing the construction of the Ka'bah, the Prophet Abraham and his son Ismail, raised their hands to the heavens and prayed as follows:

**"Our Lord, raise up among them a Messenger from them to recite Your Signs to them and teach them the Book and Wisdom and purify them. You are the Almighty, the All-Wise"** (al-Baqara, 2: 129)

Similarly when the Prophet Isa informed the Israelites of his own prophethood, he also gave them good tidings of the coming of the Prophet Muhammad:

**"And when 'Isa son of Maryam said, 'Tribe of Israel, I am the Messenger of Allah to you, confirming the Torah which came before me and giving you the good news of a Messenger after me whose name is Ahmad..."** (al-Saff, 61: 6)

When Aminah was pregnant she saw a dream in the first days of her pregnancy in which she was told:

"O Aminah! You are pregnant with the master of this community. When he honours the world with his presence pray to Allah as follows: "I leave him in the protection of Allah from the evil of every envier" and call him Muhammad" (Ibn-i Hisham, I, 170).

This is why Allah's Messenger (saw) would say:

"I am the prayer of my father Ibrahim, the good news brought by my brother Isa and the fulfilment of my mother's dream" (Hakim, II, 453; Ahmad, IV, 127-128).

The Jews who knew of the Messenger of Allah (saw) with all of his traits were in expectation of his arrival. Whenever the idol-worshipping tribes of Aws and Khazraj would be in conflict with the Jews, the Jews would say:

"The time is near when the Prophet will be sent. His coming is very near. And when he comes we will follow him and slay you and wipe out all traces of you just like the tribes of Iram and 'Ad were destroyed" (Ibn-i Asir, al-Kamil, II, 95-96).

Ibn Abbas (ra) relates the following event which shows that the Jews knew beforehand that the Messenger of Allah was to arrive: There was a battle between the Jews of Khaybar and the tribe of Ghatafan and each time the Jews would be defeated. Eventually they decided to pray as follows:

"O Allah! We ask that You make us victorious for the sake of the Prophet that You have promised to send at the end of time" When they went to battle with the Ghatafan they prayed this prayer and as a result they were able to defeat them. However when Allah Most High eventually sent the Prophet Muhammad (saw) to them, whom they resorted to in their prayers, they rejected him. Allah Most High then revealed the following verse:

**"When a Book does come to them from Allah, confirming what is with them – even though before that they were praying for victory over the unbelievers – yet when what they recognise does come to them, they reject it. Allah's curse is on the unbelievers..."** (al-Baqara, 2: 89) (Qurtubi, II, 27; Wahidi, p. 31).

Abdulmuttalib, the Prophet's grandfather was also given the good tidings of the coming of his grandson as follows:

"When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was a child he was playing with the other children and went with them as far as the area of Radm. He drew the attention of the sons of Mudli. They called him and looked at his feet and studied his footprint. At that point Abdulmuttalib arrived and embraced his grandson. Those present asked him:

"Is this child from your lineage?" He replied: "He is my son". The sons of Mudli said: "In that case protect him well because we have not seen a footprint as similar to that at the *maqam* of Ibrahim as that of this child's.

Abdulmuttalib said to his son Abu Talib:

“Look and listen to what they are saying”.

After that Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, protected his nephew with great caution (Abu Nuaym, Dalail, I, 165; Ibn-i Sa'd, I, 118)

When the time of the Prophet Muhammad's birth was near, everyone and in fact every thing was waiting in enthusiastic expectation and longing for that great Light to come to their aid and save them from darkness.

All of humanity was yearning for him and awaiting him.

### **His Sublime Arrival and the Extraordinary Events that Happened Then**

Eventually that long-awaited Light honoured this world with his arrival on the dawn of a Monday morning on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Rabi'u'l Awwal, which corresponded to the 20<sup>th</sup> April in the year 571 AD.

It was as if all of creation was suddenly able to speak. Overcome with in bliss they cried out: “Welcome o Messenger of Allah.”

Sulayman Celebi has penned the following verses to express the cries of happiness of all creatures on earth, from the tiniest to the greatest.

*Welcome O elevated sultan, welcome!*  
*Welcome O source of inspiration, welcome!*  
*Welcome O mystery of the Qur'an, welcome!*  
*Welcome O remedy for our ills, welcome!!*  
*Welcome O mercy to all the worlds*  
*Welcome to You, the intercessor of the sinners*

With his birth the mercy of Allah overflowed and flooded the world. Mornings and evenings changed their hue. Feelings became more profound. Words, conversation, all pleasure was immense. All things gained a different meaning, and a different beauty. Idols were shattered and toppled to the ground. In the land of Chosroes, in the palace of Madayin, fourteen pillars and some towers were smashed. The lake of Sawa dried up in an instant. The valley of Samawa was flooded all of a sudden. The fires of the Iranian Zoroastrians which had been burning in their temples for thousands of years suddenly went out (Ibn-i Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 273). With the beautiful and sublime honouring of that rose of roses the flow of all things changed.

Manifestations of mercy diffused throughout the universe like pearls, satiating hearts that were in longing for that light with happiness and peace. Hearts were engulfed in prosperity and blessings. That year was termed the year of plenty. This is why people of the heart have accepted the night that the Messenger of Allah was born as the most precious after that of the Night of Power.



## THE BIRTH OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMED AND HIS CHILDHOOD

It has been narrated by Ibn Abbas :

“The Prophet was born on a Monday and he became a prophet on a Monday. It was on a Monday that he emigrated from Mecca to Medina and he arrived in Medina on a Monday. He also passed away on a Monday. It was on a Monday that he lifted the Black Stone in the Ka’bah and issued his decision as arbitrator. He won the battle of Badr on a Monday. And it was on a Monday that the verse **"This day have I perfected your religion for you"** (al-Maida, 5: 3) was revealed. (Ahmad, I, 277; Haythami, I, 196)

All of the people of Mecca were happy at the birth of the Messenger of Allah (saw). Even Abu Lahab rewarded his maidservant, Suwayba, by setting her free to celebrate the birth of his blessed nephew (Halabi, I, 138)

In connection with this event, Abbas (ra) later related the following:

“A year after Abu Lahab died, I saw him in my dream in a bad state. I asked him: “How are they treating you there?”

He replied: “Because I was happy and set Suwayba free when Muhammad was born, my punishment is lightened on Mondays. I am cooled by some water that flows through this small hole between my thumb and index finger (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 277; Ibn Sa’d, I, 108, 125)

### The Names of the Prophet Muhammad

The Messenger of Allah (saw) had many blessed names. The first of these are those mentioned in the Qur’an – ‘Muhammad’ and ‘Ahmad’. Muhammad means the one who is praised much, while Ahmad means the one who praises much. In the Holy Qur’an, the name Muhammad is mentioned four times while the name Ahmad is mentioned once. In the Bible, the Messenger of Allah (saw) is called ‘Paraclete’, which has the same meanings.

In a hadith the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said:

“I am Muhammad and I am Ahmad. I am *al-Mahi* (the obliterator) through whom Allah obliterates unbelief and I am *al-Hashir* (the gatherer) at whose feet the people will be gathered (on the Day of Resurrection and I am *‘Aqib* (the seal of the Prophets) after whom there will be other prophet” (See Bukhari, Manaqib, 17; Muslim, Fadail, 125/2354).

The blessed names and attributes of the Messenger of Allah are mentioned in many books. In ‘Dalail al-Hayrat’, approximately 200 are mentioned.



The following names and attributes are some of those that decorate the wall facing the Qibla in the Rawda of the Prophet today with beautiful and perfect script:

*Ahmad, Mahmud, Muhammad, Mustafa, Nur, Hamid, Bashir, Nabi, Nadhir, Emin Hatem, Muhtar, Burhan, Habibullah, Rasulullah, Mujtaba, Rahmeten li'l-alemin, Seyyidu'l-Murselin, Shafi al-Mudhhibin, Seyyidu'l-Kavnayn, Rasulu's-Sakalayn, Imamu'l-Haramayn, Ta-Ha, Ya-Sin...*

### **The Prophet's Given to a Nursing Mother**

The Messenger of Allah (saw) came to this world as an orphan. In expressing this as such, Almighty Allah says in the Qur'an:

**"Did He not find you orphaned and shelter you?"** (al-Duha, 93: 6)

When he was born, his mother, Amina breastfed him for the first few days. Later Suwayba became his nursing mother, nursing him along with her own son Masruh (Ibn Sa'd, I, 108).

In his later years, the Messenger of Allah continued to pay great attention and regard to his nursing mother, Suwayba. While they were in Mecca, both the Messenger of Allah and his wife, Khadija, were very generous and kind to her. And when the Prophet migrated to Medina, he continued to send food and clothing to her and meet her other needs (Ibn Sa'd, I, 108, 109).

This treatment of the Prophet to Suwayba is an unparalleled example of appreciation and loyalty.

After Suwayba, the honour of wet-nursing the Prophet went to Halima Sa'diya. At that time there was a custom amongst the Arabs to send their newly born children to live in the desert and be nursed by one of the nursing mothers of the tribes there. It was believed that the desert climate made people healthier and more courageous. Also the speech of desert people was more fluent and eloquent. In this environment, the children would be raised to be healthy and to have a good command of language.

In accordance with this Arab tradition, this blessed child was also to be given to a foster mother. This fortunate woman turned out to be Halima Sa'diya of the tribe of Bani Sa'd. The speech of the tribe of Bani Sa'd was the most fluent and lucid of all the Arab tribes.

In this way, the Messenger of Allah (saw) was prepared from childhood to be the most fluent and impressive of speakers in order to spread and explain the words of Allah.

Halima bint Haris (ra) was reported to have said:

"It was a year of great drought and we had set out for Mecca on a white donkey together with some of the women from Bani Sa'd in order to find a child to nurse. We had nothing left to eat. We also had with us an old she-camel but she had not a drop of milk left. I had with me my own child who kept us awake with his cries of hunger since neither I nor the camel had enough milk for him.

Eventually we reached Mecca. There was not a woman left who had not been offered to nurse Muhammad (saw). However every woman was in want of a child whose father was still alive. But he was an orphan. And so every woman except for me had found a child to nurse and had left. I did not wish to leave without taking a child so I said to my husband:

“I shall go to that orphan and take him”. So I went and took him and returned to my tent. My husband said to me:

“You did well in taking him. It may be that Allah may bless us with goodness because of him”.

By Allah, no sooner had I taken him in my arms then my milk began to overflow. I suckled him and he drank his fill. I also suckled his foster brother and he also drank his fill. When it was night time my husband went to that old camel and lo and behold her udders were overflowing with milk. We milked her and drank of her milk until we could drink no more and our hunger was satisfied. That night we were neither hungry nor thirsty.

Our children slept comfortably. My husband could not help saying to me:

“By Allah, this is a blessed child that you have taken”.

When we were finished there we rode our mounts and set off. That donkey of mine which had previously been lagging behind all the other animals was now outpacing them and I was having a hard time controlling him.

Everyone was in amazement and they asked me:

“Is this not the same animal that you came on?”

“Yes it is” I replied. Eventually we arrived back to our tents. The land of the Bani Sa’d was a very barren place. But after that time, our sheep would return from their grazing full of milk. The other flocks however would come back tired, faint, hungry and thirsty.

While everybody’s sheep were without milk, we were milking ours and drinking to our fill. The other sheep owners would chide their shepherds saying:

“Shame on you! Do you not graze our sheep where Halima’s shepherds graze hers?”

Yes, they were right, they did in fact graze them in the same place but while their sheep returned hungry and without milk, ours would return with their udders overflowing.

One day while he was outside in the heat of midday with his foster mother, he went to see the lambs with his foster sister, Shayma.

When they returned Halima asked her daughter:

“Why did you go out in such sweltering heat?”

Her daughter told her about the divine favour that they experienced:

“Mother! We did not feel the burning heat of the sun at all. There was a cloud passing over my foster brother at all times, shading us from the heat...” (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 279; Ibn Sa’d, I, 112).

Eventually Halima had completed her duty and it was time to return the child to his mother.

They went to Mecca to deliver the child to his mother, Amina.

Halima approached Amina and gave her back her child. Amina said to her:

“Leave him now and return to your land in peace” (Haythami, VIII, 221; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 278-279).

Halima narrates:

“Abdulmuttalib farewelled me with the best of gifts and I returned to my land with an indescribable amount of precious goods. Muhammad stayed with his grandfather. I informed Abdulmuttalib of everything that took place while he was with us. Abdulmuttalib embraced him and wept, saying:

“O Halima! My son’s glory will be great indeed. How I wish I could live to see that time” (Bayhaqi, Dalailu al-Nubuwwa, I, 145).

During his entire lifetime the Prophet Muhammad was to remain loyal to his foster relatives. Whenever he saw Halima he would say:

“Dear mother! Dear mother!” showing her great love and respect and taking off his robe and laying it on the ground for her to sit on. If she had any request he would immediately carry it out (Ibn Sa’d, I, 113, 114).

One time Halima came to Mecca to see the Prophet Muhammad (saw), who was married to Khadijah at that time. They hosted and received her in the best way.

Halima told him of how drought and shortage was rife in her land and that their animals were all perishing. The Messenger of Allah spoke with his wife, Khadijah who presented Halima with forty sheep and a camel for them to ride and carry their load with (Ibn Sa’d, I, 114).

### **The Splitting Open of the Prophet’s Heart**

The first time the heart of the Messenger of Allah was split open was when he was with his nursing mother, Halima. This spiritual cleansing was carried out in order for him to be better able to perceive His Divine truths and to prepare him to receive revelation.

The Messenger of Allah has related this event himself:

One time a man asked the Prophet of Allah:

“What was the first sign of your prophethood?”

The Messenger of Allah (saw) replied:

“My foster mother was from the Bani Sa’d ibn Bakr. My foster brother and I were out with our lambs and we had not anything with us to eat.

I said to my brother:

“Go to our mother and bring us something to eat” He went and I stayed with the animals.

Before too long two angels dressed in white came and one said to the other:

“Is that him?”

The other replied:

“Yes”.

They immediately approached me, laid me down on my back and opened up my breast. They took my heart out and split it open and took out a black clot which they threw away.

Then one of them said to the other:

“Go and get me some snow”. And then they washed my insides with it. Then one of them said again:

“Now bring me some hail”. They brought it and washed my heart with it. Then he said:

“Now bring some peace and harmony”. And they placed them inside my heart. Later on one said to the other:

“Now close it and stamp him with the seal of the Prophethood”. Then he closed my heart and stamped it with the seal. Then they parted and left and I was terrified. I then went back home and told my foster mother what had happened to me...” (Ahmad, IV, 184-185; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 280; Haythami, VIII, 222).

Anas (ra) relates: “I used to see the scar on the breast of the Messenger of Allah” (Muslim, Iman, 261)

### **Journey to Medina and the Death of His Mother**

When he was six years old, his mother Amina took him along with his father’s maidservant, Umm Ayman, and herself to Medina.

Her aim was to visit the grave of her husband, Abdullah. Amina and Umm Ayman stayed in the house of their maternal relatives for one month.

Allah’s Messenger played with the children of his uncle and learned how to swim while he was there (Ibn Sa’d, I, 116).

He had the following to say about his memories of those days:

“Some of the Jews would approach me and stare at me” (Ibn Sa’d, I, 116).

One day a Jew came and looked at me very carefully and then turned around and left. On another day when I was alone he came again and asked:

“O child! What is your name?”

I replied: “Ahmad”. He looked at my back and said:

“This child is the Prophet of this community”.

When my uncles told my mother about this she began to worry about me. We then set out from Medina to return to Mecca” (Abu Nuaym, Dalail, I, 163-164).

On the journey back, Amina fell ill and passed away at Abwa at the age of 30. She was buried there. Before she passed away she looked at her orphan child, her eyes filled with love and kindness and embraced him saying:

“May Allah bless you. If my dream comes true you will be appointed by Allah the Almighty so that you should enjoin goodness and forbid evil to mankind. Allah shall ever protect you from the idols and from idolatry. Every living being will die. Every new thing will grow old. Every thing that grows will die. And I too will die. But I will be remembered forever for I have given birth to a pure son and I am leaving behind a blessed memory” (Diyarbakri, I, 229-230; Kamil Miras, Tecrid Tercemesi, IV, 549).

Perceiving the truth in this one, poet addresses Amina as follows:

*“O deceased one who lies in Abwa*

*The world’s most beautiful rose has bloomed in your garden”*

In this way the Messenger of Allah was orphaned from his mother and forced to return orphaned to Mecca with Umm Ayman.

For the rest of his life the Messenger of Allah (saw) was to visit Umm Ayman often, the woman who treated him with such kindness and he would address her as “Mother”.

He would show her great love and respect, saying about her: “She was my mother after my mother” and complimenting her saying” “She is the only one left of my family” (Ibn Athir, Usd al-Ghabah, VII, 303-304; Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 223).

### **Under the Protection of His Grandfather, Abdulmuttalib**

Allah Most High did not leave his beloved Prophet unprotected, having first lost his father and then his mother. His grandfather, Abdulmuttalib embraced that most beautiful of orphans. He showed him such kindness and love that he did not show any one of his own children. No one was ever allowed to enter while Abdulmuttalib was sleeping or alone in his room. And no one could ever sit on the couch that he was sitting on. However that most blessed of prophets was always by his grandfather’s side and was free to come and go as he pleased even when his grandfather was alone or sleeping in his room (Ibn Sa’d, I, 118).

He would come and sit down freely on his grandfather’s couch. When his uncles wanted to remove him Abdulmuttalib would say to them:

“Leave my son be. By Allah, a great future is his” He would sit his grandson on his couch and stroke his back. It always pleased him to watch whatever it was that his grandson was doing (Ibn Hisham, I, 180).

Abdulmuttalib would not eat until his little grandson had come to the table. “Bring my son to me” he would say (Ibn Sa’d, I, 118).

And when the meal arrived he would have him sit next to him or on his knee and feed him the most delicious and best part of the meal. (Balazuri, I, 81).

However when the Messenger of Allah was eight years old, his grandfather, Abdulmuttalib passed away.

The loss of these people, mere transient mortals, at the time of his greatest need and weakness were so that he could be a perfect example and a source of consolation in times of distress for the community that was to come after him.

There is wisdom in the Prophet’s being deprived of the protection of a mother and father. The most important being to refute all possible future claims that it was his father and grandfather who taught him the first principles of his messengership.

In addition, by remaining separated from his parents and his grandfather, he was preserved from the ignorant customs and traditions that would have been transmitted by them and he thus

remained free from the influence of all people and was left completely under the training and guidance of his Lord.

He is reported to have said:

“My Lord educated me and how nicely He educated me” (Suyuti, I, 12).

Moreover, the fact that the Prophet was raised with an elevated character even though he was far from the training and education of his mother and father strengthens the proof of his prophethood.

Another wisdom in his being raised an orphan is that his heart was able to come to a state of being more delicate and sensitive to the degree that it was Allah solely upon whom he relied. It was because he felt the pain of being an orphan and weak in all its intensity that he was later to become the protector of the weak for the rest of his life.

In a hadith he is reported to have said:

“I and the person who looks after his own or another’s orphan and provides for him, will be together in Paradise like this”, putting his index and middle fingers together (Muslim, Zuhd, 42; See Bukhari, Adab, 24; Talaq, 14)

In order to make him an example for people from all walks of life, Allah Most High made him start out life as an orphan, which is the weakest situation, and made him pass through various stages until he reached the level of being the leader of a state.

### **Under the Protection of His Uncle Abu Talib**

When Abdulmuttalib was about to pass away, he gathered all of his children around him. He made a last request that they look after his special and dearest grandson very well.

Since Zubayr and Abu Talib were from the same mother as the Prophet’s father Abdullah, they drew lots as to who would take up the responsibility of looking after their blessed nephew. The lot fell to Abu Talib. Out of all of his uncles it was Abu Talib who was the kindest and most compassionate towards him. (Ibn Asir, Usd al-Ghabah, I, 22).

Apart from a few camels he had no other wealth and he had a very large family. But despite this humble state and meagre means, Abu Talib was one of the most respected of men amongst the Quraysh.

He was very influential amongst the people and nobody would dare go against his word. Like his father, Abdulmuttalib he too had never consumed alcohol (Halabi, I, 184).

Abu Talib doted on his blessed nephew. He loved him more than he did his own children. He would not sleep unless his nephew was beside him and he always took him with him wherever he went. His wife, Fatima Hatun was a most virtuous and good-hearted woman. After she became Muslim and migrated to Medina, the Prophet Muhammad continued to visit her for as long as she lived. He would go to her house from time to time and take a late-morning nap (Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 222).

When Fatima passed away Allah’s Messenger shed tears and said: “Today my mother passed away”. He made a shroud for her out of his shirt. He performed her funeral prayer himself and



then entered her grave and lay there for a while. When asked about the reason for this he gave the following reply:

“After Abu Talib there was no other person who was so good to me as this dearest of women. I made a shroud for her from my shirt so that she could wear a robe from the robes of Paradise. And I laid down in her grave so that she could warm up to it”.

To those who were surprised at the depth to which the Messenger of Allah was saddened by her death, he replied:

“She was my mother after my mother. When her own children were hungry and sulking she would first fill my stomach. She would comb my hair and put rose oil through it. She was my mother”.

Then he prayed for her as follows:

“May Allah forgive you and reward you with good. May Allah have mercy on you dearest mother. You were my mother after my mother. You went hungry to feed me. You would clothe me and spare yourself. You allowed me to taste the best of bounties while depriving your own self of them. And you did this solely to gain the pleasure of Allah and in hope of the afterlife” (See Hakim, III, 116-117; Haythami, IX, 256-257; Yaqubi, II, 14)



## THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S YOUTH YEARS

### The Prophet Muhammad Was Raised Under Divine Protection

Because Allah Most High was to honour him with the Prophethood, He preserved him from all of the evil of that period of ignorance. Despite his childhood and youth being spent as an orphan, he was not deprived of the characteristics and suitability of that honourable duty that he was to take up in the future. Before he became a prophet, in terms of his personality, Allah's Messenger was the most superior and had the best of characters; he was the most honourable in terms of his lineage; he was the person who most looked out for the rights of his neighbours; he was the person who stayed the farthest away from ill treatment, and causing others pain. He was never seen to criticise nor condemn another nor was he ever known to have argued with anyone.

Almighty Allah had gathered together in him all good virtues and merits so much so that his tribe began to call him '*al amin*' the most trustworthy" (Ibn Hisham, I, 191; Ibn Sa'd, I, 121).

One day the Messenger of Allah was asked:

"O Messenger of Allah! Did you ever worship another being besides Allah?"

He replied: "No".

"Have you ever drunk wine?"

He replied: "No. Even when I did not know of the Book or of faith, I knew that those things that they did were wrong" (Diyarbakri, I, 254-255).

Once when the Ka'bah was being rebuilt the Messenger of Allah was carrying stones together with his uncle Abbas. At one point Abbas said to his nephew:

"Put your cloak over your shoulders so that the stones do not hurt them"

As he tried to place his cloak over his shoulder he fell to the ground and pointing his eyes towards the heavens he said:

"My cloak, my cloak" and he immediately rose and covered himself with it (Bukhari, Hajj 42)

Even though at that time, it was quite normal to walk around without any clothes on, Allah's Messenger never displayed any behaviour that went beyond the limits of modesty. As is recorded in this hadith, even when he did do something at the urging of his uncle, Allah protected him.

According to a narration by Ali, the Messenger of Allah said: **"Only twice in my life I attempted to carry out a practice of the people from those days of ignorance. However Allah protected me from them. One night we were grazing our sheep with some of the youth from Quraysh on the upper side of Mecca. I said to my friend:**



**"If you look after my sheep I will go to Mecca and participate in one of the night celebrations like the other youth"**

**My friend said: "All right, as you wish".**

**I then set out and when I came closer to Mecca I could hear the sounds of drums, pipes and whistling.**

**I asked the people there what that sound was.**

**They told me that such and such a man was marrying so and so. I immediately sat down and looked that way. At that point Allah numbed my ears and I fell asleep there and then. I swear by Allah that I was unable to wake up until the sun rose over me. As soon as I woke up I went to my friend and he asked me:**

**"What did you do?"**

**I replied: "Nothing" and I told him what happened.**

**Another night a similar thing occurred. I went to Mecca again one night and Allah Most High made me sleep again until the sun rose. I never inclined towards any other indecent act apart from these and then my Lord honoured me with the Prophethood"** (Ibn Ishaq, s. 58-59; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 292)

### **The Prophet Muhammad Herds Sheep**

Before embarking on trade and whilst he was still staying with his uncle, the Prophet Muhammad was a shepherd for a brief period of time. At that time amongst the Arabs, this profession was not an ordinary, simple task but one that even the children of wealthy and leading families performed. Moreover, almost all of the Prophets were shepherds.

In making his prophets shepherds Allah Most High allowed them to gain certain capabilities necessary for leadership before bestowing on them the duty of spreading His religion.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) is reported to have said:

**"Allah Most High made all of the Prophets that he sent herd sheep".**

**The Companions then asked him:**

**"Did you also herd sheep o Messenger of Allah?" He replied:**

**"Yes. I used to herd the sheep of the Meccans in the region of Kararit"** (Bukhari, Ijara, 2, Anbiya, 29; Ibn Majah, Tijarah, 5).

A person who herds sheep has a high degree of contemplation, and his feelings of earnestness and mercy are well developed. The Messenger of Allah (saw) once indicated this when he said:

**"Tranquility and dignity can be found in those who herd sheep"** (Bukhari, Manaqib, 1; Muslim, Iman, 84/52).

Moving and managing sheep and trying to protect them from wild animals develops a person's patience and feeling of ownership. It is easier for a person who is patient with all of the states of animals and who protects them, to be kind in their dealings with other human beings and be

patient with their intolerant ways. And this is one of the most needed traits of a prophet who is to spread the religion of Allah.

### **The Prophet Muhammad's Travels With His Uncle**

When the Prophet Muhammad was twelve years old he travelled with his uncle Abu Talib to Syria for the first time to carry out some trade. The Quraysh were preparing to head out for Damascus and Abu Talib wished to join their trade caravan. When he was about to set out all of his brothers and sisters came out to farewell him. At that point Abu Talib asked his beloved nephew:

“Would you come with me too?”

His other uncles and aunts objected in the fear that he was too young and he might fall ill along the way. When his uncle saw that they were right he decided to leave his nephew in Mecca. The Prophet Muhammad was sad and began to cry. Abu Talib asked him:

“O my nephew what is it? Are you crying because I am not taking you?” The Prophet replied, grabbing hold of his camel's reins:

“My dear uncle. To whom are you entrusting me when you go. I have no father nor no mother”.

Abu Talib was very touched and he said: “By Allah I will take you with me. Never can you be parted from me and never will I part from you” (See Ibn Ishaq, p. 53; Abu Nuaym, *Dalail al-Nubuwwa*, I, 168).

When the Prophet Muhammad was seventeen years old he went to Yemen with his uncle Zubayr. The trade caravan passed through a valley. Upon the road was an angry male camel who would not let anyone pass and there was nothing anybody was able to do about it. In fact, the caravan wanted to turn back. At that point the Prophet Muhammad said:

“I will take care of it” and he headed out in front of the caravan. When the angry camel saw the Prophet he calmed down. The Prophet got down from his own camel and mounted this one. He let it go after they had passed through the valley (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, II, 282)

### **The Meeting with Bahira the Monk**

It was the time of the journey of the Prophet and his uncle Abu Talib to Damascus. Along the way they approached the monastery of the monk Bahira and stopped off for a rest at a site near it.

Bahira the monk was a Christian scholar of that time. He had noticed that a cloud had been following the caravan and shading it as it approached. This caught the attention of Bahira. When the caravan stopped off to rest under the shade of a tree he wished to understand the situation so he invited all of the people from the caravan, young and old, free and enslaved to dine with him. Bahira had never before approached the caravan previously and had taken no notice of it.

Every person in the caravan appeared for the meal except for the Prophet Muhammad. Bahira examined each person one by one but failed to see the attributes he had read about in his books.

“O Quraysh! Is there anyone left from your caravan who did not come with you” They replied:

“Nobody apart from a young boy. Since he is the youngest of us we left him behind with our belongings”. Bahira told them:

“Call him too. Let him too be at this meal.”

Upon this they called Muhammad (saw) and had him sit at the table with them. As soon as the monk saw the boy he began to examine him carefully and look him up and down.

He later observed the seal of the Prophethood on his back and taking him by the hand he said:

“This boy is the Master of all the worlds. He is the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds. Allah will send him as a mercy to all the worlds”

The leading men of the Quraysh asked him:

“How do you know of this?”

The monk answered:

“I have read his description in the books that have been revealed to us. When you were approaching us now, there was not a tree nor a stone which did not prostrate to him. These lifeless things will only prostrate to a prophet. In addition, I recognised him from the seal of the Prophethood on his back which is found between his shoulder blades”.

Bahira then asked the Prophet Muhammad and his uncle certain questions and when they were in harmony with what he already knew he became convinced. He turned to Abu Talib and said:

“Take your nephew back to your country and guard him against the Jews. By Allah if they see him and recognise him they will try to kill him. The Jews are expecting the future prophet to come from the sons of Israel. But this boy is an Arab. Verily the rank and prominence of your nephew will be great indeed”

Upon the advice of Bahira the monk, Abu Talib immediately took his nephew back to Mecca (See Ibn Ishaq, p. 54-55; Ibn Sa’d, I, 153-155; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 3).

### **The Alliance of the Virtuous (Hilf al-Fudul)**

*Hilf al-fudul* means ‘the alliance of the virtuous’. Before Islam the Arab tribes would fight each other in never-ending battles that lasted for months. However during the sacred months of Dhu’l Qada, Dhu’l Hijjah, Muharram and Rajab, the fighting would stop in honour of the sanctity of these months.

Despite this there were some battles that did take place during the sacred months. Amongst the Arabs they are known as the ‘Battles of Fijar’.

They were fought at four times in history. The fourth of these was fought between the tribes of Quraysh and Kinana and the Hawazin.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) also fought in this battle. In all stages of his life he always took the side of the Truth. He stood beside whoever was in the right and whoever was the victim.

He fought in this battle together with his uncles when he was twenty years old, however he never shed any person's blood. He merely gathered the arrows of the enemy to hand them over to his uncles (Ibn Hisham, I, 198; Ibn Sa'd, I, 126-128).

After returning from this battle that took place in the month of Dhu'l Qada, one of the sacred months, a man from the Yemenese tribe of Zabid arrived in Mecca with some goods to sell. 'As ibn Wail, one of the leading men from the Quraysh, bought these goods but refused to pay the price. In order to obtain his money, the wronged merchant approached some of the leading men of Mecca such as Abdu Dar, Mahzum, Jumah, and Sahm and asked them to help him.

However instead of helping this wronged man they favoured 'As ibn Wali and rebuked the merchant. In a state of helplessness, the poor man climbed the mountain of Abu Qubays and called out to the leading men of Quraysh who were sitting around the Ka'bah: "O men of Fihir". He then began to loudly read out a poem to express the injustice he had met with and to appeal for help. The first person to help was Zubayr, the Prophet Muhammad's uncle.

Zubayr and some of the other leading men of Quraysh were uneasy at the occurrence of such an event and they gathered together in the house of Abdullah ibn Judan in order to combat such injustice and oppression.

