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# The Prophet Muhammad Mustafa the Elect



- 1 -

Osman Nûri Topbaş

Regarding the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Allah ﷻ, states in the Holy Quran:

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ

And you stand on an exalted standard of character.” (al-Qalam, 68:4)

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the last day and remembers Allah much.” (al-Ahzab, 33; 21)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

“Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! Invoke (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a becoming salutation.” (al-Ahzab, 33:56)

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“So take what the Messenger enjoins on you, and desist from that which he forbids you. And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment.” (al-Hashr, 59:7)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ

“O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messenger, and render not your actions vain.” (Muhammad, 47:33)

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ

وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا

“All who obey Allah and the messenger are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah; the Prophets, the most truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. What a beautiful fellowship!” (an-Nisa’, 4:69)

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَنْ يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْخِزْيُ الْعَظِيمُ

“Do they not know that whoever acts in opposition to Allah and His Messenger, he shall surely have the fire of hell to abide in it? That is the grievous abasement.” (at-Tawba, 9:63)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ says:

*“I was sent to perfect morals.” (Muwatta’, Husn’ul-Khuluq, 8)*

*“Everything and everybody on earth and in the skies knows that I am the Messenger of Allah except the disobedient jinn and human beings.” (Ahmad ibn Hanbel, Musnad, III, 310)*

*“I leave you two things if you hold fast to which you will never fall into misguidance. The Book of Allah (Holy Quran) and the Sunnah of His Prophet” (Muwatta’, Qadar, 3)*

The following is from Mawlana

Rumi:

*“As long as I have life in this body, I am the slave of the Quran and the dust in the path of Muhammad the chosen...”*

*My complaints shall abide against anyone who relates from me something contradicting this.”*



## FOREWORD

*The First and Last Link in the Chain of Prophets,  
The Noblest in the Two Worlds,  
The Prophet of Man and Jinn,  
The Imam of the Holy Precinct,  
The Light of all Being and Mercy for the Universe,*

### THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA ﷺ

Considering it is the Light of Muhammad that provides the reason for existence in all creation, it is impossible to do justice, solely through these humble words, to the life, so unique and unblemished, of a man honored as the ‘Beloved’ by the Creator. Still, countless benefits await each and every person, depending on aptitude, in nonetheless attempting to narrate the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and convey his characteristics to new generations. Thus we will consider ourselves honored, if through this work, we are able to receive so little as a glimpse of the exceptional character of the Prophet ﷺ and emulate his great morals. Let it be known that we are far from making the claim of having understood and explained the Noble Prophet ﷺ as befits him. With respect to the magnificence of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, our words should rather be taken as a thin ray of light that pierces through a felt covering a lamp. Allah ﷻ, declares:



لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ  
وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

“Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much.” (al-Ahzab, 21)

The Almighty also vows by the life of the Prophet, in order to show the greatness of his life in the Divine sight. لَعَمْرُكَ “By your life! ...” (al-Hijr, 72) It is therefore impossible to properly understand and encompass such an emphatically exalted life through mere words.

Sheikh Ghalib, one of the greatest figures of classical Ottoman poetry, gives expression to his love and respect for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in the following:

Master... The Sultan of all Prophets, an illustrious king,  
The eternal cure you are, Master, for the desperate and ailing,  
Master, you are the most valued soul in the abode of the Lord,  
Who vowed on your life, Master, by Divine words reinforced,  
*Ahmad, Mahmud and Muhammad*, you are, praised out of all  
kinds,  
A mercy for us from the Lord, strengthened through the Divine...

So high is the value of the Prophet ﷺ in the Divine sight that the Almighty considers obedience to the Prophet to be obedience to Himself. Even a little disobedience of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is enough to annul religious deeds and make them meaningless. Respect for him is taken as a test of piety; even addressing the Prophet ﷺ improperly was considered as a residue of ignorance. Allah the Glorious has thus declared the necessity of observing the





remembrance of the Prophet ﷺ in our hearts and tongues, even commanding us to recite during each in daily salat:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

“Peace be upon you O Prophet, as well as the mercy and blessings of Allah!”

Although greeting someone during the prescribed prayer normally annuls it, Allah ﷻ, has not only exempted the salutation of His Prophet from this legal ruling, He has made it obligatory. Concerning this, Imam al-Ghazali says:

“As you send your greetings to the Prophet ﷺ during salat, consider him present in person, in your heart. Rest assured that your greetings will reach him and he will respond to you in an even better way.” (*Ihyâu Ulûmi'd-Dîn*, I, 224)

Khalid al-Baghdadi, the famous Naqshbandi Sheikh, in the fourth letter of his *Maktûbât* quotes the erudite scholar Shihâb ibn-i Hajar al-Makkî as saying:

“When we recite «as-salâmu alayka» in the sitting position of the salat, this greeting is addressed to the Prophet, as if for the Almighty to inform the Messenger of the prayer of his followers. Having witnessed thereby the prayer of his followers in this world, the Prophet will give evidence in their favor in the Hereafter. Also, remembering his spiritual presence with us while we pray will increase the heart’s awareness and concentration.”<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to truly understand and explain the immensely precious life of the Prophet, a man with whom the universe boasts.

1. *Maktûbât-ı Mawlânâ Khâlid*, p. 118; *Risâlatu'r-Râbita*, (Mawlânâ Safiyyuddîn, in the *Rashahat* gloss) p. 225-226.

By mentioning his blessed name, we only have the intention of honoring our words, and perhaps partake in that honor ourselves. So we implore our readers to excuse the weakness of our words in conveying the great value of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Doubtless, tongues also suffer the same incapacity the understanding does, caused by the inability to behold and ponder the Gracious Messenger ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ is an eternal realm of mystery, access to which is determined according to the force and sincerity of love for him. We ask the help of Allah ﷻ, that He grant us access to the blessed life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the ability to draw from his exemplary conduct; and that He forgive us for the errors we may make in the process of putting his illustrious life into words.

In the spirit of our righteous predecessors, we hereby repeat:

O Allah! Where shall the sinners take refuge if you only forgive the pious and obedient servants? Who shall they beg if you only show mercy to the pious and the god-fearing?<sup>2</sup>

And we too take refuge in the vast ocean of Divine mercy and ask His forgiveness for the unintentional slips of our tongue, wrought by our flaws and the audacity with which we have set out to elaborate the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, to the limited extent of opportunity words provide.

O Allah! For the sake of the Prophet Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, please forgive us.

Amin!



Dear Readers!

The work which we present here is the expanded edition of the fourth volume of *Nebiler Silsilesi*, first published in Turkish. The first three volumes covered the lives of previous Prophets. The fourth volume, an outline of the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, has been, in this new edition, expanded into a larger two-volume account, the first on the Meccan period, and the second on the Madinan period of the Prophet's life ﷺ.

I sincerely thank Murat Kaya for his help in finding the sources of hadith and the life of the Prophet ﷺ. My thanks also go to the translators who have done a great job in rendering this work into English. The names of the previous authors of the life and times of the Blessed Messenger ﷺ, I also mention with respect. I ask for the forgiveness and mercy of Allah on their behalf. Success comes from Allah ﷻ, alone.

Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ

January 2005

Uskudar





# INTRODUCTION

## **The Significance of Knowing the Life of the Prophet for Understanding and Practicing Islam**

There are many different elements in forming one's education and character. Since human beings form their personalities as well as language, religion and moral qualities in accordance with the living examples they see around themselves, who they deem as the most important living example around them is adopted as a guide or an exemplary personality. Bar a few exceptions, this is how human nature generally is. For example, every child learns how to speak first from the parents, and then goes on to learn even more languages; and if he does, it is only through imitating other examples.

The inclination to imitate is an important character-forming trait in every human being. Education mostly consists in setting examples for imitation, good or bad. One forms his personality in line with the influences impressed by the given environment, to the degree of the intensity of his imitation. Although language is acquired naturally, religious and spiritual characteristics cannot be acquired as easily.

The reason behind this difficulty is that along with the will power, man has also been given an ego (*nafs*) and Satan, as part of the great test. These two great obstacles prevent the practice of virtues, and urge man on the contrary to head in the opposite



direction. There is therefore a vital need for Prophets and saints, people of delicate hearts who have perfected their spiritual lives, around which they have formed their personalities, having shackled their egos and repelled Satan. Man is otherwise unable to escape from heedlessness, misguidance and disobedience, which might cost him eternal salvation. It is also for this reason that human beings follow the footsteps of those who captivate them, good or bad, on whom they model themselves. It is tragic to see today the sinners and the morally ill, who defeated by their egos, let their evil guides lay waste to their lives. It is simply a case of having placed wrong people on the thrones of their hearts, whereby they have ended up deceiving only themselves.

Rumi explains the paradox of man's condition in the following lines:

*It is not amazing to see a lamb flee from a wolf, since the wolf is its enemy. But seeing a lamb fall in love with a wolf...that is cause for wonder!*

Instead of leaving our hearts to the wolves during our fleeting stay on earth and thereby losing eternal bliss, we must submit it to the best of examples, the leader of the universe, the master of the Prophets, Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, lovingly obey him and make him the only king of our hearts. Loving him was made an obligation by Allah the Almighty,<sup>3</sup> as expressed in following *ayah*, and many others in the Holy Quran alike:

النَّبِيِّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ

3. See at-Tawba, 24.



“The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves...”  
(al-Ahzâb, 6)

In the words of the Prophet ﷺ narrated by Abu Hurayrah, loving him is a condition of *iman*.

“By Him in Whose Hands my life resides, none of you will have faith until he loves me more than his father and his children.”  
(Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 13)

According to another hadith narrated by Anas ؓ, the sweetness of faith is tasted only if Allah and His Prophet become dearer to the believer than anything else. (Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 2, Number 15<sup>4</sup>)

The following, narrated by Abdullah ibn Hisham ؓ, highlights the level of love between us and the Prophet ﷺ.

“One day Omar ؓ went for a walk with the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. At one point the Prophet ﷺ took Omar’s hand, prompting Omar to exclaim:

“By Allah, I love you very much”.

“Even more than your children, Omar?” the Prophet ﷺ then asked.

“Yes!”

“More than your family, too?”

“Yes, Prophet of Allah.”

“More than your wealth?”

“Yes, Prophet of Allah, more than my wealth!”

“And even more than yourself?” then asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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4. See Bukhari, Iman, 9, 14; Muslim, Iman, 67.



“No, Messenger of Allah”, Omar ؓ replied hesitantly.

“Your faith will never be complete, Omar, until you love me more than yourself.”

So Omar ؓ went away and stayed alone and returned after a while. Standing in the middle of the mosque, he shouted at the top of his voice:

“Messenger of Allah, now I love you more than myself!”

“That is it, Omar; that is it!” the Noble Messenger ﷺ replied, meaning that only now was Omar’s faith complete. (*Bukhari, Ayman, 3*)

The prerequisites of love are persistent remembrance of the beloved and conforming with the beloved in all actions and thoughts. In order to obtain a heart filled with the love for the Prophet ﷺ, one needs to learn his Sunnah and imitate it with great care and respect. Without knowing his life and embellishing the heart with his love, Islam cannot be practiced in the ideal way. The road to gaining the love of Allah ﷻ, runs through the love of the Prophet ﷺ. But loving him requires knowing him; and without loving the Prophet ﷺ in the extreme, one cannot perfect his faith. It is owing to such reasons that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ took delicate care in establishing such love, explaining to his followers the refined aspects of how to duly develop this necessary affection.

Being the peak of all Prophets, the life of the Noble Messenger ﷺ embodies and surpasses all the virtues of the past 124 thousand or so Prophets said to have come. Not only did he have the gift of guiding the people of his own time, he has also been blessed with guiding the following generations until the Final Hour, as the *Khatamun Nabiyyîn*, the Seal of All Prophets.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the only Prophet, indeed the only man in history, every minute detail of whose life has been recorded.





Only a portion of the exemplary conduct of other previous Prophets has reached us. The Noble Prophet ﷺ remains the only one of that blessed chain whose life is thoroughly known, from the simplest daily actions to the most delicate social dealings. This knowledge, as a grace of Allah ﷻ, will be transmitted from one generation to another until the end of time.

Thus what grants superiority to Islamic morality and elevates it from pure theory to practice is the very fortunate fact that the exemplary actions of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ were recorded in their full details and preserved until today without any change.

As human beings we ought to adopt many good moral characteristics, including trust in the Almighty, gratitude, contentedness with the Divine verdict, patience against afflictions, bravery, sacrifice for others, generosity, modesty, just to name a few. In addition, we have to maintain our balance against the ups and downs of life. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the gift of the Almighty to all humanity in setting the best standard in the adoption of these virtues for others.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ virtually began his life as an orphan, the most feeble position in society, going through all kinds of difficult phases until ultimately reaching the peak of his mission as a Prophet, as well as a head of state. In all walks of life, these different stages set others the best of example to follow. Owing to his balanced stance in the face of strong tides in various situations, persons from different backgrounds can draw good lessons from his blessed life, not only in theory but also in practice.

Therefore the fitting return for the boundless grace of Allah ﷻ, would be none other than learning the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ with a spiritually vibrant heart. Such learning must inevitably lead to practice and its teaching to others. But just as importantly, in doing so, we must also take good care in applying the correct method of



approaching his life, as the actions of the Noble Messenger ﷺ reflect two different kinds of acts.

1- Acts applicable only to the Prophet ﷺ himself; as when he would perform salat at night until his feet would swell, when he would fast continuously for days on end; when he would hand out all he had – even if it were as great as Mount Uhud, he would say-for charity without reserving anything for himself except for what he held back to pay off a debt, and the fact he did not leave any inheritance and forbade receiving charity not only for himself but also for his offsprings until the end of time.

Although the Prophet ﷺ had stated he was a human being like any other (Bukhari, Salât 31, Ahkâm 20), he is also known to have dissuaded some Companions from following him in fasts without break, saying, “I am not like you, for I am provided with food and drink by Allah.” (Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 31, Number 145)

The Believers simply do not have the power to imitate the Prophet ﷺ in such difficult matters. Such acts are therefore applicable only to him, with the followers not allowed to follow the Prophet ﷺ in like manner.

2- Acts that are to be emulated universally. The Prophet’s ﷺ Sunnah is for all human beings of all different social statuses and backgrounds to follow according to their capacities.

We are not obliged to emulate the virtues displayed by the Prophet ﷺ in the first section described above; virtues as high as the skies which we are incapable of following. But as for the second virtues, we are obliged to imitate them throughout our lives until we breathe our last, to the best of our capabilities. In full appreciation of the great importance of the Prophet ﷺ in one’s life, it has been common for Turks to dub each and every one of their children

*Mehmetcik*, that is ‘little Muhammad’, wishing thereby to encourage them to become role models, to the best of their potentials, in putting to practice the great ways of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

Understanding the life of the Prophet ﷺ is also very important in understanding the wisdom and ethos of the Holy Quran.

As stated there:

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ  
بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُبِينٍ

“Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: With it came down the Trustworthy Spirit upon your heart, that you may admonish in a clear Arabic tongue.” (al-Shuara, 193-195)

Effectively, his twenty-three year period of prophethood is an explanation of the Holy Quran, which makes it impossible to take even a step in comprehending the Sacred Book without any knowledge of his life.<sup>5</sup>

5. Unless verbal truths are illustrated by physical examples, one will inevitably fall into error in practice, for people always tend to comprehend abstract things in line with their own experiences and according to the level of their own understanding. Concrete examples bear out the shape in which a given abstract truth is supposed to be embodied, leaving no room for further argument. All opinions, therefore, propounded for the good of humanity have led to various differences in practice, owing simply to their lack of physical and concrete criteria. Islamic thought, in this sense, contains a wealth and perfection incomparable to any other; and making this possible has solely been the fact of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ rendering concrete the entire body of abstract truths through the behavior he exemplified throughout his life and their immediate recording, in their totality, by the Companions, which providentially have been passed onto us.



To correctly understand Islamic culture and achieve spiritual completion, thus unavoidably requires one to receive inspiration from his splendid twenty-three year life. Spiritual life is perfected only through the positive energy that comes from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His chaste life is like a painting, in which all the beauties of Islam are fully exhibited.

Neither can those who call people to Islam nor can teachers do their work without knowing the blessed life of their Prophet ﷺ, since he gives the most concrete examples in teaching as well as inviting people to Islam. Such knowledge will unite knowledge with the heart, establishing a balance between the two.

A young man wanting to be trustworthy person in his society, a head of state wishing to be just ruler among his people, a man seeking to be a compassionate father towards his wife and children, an army commander striving for success, and in short, all Muslims from all walks of life are bound to find their best example in the life of the Prophet (*Siyar'un-Nabi*).<sup>6</sup>

### **The Wisdom behind the Choice of the Arabian Peninsula as the Cradle of Islam**

In order to better appreciate the choice of Arabia as the birthplace of Islam we need to know the nature, traditions and

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6. “No single person can take a step beyond the principles of Muhammad. Despite all the success that has come the way of Europe, all the laws and principles decreed by Europe are insufficient in relation to Islamic culture. We, the nations of Europe, in spite of all the opportunities our civilization is impregnated with, are still only on the first step of the ladder on whose final step Muhammad stands. Doubtless, nobody shall beat him in this race. And this Book (the Quran), being exceptionally practical, shall never cease to wield influence for eternity and will gather other nations around itself.” (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

characteristics of Arabs as well as the geographical and social conditions of their homeland.

The two superpowers of the time, the Byzantines and the Persians, were both neighbors to Arab lands. The Byzantines had many vassals and had problems with their subjects in religious issues. Their rulers corrupted Christianity by changing it according to their whims. In their Church councils, they proclaimed some scriptures as holy and others as heretical, manipulating the rules of Christian faith as they wished. They used excommunication for political reasons, and it was not uncommon for the new ruler to excommunicate the previous one. The heavy taxes enforced upon people and the bribery rampant among administration corrupted the base of society.

Persia was also in the grip of moral and political chaos. Allowing one to marry with one's mother and daughter, the Zoroastrian religion was effectively wreaking havoc on human dignity. The Mazdean claim was that just as air, water and fire belonged to all, human beings exercised a similar right over women whom they could commonly use without any discrimination, just like the rest of their properties.

Greek civilization was in the vicious circle of endless philosophical disputes and superstitions, whereas Indian civilization remained in a primitive phase, both morally and socially.

Arabs, on the other hand, were living in close-knit societies, and surrounded by vast deserts, were remote from the threat of military and cultural invasions. They had never been colonized; hence they were like raw material uncorrupted by any foreign culture. Their natures were not polluted. Virtues like honor, keeping one's word, generosity, locality, bravery and patience, among others, were still very much alive, except that they would either be shown in excess



or in the bare minimum, and not in the perfected balance that befits human nature. Without a guide to show them the true way, they were living in the darkness of ignorance.

Their ignorance and slavery to their egos had veiled their good characteristics hidden underneath their human nature. Fearing they might be forced to prostitution by the enemy if captured as slaves in battles, the pagan Arabs would kill their daughters by burying them alive, much to the heartfelt dismay of their mothers; or they would squander their most basic needs just to protect their reputations of generosity. Their bravery and fearlessness would incite them to engage in ceaseless battles. The aftermath was always great bloodshed. The advent of Islam and the emergence of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, turned this tide upon its heels, steering all the wrong manifestations of their moral values to a positive direction, eliminating the negative outcomes of the good qualities they had deep inside.

Another reason as to why Arabia was chosen as the cradle of the last Prophet was to dispel any doubt that would have arisen regarding the authenticity of the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Since the Arabs were an illiterate people, they were left unaffected from the cultures and philosophies of surrounding nations. Had the Prophet ﷺ been a literate man conversant with the culture and knowledge of neighboring civilizations, as well as the content of their sacred scriptures, doubt would have arisen that the Prophet had conjured up his prophecy through learning from others. Similarly, with an ingrained resistance based on the long histories of their civilizations, the Persians or Byzantines would have perhaps found it difficult to accept Islam had the religion appeared in either of these environments. In addition, it could have led other people to think that Islam was the product of these environments and not a Revelation of the Almighty. To prevent such doubts Islam was therefore sent to an illiterate society through



an unlettered Prophet ﷺ, leaving no room to validate the claim that Islam was a product of a literate Prophet and his cultured people.

Arabia also had the advantage of occupying a central place in the world map between Europe, Asia and Africa, facilitating the spread and accessibility of Islam.<sup>7</sup> The Holy Quran describes Mecca as a place unfit for agriculture,<sup>8</sup> necessitating the locals to travel in order to get by. Agricultural societies are normally very much attached to their soil and not fond of travelling long journeys. Similarly, craftsmen are attached to their workshops and therefore are not fond of traveling either. As tradesmen, the Meccans were accustomed to travel long distances which proved to be a blessing for the spread of Islam in the long run. The advantage they had in being able to go to distant countries and their experience in interacting with many different people could count as another reason as to why Islam was sent to the people of Mecca.

The Divine Will graced the Arabic language as the vehicle of transmission due to the excellent qualities inherent within that language itself. Compared to other languages, the Arabic language enjoys superior qualities in terms of its harmony and syntax, in producing derivations, conjugations and so on. Arabic has the power of transmitting the most difficult meanings in the curtest words, without losing any nuance. Its richness allows the language to transmit the most abstract ideas in the most admirably eloquent way. The Arabic language had completed its development early, making it the only language at the time capable of transmitting the Divine Will in the most perfect way.

The Arabian peninsula is also a blessed environment. The great-grandfather of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ lived in this area and

7. See Muhammad Ilyas Abdulghani, *Tārihu Makka*, p. 12-13.

8. See Ibrahim, 37.

built the Kaabah, the foundations of which had been there as old as the history of mankind. With an awareness of this historical fact, Meccans considered themselves as heirs of the spiritual inheritance of Ibrahim and Ismail عليهما السلام. This is another factor that helped the acceptance and understanding of Islam.

Though one can certainly enumerate many more causes for the choice of this land for the revelation of Islam, there ultimately lies a wisdom behind it which we cannot know, and which is known only to Allah ﷻ. We therefore feel compelled to conclude this discussion with the words “اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمُرَادِهِ”: Allah knows best what He wills.

### Mecca: The Mother of Towns

Known as the mother of towns, Mecca is also called “Becca” and “the safe town”. In Babylonian, both Mecca and Becca mean a “house”. The greater area of Mecca is surrounded by Yemen in the south, the Mediterranean Sea in the north, the Persian Gulf in the east and the Red Sea in the west. It is at the crossroads of intercontinental routes, in particular Africa, where Jeddah, in particular, as a harbor by the Red Sea, played an important role in connecting Mecca to the sea routes. In Mecca, the area where the Kaabah was situated was called *al-Batha*, and the town center was called *Batn’u Mecca*.

Mecca was established by a great Prophet of Allah ﷻ. Ibrahim عليه السلام, the father of Prophets, had a wife called Sarah who had not borne him any child. Sarah gave her slave girl Hagar to Ibrahim عليه السلام and they married after her emancipation. From this marriage Ismail عليه السلام was born, to whom the Muhammedan Light was transmitted, much to the disappointment of Sarah who had expected the light to be passed on through her. Seeing the light passed onto Ismail instead from her former slave girl Hagar, she became very sad.



She asked Ibrahim عليه السلام to take Hagar and Ismail عليه السلام to a remote place. This was, of course, only the visible reason behind the greater, underlying Divine Will. So with the command of Allah ﷻ, Ibrahim عليه السلام took them to Mecca, guided on the way through by the Archangel Jibril. Upon reaching Mecca the Angel told Ibrahim عليه السلام to house his family over there.

But Ibrahim عليه السلام protested, saying:

“This place is neither fit for agriculture nor for animal husbandry.”

Jibril however calmed him:

“Indeed...But from the offspring of your sons the unlettered Prophet will emerge. And with him will be completed the Divine Word, the words of unity (*tawhid*).” (Ibn-i Sa’d, I, 164)

Abdullah b. Abbâs<sup>9</sup> (may Allah be happy with him) narrates:

“Prophet Ibrahim took our mother Hagar and his son, still an infant, to Mecca. He left them behind a tree which near the fount of

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9. Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه is the son of Abbas رضي الله عنه and thus the cousin of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. His mother is Umm’ul-Fadl Lubaba, the woman who accepted Islam immediately after Khadijah رضي الله عنها. Moments after his birth, three years prior to the Hegira, he was taken to the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who took the toddler in his arms, rubbing in the child’s palate a date he had chewed in his mouth. Due to this incident, known as *tahnîk*, Ibn Abbas was to later stand out among the Companions. Afterward, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ personally prayed for him on two occasions, in one of these with the words, “Allah, grant him a depth of knowledge in religion and teach him the Quran!” He thus became the Companion with the greatest insight into the Quran, earning him the appellation *at-Tarjuman*, the Interpreter. He was also known as *Hibr’ul-Ummah*, meaning the most knowledgeable of the Believers. Including repetitions, he narrated a total of 1660 hadiths. Spending the last few years of his life as a blind man, he passed away in Ta’if, in 687 (H. 68), at the age of 71.



Zamzam awaiting to be dug. He also gave them a basket of dates and a jug of water. When he was about to go back, Hagar asked:

“Did Allah command you to leave us here in this barren land?”

“Yes”, Ibrahim answered.

Hagar then said in great submission and trust to Allah:

“In that case our Lord will protect us. We will not be forsaken.”

She then returned to her son Ismail. Ibrahim, on the other hand, began walking away. As soon as Ibrahim got out of sight of both Ismail and Hagar, he opened his hands towards the skies and supplicated:

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ  
 الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي  
 إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ

‘O our Lord! Surely I have settled a part of my offspring in a valley unproductive of fruit, near Your Sacred House, our Lord, that they may keep up prayer. Therefore make the hearts of some people yearn towards them and provide them with fruits, haply they may be grateful’” (Ibrāhīm, 37)” (Bukhari, Anbiya, 9)

Leaving his only son and wife back in this barren land, Ibrahim ﷺ prayed to Allah ﷻ, in the following way:

رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ  
 مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

“My Lord, make this a Land of Safety, and feed its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day.” (al-Baqara, 126)

The Almighty accepted his prayers, exempting the unbelievers from His mercy and threatening them in the following words:

قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمْتِعْهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ  
وَبُئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

“...He said: “(Yea), and such as reject Faith,-for a while will I grant them their pleasure, but will soon drive them to the torment of Fire,- an evil destination (indeed)!” (al-Baqara, 126)

Even today, due to the prayers of Ibrahim عليه السلام, the Almighty fills the hearts of pilgrims with love and respect towards the Holy Kaabah. Souls find unparalleled peace and tranquility in those holy lands.

The little water left by Ibrahim for Hagar was consumed in no time. Hoping to find some water Hagar, ran between the hills of Safa and Marwa seven times. The distance between these two hills is about four hundred meters. When she was running between the hills, she was also watching her baby with the corner of her eyes. But there was no trace of life around; no human beings, not even birds. When she yet again reached the Hill of Marwa she heard a voice command:

“Keep silent and listen!”

“Yes, I can hear you... Please help us if you can!” she answered.

She then saw an angel digging with either its wings or heels the fount of Zamzam. Water gushed forth. Jubilant, Hagar first filled her water-skin. Yet, the more she took with her hands from the water, the more it sprang. She immediately started making a little well around the spring to collect the gushing water, repeating the



words ‘*zam zam*’ at the same time for the water to stop. (‘*zam zam*’ means ‘stop, stop’).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “May Allah bestow His Mercy upon the mother of Ismail! Had she not hastened to fill her water-skin with water from the Zamzam well, Zamzam would have been a stream flowing on the surface of the earth.” Ibn Abbas further added, “The Prophet Ibrahim brought Ismail and his mother to Mecca and she was suckling Ismail and she had a water-skin with her.” (Bukhâri, Enbiyâ, 9)

The mother and her son were continuing to live by only on the water from Zamzam. After a while, passing by the spring of Zamzam, the tribe of Jurhum saw a bird fly up and down from a certain place. Guessing there to be a trace of life, they sent two people to check it out. Once they found out about the spring, they asked permission to settle near it. Hagar allowed them on the condition they do not claim ownership of the spring. The Jurhumites agreed, making them the first tribe to settle in Mecca.

In time, Mecca developed into a city-state. The tribe of Huza’a took Mecca by force in 207 when they were not allowed to settle by the Jurhumites. The sons of Ismail remained neutral in this battle and hence they were left unharmed by the new occupying force. They ruled the city for long years, during which they deviated from the right path of Ibrahim. They supported the worship of idols, promoting the deviant faith. They set up an idol named Hubal. When the offspring of Ismail became more powerful under the leadership of Qusayy, they expelled Huza’a out of Mecca in 440.

Qusayy established the Dar’un-Nadwa which functioned like the parliament of the city-state of Mecca along with the other institutions he founded to organize the social and religious life. Duties like the commandership of the battles and the protection of the flag

(*qiyâdah*), the service of the Kaabah (*sidânah*, *hijâbah*), watering of the pilgrims (*sikâyah*) and feeding of the pilgrims out of the taxes collected (*ridânah*) were under the responsibility of Qusayy. Before his death, he requested in his will that these duties be passed onto his sons Abd'ud-Dâr and Abd Menaf, initiating the beginning of the passage of these duties from father to the son thereafter.<sup>10</sup>

All the inhabitants of Mecca could join in the sessions of parliament once they reached they turned forty. However, the rule was that only the family or clan chiefs could participate in these meetings. Interestingly, it was also this assembly that was used to oppose the mission of the Prophet ﷺ.

Other local assemblies, or *nadi*, like these were also used for social gatherings and other activities in addition to their main purpose as places to make military and political decisions.

As the soil of Mecca was unfit for agriculture, the locals earned their living primarily through trade. Mecca thus occupied a pivotal place in the commercial life of the Arabian Peninsula. Commerce in the town was continuously lively through summer and winter. The destination of trade was Syria in winter and Yemen in summer. Chiefly used to carry commercial goods were camels and at times the number of camels in a single caravan would reach to two-thousand-five-hundred. The prosperity Meccan lives received through trade was of such immensity that the Almighty reminded them of this exclusive favor when inviting them to Islam:

لَا يَلَافُ قُرَيْشٌ أَيْلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ  
هَذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

10. See Ibn Hisham, I, 135-142.

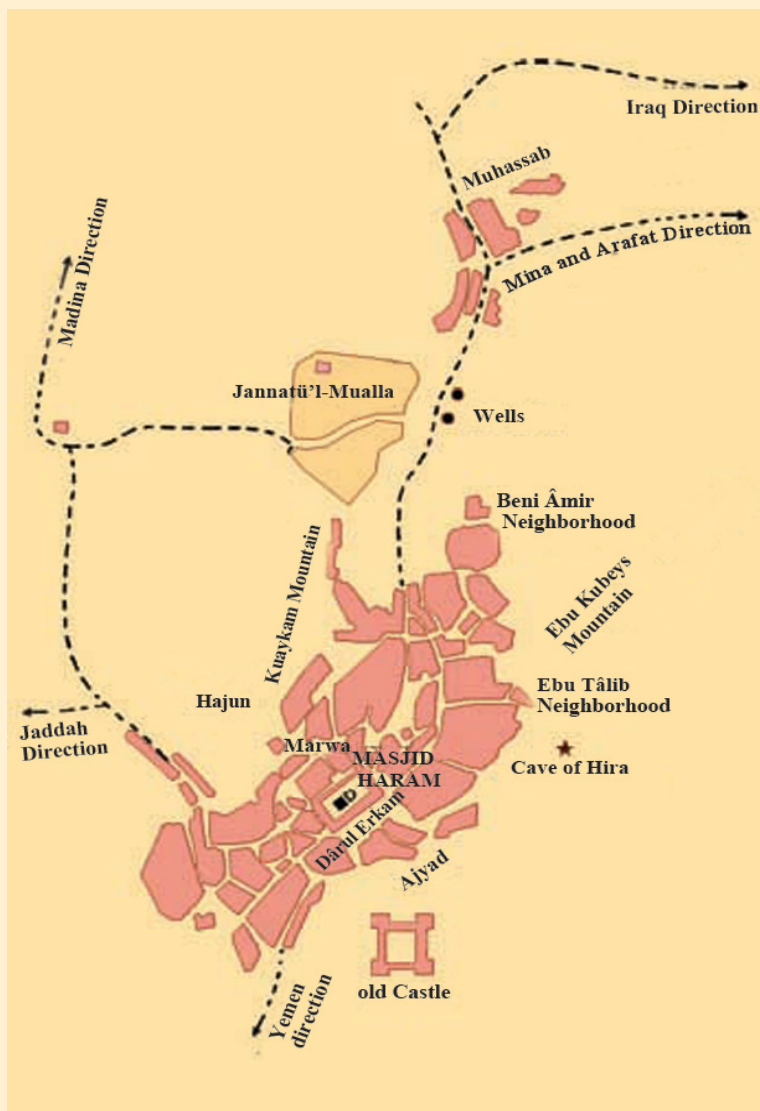
“For the protection of the Quraysh; their protection during their trading caravans in the winter and the summer. So let them serve the Lord of this House, Who feeds them against hunger and gives them security against fear.” (Quraysh, 1-4)

Caravan trade was not easy in the Arabian Peninsula due to tribal turmoil and lack of a central political power. Only during the forbidden months, which prohibited engagement in any kind of conflict and highway robbery, could a trader feel safe and secure. Even in this respect Mecca had superiority over other places. While the general ban for violence and transgression covered only the month of Rajab, Mecca enjoyed an extended period of non-violence that extended over four months called *al-Ashuru'l-Hurum*. As for the remaining eight months, the *Basl* institution protected the wealth of many families from falling prey to potential plunder.<sup>11</sup>

Mecca held three trade fairs in its vicinity called *Ukâz*, *Majannah* and *Dhu'l-Majâz*. Held in times of pilgrimage according to the *Jahiliyya* schedule, the fairs would attract a significant crowd, endowing Meccan traders with handsome revenue.

Being the all important precinct for the House of God, Mecca always attracted the attention of neighboring powers. In spite of numerous attempts of invasion throughout history, Mecca was somehow able to retain its independence. Even the Byzantines, keen to extend their influence over the peninsula, were ultimately unsuccessful.

11. See Hamidullâh, I, 24-25.



## The History of the Kaabah and Its Sacredness

The Kaabah, mentioned twice in the Quran, literally means a cubic object. Notwithstanding its other famous synonyms referred to in the Quran like *al-Bayt*, *Baytullâh*, *al-Baytu'l-Atîq*, *al-Baytu'l-Harâm*, *al-Baytu'l-Muharram*, *al-Masjidu'l-Harâm*, it is often called the *Kaabah-i Muazzama*, the highly respected Kaabah.<sup>12</sup>

12. The Kaabah was erected upon approximately 1.5 meter-wide columns. Its walls contain a total of 1614 basalt stones of various dimensions brought from around Mecca. On the east corner is the *Hajar'ul-Aswad*, the Black Stone. It is kept in a silver casing and marks the beginning and ending point of circumambulation. The Kaabah's east corner is called *Rukn'ul-Hajar'ul-Aswad* or *Rukn'us-Sharqi*, its north corner *Rukn'ul-Iraqi*, its west corner *Rukn'us-Shami*, while its south corner *Rukn'ul-Yamani*. The drain channeling the rainwater from the roof of the Kaabah (*Mizab'ul-The Kaabah*) is known as the Golden Drain. Starting from the Kaabah, the first three meters of the area enclosed by a semicircular wall, standing at a height of 1.32 meters and width of 1.55 meters, that rises opposite the northwest corner of the Sacred House between *Rukn'ul-Iraqi* and *Rukn'us-Shami*, is known as *Hatim*. This section was included in the main building of the Kaabah put up by Ibrahim ﷺ. Restricted by a lack of material, however, Quraysh, during their restoration, had no other choice but to leave it outside. The remaining 5.56 meter area known either as *Hijrul-the Kaabah*, *Hijru Ismail* or *Hatira*, is the exact spot where Ibrahim ﷺ had made a shade for Hajar and his son Ismail from an *arak* tree. According to tradition, both Hajar and Ismail –upon whom be peace– are buried in the area of *Hijr*. It has thus been decreed obligatory to perform circumambulation from the outside of the *Hijr*. The door of the Kaabah, on the northeast of the House, stands at height of 2,25 meters from the ground. The section of the wall located between the door and the *Hajar'ul-Aswad* is known as *Multazam*. The exact height of the Kaabah is 14 meters. The length of *Multazam* is 12.84 meters, while that of *Hatim* 11.28 meters. *Hatim* and *Rukn'ul-Yamani* is separated by a distance of 11.52 meters. Holding the roof inside the Sacred House are three pillars, lined in the middle, from the south wall to *Hatim*. A ladder to the roof is found on the right hand side of the entrance, which also has a door of its own, called *Bab'ut-Tawbah*, the Door of Repentance. The inner walls of the Kaabah and its roof are covered with a green fabric made of silk. (Muhammad Ilyâs Abdulghani, p. 33-66; Kâmil Mirâs, *Tecrid Tercemesi*, VI, 17-20)



The story of the Kaabah begins with Prophet Adam عليه السلام, the first human being. Upon descending to the world, he was given the duty of building a place of worship on the grounds where the Kaabah stands today.<sup>13</sup> This is mentioned in the Quran in the following verse:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي لَبَّيْكَ مَبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“Most surely the first house appointed for men is the one at Bekka, blessed and a guidance for the nations.” (Āl-i Īmrān, 96)

In response to a question posed by Abu Dharr رضي الله عنه<sup>14</sup>, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم reveals the first building constructed on the face of Earth as the Kaabah, and the second as Masjid’ul-Aqsâ, the holy mosque of Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> The valley of Mecca was hence chosen as a holy place since the very beginning of human history.

After the Deluge of Nuh عليه السلام, the Kaabah remained for a long time under sand. It was rebuilt by Ibrahim many years after he left his son and wife in the land. Revisiting his family in Mecca years after, and seeing that his son was now a young man, Ibrahim عليه السلام told him:

13. See Tabari, *Tārīh*, I, 124

14. Abu Dharr’s رضي الله عنه real name is Jundab ibn Junada. He was known as Ghifari in reference to the tribe of Ghifar from where he originally sprung. As the fifth Muslim, he was a man of piety, contentedness and abstinence, which lead the Blessed Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to call him the *Masih’ul-Islam*, i.e. the Isa عليه السلام of Islam. Constantly by the side of the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he would look to reap the greatest benefit from his presence, asking what he knew not to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم for clarification; accumulating so deep a knowledge in the end that Ali رضي الله عنه is known to have called him ‘the repertoire of knowledge’. The total amount of his hadith narrations is 281. Breathing his last in Rabaza near Mecca in the 31<sup>st</sup> year of Hegira, his funeral last was conducted by a small group who laid him to rest.

15. See Bukhari, *Anbiyâ*, 10.

“Our Lord commands us to build a house for him...and you will help me!”

The young Ismail ﷺ carried stones while Ibrahim ﷺ erected the walls of the Kaabah. The piece of marble carrying the footprints of Ibrahim ﷺ was used as a stepping stone to help him reach the higher places of the wall.<sup>16</sup> The Holy Quran narrates the event in the following words:

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا  
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

“And when Ibrahim and Ismail raised the foundations of the House: Our Lord! accept from us; surely You are the Hearing, the Knowing” (al-Baqara, 127)<sup>17</sup>

The Kaabah is the House of the Almighty only symbolically; that is to say, God does not live in it. Muslims pray to Allah ﷻ, by circumambulating it seven times, starting from the Black Stone placed by Ibrahim ﷺ near one of the corners of the Kaabah. The Black Stone descended from Paradise, and as reported by the

16. Said Bektash, *Fadlu'l-Hajari'l-Aswad wa Maqâmi Ibrâhîm ((upon him peace)),* p. 108; Muhammad Ilyâs Abdulghanî, p. 71-73.

According to one source, Ibrâhîm ﷺ later stood up on the marble, the *Maqamu Ibrahim* and invited people to *hajj*. (Said Bektash, p. 111) In reference to the *Maqamu Ibrahim*, Allah ﷻ, says:

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَحَابَّةً لِلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنَاً وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى

“And when We made the House a resort for mankind and sanctuary, (saying): Take as your place of worship the place where Ibrahim stood (to pray).” (al-Baqara, 125)

17. For the details of the incident, see Bukhari, *Anbiya*, 9.

Blessed Prophet ﷺ, it was whiter than milk and snow at the time of its descent, darkened in time by the sins of human beings. (Tirmidhî, Hajj, 49/877; Ahmad, I, 307)<sup>18</sup>

It has also been reported that fires before and after Islam had a part to do with the darkening of the Stone. But there are accounts that the side of the Stone facing the wall of the Kaabah still remained very white.

Mujahid narrates that when Abdullah ibn Zubayr ؓ demolished the walls of the Kaabah in order to renovate it, he saw that the inner side of the Black Stone was white.

Present during the reinstatement of the Stone in the 339<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira after having been taken away by the heretic Qarmatis was Muhammad ibn Nâfi el-Huzâi, who later gave the following testimony:

“I was there to inspect the Black Stone when it was removed from its case and I saw that only one side, the visible side of the Stone was black, while the other three sides were white.”

In the 1039<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira, the Kaabah was ruined by a strong flood that swept across Mecca. During the rebuilding, Imâm Ibn Allân al-Makkî inspected the Black Stone, commenting that “the parts of the Black Stone installed facing the walls of the Kaabah are as white as the marble where Ibrahim ؑ prayed (*Maqâmu Ibrâhim*)”<sup>19</sup>

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18. Scholars have commented that if sins can have so great an effect on even a stone so as to leave it black, who knows the intensity of the tarnish they can leave on the heart. Abstaining from sins with utmost effort is therefore a must.

19. See Said Bektash, p. 36-38; Dr. Muhammad Ilyâs Abdulghani, p. 43.

The Quran narrates that once the building of the Kaabah was completed, Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail عليهما السلام prayed to Allah ﷻ, in the following manner:

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا  
 مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ. رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ  
 فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ  
 وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“Our Lord! Make of us Muslims, bowing to Your (Will), and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Your (will); and show us our place for the celebration of rites; and turn unto us in Mercy; for You art the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

Our Lord! Send among them a Messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Your Signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: For You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise.»” (al-Baqara, 128-129)

Upon the completion of the Kaabah, the Almighty commanded Ibrahim to invite people for pilgrimage:

وَإِذْ نَادَى فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَا تُوكَ رَجَالاً  
 وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ

“And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage: they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, from every remote path.”

(al-Hajj, 27)



Heeding to this Divine commandment, Ibrahim ؑ climbed the nearby Abu Qubays Mountain, and called out to all four directions with an audible voice, informing people of their obligation to visit the Kaabah.<sup>20</sup>

After this declaration the Archangel Jibril came and showed Ibrahim the borders of the Holy Mosque and the distances of Safâ and Marwâ, telling him to erect stones to mark these borders. The Archangel afterward taught him all the rituals and procedures of the pilgrimage. Thereafter, people from far away lands began visiting the Kaabah for pilgrimage, making Mecca the center for the religion of the Almighty, granting the town an important place in the hearts of people.

On the other hand, jealous of its sacredness and high esteem among people, many idolatrous tribes began attacking Mecca. Before Abrahâ, three idolater kings of Yemen had launched assaults on the Kaabah with the intention of demolishing it. Interestingly enough, the tribe of Huzayl had a way of getting rid of their enemies by encouraging them to attack the Kaabah, knowing that any army that tried to attack the Kaabah would be doomed by Allah ﷻ. It is said that they told one of these kings of Yemen, the *Tubba*,<sup>21</sup> that if he were to invade the Kaabah, he could lay claim to the supposed treasure hidden inside it. Encouraged, the King attacked the Kaabah, but his attempt was thwarted as the feet of his soldiers became buried in sand. The King was then warned by his knowledgeable advisors and persuaded to retreat. On the way back, the King pledged thereafter to treat the Meccans well, supplying them with generous donations, promising also to respect the Kaabah. The assailants were thus able to salvage themselves from destruction.<sup>22</sup>

20. See Kâmil Mîrâs, *Tecrid Tercemesi*, VI, 20-21; Said Bektash, p. 111.

21. *Tubba* is a name formerly given to the kings of Yemen.

22. See Ibn Hisham, I, 19-20; Abdurrazzaq, V,153.

News of such incidents spread fast among the people of the Arabian Peninsula and the Kaabah thereby attained an awesome reputation and an esteemed place in people's eyes. The idea that Mecca, the Kaabah and the tribe of Quraysh were under Divine protection, became an accepted norm among Arabs.

Worshipping in the House of Allah ﷻ, continued the way Prophet Ibrahim ؑ had taught up until the spread of idolatry. When idol worshipping became widespread in Mecca, the idolaters filled inside and around the Kaabah with idols. But even then the Kaabah was not renamed after a certain idol, continuing to be called *Baytullah*, the House of Allah ﷻ.<sup>23</sup>

When Mecca was taken and opened to Islam by the Noble Prophet ﷺ all the idols were demolished, and under the inspection of the Prophet ﷺ, the Kaabah, from both the inside and outside, was cleansed with Zamzam water. This initiated a custom of washing the Kaabah with Zamzam and rosewater every year, perfuming it with musk and amber, and renewing its cover.

The idolatrous practice of hanging upon the walls of the Kaabah the seven most eloquent poems, the *Muallaqât al-Sab'a* (literally 'the Seven Hanged'), acclaimed in their literary contests, not to mention their hanging on the very same walls the declaration of their boycott of Muslims, attest to the immense value of the Sacred House in their eyes.

Any service made to the Kaabah and its visitors was thus held in great esteem. First fulfilled by Ismail ؑ, these noble duties passed on to his sons, then to the Jurhumites and finally to the tribe

23. Stuck in the swamp of ignorance, the idolaters amazingly never worshipped the three things they valued the most: the Kaabah, *Hajar'ul-Aswad* and *Maqam'u Ibrahim*, in spite worshipping various kinds of trees and stones. This can only be explained with the exclusive protection by the Almighty.

of Quraysh. Simultaneous to the establishment of the Meccan city-state we see the founding of the following duties:

1. **Sidānah or Hijābah:** The duty of covering the Kaabah and safeguarding its keys.<sup>24</sup>

2. **Siqāyah:** Providing the pilgrims with water and beverages, and the maintenance of the Zamzam well.

3. **Ridānah:** Feeding and hosting poor pilgrims.

Becoming entrusted with these duties was considered a great honor and privilege among Arabs. In the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ these duties were shared among the leading families of the Mecca. Omar ؓ, the second Caliph, allocated allowances for these purposes, which during the time of Muawiyah ؓ became more organized. The Ottomans similarly considered the upkeep of the Kaabah as being of great significance, providing sizeable allowances for tending to the Sacred House.

### The Elephant Incident: A Testimony of Divine protection

The Kaabah, built on the command of Allah ﷻ, stands under constant Divine protection. Attesting to this is the famous event

24. Ismail ؑ is recognized as the first person to drape the Kaabah. (Abdurrazzaq, V, 154) Throughout Islamic history, the preparation of the cover of the Kaabah would be seen to by the Caliph, a sultan or the incumbent governor of Mecca. After the passage of the Caliphate to the Ottomans in 1517, the cover of the Sacred House continued to be woven in Egypt for a little while longer. During the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, Istanbul became the center for weaving its inner cover, added to which was the outer cover, come the time of Sultan Ahmed III. The last cover woven in Ottoman hands to be sent was in 1916, with the rebellion of Sharif Hussain preventing further attempts. Prepared for a period of time once again in Egypt thereafter, the cover is today is made in a factory in Mecca set up specifically for that purpose.



known in history as the Elephant Incident, replete with lessons to be drawn from it.

Abraha, a Roman vassal and governor of Yemen, had built a big, ornamented church in Sana, hoping to divert local attention thereto. The Arabs, however, showed very little interest in the church, much to the disappointment and vexation of the Governor. To implement this program, Abraha then decided to demolish the Kaabah, their center of attraction, the Sacred House that always drew visitors. Having prepared a great army that included many elephants, comparable to today's tanks, Abraha headed for Mecca to carry out his plan and render the church unrivaled in the quest for people's attention.

Near Kasbah, Abraha laid claim to some camels belonging to the Meccans, some of which belonged to Abdulmuttalib, the grandfather of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who came to Abraha to ask to have his camels back. Angered at Abdulmuttalib's concern for a few camels, Abraha lashed out:

"I have come to demolish the Kaabah and you are only concerned for your camels!"

"The Kaabah has an owner to protect it", Abdulmuttalib answered calmly.

"Nobody today shall stand in my way to protect it", Abraha then commented arrogantly.

When Abraha finally commanded his army to march on towards the Kaabah, the elephants stood their ground, unable to move forward. Suddenly, the skies were filled with birds in flight, which begun pelting the army with little stones of baked clay they were carrying with their claws. The stones struck each and everyone in the army like hailstones, destroying whatever they touched. The





tiny birds were pulverizing the seemingly invincible elephants standing in tons of weight. The year in which this miraculous event took place was thereafter known by Arabs as the Year of the Elephant.

The Almighty narrates this story in the Holy Quran as follows:

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ. أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ  
فِي تَضَلِيلٍ. وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ. تَزْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ  
سِجِّيلٍ. فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَأْكُولٍ

Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant? Did He not make their treacherous plan go astray? And He sent against them Flights of Birds, Which pelted them with stones of baked clay, Then did He make them like an empty field of stalks and straw, (of which the corn) has been eaten up.” (al-Fil, 1-5)

The Kaabah, the House of Goodness serving as a place of worship to one God, was all along blessed by Allah ﷻ, and kept under His protection.

The punishment exacted from Abraha for his disrespect towards the Kaabah remains in no uncertain terms a warning until the Final Hour for others who may harbor similar malice against the Sacred House.

The Quran similarly extends this value to all the mosques of Allah ﷻ.



وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى  
 فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي  
 الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

“And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the mosques of Allah, that His name should be remembered in them, and strives to ruin them? (As for) these, it was not proper for them that they should have entered them except in fear; they shall meet with disgrace in this world, and they shall have great chastisement in the hereafter.” (al-Baqara, 114)

Blinded by his boundless arrogance, Abraha considered himself to have great power, and the punishment he was given is indeed fitting. He was not struck by beasts known for their strength like lions and tigers or even poisonous snakes but by feeble birds carrying pebbles smaller than chickpeas. The Almighty thus destroys arrogant disbelievers like the Pharaoh, Nimrod and Goliath with seemingly powerless creatures, in order to show how weak they are in reality.

Abraha was now returning to Yemen, the land he had set out from in great honor and majesty, in a very contemptible way. With his body in wounds and clothes in tatters, he was almost crawling back to his town. His plight provides a striking lesson in showing how disgrace follows the arrogant even in this world.

Called by the Quraysh the Year of Elephant, that year marked the starting point of their calendar. Qubash ibn Ushaym ؓ, a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, for instance, used to cite the Year of Elephant in telling others how he and the Prophet ﷺ were born in the same year.

Othman ibn Affân ؓ once inquired further as to who was bigger age wise, to which Ibn Ushaym ؓ responded in the most polite and considerate of manners:

“The Prophet ﷺ is of course much greater than me but as far our ages are concerned, I was born before him,<sup>25</sup> as I remember seeing the droppings of Abraha’s elephants: they were still green and little altered.” (Tirmidhi, Manâqib, 2)

### **The Hanif Prophet Ibrahim ؑ and the Religion of Worshipping One God**

Although most of the people of Mecca had become idolaters, traces of belief in one God were not completely eradicated. A few people still practicing the religion of *tawhid*, as taught by Ibrahim ؑ were still to be found. Ibrahim ؑ is considered in Islam as *Khalîlullâh*, the friend of Allah, and also among the five grand Prophets, referred to as *Ulu’l-Azm*. The great-grandfather of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Ibrahim ؑ is also known to have received ten leaves (*suhuf*) of Revelation from the Almighty.

The name Ibrahim is mentioned throughout twenty-five chapters in the Quran, at a total of sixty nine times. Some of the attributes mentioned in praise of him in these verses include *awwâh* (sigher, referring to compassion), *halîm* (forbearing) *munib*

25. As evident in this narration, the Companions were always conscious of the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was of the highest and most sublime rank, with regard to which they were of utmost sensitivity. Just a touch of their skin by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, for them, provided reason for gratification, as many a fortunate Companion touched by those sacred hands, would point to their own hands and say:  
“It was with these two hands that I pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah!”  
(Ibn Saad, IV, 306; Haythami, VIII, 42)



(penitent), *qanit* (excellent in servitude to the Almighty), *shakir* (thankful) and *hanif*.

The religion of Ibrahim ﷺ is called Hanif. It means to leave crooked ways for the right path, to give up heretical beliefs for belief in One God, and become a *muwahhid*, one who recognizes the unity of the Almighty.

The Almighty states in the Holy Quran:

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا  
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“And they (Christians and Jews) say: Be Jews or Christians, you will be on the right course. Say: Nay! (we follow) the religion of Ibrahim, the Hanif, and he was not one of the idolaters!” (al-Baqara, 135)

مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا  
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Ibrahim was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man, the Hanif who had surrendered (to Allah); and he was not of the idolaters.” (Âl Imrân, 67)

During the phase of Ignorance, the term Hanif was used to refer to anyone who rejected the worship of idols and, espousing belief in One God, followed the religion of Ibrahim. Included among the Hanif were people like Waraqa ibn Nawfal, Abdullâh ibn Jahsh, Othman ibn Huwayrith, Zayd ibn Amr and Quss ibn Sâida, who throughout their lives remained adamant in refusing to bow down in front of idols or pay to them as gods.



Ibn Omar رضي الله عنه<sup>26</sup> narrates:

“The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was invited to a meal near the valley of Baldah;<sup>27</sup> this was before any Divine Revelation had come to the him. Present

26. Abdullah ibn Omar رضي الله عنه was born in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Prophethood. He made the Hegira with his father Omar رضي الله عنه. Along with Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, he was member of the army that was to lay siege to Istanbul. As his elder sister Hafsa رضي الله عنها was the wife of the Noble Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم, he had the privilege of being in the close company of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. A narration of 2630 hadiths, together with repetitions, makes him second to Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه on the list of the *mukthirun*, the seven Companions with the most number of hadith narrations. Ibn Omar رضي الله عنه was likewise among the seven Companions to give the most number of *fatwa*, jurisprudential verdicts.

He was second to none, however, in following the lifestyle of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم to the letter, in implementing his commands in their exactitude. After the passing away of the Blessed Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, stemming from an exuberant love for him, Ibn Omar would specifically offer salat in the exact spots where the Prophet had once offered it; he would walk the paths he had trodden, sit in the shades of trees the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم used to sit beneath, purposely watering them so they would not dry out. (Bukhari, Salat, 89; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isâba*, II, 349)

He once suffered a major cramp in his foot. Abdurrahman ibn Saad, next to him at the time, advised him to say the name of the person he most loved.

“Muhammad!” exclaimed Ibn Omar, immediately upon which he foot was relieved of pain. (Ibn Saad, IV, 154)

Ibn Omar رضي الله عنه was also among the wealthiest of the Companions. That so, he would never allow his wealth to accumulate, distributing it among the poor as soon as he would get his hands on it himself. He had a habit of sparing his favorite possessions for charity in the way of the Almighty. He had also begun setting free all his slaves, who developed praiseworthy behavior, especially those who had begun to regularly perform salat. For this, Ibn Omar was cautioned by one of his friends, informing him that one of his slaves was frequenting the mosque just to be set free. Ibn Omar’s response, showing the depth of Divine love in his heart, is splendid:

“We are willing to be tricked by those wishing to trick us with Allah!”

He is reputed to have set free over 1,000 slaves, for numerous reasons and under different circumstances. He passed away in Mecca in 692, (H. 73) at the age of 85

27. Baldah is a valley nearby Mecca.



at the meal was also Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl. Just as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ refused to eat from the meat which he was offered, so did Zayd, who explained:

‘I do not eat anything which you slaughter in the name of your stone idols. I eat nothing but that which is slaughtered in the name of Allah.’

Zayd ibn Amr was known for his criticism of the way Quraysh used to slaughter their animals, which he considered something abominable, saying:

‘Allah has created the sheep, has sent the water for it from the sky, and has grown from the earth for it to eat; and yet you slaughter it in the name of another than Allah.’” (Bukhârî, Manâqibu'l-Ansâr, 24; Dhabâih, 16)

According to another narration from Ibn Omar:

“Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl had gone to Damascus to inquire about a true religion to follow. There, he met a Jewish religious scholar and asked him about their religion.

‘I intend to embrace your religion, so tell me something about it,’ he said.

‘You cannot embrace our religion unless you receive your share of the Wrath of God,’ replied the Jew.

‘I have not come here except from fear of His Wrath, so I cannot see myself bearing a bit of it, given I have the power to avoid it. Can you tell me of some other religion?’

‘I know of no other religion except the Hanif.’

‘What is the Hanif?’ then Zayd further asked.

‘Hanif is the religion of the Prophet Ibrahim, neither a Jew nor a Christian, who used to worship Allah alone’, explained the Jewish scholar.

Zayd then headed out and met a Christian scholar and stated the exact concern.

‘You shall not embrace our religion unless you get a share of the Curse of God,’ the Christian responded.

‘I run from none other than His Curse, and I will never bear any of it so long as I have the power to avoid it. Can you tell me of some other religion?’ Zaid asked.

‘I do not know of any other religion except Hanif.’

‘Which is...?’

‘It is the religion of the Prophet Ibrahim who was neither a Jew nor a Christian and who worshipped none but Allah’.

Hearing similar words from both regarding the religion of Ibrahim ﷺ, Zayd left that place, and raised both his hands to the skies, as he came out, and said:

‘O Allah! Bear witness that I am in the religion of Ibrahim.’”

(Bukhârî, Manâqibu'l-Ansâr, 24)

Asma bint Abi Bakr ؓ reports to have seen Zayd ibn Amr ibn Nufayl, standing with his back against the Kaabah, declaring:

“People of Quraysh! By Allah, none among you is in the religion of Ibrahim except for me.”

She adds that Zayd took great care to preserve the lives of little girls, salvaging their lives from a horrific death. Upon seeing a man with the intention of slaying his daughter, he would intervene and say:



“Do not kill her! I will feed her on your behalf.” So he would take her and look after her, and when she would grow up, Zayd would say to her father:

“If you want her now, I will give her to you, and if you wish, I will keep on looking after her on your behalf.” (Bukhârî, Manâqibu'l-Ansâr, 24)

As regards Waraqa, another prominent Hanif, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

“I see him walking around in Paradise in a silk gown.”

And about Zayd:

“He will be resurrected in the Hereafter as a separate nation between me and Isa.” (Haythamî, IX, 416)

With knowledge of the previous Sacred Books, the Hanîfs had a feel that the approach the Final Prophet ﷺ was near and they were waiting in longing anticipation.

Most Muslim scholars are of the opinion that the parents of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were also among the Hanif, a religion that is nothing but belief in the one true God, in *tawhid*. Such is why the Almighty commands the observance of the religion of Ibrahim (عليه السلام), the quintessential Hanif, in the following verse:

ثُمَّ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ أَنْ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنْ  
الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Then We revealed to you: Follow the faith of Ibrahim, the upright one; he was not of the idolaters.” (an-Nahl, 16:123)



The term Hanif is also used to signify Islam and every sincere Muslim is thus also called a Hanif. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ states, in confirmation:

“I was sent with the forbearing Hanif religion.” (Ahmad, V, 266)<sup>28</sup>



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28. Also see, Bukhari, Iman, 29.





# *The Prophet*

-upon him blessings and peace-

## *before the Message*



### CHAPTER ONE



## THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF THE BLESSED PROPHET

### The Muhammedan Light

We cannot think of time and space for Allah ﷻ, who transcends all dimensions.<sup>29</sup> Existent in pre-eternity, His existence comes from Himself without need for any other. That stated, the Almighty nonetheless willed to be known and hence created existence, the world of plurality (*âlam'ul-kasrat*), which is also called *mâ siwallâh*, denoting anything other than Allah ﷻ.<sup>30</sup> In the process of creation, He first created a light that is the essence of *Haqîqat'ul- Muhammadiya*, the Muhammedan Reality.

A precious gem is kept in an ornamented box, not a rudimentary one. Seen in this respect, the Muhammedan Light is the precious gem hidden in the rest of creation, the ornamented box serving to preserve it. Beings were created only for the sake of his greatness. It

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29. The human mind is of a nature that can think only within the bounds of space and time. Through the impressions it receives from the physical world, it can, albeit to a certain degree, reach Truth. Bound by the impressions received from the world of observation to refer to the truths that transcend the observational realm, both in terms designating and insinuating the content of metaphysical truths, man is thus virtually compelled to resort to metaphor.
30. *Ma siwallah* is a term used to indicate all that which is *other than* Allah ﷻ, and which keeps one away from Him.



could therefore be said that Allah ﷻ, created existence to ornament the Muhammedan Light. In the language of divinity, the Almighty is the origin of creation, possessing absolute freedom to do anything He wills, while the cause is the Muhammedan Light, the first creation.

Contrary to the claims of some philosophers, the universe is not eternal and uncreated, on the contrary, it is fashioned by Allah ﷻ. Only the Almighty is uncreated and timeless. Created first was the Muhammedan Light, which sheds light on the hadith below:

“I was a Prophet when Adam was between soul and body (i.e. when Adam’s creation was in its preliminary stages)” (at-Tabarani, *Al-Mu’jam al-Kabir; Al Khasa’is al-Kubra*, vol.1, p.4). (Tirmidhi, Manâqib, 1)

In other words, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was created and thus entrusted with the mission of prophethood well before the creation of Adam ﷺ. His bodily manifestation on Earth, however, marks the final page of the book that is prophetic history, which means that the first page of that very book was turned with the Muhammedan Light and similarly came to a close with the embodiment of Muhammad ﷺ as a Prophet on the physical plane.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is thus the Light of Creation, from whom beings borrow their value, a fact elaborated in the hadith below:

“When Adam was ejected from Paradise due to his sin, he asked forgiveness from Allah through the words: ‘Forgive me, my Lord, for the sake of Muhammad!’

‘How do you know Muhammad’s name when I have not yet created him?’ the Almighty asked.

‘When you created me, my Lord, and breathed into me Your spirit, I raised my head and saw the words *Lâ ilâhe illAllâh*,

*Muhammedun Rasûlullâh* inscribed above the pillars of the Throne. I therefore thought that You would only mention Your name with the Most Beloved of Your creation.’

‘I forgive you, Adam’, the Almighty declared, ‘and were it not for Muhammad I surely would not have created you.’” (Hâkim, II, 672)

Narrated from Ibn Abbas, Allah ﷻ, inspired Isa (عليه السلام) to “Believe in Muhammad and command those who live in his time from among your community to believe in him. For were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created Adam; neither would I have created Paradise and Hell. When I created the Throne (*Arsh*) on water, it started rocking, coming to a standstill only after I wrote over it *Lâ ilâhe illâllâh Muhammedun Rasûlullâh*”. (Hâkim, II, 672)

Jabir (رضي الله عنه) is reported to have one day asked the Prophet ﷺ:

“May my father and mother be ransomed for you Messenger of Allah! Could you please tell me what the first created thing was?”

“The first thing Allah created was the Light of your Messenger from His Own Light.”<sup>31</sup>

Ibn Arabi affords the following comments in regard:

“When Allah almighty heralded Muhammad ﷺ with Prophethood, Adam was not fully created; he was in a state between water and mud. Thus, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ effectively became, at once, the foremost core of all Divine laws (*sharia*) to transpire through prophets thereafter. Even as early as then, he had a *sharia*, as the Prophet indicates in the hadith that he was a Messenger when Adam was still in a state between spirit and body; he does not say he was a ‘man’ or that he simply existed. Prophethood may only be

31. See Ajluni, I, 265.

through a law, a *sharia*, given by the Almighty.” (Ibn Arabi, al-Futuhat, II, 171; IV, 66-67)

In another famous work, Ibn Arabi says:

“Being the most perfected of all human species, Prophethood thus began and ended with the Messenger of Allah.” (Ibn Arabi, *Fusûsu’l-Hikem*, IV, 319)

In his *Mathnawi*, Rumi states:

“Come, o heart! The true festival is unity with Muhammad, his Majesty; for the luminosity of the universe is from the light of his sacred being.”

Sulayman Chelebi also makes mention of the Muhammadan Light in his *Mawlid*:

*Mustafâ nûrunu evvel kıldı vâr*  
*Sevdi ânı ol Kerîm ü Girdigâr*<sup>32</sup>  
 The Light of Mustapha, He first made,  
 Which He loved, the Generous, the Great.

Thus the Muhammadan Light, labeled also as the Muhammedan Truth, is an essence that represents the spiritual identity of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. It is he who is the most beloved and the most precious in the sight of the Creator. The reason for the existence of creation is the love of the Almighty towards the Muhammedan Light, the first entity created. The entire universe has therefore been given existence in the honor of the Muhammadan Light, the core which it envelops. Existence is only to expose and explain his reality. Having said that,

32. The other couplets of Sulayman Chalabi’s *Mawlid* pay further lyrical tribute to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ being the Light of Existence and that the universe was created but in honor of the Muhammedan Light.



just as it is impossible to pour an ocean into a cup, it is inconceivable to understand the Muhammadan Light as befits its nature.

### The Pure Lineage of the Prophet ﷺ

The Noble Prophet's ﷺ father is Abdullah and his mother is Aminah, a blessed lineage stemming from Ibrahim and Ismail ؑ through Adnan,<sup>33</sup> the most honorable member of the Kayzar family.<sup>34</sup> Adnan's son Meadd is said to be a contemporary of Isa ؑ.

Both maternally and paternally, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ belonged to the purest family of Quraysh, a purity of lineage confirmed by the Prophet ﷺ himself in the following hadith:

“I was born from my mother and father without being marred by any of the evils of the Period of Ignorance. From Adam ؑ to my mother and father, every preceding member of lineage was conceived by none other than religiously legal marriage, never from fornication.” (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidāya*, II, 260)

Another name of the Prophet ﷺ is Mustapha, meaning one who is delicately chosen. Whenever there was a split of lineage, the forefathers of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ always succeeded from among the better of the two. Since Adam and Hawwa, therefore, the Prophetic Light passed on through the purest of mothers and fathers, from one generation to another.<sup>35</sup>

33. The lineage of the Noble Messenger ﷺ is: Muhammad ibn Abdullah ibn Abdulmuttalib ibn Hāshim ibn Abdi Menaf ibn Qusayy ibn Kilāb ibn Murra ibn Kaab ibn Luay ibn Ghalib ibn Fihr ibn Malik ibn Nadr ibn Kināna ibn Huzayma ibn Mudrika ibn Ilyas ibn Mudar ibn Nizar ibn Mā'add ibn Adnan. (Bukhari, *Manaqibu'l-Ansar*, 28 Ibn Hisham, I, 1-3; Ibn Saad, I, 55-56)

34. See Ibn Hisham, I, 1, 5.

35. See Ahmad, I, 210.

The *ayah* “And rely on the Almighty, the Merciful, Who sees you when you rise up, and your descending among those who fall prostrate in worship”, (al-Shuara, 217-219) was understood by a number of commentators, including Ibn Abbas, as a reference to the descent of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ through his ancestors, all of whom were men of utmost piety; that is until reaching him, the light of the Prophet ﷺ was transmitted only through those who fell prostrate to Allah ﷻ. (Qurtubî, XIII, 144, Haythamî, VIII, 214 )

The Noble Prophet ﷺ confirmed his pure lineage also through the following:

“Allah ﷻ, chose Ismail from among the sons of Ibrahim, the Kinana clan from among the descendants of Ismail, Quraysh from among the sons of Kinana, the sons of Hashim from among Quraysh, and the sons of Abdulmuttalib from among Hashim; and me from among the sons of Abdulmuttalib.” (Muslim, Fadâil, 1; Tirmidhî, Manâqib, 1)

Regarding the well-known purity of genealogy of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his eminent forefathers, the great Muslim scholar Ibn Khaldun affords the following remarks:

“No other person than Prophet Muhammed ﷺ has a well recorded lineage that is moreover blessed with uninterrupted purity and nobility since Adam ﷺ. This is a special gift to His Beloved by the Almighty.” (Ibn Khaldun, I, 115)

### **The Marriage of Abdullah and Aminah, the Parents of the Prophet**

Before the advent of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, belief in One God was all but lost and the Kaabah was filled with idols that belonged to different tribes. The well of Zamzam had also been lost. One day

while asleep near the Kaabah, Abdulmuttalib, the grandfather of Blessed Prophet ﷺ, saw a dream where he was shown the font of Zamzam which he was commanded to dig. But when he made an attempt to dig in hope of bringing the dream to fruition, he was prevented by the people of Quraysh, on the grounds that it would be horrendous to dig anywhere near the Sacred Temple.

Since he had only one son to help him, Abdulmuttalib was apprehensive about having no power to resist them. He therefore prayed to Allah ﷻ, and made a *nadhr*, a vow, that he would sacrifice one of his sons if the Almighty gave him ten to help him against his enemies in this cause.

Upon seeing some miraculous signs transpire in Abdulmuttalib, the Meccans softened after a while and gave him permission to dig the well. He eventually went ahead to dig and unearthed the font of Zamzam. Years later his prayer was also granted, where he was given twelve sons by the Almighty, who all grew up to be strong, protective men. Abdulmuttalib was then reminded of the vow he had made years ago in his dream. Uneasy, Abdulmuttalib first sacrificed a ram then a cow, only to be asked each time for a greater sacrifice, until being finally reminded at the end:

“You had vowed to sacrifice one of your sons!”

Upon this, Abdulmuttalib gathered all his sons around him and explaining his dream to them, he invited them all to submit to what the dream compelled him to do. In full submission, they said:

“Do what you have to do to fulfill your vow!”

To fulfill his vow, Abdul-Muttalib then decided to cast a lot to determine the son he was to sacrifice, pleading the Almighty as he did:



“O Lord! Here I am, casting lots to show I am sticking to my word. Now please, let me draw the name you want to be drawn!”

The lot was cast and it was Abdullah’s name that came out. Though Abdullah was the dearest to him, Abdulmuttalib did not flinch from carrying out the verdict of fate. Afraid that it could initiate an evil tradition however, the Meccans strongly opposed Abdulmuttalib, persuading him to consult a knowledgeable man. So they all went to a wise man and told him the story.

“What is the blood money for a person killed?” the knowledgeable man asked.

“Ten camels”, they replied.

The knowledgeable man then advised the Meccans to cast lots between Abdullah and ten camels, and if it just happened that Abdullah’s name was drawn yet again, to add ten more camels to the bloodmoney until a camel was drawn from the lot.

So they cast lots, as advised, between ten camels and Abdullah. Abdullah’s name was repeatedly drawn from the lots until the number of the camels reached a hundred, which is when the name of camels was eventually drawn. The family was jubilant but Abdulmuttalib was still not satisfied, thinking it would be unfair to ignore the fact of drawing Abdullah’s name ten times as opposed to just the one lot of camels. He therefore repeated another three times the lot between Abdullah and a hundred camels, and much to the satisfaction of Abdulmuttalib, the lot of the camels were drawn each time. Everyone present glorified the Almighty for this fortunate result. Abdulmuttalib then sacrificed all the camels, distributing their meat in charity.<sup>36</sup>

In Islamic Law today, the blood money for a person killed is either a hundred camels or their worth, a jurisdiction that is derived from this very precedent. In memory of the near sacrifice of his father and his great grandfather Ismail ؑ, the Noble Prophet ﷺ has stated:

“I am the son of the two sacrifices.” (Hâkim, II, 609/4048)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thus given the name “the son of two sacrifices.”<sup>37</sup>

Abdullah was the most handsome man in his tribe, surpassing them all also in intelligence and moral perfection.<sup>38</sup> All the girls of Quraysh desired to marry him. One of them was the sister of Waraqa ibn Nawfal, who seeing the light on the forehead of Abdullah, realized that it belonged the light of the impending Prophet. She hence wanted to be the mother of the Prophet impatiently waited for, even offering the young Abdullah a hundred camels as dowry.<sup>39</sup>

A year before “the Year of the Elephant”, Abdulmuttalib asked, for his son Abdullah, the hand of Aminah, the daughter of Abdimenaf, the best of Quraysh in terms of honor and ancestry. The proposal was welcomed and their marriage soon took place. Aminah’s ancestry, through her father Wahb ibn Abdimenaf, reaches Zuhrah, the son of Kilab, the son of Murrah, whereby it merges with the ancestry of the Abdullah and the Hashim clan, with Kilab, whose son Zuhrah was the brother of Qusay.<sup>40</sup>

When the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was conceived, the light on the forehead of Abdullah passed on to Aminah.<sup>41</sup>

37. See Hakim, II, 604/4036.

38. See Halabî, I, 51-62.

39. See Ibn Hisham, I, 168-169.

40. See Ibn Saad, I, 59-60.

41. See Ibn Hisham, I, 170.

### The Passong Away of Abdullah

A short while after the marriage, Abdullah went on a trade journey to Damascus. On the way back, he fell sick. When they reached Madina, he told his friends it would be best for him to stay next to his maternal uncles in the town for a while until he recuperated.

