

On the Path of the Beloved ﷺ

The Cavern of Thaur

In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful. Peace and blessings be upon our master, the most noble Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Let us start from the beginning, when all the companions have already migrated to Madinah. The only ones left were the Prophet ﷺ, Abu-Bakr (RA) and their families. The tribes of Quraysh realized that this Hijrah would lead to establishing a strong nation, which consequently would destroy Quraysh's position. Therefore, a crucial meeting was held at Dar-al-Nadwa and was attended by all the leaders of Quraysh, such as Abu-Jahl and Abu-Sufyan.

They wanted to find a way to get rid of the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, they sought to reach a plot against him ﷺ. The first suggestion was to expel him from their land. However, Abu-Jahl objected, stating that doing so would still allow him to establish a nation somewhere else. The second was to chain him on a metal; however, Abu-Jahl once again objected, saying that he will be unchained. The third was to find the sharpest swords and the strongest young men to kill him with one strong collective stab. They all agreed on that.

These young men gathered outside, where the Prophet ﷺ was staying, waiting for him to come out in order to kill him. Before that, the angel Jibril ﷺ descended and warned the Prophet ﷺ not to stay the night because Quraysh had a murderous plot against him. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ went out in the afternoon, which is a rare time for him to go out in. He headed to Abu-Bakr (RA) and told him that Allah had ordered him to make the Hijrah. Abu-Bakr (RA) cried with so much happiness to accompany the Prophet ﷺ in this journey.

The Prophet ﷺ told Ali Ibn-Abu-Taleb (RA), the brave twenty-three-year-old young man, to sleep in the Prophet's bed so that if Quraysh peeked in, they would think he was still inside. Before that, the Prophet ﷺ pointed to Ali Ibn-Abu-Taleb (RA) at some consignments and told him (RA) whom these belonged to. He was keen to be trustworthy and honest and have them returned. When the Prophet ﷺ left the house, he was surprised to see that Quraysh have already gathered. He risked his life for the sake of honesty. They want to kill him, though they left their belongings with him; however, he did not throw their belongings away. Look at us now! Some people write uncovered checks; others are not trustworthy regarding others' belongings. We here learn from our Prophet ﷺ how important honesty is. Whoever is as honest Allah ﷻ will surely be there for him.

The Prophet ﷺ threw some soil reading the ayah where Allah says, **“And We have made before them (Literally: between their hands) a barrier and behind them a barrier, then We enveloped them, so they do not behold (the Truth)” (36:9).** The soil covered their heads and

they dusted it off after the Prophet ﷺ had left. They did not see a thing. He was finally able to leave with Abu-Bakr (RA). They both did not go North of Makkah to Madinah. Instead, they went South. This shows careful planning. The Prophet ﷺ acted upon the means and the good planning and was honest regarding the consignments. Allah ﷻ then saved him. We must also learn to plan carefully and Allah ﷻ will be there for us.

The Prophet ﷺ hid in the cavern of Thawr for three days. Imagine with me as he walks up and sees Makkah from right here. It brings tears to his eyes as he expresses how Makkah is the most beloved to him. This shows how he cares about his country.

Maybe we are now standing exactly where the Prophet ﷺ walked. The Prophet ﷺ had to walk this long distance to find a place far from Quraysh. There is no miracle here; the Prophet ﷺ had to exert effort and search to find a safe place. It is our utmost happiness to follow him. Exert at least one-quarter of such effort in your life!

Imagine that as he walks up in these curves, he was crying with a longing for Makkah. Surat Al-Qisas was revealed to him right here. Allah says, **“And a man speedily came along from the remotest part of the city. He said, “O Mûsa, (Moses) surely the chiefs are conspiring to kill you. So go out (of the city). Surely I am one of the (sincere) advisers to you. So he went out of it, frightened and on the watch. He said, “Lord! Safely deliver me from the unjust people” (28:20-21).** This continues until ayah 26, **“...So when he came to him (i.e., to Shuaayb) and had narrated to him the narration, he said, “Do not fear (anything): you have (been) delivered from the unjust people” (28:26).**

O, Prophet! You will return and win. On the day of Judgment, all the Messengers will say “Myself, My self”, except that our Prophet; he will say, “My ummah, my ummah” (my nation, my nation). You have to love him after knowing all this. He is immensely dear to us.