Abdullah offered them something to eat and they then vowed an oath that they would defend whoever it was who had met with injustice in Mecca against the oppressor until the wronged had regained his right.

They swore that they would keep their word as long as there was enough water to wet a strand of hair and as long as the mountains of Hira and Sabir remained in their place.

The men from this alliance began first by obtaining the rights of the wronged merchant from the tribe of Zabid from As ibn Wail.

Later they strove to spread justice throughout Mecca and ran to the aid of people who had been wronged or had their rights violated. (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 295-296; Ibn Sa'd, I, 128-129).

The only alliance that the Messenger of Allah approved of and participated in during the Period of Ignorance was the *Hilf al-Fudul*, because this pact tried to establish justice by preventing oppression in the society.

After he became a prophet, the Prophet Muhammad later said about this pact:

"I was present in the house of Abdullah ibn Judan with my uncles at so excellent a pact that I could not have been happier than if they gave me a herd of red camels. If I were called to it now (in Islam), I would gladly take part" (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 295).

### **His Life as a Merchant**

The Meccans earned their livelihood trading goods. They would travel to neighbouring lands with their trade caravans and sell their goods at fairs set up in Mecca.

Goods produced in Mecca would be taken to neighbouring lands to be sold.

During his youth the Messenger of Allah took part in one of these trade caravans travelling to Damascus and Yemen along with his uncles.

One day Abu Talib said to his beloved nephew:

“O son of my brother! I am a poor man. Drought and shortage have left us with no capital nor trade. A trade caravan is preparing to go to Damascus. Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (ra) is seeking someone to take her goods there to be sold. She is in need of someone trustworthy, pure and loyal as yourself. Let us talk to her about making you her agent. I do not think she will prefer another over you due to your honesty and trustworthiness. In fact I do not want you to go to Damascus because I fear the Jews will try to harm you. However we have no other choice.

When news of this conversation between uncle and nephew reached the ears of Khadijah (ra), she said:

“I did not know that Muhammad would want this”. She immediately sent word to him and offered him a greater fee than she would have anyone else, asking him to take her goods to Damascus.

Khadijah (ra) well knew that the Prophet was extremely trustworthy, honest and of good character (Ibn Hisham, I, 203; Ibn Sa'd, I, 129; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 297).

In later years the Messenger of Allah took part in many trade expeditions on behalf of Khadijah (ra) which had proved to be highly profitable (See Hakim, III, 200/4834).

Allah's Messenger is reported to have said:

“I know of no better partner than Khadijah” (Halebi, I, 221, Ayni, X, 104).

Throughout his life and in all of his trade dealings the Prophet Muhammad behaved uprightly towards all people. Whenever he made a promise he kept it, no matter what.

As someone who was familiar with the finest details of the life of the Prophet, Ibn Abbas, said:

“If the Messenger of Allah ever said that he would do something, then he definitely kept to his word” (Bukhari, Shahadat, 28).

Abdullah ibn Abi al-Hamza (ra) tells of one of the reasons for why he was given the titles *al-Amin* and *al-Sadiq*:

“One time before the Messenger of Allah became a prophet I traded some goods with him. I became indebted to him and I told him to wait for me a little while while I went to bring his money. However I forgot my promise and then when I remembered three days later I went back to where we had spoken and I found him there waiting in the same place. Allah's Messenger, who was at the peak of trustworthiness and loyalty, did not chide me but rather said:

“O young man! You have caused me difficulty. I have been waiting here for you for three days” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 82).

If Allah had so willed He could have made him live a comfortable life from childhood and not have to run after his livelihood.

However, Almighty Allah willed that His Messenger maintain himself by earning his own livelihood and thus be an example for his community.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) is reported to have said:

“No one earns a better provision than that which he earns with his own hands” (Bukhari, Buyu’, 15; Anbiya, 37)

### His Marriage to Khadijah

Maysara, the slave of Khadijah (ra), had participated in the trade caravans with the Prophet Muhammad. Maysara related to her in detail the extraordinary incidents he saw during his travels with the Prophet as well as his beautiful character and exceptional personality.

Khadija's friend Nafisa bint Umayya tells of how their marriage took place as follows:

“Khadijah was a talented, hardworking, righteous and virtuous woman. The men of her tribe yearned to marry her. However Khadijah (ranha) was in admirer of the character and personality of the Prophet Muhammad. After returning from the trade caravan from Damascus, Khadijah sent me to him in order to ask him to marry her.

I went to him and said:

“O Muhammad! Why do you not marry?”

“How can I marry when I do not have the means to?” he replied. I asked him:

“If you were given the means to marry a woman of wealth, honour and beauty would you consent?” He asked: “Who is this woman?” I replied: “Khadijah”. He asked: “Can this be possible?”. I told him: “Leave that to me”.

“In that case I will do as you say”, he said.

I immediately went to Khadijah and informed her (Ibn Sa’d, I, 131).

Upon the good news she received from Nafisa, Khadijah (ranha) proposed to the Messenger of Allah, who sent the news of this to his uncle, Abu Talib. Abu Talib then went to Amr ibn Asad, Khadijah’s uncle and asked for her hand. Abu Talib and Waraqah ibn Nawfal delivered the wedding speeches.

Later Amr ibn Asad rose and said:

“O people of Quraysh! Bear witness that I have married Khadijah bint Khuwaylid to Muhammad ibn Abdullah” (Diyarbakri, I, 264; Yaqubi, II, 20).

The Prophet Muhammad was 25 years old when he got married. His noble wife, Khadijah (ranha), was a new source of support and strength for him, with her wealth and her life. This fortunate woman was 15 years older than him and had children from her previous marriages. She came from an honourable family and due to her elevated character she had been given the names “*Afifa*” and “*Tahira*”<sup>4</sup> even before she became a Muslim. After the birth of Islam, she started to be known as ‘Khadijah al-Kubra’ (The great Khadijah) (Ibn Sa’d, VIII, 14-15).

The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said about her:

4 *Afifa* is a name that comes from ‘*iffa*’ which means dignified and *Tahira* means ‘pure and clean’ (Translator’s note).



“The best of women (in the hereafter) is Maryam bint Imran, while the best of woman (in this world) is Khadijah bint Khuwaylid” (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 20; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 69)

This marriage of the Messenger of Allah (saw) shows that he was not a man who succumbed to his carnal desires nor did he give any importance to them. If he had done so, he would not have married a widowed woman, much older than him. Rather he would have chosen a young girl to marry. However he preferred honour, virtue and good character over passing traits such as youth and beauty.

### His Adoption of Zaid ibn Harithah

When Zaid ibn Harithah was eight years old, he was captured by some horseman from the Bani Qayn tribe and brought to be sold as a slave to the fair at Ukaz. Hakim ibn Hizam, the nephew of Khadijah, bought him for his aunt for four hundred dirhams. When the Prophet Muhammad (saw) saw him, he said:

“If he were my slave, I would free him”.

Khadijah responded:

“In that case, he is yours”. The Prophet Muhammad immediately set him free. (Ibn Hisham, I, 266; Ibn Sa'd, III, 40).

Despite having been set free, Zaid (ra) preferred to stay with and never parted from the Prophet who had been so kind to him. Zaid's father was very distraught at the loss of his son and set out to search for him. When he learned from pilgrims who had gone to visit the Ka'bah that Zaid was in Mecca he immediately went there with his brother and found the Prophet Muhammad. He offered to pay the price for Zaid and also asked that he be fair with the price. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) asked:

“Can there be no other solution than this?”

“What is that?” Zaid's father asked.

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) replied:

**“Call him and leave the choice to him. If he chooses you, then there is no need for you to make any payment. If he chooses me, then by Allah I cannot send away one who wishes to stay with me”.** Upon this, Zaid's uncle and his father said:

“You have been very fair to us, and showed us great favour and grace”.

However, this is what Zaid had to say:

“O Master! I swear by Allah that I could never choose anyone over you. You have been like a mother and a father to me. I will only stay with you”

When his father and uncle shocked by his response and complained by asking him why he gave such a decision, he replied:

“I have seen such nice things from this man that I could never prefer anyone over him. Neither can I ever be parted from him”.



When the Prophet Muhammad saw this loyalty in Zaid, he took him by the hand to the Ka'bah and declared his adoption<sup>5</sup> of Zaid, saying:

“O people! Bear witness that Zaid is my son. I am his heir and he will be mine”.

When Zaid's father and uncle saw Zaid's happiness and contentment, they returned to their land with peace of mind (Ibn Hisham, I, 267; Ibn Sa'd, III, 42).

### The Prophet Muhammad's Taking Ali (ra) under His Care

Abu Talib's family was very crowded and his financial situation was quite poor. The Prophet Muhammad went to his other uncle, Abbas, and said:

“Dear uncle! You know that the family of my uncle Abu Talib is very crowded. They are struggling with hunger and shortage. Let us go now to Abu Talib and speak with him. Let me take one of his sons and you take the other. In that way we can lighten his burden”.

Abbas (ra) accepted this offer and together they went to Abu Talib. Abu Talib's response was:

“Leave Aqil to me and take whichever of the others you wish”

Upon this, the Prophet Muhammad took Ali while Abbas took Ja'far (Ibn Hisham, I, 264).

### The Prophet's Children

From his marriage to Khadijah, the Prophet Muhammad had six children – Qasim, Abdullah, Zaynab, Ruqayya, Umm Kulthum, and, Fatima. Because his first son was named Qasim, the Prophet Muhammad was given the epithet, ‘Abu al-Qasim’. Unfortunately Qasim passed away when he was only two years old. After he passed away, the Quraysh idolaters said about the Prophet:

“Leave him! He is ‘*abtar*’, a man whose lineage is discontinued. When he is dead his name will be forgotten and you will be rid of him and free”

It was then that Allah Most High revealed the chapter Kawthar:

**"Truly We have given you the Great Abundance.<sup>6</sup> So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. It is the one who hates you who is cut off without an heir"** (al-Kawthar, 108: 1-3) (Ibn Sa'd, III, 7; Wahid, p. 494).

Allah's Messenger (saw) had four daughters, the eldest of whom was Zaynab. The Prophet Muhammad was 30 years old when she was born. When he was 33 years old, his daughter Ruqayya was born (Diyarbakri, I, 273-274). After Ruqayya came Umm Kulthum and then Fatima. At that time, the Prophet was 35 years old (Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 19-26)

5 From that day on Zaid was known as Zaid ibn Muhammad. This condition continued until the practice of adoption was annulled by the 5<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> verses of the chapter al-Ahzab.

6 *Kawthar* has the meanings of plenty, abundance, everything in great quantity. According to a narration *Kawthar* is also the name of the pool at which the Prophet Muhammad will gather together his community on the Day of Judgement (Bukhari, Tafsir, 108)

That year Mecca was flooded and the walls of the Ka'bah were greatly damaged. The tribes of Quraysh worked together to repair the walls and they decided to demolish the walls and then rebuild them. At that time they heard that a boat which had been subject to strong winds was washed towards the pier of Shuayb in Mecca and broke apart when it hit land. The boat had been carrying building materials such as stones, timber and iron. The Meccans went to buy the wood from this ship to use in the construction of the Ka'bah. They then drew lots as to how to divide up the tasks of demolishing and repairing the Ka'bah.

At the time when the Quraysh were about to begin demolishing the part of the Ka'bah that fell to their lot, Abu Wahb ibn Amr down (Abdurrazzak, V, 319).

The Quraysh then raised the walls of the Ka'bah by laying one row of stones then one row of wood. The Prophet Muhammad participated in the rebuilding of the Ka'bah together with his uncle, Abbas.

The time came to put the Black Stone back into its proper place. Every tribe wanted to carry out this honourable task themselves which was why a great dispute broke out and there was harsh squabbling. Swords were drawn and blood was about to be shed. In accordance with an old Arab custom, the sons of Abdu Dar brought a vessel filled with blood and made their pledge with the sons of Adiyib ibn Ka'b to fight for this cause to the death. They thus prepared themselves for war.

In order to strengthen their oath they dipped their hands into the blood-filled vessel. The Quraysh spent four or five tense nights in this way. At the end of this period, the oldest man of Quraysh, Abu Umayya cried out:

"O my people! We wish for good and we do not wish for evil. Do not enter into a race of envy. Stop this fighting each other. Since we have been unable to solve this matter ourselves, let us appoint the first man to enter the gate of the Haram to be our arbiter. And let us be content with his ruling." He then indicated the gate of Bani Shayba.

Before long the Prophet Muhammad appeared at the gate. A sweet smile appeared on the faces of all the men there for here was Muhammad al-Amin, the man most loved and trusted by all the people of Mecca.

As soon as they saw him, they said:

"Here is al-Amin. We are content with him as our arbiter"

They explained the matter to him. He selected one man from each tribe and then took off his robe and laid it on the ground. He then told each person that he chose to place the Black Stone upon his robe and to each grab one of its sides. In this way they were all able to carry the blessed stone to its place. Then the Prophet Muhammad took the stone with his own hands and put it in its place.

Thus a potential war was prevented amongst the tribes (Ibn Hisham, I, 209-214; Abdurrazzak, V, 319).

This insightful act of the Prophet, his character which was of such unattainable perfection and beauty, and the elevated personality which left everyone in awe were indications of the attribute of Sultan of Prophets which he was later to be called.

### His Retreat to the cave of Hira<sup>7</sup>

As the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah approached, he had been frequently retreating and delving into a realm of contemplation. From time to time he would leave his house and distance himself from Mecca and head off for somewhere quiet and calm. During these trips all of the trees and stones he encountered would greet him saying “As salamu alayka ya Rasullullah.”<sup>8</sup> He would immediately look around him but see nothing other than the trees and the stones (Ibn Sa’d, I, 157).

He is later reported to have said:

“I know of a stone in Mecca which used to greet me before I became a prophet. I still know where it is now” (Muslim, Fadail, 2).

Ali also related a similar hadith: “I was once in Mecca with the Messenger of Allah. While we walking around certain parts of Mecca we passed through some mountains and trees all of which greeted him, saying: “As salamu alayka ya Rasulullah” (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 6/3626).

It was the month of Ramadan and the Prophet Muhammad had retreated to the cave of Hira.<sup>9</sup> On completing his *itiqaf*,<sup>10</sup> he would circumambulate the Ka’bah seven times or more and then return home.

Seeing his tribe worshipping idols and in moral depravity would sadden him and he would prefer to distance himself from them and remain alone. The worship that he performed during these times of solitude and retreat were for contemplation and, like his forefather Ibrahim, to take heed from the creation of the heavens and the earth (Ayni, I, 61).

From the retreats of the Prophet Muhammad to the cave of Hira and from his later periods of regular *itiqaf* we understand that however much a Muslim worships in their daily life, from time to time, we need to retreat and take our nafs to account and contemplate on the flow of divine power throughout the universe. Otherwise we cannot be said to have reached perfection in the full sense of the word. This is a duty incumbent upon every believer. Those who are in the position of guiding people, are in even greater need of contemplation and taking oneself to account. In order for the love of Allah to establish itself in the servant’s heart, one needs to contemplate and ponder on the great-

7 In Arabic, the word is *inziwa* which means to retreat to oneself in order to protect oneself from sins and whatever is unforbidden, to train one’s nafs and remember Allah constantly.

8 Peace be upon you o Messenger of Allah (Translator’s note)

9 *Hira* was the name of the cave in which the Messenger of Allah received his first revelation. It is in the north east of Mecca, approximately 5 km away from it. Another name for it is *Jabal al-Nur* (the mountain of light). The cave of *Hira*, which had such an important place in the life of the Prophet, is at the top of this mountain. This site consists of an empty space which looks like a tunnel between huge rocks that have been placed one on top of the other. Its height is just enough for a man to stand upright without hitting the roof while its width is the length of a human being. This cave is suitable for contemplation, as it is located at a site where the Ka’bah can be seen. Before the Prophet Muhammad other hanifs from Mecca would often retreat to the cave of Hira. Abdulmuttalib, the Prophet’s grandfather, was one of these. He was a hanif who would retreat to Hira from time to time, giving himself to worship. He believed in the existence of Allah, and in the existence of a hereafter in which there would be reward and punishment (Fuat Gunel, DIA, “Hira,” vol. XVIII, 121-122).

10 *Itiqaf* is a word that means to spend one’s time closed off from the outside world and in worship. It is particularly common in the last ten days of Ramadan when one retreats to the mosque and gives himself to worship.

ness of Allah in these times of solitude and remember the Creator of this universe often. This is only really possible by retreating from worldly preoccupations.

What is aimed at here by solitude is not to distance oneself from people or flee from society and settle oneself in a mountain or a cave. This would be contrary to the practice of both the Prophet and his Companions. The Prophet is reported to have said:

“A Muslim who mixes amongst the people and endures their distress is better than one who distances themselves and does not endure their distress” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 55)

The Prophet Muhammad was always amongst the people, sometimes herding sheep, sometimes carrying out trade. He participated in the Alliance of the Virtuous (*Hilf al-Fudul*) and worked in the rebuilding of the Ka’bah.

In short, he was a beautiful model for us, by participating in all virtuous acts of his society and staying away from improper ones.



## QUESTIONS PART ONE

### A. SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean for the Prophet Muhammad to be the first and last link in the chain of prophets?
2. Is it possible for a person who knows the Prophet Muhammad and does not learn about his life to be able to understand the Holy Qur'an in its true meaning? Why?
3. What importance does knowing and learning about the life of the Prophet Muhammad have in correctly understanding and applying the teachings of Islam?
4. What must we do in order to protect ourselves from the various tests, misfortunes and surprises that life has in store for us?
5. Find some information about the building of the Ka'bah.
6. Why did Abraha want to destroy the Ka'bah? How did his attempt end?
7. What is the wisdom in Allah Most High's destroying Abraha's army with small birds and stones?
8. What are the lessons to be learnt from the event of the Elephant?
9. What did Allah's Messenger mean when he said: "I am the son of two sacrificed on10. Why was the Prophet Muhammad given to a nursing mother to be suckled?
11. Explain the wisdom in the Prophet Muhammad's losing his father before he was born, his mother when he was six years old, and his grandfather when he was eight years old?
12. Before he became a prophet the Messenger of Allah did not approach any of the acts of the ignorant people of his time nor did he commit any sins. How did this affect his people after he became a prophet?
13. Explain the wisdom in the Prophet Muhammad working as a shepherd when he was a child?
14. Give some brief information about the trade expeditions that the Messenger of Allah participated when he was a young man.
15. Why was the Alliance of the Virtuous established? Which of today's institutions does it resemble?
16. Even before he became a prophet the Messenger of Allah took part in the Alliance of the Virtuous. Which of his characteristics does this indicate?
17. How did the marriage of the Prophet Muhammad to Khadijah happen?

18. What was the reason for the Meccan pagan, 'As ibn Wail calling the Prophet Muhammad 'abtar'?
19. What was the reason for the Prophet Muhammad frequently taking to retreats as his prophet-hood was nearing?

### B. FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. The only person in history who has had his entire life examined to the finest of details was .....
2. Even though idol-worship was common in Mecca, there were still people who followed the religion of the Prophet Ibrahim. These people were called .....
3. Allah's Messenger is reported to have said: "I am the ..... of my father Ibrahim, the ..... of my brother Isa, and the ..... of my mother Amina.
4. The Prophet Muhammad was born on the ..... of Rabi'a al-Awwal which corresponded to the ..... day of April in the year ..... AD.
5. The Prophet Muhammad is mentioned in the Bible by the name .....
6. The nursing mothers of the Prophet Muhammad were ..... and .....
7. The Prophet Muhammad was .....years old when he lost his mother and .....years old when he lost his grandfather.
8. The Prophet Muhammad's first marriage was to ..... who was ... years of age at the time.
9. All of the Prophet Muhammad's children were from his wife Khadijah, except for .....
10. All of the Prophet Muhammad's children passed away before him except for .....

### C. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which of the following is the situation of a person who does not obey the Messenger of Allah?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The favours and provision that Allah bestowed upon him will be cut off.</li> <li>B. He will become wealthy all of a sudden because he will not be limited by religion and he will not have to give charity.</li> <li>C. All of the deeds that he does without having obeyed the Messenger of Allah will lose their value.</li> <li>D. The sincerity in his worship and the reward he will receive will be reduced.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Which of the following is not an expression from the Qur'an about the Prophet Muhammad?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. 'You are indeed vast in character'</li> <li>B. 'He is the only prophet to call people to guidance'</li> <li>C. 'Indeed Allah and the angels send blessings upon the Prophet'</li> <li>D. 'O you who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger so that your deeds are not in vain'.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |
|---|---|

3. **Which of the following is NOT a trait that Allah Most High wants from us in showing respect to the Prophet?**
  - A. To value him and respect him.
  - B. To refrain from addressing him in an unsuitable manner.
  - C. To perform minor ablution before mentioning his name
  - D. To send blessings and peace upon him.
4. **Which of the following is not a reason for why the Arabian Peninsula was selected for the birth and spread of Islam?**
  - A. Throughout history the Arabian Peninsula has been protected from military and cultural assaults.
  - B. The soil of the Arabian peninsula is very fertile and blessed and greatly suited to agriculture.
  - C. The fact that the Arabs did in fact possess some virtuous traits, even though uncontrolled and that their nature was unspoiled.
  - D. The Arabian peninsula has been a holy site for many religions throughout history.
5. **Which of the following is not an event that demonstrates the sanctity of the Ka'bah?**
  - A. The Prophet Adam was sent here after being removed from Paradise.
  - B. Abraha's failure to destroy the Ka'bah having tried to do so.
  - C. The Ka'bah was appointed as the qiblah for the Muslims
  - D. The Muslims abandoned it in order to migrate to Madina.
6. **Which of the following is not one of the months that the Arabs considered it forbidden to fight during?**
  - A. Ramadan
  - B. Dhu'l Qada
  - C. Muharram
  - D. Rajab
7. **Which of the following cannot be a lesson to learn from the event of the Elephant?**
  - A. Since it was built by the command of Allah, the Ka'bah is always under divine protection.
  - B. Like Abraha those who are not content with what they have and desire more will be destroyed.
  - C. If Allah wills, He will destroy wild and rebellious people even with the tiniest of animals.
  - D. Injustice committed against a servant or a place which is great in the sight of Allah will bring divine punishment.
8. **Which of the following is not a lineage to which the tribe of the Prophet belonged?**
  - A. Bani Najjar
  - B. Bani Kinana
  - C. Bani Hashim
  - D. Bani Quraysh



9. Which of the following is incorrect in regard to the events that took place when the Prophet Muhammad was born?
- A. Calamities came about in places where oppression and unbelief were rampant.
  - B. Mecca, the place where Islam was to appear, was purified and prepared for Islam.
  - C. The bounties and prosperity of the land that the Prophet Muhammad was to honour increased.
  - D. Symbols of false beliefs were damaged and destroyed.
10. Which of the following is not a reason for why the Prophet Muhammad was given to a foster mother to be suckled?
- A. It was desired that he learned to speak Arabic eloquently and beautifully.
  - B. It was desired that he be protected from the hot and harsh climate of Mecca.
  - C. It was desired that he be raised in an environment which would make him brave and strong as opposed to the climate in the town.
  - D. Amina was too ill and did not have any help in looking after her child.
11. Which of the following is not a wisdom in the Prophet Muhammad's chest being split open?
- A. The verses that were to be revealed to him could be firmly established in his heart.
  - B. Spiritual cleansing of his heart so that it could be ready to receive revelation.
  - C. He was allowed to reach a stage in which he would be better able to perceive the divine truths that would be revealed to him later
  - D. The removal of all evil traits from the heart and their replacement with virtuous traits.
12. Which of the following cannot be one of the wisdoms in the Messenger of Allah having to face great pain and difficulty at such a young age?
- A. He possessed a highly sensitive heart as a result of growing up sorrowful and heart broken.
  - B. His turning towards Allah as a result of losing everybody he knew during his childhood.
  - C. He was protected from learning many false traditions and customs from his mother and father.
  - D. He could be an example for people from all walks of life in the future.

**13. Which of the following is not one of the traits possessed by the Messenger of Allah before he became a prophet?**

- A. He did not worship anything other than Allah.
- B. In terms of his character he was the most superior and upright.
- C. He did not interfere in other people's business even those who were violated against.
- D. He did not act with evil intention nor did he harm anyone.

**14. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "Allah Most High made every prophet He sent herd sheep. I too would herd the sheep of the Meccans in the region of Kararit. Calm and dignity is with those who herd sheep"**

**According to these words which of the following cannot be one of the characteristics that a person gains by herding sheep?**

- A. Being patient and taking responsibility for those under one's guidance.
- B. Being compassionate and tolerating every difficulty that happens to come one's way.
- C. Being insightful and protecting all those under one's supervision from all dangers.
- D. Being loyal and never forgetting the good done to one.

**15. Which of the following is true in regard to the reasons for the establishment of the Alliance of the Virtuous?**

- I. Corruption and robbery was on the increase in society.
- II. People were being oppressed and their rights infringed upon.
- III. The weakening of wealthy and noble people's political power.
- IV. The severe punishment of those in society who violated other's rights.
- V. To protect the rights of the weak.

- A. I, II, and V
- B. I, II and III
- C. I, II, and IV
- D. II, III, IV and V

**16. Which of the following is incorrect in regards to the marriage of the Prophet Muhammad to Khadijah?**

- A. The fact that Allah's Messenger conducted trade with Khadijah's goods was an opportunity for them to become well-acquainted with each other and was the foundation for their marriage.
- B. The Prophet chose Khadijah due to her beauty and wealth even though he could have married a younger woman.
- C. Due to his lack of finances, the Prophet Muhammad did not consider marriage but could not reject an offer from such a noble and righteous woman.
- D. Whilst the wealthy and noble men from Mecca wished to marry Khadijah, she was in admiration of the Prophet's character and personality and thus wished to marry him.

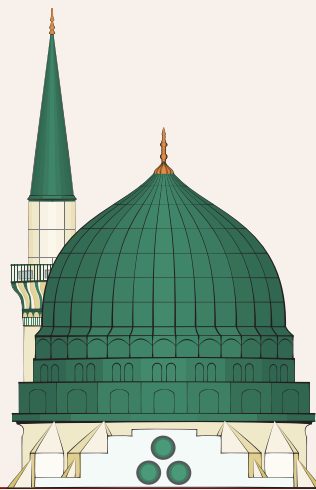
17. Despite having been set free and then having the chance to be reunited with his father and uncle, Zaid preferred to remain with the Messenger of Allah. Which of the following was a reason that influenced him in making this decision?
- A. The decrease in love felt for his father and uncle from whom he had been separated for years.
  - B. His fear of losing the calm and spiritual ease that he had when he was with his beloved master, the Prophet Muhammad.
  - C. His inability to meet with the same level of material wealth that he had in the house of the Messenger of Allah.
  - D. He would never again see the Messenger of Allah once parted from him.
18. The method of the Messenger of Allah in solving a quarrel which could potentially have led to much blood shed amongst tribes without encountering any objections from any sides demonstrates certain qualities of his beautiful character. Which of the following is not one of these qualities?
- A. His humility and modesty.
  - B. His trustworthiness and righteousness.
  - C. His justice and honesty
  - D. His intelligence and foresight.
19. Which of the following is not one of the deeds carried out by the Messenger of Allah whilst in the cave of Hira before he became a prophet?
- A. He would try to protect himself from the corruption in faith and morals of the community in which he lived.
  - B. He would take himself to account and ponder on the Divine power evident throughout the universe.
  - C. He would spend his time fasting, praying and glorifying Allah in conscious retreat.
  - D. He would search for solutions to the decadent situation of his community in terms of their faith and morals.
20. The Messenger of Allah is reported to have said: "A Muslim who mixes with the people and endures their problems and distress is better than one who distances himself from them and does not tolerate their problems and their distress" (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 55). Which of the following can we not conclude from these words?
- A. It is not appropriate to withdraw from all people and practice one's faith in solitude.
  - B. It is considered a form of worship for a believer to help another believer.
  - C. It is more difficult to live amongst the people and have to endure their problems but this is more acceptable
  - D. It is an order of religion that one distances oneself from people and is in a constant state of worship and contemplation.

مَحَمَّدٌ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ





# PART TWO



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**THE MECCAN PERIOD  
OF HIS PROPHETHOOD**



## BEGINNING OF REVELATION: TRUE DREAMS

At the age of forty, the Prophethood was given to the Messenger of Allah who had lived a youth of purity and a distinguished family life. Only six months before he turned forty, Divine Power turned the cave of Hira into a holy place of learning for him.

In this place of learning and prosperity in which divine training was taking place in secret, there was no need for either book nor pen and these lessons which took place between him and his Lord will remain a mystery for eternity. In this way he was prepared for revelation. This preparatory six-month period passed with him seeing true dreams which cannot be understood by our human intelligence.

During that time, whatever the Prophet Muhammad saw in his dream would come true the next day.

His wife, Aisha, is reported to have said:

“The coming of revelation to the Messenger of Allah began with him seeing true dreams in his sleep. Every dream he saw would come true the next morning” (see Bukhari, *Bad’u al-Wahy*, 3).

Because the Prophethood was such a weighty and great duty, the archangel Gabriel would come to him in his sleep in order to prepare him and get him used to this important duty. According to a narration by Alqama ibn Qays, most of the knowledge revealed to the Prophets would first be shown to them in their dreams until their hearts were at peace and they would then be sent down as revelation (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 55).

Thus one of the ways in which prophets receive the revelation is through their dreams. The following words of the Prophet Abraham (as) are a proof of this: **‘My son, I saw in a dream that I must sacrifice you. What do you think about this?’** (al-Saffat, 37: 102)



## THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF THE PROPHETHOOD: THE PERIOD OF SECRET INVITATION

### The First Revelation and the Pause in Revelation

Allah's Messenger (saw) was at the age of forty. The period assigned for his preparation to receive revelation was complete. It was the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Ramadan. As usual the Messenger of Allah was in the cave of Hira.

The angel Gabriel appeared and spoke to him:

"Read." The Messenger of Allah replied:

"I cannot read." The angel then squeezed him until he lost all strength. Then he spoke again:

"Read." The Prophet repeated:

"I cannot read."

Gabriel squeezed him a second time and then said again:

"Read."

"I cannot read (What shall I read?)"

Gabriel squeezed him a third time and then let him go. He then revealed to him the following divine verses:

"Read: In the Name of your Lord who created,  
created man from clots of blood.

Read: And your Lord is the Most Generous,  
He who taught by the pen,  
taught man what he did not know" (al-Alaq, 96: 1-5)

Thus began the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, the source of a great mercy and healing for all of mankind through the means of the Messenger of Allah.

The Prophet Muhammad left the cave and returned home, his heart trembling.

He was greeted by his wife Khadijah to whom he said:

"Cover me! Cover me!"

After resting for a while he told Khadijah what had happened to him. Anxiously he asked her: "O Khadijah! Who will believe me?"

His blessed wife was a very wise, virtuous and insightful woman. She said to her husband:

“I swear by Allah that He will never bring shame to you. You take care of your relatives, help the needy, give to the poor, and are generous to your guests and you protect the rights of the orphans.”

She then continued:

“O Messenger of Allah! I believe that what has happened to you is for the best and I believe in you.”

Thus she was the first person to believe in and support the end of time Prophet.

Khadijah then took the Messenger of Allah to her cousin, Waraqa, a man known for his wisdom and virtue and one of those rare individuals at that period of ignorance who refused to worship idols.