Even though he stayed in Madina for a month, recuperation from the illness was never to be, and he finally breathed his last in the town where he was to be buried at twenty five years of age.<sup>42</sup>

Aminah shed tears of sorrow for days on end for her deceased husband, chanting eulogies in praise of how much he was loved by everyone, and celebrating his matchless generosity and mercy.<sup>43</sup>

### Events Heralding the Birth of the Prophet

Divine signs indicating the great birth started to become manifest well before the delivery of the Blessed Prophet. Every inch of the universe was yearning for the embodiment of very cause behind their creation.

The pledges taken by the Almighty from previous Prophets that they will recognize Muhammad ﷺ as a Prophet and help him should he appear in their lifetimes could be considered as the greatest sign attesting to his advent. The following verse confirms that:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ  
جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ

42. See Ibn Saad, I, 99.

43. See Ibn Saad, I, 100.

أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا  
وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

“Behold! Allah took the covenant of the Prophets, saying: ‘I give you a Book and Wisdom; then comes to you a messenger, confirming what is with you; do ye believe in him and render him help.’ Allah said: ‘Do you agree, and take this My Covenant as binding on you?’ They said: ‘We agree.’ He said: ‘Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.’” (Āl Īmrān, 81)

Raising their hands to the heavens, Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail عليهما السلام also prayed for the arrival of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ after completing the building of the Kaabah.

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ  
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

“Our Lord! Raise up a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Your communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them. Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise!” (al-Baqara, 129)

Similarly, while informing the Israelites of his Prophethood, Prophet Isa عليه السلام also gives the glad tidings of the coming of the final Prophet.

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ  
إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي  
مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ



“And remember, Isa, the son of Maryam, said: “O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad...” (es-Saff, 6)

While still pregnant, Aminah saw a dream in which she heard:

“You are pregnant, Aminah, with the master of the *Ummah*. When you give birth to him pray to Allah and say, ‘I seek refuge with Allah, the One, from the evil of the envious when he envies’ and give him the name ‘Muhammad’.<sup>44</sup>

In memory of these, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has stated:

*“I am the answer to the prayer of my grandfather Ibrahim, the good news given by Jesus and the dream of my mother.”* (Hâkim, II, 453; Ahmad, IV, 127-128)

The Prophet’s name and attributes were also explicitly written in both the Torah and the Gospel, with which the scholars of both texts were fully informed at the time. Those among them who had it in their hearts to acknowledge this were praised in the Quran:

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ  
مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ

“Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them ...” (al-Arâf, 7:157)



Because they knew the characteristics of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, they recognized him with the ease a father would recognize his son, as confirmed by the following verse:

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا  
مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

“Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons, and a party of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it).” (al-Baqara, 2:146)

Upon becoming a Muslim, Abdullah ibn Selâm ﷺ who was a great scholar of the Torah, said:<sup>45</sup>

“I recognize the Messenger of Allah ﷺ better than I would my own son.”

Inquiring further was Omar ﷺ:

“How is that so?”

45. Abdullah ibn Salam ﷺ, also known as Abu Yusuf, is a descendant of Yusuf (عليه السلام). Called Husayn by birth, his name was later changed to Abdullah by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. He was a scholar of the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa. Once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ arrived at Quba, near Medina, during the Hegira, Abdullah went there and posed a few questions to him. The responses, he thought, could only have been given by a Prophet, on which grounds he immediately entered Islam. He later proved instrumental in the acceptance of Islam by his entire family and many of his relatives. Given the glad tidings of Paradise by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ while still alive, Abdullah ibn Salam was a highly respected Companion. It is said that the 10<sup>th</sup> ayah of Ahqaf and the 43<sup>rd</sup> of Rad were revealed in relation to him. Having narrated 25 hadiths, he breathed his last in Medina, in 663 (H. 43), when Muawiyah was caliph.

“I can without any doubt bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, purely because his characteristics are clearly written in the Torah”, he answered.

Hearing this, Omar remarked, “The Almighty has indeed given you the truth.” (Vahidi, s. 47; Râzi, *Tefsîr*, IV, 116)

The Holy Quran testifies that both the Torah and the Gospel describe the characteristics of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as well as his companions:

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ  
تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ  
فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ  
فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى  
سُوْقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Torah and their description in the Gospel; like as seed-produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the unbelievers on account of them; Allah has promised



those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward” (al-Fath, 48:29)

Abdullah ibn Abbâs ؓ one day asked Kâb al-Ahbâr<sup>46</sup> to tell him of the characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ mentioned in the Torah.

“Mentioned therein are the following characteristics: Muhammad ibn Abdullah will be born in Mecca and will migrate to Medina. He will eventually seize Damascus. Never will he speak foul words, nor will he raise his voice in public. He will not retaliate against evil with evil and will forgive the culprits. His people will offer their thanks to Allah and glorify Him in good times and bad. They will wash their arms (make *wudu*, ablution) and stand in lines in prayer like in battles. Constantly heard from their places of worship will be a buzz (the recital of the Quran and chanting the names of Allah). Their call to prayer will fill the sky.” (Dârimi, Muqaddima, 2)

Atâ ibn Yasâr -rahimahullâh- narrates:

“I came across Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As<sup>47</sup> and asked him to tell me about the description of Allah’s Messenger in the Torah.

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46. Kâb al-Ahbâr –Allah have mercy on him-, of the *tabiun* generation, is famous for his narrations from the books of the Israelites. He became a Muslim during the time of Abu Bakr ؓ, passing away in the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of Hegira.
47. Abdullah ibn Amr ibn As ؓ immigrated to Medina in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira, with his father Amr, whom he preceded in accepting Islam. He was a literate Companion, well-versed with the cultures of the past. He would write the hadiths he heard from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, for which the Prophet ﷺ had given him special permission. His vast knowledge of hadith and jurisprudence makes him one of the four Abdullaha, or the *Abadila*, recognized for their depth in regard. A member of the army that conquered Damascus, Abdullah also fought in the Battle of Yarmuk where he was the flagbearer of the army of Believers commanded by his father Amr ؓ. He settled in Egypt following its conquest, with his father, where he remained for the remainder of his life, eventually breathing his last at the age of 72. He was buried near the Amr ibn As Mosque in Cairo where he remains today.

‘By Allah, he is indeed described in the Torah with some of the qualities attributed to him in the Quran. It is said in the Torah that:

‘O Prophet ! We have sent you as a witness for Allah’s True religion, a giver of glad tidings to faithful believers, a warner to unbelievers and as a guardian of the illiterate. You are My slave and My Messenger. I have named you *al-Mutawakkil* (who depends upon Allah). You are neither discourteous, harsh nor a noise-maker in public. You do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them forgivingly and kindly. Allah will not let you die until, through you, He straightens the crooked by making them admit that none has the right to be worshipped besides Allah; and through this which will blind eyes, deaf ears and hearts of stone be opened to the truth.” (Bukhârî, Buyû, 50; Tafsîr, 48/ 3)

Aware of all the characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ, the Jews were in anxious anticipation of his advent. So much so that whenever the Jews had a quarrel with the Madinan tribes Aws and Khazraj, they would threaten them, telling that their days were numbered, since the with the expected Prophet, whose arrival was now looming and whom the Jews would follow, would signal the end of the two tribes who would be eradicated just like the tribes of Ad and Iram. (Ibn Asir, *el-Kâmil*, II, 95-96)

But as the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was not of Jewish blood, the Jews never came around to accepting him in their entirety. Striking is the following story narrated by Safiya bint Huyay, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ and a Jew before Islam.

“When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reached the village of Quba during the migration to Madinah, my father and my uncle rushed to see him. They returned only around sunset, sad and dejected, however. I heard them say the following to one another.

‘So you think he is the expected Prophet?’ asked Huyayy, my father.

‘By God he is!’ said my uncle, Abu Yâsir.

‘But are you sure? Did you confirm it with other proofs?’ asked my father once more.

‘Yes!’ was the reply.

‘So how do feel towards him now?’ asked Abu Yasir in turn after a momentary pause.

‘By Allah as long as I am alive I will foster only enmity towards him in my heart,’ replied my father.” (Abû Nuaym, *Delâil*, I, 77-78)

The Jews were envious of the Arabs because the last Prophet had emerged from among them, and not from Jewish stock. All along, they had anxiously expected him to be raised from among them. On these grounds they rejected his prophethood.<sup>48</sup>

Ibn Abbâs  is another who recounts the Jews’ hostile attitude:

“Warring continuously with the tribe of Ghatafan, the Jews of Khaybar almost always used to wind up defeated. So they prayed to the Almighty:

‘Our Lord! We ask victory from you for the sake of the Prophet you promised to send towards the end of time.’ By asking for Divine assistance in the name of the Prophet (*tawassul*), the Jews were at last able to gain victory over the tribe of Ghatafan. Yet even though they had received help using his name, they did not accept the Final Prophet when sent by the Almighty. So to chastise them the following verse was revealed:

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48. See Ibn Saad, I, 155.



وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا  
عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

“...although from of old they had prayed for victory (fort he sake of the Prophet that would come soon) against those without Faith,- when there comes to them that which they (should) have recognized (the Prophet Muhammad), they refuse to believe in him; but the curse<sup>49</sup> of Allah is on those without Faith.” (al-Baqara, 89) (Qurtubî, II, 27; Wâhidî, p. 31)

The following incident is also noteworthy in indicating the arrival of the Blessed Prophet into the world:

Sayf ibn Zî-Yazan was appointed the king of Yemen by the Persian Khosrau. The representatives of the entire Arab tribes came to congratulate him. The mission sent by the Meccans consisted of ten people and was headed by Abdulmuttalib, the grandfather of the Prophet ﷺ.

In the presence of the King, Abdulmuttalib said:

“We are the people and the servants of the protected House of Allah. We have come to congratulate you for your accession to the throne.”

49. Both in the Holy Quran and in the ahadith of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, some of which we will see in due course, we find the cursing of certain ingrained sinners, without reference to any particular person or persons. Curses, here, are aimed at morally deviant notions, behavior and practices. That the Blessed Prophet chose to curse despite avowing “...I have not been sent as an imprecator but as a mercy” (Muslim, Birr, 87) only indicates the severity of the behavior of the kind and its grave consequences on Islamic life and social structure.

They were warmly welcomed by the King of Yemen and were lodged for some time as his guests. One day the King summoned Abdulmuttalib and said:

“I am going to tell you a secret, Abdulmuttalib. Had it been anybody else other than you, I would not have said it, but it is only because there is something about you I sense. Keep this between us until the Almighty wills it to be exposed. Only His Will is realized. We have a book, the contents of which only we know and in it there are important news closely concerning you and your friends.”

“Even if it means these nomads are to die in your path, please tell me...What is this important news?” insisted Abdulmuttalib.

“A boy will be born in the area of Tihâma. He will be the leader of mankind until the Final Hour and your people will reap the honor. As a sign there will be mole between his shoulder blades.”

King Sayf ibn Zi-Yazan continued:

“The time of his birth has come. Who knows? He may have already been born. His name is Muhammad. His parents are to die and his grandfather and uncle will see to his care. The Almighty has sent him as a clear caller onto His path and will make some of us his helpers. Through them, the Almighty will debase the enemies of this Prophet and dignify his friends. He will capture the best parts of the world. The Magian fire will be extinguished with his birth. People will in his time worship *al-Rahman*, the One True God. Disbelief and extremities will be banned, idols will be destroyed and the Satan will be stoned. His words will differentiate true and false. His judgments will always be just. He will always command the good and will practice it first himself. Evil will be prohibited and falsehood will be destroyed.”

Abdulmuttalib asked:



“May Allah extend your life and honor! May your rule be everlasting! What you describe is my lineage. Can the King make this man happier by giving more detail about this child?”

“By the enshrouded House of Allah, by all the miracles and heavenly Scriptures, it is no lie that you are the forefather of this baby”, Sayf replied.

Abdulmuttalib fell to the ground in jubilation.

“Raise your head. May your heart be at peace, your life long and your name exalted! Tell me...Is there anything that you are aware of from the signs that I have told you?” asked the King.

“Yes...I had a son who I used to dearly love and treasure. I had him married to Aminah, daughter of one of the most honorable of my people. She gave birth to a child. I named him Muhammad. He has a mole between his shoulder blades. He furthermore carries all the signs you say. Both his parents are deceased. His uncle and I have taken his care upon ourselves”, explained Abdulmuttalib.

“Protect the child very well”, advised the King. “Be wary of the Jews as they have enmity towards him. But the Almighty will not give them the opportunity. Do not mention what I have said to your friends, for I fear they might get jealous of the superiority granted to you and inflict trouble upon your grandchild. If only I knew I would survive to see the day he becomes a Prophet, I would march on with my cavalry and infantry to seize Yathrib (Medinah) and make it the capital of my realm and prepare it for his migration. If only I could be the one protecting him from troubles and adversaries! Bring me back news of him in a year’s time!”





Sayf ibn Zi-Yazan was unfortunately killed within a year.<sup>50</sup> (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 26-28; Diyarbakri, I, 239-241)

Another piece of good news Abdulmuttalib received regarding the future of his grandchild runs as follows:

While playing with fellow children, the young Muhammad ﷺ had one day gone as far as the Radm quarters. There, a group from the clan of Mudlij called him and inspected the child's feet and footprints. Thereupon Abdulmuttalib arrived. They hugged him and asked:

“Is this child yours?”

“He is my son”, answered he.

50. That the coming of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and certain of his attributes were expressed in both the Torah and the Bible, indicates they were of Divine origin to begin with, and that in spite of their distortion, they still retain a shade of authenticity. Therefore, even though Muslims do not regard these books as any longer valid, they nonetheless do not in any way act with disrespect towards them. Like the Torah and the Bible, the coming of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ has also been heralded in the scriptures considered sacred by the religions of the East, like Zoroastrianism, Hinduism and Buddhism. In the Avesta, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, the Noble Messenger ﷺ is referred to as *Saoshiyant*, a term which means ‘mercy to the worlds’, where he is mentioned as the Prophet of entire humankind, in addition to many of his attributes. The Hindu Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas speak, among other things, of how the Seal of the Prophets will proclaim the beard as *sunmah* and prohibit the consumption of pork. Buddhist texts similarly contain many sections dwelling on the attributes of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in celebration of his future arrival. (See Remzi Kaya, *İlâhî Kitaplarda Hazret-i Muhammed*, p. 221-239; A. H. Viyarthi - U. Ali, *Doğu Kutsal Metinlerinde Hazret-i Muhammed*, İstanbul, 1997; İbrâhim Cănan, XIV, 79-81) Considering that the first religion on Earth was the true religion and that thousands of prophets were sent to guide mankind intermittently whenever they digressed from the true path, it is really not surprising to stumble upon truths, like the heralding of the final Prophet, still extant in falsified beliefs like Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and many others.

“Protect him closely, for we have never before seen footprints that resemble those of Ibrahim near the Kaabah more than his”, they advised.

Abdulmuttalib urged his son Abu Talib nearby to give ear to their words. It was owing to such concerns that Abu Talib was so protective of his nephew.<sup>51</sup>

Before the Noble Messenger ﷺ honored the world with his presence, the entire globe was plunged in spiritual darkness. People were drowning in swamps of crass ignorance. Humanity had all but lost its dignity. Even beasts had had enough of human atrocities. Life had become unbearable. The universe was dark, human beings were in misery and hearts were aching. The weak had long forgotten how to smile. Only the strong exercised the right to live. In the words of Mehmed Akif:

Mankind had surpassed hyenas in ferocity,  
Weak, devoured by his brothers one would be.  
The Quran echoes this in the following:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ

“Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return.”  
(ar-Rum, 41)

As the sublime birth approached, everything, living and nonliving, grew in excitement and longing in their wait for the coming of that Great Light to save them from darkness, thirsting

51. See Abû Nuaym, *Dalâil*, I, 165; Ibn Saad, I, 118.

for him to offer them the elixir of life. Entire mankind was waiting, having already received the providential signs of his advent.

By giving poetic expression to Amina's state at the time of the sublime arrival, Suleyman Chelebi, in his *Mawlid* articulates that even the sun revolves around the Blessed Prophet ﷺ from love, like a moth around a flame:

'I saw', the Beloved's mother said,  
'A light so unique, the sun its moth,  
Angels descended from the skies in line,  
And like the Kaabah, orbited my home  
'No other like your son', they said,  
Has come since the world was formed  
The King of knowledge divine he is,  
With secrets of wisdom and unity adorned...'

### **The Sublime Birth and the Occurrence of Extraordinary Events**

Around the break of dawn on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabiulawwal, corresponding to the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 571 on the Solar Calendar, the Awaited Light at long last honored the world of manifestation with his gracious presence, as the child of Amina and Abdullah.

It was like all things had virtually come to life to say, in jubilation:

"Welcome, Messenger of Allah!"

Suleyman Chelebi expresses the joyous feelings shared by all things in the universe in celebration of this birth of grace:

Welcome...O great sultan,  
One adorned with wisdom...Welcome!  
Welcome, o secret of Discerning  
The cure to all ailing...Welcome!



Welcome, o mercy to all worlds  
Relief for all sinners, welcome!

His appearance marked the overflow of Divine compassion across the universe. Days and night virtually changed color. Feelings grew deeper. Words and tastes became boundless. Everything gained a different meaning, a unique grace. Idols shook and collapsed. The pillars and towers of the palaces of Madayin, home to Khosraus, crumbled. The Lake of Sawa, or Tabariya,<sup>52</sup> deemed sacred at the time, dried up like a swamp of oppression.<sup>53</sup>

This spatio-temporal manifestation was the first grace of the appearance of that Noble Being, a grace that encompassed the entire universe. That year was henceforth to be known as the Year of Abundance. It is of little wonder that the righteous consider the most precious night after the Night of Qadr, as that in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ graced the Earth. A poet said:

Let not the gardener take pains to water the rose garden, for even  
Watering a thousand gardens could not bloom a face like yours.

The sublime coming of the Rose of roses changed the course of everything. Like beads of pearls, manifestations of Divine mercy were sprinkled across the universe, immersing in bliss hearts that longed for the Light.

The following is narrated from Ibn Abbas ؓ:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was born on a Monday, entrusted with Prophethood on a Monday, departed Mecca for Medina on a Monday, arrived there again on a Monday and breathed his last on a Monday. It was a Monday when he arbitrated near the Kaabah

52. Sawa was a lake 12 km to the southwest of Tahrán, between Hamadan and Qum. The town of Sawa was founded on the very lake once it became desiccated.

53. See Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, II, 273.

the dispute regarding the replacement of the Black Stone. He was triumphant at Badr on a Monday; and the verse **الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ** ‘Today I have perfected your religion...’ (al-Maida, 3) was revealed on none other than a Monday.” (Ahmad, I, 277; Haythami, I, 196)

That his birth, prophethood, Hegira and passing away all coincided as part of Divine manifestation with Monday, is a sign of the importance of that day, wherein joyous excitement and painful sorrow, jubilation and grief were experienced together.

Certain extraordinary incidents came to pass in the sacred night in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ graced the universe, some of which will be mentioned now.

According to her own statement, neither during her pregnancy, nor while in labor did Aminah undergo any difficulty; and as the Blessed Messenger ﷺ made his way to the world, she saw a light coming out of her that illumined East and West. The Noble Child was delivered as pure as can be, with his hands placed on the ground and head turned to the sky.<sup>54</sup>

Iblis thereupon let out a piercing shriek, louder than he had ever done before.<sup>55</sup>

Mubazan, the high priest of Persia, saw a dream where a pack of wild camels, driving a flock of horses in their wake, were crossing the Tigris and spreading across the Persian land.

The Samawa Valley was flooded.<sup>56</sup>

54. Ibn Saad, I, 102, 150.

55. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 271.

56. Samawa is a sandy desert 235 kms to the southeast of Baghdad, near Kalb, which is roughly between Kufa and Damascus.

Fourteen pillars from the palace of the Khoustrau of Persia collapsed.

The great fire that had burnt ceaselessly for a thousand years in the Persian temple was snuffed out.<sup>57</sup>

According to the word of Aisha رضي الله عنها, on the night of the Sublime Birth, a Jewish trader from Mecca saw the rising of a star which he recognized as an indication of the awaited arrival, whereupon he went to one of Quraysh's meeting spots, asking:

“Is there any one of you whose wife gave birth to a child tonight?”

“Not that we know of”, they said.

“Listen to me carefully now, Quraysh”, then remarked the Jew. “The Prophet of the Final Era is supposed to have been born tonight. Between his shoulder blades is a mole, a blend of black and yellow, covered with hair.”

Amazed at the words of the Jew, those present separated, going their own way. Upon returning home, they told of the encounter to their families, some of whom remarked:

“A boy by the name of Muhammad was born tonight...the son of Abdullah.”

Thereupon they went to the Jew's house.

“A child was born in Mecca. Have you heard?” they asked.

“Was he born before or after my informing you?”

“Before; and his name is Ahmad!”

57. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 273.

The Jew requested to be taken to Aminah's house. She showed the sacred baby to them. Seeing with his own eyes the Seal of Prophethood between the baby's shoulder blades, the Jew fainted. When he regained his senses, he was asked what had happened.

“By God, Prophethood has now left the Children of Israel. So has the Scripture! It is written that the Last Prophet will defeat the Jews and destroy the reputation of their scholars. Arabs shall attain a grand honor and dignity through Prophethood. Rejoice Quraysh; for by God, you are set to acquire a might whose legend shall resonate through East and West.” (Ibn Saad, I, 162-163; Hakim, II, 657/4177)

All Meccans were happy with the birth of the Blessed Child. Even Abu Lahab awarded the slave girl Suwaybah, who brought him the good news of his nephew's birth, by setting her free.<sup>58</sup>


Ibn Abbas  provides the following account in relation:

“I saw Abu Lahab in my dream a year after his death. He was in a horrid state.

‘What is your state?’ I asked him.

‘My punishment is lightened on Monday's, for setting free Suwaybah in joy of Muhammad's birth. That day I am provided with refreshment with water that sprinkles forth from the small hole between my thumb and index fingers’, he replied.” (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, II, 277; Ibn Saad, I, 108, 125)

### **The Names of the Blessed Prophet**

The Messenger of Allah  has many sacred names. First and foremost are Muhammad and Ahmad, mentioned also in the Holy

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58. Halabi, I, 138.



Quran. Muhammad means one who has been lavishly praised, while Ahmad denotes one who abundantly gives thanks.

The name Muhammad receives mention in the Quran four times, and Ahmad once. The Gospels refer to these names with the word Faraqlitos, which carries their exact meanings.

In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ declares:

“I am Muhammad and Ahmad.

I am the Effacer<sup>59</sup> through whose Prophethood Allah shall erase disbelief.

I am the Reviver, following whom mankind will be resurrected in the Hereafter.

I am the Last, the Seal of Prophets, after whom no Prophet shall come.” (Bukhari, Manaqib, 17; Muslim, Fadail, 125)

The sacred names and attributes of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ have been given mention in many works. *Dalail’ul-Khayrat*, for instance, cites about two hundred of them. Some of these names and attributes which today beautifully adorn the Qiblah side wall of the *Rawdah* of the Prophet’s Mosque in lines of exceptional calligraphy are:

Ahmad, Mahmûd, Muhammad, Hâmid, Hamîd, Bashîr, Nadhîr, Burhân, Amîn, Awwal, Âkhir, Duhâ, Habibullâh, Hâdî, Khâtam, Mukhtâr, Mustafâ, Mutahhar, Mujtabâ, Nabî, Nûr, Raûf, Rahîm, Rasûlullâh, Rasûlû’s-Thaqalayn, Rahmatan li’l-Âlamîn, Sayyidu’l-Mursalîn, Sayyidu’l-Kawnayn, Imâmu’l-Haramayn, Imâmu’l-Muttakin, Shaflu’l-Mudhnibîn, Shams, Tâ-hâ, Ummî, Yâ-sîn...

59. Mâhî (الماحي): One who erases or annihilates.



### In the Foster Mother's Care

The Light of Being was born into the world fatherless, as lucidly expressed in the Quran:

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَى

“Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?” (ad-Duha, 6)

For the first few days, the Blessed Child was suckled by his mother Aminah. Then Suwaybah briefly got to breastfeed the child, along with her own little one Masruh.<sup>60</sup>

A pillar of loyalty, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ always took care of the needs of her nursing mother Suwaybah throughout his life. Both he and Khadijah treated Suwaybah with kindness and honor during their Mecca years. Even after migrating to Medina, the Light of Being ensured her needs were taken care of by sending her provisions. After hearing the news of her demise during his return from the Khaybar expedition in the seventh year of Hegirah, the Messenger of Allah inquired the well-being of her son Masruh to send him support, only to find out not only about his death, but also the bereavement of all of Suwaybah's relatives well before her own. (Ibn Saad, I, 108, 109)

The respect and honor shown to Suwaybah by the Noble Prophet provides an exemplary instance of grateful loyalty.

It was Halimah who after Suwaybah received the honor of becoming the nursing mother of the Blessed Child.

60. Suwaybah was also the foster mother of both Hamza and Abu Salama ؓ, which therefore makes them the foster brothers of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. (Ibn Saad, I, 108-110)



The Arabs then had a custom of temporarily sending their newborns over to the care of desert tribes to be breastfed. Not only did the desert climate make children healthier and more courageous, the dialects of nomadic Arabs were also clearer and more eloquent, rendering children more articulate.

As part of the said custom, the Blessed Child was also handed over to the fortunate Halimah, from the tribe of Banu Saad, reputed as the most eloquent among all the tribes of Arabs. The most eloquent and expressive of all men, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thus prepared from a very early age for the duty of conveying the Words of the Divine, which themselves mark the peak of eloquence.

Attesting to this is the Prophet's response to Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, when the latter once remarked he had never seen a more eloquent speaker than him.

“Little wonder! I am a man from Quraysh who was once suckled by a nursing mother of Banu Saad.” (Ali al-Muttaqi, VI, 174/15247)

Halimah bint Haritha recounts how she ended up becoming the wet-nurse of the Blessed Child.

“It was a year devastated by famine. Astride a white donkey and accompanied by some fellow women from the Banu Saad, we headed towards Mecca in hope of finding infants to breastfeed. We had nothing left to eat. We had but an old she-camel, without even a drop of milk left to give. We also had a small child. As neither I, nor the camel could provide enough milk to feed her, we could not sleep due to the sound of her constant crying. We eventually arrived at Mecca. There was not a woman left who was not offered the little Muhammad. They all refused to take him, however; as they were all looking for a child whose father was still alive. But he was



an orphan. Then every woman, except for me, ended up finding a child to take and returned. I did not wish to return empty handed, so I said to my husband:

‘I will go and agree to take that orphan.’

So I did as I said, and returned to the tent with the child in my arms.

‘You have made a good call,’ said my husband. ‘Who knows, the Almighty might provide us with blessings for his sake.’

And by all means, from the moment I had him in my arms I began overflowing with milk, and was able to abundantly feed both him and my own child. Come night, my husband went to check on our old camel, and found to our astonishment that she too had begun brimming over with milk. We milked her and drank to our hearts content, removing all trace of thirst and hunger. The children slept peacefully.

‘By God, it seems you have gotten your hands on a truly blessed child’, my husband could not help but say.

But our fortunes did not end there. Our donkey, always known to lag behind from the rest when traveling in a group, began overtaking the rest. I could hardly contain her.

‘Isn’t that the donkey you rode to Mecca?’ people were asking, astonished.

‘Yes’, I would reply.

Back home, and as arid an area as it was, our sheep began returning at night full of milk from where they were grazing. The other sheep meanwhile were returning tired and worn out, full of thirst and hunger. We were able to milk our sheep in full at a time



when the other sheep could not offer as little as a drop. The owners of the sheep were blaming the shepherds:

‘Shame on you! Don’t you graze our sheep where Halimah’s shepherd grazes hers?’ they were protesting.

They indeed had a point, for the shepherds grazed all the sheep in the same area. Ours returned with milk, yet theirs were bone dry.

What usually takes other children a month, little Muhammad ﷺ was developing in a day, and in a month, he had blossomed like a year old child. When he reached a year of age, he had grown to be a striking young toddler.

After staying with us for a few years, we finally returned him to his mother. But my husband could not bear his loss:

‘Let us take him for a bit more, at least until the plague passes away from Mecca’, he insisted. We could little stand to be deprived from his blessings through separation. We persevered so much that Aminah finally had to give in, allowing his blessings to remain with us for a little while longer.” (Haythami, VIII, 221; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, II, 278-279)

One day with his foster sister Shayma, the Blessed Child went next to the lambs, under the scorching midday heat. When they returned, Halimah rebuked her daughter for venturing outside under such heat, only to have the little Shayma respond:

“We never felt the heat of the sun even for a single moment. There was always a cloud hovering above my brother, shading us.” (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, II, 279; Ibn Saad, I, 112)

Halimah continues explaining:

“So he stayed with us for a while more. But having witnessed so many extraordinary things about him, a sudden fear that something



might happen to him gripped us. We therefore headed for Mecca, to return him. We were at the upper part of Mecca, however, when we suddenly lost him.” (Ibn Hisham, I, 179; Ibn Saad, I, 112)

It is reported that the Meccans then frenetically began looking for the lost child, but to no avail. Abdulmuttalib was near the Kaabah, praying for his wellbeing, which is when a voice was heard from above:

‘Do not fear; for Muhammad has a Lord who shall not leave him unprotected!’

Abdulmuttalib called out in desperation:

‘Whoever you may be... Tell us where the child is!’

‘Near the tree towards the right side of the Tihama Valley,’ it said.

Without further ado, Abdulmuttalib made way towards the described tree and found his grandson nearby. (Diyarbakri, I, 228)

It has also been reported that the verse in Chapter ad-Duha:

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ

“And He found you wandering, and He gave you guidance”, (Duha, 7) is a direct reference to the above incident.<sup>61</sup>

Halimah continues narrating the unfolding of events:

“Aminah was visibly surprised when we arrived next to her.

‘Why have you brought him back when you insisted so much to take him in the first place?’ she asked.

61. Zamakhshari, VI, 240.

‘The Almighty is our witness how well we have taken care of him,’ I replied. ‘But we had reason to fear something might happen to him, so we thought we would bring him back.’

‘Please tell me what you saw that made you fear,’ she asked.

Though we did not want to say at first, she insisted so much that we finally had to yield. But she was not surprised a bit at what we explained.

‘My son has displayed many extraordinary things enough to leave one in awe. Now let me explain to you what I had witnessed before’, she said, before proceeding to explain the astonishing experiences that took place during his delivery.

‘You can now leave him with me and return home in peace,’ was the last thing we heard her say.” (Haythami, VIII, Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, II, 278-279)

Halimah furthermore recounts:

“Abdumuttalib sent us off with generous gifts. I returned home with an inexpressible amount of valuable goods. I also told him what I had already told the child’s mother. Abdumuttalib embraced the child, as he began weeping.

‘There is no doubt, Halimah, that my son will have a great name. How I wish to see the days when he does,’ he said.” (Bayhaqi, Dalail, I, 145)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ displayed utmost loyalty to his foster relatives throughout his life. He would always address Halimah as ‘dear mother’ and show an enormous degree of affection and respect for her, even laying out his mantle for her to sit on. Whatever need she had, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would take care of. (Ibn Saad, I, 113, 114)

Halimah had one day come to Mecca to see the Prophet ﷺ. At the time he was married to Khadijah. They kept Halimah as their guest for some time, hosting her nicely. She bemoaned the famine and drought wreaking devastation in her land, laying waste to the livestock. Khadijah then presented her forty sheep and a camel for her to ride home with and to carry her load.<sup>62</sup>

During the conquest of Mecca, Halimah's sister had come to visit the Noble Prophet ﷺ, who was stationed near Abtah at the time. She had brought with her in a leather pouch some cheese and butter as a gift. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ straight away asked her of his foster mother. Upon hearing she had passed away, his eyes welled with tears. Then he commanded she be given clothes, a camel and two hundred dirhams of silver. Before returning satisfied to her village, the woman is known to have remarked:

“You are loyal now, as you were loyal back then.” (Waqidi, II, 869; Balazuri, I, 95)

### **The First *Sharh'us-Sadr*: The Cleaving of the Chest**

In order to prepare the Prophet ﷺ for his future reception of Divine mysteries, the Almighty opened his chest and cleansed his heart on numerous occasions, filling it with unique traits like serenity, compassion, mercy, faith and wisdom. The first of these occurred while the Blessed Child was still with his foster mother, recounted later on by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself.

Years later, a man asked the Prophet ﷺ what the first signs of his prophethood was. The Prophet ﷺ responded in detail:

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62. Ibn Saad, I, 114.



“My foster mother was from the clan of Banu Saad. One day my foster sister and I had set out with our livestock. We had not taken anything with us to eat. So I advised my sister to go to our mother and bring back some food.

So she left. I was left alone with the animals. It was not long after when two angels appeared, dressed in white.

‘Is that him?’ one said to the other.

‘Yes’, the other replied.

Then they quickly came next to me. Laying me on my back, they cleaved my chest. They then took out my heart, removing from it a black spot.

‘Go and bring me some snow water’, I heard one say to the other.

The water was brought and with it they washed my inside.

‘Now get me some hail water’, one again told the other. With that they washed my heart.

‘Now bring me peace and serenity’, one commanded yet again. They poured both into my heart.

‘Now close it up and stamp it with the Seal of Prophethood’, one said.

They closed up and sealed my heart and thereafter my chest. Then they immediately stitched made chest. I was really frightened. Quickly rushing home, I informed my foster mother of the incident...” (Ahmad, IV, 184-185; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, II, 280; Haythami,

VIII, 222)





Many sources testify to the occurrence of the above incident when the Light of Being was still four years of age.<sup>63</sup>

Anas ؓ confirms having repeatedly seen the scar the Prophet ﷺ carried on his chest from that opening. (Muslim, Iman, 261)

Some of the underlying wisdoms behind the cleaving of the chest of the Noble Prophet ﷺ could be given as follows:

Through the incident, Allah ﷻ, informed people of His Prophet's reputation and prepared him for Revelation from a very early age. That the *Sharh'us-Sadr*, an act of spiritual purification, left in its trail marks and signs for all to witness, was to ease the path for others in affirming faith in his Prophethood. Extraordinary events like these in fact did make it easier for people to believe him.

### **The Journey to Medina and the Passing Away of Aminah**

While the Light of Being was still six years of age, accompanied by Umm Ayman, Aminah took him to Medina to visit his father's grave. They stayed for a month in Medina next to Aminah's brothers. The visit proved fruitful as the Blessed Child ﷺ was able to mix with his cousins, even learning how to swim.<sup>64</sup>

Recalling those days, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remembers certain Jews coming next to him and staring lengthily at him, (Ibn Saad, I, 116) recounting:

“Again after inspecting me for a while, a Jew left the scene, only to come back a few moments later.

‘What’s your name, child?’ he asked.

63. See Ibn Saad, I, 112.

64. See Ibn Saad, I, 116.

‘Ahmad’, I said.

Then, he looked at my back and murmured, ‘He has got to be *him*.’

I told the incident to my uncles, who then informed my mother. She began to feel uneasy, so without further ado we prepared to return to Mecca.” (Abu Nuaym, *Dalail*, I, 163-164)

But Aminah fell ill on the return journey and at thirty years of age breathed her last near Abwa’, where she was buried. Moments before her death she gazed at her little orphan with loving eyes, filled with tender affection, hugged him and said the following:

“May Allah bless you! If what I have seen in my dreams is true, you shall be assigned by the Glorious and the Generous Allah to inform mankind of the good and bad. Allah will protect you from idols and idolatry. All that is alive will die, all that is new is bound to become old and all that is old is destined to perish. I will too now move on but knowing I will be forever remembered because I leave behind a pure child and a loving memory...” (Diyarbakri, I, 229-230; Kamil Miras, *Tecrid Tercümesi*, IV, 549)

Poet Arif Nihat Asya addresses Aminah as:

The woman, who at Abwa’ lies,  
From whose garden,  
The most beautiful rose thrived.

Bereaved now of his mother as well, the Light of Being returned to Mecca with his caretaker Umm Ayman.

Umm Ayman, the Blessed Child’s caretaker, was another who the Prophet ﷺ would address as ‘mother’ and frequently visit. In expression of his loving respect, the Noble Prophet ﷺ is known

to have referred to her as ‘a second mother’, and a member of his immediate family.<sup>65</sup>

### **Under the Protection of Abdulmuttalib**

The Blessed Child was not left unprotected by Allah ﷻ, despite having lost his father and his mother within a few years in succession. Thereupon, he was taken under the caring wings of his loving grandfather Abdulmuttalib, who showed his beloved grandson a mercy and love that he had not shown even his own children.

Not a single person was allowed to enter Abdulmuttalib’s room when he was alone or asleep except for Muhammad ﷺ who enjoyed the unreserved freedom of seeing his grandfather at will.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, out of respect, none of his own sons could dare to take Abdulmuttalib’s seat near the Kaabah except for Muhammad ﷺ. The Beloved Child would be warned by his uncles not to sit in his grandfather’s seat, only to have his imposing grandfather interject on his behalf:

“Let him sit in my place. I swear by God he is destined for greater things.”

Abdulmuttalib would always have his dear grandson sit by his side, enjoying and approving of whatever the Child ﷺ would do.<sup>67</sup> He would never start a meal without his grandson and would send

65. See Ibn Asīr, *Usdu’l-Ghāba*, VII, 303-304; Ibn Saad, VIII, 223.

66. Ibn Saad, I, 118.

67. Ibn Hishām, I, 180.



for him when he was not around.<sup>68</sup> When the food was served, he would always make sure to give him the most delicious part.<sup>69</sup>

Mecca was once struck by a severe drought, leaving the locals in distress. Helpless, the Meccans climbed Abu Qubays Mountain to supplicate the Almighty for rain. Climbing with them was also Abdulmuttalib, carrying Muhammad ﷺ on his shoulders. Once they reached the top, people lined up near Abdulmuttalib who then began supplicating the Almighty for rain, lifting his hands aloft to the skies in desperate hope of a downpour, with the Blessed Child atop his shoulders. It did not take long for heaven's gates to open. The clouds bursted immediately after they began descending the mountain and generously inundated the parched Meccan soil.<sup>70</sup>

These delightful days went by in a flash, and when the Prophet ﷺ reached the age of eight, his grandfather Abdulmuttalib passed away. All his worldly supports, it seemed, had ended. His only protector, friend and trainer thereafter was to be his Lord Allah ﷻ.

There is immense wisdom underlying the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was left without parents and a grandfather at an early age. By these losses, the disbelievers were to be left without excuse to deny his prophethood in the future. They could no longer claim that he may have been trained by his parents or grandfather, in alleging to receive Revelation. Being an orphan, furthermore, meant protection from the corrupt customs of his society, sustained more often than not by passing on from father to son; it means he was to be educated and trained thereafter exclusively by the Almighty. Confirming this is the following hadith:

68. Ibn Saad, I, 118.

69. Balazuri, I, 81.

70. See Ibn Saad, I, 90; Ibn Asir, *Usdu'l-Ghaba*, VII, 112; Diyarbakri, I, 239.

“My Lord trained me, and perfectly has He trained me indeed.”  
(Suyûtî, I, 12)

That he developed to attain the highest level of morality in spite of growing up without the privilege of receiving parental support and training is another enormously significant proof of the veracity of the prophethood of the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

Growing up as an orphan helped the Messenger of Allah ﷺ develop a merciful, refined heart, whereby he learned what it was to fully trust in the Almighty. Enduring a variety of difficulties that come with being an orphan and a lack of family support enabled the Prophet ﷺ to become the protector of orphans and other vulnerable alike from all levels of society. And so he has declared:

“Whoever protects an orphan from among his relatives or another, will be next to me in Paradise as close as the index finger is to the middle finger.” (Muslim, Zuhd, 42; Bukhari, Adab, 24; Talâq, 14)

Another subtle reason behind the raising of the Blessed Child ﷺ as an orphan is that for mankind to find examples of all kinds of social status in his life, the Almighty put his Prophet ﷺ through all kinds of situations, from the most feeble position of an orphan to the highest as the head of state.

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

Right before his death Abdulmuttalib gathered all his sons around him to declare his will, advising them above all to look after his beloved grandson in the best possible manner after he passed away. Being siblings born from the same mother as Muhammad’s ﷺ father Abdullah, the prime candidates to take care of the child were naturally Zubayr and Abu Talib. Lots were drawn and Abu Talib was eventually chosen to take care of the child.



Abu Talib was the most merciful of all of Abdulmuttalib's remaining sons.<sup>71</sup> He had a large family and, bar a few camels, sparse worldly possession. Like his father he was nonetheless was much respected, and was considered the master of Quraysh especially after the passing away of Abdulmuttalib. There was not be a single person who did not listen when he spoke and his words were considered authoritative among the locals. A man of towering virtue, he followed his father's footsteps in avoiding alcoholic beverages throughout his life.<sup>72</sup>

The love and care Abu Talib showed his beloved nephew was like that of a father for his son. Abu Talib's devotion to Muhammad ﷺ was in many respects indeed greater than what he showed his own children. There would not be so much a morsel taken from the table without the young Muhammad ﷺ first being ensured his share. It did not take long for Abu Talib to notice the plentitude of food on the table and how everybody was able to have their fill when Muhammad was eating with them, and contrarily the insufficiency of the food that would leave them hungry and asking for more whenever the Blessed Child was absent. There would invariably be food left over whenever they ate with Muhammad ﷺ. If there was some milk that would satisfy only one person, for instance, it only took the orphan to begin drinking it first for others after him to drink to their hearts content. Before meals, Abu Talib would therefore always command his children:

“Wait until my son comes.”<sup>73</sup>

Fatimah, Abu Talib's wife, was an extremely virtuous woman with a gentle heart, who approached the young orphan with utmost

71. Ibn Asîr, *Usdu'l-Ghaba*, I, 22.

72. Halabî, I, 184.

73. Ibn Saad, I, 119-120, 168.

affection. She was among those who years later migrated to Medina with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. The Noble Messenger ﷺ would always make sure to often visit her throughout his life, even taking his afternoon naps at times at her house.<sup>74</sup> Her passing away caused the Messenger of Allah to shed pearl-like tears from his eyes, a day which he labeled as the day in which ‘his mother had died.’ Under her shroud, the Prophet ﷺ instructed that she be dressed in his shirt, and before leading her *janazah* salat, he lied down awhile in her grave, supplicating. In response to those wondering the reason to all this, he replied:

“After Abu Talib, no other person helped me like her. I gave her my shirt so that the Mighty Allah would give her the dress of Paradise in the Hereafter.”

Some Companions were astonished at the degree of the Blessed Prophet’s sorrow. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then explained:

“She was a second mother to me. I would be the first one she fed when even her own children were hungry and sour-faced. She would comb my hair and scent me; she was indeed a mother.” The Noble Prophet ﷺ then said the following prayer:

“May Allah forgive you, my mother, and reward you with the best. May Allah have mercy upon you! You were a mother to me after my own. You fed me while you were hungry. You clothed me when you needed clothes yourself. You fed me the tastiest foods, while depriving yourself. And you did all this only to gain the pleasure of the Almighty and in expectation of the abode of Hereafter!..” (Hâkim, III, 116-117; Haythamî, IX, 256-257; Ya’kûbî, II, 14)

74. Ibn Saad, VIII, 222.

## The Second Cleaving of the Chest

Abu Hurayrah<sup>75</sup> ﷺ was known for his boldness in asking the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about things others would not dare. One day he inquired:

“What was the first sign you saw, Messenger of Allah, concerning your Prophethood?”

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the guide to happiness in both worlds, answered to soothe the Companion’s curiosity:

“Since you ask, Abu Hurayrah, I shall explain. I was once out in the desert; I must have been about ten. I was suddenly alarmed by a voice coming from above my head.

‘Is that him?’ one man was asking another.

‘Yes...That sure is him,’ the other answered.

They then appeared right in front of me. Their faces resembled nobody I had ever seen before; so were their clothes. Approaching me, each of them then held me by the arm, but I could not feel their touch.

75. Abu Hurayrah ﷺ, named Abd’us-Shams at birth, took the name Abdurrahman after entering Islam. While carrying a cat inside his shirt one day, he met the Blessed Prophet ﷺ who inquired what he was carrying. “A cat”, he replied, upon which the Messenger of Allah jokingly called him Abu Hurayrah, which means the Father of a Kitten. The moniker stuck to the point that his real name was no longer used. Abu Hurayrah ﷺ arrived at Medina in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira. He was among the underprivileged Muslims of the Suffa, who called the Masjid’un-Nabawi home. Staying by the Prophet’s ﷺ side day and night, he had an insatiable passion for learning the hadith directly from the mouth of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. Thus, including repeats of what he heard from the prominent Companions, by the time he passed away he had narrated a total of 5374 hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ, more than any other Companion. He was 78 when he passed away in Medina in the 58<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira.



‘Lay him on the ground’, one of them said to the other.

Together they laid me down. I did not feel any force, nor was there uneasiness of any kind.

‘Come on...open his chest,’ one said. But again, neither could I see, nor feel any pain.

‘Remove malice and jealousy from there’, he said.

He then removed something like a blood clot, throwing it away.

‘Now insert mercy and compassion’, one said. I saw them place something like silver, the same size of that which they had removed. Then one of them held my big toe, jiggled it a little and said:

‘You can now leave in peace!’

As I got up to leave, I could feel mercy and compassion deep inside. Thereafter I could only feel respect for my elders and love for my juniors.” (Ahmad, V, 139; Haythami, VII, 223)



## THE YEARS OF YOUTH

### A Development under Divine Protection

The young Muhammad ﷺ was protected by the Almighty from the evil habits of his society and times. He spent his youth immersed in moral purity in a way deserving of carrying the duty of prophethood, which a bright future stored for him. The man with the noblest lineage had undoubtedly also embodied the highest moral values among his people well before beginning his mission as a Prophet. His superlative generosity extended above all to his neighbors and he showed others a magnanimity and forgiveness that prevented him from harming anyone in any way whatsoever. Quarrelling and fighting, for him, were things absolutely unheard of. Combined with all these traits also was an unprecedented dependability, leading his peers to nickname him *al-Amîn*, the trustworthy, and *al-Sâdiq*, the honest.<sup>76</sup>

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was once asked whether he had ever worshipped the idols or drank wine before Prophethood. Replying to both questions in the negative, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ then went on to affirm:

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76. Ibn Hishâm, I, 191; Ibn Saad, I, 121.



“Even though I did not know about the Book and Faith, I somehow knew the Meccans were indulging in disobedience to Allah.” (Diyarbakri, I, 254-255)

The Prophet ﷺ recounts another time during his childhood when he experienced the protection of the Almighty:

“Still a young boy, I was playing with the boys of Quraysh, carrying stones from one place to another. To carry the stones with more ease, the other boys took off their garments and placed them over their shoulders, on top of which they began placing the the stones. Just as I was intending to do the same, I felt a very hard punch by someone I could not see.

‘Leave your garment on’, was all I heard him say.

So I left my garment on and continued to carry stones dressed, the only one among my friends who still had his clothes on.” (Ibn Hishâm, I, 197)

Another similar incident predating the onset of Prophethood occurred during the rebuilding of the Kaabah, when the young Muhammad ﷺ was carrying stones on his shoulders with his uncle Abbâs, who advised his nephew to put his garment over his shoulders so as not to hurt himself. But when he tried to comply, the young Muhammad ﷺ collapsed on the ground, and with eyes fixed on the skies, all he could do was to ask his uncle for his garments back so he could cover his body. (Bukhari, Hajj, 42)

Although strolling naked in certain circumstances was deemed acceptable at the time, the Prophet ﷺ never walked in such a manner utterly unacceptable by Islam.

One can also remember the conversation between the Prophet ﷺ, still twelve year old child at the time, with Bahira, for an ample



idea of his attitude to Meccan wrongdoings. When Bahira asked the child to speak the truth in the name of the idols Lât and Uzza, the response he got was:

“By Allah, I never hated anything more than Lât and Uzzâ; so do not ask me anything in their name.” (Ibn Ishâq, p. 54; Ibn Saad, I, 154; see also Ahmed, V, 362)

Umm Ayman, the caretaker of the Blessed Child, reports that Quraysh used to pay homage to an idol called Buwaabah, where they would organize a special festival in its honor on a particular day each year, consisting of remaining next to the idol all day long and shaving their heads in reverence. Like other Meccans, Abu Talib had also prepared eagerly for this annual festival and asked his orphan nephew to attend with him. Much to the fury of his uncle and aunts, however, Muhammad ﷺ declined the offer.

“We are afraid a calamity will befall you for your lack of respect for our idols”, his aunts were saying, pleading the child to be present at the festival. The Child ultimately accepted his aunts’ pleas and made his way to the festival with his people. But once they arrived at the presence of the idol, Muhammad ﷺ all of a sudden disappeared, returning moments later petrified, with a pale face.

Asked by his anxious aunts as to what had happened, he said:

“I fear I may be possessed by an evil spirit!”

“The Almighty would never leave you to suffer such torment, for you are a child exuding all kinds of virtue”, his aunts assured him. “Just tell us what you saw.”

“Each time I drew near the idol, a tall man white man appeared telling me to get back and refrain from touching it”, he said.



This would prove to be the last time Muhammad ﷺ was forced to attend idolater festivities.<sup>77</sup>

The subsequent account given by the Blessed Prophet is quoted by his cousin, Ali ibn Abu Talib ؓ:

“Never did I think of taking any part in the festivities organized during the period of Ignorance, except on two occasions. But on both occasions, I was protected by Allah from these evils. While shepherding on one evening, I remember asking one of my fellow shepherds:

‘Could you please look after my sheep so I have a chance to go down to Mecca and attend in that revelry like the other boys?’

‘Sure’, he said. ‘Do whatever you want.’

So I went to Mecca. The moment I entered, I could hear music and singing coming from the first house. Inquiring what the occasion was, I was told that so and so were getting married. I decided to sit down and watch. But taking hold of me almost immediately was an immense drowsiness that put me to deep sleep. I was only awoken next morning by the heat of the sun. I quickly went back to my friend. When he saw me, he instantly asked me to tell him what I did.

“I did nothing”, I replied.

The same thing happened to me again at another night, when I went to Mecca to participate in an event, only to be overcome with fatigue. I never again thought or did anything of this sort, until the day Allah honored me with Prophethood.” (Ibn Ishâq, p. 58-59; Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah*, II, 292)

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77. Ibn Saad, I, 158.



## Muhammad ﷺ as a Shepherd

The Light of Being worked as a shepherd before joining his uncle Abu Talib in trade. Shepherding was a profession that was held in high esteem by the Arabs; it was not uncommon to see even the children of the rich grazing sheep. Imparting unto them the precious skills of ruling and administering, shepherding, as confirmed by the following hadith, has moreover been the profession of all prophets well before their responsibilities of prophethood:

“All Messengers sent by Allah have been shepherds of sheep.”

It is reported that some Companions then asked the Blessed Messenger ﷺ whether or not he had also been occupied in that line of work, to which he plied the reply:

“Yes, indeed. I used to tend the sheep of the Meccans in return for a pay<sup>78</sup>.” (Bukhari, Ijārah, 2, Anbiyā, 29; Ibn Majah, Tijārat, 5)

Another similar hadith states:

“Musa was sent as a Prophet while tending sheep. Dawud was made a Prophet while he was tending sheep. I also used to tend my family’s sheep at Ajyad when I was granted with prophethood.” (Ibn-i Saad, I, 126)

The young Muhammad ﷺ is reported to have been twenty-five years of age when he worked as a shepherded the sheep owned by Meccans.

78. Reports vary on what the term *qararit*, used in the hadith to denote the payment received, could mean. One report suggests that it was rather the name of a place in Mecca, while the other implies it being the plural of the term *qirat*, a type of currency, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to shepherd the sheep of the Meccans in return for one *qirat*, or the twentieth of a dinar, per sheep, per day.

Shepherding in times of affliction has been emphatically praised in the following hadith, which describes it as a virtuous occupation:

“A person in one of the most propitious lines of work is he who grazes his sheep on a hilltop or in a valley; who furthermore performs his salat, gives his alms, worships his Lord until the day he dies and constantly does good to others.” (Muslim, Imarat, 125; Ibn Majah, Fitan, 13)

The path of solemnity and compassion and the capacity for reflection are paved for shepherds, as indicated by the hadith below:

“Serenity and solemnity follow shepherds.” (Bukhari, Manaqib, 1; Muslim, Iman, 84/52)

Looking after sheep and shielding them from wild animals nurture in the shepherd emotions of mercy and protectiveness, favorable towards the flourishing of virtues a prophet must possess, like patience when facing the possible disrespect and ignorance of his people, and compassion to all the creations of Allah ﷻ.

### **Trade Journeys with His Uncles**

The young Muhammad’s ﷺ first trip to Syria was with his uncle Abu Talib while still only twelve years of age. He made another trip to Yemen when he was sixteen. On the first occasion, Abu Talib had decided to join the Meccan caravan en route to Syria. With all his family present to see him off, it was only at that moment that Abu Talib asked his beloved nephew:

“Would you like to come to Syria with me?”



The Blessed Child's aunts and other uncles were lukewarm to the idea, however, afraid that being very young, he might catch a disease on the way. Abu Talib was hence dissuaded and decided not to go ahead with the idea of taking Muhammad ﷺ along. But this was to the disappointment of his beloved nephew, who was left in tears.

“Why are you crying, my dear?” asked Abu Talib. “Is it because I am leaving you behind?”

Holding fast to the reins of the camel on which his uncle was astride, he pleaded:

“Who are you leaving me with? I have neither a father nor a mother!”

Suddenly overflowing with mercy, Abu Talib then replied:

“By Allah, I will take you with me...and this will be the last time I will ever think of separating from you.” (Ibn-i Ishâk, s. 53; Abû Nuaym, *Dalâil*, I, 168)

His second trip was this time with his uncle Zubayr to Yemen when he was sixteen. Wanting to benefit from the blessings of his nephew in his business venture, Zubayr gained the permission of Abu Talib to take Muhammad ﷺ with him.<sup>79</sup>

On the way, they encountered a wild camel blocking a certain passage they needed to pass. The caravan decided to change their route but Muhammad ﷺ told the members of the caravan to let him take care of the situation instead.

79. Diyarbakri, I, 260.





The moment the wild camel saw the young Muhammad ﷺ, it calmed down. The Prophet mounted upon the camel, riding it until they passed the valley, after which he let the camel free.

Similarly, on their return, the caravan came across an unexpectedly flooded valley. The Prophet-to-be ﷺ kept his calm and told the others to follow him, leading the caravan through the valley, safe and sound, as if the Almighty had dried up their path for them. (Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâyah*, II, 282)

### **Encounter the Christian Monk Bahirah**

During his trip to Syria with his uncle Abu Talib, the caravan camped near the monastery of Bahirah, a Christian monk. Astounded at having noticed a cloud hovering around the caravan and shading a certain person, as well as the branches of trees leaning forth to shelter someone from the sun near where the caravan had camped, the curious Bahirah decided to look in to the intriguing matter and invite the Meccans inside the monastery for some food:

“I have prepared food for you all. I insist each and every member of the caravan to join, young and old, free and slave.”

The Meccans were taken aback by the invitation of Bahirah, since he had never seemed to take much interest in them before, during their numerous other trips to Syria. Nevertheless, everyone heeded the invitation. Inquisitively staring at all the faces of his guests upon their entrance, Bahirah felt he did not find what he had been looking for, a certain sign he wished to see.

“Did you leave someone behind?” he asked.

“No one”, they said, “except for a child left to keep an eye on the caravan and their belongings, chosen for the job since he was the youngest.”



But Bahirah insisted he come for the meal as well. Once brought by the table, Bahirah recognized Muhammad ﷺ immediately. Taking him by the hand, he murmured:

“This is the Master of the Both Worlds...The Almighty’s Messenger, the Mercy of the Worlds!”

The Meccan elders asked him where he had gotten such an idea, to which Bahirah answered:

“I read his signs from our Holy Scriptures. As you approached, I noticed all trees and rocks bowing to him in respect. I am aware that it is only to prophets that these inanimate things bow in respect. I then became all the more convinced, once I looked further and noticed the his seal of prophethood between his shoulder blades.”

Bahîrah then continued to pose more questions to Abu Talib about his young nephew and each answer he received set his heart at greater ease regarding his premonition. Bahirah was now certain about the child’s prophethood.

“Take your nephew back to your homeland!” he then urged Abu Talib. “Beware of the harm that may come from the Jews, for God forbid if they recognize your nephew, they will most certainly try to kill him. The Jews desire the next prophet to be raised from among them, from the children of Israel, yet this child is an Arab. Take him back...Awaiting him is a great future.”

Abu Talib listened to the advice of Bahirah and immediately turned back to Mecca, at the expense of cutting his business venture short. (Ibn Ishâq, p. 54-55; Ibn Saad, I, 153-155; Tirmidhî, Manâqib, 3)

Some orientalist have exploited this incident in alleging that the Prophet ﷺ received all the vital information from Bahirah to establish his own religion; an unfounded accusation indeed. Bahirah,



after all, was a Christian monk and the beliefs communicated in the textually corrupted Bible are contrary to the core of Islamic beliefs. So how could it be conceived that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ could imitate the ideas of Christians, or for that matter Jews, which he had set out to correct in the first place?

The God of Christianity, the faith professed by Bahirah, is attributed with anthropomorphic qualities, which results in a materialistic idea of the Divine. The concept of God in Islam, on the other hand, the faith conveyed by the Final Messenger ﷺ, is deeply entrenched in the notion of Divine unity and transcendence and thus stands entirely different. Allah ﷻ, is transcendent, beyond all comprehension and above all weaknesses and imperfections alike.

The Holy Quran therefore makes it clear, in no uncertain terms, that the People of the Book, the Torah and the Gospels, who lived before the appearance of the Final Prophet ﷺ, merit salvation only if they abided by the original form of their religions.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ  
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Those who believe (in the Qur’an), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians,- any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.” (al-Baqara, 62)

The Prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ, being the Final Prophet, encompasses all times and places, and consequentially abrogates all



previous religions and their validity. Not professing faith in Allah ﷻ, and His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is tantamount to disbelief. Even devout adherents from among the People of the Book today, are therefore excluded from the compass of people referred to in the above *ayah*.

Subsequent to professing faith comes the life of worship and the rules of conduct. Islam has implemented an organized life of worship, aligning social life with justice, morality and righteousness, in relation to which it decrees punishments for those who violate the law. The aspects of worship in the religion Bahirah practiced at the time, on the other hand, had already been falsified, already devoid of the laws that regulate social conduct.

Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was also unlettered. As clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran, neither did he know how to read nor write:

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ  
إِذَا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ. بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ  
أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ

“And you (O Muhammad) were not a reader of any scripture before it, nor did you write it with your right hand, for then might those have doubted, who follow falsehood. But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge, and none deny Our revelations save wrong-doers.” (al-Ankabut, 48-49)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was only twelve years old at the time he met Bahirah and the meeting was a very short one at that. It would be inconceivable to even momentarily entertain the idea that an

unlettered boy of twelve could memorize six thousand odd verses of a Book in such a fleeting time and furthermore, keep each and every one of them in tact in his memory for twenty-eight long years, then all of a sudden come out and gradually begin to communicate them at the age of forty. Nobody in their right mind could dispute the fact that Islam, as a universally accepted religion, has brought a comprehensive way of life that simply cannot be conjured up out of the blue by even a scholar of expertise, let alone by a child.

What's more, had Bahirah really known all this as alleged, then why would he not proclaim the religion himself instead of leaving the honors to a boy whom he had never met before?

Another aspect that should also be noted is that the language spoken by Bahirah was not Arabic, in contrast to the characteristically clear and eloquent Arabic of the Holy Quran:

وَلَقَدْ نَعَلُمْ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ  
إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ

“We know indeed that they say, ‘It is a man that teaches him.’ The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this (Quran) is Arabic, pure and clear.” (an-Nahl, 103)

The Quran, moreover, uses the Arabic language so powerfully that it mounts what is an insurmountable challenge against the entire Arab poets and their literary abilities. The Divine origin of the Quran and the sure failure awaiting those who attempt to imitate its powerful literary majesty is bluntly expressed in the verse:



قُلْ لئن اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ  
لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

“Say: Verily, though mankind and the jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another.”

Considering that the Prophet’s ﷺ meeting with Bahira was witnessed by many Meccans, had the orientalist claim any truth to it, the Meccans who severely rejected Islam would have surely used this as a pretext to reject the Religion. Although historical accounts abundantly attest to the fact that the idolaters did not forego the slightest opportunity that came up to attack Islam, there exists no reference to a polemic based on this meeting, which suggests that even they must have thought taking such a claim seriously as absurd.

### The Hilful-Fudûl Society

Clashes that repeatedly occurred between Arab tribes during the forbidden months were referred to in general as the Fijar Battles. There are four such battles known to have taken place during the Age of Ignorance, the last one being between the tribes of Quraysh and Kinanah, in which the future Prophet ﷺ, still twenty years of age at the time, also took part but without shedding any blood; he merely collected the stray arrows shot by the enemy and handed them to his uncles.<sup>80</sup>

The battle came to an end in the month of Zilqadah, one of the months deemed holy by Arabs. Not long after, a Yemenite tradesman from the tribe of Zubayd arrived in Mecca to sell his

80. Ibn Hishâm, I, 198; Ibn Saad, I, 126-128.



goods. The Meccan Âs ibn Wâil, one of the richest tradesmen of the town, purchased the goods brought by the man but did not pay the price he had promised. Helpless, the poor man asked the help of the strong clans Abd'ud-Dâr, Mahzûm, Jumâh, Sahm and Adiyî ibn Kâ'b tribes, but to no avail. They even scolded him for seeking his rights.

Unable to find help in resolving the problem, the embittered Yemenite trader climbed the hill of Abu Qubays near the Kaabah and recited a poem, which began with the words 'O Sons of Fihir', referring to the reputed forefather of the Meccans, explaining the injustice he had suffered at the hands of As ibn Wail, calling out for the help of Meccans who had gathered around the Kaabah at that time. The first man making a move to help was Zubayr, the Prophet's uncle, who organized a meeting at the house of Abdullah ibn Jud'an, attended by many notables of Mecca.

There, they made a solemn pledge to defend and restore the rights of anyone, beginning with the Yemenite, who suffers any injustice within the borders of Mecca, and to struggle against tyrants on behalf of the weak, "as long as mounts Hira and Sabir stood in their places and until there was enough water left in seas to moist a single strand of hair."

The newly founded society remained strong even after they successfully regained the rights of the Yemenite from Âs ibn Wâ'il and remained on its feet to help the victims of injustice thereafter, trying its utmost to restore justice among people.<sup>81</sup>

Being entrenched in justice and based on helping the weak, the Hilf'ul-Fudûl was the only society that the Prophet ﷺ supported

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81. Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâya*, II, 295-296; Ibn Saad, I, 128-129.

during the Age of Ignorance, remembering the society with sympathy long after his Prophethood:

“I was present with my uncles at the house of Abdullah ibn Jud’ân when the Hilf’ul-Fudûl was established. So satisfied was I with it that being given red camels (the most prized Arab commodity at the time) in its place could not have satisfied me more. If I were invited to participate in such a society even today, I would certainly accept the offer without hesitation.” (Ibn Kathîr, al-Bidâya, II, 295)

### The Business Life of the Prophet ﷺ

It should always be borne in mind that being home to the Kaabah, the house of Allah ﷻ, Mecca has always been a revered visiting place for believers not only since the time of Ibrahim ؑ, but also since Adam ؑ. Trading with pilgrims by virtue of buying goods from neighboring lands and selling them at fairs during the seasons of pilgrimage, not to mention the selling of local goods to neighboring lands during the regular season, always provided Meccans a major source of livelihood.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had already traveled with his uncles in trade caravans to Syria and Yemen as a teenager. In later years, he traveled on another two occasions to Yemen, to the Juraish market, on behalf of Khadijah ؓ, receiving in return a young male camel for each trip.<sup>82</sup> On one occasion, he also took a caravan loaded with goods belonging to Khadijah ؓ to the Hubasha market at Tihamah. Accompanying him on this trip was Maysara, Khadijah’s ؓ servant. They brought the valued Tihamah fabric they had purchased at the market back to Mecca and sold it to Hakim ibn Hizam with a high profit. The Noble Messenger ﷺ was always very happy with

82. Hâkim, III, 200/4834.



Khadijah's ﷺ conduct when working for her, confessing to have never worked with a better business partner than Khadijah ﷺ who more often than not would end up paying Muhammad ﷺ more for his services than the price agreed upon. (Halabî, I, 221, Aynî, X, 104)

It all began with Abu Talib's advice to Muhammad ﷺ:

"I am a poor man, my dear nephew. Drought has left us with nothing to trade. It has dried up all our capital. But I hear a caravan is about to leave to Damascus and Khadijah ﷺ, the daughter of Khuwaylid, is looking for a trustworthy agent to sell some of her goods over there on her behalf; a dependable, loyal person like yourself. I think we should convince her to accept you as a partner in trade. I believe she will prefer you for your trustworthiness. The truth is I do not want you to go to Damascus for the Jews have me fear for your wellbeing, yet I cannot think of another way out."

The offer made Khadijah ﷺ very happy, and she ended up offering Muhammad ﷺ more money than expected, remarking:

"I never knew Muhammad would be willing to work for me!"

Khadijah ﷺ knew very well that Muhammad ﷺ was a very reliable and honest man, who possessed an exceptional moral standard.<sup>83</sup>

As Muhammad ﷺ was preparing to leave for Syria, Khadijah ﷺ advised her servant Maysara to go with him and obey him under all circumstances.

Having loaded the two camels, they set out. At the outset, the two camels kept lagging behind the rest of the caravan, a reason for concern for Maysara as he felt anxious and rushed to Muhammad ﷺ to inform him of the problem. It only took Muhammad ﷺ to

83. Ibn Hishâm, I, 203; Ibn Saad, I, 129; Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâya*, II, 297.



place his hands on the camels' hooves, immediately after which they rejuvenated, bellowing and marching in a frenzied pace to take the lead in front of the caravan. Witnessing such a sight, the other members of the caravan thereafter showed extra care for Muhammad ﷺ and his servant.<sup>84</sup>

The young Muhammad ﷺ was always honest in his business transactions, fulfilling the promises he made at any cost. Ibn Abbas ؓ, who thoroughly knew the details of Muhammad's ﷺ life, has said:

“Whenever the Messenger of Allah promised something he would definitely do it.” (Bukhari, Shahâdât, 28)

A similar affirmation was made by Sâib ibn Abi's-Sâib ؓ, who recounts the time he visited the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as he was surrounded by the Companions.

“The Companions started praising me to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, thinking he knew little of me. But he then told the others he knew me more intimately than the rest, upon which I said:

“May my mother and father be ransomed for you, Messenger of Allah; you surely do. You were my business partner; and what an excellent partner you were. Never do I remember you quarrelling nor disputing with me!” (Abû Dâwud, Adab, 17/4836; Ibn Majah, Ticârât, 63)

Countless examples from his life illustrate why the Blessed Prophet was nicknamed *al-Amin* (the Trustworthy) and *as-Sâdiq* (the Honest). One such instant is narrated by Abdullâh ibn Abi'l-Hamsâ ؓ:

“I did some trade with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ long before his prophethood. Having owed him money, I told him to wait for me and that I would repay him after a short while. But not long after I

84. Diyarbakrî, I, 262.

departed, I forgot my promise, and came around to remembering it only after three days. On impulse, I rushed back to the spot where I had made the promise and I found him there still waiting for me. Expecting him to pour scold on me, that noble man, who evinced the most remarkable virtues, instead simply remarked, ‘You have placed me in a very difficult situation, young man, keeping me waiting here for the past three days.’” (Abû Dâwûd, Adab, 82/4996)

Such splendid behavior evocative of great wisdom could have only been embodied by a future Prophet.

Had the Almighty wished, He could have enabled His Beloved Prophet to lead a comfortable life, beginning from childhood. But Divine Wisdom willed that he earn his livelihood with his own hands and thus set an example for others to emulate. Confirming the action of the Noble Prophet ﷺ are his words:

“None has ever eaten a better sustenance than that earned by his own hands...” (Bukhari, Buyû’, 15; Enbiyâ, 37)

Any given cause will decrease in value in people’s eyes, if its leader makes a living only through the donations of his followers. Such a leader will no longer be taken seriously by others. This is the gist that underlies the command of the Almighty to His prophets:

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“No reward do I ask of you for it: my reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.” (al-Shuarâ, 109, 127, 145, 164, 180; Yûnus, 72; Hûd, 29)

Echoing this truth also is the following couplet:

*Covet not the favor of another,  
For its price is the gem of freedom*



Since he supported himself through his own earnings, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was in this sense among the most independent of all people.

### The Observations of Monk Nestor

After a long journey, the caravan eventually made a stopover at Busra, part of Syria. Muhammad ﷺ retreated under an olive tree in the vicinity of the monastery of Monk Nestor. Noticing the man taking a respite in the shade, and already having met Maysara before, the Monk asked him:

“Maysara! Who is the man under the shade?”

“He is from the tribe of Quraysh”, Maysara answered.

“Has he any redness in his eyes?” the Monk then asked.

“Yes, he has.”

“Then he has got to be the Last Prophet!” exclaimed Nestor. “If only I could live to see the beginning of his prophethood and help him!” (Ibn Saad, I, 130-156; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidâya*, II, 297-298)

Soon after, the caravan left Busra for Mecca. On the way back, Maysara witnessed two angels shading Muhammad ﷺ at times when the heat of the desert soared to unbearable heights. The journey proved to be a profitable one for the entire caravan.<sup>85</sup>

### Marriage to Khadijah ﷺ

Immediately following the return to Mecca, Maysara began conveying in great detail the supreme conduct he witnessed in the Blessed Man during the journey, as well as their spectacular

experiences throughout. Upon hearing this, Khadijah رضي الله عنها began nurturing a wish to marry Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Nafisa bint Umayya, a close friend of Khadijah رضي الله عنها, narrates how it all developed then on:

“Khadijah رضي الله عنها was a clever, hardworking lady of an splendid moral standard. Virtually, there was not a single man from her tribe who did not carry a strong desire to marry her. But Khadijah رضي الله عنها was a great admirer of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. Following their return with the trade caravan from Damascus, Khadijah رضي الله عنها sent me to sound him out regarding his intentions of marriage.

‘Why don’t you marry, Muhammad?’ I asked him.

‘How can I when I am without material means?’

‘Say you did have the means; would you then marry an honorable, beautiful and moreover wealthy woman?’

‘Who is this lady?’ he then asked.

‘Khadijah رضي الله عنها, I replied.

‘Do you think that is possible?’

‘Leave that to me’, I assured him. He then remarked:

‘If you can arrange it, I will marry her.’