Let us now continue walking up to the cavern. As the Prophet ﷺ was going up, he did not know there was a cavern up there. Allah ﷻ set his steps in the right direction. Meanwhile, Quraysh was surrounding the Prophet’s home and began to worry. They saw soil on their heads and wondered why the Prophet ﷺ did not leave yet. Someone passing by mentioned that he saw the Prophet ﷺ leave. They did not believe it, as they saw the Prophet ﷺ was still in bed, as was planned. All this was a plan so that the Prophet would delay them. Imagine how Ali (RA) would have felt. He (RA) was twenty-three years old at that time and entered Islam at the age of 10. He (RA) was once asked how he (RA) slept that night. His answer was that it was the calmest night he (RA) ever spent.

When Quraysh awoke up, they found someone sleeping inside and saw that it was Ali (RA). They asked him where the Prophet ﷺ was; he (RA) told them he did not know. So they thought that the only one who would know where the Prophet ﷺ went would be Asmaa, Abu-Bakr’s daughter. She was a great woman in Islam, who kept the secret. The Prophet ﷺ and her father (RA) had faith in her, and this was an honor. No one would even be suspicious of her. Do you

know why? Asmaa was seven-months pregnant. It is impossible for anyone to be doubtful, as she went up to the cavern two times each day of those three days to bring them food. This is amazing for a woman who is in her condition. The first baby born in Madinah was Abd-Allah Ibnul-Zubair, whose mother was Asmaa, and he became a Caliph.

Anyway, Quraysh went to the house of Abu-Bakr (RA). His daughter Asmaa opened the door; they asked her where her father was. She would not tell them no matter how they disturbed her. They assumed that he must have headed North to Madinah. The Prophet ﷺ here perfected the job and acted upon the means of good planning, as he decided to go South instead of North. The Prophet ﷺ did all that for the sake of the great Message of Islam. He sought to go up to the peak, so he could do all what was possible on his part. There was a commitment to this Message.

Now let me ask you a question! Why is this particular day (the day of Hijrah) considered the beginning of the Islamic calendar, while it does not start, for example, on the Prophet's birthday or on the day of the Conquest of Makkah? The answer is that the greatest day of triumph is the day of hardship, when one has to be committed to the Message of Islam. It is a true proof of triumph and commitment. This is an important lesson for us to learn; the greatest day is the day of hardship when our commitment is proven.

Before we proceed, let me pause for a while to ask you! What is the greatest day in Islam? Allah says, **“In case ever you do not vindicate him, (The Prophet) yet Allah readily vindicated him” (9:40)**. Who would believe that this little opening (of the cavern) was the beginning of Muslims' triumph?! It was not the day when the Message started, for many people may show enthusiasm at the beginning then abandon it at the times of difficulty, nor the day when the Prophet ﷺ was born, for his birth was not miraculous like the birth of Isa ﷺ and Musa ﷺ. It is this particular day because it is the day of sacrifice and hope. That little opening (of the cavern) symbolizes the beginning of victory. It is the gate of hope, as if Allah ﷻ wants to convey a message to us here: the day that witnessed your steadfastness, sacrifice and perfection is the day of your victory; it is a symbol of hope for the whole nation.

Do you remember the ayah where Allah ﷻ says **“so take (your) abode in the cavern, (then) your Lord will spread for you of His mercy” (18:16)**. This ayah carries the same concept, with respect to the Cave people, hope can still be born out of the womb of despair. We came here today to plant the seeds of hope in the souls of every young man and young woman.

Now let us see how the Prophet ﷺ planned his journey. Actually, his plan was very accurate and deep. It seems that the Prophet ﷺ did not leave anything for chance; everyone was marvelously aware of and committed to his own role.

1. Ali Ibn-Abu-Taleb (RA) sleeps on the Prophet's bed to pretend he is the Prophet .
2. The Prophet ﷺ goes to Abu-Bakr's house disguised, at a time he rarely goes out in.

