

## Chapter 25: The Event of Migration

The government of the Makkans resembled a constitutional government. Their Darun Nadwah was like a national consultative assembly where the heads of the tribes met at the time of crisis and exchanged views on complicated matters and took collective decision.

In the thirteenth year of the Prophet's prophetic mission the people of Makkah were faced with a great danger from the Muslims. It threatened their very existence and freedom. The great base which the Muslims set up in Yathrib and the responsibility taken by the residents of Yathrib for the protection of the Prophet were clear signs of this threat.

In the month of Rabiul Awwal of the thirteenth year of the prophetic mission, when the Prophet's migration took place, none of the Muslims was left in Makkah except the Prophet, Ali, Abu Bakr and a few other Muslims who had been detained by Quraysh or those who were old or sick. There was however, every possibility of these persons also leaving Makkah for Yathrib. In the meantime Quraysh suddenly took a categorical and dangerous decision.

A consultative meeting of the chiefs took place in Darun Nadwah. A man from among them spoke at the outset about the centralization of the forces of Muhammad at Yathrib and the agreement made by Bani Aws and Bani Khazraj.

Thereafter he added: "We, the people of the Haram, were respected by all tribes. However, Muhammad sowed the seeds of discord and thus posed a great danger for us. Now we have lost all patience. The only path of safety for us is that a brave man should be selected from among us, and he should put an end to his life secretly. And in case Bani Hashim stand up to quarrel and dispute with us, we may pay the blood-money to them.

An unidentified old man who introduced himself as 'Najdi' rejected this idea and said: "This plan is not at all practicable, because Bani Hashim will not spare the life of the murderer of Muhammad and the payment of blood-money will not satisfy them. Hence, whoever volunteers to execute this plan should first part with his own life, and no such person is found amongst you".

One of the chiefs named Abul Bakhtari said: "The best thing would be to imprison Muhammad and to provide him food and water through a hole and thus prevent the spreading of his religion". The old Najdi spoke again: "This scheme is also not very much different from the first one, because in that event Bani Hashim will wage war against you to get him released. And even if they themselves are not successful in achieving this object they will seek help from other tribes at the time of Haj and will get him released with their assistance".

A third man put forward another suggestion and said: "It will be better if we make Muhammad mount a refractory camel and tie both of his feet and make the camel run so that it may strike him on hills and stones and thus shatter his body. And if, by chance, his life is saved and he alights in the land of some other tribe and wants to propagate his religion amongst them they themselves, who are zealous idolaters, will settle their accounts with him and will save us and themselves from his mischief".

The old Najdi once again disapproved of this plan and said: "You are aware of Muhammad's attractive and fascinating way of speaking. By his sweet speeches and oratory he will make the other tribes his allies and will then swoop down on you".

Perfect calmness prevailed over the whole assembly. Suddenly Abu Jahl, and according to another version the old Najdi himself, expressed his view and said: "The only proper and easy way is that some persons should be selected from all the families and they should jointly attack his house at night and cut him into pieces, so that all the families might be held responsible for the murder. It is evident that in that case Bani Hashim will not be in a position to take revenge on all the families". This proposal was endorsed unanimously and the would-be assassins were selected. It was then decided that when night fell those persons should carry out their mission.<sup>1</sup>

## **Divine Assistance**

These muddle-headed persons were under the impression that like other mundane affairs the institution of prophethood, too, could be destroyed with such schemes. They could not conceive that like other Prophets the Prophet of Islam was also blessed with Divine assistance and the hand that had protected this luminous torch from the hurricanes of accidents for thirteen years could also frustrate the present plan of his enemies.

According to the exegetes the Archangel Jibreel came and informed the Prophet of the nefarious designs of the polytheists. The Qur'an makes a reference to this incident in these words:

***Remember how the unbelievers plotted against you. They sought to take you captive or kill you or banish you. They devised plans—but Allah too made a plan and Allah is the best planner. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:30).***

The Prophet was ordered by Allah to proceed to Yathrib. However, it was not an easy task to get rid of

the cruel hands of the idolaters, especially when they were on the look-out for him and the distance between Makkah and Yathrib was also long. In case he had not left Makkah after proper planning it was probable that the Makkans might have overtaken and arrested him and had shed his blood before he could join his friends.

The historians and biographers have given different versions about the migration of the Prophet and the differences between them about the particulars of the incident are unusual. The writer of Seerah-i Halabi has succeeded to some extent in making the different narratives compatible with one another, but has failed to eliminate the contradictions in some cases.

The thing which deserves attention is that most of the Sunni and Shi'ah traditionalists have put the Prophet's migration in such a way that one concludes that it was a miraculous feat to get rid of the enemy, whereas a careful study of the incident reveals that the Prophet's escape was the result of his foresight, careful planning and the precautionary measures taken by him; and Allah had willed to provide him safety through natural channels and not by means of miraculous acts. The thing which bears testimony to this view is that the Prophet availed of natural causes and rational means (like making Ali sleep in his own bed and concealing himself in the cave etc. and thus ensured his safety.