Without delay, I went to Khadijah رضي الله عنها to inform her of our conversation.” (Ibn Saad, I, 131)

Upon hearing the good news of her confidant, Khadijah رضي الله عنها proposed to Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. The Light of Being عليه السلام then informed his uncle Abu Talib of the proposal, who in line with the custom of the time went to Khadijah’s رضي الله عنها uncle to ask her hand in marriage on behalf of his beloved nephew. Khadijah’s رضي الله عنها uncle gave his



blessings and the marriage ceremony went ahead, attended by all relatives and friends. Short speeches were given by Abu Talib and Khadijah’s ﷺ cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal. Once the talks came to an end, Khadijah’s ﷺ uncle Amr stood and said:

“Bear witness, people of Quraysh, that I hereby declare Khadijah ﷺ ibn Khuwaylid as the wife of Muhammad ibn Abdullah.”<sup>86</sup>

As *mahr*, the obligatory dowry offered to the bride in marriage, Muhammad ﷺ gave Khadijah ﷺ twenty young camels.<sup>87</sup> At the time of their marriage, Muhammad ﷺ was around twenty-five years old, while Khadijah ﷺ, a widow already with children from her previous marriage, was around forty.

Throughout their marriage, Khadijah ﷺ, the mother of the Believers, proved to be a brilliant support for Muhammad ﷺ, virtually laying her life and riches at his feet. Stemming from her noble character, she was known as *al-Affah* (the Chaste), *al-Tâhirah*, (the Pure) and most notably, before and after the advent of Islam, as *Khadijat’ul-Kubra*,<sup>88</sup> Khadijah ﷺ the Great.

The following words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ attest to her outstanding status:

“The best woman of the Hereafter is Maryam bint Imrân, mother of Isa, while the best of this world is Khadijah ﷺ bint Khuwaylid.” (Bukhari, *Manâqibu’l-Ansâr*, 20; Muslim, *Fadâil’us-Sahâbah*, 69)

The future Prophet’s choice of marriage shows he was never a man motivated by egoistic desires. He could have most certainly married a younger and more beautiful lady, if he wanted, and not a widow with children. But the Noble Muhammad ﷺ was not

86. Diyarbakrî, I, 264; Yakûbî, II, 20.

87. Ibn Hisham, I, 206; Ibn Asîr, *Usdu’l-Ghaba*, I, 23.

88. Ibn Saad, VIII, 14-15.

searching for passing beauties or youth in his wife to be, but rather treasured virtues like honor, chastity and morals.

### The Wisdom behind the Multiple Marriages of the Prophet ﷺ

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ contracted multiple marriages after he the age of fifty-five, a move behind which lay much wisdom. Regardless, since Allah had made the Messenger of Allah ﷺ an example for others to emulate in all aspects of life by Allah ﷻ, as testified by the following *ayah*, entertaining any bad thoughts about his marriages and taking these thoughts even further to the point of slander, only betrays an ignorance of facts and a malicious intention:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ  
وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

“Verily in the Messenger of Allah there is a good example for him who looks unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.” (al-Ahzâb, 33:21)

The Blessed Prophet is an exemplar beyond comparison in all affairs, especially family relations. Even though we cannot give details here on all the righteous wives of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his marriages, a task that surpasses the scope of this book, we will nevertheless touch upon some of their characteristics.

Undoubtedly it is during youth that one feels the strongest desires for the opposite gender. From this aspect, a look into the early life of the Prophet ﷺ evidently presents an impeccably chaste and honest young man. This can easily be gleaned from the nickname given to him by Meccans, *al-Amîn*, the Trustworthy,



without requiring a look elsewhere. His integrity is also proved by the fact that no Meccans had ever made any allegations about his marital life. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ married only once during the Meccan period, when he was twenty-five, to Khadijah ؓ, a widow of forty. Throughout their twenty-five year marriage, which came to an end with the passing away of Khadijah ؓ, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ never married another lady. The Arab custom of the time was hospitable to polygamy; had the Prophet ﷺ gone ahead to marry another, it would have been deemed perfectly acceptable and he would have incurred no blame for doing so.

Following the passage of Mother Khadijah ؓ, the Blessed Prophet married Sawda ؓ, another widow. Having immigrated to Abyssinia with her former husband, she suffered his death on the return back to Mecca, leaving her vulnerable and without protection, especially against her relatives, who, predominantly being idolaters, were putting unbearable pressure on her to reject Islam. Hence in order to help and protect her, the Noble Messenger ﷺ married Sawda ؓ in the tenth year of Prophethood. Apart from his marriages to Khadijah and Sawdah, the rest of the marriages of the Prophet ﷺ were to take place in Medina.

The Hegira marked the beginning of an entirely new period in the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. No longer was he only a Prophet, but also a head of state and a commander of an army of Believers. Above all, he was a teacher entrusted with the responsibility of conveying the message in a way that would reach all kinds of people in different places, as befitted their peculiar needs. Setting a precedent for such needs was the primary motive behind the marriages of the Prophet ﷺ, interwoven with a remarkable wisdom from all perspectives, whether religious, social or moral.



Aisha رضي الله عنها was the only maiden whom the Blessed Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم married. Despite her young age, she was very clever, graced with an acute intellect and a profound understanding. It was from her that the female Companions learned with ease the Islamic principles and regulations, especially those peculiar to women. Even five to six decades after the passing away of the Noble Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم, the remaining Companions and the rest of the Muslim community, including the children and the grandchildren of that first generation who never had the privilege of physically being in the presence of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, were able to learn Islam directly from her. In hindsight, foreshadowing this was the confirming hadith of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

“Learn one third of your religion from the house of Aisha رضي الله عنها.”

(Daylamî, II, 165/2828)

Aisha رضي الله عنها is among the seven Companions known as the *mukthirun*, for having transmitted an enormous number of ahadith pertaining to the sayings and actions of the Blessed Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم; two-thousand-two-hundred-and-ten to be exact. One-hundred-and-ninety four among them are narrations agreed upon (*muttafaqun alayh*) by both Bukhari and Muslim, the two paramount scholars of hadith.

Aisha رضي الله عنها, the mother of Believers, was a lady steeped in knowledge, gifted with an insight into the Holy Quran with regard to obligations and prohibitions, not to mention her knowledge of medicine, poetry, Arab history and the lineage of Arab families. Whenever the Companions had difficulty in resolving their disagreement over a given issue, they would always come to Aisha رضي الله عنها for a solution. This applied to even the more prominent Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم,<sup>89</sup> as confirmed by Abu Musa رضي الله عنه:

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89. See Ibn Hajar, *al-Isâba*, IV, 360.

“Whenever we came across a difficulty in understanding a saying of the Messenger of Allah, we would ask Aisha رضي الله عنها for help, who would clear any possible misunderstanding.” (Tirmidhi, Manâqib, 62)

By marrying his daughter and establishing a familial relation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also reinforced his already strong friendship with Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, the closest friend and the most loyal supporter of the Prophet ﷺ.

In his marriage to Hafsa رضي الله عنها, the Messenger of Allah had a similar idea in mind, to establish a familial relationship with the outstanding Omar رضي الله عنه. Hafsa رضي الله عنها was bereaved of her husband who was martyred at the Battle of Badr. Omar رضي الله عنه first wished for Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه to take his daughter’s hand in marriage, and then upon Abu Bakr turning down of the offer, Othman رضي الله عنه, who however also declined. Omar رضي الله عنه was saddened by their refusal. Thus, by marrying Hafsa رضي الله عنها, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ effectively appeased Omar رضي الله عنه and at the same time mended the damaged relationships between Abu Bakr, Othman and Omar رضي الله عنه.

The heavily debated marriage of the Prophet ﷺ to Zaynab رضي الله عنها is in fact laden with profound wisdom. In the first place, as halfhearted as she was, by arranging the marriage between Zaynab رضي الله عنها, the daughter of his aunt, to Zayd رضي الله عنه his emancipated slave, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ helped eradicate some mistaken notions prevalent among Arabs and through persons closest to him and set an example of putting an end to the discrimination between the rich and the poor, the noble and the slave, sending a message out that all were equal in the sight of Allah ﷻ, like the teeth of a comb. Yet, the reluctance of Zaynab as well as the persistent pressure of her relatives meant that the marriage became unbearable for both parties. Although Zayd رضي الله عنه did consult the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and sought his permission to divorce Zaynab, he was instead advised



to keep patient. Once the marriage reached an insufferable level however, Zayd had no other choice than to divorce.

Revealed a short time after the divorce, an *ayah* commanded the Prophet ﷺ to marry Zaynab,<sup>90</sup> whereby Allah ﷻ, willed the abolishment of the Arab notion of regarding marriage with the former wife of an adopted son as illicit. The marriage was thus aimed toward drawing attention, once and for all, to the difference between an adopted child and one's own, emphasizing the distinction between the two.

Thus the absurdity of the claim that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ married Zaynab for her beauty stems from a sheer ignorance of the following facts:

1. First of all, Zaynab ؓ was the Prophet's ﷺ cousin, the daughter of his aunt. Thus he knew her from childhood and saw her on innumerable occasions.

2. Had the Blessed Prophet ﷺ proposed to her before, she would have accepted it wholeheartedly; neither was there any obstacle standing in the way of their marriage. But not only did the Noble Prophet ﷺ ask her to marry Zayd, he moreover turned down their request for divorce on numerous occasions.

In short, such incidents had to take place to facilitate the establishment of the many principles of Islamic Law through them being embodied in the life of the Blessed Messenger ﷺ and provide precedents for later practices.

The Prophet's ﷺ marriage to Safiyya ؓ, the daughter of the Jewish leader of Khaybar, was motivated by the intention of bolstering relations with the Jews, conducive therefore to a political aim.

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90. See al-Ahzāb, 37.



The marriage to Juwayriyah ﷺ also had similar aims. Marrying Juwayriyah, the daughter of a chieftain, meant the release of hundreds of prisoners of battle, who enthralled to regain their freedom, entered Islam in thjeir entirety. Their good fortune was occasioned by the marriage between the Prophet ﷺ and Juwayriyah ﷺ.

The Noble Prophet's ﷺ marriage to Umm Habibah ﷺ was prompted by the intention of protecting her. Among the early Muslims who immigrated with her husband to Abyssinia, Umm Habibah was left alone and unprotected there when her husband retracted from Islam. She nonetheless courageously preserved her faith under extremely difficult circumstances. Although her father Abu Sufyan was at the time the leader of the Meccans, Umm Habibah's faith and honor prevented her from asking for his help. Hence, by marrying her, the Noble Prophet ﷺ took her under his protection. A further blessing fostered by the marriage was that it helped reduce the enmity between the Meccan idolaters and Muslims.

Now, had the Prophet ﷺ married out of sexual desires, there were many young and beautiful daughters of the Ansar, the Medinan Muslims, from whom he could have chosen. Doubtless they would all have been more than willing to marry the Prophet ﷺ and thus attain the honor of becoming the wife of the Last Messenger and consequently the *Mother of the Believers*. The Prophet, however, never chose to head down that path.

It therefore ought to be realized that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ contracted multiple marriages, with the permission and command of Allah ﷻ, for reasons social, moral and religious, and above all out of the need to have a number of women trained to convey the specific legal commandments of Islam to other Muslims. Considering Islam is a universal religion that aims to cover all times and places, it

would be difficult to think that the duty of teaching the vast corpus of Islamic knowledge should rest upon one woman only; and had that been the case, the religion may not have properly passed on to future generations. Besides, that 'one' wife could well have passed away before the Prophet ﷺ, which would have forever interrupted the establishment of Islamic Law.

There are many private matters pertaining to Islamic Law that women would feel uncomfortable asking men. But given they have female instructors they could then learn such matters with ease, safe from any discomfort. Muslim societies therefore are always in need of educated and knowledgeable women to ensure the outright practice of Islam. Could there be, then, anyone better to fulfill this duty than the Blessed Wives, who breathed the same air as the Prophet ﷺ and learnt everything directly from him? Beyond everything, the way they conducted themselves and the sheer life of piety they led, have rightly made them shining examples for the future generation of Believers.

If one wonders as to how exactly the Noble Prophet's ﷺ multiple marriages can constitute an example for people in this day and age, the following considerations should be borne in mind.

First of all, we need to remember that not all the practices of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are meant to be imitated. Being the first representative of a religion, its founder as well as its implementer, his position was unique. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was hence obliged to carry out some practices peculiar to himself only, like the *tahajjud* prayer, fasting continuously without break (*sawm-ul'wisâl*) and the prohibition of him and his family from receiving charity even if they should be in need. The multiple marriages he contracted owing to various underlying reasons, whether religious, social or political, do



not constitute examples for the rest of the *Ummah* to emulate, as held by the consensus of Muslim scholars.

It ought to be remembered that it was not Islam that initiated polygamy. Islam rather reformed and regulated the already existent practice. Before Islam, there was no limitation as to the number of women a man could marry. Restricting this number to four, Islam at the same time emphatically recommends monogamy, if one is apprehensive of not being able to treat all spouses with justice.<sup>91</sup>

Secondly, contracting more than one marriage is not a commandment, but rather a permission given in special circumstances, motivated by the aim of upholding and safeguarding the marital institution.<sup>92</sup> In times of war and plague, for instance, the number of men can tend to decrease drastically, leaving many women without spouses. The practice can therefore serve to protect women left without protection. Moreover, if one is married to a woman depleted with ill health, a physical disorder or one who is unable to conceive, then the practice can provide opportunity for remarriage without the need for divorce, from whose damaging consequences the family is therefore protected. Regardless of the circumstance, the upper limit is four, whatever the motive behind it may be.

91. See an-Nisà, 3.

92. Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır elucidates the issue in the following: "...As for contracting multiple marriages: It cannot be disputed that, essentially, this is only a permission, rendering permissible (*mubah*) something that at the same time can become impermissible (*makruh*) if there is fear of committing injustice towards any of the spouses. Having said that, it would not be a farfetched construal of the *ayah*, to see that it suggests contracting multiple marriages can become recommendable (*mandub*) even necessary (*wajib*) in certain situations, characteristically defined by an increase of risk, for both men and women, of falling into iniquity." (*Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, II, 1290)

Indeed, when war strikes it can take its toll on the population, in which case encouraging the contracting of multiple marriages may provide the only remedy to boost the population and prevent prostitution. Numerous examples of such circumstances have come to pass through the history of mankind. In overcoming such major challenges, Islam always offers solutions through allowing leeways of such nature, all of which serve to make life easier and keep it steadfast on its natural course. This shows the vitality of Islam, since it exhibits an ability to solve all kinds of potential problems that may surface in different times and places, under various conditions.

The following *ayah* makes clear that one who does intend to contract more than one marriage should be aware of his responsibilities and seek to establish justice among his wives, lest the injustice he commits should lead to him incur the punishment of Allah ﷻ.

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ  
مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً  
أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا

“And if you fear that you cannot act equitably towards orphans, then marry such women as seem good to you, two and three and four; but if you fear that you will not do justice between them, then marry only one or what your right hands possess; this is more proper, that you may not deviate from the right course” (an-Nisâ, 4/3)



وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ  
فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا  
وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

“And you have it not in your power to do justice between wives, even though you may wish it, but be not disinclined from one with total disinclination, so that you leave her as it were in suspense; and if you effect a reconciliation and guard against evil, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (an-Nisâ, 4/129)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ states, “A man married to two women without having established justice among them will be resurrected half paralyzed in the Hereafter.” (Ibn Majah, Nikâh, 47)

Islam also allows women to lay down the condition, at the time of their marital contract, that her husband observe monogamy throughout the marriage. This is a legal right given to women permitting them to make a case against any second marriage provided they had stipulated it at the time of the contract.<sup>93</sup>



A crude logic may attempt to justify the multiple marriage of a woman, that is her having more than one husband. Such a notion is completely wrong, since a child born from such a marriage will not have a proper lineage, forever leading to controversy regarding who his/her father is. Not only does Islam reject this type of marriage by calling it *fujur* (open sin), but no other legal system, religious or secular, is found to be hospitable to that kind of practice. Islam places great emphasis on the progeny of human beings, to the point of demanding that a divorced woman wait a period of at least three



months before marrying again, lest she may be pregnant from her previous marriage, in which case the waiting period will clear any confusion that might arise with regard to the child's father. The waiting period described is ignored today by almost all secular legal systems. The difference illustrates the level of care shown by Islam for human honor, through the laws it lays for ensuring its protection.

To contemplate all these unique conditions enables one to understand the underlying reasons behind the permission given by Islam for contracting multiple marriages, which stems from its consideration of various circumstances. Islam is not only the religion of the strong and healthy, but equally of the old and the weak. It offers rules regulating not only common conditions, but also those that provide solutions for the more difficult quandaries. Not only is it the religion of men, but also the religion protecting the rights of women; it is the inimitable religion that cares so much for the honor and dignity of human beings that it does not turn a blind eye on women and children falling into destitution owing to a reckless breakdown of the family.

### **The Emancipation of Zayd ibn Harithah and His Adoption by the Blessed Prophet**

Abducted by the tribe of Banî Qayn, the young Zayd ibn Harithah was brought to the Ukaz Festival to be sold. Eventually buying him for four hundred dirhams was Hakim ibn Hizam, who then offered him to his aunt Khadijah . Upon seeing the young boy for the first time, the Blessed Prophet  said:

“Had I been the owner of this slave I would have certainly emancipated him!”



“In that case he is yours”, said Khadijah ؓ, hearing her husband’s words.

The mercy of all worlds, the Noble Messenger ﷺ then immediately set him free from slavery. (Ibn Hishâm, I, 266; Ibn Saad, III, 40)

Agonized by the abduction of his son, Zayd’s father was in the meantime looking for him everywhere. After a long search, by some information passed on to him by the returning pilgrims, he found the traces of his son in Mecca, to where he immediately set out with his brother. Finding the Prophet ﷺ not long after, he informed the Prophet ﷺ of his intention to take his son back and of his willingness to pay the required ransom, appealing to him to be merciful and quoting a reasonable price. But the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had something else in mind.

“Can we not find another solution for this?” he asked them.

“What other solution is there?” they replied, thinking the only way for them to regain custody of Zayd would be through paying his ransom out of the slavery they supposed he was still in.

“Let’s call Zayd here and leave him free to decide between me and you”, said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. “If he chooses you, then you may take him without paying anything. But if he prefers me, you have to understand that by Allah, I can tell someone wanting to stay with me to leave!”

Both Zayd’s father and uncle were elated with the suggestion of the Prophet ﷺ, commending him for his kindness and generosity, confident that Zayd would choose them, after which they could leave Mecca with him without having to pay any ransom. The idea that he might choose to stay never crossed their minds. But the words of Zayd proved them wrong:



“I swear by Allah, I will not prefer anyone over you! You are like a father and mother to me. My preference is to remain here with you.”

When his father and uncle showed their disappointments over his choice, Zayd said:

“I have seen such extraordinary things from him that I could never possibly prefer anyone over him. I will never leave him.”

Moved by Zayd’s loyalty, the Prophet ﷺ took him by the hand to the Kaabah where he proclaimed:

“My fellow people! Bear witness that Zayd is now my son, he shall inherit me and I shall inherit him.”<sup>94</sup> Zayd was thus officially adopted by the Prophet ﷺ. The great honor conferred upon the young Zayd was a reason for relief and happiness for both his father and uncle as they returned to their hometowns with their hearts at ease. (Ibn Hishâm, I, 267; Ibn-i Sa’d, III, 42)

Zayd’s brother Jabala ibn Hârithah ؓ narrates another version of the story:

“I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to ask him to send Zayd with me.

‘He is here. If he wants to go with you I will not stop him from doing so,’ he said. But Zayd did not accept my request, telling him:

‘I will never prefer anyone over you.’

Much later I understood that my brother Zayd had greater wisdom than I.” (Tirmidhî, Manâqib, 39/3815)

94. Following that day, Zayd began to be called ‘Zayd ibn Muhammad’, up until the abolishment of adoption with the 5<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> verses of Surah Ahzab.



### The Prophet's ﷺ Custodianship of Ali ﷺ

Abu Talib was in financial duress, being the head of a large household. It was owing to this that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ went to his other uncle Abbas ﷺ and suggested:

“As you know uncle, your brother Abu Talib manages a large family and the drought and famine have left him in need like most. Why don't we go to him and talk him into giving two of his little ones over to our custody, to relieve him of some of his responsibility?”

Abbas ﷺ accepted the benevolent suggestion, and together they went to Abu Talib, who after hearing the offer, said:

“Apart from Aqil, you can take any of the children you like”, he said.

Muhammad ﷺ eventually took Ali, while Abbas took his brother Jafar ﷺ. Ali ﷺ was raised by his generous caretaker until the beginning of prophethood. (Ibn Hisham, I, 264)

### The Children of the Prophet ﷺ

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had a total of six children with Khadijah; two sons, Qâsim and Abdullah, and four daughters, Zaynab, Ruqayya, Ummu Khulthum and Fâtima. As the Arab custom designated one's name in line with the name of his firstborn male, the Prophet ﷺ began carrying the appellation Abu'l-Qasim, after his eldest son.

Qasim did not live long however, passing away at the age of two. Abdullah, the Prophet's ﷺ second son in line, was born within the period of his messengership. But like his brother before him, neither did Abdullah survive, breathing his last at an early age.<sup>95</sup>

95. Ibn Saad, I, 133.

Thereupon Âs ibn Wâ'il, a notorious idolater of Quraysh, exploiting the sorrow of the moment, began insulting the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, telling his comrades:

“He is an infertile man who will not leave a son to carry on his name. So you need only wait until his death. You will then be saved from him forever.”

This occasioned the revelation of Chapter Kawthar:

أَنَا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ. فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ. إِنَّ شَانِكَ هُوَ الْآبَتْرُ.

“Surely We have given you *Kawthar*.<sup>96</sup> Therefore pray to your Lord and make a sacrifice. Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity.” (al-Kawthar, 1-3) (Ibn Saad, III, 7; Wâhidî, p. 494)

Upon the death of their son at a very early age, Khadijah ﷺ lamented:

“I am overflowing with my dear child’s milk. If only Allah had extended his span until at least he completed his feed!”

“He shall complete his feed in Paradise”, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied.

“If I knew that with certainty, it would definitely ease the pain of his loss.”

96. *Kawthar* means abundance, a great amount of every given thing. It has been interpreted as including Prophethood, the Quran, Islam, goodness, bliss, intercession, salat and the miracles given to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Authentic narrations report it to be the name of the heavenly pool given to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Paradise, around which the *ummah* will gather in the Hereafter. (Bukhari, Tafsir, 108)



“I will pray to Allah, if you wish, so you are made to hear his voice”, said the Prophet ﷺ.

But showing once more her exemplary submission and dependence, Khadijah ﷺ replied:

“No need. I trust Allah and His Messenger.” (Ibn Majah, Janaiz, 27)

The eldest of the daughters of the Noble Messenger ﷺ was Zaynab, born when he was around thirty years of age. Ruqayya was born after her.<sup>97</sup> Subsequent to the birth of Ruqayya was Umm Kulthum, followed right after by Fatimah ﷺ, born in the year of the rebuilding of the Kaabah, at which time the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thirty five years old.<sup>98</sup>

The last child of the Noble Prophet ﷺ was Ibrahim, born in Medina, in the eighth year of Hegira. His mother was Mâriya. The birth was nursed by Umm Rafi, whose husband Abu Rafi delivered the good news of Ibrahim’s birth to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who reportedly became quite happy and told those around him:

“Tonight I had a baby son whom I shall name after my grandfather Ibrahim.” (Muslim, Fadâil, 62)

Ibrahim also developed an illness when he was around seventeen months old, passing away shortly after.<sup>99</sup>

### **The Arbitration at the Kaabah**

A flood that struck Mecca around then had led to a partial destruction of the Holy Kaabah. The clans of Mecca thus decided to jointly repair it, by demolishing it down to its foundations and

97. Diyarbakri, I, 273-274.

98. Ibn Saad, VIII, 19-26.

99. See Asri Çubukçu, *DÎA*, “İbrâhîm” entry, XXI, 273-274.

reconstructing it. Inadvertently around the same time, news arrived of a vessel loaded with iron, planks, timber, stones and other kinds of construction material, shipwrecked at Shuaybah Pier nearby Mecca. Without wasting time, the Meccans went there and bought the materials necessary for the repair of the Sacred House and the reconstruction soon got under way. They cast lots to determine the type of work that would fall to the share of each and every clan. They shared the work of demolishing and building by casting lots. Before the launch, a wise man from among them said:

“People of Quraysh! Do not mix dirty money into the reconstruction of the Sacred House. Let not money earned from interest or usurped from others against their will be used to fund the repair!” (Ibn Hishām, II, 210; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, II, 305)

But fearing wrath may befall them if they went ahead and destroyed the Kaabah, the Meccans remained undecided. The respect and reverence of the Kaabah prevalent among Arabs was a sacred duty upheld since the Law of Ibrahim ﷺ. Walid ibn Mughirah, the notable of Quraysh, cut the knot and asked:

“What do you aim for by destroying the Kaabah; good or evil?”

“For the good, of course”, they replied.

“My fellow tribesmen! Don’t you wish to destroy the Kaabah only for the sake of its improvement? Then, feel at ease, for the Almighty shall never destroy those seeking improvement”, Walid assured, shortly after which he struck the first sledge in demolishing the House, and the rest followed suit. (Abdurrazzaq, V, 319)

They raised the walls of the Kaabah reinforcing each row of stone with timber beams, following the order up to the top. The Light of Being ﷺ also labored in the reconstruction with his uncle



Abbas. When time came to restore the Black Stone in its spot, each clan vied with one another to have the honor exclusively to itself, sparking a debate that turned into a sour dispute which at one stage looked like it would spill over into a bloody conflict; so much so that the clan of Abduddar made a pact with the clan of Adiyib ibn Kaab to fight until death, with both clans dipping their hands in a bowl filled with blood brought by the Abduddar clan as a symbol of their resolution. Quraysh was left to wait in doubt regarding the fate of the Black Stone for three or four days.

Abu Umayya, the eldest Meccan present, eventually spoke out:

“Friends! We only want what is best, not evil. Do not lock horns out of jealousy! Stop the quarrel! Since we seem unable to settle the issue among ourselves, let us designate the first person to walk past the gates of the Sacred Precinct as our arbitrator and comply with his verdict, whatever it may be!” He was pointing at the Banu Shaybah gate of the Sacred House.

Right at that instant, Muhammad ﷺ walked through the gate. All faces were now full of smiles; after all it was the Trustworthy approaching. Meccan love and respect for Muhammad ﷺ had grown by the day, to the point that were they to slaughter a camel, for instance, they would call him to pray for blessings.<sup>100</sup>

As soon as they saw him, the men of Quraysh exclaimed:

“There is the Trustworthy. We are all happy for him to settle our dispute!”

After they explained the matter to him, the Blessed Muhammad ﷺ elected a person from each clan, then removing his *rida*, he laid

100. Abdurrazzaq, V, 319; Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidaya*, II, 304.





it on the ground, placing the Black Stone on it. Then he told each member to hold an edge of the *rida*, thereby getting them to jointly carry the Sacred Stone to its place, whereupon Muhammad ﷺ reinstated the Stone into its spot with his own hands. He thus effectively prevented the breakout of a battle between the clans.<sup>101</sup>

Such exhibition of wisdom and exceptional virtue were but fore signs of a prophethood that was to raise the Noble Man in the near future above every other prophet before him. People were little aware that the young Muhammad ﷺ, born and raised in Mecca, would in due course become a prophet. Many devout souls still persevering on the path of *tawhid* were conscious of the coming of the Prophet of the Final Hour, sensing the time was near. One such man was Quss ibn Saidah.

### The Speech of Quss ibn Saidah

The leader of his clan, Quss ibn Saidah was a poet and an adherent of the religion of Isa عليه السلام. The sermon he gave during the Ukaz Fair to a crowd that included the Prophet to be ﷺ, in which he spoke of the awaited coming, is remembered for its wisdom:

“People!

“Come, listen, learn and take a lesson!

“Whoever lives dies, whoever dies perishes and whatever is bound to happen happens. Rain falls, grass grows and children are born to take over the place of their parents. Then they all depart. Occurrences are ceaseless; they all follow up on one another.

“Beware and lend an ear to my words! The skies are filled with news, the ground with lessons to be taken. The earth is a mattress

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101. Ibn Hisham, I, 209-214; Abdurrazzaq, V, 319.



stretched out and the skies a lofty ceiling. The stars will expire and the seas will come to a rest. Whoever comes does not stay and whoever leaves does not return. Who knows? Is it that they are so comfortable where they are that they remain there or are they withheld and put to sleep?

“I swear that there is a religion more beloved to God than the one you now follow.

“And a Prophet of God will come; and his coming is near. His shadow hovers over your heads. Blessings to him who believes in the Prophet and basks in the light of guidance. Woe to him, who rebels and opposes Him!

“Woe to those who squander their lives in ignorance!

“Mankind!

“Beware of heedlessness! Everything is mortal. Immortality lies only with the Almighty, who is One, without partners, without a like. He is the only One worthy to be worshipped. He begets not, nor is He begotten.

“Abundant lessons wait to be taken from those who have come to pass.

“People of Iyad! Where are your fathers and forefathers? Where are the people of Ad and Thamud who built exquisite mansions and abodes of stone? Where is the Nimrod and the Pharaoh, who beside himself in worldly riches said to his people ‘Am I not your greatest lord?’

“The Earth ended up grinding them all in its mill. Even their bones have now rotten away, scattered. Their abodes stand deserted, now inhabited by dogs. Do not ever become heedless



like them! Do not tread their path! Everything is mortal, only the Almighty is not.

“There is many a passage to enter the river of death, but alas, no way out! All things great or small migrate. Whatever befalls all shall befall you too!” (Bayhaqi, *Kitabu’z-Zuhd*, II, 264; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, II, 234-241; Haythami, IX, 418)

When he made this beautiful speech, a short time after which he passed away, Quss ibn Sâidah was of course not aware that the future he was announcing—the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ—was present listening. But Quss’s entire tribe believed in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once they were made aware of him.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is reported to have told their delegation:

“Never could I forget the speech given by Quss ibn Sâidah at the Ukâz Fair, when mounted on a camel, he said, ‘Whoever lives dies, whoever dies perishes and whatever is bound to happen happens.’

The Blessed Messenger ﷺ then asked them whether there was anyone remaining among them who could repeat his speech. They answered that almost everyone could, a response that made the Light of Being ﷺ very happy.

Thereupon, Abu Bakr ؓ also said he could repeat from memory the famous speech as he was also present at the time, confirming his avowal by reciting Quss ibn Sâidah’s speech in full.

Following Abu Bakr, a man from the tribe got up and recited a poem of Quss ibn Sâidah, clearly informing of how a great Prophet would appear from among the Hâshimites. (Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidâyah*, II, 234-241)



About Quss ibn Sâidah, the Prophet ﷺ has said:

“May Allah have mercy on Quss ibn Sâidah. He will be resurrected as a separate nation in the Hereafter.” (Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bi-dâyah*, II, 239)

### **The Retreat of the Prophet ﷺ to the Cave of Hira before the Mission**

As the advent of Prophethood drew near, the Messenger to be ﷺ often found himself delving into the depths of contemplation, in seclusion, distant from the public eye. At times he would set out from his home and leave Mecca far behind him, to seek the haven of places silent. Many a time on the way, he would hear the outlying stones and the trees on the path greet him with the words, ‘peace be upon you Messenger of Allah’. In hope of making out the owner of the voices, he would look around, but see only trees and stones.<sup>102</sup>

Later, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, “I remember there being a certain stone in Mecca that used to greet me before the arrival of my Prophethood. I could identify its place even today.” (Muslim, *Fadâil*, 2)

Confirming this are the words of Ali ؑ:

“The Messenger of Allah and I were going to a certain place in Mecca once, during our years in the town. As we were passing by trees and stones, I could hear them salute him with the exact words, *as-Salâmu alayka yâ Rasûlallah*.” (Tirmidhî, *Manâqib*, 6/3626)

Muhammad ﷺ had made a habit of regularly retreating to the Cave of Hira<sup>103</sup> in Ramadan for well nigh the entire month,

102. Ibn Saad, I, 157.

103. Hira is the name of a cave in the mountain, known as the *Jabal'un-Nur*, or the

taking even greater care to feed the poor and disadvantaged. Circumambulating the Kaabah each time he returned home from the Cave had also become routine.<sup>104</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ always despised his tribe's worshipping of idols, perpetually distancing himself from the practice. His worship in seclusion consisted of contemplating the creation of the skies and earth, like his grandfather Ibrahim ؑ and gazing at the Kaabah from the overlooking Cave.<sup>105</sup>

Muhammad ﷺ used to take with him to the Cave small supplies of food and drinks, returning to Khadijah ؓ once they finished to refill, only to once again go back to the Cave.<sup>106</sup> On occasion, he would also take Khadijah ؓ with him.<sup>107</sup>

Contemplating in seclusion in the Cave of Hira, the Light of Being ﷺ would frequently see lights and hear voices, which led him to fear that the experiences could be premonitions related to

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Mountain of Light, where the Blessed Prophet ﷺ received his first ever Revelation. Situated to the northeast of Mecca at a distance of approximately five kilometers, the Cave of Hira occupies an important place in the life of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. The Cave, a few meters below the peak of the mountain, in fact consists of a tunnel-like passage wedged amid slabs of rock naturally piled upon one another. The Kaabah stands in clear vision through the entrance of the Cave. Only as high as one can stand, the width of the Cave barely allows one to lie down; though overlooking the surrounding areas, including the Kaabah, it provides an ideal hideaway for contemplation. Before the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the Hanifs of Mecca too made most of the opportunity for contemplation provided by the Cave, one of whom was Abdulmuttalib, the Prophet's ﷺ very own grandfather, who having firm belief in Allah ﷻ, and the Hereafter as the abode of reward and punishment, would escape to the Cave and commit himself to worship. (Fuat Günel, *DÍA*, "Hira" entry, XVIII, 121-122)

104. Ibn Hishâm, I, 253-254.

105. Aynî, I, 61; XXIV, 128.

106. Muslim, Iman, 252.

107. Ibn Hishâm, I, 254.



soothsaying and sorcery. Concerned, he would voice his anxiety to Khadijah رضي الله عنها, saying:

“I am afraid, Khadijah, of being a soothsayer, when by the Almighty there is nothing I hate more than soothsaying and idols!” But Khadijah رضي الله عنها would only have words of consolation:

“Do not say that, cousin.<sup>108</sup> Allah would never make you a soothsayer.” (Ibn Saad, I, 195)

The period of seclusion before the mission was a preparatory stage for the Prophet ﷺ, like a seed pushing forth from beneath the soil. The exact nature of this preliminary period of preparation, however, will forever remain a secret to us. But it was there that the seeds of faith were laid and the fire of eternal bliss was ignited; and the Revelation of the Quran, the guidance for all humanity, first started.

On the face of it, the retreat of the Blessed Prophet to the Cave was prompted by the general misguidance of the people and his inexpressible grief over the injustices committed by the corrupt Meccans; yet in reality the withdrawal was simply a preparation of the heart of the Noble Messenger ﷺ towards immaculate purification whereupon the Holy Quran could be flawlessly communicated to the perception of entire mankind. This was virtually an instance of a spiritual spark stirred by the grounding of a high voltage of electricity, an intimate secret between the Almighty and His Beloved, in a secluded cave remote from prying eyes. Just as raw iron becomes steel through an inner propensity, the time at Hira was for the flourishing of the Prophet's ﷺ predisposition to become the recipient of Divine Revelation and assume a burden too heavy for ordinary human beings to carry. It is inconceivable to even imagine a conscience that

108. Colloquial terms like cousin or nephew are commonly used by Arabs to address one another. They do not necessarily imply a blood relation.

would not shatter to pieces in trying to grasp this secret or a human language that could perfectly express its gist.

Understood from the retreat and seclusion of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ at the Cave of Hira and many an *itikaf* he regularly performed during the later years of his life, is the fact that no matter how great a deed one may perform, spiritual perfection will forever remain out of reach short of retreating to seclusion to call the self into account and contemplate the flow of Divine Power vibrant throughout the universe. This is a minimum requirement for all Muslims. As for those set to become guides for the rest, they need to spare even more time for contemplation and reflecting on the self.

From the first verse to the very last, the Sacred Quran trains one in the art of contemplation, instilling servanthood to the Lord at the center of all thought. Only then does faith become an intrinsic identity, prompting one to seek the pleasure of the Almighty at all times and places. And with the manifestations, through wisdom, of the flow of Divine Splendor and Power in the heart, the servant gradually gains greater proximity to the Lord, attaining the ultimate aim.

Among the most vital aspects for a Believer is *muhabbetullah*,<sup>109</sup> the love of Allah ﷻ. After faith, the most important catalyst for gaining Divine Love is through constant contemplation of His blessings and grace, deliberating over His Majesty and Power and then incessantly remembering and invoking Him with the heart and

109. Pleading the Almighty for His Love in his prayers, the Blessed Prophet would pray:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ وَالْعَمَلَ الَّذِي يُبَلِّغُنِي حُبَّكَ.  
اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ نَفْسِي وَأَهْلِي وَمِنْ الْمَاءِ الْبَارِدِ.

*"Allah! I ask you for Your Love, the love of those whom You love and the deeds that will lead to Your Love! Allah! Make Your Love dearer to me than myself, my family, my possessions and even cold water!"* (Tirmidhi, Daawat, 72)



tongue.<sup>110</sup> To realize these states in the truest sense of the word can be achieved only through protecting the heart from the pomp and concern of the world by retreating to seclusion.

One thing needs to be brought to attention here, that is to say, what is intended by *khalwat* or retreating to seclusion here is not fleeing all together from the community and taking up permanent residence in caves, mountains or remote dwellings. Such a move would run counter to the practice of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and his Companions.

One only needs to be reminded of the words of the Prophet ﷺ himself:

“A Muslim who lives in the community and endures the torment that comes with it is of greater virtue than he who stays remote from them and their distress.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamat, 55)

Many activities of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, from shepherding to taking active part in the Fijar Battles and the Hilf ul-Fudul guild, his business endeavors, and his assistance in the rebuilding of the Kaabah, testify to his lively presence in society even before his advent as prophet. A part of all the virtuous activities of his society, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ equally made sure to stay away from their vices, never crossing paths with them.

110. In interpreting the *ayah*, يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا, “**Believers...Remember Allah plentifully**” (al-Ahzâb, 41) Ibn Abbas ؓ has stated:

“For each compulsory deed Allah ﷻ, has decreed His servants, He has imposed a limit, exempting at the same time those with legitimate excuses. From this, however, His remembrance (*dhikr*) is excluded, for which Allah ﷻ, has not designated a specified limit. Neither will he accept the excuses of those who abandon His remembrance, apart from those who have lost their sanity. He has commanded each and everyone to be in a constant state of remembrance.” (Tabarî, XXII, 22; Qurtubî, XIV, 197)



The essence of retreating into seclusion is to improve one's condition. To become cured, medicine must be taken on time at the right amount. Taken excessively, it is sure to procure harm instead of remedy.<sup>111</sup>

### **An Overview of the Blessed Prophet's Childhood and Youth**

Allah ﷻ, brought His Beloved to the realm of being by filtering him through the noblest and purest of lineages beginning with the first page of the book of humanity. Bestowing upon this lineage a preeminence above others in many respects, the Almighty made each and every ancestor of the Prophet ﷺ a person honored and respected during his or her time, as indicated exquisitely in the following couplet:

*A rose is so for being a rose at its core,  
Only a line of roses would bear a Prophet forth...*

Beginning with Adam ﷺ, the first man and Prophet, an oath was taken from every single Prophet to believe in the Final Messenger ﷺ and disclose the news of his coming, which has been bolstered by many incidents alluding to the awaited arrival. Allah ﷻ, thus introduced His Beloved Prophet, whom He was to grant to humanity, with all his signs, easing the path for His right-minded servants to affirm their faith in him once he appeared.

By leaving him an orphan without parents, the Almighty Himself undertook the training of the gracious soul exclusively, imparting unto him the best of conduct. Giving him the sour taste of the greatest vulnerability and helplessness one can endure, the Glorious enabled him to reach the apex of mercy, compassion and

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111. Būti, p. 79-82.



altruism with regard to the people he was to be entrusted with in the near future.

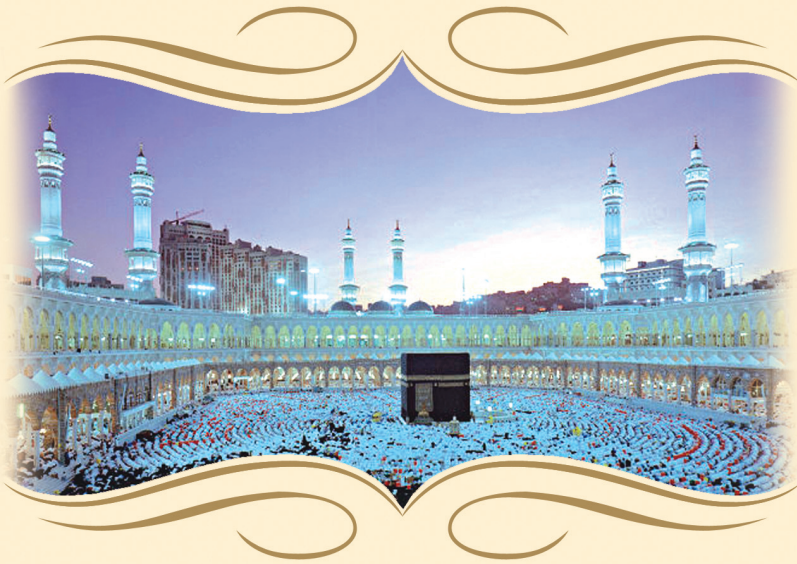
Protecting His beloved from the repugnance of the Age of Ignorance, the Almighty did not allow even the slightest blot of vice to mar the clean sheet that was his life, ensuring thereby the manifestation of the zenith of virtue in his conduct.

People knew him for his virtues of trustworthiness, dependability, sincerity, generosity, nobility and loyalty, and preeminent features like intelligence and prudence, placing their trust in him in all their affairs. The Almighty combined in him all things beautiful and the most exemplary attributes, conceded even by his enemies. It was they who, after all, had named him *al-Amin*, the Trustworthy, well before the time of prophethood. The arbitration of the Blessed Messenger ﷺ at the Kaabah testifies to his inimitable position in the eyes of Meccan notables. It never even crossed their minds that there could be any untruth to his words or that his moral fiber could harbor any misgivings. They never doubted the sublime level of his sincerity whenever his aid was sought and things depended on him for the better.

Character wise, the Almighty had created the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in the most excellent manner and ensured he lived accordingly, as he was going to constitute the best example for the rest of mankind and steer them onto the path of guidance. In essence, man becomes attracted to figures of exceptional character, and not to those in possession of worldly goods. However praiseworthy geniuses are, people only follow those with exemplary disposition.



# *The Meccan Period of Prophethood*



## CHAPTER TWO



## THE MECCAN PERIOD OF PROPHETHOOD

### The Inception of Divine Revelation: Truthful Dreams

After an upright youth and exceptional perfection that manifested through a blameless family life, the Noble Prophet ﷺ, the cause of all creation, became prophet at forty. Six months prior to his fortieth year, the Divine Majesty inaugurated a sacred school for him in Mecca at the Cave of Hira.

These edifying and enlightening sessions, in a manner that eternally remains a secret between him and his Lord, saw the Blessed Prophet ﷺ receive Divine training, without any book or pen, at the end of which he became ready to receive Divine Revelation.

During the early part of the six-month phase of preparation, the Prophet to be ﷺ underwent experiences in a form that has since come to be known as ‘truthful dreams’ (*ar-ruyâ-us’sâdiqah*), where things would develop in the exact manner in which the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had previously seen in his dreams. In relation, Âisha ؓ narrates:

“Revelation sent to the Messenger of Allah first began in the form of truthful dreams in his sleep; lucid dreams, which turned out true as clearly as the morning light.” (al-Bukhârî, *Bad’ul-Wahy*, 3)

Since Prophethood is a responsibility of enormous magnitude, the Archangel Jibril ؑ at first appeared to him only in his dreams,



in order to ease the process of preparing him for the difficulties to come, and embed the love of the mission in his heart.

According to a report from Alqama ibn Qays, whatever is sent to Prophets, whether advices, commands or prohibitions, is always revealed first in dreams, only later to be disclosed in the authorized form of Revelation.<sup>112</sup>

Dreams thus count as one of the ways through which prophets receive Revelation, illustrating which is the following from the Quran:

يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَى ...

“Son! I saw in my dream that I offer you in sacrifice... Now what is your view?” (as-Saffât, 37/102)

It should be borne in mind that even though the eyes of Prophets may sleep, their hearts do not.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, there is no barrier to prevent them from receiving Revelations even in their dreams.

As regards the truthful dream, the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said, during the later part of his life:

“One-forty-sixth of Prophethood consists of truthful dreams.”  
(al-Bukhârî, *Tâbir*, 26; Muslim, *Ru'yâ*, 6)

It is interesting that this six-month period corresponds exactly to the one-forty-sixth of his twenty-three-year period as Prophet.

112. Ibn Kathîr, *al-Bidâya*, III, 55.

113. al-Bukhari, *Manâqib*, 24.

## THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF PROPHETHOOD: THE CALL IN SECRET

### The First Revelation and the Interval

Having completed the six-month preparation toward perfecting his spiritual development so that he was now ready to receive Divine Revelation, Muhammad ﷺ was now forty years old

It was the seventeenth day of the holy month of Ramadan.<sup>114</sup> The Noble Prophet was in the Cave of Hirâ as usual, when Jibril ﷺ suddenly appeared and said:

“Read!”

“I cannot read”, answered our Beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Thereupon, the Angel seized and constricted the Prophet ﷺ so hard that he left him almost unable to breathe.

“Read!” Jibril ﷺ then ordered once more.

But the Light of Being ﷺ responded in the same manner:

“I cannot read!”

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114. Ibn Saad, I, 194.



The Angel then seized him for the second time, compressing the Prophet ﷺ until he had not strength to remain on his feet, repeating the command once again:

“Read!”

“I cannot read!” answered the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as if urging the Angel to indicate what exactly it was he wanted him to read.

Jibril ؑ then forcefully squeezed the Light of Being ﷺ for the third time and then released him, beginning shortly thereafter to reveal the very first Revelation:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ  
اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ  
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

“Read: In the name of your Lord Who created; created man from a clot. Read; and your Lord is the Most Bounteous; who taught with the pen...taught man that which he knew not.” (al-Alaq, 1-5)

With this Divine Command, the revelation of the Sacred Qur’ân, the greatest benevolence of the Lord for the whole of mankind, began its long course of revelation through the person of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

It was thus these *ayah* of the Clear Quran that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ received first from the gates of Heaven as a source of grace and vigor. Jibril ؑ departed not long after and the Prophet ﷺ returned home to Khadijah ؑ trembling from the unbearable fright of the moment:

“Cover me, Khadijah, cover me!” he was saying.



After a few moments, the Blessed Messenger ﷺ recounted the experience to his wife, our mother Khadijah ؓ, the noble woman with whom he lived an upright family life for the rest of humankind to emulate. Anxiously, he asked her:

“Who is going to believe me now, Khadijah?”

But the noble woman reassured her life companion:

“I assure you that Allah will never embarrass you; for you protect your kin, assume responsibility for those who cannot do so for themselves, give charity to the needy, do greater good than anyone else, treat your guests with honor and respect and assist those striving to do good. I will believe you and be the first to do so, even if nobody else does. Let me be the first you invite onto the path you call!”

These gracious words thus made Khadijah ؓ the first person to testify to the truth of her noble husband and help him in his arduous mission.

In other words, what Khadijah ؓ was implicitly telling her husband was that only good can come out of good and benevolence could only engender benevolence, and nothing else. Rightly so, she could only expect the unfolding of a bright future from an immaculate past of moral uprightness, as if to echo the words of the Quran soon to be revealed:

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

“Is there any Reward for Good - other than Good?” (ar-Rahmân, 60)

Khadijah ؓ thereupon took the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to Waraqa ibn Nawfal, her paternal cousin, one of the exceptionally rare people who had never worshipped idols during the Age of Ignorance. With



knowledge of Hebrew, Waraqa was similarly conversant with the Bible. Now in his elderly years, he was no longer able to see.

“Listen, cousin, to what your nephew has to say”, Khadijah ؓ said, upon arrival.

“What is wrong, my nephew?” then asked Waraqa curiously, which is when the Blessed Prophet ﷺ recounted what he had seen.

Recognizing the greatest reality of all concealed within what had been explained to him there and then, Waraqa’s face glowed with a radiant smile, before becoming engrossed in a brief but deep meditation.

“What you saw”, Waraqa then remarked, “was but the Great *Namus* (Jibril) sent by the Almighty to Musa. If only I was still young when you would begin the Call... If only I would live to see the day your people expel you from your town.”

“And they will expel me from my town?” asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

“Yes”, replied Waraqa. “There has not been a Prophet who has called to the Religion and not faced enmity and hostility and ultimately been driven out of his hometown. But if it happens that I live to see the days of your Call, I will run to your aid.”

Not long after the conversation Waraqa passed away; and Revelation, likewise, came to a temporary standstill (*fatrah*). (Bukhari, Bad’ul-Wahy, 1; Anbiya, 21; Tafsir, 96; Muslim, Iman, 252)

In the verses revealed afterward, Allah ﷻ, was to address His Prophet in the following:



وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ  
 وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا  
 وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“And thus did We reveal to you a Spirit of Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor what the faith was, but We made it a light, guiding thereby whom We please of Our servants; and most surely you show the way to the right path.” (as-Shura, 52)

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ

“Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nuh, and the Prophets after him...” (an-Nisa, 163)

As regards the fact that the foremost word of the very first *wahy* revealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was the command “Read”, the wise men of heart have rendered the following interpretation:

“Read! Read everything! Read the Book of Allah! Read His Signs! Read the book that is the universe! Read in order to attain guidance, to distance yourself from deviance! Read to complete your faith! Read in the name of Allah! Read in the name of your Lord who created you! Read in the name of Him who even though He created man from a clot of blood, still gave him the opportunity to read, to understand and become enlightened, and put to practice what has been understood! Read in the name of Allah who has blessed man with the ability to read, the grandest grace of all! Read in order to learn...Read each line drawn throughout the universe by the Pen of Might! Read in the name of Allah who has taught man what he did not know...”

In classifying himself during the spiritual stages he outgrew, Mawlana Rumi used the term *raw* for the time he spent reading books of exoteric content, *cooked* during the phase reading the mysteries of the universe, and *burnt* during his reading of Divine mysteries which virtually reduced him to ashes.

The command “read” conveyed through the *ayah* is of great importance; though the importance is matched by the condition that this reading ought to be in the name of Allah ﷻ. It shows the manner in which this reading must be undertaken.

“Reading” is not so much an external activity as it is a process of refining and cleansing the heart spiritually to the point where it becomes receptive to the *Book* and Wisdom. Suggested by the command, therefore, is the ability to read with the heart, the focal point of manifestations. More clearly, it requires the universe be perceived as a book, the pages of which the heart turns to read wisdoms and Divine mysteries therefrom; the gist of it all, that is to say, is for human beings to read, comprehend and live the universe, themselves, and not least, the Holy Quran.

From the first Revelation, the following conclusion may also be derived:

One must begin all noble activities in the name of the Almighty.

Human beings, created from a clot of blood yet given the most beautiful form, must never forget their vulnerability and insignificance before Divine Power.

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ. عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

“Who taught by the pen; taught man that which he knew not.” (al-Alaq, 4-5) inform human beings of the importance of knowledge, at the same time reminding them of the fact that whatever is learnt is learnt only by being taught by the Almighty, an enormous Divine blessing in itself.

Man must therefore always be conscious of the Greatness of his Lord and resist the urge to become ingrate.

Revelation slowed to a lengthy silence following the first revelation. In a way, this was to prepare the Blessed Prophet ﷺ for the revelations to come. Receiving Divine Revelation was such an enormous undertaking that conceiving it was certainly not something easy. Underlining this fact are the words of the Almighty:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

“Soon shall We send down to you a weighty Message.” (al-Muzzammil, 5)

After the initial stage of truthful dreams, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was overcome with anxiety upon suddenly seeing the Angel of Revelation right in front of him. Only with the comforting words of Khadijah and the confirmation of Waraqa did his heart feel at ease. Now, he enthusiastically desired for Revelation to resume, almost growing impatient. Time and again, he would go to Mount Hira, the place where he received Revelation for the first time, and wait in hope for it to come once again.

The greatest support during the hiatus came from none other than the honorable Khadijah, a depth of spirit, elegance and grace the Noble Prophet ﷺ was never to forget. Following her death, whenever he sacrificed stock, he would always make sure to pay tribute to his late wife by sending a share of the meat to her relatives.



For the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, she always remained a cherished and unforgettable memory.

The life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is replete with incredibly admirable manifestations, unseen in Prophets before him. It was only him that Allah ﷻ, addressed as His “Beloved”. Again, among the entirety of Prophets, only he was granted the gift of Ascension, the *Miraj*.

The preeminence of the Noble Messenger ﷺ was confirmed by virtue of him leading the entire prophets in salat at the Masjid’ul-Aqsa. The *لَنْ تَرِنِنِي* mystery of Musa ﷺ thus transpired in him in the form of *قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى*.<sup>115</sup>

115. *لَنْ تَرِنِنِي*: “You shall never see me!” (al-Araf, 143). On Mount Sina, Musa ﷺ was subjected to training in preparation for speaking with the Almighty. He was made to fast for thirty days, completed to forty with a further addition of ten, which elevated him from the ego-dominated life and prepared him for the conversing that was to take place between him and the Almighty. Allah ﷻ, did not speak to Musa ﷺ through the medium of a language or a sound, much rather with His eternal attribute of *Kalam*, or Speech, which was not heard or even sensed either by Jibril ﷺ, or the seventy men brought to stand witness. Musa ﷺ, in the face of this manifestation, lost sight of himself. Forgetting whether he was on Earth or in the Hereafter, he traversed beyond space and time. A forceful desire awakened in him, fuelled by a grand love and rapture, to see the essence of the Almighty, in response to which came the Divine decree: “You shall never see Me!” And when Musa ﷺ involuntarily insisted on gazing at the Essence of the Divine, the Almighty told him to turn his gaze towards the mountain, and that he could have his wish of gazing at the Essence of the Divine granted, on the condition that the mountain would remain in one piece upon the Almighty’s manifestation thereon. When a light of Divine Essence trickled forth from behind innumerable veils and manifested itself to the mountain, the mountain shattered, the terrifying sight of which made Musa ﷺ faint. Upon regaining consciousness, he repented to Allah ﷻ, for having overstepped his boundary.

One can draw the following lessons from the incident: There is no single place in the universe that can stand an *essential* manifestation of Allah ﷻ. This is attested by the eruption of a mountain, which could not even endure an infinitesimal amount

Salat, the moment of union with the Real, was thereby presented to the mass of Believers to come, as a reenactment of the Ascension within the climes of the heart. Commanded, at the outset, to be performed fifty times a day by the *ummah*, the number of salats per day was eventually reduced to five, as a result of the repeated pleas of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Though an unlettered orphan, through Divine teaching and training, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ became a guide to the whole of humankind, a translator of the realities of the realm of the unknown, the teacher of the school of truth. As expressed by Ziya Pasha:

*At such a school was he a learner  
That the Almighty was his personal teacher*

Musa ﷺ had conveyed certain laws. Dawud ﷺ excelled through the prayers and psalms inspired to him by Allah ﷻ. Isa ﷺ was sent as an exemplar of virtue and piety. Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ

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of Divine manifestation. Thus in terms of His Essence, Allah ﷻ, is hidden (*ghayb*), but apparent through the manifestations of His attributes, for which reason that in describing Believers, the Quran reiterates that they “الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ” “...those who believe in the *ghayb*”.

Another fact of the matter is that human cognition is incapable of comprehending the manifestation of the Essence of the Almighty, something verified by the fainting of Musa ﷺ. Accordingly, there is no manifestation of Divine Essence in our world, due to the inadequacy of the cognition of both man and jinn to bear the intensity of its appearance.

“قَابَ فَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى” “And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer...” (an-Najm, 9): On the night of Miraj, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was delivered beyond the *Sidrat'ul-Muntaha*, the Lote Tree, never before passed by any being, including Jibril ﷺ. Taking place there was a union, whose nature remains impossible and too confidential for our understanding to grasp, disclosed to cognition simply as “a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer...”.

These are expressions articulated to accommodate our levels of understanding, in depicting the two grand manifestations which Musa ﷺ and Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ were subjected to.



came with all of these. Pronouncing laws, he at the same time taught ways of refining the self and praying to the Almighty with a pure heart. The paramount virtues he taught, he epitomized throughout his life. He advised not be beguiled by the deceiving dazzle of the world. Simpler said, he embodied all the rights and duties of the entirety of prophets before him. The nobility of both lineage and conduct, of beauty and perfection were personified in him.

Without a doubt, the fortieth year of his life proved to be the greatest turning point in the course of the history of humankind. He had spent forty years in an ignorant society, during which most of the perfections he later was to promote remained a mystery to nearly all. He was not known yet as a man of state. Little were aware of his eloquence. Speaking of his potential as an illustrious commander was one thing; he was not renowned even as an ordinary soldier.

Before that, nobody had heard him talk about the histories of peoples and prophets of the yesteryears, or of paradise and hell. Reputed only for leading a life of utmost virtue and solitude, that momentous return from the Cave of Hira where he was entrusted with Divine duty, marked a momentous change.

### **The Reality of Revelation and the Ways of its Disclosure**

*Wahy*, or Revelation, contains a variety of meanings; a rapid sign, script, correspondence, inspiration and secret talk, just to name a few. In principle, it signifies what Allah ﷻ, informs his Prophets of whatever He wills, in whichever manner He pleases, as stated by the Quran:

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ  
أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بآذَنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ



“It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by Revelation, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with Allah’s permission, whatever Allah wills. He is Most High, Most Wise.” (as-Shura, 51)

Narrated by Aisha رضي الله عنها, the Blessed Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was once asked about the manner in which he received Divine Revelation, to which he responded:

“Sometimes it comes in a clanging sound, which is the most burdensome way I receive it. Once I comprehend and commit to memory what Allah has declared, the Angel then leaves me. And at times the Angel appears in human form. He talks to me and I immediately comprehend it.” (Bukhari, Bad’ul-Wahy, 1-2; Muslim, Fadail, 87)

Judging from numerous narrations, Muslim scholars have concluded that:

1. Revelation sometimes came in the form of truthful dreams during sleep, which later took place in the exact way they were seen.
2. Words to be revealed would at times be instilled in the Noble Messenger’s صلى الله عليه وسلم heart, without the Angel appearing.
3. As was the case in the Hadith of Jibril,<sup>116</sup> the Angel of Revelation would assume the form of a human being and impart the Revelation.

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه, the incident recounted below provides a splendid example of revelation in the latter sense:

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116. One day while the Blessed Prophet was at the Masjid, Jibril -aleyhissalâm- came to him in the form of a man and asked him questions regarding *îman*, Islâm, *ihsân* and the signs of the Day of Judgment, with the aim of helping the Companions learn their religion. The hadith explaining this incident has thereafter been known as the Jibril Hadith. (See Bukhârî, Iman, 37; Muslim, Iman, 1, 5)



“I was next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with my father Abbas. By the side of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was also another man and they were whispering to one another, for which reason the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not pay much attention to my father. When we left, my father asked me:

‘You saw how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not take much notice of me, didn’t you?’

‘Yes, father’, I replied. ‘But he was talking to another man next to him’, I added.

Thereupon we quickly returned next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

‘Messenger of Allah’, explained my father. ‘I said so and so to Abdullah and he told me that you were whispering to a man next to you. Was there really someone by your side?’

‘Did you actually see him, Abdullah?’ the Messenger of Allah ﷺ then asked me.

‘Yes’, I replied.

‘That was Jibril’, he then said, ‘and he was the reason I could not attend to you.’” (Ahmad, I, 293-294; Haythami, IX, 276)

4. Revelation every so often came in the form of a terrifying clanging sound. By the end of the process, the Blessed Messenger ﷺ would have grasped every word conveyed by the Angel.

5. On two occasions, Jibril ﷺ brought Revelation in his actual angelic form. First of these was subsequent to the period of interval, as the Noble Prophet ﷺ was descending down the Cave of Hira, while the second was during the Night of *Miraj*, by the Lote Tree, *Sidrat’ul-Muntaha*.



6. Revelation, on occasion, would be disclosed directly to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as part of Divine acceptance and grace, without the medium of the Angel of Revelation, as was the case during the *Miraj*.

7. It was also the case that Jibril ؑ would sometimes disclose the given Revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his sleep. Some commentators are of the view that such was the way Chapter Kawthar was revealed.

Some Companions provide an account of how, during the process of Revelation, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would become overwhelmed, become flustered, close his eyes, and put his head down. The Companions, too, would put their heads down, not daring to look up or peek at the Noble Messenger ﷺ, until the process was concluded.

Sometimes a sound resembling the humming of bees could be heard near his face upon the arrival of Revelation. During those moments, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would take quick breaths, with drops of sweat trickling down his forehead even during the coldest of days.<sup>117</sup>

Zayd ibn Thabit ؓ,<sup>118</sup> among the scribes of Revelation, has stated that the intensity of a given revelation would correspond to the weight of its content. If the revelation consisted of a Divine

117. Bukhari, *Bad'ul-Wahy* 1/2, *Umra* 10; Muslim, *Fadâil* 87, *Hudûd* 13; Tirmidhi, *Tafsir* 23/3173; Ahmed, V, 327.

118. Zayd ibn Thabit ؓ was among the scribes of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. At the time of the Noble Messenger's ﷺ migration to Medina, Zayd was an eleven year old orphan. As a child, he had committed to memory seventeen chapters of the Quran. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised him to learn Assyrian and Hebrew, both of which he became conversant with within a matter of forty days, supervising the Prophet's ﷺ Assyrian and Hebrew correspondences afterward. But one of his most honorable services was, with the aid of another two Companions, the



promise or assurance, then Jibril ﷺ would appear in human form, a situation that would not cause much difficulty for the Noble Messenger ﷺ. But if Divine warnings and threats of punishment were being sent down, then the Revelation would arrive amid the sound of a most terrifying clanging.

If the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was riding on camelback at the time the Revelation arrived, incapable of withstanding its weight, the legs of the camel would buckle and it would be forced to crouch. Indeed, upon the revelation of the third *ayah* of Chapter Maida, it was as if the legs of his camel Adba, were on the verge of breaking, forcing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to dismount.<sup>119</sup>

Zayd ibn Thabit ؓ recounts:

“I was sitting on the floor next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with his knee on mine. Right at that instant he began receiving Revelation. Suddenly it was as if there was nothing else on Earth heavier than his knee. It was only a matter of time, I thought, before mine were crushed.” (Ahmad, V, 190-191)

In denial of the fact that the Sacred Quran is the word of the Almighty, some orientalist have contended Revelation to be nothing but inner inspirations felt by the Prophet ﷺ as a result of profound contemplation and meditation. Such allegations only betray the ignorance set deep within their hearts, their weakness of judgment, and the zeal of their enmity.

The fear felt by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ upon seeing the Angel for the first time during the initial arrival of Revelation, clearly disproves the possibility that it could have been an inner, personal

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assembling of the Quran. He passed away in Medina in the 45<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira, having narrated 92 hadiths.

119. Ahmed, II, 176; VI, 445; Ibn Saad, I, 197; Tabari, *Tafsir*, VI, 106.

case of hallucination.<sup>120</sup> The Prophet's ﷺ receiving of Revelation consists of his conceiving an external reality, not related in any way to the state of his inner being. That Jibril عليه السلام forcefully hugged the Messenger of Allah ﷺ three times, urging him on each occasion to “read” before letting him go, is confirmative of the fact that the source of Revelation is not internal, but external, from Allah ﷻ.

Besides, the temporary interval of Revelation invalidates, in no uncertain terms, the claims of Revelation being an internal phenomenon transpiring within the mind of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ as a consequence of his profound contemplation. The sudden break in Revelation and the urgent desire nurtured by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for it to resume, visibly proves that it was an occurrence of an external nature, independent of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ will.

In addition, as reminded by the verse below, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was entirely unaware that he would be receiving Revelation in the first place.

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُو أَنْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ فَلَا  
تَكُونَنَّ ظَهِيرًا لِّلْكَافِرِينَ

“And you did not expect that the Book would be revealed to you, but it is a mercy from your Lord, therefore be not a supporter of the unbelievers.” (al-Qasas, 86)

120. Hallucination: Originally from French, in psychology, the term denotes sensations more commonly observed in cases of schizophrenia or paranoia, where the person undergoes experiences without the stimulation of his senses and imagines things that have no reality of their own.



One only needs to glance at the difference of style between the Quran and Hadith to be further convinced of the revelatory source of the former.

Such incidents would come to pass at times, that in spite of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ needing an urgent answer, the arrival of an enlightening Revelation would be postponed; as was the case with the *Ifk* or the Slander Incident and the recurring questions many a time asked by the Israelites. Had the Quran been, as claimed, a fruit of the Prophet's ﷺ meditation, it would have been better for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to provide an instant answer rather than put himself in an awkward position by waiting for a Revelation instead.

What's more, Revelation would at times inform of the Prophet's incorrect stance regarding certain issues or command things counter to his preferred tendency. Even a slight deferral of communicating a certain command would lay the Blessed Prophet ﷺ open to Divine criticism. All this exposes the illogicality of the accusations holding the Quran to be a product of the Noble Prophet's ﷺ personal contemplation.

Just to recount a relevant incident, while communicating Islam to a few notables of Quraysh, Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum ؓ, a blind Companion who had previously entered the fold of Islam, came up to the Noble Messenger ﷺ, insisting him teach him some of the truths revealed by the Almighty. Preoccupied at the time with trying to convince the prominent figures of Quraysh however, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took little notice of him, even frowning a little upon Ibn Maktum's insistent attitude to learn, for which he was subject to the following rebuke of Allah ﷻ:

أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْنَىٰ فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّىٰ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّىٰ  
 وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَىٰ وَهُوَ يَخْشَىٰ فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ  
 تَلَهَّكَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرْهُ

“As for him who considers himself free from need (of you) to him you do address yourself; but no blame is on you if he would not purify himself. And as for him who comes to you striving earnestly and with fear of Him, from him you divert yourself! Nay! Surely it is an admonishment; so let him who pleases mind it.” (Abasa, 5-12)

In times subsequent to the above Revelation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would at every given opportunity seek to compliment Ibn Maktum with kind words. Upon seeing him, he would sometimes comment:

“Greetings, Ibn Maktum, on behalf of whom my Lord rebuked me!” (Wahidi, p. 471)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ would, on occasion, receive Divine Commands in concise (*mujmal*)<sup>121</sup>, for which he would not provide a subjective interpretation, so long as they remained unelaborated by the Almighty. A case in point is the following verse:

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ  
 أَوْ تُخَفُّوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ

121. *Mujmal* are expressions that contain succinct meanings, which until further clarification, remain obscure.

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah’s; and whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allah will call you to account according to it...” (al-Baqara, 284)

Upon hearing the above Revelation, apprehensive that they might be held responsible for even the fleeting thoughts in their hearts, the Companions worriedly asked:

“How, Messenger of Allah, are we supposed to cope with that?”

In response, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ stated:

“What now? Are you trying to say ‘we hear, yet we rebel’ like the People of the Book before you? Better for you to say instead ‘we hear and we obey...we entreat You, our Lord, to forgive us, for to You is every return!’” (Muslim, Iman, 200; Ahmad, I, 233; Wahidi, p. 97)

Owing to the concise meaning of the relevant Revelation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not provide further clarification but insisted that the Companions keep faith in Allah ﷻ. It was not long afterwards, however, that an *ayah* revealed anew shed light upon the previous:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ  
رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا  
كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ  
لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى

الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ



“Allah does not impose upon any soul a burden greater than it can bear; for it, is the benefit of what it has earned and upon it, the evil of what it has wrought: Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake! Our Lord! Do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us! Our Lord! Do not impose upon us that which we have not the strength to bear; and pardon us and grant us protection and have mercy on us! You are our Patron, so help us against the unbelieving people.” (al-Baqara, 286)

Thanks to the above *ayah*, the Companions had now become aware that they would not be held accountable with regard to thoughts which they could not help.

That the Noble Messenger ﷺ recoiled from offering a clarification for a *mujmal* revelation, over and above being a Prophetic reality, provides at the same time another incontestable evidence that bears out the Divine source of the Quran. Had that not been the case, then an explanatory revelation would have been redundant, and a subjective explanation would have sufficed as enough clarification. The absence of the occurrence of such a scenario supports the case for the miraculous nature of the Holy Quran.

Another irrefutable fact that proves the Divine source of the Quran lies in its providing news of the unknown, that is, of *ghayb*.

In like manner, the Quran also provides a factual account of history. Neither a scholarly institution, nor a single cultured individual existed in 7<sup>th</sup> century Mecca, with insight into the historical knowledge presented therein. All they boasted in the name of historical knowledge was nothing beyond a few local Persian legends that swarmed with contradictions, brought to town by its seasonal traders. Not only does the Quran offer a coherent and a total picture of history, it is not, in any way, of the kind that



can be articulated by any individual, no matter how intelligent and inventive he may be.

Furthermore, an intelligent person ought to stop and think: Could an unlettered man, raised in an ignorant society, really be the source of the exceptional meanings of the Quran, other than through obtaining it from a Divine source? Of course not!

And this shows that all that has been conveyed by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has sprung forth from its very source in Divine Revelation.

The Holy Quran has also foretold events of the future, which have come to pass in the exact manner foretold, when their times came. The Quran perennially leads the way, and science only follows in its wake.

Undeniably, the following incident recounted in the Quran provides only one example of many.

To the Pharaoh, who, being on the verge of drowning in the whirlpool of the Red Sea wanted to seize the rope of belief as a last resort, the Almighty declared:

الآنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

“What! Now? When hitherto you had rebelled and been of the wrong-doers?” (Yunus, 91), rejecting his desperate bid to affirm faith amid the throes of death, before continuing:

فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُونَ لِمَنْ خَلَقَ آيَةً وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا لَغَافِلُونَ



“But We will this day deliver you with your body that you may be a sign to those after you, and most surely the majority of the people are heedless to Our signs.” (Yunus, 92)

Zamakhshari interprets the *ayah* in the following:

“We shall throw your naked corpse in a corner by the shore and protect it, in its wholeness, preventing it from decomposing, as a lesson for those after you in the centuries to come.” (Zamakhshari, III, 24)

Recent discoveries have found Pharaoh’s corpse washed upon the shore, prostrate. This was his very final state before death. Dreading the horrible scenes he had been made to witness in his dying moments, he wanted then to surrender to belief, but since his stance was out of desperation, it was not accepted. Thus, approximately three thousand years following that plight, and having survived decay, his corpse has emerged, and as was proclaimed by the Quran, exposed to be exhibited to humankind as warning. The corpse is exhibited at the British Museum as we speak: only one among many instances of the miracles of the Quran set to survive till the Final Hour.

But as the main objective of the Quran is to communicate *tawhid* and thereby call humankind to guidance, such miraculous instances of scientific and historical nature are only secondary. It must not be forgotten, that compliant with the Divine proclamation:

وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابَسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

“...nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a Clear Book”, (al-Anam, 59), truths of every single kind are hidden in the Quran. Accordingly, the Holy Quran is a perfect narrative of all realities engraved across the universe, comprising the nucleus of all truths within. This characteristic of the Quran, necessitated by its being a



miracle, will be better appreciated through the unfolding of events and in proportion with progress in human knowledge.

Had such knowledge, hidden in the depths of the universe as part of Divine Will, received detailed exposition in the Quran instead of its present concise form, then libraries would not have been spacious enough to accommodate its voluminous size. Besides, as human beings are prone to reject any claim unjustified by the expertise of the time, belief in the Quran would not have lasted intact until the Final Hour. Just to give one example, even if the reality of television had been exposed then as we know it now, people would have balked at believing it until physically seeing it before their eyes, which would have given them reason to reject the Quran; and hence the reason as to why the Quran, though having embodied every single truth, voices most of them in an undetailed manner.

