

Chapter 42: The Events of the Seventh Year of Migration

The Peace Pact of Hdaybiyah relieved the Prophet of worries from the southern part of Makkah and hence a group from amongst the chiefs of Arabia got attracted towards Islam. In the meantime the Prophet seized the opportunity and started correspondence with the rulers of the time, the chiefs of the tribes and the religious leaders of the Christians and presented his religion to the nations living during that period.

It was a religion which had by that time gone a step forward from a merely simple belief and had assumed the shape of a universal faith and could bring entire humanity under the banner of monotheism and sublime social and ethical teachings.

This was the first step which the Prophet took after nineteen years' conflict with the obstinate Quraysh. And if the internal enemies had not kept him busy in bloody battles he would have invited the distant nations to Islam much earlier. However, the cowardly attacks of the Arabs obliged him to spend a major part of his time in the defence of Islam.

The letters which the Prophet wrote to the princes, kings, chiefs of the tribes and distinguished spiritual and political personalities shed a light on the method of his invitation. At present the texts of 185 letters which the Prophet wrote for the propagation of or invitation to Islam or by way of agreements and pacts are available with us and the traditionalists and historians have preserved them in their records.¹

All these letters show that the method of invitation to, and propagation of Islam, adopted by the Prophet was that of logic and not that of war and sword. When the Prophet felt secure from the attacks of Quraysh he made his voice reach the inhabitants of the world by sending letters and missionaries.

The Universality Of The Prophethood

Some indiscreet persons view the universal prophethood of the Prophet of Islam with suspicion and doubt and imitate the melody sung by some hired writers whose leader is an orientalist named Sir William Muir, who says: "the idea of the universality of the message of Muhammad came into existence later and from the time of the commencement of his prophetic mission till his death Muhammad invited only Arabs to Islam and he was not acquainted with any place other than Arabia".

This British writer has followed the method peculiar to his own race. Notwithstanding numerous verses which testify that the Prophet invited the entire humanity to monotheism and to his own prophethood, he (Sir William Muir) conceals facts and says that the Prophet's invitation was extended to the Arabs only. We quote below some verses of the Holy Qur'an which go to show that the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam is meant for the entire mankind:

● ***Muhammad, tell them: O' mankind! Certainly I have come to you all as the Messenger of Allah.***

(Surah al-Araf, 7:158) (It should be noted that the people addressed are not only the Arabs but the entire mankind).

● ***We have sent you as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner to the entire mankind, but most people do not know.*** (Surah Saba, 34:28)

● ***The Qur'an is nothing but a reminder from Allah to mankind.*** (Surah al-Qalam, 68:28)

● ***No religion other than Islam will be accepted from anyone. Whoever follows a religion other than Islam will be loser in the Hereafter*** (Surah Ale Imran, 3:85). This verse supersedes all religions except Islam and makes it obligatory for the entire mankind to follow only Islam.

● ***The Qur'an has been revealed, to warn to those who are living and the words of Allah may be fulfilled against the unbelievers.*** (Surah Yasin, 36:70)

It is Allah Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and a true religion that will prevail over all other religions, though the polytheists may be averse. (Surah Tawbah, 9: 33)

Now we ask the British writer as to how he says, in spite of the universal invitation manifested in these verses, that the idea of the universality of Islam came into existence later? Is one justified in doubting the universality of the prophethood in spite of these and other verses and the messengers sent to far-off places and the texts of the letters of the Prophet which are recorded in the pages of history? (Some of the original letters sent by him to different persons at far-off places are extant and adorn various museums of the world).

The British writer says with shameless impudence that Prophet Muhammad was not acquainted with any place other than Arabia (the Hijaz) although he went to Syria along with his uncle when he was sixteen

years of age and during his manhood he traded on behalf of Khadijah and used to accompany the trade caravans.

No doubt, as and when we read in history books that Alexander the Macedonian wished to become the ruler of the world, or Napoleon was anxious to build up a world-empire, we are not at all surprised, but when the orientalist hear that the Prophet of Islam invited under the command of Allah, two great emperors of the world (with whose subjects the Arabs had trade relations) to embrace Islam, they, with all their obstinacy and baseless doubts, declare this to be something impossible.

The Message Of Prophethood Is Sent To Far Off Places

Like all other important matters the question of inviting the rulers of various countries to Islam was also placed by the Prophet before a big consultative council for discussion. One day he said to his companions: "All of you should be present tomorrow morning so that I may consult you about a very important matter".

On the following day he addressed his companions, after morning prayers, as follows: "Exhort the servants of Allah to do good. Allah has disallowed Paradise to one, who becomes the guardian of the affairs of the people, but does not endeavour to guide them and show them the right path. You should rise and convey the message of Islam to far-off regions and should make mankind hear the voice of monotheism. However, you should not oppose me in the manner in which the disciples of Prophet 'Isa opposed him".

The Prophet was asked as to how the disciples of Prophet 'Isa opposed him. He replied: "Like me, he also deputed some persons to act as his messengers in different areas. From amongst them those who had to cover a short distance obeyed his command but those who had to travel a long distance disobeyed him".

Thereafter the Prophet of Islam sent six most proficient persons to different places along with letters in which his universal prophethood was reflected. These ambassadors of guidance proceeded to Iran, Byzantium, Ethiopia, Egypt, Yamamah, Bahrain and Hira (Jordan) on the same day.

When the letters of the Prophet had been written by special scribes people who were acquainted with the etiquette of the royal courts of those times, submitted to the Prophet that he should seal the letters, because the various rulers did not condescend to read unsigned letters (and in those days signatures were subscribed by means of a seal). In view of this a silver seal-ring was prepared, as ordered by the Prophet himself, and the sentence *Muhammad Rasulallah* (Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah) was engraved upon it. The engraving was in this order that the word 'Allah' was at the top, 'Rasul' in the middle and 'Muhammad' at the bottom.