## **The Archangel Jibreel Informs The Prophet**

The Archangel Jibreel informed the Prophet about the wicked plan of the unbelievers and asked him to migrate. The Prophet ordered Ali to sleep in his bed, and pass through the terrible ordeal for the safety of Islam, so that the unbelievers might not think that the Prophet had left, but should remain under the impression that he was in the house. Thus Ali remained contented with remaining in the house, so that he himself could move freely through the streets of Makkah and in its precincts.

The advantage underlying this plan was that the enemies kept guarding the Prophet's house only, and he himself gained time to move to a place of safety.

Now we should see as to who offers to sleep in the Prophet's bed and to sacrifice his own life for him? You will naturally say: "He who believed in him first and whirled round him from the day of his appointment to the prophetic mission just as a moth whirls round a candle". It is he who should make sacrifice in this path and that self-sacrificing person is Ali.

The Prophet, therefore, turned to Ali and said: "Sleep in my bed tonight and cover yourself with the green sheet which I use during sleep, because the enemies have conspired to kill me and it is, therefore, necessary that I should migrate to Yathrib".

Ali occupied the bed of the Prophet early in the night. When three-fourth of the night had passed, forty persons encircled the house and peeped into it through a hole. They saw the condition of the house to be as usual and thought that the man who was sleeping in the bedroom was the Prophet himself.

The Prophet decided to leave the house when the enemies had surrounded it from all sides and were keeping perfect vigil. Almighty Allah willed to save the great leader of Islam from the clutches of these mean people. The Prophet recited those verses of Surah Yasin which suited his condition at that time and after having read up to the verse:

***"so that they cannot see"***

he came out of the house immediately and went to the appointed place. It is not clear as to how the Prophet succeeded in crossing the blockade and why the besiegers could not see him. It is learnt from the tradition quoted by the renowned Shi'ah traditionalist, the late Ali bin Ibrahim, while commenting on the verse:

***Remember how the unbelievers plotted against you.....***

***They devised plans -but Allah too has made a plan. Allah is the best planner. (Surah al-Anfal, 8:30)***

that, when the Prophet left the house, all of them had gone to sleep and wanted to attack the house in the morning and did not imagine that the Prophet was aware of their plot.

However, other historians clearly narrate<sup>2</sup> that the enemies remained awake till the time they attacked the Prophet's house and he came out of the house miraculously and they could not see him.

There is no doubt about the fact that such a miracle is possible. But the question is: Was such a miracle necessary on this occasion? Complete scrutiny of the circumstances of migration proves positively that the Prophet was aware of the plot of the enemies before they besieged his house and the plan which he chalked out for his escape was perfectly natural and had nothing supernatural about it.

By making Ali sleep in his bed he wanted to free himself from the idol-worshippers by natural means and not through miracle. Hence, he could very well leave the house before it was besieged and did not need any miracle for the purpose.

It is, however, possible that the Prophet's stay in the house till the siege took place was due to reasons which are not known to us at present. Hence, the discussion about this matter (Prophet's leaving the house at night) is not final in the eyes of all historians, because according to some of them the Prophet left his house before it was besieged and before sunset.<sup>3</sup>

## **Enemies Attack The House Of The Prophet**

The forces of infidelity surrounded the house of the Prophet and were awaiting orders to make a rush and to cut the Prophet into pieces in his bedroom. Some of them insisted that they should attack at midnight and implement their scheme.

However, Abu Lahab stood up and said: "Women and children of Bani Hashim are within the house and it is possible that they may be hurt during the course of attack". Some say that the reason for their delay was that they wanted to kill the Prophet in broad daylight before the very eyes of Bani Hashim, so that they (Bani Hashim) might see that his murderer was not a particular person. Eventually they decided to execute their plan at dawn, when there was light.<sup>4</sup>

It was now dawn. A great zeal and enthusiasm was visible amongst the unbelievers. They were under the impression that they would soon achieve their desired object. With their hands on the hilts of the swords they entered the bedroom of the Prophet making a great noise. Simultaneously Ali raised his head from the pillow, threw aside the green sheet and said very calmly: "What is the matter?" They replied "We want Muhammad. Where is he?" Ali said: "Did you hand him over to me so that I may deliver him back to you? Anyway, he is not in the house at present".

The faces of the agents flushed with anger and their throats were choked on this account. They regretted having waited till morning and blamed Abu Lahab who had restrained them from making an attack at night.

Quraysh became very much excited owing to the frustration of their plan and the defeat which they had to suffer. They began thinking that Muhammad could not manage to go out of the environments of Makkah within such a short time and concluded that he had either concealed himself within Makkah or was on his way to Yathrib. They, therefore, planned to capture him.

## **The Prophet In The Cave Of Thaur**

It is an established fact that the Prophet spent the night of migration, along with Abu Bakr in the cave of Thaur, which is situated in the south of Makkah (a spot opposite Madina). It is not, however, clear as to how this companionship took place and this point is perfectly ambiguous in history.