All the issues dealt with by the Quran are conducive to the greater aim of *tawhid*, the impulse behind its touching upon scientific facts. A distinctive miracle of the Quran is that it survives in all times and places until the Final Hour. This is another testimony to a splendor revealed all the more with every moment and discovery.<sup>122</sup>

Unable to stomach the magnificence of the Holy Quran and the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, some orientalists have resorted to making the absurd and illogical claim of describing the Prophet's ﷺ state, while receiving Revelation, as an 'epileptic seizure'.<sup>123</sup> We need only mention the following in response:

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122. For relevant examples, see, Osman Nüri TOPBAŞ, *Rahmet Esintileri*, Istanbul 2001, p. 184-239.
123. The observable changes undergone by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ during the receiving of Revelation, the details of which are explained above, have lead some orientalists to conceive the experience as an epileptic seizure, centered upon

After undergoing an epileptic seizure, one is overcome with exhaustion and soreness, leaving him or her in great pain and a disturbed state of mind. Yet, not only did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ not undergo any of these said sufferings, he would also consider a pause in Revelation as a break in proceedings, longing for its arrival, and becoming delighted beyond description when it did.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ would not undergo the experiences characteristic during Revelation all the time, often remaining in usual manner.

During an epileptic seizure, a fact known to medicine, one loses all capacity to think and all consciousness, remaining oblivious to everything around him; yet the Revelation that the Noble Prophet ﷺ received were conveying to humankind the magnificent *ayah* of the Quran, boasting the most perfect blueprints of law, morality, piety and the most splendid accounts of history.

The violent tremor known to take over an epileptic during seizure was never witnessed during the coming of Revelation.

Epileptics tend to utter nonsensical even absurd words during seizure. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was never seen to engage in such behavior; not only that, spilling from his tongue were the most eloquent and meaningful words mankind can ever imagine.

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which they have conjured further arguments, even taking it so far as to make the inconceivable allegation of dubbing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ mentally insane. They were even able to persuade the French National Academy of Medicine to at least consider the scientific value of the case, hoping for the eventual confirmation of their claim. In 1842, a committee consisting of the most outstanding doctors of medicine at the time assessed the claims, finally submitting a long and elaborate report, rejecting the claim as medically unacceptable. Those interested can refer to *Rapor*, a 1996 translation of the report from French to Turkish by Prof. Feridun Nafiz Uzluk.



Moreover, medically proven is the fact that no single body has the power to endure a seizure as lengthy as that needed to utter six-thousand odd verses.

Such deliberate allegations, which lack the least sense, are therefore only an outcome of an inability to come to terms with the truth of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

### Prophethood: *Nubuwwah* and *Risalah*

Allah ﷻ, willed to address His servants through exceptional figures raised from among them, by entrusting them with Prophethood; a Divine routine revealed in the Quran as:

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْضُصْهُمْ  
عَلَيْكَ

“Of some messengers We have already told you the story; of others We have not...” (an-Nisa, 164)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءُوهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ

“We did indeed send, before you, messengers to their (respective) peoples, and they came to them with Clear Signs.” (ar-Rum, 47)

Beginning with the first man, through every epoch of history, the Almighty continued sending His Prophets, as *nabi* and *rasul*, as a mercy for human beings.

*Nubuwwah*, or prophethood in a general sense, denotes the ambassadorship between the Almighty and His rational servants in regulating their affairs, both Here and in the Hereafter.



A *rasul* is a person, who receiving Revelation, is furthermore obliged to pass on what has been revealed in him to others. A *nabi*, on the other hand, is a person who receives Revelation whether or not he is obliged to pass it on. Generally, a *nabi* is sent to further communicate and reinforce the *sharia*, the canon law of a *rasul* sent before him. Therefore each *rasul* is also a *nabi*, though not every *nabi* is a *rasul*. There are many ahadith which indicate that the terms *nabi-rasul* have a universal-particular relation: that said, the Quran uses both terms interchangeably.

To the question that may arise as to why the Almighty does not address His servants directly but instead through Prophets, the following response could be rendered:

It is contrary to the mystery of the great trial that comprises the underlying reason of the existence of the universe, for the Almighty to disclose His Revelation through a direct addressing of humankind. Faith would have then lost the honor and worth it has, in its pertaining to an *unknown*. Receiving commands and prohibitions directly from the Almighty, humankind would have had no choice but to believe, for being directly conscious of the reality of Allah ﷻ. By preventing human beings from making a willful choice of either good or bad, this would have in turn rendered the awaiting reward and punishment nonsensical.

On the other hand, human beings are of different levels of understanding, power and ability, for no other reason that they each have different functions to carry out in life. Had all human beings been talented, there would have remained certain things nobody would have liked to do. The fulfilling of all outward functions of the world, from the lowest to the highest, has necessitated that human beings be created in various grades of ability.



The greatest leaders, teachers and guides in the history of mankind are prophets. It is imperative that persons, who are to guide society and moreover show them the right way and endure the torment and hardships that may come therefrom, are endowed with supreme abilities and an endless reserve of patience. Unless they are blessed with high qualities and supreme features of character that people will admire, swaying the masses and guiding them will remain impossible.

Even with ordinary leadership, a person may not become a leader without possessing higher qualities than those under him. Even if he does somehow find himself as a leader, he cannot be successful, for no other reason that the insufficient are never truly recognized as leaders.

It is for that reason that Prophets are acknowledged as naturally endowed with greater qualities. Yet, they cannot be prophets solely through their personal will, by simply putting to use the talents they have from predisposition. Among them, prophethood is exclusive to those handpicked and appointed by the Almighty. Simpler put, neither *nubuwwah* nor *risalah* are earned: one cannot acquire them through effort. Instead, Allah ﷻ, appoints whoever He wills from among His servants.

So the *ayah* declares:

اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ

“Allah knows best with whom to place His message.” (al-Anam, 124)

In contrast, selecting an ordinary person to carry Revelation is equally incompatible with Divine Will, as not everyone is competent enough to conceive and convey the Word of the Almighty. Prophets have therefore been specially selected from among the most



competent, chosen to carry the heavy burden of prophethood, by virtue of the innate endurance with which they have been gifted.

### The Attributes of Prophets

All Prophets have certain common attributes, classified as *sidq*, *amanah*, *fatanah*, *ismah* and *tabligh*. Belief in prophets comprises these principles.

*Sidq* marks the honesty and truthfulness of prophets in communicating Divine verdicts, commands and prohibitions, and in all the words they utter. They always uphold honesty in their words and actions, both of which are mirrors of one another. It is inconceivable for them to lie. Their trustworthiness is praised by the Almighty in the Quran:

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

“Also mention in the Book Ibrahim: He was a man of Truth, a Prophet.” (Maryam, 41)<sup>124</sup>

In emphasis of the impossibility for Prophets to deviate from *sidq* even for a split second, Allah ﷻ, states:

وَلَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ  
ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ

“And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name, We should certainly seize him by his right hand, And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart...” (al-Haqqa, 44-46)

124. Also see, Maryam, 54, 56; Yûsuf, 46.



Their trustworthiness is of a magnificence even attested to by their foes. Below are just a few of numerous other examples:

During the first days in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ publicly announced the Call, standing on a rock on the Hill of Safa, he declared to those of the Quraysh who were present:

“People of Quraysh...If I were to tell you that enemy cavalymen are staking out the outskirts of that mountain, or in that valley, waiting to pounce on you and seize your belongings, would you believe me?”

Without a second thought, they replied:

“Certainly! For until now, we have known you to be a man of your word and we have never heard you tell a lie...” (Bukhari, Tafsir, 26)

One of the questions posed by Heraclius, the Emperor of Byzantine, to Abu Sufyan, still a nonbeliever, in order to obtain more information on the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, was:

“Has there ever been a time where he has failed to keep his word?”

In spite of being in staunch defiance of the Noble Messenger ﷺ at the time, Abu Sufyan replied, unswervingly:

“No...Whatever promise he makes, he always keeps.” (Bukhari, Bad’ul-Wahy, 1, 5-6; Muslim, Jihad, 74)

Ubayy ibn Khalaf, a Meccan idolater, was among the most inveterate enemies of Islam. Prior to the Hegira, he would threaten the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, remarking:

“I am raising a horse, feeding it the best fodder. There shall come a day when I will mount on it and kill you!”

On one occasion, however, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ broke his silence and responded:

“Allah willing, I shall be the one who ends up killing you.”

On the day of Uhud, that dim-witted idolater was searching all over the battlefield for the Noble Messenger ﷺ, screaming:

“If he survives today, it means I am gone!”

With this thought in his mind, he was able to come within a very short distance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and get ready to attack him. Seeing him further away moments before, the Companions wanted to finish him off, only to be prevented by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, telling them:

“Let him come!”

As Ibn Khalaf got closer, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ grabbed a spear from the hands of a Companion.

As Ibn Khalaf charged on his horse, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pointed the spear, which lightly scraped Ibn Khalaf’s neck as he rode past. But even with that little a blow, he fell off his horse and rolled on the ground awhile, before getting back on his feet horrified and fleeing back to towards his ranks, at the same time shouting, with his eyes about to fly out of their sockets from fright:

“I swear that Muhammad has killed me!”

The idolaters rushing next to him to inspect his wound were all assuring:

“It is only light scrape...”

But unsatisfied, he kept on remarking:



“In Mecca, Muhammad had told me that he would kill me. So I swear, even if he was to spit on me, it would be enough to take my life!”

He continued bawling.

“How could you cry so much over a little scrape?” Abu Sufyan eventually told him off, to which he responded:

“Do you know who did this to me? This is a wound caused by Muhammad. I swear by Lat and Uzza that if they were to inflict on the whole folk of Hijaz the pain I am feeling from this scrape, they would certainly all perish. Back in Mecca, Muhammad had told me he would end up killing me. There and then I knew he was to be the cause of my death...I knew there was no way of saving myself.”

Ubayy, that ingrained enemy of the Prophet ﷺ, died on the return, within days of reaching Mecca. (Ibn Ishaq, p. 89; Ibn Saad, II, 46; Hakim, II, 357)

Even an idolater with a close acquaintance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ firmly believed in the truth of his word.

Abu Maysara explains:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had once gone next to Abu Jahl and company. Upon seeing him, they said:

‘We swear, Muhammad, that it is not you we are denying. For as far as we know you are an honest and a truthful man. It is only what you have brought that we refute!’ Revealed thereupon was the *ayah*:

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ  
وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

‘We know well how their talk grieves you, though in truth they deny not you but it is the signs of Allah that the wicked negate.’ (al-Anam, 33)” (Wahidi, p. 219)

Requiring neither an extra word nor speech, the expression of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ alone was the ultimate embodiment of honesty; such that simply the sight of his face compelled Abdullah ibn Salam, a distinguished Jewish scholar, to remark:

“Such a face can never lie”, as he accepted Islam there and then. (Tirmidhi, Qiyamah, 43; Ahmad, V, 451)

Uttering a lie on behalf of the Almighty is impossible for a man who never spoke a lie, even jokingly, during his entire life prior to being given prophethood. Indeed, the Noble Messenger ﷺ regarded lying as a sign of hypocrisy, emphatically prohibiting his *ummah* from speaking a word of untruth.<sup>125</sup>

He states in a hadith:

“So long as one continues to lie and carry the intention to do so, his heart is branded with a black spot. Then the spot grows, turning his entire heart black, to the ultimate point he is recorded among the liars in the Divine sight.” (Muwatta’, Kalam, 18)

Nufay ibn Harith رضي الله عنه narrated:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ one day asked, three times:

‘Should I inform you of the gravest of the great sins?’

‘Please do, Messenger of Allah’, responded we.

‘Ascribing partners to Allah and rebelling against the parents’, he said. He then straightened up from where he had been leaning, assumed a seated position, and added:

125. Bukhari, Iman, 24; Muslim, Iman, 107.



‘And also –and listen carefully- lying and perjury’. So many times did he repeat that that fearing he would tire himself, we wished for him to stop.” (Bukhari, Adab, 6; Muslim, Iman, 143)

The Quran underlines the importance of truthfulness as follows:

قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمٌ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي  
 مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ  
 ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“Allah will say, “This is a day on which the truthful will profit from their truth: theirs are gardens, with rivers flowing beneath,- their eternal Home; Allah well-pleased with them, and they with Allah. That is the great salvation!” (al-Maida, 119)

*Amanah* denotes the extreme trustworthiness, dependability and honesty possessed by the outstanding figures that are prophets. Even nonbelievers looked upon them with trust. Together with signifying their trustworthiness and reliability in general matters, the attribute of *amanah* in particular implies their fidelity with regard to Revelation, their faultless communicating of the Divine commands and prohibitions to people, neither adding nor subtracting a word from it.

Allah ﷻ, only entrusts His most honest and dependable servants with the honor and duty of prophethood, not the treacherous. The verses below indicate that Prophets have constantly been truthful in reminding their people:

أَبْلَغُكُمْ رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنَا لَكُمْ نَاصِحٌ أَمِينٌ



“I but fulfil towards you the duties of my Lord’s mission: I am to you a sincere and trustworthy adviser.” (al-Araf, 68)

إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

“I am to you a messenger worthy of all trust.” (as-Shuara, 107)<sup>126</sup>

As a matter of fact, the title *al-Amin*, or the Trustworthy, given to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would resonate equally loud among the ranks of idolaters. Ever suspicious of their own friends, when they had to, the idolaters routinely entrusted their belongings to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Indeed, even just before the journey of Hegira, the idolaters had many of their possessions entrusted with the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who, in a display of inimitable loyalty, had left Ali ؑ behind in Mecca to return the goods to their owners, at the risk of death.

*al-Amin* virtually became the Noble Prophet’s ﷺ second name—and the only name the Meccans used to call him around the twenty-fifth year of his life.<sup>127</sup>

Those up in arms over the Black Stone issue prior to the Prophet’s ﷺ arbitration were jubilant upon seeing him approach from a distance towards them, excitedly shouting ‘al-Amin is coming’, placing the settlement of their disagreements in his dependable hands. Never could there be a slight question mark raised against his trustworthiness, neither by a Companion who would not think twice of sacrificing his all for him, nor by an enemy intent on putting him to death.

126. Also see, as-Shuara, 125, 143, 162, 178; ad-Dukhân, 18.

127. Ibn Saad, I, 121, 156.



Equal to the trustworthiness of the Prophets, so is Jibril عليه السلام the carrier of Revelation, attesting to which the Almighty said:

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ  
مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ

“Verily this is the word of a most honourable Messenger, endowed with Power, possessing rank before the Lord of the Throne, with authority there, and faithful to his trust” (at-Takwir, 19-21) Revelation, is therefore, carried to the *Amin* on Earth, through the *Amin* of the Heavens.

*Fatanah* implies that prophets possess the highest level of intelligence, reason and insight among mankind. They have been gifted with strength of memory, a piercing cognition and solid power for judgment and persuasion.

*Fatanah* is not a tedious exercise of reason and logic; it much rather represents a level of comprehension beyond genius, the expression of reason, prudence and insight that abides with the heart. To impeccably complete their duties, prophets need to be in possession of peerless intelligence. They would otherwise be unable to put forward to the people the case that they have been sent for and convince them of its truth.

Prophets solve even the most obscure and intricate problems with ease. Wrapping even the most complex issues in the shroud of ease enables their words to be put across with clarity to people of various levels of understanding.

A quality that has transpired in various styles in each prophet, it could be said the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is a quintessence of *fatannah* or prudence. As aforementioned, by virtue of a matchless





display of prudence and insight, the Noble Messenger ﷺ, who happened to be walking through the gate of the Kaabah at the time, was able to settle the great dispute that arose pertaining to the replacement of the Black Stone, and prevent what otherwise would have certainly ended up as massive bloodshed between rival clans.

Similarly, his competence when battling in the way of Islam, his prudence in peace, and in particular, during the Armistice of Hudaibiyah, the wisdom in his capture of Mecca and its eventual guidance without the shedding of a drop of blood, his extraordinary discretion and justice in Ta'if, are exemplary displays of *fatanah* lying beyond the reach of any single mortal.

A Muslim should likewise seize a share of the *fatanah* of prophets and put to use the gift of reason in the most efficient way possible. Knowing how to say what is to be said, where and when to say it, and no less the behavior to adopt in saying it, is essential.

The delicate approach adopted by Jafar Tayyar ؑ, for instance, in informing the Abyssinian Negus of Islam, is worth enormous significance in terms of exhibiting the ideal prudence of a Believer. When the Negus, then a Christian, insisted that Jafar Tayyar ؑ recite a few verses of the Quran, instead of reciting, for example, Chapter Kafirun that defies the disbelievers in full force, Jafar chose to recite Chapter Maryam, which speaks highly of both Isa ؑ and his mother. Enthralled by the *ayah* read aloud by Jafar, the Negus, reduced to tears, exclaimed:

“There is no doubt that what I have just heard and springs forth from the same source of light as that which was brought by Jesus”, and he entered the fold of Islam not long after. (Ibn Hisham, I, 358-360)



*Tabligh* refers to how prophets inform people of the Divine Word truthfully, just as they have been commanded. Their invitation contains neither addition nor subtraction. Among the common attributes of Prophets, *tabligh* is one of their most important duties, as is thus declared in the *ayah*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ  
وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ

“O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message...” (al-Maida, 67)

In carrying out their responsibility of *tabligh* prophets have encountered numerous obstacles, in the face of which, however, they never allowed for compromise. Their lives abound in exemplary cases of such experiences.

The Noble Messenger ﷺ began his invitation to Islam by extending it to his closest kin, acting in accordance with the given time and place, making sure to observe the state of mind and the level of comprehension of his subjects: in compliance with the principle of gradualness he made the most of every opportunity, replacing difficulty with ease, promoting glad tidings rather than attracting hate.

Having devoted his entire life to the call of Islam, in his Farewell Sermon, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ asked the Companions who were present:

“Have I accomplished my duty of conveyance?” After receiving an affirmative response he announced:



“Bear witness, O my Lord!” with satisfaction over a mission accomplished.

Thus all Believers must also live up to the *tabligh* methods exemplified by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, to the best of their ability; for calling to Islam is an obligation upon all Muslims.<sup>128</sup>

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ states:

“Upon seeing something improper, one should set it right with his hand; if unable to do so, then with his tongue; if unable to that too, then he should despise it with his heart, and that is the weakest faith.” (Muslim, Iman, 78)

The absence, in society, of people who enjoin the good and forbid the wrong, sooner or later results in the wrong becoming customary and accepted as something normal. An evil not eradicated in time after a while becomes ineradicable even if it were wished to be so. Right and wrong become muddled, and as the truth takes flight people forget about their Lord. Consequent upon this is the total destruction of that society. Avoiding such devastation requires that an especial importance is given to the activity of *tabligh*.

*Ismah* points to the fact that prophets are immune from falling into sin, whether it is great or small. Owing to this quality, prophets have been safeguarded from becoming mired in the swamp of *shirk*, both before and after their prophethood. In like manner, it is impossible for them to have a memory lapse or make an error while extending to people the Revelation they receive from the Almighty.

Had Prophets not been endowed with the quality of *ismah*, then the truth of what they communicated would have remained

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128. See Âl-i Īmrân, 104, 110.



dubious, a shortcoming which would have cast doubt over their being the proof and witness of the Almighty on Earth.

According to *Ahl'us-Sunnah*, prophets never commit major sins. Though it is possible for them to commit blunders, unintentionally and in compliance with many underlying reasons, they are never left as they are, but are immediately rectified and cautioned through Revelation.

The commission of these involuntary mistakes called *zalla*, is motivated by the underlying wisdom of giving Prophets a little taste of insufficiency in comparison with the Almighty and in preventing others from idolizing them through a reminder that they are, after all, human.

The conduct of prophets must be of a kind that can be taken after. People, otherwise, would be prone to dismissing the Divine commands with the excuse that what Prophets enjoin is beyond human capability. In total disregard of this fact, there were even those ignorant enough to expect prophets to be raised from among angels, to whom the Quran tendered the following answer:

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ  
لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا

“Say: Had there been in the earth angels walking about as settlers, We would certainly have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as a Messenger.” (al-Isra, 95)

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَا يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ

“Nor did We give them bodies that ate no food, nor were they exempt from death.” (al-Anbiya, 8)

Likewise protecting their followers from making the same blunders and showing them the right kind of action, requires prophets to provide an example.

For instance, after his tribe remained indifferent to his nine-hundred-and-fifty-year call to the Truth, Nuh عليه السلام pleaded:

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَانْتَصِرْ

“Therefore he called upon his Lord: I am overcome, come then to help!” (al-Qamar, 10)

As his tribe met its ruin by drowning amid the Deluge in consequence of his prayer, Nuh عليه السلام again pleaded, overflowing this time with fatherly compassion:

رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي

“Surely, Lord, my son is of my family!” (Hud, 45)

Yet, for wanting his son salvaged while calling destruction upon his tribe, Allah ﷻ, sent him the following warning:

إِنِّي أَعِظُكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

“...I admonish you lest you be of the ignorant!” (Hud, 46)

That admonishment to Nuh عليه السلام has provided a precedent for all Believers to come until the Final Hour.

The attribute *la yukhti*, or infallibility, is exclusive to the Almighty alone. It is impossible for mortals to avoid error. Be that



as it may, a Muslim should strive to minimize his errors, to ensure which the Quran, on numerous occasions, advises *dhikr*, that is to say the togetherness of the heart with Allah ﷻ, since it is impossible to do injustice or commit an error while the heart says “Allah”.

So declares the Almighty:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ  
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“And be ye not like those who forgot Allah; and He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors!”  
(al-Hashr, 19)

Again, with reference to those ignorant of this aspect:

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

“Woe to those whose hearts are hard against the remembrance of Allah; those are in clear error!” (az-Zumar, 22)

Besides the five prophetic attributes mentioned, namely *sidq*, *amanah*, *fatanah*, *tabligh*, *ismah*, there are an additional three, solely exclusive to the Noble Messenger ﷺ:

1. The Chosen Prophet ﷺ is the Beloved of Allah, the greatest of all Prophets, the noblest of humankind.

Poet Necip Fazıl concisely depicts him as:

*Eternity has refined your fragrance,  
You are honey, Being is your comb!*

2. As the *rasul'us-thaqalayn*, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ has been sent to all man and jinn. The religion he brought is valid until the

end of time. Other prophets, on the other hand, were sent for a temporary period of time, with some sent for a certain group of people in particular. In this respect, while the miracles of other prophets have remained exclusive to their times, the miracles of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ extend to all times. The Holy Quran, especially, as the greatest miracle given to him, is set to survive unsullied till the Last Hour, impervious to falsification.

### 3. He is the *Khatam'ul-Anbiya*, the Seal of Prophets.

On top of all this, on the Day of Judgment, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ will be privileged with leading the Great Intercession, *shafaat'ul-uzma*, and be given the Praised Rank, that is to say the *maqam'ul-mahmud*. It is that Prophet of Mercy ﷺ, who will hence intercede on behalf of the sinners of his *ummah*, an intercession that will be accepted.<sup>129</sup>

It is an indisputable fact that loving a person, admiring his character and trying to imitate him, are naturally ingrained tendencies. Pinpointing the most exemplary figures and following in their wake is therefore of enormous importance for human beings. Being of eternal grace and generosity, the Almighty has therefore not only sent Revelation to humankind, but also prophets adorned with the most supreme qualities, quintessential figures who are the living embodiment of Divine Revelation. Such consummate characters they are that they exude perfection in all aspects, be it religious, scientific or moral. In fact, by perfecting certain modes of behavior, each Prophet has rendered an outstanding service to humankind.

Among the Prophets, for instance, a look at the life of Nuh عليه السلام immediately strikes one with a persevering and patient call to the

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129. See Bukhari, Tawhid, 36.

Truth, and an ultimate and passionate dislike of unbelief and its representatives.

Dominating the life of Ibrahim ﷺ is a relentless battle against idolatry in an attempt to eradicate it permanently, whereby he provides a unique example of trust and reliance in the Almighty, who, in return, turned the fire of Nimrod into a rose garden for him.

Musa ﷺ spent the bulk of his life struggling against the oppressive Pharaoh and his mob, setting up a celebrated social system for Believers in the shade of the Sacred Law.

The distinctive feature of the call of Isa ﷺ was a tenderness of heart filled with mercy and compassion for human beings. Significant in his call is the promotion of sublime virtues like humbleness and leniency towards people.

In spite of the dazzling and legendary kingship of Sulayman ﷺ, his maintenance of his spiritual state by virtue of gratitude and humbleness, which made him grow ever greater in his servanthood of the Real, commands admiration.

The life of Ayyub ﷺ reveals instances of fortitude against hardships and of thankfulness to Allah ﷻ, at all times, no matter how dire the situation may be.

The life of Yunus ﷺ offers a perfect example of turning towards and attaching to the Almighty with repentance, out of remorse over an error committed.

Even during captivity, Yusuf ﷺ personified the zenith of loyalty to the Almighty and calling to His Path, fending off his attempted seduction by a beautiful woman of wealth and fame, her mesmerizing and tempting call, with lofty purity. His heart, adorned with piety, was virtually like a font of behavioral perfection.





The life of Dawud عليه السلام is filled with an excellence of sentiment towards Divine Majesty. Engrossed in His fear and awe, his tearful glorifications and invocations of the Almighty, his turning to Him, earnestly and beseechingly, provide great lessons.

As for the life of Yaqub عليه السلام, it is the quintessence of the need to avoid despair even in the darkest hour, to attach one's hopes to the Almighty with steady patience and to never lose hope in His mercy.

Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, the Seal of Prophets, embodied all the known and unknown distinguished attributes of the entirety of Prophets to come before him -124,000 on one account-, and more, representing the apex of virtue and conduct. His celebrated life is a vast ocean of which the lives of all the other prophets are tributary rivers that pour into it.



In order that Religion flourish within an environment of peace and happiness, the family of humankind that began with Adam and Hawwa عليها السلام adopted that certain area of Mecca, on which today stands the Kaabah, as the first place of worship. Spread across vast lands thereafter owing to the demands of life, the children of Adam عليه السلام continued their life of religion, guided time and again by prophets, remaining loyal to Divine Truths which, since times immemorial, have been exposed to distortion by the ignorant and those bent on destroying religion. By virtue of sending prophets in succession, the Almighty has always mended the damage inflicted, reviving Religion each time with a fresh breath of life. Humankind has thereby been saved, each time, from universal, individual and social disarray.



Making its entrance into the world at long last, at the *asr* mark of its entire history was the Great Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ, with whom the life of Religion met its final and grandest display, at the very place in which it had been inaugurated. It is now inconceivable to imagine a greater perfection beyond that of his dispensation, insofar as with him, the regular revival of Religion through the sending of Prophets came to an end, making Islam the religion Allah ﷻ, is pleased with.

### On the Humanness of the Blessed Prophet

Allah ﷻ, has reinforced humankind with prophets of their own kind, who dwelled in their midst, and the details of whose lives were quite known to them. In reply to the idolaters' wishes to see a miracle, the Almighty counseled the Noble Messenger ﷺ to say:

قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَسُولًا وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ  
 أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا  
 قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ  
 مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَلَكًا رَسُولًا

“Say: Glory be to my Lord; am I aught but a mortal messenger? And nothing prevented people from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said: What! has Allah raised up a mortal to be a messenger? Say: Had there been in the Earth angels walking about as settlers, We would certainly have sent down to them from the heaven an angel as a messenger” (al-Isra, 93-95)



The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would remind of his inability to produce a miracle of his own doing, without it being through the permission of the Almighty, no other than the fact that he, too, was after all human. Reiterating this fact on numerous occasions is also the Quran:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

“Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is one...” (al-Kahf, 110)<sup>130</sup>

The words below of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ leave no doubt as to him being a human being just like everyone else:

“I, too, am human like the rest of you. You come to me to settle your disputes. Some may have more proofs or be more persuasive, and therefore I may judge in favor of them in line with what I hear. Whoever I have favored in my judgment at the expense of the right of his brother, let him know that I have handed over to him a portion of Hellfire.” (Bukhari, Shahadah, 27; Mazalim, 16; Muslim, Aqdiyya, 5)

Prophets were sent not only to communicate revelation, but also to establish a lifestyle compliant with the Divine way, to exhibit an exemplary character under all circumstances and provide a concrete case in point. Since this could only be carried out within a society of human beings, only a human being could have achieved this task. Had there been angels sent instead, verbal communication of the Divine Revelation would have been the only thing they would have been capable of. Being incapable of leading a life in society and therefore unable to relate to their lives and human problems, they would have failed to address the human condition. Human beings

130. For other *ayah* in relation, see, Fussilat, 6; al-Muminûn, 33, 24; al-Anbiyâ, 2-3; Ibrâhîm, 11.



would have then come up with the excuse that not being angels, it naturally lies beyond their power to obey the commands and prohibitions communicated by them.

In that respect, being under an obligation to provide an example for his *ummah*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not lead the extraordinary life the authority of being a Prophet would have otherwise granted. He displayed feats of wonder only very rarely and on an individual scale. The majority of the activities that filled his life evolved around the necessities of society, in line with their capacities. For that reason, anyone intent on becoming an ideal merchant, a perfect family man, a superb commander, an administrator, and so forth, can very well derive principles from the life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ that will allow him to be so.

Society, through history, has held fast to the illusion that a human being cannot be a representative of the Almighty. That prophets have been human, with wives and children of their own kind, carrying the needs of ordinary human beings have been wrongly regarded as deficiencies on their behalf, which has led to brazenly laying the blame on Divine Will. Many a Prophet has been indicted with such a charge by the very people to whom he was sent.

On the other hand, excess love and devotion to certain Prophets by their followers has led, over time, to a belief that they must be superhuman. Glorifying them with extreme intensity, many have seen fit to ascribe their prophet a divine status, thereby falling into idolatry. Some mistook their prophet to be God, others chose to call him the son of God, or even God incarnate, resulting in a corruption of monotheism, and a promotion of anthropomorphism as is the case with Christianity.

The purpose of the emphasis of the humanness of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in the Quran and Hadith is to deter the Believers from falling into the error that plagued people before them.

Omar رضي الله عنه retells the following words of the Noble Messenger ﷺ:

“Do not praise me in the excessive manner in which Christians praise Isa, son of Maryam. I am without a doubt a servant of Allah. So duly call me ‘Allah’s servant and messenger.” (Bukhari, Anbiya, 48)

In another hadith, we see the Messenger of Allah ﷺ caution a certain group tending to praise him to excess:

“Do not elevate me above a higher rank than I deserve... for Allah had made me a servant before He made me a Prophet.” (Hakim, III, 197/4825; Haythami, IX, 21)

Another cause for the Prophet’s ﷺ frequent reminder of being human and a servant of the Almighty is his unfathomable humbleness.

Doubtless, many a time, after having enumerated in thankful appreciation the blessings bestowed upon him by the Almighty, he was always quick to adjoin to it the expression, “this is not to boast”.<sup>131</sup>

Abdullah ibn Jubayr رضي الله عنه explains:

“Once while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was walking in the company of a few Companions, one of them made a move to veil him from the sun. Upon becoming aware of the man’s attempt, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ quickly intervened, putting the veil on the ground, before saying:

‘I am human just like you!’” (Haythami, IX, 21)

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131. See Tirmidhi, Manâqib, 1/3615.



It should also be remembered, however, that, although human, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is certainly not just like any other human being. As elaborated by a poet:

“Sure, Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ is human, but he is not like any other. How a ruby fares among stones is how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ fares among human beings.”

Another poet puts this reality into the following words:

*There is nobody alike in entire history,  
On each tongue lives his memory,  
Heavens stand for the perfection of his Ascension,  
Angels rise admiring his beauty,  
The essence of words resides in his personality,  
A man, who yet presides over angels in supremacy*

### **The Wisdom behind the Blessed Prophet ﷺ being an *Ummi***

The word *ummi* harbors a variety of meanings, denoting one who has remained pure and unsullied like a newborn, or is unlettered without having received any formal education, as well as signifying Meccans or, in general, the Arabs, with the exception of the People of the Book residing in Arabia.

On the words of the Quran, the Noble Messenger ﷺ was an *ummi*, that is he was unlettered, knowing neither how to read nor write.

Thus states the *ayah*:

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ  
مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ

“Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, the *Ummi*, whom they find written down with them in the Taurat and the Injeel” (al-Araf, 157)

That the Messenger of Allah was unlettered was something also known to the idolaters of the time, who, on the testimony of the Quran, would accordingly allege:

وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

“They claimed: Stories of the ancients—he has got them written, and these are read out to him morning and evening” (al-Furqan, 5)

The reasons why the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was called *ummi* or unlettered could be listed as follows:

1. He remained as pure as the day he was born, a purity of predisposition through which he was protected from the smear of external knowledge, trained and educated personally by the Almighty instead.

The Quran fittingly indicates:

وَقَالُوا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلَى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

“We will make you recite so you shall not forget” (al-A’la, 6)

As also professed by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ:

“My Lord educated me and made my education beautiful.” (Suyuti, I, 12)

Cleaving his chest on three occasions (*sharh’us-sadr*), the Almighty cleansed all negativities from the Prophet’s ﷺ heart,



replacing them with sublime feelings of peace, serenity, mercy, compassion, faith and wisdom.

2. It serves as a reminder that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was an Arab, not from the People of the Book.

3. It is in emphasis that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was born in Mecca, also known as *Umm'ul-Qura*. *Qaryah*, whose plural is *qura*, is an Arabic word that denotes villages or the smallest settlements. *Umm'ul-Qura*, therefore, means the mother of all settlements, that is to say, the first ever milieu in which human beings settled.

Arabs were on the whole unlettered; they were a people remote from culture, who did not know how to read and write. Allah ﷻ, sent them a Prophet from among their ranks; a quintessential Prophet whose inner blend of purity remained uncorrupted.

The *ayah* describes:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ  
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي  
ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

“It is He Who has sent among the Unlettered a Messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, - although they had been, before, in manifest error.” (al-Jum’a, 2)

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ sheds greater light on the issue:

“We are an *ummi* people. We neither know how to write, nor calculate.” (Muslim, Siyam, 15)



Although being unlettered denotes a lack of knowledge when used for common people, for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ it carries connotations of perfection and superiority. That a Prophet, whose perfection of knowledge and action can leave even the supposedly most cultured in awe, could only be a fabulous proof that he was sent directly by the Almighty.

Allah ﷻ, declares:

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ  
إِذَا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

“And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand, for then could those who say untrue things have doubted.” (al-Ankabut, 48)

Unless through Divine Revelation, there is no way known that an *ummi*, simply through inner inspiration, can put together the Holy Quran, a miracle that leaves powerless entire man and jinn, and provide insight into historical facts like the accounts of the Pharaoh, of Musa’s ﷺ mother and Yusuf ﷺ.

The Quran presents the experiences of past people to humankind in the most evocative manner, in conformity with the demands of contemporary science and standards of the philosophy of history.<sup>132</sup>

132. On the other hand, some of the historical accounts provided by the Torah and the Bible conflict with the findings of modern historiography and science. The creation of the universe and its stages, the date of man’s descent on Earth, the Deluge are but a few of these conflicting accounts. (See Maurice Bucaille, *Müsbet İlim Yönünden Tevrât, İncil ve Kur’ân*, p. 53-82, 157-175)



Being unlettered, from another perspective, is the minimum requirement for the words of the Quran to have an all-inclusive universality. Reminiscent of the aphorism “the leader of the caravan is always its weakest”, to make sure of getting its message across to humankind entire and rendering its application achievable by all human beings, the Quran has in a sense targeted, first and foremost, the level of illiteracy. Such that understanding and living Islam requires as little as being an ordinary, common human being. Coming into play, again, is a similar sensitivity in its taking the motions of the Sun as a measure in determining daily deeds of worship, and those of the Moon in determining the deeds of worship that are monthly or annual.

Having descended to the level of human beings does not mean that the Quran has wished for them to remain on that level, aiming to raise them from illiteracy to being an *ummah* with a Book. To be sure, Islam did establish a brand new civilization, the cornerstone of which was the Holy Quran, to which it referred as *al-Kitab*, the Book.

### Hilyat’us-Saadah

*Hilyah* means adornments, jewelry, as well as beauty of spirit and expression. By convention, the term also denotes a verbal description of the appearance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, inasmuch as allowed by the capacity of the words of mortals.

Nahifi avows:

“Surely, if one writes the *hilyah* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and takes some time to contemplate it, Allah ﷻ, will protect the person from illness, troubles and a sudden death. If one takes the *hilyah* with him on a journey, then he will be under Divine protection throughout.”

Many Muslim scholars have put forth their views with regard to the numerous blessings of the *hilya* of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. The tradition of memorizing it, motivated by the hope of seeing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ in a dream survives in many Muslim countries to this day.

Having said that, equal to the inadequacy of any verbal depiction of the blessed appearance of the Prophet ﷺ, a beauty described as ‘light upon light’, one must also consider the absolute inadequacy any human being faces when gazing at him and trying to comprehend his reality. A perfect articulation of the beauties of that exceptional being, in whom the Almighty has gathered up all the exquisiteness He has ever bestowed upon mankind, remains impossible. As said by Hakani:

*None who knows this has belied,  
Among creation, that he has no peer.*

These attempted illustrations of the Prophet ﷺ, the Beauty of all Beauties, are simply to console and assuage hearts not fortunate enough to witness the Age of Bliss, ever burning with his yearning. Those who convey the precious descriptions of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ virtually present us with a drop from an ocean. Believers, who have tried to see the ocean through the crystals of those drops, have striven to benefit from his quintessential example, and by virtue of intensifying their love for him, to try to become one with his conduct and morals.

Without a doubt, as compelled by their predisposition, hearts always incline towards the beautiful, with the desire of becoming one with it. The attraction takes hold of the mind, as it exclusively becomes preoccupied with it. Budding in the heart, then, is the desire to become like the beloved, in terms of spirit and morality. Consequent upon taking the beloved as example, one



ends up becoming one with him/her. Owing to the tendency of predisposition, it is doubtless that these descriptions of the Prophet ﷺ are sure to increase love and enthusiasm towards him.

As a matter of fact, Hasan ؓ uses the following words to describe his emotional state when asking for a description of the Blessed Prophet from his foster uncle Hind ibn Abi Hala ؓ:

“My uncle Hind ibn Abi Hala used to describe the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the most beautiful style. I used to love it when my uncle described him, for my heart to continue being attached to him and stand firm on his path.” (Tirmidhi, *Shamail*, p.10)

Hasan and Husayn ؓ, who could never have enough of listening to others depict the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, likewise, on many an occasion, heard their father Ali ؓ elaborate his graceful appearance, a description they have passed on to future generations.

Yet it gives reason to wonder as to what portion of the reality of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ could really be conveyed through such depictions? Similarly, one can only comprehend the *hilyah* in accordance with the intensity of the love within and in line with the limited content words can at best convey.

Thus, notwithstanding our blatant inadequacy in that respect which we humbly confess, we nonetheless wish to present here a drop from the narrations that have trickled down to us that depict the gracious appearance of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. A concise summary of the said narrations reveal that:

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was of medium height, closer to tall.

He had a perfectly balanced stature and a well proportioned body.

Having a wide chest and broad shoulders, there was also a seal of prophethood adorning the spot between his shoulder blades.

His bones and joints were largish.

He was of a pinkish white complexion, like a rose. Shiny like light, his skin was softer than silk. His graceful body was always clean, emitting a refreshing scent. Regardless of whether he had put on fragrance or not, his skin and sweat were more elegant than the most exquisite of fragrances. If one were to shake hands with him, his hands would be immersed all day in the Prophet's ﷺ elegant scent; it was as if roses had gotten their fragrance from him. If the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was to caress a child's head, one could immediately tell the child apart from others, due to his beautiful scent.

Upon sweating, his skin would resemble a rose sprinkled with dew.

He had a dense beard, which he would not allow to grow more than a handful. Upon his passing away, there were around twenty strands of grey hair on his hair and beard.

His eyebrows were the shape of a crescent, with a fair distance separating both.

Located right between his eyebrows was a vein that would visibly swell, whenever the Blessed Prophet ﷺ got annoyed for something in the name of Truth.

He would brush his pearl like teeth with *miswaq*, the frequent use of which he would always recommend.

His black lashes were quite long. His eyes were stunningly big; entirely black where black, and entirely white where white. It was as if the hands of the Divine had garnished them with kohl in past eternity.



As exceptional as the perfection of his spiritual composition was the beauty of his physical appearance.<sup>133</sup>

His face would shine like the full moon. Aisha رضي الله عنها has said:

“So radiant was the Messenger of Allah’s ﷺ face that, in the dark of the night, I would make use of its light to put a thread through the eye of a needle.”

Between his shoulder blades was a Divine mark attesting to his prophethood. Many a Companion would crave just to kiss it. The disappearance of the seal upon the passing away of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was accepted as confirmation of his demise.<sup>134</sup>

His blessed body underwent no change whatsoever after his bereavement. Staring at the Light of Being ﷺ behind teary eyes, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه mournfully remarked, moments after he had passed away:

“As your life, so too is your death beautiful, Messenger of Allah”, thereupon placing his lips on the forehead of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

It is impossible to adequately describe the profundity of the elegance of his heart.

Never uttering a word in vain, his every word conveyed wisdom and advice. There was not the least place for backbiting and futile talk in his vocabulary. He would talk to people in accordance with their capacities.

He was kind and humble. Although he would never express his joy through excessive laughter, his face always displayed a warm smile to others.

133. See Hâkim, III, 10; Ahmed, I, 89, 96, 117, 127; IV, 309; Ibn Saad, I, 376, 412, 420-423; II, 272; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, VI, 31-33; Tirmidhi, *Shamâil*, p. 15.

134. Tirmidhi, *Shamâil*, p. 15; Ibn Saad, II, 272.

If someone happened to see the Prophet ﷺ, awe would overwhelm him; even a brief conversation sufficed to implant feelings of deep love and affection towards him.

He would treat the righteous with respect, according to their ranks of piety. Receiving a massive share of his kindness and respect were his relatives. It was habitual for him to extend the tenderness he nurtured for his family and friends to the rest of society. He explicitly reminded us of these qualities, saying:

“None of you may become a true Believer until you wish upon your brothers what you wish upon yourselves.” (Bukhari, Iman, 7; Muslim, Iman, 71-72)

He would treat his servants inexpressibly well, feeding them whatever he had and clothing them with whatever garments he himself wore. Generous and compassionate, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had struck a perfect balance between courage and kindness.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was a man of his word and always kept his promises. Superior to all in terms of virtue, intelligence and sharpness, he does truly deserve all the praises one can possibly state. With beauty of appearance coupled with perfection of life, he was a sacred being beyond compare in all creation.

He also carried a perpetual look of sorrow. Withdrawn to an uninterrupted state of contemplation, he only spoke when necessary. Though his spell of silence was lengthy, he would complete every sentence he began, conveying the deepest meaning using the least possible words. His words would come out distinctly, like the beads of a necklace. Though he was born with a gentle predisposition, his stature was nevertheless majestically imposing.

He would never get up from his seat when angry. Besides, he would never get angry, unless there was an infringement of



right; and given there was an infringement of which nobody took notice, his anger would not subside until the right was restored. Afterwards, he would once again resume his usual composure. He never got angry on his own behalf; he would never develop a vendetta or become quarrelsome over a personal matter.

He would never enter the household of anyone without permission. Once he returned home, he would divide the time he spent there into three parts: the first was for Allah ﷻ, the second for his family and the third for himself, though only by name, as in effect he would spare that time for all kinds of people, both common and eminent, depriving not a single person of his precious time, leaving not a single heart uncaptured.

Each state and deed of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was an expression of Divine Remembrance.

At mosques, he would assume different places for seating, to prevent others from making a habit of sitting in a particular place, wary of the consecration of certain places and sites. He disliked the adoption of conceited behavior in public. Upon entering an assembly, he would take whatever seat available, insisting others do the same.

Whenever a person wanted something from him in sorting out a particular problem, regardless of the importance of the favor, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would never feel at ease until that need was taken care of. Given the impossibility of sorting the problem out, then the Noble Messenger ﷺ would not recoil from at least soothing the person with some comforting and heartening words. He was a confidant for all. No matter what their social classes were, whether rich or poor, wise or ignorant, people would receive even treatment next to him, solely from the vantage of being a human being. All his gatherings were environments teeming with kindness, wisdom,





manners, patience and trust, first and foremost in Allah ﷻ, then in each other.

Never would there be a person explicitly condemned for his shortcomings. When there was a need to warn a particular person, the Noble Messenger ﷺ would subtly and gently hint at it, without breaking the person's heart.

“Do not celebrate a disaster that befalls your Muslim brother... for through His Mercy, Allah may deliver him from that disaster and test you”, he would say. (Tirmidhi, Qiyamat, 54)

Not only was he ever preoccupied with investigating the concealed flaws of others, he was stern in prohibiting others from getting busy with such ignobility; for Divine decree had banned suspicion of others and inquiring into their hidden faults.

He would not speak, unless it was with an aim to reap the Divine pleasure. Ecstasy would take hold of the assemblies in which he spoke. So enamored would the listeners be while the Blessed Prophet ﷺ spoke, and so intently would they give ear, that in the words of Omar ؓ, had there been a bird perching above any of their heads, it could have remained there for hours on end undisturbed.

The manners and conduct that had reflected onto his Companions were of such force that, more often than not, even asking him questions was deemed to be impudent. Thus they would wait for a desert Arab to perhaps arrive and inadvertently drop in to ask the Noble Prophet ﷺ questions and spark a conversation, from whose blessings and grace they would be in hope of benefiting.<sup>135</sup>

Timid in his presence, there were even those who had waited for two years before plucking up the courage to ask their questions.

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135. Ibn Saad, I, 121, 365, 422-425; Haythami, IX, 13.



Due to his imposing appearance, they could not stare at him in the face.

Amr ibn Âsؓ has confessed:

“Though I spent a lot of time next to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the shyness I was overcome with in his presence and the immense feeling of reverence deep inside always prevented me from lifting my head and staring at his sacred and beautiful face to my heart’s pleasure. If they were to ask me, right now, to describe the appearance of the Messenger of Allah, believe me, I could not.”

(Muslim, Iman, 192; Ahmad, IV, 199)

A person who wished to describe his unique traits could not help but admit to “never seeing anyone alike, before him or after.”<sup>136</sup>

During his visit of a certain Arab tribe, Khalid ibn Walid ؓ was asked by the chief to explain the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

“That is impossible”, replied Khalid ؓ. “Words could not suffice!”

“Then at least explain to the best of your ability”, said the chief, prompting Khalid to give the magnificent reply below:

“Let me tell you this much: the Envoy reflects the honor of the Sender. Since the Sender is the Lord of the Worlds, the Creator of the Universe, then you imagine the honor of the Envoy!” (Munawi, V, 92; Qastallani, *Mevâhib-i Ledünniyye Tercümesi*, p. 417)

Endowed with an immense degree of beauty, awe-inspiring majesty and a dazzling elegance, he really needed neither an extra proof, nor a further miracle to prove the truth of him being the Prophet of the Almighty.

136. Ahmed, I, 96.

His morals were the Quran, something gracefully elaborated by Muallim Naji:

*Embodied in you is the Quran's beauty, the praise of all things existent,  
The Quran is your hilyah written by the Hand of Might*

A similar tone reverberates in the words Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi رحمته, which express how the supreme virtues of the Noble Messenger ﷺ invigorate entire creation:

“How splendidly beneficial he is that thanks to his bountiful existence, pearls billow out of seas, emerald from hard stones and roses from thorns. You would not see a bud that does not smile out of joy, and blossom, in a garden where his beautiful conduct is mentioned.” (Diwan, p. 65-66)

All beauties had united in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, virtually radiating from his body. Still, nobody has been able to see the beauties of Blessed Prophet ﷺ in their completeness. In the words of Imam Qurtubi:

“The beauty of the appearance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ never fully transpired. Were the entirety of his beauties to be shown in all their reality, the Companions would not have had to power to gaze at him.” (Ali Yardım, *Peygamberimiz'in Şemâli* p. 49)

The Noble Messenger's poet Hassan ibn Thabit رضي الله عنه articulates the uniqueness of his nature in the following:

وَأَحْسَنَ مِنْكَ لَمْ تَرَ قَطُّ عَيْنٍ  
وَأَجْمَلَ مِنْكَ لَمْ تَلِدِ النِّسَاءُ



جُلِقْتَ مُبْرَأً مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ  
كَأَنَّكَ قَدْ خُلِقْتَ كَمَا تَشَاءُ

“Messenger of Allah...No eye has seen anyone more beautiful than you. No woman has given birth to anyone more beautiful. You were created remote from all shame and insufficiency, as if you were created in your own liking!”

### The Resumption of Revelation

The break in Divine Revelation lasted six months. Its resumption is recounted by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ:

“As I was walking one day I heard a voice from the sky. I lifted my head, and there he was; the Angel that had come to me at Hira, seated on a throne suspended on the horizon. I was terrified. I returned home, urging:

‘Cover me...cover me!’

(As I lay covered, Jibril ﷺ returned; and through him) Allah ﷻ, revealed:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِيرٌ  
وَتِيَابِكَ فَطَهِّرْ وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ

‘O you who is covered! Arise and warn, And your Lord do magnify, And your garments do purify, And uncleanness do shun!’  
(al-Muddaththir, 1-5)

Revelation continued uninterrupted thereafter.” (Bukhari, Tafsir,

74/4, 5; Muslim, Iman, 255-258)



The Almighty declares:

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

“And certainly We have made the word to reach them so that they may be mindful.” (al-Qasas, 51)

The unbroken continuance of Revelation is likewise to be counted among the miracles of the Quran. The successive revelation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of verses of such magnificence, defying imitation even if an attempt was to be made by the entirety of humankind with another species of being also called upon to help, can only confirm beyond the shadow of a doubt the Divine source of the Quran, providing one of the clearest proofs of it being impervious to human intervention.

Readily admitted, moreover, is the fact that even a simple volume of poems takes great toil to compile. However, regardless of the degree of care shown, it is impossible to argue that any of these manmade works is free from error. Such concerns are inapplicable to Divine Revelation, forever surviving in its original form, abounding in numerous miracles. That alone suffices to manifest the splendor of the Holy Quran.

Upon the coming of Chapter Muddaththir, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ immediately got up from where he had been laying. Not knowing what had just happened, Khadijah ؓ was surprised:

“Why did you not continue your rest?” she asked.

“Time for resting is over”, said the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, informing her of the Revelation that had come anew.

During the first few days of the arrival of Revelation, Jibril ؑ taught the Blessed Prophet ﷺ how to make wudu and perform salat.



The command to perform a deed of worship which he was fond of had put a smile on his face.

Jubilant, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned home. Telling Khadija ؓ of the great blessing given by Allah ﷻ, he instructed her how to make wudu and offer salat.<sup>137</sup>

### The First Muslims

The first person to believe in the Divine Message was the Messenger of Allah himself, ﷺ, which is expressed in the Quran as such:

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ

“The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord...” (al-Baqara, 285)

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ  
وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“Say: “Verily, I am commanded to serve Allah with sincere devotion,

And I am commanded that I shall be the first of those who submit.” (Zumer 11-12)

The next in line to accept Islam after the Prophet ﷺ was his honorable wife Khadijah ؓ. Each time the Noble Prophet would return home dejected and depressed from having to put up with the insults, mockery and ill-treatment of his tribesman, the Almighty

137. Ibn Ishaq, p. 117; Ibn Hisham, I, 262-263.

would soothe his pain with the kind and consoling words of Khadijah ﷺ that served as a Divine relief easing his mission.<sup>138</sup>

Once Khadijah ﷺ became a Muslim, their daughters Ruqayya, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah ﷺ followed in her footsteps.<sup>139</sup>

Having seen the Prophet ﷺ and Khadijah offer salat together, Ali -may his countenance be ennobled- once asked:

“What are you doing?”

“This is the religion Allah has chosen for Himself. I hereby invite you to believe in the one Allah and worship Him, and reject Lat and Uzza who neither benefit nor harm’, said the Prophet ﷺ.

“I have not heard of a religion of this kind until now”, replied Ali. “In any case, I cannot accept anything without first consulting my father Abu Talib.’

As the Noble Prophet ﷺ had been calling to Islam only secretly at the time, he said:

“If you will not choose to become a Muslim, Ali, keep this between us, do not expose it.”

That night, the Almighty warmed Ali’s -may his countenance be ennobled- heart to the light of Islam. He went next to the Prophet ﷺ in the morning to ask more questions. Upon receiving the desired answers, he succumbed to the wish of the Prophet ﷺ and became a Muslim. Being only ten years old at the time and fearing his father, he nonetheless kept his acceptance of Islam secret for some time. (Ibn Ishaq, p. 118; Ibn Saad, III, 21).

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138. Ibn Hisham , I, 259.

139. Ibn Saad, VIII, 36.



Every time the Prophet ﷺ wished to perform salat, with Ali -may his countenance be ennobled- by his side, he would set out to the valleys of Mecca and worship in secret, and would return by sunset. This continued for a while.

It was only a matter of time before Abu Talib found out about the secret prayers of his son and nephew, whereupon the Prophet ﷺ formally invited his beloved uncle to Islam. Abu Talib responded:

“Abandoning the religion of my ancestors, my dear nephew, is not something within my power. But be sure to hold fast onto that with which you have been sent. By Allah, as long as I am alive no harm shall come to you.”

And to Ali -may his countenance be ennobled- he said:

“He invites you only to goodness and integrity. Remain firm on his path, son; do not ever leave him!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 265)

During a commercial visit to Mecca, Abdullah ibn Masud <sup>140</sup> saw the Prophet ﷺ, Khadijah and Ali <sup>140</sup> circumambulate the Kaabah,

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140. Abdullah ibn Masud <sup>140</sup>, also called Abu Abdurrahman, is among the first Muslims. After accepting Islam, he never left the side of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, taking great enjoyment in serving him. Ibn Masud was a thin, delicate man, with a sweet voice and an amiable appearance. Muslims were still very low in number when he entered Islam. The idolaters never ceased harrassing him in Mecca, forcing him to migrate to Medina, where he was sheltered by Muadh ibn Jabal <sup>140</sup>. He took permanent residence in the town following the Hegira of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, taking active part in all the battles that were to take place thereafter. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to take great pleasure from listening to Ibn Masud recite the Quran. Because of his profound knowledge, Ibn Masud ended up training numerous scholars of tafsir, hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. The scholars of Kufa, in particular, are known to have given jurisprudential verdicts in accordance with his narrations and opinions. He is reputed to have conveyed a total of 848 hadith narrations. After serving as the Judge of Kufa, Ibn



and noted that Khadijah paid particular attention to covering herself with the hijab. (Zahabi, Siyer, I, 463)

Ufayf al-Kindi also paid a visit to Mecca at the time for trade where he noticed the Prophet ﷺ, Khadijah and Ali perform salat by the Kaabah. Interested, he requested information about them from Abbas ؓ, who after describing them at length, added:

“By Allah, I know of no other people who believe in this religion apart from those three!”

Even long after having become Muslim, Ufayf ؓ was later always to express his regret for that day and bemoan:

“If only I had accepted Islam that day and had become the second male Muslim! How I wish now to have been the fourth among them!” (Ibn Saad, VIII, 18; Ibn Hajar, al-Isaba, II, 487)

Right after Ali, Zayd ibn Harithah, ؓ, the freed slave of the Prophet ﷺ, also accepted Islam and offered salat, never leaving the company and service of the Prophet ﷺ thereafter. So sincere was his devotion to the Messenger of Allah that when the vagrants of Ta’if began stoning the Prophet ﷺ, he shielded him with his own body until he was left bloody and bruised, for which he was graced with the personal affection and compliments of the Prophet ﷺ.

In this respect, significant is the following account of Omar ؓ that testifies to the love the Prophet ﷺ had for Zayd ؓ.

As Caliph, Omar ؓ had reserved a salary of 3,500 dirham for Zayd’s son Usama, 500 dirham more than the salary of Abdullah, Omar’s own son. Abdullah protested.

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Masud returned to Madina during the caliphate of Othman ؓ, passing away a short time later, aged over sixty years.



“Why do you value Usama more than I, when I have been involved in a greater number of battles than him?”

Omar’s ﷺ response manifested the richness of his heart and the greatness of his humility, along with his extraordinary esteem for justice.

‘Well, son, the Prophet ﷺ liked his father more than he liked yours. He also liked Usama more than he liked you. It is for that reason that I have preferred the fondness of the Prophet ﷺ over mine’. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 39)

As seen in this example, which is just one among numerous others, the Companions always willingly chose those whom the Prophet ﷺ liked over their own.<sup>141</sup>

Abu Bakr ﷺ had already been a friend of the Prophet ﷺ even before Prophethood. Since childhood, he had witnessed the Messenger’s perfect morals, loyalty and trustworthiness and was convinced that a person whose unblemished standards prevented him from uttering even the smallest of lies could never lie about the Almighty. Hence, when invited by the Prophet ﷺ to accept Islam, Abu Bakr accepted without hesitation.<sup>142</sup>

In a relevant hadith, the Prophet ﷺ states:

“When Allah sent me as a Prophet to you people, you first said ‘You are a liar’. But Abu Bakr said ‘He speaks the truth’ and then supported me with his life and wealth”. (Bukhari, Ashab’u-Nabi, 5)

Nothing had made the Prophet ﷺ happier than Abu Bakr’s ﷺ acceptance of Islam. Once he became a Muslim, he openly

141. Haythami, VI, 174; Ibn Saad, IV, 30.

142. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 78.

proclaimed his faith without hesitation and began inviting others to believe in Allah and his Messenger.<sup>143</sup>

Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه holds an exceptionally important place in the life of the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. In this respect, the success of any given cause depends upon three factors:

1. A governing idea.
2. People rallying around that idea.
3. Financial resource.

The governing idea was the content of Islam, confirmed by Revelation. Regarding the other two factors, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه assumed a crucial role. It was with him that the rallying began and his great wealth was put to use in taking care of the various financial needs of the cause, including, among others, the freeing of Muslim slaves.

To further explain these two points, it can be said that the friendship between the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه that spanned across their teenage years, turned into a sublime companionship once the mission of prophethood began.

Already honored for being among the first to accept Islam, Abu Bakr further earned the title *as-Siddiq*, by not allowing even a speck of doubt to sully his faith. True to this spirit, the upcoming years were to stand witness to his amazing material and spiritual devotion in the cause of spreading Islam, when he was to end up devoting his entire wealth in the way of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم.

To love is to overflow with affection for the beloved; it is to be able to love whatever and whoever the beloved loves, to prefer his or her desires over one's own and to be able to sacrifice all in the way

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143. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 80-81.

of the beloved. The life of Abu Bakr ؓ is filled with such supreme instances of a devoted love for and complete self-annihilation in the Prophet ﷺ.

On one occasion, Abu Bakr ؓ became bedridden simply upon hearing the Prophet ﷺ was ill. Such uplifting love resulted in a complete bond between the two friends, so much so that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Abu Bakr is part of me and I am part of him. He is my brother both in this world and in the hereafter”. (Daylami, I, 437) This is a confirmation of their companionship in the spiritual world and a mutual reflection of the state of their hearts.

On his deathbed, the Prophet ﷺ further said of the doors leading to his Mosque:

“Close all the doors except that of Abu Bakr!” (Bukhari, Ashabu'n-Nabi, 3) This compliment is one of the finest expressions of the spiritual connection and exceptional closeness between the two.

Also becoming Muslim during the first days of the call of Allah's Messenger ﷺ were Bilal the Abyssinian and his mother ؓ. Bilal ؓ was in fact among the first seven to announce their acceptance of Islam. To renounce his faith, he was inflicted with the severest of tortures, which he would endure, reciting 'Ahad! Ahad! Allah is one! Allah is one', each time he was forced to deny his belief.

Paying their ransom, Abu Bakr ؓ freed both Bilal and his mother,<sup>144</sup> for which not only did he receive the praises of the Prophet ﷺ, he also became an exemplar of compassion and generosity.

Mawlana Rumi ؒ recounts this instance, using the language of the heart, as follows:

144. Ibn Saad, III, 232; Hâkim, III, 319.

“Upon hearing of the horrendous torture exacted on Bilal Habashi, the Siddiq appeared in the presence of the Noble Prophet and informed him of Bilal’s troubles:

‘That sacred soul, who clutches the heavens, has fallen in love with you. He is captivated by your affection. Only for this reason do the oppressors harass that angelic man. In spite of his innocence, they pluck his wings. They want to bury that great treasure in the dirt of idolatry and rebellion...

They are laying him on scorching sand under the burning sun; thrashing his naked body with thorny branches...

But despite the fount-like gushing of blood from his flesh, he still says ‘Allah is one, Allah is one’; he does not give up prostrating to his Lord...’

Compassion and mercy had virtually turned every bit of Abu Bakr’s body into a tongue aching with sorrow and agony, with which he was distressfully and lengthily explaining the torment of Bilal to the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

At last, he unveiled the intention in his heart and uttered, ‘I want to ransom him, Messenger of Allah; I am ready to spend all my wealth. I shall not feel at ease in this world until I save that sacred soul who has incurred the wrath and torture of the enemies of Allah only for having loved Allah and having become His slave, and a believer of His messenger’.

The Noble Prophet ﷺ became overly delighted, and responded, ‘I too am your partner in this venture...you compassionate friend of Allah and His Messenger!’

Abu Bakr then immediately headed to the house of Bilal’s master. Bilal had meanwhile passed out from the pain of torture.



Abu Bakr had only bitter words to say to his master, the man deprived of even the least mercy.

‘You evil, ruthless soul! How can you torture a friend of Allah? You callous man! With what kind of malice and hatred are you filled?

You merciless beast! Do you think yourself a man? You are a villain deprived of mercy, a disgusting soul clad as a human being!’

Following these words, Abu Bakr quenched the greed of Bilal’s master with so much worldly goods that the man was left in awe as he watched Abu Bakr pour out his ransom.

Realizing the amazement of the deprived man, Abu Bakr said, ‘You fool! Little are you aware that like a child, you have given me a pearl in return for a walnut. Little do you know that Bilal is worth both worlds. The difference is that you look at the color of his skin, while I look at his soul. If you were to insist on more payment during the deal, I would have surely given more to secure him. Were you to insist on even more, I would have given you all I have, and I would have even gone into debt if need be. You simple fool! Remember that only a jeweler can know the worth of a gem’.

Giving voice to a perfect compassion and mercy, Rumi’s depiction equally impresses our hearts with the truth that the value of a mature human being is beyond all estimation and that worldly riches amount to nothing in comparison to the spiritual fiber of a human being.

With this humane deed, Abu Bakr had once more proven the great love he had for the Prophet . Further signs of his boundless love for the Messenger of Allah could be summed up as follows:

- Acting in line with the Quran and principles of Islam brought by the Prophet ﷺ, lovingly with all his heart.

- Showing compassion to fellow Muslims and persevering in matters to their benefit.

- Not valuing the world and being willingly prepared for poverty if need be.

- Longing to unite with Him.

- Frequently remembering Him.

The guidance of Khalid ibn Said ؓ on the other hand came through a disturbing dream. One night he saw himself on the edge of a huge pit of fire with his father trying to push him down, just when the Prophet ﷺ seized him by the waist, saving him from plunging into the flames. When he woke in fear, he said to himself, 'This must surely be a message!' Afterwards, through the advice of Abu Bakr ؓ, he went to the Prophet as and accepted Islam.

After hearing about his son's change of faith, Khalid's father persecuted him, telling him to, "Go away! You shall no more receive any food from me!"

"Withhold as long as you may...surely Allah will give me my food", Khalid replied resolutely.

Khalid ؓ remained by the Prophet's ﷺ side until the Abyssinian migration. (Hakim, III, 277-280)

Becoming Muslim later were also Khalid's wife Umayna, his brother Amr and Amr's wife Fatima ؓ. With the encouragement and guidance of Abu Bakr ؓ, the days of secret calling also saw Abu Fuqayha, Othman, Zubayr ibn Awwam, Abdurrahman ibn



Awf, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and Talha ibn Ubaydullah ؓ taste the delight of Islam.<sup>145</sup>

Othman ؓ once told the following to the Prophet ﷺ.

“While in Damascus lying half asleep, Messenger of Allah, we suddenly heard a voice, saying ‘Sleepers, wake up! Ahmed has appeared in Mecca!’ Once we returned to Mecca, we found out about your prophethood.” (Ibn Saad, III, 255)

Talha ibn Ubaydullah ؓ recounts the following:

“I was at the Busra Fair when I heard a priest asking for people from Mecca. I approached him and told him I was from there.

‘Has Ahmed appeared?’ the priest then asked.

‘Which Ahmed?’ I replied.

‘Ahmed ibn Abdullah ibn Abdulmuttalib! The last Prophet set to appear in Mecca. He shall then leave Mecca and migrate to an arid, stony place with date orchards. I advise you to pursue him!’ the priest said.

The priest’s words had made a way into my heart. Immediately leaving the fair, I returned to Mecca.


‘Are there any news of late?’ I asked.

‘Yes’, they replied. ‘Muhammad the Trustworthy, son of Abdullah, claims to be a prophet. Abu Bakr too has followed him’”. (Ibn Saad, III, 215)



Others graced with the blessing of being the first Muslims include Abu Ubayda ibn Jarrah, Abu Salama, Arqam ibn Abi Arqam, Othman ibn Mazun, Asma bint Abu Bakr, Khabbab ibn




145. Ibn Hisham , I, 268.



Arat, Abdullah ibn Masud, Abdullah ibn Jahsh, Jafar ibn Abu Talib, his wife Asma bint Umays, Abu Huzayfa and Amir ibn Fuhayra .

### **The House of Arqam: The Center of Education for the First Muslims**

For the first three years, the Prophet  called people to Islam secretly, asking those who declined the offer not to disclose the matter to anyone. The house of Arqam ibn Abi Arqam  served as a secret meeting place for the Companions, after he became Muslim during the first year of Prophethood.

The House of Arqam, also known as the House of Islam, was situated by the Hill of Safa in Mecca. Here in this sacred house, the Prophet  would take refuge to explain Islam, recite and teach the Quran to those who would come, away from Meccan idolaters. There, they would offer salat in congregation. It was here that many became acquainted with Islam. Until Omar's  acceptance of Islam in the sixth year of prophethood, the house lent tremendous service in the way of teaching and calling others to Islam. Arqam  was to later donate the house as a trust. The deed of trust is as follows:

“In the Name of Allah, the most Merciful and most Compassionate...This is Arqam's will regarding his house at Safa just ahead, the land of which has been deemed as part of the Sacred House, and has therefore also become sacred and inviolable. It cannot be sold or bequeathed. To this, Hisham ibn As and his slave bear witness'. (Ibn Saad, III, 242-244; Hakim, III, 574-575/6129)

The House of Arqam has today been demolished by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and incorporated into the land of the Sacred House, the Kaabah, and has thus returned to its origin.



The Prophet ﷺ spent the first three years of prophethood calling to Islam in secret. This was not from fear of incurring torment and hardship but was rather for the benefit of Islam. Besides the fact that there had not yet been revealed a Divine command for open calling, had Islam been proclaimed openly during that period, many new Muslims, most of whom were poor and weak, would have fallen into danger, and their perishing could have put an end to the religion even before it began.

From the experience of the House of Arqam, we can draw the following lessons with regard to the method of Islam.

1. When needed, covertness must be essential to a mission.

2. Education is the necessary first step in the realization of any given social, religious and political aim. To acquire quality, individuals must be conversant with the logic and morals of the mission.

The course to be taken and the method to be followed in Islamic activities till the Day of Judgment must be observed in the light of the model of the Prophet ﷺ. Any effort toward revitalizing Islam and taking it to places it has not yet been must take into essential consideration these educational blueprints.



## THE FOURTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

### Declare What You Have Been Commanded! Warn Your Nearest Relations!

After the three year period of secrecy, in the fourth year of prophethood, the Almighty revealed:

فَاُصَدِّعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ  
إِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ

“So declare openly what you are commanded and turn aside from the idolaters.

Surely, We will suffice you against the scoffers”. (al-Hijr, 94-95)

These *ayah* were commanding the open declaration of Islam. Another emphasizes the same point with greater clarity, with a tone of warning.

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا  
بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ  
الْكَافِرِينَ



“O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message. Allah will protect you from people. Surely He will not guide the unbelieving.” (al-Maida, 67)

From then on, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, was ordered to:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي  
لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ  
فَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ النَّبِيِّ الْأُمِّيِّ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ  
وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

“Say: O people! Surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him to Whom belongs the kingdom of heavens and earth. There is no God but He, He gives life and death. So believe in Allah and His messenger, the unlettered Prophet who believes in Allah and His words; and follow him so that you may walk in the right way.” (al-Araf, 158)

But while thinking how and where he was to begin, the Prophet ﷺ was aided by another Revelation:

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ وَخَفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ  
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَإِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ إِنَّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ  
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ

“And warn your nearest relations; and be kind to him of the believers who follows you. But if they disobey you, then say: Surely I



am clear of what you do. And rely on the Mighty, the Merciful, who sees you when you stand.” (as-Shuara 214-218)

Once the Prophet ﷺ began the calling to Islam openly, he first invited his close relatives, compliant with the Divine order. Treating them with honor and respect, he then addressed them in the following:

“I have been sent as Prophet first to you, sons of Abdulmuttalib, then to all of mankind. You have already borne witness to many miracles through me. Now, who among you will follow me as a brother and friend?”

Nobody took much notice. They remained silent. But Ali ؑ, who was still a child at the time but had the honor of being the first male to join faith, stood and said:

“I will be sure to help you, Messenger of Allah!”

As those who were present looked on belittlingly and mockingly, the Prophet ﷺ turned his warm gaze towards Ali ؑ and caressed his head with the gentle hand that so many would have given all to kiss just once.<sup>146</sup>

The unwillingness of his relatives to accept Islam did little to break the perseverance of the Prophet ﷺ. After all, Allah the Almighty had revealed:

يَس وَالْقُرْآنِ الْحَكِيمِ إِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“Ya Seen. By the wise Qur’an. Most surely you are one of the messengers. On a straight path...” (Ya-Seen, 1-4)

146. Ahmed, I, 111, 159; Haythami, VIII, 302-303.



وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

“...and We have sent you to mankind as a messenger; and Allah is sufficient as a witness!” (an-Nisa, 79)

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا  
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“And We have not sent you but to all of mankind as a bearer of good news and as a warner, but most men do not know.” (as-Saba, 28)

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ  
جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

“Say: O people! Surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all, of Him whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth...” (al-Araf, 158)

As made clear by the Quran, different from those before him, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent to all humankind. This is explicated by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself in the following hadith:

“I have been given five things which were not given to any one else before me.

1. Allah made me victorious by awe, by His frightening my enemies from a distance of one month’s journey.

2. The earth has been made, for me and for my followers, a place for praying and purity through *tayammum*, hence anyone of my followers can perform salat wherever and whenever the time is due.



3. Spoils have been made permissible for me even though it was not lawful before for anyone else.

4. I have been given the right of intercession on the Day of Judgment.

5. While every prophet was sent to his nation only, I have been sent to all mankind.” (Bukhari, Tayammum, 1)<sup>147</sup>

Except for Ali ؓ, who was only a child at the time, the Prophet’s ﷺ first open calling of his relatives fell virtually on deaf ears.

Afterwards, the Prophet ﷺ once again invited his relatives to his house. Treating them again with respect and honor, he then addressed them:

“Sons of Abdulmuttalib! By Allah, I know of no other man among the Arabs who has brought a thing of greater benefit, for your world and your hereafter, than I.

Sons of Abdulmuttalib! I have been sent as a prophet to you in particular, to all mankind in general. And you have indeed already seen some of the miracles in this regard. Now who is willing to lend me brotherly help in this duty in return for paradise? Who is willing to follow me in this path as a brother and friend?”