This order and subtlety was resorted to prevent imitation and forgery. The reader was required to

commence reading the signatures from the bottom till he reached the word 'Allah' (Muhammad Rasul Allah). He did not content himself with even this and having stuck down the envelope of the letter with a special wax (instead of the 'lac' of the present times) affixed the seal on it.²

Conditions Of The World At The Time Of The Communication Of Universal Invitation

In those days the power of the world was in the hands of two big empires and the rivalry and wars between them had continued since long. War between Iran and Rome started in the days of Achaemenians and continued till the period of Sasanians. East was then ruled by the Iranian Emperor and Iraq, Yemen and a part of Asia Minor were treated to be satellites and colonies of Iran.

The Roman State was then divided into two blocs (viz. Eastern and Western) because in 395 A.D. Theodosius the Great, the Roman Emperor, divided his empire between his two sons and thus brought into existence two countries with the names of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Western Roman Empire. The Western Empire was overthrown in 476 A.D. at the hands of the savages and barbarians of Northern Europe.

However, the Eastern Roman Empire which had its capital at Constantinople and which also controlled Syria and Egypt held the reins of world politics in its hands at the time of the advent of Islam. It continued to exist till 1453 A.D. when Constantinople was conquered by Sultan Muhammad II Fateh (i.e. the Conqueror). Its existence then came to an end and it was completely shattered.

Arabia was surrounded by these two super powers. However, as its land was not fertile and its inhabitants were nomads and were scattered, neither of the two empires showed inclination to conquer it.

Their pride, tyranny and mutual wars also prevented them from becoming aware of the revolutions and political changes in this region and they could not at all visualize that a nation far away from civilization would put an end to their empires with the strength of its faith, and the areas which had fallen into darkness on account of their tyranny would be illuminated with the bright dawn of Islam. If they had gained knowledge about the existence of this shining light they would have extinguished it at the very first stage.

The Messenger Of Islam In The Roman Territory

Kaiser, the Roman King, had vowed to God that if he was victorious in the war against Iran he would, as a mark of thanksgiving for this great victory, go from his capital (Constantinople) to Jerusalem on foot to perform pilgrimage of the Holy place. After gaining victory he acted according to his vow and proceeded to Jerusalem on foot.

Dihyah bin Kalbi was deputed by the Prophet to carry his letter to Kaiser. He had performed many journeys to Syria and was fully acquainted with the various places of that region. His impressive appearance, and sublime morals made him fully eligible for carrying out this important duty. Before leaving Syria for Constantinople he came to know at one of the towns of Syria called Busra³ that Kaiser had proceeded to Jerusalem. He, therefore, immediately contacted Harith bin Abi Shamir, the Governor of Busra and informed him of his important assignment.

The author of *Tabaqat-i Kubra* writes:⁴"The Prophet had ordered Dihyah to give the letter to the Ruler of Busra so that he might deliver it to Kaiser. Possibly this order was given in view of the fact that the Prophet was personally aware of the journey of Kaiser or because the conditions and possibilities of Dihyah were limited and his journey to Constantinople was not free from difficulties and hardships. However the ambassador of the Prophet of Islam contacted the Ruler of Busra. The governor called for Addi bin Hatim and ordered him to accompany the ambassador of the Prophet to Jerusalem and deliver the letter of the Prophet to Kaiser.

The ambassador was to see Kaiser in the city of Hams. He sought an audience with Kaiser and requested that a time might be fixed for it. The officers concerned said to him: "You will have to prostrate before Kaiser thrice, because otherwise he will not attend to you and will not accept your letter".

Dihyah, the wise ambassador of the Prophet of Islam said: "I have taken all this trouble in coming here to put an end to these wrong customs. I have been directed by the Prophet of Islam to tell Kaiser that the worship of man should cease and none except the Almighty Allah should be worshipped. How can I, with this assignment and belief, accept your viewpoint and prostrate before anyone except Allah?"

The firmness, steadfastness and strong logic of the ambassador was admired very much by the employees of the royal court. A benevolent courtier said to Dihyah: "You should leave the letter on the special table of the Emperor and return. None except Kaiser touches the letters lying on that table. As and when Kaiser reads the letter he will call you". Dihyah thanked that man for the guidance, left the letter on that table, and returned.

Kaiser opened the letter. The opening words of the letter, *Bismillah* (In the name of Allah) attracted his attention and he said: "I have not so far seen such a letter except that of Solomon. Then he called his interpreter so that he might read the letter and translate it for him. He translated the Prophet's letter as under:

"(This is a letter) from Muhammad bin Abdullah to the great Hercules of Rome. Peace be upon the followers of guidance. I invite you to the religion of Islam. Embrace Islam so that you may be safe. Allah will give you two rewards (reward for your own faith as well as reward for the faith of those who are your subordinates). In case, however, you turn away your face from Islam you will be responsible for the sins of the Arisiyans⁵ as well. O people of the Scriptures! We invite you to a common basis i.e.: we should not worship anyone except Allah. We should not treat anyone to be His partner. Some of us too should

not accept others as their gods. And (O Muhammad! As and when) they recalcitrate against the true religion say: "Be witness to the fact that we are Muslims".

Kaiser Makes Investigations About The Holy Prophet

The wise Roman Ruler considered it probable that the writer of the letter was the same Promised Prophet Muhammad, as referred to in the Evangel and the Taurat. Hence, he decided to collect detailed information about him. He, therefore, called for the head of administrative department and said to him:

"Make a thorough search throughout Syria. It is possible that you may be able to find out some relatives or kinsmen of Muhammad or some other persons who may be aware of his antecedents so that I may get some information from them. By chance, in those very days Abu Sufyan and some other persons from amongst Quraysh had come to Syria for trade. The representative of Kaiser contacted them and took all of them to Jerusalem. They were received in audience by Kaiser who said to them: "Is there anyone amongst you who may be related with Muhammad?"