He was one of the devout Christians of that time. He knew Hebrew and used to write from the Bible. He was very old and had lost his sight. The Messenger of Allah told Waraqa all that he had seen. A smile appeared on Waraqa's face and his eyes shone as he realised that this was the Prophet from the end of time. He then became silent and was lost in thought when suddenly he said:

“What you saw was the angel Gabriel who Allah the Most High sent to Moses. If only I were alive and young enough to see the day when you will invite the people to this religion. Then I could be with you when your people drive you out of your country.”

In shock, the Messenger of Allah asked:

“Will they really drive me out of my land?” He replied:

“Indeed! All prophets who have come with a religion as you have done, have been subject to suffering and enmity and driven out of their lands. If I live to the day when you invite the people I will help you indeed”

It was only a short while after this conversation took place that Waraqa ibn Nawfal passed away.

After those first verses, there was a pause in revelation which lasted quite a long time (Bukhari, Bad'u al-Wahy, 1; Anbiya, 21; Tafsir, 96; Muslim, Iman, 252).

One of the wisdoms of the first revelation that came to the Messenger of Allah began with the command to ‘read’ includes not merely acquiring knowledge but purifying and refining one's heart in order to bring it to a state in which it is able to perceive divine knowledge and wisdom. This amounts to be able to read the universe with a heart which is a reflection of divine attributes. Thus the universe becomes like a library in the eyes of those who can read in this way and this enables a person to be able to perceive the meaning of life and thus bring order to his own life by reading ‘the Book of man’, ‘the Book of the universe’ and ‘the book of revelation’ - i.e. the Qur'an.

Jalalluddin Rumi wrote of the spiritual stages through which he passed. For the stage in which he passed reading books of ink and paper, he expressed as being ‘unripe’. For the next stage in which he began to study the secrets of the book of the universe, he described himself as being

‘cooked’. When he began to burn with the flames of divine mysteries and reach the stage of divine love, he described himself as being ‘burned’.

And so the revelation stopped for a period after the first one in order to prepare the Messenger of Allah for the next lot to come. It would not be an easy thing to bear such a great responsibility as receiving and spreading revelation. Allah the Most High says in the Qur’an:

**"We will impose a weighty Word upon you"** (al-Muzzammil, 73: 5).

This is why Allah’s Messenger (saw) was apprehensive when he saw the angel of revelation before him after having seen his true dreams.

However with the consolation of Khadijah and the support of Waraqa his heart became calm.

Now he was eager for the revelation to begin once more and was becoming increasingly restless. He would go to the cave of Hira from time to time and wait in yearning for a new verse to be revealed.

In these intermittent periods his only consolation was his wife Khadijah.

And so it was that he was never able to forget the depth of spirit, and her delicate and refined nature. After she passed away he would regularly send a portion of any animal he sacrificed to her relatives. Even after her death he never forgot her in a show of unparalleled loyalty.

### **The Truth Behind the Revelation and the Manner in Which It Appeared**

The word ‘*wahy*’ has various meanings such as speedy indication, inspiration, and secret speech. It is the way in which Allah the Almighty informs the Prophets of what He wants people to know. Allah the Most High says in the Qur’an:

**"It does not befit Allah to address any human being except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or He sends a messenger who then reveals by His permission whatever He wills. He is indeed Most High, All-Wise"** (al-Shura, 42: 51).

According to a narration by Aisha, she asked the Prophet:

“O Messenger of Allah! How does the revelation come to you?”

He replied:

“Sometimes it appears like the sound of a bell and that is the most weighty for me. Once I have understood and memorised the words of Allah the angel leaves me. Sometimes the angel comes to me in the form of a man and speaks to me and then I can immediately understand what he says” (Bukhari, Bad’u al-Wahy, 1/2; Muslim, Fadail, 87).

The scholars of Islam have classified the ways in which the revelation came as follows:

1. Sometimes the revelation would come as dreams in the Prophet’s sleep which would then be realised in his real life.

2. Sometimes the verses would be revealed directly to the Prophet’s heart with no angel appearing.

3. Sometimes the angel of revelation would appear in the form of a man, just like in the famous hadith of Gabriel. One day while the Prophet was in the mosque Gabriel approached him in the form of a man and asked him about Iman, Islam and Ihsan and the Last Day, in order to teach the Companions their religion (Bukhari, Iman, 37; Muslim, Iman, 1, 5).

4. At other times the revelation would appear with the alarming sound of a ringing bell. When it was over the Prophet would have grasped completely what the angel came to inform him of.

5. On two occasions Gabriel appeared as his own form of an angel bringing revelation. The first time this happened was when the Prophet was leaving the cave of Hira after the first pause in revelation. The second time was on the night of the Mi'raj at the *Sidrah al Munteha*.

6. Allah the Most High spoke to the Messenger of Allah (saw) directly without any angel as intermediary. This happened on the night of the Mi'raj.

7. The angel Gabriel brought revelation to the Messenger of Allah in his sleep. Some commentators believe that this was how the chapter Kawthar was revealed.

According to narrations by various Companions when revelation came to the Prophet he would be weighed down and his face would turn pink like a rose.

He would close his eyes and bow his head down. The Companions would also bow their heads. When the revelation was over none of them would dare to raise their heads to look at the blessed face of the Prophet. Sometimes they would hear a sound like the buzzing of a bee near his face. During entire period of such revelation, the Messenger of Allah would be breathing rapidly. When the revelation came in this way beads of sweat would pour down his face even when the weather was cold (Bukhari, Bad'u al-Wahy, 1/2; Umrah, 10; Muslim, Fadail, 87; Hudud, 13; Tirmidi, Tafsir, 23/3173; Ahmad, V, 327)

If the Messenger of Allah was mounted on an animal when revelation came to him, the animal would not be able to bear the weight of the revelation, its knees would bend and it would sit down to the ground. It was when he was mounted on his camel Adba that the third verse of the chapter al-Maida began to be revealed. The poor animal's legs almost broke and the Messenger of Allah had to climb down (Ahmad, II, 176; VI, 445; Ibn Sa'd, I, 197; Tabari, Tafsir, VI, 106).

Zaid ibn Thabit (ra) narrates:

"I was once sitting next to the Messenger of Allah when revelation came to him. His knee was upon mine. By Allah I never felt anything as weighty as his knee. I thought as though my knee was going to be crushed" (Ahmad, V, 190-191).

Certain orientalists who deny that the Qur'an is a divine book, make the insubstantial claim that it was mere inspiration that came to the heart of our Prophet as a result of his own contemplation and perceptions. These claims arise from the feebleness in their perception and the voracity of their enmity towards him.

The fact that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was terrified when he first saw Gabriel proves that what he saw could not be hallucination or a product of his own imagination, because a person afraid of his own imagination or a vision arising from his own desires would be very illogical. In reality revelation was an external factor which has no connection with the Prophet's inner world

nor with his own self. If the revelation was a product of his own personal experiences then he would not have been so perplexed and incapacitated at any of the knowledge or information that was communicated to him.

The pause in revelation also shows that this was not an internal event that was a product of the Prophet's long periods of contemplation. Moreover, the Prophet never expected revelation to come to him as indicated by the following verse:

**"You did not expect to be given the Book. It is nothing but a mercy from your Lord. So do not lend support to the unbelievers"** (al-Qasas, 28: 86).

Another evident proof that the Qur'an is a revealed book is the obvious difference in style between the language of the Prophet's hadiths and that of the Qur'an.

Sometimes such events had happened where the Prophet needed to respond immediately but he was forced to wait for revelation to come to him. For examples in the incident of *Ifk* and before certain questions asked by the Jews, the Prophet kept his silence for a period and gave no immediate answer. These questions could only be answered by revelation. If, as claimed, the Qur'an had been a product of the Prophet's own mind, then he would have given an immediate response without having to face the difficulties he did.

Knowledge of the unseen given by the Qur'an is another clear proof that it is a product of divine revelation. The Holy Qur'an narrates events in accordance with reality even if they occurred a very long time ago. In seventh century Mecca, there was no individual with such knowledge nor any scholarly institution that could have appraised this information. All knowledge of that time related to past history consisted of several legendary Persian tales full of contradictions told by the merchants. In contrast events about the past as narrated in the Qur'an constitute a whole and can in no way be a product of human being's intelligence or sharp acuity.

Therefore can we even imagine the possibility whether an illiterate person raised in an ignorant society could be the source of a book such as the Qur'an without receiving revelation? Indeed we cannot! This shows that everything that the Messenger of Allah informed us of was revealed to him by Allah. Moreover the greatness attributed to the Messenger of Allah in the Qur'an and his humble approach towards the revelation shows that revelation came to him externally.

### **The Illiteracy of the Prophet and the Wisdom Behind It**

The Arabic word '*ummi*' has the meanings of being pure and innocent like a newborn baby, or a person who does not know how to read or write, and a person who has not received any education.

As we are informed by the Holy Qur'an the Messenger of Allah was *ummi*, or illiterate. He did not know how to read nor write. The verse is as follows:

**"...those who follow the Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel..."** (al-A'raf, 7: 157)

At that time most of the Arabs were in fact illiterate. They were made up of tribes who did not know how to read or write, and who were quite uncultured. Allah the Most High sent a

Prophet from amongst themselves, whose purity was unblemished, and who was at the peak of morality and spirituality. The Holy Qur'an says:

**"It is He who raised up amongst the unlettered people a Messenger from them to recite His Signs to them and purify them and teach them the Book and Wisdom, even though before that they were clearly misguided"** (al-Jum'a, 62: 2)

Generally illiteracy is a trait referring to the lack of education when it is attributed to ordinary people. In the case of the Prophet Muhammad, however, it is a proof of his prophethood, because being an *ummi* and with no extra effort on his own part, he possessed greater knowledge and wisdom than literate and learned people. This was a great favour and miracle bestowed on him by Allah, who says in the Qur'an:

**"You never recited any Book before it nor did you write one down with your right hand. If you had, the purveyors of falsehood would have voiced their doubts"** (al-Ankabut, 29: 48).

These facts prove the insubstantiality of all objections and criticisms made against the personality of the Prophet. For it is impossible for an illiterate person to have written a book (the Qur'an) that has left all the mankind and the jinn incapacitated or to have had knowledge of such historical events such as those that took place in the lives of the Pharaoh, and of the Prophets Moses and Joseph without receiving any divine help or revelation and through his own perceptions or inspiration that came to his heart.

### Hilya-i Saadah

The word *hilya* has the meanings of embellishment, adornment and beauty of the face and spirit. As a religious term it indicates the description of the physical beauty of the Prophet Muhammad as much as can be expressed in words. It is in some respects a portrait in words.

When describing the radiant and blessed countenance of the beloved Prophet we must take into account the inadequacy of language and the incapacity of mankind to perceive his reality. It is thus impossible to adequately describe that unique individual in whom all beauty that Allah the Most High bestowed upon mankind was gathered.

The attempts to portray in words that the most beautiful of the beauties are an attempt at consoling those unfortunate enough to have not lived in that Age of Bliss and those hearts which burn with longing for him. Those who have transmitted those precious descriptions of the Prophet have presented to us a mere drop from an ocean. By attempting to view the ocean from that drop the believers increase their love for him and make an effort to adopt his character and *shamail*<sup>11</sup>.

The Prophet's grandson, Hasan (ra), expressed his emotional state when one time he asked his step uncle, Hind ibn Abi Hala, to describe the Prophet:

"My uncle, Hind ibn Abi Hala, would narrate the *hilya* of the Messenger of Allah so beautifully. It would give me a great pleasure when he did so so that my heart could remain devoted to him and I could follow in his footsteps" (Tirmidhi, Shamail, p. 10).

11 *Shamail*: the Prophet Muhammad's attitude, behaviour, characteristics and habits.



Neither Hasan nor Hussain could be satiated from listening to such descriptions of the Prophet. They had listened to their father, Ali, talk about his blessed beauty on many occasions.

All *hilyas* have been limited in their ability to transmit to us the beauty of that most beautiful of the creation. Now despite our inadequacy we will attempt to transmit some of those narrations.

It has been narrated from various reports that:

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was of average height, leaning towards the tall. His body was well-proportioned. He had a broad chest and there was a large space between his two shoulders. There was a seal of the Prophethood between his two shoulder blades. His bones and joints were quite large.

His skin was pinkish white, like a rose, radiant and soft as silk. His blessed body was always clean and its smell was refreshing. Whether he put on perfume or not, his scent and his perspiration were more elegant than the highest quality fragrances. Whoever shook hands with him would be refreshed by his beautiful scent throughout the day. It was as if the rose obtained its scent from him. Whenever he caressed the head of a child with his blessed hand, that child would be able to be distinguished from others by his scent.

When he perspired the beads of his perspiration would resemble drops of dew on the leaves of a rose. His beard was dense and when he allowed it to grow he did not let it grow longer than a handful. When he passed away there were approximately twenty white hairs in his hair and beard. His eyebrows were in the shape of crescent and the space between them was long and wide. He had a vein between his two brows which would throb when he got angry for the sake of Allah.

His teeth were like pearls and he would always use a *siwak* to brush them and also advise his Companions and his community to brush their teeth so often. His lashes were long and black. His eyes were quite large, the black part being completely black, and the whites of his eyes being completely white.

It was as if his eyes had had *kohl* applied to them in the pre-eternity by the hand of the Power. Just as his unique spirit was perfect so too the beauty of his body was unparalleled. (Hakim, III, 10; Ahmad, I, 89, 96, 117, 127; IV, 309; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, VI, 31-33).

His face would radiate light like the full moon.

Aisha (ranha) said:

“The face of the Messenger of Allah was radiating so much light that I would be able to thread my needle in the darkest of night by the light of his face.”

There was a divine seal of the Prophethood between his two shoulder blades. Many of the Companions lived with the hope of being able to kiss it. When he passed away the seal disappeared which was a sign that he had migrated to the Hereafter (Tirmidhi, Shamail, p. 15; Ibn Sa'd, II, 272). Looking at him, Abu Bakr said sorrowfully with tears in his eyes and his heart weeping: “Your death is as beautiful as your life, O Messenger of Allah!” and he kissed his blessed forehead.

It is impossible to describe the depth and sensitivity of that blessed Prophet's heart.

He never uttered an unnecessary word and every word he spoke was pure wisdom and guidance. He never gossiped nor spoke an idle word. He spoke according to people's intelligence and



understanding. He was sweet-natured and humble. There were no extremes in his laughter; but there always was a smile on his face.

Whoever saw him would be awe-struck. Whoever conversed and had a chance to meet with him would like him immediately.

His beauty, majesty, radiance and grace was of such a degree that they left no need of any further miracle or proof that he was the Prophet of Allah. All aspects of beauty got together within the Messenger of Allah (saw).

It is human nature for people to incline towards whatever is beautiful and to want to be with beauty. As a result of this attraction, the mind is constantly preoccupied with beauty. Within the heart arises a desire to resemble one's beloved in spirit and character. The result is that, of a necessity, a person takes on the character of the person they love. In accordance with this natural tendency, the descriptions of the Prophet Muhammad are certain to increase one's enthusiasm and love for him and be a means to follow in his footsteps.

### The Revelation Resumes

The pause in revelation continued for six months. Allah's Messenger explains how it resumed as follows:

**"(One day) when I was walking I suddenly heard a heavenly sound. I raised my head and what did I see but the angel that had come to me in Hira was sitting between the heavens and the earth. I was terrified and ran home to my wife, saying: "Cover me, cover me."**

(While I was in this covered state) **Allah the Most High revealed to me via Gabriel, the following verses:**

**"You who are enveloped in your cloak! Arise and warn** (people of the punishment of Allah) **Glorify your Lord** (Inform everyone of His greatness) **Purify your clothes** (Keep your inner and outer world clean and adopt good character) **Shun all filth**" (al-Muddaththir, 74: 1-5). **After that, the revelation was never suspended again**" (Bukhari, Tafsir, 74/4, 5; Muslim, Iman, 255-258).

With the revelation of these verses Allah's Messenger immediately stood up. His wife, Khadijah (ra) was surprised that he stood up without having rested, as she had no knowledge of what had just occurred.

"Why have you risen? You have not rested", she asked.

Allah's Messenger (saw) replied:

**"The time for resting is over."** He then informed Khadijah of the newly revealed verses.

Soon after this event, Gabriel taught the Prophet how to perform minor ablution and the ritual prayer (salat). Allah the Almighty pleased His Messenger by commanding him an act of worship that would bring peace and contentment to his heart. With great pleasure, the Messenger of Allah (saw) informed his wife of this greatest of favours from his Lord and he then taught her how to perform ablution and prayer. (Ibn Ishak, p. 117; Ibn Hisham, I, 262-263)

### The First Muslims

The first person to believe in the revelation sent to mankind by Allah was the Messenger of Allah (saw) himself.

The Holy Qur'an says:

**"The Messenger has faith in what has been sent down to him from his Lord"** (al-Baqara, 2: 285).

**"Say: 'I am commanded to worship Allah, making my deen sincerely His. And I am commanded to be the first of the Muslims'"** (al-Zumar, 39: 11-12)

After the Prophet Muhammad, his honourable wife Khadijah (ra) was the next person to become a Muslim. Their daughters, Ruqayyah (ranha), Umm Kulthum (ranha) and Fatima (ranha) also embraced Islam. (Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 36).

The Messenger of Allah (saw) began to deliver the religion of Allah to the people starting with those closest to him. However most of the time he met with unpleasant responses and behaviour from his people, including insults, ridicule and torment and he would return home grieved and sorrowful. His greatest helper in all circumstances and all times was his wife, Khadijah. She would utter consoling and comforting words to alleviate his sorrow. In this way, the duty of the beloved Messenger was made easier through the divine help of Allah (Ibn Hisham, I, 259).

One day Ali saw the Messenger of Allah and Khadijah performing the prayer and he asked them:

"What is this that you are doing?" Allah's Messenger replied:

**"This is the worship that Allah has chosen. I invite you to believe in and worship the one Allah and to reject Lat and Uzza who can bring neither benefit nor harm."**

Ali (ra) said:

"I have never heard of such a religion until now. I can not do anything until I ask my father Abu Talib."

Because the Prophet was still spreading his message in secret, he said:

**"O Ali! If you are not going to become Muslim, keep this matter that I have spoken to you about secret, and do not disclose it to anyone."**

That night Ali waited. And that night Allah the Most High instilled the love of Islam into his heart. In the morning he went to the Prophet and asked him some questions about the religion of Islam.

The answers he received satisfied his heart and he accepted the faith. But because he feared the reaction of his father, he kept his Islam secret for a period of time. He was ten years old at the time (Ibn Ishaq, p. 118; Ibn Sa'd, III, 21).

Whenever the Prophet wished to perform the prayer he would go, together with Ali, to the Meccan valleys outside the city and there they would perform their prayer hidden from the people.

When Abu Talib discovered that his son and his beloved nephew were secretly praying, the Prophet invited his most beloved uncle to accept Islam. Abu Talib replied:

“O son of my brother! I do not have the strength to stray from the religion of my forefathers. However you may continue on the path that you have been commanded. By Allah, as long as I am alive, no one will be able to harm you.”

He said to his son Ali:

“My son! He would call you only to that which is good and beneficial. Hold on tight to his path and never part from him” (Ibn Hisham, I, 265).

After Ali, Zaid ibn Harith was the next person to become Muslim, and he never parted from the Prophet nor did he abandon his service of him. He went so far as protecting the Messenger of Allah when he was stoned at Taif, using his own body as a shield against the stones and rocks that those unfortunate people threw at him, and being left bloodied as a result. He thus became much beloved by the Prophet.

Abu Bakr (ra) was the Prophet's friend even before he was chosen as a prophet. He knew him from his childhood. He was a witness to his loyalty, his trustworthiness and his good character. It was impossible for a person of such elevated character, who was unable to deceive the people, to lie about Allah. And so when the Messenger of Allah invited him to Islam, he accepted without hesitation (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 78).

Nothing pleased the Prophet more than Abu Bakr's conversion to Islam. When Abu Bakr embraced Islam, he openly declared this without fear and invited others to have faith in Allah and His Messenger (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 80-81).

In addition to being one of the first people declaring their faith, Abu Bakr was considered worthy of the title '*as Siddiq*' 'The Veracious One,' because he never once allowed any doubts or reservations to cloud his faith. In later times he made great sacrifices, both financial and spiritual, in the spread and growth of Islam. In fact, he donated all of his wealth to this cause.

Some of the other people who are listed amongst the first Muslims were Abu Ubaydah ibn Jarrah, Abu Salamah, Arkam ibn Abi al-Arkam, Uthman ibn Maz'un, Asma bint Abu Bakr, Habbab ibn Arat, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Abdullah ibn Jahsh, Ja'far ibn Abu Talib and his wife Asma bint Umays, Abu Huzayfa, and Amir ibn Fuhayra.

May Allah be pleased with them all.

### **Dar al-Arkam: The School and Learning Centre for the First Muslims**

For the first three years, the Messenger of Allah (saw) spread Islam in secret and asked those who did not accept it to refrain from disclosing the matter to anybody. This three-year period of secret invitation was not due to any fear of suffering torment or difficulty but rather in order to ensure that the religion was spread in a sound way. Otherwise to endanger those new Muslims who were generally poor and weak and be the cause of them encountering harm would have led to the annihilation of the religion.

In the first year of the Prophethood, the Companions began to secretly gather in the house of ibn Abi Al-Arkam. This House of al-Arkam (Dar al-Arkam), which was also known as Dar al-

Islam was located next to the hill of Safa in Mecca. The Prophet would take refuge here in this blessed house, away from the Meccan idolaters and teach Islam to those who came there. He would also recite from the Qur'an and teach it to them. Together they would perform the prayer there. It was in this house that many people first came to know Islam. Until the time that Umar embraced Islam in the sixth year of the Prophethood, this house was very important in the service of the teaching of Islam. Later Arkam was donated this house as an endowment.

Dar al-Arkam was torn down by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and added to the Haram. And currently there is a gate to the Kab'ah in its location and this gate is called the gate of Dar al-Arkam.

As a consequence, in the struggle for Islam that will continue until the end of time, the path to hold on to and the method to follow must be embarked upon in the light of the practices of the Prophet. Thus in movements to make Islam blossom once more and reach places it has not yet reached, primary importance must be given to such training and teaching practices.



## THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE PROPHETHOOD

### Proclaim What You Have Been Commanded to: First Warn Your Close Relatives

After the three-year-long secret invitation in the fourth year of the Prophethood, Allah the Most High revealed the following verses:

**"Proclaim what you have been ordered to and turn away from the polytheists. We are enough for you against the mockers"** (al-Hijr, 15: 94-95).

Thus with these verses the command to openly spread the message was given. Now the Messenger of Allah (saw) began to openly invite people to Islam with the words:

**"...Mankind! I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him to whom the kingdom of the heavens and earth belongs..."** (al-A'raf, 7: 158).

However as he was thinking about how and where to start another verse was revealed to him:

**"Warn your near relatives"** (al-Shu'ara, 26: 214)

In accordance with this divine commandment the Prophet first began to invite his near relatives to accept the faith. One day he invited them to his house and served them a meal.

Then he said to them:

**"O sons of Abdulmuttalib! I bring to you the best religion of this world and the next. I have been revealed the Qur'an with which I have come to warn you and all those it reaches. Who will help me in this task of mine?"**

Nobody paid any attention to these words. Every man was silent. At that point Ali (ra), yet a child but having been honoured as one of the first people to accept Islam, rose and spoke:

"O Messenger of Allah! I will help you."

In contrast to the mocking smiles on the faces of those gathered, the Messenger of Allah's face lit up with a radiant smile and he turned to Ali and gently caressed his head with his blessed hand (See Ahmad, I, 111, 159; Haythami, VIII, 302-303).

Even though his near relatives did not accept the new religion, the determination of Allah's Messenger was not broken.

Allah the Most High says in the Holy Qur'an:

**"By the Wise Qur'an. Truly you are one of the Messengers on a Straight Path"** (Ya'sin, 36: 2-4)

**"We only sent you for the whole of mankind, bringing good news and giving warning. But most of mankind do not know it"** (al-Saba, 34: 28).

Thus in contrast to the other prophets, the Prophet Muhammad was sent to all of mankind. This is expressed in the following hadith:

**"Five things were given to me that were not given to previous prophets:**

**1. Allah the Most High gave me the ability to put fear into the hearts of my enemy at a distance of one month.**

**2. He made the entire earth pure and a place of worship for me. Thus whenever the time for prayer befalls any believer from my community, let him pray where he is.**

**3. Booty gained from war was never previously made lawful for earlier prophets but it has been made lawful for me.**

**4. I have been given permission to intercede for my community in the hereafter.**

**5. The Prophets before me were sent only to their own people. However I have been sent to all of mankind.** (See Bukhari, Tayammum, 1)"

At the time that the Prophet made this first invitation, no one other than the young child, Ali (ra) accepted it. When the Prophet did not succeed in the first attempt he invited his relatives to his house again the next day. After serving them some food he spoke:

**"...O Sons of Abdulmuttalib! By Allah I know of no other man amongst the Arabs who has come to you with a better message for your world and your hereafter, than that which I bring you.**

**O sons of Abdulmuttalib! I have been sent as a messenger to you in particular and to all of mankind in general. And you have been made witness to some miracles that you have never before witnessed. Which of you will be my brother and my helper in this duty of mine and thus gain Paradise? Who will make a pact with me to be my brother and my friend in this path?"**

None of the men there accepted this invitation. Moreover they began to laugh and mocked him. A little while later they rose and left (Ahmad, I, 159; Ibn Sa'd, I, 187).

Because a person's near relatives are more familiar and know them better than others, they are more likely to accept what they say than people who are not related. And when we take into account the relatives of those who do accept the invitation, it is obvious that Islam will be spread throughout society in an even shorter period of time. If the relatives of the one who is sending out the invitation do not believe in and support him then it is difficult for others to believe in and trust him. This is why the Prophet Muhammad began his duty with his near relatives.

### **The Invitation to the Quraysh on the Hill of Safa**

One day the Prophet Muhammad (saw) climbed to the top of the hill of Safa and called out to the Quraysh. They responded to the call and arrived at the hill of Safa. Standing on a rock up high, he addressed them as follows:

**"O men of Quraysh! If I told you that there were enemies behind this mountain or in this valley preparing to attack you and take all of your wealth would you believe me?"**



They responded without hesitation:

"We would believe you. We have never heard you tell a lie before. We know you to be an honest man."

After receiving validation from all of those gathered there and confirming his character, he informed them of the following:

**"In that case I bring you warning of a severe Day of punishment awaiting you and a grave penalty for those of you who do not believe in Allah. And I have been sent to you to caution.**

**O people of Quraysh! My situation amongst you is as that of a man who sees the enemy and hastens to inform his family, fearing that they will harm them.**

**O people of Quraysh! One day you will die just as if you have fallen asleep. And you will be raised to life once more just as if you awake. You will most certainly rise from your graves and enter the presence of Allah and account for everything that you did in this world. In short, you will be rewarded for all the good and the worship that you have performed and you will be severely punished for the evil and sins that you have committed. The reward there will be everlasting Paradise and the punishment will be eternal hellfire"** (Bukhari, Tafsir, 26; Ahmad, I, 281-307; Ibn Sa'd, I, 200).

The Prophet did not meet with any general objection to his words, however his uncle Abu Lahab insulted and broke the heart of the Prophet saying:

"Ruin to your hands. Did you call us here for this?" and then began to throw stones at him.

After this offensive and crude act of Abu Lahab, the chapter Tabbat was revealed:

**"Ruin to the hands of Abu Lahab and ruin to him! His wealth has not helped him, nor anything he has earned. He will burn in a Flaming Fire. And so will his wife, the firewood-carrier, with a rope of twisted fibre round her neck"** (Tabbat, 111: 1-5); (Bukhari, Tafsir, 26/2; 34/2; 111/1, 2; Muslim, Iman, 355).

The wife of Abu Lahab is also mentioned in the verse because she, too, like her husband, used to place thorns in the path of the Prophet in an attempt to harm him. This verse also indicates that a mere blood relationship, such as that between the Prophet and his uncle Abu Lahab, does not carry so much importance. What is important is the bond of the spirit. Because the spirit has no race, nor heredity. Lineage is particular to the body. And the body is destined to return to the earth one day.

As a result of these efforts of the Messenger of Allah, his aunts Safiyyah and Atika, the free servant of his uncle Abbas, Abu Rafi, and Abu Dharr and his brother Amr ibn Abasa all became Muslim.

Abu Dharr was from the tribe of Ghaffari and he was a man who did not worship idols even in the days of ignorance. He recalls how he was honoured with Islam:

"Allah let the love of Islam enter my heart the moment I heard that a man had appeared in Mecca declaring himself to be a prophet. I said to my brother Unays:

"Go to Mecca and speak with that man who claims to receive revelation from the heavens and bring me news of him"



My brother Unays went to Mecca and met with him and after listening to what he had to say he came back to me:

I asked him:

“What did you do? What news have you brought me?”

“I encountered a man in Mecca who told me that he was sent by Allah.”

“And what do the people have to say about him?”

“They say that he is a poet, a soothsayer, and a magician.”

My brother was a poet and he understood poetry. He said:

“I know the words of the poets. His words are not the words of a poet. I have compared his words with all manner of poetry. I swear that no one would dare say that his words were the words of a poet. He is a man of truth and those who slander him are liars. He only commands to goodness and virtuous character and prevents evil, immorality and corruption.”

My brother's words were not enough to satisfy me.

I immediately loaded my provisions and my water bottle and went straight to Mecca. I did not know the Messenger of Allah and I was hesitant to ask others about him.

While I was waiting in the Haram, Ali (ra) arrived and spoke to me:

“You are a stranger here it seems”

“Yes, I am”, I replied.

“In that case come and be our guest”, he said.

Together we went to his house. In the morning I once more went to the Haram to find the Messenger of Allah. I waited until the evening but was unable to receive any news of him.

Ali came back and asked me:

“Have you still not found where you need to go?”

“No”, I replied. Ali said:

“In that case come and be our guest again.”

When we arrived at his house he asked me:

“Why did you come here?”

After making him promise to keep what I told him a secret and to guide me, I told him:

“According to some news that has reached us, a man here has appeared claiming to be a prophet. I came here to meet with him and speak to him.”

“You have done very well by coming here. This man is the Messenger of Allah and a true prophet.”

We then arrived in the presence of the Prophet. After being introduced to him I asked:

“O Muhammad! What is it that you call the people to?”

He replied:

**"To believe in the one and only Allah, who has no partner, to abandon one's worship of idols and to bear witness that I am the Messenger of Allah."**

After he taught me about Islam, I immediately became Muslim.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was very pleased and smiled, saying:

**"O Abu Dharr! Now keep this affair secret from the Meccans and return to your land."**

"O Messenger of Allah. I want to proclaim my religion.

He replied:

**"I fear that the Meccans will try to harm you."**

"O Messenger of Allah! Even if I know that they will definitely kill me I am going to openly declare my religion."

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was silent. When the Quraysh had gathered together in the Haram I called out to them in a loud voice:

**"O Quraysh! I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger."**

The idolaters rose and said:

"This man has gone wild. Rise and crush this man who has abandoned his religion."

Then they began to beat me wildly. At that point Abbas, the uncle of the Messenger of Allah, came over to shield me from them and called out to them:

"Shame on you, o men of Quraysh! You are men of trade. Your trade route passes through the tribe of Ghaffar. Or do you wish to cut your trade route?" When they heard him shout out these words, they immediately left me alone.