Some believe that this companionship was a mere chance and the Prophet having seen Abu Bakr on the way took him along with himself Others say that the Prophet went to Abu Bakr's house that night and at midnight both of them left the house for the cave of Thaur. Still others say that Abu Bakr came in quest of the Prophet and Ali guided him to his hiding place.<sup>5</sup>

In any case many biographers of the Prophet consider this companionship to be a proof of the Abu Bakr's greatness and quote this incident prominently in connection with his virtues.

## **Quraysh Do Not Hesitate In Searching Out The Prophet**

The defeat suffered by Quraysh made them change their strategy They, therefore, decided to block the roads, to post watchmen on all the paths leading to Yathrib and also to procure the services of those who could locate a person by his foot-prints, so that, by this means, they might trace him out at any

cost. They also declared that whoever gave correct information about the hiding place of Muhammad would be rewarded with one hundred camels.

The Qurayshites became active and proceeded towards north of Makkah to the road which leads to Madina, whereas the Prophet in order to frustrate their plan, had hidden himself in the cave of Thaur. Abu Karz, a famous physiognomist of Makkah, was acquainted with the foot-prints of the Prophet. On this account he came near the cave and said: "It appears that the Prophet intended to come to this place. It is possible that he is hidden in the cave".

He, therefore, deputed someone to enter the cave. When that man came near the cave he saw that a very thick web had been woven on the mouth of the cave and the wild pigeons had laid eggs there.<sup>6</sup> He returned without entering the cave and said: "There are cobwebs on the mouth of the cave, which show that there is no one inside it". These activities continued for three days and three nights and then Quraysh lost all hope and abandoned the quest.

## **Self-Sacrifice In The Path Of Reality**

The most important point in regard to this event is the self-sacrifice of Ali in the path of reality. Self-sacrifice in the path of reality is the quality of those who are wedded to it- persons who ignore their lives, property and position, and spend their entire spiritual and material capital for the revival of truth.

Such persons are decidedly the lovers of reality and the perfection and auspiciousness which they observe in their pursuit for it make them surrender their temporary life and to embrace the eternal one. Ali's sleeping in the Prophet's bed during that tumultuous night is an outstanding specimen of this love for reality. There was no other stimulant for this hazardous feat except love for the survival of Islam, which is a surety for the prosperity of the society.

This kind of sacrifice is so valuable that the Almighty Allah has called it sacrifice made to acquire the pleasure of Allah and, as quoted by many commentators, the following verse was revealed in this behalf:

***Among men, there are those who sacrifice their lives to seek Allah's pleasure. Allah is Compassionate to His servants. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:207)***

The greatness and importance of this act has made the great sages of Islam consider it to be one of the greatest virtues of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful and they have introduced him as a brave and self-sacrificing person.

And wherever this event has been mentioned in exegetes and history it has been admitted that the said verse was revealed about him. This truth can never be forgotten. The face of reality always shines through the inner folds of superstition and the scattered patches of a cloud cannot diminish the light of the sun.

The enmity of Mu'awiyah with the family of the Prophet and especially with the Commander of the Faithful needs no mention. He planned to bribe some of the companions of the Prophet so as to get falsehoods forged with a view to stain the luminous pages of history, but he could not succeed.

Samrah bin Jundab who lived during the time of the Prophet and later attached himself to the court of Mu'awiyah used to tamper with facts and was paid for doing so. One day, while he was present before Mu'awiyah, the latter asked him earnestly to mount the pulpit and refute that the said verse was revealed about Ali. He also asked him to tell the people that this verse was in fact revealed for the assassin of Ali (i.e. Abdur Rahman, bin Muljam).

As a reward for this act, which would have ruined Samrah's faith, Mu'awiyah offered him one hundred thousand dirhams. Samrah did not agree. Thereupon Mu'awiyah raised the amount and the deal was finally settled for four hundred thousand dirhams. The greedy old man began falsifying the facts of history and worsened his guilt-stained reputation. He said before a gathering that the said verse had been revealed about Abdur Rahman bin Muljam and not about Ali.

The stupid and simple-minded people believed in what he said and it did not occur to them that at the time of the revelation of the said verse Abdur Rahman was not in Hijaz and was not perhaps born.

The face of reality did not, however, remain concealed with these fabrications. Mu'awiyah and his family fell victims to vicissitudes of time. The signs of those who fabricated lies during his time were obliterated. Once again truth prevailed. Great and renowned exegetes<sup>7</sup> and traditionalists of all times have admitted that the verse:

***Among men, there are those who sacrifice their lives to seek Allah's pleasure (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:207)***

was revealed during the 'night's stay' about the self-sacrifice of Ali.<sup>8</sup>

## **Statement Of Ibn Taymiyah**

Ahmad bin Abdul Halim Harani Hanbali who died in the prison of Morocco in 728 A.H. was one of the Sunni scholars and most of the beliefs of Wahabis originate from him. He held special views about the Holy Prophet, Ali, the Commander of the Faithful and other members of the Prophet's family and has recorded most of his beliefs in his book entitled "Minhajus Sunnah".