Abu Sufyan pointed to himself and said: "He and I belong to the same tribe and our fourth grand-parent (Abd-i Munaf) was common. Kaiser ordered that Abu Sufyan should stand facing him and others should stand behind his back so that if he was partial in his replies they should at once point out his mistake or falsehood. Having made these arrangements Kaiser asked Abu Sufyan the following questions to which the latter gave replies seriatim:

Kaiser: What do you know about the descent of Muhammad?

Abu Sufyan: He belongs to a noble family.

Kaiser: Was there any one amongst his ancestors who ruled over the people?

Abu Sufyan replied in the negative.

Kaiser: Did he refrain from falsehood or not, before claiming to be a prophet?

Abu Sufyan: No doubt Muhammad was a truthful person.

Kaiser: Which class of people supports him and believes in him?

Abu Sufyan: The nobility is against him and the common and middle class people are his earnest supporters.

Kaiser: Are his followers increasing?

Abu Sufyan: Yes.

Kaiser: Has anyone of his followers turned apostate so far?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Kaiser: Has he been victorious while fighting or has he been defeated?

Abu Sufyan: On some occasions he has been victorious and on others he has been defeated.

Kaiser asked the interpreter to tell Abu Sufyan and his companions that if this account was correct he (Muhammad was definitely the last Promised Prophet. Then he added: "I have information that such a Prophet would appear, but I didn't think that he would belong to the tribe of Quraysh. However, I am ready to pay homage to him and to wash his feet as a mark of respect and in the near future his power and glory will capture the Roman territories".

Kaiser's nephew said: "In the letter Muhammad has written his own name above yours, but he has not been punished for this sedition". Kaiser angrily said: "It is appropriate that the name of the person on whom the Archangel Gabriel descends should precede mine".

Abu Sufyan says: "Kaiser's keen partiality for Muhammad created a murmur in the court and I felt very uneasy on account of this development lest the position of Muhammad should become so high that the Roman nation should be afraid of him. Although, when questioning commenced, I tried to belittle Muhammad in the eyes of Kaiser and told him that Muhammad was smaller as compared with what he had heard about him, but Kaiser did not pay any heed to my derogatory remarks and said: "Only give replies to the questions which I ask you."⁶

The Prophet's Letter Impresses Kaiser

Kaiser did not content himself with the information gained from Abu Sufyan but he wrote a letter about the matter to one of the sages of Rome. The sage wrote in reply: "He is the very Prophet who is awaited by the world". Kaiser arranged for a big gathering in one of the monasteries to find out the way of thinking of the Roman chiefs and, after reading out the Prophet's letter before them, said: "Do you agree that I should accept his religion?"

Immediately a great convulsion took place in the meeting, so much so that the opposition of the people frightened Kaiser out of his life. He at once rose from his place which was at an elevated point and spoke to the people thus: By making this proposal I wished to test you. Your firmness and steadfastness in the religion of Prophet 'Isa has aroused my admiration and appreciation for you".

Kaiser called Dihyah and honoured him. He wrote a reply to the Prophet's letter and also sent some presents through Dihyah. In his letter he showed his faith and devotion to him.⁷

The Ambassador Of The Prophet Arrives In Iran

When the Ambassador of the Prophet left for the Iranian court the ruler of that vast territory was Khusro Perviz. He was the second ruler after Anushirwan who ascended the throne thirty two years before the migration of the Prophet and had to face many bitter and pleasant incidents during this period. During his reign the strength of Iran was completely in a state of vacillation. At one time Iran penetrated into Asia Minor and extended its authority up to the proximity of Constantinople and the Cross of Prophet 'Isa, which was the most sacred thing amongst the Christians, was taken away by him to his capital Taisfun (Mada'in). The Roman Emperor requested for peace and sent an ambassador to the Iranian court to conclude a peace treaty. Now the frontiers of Iran coincided with the frontiers of the territories of the Achaemenians.

Then, however, Iran came on the brink of downfall on account of wrong policies, immense pride and lavish living of the ruler. The conquered territories went out of control one after the other and the enemy's forces reached the very heart of Iran (viz. Dastgard near Taisfun). Consequently Khusro Perviz was obliged to flee on account of the fear of Romans. This shameful act on his part roused the wrath of the nation and eventually he was killed at the hands of his own son Shirviah.

The historians consider the decline of Iran to be the consequence of the pride, egotism and luxurious life of the ruler. If he had accepted the message brought by the ambassador of peace, the splendour of Iran would have remained safe and peaceful.

If the Prophet's letter did not make the desired impression on the mind of Khusro Perviz it was not due to anything wrong with the letter or because the person who brought it was at fault. In fact his peculiar mentality and excessive egotism did not permit him to ponder over the invitation of the Prophet even for a few moments. Consequently when the interpreter had not yet finished the letter he shouted and having snatched the letter tore it into pieces. Here are the details of the incident:

In the beginning of the seventh year of migration⁸ the Prophet appointed one of his brave officers named Abdullah Huzafah Sahmi Qarashi to carry his letter to Khusro Perviz inviting him to Islam. The letter of the Prophet is given below:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to the great Kisra of Iran. Peace be upon him, who seeks truth and expresses belief in Allah and in His Prophet and testifies that there is no god but Allah and that He has no partner, and who believes that Muhammad is His servant and Prophet. Under the Command of Allah, I invite you to Him. He has sent me for the guidance of all people so that I may warn them all of His wrath and may present the unbelievers with an ultimatum. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe. And if you refuse to accept Islam, you will be responsible for the sins of the Magi⁹.