Again, not only did any of his relatives not accept the invitation of the Prophet ﷺ, they all mocked and laughed at the offer. Soon after they all disbanded. (Ahmed, I, 159; Ibn Saad, I, 187; Haythami, VIII, 302; Ibn Asir, *el-Kâmil*, II, 63; Balazuri, I, 119; Halabbi, I, 283)

147. In another narration, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ further emphasizes three more points: “*I have been made jawami’ul-kalim* (i.e. endowed with the ability to express the greatest meanings through the least amount of words). *Prophethood has come to an end with me, sealed, and there shall come no more prophets after me. And as I was lying asleep, the keys of the treasures of earth were brought and placed in front of me.*” (Muslim, Masjid, 5, 6)



Close relatives are more apt to accept what a person has to say in comparison to those who are more distant. Considering also the relatives of those who accept Islam, it is evident that the Religion through this way carries the potential of being carried to society at a greater speed. It is even more difficult for others to show acceptance if the relatives do not believe in and accept the words of the caller. It was for that reason that the Prophet ﷺ followed the Divine command and initiated the process with his relatives.

On the other hand, for prophets to be successful in their duty of invitation, the support and assistance of close relatives has always been crucial. This has in fact been explained in the Quran with reference to past examples:

قَالُوا يَا شُعَيْبُ مَا نَفَقَهُ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا تَقُولُ وَإِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِينَا ضَعِيفًا  
وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنَاكَ وَمَا أَنتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيزٍ

“They said: O Shu’aib! We do not understand much of what you say and most surely we see you to be weak among us, and were it not for your family we would surely stone you!” (Hud, 91)

When Lut عليه السلام was left helpless in the face of his people’s deviance, he bemoaned in sorrow the lack of help at his side:

لَوْ أَنِّي لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةٌ أَوْ آوِي إِلَىٰ رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ

“He said: If only I had strength to resist you or had some strong support!” (Hud, 80)

Islam has placed particular emphasis on looking out for relatives. Therefore, if a person wishes for the guidance of others





through Islam, he ought to first think of his own family and relatives. Allah the Almighty says in this respect:

وَأُولُو الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي  
كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ

“Blood relations are more deserving of one another in the Decree of Allah.” (al-Ahzab, 6)

### **The Prophet’s Invitation of Quraysh to Islam on the Hill of Safa**

Commanded to begin the invitation to Islam with his relatives, the Prophet ﷺ, the Light of Being, ascended the Hill of Safa to address the tribe of Quraysh, who had flocked to the Hill. Standing on a high rock, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said the following words aloud:

“If I were to tell you, Quraysh, of enemy horsemen hiding in the outskirts of this mountain, in that valley, ready to attack you and seize your properties, would you believe me?”

Without a second thought they replied:

“Yes, we would as until now we have always found you dependable and have never heard you say a lie!”<sup>148</sup>

148. Here, prior to communicating the Call, we see the Blessed Prophet ﷺ demand a confirmation of his own character. Indeed, it is a person’s character that human beings are first attracted to, motivating them to obey. It is similarly imperative for those communicating Islam today to have the truthfulness of their characters confirmed, to be endowed trustworthiness and honesty, like the *al-Amin* and *as-Sadiq* the Noble Messenger ﷺ was. Habib’un-Najjar, the running man mentioned in Chapter Yasin, uses the following words to confirm the dependability of the



Hearing this confirmation from all those present without exception, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ went ahead to inform them of the Divine Truth:

“Then be assured that I inform you of an approaching and severe torment that will befall those who disbelieve in Allah, against which I have been sent to warn you.

With respect to you, Quraysh, I am like a man who sees the enemy and fearing they may harm his family, rushes to warn them.

Quraysh! You shall die just the way you fall asleep, and you will be resurrected just the way you are awakened. There is no doubt that you will rise from your graves and be brought to the presence of Allah to give an account of all that you did in this world. You shall consequently reap the rewards of your good deeds and face a severe punishment for your bad deeds.” (Bukhari, Tafsir, 26; Muslim, Iman, 348-355; Ahmed, I, 281-307; Ibn Saad, I, 74, 200; Balazuri, I, 119; Samira az-Zayid, I, 357-359)

There was no overall reaction to the words of the Prophet ﷺ, except for his uncle Abu Lahab who rudely interrupted:

“May your hands dry up! Is this what you called us here for?” He unashamedly continued making inappropriate remarks, breaking the heart of the Prophet ﷺ with vile insults.

The behavior of Abu Lahab brought about the revelation of the chapter al-Masad:

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righteous persons inviting his people to the Truth: *اَتَّبِعُوا مَنْ لَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ اَجْرًا وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ*  
 “Follow those who ask of you no fee and who are rightly guided!” (Yasin, 21). The *ayah* places equal weight on the need for the invitation to be carried out strictly for the pleasure of the Almighty alone and, first and foremost, for the inviters to be on the path of guidance themselves.

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ  
 سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ  
 فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ

“Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he! No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains! Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of Blazing Flame! His wife shall carry the crackling wood - As fuel! With a twisted rope of palm-leaf fiber round her neck!”  
 (al-Masad, 1-5; Bukhari, Tafsir 26/2, 34/2, 111/1-2; Muslim, Iman 355)

The *ayah* also make mention of Abu Lahab’s wife because, like her husband, she caused much agony for the Prophet ﷺ, to the point of even laying thorns in his path. The chapter additionally implies that neither racial nor genealogical closeness hold absolute value. What is important is spiritual nearness. Spirit recognizes no race. Race is only a quality of the flesh and the flesh is set to perish in soil. A person’s value is determined by spiritual maturity; that is his noble attribute. The flesh, which is the material aspect of man, is like a mould which the spirit enters, a dress which it wears. Wearing clothes of different fabrics does not increase the value of man.

As a result of the endeavors of the Prophet ﷺ, his aunts Safiyya and Atiqa, the freed slave of his uncle Abbas Abu Rafi, as well as Abu Dharr and Amr ibn Abasa ؓ all accepted Islam.

Abu Zarr ؓ had never worshipped idols, even during the days of ignorance. He explains his own experience of entering the true path as follows:

“I was from the tribe of Ghifar. Just when I received the news that a person had emerged in Mecca claiming to be a prophet, Allah cast the love of Islam into my heart. I told my brother Unays:

“Go to Mecca and speak to the man who says he receives news from the heavens, and return with the information!”

Unays headed to Mecca. After meeting with the Prophet ﷺ and listening to what he had to say, he came back.

‘What did you do? What news have you brought?’ I asked him.

‘I encountered a man in Mecca, of the same faith as you, who says he has been sent by the Almighty’, he replied.

‘What does the public say about him?’

‘Poet, sorcerer, magician and the like!’

A poet himself, my brother was well versed in poetry. He continued:

‘I am well aware of the words of sorcerers. His words do not sound like those of a poet in the least. I compared his words to poems of all kinds. But I swear, nobody in their right minds would call that poetry. He certainly speaks the truth. Those who slander him are liars! He only enjoins the good and acts of virtue and forbids the bad and acts of evil’.

I was still undecided. I grabbed my leather bottle and some food and quickly hit the road. I came to Mecca. Not only did I not know the Prophet ﷺ, I was also reluctant to speak to anyone else. I waited by the Kaabah, drinking some Zamzam to quench my thirst. In the meantime, Ali ؑ came next to me:

‘It looks like you’re a foreigner’, he said.



‘Yes’, I replied.

‘Then be our guest!’ he offered.

I went with Ali ؑ. Because of the climate of terror caused by the Meccans, he did not even enquire of the purpose of my arrival. The next morning, I again went to the Kaabah in hope of finding the Prophet ﷺ. But again despite waiting until night, I could not find him. Once more Ali ؑ came and asked:

‘Have you still not found out where you want to go?’

‘No’, I responded.

‘Then come, be our guest again’, he again said.

When we arrived at his house, he finally took the opportunity to ask me.

‘So what is your story? Why have you come?’

After making him promise to keep it a secret and to help me, I said:

‘According to what we have heard, there is supposed to be someone here who says he is a Prophet. I have come to talk to him.’

‘You have done very well to come. That man is the Messenger of Allah; he is truly a Prophet’, he asserted and gave me the following instructions: ‘Follow me in the morning, into a house which I will enter! But if I sense a danger for you, I will face the wall and look as if I am mending my shoes, and you will pass me by!’

We finally arrived at the presence of the Prophet ﷺ.

‘as-Salamu alayka ya Rasulallah,’ I said, greeting him for the first time in the manner of Islam.



‘To what do you invite people, Muhammad?’ I then asked.

‘To Allah, who is One and who has no partners, to shun idols and to bear witness that I am the Messenger of Allah’, he replied.

After he explained Islam to me, I immediately became a Muslim. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was overly happy, and smiled joyfully.

‘Now, Abu Dharr, keep this secret from the Meccans and return to your hometown’, he said.

‘But I wish to declare my faith, the Messenger of Allah!’ I stated.

‘I fear that the Meccans may harm you’, he said.

‘Even if it means they will kill me, I will surely do it’, I replied.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ remained silent.

Just as the men of Quraysh had assembled by the Kaabah, I said at the top of my voice:

‘Quraysh! I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his servant and messenger!’

‘The man must be mad! Let’s show this Sabiite<sup>149</sup> a lesson,’ the idolaters shouted and they began beating me until I lay halfdead. At that point Abbas, the Prophet’s ﷺ uncle, arrived and shielded me with his own body, and shouted:

‘Shame on you! Do you forget you are traders whose route lies on the way of the tribe of Ghifar? Do you want your route cut off?’

Only then did they leave me.

149. Meccans would occasionally refer to Muslims as ‘Sabiites’, meaning those who have deserted their religion of old.

When I arrived at the Kaabah the next morning, the same thing happened all over again. They left me for dead. I got up and went next to the Prophet ﷺ. Seeing my state, he said:

‘Had I not forbidden you?’

‘This was my heart’s wish, Messenger of Allah, and I fulfilled it’, I replied.

I stayed awhile next to the Prophet ﷺ. Afterwards I asked:

‘What do you command I do?’

The Prophet ﷺ said:

‘When you receive my order, preach Islam to your tribe. And when you receive the news of our coming out into the open, come to me!’ (Bukhari, *Manaqibu’l-Ansar* 33, *Manaqib* 10; Ahmad, V, 174; Hakim, III, 382-385; Ibn Saad, IV, 220-225)

Meanwhile, the Prophet ﷺ continued inviting people to Islam. During the months of pilgrimage, he would always roam the fairs of Uqaz, Majanna and Zhul-Majaz, communicating Islam to whomever he came across, whether they were free or slave, weak or strong, rich or poor and he would invite them to belief in the unity of Allah ﷻ.<sup>150</sup>



*Ayah* revealed during this phase of prophethood generally warn of the Day of Judgment:

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150. See Ibn Saad, I, 216-217.



إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ مَا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ  
 مَوْرًا وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا فَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُكْذِبِينَ  
 الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ يَوْمَ يُدْعُونَ إِلَى نَارٍ  
 جَهَنَّمَ دَعَا هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكْذِبُونَ

“Most surely the punishment of your Lord will come to pass. On the day when the heaven shall move from side to side and the mountains will fly hither and thither. So woe on that day to those who reject the truth; to those who play and paddle in vain discourses! The day on which they shall violently be driven away to the fire of hell, when it will be said ‘This is the fire which you used to deny!’” (at-Tur, 7-14)

Once the Noble Messenger ﷺ proclaimed his prophethood and openly began inviting people to Islam, a condemnation of the idolaters and their idols followed:

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ حَصْبُ جَهَنَّمَ أَنْتُمْ لَهَا وَارِدُونَ

“Surely you and what you worship besides Allah are the firewood of hell; to it you shall come.” (al-Anbiya, 98)

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ  
 فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Say: I am only a mortal like you; it is revealed to me that your god is One God, therefore follow the right way to Him and ask His forgiveness; and woe to the idolaters.” (Fussilat, 6)





When the Messenger of Allah began denouncing the idols the Meccans were worshipping, and telling them that their ancestors who had died as idolaters were destined for hellfire, he was rejected by the idolaters of Quraysh, who then united in enmity and hatred towards him. But as Abu Talib had the Prophet ﷺ under his protection, they could not do anything.<sup>151</sup>

Ingrained idolaters like Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab, Walid ibn Mughira, Umayya ibn Khalef, As ibn Wail, Nadr ibn Harith, Uqba ibn Abi Muayt and Utbah ibn Rabia were among the miserable who went too far in their hostilities against the Prophet ﷺ and thus wrought with their own hands their eternal torment.

### The Importance and Method of Invitation

Invitation in this sense, or *tabligh*, is the attempt to summon people to live by the principles of Islam, by virtue of explaining them. To use a more famous definition, it is to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. In the Quran, the Almighty imposes *tabligh* as a duty for all Muslims:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and it is these that shall be successful.” (Al-i Imran, 104)

151. Ibn Saad, I, 199.



كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

“You are the best of the nations raised up for the benefit of men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong...” (Al-i Imran, 110)

The importance of *tabligh* is also underlined by the Prophet ﷺ in the following hadith:

“May Allah grace him who hears a word from us and communicates it exactly to others. Many a person, who receives a word, understands and applies it better than the actual speaker.” (Tirmidhi, Ilm, 7)

“By Allah, for a single person to receive guidance from Allah through you, is better for you than to own a valley full of red camels.” (i.e. the best of worldly goods) (Bukhari, Ashabu'n-Nabi, 9)

“The reward of an inviter is as much as that of those who follow him, without reducing theirs in any way.” (Muslim, Ilm, 16)

Anas ؓ, a companion of the Prophet ﷺ, narrates the following hadith about the high ranks awaiting the inviters to Islam in the Hereafter:

“One day, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained:

‘Should I inform you of certain people? They are neither prophets nor martyrs; yet prophets and martyrs will gaze at their ranks with envy on the Day of Judgment.<sup>152</sup> They will be seated on pulpits of light, recognized by everyone.’

152. Indicated by the expression is the value of those occupied with inviting others to Truth. It does not imply they have a greater worth than prophets and martyrs, for both are persons who have sacrificed their lives on the way of Truth. Their



‘Who are they, the Messenger of Allah?’ the Companions asked.

The Prophet ﷺ answered:

‘They are those who endear people to Allah and endear Allah to people. They roam the Earth as advisors and inviters.’

Then I asked:

‘We understand how Allah may be endeared to his servants, Messenger of Allah, but how are his slaves to be endeared to Allah?’

‘They enjoin the things Allah likes and caution against the things He dislikes. And once people obey, Allah likes them’, he explained. (Ali al-Muttaqi, III, 685-686; Bayhaqi, Shuabu'l-Iman, I, 367)

While the gain of a person who duly carries out the duty of invitation is greater than the world’s richest treasures, the neglect of this duty carries consequences so grave that they could steer society to destruction.

The Blessed Prophet’s ﷺ related warning merits attention:

‘I swear by Allah who has given me life that, either you will enjoin the good and forbid the wrong, or else Allah will send such a punishment upon you that your prayers for relief will no longer be of benefit.’ (Tirmidhi, Fitan, 9)

Abza al-Huzai ؓ narrates the following:

‘One day, the Messenger of Allah ascended the pulpit to give a sermon. After speaking highly of certain groups of Muslims, he added, ‘What is the matter with some people that they do not

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fondness of the deeds of those engaged with *tabligh* and their related joy, stems from their insight into the sacredness of the duty itself.



explain matters to their neighbors, teach them what they do not know and increase understanding? Why is it that they do not enjoin the good and warn against the wrong? And what is wrong with others who do not seek to learn what they do not know from their neighbors and try to increase their understanding? ‘I swear it by Allah! Either the knowledgeable shall teach their neighbors and make them people of greater understanding, enjoin the good and forbid the wrong; and either those who do not know shall ask and learn from their neighbors and try to grasp matters of Religion, or I shall punish them both, here in this world.’

After the speech, the Prophet ﷺ descended the pulpit and returned home. Some remarked:

‘It could be that the Prophet ﷺ meant the Asharis of Yemen, as they possess understanding, while their neighbors are vulgar, hard-tempered nomads who live by oases.’

Once the Asharis were made aware of the situation, they went to the Prophet ﷺ and asked:

‘It seems that you spoke highly of certain people, Messenger of Allah, and badly of us. What is it about us that you spoke that way?’

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept silent, only repeating what he had said before. The Asharis were still uncertain whether they were the people in question. To completely make sense of the matter, they repeated the same question a few more times. But each time the Prophet ﷺ gave the same reply. Thereupon, the Asharis said:

‘Then give us one year, Messenger of Allah!’

So the Messenger of Allah allowed them a year to educate their neighbors and teach them matters of Religion, reciting the following *ayah*:



لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى  
ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ. كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ  
مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

‘Cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary, are those who disbelieved from among the children of Israel; this was because they disobeyed and used to exceed the limit. They used not to forbid each other the hateful things which they did; certainly evil was that which they did.’ (al-Maida, 78-79) (Haythami, I, 164; Ali al-Muttaqi, III, 684/8457)

With the spiritual strength and maturity he was graced with by the Almighty, the Light of Being ﷺ continued preaching Islam with the desire to guide humanity entire, whereby the consciousness of fulfilling the Divine duty entrusted in him raised him to the highest level. He rejected all worldly offers that would stand in the way of carrying out his duty, valuing servanthood to the Creator above anything else.

The Prophet ﷺ always explained Islam according to people’s level of comprehension, to the extent of their understanding. The guidance of even a single person would give him joy beyond description. Even during an event of great magnitude like the capture of Khaybar, he took delight from lengthily explaining Islam to a slave, which ultimately led to the slave’s guidance. (Ibn Hisham, III, 398)

Again, during the harsh ten-day mission in Ta’if, the Prophet ﷺ led Addas, a Christian slave, to his guidance, which made him forget all the misfortunes at Ta’if.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave his all in the way of shedding the light of Islam upon the whole of humanity, and never felt tired



or fed up with the duty of invitation. Abu Rifaa ؓ gives detail of an account that shows the Prophet's ﷺ sensitivity regarding the duty of inviting:

“While the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was giving a sermon, I approached him and said, ‘There is a poor man, Messenger of Allah, who says he wants to learn this Religion.’

The Prophet ﷺ turned and looked at me. Cutting the sermon short, he then came next to me. They immediately brought him a steel legged stool on which he sat and explained me a few things he had been taught by the Almighty. He then returned and completed his sermon.” (Muslim, Juma, 60)

The Companions were also very sensitive in communicating the truth and fixing the errors they saw. The duty of alerting those who acted against the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ was not just reserved to a few selected persons among them. Given the right time and the right place they would do what they had to do. They would express the truth regardless of its consequences as they could not tolerate anything in opposition to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. They would have nothing to do with those who had a habit of objecting to the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, saying they could never live under the same roof.<sup>153</sup> To those who forwarded their own opinions in opposition to the hadiths they would say they could no longer remain with them in the same environment, immediately after which they would leave.<sup>154</sup>

Sufyan as-Sawri says the following on the importance of tabligh:

“It is better for you to go to Khorasan to preach Islam, than to live in Mecca.”

153. See Shafi'i, *Risāla*, p. 193, İstanbul, 1985; Suyutî, *Miftâh*, p. 48, Beirut 1987.

154. See Muwatta', Buyu', 33; Ibn Mâjah, Muqaddima, 2.

For a task as important as inviting people to Islam, the rearing of persons who can properly carry it out becomes equally important. The incident below clearly expresses the value of a spiritually well-trained inviter.

“Omar رضي الله عنه was one day sitting with his friends. He asked them to make some wishes from Allah. Some wished:

‘...for a houseful of coins to spend in the cause of Allah!’

Another few wished:

‘...for a houseful of gold so to spend in the cause of Allah!’

Yet some other Companions wished:

‘...for a houseful of jewelry to use in the way of Allah!’

‘Ask for more, more!’ Omar insisted.

‘What more from Allah could we ask for?’ they inquired.

Thereupon Omar رضي الله عنه said, ‘I would wish for this house to be filled with people of exceptional maturity of the likes of Abu Ubayda ibn Jarrah, Muaz ibn Jabal, Huzayfa’ul-Yaman, so I can employ them in ensuring obedience to Allah, in the service of enjoining good and forbidding evil...’ (Bukhari, Tarikh’us-Saghir, I, 54)



The Almighty, the absolute source of mercy and compassion, explains the most effective style to follow in calling His servants to the true path:

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ  
وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالتِّي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ



“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and have disputations with them in the best manner...” (an-Nahl, 125)

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا  
مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا أَمَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَالْهَنَا وَالْهَكْمُ  
وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

“And do not dispute with the followers of the Book except by what is best, except those of them who act unjustly, and say: We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him do we submit.” (al-Ankabut, 46)

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي  
مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ  
أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

“And who speaks better than he who calls to Allah while he himself does good, and says: I am surely one of those who submit? And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best<sup>155</sup>; he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend.” (Fussilat 33-34)

155. A beautiful illustration of this *ayah* is provided by Yusuf عليه السلام, who, instead of holding the misdemeanors of his brothers against them, continued treating them with the same respect and honor as before. The brethren eventually identified him, and pronounced, تَاللَّهِ لَعَدُوٌّ لَنَا اللهُ عَلَيْنَا “By Allah, He has certainly preferred you over us”, confessing Yusuf’s superiority over them, requesting to be pardoned. The incident is a clear case in point attesting to the effectiveness of calling to the





قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي  
وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me being certain, and glory be to Allah, and I am not one of the idolaters.” (Yusuf, 108)

Throughout history, the appliance of the recommended Divine style of invitation has turned many thorny souls into roses, and the darkness of many hearts into light. Even when sending Musa and Harun عليهما السلام to a transgressor and deviant of the caliber of the Pharaoh, Allah عز وجل, still advised them to be gentle:

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ

“...Then speak to him a gently, that perhaps he may mind or fear.” (Ta-ha, 44)

We can see in the above verse the two fundamentals of the method of invitation:

1. When communicating the truth, one must use a gentle manner without provoking the person.

Even though the Pharaoh himself had in fact leaned towards believing on many occasions after having witnessed the numerous miracles of Musa عليه السلام, he was prevented by his vizier Haman and his circle. Losing to arrogance and conceit, he chose not to believe.

By advising Musa عليه السلام to adopt a gentle approach, the Almighty also teaches us a method of invitation. Before the actual invitation

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right path foremost through conduct. For a detailed account see, Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ, *Nebîler Silsilesi* 2, p. 129-130, İstanbul, 2004.



takes place, hearts are to be softened.<sup>156</sup> Quarrel has no place in the lives of prophets and saints; letting actions do the preaching is what is important.

As all prophets given by the Almighty the duty of invitation came to mend hearts, they always looked at others from the window of the heart and thus enabled the guidance of many by continuously spreading love and mercy in their surroundings. To do otherwise would have produced a gulf that would have completely severed ties with others and the chance of communicating the Truth to them would have been forever lost. And this would have been at odds with Divine Will, as Allah ﷻ, wishes His servants be saved from the swamp they are in. For this reason, the Almighty has sent thousands of prophets throughout history, commanding them to purify hearts with the most beautiful of approaches. Again in line with the same aim, saints who have been blessed among mankind have continued this prophetic manner in the spiritual training of others.

No benefit can be expected from services offered with a harsh and offensive manner which can in no way be reconciled with good morals. This is all the more important in activities that directly address the person's soul, such as education, invitation and offering guidance. In the Prophet's ﷺ person, the *ayah* below addresses the entire Muslims:

156. During the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira, in the wake of the Capture of Khaybar, the Noble Prophet ﷺ aided the depleted Meccans, who were battling fierce famine and scarcity, with supplies of gold, barley and date seeds. Accepting the aid, Abu Sufyan distributed it among the Meccan needy, exclaiming at the same time appreciatively, "May Allah reward our Cousin for looking out for his relatives..." (Yaqubi, II, 56) Their hearts growing tender through such acts of magnanimity, the Meccans soon found themselves wholeheartedly and unreservedly accepting Islam.

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ  
لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

“Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you.” (Al-i Imran, 159)

2. To extend the invitation to all of humanity, regardless of their status.

A brutal and miserable man who could not lend himself to believe, the Pharaoh was at the same time a ruthless murderer who had slain thousands of innocent babies just to kill Musa, ﷺ. But he still became subject to Divine invitation.

Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ invited Abu Jahl to Islam on numerous occasions. While accepting in his conscience the clear truth of the words of the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Jahl could not admit to it, defeated by his ego and conceit. But the noble manner of the Messenger of Allah led to the guidance of many who were enemies of Islam to begin with, like Omar ibn Khattab, Abu Sufyan, Hind and Wahshi.

Both in Islamic activities and all social relations in general, this approach engenders elegance, kindness and sensitivity to people’s special circumstances and physical conditions. This is the exact approach seen in its most inspirational form in the behavior of sufis.

When we look into the Blessed Prophet’s ﷺ twenty-three year period of invitation, we come across the following six factors that shed light on the path of an aspiring inviter.

1. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ began the invitation with his closest relatives. After all, the Almighty had revealed:

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ

“...And warn your nearest relations.” (as-Shuara, 214)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ  
وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ  
وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

“O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded.” (at-Tahrim, 6)

2. In inviting to Islam, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ observed gradualness, following an ease path that gradually increased in difficulty.

The Almighty’s first command was: اِقْرَأْ “Read!” (al-Alaq, 1)

Then Muhammad ﷺ was given the duty of prophethood, whereupon he was ordered to: قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ “Get up and warn!” (al-Muddaththir, 2)

After that came the Divine command:

وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ

“...And warn your nearest relations.” (as-Shuara, 214)



Afterward the borders of the duty were expanded as to include the entire town:

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمِّهَا رَسُولًا يَتْلُو  
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَىٰ إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ

“And your Lord never destroyed the towns until He raised in their main town a messenger, reciting to them Our communications, and We never destroyed the towns except when their people were unjust.” (al-Qasas, 59)

The next step was the further extension of the invitation as to include neighboring regions:

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُّصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ  
أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا

“And this is a Book We have revealed, blessed, verifying that which is before it, and that you may warn the Mother of Towns and those around her; and those who believe in the hereafter believe in it, and they attend to their prayers constantly.” (al-Anaam, 92)

Finally, it was proclaimed that the boundaries of the invitation were as vast as those of humanity:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

“And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.”  
(al-Anbiya, 107)



وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا  
وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“And We have not sent you but to all people as a bearer of good news and as a warner, but most do not know.” (Sab’a, 28)

We see that the Noble Prophet ﷺ also followed the same principle of gradualness in passing on certain regulations. Many instances including the commanding of salat and fasting, and the prohibition of alcohol and usury provide fitting examples.

The Light of Being ﷺ who brought his companions to a perfect level of servanthood, did not bring this about through a sudden change, but rather through a slow, gradual and subtle development. This can be clearly seen for instance in the Prophet’s ﷺ advice to Muadh ibn Jabal ؓ before sending him to Yemen:

“You are about to reach a community of the people of the Book. The very first thing to which you should call them is that there is no god but Allah, may His Glory be Magnificent, and that I am His messenger. If they accept, then instruct them that He has enjoined five salats on them during the day and the night. If they accept and obey, then instruct them that Allah has made alms obligatory for them, to be collected their wealthy and distributed to the needy. And if they accept that too, then avoid selecting the best items of their riches. Do not attract the ill wishes of the oppressed, as there stands no curtain between their prayers and Allah.” (Bukhari, Zakat 41-63; Muslim, Iman 29-31)

3. To invite or educate, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ always looked out for a suitable opportunity in terms of time, place and the person’s state of mind.



Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه, used to preach on Thursdays. A person once said to him, “If only you addressed us every day!”

“I do not preach everyday from the fear of boring you”, Ibn Masud رضي الله عنه replied. “Even the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم used to watch out for the times we were eager to listen, so that we would not get bored.” (Bukhari, Ilm, 11, 12)

During the conquest of Mecca, Abbas رضي الله عنه brought Abu Sufyan, who had agreed to become Muslim, and said to the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, “Abu Sufyan is a person who loves to be complimented, Messenger of Allah. How about you do something that would make him feel honored?”

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied, “You are right! As we enter the town, announce that ‘whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan and whoever remains home and keeps their doors closed is safe.’” (Abu Dawud, Kharaj, 24-25/3021)

To the questions that were asked to him from time to time, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would respond by considering the questioner’s circumstances, and would follow methods appropriate to the person.

To the various people who inquired ‘what the most virtuous deed’ is, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم gave different answers depending on their circumstances.

“The most virtuous deeds are belief in Allah, struggling in His way and an accepted pilgrimage!” (Bukhari, Hajj, 4)

“It is salat performed on time!” (Bukhari, Mawaqit, 5)

“...the remembrance of Allah!” (Muwatta’, Quran, 24)

“...to love for the sake of Allah!” (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 2)

“...Emigration!” (Nesai, Bay’ah, 14)



“...to serve one’s parents!” (Ibn Athir, Usdu’l-Ghaba, IV, 330)

4. For the Noble Prophet ﷺ, providing ease and offering glad tidings were the basics of all affairs and he strictly abided by these principles in his calling.

It is said in a hadith:

“Provide ease, not difficulty; give glad tidings, do not drive people away.” (Bukhari, Ilm 11, Adab, 80)

Correspondingly, the Almighty states:

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

“...Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire difficulty for you.” (al-Baqara, 185)

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

“...and My mercy encompasses all things...” (al-Araf, 156)

In what could be regarded as a commentary of the above *ayah*, the Prophet ﷺ has said:

“When Allah the Almighty created all creation, he wrote in His Book, hanging above His Throne: ‘My mercy has vanquished my anger!’” (Bukhari, Tawhid, 15, 22, 28, 55; Muslim, Tawba, 14-16)

Abu Hurayra ؓ narrates the following incident:

“An Arab from the desert had urinated in the Masjid of Medina. The Companions immediately began rebuking him, whereupon the Prophet ﷺ said:





‘Leave the man alone. Just wash that place with a bucket of water after he is done. You have come to provide ease, not to cause difficulty.’ (Bukhari, Wudu, 58; Adab, 80)

5. An important part of the Prophet ﷺ invitation was to warn of Divine punishment and to encourage preparation for the Hereafter.

When the Gracious Prophet ﷺ first began his call, he addressed his kin, the children of Hashim in the following words:

“I hereby call you to bear witness that there is no god but Allah, He is One and without a partner. And I am His servant and messenger. If you accept this as it is, then I shall guarantee Paradise for you.

But on the Day of Judgment, if you do not come with good deeds and instead arrive with a world of sin on your shoulders, then I shall turn away from you! Then, you will plead, ‘O Messenger of Allah’ ...And I will then do ‘such and such’”.

When the Messenger of Allah said ‘I will then do such and such’, he physically turned his face away from them, repeating the action twice.” (Ibn Ishaq, p. 128; Yakubi, II, 27)

6. Not only did the Prophet ﷺ invite people verbally, he also brought his words to life through practice, and effectively invited them also through his overall behavior.

The most effective form of inviting to Islam is by living it. The Companions of the Prophet had devoted themselves to Islam to carry the voice of belief to the most remote corners of the world and to guide humanity. Today, exhibiting the beauties of Islam to the world with the same excitement and vigor still remains the best form of invitation.



It is a duty upon all Muslims to invite others to Islam through explanation and practice, to the best of their ability. Today, the rise of resources and ways of communication means that this responsibility has increased all the more. Those who live in the most distant places of the world and thus have not even heard of Islam, and many others whose guidance we have neglected even though they are very close to us, will grab us by the scruff of our necks and call us into account in the Hereafter.

Regarding the above, Abu Hurayra رضي الله عنه states:

“We used to hear of a man, who, on the Day of Judgment, is going to grab another by the scruff of his neck and call him into account. The other man will ask:

‘What do you want from me? I do not even know you!’

‘You used to see me on Earth committing bad deeds,’ the man will reply, ‘without ever warning me.’” (Rudani, *Jam’ul-Fawaid*, V, 384)

### **Islam’s Invitation and Missionary Work**

In Islam, the aim of invitation is to communicate the true religion to people<sup>157</sup>. It is not to Islamicize people by resorting to all kinds of measures<sup>158</sup>.

On the other hand, Christian missionary activity seeks to Christianize and baptize its subjects at all costs.<sup>159</sup> Paul of Tarsus, taken as a model by missionaries, explains his approach in one of his letters as follows:

157. See al-Máida, 67.

158. See al-Baqara, 256; Yâ-sîn, 17.

159. See Matthew 28:19-20.

“I am free, I am nobody’s slave. But just to win over more people, I have become a slave of all. To win over the Jews, I acted like a Jew. Though I do not adhere to the Canon, I acted as if I did, to win over its adherents. And though I follow the laws of Jesus Christ, to win over the lawless I acted like a lawless myself. To win over the weak, I became weak with them. By fair means or foul, to save some, I had become everything with everyone.”<sup>160</sup>

As seen, Paul justifies all the means that lead to the desired end, without recognizing any principles or borders. Islam, on the other, hand prohibits using unlawful means for lawful ends. This incorrect method adopted by Christianity ever since its beginning—that is, the attempt to Christianize masses by all means instead of simply delivering the message to them—has led to the decay of the essence of Christianity and the change of the message wherever it went, resulting in divisions among its followers.

In such activities, it is not uncommon to see missionaries approach socially and politically deprived communities, as well as the poor, refugees, minorities, and victims of war and natural disasters, and exploit their physical and mental sufferings by virtually trying to buy their beliefs.

On an another note, it is a well known fact that missionary activities are closely linked to imperialism, and their motivation could therefore be seen as more political than religious. By taking residence in their targeted countries, missionaries aim to Christianize locals under the veil of schools, foreign language courses and similar activities of education.

Following the way of Paul, today’s missionaries take care to hide their true identities and appear in a guise acceptable to their

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160. See Corinthians I, 9:19-22.



environments. To endear themselves to Muslims, for instance, missionaries tend to recite verses from the Quran, dress in Muslim clothes, use Islamic terms like ‘hodja’ and ‘masjid’ instead of ‘priest’ or ‘church’. Again, to turn people away from their religions and warm others to themselves, they have made it a principle to give concessions from Christianity.<sup>161</sup>

In the face of such frantic missionary activity, it is important for Muslims to pay attention to educating both themselves and their children, to learn and practice Islam in the best way and to communicate it to others. Muslims can at least take a great lesson from missionaries who go through a great effort to spread an altered religion, and must strive to live Islam through practice. The gift of Islam for which we can never be thankful enough requires that one never forgets the responsibility of invitation.

The late Mehmed Akif refers below to the overall Muslim weakness in this area:

*While missionaries roam night and day,  
Who knows, Revelation perhaps the ulama await!*

### **The Attitudes of Abu Lahab and his Wife against the Prophet ﷺ**

The Prophet’s ﷺ home was situated between the houses of two wretched figures, Abu Lahab and Uqbah ibn Abi Muayt. They used to dump all kinds of filth in front of the Blessed Prophet’s ﷺ door. Though this would break the Prophet’s ﷺ gentle and pure heart, he would only say:

161. See Şinâsi Gündüz, p. 5-28.



“What kind of neighbors are you, sons of Abd Manaf?” and remove the filth away from his doorstep. (Ibn Saad, I, 201)

While about to do the same vile act one day, Abu Lahab was seen by Hamza رضي الله عنه, who, grabbing the filth from Abu Lahab’s hands, emptied it on his head. All Abu Lahab could do was to clean his head of the dirt, while firing insults at Hamza رضي الله عنه.<sup>162</sup>

Neither did Umm Jameel ever lag behind her husband Abu Lahab in inflicting torment on the Messenger of Allah. Every night she would prepare a bundle from the thorny branches of trees, and hanging them around her neck, she would throw them at night on the path of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, so that he would step on the prickles. But the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would walk over them, as if walking over silk.<sup>163</sup>

Their wrongdoings brought about the revelation of the chapter al-Masad. When Umm Jameel heard it, grabbing a large stone in her hand, she went out searching for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم had been sitting by the Kaabah with Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه.

Seeing her from a distance, Abu Bakr said:

“Umm Jameel is heading this way, Messenger of Allah. I am worried that she will see you and cause you distress. If only you had gotten up and left before she saw you.”

“She will not be able to see me”, the Gracious Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied.

162. See Ibn Asîr, *al-Kâmil*, II, 70.

163. See Ibn Hisham , I, 376; Qurtubî, XX, 240.



Indeed, even though Umm Jameel stood next to them, she could not see the Prophet ﷺ. After ranting awhile to Abu Bakr ؓ, she left.<sup>164</sup>



Before Prophethood, the Prophet's ﷺ daughter Umm Kulthum had already been married to Abu Lahab's son Utaybah, while his ﷺ other daughter Ruqayya was engaged to Abu Lahab's other son Utbah. Upon the revelation of al-Masad, Umm Jameel told her sons to:

“Separate from Ruqayya and Umm Kulthum. They have abandoned our religion!”

And so did Abu Lahab. “If you do not leave Muhammad's daughters, stay out of my sight!” he bellowed.

Utaybah thereupon went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “Damn your religion! I hereby divorce your daughter. From now on do not ever come near me, and I will never come near you!” After these words, he insolently ripped the shirt of the Prophet ﷺ.

In the face of such rudeness, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed,

“Allah...Unleash upon him one of your dogs!”

After a while, Utaybah joined a caravan on a trade journey. They stopped by at a place called Zarqa. When, that night, a lion began circling the caravan, Utaybah remarked:

164. See Ibn Hisham , I, 378-379; Qurtubî, XX, 234.



“Oh my...! It is going to come and get me just as Muhammad had prayed. I can just feel it! He may be in Mecca, and I in Damascus, but if I die, Ibn Abi Kabshah<sup>165</sup> is responsible!”

After roaming around them awhile that night the lion eventually left. Utaybah’s friends placed him in between them and went back to sleep. Then suddenly the lion returned. Slowly sniffing its way through the group, the lion came all the way up to Utaybah. So fiercely and swiftly did the lion lunge towards Utaybah’s head that the idolater, at that moment, began coming to terms with a horrendous death. He could only but scream, “Didn’t I tell you that Muhammad is a man of his word?”

Hearing of his son’s terrible death, Abu Lahab responded in a similar way:

“I knew Muhammad’s wrath would target my son one day...”<sup>166</sup>

The Light of Being ﷺ experienced the torment of many idolaters like Abu Lahab during this period. Responding with patience and endurance, he nevertheless continued his calling.

### **Meccan Attempts of Reconciliation**

That the Prophet ﷺ continued inviting people to Islam without taking heed of anything, drove the idolaters mad. They began voicing their anger to Muslims and to the new religion that stood in

165. Previously, a man by the name of Abu Kabshah from the tribe of Hudaa had opposed his tribesmen over the worship of idols. Likening the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to Abu Kabshah, the Meccan idolaters would sometimes refer to him as Ibn Abi Kabshah, that is the son of Abu Kabshah. According to another account, Abu Kabshah could have been the label of one of either the maternal or paternal grandfathers of the Prophet ﷺ, or even his foster father, i.e. Halimah’s husband.

166. See Ibn Saad, VIII, 36-37; Bayhaki, *Dalâil*, II, 338-339; Haythami, VI, 19.



the way of their self-interests. They ran to Abu Talib and explained him of their concerns, begging him to prevent his nephew. Abu Talib politely warded them off. He said nothing about the incident to the Prophet ﷺ.

Seeing no change, the idolaters went to Abu Talib once again and said:

“We have run out of patience, Abu Talib! You know that your nephew speaks ill of our religion and idols. He accuses us of stupidity. If you do not stop your nephew from doing this then we will openly oppose both you and him. Either talk him out of it or lift your protection from him, so we can deal with him how we know best!”

Upon these threats, Abu Talib politely explained to the Prophet ﷺ the idolaters’ attitudes. Though he refused to lift his protection from nephew, he also hinted at his unwillingness to defy the idolaters, telling him to, “Protect both yourself and me!”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was greatly upset, since his uncle’s words virtually meant that if worse came to worse he would lift his protection. His graceful eyes welled up with tears. After all, the Muslims were still weak, without the power to withstand the Meccan transgressors who thrived on power and wealth.

In the meantime, to overcome the difficulty, the Almighty advised the Prophet:

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا  
رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا



“...And remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him exclusively; the Lord of the East and the West- there is no god but He- therefore take Him for a protector.” (al-Muzzammil, 8-9)

The Prophet’s ﷺ sorrow had gone. With unshakable faith and courage, he uttered these famous words to his uncle:

“By Allah, uncle, if these men were to place the sun in one of my hands and the moon in the other, I would still not give up this calling!”

Not expecting to hear such an answer, Abu Talib was shaken. Although not a Muslim, he still loved the Prophet ﷺ like a son. Besides he had made a promise, when his father Abdulmuttalib gathered all his sons around him just before his death to ask which one was to take the little Muhammad ﷺ in his care:

“You know I am not rich, father, but I am a compassionate man with a kind heart. I would love to take care of my nephew. I promise you that. Entrust him to my care!”

His soft heart therefore could not bear to see the Noble Prophet ﷺ leave brokenhearted, and he shouted from behind him:

“Come and say what you like. I swear I will not hand you over to them...ever!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 276-278; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 96-97)

Unable to get what they wanted, the idolaters took Umarah, son of Walid ibn Mughirah, to Abu Talib, to make another offer:

“Umarah is the strongest and most handsome youth of Quraysh”, they said. “Take him and make the most of his intelligence and strength. He can be your son. But surrender to us your nephew, who defies the religion of his ancestors and ignores their ways, so that we can get rid of him.”



“What is this?” Abu Talib responded. “You want give me your son so that I can look after him on your account and I am to give you my son so that you can kill him? That is unthinkable!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 279; Ibn Saad, I, 202)

Afterward, the idolaters told Abu Talib to “Send a message to Muhammad. Let him come here so we can make him reasonable offers.”

Receiving the message, the Prophet ﷺ quickly went. Ahnas ibn Sharik said:

“Stop speaking ill of us and our idols, and will leave you and your God alone!”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned his head to the sky and asked:

“Do you see the sun?”

“Yes, we do”, they answered. The Prophet ﷺ then gave the following meaningful response, setting forth the greatness of Islam and its promising future:

“Could it be in my power to prevent its rays reaching you?”

“I swear, my nephew never speaks a lie!” Abu Talib commented, standing by.

The idolaters angrily left the scene. (Ibn Ishaq, p. 136; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 92; Ibn Saad, I, 202-203)

According to the account of Ibn Abbas ؓ, the notables of Quraysh gathered at the site of Hijr near the Kaabah and swore on the names of idols Lat, Manat, Uzza, Naile and Isaf to jointly attack and kill the Prophet ﷺ the first instant they saw him. Each pledged to pay the blood money that was to fall to their share.

Hearing about this, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ Fatima ﷺ rushed to her father in tears and informed him of the terrible plot.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked for some water for wudu. He then headed straight to the Kaabah.

“There he is!” the idolaters excitedly exclaimed when they saw him approach.

But the majestic appearance of the Gracious Prophet ﷺ in front of them made them drop their heads and lower their gaze, despite their sworn pledge. None of them felt the courage to look back up. They lost all nerve to look the Prophet ﷺ in the face. Grabbing a handful of soil from the ground, the Prophet ﷺ, said:

“May you lose face!” as he flung it their way.

Each idolater struck with a dust of soil that day was eventually slain as a nonbeliever at the Battle of Badr and thrown in one hell-like pit. (Ahmad, I, 303)

After this incident, the wary Abu Talib gathered the clans of Hashim and Muttalib and asked them to swear on their honor to protect the Prophet ﷺ against the Meccans at all costs. All complied, except for Abu Lahab.<sup>167</sup>

Realizing there was no point in going to Abu Talib again, this time the idolaters went straight to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ himself:

“You are of a noble lineage and much respected; yet you do and say what no Arab has ever done and said until now. You have thrown into disarray. We have jumped at each other’s throats. What is it that you want? If it is wealth, then we will give you all you could wish for. There will be no man in any tribe richer than you. If it is

167. See Ibn Hisham, I, 281; Ibn Asir, *al-Kamil*, II, 65.



leadership you want, then we will make you the chieftain of Mecca! If you want women, just name the most beautiful girl in Mecca and you shall have her! Or if you have been put under a spell, we will take you to witch doctors. We will do everything to cure you.

We are ready to do what you want...as long as you give it up!”

The foolish idolaters thought they could turn the Prophet ﷺ away from his mission by luring him with wealth, rank and women, thinking that the Prophet ﷺ could never say no to the three baits always effectively used to trick men.

Wealth, fame and lust are three traps that wear down a person’s will. It is striking that the idolaters could not understand that these and other vices alike had never found a place in the untainted life of the Prophet ﷺ.

So the Noble Messenger ﷺ responded, giving voice to this very truth in no uncertain terms:

“I want nothing from you, neither wealth, nor rank, nor chieftainship! The only thing I want is that you stop worshipping idols and worship the One Allah!” (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 99-100)

But because the idolaters were under the grip of their egos, they could not grasp the noble mission of the Prophet ﷺ, even going to the length of asking him to worship their idols. The reaction of the Prophet ﷺ in such cases was compliant with the Quran’s advice:

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَمَّا جَاءَ نِي  
الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides Allah when clear proofs have come to me from my Lord,



and I am commanded that I should submit to the Lord of the worlds.” (al-Mumin, 66)

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ إِلَيْهِ أَدْعُو وَإِلَيْهِ مَآبٌ

“Say: I am only commanded that I should serve Allah and not associate anything with Him, to Him do I invite and to Him is my return.” (ar-Rad, 36)

إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَذِهِ الْبَلَدَةِ الَّتِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ  
وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِنِّي أَتْلُو الْقُرْآنَ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَى  
فَأِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ

“I am commanded only that I should serve the Lord of this town, Who has made it sacred, and His are all things; and I am commanded that I should be one of those who submit; and that I should recite the Quran. Therefore whoever goes aright, he goes aright for his own soul, and whoever goes astray, then say: I am only one of the warners.” (an-Naml, 91-92)

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَيْتَنِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيَمًا مِثْلَ آبْرَاهِيمَ  
حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ قُلْ إِنِّي صَلَّاتِي وَسُكُوتِي وَمَحْيَايَ  
وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ  
الْمُسْلِمِينَ قُلْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ ابْغُوا رِيبًا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

“Say: Surely, (as for) me, my Lord has guided me to the right path; to a most right religion, the faith of Ibrahim the upright one,



and he was not of the idolaters. Say. Surely my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. No associate has He; and this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who submit. Say: What! Shall I seek a Lord other than Allah? And He is the Lord of all things; and no soul earns (evil) but against itself, and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, so He will inform you of that in which you differed.” (al-Anaam, 161-164)

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُو إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ بَصِيرَةٍ

“Say: This is my way: I call to Allah, I and those who follow me with sure knowledge.” (Yusuf, 108)

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ

“Say: I do not ask you for any reward for it; nor am I a pretender.” (Saad, 86)



Facing the impervious attitude of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the idolaters asked him to at least stop speaking ill of their idols. Thereupon, the Almighty commanded:

فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ وَدُوا لَوْ تَدَّهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ

“So do not yield to the rejecters. They wish that you would compromise so they too would compromise.” (al-Qalam, 8-9)

In other words, the idolaters who rejected the truth were claiming they could make peace with the Prophet ﷺ if only he



abandoned those *ayah* which conflicted with their interests. But the Quran's warning against doing so was loud and clear:

إِذَا لَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ  
ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا

“In that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double punishment in this life and a double punishment after death, then you would not have found any helper against Us.” (al-Isra, 75)

That is to say, even in such times of difficulty, giving concessions at the expense of the principles is prohibited; in this case that would have meant the destruction of the Religion, which is what the idolaters so avidly desired in the first place. The more the idolaters returned empty-handed, the more they insisted with their foolish offers to save the faces of their idols. They even went to the extent of suggesting:

“Worship our idols every other day, and we will worship your God every other day; then our dispute will end!”

To this offer that totally clashed with the spirit and logic of Islam, the Almighty had the following to declare in the Holy Quran:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ  
عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ  
عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينٌ



“Say: O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship. Nor do you worship Him Whom I worship; nor am I going to worship that which you worship, nor are you going to worship Him Whom I worship. To you be your religion, and to me mine.”  
(al-Kafirun, 1-6)<sup>168</sup>

In the beginning, it was mostly the poor, the weak and the slaves who submitted to the call of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Though there were wealthy people like Abu Bakr who accepted Islam, they were still quite scarce in number.

That the Messenger of Allah rejected out of hand all sorts of settlement offers made by the idolaters like wealth and status, clearly proves the fact that he had no intention whatsoever of obtaining riches or titles, contrary to the claims of some. Indeed, even in times of greater opportunity, the life of the Gracious Prophet ﷺ was no different from the poor. This was no doubt a manifestation of the prophetic morals of abstinence, humbleness and contentedness.

If he had wanted, the Prophet ﷺ could have accepted the Meccan offer of leadership and used its powers and opportunities for the future service of Islam. But the Light of Being ﷺ did not want to become mixed up in such politics and use it as an instrument for the cause, simply because Islam always observes the principle of loyalty to the honor of religion before making use of any given instrument. Muslims may therefore be forced to persevere and put up a struggle under various conditions but the path they must follow after all is the *sirat'ul-mustaqim*, the straight path devoid of deviation.



### The Inimitability (I'jaz) of the Quran and its Affect on Listeners

The word *ijaz* literally means to incapacitate someone or to exceedingly go beyond something. In the technical sense, however, it means the ineffectiveness of the whole of humanity in producing something similar to the Quran, in terms of its eloquence, legislative value and its news of the unseen, as it comes from the highest of sources.

As Allah ﷻ, willed the last scripture revealed to humanity to be in the most perfect form and in the Arabic language, He gave those who spoke this language, from the earliest times, a zest for literary eloquence and articulation. By taking part in numerous literary activities and competitions, the Arabs were able to develop the language further and as a consequence, give it a richness and perfection that could enable it to express Divine words and meanings.

Such activities saw eloquence among Arabs become a profession. Poets and orators rose to publicly envied ranks. So it should be kept in mind that it was within this sort of an environment that the Holy Quran, the Divine words delivered by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, came to be regarded as the greatest of miracles, the most elegant of discourses.

Because the most important qualities that separate man from other beings are reason, understanding and expression, the miracle of the Quran, the last and most perfect Divine book, emerges in these very qualities. The Almighty says:

الرَّحْمَنُ . عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ . خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ . عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ



“The Beneficent Allah, taught the Quran. He created man, taught him clear expression.” (ar-Rahman, 1-4)

Many books have been written by numerous scholars with precise observations regarding the unfathomable *ijaz* of the Quran, of which we shall now present a small summary.

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ declared his prophethood, the idolaters objected, saying:

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ

“And they say: Why are not signs sent down upon him from his Lord?”

The Almighty responded in the following:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ  
 أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ  
 إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَذِكْرَىٰ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

“Say: The signs are only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner. Is it not enough for them that We have revealed to you the Book which is recited to them? Most surely there is mercy in this and a reminder for a people who believe.” (al-Ankabut, 50-51)

The *ijaz* of the Quran is explicit in many aspects like its eloquence and style, richness of content, the convincing power of its principles, its informing of the unknown, its ability to constantly preserve its validity and its legislative supremacy.

The most important aspect of the Quran’s miracle is provided by its eloquence and style. Entailed by eloquence is to say the



most appropriate word in terms of content, aim or the subject in accordance with what the given situation demands. In the issues it deals with, the holy Quran puts eloquence into practice in the best of ways.

The Quran is also a masterpiece of clarity of speech. It is impossible to find the least of flaws in the words it chooses, in its sentences and the meanings they express.

Like the meaning, the wording<sup>169</sup> of the Quran also belongs to Allah ﷻ. This is the most fundamental difference that separates it from a sacred hadith. For that reason, changing a word from the text of the Quran with another from the Arabic language leads one to heresy if done intentionally; if not intentional, then the most it can do is annul a deed of worship owing to a change in meaning to a certain extent. Under the discussion *zhallat'ul-qari*, scholars have put forth numerous rulings in books of jurisdiction regarding the legal consequences of unintentional yet mistaken pronunciations or change of words during salat.

In spite of all this, the nonsense that it is permissible for one to worship with a translation of the Quran, which is at best produced only according to the understanding of the translator, betrays intellectual bankruptcy, to say the least.

The style of the Quran observes a balance between meaning and wording. For every meaning it wants to put forward, it uses a word most fitting for the purpose. It therefore establishes a balance between the meaning and the word, in a manner that befits the

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169. Denoted here are the Quran's intonation, choice of words appropriate with the language utilized, pronunciation and clarity of expression; its eloquence, articulacy and fluency.



Absolute Possessor of Speech. This baffles even the most elegant canons of literature.

The famous Andalusian exegete Ibn Atiyya said:

“The Quran is such a book that if a word were to be removed from it, it would be impossible to find a better substitute even if the entire Arabic language was rummaged.”<sup>170</sup>

Being a Divine word, the Quran expresses various parables, advices, debates, historical accounts, legal matters, and information regarding the Hereafter, paradise and hell, including verses of glad tidings as well as warnings, separately, according to the force of their meanings, yet within a unity of style, by preserving an equal level of harmony in their clarity and eloquence.

The Quran simultaneously addresses different people with distinct intellectual levels living in various times and places. When the *ayah* of the Quran are recited next to people of various levels, each present understands what he/she hears differently, according to his/her understanding. Again, this is a quality that surpasses human capability.

To sum up, the miracle of each prophet belongs to his time. But as the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has been sent a prophet for the whole of humankind, his greatest miracle, the Quran, will remain strong until the Day of Judgment, incorporating within its realm all times and places.

To help illustrate the existence and power of the Almighty, the Quran also makes numerous references to scientific truths. The rapid development and discoveries in the scientific arena during the

170. Zarqânî, *Manâhili'l-Îrfân*, II, 325; Muhammad Abdullâh Dîrâz, *an-Nabau'l-Azîm*, s. 112; Atâ, *Azâmatu'l-Kur'ân*, p. 85.

last 1400 years has not only been unable to refute any verdict of the Holy Quran, but has further strengthened them. Again, this only highlights its miraculous nature.

The nations of the world today have their most capable minds produce encyclopedias with which they vie against one another. One can think of the British *Britannica* or the French *Larousse* as examples. But they also have the frequent need to produce additional volumes for correcting or completing previous errors or deficiencies. New discoveries force them to make additions and correct previous claims. Even in our times marked by an incredible vigor of scientific discovery, encyclopedias produced by scientific commissions that consist of the most exceptional scholars, are continually outdated and need correction. Yet, the need to correct the scientific assertions of the Quran has not come about over the passage of centuries. This is one of the greatest proofs of its Divine origin, and of the fact that it is the Word of the Almighty.

In a hadith which emphasizes the fact that the miracle of the Holy Quran is destined to survive until eternity, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ says:

“The Quran is a Divine word that guides man to safety from all the tribulations to come, that gives news of past peoples, forewarnings of future peoples and verdicts of all controversies to take place between them. It separates between right and wrong. It is not vain. The transgressor who deserts it, Allah destroys; the person who seeks any other guidance Allah causes to go astray. It is Allah’s strong rope, His great remembrance and straight path. Those who live by it never deviate, the tongues that pronounce it are never mistaken, its scholars can never have enough of its insights. Its repetition never wears it out, and its miracles never cease to amaze. Upon hearing it the jinn could not help but say,



## إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا

‘Surely, we have heard a fabulous Quran!’ (al-Jinn, 1). Those who speak with it only speak the truth, and those who judge with it only judge with justice. Those who practice it reap rewards and those who call to it find in it the truest of paths.” (Tirmidhi, Fada'il-ul-Quran, 14; Darimi, Fada'il-ul-Quran, 1)

The Quran is a miracle in all its aspects. It is in this respect that the Quran has for centuries continued to challenge all men and jinn, as it did the Arabs of then, who had reached the heights of eloquence, to produce a similar text. This reminds one of the 34<sup>th</sup> *ayah* of at-Tur:

فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

“Then let them bring a speech like it if they are truthful.”

The helplessness of the idolaters before this Divine challenge was further exposed by the Almighty:

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِّثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَّادْعُوا  
مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“Or, do they say: He has forged it. Say: Then bring ten forged chapters like it and call upon anyone you can besides Allah, if you are truthful.” (Hud, 13)

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ  
وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

“And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it and call on your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful.” (al-Baqara, 23)<sup>171</sup>

قُلْ لَّيِّنَ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ  
لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

“Say: If men and jinn should combine together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like of it, even if they helped one another.” (al-Isra, 88)

But the idolaters continued with their unfounded claims that only served to reveal their own inconsistencies and misgivings.

إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ

“...This is nothing but enchantment, narrated (from others).”  
(al-Muddaththir, 24)

سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ

“...Transient magic.” (al-Qamar, 2)

إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ افْتَرَاهُ

“...This is nothing but a lie which he has forged.” (al-Furqan, 4)

إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

“...This is nothing but the stories of the ancients.” (al-Anaam, 25)

171. Also see, Yûnus, 38.

Up until now, the Quran's challenge to its enemies to bring forth a similar chapter has resulted in their utter defeat. And that is how it shall remain until the end of time.

Over the years, Christians have been able to raise priests eloquent enough to teach Arabic to Arabs. But none of them has ever had the nerve to answer the particular challenge of the Quran. Shouldn't the nonbelievers, who have endured all kinds of hardship just to extinguish the light of Islam, instead have simply tried to answer this challenge? Isn't just this historical fact enough to prove the greatness of the Quranic challenge and the helplessness of its enemies, as well as the impossibility of refuting it?

Many figures famed for their eloquence have worked for months on end behind closed doors without being able to even produce a verse at the end of their painstaking efforts. Musaylama and many others who tried producing alternatives to the Quran in fact only brought ridicule upon themselves, as what they wrote only served to highlight their own ineptness. This is because the Quran is not only a miracle of eloquence, but also a book that encompasses within itself all ages with all their truths. Therefore, it is certainly impossible for a vulnerable human being, who does not even know where and when he is to die, to produce a miraculous verse of truths beyond compare. The current fate of the Torah and the Bible are clear. Having been subjected to human intervention, both books are several removes from their origins and are now virtually a web of contradictions.

A look at past experiences provides the greatest and unchallengeable proof of the fact that the Holy Quran is a book of miraculous eloquence. From the first day of its revelation through to the 15 centuries that have passed as we speak, there has not been a single person to challenge the Divine Book with success.





Those who have tried have only humiliated themselves before all humankind and have incurred shame that will never leave them until the Final Hour.<sup>172</sup>

The Quran is neither poetry nor prose. It has a style that combines the characteristics of both poetry and prose with an unsurpassable inner harmony that presides over its style. One can feel the affects of this inner harmony in the depths of the soul whenever one recites the Quran. It only takes a slight alteration of the order of the wording to do away with both the harmony and the meaning.

With this characteristic, the Quran has had an enormous impact on people. Hearing its recital with the pure tongue of the Noble Prophet ﷺ has had many an Arab hasten to profess faith. As they could not produce a word of similar greatness, all idolaters accepted in their hearts the eloquence of the Quran. Their only reason for denying the Quran was that it stood in the way of their self-interests and that they found unbearable the idea of following an orphan in the Prophet ﷺ.

Ibn Abbas ؓ narrates that one day Walid ibn Mughira came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked him to recite the Quran. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ read him the following:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ  
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

“Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good (to others) and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids

172. Būti, *Min Rawāi'l-Kur'ān*, p. 126, 129, 130.



indecent and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful.” (an-Nahl, 90)

Walid asked the Prophet ﷺ to recite it again, after which he could not help but say:

“I swear, there is such sweetness, such beauty and brightness in these words that they resemble a lusciously green tree, with a moist root and fruits overhanging from its branches. It is impossible for any man to make these up. Nothing shall defeat them and they most certainly will overcome whoever resists them.”

Leaving in amazement, Walid got up and headed to the house of Abu Bakr ؓ and asked him a few questions about the Quran. Then, he turned up next to the leaders of Quraysh.

“The things the son of Abu Kabshah says are amazing indeed! I swear they are neither poetry, nor sorcery nor mad nonsense! What he says is without a doubt the word of Allah!” he said.

When Abu Jahl heard him, he grumbled:

“I swear that if Walid turns away from his religion then so will the rest of Quraysh!” He then immediately went next to Walid and mockingly said:

“Uncle, your tribesmen are collecting riches to give to you, because apparently you went to Muhammad to beg!”

“The Quraysh should know better. I am the richest man among them!” Walid replied.

“Then say such a thing about Muhammad that will make him know your denial and dislike of him”, Abu Jahl suggested.



“What should I say? I swear there isn’t anyone among you who knows poetry, *qasida* and *rajaz*<sup>173</sup> better than I. What he says doesn’t resemble any of that. I assure you that what I heard from Muhammad sounded nothing like the words of man or jinn. It had a magnificent sweetness and elegance to it”, Walid responded.

Abu Jahl was adamant.

“Your tribesmen will not approve of you until you say something against him!”

“Give me some time to think then”, Walid then said.

After he had his moment of thought, he came out to claim, “It is but the magic of old!” (Hakim, II, 550/3872; Tabari, Tafsir, XXIX, 195-196; Wahidi, s. 468)

His story is vividly retold in the Holy Quran:

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ فَقَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ثُمَّ قَتَلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ثُمَّ نَظَرَ  
 ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ  
 فَقَالَ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ

“Truly he reflected and plotted. May he be cursed—how he plotted! Again, may he be cursed how he plotted! Then he looked, Then he frowned and scowled, Then he turned back and was puffed up with pride, Then he said: This is naught but enchantment

173. *Rajaz* is one of the poetic meters in Arabic prosody. The rhythmic and accented meeting therein of a slow and fast tempo enables it to be performed by a host of different instruments, evoking thereby the rallying of a variety of feelings. Making possible the expression of both joy and sorrow, *rajaz* is moreover said to contain around fifteen subbranches. (Tahir’ul-Mevlevi, *Edebiyat Lüğati*, p. 120, “recez” article.)

that was passed down; this is naught but the speech of men.”  
(al-Mudaththir, 18-25)

Idolaters like Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahl and Ahnath ibn Shariq, who were preventing the public from listening to the Quran, once came to the Kaabah three nights in a row, without any knowledge of each other’s presence, to secretly listen to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ recite the Quran. However, they were left red faced when they accidentally bumped into each other. After a moments shock, they reproached themselves.

“Whatever happens, nobody must know of this! We’ll be disgraced if the others find out...Our words will no longer have any effect when we try to prevent them from listening to the Quran!” Then pledging not to repeat this ever, they separated. (Ibn Hisham, I, 337-338)

Many people accepted Islam due to this inner beauty of the Quran. Celebrated is the case of Omar ؓ, notorious for his temper, whose world was turned upside down in the house of his brother-in-law, when his heart melted, as well as his anger, at the pleasant sound of the Quran.

Another person who accepted Islam after becoming captivated by the Quran was Jubayr ibn Mutim ؓ. Hearing the recital of chapter at-Tur from the Prophet ﷺ, his heart quivered, after which he said:

“I thought my heart would crack!” (Ahmad, IV, 83, 85)

His own account of the event is as follows:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recite chapter Tur during the salat of maghrib.

أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ  
 أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ  
 أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيِّرُونَ

‘Or were they created without there being anything, or are they the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay! They have no certainty. Or have they the treasures of your Lord with them?’ (at-Tur, 35-37) At that point my heart was about to fly out of its cage from sheer excitement.” (Bukhari, Tafsir, 52)

During the first years of Prophethood, the sister of Imr’ul-Qays, the famous poet whose poems were hung on the wall of the Kaabah for their triumph in poetry contests, was still alive. They read a few *ayah* of the Quran to her. The woman, an expert in eloquence and clarity of speech, exclaimed:

“This cannot be the word of any human! With such words around on Earth, my brother’s poems no longer deserve to be displayed on the wall of the Kaabah! They must be brought down to make way for these!” She then removed her brother’s award winning poem from the Kaabah with her own hands. And naturally, the other lesser poems among the *Muallaqat* were also removed.<sup>174</sup>

Just listening to the Quran is enough for any person with the right mind to realize it is the word of Truth. It is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ was entrusted with the duty of presenting the Quran to the hearing of others.

The Quran in fact says:

174. See Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, I, 83.



وَأِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ  
حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ

“And if one of the idolaters seeks protection from you, grant him protection till he hears the word of Allah, then make sure he reaches his place of safety; this is because they are a people who do not know.” (at-Tawba, 6)

It is therefore clear that the delivery of the Divine word to people allows for the light of faith to take root in their hearts.

The melody of the Quran that captivates the soul springs from the harmony of its sound, from the impeccable arrangement of its words, long and short syllables and vowel points. Passing from one sound to another with exceptional harmony, it seduces hearts. Even those who do not understand its meaning can take much delight from its unique sound when the Quran is properly recited according to its rules.<sup>175</sup>

### Idolater Attitudes towards the Quran

Islam spoke of truth, justice, the Hereafter, resurrection and reckoning in the presence of Allah, promising that no wrong committed will be left unpunished. That Islam was therefore aiming to put an end to their egoistic lives was a disturbing thought for idolaters to entertain. Islam was moreover throwing their idols into disrepute, declaring them as false. With the additional “great news”

175. Even the recitation of the Quran alone has therefore developed as a separate branch of knowledge, which focuses on the ten different styles of recital, or *qiraah*, known as the ten canonical readings (*qiraat'ul-ashara*). Akin to the *imams* of *madhabs*, each manner of recital has its own initiators, known as an *imam* of *qiraah*. Prevalent in Turkey is the *qiraah* of Asim.

delivered by the Prophet ﷺ, Mecca began shaking. The opening of chapter Naba describes this terrifying scene thus:

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ عَنِ النَّبِإِ الْعَظِيمِ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ

“Of what do they ask one another? About the great news; about which they differ...” (an-Naba, 1-3)

Because human beings are naturally predisposed towards the truth, hearts are never satisfied with the unknown. They always run to what is known. What they do not know and what they may never know therefore causes them severe anguish. Despite having been given insight by prophets, humanity has always been occupied with the problem of death. The mystery of death eats away at the mind like a venomous snake and causes terrible anguish. Some try to dismiss it from time to time with various views and push its inevitability out of the realm of consciousness. But since death captures all with more tremendous force than even life itself, and because it is a reality that awaits all, to provide it with a clear explanation heads the list of the objectives of humanity.

This timeless riddle, impossible to grasp through human thinking, can only be undone with the power of Revelation. Though this news of the future brought by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and all prophets before him should have been welcomed with appreciation, it has only been met with ridicule and indifference by certain groups lacking even a modicum of human dignity. Idolaters and disbelievers leading a life opposite to the aim of creation, met the news of the Hereafter brought by the Prophet ﷺ with perplexity, and with a stubbornness and selfishness, turned their backs on the invite to eternal salvation, simply because it clashed with their selfish lifestyles.



The Quran speaks of the Hereafter as ‘the great news’. The reason for this is clear. Regardless of their particular conditions, human beings feel collective anguish at the face of death. That all the paths of life ultimately converge in death leaves all hearts, especially those of disbelief, in pain. One would expect at least the severity of any news regarding death to be understood, to the degree that for a living being there is no greater concern. In fact those who have come to a proper understanding have abandoned passing desires for the true, eternal life. A life without taking a lesson from death is no different from a life of darkness and disaster. The star of happiness is only born with death, at the end of a life lived beautifully, which is the very reason why Islam has advised the constant remembrance of and preparation for death.

Troubled with the Quran’s expressions regarding the Hereafter and death which, furthermore, clashed with their self-interests, the idolaters asked the Prophet ﷺ to change those news to their liking:

“Bring us a Quran that does not command us to stop worshipping Lat and Uzza. If Allah does not reveal a Quran as such, then you devise it, or change the one you have. Place mercy instead of punishment, permissible instead of unlawful, and vice versa!”

وَإِذَا تُلِيٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ  
لِقَاءَنَا أَنتِ بِقُرْآنٍ غَيْرِ هَذَا أَوْ بَدَّلَهُ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي  
أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مَنْ تَلَقَاءَ نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَّبَعِ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ  
إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

“And when Our clear communications are recited to them, those who hope not for Our meeting say: Bring a Quran other than this or change it. Say: It is not up to me that I should change it of myself; I





follow only what is revealed to me. If I disobey my Lord, I surely fear the punishment of a mighty day.” (Yunus, 15) (Wahidi, p.270; Alusi, XI, 85)

The idolaters did not know what to do. So they turned to oppressing, persecuting and torturing Muslims, which increased by the day and made life in Mecca unbearable. Like many other Muslims, Abu Bakr ﷺ also asked the Prophet ﷺ permission to migrate. Once he was given permission, he made his way towards Abyssinia.

One or two days into the journey, he came across Ibn Daghinah, the chief of the tribe of Qara. He said:

“A man like you, Abu Bakr, can neither leave his home nor be driven out. I swear you are the gem of your tribe! You do what’s good and look after your relatives. You labor for those who cannot! Turn back! You are under my protection!”

With Ibn Daghinah next to him, Abu Bakr ﷺ returned to Mecca. When they entered the town, Ibn Daghinah openly declared his protection. The Qurayshis laid down some conditions.

“Tell Abu Bakr to worship his God at home! Let him perform his salat and recite the Quran as much as he wants there. But he must not disturb us by performing the salat or reciting the Quran anywhere else! We fear he will enchant our women and children!”

Ibn Daghinah delivered the Meccan requests to Abu Bakr ﷺ who gave his agreement. He made a small place for salat in front of his home. There he began praying and reciting the Quran. As he was a gentle man with a tender heart, he would become emotional when reciting the Quran, unable to hold back his tears. The wives and children of the idolaters began to gather around him, and listen admiringly. This again worried the idolaters. They appealed to Ibn Daghinah to either prevent Abu Bakr ﷺ from doing this or lift his protection from him.



He sent Abu Bakr ﷺ the message:

“Either stay home and keep quiet or declare that you have left my protection!”

Fully resigned to the will of the Almighty, Abu Bakr ﷺ gave the following response:

“I return your protection to you. The protection of Allah is enough for me!” (Bukhari, Manaqib’ul-Ansar, 45; Ibn Hisham, I, 395-396)



Because the Arabs were very keen on literature, they admired and were greatly affected by eloquent words; so much so that sometimes even a rhyme was enough to praise one to the skies while humiliating another. Considering the enormous influence of the Quran which from time to time even had them under its grip, the idolaters took certain self-styled measures. In addition to having banned the recital of and listening to the Quran, the idolaters would also make noises to suppress the sound of the Quran they heard in one way or another, to prevent the warming of hearts towards it. Such is how the Almighty mentions them:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ  
وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ

“And those who disbelieve say: Do not listen to this Quran and make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome.” (Fussilat, 26)

Despite the ceaseless oppression and harassment of his tribe, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ continued delivering the message of Islam and inviting them to eternal salvation. The idolaters, on the other



hand, would greet the neighboring Arabs who visited Mecca for pilgrimage or other reasons outside of the town, to warn and even threaten them against approaching the Prophet ﷺ and taking notice of his words. Claiming the Prophet ﷺ to be a madman, a magician and so forth, they would seek to keep people away from him, with allegations they themselves did not even believe.

When Tufayl ibn Amr<sup>176</sup> came to Mecca, he was met by a few Meccan notables who suggested, “You are a poet much respected among your tribe, Tufayl. Though you have come to our town, beware of that man among us! His condition has us worried. He has completely disrupted our community. His words have the effect of magic and separate a man from his father, wife and siblings. We fear that what has happened to us will also happen to you and your tribe. So never should you speak to him nor listen to anything he has to say!”

Under the influence of these words, Tufayl decided not to speak and listen to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at all. When he went by the Kaabah, he even stuffed his ears with cotton in order not to hear, even by accident, any of the words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. A while later, he felt ashamed of his actions and he thought, “What am I thinking? I am a poet with sound reason. I can tell a good word from a bad one. Then what could be wrong with listening to what the man has to say? If it is good I will accept it, otherwise not.” He waited. After the Prophet ﷺ left for home, he caught up with him and said:

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176. Tufayl ibn Amr ad-Dawsi ؓ was an honorable, wise and hospitable man with a flair for poetry. His door was open to all visitors. He would feed the hungry, protect those seeking shelter and aid those in need of help. Following his acceptance of Islam in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Prophethood, up until the Hegira of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to Medina, he continued inviting his tribe Daws to Islam. He was eventually martyred in the Battle of Yamama after showing great courage.

“Muhammad! Your tribesmen said so and so about you to me. They scared me so much that I even stuffed my ears with cotton not to hear your words. Now something has come over me and I want to listen. Could you explain to me your cause?”

