

On The Path Of The Beloved ﷺ

The 3 – 6 Years Before The Hijrah

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

Ten days of Ramadan have passed, exactly one third of Ramadan.

Are we still worshipping Allah ﷻ ? Are the mosques still filled with people? We want to change the world; we need to recharge our batteries to help us through the upcoming year. Are you still shedding tears, begging for Allah's mercy? Are your legs aching from the long nights' standing in front of Allah ﷻ, worshipping and prostrating to Him alone?

If you feel that the first ten days have slipped by from underneath your feet, it is not too late! Be steadfast, start right now and make the most of the remaining 20 days; become zealous; you will never know; you may beat those who have started from day one. Keep worshipping Allah ﷻ until your body begins to ache. Quench your hearts' thirst with this energy, anchor your feet to the ground and pray to Him alone through the nights.

Remember the "to-do-list" that we have agreed upon: prayers, keeping contact with your relatives and giving to charity; make sincere dua'a to Allah ﷻ. This is the way to get the reward of Laylatul Qadr, and we pray that each one of us listening or watching is forgiven and blessed with Allah's mercy and spared hellfire.

Our lessons, so far, have included the Prophet's ﷺ propagation of the message, and how he began to bring together the strong and outstanding people within the society. After that, he invited his family to guarantee their safeguard. The events, which will be discussed today, will cover the years three to six before the Hijrah (the migration from Makkah to Madinah). This period consisted of the first hijrah in Islam, which was to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), and the economic sanctions imposed by Quraysh on Muslims.

The propagation of Islam during those three years was public up until the sixth year before Hijrah. The Prophet ﷺ used Dar Al-Arqam to prepare his companions spiritually and personally. Omar and Hamza embraced Islam at that period, a blessing from Allah for those who were patient. Subsequently, Quraysh's tactics in how to deal with the Prophet ﷺ changed and began to involve negotiating several issues and offering materialistic rewards, as a form of temptation to abandon the beautiful message of Islam.

The Prophet ﷺ offered a peace treaty, which was refused, and Quraysh resumed their assault on Muslims. These assaults became increasingly tough and intolerable and soon

Quraysh began to focus their torture on Muslim women, because of their significant role in society. To mention a few examples, Fatimah, the daughter of Omar Ibn-Al-Khattab, was the reason for his conversion to Islam; and without the support of Khadija the Prophet ﷺ would have found it difficult to cope with the stress of delivering the message of Islam.

Quraysh started with the weakest in women, Zimmira, a slave who was tortured so badly. Another woman, Al-Nahdeya, lost her eyesight under the torture but regained it again afterwards. This point further emphasizes the importance of women and how both Quraysh and Muslims, at that time, truly recognized their imperative role.

The question today is do we appreciate women enough? Sadly not!

Women do not merely constitute 50 or 75 percent of our efforts to change this world, their efforts equate to a value closer to 100 percent. They are half of the population and have the responsibility of bringing up the next generation of youth as well as supporting their husbands and families.

In addition to women, Quraysh also focused on the youth, like Musab Ibn-Umayr, the handsome and exquisitely dressed young companion. He was 25 years old and his mother placed him under house arrest for three years, preventing him from meeting the Prophet ﷺ; yet he was steadfast through worship and prayer. Despite his mother's harsh treatment, he served her as best as he could in line with the orders in the Qur'an.

Talha Ibn-Ubayd-Allah, who was 15 at the time, used to be tied up and marched through the market streets with his mother walking behind him and cursing him. A man in the market once asked who they were, and when he found out he asked why her son did not do anything about it? He was given the reply that his religion had ordered him not to.

Imran Ibn-Hussayn, who had concealed his acceptance of Islam from his father, was only 17 at the time. His father went to Dar Al-Arqam where the companions were hiding Imran by sitting on him. When Imran found that his father was coming to declare his faith in Allah ﷻ and His messenger, he ran to him and kissed his hands out of respect and cried along with the rest of those in the room.