The next morning when I arrived at the Masjid once more, the same thing occurred. Thinking me to be dead they left me there.

I rose and went to the Messenger of Allah. When he saw me he said:

**"Did I not discourage you from this?"** I replied:

"O Messenger of Allah! This was a desire of my heart and I wished to carry it through."

I stayed for a little while with the Prophet and then asked him:

"O Messenger of Allah! What do you command that I do now?" He replied:

**"When you receive the command from me, spread the teachings of Islam. When you hear that we have come out, then come and see me"** (See Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 33; Ahmad, V, 174).

After that the Prophet began to invite the people to Islam. During the pilgrimage season, he would walk around the fairs at Ukaz, Majanna, and Zulmajaz, where he found the people gathered together and teach Islam to whomever he encountered, free and enslaved, weak and strong, rich and poor and invite them to believe in the oneness of Allah (Ibn Sa'd, I, 216-217).

### The Stance Taken Against the Prophet by Abu Lahab and His Wife

The house of the Prophet was located between the two enemies of Islam, Abu Lahab and Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt. They would bring all types of filth and throw it in front of his door. The Prophet's sensitive and pure heart would be dismayed by their vile behaviour and he would say:

**"O sons of Abdu Manaf! What kind of neighbourliness is this?"** He would then push the filth away from his door with a stick (Ibn Sa'd, I, 201).

One time when Abu Lahab was about to carry out this very same ugly act, the Prophet's uncle Hamza saw him. He took the filth from him and poured it over his head. Abu Lahab tried to clean himself of the filth on the one hand, and rained down insults upon Hamza on the other. (Ibn Asir, al-Kamil, II, 70).

Umm Jamil was the wife of Abu Lahab and she did not lag behind her husband in his painful and torturous treatment of Allah's Messenger. Every night she would bundle together large thorns and place them in the path of the Messenger of Allah so that they would prick his feet (Ibn Hisham, I, 376; Qurtubi, XX, 240).

Before the Prophethood, the Prophet's daughters Umm Kulthum and Ruqiyah were engaged to Utaybah and Utbah, the sons of Abu Lahab. When the chapter Masad was revealed, Umm Jamil said to her sons:

"Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthum have abandoned their religion. You will separate from them."

Abu Lahab swore to them:

"May you never see me again if you do not repudiate the daughters of Muhammad."

Utaybah then went to the Prophet and said:

"I do not recognise your religion. And I have parted from your daughter. Neither come to me now nor will I come to you." He then tore the Prophet's shirt.

As a punishment for this insolence against the Messenger of Allah, Utaybah was later torn apart by wild animals during a trade expedition (See Ibn Sa'd, VIII, 36-37).

During this period the Prophet was subjected to much torment by many of the idolaters. However he tolerated them all with patience and forbearance and continued to spread his message.

### The Attempts of the Meccans to Make Peace

The Messenger of Allah's attempt to continue to spread the message of Islam enraged the idolaters. They were fuming at the Muslims. The new religion began to bring harm to all of the things that benefitted them. They immediately ran to Abu Talib and explained the situation to him and asked him to hinder his nephew. Abu Talib dismissed them politely and did not say anything to the Prophet. When the idolaters saw that nothing had changed, they went him again a short while later.

"O Abu Talib! We are running out of patience. You know that the son of your brother is denigrating our religion and our idols. And he is accusing us of stupidity. If you do not stop him in

what he is doing we will rise against both you and him. Either you make him abandon this affair or renounce your protection of him. We will take care of him.”

Upon these words Abu Talib kindly told the Prophet what the idolaters had said to him.

He told him that he would not abandon his protection of him but also let him know that he did not want to go against them and indicating that he should surrender his cause he said:

“Spare both yourself and me.”

The Messenger of Allah (saw) was very sad because these words of his uncle came to indicate that he could abandon his protection of him if need be. His blessed eyes welled up with tears. He knew that without the protection of Abu Talib, the already weak Muslims would not be able to protect themselves. The Muslims had not enough strength to stand up against the wealthy, strong and furious Quraysh.

During this time, Allah revealed to the Prophet the following verses to inform him how to overcome any difficulty he found himself in:

**"Remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him completely. Lord of the East and West – there is no god but Him –so take Him as your Guardian"** (al-Muzzammil, 73: 8-9).

The Prophet's sorrow then left him. With unshakable faith and great courage he spoke the following famous words to his uncle:

**"O my uncle! I swear by Allah that if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would never abandon this task of mine."**

After these words he stood up to leave with tears in his eyes. The kind heart of Abu Talib could not bear to see his nephew leave so sadly and he called out after him:

“O son of my brother! Go and say what you wish. By Allah I will never abandon you to them” (Ibn Hisham, I, 276-278; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 96-97).

According to a narration by Ibn Abbas, the leading men of the Quraysh gathered together in the region of the Hijr of the Ka’bah and swore by the idols, Lat, Manat, Uzza, Naila, and Isaf that as soon as they saw the Prophet they would attack him altogether and kill him. In this way the crime would not be on the head of any particular person and every man would pay the blood money that befell him.

When Fatima (ra) heard about this she went to her father and informed him of this hateful and contemptible pact that his tribe had made against him. The Prophet asked for some water and performed his ablutions. Then he went straight to the Masjid al-Haram. When the idolaters saw him there they shouted:

“Here he is.”

When they saw him across from them in all his greatness and majesty their looks fell to the ground and their heads bowed down. None of them was able to move. They could not even raise their eyes to look at his face. The Prophet came and stood in front of them. Then he took a handful of earth and threw it at them saying:

“May your faces be blackened.”

Every man who was touched by that earth was subsequently slain on the day of Badr and filled into a hole like one of the holes from Hell (Ahmad, I, 303).

After this event had happened, Abu Talib called the sons of Hashim and the sons of Muttalib and asked them to protect the Prophet against the Quraysh in honour of their families. All of them agreed except for Abu Lahab (Ibn Hisham, I, 281; Ibn Asir, al-Kamil, II, 65).

When the idolaters were unable to reach any solution with Abu Talib, they turned directly to the Prophet and said to him:

"You are a man who is of pure lineage and high rank. You are now speaking of and doing such things as no Arab has ever spoken nor done. You have caused dissension and conflict amongst us. You have made us enemies against each other. What is your purpose in acting as such?

If you are doing so in order to gain wealth we will give you all the wealth that you desire. Let there be no man amongst the tribes wealthier than you. If you wish to be our leader, we will make you our king. You will be the ruler of Mecca. If you wish to marry a noble woman we will marry you to whichever of the most beautiful women of Quraysh that you desire. If you have been struck by jinn or the evil of Satan we will take you to a physician. We are prepared to undergo all types of sacrifice in order to save you and do whatever you wish. As long as you come and abandon this mission of yours."

How pitiful those idolaters were thinking that they could discourage the Prophet from his mission by offering him wealth, property, kingdom and women which most people would be unable to resist.

In fact wealth, fame, and passion are three of the greatest traps of the *nafs* that can very easily delude and pervert the human being. How unable they were to understand that such base pleasures could never have any importance in the virtuous and devout life of the Messenger of Allah (saw).

The Messenger of Allah's response proclaimed this reality to them:

**"I do not ask you for anything, not wealth, nor property, not kingdom nor leadership. I only ask this: That you abandon your worship of the idols and worship the one and only Allah"** (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 99-100).

However because they had themselves bowed down to the desires of their own *nafs* the idolaters were unable to understand this sublime mission of the Prophet. They even went so far as to ask him to worship their idols. The Prophet responded with the following verses:

**"I have been forbidden to worship those you call upon besides Allah when the Clear Signs came to me from my Lord and I have been commanded to submit to the Lord of all the worlds"** (al-Mu'min, 40: 66)

**"...I have only been ordered to worship Allah and not to associate anything with Him. I summon to Him and to Him I will return."** (al-Ra'd, 13: 36).

In the face of this determined stance of the Messenger of Allah the idolaters at least wished for a solution to the problem of his insulting their idols. They asked him to refrain from insulting and belittling their idols.

Allah then revealed the following verse:

**"So do not obey those who deny the truth. They wish that you would conciliate them, then they too would be conciliating"** (al-Qalam, 68: 8, 9). He then explained to Allah's Messenger the future consequences of bowing down to them:

**"Then We would have let you taste a double punishment in life and a double punishment in death. You would not have found any helper against Us"** (al-Isra, 17: 75).

Thus to compromise one's belief in *tawhid*, that is in the oneness of Allah, is forbidden, even in such difficult times and under such circumstances. Otherwise the religion would have been ruined before even being established.

In any case this was the odious aim of the idolaters. And when they failed to achieve their aims they repeated and increased their demands. In doing so they were trying to save the reputation of their idols. They even so far as to make the following comical offer:

"You worship our idols and we will worship your Allah. In this way the disagreement amongst us will be solved"

The Holy Qur'an responded to this illogical and deviant offer as follows:

**"Say: 'Unbelievers! I do not worship what you worship and you do not worship what I worship. Nor will I worship what you worship nor will you worship what I worship. You have your religion and I have my religion'"** (al-Kafirun, 109: 1-6) (Ibn Hisham, I, 386).

### **The Accusations Made Against the Messenger of Allah and the Qur'an**

Faced with no other choice, the idolaters began to claim that the Messenger of Allah learnt the Qur'an from a Christian slave even though they knew that he could neither read nor write. Did they not consider that a slave who had the ability to establish the foundations of such a great religion would not allow another to take this honour from him? And why should he continue to remain Christian?

The Holy Qur'an responded to this impertinent accusation as follows:

**"We know that they say, 'It is only a human being who is teaching him.' The language of him they allude to is a foreign one whereas this is in clear and lucid Arabic"** (al-Nahl, 16: 103).

**"(O My Messenger) You never recited any Book before it nor did you write one down with your right hand. If you had, the purveyors of falsehood would have voiced their doubts"** (al-Ankabut, 29: 48).

In addition Allah the Most High consoled the Prophet against the accusations made by the idolaters as follows:

**"Remind them then! For, by the blessing of your Lord, you are neither a soothsayer nor a madman. Or do they say, 'He is a poet and We are waiting for something bad to happen to him'? Say: 'Wait then! I am waiting with you'"** (Tûr, 52: 29-31).

Because the idolaters had no desire to follow the straight path they continued to make various accusations against the Messenger of Allah and the Qur'an. However they knew the truth. Fearing



that Islam would spread outside of Mecca, the leading men of the Quraysh gathered together in the house of Walid ibn Mughirah and consulted with one another:

“What shall we say about Muhammad to the tribes that come to Mecca?”

Walid had personally met with the Prophet and listened to him recite from the Qur'an. He now said:

“I know of all kinds of poetry. What I heard from him was not poetry. It was much more superior than that. Neither was it prose. And it did not resemble the words of the soothsayers. It was also not the words of a madman for I have never heard words of such unrivaled meaning and harmony. I have not seen one proof of madness in him. Neither can we say that he is a magician because he does not breathe upon nor tie knots, and so he does not resemble the magicians.”

After these words and in order to find a solution in accordance with their evil intentions, Walid said:

“However, he is coming between brothers and planting the seeds of dissension amongst relatives. His words have an effect on people as do magic charms and spells” (Ibn Jawzi, VIII, 403-404; Hakim, II, 550; Wahidi, p. 468).

Having failed to achieve their aims by trying to defame the Qur'an, the idolaters now took aim at the blessed character of the Prophet. Just like in the times of the previous prophets, those who were unable to tolerate him were the proud and arrogant leaders and spoiled and pampered wealthy classes, Allah the Most High says in the Qur'an:

**"We never sent a warner into any city without the affluent people in it saying, 'We reject what you have been sent with.' They also said, 'We have more wealth and children. We are not going to be punished'" (Saba, 34: 34-35).**

Likewise, Abu Lahab, about whom the chapter al-Masad (111) was revealed, said:

“Let there not be a religion that holds others equal to me.”

Abu Jahl, the staunchest enemy of the Prophet Muhammad and the religion of Islam used to say:

“If I see him praying I am going to stomp on his head.”

Later he did in fact see the Messenger of Allah praying in the Haram. He immediately acted to keep his promise and grabbed a stone from the ground in order to throw it at the head of the Prophet. However a sudden great fear covered him, he turned pale and his hand was unable to hold onto the stone. He immediately turned back and fled.

When he was later asked about what happened he replied in great fear and anxiety:

“When I approached him suddenly a wild camel appeared in front of me. By Allah I have never seen such a frightening animal as that. He was going to swallow me up” (See Ibn Hisham, I, 318; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 92-93).

Allah the Most High was ever protecting the Messenger of Allah and his religion and making it reign supreme.

### The Period of Persecution

When they were unable to reach a compromise with Abu Talib, the idolaters turned to threatening and terrorising the Muslims. At first they were unable to touch those Muslims whose tribe and family was large and influential. It was those Muslims who did not have many connections and the slaves who became subject to their torture. There was no manner of torture left that they were not subjected to.

One of the Companions who was tortured was Habbab (ra). He was laid down upon hot embers. His chest was exposed to the flames until they were extinguished by the melting fat from his body.

Habbab was an ironsmith. He was owed money by some of the idolaters. When he asked them for his money he was told:

“First reject Muhammad and then we will pay you.”

Abandoning temporary worldly benefits and preferring eternal happiness, he replied:

“I will never deny him! I will never part from his path.”

He tells of an event that befell him as follows: “One day I went to ‘As ibn Wail in order to ask for what he owed me. He said to me:

“I will not give you your money until you reject Muhammad.” I replied:

“I will never reject Muhammad until you die and in fact until you are resurrected again.”

“You mean to say that I am going to die and then be brought back to life, is that so?”

When I replied ‘yes’, he said:

“In that case when I am brought back to life, I will have wealth and then I will pay you.”

After this event took place the following verses were revealed:

**“Have you seen him who rejects Our Signs and says, ‘I will certainly be given wealth and children there.’ Has he surveyed the Unseen or has he a contract with the All-Merciful? No indeed! We will write down what he says and prolong the punishment for him. We will inherit from him the things he is talking about and he will come to Us all alone”** (Maryam, 19: 77-80) (Bukhari, Tafsir, 19/3; Muslim, Munafiqun, 35-36).

Bilal (ra) was another Companion who was subjected to cruel and brutal torture.

His owner Umayya ibn Halaf tortured him in the most unspeakable of ways. He would lay him down on hot sand and place large rocks on top of him. Sometimes he would drag him along the streets of Mecca.

He would leave him without water for a day and a night and then make him wear an iron shirt and lay him down on the hot sands under the burning sun. He would keep him there until the fat from his body began to melt. However despite all manner of torture that they subjected him to, the idolaters were unable to make him say what they wanted him to say. He would constantly repeat:

“Ahad, ahad, ahad (Allah is One, Allah Is One, Allah is One)” (Ahmad, I, 404; Ibn Sa’d, III, 233; Balazuri, I, 186).

The Muslims were not subjected to only torture and suffering. Yasir (ra), the father of Ammar (ra) had one foot tied to one camel and the other tied to another and he was subsequently torn apart. His mother Sumayya (ra) was brutally martyred after being subject to cruel torture. In this way the family of Yasir (may Allah be pleased with them) became the first martyrs in Islam.

One day the Quraysh Meccans captured Ammar. They pushed his head down a well and told him:

“We will not let you go until you insult Muhammad and praise Lat and Uzza.” They did in fact achieve their aim.

News was sent to the Prophet:

“O Messenger of Allah! Ammar has become an unbeliever.” However he replied:

**"No, indeed. Ammar is filled with faith from head to toe. Faith has become etched upon his flesh and blood."**

At that point Ammar (ra) came to the Prophet. He was crying. The Prophet wiped away his tears and asked him:

**"What happened to you?"**

Ammar (ra) replied:

“O Messenger of Allah! They did not let me go until I insulted you and said that their idols were better than your religion.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) replied:

**"What was the state of your heart when you said these things?"**

Ammar (ra) replied:

“My heart was content with my faith in Allah and His Messenger and my attachment to my religion was stronger than iron.”

The Prophet continued to wipe away his tears whilst saying:

**"O Ammar! If they force you to repeat what you said, you may do so again."**

After this event took place the following verse was revealed:

**"Those who reject Allah after having had faith – except for someone forced to do it whose heart remains at rest in its faith – but as for those whose breasts become dilated with unbelief, anger from Allah will come down on them. They will have a terrible punishment."** (al-Nahl, 16: 106) (Ibn Sa’d, III, 249; Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, II, 67; Haysami, IX, 295; Wahidi, p. 288-289).

This event is the evidence for a legal ruling that any words against one’s faith can only be spoken when there is a threat to one’s life, otherwise it is not allowed to do that under any other circumstances.

Many more Muslims were suffering under similar painful and torturous situations. Many of the distinguished Companions of the Prophet such as Amir ibn Fuhayra, Abu Fuqayha, Miqdad

ibn Amr, Ummu Ubays, Lady Nahdiye and her daughter lady Lubayna (may Allah be pleased with all of them) were all subjected to unspeakable torture.

The idolaters would drag them around, naked and bound in chains, and then take them out to the desert in the most intense heat of the day. They would place large rocks on them and would torture these innocent people until they lost consciousness and were not aware of what they were saying (Ibn Majah, Muqaddima, 11; Ahmad, I, 404).

All of the believers, and in particular the Prophet himself, were very saddened by these events. However they were powerless to do anything at that point. Abu Bakr (ra) however, who was quite wealthy at the time purchased seven slaves from their owners, including Bilal and set them free, thus saving them from excruciating torture.

The torturous acts of the idolaters increased day by day and after the poor and weak believers, the Messenger of Allah and even the wealthy with him, including Abu Bakr, Zubayr ibn Awwam, Uthman and Mus'ab ibn Umayr, were also subjected to their share of cruelty and suffering.

The idolaters would provoke the rabble of Mecca and other lowlife to attack the Prophet. They would cause him great pain by making all manner of accusations and lies about him, which even they did not believe, such as him being a poet, a magician, a soothsayer and a madman (Ibn Hisham, I, 309-310).

According to a report which Abdullah ibn Amr (ra) personally witnessed and later narrated, one day the Messenger of Allah (saw) was praying in the Hijr of the Kabah, when Uqbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt came. He wrapped his coat around him in order to strangle him and began to pull it hard.

At that point Abu Bakr came to the rescue. He took him by the shoulders, pushing him away and said:

“Will you kill a man who has been sent from his Lord with clear proofs, for saying that **“My lord is Allah”** (Bukhari, Tafsir, 40).

Ibn Mas'ud (ra) narrates another similar event:

One day the Messenger of Allah was praying next to the Ka'bah. Abu Jahl and his friends were there. One day previously a camel had been slaughtered. Abu Jahl said to his friends:

“Who will bring the offal from the camel that such and such family slaughtered yesterday and place it on Muhammad's shoulders when he goes down to prostrate.”

The most miserable of those there immediately rose and brought the offal. When the Prophet bowed down in prostration, he placed it between his shoulders. All of the men there began to lean upon one another howling and laughing out loudly. I was standing a distance away looking at them. If I had had someone to protect me, I would have immediately removed the offal from the Prophet's shoulders.

The Messenger of Allah was in prostration and he kept his head bowed down. Just then someone went and informed his daughter, Fatima (ra), who was a little girl at that time. She came and removed the offal from her father's shoulders and then turned around and spoken harsh words to the culprits. The idolaters did not respond.

When the Prophet had completed his prayer he raised his voice and said:

**"O Allah! I refer the Quraysh to you"** He repeated this three times. When they heard this prayer of the Prophet's, the idolaters suddenly stopped laughing. They began to feel fear as a result of his prayer, because they had previously experienced many times the Prophet's prayers coming true.

Later Allah's Messenger listed their names praying as follows:

"O Allah! I refer Abu Jahl, Utbah, Shaybah, Walid, Umayyah ibn Halaf, and Utbah ibn Abi Mu'ayt all to you."

I swear by Allah who sent Muhammad with the truth that all of the men whose names the Messenger of Allah mentioned I later saw slain on the ground at Badr. Their bodies were later dragged and thrown into the well of Kalib at Badr (Bukari, Sala, 109; Jihad 98; Jizya, 21; Muslim, Jihad, 107)."

Whenever the staunch enemy of Islam, Abu Jahl, heard that a wealthy and powerful person had become Muslim, he would immediately approach them and insult them, raining down threats upon them:

"So you have left your father's religion. He was a finer man than you. So you have spurned your father's ideas and dishonoured him? I swear that we too will give no value to your opinions and we will bring to light his mistakes and faults. We will destroy his reputation"

If the Muslim was involved in trade he would say:

"By Allah! We will ruin your business and make you bankrupt." If the Muslim was a weak and poor person he would beat them and try to deceive them with ruses in order to make them turn back from their religion. One day Ibn Abbas (ra) was asked:

"Were the Messenger of Allah and his Companions tortured so much so by the idolaters that they were forced to turn back from their religion?"

Ibn Abbas replied:

"Yes. I swear by Allah that whenever the idolaters captured one of the Muslims, they would beat him so much and leave him hungry and thirsty so that he would not be able to sit due to the pain from the beating. They would beat them so much that they would make them say whatever they wished them to say. "Are Lat and Uzza gods beside Allah?" they would ask and the Muslim would say yes.

In fact they pointed to a beetle that happened to be passing by and ask: "Is that beetle also a god beside Allah?" That poor Muslim would say yes just to escape that severe torture. When he escaped however, he would return to his belief in *tawhid*" (Ibn Hisham, I, 339-343; Ibn Sa'd, III, 233; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 108).

Despite all of this torture and cruelty, the Messenger of Allah did not compromise. He never made any concessions from his beliefs or his religion. Thus we must realise that the bounty of Islam reached us today as a result of thousands of people enduring torture and pain and we must appreciate the value of this bounty.

If Allah the Most High had so willed, he would have made it easy for the religion of Islam to grow and spread and He would not have allowed any of the Muslims to suffer any pain or torture. However the sincerity and struggle of those who made sacrifices for this religion would not have



come to light. Then we would not have been able to distinguish between the believer and the hypocrite nor between the truthful and the liar.

Allah the Almighty says in the Qur'an:

**"Alif Lam Mim. Do people imagine that they will be left to say, 'We have faith,' and will not be tested? We tested those before them so that Allah would know the truthful and would know the liars' 'Or did you imagine that you were going to enter the Garden without Allah knowing those among you who had struggled and knowing the steadfast?"** (Al-i Imran, 3: 142)

**"Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same as those who came before you? Poverty and illness afflicted them and they were shaken to the point that the Messenger and those who had faith with him said, 'When is Allah's help coming?' Be assured that Allah's help is very near"** (al-Baqara, 2: 214).

In short, all prophets and righteous servants of Allah have been subjected to distress and pain. In fact some were unable to endure what was done to them and became martyrs. Thus a Muslim who encounters difficulties and trouble must never become all into despair.

### Advising the Muslims to be Patient and Persevere

The Messenger of Allah (saw) too was a human being. From time to time he would become saddened by the unpleasant treatment he saw from the people. The ugly behaviour towards him of those people whom he was trying to guide with all his might saddened him greatly. There were times when he faced such difficulty that he was in need of absolute consolation.

Allah the Most High did not wish the Messenger of Allah to be sad, and He consoled him and supported him through revelation:

**"...(O My Messenger) His favour to you is indeed immense"** (al-Isra, 17: 87)

**"Do not grieve over them and do not let the plots they make distress you"** (al-Naml, 27: 70)

Almighty Allah was encouraging the Messenger of Allah to be patient and seek refuge in his worship:

**"So be patient in the face of what they say and glorify your Lord with praise before the rising of the sun and before it sets"** (Qaf, 50: 39).

With these verses which fortified the Messenger of Allah's determination and zeal, he was able to relieve the pain of his Companions and dress the wounds of their heart.





Habbab (ra) narrates:

One day, while the Messenger of Allah was sitting in the shade of the Ka'bah, we approached him and complained to him about the torment that we were receiving from the idolaters.

He said to us:

**"There were believers from amongst the generations before you who were captured and thrown into pits, who were sawed into two, and whose nails were raked with iron files, and who still did not turn back from their religion. I swear that Allah the Most High will complete this religion and make it reign. A person will be able to travel from San'a to Hadramut<sup>12</sup> without fear of anything other than Allah and that a wolf may attack his sheep...But you are very impatient"** (Bukhari, Manaqibu al-Ansar, 29)

The Messenger of Allah then read the following verse:

**"Do not be deceived by the fact that those who are unbelievers move freely about the earth. A brief enjoyment; then their shelter will be Hell. What an evil resting-place! But those who have taqwa of their Lord will have Gardens with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever: hospitality from Allah. What is with Allah is better for those who are truly good"** (Al-i Imran, 3: 196-198).

Almighty Allah, who bestowed the path to happiness on the believers in all aspects of life, spoke to His Messenger as follows:

**"Say: 'Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Falsehood is always bound to vanish"** (al-Isra, 17: 81).

Those whose duty it is to exalt the truth are only responsible for doing what they are capable of. Since this world is a place of trial for the human being, it is obviously going to be filled with difficulty and pain.

Thus a person cannot obtain their desired result without a struggle. Allah the Most High explains that this reality is also valid for the Prophets:

**"Then when the Messengers despaired (that their people would never have faith) and thought themselves denied, Our help came to them, and those We willed were saved. Our violent force cannot be averted from people who are evildoers"** (Yusuf, 12: 110)

As much as the believers' hearts attained peace and they were encouraged in their efforts when they heard these verses, the animosity and anger of the idolaters were increasing as well. Instead of abandoning their torture of the Messenger of Allah, each day they found a new way to persecute and torment them. And so thirteen years of pain and difficulty passed in this way. The fury and rage of the idolaters reached such a degree that they even began to think of a plan to annihilate the source of revelation.

The Prophet Muhammad was at the peak of patience even in the face of these events, in a state of seeking refuge with Allah. He took refuge in His providence and protection. However the expected divine promise was not taking place and the distress did not end but continued to increase. Allah

<sup>12</sup> San'a was the capital of Yemen whilst Hadramut is an area in the east of Yemen.

warned His Messenger (saw) about succumbing to a state of sorrow and grief in response to his circumstances as follows:

**"(O My Beloved!) Do not imagine that Allah will break His promise to His Messengers. Allah is Almighty, Ever-Able to Requite (all wrongs)"** (Ibrahim, 14: 47).



## THE FIFTH YEAR OF THE PROPHETHOOD

### Migration to Abyssinia

In response to the callous and cruel torturing of the Quraysh on the Muslims, Allah's Messenger gave the command for them to emigrate, as they had been unable to freely perform their religious duties. In addition there was the duty of spreading Islam to other lands.

When the Companions asked him where they could emigrate to, the Messenger of Allah replied:

**"To Abyssinia because there is a ruler there who does not oppress his people. It is a just land. Remain there until Allah the Most High brings you salvation from the distress that you are in"** (Ibn Hisham, I, 343; Ibn Sa'd, I, 203-204).

This first migration took place in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the Prophethood in the month of Rajab.

The first group to migrate consisted of twelve men and five women, making a total of seventeen people.

Included amongst them were many of the leading Companions such as Uthman ibn Affan and his wife Ruqayya, Zubayr ibn Awwam, Mus'ab ibn Umayr, Abdurrahman ibn Awf, Abu Salama, Ummu Salama, Uthman ibn Maz'un, Ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with all of them). This group of immigrants departed Mecca in secret and found the help of Allah when they arrived at the port of Shuaiba. There they found two trade boats about to depart and agreeing to pay them half a gold coin, they immediately set out for Abyssinia. When the Quraysh realised that the Muslims were about to emigrate from Mecca they set out after them in order to capture them. They failed however since by the time they arrived at the port the boats had already left (Ibn Sa'd, I, 204).

For a while the Messenger of Allah was unable to receive any news of his daughter Ruqayyah and Uthman. From time to time he would go out and ask for news of them from people who had arrived from that part of the country. One time a woman from Quraysh had arrived from Abyssinia and the Prophet asked her about his daughter and son-in-law. She replied:

"O Abu Qasim! I have seen them." Allah's Messenger asked:

**"How were they? Were they well?"** The woman replied:

"Uthman had mounted Ruqayya on a camel and he was walking behind her."

The Prophet then said:

**"May Allah help them. After the Prophet Lut, Uthman ibn Affan is the first person to have migrated with his family for the sake of Allah"** (Ali al-Muttaqi, XIII, 63).

The first group of people to migrate to Abyssinia could stay there for three months. When a rumour began to be spread amongst the Muslims that the Meccan idolaters had accepted faith in Allah, the emigrants decided to return to their homeland. In the fifth year of the Prophethood a group of thirty nine people, consisting of thirty three men and six women set out for Mecca in the month of Shawwal. When they came close to the city they learned that the rumour was false. It then became too difficult for them to return to Abyssinia at this stage, however they were afraid to enter Mecca with nobody to offer them protection.

They were only able to enter Mecca under the protection of their pagan relatives and friends or in secret. A group of them did in fact return to Abyssinia (Ibn-i Hisham II, 3-8; Ibn Sa'd, I, 206; Haysami, VI, 33).

### The Gharaniq Incident

One time Allah's Messenger was reciting the newly revealed 'the chapter al-Najm (53)' in the Haram in a sonorous voice so that everybody there could hear him. When he came to the verse of prostration at the end of the chapter, he performed prostration to Allah. Everyone there including the Muslims and idolaters, and the jinn prostrated together with him (Bukhari, Tafsir, 53/4).

However the idolaters were not prostrating to Allah but rather to the idols that were mentioned in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> verses of this chapter. The reason for the rumour that later spread that the Meccan idolaters had become Muslim was that they had prostrated together with the Muslims, albeit with a different intention and aim.

Even though this was the reality of the matter, the 'gharaniq' incident was later to become a scandal. According to this scandal, Satan supposedly whispered to the Prophet a verse with the meaning: *'these are the exalted gharaniq<sup>13</sup> whose intercession is approved'*. The idolaters were apparently very pleased with this verse and immediately bowed down in prostration. The error only became apparent later.

Almighty Allah protected His Messenger from heedlessness and erring in the duty of spreading the divine revelation. It is impossible for Satan to have interfered in the Prophet's duty of messengership. Allah informs us that Satan has no authority over His believing servants (al-Hijr, 15: 42) so it is unthinkable that he could have intervened.

Just as the Prophet Muhammad was preserved from all manner of erring, carelessness, sins and faults, so too the Holy Qur'an is also under divine protection. Some of its verses states:

**"...truly it is a Mighty Book; falsehood cannot reach it from before it or behind it –it is a revelation from One who is All-Wise, Praiseworthy"** (Fussilat, 41: 42)

**"It is We Who have sent down the Reminder and We Who will preserve it"** (al-Hijr, 15: 9).

It is sufficient proof of the invalidity of this claim that none of the books of sound traditions have transmitted this event, nor has any trusted transmitter of hadith transmitted it with a sound and unbroken chain (Qadi Iyad, as-Shifa, II, p. 132).

13 'Gharaniq' is the plural of Gharnuq or Gharniq which means a sort of aquatic bird or a handsome youth (translator's note).

Moreover this *gharaniq* incident does not seem rationally possible, for it consists of a claim of *shirk*, in other words idols are being associated with Allah the Almighty, whereas the religion of Islam has propagated the belief in the oneness of Allah since day of its inception. There is no logic nor rationale in claims such as these which oppose the belief in *tawhid*, which is the foundation of Islam. Also *shirk*, or associating partners with Allah, is condemned in this very chapter, from beginning to end, stating that idols are mere names fabricated by the idolaters on the basis of their own assumptions and whims.