The ambassador of the Prophet arrived in the Iranian court. Khusro Perviz ordered the letter to be taken from him. But the ambassador, said that it was necessary that he should deliver the letter to the king himself, and then he handed it over to him. Khusro Perviz called for an interpreter and he translated it thus:

"This is a letter from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to the great Kisra of Iran",

The interpreter had not yet finished reading the letter when the Ruler of Iran got very much agitated, shouted loudly, took the letter from his hand, tore it into pieces and cried: "Look at this man! He has written his own name before mine". He ordered at once that Abdullah should be turned out of the palace. Abdullah came out of the palace, mounted his horse and left for Madina. On reaching there he reported the matter to the Prophet. The Prophet was displeased to learn about the disrespect shown by Khusro and signs of anger appeared on his face. He cursed him in these words: "O Lord! Break his kingdom into pieces."¹⁰

Ya'qubi's False View

As opposed to the fact generally accepted by historians Ya'qubi says in his history: "Khusro Perviz read the Prophet's letter and sent him some musk and silk through his ambassador as a mark of respect to him. The Prophet distributed the perfume and said that silk was not fit for men. He also said: "The power of Islam will enter his territories and the Divine decree will be enforced soon".¹¹

However, none of the historians agrees with him, except Ahmad bin Hanbal, who writes that Khusro Perviz sent a present for the Prophet.¹²

Khusro Perviz Contacts The Ruler Of Yemen

The fertile territory of Yemen is situated towards the south of Makkah and its rulers had always ruled as satellites of the Sasanian Kings. The Ruler of Yemen in those days was Bazan and the Sasanian King wrote in a proud and self conceited tone: "It has been reported to me that a person from amongst Quraysh in Makkah claims to be a Prophet. Send two of your brave officers to him to him so that they may arrest him and bring him to me".¹³

Ibn Hajar has quoted in al-Isabah that Khusro Parviz ordered Bazan that these two officers should persuade the Prophet to revert to the religion of his ancestors and if he declined to do so his head should be cut off and sent to him.

This letter clearly shows the ignorance of the ruler of the time. He did not even know that the claimant of prophethood had migrated from Makkah to Madina six years earlier. He also did not realize that it was not possible to arrest, by sending two officers, or at least to summon to Yemen, a person who claimed to be a Prophet in a region whose influence had extended so much that he was sending ambassadors to

the courts of the rulers of the world.

As ordered by the centre, the Ruler of Yemen sent to the Hijaz two brave and strong officers name Firoz and Kharkhusrah. They first contacted a Qurayshite in Ta'if. He guided them and said: "The person whom you wish to contact is in Madina these days".

They then went to Madina and presented themselves before the Prophet. They delivered Bazan's letter to him and said: "According to the orders received from the capital, we have been deputed to take you to Yemen and we think that Bazan will correspond about you with Khusro Perviz and will do what he says, otherwise, however, war will start between you and us and the Sasanian power will destroy your houses and kill your men".

The Prophet heard their words with perfect calmness. Before giving them a reply he invited them to embrace Islam. He did not like their appearances as they had grown long moustaches, and said to them: "My Lord has ordered me that I may grow my beard and shorten my moustaches".¹⁴ They were so much overawed by the greatness, formidableness and calmness of the Prophet that when he invited them to Islam, they were trembling. Then he said to them: "You may go today. I will let you know my decision tomorrow".

In the meantime revelation came and the Archangel Jibreel informed the Prophet about the assassination of Khusro Perviz. On the following day, when the Yemenite officers came to the Prophet, he said: "The Nourisher of the world has informed me that when seven hours of the last night had passed Khusro Perviz was assassinated by his son (Shirviyah) who has now ascended the throne. The night which the Prophet specified was the night of Tuesday, the 10th of Jumadi I, 7 A.H.¹⁵

The representatives of Bazan were very much astonished on hearing this and said: "Responsibility for what you have said is greater by far than the claim of prophethood which annoyed the Sasanian King. We have no alternative but to inform Bazan about it. He will send a report in this behalf to Khusro Perviz".

The Prophet said: "I shall be glad if you inform him about the matter and also tell him that my religion and power will reach those regions where fast steeds reach and if he embraces Islam I will leave to him the territories which are under his control at present".

Then, in order to encourage the two persons deputed by Bazan, the Prophet gave them a costly belt which was ornamented with gold and silver and had been presented to him by some chiefs of the tribes. Both of them were perfectly satisfied and took leave of him and proceeded to Yemen. On reaching there they conveyed to Bazan the message of the Prophet.

Bazan said: "If this news is correct he is certainly a Prophet of Allah and should be obeyed". In the meantime he received a letter from Shirviyah with these contents: Be it known to you that I have killed Khusro Perviz. The wrath of the nation prompted me to kill him because he killed the nobles (of Persia)

and dispersed the elders. As soon as you receive my letter you should obtain oath of allegiance for me from the people, and until you receive further orders from me don't be harsh to the man, who claims to be a Prophet and against whom orders had been issued by my father".

The letter of Shirviyah provided means for the embracement of Islam by Bazan and the government employees, all of whom were Iranians. Bazan corresponded with the Prophet and informed him about his own conversion to Islam as well as that of the employees of his government.

Arrival Of The Messenger Of Islam In Egypt

Egypt was the origin of old civilization, the centre of the Kingdom of the Pharaohs and the seat of Government of the Copts. Since the advent of Islam in the Hijaz, Egypt lost its power and independence. The Maqauqis had accepted the governor-generalship of Egypt from the Roman Emperor against payment of 19 million Dinars per annum.

Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah was a brave and skilled rider and was associated with a famous event in the history of Islam. He was one of the six persons who were deputed to carry the missionary letters of the Prophet to the rulers of the world. The Prophet ordered him to carry the following letter to the Maqauqis, the Ruler of Egypt:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad bin Abdullah to the Maqauqis, the head of the Copts. Peace be upon the followers of truth. I invite you to the religion of Islam. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe (from the wrath of Allah). Embrace Islam so that the Almighty may grant you two rewards. And if you turn away your face from Islam you will be responsible for the sins of the Copts as well.