Tufayl describes what happened next:

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained Islam to me and recited the Quran. By Allah, I had never heard words more beautiful than the Quran, nor of a religion more beautiful than Islam. Right away I became a Muslim and bore witness that there is no god but Allah.”

After remaining with the Prophet ﷺ for a few days, Tufayl ﷺ asked permission to return to his tribe with the intention of spreading Islam. He asked the Noble Messenger ﷺ to pray to Allah the Almighty to give him a sign with which to call others to the path. With the blessing of the Prophet’s prayer, he was granted a light right between his eyes, on his forehead. Then with his request, the light moved from there to the edge of his stick. In this state, Tufayl ﷺ returned to his tribe, busying himself with struggling in the cause until ultimately becoming a martyr.<sup>177</sup>

The first person to heed to Tufayl’s ﷺ call to Islam was Abu Hurayrah ﷺ, the prominent Companion who narrated the greatest number of hadiths.<sup>178</sup>



Although they adopted such negative attitudes towards the Quran, when left alone with their consciences, the idolaters accepted

177. Ibn Hisham , I, 407-408; Ibn Saad, IV, 237-238.

178. Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, II, 226.



the truth in their hearts, unable to keep themselves from listening to the Quran in secret. But then they found another excuse:

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ

“And they say: If only this Qur’an had been revealed to some great man of the two towns?” (az-Zukhruf, 31)

Even though they recognized in their conscience the truth of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and the Quran, their egos prevented them from accepting. They agreed that the Quran was a revelation from Allah ﷻ, but they ascribed error to His will. Their thinking, veiled from the truth by their own selfishness, told them that the Quran should not have been revealed to an orphan of barely any wealth, but instead to either one of the rich men of Mecca and Ta’if, in Walid ibn Mughirah or Amr ibn Umayr.

Walid ibn Mughirah is in fact known to have said:

“Why should the Quran be revealed to Muhammad, when there is me, the elder and lord of Quraysh, or Amr ibn Umayr, the notable of Ta’if?” (Ibn Hisham, I, 385)

But the value of human beings in the sight of the Almighty comes neither from wealth or nobility, but from piety. Having said that, lineage wise, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was indeed the noblest among them.

### **Allegations against the Prophet ﷺ and the Quran**

The idolaters, left helpless against the Prophet ﷺ despite all that they had tried to muster, showed they could be stupid enough to claim he had learned the Quran from a Christian slave, despite being well aware of him being unlettered. Could they not think that



a slave capable of laying the foundations of a great religion would never leave the honor to another? Besides, after an effort of the kind, could he still remain a Christian?

The Quran responded to this unfounded claim:

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ الَّذِي  
يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ

“We know indeed that they say, “It is a man that teaches him.” The tongue of him they wickedly point to is notably foreign, while this is Arabic, pure and clear.” (an-Nahl, 103)

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ  
بِيَمِينِكَ إِذَا لَأَزْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

“And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand; for then could the naysayers have doubted.” (al-Ankabut, 48)

Moreover, the Almighty advised His Messenger ﷺ not to become upset over the claims of the idolaters:

فَذَكِّرْ فَمَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِكَاهِنٍ وَلَا مَجْنُونٍ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ  
نَتَرَبَّصُّ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمُنُونِ قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَرَبِّصِينَ

“Therefore continue to remind, for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a soothsayer, or a madman. Or do they say: A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of time? Say: Wait! For surely I too with you am of those who wait.” (at-Tur, 29-31)



قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ  
 افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا  
 تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَىٰ بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

“And when Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who disbelieve say with regard to the truth when it comes to them: This is clear magic. Nay! They say: He has forged it. Say: If I have forged it, you do not control anything for me from Allah; He knows best what you utter concerning it; He is enough as a witness between me and you, and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.” (al-Ahqaf, 7-8)

Without the slightest intention of entering the right path, the idolaters went to great lengths to make up claims against the Prophet ﷺ and the Quran. But they knew the truth. Fearing the spread of Islam outside the borders of Mecca, the notables of Quraysh gathered next to Walid ibn Mughirah, where they asked one another:

“What should we tell the visiting people about Muhammad?”

Walid had spoken to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and had listened to the Quran personally from him. He suggested:

“I know all kinds of poetry. What I heard from him was not a poem. It was superior. Neither was it prose. I have never heard such an elegant harmony pervaded by an exceptional eloquence from anyone before. They did not sound like words of sorcerers either. They were certainly not the ravings of madmen; I saw not one sign of madness in him. We can hardly call him a witch, because he does not engage in their activities!”

After these words, Walid forced himself to provide a solution, as if to assist the ill intentions of the idolaters:

“But he separates a man from his brother. He sows the seeds of conflict between relatives. Thus his word can only be magic!” (Ibn Jawzi, VII, 403-404; Hakim, II, 550; Wahidi, p. 468)



Unsuccessful in their allegations against the Quran, the idolaters this time turned their insults against the Prophet ﷺ himself. Taking advantage of the passing away of the Noble Prophet’s ﷺ two-year-old son Qasim, As ibn Wail began spreading the rumor that the Prophet ﷺ had become *abtar*, that is, his lineage had been cut off and become extinct. By doing this, they wanted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to fall into disfavor among the public and cancel his influence on people’s hearts.

But they found no success. Chapter Kawthar came like a slap in their faces:

إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

“Surely We have given you the Kawthar! Therefore pray to your Lord and make a sacrifice. Surely your enemy is the one who shall be cut off!” (al-Kawthar, 1-3)

As understood from the *ayah*, in whatever time and place, the common feature of those with malice towards the Noble Prophet ﷺ is that they are *abtar*, or cut off. This applies equally to the vulgar people with the nerve to claim the Blessed Messenger ﷺ was backward, to the idiots who try to project their own meanness onto the Best of Creation, and to the fools who see the religion of truth





he brought as a “law of the desert.” It is these and their ideas that are cut off, without prospect.

As expressed beautifully in a poem:

*The sun of your face  
Lights both worlds with grace.  
The accursed, with no love for your children,  
Are, on the Day, cut off more than Satan!*



Just like those who rejected previous messengers, those who could not stand the Prophet ﷺ were mainly arrogant leaders and a crew of spoiled rich individuals.

The Almighty states:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ  
كَافِرُونَ وَقَالُوا نَحْنُ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِينَ

“Never did We send a warner to a population, but the wealthy ones among them said: “We believe not in the (Message) with which ye have been sent.” Say: “Verily my Lord enlarges and restricts the Provision to whom He pleases, but most men understand not.””  
(Saba, 34-35)

وَلَا تَطْعُ كُلِّ حَلَاْفٍ مَّهِيْنٍ هَمَّازٍ مَّشَاءٍ بِنَمِيْمٍ مَّنَاعٍ  
لِّلْخَيْرِ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيْمٍ عُتْلٌ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ زَنِيْمٍ اَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِيْنٍ اِذَا  
تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ اٰیٰتُنَا قَالَ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ



“And yield not to any mean swearer, defamer, going about with slander, forbiddener of good, outstepping the limits, sinful; ignoble, besides all that, base-born; just because he possesses wealth and sons. When Our revelations are recited to him, he says: Stories of old.” (al-Qalam, 10-15)

In fact Abu Lahab, concerning whom chapter al-Masad had been revealed, was complaining:

“Down with a religion which treats me on a par with others!”

On the other hand, Abu Jahl, the fiercest enemy of the Noble Messenger ﷺ and Islam, would say, “We know what Muhammad says is true! But until now, whatever his clan did, we did the same. And now they boast of having a Prophet! Now how could we produce a Prophet like him from among us? Impossible! There is no way I can ever accept Muhammad’s prophethood!” (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 113)

Embittered, Abu Jahl had once also remarked during a fit of rage, “If I see him offer salat, I will stomp on his head!”

He later saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ offer salat by the Kaabah. Though he made a move to fulfill his promise, he suddenly grew pale and was overcome with fear. He could not even hold on to the rock that he had picked up in his hand. He turned his back and fled. Those around him asked what had gone wrong. Trembling, Abu Jahl replied:

“As I drew closer to him, I was met with a wild camel. I swear I have never seen a terrifying beast like that before! It was about to devour me!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 318; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 92-93)



They knew little that the Almighty had the Noble Messenger ﷺ and His religion under protection and He was constantly holding them superior.

Yet the idolaters still could not stomach the Prophet ﷺ and were distancing themselves from the truth of the Quran. They were simply running away from Divine reality:

فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ كَأَنَّهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُسْتَنْفِرَةٌ  
فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ

“What is then the matter with them that they turn away from the admonition, like frightened mules fleeing from a lion?”  
(al-Muddaththir, 49-51)

That the idolaters kept distance from the Truth even though they knew, and that guidance is only in the hands of the Almighty is treated nicely by a poem:

*Ability does not suffice, Lord, without guidance from You,  
To Abu Jahl, though he knew Arabic, what could a verse do?*

Time came when, as part of the Divine test, the stubborn turning away of the idolaters grew into an unbearable persecution of Muslims.

### **The Period of Torture**

Unable to get what they wanted from Abu Talib and failing to receive a compromise from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, this time the idolaters turned to terror as their solution. At first they could not harm those who hailed from large families or clans; the oppression of the Muslims had not yet become widespread. The Muslims subjected



to the torture of the idolaters then were mainly poor, without many relatives, and slaves, male and female alike. There was virtually no form of torture which they had not been subjected to.

Khabbab رضي الله عنه<sup>179</sup> was made to lie on fiery coal which was seared into his chest until the flame was put out by the melting fat of his own skin.

He was a blacksmith who had money owed to him by some idolaters. Each time he asked for it, they would say, “First reject Muhammad then we will repay our debts!”

But putting passing worldly riches aside, Khabbab رضي الله عنه would reply, “I will never reject him! I am by his side!” and choose eternal happiness.

He gives an account of one these painful episodes below:

“One day I went to As ibn Wail to ask for my money. He said ‘I will not pay until you deny Muhammad.’

‘I will never deny Muhammad until you die...No, not even after you’re resurrected!’ I replied.

‘What? I am to die and be resurrected?’ he remarked.

‘Yes’, I responded.

‘Then considering I will still be rich when I am resurrected, I will pay you then!’ he said.

179. Khabbab ibn Arat رضي الله عنه was the sixth Muslim, and among the victims of the vicious torment exacted by the idolaters. He carried the scars of his torture on his back until the day he died. Following his migration to Medina, he took active part in all battles from Badr onwards. He narrated a total of 32 ahadith from the Noble Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم. He was well past seventy years of age at the time of his demise in Kufa, in 657. (37 AH)

This was when the following Revelation came:

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتِيَنَّ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا . أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ  
 أَمْ آتَخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا . كَلَّا سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهُ مِنَ  
 الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا . وَنَرْتُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا .

“Have you, then, seen him who disbelieves in Our communications and says: I shall certainly be given wealth and children? Has he gained knowledge of the unseen, or made a covenant with the All-Beneficent? By no means! We write down what he says, and We will lengthen to him the length of the chastisement. And We will inherit of him what he says, and he shall come to Us alone.” (Maryam, 77-80) (Bukhari, Tafsir, 19/3; Muslim, Munafiqeen, 35-36; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 19/3162)

Neither did his female master Umm Ammar lag behind others when it came to torturing Khabbab رضي الله عنه. With a heated iron, she would brand Khabbab’s رضي الله عنه forehead. Khabbab رضي الله عنه complained of Ummu Anmar to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, who prayed:

“Help Khabbab, o Allah!” Soon afterwards, Umm Anmar caught a disease on her head, making her howl like a dog. They advised her to brand her head to soothe the pain. So upon her request, with a heated iron, Khabbab رضي الله عنه in turn began branding her head on a regular basis.<sup>180</sup>

Bilal رضي الله عنه<sup>181</sup> was subjected to the most ruthless forms of torture. His master Umayya ibn Khalef would inflict him with the severest

180. See Ibn Asir, *Usdu'l-Ghaba*, II, 115.

181. Bilal ibn Rabah –radiyallahu anh- was more commonly known as Bilal Habashi in reference to his *Habash*, i.e. Abyssinian descent. He was among the

of sufferings. He would make Bilal lie down on scorching sand and place huge rocks on his chest, sometimes dragging him through the streets of Mecca. After leaving Bilal ﷺ without food and water for a day and night, Umayya would make him wear an iron armor, placing him on scorching sand under the sun, where Bilal ﷺ would remain until his body fat would begin to melt.

Despite torturing him in unthinkable ways, the idolaters still could not get Bilal ﷺ to say what they wanted, and he would constantly utter:

“Allah is One, Allah is One, Allah is One!”<sup>182</sup>

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first seven in Mecca to openly declare their faith. His mother Hamama was also a Muslim, owing to which both suffered much torment from the idolaters during the initial years of Islam. Celebrated for calling out the first ever *adhan* in Medina in the first year of Hegira, Bilal constantly served as the *muaddhin* of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, in both war and peace. He participated in all the battles by the side of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. On the day of the Conquest of Mecca, he ascended the roof of the Kaabah to call out the *adhan* of victory. Bilal used to prepare water for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to make wudu, see to his personal needs, keep an eye over him at night during battles and provide assistance in matters of the state. He no longer could recite the *adhan* following the passing away of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. When Omar ؓ was Caliph, Bilal left Medina to take part in battles across Syria. People there asked the Caliph to personally mediate so that he would again call out the *adhan*. Compliant with the request of Omar ؓ, Bilal called out the *adhan* one more time. (Dhahabi, Siyar, I, 357) Reminiscing the times of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, all listeners were reduced to tears. Bilal Habashi ؓ narrated 44 hadiths from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The great devotee of the Prophet ﷺ eventually breathed his last in Damascus, having lived over sixty years. Right before his death, it is reported that he was jovially exclaiming, “Tomorrow, Allah willing, I shall reunite with my dear friends... the Messenger of Allah and his companions.” His wife mourning the looming death of her husband in the background, Bilal, in the meantime, was expressing joy, murmuring, “How wonderful...” (Dhahabi, Siyar, I, 359)

182. See Ahmed, I, 404; Ibn Saad, III, 233; Balâzurî, I, 186.

At times the idolaters took this even a step further. Yasir رضي الله عنه<sup>183</sup>, the father of Ammar رضي الله عنه, did not say what the idolaters wanted to hear and so was martyred under heavy torture. After being subjected to a similarly brutal torture, Ammar's mother Sumayyah رضي الله عنها was savagely martyred by having both her feet tied to different camels steered to opposite directions. Hence Yasir's family رضي الله عنهم became the first martyrs of Islam.<sup>184</sup>

One day the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم came across this noble family as they were being tortured, and he said:

“Be patient! Be glad! For undoubtedly what awaits you is paradise!” (Hakim, III, 432, 438)

Undergoing tortures of horrendous kinds was also Ammar رضي الله عنه.<sup>185</sup>

The idolaters one day got hold of Ammar رضي الله عنه, and forcefully holding his head under water, screamed, “We will not let you go until you insult Muhammad and praise Lat and Uzza!” And they did force him to say it.

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم was told:

“Ammar has renounced Islam!”

But the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied:

183. Originally from Yemen, Yasir ibn Amir رضي الله عنه had taken residence in Mecca where he married Sumaya, the slave of Abu Hodayfa. Together they had two sons, Ammar and Abdullah رضي الله عنهما (Ibn Saad, IV,136, VIII, 264). Yasir's family collectively accepted Islam, for which they were forced to undergo torture.

184. See Ibn Hajar, al-Isâba, III, 648; Zamakhshari, III, 164.

185. Ammar's precious worth is verified by the following words of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم: “Paradise itches to unite with three people: Ali, Ammar and Salman”; “Ammar always makes the best choice of what is offered to him”. (Tirmidhi, Menâkib, 32, 34; Ibn Mâce, Mukaddime, 11)



“No! Ammar is filled with faith from head to toe. Faith has mixed into his flesh and blood!”

In the meantime, a weeping Ammar ؓ came next to the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Wiping the tears from of his eyes, the Prophet ﷺ asked him what had happened.

“They would not let me go, Messenger of Allah” said the tearful Ammar, “until I insulted you and said that the idols are better than your Religion...”

“How was your heart when you said these?” the Prophet ﷺ inquired.

“Content with belief in Allah and His Messenger...and my loyalty to the religion was stronger than iron!” Ammar replied determinedly.

Then still wiping the tears of Ammar’s eyes with his own hands, the Prophet ﷺ advised him, “If they again force you to say what you said, then do it again!”

Upon this incident, the following *ayah* was revealed:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ  
وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ  
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

“Any one who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters unbelief,- except under compulsion, his heart remaining firm in faith - but such as open their breast to unbelief, on them is wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful penalty.” (an-Nahl, 106) (Ibn Saad, III, 249; Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, II, 67; Haythami, IX, 295; Wahidi, p. 288-289)





This incident provides legal proof that an expression contrary to Islamic creed can only be said in a life and death situation and is otherwise not permissible.

The enemies of Islam used to beat Suhayb رضي الله عنه<sup>186</sup> until he would fall unconscious.

Zinnira رضي الله عنها was a female slave who suffered all kinds of torment at the hands of idolaters. She temporarily lost her vision from the effects of the torture exacted by Abu Jahl, on top of which he even mocked her, “See? Lat and Uzza have blinded you!”

“No! By Allah, they are not the ones who have blinded me. Lat and Uzza can neither harm nor benefit. Surely my Lord can give me my sight back!” she replied.

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186. Suhayb ibn Sinan رضي الله عنه, or more famously known as Suhayb ar-Rumi, while still a child, was taken prisoner first by the Greeks and then by the Arabs. Staying in Mecca at the time as an ally of Ibn Jadan, Suhayb immediately accepted Islam upon hearing about it from Ammar. Relinquishing all his wealth to the idolaters, he made an illustrious migration to Medina. The following *ayah* was revealed in reference to him:

وَمَنْ التَّاسِ مَنْ يُشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

“...And there are those who give away their belongings in order to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Compassionate to His servants.” (al-Baqara, 207)

Upon seeing him following the Revelation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ exclaimed:

“You have made a profitable, a rewarding deal indeed *Abu Yahya!*” (Hâkim, III, 450-452) A skillful archer, Suhayb رضي الله عنه played a part in all the battles by the side of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Of medium height, he had fair skin. A man of enormous generosity who sacrificed his entire life in the service of Islam, Suhayb ar-Rumi رضي الله عنه passed away on the 38<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira and was buried in the Baqi Cemetary in Medina. He was 73 at the time.



Come morning, they all saw that Allah had given Zinnira's sight back. (Ibn Hisham, I, 340-341; Ibn Athir, al-Kamil, II, 69; Usdu'l-Ghabah, VII, 123)

Many more Muslims had fallen victim to such pain and suffering. Among the exceptional companions of the Prophet ﷺ Amir ibn Fuhayra, Abu Fuqayha, Miqdad ibn Amr, Ummu Ubays, Lubaynah, Nahdiyah and her daughter ة, are just to name a few. Tying chains around their feet, the idolaters would drag them out to the desert in the hottest hours of the day and placing rocks above them so they could not move, would ruthlessly torture them until they would faint and loose awareness of what they said. The idolaters would choke them and would not let go until they thought they were dead.<sup>187</sup>

All Muslims and most of all the Blessed Prophet ﷺ were deeply saddened by this, but unfortunately they could do little.<sup>188</sup> But the pillar of faith Abu Bakr ؓ, who was well-to-do, bought seven slaves including Bilal ؓ from their idolater masters and freed them, saving them from the claws of brutal torture.

Still, the torment was increasing by the day. After the weak and poor Muslims, even the more powerful and wealthier ones got their

187. See Ibn Majah, Muqaddima, 11; Ahmed, I, 404.

188. Mehmed Akif gives poetic voice to the grief felt by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ over the sufferings Muslims were being afflicted with:

*From the Prophet, do not you feel any shame?  
That, if a thorn was to spike a Muslim, far away,  
His innocent heart would be speared with its pain,  
So against you, surely, will His Spirit stake a claim...*

Hence, one must always act with the awareness that making a Muslim suffer is tantamount to placing the Blessed Prophet ﷺ under the same ordeal; and that requires one to refrain from infringing with others' rights, backbiting, breaking hearts and misconducts of similar malicious nature.

share of suffering, like the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself, Abu Bakr, Othman, Zubayr ibn Awwam and Musab ibn Umayr ؓ.

By provoking the louts of Mecca, the idolaters would set them against the Noble Prophet ﷺ. It had become common to verbally abuse him, calling him a poet, a sorcerer, a magician, a madman and so forth, without even believing their lies themselves.<sup>189</sup>

Abdullah ibn Amr says he once saw the Prophet ﷺ perform salat by the site of Hijr near the Kaabah, when Uqba ibn Abi Muayt came, and wrapping his shawl around the Noble Messenger's neck, began tugging it to strangle the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Abu Bakr ؓ made it in enough time to push Uqbah away, as he yelled:

“Will you murder a man who has come with clear proofs from your Lord, only because he says ‘my Lord is Allah?’” (Bukhari, Tafsir, 40)

Ibn Masud ؓ recounts a similar incident.

“One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was performing salat by the Kaabah. Already waiting there was Abu Jahl and his crew. Referring to a camel that had been slaughtered a day before, Abu Jahl said to the others:

‘Who dares to bring the entrails of the slaughtered camel and place them on Muhammad’s shoulder just as he goes down to prostrate?’

The most wretched among them quickly went and grabbed the entrails and placed them on the shoulder of the Noble Messenger ﷺ as he was prostrating. They all laughed. I was looking on from a distance. If I had anyone to protect me, I would have quickly removed them from his shoulders. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ meanwhile was still prostrating. He had not lifted his head. Then someone went and

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189. See Ibn Hisham, I, 309-310.



told Fatima ؓ, who back then was still a young child. She came and threw the entrails off from her father's shoulders. Then she turned around and shouted imprecations at the idolaters. They could not respond to Fatima ؓ in the least. After completing his salat, the Light of Being ﷺ raised his voice and said:

'O Allah! I resign Quraysh to You!' He repeated this three times.

The laughter of the idolaters was cut short when they heard the Prophet's ﷺ imprecation. Fear seized their hearts, as they had actually witnessed the acceptance of his prayers on previous occasions before. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then mentioned their names one by one:

'O Allah! I resign Abu Jahl, Utbah, Shaybah, Walid, Umayya ibn Khalef and Uqba ibn Abi Muayt to You' he prayed.

I swear by the One who has sent His Messenger with the Truth that I later saw each person mentioned by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that day, sprawled out dead on the battlefield of Badr. They were later dragged and thrown into Badr's pit." (Bukhari, Salat 109, Jihad 98, Jizya 21; Muslim, Jihad 107)

Despite all the cruelties the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had to face, he still did not give in to the idolaters in any way, compromising not an inch of Islam. He once asked the Companions:

"Who will go to the Kaabah and recite the Quran to the idolaters?"

Wholeheartedly agreeing, Abdullah ibn Masud ؓ ended up going and reciting the Quran to them only to be viciously beaten up. Abdullah's friends said to him:

"This is what we had feared for you!"

“Right now, there is nobody weaker than them in my sight. If you like I can go again tomorrow and make them listen to the Quran!” Abdullah replied.

But his friends talked him out of it.

“You have already made them listen to something they dislike. That is enough for you!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 336-337)





Whenever Abu Jahl heard a rich and powerful person accept Islam, he would go and taunt him.

“So you left the religion of your father even though he was wiser than you? But look at you...all you can do is to dishonor his name! Just know that we will no longer have you among us. Your honor shall no longer be!” he would say in a threatening tone.

If the person was a trader, he would intimidate them:

“We will ruin your business and bleed you dry!”

If the new Muslim was poor and weak, he would have them beaten and would try to trick them with false hopes in hope of turning them away.

Ibn Abbas  was later asked whether the Blessed Prophet  and his companions were tortured to give up Islam.

“Indeed! By Allah, once the idolaters got their hands on a Muslim, they would beat him and leave him without food and water to the point where they could no longer sit straight, at which point he or she would say whatever they wanted him to. They would ask:

‘Are Lat and Uzza gods along with Allah?’ The reply would be ‘Yes’.



They would even show a bug crawling nearby and ask whether even that was a god. Just to get away from the unbearable torture the person would go along with them. But after regaining conscience, he or she would return to the belief.” (Ibn Hisham, I, 339-343; Ibn Saad, III, 233; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 108)

What we must do is to think about the scenes of cruelty we have touched upon, as well as those we have not, and appreciate that the blessing of Islam has reached us only through the suffering of numerous people, without any compromise.



If the Almighty had willed, the development and spread of Islam could have been much easier, without the suffering of any Muslims. But then the sincerity of Believers would never have been known, and their determination and sacrifice would never have come out, meaning that the difference between a Believer and a hypocrite, the truthful and the liar would have been blurred.

In the Quran, the Almighty states:

الم أَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ  
وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ  
صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ

“Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, ‘we believe’, and not be tried? Most certainly We tried those before them, so Allah will certainly know those who are true and He will



certainly know the liars. Or do they who work evil think that they will escape Us? Evil is what they judge!” (al-Ankabut, 1-3)

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ  
جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ الصَّابِرِينَ

“Do you think that you will enter Paradise while Allah has not yet known those who strive hard among you, and (He has not) known the patient?” (Al-i Imran, 142)

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا  
مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ  
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ

“Or do you think that you would enter Paradise while yet the state of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you; distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently, so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said: When will the help of Allah come? Now surely the help of Allah is nigh!” (al-Baqara, 214)

The path of Truth is paved with tough trials. Such is how the Almighty has willed it. All prophets and persons of virtue have suffered and some have even been martyred for the cause. It is therefore not right for a Muslim to fall into despair when faced with difficulties. On the contrary, Muslims ought to know that the more trouble they endure in the way of realizing the command of the Compassionate, the more quickly they will attain His mercy.

### Advising Muslims with Perseverance and Patience

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ was after all a human being, saddened by the negative attitude he was met with, and grieved by the ugly behavior of those he was striving to guide. He went through such difficult times that he needed to be comforted.

His comfort and support came from his Lord, who did not want His Messenger to be overcome with grief:

إِنَّ فَضْلَهُ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيرًا

“...Surely His grace to you is abundant.” (al-Isra, 87)

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنكَ كُفْرُهُ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ  
بِمَا عَمِلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ نُمَتِّعُهُمْ قَلِيلًا  
ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

“And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you; to Us is their return, then will We inform them of what they did. Surely Allah is the Knower of what is in the breasts. We give them to enjoy a little, then will We drive them to a severe chastisement.” (Luqman, 23-24)

وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُن فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ

“And grieve not for them and be not distressed because of what they plan.” (an-Naml, 70)

The Almighty was thus reassuring His Messenger, advising him to be patient:





فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ  
قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ

“Therefore be patient of what they say, and sing the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before the setting.” (Qaf, 39)

His determination strengthened by these *ayah*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was easing the pain of his companions and mending their broken hearts.

Khabbab رضي الله عنه explains:

“One day while he was under the shade of the Kaabah, we went to the Prophet ﷺ, complaining to him of the torment of the idolaters.

‘Among the people before you’, he began to explain, ‘there were believers who were caught and placed in a ditch and were cut head down into two halves with saws; and there were those whose flesh was flayed with steel rakes, who still did not turn away from their religion. I assure you by Allah that He shall complete His religion and grant it supremacy. So much so that a person will be able to journey from Sana to Hadramut without fear, except of wolves for his sheep. But you are being impatient!’” (Bukhari, *Manaqib’ul-Ansar*, 29)

Then the Blessed Prophet ﷺ recited the following verses:

لَا يَغُرَّنَّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ  
مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ



جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا  
مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ

“Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the towns fearlessly. A brief enjoyment, then their abode is hell, an evil resting-place. But as for those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord, they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding in them; an entertainment from their Lord, and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous.” (Al-i Imran, 196-198)

As the idolaters’ persecution increased, *ayah* of the kind above served to console the hearts of Believers. In this sense, together with drawing the person closer to the Creator, severe tests and hardship served as Divine scales measuring the trust and submission of Believers in their Lord. The most fitting attitude for Muslims to display in times like these is mentioned in the Quran as such:

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ آثِمًا أَوْ كَفُورًا. وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا. وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا.

“Therefore wait patiently for the command of your Lord, and obey not from among them a sinner or an ungrateful one. And glorify the name of your Lord morning and evening. And during part of the night adore Him, and give glory to Him a long (part of the) night.” (al-Insan, 24-26)

It was certain for a Muslim who heard these instructions to become content at heart and acquire strength and patience to endure sufferings of all kinds. Especially the tahajjud salat performed at night served to bring the Believer closer to Allah and



grant the soul with so much strength that the truth become fixed in the heart. The Almighty indeed says:

إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْءًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلاً

“Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing (the soul), and most suitable for (framing) the Word (of Prayer and Praise).” (al-Muzzammil, 6)

Although the command to perform tahajjud is directly exclusive to the Prophet ﷺ, nonetheless it is something the rest of his ummah can do if they wish, according to their capacities. The same goes for the rest of the other forms of supererogatory worship that have been advised for the pious to the extent it aids in spiritual progress.



Allah ﷻ, who has blessed believers with paths of happiness moreover declares:

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

“And say: “Truth has (now) arrived, and Falsehood perished: for Falsehood is (by its nature) bound to perish.”” (al-Isra, 81)

However, those responsible for advancing the Truth are required to do what they can. As man faces many difficulties due to the test of servanthood, he may never reach the desired end without putting up a struggle.

The Almighty states that this also holds true for prophets:



حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اسْتَيْسَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا  
فَنَجَّيْنَا مِنَ النَّشَاءِ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

“Until when the messengers despaired and the people thought they had been told a lie, Our help came to them and whom We pleased was delivered; and Our punishment is not averted from the guilty people.” (Yusuf, 110)

The more Muslim hearts were being relieved and their efforts increased by the revelation of these verses, the more enraged the idolaters were becoming. Far from stopping their torments of the Noble Messenger ﷺ and the Companions, they were every day coming up with new methods of cruelty. The suffering Muslims were made to go through what was seemingly never ending, becoming more unbearable by the day.

Things got so out of hand that even the horrendous thought of assassinating the Blessed Prophet ﷺ began to cross the minds of the idolaters. Still, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the exemplar of patience, was seeking the protection only from the Almighty.

Not wanting His Messenger to give in to grief and agony, the Almighty was warning him:

فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْلِفًا وَعْدَهُ رُسُلَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ

“Never think that Allah would fail his messengers in His promise: for Allah is Exalted in power, - the Lord of Retribution.”  
(Ibrahim, 47)

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَهُمْ



كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنْ نَّهَارٍ

“Therefore bear up patiently, as did the messengers endowed with constancy bear up with patience. And do not seek to hasten for them (their doom). On the day that they shall see what they are promised, they shall be as if they had not tarried save an hour of the day. A sufficient exposition! Shall then any be destroyed save the transgressing people?” (al-Ahqaf, 35)



## THE FIFTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

### The Abyssinian Migration

Due to the idolaters' ruthless persecution, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised the believers to migrate, as neither could they freely perform their religious duties, nor could they fulfill their obligation of spreading the religion.

When the Companions asked where they could possibly migrate to, the Prophet ﷺ said:

“To Abyssinia! Over there is a king who does not oppress his subjects! It is moreover a land of the upright! Until the Almighty provides a path of escape from your sufferings, remain there!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 343; Ibn Saad, I, 203-204)

This first migration took place in the month of Rajab, in the fifth year of the Meccan era.

The first batch consisted of a total of seventeen people; twelve males and five females. It included notable companions like Othman ibn Affan and his wife Ruqayya, Zubayr ibn Awwam, Musab ibn Umayr, Abdurrahman ibn Awf, Abu Salama, Othman ibn Ma'zun and Ibn Masud ؓ.

When the migrants, who had left Mecca in secret, reached the pier of Shuaybah, as a blessing of Allah ﷻ, two trading ships arrived. In return for half a coin of gold, they were delivered to



Abyssinia. Although the Meccans did come after the migrants, they could not catch them. By the time they had reached the shore, the ship had long departed. (Ibn Saad, I, 204)

For a while, the Prophet ﷺ did not receive any news from Othman ibn Affan and his daughter Ruqayya ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ would go outside at times and ask for news of his daughter from travelers coming from the direction of Abyssinia. Finally, a Qurayshi woman arrived with some news.



“Muhammad! I saw them there. Othman had Ruqayya on a donkey, while he was following them behind on foot”, she said to the Prophet ﷺ.

Then the Prophet ﷺ remarked:

“May Allah be on their side! Surely, Othman is the first person since Lut ﷺ who has migrated with his family for the sake of Allah!”  
(Ali al-Muttaqi, XIII, 63/36259)

The first migrants could only stay in Abyssinia for three months because a rumor had spread that the Meccans had embraced Islam. So on the month of Shawwal in the same year, a group of thirty-nine migrants, consisting of thirty-three males and nine females, left Abyssinia. However, when they came within a distance of Mecca, they found out what they heard was untrue. But they could not bear returning to Abyssinia. They also feared entering Mecca without protection. They eventually entered the town under the protection of their relatives or friends from among the idolaters. (Ibn Hisham, II, 3-8; Ibn Saad, I, 206; Haythami, VI, 33)

### **The *Gharaniq* Issue**

When the chapter an-Najm had just been revealed, the Noble Prophet ﷺ began reciting it out loud near the Kaabah. When he came to the verse of prostration at the end of the chapter, he fell prostrate to Allah, and so did everyone else present, believers and nonbelievers, man and jinn alike. (Bukhari, Tafsir, 53/4)

However, the idolaters were not in fact prostrating to Allah ﷻ, but to their idols Lat, Uzza and Manat whose names are derogatorily mentioned in the chapter.

This is the event that has provided material for the ‘Gharaniq Issue’ fabricated later.



The rumor that the Meccans had accepted Islam was due to this dual prostration that had taken place at the same time, only one of which belonged to the Muslims.

Even though this is all there was to it, a slander by the name of Gharaniq (which mean ‘cranes’) was later made up. It is alleged that Satan whispered an addition to the Divinely revealed *ayah* something of the meaning that the ‘intercession of idols is to be hoped for’, which supposedly sent the idolaters in a frenzied joy, for which they fell prostrate in celebration; and only later was the error apparently realized.

This story has been taken as fact by some, like orientalists, who have been hostile towards Islam. But leading scholars of tafsir, hadith and Prophetic-Islamic history have examined both the narrative chain and content of this rumor in relation to Islamic principles, and as a result have rejected it outright.

Firstly, the Prophet’s ﷺ duty of delivering Divine Revelation to mankind has been protected from error and blunder. It is impossible for Satan to interfere with the duty of prophets. Considering the Almighty has stated that Satan cannot exercise control even on believers<sup>190</sup>, it is unthinkable to suppose he can interfere with the Blessed Prophet’s ﷺ call.

In addition to being protected from all kinds of blunder, error and sin in his duty, the Quran delivered through the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is equally under Divine protection.

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ  
تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

190. See al-Hijr, 42.



“Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the Wise, the Praised One.” (Fussilat, 42)

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian.”(al-Hijr, 9)

The narrative chain of the Gharaniq incident is unacceptable. In relation, Ibn Khuzayma is known to have called it a “lie of heretics”.<sup>191</sup>

That this supposed event has not been transmitted in an unbroken and authentic chain suffices to show its falsity.<sup>192</sup>

Neither can reason accept the Gharaniq claim, as it alleges polytheistic behavior, against the Islamic emphasis on the unity of Allah from the very beginning. Such claims that run against this basic, which is the cement of Islam, can never be reasonable. Chapter an-Najm just mentioned condemns idolatry from beginning to end, underlining the fact that idols are mere names and that the idolaters are simply following their vain desires. Even if the outrageous possibility is granted that a sentence, which the idolaters like so much to the point of falling prostrate, can be mixed into Divine Revelation, it is still unthinkable to assume the idolaters would be convinced. Amid all those verses that put the idolaters down, surely they could not have prostrated just for a couple of sentences allegedly mixed in by Satan.

The best response to this claim is given at the beginning of the chapter itself:

191. İsmâil Cerrahoğlu, *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, “Garanîk” entry, XIII, 363.

192. Qâdî İyâd, II, 132.



مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ  
إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ

“Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray. Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed.”

(an-Najm, 2-4)

Muslim scholars have proven from many angles that this is a mere claim that has come about as a result of anti-Islamic hostility. Besides, the thirteen-year Meccan period was a struggle to get rid of idolatry and reinforcing belief in the unity of Allah in the hearts, which cannot in any way suffer ascribing partners to Him.

### The Second Abyssinian Migration

Once the Meccans found out that the first migrants had been very well received in Abyssinia, their concern grew and, as a result, so did their ruthlessness.

Othman ibn Ma’zun رضي الله عنه, who until then lived comfortably under the protection of Walid ibn Mughirah, began thinking once he saw that the Prophet ﷺ and his companions were made to go through incredible torment, some branded with fire, others whipped.

“By Allah, it is not right for me to be safe and sound under the protection of an idolater, far from the torment that my friends undergo in the way of Allah! Allah’s protection is greater and more honorable!” Thinking this way, he went to Walid ibn Mughirah, his protector. He said:

“Cousin! You have had me under protection! You have protected me very well and have been a man of your word. But now I wish to leave your protection and go next to the Prophet ﷺ. For



me, he and his companions set the best example. Now take me to the men of Quraysh and tell them you have lifted my protection!”  
(Ibn Ishaq, p. 158; Haythami, VI, 34)

As the Meccan oppression and persecution got more violent, the Muslims were forced to migrate to Abyssinia for the second time that year. This time they were ninety in number; seventy males and thirteen females. They were headed by Jafar Tayyar ﷺ, the older brother of Ali ﷺ.<sup>193</sup>

Layla ﷺ explains:

“Omar was very angry with us for accepting Islam. I was astride a camel as we were preparing to leave for Abyssinia when he came and asked where we were going.

‘You have oppressed us for what we believe. So now we are going somewhere where we shall not be oppressed.’

‘May Allah be with you’, he said softly.

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193. Jafar ibn Abi Talib ﷺ, the cousin of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, had become a Muslim well before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the House of Arqam as base for communicating Islam, participating in the Second Abyssinian Migration with his wife Asma bint Umays. (Ibn Saad, IV, 34)

Jafar ibn Abi Talib and his fellow migrants returned to Medina from Abyssinia, in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Hegira, during the siege of Khaybar. The homecoming migrants were also given a share of the spoils. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 38)

Jafar took part in the Battle of Muta in the following year, where he was martyred. Ibn Omar testifies to seeing his body bearing over ninety wounds inflicted by swords, arrows and spears alike. (Bukhari, Maghazi, 44)

Referring to the fact the Jafar had both his arms severed during the Battle, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ famously said, “I saw Jafar flying with angels in Paradise”, indicating he had been given two wings in their place. (Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 29/3763)

Jafar has thereafter after been called *Tayyar*, meaning one who soars in flight.

When my husband Amir came around, I told him of Omar's tender attitude. He said:

'I think you wish for him to receive guidance. But by Allah, there is greater hope for his donkey to become Muslim!'

Such was Omar's staunchness until then that he had made others despair that he could ever believe." (Haythami, VI, 23-24)

Ummu Salamah رضي الله عنها, the future wife of the Noble Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم, has said:

"From the moment we stepped foot in Abyssinia, the Negus treated us with great honor and respect. He always looked out for us. We performed our duties to Allah in peace and security." (Ahmad, I, 201-202)

The account below of Ummu Habibah رضي الله عنها, another of the migrants of Abyssinia, shows the level of long distance affection the Muslims had for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

"The Negus had a slave-girl by the name of Abrahah. Engaged to the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم in Abyssinia and as I was preparing to leave for Medinah, she came to me and said:

'I ask you to send my greetings to the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and tell him that I have entered his Religion.'

Abrahah was very kind to me throughout. She even helped me prepare for the journey. Each time she came next to me, she made sure to remind me of her request.

When I came to Medina, I told about her to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم during the wedding and delivered him her greetings. The Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم smiled and accepted:

'...*wa aleyhassalam wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.*' (Ibn Saad, VIII, 98)



## THE SIXTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

### **Meccans Request the Negus to Hand over the Muslims**

Though they took little notice of the first Abyssinian migration, the Meccan idolaters were alarmed after hearing the kind treatment the Muslims received there. If Islam was to begin spreading outside of Arabia, they thought, things could really get out of control. Thus they made an immediate decision to ask the Negus to extradite the Muslims, for which they sent Abdullah ibn Rabia and Amr ibn As with loads of gifts to entice the king and his commanders.


Once Abu Talib heard the news that Quraysh had sent an envoy to Abyssinia, he quickly wrote a poem to the Negus himself, praising him and warning him to beware of Meccan tricks. (Ibn Hisham, I, 356)

Before speaking in the presence of the Negus, Amr and Abdullah were able to lure the commanders with their gifts. They later presented the Negus with gifts, after which they introduced themselves and spoke:

“Your majesty! Some of our dimwitted youths have sought protection in your land. Though they have abandoned the religion of their forefathers, they have not accepted yours either and instead, they have gone and invented a new one! So their relatives have sent



us to have them returned. After all, their tribesmen would know them and their wrongdoings better than anybody else.”


The envoy feared that the Negus would listen to Jafar  and his friends and fall under their influence. Thus they wanted the migrants to be handed over before the Negus decided to listen to their side of the story.

The Negus’ commanders spoke in support:

“Your majesty, these men speak the truth. We cannot know their tribesmen better than them. We should hand the migrants over and let them sort this out between themselves.”

“Never!” the Negus intervened angrily. “I shall not give them up before listening to them first! I can do no wrong to people who have chosen my land over others for protection!”

The Negus then sent for the migrants, as well as his priests, who opened their books and sat around the King.

When the migrants arrived, the Negus decided to face both sides in his presence. It was a historical moment. The spokesperson for the Muslims was Jafar , and it was to him the Negus turned first:

“Quraysh has sent an envoy to take you back to Mecca”, he said.

“Ask them, your Majesty. Are we slaves, that they would want to take us back to Mecca?” Jafar requested.

The Negus eyed Amr ibn As for a response.

“No, they are all free”, Amr responded.

The debate continued as follows:



“Ask them! Are we indebted to them that they want us returned?”

“No, they don’t owe anything to anyone.”

“Ask them. Are we murderers that they call us for trial?”

“No, that is not the case!”

“Then for what do they want us returned?”

Amr explained:

“...For they have abandoned the religion of their ancestors! They insult our idols! They have corrupted the faith of our youth! They have split our community! Mecca now stands divided into two!”

The Negus then interrupted to pose Jafar ﷺ a question.

“Since you accept neither the religion of your ancestors nor mine”, he asked, “what kind of a religion is that which you accept?”

Jafar Tayyar ﷺ began to speak:

“Your Majesty! We were an ignorant bunch. We used to worship idols made of wood thinking they were gods. We used to eat carrion and bury our daughters alive. We were gamblers, indulgers in usury. We fornicated and saw no harm in seeing a woman engage in relations with numerous men. Neither did we know anything of the rights of our relatives, nor did we recognize the rights of neighbors. The strong used to oppress the weak, while the rich lived off the poor. We knew nothing of justice!

Then Allah the Almighty showed mercy on us and willed our recovery, and sent a Prophet from among us, from a noble line and a virtuous clan. We had already known him as the Trustworthy. He called us to the oneness of Allah. He taught us how to worship Him. He saved us from the idols of our ancestors. He warded off



all evil from us. He banned the shedding of blood, usury, lying and the misuse of orphans' properties. He constantly taught us what is good. He advised us righteousness, to keep our word, to treat neighbors and relatives with kindness and to protect the honor of women and the lives of our daughters. He saved us from savagery and taught us how to be humane. So we believed him and now we walk on his path. For that very reason we have earned the hostility of the Quraysh. We were tortured; and when the suffering became unbearable, since we did not want to leave our religion either, we asked permission of our Prophet ﷺ, and favoring you over other kings we came to your land. We assumed we would not be oppressed here and so we took shelter under your protection.”

The Negus remained poised, calmly listening to what Jafar ﷺ had to say.

“Do you know from memory any of what was revealed from Allah to your Prophet?” he then asked abruptly.

“Yes”, Jafar ﷺ replied and he began reciting the opening *ayah* of chapter Maryam concerning Yahya (John) ﷺ and the birth of Isa (Jesus) ﷺ. As he did, the Negus and his men broke down in tears from emotion.

“I swear in the name of God, that these words are from the same source of what has been revealed to Moses and Jesus Christ” said the Negus. Then turning to the Meccan envoy he stated:

“I will never return the migrants to you!”

When the envoy left the presence of the Negus, Amr said to his friend:

“I swear I am going to tell Negus of their belief that Isa, the son of Maryam, was only a man. That is sure to have them banished!”



The next day, Amr was again at the court of the Negus.

“Your majesty! They speak harshly of Jesus Christ. Call them if you like and hear it with your own ears!”

The Negus sent for the Muslims and asked them what they thought of Jesus Christ.

In a poised manner, Jafar رضي الله عنه explained, “We think of him in the way he has been taught by our Prophet. And he says, ‘Jesus is the servant, the Messenger of Allah; His Spirit, and Word, born from Mary who had left everything to commit herself to Allah’”.

Grabbing a twig of the ground, the Negus then remarked:

“I swear in the name of God, that Jesus Christ is nothing but what you say. The difference between what you say and the truth of Jesus Christ is not greater than this twig!”

Hearing the words of the Negus, the commanders around him began grumbling. Then turning to them, the Negus stated, “Grumble as much as you wish, but that is the truth!”

And to the Migrants:

“Now you may leave! You are safe and sound in my land. Whoever insults you will be punished! Even if they were to give me a mountain of gold, I still would not want to be the one to harm you.”

Turning to his men once again, the Negus commanded, “Return the gifts of these two men. I do not need them!” adding, “If I were next to the Messenger right now, I would have wanted to wash his feet and serve him!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 356-361; Ahmad, I, 202-203, V, 290-291; Haythami, VI, 25-27)

According to another version, the Negus said:

“I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He is the man mentioned by Jesus Christ. Had I not been on the



throne of this kingdom and without the responsibility of my people, I would have gone to him to carry his sandals.” (Abu Dawud, Janaiz, 55-57/3205)



With his answers to the Negus, Jafar رضي الله عنه offers an excellent example for other callers to Islam about how to speak and what to say in a given situation, a method one should always keep in mind.

It is noteworthy that, when asked to read some of the Quran, Jafar رضي الله عنه did not simply randomly recite a given chapter, but chose the most suitable part for the occasion, which happened to be the *ayah* concerning Isa عليه السلام from chapter of Maryam. The same goes for his sound defense of the migrants, when the Meccans put forward various excuses to have them returned, as he underlined that their religion commanded only justice and virtue.

There are also many reasons why the Prophet ﷺ chose Jafar رضي الله عنه as the head of the migrants. The choice itself shows the importance of choosing leaders according to their capabilities and as circumstances demanded.

A portion of the Second Abyssinian migrants returned shortly after the Hegira to Medina, while others waited until the Hudaibiyah Truce. The last group lead by Jafar رضي الله عنه returned to Medina during the conquest of Khaybar, giving the Prophet ﷺ a reason for joy.

### Hamza's رضي الله عنه Acceptance of Islam

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was not just simply sending his companions to the Kaabah to recite the Quran to the idolaters. He was also personally going to the Meccans from time to time to



communicate Divine Revelation. During one of these occasions, Abu Jahl emboldened himself in his insults of the Prophet ﷺ. As if to show off next to his friends who had gathered around, he was just about to take it one step further, when a woman ran to tell Hamza, returning anew from a hunting expedition.

“Hamza, brave Hamza! They are insulting your nephew at the Kaabah. I fear they are about to harm him. They are going to something bad!”

Without wasting any time, Hamza ran to the scene, and using his bow, struck Abu Jahl’s head so fiercely that blood began gushing out of it like a stream. Not expecting an interference of the sort, Abu Jahl was baffled, and fearing for his life, quickly fled the scene. In ones and twos, the idolaters followed, as they all knew very well Hamza’s might. None of Quraysh’s strongest men could face him without growing weak in the knees.

Straight after the incident, Hamza went next to his nephew, Muhammad, the Noble Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

“I have taken your revenge from him...You can be at ease!” he said.

“I will only be at ease if you accept Islam!” the Prophet ﷺ replied.

Suddenly, the curtain of ignorance lifted from Hamza’s heart. Realizing the truth at that instant, the brave Hamza looked at his noble nephew with a smile, and staring at the magnificent glimmer on his face declared his acceptance of Islam.



Hamza ؓ, the Prophet's ؓ uncle, was only two years older than the Prophet ؓ. They had also been breastfed from the same mother.<sup>194</sup>

By saying he could only be at ease if his uncle accepted Islam, the Messenger of Allah ؓ expressed the superiority of guidance over personal revenge and therefore of the eternal life over passing worldly desires. This incident teaches us that we should always choose the benefit of Islam over our personal interests and that we should seek happiness in the success of the Religion and not from personal achievements.

The day Hamza ؓ became Muslim, Abu Bakr ؓ insisted with the Prophet ؓ for all the Muslims to go together to the Kaabah and invite everyone there to Islam.

“We are still very few in number”, the Noble Prophet ؓ replied.

But when Abu Bakr ؓ persisted, with the Companions by his side, the Prophet ؓ left the house of Arqam to go to the Kaabah. Once they arrived, the moment when Abu Bakr ؓ began inviting people to believe in Allah and His Messenger, the idolaters charged at the Muslims and began beating them. The base Utbah, especially, trampled and kicked Abu Bakr's ؓ face with his steel-studded boots. Abu Bakr ؓ was left bloody and bruised. It took a great effort from his clan, Taym, to save him from idolater hands.

His clan brought the unconscious Abu Bakr ؓ to his house. Fearing he would die any moment, they returned to the Kaabah, and yelled:

“We swear that if Abu Bakr dies, we will kill Utbah!”

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194. See Ibn Hisham, I, 312-313; Hâkim, III, 213; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya* , III, 84.



It was well into the night when Abu Bakr ﷺ finally regained consciousness. The first thing he asked, with a mighty effort, was:

“Is the Prophet ﷺ all right?”

His mother Ummu'l-Khayr was constantly pleading him to eat something, but Abu Bakr ﷺ, as if not hearing anything, was constantly asking:

“How is the Prophet, is he well?”

“I have not heard from your friend, my dear”, his mother responded.

Abu Bakr ﷺ then sent his mother to Ummu Jameel,<sup>195</sup> a Muslim woman, to get information about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When Ummu Jameel ﷺ came around and saw Abu Bakr ﷺ in such a horrible condition, she could not help but scream:

“I swear by Allah that only a beast could do something like this to you! May Allah take your revenge!”

Soon after, upon Abu Bakr's ﷺ request, she informed him that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was safe, waiting at the House of Arqam.

“By Allah, I will neither eat nor drink until I see him”, Abu Bakr insisted.

Once things settled down and everyone went their own way, his mother Ummu Jameel took Abu Bakr ﷺ by the arm and carried him to the Light of Being ﷺ. The moment he saw the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr ﷺ fell at his feet. The state of his dear friend affected the tender heart of the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Bakr ﷺ managed to say:

195. Umm Jameel bint Hatib, a Muslima, is not to be confused with her namesake, Abu Lahab's wife.

“May my mother and father be ransomed for you! I am fine, really. That sordid man knocked me around a little, that’s all!” He then asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray for the guidance of his mother.

Not long after, with the blessings of the Noble Prophet’s prayers, Abu Bakr’s honorable mother also joined the circle of belief.<sup>196</sup>



Alarmed by the steady rise of Muslim numbers and the acceptance of Islam by leading figures like Hamza ؓ, the idolaters held a meeting to come up with ways to stem the tide.

“The issue of Muhammad has gotten serious” they discussed. “It is starting to get disturbing. Let us send our most able poet and sorcerer to him, so he can have a word!”

They chose Utbah ibn Rabbiah for the purpose. Utbah repeated at length the offers formerly made by the idolaters. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ listened quietly for him to finish. He then asked, “Have you finished what you have to say Abu’l-Waleed?”

Utbah nodded.

“Now listen to me then!” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then began reciting chapter Fussilat, until the verse of prostration, for which he fell prostrate. Getting up, he then added:

“You have now heard what I have to say. Here it is and there you are!”

On the way back, Utbah was seen from a distance by the idolaters, who could clearly notice his change of expression.

196. See Ibn Asir, *Usdu'l-Ghâba*, VII, 326; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 81.



Once Utbah came, they anxiously asked him to explain what happened.

“I swear by Allah that I have never heard a word of the like I just heard. Poetry, magic, sorcery...it’s none of the kind! When Muhammad said:

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ

‘But if they turn aside, then say: I have warned you of a scourge like the scourge of Aad and Thamud,’ (Fussilat, 13) I blocked his mouth and begged him to read no further for the sake of our kinship. For I knew that whatever Muhammad says, comes true...I feared that Divine wrath would fall upon us.

Now listen to me, Quraysh! Leave him alone with his affairs, step aside! If Arabs happen to kill him, then you will be saved through others! But if he becomes sovereign over the Arabs, then his sovereignty means your sovereignty, and his honor means yours! Then, thanks to Muhammad, you will be the happiest of men!”

“He cast a spell on you with his words, Utbah!” the idolaters exclaimed in response.

“I only say what I think”, replied Utbah. “But you are free to do as you wish!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 313-314; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 111-112)

### Omar’s ﷺ Acceptance of Islam

Having gathered yet again at the House of Nadwah, their advisory council, the idolaters decided to kill the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. For the task, they chose the brave and hot headed Omar ibn Khattab, thirteen years younger than the Noble Prophet ﷺ, with whom he shared a common lineage in their ninth great grandfather.



Omar had now unwarily set out to murder the Best of Creations ﷺ. On the way he came across Nuaym ibn Abdullah ؓ. Suspicious of Omar's overall manner, Nuaym asked where he was headed.

“To kill Muhammad...the man who has brought a new religion in place of that of his ancestors!” Omar responded.

To distract Omar and gain some time, the prudent Nuaym cobbled together an excuse.

“I swear, Omar, you are fooling yourself! Do you think the sons of Abd Manaf will let you live if you do? Besides, you should take a look at your own family first!”

“Who are you talking about?” Omar asked angrily.

“Who else but your sister Fatimah and your brother-in-law Sa'id ibn Zayd? They have both become Muslims. Take my word for it!”

Having found out about Omar's sinister intention, by diverting him to his sister's house Nuaym ؓ had gained some precious time to notify the Blessed Prophet ﷺ of the plot.

Speaking with Nuaym had irritated Omar all the more, and without further ado, he redirected his path to his sister's house, fuming.

Khabbab ؓ was also present at the house at the time, busy teaching Omar's sister and brother-in-law Quran. The moment they saw the angry Omar approach towards them, they hid Khabbab ؓ in a room, while Fatimah concealed the page of the Quran they were holding in their hands.

Omar stormed inside.

“What was that I heard you read just now?” he roared.



“You must have heard wrong. We have no such thing here”, they said.

“Really? Then why is it I hear that you two have become followers of Muhammad?” Omar yelled, after which he charged at his brother-in-law, beating him up. While trying to intervene, Fatimah got her share of Omar’s fury with a slap in the face, which however incited her to cry out:

“You can do what you like Omar! Even kill us if you wish! But we shall never give up our belief!”

A thin line of blood was trickling down Fatimah’s face ﷺ, as she spoke up with the courage of belief.

Not expecting such a reaction, Omar was stunned. The sight of his sister’s bloodstained face had suddenly caused an ache in his heart. He regretted his momentary fit of anger.

“Could you bring me what you were reading?” he asked compassionately, as if to apologize.

“Promise not to do anything to it!” said Fatimah.

“I promise; I will give it back once I read it”, Omar swore in the name of his idols.

Thereupon, hoping he might see the light of guidance, Fatimah ﷺ said:

“But you are an idol worshipper, so you are not clean! Only those who are clean may touch the pages of the Quran!”

Omar ﷺ was given the pages only after a complete bodily wash. He then began reading the sacred *ayah*<sup>197</sup> thereon:

197. It has also been narrated that it was the first few verses of al-Hadid that Omar ﷺ read. (Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 217)

طُهُ. مَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَى. إِلَّا تَذَكِرَةٌ لِمَنْ يَخْشَى.  
تَنْزِيلًا مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ وَالسَّمَوَاتِ الْعُلَى. الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى  
الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى. لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا  
وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى. وَإِنْ تَجَهَّرَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَأَخْفَى. اللَّهُ  
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى. وَهَلْ آتَيْكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى.  
إِذْ رَأَى نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا  
بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجْدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى. فَلَمَّا آتَيْهَا نُودِيَ يَا مُوسَى. إِنِّي  
أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى. وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ  
فَأَسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَى. إِنَّنِي لَهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ  
لَذِكْرِي. إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا  
تَسْعَى. فَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدَى

“Ta Ha. We have not revealed to you the Quran to distress you! But only as an admonition to those who fear. A revelation from Him Who created the earth and the high heavens. The Beneficent One, Who is established on the Throne. To Him belongs what is in the heavens and on earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil. And if you utter the saying aloud, then surely He knows the secret, and what is yet more hidden. Allah! There is no god but He! To Him belong the most Beautiful Names. Has the story of Musa come to you? When he saw a fire, he said to his family: ‘Stop, for



surely I see a fire, haply I may bring to you therefrom a live coal or find guidance.’ When he came to it, a voice uttered: ‘O Musa! Truly I am your Lord, therefore take off your shoes; truly you are in the sacred valley, Tuwa. And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Truly I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance. Surely the hour is coming—I am about to make it manifest—so that every soul may be rewarded for what it strives. Therefore let not him who believes not in it and follows his low desires, turn you away from it so that you should perish!’” (Ta Ha, 1-16)

Omar froze. All he could do was sigh, “How beautiful, how tremendous...”

He had been captivated by the eloquence of the Quran, by words laden with a meaning and wisdom no man could ever invent. He fell in the grip of some deep thinking.

Meanwhile, Khabbab ؓ had come out from where he was hiding:

“Omar! By Allah, I have a feeling that the Prophet’s ﷺ prayer is about to come true. Yesterday he prayed, ‘Allah...! Strengthen your religion with either Abu’l-Hakam ibn Hisham or Omar ibn Khattab!’ So the time has come, Omar, to fear Allah!”

“Take me to Muhammad!” Omar said to Khabbab ؓ.

They left right away. Each step of Omar was this time filled with the excitement of faith, with the love and satisfaction of having grasped the truth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

When they arrived, Omar was met with by Hamza ؓ, waiting with a sword in hand, having been informed by Nuaym ؓ of the

earlier episode. But little could they have guessed the way it had developed.

The Gracious Messenger ﷺ got up and met Omar at the courtyard, inquiring of the purpose of his visit. Spilling from Omar's lips were the following words of contentment:

“I have come to become a Muslim, Messenger of Allah!”

In thankfulness of what Allah ﷻ, has the power to show, the Prophet ﷺ exclaimed:

“*Allah-u Akbar!*”

The Companions followed at the top of their lungs. Another wish of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had just been fulfilled. When Omar ؓ resumed speaking, the first sentence he uttered was, “I bear witness there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and messenger.”

Omar ibn Khattab ؓ was now granted with the Prophet's ﷺ wish. As for Abu'l-Hakem ibn Hisham, better known as Abu Jahl, he was sinking more and more in his swamp of misery.<sup>198</sup>

Following Omar's ؓ declaration of faith in the presence of the Noble Messenger ﷺ, with his proposal, all the Muslims collectively left the House of Arqam and amid praises of the Lord began walking to the Kaabah. This was a huge blow to the idolaters. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then granted Omar ؓ the title “al-Faruq”, for separating right from wrong.<sup>199</sup>

Omar ؓ gives the following account of those times:

198. See Ibn Hisham, I, 365-368.

199. See Diyarbakri, I, 296.



“There was not a single Muslim who was not harassed, who did not have to put up a struggle. But nobody was touching me. I thought to myself, ‘I do not wish to be out of harm’s way while the Muslims are made to endure all sorts of cruelty’.

So the night I became a Muslim, I decided to find the greatest enemy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from among the idolaters and tell him I had accepted Islam. Come morning, I went to the door of Abu Jahl. He opened the door:

‘Welcome, Omar. What’s the story?’

‘I have come to tell you that I am now a believer of Allah, His Messenger and all that which he has brought,’ I said. He cursed and shut the door on my face.” (Ibn Hisham, I, 371)

In similar manner, Omar ؓ later passed on the good news to one of Quraysh’s most prominent idolaters, his uncle Walid ibn Mughirah, and to two other idolaters who, all lacking the courage to get back at Omar ؓ could only shut the door in his face and retreat inside their homes.

Abdullah ibn Masud ؓ says:

“Omar’s acceptance of Islam was a triumph, his migration to Medina was an aid and his becoming caliph was a mercy! Until he became Muslim, we could not openly perform salat by the Kaabah. When he became Muslim, however, he fought the idolaters, and ensured they left us alone. Only then could we perform our salat there.” (Haythami, IX, 62-63)

Omar ؓ persevered in Mecca in the way of Islam until the Hegira, putting up with all kinds of hardship together with the rest of the Muslims.

## THE YEARS SEVEN TO NINE OF PROPHETHOOD: THE BOYCOTT YEARS

### —A Three-Year-Long Isolation Policy of Idolaters towards Muslims

Despite all preventative measures, Islam was growing by the day and this only fuelled the idolaters' hatred. They made an evil pact to take aim at the sacred existence of the Noble Prophet ﷺ and thereby hurl the universe into darkness.

“Openly or in secret, we will kill him!” they vowed.

Seeing the idolaters were determined to commit this horrendous act, Abu Talib began fearing for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He gathered the clan of Hashim and Muttalib, urging them to protect the Prophet ﷺ at all times and at all costs. The night in which the crescent of the month of Muharram appeared in the skies, led by Abu Talib, the clans of Hashim and Muttalib, including the Prophet ﷺ, met at Abu Talib's quarters. Missing from the assembly was only Abu Lahab, who chose to continue remaining in the pagan ranks.

The idolaters resorted to yet another vicious plan to put an end to Islam before it spread and grew even more in strength: to try and drive the budding believers away of their faith by enforcing a social and economic boycott.



For this purpose, a group of dark souls headed by Abu Jahl gathered at the quarters of Banu Qinanah, where they announced they had severed all ties with the Muslims and their protectors the Hashim clan, ranging from trade of all kinds to marriage. They penned down the pact and posted it on a wall inside the Kaabah.

By the prayer of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, the hand of Mansur ibn Ikrimah, who wrote the pact, became paralyzed, causing a whisper to go around among idolaters that Mansur's misfortune was because of what they had done to the Hashim clan. (Ibn Hisham, I, 372-373; Ibn Saad, I, 208-209; Bukhari, Hajj, 45)

The embargo forced the Muslims, who until then were disseminated in various parts of Mecca, to relocate one and all into Abu Talib's quarters in order to consolidate their mutual support. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also moved there, leaving the house of Arqam.

Prepared for the worst, Abu Talib was taking all precautions against a possible assassination. For instance, after everybody went to sleep, Abu Talib would send one of his sons or cousins to sleep in disguise in the place of the Prophet ﷺ, and have the Prophet ﷺ take his place.<sup>200</sup>

A period of enormous hardship had begun. Abu Jahl and his men were having the Muslim quarters monitored day and night, not allowing even a crumb of provisions to enter. All the roads that led the Muslims to marketplaces were blocked, and the goods that entered wholesale into Mecca were being monopolized by the idolaters before the Muslims could ever get their hands on them. Believers could only leave their quarters during the season of pilgrimage. Whenever a Muslim would go to a salesman in order to

200. Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 132.



purchase some food for his family, it had become common for Abu Lahab, standing by the goods, to shout:

“Salesmen! Raise the prices for Muhammad and his followers so that they are unable to buy anything from you! Do not worry! I am a rich man of his word! I shall compensate your losses!”

Thus Muslims would return empty handed, without any food to calm their crying children. As for the salesmen, they would go to Abu Lahab the next morning, and he would purchase their goods for no less than the raised price.<sup>201</sup>

Amid this crisis, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his wife Khadijah ؓ ended up spending all their wealth for relieving the Muslims.<sup>202</sup>

Despite all the measures taken by the idolaters to block the roads leading to Muslim quarters, some Meccans nonetheless were able to aid their Muslim relatives. Hakim ibn Hizam had brought a caravan of wheat from Damascus. He loaded a camel with wheat and, secretly steering it onto the beginning of the road that led to the Muslim quarters, he nudged and chased the camel. The camel fled right towards the quarters, whereupon the Muslims seized its load. On another night, in similar fashion, he sent a camel loaded with flour.

Another figure helping the Muslims was Hisham ibn Amr. Once the idolaters became aware that Hisham had sent a few camel loads of food into the quarters, they threatened him aggressively. As Hisham took little notice and continued aiding his relatives regardless, the idolaters turned to violence. He was only saved from death by the intervention of Abu Sufyan:

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201. Suhaylī, II, 127-128.

202. Yakūbī, II, 31.



“Leave the man alone! He is only helping his relatives...If only we could do the same!”

Throughout this period, the Muslims had to endure great pains, forced at times to eat even the leaves of trees. Children were perishing from hunger. Their crying could easily be heard from outside of the neighborhood.

With this boycott, the idolaters aimed to starve the Muslims until they surrendered the Prophet ﷺ, which would then have given them opportunity to kill him. But having joined forces with the Abu Talib lead Hashim clan, the Muslims were determined to safeguard the Light of Being ﷺ, even if it meant shedding their last drop of blood.

Once the boycott became unbearable, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ lifted his hands to the sky and prayed, “Allah...! Help us by bewildering these ruthless people with a seven-year famine like the famine of Yusuf!”

Not long after, the rains stopped, making way for a destructive drought that hit the idolaters of Quraysh hard. Many starved to death. Others, without anything to eat, began consuming the meat and skin of dead animals. From the severity of hunger, the sky had even begun to look hazy, as if it was covered in smoke.

According to Ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه, the Almighty alludes to this in the Quran as follows:

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ  
يَغْشى النَّاسَ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“Then watch out for the day when the sky will produce visible smoke that shall overtake men. That is a painful punishment!”

(ad-Dukhan, 10-11)

Once the famine became intolerable, Abu Sufyan pleaded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, “You say you have been sent as mercy, Muhammad! You enjoy obeying Allah and helping relatives. But your people are about to perish from famine! Ask Allah to relieve them! If He does through your prayers, then be sure that we will believe in Him!”

So the Noble Messenger ﷺ prayed and down poured the rain. But although the famine ended, the idolaters continued in their old ways.<sup>203</sup>

In the Quran, the Almighty says the following with regard to the idolaters’ mindset:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا  
كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَىٰ ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ  
كَذَلِكَ زِينٌ لِّلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“And when affliction touches a man, he calls on Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove his affliction from him, he passes on as though he had never called on Us on account of an affliction that touched him; thus that which they do is made fair-seeming to the extravagant.” (Yunus, 12)

203. Bukhari, Tafsir, 30, 44; Muslim, Munâfiqin, 40; Ahmed, I, 431, 441.



## The End of the Boycott

At the end of three years of agony, the Almighty set loose a maggot on the written pact of the boycott which the idolaters had posted inside the Kaabah. Except for the words *Bismik Allahumma* (*In your Name O Allah*), the maggot ate away the entire document of cruelty and oppression. Informed through Revelation, the Prophet ﷺ disclosed the event to his uncle Abu Talib who, in turn, informed his brothers, telling them, “Wear your neatest clothes and go to Quraysh! Tell them about the fate of the pact before they find out!”

Straight after the idolaters were told of the matter by Abu Talib and his brothers, they sent a person to fetch the written pact, who brought it in the very condition the Prophet ﷺ had told them. The idolaters were frustrated. Encouraged, Abu Talib spoke out:

“Do you now understand you have done wrong and oppressed your people?”

There was not a word. Some eventually began mumbling:

“This has got to be magic!” After that they raised pretexts, once again turning their backs on the clear truth. But some Qurayshi men did begin to feel remorse for what they did and began to look for a way out. It was now the tenth year of prophethood when a few idolaters made a move to lift the boycott. Telling off Zuhayr ibn Abi Umayya was Hisham ibn Amr:

“Listen to me Zuhayr! How can you be content doing as you wish, while your uncles struggle in poverty and are prevented from even the simplest rights of trade and marriage? If you had called Abu Jahl to a pact against his uncles, I swear he would not have listened to you!”

After convincing Zuhayr, Hisham was able to win over, one by one, Mutim ibn Adiyy, Abu'l-Bakhtari and Zam'a ibn Aswad. At night, the five met at Hajun in upper Mecca to discuss the moves they were to make. They vowed to struggle until the boycott was lifted.

The next morning they went to the Kaabah. Wearing expensive clothing, Zuhayr circumambulated the Great House after which he said, "Meccans! How can it be that we can live to our heart's content while we leave the Hashim and Muttalib clans to perish? I swear to God that I shall not sit until the vicious pact that has done away with all blood ties is torn!"

Abu Jahl's protests fell on deaf ears once the four friends expressed their support, which suddenly created an encouraging atmosphere. At once, Mutim got up and tore the pact hanging on the wall. Arming themselves, Adiyy ibn Qays, Abu'l-Bakhtari and Zuhayr headed towards the quarters of Abu Talib, making sure the Muslims returned to their homes. Thus with Divine blessing, Muslims were finally freed from the fierce three-year siege. Abu Talib read a poem in praise of those who ended the boycott. Meanwhile, the diehard idolaters had all but lost hope in ever preventing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from inviting people to Islam.<sup>204</sup>

In the end, such hardships served to strengthen the faith of believers and their ranks, while, as always, they added to the idolaters' misery.



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204. See Ibn Hisham, I, 397-406; Ibn Saad, I, 210-211.



In the meantime, during the course of the eight years of prophethood, the Persians had defeated the Byzantines in successive battles and laying waste to their cities had reached as far as the gates of Constantinople, forcing the humbled Byzantines to pay a hefty tribute.

As the Persians too were idolaters, the Meccans were delighted by their victory. The Prophet ﷺ was, however, left disheartened by the Byzantine defeat, the People of the Book, at the hands of the Persians. But just then the following *ayah* were revealed:

الْمِ غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ  
 مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ  
 مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ  
 بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

“The Romans have been defeated in the nearer land, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious again within a few years. Allah’s is the command before and after; and on that day the believers shall rejoice in the victory of Allah; He supports whomever He pleases. And He is the Mighty, the Merciful.” (ar-Rum, 1-5)

“Defeat is surely near for the Persians!” the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remarked. (Ahmed, I, 276)

Hearing the Divine news, Abu Bakr ﷺ made a wager with idolater Ubayy ibn Khalaf for ten camels that the Byzantines would defeat the Persians within three years.<sup>205</sup>

205. The event precedes the prohibition of betting.



He then told the Prophet ﷺ of the wager, who said, “The word *bid'* actually means a period from three to ten years. So now go and increase the term and the number of camels!” Abu Bakr ؓ then increased the time to nine years and the amount of camels to a hundred.

The Byzantines swiftly regained strength to score a crushing victory over the Persians. Collecting the hundred camels due from Ubayy, Abu Bakr ؓ brought them to the Prophet ﷺ, who advised him to deal them out to the poor. And he did exactly that.

The Quran’s miraculous prediction led to the guidance of many idolaters.<sup>206</sup>

### ***Shaqqu'l-Qamar: The Splitting of the Moon***

To help them defeat the stubbornness they faced along the way, the Almighty provided His prophets carrying out the duty of inviting others onto the true path with an exceptional gift to affect people and attract them to belief. For drawing masses towards what is best for them, prophets are also given extraordinary blessings called miracles.

The miracles Prophets have been blessed with have always been in line with the skills commonly admired in their times. During the time of Musa ؑ, for instance, sorcery was at its peak. So Prophet Musa ؑ was given fitting miracles: the Staff and the Luminous Hand.<sup>207</sup>

206. See Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 30/3194; Qurtubi, XIV, 3.

207. The Luminous Hand or *Yad'ul-Bayda* (literally ‘White Hand’) was one of the nine miracles given to Musa ؑ. (see, al-Araf, 108; al-Isra, 101; Taha, 22; as-Shuara, 33; an-Naml, 12; al-Qasas, 32). Upon removing his hand from his bosom, everything in sight would become illumined as if the sun had appeared.