A fitting answer to this accusation is given at the beginning of this chapter:

**"...your companion is not misguided or misled; nor does he speak from whim. It is nothing but Revelation revealed"** (al-Najm, 53: 2-4).

Thus this affair is nothing more than the purposeful fabrication of the enemies of Islam, with hostile intentions. The scholars of Islam have refuted this claim from many different aspects and presented the truth of the matter.

### The Second Migration to Abyssinia

The Meccan idolaters had learnt that those emigrants who had returned from Abyssinia were treated very well there. They became very anxious that Islam would spread outside of Mecca and the Muslims would become strengthened and so they increased their persecution of them. When the torture became very severe the Muslims were forced to migrate to Abyssinia for a second time in that same year. This time the group consisted of ninety people, seventy seven men and thirteen women. At the head of this consignment was Jafar at-Tayyar, the older brother of Ali.

Ummu Salama, the wife of the Prophet is reported to have described their migration to Abyssinia as being very convenient: "From the moment we set foot in Abyssinia we were treated very kindly and generously by the Negus. He continually protected us and looked over us. We were able to worship Allah in peace and safety" (Ahmad, I, 201-202)."



## THE SIXTH YEAR OF THE PROPHETHOOD

### The Quraysh Ask the Negus to Deliver the Emigrants

When the Quraysh learnt of the good treatment that the emigrants received on their second migration to Abyssinia they became extremely worried. They thought that if Islam spread they would not be able to stop it. They thus decided to ask the ruler of Abyssinia to return the Muslims who had sought refuge with him. They appointed Abdullah ibn Rabi and Amr ibn 'As and immediately sent them to Abyssinia with various gifts for the Negus and his generals.

Before meeting with the Negus, Amr and Abdullah first met with the generals and presented them with various gifts in order to draw them to their own side. They then presented their gifts to the Negus and said to him:

“Sir! Some foolish young men and women of our people have taken refuge in your country. They have left the religion of their forefathers but have not entered your religion either. They have invented their own religion. Their relatives have sent us to you so that you can send them back with us. Their tribe and relatives know them better than anyone and realise their mistakes better than others”

They were afraid that the Negus would want to listen to what Ja'far (ra) and his friends had to say. They wanted the Negus to make a decision without reasoning first and deliver the emigrants to them. The Negus' generals said:

“Sir. These men speak the truth. Their tribe know them better than anyone. Deliver them to these men and let them take back to their home.”

The Negus became angry and said:

“No indeed. I will not deliver them without listening to what they have to say. I can not do evil to a people who have preferred me over others and sought refuge in my kingdom.” He then had the emigrants brought to him.

When the emigrants arrived, the Negus had already summoned his own men of religion. They were sitting around the Negus with their books open. The Negus had both sides confront each other in his presence. There was an excited nervousness in the air.

The spokesman of the Muslims was Ja'far (ra). The Negus asked him:

“The Quraysh have sent these here envoys asking that you be returned to Mecca. What do you have to say about this?”

Ja'far (ra) replied:

“O Ruler! Ask them if we are slaves that they want us back.” The Negus looked at Amr ibn 'As who replied:



“No, they are all free men.”

Ja'far continued:

“Ask them do we owe anybody any money that they want us back?”

“No, none of them owe anybody anything.”

“Ask them are we murderers that they are calling us back for revenge?”

“No, we have no such demand.”

“In that case why do they want us back?”

Amr then spoke:

“These people have left the religion of our forefathers. They insult our gods. They have ruined the beliefs of our youth. They have spread dissension amongst us. Meccans are divided into two because of them.”

The Negus asked the Muslims:

“You have neither accepted my religion nor the religion of your people - so what is this religion that you have accepted?” Ja'far spoke:

“O ruler! We were a people steeped in ignorance, worshipping idols made of stone and wood. We would eat the flesh of dead corpses and bury our daughters alive. We would gamble and deal in usury. We would look with approval on adultery. We did not know our duties towards our relatives. We did not observe the rights of our neighbours. The strong would oppress the weak and the wealthy would live off the sweat of the. We did not respect each other's rights. Then Allah the Most High poor took mercy on us and willed for our reform and sent us a prophet from amongst us. This prophet is a man of honour and pure lineage. We had given him the title *al-Amin* (The trustworthy one). He called us to the oneness of Allah. He taught us how to worship Him. He saved us from the idols of our forefathers and distanced us from all abomination. He forbade us from shedding blood, gambling, wine, usury, deception and taking the heritage of orphans. He commanded us to honour women and save the lives of our baby daughters. He rescued us from savagery and barbarity and civilised us. We believed in him and are following in his footsteps. This is why our people have turned against us. They tortured us in many different ways and when the torture became too much to bear and we refused to turn back from our religion, the Prophet gave us permission to migrate and we chose you as a ruler and came to your country. We have sought refuge with you in the hope that we will not be oppressed in your land.”

The Negus listened in silence to what Ja'far had to say. He then asked him:

“Have you memorised any of the revelation that your Prophet has brought to you?”

Ja'far (ra) replied:

“Yes” and he then began to recite the first verses of the chapter Maryam. When he recited the verses that mention the births of Yahya and Isa, the Negus and his men were very moved and began to weep. The Negus said:

“I swear by Allah that these words come from the same source as the revelation that came to Musa and Isa.”

He then turned to the Qurayshi envoys and rejecting their proposal he said:

“I will never deliver these men to you.”

When the envoys left the Negus, Amr said:

“I swear by Allah that I will inform the Negus that these people believe that Isa ibn Maryam is a human being and thus have them annihilated.”

The next day he entered the presence of the Negus and said:

“O Ruler! They utter a lie about Isa ibn Maryam. Call them to you and ask them what they say about him.”

The Negus called for the Muslims once more and asked them:

“What do you believe about Isa, the son of Mary? Let me hear you.” Ja’far replied:

“We say what we learned about him from our Prophet. The Messenger of Allah has the following to say about him:

**“Isa is the slave of Allah, His Messenger, and His Spirit and His Word which he placed inside the womb of Maryam (who was herself consecrated to Allah).”**

Upon hearing this, the Negus took a piece of stick, drew a line on the ground, and said:

“I swear by Allah that Isa ibn Maryam is nothing more than what you say about him. There is not even this much difference between what you say about Isa and the truth about him.” When he said this, the generals around him began to snort.

“By Allah even if you snort this is the truth.” Then he turned to the emigrants and said:

“Be on your way. You are in complete safety in my land. Anybody who tries to harm you will be punished. I would not harm a single one of you for mountains of gold. Return their gifts to these two men. I have no need of them. If that prophet were in my land, I would wash his feet and serve him” (Ibn Hisham, I, 356-361; Ahmad, I, 202-203, V, 290-291; Haysami, VI, 25-27).

The answers that Ja’far (ra) gave to the Negus are a good example of how and where Muslims should represent Islam. When he was asked to recite from the Holy Qur’an he did not recite from any random place but rather chose suitable verses according to the situation in which he was. That is he chose to recite the verses about the Prophet Isa from the chapter Maryam. In addition he gave reasonable and logical responses to the excuses put forth by the idolaters who wanted to take them back to Mecca, saying that the religion which had come to them commanded them to observe all people’s rights, fairness and good character.

Some of the emigrants who had participated in this second migration to Abyssinia went to Madina immediately after the Hijrah, whilst others went during the pact of Hudaibiyyah. The last of the immigrants under the supervision of Ja’far (ra), went to Madina during the conquest of Khaybar, which greatly pleased the Prophet.

### **Hamza (ra) Embraces Islam**

One time Abu Jahl saw the Prophet Muhammad (saw) reciting the Qur’an in the Ka’bah and insulted and reviled him. In his desire to show his power and strength to those idolaters who had

gathered around him he was about to go even further when a woman who had witnessed this ran to Hamza (ra), who was returning from a hunt and said to him:

“O the bravest one of all the brave men. They are reviling your nephew in the Ka’bah. I fear that they will harm him and do evil unto him.”

Hamza (ra) immediately ran to the Ka’bah and prevented Abu Jahl from going any further. He struck him on the head with his bow so hard that his head began to bleed profusely. Not expecting such an intervention this enemy of Islam left in shock fearing that he would receive further harm. Seeing this, the other idolaters also dispersed for they all knew the strength of Hamza (ra). Even the wrestlers of Quraysh were afraid of him and could not pluck up the courage to face him.

After that Hamza (ra) went to the Prophet and said:

“I have avenged you O Muhammad, you may now be at ease.” The Prophet responded:

“O my uncle! I will be at ease when you become a Muslim.” Thus the Prophet informed him that it was not with taking revenge for him personally that he would be pleased but rather his conversion to Islam was what would make him happy. Thus the Prophet (saw) demonstrated that he preferred the happiness of the Hereafter rather than worldly feelings. Suddenly the veils of heedlessness over the heart of Hamza (ra) were lifted. He now perceived the truth. He smiled and looked at his nephew. Gazing upon his light he declared his faith by saying the *Kalima al-Shahadah* and became a Muslim.

**Hamza (ra) was only two years older than the Prophet and he was both his uncle and his nursing brother (having been suckled by the same wet nurse)** (See Ibn Hisham, I, 312-313; Hakim, III, 213; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 84).

We can see from this stance of the Prophet that we should prefer acts that elevate Islam rather than our own personal benefit.

The day that Hamza (ra) became a Muslim, Abu Bakr (ra) insisted that they all go together with the Prophet to the Masjid al-Haram and invite everyone present there to Islam. However Allah’s Messenger replied:

**"O Abu Bakr! We are yet too few in number."**

When Abu Bakr insisted further the Prophet and his Companions left Dar al-Arkam and went to the Haram. When they arrived at the Ka’bah, Abu Bakr began to invite the people to believe in Allah and His Messenger. The idolaters all began to walk over Abu Bakr and the Muslims and beat them savagely. Utbah stood on Abu Bakr and began to trample him. He kicked his face with his iron-soled shoes. Abu Bakr was bleeding all over. The sons of Taym, the tribe of Abu Bakr, finally managed to rescue him from the hands of the idolaters.

The sons of Taym took the unconscious Abu Bakr to his house. Thinking that he was going to die they returned to the Masjid and cried out to those present:

“If Abu Bakr dies, by Allah we will kill Utbah.”

Abu Bakr (ra) finally gained his consciousness back towards the evening and the first words to come out of his lips were these:

“Is the Messenger of Allah well?”

His mother, Ummu al-Khayr said to him:

“Will you not eat or drink something.” Abu Bakr continued to ask, as if he had not heard her words:

“What is the Messenger of Allah doing? How is he?”

Ummu Khayr replied:

“My son. I have no news of your friend”

Abu Bakr sent his mother to Ummu Jamil,<sup>14</sup> a Muslim woman, to obtain some news about the Prophet. When Ummu Jamil arrived and saw Abu Bakr in the state he was in she could not restrain herself and cried out:

“I swear by Allah that those who did this to you are sinners and unbelievers. May Allah punish them for what they have done to you.”

Then she informed Abu Bakr that Allah’s Messenger was safe and in Dar al-Arkam.

Abu Bakr then said:

“I swear by Allah that I will not eat or drink until I have seen the Messenger of Allah.” When the tension had died down and everybody had returned to their houses, Abu Bakr’s mother and Ummu Jamil held onto Abu Bakr’s arms and took him to the Prophet. As soon as he saw him, he fell to his knees. This state of his dear friend greatly moved the Prophet.

Abu Bakr said:

“May my mother and father be sacrificed for you, I feel no pain O Messenger of Allah. That lowly sinner maltreated me, that is all. Then he asked Allah’s Messenger to pray for his mother to be guided. As a result of this prayer of the Prophet Abu Bakr’s honourable mother also became Muslim (Ibn Asir, Usdu al-Ghaba, VII, 326; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 81).

The number of Muslims was rapidly increasing and seeing such brave men such as Hamza embracing Islam caused a great stir amongst the idolaters and they convened together.

“Muhammad’s situation has become grave. He has brought disorder to our affairs. Let us send a man from us who is the most talented in magic, divination and poetry to talk to him and come to an agreement with him.”

They concluded that Utbah ibn Rabia was the most suitable man for this task and they sent him to the Prophet. Utbah repeated the offers made by the idolaters previously and spoke at length. The Messenger of Allah listened to him silently until he finished. Then he asked:

“O Abu Walid. Have you finished what you have to say?”

Utbah replied “Yes.” The Messenger of Allah then said:

“Now you listen to me.” He then said the Basmala and began to recite from the chapter Fussilat. After reciting the 37<sup>th</sup> verse, the verse of prostration and having prostrated he said:

14 This was Ummu Jamil bint Khattab a Muslim lady who should not be confused with Ummu Jamil, the wife of Abu Lahab.

“Abu Walid! You have heard what I have recited. And you have spoken your words and have listened to what I have to say.”

When Utbah returned to his friends, they said:

“By Allah Abu Walid returns with a different face than that which he left with. He has changed.”

When he neared them, they asked:

“What happened? Tell us.”

Utbah spoke:

“By Allah, I have never heard such words as I have just now. It is not poetry, nor magic nor soothsaying. When Muhammad recited the following verse: **“If they turn away, then say, ‘I warn you of a lightning-bolt like the lightning-bolt of ‘Ad and of Thamud’”** (Fussilat, 41: 13) I covered his mouth with my hand so that he could read no more and said: “For the sake of our kinship that is enough.” I feared that punishment would befall me since everything Muhammad says comes true. O Quraysh! Listen to me! Leave him to himself and fade from the scenes! If someone else slays him you will be freed from him. If he dominates and rules over the Arabs then his rule will be your rule and his power and honour will be your power and honour. In this way you will be the happiest of men on account of Muhammad.” The Quraysh responded:

“O Abu Walid! He has bewitched you with his tongue.”

Utbah replied:

“I have given you my opinion. Do whatever you wish” (Ibn Hisham, I, 313-314; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 111-112)

### **Umar (ra) Becomes a Muslim**

Umar (ra) was thirteen years younger than the Prophet. His lineage meets with that of the Prophet at the ninth generation.

One day the idolaters had gathered at Dar an-Nadwa to plan the murder of the Prophet. They selected Umar to kill him and sent him to carry out his duty. Umar heedlessly set out with the intention of murdering the Prophet of Allah. On the way he encountered Nuaym ibn Abdullah who asked him:

“O Umar! Where are you going?” Umar replied:

“I am going to kill Muhammad who has abandoned the religion of his forefathers to bring a new religion”

Nuaym said to him:

“O Umar. Your *nafs* has deceived you. Do you think that after you have slain him, the sons of Abdu Manaf will let you live. It would be better for you if you looked at your own family first.”

Umar asked:

“Who do you mean?”

Nuaym replied:

“Your sister Fatima and her husband Said ibn Zayd. By Allah they have both become Muslim.” Hearing this Umar became enraged and went straight to the house of his sister.

Nuaym had realised his evil and ugly intention and wished to buy time to inform the Messenger of Allah about the situation. He was thus forced to divert Umar towards his sister and brother-in-law.

When he arrived at his sister’s house Habbab was teaching them some verses from the Holy Qur’an.

When they saw Umar coming towards them with furiously, Habbab hid in a corner.

Fatima immediately hid the pages of the Qur’an. When Umar entered the house he roared:

“What were those words that I heard just now?”

His brother-in-law and sister said:

“You are mistaken, there is no such thing here.”

Umar said:

“No. By Allah I have learned that you have both become followers of Muhammad!”

In his rage he then trampled his brother-in-law and began to beat him. His sister tried to interfere but he slapped her. Fatima then cried:

“O Umar! Do as you wish! Kill us if you like. But we will never abandon our Islam...” At that point a small trickle of blood began to flow down Fatima’s face.

Not expecting such a determined response from his sister, Umar was shocked. When he saw the blood on his sister’s face he immediately regretted what he had done and said:

“Bring me what you were reading just now.”

His sister said:

“We fear that you will damage these pages.” Umar replied: “Have no fear” He swore by his gods that he would give them back after reading them. In the hope that he would become Muslim Fatima said to him:

“O my brother. You are not clean as long as you worship idols. But none other than those who are pure may touch this Qur’an.

After he had washed himself Fatima handed the pages over to Umar. He began to read the verses:<sup>15</sup>

**"Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. He gives life and causes to die. He has power over all things. He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward. He has knowledge of all things. It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then established Himself firmly on the Throne. He knows what goes into the earth and what comes out of it, what comes down from heaven and what goes up into it. He is with you wherever you are –**

<sup>15</sup> The verses read by Umar are reported to have been the first verses from the chapter Hadid or Ta Ha



**Allah sees what you do. The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. All things return to Allah. He makes night merge into day and day merge into night. He knows what the heart contains. Have faith in Allah and His Messenger and give of that to which He has made you successors. Those of you who have faith and give will have an immense reward"** (al-Hadid, 57: 1-7)

After listening to these verses Umar was paralysed.

"What beautiful words. What precious rewards"

The expression and eloquence of the Qur'an had captivated him. These were words full of truth and wisdom, which no human being could ever have fabricated.

He began to meditate deeply. Hearing these words of Umar, Habbab came out from where he was hiding and said:

"O Umar! By Allah the prayer of the Prophet for you will come true. Yesterday I heard him pray: "O Lord Strengthen this religion with Abu al-Hakam ibn Hisham or Umar ibn al-Khattab." O Umar have fear of Allah."

Umar asked Habbab:

"O Habbab! Take me to Muhammad so that I may embrace Islam."

They immediately set out. The steps now taken by Umar (ra) were now filled with the love and zeal of faith and desire to meet the Messenger of Allah.

When he arrived at the house of Arkam he found Hamza (ra) waiting for him, sword in hand ready. Nuaym had arrived earlier to warn them that Umar was setting out to kill the Prophet.

However the Muslims were unaware of the later developments. Umar told them his purpose in one sentence:

"I am here to become a Muslim O Hamza!"

Hearing these words from inside Allah's Messenger declared:

"*Allahu Akbar*" in gratitude and expressing that Allah was capable of all things.

All of the Companions then began to pronounce the *takbir* loudly. Thus the prayer of the Prophet (saw) was accepted by Allah.

When Umar (ra) began to speak he did so with a heart filled with contentment and the first thing he uttered was the declaration of faith:

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger"

Thus it was Umar who was the recipient of the prayer of the Prophet whereas Abu Jahl was to be ruined after falling into the pits of misfortune.

After Umar made the declaration of faith in the presence of the Messenger of Allah and entered Islam all of the Muslims gathered at his request and left the house of Arkam. With cries of 'Allahu Akbar' they walked towards the Ka'bah.

Umar (ra) later recounted those days:

“There was no person who had become Muslim who had not suffered pain and torment and had to struggle. However nobody dared touch me. I said to myself: “I do not want to remain in security while the Muslims are suffering from such misfortunes.” The night I became Muslim I thought about this and made the following decision:

“I will go to the most hostile of the Meccans and tell him that I have become Muslim.”

In the morning I knocked on the door of Abu Jahl. He came to the door and said:

“Welcome o Umar! What news have you brought?”

I replied:

“I came to inform you that I believe in Allah and His Messenger and endorse everything he has brought.” He cursed me and banged the door in my face (Ibn Hisham, I, 371).

Later Umar went to his maternal uncle, Walid ibn Mughirah, one of the staunchest enemies of Islam and two other idolaters and gave them his good news however none of them dared to do anything to him. Instead they slammed the door in his face and withdrew to their houses helplessly.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (ra) narrates:

“Umar's becoming Muslim was an opening; his migration was a help; and his caliphate was mercy! Before Umar became Muslim we could not pray out in the open in the Ka'bah. Once he became Muslim he struggled against the Quraysh and they let us be. We were thus able to perform our prayer there” (Haysami, IX, 62-63).



## QUESTIONS PART TWO

### A. SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What was the reason why the Prophet Muhammad used to frequent the Cave of Hira before he became a prophet? ?
2. Why were the prophets subject to oppression and enmity when they came to their people with a true religion?
3. What is the reason and the wisdom in the first revelation being the command to 'Read'?
4. Why was the Holy Qur'an revealed gradually over a period of 23 years and not all at once?
5. How can we answer the claims that the Holy Qur'an is a product of the Prophet's own imagination?
6. Had the Prophets not been characterised by their trait of 'ismah" (that is, immunity from sin) before they became prophets, what kinds of difficulties would they have encountered after they took on the duty of prophethood?
7. Explain why the Prophets were selected from amongst mankind and not from the angels?
8. Had the Prophet Muhammad not been illiterate what kind of accusation and allegations could he have encountered?
9. How did Dar al-Arkam make life easier for the Muslims in the first years of Islam?
10. Why is spiritual closeness more important than blood ties in Islam?
11. The idolaters made the following offer to the Prophet: "If you worship our idols we will worship Allah. In this way the conflict amongst us will dissolve". What consequences could have resulted had the Prophet made the slightest of compromises?
12. Why did the Prophet Muhammad spread the teachings of Islam in secret for the first three years of his prophethood?
13. What were the characteristics given to the Prophet Muhammad that were not given to other prophets?
14. What kinds of offers did the idolaters make to the Prophet so that he would abandon his task? How did he respond to their attractive offers?
15. If the first Muslims had been unable to protect their faith out of fear of losing their wealth or their lives how would this have affected the spread and development of Islam?

16. What general stance did the Prophet take against the idolaters and unbelievers who oppressed and insulted him?
17. What should be the stance of a Muslim in the face of difficulties and trials?
18. What were the reasons for the first migration to Abyssinia?
19. Why were the idolaters opposed to the migration of the Muslims?

### B. FILL IN THE GAPS

1. The Messenger of Allah became a prophet at the age of .....
2. The first person to believe in the Messenger of Allah was .....
3. The word ..... has the meanings of pure and innocent like a newborn baby, a person who does not know how to read or write.
4. .... and her husband ..... were the first martyrs of Islam having been tortured by the idolaters.
5. Open invitation to Islam began to be carried out in the ..... year of prophethood.
6. The first migration to Abyssinia took place in the month of ..... in the ..... year of prophethood.
7. In the consignment of emigrants to Abyssinia during the 1st migration there were a total of seventeen people ..... men and ..... women.
8. .... was the place where the first Muslims gathered to worship and consult each other.
9. The pagan about whom a chapter was revealed because he insulted the Prophet saying: 'Ruin to your hands' was ..... The revealed chapter was .....
10. After the Prophet Lut, the first person to emigrate with his family for the sake of Allah was .....

## C. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following conclusions cannot be made from the first verses to be revealed to the Prophet Muhammad?
  - A. The revelation began with the command to 'Read' thus reading is more virtuous than contemplation.
  - B. In reality it is Allah who teaches knowledge, a great favour, to mankind.
  - C. Mankind who was created from a clot of blood should never become arrogant and forget his origins and his weakness.
  - D. A believer should embark on every task in the name of his Lord, who created him.
2. Which of the following is not a method of revelation?
  - A. Terrifying screeching sound accompanied by the fainting of the Prophet.
  - B. True dreams seen in the Prophet's sleep and these then coming true.
  - C. Gabriel would inform him of revelation directly in his sleep.
  - D. The appearance of the angel Gabriel in his own form.
3. Which of the following is not one of the states experienced by the Prophet while he was receiving revelation?
  - A. His face would become as red as a rose and he would perspire with drops of dew forming on his forehead.
  - B. He would abandon any gathering he was in when revelation came to him.
  - C. He would bow his head and breathe rapidly.
  - D. A weightiness would come upon him and he would encounter difficulty.
4. Which of the following responses could not be used as a reply to the claims of certain Western scholars who state that the Holy Qur'an was a product of the Prophet's imagination and his own ideas?
  - A. The Qur'an gives detailed and evident information about the stories of past nations.
  - B. Allah's Messenger would sometimes be silent in the face of certain events and even though he was required to respond immediately he would not do so but rather wait until some time had passed.
  - C. There is a definite difference in style between the verses of the Qur'an and the texts of the hadith.
  - D. Allah's Messenger belonged to a noble family in addition to being a very intelligent man.

5. Which of the following definitions is incorrect in regards to the attributes of the Prophets?
  - A. Sidq- Righteousness
  - B. Amanah – Reliability
  - C. Fatanah – Justice
  - D. Ismah - Preservation from sin
  
6. Consider the following paragraph: "If there were no people in a society who command good and forbid evil, then eventually indecent acts would be regarded as normal in that community. If an indecent act is not prevented at the beginning then it will not take long before it becomes totally unpreventable. Falsehood and truth will become mixed up, truth will disappear and people will forget Allah. The result of this will be the complete destruction of that community". According to the above lines which of the following cannot be considered to be a responsibility of a Muslim?
  - A. Commanding good and preventing from evil.
  - B. Teaching what you know to others
  - C. Being an example for others with your own life
  - D. Severely punishing sinners
  
7. Which of the following is not a reason and a wisdom in Allah choosing the Prophets from amongst human beings and not from the angels as the idolaters desired?
  - A. If Allah had have made the Prophets from the angels, then the idolaters would have objected and said: "How can we do what angels do, we are mere human beings"
  - B. If the messengers were angels, then the extraordinary acts they performed would not be considered miracles and the idolaters would not believe in them.
  - C. Because angels are different from human beings in terms of creation and living they cannot be 'the best example' for people.
  - D. If the messengers were angels then not all human beings would have been able to see them



8. Consider the following description of the Prophet Muhammad (saw): *"His skin was pinkish white like a rose, radiant and soft as silk. His blessed body was always clean and fragrant with a scent of freshness. Whether he did or did not use a scent his skin and his sweat were more beautiful than the most beautiful of fragrances. If a person were to shake his hand, then for that day that person's hand would be fragrant with his subtle scent. It was as if the rose had taken its scent from him. If he were to caress the head of a child with his blessed hands, his beautiful scent would distinguish that child from others".*

**Which state cannot be expected to be seen in a person who reads this description of the Prophet?**

- A. Like the Messenger of Allah he would give more importance to his outer cleanliness than his inner cleanliness
- B. His love for the Messenger of Allah would continue and increase
- C. His desire and enthusiasm to see the Messenger of Allah would increase
- D. He would understand that the Messenger of Allah was blessed and fine from a physical aspect also

9. **When the Prophet began to spread the teachings of Islam, he began with those who were close to him. What could be the common reason for those who knew him well, such as Zayd, Abu Bakr, Abu Ubaydah ibn Jarrah, and abu Salama (ra) immediately accepting Islam?**

- A. These people were in search of a new religion and faith
- B. These people were in awe of the Prophet's character even before he became a prophet.
- C. The Prophet was from a noble lineage
- D. These first Muslims suffered great hardship under the oppression of the idolaters.

10. **Which of the following cannot be a reason for why the Prophet began to teach Islam to those close to him?**

- A. Starting from one's relatives would speed up the spread of Islam
- B. The confirmation and support by his relatives would have made it easier for others to accept him
- C. He was sent as a prophet to his relatives first
- D. His relatives knew him better than anyone else

11. Which of the following cannot be a reason for the Prophet teaching Islam in secret for the first three years?
  - A. He wanted to prevent the hypocrites from infiltrating them
  - B. He wanted to ensure that Islam be spread more easily and soundly
  - C. He did not want to put the new Muslims in danger
  - D. He wanted to prevent the idolaters from becoming hostile to the Muslims
  
12. The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "Whoever of you sees an evil, let him try to fix it with his hands, and if he cannot then let him try to fix it with his words, and if he cannot do that then let him pray with his heart. And this is the weakest state of iman" Which principle can we not conclude from these words?
  - A. Spreading Islam is the command of Allah and those who do not want others to teach them about Islam will leave the religion.
  - B. The most acceptable way to prevent evil is by action, then by words and then by prayer and with one's feelings.
  - C. The spreading of Islam is such an important act of worship that it can affect one's level of faith.
  - D. Spreading the teachings of Islam is a form of worship that every person is responsible for in accordance with their capacity
  
13. Which of the following characteristics is not a feature of those described in the hadith as: "those who make His servants beloved to Allah and Allah beloved to His servants"?
  - A. Those who advise and teach the people
  - B. Those who obey the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad
  - C. Those who make much remembrance of Allah
  - D. Those who meet the needs of all of the poor people
  
14. The following is a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad: "I swear by Allah who gave me life that you will either command to good and prevent from evil or Allah will send you a grave punishment. Then you will pray but your prayer will not be accepted" Which conclusion can we not come to from this hadith?
  - A. Those communities who do not command to good and prevent from evil are deserving of divine punishment.
  - B. The acceptance of our prayers is dependent on whether people in our community commit sins.
  - C. Advising to good and preventing from evil is an essential duty of our servanthood.
  - D. Those communities who do not advise to good and prevent from evil are doomed to loss with time.

15. Which of the following was not a method the Messenger of Allah followed in guiding his people from the heedlessness of shirk to the belief in tawhid?
- A. Warning people about the punishment of the hereafter and reminding them of the bounties of Paradise.
  - B. Trying to convince people by insulting their beliefs
  - C. Receiving confirmation about his own trustworthiness by those he was addressing
  - D. Remaining patient and understanding no matter the state of those he was addressing.
16. Consider the following verses from the Qur'an: 'Do people imagine that they will be left to say, 'We have faith,' and will not be tested?' (Al-Ankabat, 29: 2) 'Or did you imagine that you were going to enter the Garden without Allah knowing those among you who had struggled and knowing the steadfast' (Al-i Imran, 3: 142) 'Or did you suppose that you would enter the Garden without facing the same as those who came before you?' (al-Baqara, 2: 214). Which common conclusion can we draw from the above verses?
- A. Nobody can be a believer unless they have passed through great tribulation.
  - B. A person is a good believer to the degree of difficulty of his trials.
  - C. Every community is subject to certain tribulations in accordance with their own state
  - D. In every period, being and remaining a believer has required passing through difficult tribulations.
17. In the Gharaniq incident the idolaters claimed that the revealed verses suggested the intercession of idols. If this claim that Satan whispered these verses to the Messenger of Allah were true then which of the following could not have been possible?
- A. Satan could have done the same with the other verses which would thus not have shown the truth
  - B. The idolaters would have accepted faith due to this verse which was very pleasing to them. They had previously suggested to the Prophet that he accept their idols.
  - C. Allah Most High would have left his prophet in a situation in which he was incapacitated before Satan. The religion would thus not be completed in a sound way.
  - D. Allah Most High would have repeatedly sent a verse for each unbeliever in order to remove any of their doubts.

18. In the second migration to Abyssinia, Ja'far Tayyar said to the Negus: "Isa was the slave of Allah, His Messenger, His Spirit and a Word deposited in the womb of Maryam, who had abandoned everything and given herself to Allah". The Negus took a stick from the ground, drew a line on the ground and said: "I swear by Allah that Isa ibn Maryam is nothing more than what you say about him. There is not even this much difference (indicating the line) between what you say about him and the truth"

**Which of the following conclusions can we not draw from the above paragraph?**

- A. In the principles of its beliefs the religion of Islam is not that different from the distorted religion of Christianity
  - B. Isa is of equal importance as a prophet in both religions.
  - C. The Negus was closer in his beliefs to the original Christianity.
  - D. The Negus discovered that the Divine Light was the source of both the Gospels and the Qur'an.
19. Which of the following was not a reason for the apprehension of the idolaters at the migration of the Muslims to another land?
- A. The possibility that they would spread Islam to those lands that they migrated to
  - B. They would be ousted from the lands they migrated to and would return to Mecca
  - C. They would appear before them with a renewed strength and power
  - D. They would provoke other tribes against the Quraysh

20. Which of the following did not have a positive effect on Umar (ra) coming to accept Islam when he was on his way to murder the Messenger of Allah (saw)?