Owing to his deviated beliefs most of his contemporary ulema accused him of heresy and showed disgust for him. However, discussion of these matters is beyond our aim. He has said something about this distinction<sup>9</sup> which may be placed before you with minor amendments.

It is seen at times that some incapable persons with scant or superficial knowledge are influenced by his words and they propagate his view among common people without any investigation and without

consulting those learned in the field, and the irony is that people may consider them to be research scholars. They are, however, oblivious of the fact that these words are those of a heretic who has been refuted by his co-religionists and has been charged with heresy.

He says "Ali's sleeping in the Prophet's bed is not a matter of distinction for him, because Ali was aware for two reasons that he would not meet any harm that night. Firstly it was the remark of the Prophet which was absolutely true, for he said to him that night: "Sleep in my bed and you will not meet any harm".

And secondly the Prophet handed over to him the things which the people had kept with him for safe custody, and naturally knew that his representative would not be killed, for, otherwise, he would have entrusted those things to some other person. And on account of this recommendation Ali himself also understood that he would not meet any harm and would be successful in discharging the responsibility which had been entrusted to him by the Prophet.

## **Reply To The False Interpretation**

Before giving detailed replies to the abovementioned two points we may say briefly: "By denying one distinction Ibn Taymiyah has proved a still greater distinction for Ali, because his faith about the truthfulness of the Prophet was either an ordinary faith or it was a strong and extraordinary faith and all the words of the Prophet were clear before him.

According to the first assumption (i.e. in case his faith was ordinary) Ali did not at all possess any definite knowledge of his remaining immune from any harm. This is so because the words of the Prophet do not create a definite knowledge in the hearts of such people (and Ali was decidedly not one of them).

Even if they apparently accept his words to be true they entertain anguish in their hearts. And in case they sleep in his place at times of danger their disturbance of mind increases all the more and the monster of death appears before their eyes every moment. According to this assumption, therefore, Ali undertook this task with the possibility of being killed and not with the knowledge that he would remain safe.

According to the second assumption Ibn Taymiyah has proved a greater distinction for Ali, because if the faith of a man is so firm that the words of the Prophet are crystal clear to him and the excellence of such a faith surpasses everything else. The result of such a faith is that when the Prophet tells him: "Sleep in my bed and you will not meet any harm from the enemies".

He walks with perfect peace of mind and occupies his bed and does not feel the least fear in his heart. And if the view expressed by Ibn Taymiyah (that Ali had knowledge of his safety, because the truthful Prophet had told him so) be a proof of the highest degree of faith, he should know that he has unconsciously proved this greatest distinction for Ali.



## Detailed Reply

As regards the first argument it may be said that the sentence, "Sleep in my bed and you will not suffer any harm", has not been quoted by any reliable historian.<sup>10</sup> No doubt Ibn Athir (d. 630 A.H.)<sup>11</sup> and Tabari (d. 310 A.H.)<sup>12</sup> have quoted this sentence but it appears that their source is Seerah-i Ibn Hisham<sup>13</sup> who has quoted the matter in this way—especially because the text of these historians in this regard is exactly the same as that of Ibn Hisham. Besides this, so far as we are aware, this matter is not found in the writings of Shi'ah scholars.

Shaykh Muhammad bin Hasan Tusi (d. 460 A.H.), has quoted the event of migration in his 'Amali' in great detail and has also mentioned the said sentence with a minor alteration. However, what he says is different from that quoted in the writings of Sunni scholars, for he clearly quotes that, when the night of migration had passed, Ali and Hind bin Abi Hala (son of Khadijah and step-son of the Prophet met him [the Prophet]) during the following nights. During one of those nights the Prophet said to Ali: "O Ali! Henceforth these people will never be able to overpower you".

As will be observed, this is almost the same sentence which has been quoted by Ibn Hisham, Tabari and Ibn Athir. However, according to the quotation of Shaykh Tusi, the Prophet gave this assurance to Ali in the second or third night and not in the first night.

Besides all this, the words of Ali himself are the best testimony on the subject. As is evident from his couplets (translated below) he himself has treated this act to be a sort of self-sacrifice in the path of truth:

"I have protected with my life the best man, who has laid his feet on earth, and the noblest man, who has performed 'Tawaf' of the 'House of Allah' and 'Hajar-i Isma'il'. That dignified person is Muhammad bin Abdullah. And I acted in this way when the unbelievers were plotting against him. At that time the Great Allah protected him from their plot. I remained in his bed from night till morning and kept waiting for the enemy, and prepared myself for captivity and death". (Suyuti has quoted these lines from Ali in his exegesis entitled 'Durre Manthur').