"O people of the Scriptures! We invite you to a common basis i.e. we should not worship anyone except Allah. We should not treat anyone to be His partner. Some of us also should not accept others as their gods. O Muhammad! (As and when) they recalcitrate against the true religion say: "Be witness to the fact that we are Muslims."¹⁶

The ambassador of the Prophet of Islam proceeded to Egypt and learnt that the ruler was then residing in a lofty palace in Alexandria, situated on the bank of the river. He then proceeded to Alexandria and entered the palace of the Maqauqis by boat. Hatib was received in audience by the king, who opened the letter, read it and pondered over its contents for some time.

Then he raised his head and addressed the ambassador of Islam in these words: "If Muhammad is really a Prophet of Allah, why were his opponents able to turn him out of his birth-place and why was he obliged to settle in Madina? Why did he not curse them so that they might have been destroyed by Allah

"

The intelligent and judicious ambassador of Islam replied: "Prophet 'Isa was a Prophet of Allah and you too acknowledge him to be so. Why did he not curse the Children of Israel when they plotted to kill him so that Allah might have destroyed them?"

The ruler, who did not expect such a prompt reply, yielded to the strong logic of the ambassador and praised him saying, "Bravo! You are a wise man and you have brought a message from a wise and a fully accomplished person".¹⁷

The ambassador was emboldened by the cordial reception accorded to him by the Ruler of Egypt and spoke thus with a view to invite him to embrace Islam: "before you a person (the Pharaoh) ruled over this country; he oppressed the people for a long time. Allah destroyed him so that his life might be a lesson for you. However, you should endeavour that your life like his may not serve as a lesson for others.

Our Prophet invited people to a pure religion. Quraysh campaigned against him and the Jews also opposed him with peculiar grudge. The people nearest to him are the Christians. I swear by my life that just as Prophet Musa bin Imran gave good tidings to the people about Prophet 'Isa, the latter also has given good tidings about the Prophethood of Muhammad.

I invite you to the religion of Islam and our Heavenly Book (the Qur'an) in the same manner in which you have invited the people of the Taurah to the Evangel. Every nation which hears the call of a Prophet should follow him. And now that I have made the call of this Prophet reach your land it is only proper that you and the Egyptian nation should follow his religion. I do not at all restrain you from believing in the religion of 'Isa. I should rather tell you that you should follow his religion but must know that the complete form of the religion of 'Isa is Islam itself."¹⁸

The meeting of the ambassador with the Ruler of Egypt came to an end, but the Maquaqis did not give him a final reply.

It was therefore, necessary that Hatib should stay on for some time more so that he could obtain a reply and carry it to the Prophet of Islam. One day the Maquaqis called him and had a meeting with him in the palace in seclusion, and enquired from him about the programme and religion of the Prophet.

The ambassador replied: "He invites people to worship only Allah. He orders that people should offer prayers five times during day and night and should also fast during the month of Ramadan. They should also perform pilgrimage of the House of Allah and must keep their promises. They should refrain from eating dead bodies and drinking blood" Hatib ended his words with explaining the sublime qualities of the Prophet.

The Ruler of Egypt said to him: "These are the signs of prophethood. I knew that the last Prophet had not yet come. However, I was under the impression that he would appear, not in the Hijaz but in Syria, which has been the centre for the appearance of the Prophets. But O Ambassador of Muhammad! You should know that if I embrace Islam the Copts will not cooperate with me. I hope that the power of this

Prophet will extend to Egypt and his companions will come to our land and gain victory over the local forces and over the false beliefs. And I desire you to keep this conversation secret and none of the Copts should know about it".¹⁹

The Maqauqis Writes A Letter To The Prophet

The Ruler of Egypt called his Arabic scribe and ordered him to write a letter to the Prophet as follows:

"This is a letter to Muhammad bin Abdullah from the Maqauqis, chief of the Copts. Peace be upon you! I have read your letter, understood its contents and realized the truthfulness of your call. I knew that a Prophet would appear but thought that he would rise from Syria. I have welcomed the arrival of your ambassador."

Then he mentioned in his letter the presents which he was sending to the Prophet and ended it with the words: "Peace be upon you".²⁰

The respect which the Maqauqis showed to the Prophet in his letter and his writing the name of Muhammad first, as well as the precious gifts which he sent to the Prophet and the welcome which he accorded to his ambassador, show that he had secretly accepted the invitation of the Prophet, but his interest in his position as a ruler prevented him from making his faith public.

From Egypt Hatib came to Syria under the protection of a group of persons appointed by the Maqauqis. There he allowed those persons to return and proceeded to Madina along with a caravan. He delivered the letter of the Maqauqis to the Prophet and also conveyed his message. The Prophet said: "He has not accepted Islam on account of fear for his rulership, but his rule and authority will come to an end soon."

Envoy Of Islam Enters Ethiopia

Ethiopia is situated at the far end of Eastern Africa. Its area is 18,000 sq. kilometres and its present capital is the city of Addis Ababa.

The orientals were acquainted with this country for more than a century before Islam. The acquaintance commenced with the attack of the Iranian army during the Rule of Anushirwan and was matured with the migration of Muslims from Makkah to Ethiopia.

When the Prophet decided to send six distinguished and brave delegates to far-off places as envoys for making his universal prophethood known to the people of the world he appointed 'Amr bin Umayyah to proceed to Ethiopia with his letter and to convey his message to the Negus, the just ruler of that country. This was not the first letter which the Prophet wrote to the Ruler of Ethiopia.

He had written a letter earlier also about the Muhajirs asking the Negus to be kind to them. The text of that letter is recorded in history.²¹ Some times confusion takes place between the two letters (i.e.

between the one making recommendations for the Muhajirs, and the other written to communicate the Prophet's universal prophethood) and the text of both of them is mixed up.