During the time of Prophet Isa عليه السلام, it was medicine that had gained popularity, and doctors were highly respected in society. He was therefore blessed with a miracle that could bring even the best doctors to their knees: raising the dead.

But as the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ encompasses all ages and is valid until the end of time, his authority and influence, and the miracles in relation, are superior to all others before him. His miracles were not only applicable in the supreme fields and interests of the time like eloquence and expression, but also in various others. One of these was the Splitting of the Moon; a miracle that uplifted Muslim hearts weakened by the vicious boycott with a ray of hope and a new drive that would give the idolaters an idea of the power they were trying to defy.

This great miracle occurred amid the boycott, in the ninth year of the Meccan period. In a moonlit night, the Noble Prophet ﷺ prayed to the Almighty and the moon was split in two, one part descending on one side of Mount Abu Qubays, and the other near Mount Quayqian. But despite this awesome miracle, the idolaters still shied away from believing. Abu Jahl, as always, decried the event as magic.

It was a show of magic, the idolaters thought, that charmed them, but surely it could not have charmed others! So they decided to ask members of the incoming caravans to Mecca whether or not they saw such a thing. To their dismay, they testified that they did.

These below *ayah* were revealed immediately following the event:

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَاَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ.  
وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ



“The hour drew nigh and the moon did rend asunder. And if they see a miracle they turn aside and say: Transient magic. (al-Qamar, 1-2) (Wahidi, p. 418; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 54/3286)

All Meccans agreed seeing the moon split. Those with glimpses of truth in their hearts declared their belief in the Prophet ﷺ, while others, the hearts of whom remained firmly locked, continued calling him a magician.

While investigating the previous cycle of the moon’s motion, even the famous French astronomer Lefrançois de Lalande (1732-1807) admitted the truth of the miracle of *Shaqq’ul-Qamar*.<sup>208</sup>



The underlying reasons as to why the Almighty has given miracles to his prophets could be summarized as follows:

1. To influence the masses and attract them to believing.
2. To strengthen the faith of believers and console their hearts.
3. To prove the veracity truth of prophets’ call.
4. To awe Muslims and force nonbelievers to realize their weakness against Divine Power.

Enhancing the faith of the believers, each verse of the Quran yet only increases the disbelief of those the Quran declares as ‘*la yahdi*’, those that may never be guided.<sup>209</sup>

208. See Zekâi Konraba, p. 110.

209. وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ meaning ‘Allah does not guide.’ The expression appears in exactly twenty-six verses throughout the Quran. To give just a few examples:

وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ



The Splitting of the Moon is a great miracle of the Prophet ﷺ. As he is also the ‘Prophet of the Last Hour’, his coming to the world is also among the signs of the Day of Judgment. By stating:

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَاَنْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ

“The Hour has drawn near and the moon was rent asunder”, (al-Qamar, 1) the Quran in fact alludes to this.

### **The Perseverance of the Prophet ﷺ in Inviting to Islam under all Circumstances**

In spite of all the terror unleashed by his tribesmen, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not take a even a single step back in calling to the truth. He made use of the slightest opportunity to invite, using differing methods suiting the person in question.

Rukanah, perhaps the strongest wrestler among Quraysh, one day came across the Prophet ﷺ in one of the nearby valleys of Mecca. The Noble Messenger ﷺ called out to him:

“Rukanah! How long more are you going to stand against Islam and live without fearing Allah? Come...be a Muslim!”

“Only if you beat me in wrestling”, Rukanah challenged.

“If I beat you, will you accept the truth of what I say?” the Prophet ﷺ asked.

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“...Allah does not guide an oppressing people.” (al-Baqara, 258)

وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِيْنَ

“...Allah does not guide people of disbelief.” (al-Baqara, 264)

وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ

“...Allah does not guide the corrupt.” (al-Maida, 108)



“Yes. If you beat me, I will either accept Islam or give these sheep to you! But if I beat you, then you will give up your claim to prophethood!”

They began wrestling. The moment the Blessed Prophet ﷺ grabbed Rukanah, the Meccan wrestler found himself thrown on the ground. He could not even make a move.

“Let’s have another go”, he said enthusiastically to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

They did but he was again defeated.

“Let’s go again”, he told the Prophet ﷺ.

He was beaten again for the third time.

“I swear to God you are better, a nobler man than I”, Rukanah admitted as he left.

Even though he did not remain true to his promise then, Rukanah did eventually become a Muslim following the Conquest of Mecca, after which he went to Medina to settle. (Ibn Hisham, I, 418; Ibn Athir, Usd’ul-Ghabah, II, 236)

Dimad ibn Thalabah, from the tribe Azd Shanuah, arrived in Mecca one day for pilgrimage. A man with an interest in medicine, and known to treat the mentally ill, once he heard that the idolaters call the Prophet ﷺ ‘mad’, he said to himself:

“I ought to go and visit this man. I might perhaps be a means of curing him.” So getting up, he went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said:

“I can cure madness, Muhammad; so if you wish I can treat you. It could just be that God will cure you through me!”

The Noble Prophet ﷺ had the following to say:



“All praises are due to Allah. Only Him do we thank and from Him do we seek help and forgiveness. It is His protection we seek from the evils of our souls. Nobody shall guide whom Allah has deviated. And nobody shall deviate whom Allah has guided. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. He is One. There is no being alike Him; He has no partners. I again bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.”

Dimad was very much taken in by the words of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. “I have never heard such beautiful words in my life. Can you please repeat what you just said?”

The Gracious Messenger ﷺ repeated his words. Dimad made him repeat them another two times, after which he remarked, “I have heard soothsayers, magicians, poets and all kinds of people, I swear...but never have I heard them say anything like your words. They are like the most precious pearls of the ocean of eloquence. Give me your hand so I can pledge allegiance.”

Thus Dimad ﷻ became a Muslim.

“Can you pledge allegiance also on behalf of your tribe?” the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked.

“Certainly...I pledge allegiance on behalf of them too”, he replied. (Muslim, Juma, 46; Ahmed, I, 302; Ibn Saad, IV, 241)

By making Dimad ﷻ pledge allegiance on behalf of his tribe as soon as he became Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ had effectively appointed Dimad a teacher and a representative of Islam for his tribe.



## THE TENTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

### The Year of Grief-

#### The Passing Away of Khadijah ؓ and Abu Talib

Muslim joy over being relieved of the idolater boycott did not last long, as the Prophet's ؐ uncle Abu Talib, the protector of Muslims who took great pains in safeguarding them, passed away shortly thereafter.

On many occasions, the Noble Prophet ؐ would insist his uncle to accept Islam, only on each occasion to have Abu Talib reply, "I know you speak the truth. But if I accept, even the women of Quraysh would condemn me!"

Having accepted the truth of the Prophet ؐ in his conscience, he was however held back by his ego.

Even on his deathbed, the Messenger of Allah ؐ urged him to give up his soul to the Almighty in a state of belief:

"Please uncle...Just say the word so Allah will grant you eternal happiness!"

He was prevented by Abu Jahl, who was there paying a visit. As the Noble Prophet ؐ repeated the words of *shahadah* to his uncle, Abu Jahl spoke over him, saying, "Don't you forget that you are in the religion of your ancestors!"

The last words of Abu Talib to the Messenger of Allah eventually were:



“I am breathing my last, in the religion of old. I would have accepted your words, only if I knew Quraysh would not think I changed my religion from fear of death!” (Bukhari, Janaiz 81, Manaqibu'l-Ansar 40; Ibn Saad, I, 122-123)

To these words, the Prophet ﷺ replied, with a glimmer of hope, “Still, I will always pray for your forgiveness.”

He left his uncle’s house in grief.

The last promise the Prophet ﷺ made to his uncle sparked the following Revelation:

أَنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

“Surely you cannot guide whom you love, but Allah guides whom He pleases...” (al-Qasas, 56) (Muslim, Iman, 41-42)

Guidance is a Divine light that leads to the straight path. It only reaches those whose hearts are inclined to the Truth.

يَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ أَنَابَ

“...and guides to Himself those who turn (to Him).” (ar-Rad, 27)

Thus others can at best only act as a means. Guidance does not come solely through the efforts of a person, even if the person is a prophet. Despite all the efforts of the Noble Prophet ﷺ, guidance did not come to Abu Talib, simply because, even though he knew what was right, he chose not to turn to the Truth and allowed himself to fall victim to his ego.



Only thirteen days had passed since the saddening death of Abu Talib when the companion, the great support and the lifelong partner of the Prophet ﷺ and the noblest of all women Khadijat'ul-Qubra also breathed her last. For the Muslims, one grief had followed another. With a heart set in sorrow and eyes welled with tears, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ placed his wife in her resting-place with his own hands.

Throughout her life, Khadijah ؓ served as a reliable advisor and a source of comfort for the Prophet ﷺ in the way of Islam. Her passing away touched the Messenger ﷺ so much that he mourned, “Of the two disasters that have befallen this *ummah* (meaning the deaths of his uncle and wife), I do not know over which one I should grieve over more.” (Yakubi, II, 35; Taberi, Tarih, II, 229)

Because of these two sorrowful losses, the tenth year of the Meccan period came to be known as the Year of Grief.

The losses of his uncle and wife now meant that the Noble Prophet ﷺ no longer had an outward support and refuge. His spiritual world was now reserved to the Almighty only. After all, it was Allah alone on whom one could rely and in whom one could trust, in the absolute sense. Besides, by losing his father, mother and grandfather at an early age, the Prophet ﷺ had already been nurtured by the Almighty.



Khadijah ؓ was an exceptionally virtuous woman. On one occasion, the Archangel Jibril came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to say:

“Khadijah is on her way to you, with a bowl of food in her hand. When she comes, pass her the peace and blessings of her Lord



and mine, and give her the good news of a palace made of pearl, awaiting her in paradise where there shall be no noise or fatigue!”

(Bukhari, Manaqibu'l-Ansar, 20)

To this greeting, Khadijah responded by exclaiming:

“Allah Himself is Peace; it is from Him that peace comes, so peace unto Jibril as well! And may the peace, mercy and blessings of the Almighty be upon you, the Messenger of Allah!”

Throughout his remaining years, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ never forgot his blessed wife, showing the greatest display of loyalty to her memory.

Aisha ؓ explains:

“I have never envied another wife of the Prophet ﷺ more than I have envied Khadijah ؓ. What’s more, I had never seen her. But the Prophet ﷺ would always mention her name. Like whenever he had a sheep slaughtered, he would more often than not send some parts of the meat to Khadijah’s friends. On one time, unable to hold myself I said, ‘As if there was nobody left on Earth except Khadijah!’

In reply, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ began mentioning each of her virtues, and added, ‘She was also the mother of my children.’

That was when I said to myself I will never speak ill of her again.” (Bukhari, Manaqib’ul-Ansar 20; Adab 73; Muslim, Fadailu’s-Sahabah 74-76)

Hala bint Khuwaylid, Khadijah’s ؓ sister, once asked permission to see the Prophet ﷺ. At that instant, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remembered the voice of Khadijah ؓ, and he remarked excitedly:

“O Allah! This is Khadijah’s sister, Hala bint Khuwaylid!”



Seeing the excitement, Aisha رضي الله عنها, again, could not contain herself:

“Why do you keep mentioning the name of an old Qurayshi woman who is now long dead? Allah has given you better in her place!” (Bukhari, *Manaqib’ul-Ansar*, 20)

It was herself that Aisha رضي الله عنها was implying with the word ‘better’. Deeming her words inappropriate, the Messenger of Allah responded:

“No, Allah has not given me better. She believed me when no one else did. She trusted me when everybody else was calling me a liar. She gave me her all when everybody else backed away. And through her, Allah blessed me with children.” (Ibn Hanbal, VI, 118)

### **The Journey to Ta’if**

The ill-treatment of the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم increased all the more after the passing away of both his uncle and wife. The assaults, now well and truly terrible, were trying the patience of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم. Seeking respite, and with Zayd رضي الله عنه by his side, he decided to journey to Ta’if, a town about 120 km away from Mecca.

There he explained Islam to the locals, calling them to *tawhid*. Having a word with their leaders, he advised them to give up worshipping idols and called them to realize they are servants of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم. There was virtually no person left whom the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had not spoken to.

But this call caused the eruption of a violent storm among the locals of Ta’if, who were idolaters just like the Quraysh. Caught in the mazes of their egoistic lives, not even a single person heeded the invitation. To make matter worse, they even began harassing the Gracious Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم.



First they mocked him, pestering him with insults. Then they lined their slaves on both sides of the streets where the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would pass, and had him stoned. This severe harassment continued until the Prophet ﷺ left town. Even when he was well outside the town, the Noble Messenger ﷺ continued being pelted with stones. The feet of the Grandest of Prophets ﷺ, for the sake of whom the universe had been created, were left soaked in a pool of blood that filled his shoes. Also heavily injured was his loyal companion Zayd ؓ, who was trying to shield him with his own body, shouting:

“Don’t! The man you are stoning is a Prophet!”

With difficulty, they were able to manage to make it to a garden belonging to Meccans, as they threw themselves under the shade of a date tree. The earth and the skies above were in mourning, as were the angels, Jibril, Mikail, Israfeel, Azraeel, alike.

Headed by Jibril, and with permission from the Almighty, the angels rushed next to the Prophet ﷺ:

“Say the word and we shall destroy that tribe!” they said.

But despite the vicious treatment he had received, the Prophet of Compassion ﷺ still only had good wishes in his heart, as he turned to the gates of heaven:

“Allah! I only submit to you my own vulnerability; that I have lost strength and have been ridiculed...

O the Most Compassionate! If you are not angry with me, I will not in the least worry for the troubles I have undergone!

Allah! Guide this tribe, for they do not know.

Allah! I seek your forgiveness, only for your sake!” (Ibn Hisham,

II, 29-30; Haythami, VI, 35; Bukhari, Bad’ul-Khalq, 7)



Feeling for the Gracious Prophet ﷺ, the owners of the garden who were from the clan of Rabiah, sent their slave Addas to him with a bowl of grapes. Addas presented the treats:

“Please, help yourself”, he said.

After saying, بِسْمِ اللَّهِ, ‘in the name of Allah’, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ began eating. The words caught the attention of Addas. He had never heard anyone utter those words before.

“Nobody around here knows or says that word”, he mumbled, which he followed up by asking, “You are different from those around here. May I ask who you are?”

The Prophet ﷺ replied with a question.

“Where are you from? And what is your religion?”

“I am from Nineveh and I am a Christian”.

“So you are from the town of the righteous Yunus ibn Matta...” the Messenger ﷺ commented.

Addas was now all the more amazed.

“How do you know Yunus?”

The Light of Being ﷺ replied:

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

Thereupon, the founts of faith began bursting out from the heart of Addas, and excitedly getting up at his feet, he seized the hands of the Prophet ﷺ and pronounced the words of *tawhid*. (Ibn Hisham, II, 30; Yaqubi, II, 36)

When his masters condemned him for it, Addas defended his decision, saying, “I have never met a man like him in my life. He said a word only a prophet ﷺ could have known.” (Ibn Hisham, II, 31)



How fortunate Addas ؓ was to heed to the call of the Prophet ﷺ amid the most difficult times of his life and seize the honor of becoming a Muslim to comfort him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ became so happy for him that he had all but forgotten the pains he had suffered.

Today a mosque stands in memory of Addas ؓ where he accepted Islam and the garden where he treated the Noble Messenger ﷺ with grapes has been kept as it was.

### **A Unique Mercy and Solace from the Compassionate**

Aisha ؓ explains:

“Once I asked the Prophet ﷺ whether there had been a day where felt more distress than the Battle of Uhud.

‘Yes, I suffered a lot in the hands of your tribe. The worst was what they did on the day of Aqabah.<sup>210</sup> Again, I sought the protection of Abdiya’lil ibn Abduqulal, who over and above rejecting me had all the troublemakers stone me until I was left in blood. So I turned back, distraught. Only when I reached Kam’us-Saalib could I come to my senses. There I looked up and saw a cloud shading me. On a closer look, I noticed Jibril in the midst of the cloud. He was calling out to me:

‘The Almighty knows the way you have been treated by the tribe and how they have refused to shelter you. To do to them as you wish, he has sent you the Angel of Mountains!’

210. The Day of Aqabah is the day in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood near Aqabah, in Mina, and called people to Islam. While some heeded his call, many others responded with insults. The incident was hence referred to as the Day of Aqabah thereafter.

Then the Angel of Mountains greeted me and called out:

“Muhammad! Allah the Almighty has heard what the tribe has said to you. I am the Angel of Mountains. The Almighty has sent me to do to them as you command. What do you command? If you wish, I shall tumble these two mountains down on their towns!”

“No. I only wish from the Almighty that He bring forth from their children people who will only worship Him and who will not attribute to Him any partners”, I replied. (Bukhari, Bad’ul-Khalq, 7; Muslim, Jihad, 111)

The following poem beautifully expresses the love of the Compassionate for His noblest servant:

*So beloved are you in Divine eyes, that for you  
He would sacrifice the world and what’s in it.*



The Ta’if journey contains many lessons:

1. First, it emphasizes the importance of inviting to Islam. Even though it was the year of grief, the Prophet ﷺ did not take any time off, carrying on his call with patience and perseverance.

2. Although the locals of Ta’if stoned him, the Noble Messenger ﷺ had no ill wishes for them. Together with displaying the Prophet’s ﷺ compassion, this also shows that an inviter must also be compassionate.

3. A caller to Islam must be self-critical and continue praying for the guidance of others without falling into despair. Upon seeing a mistake, it was common for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to remark, as if to attribute the mistake to himself:



“What is it with me that I see you do such and such?”<sup>211</sup>

Again, Suleyman’s ﷺ remark upon noticing the absence of the Hoopoe during a meeting is of a similar kind:

مَا لِي لَا أَرَى الْهُدُودَ

“What is it with me that I do not see the Hoopoe?” (an-Naml, 20)

4. The guidance of Addas following the Ta’if journey is of great importance in raising the spirits of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the most testing of times. It also shows that even when undergoing great struggles, the guidance of even a single person should provide more than enough comfort.

5. An inviter should set an example through his manners.

6. An inviter ought to be cultured and know how to interact with people, and know to say the right words at the right time, just like the Prophet’s ﷺ encounter with Addas.

### **The Jinn’s Hearing of the Quran from the Noble Prophet ﷺ and their Acceptance of Islam**

During the evening stopover on the return from Ta’if, a journey in which only Addas heeded the call, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited some Quran and was overheard by a group of jinn. All of them realized the truth and declared their faith in the Prophet ﷺ. They returned to their people with the duty of invitation. (Ibn Saad, I, 212)

Ibn Abbas ؓ further explains:

211. See Muslim, Saaât 119; Abu Dâwvud, Khatem 4, Adab 14.



“With some companions by his side, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left with the intention of going to the Ukaz Fair.

This was when demons, from among the jinn, were prevented from eavesdropping on news coming from the heavens.<sup>212</sup> Those with a habit of doing so were even bombarded with flaming stars.<sup>213</sup> They thus returned to their folk empty-handed.

‘Why haven’t you brought any news?’ they were asked.

‘We found we are now prevented by a barrier placed between us and the heavens. Not only were we unable to steal any news, we were chased with flaming stars...so we had to flee!’ they responded.

‘This must be due to something new that has just happened. Roam East and West and come back with news’, they were told.

Thus the jinn divided into separate groups and headed towards different directions. The group that went towards Tihamah stumbled across the Prophet ﷺ offering fajr salat with his Companions near Nakhlah on the way to the Ukaz Fair. Hearing the Quran, they were all ears:

‘So this must be what prevents us from gathering news from the heavens!’ they decided.

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212. “The jinn used to ascend to the heavens and eavesdrop on Revelation. Upon overhearing a word, they would add to it ninety-nine words of their own. One word would remain true, while the rest would be fabricated. Once the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was sent as a Prophet, from then on, they were hindered from ascending to their posts in the heavens by flaming stars. Previously, no jinn had been targeted with them in the skies.” (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 72/3324)
213. *Shihab*, in Arabic, which means a flare of fire, is especially used to describe the flame that appears in the skies simultaneously with a shooting star. Contemporary commentators have said that *shihabs* could signify meteors.



Then they returned to their folk. ‘We have heard a wonderful Quran, which guides to the right path’, they assured. ‘So we believe in it and no longer will we ascribe any partners to our Lord!’

Thereupon the Almighty revealed Chapter al-Jinn, informing the Prophet ﷺ how the relevant jinn overheard him recite the Quran and the words of wisdom they conveyed to their tribe:

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا  
عَجَبًا. يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا.

“Say: It has been revealed to me that a party of the jinn listened, and they said: Surely we have heard a wonderful Quran, Guiding to the right way, so we believe in it, and we will not ascribe any partner to our Lord.” (al-Jinn, 1-2) (Bukhari, Tafsir, 72; Adhan, 105; Muslim, Salat, 149; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 72/3324)

The Almighty further explains the event in Chapter al-Ahqaf as follows:

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَا إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقُرْآنَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ  
قَالُوا أَنْصِتُوا فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ مُنْذِرِينَ.  
قَالُوا يَا قَوْمَنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَابًا أُنزِلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى مُصَدِّقًا  
لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ وَإِلَى طَرِيقٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

يَا قَوْمَنَا أَجِيبُوا دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ وَآمِنُوا بِهِ يَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ





مِنْ عَذَابِ الْيَمِّ. وَمَنْ لَا يُجِيبُ دَاعِيَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي  
الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءُ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ.

“And when We turned towards you a party of the jinn who listened to the Quran... When they came to it, they said: Be silent! Then when it was finished, they turned back to their people to warn them. They said: O our people! We have heard a Book revealed after Musa verifying that which is before it, guiding to the truth and to a right path. O our people! Accept the Divine caller and believe in Him, He will forgive you of your faults and protect you from a painful punishment. And whoever does not accept the Divine caller, shall not escape in the earth; neither shall they have guardians besides Him, for they will be in manifest error. (al-Ahqaf, 29-32)

The Quran explains the following in relation to the barring of the jinn from eavesdropping on the heavens:

وَأَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا.  
وَأَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ  
شِهَابًا رَصَدًا. وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا

“And we sought to reach heaven, but we found it filled with strong guards and flaming stars. And we used to sit in some of the sitting-places thereof to steal a hearing, but he who would try to listen now would find a flame lying in wait for him; and we know



not whether evil is meant for those who are on earth or whether their Lord means to bring them good.” (al-Jinn, 8-10)<sup>214</sup>

Outwardly, the Prophet’s ﷺ only gain from the Ta’if journey was the guidance of Addas ؓ. But in reality, the Compassionate Allah provided many more blessings. Included among this, for instance, is that he was given the sultanate of both worlds. First, even before he returned to Mecca, the jinn heard the Prophet ﷺ recite the Quran which inspired them to begin the call among their own people. A short time later, the Almighty was to grant His

214. The great Mawlana Rumi describes the incident by use of metaphor:  
 “Demons used to ascend to the skies and listen in on the secrets of the heavens. Just as they would be about to take flight with a small number of secrets, blazing stars would drive them out of their corners.  
 ‘A Prophet has been sent’, would resonate. ‘Go to where he is and acquire from him whatever it is that you want.’  
 ‘If a precious pearl is what you search, then *enter houses through their doors!*’\*  
 ‘Rattle the loop of that door and wait at its threshold...for heavens provide no road for you and those like you.’  
 ‘Besides, there is no need for you to venture out onto distant journeys...for We have placed the greatest mystery of all in our servant whom We have fashioned from mud.  
 ‘If you are sincere, then go to his presence, the *Caliph* of the Divine. Even if you are a hollow cane, you shall become a cane full of sugar with his help and companionship.”  
 \* “*Enter houses through their doors.*” (al-Baqara, 189) In the Age of Ignorance and during the first years of Islam, after donning the consecrated state (*ihram*) for pilgrimage, one would not enter his house or garden by their door. If a townsman, he would instead open a whole in the roof through which he would go in and out of his house. If a desert Arab, he would then rip open the back part of his tent, in preference to entering through the front. To do so until they were out of *ihram*, they assumed, was of great virtue and goodness. By revealing the 189<sup>th</sup> *ayah* of al-Baqarah, the Almighty proclaimed otherwise. (Wahidi, p. 56-57) The Divine expression has since come to be used as an allusion to ‘doing things the right way’; and Mawlana Rumi ؒ, here, affords a sufi commentary of the *ayah*: to find Allah, one must resort to *ahlullah*, His people, who are virtually His doors.

beloved the Ascension or the *Miraj*, making him the sultan of the heavens.



As the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had left Mecca with his own consent, according to Arabian custom, to return to the town he needed the protection of a Meccan. Thus on his way towards Mecca from Nakhlah, the Prophet ﷺ sent a Meccan who he came across near Mount Hira, first to Ahnas ibn Sharik, and then to Suhayl ibn Amr and Mutim ibn Adiyy, with the message:

“Will you have me under your protection until I communicate the task of prophethood given to me by my Lord?”

The first two declined. Mutim, however, accepted and the Light of Being ﷺ was able to spend the night at Mutim’s house. Come morning, Mutim gathered his sons and clan around him, ordering them:

“Arm yourselves and remain on guard next to the pillars of the Kaabah!”

When they reached the Kaabah, Mutim made an announcement to the Meccans:

“Listen up, Quraysh! I have Muhammad under my protection. Nobody shall touch him!”

Mutim and his sons stood guard by the Kaabah until the Prophet ﷺ circumambulated and performed two rakahs of salat. (Ibn Saad, I, 212; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 182)

Years later, Mutim was slain at the Battle of Badr, unfortunately without the honor of being a Muslim. Following the battle, amid



discussions regarding what to do with the Meccan prisoners, the Prophet ﷺ expressed his appreciation to Jubayr, the son of Mutim:

“Had your father been alive and wanted me to free the prisoners, I would have freed them without asking for the least ransom.” (Bukhari, Khumus, 16, Ibn Hisham, I, 404-406)

Loyalty that extends even to a nonbeliever, for easing the path for the call of Islam, could only be an expression of supreme morals.

### Meeting with Various Tribes and Inviting them to Islam

After returning from Ta'if, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ kept a low profile for a while. Soon after, he resumed his call, only to find the idolaters acting more brutally than ever. The Almighty then commanded the Prophet ﷺ to meet other Arab tribes and invite them to Islam.

Thus, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took the opportunity provided by the months of pilgrimage to address those visiting Mecca for the fairs of Ukaz, Majannah and Zhu'l-Majaz, first reading them the Quran before extending an invitation to Islam. Members of the tribes whose camps the Messenger of Allah ﷺ personally visited to ask for assistance in carrying out the duty given to him by the Almighty included the Banu Amir, Muharib, Fazara, Ghassan, Murrah, Hanifah, Sulaym, Abs, Banu Nasr, Banu Baqqa, Kind, Kalb, Harithah, Uzra and Hudarimah.<sup>215</sup>

Jabir رضي الله عنه<sup>216</sup> narrates:

215. See Ibn Saad, I, 216-217; Ahmed, III, 322, 492; Ibn Kathir, III, 183-190.

216. Jabir ibn Abdullah رضي الله عنه was born in Medina sixteen years prior to the Hegira. Abdullah ibn Jabir رضي الله عنه, his father, is the first Companion martyred at the Battle of Uhud. Forced to remain behind to look after his nine sisters, Jabir had not been able to participate in any battles while his father was alive. Following his death at

“During the month of pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would present himself to the pilgrims while standing at Arafah and say, ‘Is there anyone who will take me to his tribe? Quraysh has prevented me from communicating the word of my Lord.’” (Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 19-20/4734)

But no tribe was putting its hand up to accept the invitation to protect and assist the Prophet ﷺ. While some simply turned cold shoulders and acted rudely, others debated with the Prophet ﷺ as to why his own tribe had left him without support, when they, out of all people, knew him best. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ continued inviting them to the path of Truth regardless.<sup>217</sup>

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Uhud, however, Jabir ؓ took active part in nineteen battles with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was the youngest participant at the Second Aqabah Pledge. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ had great affection for him. Time and again the Blessed Prophet ﷺ would take Jabir behind him on the saddle while on camelback, and visit him while ill. Jabir ؓ struggled to pay off the debts his father had left behind. The creditors, most of whom were Jews, were urging immediate payment. To make matters worse, there was not much harvest that year. So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had all the harvested dates piled in heaps; and with the scale in his blessed hands, he began repaying the creditors, one by one. Not only was Jabir's entire debt ؓ paid back, as a Divine miracle, the dates had not decreased.

One of the *mukthirun*, the seven Companions with the most hadith narrations under their names, Jabir ؓ narrated 1540 hadiths. He once heard about Abdullah ibn Unays narrating a hadith, about the state of people upon resurrecting from the graves; a hadith Jabir ؓ nonetheless wished to hear firsthand. Not in the least deterred by the fact that Abdullah had long moved to Damascus, Jabir bought a camel, mounted it and departed from Medina, reaching Damascus following a month's journey where he listened to the hadith straight from Abdullah ibn Unays' mouth. Towards the end of his life, Jabir ؓ lost his sight, finally passing away in Medina in 697 (H. 78), at the age of 94. He was the last Companion to pass away in Medina.

217. Ahmed, III, 322; Ibn Saad, I, 216.



Before even stepping foot inside Mecca, any pilgrim or fairgoer from the Mudar tribe, Yemen or elsewhere would be cautioned, “Don’t you let the young man of Quraysh turn you away from your religion!”<sup>218</sup>

At some point, the Noble Prophet ﷺ went to the Thalabah clan in Mina. Once, he told them of being the Messenger of Allah, he was asked by Mafruq ibn Amr, one of their leaders:

“To what do you invite people, brother?”

With Abu Bakr ؓ standing by his side shading him from the sun, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ took a seat next to them and said the following to Mafruq:

“I invite you to bear witness that there is no god but Allah, who is One without any partners, and that I am his messenger; and also to protect and help me until I carry out to completion what I have been commanded by Allah. Quraysh has disputed the Divine command; they have denied His messenger and have preferred error over truth. But Allah stands in need of no one and deserves all the praise!”

“My brother, what else do you invite to?” Mafruq asked.

Then the Noble Prophet read aloud the following *ayah* from Chapter al-Anaam:

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا  
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ  
وَأَيَّاهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا

218. Hakim, II, 681/4251.



النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّيْكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تَعْقِلُونَ. وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ  
أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا  
إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ  
أَوْفُوا ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّيْكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ. وَإِنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي  
مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ  
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّيْكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ.

“Say: Come I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you. Do not associate anything with Him and show kindness to your parents, and do not slay your children for fear of poverty-- We indeed provide for you and for them-- and do not draw nigh to indecencies, apparent and concealed, and do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden except for the requirements of justice; this He has enjoined upon you that you may understand. And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner until he attains his maturity, and give full measure and weight with justice- We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability; and when you speak, then be just though it be against a relative, and fulfill Allah’s covenant; this He has enjoined you with that you may be mindful. And know that this is My path, the right one, therefore follow it, and follow not other ways, for they will lead you away from His way; this He has enjoined you with that you may guard against evil. (al-Anaam, 151-153)



“So, my brother, tell me; to what else do you invite?” asked Mafruq after a brief pause. “If what you have said were words of men I surely would have made them out by now.”

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah quoted:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَائِ ذِي الْقُرْبَى وَيَنْهَى عَنِ  
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

“Surely Allah enjoins the doing of justice and the doing of good and the giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion; He admonishes you that you may be mindful.”

(an-Nahl, 90)

“My brother from Quraysh! You indeed invite to the best of morals and conduct! From what I can see, your people are slandering you in calling you a liar!” Mafruq exclaimed. Hani and Muthanna, other leaders of the clan, lent Mafruq their support. But they said they could not accept the offer until they consulted the other leaders of their tribes, stating moreover that they had made a pact of alliance with the Persians, who would not be happy if they heard of such a deal.

So even though they accepted in their consciences, the clan in the end declined the offer of the Prophet ﷺ out of fear of getting into trouble.<sup>219</sup>



Tariq ibn Abdullah ؓ narrates the following:

219. Ibn Asir, *Usdu'l-Ghâba*, V, 250-251; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 187-189.





“I once saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the Zhu’l-Majaz Fair, wearing a red shirt, calling out, ‘People... Say *La ilaha illallah* and be saved!’

Behind him was another man, throwing rocks at the Messenger ﷺ, shouting in his wake, ‘Do not listen to him! He is a liar!’

The stones had left the feet of the Prophet ﷺ in blood. Not knowing till then who the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was, I asked those around me.

‘A young man from the sons of Abdulmuttalib’, they replied.

‘What about the man throwing stones?’

‘His uncle Abu Lahab!’” (Hakim, II, 668; Ibn Athir, *Usd’ul-Ghabah*, III, 71)

Another account of the hardships the Noble Prophet ﷺ had to endure in the way of inviting people to Islam was given by Mudrik al-Azdi ؓ:

“I was performing pilgrimage with my father. Once we stopped over at Mina, we came across a large group.

‘I wonder why they have gathered’, I said to my father.

‘...For the man who has abandoned the religion of his tribe!’ he replied.

When I looked towards the direction my father was pointing to, I saw the Messenger of Allah. We could hear him say loud and clear, ‘People, say *La ilaha illallah* and be saved!’

Some were spitting at him and throwing dirt at his face; others were hurling abuse. This continued until midday. Then a girl, whose neck was slightly exposed, came with a jug of water and a handkerchief. She was crying. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ drank



from the water, washing his hands and face. Afterward lifting his head, he said:

‘Cover your neck with your headscarf, my dear. And don’t ever think that they can kill or dishonour your father!’

I later found out she was his daughter Zaynab.” (Ibn Athir, *Usd’ul-Ghabah*, V, 130; Haythami, VI, 21)

Zaynab, Fatimah and the other daughters ﷺ of the Noble Messenger ﷺ spent their childhood and youth in the weakest days of Islam, when Muslims were subjected to the harshest treatment. Zaynab and her sisters ﷺ would always find themselves sharing the pains suffered by the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims. When their father set out from home to call people to Islam, they would either wait anxiously by the door or follow him, step by step, to ensure no harm befell him.

They were also by their father’s side mourning the passing away of their dear mother Khadijah ﷺ. Never did the Prophet ﷺ undergo any hardship without his daughters shedding tears by his side. Fatimah ﷺ would be there wiping the Prophet’s ﷺ blood, while Zaynab ﷺ would be in his wake with some water to wash his face. They led a difficult life indeed.

Included among the many tribes the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called to Islam at the Ukaz Fair were the sons of Amir ibn Sa’saa.

“Are you willing to give me refuge and protect me, as the Messenger of Allah, until I am able to pass on the commands of my Lord to people and complete my duty? I will not force anyone among you”, he asked them.

“We will neither drive you out, nor believe you. We will only protect you until you complete your mission”, they responded.

At that point a certain person from their tribe, named Bayhara, turned up. Having found out the identity of the Prophet ﷺ, he had already been thinking how he would be able to gain supremacy over the entire Arabs, if only he could win the Prophet over.

“Say we pledged allegiance to you and Allah made you victorious over your enemies, would kingship be ours after you are gone?” he impudently asked the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

“All affairs belong to Allah. He elects whomever He wishes!” the Light of Being ﷺ replied.

“So you are asking us to put our bodies inn the line of fire against all the Arabs for you and then expect us to wait and see who is given kingship if you are victorious? That’s a raw deal!” Bayhara remarked, before shouting to his clan:

“I have not seen a bargain worse than yours in this entire fair. Go ahead and draw the hostility of the entire Arabs. But know that his tribe knows him best. Had they seen any goodness in him, they would have been sure to lay claim to him before you ever did!”

With the pendulum having swung his way, he then turned once again to the Prophet ﷺ:

“Leave this place immediately!”

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ got to his feet to mount his camel, the wretched Bayhara poked the camel’s chest, causing the camel to spring and the Noble Prophet ﷺ to fall.

Seeing the horrific treatment of the Prophet ﷺ, Dubaa bint Amir, a Muslim woman present, screamed in a sense of urgency, “For heaven’s sake, sons of Amir! How can you stand seeing the Messenger of Allah abused right in front of your eyes without moving a finger?”



Thereupon, three men stood up and disciplined Bayhara, for which they earned the good wishes of the Noble Prophet ﷺ:

“Grant them your blessings, o Allah!” he prayed.

So great were the blessings of this prayer, that not only were the three men eventually guided, they all breathed their last as martyrs.

The tribe had a leader, prevented by old age to visit Mecca for pilgrimage, who was told about the encounter by his returning tribesmen. The moment he heard what had happened, he put his hands on his head in despair, telling them off with regret:

“How on earth will you make up for such a lost opportunity? I swear to God that nobody from among the sons of Ismail has ever falsely claimed to be a prophet! How could you not see he was telling you the truth? What on earth were you thinking?”<sup>220</sup>

In spite of all the abuse he had to cope with, the Gracious Messenger ﷺ was meanwhile continuing to call the remainder of the other tribes to the fair to the path of truth.

### Marriage with Sawdah ﷺ

Sawdah ﷺ was previously married to Sakran ibn Amr ﷺ. Together they were among the migrants of Abyssinia, where Sakran had passed away a short time later. Being one who had shown great loyalty and devotion to the path of Islam, Sawdah ﷺ had earned the praises of the Prophet ﷺ. Thus to help her out of the troublesome situation she would face as a widow, the Prophet ﷺ took her hand in marriage.

Setting up the marriage was Hawla the wife of Othman ibn Mazun ؓ. As was the custom, Sawdah's father was asked to grant permission. As expected, he was more than happy for his daughter.

Yet, Sawdah ؓ could not find in herself the courage to go ahead with the marriage, mainly because of the five or six small children she had from her late husband.

Seeing her hesitance, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked her the reason of her doubts.

“How could I have doubt about marrying you when there is nobody in the world dearer to me? But I fear my small children will end up disturbing you with all their noise. Otherwise I am more than happy to marry you...” (Ibn Saad, VIII, 53-57; Ahmad, I, 318-319; VI, 211; Haythami, IV, 270)

The marriage took place on the tenth year of prophethood, in the month of Ramadan.

Sawdah ؓ cared enormously for the Prophet ﷺ. She became the other half of the Prophet ﷺ, always by his side at a time when he needed support the most, and took compassionate and loving care of his young daughters who were in need of tender, motherly affection.



## THE ELEVENTH YEAR OF PROPHETHOOD

### The Aqabah Meeting

It was night. A group of six people from Medina, who were in Mecca visiting the Kaabah, encountered the Messenger of Allah ﷺ near Aqabah. They were instantly struck by the heavenly glow of the Prophet's ﷺ appearance, at which moment the drops of divine compassion began dripping into their hearts, bringing to life the buds of love within, giving them a joy beyond description. Meanwhile, the Light of Being ﷺ approached to offer them an invitation to Islam, just as he did with others, in accordance with his duty of prophethood.

“Shall we sit awhile and talk?” he proposed.

The six fortunate men from Medina were more than ready for the opportunity to talk to such an awe-inspiring man. Like moths drawn to a light, they quickly formed a circle around the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

Reciting some passages from the Quran, the Prophet ﷺ called them to Islam, urging them to accept the happiness of both worlds.

The Medinans had heard from their forefathers of a future prophet, of whom they were also frequently reminded by their



Jewish neighbors. Thus, when they heard firsthand the call of the Prophet ﷺ, they said to one another in a sense of urgency:

“He must be the Prophet the Jews have been threatening us with. We cannot let the Jews beat us to believing him.”

It only took another look at the Gracious Messenger’s ﷺ glowing face, which they had admired from the first moment they had set their gazes on him, for the Medinans to wholeheartedly embrace the call. They said the *shahadah* at once.

The Prophet ﷺ then asked them whether they would help if he was to migrate to Medina with the Muslims. They replied that the long lasting hostilities between the Medinan tribes of Aws and Khazraj had reached a boiling point, owing to which they could not be of much help if the Muslims were to migrate that very year. But they asked for a year’s delay to assess the situation. With the promise to pass the word of call to the Medinans, they pledged to return for pilgrimage in a year’s time.

The small delegation of Medinans returned home with an entirely different air of joy. Cleansed of the dirt of ignorance, they were now relieved of a burden from their shoulders and were feeling as light as birds. As soon as they came back to Medina, they began explaining the cause of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to the locals and inviting them to Islam, so much so that there was not a single house left in Medina in which the Noble Messenger ﷺ was not spoken about.<sup>221</sup>

### **The Third Sharh’us-Sadr: A Preparation for Miraj**

On the night of Isra and Miraj—the Night Journey and Ascent to Heaven—before the Noble Prophet’s ﷺ meeting with the Almighty,

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221. See Ibn Hisham, II, 38; Ibn Saad, I, 219; Haythami, VI, 40.



for the third time, his pure heart was prepared to receive divine manifestations and his chest filled with faith and wisdom.<sup>222</sup>

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ recalls the event as follows:

“I was lying down between sleep and wakefulness at Hatim, near the Kaabah. Then someone came and cleaved my chest from there to here (pointing from his throat to his abdomen while saying this) and removed my heart. A golden container was then brought, filled with faith and wisdom. My heart was washed with Zamzam water and filled with faith and wisdom, before being returned to its place.” (Bukhari, Bad’ul-Khalq 6; Anbiya 22, 43; Muslim, Iman 264)

### A Unique Gift to the Beloved: Miraj

The Isra took place eighteen months before the Hegira.

The Divine gift referred to as the Isra and Miraj is a transcendent blessing beyond all veils placed on mortals that surpasses all comprehension. Space and time as understood in human terms, for instance, were removed, allowing a long journey and innumerable experiences to occur within a mere split second that would otherwise take billions of lifetimes to complete.

The Almighty reveals:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى  
 الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ  
 السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

222. See Bukhari, Salat, 1; Muslim, Īman, 263.



“Glory be to Him Who made His servant go by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts we have blessed, so that We may show to him some of Our signs. Surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” (al-Isra, 1)

To draw attention to the importance and wonder of the event it is soon to express, the verse begins with a glorification (*tanzih*). Commentators hold that the word *سُبْحَانَ* (*subhane*) clears the Almighty of all deficient attributes, used also to express astonishment in the face of the miraculous doings of the Creator. As such, it is also one of the most important words used to remember the Almighty.

In short:

1. The word praises and affirms the miraculous Isra and lays the groundwork for the purification of hearts, protecting it from the fancies of likening Allah ﷻ, to creation.

2. It emphasizes that the Almighty is remote from deficient attributes of any kind, especially for those who deem the *Miraj* impossible.

The verse goes on to draw attention to night. Isra was a night journey. Most of the Revelation came at night time. Again, it is the night in which groundbreaking events, whether good or bad, take place. Likewise the pre-dawn is the time of the *tahajjud* salat, a voluntary yet a peak act of worship.

As for the blessings of the Farthest Mosque, or Masjid’ul-Aqsa, and its surroundings, commentators have referred to them as:

1. The blessings of both the world and the hereafter. The Mosque is surrounded by greenery and rivers.

2. It has been the home of many prophets and hence has been blessed over and over with divine revelation.



3. The further blessings it has received through being a destination for the Isra.

During this journey, Allah ﷻ, made His messenger witness many extraordinary events.



That night at Masjid'ul-Aqsa, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ led the salat before the entire host of prophets.<sup>223</sup>

Abu Hurayrah ؓ narrates that on the night of Isra, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was brought two bowls, one of wine, the other of milk. After a momentary look, the Prophet ﷺ chose the bowl of milk, upon which Jibril said, "Praise be to Allah who has guided you to that which suits man's reason for existence. Had you chosen the bowl of wine, your nation would have deviated." (Muslim, Iman 272, Ashribah, 92)<sup>224</sup>

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was thus representing the whole of his *ummah*, as their source of inspiration. Milk stood for natural disposition (*fitrah*), while wine stood for love of the world.

The Quran states:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ

223. Ibn Saad, I, 214.

224. Also see Bukhari, Tafsir 17/3, Ashriba 1, 12; Nasâi, Ashriba, 41.

That Islam is a religion of natural predispotion was confirmed with the *Isra* and *Miraj*, testifying that the books of heavens shall never be disclosed to the spiritually corrupt, ailing with the diseases of the heart.



“...Nor does he speak out of desire” (an-Najm, 3) whereby the Almighty informs us that the Noble Prophet ﷺ never did anything of his own doing.

Allah, glory be unto Him, is the Absolute Doer, and thus the Prophet ﷺ had submitted completely to Him. Here, by making him prefer milk, the Almighty guided His Messenger to the greatest virtue. This event depicted in the hadith also hints at the supreme blessing upon the ummah of the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

Taken from the Masjid’ul-Haram to the Masjid’ul-Aqsa with the night walk referred to as *Isra*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was honored with ascension to the heavens, the *Miraj*. Guided by the Archangel Jibril, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ went as far as the *Sidrat’ul-Muntaha*, the Lote-Tree.

The Noblest of Creations ﷺ recounts the experience as follows:

“I was at Hatim, by the Kaabah, between sleep and wakefulness, when Buraq, an animal larger than a donkey yet smaller than a mule, was brought to me. With its forelegs, it could leap as far as it could see. I was mounted on it. Jibril led us to the nearest heaven and asked for its gates to be opened.

‘Who is it?’ a voice asked from behind.

‘Jibril’.

‘Who is with you?’

‘Muhammad’.

‘Has he been delivered the invitation of *Miraj*?’

‘Yes!’

‘In that case welcome...How wonderful a visit!’



The gates were then opened. When we passed through, I saw a man waiting. ‘This is your father Adam. Greet him!’ it was said. I greeted him. He responded, after which he spoke:

‘Welcome, virtuous son, virtuous Prophet!’

Then Jibril elevated me to the second heaven. There I saw Yahya and Isa ﷺ, the two maternal cousins.

I was further raised to the third heaven, where I saw Yusuf ﷺ. And afterward to the fourth, where I saw Idris ﷺ, then to the fifth where I saw Harun ﷺ, and finally to the sixth, in which Musa ﷺ was waiting.

‘Virtuous brother, virtuous Prophet...Welcome!’ he said.

But after we passed him, he began weeping.

‘Why do you weep?’ he was asked.

‘I weep because the young man who became prophet after me will have more of his followers enter Paradise than mine!’<sup>225</sup>

Then Jibril took me to the seventh heaven, where we saw yet another man.

‘Greet your father Ibrahim!’ Jibril said.

I greeted him to which he replied:

‘Virtuous son and virtuous Prophet...Welcome!’ he said, before continuing, ‘Send my greetings, Muhammad, to your followers and let them know of the beauty of the soil of Paradise, the sweetness of her waters, and the vastness of her land. But tell them to plant more trees here. The trees of Paradise are planted merely through saying,

225. Musa’s ﷺ weeping should not be understood as caused by jealousy, but rather from sorrow caused by not being able to attain that state of perfection.

‘*Subhanallah wa’l-hamdu lillah wa la ilaha illallahu wallahu Akbar*’ (Glory and thanks are for Allah; there is no god but Allah and Allah is the Greatest)’.

I was then raised to a Tree, whose fruits were as huge as the Hejr pots of Yemen, and leaves like elephant ears.

‘And this...is the Sidrat’ul-Muntaha’, Jibril uttered.

There flowed four rivers; two inward and two outward.

‘What are these called, Jibril?’ I asked.

‘The two inward rivers belong to Paradise. As for the outward ones, one is the Nile and the other the Euphrates’<sup>226</sup> (Bukhari, Bad’ul-Khalq, 6; Anbiya, 22, 43’ Manaqib’ul-Ansar, 42; Muslim, Iman, 264; Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 94; Da’wat, 58; Nasai, Salat, 1; Ahmad, V, 418)

It follows that upon reaching the Sidrat’ul-Muntaha, Jibril said:

“From this point onward, Messenger of Allah, you are on your own!”

“Why, Jibril?” asked the Prophet ﷺ.

“The Almighty allows me passage only up to this point. If I take a single step further, I will burn to ashes!” (Razi, XXVIII, 251)

226. According to one view, the witnessing of the Nile and Euphrates in Paradise by the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is an allusion to Islam flourishing on Earth and becoming sovereign over the fertile lands through which the Nile and the Euphrates flow, by which those regions will be saved from the fire worshipping of the Persians and Trinity doctrine of the Byzantines; and for generations to come, the dwellers of these areas will become the flagbearers of *tawhid* and lend an invaluable service to Islam.



The Noble Prophet ﷺ continued the rest of the journey on his own. He was blessed with extraordinary manifestations, and honored above all with the vision (*jamal*) of the Almighty.

To properly describe these amazing experiences in words is as impossible as trying to reduce a truth beyond imagination to the level of human comprehension. The manifestations, whose true nature remains an eternal secret between the Almighty and His Beloved, took place strictly within the conditions of the supersensible world, *alam`ul-ghayb*.

With that said, these magnificent secrets manifested between the Glorious and His Noble Prophet display the boundless blessings of the Creator to those who receive His revelations.

The *Miraj* also carried the Divine aim of ridding the sorrow that had filled the Prophet's ﷺ heart following the cruelties he endured at Ta'if, to make room for happiness.

Since the *Miraj* took place beyond space and time, it is impossible for human understanding to completely grasp this Divine manifestation. Forcing the imagination in hope of grasping such delicate and unique matters is strongly advised against.

Once in the dimensionless realm of the Almighty during the *Miraj*, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with an exceptional Divine gift that surpassed all those given to previous prophets, experienced a manifestation described as:

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ

“So he was at the measure of two bows or closer still.” (an-Najm, 9)

Remembering that despite being among the great prophets, experiencing only an inkling of this manifestation was enough to

make Prophet Musa عليه السلام faint, one can get an idea of the sublime rank of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ next to Allah, the Glorious, and the special authority and power he was given.

In the sacred valley, for his feet to share in the blessings of the site and participate in that honor, Prophet Musa عليه السلام was asked to remove his shoes. But at the Night of *Miraj*, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was in a sense told to:

“Walk on the covering of the Highest Heaven with your shoes, so that the Heaven is honored with their dust, and that the light of the Heaven is blessed with your presence .” (Bursawi, V, 370)

Poet Kemal Edib Kürkcüoğlu gives an elegant voice to the excitement of the heavens over the ascension of the Prophet ﷺ:

*At the night of Miraj, for staring at his face,  
To the ground, in gratitude, the heavens fall prostrate...*



Below is the Almighty’s description of the *Miraj*:

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ

“By the Star when it goes down...” (an-Najm, 1)<sup>227</sup> The chapter begins with an oath to emphasize the truth of the *Miraj* against

227. The commentators have provided various explanations regarding the star (*an-najm*) by which the Almighty swears. Among the most significant of these is the interpretation that ‘the star’ is the Blessed Messenger ﷺ himself or the gradually revealed verses of the Holy Quran. In light of this, the meaning of the oath is:

1. By Muhammad Mustafa, who ascended upon and descended down the *Miraj*!
2. By the time of the disclosure of each Divine dispensation during the revelation of the Quran!



the possible denials of the nonbelievers. This is supported by what follows after the vow:

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَى. وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَى. إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا  
وَحْيٌ يُوحَى. عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَى. ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى. وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ  
الْأَعْلَى.

“...Your Companion is neither astray nor being misled; Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed. He was taught by one Mighty in Power, endowed with Wisdom: for he appeared, in a stately form, while he was in the highest firmament.” (an-Najm, 2-7)

The word *istiwa*, translated as ‘appearance in a stately form’ above, literally means to cover, to encompass or to straighten up. Together with the consideration that it is Jibril عليه السلام who is the subject of the verb, the majority of commentators tend to instead attribute the verb to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, in which case it highlights the highness of his value and rank. So the Prophet ﷺ straightened up at the highest horizon and:

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى

“Then he approached and came closer...” (an-Najm, 8) That is to say, as a result of Divine attraction, the Noble Prophet was drawn higher; even higher than the rank where he was.

Thus, during the Miraj, the Prophet ﷺ not only aligned to the highest horizon, he also drew nearer to the Allah ﷻ. Then the affect of divine attraction increased more and more, until the Prophet ﷺ suddenly passed to the other side of the highest horizon:



## فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ

“So he was the measure of two bows or closer still.” (an-Najm, 9)

قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ‘The measure of two bows or closer’ is a simile used to express a supersensible reality in sensory terms. It has reference to a common practice among Arabs before the coming of Islam. The custom was that whenever two parties made an agreement on a matter, each party would take out a bow, and placing them jointly on top of one another, would shoot a single arrow with the two bows. This acted as a symbol of solidarity, indicating that whatever one liked from then on so would the other, and reason for one’s anger would also serve as reason for the other’s.

Thus comprising both physical and spiritual closeness, *qaba qawsayn*, or the measure of two bows, is a sublime reality that surpasses human comprehension. The Prophet Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ got so close to his Lord at that instant that all mediums ceased to be, and in a direct fashion:

## فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ

“...He revealed to His servant what He revealed...” (an-Najm, 10)

What is meant by this ‘revealing’ has been explained as:

1. Salat. One of the most important aspects of the Miraj is that it was then that the five daily salats were made obligatory. With the advise of Prophet Musa ﷺ, the Noble Prophet ﷺ kept on insisting the Almighty, as a result of which the number of daily salats, fifty to begin with, were dropped to five. With this, however, the Allah ﷻ, promised to reward a single deed with ten rewards, hence the reward of fifty salats in return for the five. Afterward, Allah, glory be to Him, added:

“Whoever intends to do a good deed but cannot, shall still receive a reward for his good will. If he does, then he will have ten rewards recorded in his name.

And whoever intends to commit something bad, but does not, shall reap no sin. If he does commit it, he will be imputed that one sin!” (Muslim, Iman, 259)

Owing to the repeated pleas of the Prophet ﷺ, the Almighty decreased the number of daily salats, fifty to begin with, to five, as is explained in a lengthy hadith. What this means is that although the rights of the Creator, or *huququllah*, in fact require man to worship Him fifty times a day, being boundlessly merciful, the Creator has relieved man of nine tenths of this responsibility. Considering the *ayah*:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

“I have created the jinn and men only that they might worship Me” (az-Zhariyat, 56) declares that the essential activity for mankind is to worship the Creator, it could be understood that the amount of this responsibility has been reduced in consideration of the generally weak nature of man; yet it also means that although it is not obligatory, there is more than good reason, for those who can, to voluntarily offer more salats, which is not prohibited by any means.

In addition to the five obligatory daily salats, and as the natural outcome of what has been explained above, mature believers offer voluntary salats like the *ishraq* and *awwabin*, and give special importance to getting up at night for *tahajjud*. But in order for these voluntary acts of worship to be performed only by those with the zest and power to do so, with the repeated pleas of the Prophet ﷺ,

the obligatory salats were in the end reduced to five a day from the fifty they were to begin with.

2. The Prophet ﷺ was given the promise that:

“No Prophet before you and no followers before your followers shall enter Paradise!” (Razi, XXVIII, 248)

3. The final two verses of Chapter Baqarah were revealed.

A hadith narrated by Muslim states that:

“During the Miraj, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given three blessings: the five daily salats, the ending of chapter Baqarah and the good news that the major sins of his followers, except for *shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah) would be forgiven...” (Muslim, Iman, 279)

That said, only Allah ﷻ, and His Messenger know the nature of the said ‘revelation’ of Miraj.

What is obvious here however is that Prophet ﷺ witnessed the manifested experiences of *Miraj*, not as a dream, but as a reality supported by the certainty in his heart. That is:

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى. أَفْتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَى.

“The heart lied not in seeing what it saw. Now will you dispute with him as to what he saw?” (an-Najm, 11-12)

Upon returning from the *Miraj*, from that unique post to which no man can attain, where he met his Lord and underwent many extraordinary experiences, the Prophet ﷺ saw Jibril ﷺ where he had left him, once again, in his true form, near the *Sidrat'ul-Muntaha*.

وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزَلَةً أُخْرَى. عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى.

“For indeed, he saw him at a second descent; near the Lote Tree beyond which none may pass.” (an-Najm, 13-14)

The *ayah* hints at the higher rank of the Prophet ﷺ in comparison with Jibril ؑ. Indeed, Jibril ؑ had to remain at the spot where he remarked ‘only a step further and I will burn’, while the Prophet ﷺ was able to go further. This is made all the more clear by the Prophet’s encounter again with Jibril ؑ on the way back.

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ. إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ.

“Near it is the Garden of Refuge, when that which shrouded did enshroud the Lote Tree.” (an-Najm, 15-16)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was later asked what he saw that enshrouded the *Sidrat’ul-Muntaha*.

“I saw it enshrouded by golden moths, with an angel seated on each of its leaves invoking Allah.” (Tabari, XXVII, 75; Muslim, Iman, 279)

Ibn Abbas ؓ commented that the Almighty rewarded Musa ؑ by talking to him, Ibrahim ؑ by befriending him, and Muhammad ﷺ by the honor of Divine vision, in a way whose nature remains unknown to us. (Tabari, XXVII, 64)

For eyes to be fixed unwaveringly on the Beloved is the peak of *adab*, that is to say, courtesy.

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ. لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ.

“His sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong; for truly he did see the Greatest of the Signs of his Lord!” (an-Najm, 17-18)

As understood by these *ayah* of the Quran, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was allowed to pass beyond the *Sidrat’ul-Muntaha*, beyond which



no being, including Jibril عليه السلام had passed before. Taking place there was a union, described simply as ‘the measure of two joined bows or closer’, whose true nature however remains forever hidden from human understanding.

During this union, the Sultan of Prophets ﷺ stood witness to realities too great for words to articulate, and saw the splendid signs of the lordship of the Almighty, and the grandeur of His majesty that could only be attained through inner experience, that is *mushahadah* or witnessing.

The interpretation of most commentators here is that the Noble Prophet ﷺ saw the Almighty with the eye of the heart. (Tabari, XXVII, 63)

Narrated by Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is known to have said:

“I indeed saw Him, the Almighty!” (Ahmad, I, 285; Haythami, I, 78)

In another instance, upon being asked whether he saw the Almighty during the Miraj, the Messenger of Allah replied:

“I saw a Light!” (Muslim, Iman, 292)

Only Allah, glory be to Him, knows the essence of the matter.<sup>228</sup>



We have many narrations from the Prophet ﷺ regarding his experiences during the Isra and Miraj, some of which we shall mention now.

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228. We have drawn from Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır’s “*Hak Dini Kur’an Dili*” in explaining the *ayah* concerning the *Miraj*.



During the Miraj, the Prophet ﷺ saw a group who had swollen lips, like camels. Standing over them were officials given the duty of cutting their lips and stuffing their mouths with stones.

“Who are they, Jibril?” asked the Prophet ﷺ.

“They are those who used to unjustly seize the properties of orphans”, Jibril replied. (Tabari, XV, 18-19)

Afterwards, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ encountered another group, digging their copper nails into their own faces and chests.

“Who might they be?” the Prophet ﷺ again asked.

“They are those who through gossiping and backbiting used to mess about with the honor and dignity of others.” (Abu Dawud, Adab, 35/4878)

Soon afterward, the Noble Messenger ﷺ also saw the fornicators on earth wretchedly eating away at carcass, the usurers afflicted with swollen guts, and women who had murdered the children they had conceived through fornication, miserably hung from either their breasts or upside down from their feet.<sup>229</sup>

It is for such reasons the Light of Being ﷺ once remarked:

“If you knew what I know, you would surely laugh less and cry more.” (Bukhari, Tafsir, 5/12)

Again, regarding one of his visions during the *Miraj*, the Gracious Prophet ﷺ once said, “On the night of Miraj, I saw the Gates of Paradise inscribed with the words:

*‘Charity shall be rewarded tenfold but loans eighteenfold’.*

229. See Tabari, XV, 18-19.



‘Why is giving loans superior to giving charity?’ I then asked Jibril.

‘...Because one who asks for charity more often than not asks despite having money. But one who seeks a loan seeks it out of need.’” (Ibn Majah, Sadaqat, 19)

In another hadith, the Prophet ﷺ recounts:

“During the *Miraj*, I paused at the Gates of Paradise and looked inside. Its dwellers were mostly the poor, while the rich were detained for questioning. Those judged to enter hellfire were then commanded to be taken away. Then I paused at the Gates of Hell. Most of its dwellers were women.” (Bukhari, Riqaq, 51; Muslim, Zuhd, 93)

The hadith serves as a caution, especially for women, to protect themselves from behavior that could lead them to Divine punishment.



While on the subject of *Miraj*, we must touch upon another matter, that is to say, even though human beings can only think of past recollections to the extent allowed by the Almighty, prophets are endowed with knowledge of the present and future, in addition to the past. The Prophet’s ﷺ informing of the circumstances of the hereafter in the ‘past’ tense, is thus simply a demonstration of this fact.

In fact in the miraculous night of *Miraj*, in which he was relieved of all past, present and future limitations, the Prophet ﷺ gazed at forthcoming events of great consequence, expressing them in the ‘past’, as if they had already happened. One of these is about



Abdurrahman ibn Awf ؓ of the *Ashara Mubashshara*, one of the Ten Promised with Paradise while still alive.

“That night I saw Abdurrahman crawling on all fours entering Paradise.

‘Why are you coming so slowly?’ I asked him.

‘Due to the greatness of my wealth, I was subjected to such hardships that would have made toddlers turn gray. So much so that at one stage I thought I would never see you again...’ (Muhammad Parsa, *Faslu'l-Khitab*, p. 403)

It was only after the Hegira to Medina, where he became rich that Abdurrahman ibn Awf ؓ heard about this. Without further ado, he quickly went to Aisha ؓ to ask whether the Prophet ﷺ had really said such words. Upon receiving a positive response, Abdurrahman ؓ was so ecstatic that he gave away his caravan, which had just arrived from Damascus loaded with goods, in charity for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

The Prophet ﷺ indeed stood witness to numerous Divine signs in the course of the *Miraj*. One hadith even states, “I ascended so high that I could hear the squeaking of the pens (of destiny).” (Bukhari, *Salat*, 1)

That is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was taken to such a high post that he could hear the sounds of the pens recording the destiny of the universe and gain acquaintance with realities beyond comprehension.

Judging from the above hadiths, it is obvious that during the *Miraj*, the Prophet ﷺ was virtually living the past, the present and the future intertwined, all at once.



### A Few Subtle Points from the Miraj

1. Right before the Noble Prophet ﷺ embarked on the journey, there was the *sharh'us-sadr*. This indicates that a spiritual ascension requires a pure heart, in which nothing but the Divine light resides. Only after the heart is rid of its density will the manifestations of Divine secrets make their way.

2. The Isra simply exhibits the eternal power and majesty of the Almighty in carrying His servant through a unique journey.

3. Another point is that having been granted following the painful and distressing journey of Ta'if, the Miraj was an indication of better days to come.

4. All the obligatory deeds made mention in the Quran were delivered through Jibril ﷺ. But as an exception, salat was commanded directly by the Almighty during the Miraj. This hints at a different kind of mystery in salat and its exceptional importance among other deeds.

Salat is indeed the pillar of religion. The maturation awaiting there is to be found in no other act. The rank of salat among other acts of worship is like the rank of the vision of the Almighty as compared to other blessings of the Hereafter. Insofar as salat is the *Miraj* of Believers, the moment in which servants are closest to the Lord are those in which they perform salat in deep submission and concentration. Salat is where the servant meets his Creator while still in this life. It is owing to such reasons that the Prophet ﷺ said that 'salat was the light of his eye'<sup>230</sup>, urging his followers even in his final breath 'to hold fast to' the primary deed of worship.<sup>231</sup>

230. Nasâi, *Ishratu'n-Nisa*, 1.

231. See Abû Dâwûd, *Adab*, 123-124.



5. The opening of the gates of heavens for the Noble Prophet ﷺ during the *Miraj* showed that his prophethood was not confined to Mecca and Ta'if, but that he was the Prophet of the Universes, whose mission extended to the whole world and even to the heavens beyond.

6. The *Miraj* marks the final point of maturity for man, showing the final border of spiritual perfection a human being could ever attain to.

7. As a journey from the Masjid'ul-Haram to the Masjid'ul-Aqsa in Jerusalem, the *Isra* reinforces the already strong ties between these two great spiritual centers, which were blessed with being home to numerous prophets in history. Also expressed through the journey is that encompassing all heaven-sent religions before it, Islam is the only remaining true religion in the sight of the Almighty. Another indication of this is the Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ leading of the entire prophets in salat at the Masjid'ul-Aqsa.

### The Reception of Miraj

When time came to tell the Meccan idolaters of the *Isra* and *Miraj*, the Noble Messenger ﷺ voiced his worries to Jibril ﷺ:

“But my tribe will not believe me!”



“Abu Bakr will. He is the *Siddiq* (the Confirmer)”, Jibril ﷺ assured. (Ibn Saad, I, 215)

Once they heard of it, the idolaters refused offhand to accept the *Miraj*. Making the most of the opportunity, they began spreading a storm of rumors around the town, in hope of turning Muslims away from their faith by questioning the credibility of the Prophet ﷺ. They even went to Abu Bakr ؓ, who to their dismay however, responded with an unshakeable loyalty to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.


“Whatever he says is right...for there is no chance of him lying! I will believe without hesitation in whatever he says!”

“So you really think that he went to Masjid’ul-Aqsa and back in a single night?” the idolaters asked mockingly.

“Yes...What’s there to be surprised about? Greater still, he tells me he receives news from the Almighty every day and night...and I still believe him.”



Afterward, Abu Bakr  went next to the Prophet , by the Kaabah at the time, and listened to the experiences from first hand, to which he remarked:



“You speak the truth, Messenger of Allah!”

Made joyous by Abu Bakr’s reaction, the Prophet  said with a smile with enough glow to light up the entire universe:

“You are indeed the *Siddiq*, Abu Bakr!”

From that day on, Abu Bakr  came to be known as the *Siddiq*.

The remainder of the Companions also followed in the footsteps of Abu Bakr  in confirming the Noble Prophet  regarding the *Miraj*.

Unable to confound the believers, the idolaters this time resorted to testing the Prophet . They interrogated him regarding Masjid’ul-Aqsa. The Almighty then presented a vision of the Sacred Temple before the eyes of the Prophet , gazing at which he answered one by one the questions posed by the idolaters. (Bukhari, *Manaqib’ul-Ansar*, 41; *Tafsir*, 17/3; Muslim, *Iman*, 276)

Still unconvinced, the idolaters then posed another question.



“Then tell us, Muhammad, about the caravan of ours we are expecting from out of town, about which we do care more than we ever cared about Masjid’ul-Aqsa!”

“I stumbled upon the caravan of so and so clan over at that valley. Frightened by the growl of a wild beast, a camel of theirs had run away. I showed them where it was...

And near Dajnan, I saw the caravan of the clan. The men were asleep. They had a bottle full of water, which they had topped with a cover. I lifted the cover and had a drink. Then I put it back over the bottle, leaving it as it was before. The caravan should now be heading down the Tanim slope from Bayda. Leading the caravan is a brownish male camel, carrying two sacks, one black and the other spotted.”

Dazzled by the response they received, the idolaters exclaimed, “By Lat and Uzza, this will decide whether he says the truth!” Hoping to find inconsistency in the words of the Prophet ﷺ, they rushed to the Tanim slope and waited for the caravan. Not long after the caravan became visible from a distance, they remarked, dejected:

“There is the caravan...led by a brownish camel!”

Upon an even closer inspection, they found the camel was exactly as it had been described. They then asked the caravan members of the water bottle the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had described. They confirmed that they had a bottle full of water under cover, which they found emptied some time later.

On a side note, that the Prophet ﷺ had a drink of water is one indication that the *Isra* and *Miraj* was a journey both physical and spiritual.



The idolaters then asked the other group of the runaway camel.

“That’s true! We were shaken by a growl in that valley, upon which a camel of ours fled. Someone then began calling us to the camel. We found the camel right where he told us and seized it!”

Some of them even said that they had recognized the voice as “Muhammad’s”.

There was not a single question that the idolaters had left unasked to the Noble Prophet ﷺ, from the amount of camels in the caravan to the number of shepherds. The Prophet ﷺ answered each of them correctly, as just like Masjid’ul-Aqsa, the caravan had also been brought to his gaze. But those with hearts locked to the truth continued in their stubborn ways and merely remarked, “This has got to be magic!” (Ibn Hisham, II, 10; Ibn Sayyid, I, 243; Haythami, I, 75; Bayhaqi; Dalail, II, 356)

The Almighty declares:

أَفَعَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ

“Were We then fatigued with the first creation? Yet they are in doubt with regard to a new creation.” (Qaf, 15) What could be easier for the Glorious Allah, who has created everything out of nothing, than to raise His servant to the Isra and Miraj? Only a lack of common sense could explain why one deigns not to accept this.

Again, the pitiable idolaters of Mecca had balked at believing the Isra, once again making fun of the Prophet ﷺ. But now their inappropriate behavior was to forever cost them the blessing of having the Noble Prophet ﷺ nearby. Time had now come to take this blessing away from the Meccans who never knew how to



appreciate it. Instead, they chose to go too far in their ungrateful and unjust treatment of a Prophet, for whose sake they had been created in the first place.

There was really one thing left to do: For Allah ﷻ, to take the Noble Messenger ﷺ away from them and award him to another people who could better appreciate such a blessing.

Indeed, not long after the fateful journey of Ta'if, the Almighty had already sent to His Beloved Messenger ﷺ the forerunners of an exceptional people longing to pledge allegiance to him.



## THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH YEARS OF PROPHETHOOD

### The First Aqabah Pledge

The six Medinans who had embraced Islam during their trip to Mecca the previous year turned up again a year later, with another six by their side. Aqabah once again served as the meeting spot.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ invited the six newcomers to *tawhid*. Having already heard from their friends of the beauty and greatness of Islam and the nobility of the Prophet ﷺ, they too embraced the faith.

Unlike the first meeting, this time the visitors formally pledged allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ. Claspings the hand of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Medinans gave their first vows, for which reason this meeting has come to be known as the First Aqabah Pledge.

The Medinans pledged the following:

1. Not to ascribe any partner to Allah ﷻ, under any condition.
2. Not to steal.
3. Not to even approach fornication.
4. Not to bury their daughters alive.



5. Not to slander.

6. To obey Allah and His Messenger. (Bukhari, *Manaqib'ul-Ansar*, 43)

A vow to rid the entire Arabian peninsula of idolatry, oppression and the evil practices rampant at the time, the Medinans' first pledge is thus a turning point in the history of Islam.

### **The Appointment of Musab ibn Umayr as Teacher and the Conquest of Medina through the Quran**

The new Muslims of Medina wrote a letter to the Prophet ﷺ, asking him to send them a teacher to explain Islam to them, teach them the Quran and lead them in salat. So the Prophet ﷺ sent Musab ﷺ.<sup>232</sup>

To teach Medinans the Quran, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had also sent Abdullah Ibn Ummi Maktum ﷺ, one of the first believers along with Musab ibn Umayr ﷺ.<sup>233</sup>

Musab ibn Umayr ﷺ had embraced the guiding light at a very young age, holding firm to his belief despite the tyranny of his family who went so far as to deprive him of his inheritance. Though outwardly he may have been left poor and deserted, inwardly, he had a rich heart filled with the love and delight of *iman*. In spreading Islam, he was like a pillar of passion.<sup>234</sup>

232. Ibn Saad, I, 220.

233. Bukhari, *Manaqibu'l-Ansar*, 46.

234. Ali ﷺ explains:

“We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the Masjid. Musab then arrived, wearing nothing but a mantle patched all over with pieces of wool. Seeing him reminded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of Musab's prosperous days in Mecca; and witnessing his current condition reduced the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to tears. He then said:



Indeed, the coming of Musab رضي الله عنه to Medina marked the beginning of the blooming of Islam in the town. Entrusted by the Prophet ﷺ with the duty of communicating Islam, the young companion began working night and day to explain to people the word of the Almighty. His host and main helper was Asad ibn Zurara رضي الله عنه, one of the fortunate first to be guided through the efforts of Musab رضي الله عنه.