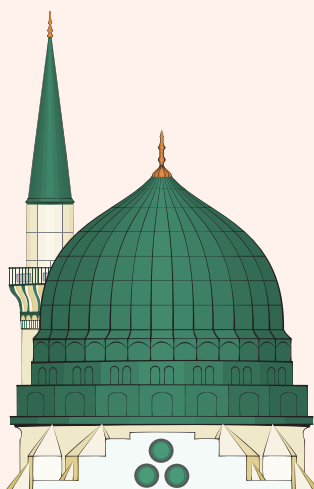
- A. Hamza, in whom the idolaters so trusted, had recently become Muslim
- B. The resolution and sincerity of his sister and her husband
- C. Allah's Messenger prayer that he be guided
- D. The efforts and encouragement of Habbab

لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله





# PART THREE



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**THE SEVENTH AND NINTH YEARS  
OF THE PROPHETHOOD**





## THE SEVENTH AND NINTH YEARS OF THE PROPHETHOOD

### The Idolaters Ostracise the Muslims and Boycott Them

Despite all the obstacles, Islam was growing day by day. This increased the animosity and envy of the idolaters. Those who were unable to tolerate this situation decided to kill the Messenger of Allah (saw) and they made an oath amongst themselves:

“We will definitely kill him be it in secret or in front of everybody.”

When Abu Talib saw that they were determined to carry out this assassination he began to fear for the life of the Prophet. He gathered together the sons of Hashim and the sons of Muttalib and commanded them to stand by the Prophet and protect him against all danger.

Every member of these clans participated except for Abu Lahab who continued to take his place amongst the idolaters in their cruel plan to stop Islam from growing and spreading.

With this aim in mind they gathered under the leadership of Abu Jahl. They decided that they would stop all trade with the sons of Hashim; that they would not marry their daughters and that they would cut all ties with them. Mansur ibn Ikrima wrote out this contract and hung it on the wall of the Ka’bah. The day he wrote it his hand lost all function as a result of the curse that Allah’s Messenger placed upon him. The idolaters began to talk amongst each other:

“Mansur has met with misfortune because we oppressed the sons of Hashim” (Ibn Hisham, I, 372-373; Ibn Sa’d, I, 208-209; Bukhari, Hajj, 45).

And so a period of great deprivation began for the Muslims. Day and night Abu Jahl and his cruel and oppressive men guarded the neighbourhoods of the Muslims and tried to prevent any provisions from being smuggled in. They cut all the roads that led to the Muslims’ houses from the markets and bazaars. They purchased all food that arrived at the markets so that there would be nothing left for the Muslims. The Muslims were only able to leave the neighbourhood of Abu Talib during the season of the pilgrimage. Whenever a believer tried to obtain some food for his family Abu Lahab would immediately arrive and tell them:

“O merchants! Raise your prices so high so that Muhammad’s companions can not buy from you. You know that I am a wealthy man who keeps his promise. As long as you do so I guarantee that you will meet with no loss.”

The Muslims would leave having not found any food for their children who were writhing from hunger. The next morning the merchants would go to Abu Lahab who would purchase their goods at a high price (Suhayli, II, 127-128).

In the face of this difficult situation the Messenger of Allah and his wife Khadijah spent all of their wealth on the Muslims (Ya’qubi, II, 31). However some of the idolaters such as Hakim ibn Hizam, the nephew of Khadijah and Hisham ibn Amr were helping the Muslims in secret. During this period the Muslims tolerated great difficulty and deprivation. Their children writhed with hunger. Their cries could be heard even from outside their neighbourhood.

Hunger had reached such a degree that they were forced to fill their stomachs with leaves from trees. The purpose of the idolaters was to leave the Muslims so hungry that they would surrender themselves to them. In this way they would find an opportunity to murder the Messenger of Allah. However the sons of Hashim, under the leadership of Abu Talib and the other determined Muslims were resolute in their protection of the Messenger of Allah even if it meant sacrificing their own lives.

### **The End of the Boycott**

One day at the end of the third year of the boycott which had brought so much pain, the idolaters saw that the contract they had hung on the wall of the Ka’bah had been eaten away by worms. The worms had eaten away everything except for the word “Bismikallahumma” (I begin in Your name o Allah). News of this came to the Prophet by revelation and he informed his uncle Abu Talib. Abu Talib told his brothers and then said:

“Put on your best clothes and let us go to the Quraysh and tell them about this before they see it for themselves.”

They did as he said and the idolaters sent a man to the Ka’bah to bring back the contract. They found it as described by the Messenger of Allah. The Quraysh were in shock. Taking advantage of their shock Abu Talib said:

“Now you have realised that by cutting all relations with your relatives you have oppressed and caused great harm, have you not?” None of the Quraysh were able to reply. They merely said:

“This is nothing but magic.” They thus turned their backs towards an evident reality and continued in their oppression.

Some of the leading men of the Quraysh however reprimanded each other for their cruel treatment of the sons of Hashim:

“What we have done to our brothers is nothing but tyranny.”

That night Hisham ibn Amr, Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayya, Mut’im ibn Adiyy, Abu al-Bahtari, and Zam’a ibn Aswad gathered together in the Hajun district of Mecca and discussed what was to be done now.

They vowed to have the boycott annulled. In the morning they went to the Haram. Zuhayr made the rounds of the Ka'bah in his finest clothes and cried out:

“O men of Mecca! Is it right that we eat and drink and dress as we please whilst the sons of Hashim and Muttalib are deprived of buying and selling and are slowly being destroyed? I swear by Allah that I will not give up until this tyrannical contract which has broken blood ties is torn up.”

Even though Abu Jahl objected, his four friends supported Zuhayr as they had previously agreed, and the tide suddenly turned positive. Mut'im rose and tore up the contract that was hanging from the wall of the Ka'bah.

Then Adiyy ibn Qays, Zam'a, Abu al-Bahtari and Zuhayr armed themselves and went to the sons of Hashim and Muttalib. They allowed them to leave the neighbourhood of Abu Talib and return to their homes. Thus the Muslims were freed by the grace of Allah from a difficult three year boycott. Abu Talib praised the men who annulled the boycott in a poem. The idolaters realised that they were not going to be able to prevent the Messenger of Allah from spreading the teachings of Islam and they gave up hope (See Ibn Hisham, I, 397-406; Ibn Sa'd, I, 210-211).

These difficulties and troubles were a means to increase the faith of the Muslims and strengthened their ties to each other. As for the unbelievers they met only with loss as always.

### **The Miracle of the Splitting of the Moon**

Allah bestowed upon His prophets extraordinary abilities in order to impress people in their invitation to the true religion and bring them closer to faith. This was to break the obstinacy of those unbelievers who were headstrong in their unbelief. In addition these extraordinary phenomena helped the masses follow the Prophets. Such phenomena are called 'miracles'.

Allah Most High bestowed miracles upon His messengers in a shape and form that would arouse the wonder of the people of the time in which they lived. For instance, magic was common in the time of the Prophet Musa and he was thus given a miracle that was similar to those of the famous magicians of the time but which would silence them. An example of these miracles was that his staff was turning into a large snake and his hand could become radiant with light after removing it from his chest.

In the time of the Prophet Isa, the science of medicine had become well developed and so the physicians of the time had gained great status amongst the people. This is why the Prophet Isa was given certain miracles that would incapacitate even the most skilled of physicians and make them obey him. He was able to cure the ill and bring the dead back to life.

The Prophet Muhammad was sent to all peoples of all times and in every place until the end of time. He was thus in possession of the power and miracles of the previous prophets and took his place over them. His miracles were not merely limited to eloquent and impressive speech and words of wisdom which was the most impressive skill of that time.

And so it was that in the ninth year of the Meccan period the moon was split into two. This event brought great joy to the believers who had suffered under the boycott of the idolaters and was a divine warning to the unbelievers.

On a moonlit night, Allah's Messenger prayed to his Lord and the moon was split into two. One half went to the side of the mountain of Abu Qubays whilst the other went towards the direction of Mount Kuaykian, and thus could be seen from everywhere. Despite having seen this evident miracle with their own eyes, the Quraysh still refused to believe. Abu Jahl even denied this miracle, saying that it was magic. Those idolaters who saw this miracle said: "He has bewitched us, but he cannot bewitch everyone."

They then asked caravans that had arrived from distant places whether they had seen such an event and they informed them that they had (Wahidi, p. 418; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 54).

After this event the following verse was revealed:

**"The Hour has drawn near and the moon has split. If they see a Sign they turn away, saying 'There is no end to this witchcraft!'"** (al-Qamar, 54: 1-2).

All of Mecca were in agreement that the moon had in fact been split into two. However those in whose hearts could be found the light of guidance confirmed the Messenger of Allah whilst those whose hearts were locked said: "What a great magician he is."

Lefrancois de Lalande, the famous French astronomer, studied the past movements of the moon and confirmed that it had in fact split into two.<sup>1</sup>

The event of the splitting of the moon is a great miracle of the Prophet Muhammad. Because he is the Prophet of the end of time, his appearance in this world is also a sign of the end of time. This fact is touched on in the above verse:

**"The Hour has drawn near and the moon has split"** (al-Qamar, 54: 1).



<sup>1</sup> See Zekai Konrapa, pg 110

## THE TENTH YEAR OF THE PROPHETHOOD

### The Year of Sadness: Khadijah (ra) and Abu Talib Passed Away

The happiness of the Messenger of Allah and the Muslims at being freed from the boycott of the idolaters did not last for very long. Immediately after the boycott was lifted, the Prophet's uncle, Abu Talib, who had selflessly protected him and the believers, passed away. From time to time the Prophet would try to persuade him to accept the faith. In the face of this persistence of his nephew his uncle would say:

"I know that what you say is the truth. However if I believe in you, the women of Quraysh will censure me."

Thus his conscience accepted his nephew's prophethood but in succumbing to his inner self, he still could not formally accept it.

Whilst he was on his deathbed, the Messenger of Allah, in his desire to deliver his uncle to his Lord having accepted faith, he said to him:

**"O my uncle! Speak a word so that Allah will bestow on you eternal happiness."**

At that point Abu Jahl arrived and prevented him from doing so by continually reminding him:

"You are of the religion of your forefathers."

Eventually the last words of Abu Talib to the Prophet were the following:

"I am dying on the old religion of Abdulmuttalib (the *hanif* way). If I did not fear that the Quraysh would say about me that I changed my religion because I feared death, I would accept your words" (Bukhari, Janaiz 81, Manaqib al-Ansar 40; Ibn Sa'd, I, 122-123).

The Prophet then said to him:

"And I will continue to ask that Allah forgive you." He then left his uncle's house in sorrow.

After these words of the Prophet the following verse was revealed:

**"(My Messenger) You cannot guide those you would like to but Allah guides those He wills"** (al-Qasas, 28: 56) (Muslim, Iman, 41-42).

Guidance is a light that directs a person to the straight path. Whoever's heart is thirsty for guidance and turns towards Allah, Allah bestows guidance upon them. The Holy Qu'ran states:

**"... Allah guides to Himself all who turn to Him"** (Ra'd, 13: 27).

Thus the efforts of others can only be a means to faith. It is not always possible for a person to accept faith due to the attempts of others, even if they are prophets.



And so despite the efforts of the Prophet, Abu Talib succumbed to his inner self (*nafs*) even though he knew the truth and so guidance was not bestowed upon him.

Not even three days had passed since the death of Abu Talib when the Prophet's wife, Khadijah (ra), his partner in his sorrow, his greatest support, his life companion and the best of women also passed away.

The heart of the Messenger of Allah and the believers thus suffered grief upon grief. It was the Prophet himself who placed his blessed wife, whom he loved dearly, into her grave.

His heart was full of sorrow and his eyes were filled with tears.

Khadijah was for him his loyal helper in the cause of Islam, his lifelong partner and his source of consolation. Her death was so weighty for him that he said:

"I do not know for which of these two trials that this community has suffered, that I should grieve over more" (Ya'qubi, II, 35; Tabari, History, II, 229).

The year in which these two sad events took place is called the 'Year of Sadness'.

With the death of his uncle and his wife, the Prophet was now left with no one to support and protect him.

In this way his heart was directed to Allah. Thus the only refuge to which one should rely upon and submit to is Allah. And was it not so that in his childhood he was deprived of the protection of his mother, father and grandfather and raised and nurtured by Allah?

Khadijah (ra) was a very virtuous woman. The Messenger of Allah (saw) never forgot her for the rest of his life. He displayed the best example of loyalty to her. Aisha (ra) narrates:

"I never envied any of the wives of the Prophet as much as I envied Khadijah. And I had never even seen her. However the Messenger of Allah would remember her always. Whenever a lamb was slaughtered most of the time he would send it to the friends of Khadijah" (Bukhari, Manaqibu al-Ansar 20).

One day Hale bint Khuwaylid asked for permission to enter the presence of Allah. When he heard her voice he remembered his wife Khadijah and said in excitement:

**"O Allah this is Hale bint Khuwaylid (Khadijah's sister)."**

Seeing this Aisha could not bear it and she said:

**"Why do you continue to remember an old woman from the Quraysh whose teeth have fallen out and who passed away a long time ago. Allah has given you something better in her place"** (Bukhari, Manaqibu al-Ansar, 20).

Of course Aisha meant herself. The Prophet did not find her words appropriate and he replied:

**"Allah the Most High did not give me anything better than her. When the people denied me she believed in me. When every one said that I was a liar she accepted my words. When nobody would give me anything, she supported me with her wealth and it was through her that Allah bestowed children upon me."** (Ahmad, VI, 118)

### The Journey to Taif

After the death of his uncle and wife, the persecution of the Prophet increased. The treacherous attacks upon him were now so savage and brutal that they began to test the patience of the Prophet. Upon this, the Messenger of Allah took Zaid with him and went to the city of Taif, approximately 120 km away from Mecca.

He stayed there for ten days and began to teach the people there about Islam. He invited them to believe in the oneness of Allah and met with the leading men of Taif in an attempt to discourage them from worshipping their idols and begin to worship the One and Only Allah.

There remained not a notable man of Taif to whom he did not meet with. However this invitation of his caused a fearsome storm amongst the tribe of Taif who were an idol-worshipping people like the Quraysh.

Because they lived under the yoke of their *nafs* not one of them accepted the faith. What is more, they intimidated and persecuted the Prophet. First they mocked him and then they began to insult him. After that they lined their slaves up along the road along which he passed and had them stone him.

This torture and persecution continued until the Prophet eventually left the city. Not being able to overcome their rage they sent their slaves after him to continue to stone him as he left. The blessed feet of the Prophet were bloodied and his shoes became filled with blood.

His loyal Companion, Zaid, who used his own body as a shield against the stones that were directed at the Prophet, shouted out to them:

“O people of Taif! Do you not know that this man that you stone is a Prophet of Allah?”

The Prophet and Zayd finally managed to reach a garden owned by a Meccan and took refuge under a date-palm tree.

The heavens and the earth were filled with sorrow. The angels, including Gabriel, Mikhail, Israfil, and Azrail were also filled with sorrow. With Gabriel at their head, the angels went to the Prophet, after obtaining permission from Allah, and told him:

“O Messenger of Allah! Just give us one command and we will destroy these people.”

However that source of compassion and that the Prophet of mercy did not so much as even curse them but raised his hands to the heavens and prayed to his Lord:

**"O Allah! It is to You that I complain of my weakness, my helplessness and my lowliness before men. O Most Merciful of the merciful! If You are not angry with me, then I do not care about the torment and persecution that I face. O my Lord! Guide your people for they do not know. O my Lord! I beg for forgiveness from You until You are pleased with me"** (Ibn Hisham, II, 29-30; Haythami, VI, 35; Bukhari, Bad' al-Khalk, 7).

The owner of the garden in which the Messenger of Allah took refuge belonged to the sons of Rabi'a' and they took pity on him and sent their slave Addas to him with a bowl of grapes. Addas handed the plate to the Prophet and said:

“Please, eat.”

The Prophet said 'Bismillah' and began to eat. This caught the attention of Addas who had never heard such a word uttered by anyone before. Curiously and in wonder he murmured:

"The people of this land do not know nor do they utter this word" Again he said:

"You are not like the people of this land. Who are you?"

The Messenger of Allah asked him:

**"Where are you from and what religion do you follow?"**

Addas replied:

"I am from Nineveh, I am a Christian."

The Prophet then said:

**"So you are from the city of the righteous man of Nineveh, Jonah the son of Matta?"**

Addas asked in wonder: "How do you know of Jonah?"

The Prophet replied:

**"Jonah is my brother. He was a prophet and I am a prophet."**

Hearing these words Addas's heart was overawed and he bent down and kissed the feet of the Prophet and made the declaration of faith right there and then (Ibn Hisham II, 30; Ya'qubi, II, 36).

How happy for Addas that he came to believe in the Prophet at the most difficult time of his life and became honoured as one of the believers who consoled the Prophet of Allah.

The Prophet was so happy that Addas (ra) became a Muslim that he almost forgot all of the pain that he had just endured.

The journey to Taif has many lessons for us:

1. The journey to Taif demonstrates the great importance of spreading the teachings of Islam. The year of that journey was the same year that the Prophet had lost his uncle and his wife, however he continued to carry out his duty with patience and perseverance.

2. Even though the people of Taif stoned him, the Prophet did not curse them. This demonstrates the deep compassion of the Messenger of Allah and is an indication of the degree of mercy that other Muslims should have towards the people they are addressing.

3. The Prophet did not fall into despair in the face of all of the persecution and oppression that he faced but rather prayed for those people to be guided. Thus we Muslims should continue to pray for the guidance of people and never lose hope.

4. In his most distressing hour, the Messenger of Allah found consolation when Addas (ra) became Muslim. Thus even if after all our efforts we do not achieve all of our aims we can console ourselves with the guidance of even one person.

5. A Muslim should follow the example of the Messenger of Allah in his patience, his reliance upon Allah, his determination and his continual hope and with his good character he should be an example to those around him.

6. A Muslim should know the methods of effective communication with people and should be knowledgeable and well-educated. He should know well how to speak to a person, who to speak to, where to do so and what to say.

### **The *jinn* Listen to the Prophet Reciting Qur'an and Accept Faith**

On his return from Taif, the Messenger of Allah began to recite from the Qur'an in the place where he spent the night and whilst he was doing so a group of the *jinn* began to listen to him. They all perceived the truth of his words and believed in him and then returned to their communities to spread his teachings (Ibn Sa'd, I, 212). They said to them:

"O *jinn*! We have heard a beautiful recitation (the Qur'an) which guides us to the straight path and we have believed in it. We will no longer associate any partners with Allah." Allah Most High then revealed the chapter *Jinn* to the Messenger of Allah:

**"Say: 'It has been revealed to me that a band of the jinn listened and said, "We have heard a most amazing Recitation. It leads to right guidance so we have faith in it and will not associate anyone with our Lord" (Jinn, 72: 1-2); (Bukhari, Tafsir, 72, Adhan, 105; Muslim, Salat, 149).**

Allah mentions this event in the chapter al-Ahqaf (al-Ahqaf, 46: 29-32).

According to the customs of the Arabs, since the Messenger of Allah left Mecca to emigrate to Taif he was only allowed to return to Mecca under the protection of a Meccan. This is why on his return to Mecca when he arrived at the mountain of Hira from Nakhlah, he sent a man he encountered there to Akhnas ibn Shariq first of all, and then to Suhayl ibn Amr and Mut'im ibn Adiyy. His message was as follows: "Muhammad asks whether you will protect him so that he can carry out his duty of delivering the message of his Lord?"

The first two men did not agree but Mut'im's reply was positive.

The Prophet spent that night in the house of Mut'im and the next morning Mut'im together with his sons made the following announcement to his clan:

"Arm yourselves and go to the Ka'bah." When they arrived at the Ka'bah he turned to his clan and called out to them:

"O people of Quraysh! I give protection to Muhammad. Let no man touch him from now."

The Messenger of Allah (saw) then circumambulated the Ka'bah and performed two cycles of prayer and returned home and all the while Mut'im and his sons protected him (Ibn Sa'd, I, 212; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 182).

Years later at the battle of Badr, Mut'im fought against the Muslims and was killed and thus passed away without having become Muslim. When they were discussing what was to be done with the enemy slaves, the Messenger of Allah, in a show of loyalty to Mut'im, told his son Jubayr:

"If Mut'im were alive and he asked me to free all of the slaves I would have done so without taking any ransom" (Bukhari, Humus, 16; Ibn Hisham, I, 404-406).

What a display of great character is this loyalty to a pagan who helped him when he was trying to spread his message.



## THE ELEVENTH YEAR OF THE PROPHETHOOD

### The Pledge of Aqaba

One night a group of men from Medina came to visit the Ka'bah and there they encountered the Messenger of Allah at a place called Aqabah. They looked at his radiant face and whispered amongst each other:

"What a beautiful man." They felt a sense of delight that they found hard to describe. Seeds of love for the Prophet began to grow within them. At that point the Prophet, in accordance with the requirements of his prophethood, approached them and invited them to Islam:

"Will you not sit a while and we can talk?"

This most fortunate group of six men from Medina were very happy to be able to speak with such an individual who had left them in awe.

They immediately surrounded him like moths are drawn to the light.

Allah's Messenger recited to them certain verses from the Qur'an. He told them that if they wanted to be happy in both this world and the next they had to accept this invitation to faith.

These Medinans had heard from their forefathers and from their Jewish neighbours that the coming of a prophet was near. When they heard the invitation of the Prophet they said to each other:

"Friends! By Allah this man is the Prophet that the Jews spoke of! Let not the Jews believe in him before we do."

They looked once more at the radiant face of the Prophet in admiration and awe and having realised that what he spoke was the truth they accepted his invitation. All together they made their declaration of faith:

"I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger."

Meanwhile Allah's Messenger was seeking a land in which the Muslims could escape the tyranny of the Quraysh and live in peace and safety. Thus he asked these men whether they would offer their aid if he and the Meccan Muslims migrated to their city.

These first Muslims of Medina told the Prophet that their people were subject to an ongoing conflict between the two tribes of Aws and Khazraj and that the enmity between them had reached its peak.

They told the Prophet that if they were to migrate to Medina that year, they would not be available to help them and so they asked for a period of one year. They promised that they would

invite their fellow Medinans to Islam and that they would return next year during the season of the pilgrimage.

This small group of believers returned to their city in peace and bliss. They felt free as birds having been cleansed of the dirt of ignorance and having the weightiness of their problems lifted from them.

When they arrived back in Medina they began to tell the people there about the Prophet and invite them to Islam. Due to their efforts there remained not one house in Medina which was not talking about the Prophet Muhammad (saw). (See Ibn Hisham, II 38; Ibn Sa'd, I, 219; Haythami, VI, 40)

### **The *Miraj*: The Supreme Gift of Almighty Allah to His Beloved**

The event of the *Isra* took place eight months before the migration to Medina. This favour from Allah, which is known as the *Isra wa'l Mi'raj*, was a bounty that took place under divine observation and was beyond all perception and veils of the human being.

During the *Mi'raj* (which means Ascension) all human concepts of time and place were absent. This was a long journey that took place in less than a second but during which was encountered an endless number of scenes that would not have fit into millions of human life spans.

Allah Most High states:

**"Glory be to Him who took His slave on a journey by night from the Masjid al-Haram to the Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, in order to show him some of Our Signs. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing"** (al-Isra, 17: 1).

The reason that the verse starts by absolving Allah of all faults and defects is due to the extraordinary events that took place on the night of the Ascension which are be difficult for the human mind to comprehend. With this word Almighty Allah has exonerated Himself from the claims of those who find the *Mi'raj* impossible to believe in, of all deficiencies such as powerlessness and incapacity.

The word *isra* means night journey. During this journey the Prophet Muhammad was taken from the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca to the Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem and from there he was raised to the heavens.

Allah's Messenger went to the Masjid al-Aqsa and under the guidance of the angel Gabriel he was lifted higher and higher until he reached the *Sidra al Muntaha* (The Lote Tree of the Farthest Boundary).

The Prophet Muhammad later related this event:

**"I was in the hatim of the Ka'bah half awake and half asleep when a white mount was brought to me, larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule. This was Buraq. The animal's step was so wide that it was able to reach the farthest point that its eye could see.**

**I was mounted upon it and this is how Gabriel took me on the journey. We came to the lowest heaven of the (earthly) sky. Gabriel asked that the gate be opened. It was asked of him:**

**"Who is it?" He replied:**



"It is Gabriel."

"And who is with you?"

"Muhammad (saw)."

"Has an invitation to the mir'aj been sent to him?"

"Yes."

"Welcome to him. What a beautiful coming is this coming?" And the gate was opened.

When I entered the gate I saw the Prophet Adam. They said:

"This is your father Adam. Greet him." I greeted him with the greeting of peace (salam) and he returned my greeting. Then they said to me:

"Welcome righteous son, welcome righteous prophet."

Then Gabriel lifted me up a little more and we reached the second heaven. There I met the Prophets Yahya and Isa. They were cousins.

Then Gabriel raised me up to the third heaven where I met the Prophet Yusuf. At the fourth heaven I met with the Prophet Idris and at the fifth heaven I met with the Prophet Harun and at the sixth heaven I met with the Prophet Musa. He said to me:

"Welcome righteous brother, welcome righteous prophet."

When I passed him he began to cry. They asked him:

"Why are you crying?" He replied:

"After me a young man became a prophet. The members of his community to enter heaven will be much greater in number than those of my community" (This was not due to any envy on the part of the Prophet Musa. On the contrary he was saddened that his own people were so few in number compared to that of the community of Muhammad).

Then Gabriel lifted me up to the seventh heaven and there I met the Prophet Ibrahim.

Gabriel said to me:

"This is your father Ibrahim, so greet him."

I greeted him and he returned my greeting. Then he said:

"Welcome my righteous son, welcome righteous Prophet."

Then he said:

"O Muhammad! Take my greetings of peace to your community and tell them that the lands of Paradise are beautiful, its water is sweet and its terrain is wide and flat. Tell them to plant many trees in Paradise. The trees of Paradise are planted with the seeds of: "SubhanAllahi wa'l hamdu lillahi wa la ilaha illallahu wallahu akbar" (Glory be to Allah and Praise be to Allah. There is no god but Allah and Allah is the Greatest).

Then I was raised to the sidra al-muntaha (the Lote tree of the farthest boundary). Here the fruit were very large, like the stone urns (of Yemen) and the leaves were like the ears of elephants. Gabriel said to me:

"This here is *sidra al-muntaha*." There were four rivers here: two hidden and two apparent (*batini* and *zahiri*).

I asked Gabriel:

"What are they o Gabriel?"

He replied:

"These two hidden rivers are the rivers of Paradise. One of the two apparent rivers is the Nile and the other is the Euphrates" (Bukhari, *Bad al-Khalk*, 6; *Anbiya*, 22, 43; *Manaqibu al-Ansar*, 42; Muslim, *Iman*, 264; *Tirmidhi*, *Tafsir* 94, *Dawa* 58; *Nasai*, *Salat*, 1; *Ahmad*, V, 418).

At the *sidra al-muntaha* Gabriel said to me:

"O Messenger of Allah! From here only you can pass." I asked him:

"Why O Gabriel?"

He replied:

"Allah has only given me permission to come up to this point. If I go one step beyond I will burn and be turned to ashes" (Razi, XXVIII, 251).

From that point on the Messenger of Allah was to journey alone. During his journey he was favoured with some extraordinary manifestations of Allah's power. He was honoured with seeing the beauty of Allah.

It is difficult to properly express the extraordinary phenomena that took place during this journey as it is beyond one's imagination and beyond human perception. The truth of this event and its true nature is (and will remain) an eternal secret and mystery between Allah and His Beloved. Moreover Allah Most High willed that the sorrow in the heart of the Prophet due to the cruelty and harshness he was subject to at Taif be replaced with joy.

In short, the Prophet was subject to a unique divine favour which surpassed all other divine favours bestowed upon all of the other prophets.

In describing his closeness to Allah the Holy Qur'an states:

"He was two bow-lengths away or even closer" (al-Najm, 53:9).

If we recall that despite being one of the *ulu al-azm*<sup>2</sup> prophets, the Prophet Musa fell down and fainted when he witnessed a mere glimmer of this manifestation, then we can better comprehend how valued he was in the sight of Allah and the degree of authority and power that was bestowed upon him personally.

The poet Kemal Edip Kurkcuoglu has expressed well the excitement and enthusiasm of the heavens when the Prophet was raised in his ascension:

*When the heavens observed the radiant face of the Prophet on the night of the Ascension, they fell down in prostration due to their gratitude.*

Allah speaks of the Mi'raj in the Qur'an:

2 A prophet of the highest degree

**"By the star when it descends, your companion is not misguided or misled; nor does he speak from whim. taught him by one immensely strong, possessing power and splendour. He stood there stationary there on the highest horizon. Then he drew near and hung suspended."**

(al-Najm, 53: 1-8)

Thus the Prophet was drawn up to the heavens due to divine attraction. He was then raised up to a place and station even higher than where he was. Thus he did not remain level with the highest horizon but headed ever closer towards Allah.

Then the attraction towards the divine increased and increased until he had passed in an instant the highest heaven.

**"He was two bow-lengths away or even closer"** (al-Najm, 53: 9).

The expression 'two bow-lengths away or even closer' [*qab'a qawsayn*] is an analogy to express a reality that exceeds all human understanding and that cannot be comprehended by human perception.

"*Qab'a qawsayn*" indicates both physical and spiritual closeness. That is, the Prophet Muhammad had come so close to his Lord that all causes were suspended and he became subject to direct revelation:

**"Then He revealed to His slave what He revealed"** (al-Najm, 53: 10)

What Allah Most High revealed at that point included the following:

1. *Salat*: One of the most important features of the Mi'raj is that praying five times a day became obligatory upon the Muslims. Upon the advice of the Prophet Musa, the Messenger of Allah asked Allah to reduce the number of times of prayer to five, after He had originally commanded prayer to be carried out fifty times a day. One who prays five times a day is rewarded as if he prayed fifty times a day.

Those believers who are devoted to Allah pray other extra prayers in addition to this compulsory five, such as *duha* (mid or late morning prayer), *ishraq* (prayer after sunrise), *awwabin* (prayer of the repentant) and *tahajjud* (the night prayer) in particular.

2. The last two verses of the chapter Baqara were revealed. In a hadith transmitted by Muslim it is said:

"The Messenger of Allah was given three things on the Mi'raj: Prayer five times a day, the last part of chapter Baqara and the good news that for those believers from his community who do not fall into *shirk* all of their major sins will be forgiven" (Muslim, Iman, 279).

Nevertheless the details and true nature of the revelation given to the Prophet on the night of the Mi'raj is only known by Allah and His Messenger.

On this night Allah's Messenger met with his Lord and witnessed a countless number of His manifestations and other cautionary and instructive events. On his return from that singular and unique place the Prophet encountered Gabriel once more in his true form at the *sidra al-muntaha*.