We have to ensure that we respect our parents; Allah ﷻ says that one of the three groups of people that He would not look at on the day of judgment are those who disobey their parents.

Abu-Sufyan, Abu-Jahl and Al-Akhnas Ibn-Shurayq, after showing enmity to the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims in day time, would individually go every night to the Prophet's home when it was pitch dark and where there would be a smaller chance for anyone to spot them, to listen to the Prophet read the Qur'an.

Allah ﷻ so willed that the three men would end up meeting each other as they left the vicinity of the Prophet's ﷺ house. They would subsequently agree not to return again, only to find each other there the following night! This took place so that they would all become witnesses against each other, on the Day of Judgment. Later on, and on the third day, they had to swear that they would not return again.

Have we, as Muslims, ever appreciated the Qur'an like this? Allah ﷻ says, **"Will they then not contemplate the Qur'an? Or are there locks upon (their) hearts?" (47:24)** One third of the Qur'an is about the hereafter, paradise and hell. The more we read, the more Allah ﷻ will help us comprehend the Qur'an.

Hostility towards the Prophet ﷺ and the companions increased a great deal. Those of the companions, who were of a lower status in the society, were being beaten up to the extent that some were not able to hold their own body straight. The Prophet ﷺ subsequently proposed that people migrate from Makkah.

This may seem like an easy option to us in this modern day and age, but the proposal was not normal to people at that time. To consider not only leaving Makkah, but also traveling to a far flung country across the sea, required an innovative mind like that of the Prophet . The Prophet ﷺ described Abyssinia as, **"a land of truth governed by a just king who did not mistreat or oppress anyone. That was a solution until Allah ﷻ guides you to a way of recovery from this calamity".**

The Prophet ﷺ described the king of Abyssinia as one who did not oppress people. This poses the question about how the Prophet ﷺ would know such a fact? It shows the Prophet's intelligence and that he studied the geography surrounding not only Makkah but also the entire Arabian Peninsula. The Prophet ﷺ planned; his thoughts and actions were not haphazard and his knowledge of geography and history were up-to-date. It was not a case of trial and error it was a definitive situation.

Abyssinia was a Christian country ruled by a Christian king. Nevertheless, the Prophet ﷺ described him as a just king. This only further emphasizes the beauty and fairness of Islam, in which the truth is not conditional or prescribed to Muslims alone. Allah ﷻ says **"And of the population of the Book is he who, in case you put in his custody a hundred- weight, (Literally: a Kantar) will pay it back to you; and of them is he who, if you put in his custody one dinar, will not pay it back to you, except as long as you are upright over him. (Or: over it) That (is) so because they said, "There is no way over us as to the common folk." (i.e., the illiterates or the Gentiles) And they say lies against Allah, and they know (that)" (3:75).** This is how the Qur'an is teaching us to deal objectively with the others.

One may also wonder why the Prophet ﷺ chose Abyssinia, for the companions to migrate to and not a closer place within the Arabian Peninsula. This was because he

was aware that Quraysh had almost complete control over all the tribes in the area and would therefore be more easily capable of influencing their policies and treatment of Muslims.

It is also important to consider why the Prophet ﷺ himself did not migrate. The reason was that Abraha, the Negus that tried to topple the Ka'ba originated from Abyssinia; therefore there was the danger of the Arab tribes seeing his migration to Abyssinia as a step in seeking help from those who had only recently attempted to defeat Makkah.

Before the Companions' migration to Abyssinia, two surahs were revealed to the Prophet ﷺ in preparation for their move. Those were Surat Al-Kahf and Surat Maryam. The reason was due to the fact that they were traveling to a Christian country and therefore must be educated in its religion and culture before they leave in order to be well equipped. Surat Maryam, the most gentle and loving of surahs, was revealed to show the Christians the extent of Muslims' respect for Maryam, as well as helping them to relate to the Christian faith.