When the Prophet sent his envoy to Ethiopia with a letter some Muslim Muhajirs were still residing there whereas others had come over to Madina and had praised the justice of the great ruler of that country and his kindness to his subjects. In case, therefore, we find a sort of inclination, kindness and softness in the tone of the letter written by the Prophet to that ruler, it is, because he was aware of the mentality of the Negus.

In letters addressed to other rulers he warned them of the time of Divine wrath and told them that if they did not express their faith in Islam the sins of those who refrained from embracing Islam owing to fear would also be recorded in their account. However, no such thing has been said in the following letter to the Negus:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah to the Negus, the King of Ethiopia. Peace be upon you! I praise Allah except Whom there is no god. He is Allah who is free from all defects and faults; and His obedient servants are safe from His wrath. He sees and witnesses the conditions of His servants.

I testify that Prophet 'Isa bin Maryam is a spirit of Allah and a 'word' (of Allah) which settled in the womb of pious Maryam. Allah created him in the womb of his mother without a father with the same Power with which He created Adam without parents.

I invite you to the One Allah Who has no partner, and require you to obey Him and to follow my religion. Profess faith in Allah Who has appointed me to the prophetic mission.

The King of Ethiopia should know that I am the Prophet of Allah. I invite you and all your soldiers to the Almighty Allah and I have, by sending this letter and my envoy, discharged the onerous responsibility which devolved upon me and have given you advice. Peace be upon those who follow guidance".²²

The Prophet commenced his letter with the Islamic salutation of *Salamun Alayk* and sent personal greetings to the King of Ethiopia. In other letters (sent to the Kisra, the Kaiser and the Maquaqis, the Rulers of Iran, Rome and Egypt respectively), however he began with a general salutation (Peace be upon the followers of guidance). In this letter he sent personal greetings to the Ruler of Ethiopia and thus accorded him superiority over other contemporary rulers of the world.

In this letter a reference has been made to a number of salient attributes of the Almighty, which indicate His Oneness and Greatness. Thereafter the Prophet propounded the question of 'Divinity' (Prophet 'Isa being god) which is the creation of decayed thinking of the Church and refuted it by arguments inferred from the Holy Qur'an. As regards Prophet 'Isa being born without a father he explained this event by making a comparison with the birth of Adam and proved that if birth without father be an argument for

one's being the son of God the same argument should apply to Adam, whereas the Christians hold no such belief about him.

At the close of the letter he offered advice to him and thus manifested his own status.

Conversation Of The Envoy With The Negus

When the necessary formalities ended the ambassador of Islam was received in audience by the Ruler of Ethiopia. He spoke to the ruler thus: "It is my duty to convey the message of the Prophet to you, and your pure nature also demands that you should kindly listen to my submission.

O Just Ruler of Ethiopia! Your sympathy for the Muslim migrants cannot be forgotten and these sentiments of yours have pleased us so much that we consider you as one of us and have a great confidence in you, as if we were your friends. Your Heavenly Scripture is a firm and indisputable witness.

This Book is the best judge which doesn't do injustice and this just judge clearly testifies to the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam. If you follow this universal Messenger and the Last Prophet of Allah you will acquire great blessings; otherwise you will be like the Jews who did not accept the religion of Prophet 'Isa which superseded the religion of Prophet Musa and continued to follow the superseded religion. And the religion of Islam supersedes earlier religions like the religion of 'Isa and in a sense completes them".

The Ruler of Ethiopia replied to the envoy of the Prophet of Islam in these words: "I testify that he is the same Prophet who is awaited by the people of the Scriptures and believe that just as Prophet Musa informed the people about the prophethood of 'Isa, the latter also specified the signs of the Last Prophet. I am prepared to proclaim his prophethood before the public.

However, as the environment is not yet ready for such a proclamation and my strength is also insufficient, it is necessary that the requisite ground should be prepared so that the hearts of the people might be attracted towards Islam. If it had been possible for me I would have hastened to reach your Prophet at once".²³ Then he wrote a letter in reply to the Prophet.

The Negus Writes To The Holy Prophet

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

It is a letter to Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah from the Negus. The blessings of One except Whom there is no god and the greetings of One Who guided me towards Islam be upon you. I have read your letter pertaining to the prophethood and human attributes of 'Isa. I swear by the Lord of the heavens and the earth that whatever you have said is absolutely correct and I do not have the least difference with this belief. I have also become acquainted with the reality of your religion and have rendered such

services to the Muslim migrants as were expedient.

I testify by means of this letter that you are the Messenger of Allah and a truthful person whose prophethood has been confirmed by the Heavenly Scriptures. I have performed the ceremonies of embracement of Islam and allegiance to you in the presence of your cousin (Ja'far bin Abu Talib).

I am sending my son, Rarha, to your sacred presence to communicate my message and embracement of Islam. And I state clearly that I am not responsible for anyone except myself. In case, therefore, you order me I shall present myself to your august presence. Peace be upon you O Prophet of Allah.²⁴

The Negus sent special presents to the Prophet and later two more letters were also sent to him by the Prophet.

Letters Of The Holy Prophet To The Rulers Of Syria And Yamamah

It is possible that the extension of universal invitation by the Prophet of Islam to the various rulers might have appeared to some of the politicians of that age to be something beyond moderateness. However, the passage of time proved that the Prophet had no other alternative.

Firstly deputation of six envoys to different parts of the world and that too with firm and convincing letters closed the path of doubt for the opponents in the future. After the performance of this great act by the Prophet none can entertain any doubt today about the universal nature of his invitation. Moreover, besides the verses revealed on the subject, sending of envoys is in itself the greatest proof of the universality of Islam.

Secondly, the rulers of the time, excepting Khusro Perviz, who was a proud and despotic person, were generally impressed by the invitation and the letters. They showed great respect to the representatives of the Prophet and the appearance of the Arabian Prophet became the subject of discussion in religious circles.