In the presence of these expressive sentences and clear explanations there remains no justification to rely upon the words of Ibn Hisham, because there are more chances of his committing mistake. And there is a great probability that, as Ibn Hisham desired to narrate things in a compressed manner, he contented himself with quoting only the actual sentence.

And as it was immaterial for him as to when this sentence was uttered (which was actually uttered during the second night) he ignored to quote the time and narrated things in a way as if all these incidents occurred during the very night of migration.

Another evidence which confirms this statement is the well-known tradition which has been quoted by many Sunni and Shi'ah scholars. According to this report Allah addressed the Archangels Jibreel and

Mika'il that night and said: "If I decide to grant one of you life and the other death which of you would be ready to accept death and leave life for the other?"

Neither of them agreed to this proposal. The Almighty then said: "Now Ali has preferred death for himself and sacrificed his life for the Prophet". Then He ordered them to descend to earth and undertake the safety and protection of Ali.

The second argument advanced by Ibn Taymiyah about Ali's being aware of his eventual safety is the order given to him by the Prophet to return to their owners the things which they had entrusted to him for safe custody.

According to him this would go to show that the Prophet knew that Ali would not suffer any harm and, therefore, asked him to return those things. However, we think that if the trail of events is studied properly this difficulty may also be solved. And here is the trail of the events of migration

## **Trail Of Events Of The Migration Of The Prophet**

The initial stages of the escape of the Prophet assumed a practical shape with the help of proper planning. The Prophet took refuge at night in the Cave of Thaur and foiled the plan of the conspirators. He did not feel any disturbance of mind. So much so that at critical moments he consoled his companion with the words: "Don't worry. Allah is with us".

For three days and three nights they enjoyed the blessing of Allah. According to Shaykh Tusi (in 'Amali'), Ali and Hind bin Abi Hala (the son of Khadijah) and according to many historians, Abdullah bin Abu Bakr and 'Amr bin Fuhayrah (the shepherd of Abu Bakr) used to go and meet the Prophet.

Ibn Athir writes: 14 "During nights Abu Bakr's son informed his father and the Prophet about the decisions taken by Quraysh and his shepherd made the sheep pass by the cave on their way to Makkah so that the Prophet and his companion might use their milk. At the time of his return Abdullah walked before the sheep so that his footprints might be obliterated.

Shaykh says in 'Amali: "During one of the nights (after the night of migration) when Ali and Hind had the honour to reach in the presence of the Prophet he ordered Ali to arrange two camels for them (i.e. for the Prophet and his companion). At that time Abu Bakr said: "I have already arranged two camels for you and myself". The Prophet replied: "I am prepared to accept this offer on payment". He then ordered Ali to pay the price of the camel.

Among the directions given by the Prophet that night in the Cave of Thaur some were that Ali should declare on the following day in broad daylight with a loud voice that in case someone had kept something with Muhammad for safe custody or if he (Muhammad) was indebted to any person, the persons concerned should receive their property back.

Then he gave directions about the departure of 'Fawatim' (which means his own dear daughter Fatimah and Fatimah daughter of Asad and Fatimah daughter of Zubayr) and ordered Ali to make arrangements for their journey as well as for such other members of the family of Hashim as were inclined to migrate. And he pronounced on this occasion the sentence which has been relied upon by Ibn Taymiyah for his first argument. He said: "Henceforth these people will never be able to overpower you".

As you can observe the Prophet ordered Ali to return the things entrusted to him by the people when the 'night of stay' had already passed. These orders were given by him to Ali when he himself was getting ready to leave the cave.

Halabi writes: "When one night Ali presented himself before the Prophet in the Cave of Thaur the latter told him *inter alia* to return to the people the things which they had entrusted to him (the Prophet) and also pay off his debts". Then he turns to the statement that Ali did not meet the Prophet after the 'night of stay', but does not accept it himself and quotes from the author of the book 'ad-Durr' that Ali did meet the Prophet again after the night of 'migration'.<sup>15</sup>

In short Shaykh Tusi quotes reliable authorities saying that orders regarding the return of things entrusted to the Prophet by their owners were given by him after the 'night of stay' we need not refute this authentic version and get busy in amusing the people.

And as regards the Sunni historians having quoted the matter in a manner which apparently gives the impression that all directions were given by the Prophet during one and the same night viz. the night of migration, it needs explanation and it is not improbable that their object was to quote the original facts and they did not attach any importance to the determination of time at which these recommendations were made and directions given to Ali.

## **Coming Out Of The Cave**

As directed by the Prophet, Ali sent three camels to the cave during the fourth night along with a reliable guide named 'Urayqit'. The Prophet heard the bellowing of the camels and

came out of the cave along with his companion. They mounted the camels and proceeded to Yathrib (Madina) from the lower side of Makkah, along the coastal route. The details of this journey are recorded in books.<sup>16</sup>

## **The First Page Of History**

The darkness of night commenced. The Qurayshites, who had been roaming about in the city of Makkah and its environments to find out the Prophet, returned to their homes extremely tired and had lost all hope of the big reward (100 camels) which had been fixed for capturing the Prophet. The roads leading to Yathrib, which had been blocked by the watchmen posted by Quraysh, were also reopened.<sup>17</sup>

At this moment the low voice of the guide, who had three camels and some food with him, reached the ears of the Prophet and his companion. He was saying with a calm voice: "It is necessary to take advantage of the darkness of night and get beyond the reach of the Makkans as early as possible and to select an unfrequented path".