3. He is careful to have no one hear him, so he tells Abu-Bakr (RA) that everyone in the house should leave them alone. Asmaa is in the house and Abu-Bakr (RA) said she is trustworthy.
4. He leaves from the back-door of the house, not from the front-door.
5. He does not head North to Madinah, but instead goes South.
6. Abdullah Ibn-Abu-Bakr is assigned to hunt for the news and inform them with it.
7. Asmaa is in charge of providing them with food in the cavern and no one will ever be suspicious of her, as she is seven-months pregnant.
8. Amer Ibn-Fehr is assigned to wipe out the footprints.
9. Ali Ibn-Abu-Taleb (RA), who do not know where they hide, turns back the consignments and distracts Quraysh's attention away from the Prophet .
10. Abu-Bakr (RA), in his turn, prepares two riding camels for the journey.
11. The Prophet hides in the cavern with his companion for three days till everything settles down and Quraysh gets tired of their failing attempts to chase after them along the Northern road.

This is what can be really called accurate planning, where you have to exert whatever in your power to achieve your aim just like the Prophet , who insisted on staying inside the cavern with Abu-Bakr (RA) so as not to jeopardize being noticed even in such a deserted place.

The nature of the cavern is really amazing; it gets a bit wider from inside and consists of superimposing rocks, as if Allah created it of rocks laid down atop of each other with a hole in the middle. This clearly shows that Allah ﷻ specified this path specially for his Prophet , as if to tell whoever wishes to work for Islam: Take the first step and Allah will lead you through the way. Allah ﷻ says , **“Enter in upon them (by) the gate. So, when you enter it, then surely you will be overcoming them” (5:23)**. The amazing superimposing structure of the cavern rocks, with an opening in-between, shows the magnificence of the divine creation, the creation of Allah the Eternal Owner of Sovereignty, the Lord of Majesty and Bounty.

Now, while we are sitting inside the cavern, the symbol of honor, challenge, willpower and dedication for the Message, let me ask you: what did you do for Islam? Before answering, you should consider the great devotion of the companions: Ali Ibn-Abu-Taleb (RA) was ready to sacrifice his life, Asmaa was ready to sacrifice her baby and Abu-Bakr (RA) sacrificed all his money for the sake of Islam. So now, what did you sacrifice?

Our love for the Prophet ﷺ must not confine to shedding tears and wailing; it should rather take a different turn through exerting efforts, being devoted to the Message, motivated by the love for Islam and for our countries, establishing a revival and following the Prophet's path when he developed a perfect plan and exerted his utmost efforts. However, victory cannot be reached unless through the help of Allah ﷻ, the Incomparably Great, the Ultimate Trustee. Despite the Prophet's accurate planning, Quraysh could somehow find out their hideaway, which represented a sort of shortcoming in the plan, but it was meant to be in order to prove to you now that the Prophet's experience was a humanly one, where deficiencies may occur.

Consequently, Quraysh went out to get them. They ascended the mountain until they reached the cavern, with the Prophet ﷺ and his companion (RA) inside, but Allah ﷻ was capable of rescuing them, just like when He rescued the Prophet the first time in order to show the disbelievers that He is the Eternal Owner of Sovereignty and to convey a very significant meaning. That is: He saved the Prophet on the first time as a reward for his honesty and keenness on giving back the consignments and will save him on the second time for being a man with a great Message, who had done his best and planned accurately, but eventually it is Allah who grants success.

Quraysh actually reached the cavern after three hours of exhausting climb and here they were standing right before the cavern opening (access), but they did not take the effort to have a look inside it because they found doves laying eggs there. Allah misled them and turned them blind so as not to see the Prophet and his companion (RA), for He is the Ultimate Trustee. Would not you trust Him too?!

Look at the Prophet's courage when he reassured the anxious Abu-Bakr (RA) saying his famous phrase, **“O Abu-Bakr, what do you think of two men protected by Allah?”**. Allah ﷻ says, **“In case ever you do not vindicate him, (The Prophet) yet Allah readily vindicated him, as the ones who disbelieved drove him out the second of two, as the two were in the cavern, as he said to his companion, “Grieve not” ...” (9:40).**

This is Cavern Thawr, the embodiment of the great significance of Allah's beautiful name the Ultimate Trustee; so, you should make Him your trustee. We do not sacrifice objects or places but this cavern is truly a sign of the glory of this religion, the greatness of our Prophet and the potency of the Creator .