These letters awakened those who were asleep, gave a severe jolt to the heedless persons and stirred the sense of the civilized nations so that they might once again undertake discussion and investigation about the Promised Prophet of the Taurat and the Evangel, and the religious personalities of the time might come in contact with the new religion in different ways. For this reason most of the leaders of different religions of those days came to Madina, during the last days of the life of the Prophet and even after his death and studied his religion from near.

In the foregoing chapters we have mentioned in detail the impression which the letters of the Prophet made on the Rulers of Rome, Iran and Egypt. Now we should see what was the result of his letter to the Negus.

After delivering presents to the representative of the Prophet of Islam, the Negus, in order to acquaint the religious organization of Ethiopia with the truthfulness of Islam, sent thirty proficient priests to Madina, so that they might study the simple and pious life of the Prophet of Islam from near, and might not think that he too possessed an organization like the monarchs of the time.

The persons deputed by the King of Ethiopia were received in audience by the Prophet and they enquired from him about his belief with regard to Prophet 'Isa. The Prophet informed them of his belief about 'Isa by reciting this verse:

When Allah said, "Jesus, son of Mary, recall My favours to you and your mother. Recall how I supported you by the Holy spirit, made you speak to people from your cradle and when you grew up, taught you the Book, gave you wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel. Recall when, by My will, you made a sculpture of a bird out of clay, blew into it and it turned into a real bird. Recall how, by My will, you healed the deaf, the lepers and raised the dead. Recall when you came to the Israelites in the house with clear miracles and I saved you from their mischief, even though the disbelievers among them said, "This is obviously magic". (Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:110)

The contents of the above verse moved them so much that tears began to flow down involuntarily from their eyes.

Those deputed by the Negus returned to Ethiopia after a minute study of the invitation of the Prophet and narrated their experiences to the king. His eyes were also filled with tears like those of the priests."²⁵

Ibn Athir has narrated the story of the priests sent by the Negus in a different manner. He says: "All of them were drowned in the sea and the Prophet sent a letter of condolences to the king". However, the text of the letter to which he has referred does not at all show that the Negus had faced any such calamity".²⁶

The Holy Prophet's Letters To The Prince Of The Ghassanians

Ghassanians were a family of the Qahtani tribe named Azd who had been living in Yemen for a long time, and their lands were irrigated by means of Ma'rib Dam. When the dam was destroyed they were compelled to leave that place and come to Syria. Their power and influence eclipsed that of the natives and eventually they established a State named Ghassaniyah. They ruled in that area under the suzerainty of the Roman Emperors and when Islam disbanded their organization, thirty two persons out of them had ruled over Golan, Yarmuk and Damascus.

Out of the six envoys who were sent to big countries to communicate the message of universal prophethood, the fifth was Shuja' bin Wahab, who proceeded to the State of Ghassaniyah to deliver the Prophet's letter to their ruler, Harith bin Abi Shamir at Ba'uzah. When the envoy reached the territory of

Harith he came to know that the ruler was busy making preparations to receive Kaiser who was coming from Constantinople to Jerusalem on foot as a mark of thanksgiving for his gaining victory over his enemy, Iran.

In the circumstances Shuja' bin Wahab had to wait for some time before his meeting with the ruler could be fixed. In the meantime he developed friendship with the Hajib (the chief of ceremonies) and informed him of the attributes of the Prophet as well as about Islam.

The impressive and penetrating words of the envoy brought about a peculiar change in the Hajib's thoughts, so much so that tears began to flow from his eyes and he said: "I have studied the Evangel very minutely and have read in it the attributes of the Prophet and I hereby express my faith in him. However, I am afraid of Harith lest he should kill me. And Harith, too, is afraid of the Kaiser and even if he believes your words, he will not be able to proclaim his faith, because he as well as the ancestors of this family have been the satellites of the Kaiser.

When Shuja' was received in audience by the ruler. he saw him sitting on a throne and wearing a crown. He delivered the Prophet's letter to him. It was as follows:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is a letter from Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah to Harith bin Abi Shamir. Peace be upon the followers of truth and the guides and the true believers. O Harith! I invite you to the One Allah Who has no partner. If you embrace Islam your kingdom will continue to exist".

The words at the end of the letter which threatened the destruction of his kingdom in the event of his failing to express faith (in Allah and the Prophet) annoyed Harith and he said:

"None can deprive me of my power. I must arrest this newly-risen Prophet". Then, in order to impress the envoy, he ordered that the army should march past before him so that the envoy of the Prophet might see his military power from near. By way of rendering supererogatory service he also wrote a letter to the Kaiser and informed him of his decision to arrest the Prophet of Islam.

By chance, his letter was received by Kaiser at the time when Dihyah Kalbi, another envoy of the Prophet, was present in the court of Kaiser and the Roman Emperor was thinking about Islam. The Kaiser was displeased with the excessive zeal of the Ghassani Ruler and wrote to him in reply: "Give up your idea and see me in the city of Ailya."

However, in accordance with the maxim: "People follow the path of their rulers", the reply of Kaiser altered the attitude of Harith and hence he gave the envoy of the Prophet a robe of honour and, before he left for Madina, said to him: "Convey my greetings to the Prophet of Islam and tell him that I am one of his real followers". However, the Prophet did not attach any importance to his diplomatic reply and said: "In the near future his power will collapse". Harith died in the 8 A.H. i.e. one year after this event.²⁷

The Sixth Envoy Of The Prophet Proceeds To Yamamah

The last envoy of the Prophet proceeded to Yamamah, a territory situated between Najd and Bahrain, and delivered his letter to the ruler of that place named Hawzah bin Ali Hanafi. The text of the Prophet's letter is as follows:

"In the name of Allah. Peace be upon the followers of guidance. You should know that my religion will spread in the east and the west up to the remotest corners of the earth. Embrace Islam so that you may remain safe and your power and kingdom may continue to exist".