The history of the Muslim era commenced from that very night. Hence, they determine the dates of all events according to the Hegira calendar and record them in history accordingly.

## **Why The Year Of Migration Became The Era Of Islamic History?**

Islam is the most perfect heavenly religion and adapts the religions of Musa and 'Isa in a more perfect form suited to all the conditions and situations. It has brought blessing for mankind. Although Jesus and his birth are respectable in the eyes of the Muslims, they did not adopt his birth as the origin of their era, because they are an independent and distinguished nation and it is not appropriate that they should follow others in adopting their era.

For quite some time the 'Year of the Elephant' (the year in which Abraha came to Makkah with an army of elephants and wished to demolish the Ka'bah) was treated by the Arabs to be the origin of history and the birth of the Prophet also took place in the same year. However, the Muslims did not treat it to be the first page of the history of Islam.

The year of Be'that (appointment to the prophetic mission) was also not treated to be the starting point of the history of the Muslims, because at that time there was no trace of Islam and the Islamic faith, and the number of the Muslims in those days did not exceed three.

However, in the first year of migration, Islam and the Muslims were blessed with a great success. An independent government came into existence in Madina. The Muslims got rid of homelessness and freely gathered at a central place. On account of this very success and victory, therefore, they decided to treat that year to be the starting point of their history<sup>18</sup> and till today they reckon the date of everything; good and evil in accordance with it.

## **Schedule Of The Journey**

The journey which the Prophet had to perform consisted of a distance of about 400 kilometers, and covering this distance in the scorching heat of summer necessitated correct planning. Furthermore, they (i.e the Prophet and his companions) were also afraid of the Arabs, who met them on the way, for they might report their whereabouts to Quraysh. They, therefore, performed the journey at night and rested during day-time.

It seems that a camel-rider, having seen the Prophet and his companions from a distance, went to Quraysh at once and informed them of the itinerary of the Prophet. In order to earn the prize alone,

Saraqah bin Malik bin Ja'sham Madlaji dissuaded others from pursuing the matter and told them that they (i.e. the persons seen by the said camel-driver) were some other persons. Then he came to his house, armed himself, rode a swift horse and reached, as quickly as possible, the spot where the Prophet and his companions were resting.

Ibn Athir writes: 19 "This state of affairs made the Prophet's companion very sad and the Prophet had to console him once again with the words: 'Don't worry. Allah is with us'. Saraqah was very proud of his physical strength and sharp weapons and was quite ready to shed the blood of the Prophet to earn the biggest prize offered by the Arabs.

In the meantime the Prophet prayed for himself and his companions with a heart overflowing with faith and confidence and said "O Allah! Save us from the mischief of this man". Suddenly Saraqah's horse got startled and threw him violently on the ground. Saraqah realized that a Divine hand was at work and these developments were due to the bad intention which he had against Muhammad.<sup>20</sup>

He, therefore, turned to the Prophet in a beseeching manner and said: "I surrender my slave and camel to you and am prepared to do whatever you like". The Prophet then replied: "I want nothing from you".

However, the late Allamah Majlisi says that the Prophet said to him: "Return and dissuade others from pursuing us". Hence Saraqah told whomsoever he met: "There is no trace of Muhammad on this route".<sup>21</sup>

The Sunni and Shi'ah writers have quoted miracles which were performed by the Prophet during his journey from Makkah to Madina. For brevity's sake, however, we refrain from narrating them.

## **Arrival In The Village Of Quba**

Quba, which is situated at a distance of two leagues from Madina, was the seat of the tribe of 'Bani 'Amr bin 'Auf'. The Prophet and his companions reached there on Monday the 12th of Rabiul Awwal and stayed at the house of Kulsum ibnul Hadam, the chief of the tribe. A number of 'Muhajirs' (migrants) and 'Ansar' (helpers) were then awaiting the arrival of the Prophet.

The Prophet stayed there till the end of the week and during this time he laid the foundation of a mosque for the tribe of Bani 'Awf. Some persons insisted upon his proceeding to Madina as early as possible. He was, however, waiting for the arrival of his cousin, Ali.

After the migration of the Prophet, Ali stood up at a place in Makkah and said: "Whoever has entrusted anything to Muhammad should come and take it back from me". Those concerned came and took back their things after mentioning the marks of identification.

Thereafter, according to the directions given by the Prophet, Ali had to take to Madina, along with himself, the Hashmite women including Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet and his own mother

Fatimah binte Asad, and also those Muslims who had not till then been able to migrate. Ali adopted the route of 'Zi Tuwa' and proceeded to Madina at night.