The Holy Qur'an states:

**"He saw him again another time by the Lote-tree of the Final Limit, beside which is the Garden of Refuge, when that which covered the Lote-tree covered it"** (al-Najm, 53: 13-16)

The Prophet Muhammad was once asked:

“O Messenger What did you see the *sidra* covered with?”

He replied:

**"I saw wings of gold covering it and an angel sitting on each wing glorifying Allah"** (Tabari, XXVII, 75; Muslim, Iman, 279)

During this reunion with his Beloved the Prophet experienced such elevated and great truths that cannot be described with words.

He was subject to many great manifestations of the magnificence of his Lord's kingdom and dominion. Here the testimony of the exegetes (commentators on the Qur'an) is that the Prophet saw Allah with the eye of his heart (Tabari, XXVII, 63).

According to a narration by Ibn Abbas (ra) the Prophet Muhammad said:

**"I saw my Most Exalted Lord"** (Ahmad, I, 285; Haythami, I, 78). In another narration the Prophet Muhammad replied to the question "Did you see your Lord?" in the following way:

**"I saw a light"** (Muslim, Iman, 292). And only Allah knows the truth.

We can use the Mi'raj to touch on the following truth: in terms of time, human beings are only able to observe and be affected by the past, however the Prophets have been given information about the past, the present and the future as much as Allah so wills.

On the night of the Mi'raj the Prophet was freed from the dimensions of the past, the present and the future and observed certain events related to the future that were full of warning and he transmitted these using the past tense, as if they had already happened.

He is reported to have said:

**"On the night of Isra and Mi'raj, I passed by some people whose lips were being cut by scissors made of fire. I asked Gabriel:**

**"O Gabriel. Who are they?" He replied:**

**"They are certain preachers from your community. Even though they continued to recite the Book of Allah they commanded other people to good but forget themselves. Will they not yet see reason?"** (Ahmad, III, 231, 120, 180, 239; Bayhaqi, Shuab, II, 283).

Abu Hurairah narrates: The Messenger of Allah said: **"On the night of Mi'raj I encountered a people whose stomachs were as large as houses. Their stomachs were full of snakes and these snakes could be seen from the outside. I asked Gabriel:**

**"O Gabriel. Who are they?" and he replied:**

**"These are the ones who consumed usury"** (Ibn Majah, Tijarah, 58/2273).

On the night of the Mi'raj the Messenger of Allah saw many signs too numerous to enumerate.

He is reported to have said:

**"(That night) I was raised to the heavens. I reached such a station that I heard the scribbling of (the) pens"** (Bukhari, Salat, 1).

The Messenger of Allah was raised to such a station and level that he was able to hear the sounds of the pen that wrote down the fate of the universe and he became well-informed of certain truths beyond our perception.

From the above hadiths it is obvious that on the night of the Mi'raj the Messenger of Allah experienced the past, the present and the future all at the same time.

### **Some Lessons to be Learnt from the Mir'aj**

1. The Isra and Mi'raj demonstrates for all eyes to see the endless power and dominion of Allah who allowed his servant this unique journey.
2. Because it took place after the journey to Taif, which was filled with pain, torment and suffering, it is a herald of glad tidings of the happiness that is promised after difficulty.
3. The obligatory acts of worship in the Qur'an were all revealed through the angel Gabriel. Salat (the obligatory prayer), however was commanded directly and personally by Allah on the night of Mi'raj. This shows the singular and distinguished mystery that is to be found in salat and its unique, special and important place compared to the other acts of worship.
4. The event of the Mi'raj is an indication of the level of perfection that the human being can reach with the freeing of one's heart from darkness and opening it towards the divine. That is, it shows us the limits which reach to eternity that the human being can attain in their spiritual growth.

### **Reflections of the Mi'raj**

When it was time to inform the Quraysh about the event of Isra and Mi'raj, the Prophet Muhammad became anxious and said:

**"O Gabriel, my people will not believe in me."**

Gabriel replied:

"Abu Bakr will believe in you. He is *al-siddiq* (the truthful one) (Ibn Sa'd, I, 215).

As soon as the Quraysh heard about this event they began to deny it. Some of them even took this opportunity to instil doubts and misgivings into the hearts of the believers and make them abandon their faith. They went to Abu Bakr who in a display of his faith and loyalty to the Prophet said:

"Whatever he speaks is the truth. There is no possibility of him speaking a lie. I believe in advance in whatever he brings."

The Quraysh asked him:

"Do you confirm what he says, and believe that he went to and returned from Bayt al-Maqdis in one night?"

Abu Bakr replied:

“Yes and what is suprising about this? I swear by Allah that he tells me that he receives revelation from Allah any time of the day or night and I believe him.”

Later Abu Bakr (ra) went to the Prophet who was sitting in the Ka’bah and listened to the events that took place on that night and said:

“This is the truth o Messenger of Allah.”

Allah’s Messenger was very happy with his affirmation and smiled in such a way that his smile lit up the world. He said to Abu Bakr (ra):

**"O Abu Bakr, you are ‘siddiq" (you possess great loyalty)"** (Ibn Hisham, II, 5).

From that day on Abu Bakr (ra) became known by the title ‘*al-Siddiq*’.

Like Abu Bakr the Companions also confirmed the truth of what the Messenger of Allah said about the Mi’raj.

Unable to mislead the believers, the Quraysh went to the Prophet and attempted to test him. They asked him questions about Bayt al-Maqdis. Allah brought an image of it to the eyes of the Messenger of Allah and he was able to answer questions about it, seeing it as if it was right before his eyes (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 41; Tafsir, 17/3; Muslim, Iman, 276).

The surprise of the Quraysh increased with every correct and detailed answer given by the Prophet. This time they asked about certain features of a caravan that was journeying from there. An image of the caravan was brought to his eyes and he gave them more information than they asked for. In fact he told them that the caravan would enter Mecca the next day at sunrise.

The Quraysh were in shock and hoping that his last statement would prove to be false they did not sleep until dawn and began to await the arrival of the caravan.

Eventually it arrived but the Quraysh still persisted in their obstinance and their hearts remain sealed and they said:

“This is pure magic” (Ibn Hisham, II, 10).

Just as before, those poor and miserable idolaters refused to believe in this event and they continued to mock the Messenger of Allah. This unchanging attitude meant that they had completely failed to appreciate the bounty of Allah’s Messenger being amongst them.

And so the time had come for this great bounty that was bestowed upon the Meccans, but which they failed to appreciate, to be taken away.





## THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH YEAR OF THE PROPHETHOOD

### The First Pledge of Aqabah

The six men from Medina who had come to Mecca and met with the Messenger of Allah at Aqaba and subsequently believed in him returned to Mecca the next year with six more men. Their meeting with the Messenger of Allah took place once more at Aqaba. The new men to arrive had listened to much praise of the beauty and goodness of the Prophet. When he invited them to believe in the oneness of Allah they accepted immediately.

The difference between what happened this year at Aqaba to the previous year was that these believers from Medina made a pledge with the Messenger of Allah. They took the hand of Allah's Messenger and promised their first pledge to him. Because the pledge made at this second meeting at Aqaba was the first one, it is called the 'First Pledge of Aqaba'.

In this pledge the Medinans made the following promises to the Messenger of Allah:

1. They would not associate any partners with Allah;
2. They would not steal;
3. They would not commit adultery;
4. They would not bury their newborn daughters alive;
5. They would not slander another;
6. They would continue to obey Allah and His Prophet (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 43).

This first pledge of the Medinans was a turning point in the history of Islam. With it a common oath was made to curtail the shirk, oppression and other vices that had become so widespread throughout the Hijaz and all of Arabia.

### The Qur'an's Conquest of Medina

The new Muslims of Medina wrote a letter to the Messenger of Allah in which they requested that he send them a guide to teach them the Qur'an and Islam and how to perform the prayer. The Prophet sent them Mus'ab ibn Umayr (ra) (Ibn Sa'd, I, 220). He also sent Abdullah ibn Umri Maktum, one of the first believers, to teach the Qur'an (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar 46).

Mus'ab ibn Umayr (ra) was very young when he became Muslim.

Even though his family severely tortured him and deprived him of his family heritage he refused to turn back from his religion. Mus'ab had left a wealthy lifestyle to lead a poor and out-

cast life but he possessed wealth of the heart that was filled with faith, love and ecstasy. Ali (ra) explains the situation he was in as follows:

"We were once sitting with the Messenger of Allah (saw) in the Masjid al-Nabawi. Mus'ab entered with a very old coat which was patched with pieces of fur. When Allah's Messenger saw him and remembered how he had previously lived in bounty he began to weep at his state now. Then he said to those around him:

**"How will you be when one of you wears a different dress in the morning and in the afternoon, and when your plate is removed and replaced with another and when you cover your houses with pretty covers like that which covers the Ka'bah?"**

"O Messenger of Allah! Of course our state that day will be better than our state now. Because then we will not have to worry so much about our livelihood and give ourselves completely to worship"

Allah's Messenger responded to their words as follows:

**"On the contrary, you are in a better state now than on that day."** (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 35)

Mus'ab was a shining example in his enthusiasm to spread the message of Islam. This young Companion worked day and night in order to teach the religion of Allah to the people. When he went to Medina, Islam spread there rapidly. The first person to become Muslim through Mus'ab was As'ad ibn Zurarah (ra) and he would host him at his house and help him in all his efforts.

One day As'ab ibn Zurarah and Mus'ab went together to the well in the garden of the sons of Zafar and sat there for a while. When one of the leading men of the sons of Abdul Ashhal, Sa'd ibn Muadh, heard this he told Usayd ibn Hudayr:

"You are a wise man who is in need of no-one. Go to those two men who have come here to ruin the beliefs of our weak people and warn them never to come to our neighbourhood again. If As'ad were not my kin I would do this myself."

Grabbing his lance, Usayd immediately approached them and said angrily:

"Why have you come here? Have you come together with that foreigner next to you, to destroy the beliefs of our weak people? Never attempt to do such a thing again. If you value your lives leave here immediately."

Mus'ab, who was full of discernment and foresight, said to him:

"Will you not sit with us and listen to what we have to say? You are an intelligent man. If you like what I have to say you can accept it, if you do not then you do not have to accept."

Usayd replied:

"You have spoken a fair word." He then speared his lance into the ground and sat down next to them. Mus'ab told him about Islam and recited the Qur'an to him.

When he heard the recitation of the Qur'an the light of Islam began to shine in his face even before he spoke and his heart softened towards it. He said:

"How beautiful and grand are these words. What do you do if you wish to enter this religion of yours?"

Usayd then rose and purified himself with the major ritual ablution as described to him by Mus'ab. He cleaned his robe and made the declaration of faith. Then he went back and sent Sa'd ibn Muadh to them and Sa'd became Muslim in the same way (Ibn Hisham, II, 43-46; Ibn Sa'd, III, 604-605).

When the Messenger of Allah heard of this great welcome of Islam in Medina and how so many people were becoming Muslim he and the Meccan Muslims were overjoyed and labelled this year 'the year of happiness'. Medina was on the verge of becoming the cradle of Islam. The Prophet alluded to this truth in the following hadith:

**"Countries are conquered by the sword, however Medina was conquered by the Qur'an"**

(Bazzar, Musnad, no: 1180; Rudani, no: 3774)

### **The Second Pledge of Aqaba**

A year after the first pledge at Aqaba, in the thirteenth year of the Prophethood, the people of Medina once again met with the Prophet during the season of Hajj.

This time they numbered seventy five people including two women.

These Medinans also made their pledge with the Messenger of Allah and this pledge was called the 'Second Pledge of Aqaba.'

At the head of this group of people was Mus'ab and before he went to his house he stopped by the Messenger of Allah to inform him that the Medinans were accepting Islam at a rapid rate. The Messenger of Allah was jubilant at this news.

When his mother, who was yet an idolater, heard that Mus'ab went to see the Messenger of Allah before coming to see her she was greatly incensed. After asking for permission from the Prophet, Mus'ab went to his mother and invited her to accept Islam. To those who rebuked him for this act of his, he replied:

"I would not go to any other before the Messenger of Allah. Whilst he is alive I would not give priority to any other person" (Ibn Sa'd, III, 119). Such was the love that the Companions felt for their Prophet.

The Medinan Muslims had come to Mecca in order to save the Messenger of Allah and their believing brothers and sisters from their life of pain and torment. They agreed to meet with the Prophet in secret on the Days of *Tashriq*<sup>3</sup> in the region of Aqaba. As a precaution the Messenger of Allah said to the Medinans:

**"Do not wake those who are asleep and do not wait for anyone who does not arrive at our meeting place on time."**

When one third of the night had passed they began to arrive at Aqaba to wait for the Prophet as agreed. Eventually the Messenger of Allah arrived with his uncle Abbas. Abbas was not yet a Muslim but after the death of Abu Talib he had taken it upon himself to protect his nephew. The Medinans had come to invite the Messenger of Allah and the Muslims to migrate to their city. Upon hearing this Abbas said:

3 The Days of *Tashriq* are the second, third and fourth days of the *Eid al-adha* (The feast of sacrifice)

“O people of Medina! We have protected him from his enemies until this day and we will continue to do so. His standing amongst us is great. However out of your love and respect for him you are inviting him to Medina so that he can be safer. And he is also of this inclination. However, only if you can protect him from his enemies should you take him to your city. I ask from you a clear promise that you will not leave him without aid and that you will not desert him. Your neighbours, the Jews, are enemies of my nephew. I cannot be sure that they will not try to trap him. Only undertake this mission if you have enough power to resist the hostility of the other Arab tribes. Consult amongst yourselves carefully so that you do not come to disagreements later. If you do not have confidence in yourselves, and if after you take him, you later fail to help him out of fear and leave him in the hands of his enemies, then abandon this mission. If there is any man amongst you who wishes to speak, let him do so but let him keep it short. The idolaters have eyes and spies all around us. And when we leave this place keep this matter secret.”

As'ad ibn Zurarah rose and made the following speech in reply to the misgivings of Abbas:

“O Messenger of Allah! You have invited us to abandon the religion that we believed in previously and follow your own religion. Although this was a difficult and weighty task we accepted your offer. You told us to cut our relations with all of our pagan relatives, near and far, and our pagan neighbours, and even though this was difficult and weighty upon us, we obliged. We are aware that we have taken it upon ourselves to protect a man whose death is desired not only by his own people but by his own uncle. Despite this we have accepted your offer.

O Messenger of Allah! We will protect and preserve you just as we protect and preserve ourselves, our sons and our women. If we break this covenant of ours let us be more miserable than those who break their covenant with Allah. O Messenger of Allah! This is our oath of loyalty to you. The only One to seek help from is Allah Most High!”

After As'ad (ra) spoke Abdullah ibn Rawahah (ra) rose and addressed the Messenger of Allah:

“O Messenger of Allah! You may lay down whatever condition you or your Lord wills.” The Prophet then spoke:

**"My condition for my Lord is that you worship Him and do not associate any partners with Him. My own condition is that you protect me with your lives and your wealth just as you do your own selves"**

These blessed Companions from Medina then asked the following question:

“And if we do so what reward is there for us?”

The Prophet replied:

**"There is Paradise."**

The Medinans said:

“What a profitable trade. We will never turn back from it neither would we want it to be turned back from” (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, II, 406).

In later years Abdullah ibn Rawahah (ra) was to complete this profitable trade at the Battle of Mut'ah. He was informed by the Prophet that he would become a martyr and he took part in the

battle with great enthusiasm knowing full well that he would be killed. He gave his wealth to the *Bayt al Mal* and his life to Allah and was raised to the highest of heavens.

The other Companions continued in their struggle in the way of Allah in various places and remained true to their pledge, thus multiplying their spiritual trade. The following verses were revealed in regard to this pledge made by the Muslims of Medina:

**"Allah has bought from the believers their selves and their wealth in return for the Garden. They fight in the Way of Allah and they kill and are killed. It is a promise binding on Him..."** (al-Tawba, 9: 111).

Two more men gave speeches and then the Prophet addressed the Medinans. He recited some verses to them from the Holy Qur'an and taught them about Islam. He then informed them of the conditions of the pledge that they would make. In addition to the articles he counted previously he also mentioned the following:

1. To obey the ruler and the commander whoever he happens to be from amongst the believers
2. To continue in the path of Allah even though the idolaters and deniers may reproach them.
3. To obey the Messenger of Allah in times of both ease and hardship. To place him above their own selves and not disobey him in any manner.

The Prophet then told them:

"Select twelve representatives from amongst yourselves to represent each clan.

The Medinan Muslims then selected twelve representatives, nine from the clan of Khazraj and three from the tribe of Aws.

Then under the shade of a tree, Abbas made each of the Muslims take the hand of the Prophet and pledge their oaths to them. In this way the migration to Medina was decided upon (See Ibn Hisham II, 47-57; Ibn Sa'd, I, 221-223; III, 602-603; Ahmad, III, 322, 461, 462; Haythami, VI, 42-44).

In reality the pledge of Aqaba was not merely a pledge made by these twelve or seventy five people. It was a covenant made with Allah by all the Muslims. We as Muslims today must follow this covenant just as those believers who took the hand and made their promise to the Prophet that day. Just as Mus'ab laid down the foundations of Islam in Medina, we too should lay down the foundations of Islam in the hearts. Our hearts should be filled with love for the Messenger of Allah and like Mus'ab ibn Umayr (ra) we should allow the stream of faith to flow to thirsty hearts in search of the truth.

### **An Analysis of the Meccan period**

The following five points are a summary of the acts of persecution of the Meccans towards the Muslims in the thirteen year Meccan period:

1. The Muslims were continually mocked and ridiculed and others were also encouraged to mock them.
2. The Muslims were insulted at each opportunity with nasty words and behaviour.

3. The Muslims were tortured and tormented in all manner of ways.

4. When the Meccans were unable to overcome the Muslims they cut all trade and social dealings with them.

5. When none of these showed results they resorted to violence, and even murder, in order to force the Muslims to leave their homes and their land.

Allah informs us of their state as follows:

**"Those who did evil used to laugh at those who had faith. When they passed by them, they would wink at one another. When they returned to their families, they would make a joke of them. When they saw them, they would say, 'Those people are misguided.'" (al-Mutaffifin, 83: 29-32).**

In response to these acts of the idolaters Allah's Messenger adopted the following method after being informed by his Lord through revelation on how to act towards them:

1. He tried to keep the spark of faith alive in the hearts of the believers and encourage them and raise their spirits.

2. He supported the believers in their times of hardship and pain by being a model of patience, forbearance and hopefulness.

3. He consoled the hearts that were wearied from pain and suffering with beautiful words.

4. He never compromised his mission and continued in his struggle even though he may have felt weak and powerless from time to time in the face of the tyranny of the idolaters.

5. He relied upon Allah and submitted to His Will and his heart was devoted to Him in times of difficulty and ease.

Through this method the Messenger of Allah was successful in his mission despite all manner of difficulty he encountered and he was able to overcome the obstacles laid down before him.

At the end of this long and painful period Medina, which was to hold great importance in terms of the spread and development of Islam, was to become the centre in which the light of Islam would spread to the world.

It was only after a long period of thirteen years in which they suffered great torment and hardship that Allah gave permission for the believers to migrate. After thirteen years of persecution the faith of the believers reached a degree of certainty and their hearts were filled with prosperity and spirituality. That is the believers had paid the price for their faith.

In this next period the foundations for the state of Islam and of a civilisation were to be built in Medina, a civilisation that would be a model for all of mankind. Solid characters and sound personalities were built, full of passion and ardour for their faith and that would not be weakened in the face of difficulty.

These people would become the stars that would guide the rest of the community.





## THE PROPHET'S LAST RESORT: EMIGRATION TO MEDINA

### Permission is Given to Migrate to Medina

After the Second Pledge of Aqaba when the idolaters learned that the Muslims were about to migrate to another land where they would be protected, they greatly increased their persecution of them. The Muslims came to a state in which it was no longer tolerable to stay in Mecca in the face of this unbearable torture. They presented their case to the Prophet and asked for permission to migrate. The Prophet indicated to them the direction of Medina and said:

**"The place to which you shall emmigrate has been shown to me to be a fertile land of date palms between two tracts of black stones"** (Bukhari, Kafala, 4). He continued: **"Allah Most High has bestowed upon you a land in which you will find brothers and peace."**

After this, the Muslims began to prepare for their journey unknown to the Meccans, and secretly helped each to migrate in small groups (See Ibn Hisham, II, 76; Ibn Sa'd, I, 226).

And thus Medina became a place of refuge and haven for the Muslims. As for the idolaters they met with what they had feared Islam had spread outside of Mecca and gained a great welcome in Medina. The miserable and unfortunate idolaters thought that they they had daunted the Muslims and preserved their power in Mecca. However they were unaware of what they were to witness very soon. An inevitable defeat and ruin awaited them, for the Muslims who were flowing to Medina in crowds were going there not because they feared them, but in order to lay down a solid foundation for Islam. The migration to Medina should never be thought of as an escape in response to a helpless and derogatory situation. Medina was a land of migration for the Emmigrants as they later came to be known. Medina would become the headquarters in which the Muslims would prepare to make the religion of Allah supreme.

The Emmigrants left behind wealth and property, relatives and whatever they had, and set out for the road to Medina.

Ali (ra) once said:

"When Umar (ra) was about to emigrate he girded himself with his sword, hung his bow over his shoulder, took his arrows and spears and went to the Ka'bah. The leading men of Quraysh were there. After performing tawaf around the Ka'bah Umar approached them and cried out to them as if informing them of their future victory.

"And so I am also going to Medina. Let whoever wishes to make his mother weep, or his wife be widowed, or his children orphaned, come after me beyond that valley." No one dared to follow him" (Ibn Athir, Usd al-Ghaba, IV, 152-153).

When the Emigrants arrived in Medina, the people there embraced their brothers wholeheartedly and helped them with everything they had. This is why the Muslims of Medina were called the 'Ansar' which means the Helpers.

Allah Most High says in the Holy Qur'an:

**"The forerunners – the first of the Muhajirun and the Ansar – and those who have followed them in doing good: Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared Gardens for them with rivers flowing under them, remaining in them timelessly, for ever and ever. That is the great victory"** (al-Tawbah, 9: 100)

### **The Quraysh Attempt to Assassinate the Prophet**

Day by day Mecca was being emptied and the eventual negative impact on this for the idolaters slowly began to dawn on them. They gathered together at Dar an-Nadwa in order to come up with a final solution. An old man, who claimed to be from Najd also participated in the gathering. This man was a devil dressed in the form of a human being. They discussed at length what they were to do. Many suggestions were put forth such as imprisoning the Prophet or driving him out of Mecca.

However this devil opposed all of these suggestions. They finally agreed upon a most cruel and foul plan to murder the Messenger of Allah. This suggestion was put forth by the Pharoah of that time, Abu Jahl:

"Let us take a young man from each clan and arm him. Each of them will attack him at the same time and strike and kill him. We will be freed of him and the crime of murdering him will be shared amongst all the clans. The sons of Abdu Manaf will not be able to fight all of the clans and will be content with accepting blood money. And we will pay them."

The old man from Najd, the devil in disguise, said:

"The words of this man are the best spoken. There is no more logical plan than this one" (Ibn Hisham, II, 93-95).

When this plan was being decided upon the Messenger of Allah was almost all alone in Mecca. Since he was a prophet devoted to his people, he had sent all the other Muslims ahead of him and stayed behind in order to observe and remain in control of the situation.

The fact that the command had not yet come from his Lord for him to migrate showed that this was also the will of Allah. When his dearest companion, Abu Bakr (ra), asked him for permission to migrate, he told him:

**"Be patient"** and then continued:

**"It may be that Allah will give you a righteous companion in your migration"** (Ibn Hisham, II, 92).

Abu Bakr was very pleased with this reply and purchased two camels for eight hundred dirhams and attentively tended to them for four months (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45).

When the idolaters were ready to put their plan into action, the command came from Allah for His Messenger to migrate:

**"Say: 'My Lord, make my entry sincere and make my leaving sincere and grant me supporting authority direct from Your Presence'" (al-Isra, 17: 80).**

In addition to this verse Gabriel also revealed to the Prophet the devious plan of the idolaters and told him:

"Do not sleep in your bed tonight" (Ibn Hisham, II, 95).

After receiving this news the Prophet then went to the house of Abu Bakr at noon, whilst everyone was resting during the heat of the day, and informed him of the command to migrate. Abu Bakr asked him:

"Will we go together o Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet replied:

**"Yes, we will go together."**

Abu Bakr was so happy at this reply that tears of joy began to fall from his eyes (See Ibn Hisham, II, 97-98).

Later the Prophet called Ali (ra) and told him that he was going to migrate. The Messenger of Allah had been charged with the safekeeping of many valuables of various people since the people of Mecca entrusted their belongings to him because they knew him to be trustworthy and reliable. The Messenger of Allah left these belongings with Ali and told him to return them to their owners after he had left.

As a precaution against the plan to murder him he also told Ali:

"O Ali! Sleep in my bed tonight. Place my cloak over you and do not fear. Nothing unpleasant will befall you" (Ibn Hisham, II, 95, 98).

Here the submission by Ali to the Messenger of Allah is striking. None of the Companions would ever hesitate to submit to the command of the Messenger of Allah. They were never negligent in following his words and actions.

When they were given a command they would never ask why or what for and would obey it immediately. They were well aware that if they abandoned following his *sunnah* they would become misguided and they feared this very much. Their attachment to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet was like the attachment of a shadow to its object (See Bukhari, Humus, 1; Muslim, Jihad, 52).

On the night that he was due to migrate, the idolaters surrounded the house of the Messenger of Allah before he even left. However there was no sign of any fear, doubt or apprehension due to his absolute submission to and reliance upon Allah. The Prophet recited the following verse from the chapter Ya'sin:

"We have put iron collars round their necks reaching up to the chin, so that their heads are forced back. We have placed a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them, blindfolding them so that they cannot see" (Ya'sin, 36: 8-9).

He then took a handful of earth and threw it into the eyes of the idolaters and walked right passed them. Even though he walked right by them the idolaters did not see him because the blindness of their hearts had blinded their eyes. Of course it is not possible for unseeing hearts and blind eyes to see that Light and so they did not see him.

When the idolaters failed to see the Messenger of Allah leave his house they entered it and saw someone sleeping on his bed:

“There is Muhammad. He is wrapped in his cloak, sleeping”, they shouted.

They immediately ran to the bed but were shocked and could not believe their eyes when they saw the face of Ali turn around to meet them.

The Quraysh shouted at him in anger:

“Where is the son of your uncle?”

Ali replied:

“I do not know, I have not the slightest idea. And I am not a watcher over him. You told him to leave Mecca and so he did.”

The Quraysh knocked him about and lashed out at him. They even took him to the Masjid al-Haram and detained him for a period but then let him go (See Ibn Hisham, II, 96; Ahmad, I, 348; Ya'qubi, II, 39).

As those most unfortunate and miserable of men whose hearts were locked and whose eyes were blinded to the truth waited around that blessed house with their evil intentions, Allah's Messenger was well on his way to the house of Abu Bakr, under divine providence. The Quraysh had made their plan but Allah also had a plan. And nothing could take place outside of the will of Allah. Allah informs us of this in the Qur'an:

**"(O My Messenger) When those who are unbelievers were plotting against you to imprison you or kill you or expel you: they were plotting and Allah was plotting, but Allah is the Best of Plotters"** (al-Anfal, 8: 30)

### **An Arduous Journey**

After leaving his house the Messenger of Allah went to the house of Abu Bakr who had prepared a camel for the Messenger of Allah to make his emigration with. Even though Abu Bakr did not want any payment for this camel the Messenger of Allah insisted on paying the price to Abu Bakr. Taking the necessary precautions they walked out behind the house and set out on their journey. They had planned to leave the camels there for three more days.

So that it would not be obvious that they were headed for Medina they headed in the opposite direction. From time to time Abu Bakr would walk in front of the Prophet and then behind him. When Allah's Messenger became aware of this he asked him:

“O Abu Bakr! Why are you walking in such a way?”

Abu Bakr replied:

“O Messenger of Allah! I want no danger to come to you from in front or behind.” In this way they reached the cave of Thawr.

Abu Bakr said:

“O Messenger of Allah! Wait here until I clean out the cave.”

After cleaning it out and plugging any insect and spider holes he said:

“Now you may enter o Messenger of Allah” (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 222-223).

Meanwhile the Quraysh had arrived at the house of Abu Bakr and asked his daughter, Asma, where her father was. She told them that she did not know and they were so enraged that they took their revenge out on her and struck her.

The Prophet and his *yar-i gar*<sup>4</sup> were to spend some time in the cave and thus be able to protect themselves from the Quraysh who had set out on the road to Medina to find them.

The grace and help of Allah was with them and when any human precautions were lacking, divine providence stepped in to lend a hand. Some of the Quraysh were in fact able to follow their footsteps and came as far as the mouth of the cave of Thawr. However when they looked they saw a cave which appeared untouched as it was covered with a large spider's web and a dove had made its nest there. Thinking that the Messenger of Allah could not possibly be inside they turned back (See Ibn Sa'd, I, 229; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 223-224).

Allah Most High was the helper, point of support, refuge and haven of these two blessed travellers. This is why those miserable men who came so far as the mouth of cave were only able to see nothing more than a dove and a spider's web.

Meanwhile whilst all of this was taking place Abu Bakr was having a difficult time inside the cave. He was afraid, not for himself but for the Prophet. If the idolaters had knelt down slightly they would have seen them immediately. They kept walking around the cave and saying:

“If they have entered the cave the eggs of that dove would have broken and the spider's web would have been torn”

Some of them said:

“Let us enter the cave and see” to which Umayyah ibn Khalaf replied:

“Have you no intelligence at all? What are you doing inside the cave? Will you enter a cave whose entry is covered by layers of a spider's web? By Allah I believe this web has been here since even before the birth of Muhammad”

Abu Jahl said:

“By Allah I sense that he is very close. However he has blindfolded our eyes with his magic” (Ibn Sa'd, I, 228; Halebi, II, 209).

Hearing all of this Abu Bakr became very anxious and he said to the Prophet:

“If they kill me, I am only one person and I will die and be gone with. But if anything happens to you then this community will be destroyed.”

The Prophet said to his friend in the cave:

**“O Abu Bakr! Have no fear! Allah is with us”** (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 223-224; Diyarbakri, I, 328-329).

4 Yar-i Gar: Means the ‘friend in the cave’ and is an expression which is used for the friendship of the Prophet and Abu Bakr while they were in the cave of Thawr. In time it has come to be used for close and intimate friends.

This event is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

**"If you do not help him (Muhammad), Allah did help him when the unbelievers drove him out and there were two of them in the Cave. He said to his companion, 'Do not be despondent, Allah is with us.' Then Allah sent down His serenity upon him and reinforced him with troops you could not see. He made the word of the unbelievers undermost. It is the word of Allah which is uppermost. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise"** (al-Tawbah, 9: 40).

Abu Bakr later related this event as follows:

"While we were in the cave I could see the feet of the Quraysh and I could hear their voices. I was worried that they would see us and I said to the Messenger of Allah: "O Messenger of Allah! If they just bow down and look inside they will definitely see us." He replied:

"O Abu Bakr! What **do you think** of **two (persons)** the **third** of whom is **Allah?**" (Bukhari, Fadail al-Ashab, 2, Manaqib, 45; Muslim, Fadail al-Sahaba, 1)

Before he became a prophet the cave of Hira was a divine school of learning for the Messenger of Allah and now the cave of Thawr became another place of learning for him, this time with a different spiritual lesson to be learnt. At Hira the seeds of faith were sown and then the seeds of excellence (*ihsan*) and the seeds of *tasawwuf* were planted at Thawr. Thawr became a lesson in observing the flow of divine mystery and power and to read the wisdom in the creation of human being and the book of the universe. It was a school for attaining divine mysteries and training of the heart. This is an indication that a person must first follow the shariah and then develop their capacity for a more spiritual Islam (*tasawwuf*).