Surat Al-Kahf was revealed to deal specifically with the issue of migration. The surah described several scenarios where such action was necessary. It mentions the migration of "The People of the Cave" who escaped from their homeland because their religion was not accepted by the general population.

It also mentions the story of Musa and Al-Khidr, to explain to the Companions that things do not always go as planned, teaching them that endurance is vital at that phase. The story of Thu-Al-Qarnayn was also another story revealed in the same surah, which is about developing people's lives and communities on earth and that Allah ﷻ bestows supremacy over earth to whom He wills.

One hundred companions migrated with their wives to Abyssinia out of a total of 300 at the time. They sacrificed so much for Islam, for us to be here today. We are asked today to wake up for fajr and pray qiyam, when this is nothing compared to what they have sacrificed for the sake of Islam.

Among those who migrated were some of the wealthier and more prominent figures within the Makkan society, ones that did not actually need to leave Makkah, such as Othman Ibn-Affan and his wife, Ruqayyah Bint-Muhammad, Jafar Ibn- Abu-Talib, Zubair Ibn-Al-Awam and Um-Habiba, the daughter of Abu-Sufyan.

They did so in order to send a message to An-Najjashi (Negus), the king of Abyssinia, that it is not only the weak that embraced Islam, but also the prominent and rich. This could affect An-Najjashi in a way that might make him consider embracing this religion himself and taking its message seriously.

In addition, the Prophet ﷺ asked such prominent figures to make the people of Makkah realize that even though some of those who left did not need to migrate; they did it for the sake of the message of Islam, to aid those who were weaker, and to show unity among Muslims without being defined according to social status.

Subhan-Allah, the Prophet ﷺ was indeed great in everything: worshipping, planning, tactical thinking, sacrifice and patience.

He is also great in his love for us. Abu Huraira reported: Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came to the graveyard and said, "**Peace be upon you! the abode of the believing people and we, if Allah so wills, are about to join you. I love to see my brothers. They (the hearers) said, "Aren't we your brothers-Messenger of Allah? He said, "You are my companions, and our brothers are those who have, so far, not come into the world."**"¹

Notice that none of those rich and prominent immigrants has ever rejected to leave; they all obeyed the Prophet ﷺ. He meant to establish a bond between the rich and the poor, for Islam contains both. Nowadays the poor are isolated from the rich, although that after the migration to Madinah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ dedicated a place that was nearby his house for the poor to stay.

What was really strange is that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ did not permit those immigrants to get back to their homeland until after the Battle of Khaibar, in 7 A.H.² Thus, they stayed in Abyssinia for 15 years. This was for the significant goal of having another base for Islam, in case Madinah was attacked. He did not wish to have all Muslims in one place so that it would be easy for their enemies to attack them. However, Islam was well established after the Treaty of Hudaibia.

When the immigrants finally returned to Madinah, they encountered a new society they were not acquainted with. Madinah was different; there they, for the first time in their lives, saw the mosque and heard Athan. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ realized it all. Therefore, he received them with such a warm reception. **When Ja'far (RA) came back from Abyssinia, the Prophet ﷺ embraced him and kissed him between both of his eyes (forehead) saying that he does not know which to rejoice more, conquering Khaibar or Ja'far's arrival."**³ He also got married to one of them, Umm-Habibah, to help them be fully integrated into the society.

When Quraysh knew about this migration to Abyssinia, they were in rage. They realized that the Prophet ﷺ has moved the battlefield into a different ground. Hence, they sprang to get them back. Amr Ibn-Al-'Ass, who had close relations with An-An-Najjashi accompanied by Abdullah Ibn-Abi-Rabee'a took many precious gifts and travelled to

¹ Authentic hadith in *Sahih Muslim Book 002, Number 0482*.

² A.H. = After Hijrah of the Prophet from Makkah to Madinah in 622 A.D.

³ A good hadith, Al-Bayhaqy.