Shaykh Tusi writes:<sup>22</sup> "The spies of Quraysh came to know about the migration of Ali and his party. They, therefore, pursued him and came face to face with him in the area of 'Zajnan'. Hot words were exchanged between them. During that time the cries of women were reaching the sky. Ali realized that he had no alternative left but to defend the honour of Islam and the Muslims.

He, therefore, turned to the opponents and said: "Whoever wishes that his body should be cut into pieces and his blood should be shed should come forward". Signs of wrath were visible on his face. The agents of Quraysh felt that the matter had become serious. They, therefore, adopted a conciliatory attitude and took to the way they had come".

Ibn Athir writes: "When Ali reached Quba, his feet were bleeding. The Prophet was informed that Ali had arrived, but was not in a position to come up before him. The Prophet immediately went to the place where Ali was, and took him in his lap, and when he saw the swollen feet of Ali tears began to flow from his eyes".<sup>23</sup>

The Prophet arrived at Quba on the twelfth of Rabiul Awwal and Ali joined him there in the middle of the same month.<sup>24</sup> This view is supported by Tabari: "Ali stayed in Makkah for three days after the migration of the Prophet and during this period he returned to their owners the things which they had entrusted (to the Prophet)".<sup>25</sup>

## **Tumult And Glamour Of Joy In Madina**

There was a great excitement and jubilation among the people who had expressed faith in the Prophet three years ago and sent their representatives to him every year and used his sacred name every day in their prayers, when they learned that their great leader had arrived at a distance of only two leagues and was likely to enter their city soon. What their feelings and emotions were cannot be described in words.

The Ansar had thirst for Islam and its sublime and invigorative programme, and in order to purify Madina of all traces of polytheism and idol-worship they had burnt the idols and had removed all signs of idolatry from the homes, the streets and the bazaars of the city. It will be appropriate if we quote here an example of the interest taken by the Ansar in Islam.

'Amr bin Jumuh, who was one of the chiefs of Banu Salmah tribe, had placed an idol in his house. In order to make him realize that the wooden idol was a useless thing, the men of his tribe took it away and threw it upside down in a pit which was used in those days for easing nature.

He got up in the morning and, after making a good deal of search, found the idol in that pit. He picked it up, washed it and restored it to its place. This drama was repeated many times. Eventually 'Amr tied a sword round the neck of the idol and said: "If you are the origin of any strength in this world defend

yourself".

One day, however, he found the idol in a well, tied to the dead body of a dog, and without the sword. Observing these events he realized that the status of man was much higher than that he should bow his head before every stone, wood or mud.

Then he recited some verses whose purport is this: "By Allah! If you had been a true god you would not have been lying in a well tied to a dead dog. Praise be to Allah Who owns all blessings. It is He Who is Merciful and Who nourishes and gives reward. It is He Who grants us salvation before we are consigned to the grave".<sup>26</sup>

The Prophet proceeded to Madina. When his mount descended at Thaniyatul Wida' and set its foot on the land of Yathrib the people warmly welcomed and greeted him and began singing mirthful songs to this effect:

"The moon rose from Thaniyatul Wida'. It is our duty to be thankful for this blessing till the day when even one person on the face of the earth prays to Allah and worships Him".

"O you, who have been sent by Allah for our guidance! It is necessary for all of us to obey your orders".

The tribe of Bani 'Amr bin 'Awf insisted that the Prophet might stay on in Quba and said: "We are assiduous, steadfast and brave people". The Prophet did not, however, agree to this. When the people of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj came to know about the migration of the Prophet, they armed themselves and hurried to welcome him.

While he was proceeding on his way the people encircled his camel and the chiefs of the tribes held its bridle. Every one of them insisted that the Prophet might stay in his area, but he replied to all of them: "Don't obstruct the camel. I shall dismount wherever it kneels down". The camel stopped and bent its knees in a spacious piece of land which belonged to two orphan boys named Sahl and Suhayl who lived under the protection and guardianship of As'ad bin Zurarah.<sup>27</sup>

This land was used for drying palm-dates and for agriculture. The house of Abu Ayub was situated nearby. His mother, therefore, availed of the opportunity and took the belongings of the Prophet to her own house. Hence competition and solicitations began for taking the Prophet.

He, however, cut the argument short and said, "Where are my belongings?" He was told that Abu Ayub's mother had taken them to her house. Thereupon he said: "Let somebody go to the place where my belongings are". And As'ad bin Zurarah took the camel of the Prophet to his own house.

## **Seeds Of Dissension**

Abdullah bin Ubay is considered the chief of the hierarchy of hypocrites. Before the people of Madina

concluded an agreement with the Prophet they had decided to select Ubay as their absolute ruler.

However, on account of the relationship which Aws and Khazraj developed with the Prophet this decision was automatically dropped, and from this very moment he nursed a grudge against the great leader of Islam and did not believe in him till the last moment of his life.