In the three days and three nights that he spent in the cave of Thawr Allah's Messenger was not alone. His friend was Abu Bakr (ra), the best and most righteous of people after the Prophets. Abu Bakr was honoured and favoured with being his companion in the cave for three days.

In his words to his dear friend:

**"Do not be despondent, Allah is with us..."** (al-Tawbah, 9: 40), the Prophet was at the same time revealing the mystery of being together with Allah. This was the beginning of the act of private remembrance of Allah (dhikr) and the arrival at a state of contentment and peace as one's internal windows open up to Allah.

That is the cave of Thawr was the initial site of the training of the heart which would take the slave to Allah and thus it was the first stage of this divine journey. The flow of the mysteries contained within the heart of the Prophet, a source of light, to his community began in that cave with Abu Bakr. Thus the Prophet became the first link in the 'Golden Chain'<sup>5</sup> that would continue until the Day of Judgement. This flow of love that emanated from the heart of the Messenger of Allah to that of Abu Bakr continued to flow into the hearts of the friends of Allah and like the links in a chain continue until this day. The origins and the destination of the love felt for the friends of Allah is this love for the Messenger of Allah. This is why it is possible to keep one's love for the Prophet alive by strengthening our ties with him, and constantly keeping him in our thoughts. The first stage is to love the friends of Allah and the lovers of His Messenger.

5 The chain of spiritual imams in the Sufi tradition that leads all the way back to the Prophet (saw) himself. It can be considered to be a spiritual lineage (Translator's note).



At one point while they were in the cave, the Prophet lay down his blessed head upon the knees of Abu Bakr and fell into a light sleep. Just then Abu Bakr spotted a small hole very close to where they were sitting and fearing that some harmful insect may harm the Prophet he immediately placed his foot in the hole to block it without waking the Prophet up.

He was right to be afraid because a short time later a snake appeared and violently bit him on the foot, and injected him with his poison. That great Companion felt a great deal of pain but he did not move in order to avoid waking the Prophet but was still unable to prevent some tears coming from his eyes due to the pain.

One of the drops fell onto the face of the Prophet who woke up and asked:

**"What is the matter o Abu Bakr? What happened?"**

Abu Bakr replied:

"Nothing, o Messenger of Allah." But the Prophet insisted and he was forced to tell him what happened (Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 477; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 223). While they were in the cave the daughter of Abu Bakr, Asma, brought them food. On the command of Abu Bakr, his son, Abdullah, would also come to the cave and stay with them the night and leave again at dawn to go to Mecca as if he had spent the night in Mecca. Abdullah was a youth of great intelligence and ability and he would mix amongst the Quraysh during the day and listen to what they had to say about the Prophet and inform him of any plans and traps they may have been making (Ibn Hisham, II, 99; Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45; Haythami, VI, 53).

The Quraysh searched for the Messenger of Allah for three days and then finally lost hope of finding him. When Abdullah informed the Prophet that the Quraysh had given up searching for him, he and his friend mounted the camels that their guide had brought them and set out on their journey on the fourth day. Because this journey was a separation from the land in which he had been born and grew up in, it saddened the Messenger of Allah.

When he reached the area of Hazwara he said:

**"You are the most beloved to Allah of all the lands and had I not been driven out from you I would never have left you and migrated to another land"** (Ahmad, IV, 305; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 68/3925).

In response to the sorrow of the Prophet came consolation in the form of revelation:

**"He who has imposed the Qur'an upon you will most certainly bring you back home again..."** (al-Qasas, 28: 85).

Thus were the glad tidings that there would be a return to Mecca. It was also an sign of the conquest of Mecca and transformed the sadness in the heart of the Prophet into joy.

The distance between Mecca and Medina is approximately 400 km. At that time this journey could be made by camel in eight days. The road was long, the weather hot and the sand was like fire. For the first twenty four hours, this blessed convoy travelled on their journey without stopping. Because Abu Bakr would travel to Damascus for trade many people knew him there. Whenever he encountered a person whom he knew and was asked:

"O Abu Bakr! Who is that man in front of you?" he would reply:

“He is my guide. He is showing me the way.” He was thus cautious and vigilant and was also in effect saying: “He is acting as my spiritual guide in showing me the best path to take” (Ibn Sa’d, I, 233-235; Ahmad, III, 211).

Under the guidance of Abdullah ibn Urayqit, the Messenger of Allah, Abu Bakr, and his freed slave Amir ibn Fuhayrah stopped by at a tent set up at the site of Qudayd. This tent belonged to a woman by the name of Ummu Ma’bad. She would give food and water to those travellers who passed by. These blessed travellers to Medina asked Ummu Ma’bad for some milk. In her tent was a very weak sheep. This poor sheep did not even have the strength to join the herd let alone have any milk and so stayed in a corner of the tent. When the Messenger of Allah asked for permission to milk it, Ummu Ma’bad said:

“If you can find any milk, then milk her.”

The Prophet prayed to Allah to favour them and saying ‘Bismillah’ he began to milk the sheep which then gave a good amount of milk.

According to a report by Ummu Ma’bad that sheep subsequently lived until the time of a drought during the Caliphate of Umar (ra).

She also said:

“When the animals could find nothing to graze on, we would milk that sheep day and night”, indicating the blessings of that sheep.

After the Prophet left the tent, Abu Ma’bad, the husband of Ummu Ma’bad, came to the tent and when he saw the copious amounts of milk, he asked:

“O Ummu Ma’bad! Where did this milk come from? The sheep are all out grazing on a distant pasture and all are empty and there is no animal here capable of being milked. What is this?”

His wife replied:

“Today a most blessed man stopped by our tent...” She then began to describe the beautiful qualities of the Prophet and the events that took place that day.

Her husband said:

“Describe that man to me.” Ummu Ma’bad then described the physical appearance of the Prophet as follows:

“That man I saw had the best of character and a radiant face and his beauty was apparent all over. There was no defect in his body and he had a nice and graceful face. His face was always smiling. The blackness of his eyes, the length of his eye lashes and the delicacy in his voice were noteworthy. The whites of his eyes were very white, while the black parts were very black and it was as if he had kohl on from birth. His hair was very black, his beard was thick and slightly long. When he was silent, a state of peace and dignity came over him; and when he spoke, his beauty, his smile and the sweetness in his voice became apparent. His words dropped from his mouth one by one as if pearls. His speech was clear and he could distinguish between truth and falsehood. He neither spoke too little nor did he speak too much so that people tired of him. He had some friends with him, and when he spoke, they would listen to him attentively and immediately rush to comply with his commands. He was a man who people rushed to serve



and who respected him greatly. He did not censure any person nor did he rebuke them.”

When he heard these words Abu Ma’bad said:

“I swear that this is the Prophet that arose from the tribe of Quraysh. How I would have wished to be with him and be his friend. If I ever find a way I will definitely do so” (See Ibn Sa’d, I, 230-231; VIII, 289; Hakim, III, 10-11).

When the idolaters failed to find this blessed convoy they promised a great reward for anybody who could. Hoping for this reward certain ignorant people set out to search for them. One of them was Suraqah ibn Malik. After a long search he finally came across the Messenger of Allah. As soon as he saw him he galloped towards him on his horse at high speed. All of a sudden the horse’s hooves became buried in the sand. He then fell to the ground. However hard he tried he did not find the strength to free himself from the sand and move towards the Prophet. After he tried for quite some time, he finally came to his senses.

Realising his mistake he felt a sense of regret and he asked the Messenger of Allah to pardon him. The Prophet then prayed for him and as a result of the blessings of this prayer, Suraqah’s horse was freed from the sand. Seeing this miracle changed the heart of Suraqah and he became a close friend of the Messenger of Allah.

After this event Suraqah returned to where he had come from and kept the location of the Prophet secret. He then either turned back anyone who was heading in that direction or he directed them to another path (Muslim, Zuhd, 75).

Step by step the convoy to Medina was slowly approaching the city. Even though the Quraysh had sent out men to kill him and in spite of all the dangers along the way, Allah’s Messenger continued to carry out his mission of spreading the religion of Allah and teaching anybody he met along the way about Islam.

### The Long-Awaited and Cherished Traveller

Hearing the news that the Messenger of Allah had set out for Medina, the people of that city waited for him in great excitement. In longing to see him they kept watch over the roads for days and headed out of the city in order to meet that blessed convoy. It was the fourteenth year of his prophethood. On the 12<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Rabi’ al-awwal, on a Monday, a voice continued to reverberate with great joy in the hearts of the Muslims:

“He is coming...”

Cries of “*Allahu Akbar*” began to ring out all over Medina. The Muslims armed themselves in order to guard the Messenger of Allah and ran out to welcome him, some on horse and some on foot.

When the convoy reached the surrounds of Quba, near Medina, the whole area was filled with festivity and joy.

From the hills could be heard the cries:

*Oh the full moon rose over us  
From the valley of al-Wada And we owe it to show gratefulness  
Where the call is to Allah. Oh you who were raised among us  
Coming with a word to be obeyed  
You have brought to this city nobleness  
Welcome best caller to God's way  
You are the sun, You are the moon  
You are the light upon light  
you are the light of the Pleiades  
O Most Beloved, O Messenger*

These touching and tender verses rang out through the heavens and enthused the hearts. From that time on history would turn a new page, starting its calendar with the Hijrah.

Most of the Muslims who came out to greet him, had never met or seen the Prophet Muhammad. For a moment they mistook Abu Bakr for the Prophet. The Messenger of Allah was in a state of silence. When the heat of the sun beat down upon him, Abu Bakr immediately rose and tried to shade him with his shawl. It was only then that they realised that he was in fact the Prophet (Bukhari, Manaqib al-Ansar, 45).

### **The Masjid Built on the Foundation of *taqwa*: The Masjid of Quba**

The first stop on the *hijrah* was at a place close to Medina, called Quba. Allah's Messenger (saw) stayed for four days in Quba, at the house of Amr ibn Awf. This was when the famous Quba Masjid began to be built. The Prophet himself helped in its construction. The masjid of Quba was the first masjid to be built in Islam. It carries an important place in Islam since it was built during the hijrah.

This masjid is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

**"A mosque founded on *taqwa* from the first day has a greater right for you to stand in it..."** (al-Tawba, 9: 108)<sup>6</sup>.

Abu Hurairah said that the following verse was revealed about the people of Quba:

**"In it there are men who love to purify themselves. Allah loves those who purify themselves"** (al-Tawbah, 9: 108) (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 9; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 23/44; Ibn Majah, Taharah, 357).

6 Later Umar (ra) was to identify the first day of the hijri calendar with this 'first day'.

When the first Emigrants to migrate arrived in Medina, they cleaned out the place where Amr ibn Awf dried his dates and prayed there. Abu Huzayfa's freed slave Salim lead them in prayer as he was the best reciter of Qur'an and the most learned (Ibn Sa'd, III, 87; IV, 311).

The Prophet Muhammad extended this site where the Emigrants first prayed to build the mosque of Quba. Just as with the Masjid an-Nabawi and nine other masjids in Medina, teaching and learning continued in the mosque of Quba.

Whenever the Prophet came to this mosque he would inspect the activities that went on (Hamidullah, *Prophet of Islam*, II, 771).

On Saturdays the Prophet would go to Quba, sometimes on foot and sometimes on his mount in order to perform two cycles of prayer there (Bukhari, Fada'il as-Salat 3, 4; Muslim, Hajj, 516).

The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have given the following advice to the Muslims:

"Whoever takes his ablution in his house and then goes to the masjid of Quba and performs his prayer there, will have the reward of performing Umrah (Ibn Majah, Iqama, 197; Nasai, Masajid, 9).

### The First Friday Prayer in the Valley of Ranuna

When the people of Quba realised that they would be deprived of the honour of hosting the Messenger of Allah for a longer time, were filled with sorrow at being separated from him and they asked him:

"O Messenger of Allah. Is it that you have tired of us or that you wish to go somewhere better?

The Prophet replied:

**"I have been commanded to go to Medina."** In this way he also let them know that he was content with them (Diyarbakri, I, 339).

After completing his stay of fourteen days in Quba, the Messenger of Allah and those with him set out for Medina. It was a Friday.

They arrived at the valley of Ranuna at noon and stopped there.

The Messenger of Allah got down from his camel in order to perform the Friday prayer, which had just become obligatory.

The Muslims were now in a land in which they were free and safe. As a sign of the power of Islam and the Muslims the Friday congregational prayer was made obligatory. For the first time Allah's Messenger led the Muslims for this prayer. He read out the following sermon while there:

The first sermon:

**"O people. Repent before you die; perform good deeds while you have the chance. Give much charity either in secret or openly and improve your relationship with your Lord by making much remembrance of Him. If you do this, you will be provided for, you will be helped and you will obtain those things that evaded you.**

**Know that Allah has made the Friday congregational prayer obligatory upon you in this month of this year and in this place. Whoever belittles or denies this prayer and abandons it,**



either in my lifetime or after I am gone, when they have an imam in front of them, be he just or not will never be comfortable in this world. And Allah will not give them success. Even if he performs the other prayers, he will not be rewarded for them. However those who reflect on this situation and repent are excused. Because Allah accepts the repentance of those who repent." (Ibn Majah, Iqama, 78).

**"O people!**

**Prepare for your hereafter while you are still alive. Each of you will most certainly die and leave your herds without a shepherd. Then Allah will say to him directly, without translator or means: "Did My Messenger not come to you and inform you of My commands? I gave you wealth and property, and favoured you and bestowed much bounty upon you. And so what have you brought forth for your own salvation? Everyone who faces this question will look to their right and to their left but will find nothing (to save them). However when they look in front of them they will see Hellfire...**

**In that case, wake up. Whoever can save themselves from the fire, even if it be with half a date, let him do so. And for those who cannot find half a date, let him do good by speaking a kind word. A single good deeds is rewarded from ten-fold to seven hundred fold.**

**May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you"** (See Bukhari, Tawhid, 36; Muslim, Zakah, 97; Ibn Hisham, I, 118-119, Baihaqi, Dalail, II, 524).

The second sermon:

**"I praise Allah and I ask for His help. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our nafs and our bad deeds. No one can deviate from the one that Allah has guided and no one can guide the one whom He has made to deviate.**

**I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. He is One and He has no partner. The best of speech belongs to Allah. The person whose heart Allah has adorned with the Qur'an and guided to Islam after unbelief, and who prefers the Qur'an above all other speech [words] has attained salvation.**

**The Book of Allah is the best and truest of all words.**

**Love that which Allah loves. Do not tire of the Words of Allah or of remembering Him. Let not a constriction come to your hearts from the Words of Allah. Because they narrate the best of deeds, the choicest of people, that is, the Prophets, the best of stories and lessons. They explain the lawful and the forbidden.**

**Worship Allah alone and do not associate any partners with Him, Fear Him as He should be feared. Let your words and your acts confirm and declare Allah. Love each other by the grace and bounty of Allah. Know that Allah's wrath is upon those who break their promise.**

**And may the peace of Allah be upon you."** (Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 524-525).

These sermons were about certain principles of Islam such as belief, worship, morals and human interactions, which constitute the essence of religion. In addition, the fact that the Friday prayer was made obligatory during the migration was an indication of the importance and necessity of the Muslims coming together as a community.



### Excited Waiting in Medina

When the Messenger of Allah (saw) was about to set out for Medina from Quba, he sent word to his maternal uncles, the sons of Najjar, to offer him their protection. They then took up their arms and went to him, greeting him and saying:

“You may mount your camels, being assured of your safety” (Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 46).

After the Friday prayer, the Messenger of Allah then mounted his camel, Quswa and together with Abu Bakr and the leading men of the sons of Najjar and the other Muslims, he entered Medina.

Each person in Medina desired be his host. They were longing to take him to their homes and they even began to argue with each other.

Indicating his camel Quswa, Allah’s Messenger said:

**“Let the animal be free, move out of her path; she is ma’mur** (she has been informed of where she is to kneel down)” (Ibn Hisham, II, 112-113)

In this way the Messenger of Allah solved the matter of who was to host him without hurting anyone’s feelings. After kneeling down, and then rising in a few places, the blessed camel then settled himself down in front of the house of Khalid ibn Zayd, that is Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. This fortunate Companion was overcome with an indescribable joy. He invited the Messenger of Allah, saying:

“Welcome o Messenger of Allah. You have honoured our home.”

As the Messenger of Allah walked towards Abu Ayyub’s home, the small girls of the sons of Najjar appeared before him with their tambourines in their hands and began to recite the following poem:

“We are the daughters of the Bani Najjar. How happy are we that we are the neighbours of Muhammad”

That King of Hearts, the Prophet Muhammad, asked them:

**“Tell me! Do you love me?”** and they answered:

“Yes O Messenger of Allah! We love you very much.”

Pleased with their joy and happiness the Prophet responded:

**“And Allah knows that I love you. I swear by Allah that I love you too. I swear by Allah that I love you too”** (Ibn Majah, *Nikah*, 21; *Diyarbakri*, I, 341).

Bara ibn Azib has said:

“I never saw the people of Medina so happy at any event as they were at the coming of the Messenger of Allah. Every person in Medina, young and old, man and woman, had filed out to the streets or climbed their roofs and were crying out:

“The Prophet of Allah has come! O Muhammad! O Messenger of Allah! O Muhammad! O Messenger of Allah!” (Bukhari, *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 45; Muslim, *Zuhd*, 75).

Anas ibn Malik (ra) has said:

“I never lived a day more beautiful, more bright or more radiant than the day that the Messenger of Allah honoured Medina with his presence. On that day Medina was enveloped in light” (Ahmad, III, 122; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1).

The people of Medina sacrificed a camel out of the gratitude and joy they felt at the arrival of the Prophet in their city (Ahmad, III, 301).

This historical *hijrah* marked the end of the Meccan period of the Prophethood. So began the Medinan period.



## QUESTIONS PART THREE

### A. SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What were the reasons for the idolaters boycotting the Muslims? How did the boycott end?
2. What was the wisdom in the miracles that the Prophets were given?
3. Particular miracles were given to previous prophets whilst the Prophet Muhammad was given miracles in a wide range of areas. Why was this so?
4. What lessons can we learn from the journey to Taif?
5. How did the Prophet Muhammad pray for the people of Taif after their wretched treatment of him?
6. What were the results of the first meeting at Aqaba?
7. How can we interpret the fact that the event of the Mi'raj occurred after the journey to Taif?
8. In the first years of Islam, people would be saved just by making the declaration that 'there is no god but Allah' in response to the Prophet's teachings. Is there any difference if a person today were to make this statement and be saved?
9. How did Abu Bakr respond to the mocking provocation of the idolaters after the event of the Miraj?
10. Why was there no need for swords in the conquest of Medina?
11. What was the most important decision made at the Second Pledge of Aqaba?
12. What is the meaning of the statement of the Prophet Muhammad that 'Countries were conquered by the sword however Medina was conquered by the Qur'an'?
13. On the night that the Messenger of Allah was to make his hijrah to Medina, Ali (ra) slept in his bed without any hesitation. What thoughts and feelings do you think could have gone through his mind as he slept?
14. Why was the hijrah to Medina made after thirteen years of struggle and hardship?
15. What could be the wisdom and the divine will in the oppression, persecution and other hardships faced by the Muslims in the thirteen year Meccan period?

16. What forms of divine help came to the Prophet as he was in the cave of Thawr?
17. Where and under what conditions did the source of light first come to the Prophet, that is the 'secrets and mysteries of his inner heart that were to be revealed to his community'?
18. When Abu Bakr (ra) and the Prophet Muhammad were making their hijrah to Medina, Abu Bakr responded to those who asked who the Prophet was as follows: "He is my guide. He is showing me the way". Which lessons can we learn from this?
19. What is the reason for the Friday congregational prayer being made obligatory in Medina rather than in Mecca?
20. How did the Muslims in Medina welcome the Prophet's arrival in Medina?

#### B. FILL IN THE GAPS

1. In calling the people to the true religion Allah bestowed upon the Prophets certain extraordinary features. These phenomena are called .....
2. The miracle of the splitting of the moon is called .....
3. The year in which both Khadijah and Abu Talib passed away was called the year of .....
4. On his return from Taif the Prophet was consoled when the Companion, ..... (ra) became a Muslim.
5. In the event of the Isra, the Prophet Muhammad was taken from ..... to .....
6. The twelfth year after the hijrah, in which Islam spread throughout Medina very rapidly was called the year of .....
7. The Meccan Muslims who migrated to Medina were called ..... while the Medinan Muslims who helped them were called .....
8. The calendar which begins with the arrival of the Prophet in Medina is called the .....
9. The ..... Mosque was the first mosque built by the Muslims.
10. The Prophet Muhammad performed the first Friday prayer in the valley of ..... in the Juma' Mosque.

### C. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. **Which of the following was not a reason for the boycott against the Muslims?**
  - A. To make the Prophet abandon his cause
  - B. To prevent other idolaters from becoming Muslims
  - C. To make the Muslims abandon Mecca
  - D. To find a way to murder the Prophet
2. **Which of the following is not one of the positive results of the lifting of the difficult and distressing boycott of the Muslims?**
  - A. The strengthening of the brotherhood of the Muslims under such difficult conditions of hunger and shortage
  - B. The development of feelings of compassion and kindness in the hearts of the idolaters towards the Muslims
  - C. The idolaters realised that they would not be able to prevent the growth of the Muslims
  - D. Some of the idolaters abandoned their idea of persecuting the Muslims
3. **Which of the following is not one of the aims in the bestowing of miracles upon the Prophets?**
  - A. To influence people so that they are able to see the truth
  - B. To incapacitate those who are obstinate in their unbelief
  - C. To confirm the belief of those who believe
  - D. To make it easier for the people to believe in them
4. **Which of the following cannot be a reason for the Prophet's journey to Taif?**
  - A. To reach a political compromise with the rebellious and wild people of Taif
  - B. To find a new land in which the Muslims would be free to believe and perform their worship.
  - C. To invite the people of Taif to Islam and thus spread its teachings
  - D. To find a place in which the Muslims could be freed from the increasing persecution and oppression against them.
5. **After the Prophet was stoned in Taif he made the following supplication to Allah: "O Allah. To you do I complain of my weakness, of my helplessness and of my lowliness before men. O my Lord. Guide my people for they do not know". Which religious principle can we learn from this prayer?**
  - A. To search for the reasons of one's failure in serving the religion in one's own self.
  - B. To distance oneself from ignorant people whom no words or teachings will benefit
  - C. To believe that guidance and success are a favour from Allah
  - D. To constantly pray for the guidance of those people to whom one is spreading the message

6. After meeting with persecution and torture in Taif, the Prophet Muhammad's task became even more difficult. He began to visit the trade fairs, meeting with people individually and saying: "The Quraysh have prevented me from spreading the word of my Lord. Is there no one who will take me to their people?" **What does this tell us about his state?**
- He was weary and exhausted
  - He was hopeless and helpless
  - He was unable to teach anybody in Mecca about Islam
  - He was in search of a new homeland
7. One time when the Prophet was spreading the teachings of Islam and they threw dirt, dust and filth over him, his daughter Zaynab came to him to clean his clothes and his face. Her father said to her: "My daughter. Cover your neck with your scarf. Do not fear that your father will fall into a trap, be killed or disgraced". **Which of the following is not a lesson we can take from these words of his?**
- Allah will not disgrace and debase those who struggle to exalt His religion
  - Whilst living one's Islam one must guard one's covering up and modesty under all conditions
  - The family of those who spread the religion of Allah must also show the same determination.
  - Because the spreading of Islam is a difficult task that requires great patience not everyone should undertake it
8. **According to the Holy Qur'an, which of the following was one reason for why the Prophet Muhammad was taken one night from the Masjid al-Haram to the Masjid al-Aqsa?**
- Allah Most High wished to show His Beloved certain of His signs
  - Gabriel was to be shown to the Prophet
  - The Prophet was to be given the duty of the Prophethood on that night
  - The Prophet Muhammad was to be shown the other prophets
9. **Which of the following is not one of the 'gifts' bestowed upon the Prophet on the Mi'raj?**
- The obligation to perform the five daily prayers
  - The last two verses of the chapter Baqara
  - The forgiving of the major sins of the Mu'mins on the condition that they do not commit *shirk*
  - The other prophets would not enter Paradise without the permission of the Prophet Muhammad



10. Which of the following is **not** one of the wisdoms of the event of the Mi'raj?
  - A. If we can become worthy of the Mi'raj that was bestowed on the Prophet then we can experience our own kind of spiritual ascension
  - B. The Mi'raj shows us that a person can be elevated once they have freed themselves from the obstacle of their *nafs* and increase in their spirituality and subtlety.
  - C. Because Salat was revealed directly by Allah on the Mi'raj, to perform the prayer is like receiving revelation.
  - D. The end affair of those who endure great hardship and difficulties is great divine favour.
11. After witnessing the miracle of the Isra and the Mi'raj the idolaters remained obstinate in their unbelief. Which situation did this lead to?
  - A. Certain of the Muslims remained in doubt and abandoned their faith.
  - B. They persecuted and tortured the Messenger of Allah in a way that they had not done previously.
  - C. Certain of the Muslims who had secretly accepted the faith openly rejected it.
  - D. They lost the bounty of having the Prophet of mercy amongst them.
12. Which of the following was **not** one of the pledges made by the Medinans at the First Pledge of Aqaba?
  - A. To live in harmony with the hypocrites for a period
  - B. To refrain from insulting anybody
  - C. To refrain from stealing
  - D. To refrain from burying one's daughters alive
13. Which of the following is **not** one of the features of the life of Mus'ab ibn Umayr that we should take as our example?
  - A. To prefer eternal happiness to the happiness of this world and to prefer the bounties of the Hereafter to the bounties of this world
  - B. To put all of one's efforts into spreading the teachings of Islam and honouring people with Islam.
  - C. To abandon everything whilst in a state of wealth and prosperity and give oneself to worship and remembrance of Allah.
  - D. To migrate from one's land if necessary in order to spread one's religion and serve the people

14. Which of the following was not one of the things that the Messenger of Allah asked of the Medinans at the Second Pledge of Aqaba?
  - A. To refrain from turning back to their old religion and beliefs
  - B. To protect the Messenger of Allah as they protected their own lives and wealth
  - C. To obey the Messenger of Allah in times of both ease and distress and in happiness and sorrow
  - D. To meet the needs of housing and food of the Muslims of Medina.
15. Which of the following was not a method that the Prophet used in response to the persecution of the Muslims by the Meccan idolaters?
  - A. To keep the passion of the faith of the Muslims alive and increase their enthusiasm and efforts
  - B. To support the believers in terms of being patient, tolerant and hopeful in the face of their struggles and pain
  - C. To respond to the persecution of the idolaters with the same persecution.
  - D. To devote one's heart to Allah in times of difficulty and distress and submit to Him and rely upon Him.
16. Who was the great and brave Companion who, as he was about to migrate to Medina he went to the Ka'bah and performed two rakats of prayer saying: "I am leaving now. Let him follow me whoever wishes to leave his child without a father and his wife a widow"?
  - A. Ali (ra)
  - B. Hamza (ra)
  - C. Abu Bakr (ra)
  - D. Umar (ra)
17. What could have been the greatest danger for the Meccan idolaters in the migrating of the Muslims to Medina?
  - A. They would no longer be able to oppress and persecute the Muslims
  - B. Islam would gain prestige outside of Mecca and spread rapidly
  - C. Trade in Mecca would be negatively affected
  - D. The Muslims would arm themselves in a very short time and attack Mecca
18. Which of the following was not one of the reasons for why the Prophet Muhammad was the last to migrate from Mecca?
  - A. He was considerate of his community and he wished to see them reach safety first
  - B. The command for him to migrate had not yet come
  - C. He had no animal to ride, nor no companion to migrate with
  - D. He wanted to remain behind to observe and remain in control of the situation.

19. Which of the following events that took place in the cave of Thawr **cannot** be accepted as being a starting point in the path of Sufism?

- A. Learning remembrance of Allah in secret after the Prophet said: "Do not worry. Allah is with us".
- B. The concept of 'rabita' in Sufism which arose out of the intense love that Abu Bakr felt for the Messenger of Allah in the cave of Thawr, and their special relationship there.
- C. The three days in which Abu Bakr spent with the Messenger of Allah was the basis of the murshid –murid relationship, in which there is physical and spiritual closeness.
- D. The three difficult days in the cave of Thawr led to the obligation of abstinence, solitude and suffering in the Sufi tradition.

20. Consider the following statements:

- I. All eyes of all the people and children were on the road to Medina.
- II. The people sang songs to express their happiness and joy.
- III. The men armed themselves to go out and meet the Prophet.
- IV. Every person wanted to host the Prophet in their house.

**Which of the following could be the common conclusion we can come to in the behaviour of the Medinan Muslims towards the Messenger of Allah?**

- A. The people of Medina had a very excited nature.
- B. The Muslims of Medina loved the Messenger of Allah greatly.
- C. The people of Medina were trying to prove their love for the Messenger of Allah.
- D. The people of Medina were of a very hasty nature.

## ANSWERS

### ANSWERS TO PART ONE

#### B. Fill In The Gaps

- |                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Muhammad (saw)                | 6. Suwayba / Halima  |
| 2. Hanif                         | 7. 6 / 8             |
| 3. prayer / good tidings / dream | 8. Khadija (ra) / 40 |
| 4. 12/ Monday 20/ 571            | 9. Ibrahim           |
| 5. Paraclete                     | 10. Fatima (ra)      |

#### C. Multiple Choice

1. C   2. B   3. C   4. B   5. D   6. A   7. B   8. D   9. B   10. D  
 11. A   12. B   13. C   14. D   15. A   16. B   17. B   18. A   19. C   20. D

### ANSWERS TO PART TWO

#### B. Fill In The Gaps

- |                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. 40              | 6. Fifth / Rajab              |
| 2. Khadija (ra)    | 7. 12/ 5                      |
| 3. Ummi            | 8. Dar al-Arkam               |
| 4. Sumayyah/ Yasir | 9. Abu Lahab / Chapter Tabbat |
| 5. fourth          | 10. Uthman (ra)               |

#### C. Multiple Choice

1. A   2. A   3. B   4. D   5. C   6. D   7. D   8. A   9. B   10. C  
 11. A   12. A   13. D   14. B   15. B   16. C   17. D   18. A   19. B   20. A

### ANSWERS TO PART THREE

#### B. Fill In The Gaps

- |                                      |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Miracle                           | 6. Happiness       |
| 2. Shaqq al-Qamar                    | 7. Muhajir / Ansar |
| 3. Sorrow                            | 8. Hijri calendar  |
| 4. Addas                             | 9. Quba            |
| 5. Masjid al- Haram / Masjid al-Aqsa | 10. Ranuna         |

#### C. Multiple Choice

1. C    2. B    3. C    4. A    5. B    6. D    7. D    8. A    9. D    10. C  
 11. D    12. A    13. C    14. D    15. C    16. D    17. B    18. C    19. D    20. B

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