As the Ruler of Yamamah was a Christian the envoy, chosen for that place, was a man, who had resided in Ethiopia for a long time and was fully conversant with the logic and ceremonies of Christianity. This man was Salit bin 'Amr who had migrated to Ethiopia under the orders of the Prophet at the time when the Muslims were severely oppressed by the idolaters of Makkah.

The sublime teachings of Islam and his contacts with different classes of people during his journeys had made him so brave and strong that he impressed the Ruler of Yamamah by his words and said to him:

"Honoured is he, who is blessed with faith and piety. The people who under your leadership will never be unsuccessful. I invite you to the best thing and restrain you from the worst acts. I invite you to worship Allah and prevent you from obeying Satan and following temptations and lusts. The result of worshipping Allah is Paradise and that of following Satan is fire (Hell). If you do against what I have said, you should wait till reality dawns upon you".

The face of the Ruler of Yamamah showed that the words of the envoy had made a good impression on him. He asked for time to ponder over the prophethood of the Prophet. By chance one of the Archbishops of Rome happened to arrive in Yamamah at that time and the Ruler of Yamamah placed the matter before him.

The bishop said: "Why did you abstain from acknowledging him?" He replied: "I fear for my kingdom and my authority". The bishop said: "It is proper for you to follow him. He is the same Arabian Prophet whose appearance has been foretold by Jesus and it is written in the Evangel that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah".

The advice tendered by the bishop encouraged the ruler. He called the envoy to deliver a letter from him to the Prophet. The letter reads as follows:

"You have invited me to the best religion. I am the poet, orator and spokesman of my community and enjoy a position amongst the Arabs which is recognized by all. I am prepared to follow your religion, subject to the condition that you allow me to share some high religious status".

He did not content himself with this only. He sent a delegation to Madina headed by Muja'ah bin Murarah

so that they might convey his message to the Prophet and tell him that if this religious distinction was to devolve upon him after the Prophet's death he was prepared to embrace Islam and to assist him, but otherwise he would wage war.

Members of this delegation presented themselves before the Prophet and embraced Islam without any preconditions. As regards the Ruler of Yamamah the Prophet said in reply to his message: "If his faith is conditional he is not fit for rulership and succession and Allah will protect me from his mischief".²⁸

Other Letters Of The Prophet Of Islam

The letters written by the Prophet inviting the princes, kings, rulers and religious personalities (to Islam) are more in number than those mentioned above and even now the research scholars have reproduced in their books twenty nine letters of invitation sent by him. For brevity's sake, however, we content ourselves with those mentioned above.

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1. The great scholars of Islam have collected the letters of the Prophet as far as they could. The following two books are most valuable in this regard: (i) *al-Wasa'iq Siyasah* by Prof. Muhammad Hamidullah Hyderabad, Professor of Paris University. (ii) *Makatibur Rasul* by the contemporary scholar Ali Ahmadi.
 2. *Tabaqat-i Kubra*, vol. I, page 258; *Seerah-i Halabi*, vol. III, page 271.
 3. Busra was the capital of the governor of Horan Province. This province was treated to be a colony of Kaiser and Harith bin Abi Shimar and generally the rulers of the family of Ghassan ruled it as satellites of Kaiser.
 4. *Tabaqat-i Kubra*, vol. I, page 259.
 5. There is a difference of opinion between the scholars about the meaning of this word. Ibn Athir writes in *Nihayah*, vol. I, page 31: "It means the employees of the court". Others say that it means the farmers, because in those days the majority of the people were farmers. This view is supported by the fact that in some copies (*Tarikh-i Kamil*, vol. II, page 145) the word Akarin has been used instead of the above word and Akar means a farmer. It is also considered probable that Aris was the name of a community which resided in the Roman Empire.
 6. *Tarikh-i Tabari*, vol. II, p. 290; *Biharul Anwar*, vol. XX, pp. 378 – 380.
 7. *Tabaqat-i Kubra*, vol. I, page 259; *Seerah-i Halabi*, vol. II, page 277; *Tarikh-i Kamil*, vol. II, page 44 and *Biharul Anwar*, vol. XX, page 379.
 8. According to Ibn Sa'd, (*Tabaqat*, vol. I, page 258) the Prophet sent the envoys in the month of Muharram, 7 A.H.
 9. *Tabaqat-i Kubra*, vol. I, page 360; *Tarikh-i Tabari*, vol. II, pp. 295 & 296; *Tarikh-i Kamil*, vol. II, page 81 and *Biharul Anwar*, vol. XX, page 389.
 10. *Tarikh-i Kubra*, vol. I, page 260.
 11. *Tarikh-i Ya'qubi*, vol. II, page 62.
 12. *Musnad-i Ahmad*, vol. I, page 96.
 13. *Seerah-i Halabi*, vol. III, page 278.
 14. *Tarikh-i Kamil*, vol. II, page 106.
 15. *Tabaqat-i Kubra*. Vol. I, page 260 and *Biharul Anwar*, vol. XX, page 382.
 16. *Seerah-i Halabi*, vol. III, page 280; *Durr-i Manthur*, vol. I, page 40 and *A'ayan-i Shi'ah*, vol. I, page 142.
 17. *Usdul Ghaba*, vol. 1, page 362
 18. *Seerah-i Halabi*, vol. III, page 28.
 19. *Seerah-i Zayni Dehlan*, vol. III, page 73.
 20. *Tabaqat-i Kubra*, vol. I, page 260.

21. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. II, page 294.
22. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, page 279 and Tabaqat, vol. I, page 259.
23. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, p. 279; Tabaqat-i Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, p. 259.
24. Tarikh-i Tabari, vol. I and Biharul Anwar, vol. XX, page 392.
25. A'alamul Wara, page 31.
26. Usudul Ghaba, vol. II, page 62.
27. Seerah-i Halabi, vol. III, p. 286; Tabaqat-i Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, p. 261.
28. Tarikh-i Kamil, vol. II, page 83; Tabaqat-i Kubra, vol. I, page 262.

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