On one instance with Musab by his side, Asad went and sat by the well at the garden belonging to the Zafar clan. Saad ibn Muadh, a notable from the family of Abdul'Ashal, took the opportunity to voice his displeasure to Usayd ibn Hudayr:

“You are a man who knows what to do. You do not need anyone helping you. Go and tell those men, who have come to our neighborhood to corrupt the faith of the weak men among us, to leave and never come back! I would have done it myself only if Asad had not been my relative.”

Fired up, Usayd quickly went to the two men with a spear and vented his anger.

“What are you doing here? Have you brought this man next to you, Asad, to corrupt the faith of the weak among us? If you wish to live, leave now and don't turn back!”

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‘What will become of you when you will wear one beautiful garment in the morning, another in the afternoon, when you will be served with one full plate after another, when you will adorn your houses with drapes just like the Kaabah is draped!’

‘Most certainly, Messenger of Allah, our condition then will be much better than it is now’ they said. ‘For then we will not have to worry about our livelihood and be able to commit ourselves entirely to worship.’

‘Quite the reverse... You are in a much better position now than you will be then,’ the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stated.” (Tirmidhi, Qiyamat, 35/2476)



A prudent man, Musab ﷺ kept his nerve and asked:

“Will you not sit awhile and listen to what I have to say? You look like an intelligent man...If you like my words you will accept, and if not you won't.”

“Quickly say what you have to say”, answered Usayd. Thrusting his spear into the ground, he sat down. Musab ﷺ explained Islam to him, reciting some Quran.

As soon as he heard the recital of the Quran, before he could even speak, Usayd's face became lit with the light of Islam and his heart melted to the truth.

“What marvelous words...<sup>235</sup> What does one who wants to enter this religion do?” he asked.

235. Usayd ﷺ never ceased to recite the Divine Words, the beauty of which he recognized the very first moment, with the same love and enthusiasm throughout his life. He himself explains:

“I was reading Chapter Baqarah one night. My horse was next to me, tied. But at one stage the horse began to rear up. I stopped reading and the horse calmed down. I continued to read, but again, the horse began to rear up excitedly as I read. Fearing he might be trampled under the horse's hooves, I was forced to bring my little son Yahya closer to me. But then I looked up to the sky and saw spots that looked like lamps, which after a while, rose further up into the sky and disappeared from sight. In the morning, I told the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of the experience.


‘Read Usayd, read,’ he said to me before asking, ‘Do you know, Usayd, what those things were that you saw?’

‘No,’ I replied.

‘They were angels who had come to listen to your recital of the Quran. Had you continued reading, they would have listened to you until daybreak. They would not have remained secret to other people either, who would have been able to see them freely.’ (Bukhari, Fada'il-ul-Quran, 15)

Aisha ﷺ recounts:

“Usayd ibn Hudayr ﷺ was one of the most virtuous Companions. I remember, he used to continually say:

On the instruction of Musab and Asad , Usayd washed himself and his clothes and then pronounced the *shahadah*. After performing two rakats of salat, he said:

“There is one man I have left behind. If he accepts your words everybody will follow in his wake. His name is Saad ibn Muadh. I will send him to you at once!”


Before long, Saad came hastily next to them. But he too, like Usayd, ended up embracing Islam after hearing Musab talk. Afterwards, he returned to his people:

“Sons of Abdul’Ashal! How have you known me until now?”


“As our leader and our wisest”, they replied.

“Then know that I will not speak to any men or women among you until you believe in Allah and His Messenger!”

By night, not a single person was left in the clan who had not become Muslim. (Ibn Hisham, II, 43-46; Ibn Saad, III, 604-605; Ibn Athir, Usd’ul-Ghabah, I, 112-113)

Musab  then went on to invite Amr ibn Jamuh, a notable from the clan of Salima, reading to him the first eight *ayah* of chapter Yusuf. Though he asked for time to think it over, Amr could not make up his mind. Thereupon with a few youngsters from his tribe helping him, Amr’s son Muadh, who had already become a Muslim, one night secretly grabbed his father’s idol and threw it

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‘Had I been able to continuously sustain the state of mind that overtook me in either one of these three moments, I surely would have been Paradise bound: while reading the Quran or listening to someone read it, while listening to the talks of the Messenger of Allah  and while seeing a funeral. Yes indeed... whenever I see a funeral, I feel like it is me experiencing the things the deceased is going through, taken to where the deceased is being taken.’ (Hakim, III, 326/5260)



in a nearby filth hole. Horrified next morning at seeing his idol thrown in a pile of dirt, Amr took it out of there, and after giving it a thorough cleaning with beautiful scents, put the idol back in its place.

After the same incident repeated itself over a few nights, Amr hung his sword on the idol's neck for it to protect itself. But seeing the idol once again in a pile of dirt the morning after, he finally realized that the lifeless object he had been worshipping for so long could not even protect itself, let alone be of any benefit to another, making him open his eyes to the morning of Islam from the twilight of idolatry. He thanked the Almighty for saving him through the Noble Prophet ﷺ from the darkness he had been in and took active part thereafter in inviting his people to Islam.<sup>236</sup>

The news of the delightful reception of Islam in Medina put the Muslims of Mecca and the Prophet ﷺ in such high spirits that the year came to be known as the Year of Joy. Medina was now becoming ready to become the cradle of Islam.

Of this, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

“Lands are conquered with swords...but Medina was conquered with the Quran.” (Bazzar, Musnad, 1180; Rudani, 3774)

### **The Second Aqabah Pledge (The Thirteenth Year of Prophethood)**

A year after the First Aqabah Pledge, during the months of pilgrimage, a group of Medinans came again to meet the Noble Prophet ﷺ, this time numbering seventy-five, including two women.

236. Ibn Hisham, II, 61-63; Dhahabí, *Siyar*, I, 182.

Their pledge of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is known as the Second Aqabah Pledge.

Arriving at Mecca as the head of the group, Musab رضي الله عنه went straight to the Prophet ﷺ before his own home. He gave the good news of the Ansar's swift acceptance of Islam, delighting the Noble Prophet ﷺ. But the fact that Musab went to the Prophet ﷺ before seeing his own pagan mother made her quite upset.

“I will never go to anyone before the Messenger of Allah...I shall never put anyone else before him”, was how Musab defended himself.

With permission from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, Musab رضي الله عنه eventually went to his mother and repeated his invitation to Islam. (Ibn Saad, III, 119)

Such was the love nurtured by the Companions for the Gracious Prophet ﷺ.

Jabir رضي الله عنه explains the following:

“In the days when the Messenger of Allah was searching for a tribe for protection for his fellow Muslims, only to have each and every one of them turn a cold shoulder, the Almighty sent us to him from Medina; and we believed in him and offered protection. Someone from among us would go to the Messenger of Allah, who would read him the Quran. Upon returning, the person's whole family would follow the lead and become Muslim. In this way, there was no house in Medina in which Islam had not been explained. Then after a while, we got together and asked ourselves:

‘Until when are we going to let the Messenger of Allah ﷺ suffer in the mountains of Mecca?’



That was when we decided to go to him, during the pilgrimage season, and pledge our allegiance.” (Ahmad, III, 322; Hakim, II, 681-682)

This fortunate group agreed to meet the Prophet ﷺ at Aqabah on one of the days of *tashriq*. Beforehand, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised them not to “...awaken those asleep and wait for those who have not gotten ready on time!”

Passed the third of the night, the Medinans went to Aqabah as agreed and began waiting for the Noble Messenger ﷺ, who appeared a short while later with his uncle Abbas by his side. Even though Abbas had not yet accepted Islam, he had nonetheless assumed the protection of his nephew after the passing away of Abu Talib. And it was he who began negotiating with the Medinans regarding their invitation of the Prophet ﷺ to Medina:

“Medinans! We have protected him from his enemies till now and will continue to do so. He is highly respected among us. And it is out of love and respect that you invite him to Medina where he will be safer; and that happens to be his wish, too. But take him only if you will be able to protect him from his enemies. First you must promise me that you shall never deceive or desert him. Your neighbors, the Jews are hostile to him and I am just not so sure that they will keep their word of peace. Go ahead with this only if you see in yourselves enough power to ward off the hostility of Arab tribes. Discuss it among yourselves thoroughly so that you will not become disunited later. If you have the least doubt of not being able to help Muhammad after he comes, or if it turns out you will hand him over to his enemies, then give the idea up from now! If anyone wishes to speak up from among you now, then let him speak. But let him not be too wordy, as Meccans spies could be on the lookout! And keep this a secret after you leave!”



To dispel the doubts of Abbas, Asad ibn Zurarah رضي الله عنه stood and said the following:

“You, the Messenger of Allah, invited us to leave the religion of our fathers and follow yours. As burdensome and difficult a task as that was, we accepted. You invited us to sever our ties with all our pagan relatives and neighbors. As burdensome and difficult a task as that was, we again accepted. We are well aware that we have put our hands up to shelter one who is wanted dead not only by his tribe, but even by his closest kin. Rest assured, Messenger of Allah, that we shall protect you just like we protect ourselves, our children and women. If we turn back, then we are the most wretched of all creatures. This is our pledge of honor. It is to Allah we all turn for help!”

Following Asad رضي الله عنه, Abdullah ibn Rawaha رضي الله عنه got up to say:

“Messenger of Allah! You can lay down for us any condition you want, on behalf of yourself and your Lord!”

“On behalf of my Lord, I ask you to worship Him without ascribing to Him any partners; and on behalf of myself, I ask you to protect us just as you protect yourselves and properties”, the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said.

“And what awaits us if we do?” the Medinans asked.

“Paradise”, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم answered.

“What a profitable trade! Who in their right minds could afford to pass up on that?” (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, II, 406)

Abdullah ibn Rawaha رضي الله عنه was to reap the profits of this pact years later at the Battle of Mutah, in which he enthusiastically took part despite being informed by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم beforehand that he would be martyred; and presenting his life to the Almighty and



his legacy to the treasury of Medina, he ended up taking flight to Paradise, to his Lord. The other companions also added more and more blessings to their spiritual earnings by persevering constantly in the way of the Almighty.

The following *ayah* of the Quran was revealed in relation to the pledge of the Medinans.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ  
يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدَا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي  
التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا  
بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the Garden; they fight in Allah’s way, so they slay and are slain; a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran; and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Rejoice therefore in the pledge which you have made; and that is the mighty achievement.”

(at-Tawbah, 111)

Thereafter, a few more were given opportunity to speak. Afterward, the Prophet ﷺ began his address of the Medinans, quoting the Quran to further elaborate Islam, then making explicit the terms of their pledge. In addition to the terms already agreed upon, the following terms were also added:

1. The leader of the Muslims should not be opposed, whoever he may be.





2. No blame that may come from the way of nonbelievers should be feared in persevering in the cause of Allah ﷺ.

3. To obey the Messenger of Allah ﷺ through thick and thin and to prefer him to themselves; not to disobey him in any way.

The Noble Messenger ﷺ then asked for twelve *naqibs*<sup>237</sup>, or delegates, to represent their clans. The Medinans nominated twelve people, nine from Khazraj and three from Aws.

“You are bondsmen for your clans, just as the Apostles were bondsmen for Isa, the son of Maryam. And I am a bondsman for the Muslims of Mecca”, the Light of Being ﷺ said to them.

The representatives agreed.

Abbas, the Prophet’s ﷺ uncle, then one by one made each Medinan clasp the hand of the Prophet ﷺ and swear an oath of allegiance.

It was in this pledge that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was invited to Medina, which sparked the Hegira. Medina, known as Yathrib at the time, had now become ready to open her arms to Islam.

As the pledge took place at night, the Meccans had no way of knowing about it. But just as the pledge was being concluded, Iblis, overlooking Aqabah, screamed in a shrill voice:

“People of Mina! Quraysh! Do you realize that Muhammad and those who have turned their backs on the religion of old have gathered and agreed on waging war against you?”

The Prophet ﷺ was quick to reassure them:

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237. A *naqib* is a representative of a tribe or a clan.



“Don’t fear! That is the voice of Iblis, the enemy of Allah. He can do nothing!” He then advised the Muslims to return to their camps, upon which Abbas ibn Ubadah ؓ assured:

“I promise by the One who has sent you with the Truth, we could put all of Mina to the sword if you want!”

“We have not been commanded to do that. Now, you should return to your places”, the Noble Prophet ﷺ responded.

The Muslims returned to their camps, sleeping until daybreak. Early in the morning, some Meccan idolaters arrived at the camp that included the Muslims, asking the nonbelievers among them whether any agreement with the Noble Prophet ﷺ had taken place. Without the least clue as to what had happened, they assured the Meccans that nothing of the sort had taken place. Unconvinced, the idolaters further investigated the Aqabah Pledge. Soon their worst fears were confirmed as they found out about the Pledge, immediately after which they sent horsemen in all directions to track down the departing Medinans, blocking all routes to Medina. They were able to pin down Saad ibn Ubadah ؓ.

“Have you entered Muhammad’s religion?” they inquired.

When Saad ؓ answered that he had, they tied both his hands tightly around his neck. Beating him and pulling him by the fringes of his long hair, they brought him to Mecca, where they began to torture him even more brutally. He was set free by Jubayr ibn Mutim,<sup>238</sup> whom Saad ؓ had helped before, and Harith ibn Harb,

238. Jubayr ibn Mutim ؓ was a relative of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. For a long time he resisted Islam; he was even in the group that decided on the assassination of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. He sided with the idolaters in the Battle of Badr. At Uhud, he allowed for Wahshi, then his slave, to play a central role in the martyring of Hamza ؓ. Immediately after the Peace of Hudaibiyah, however, he entered Islam,

who rushed to the scene upon hearing of the incident. Just when the Medinan Muslims had gathered to plan his rescue, Saad رضي الله عنه was able to turn up next to them. (Ibn Hisham, II, 47-57; Ibn Saad, I, 221-223; III, 602-603; Ahmed, III, 322, 461, 462; Haythami, VI, 42-44)

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه has said:

“Just as the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, Abu Bakr and Omar رضي الله عنهما are among the *Muhajir*, the Emigrants, for leaving the idolaters of Mecca, there are also emigrants from among the *Ansar*, the Helpers of Medina; those, who on the night of Aqabah, fled to the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم from the then pagan town of Yathrib.” (Nasai, Bayat, 13)



The Pledges of Aqabah do not simply signify a pledge made by twelve or seventy-five people, but the pledge of the entire Muslim host with the Almighty.

The world is a bazaar in which the Hereafter is bought. It remains for us to participate in the above pledge made with the Noble Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and, like the Companions, rejoice over such a profitable trade.

Just as Musab رضي الله عنه provided a foundation for Islam in Medina, so should we establish the very same foundation in our hearts and those of others, even going door to door in extending that foundation through exemplary behavior. Once the heart is filled with the love of Allah and His Messenger, sacrificing the pleasures of the world, like Musab رضي الله عنه, becomes easy.

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becoming a sincere Muslim thereafter. A perceptive man of a mild temperament, Jubayr narrated 60 hadiths till his passing away in Medina in 678. (H. 58)



## An Overview of the Meccan Period

The five points below sum up the attitude of idolaters towards Muslims throughout the thirteen year Meccan Period.

1. Mockery.
2. Insult.
3. Torture.
4. Isolation or severing of all kinds of social and commercial relations.
5. Violent intimidation and even murder, forcing Muslims to immigrate.

Allah ﷻ, describes the Muslim situation in the Quran as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ. وَإِذَا مَرُّوا  
بِهِمْ يَتَعَامَزُونَ. وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ. وَإِذَا  
رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ.

“Surely the sinners used to laugh at those who believe. And when they passed by them, they winked at one another. And when they returned to their own followers they returned exulting. And when they saw them, they said: Most surely they have gone astray! (al-Muttaffifin, 29-32)

In response, the method abided to by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, constantly reinforced with Revelation advising him the most suitable manner to adopt, could be summed up as:

1. Cultivating spirituality in the hearts of believers.

2. Being patient in the face of hardships.
3. Counseling with the most beautiful advice.
4. Continuing to persevere without the least compromise.
5. Trusting in and submitting to the Almighty.

As a consequence of this method, despite unfavorable conditions, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was able to succeed in his cause and overcome all difficulties. A fruit of this long and enduring phase was the blessing of Medina, a strategic town, whose locals had embraced the truth in masses. Previously expelled from Ta'if where he had gone with such great expectations, the Prophet ﷺ had never even gone to Medina; yet with Divine reinforcement, Islam had spread like wildfire in the town, and only a short while later it became ready to welcome the Muslims, first and foremost the Noble Messenger ﷺ.

Inspired by the triumph in his cause, a prominent historian has made the following observations regarding the genius of the Prophet ﷺ:

“If the three great measures of genius are the greatness of the cause, the limitation of means and the magnitude of the result, then who could dare to compare the greatest figures of modern history with Muhammad?” (Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie*)

The Almighty gave permission to Muslims to migrate only after a thirteen-year phase of blood and tears, as a consequence of which the faiths of Muslims attained contentedness and their hearts prospered with spirituality. Simpler put, the believers paid the dues for their belief.

The period also saw the laying of the foundations of the Islamic state and civilization in Medina that was to set an example for all of mankind, and the raising of persons of strong character who, enthused



by the ecstasy of belief, would not shrink back in testing times. These persons virtually became guiding stars for the entire *ummah*.

### The Characteristics of the Meccan Revelations

The first verses of the Quran, as known, were about aspects of *aqidah*, or creed, and involved inviting to *tawhid* and to belief in the resurrection, promising paradise to the believers and threatening disbelievers and rebels with hellfire. Only after convincing the believers and strengthening their faith through various proofs were verses on social matters revealed. Trapped in superstitious beliefs and habits as they were, it was not easy for people to quit their ways of old. Failing to apply a gradual procedure to try and rid people of their bad ways could have therefore backfired and deterred them away.

Aisha رضي الله عنها says:

“The first *surah* revealed was one of the *mufassals*.<sup>239</sup> It spoke of Paradise and Hell. Rulings on the permissible and impermissible were revealed after people had become fully warmed to Islam. If they had been told at the very beginning to quit drinking, they would have reacted:

‘We can never quit drinking!’

Had they been told to stop fornicating, they would have said:

‘We can never stop fornicating!’

239. The *suwar'ul-mufassal* comprise the final section of the Holy Quran, beginning, in accordance with the preferred view, with Chapter Qaf, which is the 50<sup>th</sup> chapter, and ending with the very final chapter, an-Nas. The chapters have been named *mufassal* for the fact they are frequently divided with a *Basmala* due to their brevity.

When I was still a child playing in Mecca, *ayah* on faith and the Hereafter like:

بَلِ السَّاعَةِ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةِ أَذْهَىٰ وَأَمْرٌ

“Nay, the hour is their promised time, and the hour shall be more grievous and bitter”, (al-Qamar, 46) came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. al-Baqara and an-Nisa (chapters that include rulings on social matters) were revealed when I was with him in Medina.” (Bukhari, Fadail’ul-Quran, 6)

Marked by an elegant and succinct style, the Meccan Chapters assume a certain and uncompromising stance against idolatry. Being eloquent men with a taste for poetry, for any word to affect the Meccans it had to be consummately eloquent and with a perfect measure.

Reducing to naught the idolaters’ mastery of literature, to further confuse them, the Almighty even made use of the disjointed alphabetical letters (*huruf al-muqatta’a*), beginning the texts in a manner previously unheard of. Except for al-Baqara and Al’ Imran, all the chapters that begin with the *huruf al-muqata’a* belong to the Meccan period.

For such reasons, the first verses revealed were so affective that they pierced straight into hearts, captivating their listeners with their flowing and beautiful eloquence.

Another characteristic of the Meccan Revelations is their manner of addressing, which apart from a few exceptions, is in the form of “O Humankind!”

To persuade the idolaters into accepting an array of issues that ran counter to their opinions and practices, the Meccan Revelations also include vows made in the name of various things



they had sanctified like the sun, the moon, stars, day and night and so forth; also for the reason that these created objects by which the oaths were made, display the power of the Almighty as perceived throughout the universe.

Furthermore revealed among the Meccan Revelations are a majority of the Quranic historical accounts, or *qasas*. Taking lessons from history is one of the most emphasized points of these verses. A great portion of the chapters which dwell on the accounts of previous prophets and peoples, especially those of Adam ﷺ and Iblis, are Meccan. One exception is al-Baqara, revealed in Medina.

The narrating of the experiences of past peoples, offering lessons to be taken, played a crucial role in communicating the truth to the idolaters and in their gradual correction. In the foreground of these narrations is always the notion of *tawhid*.

The Meccan verses also map the course an inviter to Islam should follow. They underline that one ought to invite to the truth seeking only the pleasure of the Almighty, not those of the world, and expect its rewards, again, only from Allah ﷻ. One instance of this is in Chapter as-Shuara. Enjoining upon their people piety and virtue as messengers of the Almighty, the Prophets Hud, Salih, Lut and Shuayb ؑ add:

وَمَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“No reward do I ask of you for it: my reward is only from the Lord of the Worlds.” (ash-Shuara, 109, 127, 145, 164, 180)

The second half of the Quran was mostly revealed in Mecca. As the Meccans were generally conceited people, the word *كَلَّا*, (*kalla*) the definitive ‘nay’, can be easily noticed throughout these *surah*, rejecting and threatening the idolaters over their attitude. Hence,



all the chapters in which the word كَسِبَ is to be found are Meccan and they all happen to be in the second half of the Quran.

Similarly, chapters that contain verses of *sajdah*, or prostration, were also revealed in Mecca. Thereby people accustomed to prostrating to other things were encouraged to give the Almighty His due, and reflect over such verses.

These first verses revealed in Mecca declare all the old superstitious habits as falsities based on ignorance, replacing them with universal principles of morality.

The Meccan verses laid the foundation of a firm society with respect to belief, thought and morals. Containing moral principles, the verses aim toward ridding Muslims of false beliefs and customs and replacing them with an unshakable belief in the Truth, patience, will and perseverance.

As the Meccan revelations contain no verdicts on legal issues, except for salat, they also do not contain any rulings concerning deeds of worship. There are no legal verses, for instance, in the Meccan chapters of Yunus, ar-Rad, Furqan, Yasin and al-Hadid. What can be found generally are principles of faith, the attributes of Allah ﷻ, thought-provoking accounts of previous prophets and scenes of the Hereafter.

### **The Prophet's Last Resort: Migration Permission for the Hegira in the Thirteenth Year of Prophethood and Migration to Medina**

After finding out about Muslim plans to migrate to where they would find protection following the Second Aqabah Pledge, the idolaters took their abuse to new heights. With this unbearable



torment making life almost impossible for Muslims in Mecca, the believers asked permission of the Prophet ﷺ to migrate.

By the will of the Almighty, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pointed towards the road to Medina and said:

“I have been shown that your destination shall be a place of date gardens wedged amid rocky terrain”. (Bukhari, Kafalah, 4)

Advising them to embrace the *Ansar*, their brothers in Medina, the Prophet ﷺ then added:

“The Glorious Allah has blessed you with brothers and a land where you shall find peace!”

Without making it obvious to the idolaters, the Muslims thereupon got their preparations under way, and aiding one another, began migrating in secret.<sup>240</sup>

Even though the Believers were generously welcomed in Abyssinia, the first destination of Muslim migration, the region did not meet the requirements for being a center for a universal religion. But Medina, both politically and commercially, was a town favorable to being an Islamic center. Thus, it was there the Hegira would take place.

Indeed Medina became a shelter for the Believers. The worst fears of the Meccan idolaters were hence confirmed; Islam had set forth from Mecca to Medina, where it had gained an enormous reputation. The idolaters simply could not come to terms with how terrible a loss the forcible departure of the Prophet ﷺ from his hometown was for them. It was truly a great loss. But they could not even feel it, let alone see the consequences.

240. See Ibn Hisham, II, 76; Ibn Saad, I, 226.



And the Almighty revealed to His Prophet ﷺ:

... وَإِذَا لَا يَلْبُثُونَ خِلَافَكَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“...they will not stay therein after you, except for a little while.”

(al-Isra, 76)

Deceived by their seeming power and ego, the idolaters had fooled themselves into believing that mocking, threatening and torturing the Believers would deter them from the Truth, and enable to keep themselves in authority in Mecca. Little were they aware of what was lying in wait for them: an absolute and miserable defeat without return. After all, the Muslims were not leaving Mecca out of fear, but from the awareness of the need to found Islam upon the strongest foundations.



The Hegira should never be taken as a helpless and pitiable flight. For the *Muhajir*, the Emigrants, Medina was a haven, a headquarters in which they settled to render sovereign the religion of the Almighty, by joining forces with other Muslim brothers and sisters.

The late Necip Fazıl gives voice to this in the poem below:

*Hegira...the support that is sought from afar,  
For a man of mission, the home is a fetter,  
The hope... from outside to envelop the core,  
The will to conquer the center from abroad...  
Hegira...The support that is sought from afar!*

The Emigrants were leaving behind all they had of wealth and relatives, secretly or openly setting forth on the road to Medina.



Ali ﷺ gives the following account:

“I know of nobody who openly migrated to Medina. Omar ibn Khattab was an exception. Prior to leaving, he armed himself with his sword, hung his bow on his shoulder and with his spear and arrows in his hands went to the Kaabah. All the Meccan notables were there. Omar ﷺ circumambulated the Kaabah seven times and then went next to them, and as if to give a glimpse of the victories to come, declared:

‘Here you have it! I am leaving for Medina. Whoever wants to leave behind a weeping mother, a widow and orphans can follow me and face me off behind the valley!’

Nobody dared take up the challenge.” (Ibn Athir, *Usd’ul-Ghabah*, IV, 152-153)

The Medinans were welcoming their brothers with open arms and helping them from the bottom of their hearts. The Muslims of Mecca were thus dubbed *Muhajir*, meaning emigrants, and the Medinan Muslims *Ansar*, or helpers.

The Almighty states:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ  
بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي  
تَحْتَهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“And the first to lead the way, of the Muhajir and the Ansar, and those who followed them in goodness - Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him, and He has made



ready for them Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide for ever. That is the supreme triumph.” (at-Tawba, 100)



Scholars have derived the following conclusions from the permission given to Muslims to migrate:

Hegira was compulsory in the time of the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. Generally perceived, there is a compulsoriness of Hegira that will remain till the Day of Judgment. But the particular Hegira that ended with the conquest of Mecca, however, is peculiar to the time of the Prophet ﷺ.

It is impermissible for a Muslim to remain in a place where he cannot fulfill duties like the adhaan, salat in congregation and fasting. The *ayah* below is proof:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا  
 كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً  
 فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا إِلَّا  
 الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانَ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً  
 وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا

“Surely (as for) those whom the angels cause to die while they are unjust to their souls, they shall say: In what state were you? They shall say: We were weak on Earth. They shall say: Was not Allah’s earth spacious, so that you should have migrated therein? So it is these whose abode is hell, an evil resort. Except the weak from



among the men and the children who neither have in their power the means, nor can they find a way to escape.” (an-Nisa, 97-98)

The above *ayah* describes those who did not migrate and continued to remain in a society of unbelievers, as being unjust to their souls. For preferring their comfort, habits, families, wealth and vested interests over their Religion, their excuse of being among the ‘weak on Earth’ is not accepted in the Divine tribunal. The excuse is valid only for the elderly, invalids, and women and children who genuinely could not find the means to join the Hegira.

Another matter the Hegira teaches us is that no matter how distant Muslim lands may be from one another, it is obligatory to help those afflicted with oppression. So far as the *ijma*, or consensual opinion of Muslim scholars are concerned, Muslims who, despite having the power to do so, fail to help other Muslims oppressed in any given part of the world, partake in a major sin.

The Light of Being ﷺ placed great importance on the Hegira and urged all Muslims to take part until the Conquest of Mecca. This was mainly because until then, all lands besides Medina were foreign, making it practically impossible for a believer to learn and practice his beliefs.

### **Idolater Plans of Assassination**

Seeing Mecca becoming more and more deserted by the day, the idolaters felt the urgency of the situation at hand. They hurriedly gathered at the House of Nadwa, the hotbed of mischief. Present there was also an old man, claiming to be from Najd. He was none other than Iblis himself in the guise of a human being.

They lengthily discussed what they were to do. Many suggestions, from imprisoning the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to sending



him into exile outside of Mecca were put forth, with all of which the old man of Najd disagreed. They finally arrived at a callous decision: To murder the Messenger of Allah ﷺ!

It was Abu Jahl, the Pharaoh of his time, who mapped out the plan:

“First, we arm one young man from each clan. Then we get them to attack and kill him all at once. This way his blood money will be distributed among all clans. And surely the Abd Manaf clan will not dare to wage war on all clans in Mecca, so they will have to settle for the blood money. That, we can pay with no trouble!”

The old man of Najd was the first to rejoice:

“No single man has spoken with a clearer mind than him...I can't think of anything better!” (Ibn Hisham, II, 93-95)

The idolaters busy with their sinister plans, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was virtually left alone in Mecca. A Prophet with such delicate care for his people, he preferred to remain and watch the backs of the leaving *Muhajir*. Besides, this had also been the Divine Will. When Abu Bakr, who was to be the one and only companion of the Prophet ﷺ in this sacred journey, asked permission to migrate, the Prophet said:

“Be patient. Who knows? Perhaps Allah shall grant you a good traveling companion!” (Ibn Hisham, II, 92)

Sensing the awaiting blessings, and as a mark of joy, Abu Bakr ﷺ bought two camels for 800 dirhams and nurtured them for four months in preparation for the journey. (Bukhari, *Manaqib'ul-Ansar*, 45)

By the time the idolaters made the move to implement their plan, the Noble Prophet ﷺ had received the Divine command to migrate:



وَقُلْ رَبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ  
وَاَجْعَلْ لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا

“And say: My Lord! Make me to enter a goodly entering, and cause me to go forth a goodly going forth, and grant me assistance from Your power.” (al-Isra, 80)

Besides the above Revelation, Jibril ﷺ had hinted to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ of the idolaters’ assassination plot, saying, “You shall not sleep in your bed tonight!” (Ibn Hisham, II, 95)

Thereupon in the heat of high noon, with everyone at rest in their homes, the Noble Prophet ﷺ went next to Abu Bakr ؓ, informing him of the command to migrate.

“Together?” asked Abu Bakr ؓ.

“Yes, together!” the Prophet ﷺ answered.

The tears of joy welling up Abu Bakr’s eyes were alluding to splendid the inner beauty of his heart.<sup>241</sup>

Afterward, the Noble Messenger ﷺ also gave the news to Ali ؓ, who was to be left behind to give back to their owners the goods entrusted in the safekeeping of the Prophet ﷺ. Knowing his trustworthiness and righteousness, there was almost not a single man in Mecca, who in one way or another had not placed their valuables in the custody the Prophet ﷺ.

Then as a precaution against the plots of Meccans, he said to Ali ؓ, “Lay in my bed tonight...and cover yourself in my mantle. Don’t be afraid! No harm shall come to you!” (Ibn Hisham, II, 95, 98)

241. See Ibn Hisham, II, 97-98.





That the Prophet advised Ali ؑ to use his mantle as a blanket also provides an example for *tabarruk*, that is seeking blessings from the belongings of the Noble Prophet ﷺ.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ later also sent a mantle to Uways al-Qarani with the message:

“Wear the mantle and pray for the *ummah*.” (Fariduddin Attar, *Tadhkirat’ul-Awliya’a*, p. 21)<sup>242</sup>

Another thing worthy of attention here is the complete submission of Ali ؑ to the Prophet ﷺ. It was not for the Companions to show the slightest hesitancy in fulfilling the Prophetic commands and neglecting to heed the Prophet’s ﷺ words and actions. They never felt the need to ask why. They always showed the utmost care not to neglect even a single *sunnah*, and in implementing each, they illustrated the fear of falling into deviancy if they were to abandon it. Their abidance by the Quran and Sunnah was like that of a shadow to its origin.<sup>243</sup>



Ali -may Allah ennoble his countenance- recounts:

“On the verge of his setting off to the Hegira, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and I went to the Kaabah.

‘Sit down’, he told me.

I sat. Intending to climb onto the roof of the Kaabah, he stepped on my shoulders. But suddenly I lost all my strength. Seeing

242. Also see, Muslim, *Fadailu’s-Sahâba*, 223-225.

243. See Bukhari, *Humus*, 1; Muslim, *Jihad*, 52; Abu Dâwûd, *Haraj*, 18; Ahmed, I, 10.



me lose my strength, he quickly came down off my shoulders. This time he sat down.

‘Step on my shoulders’, he said.

I did what he told me. Then he rose and hoisted me up. I was overcome with such power that I felt I could rise to the ends of the sky if I wanted. I climbed on the roof. Placed there was an idol made of bronze and copper.

‘Throw it down, Ali’, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said. So I did.

The instant it hit the ground, it shattered like a glass bowl. I quickly came down from the roof. We promptly left the scene in order not to be seen.” (Ahmed, I, 84; Hakim, III, 6/4265)



Come the night of Hegira, the idolaters had already surrounded the house of the Noble Prophet ﷺ even before he could take a step outside. But with a boundless trust in and submission to the Almighty, the Prophet ﷺ showed not a single trace of anxiety or fear. Taking a handful of soil from the ground, he threw it towards the awaiting idolaters and moved smoothly through their ranks reciting the following verses from Chapter Ya-Sin:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُقْمَحُونَ.  
وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا  
فَأَعْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ.

“We have put chains round their necks right up to their chins, so that their heads are forced up (and they cannot see). And We have



put a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them, and further, We have covered them up; so that they cannot see.” (Ya-Sin, 8-9)

Blinded by nothing other than the blindness of their hearts, they of course could not see. Passing through them, in front of their eyes, was the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. Since light is not perceivable by blind eyes and hearts, their sights in the end counted for nothing.

It was only after some time, when they were asked by someone passing by:

“Who on earth are you waiting for?”

“Muhammad!”

“You fools! Muhammad has long left, apparently flinging dirt on your faces in the process!”

When the idolaters reached for their heads, they found they were indeed stained with soil. Enraged, they quickly stormed inside the house, seeing someone lying in the Prophet’s bed.

“There is Muhammad! He is under cover, fast asleep!” they shouted.

They walked hurriedly to the bed, only to shake their heads in disbelief when the man lying in the bed lifted his head and threw a glance at them. It was Ali ؑ lying in front of them, not the Prophet ﷺ.

“The man was telling us the truth after all”, they admitted, crestfallen. They angrily turned to Ali ؑ:

“Where is your cousin?” they shouted.

“I have little idea. What...do you think I watch him wherever he goes? Besides, it was you telling him to leave Mecca all along... So my guess is, he must have left!”



Thereupon, the idolaters began rebuking and insulting Ali ﷺ. They even took him to the Kaabah where he was held in custody for some time, eventually released afterwards. (Ibn Hisham, II, 96; Ahmed, I, 348; Yakubi, II, 39)

While the miserable men, whose hearts were locked and eyes blind to the truth, were prowling around the house of the Prophet ﷺ, little were they aware that the Prophet ﷺ had long made it to the house of Abu Bakr ﷺ. Though the idolaters had plotted, the Almighty had made an even greater plot of which they had no idea. Allah ﷻ, describes this as follows:

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ  
وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

“And when those who disbelieved devised plans against you that they might confine you or slay you or drive you away; and they devised plans and Allah too had arranged a plan; and Allah is the best of planners.” (al-Anfal, 30)

### The Long Road

Arriving at Abu Bakr’s ﷺ house after leaving his, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remitted the money for the camel prepared for him for the journey, despite Abu Bakr’s reluctance. Having slipped through the idolaters only moments before, the Noble Prophet ﷺ this time acted cautiously as instructed by the Divine will and to set an example for his *ummah*. Together they left from the back of Abu Bakr’s house, where the camels were to remain for a few more days.

Again, as a subtle precaution, they headed toward the direction opposite to Medina.

Abu Bakr ؓ was walking behind the Prophet ﷺ one moment and in front of him the next. Upon being asked by the Noble Messenger ﷺ for the reason he walked thus, he replied:

“I fear for your wellbeing, Messenger of Allah”.

They eventually made it to the Cave of Thawr.

“It is best if you wait until I clear out the cave, Messenger of Allah”, Abu Bakr recommended after which he entered the cave, cleaning it up and blocking all holes in case pests might enter. Only then did he advise the Prophet ﷺ to make his way in. (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya, III, 222-223)

Headed by Abu Jahl, the idolaters meanwhile rushed to Abu Bakr’s house, and unable to find the two there, they began interrogating his daughter Asma. For saying she knew nothing of her father’s whereabouts, the poor girl bore the brunt of the idolaters’ frustration and anger, receiving a fierce slap across the face.

The Light of Being and his “Companion of the Cave” (*Yar-i Ghar*)<sup>244</sup> were to remain in the cave for a while, where they could find breathing space from the idolaters who were busy searching for them on the roads to Medina. Besides, they were under the protection and assistance of the Almighty, who was intervening, so to speak, just when all options were exhausted. Following their traces, some idolaters were in fact able to come to within the threshold of the cave. But other than a pigeon’s nest at the entrance of the cave they found nothing but cobwebs, as if no man had set its eyes on the cave before, let alone entered it. With the command of

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244. *Yar-i Ghar*, meaning the Companion of the Cave, is an expression used to describe the companionship of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ in the Cave of Thawr. In time, it has also been used to signify genuine friendships.



the Almighty, moreover, a tree had grown in the entrance, blocking the Prophet's ﷺ face from prying eyes.<sup>245</sup>

Without suspecting the slightest possibility of finding the Noblest Being ﷺ there, the idolaters turned back.

The common aid and protector of these two dignified wayfarers was no other than Allah ﷻ. Thus, the miserable men who had turned up at the cave could see nothing but a pigeon's nest and cobwebs. As elegantly said by poet Arif Nihat Asya:

*The spider was neither in the sky,  
Nor in water, nor on land,  
It was only in the eyes  
Blinded to the Truth so grand.*

As all this was taking place, Abu Bakr ؓ was becoming increasingly restless in the cave. He was in fear, not for himself but for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

If the idolaters were to do so little as to peek inside, they could have easily seen the two. Instead they were walking around the cave, inspecting it and remarking, "Had there been anyone inside, the pigeon's eggs and the spider web would have long been destroyed!"

Some who suggested taking a look inside the cave were prevented by the furious Umayyah ibn Khalaf:

"Are you out of your minds? What are you going to do inside? How can you even suggest walking inside a cave knit with layers of cobweb? Believe me...this web was weaved well before even the birth of Muhammad!"

245. Ibn Saad, I, 229; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya*, III, 223-224.



While Abu Jahl remarked:

“I swear Muhammad is nearby...I can just feel him! But he has blinded our eyes again with magic!”<sup>246</sup>

Overcome with anxiety, Abu Bakr ﷺ meanwhile was whispering to the Noble Messenger ﷺ:

“If they kill me, I am just one person after all. But if something happens to you, then the whole *ummah* will be destroyed!”

The Noble Prophet ﷺ was offering salat on his feet and Abu Bakr ﷺ was keeping an eye out, all the while voicing his uneasiness:

“Your tribe is looking for you everywhere. By Allah, it is not for myself that I fear but I am worried they will do something to you!”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ calmly responded:

“Do not fear, Abu Bakr! Surely Allah is with us!” (Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 223-224; Diyarbakri, I, 328-329)

This phase is retold in the Quran:

الَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“If you will not aid him, Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: ‘Fear

246. Ibn Saad, I, 228; Halabi, II, 209.

not, surely Allah is with us.’ So Allah sent down His serenity upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of Allah, that is the highest; and Allah is Mighty, Wise.” (at-Tawbah, 40)

Abu Bakr ؓ later said:

“In the cave I could see the idolaters’ feet. ‘If they had only kneeled they would have seen us’, I whispered to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said, ‘Why do you fear for two companions, the third of whom is Allah?’ (Bukhari, Fadail’ul-Ashab 2, Manaqib 45; Muslim, Fadailu’s-Sahabah, 1)



The Cave of Thawr where the Prophet ﷺ had been guided following the thirteen-year struggle in Mecca, was a different sort of training place than Hira.<sup>247</sup> There, the gist was to observe the flow of Divine mysteries and might, to read the Wisdom right from the book of man and universe; and to become immersed in Divine secrets, thereby to develop the heart.

The stay in Thawr lasted for three days and three nights. The Prophet ﷺ was not alone. He was accompanied by Abu Bakr ؓ, the noblest of men after prophets. Honored with being by the Prophet’s ﷺ side for three days and nights, he thus became ‘the Second of the Two’.

By counseling his friend:

247. Thawr provided a precinct of education distinct from that of Hira. In Hira the seeds of *iman* were cultivated, whereas at Thawr the seeds of *ihsan* and *tasawwuf* were planted after the seeds of *iman* had already flourished. This shows that a heart must first live *sharia*, by virtue of which it acquires an aptitude for *tasawwuf*.



## لَا تَحْزَنُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا

“Fear not! Allah is with us”, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was at the same time revealing the secret of being-with-Allah (*ma'iyah*). This was the beginning of the teaching of silent *dhikr*, or remembrance, the opening of hearts to the Almighty on the way of becoming content.

Thus the Cave of Thawr served as the starting place of the training of the heart towards reaching the Almighty from the horizon of endless mysteries, the first stop of this Divine journey.

The Noble Prophet's ﷺ exposure of the secrets from the realm of the heart to his *ummah* thus first began in this cave with Abu Bakr ؓ, the first ring of the Golden Chain set to survive until the Day of Judgment.

Faith receives its power from the love of the Prophet ﷺ. The main impetus in this sublime journey is the love felt for the Noble Messenger ﷺ and the only way of reaching the Almighty is through feeling such affection. In any case, to love is not only to love the person, but also to love whoever and whatever the person loves. Keeping love ever alive is possible through the spiritual bond (*rabitah*).<sup>248</sup> A raw and shallow understanding can never conceive Divine Love.

Understanding the spiritual bond of Abu Bakr ؓ with the Noble Prophet ﷺ should leave an impression on each mind, the depth of which depends on their capacities. Abu Bakr ؓ would receive a different kind of sublime satisfaction each time he talked with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; being the person most privy to prophetic secrets, he would always long for the Prophet ﷺ even when he was by his side witnessing unique manifestations.

248. For a more detailed elaboration of *rabitah*, see Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ, *İmandan İhsâna TASAVVUF*, p. 249-257, Istanbul 2002.



Indeed, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ remarked appreciatively:

“I have never benefited from the wealth of anyone like I have from the wealth of Abu Bakr”, Abu Bakr ؓ responded, in tears:

“Are not my wealth and I for you anyway?” (Ibn Majah, Muqaddimah, 11); an expression of total devotion to the Prophet ﷺ and annihilation in him. (In tasawwuf, this spiritual position is defined as *Fana fi'r-Rasul*).



One point during their stay at Thawr, the Prophet ﷺ, placing his head on Abu Bakr’s lap, had drifted off to a light nap. At that stage Abu Bakr ؓ noticed a small hole close by in the cave. To prevent the likely appearance of a pest from the hole that could harm the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr ؓ, blocked it with his foot, quickly but also delicately not to wake him up.

Soon, as part of the Divine test, it turned out that Abu Bakr ؓ had every reason to worry, when a snake made its presence felt in the hole, fiercely biting Abu Bakr’s ؓ foot, dribbling its venom. Abu Bakr ؓ was left in such agony that even though he did not move in order not to awaken the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he nonetheless could not contain his tears; such that one dropped right on the blessed face of the Prophet ﷺ. Waking up, the Noble Messenger ﷺ inquired:

“What’s wrong Abu Bakr? What happened?”

Even though Abu Bakr ؓ said there was nothing wrong, he ended up telling his experience upon the Prophet’s ﷺ insistence.

(Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 477; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, III, 223)



Without further ado, the Noble Prophet ﷺ applied his saliva with his finger to the bite wound. With the blessing of Allah, the wound of Abu Bakr ؓ was quickly healed, without a single trace of pain left.

Though from a disputable source, there is an account according to which the Noble Prophet ﷺ asked the snake, in spiritual language, the reason for the bite, to which the snake responded:

“Messenger of Allah...I have been waiting for years in that small hole longing to see you. Just when I finally had the opportunity to realize my wish, I saw my path had been blocked. Unable to withhold the severe desire to see you, to unblock my path, I had no other option than to bite.”

This inspired poet Fuzuli to elaborate the following, in celebration of the Noble Prophet ﷺ being a source of spiritual and physical healing, from which those who befriend him can receive a share:

*Drunk by His friend, and the fount of life a snake's venom shall be,  
But venom is what becomes of water drunk by His enemy.*

When during his caliphate Omar ؓ overheard some people implying his superiority to Abu Bakr ؓ, he interrupted and said:

“By Allah, Abu Bakr is better than Omar’s entire family. More so, even one day of Abu Bakr’s life is more blessed than Omar’s entire family: the day when Abu Bakr was by the side of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he left his home for the cave.” (Hakim, III, 7/4268)



Throughout their stay in the Cave of Thawr, Abu Bakr’s daughter Asma would bring them food, while his son Abdullah



would spend each night at the cave with them, returning to Mecca toward the break of dawn, leading the idolaters to think he had spent the night in the town. An exceptionally witty and capable man, Abdullah would mix with the idolaters during the day and listen unassumingly to their plots against the Prophet ﷺ, leaking the information to the cave at night.

Amir ibn Fuhayrah, the freed slave of Abu Bakr, would likewise graze Abu Bakr's sheep alongside the other sheep with the shepherds of Mecca. Setting out with them early in the morning, he would purposely lag back from the other shepherds on their return at nightfall, going to the cave with the sheep, for the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his honorable friend to obtain their milk. On his return to Mecca in the early hours of the morning, Amir would wipe out the footprints of Abdullah with the hooves of his flock, making them unnoticeable.<sup>249</sup>

Having been in search of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ for three days now, the idolaters had lost all hope. Receiving the news of Meccan despair from Abdullah, the Noble Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ, on the fourth day, mounted their camels brought by the guide and set off from the cave. This meant that the time had come for the Prophet ﷺ to bid farewell to his hometown where he had spent his entire life till that day, which thus cast grief over him. He very much loved the blessed town of Mecca. A short time before, overlooking the town from the hill of Hazwarah, he had remarked:

“By Allah, Mecca, you are for me the most beloved of all places. Had I not been driven out, I would never have turned my back on you!” (Ahmed, IV, Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 68/3925)

Again, the Noble Prophet ﷺ said:

249. Ibn Hisham, II, 99; Bukhari, Manaqibu'l-Ansâr, 45; Haythami, VI, 53.



“What a lovely town you are Mecca and how much do I love you! I would never have sought haven in any other, if it were not for my tribe expelling me!” (Tirmidhi, *Manaqib*, 68/3926)

Comfort came through Divine Revelation, dispersing the Prophet’s sorrow:

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَيَّ مَعَادٍ

“Most surely He Who has made the Quran binding on you shall bring you home again. (al-Qasas, 85)

Explicitly promising the return, also as the first sign of the Conquest of Mecca, this *ayah* also served to rid the Prophet’s heart from sorrow and make way for joy.



The 400 km stretch between Mecca and Medina then took eight days to complete at a camel’s pace. In spite of the long road, the scorching weather and the burning sand, the journeymen continued their walk non-stop for the first day.

Being a trader who had made numerous journeys to Damascus, Abu Bakr was a recognizable face for many. So at times during the journey they would come across people he knew, asking Abu Bakr of ‘the identity of the man in front of him’. Acting prudently and to stay safe, Abu Bakr would reply:

“He is my guide...He is showing me the way!” Of course, at heart, he would mean “he is guiding me to the best of ways.” (Ibn Saad, I, 233-235; Ahmed, III, 211)



Led by the tracker Abdullah ibn Urayqit<sup>250</sup>, the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr ؓ and Amir ibn Fuhayrah stopped by a tent near Qudayd owned by Ummu Mabed, who used to take care of the needs of passing travellers. So the blessed travellers bound for Medina asked her for some milk.

In the tent there was a weak sheep, which did not even have enough power to join the flock to graze, much less milk in its udders. It was therefore left behind in one corner of the tent. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked permission from Ummu Mabed to milk it, she said:

“Do as you wish—but good luck finding a drop of milk in her!”

After praying to Allah ﷻ, to bless the sheep with prosperity, the Noble Prophet ﷺ began milking it with his own hands, ending up drawing out plenty of milk from it.

From what Ummu Mabed later told, that sheep survived until a drought that struck during the caliphate of Omar ؓ, at which time they milked it day and night, even when livestock could not find any grass to graze.

After the Messenger of Allah ﷺ left Abu Mabed’s tent, her husband turned up. Astonished at the sight of the amount of milk inside, he exclaimed:

“Where did these come from, Ummu Mabed? The sheep are all away on land, all infertile, and there is nothing to milk! What happened?”

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250. Abdullah ibn Urayqit, though then a nonbeliever, was a man thought highly of. Although it is disputed whether or not he later became a Muslim, preferable are the reports that he in fact did.

“Today a holy man came to the tent”, Ummu Mabed said, going on to explain the event and the Prophet’s ﷺ beautiful traits.

“Go on, tell me more about him!” Abu Mabed requested, upon which his wife began elaborating further:

“A handsome man, with a luminous face...He has exceptionally good morals. There was nothing wrong with him that I could see. His eyes are black and sparkling, lashes thick but slender and there is a politeness to his voice. Somewhat tall, he has black hair and a slightly long beard.

“There is serenity and majesty in his quietness, and a flowing beauty and kindness in his speech. His words are like perfectly aligned pearls, spilling from his mouth with measure. He speaks clearly, separating precisely right from the wrong. Neither did he speak very little as if to show inability, nor a lot that would make one wearisome.

“From a distance, he looks the most imposing and awe-inspiring of all men, but up close, he is the most amicable and charming. Of medium height, he is neither outrageously tall, nor short. He is like a sapling that has surpassed in beauty the other saplings it has grown among. Next to him he had friends who would peacefully listen to each word he uttered and rush to fulfil his each command. He is dearly respected. From what I saw, blaming or telling off others is something he never does.”

Upon hearing this vivid description, Abu Mabed remarked:

“That man is the Prophet from Quraysh. How I wish I had met him and become his friend! But still I am going to try when the first opportunity presents itself.”



During those days, an unknown voice in Mecca was heard delivering emotional eulogies in praise of the guests of Ummu Mabed's tent. Stirred by this unknown voice, Hassan ibn Thabit improvised a poem declaring that the people who let go of their Prophet are now doomed, and that the Prophet is spreading guidance in the heart of Medina, reading aloud the words of Allah ﷻ. (Ibn Saad, I, 230-231; VIII, 289; Hakim, III, 10-11)

Abu Mabed's entire family ended up accepting Islam and the honour of becoming Companions of the Prophet.

Incapable of finding the blessed travellers in spite of their efforts, the idolaters as a last resort offered a ludicrous award for their capture. One of the many adventurers dazzled by this promise of reward was the hunter Suraqa ibn Malik.

At the end of a long search, Suraqa was able to track down the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. With the hope of seizing him, Suraqa immediately had his horse gallop towards them. Suddenly, however, the hooves of his horse sank into the sand, causing Suraqa to fall off.

Despite great effort, Suraqa could not free himself from the sand in which he was bogged and resume his pursuit of the Prophet ﷺ. Only after a while of struggling did he come to his senses and began feeling remorse. Thereupon, he sought the mercy of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed for him, shortly after which Suraqa's horse rose from the sand. Suraqa instantly had a turn of heart for the better and became a genuine friend of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. With the intention of keeping their location secret, Suraqa returned, diverting others from heading towards them by suggesting various other directions. (Muslim, Zuhd, 75)

Echoing in Suraqa's ears for a while to come were the following words the Prophet ﷺ told him:





“How will you feel Suraqa, the day you shall wear Khosrau’s gold bracelets and crown, and don his belt?”

Indeed, when the bracelets, belt and crown of the defunct Khosrau were brought to Medina following the conquest of Persia, Caliph Omar رضي الله عنه called Suraqa and, making him wear the adornments, told him to lift his hands and say:

“Allahu Akbar! Praise be to Him who has taken these away from Khosrau ibn Hurmuz, who paraded himself as the god of men, and placed it in the hands of Suraqa ibn Malik, of the sons of Mudlij!” (Ibn Athir, *Usd’ul-Ghabah*, II, 332; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, II, 19)

Encountering Buraydah ibn Husayb and his tribe on the way near Ghamim, the Blessed Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم invited them to Islam. They all accepted wholeheartedly. That night, the Light of Being صلى الله عليه وسلم taught Buraydah رضي الله عنه the opening part of Chapter Maryam.<sup>251</sup>

Undoing the white turban (*imamah*) on his head, Buraydah then said to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

“Allow me to be your flag bearer!”

Buraydah thereafter bore the flag for them, until they reached the village of Quba.

Afterwards on the way, they met a commercial caravan returning from Damascus, among which was Zubayr ibn Awwam who enshrouded the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and Abu Bakr in two white cloaks.<sup>252</sup>

Each step was now drawing the Hegira company closer to Medina. Regardless of the idolaters rallying each and every person they could to

251. Ibn Saad, IV, 242.

252. Bukhari, *Manâqibu’l-Ansâr*, 45.



murder the Noble Prophet ﷺ, he was nonetheless proceeding steadily, continuing to extend his invitation to Islam on the way.

Saad ad-Dalil ؓ,<sup>253</sup> one of the Companions, recounts the following:

“During the Hegira, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ came to our place. A daughter of Abu Bakr ؓ was with us at the time, being breastfed by a wet nurse. They wanted to reach Medina through the shortest way possible. We told them that they were on the Ghair Way amid the Raqubah Passage, famous for two bandits known as *Mukhanan*, and that he only needed to say the word for us to take care of them.

‘Take us to them’, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said.

So we set out. When we walked up to the end of the Raqubah slope, we saw the bandits, one of whom we heard say to the other:

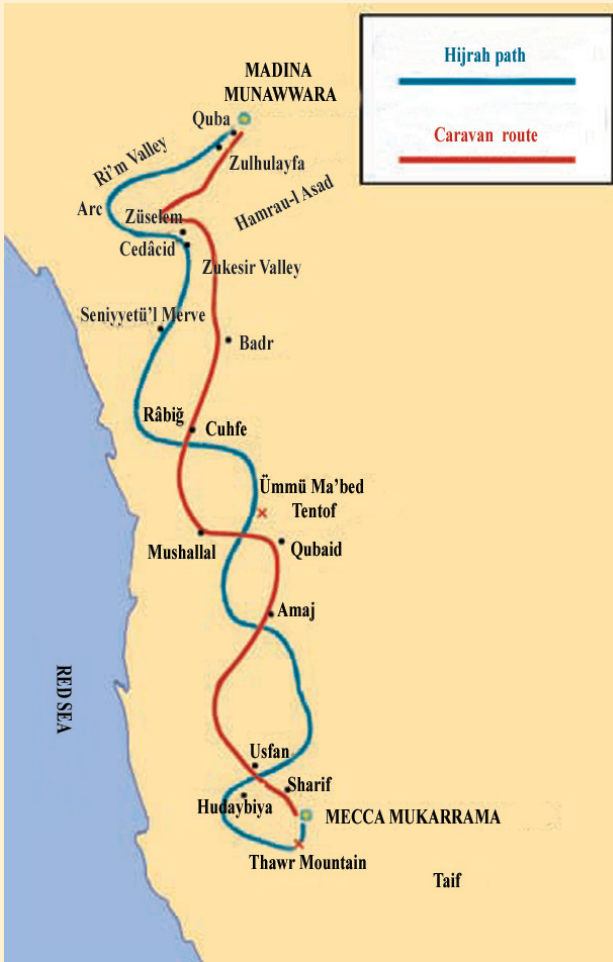
‘That man looks like he is from Yemen.’<sup>254</sup>

Calling the two next to him, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ explained and openly invited them to Islam. They accepted there and then. When the Prophet ﷺ asked their names, they replied, ‘We are called *Mukhanan* (i.e. the despised two)’.

‘Quite the reverse, you are *Mukraman* (i.e. the honoured two)’, the Prophet ﷺ said. He then told the two to go to Medina before them with the good news of their upcoming arrival.” (Ahmed, IV, 74)

253. For showing the shortest route to Medina and guiding the Blessed Prophet ﷺ through the Raqubah Passage, the great Companion was given the appellation *ad-Dalil*, the Guide.

254. Intended by the remark is the fact that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was from Mecca. Mecca was regarded as part of Tihama, a region classified as within the borders of Yemen. the Kaabah, for that very reason, has also been called *al-Kaaba'tul-Yemeniyya*. (Ibn Athir, *an-Nihaya*, V, 300)



### The Long Awaited Guest

Excitement was at its height for the Medinans who had long received the news of the Prophet's ﷺ impending arrival. They had



gathered at the outskirts of the town in anticipation of the arrival of their blessed guest, in hope of welcoming the brilliant envoy and garner their share of blessing.

At long last, on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabiulawwal,<sup>255</sup> the joyous shouts “They are coming!” were finally beginning to reverberate throughout Medina.

Enlivened by the good news, the streets of Medina were now resounding with the sounds of *takbir*. The Muslims took their arms. Mounted or on foot, they rushed to welcome their blessed guest.

With the arrival, under Divine protection and assistance, of the long awaited travellers at the nearby village of Quba, the whole town bubbled over, sent into blissful celebration.

The fervent tune of *Talaa'l-bedru alayna*<sup>256</sup> rising to the skies from the surrounding hills were setting hearts ablaze with joy. To register all events to take place thereafter until the Final Hour, history was meanwhile setting the Hegira calendar in motion.

As a majority of Muslims had never before seen the Light of Being ﷺ in their lives, they did not recognize him, and for a while took Abu Bakr Siddiq ؓ to be the Prophet. The Noble Prophet ﷺ was in the meantime keeping quiet. He was directly exposed to the scorching heat of the sun, which was when Abu Bakr ؓ made a move to shade him with his mantle. Only then did the Muslims realize the identity of the Prophet ﷺ.<sup>257</sup>

From that day on, Medina was to become the center and mirror of Islam’s development and progress. The dark face of disbelief was

255. The date coincides with September, 622 on the Gregorian Calendar.

256. *The full moon has ascended upon us.*

257. Bukhari, *Manaqibu'l-Ansâr*, 45.

fading out more and more. Instilled with the sublime meanings of the Hegira, the Masjids of Medina and Quba have been left as living memories and legacies of this blessed journey until the Final Hour.

Laying all their belongings at the feet of the *Muhajirun*, the *Ansar* proclaimed:

“Here is my wealth...Half is yours!” The immeasurable sacrifice and devotion that is Muslim brotherhood was thus initiated there and then. Medina cemented her unshakeable place and reputation in Islamic history. All deeds of Islam, social and personal, and struggles became manifest in a unique way in Medina, setting an example for the rest of the *ummah*.

In Quba, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was a guest at the house of Ibn Khidm, from the Amr ibn Awf clan. There, the Prophet ﷺ would occasionally leave and go to the house of Saad ibn Haythamah, where he would sit and talk with other Muslims. As Saad ؓ was yet unmarried, the bachelors of the Migrants used to stay at his house, for which reason it came to be called *Manzil'ul-Uzzab*, the Place of Bachelors. (Ibn Hisham, II, 110; Ibn Saad, I, 233)

During his temporary stay at Quba, the Prophet ﷺ would attend funerals, invitations and visit the ill.

Abu Said al-Khudri ؓ recalls the following from those days, which shows the sensitivity of the Companions.

“During the first days of the arrival of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Medina, we used to always notify him, whenever there would be someone on his deathbed. He would then come and wait by the person, praying for his forgiveness. Only after the person breathed his last would he return, sometimes waiting even until the burial.

Weary of causing him inconvenience, we said to each other:



‘Let’s not tell the Messenger of Allah anything until the ill person passes away. That way the Prophet will neither become tired nor will he lose any time.’

So we began telling the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the deceased only after the person breathed his last. He would then come and perform the salat of the deceased and pray for his forgiveness, waiting at times until the burial.

We continued doing this for some time. Then thinking even that was causing inconvenience for the Prophet ﷺ, we decided to take the funeral to his doorstep, supposing it would be easier for him to perform the salat over the deceased like that. So that’s what we did from then on.”

Muhammad ibn Omar, the narrator of the above account, adds:

“Such is the reason why that place is now called *Musalla*, meaning the place where the salat (of the deceased) is performed. The funerals were always taken there and the practice continued even after the passing away of the Prophet ﷺ.” (Ibn Saad, I, 257, Hakim, I, 519/1349)

The Noble Prophet ﷺ had not yet departed from Quba when Ali -may Allah ennoble his countenance-, having returned to their owners the goods entrusted in the safekeeping of the Prophet ﷺ, caught up with them.

There are many reports that bear witness to the immensity of the love the Companions nurtured for the Noble Prophet ﷺ and his loving memory. Bara ibn Azib ؓ<sup>258</sup> tells of his father’s insatiable

258. Bara ibn Azib ؓ, also known as Abu Ammara, was among the *Ansar*. He became Muslim before the Hegira and took active part in all the battles after Uhud. He breathed his last in Kufa, in the 73<sup>rd</sup> year of Hegira, having narrated more than 300 hadiths.

desire to listen to something about the Prophet ﷺ at every given opportunity:

“Abu Bakr ؓ had bought a saddle from my father for thirteen dirhams and told him:

‘Ask Bara to deliver it to our house if he can’.

‘Not until you describe to me how the Messenger of Allah migrated from Mecca to Medina’, my father replied.

Thereupon Abu Bakr ؓ lengthily described their Hegira to Medina.” (Bukhari, Ashabu’n-Nabi, 2; Ahmad, I, 2)

### **The Masjid of Quba: A Masjid Founded upon Piety**

At Quba, the first stop on the road to Medina, the Prophet ﷺ remained for fourteen days as guest at the quarters of the Ibn Awf clan. It was then that the illustrious Masjid of Quba was built, with the Noble Prophet ﷺ personally taking active part in the construction.

Quba is the first mosque of Islam and holds even greater importance for the fact of having been built during the Hegira. It is described in the Quran as:

لَمَسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ

“...a masjid founded on piety from the very first day.”<sup>259</sup>  
(at-Tawbah, 108)

Abu Hurayrah ؓ states that the part of the *ayah* that says:

259. Omar ؓ was to later adduce the Quranic expression ‘the very first day’ as proof, when making the Hegira the starting date of the calendar.



فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ

“...in it are men who love that they should be purified; and Allah loves those who purify themselves”, (at-Tawbah, 108) refers to the locals of Quba. (Tirmidhi, Tafsir, 9/3099; Abu Dawud, Taharah, 23/44; Ibn Majah, Taharah, 357)

When the first group of Migrants reached Quba, they prepared the area formerly used by the Ibn Awf clan to dry their dates, for salat. Leading the first Migrants in their salat was Salim, the freed slave of Abu Huzayfah, a beautiful reciter of the Quran with more knowledge of it than anyone else there.<sup>260</sup>

Extending the area where the Migrants performed salat, the Noble Messenger ﷺ had the Masjid of Quba built. The square-shaped Masjid had originally a length of 32 meters on each side. The Prophet ﷺ asked the locals to bring stones, the first of which he placed in the *Qiblah* with his own hands, thereafter instructing Abu Bakr and Omar ؓ to place the stones in the same order.

By far, it was Ammar ibn Yasir ؓ who showed the most effort in the construction of the Mosque, for which he was called then on as ‘the first mosque builder’ in Islam.<sup>261</sup>

The poems Abdullah ibn Rawaha ؓ recited while working would help Muslims unwind amid their tiredness.<sup>262</sup>

Saad al-Qurazi took up the responsibilities as *muadhhdhin* of the Mosque.

260. Ibn Saad, III, 87; IV, 311.

261. Ibn Hisham, II, 114.

262. Kâmil Mîras, *Tecrid Tercemesi*, X, 106.



Like the Masjid'un-Nabawi and the other nine mosques in Medina, Quba provided a base for ongoing teaching activities, which the Prophet ﷺ supervised each time he attended the mosque.<sup>263</sup>

On Saturdays, the Blessed Messenger ﷺ would go to Quba, either on a mount or on foot, and offer two rakats of salat at the Mosque<sup>264</sup>, something he also advised fellow Muslims to do:

“Whoever makes a thorough *wudu*, goes to the Masjid of Quba and performs two rakats of salat, shall receive the rewards of an *umrah* (voluntary pilgrimage).” (Ibn Majah, Iqamah, 197; Nasai, Masajid, 9)

Omar ؓ also had the habit of visiting the Mosque on Mondays and Thursdays during his caliphate, saying he would not think twice in steering his camel to the mosque even it were a great distance away.<sup>265</sup>

The Masjid of Quba underwent extensions during the caliphates of Othman ؓ and Omar ibn Abdulaziz, not to mention numerous renovations thereafter. Repaired also during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II in the year 1829 (H. 1245), the single minaret and flat-roofed mosque was torn down by the Saudi Arabian government and reconstructed with a dome and four minarets.

### The First Friday Salat on the Valley of Ranunah

After a fourteen-day stint at Quba, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his following made their move towards Medina. It was Friday. By noon, with the time approaching zuhr salat, they had reached the Valley of Ranunah, where the Noble Prophet ﷺ dismounted his camel. There, for the first time, he led the salat of *Jumuah*, or

263. Hamidullâh, *Islâm Peygamberi*, II, 771.

264. Bukhari, Fadlu's-Salat 3, 4; Muslim, Hajj, 516.

265. Ibn Saad, I, 245.



Friday, the most prominent sign of Islam’s sovereignty. He gave the following *khutbahs*, or sermons.

### **The First Sermon**

“People!

“Repent before death! Perform good deeds while the opportunity is at hand! By offering plenty of charity, secretly or openly, and by constantly remembering Allah, mend your relations with Allah! Do this and you shall be blessed, assisted and be made to regain all that you have lost.

“Know that on this month of this year, in this place, Allah has made obligatory the Friday Salat. May his ends never meet, who takes the Salat lightly or abandons it in rejection, while there is an imam, just or unjust, to lead him, while I am still alive or after me! And may Allah never guide him to success! Such a person has no other salat (in hope of acceptance)—except those who repent, for Allah will accept their repentance.” (Ibn Majah, Iqamah, 78)

“People!

“Prepare for your Hereafter while you have your health! Death will surely come to pass and leave your flocks without a shepherd. Then without a translator or a medium, Allah will ask:

‘Has not my Prophet come to you and informed you of My commands? For all the wealth you had and My favors upon you, what have you brought today for yourself?’

“Faced with this question each person will look left and right to no avail; then they will look to the front and see Hellfire.

“So wake up! Guard yourselves from the flames, even if it be with half a date! If you cannot even find half a date, then with kind



words; for a single goodness is multiplied by ten to seven hundred times.

“May Allah’s blessings and mercy be upon you!” (Ibn Hisham, I, 118-119, Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 524)

### **The Second Sermo**

“Praise be to Allah. Only from Him do I seek help. His protection we seek from the evils of our own souls and the wickedness of our deeds. Whoever Allah guides nobody shall misguide and nobody can guide whoever He causes to deviate.

“I bear witness that there is no god but Allah. He is one, without partner. The most beautiful words are in His Book. Whosoever’s heart Allah has adorned with the Quran and guided him to Islam after darkness, has been salvaged, if he chooses the Quran above all words.

“The book of Allah is truly the most beautiful and eloquent of words.

“Love what Allah loves! Do not ever be weary of Allah’s word and His remembrance! Do not let your hearts strain from the word of Allah, for His words pick and choose from the best. They explain the best deeds, and give mention to the Prophets, the most eminent of servants, and convey the most beautiful and striking accounts.<sup>266</sup> It makes explicit the permissible and the non-permissible.

“Worship only Allah and do not ascribe any partners to Him! Fear Him the way He ought to be feared! Have your tongues support

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266. *Qissa*, accounts of previous prophets and peoples comprise more than a third of the Quran. For the inherent wisdom in this, refer to Osman Nûri TOPBAŞ, *Nebiler Silsilesi*, v. 1, p. 11-28, Istanbul 2004.



your good deeds! Love each other with the word of Allah! Know that Allah is angered with those who fall back on their words.

“May Allah’s peace be upon you!” (Bayhaqi, Dalail, II, 524-525)

Including aspects of Islam like belief, worship, moral and social principles, these sermons can effectively be taken as a broad summary of the Religion.

That the Friday Salat was made obligatory even before the completion of Hegira underlines the importance and urgency for Muslims to assemble themselves in a community.

### **The Nervous Wait in Medina**

Before leaving Quba for Medina, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ summoned the Najjar Clan, among whom were his maternal uncles, for support. Armed, they quickly heeded the call, and greeting the Prophet ﷺ, they assuredly told him:

“Mount your camels for the journey. Your protection is assured.”<sup>267</sup>

With the Friday Salat completed, accompanied by Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, the notables of Najjar and other Muslims, the Noble Prophet ﷺ mounted his camel Qaswa to make his long awaited entrance into Medina.

The departure of the Prophet ﷺ and the pain of no longer being able to have him as guest slowly sinking in, the Qubans said in a heartfelt plea:

“Messenger of Allah! Are you leaving because you are tired of us or is it just that you’re leaving for a better place?”

267. Bukhari, Manaqibu'l-Ansar, 46.



“I have only been commanded to go to Medina”, the Prophet ﷺ replied, consoling them and assuring them of his contentment with their company. (Diyarbakri, I, 339)

All the Medinan Muslims, without exception, wanted to lodge the Prophet ﷺ as guest. As that burning desire in each and every Muslim to take the noble guest home was threatening to turn into a dispute, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, referring to his camel Qaswa, had to intervene:

“Better you stay out of the camel’s way; she has her instructions.”  
(Ibn Hisham, II, 112-113)

This was the only way to avoid heartbreak in determining where the Noble Messenger ﷺ would end up lodging.

After a couple of temporary pauses, the gifted camel indeed ended up crouching on the vacant land in front of the home of Khalid ibn Zayd, better known as Abu Ayyub al-Ansari ؓ. The lucky companion was in an inexpressible bliss.

“Please, Messenger of Allah! Honor the house of your humble host!” said Abu Ayyub ؓ, immediately inviting the Prophet ﷺ in.

Walking towards Abu Ayyub’s ؓ house, the Noble Prophet ﷺ was met with the little girls of the Najjar clan, singing merrily with drums in their hands:

نَحْنُ جَوَارٍ مِنْ بَنِي النَّجَّارِ  
يَا حَبْدًا مُحَمَّدٌ مِنْ جَارِ

*“The bliss of being the daughters of the sons of Najjar,  
Compare little to being neighbors with the Messenger!”*



The Beloved Messenger ﷺ then asked them:

“Tell me—do you love me?”

“Yes, we love you very much”, they replied.

Delighted to see their joy, the Prophet ﷺ replied:

“Only Allah knows how much I love you all! By Allah, I love you all, too. By Allah, I love you all, too!” (Ibn Majah, Nikah, 21; Diyarbakri, I, 341)

Bara ibn Azib ؓ mentions the following:

“Never have I seen the Medinans happier than the day of the Prophet’s ﷺ arrival. All Medinans, young and old, male and female, had flocked to the streets, climbed on their rooftops, shouting ecstatically, “The Messenger of Allah has arrived! O Muhammad! O the Prophet of Allah!”” (Bukhari, Manaqib’ul-ansar, 45; Muslim, Zuhd, 75)

Anas ibn Malik ؓ recalls similar memories:

“I do not remember a day more joyful, more beautiful and with greater light than the day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ honored Medina. It was as if the whole town was bathed in light.” (Ahmed, III, 122; Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 1/3618)

As a sign of their appreciation for the Prophet’s ﷺ coming to Medina, the Medinan Muslims sacrificed a camel.<sup>268</sup>



The love the Believers nurture for the Blessed Prophet ﷺ is expressed beautifully in the couplet below:

268. Ahmed, III, 301.



*Aman is the same as your honorable name,  
For a lover, O Prophet, your remembrance is aman...*

Both the expression *aman*, which is a plea of help, and the name Muhammad have the same *abjad* value of 92, poetically hinted at above in expressing that a lover's cry of *aman* is essentially a desire for none other than the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. A spectacular poetic insight indeed!

The Hegira marked the end of the Meccan era, signaling a brand new phase in Medina.







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