We are now inside the cavern, where the Prophet ﷺ and Abu-Bakr (RA) spent three days hiding. See how they could have been easily disclosed; see how narrow the cavern is. Do you remember when we likened Cavern Hira' to the Prophet's Al-Hawd (the pool whose water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey; whoever drinks from it will never thirst)? The same likening can be applied to Cavern Thawr as well. The Prophet ﷺ slept and prayed here for three days; this place witnessed the descend of Allah's **“ones who disbelieved drove him out the second of two, as the two were in the cavern, as he said to his companion, “Grieve not; surely Allah is with us. “Then Allah sent down His serenity on him and aided him with hosts you did not see” (9:40).**

Consider the following examples, which show the love and devotion that the great companion Abu-Bakr (RA) had for the Prophet ﷺ, which were evident in more than one occasion. Abu-Bakr (RA) insisted to be the first to get into that desolated cavern before the Prophet ﷺ in order to ensure that the Prophet would not get stung by a snake, and he was keen on blocking any crack in the walls with his fingers to save the Prophet from snakes or scorpions bite. Another example, one day while they were heading to Madinah through the desert, it was terribly hot and the Prophet got thirsty, so Abu-Bakr (RA) hurried to get him little milk to drink though he was equally thirsty himself; he (RA) later on commented on this incident by saying **“the Prophet**

kept drinking till my own thirst quenched”; a very significant phrase. Do you long for meeting the Prophet ﷺ at Al-Hawd, when he will scoop up some water for you to drink and when everyone will be suffering from the terrible thirst of that day?

After Quraysh gave up hope in identifying the shelter of the Prophet ﷺ and his companion (RA), they turned back down the mountain, and after three days the Prophet ﷺ and Abu-Bakr (RA) left the cavern and set out to the North towards Madinah. The Prophet ﷺ was keen on avoiding the caravans road, so he chose another one away from it; yet, he will inevitably be crossing the caravans road in certain areas. However, the Prophet passed these areas fast, with his face covered in order not to leave anything for chance. At one of such crossing points, a group of men from Quraysh, who were on their way back to Makkah, happened to see the Prophet . When they reached Makkah, they went to inform Quraysh, which had previously offered 100 camels for anyone who can find Muhammad . Among this group of men was Surakkah Ibn-Malk, who wanted to have the 100 camels all for himself; so, he deceived the others by saying that the passers-by whom they saw were his own relatives, not Muhammad and his companion (RA). Then, he secretly rode his horse, armed with his sword, and went off to get the Prophet . At that time, the Prophet ﷺ was reading Qur'an and Abu-Bakr (RA) was watching over him as usual. Abu-Bakr (RA) suddenly saw Surakkah coming, so he (RA) warned the Prophet , who said this wonderful supplication “O my Lord, save me his harm however you wish and by whatever means you wish, You have the Power over what you will”. Hence, the sophisticated knight fell off his horse; he tried to re-ride over and over in vain, until he finally realized that the Prophet was really protected by a divine power. Surakkah went to the Prophet and asked the Prophet to offer him something. The Prophet ﷺ promised to grant him the armlets of Khosrau one day; surprisingly enough, the man believed the Prophet and asked him to put this promise into writing. The Prophet's promise proved to be true twenty years later, when the Muslims conquered the Persian land under Omar Ibnul-khattab’s Caliphate .

That was the story of the Prophet's journey of the Hijrah, which marked the true beginning of Muslims' victory. Finally, let me conclude this lecture with this question: Are you ready to sacrifice for the sake of Islam the way Ali Ibn-Abu-Taleb (RA), Abu-Bakr (RA), Asmaa and the Prophet ﷺ did??!!

Lecture Notes Provided By: Imam Ghulam Moyhuddin

Seerah: Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisam, Ibn Kathir and Diya al-Nabi were used in the compilation of these lecture notes as well as various books of Hadith.

The selective topics and format is from Amr Khaled’s Arabic lecture on Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ with renditions from the “dar al tarjma” convoy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oDLD8B-has>

I have included modifications for the sake of readability and clarity.