On observing the welcome accorded by the people of Aws and Khazraj to the Prophet he was very much disturbed and could not help uttering a sentence, which fully indicates his envy and enmity against him. He turned his face to the Prophet and said: "Go to the people who have deceived you and don't deceive us here".<sup>28</sup>

Said bin Ubadah, fearing that the Prophet might treat his words to be true (i.e. indicative of the sentiments of the Ansar or take them to heart, apologized for his remark and said to the Prophet: "He has said these words on account of grudge and enmity, because it had been decided that he should be the absolute ruler of Aws and Khazraj and now, by your arrival, his rulership has become out of question.

The historians generally say that the Prophet arrived in Madina on Friday and offered Friday prayers along with his companions at a spot which was situated in the area of Bani Salim tribe. Here he delivered an eloquent sermon which made deep impression on the hearts of the people who had never heard such words before.

The text of this sermon has been quoted by Ibn Hisham,<sup>29</sup> Miqrizi in *Amta'ul Asma'* and by Allamah Majlisi.<sup>30</sup> However, the wording and contents of the sermon as quoted by the first two are different from those quoted by Allamah Majlisi.

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1. *Tabaqatul Kubra*, vol. I, pp. 227–228 and *Seerah-i Ibn Hisham*, vol. I, pp. 480–482.

2. *Tabaqat-i Kubra*, page 228 and *Tarikh-i Tabari*, vol. II, page 100.

3. *Seerah-i Halabi*, vol. II, page 32.

4. *A'lamul Wara'*, page 39 and *Biharul Anwar*, vol. XIX, page 50.

5. *Tarikh-i Tabari*, vol. II, page 100.

6. *Tabaqat-i Kubra*, vol. I, page 229 etc. Most of the biographers have quoted this miracle. In view of what we have said regarding miracles in connection with the narrative about Abraha it does not appear appropriate that we should unnecessarily explain away or amend this series of miracles.

7. In *Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah* of Ibn Abil Hadid this distinction of Ali has been mentioned in suitable words (vide vol. XIII, page 262).

8. Samrah bin Jundab was one of the criminal elements of the Umayyad period. He did not only tamper with facts to the extent mentioned above, but as quoted by Ibn Abil Hadid he also added something to it and said that what was actually revealed about Ali was this verse: And among men is he whose speech about the life of this world causes you to wonder, and he calls on Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries. (*Surah al-Baqarah*, 2:204) During the period of the governor-generalship of Ziyad bin Abih in Iraq, Samrah was the Governor of Basrah. One of the crimes of this man was that he killed eight thousand Muslims and devotees of the family of the Prophet. When Ziyad called for his explanation and said: "How did you pick up courage to kill all these people? Did it not cross your mind that



possibly there might be some innocent persons amongst them?" He replied: "I won't mind killing even more than these". His shameful acts are too many to be inserted in these pages. This obstinate man was the very person who rejected the recommendation of the Prophet about respecting rights of a neighbour, and the Prophet said to him: "You are a harmful person and Islam does not allow that one should do harm to others or tolerate harm from them".

9. Before him Jahiz partly mentioned this objection in his book entitled 'al-Usmaniyah'. Please refer in this connection to Sharh-i Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abil Hadid, vol. XIII, page 262.

10. For example this sentence has not been mentioned in Tabaqat-i Kubra, pp. 227 – 228. Its author was born in 168 A.H. and passed away in 238.A.H. Maqrizi too has not mentioned it in al-Imta'a.

11. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 72

12. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 99.

13. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 483.

14. Tarikh-i Kamil, Ibn Athir, vol. II, page 73.

15. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. II, page 37.

16. Seerah-i Ibn Hisham, vol. I, page 491; Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 75 and in the footnote of the Tarikh-i Ibn Athir.

17. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 104.

18. Ibn Wazeh Akhbari writes in his history entitled 'Tarikh-i Ya'qubi' that in the 16th year of 'migration' the second caliph determined to fix a starting point of the history of the Muslims. He wished that it should be the date of the birth of the Prophet or the date of his appointment to the prophetic mission, but Ali did not endorse his views and said that 'migration' should be the origin of Islamic history. (Tarikh-i Ya'qubi, vol. II, page 135).

19. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 74.

20. Most of the biographers of the Prophet, like Ibn Athir (Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 74) and Majlisi (Bihar, vol. IX, page 88) have quoted this incident, as narrated above, from the sixth Imam with reliable sources. However, the author of 'Hayat-i Muhammad' says: "Saraqah considered these occurrences to be a bad omen and thought that the gods wished to prevent him from this task".

21. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 75.

22. 'Amali, page 300.

23. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 75.

24. Imta'ul Asma, page 48.

25. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. I, page 106.

26. Usdul Ghabah, vol. IV, page 99.

27. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 108; but according to some books including Tarikh-i Kamil they were under the guardianship of Mu'az bin 'Afra'.

28. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 108.,

29. Seerah, vol. I, pp. 500 – 501.

30. Biharul Anwar, vol. XIX, page 126.

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