Abyssinia. When Amr met with An-Najjashi he said, "**O, An-Najjashi, some of our people, abandoned their families and the religion of our ancestors and came to live here in your land, yet they did not even embrace your religion. We have to bring them back to their families who are grieving for their leave.**" While the retinue approved Amr's words, An-Najjashi refused to do anything about it until he gives the Muslims a chance to explain their position, and he called for them. When the Muslims came, they were astounded to find Amr there. An-Najjashi then asked them whether what Amr had said was true or not.

Now, the Muslims were taught at Dar Al-Arqam to be organized and civilized. Therefore, Ja'far Ibn-Abu-Talib stepped forward and talked on behalf of the rest of the Muslims. He did so for two reasons:

First, he is the Prophet's cousin.

Secondly, he is the grandchild of Abdul-Muttalib, who once encountered Abraha. Thus, An-Najjashi would realize the value of the person he is talking to. With great wisdom, he said no more than few sentences, in which he introduced Islam to An-Najjashi and refuted all what Amr had said, in spite of the fact that the whole situation was a shock to him. Can you imagine that he had done what is being taught nowadays at the American universities, on how to make a presentation and prepare a speech in just few minutes?

He said, "**O, king, we were ignorant and ill-mannered. We used to worship idols, eat carrion (dead meat), mistreat our neighbours, cut kinship ties, and the strong used to assault the weak. However, we have changed after a man from amongst us, who is well known to us by his noble family, truthfulness, faithfulness and chastity was sent to us by Allah . He ordered us to tell the truth, pay deposits back to their owners, preserve our kinship ties, and be kind to our neighbours. He prohibited us from drawing near to obscenities, speaking of forgery, and drawing near the wealth of the orphan. Our people rejected him, so they assaulted, oppressed and tortured us. Thus, our Prophet told us to flee to Abyssinia, for he is known to be just and fair. Therefore, we came to your land, hoping that we would not be harmed here.**"

Then, An-Najjashi asked Ja'far, " Would you tell me something of the revelation that came upon your Prophet?" Ja'far recited segments of Surat Maryam where Allah says , "**And mention in the Book Maryam (Mary) as she retired from her family to an eastern place. So she took to herself a curtain apart from them; then We sent to her Our Spirit; (i.e., the Angel Jibril "Gabriel) so he took for himself the likeness of a mortal in perfect shape (Or: mold). She said, "Surely I take refuge in The All-Merciful from you, in case you are pious." He said, "Surely I am only a Messenger of your Lord to bestow upon you a most cleansed youth." She said, "However can I have a youth, and no mortal has touched me, neither have I been a prostitute?" He said, "Thus (it will be).**

Your Lord has said, Simple is it for Me, and that We may make him a sign for mankind and a mercy from Us, and it is a Command decreed” (19:16-21).

He went on reciting until An-Najjashi and his patriarchs shed tears. This is the influence of the Qur'an on non-Muslims. Could you imagine? That is the Qur'an that touches the hearts. The Qur'an touched Omar Ibnul-Khattab, Abu-Jahl, Abu-Sufyan, An-Najjashi and his retinue, while you are yet to be touched. You should work on this during the rest of Ramadan, making sincere dua'a to Allah to help you perceive the Qur'an and be affected by it that way.

"I vow that what you have just said and what Isa (AS) had said are of the same spring," said An-Najjashi to Ja'far. **"Go in peace, for I will never let them harm you".** This is a real fair Christian king. Therefore, we should learn never to classify any one who is non-Muslim as an enemy, for this is not true. You have to judge people according to their actions while sticking firmly to your own ethics.

Amr was in rage. He decided to try once more. He went to An-Najjashi on the second day telling him that the Qur'an insults Isa ﷺ. An-Najjashi then called for the Muslims again asking them if that was true. Ja'far, determined to stick to the truth said, "Isa (AS) is a servant and messenger of Allah ﷻ. He is a Word that Allah ﷻ cast forth to Maryam the virgin". An-Najjashi then drew a line on the ground and said, "I swear that Isa has never said anything more than what you have just said. "Nobody would ever harm you in my land, and I swear that I would rather lose a mountain of gold than having you harmed in any way". Then he turned to Amr and said, "Go Amr and take your gifts back. I would never accept such a bribe, while Allah Is He Who Granted me this reign". Thus, Muslims lived peacefully in Abyssinia for 15 years during which they used to produce leathery goods that Abyssinians liked. Umm-Salamah, the wife-to-be of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ used to teach wives of the companions how to make these products and sell them in cheap prices.

At the time, a strong rumour, which turned to be false, spread. The rumour was that Quraysh had embraced Islam. The story began when once Prophet Muhammad recited Surat Al-Najm beside Ka'ba. He recited , **"Then whichever of your Lord's boons do you wrangle about? This is a Warner, of the earliest Warnings. The Imminent is imminent; Apart from Allah, none can lift it off. Do you then wonder at this discourse, and do you laugh, and do you not weep. (While) you amuse yourselves? So prostrate yourselves to Allah and worship (Him).A prostration is to be performed here" (53: 55-62).** They all listened to him attentively. They stood still until he reached the last Ayah, which is an ayah of Sajdah (An ayah that you should prostrate when you recite it), then they all fell down to the ground and prostrated.

Can you see? In spite of the fact that they were disbelievers, they were moved by the Qur'an, and so should we, especially in Ramadan, the month of the Qur'an. Recite

Qur'an as much as you can. Even if you do not memorize it, hold it and read it while you are praying, as long as it is not an obligatory prayer.

After their prostration, Quraysh realized the mistake they made and tried to justify it claiming that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ praised their idols before reciting those ayahs.

The news reached Muslims in Abyssinia, that some of them decided to go back to Makkah only to realise that it was a rumour, and to face the extreme torture that was waiting for them. Othman Ibn-Math'oon was one of those who returned and his story is interesting enough to end this lecture with. Nobody could harm him because he was protected by one of Quraysh's leaders, Al-Waleed Ibnul-Moghirah. However, he could not stand being protected while his Muslim brothers are being tortured and oppressed, so he renounced such protection and thought of a way to declare this.

One day, while a poet was reciting in a great gathering in Makkah, Othman Ibn-Math'oon kept interrupting him, an offensive act according to poets at that time that the poet demanded for vengeance. The people told him that this is not possible since Othman is protected by Al-Waleed, only to have Othman declare that he renounced that protection. Once they heard that, they started beating him brutally to the point that one of his eyes was severely damaged. Nevertheless, with unwavering iman, he could not care less. When Prophet Muhammad ﷺ saw him, he blew in his palms, massaged Othman's eyes gently, and kept making dua'a for Allah ﷻ to heal Othman's eye until the dua'a was accepted and Othman gained his eyesight.

Finally, it should be mentioned that An-Najjashi had, secretly, embraced Islam. After the Battle of Badr, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ sent An-Najjashi a message telling him about his victory and calling him for Islam. Before reading the message, An-Najjashi, with great humility, went down to the floor, put the Prophet's message on his head and kissed it. When he read it, he prostrated to Allah ﷻ, thanking Him for the victory of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

An-Najjashi died shortly after companions had left Abyssinia. No sooner Prophet Muhammad ﷺ knew about his death, than he ordered his companions to pray for him. Abu Huraira (RA) narrated, "**Prophet Muhammad ﷺ informed (the people) about the death of An-Najjashi on the very day he died. He went towards the Musalla (praying place) and the people stood behind him in rows. He said four Takbirs (i.e. offered the Funeral prayer).**"⁴

Here we would deduce the following lessons:

- 1- You should carefully plan for your future like the Prophet ﷺ carefully did for the Muslims.
- 2- Observe the value of sacrificing for the sake of Islam.

⁴ Authentic hadith in Sahih Bukhari. Volume 2, Book 23, Number 337.

3- Get attached to the Qur'an and appreciate its great value.

Lecture Notes Provided By: Imam Ghulam Moyhuddin

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

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

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

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